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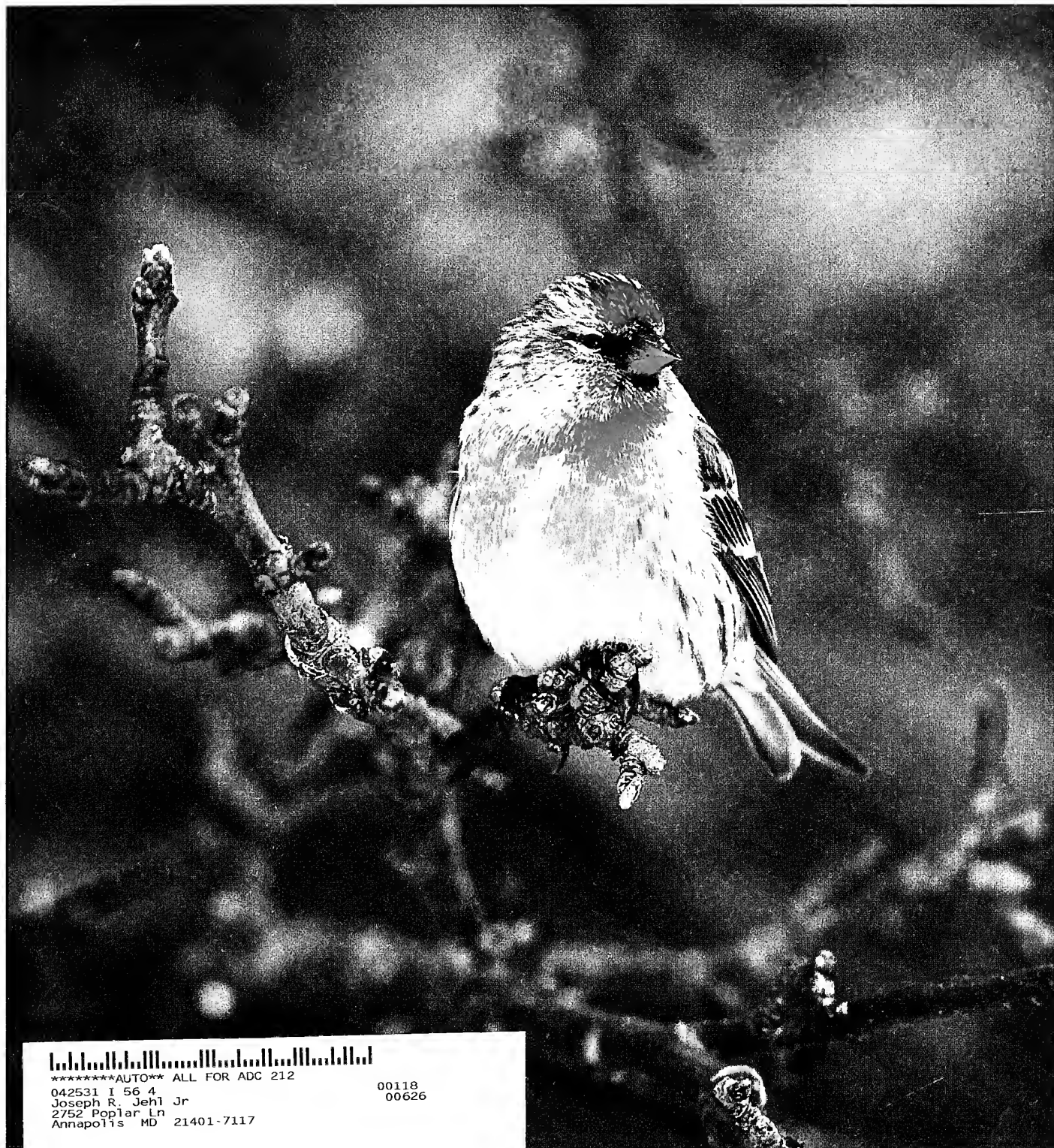
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NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORD PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION



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Common Redpolls, along with much smaller numbers of Hoary Redpolls, descended the north country in great hordes in the winter of 2001-2002, reaching points as far south as about latitude 36° N—the Central Valley of California, Utah, Nevada, eastern Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, southern Illinois, Kentucky, southern Virginia, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Those blessed with large flocks at their feeding stations found their spirits (and wallets) the lighter for it. This Common Redpoll frequented a feeder at Georgetown, New York, where it was captured on film 28 February 2002. Photograph by Sean Sime/Housewren.



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Plumage variation and hybridization in Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses

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INTRODUCTION

Black-footed (*Phoebastria nigripes*) and Laysan (*P. immutabilis*) Albatrosses nest side by side in dense island colonies. Their breeding populations center in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands, with smaller colonies scattered across the subtropical North Pacific. Both species visit nutrient-rich waters off the west coast of North America throughout the year to forage. Black-footeds concentrate in coastal waters from northern California to southern Alaska, while Laysans frequent more offshore and northerly waters in this region. Birders on pelagic trips off the West Coast often encounter significant numbers of one or both of these species, and searching for other, rarer albatrosses among them has proven to be a worthwhile pursuit in recent years (Stallcup and Terrill 1996, Cole 2000).

Albatrosses identified as Black-footed x Laysan hybrids have been seen and studied on Midway Atoll and other northwestern Hawaiian Islands since the late 1800s (Rothschild 1900, Fisher 1948, 1972). In addition, considerable variation in appearance is found within both species, individuals with strikingly aberrant plumage and soft part colors occasionally being encountered (Fisher 1972, Whittow 1993a). Midway Atoll hosts approximately two-thirds of the world's breeding Laysan Albatrosses (Fig. 1) and one-third of the world's breeding Black-footed Albatrosses. These populations have provided us with many opportunities to study and photograph presumed hybrids and unusual individuals. In this paper, we discuss variation in the plumages of both species and the appearances of aberrant individuals and probable hybrids, as well as the potential pitfalls to identification that such birds may pose. Our observations are based on a collective 21 months on Midway from 1997 to 2000, in addition to the study of thousands of Black-footed and hundreds of Laysan Albatrosses at sea off California.



Figure 1. Midway Atoll hosts significant portions of the breeding populations of both Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses. Presumed hybrids and aberrant individuals are found regularly in these dense colonies. Photograph by Peter Pyle.



A presumed hybrid Laysan x Black-footed Albatross tends a chick at Midway Atoll, 14 February 2000. Photograph by Peter Pyle.

BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS

Worldwide, the Black-footed Albatross is the less common of the two species, with population estimates ranging from 200,000 to 300,000 individuals (Whittow 1993a, Cousins & Cooper 2000). Adults arrive at colonies in late October, fledging takes place in late June and July, and adults have an incomplete to complete molt during April (non-breeding individuals) or July (breeders) through October. This species is largely dark brown at all ages, with white shafts to the outer primaries. Juveniles have whitish bases to the feathers encircling the bill and to those feathers in a crescent immediately under the eye. The resulting pale areas are obscured at fledging, resulting in wholly dark plumage (Fig. 2) but quickly become visible with wear.

Fledglings usually show well-developed white areas on the face by the time they reach North America in late summer. We have seen one or two breeding adults that lacked the eye crescent and showed limited white around the bill, but these features are obvious on the vast majority of individuals after fledging. Feather edges on the head become very frayed and bleached on birds of all later ages in the summer, and the white area can encompass most of the head on some birds in this state (Fig. 3). Adults with heavily bleached heads from April to August likely represent breeding individuals that have spent significant time at subtropical latitudes, whereas those showing less bleaching probably are prebreeders (ages 2-10 or more years) or birds that skipped breeding that year and remained at temperate or subarctic latitudes, thus being exposed to less intense sunlight. Feather edges throughout the neck and underparts also become bleached and frayed, and on many birds the edges contrast distinctly with dark feather bases and create a scalloped look of tan on brown (see Miller 1940).

White feathering develops on the rump, uppertail coverts, lower belly, vent, and undertail coverts, and its extent has been linked to age and sex (Streets 1877, Bourne 1982, Pyle unpubl. data), old males being whitest. Birds showing areas of white



Figure 2. Juvenile Black-footed Albatross near fledging. Pale areas are already developing on the face, before all the down is lost. Midway Atoll, June 1999. *Photograph by Peter Pyle.*



Figure 3. An exceptionally worn and bleached adult Black-footed Albatross. The bill is near the pale extreme for the species. Photographed in Monterey Bay, off Santa Cruz, California, 15 October 2000. *Photograph by Michael Donahue.*



Figure 5. A leucistic Black-footed Albatross on Tern Island, Hawaii, January 1993. Documented details of the wing and tail pattern indicate that this is the same individual as presented in Figure 4, photographed several years earlier. *Photographs from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service files.*



Figure 4. A striking leucistic Black-footed Albatross in Monterey Bay, California, 18 September 1988. The bill shape eliminates Southern Giant-Petrel and Laysan Albatross; the bird also shows a shadow of the Black-footed's facial pattern. *Photograph by Serge LaFrance.*



Figure 6. Leucism often appears in patches, as in this Black-footed with white outer primaries and a white strip across the belly; note also the pale splotching on the feet. The facial pattern is typical of adults. Midway Atoll, 23 June 2000. *Photograph by Peter Pyle.*

elsewhere on the body due to leucism are very rare but have been photographed in several locations (e.g., Figs. 4, 5, and 6). In extreme cases, such as the mostly white bird in Figures 4 and 5, this can create an appearance reminiscent of a light-morph Southern Giant-Petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*). The distinctive bill structure of *Macronectes*, with external nasal tubes atop the culmen, consistently distinguishes this genus from all albatrosses (Harrison 1983). Roberson (1980) mentioned white in the rectrices and light dusky-yellow feet on some birds. We have seen pale coloration in these areas only on obviously leucistic Black-footeds, so it does not appear to be age-related. Similarly, pale underwings apply only to presumed hybrids and leucistic birds in our experience. Such birds were noted by Stallcup (1976), who felt that it was age-related, and by Roberson (1980), who considered it a feature of aberrant birds or hybrids. The appearance of indistinct pale areas can also be created by the exposure of feather bases of birds in heavy molt in early summer.

The Black-footed's bill is blackish, usually with a pinkish tinge of varying intensity at the base. This color is well developed in some individuals of both sexes, making the bill appear fairly bright pink with a blackish or dark gray nail (Fig. 3), especially in bright sunlight. Pink-billed birds may cause confusion with juvenile Short-tailed Albatross (*P. albatrus*), which has a considerably larger bill. The bill of Short-tailed is dark at fledging (H. Hasegawa, pers. comm. to Pyle), but eventually it develops a bright pink base and pale blue tip. The timing of this change is unknown. Largely dark, pink-billed birds photographed off California in October to December have been regarded as juveniles (e.g., Stallcup and Terrill 1996, *N.A.B.* 52: 203), but these birds show worn, retained feathers, suggesting that the second prebasic molt has taken place. Pink-billed birds photographed in Oregon in March (*N.A.B.* 55: 506) and California in January (McKee and Erickson, in press) may in fact be juveniles, but ageing criteria in this species are still unclear.

Short-tailed Albatrosses slowly acquire an extensively white adult plumage (cf. Roberson 1980, Erickson and Hamilton 2001). Pale areas on the upperwing coverts can be among the first signs of this transition in Short-tailed, but it should be noted that the innermost greater coverts, tertials, and humerals on Black-footed Albatrosses have paler inner webs. When worn, this patch of feathers can contrast with the remainder of the upperwing, creating an appearance similar to Short-tailed. Leg and foot color of Black-footed usually is blackish or dark gray. We have found several individuals with irregular pale splotching on the legs and feet (e.g., Fig 6; these birds often show leucistic plumage as well), but in no case was this extensive enough to resemble the entirely pink feet of juvenile Short-taileds.

LAYSAN ALBATROSS

Although about ten times more numerous than the Black-footed Albatross, with a world population estimated at 2.5 million birds (Whittow 1993b), the Laysan Albatross is not encountered as frequently close to the North American continent. Laysans also arrive at breeding colonies in November, fledge young in July and early August, and have an annual incomplete to complete molt from April to October. This species was named *immutabilis*, meaning unchangeable, because of its lack of obviously different immature and adult plumages (Jobling 1991). While it is true that age-related variation is subtle, this species nonetheless shows a considerable amount of individual variation.

Laysans at fledging are white throughout the head and underparts, with a small black patch surrounding the eye (Fig. 7). They lack the gray wash across the auriculars of adult birds (Fig. 8). The exact time at which gray in the face develops is unknown. Procellariiformes typically do not molt between fledging and the second prebasic molt (see Howell and Corben 2000) during the following breeding season, so gray auriculars are not likely acquired before then. Our observations off California confirm that juveniles can remain white-faced at least until December. The gray wash normally is quite evident, though variable, by the time birds return to colonies, many of which are three to four years old (bands examined). Ageing is not always straightforward at sea, because the gray wash of adults can be difficult to discern in bright sunlight. Its extent also is reduced by wear, and some birds take on a facial pattern like that of the juvenile by late summer, just before the prebasic molt. The heavily worn mantle feathers of these birds readily distinguish them from fresh



Figure 7. Juvenile Laysan Albatross, showing white auriculars; adult bill color begins to develop near fledging. Midway Atoll, June 1999. Photograph by Peter Pyle.



Figure 8. A Laysan with rather pale underwings, showing narrow black margins. Midway Atoll, May 1999. Photograph by Tristan McKee.



Figure 9. A Laysan toward the dark end of the spectrum, with black areas merging on the underwings. Midway Atoll, February 2000. Photograph by Tristan McKee.



Figure 10. A leucistic Laysan Albatross, near fledging at Midway Atoll 25 June 1999. One or two mostly white chicks are found almost every year on Midway. Photograph by Peter Pyle.

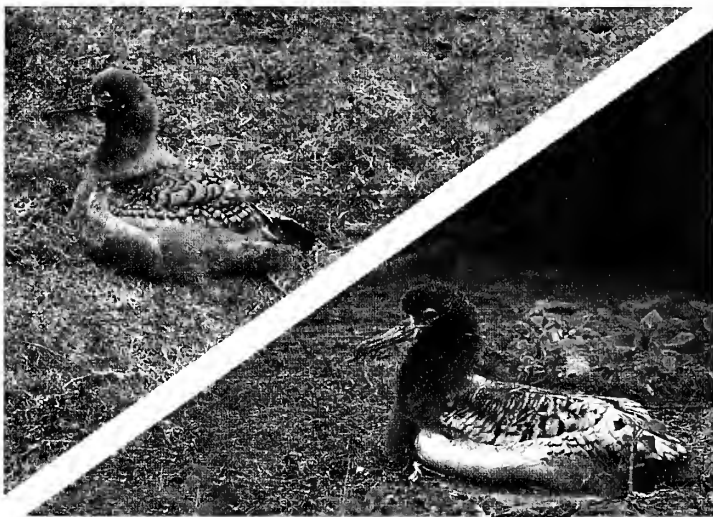


Figure 11. Laysan Albatross chicks showing a scaly or barred pattern to the upperparts, another regular occurrence in large colonies. The bird on the left was photographed at Midway Atoll, 21 May 1997, the bird at right 30 May 1993. Photograph by Peter Pyle (left) and from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service files (right).

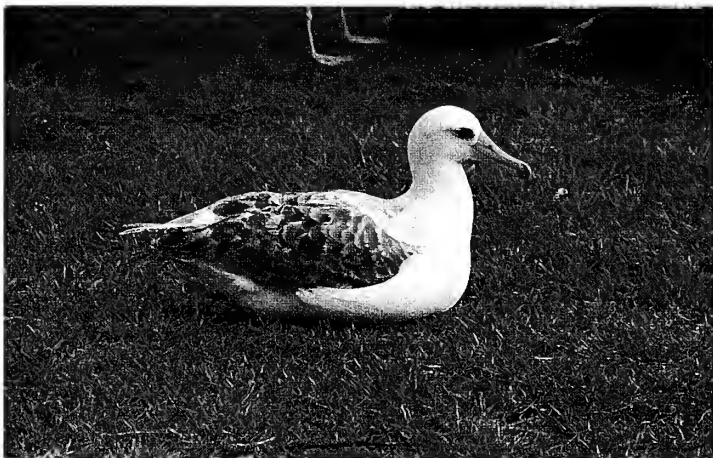


Figure 12. Aberrant Laysan Albatross. Such birds can show a pale gray shadow of the typical Laysan underwing pattern of dark margins and humerals. Midway Atoll, April 1993. Photograph from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service files.

juveniles. All ages have a dark brown back, upperwings, and rectrices and show white shafts to the outer primaries. The bill is dark grayish on young chicks, but a dull pink base and bluish-gray nail begin to develop before fledging.

The underwing pattern of this species usually is distinctive, but there is substantial variation in the amount of black versus white (National Geographic Society 1999, Sibley 2000). Preliminary observation of known-age birds on Midway has indicated that underwing variation is not strongly related to age, but more study is needed to confirm this. Black is present on the leading edge of the underwing, the flight feathers, the primary coverts, and usually in a triangular patch on the humerals. Near the palest extreme for birds that otherwise appear normal (but cf. leucistic birds), the black borders are very narrow and the humeral patch limited to a few blackish streaks or a grayish shadow. The humeral patch is absent or invisible in the field on a few birds, which appeared to represent less than 0.01% of the overall population at Midway. They could create confusion with the Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*) complex (Cole 2000), but size, structure, and bill shape differences are easily visible and should be used to confirm any Shy Albatross in the North Pacific.

Toward the darker side of the underwing spectrum, the black areas merge, sometimes to the extent that white is limited to the outer secondary coverts (Fig. 9, cf. Fig. 20). A few individuals show no white on the underwing, with either a gray shadow of the latter pattern or entirely dark underwings. It is not known whether these are at the dark extreme for the species or if this is strictly the result of introgression with the Black-footed Albatross (see below). The amount of dark on the rump is also variable and often loosely mirrors that of the underwing. The darkest birds have a dark rump with only a thin U-shaped white area on the uppertail coverts, contrasting with the dark tail, while the palest show a straight line of contrast, even with the trailing edge of the wings, between the dark back and an entirely white rump. Most birds fall between these two extremes, showing a patchy dark area extending into the center of an extensively white rump (Fig. 20). Laysans show a variable amount of dark smudging around the thighs, which is discussed below.

As in Black-footeds, leucism and other plumage aberrancy is occasionally noted in Laysans. One or two mostly white chicks (e.g., Fig. 10) are found on Midway almost every year, and some have been followed to fledging, but none have been known to return as adults. These birds again could cause confusion with giant-petrels until bill structure is noted. Bill structure also is an important feature for determining which of the *Phoebastria* is involved when dealing with leucistic birds: with experience, the shorter, thicker bill of Black-footed is distinguishable in the field from the relatively slimmer bill of Laysan, which shows a more concave culmen (cf. Figs. 6 and 13). Figures 11, 12, and 13 illustrate some of the other ways leucism and/or other types of plumage aberrancy can be manifested in this species. A variable amount of gray or whitish in the mantle feathers, often in a uniform pattern, is the most commonly encountered example. This can involve a scaly pattern of contrasting feather edges, various internal bars, or dark anchor-shaped markings on pale-based feathers. Fisher (1972) described such birds, and we have found a small number regularly on Midway. Such plumages may be caused by schizochroism (the lack of a pigment throughout) or dilution (reduction in quantity of a pigment), but the specific cause is difficult to determine without precise genetic information (Buckley 1969; P. A. Buckley, pers. comm.).

Indistinct white bars on dark feathers are particularly common in chicks (Fig. 11) and may be exaggerated growth bars resulting from metabolic changes during feather growth (see Michener and Michener 1938). The adult in Figure 12 takes gray in the mantle to the extreme. Several aberrant Laysans on Midway have returned to specific areas year after year, retaining the same patterns of abnormal pigmentation through repeated molts.

The unusual coloration of the bird in Figure 13 is evident in both the plumage and the soft parts. The bill is exceptionally bright pink, the gray wash is lacking on the face, and the upperparts show a considerable amount of white. This bird superficially resembles a near-adult Short-tailed Albatross in coloration, but size and structural features identify it readily.

HYBRIDS

In 1997-2000, we observed up to 20 different presumed first-generation (F_1) hybrids on Midway. Although no hybrid between these species has yet been confirmed genetically or through parentage, presumed hybrids are intermediate between Black-footed and Laysan in plumage, soft-part, behavioral, and vocal characters (Fisher 1972), and they would be difficult to explain as resulting from variation in either parental species. As also reported by Fisher (1972), all presumed hybrids we observed were interacting with Laysan Albatrosses, many being found among the pure Laysan populations in the central portions of the islands. We have witnessed male Black-footed Albatrosses involved in "rapes" (Fisher 1971) of female Laysans, and, *contra* Fisher (1948, 1972), we believe that hybrids between the two species are most likely products of these extra-pair copulatory events rather than of naturally occurring mixed pairs, something we have seen no evidence of on Midway. This would explain why hybrids seemed to be imprinted upon Laysan rather than Black-footed Albatrosses: they were likely raised by a pair of Laysans, the male unwittingly not the father. We have seen occasional attempts at interspecific courtship dancing, but these rarely lasted more than a few seconds (see also Whittow 1993b). It should be noted, however, that Fisher (1971) examined Laysans after intraspecific extra-pair copulation and found no physical evidence of successful copulation.

Because of the intermediate nature of their displays, most attempts of hybrids at courtship with Laysans appear unsuccessful. We observed two presumed hybrids incubating eggs and raising chicks with Laysan mates during the 1999-2000 season (frontispiece); hybrids have been observed on eggs on several other occasions. The chicks from these pairings appeared to have thicker bills and darker first-basic plumage than Laysan chicks from adjacent nests. Blood from hybrids and these apparent F_2 (second-generation) back-crosses has been taken by U. S. Fish and Wildlife biologists for DNA sampling (N. Hoffman, pers. comm.). If confirmed, this would represent the first documented record of a hybrid albatross successfully breeding (cf. Whittow 1993b), although our observations of suspected back-crosses (see below) indicate that this probably has occurred before. Actual parentage is difficult to confirm in the field because "adoption" of various objects, including displaced eggs and young chicks, is common in these dense colonies.

Most presumed F_1 hybrids are quite distinctive, with strong gray tones setting them apart from both species (Figs. 14, 15, 16, 17). Structural and behavioral features, soft part colors, courtship displays, and vocalizations are variably intermediate. The head and neck are gray on most birds, varying from a pale pearl gray to a dark, smoky-brown color. White areas around the bill and under the eye are often more extensive and diffused at the edges than on fresh Black-footeds, giving the face a frosty appearance. The gray wash on the neck can give way to white on the breast or continue down onto the lower breast, sides, and flanks. The undertail coverts and lower flanks often show some dark gray, even on pale hybrids. A large white area remains on the belly, usually more extensive than on Black-footeds.

The grayish head and underpart color of even most dark hybrids, such as the bird in Figure 16, is distinguishable from the dark brown of Black-footed. Figure 19 shows the only hybrid-like bird we have on record in which the distinction from Black-footed was unclear. Without behavioral information, this bird's identification must be left unresolved. The line between pale hybrids and Laysans is less clear. We have encountered a small number of adults that appear to be intermediate between hybrids and typical Laysans. Individuals such as the one depicted in Figure 18, which showed extensive dark smudging on the flanks, a very faint gray wash on the head, and very dark underwings, may be F_2 back-crosses. In 2000, we were able to follow one of the chicks attended by an adult hybrid and a pure Laysan through to fledging, and it resembled the bird in Figure 18 in its extent of extralimital darkness. On the other hand, such birds could represent anomalous plumages or extremes in variation among pure birds or hybrids. We have observed similar individuals with more extensively dark bellies or slightly darker heads than this bird, so there is no clear line separating "typical" gray hybrids from paler individuals. We have also seen birds that are slightly paler and more Laysan-like than the bird in Figure 18, making the dark extreme in "pure" Laysans difficult to pinpoint. The



Figure 13. This Laysan shows reduced pigment in both the plumage and soft parts; note the superficial resemblance to a subadult Short-tailed Albatross. Midway Atoll, 8 February 2000. Photograph by Peter Pyle.

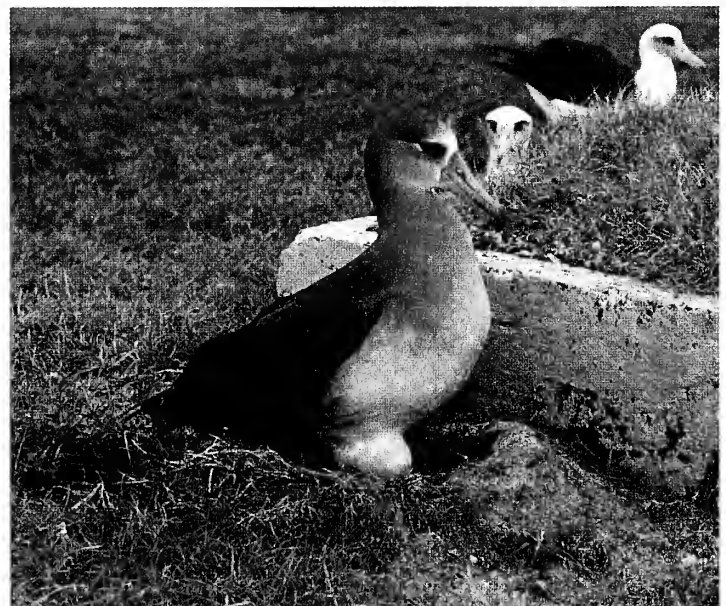


Figure 14. This is a "classic" hybrid with a contrasting gray head and breast and extensively white underparts. This bird shared incubation duties with a Laysan Albatross in December 1999 at Midway. Photograph by Jennifer W. Schramm.

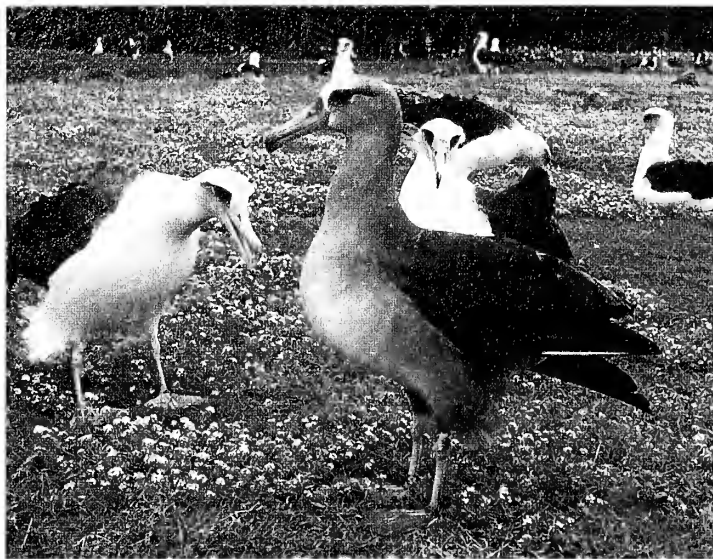


Figure 15. Presumed hybrids typically associate with Laysan Albatrosses. This bird shows a fairly even gray wash through the head and underparts. Midway Atoll, March 1999. Photograph by Tristan McKee.



Figure 16. Although this presumed hybrid is at the dark extreme, the grayish cast to the head still distinguishes it from Black-footed. Midway Atoll, March 2000. Photograph by Tristan McKee.

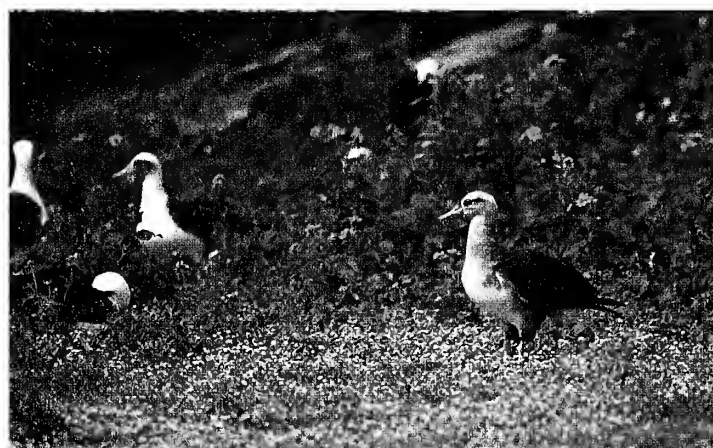


Figure 17. A much paler presumed hybrid, showing a pearl-gray wash on the head and breast. Midway Atoll, March 2000. Photograph by Tristan McKee.

amount of dark smudging on the thighs, flanks, and undertail coverts of Laysan shows a considerable amount of variation. Unlike Whittow (1993b), we have found no evidence, based on examination of known-age birds, that this smudging is more extensive on juveniles than adults. There appears to be a continuous gradation or overlap between typical Laysans and suspected back-crosses in both flank color and underwing pattern (Fig. 20), and the increased pigmentation of most notably dark individuals is evident in both areas. Birds retaining the pure white head, belly, and upper flanks and some pattern on the underwing probably fall within the range of variation of pure Laysans, but those showing more extensive darkness are difficult to categorize.

Hybrids also present a potential source of confusion with other albatross species. George Watson (in Wahl 1970) discussed the identification of these birds in comparison with an immature Short-tailed Albatross photographed off Washington, citing white feathers on the underwings and the darker bill and feet of hybrids (see also Roberson 1980). Older Short-tailed develop pale underwings, but like Black-footed, they always lack the distinctive gray cast of hybrids. Size and structural features are also diagnostic. Although Wahl later expressed doubts about the identity of the Washington bird (Helm 1980, Roberson 1986), we feel that the plumage pattern and structural features visible in the photograph strongly support his original conclusion. On the other hand, we concur that the photograph published in Helm (1980), originally identified as a Short-tailed but later as a Black-footed or Black-footed x Laysan hybrid (Roberson 1986), is a worn Black-footed. This bird's neck,



Figure 18. This bird shows a very faint gray wash to the head and extensive dark smudging on the flanks; it may be an F₂ backcross. Determining the dark extreme for pure Laysans is problematic. Midway Atoll, April 1999. Photograph by Tristan McKee.



Figure 19. Unidentified albatross on Laysan Island, February 1995. This bird superficially resembles other suspected hybrids, but the head and neck are brownish, closer in color to Black-footed. The bluish bill tip, pale feet, and extent of white on the belly are unusual in our experience for Black-footed but might appear on a leucistic bird. Note also the lack of gray in the auriculars, normally present in adult Laysans and presumed hybrids. Photograph from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service files.

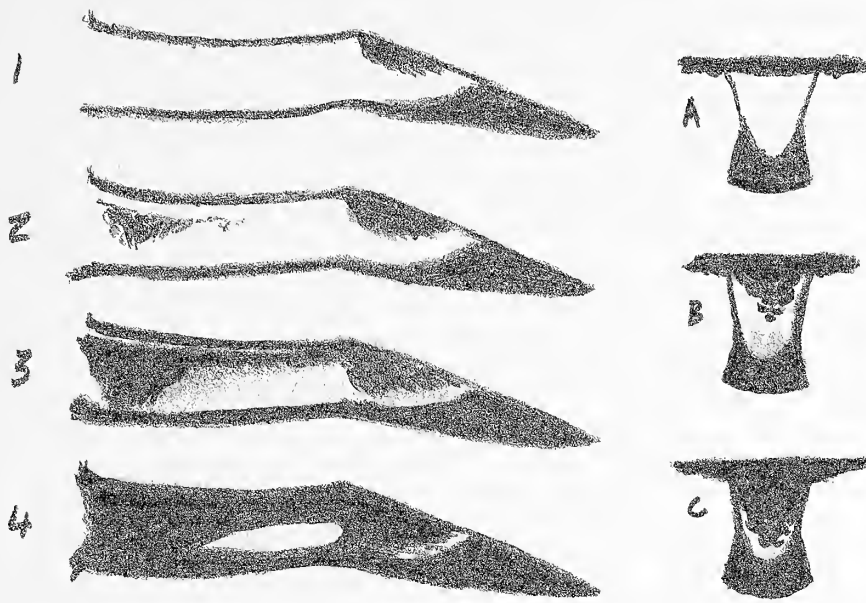


Figure 20. Underwing and rump patterns of Laysan Albatrosses and presumed hybrids. Laysans that are apparently "pure" can show any of these underwing patterns, although (1) is extremely rare and (4) may suggest introgression with Black-footed in some cases. Most presumed F_1 hybrids show patterns similar to (3) and (4) or even darker. All three rump patterns are common in Laysan, while hybrids tend to be closest to (C). Sketch by Tristan McKee.

breast, and upper belly are considerably darker than any hybrid we have encountered, and the bill color, head pattern, and extent of white on the lower underparts appear to be within the range of variation of Black-footed.

At first glance, hybrids may recall gray-headed forms of the Shy Albatross complex, but their underwing patterns, as well as size and structure, should prevent confusion. More critically, many presumed hybrids show a superficial resemblance to immature Black-browed (*Thalassarche melanophrys*) and Gray-headed (*T. chrysotoma*) Albatrosses. The underwing pattern of some hybrids maintains a recognizable resemblance to the "average" Laysan pattern, but others retain only an indistinct pale strip on the underwing coverts (e.g., see Fig. 2 in Fisher 1972), appearing nearly identical to dark immature Black-browed and Gray-headed Albatrosses in this respect. The head pattern of hybrids can be a close match for these species as well, although the two southern species are more likely to retain a dark partial collar, while hybrids usually show some suggestion of the Black-footed's facial pattern. *Thalassarche* species differ noticeably at sea from *Phoebastria* in their greater caudal projection, that is, longer projection of body and tail behind the trailing edge of the wings (S. N. G. Howell, pers. comm.). The feet of the former do not extend noticeably beyond the tail tip. The feet of North Pacific *Phoebastria* project well beyond the tail tip when they are extended, but these species often fly with the feet tucked into the contour feathers. Another important feature is rump color, which is pure white in Black-browed and Gray-headed (Morlan 1985, Marchant and Higgins 1990). Only the palest Laysans show this pattern, and we have never seen a hybrid without a noticeable intrusion of dark onto the upper rump (cf. Fig. 20). Considering that old male Black-footeds can also be white-rumped, however, this pattern is not inconceivable on hybrids.

Other potentially useful features to examine on confusing birds are exact bill and tail colors. Very young Black-browed and Gray-headed Albatrosses initially show blackish bills, but birds of this age are unlikely to be encountered in North America. The bill of Black-browed quickly develops a dull pinkish cast at the base, before changing to yellowish or horn with a dark tip (S. N. G. Howell, pers. comm.; cf. Patteson et al. 1999). During the brief period when dull pink is evident, the bill appears very similar to that of presumed Black-footed x Laysan hybrids. Developing yellow or horn coloration is indicative of Black-browed, but beware of hybrids illuminated by low-angle sunlight, which can appear to have yellow tints to their bills. Gray-headed develop yellowish or horn coloration along the culmen and at the tip of the maxilla, a pattern that is easily distinguished from that of

Phoebastria species. The tails of Black-browed and Gray-headed are grayish when fresh (Marchant and Higgins 1990), while hybrids share the dark brown tails of Black-footed and Laysan. Worn birds of both genera have similarly dark, brownish tails. Good views of a combination of these features should allow the identification of nearly all birds. Observers are strongly encouraged to photographically document any "gray-headed" albatrosses appearing off North America, including suspected Black-footed x Laysan hybrids, which to our knowledge have not yet been documented near the continent.

Despite being large and generally easy to identify, albatrosses show complex age-related and geographic variation in their plumages. This can cause confusion, especially when encountered in their, but not our, element: rough seas. It does not help that two of the more genetically stable species, the Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses, show extensive individual variation, which is further complicated by apparent hybridization. We hope this paper will stimulate others to continue to document and understand variation in albatross plumages throughout the seven seas.

Acknowledgments

We extend special thanks to the people of Midway, including U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel Rob Shallenberger, Ken Neithammer, Nanette Seto, Nancy Hoffman, Keith Larson, and Aaron Gallagher, as well as Birgit Winning of the Oceanic Society, who all facilitated our presence and work on the atoll. We are indebted to Debra Shearwater, who has made it possible for us to spend a considerable amount of time offshore California studying albatrosses on Shearwater Journeys trips; she also provided valuable photos for use in this paper. We thank Rich Stallcup, Michael Donahue, Jennifer Schramm, James Aliberti, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge for contributing useful photographs and permission to publish them, and we are most grateful to Cindy LaFrance for granting permission for us to use the photograph of the late Serge LaFrance. Kimball L. Garrett, Steve N.G. Howell, Hiroshi Hasegawa, and Joseph Smith have added helpful and interesting discussion or information relating to these species. Steve N. G. Howell and P. A. Buckley reviewed drafts of the manuscript and added many helpful suggestions.

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Editors' Notebook

Balance

In striving to meet our goals of geographic, taxonomic, and methodological diversity in the journal, we present three articles in this issue whose subjects hail from southern Canada, from the Flint Hills of Kansas, and from Midway Island in the tropical Pacific Ocean—species of albatross, stilt, and prairie-chicken occupy the present issue.

The plight of the prairie-chicken in the very core and stronghold of its range should concern us all: the bird is in dire straits, another testimony to the need for rapid assessments of such species by scientists working in conservation and population ecology. In this case, the birds' habitat is threatened by a relatively recent form of cattle ranching in the area, as demonstrated by Mark Robbins, Miguel A. Ortega-Huerta, and A. Townsend Peterson. To underscore the urgency of the situation, the birds—and this team's research results—were featured in the *New York Times* on 28 May.

Also of conservation concern, but a bit brighter story, is the recent, rapid consolidation of Black-necked Stilt's breeding range into the prairie country of southern Canada, especially in Alberta. One might rightly wonder whether some connection to global warming is possible here. Cheri Gratto-Trevor and assistants were actually studying Willets and godwits when they came across these stilt nests, and we're delighted they've provided us with a paper on a species peripheral to their primary research!

Our lead article by Tristan McKee and Peter Pyle explores the little-known appearances of aberrant individuals and hybrids of two very numerous species, Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses. Though numbering in the hundreds of thousands, both albatrosses presently incur heavy losses in the long-lining fishery. In this case, it is possible for us to act decisively and quickly to stop this slaughter consult: <http://www.abcbirds.org/policy/seabirds.htm> to learn more about the problem and possible remedies.

Huitzil?

More and more readers are sending in bird records to our newest regional and subregional editors south of the border—for which, *thank you*. Fans of Mexico's great avifauna will want to check out a fine new Internet offering, the on-line journal called *Huitzil* (<http://www.huitzil.org>). Here one finds timely, scholarly articles on basic bird distribution in Mexico written by some of the most active birders and ornithologists in the country; all of the articles are downloadable in "pdf" form to facilitate their circulation.

Another marvelous milestone for Mexican birding has been the A.B.A.'s publication of *Birds of the Baja Peninsula: Status, Distribution, and Taxonomy* edited by Richard Erickson and Steve N. G. Howell (a regional editor and a longtime contributor of bird records and articles to this journal). The book, part of the *ABA Monographs in Field Ornithology* series edited by Kenneth P. Able (yet another longtime *North American Birds* editor and contributor!), brims with color photographs and sketches documenting many of the uncommon and rare birds observed recently in the states of Baja California and Baja California Sur, as well as summarizing the status of many species known to have occurred there historically. Birding the Baja is catching on rapidly among avid California birders, as well as among local bird-ornithologists, and this book will surely whet the appetite for a junco south of San Diego!



Trumpeter Swans have been showing up far to the south and east of typical winter range in recent winters; three in Tennessee this season were the first since Audubon's time. Of the two that made their way to Texas, one was in the Panhandle, while this Trumpeter was on the Upper Texas Coast in Brazoria County 2 January 2002. The Tennessee birds were neck-collared and known to come from a reintroduction program in Wisconsin. Neither Texas swan was so marked, and their provenance is unknown. *Photograph by Don Fry.*

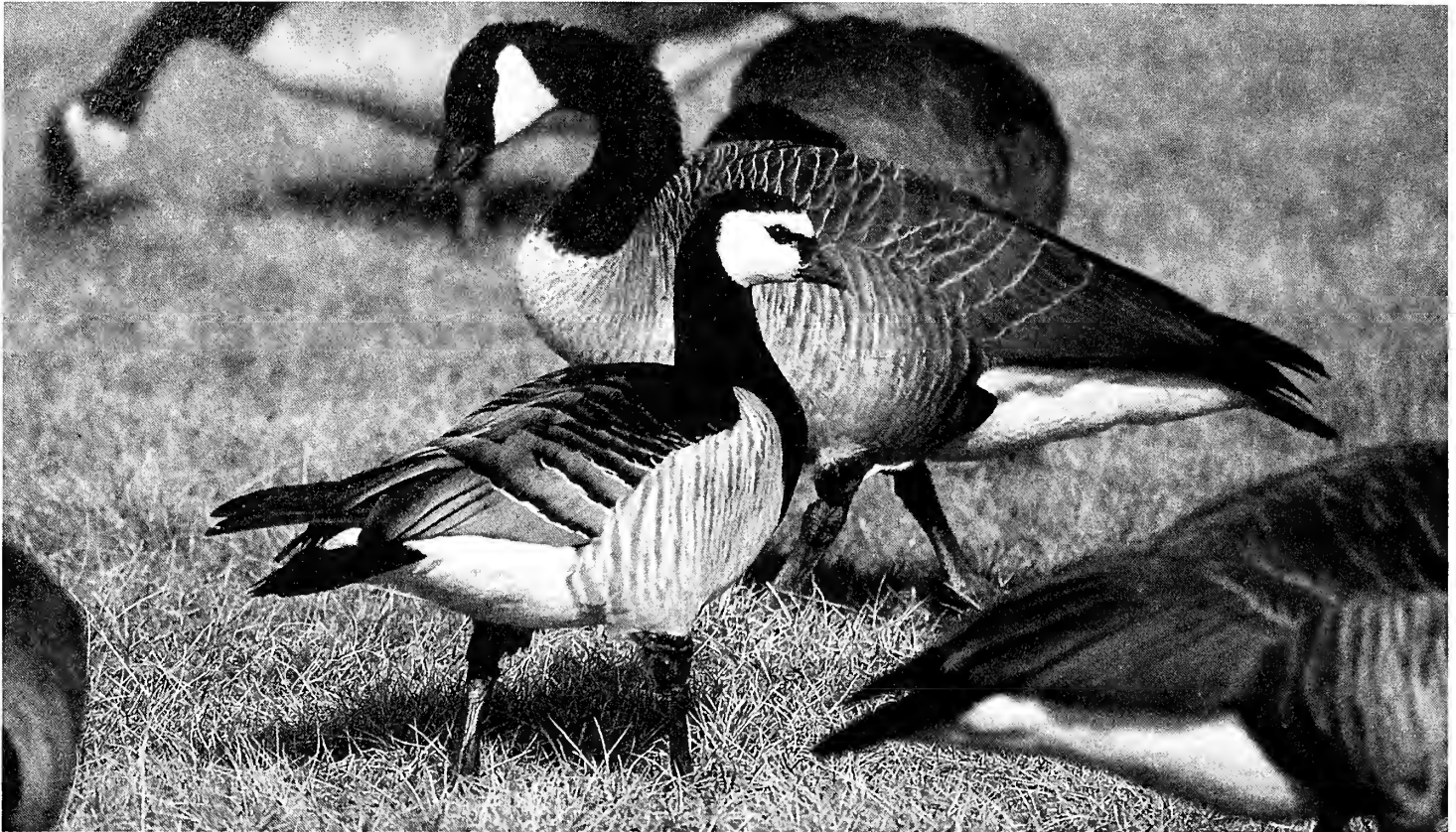
Moltings

We offer our gratitude here to outgoing Regional Editors, to Theo Hoffman of Ontario and to Roy Jones of Arizona, who did thoughtful, diligent, and precise work during their time at the helm. They will be replaced by Matthew L. Holder (spring season) and Mark M. Stevenson (all seasons), respectively, both active birders with a keen eye for detail on the page, as well as in the field. Please do give them every assistance by sending in field notes and photographs promptly. Matt Holder is well known to Ontarians as a fine all-around field naturalist (with a great interest in dragonflies) and birder; his father Phil edits a regional report for *Birders Journal* as well! To contact Matt, write to him at Jacques Whitford Environment Limited, 1200 Denison Street, Markham, Ontario, Canada, L3R 8G6 (mholder@jacqueswhitford.com). Mark Stevenson is a likewise very active field naturalist in Arizona, with a strong foundation in avian distribution in the state. He will be covering the "non-passerines" beat, while Gary Rosenberg will continue to do the passerines. Contact Mark at 4201 East Monte Vista Drive #J207, Tucson, Arizona 85712-5554 (drbrdr@att.net).

In the Great Basin region, we have a different sort of news. Our tireless Regional Editor Ted Floyd will be taking on the editorship of *Birding* magazine at the A.B.A. Congratulations to Ted, who will be moving to Colorado very shortly to begin his tenure! In his stead at *North American Birds*, Steve Summers (summers@cedarcity.net) and Rick Fridell (rfridell@redrock.net) will serve as new Regional Editors of the Great Basin region. Rick and Steve are active birders in both Nevada and Utah—and have been very faithful contributors to the Great Basin regional report. Instructions for contributors to this report can be viewed on line, via links from both the Utah Birds <<http://www.utahbirds.org>> and Great Basin Bird Observatory <<http://www.gbbo.org>> web-sites.



The Changing Seasons: Broken Records



After the first Barnacle Goose showed up in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada 3 November 2001, about eight Barnacle Geese turned up over the winter in the eastern United States, in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (with an unconfirmed report of multiple birds in Maryland). All of these birds arrived with wintering Canada Geese and departed with them, mostly before or at the end of the reporting period. It might have been interesting to put a satellite tracking device on one of these birds—to find out where it considers home, at least. But without such clues, the origin of all these geese remains a mystery. This photograph was taken 13 February 2002 at Bill Brenman Park, Alexandria, Virginia. *Photograph by the editor.*

The “Changing Seasons” lately has come to sound like a broken record: this past winter’s weather was *warm*, almost *warmer* than has ever been in many areas, with record-breaking *warmth* in much of the East. (For those who have come up in the time of CDs and DVDs, a “broken record” was an LP [long-playing vinyl record album] with a scratch in it, which caused a repeated backskip of the needle, which made the recording repeat itself.) Did I mention the season was *warm*? I admit that I did compose one of those long introductions about the Weather, in which all reporting regions agreed that it was unusually warm, often dry, and that scores of birds not usually wintering in those regions did so successfully. In reading through that introduction, I nodded off twice; and then I highlighted the two pages on the computer screen and deleted them. (Much cheering.)

If the concord of serious scientists isn’t enough to convince the average skeptic of the effects of the global destabilization of climate (“global warming” as the media dubs it), then perhaps the pages of this winter’s regional reports, when read in light of past reports, will make some impression. Most regional reports in this issue, especially but not only those from above the southernmost tier of U. S. states, are filled with another sort of broken record—filled, that is, with so many superlatives that to organize and repeat them here would require more pages than we can devote to the topic: *first* winter records; *first* complete overwinterings; *farthest* northern occurrences; *latest* departure dates; *earliest* returning dates; *unprecedented* overwinterings by semi-hardy (or nonhardy!) species; overwinterings in *unprecedented* numbers. In reading through

many of the Regional reports, we wade through scores of Neotropical migrants that never reached the tropics, even thriving away from feeders, the northern areas alive with birds usually far to the south in winter, while southern birders wait in vain for the usual numbers of waterfowl, field birds, and blackbirds to show up. I exaggerate, but only slightly. Alaska was cold and Buffalo was eventually snowy; and climatologists are still widely regarded as Chicken Little or Cassandra, at least as far as global warming is concerned. (Pay no attention to that New-Jersey-sized iceberg, ladies and gentlemen.)

You might have guessed that I tend to concur with researchers who have marshaled evidence for the anthropogenic warming of earth’s climate in recent years. Even the Bush administration in the United States acknowledged in early June 2002 that continued production of “greenhouse” gases will “very likely” result in ecological catastrophes throughout the world; remarkably, the administration is taking no action on its own findings. But of course, we must remain cautious in connecting these ever-milder winters to the ever-changing patterns of bird distribution charted in this journal. (A “leap of logic” in English sounds inviting; the awful German “Gedankensprung” sounds like you’ve just lost an axle and serves as a better deterrent.) After reading through the first of our 31 regional reports, I imagined a future brochure for ecotourists to the Atlantic provinces of Canada: “Looking for Neotropical migrants in December and January? Why not come to Nova Scotia or St. John’s, Newfoundland? While enjoying at least *fifteen* species of warbler last winter, birders could take in grand flights of Ivory Gulls, Bohemian Waxwings, and Pine Grosbeaks!”

That these warblers got to the Maritimes, some perhaps as late migrants or reverse migrants (cf. McLaren et al. 2000), is not terribly surprising, nor is the fact that they attempted to overwinter. What is remarkable is that they did so successfully in some cases—I think this is where we see the effects of the warm winter. If we have enough of these, we might dare to say “the effects of global climate change.” The years will tell. The brochures on “Hot Winter Birding in the Maritimes” will hopefully be only figurative: despite the diversion these wintering warblers provide, none of us want the predictions about global warming to be validated. But a Tennessee Warbler in New York in February surely gets one’s attention.

Birders around the continent look to neighboring regions when trying to anticipate changing patterns of distribution or occurrences of lingerers and vagrants in their own areas. Largely, this is a logical way to shape one’s time in the field: if Point A to one’s north and Point B to one’s south are both reporting a bizarre winter influx of Barn Swallows, such as the entire West Coast from British Columbia to California experienced this past winter, then it’s reasonable to go out immediately to a site with similar geography in one’s area to look for small flocks of Barn Swallows. (N. B.: This apparently very early northbound migration occurred in *December, January, and February*; see the S. A. columns in the Middle Pacific Coast, Oregon—Washington, and British Columbia—Yukon regions.) The Internet gives us the real-time capacity to do this; and in some areas, networks of birders using cell-phones, pagers, voicemail boxes, and the like can communicate even more effectively. I still find the technological changes in birding dizzying, but I heed the cell-phone’s buzz when it comes from Cape Hatteras or Cape May with word of some avian anomaly. Eastern birders looking to their north and south this winter would have read Internet-posted accounts of many warblers wintering or attempting to winter out of range: 14 species in New England (called “unremarkable” by Regional Editor Pam Hunt), 10 in New York and New Jersey, five in Virginia and Maryland, and 10 in Georgia and the Carolinas. Florida, where wintering warblers are less startling, recorded 25 species this past season—the only eastern region to outperform the Maritimes. Hmmm.

Assumptions based purely on proximity can easily be pitfalls. Take, for instance, Broad-winged Hawk, a widespread common fall and spring migrant in the East, a Neotropical migrant that largely vacates the United States in winter. There is no doubt that other species are misidentified as Broad-winged Hawks on Christmas Bird Counts and just generally through the winter (young Red-shouldered and Cooper’s Hawks are only some of the culprits). But reliable observers have been seeing *real* Broad-winged Hawks in Nova Scotia, even on Cape Breton Island, in December and January in recent years—and six were detailed there this past winter, 2 December 2001 through 13 January 2002. One would then assume that New England might have recorded eight or so, the Middle Atlantic states a dozen or more. In fact, a single bird at Cape May 2 December and three “adequately described” birds on eastern North Carolina C.B.C.s on 16 December were the only other ones reported on the East Coast north of Florida, where regular in winter. (Others were noted overwintering in southern Louisiana, a relatively recent pattern, while one at year’s end in Colorado was without precedent.)

One could call the assumption that Neotropical lingerers such as the warblers or Broad-winged Hawks should be found in increasing numbers in progressively warmer climes the “Latitudinal Fallacy,” even though the assumption appears to hold true, by and large, for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Blue-headed Vireos, and those winter hummingbirds, for instance. For those of us who look forward to Christmas Bird Counts every year, we have to be on our guard against this potential error. For instance, for the Atlantic Provinces, I count nearly 25 Yellow-breasted

Chats this past season. And out on Long Island and Cape Cod, birders seem to come across a nice number of winter chats. In the mid-Atlantic states, we’re lucky to scrape up two or three chats all winter, in an area with hundreds of birders! Nova Scotia, Cape Cod, and Long Island are largely surrounded by water: for a misoriented fall reverse-migrant, such as a chat (or a Broad-winged Hawk), overwintering might be the only apparent alternative to a chilly open-water crossing, which both would be loath to do in a state of depletion. Islands and peninsulas both trap and concentrate the waifs of autumn, but not in a uniform way, and it is tough to say why Nova Scotia would have almost twice the number of Broad-winged Hawks as the other eastern provinces and states combined—or almost three times the diversity of warblers of the Chesapeake Bay region, with its long peninsula. Perhaps the combination of impediments to onward migration (geography, prey resources, climate) is simply more dire there than elsewhere. In any case, the immature Broad-winged Hawks observed here in the early winter are not usually observed toward winter’s end, and it seems probable that most perish here; we should take note if these birds continue to be seen here in coming winters and survive through the entire winter season.

The White-rumped Sandpipers identified annually on Nova Scotia’s Cape Breton Island might represent a different situation, one not considered in last winter’s Changing Seasons column, namely an annual *pocket* of overwintering birds some 13,000 kilometers out of typical winter range. As far as is known, White-rumped Sandpipers winter in southern South America: they’re there to bid you *bon voyage* at the head of the Beagle Channel as you set sail for South Georgia or Antarctica in November. Why are up to four now present annually, all winter, on Cape Breton Island? And why isn’t the species observed north of Florida (where winter reports are not yet confirmed) in the winter otherwise? The answer here seems tempting: that these birds have figured out that the prey resources and climate are sufficient here, in the extensive mudflats of the area, to permit them to forego most of their extraordinary transequatorial migration. This could be the beginning of a wider trend; or it might just be a few ailing birds per year that cannot make it from a key stopover site down to South America. Broad-winged Hawks spending the winter in Louisiana is impressive; but White-rumped Sandpipers wintering above latitude 45° N is mind-blowing: they should be *south of the Tropic of Capricorn*! One wonders whether these birds are not simply just the “dross,” the failures in otherwise successful migratory strategies, or whether their presence at this remarkable outpost can’t tell us something startling and new about broader biometeorological changes on the horizon. If double-digit figures of White-rumped are seen here in future years, we should pay attention.

Whatever sense we make of them, if any, most of us are impressed by these “gee-whiz” birds, as they’re sometimes called, birds that are genuine seasonal “vagrants,” though they might be very common at other times of year. Certainly, they attract skepticism (which, politely, one must maintain vis-à-vis many such reports). Certainly, they brighten the Christmas Bird Count season and make the long hours under harsh conditions seem merry. As noted in many a winter’s “Changing Seasons” column, however, they’re hard to piece together into *evidence of anything* in the single-seasonal framework. This past winter’s bird reports together suggest a reasonably strong correlation between unusual lingerers/overwinterers and mild weather (or climate), as most of the recent winter “Changing Seasons” columns have observed. For now, we will leave it at that.

WATERFOWL

In light of the concord of regional reports, I elected to use this essay not to repeat last year’s incredulity about wintering hummingbirds (how

quickly we become accustomed to the astonishing) but instead to take a look at a set of birds I rarely spend quality time with: waterfowl. I like and value waterfowl, but I take for granted that their identification and distribution have been worked out—not the case at all, of course. And when it comes to waterfowl vagrancy, my response has been a shrug. Modern waterfowl collectors seem to keep almost everything, and these birds too often fly the coop (a few hours perusing on-line offerings of exotic and native waterfowl, and much else, is eye-opening). Sour grapes? Not necessarily, but arguments about the “wildness” of a given potential vagrant so often come down to familiar tête-à-têtes between the credulous and the skeptical (or the open-minded and the spoilers, depending on your point of view) and are less enlightening after one goes through a few. When asked what he thought of the provenance of a certain Pink-footed Goose found on local turf, a wizened New Englander quipped: “I don’t know. Why don’t you ask the bird?” In most of the sections that follow, human interventions and accidents feature prominently; no one, apparently, asked the bird.

Barnacle Geese (again)

Once bitten, twice shy. Most readers remember the excitement that accompanied announcement of a flock of six “countable” Barnacle Geese on Cape Cod in January 1991. Air tickets were booked, and the geese were dutifully ticked off. Those who made the journey can thank Regional Editor Brian Dalzell for dispelling the myth of their wild origins. Brian did some checking around and found out that these unmarked geese had come from a rogue collector’s gallery on White Rock Island, near Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. Two adult Barnacle Geese had been released in 1990 (along with other waterfowl), raised four young on the island (A. B. 45: 244), migrated with them in early September to Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia, where they were counted on the local C. B. C. and remained through 8 January 1991, thence repairing to Osterville, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where they wintered at least 18 January—22 March. In the spring, they returned to Cape Sable Island in May via Bangor, Maine 18 April and Hopkinton, New Hampshire 20 April (A. B. 45: 416). A perfectly reasonable and civilized thing to do, from the goose point of view: after all, released Canada Geese, though usually more sedentary, had been making up their own rules for decades.

Since that time, it has become more difficult for some to take an interest in tracking and documenting potentially vagrant Barnacle Geese (or any other waterfowl). The traffickers in captive birds tamper, sometimes mindlessly and usually unnecessarily, with ornithologists’ and birders’ efforts to understand movements of birds. It takes a few minutes to band a bird to indicate captive origin, but some collectors argue that it “spoils” the birds aesthetically. (Insert your reaction here.)

The “parolee” Barnacle Geese of 1991 stayed together as a family group, but in fall and winter 2001-2002, rather widely separated single Barnacle Geese in company with Canada Geese were the rule. To the best of my reckoning, there were minimally eight Barnacle Geese present in eastern North America between New Brunswick, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia, November 2001 through April 2002 (Table 1), more than in an average winter, to be sure. These birds’ behaviors differed little from the locally wintering Canada Geese with which they found themselves, and none of the Barnacle Geese bore bands or tags, and none had clipped haluxes (good waterfowl collectors typically clip captives’ haluxes).

We have, in short, no evidence that these Barnacle Geese were former captives; nor is there any evidence that they were from a wild population, the nearest of which is in Greenland, several hundred kilometers from Canada. Regional editors from New England, Hudson-Delaware, and

Middle Atlantic opined in different ways about the origin of these geese. In Connecticut, Pam Hunt notes that the Barnacle Goose populations in Greenland are expanding (thus the supply of potential vagrants would be increasing) and that the Connecticut bird accompanied a flock of Canada Geese, some of which had been banded on Greenland nesting grounds. In northern Virginia, an adult Barnacle Goose hung around a rather docile set of Canada Geese, one of which was banded in 1999 as a gosling near Peterborough, Ontario, which Marshall Iliff cites as potentially problematic for a pro-vagrancy argument.

Of course, we should not assume, in this day of postmodern landscapes and the proliferation of vast urban goose flocks (that in the cold months include “wild” migrants and local birds of “feral” stock), that a vagrant Barnacle Goose must have descended the continent with birds from its natal or breeding grounds—or that it must spend the winter with these birds (or that Canada Geese from Ontario cannot flock with geese from Greenland). Likewise, we should not assume that a Barnacle Goose associating with Greenland-banded Canada Geese came from the Greenland population. (In fact, as Barnacle Geese also nest on Novaya Zemlya and Svalbard, there is no reason to assume that North American birds, if wild, came from Greenland at all.) A vagrant goose moving down the coast might just as easily put down with a flock of city geese that holds a complement of waddling, mottled Muscovy Ducks as with a tundra-nesting flock out in the farm fields. This is especially true of stressed birds in periods of harsh weather, when the shelter of the local golf course pond or boat marina can harbor a bewildering mix of former pets and formidable rarities. In Europe, however, single Barnacle Geese found inland, away from typical coastal wintering areas, are regarded with suspicion.

Are these approximately eight Barnacle Geese just the same old family group, now increased, that was first noted in 1990? (If so, how have we missed most of them for the previous ten winters?) Or are they the real thing, vagrants blown off course by the unusual easterlies set up by decaying hurricanes *Erin*, *Gabrielle*, or *Humberto* between Greenland and Iceland during the time of their transit to stopover grounds in southeastern Iceland? (If so, why didn’t any groups of Barnacles show up together? Don’t these birds usually migrate in family groups?) Is it disturbing that this year’s first Barnacle Goose turned up, again, in New Brunswick? (Say, Brian, could you do some more checking around?)

In the absence of a compelling piece of evidence to sway opinion one way or another, one can just as easily envision a prankster purchasing and releasing a dozen Barnacle Geese (or even driving all around the East, planting them in local goose flocks) as one can imagine a group of migrant Barnacle Geese breaking up under storm conditions over the northwestern North Atlantic and being driven back southwestward toward North America. If ever there were a case to be made for a “flight” of vagrant Barnacle Geese into North America, the 2001-2002 birds might be the best shot; certainly, *no past winter* has seen evidence of such a widespread “flight.” Or perhaps our old friends from White Rock Island just felt the need to get out and see more of the world. If a feral population of Barnacle Geese becomes established in eastern Canada, one wonders how long it might take before their nesting range overlaps with that of the expanding Eurasian Collared-Dove (which now nests above the Arctic Circle in Norway, by the way).

A possible twist in the tale comes from Maryland, in the report of a flock of Barnacle Geese. Ellie and Walt Simonson write: “We saw a flock of about 10 Barnacle Geese on Egypt Road on the drive into Blackwater N.W.R. on 12 January at about 10:00 a.m. We did not count them precisely because at the time we did not realize that seeing a flock of Barnacle Geese was so unusual (we did not know at that time that people were mostly seeing single Barnacle Geese). We later saw the Barnacle Goose

Table 1. Barnacle Geese recorded in eastern North America, November 2001–April 2002

New Brunswick

One bird was present in Moncton 3-28 November 2001. No other Barnacle Geese were reported during this time frame, so this bird could be the same individual as any of the subsequent birds.

Massachusetts

One was at Gloucester 2-7 December 2001 in the salt marsh off Route 127, opposite the Good Harbor Beach parking lot. One was at Lynnfield Marsh Pleasure Island Road, Wakefield or Lynnfield, Essex County 17-20 February (said not to be the one in nearby Connecticut). Another was reported at Herring Pond, Eastham 1 March 2002.

Connecticut

One at Mansfield at Stearns Farm 4-12 December 2001 was followed quickly by one at Mirror Lake, Storrs, from 12 December 2001 through 22 January 2002. This bird differed from at least one of the Massachusetts birds, if indeed Massachusetts had more than one.

Rhode Island

One in Portsmouth 15-19 January in the field along Middle Road; apparently the same bird noted nearby 16 January at Lawton Reservoir off West Main Road.

New York

There were minimally two single Barnacle Geese in various locations around eastern Long Island, all in Suffolk County between 17 November and 20 January: at Hook Pond, Easthampton; Marratooka Lake, Mattituck; Penny Pond, Northville; Grumman Pond, Calverton; and at Wainscott (*vide* P. Gillen, A. Guthrie, A. Wilson). Another different individual frequented Oakland Lake, Bayside, Queens, New York City, as well as the Marine Parkway and Floyd Bennet Field, 1 January through 7 April (I. Grant, S. Walter). An adult at Iroquois N.W.R. 1 March+ was almost certainly another individual (*vide* W. D'Anna).

New Jersey

One in Warren County at Merrill Creek Reservoir from 5 to 10 February 2002.

Pennsylvania

One at Buckingham Township, Bucks County from 2 to 19 February.

Virginia

A bird discovered 6 January 2002 on the Potomac River at Belle Haven Marina was last seen there 26 January; presumably, the same bird settled down in nearby Alexandria between Cameron Run Regional Park and Bill Brenman Park, last reported 18 February.

that has been seen by many birders in Alexandria on 2 February while on a bird walk with some excellent birders from the Alexandria Wild Bird Center. We were able to confirm that the geese we saw on Egypt Road were of the same species." Naturally, one assumes that the birds in question were probably distant blue-morph Snow Geese; but what if they weren't? The moral of this story, indeed of this journal: consult the field guide, and take notes, and always have the camera turned on and ready.

King Eiders

Where are the King Eiders along the U. S. Atlantic coast lately? On the East Coast, only five were reported in fall and winter 2001-2002, just a fraction of numbers seen between Maine and North Carolina a decade earlier, for instance. Though flights of this species have tended to show a fair amount of variation over the past half-century, it seems curious that the Great Lakes, in particular Lake Ontario, should suddenly be seeing large numbers of King Eiders, daily counts of up to 91, whereas prior to the early or even mid-1990s, the species was considered a vagrant here despite counts of up to 75 from the turn of the past century. (In Madge and Burn [1988], it is suggested that King Eider is the most abundant of all ducks worldwide; however, its populations are known to be declining in the Americas and in Siberia.)

The recently published *Summary of the Hamlin Beach Lakewatch Fall and Winter Waterbird Migration Data 1993-1999* (Brett Ewald and Dominic Sherony, 2001, Federation of New York State Bird Clubs) shows no records for King Eider until 1997, after which it is recorded annually. Are the ready supplies of the invading exotic Zebra Mussels on the Great Lakes, certainly an attraction to the wintering eiders here, tied to the recent scarcity of King Eiders on the East Coast? Might similar drops in Common Goldeneye, scaup, White-winged Scoters, and other divers along Atlantic shores be attributable to this rich (and tainted?) food supply nearer to nesting grounds. Or perhaps the recent mild winters, or the declining populations of the eider, or degradation of past Atlantic coastal haunts are causes of its scarcity, which could too just be a temporary lull of a perfectly "natural" sort. Even if the Great Lakes freeze over, as they did partly in early 1994, we might not get a clear answer to these questions. Meanwhile, several standardized studies of wintering waterfowl are in progress on the Great Lakes, with data to be published soon—the news is sure to be intriguing. (Check the August issue of *Birding*.)

Trumpeter Swan (again)

The bird's very name calls out for the conservation measures that have long been in place to aid its recovery: to silence the Trumpeter would be to take aim at an angel incarnate. But in Tennessee this year, a young Trumpeter was shot and killed, and its parent was also wounded, in a state where the species had not been seen for "182 years and 28 days" as Dwight Cooley writes, since John James Audubon's sight records. (The hunter paid a small out-of-court fine for his crime.) Incidents such as this are bound to occur again, as the hundreds of introduced breeding Trumpeter Swans from Ontario, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, South Dakota, Missouri, and Ohio wander more widely in search of wintering grounds that can support their growing needs.

Lately we have another chapter in the Trumpeter Swan story, one that few of us have not noticed, at least in passing, in the mass media and even a movie, namely the establishing of an "Atlantic population," one potentially based in New York and wintering in Maryland. This project has been, at various times, a joint venture of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Atlantic Flyway Council, The Trumpeter Swan Society, Environmental Studies at Airlie (Warrenton, Virginia; a division of the International Academy for Preventive Medicine), Operation Migration, The Defenders of Wildlife, and the Wildfowl Trust of North America (near Grasonville, Maryland), with the assistance of the Council of Chiefs of the Tonawanda Band of Senecas. All of these groups, one assumes, have the best interests of wildlife at heart (one can read more on the latest experiments at <http://www.trumpeterswans.org/TSMF_3_02.html>).

The latest chapter of the efforts to establish the species in the East has not been altogether felicitous, nor very well publicized, and our regional reports have little recent information on the efforts. In the most recent

experiments, some 18 Trumpeter cygnets were removed from Chugach National Forest, Alaska, in June 2000; two of these died in transport from Alaska, while three more died that year (one of a dislocated tendon, another in a collision with the ultra-light aircraft used to train them to migrate, while another was shot in Maryland soon after it arrived on the intended wintering ground). Another Trumpeter cygnet was not deemed physically fit for the experiment and was not released.

The dozen remaining Alaska Trumpeters spent much of the summer of 2001 and winter 2001-2002 in the vicinity of Oak Orchard Management Area and Iroquois N. W. R., in upstate New York. This group was comprised of four that were trained to follow ultra-light aircraft and eight that had been trucked in to the site from the northern Virginia collection at Airlie. The mild winter meant they didn't need to migrate (which the majority had not been trained to do in any case), and so seven of the eight trucked birds have been recaptured this spring, on instructions from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the last bird has evaded capture. The other four swans, those that learned part of the route from New York state to Maryland in 2001, have disappeared, last seen 18 February 2002 in the Niagara River gorge above Niagara Falls, associating with a large flock of Tundra Swans. These are neck-collared (yellow and black); keep an eye out for them.

After three migration experiments with Trumpeters based at Airlie, it seems the coalition has not remained unified on the issue of the introduction of the species into the eastern states. The Atlantic Flyway Council has not approved a Trumpeter Swan Management Plan (Luszc 2000), and so the captured birds will most likely be contributed to another restoration program, and negotiations with the Mississippi Flyway Swan Committee have begun, despite some trepidation about the "wildness" of these swans.

Kenn Kaufman (1997) wrote extensively in these pages about the ecological peril that introduced Trumpeter Swans might pose to ecosystems where the species has not been present for centuries (if at all: at many of the introduction sites, there is no historical record of the species having nested there). Certainly, here in the Chesapeake Bay area, introduced Mute Swans have inarguably been a disaster, chasing off other nesting waterbirds, even in some cases attacking humans that dared wander into their sizeable territories! (Greek mythology meets Gary Larson.) In four decades, from the initial Maryland introduction of five Mute Swans in 1962, the species has flourished, if you will, with a current population of some 3,000 birds in the Chesapeake Bay area. What seemed at first a quaint distraction, like the decorative brace of Canada Geese on the occasional estate pond, has, like the introduction of Canada Geese, grown into a fair-sized ecological horror, as well as a public relations disaster: animal rights activists now fight against the state's "removal" of Mute Swans in these areas—and even Dame Judith Dench lends her name to the fight against the removal of feral Canada Geese in urban England! Incredibly, the latest judicial interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act *includes* Mute Swan as a protected species!

Some of Kaufman's cautions were based on analogy with the cases of Canada Geese and especially Mute Swans, for which there is no conscientious argument for introduction in North America (arguments of real estate developers and aviculturalists that the birds add to the "aesthetic" and thus monetary value of the property don't fall under the rubric of the "conscientious"). Trumpeter Swans, unlike Mutes, were indeed documented as wintering birds on the upper Chesapeake Bay in early colonial times. And Trumpeter Swans do not appear to be as indiscriminately aggressive toward other vertebrates as are Mute Swans, so we can probably relax worries about them attacking moorhens, children, dogs, and couples in canoes. At least, in this last experiment at Airlie, the

captured Alaskan cygnets showed no aggression toward humans, unlike in the earlier experiments.

When Kaufman wrote that the "Trumpeter introductions are doing disquietingly well," he was no doubt unnerved by the confirmed 1996 nestings of Trumpeters at two sites in New York, probably swans from the Ontario introductions, which had begun in 1982. Adjacent to these swan nests were nests of the beleaguered Black Tern, whose numbers appear to fall in most years, as their nesting habitat, shared with many prairie waterbirds, vanishes. Though there have been impact studies and hypothetical arguments brought to bear, we just don't know whether there is ecological "room" for the megafauna of the past, such as Trumpeter Swan, in the diminished and fragmented eastern ecosystems we have inherited. After all, the Chesapeake Bay until not long ago harbored tens of thousands of Tundra Swans in winter; most merely stop over here on migration now, as the Bay is still in poor health. Harmful interaction with other species is one risk posed by introductions of large waterfowl species; depletion of resources needed by other species is another. Gambles such as these are certainly preferable to the outright introduction of nonnative species, such as Mute Swan (or Barnacle Geese), but one wonders, given the presence of large and healthy Trumpeter Swan populations out West, whether our slim resources might not be better put in the service of the less Hollywood-ready species, such as Black Terns, rather than in taking such risks by introducing "big ducks in small ponds."

Blue-morph Ross's Geese (again)

Reports of blue-morph Ross's Goose—a rare creature and one believed to represent, in the case of many reports, a situation of introgression by or hybridization with blue-morph Lesser Snow Geese—have become increasingly regular out of range and bear revisiting here. (Thankfully, we are not aware of any blue Ross's in, or escaped from, captivity.) This past autumn 2001, an immature blue-morph Ross's was studied at Métabetchouan, Québec on 28 September, and a group of four Ross's Geese present 17-26 November at Chincoteague N.W.R. was reported to have two blue morphs (an adult and an immature); this is the second report for the locale, the first having been 2 November 1994, and regionally, a few blue Ross's have been reported along the Eastern Seaboard since the late 1980s, when Ross's became regular visitors in small numbers. Iliff raised the question of hybridization in his column in 1998 (*F. N.* 52: 41) after finding a family comprised of an adult white-morph Ross's Goose, its blue-morph Snow x Ross's Goose hybrid mate, and four young of the year, three white and a blue in Maryland; Michael Patten (1998) treated the matter in the "Changing Seasons" column that season as well.

Where would one go to find out more about this very scarce, little-known bird? There are in fact few if any photographs in print, but there are helpful paintings in David Sibley's *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (Knopf, 2000). The article by McLandress and McLandress (1979) that introduced us to this rare morph is not intended as a primer for field identification. Nowadays, one can turn for much rich discussion on such matters to the Internet. On the listserve "Frontiers of Field Identification," owned by Will Russell, there was recently an engaging discussion about putative blue Ross's Geese, mostly focused on birds seen in the core range of Ross's, rather than on the fringes. At issue have been several photographs posted on the Internet, all of which are commended for viewing:

- two apparent blue-morph, an adult and an immature, Ross's Geese photographed by John and Barbara Ribble near Karnes City, Texas on 17 February 1999, and an apparent adult photographed by Matt White at Lake Tawakoni, Van Zandt County, Texas on 30 January 2000

(<http://members.tripod.com/~tbr/brossgo.html>);

- Arizona's first record of blue-morph Ross's Goose, a bird photographed at Nogales Sewage Treatment Plant in early January 1999 by Regional Editor Mark M. Stevenson that remained at least through 21 January 1999 (<http://personal.riverusers.com/~ghrosenberg/ArizonaPhotos/BlueRossGoose.html>);
- a goose specimen collected 9 March 2000 by Larry Langenfeld west of Florence, Codington County, South Dakota (<http://lupus.northern.edu:90/tallmand/ross.htm>);
- a goose photographed in the heart of "blue Ross's country," at Klamath Lakes California 15 April 1999 by Richard Millington (<http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan/gallery.htm>); and
- an apparent blue-morph Ross's Goose photographed 23 November 2001 at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, California by Kevin McKereghan (<http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan/gallery.htm>).

The crux of this Internet discussion comes down to the structure of the birds in question, but particularly the bills' structure and pigmentation: the presence or absence of a black or dusky "grin patch" on the tomiae (a classic adult Ross's Goose lacks a grin patch); the amount of curvature to the inner edges of maxilla and mandible (usually flared in Snow, straighter in Ross's); the shape of the culmen (straighter in Ross's, more concave in Snow); and the shape of the maxilla where it meets the feathering of the head (generally straight and vertical in Ross's but obviously curved in Snow Goose). These aspects are well illustrated in the Sibley guide, as are the blacker scapulars and white coverts of (most?) blue-morph Ross's Goose and its (usually?) isolated white head or face. Naturally, too, Ross's Geese are smaller than Lesser Snow Geese, the subspecies in which blue morphs are chiefly found.

Using these features, one might conclude (though the quality of the images posted is not quite adequate for firm conclusions) that the birds from Arizona and Texas show characters most consistent with blue-morph Ross's Goose, while the South Dakota and Klamath Lakes birds show more intermediate characters, particularly in the bills, which appear heavy and long and bear dark grin patches. The Sacramento bird, wonderfully photographed, seems a typical Ross's in all respects, but it does seem to have rather dark tomiae as well.

Martin Reid raises the question, not addressed in Sibley's guide or elsewhere, as to how much of a faint or thin grin patch an otherwise-typical Ross's Goose might have and still be considered "pure." Reid writes: "How much of this variation is within the pure Ross's gene pool, and how much is due to hybridization with or introgression from Snow? This identification issue has not been seriously addressed (to my knowledge) and is important because a conservative interpretation of this variation (i.e., it is all due to introgression from Snow) might lead to the invalidation of numerous records away from the expected range, and would mean that Ross's are *not* identifiable in flight (as F_1 or F_2 hybrids cannot be ruled out on structure and size)."

The situation calls to mind Steve Howell's (1998) summary of the difficulty in distinguishing Thayer's from Iceland Gulls: "We can't learn how much they interbreed until we can distinguish them, but we can't distinguish them because they appear to interbreed!" If, as has been suggested, the sudden appearance of blue-morph Ross's Geese in the latter third of the past century was owing to the introduction of the blue allele from occasional hybridization with Lesser Snow Goose, then our search for a "pure" blue-morph Ross's Goose might be Quixotic. If memory serves, Claudia Wilds consistently and calmly rejected all reports of flying Ross's Geese in the mid-Atlantic out of concern about hybridization, but many of us have been rather lax in tendering records of Ross's out of core range

lately (I have blithely submitted a few reports of flying Ross's, certainly!). Perhaps we should arm ourselves with more caution in this case.

Bills of ivory

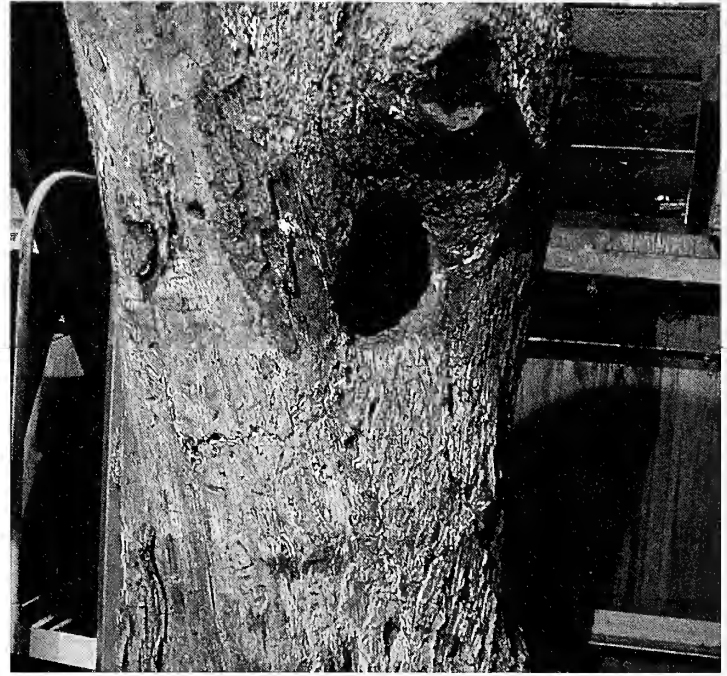
We would be neglectful here if we overlooked the substantial search effort mounted this winter by J. M. (Martjan) Lammertink, Alison R. Styring, Richard L. Knight, Alan Wormington, Peter McBride, and M. David Luneau, Jr., to locate evidence of the continued existence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Louisiana.

The effort, sponsored by Carl Zeiss Optics of North America (for full report, see <http://www.zeiss.com>), generated staggering amounts of national press publicity and raised public awareness of the woodpecker's plight over the past century but regrettably did not succeed in photographing an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, where David Kulivan had reported seeing a male and a female on 1 April 1999 (very near where Nancy Higginbotham had, unbeknownst to Kulivan, reported seeing one 13 years earlier) or in the adjacent Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge. On 27 January 2002, an "interesting" recording was made of what sounded like a large woodpecker rapping; the recording can be heard on the Zeiss website. Analyses of the recordings, however, suggest that the source was a gun rather than a woodpecker.

Nevertheless, several impressive cavities and cavity starts and at least 15 recently dead trees with extensive bark scaling—both consistent with Ivory-billed work but not known to be consistent with the work of Pileated Woodpecker—were carefully documented. At the same time, a team from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology placed 12 Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs), a novel technological device designed in-house by their Bioacoustics Research Program, throughout the Pearl River basin; these units took in some 4,000 hours of recorded sound, with results soon to be announced (in *BirdScope* Vol. 16, No. 3). It is unclear at the time of press whether searches for the woodpecker will be mounted again in the late fall and winter of 2002-2003. If the species is not demonstrated by photograph to be in the Pearl, it is likely that this area will be logged in the near future, as I understand it.

As several small parties had done after Kulivan's sighting, I went in March 2002 to see the Pearl, to get a firsthand sense of what the scaling and cavity starts looked like, whether they matched my experience of Pileated Woodpeckers' work such as I had seen in Virginia and Carolina swamps of Sweet Gum and Bald Cypress. For what it's worth, two of the large cavity starts I saw were well outside the realm of my experience with Pileated Woodpecker: their oblong shape (one with a remarkably rectangular top border) and their large dimensions, about 15 cm tall by 10+ cm wide, were striking and matched archived photographs of Ivory-billed cavities (see Figures 1 & 2). Several thoroughly scaled, very recently dead trees, some of them with as much as four meters of their boles stripped of very tight bark, were likewise something I had never seen from Pileateds. It was at least readily apparent, after several days of bayou trekking, that a large woodpecker or two should have little trouble evading a small search team, particularly if the birds are relatively shy, not especially vocal, and fairly wide-ranging. The studies of James Tanner (1942) suggest that Ivory-billed had, or has, these attributes.

That the attractive Pearl River area, recently logged in part, might again soon fall under the axe is a dismal prospect. Though there is every possibility that Kulivan and Higginbotham erred, there is also the possibility that they did not and that a pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers persists in the basin. The data gathered by the search team suggest that it would be premature to assume that no Ivory-billed Woodpeckers hang on there. Sixty years after the last fully documented records, the situation of the Pearl puts one in mind of Arthur A. Allen's foreword of



A few large cavities and cavity starts documented in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in Louisiana this winter (such as the cavity on the left) resembled known nest cavities of Ivory-billed Woodpecker (the cavity on the right is the actual nest studied by James Tanner in the Singer Tract; it is currently housed in the Cornell collection). The cavities thought to have been made, possibly, by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers had large interiors and very large apertures, with an oval- or pear-shaped entrances. Some of the cavity starts showed a roughly hexagonal shape. The cavity entrance on the left shows two pale scrape marks on the lower rim, where the woodpeckers' feet would cling to the opening. The Tanner nest cavity shows the same pale marks. *Photographs by Kevin J. McGowan.*

August 1, 1942, after the United States' entry into the Second World War:

[Tanner's study] does not tell how the Ivory-billed Woodpeckers can be saved by the expenditure of words alone. Much real work must be done—virgin forest must be set aside as a sanctuary and intelligent management practices applied. Is the bird worth it? Is the preservation of a glorious species that has taken millions of years to evolve worth ten dollars? Is it worth ten million dollars?

Today we are measuring our love of freedom in billions of dollars and thousands of lives. The American way of living is worth anything we have to pay to preserve it, and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is one little guide post on our way of life, a reminder of that pioneering spirit that has made us what we are, a people rich in resourcefulness and powerful to accomplish what is right. [Tanner 1942]

Allen answers his question: "It is worth whatever we must pay to preserve it before it is too late." As the United States finishes prosecuting its latest war, and moves toward drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (thankfully defeated, this time, as we are going to press), it took the conscience of an optics company to make an effort that the national government would not. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Carl Zeiss Sports Optics division, especially Anthony R. Cataldo, have the gratitude of a great many for this effort. Certainly, there are many more pressing conservation quandaries that demand our attention—and one can scarcely imagine what the best outcome of the discovery of a last pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers might be. A modern photograph would evoke as much remorse at what we've done to this species as faint hope at the prospect of its survival. Perhaps, as much as an expression of a conservation ethic, our dogged dedication to the great birds—the Trumpeter Swan, California Condor, Ivory-billed Woodpecker—speaks of our sense of culpability for past misdeeds and our need to atone for old transgressions.—*Ed.*

Acknowledgments

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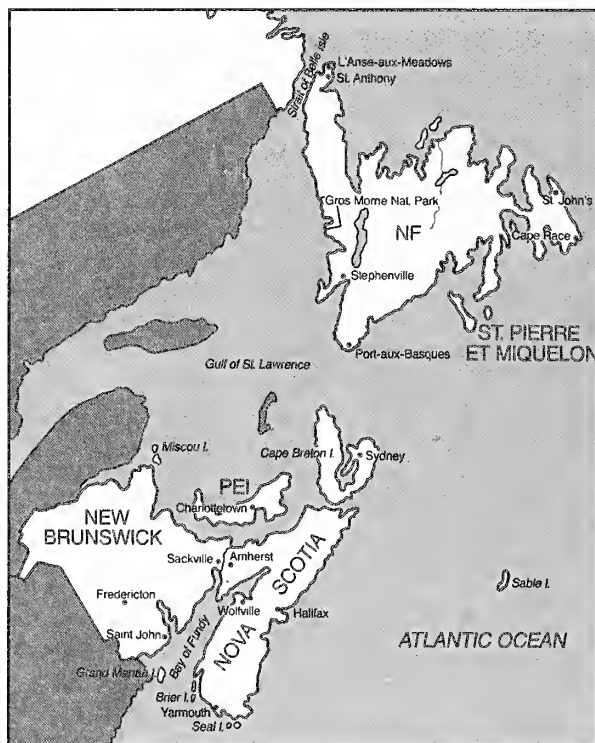


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Winter was a generally timid affair in the southern reaches of the expansive Atlantic region—but not so in Labrador, northern New Brunswick, and the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, where it was colder than normal. Temperatures dipped as low as -45 degrees C in western Labrador, though snowfall there by the end of the period was only about half of the long-term winter average (300 cm). When one considers that this Region stretches some 1920 km from Cape Chidley in the north to Cape Sable in the south, such extremes should not be unexpected. A good indication of this sharp climactic difference between north and south was the number of species detected in two adjoining provinces: Nova Scotia had a record 209 species for the period (BMy), while New Brunswick also raised the bar with 167 species (SIT). Extensive ice did not form in the Gulf of St. Lawrence until early January, resulting in a generally unhurried exodus of waterbirds. In keeping with recent mild winters, many species of half-hardy lingers continue to set new endurance records, especially in Nova Scotia and the Avalon Peninsula.

Abbreviations: Avalon (Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland); C.B.I. (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia); C.S.I. (Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia); H. R. M. (Halifax Regional Municipality); G.M.I. (Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick); SPM (St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands, France); PEI (Prince Edward Island).

GANNET THROUGH VULTURES

Northern Gannet continues to linger longer in winter, with singles at both Miquelon (RE) and Cape St. Marys, NF 15 Dec (John Wells). A good count of 225 was made off East Point, PEI 14 Dec (EVL). For the first time, they remained at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy all winter, with 45 in Seal Cove Sound, G.M.I. 29 Jan (VDG). An abundance of small herring was the attraction: a 30-km-long "cloud" of gannets estimated at 20,000+ birds was engaged in a herring feeding frenzy between C.S.I. and Seal Island, NS in the 2nd week of Dec (MN). Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase along the Atlantic coast, with 52 found on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s. Great Cormorants are thought to be rebounding in the French Islands (RE), where 200+ were found on the two local C.B.C.s.

An American Bittern at Truro, NS on 26 Jan was a good find (Jeff Ogden). A Cattle Egret was at Aylesford, Annapolis, NS until 11 Dec (Stephen Hawboldt). Two **Black Vultures** were found in Nova Scotia, one at L'Ardoise, C.B.I.

22 Dec (fide Billy Digout), and an imm. near Yarmouth 19-28 Jan (MN). Brier Island continues to hold the lion's share of wintering Turkey Vulture in Nova Scotia, with a peak of 20 there 17 Dec (ELM). Singles were notably far e. at Ingonish, 23 Dec (James & Kathryn Bridgeland) and New Haven 5 Jan (Angus MacLean), both C.B.I.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A single Greater White-fronted Goose was found near Waterville, Kings, NS 7 Dec (BMy, Judy Tufts). Peak counts of Gadwall were 50 at South Rustico, PEI 13 Jan (Eric Marcum) and 24 at Barrington, NS 6 Feb (Paul Gould). Ten American Wigeon throughout the period at Saint John, NB made a record count for the province (v. o.). At least 7 Green-winged Teal toughed it out until 25 Jan (Laurent Jackman, et al.) at SPM. A drake **Canvasback** was at N. Sydney, NS 21 Feb+ (DMq, Susann Myers), a hen at Yarmouth, NS 9-23 Feb (BMy, Richard Stern, et al.), and another hen at Daniel's Head, C.S.I. 9-17 Feb (MN). The only Redhead report was of one at Long Pond, PEI 8 Dec (David Seeler). An amazing 45 Ring-necked Ducks on the usually-frozen Hammond R., NB 30 Dec was an unprecedented winter number at one site (DSC). A "small" flock of 12 Tufted Ducks present throughout at Quidi Vidi L., St. Johns (TBO) was a new provincial high. A high count of 4254 Greater Scaup on the PEI N.P.C.B.C. 15 Dec was indicative of the open conditions there, while 5184 were on the Pictou Harbour, NS C.B.C. A pure flock of about 75 Lesser Scaup in Halifax Harbour in late Feb was notable (FLL). At least 13 King Eiders were picked out of flock of 11,000 Common Eiders at Cape Race, NF 16 Feb (BM). Two imm. male Kings at Orby Head, PEI 13 Jan (EMA et al.) provided one of very few winter reports from that province. Mid-Feb surveys for Harlequin Duck found about 200 at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick (*fide* VDG), and about 600 in Nova Scotia, mostly along the eastern shore e. of Halifax (Andrew Boyne, C.W.S.). There were 139 on the Cape St. Marys, NF C.B.C., up from only 20 in 1990, a welcome development! Best count of Long-tailed Ducks went to Prince Edward Island, with 3000 off East Point 14 Dec (EVL). Best count of Hooded Merganser was 75 at Lunenburg, NS 2 Jan (C.B.C.). A Ruddy Duck at Saint John, NB 27 Jan was apparently a first winter record for the province (KMI). Three were at Dartmouth, H.R.M. (BMy) 15 Dec.

The annual raptor count in e. Kings, NS turned up 333 Bald Eagles 9 Feb (67% ads.; 33% imm.). This is a bit below numbers from the last few years (*fide* Jim Wolford).

Good numbers of Northern Harriers were found in early winter in s. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. Broad-winged Hawks are now almost annual in Nova Scotia, with six reports for the winter period. Birds were found at Tantallon, H.R.M. 2 Dec (Fulton Lavender); Wallbrook, Kings 15 Dec (George & Margaret Alliston); Belleville, Yarmouth 23 Dec (PG); Argyle, Yarmouth 11 Jan (MN); Glace Bay, C.B.I. 24-29 Dec (Cathy Murrant); and Dartmouth, H.R.M. 13 Jan (Terry Pacquet). The species is quite rare after early Nov in North America, and photographic documentation of any of these reports would be most desirable. An imm. Red-tailed Hawk delighted observers at St. John's 5-7 Jan, where rare (TBO). A total of 94 was found during a 2nd raptor count in e. Kings, NS 16 Feb. One or 2 Golden Eagles were present at Shepody Bay, Westmoreland-Albert, NB, the Region's only consistent wintering area (DSC et al.).

PTARMIGAN THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Willow Ptarmigan were in short supply in w. Labrador this winter, their reported numbers exceeded even by those of Rock Ptarmigan. At least 10 of the latter were present in Feb at Smokey Mt., Labrador City (Bernard Jolicoeur). Gray Partridge persists in the Region mainly on agricultural Prince Edward Island, where 56 were found on the Hillsborough C.B.C. 29 Dec. A Sandhill Crane that appeared at St. Anthony, NF in early Dec was still present 18 Jan, surviving on handouts from local residents (*vide* BM). Numbers of overwintering shorebirds have "increased noticeably" over the past five years in Nova Scotia, no doubt influenced by the warm weather (SF). Surprising was a lone Semipalmated Plover at Pinkneys Pt., Yarmouth 6-11 Jan (Paul Gould et al.); another was near the village of Miquelon 5-16 Dec (RE). A Lesser Yellowlegs was at C.S.I. until 15 Dec (C. B. C. data), and a Western Willet (subspecies *inornatus*) was present throughout the period at C.S.I. (MN, Johnny Nickerson et al.). Eight unidentified dowitchers were also at C.S.I. 20-28 Feb (MN). Some peak counts of shorebirds at C.S.I. were: 75 Black-bellied Plover, 25 Ruddy Turnstone, 95 Red Knot, 500 Sanderling, and 46 Dunlin. Two small, enigmatic sandpipers there 20 Feb (MN) were described as Semipalmated/Western. There were still 5 White-rumped Sandpipers at Long Beach, near Cape Race, NF 5 Dec (BM, Paul Linegar). One was at Grand Barachois, SPM 15 Dec (RE, Danielle Lebollocq) was well seen at close range, both on the ground and in flight. At least 4 overwintered at C.S.I. (MN et al.), where they are becoming somewhat regular (a unique situation in North America, perhaps). Small

numbers of American Woodcocks are now reported annually in sw. Nova Scotia, mostly in Shelburne, and there is little doubt that some successfully overwinter. A flock of 200 unidentified phalaropes were reported at Old Proprietor Shoal, G.M.I. 7 Feb (VDG); Red Phalaropes would be more likely, but even these would be almost unprecedented in the area in midwinter.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

Several Great Skuas were noted at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy off Brier Island, NS in Dec, as well as "large numbers" of Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers (CAH). A record 430 Black-headed Gulls were found on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s. The ad. Thayer's Gull at the Halifax—Richmond Pier returned for a 3rd winter, present 30 Dec-26 Jan (BMy et al.). Another was reported during count week on the East Pt., PEI C.B.C. (14 Dec, EVL). A major movement of Ivory Gulls took place past L'Anse-aux-Meadows, NF in early Jan, with 50+/day noted (BM). The only report outside of Newfoundland was an ad. feeding on a seal carcass at Dominion Beach, C.B.I. 10-13 Feb (v. o.). Surprisingly, one in St. Pierre harbor 26 Jan—7 Feb was only the 3rd ever for St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the first well-documented bird there. By and large, there were no large flights of alcids observed near shore in the Region this winter.

SA The alcid event of the winter was a tragic one, precipitated by the deliberate practice of oil dumping off the coast of Nova Scotia by ships unknown. First reports of seabird oiling came 7 Feb from sw. Nova Scotia and by 22 Feb extended along the entire coast to C.B.I. Most reports involved Thick-billed Murres, but significant numbers of Dovekies were reported as well. Samples of oil taken from two dead birds revealed two very different types, according to Tony Lock of the Canadian Wildlife Service. "One was heavy fuel oil and the other a bilge oil mixture. This means more than one ship was engaged in oil dumping off southern Nova Scotia in early February. In my 30 years with the Wildlife Service I have never seen so much bird mortality from ship-source oil dumping. The number of birds killed will be certainly some thousands of birds."



The name L'Anse-aux-Meadows, the site of Leifur Eiriksson's "Vinland" settlement, is synonymous in birders' minds with European Golden-Plover (and perhaps too therefore with Mactavish's name!), but it offers extraordinary winter birding for the hardy as well. This Ivory Gull was part of a strong flight of the species here in early January 2002, when as many as 50 per day were seen. Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.

DOVES THROUGH GNATCATCHER

A White-winged Dove arrived at a feeder in Alma, NB 1 Dec (Doreen Rossiter) and stayed about a week. Mourning Doves continue to "push the envelope," with at least 20 attempting to winter at a Labrador City feeder; only 6 remained by the end of the period (Cheryl Davis). Snowy Owls staged a good flight into the Region, the best showing since the late 1980s. At Cape Race, NF, 20 were found 22 Dec (BM et al.). A fair number of Northern Hawk Owls was noted in Newfoundland, with virtually none elsewhere. In comparison to last winter, there were few reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl mortality induced by deep snow cover. One Red-bellied Woodpecker was reported from each province, a definite reversal of the good numbers of previous winters. A Red-bellied Woodpecker at St. Phillips, NF (Avalon) from late Oct 2001 through at least early Apr 2002 was a long overdue first for Newfoundland (m. ob.). The big news in New Brunswick in Dec was the discovery of an astounding 4 Ash-throated Flycatchers, double the previous provincial total! Birds were found at Westfield, Kings, NB 2 Dec (David Smith); Alma 2 Dec (SIT et al.); Sackville 20-22 Dec (Sean Blaney); and Lower Jemseg 21-22 Dec (Don Gibson, Peter Pearce). Nova Scotia got its

first, with one at Voglers Cove, Lunenburg 1-7 Dec (Andy Dean, Lelia Dean; full details in *Birders Journal*). A Western Kingbird lingered until at least 9 Dec at Lockeport, NS (Donna Crosby). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was found at Waterside, NB 1 Dec (DSC) and sporadically for several days thereafter. A White-eyed Vireo at Point Lance, Avalon 15 Dec was the latest by a month (BM, Ian Jones). A Red-eyed Vireo was seen in Halifax 3 Dec (IM). Carolina Wren made a good fall rush into the Region, with birds pushing as far e. as Halifax-Dartmouth (2) and Memramcook, NB. Single House Wrens were found at Halifax 2-15 Dec (TP) and Dartmouth 17 Dec (*fide* AH). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Sackville, NB in early Dec and another was at St. John's, NF in Mactavish's backyard 11 Dec.

THRUSHES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Two Townsend's Solitaires surfaced, one at Tantallon, NS in Dec—Jan (Steve King) and one at St. John's, NF 20 Jan (JW, KK). Many

thousands of American Robins invaded Avalon in Jan to feed on the heavy crop of Mountain Ash berries, the one area in the Region where they were not found during the exceptional winter of 2000-2001. Reports of Varied Thrush came from Nova Scotia, with one each at Lower West Pubnico 23 Dec—20 Feb (Raymond d'Entrement et al.) and Lower Harmony 16-26 Jan (Cindy Spicer et al.), and Newfoundland's 3rd was at Conception Bay South 6 Feb (*fide* J. Pratt). A **Swainson's Thrush** at C.S.I. 15 Dec would be a first for a Nova Scotia C.B.C. Four Gray Catbirds in Nova Scotia were not unexpected, but one at Penniac, near Fredericton, NB 5 Jan (DG) was unusual. Northern Mockingbird certainly lived up to its name, with 2 brave individuals as far n. as Labrador City. The first disappeared in early Jan, with the 2nd last seen 27 Feb (but found dead 1 Mar), despite plenty of care from the feeder owner (*fide* CD). Numbers have increased significantly on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s the past three years, to about 40 per year versus 15-20 in the early 1990s. American Pipit

continues to increase in winter in the Region, mostly along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia and the Avalon, but small numbers (up to 3) are now being regularly encountered in s. New Brunswick and n. Nova Scotia. The bird of the season was definitely the **Black-backed Wagtail** found at St. Pierre, SPM 21-26 Jan (ph. Bruno Letournel et al.), a Regional first with little precedent for the Atlantic seaboard at this season (David Sibley noted one in Brooklyn, New York in December 1992). An image of this bird is posted at <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/iles-et-ailes/Berge_lug.jpg>. Bohemian Waxwing was again common throughout the Region, in stark contrast to 30 years ago. In Nova Scotia, for example, there were only eight records of the species prior to the winter of 1968-1969, when the first significant numbers reached that province. There is now little doubt they are fairly common breeders in n. Québec and Labrador, although this major eastward range extension has gone mostly unobserved, due to the paucity of observers in that huge area. Cedar Waxwings

SA Several species of warbler set new endurance records, mostly in Nova Scotia and the Avalon (Table 1, below). Some of these, such as the Blue-winged, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Green Warblers, would be considered extraordinary anywhere in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic United States at these dates. In one concentrated area of Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, in the first half of December, there were: Yellow-throated Warbler (perhaps 2 birds), an **Audubon's Warbler**, a Nashville Warbler, 4+ Orange-crowned Warblers, 2+ Pine Warblers, a Yellow-breasted Chat, a Blackpoll Warbler, and a Western Palm Warbler. It should be kept in mind that some of these birds depended on feeders for survival, such as a Wilson's Warbler at Halifax that came for its daily allotment of grape jelly and mealworms. At least 20 Yellow-breasted Chats were found in Nova Scotia.

Species	Location	Date(s)	Observer(s)
Blue-winged Warbler	Portuguese Cove, NS	2-4 December	David Currie, Azor Vienneau
Blue-winged Warbler	Eastern Passage, NS	15 December—1 January	Tim Allison, Terry Paquet
Magnolia Warbler	Schooner Pond, C.B.I.	3 December	Dave McCorquodale, Richard Knapton
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Antigonish, NS	1-21 December	<i>fide</i> Randy Lauff
Black-throated Green Warbler	St. John's, NF	9-27 December	Paul Linegar et al.
Black-throated Green Warbler	C.S.I., NS	20 January	Johnny Nickerson
Townsend's Warbler	St. John's, NF	8-23 December	Bruce Mactavish, Paul Linegar
Pine Warbler	Carbonear, NF	throughout period	<i>fide</i> Bruce Mactavish
Prairie Warbler	Sable Island, NS	2 December	Zoe Lucas
Yellow-throated Warbler	Tracadie-Sheila, NB	1-30 December	Robert Doiron
Yellow-throated Warbler	Halifax, NS	3-26 December	Andy Horn, m. ob., ph.
Yellow-throated Warbler	Carbonear, NF	early December—23 January	Paul Linegar et al.
Yellow-throated Warbler	St. John's, NF	7 January—1 February	m. ob.
Blackpoll Warbler	Halifax, NS	10-16 December	Blake Maybank, m. ob., ph.
Black-and-white Warbler	Moncton, NB	21 December	Jim Edsall
Black-and-white Warbler	St. John's, NF	5 January (3), 19 January (1)	Bruce Mactavish
Black-and-white Warbler	Summerside, PEI	2 January	Suzanne Essensa
Nashville Warbler	Ferryland, NF	11 January	Todd Boland, T. Smith
Nashville Warbler	Tancook Island, NS	2 January	Eric & Ann Mills
Wilson's Warbler	Halifax, NS	1 December+	Suzanne Borkowski, m. ob., ph.
Wilson's Warbler	Florence, C.B.I., NS	early December	Dave McCorquodale
Wilson's Warbler	Dartmouth, NS	early December	Blake Maybank
Ovenbird	Bedford, NS	29 December	C. B. C. data
Ovenbird	St. Pierre, SPM	14 January	Thierry Vogenstahl, Laurent Jackman
Yellow-breasted Chat	Saint John, NB	20 January	Frank Kelly
Yellow-breasted Chat	St. John's, NF	13-20 January	Dave Brown et al.
Yellow-breasted Chat	St. Pierre, SPM	1 January	Rita Ruel, Marc Dérrible

pulled their usual disappearing act, with only small numbers reported, mostly in Nova Scotia.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The amazing "hat-trick" of tanagers continued to frequent berry bushes at Canso (Town), NS in early Dec (Rose Ann McMullen et al.): one each of Scarlet, Summer and Western (cf. *N. A. B.* 56:24). Two more Western Tanagers were found, one until late Jan in Halifax (Etta Parker) and an imm. male that appeared 23 Jan in Lower Sackville (Peter LeBlanc, m. ob., ph.).

A Summer Tanager was found dead near Sydney, NS in early Jan (Darryl MacAulay, *fide* John MacInnis), and another at a feeder in Fredericton, NB was last seen in late Dec (DG). A Green-tailed Towhee at a Saint John, NB feeder 4 Jan+ was a first provincial record (Jim Wilson, et al.). Clay-colored Sparrows numbered 3 in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. A Field Sparrow was a good find at New Dominion, PEI 17-18 Jan (EM). A Vesper Sparrow at Renew's, NF through the period was the first confirmed record for the province (BM, Dave Brown et al.) Five Lark Sparrows were in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. Quite rare were single Grasshopper Sparrows at Lunenburg 2-6 Jan (James Hirtle et al.) and Renew's, NF 29 Dec (BM, Dave Brown). An Ipswich Sparrow was a good find at Biscay Bay, Avalon 10 Feb (Rudolf Koes, BM). A spectacular assortment of *Ammodramus* sparrows came to light at Daniels Head, C.S.I. in mid-Feb, including 4 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows and one Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow (first for Nova Scotia), a Seaside Sparrow, and a Henslow's Sparrow (MN et al.). It was interesting to note that of 8 White-crowned Sparrows found in Nova Scotia, half were of the w. *gambelli* race. A plucky Dark-eyed Junco survived the period at a Labrador City feeder, but alas succumbed in late Apr (*fide* CD).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak made it to 22 Dec at Buchans, NF feeder (Dianne Burton). An Indigo Bunting at a Lameque, NB feeder 20 Jan was the latest ever for the province, as was one at a St. John's feeder 26 Dec (John Pratt). Nice groups of Eastern Meadowlark included 5 each at Shepody Marsh, Albert, NB 11 Jan (BD) and Daniels Head, C.S.I. 17 Feb (Paul Gould et al.). A Bullock's Oriole at Bathurst, NB 24 Dec—20 Jan (MD et al.) was a first for the province. Many Baltimore Orioles survived until well into Jan at feeders in Nova Scotia and even s. New Brunswick. A Common Chaffinch at a Halifax feeder until 13 Jan (FL et al.) brought birders from as far as California and was the 4th Nova Scotia record. As Mactavish put it: "It was a very good winter for most finch species." Of special note were the many reports of Pine

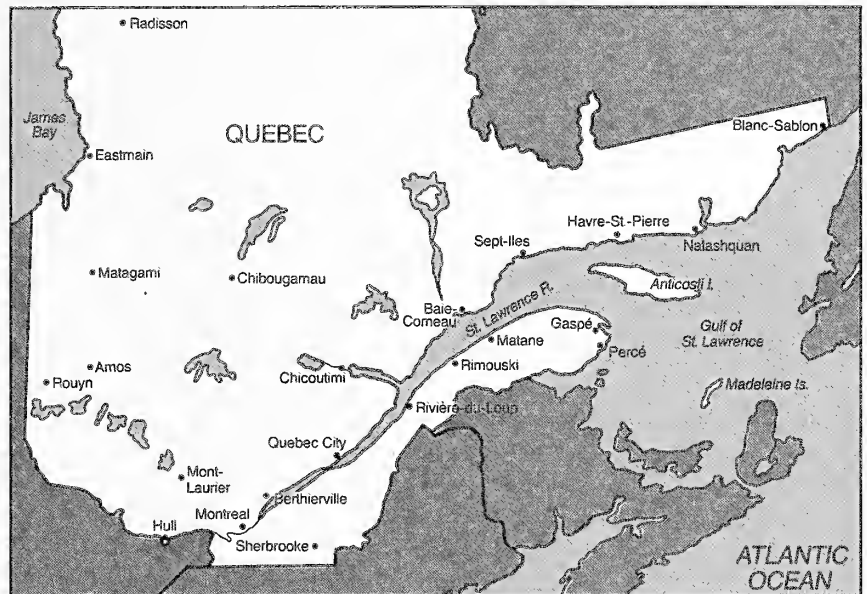
Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and White-winged Crossbills coming to feeders, an increasingly common trend in just the past decade.

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With temperatures exceeding the normal by 7 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit, the winter 2001-2002 will be remembered as the mildest ever in

southern Québec. One had to travel as far as Ungava Bay to find temperatures slightly below normal. At the same time, precipitation was below normal all along the St. Lawrence River but closer to normal or above normal farther north.

As a result of the mild weather, many species normally leaving the Region in fall lingered very late or in some cases overwintered successfully. Waterfowl in particular were much more abundant than usual in southern Québec, and expanding species such as the Carolina Wren and the Tufted Titmouse also appeared to benefit from these conditions. Finally, apart from the redpolls, winter finches were rather scarce.

Abbreviation: C.W.S. (Canadian Wildlife Service).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon at Les Escoumins 6-10 Jan established a new record late date for the Region (CA, CG). Once again, while none were reported in the southern part of the Region, Common Loons appeared in Feb at some more northerly

locations, e.g., 2 at Laterrière, *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* 16 Feb (L. Tremblay) and singles at Pabos 2 Feb (C. Poirier, PP, G. Roy), Saint-Godefroi 16 Feb (B. Arsenault), and Les Escoumins 15 Feb (CG, CA). The presence of a Pied-billed Grebe at Rivière-du-Loup 9 Jan—23 Feb was considered as the first overwintering record in the Region, although there have been previous sporadic records in winter (D. Bérubé, R. Plourde). Another bird present at Maple Grove 7-12 Jan and nearby Beauharnois 8-25 Feb probably involved the same overwintering individual (PB). Additional records involved single birds at Amqui 12 Dec—29 Jan (RL) and Valleyfield 17 Feb (AH). Three Red-necked Grebes at Les Escoumins 11 Jan were noteworthy for the North Shore (CA, CG). A Double-crested Cormorant at Ile Sainte-Hélène 4 Feb was the first ever for the month of Feb in the Montréal region (RB). Aerial surveys conducted by C.W.S. biologists highlighted the presence of 916 Great Cormorants along the e. and s. coasts of Gaspésie 12-13 Feb (MR, CM, DB). There were six records of Turkey Vulture, all of single birds, for Jan-Feb compared to a total of only five previous records known for this period; these birds were found at Saint-Damien 3 Jan (D. Savard, *fide* M. Dufort), Saint-Joseph-de-Lepage 16 Jan (S. Routhier, *fide* J. Larivée), La Pocatière 25 Jan (MF. Auchu, *fide* CA), Rockburn 10 Feb (A. Quenneville), Victoriaville 23 Feb (CR), and Saint-Armand 25 Feb (JG. Papineau).

A few Snow Geese overwintered successfully, including 11 at Victoriaville (*fide* CR) and 7 at Iberville (*fide* PB), while other sightings included 4 at Saint-Romuald 21 Jan (D. Lepage), 2 at both La Pocatière (R. Lepage) and Saint-Nicolas 25 Jan (S. Blais), and finally 2 at Auclair 14-18 Feb (M. Beaulieu). Considering the mild weather, a total of 130 overwintering Canada Geese in the Montréal area was rather expected, but a group of 8 at Laterrière 18 Jan-16 Feb was more notable (M. Tremblay, D. Gervais).

Single Mute Swans appeared at Saint-Irénée 6 Jan (RG et al.) and at Cap-de-la-Madeleine 12 Feb+ (*fide* HB). Wood Ducks are known to winter occasionally in the Montréal area, but one at Amqui 12 Dec—28 Feb represented the first overwintering record for the Lower St. Lawrence (RL). A male Eurasian Wigeon at Lachenaie 8-26 Dec established a new Regional record late date by more than 3 weeks (S & F. Rousseau, m. ob.). A mid-Feb waterfowl count showed that the Montréal area hosted 64 wintering Gadwall, 94 American Wigeon, and a staggering 7000 Mallards (PB et al.). Following a count of only 50 wintering individuals in 1982, the latter has been steadily increasing during the 20 years existence of this annual

duck census (PB et al.). Single Northern Pintails were located at Amqui 19 Jan—28 Feb (RL) and Les Escoumins 18-28 Feb (CA, CG). Mid-winter records for this species are very scarce away from the Montréal area. Possibly a first for the Québec City region, a Green-winged Teal overwintered at Beauport (JFR), while the presence of 60 Greater Scaup, at least 2 Lesser Scaup, and 2 Ring-necked Ducks wintering at Lachine, Montréal was a notable event (PB et al.). An out-of-range female King Eider at Carignan 13 Jan—24 Feb represented the 2nd overwintering record only for the Montréal region (P. Beaulé, m. ob.). Unusual hybrid waterfowl included a Mallard x American Wigeon at Lévis 1-31 Dec (JL et al.), a Barrow's x Common Goldeneye at Lachine 20 Jan (PB), and a Hooded Merganser x Common Goldeneye also at Lachine 17 Feb (PB). Finally, a female Ruddy Duck at Lachine 13 Jan was record late by a little more than 2 weeks (PB).

HAWKS THROUGH OWLS

Bald Eagles were reported in record numbers in some regions. An aerial survey by the C.W.S. showed a surprising 46 individuals on Anticosti I. 11-15 Feb (MR, CM, DB). A group of 5 Northern Harriers overwintered on Ile aux Fermiers, near Montréal (Y. Gauthier, S. Moran), while one at Isle-Verte, *Lower St. Lawrence* 17 Jan was locally very late (A. Boucher, *fide* D. Bérubé). Two Red-shouldered Hawks overwintered at Québec City (*fide* JL), while there were at least 3 in the Montréal area (*fide* PB). The Rough-legged Hawk was commonly reported, as far n. as the Lac Saint-Jean region through the end of the period. An American Kestrel at Saint-Alexis 27 Jan was the first winter record for the Gaspésie region (P. Beaulé). Gyrfalcons numbered 19 individuals, a good Regional total if significantly lower than last year's. Rarely so dependable, a white-morph Gyrfalcons was seen almost daily at dusk at its roosting site on Mont Saint-Hilaire (Y. Fredette, m. ob.).

Two American Coots were at Maple Grove 5-13 Jan (PB, m.ob.), while one was spotted at nearby Côteau-du-Lac 16 Feb (LS et al.), which is suggestive of a successful overwintering record. A Sandhill Crane at Les Cèdres 5 Dec furnished a new record late date for the Region (M. Spencer). A Killdeer at Bécancour 26-31 Jan was only the 2nd Regional record for Jan (HB et al.), while one at Pointe-au-Père 15 Dec was locally very late (J. Larivée et al.). In line with data from 1999, C.W.S. biologists found a sizeable wintering population of Purple Sandpipers in the St. Lawrence Estuary where they made a count of 534 individuals 19 Feb (MR, CM, DB). Two hundred more were located in the Gaspésie

region 31 Jan (MR, CM, DB). A Dunlin at La Malbaie 7-27 Jan was the latest ever found in the Region by almost six weeks (ML, RG). Although known to overwinter irregularly s. of the St. Lawrence R., the occurrence of 2 Common Snipe at Sept-Iles 24 Feb was quite surprising (JF. Laporte, B. Duchesne, C. Couture). An American Woodcock at Cap Tourmente 13-20 Jan was the latest ever reported in the Region (J. Guérin, JL, RG).

Black-headed Gulls numbered a high 34 at Havre-aux-Basques, *Iles-de-la-Madeleine* 10 Dec (DGG), but dwindled to 6 on 1 Feb (*fide* DGG). Always rare, a first-winter Mew Gull of the North American race *brachyrhynchus* was found at Pointe-Claire 5-15 Dec (B. Barnhurst), and an ad. of the European race *canus* was at Saint-Irénée 5-6 Jan, a new late date for the Region (RG, J. Forgues et al.). Many Ring-billed Gulls overwintered in the s. part of the Region as indicated by a count of 105 along Rivière des Prairies, Montréal, 13 Feb (LS, GL) and smaller groups at Lachine and in the Montréal harbour throughout Feb (PB). An influx of migrants was already obvious starting 22 Feb. Lesser Black-backed Gulls included 4 individuals in the Montréal region in Dec (*fide* PB), one at Baie-Sainte-Catherine 1 Dec (OB, N. Barden) and an ad. at Les Escoumins 12-27 Dec, followed by a third-winter bird 9 Jan (CA, CG). Interesting hybrid gulls included a presumed ad. Herring x Great Black-backed 11-13 Jan at Laval (M. Bertrand et al.), 2 different first-winter Great Black-backed x Glaucous at Les Escoumins, 11-12 Jan and 20 Feb (CA, CG), and finally an ad. Herring x Glaucous also at Les Escoumins 24-28 Feb (CA, CG).

A count of 469 Mourning Doves around a single feeder at Pointe-au-Père 21 Jan was highly indicative of the very mild weather prevailing in the Region this winter. Snowy Owls were common everywhere, notably in the Québec City region, where 56 were counted 23-24 Feb (G. Lemelin et al.). After last year's memorable invasion, Northern Hawk Owls and Great Gray Owls were down to more normal numbers, totaling 24 of the former and 15 of the latter for the period extending from late Oct through the end of Feb (*fide* S. Belleau).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH ORIOLES

The Lower St. Lawrence region was rewarded with 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers: one (previously found during the fall) at Rimouski until 20 Dec (P. Saint-Jean) and another at Pohénégamook 17-24 Dec (F. Gagné, R. Deschênes). In the s. part of the Region, a female seen intermittently at Bedford 14 Jan+ (C. Hamon) and another at Quyon 16 Jan (R. Craig) were more expected. Tufted Titmice were

much in evidence, with 75 reported from 32 sites (*fide* PB). Even more noteworthy were the 30 Carolina Wrens tallied from 23 localities (*fide* PB), the highest count ever for this species, with the northernmost appearing at Sainte-Pétronille (*fide* JL).

A group of 5 Eastern Bluebirds, seen sporadically from the end of Dec through mid-Feb at Hemmingford, established the first overwintering record in the Region (PB, E. Samson, A. Lacasse). Townsend's Solitaires are now found almost each winter: singles were at Rivière-du-Loup 3 Jan+ (R. Plourde, m. ob.) and at Boucherville 24 Feb (P. Casavant). Very rare in winter, single Hermit Thrushes resided at Ile Sainte-Hélène through at least 23 Jan (R. Bélanger, D. Cloutier) and at Cap Tourmente 11-30 Jan (A. Rasmussen et al.). A similar pattern was evident for Varied Thrush: single males visited feeders at Deschambault 4 Jan+ (F. Paré, m. ob.) and Cookshire 31 Jan—10 Feb (K. Clarke, S. Lamontagne). A Brown Thrasher successfully overwintered at Saint-Zénon (*fide* R. Piché).

The Nashville Warbler that lingered at Québec City until 16 Dec was the 2nd latest ever (C. Nadeau). Most surprising was an imm. male Yellow Warbler at Saint-Nicolas until 25 Dec (MR et al.). An imm. Pine Warbler successfully overwintered at Ile Notre-Dame, Montréal (C. Morin, D. Daigneault), while another individual was reported at Pabos 22 Jan (J. Blais). Single Common Yellowthroats at Carignan 15-26 Dec (P. Beaulé) and at Cap Tourmente until 3 Jan (P. Otis, R. Lepage) contributed new Regional record late dates. The imm. male Summer Tanager that was already present at Baie-Saint-Paul was last seen 2 Dec (*fide* SD), while the female at Rivière-au-Renard made its last appearance 21 Dec (*fide* PP). A Scarlet Tanager visited a feeder at Sainte-Foy until 30 Dec (*fide* OB), providing a new Regional record late date.

A male Spotted Towhee that spent the whole winter at a Gatineau's feeder represented our 13th Regional record (C. Gratton, *fide* DT). Unusual winter sparrows were probably sustained by the mild weather. A Chipping Sparrow was seen daily at a Cowansville's feeder (BH), while an ad. Chipping turned up briefly at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade 20 Jan (OB). A Vesper Sparrow lingered at Saint-Mathieu until at least 5 Jan (L. Gervais, F. Roberge, PB). Totally unexpected were 3 Savannah Sparrows at Laval 7 Feb+ (GL et al.) and another at a feeder of Saint-Timothée until 6 Feb (S. Bougie), providing the first Feb records for this species. A Fox Sparrow at Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park, Montréal 10-17 Feb was notable (P. Franche, A. Gosselin). A

Lincoln's Sparrow at Montréal 17-18 Dec was very late (RB). A Swamp Sparrow at Cap Tourmente 2 Jan through Feb (MR, F. Schaffer et al.), and another at Beauport 31 Jan—3 Feb (JFR) were interesting sightings for the season. Finally, single White-crowned Sparrows of the *gambelii* race appeared at Saint-Majorique 10 Feb+ (J. Lehoux) and Château-Richer 9 Feb (OB, N. Barden).

The imm. male **Black-headed Grosbeak** previously reported at Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval was last seen 7 Jan (ME. Lepage). Noteworthy were 3 Dickcissels throughout Dec: one at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 1 Dec (M. Larrivée), a 2nd individual at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 12 Dec (E. Razurel), and a female at Saint-Timothée 15-16 Dec (AH). The ad. male **Bullock Oriole** reported in Nov at l'Isle-aux-Coudres was last seen 8 Dec (*fide* SD) and to everyone's surprise reappeared at nearby Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive 5-22 Jan (ML et al., A. Jean). A Baltimore Oriole at Sainte-Foy 15 Feb was the latest ever in the Region (OB).

EXOTICS

A belated report was received of a Mountain Quail at Lennoxville 26 Nov (C. Parent-Pomerleau). A Yellow-fronted Canary at Philipsburg 20 Jan—6 Feb impressed everyone by its ability to survive our climate (P. Wery et al.).

CORRIGENDUM

Please delete the record of the Carolina Wren at Falardeau 12 August 2001 (GS).

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20 May-14 June

INDONESIA #1
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12 July-2 August

INDONESIA #2
Sulawesi
3-24 August

2003 BIRDING TOURS

THAILAND
Northwest, Central, Peninsular
4-26 January

SOUTH INDIA
Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andaman Is.
2-25 January
Forest Owlet Pretour
28 December-4 January

SRI LANKA
24 January-10 February

PHILIPPINES
Luzon, Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan,
Bohol, Negros
31 January-3 March

CAMBODIA
Giant Ibis
7-25 March

BHUTAN
28 March-20 April

EAST HIMALAYAS
West Arunachal Pradesh
25 April-18 May

MALAYSIA
Malaya, Borneo (Mt. Kinabalu)
3-25 May

New England



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Once again, New England birders were left wondering what "winter" really meant in 2001-2002. In fact, the season as a whole was the warmest in 122 years, with only one winter averaging warmer in the 138 years for which consistent records have been kept for the Region. As a result, even northern lakes remained open well into Feb (New Hampshire's Lake Winnepesaukee never completely froze for "the first time in memory"), and waterfowl lingered north and inland in largely unprecedented numbers. Sorting through some of these numbers is a largely mind-boggling task, but suffice it to say that loons, grebes, and ducks set records throughout the Region. Not to be left out, unexpected wading birds were reported from coastal areas as far north as New Hampshire. Finally, as has become expected in this column in recent years, half-hardies were everywhere. In addition to multiple Yellow-rumped Warblers in Vermont and interior New Hampshire, there was no better an indication of this trend than a single feeder in Rye, New Hampshire. Starting in late January, when a Yellow-breasted Chat was called in to the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, this single yard hosted the chat, a Gray Catbird, an Eastern Towhee, and a

Carolina Wren—often all at the same time. If anyone needs further evidence of the decidedly unwinterlike conditions, several species set record "late" dates for the Region, including species as varied as Lesser Yellowlegs, Pomarine Jaeger, and Northern Waterthrush. Meanwhile, there was a moderate invasion of Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged Crossbills, and Common Redpolls, some of which even made it to southeastern Massachusetts and its offshore islands. In among all the broader Regional trends, there were of course a few rarities, including, but certainly not limited to, Rhode Island's second winter Brown Pelican, a veritable invasion of Barnacle Geese (pending the usual discussion of origins), *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Maine's Sage Thrasher continuing a few days beyond November, and the first Bullock's Oriole in New Hampshire in over 25 years.

Abbreviations: Charlotte (Charlotte Town Beach, Addison, VT), First Encounter (First Encounter Beach, Barnstable, MA), M.V. (Martha's Vineyard, MA), Nantucket (Nantucket I., MA), Ogunquit (Ogunquit, York, ME), P.I. (Plum I., Essex, MA), P'town (Provincetown, Barnstable, MA), Quabbin (Quabbin Res., w. MA), Rockport (Rockport, Essex, MA).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Noteworthy Red-throated Loons included 2 birds lingering on L. Champlain at Charlotte through at least 16 Feb (TM). As another indication of the amount of open water on L. Champlain, 103 Common Loons and 87 Horned Grebes were at Charlotte 2 Dec and 19 Feb, respectively (TM). In w. Massachusetts, 14 Common Loons were still on Quabbin 11 Jan. Along the coast, Pacific Loons were reported from Rockport 24 Jan—16 Feb, P'town 24-26 Feb, and Ogunquit 5 Jan. Eared Grebes were at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, MA 13 Jan; E. Lyme, New London, CT early Dec—4 Jan (2nd year at this location); and Third Beach, Newport, RI 24 Jan (JSJ); the Gloucester, Essex, MA, bird returned for its 7th winter. Yet another Eared Grebe was reported from Grande Isle, Grande Isle, VT 4 Dec (D. Hoag) and awaits review by the Vermont Records Committee. Meanwhile, Western Grebes made brief appearances in Portland, Cumberland, ME 18 Dec and Rye, NH 24 Feb.

Regular pelagic trips aboard a research vessel studying hagfish allowed birders a rare opportunity to sample the avifauna around Jeffreys Ledge off New Hampshire and ne. Massachusetts. On 3 Dec, this trip tallied 75 Northern Fulmars, 2 Greater Shearwaters, and 250 Northern Gannets (JB), while on 17 Jan there were 25 fulmars and numerous alcids. At the other end of the season, observers at First Encounter tallied 85 fulmars and 350 gannets 18 Feb. Greater Shearwaters were also seen from shore in Dec, with one at Gloucester 10 Dec and 5 from Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, ME 15 Dec. There were some exceptional onshore counts of Northern Gannets in mid-Dec, many on C.B.C.s. On 15 Dec, there were 400 from Cape Elizabeth and 800 from First Encounter. A few days earlier, there were an estimated 4200 at Nantucket on 12 Dec. A total of 9 Double-crested Cormorants in Newburyport, Essex, MA 25 Jan (JB) is unusual for mid-winter, even in Massachusetts. However, the pelecaniform of the season is without doubt the **Brown Pelican** seen at Fort Wetherill, Jamestown, Newport, RI 15 Jan (J. Powell), the 3rd consecutive winter record for the Region and the 2nd for the Ocean State.

While pelagic species and inland loons made headlines in the east and north, Connecticut birders probably had flashbacks to the breeding season, at least as far as heron diversity was concerned. All the following species were reported in the Nutmeg State at one point or another: American Bittern, Great Egret, Snowy Egret (Groton, New London through 9 Jan), Little Blue Heron (Stratford, Fairfield through 1 Jan), and Green Heron, as well as the more expectable

Black-crowned Night-Heron and Great Blue Heron. Great Egrets were also in Rhode Island, se. Massachusetts, and inland at Longmeadow, *Hampden*, MA 15-18 Dec. Rounding out the Region's list of winter ardeids were a Cattle Egret at Falmouth, *Barnstable*, MA 8 Dec, and another on M.V. throughout Dec. Black Vultures made a major move to the east, if a group of 10-15 roosting with Turkey Vultures in Ashway, *Washington*, RI 26 Jan is any indication. Even farther afield were one in Westport, *Bristol*, MA 3 Dec, and 2 in Maine: Popham Beach, *Sagadahoc* 21 Jan (ph. G. Pennington); and Portland 28 Feb (*fide* J. Walker). Turkey Vultures in weird places, whether overwintering birds or migrants with unusual timing, included individuals at Brandon, *Rutland*, VT 20 Jan; Hancock, *Hillsboro*, NH 25 Jan; and Bar Harbor, *Hancock*, ME 10 Feb (WT).

WATERFOWL

Open fresh water was everywhere in New England this winter, and as a result so were waterfowl. At least 11 Greater White-fronted Geese spent part of the winter in the Region, including at least 5 in Massachusetts, one in Connecticut, and 5 in Rhode Island. These numbers are about usual for the Region, although 2 of Massachusetts' birds were in the w. part of the state at Southwick, *Hampden* throughout Feb. A Ross's Goose at Trustom Pond 4-12 Dec provided the first fully documented record for the Ocean State (ph., JSJ).

A group of 15 Tundra Swans appeared in

Colchester, *Chittenden*, VT 3 Dec (TM). By late Dec, this flock had split in 2, with a group of 11 to the s. in Shelburne and a group of 4 to the n. in Milton (both *Chittenden*), where they remained into mid-late Jan. Five spent most of the winter at Coventry, *Kent*, RI, and 4 appeared briefly at Westport, MA at the end of Feb. A Whooper Swan of captive origin swan appeared St. Albans, *Chittenden*, VT 30 Dec and was seen again at Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, VT 2 Feb (TM). The bird in question spent the winter in the company of 2 Mute Swans, thus giving the Green Mountain State the dubious honor of hosting three species of swan this winter.

Many dabbling ducks remained n. or inland in higher than usual numbers, but none more so than Northern Shovelers. At least 37 were reported in the Region this winter, including 7 in Connecticut, 9 in Rhode Island, 17 in Massachusetts, 3 in New Hampshire (Rochester, *Strafford*, 18 Dec—20 Feb), and one in Maine (Lamoine, *Hancock*, 13 Feb). Gadwall were much more common in Vermont than is usual in winter, with up to 17 reported at various locations on L. Champlain. Eurasian Wigeon numbers were roughly normal, including 2 in New Hampshire, 7 in Massachusetts, 4 in Rhode Island, and 3 in Connecticut. Is Common Teal (the Eurasian race of Green-winged Teal) increasing in North America? There were 4 reported in s. New England this winter: 2 in Massachusetts and one each in Rhode Island and Connecticut. The latter was briefly accompanied by a hybrid Common x Green-winged Teal.

Among the diving ducks, the star of the show was Ring-necked Duck. On the early C.B.C.s, this species was seemingly everywhere where there was an open pond or two, and many continued in the n. well into Feb. The high counts came from the s. states, including a tally of roughly 200 at Coventry, RI 2 Feb. Like Gloucester's Eared Grebe, the Tufted Duck that has frequented Wachusett Res., *Worcester*, MA for the last six years returned for a 7th. The only other report for the Region was from Bourne, *Barnstable*, MA 5-12 Jan. While Redheads winter regularly in s. coastal areas, they are good finds over most of the Region at any time of year. Five were at Milton, VT 13 Jan (TM), and singles rewarded birders at Chimney Point, *Addison*, VT 16 Feb and Easthampton, *Hampshire*, MA 22 Feb. Interestingly enough, only a single Redhead was reported from Rhode Island, where the species is usually more common, for the entire season.

Since the species is more expected at locations in e. New England, an overwintering female King Eider was noteworthy at Hammonasset Beach S.P., *New Haven*, CT. Another interesting

find for Connecticut birders was a female Black Scoter that spent the winter on the Connecticut R. in Hartford. Harlequin Ducks numbers were typical for recent years. The following are seasonal maxima for the traditional hot spots: 20 at Ogunquit; 102 at Rockport; 11 at Orleans, *Barnstable*, MA; 40 at Nantucket; 50 at Sachuest Pt., *Newport*, RI; and 28 at Jamestown, RI. Among noteworthy maximum counts of other waterfowl for the Region, a record-high total of 254,302 Long-tailed Ducks was received from Nantucket Sound (on the Nantucket C.B.C.) 30 Dec, whereas 3100 Common Goldeneye were at Charlotte 2 Dec (TM). A flock of 500 Ruddy Ducks made a nice total for Candlewood L., *Fairfield*, CT 18 Jan.

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANE

The Region's 3 winter Ospreys included 2 Jan birds in Rhode Island and an individual at Westport, MA 25 Feb that was likely an extremely early spring migrant. With all the open water, Bald Eagles were less concentrated at usual hot spots by the time of the traditional mid-winter eagle survey. This doesn't imply that they were hard to find however, as numbers were at or near record highs over much of New England: w. Massachusetts hosted 41, Connecticut birders found 23-24, and the combined New Hampshire and Vermont total was over 100. The Region's high count of Rough-legged Hawks was 52, all found in a day-long survey of parts of *Addison*, VT 2 Feb. Golden Eagles appeared at traditional locations around Quabbin and cen. Connecticut, with additional s. individuals at Middletown, *Newport*, RI 28 Dec and W. Newbury, *Essex*, MA 25 Dec. In the north, one Golden Eagle made a one-day appearance at Dead Creek W.M.A., *Addison*, VT 4 Dec, while another spent most of the winter at Wilson's Mills, *Oxford*, ME (*fide* C. Martin). There were 4 Gyrfalcons in New England this winter. One took up residence at Sandbar S.P., *Chittenden*, VT 21 Jan to 17 Feb, and single-day sightings came from Richmond, *Sagadahoc*, ME 23 Dec (P. Vickery), and Salisbury, *Essex*, MA 13 Jan. The 4th bird was seen sporadically around Boston 16 Dec through Feb, where it entertained innumerable birders.

A few Virginia Rails regularly spend all or part of the winter in s. coastal areas, and some have even started showing up in w. Massachusetts. They are much less common along the n. coast, but this winter a very cooperative bird frequented a marsh in Hampton, *Rockingham*, NH for much of Jan, where it was regularly observed catching fish through a hole in the ice. Back in the south, a Sora was on Cape Cod 27 Dec, and a Yellow Rail was reported without details from Nantucket in Jan. In addition to the fairly regu-

SA There were at least 2 and possibly 3 Barnacle Geese in the Region this winter, with reports from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The first was seen at Gloucester 2 Dec. Two days later, it (or another individual) appeared at Storrs, *Tolland*, CT, where it remained through mid-Jan. An additional Barnacle Goose was reported from Portsmouth, *Newport*, RI 15 Dec—16 Jan, and another was at Lynnfield, *Essex*, MA 17-20 Feb. This latter bird differed in plumage from the one in Connecticut, but comparison to the Rhode Island bird was not available at press time. All birds await final evaluation by the appropriate state records committees, although there is some evidence that suggests natural vagrancy. The Connecticut Barnacle Goose was associating with Canada Geese that had been banded in Greenland, and there were several other Barnacle Geese in the Canadian Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, and Middle Atlantic regions this winter. Given the species's increasing populations in Greenland, vagrancy to New England is only likely to increase as well.

lar appearance or Common Moorhens on Nantucket, where a bird spent the entire winter, there were single moorhens in Rhode Island and Connecticut in Dec. A **Purple Gallinule** somehow found itself well to the n. at Spruce Head, *Knox*, ME, where it was found injured and sent to a rehabilitator 15 Jan (R. Pelletier). Also in the north, one Am. Coot was found at Milton VT 12 Jan, and an exceptional concentration of 85 was reported from Kingston, *Rockingham*, NH 10 Dec (K. Folsom). The Sandhill Crane that has visited Monroe, *Grafton*, NH for the last three summers lingered this year until 6 Dec, providing the Granite State with a rare winter record. Another crane was at Columbia, *Tolland*, CT 9 Dec, and one wonders if it could have been the same individual moving south.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Although a few Black-bellied Plovers regularly spend the season on Cape Cod, individuals n. of se. Massachusetts are quite rare after Dec. Given the mild winter, however, it was not surprising that one was found in Boston 10 Feb (M. Hall). Winter Killdeer along the New England coast are not unusual, but one surviving through at least 3 Feb at Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, VT provided a rare mid-winter record for the Green Mountain State (TM). Among the usual smattering of lingering winter sandpipers were a number of Lesser Yellowlegs. On 15 Dec, 3 were at Sippewisset, *Barnstable*, MA and one was in Stratham, *Rockingham*, NH. These pale by comparison to the 5 that spent the entire winter at P.I., providing the Region with its first record of overwintering birds. One wonders whether these birds included the 3 found at this location in early Dec 2000. Four thousand Dunlin was a good winter count for Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA 2 Dec (B. Nikula), and 2400 of these birds were still in the area 23 Feb. Massachusetts hosted 8 Long-billed Dowitchers in Dec, including a group of 5 at Hyannisport, *Barnstable* 27 Dec. Ten American Woodcock were already displaying on Nantucket by the end of Feb.

Jaegers continue to set wintering records for the Region. A Pomarine at First Encounter 18 Feb is the latest ever recorded in the Bay State. Farther north, a Parasitic and 4 unidentified jaegers were seen from Cape Elizabeth, ME 15 Dec. In the southeast on the same date, 14 Pomarines and 42 unidentified jaegers were tallied from First Encounter (P. Flood). A Laughing Gull at P.I. and vicinity in Jan and early Feb is one of few mid-winter records n. of Cape Cod. A count of 40,000 Bonaparte's Gulls and 25,000 Black-legged Kittiwakes from Lubec, *Washington*, ME 10 Dec is quite impressive, although in all fairness they were shared with New Brunswick. At the other extreme, both geo-

graphically and numerically, was a single Black-legged Kittiwake unusually far up Long I. Sound at Groton, CT 10 Feb. The Region's only Thayer's Gull was at Nantucket 31 Dec and 1 Jan (ph. GdE), although another was reported without details from Lubec ME 9 Dec (*fide* WT). For the 2nd winter in a row, a possible **Yellow-legged Gull** was reported from Nantucket in Jan, although no details were submitted. Two Forster's Terns were in s. New England: one at Trustom Pond N.W.R., *Washington*, RI 6 Dec and another at Stratford, CT 29 Dec. The latter represented a record late date for the Nutmeg State.

Common Murres seem to have staged something of an invasion in Feb, when 18 were found on a pelagic trip off Rhode Island on the 9th, and 21 were reported from P'town on the 24th. The only other alcid records of note were a few Razorbills off Connecticut; counts of this species at traditional hot spots in Massachusetts were unremarkable.

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eastern Screech-Owls are not known to move far from their usual haunts in s. New England (and nw. Vermont), but nonetheless one wandered over 80 km to Springvale, *York*, ME, where it was hit by a car 30 Jan and taken to a rehabilitator. Snowy Owl numbers were the highest in four or five years. Rough numbers for each state are as follows: 4 in Vermont, 6 in New Hampshire, 12-15 in Maine, 30 in Massachusetts, 5 in Connecticut, and 3 in Rhode Island. Not necessarily included in these totals were the 7 Snowies found on the Isles of Shoals C.B.C. (*York*, ME and *Rockingham*, NH) 16 Dec. Unfortunately, many of these owls appeared to be having trouble finding enough food, since several were turned in to wildlife rehabilitators in Massachusetts and Maine. The only other n. strigids were in Maine: a Great Gray Owl in Damariscotta, *Lincoln* 4-20 Feb (ph. B. Twarog) and a dead Boreal Owl in Westfield, *Aroostook* 15 Jan.

Two unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds graced the Region this winter. The first appeared at a feeder in Newport, RI 10 Dec and stayed through 23 Jan (C. Raithel). It was tentatively identified as a Rufous, and photographs are currently being reviewed by hummingbird experts in California. The other bird was at Chatham, MA feeder 1-21 Jan (ph., m. ob.). One wonders how these birds arrived in the Region; they were the first mid-winter records of any hummingbird for New England. Numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in s. New England were roughly normal.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Typically, the only flycatchers in this report are a few Eastern Phoebe from e. Massachusetts in Dec. These were around again, although this time they continued into Feb, but the real phoebe action was elsewhere. Farthest afield was a well-described bird in Barnard, *Windsor*, VT 28 Dec, while the award for persistence goes to one at Rochester, *Strafford*, NH, which was present at least through 16 Feb (D. Abbott). Three **Ash-throated Flycatchers** lingered into Dec after the fall mini-invasion of the Northeast. One was at Bath, *Sagadahoc*, ME 15 Dec (†M. Dauphin), and Massachusetts hosted 2: Gloucester 16-22 Dec (†, m. ob.), and M.V. 22-24 Dec (no details, v. o.). Western Kingbirds were on M.V. and Nantucket in early Dec, while another was present at Wood's Hole, *Barnstable*, MA 4 Dec through 18 Jan (G. Hirth). The only time this species has survived longer than this was in 1953, when 2 frequented a feeder on M.V. for an entire winter.

Blue-headed Vireos numbered 3 in Dec: 2 in Massachusetts and one in Connecticut. Although Northern Shrikes showed early signs of another good winter, overall reports declined after mid-Dec. The Gray Jay that showed up at a feeder in Windsor, *Berkshire*, MA in the fall remained through at least 5 Jan. This season's wayward Fish Crow was reported from Northampton, *Hampshire*, MA in mid-Jan.

After a moderate fall flight, Boreal Chickadees showed up at several locations away from their traditional n. haunts. Closest to home was one at Springfield, *Sullivan*, NH (D. Hayward). Six more were in Massachusetts: 2 each in *Berkshire*, *Quabbin*, and *Middlesex*. Another was reported without details from Goshen, *Litchfield*, CT 6 Jan. Carolina Wrens were exceptionally well reported from s. parts of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, but there are few better indicators of the mild winter than an individual of this species at Caribou, *Aroostook*, ME 7 Dec—16 Jan. Weather enthusiasts will recall that this town, near the extreme n. tip of the Pine Tree State, regularly holds the honor of having the coldest temperatures in New England.

Three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found on Cape Cod in Dec, 2 on a C.B.C. 16 Dec and one at P'town 27 Dec. It's worth noting, once again, that Hermit Thrushes showed up n. and inland in respectable numbers. Less expected were the Region's 5 Varied Thrushes. The first was at Westport, MA 15 Dec, with a 2nd for Massachusetts at Southwick 22-23 Dec. Later in the season, a female made a one-day appearance in a fruiting tree outside a McDonald's in Belchertown, *Hampshire*, MA 19 Feb. Farther north, one was at Deer I., *Hancock*, ME throughout Dec (*fide* WT), and another frequented a

feeder in Sutton, *Caledonia*, VT from 3 Jan onward. Still less expected was a **Townsend's Solitaire** at Essex, *Essex*, MA 4 Dec—8 Feb. The thrush of the season, however, was a well-described **Wood Thrush** in Plainfield, *Sullivan*, NH 5 Dec (P. Stettenheim), the first winter record for n. New England.

Maine's **Sage Thrasher** was last reported from Nubble Light, *York* 6 Dec (*fide* P. Vickery). American Pipits again wintered in small numbers in coastal New Hampshire. Early in the winter, Bohemian Waxwings showed signs of a good invasion, but most didn't get far from the n. portions of the n. three states. Exceptions include birds at M.V. and Nantucket on 22 & 29 Dec, respectively. High counts to the n. included 300 in Orono, *Penopscot*, ME and 220 at Thetford, *Orange*, VT.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Despite the aseasonal temperatures, lingering warbler diversity was unremarkable in 2001-2002. A Cape May was found on the Block I., *Washington*, RI C.B.C. 17 Dec, a Pine lingered in Portland through at least 2 Jan, a Palm was inland at Hadley, *Hampshire*, MA 4 Feb, a Black-and-white was at W. Brooksville, *Hancock*, ME 7 Dec (*fide* WT), and an American Redstart was in Portsmouth, RI 15 Dec. A Black-throated Green Warbler at Canton, *Hartford*, CT 5 Jan set a record-late date for Connecticut. Two Wilson's Warblers made it into Dec: one in Falmouth, MA 15 Dec, and the other at Milford, *New Haven*, CT 26 Dec. *Seiurus* warblers were seemingly everywhere, including 4 Ovenbirds (2 in Massachusetts, singles in New Hampshire and Maine) and an unprecedented 3 Northern Waterthrushes: at Milford, CT 20 Jan (D. Sosensky); Bourne, MA 27 Jan (S. Miller); and N. Marshfield, *Plymouth*, MA 10 Feb (GdE), all of which set record-late dates for their respective states. Visitors from the West graced three states. The **Audubon's Warbler** at Rye NH, first discovered in late Nov, was still being seen in Feb and appears to have survived the winter. To the s., a **Townsend's Warbler** was at Centerville, *Barnstable*, MA 28 Dec—3 Feb. And to the w., a **MacGillivray's Warbler** was in New Milford, *Litchfield*, CT 15-16 Dec (D. Tripp et al.). Almost a month later, yet another MacGillivray's was at Silver Sands S.P., *New Haven*, CT 12 Jan (†B. Devine). Depending on how one deals with a controversial specimen, and pending review by the state record committee, these may represent the first records for Connecticut. Yellow-breasted Chats were fairly widespread in s. New England, with the northernmost record being the aforementioned bird in Rye, NH. Another chat in the Granite State was a *banded* individual on offshore Star I., *Rockingham* 16 Dec,

sparking speculation that it remained in the area after fall banding activities on nearby Appledore I., *York*, ME.

A **Western Tanager** was reported from Bridgeton, *Cumberland*, ME 29 Dec, while a 2nd was seen sporadically in the Orleans/Eastham area of Cape Cod during Jan. Eastern Towhees, like Hermit Thrushes and Gray Catbirds, were widespread this winter, with an individual on Mount Desert I., *Hancock*, ME 18 Dec (WT) being the farthest north. After their "invasion" in 2000-2001, sparrows as a group provided no remarkable numbers or vagrants. The sole exception, and it was a good one, was an imm. **Lark Bunting** at Middleton, *Newport*, RI 15 Dec (†C. Raithel). At the very end of Feb, the s. parts of the Region were practically swamped with Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles, with peak numbers of 6000 and 2000 respectively. As has become a regular event, 3 Boat-tailed Grackles remained near their breeding areas in Stratford, CT, where they were seen at least through 14 Jan. The Region's only Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Westport, MA 20 Jan. A **Bullock's Oriole** visited a feeder in Dover, *Strafford*, NH during the first half of Jan, providing the Granite State with its first record since 1976. Baltimore Orioles were relatively widespread, with at least 4 in Massachusetts, 2 in Connecticut, and a quite impressive 7 in Maine. Most of these were in Dec, but one made it through 27 Feb at Brunswick, *Cumberland*, ME, suggesting successful overwintering.

The finches of the season were Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls, although numbers were generally lower than during the last invasion (1999-2000). The grosbeaks were confined to the traditional spots of n. New England and w. Massachusetts, with flock sizes generally under 30 birds. Common Redpolls went farther southward, with a few individuals reaching Nantucket and coastal Rhode Island. Except in parts of Maine, redpoll flocks rarely exceeded 100 birds. A few Hoary Redpolls were reported in Maine and New Hampshire. The other finch that moved southward was White-winged Crossbill, which once again seemed to concentrate in se. coastal areas. Flocks of 40 or more were at Salisbury MA and Charlestown RI, and the farthest afield were a dozen or so on Nantucket. Purple Finches were most notable for their absence, and Evening Grosbeaks, while widespread, were generally quite local and in small numbers.

Addenda

The Pink-footed Goose at Dennis, MA 16 Jan—20 Feb 1999 and the Yellow-legged Gull at Nantucket, MA 28 Dec 2000 were not accepted by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee.

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The warm, dry weather from last fall continued through the winter. With average temperatures seven to nine degrees Fahrenheit above normal, it was one of the warmest on record. And with precipitation as much as 15 cm below normal in some areas, it was also among the driest. Most of the Region remained without significant snow cover through the period. Lakes remained partially ice-free as much as a month later than normal. Even in the snow-belt areas, where up to 2.5 m of snow are normal, there were often no more than a few cm on the ground. As a result, with no fewer than 19 species of warbler reported, waterfowl and many half-hardy species remained n. well into the season.

The season's highlights included reports of Slaty-backed Gull and Long-billed Murrelet in New York, Bell's Vireo in New Jersey, "Western" Flycatcher in Pennsylvania, and Mew Gull and Dusky Flycatcher in Delaware. Also notable were Western Grebe, Least Flycatcher, two continuing Calliope Hummingbirds, a winter Tennessee

Warbler, and Townsend's Solitaire in New York; Townsend's Warbler in New Jersey, and a continuing Great White Heron in Delaware.

Abbreviations: Brigantine (Brigantine Unit, Forsythe Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, *Atlantic*, NJ); Hamlin Beach (Hamlin Beach S.P., *Monroe*, NY); Montauk Pt. (Montauk Point S.P., *Suffolk*, NY); Sandy Hook (Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway Nat'l Recreation Area, *Monmouth*, NJ).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A Pacific Loon in largely alternate plumage at several locations near Eastport and E. Moriches, *Suffolk*, NY 22 Dec—7 Jan (Steve Biasetti) was enjoyed by many observers. There are only about a half-dozen accepted records of this species for New York. With fewer than 20 reported, Red-necked Grebe's numbers were low, reflecting open water conditions farther north. Numbers of Eared Grebes were also low with only 3 reported: Cayuga L., NY 22-24 Dec (KM, JM); Essex, *Essex*, NY 26 Jan (SeO, Gerard Phillips, and Christopher Tessaglia-Hymes) just the 2nd record for New York's Adirondack-Champlain Region; and Dewey Beach, *Sussex*, DE 27 Jan (MG et al.). A Western Grebe at Hamlin Beach 2 Jan (†DT, details to NYSARC and to Genesee Ornithological Society/Rochester Birding Association records committee) was convincingly distinguished from Clark's Grebe. New York has only about six previous accepted records of Western Grebe. A pelagic trip from Brielle, *Monmouth*, NJ 1 Dec to the Hudson Canyon produced 52 Northern Fulmars (PG et al.), a good count, possibly the highest since the establishment of the offshore Exclusive Economic Zone,

which limits the foreign fishing fleet to waters beyond 200 nautical miles from shore.

Single Northern Gannets were at Cayuga L., NY 19-20 Dec (Aaron Greene), an unusual inland location, and at several locations on L. Ontario in Dec to 5 Jan. Brown Pelicans took advantage of the mild weather with possibly the same 2 both at Cape May, NJ 5 Dec (Dave Githens) and at Avalon, *Cape May*, NJ 6 Dec (CS). One was also noted at Cape May Pt., NJ 13 Jan (DHe) and 2 at Broadkill Beach, *Sussex*, DE 15 Jan (Jennifer Multhropp). An American Bittern at Howland I. WMA, *Cayuga*, NY 1 Jan (†Sue Boettger, †Bill Gruenbaum) provided the 4th winter record in the Oneida L. Basin. A very late Least Bittern was found dying at E. Point, *Cumberland*, NJ 2 Jan (CS, JD), and a more successful one was at Cape May Point S.P., NJ 8 Jan (D. Soares). But the heron of the season was the Great White Heron remaining from last fall at Woodland Beach Wildlife Area, *Kent*, DE, seen 3 Dec and 1 Jan (MG). Now uncommon at any time, Cattle Egrets remained at Bridgehampton, *Suffolk*, NY on 16 Dec (Shai Mitra, PAB) and at Skaneateles, *Onondaga*, NY until 19 Dec, a record-late date for the Oneida L. Basin. It seemed bound to happen; Black Vultures outnumbered Turkey Vultures on several C.B.C.s. The Southern Orange County C.B.C., NY had a record total of 182 on 22 Dec.

WATERFOWL

A *Pink-footed Goose*, perhaps the same individual that visited e. Pennsylvania for three consecutive winters and last seen three years ago, was at Upper Makefield Twp. and Buckingham Twp. 27 Jan—3 Feb (DF et al.). The records committee accepted at least the first of these reports. With 21 Greater White-fronted Geese reported from all four states, numbers, though slightly lower than last year's, were about normal. Seventeen Ross's Geese in all four states made an excellent number, about double what would have been considered outstanding only four or five years ago. Small Canada Geese, most reported as Richardson's, continued their recent trend, with singles at Tom's R., *Ocean*, NJ 15 Dec (Don Sutherland, Donna Desjardins, Lynn Hunt), Prime Hook N.W.R. *Sussex*, DE 12 Jan (MG), Waryas Pk., *Dutchess*, NY 28 Jan (Chet Vincent); and multiples in *Bucks*, PA, including birds at Peace Valley Pk. and Nockamixon S.P. in Jan and Feb (DF, AM, PL et al.) and Calverton and East Hampton, *Suffolk*, NY through the season.

Barnacle Geese of unknown origin echoed the influx occurring elsewhere along the Eastern Seaboard. In *Suffolk*, NY, last fall's remained at East Hampton until at least 20 Jan but reappeared at Wainscott 17 Feb (HM); a different individual was at Mattituck, NY 19 Jan (Paul

Gillen). One was at Bayside, *Queens*, NY 1 Jan—23 Feb (Art Scopec et al.), yet another visited Buckingham Twp., *Bucks*, PA 2-19 Feb (AM, PL), and one was at Merrill Cr. Res. *Warren*, NJ 5-9 Feb (RW, Tom Halliwell et al.).

More than a dozen Trumpeter Swans were reported from nw. New York. In *Monroe*, 2 at Irondequoit Bay (RS, m. ob.) and one at Bear Cr. for the month of Jan had wing tags probably indicating an Ontario origin. In *Erie*, one at Buckhorn I. S.P. 10 & 17 Feb (Michael DeSha, Tom LeBlanc) and 4 at Randolph 15 Feb (†Jack Skalikci) had collars from a migration project at Oak Orchard W.M.A., *Genesee*, NY. And in *Oswego*, 5 were at Fair Haven 18 Feb (†BP). Four Common Teal visited the Region, 3 in New York and one in New Jersey. A female Tufted Duck returned to Rehoboth, *Sussex*, DE for the season, and single males were at the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers, *Monmouth*, NJ 6-22 Jan (FT, BD) and at Patchogue, *Suffolk*, NY 12-21 Jan (Diana Teta). Tufted Duck x scaup hybrids, all males, were at Rehoboth Beach, DE 26 Jan (MG), the Navesink R., NJ 28 Jan (SB), and Massapequa, *Suffolk*, NY 21-24 Feb (Ken Feustel, RJK). Eighteen Harlequin Ducks at Barnegat Lt. S.P., *Monmouth*, NJ 30 Dec was the highest count, with a dozen others scattered through the Region. Nine Barrow's Goldeneye reported was typical for recent years. A male and 2 females were at Sandy Hook 6 Jan to season end (FT, BD), with 6 singles scattered through the Region.

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES

Reports of 8 early-winter Ospreys were exceptional. The latest were 2 at Selkirk Shores S.P., *Oswego*, NY 28-29 Dec (†Don Coogan) for a first Oneida L. Basin winter record. The earliest arrivals, all on 15 Feb a full month before expected, were 2 at E. Hampton, NY and one in s. *Cape May*, NJ (Judy Lukens). Several reporters remarked that the low numbers of Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, and Short-eared Owls this season could be attributed to a low Meadow Vole population this year. A very late Broad-winged Hawk 2 Dec at W. Cape May, NJ (Shawnee Finnegan) was a surprise. A gray Gyrfalcon was reported at Westport, *Essex*, NY 15 Dec (J&PT, Richard & Susan Stewart), along L. Champlain, one of the better areas in the Region for this very rare falcon. Another was reported at Mispillion Inlet, *Kent/Sussex*, DE 5 Jan (†CB, Karen Bennett), where it is decidedly more rare. There is only one previous record of Gyrfalcon in Delaware. And a white Gyrfalcon, the rarest morph in the area, was reported without details at Prospect Park, *Brooklyn*, NY 27 Jan (Steve Nanz, Inara Schwartz).

A Common Moorhen surprised two observers at Mendon Ponds Pk., *Monroe*, NY 27 Jan (DT,

Mike Davids), where there are only about a half-dozen winter records. Eighteen Sandhill Cranes at Seneca Falls, *Seneca*, NY 15 Dec (John Van Niel) was the highest count this season, while 12 at Pomfret, *Chautauqua*, NY 1-21 Jan (JoG, m. ob.) provided a first winter record as well as a new maximum count for the state's Niagara Frontier Region. The crane flock at Bostwick L., *Salem*, NJ returned this year, with 2 Sandhill Cranes and 6 Sandhill x Common Crane hybrids there 10 Feb among other dates (WD, Alfred Driscoll).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

A pelagic trip from Brielle, NJ 1 Dec turned up 19 Pomarine Jaegers (PG et al.). More interesting was one over L. Ontario at Derby Hill, *Oswego*, NY 13 Jan (Kevin McGann), the 2nd Jan record for the Oneida L. Basin. Rare in New York's Niagara Frontier Region at any season, an ad. Laughing Gull was a prize at Dunkirk Harbor, *Chautauqua* 3 & 6 Jan (†WD'A, †BK et al.). One at the Cape May ferry slip, NJ Jan—14 Feb was exceptionally late (Sandra Keller). Thirteen Black-headed Gulls for the season was unremarkable, but one at Oswego, NY 17 Dec (Richard Crossley) provided the Oneida L. Basin with its 9th record. After seeing a hybrid of Black-headed Gull found at Kiamesha L., *Sullivan*, NY 4 Feb and seen again 22-23 Feb in nearby Woodbourne (VF, ph. KM et al.), Lehman and others suggested the other parent was probably a Ring-billed Gull. The Bonaparte's Gull flock on the Niagara R., NY built to an estimated 50,000 on 13 Jan (WD'A), which was doubly remarkable because by mid-Jan numbers are usually low. However, by 5 Feb the flock had decreased to 3800 (Gordon Bellerby). A well-photographed Mew Gull at the Cherry I. Landfill near Wilmington, DE 15 Feb (ph. George L. Armistead, Matthew Sharp) will provide Delaware's 2nd record pending approval; the bird was clearly not a North American Mew Gull (*Larus canus brachyrhynchos*) and was more likely a nominate bird (Common Gull, *L. c. canus*) or possibly one of the Asian races, *heinei* or *kamschatchensis*. Two ad. California Gulls were

observed at the Niagara R., NY 2 Dec (WD'A), and one remained there until 18 Feb. While there are still very few records of California Gull in New York, this area has become one of the best places to find them. Record numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued this year, with the usual very large concentrations in *Bucks*, PA and adjacent Florence, *Burlington*, NJ. The highest count was 192 on the Southern Bucks County C.B.C. 30 Dec (Rick Mellon), with 166 of them at the Penn Manor tract across the Delaware from Florence. Immature Sabine's Gulls at Dunkirk Harbor, NY 1 Dec (JoG, Dick Miga) and on the Niagara R. at Buffalo, NY 3 Dec (Peter Yoerg) were late but not exceptionally so. Most individuals of this rare species pass through the Niagara Frontier Region in Sep and Oct, but some have been observed well into Dec.

The warmer weather held large numbers of Forster's Terns into Jan. Late high counts included 140 on the Rehoboth C.B.C., DE 29 Dec (*vide* Joseph Swertinski) and 20 at Cape May Pt. NJ 21 Jan (Tom & Patti Reed). Very unusual were 11 Black Skimmers on the Oceanville C.B.C., *Atlantic*, NJ 15 Dec, a new winter high count for New Jersey. Far from common, a Common Murre was reported at Montauk Pt. 25 Feb (John Fritz). Also not common, 2 Thick-billed Murres were reported, one on a pelagic trip from Brielle, NJ 1 Dec (†PG, †SB et al.) and one 26 Dec (PL) & 1 Jan (Jim Clinton) at Montauk Pt. But the alcid of the season was certainly a Long-billed Murrelet at Ithaca, *Tompkins*, NY 17-20 Dec (†SK, Taylor Kelling), providing New York's and the Region's 2nd record, with the first also from upstate. An Atlantic Puffin was seen on the Brielle pelagic trip 1 Dec (†PG et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A White-winged Dove visited a feeder at Montauk, *Suffolk*, NY 6-7 Dec (Peter & Kay Liss; no details received). Another was at Cape May Pt. 25 Feb through the end of the season (Karl Lukens, Andre Robinson, m. ob.). This individual, New Jersey's 15th record pending approval, was found where one appeared in Nov 1996.

SA An unidentified adult, winter, dark-mantled gull was discovered 4 Feb (VF) at Kiamesha L. in *Sullivan*, NY and relocated there 8 Feb (John Haas). In response to Haas's email posting, P. A. Buckley arranged to meet them. And on 20 Feb after extensive searching, it was relocated about 16 km away at the Neversink Res. Seen in the water, on the ice, and several times in flight, it clearly matched **Slaty-backed Gull**. Features noted included the "string of pearls" formed by the white sub-terminal spots on the primaries (observed on both dorsal and ventral surfaces); the broad white trailing edge to the upperwing; restricted black on outer primaries; smallish bill with slight gonydeal angle; light eye; dark eye patch; almost coral-red legs; and gray, not blackish, trailing edge to the underwing. Extensive searching on the following two days was unsuccessful. However on 23 Feb, an ad. Slaty-backed Gull, possibly the same individual, was observed at Seneca Falls, about a hundred miles NW (ph. SK, KM, JM) and superbly photographed. If confirmed, this will be New York's and the Region's 2nd record (or 2nd and 3rd records). (Many thanks to P.A. Buckley for help getting this straight.)



One of at least five Barnacle Geese in the Region this season, this one in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, south of New Hope 13 February 2002 associated with Canada Geese and departed with them, as did all other Barnacle Geese observed in the East. A flight on this scale (if indeed a flight was involved) had not been recorded previously. Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.

With reports of 50, Snowy Owls were quite common, and in some areas such as *Atlantic* and *Cape May*, NJ, where up to 13 were observed (possibly some duplication here), they were unusually so. Northern Saw-whet Owls had their best year in at least five, with 52 reported. Unusual was the total of 12 at Honeoye L., *Ontario*, NY 22 Dec (D. Van Horn et al.). In what may be the Region's best hummingbird winter, an *Archilochus* hummingbird in Yonkers, *Westchester*, NY 7-23 Dec (Hugh Martin, MB, TWB, ph. Mike Stubblefield) remains unidentified to species. But the photographs are said to be excellent, so this may change. If Ruby-throated, this individual would be record-late for New York, while if Black-chinned it would provide a new state record. Last season's 2 *Calliope* Hummingbirds remained at Ft. Tryon Pk. in New York City, one each to 26 and 27 Dec. Two new Rufous Hummingbirds, now annual, visited the Region, with one near Lewes, *Sussex*, DE Dec—mid-Jan (Frank Rohrbacher) trapped, measured, and banded (MG), and one at Cape May, NJ 8 Dec—13 Jan (Anita Van Heeswyk, m. ob.) also trapped, measured, and banded (MG). And one each continued from last season at Yonkers, NY until 6 Jan, and at Barnegat Light, *Ocean*, NJ until 15 Jan. The Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird remained at Knowlton Twp., *Warren*, NJ until 12 Jan. Finally, three unidentified hummingbirds were reported, including 2 probable *Selasphorus*. Not to be outdone, Red-headed Woodpeckers staged their strongest winter invasion in recent memory. About 80 were reported. The highest totals were from *Morris*, NJ, where 14 were observed at Great Swamp N.W.R. 15 Dec (Bill Boyle et al.) and 18 at Troy Meadows 23 Dec (Roger Johnson et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Westport, *Essex* in far n. New York produced a

Say's Phoebe 24 Feb (†Carole & James Wilkinson), the first recorded in the Adirondack-Champlain Region and only the state's 2nd winter record later than Dec. Four Ash-throated Flycatchers, a rare species but recently appearing annually, visited the Region. Three were on Long I., NY: one at Ft. Tilden, *Queens* 1 Dec; one at Northville, *Suffolk* 4 Dec (Mary-Laura Lamont); and one on the Central Suffolk C.B.C. 22 Dec (Steve Walter et al.). The 4th remained from last season at Bedminster, *Somerset*, NJ until 9 Dec (Susan Endres). Five Western Kingbirds were present, 2 on Long I., one in New Jersey, and one in Delaware, that latter remaining well into Jan. The farthest afield was at Hamlin Beach 8 Dec (DT) for the 5th *Monroe*, NY record, with all previous ones in Aug and Sep (*vide* RS). Northern Shrikes, with about 55 reported (well below the highs of the past two years) were present in more normal numbers, some well south. The Cape May

SA This was a winter of *Empidonax* flycatchers, with three reports almost surely unprecedented. All three are pending approval by the respective records committees. One reported as "99% sure it is a Least" Flycatcher was found on the Central Park C.B.C. in New York City 16 Dec (Kenn Kaufman, Scott Haber). The remaining uncertainty is because Dusky Flycatcher could not be ruled out. Call-notes eliminated most other western species. Details included a small bill, rather distinctive eye-ring, and other more subtle features. If confirmed, this would provide a new record-late date for New York and perhaps the entire Region as well. At Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area, *New Castle*, DE a Dusky Flycatcher was discovered 31 Dec (†Bill Murphy, Bert Filmeyr) and first identified to species by Gustafson. Present to at least 22 Jan, this individual was well photographed (Ray Wilson) and captured, measured, and banded (MG). Except for a hypothetical record in Pennsylvania, this is potentially the Region's first. Finally, on the Southern Lancaster C.B.C. at Fishing Creek, *Lancaster*, PA, a bird widely called a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, but more safely considered a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher, was found 16 Dec (†Barry Blust et al.). Present until 26 Dec this individual was also photographed and we understand recordings of its calls made. If, in addition to the thorough description and the photographs, the recordings of the calls reach the records committee, the identity may be narrowed to species. Interestingly enough, Pennsylvania's only confirmed previous record, one of Pacific-slope Flycatcher, comes from this same C.B.C. in 1990. There is one other record for the Region, a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran in New Jersey.

C.B.C. 16 Dec produced a Bell's Vireo (Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis). Remaining until at least 12 Jan and seen by many, this individual provides New Jersey with its 5th record. Late Blue-headed Vireos included one at Media, *Delaware*, PA 15 Dec (Sandra Sherman et al.) and one in Cape May 20 Dec (JD). Two Fish Crows were a surprise in Plattsburgh, *Clinton*, NY 24 Feb (Dana Rohleder), far n. of their normal wintering range.

The warm winter produced a number of very late swallow reports. Eleven Tree Swallows wintering at the Wilmington, DE sewage treatment plant (JW, SaO, JeG) dwindled to 6 by season's end. Exceptionally late Northern Rough-winged Swallows include one at Sandy Hook 2 Dec (PL), one at Niagara Falls, NY 8 Dec (WD'A), and one at the Wilmington sewage plant 22 Dec (JW, SaO, JeG, vt.). Rare after Oct, these reports probably provide record-late dates for Delaware and New York. A Barn Swallow remained at the Wilmington sewage plant until mid-Jan (JW, SaO, JeG). Similarly, there was a rash of 9 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher reports in Dec, the latest at Cape May, NJ until 8 Jan. A Townsend's Solitaire at Bond L., *Niagara*, NY 23 Dec through the season (WD'A, m. ob.) provided a first for New York's Niagara Frontier Region, about the 7th NY record, and perhaps the first away from the se. corner of the state. Astonishing anywhere in North America in winter, a Wood Thrush was found on a C.B.C. in e. *Orange*, NY 15 Dec (John Tramontano et al.). Two Varied Thrushes were reported in New Jersey: one, a very elusive female, at Garret Mt. Pk., *Passaic* 30 Dec—24 Feb, the state's 17th (m. ob.); and one near Pemberton, *Burlington* 22 Jan (Fred Lesser, Alex Tongas). American Pipits in unusual locations included singles at Elba, *Orleans*, NY 4 Jan (†BK), a first Jan record for the state's Niagara Frontier Region; at Elizabethtown, NY, *Essex* 22 Jan (J&PT) and at Westport, NY 9 Feb (Robert Hagar, SeO), both first county winter records; and at Greece, *Monroe*, NY (DT), the first winter record for the state's Genesee Region. The season brought a major influx of Bohemian Waxwings. Reports totaled about 800, mostly from the ne. corner of New York. The highest counts, all in New York, included 235 on the Ferrisburg C.B.C., *Essex* 15 Dec, 160 at New Hartford, *Oneida* 26 Feb, 100 at Massena, *St. Lawrence* 9 Feb, and 100 at Kirkland, *Oneida*, 18 & 26 Feb.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Single Tennessee Warblers at Park Station Pk., *Chemung*, NY 2 Dec (Dave Russell) and Patchogue, *Suffolk*, NY 10 Feb (TWB, vt. Andy Guthrie) provided the state's 2nd and 3rd winter records and the first in Feb. Exceptionally late Northern Parulas included one at Central Park,



Long-billed Murrelet, distinguished at the species level from Marbled Murrelet only in the last decade, has shown an astonishing propensity for vagrancy into the continent's eastern half in recent years, a pattern of dispersal not seen in its close congener. It is not yet annual in the continent's interior, however, and its appearance anywhere here is a major event. This bird was a marvelous find just north of Stewart Park, at the southern end of Cayuga Lake, 17 (here) through 20 December 2001. Photograph by Kevin J. McGowan.

New York City until 1 Jan (Tom Fiore) and one 26 Jan to season end at Washington Boro, Lancaster, PA, both dates probably record late. Sandy Hook produced a **Townsend's Warbler** 1-6 Dec (Ken Klapper, m. ob., ph.) at the same location as one in Dec 1980, for New Jersey's 8th record. A Yellow-throated Warbler at Wissler Run Pk., Lancaster, PA 16 Dec—30 Jan (m. ob.) was observed eating insects out of spider webs and remained living under and inside a picnic pavilion. Late Prairie Warblers included one at Allaire S.P., Monmouth, NJ 9 Dec (SB, Linda Mack), one at Alpine, Bergen, NJ 15 & 17 Dec (Linn Pierson, Brian Moscatello), and one at Bombay Hook N.W.R., Kent, DE 23 Dec (DAC, ph. Lewis Dumont). Exceptionally late Ovenbirds included one at Ft. Tryon Pk., New York City 5 Dec—26 Jan and one at New Lisbon, Burlington, NJ 12-19 Jan (Len Little). More surprising were Wilson's Warblers, one each at Pleasant Valley, Staten I., NY 29 Dec (Howie Fischer, *fide* Henry Flam), at Prospect Pk., Brooklyn, NY until 6 Jan, and at Cape May Pt. S.P., NJ until early Jan (m. ob.).

Sandy Hook harbored a Western Tanager 27 Jan (ph. TB). About a third of New Jersey's records of this rare species are in winter. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were at Cape May, NJ, one for the season, as well as another one for most of Dec (PL et al.). Another was rare at Pt. Phillips, Northampton, PA 26 Dec—20 Jan (RW). Solo Lark Sparrows were at Cape May Court House, NJ for the season (Sandy Sherman, m. ob.) and at Benjamin Rush S.P., Philadelphia 2-18 Feb. Unusual in New Jersey in Dec and exceedingly rare in Jan, 2 Grasshopper Sparrows were reported there, one at Cape May 16 Dec (Tony Leukering), and one at Holmdel, Monmouth 20 Jan (Mike Fahay). Even more surprising, a

Henslow's Sparrow was found at Big Brook Preserve, Marlboro, Monmouth, NJ 2 Jan—1 Feb (ph. TB, m. ob.). An ad. and an imm. Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow were at Martins Creek, Northampton, PA (RW). Single Oregon Juncos were at Eden, Erie, NY for the season (†Robert Andrie) and Ulster, NY 3 Dec (Seldon Spencer). An Indigo Bunting was a rare find at Cape May, NJ 15 Jan (DHe). New Jersey has only three or four previous winter records of this species.

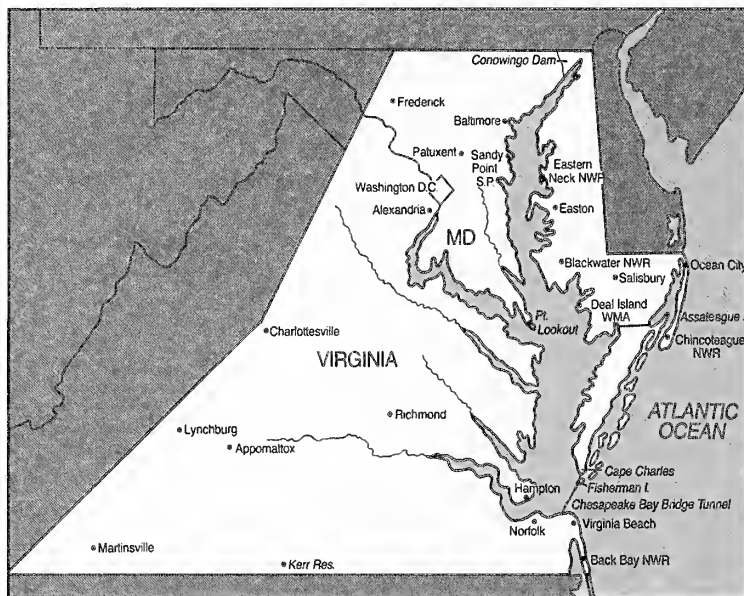
More than 30 Brewer's Blackbirds were present at their customary location in Leipsic, Kent, DE 23 Dec until at least 23 Feb (John Miller, Matt Hafner). About 30 Baltimore Orioles was a very strong showing, with a high count of 14 individuals in Cape May, NJ in Dec, 5 of which persisted into Jan. Following the pattern set last fall, Pine Grosbeaks were present in the largest numbers in years, with well over 300 reported, all in upstate New York. Peak counts were 80+ at Cherry Plain, Rensselaer, NY 17 Jan (Matt Young), 70 at Tioughnioga W.M.A., Madison, NY, 60 at New Hartford, Oneida, NY, and 41 on the Plattsburgh C.B.C., NY 16 Dec, with many reports of smaller numbers mostly in the n. half of New York. Except in se. Pennsylvania, Purple Finches were scarce. But there, some holdovers from last fall's large movement remained, with about 150 in Nockamixon Twp., Bucks, PA and good numbers elsewhere in the area. With about 15 reports of small numbers, Red Crossbills were widely scattered. Only four reports reached double digits, all from the Coastal Plain. Following last year's major influx in the Adirondacks, White-winged Crossbills showed a big decline yet still outnumbered Red Crossbills. Peak counts were 50 at High Point S.P., Sussex, NJ (m. ob.), dwindling to smaller numbers by season end, and 50 at Paul Smith's, Franklin, NY 27 Jan (Rob Jett). With reports totaling more than 5000 individuals, Common Redpolls staged a major invasion, though most remained in n. New York. The highest counts were 1000+ at Gansevoort, Saratoga, NY 22 Jan (Robert Budliger); 500 in Highland Forest, Onondaga, NY 5 Jan; and several between 300 and 500. As would be expected there were about 15 Hoary Redpolls reported, some well documented, and all from n. New York. Last fall's big movement of Pine Siskins fizzled out in mid-Dec. There were about 30 reports, most of small numbers, most in Dec, and most from s. parts of the Region. With about 30 reports, most of small numbers, Evening Grosbeaks were largely confined to upstate New York. High counts were 308 on the Johnstown-Gloversville C.B.C., Fulton, NY 22 Dec; 150-200 at De Ruyter, Madison, NY; and 140 on the Saranac L. C.B.C., Franklin/Essex, NY 29 Dec.

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Middle Atlantic Coast



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The mild weather of this season was strongly reflected in reports of lingering hardy and semi-hardy species, especially from the Regional C.B.C. data. Birds that winter annually, usually in small numbers—such as phoebes, thrashers, and catbirds—scored record-high counts on a large number of C.B.C.s. Other unusual lingerers such as Least and Spotted Sandpipers, Laughing Gulls, Forster's Terns, and some exceptional warblers strengthened the pattern. The Audubon C.B.C. website (<<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>>) was invaluable again this year, as the count data were far easier to access. I would like to thank Todd M. Day for helping to track down data on some records.

Abbreviations: Assat. (Assateague Island, Worcester, MD); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel complex, s. of Northampton, VA); D.C. (District of Columbia); p. a. (pending acceptance by state records committee); Vaughn (E. A. Vaughn W.M.A., Worcester, MD). All locations can be assumed to be in Maryland except that each Virginia location is noted as such the first time it is mentioned in the text.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The Mathews, VA C.B.C. 30 Dec had good totals for Red-throated Loon (107), while a number of Regional C.B.C.s counted record-high counts of Pied-billed Grebes. Two **Western Grebes** seen together (!) at The Wildfowl Trust, at Kent Narrows, *Queen Anne's* 12 Jan (p. a. FF, P. Webb, v. o.) were unfortunately not seen after the morning of 13 Jan and were undocumented, despite being seen by a number of observers. A Clark's Grebe was reported from the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Henry, Virginia Beach, first noted near 87th Street 18 Dec (Elisa Enders, Frank Enders et al.) and again just a few km away at Ft. Story 31 Dec (p. a., †Mike Iwanik, DLH, David Clark). Written documentation is strongly suggestive of the species, but for a rarity of this magnitude, more compelling descriptions are needed that would rule out the possibility of a hybrid Clark's x Western Grebe conclusively. While there are some 50+ East Coast records pertaining to definite Western Grebes, Clark's Grebe has yet to be documented well e. of its regular range. The Virginia Avian Records Committee has accepted a sight record from the C.B.B.T. 11 Feb 2000, but until such time as unequivocal documentation is obtained, I prefer to consider this species hypothetical in the Region and on the East Coast. Every possible effort should be made to obtain photographs or videotape of this species out of range.

Two pelagic trips off Virginia Beach, VA succeeded in finding all regular winter pelagic species (Table 1). The 503 Northern Fulmars 3 Feb (BP et al.) made for a record Virginia count, and, amazingly, most were about 65 km offshore around a fishy slick created by a pod of 3-5 feeding Orcas, themselves establishing one of very few Regional records!

Table 1. Totals for Virginia Beach pelagic trips 3 February & 9 February 2002.

Species	3 Feb	9 Feb
Northern Fulmar	503	144
Manx Shearwater	7	4
Red Phalarope	52	40
Great Skua	1	1
Black-legged Kittiwake	61	178
Little Gull	1	0
Razorbill	54	42
Atlantic Puffin	34	12
Dovekie	1	0

The Mathews C.B.C. noted 28 Brown Pelicans; this species continues its expansion in the Region, with more winter sightings coming from increasingly farther up the Bay, as evidenced by one at Waterview, *Wicomico* 28 Dec (C&DB). A Great Cormorant at Salisbury, *Wicomico* 2 Jan (SHD) was a first local record and a surprise so far up a Chesapeake tributary; the trend toward more inland records of this species has also been noted in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York in recent years. Northern Gannets staged one of their most impressive movements into the Bay and coastal areas, with counts of minimally 13,000 at the C.B.B.T. on the Chesapeake Bay C.B.C. 26 Dec (ESB et al.), 14,100 on the Cape Charles C.B.C. 30 Dec, and 1304 on the Pt. Lookout C.B.C. 23 Dec, while 13 off *Dorchester* 1 Jan (JLS) were also late that far up the Bay. Double-crested Cormorant continues to expand as a wintering bird in the Region, with many counts reporting record highs, such as the 115 on the Annapolis C.B.C. 31 Dec.

The only noteworthy ardeids wintering at Deal were 49 Tricolored Herons 11 Jan (JLS), 11 Great Egrets and 20 Tricolored Herons 20 Feb (SHD), and 3 Glossy Ibis 11 (JLS) & 13 Jan (SHD). Tricolored Herons made a good showing for the Ocean City C.B.C. 28 Dec, with a record total of 10, half of which were noted in the area 26 Jan (GL), with 4 still present 17 Feb (MLH).

Regular reports of *hutchinsii* Canada Geese continue from areas of goose concentration Regionwide, with a notable high count of 13 in several *Cecil* locations 16 Jan (MJI, MH). A small-form Canada Goose photographed at Hunting

SA One of the great sensations in the Region this winter was a confiding ad. Barnacle Goose that frequented the Belle Haven, Fairfax, VA area of the Potomac R. and adjacent Cameron Run Regional Park and Bill Brenman Park, Alexandria 6 Jan—19 Feb (p. a. KG, m. ob., ph.). This species is common in captivity and escapes frequently. Although the Alexandria bird was unbanded and had all toes intact (collectors usually clip the halux), 4 Canada Geese accompanying the Barnacle Goose bore bands from near Peterborough, Ontario. Had the Barnacle been associating with Canada Geese from Greenland (as was the case in Connecticut this winter, for example), or Baffin Island, or another far-northern population, one might more easily make a case for natural vagrancy. The lack of wariness of the entire flock might also be construed as an argument against vagrancy. On the other hand, the species is highly migratory, has appeared as a legitimate vagrant in Newfoundland, has appeared most often in the Northeast (as one would expect of legitimate vagrants), and shows clear peaks of occurrence in November-December and March, migratory peaks that closely match those of Canada and Snow Geese with which they associate. It is best that birders continue to consider Barnacle Goose vagrancy an open question and look upon each record with an open mind, weighing the likelihood of either of the two possible theories to explain these appearances. I consider this bird most likely an escapee.

Cr., Fairfax, VA was present for several days starting 9 Feb (GM, BC, DM, ph. J. Alderfer) showed the extremely small proportions and dark, almost purplish breast of *B. c. minima*. However, *minima* is apparently the most common small Canada Goose form in captivity and breeds so far w. that natural vagrancy seems improbable. An ad. *flavirostris* Greater White-fronted Goose seen at the Pocomoke W.T.P., Worcester 26 Dec (MLH) was likely the same bird seen at nearby Sheephouse Rd. 15 Jan (MJI, GLA). One imm. n. of Townsend, Northampton found 30 Dec on the Cape Charles C.B.C. remained through 9 Jan (D. Matson, N. Matson, v. o.); another was seen 5 Jan (JLS) at Worton, Kent, and 2 were near John Brown Rd. Turf Farm, Queen Anne's 27 Jan (LMD, HLW), in an area that has hosted up to 2 fairly consistently since 1997.

Eurasian Wigeon, rarely if ever considered to be escaped former captives (though they are common in captivity as well), were at Deal, with one 12 Feb (C&DB) and 3 on 20 Feb (SHD), at Assat. 2 Dec (SHD) and 28 Dec (Ocean City

C.B.C.), at Upper Marlboro, Prince George's 22 Feb+ (DBY, v. o.), Lapidum, Harford 23 Feb (vt.JLS), Virginia Beach early Feb+, and Henricus, VA 27 Jan (Ben & Betsy Sanders). A record count of 252 Blue-winged Teal on the Southern Dorchester C.B.C. 26 Dec was an order of magnitude higher than other Maryland counts in Dec. Other Blue-winged Teal apparently wintered at Henricus, near Richmond, and may do so regularly at this good duck spot; 2 were seen in Dec (Ben Saunders) and 30 Jan (G. Weinberger). Gadwall were noted in excellent numbers, one of the more surprising counts being 850 at Perryville Park, Cecil 16 Jan (MJI, MH). The 1000 Redheads at Roaring Pt., Wicomico 11 Jan was an encouraging count and not far from the Pocomoke Sound flock, which has numbered up to 10,000 (JLS)! A Surf Scoter at Triadelphia Res., Montgomery/Howard 5 Jan (EH, †NM, ph. R. Cullison) was very rare inland in mid-winter, though a pair of Long-tailed Ducks there 2 Feb (NM) might have been early migrants. Another Surf Scoter at Sandy River Res., Prince Edward, VA, 12 Nov—19 Dec (MSt) might have been a lingering fall migrant. A flyby female Harlequin Duck at Back Bay N.W.R. 29 Dec (†PWS, BP, ESB, GP) was the 2nd for the Back Bay C.B.C. in its 62-year history. Another flyby female was rare in the Bay at Pt. Lookout S.P. 23 Dec (†MJI, MH). A female Common Merganser at Public Landing 26 Jan—17 Feb (GL; ph. MJI, MLH et al.) was an unusual Worcester find.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

A dark Rough-legged Hawk at University of Maryland Central Farm 15 Dec (BO, EH) was rare for Howard. Two Ospreys at Pt. Lookout S.P. 30 Jan (M. Cribb) were apparently early returnees, the earliest such record for Maryland.

Lesser Yellowlegs might be increasing as a wintering bird in Maryland, as it has been annual at Lower Shore sites for most recent years; this winter, there were several reports from Dorchester and Somerset, highlighted by an exceptional count of 42 at Elliott I. on 9 Feb (JLS). Five Lesser Yellowlegs at Hunting Cr. 24 Feb (P. Sullivan, BA) were more odd at an inland locale in late winter. Long-billed Dowitcher has also been annual in coastal Maryland recently, with 3 at Elliott I. 29 Jan (HTA), 7 there 9 Feb (JLS), and 12 (plus 20 unidentified dowitchers) on the Ocean City C.B.C. 28 Dec; both areas have been consistent in recent years. Willets are also being found in Maryland more regularly in winter, and one Western Willet was on Assat. 16 Feb (vt. JLS). Spotted Sandpiper made news on a couple Regional C.B.C.s, with singles at Oyster, Northampton 30 Dec (GLA, MS) and Isle of Wight, Worcester 28-29 Dec (SRi, S. Hamilton, J. Sheppard), an Ocean City C.B.C. first. Extremely

rare in winter on the Upper Eastern Shore, and a first for the Denton C.B.C., were 3 Least Sandpipers at Ridgely W.T.P. 15 Dec (JLS, SRi et al.). Other notably late shorebirds included 15 Least Sandpipers, one Dunlin, and one unidentified dowitcher on the Banister River, VA C.B.C. 16 Dec. A juv. Pomarine Jaeger and an ad. Parasitic Jaeger at the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec were noteworthy in winter (RLAn, ESB et al.), while a Pomarine and an unidentified jaeger on the Ocean City C.B.C. 28 Dec and an imm. dark Pomarine 12 Jan (JLS) were even more so for Maryland waters.

Late Royal Terns were noted on several counts, including count-week on the Mathews C.B.C. 30 Dec. Maryland's latest-ever were one at North Beach, Calvert 16 Dec (Jug Bay C.B.C.; JLS) and on the Point Lookout C.B.C. 23 Dec (3 birds). Forster's Tern lingered in record numbers, with counts such as 456 on the Chincoteague C.B.C. 29 Dec and an amazing 1100 on the Ocean City C.B.C. 28 Dec, with 40 birds lingering in the Ocean City area through 17 Feb (MLH et al.) for a record Feb count in Maryland. Other Forster's stayed late for most Bay C.B.C.s but not much thereafter. The 3 Feb Virginia Beach pelagic trip (BP et al.) recorded Virginia's second-best Atlantic Puffin count (Table 1), most of which were concentrated from 64-104 km offshore, inshore from Norfolk Canyon, where there was a strong thermocline.

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Snowy Owls continued a good showing this season, with one at Craney 9 Jan—19 Feb the most widely enjoyed. Others were noted at the C.B.B.T. 3 Dec (bridge-tunnel staff, *fide* ESB), downtown Baltimore 27 Dec (J. Landers et al.), and Assat. 11 Feb (F. Saunders, ph. NS).

A female-type *Archilochus* hummingbird visited the feeders of Andy and Farimae Tate in Virginia Beach 6 Jan—5 Feb. Photographs of the bird seem to show the coloration, bill shape, dull face pattern, and most importantly, the primary shape characteristic of **Black-chinned Hummingbird**. Pending acceptance by the Virginia Avian Records Committee, this will represent a first state and Regional record, though another was identified (but not documented by photographs) from Portsmouth this past Oct (DLH). Black-chinned Hummingbird has been documented regularly in North Carolina in recent years (cf. *The Chat* 66: 3). Although Maryland had none, Virginia held at least 7 Rufous Hummingbirds this winter, with singles banded and identified in Loudoun (late Nov—17 Jan) and Albemarle, 2 in Chesterfield, and 3 in the Williamsburg area (*fide* MG). An unidentified *Selasphorus* visited a Springfield, Fairfax, feeder late Nov—10 Feb (v. o., ph. KG).

SA Each winter seems to outdo the last in terms of rare (and odd) gulls. In addition to the increasing cadre of unidentified “mystery” gulls (which I do not detail below), between 18 and 19 species of gull were identified in this Region, though at least two species (Silver/Red-billed Gull and Kelp Gull) present a problem of origin. In addition, another two gull species were reported without adequate details this season (Black-tailed Gull and Franklin’s Gull). *Compelling, thorough documentation is imperative for rare and unusual gulls; observers are encouraged to photograph their findings exhaustively.* Gull-watching is a relatively new activity in the Region, at least away from metropolitan D.C./Virginia/Maryland, and the high diversity of gulls documented this season suggests that the Chesapeake Bay could be one of the continent’s better gulling grounds—all the more reason to document these birds very carefully.

The season’s gull extravaganza commenced promptly with the arrival of the season’s first strong cold front 9 Dec: in the first large flight of Bonaparte’s Gulls down the Bay, an ad. **Sabine’s Gull** was seen well by many observers at the C.B.B.T. (DLH, LL, M. A. Byrd, VSO et al.), along with 3 imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes. The Sabine’s was the 2nd record for the C.B.B.T. (the first was 20–22 Jun 1968) and the 9th for Virginia. Little Gull was noted in small numbers (up to 4) around the mouth of Chesapeake Bay from the C.B.B.T. to Virginia Beach, and single Black-headed Gulls were seen at least three times in the same area (v. o.). A probable first-winter **Yellow-legged Gull** was described 24 Dec (†ESB) from the C.B.B.T., where there are two previous sight records. First-winter Yellow-legged Gull seems still to be very poorly known by North American birders and might be overlooked with some regularity.

If this winter had a theme larid, it was surely **California Gull**: when the winter’s reports are combined with the fall reports, 2001–2002 was clearly the best season ever. Single ads. were found at the C.B.B.T. 10 Feb (ph. A. Merritt) and Hunting Cr. 21 (E. Wilson et al.) & 24 (BA et al.) Feb, and first-winter birds, including the first well-documented individual of this age class in the Region, were seen at the *Prince William* Landfill 16 Feb (SCR et al., ph. B. Tekin) and at the *Cecil* Landfill 9 Feb (p. a. E. Blom, E.J. Scarpulla). The C.B.B.T. bird was probably a fourth-winter and likely an *albertaensis*, based on photos. The *Prince William* Landfill had several other highlights, including several Iceland Gulls, at least 2 Glaucous Gulls, and an apparent Herring x Glaucous Gull hybrid 23 Jan (ph. MJI). Undoubtedly the most interesting gull of the season was an ad. four-year gull photographed at the *Prince William* Landfill 31 Dec (ph., †SCR). Rottenborn’s extremely detailed description noted brownish eyes, mantle color a shade darker than Herring, pale gray primary pattern closely matching the mantle in color, and an extensive hood of transverse vermiculation in the head and neck, a plumage strongly suggesting ad. **Glaucous-winged Gull**. Given the relatively small bill, shallow gonydeal angle, and small size of this bird, it is conceivable that it represented a hybrid combination, perhaps Herring x Glaucous-winged. The Virginia Avian Records Committee will have a tough task assessing this record, which would be a first for the Region and the East Coast if judged a Glaucous-winged.

Overall this was a good winter for Glaucous Gull, with reports at a number of locations (Beulah Landfill, *Prince William* Landfill, Neabsco Creek, Salisbury Landfill), including a rarely-seen ad. at Salisbury Landfill, *Wicomico* 11 Jan (JLS). A small handful of Iceland Gulls was reported from the more productive landfills, mostly first-winters except for a third-winter at the Beulah Landfill 25 Jan—9 Feb (MJI, GLA, MH). A final gulling highlight was a straightforward ad. **Common Gull** (*Larus canus canus*) found by Brinkley among massive numbers of Ring-billed Gulls on the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec (ESB, D. Clark; vt. RLAn, ph. RLAK). Virginia has one previous record, documented by written description, as does Maryland (though the latter record has recently been called into question). Notably, another *Larus canus* was a first for Delaware 15 Feb 2002, and though its subspecific identity is in question, Common Gull seems most likely. Scrutinizing Ring-billed Gull flocks in the Region may feel tedious, but is worthwhile in light of these records. Among several **Thayer’s Gull** reports were first-winters at the C.B.B.T. 31 Dec (†PWS) and at the Salisbury Landfill 15 Jan (ph. MJI, ph. GLA), and a well-studied ad. at the C.B.B.T. 31 Dec (GLA, MS et al.). Rounding out the list, the consistent **Kelp Gull** continued at Sandgates, *Saint Mary’s* throughout the season. Finally, the (presumed) escapee Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*; sometimes split as Red-billed Gull, *Larus scopulinus*), first noted at Brown’s Station Landfill last winter, was seen 25 Dec at nearby Schoolhouse Pond, *Prince George’s* (DBY). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were noted in record-high numbers on the Back Bay C.B.C. (34) and the Chesapeake Bay C.B.C. (30+) and were found in particularly good numbers at most other gull concentration spots. Bonaparte’s and Laughing Gulls both lingered in the Region in excellent numbers, with many Regional C.B.C.s finding record-high counts, especially of Laughing Gull into late Dec (e.g., 44 on Annapolis C.B.C., 550+ at the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec). As has been the pattern in the Region, Laughing Gulls pulled out rapidly in early Jan and were unreported away from the Virginia Beach area after 10 Jan.

One of the more interesting questions this winter was whether a Western Kingbird at Eastern Neck N.W.R., *Kent* 9 Dec—27 Jan (S. McCandless, vt., ph., m. ob.) was the same individual noted here Nov 2000 to Jan 2001. Photographs appear to show an ad. bird, and it frequented the same location in which last year’s was reported, which had been the first long-staying wintering Western Kingbird ever in Maryland. Two Common Ravens 16 Feb (SCR et al.) were unusual for e. *Prince William*. Tree Swallows returned early, with 4 at Grove Neck W.M.A., *Cecil* being exemplary 24 Feb (JLS). Scattered Loggerhead Shrikes are still reported regularly by observers in the n. Virginia Piedmont counties such as *Loudoun*, *Culpeper*, and *Fauquier*. Stinson had 2 this winter from farther s. in the Virginia Piedmont in *Charlotte* and

Prince Edward, the latter a new location for the species, and another was reported from w. of South Hill, *Mecklenburg* 28 Jan (JSp et al.), where the species winters annually. A Brown-headed Nuthatch at Jefferson-Patterson Park 28 Jan was n. of its regular range on the Western Shore (T. Bell); there were several sightings from this area of *Calvert* in the winter of 2000 as well. The poor Red-breasted Nuthatch year was evidenced by the low C.B.C. counts.

Yellow Warbler is extremely rare in winter in the Region, so 2 reported this season were exceptional. One at Hunting Cr. 15 Dec (KG) and 25–28 Jan (v. o., ph. MJI, †KG) was probably the same bird reported here in the fall season 15 Nov (KG). Another appeared at Tailrace Park, below the dam at John H. Kerr reservoir, *Mecklenburg*, VA 23 Nov (†Phillip Kline), 1 (†J. Blalock) & 28

Jan (JSp et al.). Almost as unusual were 2 wintering Northern Parulas in the Region: one at Stumpy L. Golf Course on the Little Creek C.B.C. 31 Dec (†ESB, †RLAK) and one at Ft. McHenry, *Baltimore* 29 Dec—24 Jan (KEC, JP, m. ob.). A Nashville Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo in the same area of Kiptopeke S.P., *Northampton* 30 Dec (†ESB, BP) was a nice combination for the Cape Charles C.B.C., both still present 11 Jan (GLA et al.). A Yellow-breasted Chat remained in D.C. near R.F.K. Stadium at least 4–26 Jan (Kevin Krough, Craig Richard), and another was seen at L. Roland, *Baltimore* 9 Feb (E. Kichbaum).

A **Western Tanager** (p. a.) at Ross Boddy Community Center, near Ashton, *Montgomery* was found on the 15 Dec Triadelphia C.B.C. (Dave & Elaine Pardoe). It was seen widely the next day but then disappeared before being relo-

cated at an adjacent nursery 19-22 Dec (ph. †MJI, ph. m. ob.). Maryland has just three previous well-documented records (from *Worcester, Montgomery*, and *Anne Arundel*), unlike many other East Coast states, which have five to 10 times as many records. A Dickcissel at Back Bay N.W.R. 29 Dec (ESB, J. Beard) was the 2nd for that C.B.C. An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was noted at a Greenbelt, *Prince George's* feeder Sep—1 Jan (ph. M. Balzer *fide* F. Fallon).

This proved to be a very good winter for Fox Sparrows in some locations, with the Bowie C.B.C. 1 Jan reporting an exemplary total of 132, while other counts, especially on the Coastal Plain, found the species nearly absent. A Le Conte's Sparrow (p. a.) again wintered at the same n. Vaughn location as in past years, seen 12 Jan (JLS) and 4 Feb (MJI). A single Grasshopper Sparrow at s. Vaughn was seen 30 Dec (MLH) and 17 Feb (MLH et al.). A rare winter Lincoln's Sparrow was found at Taylor I., *Dorchester* 1 Jan (JLS). Single Lincoln's in the Piedmont, where also rare in winter, were in *Howard* at University of Maryland Central Farm 1 Jan (BO et al.) and Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 29 Jan (H. Holbrook). A Clay-colored Sparrow at Mannassas Battlefield, *Prince William*, VA for that C.B.C. 22 Dec (p. a. TMD, ph., †MJI, m. ob.) was seen through at least 9 Feb (F. Atwood) and provided a first winter record for the Virginia Piedmont. Interesting was an Ipswich Sparrow noted on the Bay shore at Cape Charles Beach 20 Jan (ESB); although this location is only 16 km (overland or via coastline) from the next closest regular winter area, this subspecies has been found just a mere handful of times farther n. in the Bay.

An ad. male Yellow-headed Blackbird was a nice surprise near Capeville, *Northampton* 11 Jan (MJI, TMD, E. Hynes, GLA) and the only one reported in the Region; this county produces about one report of the species per year, on average. Brewer's Blackbird is found less frequently now than formerly, but one was seen 7-9 Dec (BP, LL, VSO) s. of Townsend, *Northampton*. Common Redpolls appeared in several widely-separated areas, the most unusual being one at Back Bay N.W.R. 29 Dec (BP, †PWS, HTA, GP), only the 3rd for that C.B.C. Other redpolls were on the *Mathews* C.B.C. 30 Dec, *Howard* 12 Feb (H. Zeichner), Richmond 6-17 Feb (John & Caroline Cole), and in Feb in *Saint Mary's*. Pine Siskins and Purple Finches were in average to below-average numbers, while Evening Grosbeak matched the recent status quo with a mere handful of reports.

Corrigenda

Several dates were omitted in the fall 2001 report: at Little Island Park, Virginia Beach, the Rufous

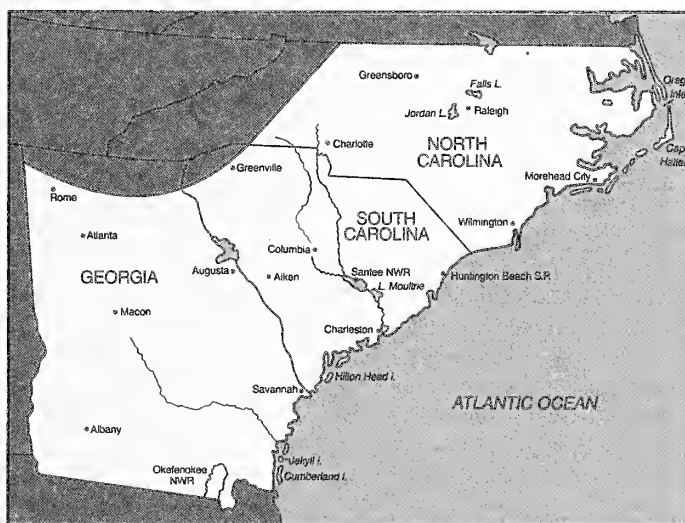
Hummingbird banded 30 Oct, and the Western Kingbird and White-winged Dove were seen 4 & 2 Nov 2001 respectively.

Observers (area compilers in boldface): Bob Abrams, Robert L. Ake (RLAk), Robert L. Anderson (RLAn), George L. Armistead, Henry T. Armistead, **Debbie Bennett** (*Caroline*, P.O. Box 404, Denton, MD 21625), Edward S. Brinkley, Carol & Don Broderick, Danny Bystrak (DBY), Barry Cooper, **Patty Craig** (*Saint Mary's*, P.O. Box 84, Lexington Park, MD 20653), Lynn M. Davidson, Todd M. Day, Samuel H. Dyke, Kurt Gaskill, Mary Gustafson, Matt Hafner, Mark L. Hoffman, Emy Holdridge, David L. Hughes, Glen Lovelace, **Larry Lynch** (VA-BIRD internet

group), Gail MacKiernan, Nancy Magnusson, Dave Mozurkewich, Bonnie Ott, Brian Patteson, **Helen A. Patton** (*Montgomery*, 429 Hamilton Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20901 <helen@dataprompt.com>), Grayson (Butch) Pearce, **Elizabeth Pitney** (*Wicomico*, 7218 Walston Switch Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849), Sue Ricciardi (SRi), Stephen C. Rottenborn, **Norm Saunders** (MDOsprey internet group), Matt Sharp, **Jo Solem** (*Howard*, 10617 Graefloch Rd., Laurel, MD 20723), John Spahr (JSp), James L. Stasz, Michael Stinson (MSt), **Paula Sullivan** (Voice of the Naturalist), Paul W. Sykes, Hal L. Wierenga, **Les Willis** (Virginia Birdline); VSO (Virginia Society of Ornithology).



Southern Atlantic Coast



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The weather this winter was basically a continuation of the warm and dry fall season. In December, mild temperatures and low rainfall were most evident. A large percentage of Christmas Bird Counts had good weather. The only exception was a major snowfall event in the central and eastern Carolinas January 3-4 that provided up to 30 cm in many locations. After this event, which did little to bother bird populations, temperatures in January and February returned to slightly above average. The dry con-

ditions were relieved somewhat in some areas of the Region with increased rainfall during the last half of the season. Also continuing the trend from the fall season was the presence of several good rarities, such as a couple of state firsts and Regional firsts.

Abbreviations: A.R.N.W.R. (Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, NC); B.R.C. (Bird Records Committee); C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, NC); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); L.M. (Lake Mattamuskeet, NC); L.W.F.G. (Lake Walter F. George, GA); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., Dare, NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC); W.P.L. (West Point Lake, GA).



The fall and winter were the best seasons in over a decade for Snowy Owl records toward the southern extreme of its range. This bird was at Fort Fisher, North Carolina from late November through early December, frequenting a spit once used by a regularly roosting Masked Booby 20 years before. Photograph by Will Cook.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The only inland loon reports of note were a Red-throated at L. Juliet, GA 13 Jan (MB) and an impressive count of 500 Commons on W.P.L. 13 Dec (WC). Grebes seemed down somewhat, although single Red-neckeds at W.P.L. 30 Dec (WC) and Jekyll I. 20 Jan (*fide* JH) in Georgia, and L. Wateree 5 Jan (LG) in South Carolina, were good finds. Eared Grebes were in the usual locations, with the best count being 9 at Rum Cr., GA 2 Dec (JS, CL et al.) and on the Sun City-Okatie, SC C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* HC). Also another **Western Grebe** was found in North Carolina, with one in the surf near Duck, Dare 26 Jan (DC, JP, LG, CM). Pelagic trips off Hatteras, NC this winter were relatively uneventful, with the peak Northern Fulmar count being 136 on 16 Feb and the peak Manx Shearwater total being 7 on 26 Jan (BP et al.).

American White Pelicans continued their excellent Regional presence from the fall. Over 250 were still in the Beaufort, SC area in Dec (DF), and the L.M. flock increased to at least 15 during early Dec (KD). Long-legged waders lingered in many places, with the most interesting being a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at L.M. 1 Dec (R&SB), 4 Glossy Ibis on the L.M. C.B.C. 29 Dec (WCo et al.), and a Wood Stork at Santee N.W.R., SC 29 Dec—1 Jan. (LG). Reddish Egrets were at a few of the usual coastal Georgia sites, and Green Herons were spread over the three states. The farthest inland were singles at Pineville, NC 7 Dec (JB) and Atlanta, GA 16 Dec (*fide* BB).

Greater White-fronted Goose reports included an impressive count of 24 at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 28 Jan (EB, MB), one at Whispering Pines, NC early Dec—early Feb (SC), and one at Myrtle Beach, SC 7 Feb (RL). Ross's Goose seems to be

increasing, as there were six reports this winter. The best count was of 3 at Santee N.W.R., SC 28 Jan (DF et al.). Duck numbers were down considerably this winter, with some areas reporting an absence of several normally-occurring species. One exception was the Eurasian Wigeon, with excellent counts of 3 each at L.M. 29 Dec (GH, RD) and Greenfield L., Wilmington, NC 30 Dec (*fide* SCo). A male Cinnamon Teal once again was present at Savannah N.W.R., SC 8 Dec (TK et al.) until at least 16 Feb (DB et al.). Rarely reported in our Region, a male hybrid duck, apparently Gadwall x Northern Pintail, was found at Bodie I. on the Bodie-Pea Is. C.B.C. 28 Dec (RD, GLA et al.). Diving duck numbers were also down, the only exceptions reported involved 100 Redheads at W.P.L. 13 Dec (WC) and 10,526 Lesser Scaup on a count at Camp Lejeune, NC 15 Dec (SCa et al.). Only one eider was found, that being an imm. male Common at Morehead City, NC 12 Feb (*fide* JF). Also of note were inland Surf Scoters, with 3 at Lookout Shoals L., NC 9 Dec (DM) and 3 at Thomaston, GA 3 Jan (EB et al.). Two Long-tailed Ducks at L.W.F.G. 30 Dec (WC) were good finds, as was a Common Merganser far to the s. on the Hilton Head I., SC C.B.C. 15 Dec (*fide* BL).

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Broad-winged Hawks were found twice this season, no doubt related to the mild weather of the fall and early winter. One was on the A.R.N.W.R. C.B.C. 16 Dec (KK-W), and 2 were on the *Iredell*, NC C.B.C. 16 Dec (SCT, DM et al.). Although adequately described, these birds were not able to be verified. Actual documentation of this species in winter in our Region is very much needed. Also interesting was the *Buteo* seen in flight in *Carteret*, NC 28 Dec (R&PT) which for all practical purposes fit the description of Swainson's Hawk. Reports of this species in our Region are extremely rare, and all need thorough documentation. Georgia had several w. Red-tailed Hawks this winter: up to 4 different *krideri* forms and 2 different dark-morph western *calurus* Red-taileds were found (MB, JFI, EH, WC, BZ, BD). Was there a reason for this number of these forms to be in the state this winter? Rough-legged Hawks once again wintered at A.R.N.W.R., with a peak of 3 (including one dark morph) 27 Jan (DC, JP). Elsewhere one was a good find near Harrisburg, *Cabarrus*, NC 23 Dec (*fide* EHa). Golden Eagles, always noteworthy, were in *Tyrrell*, NC 2 Dec (JL), at A.R.N.W.R. 8 Dec and L.M. 6 Dec (DD et al.), and Harris Neck N.W.R., GA 29 Dec (GK). Good Sandhill Crane reports included 4 at Pee Dee N.W.R., NC 18 Jan (BG), 3 in *Carteret*, NC 16 Dec (*fide* JF), 2 near Edenton, NC 14-20 Jan (GG, JD), and 2 at Santee N.W.R., SC 29 Dec—1 Jan (LG et al.).

An American Golden-Plover was late at P.I. 5 Dec (BP), a good find. American Avocets were in good supply this winter, with 500 at P.I. 8 Dec (JL). Also 52 on the L.M. C.B.C. 29 Dec (*fide* AB) was an impressive count for that inland locality. For the 2nd year in a row, a **Solitary Sandpiper** (subspecies unspecified) was found in the same spot on the Long Cane, SC C.B.C. 22 Dec (SW); no doubt the same individual is involved here. Long-billed Curlews were at the usual locations, with the 7 on the McClellanville, SC C.B.C. 15 Dec (*fide* PN) being the best count. Very rare in winter, a Curlew Sandpiper was at P.I. 5 Dec (BP). This is all the more interesting, as the species has been hard to come by in the state the last several years. One of the rarest shorebirds of the season, a **Ruff** was on the Wayne, NC C.B.C. 15 Dec (J&PW). This is the 2nd winter report for that state, with the first one being at L.M. in Dec 1991. Also what is probably the latest ever found in the Region, a **Wilson's Phalarope** was videotaped on the Savannah GA-SC C.B.C. 5 Jan (SCv). Great Skuas, as usual, were found off Hatteras, NC with 3 each 26 Jan and 16 Feb (BP et al.). A **Little Gull** was a surprise at the S.S.S. 5 Dec (SCv, PR), providing about the 4th report for South Carolina. Black-headed Gulls were found only twice, with one at the L.M. causeway 19-28 Jan (RP et al, KD, m. ob.) and one at Oregon Inlet, NC 30 Jan (JL). Somewhat overdue for North Carolina, a **Black-tailed Gull** was found on the beach at P.I. 28 Dec (PS). Unfortunately, the bird was not relocated for further documentation. If accepted by the N.C. B.R.C., this would be the first state and Regional report of this species which has been found in nearby Virginia and Maryland several times. California Gull was found three times with ads. at P.I. 5 Jan and Southern Shores, NC 12 Jan (JL) and C. Hatt. 17 Feb (RD). Two reports of Thayer's Gull were had, with 2 on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (BP) and one at C. Hatt. 17 Feb (RD). White-winged gulls included an Iceland hanging out with the Cedar Island ferries during Feb into Mar (BvD, v. o.) and a Glaucous at Bald Head I., NC 18 Feb (GM). The imm. Black-legged Kittiwake first found during the fall at W.P.L. remained until spring and was joined by a 2nd individual 12 Dec—8 Jan (WC, EB)! Inland wintering of this species is highly unusual in our Region. And finally, the best Razorbill total reported was 10 off Hatteras, NC 26 Jan (BP et al.).

DOVES THROUGH GNATCATCHER

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to be found in the Region. White-winged Doves continue at Beaufort, NC (R&SB, JF) and another was a good find at Goldsboro, NC 5 Jan (MBr). An unidentified **nighthawk** was found on the Savannah GA-SC C.B.C. 5 Jan (*fide* SCv).

Unfortunately, the bird was not heard or seen well enough to identify to species. Wintering Whip-poor-wills were found in all three states in the usual narrow coastal range, with the best count being three on the Sun City—Okatie, SC C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* HC). Hummingbird news this winter included the Region's first **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** at Lexington, SC (BH). Banded on 4 Dec, this species was long overdue for the Region (it is of annual occurrence in the nearby Gulf states). The Region's 3rd and Georgia's first **Broad-billed Hummingbird** caused much excitement at a Macon feeder until at least 21 Feb (TJ, m. ob.). This bird, banded on 15 Dec, was apparently present from 2 Nov on! Other hummers included the usual smattering of coastally wintering Ruby-throateds in the Carolinas, at least 9 different Black-chinneds spread over all three states, 6 Calliopes in the three states, and the usual numerous Rufous across the Region. The Broad-billed Hummingbird from the fall at Gibsonville, NC remained until the end of the period. Also Georgia had its 7th and 8th Allen's Hummingbirds, with one at Roswell 26 Feb+ (RT) and near Columbus all winter (WC).

North Carolina's 6th **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was present at A.R.N.W.R. 16 Dec (JR, JL) until at least late Jan (v. o.). This individual was easily the most observed Ash-throated ever in that state. Good numbers of Western Kingbirds were found this winter. The best counts were 2 at Jekyll I., GA 8-16 Feb (LT et al., EH et al.), 2 near Salvo, NC 8 Dec (DD et al.), and 3 at Roanoke I., NC 15 Dec (JL et al.), at least 2 of which remained until 8 Jan (JL). One was very rare inland at Augusta, GA 22 Dec (*fide* AW). Horned Larks were found at several areas at the edge of their normal range. The best reports involved 20 in *Carteret*, NC 9 Dec (JF, JFe) where the species is extremely rare. Two Tufted Titmice were found on Jekyll I., GA 13 Jan (*fide* TM), unusual for titmice, which often do not colonize coastal islands even when nearby mainland areas have them. This phenomenon has also been noted at areas such as North Carolina's Outer Banks and Virginia's wooded barrier islands.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

One of the rarer winter warblers, Northern Parula, was found twice: singles on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (PS) and near Raleigh, NC 19 Jan (DMu). Much rarer, though, was the **Chestnut-sided Warbler** found on the Macon, GA C.B.C. 15 Dec (J&MA). This bird, extremely rare and unusual anywhere in winter, provided that state's first winter report. Less unusual but still noteworthy, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler was on Roanoke I., NC from the fall until at least 11 Jan (JL). An Audubon's Warbler was a good find

on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (PS). How many of these go undetected among the hordes of "Myrtles" each winter? Another good winter warbler was the **Black-throated Green Warbler** found on the Cumberland I., GA C.B.C. 15 Dec (BZ et al.). This was about the 4th winter report for that state. Other lingering warblers included a female American Redstart on Edisto I., SC 25 Dec (SG), an almost unbelievable **Worm-eating Warbler** near Raleigh, NC 16 Dec (*fide* JG), a Northern Waterthrush at the S.S.S. 5 Jan (SCv), 2 Wilson's Warblers on the Wilmington, NC C.B.C. 30 Dec (JBr et al.), and 2 Yellow-breasted Chats on the Southport, NC C.B.C. 5 Jan (GM, BS). Amazingly early was a Prothonotary Warbler at Hilton Head I., SC 25 Feb (*fide* LG), missing the state's earliest record date by just two days! An Ovenbird (apparently injured) provided an unusual winter report near Atlanta, GA 7 Feb (SP). This species is normally found only at a few coastal areas during the winter. The only Western Tanagers reported this winter involved one at a New Bern, NC feeder 6 Feb+ which was joined by a 2nd one 27 Feb (*fide* WF).

North Carolina's first documented **Green-tailed Towhee** was found on the Southport, NC C.B.C. 5 Jan+ (GM, BS). The bird remained in the same location until the middle of spring! Peak counts of selected sparrows included 5 Bachman's at Birdsong Nature Center, *Grady*, GA 25 Jan (GB et al.), 7 Grasshoppers at A.R.N.W.R. 16 Dec (JL), 29 Henslow's at Birdsong Nature Center, GA Jan 25 (GB et al.), 2 LeConte's at Ichauway Plantation, Baker, GA 2 & 19 Dec (MB et al.), and 3 Lincoln's on the Southport, NC C.B.C. 5 Jan (GM). Only one Clay-colored Sparrow was found this winter, that being one at the Conway, SC W.T.P. 22 Jan 9 (JPe). Rare winter Lark Sparrows included one at Jekyll I., GA 28 Dec—17 Jan (LT et al.), one at Figure Eight I., NC 27 Jan (BG), and 2 on the *Wayne*, NC C.B.C. 15 Dec (R&PT, RD). Of interest was the presence of a grayish Red Fox Sparrow in Southern Pines, NC 3 Jan+ that appeared to be of the *zaboria* rather than the expected eastern *iliaca* subspecies (WI). Lapland Longspur reports included up to 6 in *Carteret*, NC 9-16 Dec (JF, JFe, R&PT), 2 near Conway, SC 31 Dec—1 Jan (ST), and 10 at Andrews I., GA 10 Jan (EB). A Snow Bunting was a good find away from the immediate coast on the Greenville, NC C.B.C. 5 Jan (KH). Always noteworthy in winter, Indigo Buntings were found on the Morehead City, NC C.B.C. 16 Dec (J&PW) and the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (HA). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found only twice, with ad. males at L. Seminole, GA 24 Dec (WC) and in Georgetown, SC 17 Jan (KM). A Common Redpoll on the Bodie-Pea Is., NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (MS, JBe, WI) was a lucky find. This species is very rare anywhere in the Region any time of the



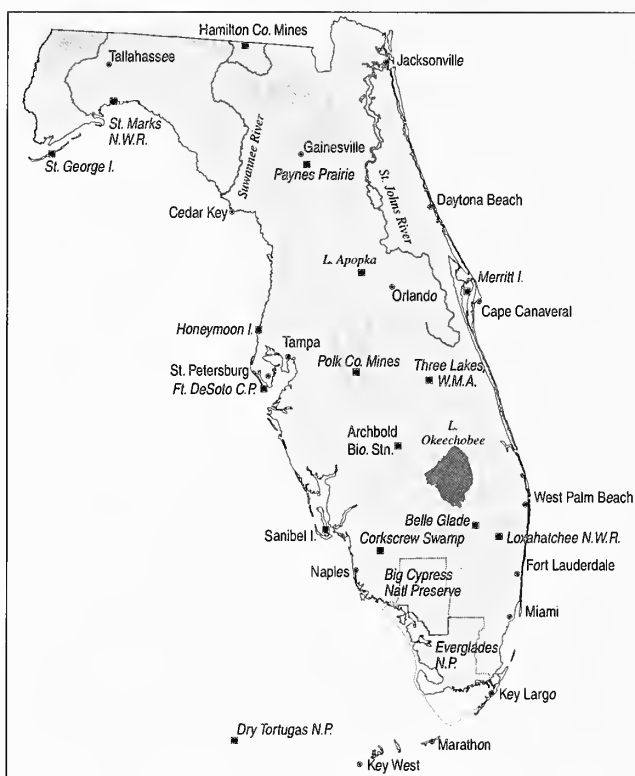
This Ash-throated Flycatcher at Alligator River N.W.R., Dare County, North Carolina was present from December through late January. Although North Carolina's sixth record, this was the most cooperative and widely studied of any in the state. Photograph by Will Cook.

year. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were present in many parts of the Region but showed a localized distribution. Evening Grosbeaks were still in very low numbers, with none reported in most of the Region.

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Florida



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This season was rather typical for the central and southern peninsula, with the Orlando area experiencing about a half-dozen nights of temperatures at or near freezing. One night in January the mercury dipped to 25 degrees F in Orlando, with freezing temperatures reaching into the southern peninsula; damaged tropical foliage recovered quickly, as many later days climbed into the 80s. Temperatures in the Big Bend and the northern peninsula occasionally fell into the teens. The season was dry, and the entire Region continued to experience a rainfall deficit. Two southern locations gained notoriety this season because of exceptional birding: the first 24 km of Government Road in *Broward* and *Hendry*, and "Lucky Hammock" (a part of Frog Pond W.M.A.) near the entrance to Everglades National Park. Several species continue to be reported in increasing numbers, possibly solely the result of a greater number of observers.

Abbreviations/definitions: C.P. (County Park); E.N.P. (Everglades N.P.); L.A.R.A. (L. Apopka Restoration Area, *Orange*); report (any

observation); record (only those reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Up to 10 Red-throated Loons comprised the usual winter gathering at Alligator Pt., *Franklin* (v. o.). Other Gulf reports included singles at Cedar Key, *Levy* 7 Dec (MMe) and Ft. I. Beach, *Citrus* 6 Feb (MG et al.). Unlike the hundreds that flew past *Duval* last winter, 3 was the greatest number of Red-throated reported off Jacksonville this winter (*fide* PP). Other Atlantic reports were of singles at Merritt I. N.W.R. 4 Jan (C.B.C. data) and near Jupiter Inlet, *Martin* 19 Dec (JaH). Rare inland, one at Tallahassee 27 Jan–5 Feb was the 2nd for *Leon* (AT et al.). Common Loons and Horned Grebes continued to congregate inland on L. Weir, *Marion*; this year, 74 loons and 644 grebes were counted (ESc). The usual congregation of Eared Grebes at *Polk* mines peaked at 19 (PF); singles wintered at Gainesville (AKr) and Viera, *Brevard* (DF et al.). A late Cory's Shearwater was at Dania, *Broward* 5 Dec (WG, RM). Rare in the Big Bend, up to 12 American White Pelicans wintered at Tallahassee (GMe). Inland Brown Pelicans were single imms. in *Alachua* (ESc), *Lake* (JP), *Polk* (TP, CGe), and *Putnam* (PBo). An imm. Great Cormorant was

at Jacksonville 24–29 Dec (BRi, ph.). Rare in winter, a Least Bittern was at St. Marks N.W.R. 5 Jan (DM et al.). Early migrants, 33 Wood Storks were counted at Tallahassee 7 Feb (RL, GMe). Only 5 Greater Flamingos wintered at Snake Bight, E.N.P. (LaM).

One Fulvous Whistling-Duck wintered n. to Emeralds Marsh, *Lake*, where hundreds wintered last year (JP). One Greater White-fronted Goose was found at St. Marks 24 Dec (TC), while up to 5 wintered in the Tallahassee area (JCa et al.). Snow Geese were few and far between, although 20 were in e. *Polk* 1 Jan (F&RC). Ten Canada Geese at Bartow, *Polk* (SRi) might have been wild birds. Florida's first Tundra Swan in three years visited Springhill Road S.T.P., *Leon* 14–24 Jan (ESh et al.). Rare in the south, one Gadwall was at the *Miami-Dade* landfill 12–15 Dec (LaM), while a male Eurasian Wigeon was reported at Merritt I. 27 Jan+ (CPi, CPa). The only peninsular reports of American Black Duck were of singles at L.A.R.A. (HR) and Lake Placid, *Highlands* 27 Dec (WB). A White-cheeked Pintail at Pembroke Pines, *Broward* 29 Dec–5 Feb was considered an avicultural escapee (WG). Scoter numbers were about normal. One Surf was in n. Jacksonville 29 Dec (RCI), with 3 at Alligator Pt. 6 Jan (JM et al.). White-winged were at St. Marks N.W.R. 8 Dec (one bird; BBe) and Indian Shores, *Pinellas* 23 Jan (4; JF). There were 4 Black Scoters at Alligator Pt. 6 Jan (MMe et al.), one at Jacksonville 29 Dec (C.B.C. data), 47 at St. Augustine, *St. Johns* 15 Dec (C.B.C. data), and up to 25 in *Broward* 4–5 Dec (WG, RM). Long-tailed Ducks were well reported, with 2 at Cedar Key 28 Dec (AKr) and singles at Redington Shores, *Pinellas* 29 Dec, Tampa, *Hillsborough* 16 Jan (KAN), Palm Harbor, *Pinellas* 6 Feb+ (A&BH et al.), and Titusville 10 Feb+ (KAe et al.). Rare in the peninsula, 2 Common Goldeneyes wandered s. to Merritt I. 4 Jan (CPi, CPa et al.), one stopped at Seminole, *Pinellas* 13–16 Dec (IH), and one reached the s. peninsula for the 2nd year at Punta Gorda, *Charlotte* 15 Dec (JBo).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The first Swallow-tailed Kite was found at E.N.P. 17 Feb (CJG et al.); within three days, 5 had reached Bald Pt., *Franklin* (JDo). Another early migrant, a Short-tailed Hawk was at Peace River Park, *Polk* 31 Jan (TP), while others arrived at L. Monroe, *Seminole* 9 Feb (LoM), and Orlando Wetlands Park, *Orange* 10 Feb (CPi). The only White-tailed Kites reported were at two *Broward* locations: duos on Government Road (v.o.) and at Pembroke Pines, where a pair has bred the past several years (WG). Ninety Bald Eagles assembled at

Tomoka Landfill, Daytona Beach 30 Dec (MeW). The Crested Caracara's range continues to expand: 2 have taken up residence at the St. Johns R., *Seminole* and *Volusia* (LoM), while one along Government Road 4–13 Jan (VL et al.) was the 2nd for *Broward*.

Rare in winter in the Big Bend, one Purple Gallinule was found at Wakulla Springs, *Wakulla* 28 Dec (RL). Five downy Common Moorhens in a retention pond at Seminole 14 Jan–2 Feb (JF) furnished a rare winter breeding report. At opposite ends of the state, where they are rarely seen, 2 Sandhill Cranes were found near the entrance to E.N.P. 1 Dec (LaM), and one wintered in Jacksonville (JCo). A late American Golden-Plover was found on the Long Pine Key C.B.C. 19 Dec. Up to 6 American Avocets lingered at Springhill Road W.T.P. through 22 Dec (GMe), while 42 were at Jacksonville 29 Dec (BRi). A Solitary Sandpiper was observed in *Broward* 10 Jan (DB). Purple Sandpipers wandered s. to Boynton Inlet, *Palm Beach* to 8 Dec (*fide* JHB), Rickenbacker Causeway, Miami 15 Dec (BRa, JHB), and Stuart, *Martin* 29 Dec (2; PM, ph.). One Stilt Sandpiper far n. at St. Marks N.W.R. 17 Feb may have wintered (GMe). Up to 7 American Woodcock, some displaying, were at Weekiwachee Preserve, *Hernando* 16 Dec+ (A&BH et al.). At the edge of the Gulf Stream off Stuart, several flocks of up to 10 Red Phalaropes and a few Red-necked Phalaropes were found 18 Jan (BW).

SAIn an effort to create a new migratory flock, 8 **Whooping Cranes** were led by ultralight aircraft from Necedah N.W.R., Wisconsin, 18 Oct to Chassahowitzka N.W.R., *Citrus*, where 7 cranes and the aircraft arrived 3 Dec. Five cranes survived the winter; the other two were suspected to have been depredated by Bobcats. The five cranes departed unassisted 9 Apr, and 4 returned to Wisconsin 19 Apr; the fifth arrived three days later (<<http://www.bringbackthecranes.com>>).

JAEGERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Jaegers were seen from shore in mostly ones and twos at various locations along both coasts. A Pomarine Jaeger was photographed at Anclote, *Pasco* 18 Jan (KT). Single Franklin's Gulls were at Naples, *Collier* 29–31 Dec (HM, LD et al.) and the *Miami-Dade* landfill 17 Jan (LaM). Sebastian Inlet, *Brevard* and *Indian River*, hosted a **Black-headed Gull** 15 Feb+ (*fide* DH et al.). Our perennial **Heermann's Gull**, present since Oct 2000 and now in third-alternate plumage, followed a travel pattern similar to that of the previous winter. Last seen

at Ft. De Soto C.P., *Pinellas* 10 Nov (LA), it was next reported at Sanibel I., *Lee* 2 Dec (A&BH), then at Naples, *Collier* 7 Dec (*fide* CE). There were no subsequent reports until it returned to Ft. De Soto 23 Jan–8 Feb, after which it was not reported again until 15 Mar (LA). The **Thayer's Gull** at Ft. De Soto remained to 7 Dec (LA); this was probably Florida's 8th documented occurrence. Inland Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at L.A.R.A. 16 Dec (HR) and Springhill Road W.T.P. 19 Jan (BBE). One Sabine's Gull remained at Boynton Inlet through 2 Dec (VF). Single Gull-billed Terns were n. to New Port Richey, *Pasco* 11 Dec (KT) and 3 Feb (RaS), Dunedin, *Pinellas* 18 Dec (WY), and up to 4 at *Polk* mines all season (CGe). Casual in winter, Black Terns were identified at Pompano Beach, *Broward* 10 Jan (WG, RM et al.) and Ten Thousand Is. N.W.R., *Collier* 5 Jan (LB).

Wintering White-crowned Pigeons are rare, so 2 at Collier-Seminole S.P., *Collier* 9 Feb (*fide* TD) were noteworthy; one photographed at Port Orange, *Volusia* 1 Feb (KD, ph.) established the most northerly record along the Atlantic coast. White-winged Doves appear to be resident n. to Eustis, *Lake* (JP). The most intriguing report of the season was the 8th Florida report of **Ruddy Quail-Dove** at Birch S.P., Fort Lauderdale 11–12 Jan (WG, RM). Scarce, declining, and local, up to 6 Smooth-billed Anis spent the season in Fairchild Gardens, Miami (v. o.).

At Lighthouse Pt., *Broward* 26 Dec, two police officers saw something fall from a tree after a truck passed under it. That "something" was Florida's 4th verified **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, which was taken to a rehabilitation center (ph. CR) and released two days later! Despite nearly annual C.B.C. reports, Common Nighthawk has never been verified to occur in winter in Florida. This season, a dead *Chordeiles* found "still warm" on a road in *Wakulla* was examined, identified as this species, and then discarded (C.B.C. data). Ten years ago and three specimens later, the Lesser Nighthawk's status has changed from "unverified in winter" to the "expected" winter nighthawk. Up to 12 were at Flamingo, E.N.P. (v.o.) and up to 10 at the *Miami-Dade* landfill (LaM, JHB). Others were at Loxahatchee N.W.R., *Palm Beach* 29 Dec (BH), L.A.R.A. 23 Dec (DSi, JBo), and Cedar Key 28 Dec (2; RCh et al.). The first singing Chuck-will's-widow was reported at St. Petersburg 5 Feb (*fide* RoS).

The proliferation of w. hummingbirds in the Region continues to be one of the more interesting stories of recent winters. So great are the number of reports that this summary concentrates on hummingbirds banded by FB or pho-



On the day after Christmas, two policemen saw a small parcel drop from a tree, having been dislodged by a passing truck at Lighthouse Point, Broward County. Their investigation revealed Florida's fourth Northern Saw-whet Owl, a dazed bird that was rehabilitated and released 28 December 2001. Photograph by Cindy Rohkamm.

tographed or videotaped by others. Black-chinned Hummingbirds were at Apalachicola, *Franklin* (2), Tallahassee (4), Spring Hill, *Hernando* (one), Merritt I. (one), and Mims, *Brevard* (2). Of uncertain status so far n., a Ruby-throated Hummingbird wintered at Tallahassee (FB). Florida's 4th reported **Allen's Hummingbird** was banded at Alligator Pt. 11 Jan (FB). Fifteen Rufous Hummingbirds were banded, including 11 at Tallahassee, while others were videotaped at Shady Hills, *Pasco* 28 Dec (BP) or salvaged at Brooksville, *Hernando* 18 Jan (KC, to UCF). An unidentified *Selasphorus* was photographed on the Melrose C.B.C. Lastly, a Buff-bellied Hummingbird was seen (only) at Merritt I. 13–21 Jan (SH), for a very rare peninsular report.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

Least Flycatchers were numerous this season (v.o.), with 5 at L.A.R.A. 27 Jan (HR) and up to 6 in and near E.N.P. An *Empidonax* near Tallahassee 24 Feb (GMe) was likely this species. At one time, St. Marks hosted most of Florida's wintering Vermilion Flycatchers, but not so during the past decade. This year, lone Vermilions were found in *Alachua* (GMc, MMe), *Volusia* (3rd year, LoM, DF), *Lake* (2nd year, HR et al.), *Sarasota* (IH et al.), *Palm Beach* (LiM et al.), and *Hendry* (VL et al.). Ash-throated Flycatchers are the expected winter *Myiarchus* in the n. and cen. peninsula. Singles were identified at *Alachua* (JoH et al.), *Seminole* (BHA, to UCF), *Palm Beach* (BH), *Hendry* (WG), and *Lake* (2; JP, MG), with up to 9 at L.A.R.A. (HR et al.). A Great Crested Flycatcher at Kelly Park, *Orange* 29 Dec (BHA et al.) was n. of usual winter range. Single Brown-crested Flycatchers were near



Lately a species seen in small numbers through the early winter, Summer Tanagers are now occasionally overwintering in Florida as well, as this one did at Collier-Seminole State Park in Collier County (photographed here 10 February 2002). What's more remarkable still are the numbers of Summer Tanagers recorded in winter north to southern Canada! Photograph by Terry J. Doyle.

Loxahatchee N.W.R. 3 February (BH) and at "Lucky Hammock" 14–28 Dec (LaM et al.). A La Sagra's Flycatcher remained near Loxahatchee N.W.R. 25 Dec+ (BH et al.), while a 2nd bird was found at Matheson Hammock, *Miami-Dade* 20 Feb (PBL, WY). Found in the fall, a **Tropical Kingbird** remained at St. Marks through the season (v.o.). Single Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds were reported at L.A.R.A. 9 Dec (HR) and Goodwin W.M.A., *Brevard* 16 Jan (SRO). For the 3rd year, a **Cassin's Kingbird** joined the L.A.R.A. tyrannid flock 9 Dec+ (HR et al., C&KR, ph.). Another Cassin's was found at Homestead, *Miami-Dade* 21 Feb (JHB). Western Kingbirds were plentiful in the s. and cen. peninsula, with 5 singles farther n. (v.o.). The Western Kingbird roost at L.A.R.A. peaked at 72 individuals 27 Jan (HR), establishing Florida's highest count. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were widely reported, with northerly reports from High Springs, *Alachua* 13 Jan (CGr), L.A.R.A. 16 Jan+ (3; HR, BHA et al.), and Seven Springs, *Pasco* through Jan (KT et al.).

Three Bell's Vireos were reported: one wintered at "Lucky Hammock" (v.o.), another was near Loxahatchee N.W.R. 2 Dec (BH), with the 3rd at Mahogany Hammock, E.N.P. (C.B.C. data). An early Yellow-throated Vireo was singing at Morris Bridge Park, *Hillsborough* 26 Feb (BAh). A Bank Swallow was carefully identified at Delray Beach 5 Jan (WG), and single Bank and Cliff Swallows were discovered among about 200 Cave Swallows at the *Miami-Dade* landfill 9 Jan (LaM). One Golden-crowned Kinglet wandered s. to n. *Pinellas* 22 Dec (KR), and a Wood Thrush wintered at Birch S.P. (WG et al.). A newly-fledged Northern Mockingbird in *Polk* 24 Feb fur-

nished an early breeding report (B&LC). Twelve American Pipits were far s. at Frog Pond W.M.A. 1 Dec (LaM).

WARBLERS THROUGH MANNIKINS

Twenty-five species of warblers were reported in the s. peninsula this season. Unverified in winter, Blue-winged Warblers were found at West Lake, E.N.P. 14 Dec (LaM) and near Loxahatchee N.W.R. 29 Dec (BH). A Tennessee Warbler was at L. Placid 27 Dec (DG et al.). Single Nashville Warblers were at Tallahassee 1 Jan (JCa), New Port Richey 31 Dec (KT, ST), Fairchild Gardens, Miami 22 Jan (JBo), and Frog Pond W.M.A. 11 Dec (JHB). Casual in winter, lone Chestnut-sided Warblers were at Birch S.P. 12 Jan+ (WG), and Royal Palm, E.N.P. 5–6 Jan (JHB). Another rare wintering *Dendroica*, Magnolia Warbler was reported on nine C.B.C.s (v. o.), with 8 tallied at Coot Bay and one n. to Crews Lake C.P., *Pasco* 18 Dec (MG). A Black-throated Green Warbler was n. to Gainesville 16 Dec (AKr). Irregular in the cen. peninsula, up to 3 Prairie Warblers wintered at Jacksonville (PP). Several birders commented that Yellow Palm Warblers appeared in greater numbers than usual in *Orange* (DF, JCI) and *Marion* (JP), about which Puschock commented, "they are almost as common (perhaps as common) as Western Palms and [...] seem restricted to mature scrub habitat." Two American Redstarts in *Alachua* 16 Dec (AKr, KS) may have been late, while one at L. Placid 27 Dec likely wintered (C.B.C. data). A Worm-eating Warbler was well described at Jacksonville 29 Dec (TA). A possibly late Northern Waterthrush was in *Alachua* 16 Dec (AKr), while up to 2 at L. Monroe (LoM) and up to 4 at L.A.R.A. wintered locally (HR). A Louisiana Waterthrush was recorded in West Palm Beach 5 Jan (CW); one at L.A.R.A. 10 Feb (HR) probably was a migrant. The number of Wilson's Warblers was down from the previous winter, although at least 12 individuals were reported (v. o.). Eight Yellow-breasted Chats ranged from *Leon* to *Miami-Dade*.

Summer Tanagers were reported in *Alachua* (MMe, BS), *Polk* (C.B.C. data), *Collier* (DSu, TD, ph.), and *Miami-Dade* (LaM, PBi). Western Tanagers were at Cedar Key 28 Dec and Royal Palm, E.N.P. 22 Dec (C.B.C. data). The male **Western Spindalis** at Bill Baggs-Cape Florida S.P., Miami was relocated 9 Dec (RD). Clay-colored Sparrows were reported in *Palm Beach* (BH), *Polk* (PT), and *Orange*, with 20 of these at L.A.R.A. 10 Feb (C&KR). A flock of 7 Lark Sparrows at Redland, *Miami-Dade* 5 Jan (*vide* JHB) was the only such report. Up to 4 Henslow's Sparrows wintered at Emerald Marsh (JP et al.), while 3

were at Gainesville (C.B.C. data). A Le Conte's Sparrow at Emerald Marsh 26 Jan–9 Feb (JP) was the sole report. Fox Sparrows were at Tallahassee 6 Dec (RL), O'Leno S.P., *Columbia* 12 Jan (JoH), and Paynes Prairie 27 Jan (MMA, AKe), while single Lincoln's Sparrows were in *Alachua* (JoH), *Pasco* (C.B.C. data), *Orange* (HR), *Broward* (LA et al.), and *Miami-Dade* (JHB et al.). Unexpected were 5 White-throated Sparrows at L. Wales, *Polk* 24 Jan (PF) and one on Government Road, *Broward* 18 Jan (BHA et al.). White-crowned Sparrows were reported on 8 C.B.C.s (v. o.), with 10 at L.A.R.A. (C&KR). Huguenot Memorial Park, *Duval* hosted up to 3 Lapland Longspurs 8 Dec–4 Jan (PP, BRi, ph.).

A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** photographed at Collier-Seminole S.P., *Collier* 5 Jan–9 Feb (KOD, LDo, TD, ph.) established the 2nd verifiable winter record in Florida. Another Rose-breasted was photographed at Merritt I. 5 Jan (JeH). Wintering Blue Grosbeaks were singles on the Alafia Banks and Kissimmee C.B.C.s and at Emerald Marsh 26 Jan (JP), with up to 3 at L.A.R.A. (HR). Painted Buntings rarely winter in the n. Peninsula, so singles at Tallahassee (BBu), Jacksonville 28 Jan+, and n. *St. Johns* 13 Jan (both PP) were notable. Single Dickcissels were found at L.A.R.A. 16 Dec (HR) and w. Kendall, *Miami-Dade* 3 Feb+ (JHB et al.). Three Rusty Blackbirds were s. to Oviedo, *Seminole* 29 Dec (BHA); a Brewer's Blackbird at L.A.R.A. 19 Dec (HR) was equally rare. L.A.R.A. furnished the Region's only reported Yellow-headed Blackbird 10 Feb (HR). A remarkable report was the 12 Shiny Cowbirds at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S. P., *Okeechobee* 4 Feb (PS), by far the largest inland report in the U.S. during winter. Another Shiny at Naples 19 Jan (JHB) was not unexpected. Two Bronzed Cowbirds were discovered at Apalachicola 6 Dec (GB et al.), at least 3 wintered at their usual spot at Lakeland (v. o.), and up to 15 were at Naples 17 Jan+ (CE, JHB et al.). An imm. male **Bullock's Oriole** paused at Captiva I., *Lee* 29 Dec (VM), while an early Orchard Oriole was at L.A.R.A. 24 Feb (HR).

The only Purple Finches were singles at two *Alachua* locations (BW, BQ). Our n. and s. populations of House Finches continue to populate the cen. peninsula. One was seen in e. *Polk* 5 Dec (F&RC), 14 were at L. Wales, *Polk* 29 Dec (C.B.C. data), 2 at Temple Terrace, *Hillsborough* 5 Jan (KAn, TM), and one at New Port Richey 19 Feb (KT). Irregular in the Region, Pine Siskins were in *Wakulla* 3 Dec (JE), at Homosassa Springs, *Citrus* 10–13 Jan (4; MaW, JA) and Alva, *Lee*, 7 Dec+ (L&LW, ph.). An imm. *Lonchura* at Eco Pond, E.N.P. 29

Jan–3 Feb (CJG, LS ph. et al.) could not be identified specifically, not even by Robin Restall, author of *Munias and Mannikins* (Yale University Press, 1997). The most likely species—based primarily on geography and the hypothesis that the bird was a vagrant from established populations in Cuba or elsewhere in the West Indies—was either a Chestnut or Tricolored Munia. However, the bird perhaps was more likely a local escapee.

Undocumented report

Details have not been seen for a Lazuli Bunting, the 8th Florida report, at L.A.R.A. 7 Jan.

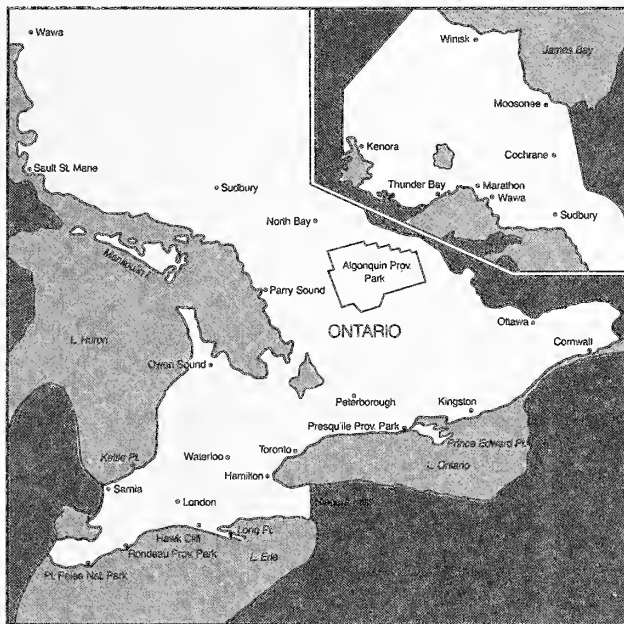
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This was the winter that wasn't. Temperatures in southern Ontario were 8.6 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than average and 2.0 degrees warmer than the previous warmest winter, which occurred 1997-1998. It was

somewhat dry in in most locations, though water levels finally began to rise in all the Great Lakes (except Lake Superior, which remained unchanged) after several years of declines. The effect of the warm winter on Ontario's birds was profound, with many records for numbers and for new species set in Christmas Bird Counts. Many transients and half-hardies, particularly waterfowl, lingered through December and even longer, though a few species such as Hermit Thrush were unusually

scarce. In Ontario, where "winter listing" is popular, it was a banner season. This was true despite the fact that most finches were noted in below-average numbers and the northern owls stayed in the north.

Abbreviations: H.F.N. (Hamilton Field Naturalists); K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists); Frontenac; Long Point (Long Point Bird Observatory, *Haldimand-Norfolk*); Pelee (Pt. Pelee and vicinity, Essex); R.O.M. (Royal Ontario Museum); Soo (Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A high count of 50 Red-throated Loons (KO, AW) was made at Niagara-on-the-Lake 1 Dec. Thereafter, only a few singles were noted, mostly on L. Ontario. A **Pacific Loon** at the Soo 3 Feb turned out to be a one-day wonder. Horned Grebes were unusually plentiful. The counts of 197 on the Fisherville C.B.C., *Haldimand*, 87 on the Long Point C.B.C., and 90 at Kingston 15 Dec (K.F.N.) were all exceptional. The 6 Red-necked Grebes at Presqu'ile P.P. 7 Dec (FH) was the highest number by 5 ever seen in one day in winter there. There were 19 Pied-billed Grebes at the Point Pelee marsh 18 Dec (AW) and 52 in the Erieau area 16 Dec (AW, MJ). At least one juv. Northern Gannet circled L. Ontario again this year, with observations at Stoney Creek 24 Dec (H.F.N.) and Kingston on the 16 Dec C.B.C. Double-

crested Cormorants were recorded for the first time on several C.B.C.s, but the count of 52 on the Kincardine C.B.C. was high for a location that far north.

A Cattle Egret, record late for Ontario, lingered at Hillman Marsh, Essex, until 17 Dec, when it became an entry on the Pt. Pelee C.B.C. An American Bittern inhabited a ditch near Eriau until 16 Dec (GP). A Glossy Ibis, exceptional in winter, was observed near Thamesville 3-10 Dec (BDu). A Greater White-fronted Goose wintered in the area of Cranberry Marsh, Durham (m. ob.), and 2 more were at Bronte 5-12 Jan (H.F.N.). There were 2 Ross's Geese 9-14 Dec in the Cranberry Marsh area in company with 5 blue- and 15 white-morph Snow Geese (HC). A lone Ross's Goose was recorded in Kent 16-20 Dec (SC), one was on the Long Point C.B.C., 2 others alternated between Kingsville and Pelee 9-14 Dec, and 2 more were at Shrewsbury 3 Feb (JB). Brant were unusually widespread for the 2nd winter in a row. They were seen as far w. as Rondeau, where 4 were tallied 10 Dec (AW, FU). A Eurasian Wigeon was at Eriau 10 Dec-8 Jan (AW, FU et al.) in company with the huge mixed flock of waterfowl. Another at Hillman Marsh 24 Feb (DW) was record early for Ontario. Northern Shovelers remained in good

numbers, with 3 well n. at Ottawa 16 Dec. A Mallard was a first for the Algonquin P.P. C.B.C. 29 Dec. Three Harlequin Ducks were found on the Pt. Pelee C.B.C., 2 of which were present 1-17 Dec; the other, a young male, was seen 17-20 Dec. A pair lingered at Hamilton's Confederation Park to 27 Dec (DL, GL). A female Black Scoter was at the tip of Pelee 21 Dec (DW). A male Barrow's Goldeneye was on Amherst I. 5 Jan-9 Feb, while 4 were counted on the Ottawa C.B.C. 21 Dec, where they are more usual. .

HAWKS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The count of 34 Bald Eagles on the Atikokan C.B.C. 16 Dec was exceptionally high. Other big counts included 14 on the Long Point C.B.C., 9 at Navy I. 20 Jan (NM, SB), 11 at Kettle Pt 24 Feb (AR), 25 at Gore Bay 16 Dec (*fide* JL), and 19 at Mindemoya 15 Dec (*fide* JL). Four Northern Goshawks on the London C.B.C. 15 Dec was high but typical of the good numbers throughout s. Ontario. Golden Eagles were noted on the West Elgin C.B.C. 27 Dec, and another was at Port. Rowan 16 Dec (JM). A juv. Krider's Red-tailed Hawk was present at Sturgeon Creek near Pelee 16 Nov-15 Dec (MM, AW). A white morph at Ottawa was the most spectacular of the 3 Gyrfalcons seen intermittently there during the winter. The count of 86 Sandhill Cranes on the Long Point C.B.C. 15 Dec gave further indication of that species's ability to withstand Ontario winters. Twelve Northern Bobwhites in two groups were found at Walpole I. on the Wallaceburg C.B.C. 29 Dec. Christmas counters had a tally of 484 Wild Turkeys at the Ivy Lea bridge. The species had persisted there even before the widespread reintroductions. The London birders were very pleased with their count of 74 on their C.B.C. 27 Dec. Four Virginia Rails were noted 19 Dec by AW at the Pelee marsh, where 2 remained until 13 Jan. A Sora at Cambridge 20 Jan appeared to be overwintering. The count of 8200 American Coots 16 Dec at Eriau (AW, MJ) was huge.

An extreme oddity was the imm. **Black Vulture** at Echo Bay, Algoma dining on suet 23-26 Jan. A Black-bellied Plover at the n. edge of Peterborough remained until 7 Dec (*fide* DS) providing a new latest date locally. A **Black-necked Stilt** at Wallaceburg 27 Dec-2 Jan (LC, m. ob.) was seriously out of time and place. A Lesser Yellowlegs at Sturgeon Creek remained until 24 Dec (FU), thus record late for Pelee. A Willet near the Long Point causeway 2-16 Dec (AT) was only the 2nd ever seen in Ontario in winter. A Spotted Sandpiper at the mouth of the Rouge R. in early Dec remained until at least 26 Jan (CM). A Western

Sandpiper was at Rondeau P.P. 16 Dec (PAW). Purple Sandpipers were represented by individuals at Cobourg 1 Dec-24 Jan (MB), at Pelee 9 (SPi,AL) & 20-21 Dec (AW, HO) and again 2 Feb (DD), on Wolfe I. 13 Jan (BD), and at Niagara where they have become scarce the past few years 18 Dec (JI). An American Woodcock on the Burk's Falls C.B.C. was exceptionally far north.

There were 2 jaegers, thought to be Pomarine, at Hamilton 8 Dec (H.F.N.) and 2 others at Kettle Pt. 21 Dec (AR). A Black-headed Gull was observed at Queenston 1 Dec-17 Jan (RJ) and likely wintered because one in breeding plumage was seen after winter ended. Counts of Bonaparte's Gulls at the Niagara-on-the-Lake flyby remained very high, with 19,000 tallied 3 Jan (RJ). They were accompanied on that date by 5 Little Gulls (RJ). The record of a third-winter **Mew Gull** at Hillman marsh 26-28 Feb (AW et al.) became the 4th for Pelee. There were 2 California Gulls at Niagara 1-2 Dec and 20 Jan. An imm Sabine's Gull on the 16 Dec Kingston C.B.C. was an exceptional sight in winter. A Black-legged Kittiwake was at Morpeth 3 Dec (SC), and another was at Fort Erie 13 Jan (MM). Reports of Common Terns in winter are rare, but this winter we had 3: one was at L. Simcoe 15 Dec on the Orillia C.B.C., another at Long Point 15 Dec (MG), and there were 2 on the Woodhouse C.B.C. 16 Dec. Two Forster's Terns were found on the Rondeau C.B.C. 16 Dec. Counts of Snowy Owls were high in the Kingston area, with 43 reports in Dec, 49 in Jan, and 23 in Feb (K.F.N., *fide* RW). Rondeau had 12 on their C.B.C. 16 Dec. A Northern Hawk Owl was seen by many at Palmerston, Grey until 4 Jan, when it was killed by a vehicle, and another was at Bobcaygeon 30 Dec-28 Feb. There were 8 hawk owls at Atikokan (DE) and 9 between Timmins and Cochrane 19 Feb (SP). The tally of 43 Long-eared Owls 22 Dec on the Fisherville C.B.C. was reminiscent of the wintering groups of 50 or more in s. Ontario that were seen as recently as 30 years ago. A **Lewis's Woodpecker** (m. ob.) at Wooler (Northumberland) 5 Jan-28 Feb may have been the same one seen in Jun 2000 only 12 km away. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were in good numbers in the south, e.g. 18 on the St. Catharines C.B.C. 16 Dec and 7 on the Kingston C.B.C. 16 Dec. They were seen as far n. as North Bay, where 2 individuals wintered. Three-toed Woodpeckers turned up at Algonquin P.P. 26 Dec (RP) and on the Atikokan C.B.C. 16 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH TANAGERS

An Eastern Phoebe remained at Blue Heron,



Another testimony, among thousands, to the mildness of the season, this Glossy Ibis tarried at Thamesville, Ontario 3-10 December 2001, here photographed on the final day of its stay.
Photograph by Alan Wormington.

Pt. Pelee 3-21 Dec. (m. ob.). A Blue-headed Vireo at Long Point became a reliable tick for the winter listers 8-21 Dec (RR). Two Rough-winged Swallows (WD) just above Niagara Falls were very late DATE. The 69 Tufted Titmice on the Wallaceburg C.B.C. 29 Dec was a new high count and further proof of that species's range expansion in the L. St. Clair region. The 3 Brown Creepers at Atikokan 1 Dec—28 Feb was 2 more than had ever been seen there in any winter. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at the Sandbanks PP 2 Dec (m. ob.). A Bewick's Wren at Massey, Sudbury came to a feeder intermittently 21 Dec—28 Feb (E&AM). A Mountain Bluebird appeared briefly 7 Dec in the Soo. A Townsend's Solitaire was much appreciated by the many who saw it at Plum Tree Park, Mississauga 8 Dec—13 Jan (MC, LN); it was seen again after the winter period. Amazingly, the well-documented Toronto I. Swainson's Thrush on the Toronto C.B.C. 30 Dec (DB et al.) was the 2nd for that C.B.C. in recent years. Single Varied Thrushes were at Haydon, Durham 3-5 Jan (DSz) and at Nipigon 26 Jan—28 Feb (CHu), fewer than normal. All three mimids could be found in n. Ontario in mid-Jan: there was a Brown Thrasher in Marathon (KW), a Gray Catbird at Eagle R. (CE), and a Northern Mockingbird in Thunder Bay's Marina Park (m. ob.).

An extremely late Cape May Warbler graced the Thunder Bay C.B.C. 26 Dec (AH). Pine

Warblers are more usual in the winter, and these were reported at Campbellville 11 Jan (m. ob.) and far n. on the Marathon C.B.C. 16 Dec. The latter bird remained until about 25 Jan. An Ovenbird in Toronto 6-20 Feb (GBr) was not unprecedented there in winter. A Hooded Warbler was on the w. side tip of Pelee 5 Dec (AW), record late for Ontario. A female Summer Tanager attended a feeder at Deep River, Nipissing, 8-30 Jan+.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

This winter's only Spotted Towhee was recorded on the highly successful Marathon C.B.C. 16 Dec and was seen until 13 Jan. A Lark Sparrow near Newburgh 1-22 Dec (K.F.N.) was seen by many. Nine Fox Sparrows along the Delaurier trail at Pelee 21 Dec (DW) was a high count for the late date. A single Fox Sparrow remained on Dacre Cr. in Toronto 1 Dec—28 Feb, although it was hard to find. A Lincoln's Sparrow visited a feeder and was recorded as count week on the Soo C.B.C. 15 Dec. A Harris's Sparrow turned up in Plover Mills near London for all of Jan and Feb (EH). Another was in sw. Leamington 16-18 Jan (JW, PW). A flock of 38 Lapland Longspurs was observed on the West Elgin C.B.C. 27 Dec. A Smith's Longspur, a first for Ontario in winter, was found near Hagersville 2 Dec (JMi), where it remained until 10 Mar, to the delight of Ontario birders. The only report of Dickcissel was at Port Britain, Northumberland, 26 Dec (KM). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Providence Bay, Manitoulin 13 Dec (EG). A Western Meadowlark was found dead at the Soo 2 Jan (*Royal Ontario Museum) only one day after it was first found. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were among the thousands of Red-wings on the Wallaceburg C.B.C. and provided an extra bit of excitement for the many birders who had come to see the Black-necked Stilt. The 2 Brewer's Blackbirds near Long Point (DM) 23 Dec were the only ones reported this winter. Pine Grosbeaks were widespread in s. Ontario this winter, e.g. 160 on the Peterborough C.B.C. 16 Dec; there were even 5 at Pelee 1 Dec, where they are very seldom seen. Crossbills were generally scarce, but a few White-wings roamed s. Ontario. Evening Grosbeaks continued their decline of recent years and were very sparsely distributed.

Cited observers (regional coordinators in boldface): Robert Andrie, Margaret Bain, Stan Bajurny, Dave Beadle, Gord Bellerby, Evelyn Brown, George Bryant (GBr), Jim Burk, Keith Burk, Steve Charbonneau, Mark Chojnacki, Larry Cornelis, Hugh Currie, Willie D'Anna (WD), Bruce Dilabio, Dan Dufour, Brad



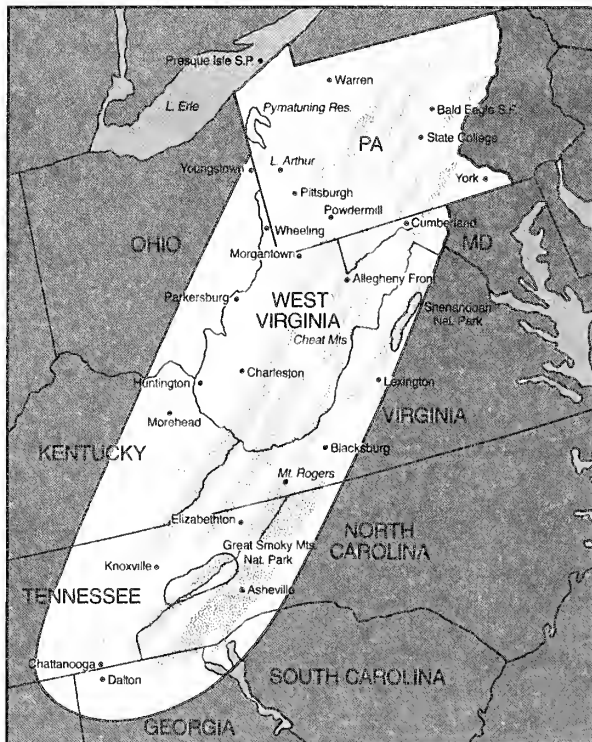
The careful reader of the regional reports will notice more and more firm records of western races of Red-tailed Hawk east of the Mississippi River. This *krideri* Red-tailed was photographed 11 December 2001 at Sturgeon Creek, Essex County, Ontario, where the pale "Kriders Red-tailed Hawk" is quite rare. Photograph by Alan Wormington.

Dupuis (BDu), Carolle Eady, Dave Elder, Nick Escott, Mary Gartshore, E. Glanville, Clive Goodwin, Carl Hamman, Al Harris, Fred Helleiner, Estelle Homer, Chuck Hudson (CHu), Jean Iron, Mark Jennings, Joe Johnson, Richard Joos, Bob Knudsen, Annie Legault, John Lemon, Dennis Lewington, Gwen Lewington, Mike Malone, Scott Martin, Jon McCracken, John Miles (JMi), K. Mills, Dave Milsom, Mike Morgante, E. & A. Meissner, Norm Murr, Linda Nuttall, Henrietta O'Neill, Karl Overman, Rob Pearce, Stan Phippen, Steve Pike (SPi), George Prieksaitis, Pete Reade, Ian Richards, Alf Rider, Ron Ridout, Maureen Riggs, Doug Sadler, Roy Smith, Dave Szymr (DSz), Richard Tafel (RTa), Adam Timpf, Ron Tozer, Fred Urie, Keith Wade, Dean Ware, James Watson, Patricia Watson, Ron Weir, Al Woodliffe (PAW), Alan Wormington (AW).



SA American Pipits were especially numerous this winter. Some unusually large flocks were seen in Dec, e.g. 111 on the West Elgin C.B.C. 27 Dec; however, most birds remaining into Jan could safely be considered wintering birds in the experience of Alan Wormington. It was a very mild Dec, and there were very few pipit sightings prior to 24 Dec. On that date, the cold and snow finally arrived, and there were several observations of flocks of 50-100 moving s. in the next few days. Overwintering pipits in Ontario are normally rare—many winters go by with none at all in the province—but this winter there were 45 reported, mostly singles. Thirty-five of these were in sw. Ontario, 8 at Toronto, one at Kingston, and one s. of Hamilton. Whether or not this phenomenon was related to global warming, the mild Dec of 2001, or something else entirely is not known at present.

Appalachia



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It was an exceptionally mild winter over most of Appalachia, with little significant snowfall even in the north. In some ways it was nearly, as one correspondent put it, "the winter that wasn't." For more species than usual, it was difficult to differentiate among later-than-usual southbound migrants, more northerly-than-usual wintering birds, and earlier-than-usual spring arrivals. Lake Erie and other large bodies of water in the northern tier of the Region remained largely ice-free for the entire season. This enabled many ducks and gulls to remain farther north and accounts for the relatively low numbers of waterfowl reported on many lakes and reservoirs in the southern Appalachians. The mild weather also allowed a scattering of Neotropical migrants, such as Cape May and Yellow Warblers and a Baltimore Oriole, to linger as far north as Pennsylvania, while semi-hardy species like Carolina Wren and Brown Thrasher survived the northern winter very well. Another product of the mild weather was that feeding stations attracted fewer birds,

which caused some birders to describe the season as dull. A scattering of northern finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches brightened the season for some feeder watchers well into the southern highlands.

Abbreviation: P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

An unprecedented 42 late migrating Red-throated Loons were listed during a waterbird count at Sunset Point, P.I.S.P. 1 Dec—1 Jan (JM); away from L. Erie, late birds were at Bald Eagle S.P., PA 9 Dec (*fide* EZ), at L. Arthur 16 Dec (DDr, DY), and on the Allegheny R. at Starbrick 20 Jan (DWA). A remarkably high count of 709 Common Loons passed Sunset Pt., P.I.S.P. 2 Dec (JM); in Tennessee, 42 were on Boone L. 8 Dec and 40 at Douglas L. 11 Dec (RKn). High counts for Horned Grebes were of 160+ each on both Douglas and Cherokee Lakes, TN 11 Dec (RKn). Up to 3 Red-necked Grebes frequented P.I.S.P. 11-15 Dec (DWi, AE), and another was there 6-9 Feb (PR), but none was reported from elsewhere in the Region. An Eared Grebe was at P.I.S.P. 1-5 & 15 Dec (JM), and up to 3 lingered at S. Holston L., TN through Dec (RKn, WC). An ice-free Erie Bay enabled good numbers of Double-crested

Cormorants to winter at P.I.S.P. for the first time ever (JM), and winter cormorant records came from at least six other w. Pennsylvania counties.

Open water conditions allowed many more than the usual number of Great Blue Herons to winter across the length and breadth of Appalachia, with a maximum count of 180+ at Douglas L., TN 11 Dec (RKn). The only Great Egret reported was at Hiwassee W.R., *Meigs*, TN 1 Jan (BJ), while a Green Heron was an unexpected find in *Raleigh*, WV 29 Dec (*fide* RC). Wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons were noteworthy at several e. Tennessee sites, with a high count of 12 at Cherokee Dam 11 Dec (RKn); even rarer was an imm. bird on the Allegheny R. at Rosston, *Armstrong*, PA 1 Jan (MH) and an ad. along the Ohio R. at McKees Rocks, PA 3-6 Jan (DW, m. ob.). Turkey Vultures, all but unknown in w. Pennsylvania in mid-winter until just a few years ago, were seen in unprecedented numbers as far n. as Erie beginning in mid-Jan (JM, m. ob.).

WATERFOWL

Scattered sightings of Greater White-fronted Geese include one at Kingwood, *Preston*, WV 5 Jan (GF) and 6 on the Ohio R. at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, *Mason*, WV 1 Feb+ (ph. WA, m. ob.); 2 each were at Grayson L., *Carter*, KY 20 Jan (*fide* BPB) and at Hiwassee W.R., TN 2 Feb (*fide* KC). Small groups of Snow Geese were spotted over almost the full length of the Region, with a top count of 30 over Clarksburg, *Greene*, PA 8 Dec (RB). A Ross's Goose appeared at Cove L. S.P., TN 6 Feb (NM), and one at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, *Rowan*, KY 17 Feb established the easternmost record for that state (GR). Mild weather and open water conditions apparently contributed to an unusual build-up of Canada Geese in the Pymatuning region, *Crawford*, PA where 19,000 were estimated 16 Jan (RFL). A rare winter straggler in w. Pennsylvania, single Brant were at P.I.S.P. 24-26 Dec (JF, BC), on the Youghiogheny R., at Boston, *Allegheny* 1-6 Jan (*fide* PH), and near State College 3 Jan (EZ, m. ob.). Apparently, there was only a short break between southbound and northbound Tundra Swan flights. A flock of 250 southbound swans stopped at Hartstown, *Crawford*, PA 20 Dec (MBy), and 60 were flying se. at Warren, PA 1 Jan (DWA); by 2 Feb spring migrants began to arrive in numbers at State College, PA (EZ). A Tundra Swan at L. Julian, *Buncombe*, NC 25 Dec was the first for the mountains there in many years (WF), and one at Hiwassee W.R. 1 Jan was unusual for Tennessee (KC).

Again, ice-free conditions nearly throughout the Region allowed many ducks to either linger

late, overwinter, or begin their spring migration early. Wintering Gadwalls peaked at 254 at Kingston, TN 9 Jan (RKn), and in Pennsylvania counts of 68 at Pymatuning 16 Dec (RH), and 63 on L. Arthur 24 Dec (GW) were exceptional. The 37 Northern Shovelers at Pymatuning 10 Jan (DS) certainly established a new winter high count there, and 7 early migrants were on L. Osceola, Henderson, NC 28 Feb (WF). In an excellent flight, 102 Redheads put down on L. Cumberland, Pulaski, KY 8 Dec (*fide* SS); in Tennessee, 301 were at Chickamauga L. 10 Dec (KC) and 400 at Cherokee L. on the 11th (RKn). An imm. male **Harlequin Duck**, casual anywhere in Appalachia, attracted the attention of many birders at P.I.S.P. 29 Jan+ (DBo, JM, m. ob.). Up to 6 Surf Scoters could be found w. of Erie through 19 Jan (BC), and 2 were at P.I.S.P. 2 Dec (JM). A White-winged Scoter was a good find at Prince Gallitzin S.P., PA 5 Dec (DG), and 21 were listed on the P.I.S.P. waterbird count through 19 Jan (JM). Several Black Scoters were in the Erie area during the Dec-Jan period (BC, JM), one was a rare find at Staunton, VA 8 Dec (AL), and 5 were at Cherokee L., TN 11 Dec (RKn). There were some high counts of Hooded Mergansers, including 368 in Augusta, VA 8 Dec (AL), 348 at Pymatuning L. 11 Dec (SK), and 225 at Kingston Steamplant, TN 5 Jan (NM). A raft of 400+ Common Mergansers at Conneaut L., Crawford, PA 23 Feb, was unusually large for that area (RFL).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Was the Osprey in Anderson, TN 1 Feb (NM) an early migrant or a wintering bird? By Regional standards, there were some large concentrations of Bald Eagles, including 9 at Mosquito W.A., Trumbull, OH 13 Jan (DH), 17 at Pymatuning L., PA 16 Dec (RH), and a record 20 on the Hiwassee, TN C.B.C. 1 Jan (KC). A Northern Goshawk over Jackson Park 7 Dec represented a first record for Henderson, NC (RSe), and there were scattered sightings from w. Pennsylvania, including singles in Huntingdon 15 Dec (*fide* GG), at L. Arthur 15 Dec (RSt, JSt), and in Natrona Heights, Allegheny 16 Feb (DHe, PH). Rough-legged Hawks were widely reported across e. Ohio and w. Pennsylvania, if in somewhat smaller numbers than during the previous winter; one wintered at Pickway, Monroe, WV (JPh), one was at a regular wintering site at Burke's Garden, VA 16 Feb (WC), and 2 were in the Sequatchie Valley, Bledsoe, TN 12-20 Jan (*fide* KC, SS). Winter Golden Eagle sightings included one at Quehanna W.A., Clearfield, PA 17 Jan (*fide* EZ), 2 at Burke's Garden, VA 16 Feb (WC), and one in Meigs, TN 23 Feb (*fide* KC); the first northbound bird flew past the Tussey Mt., PA hawkwatch 24 Feb (CWl).

Wintering Sandhill Crane numbers continue to increase in Appalachia. In Tennessee, a remarkable 11,658 cranes were listed on the Hiwassee W.R. C.B.C. 1 Jan (*fide* KC). In North Carolina, single birds were at Four Season's Marsh, Henderson 26 Jan (WF) and at Rosman, Transylvania 27 Jan (NS); 6 were at Huntington, WV 30 Dec (WA); in Pennsylvania 15 cranes were in Lawrence 31 Dec (*fide* PH), 21 at Pennsy Swamp, Mercer 23 Feb (BV), and 5 at P.I.S.P. 25-26 Feb (BC). A Spotted Sandpiper at P.I.S.P. 15 Dec was record late for Erie (JM); an extremely early (or overwintering?) bird was at L. Perez, Huntingdon, PA 23 Feb (DWe). A record-late Ruddy Turnstone lingered at P.I.S.P. 1-22 Dec (BC, MT), and in Tennessee 3 Least Sandpipers remained for the Hiwassee C.B.C. 1 Jan (*fide* KC). A Dunlin at L. Somerset 11 Dec (JPa) was very late for the Pennsylvania mountains; farther s., 94 were at Douglas L., TN on the same date (RKn). Single unidentified jaegers were seen on the P.I.S.P. waterbird count 24 & 28 Dec (JM, BC), and a Pomarine Jaeger was identified there on 1 Jan (JM). The Bonaparte's Gull migration peaked at 2200 at Pymatuning L., PA 3 Dec (SK), and on 11 Dec, 900 were at Douglas L., TN (RKn). The high count of Ring-billed Gulls, away from L. Erie, was 5800 at Pymatuning 3 Dec (SK). Up to 3 Thayer's Gulls were identified at P.I.S.P. 13 Jan & 16-28 Feb; there were several Iceland Gulls there beginning 12 Jan, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls first appeared at Erie 13 Jan (JM). A few Glaucous Gulls also were at Erie 10 Jan+ (BC). A Great Black-backed Gull was a rare find on the Ohio R. at Huntington, WV 10-16 Jan (WA, m. ob.).

DOVES THROUGH WRENS

In Hamilton, TN, where the Eurasian Collared-Dove population had been building up to substantial numbers over the past few years, few were reported this season (KC); one that appeared at Fairview, Erie, PA this past Nov (establishing a first county record) remained through the winter, attracting many birders (JM). There was a minor invasion of Snowy Owls into the Region: a bird that had appeared in Pleasants, WV in late Nov remained through 20 Dec (JE), one was at Youngsville, Warren, PA 29 Nov (*fide* JF), one at Lakewood, Union, PA over much of Jan and Feb (m. ob.), and still another was at Cherokee L., TN 11 Dec (*fide* RKn). Up to 5 Short-eared Owls frequented various reclaimed stripmines in Lawrence (PH), Armstrong (*fide* MH), Indiana (MH) and Somerset, PA (JPa, TM) this winter; and as many as 5 were seen at several sites in Augusta, VA (AL, YL). A Northern Saw-whet Owl was a rare find at Poland, OH 21 Jan (*fide* NB) and on the Rector, PA C.B.C. 16 Dec; more southerly reports

included scattered individuals in the Big S. Fork National River and Recreation Area, KY & TN between 27 Jan and 1 Mar (*fide* SS, BPB), one at Roan Mt., TN 2 Dec (AH), and a few birds were located at classic Saw-whet sites in Rabun, GA (*fide* MB & JSe).

Each year, the number of Rufous Hummingbirds wintering in the s. Appalachians seems to increase: in e. Tennessee, at least 8 birds were seen/banded over seven different counties (*fide* RKn, KC), one was at Bristol, VA all season (WC), and singles were also found at both Flat Rock and Long John Mt., Henderson, NC (WF, BO). A Loggerhead Shrike was a rare winter find in s. Adams, PA 16 Jan, but in ne. Tennessee, wintering numbers were considered low (RKn). A minor flight of Northern Shrikes brought birds to at least eight scattered counties of w. Pennsylvania; one was at Grand R.W.A., Trumbull, OH 16 & 27 Jan (CB), while the southernmost record came from Finzel Swamp, Garrett, MD in early Dec (RKi, JC). The only mid-winter Blue-headed Vireo report came from Knoxville, TN 1 Feb (CWe). Common Ravens continued to expand their range beyond the "wilderness" of the mountain ridges. One pair, for instance, was reported in late Feb (DWi) at an active nest under a bridge abutment along a major highway at Ginger Hill, Washington, PA 48 km w. of the mountains, in an area where the species was unknown just a few years ago. Indicative of the mild late winter weather was the early return of the first Tree Swallows at McClintic W.S., Mason, WV 23 Feb (WA), and at Blount, TN the 24th (DT, AH). On the heels of a heavy fall influx, high counts of Black-capped Chickadees were made in w. Pennsylvania during C.B.C.s (e.g., 517 at Butler 15 Dec, 808 at Indiana 26 Dec, and a record 872 at Rector 16 Dec), but apparently few strayed beyond their normal winter range, and Black-capped were completely missing at the Southern West Virginia Bird Research Center, where they occurred during the past few winters (RC). Red-breasted Nuthatches invaded much of the Region, with good numbers s. as far as ne. Tennessee (RKn), and 16 were listed in Rabun, GA 26 Jan (EB). Carolina Wrens achieved very high population levels in the n. half of the Region (e.g., a record 70 on the Rector, PA C.B.C. 16 Dec), and, no doubt thanks to the unusually mild conditions, apparently most of these overwintered successfully. A House Wren at Grand R.W.A., Trumbull, OH 16 Dec was well n. of the usual winter range (DH), as were singles at Sweeneyburg and L. Stephens, Raleigh, WV in Dec (RC) and at Parkersburg 29 Dec (*fide* JE). A Sedge Wren was a rare winter visitor in Hamilton, TN 29 Nov (*fide* KC), as was a Marsh Wren at Fisherville, Augusta, VA 28-29 Dec (*fide* YL).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at a bird feeder at Sewickley, *Allegheny*, PA 2 Jan (ph. CM) established the first winter record for the w. half of the state, and a late Cape May Warbler was at P.I.S.P. 2 Dec (PH, SSi). A **Yellow Warbler** divided its time between two neighborhood feeders in Warren, PA 18 Nov—26 Dec (DWa). Rarely found wintering in w. Pennsylvania, single Common Yellowthroats were at P.I.S.P. 15 Dec (DS), New Castle 15 Dec (BD), and at Upper St. Clair, *Allegheny* 9 Dec (DWI). A Chipping Sparrow at Patton, *Cambria*, PA 6 Dec (DG) was well n. of the usual wintering range in Appalachia, as was a Savannah Sparrow at Berlin, *Somerset*, PA 9 Dec (JPa). A record-high winter count of 71 Savannah Sparrows was established for *Augusta*, VA 20 Jan (*fide* YL). One of the highlights of the season was 2 **Harris's Sparrows** at the Blythe Ferry Unit, Hiwassee W.R., TN 5 Jan—23 Feb (JH, DJ, m. ob.); another good find was an Oregon Junco at Pipestem S.P., WV 24 Dec+ (JPh). Lapland Longspurs were largely confined to n. Pennsylvania, with scattered singles s. to State College 16 Dec (*fide* EZ) and Berlin 1 Jan (JPa); likewise, Snow Buntings were locally common in Pennsylvania, with singles reaching s. to *Ritchie*, WV 16 Dec (GF) and Whitetop Mt., VA 1-3 Dec (GE, m. ob.). A Dickcissel was a rarity at a feeding station in Greene Twp., *Erie*, PA 1 Feb+ (*fide* JM), as was another at Boalsburg, *Centre*, PA 1-30 Dec (*fide* EZ). Infrequent in the Region, at least 10 Brewer's Blackbirds were at Cooley's Pond, *Wayne*, KY 30 Jan (*fide* SS), and one was in *Sequatchie*, TN 23 Feb (JH, DJ), at a site where the species has been found for three consecutive years (KC). The only Baltimore Oriole reported this season was at Warren, PA through the first half of Dec (*fide* TG).

In general, the n. finch invasion was lighter than expected considering the number and early appearance of a few species in the fall. A small flock of Pine Grosbeaks near Mansfield, *Tioga*, PA 30 Dec—6 Feb, however, attracted much birder attention (BI, m. ob.), and 2 were at Brush Valley, *Indiana*, PA 30 Dec (*fide* MH). Red Crossbills peaked at 26 in *Rabun*, GA 26 Jan (EB), 10 were at Rock Creek L., *Fannin*, GA 14 Jan (BB), and one was there on the 15th (DF). A few White-winged Crossbills were scattered across w. Pennsylvania (m. ob.), highlighted by 20+ at Lake City, *Erie* from early Dec+ (*fide* JM); up to 14 were at Grandfather Mt., NC 8-13 Dec (WF, D&LM, m. ob.). Common Redpolls were reported only from Pennsylvania, where better counts included 400+ in one flock at Hills Cr. L., *Tioga*, 9 Jan (BI) and up to 35 at P.I.S.P. 5 Dec—26 Feb (BC). By mid-winter, only scattered flocks of Pine Siskins remained in

most of n. Appalachia, while southward a few were scattered about in e. Tennessee (RKn, KC), and 82 were seen along Burrell's Ford Road, *Rabun*, GA 26 Jan (EB). Flocks of up to 60 Evening Grosbeaks frequented scattered sites in w. Pennsylvania; farther s. one was at Somerset, *Pulaski*, KY 21 Dec (CN), they were "sporadic" in *Transylvania*, NC (NS), and sightings in the Georgia mountains included 20 birds in *Rabun* 24 Dec (*fide* MB) and 2 at Cherry Log, *Gilmer*, in mid-Jan (CF). In Virginia, only a handful could be found in traditional sites in *Highland* (*fide* YL).

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Western Great Lakes



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All three states reported very mild conditions throughout most of the season. Temperatures were above average throughout the Region, while precipitation was either below

average or average. Most of the Region encountered little deep snow until very late in February, when some areas received up to 50 cm.

With the mild conditions, it is not surprising that much of the excitement this season involved late and lingering species. Some real rarities were seen, with Michigan getting more than its fair share. Highlights in Minnesota included Anna's Hummingbird and Brambling, while Wisconsin boasted a Ross's Gull, a first

state record, as was the Vermilion Flycatcher first found in the fall. Michigan's list of notables was long and included Northern Gannet, White-winged Dove, Sage Thrasher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Painted Bunting—for perhaps the state's most diverse and exciting winter in recent memory.

Abbreviations: M.B.R.C. (Michigan Bird Records Committee); W.A. (Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

In Michigan, reports of Red-throated Loon from five counties was above average. Exceptional in that state were multiple reports of **Pacific Loon** including 2 from 26-27 Dec and one on 1 & 7 Jan on Keweenaw Bay, *Baraga* (JK), as well as one on 2 Feb in Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (BM, ST), all are pending M.B.R.C. review. Common Loons were encountered in above-average numbers in Wisconsin, where they had triple their normal numbers on C.B.C.s and in record numbers in Minnesota for the winter season. In Minnesota, 12 Horned Grebes 20 Jan and 11 on 24 Feb on L. Superior, *Lake* (JL) were high mid-winter totals. A Red-necked Grebe on 24 Feb in *Ozaukee* (TW) was considered record early in Wisconsin, while the species was reported from three Michigan counties, including one to 7 Jan in the n. county of *Baraga*. They were also seen in three Minnesota counties on L. Superior. A Western Grebe was seen in *Milwaukee*, WI from 4-13 Dec (m. ob.), while one 16 Dec in *Berrien* (KM) was a first on Michigan C.B.C.s. Also a first for Michigan C.B.C.s, and only the 9th overall state record, a **Northern Gannet** was at Lake Erie Metropark, *Wayne* on 22 Dec (MM). Record late in Wisconsin was a Least Bittern 22 Dec in *Chippewa* (JP), while a Great Egret 7 Dec at the Horicon Marsh was only the 3rd winter record. At least 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons overwintered on the Fox R. at Green Bay, the first such occurrence since 1976 in Wisconsin. In Michigan the species often overwinters, but 11 through the period in Gibraltar, *Wayne* (WP) was an unusually high number, while in Minnesota, where the species is considered casual in winter, one was present 5-13 Jan at Black Dog L., *Dakota* (DK). A *Plegadis* ibis lingered to 2 Dec at Metro Beach, *Macomb* (SH) constituting Michigan's first winter record. Only the 2nd winter record in that state was a **Black Vulture** 18 Jan at Dodgeville, *Houghton* (OM), pending M.B.R.C. review.

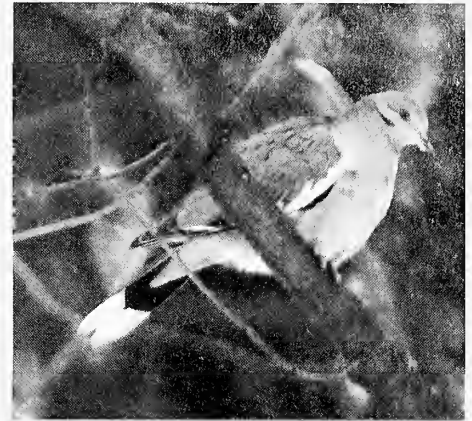
WATERFOWL

A Greater White-fronted Goose 10-12 Jan (DC) provided Wisconsin its first Jan record, while first migrants in that state were noted in *Dane*

22 Feb (AS), a flock of 225 in *Columbus* (DT) being the high count of the early arrivals. In Minnesota, there were 669 White-fronteds reported from 13 s. counties 18-27 Feb, along with a record-early 7 on 14 Feb at Fergus Falls, *Otter Tail* (JH). Also early were 9 on 18 Feb at *Big Stone*, *Swift* (SM) and 6 on 21 Feb at S. Landfill Reservoir, *Olmsted* (CB). Michigan's only report was of 8 on 6 Dec in *Washtenaw* (HP). Ross's Geese lingered throughout the Region: in Minnesota, 5 were present 11-13 Dec at E. Landfill Reservoir, *Olmsted* (RE et al.), while Michigan had its first C.B.C. and only 2nd winter record of 2 from 8 Dec—9 Feb at the Todd Farm, *Allegan* (RS). Wisconsin had three reports, with 4 on the Madison C.B.C. 1 in *Outagamie* (*fide* BD) and 2 on 9 Jan in *Winnebago* (TZ); there were only two previous winter records in that state. Minnesota reported 658 Trumpeter Swans on 4 Jan at Monticello, *Sherborne/Wright* (KB) and another 300+ overwintered along the Otter Tail R. in Fergus Falls, *Otter Tail* (DM, SM). Michigan had reports of Trumpeter Swans from 14 counties. Tundra Swans were present in near-record numbers in Minnesota, where 12,100 were reported on 22 Dec on the Mississippi R. at Reno, *Houston* (KB); Tundras returned record early, with 10 on 18 Feb at Weaver Marshes *Wabasha* (PJ, DN) and 17 on 23 Feb at S. Landfill Reservoir, *Olmsted* (RE). Wisconsin had similar high numbers of Tundra Swans: an unprecedented 4102 were on the Trempeleau C.B.C. (*fide* BD). All three states had good numbers of Harlequin Ducks this season; the species seems to be increasing in the Great Lakes region during the winter. In Wisconsin, the Barrow's Goldeneye that wintered at Virmond Park for the past seven years did not return this season, but one was present 12-26 Jan in *Milwaukee* (DT, TW). Michigan and Wisconsin reported average numbers of scoters. In Minnesota, where scoters are considered casual in winter, a Surf Scoter 6 Dec at Winona, *Winona* (DB et al.) was record late in the south and only the 9th winter record. Three White-winged Scoters on L. Superior at Duluth, *St. Louis* (PS, m. ob.) were the first documented to overwinter in Minnesota, while a Black Scoter 16 Dec at Winona, *Winona* (DB et al.) was record late in the south; one on 4 Dec at Duluth, *St. Louis* (PS) was only the 4th winter record in the north. Also in Minnesota, 75,000 Common Mergansers present to 22 Dec on Lake Pepin, *Goodhue/Wabasha* (JM, KB) was an exceptional total, while 7 Red-breasted Mergansers on 18 Feb in Winona (PJ, DN) were record-early spring migrants.

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

In Minnesota, Northern Goshawk numbers



Representing a first winter record in Michigan, this White-winged Dove remained through the season in Dewitt Township, Clinton County. The increasing frequency of vagrant White-wingeds during the warmer months will almost certainly lead to more records of wintering birds, particularly in warm winters such as 2001-2002.

Photograph by Adam M. Byrne.

were unexpectedly low this season after last year's increases. Golden Eagle numbers were about average in that state but lower in both Michigan and Wisconsin. A late Osprey was observed in Wisconsin on 9 Dec at the Milwaukee Coast Guard Impoundment (CH). The number of winter Merlin reports continues to rise in Michigan: this season reports came from 10 counties. All three states had Gyrfalcons, including a gray morph in the Sault Ste Marie area of Michigan and reports of imm. gray morphs on 3 Dec (FN) and 5 Jan (PS) in Duluth, Minnesota. Wisconsin hosted 4 Gyrs: singles 4 Dec—Jan at Buena Vista Grasslands (KH, m. ob.), 21 Jan at Devil's Lake S.P. (MF), 5 Jan at *Superior* (PS), and finally a controversial bird considered by some to be a falconer's bird, and perhaps a Peregrine x Gyrfalcon hybrid, 3-8 Feb in *Racine* (EH, m. ob.). The latter is pending review by the Wisconsin Bird Records Committee. As is typical, the only Prairie Falcon report came from Minnesota, one on 1 Dec in *Polk* (TV, *fide* BB). In Michigan, 2 Virginia Rails stayed to 2 Dec in *Washtenaw* (HP), while Sandhill Cranes lingered in the s. tier of counties in higher-than-normal numbers. Gray Partridge seems to be declining in Wisconsin; this season, the only report came from *Brown*, where 9 were reported on 31 Jan (DV). Killdeer lingered in Minnesota, with 1 on 4 Dec in Duluth, *St. Louis* (PS) being record late in the n. part of the state. Late in Michigan was a Greater Yellowlegs on 1 Dec in *Washtenaw* (SS). Perhaps the most unexpected shorebird in the Region was the **Ruddy Turnstone** that appeared 22 Jan near Alpena, *Alpena* (JSO); it remained through the period, providing a first



Michigan's third Sage Thrasher record was provided by this bird coming to a feeding station in Gladwin (here 26 December 2001). Photograph by Adam M. Byrne.

winter record for Michigan and likely the Region. The turnstone associated with Snow Buntings and took corn from a bird feeder, behavior typical on wintering grounds at beachside Caribbean bars (and even the Chesapeake Bay), but hardly in Alpena! A Purple Sandpiper 2 Feb in *Racine* (EH) was Wisconsin's 3rd winter record beyond 2 Jan, while in Michigan one 16 Dec at *Muskegon* (CF) was more typical. A Dunlin from 15-16 Dec at Duluth, *St. Louis* (MS) provided a first winter record for Minnesota. Exceptional in Michigan were reports of Red Phalarope on 1 Dec on Keweenaw Bay, *Baraga* (JK), 1- 2 Dec at South Haven, *Van Buren* (JG, RS), and 27-28 Jan at Holland, *Ottawa* (TW). An American Woodcock found dead on 17 Feb in *Racine* (fide EH) was only the 7th Wisconsin record in that month. The only Little Gull in the Region this season came from Wisconsin, where one was seen through 23 Dec in *Milwaukee*. A **Black-headed Gull** in *Milwaukee* 2-23 Dec (SL, m. ob.) was only the 2nd winter record in Wisconsin. Two tardy Bonaparte's Gulls on 15 Dec in Afton, *Washington* were the 3rd latest date in Minnesota. In Wisconsin, a **Mew Gull** was present 8-23 Dec in *Milwaukee* (RH, DG, m. ob.). Herring Gulls overwintered for the first time in Minnesota away from L. Superior, 200 staying in the Twin Cities area, while above-average numbers wintered on the Great Lakes. All three states reported good numbers of Thayer's and Iceland Gulls this season. Minnesota also reported good numbers of Glaucous Gulls, including overwintering birds at Black Dog L., *Dakota* as well as above-average numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls. Wisconsin and Michigan reported average-

numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls. In Minnesota, a first-winter **Black-legged Kittiwake** was found along I-35 feeding on a road-killed deer near Sandstone, *Pine* on 2 Dec (TWi); less unusual were the 2 ads. and 2 tar-rocks observed in Michigan on 1 Dec at South Haven, *Van Buren* (JG, RS). Certainly the bird of the season in Wisconsin was the first state record **Ross's Gull** in *Ashland* 6-8 Dec (DVe, TM), which was enjoyed by many.

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

The Eurasian Collared-Dove continues to move into Wisconsin at a slow pace. This season, one was at Holy Cross through 23 Feb, 3 were found in *Grant* on 9 Jan (JHe), and in Oconoto, where they have been present for the past three years (JS, KS). A **White-winged Dove** present through the period in DeWitt Twp., *Clinton* (EB, CK) provided Michigan its first winter record. All three states reported good numbers of Snowy Owls. In contrast, only Minnesota reported Northern Hawk Owl, with 23 during the winter season. Great Grays were similarly rare in Wisconsin, with only one report from *Shawano* (DT, JHe); Michigan had no reports, while Minnesota had 22 during the season. Michigan had increased numbers of Long-eared Owls, with reports from 5 counties. Amazingly, Minnesota had its 3rd record for **Anna's Hummingbird**, an ad. male present 1-26 Dec in Minneapolis, *Hennepin* (JLa, Jlu, m. ob.). In Michigan, the **Rufous Hummingbird** at Ortonville, *Oakland* remained to 31 Dec (AC). Minnesota had an average number of Three-toed Woodpecker reports—6 from four counties—but an individual on 15 Dec near Paradise, *Chippewa* (KMe) was exceptional in Michigan, the record pending M.B.R.C. review. Minnesota had an excellent showing for Black-backed Woodpeckers, with 41 reports including one on 2-9 Jan in Becker, *Sherburne* (DO), the first s. report since 1987. Michigan also had an unusual report of 3 present on Isle Royale, *Keweenaw* 23-28 Feb (fide JK).

Eastern Phoebe lingered into Dec in three Michigan counties, while a single bird 30 Dec—7 Jan at Little Sauk, *Todd* (JKr, m. ob.) provided Minnesota a new late date. The **Vermilion Flycatcher** reported in Wisconsin in the fall remained to 2 Dec at *Jefferson* (BR), the first documented record for that state. Also in Wisconsin, two brown-backed swallows were found on 24 Dec in *Dane* (MM) and were the source of some controversy in which identification ranged from imm. Tree Swallow to Bank Swallow to Northern Rough-winged Swallow, the latter gaining the consensus. A Marsh Wren 8-16 Dec at Mound Springs Park, *Hennepin* (SC) provided Minnesota its 8th winter record.



This Black-throated Gray Warbler remained at a feeder near Centreville from 15 December 2001 through the period's end, providing Michigan a first winter record. Photograph by Adam M. Byrne.

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

Average for Minnesota were 7 Townsend's Solitaire reports from seven counties, while Wisconsin had several at Devil's Lake S.P. and one on 29 Jan in *Waukesha* (CS). Hermit Thrushes are not unusual in Michigan during the winter, but the one in late Feb in *Houghton* (DBo) was well n. of normal. Varied Thrush was less common in Wisconsin, with only two reports, while more typical were the 9 reported from seven Minnesota counties. Unexpected was a Gray Catbird at a Wisconsin feeder 31 Jan+ in *Winnebago* (BH). Only the 3rd Michigan record, and the 2nd in 4 months, a **Sage Thrasher** was present 25-30 Dec in Gladwin, *Gladwin* (m. ob.).

American Pipits lingered in Michigan, with 6 on the Alpena C.B.C. and 2 on 21 Jan and one on 3 Feb at Metro Beach, *Macomb*. Wisconsin also reported American Pipits in *Dane* 17 Feb (PA), *Ozaukee* 21 Feb (JF), a small flock on 25 Feb at Williams Bay (WR), and 2 in *Dane* 28 Feb (KBu). All three states reported low numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, the only significant flock being 1,000 on 6 Jan in *Crow Wing* in Minnesota (WN). Minnesota had its 4th winter record for Orange-crowned Warbler, an individual on 14 Dec in *Washington* (EBe, TB). A Cape May Warbler on the Houghton C.B.C., *Houghton* (BDe) was exceptional in Michigan both because of the late date and for the northerly location. An Audubon's Warbler was reported 8-10 Feb at Grey Cloud I., *Washington* (TT, AS), 14th record of this w. subspecies in Minnesota. Both Minnesota and Wisconsin reported excellent numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers, the 19 reports in Minnesota being a record; conversely Michigan had a very poor season for this species. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** appeared in Michigan at a feeder near Centreville, *St. Joseph* 15 Dec+ (JJ, VJ). A Palm

Warbler 14 Dec in Two Harbors, *Lake* (JL) was a first winter record for Minnesota, as was one on 15 Dec on the Beloit C.B.C. (SC) for Wisconsin. An Ovenbird lingered in Michigan to 5 Dec in Detroit, *Wayne* (KO), and one on the Oconomowoc C.B.C. (*fide* BD) was Wisconsin's 5th winter record.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Summer Tanager at a feeder in *Outagamie* 27 Dec—15 Jan (DT, m. ob.) was a 3rd winter record in Wisconsin, as was one on 2 Dec in Duluth, *St. Louis* (*fide* KE) in Minnesota. In Michigan, the female Scarlet Tanager from the fall stayed to 7 Dec in *Berrien* (JW). A Spotted Towhee 15 Dec in *Dane* (GS, PSc) was the 8th state record in Wisconsin. Casual in Minnesota during the winter, a Chipping Sparrow was present 1-28 Jan at Whitewater W.M.A., *Winona* (CB, WB, m. ob.). A Vesper Sparrow 22 Dec in *Cass* (JW) was late in Michigan, while a Savannah Sparrow near Lawndale, *Wilkin* (SM) was only the 5th winter record in Minnesota. Minnesota had its 8th winter record for Lincoln's Sparrow, with one on 6 Dec in Minneapolis, *Hennepin* (TT), while in Michigan, where the species is less uncommon in winter, a single bird was present from to 1 Feb in Detroit, *Wayne* (JFo, KO). Wisconsin had 2 Lincoln's Sparrow reports, including one on 23 Feb in *Dane* (KBU) and another on the Stockbridge C.B.C. (*fide* BD). Michigan had single Harris's Sparrows on 16 Dec and 28 Dec—8 Jan, both in *Berrien* (JW). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared at a Wisconsin feeder in *Portage* 11-12 Dec (AY, KH). Very unexpected was an imm. **Painted Bunting** that appeared on 2 Feb and remained through the month at a feeder in Rogers City, *Presque Isle* (AP, ER, WG, m. ob.). The bird appeared after a day of strong southerly winds and was so weak it was thought it would succumb overnight; but it made a miraculous recovery and was enjoyed by many Michigan birders. It is the 9th state record and the first in winter. Equally astounding in that state was a **Bobolink** on the Rockwood C.B.C., *Monroe* (KO). This Neotropical migrant is rare on any North American C.B.C., though this bird provided a 2nd record for a Michigan C.B.C.! Also in Michigan's *Monroe* was a large winter blackbird roost with counts of 90,000 Red-winged Blackbirds and 135,000 Common Grackles on 15 Dec (AC). Equally impressive on the Monroe C.B.C. were 4,038 Rusty Blackbirds. Wisconsin also had big concentrations of Rusty Blackbirds, with 1,700 at the Waterloo W.A. on 14 Dec (KK) and 4,000+ on the Hutisford C.B.C. (BD). The previous winter high in that state was 337. The Hutisford C.B.C. also reported 1,200+ Brewer's Blackbirds, rather remarkable when one considers that all the previous winter records of this species

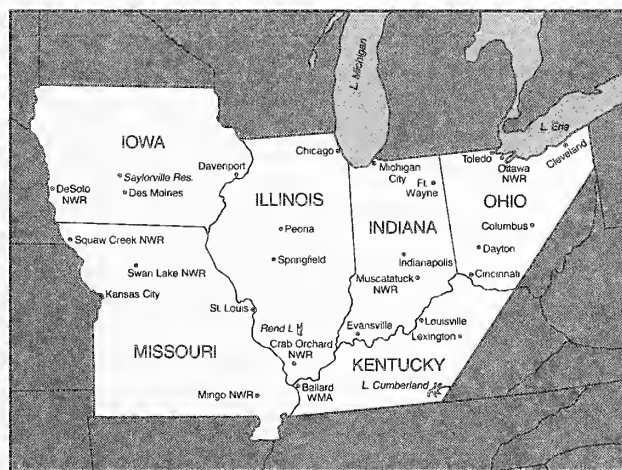
in Wisconsin numbered only 474! In Michigan, this species is extremely rare in winter, making one found 15 Dec in *Genesee* (KO) notable. Even rarer in Michigan was a Western Meadowlark from 19-27 Jan in Eagle Harbor, *Keweenaw* (MA, JK). Baltimore Orioles were reported in Wisconsin in *Dane* 10 Dec (DF) and in *Outagamie* 21 Dec (BH), and in Minnesota, a tardy Baltimore was seen 21 Dec in Duluth, *St. Louis* (PS). A highlight in Minnesota was a **Brambling** at Battle L., *Otter Tail* 16-30 Dec (EE, JE, m. ob.), the 5th record for that state. Wisconsin had a good winter finch year, with an average number of Pine Grosbeaks, good numbers of Common Redpolls, and a few reports of Hoary Redpoll. Michigan had a disappointing year for winter finches, despite the promising fall, but by winter, the numbers of all species were average to below average. Minnesota reported good numbers of White-winged Crossbills scattered throughout the state, including some in the s. portions of the state, whereas the rest of the winter finches were seen in unremarkable numbers.

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Middlewestern Prairie



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From his perspective in Iowa, a state that enjoyed its fourth warmest winter on record, Bob Cecil aptly characterized the season's weather: "Heavy coats remained in the closet, long johns in the drawer, and winter

was measured in days rather than months.” In Chicago, where the temperature failed to reach the dreaded zero, the winter of 2001-2002 was the warmest in 70 years. Snowfall was also quite light. The entire Midwest luxuriated in another joyously mild winter. This balmy Midwestern winter theme has been replayed so frequently over the past ten years that it raises the obvious question—have our winter bird populations also changed?

A warming climate might well have initiated changes in the Region’s birds, if one relies on correlation. A comparison of recent Middlewestern Prairie Region reports with those of two decades ago reveals some changes. Several species, such as Sandhill Crane, Least Sandpiper, Forster’s Tern, Palm Warbler, and Chipping Sparrow—formerly casual or accidental in the cold months—have become quite regular. The presence of these species season after season is perhaps a better barometer of winter avian population changes than are shockers such as the tail-bobbing Louisiana Waterthrush or nesting American Robin described in this report. Although the jury is still out on this issue, a substantial amount of empirical evidence now suggests that indeed “the times they are a-changin’.” Note: Due to an email malfunction, the Missouri report failed to arrive in time for inclusion in the Regional summary. That state’s highlights are appended.

Abbreviations: Carl. L. (Carlyle L. in *Clinton, Fayette, & Bond*, IL); D. N. R. (Department of Natural Resources); H.B.S.P (Headlands Beach S.P., OH); L. Cal. (L. Calumet, Chicago); O.N.W.R. (Ottawa N.W.R., OH); R.E.D.A (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Once again, Red-throated Loons were plentiful, with 5 in Kentucky, 3 in Illinois, 3 in Indiana, and one in Ohio. Common Loons were also widespread; the peak tally consisted of 125 in *Barren*, KY 8 Dec (DR). Daily Horned Grebe counts exceeding 70 birds were logged in Ohio and Illinois, but the maximum count came from Kentucky, where 130 were present in scattered flocks along the Ohio R. 8 Dec (BPB). Winter Red-necked Grebes were confined to the e. states, with 4 in Indiana, 4 in Ohio, and one in Kentucky. The only Eared Grebe e. of the Mississippi R. was seen in *Taylor*, KY 21 Dec (BPB). A Western Grebe in *Dickinson*, IA 1 Dec (LAS) was overshadowed by the discovery of a **Clark’s Grebe** in *Spirit L.*, IA the following day (†LAS, ETh). The season’s most impressive seabird was an imm. Northern Gannet that appeared sporadically at Fairport Harbor, OH 21 Dec (TKe) and 29 Dec (EB).

The largest American White Pelican concentrations occurred in Kentucky, where 226 were found on Kentucky L. (where this species might have wintered) 15 Dec (BPB) and at Carl. L., where 150 were counted 1 Dec (DKa). Double-crested Cormorant numbers remained high; the peak count was 7000 at Rend L., IL 15 Dec (DKa). Surprisingly, American Bitterns, which are accidental in winter, were reported at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL 1-7 Dec (LH), at Rend L., IL 15 Dec (LSt), and in *Muhlenberg*, KY 5 Jan (DOb, MB, HC, JCv). The latter provided one of few mid-winter records for Kentucky. Taking advantage of the mild weather, Great Egrets tarried in Illinois, providing rare winter records in *Carroll* 1 Dec (KJM, AF) and at Horseshoe L. 8 Dec (KAM). Lingered Black-crowned Night-Herons appeared in four states, the latest near Cedar Rapids, IA 8-10 Jan (JLF). Also capitalizing on the mild conditions, Turkey Vultures returned to the n. states in early Feb, and a record count was established in *Barren*, KY 9 Dec, when 850 were tallied (SS, DR).

WATERFOWL

Expansion of the Region’s winter goose population continued this season. Exceptional Greater White-fronted Goose counts included 4500 at Reelfoot N.W.R., KY in late Jan (CD), 3000+ at Lake Chautauqua N.W.R., IL 9 Feb (RTC), 2000+ in *Gibson*, IN 12 Jan (CMi, et al.), and 2000 at Carl. L. 9 Dec (DKa). The Kentucky and Indiana counts constitute record state tallies. Following suit, five Snow Goose reports, from three states, exceeded 20,000 birds; the maximum was 100,000 at Carl. L. 16 Feb (DKa). Ross’s Goose was also surprisingly plentiful, with one or more birds reported in every state. The most remarkable Ross’s Goose report consisted of an incredible 80 birds at Reelfoot N.W.R., KY 10 Feb (BPB, DR). Over the past decade, winter-period Brant have been quite rare in the Region; however, at least four birds were reported this season. These included 2 at H.B.S.P 5-7 Dec (KMj, JWH), an imm. in *Black Hawk*, IA 16-19 Dec (†FLM, †MO), one at H.B.S.P 30 Dec (LRO), and one at Lakeshore Metropark, OH 24 Feb (JPg). Tundra Swans were also present in unusually high numbers, with 965 on Mississippi R. Pool 13 IL & IA 20 Dec (KJM, et al.) and 200 that wintered at O.N.W.R (m. ob., *fide* RHa).

Both puddle and bay duck numbers remained at the high levels of recent years. Noteworthy reports included a male Eurasian Wigeon in *Johnson*, IA 25-27 Feb (DaF, †THK, †ABr, †CE, †MP, †MD), an American x Eurasian Wigeon hybrid at Reelfoot N.W.R., KY 10 Feb (BPB, DR), several Dec Blue-

winged Teal, including a female in *Hardin*, KY 4 Jan (BPB), and a phenomenal 87,470 Northern Pintails counted during an aerial survey at three w. Kentucky locations 5 Feb (*fide* BPB). The season’s only Harlequin Ducks were on the Illinois lakefront, where 2 were seen at Winthrop Harbor 1 Dec (AS, UG), at Evanston 29 Dec (JE, EW), and at Jackson Park in Chicago 20 Feb (PRC). Scoters were scarce on the Great Lakes, and White-winged Scoters were especially hard to find. Inland scoter and Long-tailed Duck numbers were near normal. The season’s best duck was a male **Barrow’s Goldeneye** at Port Neal 9-22 Feb (†WFH, †MO), which provided Iowa’s first report in six years. The 450 Red-breasted Mergansers seen on the Ohio R. in *Jefferson*, KY 8 Dec (BPB, DOB), provided an excellent inland count, as did the 3000 Ruddy Ducks at Carl. L. 8 Dec (DKa).

EAGLE TO SHOREBIRDS

Among numerous excellent Bald Eagle counts were 371 at Lock & Dam 13-15 on the Mississippi R. 15 Jan (KJM, PSb), 259 on the Ohio mid-winter survey (Ohio D.N.R., *fide* RHn), and 204 on the Indiana mid-winter survey (JSC). The peak winter Northern Harrier tally consisted of 35 birds in a reclaimed strip mine area of *Greene*, IN 24 Feb (BK, DRW). The Region’s total Northern Goshawk count was 16, which is slightly above average for a non-incursion year. The season’s Red-tailed Hawk log included a plethora of the more uncommon forms. The tally sheet included 6 “Harlan’s,” 2 “Kriger’s,” and a host of dark and rufous morphs. Several correspondents reported a dearth of Rough-legged Hawks this winter.

One to 8 Golden Eagles were reported in each state, including 2 in Ohio, where this species is casual. The season also yielded some 25 Merlins, a number that is in keeping with reports from recent winters. The easternmost Prairie Falcons were in Kentucky, where a juv. was identified in *Fulton* 4-8 Dec (DR et al.) and an apparent ad. in *Muhlenberg* 15 Feb (MM, MV). Despite the mild winter, Northern Bobwhite numbers were low. This species was reported in “extremely low numbers” in Illinois (KJM), and counts were also down locally in Iowa. Sandhill Cranes lingered well into Dec in all states, and this species likely wintered in Iowa and Kentucky (and perhaps elsewhere). January Sandhill records included 407 in *Monroe*, IN 27 Jan (J & SH), 56 at Kentucky L. 19 Jan (HC), and 8 that wintered in *Hamilton*, IA (*fide* HZ).

Once again, good numbers of shorebirds were present; a dozen species were logged for

the season. Three Black-bellied Plovers lingered at O.N.W.R. until 4 Dec (VF) to provide the Region's first winter record in more than a decade. A winter profusion of Killdeer was evidenced by 300 appropriately at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., OH 20 Dec (BWh) and 200+ in *Parke*, IN 15 Dec (AB). Greater Yellowlegs tarried into Dec in three states; the latest record consisted of 2 in *Will*, IL 16 Dec (UG). Five Lesser Yellowlegs were still at Reelfoot N.W.R., KY 15 Dec (CS et al.). Least Sandpipers were reported in four states, with Jan records in Illinois and Kentucky. This species might have wintered in Ohio as, following several late Dec reports, 2 Least were at Buck Creek S.P. 16 Feb (DOv). Most surprising was a Pectoral Sandpiper in *Warren*, IA 2 Dec (†JSi), which provided that state's 2nd Dec and latest winter record.

It was a good winter for Purple Sandpipers on the Great Lakes. Four were at H.B.S.P. until 2 Jan (m. ob.), and one was seen irregularly at Waukegon, IL 8 Dec (DD), 23 Feb, and 1-2 Mar (†DBJ et al.). The most remarkable Purple Sandpiper, however, appeared at the Cinergy Gibson power plant, *Gibson*, IN 9 Dec (†G&LB, ph.), where it provided the state's 4th inland record (all at that site). Dunlin are becoming regular in the winter report. This year, a whopping 327 were found at O.N.W.R. 4 Dec (VF), and one lingered at L. Macbride, IA until 20 Dec (†JLF, †THK) to provide an all-time late record for Iowa. Perhaps the winter's most extraordinary shorebird report involved 5 Long-billed Dowitchers at O.N.W.R. 12 Dec (VF), which constitutes one of only a handful of winter records for the Region. Common Snipes, which regularly winter in small numbers, had a banner year with a state record 243 at Reelfoot N.W.R., KY 27 Jan (BPB, CS, JD). American Woodcocks heralded the mild winter by returning very early. The earliest arrivals were recorded in *Monroe*, IN 25 Jan (J&SH) and *Darke*, OH 27 Jan (RSh). A Red Phalarope, present at Huron, OH since fall, lingered until 15 Dec (m. ob.).

JAEGERS THROUGH OWLS

Up to 5 Pomarine Jaegers were visible simultaneously at Rocky River Park, OH on 1-2 Dec (SZ, TG), suggesting that this species is becoming a regular winter resident on L. Erie. Despite the mild winter, gulls were present in abundance. Single ad. Black-headed Gulls were at Lorain, OH 20-24 Dec (SZ, Jpg) and at Fairport Harbor, OH 30 Dec (†LRO, RHn, EB). The Region's peak Bonaparte's Gull count came from an unexpected location; 6000 were present on Kentucky L., KY 20 Jan (HC). Ring-billed Gulls peaked at 50,000 at Carl. L. 28 Dec

(DKa). California Gulls have become rare but regular members of the Region's winter gull throngs. This year, ads. were identified at Huron, OH 15 Dec (VF), Avon L., OH 20 Dec (SZ), and on the Chicago lakefront 5 Jan and 5 Feb (DBJ, SH, m. ob.). All four-year gulls were both widespread and plentiful. Noteworthy records included 4 Thayer's that were recorded throughout the winter at Barkley Dam, KY (BPB, m. ob.), an inland "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull at Carl. L. 18 Dec (KAM, SBa, CL), a maximum of 6 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Kentucky L., KY 15 Dec (BPB, HC, et al.), a total of 4 Glaucous Gulls in Iowa (SJD, JLF, SFD), and a record 11 Great Black-backed Gulls at the Hammond Marina, IN 16 Mar (RHu). Late juv. Black-legged Kittiwakes appeared on the Indiana lakefront at Michigan City Harbor 1 Dec (JMc, m. ob.) and at Miller Beach 19 Dec (DGo, KJB).

A nonchalant Caspian Tern dallied in s. Illinois, where it was seen at Rend L. 15 Dec (LSt). Forster's Terns apparently wintered in Kentucky, where sightings were logged in each of the three winter months. Observations in Jan, all on Kentucky L., included 2 on 6 Jan (HC), 5 on 20 Jan (HC), and at least one on 26 Jan (ME).

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to strengthen their foothold in the Region; winter nest-building was observed in *Fulton*, KY 16 Feb (MB et al.). Kentucky's 2nd *Inca Dove* appeared in Hickman, *Fulton* 9-11 Feb (ph. BY et al.). Single Great Horned Owls of the pale Arctic race appeared at two Iowa locations: in *Cerro Gordo* 1 Jan (PH) and in *Hardin* 18 Jan (MP). The fall Snowy Owl irruption was widespread, with some 32 birds reported. Several Snowy Owls pressed into s. reaches of the Region, with two records as far as Kentucky: an imm. female in *Henderson* 9 Dec (RSO, DOB, BPB) and a second-year male in *Pendleton* 22 Feb that lingered into mid-Mar (JHy, KC et al.). It was a typical winter for the "eared" owls, with multiple individuals of both species from all reporting states. Some 16 Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported across the Region, suggesting that it was a better than average winter for that species.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A Northern Flicker of the *cafra* subspecies ("Red-shafted Flicker") wandered e. to Ames, IA, where it visited a feeder 1 Jan (JJD). The season's hummingbird roster included an ad. male Rufous at a *Bourbon*, KY feeder late Nov—1 Jan (VS, BPB). The Vermilion Flycatcher reported at O.N.W.R. last fall lingered until 12 Dec (KMi). A Loggerhead Shrike at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., OH 12 Dec—

11 Feb (TS, m. ob.) was most unusual for that location. The count of 27 Northern Shrikes reported across the Region was below the average of recent winters. A lingering Blue-headed Vireo in Ames, IA 15 Dec (†KH, et al.), provided that state's 2nd Dec record. Fish Crows are rarely reported in the dead of winter; consequently, the 4 at Horseshoe L., IL 21 Jan (KAM) were noteworthy.

A Tree Swallow in *Taylor*, KY 24 Feb (RDe, HC) was a bit early, but the Barn Swallow at L. Chautauqua N.W.R., IL 22 Feb (RBj, SBj) was thoroughly overzealous. For the 2nd time in three years, ne. Kentucky hosted Black-capped Chickadees; 3 were banded and 2 others seen in Blaine 6 Feb, and 3 more were observed 5 km farther n. (SFh, BPB, MM). Both of the Region's autumn Brown-headed Nuthatches lingered well into winter. The Illinois Beach S.P., IL bird was seen until 9 Feb (GAW, SH, DBJ, m. ob.), and the *Geauga*, OH nuthatch lingered until 15 Jan (LGi, JMc, ph. m. ob.).

The 5 House Wrens reported in Kentucky during the C.B.C. period made for an unusually high winter total. Townsend's Solitaire reports were up this winter, with one in *Cook*, IL 17 Dec (GB, *fide* KJM), a single bird in *O'Brien*, IA 8 Jan—16 Feb (DKo, †TNJ, LAS, ETh), and 2 in *Plymouth*, IA 11 Jan (†WFH et al.). Hermit Thrushes were plentiful, with 6 in Iowa, 5 in Illinois, and 3 in Indiana. Thousands of American Robins lingered well into winter, as evidenced by 8000 at Rend L., IL 15 Dec (DKa) and 3000 in *Henry*, IL 1 Feb (DJS). Incredibly, one even nested; a female was observed incubating two eggs in Chicago from 13 Dec—12 Jan (JPe). American Pipits were reported in good numbers across the Region; peak counts included 150 at Carl. L. 27 Dec (DKa) and 150 in *Warren*, KY 25 Jan (DR). Once again, Bohemian Waxwings were restricted to n. Iowa, where singletons were reported at Hawkeye W.M.A. 13 Dec (†JLF) and in *O'Brien* 2 Feb (†LAS). Cedar Waxwing counts were nominal this winter; the largest concentration consisted of 477 in *Winnebago*, IL 29 Dec (DWi).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

As has occurred in recent mild winters, a number of warblers lingered in the Region. Most noteworthy were a Nashville Warbler in Cleveland, OH 15 Dec (JT, RK) that provided that state's 3rd Dec record, and a female American Redstart in Columbus, OH 22 Dec (RR). Among the more "expected" winter warblers, Pines and Palms, were each reported in four states, whereas two states claimed Ovenbirds and Common Yellowthroats.

More evidence that more Neotropical birds

SA The spate of recent warm winters has rendered many of the Region's birders accustomed to seeing warblers, and other tropical species, in December. However, the appearance of a Christmas-period **Louisiana Waterthrush**, on freshly fallen snow, would astonish even the staunchest global warmer. Indeed, on 29 Dec, a Louisiana Waterthrush was discovered in Twinsburg, *Summit*, OH (†LRo, JSe, CJ, ph. and six other observers). Identifiable photographs were obtained. This is the first confirmed winter record for Ohio (the previous latest date was in September) and a cursory examination of the literature revealed no other December records in the Region.

are wintering in the Region was offered by a Summer Tanager's presence at a Shipshewana, IN feeder 27 Dec—30 Jan (PSm, †DSt, ph. ML, PM).

The season's only Spotted Towhee was a female in Urbana, IL 1-2 Dec (SBa, m. ob.). Chipping Sparrow numbers were up this winter; the peak count consisting of 17 in Bowling Green, KY 29 Dec—late Jan (DR). Other noteworthy sparrow reports included a single Vesper at Peabody W.M.A., KY 7 Jan (MM) and an impressive 58 Savannahs in *Greene*, IN 24 Feb (DRW). Most unusual were single winter-period Lincoln's Sparrows in downtown Indianapolis 8 Dec (RHe, DGo, et al.) and in w. *Fulton*, KY 10 Feb (BPB, DR). Harris's Sparrows were scarce, the only report e. of the Mississippi R. being of a bird in *Shelby*, IN 29 Dec—6 Feb (DGo, JMc, ph., m. ob.). Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were present in typical numbers; peak counts were 500+ Laplands in *McLean*, IL, (MLR, LW) and 1000 Buntings in *Fulton*, OH 8 Jan (JY).

A male Indigo Bunting, which visited a *Daviess*, KY feeding station 18-26 Feb (MTo), added to the season's hefty winter list of Neotropical migrant passerines. Yellow-headed Blackbird reports included one in *Warrick*, IN 9 Feb (CMi), a female in *Woodbury*, IA 9 Feb (WFH), and 2 ad. males in *Union*, KY 27 Feb (BPB). Excellent blackbird counts were also logged; peak tallies included 1100 Rusty Blackbirds at Mermet L., IL, 31 Dec (KMA) and 200 Brewer's Blackbirds in Gibson, IN 12 Jan (CMi). A fine winter Great-tailed Grackle count of 22 birds was made 1 Jan in *Dickinson*, IA (LAS). Peak tallies of the more common blackbird species included 38,500 Red-winged at Rend L., IL 15 Dec (KAM), 50,000 Common Grackles at Carl. L. 1 Dec (DKa),

and 3000 Brown-headed Cowbirds at Carl. L. 23 Dec (DKa). The winter darkness was brightened by the appearance of 2 Baltimore Orioles. The first was in *Jo Daviess*, IL 12-29 Dec (RDo), and an ad. male was in *Cuyahoga*, OH on Christmas day (LGa, reportedly ph.).

Despite the guarded optimism generated during the fall flight, it was a mediocre season for winter finches. Purple Finches were deemed scarce in many states, but a peak count of 60 was logged in *Cerro Gordo*, IA 1 Jan (PH, et al.). Red Crossbills were reported only in Illinois and Iowa; the peak tally was 30 at Sand Ridge State Forest, IL 12 Jan (KAM, KR). White-winged Crossbills were more widespread, with observations in all five reporting states. The maximum count was 12 in *Carroll*, IA 29 Dec (RGo). Common Redpolls fared a bit better, with multiple reports from every state; the largest count, by a wide margin, consisted of 165 at Arcola Cr., OH, 2 Jan (JPg). Double-digit counts of Pine Siskins were recorded in every state (mainly in Dec), with a maximum of 75 in *Lucas*, OH 9 Dec (TA). The Region's Evening Grosbeak inventory consisted of 2 found at different Kentucky locations.

MISSOURI SUMMARY

For the most part, observations of the Missouri birders paralleled those in the other five states. Missouri provided the season's only **Pacific Loon**: a single bird at Fellow's L. 1 Dec (CB). Up to 40 Trumpeter Swans were at R.E.D.A. during the winter, and 30 were counted at that location 8 Dec (BR). In view of these high numbers, Brad Jacobs suggested that the status of this "non-established" species should soon be re-evaluated. This sentiment is shared by observers in several nearby states. At R.E.D.A., the winter gull population reached about 4000, of which about 80% were Ring-billed Gulls (BR). Rarities at R.E.D.A. included a Thayer's Gull 30 Dec (BR), a first-winter Glaucous 19 Jan (BR, m. ob.), and a Lesser Black-backed 6 Jan (MTe). The "Show-Me State" also added three Snowy Owl reports to the Region's tally (LL, JH, SK); all were in the ne. corner of the state and possibly represent the same individual. Most accommodating was the **Lewis's Woodpecker** reported last fall at Schell-Osage W.M.A.; the bird was seen in each of the three winter months (*vide* BJa). A Bewick's Wren at Prairie S.P. 23-24 Feb (†PMc, SK, LL, m. ob.) provided one of few winter records of this species, which is vanishing in the Midwest. The 18 Le Conte's Sparrows in *Nodaway* 14 Dec (DAE), represents a fine winter count. A lone Snow Bunting was observed by 45 birders at L. Mozingo 2 Dec (LL), and an impressive flock of 25 was in *Boone* 19 Jan

(†JMc). Great-tailed Grackles were plentiful, with three counts exceeding 50 birds; the peak tally was 100 in *Green* 21 Jan (GS). White-winged Crossbills were reported at three locations, and a Common Redpoll was in *Buchanan* 17 Dec (LL).

Addendum

The Bewick's Wren reported 25 Sep 2000 in *Franklin*, IL (*N. A. B.* 55: 60) was not accepted by the Illinois committee.

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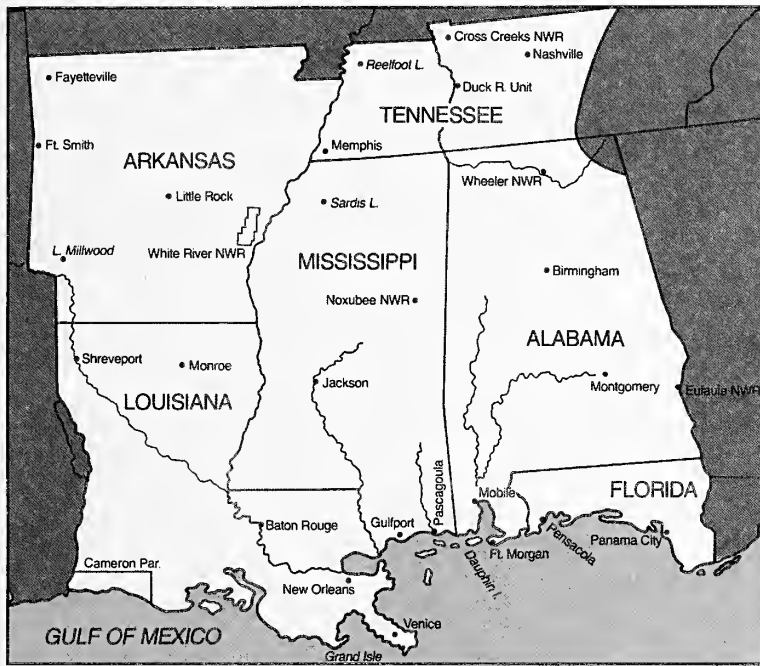
there 2 Dec (DCu, RCu). One near Ft. Walton, FL 17 Dec (WWD, LD) and one at Moses Pier, Harrison, MS 20 Jan (SJD) were local rarities. In Tennessee, up to 2 were in the Pace Point area 23 Dec—23 Feb (JRW, HC, RD, JD, CAS).

Red-necked Grebes occur only sporadically in the Region; the only report was of one from Horn L., Desoto, MS 22 Feb (RH). Up to 2 Eared Grebes were at Guntersville, AL 1-5 Jan (LBR, RAR, DCu, RCu et al.), while singles were on Cross L., Caddo, AR 5 Dec (CLy) and St. Bernard, LA 23 Dec (DLD, SWC). Western Grebe, casual in Mississippi, was seen on Enid L., Yalobusha 1 Dec (SJD, WMD), while a **Western/Clark's Grebe** at Guntersville 24 Feb (p. a. DCu, RCu) was Alabama's 4th *Aechmophorus*.

A spectacular movement of American White Pelicans through the Region commenced 2 Dec. In Alabama, up to 22 were at W.N.W.R., Limestone (JWi, CDC et al.), where they are regular, and 35 were on Weiss L., Cherokee (SC), where they are rarely seen. Tennessee hosted 44 on Reelfoot L., Lake/Obion (m. ob.), with 20 remaining through 20 Feb; in Humphreys, 31 were seen 15 Jan (GBC). In Mississippi, 180 were on Columbus L., Lowndes/Clay 3 Dec, with 6 remaining through 25 Feb; 2 were at N.N.W.R., Noxubee 11 Dec—5 Jan, and one was recorded on Oktibbeha County L. 22 Dec (TS, MS, m. ob.). Up to 855 were on University L. in Baton Rouge, LA 4 Dec (MSw, JK). Neotropical Cormorants have been steadily expanding their range in Louisiana over the past few years. In what may be their northernmost breeding location, 15 pairs and a total of 50 individuals were in a rookery on L. Martin, St. Martin 17 Feb (JH).

Reddish Egrets occur sporadically along the n. Gulf of Mexico in winter. Singles in Little Lagoon Pass, Baldwin, AL 28 Dec (HHK, GA) and on the New Orleans C.B.C. 23 Dec (DPM, KVR, JWB) were noteworthy, as were 2 near Moses Pier in Mississippi 27 Jan (SWo, MC). Cattle Egrets lingered, with 20 on the W.N.W.R. C.B.C., Morgan, AL 15 Dec (m. ob.). In Arkansas, 7 were at Little River, Fomby 2 Dec (DA), one was at Lonoke, Lonoke 16 Dec (HP, MP), and 8 were in Stuttgart, Arkansas 26 Jan (HP, MP). White Ibis away from the coast were: one imm. along Browning Cr., Oktibbeha, MS 13 Dec (TS); 21 on the Texarkana C.B.C., Miller, AR (CM); and 12 at Millwood L., Little River, AR (CM). Seeing *Plegadis* away from the coast in Alabama during the winter is unusual; 2 on the W.N.W.R. C.B.C. 15 Dec (CDC, TP) and one at E.N.W.R., Barbour 23-24 Feb (LBR, RAR) were exceptional.

Central Southern



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While the calendar may have indicated it was winter, temperatures and lingering Neotropical migrants certainly did not. Most areas did not record freezing temperatures until mid-December, while the first major cold front arrived much later than is typical, in the first week in January. Overall, it was one of the warmest winters in recent memory. Waterfowl numbers were significantly below average, while 52 species of Neotropical migrants were reported, 18 of those warblers.

Abbreviations: E.N.W.R. (Eufaula N.W.R., AL), M.S.C.N.W.R. (Mississippi Sandhill

Crane N.W.R., MS), N.N.W.R. (Noxubee N.W.R., MS), p. a. (pending acceptance by appropriate state bird records committee), U.A.E.F. (University of Arkansas Experimental Farm), U.L.L.E.F. (University of Louisiana-Lafayette Experimental Farm), W.N.W.R. (Wheeler N.W.R., AL).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

Red-throated Loons continue to be reported widely in winter. In coastal Alabama, one was recorded on the Perdido Bay C.B.C., Baldwin 22 Dec (RAD, LRD), and 2 were seen in Perdido Pass 29 Dec (DMW, RRR); in Florida, one was at Bayou Grande, Escambia 22 Dec (PB et al.). Inland, singles were at Guntersville, Marshall, AL 5-12 Jan (SWM, CDC, SG) and near Pace Point, Henry, TN 3-23 Feb (JRW, HC, RD, m. ob.). Pacific Loons were at Perdido Pass 29 Dec (3; RRR), and up to 3 were at Guntersville, AL 17 Jan—23 Feb (GDJ, DGJ, RAR, CDC, m. ob.), with a different bird

WATERFOWL

Waterfowl numbers in general were low in the Region, presumably owing to the fall-like temperatures that persisted throughout the period. While numbers were low, diversity remained high. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued their expansion in Louisiana, with 21 at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R. 23 Dec (PAW, CSo). The highest number reported was 150 at W. Hackberry, *Cameron* 15 Dec (GO, BiH). The 4th Tennessee Valley record for Fulvous Whistling-Duck was of one at Guntersville, AL 1-20 Jan (RAR, m. ob.). In Louisiana, up to 55 were seen on Forked Island, *Vermilion* 21 Feb (GO), while 10-35 were recorded at Sabine N.W.R., *Cameron* 17 Dec—10 Feb (BrH, WC, m. ob.). Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from their usual Alabama haunts at W.N.W.R. (CDC, JJ, m. ob.), with a peak of 19 on 28 Dec, and at E.N.W.R. (BFF, m. ob.), where they peaked at 21 on 22 Feb. One was reported in *Baldwin* 27 Jan, where rare in winter (LG, AM). Impressive Snow Geese flocks reported were 10,000 at Reelfoot L., 12 Jan (MAG, JRW, VBR), 40,000 at Big Lake N.W.R., *Mississippi*, AR 2 Feb (NL, CL), and 80,000 in *Tunica*, MS 25 Dec (JRW). Ross's Geese were reported from an amazing 18 different locations. Largest numbers were reported from areas that traditionally host large flocks of Snow Geese. In *Little River*, AR, 226 were seen 23 Feb (CW), including one neck-banded and 6-8 Snow x Ross's hybrids. An amazing 300 were with the 80,000 Snow Geese reported in *Tunica*, MS 25 Dec (JRW). Away from the traditional areas, interesting singles were at Fairhope, *Baldwin*, AL 16 Dec (BSu); Auburn, AL 20 Dec (BFF); L. Atalanta, *Benton*, AR 24 Dec (DJ, JN, LA, MM); Savannah Bottoms, *Hardin*, TN 29 Dec (JRW); Prichard, *Tunica*, MS 30 Dec (KKu, BPe, WRP); Calera, *Shelby*, AL 31 Dec (JAA, *fide* AMi); *Orleans*, LA 27 Jan (PAW); and, Nashville, *Davidson*, TN 3 Feb (PDC).

The only Tundra Swan reports came from Mississippi, one at N.N.W.R. 15 Jan+ (RW, LW,

TS, m. ob.) and 3 in *Washington* 16 Jan (GK, SK). Eurasian Wigeon has become almost annual at a few locations in the Region; one at Britton Ford, TN 18-22 Feb was w. Tennessee's 5th (MCT, AH). Blue-winged Teal singles were on East L. in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, AL 8 Dec (GJH) and near Little Dixie, *Prairie*, AR 30 Dec (KN, LN, MDi). A Common Teal was at Lauderdale Waterfowl Refuge, TN 3 Dec—Jan (JRW, m. ob.). The largest number of Greater Scaup reported was 52 from Guntersville, AL 23 Feb (SJD, JRB). An impressive flock of 20,000 Lesser Scaup in *St. Martin*, LA 27 Jan (MJM) appeared to be staging for migration. Surf Scoters were reported from five locations: 2 at Guntersville, AL 7 Dec (SWM); one at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, AL 23 Feb (SJD); one in *Dekalb*, TN 7 Dec (joined by 12 others 11 Dec [SJS]); one at Britton Ford 9 Feb (MAG, MCT, JRW); and 2 along the Mandeville waterfront, *St. Tammany*, LA 30 Nov—30 Dec (BW, RS, m. ob.). White-winged Scoters were reported from four locations: 2 in upper Mobile Bay, AL 7-15 Dec (KK et al); one at Guntersville, AL 1 Jan—26 Feb (LBR, RAR, m. ob.); Oktibbeha County L. 17 Dec—21 Jan (TS, m. ob.); and near Pace Point, TN 20 Jan—23 Feb (MCT, JRW).

An ad. male Long-tailed Duck was noted at Andersen's Fish Farm, *Chicot*, AR 19 Dec. (LAn), while single females were at the U.L.L.E.F., *St. Martin* 23 Jan (JH); in *Harrison*, MS 25-26 Feb (SWo, MC); and along the Mississippi R. Levee, *Dyer*, TN 1 Jan (JRW). Arkansas's first **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found on L. Dardanelle, *Pope/Yell* 2-3 Feb (KN, LN, m. ob.). Common Mergansers are noticeably absent from the Region during mild winters. Up to 5 were on L. Dardanelle, AR 9 Jan (LAn), while in Tennessee, up to 12 were at Pace Point 11 Jan—13 Feb (MCT, DM, m. ob.) and one on Gibson County L. 2 Feb (MAG).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

White-tailed Kites continue to do well in *Cameron*, Louisiana. Nine were seen near Ferry

12 Dec (JK, JKI), and 10 were recorded from Johnson Bayou to Holly Beach 26 Jan (KDE). Two were e. of normal range at Lacassine N.W.R. Pool 14 Dec—3 Jan (JK, KF, MGu, BHa, m. ob.). Broad-winged Hawks continue to winter in *Plaquemines*, LA, where 4 were on the Venice C.B.C. 29 Dec (m. ob.) and an amazing 8 were recorded from Boothville to Venice 21 Jan (BMM, PAW, RDP, DPM). Outside that area, one was near Sorrento, *Ascension* 20 Jan (JH). A **Swainson's Hawk** was seen on the Creole C.B.C. at Rutherford Beach, *Cameron*, LA 17 Dec (DLD, SWC, MSw). Rough-legged Hawks can be hard to find during mild winters in the Region. Singles were recorded 5 Dec—1 Jan in *Lake*, TN (MAG, NM, MCT, JRW) and 24 Dec—23 Feb near Georgetown, *White*, AR (KN, LN, MDi). A dark-morph bird was in *Madison*, TN 29 Dec (MAG, CG).

Golden Eagles were widely reported in the Region, continuing the trend of recent winters. In Arkansas, an ad. was seen on the Illinois Bayou C.B.C., *Pope* 3 Jan (CK), and an imm. was near Yancopin, *Desha* 20 Jan (JC). In Louisiana, where it is a review-list species, 2 imms. were seen in *Morehouse* 9 Dec (MSw, BR), 2 were near the Lacassine Pool 14 Dec (JK, MGu, KF, BHa), and an imm. was in *Jefferson Davis* 14 Dec (m. ob.). An imm. was at N.N.W.R., MS 2-26 Jan (TS, SJD), while 2 were at Pace Point, TN 1 Jan—Feb. (MCT, JD, CAS). Merlins were recorded at several inland locations in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, where they are always unusual. **Prairie Falcons** were recorded at two locations in Arkansas (Pangburn, *Cleburne*, 10 Feb [KN, LN] and Lollie Bottoms, *Faulkner* 10-18 Feb [HR, AMu]) and one sporadically in Tennessee in *Lake* 4 Dec—26 Feb (DR, MAG, CAS, m. ob.).

One each of King and Virginia Rail provided good winter records at N.N.W.R., MS 15 Dec (TS). Sandhill Cranes were at W.N.W.R., AL, where up to 142 were seen throughout the period (SWM, DCu, RCu, CDC, m. ob.). In Tennessee, 29 were near Britton Ford 3 Feb

SA In 1820, during his flatboat trip along the Mississippi River, John James Audubon recorded **Trumpeter Swans** twice in Tennessee: on 26 November, he sighted one in west Tennessee, and on 30 November another was near the Third Chickasaw Bluff, Shelby and Tipton Counties (Robinson, J.C. 1990. *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville). For the next 182 years and 28 days, Trumpeters were unknown in the state.

On 28 December 2001, Jeff Wilson found an immature and 2 adult Trumpeter Swans at Lauderdale Waterfowl Refuge, *Lauderdale*, Tennessee. The swans had been neck-banded in Wisconsin, where the species has been reintroduced in recent years. For the next 15 days, the swans were seen by many on the refuge. Some time after 12 January, the young bird disappeared. While watching the 2 adults at some distance on 13 January, Wilson noticed suspicious dark spots on one of the adults. After getting closer to the swans and through extreme magnification, he was able to determine that the spots were blood. Several days of searching failed to locate the immature. During this time, the wounded swan did not feed and stayed close to the apparently uninjured swan. In February, a hunter pleaded guilty in state court to killing the immature swan. He was fined \$50 plus court costs of \$131.50, as well as \$200 to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. The wounded adult appeared to recover, and both adults were seen through 22 January. Are they the vanguards to re-establish Trumpeter Swans in Tennessee and the remainder of their former range?

(JRW, et al.), and 18 were at the Tunica County Landfill, MS 30 Dec—2 Jan (CB, VH, GP, WRP, DDP).

An American Avocet in *Evangeline*, LA 27 Dec (SWC, DLD) was the first Pine Prairie C.B.C. record; 400 were at the East Jetty, *Cameron*, LA 10 Feb (JK, JKL). Single Solitary Sandpipers, all in Louisiana, were at Shreveport, *Caddo* 16 Dec (JT, JTr), on the Creole C.B.C., *Cameron* 17 Dec (WC), on the Reserve—Bonne Carre C.B.C. 26 Dec (MW), and at Haines Airport, *Acadia* 4 Jan (JH, DPa). The shorebird find of the season was the **Purple Sandpiper** (p. a.) at Lakefront Airport—L. Pontchartrain on the New Orleans C.B.C. 23 Dec (DPM, KVR).

GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Last winter's spectacular Laughing Gull invasion inland was not repeated; only 3 were reported this season: an ad. on Dardanelle L., AR 27 Oct+; an imm. at Pickwick S.P., *Hardin*, TN 8 Feb (JRW, MCT); and an ad. at Wheeler Dam, AL 23 Feb (SJD). Single ad. Franklin's Gulls were reported at Columbus L., MS 6-8 Dec (KKi, m. ob.) and Dardanelle L., AR 21 Feb (KN, LN). Regional records of **Little Gull** are decidedly rare. Single ads. were seen 1 Dec on Sardis L., MS (SJD) and 4 Jan on Millwood L., AR (CM). An imm. was found on Johnson's Bayou Beach, LA 16 Dec (BMM, PAW, CSO). Single **Black-headed Gulls** were seen in Arkansas 31 Dec on Millwood L. (CM) and 10 Feb on L. Norfolk, *Baxter* (HR). Another ad. was present at Grenada L., MS 6 Jan (SJD, GK, SK, WMD). There are some 10 **California Gull** reports for nw. Florida, though none with documentation; an ad. was reported at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia* 5 Feb (RAD). An imm. Thayer's Gull was at Pickwick Dam, TN 10 Feb (JRW).

Of four reports of **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, three were inland in Tennessee. A first-year Great Black-backed Gull was found at Guntersville, AL 20-26 Jan (RAR, LBR, DPG, CDC, SG), where rare, as was one near Moses Pier, MS 10 Feb (SJD, JJJ). An imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** was at Columbus L., MS 6-8 Dec (KKi, m. ob.), and the 8th Arkansas record was of an ad. at Dardanelle L. 18 Dec (KN, LN). Northwest Florida's 3rd report of Roseate Tern was one found on the Pensacola C.B.C. 15 Dec (WWD, EC, JP). There are no verified winter records of Roseate Tern in Florida.

Inca Dove is expanding its range in the Region. Sixteen were recorded at the Ogden Post Office, *Little River*, AR throughout the period (CM). The 2 reported in fall in *Washington*, MS remained through at least 2 Jan (GK, SK, m. ob.). Three at Grand Isle,

Jefferson, LA 21 Dec (CGB, TCB) were a first for the local C.B.C. Two Groove-billed Anis were at Holleman—Sheeley Sanctuary 16 Dec (DLD, SWC, CF); 4 were near Triumph, *Plaquemines*, LA 29 Dec (RDP, LE, MSw, CLy). A **Lesser Nighthawk** was on the Venice C.B.C., LA 29 Dec (DPM, KVR, CLy, MSw, RS), while a **Common Nighthawk** was seen during the count period of the White River C.B.C., *Arkansas*, AR 15 Dec (KS, BH). Both species are extremely rare in winter in the Region.

SA The influx of hummingbirds into the Region was again nothing short of extraordinary. Consider this: nine species reported in the Region, including eight in Louisiana, seven in Alabama, three in Arkansas, three in Mississippi, one in Tennessee, and four in northwestern Florida! The total of hummingbirds banded was equally extraordinary. Nancy Newfield and her associates banded 429 hummingbirds during the reporting period: 6 Broad-billed, 22 Buff-bellied, 14 Ruby-throated, 72 Black-chinned, 15 Calliope, 9 Broad-tailed, 274 Rufous, and 17 Allen's! With those banded by the Hummer—Bird Study Group and others, surely over 500 were banded in the Region. Among the luminaries, Alabama's first documented **Broad-billed Hummingbird** (p. a.) was an ad. male in Mobile seen early Nov+ (FB, JCo, m. ob.). Other Broad-billeds (p. a.) were in Louisiana, where one was in Baton Rouge 5 Jan (MD, NLN, JWB, CW, PW) and a second-year female was reported in Thibodaux, *Lafourche* 26 Jan (BM, SM, BB). An **Anna's Hummingbird** was found and banded near Gurdon, *Clark*, AR 4-10 Jan (BS, SF, PF, LFL, m. ob.). Eleven **Calliope Hummingbirds** were reported in Louisiana, with 3 in one yard in Covington, *St. Tammany* 30 Dec (NLN, MO). Four **Allen's Hummingbirds** were reported, with an ad. male banded in Pensacola 5 Jan. A male, banded as an imm. 24 Jan in Reserve, LA (NLN, RJS et al.), attained ad. male plumage and was last seen 27 Feb. In Mississippi, a hatch-year male was trapped and banded in Diamondhead, *Hancock* 27 Dec (DHo, RRS, MBS); a second-year male was banded in Ocean Springs, *Jackson* 20 Feb (JZ, RRS, MBS).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A Least Flycatcher was identified near Kaplan,

Vermilion, LA 3 Feb (RDo). A **Say's Phoebe** (p. a.) was reported again this winter from *Jefferson Davis*, LA 14 Dec—9 Feb (CWJ, JK, JKL). Vermilion Flycatchers, reported widely in the Region, always liven up a winter's day. A first-year male was at Big Lake N.W.R., AR 2 Dec+ (NL, CL, KN, LN). In Louisiana, single Ash-throated Flycatchers were reported near Gecko, *St. Martin* 3 Dec (GB, MSw); in *Jefferson Davis*, 14 Dec (BF, DPa, PH, JM); in *Acadia* 4 Jan (MAS, JAS, WW, RDo); and near Gueydan, *Vermilion* 4 Jan (VR, JF). Another **Brown-crested Flycatcher** was on the Venice C.B.C., 29 Dec, as last year (BMM, PAW, MSw, CLy). A Western Kingbird was seen near the Lacassine N.W.R. Pool, LA 3 Jan (DC, LS), where it is rare in winter.

Among all the Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintering in the Region, Bell's Vireo can easily escape detection. One was seen on Grand Isle, LA 13 Jan (BMM, RDP, DPM, PAW). An unexpected Warbling Vireo was found in Baton Rouge 5 Jan (LCB, CF). The earliest arriving Purple Martin reported was near Choctaw, *Bolivar*, MS 22 Jan (WI, JI). Northern Rough-winged Swallows winter in the Region rarely, so the 5 near Venice, LA 29 Dec (DPM, RS) and the single at the U.L.L.E.F. 10 Jan (JH) were unexpected. Bewick's Wrens were reported from three locations. In Louisiana, singles were near Gilliam, *Caddo* 20 Dec (MSw) and Black Bayou Lake N.W.R., *Ouachita* 28 Jan—9 Feb (SLP, JB, BHe). Another was on the M.S.U. North Farm, *Oktibbeha*, MS 23-25 Dec (TS, MS). The 24 Sedge Wrens at M.S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan (SWo, MG) were a good count. Inland Marsh Wrens included 3 at W.N.W.R., AL 1-15 Dec (CDC, RRS, MRS) and 2 near Fayetteville, *Washington*, AR 13 Dec (MM). A well-described Swainson's Thrush near the Bonne Carre Spillway, *St. Charles*, LA 17 Jan (RJS) was unexpected in winter. Three Sprague's Pipits were in *Baldwin*, AL early Nov—9 Feb (BSu, m. ob.), where they are only occasional. Northwest Florida's 5th report was of 4 found on Elgin A.F.B., *Okaloosa* 9 Feb (LF).

Mild temperatures enticed 18 warbler species to overwinter in the Region. One of a few winter records of Tennessee Warbler in middle Tennessee came from *Davidson* 28 Jan (DWD, CPD). Three Nashville Warblers were recorded in the Region; this semi-hardy species sometimes overwinters along the coast. While there are a few records of **Tropical Parula** in Louisiana, they are always noteworthy. One was near Peveto Woods Sanctuary, *Cameron* 22 Dec (MSw). A Chestnut-sided Warbler at N.N.W.R., MS 12 Dec (TS) was the area's first winter record and latest by 40 days. Two Magnolia Warblers were reported, both in

Louisiana. One was in *Acadia* 4 Jan (JK, MSw), while the other was on Grand Isle 13 Jan—24 Feb (BMM, PAW, DPM, RDP).

The Black-throated Blue Warbler overwintering on Grand Isle, LA 13 Jan—24 Feb (BMM, PAW, DPM, RDP) was unusual. Alabama's 11th **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (p. a.) was in Montrose, *Baldwin* 5 Dec+ (VBF, m. ob.). The only Black-throated Green Warbler report was of one on Grand Isle 13 Jan—24 Feb (PAW, BMM, DPM, RDP). Alabama's 3rd inland winter record of Prairie Warbler was of an ad. male at E.N.W.R. 22 Feb (BFF). Two American Redstarts, two Yellow-breasted Chats, and one Northern Waterthrush were reported from Louisiana, but totally unexpected was a Kentucky Warbler on the Conway C.B.C., *Faulkner*, AR 15 Dec (LM).

TANAGERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Tanagers are sporadic overwinterers in the Region. Alabama's 12th winter Summer Tanager was found along the Mobile Causeway 23 Jan (RAD, LRD, BT). In Louisiana, a male was in Covington mid-Dec+ (LMK, LB) and a female was found on the Cheneyville C.B.C., *Rapides* 29 Dec (RJB). In Mississippi, single females recorded at Starkville 21 Dec+ (BWi, SW, TS) and Longview, both *Oktibbeha* 29 Dec (ECr) were first and 2nd area winter records, respectively. A male **Western Tanager** wintered in the same yard in Baton Rouge 24-27 Dec (JLe, JK) for the 3rd year.

Spotted Towhees, increasingly frequent, were near Hampton, AR 22 Nov—13 Jan (JC) and Fayetteville, AR 6 Dec—26 Jan (MM), in Peveto Woods Sanctuary, LA early Nov—22 Dec (DB, MSw), on the Johnson's Bayou C.B.C., LA 16 Dec (RDP), and 17 Feb in *Dyer*, TN (JRW). American Trees Sparrows were reported from Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, with a high count of 6 on the Reelfoot C.B.C. 15 Dec. The only Clay-colored Sparrows reported were from Alabama, where singles were seen near Foley 29 Dec on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. (HEH, KK) and near Robinson, *Lowndes* 3 Feb (LG). Lark Sparrows were reported from Raceland, *Lafourche*, LA, where 2 were seen 30 Dec (LR, DS) and Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, AL, where one was recorded 26 Jan (LG, AM). The only Grasshopper Sparrow reported was seen 3 Feb on the U.A.E.F., *Washington* (MM).

Henslow's Sparrows continue to be found in suitable habitat in the Region. Away from their coastal flatwoods winter habitat, singles were found near Hampton, AR 20 Nov—17 Feb (JC) and near Northport, *Tuscaloosa*, AL 2 Dec (PJ et al.). The highest number reported was 13 from M.S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan (SWo, MG). Le

Conte's Sparrows were widely reported, with highest numbers in Mississippi from N.N.W.R. (6 on 15 Dec; TS, AS) and Sardis L. (4 on 15 Dec; GK, SK). A **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found on Navarre Flats, *Santa Rosa*, FL 25 Jan (WWD, LRD, AK, RAD), a first report in the Region—and a caution, inasmuch as most observers presume all sharp-tailed sparrows seen to be the expected Nelson's. Lincoln's Sparrows were reported from Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee a total of eight times. Single Harris's Sparrows were reported from *Lonoke* and *Boone* in Arkansas (KN, LN, SRo) and *Tunica*, MS (WRP). Two were seen near Wooster, *Faulkner*, AR 15 Feb (NL, CL).

Lapland Longspurs put in a good showing. Nine spent the winter in *Baldwin*, AL, where they are rare (BSu, m. ob.). The high count was of 1000 in *Lake*, TN 1 Jan (JRW). Tennessee continues to host Smith's Longspur. This winter one was at Bessie, *Lake* 14 Dec (JEW, MCT, MAG). The 2nd area winter record of Rose-breasted Grosbeak was of a female in Columbus, *Lowndes*, MS 16 Feb (DP). A female was also recorded on Monkey I., *Cameron*, LA 15 Dec (SWC). An ad. female Black-headed Grosbeak frequented a feeder in Mobile throughout the season (VC, m. ob.), while an imm. was recorded at a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, FL 4 Jan (RAD, WWD, LRD). In Louisiana, a male was present throughout the period at Lafayette (KD); a female was recorded near L. Martin 30 Nov—19 Dec (RDo); and, a male was seen near Houma 17 Jan (JL, KL, LL). Arkansas's 4th **Lazuli Bunting** frequented a feeder in Arkadelphia, *Clark* throughout the season (KN, LN, DH, DHa). A female was seen in *Jefferson*, LA 14 Dec (JWB). The only Dickcissel reported was one at Ft. Morgan, AL 30 Jan (ECS).

Western Meadowlarks continue to winter in Mississippi and w. Tennessee. The highest numbers reported this winter were 21 near Phillip, *Lake*, TN 15 Dec (JRW, MAG, MCT, MCT) and 11 in *Tunica*, MS 25 Dec (JRW). Only one Yellow-headed Blackbird was reported, an imm. male from Phillip, TN 16 Dec (JRW). Single male Bronzed Cowbirds were reported from Pensacola Beach 10-15 Dec (RAD et al.) and Ft. Walton Beach, FL 17 Dec (WWD, LD); in *West Baton Rouge*, LA, 5 were noted 5 Jan (DLD, SWC). The only Orchard Oriole was reported 29 Dec on the Venice C.B.C. (DPM, KVR, RS). Baltimore Orioles were reported from Metairie, LA, where an ad. male was seen throughout the period (NLN) and Krotz Springs, *St. Landry*, LA, where an imm. was recorded Dec. 16.

Up to 7 Red Crossbills were at Coleman L., Talladege N.F., *Cleburne*, AL throughout the period (SWM, RRR, SG, m. ob.), and up to 6 were seen in Ozark N.F., AR 13 Dec—10 Jan

(LAN). A female was seen 1 Dec near Enid L., MS (SJD). Undoubtedly a candidate for Bird of the Year in Mississippi: an ad. male **Lesser Goldfinch** frequented a feeder in Clinton, *Hinds* 4 Jan+ (JE, m. ob.), a first state record.

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A generally mild and dry winter was punctuated by a cold and snowy second half of January and another cold spell at the end of February. Overall precipitation remained below normal; fears of a continued drought remain, particularly in southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan. Birding was rather lacklustre, though numerous lingerers were reported in December and some survived the period. The majority of Christmas Bird Count sightings are not included here.

Abbreviations: C.B.C. (Christmas Bird Count); W.L. (Wabamun L., AB).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Waterton Lakes N.P., AB hosted a late Pacific Loon, 4 Horned Grebes, and 11 Western Grebes 11 Dec (LB), while 3 Common Loons were there 16 Dec (D&TD). Two American White Pelicans lingered at Lethbridge, AB 1 Dec (D&TD), while one at Wascana Marsh, Regina, SK was eventually captured 25 Dec (*fide* BE). Three Double-crested Cormorants at W.L. 15 Jan likely overwintered there (RKL, FW). A Greater White-fronted Goose was unexpected at Lethbridge 23 Jan (LB). A tardy Snow Goose was at Gardiner Dam, SK 1 Dec (*fide* WG), while a flock passed Kleefeld, MB the same day (FF). Canada Geese near Pierson, MB 17 Feb (RWg), Eastend, SK 20 Feb (*fide* FL), and near Neepawa, MB 26 Feb (CC) were believed to be early migrants. Eight Tundra Swans were seen at W.L. 15 Jan (RKL, FW).

An American Wigeon on the Qu'Appelle R., SK 11 Dec (TR), 2500+ Mallards at Gardiner Dam 18 Jan (HL, D&FF), 8 Canvasbacks at W.L. 14 Dec (J&MM), and 2 Redheads at Gardiner Dam 18 Jan (HL, D&FF) all merited

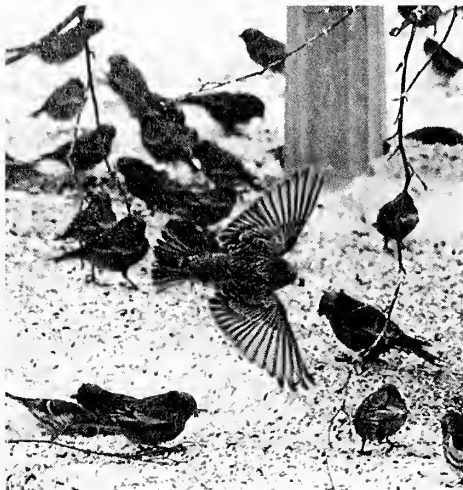
mention. Four Ring-necked Ducks and 3 Lesser Scaup at a Winnipeg sewage lagoon disappeared during bitter cold in late Feb (m. ob.), while 4 Greater Scaup survived the period in Calgary (m. ob.). Alberta's 2nd **Common Eider** was a female of the *v-nigra* race at Cold L. 8-13 Dec (DNa, TT). Two Long-tailed Ducks wintered on the Bow R. in Calgary (m. ob.); a lone Red-breasted Merganser was there 23 Dec (GY), with another 2 noted at W.L. 4 Jan (RE, DV). Five Ruddy Ducks at W.L. 15 Jan (RKL, FW) and a single male at Cookson Res., SK 17 Feb (BL, JC) were also noteworthy.

A late migration of Bald Eagles at Windy Point, Sheep R. Valley, AB 2 Dec involved 344 birds (*fide* WS). A Northern Harrier at High River, AB 1 Feb likely wintered (TK), but one at St. Adolphe 22 Feb was no doubt a migrant (AC). Sharp-shinned Hawks were unusually prominent Regionwide, with at least 24 sightings altogether, the majority in Alberta (m. ob.). Most Gyrfalcon and Prairie Falcon reports came from Saskatchewan, with 17 and 16 respectively; a Prairie Falcon near Whitewater L., MB 24 Feb was rare (PJ).

GROUSE THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Willow Ptarmigan were prominent in cen. Saskatchewan near La Ronge, Creighton and Hanson Lake Road (B&HS et al.). An American Coot at Lockport, MB 4 Dec was tardy (RK), but more remarkable were 15 loudly calling Sandhill Cranes migrating over St. Adolphe 1 Dec (SC). A **Long-billed Curlew** near Maple Cr. 14 Dec was a winter first in Saskatchewan and likely for the Region (RJ, GW, WR). A very late unidentified jaeger harassed gulls at Cold L. 10 Dec (FW). A remarkably late movement of 640 Herring and 14 Ring-billed Gulls migrated upstream along the Winnipeg R. at Pine Falls, MB in 1.5 hours 1 Dec (PT et al.). The only other gull of note was a Glaucous at Cold L. 1 Dec (RKL).

Manitoba's 7th **Band-tailed Pigeon**, first found on the Brandon C.B.C. 16 Dec, lingered until at least 11 Jan (CC, m. ob.). An Eastern



Among a wintering flock of over 600 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at Exshaw, Alberta, there were several of the "Hepburn's" subspecies and at least one albino! This image was captured 27 February 2002. Photograph by Terry Korolyk.

Screech-Owl called in temperatures of -30 degrees C in Winnipeg 27 Jan (RN). After last fall's influx of Snowy Owls, a fair number remained; 43 were banded in Saskatchewan in Dec and Jan (MS, DZ, BT). Only se. Manitoba experienced a strong "echo" of last winter's Northern Hawk Owl and Great Gray Owl incursion. A Long-eared Owl was in the Swift Current, SK area 29 Dec (*fide* WH). Seventeen Short-eared Owls were seen in Saskatchewan (RW, CB, DH), and about 10 in Alberta, while 3 in Winnipeg 26 Jan were the only ones in Manitoba (RP, JS, AW). A female **Red-bellied Woodpecker**, Saskatchewan's 7th or 8th, overwintered in Regina (TR, m. ob.).

PASSERINES

Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a major incursion in the Region. High numbers, often doubling previous records, were found on numerous C.B.C.s. Unusually late were a Winter Wren at the Cave-and-Basin marsh in Banff N.P., AB 2 Dec (J&MM), 2 Eastern Bluebirds at Treherne, MB 4 Dec (AM), and 3 Mountain Bluebirds on two Saskatchewan C.B.C.s 5 Jan, with one at Pike L. remaining through 3 Feb (DN). In Alberta, a Hermit Thrush wintered at Lethbridge (*fide* D&TD), and another was at St. Albert until at least mid-Dec (DS, m. ob.). More American Robins than usual remained across the south of the Region. Eight Varied Thrushes were tallied in Saskatchewan and 4 in Manitoba.

Bohemian Waxwings were numerous in sw. Manitoba and cen. Saskatchewan, but scarce in Alberta except for a flock of 4000 in Calgary 26 Feb (TK). Cedar Waxwings were well above normal in all three provinces, with

Saskatchewan reporting "unprecedented" numbers (BL et al.). A Yellow-rumped Warbler videotaped at a Lockport feeder 18 Jan represented the first midwinter warbler record for Manitoba (GM); it likely perished during bitter cold that night. Another exceptional lingerer was the **Summer Tanager** at Dauphin, MB 21 Nov—14 Dec (D&JM, BW).

Rare winter sparrows included single Chipping Sparrows at Kutawagan L., SK 26 Dec (*fide* WH) and in Winnipeg through the period (RP), a Clay-colored Sparrow about 23 Dec at La Ronge (*fide* WH) and another through winter in downtown Winnipeg (WC, m. ob.), and lone Swamp Sparrows at Cave-and-Basin marsh 2-12 Dec (KB, m. ob.) and at Harris, SK 18 Dec (WR). Notable were about 1000 Lapland Longspurs at Cookson Res. 17 Feb (BL, JC) and 10,000 Snow Buntings near Strathmore, AB 24 Feb (TK). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Saskatoon 1 Dec was exceptionally late (PhT). Rarely reported in winter was a Brown-headed Cowbird at Taber, AB 17 Dec (LB); 4 others were tallied on C.B.C.s.

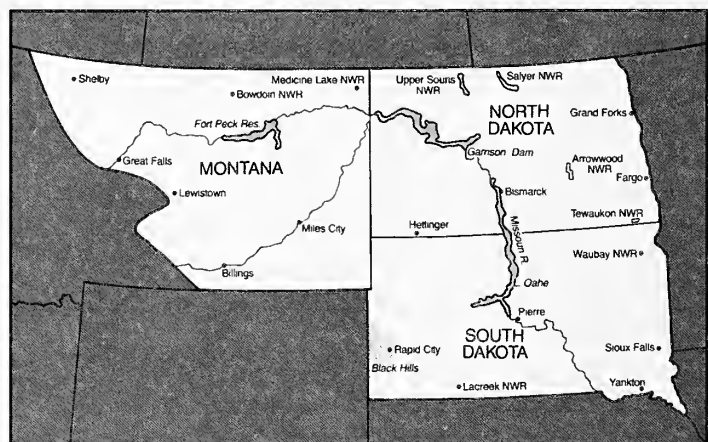
A spectacular overwintering flock of 600+ Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at an Exshaw, AB

feeder included one albino and a few individuals of the "Hepburn's" subspecies (CH, TK, m. ob.). One at Hodgeville, SK 12 Feb was locally rare (MP). White-winged Crossbills irrupted over a wide front, from the Alberta Foothills through Saskatchewan to sw. Manitoba, while Common Redpolls were especially common in Saskatchewan, and American Goldfinches were high in s. Alberta.

Observers (provincial compilers in boldface): K. Barker, L. Bennett, C. Bjorklund, W. Christianson, A. Courcelles, S. Courcelles, J. Cummings, C. Cuthbert, D. & T. Dolman, R. Ebel, B. Ewart, D. Fast, F. Fast, W. Gierulski, C. Hansen, W. Harris, **M. Harrison**, D. Hjertaas, R. Jensen, P. Jones, R. Klauke (RKI), R. Koes, T. Korolyk, F. Lahrman, H. Lane, **B. Luterbach**, G. Machnee, D. & J. McDonald, J. & M. McDonald, A. McMaster, D. Nadeau (DNa), D. Neves, R. Nickel, R. Parsons, M. Priebe, W. Renaud, T. Riffel, B. & H. Schmidt, W. Smith, M. Stoffel, D. Stokes, J. Swartz, Peter Taylor, Phil Taylor (PhT), B. Terry, T. Thormin, D. Vujnovic, B. Walley, A. Walley, R. Wang (RWg), G. Wapple, R. Wapple, F. Whaley, D. Wilson, G. Yaki, D. Zazelenchuk.



Northern Great Plains



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The winter weather was a continuation of the fall, with mild temperatures and little precip-

itation. With snow cover light or nonexistent, access to C.B.C. circles was unusually good. Most of February was particularly warm, and north-bound migrants were noted by the middle of the month. Glasgow, Montana had a record high of 66° Fahrenheit on 22 February. However, the last week of February brought very cold weather, and

many migrant waterfowl had moved back south by early March. Numerous lingering species were noted, and the semi-hardy species had a banner season. White-winged Crossbills were widespread, and Snowy Owls staged the largest invasion in recent memory.

Abbreviation: p. a. (subject to review by the appropriate state records committee).

LOONS THROUGH DIVING DUCKS

Two Common Loons that lingered until 2 Dec on Devil's L. provided only the second record for that month in North Dakota (EEF). The 2nd latest for North Dakota, 2 Horned Grebes were on L. Sakakawea, Mercer 16 Dec (DNS). A **Western Grebe** through the period at Nelson L., Oliver, ND furnished the first wintering record for the state (CDE). In South Dakota, a late Clark's Grebe was tallied in *Fall River* 1 Dec (TJ).

Large numbers of Canada Geese wintered at the n. edge of the Region, with reports of over 10,000 at L. Elwell (HM) and Ft. Peck (CC), MT, and also at Garrison Dam and Bismarck, ND. Unusual were 3 Greater White-fronted Geese at Ft. Peck, MT through most of Feb (CC). Also at Ft. Peck, 9 Tundra Swans were noted most of Feb, a first for the area that time of year (CC).

Late scoters in South Dakota included a White-winged Scoter in *Charles Mix* 11 Dec (p. a., RM) and a Surf Scoter 3-15 Dec in *Hughes* (p. a., RDO, KM). Very unusual away from Garrison Dam in the winter, 8 Buffleheads were at Tewaukan NWR 21 Dec. The 2nd highest count for North Dakota, 2420 Common Goldeneyes were tallied at Devil's L. 2 Dec (EEF). Casual away from the Black Hills, a **Barrow's Goldeneye** was reported from *Charles Mix* 12 Dec (p. a., RM).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

As might be expected in a warm, open winter, raptor numbers were notable throughout the Region. Bald Eagles peaked at 40 in *Ramsey*, ND 2 Dec (EEF), and 72 were noted on 14 North Dakota C.B.C.s, a new high count. A Red-shouldered Hawk wintered in *Day*, SD in the same area where one was present in 1999-2000 (DRS). Rough-legged Hawks were again present in large numbers in the n. part of the Region. The 67 individuals tallied on 17 C.B.C.s constituted a new high for North Dakota. Notable numbers were reported for several n. Montana locations. Golden Eagles were easily located throughout North Dakota, and 26 were noted on nine C.B.C.s.

A **Sandhill Crane** remained to mid-Feb along the Red R. in Fargo, ND/Moorhead, MN. This provided the first winter record for North Dakota (TM, JS), whereas one seen 22 Feb in *Kidder*, ND

provided the earliest ever spring migrant report for the state (GK). A late Killdeer was at Ft. Peck, MT 19 Dec (CC), and an early migrant was in Sioux Falls, SD 18 Feb (JE). Providing the earliest report for South Dakota, an American Woodcock was in *Yankton* 23 Feb (SVS).

Late away from the Missouri R., 12 Bonaparte's Gulls were in *Fall River*, SD 18 Dec (JLB). Only the 2nd report for South Dakota, an ad. **Mew Gull** was at Pierre 1-11 Dec (p. a., RFS, JSP). The same or another ad. Mew Gull was seen down river in *Yankton* 22-25 Dec (p. a., DS). An **Iceland Gull** at Pierre 17 Dec+ provided the 3rd report for South Dakota (p. a., RDO, KM). In North Dakota, an ad. Iceland Gull at Garrison Dam 16 Dec furnished about the 14th report for the state (p. a., REM, DNS). Late away from Garrison Dam, a Thayer's/Iceland Gull was seen 13-15 Dec at Grand Forks, ND (p. a., EEF, DOL). Casual at Ft. Peck, an imm. **Glaucous-winged Gull** was seen there for a couple of weeks in late December (p. a., CC).

DOVES THROUGH RAVEN

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued in Mayville, ND, and 2 in Napoleon 10 Feb provided about the 14th report for the state (p. a., CDE, JPL). In South Dakota, the species was reported from four counties, with high counts of seven in *Hughes* 20 Jan (p. a., JSP) and 6-8 in *Butte* 28 Feb (p. a., JLB). Unusual in n. Montana, Mourning Doves wintered at three locations (TP, DP, HM, LS).

Providing the first winter report for South Dakota, a **Barn Owl** was in Pierre 18 Dec (p. a., DB). Undoubtedly the bird of the season was **Snowy Owl**, with probably the largest invasion in decades. At least 10 were reported from n. Montana. South Dakota had sightings in 13 counties, with a high of 10 s. of Pierre 19 Feb (DB). The largest numbers were in North Dakota, with reports from 45 of 53 counties and a season total of >500 individuals. A peak of 51 individuals was tallied 11 Jan in *Grand Forks* (EEF). There were four February reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl for North Dakota, and the species was found in four locations in the Pierre, SD area.

At the edge of their range, 15 Pinyon Jays wintered at a feeder in Dearborn, MT (MS). The number of American Crows wintering in North Dakota continues to increase. Common Ravens are also increasing in North Dakota in winter, with 56 on four C.B.C.s being well above the previous high. Icelandic State Park led the way with 46 on 18 Dec. In Montana, two December sightings at Benton L. were a first for the refuge in winter (SM).

WRENS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

Casual in winter away from the Black Hills, a

Winter Wren was in Pierre, SD 9-15 Dec (p. a., DB). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** at Mayville, ND 26 Dec furnished the latest observation for the state (p. a., RMK). Record early for North Dakota was a Mountain Bluebird in *Burleigh* 14 Feb (WW). Early for South Dakota, a single was in *Stanley* 17 Feb (KM). Townsend's Solitaires were scarce in their usual wintering grounds in the Little Missouri drainage of North Dakota, probably due to a poor berry crop. Perhaps correspondingly, good numbers were noted in the e. Dakotas.

Lingering Gray Catbirds were at Long Lake N.W.R., ND 20 Dec (GK) and in *Pennington*, SD 17 Dec—20 Jan (JLB). Casual in winter, a Northern Mockingbird was noted in *Hughes*, SD 23 Feb (EDS). Bohemian Waxwings were very scarce, especially after the first of the year. Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were unprecedented in South Dakota, with 5 reported from four widely scattered counties.

A Swamp Sparrow in *Hughes*, SD provided the 3rd wintering record for the state (p. a., KM). Unusually high numbers of *Zonotrichia* sparrows were noted this winter. A flock of a dozen White-throated Sparrows wintered on the University of North Dakota campus in Grand Forks (DOL). In South Dakota, 14 White-crowned Sparrows were in *Hughes* 18 Feb (RDO).

Red Crossbills were noted at six North Dakota locations, with a peak of 49 at Denbigh Exp. Forest, *McHenry* 2 Dec (REM). White-winged Crossbills made a strong showing across the Region. The species wintered at three locales in n. Montana, and they were reported from eight South Dakota counties. In North Dakota, the peak was 30 in New Town 14 Jan (RS). The species was reported from 11 of 14 counties sw. of the Missouri R., an area where suitable habitat is in very short supply. Common Redpoll numbers were strong in Montana and North Dakota, with the usual scattered Hoary Redpolls in the mix. Evening Grosbeaks were extremely scarce.

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Southern Great Plains



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This winter was a generally mild and dry period for the Region, with continued drought for much of western Oklahoma and elsewhere. After several severe ice storms in recent years, another one in western Oklahoma this season was especially detrimental.

Invasions of Snowy Owl and White-winged Crossbill swept over the north of the Region, and loons' numbers swelled on Oklahoma reservoirs this season. Some half-hardies lingered farther north than is typical, but the dry conditions probably limited the shorebird possibilities for lack of habitat, and some granivores' numbers might also have been reduced by a poorer seed crop brought on by the drier conditions or perhaps mortality related to earlier ice storms.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); Hefner (Hefner L., Oklahoma, OK); L. Ogallala (Keith, NE); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Common Loons, previously overwintering

rarely, are now being found commonly across Oklahoma. Several hundred were reported at Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK (JWA). Among them were up to 5 Red-throated and 3-4 Pacific Loons (JWA, m. ob.). A Red-throated Loon was also noted at Hefner through the period (m. ob.), with 2 in Noble/Pawnee, OK 27 Dec (JWA, JS). Among Pacific Loon reports were singles in Russell, KS 1 Dec (MR), Hefner 12 Dec (JAG), and Mitchell, KS 16 Dec (SS), with 2 observed in Custer, OK 20 (SG) & 29 Dec (JWA et al.).

An astounding count of 611 Horned Grebes was made at Tenkiller 22 Feb (JWA). One to 2 Red-necked Grebes were present at McConaughy 16-17 Dec (SJD, JF, KN). A very late Eared Grebe lingered on L. Ogallala to 17 Dec (SJD, JF, KN). Western Grebes, apparently responding to a crash in alewives at McConaughy, declined to a modest 122 on 16 Dec (SJD, JF). The only sightings of Clark's Grebe were the 1-2 on McConaughy 16-18 Dec (SJD et al.).

An American Bittern lingered to at least 10 Dec in Douglas, KS (GP). One White-faced Ibis wintered at Red Slough (DA, BH et al.) with a *Plegadis* sp. in Washington, OK 21 Jan (LMA).

Among some high winter Snow Goose counts were 33,035 in Washington, NE 22 Dec (fide JT). Trumpeter Swan numbers at McConaughy peaked at 26 on 17 Dec (23 ad. &

3 juvs.; SJD, JF, KN). At least 13 Trumpeters wandered south to Kansas (fide LM), but none were located in Oklahoma. The small scattering of Tundra Swans included singles in Dixon, NE 8 Dec (BFH), Elsworth, KS 8 Dec (TS, SSH), Sedgwick, KS 17 Dec (LHi, PJ), with two in Sequoyah, OK 26 Dec (JWA).

Quite unexpected that late and that far west was a Wood Duck in Scotts Bluff, NE 15 Dec (fide AK). More remarkable was a male Cinnamon Teal in Frontier, NE 9 Dec (LR, RH). More than the usual lot in recent years were the American Black Ducks in Mitchell, KS 2 Dec-15 Jan (HA), Wagoner, OK 22 Dec (JWA, JS), Jefferson, KS 28 Dec (RR), Wyandotte, KS 5 Jan (GP), Wilson, KS 12 Jan (MG), and Greenwood, KS 12 Jan (MG).

Also improving in the region are numbers of Greater Scaup. Reliable reports are now scattered through the Region with high counts of 54 at L. Ogallala 16 Dec (SJD, JF) and 100 in Douglas, KS 26 Jan (DG). A male Tufted Duck, possibly the same bird present the past two winters, was at L. Ogallala 16 Dec (SJD, JF) & 19 Jan (DS).

Scoters this season included only White-winged 16 Dec at L. Ogallala (two different birds (SJD, m. ob.), and Lancaster, NE 24 Feb (LE), and a Black in Tulsa 15 Dec (JL et al.). At least five Long-tailed Ducks were reported from Nebraska (fide WRS) with seven from Kansas (fide LM), and one from Washington, OK (BG, m. ob.). Among the exceptional diving-duck extralimitals were an ad. female Barrow's Goldeneye at L. Ogallala 17 Dec (SJD, JF, KN) and a male in Sedgwick, KS 26 Jan—2 Feb (PJ, m. ob.). The very low numbers of Common Mergansers in Oklahoma this winter are explained by numbers of up to 20,000 in places such as Harlan, NE (fide WRS).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Lingering were Ospreys 12 Dec at Hefner (JAG), and 11 (BGe et al.) & 15 Dec in Tulsa (JWA). Northern Goshawks were noted as far s. as Wyandotte, KS 17 Dec (BY) and Morris, KS 5 Jan (TC, DL, CA). Golden Eagles were noted to the e. reaches of the Region in Dixon, NE 3 Feb (BFH), Jefferson, KS 16 Dec (RR), and Red Slough 6 Jan—20 Feb (BH et al.). Although appearing more sparsely in areas of Oklahoma, raptors were considered especially numerous in the w. half of Kansas (fide LM). The numbers of Merlin reports has increased dramatically in recent years. More are being noted "in town," and one male spent the winter picking off House Sparrows on a junk-food alley in Norman, OK (JAG). An exceptional



Several interior states were fortunate in recording their first or second Mew Gulls this winter. This bird, a first for Oklahoma, was a great find at Lake Hefner 25 January 2002. Photograph by James W. Arterburn.

find was a **Gyr Falcon** in *Sedgwick*, KS 9 Jan (B&NB). Peregrine Falcons were noted in *Seward*, NE 16 Dec (*fide* JG), and *Osage*, KS 8 Dec (MC, MM, GP), likely both *F. p. anatum*.

Sandhill Cranes lingered in unusual numbers, with 4000 still in *Kearny*, KS 15 Dec (TS). The n. boundary of exceptionally tardy shorebirds was in Nebraska this season with the following exceptional array: Greater Yellowlegs in *Lincoln* 27 Dec (RP); Spotted Sandpiper in *Lancaster* 15 Dec (MOR); and Pectoral Sandpiper in *Lancaster* 15 (MOR) to 22 Dec (LE). Long-billed Dowitchers began arriving by at least 24 Feb, when 6 were noted at Red Slough (DA et al.).

Gulls have always found a way to highlight the winter season, and so it was this season. An ad. **Mew Gull** noted briefly at Hefner 25 Jan (JWA) was the first for Oklahoma. Other ad. Mew Gulls were found at L. Ogallala 16 Dec (SJD, JF) and *Knox/Cedar*, NE 22 (DSw) & 25 Dec (SV). Sixteen Thayer's Gulls were reported this season, 11 of these from Nebraska (*fide* WRS); reports now routinely include ad. birds. A possible first-winter **Iceland Gull** was scrutinized at Hefner 13-22 Feb (JWA, m. ob.); the secondary bar and tail band still raise some issue with regard to Thayer's Gull and presumed intergrades. Another Iceland Gull was documented in *Osage*, KS 24 Feb (AP, AN). Lesser Black-backed Gull reports were perhaps more limited this season, with ads. at McConaughy 16-17 Dec (SJD, JF, m. ob.), Hefner 12 Dec (JAG) and 13 Feb (JWA, JS, JL), and *Johnson*, KS 19 Jan (MCo). More difficult to detect were the first-winter Lesser Black-backeds noted in *Tulsa* 28 Dec (JWA) and Hefner 14 & 16 Feb (JAG).

Surprisingly, only 2 Glaucous Gulls were reported from Nebraska (*fide* WRS) and 5 from Kansas (*fide* LM). A second-winter Great

Black-backed Gull was at McConaughy 19 Jan (MB, DS). Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported this season, both on the 1 Dec, at *Sequoyah*, OK (SB) and *Woodward*, OK (JAG).

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

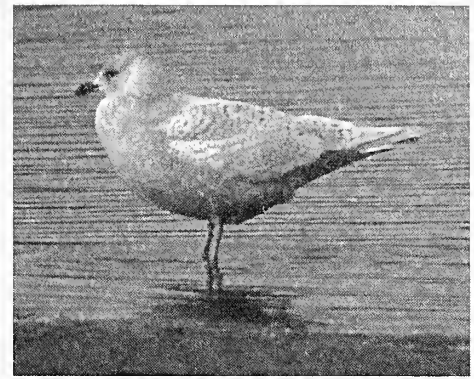
Eurasian Collared-Doves now occur Regionwide, with 25-47 reported from some individual localities in Kansas (*fide* LM). White-winged Doves were noted as far afield as *Cimarron*, OK 30 Dec (BH et al.) and *Gray*, KS 3 Jan (TS, SS). A scattering of Inca Doves occurred n. to *Kearny*, KS 15 Dec (TS) and 12 Jan (SS, MO). Perhaps the most notable dove sighting of the season was a **Common Ground-Dove** in *Johnson*, KS 2 Jan—28 Feb (MC, EC, m. ob.).

This was an invasion year for Snowy Owls: the infrequency of this event makes listing the records imperative. In Nebraska: a juv. male in *Keith* 16 Dec (JE, SJD); a juv. female at McConaughy 17 Dec (SJD, JE, KN); other singles in *Knox* 22 Dec (MB) and *Garden* 21 Feb (HW, SW). In Kansas: one in *Wyandotte* 19 Dec—11 Jan (*fide* MM), 2 at Cheyenne Bottoms 30 Dec—12 Jan (ST, m. ob.), 1-2 in *Marion* 14-17 Jan (m. ob.); one in *Douglas* 19 Jan—12 Feb (ML, m. ob.), and one in *Clay* 29 Jan (CO, JO). In Oklahoma: singles in *Custer* 1 Dec—22 Jan (D&LR, m. ob.), in *Tillman* during late Jan (KM, m. ob.; dying on site), and *Pawnee* 6-13 Feb (CD, MY, m. ob.).

An **Anna's Hummingbird** was found in *Washington*, OK 22 Nov—31 Dec (S&JV, m. ob.), only the 4th for Oklahoma. At least 2 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers may have wintered as far n. as Omaha, NE (BP, LP). Northern Shrike reports were routine for Nebraska. Six were reported from Kansas (*fide* LM); one in *Payne*, OK 3 Jan (JC) was the farthest south. While the up to 12 Steller's Jays reported from *Cimarron*, OK (PS, BG, JL) would suggest an invasion, this was the only locality in the Region from which they were reported. Black-billed Magpies wandered e. to *Dakota*, NE 6 Jan (BFH), and *Dixon*, NE 2 Feb (BFH). A Fish Crow in *Douglas*, KS 3 Feb (MRo) was exceptional both for northerly location and date.

A northerly Carolina Wren was banded in *Dixon*, NE 26 Jan (MB, EB). Numbers farther s. were still depressed by the severe weather and ice storms of past winters. Also surprising for more w. location was a Winter Wren in *Keith*, NE 9 Feb (CW, BKP). Half-hardy surprises were Ruby-crowned Kinglets in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 14 Feb (KL) and *Keith*, NE 16 Dec (SJD).

Three Mountain Bluebirds were unexpected in *Knox*, NE 5-10 Jan (MB, DH), as were 12 in



This *kumlieni* Iceland Gull was also at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma, at least 13-22 February 2002 (here photographed on the first day). The problem of distinguishing larger, darker Iceland Gulls from Thayer's Gulls persists throughout North America. Photograph by Richard Thacker.

Sedgwick, KS 22 Jan (GM). A Townsend's Solitaire was also noted in *Sedgwick*, KS 15 Dec (PJ). Two Curve-billed Thrashers were located in *Morton*, KS 29 Dec (SP). A Sage Thrasher in *Scotts Bluff* 14 Dec—27 Jan (VN, AK, m. ob.) provided only the 2nd winter record for Nebraska. Testing a potential harsh fate was a Brown Thrasher in *Buffalo*, NE 6 Jan (LB).

Although normally persisting into Dec in Nebraska, the Myrtle Warblers noted in *Nemaha/Richardson* 23 Feb (DS) and *Knox* 2 Feb (MB) were quite exceptional. A clear "zootie" was a **Cape May Warbler** 11-17 Jan in *Douglas*, KS (JC, PW). Among those oddball wandering Pine Warblers were individuals located in *Sarpy*, NE 18 Dec—28 Feb (BP, LP) and *Clay*, KS 16 Dec (CO, JO). A Common Yellowthroat in *Lancaster*, NE 15 Dec (JG, TEL) was the first Dec record for Nebraska. One in *Douglas*, KS 26 Jan (AP, AN) was also pushing the n. limits for survival.

This was perhaps a season for ground-foraging emberizids to push their n. limits. Among the more northerly observations were those of a Spotted Towhee at McConaughy 16 Dec (*fide* SJD), an Eastern Towhee in *Riley*, KS 1 Feb (TC), a Dickcissel in *Sedgwick*, KS 15 Jan (D&MC), a Field Sparrow in *Geary*, KS 20 Jan (HA), a Lark Sparrow in *Barber*, KS 5 Jan (PJ), a Le Conte's Sparrow in *Lyon*, KS 1 Dec (SS), and a Grasshopper Sparrow in *Comanche*, OK 29 Dec (JAG). Also northerly was a Lincoln's Sparrow in *Lancaster*, NE 15 Dec (LE). Westerly were 2 White-throated Sparrows in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 15 Dec (*fide* AK).

Quite exceptional was a **Pyrrhuloxia** in *Comanche*, OK 12 Dec (KM)—21 Feb (JAG). But the undoubtedly most outstanding record of the season was a **Brambling** videotaped at a *Washington*, KS feeder 22-23 Jan (WB)—

unfortunately escaping the observation of many a Kansas birder.

A juv. female Yellow-headed Blackbird lingered until 15 Dec in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (SJD, m. ob.), with a male noted in *Boone*, NE 4 Jan (WM). The 2-7 Brown-headed Cowbirds wintering in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (SJD, KL, m. ob.) provided the first Jan–Feb record for the Nebraska Panhandle. Three cowbirds in *Scotts Bluff* itself 7 Jan (KL, PD, DD, AD) were the 2nd record. Also indicative of mild winter was an imm. Baltimore Oriole that survived in Omaha until 11 Dec (*fide* WRS).

One of the surprises of the winter was an invasion of White-winged Crossbills into Nebraska and Kansas. In Nebraska, a rough tally indicates that about 75 birds were reported, most at feeders, the largest flocks being of 16 in Omaha (BP, LP, m. ob.) and of 12 in *Keyapaha* (CH). A scattering of White-wingeds was reported from Kansas, including *Barton* (MR, LH), *Douglas* (RB), *Pottawatomie* (DB, G&DS, m. ob.), *Hamilton* (SS, MO), *Leavenworth* (GP), *Finney* (TS, SSh), *Geary* (CO, JO), *Shawnee* (PWi), and *Butler* (*fide* CO). One was also observed in *Payne*, OK 9 Jan (OT). Common Redpolls were reported from five Nebraska locations. A few wandered s. to Kansas, with 2 in *Riley* 15 Dec (DR), 2 at *Cheyenne Bottoms* 13 Dec (*fide* MR), and another in *Riley* 5-10 Feb (DBu, G&DS). Among few reports of Evening Grosbeaks for the past few years were meager singles in *Hamilton* and *Kearny*, KS, both 12 Jan (SS, MO).

Cited observers (area editors in boldface):

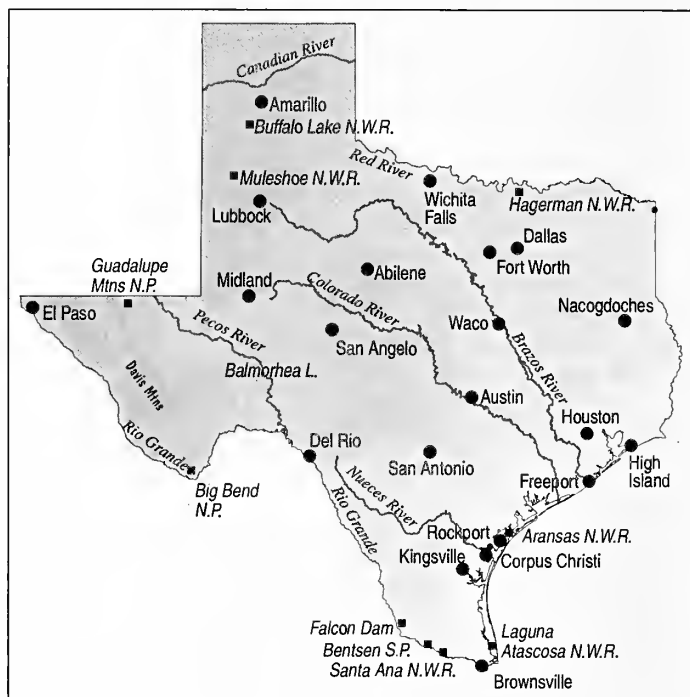
KANSAS: Henry Armknecht, Charles Anderson, Roger Boyd, Bill & Nancy Beard, Doris Burnett (DBu), Warren Buss, Mark Corder, Elaine Corder, Mike Cooper (MCo), Ted Cable, Jan Conrad, Don & Margaret Clemence, Dan Gish, Larry Hesed, Leon Hicks (LHi), Pete Janzen, Dan Larson, Mark Land, Mick McHugh, Gary Maxey, **Lloyd Moore**, Arpi Nyari, Chuck Otte, Jaye Otte, Marie Osterbuhr, Galen Pitman, Gerry Parkinson (GPa), Sebastian Patti, Alexis Powell, Mark Radar, Mark Robbins (MRo), Dave Rintoul, Richard Rucker, Scott Seltman, Tom Shane, Sara Shane (SSh), Gary & Donna Shavers (G&DS), Steve Teske, Phil Wedge, Paul Willis (PWi), Beverly Yates. **NEBRASKA:** Laurel Badura, Ed Brogie, Mark Brogie, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Dean Drawbaugh, Phyllis Drawbaugh, Larry Einemann, Joe Fontaine, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, Dave Heidt, Bill F. Huser, Alice Kenitz, Tom E. Labedz, Kathy Larson, Wayne Mollhoff, Valerie Naylor, Kay Niyo, Mark Orsag (MOr), Babs Padelford,

Loren Padelford, Rob Parsons, Brandon K. Percival, Larry Randolph, **W. Ross Silcock**, Dave Stage, Dave Swanson (DSw), Jerry Toll, Steve Van Sickle, Harley Winfrey, Sarah Winfrey, Chris Wood. **OKLAHOMA:** David Arbour, **James W. Arterburn**, Sandy Berger, John Couch (JCc), C. Dormer, Bonnie Gall,

Bob Germany (BGe), S. Greetham, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Berlin Heck, Jo Loyd, L. Mallonee (LMa), Kurt Meisenzahl, Donna and Justin Roach, Pat Seibert, Jerry Sisler, O. Thomas, S.&J. Vredenburg, M. Yancey.



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This winter saw almost normal rainfall in the eastern third of the state, while most of the remainder either lapsed back into drought conditions or simply saw a continuation of dry conditions. Much of the South Texas region had virtually no measurable rainfall during the period. The same was true in the western half of the state; for example, Big Bend National Park recorded the second driest winter since 1953. Drought conditions impacted wintering bird populations, as seed and insect food sources were minimal in much of the state. In areas with more normal precipitation, observers also noted that species and individual numbers were well below average. Although there were a few fairly strong northern fronts, producing freezing conditions well into South Texas, the winter could most easily be described as mild.

If overall bird populations seemed dismal, there was nonetheless an exceptional crop of statewide rarities. Premier among these was the state's first Gyrfalcon found in Lubbock. Other outstanding finds were the fourth and fifth documented Trumpeter Swans since the late 1800s. The northern half of the state was particularly blessed with these rarities, as a pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes was present in north-central Texas, and an astounding four White-winged Crossbills were documented around Amarillo. We are still unraveling the winter dynamics of hummingbird populations in the state. There appear to be increasing numbers of wintering hummingbirds away from the more expected haunts along the Coastal Prairies. This is particularly evident in El Paso County, where seven species of hummingbirds overwintered.

Abbreviations: T.B.R.C. (Texas Bird Records Committee); U.T.C. (Upper Texas Coast). The following are shortened names for the respective local, county, state, or national parks, and wildlife refuges, etc.: Alazan Bayou, Anahuac, Balcones Canyonlands, Big Bend, Big Bend Ranch, Brazoria, Buescher, Buffalo L., Matagorda Island, Packery Channel, Palo Duro Canyon, Quintana, Sabine Woods, Santa Ana, Sea Rim, Trinity River.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Pacific Loons were discovered at six locations across the eastern half of the state; noteworthy were singles farther w. at O. H. Ivie Res., *Coleman* 3 Feb (TMA) and Tornillo Res., *Hudspeth* 19 Dec (BZ). Common Loons wintered in larger than normal numbers in the Panhandle and South Plains (KS). An amazing concentration of 72 Common Loons was counted at L. Denison, *Grayson* 22 Feb (AW). A Red-necked Grebe was discovered at L. Tawakoni, *Rains/Van Zandt* 25 Dec (MWh). A pair of Western Grebes with young at McNary Res., *Hudspeth* 7 Dec (BZ) provided the first nesting record for a pure Western pair in Texas. Western Grebes were found at eight scattered locations e. to *Tarrant* and *Fayette* this winter. A single Clark's Grebe on L. Tanglewood, *Randall* 15-26 Dec (KS, et al.) provided the first winter record for the Panhandle. Unexpected was a group of 30 American White Pelicans at Big Bend, *Brewster* 24 Feb (GLE). This species lingered at five Panhandle and South Plains locations this season, which is well above the norm. Three Brown Pelicans wandered into n.-cen. Texas this season, with singles at L. Tawakoni early Nov—2 Dec (MWh), L. Fork, *Wood* 2 Jan (BP), Ray Roberts L., *Cooke* 2 Jan (BP), and Village Creek Drying

Beds, *Tarrant* 6 Jan (MR). Another Brown Pelican on *Fayette* Res., *Fayette* 5 Dec (BF) provided a first county record. A breeding colony containing 63 active Neotropic Cormorant nests was discovered on the King Ranch, *Kleberg* 3 Jan (TL). A Magnificent Frigatebird at Sea Rim, *Jefferson* 30 Dec (SR) provided a record late date for the U.T.C. A Reddish Egret at L. Fort Phantom, *Jones* 13 Jan (JaP) was a first Abilene-area record. Black-crowned Night-Herons, a rare winter resident in the Panhandle, were noted at L. Tanglewood on 15 Dec—27 Jan (JHam, BP, m. ob.) and Amarillo, *Potter* 16 Feb (BP). An imm. White Ibis at Tenaha, *Panola* 31 Dec (GLu, et al.) provided a rare winter record for the Pineywoods. Very rare in winter in Northeast Texas, 6 Roseate Spoonbills were at Camp Tyler, *Smith* 14 Dec (JCo) and 2 were present there on Christmas Day. Single Turkey Vultures were found at three *Brewster* locations on 14 Feb (DO, COK, GLE); this is about a month early for spring migrants.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are lingering into the winter with increasing regularity and in greater numbers; this season a total of 1187 was reported on U.T.C. Christmas counts. An astounding 75 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were at L. Fork, *Wood* 10 Feb (MWh, DH). Single Greater White-fronted Geese were noted in El Paso during Dec and Big Bend on 7 Feb (GLE). The winter populations of Snow and Ross's Geese in the Panhandle and South Plains continue to increase, and very large concentrations of both species were noted at L. Rita Blanca, *Hartley* in particular. A Trumpeter Swan was at L. Marvin, *Hemphill* 8 Dec—16 Feb (†, ph., BP, KS, m. ob.), and another was at Brazoria N.W.R., *Brazoria*, 2 Jan+ (DJ, †, ph., m. ob.). These represent the 4th and 5th documented records for the state. A Tundra Swan accompanied the Trumpeter at L. Marvin, and 2 possible Tundras were at Katy Prairie, *Waller* 9 Feb+ (PDH et al.). Drake Eurasian Wigeon were documented in nw. *Tarrant* 15-17 Dec (†, ph., DDC, MR, SJ et al.) and at Shipp L., *Bastrop* 17 Feb (†BF). Blue-winged Teal were unexpected visitors to Lubbock from 15 Dec—19 Jan (m. ob.) and El Paso 10 Jan (JSp). Three Cinnamon Teal at L. Rita Blanca, *Hartley* 26 Jan (EK) provided a rare winter Panhandle record. As expected, small numbers of Greater Scaup were reported across the state. Inland Long-tailed Ducks were at Delhi, *Caldwell* 14-17 Dec (BF) and Nacogdoches on 4 Jan (JF), the former providing a probable first county record. A pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes was discovered on Loy



This striking male Broad-billed Hummingbird, originally discovered on 18 October 2001, spent the winter in suburban Houston, Texas. This species occurs almost annually in the state, although most often in the western half. Photograph by Michael Gray.

L., *Grayson* 5 Jan (†, ph., WM). The drake remained until 22 Feb (†, m. ob.), providing the 6th record for the state. An exceptional concentration of 500-800 Hooded Mergansers frequented a power plant lake in Greenville, *Hunt* in Dec and Jan (MWh, RB). Two female Common Mergansers at L. Coleman, *Coleman* were an interesting find (JaP, LP).

An active Bald Eagle nest was discovered in *Llano* (*fide* CN) during Feb, the only known nesting site on the Edwards Plateau and the only one w. of IH-35. An imm. Gray Hawk at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* 22-27 Feb (DO, COK, MF) provided a rare winter Trans-Pecos record. An imm. Common Black-Hawk at Roma, *Starr* 2 Feb (BMc) was a nice find. Harris's Hawks are very local in the w. Trans-Pecos, so one at El Paso 10 Jan (JSp) was noteworthy. An imm. Swainson's Hawk was near Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley, *Hidalgo* 29 Dec (†, BMC, KE) providing a rare winter record for the state. Just n. of the regular range was an imm. White-tailed Hawk near La Grange, *Fayette* 5 Dec (BF). Zone-tailed Hawks were found in above-normal numbers in s.-cen. Texas. More noteworthy was one at Huntsville, *Walker* 16 Feb (OC), the first reported from the Pineywoods. Up to 4 Ferruginous Hawks were found on the U.T.C., which is above average. Another in *Henderson* 12 Jan—25 Feb (GLu, ERa, HB) was quite unexpected. The Prairie Falcon reported from *Waller* in the fall remained through the winter. Other noteworthy Prairie Falcons were in *Karnes* 9 Dec (WS, et al.) and *Navarro* 30 Dec (TP).

SA Certainly the event of the season was the discovery of an immature gray-morph **Gyr Falcon** in Lubbock on 21 Jan by Floyd. This not only represents the first record for the state, but this species had never been reported in the state, despite the erroneous mention of Texas in the *Bird of North America* species account. This individual faithfully roosted on a water tower in the south-central part of the city for the remainder of the season, much to the delight of birders from across the state and beyond. This Gyr may have been the southernmost ever recorded in North America.

CRANES THROUGH TERNS

The survey of the wintering population of Whooping Cranes resulted in a count of 174 individuals (TS). East of the normal wintering haunts was a pair that wintered at Indianola, *Calhoun* (m. ob.). An impressive count of 113 Snowy Plovers and 100 Piping Plovers was made on the San Bernard C.B.C. on 14 Dec. A Snowy Plover was photographed at L. Lewisville, *Denton* 13 Jan (KL), the 2nd winter record for the Region. A high count of 114 Mountain Plovers was made this season at the traditional wintering areas near Granger, *Williamson* 18 Dec and 3 Feb (TFe). Two lingering American Avocets were found near Taylor, *Williamson* 3 Dec (BF). A Spotted Sandpiper at Caprock Canyons, *Briscoe* 5 Jan (RK, AF, JR) provided a first winter record for the Panhandle. Only slightly more expected was another in Lubbock on 14 Feb (AF). A flock of 300 Long-billed Curlews along the Rio Grande in *Hudspeth* 10 Feb (JPa) was a surprising concentration for winter. Another interesting shorebird record from the Panhandle was of 2 Least Sandpipers at L. Marvin 8 Dec (EK et al.). A Pectoral Sandpiper at Gibbons Creek Res., *Grimes* 1 Dec (BFR, et al.) provided a very rare winter record. Along the U.T.C., there were impressive counts of Stilt Sandpipers at various locations, suggesting that the species wintered in greater-than-normal numbers. American Woodcocks were present in much higher than normal numbers in ne. Texas (MWh).

A Parasitic Jaeger at Quintana, *Brazoria* 16 Dec (ERo) was the only report for the season. Two Laughing Gulls at Ellen Trout L., *Angelina* 16 Dec (GG, NB) made an unusual winter record for the Pineywoods. An ad. Mew Gull was with a large group of Ring-billed Gulls in w. El Paso 20 Dec (†BZ). Up to 5 California Gulls were present in *El Paso* and *Hudspeth* during the season. This species has become an

annual winter visitor in the El Paso region. Farther e., California Gulls were noted in *McLennon* 15 Dec (JM, FB) and *Travis* 2 Feb (RF, JHan). A Thayer's Gull was reported at Lake o' the Pines, *Marion* 29-31 Dec (†BMe et al.), details of which will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. A Lesser Black-backed Gull in *El Paso* 25 Dec (JO) provided a 2nd county record; this bird was also seen nearby in New Mexico. Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to be found in ever-increasing numbers along the Gulf Coast. Surprisingly, no Glaucous Gulls were reported during the period. A third-winter Great Black-backed Gull was at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun* 2-14 Dec (†PHo, BF). What is believed to be the same individual was found at Fulton Beach, *Aransas* 1 Jan+ (MM, †BP). Black-legged Kittiwakes were noted at Ray Roberts L., *Cooke* 26 Dec (BF) and Lake o' the Pines, *Marion* 12 Jan (HB). An Arctic Tern was reported from the Texas City Dike 18 Dec (†, ph., PDH, SP); if accepted it would represent the 5th state record. Eight Common Terns were at Padre Island National Seashore, *Kenedy* 8 Dec, a very late date (MC). There are very few winter records of Common Tern for the Coastal Bend or the lower coast.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Red-billed Pigeon in central *Hidalgo* in mid-Feb provided an unexpected winter record from the central L.R.G.V. (JA). White-winged Doves were present in numbers throughout the season in Wichita Falls (DM). Two Common Ground-Doves in w. *Milam* on 3 Dec (BF) were n. of normal range. The population of Green Parakeets in *Cameron* and *Hidalgo* is now estimated to exceed 2000 individuals (*fide* BMc). A roost of 11 Long-eared Owls at Muleshoe, *Bailey* made a nice find (LEAS). A Lesser Nighthawk was noted near Matagorda, *Matagorda* 17 Dec, an unusual coastal winter record. A male **Green-breasted Mango** was seen sporadically in McAllen, *Hidalgo* 2 Dec—19 Jan (†, ph., JA et al.). This may be the same individual that visited this feeder in Jan 2001. The 2 Broad-billed Hummingbirds reported from the fall remained through the season (†, ph., BZ). The Broad-billed present in Houston since 18 Oct remained until 18 Feb (†, ph., MMA et al.). The **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** present in El Paso last fall remained until 16 Feb (BZ). The longest previous stay in Texas by this species was only 12 days, and each of the other four records involved a stay of one or two days. Black-chinned Hummingbirds were unexpected finds in Big Bend 27 Dec and 22 Jan (*fide* MF) and Lubbock 24 Feb (AF, CC). Brower and Zalk made a concerted effort to band hum-

mingbirds on the U.T.C. this winter. Their work resulted in the capture of 3 Buff-bellied, 5 Ruby-throated, 32 Black-chinned, 2 Calliope, 27 Rufous, 2 Broad-tailed, and 3 **Allen's Hummingbirds** (†). Up to 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds** were in Amarillo, *Randall* 1 Dec—10 Jan (RSc), and 2 others were in Lubbock 15-19 Dec (AF et al.) providing rare mid-winter records from the Region. An imm. male **Costa's Hummingbird** was at Matagorda 17-21 Dec (†, ph., CB, MG) providing the 3rd record from e. of the Pecos R. Inland winter Calliope Hummingbirds were noted at Austin, *Travis*, through the period (m. ob.) and in El Paso 29 Dec—4 Jan (*fide* JZ). Wintering Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were present through the period in El Paso and Midland, and another was in the Davis Mountains, *Jeff Davis* 1-17 Dec (M&ME). In addition to the 3 Allen's Hummingbirds banded by Brower and Zalk, another was banded in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 13 Feb (†GSw), and 4 others were rumored to have been banded in *Victoria*, but details were not provided. Another male *Selasphorus* that was thought to be an Allen's was present all winter at Russ Pitman Park, *Harris* (FC, ph. MG). Four Lewis's Woodpeckers were reported this season: 2 at Fredericksburg, *Gillespie*, 28 Dec+ (†, ph., m. ob.), one at Quemado, *Maverick* 27 Dec—13 Jan (†, ph., MC), and one near Abilene, *Taylor* 3 Feb+ (†, m. ob.). An amazing count of 52 Red-headed Woodpeckers was made on the Caddo L. count, *Harrison/Marion* 1 Dec (m. ob.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH JAYS

Following last summer's first Trans-Pecos record for Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, another was found in Pinto Canyon, *Presidio* 21 Jan (JJ, PM). The normal scattering of Least Flycatchers was found along the Coastal Prairies; more unusual was one at Gibbons Creek Res., *Grimes* 1 Dec (J&PS). A "Western" Flycatcher was well described in *Brazoria* near Brazos Bend 22 Dec (CB). A Say's Phoebe spend the 2nd consecutive winter at Cooper L., *Delta* (MWh). Two Black Phoebe wandered to *Midland* in early Dec (*fide* RMS), but more unexpected was one at S. Ceta Canyon, *Randall* 15-16 Dec (LS, RSc et al.). Eastern Phoebe also made an appearance in the Panhandle, with 2 at L. Tangelwood, *Randall* 15 Dec (PA, JCe). Ash-throated Flycatchers were found farther n. than normal this season with singles near Granger, *Williamson* 9 Dec (TFe) and one in *Kerr* 3 Jan (SW). Continuing a trend of recent years, a Brown-crested Flycatcher was at San Bernard, *Brazoria* 14 Dec (TMO, CH). The Great Kiskadees found at Missouri City, *Chambers* almost a year ago continued

through the season (m. ob.). A vocalizing Tropical Kingbird was at Rose Hill Cemetery in Corpus Christi 30 Dec (MC, WR), providing only the 4th record from the Coastal Prairies. Couch's/Tropical Kingbirds made an impressive movement up the coast this season, with numerous individual present as far ne. as *Colorado* and *Waller*. Some individuals were vocalizing, allowing definitive identification as Couch's. Western Kingbirds lingered along the upper and central coasts well into Dec, with the latest being one at San Bernard 14 Dec (DV, JHe). Probably a result of the extremely mild fall and early winter, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers lingered throughout Dec in much of the e. half of the state. A female Rose-throated Becard was at the McAllen Nature Center, *Hidalgo* 20-23 Jan (†ASy, CK). White-eyed Vireos wintered n. of their normal haunts, with singles noted in *Hunt*, *Tarrant*, and *Van Zandt* (*fide* MWh). A Bell's Vireo at Laguna Atascosa, *Cameron* 1 Feb (P&RA, ph.) provided a very rare mid-winter record for the state. A Bell's was at Big Bend on 22 Feb (DO, COK) and might have wintered locally. Plumbeous Vireos were found in cottonwood woodlands along the Rio Grande in Big Bend this season: one at Rio Grande Village 29 Dec (*fide* MF) and another at Cottonwood Campground 30 Jan (MF). A well-documented Cassin's Vireo was at Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 1 Dec (†MC). Cassin's Vireos continue to be reported without details elsewhere in the eastern two-thirds of the state. Separating this species from first-winter Blue-headed Vireo is a major identification challenge. Two Hutton's Vireos were discovered at Friedrich Park, *Bexar* 7 Feb+ (DE et. al). These birds add to what is becoming an annual occurrence in the Hill Country. A Philadelphia Vireo was studied at length at Freeport, *Brazoria* 16 Dec (†RW). In a year that lacked major movements of corvids, a Steller's Jay was a surprise at White River L., *Crosby* 30 Dec (LEAS). A Blue Jay frequented the area around the city zoo in El Paso 31 Dec—2 Jan (*fide* JZ). The known population of Brown Jays in Texas hovers at 13 individuals in two family groups (JA, BMC). Western Scrub-Jays are irregular visitors to Big Bend; this season, 5 were in the Chisos Mts. 28 Dec (m. ob.). For the 2nd consecutive winter, there were no Tamaulipas Crows in Texas.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Very early for the South Plains was a Purple Martin at Lubbock 16 Feb (AF). Cave Swallows departed late and arrived early in the El Paso area, with one at McNary, *Hudspeth* 16 Dec (BZ, JPa), and 5 in El Paso 3 Feb (JSp). There were two records of single Barn

Swallows in the Trans-Pecos this season: *Hudspeth* 1 Dec (JPa) and Big Bend 22 Feb (DO, COK). In contrast to the past several winters, Red-breasted Nuthatches were very scarce across the state this season. Two Brown Creepers were at the grassland oasis at The Post County Park, *Brewster* 21 Dec (MC, AC). Although probably annual in the area, a red-backed Bewick's Wren was in e. *Williamson* 9 Dec (ML, TFe, BF). Winter Wrens are generally rare in the Trans-Pecos; this winter found one at Fort Bliss, *El Paso* 17 Dec (BZ, JZ, MSc), a 3rd county record. Also quite unexpected was a Sedge Wren in *Garza* 10 Feb (RK et al.). A Golden-crowned Kinglet wandered away from the montane woodlands to Fort Bliss 17 Dec (*fide* BZ). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was well n. of the normal wintering range in Lubbock 15 Dec (LEAS). A Wood Thrush wintered at the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, *Hidalgo* (BMc). Reflecting the mild conditions, both American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were in very low numbers through most of the state this season. Gray Catbirds are rare and irregular in winter in the Trans-Pecos, and 2 were found this year: one near Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 2 Dec (KN) and another in the Chisos Basin of Big Bend 23 Jan (FJ). The **Blue Mockingbird** continued through the season in Weslaco (m. ob.). Providing a very rare winter sighting was a Golden-winged Warbler on Blackjack Peninsula, *Aransas* 19 Jan (PeH). A Tennessee Warbler was an unexpected winter visitor at McAllen, *Hidalgo* 27 Dec, where it remained through the period (JA). Orange-crowned Warblers are rare winter visitors to the Panhandle, and this season found an amazing 8 different individuals scattered through the Region. A Northern Parula in El Paso 1 Dec (JPa, BZ et al.) provided a rare county record. Likewise, a Chestnut-sided Warbler was rare for Austin 12 Jan (†SY); a Magnolia Warbler made an equally unexpected appearance in Austin 15 Dec (FD, CL). Two Black-throated Blue Warblers were on the U.T.C. in the early winter, with one at Quintana, *Brazoria* 1 Nov—7 Dec (MA et al.) and another on Bolivar Peninsula, *Galveston* 23 Dec (m. ob.). Much more unexpected was one at El Paso 3-13 Feb (JPa, ph.), a 2nd winter record for the county. Two Black-throated Gray Warblers wandered to the cen. coast, with singles at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun* 4 Jan—7 Feb (BF) and Corpus Christi through the season (m. ob.). An amazing concentration of up to 35 Pine Warblers wintered at Rose Hill Cemetery in Corpus Christi. A significant find was 4-5 Palm Warblers at two locations at L. Tawakoni 1 Dec—21 Jan (RR, MWh, RB). A Prairie Warbler at Smith Pt., *Chambers* 23 Feb

was noteworthy (DV). An Ovenbird returned to a residence near Brazos Bend, *Fort Bend*, for the 7th consecutive winter on 2 Dec (R&SJ). An inland Ovenbird was found at Uteley, *Bastrop* 26 Dec—17 Feb (BF). A Common Yellowthroat made a rare Panhandle appearance at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson* 3 Jan (BP, BiM). A Hooded Warbler at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 23 Jan (SM, AM) may have been a wintering individual. Two Wilson's Warblers were reported from the Trans-Pecos this year, with one at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* 22 Feb (DO, COK) and another near Marathon, *Brewster* 24 Feb.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Very unexpected was a Summer Tanager at Nacogdoches 4 Jan (DF). A female Western Tanager overwintered in Corpus Christi, and single males were at Bolivar Peninsula 23 Dec (DPe, DP) and *San Patricio* 4 Feb (JJ, PM). A Green-tailed Towhee was found on the Blackland Prairies near Granger, *Williamson* 3 Dec (BF). A flock of 80 Lark Buntings was a nice sight near Gonzales 14 Dec (BF). A Baird's Sparrow was found near White River L., *Crosby* 30 Dec (†AF). A good winter find for Big Bend was a Grasshopper Sparrow 27 Dec (MF). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows are very rarely found inland during the winter; one was at Waco 12-16 Dec (JM, FB). Two White-throated Sparrows at McNary, *Hudspeth* 16 Dec (BZ) were w. of their normal haunts in the Trans-Pecos. Three different Pink-sided Juncos appeared in the Pineywoods in *Angelina* and *Nacogdoches* 22 Dec—21 Jan (m. ob.). A Pyrrhuloxia wandered e. to *Milam* 3 Dec (BF). An ad. male Black-headed Grosbeak in *Nacogdoches* was present mid-Dec+ (MSm). There were 2 female Blue Buntings in *Hidalgo* this season; one was at Bensten-Rio Grande Valley 23 Jan+ (†JA et al.) and another at a private residence nearby from 14 Feb+ (†JA). An Indigo Bunting in *Burleson* 15 Dec (CL, EO) was unexpected away from the Coastal Prairies. Two Painted Buntings made news on the U.T.C. this season, with one at Freeport, *Brazoria* 16 Dec and another at L. Jackson 10 Jan+ (CR). A congregation of 1100 Rusty Blackbirds in *Rusk* 26 Jan (GLu) was the largest number reported in several years. A single Rusty Blackbird in Lubbock on 24 Feb (AF) was newsworthy. Up to 60 Common Grackles in El Paso 1-2 Dec (JSp, JZ, MSc) was well above the normal wintering number. A male Bronzed Cowbird at McNary Res. 16 Dec (JPa, BZ) provided a first winter record for the county. Unexpected was a Bullock's Oriole at Marathon, *Brewster* 21-22 Dec (AT). A Hooded Oriole was discovered in *Matagorda* 9-

28 Feb (*vide* CB, ph.). Several Altamira Orioles frequented San Ygnacio, *Zapata* during the season (m. ob.). A lingering Baltimore Oriole was at Buescher, *Bastrop* 5 Dec (BF). Providing a rare winter records was a male Baltimore in *Mason* 13 Dec (DF, BoF) and 2 birds 13 km s. of Alpine, *Brewster* 14 Jan (DWh) was equally rare. Even more astounding was a male Scott's Oriole in nw. *Collingsworth* 1 Dec († EK et al.) provided only the 5th Panhandle record and the first for winter. Purple Finches showed up in the Panhandle this season, with 2 at Happy, *Swisher* 31 Dec (I&WJ) and L. Tanglewood 2 Feb (TLJ). Cassin's Finches were generally absent this winter, but 3 were in the Davis Mts. 28 Feb (M&ME). **White-winged Crossbills** made an unprecedented appearance in the Panhandle this season, with 4 individuals noted. A female was at L. Tanglewood 24-28 Dec (TLJ, †BP, m. ob.), an ad. male was in Amarillo, *Randall* 30 Dec—29 Jan (†B&PN, m. ob.), another male was across town 23 Jan (†GH), and an imm. male was at the same location as the previously mentioned female 27 Jan—6 Feb (TLJ, †RSc, m. ob.). A Lesser Goldfinch was photographed at Hitchcock, *Galveston* 10 Feb (TO). The only Evening Grosbeak reported this season was one in Nacogdoches in late Jan (CM).

Undocumented reports

There were reports without details of Red-necked Grebe in *Travis*, Northern Goshawk in *Lubbock* and *Smith*, and Golden-crowned Sparrow in *El Paso*.

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Idaho-Western Montana



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The winter of 2001 was mild to average, without dramatic weather events or Arctic cold fronts. Even the coldest locations experienced few subzero days, and these periods were of short duration. Precipitation was unevenly

distributed across the Region, with northern areas receiving adequate amounts but parts of southern Idaho left drier than usual. Several of the large northern lakes remained ice-free the entire season, enticing good numbers of waterfowl to remain.

It now seems to be almost a cliché to report increasing numbers of half-hardy birds in the Region each winter. But numbers of these birds were certainly up again this winter, as evidenced by several record December counts made for doves, thrushes, waxwings, and towhees. Perhaps what was most unique and thought-provoking about this winter was that a few Neotropical migrants, including a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, a Western Tanager, and a Bullock's Oriole, stayed into December. These holdover surprises—plus spectacular rarities such as Yellow-billed Loon, Black Scoter, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Brambling—made for a thoroughly enjoyable season.

With this column we say goodbye to subregional editor Merlene Koliner, who retires with over 15 years of dedicated service to the birds and birders of this journal. Her unerringly accurate, complete, and punctual hand-typed reports were always a pleasure to read, and they will be missed. Thank you, Merlene, for a job well done! This column is dedicated to you.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., by American Falls, Idaho); L.M. (Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Ravalli, MT).

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

Among the rarest winter visitors were up to 2 Yellow-billed Loons at L. Pend Oreille, Bonner, ID 1 Dec—8 Jan (EC). Two unusually late Pacific Loons in Kootenai 1-11 Dec (LH, SL) were noteworthy; only about three previous winter records exist for Idaho. Both states found unseasonal grebes; Idaho reported 2 Eareds and a Clark's in Dec, and Montana recorded an Eared that overwintered at L.M. Although uncommon and local in s. Idaho, a pair of Trumpeter Swans in n. Idaho's Kootenai 16-27 Dec (LH, SL) was unexpected. The season's tally of lingering white geese was fairly typical, with 8 Greater White-fronteds, 8 Snows, and 2 Ross's Geese reported. Other fall holdovers included 2 Cinnamon Teal in Canyon (FH), which provided a first overwintering record for Idaho. The Gem State reported 9 Eurasian Wigeon, a very good winter total. Among the wintering duck flocks were interesting hybrids including a Eurasian x American Wigeon and a Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser in Gooding, ID 1-2 Jan (KF). Seven Harlequin Ducks in Kootenai 15

Dec (AB) and another that overwintered in Flathead (SG) represented Montana's 2nd and 3rd winter records. Especially rare in winter was a Long-tailed Duck in Flathead, MT 16 Dec (SG) and 3 in Lewiston, ID 1-27 Jan (RW, m. ob.). Idaho's 6th **Black Scoter** at Idaho Falls persisted until 1 Dec, providing the Region's first winter-period record. Another Regional first was furnished by a Surf Scoter that overwintered in Kootenai, ID (m. ob.). Completing the scoter trio was a late White-winged Scoter that persisted in Kootenai, ID until 15 Dec (SL). It appears that Idaho's Ospreys are staying later each year; singles were reported in Canyon 10 Dec (BC), Boise 15-16 Dec (JC, DT), and in Lemhi 26 Dec (D&EF). Ferruginous Hawks are very unusual anywhere away from s. Idaho in winter, making one in Lake, MT 31 Jan—28 Feb+ (LW) a good find. It was a very good winter for Gyrfalcons, with singles found in Blaine, ID 29 Dec (KF), Nez Perce, ID 1-16 Jan (ph. †KC, m. ob.), Caribou, ID 27 Jan (C&JO), Flathead, MT 8-10 Feb (DC, BR), and Butte, ID 10 Feb (C&JO). Both states reported tardy Sandhill Cranes, with singles in Ravalli, MT 1-31 Dec (WT), Twin Falls, ID 15 Dec (DR), and near Livingston, MT 29 Dec (*fide* JP).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WRENS

An exceptionally late Spotted Sandpiper in Owyhee 22 Dec (HW) represented Idaho's 6th winter record. Two Dunlins in Nez Perce, ID 5 Jan—2 Feb (m. ob.) were also a great find; they are less than annual in winter. A few Idaho Least Sandpipers also attempted to winter, with up to 5 in Minidoka 3-22 Dec (SB, JC) and 2 in Gem 14 Feb (RM).

A **Little Gull** that persisted at A.F.R. until 10 Dec (CT) provided a first winter record for Idaho. Surprising were up to 4 Bonaparte's Gulls in Kootenai, ID 11 Dec—2 Jan (LH, SS) and one in Lake, MT 29 Jan (BR). The season's tally of rare-but-expected gulls was similar to last year, and included 6 Mews, 9 Thayer's, one Glaucous, and an "Olympic Gull," a Glaucous-winged x Western hybrid.

Eurasian Collared-Doves overwintered at three Idaho locations; 3 were in Burley (RL), one was in Cassia (RL), and a flock of at least 11 was near American Falls (CT). Snowy Owls made a good showing in Idaho, with singles reported in Adams 8 Dec (AA), Kootenai 1 Jan (SL), and Bonneville 6 Feb (PB). A **Burrowing Owl** that was monitored the entire season in Elmore (RB) provided an interesting winter first for Idaho. Two Anna's Hummingbirds persisted in Missoula, MT 1-30 Dec, and one survived until 24 Feb, when it was captured for rehabilitation (S&GS). For the 4th consecutive

year, hardy single Lewis's Woodpeckers wintered in Boise, ID (RLR, DT) and Ravalli, MT (CP). One highlight was a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in Gooding, ID 7 Feb (KF) that represented Idaho's 2nd winter record. Unusually late were 2 Red-naped Sapsuckers near Bigfork, MT 13 Dec (BR) and a Williamson's Sapsucker in Gem, ID 12-18 Dec (F&MZ). Only 3 Blue Jays were reported in Idaho, the lowest winter total in six years. Other wandering jays included a Western Scrub-Jay in Gooding, ID 1 Dec—16 Jan (KF) and a Pinyon Jay in Ravalli, MT 9 Jan (WT). An exceptionally late **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** in Gooding, ID 22 Dec (SH) and 2 early **Violet-green Swallows** in Lewiston, ID 23 Feb (CS) provided interesting Regional winter firsts. Extralimital Bewick's Wrens turned up near Boise 15 Dec—10 Feb (RLR, DT) and in Canyon 17 Feb (CSy). A tardy House Wren spotted in Lake, MT 17 Dec (DC) was exceptional; only a handful of winter records exist in the Region.

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

Mountain Bluebirds made a very good showing, but far more unusual were 6 Western Bluebirds that overwintered in Kootenai, ID (CL) and another Western near Boise 13-15 Dec (RLR, DT). Like last year, American Robins were unusually numerous throughout the Region; record-high counts were made on nw. Montana C.B.C.s in Dec (DC). Especially rare in winter were single Northern Mockingbirds in Canyon, ID 26 Dec—28 Feb (FH), Twin Falls, ID 13 Jan (KF), and Flathead, MT 21 Feb (DC, BR). Bohemian Waxwings stormed through nw. Montana in huge numbers; the 11,059 tallied on the Kalispell C.B.C. 30 Dec (DC) was likely a new Regional record. Southwest Idaho's Orange-crowned Warbler numbers were on par with last year, with a total of 8 reported. Both amazing and unprecedented was the male **Western Tanager** that lingered in Kootenai, ID 1-2 Jan (LH, MMo, SS). Exceptional numbers of Spotted Towhees were reported in both states. Seasonally rare sparrows included a Chipping Sparrow in Gem, ID 8 Feb (F&MZ), a Vesper Sparrow in Ravalli, MT 7-18 Dec (†, ph. WT), a Savannah Sparrow in Flathead, MT 8 Feb (DC), and a Swamp Sparrow in Benewah, ID 29 Dec—1 Jan (SL). Even better was the **LeConte's Sparrow** discovered at L.M. 29 Dec (WT), a sensational winter first for the Region. A rare Rusty Blackbird was found near L.M. 1-14 Dec (CP), and up to 3 wintered in Flathead, MT (DC, BR). Overwintering Idaho Great-tailed Grackles were down from last year; they consisted of 6 in Marsing (RLR, DT), up to 2 in American

Falls (CT), and 3 in *Owyhee* (SP). Like last year, 3 rare Common Grackles lingered into Dec in w. Montana. Another incredible winter Regional first was a male **Bullock's Oriole** photographed in Hamilton, MT 24-25 Dec (MD, MN, CP). A Purple Finch was a good find in Blackfoot 15 Dec—24 Feb (BCa); they are less than annual in Idaho. Another of the season's highlights featured Montana's 6th **Brambling** in Lake 21 Jan—28 Feb+ (MM). It was a banner year for Common Redpolls; thousands visited northerly locations and a few even made it to s. Idaho locations that had not seen them in over 20 years. Unprecedented

numbers of Hoary Redpolls came with them, with reports of at least 15 in Idaho and 60 in Montana. More Lesser Goldfinches appear to be staying in the Gem State after late fall; at least 12 overwintered near Boise (RLR, DT), and 2 were found near Lewiston 17 Feb (RD).

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Mountain West



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This season was mild and exceedingly dry, especially in southern Wyoming and most of Colorado. There were numbers of birds that lingered into December and spring migrants arrived early.

Abbreviations: F.C.R.P. (Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso, CO); J.M.R. (John Martin Reservoir, Bent, CO).

LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

A late Horned Grebe was at Glendo Res., Platte, WY 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Single Red-necked Grebes were found at Barr L., Adams 1 Dec (JBn, TL, JBF); Standley L., Jefferson 9-23 Dec (NE, LS); and Pueblo Res., Pueblo 14-20 Dec (BKP, m. ob.), with 2 there 11 Feb (BKP, CLW). Late Western Grebes in Wyoming included 16 at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF) and 18 at Greyrocks Res., Platte 15 Dec (SJD,

JBF) and a Clark's Grebe was at Glendo Res., WY 15 Dec (JBF, SJD). Rarely observed in winter, a **Great Egret** was in Grand Jct., Mesa 2 Dec—22 Feb (LA, m. ob.). A **Green Heron** was seen at J.M.R. 1 Jan (BKP, MJ, DN). An imm. Ross's Goose frequented Blue L., Eagle 15 Dec and 15 Jan (JMe). An ad. **Black Brant** was at Woods L., Weld 30 Nov—6 Dec (DF, m. ob.), and perhaps the same bird visited Long Pond in Ft. Collins, Larimer 19-22 Dec (RH).

It was a good swan season in Colorado. Trumpeter Swans were reported from Rio Blanco, Fremont, Northglenn, Grand, and Prowers; and in e. Wyoming, one was at Grey Reef Res., Natrona 2-28 Feb (CEM, J&GL). Tundra Swans were reported from Larimer, Weld, Pueblo and Prowers. Scoter reports included single Surfs at L. Henry, Crowley 9 Dec (MJ, BKP) and J.M.R. 27 Dec (MJ, TL, m. ob.) and 10 Jan (DN); single White-winged at Pueblo Res., Pueblo 1 Dec (BKP, JBy), Big Johnson Res., El Paso 15-16 Dec (DE, m. ob.), and Marston Res. 23-27 Dec (TJ, m. ob.); and single Blacks at Marston Res., Denver 29 Nov—28 Dec (TJ, LS, DAL, DCE), at Horseshoe L. in Loveland, Larimer 8-10 Dec (NK, LS, RH, m. ob.), and at J.M.R. 27 Dec (MJ, TL). An Oldsquaw was at Grey Reef Res., Natrona, WY 31 Dec (CEM, BS). In Wyoming, a Red-breasted Merganser was at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF) and up to 9 Hooded Mergansers were at Greyrocks Res. 15 Dec—12 Jan (SJD, JBF, DF). A juv. Northern Goshawk was s. of Rocky Ford, Otero 6 Feb (SO). An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk was reported in Bent 17 Jan (DN). An unexpected juv. **Broad-winged Hawk** was at Boulder 24 Dec (BSc). An ad. gray-morph **Gyr Falcon** was observed in North Park, Jackson 20-25 Feb (RH) and a white-morph **Gyr Falcon** was near Casper, Natrona, WY 26 Feb (GL).



Two adult and three juvenile Trumpeter Swans were found at McKay Lake in Northglenn, Colorado on 13 January 2002. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

RAILS THROUGH GULLS

Rarely reported in winter in Wyoming, 2 Virginia Rails were at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 12 Jan (DF, JBF). A wintering Greater Yellowlegs stayed at F.C.R.P. 6 Dec—24 Feb (KPa, m. ob.); 15 found at J.M.R. 6 Dec (DN, SO), one there 23 Dec (DN), and one at L. Cheraw, Otero 9 Dec (BKP, MJ) were late migrants. Two Spotted Sandpipers and 3 Least Sandpipers were found on the Colorado R., near Fruita, Mesa 16 Dec (CD, LA). An **American Woodcock** was found at Bonny Res., Yuma 4 Jan (CLW). A first-basic Laughing Gull was at Standley L. 1 Dec (LS). Late for Wyoming, 4 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Also at Glendo Res., an ad. basic-plumaged **Mew Gull** was observed 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Mew Gulls in Colorado, included a juv./first-basic at Warren L. in Ft. Collins 1-9 Dec (NK), an ad. at Marston Res. 1 Dec (DAL, DCE), an ad. at Bonny Res. 2 Dec (JK, m. ob.), and an ad. 8 Dec (TL) and a juv. 8-10 Dec (RH, JV, PG) at Horseshoe L., Larimer. A first-basic **Glaucous-winged Gull** was found at Cherry Cr. Res. 23-28 Feb+ (GW, RO, DF, m. ob.). A Glaucous Gull was at the Casper Landfill, WY 11 Dec (CEM), and singles in Colorado were in Boulder, J.M.R., and at Standley L. Great Black-backed Gull reports included singles at Pueblo Res., L. Hasty, Bent, Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, and J.M.R. A juv. Black-legged Kittiwake was at Chatfield Res., Jefferson/Douglas 2 Dec (BSC).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

As many as 14 Eurasian Collared-Doves were at Ft. Laramie, Goshen, WY 12 Jan (JBF, DF). The first winter records of **White-winged Dove** in Colorado included the one found in the fall at Rye, Pueblo, (NH, DSI, SC, m. ob.) and the one to 2 seen with Eurasian Collared-Doves in Pueblo 1 Dec—23 Feb (RM, m. ob.).

A **Snowy Owl** invasion into Colorado went s. of normal invasions. It appears that there may have been over 10 individuals in the state. They included an imm. female at Adobe Creek Res., Bent 16 Jan—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.) and 2 (or 3) n. of Riverside Res., Weld 15-24 Feb (JK, SSt, m. ob.). Other undocumented reports were from Kiowa, Bent, Otero, Pueblo, and several from the ne. part of the state. A Northern Saw-whet Owls was Bonny Res. 5 Jan (JBn et al.), and 2 were on the Pawnee N.G., Weld 21 Jan—16 Feb (DSc, RH, DAL, m. ob.). An ad. male Williamson's Sapsucker was at Coal Dale, Jefferson 8 Dec (TM). Six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were observed in e. Colorado. Rare in winter, a **Red-naped Sapsucker** was at Grand Jct. all season (LA), and another was in Beulah, Pueblo 5 Jan (MY).

Single **Eastern Phoebe**s were at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (SSe) and Wray, Yuma 6 Jan (JBF, TL). A first-fall male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was found near Vineland, Pueblo 23-31 Dec (MY, JY, m. ob.); this season's mild weather obviously allowed insects to remain active late. At least 8 Steller's Jays that were found in Oct stayed around Ft. Lyon, Bent through the season (DN, m. ob.). A Juniper Titmouse was found n. of normal in Ft. Collins 18-19 Jan (DAL, RH, m. ob.). Out-of-range Bushtits included 10 in Lyons, Boulder 10 Dec (BK), one in Boulder 17 Feb (RLi), and 5-12 at Coal Mountain, Natrona, WY 15-24 Dec (J&GL). Two eastern-race White-breasted Nuthatches stayed all season at Lamar, Prowers (DAL, m. ob.), and 4 were at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (JBF et al.). A Rock Wren was n. of normal at White Rocks, Boulder 19-22 Dec (BK, JP, JV). The Carolina Wren that appeared in Oct stayed through the season at Colorado City, Pueblo (DSi, m. ob.). A Winter Wren was at Storey, Sheridan, WY 1-10 Jan (BS); others were at Two Buttes Res., Baca 2 Jan (DAL) and a western-race bird in Bent, 9 Jan—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.).

Three Eastern Bluebirds were at Bessemer Bend, Natrona, WY 21 Jan—28 Feb (CEM, HS, J&GL). A Mountain Bluebird was near Gypsum, Eagle 5 Dec (JMe), 7 at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec (DAL), and 2 at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (SSe). Single Hermit Thrushes were in Canon City 1 Dec (SMo) and Ft. Collins 9 Dec (DAL). Varied Thrush reports included one in Durango, La Plata 22 Dec—2 Jan (KSt, m. ob.), one in Boulder, 23 Dec—1 Jan (BK, TL, LS), and one at Crosier Mt. Trail in Drake, Larimer 21 Dec (RDi). A Gray Catbird was in Pueblo 10-15 Dec (BKP), and one to 2 were at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL). A Northern Mockingbird was at Casper, WY 15 Dec (DW), with 7 in Colorado this season. Single Brown Thrashers were at Ft. Lyon 23



This juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake (right; with a Bonaparte's Gull) was at Chatfield Reservoir, Colorado on 2 December 2001. Records of this species from the continent's interior are increasing, as more and more birders make regular trips to scope large reservoirs in all seasons. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

Dec—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.), at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL), at Vineland, Pueblo 23 Dec (DJ), and at Lamar 2 Feb (DAL). North of normal, a Curve-billed Thrasher was observed nw. of Windsor, Weld, 11 Nov—2 Feb+ (MMA, m. ob.). Bohemian Waxwings were seen in flocks of several hundred in Rio Blanco 2 Dec—16 Jan (DH), and about 300 were seen in Boulder, 2 Feb (BSC).



This Common Redpoll was at Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, Colorado, on 27 January 2002, part of a major exodus of the species from parts north. Photograph Andrew Spencer.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

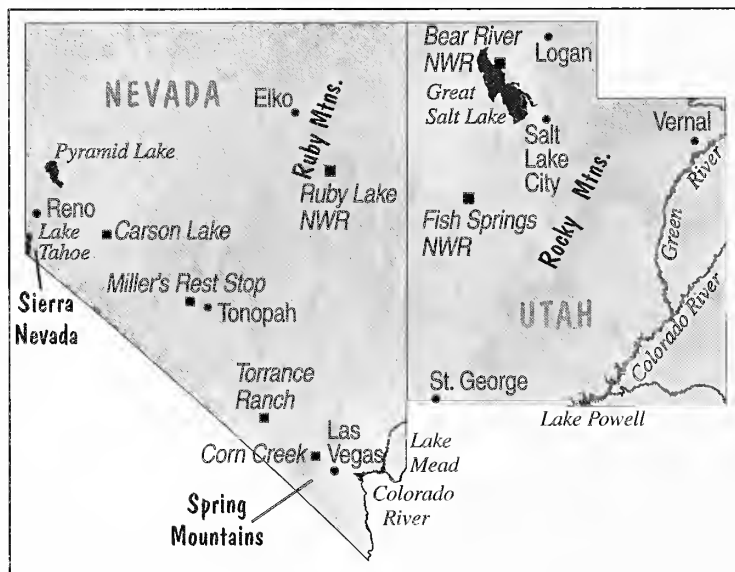
A male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** visited F.C.R.P. 15-16 Dec (KPa, m. ob.). Single Common Yellowthroats were at Pueblo 10 Dec and 2 Jan (BKP) and at F.C.R.P. 15 Dec (BGo, m. ob.). A male Wilson's Warbler was also at F.C.R.P. 1-16 Dec (KPa, m. ob.). Rare in winter, a Green-tailed Towhee was at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL) and another at Parker R.P., *Douglas* 20 Feb (GW). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, representing Colorado's 2nd winter record, wintered at Lamar (DAL, m. ob.). A Field Sparrow was at Runyon L. in Pueblo 21-28 Feb+ (RMi). Wintering Savannah Sparrows included singles at Rocky Ford 9 Dec (BKP, MJ), at Fort Lyon 27 Dec (BKP, PGA), and at Lamar 13 Jan (MJ). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Wray 6 Jan (TL, JBF, JBN). McCown's Longspurs wintered in larger numbers than normal in se. Colorado, especially in *Bent* and *Kiowa*. An ad. male Chestnut-colored Longspur was in *Kiowa* 13 Jan (BKP, MJ). A Black-headed Grosbeak stayed at Naturita, *Montrose* 1-19 Dec (CD, BW). Yellow-headed Blackbird reports included 2 in *Bent* 26-27 Dec (DN, JTh), one near Barr L. 19 Jan and 18 Feb

(TL), and one near Rocky Ford 21 Feb (SO). A female or imm. Purple Finch was at Naturita 2 Dec (CD, BW) and another at Lamar 17 Jan (DN). **White-winged Crossbills** invaded Colorado this season. They were in Las Animas, *Bent* 31 Dec—6 Jan (DN, m. ob.), up to 22 in Ft. Collins Jan—10 Feb (JMm, DAL, m. ob.), and 6 in Golden, *Jefferson* 29 Jan (DSc). In Wyoming, 6 White-wingeds were in Cheyenne 12 Jan (DF, JBF). Common Redpolls in Wyoming included 27 at Coal Mountain, *Natrona* 15 Dec (J&GL), one near Casper, *Natrona* 31 Dec (GL, BS, CEM), and an ad. male at Ft. Laramie, *Goshen* 12 Jan (JBF, DF). Common Redpolls also invaded s. into Colorado, with reports from *Boulder*, *Rio Blanco*, *Eagle*, *Yuma*, and *Weld*.

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Great Basin



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The Great Basin is sometimes disparaged as a featureless and homogeneous "sagebrush sea." But no one would ever argue that the

weather is the same all across the Region. In southern Nevada, above-average temperatures may have benefited wintering hummingbirds. In southern Utah, though, it was colder than average, with very little precipitation. Precipitation was below average in northern Utah, too, but the northern Nevada snow pack was right about normal. This winter, several observers felt that local variation in ice cover and snow pack helped

to explain patterns of occurrence in species such as Tundra Swan, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Black Phoebe, and Northern Shrike. But this year's Common Redpoll invasion was attributable to meteorological and other phenomena outside our Region. And then there are always the flukes—totally unexpected sightings without precedent or explanation. The season's winner in this category was surely the Ruff that spent the last week of December at the Great Salt Lake.

Abbreviations: A.I.C. (Antelope Island Causeway, Davis, UT); C.L. (Carson L., Churchill, NV); C.C. (Corn Cr., Clark, NV); F.B. (Farmington Bay, Davis, UT); P.L. (Pyramid L., Washoe, NV); Q.C.R. (Quail Creek Res., Washington, UT); S.L.C.C. (Salt L. City Cemetery, Salt Lake, UT); S.L.R. (S-Line Res., Churchill, NV); S.R.P. (Sun R. Pond, Washington, UT). Christmas Bird Counts referred to in this report include the following: B.R. (Bear R., Box Elder, UT, 19 Dec); Elko (Elko, Elko, NV, 22 Dec); F.S. (Fish Springs, Juab, UT, 30 Dec); P.L. (Pyramid L., Washoe, NV, 1 Jan); S.G. (St. George, Washington, UT, 29 Dec); S.R. (Silver Reef, Washington, UT, 15 Dec); T.M. (Truckee Meadows, Washoe, NV, 15 Dec).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A rare Red-throated Loon remained at Minersville Res., *Beaver*, UT until 2 Dec (RF et al.). The only Pacific Loon reports were of 2 each



This adult Black-legged Kittiwake at Ivins Reservoir, Washington County, Utah 3–5 January 2002 afforded a second record for the state.

Photograph by Rick Fridell.

at L. Mead, Clark, NV 20 Jan (MC, JCr) and at Q.C.R. 1–3 Dec (RF). A well-studied **Yellow-billed Loon** (†JW et mult. al.; ph. JT) was at P.L. 21 Dec+. Horned Grebes at 3 Nevada locales were led by 5 at P.L. 8 Jan (JW), and single birds were noted at 3 Utah locales (v. o.). A Red-necked Grebe that showed up on the P.L. C.B.C. remained until 28 Jan (JW).

An American White Pelican lingered until 5 Jan at S.R.P. (BH). The mid-winter max. for American Bittern was 3 at C.L. 2 Feb (DSe). A surprising 18 Great Egrets remained for the T.M. C.B.C.. The good fall Cattle Egret flight was rounded out by a single bird at C.C. 4 Dec (TF, CT). A Green Heron was at Fallon, Churchill, NV 14 Dec (DSe), and a White-faced Ibis lingered for the F.S. C.B.C.

Tundra Swans at 10 Nevada locales were led by 175 at Lemmon Valley Marsh, Washoe 28 Feb (FP); among four Utah reports, the highest tally was of 200 at F.B. 23 Feb (SC). Trumpeter Swans numbered up to 5 at four Utah locales (v. o.). Greater White-fronted Geese numbered up to 7 at six Reno area locales (v. o.), while reports from Utah included 8 at American Fork Marina, Utah 9 Dec (EH, KC) and 1–2 at Dixie Red Hills Golf Course, Washington 2 Jan–6 Feb (v. o.). Snow Geese at eight Nevada locales were topped by 2000+ at C.L. 16 Feb (DT), while reports from four Utah locales were led by 1000+ at Gunnison Bend Res., Millard 24 Feb (DA). A Blue Goose at C.L. 13 Feb (NB, JT) was the only report. Ross's Geese numbered up to 20 at eight Nevada sites (v. o.), but the only Utah reports were of single birds at S.R.P. 17–21 Dec (BH) and at Sun Brook Golf Course, Washington 27 Jan–6 Feb (RF). Two possible hybrid geese (Snow x Ross's) were at Idlewild Park, Washoe, NV 9 Feb (DSe).

Wood Ducks were noted at three n. Nevada locations (v. o.), while Utah reports came from S.R.P. 17–29 Dec (BH) and from La Verkin, Washington 27 Jan (RF). A drake Blue-winged Teal was an unusual winter visitor to Oxbow Park, Washoe, NV 8 Dec–12 Jan (AW et mult. al.; ph. MM), and a late Cinnamon Teal remained at Reno until 12 Dec (DM). A drake Eurasian Wigeon was at Reno 15 Dec+ (†TF et al.). Also at Reno was a hybrid drake Eurasian Wigeon x American Wigeon 20 Feb+ (JT et al.).

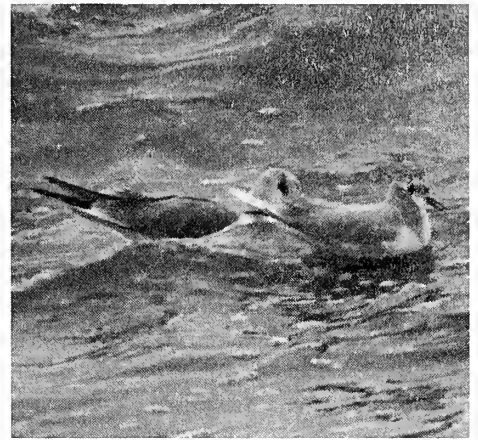
Greater Scaup numbered up to 8 at four Nevada locales and to 6 at four Utah locales (v. o.). Two Long-tailed Ducks were at A.I.C. 13–28 Dec (MSt et al.), and a single bird was at nearby F.B. 20 Jan (AN). All three scoters put in appearances in Utah, with a Black Scoter at A.I.C. 13 Dec (MSt et al.), 1–2 Surf Scoters also at A.I.C. 16 Dec–27 Jan (JB et al.), and a White-winged Scoter at Q.C.R. 18 Dec–12 Jan (RF et al.). Barrow's Goldeneyes numbered up to 4 at five Nevada locales and to 7 at four Utah locales (v. o.). The top Hooded Merganser count in Nevada was 20 at Virginia L., Washoe 16 Feb (TF et al.), and the best tally from Utah was 10 at Layton, Davis 26 Dec (HG). Red-breasted Merganser reports from five Nevada locales were led by 7 at P.L. 8 Jan (JW), while the only report for Utah was of a single bird at Q.C.R. 15 Dec (RF, KW).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Of Bald Eagles recorded at 11 locations in Nevada, 31 in the Carson Valley, Douglas 16 Feb was the top count (JW et al.); in Utah there were reports from 12 locations, including an impressive peak of 200+ at F.B. 16 Feb (SC). Single Red-shouldered Hawks were found at seven Nevada locations (v. o.), but the only Utah reports came from Cedar City, Iron 24 Jan (SS, PS) and from Washington Fields, Washington 2 Feb (SS). Single Merlins were widely noted this winter, with reports from 14 locales in Nevada and from nine in Utah (v. o.). Peregrine Falcons were found at three locales in Nevada and at four in Utah (v. o.).

The wintertime status of the Sora in the n. part of the Region is not well understood; this winter, the only reports came from the Carson Valley, Douglas, NV 2 Feb (JE et al.) and from Oxbow Park, Washoe, NV 16 Feb (TF et al.). Common Moorhen reports included: at least 3 near Fallon, Churchill, NV 2–17 Feb (DT et al.), one at Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV 12 Feb (TL), and one at Powell Slough, Utah, UT 8 Feb (EH). The only Sandhill Cranes were a flock of 9 at Overton, Clark, NV 10–16 Feb (Pfo et al.).

Four Snowy Plovers were at Saltair, Salt Lake, UT on the unusual date of 20 Jan (JB, KB). One



Adult Little Gull (right) with Bonaparte's Gull (left) off Antelope Island Causeway, Davis County, Utah 13 December 2001. This bird provided only the second record for Little Gull for Utah and for the Great Basin region. Photograph by Terry Sadler.

of the first signs of spring in the Great Basin is the return of the American Avocet, and this year some 100 were already back at C.L. 13 Feb (NB, JT). Greater Yellowlegs are scarce but widespread during the winter months in the Great Basin; this year, there were reports from 5 Nevada locales (v. o.), as well as from the Utah locales of Great Salt L. Marina, Davis 10 Jan (BR) and Saltair, Salt Lake 20 Jan (JB, KB). An early Lesser Yellowlegs was reported from S.L.R. 16–17 Feb (DT et al.). A Spotted Sandpiper was at Reno 12–15 Dec (DM et al.) and again 20 Feb (AW).

Three Long-billed Curlews at C.L. 17 Feb (DT) were the first of the year. An early or wintering Western Sandpiper was at S.L.R. 2 Feb (DSe). Wintering Least Sandpipers were found at seven Nevada locations, with a maximum of 30 at S.L.R. 2 Feb (DSe); there were reports from four Utah locations, with a high count of 10 at Utah L., Utah 2 Dec (EH, KC). A remarkable find was the **Ruff** that showed up on the B.R. C.B.C. and remained until 28 Dec (m. ob.). Wintering Long-billed Dowitchers were at four Nevada locations, the largest group being 24 at Reno 12 Dec (DM). A Wilson's Phalarope was at A.I.C. on the rather unusual date of 25 Dec (ph., †DC).

A **Little Gull** was at A.I.C. 13 Dec (ph., †TS et al.). A Mew Gull was at A.I.C. 13–16 Dec (TS et al.), and another was at Bountiful Landfill, Davis, UT 10 Jan (DS, BS). Herring Gulls were reported from Nevada only at P.L., where the top count was 13 on the P.L. C.B.C.; there were reports from four Utah locations (v. o.). Similarly, the only Nevada Thayer's Gull came from P.L. 8 Jan (JW), while there were reports from three Utah locations (v. o.). Ditto for Glaucous-winged Gull, with the only Nevada

report coming from P.L. 1 Jan—28 Feb (v. o.), but with reports from three Utah locations (v. o.). Two “Olympic Gulls” (Western x Glaucous-winged hybrids) were at P.L. 1–20 Jan (v. o.). Single Glaucous Gulls were found at F.B. 27 Jan—21 Feb (JB et al.) and at Bountiful Landfill, Davis, UT 27 Jan (DG et al.). Rounding out the gulls was a Black-legged Kittiwake at Ivins Res., Washington, UT 3–5 Jan (BSh et al.; ph., †RF).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

At least 8 Anna’s Hummingbirds wintered at three s. Nevada locales (v. o.), and 2 northerly individuals wintered successfully at Reno (ML et al.). One or 2 Costa’s Hummingbirds spent the winter at Pueblo Park, Clark, NV (RS). A *Selasphorus* hummingbird was at Reno on the

unusual dates of 5–17 Dec (†RB).

During the colder months, Lewis’s Woodpeckers are uncommon but widespread in the Great Basin, and so it was this winter: there were reports of single birds from four Utah locales (v. o.), as well as from Nevada at Amargosa Farm, Clark 8 Dec (MC, JCr) and Logandale, Clark 17 Feb (RF, KCo). Easterly Red-breasted Sapsuckers were reported from Pahrnatagat N.W.R., Lincoln, NV 16 Dec (JC) and Red Rock Canyon, Clark, NV 26 Dec (CT et al.), and a hybrid sapsucker (Red-breasted x Red-naped) was at Overton, Clark, NV 16 Feb (JC). Williamson’s Sapsuckers are rarely noted during the winter in the Great Basin, so it was nice to get reports from three w. Nevada locales 12 Dec—20 Jan (v. o.). A Northern (Yellow-

shafted) Flicker was seen at Stead, Washoe, NV 4 Jan (ph., †JT), and hybrid flickers (Yellow-shafted x Red-shafted) were noted at Rancho San Rafael Park, Washoe, NV 9–16 Feb (ph. MM; †TF et al.) and at Reno, Washoe, NV 20 Feb (†FP).

The status of Black Phoebe in n. Nevada is complex, to say the least: it is scarce in the spring and summer, somewhat more common in the fall, and generally absent in the winter. But this pattern is quite variable, and this winter there were reports from eight n. Nevada locales, including 3 on the T.M. C.B.C. Three Vermillion Flycatchers were at St. George, Washington, UT 29 Dec—9 Jan (v. o.). Northern Shrikes numbered one or 2 at four locales in Nevada and at five in Utah (v. o.). Large flocks of American Crows were reported from various locales in s. Nevada and s. Utah (v. o.), and several observers have commented on the apparent recent increase of the species in the s. part of the reporting Region.

More than 200 Tree Swallows were seen along the lower Colorado R., Clark, NV 12 Dec (MS); the species reaches the n. limit of its winter range in far s. Nevada. Meanwhile, the first Tree Swallows for n. Nevada were recorded at Mason Valley, Lyon 17 Feb (DT). Two Northern Rough-winged Swallows remained at Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV until 9 Dec (MC, JCr), and 2 late Barn Swallows tarried at Q.C.R. 22 Dec (BH).

A House Wren remained for the Elko C.B.C. A Winter Wren at Pahrnatagat N.W.R., Lincoln 16 Dec (JC) was the only report for Nevada, but there were sightings at three widely scattered locales in Utah. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Overton, Clark, NV 16 Feb was early (JC). A Varied Thrush at Fruita, Wayne, UT 28–29 Jan (BW, DW) was the only one reported. Wintering Brown Thrashers were noted at C.C. at least until 21 Jan (MC, JCr) and at Stillwater N.W.R., Churchill, NV at least until 26 Dec (DSe, RSe). Bohemian Waxwings were noted at four Nevada locales, with a top count of 20 at Rye Patch Res., Pershing 23 Feb (DSe, RSe); the only Utah reports came from Mantua, Box Elder, where up to 8 were present 5–9 Jan (v. o.).

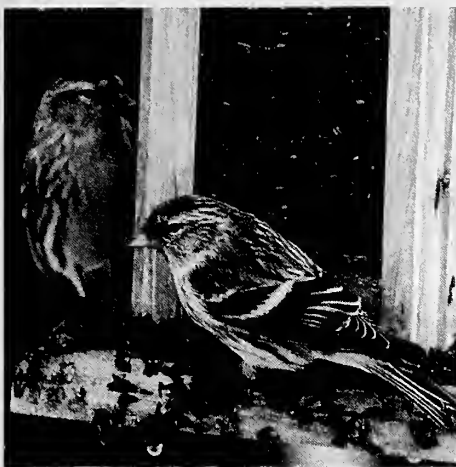
WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 6 Orange-crowned Warblers were as far n. as Reno on the mid-winter date of 23 Jan (TF; LW et al.), and a northerly individual was at Orem, Utah, UT 4 Jan (KC). Myrtle Warblers were noted at C.C. 4–8 Dec (TF et al.) and at Jordan R. Parkway, Salt Lake, UT 13 Feb (PF). An Ovenbird showed up in a Las Vegas yard 17 Dec and again 6 Jan (JBo), and an apparent Northern Waterthrush was at Bear R. Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT 22 Dec (EC, JCo).

SA Gulls of unquestioned Glaucous-winged Gull parentage occur every winter in the Great Basin. Most records are from the larger lakes in the northern parts of the Region, but sightings are possible anywhere. Some of these birds are obviously hybrids with Western Gulls. Others are not as obvious and have occasioned lively debate among area birders. One camp holds that almost all are hybrids (“Olympic Gulls”), while the other camp maintains that many are pure Glaucous-winged Gulls. The bird in the accompanying photograph appears to be a straightforward hybrid, but other individuals have proven more difficult (and less photogenic). Birders in Nevada and Utah are encouraged to make special note of wintering Glaucous-winged Gulls and/or “Olympic Gulls,” and to try to help shed light on the interesting phenomenon of their annual dispersal inland.



One of two “Olympic Gulls” present on Pyramid Lake, Nevada this winter (here 16 January 2002), these birds raise the broader question of the “purity” of apparent vagrant Glaucous-winged Gulls, which were noted as far afield this season as Ohio and Virginia. Are hybrids with Glaucous-winged Gull more likely to vagrate than pure Glaucous-wingeds? Photograph by Martin Meyers.



The event of the season in the Great Basin was an incursion of Common Redpolls into northern Nevada and Utah (and beyond). These males were part of a small flock that visited an Elko, Nevada feeder, here photographed 30 December 2001. Photograph by Lois Ports.

A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was at Zion N.P. 6 Jan (RF, KCo). Three American Tree Sparrows on the Elko C.B.C. and 8 at Ruby Valley, Elko 19 Dec (KV) were the only ones reported from Nevada; in Utah, though, there were sightings at seven locales, including reports of double digits from several places (v. o.). Single Fox Sparrows were noted at three Nevada locales (v. o.), and one was at Mapleton, Utah, UT 17 Dec (BWi); none was identified to the level of subspecies. White-throated Sparrows were found at three spots in e. Nevada (v. o.), as well as at the Utah locales of Layton, Davis 1 Dec (WS) and Mendon, Cache 3 Jan (BA). It was a decent winter for Harris's Sparrow, with reports from four locations in Nevada as well as at four in Utah (v. o.). Easterly Golden-crowned Sparrows were seen at the following locales: Rye Patch Res., Pershing, NV 17 Feb (JT et al.); Carson R. Diversion Dam, Churchill, NV 24 Feb (AW); and Red Cliffs Recreation Area, Washington, UT 4 Jan—7 Feb (RF, KCo).

Single Slate-colored Juncos at C.C. 4 Dec (TF, CT), on the Elko C.B.C., and at S.L.C.C. 2 Feb (GB, PF) were the only reports. A possible White-winged Junco was reported from Mendon, Cache, UT 4 Jan (RR). Single Lapland Longspurs were found at A.I.C. 21 Dec (TS) and at Golden Spike National Historic Monument, Box Elder, UT 5 Jan (GW, SW). A Snow Bunting was at A.I.C. 26 Dec—6 Jan (KL et al.).

An Indigo Bunting lingered at Mapleton, Utah, UT until 17 Dec (BWi). A few Great-tailed Grackles winter in n. Nevada, and this year there were reports of one on the Elko C.B.C. and a goodly 14 at Winnemucca, Humboldt 5 Dec (JW); in Utah the most northerly report came

from Lehi, Utah, where an impressive 27 were seen 20 Jan (BR). A Hooded Oriole at Las Vegas 23 Feb (RSc) was the only report. Some 310 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches made the Elko C.B.C., and several of the birds in the Elko area were determined at a later date (10 Feb) to be of the Hepburn's race (JW). Meanwhile, a small flock of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at Virginia City, Storey, NV 15 Dec (DH) was the only other report. Fifteen Black Rosy-Finches on the Elko C.B.C. were the only ones reported.

Common Redpolls staged the best invasion ever documented in the Great Basin Region. Sightings in Nevada included 4 at Elko 16–30 Dec (MP, ph. LP) and singles at Mogul, Washoe 17 Dec (†JA, GA) and at Spring Cr., Elko 20 Dec (PB). Utah sightings were as follow: one at Mapleton, Utah 17 Dec (BWi); one at Salt Lake City 20 Dec (JBi); one on the F.S. C.B.C.; up to 70 at Mantua, Box Elder 1–16 Jan (MSt et al.); 2 at S.L.C.C. 5 Jan (DJ); and one at Provo, Utah 27 Jan—1 Feb (MMo, RT). The big flock at Mantua apparently included one or 2 **Hoary Redpolls** 16 Jan (†DG). The only Evening Grosbeak reports came from Galena, Washoe, NV 2 Feb (LW) and from Summit Park, Summit, UT 27 Jan (JB, KB).

EXOTICS

Northern Utahans were delighted by the return

of "Pink Floyd," the beloved Chilean Flamingo of Great Salt L. This winter there were sightings of this hardy bird at Saltair 20–24 Jan (v. o.).

Observers: David Allan (DA), John Anderson, Gisela Anderson, Bob Atwood, Glenn Barlow, Joel Beyer, Kathy Beyer, Jack Binch (JBi), Nancy Bish, Jim Boone (JBo), Pete Bradley, Richard Brune, K.C. Childs, Darren Clark, Jack Cochran, Steve Coleman, Kristin Comella (KCo), Ed Conrad, Joseph Conrad (JCo), Jim Cressman (JCr), Marian Cressman, Jim Eidel, Ted Floyd, Phoebe Fowler (Pfo), Rick Fridell, Pomera Fronce, Hugh Gillilan, Dana Green, Diane Horgan, Eric Huish, Bill Hunter, David Jensen, Tiffany Lance, Maxine Landis, Kent Lewis, Dave McNinch, Martin Meyers, Milton Moody (MMo), Anne Neville, Fred Petersen, Lois Ports, Mark Ports, Bruce Robinson, Ron Ryel, Terry Sadler, Mike San Miguel, Rick Saval, Rita Schlageter (RSc), Wes Segni, Dennis Serdehely (DSe), Rebecca Serdehely (RSe), Brian Shirley, Dennis Shirley, Bob Showler (BSh), Mark Stackhouse (MSt), Priscilla Summers, Steve Summers, Jane Thompson, Carolyn Titus, Dennis Trousdale, Robin Tuck, Ken Voget, Alan Wallace, Jack Walters, Gale Westerman, Sid Westerman, Kevin Wheeler, Barbara Williams, Bonnie Williams (BWi), Dan Williams, Larry Williams.



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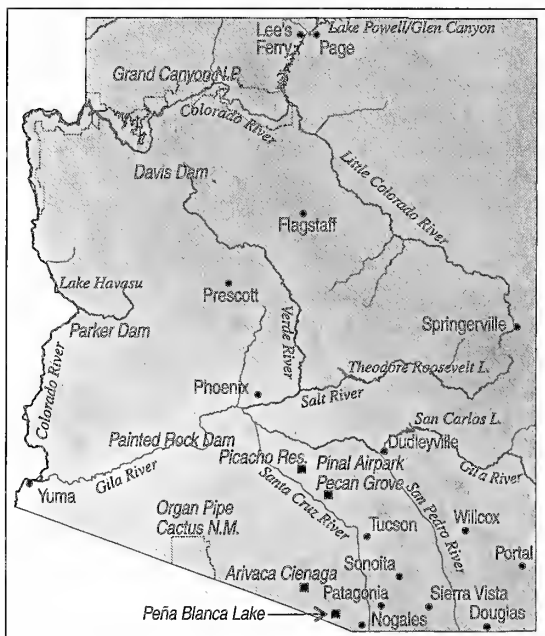
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This winter could be characterized by both lack of rain and very mild temperatures, at least in the early months. Greater-than-usual numbers of certain birds, such as some normally rarer sparrows (e.g., Swamp and White-throated) and several warbler species (Northern Parula and Wilson's Warbler) were indicative of this mild winter, as were lingering waders and flycatchers. Yet the seed crop was extremely poor, which meant low numbers of normally common grassland species, such as sparrows and longspurs, with Chestnut-colored Longspur virtually absent from the state. Wintering raptors seemed above average in numbers, especially Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks. As usual, a number of rarities were found, the best of which was Arizona's fourth Yellow-billed Loon.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Roy Jones for his work with *North American Birds*. Work-related constraints have forced Roy to give up co-editorship of this column, but hopefully they won't keep him from birding! Mark Stevenson has graciously consented to replace Roy, and will write the Non-Passerine portion of this report.

Abbreviations: Arizona Bird Committee (A.B.C.), Avra Valley Waste Water Treatment Plant (A.V.S.T.P.), Boyce—Thompson Arboretum (B.T.A.), Hassayampa River Preserve (H.R.P.), Lower Colorado River Valley (L.C.R.V.), Pinal Air Park (P.A.P.), Sewage Treatment Plant (S.T.P.), Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area (W.W.D.).

LOONS THROUGH MERGANSERS

The only Pacific Loon reported was from Topock Marsh 29 Dec (*fide* NM). More gratifying was the first-winter **Yellow-billed Loon** at L. Havasu City 1 Feb+ (ph., †MMS, m. ob.; ph. S. Davies), only the 4th for Arizona. Single Horned Grebes, rare in winter away from the L.C.R.V., were at Lyman L. 13 Dec (JC) and Becker L. 16 Dec (DR, GC). A Red-necked Grebe on a farm pond near Palo Verde 29 Dec (†PM, CD) was quite unexpected. There are fewer than 10 accepted records for Arizona. American White Pelicans, also rare away from the L.C.R.V. in winter, included 12 at Roosevelt L. 26 Jan (KK), 7 on the Tres Rios C.B.C. 19 Dec, and 27 on the Gila River w. of Buckeye 26 Dec (BG). Neotropical Cormorants continue to spread and increase, with up to 8 at A.V.S.T.P. 26 Jan (RH, m. ob.), up to 10 at Arizona City 19 Feb (NM, m. ob.), and singles in Green Valley 29 Dec (Green Valley C.B.C.) and ne. Tucson 24 Jan (BN). Casual in winter, 2 Snowy Egrets were in nw. Tucson 28 Dec (MMS). The imm. Little Blue Heron found along the Salt R. w. of Phoenix in fall continued through 30 Dec (E. Lattuner, SG). The species is essentially

unrecorded in the state at this season. A flock of up to 300 White-faced Ibis w. of Buckeye 10 Dec (B&JW) was remarkably large for winter.

High concentrations of Snow Geese were 60 at W.W.D. 6 Dec (SH), and 40 at Apache Station Wildlife Area 26 Jan (SB). Ross's Geese were less plentiful than in last winter's bumper crop but still above average. Thirty-two were reported from 14 locations, including maximum counts of 4 at Page 12 Dec (C Goetze) and 7 at Estrella Mountain Ranch 16 Dec (TC). The male Eurasian Wigeon that graces Scottsdale each winter returned by 12 Dec+ (JS, m. ob.), while a male Eurasian X American hybrid spent a fourth winter in Willcox (RT, m. ob.). Casual in Arizona away from the Colorado R., Greater Scaup were present at Patagonia L., with a female there 8 Dec—22 Feb (ph. GHR, m. ob.) and at Tempe, with 2-4 males present 1 Jan—23 Feb (DC, TC). A lone Long-tailed Duck, casual in the state, was at Parker Dam 10 Jan+ (B. & B. Clark, m. ob.). Barrow's Goldeneyes away from the Colorado R. included 2 at Lyman L. 13 Dec providing only a 2nd Apache record (JC). Good numbers of Hooded Mergansers were reported, 51 statewide. More unusual were 6 in n. Arizona, one at Becker L. 12 Dec (DR), and 5 at Flagstaff 24 Jan (B Marshall).

KITES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

White-tailed Kites were at scattered locations across s. Arizona: up to 6 in the Arlington—Buckeye area 7 Dec+ (R Widner, TC, PM, m. ob.), with singles at Hereford 1 Jan (SW), San Rafael Valley 1 Jan (Joe Gottlieb), ne. of Bowie



This Yellow-billed Loon, Arizona's fourth and enjoyed by many, resided at Lake Havasu City from the first of February through period's end. Photograph by Stephen J. Davies.

10 Jan (J Gacey), s. of Gilbert 1 Feb (JS), and Picacho Reservoir 20 Feb (DP, BM). Still casual in the state, the only Red-shouldered Hawks reported were the resident pair at H.R.P. (m. ob.). Simply stunning was the intermediate-morph **Swainson's Hawk** photographed near Eloy 18 Jan (ph. R Mellon). Though they winter in small numbers in the Central Valley of California, this is a first in recent times for Arizona. Zone-tailed Hawks were present in the Tucson area again this winter; the number involved is uncertain, with reports of singles from multiple areas between Reid Park and Sabino Canyon 9 Dec—22 Feb (RT, V McKinnon, DS, PS, RH), perhaps all involving the same wandering individual. Two were farther n. at Chandler 5 Jan (RD), where also casual in winter. A Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk, casual in se. Arizona, was found at Patagonia 14 Dec (RT, m. ob.), while another continued at W.W.D. 26 Jan (SB, m. ob.). Up to 3 Rough-legged Hawks were in the Sulphur Springs Valley Dec—Jan (ph. GHR, Elfrida C.B.C.), while singles were at Palo Verde 29 Dec—5 Jan (PM, m. ob.), and at Canoa 10 Feb (BM, DP). Once again, Crested Caracaras wintered in the Santa Cruz Flats area w. of Picacho, with up to 2 there 29 Dec—31 Jan (NB, RH). Few winter away from the Tohono O'odham Reservation.

Reflecting the mild early winter, Virginia Rails were present in n. Arizona, with 4 in Pasture Canyon 14 Dec (CTL) and one at Double Springs 16 Dec (Mormon L. C.B.C.). Pasture Canyon also hosted a Sora 1 Feb (CTL). Mountain Plovers were reported in small numbers in s. Arizona, with reported maxima in usual wintering areas of 25 near Elfrida 5 Jan+ and 12 at the Western Sod Farm s. of Arizona City 20 Jan (m. ob.). Two were near the P.A.P 15 Feb (D. Hyatt), where they are seen only irregularly. Rarer, and only casual in Arizona in winter, was a Lesser Yellowlegs in sw. Phoenix 19 Dec (M. Rupp, M. Foley). Up to 16 Western Sandpipers were found in s. Arizona into Dec, with fewer truly wintering: 5 at A.V.S.T.P 26 Jan (RH, m. ob.) and 2 at Gillespie Dam 27 Feb (SH). Three Long-billed Dowitchers at the Page S.T.P. 11 Dec (C. Goetze) provided the first winter record for ne Arizona. A Wilson's Phalarope on a stock tank in the Sulphur Springs Valley 17 Jan was only the 3rd winter record for the se. (BM, DP).

Eurasian Collared-Doves persisted in locales where reported previously: 7 in Thatcher 12 Dec (JW), up to 6 in Palo Verde 7 Dec+, 4 at Roper L. S. P. 10 Jan (MMS, J. Dunn, RH), and 2 in Cameron 8 Feb+ (CTL). As expected, more towns were added to the doves' list, with one in Ash Fork 15 Jan (TG), and 2 on the Chino Valley C.B.C. 1 Jan (E Moore). More

welcome, 9 Ruddy Ground-Doves were reported: 2 at Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson 1 Dec+ (BS, GHR, m. ob.), 2 at El Mirage 7 Dec (R. Widner, m. ob.), 2-3 in Patagonia 8 Dec+ (J. Higgins, m. ob.), one at Central Arizona College e. of Casa Grande (NB), and one in Dudleyville 5 Jan (RH).

Long-eared Owls put in a good showing, with 19 in s. Arizona. Single Northern Saw-whet Owls, always considered casual in the lowlands of Arizona in winter, were found, near the Agua Fria—Gila R. confluence 19 Dec (BG), on the Bill Williams N.W.R. in Jan (*fide* B. & B. Clark), and at the B.T.A. 16 Jan (TG).

Another sign of a mild winter were the many interesting hummingbirds at feeders in s. Arizona. Wintering Violet-crowned Hummingbirds continue to increase in number, with up to 12 at feeders from Portal to Tucson (m. ob.). Only the 3rd winter record for all of Arizona, a female Calliope Hummingbird was in Tucson 16 Dec (†RH, P. Sheppard), following last year's Tucson female. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds included a female in Tucson 20 Dec (DS) and an imm. male in lower Carr Canyon 3 Jan (H Brodtkin). A Rufous Hummingbird was on the Ramsey Canyon C.B.C. 29 Dec (*fide* M. Pretti). Reports of *Selasphorus* species came from Bisbee 26 Dec (SW), the Ramsey Canyon C.B.C. 29 Dec, and Tucson 15 Jan (BN), all considered very late for Arizona.

Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, casual in winter, were observed, with one 2 Dec at Marana (RH, PS) and another 19 Jan+ at Continental (RT, m. ob.). Apparent hybrid Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsuckers continue to vex the unwary, with 2 different birds in Madera Canyon 6 Dec and 1 Jan (S. Mahoney, BM, L. Norris, m. ob.). No reports of pure Red-breasted were substantiated. Photos of all suspected Red-breasted or hybrid sapsuckers would be appreciated by the A.B.C. Casual in Arizona, one Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker was at Pasture Canyon 1 Feb (CTL).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

A Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet was e. of normal winter range in the w. foothills of the Dragoon Mts. 14 Dec (JW). Rarer yet, a "Western" Flycatcher was at Cook's L. near Dudleyville 5 Jan; all previous winter reports of this species complex are of Pacific-slopes, and there remains no confirmed winter record for Cordilleran. Eastern Phoebes put in a good showing, with reports of singles at Patagonia L. 1 Dec—2 Feb (JB, B. Pollock), in sw. Phoenix 16 Dec (TC), near Cave Cr., *Maricopa* 31 Dec (H. Beatty), and along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia 24 Jan (K. Nelson). There are very

few Vermilion Flycatcher reports from n. Arizona at any season; therefore, an imm. male at Show Low 10 Dec (J. Videle) and another at Page Springs 23 Dec (CTL et al.) were exceptional. Outstanding was a Dusky-capped Flycatcher that wintered at Patagonia L. 1 Dec—2 Feb (JB, WR et al.), providing a first winter record from se. Arizona. We received a report of a Nutting's Flycatcher from Patagonia L. 29 Dec (†RT). This bird was looked for extensively by numerous observers throughout the winter, but never confirmed; the A.B.C. will review the details of this sighting, but without physical documentation (tape recordings in particular), any report of this species in Arizona will likely remain tentative. A Cassin's Kingbird, very rare in winter, was near Patagonia 7 Jan (JLD).

At least 10 Plumbeous Vireos were found in s. Arizona, whereas Cassin's Vireo was decidedly rarer, with reports from along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson 16 Dec—3 Jan (MMS et al.), at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson 18 Dec (D. West), and on the Gila River C.B.C. 26 Dec. Virtually unheard of during the winter season, a Warbling Vireo was in sw. Phoenix 18 Dec (TC) providing only a 4th December record for the state. Tree and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, both casual in winter, were noted at a variety of s. Arizona locations. Mild weather also produced several Barn Swallow reports, with up to 2 at Sahuarita L. 12-15 Dec (MMS), another 4 at Amado 12 Dec (MMS), one along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson 14 Dec (CDB), one in the Avra Valley 28—30 Dec (MMS), and one at Casa Grande 8 Jan (NB).

An American Dipper in Ramsey Canyon late Nov—1 Jan (M. Pretti) was the only report from the southeast. Another dipper in Aravaipa Canyon 21 Feb (T. Todd) was away from usual wintering areas. It was apparently an excellent winter for Varied Thrush movements in s. California (probably bad for the thrushes themselves!), which translated into a couple of Arizona reports, with one at Bellota Ranch Pond 3 Dec (MMS) and another bird at Peña Blanca L. 12 Dec+ (K. Graves, RH). Two Gray Catbirds, casual in winter, were reported from Bill Williams N.W.R. in Jan (*fide* B. & B. Clark). Four different Brown Thrashers, a larger number than usual, were reported, with one at Page Springs 8 Dec (RR, CTL), one all period at Agua Caliente Park in Tucson (SB, m. ob.), 2 at the B.T.A. 1 Jan+ (C. Babbitt), and one along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia 11 Jan (RH).

PEUCEDRAMIDS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

An Olive Warbler along the Blue R. near Jackson Box 7 Dec (DR, GC) was perhaps the

first winter season report for N. Arizona. A Lucy's Warbler at Sahuarita 17 Feb (C. Cathers), and 3 in the Verde Valley 26 Feb (CTL) were early migrants. An above-average number of Northern Parulas were found, with one in sw. Phoenix 14 Dec (D. Yellan), one at St. David 14 Dec (T. Wood, RH), one along the Gila River w. of Buckeye 24 Dec (TC et al.), one at Sweetwater Wetlands 24 Dec (D. West), and one at Tres Rios along the Salt R. 11 Feb (J. Burns). A Yellow Warbler along the Santa Cruz R. n. of Tucson 2 Dec (PS, RH), and another in sw. Phoenix also 2 Dec+ (TC) were of note, as this species is casual at best during this season anywhere in the state. Several Chestnut-sided Warblers made their now-usual Dec showing in s. Arizona, with one at the Phoenix Zoo 2-9 Dec (RJ), one in sw. Phoenix 8-19 Dec (TC), one at the Sweetwater Wetlands 16 Dec—5 Jan (RT et al.), and 1-2 along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson 23 Dec—5 Jan+ (BS, RT et al.); it is still surprising that there is such an influx of this species into the Southwest in Dec. A Magnolia Warbler was reported from the Bill Williams R. in Feb (B. Clark, *fide* DS); there are only a few winter reports from the state, one of which was also from the Bill Williams R. in Jan 1978. The warbler of the season was another "winter" **Prairie Warbler**, this one found at Roper L. S.P. 5-13 Jan (ph. B. Metheny, ph. JW; ph MMS et al.); there are fewer than 10 total Arizona records. A Palm Warbler, casual at best in the state during the winter, was a one-day wonder at Sweetwater Wetlands 25 Dec (JB). Individual Black-and-white Warblers were reported at Ramsey Canyon 5 Dec (M. Hirth), at Bell Trail, Camp Verde C.B.C. 27 Dec (*fide*, RR), in Sycamore Canyon 8 Jan (S. Johnsen), and at Page Springs 19 Feb (T. Fry). The only American Redstart was one along the S. Dike at Topock Marsh 2 Feb (MMS); this species has become much scarcer in Arizona as both a migrant and wintering bird in recent years.

The fall's Ovenbird at Agua Caliente Park remained until at least 7 Dec (D. West, m. ob.). The only confirmed Northern Waterthrush of the season was one along the San Pedro R. e. of Sierra Vista 7 Jan (C. Tomoff). Likely the same individual returning for a 2nd winter, a Louisiana Waterthrush wintered along Sonoita Cr. above Patagonia L. 1 Dec+ (JB, B. Pollock). Another located in Ramsey Canyon in mid-Dec remained to at least 1 Jan (M. Pretti). Common Yellowthroats are unheard of in n. Arizona during the winter, so one along the Verde R. near Interstate 17 27 Dec (CTL, RR) and another below Glen Canyon Dam 3 Jan (C. Goetze) were noteworthy. Likewise, Wilson's Warblers put in an above-average winter showing, with one along the Santa Cruz

R. n. of Tucson 2 Dec (P. Salomon, RH), one at the Roger Road S.T.P. 14 Dec (DS), one on the Gila R. C.B.C. 26 Dec (A. Peyton et al.), and one at Patagonia L. 22 Jan (K. Nelson). Quite remarkable was the report of a Red-faced Warbler in a desert neighborhood n. of Tucson (Saddlebrook) 16 Dec (R. Genung); there were no previous winter records for se. Arizona.

Summer Tanagers, casual in winter, were reported from Roger Road W.W.T.P. 10 Dec+ (D. Wright, m. ob.), and from sw. Phoenix 19 Dec (TC). The only Clay-colored Sparrow, casual in winter, was a "well-marked" individual at the A.V.S.T.P. 30 Dec (JB, MMS, L. Schibley). It was an above-average winter for Fox Sparrows in the state, and the number of reports shed some light into which forms are expected in the state in winter. Reports of the Slate-colored form totaled at least 9 individuals statewide. Fewer Red Fox Sparrows were found, with one at Patagonia L. 21-26 Jan (JLD et al.) and another at the B.T.A. 18 Jan (RH); care is still advised in the separation of the various forms of this complex. No fewer than 20 individual Swamp Sparrows were reported, a much higher number than usual. Likewise, numbers of White-throated Sparrows were reported from areas away from normal wintering grounds (such as Sonoita Cr.). Harris's Sparrows, always a nice find, were at Black Mesa 25 Jan (CTL) and in Flagstaff 15 Feb (B. Marshall). The only reports of Golden-crowned Sparrow were of one along the Gila R. near Robbins Butte 24 Dec (TC), and another on the Dudleyville C.B.C. 5 Jan (RH). For the 2nd year in a row, McCown's Longspurs wintered at a sod farm in Scottsdale, with up to 9 seen there 9 Dec+ (SG et al.). Still an excellent find, a Lapland Longspur was in with a large flock of McCown's at Zuck Farms n. of Elfrida 16 Jan (JLD et al.); there are still fewer than 15 records for the state.

Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, casual in winter, were at Patagonia 14 Dec (RT), at sw. Phoenix 16 Dec (TC), and at Ahwatuckee 6-9 Feb (D. Cocanour). Perhaps rarer during winter, a male Indigo Bunting was coming to a Portal feeder 26 Feb (ph. N. Moore-Craig). An imm male Orchard Oriole was reported from Gilbert 25 Dec—26 Jan (D. Pearson et al.); there are only a handful of accepted winter records for the state. A male Bullock's Oriole returned to a Continental yard for the 2nd winter 26 Dec+ (D. Bruckner), while another Bullock's (female) was reported from St. David 12 Feb (J. Hays); this species is also a casual winter visitor in s. Arizona. Lawrence's Goldfinches were extremely sparse this winter, with only a couple of reports received.

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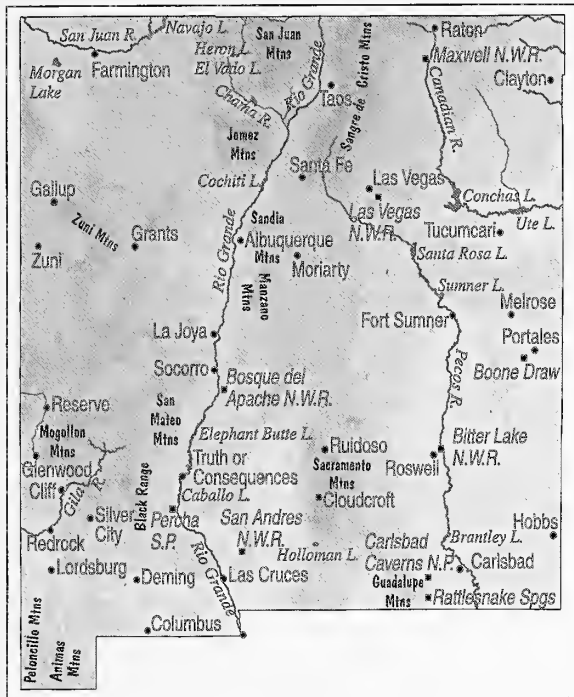
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New Mexico



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Warm and dry conditions were the rule for Winter 2001-2002, with blowing dust replacing blowing snow, and with many species lingering late or wintering far north of usual. In sharp contrast to last winter, there was little evidence of montane species in lowland areas, while sparrows and other grassland birds were again scarce in parched rangelands. Birding proceeded with enthusiasm, however, and another newly documented species pushed the New Mexico list comfortably beyond the 500 mark.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); C.C.N.P. (Carlsbad Caverns N. P.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte L.); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.); Maxwell (Maxwell N.W.R. and vicinity); R.G.N.C. (Rio Grande Nature Center, Albuquerque); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); U.N.M. (University of New Mexico).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

An active loon season produced a **Red-throated Loon** at Willow L., *Eddy* 1 Dec (vt. JO) and 16 Dec (CR). A Pacific Loon crash-landed on a wet road near Sumner L. 4 Dec (ph. RG), where it was retrieved and later released at the

lake; other Pacifics were one each at Conchas L. 3 Jan (WH) and Brantley L. 15 Feb (SW). The few Horned Grebes were relegated to e. lakes; high count was 6 at Conchas L. 12 Jan (JO, JEP). Far n. for the season was an Eared Grebe at Clayton 19 Dec (CR). Although water levels were low, an aerial survey counted some 3000 *Aechmophorus* grebes at E.B.L. 15 Jan (MW); at nearby Caballo L. 30 Dec, Westerns outnumbered Clark's about 5:1 (BZ). High count for wintering American White Pelicans was 90 at E.B.L. 15 Jan (MW). Neotropical Cormorants outnumbered Double-cresteds wherever the two species occurred together; highs for Neotropics were 51 at Bosque 15 Dec (SC) and 23 at Sunland Park 1-2 Jan (MS, JZ). Now quite rare, an American Bittern was at Bosque 8 (ph. BZ) & 21 Jan (DE, BN, CR). The 5 Snowy Egrets at Six Mile Dam, *Eddy* 29 Jan (SW) provided a notable winter "concentration." Early were 3 White-faced Ibis at Percha 28 Feb (GE). Greater White-fronted Geese were at Maxwell, B.L.N.W.R., and Caballo L.; high count was 7 at Clayton L. 26 Jan (JO). Tundra Swans made a good showing, with 5 at Maxwell 3 Dec—28 Feb (m. ob., ph. DC), 7 at L.V.N.W.R. 29 Dec (JT), 3 at Ute L. 7 Jan (MW), and one at Bosque 2 Jan—24 Feb (m. ob.). A Mute Swan was lurking about E.B.L. 17 Feb (JT). Wood Ducks were widely reported from the R.G.V. east, including aerial estimates of 25 at Santa Rosa L. and 20 at Bottomless L. 5 Dec (MW), plus counts of 28 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), 324 at

Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS), and 94 in the Avalon—Brantley area 20 Dec (TH). Now regular in winter, single male Eurasian Wigeon were at R.G.N.C. 3 Feb (CMB), Bear Canyon L. 22 Jan (EL), and Deming 8 Feb (LM). A male Greater Scaup was at R.G.N.C. 16-23 Feb (JO, JEP, JT, DE, BN); 3 probable Greaters were at Tyrone 24 Feb (JO, EL). A female **Surf Scoter** at Stubblefield L. 7 Dec (ph. DC, vt. P. Sandstrom-Smith) furnished the only scoter report. Other ducks of interest were a Long-tailed at L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP, vt. JO), 140 Buffleheads below Cochiti Dam 22 Feb (WH), and a male **Barrow's Goldeneye** on the Rio Grande at Embudo 16 Feb (JO, JEP). Evidence of overwintering by Ospreys was provided by up to 2 in the E.B.L. area 5-21 Jan (JO, JEP, DE, BN). Single White-tailed Kites were in Luna 21 Dec (LM) and 19 Feb (RM); drought conditions, leading to reduced prey, were likely responsible for low kite numbers. Accidental in winter, an imm. Common Black-Hawk was at Hill, *Dona Ana* 17 Jan (GE). Harris's Hawks in peripheral locales were singles at Bosque 1 Jan—24 Feb (m. ob.), e. of Tolar, *Roosevelt* 10 Dec (RG), and the Jornada grasslands 5 Jan (BZ). Nicely documented was a w. **Red-shouldered Hawk** at Casa Colorado, s. *Valencia* 17 Feb (CR, vt. JO). The resident **Aplomado Falcon** pair in s. New Mexico remained on territory through the winter, with copulation and nest site inspection noted 22 Feb (RM); a 2nd territory, maintained by at least one ad., was documented elsewhere 2 Feb (JO, JEP) and later (RM). Meanwhile, plans for massive releases of captive Aplomados into s. New Mexico, which some fear may obliterate this natural colonization event, proceeded aggressively. Unusual in mid-winter, single Peregrine Falcons were at Albuquerque 13 Jan (CR), Sandia Mts. 30 Dec (NV), Bosque 8 & 21 Jan (BZ, CR), E.B.L. 1 & 21 Jan (JO, DE, BN), and near Hermanas 27 Dec (JO).

PARTRIDGES THROUGH OWLS

A Chukar near Ruidoso 15 Dec (A. Powell) provided evidence that game farm birds continue to escape. Unusual for the n. were 10 Scaled Quail near Cimarron 23 Feb (JEP). Northerly were 2 Virginia Rails at Stubblefield L. 1 Jan (DC) and a Sora at Albuquerque 16 Dec (N. Pederson). Common Moorhens were in the Gila, Rio Grande, and Pecos valleys, including singles near Cliff 29 Dec (RS) and at Bosque 15 Dec—19 Jan (SC, WW, JO) and 3 each at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE) and Six Mile Dam 29 Jan (SW). The experimental Whooping Crane population that winters in New Mexico was down to its last individual, which passed over Albuquerque, with thou-

sands of northbound Sandhills, 28 Feb (GM). Noteworthy for winter were 3 Snowy Plovers at Brantley L. 28 Dec (SW), where one lingered 31 Dec (JO) and 31 Jan (SW). Surprising for mid-winter were up to 5 Black-necked Stilts in the Anapra—Sunland Park area 1 & 9 Jan (MS, JZ, WW). Late were single American Avocets at Bosque 15 Dec (RG) and L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP); early was one at B.L.N.W.R. 1 Feb (GW). Notably late Long-billed Curlews were 6 near Otis 16 Dec (SW), singles near Hermanas 21 & 27 Dec (LM, JO), and 2 near Luis Lopez 12 Jan (RG). Highs for Dunlins were 9-10 at B.L.N.W.R. 4 Dec—1 Feb (GW). Late for the n. were single Bonaparte's Gulls at Eagle Nest 1 Dec (DC) and Sumner L. 12 Dec (WW) and 2 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); high was 30 at L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP). One to three California Gulls wintered s. to Sunland Park 25 Dec—19 Jan (m. ob.); noteworthy were 8 at Eagle Nest 7 Dec (DC). Single first-winter Thayer's Gulls documented at the Socorro dump 3-16 Jan (CMB, JEP, vt. JO) and E.B.L. 19 Jan—2 Feb (JEP, DE, BN, vt. JO) may have been the same bird. New for New Mexico was an ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Sunland Park, discovered 25 Dec (vt. JO) and present through 8 Jan (m. ob., ph. BZ). Amazingly, another ad. Lesser Black-backed was described from Bosque 5 Jan (DR). An ad. **Glaucous Gull**, first seen at Springer L. 8 Dec (DC), subsequently moved to Stubblefield L., where present 9-20 Dec (CR, ph. DC). Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their rapid colonization of New Mexico, with reports from 20 locales from the R.G.V. east; west were 2 at Magdalena 24 Feb (JO) and up to 5 at Columbus 27 Dec—15 Feb (JO, JEP, LM) while highs were 80 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR), 96 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB), 24 at San Miguel, *Dona Ana* 4 Jan (ph. BZ), and 31 at Loving 16 Dec (C. Cranston). White-winged Doves maintained their impressive presence in range and numbers, including n. to Santa Fe and Clayton; notable highs were 691 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB), 871 at La Luz 2 Jan (J. Mangimeli), 138 at Silver City 15 Dec (RS), and a healthy 19,783 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Inca Doves are now resident n. to Albuquerque, where there were 5 on 12 Dec (HS); notable was an Inca n. to Cerrillos, *Santa Fe* 17 Feb (AF). The only Common Ground-Dove struck a window at Deming 28 Dec (*; LM). A Western Screech-Owl was e. to Clayton L. 26 Jan (JO). A Spotted Owl was reported without details near Questa 16 Dec (R. Weber), where there have been no recent records. Seemingly out of place in the desert borderlands was a Long-eared Owl at Pancho Villa S.P. 24 Jan—15 Feb (J. & S. Hammon et al.). Now rare, single Short-eared

Owls were at Zuni 30 Dec (JAT), Bosque 2 Dec (WW), and near Antelope Wells 4 Jan (S. Smith *fide* AC, NM-C).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH RAVENS

With no previous New Mexico winter records, **Violet-crowned Hummingbirds** staged a mini-invasion in *Dona Ana* this season, with singles at Anthony 3 Nov—25 Feb (ph. H. Bigelow) and Las Cruces 23-24 Feb (ph. R. & B. Dickenshied); a 3rd was present Nov-Feb across the line at El Paso (BZ). A Broad-billed Hummingbird reportedly wintered at Carlsbad (E. Pierce, *fide* SW). Wintering Anna's may be increasing n. to Albuquerque, where up to 4 (3 banded) were present Dec—Feb (JD-M, HS, CH, CMB); elsewhere, single Anna's were present in Dec at Las Cruces (GE) and near Carlsbad (TH). Surprising for the date and n. locale was an ad. female **Costa's Hummingbird** at Placitas 5-26 Jan (JD-M, HS, CMB); measurements, photos, and diagnostic feathers confirmed the identification (W. Baltosser). *Selasphorus* hummers included one at Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS), a probable Broad-tailed at Carlsbad 5 Dec—28 Feb (SW), and several likely Rufous, including 3 at Silver City 15 Dec (*fide* RS), 2 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (*fide* GE), and one near Carlsbad 20 Dec (*fide* TH). Early was a male Broad-tailed in P.O. Canyon 27 Feb (CL). Judging from reports, Lewis's Woodpeckers must be thriving in the upper R.G.V., with 104 at Dixon 15 Dec (RT) and 85 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF); s. of expected were singles at White Signal, *Grant* 20 Dec (*fide* EL) and Las Animas Cr., *Sierra* 2 Dec—6 Jan (m. ob.) and 2 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). A Red-headed Woodpecker at Carlsbad 7 Feb (SW), where the species formerly nested, was the first there since 1995. Gila Woodpeckers continued much in evidence in *Hidalgo*; noteworthy were singles in Clanton Canyon 27 Feb (LM) and on Deer Cr. near Antelope Wells 10 Feb (AC, NM-C). South was a Downy Woodpecker near Caballo 30 Dec (MS, JZ). Providing challenges were several overwintering *Empidonax* flycatchers, highlighted by single vocal Dusky Flycatchers at Percha 30 Dec—19 Jan (BZ, JNP, JEP, JO) and Bosque 21 Jan (CR, DE, BN) and a vocal Cordilleran at Leasburg S.P. 1 Dec—6 Jan (MS, JZ, ph. & audiotape BZ). Other empids were a "Western" at Bosque 15 Dec (DLH) and single unidentified birds at Glenwood 3 Feb (JO) and Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Unusual were 2 Black Phoebe n. to Espanola 5 Jan (BF). Eastern Phoebe were at five R.G.V. locales Dec—Jan; farther w. was one near Deming 10-15 Feb (LM, CR, vt. JO). Say's Phoebe leave n. New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were one at

Clayton 19 Dec (CR) and 2 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF). Vermilion Flycatchers lingering in the lower R.G.V. were one at Palomas 30 Dec (GE) and one to 2 near Radium Springs 1 & 5 Dec (MS, JZ, ph. BZ). Single Northern Shrikes wandered s. to Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW), Sevilleta N.W.R. 22 Dec (PB), and Bosque 1 Dec (CMB); others remained farther n. in *Taos*, *Santa Fe*, *Colfax*, and *Union*. Late lingering vireos were a Plumbeous at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE) and a Cassin's at Percha 2 Dec (DE, BN) and 30 Dec (JNP, ph. BZ). Several Steller's Jays drifted into atypical habitat, including one at Corrales 16 Dec (WH), 3 near Caballo 30 Dec (MS, JZ), up to 6 in the Santa Rosa area 16 Dec—3 Feb (WW, JEP, CR, vt. JO), and 2 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB). Blue Jays were prevalent in the e. from *Colfax* and *Union* s. to *Eddy*; west were singles at Santa Fe 22 Dec (D. Einspahr), Albuquerque all season (MLA), and Water Canyon 7 Jan (BZ). Getting an early start were Western Scrub-Jays carrying nest material in the Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C) and Mexican Jays nest-building in the Peloncillo Mts. 13 Feb (CL). East were 47 Pinyon Jays at Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). Black-billed Magpies pushing the range limits included 5 at Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS) and singles at Mills Canyon 6 Dec (DC) and Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); 29 were s. to the Dilia area 24 Dec (JO). American Crow numbers exploded in the lower R.G.V., including 5000 n. of Las Cruces 5 Dec (MS, JZ, BZ) and 10,250 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Two Common Ravens were near White's City, *Eddy*, 16 Feb (SW), where considered scarce.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Cave Swallows returned to C.C.N.P. 28 Jan (*fide* SW), two weeks earlier than usual. Enjoying global warming were 2 Barn Swallows at Bosque 9 Jan (WW). Unusual for the Organ Mts. was a Bushtit at Aguirre Springs 3 Dec (BZ); notable was a flock of 61 Bushtits at P.O. Canyon 27 Dec (CL). Several House Wrens lingered late or overwintered in the lower Rio Grande and Pecos valleys, including singles at Caballo L. 30 Dec (BZ), Santa Teresa 1 Jan (MS, JZ), and Sunland Park 9 Jan (WW), plus 5 near Loving 16 Dec (CR) and 4 at C.C.N.P. 15 Dec (SW). A Winter Wren was at Percha 2 Dec (DE, BN), and another was singing at Carlsbad 3 Feb (SW); Six Mile Dam hosted 3 on 16 Dec (CR). Cold-hardy Marsh Wrens included 2 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), one to 2 in *Colfax* 1-24 Jan (DC), one near Folsom 26 Jan (JO), and 4 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR).

A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was n. to Sevilleta N.W.R. 20 Dec (DK); notable for the sw. were 2 Black-tailed in the Animas Valley

29 Dec (CR). Eastern Bluebirds made a strong showing from the R.G.V. east, including one at San Juan Pueblo 16 Feb (JO, JEP), 6 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), and 4 at Cimarron 23 Feb (JO, JEP), plus highs of 22 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW) and 15 at Puerto de Luna 22 Dec (JO). Quite late was a Gray Catbird at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); astonishingly early was one singing in Mills Canyon along the Canadian R. 22 Feb (DC). Northern Mockingbirds are unexpected in n. New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were 3 each at Clayton 19 Dec (CR) and Conchas L. 3 Jan (WH), plus singles at Zuni 1 Jan (JAT), Dixon 15 Dec (RT), and Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). For the 3rd consecutive year, a Brown Thrasher wintered at Corrales (WH); far w. was another at Zuni 1 Jan (JAT). Noteworthy for mid-winter was a Sprague's Pipit near Hermanas 12 Jan (RM); others, possibly representing late or early migrants, were 2 at Seville N.W.R. 20 Dec (DK), 5 near Hermanas 4-14 Dec (RM), and one near Gage 27 Feb (RM). Cedar Waxwings were prevalent in mid-Dec but unreported in Jan; earliest returnees were 78 in the Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C). North for the season was a Phainopepla w. of Abo Pass, Socorro 21 Jan (RA). Three Olive Warblers were in the Organ Mts. above Aguirre Springs 3 Dec (BZ), the 2nd consecutive winter the species has occurred there.

Orange-crowned Warblers are now expected in winter in the lower R.G.V.; far n. were singles at Espanola 5 Jan (BF) and Bosque 15 Dec (SC). Well detailed were a male **Nashville Warbler** at Las Cruces 13-20 Jan (CWB) and a female **Northern Parula** at Leasburg S.P. 1 & 5 Dec (MS, JZ, BZ). A Northern Waterthrush was found by gull seekers at Sunland Park 29 Dec (SW) and 5 Jan (JO, JEP). If accepted, a well-described **Louisiana Waterthrush** along Little Bear Cr., Catron 4 Dec (GL) would be a New Mexico winter first. Many more Common Yellowthroats than usual were reported, including singles n. to Zuni 1 Jan (JAT), La Joya 22 Dec (CR), and Bosque Redondo 1 Jan (JO) and w. to the Animas Valley 31 Jan & 7 Feb (AC, NM-C). A male **Wilson's Warbler** at Las Cruces 15 Dec (CWB) furnished a winter first for New Mexico.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A puzzling female tanager at Rio Rancho 4-9 Jan (PD, HS) conveniently became a window-kill on the latter date (*U.N.M.), allowing positive identification as a **Scarlet Tanager** (R. Dickerman); there are few previous winter records for anywhere in the U.S., and none for New Mexico. Similarly surprising was a female **Western Tanager** near R.G.N.C. 1 Jan (JEP).

Rufous-crowned Sparrows may be overlooked in n. New Mexico in winter; this season produced one at Clayton 19 Dec (CR), 2-3 in Mills Canyon 9 & 19 Jan (DC), and 6 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW). Well s. of expected were single American Tree Sparrows at Bosque 15 Dec (DLH), Alto, Lincoln 19-22 Feb (JM), and C.C.N.P. 15 Dec (SW). Swamp Sparrows on the edge of typical range were singles at Tijeras Cr., Sandia Mts. 13 & 27 Jan (JO, BV) and the Animas Valley 7 Feb (ph. NM-C). Single Harris's Sparrows were in the R.G.V. at San Acacia 9 Dec (BV), Luis Lopez Dec—Feb (vt. JO), and e. of Luis Lopez 28 Jan—5 Feb (vt. JO); 2 were near L. Roberts 2-24 Feb (EL, CR, vt. JO). A male Northern Cardinal was n. to Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW), and 2 males were at nearby Agua Negra Cr. 22 Dec (vt. JO); yet another male was at Sumner Dam 12 Dec (WW). The species has only recently appeared so far n. in the Pecos Valley. Pyrrhuloxias wandering n. included singles near Sedan, Union 27 Jan (vt. JO) and Albuquerque 16 Dec—26 Jan (A. Rominger, CR, JO, JEP) and 2 each at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW) and Puerto de Luna 12 Dec (WW). They were unusually prevalent in *Hidalgo*, including 25 in and near the Peloncillo Mts. 30 Dec (AC) and 15 at Double Adobe, Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C).

Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at L.V.N.W.R. 29 Dec (GB) and one 20 Jan (BV); the species is unexpected so far n. in winter. Quite rare in New Mexico, one to 2 **Rusty Blackbirds** were at Portales 30 Jan (CR) and 9 Feb (JEP, vt. JO); less well documented were one at Espanola 2 Dec (JT) and 2 at L. Avalon 21 Feb (SW). Common Grackles lingering n. of expected areas included singles at Maxwell 2-4 Dec (DC), Clayton 19 Dec (CR), Las Vegas 29 Dec (GB), and Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW). A Great-tailed Grackle was at Raton 16 Dec (DC). Brown-headed Cowbirds continued to increase their winter presence, with reports from 12 locales including 187 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR); not surprisingly, feedlots were the favored habitats. For the 3rd consecutive winter, a mixed flock of rosy-finches wintered at Sandia Crest; from 6 on 6 Dec, the flock grew to 95 on 13 Jan, then decreased to 25 by 23 Feb, with Blacks comprising roughly 60%, Gray-crowneds 30%, and Brown-capped 10% (m. ob., vt. WH). Among the several Cassin's Finch reports were an impressive 80 at Emory Pass 2 Jan (WW), plus 8 in the Pinos Altos Mts. 20 Feb (LM) and 2 at Silver City 15 Dec (RS). A Red Crossbill was in the seldom-visited Oscrúa Mts. 6 Dec (DAH). Lesser Goldfinches have quietly become a regular wintering species across s. New Mexico and n. to Albuquerque, where small numbers were present Dec—Feb

(WH, DM); farther n. were 20 at Farmington 15 Dec (A. Nelson) and 3 at Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). Unusual so near the Mexican border were 13 American Goldfinches in the Animas Valley 31 Jan (AC, NM-C).

Initialed observers: Richard Anderson, Mary Lou Arthur, Pat Basham, Craig W. Binkman, Sherry Bixler, George Blanchard, Celestyn M. Brozek, David Cleary, Alan Craig, Steven Cox, Joan Day-Martin, Page Draper, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Andrew Fenner, Bernard Foy, Rebecca Gracey, Cindy Harris, David L. Hawksworth, Tom Hines, David A. Holdermann, William Howe, David Krueper, Gregory Levandoski, Eugene Lewis, Carroll Littlefield, Larry Malone, David Mehlman, Raymond Meyer, Gale Monson, Narca Moore-Craig, John Morton, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, David Rintoul, Christopher Rustay, Hart Schwarz, Marcy Scott, Roland Shook, Robert Templeton, Joyce Takamine, John A. Trochet, Brad Vaughn, Nick Vaughn, Gordon Warrick, Mark Watson, Steve West, William West, James Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer.



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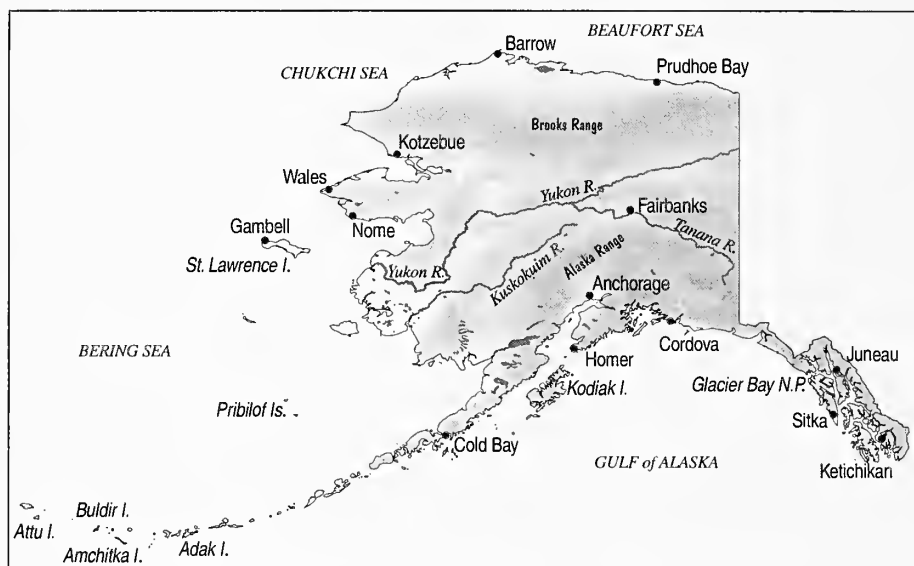


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Following the late autumn's rapid freeze-up and heavy snows, winter '01—'02 began under a continental high-pressure blanket. Early-season temperatures that were well below average set the tone until early January, when some moderation came mostly with snowstorms tracking along the North Gulf Coast. Even after such an exciting fall season, rarities and otherwise noteworthy winter records were below the past few years' norms. Heavier-than-usual snow packs probably contributed to the season's low returns. As is so often the case for an Alaskan winter, the season's highlights were discovered during the C.B.C. period. Open fresh water was at a premium this season, and significant waterbird reports were confined to a few coastal strips and saltwater refuges. After a hiatus of several years, I received a complete report from the Cordova environs, where Pete Isleib uncovered numerous winter rarities in the 1970s and 1980s.

Abbreviations: North Gulf (North Gulf of Alaska); Southeast (Southeast Alaska). Referenced details (†), specimens (*), photographs (ph.), and videotape (vt.) are on file at the University of Alaska Museum. Italicized place names denote especially unusual locations for the noted species.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

An intriguing **Arctic Loon** description (minimal detail) from just off Cordova 20-21 Jan (†AL, NO) would represent a first winter report for Alaska away from the W. Aleutians. Notable Pacific Loon concentrations were about average from typical staging sites, including 200 in Ketchikan's Ward Cove 2 Dec (SCH) and 80 near Juneau 17 Feb (GVV). Western Grebe peak counts of note included up to 215 in the Ketchikan area 10 Feb (SCH) and another flock of 140 off the n. side of Annette I. 21 Jan (SCH). A single Western lingered in the Juneau area to 19 Jan (GVV), the latest ever there in winter and one of very few n. of the traditional winter range between Frederick Sound and Annette I.

After several winters of multiple reports and small groups, only a single ad. Brandt's Cormorant was located in Nichols Passage off Ketchikan 21 Jan, where nearly all of the Region's winter records originate. A rare winter Greater White-fronted Goose spent the season with Trumpeter Swans in the Sitka area, one of few ever beyond Dec (MLW, MET). The only unusual Trumpeter Swan report was a group of 3 probable late migrants moving s. at Juneau 13 Jan (GVV). More unusual were single Tundra Swans, which lingered or attempted to stay the season, at Cordova 9 Dec—9 Jan, when found dead (AL et al.), and at Juneau 15 Dec—13 Jan+ (GVV). Four of the original 5 Ketchikan-area Wood Ducks lingered there until 23 Dec (SCH). The season's few waterfowl highlights

otherwise included: 3 Eurasian Wigeon and 2 Northern Shovelers at Kodiak all season (RAM), a returning male Green-winged Teal in an Anchorage groundwater spring all season (RLS), a Canvasback at Cordova until 10 Feb (AL), a high count of 12 Ring-necked Ducks at Sitka's Swan L. all season (MLW, MET), a drake Tufted Duck at Cordova 21 Jan—10 Feb (AL, WB, CR, NO), where there are a handful of historic winter reports, a local record high 21 Lesser Scaup in Ketchikan through Jan (SCH), Seward's male Hooded Merganser at its traditional site (WS), and a pair of Hoodeds on Cordova's Eyak L. 10-26 Feb+ (WB, AL, PM). Probably because of the season's early heavy snow and subsequent prolonged cold, unusual raptor reports were few. Southeast observers commented on good numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks. Most unusual was an ad. male **American Kestrel** in the Juneau area all season (GVV ph.), one of the Region's few true winter records.

PLOVERS THROUGH DOVES

Distribution and status of the Region's semi-hardy shorebird species was greatly diminished this season, also likely because of the combined heavy snows and early-season low temperatures. Rock Sandpiper concentrations in traditional Cook Inlet bays were elusive, with high counts well below the 10,000 to 15,000 of past winters. Rocks were also poorly accounted for at Seward and other coastal spots. Given the season, Juneau harbored decent flocks of Surf-birds, with maxima of 125 on 17 Feb and 200 Black Turnstones the same day (GVV). Typically rare in winter away from a few regular coastal sites, a Sanderling surfaced in Juneau 13 Jan—18 Feb (GVV). Eight Common Snipe in Juneau in one group 31 Jan (GVV) was also a good winter count for the Region.

Reasonable details were submitted for a bird thought to be a first-winter Kamchatka Mew Gull (*Larus canus kamschatschensis*) from Cordova 18 Jan (AL†, WB, CR, NO). Direct comparisons with similar-aged Mew Gulls were included in the description. Juneau's Eagle Beach again provided roosting habitat for Thayer's Gulls, with peak counts of 135-175 tallied between 26 Dec and 13 Jan (GVV). Only singles are sporadically found in winter n. in the Region beyond Juneau. Another clean ad. Western Gull was photographed in the Ketchikan area, present Nov—5 Jan+ (ph. SCH). Black-legged Kittiwakes, rare or missing from inshore harbors and bays in the North Gulf, apparently moved farther offshore than normal, perhaps due to weather and commercial fish closures. Excellent mid-sea-

son Marbled Murrelet feeding aggregations came in from protected Southeast waters, with a peak 5000 in lower Lynn Canal 23-24 Feb (GVV) and 1300 s. of Ketchikan 30 Dec (SCH). Rare inshore in winter for the Southeast was an Ancient Murrelet near Ketchikan 21 Jan (SCH).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Following the minor fall coastal dispersion of Snowy Owls, the Kodiak individual remained in the harbor to 15 Dec+ (RAM), a local first "winter" record. No others were refound or wintered. Short-eared Owls were missing from the Kodiak grasslands, but one lingered in the Juneau wetlands 5-28 Jan+ (GVV). The season's only Northern Pygmy-Owl was located near Juneau briefly 18-28 Feb (GVV). As the season moderated in mid-Feb, Boreal Owls initiated displays, at least in the Fairbanks area by the end of the period, while 1-2 Northern Saw-whet Owls spent the season and called occasionally in Anchorage 10 Dec—early Jan+ (NS, GJT, RLS). Certainly the season's highlight was an immaculate male **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, which had apparently taken up residence at a remote homesite feeder s. of Talkeetna near Caswell Lakes in Sep. Driven by her inability to find the bird in her bird books, the homeowner called down to Anchorage birders for some assistance, and after the homeowner provided compelling details, Delap was at the feeder the following morning (5 Feb) to confirm and document the identification. This individual constituted Alaska's first mainland record and the 8th report overall of this forest dweller from ne. Asia. Except for a spring Pribilof report, all prior records came from the W. Aleutians. There are a few Commander Island reports, and these birds likely originated from Kamchatka forests. Winter Northern Flickers were average, including singles in Sitka 29 Jan (MLW, MET) and Juneau 2 Dec+ (the latter a hybrid; GVV). Exceptional otherwise was a conservative count of 13 flickers in the Ketchikan area all season, among them 5 intergrades (GVV).

Another Mountain Chickadee, sporadic in winter out of the Coast Range into coastal Southeast, made a brief appearance at a Juneau area feeder 25 Jan—mid Feb+ (fide GVV), the season's only report. Given the tough season, American Robins held their own, at least where exotic shrubs provided decent berries, with a peak in Juneau of 6 as late as 10 Jan (GVV), and a dozen or so again in the greater Anchorage—Eagle River area all season (DFD). The season's only notable Varied Thrush report included 10 together in Sitka Jan 21 (MET, MLW), and very few were observed elsewhere. A single Cedar Waxwing wintered in Ketchikan 16 Jan+ (SCH), this winter's only find. Bohemian

Waxwing peaks were below average, and for some reason late, in the Anchorage Bowl, where certainly most of the Region's population focuses on local landscaped berry crops in Dec. A few dozen lingered through the period in downtown Anchorage, while few others were spotted after the first of the year.

WARBLERS THROUGH FRINGILLIDS

The very late **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, Alaska's first, at a Juneau feeder was not seen after 2 Dec (GVV) during an extended cold snap down to -20o F. For the first time in several winters, no warblers made it past the first days of Dec. Given the snow and cold, it was an exceptional sparrow season, especially in Southeast. American Tree Sparrows were concentrated at a few coastal sites, including 4 on 19 Jan in grasses at the Copper R. Delta (AL), 6 in Juneau wetlands 16 Dec (GVV), and at least one in Ketchikan 5 Feb (SCH), where casual. Rare in winter, and offshore, was a Chipping Sparrow in Sitka to 11 Feb (MET, MLW). Excellent Fox Sparrow tallies included 24 (*insularis*) on the Kodiak C.B.C. 15 Dec (fide RAM), at least 25+ all season at Ketchikan feeders (a new winter record; SCH), and a few offshore at Sitka 27 Jan—24 Feb (MET, MLW). They were otherwise missing or fleeting in the Seward area, where a few can be counted on most winters. This winter's only Lincoln's Sparrow was a lone bird that spent the season at a Ketchikan feeder (SCH), where casual. Following a decent fall showing, only 2 White-throated Sparrows remained through the season, both at Ketchikan (SCH). Seward's Harris's Sparrow reappeared in Feb across the bay from where it was discovered in Nov (WS), that locale's first "true" winter record. And Golden-crowned Sparrows, the most reliable and hardy winter *Zonotrichia*, were in good evidence, with good counts of 13 at the Kodiak C.B.C. 15 Dec (RAM) and 12+ in the Ketchikan area all season (SCH), that area's most ever. Elsewhere, only singles were noted, mostly in Dec, from Anchorage, Seward and Juneau.

The season's only Brambling record was a single found near downtown Kodiak Dec 14-28 (ph. RAM, IB). Kodiak produces late fall and winter Bramblings with the most regularity of the Region's coastal hotspots. Red Crossbills were distinctly absent or poorly represented Regionwide, except from the Kodiak forests, where they were fairly common all season. Two Red Crossbills in the Kenai area 17 Feb (ph. RD) were unusual in the boreal forest extension from the Interior across Cook Inlet. Common Redpolls exploded out of the Interior and through the Coast Range in mid-Jan, with hundreds noted around Juneau by early Feb (m.



A truly rare species in Alaska but one recorded several times in recent years, a Great Spotted Woodpecker spent the season at a feeder between Willow and Talkeetna (here 22 February 2002). Photograph by Randall Davis.

ob.). Every few years, redpolls reach the Southeast coast, usually towards the latter half of the winter. This year, small numbers reached s. into the Ketchikan area, with a peak 13+ by 21 Feb (SCH), where there had been only four previous winter reports. A pair of **House Sparrows** wintered at Ketchikan feeders 2 Dec—22 Feb+ (SCH ph.), a local 2nd record and the Region's first ever through the winter.

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British Columbia–Yukon



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Basically another “winter that wasn’t,” with mild temperatures and moderate snowpacks the rule, although the Yukon experienced a winter with normal temperatures and snowpack. There were several mini-Arctic air invasions during the second week of December and the third week of January, the latter depositing the most snow of the period. As a result, many species lingered farther north than usual and/or remained in higher numbers. With mild winters such as this one, it is often difficult to determine whether birds are moving north or south; for such an example, see the Barn Swallow S. A. Other highlights of the season included a winter high count of eight species of warblers, a record 14 species of gulls, and Canada’s first overwintering Pacific-slope Flycatcher.

Abbreviations: Chichester (Chichester Bird Sanctuary, Kelowna); P.G. (Prince George); P.G.N.C. (Prince George Naturalists’ Club); R.P.B.O. (Rocky Point Bird Observatory, s. Vancouver I.); Whse. (Whitehorse, Yukon).

LOONS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

At least 3 imm. Yellow-billed Loons continued

in the Comox area through the period (GLM et al.), and an imm. was in Kelowna 16–18 Feb (CC, RTo et al.), the only interior report. Winter occurrences of Pied-billed Grebes are noteworthy in the cen. interior: one was along the Crooked R. 20 Jan (P.G.N.C.), and 3 were at William’s L. 16 Dec (PR). There are only a handful of Brown Pelican winter records for the Region. The individual found on Long Beach, Tofino 3 Dec was rescued by parks staff but died shortly thereafter (AD). Double-crested Cormorants are occasional winterers in the s. interior; an imm. was along the Okanagan Lakeshore, Kelowna 16–17 Feb (CC et al.).

Accidental in the Region, one or possibly 2 **Bewick’s Swans** were reported: one was at Kilby P.P. 2 Jan (JV) and possibly the same bird 3 & 24 Feb (DB) in Abbotsford. Brant are very rarely encountered in the interior, and one found 9 Dec (TP) in the Nicola Valley furnished a first local record. A very rare coastal vagrant, a **King Eider** in third-basic plumage, was off Denman I. 10 Jan+ (PF GLM et al.). A new species was recorded on the P.G. C.B.C. when a pair of Bufflehead was found 16 Dec (*fide* JB); 2 females were along the Crooked R. 20 Jan (P.G.N.C.). Turkey Vultures remained on Vancouver I. in above-average numbers, with 8 at Esquimalt Lagoon area 9 Feb, and by mid-month, vultures were being recorded farther n., most notably, 2 in Port Alberni 24 Feb (ReCr) and one at Campbell R. 28 Feb (DS).

An Osprey was very late in Tofino 8 & 16 Dec (AD). An ad. Peregrine Falcon provided a very rare sight for the Peace R. area 5 Jan at Dawson Cr. (MP, JP). Wild Turkeys continue to do well in the West Kootenays with 115 on the Lardeau C.B.C. and 151 on the West Kootenay winter count (*fide* EB, GS). Sandhill Cranes are casual winter visitors to the s. coast: one remained in Parksville, mid Vancouver I. 20 Jan+ (JB, GLM). A record winter total of 80 Least Sandpipers occurred on the Ladner C.B.C. (RTo, JF). A high count of 61 Long-billed Dowitchers was present at Brydon Park Lagoons 5 Jan (DB).

GULLS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Very rare in winter, a Heermann’s Gull first found in Nov, remained in White Rock to 1 Jan (m. ob.). Rare in the province, **Iceland Gulls** reported were: a first-basic bird at Goldstream Park near Victoria 9–11 Dec (DF et al.); a basic ad. at R.P.B.O. 23 Dec—15 Feb (AMa, DA); and a basic ad. in Vernon 26 Jan+ (DGC ph.). A second-basic **Lesser Black-backed Gull** in Vernon provided the first record for the Okanagan Valley and 4th for the province 9 Feb+ (†DGC et al., ph.). The only Slaty-backed Gull away from the lower mainland was a third-basic bird at Nakusp 5 & 13 Jan and 3 Feb (†GSD, PW). Vancouver’s first and the province’s 6th **Ivory Gull** was found in Delta 4–23 Dec (JK, RTo, MM, TP, †BB et al.). The bird was believed to be in second-basic plumage and frequented the shipyard at the Deltaport Jetty. Due to the well-lit environs, many birders were able to tick this one in the middle of the night! A basic ad. **Black-tailed Gull** was reported from Ucluelet 5 Jan (†RTo, MM, †JF) and if accepted would be a 2nd record for the province.

Rare at any time on the outer coast, a Mourning Dove was in Tofino 2 Dec (AD). In marked contrast to last year, there were few reports of Northern Hawk Owls (except in s. Yukon) and Great Gray Owls. Smashing a pre-

SA Fifty to 60 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were present 17 Feb in the Similkameen Valley, where a specimen was retrieved (CC, CS, ph., †DGC). According to locals, this population has been present since the 1970s when a local aviculturist released the birds. Surprisingly, these birds do not appear to have the dispersal instincts of those that have rapidly expanded across the continent from stock released in the Bahamas. The population here bears monitoring.

vious record—early arrival by two weeks, 2 male Rufous Hummingbirds were in Nanaimo 20 Feb (*fide* GLM). Lewis's Woodpeckers very rarely visit the s. coast during winter, but one was near Victoria 27-29 Dec (*fide* DM). Two Downy Woodpeckers on the 29 Dec Mayo C.B.C. (*fide* MOD) provided a rare winter record for cen. Yukon. A male **Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker** provided the Territory's first documented winter record in Whse. 29 Jan (RE ph.). **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** are unheard of after Oct, but one individual spent the winter at Blenkinsop L., Saanich 24 Jan+ and provided a first Canadian winter record (JG, RS, m. ob.).

SWALLOWS THROUGH FINCHES

SA Barn Swallows have been known to occur in winter along the s. coast. These sightings have increased in frequency over the past decade; however, rarely are double-digit figures recorded. This winter, Barn Swallows staged a true invasion in Feb that contained a minimum of 52 birds. The outer coast's first winter record came 27 Dec (CS) at Chesterman Beach, Tofino. January records included: one at Swan L., Saanich 5 Jan (Victoria R.B.A.); one at Iona I. 5-14 Jan (CG, RTto) joined by another 10-14 Jan (CG); and one at Reifel I. 13 Jan (CG). This latter location saw increases to 3 on 17 Feb, 8-10 on 18 Feb, 10 on 23 Feb, 12 on 26 Feb, and finally 19 on 28 Feb (m. ob.). Other significant counts included: 15 at Serpentine Fen 26 Feb (CG) and 8 at Iona I. 25 Feb (RTto). The most northerly birds were encountered in mid-Feb in Comox (NH). Considering the significant increase in February and the relative lack of birds in December and January, it seems likely that these birds were traveling northward. Given that Vancouver's average arrival for this species is in early Apr, these are not likely early spring migrants. Weather would seem to present the likely reason behind this incursion. Persistent warm southwesterly winds dominated coastal weather for the first two weeks of Jan, but why would it affect predominantly Barn Swallows? Perhaps these winds originated from an area with a dense concentration of wintering Barn Swallows (probably in Mexico). This flood of early Barn Swallows was strictly a coastal phenomenon, much as it was to the south, in the Pacific Northwest and northern California.

SA Common Redpolls continued their invasion that had them scattered across the Region from the fall. Flocks seemed to be everywhere, and feeder watchers shelled out a lot of money and seeds to support them. Most C.B.C.s did not tally record numbers, but taken in aggregate, this will undoubtedly go down as one of the best irruptions ever to spread right across the province. As is often the case when large numbers of seed-eating birds congregate at feeders, disease eventually took its toll. The first inkling that something bad may have been afoot was when Vanderhoof birders noted several succumbing near the end of January. The accumulated evidence pointed to a salmonella epidemic. Endemic within the population, the bacterium is passed along readily via the feces of birds, a process exacerbated by the large numbers at feeders this winter. People feeding birds should note that wooden platform feeders are especially dangerous, as the toxin persists most readily on that substrate. Plastic feeders and a regular cleaning regimen using a mild bleach solution are the best defense.

A leucistic male Common Redpoll with a white-headed appearance was a daily visitor at Arras 8 Feb+ (ph. JP). Hoary Redpolls joined the flocks of Commons just about everywhere. Although they were relatively few in number, they were also liberally scattered across the province. As is usual, the best place to find them was the Peace R. area, where 12 were seen at Dawson Cr. 29 Dec (*fide* MP). Another 10 were reported from the s. interior and the s. coast, most notably a female on Vancouver I. in Duncan 19 Jan (GLM). It would seem likely that searching out breeding activity in the northern boreal forests of the province this summer could be productive.

As has been the trend, Blue Jays continue to increase in the province, with at least 40 reported this season. Most notably were 20 at Dawson Cr. 29 Dec (*fide* JB) and 2 in Comox, mid-Vancouver I. 20 Dec+ (NH). A casual visitor to the lower mainland, an ad. **Western Scrub-Jay** was in Port Coquitlam 30 Dec+ (FV, MV et al.). American Crows set a record 867 on the P.G. C.B.C. (*fide* JB). This could be a result of an increase in the local population but more likely is due to a greater proportion of the breeding population overwintering. Only rarely do interior Chestnut-backed Chickadees stray from the cedar belt. Such strays included: one or 2 in Cranbrook early Feb+ (RG et al) and a single at a P.G. feeder 27 Jan (MA). Rare in winter in the Peace R. area were 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches at Brassey Cr. 9 Dec (MP). A pair of Mountain Bluebirds was a good find near Comox 20 Dec (NH). American Robins responded to the mild weather by remaining both in large numbers and farther north. Christmas Bird Counts in the cen. interior had record numbers, with a few individuals lingering along the Nechako R. P.G. 8 Jan (JF). In the Yukon, robins numbered 3 at Wolf Cr. 12 Dec (JJ, AR), a single at Jackfish Bay on L. Laberge 7-13 Dec (AR, MR), a single at Hillcrest through Jan (m. ob.), and 2 at Riverdale through Jan (m. ob.).

Very rare in winter, single Northern Mockingbirds persisted in Castlegar 26 Dec (RK), Trail 16 Jan (DoB) and Duncan all winter (DM). The Okanagan's first Jan record of American Pipit was a single bird near Kelowna 27 Jan (CC RyT). Bohemian Waxwing numbers were near normal in most areas. In con-

trast, numbers of their smaller cousins, Cedar Waxwing, were up noticeably. Both Quesnel and P.G. had record-high numbers, with 19 and 15 respectively on local C.B.C.s. At least 8 attempted to overwinter in P.G. 15 Jan (JF). Vancouver's Crested Myna population continues its precipitous decline with only 4-6 birds left (*fide* RTto). Although there are a number of reports of **Yellow Warblers** during the winter, they are scarcely ever substantiated. One such bird was discovered on the Ladner C.B.C. (TP) and seen again the next day (DTy). This individual furnished the first confirmed winter record for Vancouver. A Palm Warbler provided the first winter record for the Okanagan and overwintered in Kelowna 21 Jan+ (RyT, DGC ph. et al.). Casual in winter along the s. coast, 2 Northern Waterthrushes were at Reifel I. 9-16 Jan (JI et al.), and one remained to the end of the month. Very rare in winter, Common Yellowthroats included: a male near Oliver 23 Dec—17 Feb (AB et al.) and a female in a bog in Langley 5 Jan (DB). Casual in winter on Vancouver Island, a Wilson's Warbler was found in the Cowichan Valley 6 Jan (*fide* DM). Also casual on Vancouver I., a juv. Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in Tofino 9, 10 & 19 Dec (ph. AD).

An American Tree Sparrow survived at a Whse. feeder through 23 Dec but subsequently disappeared (CE,PS). No fewer than 10 Swamp Sparrows were reported from s. areas of the province. Most notable was one on the outer coast in Tofino 28 Dec—14 Jan (AD). Golden-crowned Sparrows are very rare in winter in the interior; thus one recorded on the Quesnel C.B.C. was a count highlight (JMc, LMc).

White-crowned Sparrows are rarely found in winter as far n. as the cen. interior, where an imm. was found in P.G. 12 Dec (TH). Harris's Sparrows rarely stray as far as the outer coast, but one individual was in Tofino 2, 9 & 28 Dec (AD). Very rare in winter in the Peace R. area, a Red-winged Blackbird looked out of place at Arras 15 Dec (MP). An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird provided a first winter record at Vanderhoof 1 Jan (SK, LL, NK, TH). Both rare in winter, a Rusty Blackbird and a Brown-headed Cowbird were visiting a feeder in Nanaimo 1 Dec (GLM). Kelowna's male **Great-tailed Grackle** first discovered in May 2000 furnished a first Canadian C.B.C. record 15 Dec (ph. DGC) and remained through the period for its 2nd consecutive winter (m. ob.). Casual in winter on the outer coast, a Bullock's

Oriole was in Tofino 3 & 9 Dec (AD). The recent uninterrupted series of mild winters has allowed House Finches to flourish. New record C.B.C. tallies included: 53 at P.G., 161 at Quesnel, and 203 at Williams L. A female-type Evening Grosbeak, rare in Whse., was at a Riverdale feeder through Jan (RE).

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Oregon-Washington



species had first or second winter records, and 16 species of warblers were found this winter, better than some autumn seasons. Irruption species formed a remarkably diverse group, including Emperor Goose, Barn Swallow, and Common Redpoll. Also, many kudos to the observers who put in time researching and documenting subspecific identification, tallying sparrow reports, or otherwise going beyond the call of duty. This Region is truly seeing a boom in observer effort and knowledge. The weather this winter was generally warmer and wetter than normal through January, but became cool and dry in February.

Abbreviations: F.R.R. (Fern Ridge Res., Lane); Malheur (Malheur N.W.R., Harney); N.S.C.B. (N. Spit Coos Bay, Coos); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor); P.N.P. (Pt. No Pt., Kitsap); Ridgefield (Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark); Y.R.D. (Yakima R. delta, Benton, WA). "Eastside" and "westside" refer to locations east and west of the Cascade crest, respectively.

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This winter was perhaps even more extraordinary than the fall that preceded it. Rarities abounded, including two first Washington records. Perhaps more noteworthy, however, was the impressive array of lingerers and irruptions. Four non-vagrant

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Seven Yellow-billed Loons this winter was above recent norms. Two Clark's Grebes represented a paltry winter total, with singles at Bay Center, *Pacific* 18-20 Jan (SM, DD, TP) and Coquille, *Coos* 18 Feb (TR). A Northern Fulmar inside Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln* 24 Feb was as close to being inland as this species ever comes (J. Sullivan). Eight American White Pelicans at Sauvie I. 1 Dec provided the only westside record this winter (J. Pendleton).

Brown Pelicans are very rare during winter, so 6 at Coos Bay 16 Dec (TR) and 2 near Florence 17-20 Dec (V. Arnold, D. Farrar) were noteworthy; much rarer was one in the interior westside at Jackson Bottom, Washington 6 Dec (S. Pinnock). Single Great Egrets were at Orondo, Douglas 25-26 Dec (DB), Richland, Benton 29 Dec (M. Lilga), and W.W.R.D. 5-12 Jan (MD); they are very rare during winter in e. Washington. Five Cattle Egrets in Washington and one in Oregon survived into winter, with the latest at Burbank, Walla Walla 21 Jan (D. Bagley).

One of the winter's many excitements was an invasion of Emperor Geese, the largest since 1989-90: 4, Coos Bay 5 Jan (TR); 3, Florence, Lane 4 Jan (D. Pettay); 3, Dungeness Spit, Clallam 17 Dec (EH, J. Acker); and singles at Yaquina Head, Lincoln 24-28 Dec (T. Morse), Bandon, Coos 26 Dec (TR), Ridgefield throughout period (WC), and near Bruceport, Pacific 18 Jan to 20 Feb (vt. SM, DD, TP). "Stumpy," the Port Angeles Emperor, remained for its 3rd winter (AS).

Not annual in the Region, a Blue Goose was on Fir I., Skagit 22 Dec (†E. Level). Ross's Geese numbers continue to increase, with 5 in w. Oregon and 4 in Washington. Rare away from saltwater, Black Brant were at F.R.R. 1 & 27 Jan (S. Maulding, J. Sullivan) and Ridgefield 26 Dec & 24-28 Feb (DE, EA, S. McFall). A concentration of 900 Trumpeter Swans at Mt. Vernon, Skagit 13 Jan provided evidence of continued population growth (TA). A drake **Falcated Duck** on the Samish Flats, Skagit 21 Feb into Mar provided Washington's, and the Region's, 3rd record (†TA, S. Gerstle, vt. S. Pink). Previous records include a bird shot in Pacific 3 Jan 1979 and a male near Sequim, Clallam 3 Jul 1993 (Washington Birds 3: 19 and 7: 11). Notably, the Samish Flats has harbored the Region's largest concentrations of Eurasian Wigeon, with a record-shattering 160 found there 1 Mar (RTS). Also present on 22 Feb were 4 Common Teal and 2 Common x Green-winged Teal (PtS, RS)! On the eastside, 11 Eurasian Wigeon constituted an above-average winter tally. Six Common Teal were reported in addition to those seen at the Samish Flats, with a maximum of 3 at Creswell, Lane 6 Jan (DDW); at least 4 hybrid teal were also reported. A tally of 1500 Ring-necked Ducks at Jackson Bottom, Washington 12 Dec may be the highest ever for the Region (HN). Westside Tufted Ducks included singles at Astoria, Clatsop 2 Jan (TT) and Hoquiam, Grays Harbor 15-20 Feb (P. Hicks, †B. Fischer), representing an average winter. Very rare for e. Oregon, however, was a Tufted at

Redmond, Deschutes 6 Feb (KO). The only eastside Surf Scoter was one at E. Wenatchee, Douglas 8 Dec (DB), while the only eastside Long-tailed Ducks were near Vantage, Kittitas, where 4 were found on 9 Jan, increasing to 8 by 18 Feb (S. Downes, S. Ray). Scoter numbers were up on the Oregon coast, with maxima of 20,000 Surf at Seaside, Clatsop 23 Dec (MP), 15,000 White-wingeds in n. Lane 17 Dec (PP), and 300 Blacks at Seaside 23 Dec (MP). A Com. Goldeneye x Bufflehead at Wenatchee, Chelan 2 Dec—22 Jan was a surprise (†DB).

Osprey are very rare during winter in Washington, so one at Longview, Cowlitz 19 Jan was noteworthy (L. & J. Goodhew). A careful survey of Lewis and Thurston revealed 35 White-tailed Kites 21 Jan, furnishing further evidence of increase in the Region (R. Orness). Now annual in w. Washington, a Red-shouldered Hawk was at Ridgefield 18-26 Feb (K. Knittle), while the ad. at Brady, Grays Harbor was last seen 5 Dec (TA). Fleischer found 129 Red-tailed Hawks in Linn on 17 Feb, a remarkable number. Ferruginous Hawk numbers were up everywhere. In e. Oregon, where 2 per winter is the norm, at least 7 were reported. In e. Washington, where not annual during winter, one was near Prosser, Benton 9 Feb (AS, ES), and another was near Hanford, Benton 26 Jan (PB). In w. Oregon, where not annual during any season, one was near Rickreall, Polk 9 Jan—Feb (JF) and one was at Agate L., Jackson 12 Feb (J. Linch). Fleischer found 110 American Kestrels in Linn 17 Feb. A Prairie Merlin (*F. c. richardsoni*) near Sequim, Clallam 19 Dec was well described (†TA); this race may be annual in Washington. A count of 9 eastside and 7 westside Gyrfalcons was well above the norm. Similarly, 12 westside Prairie Falcons was better than average. A Sora near Cathlamet, Wahkiakum 14 Jan provided a very rare winter record (K. Stewart).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Pacific Golden-Plovers are not annual during winter, so one at Tangent, Linn 23 Dec—1 Jan was noteworthy (T. Snetsinger). An American Avocet at Coos Bay throughout the period furnished a very rare westside winter record (TR). Lesser Yellowlegs now winter annually in Oregon, but this winter's 6 was extraordinary. A Spotted Sandpiper was near Pasco, Franklin 3 Jan, likely last winter's bird returning (L. Ness). Marbled Godwit numbers remained exceptional this winter. Rare away from the outer coast, 30 were at Dungeness Spit, Clallam 17 Dec (EH, J. Acker), and one was at Blaine, Whatcom 23-28 Feb (J. Kintner). On the outer coast, a Regional record 950 were tallied at Tokeland, Pacific 18

Jan (SM, DD, TP). **Bar-tailed Godwits** were finally recorded during winter, and not just in Washington, but in Oregon as well, with an overwintering juv. at Tokeland (m. ob.) and a bird lingering at Coos Bay to 7 Dec (TR, DL, KC). Eighteen Least Sandpipers, rare during winter on the eastside, were at Othello 2 Feb (BF), and another was at Y.R.D. 24 Dec—3 Jan (BL). A nominate **Rock Sandpiper** was at O.S. 13 Feb, likely last winter's bird returning (†BW). For the 4th consecutive winter, Dunlin were found at multiple locations in e. Washington, with high counts of 160 at Scootney Res., Adams 24 Feb (RH) and 85 at W.W.R.D. 5 Jan (MD, MLD); Dunlin were formerly considered very rare during winter on the eastside. A Red Phalarope at Long Beach, Pacific 3 Jan provided a very rare winter record (MD, MLD).

Franklin's Gulls were near Auburn, King 3 Dec (MB) and Brady, Grays Harbor 5 Dec (TA); there are only 6 previous winter Washington records. The **Lesser Black-backed Gull** returned for the 3rd consecutive winter to Walla Walla 6 Dec—8 Feb (MD); it made a brief excursion to Richland, Benton 11 Jan (BW, NL, RF, PB) and still represents Washington's only record. Only 14 Glaucous Gulls were reported, well below the long-term average. Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were at John Day Dam 1 Dec (D. Bailey) and W.W.R.D. 13-14 Jan (K. Turley, MD, MLD); there are fewer than 10 records for e. Washington. Kittiwakes are rare from Port Angeles east, so 2 at Sequim Bay, Clallam 24 Feb were noteworthy (G. Kridler). After a 12-year wait, Washington's 9th **Thick-billed Murre** was found about 48 km off Westport 17 Feb (†EH, †PB, †SM). All but one of the previous records lie between 6 Dec and 19 Feb, with the outlier falling on 22 Sep.

Oregon's 5th **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was at Joseph, Wallowa throughout the winter (F. Conley, †PaS). Fourteen Snowy Owls were reported, roughly average for a non-invasion winter. A grand total 8 Burrowing Owls in w. Oregon was about three times the norm. In e. Washington, 2-3 Burrowing Owls per winter is normal, but a survey of Grant and Adams in mid-Dec revealed 19 (C. Conway)! Birders only reported 3-4, so perhaps such numbers are typical. Single Great Gray Owls, very rare on the westside, were on Samish I., Skagit throughout the period (D. Thompson) and at Olympia 13 Dec (D. Logan). Anna's Hummingbirds are becoming almost annual on the eastside. This season, one wintered at Kennewick, Benton (R. & N. Gregory), a pair wintered at Bend, Deschutes (DT), one was near Yakima 28 Dec—30 Jan (DG), and

another was in Yakima 10 Dec—10 Feb (DG). Unprecedented, 4 Anna's were found in *Clallam*, likely evidence of continuing range expansion (*fide* BN). A male Costa's Hummingbird was at Beaverton, *Washington* 14 Dec—Feb (B. Tollbom); there are now about 10 winter records for Oregon. A female *Selasphorus* hummingbird at Brookings, *Curry* 15 Dec was felt to be a Rufous (DM), while a male at Astoria, *Clatsop* 23 Dec was more definitively so (B. Barnett); Rufous Hummingbirds are very rare during Dec—Jan in Oregon. Four Allen's Hummingbirds at New River, *Curry* 9 Feb were a couple weeks early (TR).

Lewis's Woodpeckers were unusually numerous in the Willamette Valley, with a maximum of 7 at F.R.R. 7 Dec (DDW). A Williamson's Sapsucker at Odell L. 9 Dec provided a rare *Klamath* winter record (B. Newhouse), but 2 near LaGrande, *Union* 23 Dec and one at Trout L., *Klickitat* 28 Dec (*fide* R. Rogers) were in ne. Oregon and se. Washington, where extremely rare during winter (TB). Washington's 3rd **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Kent, *King* 30 Dec—5 Jan (†D. Swayne, †TA, vt. CW); the first two records spanned mid-Dec—mid-Feb. Two more Yellow-bellieds in Oregon added to that state's 15 records: one at Bay City 15 Dec—26 Jan (D. Lusthoff, B. Wong, J. Taylor) and another at Adrian, *Malheur* 17 Feb (TS). Eastern Washington, typically bereft of sapsuckers during winter's chill, was awash in *Sphyrapicus*, including 8 pure Red-breasteds and 2 apparent Red-breasted x Red-naped hybrids; most were recorded in Feb.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Washington's 4th **Black Phoebe** overwintered near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum*, having apparently been present since Oct (m. ob.); two of the three previous records were also during winter. Say's Phoebes are normally quite rare in e. Washington during winter until mid-Feb, when spring migrants return. This winter, 5 were found during Dec, and one was at Chelan Falls 4 Jan (DB). Seven Say's Phoebes in w. Oregon was a bit better than usual. Oregon's 2nd **Cassin's Kingbird** survived at Canby to 19 Dec (DVB). Mid-winter Loggerhead Shrikes are rare in e. Washington, so 2 wintering at FEALE (BL, NL), plus singles wintering at Columbia N.W.R., *Grant* (RH) and lower Crab Creek, *Grant* (BF), were noteworthy. Northern Shrikes were virtually absent from the westside (m. ob.), whereas numbers seemed near normal e. of the Cascades (NL).

The Region's only Blue Jays were singles at

Irrigon, *Morrow* 31 Jan (MD), Spokane throughout period (JA), and near Sunnyside, *Yakima* 1 Dec—5 Jan (K. Turley). A Western Scrub-Jay at Chelan 13 Jan was well away from any known breeding area (DB). Even more so was a bird at Chief Timothy S.P., *Asotin* 17-28 Feb (C. Swift, †D. Johnson, ph. RS) which proved to be either *woodhouseii* or *nevadae*, neither of which has been recorded in Washington previously. For a brief but useful discussion of Western Scrub-Jay races, see *Western Birds* 32: 186-187. The long-staying Black-billed Magpie, very rare in w. Oregon, survived the winter in Monmouth, *Polk* (B. Tice).

Other swallows were not present in extraordinary numbers. Five Jan reports of Tree Swallow from w. Oregon was a bit better than average, though a concentration of 20 at Port Orford, *Curry* 13 Jan was noteworthy (TR). Also, a Rough-winged Swallow at the Winchuck R., *Curry* 2 Feb (J. & L. Goodhew) and 2 Cliff Swallows at Ridgefield (DF) provided very rare mid-winter records.

A White-breasted Nuthatch was at Woodland, *Cowlitz* 31 Jan (TA); they are vagrants in w. Washington away from *Clark* and *Skamania*. Bewick's Wrens at Troy, *Wallowa* through the winter (F. Conley) and at Northrup Canyon, *Grant*, WA 11-12 Jan (MD, MLD) were well away from their usual haunts. Western Bluebirds were more numerous in w. Oregon than normal this winter (HN), and 9 near Elma, *Grays Harbor* 5 Dec provided a very rare winter record for w. Washington (TA). Only 2 Mountain Bluebirds were found on the westside this winter: Ebey's Prairie,

Island 15 Dec (*fide* B. Merrick) and near Burlington, *Skagit* 17 Feb (P. Kline, KK). Eight Northern Mockingbirds in Oregon and 4 in Washington was well above average. A Sage Thrasher along Crab Creek Rd., *Grant* 6 Feb provided Washington's first winter record in at least nine years (BF). Rare for the westside, a Bohemian Waxwing was at Mud Bay, *Thurston* 24 Dec (K. McAllister).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Single Tennessee Warblers were in Eugene, *Lane* 12-14 Dec (†DI) and Astoria, *Clatsop* 16 Dec (†MP); there are only about seven previous Oregon winter records. Nashville Warblers are very rare during winter, but 3 were found this winter: Eugene 8-30 Dec (DI), Siletz Bay, *Lincoln* 2 Feb (B. Tice), and Eugene 22 Jan—Feb (†M. Rudolph, †DI); notably, the latter bird was likely *V. r. ruficapilla*. A Yellow Warbler, extremely rare during winter, was at Central Point, *Jackson* 9 Feb (N. Barrett). Washington's 7th **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was at Vancouver, *Clark* 7-14 Dec (ph. J. Weideman); four of the previous six records were Nov—Mar. A **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Eugene 7-14 Dec furnished the Region's first winter record and only about the 9th overall (†DI). A Hermit Warbler, not annual during winter, was at Eugene 15 Jan (†DI); even rarer, a Hermit x Townsend's Warbler was there 8-14 Jan (†DI). Washington's first, and the Regions 4th, **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*albilora*) was at Twisp, *Okanogan* 8 Dec—23 Jan (D. Dunn, R. Murray, vt. SM); it likely succumbed to the attentions of a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Eleven

SA Barn Swallows irrupted into the Region this winter. Strange words these, especially during a winter with a redpoll invasion. In December, 2 Barn Swallows were found. These alone would have been noteworthy. But in early Jan, more appeared, and by mid-January, Barn Swallow reports were widespread on the westside. By the end of the month, 47 had been found in Oregon and 62 in Washington. During February, 11 more were found in Oregon and 29 in Washington. For perspective, note that only 26 Barn Swallows had been found in Washington during the previous eight winters (and notably, these were scattered throughout the winter, not concentrated in December as one might expect). Few of this winter's Barn Swallows lingered at any one spot, but impressively, a number survived early February's snow and hail. Maxima from this winter include 15, Spencer I., *Snohomish* 13 Jan (DP), 13, Skagit W.M.A. 13 Feb (TA), 10, Deep R., *Wahkiakum* 19 Jan (DD, SM, TP), and 10, Port Orford, *Curry* 13 Jan (TR). Barn Swallows also invaded n. California, where numbers first appeared in late December and early January, but few were found before then (S. Glover, pers. comm.).

"Where from?" and "why?" are questions that spring to mind. Barn Swallows are very rare during winter even as far south as *San Diego* and *Orange*, California (Unitt 1984, Hamilton and Willick 1996). The sudden appearance in mid-winter argues against these birds being holdovers from fall, an argument strengthened by Barn Swallows' appearance a week or two prior in n. California. Many Pacific Northwest storms originate from the south, but such a weather system would have had to, in theory, start in Mexico. Still, a weather anomaly seems the most likely cause.

Palm Warblers at Cape Blanco, *Curry* 29 Dec provided an extraordinary winter count (TJW). A Black-and-white Warbler, extremely rare during winter, was found dead in Portland 4 Dec (S. Hagen). Oregon's 2nd winter record of **MacGillivray's Warbler** came from Eugene 29-30 Dec (N. Bjorklund, M. Makarushka). A Common Yellowthroat at Wenatchee, *Chelan* 1 Dec provided e. Washington's first winter record (DB). Another was at Everett 10 Jan (SM); though almost annual recently, yellowthroats are very rare during winter in w. Washington. Four Wilson's Warblers added to Washington's previous 12 winter records, and 3 Wilson's were also in Oregon. **Yellow-breasted Chats** were Ashland, *Jackson* 7 Dec (S. Kies) and Florence, *Lane* 27 Dec—28 Jan (P. Shore, D. Pettey); there are only 3 previous Oregon winter records.

A **Scarlet Tanager** at Brookings, *Curry* 7-8 Dec was Oregon's 5th, the first during winter (DM). **Western Tanagers** at Blaine, *Whatcom* 30 Jan (J. Kintner), Tacoma 15-17 Feb (ph. L.A. Rose), and Tacoma 2 Feb (ph. D. Adams) added to Washington's five previous winter records, while one at Florence, *Lane* 17 Dec added to only three previous Oregon winter records (H&D Lown). Rare in w. Oregon, 2 American Tree Sparrows wintered at Baskett Slough, *Polk* (S. Maulding), and one was at Wilson St. Wildlife Area 2 Dec (S. Burgett); a tally of 100 near Enterprise, *Wallowa* 10-28 Feb provided an excellent count for e. Oregon (P. Barnardi). Surprisingly, only one was found in w. Washington: near Sequim, *Clallam* 26 Jan (BTw, SM). Chipping Sparrows are barely annual during winter in w. Oregon, so tallies of 10 near Amity, *Yamhill* late Jan—Feb (C. Karlen, RG) and 7 near Independence, *Polk* 22 Dec—5 Jan (RG) were impressive; singles near Corvallis, *Benton* 1 Dec (M. Cutler) and at Corvallis 2 Jan (HH) were also noteworthy. A Chipping near Lyle, *Klickitat* 1 Dec provided Washington's 8th winter record (RTS, MDo). Clay-colored Sparrows, now annual during winter, were at Woodland, *Cowlitz* through 22 Jan (BTw, ph. RS), Bandon, *Coos* 4 Jan (TR), and near Albany 15-17 Jan (M. Nikas, TB). A Vesper Sparrow, extremely rare during winter on the eastside, was near Pendleton, *Umatilla* 5 Jan (CC, JC). On the westside, where very rare in winter, single Vesper Sparrows were at N.S.C.B. 16 Dec (TR), Bandon, *Coos* 3 Jan (B. Fawver, J. Thomas), and Luckiamute Landing, *Polk* 9 Feb (RG). A Lark Sparrow, rare away from sw. Oregon during winter, was at Salem, *Marion* 20 Dec (RG). A **Black-throated Sparrow** at Brookings, *Curry* 24 Jan was extraordinary (DM, K. Goldwater); this species is very rare at any time on the westside, and

there is only one previous Regional record after Sep—a bird in *Whatcom* during the winter of 1987-1988. As many as 4 **Sage Sparrows** wintered at FEALE, *Benton*, providing Washington with its first Dec and Jan records (BL, NL). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** at White City, *Jackson* 15 Dec provided the Region's 5th winter record. Very rare during winter in e. Washington, lone Savannah Sparrows were at Kennewick, *Benton* 29 Dec (DR) and Columbia N.W.R., *Grant* 19 Jan (BF).

The status of Fox Sparrow races is still being worked out in the Region. Members of the Slate-colored group were at Richland, *Benton* 28 Dec—Feb (RF, BL, NL, BW), Everett 10 Jan (vt. SM), Blynn, *Clallam* 26 Jan (BTw, SM), and Edmonds, *Snohomish* 17 Feb (†DD); this taxon appears to be an uncommon migrant and very rare winterer in se. Washington and apparently a very rare migrant and winterer in the w. Washington lowlands, making this winter's sightings even more noteworthy. Well-documented Red Fox Sparrows were at Canby, *Clackamas* 17 Jan. (†D. van den Broek, †I. Thomlinson) and Skinner's Butte, *Lane* 27 Feb (†DI); this taxon seems to be rare but annual in Oregon and very rare in Washington. Swamp Sparrow numbers remained low, with 5 in w. Washington and about 8 in Oregon; however, one at McNary N.W.R., *Walla Walla* 1 Jan provided an extremely rare eastside winter record (CC, JC). Irons undertook the arduous task of tallying Oregon's winter White-throated Sparrows, with a final count of 176, about 90% of which were on the westside; Irons notes that this number reflects a decade-plus-long trend of increasing numbers. The Oregon maximum was 15 at Millacoma Marsh, *Coos* throughout the period (TR), and the Washington maximum was a state record 9 near Monroe, *Snohomish* 1 Jan (SM, DD). Geier likewise counted Oregon's Harris's Sparrows, normally not a difficult task, and arrived at 23 on the eastside and 15 on the westside, with a maximum of 5 at Vale, *Malheur* in early Feb (E. Marple); this total is two to three times normal. In Washington, 13 eastside and 3 westside Harris's was also above normal. A *pugetensis* White-crowned Sparrow was at McNary N.W.R., *Walla Walla* 24 Jan (SM, MD, NL, TA); this race is probably very rare in far e. Washington.

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** near the Elwha R. mouth, *Clallam* 20 Dec provided Washington's 2nd winter record (ph. B. Davies), while singles at Medford, *Jackson* 31 Dec (N. Barrett) and Seaside, *Clatsop* 10 Jan (S. Warner, MP) added to about four previous Oregon winter records. A Black-headed Grosbeak at Boring, *Clackamas* was almost as

rare (D. Bradshaw). An ad. male **Painted Bunting** in Seattle 10 Feb into Mar was the first for Washington (L. Hotelling, V.B. Brede, R. Lawson, ph. KA, †C. Kahle), and debate regarding its origins will likely provide excellent entertainment at the next W.B.R.C. meeting; Oregon has five records, two of which were ad. males, and one of which was from winter. **Dickcissels** at White City, *Jackson* 1 Dec (J. Hostick) and Malheur 9 Dec (DE) added to nine previous Oregon records, only two of which were during winter.

Four Tricolored Blackbirds at Shillapoo Bottoms, *Clark* 2-20 Feb provided w. Washington's 2nd record (vt. SM, DD, RTS). Rusty Blackbirds, rare but regular in Washington, included 2 at Othello, *Adams* 2 Dec (BF) and one at W.W.R.D. 12 Dec (PtS, RS). Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds near Astoria, *Clatsop* 9-18 Feb provided a rare record for the outer coast (MP, TT). Five Great-tailed Grackles were at Ontario, *Malheur* 26 Dec (F&M Zeilemaker), with 4 remaining through 16 Feb (D. Heyerly, A. Esche). Two **Orchard Orioles** at Brookings, *Curry* 15 Dec—Feb added to only about six previous Oregon records, one of which comes from Brookings during winter (DM). Bullock's Orioles are very rare during winter, so one at Seaside, *Clatsop* 23 Dec—10 Jan was noteworthy (S. Warner). A **Brambling** at Burns, *Harney* 30 Dec—Feb added to eight previous Oregon records (J. Green, L. Hammond), while one at Bridgeport, *Douglas* 23 Dec added to 13 prior Washington records (†MD, MLD). A Purple Finch in N. Richland, *Benton* 26 Jan made for a rare record for far e. Washington (C. Simonen), while a Cassin's Finch near Eugene, *Lane* 30 Dec provided a very rare lowland westside record (DI, T. Love). Pine Grosbeaks were unusually evident in Washington, with maxima of 55 near Winthrop, *Okanogan* 22 Dec (ST, SM, MB, RTS) and 51 at Cle Elum, *Kittitas* 26 Jan (A. Grenon, MDo); up to 4 were at Skagit W.M.A. 15 Dec—Feb (A. Knue, MDo), providing a very rare lowland westside record. Twenty-five White-winged Crossbills at Mt. Spokane during Jan constituted the season's lone report (M. Vial, R. Dexter).

A flock of 100+ Lesser Goldfinches between Dallesport and Maryhill, *Klickitat*, 31 Dec set a new Washington record and provided evidence for continued growth of Washington's still relatively local population (BTw).

Addendum

A **Red-necked Stint** at Siltcoos Beach, *Lane* 6 Sep 2001 added to six previous Oregon records, all of which were Jun—Aug († D. Pettey). A Rose-breasted

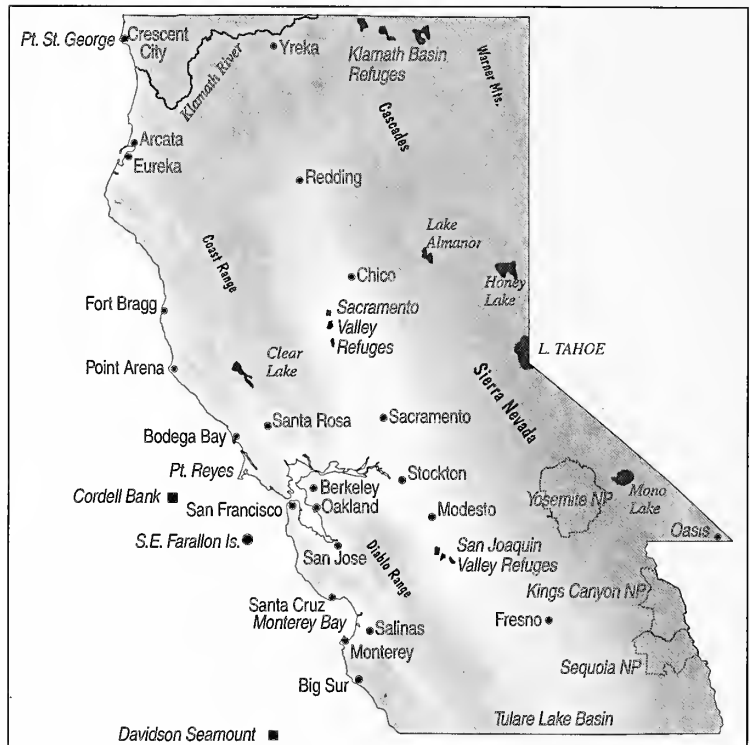
Middle Pacific Coast

SA Redpolls irrupted in a fashion not seen in over a decade. More than 7100 Commons were reported Regionwide, including 800+ in w. Washington and over 350 in Oregon. On the eastside, greater than 90% were n. of 47° 00' N, and on the westside, over 95% were from Seattle north, with virtually none w. of the Puget Sound. Western Oregon records included 6 at Portland throughout the winter (TS), while in e. Oregon, the most southerly records involved a single bird at Chiloquin, *Klamath* 1 Dec (W. Stone) and 15 at Malheur 14 Jan—Feb (CM, MM). Numbers peaked in late Dec and were sustained into mid-Feb on the westside and through Feb in the east. Maxima included 2000, near Blue L., *Grant* in mid-Feb (D. Kuehn) and 1300 near Usk, *Pend Oreille* 24 Feb (M. Moskwik).

Hoary Redpolls were also widely reported, with 6 convincingly documented: Cle Elum, *Kittitas* in early Jan (ph. C. Thoreen), Ellensburg, *Kittitas* 3 Jan (†S. Downes), Electric City, *Grant* 5-20 Jan (ph RS, †PtS), Wenatchee, *Chelan* 19 Jan (†DB); Davenport, *Lincoln* 27 Jan (†AS, DG), and Elk, *Spokane* 26-27 Jan (†M. Moskwik). There are only approximately 13 prior Washington records.

Grosbeak from Sammamish, *King* 8-9 Jun 2001 was inadvertently left off of last summer's tally (ph. M Dossett).

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Kevin Aanerud, Jim Acton, Eric Anderson, Tom Aversa, Phil Bartley, David Beaudette, Trent Bray, Wilson Cady, Kathy Castelein, Craig Corder, Judy Corder, Merry Lynn Denny, Mike Denny, Don DeWitt (DDW), Michael Donahue (MDo), Dennis Duffy, **Joe Engler** (*Clark*), Duncan Evered, Ruth Fischer, Bob Flores, Dan Friesz, Roy Gerig, **Denny Granstrand** (*Yakima*), Hendrik Herlyn, Randy Hill, Eugene Hunn, David Irons, Kraig Kemper, **Bill LaFramboise** (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy LaFramboise, David Lauten, **Tom Mickel** (*Lane*), Craig Miller, Marilyn Miller, Don Munson, **Harry Nehls** (OR), Vic Nelson, **Bob Norton** (Olympic Pen.), Kimdel Owen, Michael Patterson, Dennis Paulson, Ted Peterson, Phil Pickering, Dennis Rockwell, Tim Rodenkirk, **Russell Rogers** (WA), Ryan T. Shaw (RTS), Tim Shelmerdine, **Dan Stephens** (*Chelan*), Andy Stepniewski, Ellen Stepniewski, Patrick Sullivan (PtS), Paul Sullivan (PaS), Ruth Sullivan, Sam Terry, Todd Thornton, Greg Toffic, David Tracy, Bill Tweit (BTw), D. van den Broek (DVB), Terry J. Wahl, Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright.



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The winter season started out wet, with substantial rainfall over much of the Region in December. The next two months were drier, however, and late February was described as "balmy" in some areas. Multiple wintering Emperor Geese were unusual but part of a phenomenon that spanned the west coast from Oregon to Santa Rosa Island in southern California. A large movement of Common Redpolls into regions to the north eventually led to California's first record in twenty years; remarkably this bird did not show up in the extreme northeast of the state, but at a backyard feeder in the northern Central Valley! Another widespread phenomenon was an unprecedented number of Barn Swallows in December and early January. Where these birds came from and where they were going remains a mystery. As in 1999, large numbers of piscivorous species including grebes, pelicans, cormorants, and gulls were inland at Clear Lake in Lake County during the period. Over 50,000 birds were feeding on unusual concentrations of introduced fish, resulting in a notable display of opportunistic foraging.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California Bird Records Committee); C.V. (Central Valley); F.C.B. (Flood Control Basin); F.I. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); N.S. (National Seashore); R.P. (Regional Park); R.S. (Regional Shoreline); S.B. (State Beach); S.F. (San Francisco); S.R. (State Reserve); S.R.A. (State Recreation Area); W.A. (Wildlife Area).

Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are normally not published. Observers wishing C.B.R.C. review should also send their documentation to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, San Diego CA 91933. Banded birds on F.I. should also be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory; those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to Big Sur Ornithology Lab of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS

A Red-throated Loon found on Camanche Res. 29 Dec was noted as the first for *Calaveras* (JRow, ElW). Annual in recent winters in Monterey Bay, *Monterey*, an ad. Yellow-billed Loon was seen 27 Nov—24 Mar+ (Evelyn Meyers, JMD, m. ob.). High counts of Western (24,425) and Clark's (2100) grebes at Clear L., *Lake* 15 & 18 Dec, respectively, were feeding on concentrations of introduced Threadfin Shad and Silverside (JRW, et al.). Rare away from the immediate coast, 2 Red-necked Grebes were at Whiskeytown L., *Shasta* 4-7 Jan (WOv, BED, JSL, JCS et al., ph.), with one continuing through 17 Feb (LkC); one was at L. Mendocino, *Mendocino* 20 Jan (MAM, Gary & Judy Maddox); and one found 25 Nov at Shoreline L., *Santa Clara* remained through 6 Jan (JAC).

"Al," the Laysan Albatross, returned to Pt. Arena, *Mendocino* for the 7th consecutive winter. As pointed out by RJK, this is probably the best location in North America to view this species from land. A Manx Shearwater was on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 19 Jan (DLSh, LkC et al.). The concentrations of introduced fish at Clear L., *Lake* attracted large numbers of American White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants, with 468 and 749 (a record for *Lake*), respectively, 15 Dec (JRW et al.).

EGRETS THROUGH DUCKS

Among few coastal Cattle Egret reports, 64 birds along Ludwig Road, *Sonoma* 15 Dec was a high count for recent winters (DN, Rhio Reigh). The only coastal White-faced Ibis reported was at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 20 Feb, the first Feb record for that location (RJR).

Three Emperor Geese overwintered in the Region: one in Arcata, *Humboldt* 7 Jan—28

Mar+ (KGR, DFX, JCP, m. ob.), a cooperative ad. at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 23 Dec—19 Mar+ (Dave DeSante, ph. LkC, ph. RS, m. ob.), and an ad. at F.I. 25 Dec—1 Mar+ (Bob Wilkerson, m. ob.). Additional reports from Oregon and s. California indicate our birds were part of a broader incursion. (No details were received for up to 3 more birds reported to the Arcata Bird Box from *Del Norte* 29 Dec—2 Jan.) A remarkable 5000 Aleutian Canada Geese were reported flying to an evening roost at the sw. corner of Staten I., *San Joaquin* 9 Dec (†LLu, CLu); this may be one third of the world population of this subspecies. Two ad. Trumpeter Swans were reported from the Aloha Duck Club n. of Marysville, *Yuba* 18 Dec (†AEn), another ad. was found at Tule Lake N.W.R., *Siskiyou* 30 Dec (†MDd, Jesse Conklin), and one was reported without details from the Cosumnes River Preserve, *Sacramento* 10 Jan (JTr). A new *Shasta* high count of 2500 Tundra Swans was tallied near McArthur 4 Jan (BY, CY); also notable were 18 at Middletown, *Lake* 11 Jan (Darlene Hecomovich). An ad. *Bewick's Swan* observed among hundreds of Tundra Swans at Humboldt Bay N.W.R. 15 Jan—3 Feb was a first for *Humboldt* (†DFx, m. ob.). Cross-country ski coverage of remote portions of L. Almanor, *Plumas* during a C.B.C. 19 Dec turned up an ad. *Whooper Swan* at the mouth of Bailey Cr. (†Colin Dillingham), a county first.

Brewer's Ducks, or Gadwall x Mallard hybrids, were reported from Freshwater Corners, *Humboldt* 14 Feb (SPa) and at the Palo Alto F.C.B., *Santa Clara* 1 Dec—7 Jan (†MMR, MJM). Eurasian Wigeon were widely reported, often in larger than normal numbers, as evidenced by 14 males on South Humboldt Bay 4 Jan (KGR, MWa), a record high count for *Humboldt*, and 9 on a single salt pond in Mountain View, *Santa Clara* 27 Jan (MMR). Of 7 Common Teal reported, 2 were in *Humboldt*, 4 were along the edge of S.F. Bay in *Contra Costa*, *Alameda*, and *Santa Clara*, and a single bird was inland at the Vic Fazio Yolo W.A., *Yolo* 3 Feb (LLu, CLu). Redheads were also found in larger than normal numbers, with 300 on South Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* 4 Jan (KGR, MWa) and 213 on Salt Pond A10 in Alviso 16 Dec (MMR et al.) being notable high counts, the latter eclipsing *Santa Clara's* previous high of 150 from 16 years ago. Eleven of the 13 reported Tufted Ducks were coastal, including *Santa Cruz's* 2nd at Westlake Pond 15 Dec—15 Mar+ (Kumaran Arul, m. ob.); the 2 inland birds were *Yolo's* 2nd at the Vic Fazio Yolo W.A. 20 Jan (MP, JCS) and a likely returning ad. male at Lucerne, *Lake* 11 Jan—19 Feb (DvW). Record numbers of Harlequin Ducks graced

the *Mendocino* coast, with a high count of 25 at Glass Beach 1 Jan (Debbie Gallagher, DT, m. ob.). Also of note was a single male flying n. off Coyote Pt. 27 Jan (Steve Shunk), providing the 3rd bayside record for *San Mateo*, on the heels of last season's report from the same location. Notable Barrow's Goldeneyes included 3 birds at the Loyalton Sewage Ponds 22 Feb (the first record for *Sierra*; MMC), an ad. male at the Hollister Sewage Ponds (*San Benito's* 3rd, EP), and an ad. male at the Mad R. estuary 11-15 Dec (the first record for *Humboldt* in eight years; DFX, JCP, m. ob.).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An imm. Broad-winged Hawk heading se. over Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 13 Jan was rare in winter (RSTh). Three Swainson's Hawks near Byron, *Contra Costa* 27 Dec (SAG) included a light-morph individual, unusual for birds wintering in the San Joaquin—Sacramento R. Delta. An imm. gray-morph Gyrfalcon photographed along Flannery Road w. of Hwy 113, *Solano* 1 Dec (Stefanie Arthur, ph. Siobhan Ruck) was reported by others until 15 Dec (HCo), although we have received no documentation for these later sightings, at least some of which may pertain to the many Prairie Falcons in the area.

At least 2 *Yellow Rails* captured and photographed during nocturnal trapping of Ring-necked Pheasants in a closed area of Grizzly I. 10 Jan—12 Feb (†Conrad Jones, Chad Fien, †RLCL, ph. ABtt) were the first for *Solano* since 1915. Up to 5 Common Moorhens apparently wintered 1.5 mi ne. of Grenada, *Siskiyou* 20 Dec—11 Feb, despite their lake being frozen for several days (RE). Second-hand reports of last season's *Demoiselle Crane* were received from *San Joaquin* for 17-20 Jan and 18 Feb. A count of 300 Sandhill Cranes at the Holland Tract near Knightsen 2 Dec was a record high for *Contra Costa* (SAG).

Good numbers of Black Oystercatchers and Surfbirds continued throughout the period on South S.F. Bay. Up to 7 of each were at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* in Feb (RJR), and 10 Black Oystercatchers were found at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 16 Dec (RSTh), the highest count ever for that location. The San Jose C.B.C. produced a late juv. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Alviso, *Santa Clara* 16 Dec (†MJM). It was seen by a lucky few through 27 Dec but not thereafter. This bird was within a half km of where the only other "winter" record for the Region was found, 17 Nov 1985—5 Jan 1986. Stilt Sandpipers apparently wintered again at the Merced N.W.R., *Merced* 2-24 Feb (†FGB et al.), with 2 birds seen together 21 Feb. Ruffs overwintered in *Sonoma* and *Santa Clara*. Less



A remarkable backyard bird was this Common Redpoll (right) that kept company with American Goldfinches in the northern Central Valley near Redding, Shasta County, California 3-17 February 2002. Part of a broader redpoll invasion continent-wide, this individual was the first in California in 20 years. Photograph by Leslie Lieurance.

expected was another wintering bird inland at the Vic Fazio Yolo W.A., *Yolo* 1-26 Feb (KNN, m. ob.). Reports of one or 2 in *Humboldt* 11-15 Feb (MWa, KGR, m. ob.) and one in *San Mateo* 2 Feb (RSTh) are harder to characterize given their brief stays.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

Winter brought few unusual larids and alcids to the Region. Clear L. hosted record numbers for *Lake* of wintering Glaucous-winged (12) and Herring (4000) Gulls, as well as high numbers of California (24,000), Bonaparte's (411), and Thayer's (4) Gulls (JRW). A second-winter Laughing Gull at Redding's Kutras L. 21-24 Dec was the first for *Shasta* (Joelle Buffa, Clyde Morris, †BY, m. ob., ph.). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull returned for a 5th winter to L. Cunningham, *Santa Clara* 16 Dec—22 Mar (MJM, Mary Murphy, ph. MMR, m. ob.). Three pairs of Heermann's Gulls were on territory at Seaside, *Monterey*, as early as 13 Feb (DR). This is the 4th year for this colony, the only one in California (for more details see Roberson et al. 2001. *N.A.B.* 55: 375). Unusual inland Mew Gulls included two *Shasta* reports of perhaps the same bird 3 Jan at Kutras L. (CY, BY, m. ob.) and 4 Jan at Whiskeytown L. (JSL, JCS), and *Yuba's* first at Ellis L. in Marysville 16-18 Dec+ (TDM, BWb). A *Shasta* high count of 7 Thayer's Gulls was found 4 Jan at Whiskeytown L. and Kutras L. (JSL, JCS). Another remained at the Lewiston Fish Hatchery, *Trinity* 2 Nov—13 Jan (JSL et al.). Up to 3 Elegant Terns between Seacliff S. B. and Capitola, *Santa Cruz* 15-30 Dec were unusually late (CKf, DLSu). Black Skimmers wintered again on S. F. Bay at Charleston

Slough, *Santa Clara*; a high of 22 on 6 Dec (MMR) declined to 14 by late Feb (WGB).

A record-high 55 Marbled Murrelets were between Santa Cruz and Capitola, *Santa Cruz* 15 Dec (DLSu). Rare in winter, Pigeon Guillemots were at Laguna Pt., *Mendocino* 4 Jan (DT) and Burlingame, *San Mateo* 10 Dec (disabled imm.; Judy Spitler); the latter was also unusual inside S.F. Bay. A regionally rare Horned Puffin was off Pt. Pinos, *Monterey* 13 Jan (SFB, RT).

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

A White-winged Dove at Natural Bridges S.B., *Santa Cruz* 2 Feb—12 Mar provided a rare winter record for the Region (†AME, ph. William T. Park et al.). Obviously far from suitable habitat, a Northern Saw-whet Owl wintered on F.I. for the first time (PP). A Costa's Hummingbird at a feeder at Big Springs 10 Feb (Joey Russell) was *Siskiyou's* earliest by a month. A somewhat controversial hummingbird at *Santa Cruz* 18 Dec—16 Jan was likely an ad. male Costa's, though the possibility of hybridization was difficult to rule out (†DR, RC, Madeline Spencer et al.). A Belted Kingfisher near Eureka, *Humboldt* 10 Dec would probably not elicit comment except that it was captured by a Great Blue Heron (GSL)! Of 8 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, all were coastal except one at El Macero Country Club, *Yolo* 23 Dec—13 Jan (Glen and Dylan Holstein et al.). Four Red-naped Sapsuckers were found away from the Great Basin after 15 Dec, 3 of them coastal and the other at Weaver Cr. 28 Dec—4 Jan (*Trinity's* 6th; BAP; JSL, JCS). Though White-headed Woodpeckers are resident farther n. in the Coast Ranges of *Colusa*, *Glenn*,

and *Lake*, one at L. Solano 15 Dec was the first for *Solano* (Jack Young).

Unusual wintering flycatchers were notably scarce this winter. *Empidonax* flycatchers were represented by single Hammond's Flycatchers at Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento* 19 Jan (JTr) and Pt. Reyes Station, *Marin* 31 Jan—2 Feb (JGE, ph. RS); and by single "Western" Flycatchers were at Foster City, *San Mateo* to 15 Dec (SEM), Inverness, *Marin* 19-23 Dec (RS), and Cosumnes R. Preserve 10 Jan (JTr). Eastern Phoebe were near Ferndale 30 Dec (*Humboldt's* 7th; GAB, EE, Gretchen Ziegler) and at Merced N.W.R., *Merced* 20-31 Jan+ (†Alex Cruz, Jr. et al.). A male Vermilion Flycatcher found by golf course employees at Tulare, *Tulare* in early Feb was last seen 22 Feb (Jeff and Jeannie Wheaton, KiK), and last year's pair at Lemoore Gun Club, *Kings* was present 14-17 Feb (JSy, Mark Stacy).

A Dusky-capped Flycatcher at L. Merritt 16 Dec—20 Jan (LJP, Neil Whitehouse, m. ob.) was a first for *Alameda* and the first ever found in the Region away from the immediate coast. A Tropical Kingbird at Golden Gate Park, S.F., the only one reported this winter, was still present 20 Mar (m. ob.). *San Mateo's* Thick-billed Kingbird did not reappear for its 4th winter. The only Northern Shrike recorded away from the Great Basin was at Fay Slough W.A., *Humboldt* 16 Jan (DFx). The only unusual vireos were single Cassin's at Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 16 Dec (†JWtg, Dennis Paulson) and Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma* in "early Jan" (RLeb) and a "Solitary" at Eureka, *Humboldt* 9 Jan (RHw).

SWALLOWS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Violet-green Swallows are found annually in winter south of S.F. Bay, but they are much rarer to the north, as illustrated by 7 in *Napa* 1 Jan (BDP, Mary Scheidt), the first for the Angwin C.B.C. since 1978. Northern Rough-winged Swallows are very rare in winter, so a total of three sightings was a surprise: 2 at Carmel Valley Ranch, *Monterey* 29 Dec (KiK); one at Zmudowski S.B., *Monterey* 2 Jan (LHg); and 2 at Sunset S.B., *Santa Cruz* 2 Jan (DLSu). Not to be outdone, a Cliff Swallow at Lewiston L., *Trinity* 13 Jan (HG, DCR) was one of the few ever detected in the Region in winter and was quite far north.

A Black-capped Chickadee at Hoopa, *Humboldt* 22 Dec (JTz) was the first for the Willow Creek C.B.C. and apparently for the Trinity R. corridor. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee put in a rare appearance on the C.V. floor at Davis, *Yolo* 28 Feb (CIH). Normally sedentary Oak Titmice were out of range at Candlestick S.R.A., *San Francisco* 10 Dec—6

SA The passerine event of the season was an invasion of **Barn Swallows**, stretching primarily from mid-Dec into Jan, the likes of which is unprecedented in the 48-year history of our notebooks. Though it is impossible to gauge the number of birds involved accurately, a conservative estimate would suggest that at least 200 birds were detected. It is clear that this was predominantly a coastal phenomenon, as we have received reports from 10 of 11 coastal counties (*Del Norte* not reporting), as well as four of the counties around S.F. Bay, while there were only two reports of 3 birds from the C.V. There were no reports from the mountain or Great Basin areas.

The first reports came from the n. coast, where 3 birds were found 11 Dec and 11 birds were present 15 Dec at the Arcata Marsh Project, *Humboldt* (JTz). Similar numbers were there through at least 5 Jan but numbers quickly dwindled thereafter. Several S.F. Bay/Monterey Bay counties recorded birds in mid-Dec, but numbers were modest, with just one to 5 birds at any given location. At the s. edge of the Region, 13 birds were found on *Monterey's* Monterey Peninsula C.B.C. 29 Dec, and 86+ birds in several groups were near Moss Landing, *Monterey/Santa Cruz* 1 Jan. As with *Humboldt*, numbers declined quickly and none were noted after 8 Jan. On 20 Jan there were 44 at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* (Sheila Junge, Peter Dramer), the largest winter flock ever recorded in the Region. The last birds reported prior to the arrival of the usual spring migrants were 2 birds at Eureka, *Humboldt* 2 Feb (EE).

Opinions differ sharply on the origin of these birds. Three obvious possibilities are that these were lingering southbound migrants, wintering birds, or very early northbound migrants. Since the Oregon/Washington influx didn't occur until Jan (Steve Mlodinow, pers. comm.) and the B.C. influx not until Feb (Don Cecile, pers. comm.), it seems almost certain that those birds came through California on their way north. Could it be that the earlier, modest numbers of mid-Dec were composed of wintering and/or southbound birds, while the later, larger flocks, which dispersed quickly, pushed into the Pacific Northwest? If these birds were truly northbound, why would so many birds be heading north so early? And why were only Barn Swallows involved rather than other swallows or passerines?

Feb (ADeM) and Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 14 Feb (RJR). A Northern Mockingbird feasting on fermented apples in Loyalton, *Sierra* 29 Jan (MMC) was out of place in winter. First winter records of Sage Thrasher were located in *Shasta* 15 Dec (near McArthur; Dave Dahnke), S.F. 22 Jan (Mt. Davidson; †PSa), and *San Mateo* 16 Dec—29 Mar (Montara; AJ, m. ob.); another was rare in *Yuba* 18 Dec (Loma Rica Rd., †BWB). The only Bohemian Waxwings were along Dechambeau Cr., *Mono* 1-3 Jan (Joel Ellis, KNN).

WARBLERS

This season, in a rather "average" winter for lingering insectivores, we received reports of 31 Nashville Warblers, 22 Palms, 11 Tennessees, 9 Yellows, 11 Black-and-whites, 5 Wilson's, 3 Northern Waterthrush, and 2 American Redstarts (incomplete, with not all C.B.C. data included). Among the Yellow Warblers was one wintering in the interior n. to Clear L., *Lake* 15 Dec (JRW). There were single reports of Virginia's (29 Dec in Pacific Grove, *Monterey*, KNN), Lucy's (16-29 Dec in Pacific Grove; †JWtg), and MacGillivray's (8 Dec along Matadero Cr., *Santa Clara*; Dick Stovel). More unexpected were male Black-throated Blue Warblers at Ferndale, *Humboldt* 30 Dec—4 Jan (GSL, m. ob.), at Halfmoon Bay,

San Mateo 8 Dec (RSTh), and in a Santa Cruz backyard 28 Nov—15 Mar (Madeline Spencer, m. ob.); details of another rumored male in *Tulare* were not sent to us. A Northern Parula in Burlingame 24 Feb was the first winter record for *San Mateo* (DLSH), but it was eclipsed by C.V. winterers at Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento* 23 Dec—22 Jan (Karl Mize, JTr, m. ob.) and near Lodi, *San Joaquin* 29 Dec—20 Feb+ (DGY et al.).

TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

It was a good winter for tanagers, with 10+ Westerns (including 2 in Ukiah, *Mendocino* 15 Dec; CEV) and 8 Summers scattered from *Marin* to *Monterey*, often in flowering *Eucalyptus* (RS, RSTh, DLSu, m. ob.) (A claim of Scarlet Tanager in *Santa Cruz* in Dec could not be confirmed; our Region's latest fall record is 28 Nov 1999 in *Marin*.)

A Green-tailed Towhee wintering along Coyote Cr., *San Jose* 21 Dec—10 Mar (Sherry Hudson, Gina Barton, m. ob.) was likely the same as one present at this locale Jan—Mar 2000 and perhaps the same as one that wintered here in 1994 and 1995. An American Tree Sparrow in Shasta Valley, *Siskiyou* 31 Jan (RE) was just the 3rd ever there; the species winters more regularly in the Great Basin of our extreme northeast. Any *Spizella* is rare here in

winter; this year produced two reports of Chipping Sparrows in Dec (*Contra Costa* and *Monterey*; do these ever remain the entire winter?) and 2 Clay-colored, including one in Lafayette, *Contra Costa* 6 Jan—Feb (Alice Holmes, †SAG). Vesper Sparrows winter annually in the C.V. and locally in drier w. valleys, but one on the coast at Port Sonoma, *Sonoma* 20 Jan—11 Feb was a surprise (LHg, ph. RS, m. ob.). Sage Sparrows have likely been overlooked in winter in *Mono*; 8 were found around Mono L. 1 Jan (PJM et al.). It is apparent that some Grasshopper Sparrows winter in the open bleak grasslands where the species also nests; further confirmation came this year from *Santa Cruz*, *Santa Clara*, and *Placer* (Tonya Haff, Roger Wolfe, BDW et al.). Could these sparrows be resident?

Two Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows on Elkhorn Slough 1-26 Jan (Michelle Scott, Bill Davis, ph. DR, m. ob.) were wintering in tidal pickleweed, the first time this species has done so in *Monterey*. Nelson's Sharp-taileds at more traditional wintering sites were at Palo Alto, *Santa Clara* 1 Jan (Chris Conard, Kimya Lambert) and Arcata, *Humboldt* 15 Dec (†DFx, JCP). Harris's Sparrows winter annually in the Great Basin of ne. California, but 7 others in seven counties westward were a good showing, including *Mendocino's* 3rd at Talmage 24 Dec—16 Feb (Cheryl & Geoff Heineken, GEC), *Sierra's* 4th in Sierra Valley 31 Dec (Martin Myers), and a C.V. rarity at Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento* 15 Dec+ (JTr, EDG, m. ob.). Near the coast were a returning bird in Millbrae, *San Mateo* 19 Nov+ (Joe Macho) and one at Ft. Ord, *Monterey* 16-25 Jan (David Styer). Some 40 Lapland Longspurs on the Fall River Mills C.B.C. 15 Dec (WOv) made for the largest flock ever in *Shasta*; one in Sierra Valley 15 Dec (Paul Hardy et al.) was quite a find in *Plumas*. Another 20 Laplands wintered at Mad R. Slough W.A. (MWa, JTz). A wandering Snow Bunting visited Shasta Valley N.W.R., *Siskiyou* 8 Jan (†Bob Smith).

GROSBEAKS THROUGH FINCHES

Six Rose-breasted and 2 Black-headed Grosbeaks were a typical winter complement. A Common Grackle frequented a Safeway parking lot in Guerneville 23 Dec—25 Feb (†PP, ph. RS, †MWE, m. ob.), the 2nd ever in *Sonoma*. A compilation of wintering (=resident) Great-tailed Grackles (by JHG) tallied about 170 in five C.V. counties and about 20 in coastal counties from *Marin* to *Monterey*. A male Orchard Oriole wintered at Natural Bridges S.B., *Santa Cruz* 22 Jan+ (Michelle Scott, Steve Gerow, m. ob.). Single Hooded Orioles appeared as far n. as Ft. Bragg,

Meudocino 23 Jan (Dave Jensen, DT) and Redding, *Shasta* 22 Jan (Bea & Bob Currie). Among the 14 wintering Bullock's reported was a young male that arrived on F.I. 4 Feb and started an unprecedented pre-alternate molt there (PP). A Scott's Oriole in Golden Gate Park 22 Dec—20 Mar (†ASH, †JWtg, m. ob.) was only the 2nd S.F. City record.

Perhaps the landbird of the winter was a **Common Redpoll** at a feeder in Anderson, *Shasta* 3-17 Feb (Barbara Peck, BED, ph. LkC, †Mike San Miguel, m. ob.). Except for a controversial late May specimen in coastal *Humboldt*, all prior redpolls in California had been in the Great Basin region of the extreme northeast. This C.V. occurrence was unprecedented and at about the same latitude as the previous southernmost record at Eagle L., *Lassen*, a flock in Nov—Dec 1899. Goldfinches lingering farther n. than usual were 4 Lessers at Mono City, *Mono* 15 Feb (KNN) and a smattering of Lawrence's, including at Pillar Pt. Harbor, *San Mateo* 15 Dec (Al DeMartini) and males at backyard feeders in San Ramon, *Contra Costa* 10-19 Jan (Lauri English) and Loomis, *Placer* 15 Jan (EP).

Corrigenda

Short-eared Owls occasionally breed along the *San Mateo* shore of S.F. Bay; thus a road-killed owl at Año Nuevo 18 Jul 2000 (*N.A.B.* 55: 479) was unusual in summer for the coastal locale, not for the county. A Costa's Hummingbird in *Mono* 29 May 2001 was mistakenly published as a Calliope Hummingbird (*N.A.B.* 55: 353). We thank PJM for these corrections.

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Southern Pacific Coast



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Although some precipitation fell in the early part of the season, it turned out to be one of the driest winters on record in southern California. Since most winter birding activities

in the Region (and, hence, records of significance) are concentrated in landscaped urban and suburban areas or agricultural regions with a great deal of imported water, such drought conditions do not have clear effects on our wintering avifauna; they are likely, however, to be felt in upcoming spring migration and nesting seasons. This winter saw some significant seabird and waterbird records, including a Short-tailed Albatross, at least two Masked Boobies, an Emperor Goose, and a probable Band-tailed Gull. There were no major incursions of landbirds, and it was a fairly standard winter for over-wintering flycatchers, warblers, vireos, and the like. Of note among landbirds was California's first winter season Smith's Longspur.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); E.A.F.B. (Edwards Air Force Base, se. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley National Monument, Inyo); G.H.P. (Galileo Hill Park in extreme e. Kern); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.B.C.M. (San Bernadino County Museum); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara River Estuary near Ventura, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.C.G.P. (Ventura County Game Preserve near Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura). Because virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon on Wiest L. near Brawley, Imperial 20 Dec (LWC) was inland. Up to 2 Red-necked Grebes on L. Perris, Riverside 12 Jan—24 Feb (DPe) were not only far s. but also inland, where considered accidental; the only coastal record came Pt. Mugu, Ventura 12-17 Feb (PR).

A Short-tailed Albatross was photographed near Santa Barbara I. 19 Feb—22 Mar (JA). A Manx Shearwater, rarely reported in s. California waters, was photographed off the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Los Angeles 23 Feb (TMCg).

A subad. Masked Booby was well photographed in La Jolla, San Diego 30 Dec—10 Jan (MBu), another was caught in Corona del Mar, Orange 12 Jan (ph. in *Orange County Register*; taken to a rehabilitation center), and a third (same bird as in La Jolla?) was at Dana Point, Orange 9 Feb—7 Mar+ (CM). An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird photographed over La Jolla 4 Jan (TMCg, SW, AM) was one of a very few found in California in winter.

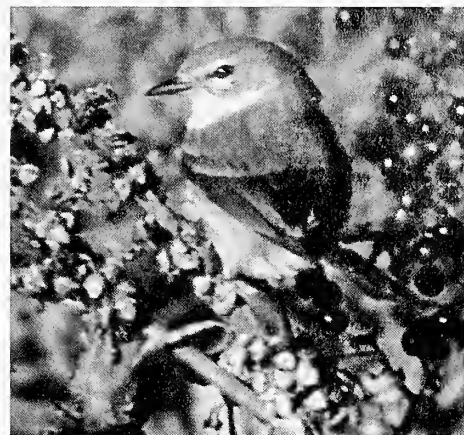
The Tricolored Heron at Bolsa Chica, Orange remained through 9 Dec (ES), and an imm. at the Tijuana R. mouth, San Diego 29 Dec (GMcC) was the only other one reported. The Reddish Egret at Point Mugu, Ventura remained through the end of the period (WW), single birds remained along the coast of San Diego from the fall on Batiquitos Lagoon through 12 Dec (MBa) and at the Tijuana R. mouth through 23 Dec (RBl), 2 were at the San Diego R. mouth through the end of the period (MUE), and another was on San Diego's Mission Bay 29 Dec (PZ); at least 2 inland near Blythe, Riverside 5-10 Jan (RHl) were on the Colorado R., where very few have been found. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

in La Jolla 6 Dec (CN) was probably the bird that has been frequenting this area for the past 20 years. A Wood Stork near Escondido, San Diego 29 Dec (KW) was one of 2 that arrived here in 1980.

An Emperor Goose photographed at Becher's Bay on Santa Rosa I. 16 Jan—6 Mar (SMacG) established the 2nd record s. of *San Luis Obispo*. Three Tundra Swans at Blythe 26 Dec (RHl) and another in flight over s. San Diego Bay 16 Feb (DPa) were unusually far south. A Common Teal, rare in s. California, was at Upper Newport Bay, Orange 30 Dec—12 Jan (JW). A male Tufted Duck on L. Perris 17 Jan—27 Feb (BP) was undoubtedly the same bird present here last winter. A male Harlequin Duck at Arroyo Laguna, San Luis Obispo 13-18 Jan (KC) was believed to be the same bird present here last winter, and the male found on Mission Bay in San Diego 28 Oct was still present at the end of the period (RBl). A Surf Scoter on the Salton Sea at Salt Creek S.B. 21 Jan (CMcG) and a White-winged Scoter on Tinemaha Res., Inyo 20 Nov—27 Jan (JLD) were the only scoters found inland. A Long-tailed Duck at S.E.S.S. 1 Dec (GMcC) and another near Blythe 26 Jan (RHl) were inland, where rare, and up to 6 in Long Beach, Los Angeles 23 Dec—6 Feb (KL, KLG, MSanM) was a large number to be found together in s. California. Single Barrow's Goldeneyes near Blythe 9 Dec and 21 Feb (RHl) were at the s. limit of this species's normal winter range on the Colorado R.

HAWKS THROUGH SKIMMERS

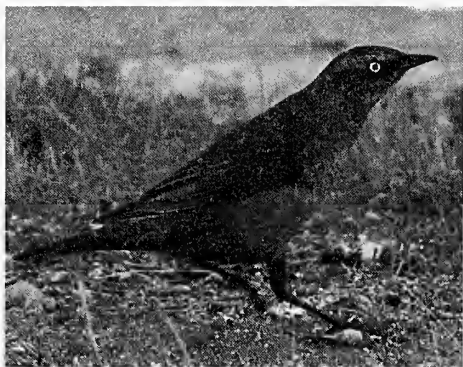
A Northern Goshawk at C.L. 16-31 Dec (BSh) was only the 2nd in e. Kern. One Harris's Hawk was still present from the 1994 incursion at Borrego Springs, San Diego at the end of the period (RT), and another was near Warner Springs, San Diego 17 Dec (BSie). The Broad-winged Hawk that arrived on San Clemente I. 31 Oct remained through the period (BLS). A Swainson's Hawk at V.C.G.P. 25 Jan+ (WW; ph.) and another over Lake Forest, Orange 16 Dec (JEP) were evidently wintering locally, but one near El Centro, Imperial 15 Feb (KZK) was an early spring migrant followed by at least 4 more in the next two days. Single Zone-tailed Hawks were along the coast in Santa Barbara/Goleta (DMC), San Clemente/San Juan Capistrano (DRW), and Escondido (MUE) throughout the period, an imm. was in the Upper Ojai Valley, Ventura 6 Jan (BSil), an ad. (returning?) was at nearby L. Casitas 12-17 Feb (TT, DPe), one was at Laguna Niguel, Orange 29 Jan (VL), and another was near Mesa Grande, San Diego 17 Dec (BSa); farther inland, single ads. were at Blythe 1-2 Dec (RHl),



Lemon Tank's fresh water is the only source on San Clemente Island, so it's a good spot to wait for vagrants such as this Prairie Warbler, which stayed here from October through mid-December 2001. Photograph by John T. Brollini.

near El Centro from the summer to 21 Feb (KZK) and another with it 5-13 Dec (KZK), and around Brawley, Imperial 25 Jan—9 Mar (TH). Single Rough-legged Hawks near Calipatria 18 Dec (BED) and El Centro 4 Feb (CMcG), and another near Blythe 26-28 Dec (RHl) were the s. most of the very few reported.

A Sandhill Crane around Bishop, Inyo 17 Dec—24 Jan (CH) and 6 over Venice, Los Angeles 8 Dec (EG) were away from areas of regular occurrence. Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers along the coast included single birds at Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles 30 Nov (KL), Bolsa Chica, Orange 4 Nov—10 Feb (DRW), in Del Mar, San Diego 3-30 Jan (NF) and at the Tijuana R. mouth 22 Aug—13 Jan (RP), 4 at Seal Beach, Orange throughout the period (JF), and 9 on San Clemente I. 6 Feb+ (BLS); inland, one was near Brawley 1 Feb (MSanM). The only Mountain Plovers along the coast were 12 at n. Vandenberg A.F.B. 16 Dec (AA) and 18 at Seal Beach through the period (JB); 3476 were counted on the primary wintering grounds in the Imperial Valley during a valley-wide survey 29 Jan—6 Feb (CMcG). Black and white oystercatchers on San Miguel I. 20 Feb (PM) and in San Diego 27 Jan (MBM, BKP) were not seen well enough to eliminate hybrid American x Black Oystercatcher hybrids. A Solitary Sandpiper near Chino, San Bernardino since 28 Aug, was still present 19 Jan (JEP) and believed to be the same bird here during the last two winters. A flock of 25 Ruddy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. 17-18 Dec (GMcC) was a remarkable number for an inland location at this time of the year. A wintering Wilson's Phalarope was in Indio, Riverside 1 Dec—8 Jan (ES), and another was at S.E.S.S. 24 Nov—28 Feb+ (GMcC).



One of two recorded this winter in the Region, this Rusty Blackbird was photographed on San Clemente Island on 14 February 2002.

Photograph by Brian L. Sullivan.

Single Laughing Gulls, rare on the Salton Sea in winter, were at N.E.S.S. 5 Jan (CMcG), S.E.S.S. 30 Dec—7 Jan (GMcC), and near Niland 16 Feb (LS). An ad. **Band-tailed Gull** seen on San Clemente I. 8 Feb (JTB) will establish the 2nd record for California if endorsed by the C.B.R.C. A Mew Gull at N.E.S.S. 24 Dec—21 Jan (C-TL) and another at S.E.S.S. 10-14 Jan (JEP) were far inland, where rare. The Lesser Black-backed Gull present at N.E.S.S. since 11 Nov was still present at the end of the period (CMcG), and an ad. near Chino 9 Jan (JEP) was the first to be found in *San Bernardino*. A Glaucous Gull in San Diego 4 Feb (DA) and another on San Clemente I. 5 Feb (JTB) were the only 2 reported. A Gull-billed Tern at S.E.S.S. 18 Dec (KLG) is one of a very few found in California in winter, as were single Elegant Terns on Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo* 19 Jan (MDH) and San Diego Bay 20 Jan—8 Feb (REW, RP). Four Black Skimmers at N.E.S.S. 5 Jan (CMcG) were unusually late stragglers from the summer.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Up to 4 White-winged Doves in Blythe 23 Dec—14 Jan (RHi), 2 in Calipatria 18 Dec (GMcC), up to 2 near El Centro 13 Dec—22 Feb (KZK) and one in Brawley 23 Feb (GMcC) were in areas where very few have been recorded in winter, and single birds in Carpinteria 18 Dec (RWH) and Ventura 1 Feb (RBu) were the only 2 reported along the coast. One Ruddy Ground-Dove was still present at F.C.R. 18 Feb (CH), 3 were still present in Blythe at the end of the period (RHi) and 2 photographed near El Centro 27 Jan-28+ Feb (KZK) established the 2nd record for *Imperial*. Three Lesser Nighthawks remained at Finney L., *Imperial* all winter (GMcC), and 2 more were near El Centro 30 Jan (KZK).

Up to 30 Vaux's Swifts around Oceanside 13 Dec—4 Jan (JS, RP, MBi), and 50 over

Sweetwater Res. 16-17 Jan (GC) were in coastal *San Diego*, where small numbers regularly winter. Two or 3 migrant Allen's Hummingbirds near El Centro 1-18 Feb (KZK) were in an area where few have previously been recorded, and an Allen's Hummingbird on Pt. Loma, *San Diego* 6 Jan (REW) was probably wintering locally, this area being outside the known range of *sedentarius*.

Lewis's Woodpeckers were a little more widespread than normal in the w. portion of the Region, with 2 near El Centro 1 Dec—28 Feb+ (GMcC) being the southeastern most. At least 15 Acorn Woodpeckers were present in *Inyo* during Jan (T&JH), and one near El Centro 19 Jan—28 Feb (JL, GMcC) was only the 6th to be found in the "Salton Sink." Single Williamson's Sapsuckers near Rancho Santa Margarita, *Orange* 16 Dec—26 Feb (GLT) and in Silverado Canyon, *Orange* 16 Dec (BML) were close to the coast, where rare. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a rare but regular vagrant to s. California, was near Mecca, *Riverside* 13 Jan—9 Feb (C-TL), the 5th to be found in the "Salton Sink."

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CORVIDS

A Greater Pewee found in Pomona, *Los Angeles* 1 Dec (DAG; ph.) remained through the period. Exceptionally late was a Western Wood-Pewee in Goleta, *Santa Barbara* 3-6 Dec (DMC). *Empidonax* flycatchers recorded during the period included a Least near Imperial Beach 9 Dec (GMcC), Duskie in Solvang, *Santa Barbara* 15 Jan—17 Feb (FE) and along the lower Colorado R. near Earp, *San Bernardino* 1-4 Feb (MBM), Hammond's at Laguna Niguel, *Orange* 10 Nov—2 Feb (JEP), Anaheim Hills, *Orange* 4 Dec—19 Jan (JEP), San Diego 22 Dec—1 Mar (GH), and Blythe 4-29 Jan (DWA), and 9 "Westerns" in coastal counties, along with a late interior bird at Bakersfield, *Kern* 16 Dec (C&JM). Nine wintering Eastern Phoebe, a bit above average, included 6 on the coastal slope and 3 on the low deserts.

A Dusky-capped Flycatcher was in San Diego 15 Dec+ (JEZ); one or 2 now winter annually in the Region. Ash-throated Flycatchers, rare in winter, were found at Borrego Springs, *San Diego* 17 Dec (JWi), Palm Desert, *Riverside* 5 Dec—8 Feb (MSanM), and Blythe 10-17 Feb (RHi), all areas where somewhat regular, but coastal birds in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 23 Jan—3 Feb (KSG) and near Imperial Beach 15 Dec—22 Feb (GMcC) were more unusual. **Brown-crested Flycatchers** in Long Beach 5-8 Dec (RBa) and Huntington Beach 13 Dec—15 Mar (MJI) were among the few ever recorded along the coast of California.

Five Tropical Kingbirds were found along the coast during the period; less expected were single Western Kingbirds near Goleta 5-21 Jan (CAM) and in San Diego 16 Dec—13 Feb (GMcC). The wintering Thick-billed Kingbird in Pomona was present through the period (KLG).

Northern Shrikes, regular in the northeasternmost part of the Region, were in Bishop 23-24 Dec (J&DP) and C.L., *Kern* 25-26 Jan (SSt). Loggerhead Shrikes continue a precipitous decline on the coastal slope; away from the San Jacinto Valley, *Riverside* (where good numbers continue to be recorded), only 154 were counted on 20 C.B.C.s on the coastal slope; just five years ago the total was 437! Shrikes were unrecorded for the first time ever on the Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley C.B.C., and only 15 were found on the three *Orange* C.B.C.s (90 on the same counts in 1993; DRW).

Winter Plumbeous Vireos outnumbered Cassin's 17 to 13 in the coastal counties; on the deserts, a Plumbeous was in El Centro throughout the period (KZK). Exceptionally rare in winter, a **Bell's Vireo** was in Coronado, *San Diego* 15 Dec (REW). Even more surprising was a well-described Gray Vireo in a desert wash 13 km w. of Needles, *San Bernardino* 9 Jan (DDi); the only previous winter records have been in Elephant Tree (*Bursera microphylla*) stands in e. *San Diego* (Unitt, *Western Birds* 31: 258-262, 2000). A Warbling Vireo in Carlsbad, *San Diego* 22 Dec (JD) was among the few ever recorded in mid-winter in the Region, and a Philadelphia Vireo in Coronado 15-16 Dec (REW) established only the 4th winter season record for California.

A Steller's Jay in Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara* 21 Dec (CA) was in an unusual location. Unexpected in mid-winter was a Bank Swallow in Irvine 27 Dec (LDT). Also normally rare in mid-winter, Barn Swallows were found in unprecedented numbers, e.g., several in *San Luis Obispo* in December, 16 in Santa Barbara 5 Jan, 16+ in coastal *Los Angeles* in Dec, 31+ in coastal *San Diego* in Dec, and, inland, one near Lancaster and 2 at E.A.F.B. 17 Jan (MSanM; probably too early for spring migrants), one at F.C.R. 4 Jan (RAH), several near Victorville 4 Jan (RMcK; specimen S.B.C.M.), and 26 on the Salton Sea (South) C.B.C. 18 Dec.

GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Federally Threatened California Gnatcatchers continue to lose habitat to urban development, but new populations are being found in the course of environmental impact studies as illustrated by up to 20 near Moorpark, *Ventura* through the period (BED) at the nw. edge of

the species's range. American Robins were present in above-average numbers, with a spectacular flight of up to 10,000 birds near Arroyo Grande, *San Luis Obispo* 29 Jan (BKS). A Brown Thrasher, casual in the Region, was in Moreno Valley, *Riverside* 24 Dec+ (C-TL). A Gray Catbird was in a Long Beach yard 25 Jan—10 Mar (JSB). The only Bohemian Waxwing found was in Bishop 9 Jan (J&DP).

A female Golden-winged Warbler in Costa Mesa 1-19 Jan (LDT) established the 2nd winter record for *Orange*. A Tennessee Warbler remained in Goleta from the fall to 5 Jan (JRS), and others were in nearby Isla Vista 31 Dec (LRB) and in Mission Viejo, *Orange* 16 Dec—24 Feb (JEP). Orange-crowned Warblers were considered relatively numerous in the n. Owens Valley this winter by *Inyo* observers. A Nashville Warbler at a hummingbird feeder in Bakersfield 26 Dec—24 Feb (JCW) was the first to winter in *Kern*. Northern Parulas were on the coast in Long Beach 26 Feb (KSG) and Gardena, *Los Angeles* 23 Dec (KL), and on the low desert near Mecca, *Riverside* 21 Jan—23 Feb (C-TL) and at S.E.S.S. 1 Jan—12 Feb (CMcF). Chestnut-sided Warblers were found in Goleta 5 Jan (RHt), near Glendale, *Los Angeles* through Mar (RBa), near Encino, *Los Angeles* 9 Jan+ (JDB), in El Segundo, *Los Angeles* 16 Jan—Mar (RBa), and in San Diego 10 Nov—9 Mar+ (MMR). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler in Newport Beach 3 Nov—8 Mar (M&BN) was the 4th to be found in winter in *Orange*. In addition to wintering birds in Coronado and National City noted in the fall report, Black-throated Green Warblers were found in Arroyo Grande 13 Nov—9 Dec (BKS), Goleta 2-3 Dec (RHt), Lake Forest, *Orange* 9 Dec—17 Feb (LDT), Carlsbad 22 Dec (PU) and Spring Valley, *San Diego* 20 Jan—21 Feb (MH). A Blackburnian Warbler, casual in winter, was near Goleta 18-26 Dec (JRS). The Grace's Warbler initially found in Sep on Pt. Loma remained through the period (GMcC), and at least 2 of the 3 male Pine Warblers found in Nov in Long Beach also remained through the period (TEW); another Pine Warbler was in Santa Barbara 30 Dec+ (HPR). A Prairie Warbler found in Oct on San Clemente I. remained to 12 Dec (JTB). Thirteen Palm Warblers were on the coastal slope during the period, and birds in Bishop 15 Dec—24 Jan (REM, JLD) and in Maricopa, *Kern* 22 Jan (BKP) were unusual for the n. interior. A Bay-breasted Warbler, declining as a vagrant to California and with few previous winter records, was in Long Beach 29 Dec—7 Jan (KLG).

Seventeen Black-and-white Warblers were in the coastal areas; inland, one remaining to 8

Dec in California City (MMcQ) was the latest for the *Kern* deserts, and another was in El Centro 17 Dec—7 Jan (GMcC). Seven American Redstarts were found during the period along the coast; 6 at S.E.S.S. in Dec (GMcC) was a normal number, and one near Earp, *San Bernardino* 22 Feb (MBM) was part of a small wintering population on the lower Colorado R. An Ovenbird in San Diego 26 Dec (TB) was the only one reported. Three Common Yellowthroats in the n. Owens Valley 15 Dec—20 Jan (J&DP) eclipsed the three previous winter records for *Inyo*. A MacGillivray's Warbler near El Monte, *Los Angeles* 15 Dec (JLF) was the only one reported, as was a female Hooded Warbler at Coronado the same day (RP). At least 35 Wilson's Warblers were found during the period along the coast, but one on the high desert in Lancaster 15 Dec (LWA) and another in El Centro 6 Dec—18 Feb (KZK) were unexpected. A Painted Redstart remained in Palm Desert to at least 8 Feb (KG, GMcC).

TANAGERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A returning ad. male Hepatic Tanager was near San Dimas, *Los Angeles* 22 Dec—21 Jan (MSanM). A remarkable 27 Summer Tanagers were found along the coast from Goleta to San Diego during the period, and a female was in Brawley, *Imperial* 19 Dec (GCH); one in Big Pine 29 Dec (J&DP) establishes the first winter record for *Inyo*. The Scarlet Tanager found 28 Nov at Oceano was last seen 3 Dec (KJZ).

Nine Clay-colored Sparrows were found along the coast during the period; a far more unusual winter *Spizella* was a Black-chinned Sparrow on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, *Los Angeles* 22 Dec (CTC). A Lark Bunting was on the Carrizo Plain, *San Luis Obispo* 18 Feb (JSe), and one on San Clemente I. 11 Feb (BLS) were firsts for winter at those locations. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at expected sites included up to 2 at Morro Bay 1 Dec—26 Feb (MDS) and up to 6 at Seal Beach N.W.R., *Orange* in Dec and Jan (JF); 2 videotaped at V.C.P.G. 23 Jan to period's end (DD) were away from tidal saltmarsh habitat normally frequented. Red Fox Sparrows were reported from Los Angeles 21 Dec—14 Feb (RBa), Huntington Beach 30 Dec—9 Mar (JSB), and Santee, *San Diego* 12 Feb (MBM). Sixteen Swamp Sparrows and 55 White-throated Sparrows were at or above normal numbers, though sightings of these regular winterers are not always reported. A good showing of 11 Harris's Sparrows included 7 along the coast and 4 in *Inyo*. A longspur "slam" at S.E.S.S. included up to 3 McCown's 30 Dec—5 Jan (TE), up to 150 Chestnut-collareds 31 Dec—2 Feb (GMcC, MSanM), 21+

Laplands 18 Dec—5 Feb (GMcC) and a **Smith's Longspur** near Calipatria 31 Dec—16 Jan (TE, GMcC); the last was in an alfalfa field with a large flock of Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and was the first for *Imperial*, only the 2nd for the Region, and established the first winter record for California.

Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and 2 Black-headed Grosbeaks were along the coast during the period, and late Blue Grosbeaks were near Imperial Beach 9 Dec (GMcC) and near Victorville 13 Dec (SJM). An Indigo Bunting in Long Beach 3 Dec (RBa) was a very late fall vagrant. The natural origin of a female Painted Bunting near Imperial Beach 29 Dec (GMcC) is uncertain.

Two Rusty Blackbirds, a declining vagrant to California, were found: a returning bird in Goleta 8 Dec+ (GBW) and one on San Clemente I. 14 Feb+ (BLS; ph.). A Common Grackle n. of Bishop 15-18 Dec (JLD) was the latest fall record for *Inyo*. In addition to the wintering bird in Irvine noted in the fall report, Orchard Orioles were in Ventura 29 Dec (OA) and San Diego 11-19 Jan (MBM). A Hooded Oriole in Ridgecrest 31 Dec (AH) and 3 in Bakersfield 31 Dec—24 Feb (BJM, MMcQ) were away from more expected coastal winter habitats. Eight Baltimore Orioles were found along the coast during the period. A Bullock's Oriole near L. Isabella 11 Jan (NJS) establishes only the 3rd winter record for *Kern*; another in Bakersfield 24 Feb (MMcQ) might have wintered locally. The Black-backed Oriole present near Imperial Beach in the spring and early summer of 2000 and 2001 was refound 2-13 Jan (JC); its presence in mid-winter might suggest, but certainly does not prove, a non-natural origin.

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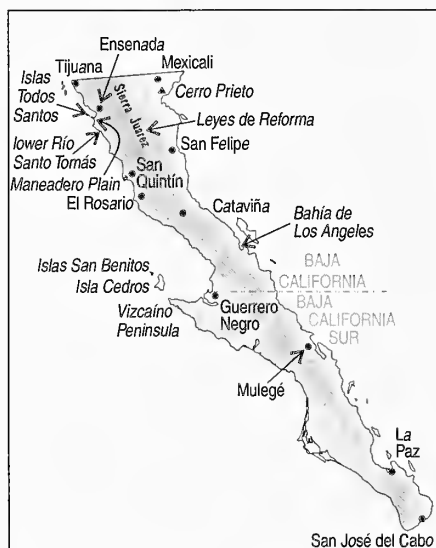
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L. Sullivan, Robert Theriault, Tom Thomason, Gerald L. Tolman, Larry D. Tripp, Phil Unitt, Stanley Walens, Ken Weaver, Richard E. Webster, **Walter Wehtje** (*Ventura*), Joel Weintraub, Grant B. Weyburne, **Douglas R. Willick** (*Orange*), Jim Wilson (JWi), **John C. Wilson** (*Kern*), Thomas E. Wurster, Paul Zephe, James E. Zimmer, Kevin J. Zimmer. An additional 40+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season; all have our appreciation.



Baja California Peninsula



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Temperatures were near average this season, but rainfall was very low. The Region's first ever Christmas Bird Count was held at Ensenada, bringing out a modest contingent of eager birders from both the U.S. and Mexico. This seasonal report lists 4 January—the CBC date—a remarkable 19 times, evidence that the count generated a considerable volume of noteworthy distributional information that would have otherwise escaped detection.

Abbreviations: B.C. (Baja California); B.C.S. (Baja

California Sur); U.A.B.C.S. (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur).

BOOBIES THROUGH TERNS

Near the California border, three species of boobies were recorded at Islas Los Coronados: an ad. Masked and 3 ad. Browns 20 Jan (REW) and an ad. Blue-footed 27 Jan (†BKP, vt. DB). Brown Boobies have become regular on these islands in recent years, and it was an exceptional season for Masked Boobies in California, so the Blue-footed Booby was actually the least expected. Although up to 38 were recorded on these islands in 1971, the species has gone unrecorded on the coast of California since 1990.

American Bitterns appear to be in decline on much of the continent and are rarely reported in our Region; one was at Estero Punta Banda 3-12 Dec (RAH et al.). Up to 5 ad. and 2 imm. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were found at Lagunas de Chametla 14 Dec–15 Feb (RC, LS et al.), where the species has occurred fairly regularly since 1995. Noteworthy geese included Snows at Estero Punta Banda and on the Manadero Plain 4 Jan (DSC, MSM et al.) and at Estero San José del Cabo 20-30 Jan (up to 5; GB, AC et al.), and a Lesser Canada Goose continuing at Lagunas de Chametla to at least 26 Mar (RC, SGM et al.). Regionally rare ducks included male Eurasian Wigeon at Estero Punta Banda 3 Dec (RAH, RAE) and 13 Jan (MDC), a female Greater Scaup at Estero Punta Banda 12 Dec (SM, EIM) and 5 females at Guerrero Negro 6 Feb (JEP, DSP), and 3 female Hooded Mergansers on the Manadero Plain 4-5 Jan (MJI et al.).

Continuing the trend from recent years, 3 Harris's Hawks were relatively far n. at Heroes de la Independencia 12 Jan (MDC). On the heels of last Oct's birds at Ciudad Constitución, 19 Swainson's Hawks were just w. of Ciudad Insurgentes 2 Feb, and 2 juvs. were at Santa Teresita 5 Feb (all JEP, DSP). A juv. Zone-tailed Hawk at El Rosario 25 Jan (JEP, DSP) was the only one found in B.C..

The season's shorebird highlight was a Solitary Sandpiper at Lagunas de Chametla 6 Feb (RC, RL, *U.A.B.C.S.); the only previous winter record for the Region was of three at Migrño, B.C.S. 9 Feb 1999. Examples of gulls on the "wrong" coasts of B.C.S. were provided by a Yellow-footed at Todos Santos 29 Jan and 8 Westerns between San Juan de la Costa and La Paz 28 Jan—1 Feb (all JEP, DSP). Two or 3 Elegant Terns at Loreto 2 Jan (†MJI) represented the first winter record for the Region.

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

Three Ruddy Ground-Doves at Todos Santos 29 Jan (JEP, DSP) were the only ones reported, a surprising drop-off from the large numbers recorded in fall. The migrations of Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds through the Region are imprecisely known. Although Allen's was considered "abundant" at Mulegé in March 1996 (*Great Basin Naturalist* 57: 131-141), identification problems with this species pair led Howell et al. (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 128, 192) to consider the species unconfirmed in B.C.S. An ad. male Allen's reported at Vizcaíno, B.C.S. 14 Feb (MDC) was midway through the period during which Allen's were found at Bahía de Los Angeles (5 Feb—6 Mar; MF, GF) and was almost certainly correctly identified, but the problem of green-backed male Rufous Hummingbirds remains. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Santo Tomás 5 Jan (JEP). Rare woodpeckers in B.C.S. were a Red-breasted Sapsucker at San Ignacio 3 Jan (†MJI) and a Northern Flicker near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (†JEP, DSP). These represented the 2nd and first state records, respectively (cf. the fall report).

The Region's first wintering Least Flycatcher was at Guerrero Negro 3-26 Jan (ph. †MJI, JEP), while a Hammond's Flycatcher at Ensenada 3 Dec—4 Jan (RAE, vt. RAH; Fig. 1) furnished the first winter record for B.C.; a Gray Flycatcher on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (PAG, †GMcC) was more expected. Fewer than 10 Tropical Kingbirds have been found wintering on the peninsula (divided between the northwest and the Cape District), so a calling bird on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (PAG, †GMcC) and a silent one at Loreto 25 Feb (†SFB) were notable. Thick-billed Kingbirds are now considered rare and regular in fall and winter in the Cape District; the season's only report was of one at Santiago 31 Jan (JEP, DSP). Outside the Cape District, single Cassin's Vireos were on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (†MSM) and at San Isidro 2 Feb (JEP, DSP). A Plumbeous Vireo near San Javier 4 Feb (JEP) was in the Cape District, where small numbers probably winter regularly; another on the Maneadero Plain 4-5 Jan (DSC, †MSM, RAE) was in B.C., where less expected.

SWALLOWS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

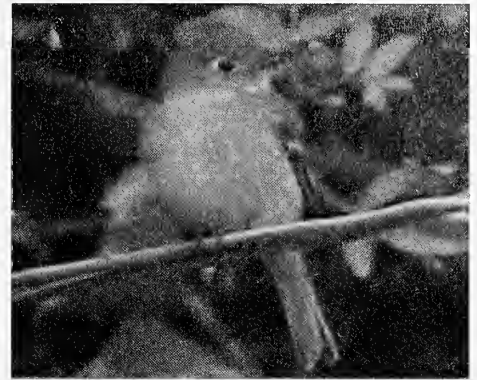
Winter swallow reports included 3 Northern

Rough-wingeds at Estero Punta Banda 4 Jan (DSC et al.) and one at Chametla 28 Jan (JEP), 9 Barns between Tijuana and La Salina 3 Jan (RAH), 9 more on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (GMcC et al.), and singles at Chametla 28 Jan and near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (both JEP). At least 3 American Robins at Guerrero Negro 29 Dec—26 Jan (MJI et al.) and another near Santa Teresita 5 Feb (JEP, DSP) were in B.C.S., where the species is rare in fall/winter (apart from birds resident in the Sierra de La Laguna).

Eastern warblers did not disappoint: A Tennessee at Guerrero Negro 3-26 Jan (ph., †MJI et al.) and another at San Antonio 1 Feb (JEP, DSP) constituted the 2nd and 3rd winter records for B.C.S.; a Chestnut-sided at San Javier 4 Feb (JEP, DSP) and a Prairie at Todos Santos 29 Jan (DSP, JEP) furnished first winter records for the peninsula; a female Cape May Warbler on the Maneadero Plain 5 Jan (†DSC, †MSM, RAE) and a male and 2 females at Miraflores 31 Jan (†JEP, DSP) followed just one previous winter record in the Region. Black-throated Green Warblers were previously unrecorded in winter, but lerpy *Eucalyptus* trees on the Maneadero Plain that held 3 on 30 Oct yielded a female on 3 Dec (RAH) and at least one male on 4 Jan and 16 Feb (JEP); an additional bird was about one km s. of there on 4 Jan (†JEP).

Reports of w. warblers were comparatively scarce; examples included just 2 Nashvilles (Punta Banda 4 Jan [JEP] and Sierra de La Laguna 15 Feb [MDC]); one Yellow in B.C. (Maneadero Plain 5 Jan [MSM, DSC]); one Black-throated Gray in B.C. (Maneadero Plain 5 Jan [MSM, DSC]); 2 Hermits (San Quintín Plain 24 Jan [JEP, DSP] and Sierra de La Laguna 15 Feb [MDC]); 2 Palms (both on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan [†JEP, †MSM]); 7 Black-and-whites (one in B.C.); 2 American Redstarts in B.C.; 6-8 Wilson's in B.C.; and 2 Yellow-breasted Chats (Mulegé 27 Jan [JEP, DSP] and Todos Santos 29 Jan [DSP]). A male MacGillivray's Warbler on the Maneadero Plain 4-5 Jan (†DSC, †MSM, et al.) was unprecedented in B.C. during winter.

Seven Summer Tanagers (5 in B.C., 2 in B.C.S.) was a healthy sum, particularly compared with a paltry 3 Westerns in B.C.: Ensenada 4 Jan (†RAH) and 2 at Cantamar 5 Jan (DSC, MSM). In B.C.S., Western Tanager counts of 2 at Guerrero Negro 2 Jan and one at Loreto 3 Jan (both MJI), 9 at Mulegé 27 Jan, 9 at Ciudad Constitución 28 Jan, and 10 at San Isidro 3 Feb (all JEP, DSP) suggest a wider winter distribution than previously known. Four Chipping Sparrows at San Javier 1 Jan (MJI) were in B.C.S., where the winter status is unclear, while a Brewer's Sparrow on the Maneadero Plain 4 Jan (†GMcC, PAG) and 3 Clay-colored on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (JEP) were extralimital. Two Sooty Fox Sparrows at El Rosario 24-25 Jan (JEP) were as far s. on the peninsular mainland as this



Baja California's first wintering Hammond's Flycatcher at Ensenada, B. C., was among numerous highlights of the Region's inaugural Christmas Bird Count, held on 4 January 2002. This bird had been present here since 3 December. Photograph from digital video by Robert A. Hamilton.

subspecies group has been found. A Swamp Sparrow on the Maneadero Plain 5 Jan (DSC, †MSM) furnished just the 6th Regional record; single White-throated Sparrows, only marginally commoner, were found at La Bufadora 4 Jan (JEP) and on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (DSP, JEP). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow at San Isidro 2 Feb (JEP) was the first for the s. third of the peninsula since early in the last century. Two Gray-headed Juncos remained at Punta Banda 3 Dec (RAH, RAE), with one there 4 Jan (JEP). A Lazuli Bunting on the San Quintín Plain 24 Jan (JEP) provided B.C.'s 2nd winter record. At least 1000 Yellow-headed Blackbirds with 2500 Brown-headed Cowbirds just e. of Ciudad Insurgentes 28 Jan (JEP, DSP) comprised the peninsula's largest recorded concentration of the former species by an order of magnitude. Two Baltimore Orioles were found: Guerrero Negro 26 Jan and La Purísima 2 Feb (both JEP).

Corrigendum

In the summer report, the Red-breasted Nuthatch noted was indeed the first mainland summer record, but the species was formerly resident on Isla Guadalupe.

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Mexico

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Records from the winter reporting period come from scattered parts of the country, with a particularly large number of records from Oaxaca. Sonora and the northern Yucatan Peninsula produced a remarkable variety of vagrants. On the other hand, Chiapas, Guerrero, and many northern and central states continue to provide few or no records.

Limpkins and Snail Kites continued to show up in many areas along the Pacific coast where they were not mapped by Howell & Webb (1995). Flammulated Owls continue to be recorded in numbers around La Cumbre in Oaxaca; there were very few previous records from that state.

A particularly interesting contribution is Rob Hamilton's careful observations from a trip to the rarely birded Islas Marias off Nayarit from 23 Jan—8 Feb, which produced six new species for the archipelago and a number of interesting winter records of birds thought to be transients. Sadly, Hamilton reports much habitat damage by introduced mammals on Isla María Magdalena and Isla María Cleofas. He writes: "Magdalena appears to show the effects of grazing fairly dramatically, both in its dearth of herbaceous understory and the dominance of thorny agaves and other spiny species in the understory left by the grazers," and Cleofas is now "full of goats and black rats, a mule, some cattle, and sign of cats," whereas this island did not have any feral animals in the mid-1970s. At least one bird of the Islas Marias, the endemic Lawrence's (Broad-billed) Hummingbird, appears to be in serious decline. However, these are just two of many Mexican islands that have problems caused by introduced mammals.

LOONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A Red-throated Loon was in Cholla Bay, Puerto Peñasco, Son 15 & 16 Dec (SG, RJ). A **Red-necked Grebe** was recorded in Puerto Peñasco 16 Dec (NB). At least 40 active Brown Pelican nests were seen at a traditional nesting site on the nw. side of Isla María Cleofas 4 Feb (RAH). A Double-crested Cormorant was at San Blas, Nay., where rare, 11 Jan (SNGH, CW). An estimated 371 active Blue-footed Booby nests were recorded at a traditional nesting site near the se. anchorage of Isla María Cleofas 3 Feb (RAH). An estimated 1730 Blue-footed Booby nests with sitting ads. or under construction were reported from the s. end of Isla San Juanito, Islas Marias, Nay. 10 Feb (AJ, SL). Holsinger reported a **Reddish Egret** at a large lake in Linares, N.L. in early Feb. At least 2 Bare-throated Tiger-Herons were seen at Mintadero Arroyo e. of Alamos, Son. 18 Jan (G&GW), and several were seen along the Río Cuchijaqui, Son. in mid-Feb (SG).

Fifteen Canada Geese, a rare species in Son., were found in the Estero María, Puerto Peñasco 16 Dec (NB). There was one Snow Goose along the Río Mayo at Presa Mocuzari, Son. (SG), where rare. Miller estimated 700 Snow Geese at Presa Abelardo R. Rodríguez in Hermosillo, Son. 6 Dec (SM). In Navojua, Son., 5 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were with 300 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in mid-Feb (SG). Three **Blue-winged Teal**, formerly unrecorded in the Islas Marias, were seen on Isla María Magdalena 6 Feb (RAH). A male **Greater Scaup** was seen on the Río San Cristóbal near Las Marismas, Nay. 14 Jan (NM-C, RT). One female **Hooded Merganser** was seen at El Golfo de Santa Clara, Son. 11 Feb (KG).

Three imm. **Snail Kites** were photographed on the Río San Cristóbal 14 Jan (NM-C, RT); SNGH and CW saw 5 nearby on the Singayta road 9 Jan; NM-C and RT recorded Snail Kites in the San Blas area in Jan 2000, and Rod Drewien remembers seeing them at San Blas as far back as the 1960s (*fide*

NM-C). One Ferruginous Hawk was reported near Bahía Kino, Son. 7 Dec (SM). Around 100 **Sandhill Cranes** were seen in N.L. near the Tamps. border at km 145 of Hwy 85 (AH). Five **Limpkins** were along Río San Cristóbal and at Las Marismas 14 Jan, where they had also been seen Jan 2000 (NM-C, RT). A **Common Moorhen**, a new species for the Islas Marias, was seen on Isla María Magdalena 6 Feb (RAH).

Eight **Snowy Plovers**, also formerly unrecorded in the Islas Marias, were seen on Isla María Cleofas 1 Feb (RAH), and 18 were seen on Isla San Juanito 10 Feb (AJ, SL). A Solitary Sandpiper was seen along the Río Cuchijaqui (SG). Seven hundred Red Phalaropes were estimated on the boat trip from Isla María Magdalena to Isla María Madre 8 Feb, while 700 were estimated between Isla María Madre and Isla María Cleofas on the same date (RAH). Sixteen **Heermann's Gulls** were estimated on Isla María Cleofas 3 Feb (RAH). One first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake was seen at a large gull roost just n. of Mazatlán, Sin. 22 Feb (MDC).

A pair of **Ruddy Ground-Doves** was in Puerto Peñasco 15 Dec (SG, RJ); this is the 2nd record for Puerto Peñasco of a species that has recently become somewhat regular in winter in s. Arizona. Around 40 Military Macaws were seen at Mirador El Águila, Nay. 15 Jan (NM-C, RT). The highest daily counts of the endemic race of Yellow-headed Parrots in the Tres Marias Islands in late Jan and early Feb were 12 on Isla María Cleofas and 18 on Isla María Magdalena (RAH). One Elf Owl carcass was found on Isla María Magdalena 25 Jan (RAH). An Eared Poorwill was seen on Cerro San Juan, Nay. 19 Feb on a traditional perch, and 2 were using the same foraging perch 27 Feb (MDC). Grazing and trampling of the understory by goats has probably caused a decline in the formerly common **Lawrence's (Broad-billed) Hummingbird** in the Islas Marias, where only one was seen 25 Jan, 2 on 7 Feb, and none on 26-27 Jan or 6 Feb on Isla María Magdalena, and none were seen on Isla María Cleofas 29 Jan—4 Feb (RAH). On the other hand, Cinnamon Hummingbird, which also has an endemic race on the Islas Marias, was seen daily 24 Jan—8 Feb, with maximum daily counts of 25 on Isla María Magdalena and 26 on Isla María Cleofas (RAH). A male Anna's Hummingbird was at La Posta, Dgo. 8 Dec (T&DH, FVP, WB). Many Plain-capped Starthroats were seen along the Río Cuchijaqui mid-Feb (SG). One male Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird was seen feeding in flowering *Inga* at La Bajada near San Blas 16 Jan (NM-C, RT). Two Bumblebee Hummingbirds, a male and a female, were seen on Cerro San Juan, Nay. 15 Jan (NM-C, RT). A female Calliope Hummingbird was at a low elevation for winter at Singayta 13 Jan (SNGH, CW).

NORTHERN MEXICO



WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two Red-naped Sapsuckers and a Lineated Woodpecker were seen along the Río Cuchujaqui in mid-Feb (SG). An Ivory-billed Woodcreeper was in a park in Alamos in mid-Feb (SG). A Say's Phoebe was reported from the summit of Cerro de San Juan, Nay. 3 & 5 Feb (MWE). A Tufted Flycatcher was at Bosque Venustiano Carranza Park in Torreón, Coah. 2 Feb, presumably the same bird found there 17 Nov (FVP, WB). Greater Pewee, Tufted Flycatchers, Brown-backed Solitaire, and Slate-throated Redstarts were all wintering at low elevation along the Río Cuchujaqui in mid-Feb (SG). A male Vermilion Flycatcher, normally considered a transient in the Islas Marías, was photographed on Isla María Cleofas 31 Jan (RAH). A Barn Swallow, unrecorded in the past from the Islas Marías, was on Isla María Cleofas 1 Feb (RAH) during the time of a winter "invasion" of the species that spanned from California to British Columbia. At Yávaros, Son., Mangrove Swallows appeared to be nesting already mid-Feb (SG).

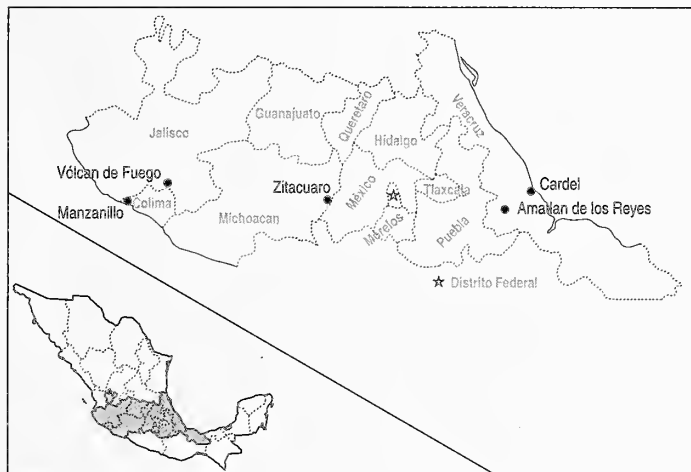
A Ruby-crowned Kinglet, new to the Islas Marías, was seen on Isla María Magdalena 2 Feb (RAH). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers had likewise never been documented in the Islas Marías; 14 were estimated on Isla María Cleofas, and 7 were estimated on Isla María Magdalena late Jan and early Feb (RAH). A single Grayson's Thrush on Isla María Cleofas 2 Feb showed juv. plumage (RAH). A Blue-winged Warbler was seen near Piedra Blanca, Sin. 14 Jan (G&WW). One Colima Warbler was on Cerro San Juan 15 Jan (NM-C, RT). A Yellow-throated Warbler, new for the Islas Marías, was seen on Isla María Madre 8 Feb (race *albilora*, RAH). An imm. male Chestnut-sided Warbler was in a yard on the e. side of Puerto Peñasco 16 Dec, feeding in acacia, mesquite, and citrus trees, as was a female or imm. male American Redstart (SG, RP). A Northern Parula and a Louisiana Waterthrush were along the Río Cuchujaqui, at Esperanza, Son. mid-Feb (SG). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was at the large gravel pond just n. of the toll booth on Hwy 15 in mid-Feb (SG). A MacGillivray's Warbler was seen on Isla María Cleofas 30 Jan (RAH), while a male Wilson's Warbler was on Isla María Magdalena 7 Feb (RAH).

Garrett saw one female Scarlet Tanager at El Doctor, Son. (km 81 on the highway to El Golfo de Santa Clara) at the late date of 9 Dec; this record agrees with the exceptional showing of Scarlet Tanagers in Arizona, s. California, and Baja California during fall 2001 (incidentally, the same observer saw an imm. male at El Doctor 8 Oct 2000). A Canyon Towhee was reported in Peso Island, San Blas, Nay. 4 Feb (MWE). A female Rusty Blackbird was found in a pigpen in Puerto Peñasco 16 Dec together with Brewer's Blackbirds, Red-

winged Blackbirds, and a few Great-tailed Grackles (SG, RJ, m. ob.). Two pairs of Hooded Orioles were found in Puerto Peñasco 16 Dec (SG), new winter records for this locality. Three American Goldfinches were reported 30 km s. of Cananea, Son. 5 Dec (SM).

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CENTRAL MEXICO



Abbreviations: P.E.C.M. (Parque Ecológico de la Ciudad de México, D.F.), U.N.A.M. (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México).

HERONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A Green Heron was in the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden, D.F. 16 Dec (SA). Two Wood Storks were inland at high elevation (1500 m) at Laguna de Sayula, Jal. 17 Feb, perhaps the same individuals seen flying over the west edge of Colima, Col. 23 Feb (SNGH, DL). A pair of Ring-necked Ducks was at a lake in Toluca, Mex. 25 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Three Snail Kites were seen on the road to Manzanillo Airport, Col. 14 Jan (AJ, JV), and up to 5 were there 12–22 Feb (SNGH, DL). A single Hook-billed Kite was in the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden 16 Dec, 17 Jan, and 10 Feb (SA). A pair of Cooper's Hawks were heard vocalizing in the P.E.C.M. 8 Dec (SA, HGdS), and one was heard vocalizing there 27 Dec, 22 & 24 Jan, and 7 Feb (SA). An ad. nominate Red-shouldered Hawk was at Laguna Zapotán, Jal. 16 Feb

(SNGH, DL). A Broad-winged Hawk was soaring low over the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden 7 Feb (HGdS). Ten Limpkins were reported from the road to the Manzanillo Airport 14 Jan (AJ, JV), and 2 were noted there 3 Feb (SJD). Up to 12 Limpkins were at Manzanillo Airport marshes 12–22 Feb (SNGH, DL). Two King/Clapper Rails were at Barra de Navidad, Jal. mangroves 13 Feb (SNGH, DL). An imm. Ring-billed Gull was at Parque Ecológico de Xochimilco, D.F. 28 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.), while a California Gull was reported near Hotel Vida del Mar, Col. 19 Jan (AJ, JV). Two introduced Red-lore Parrots were seen in Oaxtepec, Mor. 16 Dec (HGdS). A Long-eared Owl was sitting on the Volcan de Fuego, Jal., road before dawn 16 Feb (SNGH, DL). A female Whip-poor-will was studied at its roost in Barranca El Choncho, Jal. 15 Feb. at the low elevation of 250 m (SNGH, DL). Chestnut-collared Swifts were seen on the Playa de Oro road, Col. 13 &

14 Jan (AJ, JV). Two White-fronted Swifts were with 20 Chestnut-collareds over the Playa de Oro road 13 Feb (SNGH, DL). Five hundred White-naped Swifts were estimated flying to their roost at Salto de San Antón, Cuernavaca, Mor. 27 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.), along with a few Chestnut-collared Swifts. Green Violet-ears were singing on Volcán de Fuego, Jal. 1 Feb, along the road to Microondas Víboras, Jal. 5 Feb (SJD), and at La Cima, D.F. 28 Feb (HGdS). One Green Violet-ear was singing in the P.E.C.M. 18 Dec (HGdS) and 14 Jan (SA); one was singing near Zitacuaro, Mich. 26 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Two male Mexican Woodnymphs were at Puerto Los Mazos, Jal. 4 Feb (SJD). A female Broad-tailed Hummingbird was at La Cima 28 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two Greenish Elaenias were seen and heard at the P.E.C.M. through the reporting period and at the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden 25 Jan (SA). A Pileated

and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher were at Cañón de Lobos, Mor. 27 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Two Tufted Flycatchers were at La Cima, D.F. 20 Dec (HGdS, SA, BC, JGB), and an Eastern Phoebe was near Atarascuillo, Mex. 25 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). A dozen Cliff Swallows were at Salto de San Antón 27 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). One **Cave Swallow** among dozens of Northern Rough-winged Swallows and Gray-breasted Martins was reported on the Playa de Oro road, Col. 13 Jan (AJ, JV), and 5 **Cave Swallows** were there 13 Feb migrating n. (SNGH, DL).

A Steller's Jay was at U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden 20 Dec (HGdS, SA, BC, JGB), where Western Scrub-Jay is usually the only jay present (and occasional escapee Green, San Blas, or Beechey's Jays, or White-throated Magpie-Jay). A female/imm. **Black Robin** was on Volcán de Nieve, Jal. 18 Feb, and flocks of **up to 100 Aztec Thrushes** were on the Volcanes de Colima 16-18 Feb (SNGH, DL). Four Blue Mockingbirds were heard at P.E.C.M. 8 Dec (HGdS, SA). Two **European Starlings** were seen near Atarascuillo 25 Feb, and 2 were 2 km nw. of El Yukón, Mex., w. of Toluca 26 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was at Barra de Navidad 13 Feb (SNGH, DL). A Painted Redstart was in a grove of introduced *Grevillea* trees in Cuernavaca 27 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). A female Western Tanager was at Nogales, Ver. 28 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). One or 2 male **Lazuli** and 6 **Varied Buntings** were seen at Cañón de Lobos, Mor. 27 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Black-headed Grosbeaks were singing frequently and even performing song flights close to Zitácuaro 26 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Blue Grosbeaks were absent from the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden through the reporting period (SA). One Sierra Madre Sparrow was seen and another heard at La Cima 18 Dec (HGdS). Sierra Madre Sparrows were defending territories at La Cima 28 Feb (HGdS, m. ob.). Scott's Orioles were singing at the P.E.C.M. and the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden through the reporting period (SA). Seven **Pine Siskins** were seen in flight low over the U.N.A.M. Botanical Garden 7 Feb (HGdS).

Contributors (area compiler in boldface): Sofia Arenas, Brayan Cancino, Stephen J. Davies, Jorge García Burgos, **Héctor Gómez de Silva**, Steve N.G. Howell, Alvaro Jaramillo, Dan Lane, Jay VanderGaast.

SOUTHERN MEXICO



Weather was normal for the period, with no unusual trends noted. Localities are in the state of Oaxaca unless otherwise stated. Uncredited observations are by John M. Forcey.

Abbreviations: B.J. (Benito Juárez, above Teotitlán del Valle, 2800 m), C.R. (Camelia Roja), E.E. (El Estudiante), L.C. (La Cumbre, the village that marks the entrance to Parque Nacional Benito Juárez), L.G. (La Guacamaya, 2700 m), M.A. (Monte Albán), P.A.D. (Piedra Azul Dam, Teotitlán del Valle, 1700 m), S.J.G. (San Juan Guelavía, 20 km e. of Oaxaca City, 1550 m), S.F.P. (San Felipe Park, adjoining the n. end of Oaxaca City, 1700-2200 m), Tot. (Totolapan, 65 km se. of Oaxaca City).

TINAMOUS THROUGH ANTPITTAS

A **Thicket Tinamou** (race *occidentalis*) was photographed in Parque Nacional de Huatusco 25 Jan (MG). A Least Grebe with 2 chicks and an Eared Grebe were seen at P.A.D. 6-13 Dec. A Little Blue Heron was at San Pablo Etla 23 Dec, while a Reddish Egret was seen 28 Dec along the Río Papaloapan one km upstream of C.R. (RH, CW et al.). Two **Tricolored Herons** were near S.J.G. 13 Dec. Up to 12 Green-winged Teals were at P.A.D. 14-28 Dec. A male **Mexican Duck** was seen at P.A.D. 26 Jan—28 Feb (JF, RAN, ESB, MEC et al.); this represents only the 2nd state record, although it may be the same individual that was seen at this location in spring 2001. Up to 21 Ruddy Ducks were at P.A.D. 6 Dec—28 Feb. A Hook-billed Kite was at km 68 of Highway 175, at 1045 m above Valle Nacional, 29 Dec, and a **Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle** was seen there 27 Dec (RH, CW, m. ob.). A Zone-tailed Hawk was at B.J. 26 Dec (ABB). Another outstanding Oax. record was an ad. **Northern Goshawk** seen well along the road to Nuevo Zooquiapan from L.C. 21 Jan (†CT, DH). Single Merlins were seen Teotitlán del Valle 21 Dec (ABB) and Yagui 23 Dec (ABB).

Up to 13 West Mexican Chachalacas were observed above Teotitlán del Valle throughout the period (JF, ESB, MEC, ABB et al.). Two Long-tailed Wood-Partridges were near Arroyo Jilguero above Teotitlán del Valle 14 Feb and several were calling below L.C. in early Mar (ESB, MEC et al.). A Sora was at P.A.D. 25 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). Up to 12 Common Moorhens were seen near S.J.G. 13 Dec—28 Feb. A Lesser Yellowlegs was at P.A.D. 26 Feb (ESB, MEC et

al.) and one Greater Yellowlegs was seen at a pond in Cuilapan 1 Jan (JF). Six **Pectoral Sandpipers** were at P.A.D. on the late date of 21 Dec (ABB); one was still there 25 Feb (MEC). Single Common Snipe were at P.A.D. 6 Dec and at S.J.G. 13 Dec. A **Ring-billed Gull** was seen along highway between Oaxaca City and Etla 28 Dec (ABB).

A **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** was calling at Tot. 27 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). A **Flammulated Owl** was at L.C. 25 Dec (RH, CW et al.), and at least 9 were calling there 26 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was seen there 25 Dec (RH, CW et al.) and 26 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). Hundreds of Lesser Nighthawks were seen P.A.D. 26 Dec (ABB). A Green-fronted hummingbird was seen at Tot. 16 Feb, and the prized Garnet-throated Hummingbird was at L.C. 24 Dec (RH, CW et al.). Three **Violet-crowned Hummingbirds** were at Río Grande bridge below Guelatao 27 Dec (RH, CW et al.). Several Emerald-chinned Hummingbirds were around km 63 of Highway 75 above Valle Nacional 8 Dec (MDC). Golden-fronted Woodpeckers were seen at Tot. 16 Feb (JF) and 27 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). A **Strong-billed Woodcreeper** was at L.C. 24 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.), where recorded only three or four times previously, and single Spot-crowned Woodcreepers were seen there 27 Dec (ABB) and 24 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). One White-striped Woodcreeper was at Jilguero arroyo above Teotitlán del Valle 28 Feb (JF, RAN, ESB, MEC et al.). Two **Scaled Antpittas** were seen at S.F.P., an unusual location, 23 Feb (RAN) and 26 Feb (RAR).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CACIQUES

Single **Greenish Elaenias** were reported at E.E. 22 Dec (ABB), at L.C. (2960 m) 24 Dec (RH, CW et al.), and at S.F.P. 23 Feb (JF). Single Pileated Flycatchers were at E.E. 22 Dec (ABB) and at M.A. 23 Dec (RH, CW et al.). Three Gray-collared Becards were above Santa Cruz Etla 23 Dec (JF) and at B.J. 26 Dec (ABB). Rose-throated Becards were observed at L.C. 22 Dec (ABB) and 24 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). An apparent White-eyed Vireo was noted mobbing a Colima Pygmy-Owl 2 km n. of Huatulco 3 Dec (MDC).

Two Golden Vireos were at S.F.P. 23 Feb. Three White-throated Jays were seen at San José del Pacífico 1 Dec (MDC). Two **Happy Wrens** were at Río Grande below Guelatao 27 Dec (RH, CW et al.). Clay-colored Robins were at S.F.P. 20 Dec (ABB), M.A. 24 Dec (ABB), and Tequio Park 21 Feb (JF); they were numerous, along with Rufous-backed Robins, on the grounds of the Hôtel Misión de los Angeles in Oaxaca City again in Feb (m. ob.). A **Hermit Thrush** apparently of the race *faxoni* was seen 27 Dec at about km 75.4 of Hwy 175 above Valle Nacional (RH, CW, CW). Single White-throated Robins were noted above Teotitlán del Valle 13 Dec and 25 Feb (JF, RAN, ESB, MEC et al.). White-throated Robins were not seen in the Sierra de Aloapaneca or Sierra Madre del Sur in Oax., where they are normally conspicuous, in three days spent in the area during the first week of

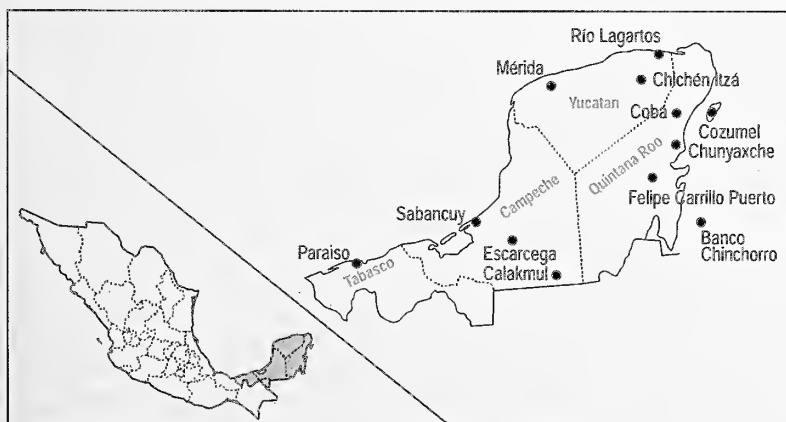
Dec (MDC). A male **Black Robin** (possibly 2 present) was at L.C. 24 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). Several Rufous-backed Robins were seen throughout the cen. valley of Oaxaca 6 Dec—21 Feb. Single **Gray Catbirds** were seen P.A.D. 7 Feb (RAN) and 25 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). A **Magnolia Warbler** was noted at Tot. 27 Feb (ESB, MEC). A **Yellow Warbler** was in Oaxaca City 23 Dec (*vide* JMF), and a stunning **Golden-cheeked Warbler** was reported at 985 m near Santa María Zoogochi 28 Feb (RAR). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was at the San Andrés Reservoir near Oaxaca City 25 Dec (ABB) and another in Tuxtépex 28 Dec (RH, CW, m. ob.). A **Hooded Yellowthroat** was reported 1 Jan at San Pablo Cuatro Venados, about 25 km sw. of Oaxaca City (MG). A **Hooded Warbler** was near Huatulco 26 Jan (MG), and 2 were recorded at Finca Irlanda near Tapachula, Chis 4 Feb (TD).

Single **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were at E.E. 22 Dec (ABB), Yagul 23 Dec (ABB), Oaxaca City 26 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.) and B.J. 26 Dec (ABB). **Orange-breasted Buntings** were recorded at Tot. 27 Feb (ESB, MEC); this is the nearest this Pacific-slope species comes to Oaxaca City. **Indigo Buntings** were seen at L.C. 22 Dec (ABB) and above Teotitlán del Valle 28 Feb (JF). **Varied Buntings** were seen at E.E. 25 Dec (ABB), e. of Teotitlán del Valle 23 Feb (RAN), and at Yagul 27 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). **Striped Sparrows** were seen 1 Jan at San Pablo Cuatro Venados (JMF, MG). **Hooded Oriole** was noted at S.F.P. 20 Dec (ABB), E.E. 22 Dec (ABB), Oaxaca City 23 Dec (*vide* JMF), and 26 Feb (ESB, MEC et al.). One **Altamira Oriole** and 2 **Yellow-winged Caciques** were recorded Tot. 27 Feb (ESB et al.).

Undocumented reports: A **Black Swift** was reported at P.A.D. 21 Dec (ABB).

Contributors (area compiler in boldface): Roque Antonio (RAN), Ramiro Aragon (RAR), Alice and Brad Boyle (ABB), Edward S. Brinkley, Michael D. Carmody, Megan Edwards Crewe, Tom Dietch, John M. Forcey, Manuel Grosselet, Diane Holsinger, Rich Hoyer, Craig Turner, Chris Wood.

YUCATAN PENINSULA



This winter was particularly wet in Yucatan, especially during the month of February, when two back-to-back "nortes" lasted the entire month. Perhaps the bad weather accounted for the sighting of a new species for the peninsula. Uncredited observations are by Barbara MacKinnon.

Abbreviations: F.C.P. (Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Q. Roo), J.B. (Jardín Botánico, Dr. Alfredo Barrera M., Puerto Morelos, Q. Roo), L.C. (Las Coloradas, Yuc) P.A. (Punta Allen), R.L.B.R. (Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve, Yuc.) R.L. (Río Lagartos, Yuc), S.F. (San Felipe, Yuc), S.K.B.R. (Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Q. Roo), Y.P. (Yucatan Peninsula).

BOOBIES THROUGH TERNS

A juv. **Brown Pelican** was at L. Cobá, Q. Roo 5 Jan (HGdS, PE). Four juv. **Brown Boobies** took up residence in Celestún, Yuc. this winter during the last two weeks of Dec (DB). One was still in the area 28 Feb (DB, BM). The only known nesting site of this species is at Alacrán Reef. A few juvs. are always present on Cayo Culebra in the S.K.B.R., and both ad. and juv. spend the winter on Isla Contoy, Q. Roo.

A **Least Bittern** was observed just w. of the 261/Progreso bypass junction 17 Jan, and an active nest of **Bare-throated Tiger-Heron** was located 100 m downstream from the Las Coloradas Bridge in the R.L.B.R. 20 Jan (KMB, LN). Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported for Isla Holbox 26-27 Jan (JG), and 2 ads. were observed in the wetlands alongside the road leading into Xcalak, Q.Roo 23 Feb. Although the species nests in the Laguna de Términos area, it is an uncommon migrant in the rest of the peninsula. Three **Glossy Ibis** were just s. of Puerto Morelos, Q.Roo 1 Dec (SNGH, DK). One to 4 **Jabirus** were reported very close to the town of Xcalak on several occasions this winter by local naturalist guides. At least two reports appear to be accurate and not misidentifications of Wood Storks. Local naturalist guides at San Felipe reported a **Jabiru** there in Feb in wetlands w. of

town. A female **Greater Scaup** was observed 9 km e. of Progreso, Yuc. 18 Jan (KMB, LN), adding a new species to the peninsula's ever-growing list. A complete report on these sightings is in preparation for publication in the journal *Cotinga*. Four **Lesser Scaup**, once quite common on the peninsula, were observed in Celestún 20 Dec (DB), 2 were seen there 4 Jan (HGdS, PE) and 2 were seen 9 km e. of Progreso 18 Jan (KMB, LN).

Three ad. **King Vultures** were seen at Calakmul, Camp. 10 Jan (HGdS, PE, GC). A **Great Black-Hawk** and a **Zone-tailed Hawk** were interesting finds at the J.B. 9 Jan (KMB, LN). A **Roadside Hawk** at S.K.B.R. had a large bat in its talons at 9 a.m. on 9 Jan (HGdS, PE). Of great interest was the report of a **Collared Forest-Falcon** on the L.C. road several km from Hwy 295 (KMB, LN). This is a new species for the R.L.B.R.

A **Rufous-necked Wood-Rail** was at Celestún bridge 4 Jan (HGdS). A **Piping Plover**, an apparently regular but rare migrant on the peninsula, was reported w. of Dzilam de Bravo, Yuc. around Santa Clara 18 Jan (KMB, LN) and another was at L.C. 4 Dec (SNGH, DL). Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** were among several hundred **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Celestún 10 (KMB, LN) & 26 Feb (DB), while 3 were observed there 28 Feb (EG, BM). A **Dunlin** was reported just e. of the 261/Progreso bypass junction 18 Jan (KMB, LN). Eleven **Wilson's** and 2 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at L.C. 4 Dec (SNGH). Four third-winter and adult **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** (resembling *gracilis*) were at R.L./L.C. 4 Dec and a second-winter bird was with an adult at L.C. 22 Jan (SNGH). Also, 10 **Caspian Terns**, a regular though not particularly common winter visitor, were reported on Isla Holbox 26-27 Jan (JG). One was at L. Cobá 5 Jan (HGdS, PE).

PARROTS THROUGH ORIOLES

An escapee **Red-lore Parrot** was on Cozumel 25 Jan (SNGH). A **Northern Potoo** was well seen on Cozumel 24 Jan, apparently the first record for this island (SNGH). The road leading to Nuevo Xcan out of Cobá, Q. Roo was found to be good for **Yucatan Poorwill** 12-13 Jan (KMB, LN). A female **Mexican Shearwater** was robbing nectar from pink *Ipomea* flowers near Umán, Yuc. 4 Jan (HGdS, PE). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was observed 6-7 Dec on Isla Holbox (JG), and a **Ringed Kingfisher** was there 26-27 Jan (JG). Although Howell & Webb (1995) do not map this species in n. Y.P., it has been sparingly reported along the n. coast since the 1970s. Five **American Pygmy Kingfishers** (including an imm.) were seen in the Celestún mangroves 4 Jan (HGdS, PE). A **Keel-billed Toucan** and 2 **Smoky-brown Woodpeckers** were in the first 4 km of the Vigía Chico Road at S.K.B.R. 9 Jan (HGdS, PE).

Yellow-bellied Tyrannulets were heard at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS); Howell & Webb (1995) do not map this species for the state of Camp. Two Caribbean Elaenias were at Xel-ha 7 Jan (HGdS, PE). Five Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were at Champotón, Camp. 12 Jan (HGdS). A female-plumaged **Rose-throated Becard** was seen 6 km s. of San Miguel, Cozumel 10 Jan (KMB, LN). A Thrush-like Schiffornis was found at the J.B. 22 Jan (KMB, LN). Two Cave Swallows were reported in the area of Isla Holbox 6-7 Dec (JG); the species is a very local resident on the peninsula. A flock of 25 Tree Swallows was at Celestún 4 Jan, and a flock of 400 was at Xel-ha 7 Jan (HGdS, PE). Yucatan Wrens were singing at Celestún 4 Jan (HGdS, PE), while Cozumel Wrens were skulking at San Gervacio ruins, Cozumel, Q. Roo 8 Jan (HGdS, PE). A Tropical Gnatcatcher, not uncommon in forested areas of Q. Roo, was reported at Cobá 12-13 Jan (KMB, LN).

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, normally a late-autumn transient, was close on the heels of a Wood Thrush at Cobá 6 Jan (HGdS, PE). A late **Swainson's Thrush** was at El Dedral, Cozumel 6 Dec (SNGH). Two thrushes that appeared to be very richly-colored Swainson's Thrushes were at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS). A Black Catbird was seen few km from Felipe Carrillo Puerto in the S.K.B.R. 9 Jan (HGdS). A Palm Warbler was at km 15 on the Vigía Chico road near F.C.P. 4 Dec and 21 Jan (SNGH). A male Black-throated Blue and a Wilson's Warbler were seen at Puerto Morelos 1 Dec, and a Wilson's Warbler was at El Cedral, Cozumel 6 Dec (SNGH). A large number of euphonias, mainly Yellow-throated, were on the ground feeding on fallen *Ficus* fruits in the cen. plaza of Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS, PE, GC). A Blue-gray Tanager was at Campeche, Camp. 12 Jan (HGdS). A male **Western Tanager** was at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS, PE, GC). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was observed in Celestún 15 Feb, while a **Lark Sparrow** was also there 25 Feb (DB). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was reported near L.C. in the R.L.B.R. 18 Jan (KMB, LN). Eight Savannah Sparrows were at Celestún 4 Jan (HGdS, PE).

A single **Brown-headed Cowbird** was observed on a cable near a stable in the town of Celestún on 27 Feb (BM, DB). This is the first winter record of this species, and interestingly, it was located within a block of where 3 were reported last year during spring migration. A male **Baltimore Oriole** was found nearby on the same day (BM, DB) and may have been the same bird reported 15-17 Jan (KMB, LN). This species was mapped as a transient in the nw. Y. P. by Howell & Webb (1995).

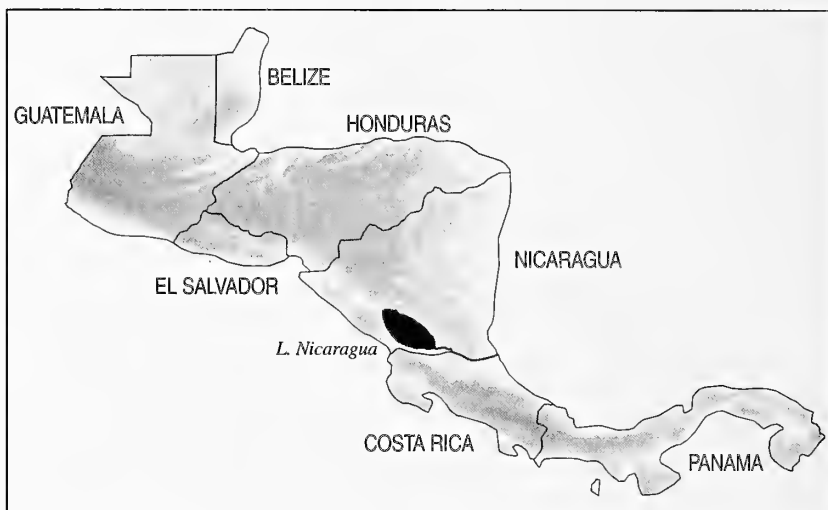
Undocumented reports: Ten Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported on Isla Holbox 29-30 Nov (JG).

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Ceballos, Paul Ehrlich, Eduardo Galicia, Jesús García Barrón, Héctor Gómez de Silva, Steve N.G. Howell, **Barbara MacKinnon**, Ismael Navarro, Laurie Ness and Gabriel Willow.



Central America



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The event of the winter season was not a bird but birders. For the first time, Central America surpassed the 50 mark, with 60 initialed observers contributing to this season's report. This is more than twice the number that contributed to the first report only five seasons ago and a testament to both the increased awareness by birders of the inclusion of Central America in the *North American Birds* seasonal reports and the increasing numbers of active birders in Central America. Hats off to all, and especially to those who contribute their observations on a regular basis!

It is perhaps too early yet, with so little historical data, to begin detecting yearly population

fluctuations or long-term changes in bird populations, but clearly, the numbers of Cave Swallows in Central America have increased dramatically in the past decade. Kelp Gulls are on the move and are likely to begin showing up in other areas besides Panama before long. This *may* have been a better than normal year for Pomarine Jaegers offshore and for Emerald Toucanets in the Belize lowlands, but with such a meager historical record, one can only speculate.

First country records keep coming in, but with "only" two country firsts—Cave Swallow in Costa Rica and Townsend's Warbler in Belize, and two potential firsts, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird in Belize and Hoffmann's Woodpecker in El Salvador—this would have to be considered a rather normal winter season

Abbreviations: B.B.R.C. (Belize Bird Records Committee); K.U.N.H.M. (Kansas University Natural History Museum); N.S.F. (Nova Shrimp Farm, Belize); Tikal (Tikal National Park, Petén District, Guatemala).

BOOBIES THROUGH HAWKS

Remarkable was a Masked Booby well inland over La Selva, Costa Rica 4 Feb (JW, JT, JA). Perhaps equally remarkable was a report of a melanistic Great Egret foraging in a roadside canal near Belize City 6 Feb (B&CM). The bird was described as completely black, including legs and bill, except for a pale gray and slightly yellowish bill tip. A juv. Reddish Egret at the Panama Canal's Gatún Spillway 26 Dec (DM, GH, GP) represented the latest of fewer than 10 Panama records. A Green Ibis seen along the Rio Liberia just s. of the town of Liberia 2 Feb (EC, CG) may have been the first ever recorded on the Pacific side of Costa Rica. It most likely came through a low pass in the Cordillera de Guanacaste, where they have been seen as high as 1000 m on the Caribbean slope. A waterfowl survey in El Salvador funded by Ducks Unlimited and conducted by WR, NH, and REIP produced an impressive 16,047 Black-bellied and 16,174 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on 9 Dec, and 20,564 Blue-winged Teal, one **Cinnamon Teal** (a male), and 7072 Northern Shovelers on 30 Jan, all on Cerrón Grande Res., Chalatenango. NH found 2 male Cinnamon Teal at this site three dates later. There were only two previous records for El Salvador. Elsewhere, WR and REIP found a flock of 21 white-morph **Snow Geese** at Laguna San Juan del Gozo, Usulután on 29 Jan, and WR counted 1300 Lesser Scaup at Laguna de Olomega, San Miguel 6 Feb. Only one previous record of Snow Goose exists for the country.

A Hook-billed Kite at Izalco, Sonsonate, 1 Feb (OK, BJO) was only the 6th for El Salvador. The Pearl Kite continues to expand in Costa Rica. One near Liberia 8 Feb (EC, CG) and another 4 km s. of Bagaces 10 Feb (JRZ), both in Guanacaste, represent the northernmost records to date. A Cooper's Hawk, rare in El Salvador, was at Izalco 3 Feb (OK). A Plumbeous Hawk, rare in Panama, was observed 2 Dec along Plantation Road in Soberania NP (JT, SA). In Belize, 3 White-tailed Hawks, s. of their normal range, were seen in different localities in s. Toledo 19 & 20 Dec (RE, MMa, LJ). Infrequently seen in Belize were single Zone-tailed Hawks at San Marcos (LJ) and along the Rio Grande (MM), both s. Toledo, on 1 & 19 Dec, respectively. The Red-tailed Hawk in Belize is normally restricted to the Mountain Pine Ridge, so one well to the n. in Gallon Jug, Orange Walk 25 Jan (HGdS, RK) was unexpected. A subad. **Harpy Eagle**, probably in its third year, was photographed at the Marengo Biological Station, Pen. de Osa, date unknown (*vide* JS). This is the first documented report of the species in Costa Rica in more than a decade, although there have been undocumented reports from near Carate on the other side of the Corcovado N.P. and from Peñas Blancas Valley in Monteverde. A

Black Hawk-Eagle at Las Fuentes Georginas, Zunil, Quetzaltenango 23 Feb (JB) was on the Pacific slope, where locally distributed.

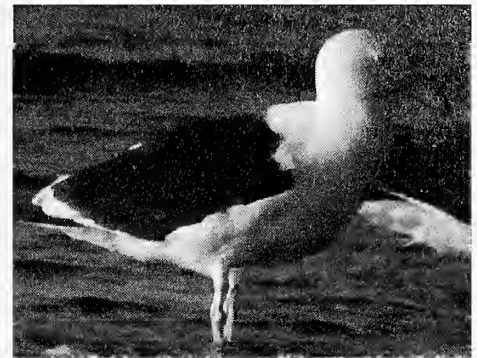
RAILS THROUGH TERNS

A Spotted Rail heard in the Dump ricefields near Big Falls, Toledo 19 Dec (LJ) was only the 2nd or 3rd record for s. Belize. Following on the heels of 6 **Southern Lapwings** seen along the Río Pacuare last Nov were 2 found on the Pacific side of Costa Rica at Playa Hermosa 17 Dec (RC), with one remaining until 28 Feb (JRZ), and up to 4 along the Río Tarcoles in early Mar (FM). An **American Avocet** at the mouth of Río Matina, Costa Rica 31 Jan (RR) was most unusual. This species is very rare in Costa Rica, especially on the Caribbean side. A Dunlin at Chomes 18 Feb (EA, RD) represents one of few records for Costa Rica. Stilt Sandpipers are not often seen in Belize in winter, but they are regular at Nova S.F., Belize District, where 2 were seen 2 Dec, with one still present 16 Dec (m. ob.).

Pomarine Jaegers are proving to be regular in the Bahía Amatique, Guatemala where 5 Pomarine Jaegers and one unidentified jaeger were seen 2 & 4 Jan (TM). Unexpected, however, was a Pomarine flying close to shore at Punta Gorda, Belize, only 25 km to the nw., also on 4 Jan (TM). Surprisingly, this was the first report of any jaeger species in Belize s. of Stann Creek. A flock of 6 Pomarine Jaegers was seen from shore 16 Jan (JTe, GB) at the port of Cristóbal near Colón, Panama. At least 2 Ring-billed Gulls, 2+ Herring Gulls, and a juv. Sabine's Gull were at Costa del Este, Panama City 2 Dec (DM, DeM, RKa, KK, GB, BA, LS). The first two are regular but rare in Panama, and the 3rd is rarely seen from shore. Of the 5 **Kelp Gulls** reported last fall on the outskirts of Panama City (DM, KW, SH), one remained until 5 Dec. At least 10 Elegant Terns, a rare and irregularly seen species in Panama, were at Costa del Este 3 Dec (GA).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Caribbean Dove heard near Nova S.F. 16 Dec (LJ) was the first documented from mainland Belize. They are rumored to be in n. Corozal District, an area that is seldom birded, but no specific records have surfaced. Two Mourning Doves were near Big Falls, Toledo 19 Dec (LJ). This species is an uncommon fall migrant but rare in winter in s. Belize. The Common Ground-Dove is also a rare fall and winter stray in s. Belize, so 6 in separate areas on the Punta Gorda C.B.C. 19 Dec (m. ob.) were quite unexpected. A female **Maroon-chested Ground-Dove** at Cerro el Pital, Chalatenango 27 Dec (GMGD *K.U.N.H.M.) was only the 2nd reported from El Salvador; however, it is found just across the border in Honduras and was expected to occur at this site. Two Yellow-headed Parrots along the



This adult Kelp Gull was one of five found 28 September 2001 at Costa del Este, on the outskirts of Panama City; one of them remained until at least 5 December. These birds were the first of this species ever reported in Central America, but its appearance was anticipated, given the rash of recent records from the northern and southern Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. (If only more tropical travelers would check the local gulls!)

Photograph by Darien Montanez.

Moho R., Toledo 19 Dec (RE) were s. of Punta Gorda, where this species was reported last fall after Hurricane *Iris*, thus establishing a new southernmost locality for this globally endangered species in Belize. Two Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts at Parque Deininger, La Libertad 12 Jan (TJ, JF) confirm that this species is found in the lowlands of El Salvador, where it had previously been reported only above 600 m elevation.

An individual of the rare *pacifica* subspecies of White-bellied Emerald was reported from the Abaj Takalik Maya Ruins, Retalhuleu, Guatemala 24 Feb (JB). Totally unexpected was the report of a male **Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird** near Tres Leguas, Orange Walk 23 Feb (BF et al.). The bird was well described and would be the first record for Belize if accepted by the B.B.R.C. An American Pygmy Kingfisher on Caye Caulker 30 Dec (J&DB) may have been the individual seen in the same location more than a year and half previously (29 Mar—28 Apr 2000). This nonmigratory species is otherwise unrecorded from the Belize cays. Emerald Toucanets were reported with greater frequency in the lowlands of Belize this winter than normally. Two apparently pure **Hoffmann's Woodpeckers**, respectively at San Felipe and Pasaquina, La Unión 26-27 Dec (NH) would be the first for El Salvador if correctly identified. Only last summer, Hoffmann's x Golden-fronted hybrids had been photographed and collected for the first time in El Salvador in the same general area.

WOODCREEPERS THROUGH PIPITS

The first Northern Barred-Woodcreepers in five years were reported in El Salvador by OK this winter: one at El Imposible N.P., Ahuachapán 20

Dec (*K.U.N.H.M.), and another 20 km to the e. at San Pedro Puxtla, Ahuachapán 18 Jan. A Mountain Elaenia 1 km e. of Santa María de Jesus, Quetzaltenango 6 Feb (JB) was in an area of Guatemala where it was previously unrecorded. In Belize, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, rare in the lowlands in winter, was seen 19 Dec (MM) along the lower Río Grande, Toledo; the last Eastern Wood-Pewee of the fall was recorded at Canton Farm near Altun Ha, Belize District 15 Dec (LJ); and for the 2nd winter in a row, a female Vermilion Flycatcher was found at Gallon Jug, Orange Walk 23 Jan (HGdS, RK), where it is considered a stray. Two Western Kingbirds at DuPlooy's Jungle Lodge s. of San Ignacio 27 Feb (TW et al.) represented only the 2nd and 3rd records from Belize. Two **Blue-headed Vireos** were reported from the Caribbean lowlands this winter, one at Tikal, Guatemala 21 Jan (HGdS, RK) and one at Hidden Valley Inn, Mountain Pine Ridge 5 Mar (MEC, Field Guides, Inc.). The latter was only the 2nd ever reported in Belize; however, it is likely that this newly recognized species has been overlooked in the past.

A Violet-green Swallow at Ensenada Lodge e. of the mouth of the Temisque, Guanacaste in the last week of Jan (IA, JZ, AD, EC, JBI) was unusual, especially in the Costa Rican lowlands. Large roosts of Cave Swallows of the migratory pale-rumped *pallida* group can now be found along El Salvador's coastal plain in Dec and Jan. This year it was last recorded 18 Feb at El Imposible NP (OK). Farther s., **Cave Swallows** were recorded in Costa Rica, apparently for the first time. On 31 Jan, JRZ, AD, EC, and JBI observed 5-8 *pallida* types in a mixed-species swallow flock at Ensenada Lodge, and on 18 Feb, one was seen with a large group of Barn Swallows along the entrance road to Chomes (EA, RD). Three Cliff Swallows at Izalco 1 Feb (OK, BJO) were the first of the spring in El Salvador. A Gray Catbird at Lago de Coatepeque, Sonsonate 25 Jan (OK) represented only the 4th record for El Salvador, and an **American Pipit** at Colima, Cuscatlán, on the shoreline of Cerrón Grande Res. 2 Jan (NH, REIP) was only the 3rd reported in *El Salvador*.

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

A Blue-winged Warbler was at Izalco, El Salvador 1 Feb (BJO), where it is relatively scarce. A Golden-winged Warbler at Finca Patrocinio, 35 km n. of Retalhuleu on the Pacific slope of Guatemala 13 Jan (JB) was also unexpected. In El Salvador, Nashville Warblers were recorded in three separate localities on 27 Dec, 9 & 13 Jan (DRE, OK, JF). With more than two dozen records now, this species is more frequent in winter in El Salvador than is reflected in the

literature. A Chestnut-sided Warbler at El Palmar Viejo, Quetzaltenango 12 Dec (JB) was on the Pacific slope of Guatemala. A male **Townsend's Warbler** reported by JS on the Punta Gorda C.B.C. 19 Dec from the hills behind San Felipe was refound by LJ 21 Dec, thus establishing the first record of this species in Belize. A Kentucky Warbler at San Pedro Puxtla, Ahuachapán 18 Jan (OK, CH *K.U.N.H.M.) became the 3rd specimen and 6th record for El Salvador. A Hooded Warbler at El Palmar Viejo 12 Dec (JB) and another at San Pedro Puxtla 13 Jan (OK, GMD *K.U.N.H.M.) were on the Pacific slope where the species is scarce.

A Rose-throated Tanager near Salt Creek Estate 16 Dec was at the s. limit of its range and the first ever for the Belize City C.B.C., begun in 1969. A Scrub Euphonia seen on Caye Caulker 17 Jan (J&DB) was the first ever reported from the Belize Cayes. It is a casual visitor to Ambergris Caye, which is in fact a long thin peninsula 10 km n. of Caye Caulker. A pair of Elegant Euphonias was at Chan Chich Lodge near Gallon Jug, Orange Walk in mid-Jan (JM, HGdS, RK). Scarce anywhere in Belize, these were the first reported n. of the Maya Mts. Perhaps the most interesting find of the winter in El Salvador was a small population of **Blue Seedeaters** at El Imposible N.P., 3 males and 2 females at scattered locations, 9 Jan—18 Feb (ph. OK, CH, BJO, and CZ). Only two previous records exist for the country, both from other areas. At least 6 Stripe-headed Sparrows 2 km e. of Tilapa, San Marcos 27 Jan (JB) were at a previously unknown locality in sw. Guatemala. Relatively scarce in winter in Belize was a female Painted Bunting at Laguna Village, Toledo 12 & 19 Dec (LJ). Rare in cen. Panama was a pair of Orange-crowned Orioles near Gamboa 24 Jan (LP). Four Yellow-winged Caciques at Ocos, San Marcos 3 Feb (JB) were on the Guatemalan side of the border with Mexico. The species is known to occur on the Mexican side but had not been reported previously on the Guatemalan side. Two Chestnut-headed Oropendolas in the Biotopo Mario Dary 19 Feb (CB, JVG, Field Guides, Inc.) were on the Pacific slope of Guatemala where unexpected.

Undocumented reports

Three American Robins reported by a visiting N.A. birder in early Feb on a golf course at Santa Ana in the Central Valley of Costa Rica, if correctly identified, would represent the first confirmed record for Costa Rica.

Cited observers (country coordinators in bold-face): Bill Adsett, Joel Alvarado, Eduardo Amengual, Seth Ames, **George Angehr**

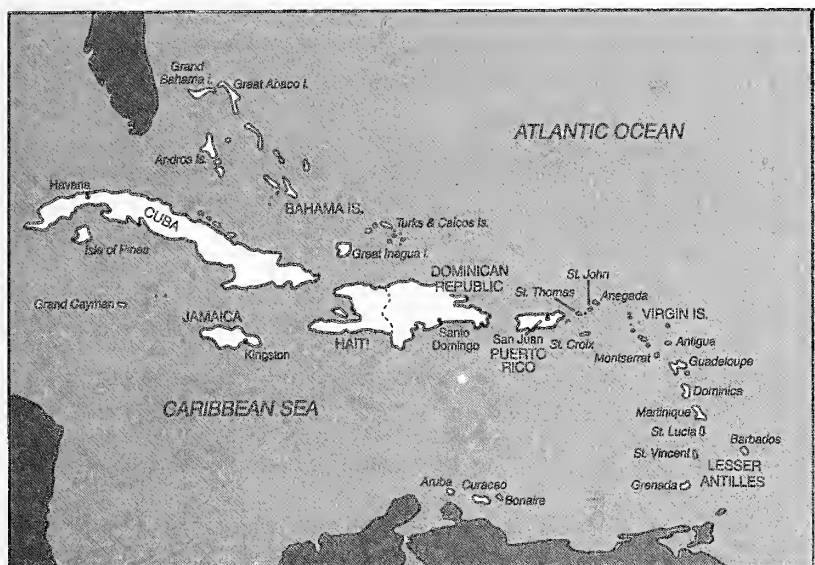
(Panama), Ingrid Ayub, Chris Benesh, Guido Berguido, Jason Berry, Jim and Dorothy Beveridge, Jim Black (JBI), Ernesto Carmen, Eric Castro, Robert Dean, Gabriela Margarita García Derás, Adolfo Downs, Roberto Echeverría, Megan Edwards Crewe, Douglas R. Escobar D., Jesse Fagan, Field Guides Inc., Bert Frenz, Cameron Gilles, Cullen Hanks, Néstor Herrera, Gonzalo Horna, Steve Huggins, Tom Jenner, **Lee Jones** (Belize), Rafael Campos, Karl Kaufmann, Rosabel Kaufmann (RKA), Richard Knapton, **Oliver Komar** (El Salvador), Mark MacReynolds (MMA), Francisco Madrigal, Tristan McKee, Bruce and Carolyn Miller, José Moh, Darién Montañez, Delicia Montañez (DeM), Mario Muschamp, B. J. O'Shea, Luis Paz, Guy Poisson, Ricardo Enrique Ibarra Portillo, Rafa Robles, Wilfredo Rodríguez, Julio Sánchez (JSa), Loyda Sánchez, Juan Sho, Héctor Gómez de Silva, José Tejada (JTe), Julie Tilden, Jamie Trejos, Jay VanderGaast, Jim Watt, Tom Wheeler, Ken Wysocki, Carlos Zaldaña, **James R. Zook** (Costa Rica).



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West Indies



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For the first time in the years of recording observation from this Region, reports from Cuba are now challenging the space formerly allotted to expanded coverage of the other Greater Antillean islands—Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. Four reports were received covering late November, 2-16 December, 7-16 February, and 21 February—2 March, the latter two during expeditions or bird surveys sponsored by the American Birding Association.

Tony White's original impression of the annual Christmas Bird Count at New Providence, Bahamas was that migrant songbirds were reduced in number from the previous year, and this was blamed in part on hurricane *Michelle* (5 November 2001). While there were some surprisingly low counts, e.g., one vs. 18 Black-throated Blue Warblers, White notes that the trend was not uniform. Nectivorous birds are usually the hardest hit by hurricanes, but nectivores such as Bahama Woodstar (31 vs. 45) and Bananaquit (54 vs. 38) did not show sharp declines.

Frugivores such as Western Spindalis (15 vs. 15) and Greater Antillean Bullfinch (4 vs. 6) also held their own.

There is little doubt as to the vagrant-of-the-season award. Andrew Dobson writes that pride of place goes to the flock of five **Bohemian Waxwings**, a new Bermuda record. Just consider how difficult it is to find them in the East south of the Great Lakes!

We are saddened to report the passing of Gibbon McKenzie, the resident birder on South Andros, who led many birders to the only nesting site of Cave Swallows in the Bahamas. His death is a severe blow to ornithology and birding in the Bahamas, and he will be missed.

Abbreviation: B.N.T. (Bahamas National Trust).

GREBE THROUGH TERNS

A pair of Pied-billed Grebes (DW) was feeding 3 chicks 12 Feb, reported to be a very early date, at Somerset's Long Bay Nature Reserve, Bermuda. Dobson reports a record-high 65 breeding pairs of Bermuda Petrel (Cahow) are established with the first hatching occurred on 21 Feb (JM). This is one of the major conservation successes of the island and the Region. A Cory's Shearwater (RP), a species rarely recorded in winter, was noted off North Shore, Bermuda 14 Dec. A Manx Shearwater seen off Elbow Beach, Bermuda 16 Feb was the first of the year (SR). Bracey reported that fishermen saw thousands of Audubon's Shearwaters and a possible Cory's Shearwater off Great Guana Cay, Abaco, Bahamas 23 Jan.

An ad. Red-billed Tropicbird was seen about 19 km w. of Grenada (ML) in late Feb, and 2 or 3 were seen on 14 Jan just off Port Elizabeth, Bequia, St. Vincent, en route to Mustique (SE). About 50 imm. Red-footed Boobies were noted

some 256 km s. of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (ML) in late Feb, and a group of about 50, all dark-morph ads. and imm., was seen on 14 Jan actively fishing in the open sea between Bequia and Mustique, St Vincent (SE). Am imm. Brown Pelican was first noted at Burgess Point, Bermuda 8 Jan, where it remained for a month. On 9 Feb, PD, LH, MW, and AB counted 29 Neotropic Cormorants at Cable Beach Golf Course ponds, New Providence, Bahamas.

During the island-wide count on Barbados 30 Dec, a single **Gray Heron** at Muddy Waters was a good find, though the species appears annually here now. The island-wide count on Barbados also produced 17 Little Egrets, including two nests (one with three eggs and one with chicks), and a total of 26 Snowy Egrets (with one nest). Might those numbers some day be reversed? A Great Egret was at the Grand Beach Resort, St. George's, Grenada (where uncommon) 10-12 Jan (SE). A nesting colony of 10-15 Wood Storks was noted at Las Salinas, Zapata peninsula, Cuba 23 Feb (JC).

A wild, free-flying Snow Goose has been present year-round on Hog Cay, Long Island, Bahamas since Oct 1999. The local landowner puts out 200 pounds of grain each day for the West Indian Whistling-Ducks, with which the Snow Goose consorts. Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks apparently lingered here for three months as well (GG, *fide* TW). On 9 Feb, PD, LH, MW, and AB counted 32 White-cheeked Pintails at Cable Beach Golf Course ponds. The high count of White-cheeked Pintails on Culebra, Puerto Rico in Jan was 19 on the 30th (ESB, SWH). On 2 Feb, B.N.T. members counted 589 ducks of seven species on New Providence. High counts were 243 White-cheeked Pintails and 186 Blue-winged Teal, mostly on Maillis's ponds in Adelaide. A count of 11 Green-winged Teal was also on the high side for this island. A **Common Teal** found at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 16 Dec remained into late Jan (AD). At Lyford Cay, New Providence, Bahamas, Hallett noted a Ruddy Duck 16-24 Jan.

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** (*fide* AD) seen over Paget, Bermuda 27 Feb was one of the earliest ever records there. An ad. **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen well perched and in flight near Old Bahama Bay resort grounds, Grand Bahama 16 Jan (BH); there is no previous report of this species from the Bahamas. A **Northern Goshawk** seen over Abbot's Cliff, Bermuda 18 Jan was the first since 1985 and one of few records off the continent (WF, DBW). The resident race of American Kestrels in North Andros, Bahamas continues to expand northward (CC, *fide* TW) in the Bahamas. Eccles noted 3 Peregrine Falcons in the Lesser Antilles in winter: one coming to roost on the Fort at St. George's, Grenada 12 Jan, one

on the cliffs at Chatham Bay, Union I. 13 Jan, and another still on 15 Jan over the fort at St. Lucia N.P., Rodney Bay, St. Lucia.

Soras were relatively frequently reported, with 10 an unusually high number at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 16 Dec (AD). A Piping Plover was found at Nassau, Bahamas 23-24 Jan (PD). An American Golden-Plover was studied carefully at Daniel's Head, Bermuda 8 Dec (AD, SR); the species is considered uncommon here in Dec. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2 American Oystercatchers (2nd record for St. Vincent and the Grenadines) were noted at Monkey Point, Mayreau I., 27 Dec (*fide* FH). Another 2 were at Culebra, Puerto Rico 31 Jan (SWH, ESB). A **Curlew Sandpiper** at Congo Road, Barbados 30 Dec was a great addition to the C.B.C. (EM). Six Least Sandpipers and 2 Short-billed Dowitchers were on the mud-flats around the lagoon on Mustique, St. Vincent 14 Jan; both are decidedly uncommon here (SE).

During a cruise through the n. Caribbean Sea, ML also noted 2 Pomarine Jaegers in a flock of boobies 256 km s. of the Dominican Republic in late Feb. On 27 Feb, a moribund subad. light-morph Parasitic Jaeger was found by PK on the 13th hole of the Lyford Cay Golf Course, New Providence, Bahamas. The bird died that night and has been preserved (AB). On 25 Feb, DF saw 2 first-winter Herring Gulls off Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman Island. According to Patricia Bradley (2000. *The Birds of Cayman Islands*, British Ornithologists' Union Checklist #18), the species is a very uncommon and irregular winter visitor in the Caymans. Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become ever more common in Bermuda in recent years, so a record 21 birds at the Dockyard 26 Feb was not entirely unexpected (SR). An apparent **Great Black-backed Gull** was seen for extended periods on 30 Nov at Gibara, Holguin, Cuba (DS, m. ob.); observers should beware of the identification pitfalls posed by the similar Kelp Gull, an increasingly frequent visitor to the lower Caribbean basin. A group of 4 Ring-billed Gulls in the port area of Basseterre, St. Kitts 18-21 Jan was unusual here (SE). Black-legged Kittiwakes were present at Bermuda early Dec—Jan, with a maximum day count of 4 along South Shore (DW, SR, AD). A Forster's Tern wintered this year in Castle Harbour, Bermuda and was seen regularly along the Causeway Nov—Feb (m. ob.). A Forster's Tern was noted at Nassau on 23-24 Jan (PD). At Guadeloupe, an ad. Caspian Tern was found 27 Dec at Anse du Canal, together with a first-winter Forster's Tern (the latter a first documented record for Guadeloupe; AL). Seven Sandwich Terns among a group of about 40 Royal Terns, were off the beach south of the "port" on Mustique, St. Vincent (SE).

DOVES THROUGH SPARROWS

On North Andros, Bahamas, 3 Key West Quail-Doves were found feeding under almond trees at Owens Town 19 Jan (MB, JW, DW, MA). At Sopllillar, Cuba, Markus and Anita Lagerqvist were treated to the shy Blue-headed Quail-Dove 11 Dec. Hepburn and Schaller saw a Barn Owl at the Botanic Gardens in Nassau, Bahamas on New Year's Day. A pair of **Ashy-faced Owls** (formerly Barn Owl; now *Tyto glaucops*, race *insularis*) was seen and heard 10-11 Jan at the Grand Beach Resort, St. George's, Grenada (SE). The male was seen well (carrying prey to the nest), and one wonders whether a fresh investigation of species limits might not be in order here, given the striking distinctions from Ashy-faced Owls on Dominica (race *nigrescens*) and Hispaniola (nominate *glaucops*).

The Lagerqvists report that Bee Hummingbird has not been reliably or consistently seen since hurricane *Irene*. Fernandina's Woodpecker and Zapata Sparrow, also Cuban endemics, have likewise become more difficult to find. Judith O'Neale visited Cuba in Feb and did not find Bee Hummingbird. However, the A.B.A. survey managed to find one 22 Feb in the hurricane-devastated area of Zapata (JC). Two or 3 birds believed to be Gray-rumped Swifts (listed by Raffaele et al. as "possibly a year-round resident, but probably only seasonal") were at the port of St. George's, Grenada 12 Jan (SE). A small group of Barn Swallows over a lake in the Grand Etaing N.P. on Grenada was unusual for the date—11 Jan (SE). On 14 Dec near Parque Nacional La Belen, the Lagerqvists found a Giant Kingbird, whose range is now restricted to Cuba (no longer on Great Inagua or Caicos islands). Most of the birding tour groups have been finding this species in this area or nearby, but it is clearly rare and endangered throughout Cuba and the Isla de Pinos.

Paul Dean reports that he does not know of any reports of Great Lizard-Cuckoo on New Providence, Bahamas in the past two years. This bird may be in serious trouble on this island. After 19 years of survey at Vieques, DG reports that Puerto Rican Woodpecker populations are at their zenith, with eight pairs and 20 individuals. Three Eastern Phoebe overwintered at Port Royal Golf Course, Spittal Pond, and Kindley Field airport, Bermuda (AD). Two very late or wintering Black-whiskered Vireos were found at Turners Hall Woods, Barbados 30 Dec (EM). Two singing **House Wrens** were discovered at St. George's Cemetery, Bermuda 4 Nov; these birds, very rare on Bermuda at any time, overwintered here (IF, m. ob.). A Golden-crowned Kinglet was at Ireland Island Cemetery, Bermuda 16 Dec (DW), with another at Compston's Pond 24 Feb (SR). A Hermit Thrush was noted at Port Royal Golf Course, Bermuda 9 Feb (SR). The 15

European Starlings 11 Nov at Diamond Farms, New Providence (PD) were outnumbered there during the C.B.C. 16 Dec (TW), which counted 62. A flock of 19 American Pipits (AD) wintered at Kindley Field airport, Bermuda, where they were first noted 5 Jan. One was present at Diamond Farms, New Providence 1 Dec (PD, m. ob.). A remarkable flock of 3 **Bohemian Waxwings** at Dock Hill, Bermuda 2 Dec boggles the mind; the eventual flock of 5 birds, last seen 6 Jan, provided a new record for the archipelago and one of very few (if any?) at this latitude anywhere (JG, m. ob.).

An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen on the C.B.C. 19 Dec at Princess Ruby Golf Course at Freeport, Grand Bahama (TW, LG), and another was noted at the chicken farm s. of Marsh Harbour, Abaco 21 Jan (BH, WB). A Yellow Warbler at Port Royal Golf Course, Bermuda 26 Jan provided a rare wintering record (SR). A Kentucky Warbler (JM) in the Smiths Hills, Bermuda 29 Nov—Dec was likewise rare in winter there. The Vieques island population of Adelaide's Warbler seems to be increasing according to DG's 19-year study. They appear to exploit all habitats on the island. Are they poised to jump to the Virgin Islands or to Culebra? On 23 Feb, MA and JT of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team found a Kirtland's Warbler on North Andros n. of the Fresh Cr. Bridge. On 20 Feb, AS saw 5 Yellow-throated Warblers in one tree at Ardastra Gardens, Nassau, Bahamas. A Hooded Warbler was at Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas 13 Jan, further evidence that this species winters in the Bahamas (RP). At Barbados, a male Kentucky Warbler at Turners Hall Woods provided the 3rd record for the island. Three Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen well on St. Kitts 19-20 Jan, 2 along the Wingfield Trails in the rain forest, another near a small lagoon ne. of Basseterre (SE). A Yellow-breasted Chat at Abbot's Cliff, Bermuda 19 Jan was noteworthy in winter (PW).

At Treasure Cay, Grand Bahama, Bracey found a female Summer Tanager 12 Jan; another in Bermuda's Botanical Gardens 21 Jan was exceptional (DW). A Blue Grosbeak discovered wintering on Cooper's Island, Bermuda in Feb was most unusual (DBW). A **Dickcissel** was on Nonsuch Island, Bermuda 17 Feb (DBW et al.), while one at Prospect Fields 12 Dec was one of 3 in Dec (SR). Red-winged Blackbirds were recorded during the annual C.B.C. at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 16 Dec (AD, PH). An **Evening Grosbeak** was present in Botanical Gardens, Bermuda 31 Dec—5 Jan (GP). In the U.S. Virgin Islands, House Sparrows were widely distributed in w. St. Croix. At Staniard Creek, North Andros, Black-cowled Orioles were seen

daily during a week-long survey (MA, MB, DE, JW), but only one oriole of the 15 counted was not an adult. This suggests that the Shiny Cowbird may already be affecting breeding success.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): Matt Anderson, Aileen Bainton, Mike Baltz, Chuck and Nancy Bell, Woody Bracey, Edward S. Brinkley, Sandra Buckner, Chuck Cable, Julie Craves, Paul Dean, **Andrew Dobson**, Stephen

Eccles, Dave Ewert, Ian Fisher, David Freeland, Wendy Frith, **Martin Frost**, Lynn Gape, Daphne Gemmill, Greg Graham, Jennifer Gray, Steven W. Hairfield, Bruce Hallett, Floyd Hayes, Tony Hepburn, Peter Holmes, Linda Huber, Peter Kemp, Chuck Knapp, Anthony Levesque, Mark Lockwood, Markus (MkL) and Anita Lagerqvist, Jeremy Madeiros, Gary Markowski, Angel Martinez, **Eddie Massiah**, Neil McKinney, Judith O'Neale, Ron Pagliaro, George Peterich, Pedro Regalado, Steve Rodwell, Freddie Schaller, Al

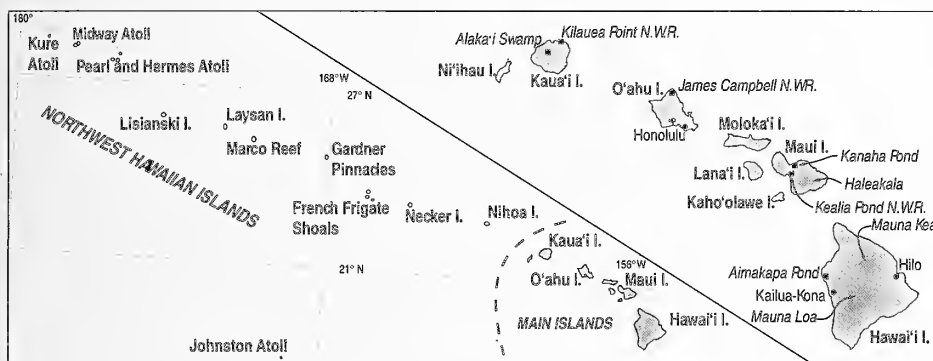
Schirmacher, Don Shanahan, Jasmine Turner, Paul Watson, David Wallace (DW), Michael Wakelin, **Tony White**, David Wingate (DBW), Joseph Wunderle, Jr.

Corrigenda

I have been incorrectly attributing some observations from Guadeloupe to Martin Frost (MF) when they should be attributed to Anthony Levesque (AL). My apologies to both observers who graciously informed me of my error.



Hawaiian Islands



SA Lehua is a small, rocky island about 8 km north of Ni'ihau. The island, a state seabird sanctuary, is uninhabited and infrequently visited. There has been little information about birdlife on Lehua. Eric VanderWerf spent three days surveying birds on the island 19-21 Feb. Highlights of the survey were 31 adult Black-footed Albatross and 8 nests with chicks and 50 adult Laysan Albatross and 9 nests with chicks. Eric counted 2352 Red-footed Boobies, but birds were still returning at dusk when it became too dark to count. The survey turned up two unusual migrants, a Peregrine Falcon and a first-year Glaucous-winged Gull.

Two Cattle Egrets were seen on Midway Dec-29 Jan (BP, MM). Cattle Egrets are abundant in the main Hawaiian Islands but rare on the NW Hawaiian Islands.

SA Chandler Robbins replaced the band on a Laysan Albatross tending a chick on Midway in February. The bird's band had been replaced several times so it took a bit of digging to find out when it had been first banded. It was discovered that Chandler Robbins himself had first banded the bird in 1956. The bird was incubating an egg at the time. Since Laysan Albatrosses don't breed till they are at least 4 years old (NH), this bird must be at least 50 years old and is probably older. This is a new longevity record for a U.S.-banded bird. Long may it soar!

Abbreviations: E. (Endangered Species); H. (Hawai'i Island); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., Hawai'i Island); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kaua'i Island); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu Island); K. (Kaua'i Island); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui Island); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui Island); Kii (Kii Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu Island); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kaua'i Island); M. (Maui Island); O. (O'ahu Island); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu Island); T. (Threatened Species).

ALBATROSS THROUGH EGRETS

At least 2 Short-tailed Albatross (E.), remained on Midway Dec+, one on Sand Island and one on Eastern Island. (MM, BP). A visiting birder on a boat trip west of Kaua'i 26 Dec observed 2 Tristram's Storm-Petrels (MH, *fide* DK). Tristram's Storm-Petrels are rarely reported near the main islands.

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Hheavy rains, which started in November, continued through January. This was a return to typical wet winter weather after four dry winters. Drier weather returned in February. We had pretty good observer coverage. Reports from tours on Hawai'i Island provided regular observations of some very rare native species. Seabird reports were also better than usual with a handful of boat trips and a survey of Lehua Island.

DUCKS THROUGH RAILS

A Fulvous Whistling-Duck was seen at Kii 1 Dec (PD, RM, MO) but not thereafter. Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were first reported in Hawaii in 1982, when 6 of unknown origin were found near Kii. Breeding was documented in 1984. The population on O'ahu had increased to a few dozen birds by 1990, and there were sightings on Kaua'i, Moloka'i, and Maui. The population dwindled in the early 1990s. For the past few years, only a single individual has been observed. "Lonesome George" was seen regularly near Kii till this Dec. It appears that Fulvous Whistling-Ducks have now disappeared from our islands.

Numbers of wintering waterfowl were low overall. Northern Shovelers and Northern Pintails are the most common migrant ducks in Hawaii. There are many records of hundreds of both species at a single site. This winter, the largest flock of shovelers was 41 at Kealia 29 Nov (MN). The largest flock of pintail was about 50 at Kii 20 Feb (MO). There were good numbers of some less common ducks. Wigeon of both species were reported from Hawai'i I. to Midway Atoll. The highest count was 19 at Kii 10 Jan (KP) and 2 Feb (PD). The count on 2 Feb included at least 10 Eurasian Wigeon (PD). That number matches the highest counts for the species in Hawaii. There were also many reports of Green-winged Teal. The largest number reported was 24 at Kii 15 Dec (PD, RM). Two Common Teal were on Midway (BP) and at least one was at Kii (PD). Numbers of bay ducks remained very low. Lesser Scaup are the most common bay ducks in Hawaii. Counts of 20+ at a single site are not unusual. The high tally of Lesser Scaup was only 6 at Kii 5 Jan (MO). One Tufted Duck was on Midway Dec—2 Jan (BP). One Bufflehead was found at Wailua, K. 28 Dec (DK). Tufted Ducks and Buffleheads are both rare in Hawaii.

Several observers had a good look at an imm. (rusty-colored) Northern Harrier along the saddle road, H. 8 Feb (LK, *fide* RP). A light-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** found on Midway Oct remained through Dec+ (MM, BP). A falcon spotted in Kaneohe during the Honolulu C.B.C. 21 Dec was identified as a Merlin (†EV). A Peregrine Falcon was later observed perched on the same branch where the Merlin had been seen. The Peregrine was found several times 12–25 Jan (†TC). Peregrine Falcons are rare but regular winter visitors in Hawai'i while Merlins are very rare.

Numbers of Hawaiian Coots (E.) were low in some areas. Only 15 Hawaiian Coots were found at Hanalei 28 Dec (DK), and the count at Kealia had dropped to 104 by 21 Feb (MN). An **American Coot** was discovered 5 Dec at

Waiakea Pd, H. (†JR) by an observer with little experience with the native Hawaiian Coots. (American Coots are very rare in Hawaii and very similar to Hawaiian Coots.) Other experienced observers were able to confirm the identification as American Coot after close scrutiny and comparison with a nearby Hawaiian Coot (DL, v.t. RD).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

A white-headed stilt was discovered near Kailua, H. 6 Feb (ph. SW). There was much speculation that it might be a vagrant Black-winged (Pied) Stilt from Australasia, but the consensus is that the bird is an aberrant Hawaiian Stilt (DL, JR). Hawaiian Stilts (E.) began nesting unusually early this year. One nest was observed at Kanaha 11 Feb (LT).

A Whimbrel of the North American race remained at Kii Dec+ (PD). The **Black-tailed Godwit** first seen on Maui 26 Oct 2000 has been at Kii since Jan 2001 (m. ob.). It remains the only one of its species reported in the Hawaiian Islands. As of late Feb, the godwit showed no signs of molting into alternate plumage (PD). A banded Wandering Tattler was seen at Waiakea Pond, H. 12 Jan (JR). This bird was banded in Alaska 14 Jul 1999 and has presumably made the round trip every year since then; it was missing during the summers of 2000 and 2001 (RD). A Red Phalarope molting from juvenal to first-winter plumage was found and photographed at Kanaha on the C.B.C. 14 Dec (ph. NM). A Common Snipe on Midway Dec—2 Jan was identified as a bird of the North American race *delicata* (†BP).

Unusually high numbers and varieties of gulls were reported this winter. There were 5–6 first-winter Laughing Gulls at Kii 29 Dec+ (PD, RM, MO, KP). One was in Hilo, H. 23 Feb+ (RD, DP, JR). One first-winter Ring-billed Gull was spotted at Kii 5 Jan (MO) and 19 Jan (RM). One first-winter Herring Gull was observed intermittently on Midway 1–19 Jan. Another individual was found dead 7 Jan (BP). An ad. Slaty-backed Gull was present on Midway 12–15 Jan (†BP). First-winter Glaucous-winged Gulls appeared in several locations. Seven were counted at Kinikini Ditch, K. 2 Jan (ph. JD, DK). One to 5 were around Kii Dec+ (PD, RM, MO, KP). A Glaucous-winged found dead at Kii 23 Feb (PD) was noted to be very emaciated (MS). An oiled Black-legged Kittiwake was found dead on Midway 27 Feb (WS).

A Caspian Tern was observed on the Marine Corps base in Kaneohe, O. several times 12 Dec—9 Feb (m. ob.). This is probably the same individual that has been in the islands since Nov 2000. One basic-plumaged Common Tern was seen at Kii 29 Dec (PD, RM). Both of these species are uncommon in Hawaii.

PARAKEETS THROUGH PASSERINES

Flocks of up to 30 Red-masked Parakeets were observed in e O'ahu Dec+. No roosts or nests have yet been located (MO). The similar Mitred Parakeets seem to be flourishing in the Kona area, H. (RD). Over 100 Red-crowned Parrots were counted in Pearl City 4 Dec, a high count for this species (PD).

Two Puaiohi (E.) were found in Koke'e, K. on the Waimea C.B.C. 24 Dec (DK). One Puaiohi heard singing and briefly seen 16 Feb was unbanded (DL). Apparently captive-reared birds released in the area have successfully raised young or have attracted wild birds to the area—

an encouraging development for this very rare species (JF).

An O'ahu 'Amakihi was seen carrying nesting material 8 Dec in Honolulu (JR). There are few nesting records for this species and none in Dec. We received over a dozen reports of Palila (E.) at Pu'u La'au, H. Dec+ (DL, DP, RP, JR). Two Maui Parrotbills (E.) and 2 'Akohekohe (E.) were seen along the Waikamoi boardwalk, M. 9 Feb (JR). At least 5 'Akiapola'au (E.) were counted near Kulani, H. 16 Dec (JR). One or 2 'Akiapola'au were found on several tours of Pu'u 'O'o Ranch, H. Dec+ (RP). One or 2 'Akiapola'au were also located along Pu'u 'O'o trail, H. (JR) and at Hakalau 24 Feb (RP).

Only 3 **Po'ouli** (E.) remain alive. The birds are in separate territories and never meet. Staff and volunteers with the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project are trying to catch one of the 2 females and move her into the territory of the only male. The first step was to have been mounting a radio transmitter on the male, but he has avoided capture. Project members have given up on capturing the male and are now concentrating on capturing the female (EV).

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Major Negative Impacts of Early Intensive Cattle Stocking on Tallgrass Prairies: The Case of the Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*)

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Abstract

Human impacts on tallgrass prairies and their biota have been severe. Among recent impacts is the shift from mosaic or rotational burns in fall and spring to broadscale artificial burns annually in the spring, coupled with "early intensive cattle stocking." We examine the effects of this relatively new management regime on the Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*). First, the rapid decline of this species is documented—a broad range expansion at the end of the nineteenth century followed by a drastic range reduction over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century. The core of the species's range has usually been considered to be the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas, yet this region has seen dramatic population declines during the past two decades. These declines are closely associated with different burning regimes: where spring burning regimes and associated early intensive cattle stocking are common, prairie-chickens are declining dramatically, whereas where spring burning is rare and/or rotated, populations are stable. We suggest that this relatively new management technique works to the great detriment of the Greater Prairie-Chicken—and indeed to that of an entire suite of species that depend on prairie vegetation that is not burned yearly.

INTRODUCTION

The tallgrass prairie is the most heavily impacted biome in North America, with less than 5 per cent of its presettlement extent remaining (Samson and Knopf 1994). Remaining tallgrass prairie is highly fragmented, with the largest contiguous unplowed section being the Flint Hills region of extreme northern Oklahoma and eastern Kansas (Reichman 1987, Knapp and Seastedt 1998). Because of their great extent, the Flint Hills have long been recognized as harboring the largest population of Greater Prairie-Chickens (Baker 1953, Johnsgard 1973, Westemeier and Gough 1999) and other species restricted to tallgrass prairie.

However, beginning in 1980 in northern Oklahoma (L. Holcombe, pers. comm.) and soon thereafter in Kansas—and especially in the past five years—the vast majority of the Flint Hills and adjacent areas have been managed under a fire and grazing regime called early intensive stocking (Smith and Owensby 1978, Launchbaugh et al. 1983). In contrast to the mosaic of burned and unburned areas that traditionally char-

acterized tallgrass prairie cattle ranching (burns every 2-3 years, with stocking and grazing from May to October), extensive portions of these regions are now burned annually in March and April, in preparation for the arrival of cattle from as far away as Mexico (*Lawrence Journal-World*, 27 May 2001). Arriving by truck between mid-March and mid-May, cattle feed on newly emerging grass as soon as 10 days post-burn and continue to graze these areas for 90-120 days (*Lawrence Journal-World*, 27 May 2001; Launchbaugh et al. 1983). This intense grazing regime uses roughly twice the stocking rate (Launchbaugh et al. 1983) and leaves much of the Flint Hills devoid of grass more than a few centimeters high until at least mid-July.

During the past four years, we have been stunned by the extent of this intense agribusiness practice in the Flint Hills and surrounding areas, so here we investigate what influence this phenomenon is having on the native biota. We focus on the Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*) and present a rangewide analysis of its distribution and population status. In order to investigate prairie-chicken population trends as they relate to fire regimes and grazing intensity, we attempted to correlate best available data on populations in the Flint Hills and adjacent areas with burned areas in 2000 as detected by three independent long-term remote-sensing operations.

THE GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN

The Greater Prairie-Chicken ranks among three species that have seen the most catastrophic range contraction and population declines in North America (Fig. 1; Johnsgard 1973, Schroeder and Robb 1993). This species, likely numbering in the tens of millions in the late 1800s, once ranged from the Great Plains to the eastern seaboard (Johnsgard 1973, A.O.U. 1998). The easternmost population, known as the Heath Hen (*T. c. cupido*), was extinct by 1932 (A.O.U. 1998). The subspecies known as Attwater's Prairie-Chicken, *T. c. attwateri*, formerly distributed along the Gulf coastal prairie from southwestern Louisiana to southern Texas, is now critically endangered, with a total of fewer than 60 individuals in two isolated populations in eastern Texas (Silvy et al. 1999).

The species began serious range contraction in the first few decades of the twentieth century, disappearing from Ohio and Indiana by the 1930s. In the succeeding 50 years, it disappeared from almost the entirety of the eastern sector of its original range, although stocking from Kansas and Nebraska populations maintains small, intensively managed populations in Illinois, Iowa, and most recently Missouri (Westemeier and Gough 1999). The continent-wide loss and fragmentation of native grasslands has been the primary cause for these declines (Johnsgard 1973). As of 1980, apparently viable populations remained only in Kansas, Nebraska, and sparsely in South and North Dakota, Minnesota, and possibly Missouri (Westemeier and Gough 1999). Numerous authors considering the distribution, abundance, and continuity of the species's distribution have suggested that Kansas's Flint Hills constitute a nucleus of the species's distribution and would be critical to the species's long-term survival (Svedarsky et al. 1999).

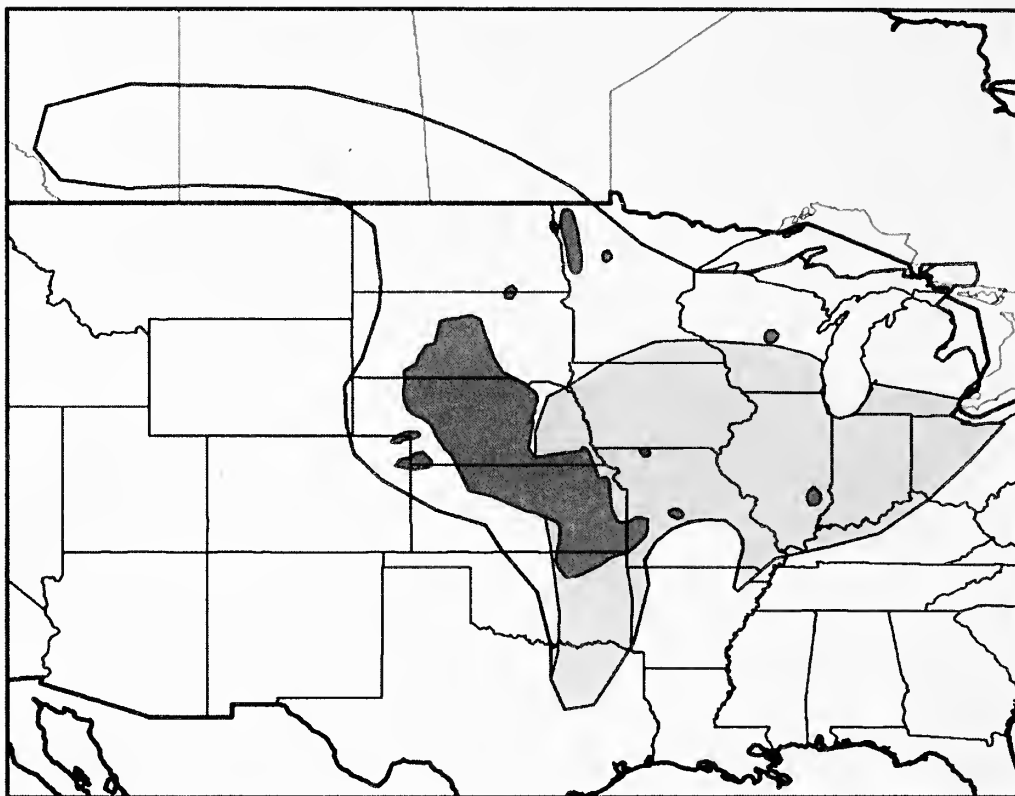


Figure 1. Greater Prairie-Chicken original (light gray shading), late nineteenth-century (black outline), and present distribution (dark gray shading), extracted from Westemeier and Gough (1999).

METHODS

Distributional data.—Distributional data for Greater Prairie-Chickens that summarize the species's original range, its expanded distribution in the late nineteenth century, and its present, highly fragmented distribution were drawn from Westemeier and Gough (1999) and from natural history museum specimens (see Acknowledgments). We digitized this information in a GIS environment (using ArcView 3.2) and saved it in raster grid format for further analysis at a resolution of one km. We reduced the extent of the species's distribution to reflect current coverage by native tallgrass and mixed-grass prairies, based on the U.S. Geological Survey's world land use/land cover classification at one-km spatial resolution ("grassland" and "wooded grassland" cover types).

Burn detection.—We used three approaches to summarize the extent and spatial distribution of spring burning within the range of the species, using the year 2000 as an exemplar year. First, we downloaded the year 2000 results of the ATSR world fire atlas facility, which provides detection of nighttime fires for the entire world. However, because controlled burns on prairies are carried out mostly in daytime, this approach greatly underestimated frequency of fires in the region.

Second, we inspected Landsat7 Thematic Mapper images to identify recently burned areas. Here, the color composite scheme in the visible bands allows easy visual detection of burned areas as black smudges on the landscape (M. Jakubauskas, pers. comm.). These images were consulted, and crude digitizations developed, at the U.S. Geological Survey website. However, because images are available only every 16 days, and cloud cover in the spring is frequently sufficient to compromise image quality, we were able to evaluate spring 2000 burns only in the eastern portion of the Flint Hills region (1999 and 2001 provided even less areal and temporal coverage for cloud-free imagery).

To provide a more complete view of spring burns (in 2000), we

explored a second approach to detecting recently burned areas. Important assumptions of this approach are: first, in spring, that the general trend is of greening of the prairie landscape; and second, that burns and cloud cover are the principal factors that could reduce greenness. In satellite imagery, the normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) presents an approximation of how green a landscape is: the proportion of photosynthetically absorbed radiation, calculated as $(ch2 - ch1) / (ch2 + ch1)$, where $ch2$ represents the 0.58–0.68 μ portion of the visible spectrum, and $ch1$ represents the 0.725–1.1 μ portion of the infrared spectrum. Hence, we used NDVI images (one-week composites) for March–April 2000 and performed the following manipulation in ArcView (version 3.2): (1) find grid squares in which NDVI in a given week is higher (greener) than in the following week; (2) find grid squares in which NDVI value in a given week is higher than in two weeks later. Given that cloud cover in the Great Plains rarely lasts more than a week in spring, (3) find grid cells in which both (1) and (2) are fulfilled. These grid cells are those that "browned down" in spring and remained browner for at least 10–14 days. We assumed that cloud cover is not a factor for such extended periods of time and that drying of soils and vegetation (which would cause a lower, or browner, NDVI value) owing to drought (not common in spring) or spring plowing is not a factor; however, these assumptions prevented our application of this approach outside of the Flint Hills region.

To validate our hypothesis, we used two approaches. First, we compared frequency of these long-term brown-downs (apparent burns) in the Flint Hills, where spring burns are frequent, with northern and eastern Douglas County, where spring burns are infrequent and of very small extent (ATP and MBR, pers. obs.). Second, we compared the distribution of fires and burns detected by the three independent methods (indeed three independent sensors) to evaluate spatial coincidence. Burn data

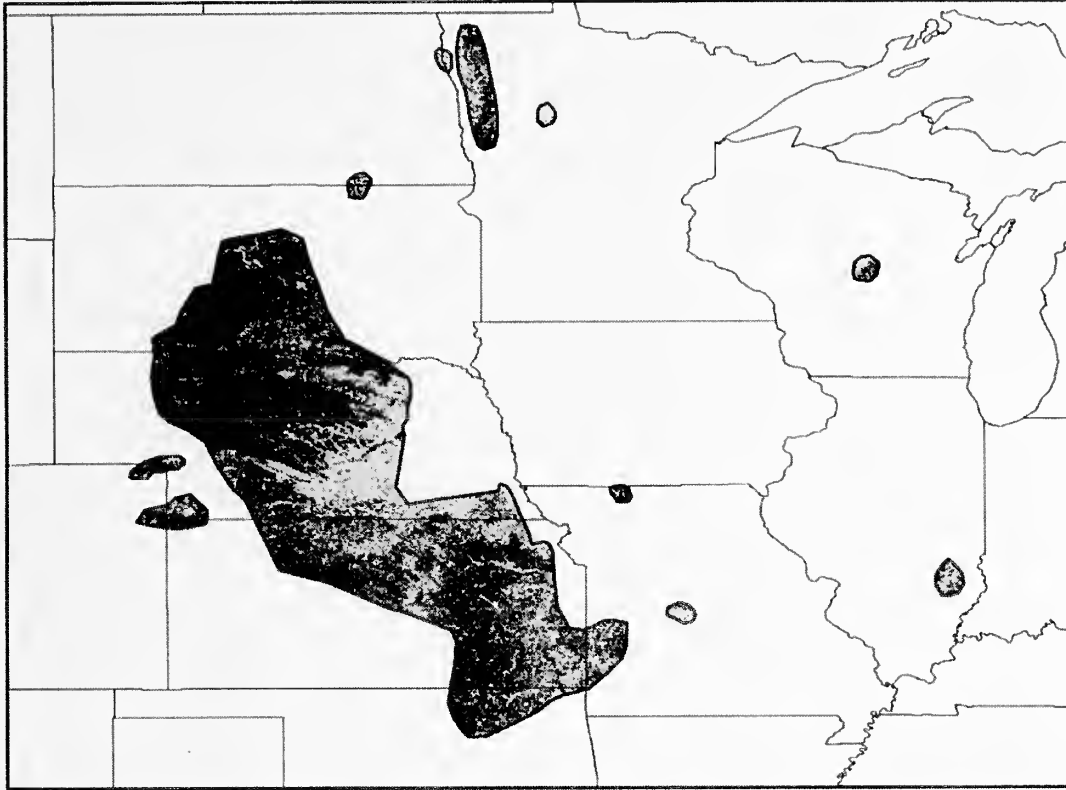


Figure 2. Greater Prairie-Chicken present range (Westemeier and Gough 1999), with the distribution of grassland and wooded grassland (in black) overlain to indicate probable true distribution in those areas.

were also evaluated qualitatively with our own observations of burned areas in the region.

Population trends.—Trend data for each state, as well as for regional and local populations of Greater Prairie-Chickens, were assembled from Svedarsky et al. (1999), supplemented with information provided by J. Taylor, D. McCrea, B. Sandercock, and D. Wiedenfeld. Trends for two regions in Nebraska and on a statewide basis for Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Dakota were assembled from lek data for which ≥ 8 years of data were available and are presented as three-year running averages for the period 1980–2000. Although data for South Dakota and Kansas are directly comparable (males/lek/square mile), data for Nebraska and Oklahoma were available only in other forms (as average number/lek and as population density index [number of males/lek \times number of leks/square mile], respectively); nonetheless, all of these indexes are intercorrelated, resulting in similar interpretations. While we are aware that these survey data do not translate directly into population density estimates—and are not directly comparable from state to state—we present the information available from each state to illustrate the likely population trends across the range of the species.

RESULTS

Prairie-chicken distribution.—Historical patterns of prairie-chicken distribution show a dynamic range for the species. Originally more southerly in its distribution in the Great Plains, it expanded greatly to the north and west at the end of the nineteenth century (Fig. 1). Its present distribution is now dramatically reduced to a few small patches in the eastern sector, and one larger swath in the central Great Plains, extending from Kansas and northern Oklahoma north to South Dakota (Fig. 1).

This “present” distribution, however, includes several land cover types not used by prairie-chickens, and so we reduced it to reflect the geo-

graphic distribution of tallgrass and mixed-grass prairie (Fig. 2). The species’s core range may be said to lie along the western fringe of its present range (South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas): its actual and potential distribution elsewhere is reduced to small, isolated fragments.

Spring burning.—The three approaches to assessing spring burn frequency revealed similar geographic patterns: burns were concentrated in the Flint Hills region, from northernmost Oklahoma north to northern Kansas in the vicinity of Manhattan (Fig. 3). As predicted, the Flint Hills saw extensive fires and burning, whereas Douglas County did not. The actual fires detected (ATSR sensor data)—being nighttime fires in a region where controlled burns are done in no small part in the daytime (ATP and MBR, pers. obs.)—are clearly but a subset of the true number of fires in the region.

The LANDSAT7 imagery, where cloud-free imagery existed, showed a much broader pattern of burned areas. In the Flint Hills, upland areas (the actual prairies) were almost ubiquitously burned, but floodplains along rivercourses were seldom burned; these areas are largely cropland and obviously protected from the prescribed burns.

The apparent burned areas (three-week brown-downs) detected via AVHRR imagery coincided closely with areas detected via the LANDSAT7 imagery. These areas, although considerably more difficult to interpret directly as burned areas, appear to represent landscape features rather than cloud contamination, given close correlation with land cover: prairie vegetation browned down (= burned), whereas cultivated areas along watercourses did not (Fig. 4). Correlation with known fires (ATP and MBR, unpubl. data) is quite close, and indeed where LANDSAT7 imagery was available, coincidence of the two hypothesized burned areas was quite close.

In sum, much of the tallgrass prairie from northern Oklahoma north to northern Kansas is burned each spring. Our observations each year, as

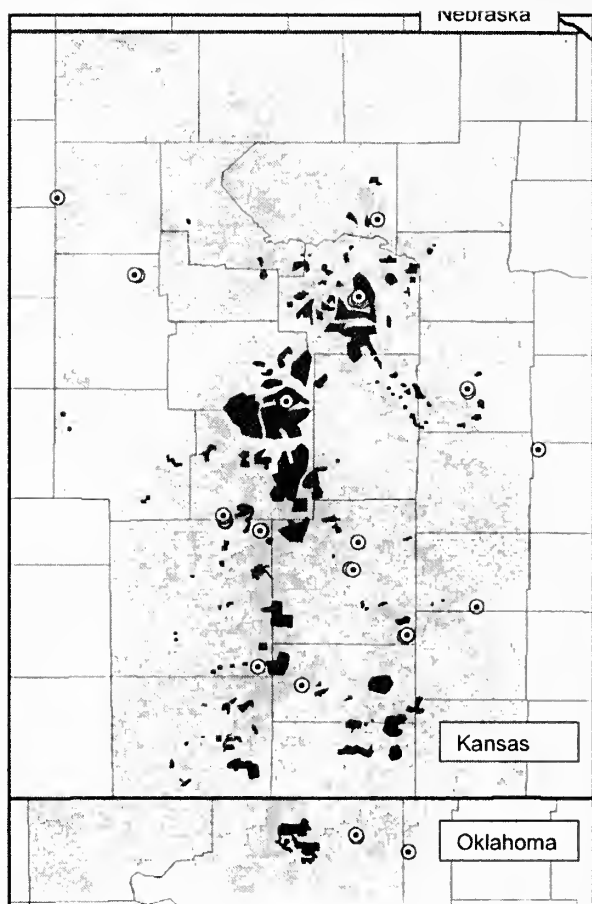


Figure 3. Fire occurrences between 15 March and 15 May 2000 in the Flint Hills region (few or no fires or burns were detected by the fire-detection sensor or by the LANDSAT7 imagery outside of this region). Nighttime fires detected via the World Fire Atlas are shown as dotted circles; burns apparent on the LANDSAT7 imagery are shown in black; and apparent burned areas detected by brown-down over consecutive weeks are shown in light gray.

well as more casual inspection of imagery from other years, confirm that the year 2000 was not unusual but rather is quite representative of burning patterns in recent years. None of the approaches we employed detected extensive spring fires or burns in Nebraska or South Dakota. Hence, the core of the range of the species is subjected to two diametrically opposed fire management schemes: spring fires dominate in Kansas, whereas spring fires are much less frequent, and typically entail rotational burning, in Nebraska (T. Labeledz, pers. comm.) and South Dakota (D. McCrea, pers. comm.).

Population trends.—Population trends differ markedly among regions (Fig. 4; presented as three-year running averages). Nebraska and South Dakota populations were increasing or are stable. Kansas and Oklahoma populations, however, declined precipitously since 1980: lek counts (both states) and hunting harvest data (Kansas) both indicated steady declines in populations. Causal interpretation of differences in population trends as resulting from differences in fire management schemes is of course not necessarily warranted; however, the association is clear.

DISCUSSION

The analyses above point to two important lessons: first, that the Greater Prairie-Chicken is undergoing a major decline in the core area of its distribution; and second, that fire management practices and intensive graz-

ing in this core area appear responsible for local declines and extirpations. The combination of fire and intense grazing has been demonstrated to have a major negative impact on forb growth and reproduction, and on populations of invertebrates and vertebrates (Zimmerman 1997, Kaufman and Kaufman 1997, Rohrbaugh et al. 1999). For example, Kaufman and Kaufman (1997) stated that “annual burning of rangelands, a common ranching practice in the Flint Hills, may be the factor that most affects small mammals of the tallgrass prairies of central North America [...] Our results of ungrazed tallgrass prairie on the Konza Prairie [in the Flint Hills] suggest that large-scale burning at an annual frequency will have a negative impact on many if not all small mammals.” This result is echoed for virtually the entire fauna and flora of this region.

Given that the Kansas prairies are the focus of a 4.9-billion dollar beef industry in Kansas (Lawrence Journal-World, 27 May 2001), and with the instigation of the early intensive stocking regime (Smith and Owensby 1978), the Greater Prairie-Chicken is experiencing serious population declines in this region. Applegate and Horak (1999) summarized Kansas population trends from two data sets for 1960-1996. Both data sets demonstrated steep population declines since the early 1980s, with the more reliable data set (booming ground censuses) indicating an overall decline of approximately 65% in the past 20 years. These population declines are also reflected in numbers of prairie-chickens taken annually by hunters in Kansas: from a mind-boggling 109,000 birds in 1982 to ca. 12,000 in 1998-1999 (Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks).

The situation in Oklahoma mirrors that of Kansas, with significant declines since 1982 (Horton and Wolfe 1999). The two largest prairie-chicken populations in Oklahoma are at the southern terminus of the Flint Hills, where intensive early stocking was implemented in 1980 (L. Holcombe, pers. comm.). Horton and Wolfe (1999) and Applegate and Horak (1999) suggest that the intensive early stocking regime is the primary reason for the declines. In contrast, Nebraska and South Dakota, which harbor the largest populations outside of Kansas, have shown populations that are stable or increasing in the same period. Particularly revealing are the stable populations in southeast Nebraska just to the north of the Flint Hills (Johnsgard 2001). Although survey data for southeastern Nebraska are available for only the past seven years, their stability is clear (Taylor 2000, Johnsgard 2001, J. Taylor, pers. comm.): unlike Kansas’s Flint Hills and Osage Plains, southeastern Nebraska prairies are not subjected to annual spring burning and the early intensive stocking regime (T. Labeledz, pers. comm.).

The intensive grazing regime in Kansas is not limited to the Flint Hills but has also become standard practice in the Osage Plains of eastern Kansas. Just in the past 5-6 years, the remaining fragmented, tallgrass prairie in the Osage Plains has begun to be burned in spring annually (W. Brecheisen pers. comm., ATP and MBR, pers. obs.). Like the Flint Hills, we strongly suspect that prairie-chicken declines in this region (= “eastern cropland” and “blackjack” in Applegate and Horak 1999) are largely related to the annual spring burning and cattle stocking.

During observations in the past three years in the Flint Hills, we have found only two bird species (Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*, and Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*) that commonly utilize grasslands subjected to spring burning and intense early stocking. Even for these species, trampling by cattle may be an important source of nest mortality, as has been documented for Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*) in the Flint Hills of Oklahoma (Rohrbaugh et al. 1999).

In contrast, tallgrass prairie and fallow pasture not burned for at least one year generally hold the full complement of tallgrass prairie bird species, including prairie-chickens and the severely declining Henslow’s Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*) (Zimmerman 1988, 1997). Indeed, in the Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas, Henslow’s Sparrow was recorded in only

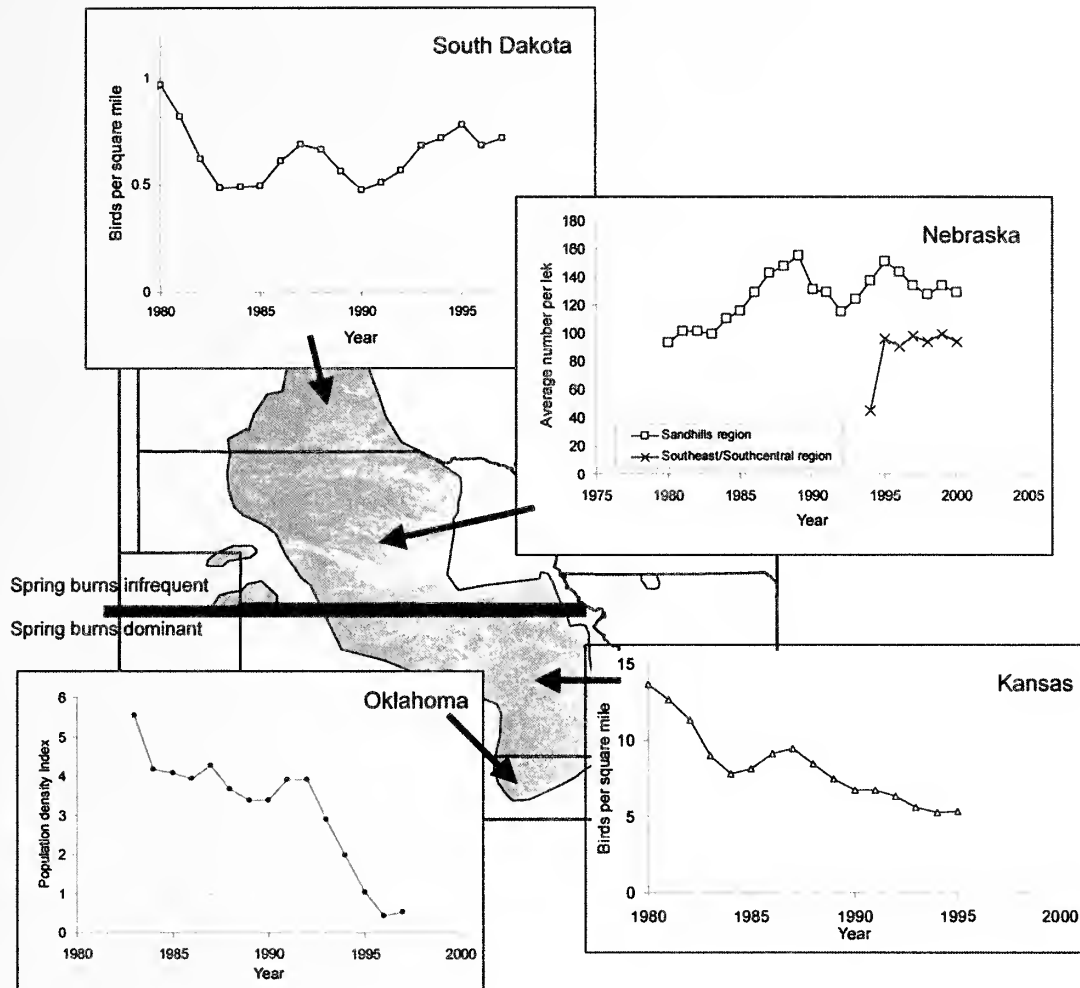


Figure 4. Population trends (presented as three-year running averages) in the core of the geographic distribution of the Greater Prairie-Chicken: stable or increasing populations are apparent in Nebraska (Taylor 2000; J. Taylor, pers. comm.) and South Dakota (Fredrickson et al. 1999), where spring burning is rare or absent; whereas precipitous declines are observed in Kansas (Applegate and Horak 1999) and Oklahoma (Horton and Wolfe 1999), where spring burning is dominant. See Results for explanation of data.

nine of 112 Flint Hills survey blocks (six of 74 priority blocks in the region), and its scarcity there was attributed to “grazing and burning practices” (Busby and Zimmerman 2001). Prior to major modifications to prairie ecosystems wrought by Euro-Americans, this species was undoubtedly widespread and abundant—if not ubiquitous—throughout the Flint Hills and the adjacent Osage Plains. Today, we estimate that less than 1% of the original range of Henslow’s Sparrow in these regions remains inhabited.

Moreover, an entire suite of birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects similarly thrive in prairie that is not burned yearly but that sees a variety of burn frequencies (Knapp and Seastedt 1998); these species, like the prairie-chickens, are becoming endangered regionally by the yearly burning regime. Not surprising, the three largest tracts of tallgrass prairie in the Flint Hills (Konza Prairie and Fort Riley Military Reservation, Kansas; and Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, Oklahoma) that are *not* subjected to the intensive early stocking regime harbor the largest populations of both the prairie-chicken and the sparrow (Zimmerman 1993, Cully and Michaels 2000, Reinking et al. 2000).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the trends and patterns documented herein, as well as on our observations of prairie species across the Flint Hills region in recent years, we and numerous colleagues involved with tallgrass prairie biotas are convinced that the spring burning regime with early intensive livestock grazing represent a serious threat to numerous elements of biodiversity. Greater Prairie-Chickens, as well as several other species (e.g., Henslow’s Sparrow), have suffered drastic reductions in distribution and population size in the state. This threat is of particular concern given that the Flint Hills region is considered to hold the core populations of these species—this situation thus constitutes a threat to the global survival of an entire suite of species.

In short, spring burning followed by early intensive stocking of cattle on an annual basis make the prairie all but uninhabitable for these species. This technique, combined with other problems (e.g., invasion of the prairies by *Sericea cuneata* [Fabaceae], resulting in spraying for control), could easily place the species in serious danger of regional extirpation or even extinction altogether. We concur with recommendations

made by Applegate and Horak (1999) and Horton and Wolfe (1999) regarding burning regimes: reducing burn frequency, adjusting the seasonality of burning, and reducing grazing pressure constitute critical components of the strategy. In effect, for prairie to represent a viable habitat for these species, a mosaic of burn frequencies of 1-5 years is necessary (Knapp and Seastedt 1998). Hence, a system centered around rotational prescribed burning, combined with reduced grazing pressure, is highly recommended.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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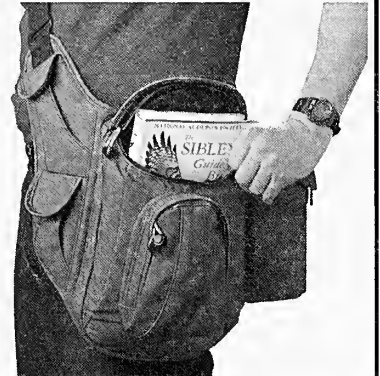
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Bucking the trend: Increasing numbers of Black-necked Stilts in Canada

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1970s, sightings of Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) in Canada have increased greatly in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. While drought in areas farther south initially may have led to prospecting breeders in Canada, stilts now breed consistently in southern Alberta, and records of breeding in Saskatchewan are few but increasing. As yet, there are no breeding records elsewhere in Canada. Black-necked Stilts in Alberta initiate nests several weeks later than stilts farther south but terminate egg-laying at similar times. A relatively large percentage of nests in southern Alberta (17%) had clutches of more than four eggs compared with areas farther south (1%), and these large clutches were usually deserted. Reasons for this are not known, but may have been due to a large percentage of inexperienced breeders and/or a female-biased sex ratio. Nevertheless, fledged young were produced in southern Alberta each year, and the population is apparently still growing.

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies suggest that numerous species of North American shorebirds are decreasing in numbers (e.g. Howe et al. 1989, Morrison et al. 1994, Duncan 1997, Gratto-Trevor et al. 1998, Morrison et al. 2001a). A notable exception is the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). The estimated world population of this species is 850,000, with about 150,000 in North America (Rose and Scott 1997, Morrison et al. 2001b). Black-necked Stilts breed primarily in the southwestern United States, Mexico, and into South America. Their breeding range has expanded northward in the past 20 years, and they are now established as local breeders in Washington, Oregon, and Montana (Rohwer et al. 1979, Berkey 1987, Paulson 1993, Robinson et al. 1999). Sightings have also increased in North and South Dakota (Berkey 1989, Martin 2000a). Until the mid-1970s, there had been very few records of Black-necked Stilts in Canada (Godfrey 1986). The purpose of this paper is to describe increases and breeding records for western Canada since the 1970s, examine whether the increases represent permanent breeding populations in Canada or are solely due to droughts farther south, and describe breeding phenology, clutch size, nest success, and return rates for Black-necked Stilts nesting in southern Alberta.

METHODS

Breeding records and sight records were obtained from various published and unpublished reports, especially the journals *American Birds*, *Field Notes*, and *North American Birds*. Because this is a large and distinctive shorebird, questions of identification to species rarely arose.

My assistants and I searched for Black-necked Stilt nests from 1995 to 2000 in southern Alberta, primarily at Kitsim, a series of wetlands owned by the Eastern Irrigation District (E.I.D.) and managed for waterfowl and cattle production by Ducks Unlimited (D.U.) Canada. Kitsim is about 12 km southwest of Brooks, Alberta. A few nests were located at Kininvie South, also an area with wetlands owned by the E.I.D. and managed by D.U. Canada, located about 40 km southeast of Brooks, Alberta. Searches were carried out by walking around wetlands and observing the behavior of the stilts. Searches were carried out annually, but time spent searching varied greatly among years. When nests were located, they were marked with a small flag 10 m north of the nest and normally checked every 7-14 days during the nesting period. In 1999 and 2000, nine adults in total were captured on nest at Kitsim and given individual color-band combinations.

Surveys for Black-necked Stilts were carried out during the breeding season from 1995 to 2001 at both Kitsim and Kininvie South but more often and more completely at Kitsim. The number of surveys was not consistent among years, although Kitsim was searched each year at least once, usually numerous times, before incubation (late April to mid-May), less often during the main incubation period (mid-May to mid-June), and multiple times after hatching (mid-June to mid-July). The central priority of my research in this area was a breeding study of Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) and Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*), but information on stilts was collected because they breed at so few locations in Canada. Streamflow data were obtained from the United States Geological Survey website <<http://water.usgs.gov/nwis/annual>>. Only sites in the U.S. Great Basin with complete data records from 1955 to 2000 were included in the analysis.

RECENT AND HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS

Before 1970, reports of Black-necked Stilts in Canada were rare: several old specimens (no date given) from New Brunswick, a potential nest in Saskatchewan in 1894, a specimen from Newfoundland in 1947, three birds seen in Saskatchewan and one in Ontario in 1955, and two separate sightings in Manitoba in 1969 (Godfrey 1986). In the 1800s the birds bred as far north as New Jersey (now normally only to Delaware; Robinson et al. 1999), so those seen in eastern Canada may have been stragglers from the small eastern population. The increase in Canadian records since the 1970s has occurred primarily in western Canada, especially west of Manitoba. Most records of breeding birds have been in Alberta (e.g., Dekker et al. 1979, Chapman et al. 1985, Semenchuk 1992), with the remaining few in Saskatchewan (e.g., Smith 1996).

The first verified sightings from Manitoba were in 1969 and the next not until 1978 (McNicholl et al. 1972, Godfrey 1986). The species has been seen occasionally since 1978: in 1980, 1981, 1994, 1998, and 2000, although nesting has not been verified there (Chapman et al. 1985, Koes and Taylor 1994, 1998, 2000).

Since the first verified sighting of Black-necked Stilts in British Columbia in 1971 (Campbell and Anderson 1972), birds have been observed in 16 of the subsequent 30 years, with a maximum of 60 reported in 1987 (Bowling 1992, 1994, Campbell et al. 1990, Mattocks 1988, Shepard 1999, Siddle 1990, 1991, 1994). The birds have been observed

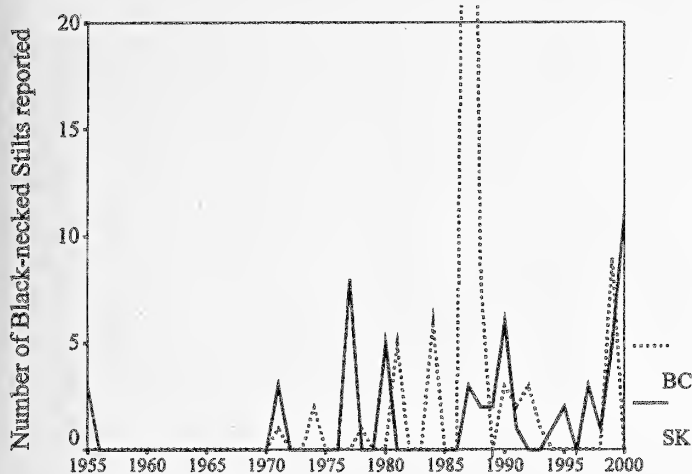


Figure 1. Sightings of Black-necked Stilts reported from Saskatchewan (SK) and British Columbia (BC) from 1955 to 2000. See text for references. The maximum seen in British Columbia was 60 in 1987.

much more frequently since 1978 than previously (Fig. 1), but no breeding records exist for British Columbia. This increase in sightings in British Columbia is probably related to the establishment of local breeding populations in Washington State and Oregon (Rohwer et al. 1979, Paulson 1993, Robinson et al. 1999).

A possible Black-necked Stilt nest was collected in Saskatchewan in 1894 (Godfrey 1986), but the first verified record there was not until 1955 (McLellan 1955), and the second in 1971 (Renaud and Renaud 1975). Since then, birds have been seen more frequently (Fig. 1), virtually annually since 1994 (Gollop 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, Harris 1981, Koes and Taylor 1990, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, Roy 1996, Smith 1996; B. Hepworth, pers. comm.; A. R. Smith, pers. comm.). Breeding in Saskatchewan has been reported eight times: at Blackstrap in 1987 (Wedgewood and Taylor 1988), Bradwell in 1989 (Salisbury et al. 1989), Unity in 1995 (Koes and Taylor 1996), Chaplin Heritage Marsh in 1997 (Koes and Taylor 1997), Chaplin Lake in 1999 (J. Bilyk, pers. comm.), near Mossbank in 2000 (Koes and Taylor 2000), the D.U. marsh at the south end of Chaplin Lake in 2001 (nest; G. Beyersbergen, pers. comm.), and southwest of Ogema in 2001 (young; S. Skinner, pers. comm.). This pattern of sighting increases and scattered breeding records appears similar to the situation in North Dakota, which has had increased sightings since the late 1980s, a first verified nesting in 1993, and three breeding records by 2000 (Berkey 1989, 1993, Martin 1999, 2000b).

The first verified record of the species in Alberta was not made until 1970 (Weseloh 1972) and the second in 1972 (Sadler and Myres 1976), although parts of a specimen were reportedly picked up in the Brooks area in the mid-1950s (Salt and Salt 1976). Subsequent sight records came in 1972, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1983, and every year since 1988 (Sadler and Myers 1976, Chapman et al. 1985; C. Wallis, pers. comm.). Nesting was first verified in the province at Beaverhill Lake in 1977 (Dekker et al. 1979), and since then in numerous locations in southern Alberta, including New Dayton, Calgary, Stirling Lake, Tyrell Lake, Leduc, Taber, Pakowki Lake, Kininvie Marsh, and Kitsim (Chapman et al. 1985, Dickson 1989; L. Bennett, R. Dickson, D. & T. Dolman, T. Korolyk, W. Smith, C. Wallis, pers. comm.; pers. obs.)—all in the prairie ecozone.

Reports of the species in *American Birds* from 1955 to 1995 (Fig. 2a) show an increase both in frequency of sightings and in numbers observed.

After about 1995, the birds were considered sufficiently common so as not to be enumerated carefully in regional reports. Black-necked Stilt records in Alberta (W. Harris and C. Wallis, pers. comm.), in addition to those observed at Kininvie, indicate that at least 70 adults were reported in 1996 and about 100 in 1997. As noted below, at a single location in 2001 (Kitsim), 117 stilts were seen in one day. These are all incomplete censuses of the province. The total number currently breeding annually in Alberta is unknown, but appears to be at least 50 pairs, and probably considerably more, with numbers increasing almost annually. This pattern of increased sightings and regular nesting records since the 1977 “invasion” is similar to the situation in Montana (Serr 1977, Faanes 1984, Berkey 1987, 1992, Martin 1992, 1998).

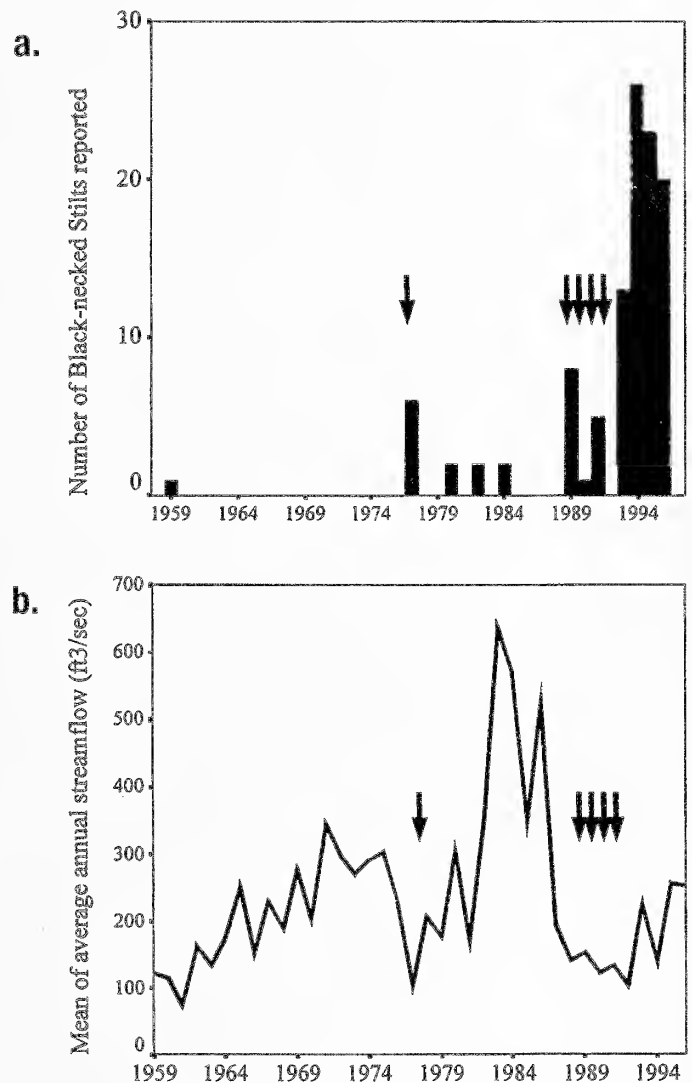


Figure 2. a. Sightings of Black-necked Stilts reported from Alberta in *American Birds*, 1959 to 1996 (Gammell 1960, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1989, 1990, Koes and Taylor 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, Serr 1977). Arrows represent drought years (between 1975 and 1996) in stilt breeding areas farther south;

Figure 2. b. Mean average annual streamflow rates from the Great Basin, USA, 1959 to 1996. Data obtained from United States Geological Survey website: <<http://water.usgs.gov/nwis/annual>>.

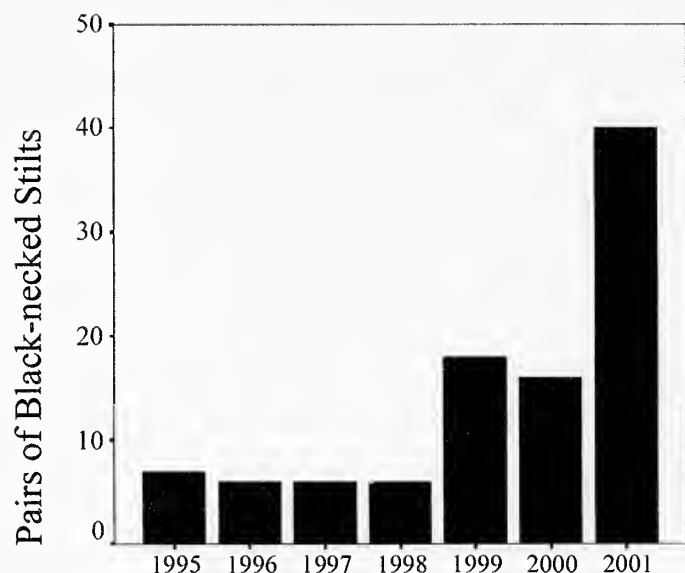


Figure 3. Pairs of Black-necked Stilts observed during the breeding season at Kitsim, Alberta, from 1995 to 2001.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GREAT BASIN DROUGHT

Some authors have suggested that increased sightings and breeding attempts north of the species's normal range occur when drought conditions exist in the United States (e.g., Dekker et al. 1979, Rohwer et al. 1979, Smith 1996). Droughts occurred in the southern Great Basin in 1977-1978 and 1989-1992 (Rohwer et al. 1979.; L. W. Oring, pers. comm.). Droughts in this area appear to correlate well with averages of average annual streamflow rates from this region (Fig. 2b; original data from United States Geological Survey website: <<http://water.usgs.gov/nwis/annual>>). While droughts earlier than 1977 (Fig. 2b) did not result in Black-necked Stilt "invasions" of Prairie Canada, that in 1977 apparently did. However, while drought conditions farther south may have originally led to prospecting Black-necked Stilts, the birds now seem to be established local breeders in parts of southern Alberta, and populations remain in years when there are no droughts to the south (Fig. 2).

KITSIM, ALBERTA NUMBERS

At Kitsim, Alberta from 1995 to 2001, six to approximately 40 pairs of Black-necked Stilts have been seen each year (Fig. 3), with numbers

increasing over time. Nests—up to 11 in any one year, with incomplete searches—have been found in all years, and fledged chicks (up to 40 in a year) have been observed there in each of those years. Nest searches were not carried out in 2001, but surveys indicated a large jump in numbers of stilts using the area, with a maximum count of 117 on one day (Table 1). Since southern Alberta was extremely dry in the spring and summer of 2001, it is probable that the birds were concentrated in the few sites with suitable habitat and shallow water conditions, such as at the managed Kitsim wetlands. Kininvie, which in the past has have numerous stilts, had very few in 2001: much of the area was dry, and vegetation around much of Kininvie South was very low due to intensive grazing in 2000 and 2001. A hail storm hit the area in June 2000, and at least three Black-necked Stilts died as a result. The higher-than-usual numbers here and in Saskatchewan (34 adults observed 13 May 2001 in a D.U. Canada marsh at the south end of Chaplin Lake; G. Beyersbergen, pers. comm.), also may have been influenced by drought conditions in at least parts of the Great Basin in 2001 (S. Haig, pers. comm.).

Return rates

Of the six adults (four males and two females) banded at Kitsim in 1999, three were seen back at Kitsim in 2000. All were males. Of the three adults banded there in 2000 (one male and two females), only the male was seen at Kitsim in 2001. Therefore, overall site fidelity (returns in the following year) was 44% overall: 0% of females and 80% of males. There is little information on Black-necked Stilt return rates, except that site fidelity is apparently often low (Robinson and Oring 1999). In northern Utah, 22% of marked adults were seen in the area in the following year: 20% (1/5) of males and 25% (1/4) of females (Sordahl 1984). The high return rate of males in Alberta may be an artifact of small sample size, or may be a result of small populations in Canada and relatively limited suitable breeding habitat in southern Alberta in most years. Stilts are often semi-colonial breeders, so others may be attracted to the few sites already occupied by stilts in Alberta. In any case, the fidelity of specific individuals to breeding sites in Canada in subsequent years lends credence to the existence of permanent breeding populations in Alberta.

Breeding phenology and clutch size

Not surprisingly, stilts in Alberta began breeding an average of several weeks after those farther south (Table 2), although the termination of breeding in a season was similar. As with most North American shorebirds, clutch size is normally four (Robinson et al. 1999). The incidence of supernormal size clutches (more than four eggs), however, is considerably greater in Alberta than in the main part of the breeding range (Table 3). A large proportion of large clutches has been noted elsewhere in the northern extent of their range as well (Rohwer et al. 1979). Most of the large clutches, based on egg color, apparently represented two females laying eggs in the same nest (Rohwer et al. 1979, Robinson et al. 1999; pers. obs.).

Few eggs of supernormal clutches hatched successfully in Alberta (Table 4): even in the one successful clutch, only two of the seven eggs

Table 1. Number of Black-necked Stilt adults observed at Kitsim, Alberta in 2001.

Date	Number seen
26 April	50
1 May	39
3 May	86
4 May	96
8 May	107
10 May	117
12 June	76
14 June	74
20 June	86
26 June	69
3 July	66

Table 2. Timing of egg-laying: Alberta versus areas farther south.

	Alberta	Utah ¹	California ²	Venezuela ³
Date of earliest egg	4 May	23 April	18 April	April
Date of latest hatch	18 July	10 July	19 July	end July

¹Sordahl 1981 ²Robinson et al. 1999 ³McNeill 1971



Black-necked Stilts, like most shorebirds, lay four eggs on average. The incidence of supernormal clutches, such as this clutch of seven, was found to be unusually high in Alberta, much higher than in core breeding range farther south. Most of these eggs in large clutches did not hatch successfully. The reason for this finding is not known. Photograph by the author.

Table 3. Proportion of abnormally large clutches (>4 eggs) in Alberta versus California.

Percentage of nests with more than 4 eggs

Kitsim/Kininvie, Alberta ¹	Tulane Basin, California ²	Lassen County, California ³
17.6 (6/34)	0.7 (15/2195)	1.1 (3/278)

¹ The present study (1995-2000)

² Robinson et al. 1999 (1987-1989)

³ Robinson et al. 1999 (1992-1994)

Table 4. Success of normal (3-4 egg) and supernormal (5-7 egg) size clutches at Kitsim, Alberta, 1995-2000.

Nest Fate	Normal clutch Percentage (n)	Supernormal clutch Percentage (n)
Hatched	66.7 (16/24)	20.0 (1/5)
Depredated	29.2 (7/24)	0.0 (0/5)
Deserted	4.1 (1/24)	60.0 (3/5)
Flooded	0 (0/24)	20.0 (1/5)

eventually hatched. Desertion of these clutches was common. In contrast, many of the normal-sized clutches hatched, and only one was deserted. It is not known why abnormally large clutches appear to be more common in areas north of normal range, but this may be a result of a larger proportion of inexperienced breeders in these areas, and/or a female-biased sex ratio in these areas. Perhaps females are more likely to range farther from historic breeding areas than are males.

CONCLUSIONS

Increasing numbers of Black-necked Stilts are being noted in western Canada. While most nests have been in southern Alberta, nests in Saskatchewan are becoming more common. If the greater proportion of large clutches (more than four eggs) in Alberta is the result of inexperienced breeders, or an unbalanced sex ratio, it would be useful to determine whether the sex ratio is indeed female-biased in this population and in other newly "colonized" areas such as Saskatchewan, and whether the sex ratio and percentage of large clutches in these areas will decrease over time.

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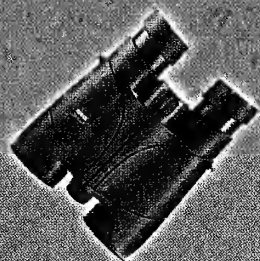
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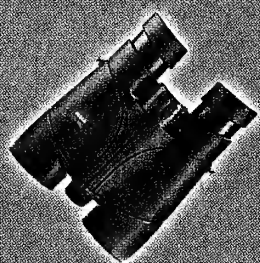
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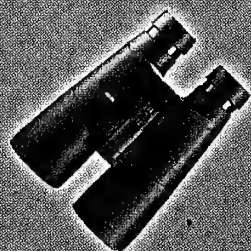
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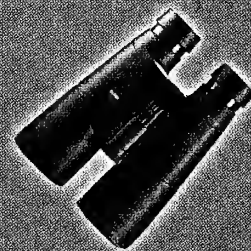
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One of five Western Kingbirds detected in the Hudson—Delaware Region this winter, this cooperative bird was photographed at Cedar Swamp Wildlife Management Area, Delaware (very near the Dusky Flycatcher!) on New Year's Day 2002. *Photograph by Matt Hoberg.*



This fine Dusky Flycatcher was found on New Year's Eve Day at Cedar Swamp Wildlife Management Area, New Castle, Delaware, where it remained through 22 January 2002. Except for a hypothetical record in Pennsylvania, this represents potentially the Region's first and one of few anywhere in the East. It was photographed here on 1 January 2002. *Photograph by Ray Wilson.*



A second-basic Ivory Gull in Delta, British Columbia spent 4-23 December around the shipyard at the Deltaport Jetty, where strong nighttime illumination allowed birders to study this beauty well into the night! This bird represented Vancouver's first and the province's sixth record, photographed here 20 December 2001. *Photograph by Ruth Sullivan.*



Wisconsin's first Ross's Gull was enjoyed 6-8 December 2001 near Ashland. This photograph was taken on the first day of its visit. *Photograph by Travis Mahan.*



This immature gray-morph Gyrfalcon was the first for Texas. It was found on 21 January 2002 and faithfully roosted on a water tower through the end of the period. Interestingly, this Arctic falcon had never even been reported in the state previously. *Photograph by Jimmy McHaney.*



This White-winged Crossbill at Lawrenceville, New Jersey was one of up to 20 in the area, present from mid-December into January (here 8 January 2002). The species was one of several winter finches that staged substantial irruptions this fall and winter. *Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.*

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



This Mew Gull at Cherry Island Landfill near Wilmington, Delaware, was found 15 February 2002 by the photographer (and our own Photo Editor). Extensive examination by gull experts suggest that this bird was one of the Old World races (*canus*, *kamtschatschensis*, or *heinei*), but field separation of these subspecies has not yet been resolved. Among other characters, the large size, longish legs, rather dark upperwings, and pale eye would appear to point to one of the Asian subspecies (*kamtschatschensis* or *heinei*). Inasmuch as other Siberian species—Slaty-backed Gull and Long-billed Murrelet—were documented in the Hudson-Delaware Region this season, a third ambassador from that area is not unthinkable. Delaware has just one previous record of the species. Photograph by George L. Armistead.



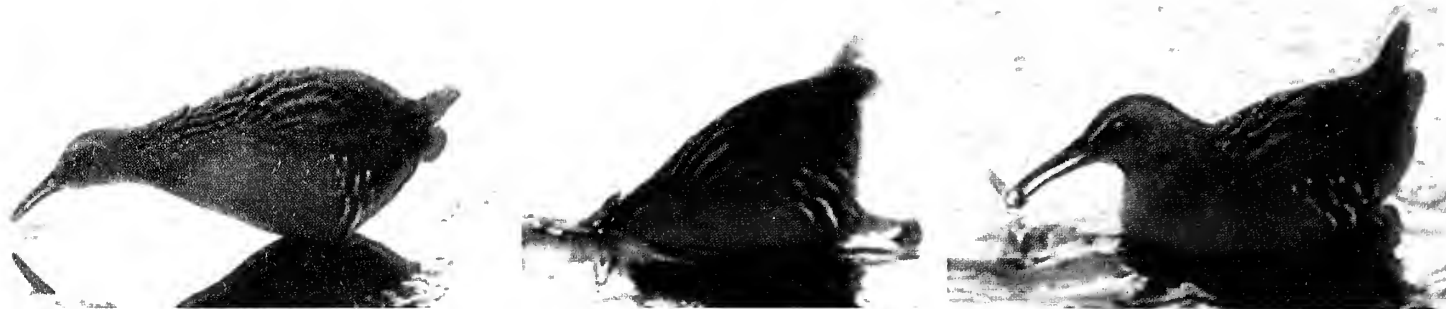
This adult Slaty-backed Gull was photographed at Seneca Meadows Landfill, Seneca Falls, New York on 23 February 2002. It is conceivable that this bird is the same individual that was seen 4, 8, and 20 February at two locations in Sullivan County, New York, about 160 km away, but it's more likely that two birds were involved. Photograph by Steve Kelling.



It was a good gull winter over much of the East, and the Common Gull (as the nominate form of Mew Gull is known in most of the world) was a highlight in several regions. This adult, found among 20,000 gulls of 10 species on the Chesapeake Bay C.B.C. 26 December 2001, stood out among the Ring-billed Gulls by virtue of its dark eye, more delicate bill with faint zigzag band, short greenish-yellow legs, and distinctive primary pattern in flight. Photograph by Robert L. Ake.



This Mew Gull of the North American *brachyrhynchus* race (formerly called Short-billed Gull) was an outstanding find at Wheatley Harbour, Point Pelee, Ontario 26 February 2002 (the fourth for Pelee). This taxon strayed to many points east and south of typical range, including states of the interior Far West, as well as to Texas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. Singles of both *brachyrhynchus* and the nominate *canus* were again found in neighboring Ontario; observers should labor to distinguish whenever possible among the various subspecies. This image was taken 1 March 2002. Photograph by Alan Wormington.



Virginia Rails are hardy enough to overwinter in the northern tier of U. S. states when conditions permit. Even when winter sets in, innovative foraging methods allow the toughest birds to survive until milder weather arrives. This ice-fishing bird at Hampton, New Hampshire 21 January 2002 was another testimony among many to the mildness of winter 2001-2002. *Photograph by Dennis Abbott.*



Perhaps increasing as a vagrant east of its western range, Bullock's Oriole put in appearances at Québec, Florida, New Hampshire, and later Virginia. This one at Dover, Strafford County, New Hampshire 13 January 2002 was the first for that state in a quarter century. *Photograph by Dennis Abbott.*



Observers who began visiting landfills in the Middle Atlantic region about 20 years ago saw birds resembling Thayer's Gulls in small numbers. After almost two decades of documentation, it is accepted that such birds occur annually on the East Coast, especially between southern New England and northern North Carolina, but birds that appear intermediate between (supposedly typical) Thayer's Gull and "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull continue to cause consternation—and this is especially true of the variable first-winter birds. This typical first-winter Thayer's Gull (upper right) showed a relatively heavy build, dark-centered tertials, a dark secondary bar, and dark outer webs to the primaries; it was photographed at the Salisbury, Maryland landfill 15 January 2002. *Photograph by George L. Armistead.*



This Cattle Egret was caught in the act of making a transoceanic flight across the Atlantic: it was photographed moving east—northeast at $20^{\circ} 17' \text{ N}$, $39^{\circ} 03' \text{ W}$, some 1472 km from the nearest land (the Cape Verde Islands). While not in this journal's area of coverage, this bird is one of a handful of birds photographically documented over the Atlantic in the process of "vagrations," which in the case of this species led to colonization of the New World some 50 years ago. Cattle Egret is now a species in decline in some parts of its North American range; causes for this decline are unknown. *Photograph by C. J. Lippincott.*



Are Southern Lapwings on a slow march northward? Twentieth-century records suggest that an expansion or increasing northward and westward dispersal of the *cayennensis* subspecies, which is nonmigratory, has been underway for some time. The species was considered "casual" through the 1970s in Panama but lately is known to be resident there, and Costa Rican records are now beginning to accrue, though the species is still quite rare there. Six or more records from Costa Rica this past winter season included this bird, noted by Regional Editor Héctor Gómez de Silva and party about five km south-east of Jaco 19 February 2002. *Photograph by John Taylor.*

A new difficulty for larophiles at landfills arose this winter in the East and Midwest, in Ohio and Virginia. Birds that bore strong resemblance in plumage to Glaucous-winged Gulls were found, a first-winter bird in Ohio and this adult in Virginia at Prince William County Landfill (31 December 2001). Both birds, however, seemed a bit too delicate of bill and head, and perhaps too small, to be "classic" Glaucous-winged Gulls, and it has been suggested that hybrid origin is the most likely explanation for this aberration. However, nothing about the plumage of either bird suggested an admixture of genes from a smaller species, such as Herring Gull. *Photograph by Stephen C. Rottenborn.*



PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



A Townsend's Warbler at Sandy Hook, New Jersey on 3 December 2001 provided the Garden State's eighth record of this hardy western species, which appears to be increasing as a vagrant to the East. *Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.*



This Pine Grosbeak was one of many well south of usual haunts in the Northeast; it was photographed at Georgetown, New York, 28 February 2002. *Photograph by Sean Sime/Housewren.*



An Ipswich Sparrow—the *princeps* race of Savannah Sparrow that nests almost entirely on Sable Island, Nova Scotia—frequented Cape Charles Beach, Northampton County, Virginia, for several days in January (here 2 January 2002), feeding on Cape Beach Grass seeds (*Ammophila breviligulata*). Although the Chesapeake Bay and its 6400 km of shoreline would seem to offer good winter quarters for Ipswich Sparrow, which favors outer dunes and barrier beaches, the loss of this habitat on the Bay's shores has been substantial in recent decades, and there are fewer than 20 Bay records of the taxon in Maryland and Virginia. *Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.*



North Carolina's first documented Green-tailed Towhee entertained birders at a feeder in Southport from 5 January 2002 through the spring. The species is a very seldom visitor to the states of the East Coast. *Photograph by Van Atkins.*



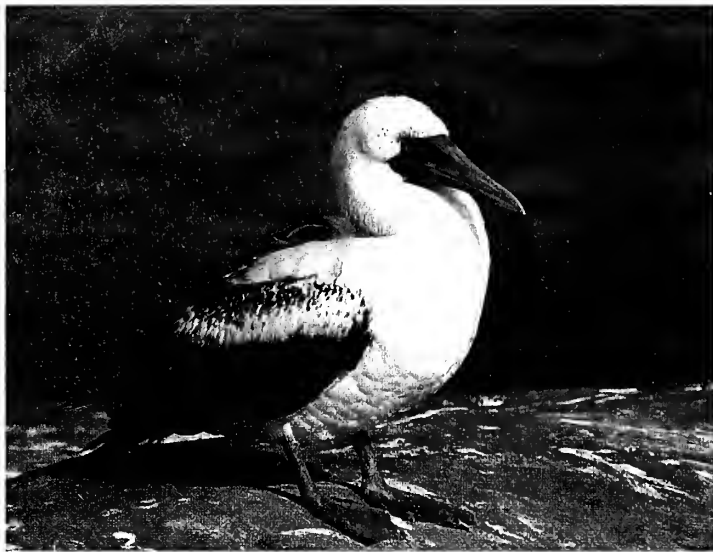
The odd combination of Common Redpoll and Painted Bunting—both species on the move across the continent this winter—at a feeder near Rogers City, Michigan, was photographed here 2 February 2002. *Photograph by William Grigg.*



A Broad-winged Hawk on Christmas Eve 2001 at Tantra Park, Boulder, Colorado would seem outlandish, were it not for the similar records of the species now being made all through the East in early winter (see the Changing Seasons essay). This bird was a first in winter for the state. *Photograph by Bill Schmoker.*



This male Blue Seedeater was one of five mist-netted at scattered locations in Parque Nacional El Imposible, El Salvador between 9 January and 18 February 2002. These birds likely represent a small but previously overlooked population. The Blue Seedeater has been reported in El Salvador on only two previous occasions. *Photograph by Oliver Komar.*



This subadult Masked Booby was photographed in La Jolla, California on 7 January 2002; it is likely the same bird that was later present 80 km north of La Jolla at Dana Point in Orange County. Distinctions from Nazca Booby are subtle and include bill color (greenish yellow in Masked, orangy in Nazca.) *Photograph by Larry Sansone.*




Extremely rare at any season in the Pacific Northwest, Washington's first Yellow-throated Warbler (of the *albilora* subspecies) was the Oregon-Washington Region's fourth. It remained at Twisp from 8 December 2001 through 23 January 2002, (when a Sharp-shinned Hawk apparently removed it). *Photograph by Ruth Sullivan.*



Bohemian Waxwings invaded northern Colorado this winter season. These birds at Gross Reservoir, Boulder County, Colorado 2 February 2002 were part of a flock of 300 birds. *Photograph by Bill Schmoker.*



An unexpected bonus during nocturnal trapping of pheasants, this Yellow Rail was one of at least two caught and photographed in a closed area of Grizzly Island, Solano County, California on 12 February 2002. The species is rare enough on the West Coast that observers should take care to distinguish it from the similarly migratory Swinhoe's Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops exquisitus*) of eastern Asia. *Photograph by Anthony Battiste.*



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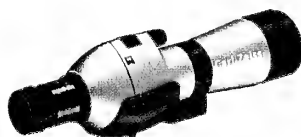
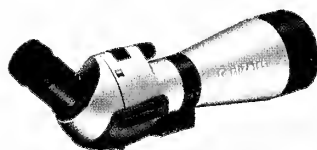
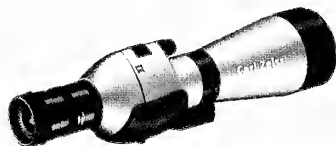
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