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North American Birds

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The Winter Season: December 2003 through February 2004

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ON THE COVER: Lunch Time in Newfoundland. This young dark-morph Gyrfalcon was found and photographed on 19 February 2004 at Quidi Vidi Lake in St. Johns, Newfoundland during the photographer's lunch break. The falcon overwintered in the area, feeding on the gulls that roosted on the lake (here a first-winter Glaucous Gull). Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.





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EDITORS' NOTEBOOK

Changing of the guard

Our roster of Associate Editors has grown again, with P. A. Buckley now on board to help manage the content and direction of the journal. Paul is Senior Scientist at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Coastal Field Station at the University of Rhode Island, where he is also Resident Professor of Ecology. A former American Birding Association Board member, "Changing Seasons" essayist, *American Birds* Regional Editor (Hudson-Delaware), and Chair of the *North American Birds* Editorial and Scientific Advisory Board, he is particularly interested in migration, distribution, and the biological significance of avian vagrancy. He was a recent panelist for two articles in *Birding's* "Next New ABA Area Birds" series.

Think of all the time birding they'll get now: B. Mac. Myers (Central Southern), Brandon K. Percival and Van A. Truan (Mountain West), and Robert C. Leberman (Appalachia; Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley) have shed their duties as Regional Editors and hopefully find they have hundreds of hours of birding time to while away, from the cheniers of the Louisiana lowlands, to the migrant traps of southeastern Colorado, to the lovely laurel-clad peaks of southwestern Pennsylvania. We join all their faithful readers in a big "Thank You" to Mac., Brandon, Van, and Bob for the 26 combined years of service to the journal and to record-keeping work in their respective regions. In their stead, we welcome Doug Faulkner to the Colorado & Wyoming region (formerly Mountain West), and Vic Fazio of Ohio and Nick Pulcinella of Pennsylvania to the Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley region. You can contact these new editors at the following addresses:

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Our Thirty-fourth Region: another piece in the puzzle

After mentioning *Birders Journal* in the previous Editors' Notebook, we learned from Editor Margaret J. C. Bain, also one of our Regional Editors, that the journal would be printing its last issue this past winter. This is a great—and, we hope, temporary—loss for Canadian birders, but we hope to announce at some point that another birding journal for Canada has come into being. Our hats are off to Margaret and her editorial and advertising staff for producing a journal of such high caliber for over a decade. We hope that they too now have a little more time for birding, with the eyestrain of copyediting now a memory!

Several *North American Birds* editors, including Margaret Bain and Tony White, have been working for three years to fill the gap in this journal's coverage of Canada, and we are pleased to announce here that longtime friend and contributor to this journal, Cameron Eckert of Whitehorse, Yukon Territories, has come on board as Regional Editor of the new Northern Canada region, which will cover the three northern territories: Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories. Don Cecile will continue as Regional Editor of the now somewhat smaller British Columbia region. For those readers lucky enough to have sightings from the far north of Canada, please them send to:

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If anyone reading this section has good birding contacts in Greenland—which was recently added to the A.O.U. Area—please let them know that *North American Birds* is interested in countenancing bird records from that neglected, enormous island as well, even if just as an annual summary report.

Our latest lulus

A "lulu," according to various dictionaries is a "remarkable person, object, or idea," but here we mean this tongue-in-cheek, more boo-boo than lulu. In this category would have to come our caption in *N.A.B.* 57: 575 of an adult male Rufous Hummingbird "in alternate plumage." Steve Howell ever-so-gently pointed out to us that hummingbirds do not have alternate plumages—had we been more careful in proofing captions, we would have caught such a boldfaced blooper. Among other misfires, Harry Armistead's email address—harryarmistead@hotmail.com—was given incorrectly; Harry is collecting data of any sort for a paper on Black Rail distribution in the United States. Please send him your arcana.

Our fall and winter issues have been delayed in production, for which we extend apologies to our patient contributors and subscribers. The American Birding Association has been kind enough to hire Jim Harris, a new graphic artist, to help us get caught up, and we look forward to bringing our turn-around time back to normal, which typically means a mailing time about seven months after the end of the reporting period.

—Edward S. Brinkley
—Louis R. Bevier
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Multiple Occurrences of Dark-bellied Brant (*Branta [bernicla] bernicla*) in North America

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ABSTRACT

The first two North American sight records for *Branta bernicla bernicla* (known in Europe as "Dark-bellied Brent Goose"), from New York and Virginia, and the first two North American specimens, from New Jersey and Canada, are recorded. The two field observations were made in the winter of 1999–2000, whereas the skins date to 1846 and 1907, respectively. Recent additional reports are also at hand from Bathurst Island (Canada) and Massachusetts; the taxon has occurred at least once in Greenland and is now annual in increasing numbers in Iceland, with most individuals there found in flocks of westward-migrating *hrota*. It seems likely that nominate *bernicla* has been overlooked in North America for some time, at least in part owing to poor information on its separation from other brant taxa, especially in first-winter plumages. With recent order-of-magnitude increases in the European population, its occurrence in North America is likely to become more frequent.

INTRODUCTION

The taxonomy of the various brant/brent geese (hereafter "brant," the North American name for this group of geese) has had a checkered history and is still in flux. The American Ornithologists' Union's (A.O.U.) *Check-list of North American Birds* through its fifth edition (1957) treated the two North American forms *nigricans* and *hrota* as separate species ("Black Brant" and "Brant," respectively), but by the sixth edition (1983) all the world's brant were lumped in a single species, Brant *Branta bernicla*. Europeans had generally applied separate names to their two common and readily identifiable taxa of "Brent Goose": nominate *bernicla* ("dark-bellied form") and *hrota* ("pale-bellied form"). They sometimes recognized *nigricans* as a sepa-

rate species, using the North American name "Black Brant," but eventually they too adopted the A.O.U.'s view of only a single Holarctic species of brant.

With the recent popularity of the so-called "Phylogenetic Species Concept" (or "PSC"; cf. McKittrick and Zink 1988) advocated strongly by a number of Dutch researchers and impelled by the increasing recognition of populations deemed "diagnosable" by molecular techniques (especially using mitochondrial [mt] DNA), a split of the brant into three species has been proposed: Pale-bellied Brent Goose (*B. hrota*), Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*B. bernicla*), and Black Brant (sic: *B. nigricans*; Sangster et al. 1997).

Not yet ready to accept the PSC unreveredly at this stage of development, the British Ornithologists' Union (B.O.U.) and the A.O.U. have retained the traditional approach to defining species known as the Biological Species Concept (or "BSC"). Historically, application of the BSC has involved the recognition of geographical subspecies, most of which are almost automatically elevated to species under the PSC. Although we generally agree with use of the BSC in avian taxonomy, and while some recent biological work on the world's brant populations is beginning to suggest that there are actually several biological species of brant, this is not the place for such a discussion.

The fifth edition of the A.O.U.'s *Check-list*, the last to treat subspecies in detail, recorded only *hrota* and *nigricans* from North America; no subsequent reviews of brant in North America (e.g., Palmer 1976; Reed et al. 1998) have changed that status.

With the sinking of Black Brant as a separate species by the A.O.U., interest in field identification of the various brant "types" waned in North America, although it remained strong in Europe. This unfortu-

nately led to a drop in reports of extralimital *hrota* on the West Coast south to California and Black Brant in eastern North America (both groups had previously been tracked reasonably well), and to an almost complete lack of interest in (or even awareness of) the European "dark-bellied" form (nominate *bernicla*). Most European field guides (e.g., Peterson et al. 1954) did not depict its various age classes or expend much effort on separating it from the rest of the world's brant until Millington's (1997) paper and Mullarney et al.'s (1999) fine guide. Consequently, few in North America were looking for it or expecting it.

In January 1986, at Jacob Riis Park in Queens, New York City, New York, PAB found a dark adult brant feeding on a golf course with several thousand *hrota*. It was strikingly different from them but was also clearly not *nigricans*. Reference to the available but identification-weak literature (especially Delacour and Scott 1954) strongly suggested nominate *bernicla*, but the bird could not be photographed and was never relocated; PAB eventually left it formally unidentified. At the time, this was the first hint that *bernicla* might be occurring in North America.

RECENT NORTH AMERICAN *BERNICLA* OBSERVATIONS

In the late fall and winter of 1999–2000, two different sets of observers, in Nassau County, Long Island, New York and at Cape Charles, Northampton County, Virginia, each found oddly plumaged brant (First Basic [=HY] in New York, adult [=ASY] in Virginia) that after some research were identified as nominate *bernicla*. At the time, we believed these represented the first firm reports of this taxon from North America.

- **NEW YORK**—The first was found by PAB and SSM at Zach's Bay, Jones Beach State Park, Nassau County, Long Island, New York on 23 November 1999. It was only seen swimming but was studied for 15+ minutes as close as 75–100 m. Detected independently by each observer, it was easily relocated several times without optics and studied through telescopes under diffusely overcast sky with mid-day side-lighting. Field notes taken at the time by the observers were later expanded. It was immediately picked out with binoculars while on the water as a curiously "all-dark HY brant" whose juvenal dorsal white markings were restricted to only two covert bars and whose flanks were devoid of white markings of any kind. Even though an HY bird, it did not associate with any adult *hrota*. At the time, the



Figure 1. Ventral views of adult nominate *bernicla* (Dark-bellied) Brant, from left to right as follows: unsexed, August 1907, Carey Straits, Davis Straits, Nunavut, Canada (MCZ 576365); female, 9 February 1922, UK (AMNH 730855); female, 18 March 1847, Egg Harbor, New Jersey (AMNH 45893); and female, 10 March 1910, Tring, United Kingdom (AMNH 730861). Photograph by P. A. Buckley.

observers thought it might be a first-winter *nigricans*.

Especially at a distance, it looked uniformly brownish-gray. Its smoky hue and uniformly dark flanks rendered it unique within its *hrota* flock. It was slightly smaller than the accompanying *hrota*, with the same neck and body proportions and a faint trace of a broken neck-ring, visible only through telescopes. Compared to accompanying *hrota*, it was slightly darker and grayer dorsally and considerably darker and browner ventrally.

Thus, the contrast between the back and the flanks was much less striking than in any first-winter *hrota* in the same flock, with only a barely perceptible difference in hue between the two areas. This impression of uniformity was reinforced by the complete absence of light spotting on the scapulars and of white crescents on the flanks. A few young *hrota* in the flock did have somewhat dark (juvenal) flanks, but each without exception showed at least some distinctly contrasting and easily visible vertical white crescents. The blackish head and upper breast showed a discernible change to the lighter coloration of the lower breast and belly, but unlike the condition in adjacent *hrota*, this line was not obvious to the unaided eye. Unlike virtually all *nigricans*, though, the line was easily visible through scopes. The belly (seen well once, when the bird reared back and flapped) was uniformly dark and concolorous with the flanks, the darkness extending at least to the mid/lower belly, beyond

which it was obscured by the water.

This bird was strikingly different from every *hrota* there, and while there were not very many young (perhaps 50 in a flock of 500), all showed paler and browner backs with more extensive white feather edging, distinct breast/belly color differences obvious to the unaided eye, and prominent white crescents on their flanks. Apart from appearing smaller, the bird showed no striking differences in shape, posture, or carriage. [After this was written, composite good matches to the New York first-winter bird were depicted in *Birding World* 13: 3 (2000) on two *bernicla*: one immediately to the left (even though depicting four rows of white edging) and one to the right (three rows of white edging) of the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*). In turn, body color and tone are well matched by an adult in *Birding World* 10: 14 (Plate 8) 1997.]

PAB and SSM were unable to photograph it but at the time were not overly concerned, as a brant flock was usually in this location on higher tides. Unfortunately, it was not appreciated then that many different, small subsets of the 10,000+ brant wintering in adjacent saltmarshes were periodically coming into Zach's Bay to preen and rest. Despite intensive searching by many people, this HY *bernicla* was never relocated, so it may have still been on southward migration.

- **VIRGINIA**—On 22 March 2000 from 1730–1745, ESB studied an adult *bernicla*



Figure 2. Dorsal views of same individuals in Figure 1. Photograph by P. A. Buckley.

among a flock of 11 *hrota* just off the beach at Cape Charles, Northampton County, Virginia at a distance of 50 m in good cross-light. A small flock had been present there 21 March but contained only *hrota*; subsequent searches for this bird were not successful, as the *hrota* in the southern Delmarva had by this time largely departed.

This *bernicla* was similar in size and shape to *hrota* but was generally darker brown above and had a dark belly and sides; the rearmost flanks were markedly paler but not whitish. Vent and all tail coverts appeared to be white, with black rectrices. Upperwing coverts lacked pale edges, and there was a typical adult partial white neck collar; these neck markings did not meet on the throat (*contra* Black Brant, for which ESB had been searching). It was dark below—including the entire breast and uppermost sides—through the center of the belly to past the legs (it stood for a good while on the sandbar with the *hrota*, so it was easy to study the underparts). The sides of the body were a somewhat lighter wood-brown than the center of the belly but not the milky pale brown of *hrota*. The scapulars and upperwing coverts appeared fresh and unworn, giving no indication of pale edges recently abraded off. Compared to *hrota*, it seemed smaller overall but longer in the neck and gave the impression of a different distribution of bulk in the body—a bit less even, and heavier looking toward the breast. Bill proportions looked about the same as the accompanying *hrota*. Juvenile *hrota* below are typically fairly pale ventrally past the black neck/breast, having only a bit of

sooty brown in the sides or flanks, but in this *bernicla* the opposite was true—the only significant paleness seemed to be in the bases of the flank feathers. There was none of the flank contrast typical of Black Brant, just some subtle scalloping.

Plumage details of both Virginia and New York individuals rule out even aberrant *hrota*, but other taxa or populations are not so quickly dismissed, especially using the currently available brant identification literature. The Virginia adult could be confused with a worn post-breeding adult *nigricans* (or perhaps a one-year-old bird) lacking any white flank blaze, but such individuals are not only rare, they should carry such a plumage only in early to mid-summer, not winter. Several are shown in Figure 3 in Reed et al. (1998); note their striking, full neck rings.

Identification of young *bernicla* is a bit less straightforward. Juvenile and first-winter *nigricans* are rarely depicted (and not always accurately), but examination of specimens at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ), and the Canadian Museum of Nature, Hull (CMN) confirms that they almost always show a striking white flank blaze, that dorsal color (sooty black) is concolorous with belly color, and that there is usually little or no demarcation between black neck stocking and breast. *Nigricans* still bearing juvenal contour feathers (mostly replaced before beginning migration) are rare on the wintering grounds but typically show at least traces of white flanks, have a strong neck ring (even if incomplete), and are strikingly blackish in color ventrally and dor-

sally, never smoky grayish brown. Lastly, *nigricans* is typically thick-necked and “chesty,” even on the water, while the New York bird was even slighter than (but still proportioned like) *hrota*.

A generally unrecognized identification contender is the little-known “Gray-bellied Brant” that nests in the Western Canadian High Arctic only on the Parry Islands (Melville, Prince Patrick, and Borden) and which winter nearly exclusively in certain portions of Puget Sound (“Western High-Arctic Brant” in Figure 2 of Reed et al. 1998). This small population—at present lacking taxonomic recognition—can in some respects be viewed as morphologically intermediate between *nigricans* and *hrota*. It was profiled in European birding journals after vagrant individuals were detected several times in Ireland (Garner 1998, Garner and Millington 2001), and recently three adult geese on western Long Island, New York that also appeared to be Gray-bellied were photographed and described by Buckley and Mitra (2002).

Adult Gray-bellied Brant seem to be somewhat variable, with some tending toward *hrota* while others approach *nigricans* in darkness (hence its description by many authors as an “intermediate” population). But such light birds may actually be *hrota*, whereas the darkest individuals are generally separable from *nigricans*. Until Garner and Millington (2001), first-winter Gray-bellied Brant had not been described or illustrated. However, reference to photographs in that paper and to unpublished photographs taken on the Parry Islands indicate that both adult and first-winter Gray-bellied Brant nearly always show a conspicuous white flank patch—not as strong as in *nigricans* and actually more like *hrota*. In this respect, they are qualitatively different from *bernicla*. Even fresh juvenile Gray-bellied Brant (lacking any first-winter flank feathers) differ from *bernicla* at least with respect to the absolute color tone of the upperparts: dark brown in the former and smoky grayish brown in the latter. Thus, Gray-bellied Brant can also be safely excluded from identification consideration in both the New York and Virginia individuals.

Scrutiny of any flock of *hrota* usually reveals more individual variation than field guides indicate. Some of this variation relates to age—e.g., juvenal plumage is varied and is routinely retained, especially ventrally, as late as May of juveniles’ second year—and some is seasonal: juvenile neck rings are slight or lacking on arrival on winter grounds but molt in during the winter, whereas adults become uniformly darker as their plumage wears, and worn birds can appear quite barred ventrally and

appear suspiciously dark-bellied at a distance. There is also individual variation in plumage, which is generally less pronounced than variation related to age and season.

NORTH AMERICAN SPECIMENS OF *BERNICLA*

Subsequent to these observations, PAB examined the large series of brant at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Massachusetts. In the process, he uncovered two previously misidentified brant from North America referable to *bernicla*. PAB and SSM subsequently compared and photographed both side-by-side with European *bernicla* skins at the AMNH. Given that they antedate the sight records above, they become the first records for this taxon in North America. For different reasons, both are also of historical interest.

(1) The first was an adult (AMNH 45893) collected at Egg Harbor, New Jersey on 18 March (Figures 1–3, second bird from right). No year is indicated on the label, but Delacour and Zimmer (1952) gave it as 1847. It is one of two specimens from the G. N. Lawrence collection taken in 1846–1847 at Egg Harbor, the first of which (January 1846), an adult male, was described by Lawrence in 1846 as *nigricans*; it is now AMNH 3211 and in the AMNH Type Collection (Figure 4).

A paper by Delacour and Zimmer (1952) entitled “*The identity of Anser nigricans Lawrence 1846*” correctly pointed out that Lawrence’s type differs significantly from what we today know as “*nigricans*”—what most authorities call Black Brant. They suggested that Lawrence’s type was referable to an “almost extinct subspecies nesting farther south than” other brant, although they were unable to adduce any firm evidence in support of this contention. [The possible identity of Lawrence’s type was discussed in Buckley and Mitra (2002), where we agree with Delacour and Zimmer that it is *not* referable to the brant widely known today as *nigricans*.]

In their paper, Delacour and Zimmer examined the other “Lawrence’s *nigricans*,” also from Egg Harbor, New Jersey, but taken in 1847. They wrote:

“We found that the type of *nigricans* and the second specimen differ from the Pacific Black Brants. They are generally browner; their underparts are medium gray, resembling closely in that feature the Eurasian *B. b. bernicla*, from which they are, however, distinguishable by having the white-spotted collar extending to the foreneck, and by the

broader white borders of the feathers of the sides and flanks. They resemble in these two characteristics the Pacific Black Brants, but they differ from them in decidedly lighter gray color of the lower breast and abdomen. This contrasts distinctly with the black upper part of the breast, while the two areas are almost concolorous, but yet different in shade, in the majority of adult Pacific birds, and completely so in a few adults, and in immatures.”

On reading the above, one might imagine the two Egg Harbor birds to be peas in a pod, yet nothing could be further from the truth; we are at a loss to explain how Delacour and Zimmer arrived at that conclusion. Figures 1–3 (second from right) and Figure 4 contrast both Egg Harbor birds, and it is clear they are different—strikingly so, given the relative uniformity within brant taxa. Lawrence’s type (Figure 4) is in several respects intermediate between *hrota* and Pacific Black Brant, while the other Egg Harbor bird (Figures 1–3) resembles in all respects an adult *bernicla*: upperparts paler than in Black Brant and showing *bernicla*’s distinctive smoky-pink bloom, which is absent in Pale-bellied and Gray-bellied Brant; ventral pigmentation both uniform (generally lacking contrasting dark scaling—unlike both Pale-bellied and Gray-bellied Brant) and extensive (reaching beyond the legs—unlike Pale-bellied Brant); flanks generally uniform-looking, owing to fine alternation of whitish and brownish bars, and not producing a conspicuous and contrasting whitish patch as seen in adult plumages of all other brant taxa. This specimen is perceptibly browner than some *bernicla*, a dif-

ference that might be attributable to foxing or leaching of fats from the skin (after all, the specimen is almost 160 years old). It nevertheless still shows the diagnostic smoky plumage tones, as well as other characters, of *bernicla*, and we regard it as referable to that taxon. There is some possibility that another dusky-bellied brant, from Virginia in 1888 and also mentioned by Delacour and Zimmer, could have been confused with the Egg Harbor *bernicla*, but owing to the poor condition of the Virginia skin as described by them, that seems most unlikely. In any event, that skin is no longer extant, possibly having been discarded because of condition.

(2) The second North American *bernicla* specimen was also an adult, found by PAB in a *hrota* tray in the MCZ. Assuming it was just a European *bernicla* in the wrong drawer, he was startled to read on its label (MCZ 57365) “August 1907, Carey Islands, Davis Straits.”

It is a typical fresh-plumaged adult *bernicla* in all respects, with a strong neck-ring on the sides but only weakly complete ventrally (Figures 1–3, left-hand bird; second from left and right-hand birds are *bernicla* winter-taken in the United Kingdom for comparison). It bears two field labels that each say “Carey Islands” and “Davis Straits.” However, on one of them there is the undated pencilled notation “*about intermediate*. JLP.” This is a notation by James Lee Peters, although he does not state what it is “intermediate” between: presumably *hrota* and *nigricans*. There is yet another label attached, from the California Academy of Sciences (whose name is lined out),



Figure 3. Lateral views of some individuals in Figure 1. Photograph by P. A. Buckley.

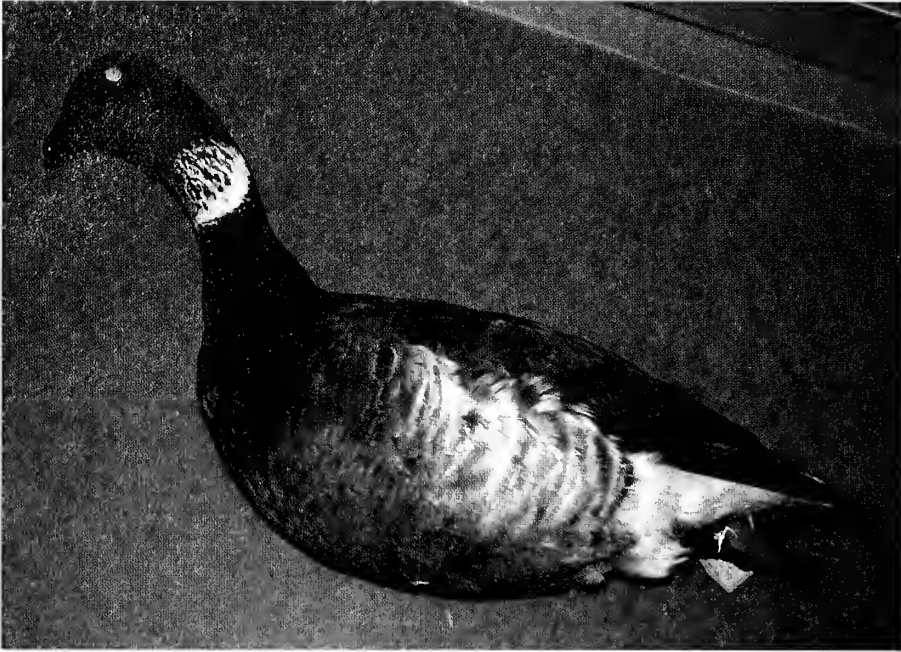


Figure 4. Type of "Lawrence's *nigricans*": adult male, January 1846, Egg Harbor, New Jersey (AMNH 3211, now in Type Collection). Photograph by P. A. Buckley.

and on which the MCZ accession number appears. It is handwritten on both sides by James Moffitt, the renowned goose expert. On the front it says "Branta bernicla bernicla typical James Moffitt Jan. 12, 1940" and on the back are the following additional comments: "Note: This spec. is not in the plumage of an August bird, but is like Jan. or Feb. collected skins. Therefore, data appear questionable to me. Perhaps it is a British Isles winter collected skin.—J. Moffitt."

Examination of the specimen reveals it to be an adult in fresh plumage, so presumably it had recently molted at one of the Arctic goose molt-migration sites and may have been returning, perhaps with a flock of *hrota*, to winter in the British Isles. Dement'ev and Gladkov (1952: 370) note that nominate *bernicla* in Russia sometimes complete their entire body molt before migrating to their wintering area. This specimen is clearly *bernicla*, and given Dement'ev and Gladkov's comments, there is no longer any reason to be suspicious of its provenance. (It may also be one of the two *hrota-nigricans* "intergrades" that Griscom and Snyder [1955: 40] mentioned having examined, exasperatingly failing to give any details, presumably in the MCZ, Griscom's home institution.)

The Carey Islands (73° 00' W, 76° 30' N) are indeed in Davis Straits but are not a breeding ground for brant of any type; they support mostly murres and some gulls (Hugh Boyd, pers. comm.). They straddle the international border between Canada and Greenland, so it is a moot point to which country this particular bird should be assigned. We have chosen Canada over

Greenland to accentuate the zoogeographic importance of this specimen, but both are included in the A.O.U.'s definition of North America.

BERNICLA IN GREENLAND AND ICELAND

It is probably unappreciated that *bernicla* is by no means unknown in either of these locations, notwithstanding their relative paucity of observers. Boertmann (1994) gives one Greenland record, 23–25 June 1976, a date coincident with wandering failed breeders; no more recent information

is available. However, for Iceland, Yann Kolbeinsson (pers. comm.) writes: "Up to and including 1997, 25 Dark-bellied Brent Geese had been recorded in Iceland (some of these may have been the same birds returning to the same place spring after spring). *Bernicla* was first recorded in 1986, but since 1989 it has been seen annually (apart from 1996) and from 1992, 3–6 birds have been seen annually. Most if not all records are from spring (cf. Figure 5), with most *bernicla* being seen with migrating *hrota* moving west toward Greenland. Others have been seen in the north and east, where *hrota* is rare." The year in which the first probable *bernicla* was seen—1986—was a year of Holarctic brant breeding failure, and this was also the year of the Bathurst Island bird (see next).

ADDITIONAL BERNICLA FROM NORTH AMERICA

Bathurst Island, Nunavut, Canada: The summer of 1986 was abnormally cold, and in general, goose breeding success in the High Arctic was nearly nil (O'Briain et al. 1998). Several workers were examining the postbreeding molting behavior and ecology of Arctic Geese on Bathurst Island. Geese were moving about to a much greater degree than in normal years, and in late July 1986 (exact date unavailable), O'Briain, Reed, and MacDonald studied an all-dark brant in a close flock of *hrota* that they tentatively identified as an adult *bernicla* (Austin Reed, pers. comm.). Unfortunately, they were unable to photograph it.

Newburyport, Essex County, Massachusetts: On 4–5 May 2001, an adult brant in



Figure 5. Adult nominate *bernicla* (right) with *hrota*, Álfanes, southwestern Iceland, 26 April 2003. Photograph by Daniel Bergmann.

a flock of *hrota* on flats along the Merrimack River was identified as *bernicla* by its finders (Perkins 2001). Remarkably, on 25–26 April 2002 (and possibly later), presumably the same bird was found in the same location (Perkins 2002). No photographs were taken either year, but detailed descriptions of both leave no doubt they were adult *bernicla* and will appear elsewhere (R. Heil, pers. comm.).

CONCLUSION

Populations of *bernicla* wintering in western Europe have rebuilt to a recent high of 300,000 in the 1990s, from their nadir of 30,000 in the 1950s (Czajkowski and Schricke 1999), so it should hardly be surprising that it is now annual in Iceland, with at least one recent Greenland record. In turn, it is not unexpected that some would find their way to North America (Bathurst Island; Massachusetts; New York; and Virginia), but the existence of two quite old North American specimens (Davis Straits and New Jersey) makes one wonder how long *bernicla* has been occurring undetected in North America. In any case, North American observers should anticipate increasingly more, especially now that field guides are beginning to depict adults and first-winter individuals accurately.

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THE CHANGING SEASONS

Refinements

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

Weather report

- Northeastern: eastern
Canada to Virginia

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

• **Prairies & Plains,**

Great Lakes south to Texas

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

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

• **Northwestern: Alaska to northern California, Yukon to Colorado**

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

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

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



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

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

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

The Boreal Birds

• **Finches, finally**

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

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

These finches rarely get the attention that

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Grosbeaks in absentia

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

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

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

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



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

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

• Waxwings

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

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

• Vole-birds and snow-birds

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

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

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

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

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

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

The lost & the "lingering"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Looning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 2. Hybrids reported December 2003–February 2004

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

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

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

Gulling

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

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

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

Hybrids

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

I've added a short section on hybrids here mostly to showcase, in a single spot, what I consider an "average" showing (perhaps fewer hybrid geese than normal) for a winter season's reports. Surely, too, there were many more individuals that did not get reported to regional editors, especially in areas where intergrades or hybrids are routine. Naturally, the hybrids most frequently reported are also the least surprising—hybrids of Herring and Glaucous Gulls (sometimes called "Nelson's Gull," though that appellation has been applied to a whole range of phenotypes, not limited to F₁ hybrids of Glaucous with Herring), of Tufted Duck and scaup, of



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Postscript: blue feet & interregional wanderings

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

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

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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

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

The season could best be described as near normal in most of the Region. Major low-pressure systems came along about every three weeks, closely following the Polar Jet Stream, which was locked into place for most of the winter. Storms typically moved up the east coast off Nova Scotia, then curved north over Newfoundland, along the coast of Labrador, and then out over the Labrador Sea toward Greenland. The result was generally above-normal amounts of snow in coastal and eastern Nova Scotia, with snowfall below normal in most of New Brunswick, normal in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and above normal in coastal Labrador and northern Newfoundland.

Temperatures were a bit above normal until late December and early January, after which extremely bitter conditions set in, as usual, eliminating most half-hardy lingerers. During the period 12–16 January, record-low temperatures not seen in many years were experienced in southern New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, e.g., -25°C at Grand Manan Island, NB on 13 January. Temperatures for the remainder of the period, while cold, were slightly above normal. It was an excellent winter for most finches, with good numbers reported throughout the Region, especially in Nova Scotia. A total of 195 species of birds were reported from that province during the period (Blake Maybank), while New Brunswick tallied a respectable 158 (Stuart Tingley).

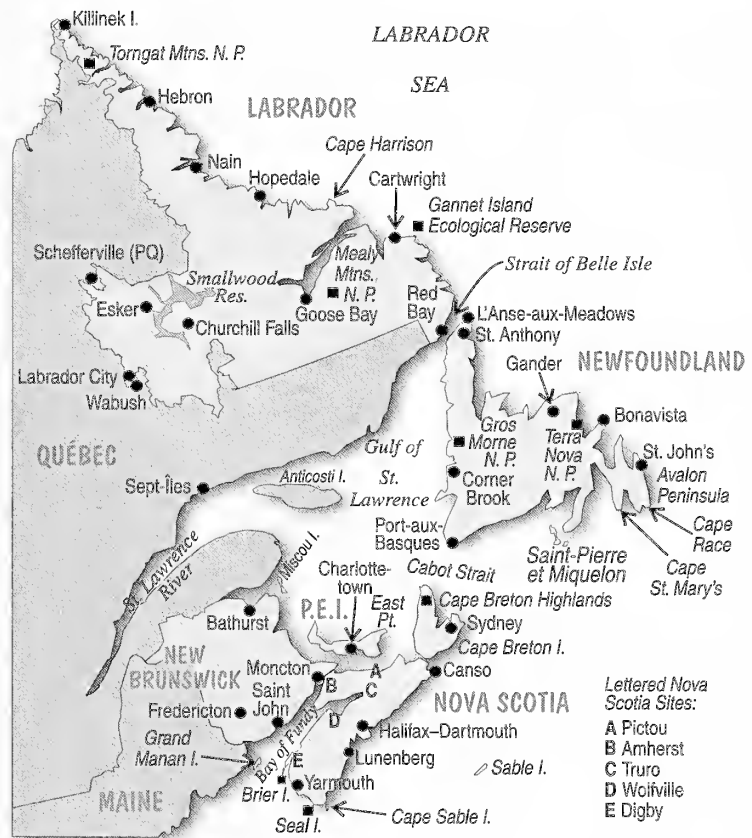
Abbreviations: A.P. (Avalon Peninsula, NL), C.B.I. (Cape Breton Island, NS), C.S.I. (Cape Sable Island, NS), G.M.I. (Grand Manan Island, NB), H.R.M. (Halifax Regional Municipality), NF (the actual island of Newfoundland), P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island), SPM (St. Pierre & Miquelon, France).

TUBENOSES THROUGH VULTURES

Rarely noted after Nov, 4–5 Cory's Shearwaters and 20–25 Sooty Shearwaters were off Canso, NS following a storm 8 Dec (TK). An imm. Brown Pelican was found 27 Dec wandering a road in s. Yarmouth, NS (Carla Allen); only the 2nd winter record for the province, the bird was eventually flown to a rehabilitation center in Florida. It had been banded as a hatch-year individual in North Carolina in the summer of 2003. Double-crested Cormorants now winter in small numbers on the A.P. of Newfoundland, with at least 10 birds there throughout the period (*vide* BMT). Six were found on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 27 Dec, while 22 in Pictou Harbour, NS 1 Jan were gone days later (*vide* KM).

An American Bittern lingered until 25 Dec at Tryon, P.E.I. (M. Lord). A healthy Great Blue Heron was notably far n. at Campbellton, NB 5 Jan (Margaret Doyle). A Great Egret at Big Island, Pictou, NS 1–2 Dec just made it into the period (Everette Baudoux). Remarkable for the season was an imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron Nov–14 Dec (Susan & Harry Jost) at

Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon



Annapolis Royal, NS, a first C.B.C. record for Canada. Single Black Vultures were present 5–15 Dec near North Sydney, NS (DM et al.); Dempsey Corner, Kings, NS 9–10 Dec (AM); and Rocky Brook, York, NB 4 Jan (B. Norrad). Best counts of Turkey Vulture, as usual, came from sw. Nova Scotia, with up to 9 at Brier I. (June Swift) and 7 at C.S.I. 30 Jan (MN).

WATERFOWL THROUGH PTARMIGAN

Late in the period, Brant numbers began to build at the only two known wintering sites in the Region, with about 600 at C.S.I. 11 Feb (MN) and 420 at White Head, G.M.I. 17 Feb (Dwayne Sabine). Up to 7 Eurasian Wigeons were present throughout at St. John's, NL (BMT), while the high count for American Wigeon was 93 on the Halifax–Dartmouth, NS

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C.B.C. 14 Dec. The only Redhead was a drake at Brier I., NS, returning for its 2nd winter 16 Dec+ (EM et al.). Seven Canvasbacks on the Annapolis Royal, NS C.B.C. 14 Dec made for the Region's largest flock in many years.

Seven Tufted Ducks at St. John's was the high count for the Region (BMT), while 2 at the Trenton, NS power plant 12 Jan (KM) provided the high count elsewhere. A drake at

SA Certainly the sensation of the season was the ad. **Slaty-backed Gull** found and photographed in downtown Glace Bay, C.B.I., NS 26 Dec and present into early Feb in the nearby harbor (Alan & Cathy Murrant et al.). Commendably, the discoverers photographed the bird and quickly sent images to experts for confirmation before announcing the presence of the gull. It was very tame and readily accepted handouts with other gulls and waterfowl, allowing close approach. This is now the easternmost record of this Siberian species for North America.

Saint John, NB 11 Dec+ was likely returning for its 8th winter (Jim Wilson). Largest concentrations of Greater Scaup were all in Nova Scotia, with about 4000 in Pictou Harbour late in the period (KM), an estimated 500 at Crescent Beach, Lunenburg 12 Jan (James Hirtle), and 486 at Glace Bay, C.B.I. 31 Jan (Sara McLean). Late in the period, pack ice became a problem for the Cape Breton scaup, and at least one fell prey to raven (DM). The species appears to be wintering in "ever-increasing" numbers in Newfoundland, with 350 found at Trinity Bay near Clarenville on the west coast 17 Feb and 250 at Shoal Harbour, A.P. 22 Feb (*vide* TB).

An apparent hybrid male King Eider x Common Eider, probably the individual seen in two previous winters, was noted at St. Andrews, NB 17 Dec (Tracey Dean), and likely a few km away at Decr I. 29 Feb (Stuart Tingley). The largest flock of Common Eiders found in the Region was 7000+ reported at West Baccaro, Shelburne, NS 10 Jan (MN). An impressive assemblage of about 4000 Black Scoters at West Baccaro 11 Feb (MN) may represent a late-winter staging area, as only 450 were found there 22 Jan (JN). Bufflehead is a scarce species in Newfoundland, so a maximum of 23 at Traytown during the period was significant (*vide* TB). A nice flock of 16 Barrow's Goldeneyes at the head of tidewater on the St. Croix R. at St. Stephen, NB 3 Jan (Tom Moffat) is the largest number ever found in a system draining into the Bay of Fundy. It represents a previously unknown wintering location.

Reports of imm. Broad-winged Hawks, all lacking photographic documentation, came from Port Clyde, Shelburne 12 Jan–13 Feb (Sandy Hiltz et al.); Kentville, Kings 12 Jan (AM); Portuguese Cove, H.R.M. 21 Dec–4 Jan (Hans Toom et al.); Donagh near Charlottetown, P.E.I. 17 Dec (DM); and Ebenezer, P.E.I. in Jan (A. Page). Subregional editor Ulli Höger encourages all observers of Broad-winged to submit both photographs and written documentation on the species. Even rarer than the preceding species, a light-morph imm. Swainson's Hawk was well described by a careful and experienced observer at Barrington Passage, Shelburne 6 Dec (Joan Czapaly).

Gordon Parsons, a long-time hunter in w. Labrador, considered the past winter's Willow Ptarmigan flight there to be a "six" on a scale of 1–10 (with the winter of 1999–2000 being the most recent "10"). On a 240-km drive from Labrador City to Churchill Falls 27 Feb, he saw 150+. The birds were flighty and had probably

been "hunted hard." As an indication of how quickly they can withdraw back n. toward their breeding haunts, only 3 were found a week later on the same route!

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Two hardy Greater Yellowlegs were still present 2 Jan at Melbourne, Yarmouth, NS (PG). A tardy Spotted Sandpiper at Bear Pt., Shelburne, NS 20 Dec was a good find (Grant Milroy). A *hudsonicus* Whimbrel at White Head, Guysborough, NS 29 Dec was carefully checked to eliminate other possibilities (Randy Lauff, Stephen Bushell). The largest group of Ruddy Turnstones in the Region was 5 at Point La Haye, NF 8 Feb (*vide* TB). Up to 9 Semipalmated Sandpipers were present at C.S.I. 20–31 Dec (MN, JN). White-rumped Sandpiper was not



This juvenile dark-morph Gyrfalcon, here 30 January 2004, was present in the Memramcook River Valley, New Brunswick throughout the period, the first long-staying bird in the south of the province for many years.

Photograph by Alain Clavette.

reported from C.S.I. this winter, breaking a six-year streak. The only White-rumped of the period were 2 at Biscay Bay, NF on the Cape Race C.B.C. 14 Dec, where considered late migrants (BM). A Dunlin at Point La Haye, NF 8 Feb was said to a first winter record for the province (*vide* TB). Up to 10 were present at Grand Barachois, SPM until at least 11 Jan (RE). High count for the Region was 250 at

C.S.I. 18 Jan (MN, JN). Sanderlings were most common at Port l'Hebert, Shelburne, NS, with 319 found on the C.B.C. 21 Dec, but down to 200+ 3 Jan (AD).

Very rare anywhere in the Region at this season was an imm. Laughing Gull at Back Oler Farm Marsh, near Lunenburg, NS 13 Feb (Shirley Cohrs). The only Little Gull reported was an ad. among kittiwakes off Blue Rocks, Lunenburg, NS 3 Jan (FL et al.). An ad. Yellow-legged Gull present in St. John's, NF 25 Dec+ was likely the same individual present the previous winter (m. ob.). The ad. Thayer's Gull returned for yet another winter to the harbor at Halifax, NS, being seen off and on throughout Jan and Feb (v. o.). An imm. was also there at Pier 9 on 1 Jan (FL), and another ad. was photographed at Glace Bay, C.B.I. 2 Jan (A&CM). At least 11 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found in Nova Scotia, while 10 were found on the St. John's C.B.C. 26 Dec.

By the end of the period, Black-legged Kittiwakes had begun to return to breeding areas in Newfoundland, with 12,000+ reported in one hour passing n. past Cape Spear, A.P. 22 Feb (*vide* TB). The only Ivory Gull reported was an imm. photographed at Glace Bay, NS 26 Jan (A&CM). Two Forster's Terns were at C.S.I. until at least 10 Dec (MN). Dovekies were said to be abundant around S.P.M. in late Dec (RE). A massive flight in early Dec brought many thousands into the mouth of the St. Lawrence R. in Québec and lesser numbers into Chaleur Bay, such as 132 in the Pointe-Verte, NB area 2 Dec (Roger Guitard). Following the strong easterly gales of 6–7 Dec, dozens were reported wrecked within 25 km of the Northumberland Strait (*vide* Nelson Poirier), with one as far inland as Oromocto, NB 8 Dec (*vide* Don Gibson).

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

It was not a Snowy Owl winter. The only multiple reports were of 2 at C.S.I. 3 Feb (MN) and 2 at Stanhope, P.E.I. in Dec (D. Clark). Short-eared Owls were in good supply, mostly in a band across s. New Brunswick, n. Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward I. Good counts include 9 over the salt marshes at Moncton, NB 11 Dec (Jean-Sébastien Guénette); 7 at Falmouth, Kings, NS in early Jan (*vide* Bob Bancroft); 6 in the Memramcook R. Valley, NB 22 Dec (Roger LeBlanc); 5 at Pinkneys Pt., Yarmouth, NS 11 Jan (PG); and at least 10 throughout the period in ones and twos across P.E.I. (m. ob.). One at Memramcook, NB 22 Dec was attacked in the air by a Common Raven, releasing a sizeable "puff" of feathers (Alain Clavette). Another at St. Shotts, NF 8 Feb was considered uncommon in winter on the island (*vide* TB).

Red-bellied Woodpecker staged its best flight ever into the Region in Nov, with most (if not all) eventually settling in at feeders. No fewer than 10 were found in New Brunswick, including one as far n. as Pokemouche,

Gloucester, while at least 20 were tallied in Nova Scotia, mostly in the sw. but as far e. as Sydney, C.B.I. Newfoundland got only its 2nd record ever, with one found on the e. coast at Rocky Harbour surviving until early Dec (*fide* TB). We seldom have Yellow-bellied Sapsucker to report here, but 3 were found in Nova Scotia, none of which likely survived the winter: 19 Dec on the Amherst C.B.C., 22 Dec on the Sydneys C.B.C., and 11 Jan at Middle River, *Victoria* (*fide* Chuck Thompson). A female Northern Flicker at a Sackville, NB feeder was killed by 2 European Starlings 12 Dec (Kathy Popma).

VIREOS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A Blue-headed Vireo survived until 14 Dec at St. John's, NF (J. Selno). Two Fish Crows were apparently blown to sw. Nova Scotia by the blizzard of 19 Feb, with the first turning up at Shelburne 24 Feb (Peter McLeod) and the other at C.S.I. 29 Feb (JN). White-breasted Nuthatches flooded into the Region from the w. during the fall and were very common at feeders throughout the Maritimes. Carolina Wrens took a big hit last winter and were just about wiped out in the Region. The only report was of one at Fredericton, NB until 7 Jan (Don Gibson). House Wrens were reported from Nova Scotia at Spryfield, H.R.M. 14 Dec (FL) and at Doctors Brook, *Antigonish* 15–29 Dec (*fide* AH). One brave individual toughed it out at the St. John's, NF dump until at least 26 Dec (BMt). The only report of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was an individual into early Dec at Canso, *Guysborough* (*fide* BM).

Surprising in such a harsh season, good counts of Hermit Thrushes were noted in the Region on several C.B.C.s: 5 at Halifax-Dartmouth, NS 14 Dec; 2 at Miscou I., NB 14 Dec; and singles at Tracadie-Sheila, NB 20 Dec and East Pt., P.E.I. 14 Dec. Five were found on the A.P., including one to 25 Feb at St. John's (BMt), and 2 were at Fredericton, NB 4 Jan. Some probably survived the period in NS, such as one at Port Joli, *Queens* 29 Jan (AD), another at C.S.I. 14 Feb (MN), and one at Bear River, *Digby*, NS 24 Feb (Maggie Rice). American Robins were generally scattered throughout the Region until early Jan, when they began a mass exodus (out of New Brunswick, for example). By early Feb, most had moved into Nova Scotia, and 2200+ were noted feeding on Multiflora Rose hips at Canning, *Kings* 8 Feb (Merritt Gibson). One came to a suet feeder at Goose Bay, Labrador 14 Feb (*fide* TB). The only report of Townsend's Solitaire came from Alma, NB 11 Dec (Doreen Rossiter).

A Northern Mockingbird at a feeder in Labrador City lasted until early Jan, when it was found dead of unknown causes (*fide* GP). Another that died there in late Feb 2002 was deposited with the New Brunswick Museum, where an autopsy revealed that it had died

from blunt force trauma (likely hitting a window) and that it was a female. Bohemian Waxwing was well distributed in the Region, even in w. Labrador, where good numbers remained throughout the period (GP). Peak numbers did not occur elsewhere in the Region until late Jan and early Feb, such as 1000+ at St. John's 9 Feb (*fide* TB); several flocks of 200–500 were noted along the s. shore of Nova Scotia 24 Jan–8 Feb (v. o.), and 1000+ were in Wolfville, NS 8 Feb (Jim Wolford). Although there were good numbers in New Brunswick as well, the Nova Scotia birds appear to have arrived mostly via Newfoundland, with reports coming first from C.B.I., then later from the eastern mainland of Nova Scotia. Cedar Waxwing was outnumbered about 10:1 by its larger cousin, with 50 in Pictou, NS 18 Jan being the most reported from one location in the Region (KM).



This apparent adult Thayer's Gull showed up for its fourth winter in the harbor at Halifax, Nova Scotia (here 19 December 2003), where it was present through the end of February 2004. There was some concern that this bird's mantle was too pale for Thayer's, but most experts felt it was well within the range of Thayer's seen in the West. Photograph by Richard Stern.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Only the most outstanding warbler rarities will be mentioned here, as reports are now commonplace of many half-hardy species lingering into Dec in Nova Scotia and the Avalon Peninsula. For the 2nd year in a row, a Magnolia Warbler was found on the C.S.I. C.B.C. 20 Dec. A Cape May Warbler was found at Petit Rivière, *Lunenburg* 2–3 Dec (*fide* JH). Four reports of Yellow-throated Warbler included one at Canso, NS 1 Dec (TK), a white-lored individual at Yarmouth, NS 14 Dec (*fide* KM), one in St. John's 7–14 Dec (Marshall Iliff), and another at Gander, NF 17–19 Dec (K. Butler). Outstanding was a Canada Warbler well seen at Cape Miquelon, S.P.M. 20–21 Dec (Jacky & Christine Hébert). Newfoundland's 10th Townsend's Warbler was in St. John's 12–30 Dec (BMt et al.). A Yellow-breasted Chat survived at a St. John's feeder until 15 Jan (m. ob.).

An imm. male Summer Tanager at a feeder in St. John's 2–9 Jan, the 4th record for the province but first for winter, appeared in the

local media (*fide* BMt). A female Summer Tanager was present at a feeder in Greenwich, *Kings*, NS until 12 Dec (Terry & Heather Hennigar). Clay-colored Sparrow feeder reports included 3 at Canso, NS throughout the period (TK); 2 at Grand Pré, *Kings*, NS 26 Dec–18 Feb (*fide* Jim Wolford); one 19–23 Dec at Lewisporte, NF (Jared Clark); and another at St. John's 26 Dec (BMt). Northern Cardinal appears to be firmly entrenched in sw. Nova Scotia, where Murray Newell was able to identify 25+ attending feeders in Yarmouth. An imm. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared sporadically at a feeder at McLeod Hill near Fredericton, NB 4 Dec–8 Jan (Jeannie Michaud). An Indigo Bunting at a feeder near Bathurst, NB survived some incredibly bitter weather 11–22 Jan (Marco Scichilone et al.), while another record-late individual "looked particularly robust" at a Renewes, NF feeder 3 Jan (BMt).

Small flocks of wintering Eastern Meadowlarks included 4 at Hartlen Pt., H.R.M., NS 16 Dec–18 Jan (m. ob.) and 6 at Canso, NS 13 Jan+ (TK). Farthest e. was an individual at Maine-a-Dieu, C.B.I. 3–14 Feb (DM). Farthest n. was one at Le Goulet, *Gloucester*, NB 12 Jan (Roger Dumaresq). New Brunswick's 2nd Bullock's Oriole in as many winters was an imm. male at a Saint John feeder 8–15 Dec (Dave Smith et al.). It was an exceptional winter for finches, with Bruce Mactavish's summation for Newfoundland applying to just about the entire Region: "Purple Finches, Common Redpolls, and Pine Siskins were abundant at feeders. White-winged Crossbills were fairly common in the woods (even in Labrador). Evening Grosbeak and Pine Grosbeak were present in moderate numbers." The latter species was reported especially common in n. New Brunswick (Mike Lushington) and is increasingly taking to feeders throughout the Region. American Goldfinches seem to be intimidated by redpolls and were present only in fair numbers, except the A.P., where said to be common (BMt). Hoary Redpoll was well reported everywhere there were Common Redpolls, even in sw. Nova Scotia, but were outnumbered at least 1000:1 by Commons, with the largest number reported being only 8 at Labrador City 1 Feb (GP), the only location where redpoll numbers were generally depressed.

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After a generally mild December, temperatures in January plummeted into the subfreezing but rebounded to near normal in February, with the overall result that winter 2003–2004 was only slightly colder than usual in southern Québec. In central Québec, temperatures were close to normal but well above normal farther north in Nunavik and on the lower North Shore. Precipitation was near

normal in most of the Region except for the North Shore, where it was below normal.

LOONS THROUGH OWLS

Several Common Loons lingered into Dec and early Jan, but one at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 15 Feb was most probably a wintering bird (AC). A light-morph Northern Fulmar was unexpected on the Saguenay R. at Saint-Ful-

gence 26 Dec (C. Cormier, GS). Another one was found alive along a road at Bégin 3 Jan (L. Boulianne) and was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it died 8 Jan. These represented the 3rd and 4th records for the Saguenay–Lake Saint-Jean region. These birds were believed to have traveled overland from the James Bay–Hudson Bay region on their way to the St. Lawrence estuary. Three Double-crested Cormorants at Bonaventure 2 Jan were unusual so late in the season (PP, O. Poulin, G. Roy).

An imm. male Eurasian Wigeon was very late at Maria, Gaspésie 3–5 Dec (C. Lamarre et al.). A pair of Green-winged Teal was reported at Labrecque 30 Dec and again 20 Feb (R. Savard, S. Girard). A Northern Pintail at Tadoussac 28 Jan represented a rare winter sighting for this locality (RP). At least 2 male Ring-necked Ducks overwintered in the Montréal area (PB), while another one was at North Hatley 7 Feb (FR). A female Tufted Duck was well described at Lévis 3 Dec (C. Deschênes). Two Harlequin Ducks overwintered in the Lachine Rapids, near Montréal (P. Lamontagne, PB, G. Gagnon). A total of 48 Hooded Mergansers on the Magog R. 13 Feb represented an exceptional winter count for the Region (FR).

Four Bald Eagles gathered at Kiamika, in the upper Laurentians 30 Jan (MAM). This species has been increasingly reported in winter especially around the Gaspé Pen. and in the Outaouais region. In the latter region, it has been suggested that this increase would be linked to the high abundance of the White-tailed Deer. There were four reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk in the Gaspé Pen., a notable event in winter (*vide* PP). A Cooper's Hawk at Rimouski 8 Feb was quite unexpected (G. Gendron). Single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared at Aylmer 12 Feb (JP. Artigau) and Rimouski 17 Dec–18 Jan (R. Pitre et RSL). The dark-morph *calurus* Red-tailed Hawk reported at Gatineau in the fall report made it through the winter (A. Cloutier). An eastern-race bird at Tadoussac 6 Jan was late for this latitude (RP). A second-year Golden Eagle at Kiamika 17 Jan was later followed by an ad. 30 Jan (MAM).

Unexpectedly, Willow Ptarmigans appeared in good numbers in the L. Saint-Jean area, only four years after the last irruption (*vide* GS). This species' irruptions generally follow a 9- to 12-year cycle. Once again this winter, Wild Turkeys were reported very close to Montréal, at Châteauguay and Chambly (*vide* PB). An American Coot at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé was last seen 11 Jan (JR. Lepage, D. Mercier). A Wilson's Snipe at Sainte-Félicité-de-Matane represented only the 3rd winter record for the Lower St. Lawrence (D. Desjardins).

A first-winter Black-headed Gull stopped at Sainte-Catherine 27–29 Dec (P. Tarassof, m. ob., ph.), while an ad. Mew Gull was discovered at LaSalle (Montréal C.B.C.) 14 Dec (BB). An ad. Thayer's Gull was also at LaSalle (Montréal C.B.C.) 14 Dec (BB), while a first-winter bird appeared at Sainte-Catherine 20 Dec (PB).

An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull lingered at Laval 28 Dec-10 Jan (FR). Dovekies remained abundant off the Gaspé Pen. (fide PP) and at Tadoussac (RP) until mid-Jan. The last sighting was of 2 at Anse-à-Beaufils 15 Feb (J. Wiseman). A Barred Owl was apparently successful in killing a Wild Turkey at Sutton 24 Jan (fide R. Gaudreault, ph.). Great Gray Owls included one at Laval 1-29 Feb+ (C. Kling, m. ob.), 2 at Cape Tourmente 23 Dec+ (fide JL), and one at Plaisance N.E. 19 Jan (JF Houle). Reports of Short-eared Owls were above normal in the Saguenay-Lake Saint-Jean region (fide GS) and in the Gaspésie region (fide PP)

WOODPECKERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A female Red-bellied Woodpecker turned up at Lavaltrie 7 Dec (C. O'Connor). Single Carolina Wrens at Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly 7 Dec-10 Jan (HL, RB) and at Mont-Laurier 10-24 Dec (A. Boisclair) were interesting sightings; one at Gaspé 6-19 Jan was very unusual for the Gaspé Pen. (O. Deruelle et al.). A Winter Wren remained at Gatineau 16 Dec-6 Jan (fide DT). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was found at Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly 7 Dec-10 Jan (HL, RB) and another one was at Gaspé 4 Jan (M. Côté, MC. Rancourt). A late Eastern Bluebird at Les Éboulements 26 Dec was noteworthy so far north (H. Mead). A Townsend's Solitaire showed up at Cape Tourmente 4 Jan-2 Feb (M. Mongeon, m. ob.). Always rare in winter, a Brown Thrasher graced Saint-Méthode 7 Dec-15 Jan (G. Dufresne et al.), while another one was at Moisie 21-29 Feb (JFL). A Yellow-rumped Warbler at Nominigüe 4 Jan was notable for the upper Laurentians (M. Blais). A Pine Warbler was reported at Victoriaville 25 Dec-7 Jan (Y. Dupuis, fide CR).

Two Spotted Towhees were discovered, a female at Moisie 6 Dec-29 Jan (N. Roy), and a male at Saint-Vallier 29 Dec (L. Mercier, ph.). A Chipping Sparrow was at Pointe-aux-Trembles 28 Dec-16 Jan (YG, SM). The Vesper Sparrow that overwintered at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka represented a first for the Region (LG, AQ), and another one was noted at Saint-Bruno 8-17 Dec (G. Daoust, R. Belhumeur). A late Savannah Sparrow was seen at Saint-Alexandre 12-22 Dec (D. Dessureault). Two Fox Sparrows at Pabos (J. Blais) and one at Sept-Îles (JFL, BD) successfully made it through the winter with the help of feeders, while another one made a brief appearance at Penouille 9 Feb (C. Dufort). Unexpected during the cold season, a Lincoln's Sparrow visited Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 17 Dec-17 Jan (LG, AQ). A Swamp Sparrow at Sainte-Anne-Beaupré 31 Jan was probably a wintering bird (P. Otis, A. Rasmussen, F. Lachance).

An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird brightened Varennes 4-15 Jan (YG, SM, F. Garépy, D. Paquin, m. ob.). The 10 Rusty Blackbirds at Bonaventure 29 Feb represented a very high count for the season (AC). Following a large fall incursion in ne. Québec, a few Baltimore Orioles continued to show up in Dec, in-

cluding one at La Baie until 6 Jan (M. Tremblay, S. Tremblay, m. ob.) and another at Sept-Îles 4 Dec-7 Jan (C. Couture, BD, JFL).

Exotics: Two European Goldfinches were reported: one at Neuville 7 Dec (L. Plamondon) and one at Repentigny 10 Jan (R. Nolet).

Addendum: A Say's Phoebe stopped at Mount Saint-Bruno 7-8 May 2003. This singing male was identified separately by two different parties (H. & G. Daoust, Y. Dion).

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New England



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The winter of 2003–2004 got off to a roaring start with the first northeaster of the season on 6–7 December, which dumped over a meter of snow on some parts of the Region. The storm was followed less than four days later by warm temperatures and heavy rain that ended up washing away much of the snow. Not to be outdone, a second winter storm raged up the East Coast on 14–15 December, providing several additional inches of snow. Again, it was followed by mild conditions and rain, with the result that even northern Christmas Bird Counts were

blessed with more open water than usual.

The respite was brief, and by 8 January, the Region was in the grip of bitter cold, with wind chills reaching -40° Fahrenheit in the north and a record low of -7° in Boston on 16 January. The cold stayed with the Region for the rest of the month, and as a whole the month ranked in the lowest ten percent for average temperature, with Massachusetts taking top honors for the coldest January since 1893. For a little bit of perspective: Nantucket Sound froze in late January, stopping ferry service and technically allowing people to walk to the island—not that anyone was silly enough to try. By February, temperatures returned to the warm side, resulting in an average winter overall. The same could be said of precipitation, as after the snowy December, both January and February were extremely dry.

With all the early coastal storms, it should come as no surprise that seawatchers in eastern Massachusetts had a field day. Dovekies, kittiwakes, phalaropes, fulmars, Pomarine

Jaegers, and even two skuas and a storm-petrel were among the noteworthy finds tallied from points on Cape Ann and Cape Cod.

It was a good winter for northern irruptives, including Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, and Common Redpoll. The latter were accompanied by an unprecedented number of Hoary Redpolls. Although many were not documented, all indications suggest that this may have been the biggest Hoary invasion in well over a decade.

Following an exceptional fall season for such strays, there seemed to be many more western vagrants than usual at the Region's feeders this winter. Topping the list were 2 Spotted Towhees in New Hampshire, but 4 Varied Thrushes, a Townsend's Solitaire, and Western Tanager were not far behind. Of course, there was also the usual smattering of "southern" species as well, including Black-throated Blue Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, and Summer Tanager. The rarity of the season, a possible Slaty-backed Gull in New Hampshire, was without precedent here.

Abbreviations: Block I. (Washington, RI), First Encounter (First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable, MA), Little Compton (Newport, RI), M.A.R.C. (Massachusetts A.R.C.), M.V. (Martha's Vineyard, Dukes, MA), Nantucket (Nantucket I., MA), Napatree (Napatree Point C.B.C., Washington, RI), Ogunquit (York, ME), P'town (Provincetown, Barnstable, MA), Quabbin (Quabbin Res., w. MA), Rockport (Essex, MA).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

With the exception of a bird at Hull, Plymouth, MA 20 Dec, this season's Pacific Loons did not show up until early Jan, with individuals at Gloucester, Essex, MA 1 Jan and Stonington, New London, CT 3 Jan. Another was at Ogunquit in early Jan. At the very end of the season, 2 more Pacific Loons were photographed off P'town 29 Feb (BN). The Eared Grebe returned to E. Gloucester, Essex, MA for the 9th year. Two were reported from Rhode Island: Westerly (Washington) 13 Dec and Tiverton (Newport) 26 Dec.

Tubenoses made a good showing during the early Dec storms, mostly during frontal passage: 43 Northern Fulmars were seen from First Encounter 7 Dec, with only one seen the next day (BN). According to resident lobstermen, 10–20 fulmars were regular of Mt. Desert Rock, Washington, ME in late Jan (*vide* WT). Greater Shearwaters have become more regular off Massachusetts in early Dec, so 4 at First Encounter 8 Dec (SM) were par for the course. Decidedly not par for the course was an unidentified storm-petrel on 7 Dec, also at First Encounter (BN). Although not identified to species, this bird was most likely a Leach's, a species with a smattering of winter records for the Region. Nonetheless, it was far from expected, and almost 10 years have passed

since the last such sighting: a Leach's Storm-Petrel off Pt. Judith, *Washington*, RI 11 Dec 1993.

Seawatches in Dec also tallied good numbers of Northern Gannets, although the species was not as abundant as in the previous winter. High counts include 2500 at First Encounter 8 Dec (BN), 390 at P'town 6 Dec (BN), 373 on Stellwagen Bank 20 Dec, and 1000 off Pt. Judith 15 Dec. While Double-crested Cormorants are increasingly common



This gull, identified as a Slaty-backed Gull, was discovered at the Rochester, New Hampshire Wastewater Treatment Plant on 24 December 2003, a potential first state and Regional record. The gull was seen regularly through 27 December (here). Photograph by Ben Griffith.

at coastal sites in early winter, an imm. at Pantton, *Addison*, VT 22 Dec (M. Kim) is one of only a handful of inland records in the past several winters. At the opposite end of the Region, an imm. Brown Pelican appeared briefly at Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, MA 23–25 Dec (G. Page), providing the 4th winter record for the Region in the past five years.

Hérons made some news in Rhode Island, with a very late Snowy Egret at Napauree 21 Dec, and 5 Black-crowned Night-Herons spending most of Dec in Jerusalem (*Washington*). Perhaps as good a sign as any that Black Vultures are becoming a fixture in the Bay State is a total of 17 on the Southern Berkshires C.B.C., *Berkshire*, MA 3 Jan. Farthest e. were 8 at Ashaway, *Washington*, RI 15 Feb, while another showed up at the Nashua landfill, *Hillsborough*, NH 10 Feb (M. Medeiros, no details). The latter bird was accompanied by several Turkey Vultures, a species that until recently was not arriving in the Granite State until the very end of Feb.

WATERFOWL THROUGH TURKEY

Greater White-fronted Geese suddenly appeared in Connecticut at the end of Dec and disappeared soon afterward. Single birds were seen at Trumbull (*Fairfield*) 27 Dec–11 Jan, Avon (*Hartford*) 31 Dec–1 Jan, Blomfield (*Hartford*) 31 Dec, and Somers (*Tolland*) 1 Jan, with the two *Hartford* records potentially

referring to the same bird, as the locations are only about 9 km apart. Another made a brief appearance in Rochester, *Plymouth*, MA 6 Jan. Up to 5 Tundra Swans spent the winter in Coventry, *Kent*, RI, with singles at Nantucket though 4 Jan (GE, m. ob.); Bangor, *Penobscot*, ME 9 Jan (T. Hodgeman); and somewhere in Connecticut (*vide* GH).

Rarer dabbling ducks were scarce, with Regional totals including 8 Eurasian Wigeon (MA, RI), 3 Northern Shovelers (MA, RI), and 2 Blue-winged Teal (RI). A single Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal made a brief showing in Falmouth, *Barnstable*, MA 14 Feb (D. Furbish). A fish hatchery pond in *Grand Isle*, VT contained numerous out-of-season waterfowl during Jan and Feb (TM, DH). Among the more notable ducks were 4 Northern Pintails, a male Redhead, 43 Greater Scaup, 7 Lesser Scaup, and a female Red-breasted Merganser. It appears to be the end of an era in Sterling, *Worcester*, MA: the male Tufted Duck that has spent the last eight winters at Wachusett Res. did not reappear this season. In fact, the only report of this species was a female at Wakefield, *Washington*, RI returning for a 2nd winter.

Despite suggestions of increasing winter populations in Long Island Sound as recently as the mid-1990s, Common Eiders remain uncommon in Connecticut, with only 2 reported there this season (*vide* GH). Also noteworthy for the Connecticut coast were a female King Eider that wintered at Hammonasset Beach S.P. (*New Haven*) and a Harlequin Duck at Greenwich (*Fairfield*) 12–28 Dec. Peak Harlequin Duck numbers in more traditional wintering spots included 146 at Rockport, 142 at Sachusset Pt., *Newport*, RI, and 45 at Ogunquit. A King

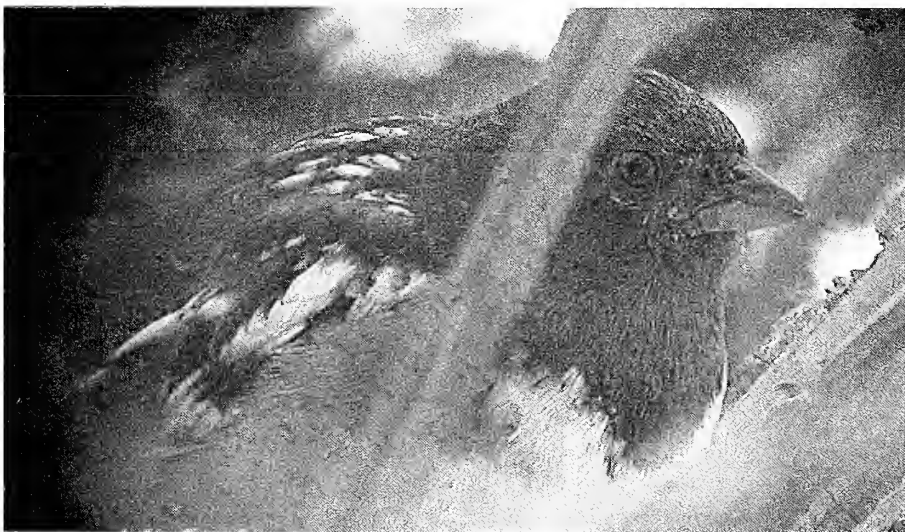
Eider inland in Rochester, *Strafford*, NH 2 Dec was the state's 4th away from the immediate coast. A group of 7 Wild Turkeys was an unusual sight far out toward the tip of Cape Cod in Truro, *Barnstable*, MA 29 Dec (D. Manchester).

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Three different Ospreys were reported from e. Massachusetts in Dec, but more notable "fish hawks" from the Bay State were in Feb: Shutesbury, *Franklin* 17 Jan and Chicopee, *Hampden* 27 Jan. Given the Jan weather, these latter 2—as well as an unconfirmed Jan report from Maine—are particularly remarkable and appear to be among only a half-dozen Jan records for the state. Numbers of Bald Eagles continue to rise, with mid-Jan counts of 47 in New Hampshire, 50+ in Massachusetts, 55+ in Connecticut, and 6 in Rhode Island. In Maine, where the national bird occurs in much higher numbers, the high count from a single wintering area was 59 along the Georges R., *Knox* 19 Dec (D. Reimer).

For the 2nd year in a row, observers in s. New England commented that Rough-legged Hawks seemed more common than usual (*vide* GH, MR), and this was certainly the case in New Hampshire, where at least 2 individuals frequented the state's limited coastline. Wintering Golden Eagles turned up in the expected areas at Quabbin and s. Connecticut, although a total of 7 from the latter area was more than twice the recent average. Elsewhere, Golden Eagles seemed unusually widespread, with reports of 3–4 elsewhere in Massachusetts, 2 in Maine, one in the upper Connecticut R. valley, one in se. New Hampshire, and even an imm. at Little Compton 14 Feb (GD).

The presence of 2 Sandhill Cranes at a bird feeder in Barnstable, *Barnstable*, MA 8 Dec–8 Feb brings new meaning to the term "feeder bird." The cranes in question were regularly



New Hampshire hosted two Spotted Towhees this season, with the first, in Grafton, showing up in November and providing the state with its first record. The second, shown here, was discovered during the Concord C.B.C. in Merrimack County on 14 (here 16) December 2003. Both birds remained through the winter. Photograph by Stephen Mirick.

observed taking sunflower seed from the ground below the feeders. Reports of 2 cranes in nearby Yarmouth on 14 and 20 Feb suggest that these birds had started to wander locally, perhaps in preparation for spring migration.

Shorebirds seemed in short supply this season. Two Lesser Yellowlegs were unusual in Harwich, *Barnstable*, MA 14 Dec, and both were still present 1 Jan (BN). Apparent Western Willets were in two locations: at Old Lyme, *New London*, CT through at least 6 Jan (T. Hendrickson) and through 19 Jan at Edgartown, M.V. (AK). A Marbled Godwit found at E. Falmouth, *Barnstable*, MA 27 Nov was relocated 20 Dec on the local C.B.C. (m. ob., ph.). The only remaining scolopacid of note was a White-rumped Sandpiper at Little Compton 14 Dec, providing a 2nd record for the Newport–Westport C.B.C.

In last year's summary, I commented that a total of 24 Pomarine Jaegers on 12 Dec was "twice the previous Dec high." Completely off the charts, however, were the 228 Pomarines seen from First Encounter during the 7 Dec storm (BN), providing Massachusetts with its 4th highest one-day total for any season. Also passing by First Encounter that day were 1435 Red Phalaropes, an unidentified skua, and 2060 Black-legged Kittiwakes, with 70 Pomarine Jaegers still present 8 Dec. The day before, a modest 14 were seen at Rockport (RH), a total that would have raised eyebrows only two years ago. Numbers were significantly lower during the northeaster of 14–15 Dec, although yet another skua was observed, this time at Rockport (RH). Jaegers seen from Rockport at the same time included 2 Pomarines (15 Dec) and one Parasitic (14 Dec, RH), the latter providing Massachusetts with a new record-late date.

Completely trouncing any other Regional larid sightings was a Slaty-backed Gull at the Rochester S.T.P., *Strafford*, NH 23–27 Dec (SM, DA, m. ob., ph.). If accepted by the state's Rarc Bird Committee, this would be a first Regional record and first confirmed record for the entire Eastern Seaboard. The bird in question was usually in the company of some 10,000 other gulls, including up to 5 Icelanders, 2 Glaucous, 3 Lesser Black-backed, an apparent Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull hybrid, and a leucistic Herring Gull. Despite regular searching, the gull was not relocated after 27 Dec. On the tern front, a Forster's Tern (no details) at Lynn (Essex, MA) 6 Jan would be only the 2nd Jan record for the Bay State.

The winter's alcid flight was dominated by Dovekies, with a mind-boggling 1270 passing First Encounter 7 Dec (BN). The next highest tally was 122 s. of Block I. 28 Dec (S. Tsagarakis), with all other reports consisting of fewer than 5. All the Common Murres were in Massachusetts, with high counts of 8 at Rockport 22 Jan (JB) and 6 at P'town 29 Feb (E. Nielsen). Razorbills peaked at

700–800 at various e. Massachusetts locations in Jan.

OWLS THROUGH CROWS

It was another slow year for Snowy Owls. After something of a push in early Dec, when 2 appeared briefly in Connecticut, only 10 were reported, and most of these showed up in Feb. A Long-eared Owl was a surprise sighting as it flew in front of a car in Whatley, *Franklin*, MA on 12 Dec (A. Magee). Short-eared Owls again wintered at Salisbury Beach, *Essex*, MA, where they were easily observed by birders from throughout the Region. Total numbers of this species throughout Massachusetts were in the 20–25 range, making it one of the better winters in recent years. Short-eareds were also more abundant than usual in Rhode Island and Maine, which each hosted 5 individuals.

Perhaps the time is coming when winter hummingbirds will become passé in this Region, or at least become listed in summary, like so many Harlequin Ducks or Snowy Owls. But we are not there yet: a Rufous Hummingbird lingering from the fall through 23 Dec at Chicopee (D. Glaszcz, m. ob.), and a Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird was at Lanesboro, *Berkshire* through 2 Dec (P. Dion). Another unidentified *Selasphorus* stayed at Little Compton through 6 Dec (GD), at which point it appears to have succumbed to the northeaster.

Lingering from Nov was a Least Flycatcher at Marblehead, *Essex*, MA through 22 Dec (RH). The "late Eastern Phoebe" award for the season goes to a bird at Canton, *Norfolk*, MA 16 Jan (S. Landry). On the coast of Connecticut, a Western Kingbird survived at least one Dec storm and was still present at Westport, *Fairfield* 8 Dec. After being discovered in Nov, Wellfleet's Scissor-tailed Flycatcher lingered until 4 Dec, thus providing the Region its first winter record. Northern Shrikes moved into the Region in respectable numbers, with 28+ in Maine, 27 in Massachusetts, and 5 in Connecticut.

A lingering Blue-headed Vireo at Napatree 21 Dec was par for the course in s. New England, but a Philadelphia Vireo in Plymouth, *Plymouth*, MA on 24 Dec (W. Petersen) most decidedly was not. The bird in question was found on the Plymouth C.B.C. and furnished the first winter record for the Region. Fish Crows continue to increase as wintering birds in the Region. This year an individual was well to the n. in Portland, *Cumberland*, ME 13 Feb, and others were reliable in s. New

Hampshire and w. Massachusetts. Migrants were back in force in the 2nd half of Feb, when flocks of over 300 were reported from Brighton and Newton, MA.

TITMICE THROUGH WARBLERS

There is rarely much mention of common "feeder birds" in these pages, but every now and then we need a reminder that not all areas are equally saturated with familiar winter residents. For example, Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch are still rare or even absent on Massachusetts' offshore islands, so a titmouse on M.V. 1 Feb (AK) and a nuthatch on Nantucket 22 Jan (E. Ray) are worthy of note. After last year's scarcity, observers in the Region were ready for an influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and the fall flight certainly



One of two that spent much of the winter visiting a bird feeder in Barnstable, Massachusetts, this Sandhill Crane was photographed there 8 December 2003. Photograph by Stephen Mirick.

suggested that numbers would be higher this winter. This turns out not to have been the case in n. New England at least, where they ended up being downright scarce on some C.B.C.s. In contrast, the little nuthatches were "widespread and numerous" in Connecticut, with tallies as high as 26 from single locations (*vide* GH). To further muddy the picture, however, numbers of this species were considered low in neighboring Rhode Island (*vide* RF).

Western thrushes made news in n. New England this season. In Vermont, a Townsend's Solitaire was present in W. Rutland, *Rutland* 27 Dec–2 Jan (ph., m. ob.). A little to the n., a Varied Thrush appeared in Montpelier, *Washington*, VT in mid-Dec and remained through Apr. Across the border in New Hampshire, another Varied Thrush visited a feeder in Bradford, *Merrimack* through the middle of Mar. In late Jan, 2 more Varied Thrushes appeared in Massachusetts: Belchertown, *Hampshire* 25 Jan–29 Feb and Nantucket 30 Jan–19 Feb.

The expected flight of Bohemian Waxwings—given this species' recent propensity for a two-year cycle—got off to a slow start, with only scattered individuals and small flocks (<20) in the n. and interior through Dec. Then, as the Jan cold snap gripped the Region, they showed up in force. Flocks of 100 and higher were reported from

Maine and New Hampshire beginning around 20 Jan. In the s., Bohemians first appeared in e. Massachusetts, with 3 in Gloucester 24 Jan and 62 in Truro 25 Jan. In Feb, however, most were farther w., with a maximum of 94 in Royalston, *Worcester*. They also started showing up in Connecticut in Feb., where numbers peaked at 20 at Chaplin, *Windham* 12 Feb (M. Szantyr). Meanwhile, numbers continued to grow in the n., including an unfathomable count of 1600–2000 in Hanover, *Grafton*, NH 14 Feb (W. Shepard). The more typical maximum flocks during this period were in the 200–400 range, with Maine tending to host more birds than New Hampshire. Along with the Bohemians, there was a noticeable late-Jan increase in American Robins in New Hampshire and presumably the other n. states. This observation leads to speculation as to the geographic origin of both species; the ongoing increase in wintering robins in the Region appears no closer to being explained.

Warblers did not fare well in New England this winter, perhaps at least partially a result of the early storms and Jan freeze. Early in the season, a Yellow-throated Warbler held over from Nov at Nahant, *Essex*, MA, where it was last seen 5 Dec. Staying slightly longer was a Black-throated Blue Warbler on M.V. that was last reported on 18 Dec. Two more Black-throated Blue Warblers “appeared” in Massachusetts in Jan: one at Belchertown 2–11 Jan, and the other in Chatham (*Barnstable*) 7–14 Jan. For the 2nd year in a row, Massachusetts hosted a Dec Northern Waterthrush, with this season’s bird at E. Falmouth on 14 Dec (J. Trimble).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Also lingering well into Dec were two tanagers that provided record-late dates for Massachusetts, both of which were at feeders. A male Scarlet Tanager graced a feeder in P-town 11–24 Dec (P. Post, m. ob., ph.), while

a female Summer Tanager made it through 25 Jan at Stow, *Middlesex*. Not to be outdone, a Western Tanager appeared in Brewster, *Barnstable*, MA 11 Jan and remained until 18 Feb. Additional Summer Tanagers were reported from Maine and Connecticut. The former appeared briefly in Bangor 1–2 Dec (J. Markowsky), while the other was at Old Lyme 8 Dec–6 Jan, where it survived by eating bees at a hive (H. Golet). In a season full of w. passerines, one might speculate on the origin of these birds, but it turns out that at least the Maine and Massachusetts individuals were of the e. race, those identifications being based on plumage and bill morphology.

When it rains, it pours. New Hampshire hosted 2 Spotted Towhees this season, providing the Granite State with its first and 2nd state records in quick succession. The first appeared at a feeder in *Grafton*, *Grafton* in Nov, where the homeowner kept detailed records of its visits (G. Renee, ph. J. Williams). The other was discovered at a feeder in Concord, *Merrimack* during the local C.B.C. 14 Dec (M. and R. Suomala, m. ob., ph.). Both birds were present through the end of the season. A Vesper Sparrow was unusually late in Swanton, *Franklin*, VT 28 Dec (TM). Lapland Longspurs definitely seemed more common than usual over much of the Region. The peak count of 44 from Newbury, *Essex*, MA 21 Jan is the highest in roughly 10 years, and more than twice the recent average. Numbers also seemed higher than usual in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut.

Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks spent most of Jan and Feb in the Region: a young male in Derry, *Rockingham*, NH (B. Horton, m. ob.) and another in Truro (ph. C. Skowron). Meanwhile, a Painted Bunting appeared in Shrewsbury, *Worcester*, MA 11 Jan–5 Feb (E. Surette, m. ob., ph.). Single Baltimore Orioles were at Arundel, *York*, ME 11 Dec; Hadley, *Hampshire*, MA 14 Dec–19 Jan; Groveton, *Coo*s, NH

through 6 Jan, and Saco, *York*, ME 13 Jan. The season’s only Bullock’s Oriole was at Walpole, *Norfolk*, MA 1–7 Jan (ph. W. Barnes).

Irruptive finches were back after last winter’s absence. Although technically an invasion year, Pine Grosbeaks were almost unreported s. of the n. portions of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. In the latter state, maxima of 50–70 were reported from *Aroostook*, *Penobscot*, and *Piscataquis*. After what appeared to be a good fall flight, Purple Finches were quite scarce over most of New England over the winter. A single White-winged Crossbill wandered to the extreme s. end of the Region at Block 1. 16 Feb. A few Evening Grosbeaks made it to Connecticut in mid-Dec, though it was generally an off year for the species.

Corrigenda: In the winter 2002–2003 Regional Summary, the Tufted Ducks in Vermont represented a 3rd state record, not the 2nd as stated. The White-rumped Sandpiper in Eastham, MA was seen on 15 Dec, not 15 Jan. The possible Yellow-legged Gull reported from Salisbury, MA on 19 Feb 2003 should be deleted, as the observer did not propose a specific identification for the bird in question; the error arose from miscommunication along the reporting chain, and the sighting was never submitted to M.A.R.C. as stated in the seasonal summary. The Long-billed Murrelet reported from Rockport in Jan 2003 was not accepted by M.A.R.C.

Subregional editors (boldface), contributors (italics), and observers: *Jim Berry*, *David Defifik* (NH), *G. Dennis*, *Jody Despres* (ME), *Rachel Farrell* (RI), *Greg Hanisek* (CT), *Rick Heil*, *David Hoag*, *Allen Keith*, *Seth Kellogg* (MA), *Derek Lovitch*, *Curtis Marantz*, *Stephen Mirick*, *Ted Murin*, *Julie Nicholson* (VT), *Blair Nikula*, *Marjorie Rines* (MA), *William Townsend* (ME). ☉

SA The stars of the irruptive finch show were without doubt redpolls. Common Redpolls were already appearing in n. portions of the Region by the end of Nov. As the season began, they were still concentrated in the n. three states, with occasional flocks of up to 40 in parts of Massachusetts. Numbers climbed throughout the Region through Jan into early Feb, when the largest flocks numbered 300 in Maine, 200 in Massachusetts, 50 in Connecticut, and 20 in Rhode Island. By mid-Feb however, the flocks seemed to disperse and diminish, and it remains unclear where birds went.

There are often a few **Hoary Redpolls** among the hordes of Commons that invade New England every two years, but nothing prepared the Region’s birders for the magnitude of this winter’s flight. After a single early bird on Plum I., *Essex*, MA 22 Nov, there was a two-week hiatus before Hoaries started appearing in Maine and New Hampshire. By the end of Dec, the following statewide totals were reported: Maine (15), New Hampshire (10), Vermont (3), and w. Massachusetts (one). Numbers increased in Jan, with an additional 15, 15, two, and six reports, respectively. By the middle of Feb, they had started to disappear along with the Common Redpolls. In Connecticut, where there are only a handful of records, 2 “possibles” were reported, but neither was seen well enough for a positive identification (*vide* GH).

Given the difficulty of identifying Hoary Redpolls, it is unclear how many were in New England this winter. Conservative estimates suggest that there were at least five in Massachusetts, three in Vermont, 20 in New Hampshire (*vide* DD), and 20 in Maine, but these still await evaluation by state records committees. Detailed observations and photographs of several individuals (reports of up to 10!) in Keene, *Cheshire*, NH suggest that the invading birds were of the expected subspecies *exillipes* (see J. Smith et al. 2004. Hoary Redpolls in New Hampshire in December 2003 and January 2004. *Bird Observer* 32: 86–91).

An interesting aspect of this Hoary invasion was the relatively high ratio of Hoary to Common Redpolls: many flocks containing Hoaries only had 20–40 total birds. In any event, even if we conservatively discount the numerous undocumented reports, this was an irruption for the record books. The most recent Hoary Redpoll invasion in the Region occurred in the winter of 1999–2000, when at least 15 were reported (mostly in Maine). Another invasion appears to have occurred in 1981–1982, when eight birds were documented in Massachusetts during Feb and Mar. Unfortunately, data for n. New England are scarce for that period, so the magnitude of that winter’s incursion cannot be fully assessed.

Hudson-Delaware

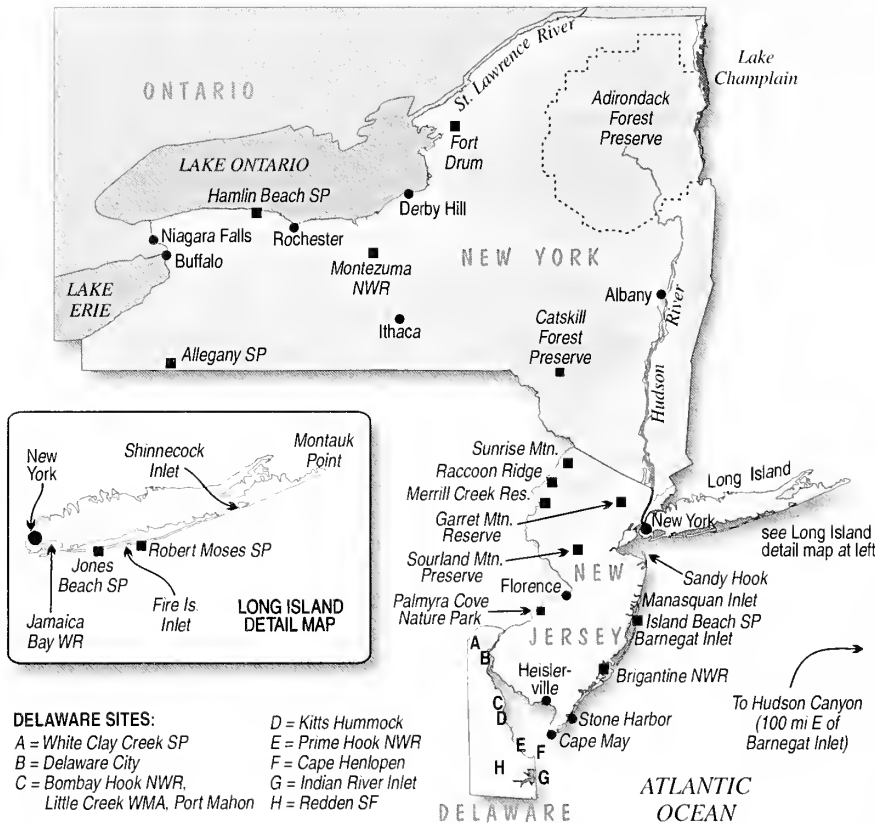
Early snow followed by sustained cold characterized this winter for much of the Region. Major snowfalls began with one on 5–6 Dec followed by a larger one on 14–15 Dec that badly disrupted the first C.B.C.s. In January, major snowfalls on 11–13 and 27–28 helped make the month one of the snowiest on record. February's only major snow came on the 3rd. Early December was colder than normal, but temperatures moderated on the 22nd. On the 7th of January, a deep freeze set in for the remainder of the month, and turned conditions brutal, especially in most northerly parts of the Region. February was more nearly moderate however, except for a very cold period on the 15th through the 17th. Southern and coastal portions were less strongly affected but were not entirely spared. Surprisingly, despite the harsh conditions, an unusual number of half-hardies persisted, as noted in the following account.

Highlights of the season included Pacific Loon, Western Grebe, Black Rails, Long-billed Curlew, Mew Gull, Allen's Hummingbird, Townsend's Solitaire, and incursions of Bohemian Waxwings and Common Redpolls. Also noteworthy were Gyrfalcons, White-eyed Vireos, and Varied Thrushes. On a less happy note, many subregional compilers commented on the disastrous decline in American Kestrels, with record lows on several C.B.C.s and on a raptor census.

Abbreviations: Bombay Hook (Bombay Hook N.W.R., Kent, DE); Hamlin Beach (Hamlin Beach S.P., Monroe, NY); I.R.I. (Indian River Inlet, Sussex, DE); Prime Hook (Prime Hook N.W.R., Sussex, DE); Sandy Hook (Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway National Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

For the 4th time in the past six winters, a Pacific Loon was present in New York, this time at Myers Pt., Lansing, Tompkins on Cayuga L. 8 Feb into Mar (Anne Marie Johnson, †Pete Hosner, m. ob.). With more than a dozen accepted records in the state and increasing in recent years, this species is still very rare and requires careful documentation. After last spring's massive movement, Red-necked Grebes returned to normal numbers, with nearly all reports coming either in Dec or Jan, suggestive of through-migration. Peak counts were 17 at Hamlin Beach 9 Dec (William Symonds, RS) and 22 on Seneca L., NY 13 Feb (Steve Fast, BM). Three Eared Grebes visited the Region this season, singles at the Aurora Bay Overlook, Cayuga L., NY 28 Feb (BM, Ann Mitchell) and Strathmere, NJ 23 Feb (PEL et al.). A Western Grebe was reported at L. Champlain at Cumberland Head, Clin-



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ton, NY 7 Jan (Michael DiNunzio). If accepted, it will add to about a half-dozen previous New York records, though there are several others assigned to Western/Clark's Grebe.

The only tubenose of note reported was a Manx Shearwater seen from the Cape May-Lewes Ferry 21 Feb (Paul Pisano et al.). An out-of-place imm. Northern Gannet visited interior New York at Niagara Falls 6-16 Dec (†WD, †William Watson, GB), and a different individual was observed farther upriver at Whirlpool S.P. 6 Dec (*vide* MM). This species is rare inland, but it is not entirely unexpected on L. Ontario. Four American White Pelicans were at Cape May Pt., NJ 3 Dec (PEL), probably part of the group of 5 present there in Nov. And 3, presumed to be part of the same group, subsequently appeared on the Bombay Hook C.B.C. 21 Dec (Joel Citron); at Cape May Pt. again on 17 Jan (Bill Murphy et al.); late on the same day at Brick, Ocean, NJ (AT); then nearby on the following day at Brielle (Rebecca Buck). The Bombay Hook report is only Delaware's 3rd in winter. In the past several winters, Brown Pelicans have been regular. This year, at least 2 were observed in Delaware, 4-9 in New Jersey, and one in New York. The latest was an imm. at I.R.I. 1 Jan (A. Guarente), and the northernmost was at Shinnecock Inlet 19 Dec (Jim Clinton). But utterly unexpected was the flock of 3 seen flying in a snowstorm in Passaic, a n. county of New Jersey, on 15 Dec (J. & T. Keller)—one must wonder whether these birds were moving inland or were fleeing the Great Lakes, where several have been present in recent autumns. A Great Cormorant at Seaford, Sussex, DE 31 Jan (GL) provided a first inland winter record for Delaware. Surprising in a harsh winter was a Least Bittern found standing on ice at Corbin City W.M.A., Atlantic, NJ 11 Jan (Karen Williams, KJ). Taken to a rehabilitation center, it was eating well a few days later and was scheduled for release where it was found.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese continued their recent trend, with a strong showing of 22: 7 in New York, 12 in New Jersey, and 3 in Delaware. Ross's Geese were also present in strong numbers: 4 each in Delaware and New Jersey and 3 in New York. Of particular interest were 2 in upstate New York, where still rare: one at the Aurora Bay Overlook on Cayuga L. 14 Dec (Jay & Kevin McGowan) and one at Iroquois N.W.R., Genesee/Orleans, NY 27 Dec-2 Jan (†MM). Richardson's Canada Geese continued their appearances in small numbers with one in Aurora, Erie, NY 15 Dec (Linda Holmes); one in Evans, Erie, NY 10 Jan (DS); and 2 at Cape May Pt., NJ 25-31 Jan (RC, PEL). A Black Brant at

Strathmere, NJ, 1 Dec (Clay Sutton) was an excellent find. After two winters with good numbers, only one Barnacle Goose returned to the area, at various locations on e. Long I. mid-Dec-late Feb (m. ob.). With 12 reported, Eurasian Wigeons were present in normal numbers after two somewhat lower years: 7 in New York and 5 in New Jersey. An ad. male Cinnamon Teal at Hackensack Meadows, Lyndhurst, Bergen, NJ remained from last season through 1 Dec (Dave Pereksta). A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was at and near Prime Hook for about a week beginning 15 Feb (FR, MG, ES), the only one reported. However, an apparent hybrid Green-winged Teal x Common Teal visited Hempstead L. S.P., Nassau, NY 21 Feb (Bobby Berlinger).

Redhead numbers were excellent in both New Jersey and New York but disappointing in Delaware. Forty-one were recorded at Snug Harbor near Toms River, Ocean, NJ 13 Dec (Shaun Wainright), a single-day, single-site total that appears not to have been reached in New Jersey since the late 1970s; elsewhere in the state, better-than-normal

9 Dec (Sam Dyke) could be the same individual that appeared there in Jan 2002.

About 20 King Eiders was a better total than in most recent years. Some 6 were spread around e. Long Island; 3-4 remained near Barnegat Inlet, NJ; and 6-8 moved along the Cape May coast. High count of Common Eiders in New Jersey was of 25 at Cold Spring Jetty on the n. side of Cape May Inlet 2-8 Feb (RC), with the maximum in New York about 3000 at Montauk Pt. mid-to late Dec (Henry Halama, m. ob.), where such large numbers are normal. High counts of Harlequin Duck included 55+ at Barnegat Inlet 21 Feb (EB)—about double New Jersey's previous single-site record, held by the same location, and even eclipsing the state's highest previous statewide total. In New York, up to 11 were at Pt. Lookout on the w. end of Long I., and 6-9 moved about the e. end. In Delaware, 2-3 visited I.R.I. at different times. Elven Barrow's Goldeneyes was not up to last year's 18, with one or 2 females at Sandy Hook 20 Dec-Mar (Jenifer Hanson, m. ob.) and 9 more scattered widely over New York.



Regular in small numbers in winter in the East, Greater White-fronted Geese were well reported from many regions in winter 2003-2004. This bird, of the race *flavirostris* from Greenland, was nicely photographed at Lavalette, New Jersey 24 January 2004. Photograph by Alex Tongas.

numbers were common. Some 19,000 were on Cayuga L. at the Wells College Boathouse near Aurora, Cayuga, NY 8 Feb (Mickey Scilingo et al.), the highest total in New York since the phenomenal 50,000 on Seneca L. in 1976. Single Tufted Ducks were at Oswego 14-29 Dec (Gerard Phillips et al.) and Sodus Bay, Wayne 11 Jan to 17 Feb (MT et al.) and later at Little Sodus Bay at Fair Haven, Cayuga 22 Feb-Mar (Kevin McGowan); no others were reported in the Region. An apparent Tufted Duck x scaup hybrid at Silver L., Rehoboth Beach, Sussex, DE

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES

Raptors generally did well, with the exception of Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and American Kestrel. No fewer than 6 Ospreys were reported between 26 Dec and late Jan. Five were at coastal or southerly locations, but one remarkable individual at Vestal, Broome, NY 29 Jan (Colleen Wolpert) was neither. Bald Eagles continued their strong recovery, with high totals on many C.B.C.s and all-time records at various locations. Except in most n. locations where numbers diminished after Dec, Northern



This apparent Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull hybrid was one of several reported in the East this winter. Photographed at Manasquan Inlet, New Jersey 8 February 2004, this first-winter individual remained for at least a week here. Photograph by Alex Tongas.

Harriers did exceptionally well, too. An all-time high of 75 was recorded on the Salem County (New Jersey) Raptor Census 1 Feb; 58 from Thompson's Beach to Stow Cr., Cumberland, NJ 16 Feb (KJ, Janet Crawford), and farther n., 23 together in the same field at dawn at Porter, Niagara, NY 28 Dec (MM). The total of 23 Golden Eagles, 6 in New Jersey and 17 in New York, was well below last year's 49. This difference may be accounted for by weather conditions at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, Delaware, NY, where this season's total was only 10 compared to last year's 30. With comments like "all-time low," "very hard to find," and "numbers continue to plunge," several noted the scarcity of American Kestrels. In particular, following a startling decline to 6 on this year's Cumberland, NJ C.B.C. from averages of 49 in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and 30 in the late 1980s and 1990s, Clay and Pat Sutton urged action for state listing as Endangered. Two New York locations provided most of the Merlin reports this year. The traditional winter roost in Buffalo yielded 7 through the season (+PY), and a nest site at Binghamton, Broome produced multiple reports of birds presumed to be the parent pair and last season's young (m. ob.) A gray-morph Gyrfalcon at the Pt. Peninsula at Cape Vincent, Jefferson, NY 1 Dec (Gerry Smith, Tom Carrolan, ph.) was at a location where semi-regular. Another upstate Gyr visited Sodus Pt., Wayne, NY 20-29 Feb (MT, m. ob.). A band was noted, so the bird was captured, the band number noted, and the bird released. This individual had been illegally caught last year, then recovered by authorities and released in Nov.

Apart from an unusual total of 25 near

Deerfield, Cumberland, NJ 31 Jan (Jean Gutmuth), the case of Northern Bobwhite is unfortunately reminiscent of the American Kestrel's. Away from areas stocked for hunting, this species has all but vanished. A Black Rail found standing on ice in Quogue, Suffolk, NY 11 Jan startled the observers



Good numbers of Black-legged Kittiwake, as many as 5000, were found during a productive pelagic trip from Belmar, New Jersey on 13 December 2003. Photograph by Angus Wilson.

(TWB, AG); it was noted during the coldest period of the month. At least two previous Dec records and one on 6 Jan on Long I. suggest that this species, which is difficult to de-

tect when not calling, may be present in winter more often than expected. Another Black Rail—seen briefly in flight at close range—was reported on the Belleplain, NJ C.B.C. 21 Dec.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

A Piping Plover at Stone Harbor Pt., Cape May, NJ continued from Oct through 14 Dec (Mike Fritz) to be on the Cape May C.B.C., about the 5th to linger so late in the state. An excellent total of 265 American Oystercatchers was counted on the Oceanville, NJ C.B.C. 20 Dec, and 195 were present at Stone Harbor Pt./Hereford Inlet 19 Dec (PEL), continuing the trend of high counts that began in the 1990s. A remarkable mid-winter total of 33 American Avocets remained at Bombay Hook 1 Jan (FR). Though 4 were present at the same location last Jan, there are still very few mid-winter records for the Region. While the maximum of 38 was seen at Absecon Inlet, Atlantic, NJ 4 Dec (Kathie Sandel), a Willet present at Buffalo 9 Dec-3 Jan (+PY, +WD) provided a first winter record for New York's Niagara Frontier Region. All winter records of the species refer to the Western Willet, *inornatus*. Last season's Long-billed Curlew remained near Stone Harbor, Cape May, NJ until 14 Dec, when it was recorded on the Cape May C.B.C. Marbled Godwits remained at Abse-

con Inlet once again, with a peak count of 46 on 10 Dec (*vide* EB) and 35 there on 5 Jan. One-hundred Wilson's Snipe in Elsinboro, Salem 5 Jan (Frank Lenik) would appear to have set a new winter record for New Jersey.

Very rare was a winter Laughing Gull at Tonawanda, Niagara, NY 21 Dec (+Nick Sly), where it is unusual in any season, possibly the same individual was at Amherst, Erie, NY 11 Jan (+DS). The gull of the season was the Mew Gull of the race *brachyrhynchus* on the Niagara R. at Lewiston, NY 13 & 16 Dec (+WD, Mike Hamilton), first found a week earlier on the Ontario side of the river. The state has only about three accepted previous records, one of them at the same location. As usual, up to 2

ad. California Gulls were at the same location 6 Dec-12 Jan (+WD, GB). A Royal Tern surprised an observer at Island Beach S.P. Ocean, NJ 6 Jan (GW), a very late date for

the state. Other very late terns included a Common Tern at Orient Pt., *Suffolk*, NY 5 Dec (PSt) and a Forster's Tern on the Central Suffolk, NY C.B.C. 27 Dec (Mary Laura Lamont).

While alcids did not repeat their major incursion of last year, they were present in above-average numbers. Fourteen Dovekies was a good showing, with 2 on the Montauk, NY C.B.C. 20 Dec; 5 on a pelagic trip off Belmar, *Monmouth*, NJ 13 Dec (PG et al.); 5 on the Cape May C.B.C. 14 Dec; one off Bethany Beach, *Sussex*, DE (GL); and one at I.R.I. 13 Feb (Odette James). Three Common Murres were present: one each on pelagic trips from Belmar 13 Dec and 2 Jan (PG et al.) and from Delaware 28 Feb (PG et al.). The Delaware report if accepted will be about the 2nd for that state. More unusual in recent years was a Thick-billed Murre, found dead but otherwise in good condition, at Wildwood Crest, *Cape May*, NJ 22 Feb (B. & B. Weber). Razorbills were plentiful, with over 50 each in New York and New Jersey and several in Delaware. A Black Guillemot was far out of place at Noblewood Park, *Essex*, NY 28 Dec (Matt Medler), the 2nd record in the state's Adirondack-Champlain Region; another Black Guillemot seen from the Cape May-Lewes Ferry 28 Dec (PEL) will provide Delaware's first record. And finally an Atlantic Puffin, not a rarity offshore, was recorded on the 2 Jan pelagic trip from Belmar (PG et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

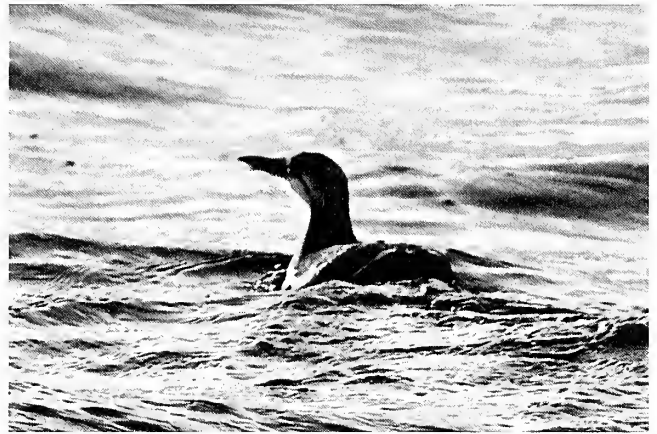
A White-winged Dove, New Jersey's 17th, was found by observers searching for Bohemian Waxwings at Island Beach S.P., NJ 9 Jan (GW, John Danzenbaker, AT). A Snowy Owl at I.R.I. 28 Feb (Mari Castellanos, *fide* Maurice Barnhill) was unusual in a year with few reports. Less common than Rufous Hummingbird in winter, one of last season's late Ruby-throated remained until at least 3 Jan at W. Cape May, NJ (m. ob.), while last season's Rufous Hummingbirds remained at Wilmington, DE until 9 Jan (Dan Stine) and on Long I. at Orient until 22 Dec (Ruth Oliva) and at East Hampton until 9 Jan (Jane Ross). Another remained from the fall at Milton, *Sussex*, DE until 3 Dec (Sally Fintel, MG et al.). Last season's Allen's Hummingbird remained at Cape May, NJ until 12 Jan (Chris Vogel, G. Davis). Only 6-7 Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported, probably a new winter low. The one at Great Swamp N.W.R., *Morris*, NJ returned again for the season (m. ob.). Another was found at Cape May N.W.R., NJ 11 Jan and remained through Feb (Tom Bailey et al.). One was recorded on the Hamburg, NY C.B.C. 4 Jan, up to 2 were present near Wallkill, *Ulster*, NY 19 Jan and 14 Feb (Rich Guthrie et al.), and 2 were at Esopus, *Ulster*, NY 21 Jan (Steve Chorvas).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Last season's hybrid *Tyrannus*, thought to be a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher x Couch's Kingbird, remained at Leicester, *Livingston*, NY until 2 Dec (Jim Kimball). Single Western Kingbirds were in Montville, *Morris*, NJ on the Boonton C.B.C. 21 Dec (Jonathan Klizas et al.; through 23 Dec) and on Staten I., NY 3 Jan (Jim Madden, Mike Mayer). Though Northern Shrikes staged a modest irruption in n. parts of the Region, their numbers were unspectacular farther south. Most reports were from Dec and Feb, with few in Jan, suggesting through-migrants. From their distribution in New York, it seems that most later birds moved through Pennsylvania; this would explain the low numbers in Delaware and New Jersey, as well as on Long I. High counts were 22 from Carlton, *Orleans* to Somerset, *Niagara*, NY 17 Feb (DT) and 22 along the L. Ontario shore in w. *Monroe* and e. *Orleans*, NY 26 Feb (DT). These totals were the result of methodical searches by the same observer and represent record-high counts for both the Genesee and Niagara Frontier regions of the state. White-eyed Vireos were unexpected on the Belleplain, NJ C.B.C. 21 Dec and the Barnegat, NJ C.B.C. 28 Dec. There are only about three previous records of White-eyed Vireo in New Jersey at this season. With a maximum of 33 at Cape Henlopen S.P., *Sussex*, DE 4 Jan (FR), Brown-headed Nuthatch staged a minor explosion. Single-digit highs have been the rule in recent years. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Rio Grande, *Cape May*, NJ 13 Dec (PEL) eluded observers the following day on the C.B.C. This species occurs only occasionally at this time here.

Ednie noted a crash in Delaware's Eastern Bluebird population: "Sixteen counted

at Bombay Hook C.B.C. was a sharp decline from last year's 92. Seaford C.B.C. dropped this year to 41. Bluebirds were rare at Brandywine Creek S.P. through the season." A Townsend's Solitaire at Grand I., *Erie*, NY 6-7 Dec (Susan & Tom O'Donnell) provided a 2nd record for the Niagara Frontier region. New York has fewer than 10 accepted records. Two Varied Thrushes visited the Region: one at Byrne, *Albany*, NY 10-15 Jan (Jocelyn Cole-Calkins, m. ob.) and one at River Vale, *Bergen*, NJ 3-29 Feb (Leona Klauth, Judy Cinquina). Although there are nearly 50 previous records in New York and



One of three Common Murres in the Hudson-Delaware region this season, this individual was found on the pelagic trip from Belmar, New Jersey 13 December 2003. Photograph by Chip Krilowicz.

20 in New Jersey, this species is still rare. A Brown Thrasher lingering at Hamlin Beach, NY 1 Dec (DT) was of note. Unlike Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwings were present in below normal numbers in most areas.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Cape May Warbler surprised observers at East Hampton, *Suffolk*, NY 16 Jan (HM, Michele Claeys), potentially a New York record-late date. Single Yellow-throated Warblers visited w. New York at Elmira, *Chemung* 3 Dec (BO) and Binghamton 1-15 Jan (Jan Peterson, Dave Sterling, m. ob.), the latter tying the previous state late date.

SA The enormous invasion of **Bohemian Waxwings** farther n. made itself felt in this Region as well. Reports in New York totaled about 1000 individuals; comparable numbers of the species had been recorded in the winters of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 in the state. Peak New York counts included 200 at Canton, *St. Lawrence* 28 Feb (*fide* JBo); 175 at E. Hoosick, *Rensselaer* 21 Feb (AG, m. ob.); 156 on the Watertown C.B.C. 20 Dec; and three reports of 75-80 in *Essex*.

A more telling indicator of the magnitude of this flight was its extent in New Jersey, where such incursions have not previously been felt. In that state, which has only eight previous records of the species, all but one of single birds (up to 3 were at Barnegat Light in 1968), at least 8 were present among five locations. One at Island Beach S.P. 1 Jan (AT) increased to 3 by 11 Feb (Chip Krilowicz), with at least one remaining until 16 Feb. One at Great Swamp N.W.R. 21 Jan (Harvey Tomlinson et al.) may have been the same as the one at Somerset County Environmental Center 30 Jan-1 Feb (Steve Ozard). One at Nummy's I., *Cape May*, NJ 10 Feb (Diana Wentink) was present for only a day, whereas one at Sandy Hook 12 Feb (Tom Boyle) increased to 3-5 by 14 Feb (m. ob.), with one individual remaining into Mar. Though none were reported in Delaware, this movement reached as far s. as Maryland's Eastern Shore and offshore s. to Bermuda.

A Wilson's Warbler found on the Sandy Hook C.B.C. 14 Dec (Susan Phelon) was very late. A Summer Tanager found in Nov at Mauricetown, *Cumberland*, NJ continued through 4 Dec (Pete Dunnc), quite late for this s. species. Eastern Towhee numbers exploded, particularly in s. areas. High totals in Delaware were 53 at Woodland Beach, *Kent* 21 Dec (Ed Marshall, Keith Russell); 58 at Milford Neck Wildlife Area, *Sussex* 28 Dec (AE, Kitt Hecksher); and about 60 at Prime Hook 25 Jan (ES); and in New Jersey, 43 at Mad Horse Creek W.M.A. 14 Dec (Ward Dascy, Colin Campbell). Singles in *Chautauqua*, *Niagara*, *Monroe*, *Seneca*, *Oneida*, and *Onondaga*, NY (4 of them into Feb) marked the n. winter limits. Very late Grasshopper Sparrows were found e. of Gilgo, *Suffolk*, NY 7 Dec (John & Gerda Fritz, Pat Lindsay) and on the Cape May C.B.C. 14 Dec (Michael O'Brien). But the biggest surprise was one near Millford, *Sussex*, DE 31 Jan (MG), for the state's only winter record. A possible Slate-colored Fox Sparrow at Hamlin Beach 7–8 Dec (†RS, Susan Spahn) will be reviewed by the N.Y.S.A.R.C.; *zaboria* Red Fox Sparrows should be ruled out in such cases. The latest Lincoln's Sparrow, found on the Moorestown C.B.C., was at Rancocas, *Burlington*, NJ 21–22 Dec. Earlier in the month, singles were found at Jones Beach S.P., *Nassau*, NY; Lincroft, *Monmouth*, NJ; and Cape May. Rounding out the sparrows was a Harris's Sparrow at Gardner's I. on the Montauk C.B.C. 20 Dec (PSt). Though now recorded more than 50 times in New York, it should still be regarded as rare.

An Indigo Bunting at Leicester, *Livingston*, NY 1–3 Dec (†RS et al., ph.) afforded the first winter record for the state's Genesee region. Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds—one at Port Penn, *New Castle*, DE 9 Dec (John Janowski), one on the Milford, DE C.B.C. 28 Dec (Mcta Little), and one at Pennsville, *Salem*, NJ 28 Dec (Robert Stewart)—was a normal winter total. No Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from Delaware, where they have been regular for 50 years and present in good numbers for the past decade. In New Jersey, with only 12 previous records, there were three reports: up to 8 at Hancock's Bridge, *Salem* 1–16 Feb (PD, m. ob.), possibly one of the same individuals nearby in Elsinboro 14 Feb (Lloyd Shaw), and one at Sharptown, *Salem* 16 Feb (Rick Wiltraut, Jason Horn). In New York, one appeared at Cuylerville, *Livingston* 6 (DT) & 12 Jan (Robert & Chita McKinney). Rusty Blackbird counts were 27 at Montrose, *Westchester* 1 Feb (TWB) and 15–20 at Rhinebeck, *Dutchess* in Jan (m. ob.). With the exception of redpolls, winter finches were scarce. There were few reports of crossbills, and Purple Finches were present only in low numbers despite last fall's big movement. Pine Grosbeaks made a modest appearance, all in New York, with scattered reports in the Adirondacks: one at Lima, *Livingston* 3 Dec (J. Foster), 5 on the Hamburg, *Erie* C.B.C. 4 Jan, and one at Caroline, *Tompkins* 1 Feb; farthest s. were 3 at High Falls, *Ulster* 20 Dec (Ev & Bob Rifenberg). Common Redpolls invaded, though in lesser numbers than in the winters of 1999–2000 and 2001–2002,



Brewer's Blackbirds, rare in New Jersey at any season, have recently been seen almost annually in Salem County in winter. This male was at Hancock's Bridge, where from up to 8 were present between 1 (here 2) and 16 February 2004. Photograph by Chip Krilowicz.

with scattered reports through the Region in early Dec and a major movement along the New Jersey coast into Delaware 28–29 Dec. Peak counts were 1019 on the Saranac L. C.B.C. 4 Jan in the Adirondacks and 244 on the Barnegat, NJ C.B.C. 28 Dec, with flocks of 100–200 scattered over New York s. to New Jersey and a total reported between 2500 and 3000. Hoary Redpolls accompanied the incursion. Though not all were well documented, about 35 were reported, double or triple the number expected based on recent experience. Pine Siskins were widespread in small numbers with a patchy distribution. With over 500 reported, Evening Grosbeaks reached their highest number in three winters. Peak totals, both in the Adirondacks, were 120 on the Saranac L. C.B.C. 4 Jan, and 50–150 at Long Lake for the season (Doug Blodgett).

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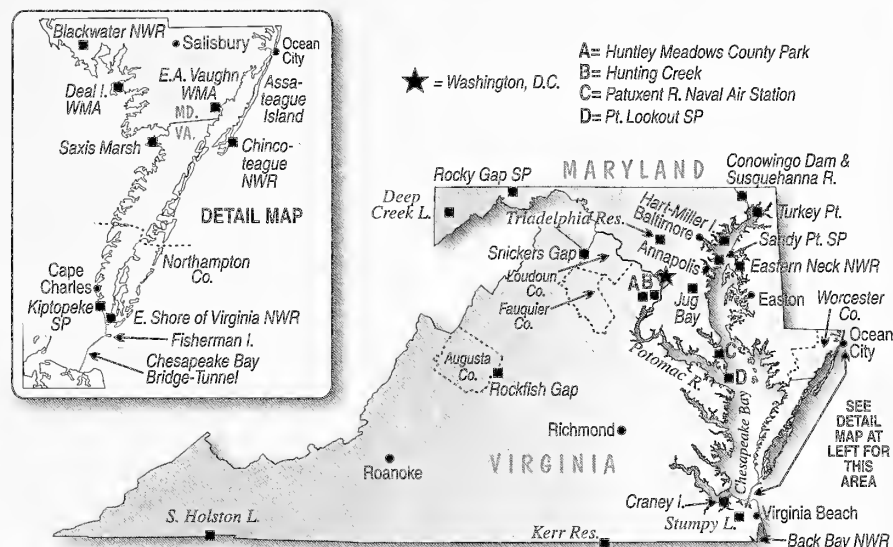
Middle Atlantic

The winter of 2003–2004 was again a brutally cold one, with heavy snow in western portions of the Region. A fallout of redpolls along the coast in late December was one of the most significant events of the season. The District of Columbia came through with a collection of interesting birds (two hummingbirds, Ovenbird) that braved the winter in a small garden off The Mall. City parks and gardens have long provided havens for tough vagrants in Boston, New York City, and other eastern metropolises. The warmer microclimates of large cities, enhanced by the wind-shelter of tall buildings, can entice insectivores to overwinter, provided they have at least a little bit of vegetative shelter, food, and fresh water. We predict that careful scrutiny of potential habitat in D.C. and other larger cities in the Region (such as Richmond and Baltimore; see Ash-throated Flycatcher below) would produce regular sightings of such vagrants. Birders in the Region might do well to visit such habitats regularly.

Abbreviations: Assat. (Assateague I., Worcester, MD); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); Black. (Blackwater N.W.R., Dorchester, MD); Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke, VA); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, s. of Northampton, VA); Chinc. (Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack VA); Chino (Chino Farms, Queen Anne's, MD); Craney (Craney I., Portsmouth, VA); D.C. (District of Columbia); O. C. Inlet (Ocean City Inlet, Worcester, MD). The state for a location is noted the first time it is mentioned in the text.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

It was an interesting winter for loons and grebes in the Region. Several reports of Pacific Loon began with one seen well inland 6 Dec at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg, VA, a bird seen sporadically throughout winter after being relocated 27 Dec, though never offering opportunity for photographic documentation (p. a., †AD, †MBo, JBl, G&RH). Also inland was one found at L. Anna from the North Anna Power Station, Louisa, VA 24 Feb (acc., ph. †MBo, John Irvine). More expected coastally, another was described at Cherrystone Landing, Northampton, VA 30 Dec (p. a., DS, TG). Another Pacific-type loon seen from First Landing S.P., Virginia Beach, VA 2 Jan (ESB) was of interest: prominent, consistent white flank patches observed over a half-hour while the bird was at rest, a fairly heavy bill and blocky head, and a lack of a chin strap and vent strap suggested the possibility of Arctic Loon. Unfortunately, photographs were too distant to be definitive, though the white flanks are discernible. There are at least nine reports of such birds on the East Coast between coastal Massachusetts (11–18 Jan 1983, 21 Jan 1983, 16 Mar 1994, 11 Jan 1998, 16



May 1998), Long I., NY (7 Feb 1993, 20 Dec 1998, 6 Jan 1999), Wrightsville Beach, NC (5 Feb 1994) and Tybee I., GA (19 Nov 1989), and one previous report from this location in Virginia (1 Jan 2000), but none with photographs. Two Pacific Loons were reported on the Little Creek C.B.C. 31 Dec (p. a., DLH, MI; RLAn). A Clark's Grebe at First Landing S.P. 31 Dec–3 Jan was surely the same bird returning for its 4th winter (acc., DS, TG, ph., †BTe, m. ob.), while a Western Grebe was seen 29 Dec at False Cape S.P., s. of Virginia Beach (acc. ESB). A lone Eared Grebe was among Horned Grebes at Craney 10 Feb+ (EE).

The fall influx of American White Pelicans contributed to a record number of winter reports. An injured bird was found at Craney 7 Dec (DCI). The flock of 24 that had been present since late Nov on Newport Bay, s. of South Pt., Worcester, dwindled to 12 seen 28 & 30 Dec (m. ob., ph. MLH) and were apparently gone by 31 Dec (JLS et al.). Amazingly, on 3 Jan Brinkley watched a flock of 11 come in off the ocean at Virginia Beach and continue westward over First Landing S.P. (m. ob.); we presume the 11 birds to have been part of the Maryland flock. We can only assume that some of the ensuing reports pertained to fragmentation of the same group, although this is impossible to establish with certainty: one at Craney 29 Dec (Karen Heatwole) and 3 there 22 Feb (Ben & Mary Copeland); 6 at Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach 13 Feb (Bill & Clare Leaning); and 3 at Black. 14 Jan (p. a., AS). Though only re-

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cently joining Maryland's winter avifauna, 6 Brown Pelicans at Point Lookout S.P., Saint Mary's were almost expected 28 Dec (MC); other Dec sightings came from Wicomico and Worcester; 10 at Thomas Pt., Annapolis, Anne Arundel, were more surprising 3–4 Jan (Peter Hanan, MJI, HLW, SR et al.) and constituted a first for that C.B.C. A Great Cormorant was rare inland at L. Accotink, Fairfax, VA 1 Dec (Joan Woodward). An Anhinga in Pembroke Meadows, Virginia Beach 31 Dec (BC, John Porter) was not far from the sites of the three previous Regional winter records from 1981, 1997, and 1998. Green Herons were late at E.A. Vaughn W.M.A., Worcester, MD 29 Dec (ZB, RFR, BE) and Schoolhouse Pond, Prince George's, MD 2 Jan (FS), as were 2 Glossy Ibis at Back Bay N.W.R., Virginia Beach 6 Dec (Clark White et al.).

A Black Brant was found among the Atlantic Brant flock at 4th Street in Ocean City, Worcester 6 Feb (p. a., †WGE, Peter Mann). The good description constitutes the first record of this form for Maryland (there is one previous, undocumented report) and eliminates similar dark-bellied taxa. Virginia has no confirmed record of this taxon. A Brant along Sparks Rd. was rare for inland Caroline, MD 7 & 14 Feb (ph. DP). Richardson's Canada Geese were widely reported: there were 10 reports in nine counties in Maryland, and three reports in different counties in Virginia, the best being 8 birds at Riverview, Radford 17 Jan (CK, BK). Ross's Geese were reported Regionally from eight locations e. of the Bay, all but one in Maryland, with counts of up to 3 birds. Western Shore reports were all in Virginia: 3 on 26 Nov–3 Dec s. of Harrisonburg, Montgomery (p. a., Ken Ranck); one 12 Dec at Abingdon, Washington, VA (p. a., Bob Riggs); 1–7 Jan on the New R., Carroll (p. a., Glen Eller, Allan Boynton); 15 Jan in Amherst (p. a., Mark Johnson); and 29 Feb–1 Mar s. of Marshall in Fauquier (p. a., †KG, †TMD). Ross's Goose reports away from significant Snow Goose wintering areas have been on the rise. Maryland's 11 reports of Greater White-fronted Geese came in well above average. The most noteworthy were 8 in Queenstown, Queen Anne's 15 Feb (ph. DP), the 2nd highest count for the state; other counts of multiple birds were 3 at Jug Bay, Anne Arundel, 26 Dec–4 Jan (DBy), 2 at Lilipons, Frederick, 21 Feb–1 Mar (DCz et al.), and 2 in Kent 29 Feb (JBr). There were three reports from Virginia from Amherst, Fairfax, and King George.

An apparent Gadwall x American Wigeon hybrid (ph., †Les Willis) was seen on the Nansemond R. at Suffolk 1 Feb. It was swimming with a hen Gadwall and resembled a drake Gadwall in all respects, except for a bright green eye patch typical of American Wigeon. A drake Eurasian Wigeon returned to the same group of small ponds in Fauquier, VA, for the 10th consecutive year 12 Dec–29 Feb+ (SH, W. J. L. Sladen). Others included one at Sunken Meadow Garden, Surry, VA 29 Feb (MI); 3 at Eagles Nest Golf Course, Worcester, MD 14–28 Feb, including one hen, rarely identified in the Region (†MLH, MC, m. ob.); one at Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset, MD 29 Nov–5 Jan (John Hubbell, m. ob.); and one at Loch Raven Res., Baltimore, MD 21–23 Feb (Kye Jenkins, Elliot Kirschbaum). Two inland Virginia C.B.C.s noted Blue-winged Teal, a single 20

Dec at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax (PS) and one on a farm pond in Fauquier 21 Dec (RPA, Joan Boudreau). An incredible 8000 Redheads were seen at Rumbly Pt., Somerset 14 Feb (HH, JBr) but were in Pocomoke Sound, where such concentrations have been noted in the past. On the Virginia side of the same sound, 406 Redheads along with 590 Canvasbacks and 1491 Ruddy Ducks were seen from Saxis, Accomack, VA 27 Dec (ESB, TMD). An amazing spectacle of scoters was enjoyed at the C.B.B.T. this winter. The first reports with estimates of thousands of birds came 24 Jan, while more diligent efforts at tracking numbers by Byrd and Williams provided a peak count of 60,000 Surfs, 15,000 Blacks, and 100 White-wingeds on 4 Feb



This White-winged Dove at Les Willis's feeders at Eclipse, Suffolk, on the Nansemond River—present 17–25 (here 21) November—was one of two noted in mid-November 2003. There are only 10 or 11 previous state records, though rumors persist that the species was seen at hunters' check stations in the early 1990s. Digiscoped photograph by Les Willis.

(BW, MBy) and similar numbers over the next several days (ESB, BTe, m. ob.). One wonders what percentage of the Atlantic's Surf Scoters wintered at the mouth of the Bay. High counts continued throughout winter, and even larger numbers were seen at Cape May, New Jersey in late winter, after numbers declined in early and mid-Mar. Riverview Park at Radford hosted 2 imm. White-winged Scoters 1 Dec, with at least one present until 31 Jan, and an ad. male Surf Scoter 13 Dec (CK, BK). Five White-winged Scoters were at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg 17 Jan (AD). It was a good year for the three jetty ducks. Ocean City Inlet eider counts peaked at 28 Common Eiders 29 Feb (MBu) and 6 King Eiders 24 Feb (SHD); a nearly ad. male King Eider was enjoyed from late Nov until 26 Dec at the C.B.B.T (BTe, JSp, m. ob.).

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Following a major winter storm that crossed from the Ohio Valley through the Northeast

5–6 Dec, leaving several inches of snow in places, our Region witnessed a notable flight of Rough-legged Hawks. Certain areas in the Region (e.g., Maryland's Eastern Shore marshes, highlands of w. Maryland and Virginia) have small wintering populations; however, this year's push was detected most notably on Virginia's n. Piedmont. The first bird was seen 6 Dec in Cecil, MD (SM), followed by a barrage of reports from Prince William, Fauquier, Orange, Culpeper, and Loudoun, VA 10–26 Dec, mostly singles but some counts of 2–3 (LC, SH, TMD, G&RH, m. ob.). Through Jan and Feb, observers were reporting Rough-leggeds from many locations in both states, with some impressive counts: Montessor Rd.,

Loudoun, VA boasted up to 11 birds 7 Feb (JL, BJW, m. ob.), and at Rapidan, Culpeper, 6 were seen 15 Feb (BTe, Gordy Adamski). Counts from the Virginia mts. seemed to be higher than usual, noticed primarily in Highland's Bluegrass Valley, with 8 present 18 Dec, 11 on 31 Jan, and 12 on 15 Feb (JL, BJW, SH, JSp, DLH, Greg Justice). The abundance of reports dwindled by mid-Feb, with only a trickle through the end of the month and beyond. It is possible that the perceived distribution of the hawks was a result of density of observers, with areas farther s. getting far less coverage, but one was seen at Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R. 15 Feb (VK, m. ob.), where unusual, and around Saxis W.M.A. on several dates (v.

o.), where less so.

A late Osprey was at Salisbury 2–4 Jan (SHD). Golden Eagles away from expected areas included one at Wye I., Queen Anne's, MD 1 Feb (Bill & Karen Harris); one near Sparks Rd., Caroline, MD 13 Feb (HH); one ad. 31 Dec at Sky Meadows S.P., Fauquier (MJI, G.L. Armistead); and one imm. 31 Jan at Elsing Green, King William, VA (FA).

A Black Rail and a Sora were flushed 24 Jan near Locustville, Accomack, VA (George Reiger, *vide* HTA). An American Avocet was reported 23 Dec from Black. (Paul Spitzer, *vide* LR). A Piping Plover 15 Feb on the sound side of Assat. was a good find (HH, JBr). Two Pippings on Fisherman I. were the Cape Charles C.B.C.'s 5th record since 1979 (they were far more regular before 1979). Interestingly, one had been color-banded in the Great Lakes; another Great Lakes bird was in Cape May, NJ, this winter, and Maryland has a Mar specimen thought to belong to a Great Lakes population. It may be that wintering birds are more likely to pertain to

Great Lakes than to East Coast nesters, which could explain why winter records in the Region have dropped off more precipitously than even the Regional breeding population. A Marbled Godwit lingered at Skimmer I., Worcester, MD 20 Dec–2 Jan (SA, Bill Hubic, DCz, N&FS). A Red Knot accompanied 200 Marbled Godwits, 200 Willets, and 35 Short-billed Dowitchers at Willis Wharf, Northampton 27 Dec (ESB, TMD), the last of the winter. A Willet 31 Jan at Elsing Green, King William, VA was out of place on the Bay (FA). Sixty Red Phalaropes were seen off Maryland 28 Feb (PG et al.).

Two unidentified jaegers were noted from Chinc. 16 Feb (RPA). Three ad. Little Gulls were at Ocean City Inlet 6 Dec (MH, JLS, Ed Boyd), while an ad. was seen on the Little Creek C.B.C. from Ft. Story at Virginia Beach 31 Dec. Claytor L., Pulaski, VA held 10 Bonaparte's Gulls 1 Jan, an unusual date at this w. location (BK). All five reports of Black-headed Gulls were from Maryland: at the Denton W.T.P., Caroline 20–31 Dec (Steve Westre, Glen Lovelace); at Ocean City Inlet 11 Jan (SHD); at Assat. 15 Feb (HH, JBr); and at the Easton W.T.P., Talbot (JBC, RK) and Tanyard, Caroline (MBu et al.), both 29 Feb, possibly the same individual. An ad. California Gull was reported from the Prince William Landfill and Neabsco Cr., Prince William 27 Dec–28 Feb (acc. ph. SCR, PP, OJ, †MBo, KG.); we believe that gulls foraging at the landfill roost on the exposed mud at the tidal creek and that reports from the two locations most likely refer to the same individual California Gull. The Fauquier Landfill yielded three county firsts this year. A first- or second-winter Glaucous Gull was present 18–21 Dec (SH, ph. †TMD, ph. †SCR), and on 21 Dec Rottenborn photographed an Iceland Gull and a Thayer's Gull, both first-winter birds. Iceland Gulls were widely reported: 12 reports in seven counties in Maryland, including 2 different ads., and 5 or more from two counties in Virginia. Other Thayer's Gull reports were one first-winter bird 24 Jan at the Salisbury landfill, Wicomico, MD (JLS); an ad. 7–12 Feb at the Cecil landfill (EJS, SM, Joel Martin); a first-winter 15–21 Feb around Washington Channel, D.C. (PP, DCz); and a second-winter at the Charles, MD landfill 27 Feb (FS). Glaucous Gulls were reported from five locations in four counties and D.C., totaling some 6 individuals in Maryland, with four other reports from four counties in Virginia. All but two of these reports were of first-winter birds (the remainder were second- or third-winter). A Black Skimmer was seen at Craney 6 Feb (Andy Rabin, Larry Meade), where unprecedented at this time of year. A small flock winters at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia

Beach, but is not known to stray westward.

A significant movement of alcids was documented at our latitudes this winter, but the lack of boat trips off Virginia Beach (for the first time in 15 years) left a gap in data off most of the Region. In Maryland, Razorbills were noted from shore at Ocean City Inlet 12 Feb (one bird; Lorraine Logan, *vide* D&CB) through 24 Feb (8 birds; SHD). Much rarer, a single Dovekie was inside the inlet 21 Feb (ZB et al., ph. Don Broderick). The only pelagic trip in the Region this season on 28 Feb (PG et al.) confirmed that a significant push of Dovekies had reached the Region, with 144 counted around Baltimore Canyon; 2 Atlantic Puffins there were standard fare, but amazingly, no Razorbills were seen. In Virginia, Razorbill sightings came from Chinc., with 1–4 birds 13–16 Feb (VK, RPA et al.); at Fort Story, Virginia Beach 16–19 Feb (RLAn, RLak, Joyce & Hayes Williams), with as many as 18 on 16 Feb; and an imm. seen 21 Feb at Little I. Park, Virginia Beach (MI, Tom Pendleton). A boat trip off Virginia Beach 22 Feb that reached only the 50-fathom line found only 8–10 Razorbills before turning back (BP et al.).

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

The Region's only Snowy Owl report was of an imm. at Assat. 25 Dec (N&FS). Ten Short-eared Owls were hunting over a field at Rapidan, Culpeper 27 Feb (G&RH), in an area where the species has recently bred. Generally, Short-eared Owls were more numerous this winter than in an average winter, as for Rough-legged Hawks. A Common Ground-Dove, a female or imm., flushed from a garden thicket at Cape Charles 1 Dec but could not be relocated (ESB); the species has declined tremendously in the Southeast and is now rarely seen in the Region. Eurasian Collared-Doves showed further signs of spread in Virginia. Two reported from Colonial Beach, West-

moreland 12 Feb were heard singing (Dan Kluza), and another pair was at Price's Fork, Pulaski 27 Feb–2 Mar (Sally Pfeiffer, *vide* Bruce Grimes). Increasingly difficult to track accurately, hummingbirds again delighted birders throughout the winter. At least a dozen Rufous or *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were scattered throughout the Region. A Rufous Hummingbird was discovered 29 Nov and banded 4 Dec at the Mary Ripley Gardens; this or a similar bird lingered well into Jan. The Black-chinned Hummingbird at the Mary Ripley Gardens, D.C. was last reported 12 Dec, and at least 4 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported well into Dec, the latest being a bird seen at Cape Charles feeder through 30 Dec (ESB, Roberta Vallone). An ad. male Magnificent Hummingbird at Radford, VA 22–25 Oct (J. Pierce, *vide* Jerry Via) was nicely videotaped and will be reviewed by the state records committee.

An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Ft. McHenry 3–5 Dec (JP, ph. Bob Mumford, m.ob.) was Baltimore's 2nd and Maryland's 9th. Like several other Ash-throateds in the past, it was initially reported as a Great Crested. Common Ravens were reported from several locations away from expected areas. Four were reported from the Sugarloaf Mt. C.B.C. 4 Jan (Helen Horrocks et al.); one was s. of Poolesville, Montgomery, MD 1 Feb (Clive Harris); 2 were at the Occoquan N.W.R. on the Coastal Plain in Prince William 31 Jan (Larry Cartwright, LC et al.); and one was seen along I-95 in Caroline, VA 16 Feb (FA). Overwintering Brown Thrashers are not uncommon, but one at 720 m on Compton Mt., Buchanan, VA 29 Dec is worth noting (Roger Mayhorn).

Hoffman discovered another Blue-headed Vireo at Hickory Pt., Worcester 27 Dec. A Northern Shrike at Assat. was Worcester's 6th on 3–13 Jan (DCz, SHD). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from several locations in Virginia where expected, in Clarke, Au-

SA Much was written in the fall report about the immediate effects of Hurricane *Isabel* on the displacement of seabirds in the Region, but the storm's effects continued to be felt through the winter. This winter was among the poorest in memory for wintering passerines, especially along the coast. Many observers made the connection between the low passerine counts on C.B.C.s and a poor food crop, blaming the failure of the wild food crop on *Isabel*. Harry Armistead, with almost 40 years of experience compiling the Cape Charles C.B.C., said the wild food crop was the worst he had ever seen. Bayberry bushes in particular were essentially devoid of fruit, and Tree Swallows were nowhere to be seen. Active hurricane seasons of past years have not been implicated in similar cases, so it would be interesting to know more. Was the timing of *Isabel* perfect for destruction of the food crop, or were other factors involved? Observers in coastal New Jersey noted the scarcity of wintering passerines as well, but the hurricane had had no such impact on habitats there.

Although counts of many species (e.g., White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Chickadee, etc.) were significantly depressed, it was the lack of Yellow-rumped Warblers that was most conspicuous, even eerie. This species usually numbers in the thousands in coastal areas of the Region and is the single most common landbird, bar none. While the average Cape Charles C.B.C. (years 1965–1996) counts 4824, this year's count, which had above-average coverage, found a paltry 382. Interestingly, Winter Wrens bucked the trend and set a new high on the Cape Charles C.B.C. (72)—this species, of course, favors tree-falls, brush-piles, and tangles.

SA Common Redpoll is an irruptive species, not quite annual in this Region. Major irruptions have occurred periodically (once every 10–20 years; most recently 1977–1978 and 1993–1994) and may bring many thousands to the Region, with counts of several hundred from single locales. Such invasions typically materialize with a trickle of birds in Dec, becoming a flood of birds by mid-Jan and Feb, with stragglers into Mar and even (in 1994) early Apr. Past redpoll invasions have primarily reached the Mountains and Piedmont sections, with lower numbers on the Coastal Plain of the Western Shore, and just a smattering of reports on the Eastern Shore. But this year witnessed an atypical redpoll movement. Most unusual was the fact that hundreds reached the immediate coast (with just singles elsewhere)—and that it showed signs of being a coastal *fallout* of redpolls rather than a protracted, season-long movement.

The first were 2 near Sycamore Landing, *Montgomery*, MD 4 Dec (Paul Woodward), followed quickly by one at Ocean City Inlet 6 Dec (JLS, MH, EB). A flyover on the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec (ESB) may have been the vanguard of an unprecedented fallout two days later. The 28 Dec Ocean City C.B.C. recorded some **186** Common Redpolls, most of which were seen on the immediate coast at Assat. and many of which were obviously arriving off the ocean. Hundreds more were seen elsewhere on the coast from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Note that during this time no Common Redpolls were seen more than 3 km from the coast. Other Commons found that day were 20+ at Loch Haven Park, Virginia Beach (David West), 4 at Sunset Beach, *Northampton* (ph. ESB, PEL), 5 at the C.B.B.T. (Eric Dean), and 5 at Chinc., the Virginia portion of Assat. (John Hubbell). The next day, one was still at Chinc. (Teta Kain), one flew over E.A. Vaughn W.M.A., *Worcester*, MD during the Chinc. C.B.C. (Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis), **72** were counted on the Back Bay C.B.C. including a single flock of **62** at False Cape S.P. (ESB), and 2 were in Cape Charles (TG, DS). By 30 Dec, the fallout was dwindling, with 17 recorded (by three parties) on the Cape Charles C.B.C., and 2 over Cape Charles Beach the next day (PEL).

Reports thereafter were limited to singles at four Maryland locations and the following Virginia sightings: 2 at Riverview Golf Course, Portsmouth 2 Jan (ESB), 2 at Mathews 4 Jan (BC), and singles in *Augusta* (Crista Cabe), at Ft. Story 4 Jan (MBy, BW), Chesterfield 19 Jan (John & Caroline Coe), Ashburn, *Loudoun* 4 Feb (John Drummond), Lynchburg 20 Feb–1 Mar (Cinda Hurt), and Hampton 27–28 Feb (BC). These large movements may bring Hoary Redpolls to the Region. Two apparent *exilipes* **Hoary Redpolls** found among the Common Redpoll flock on Assat. 28 Dec (p. a., ph. JLS, EB, Zach Baer) constituted only the 2nd *Worcester* record following the Region's first, a specimen from South Pt. 20 Feb 1949 (J. Buckalew). Confirmation of this species in the Region is elusive: of Maryland's 16 published reports (involving 45+ birds), just six reports include photographs (including one report of 18+; see Czaplak, D. 1995. Identifying Common and Hoary Redpolls in winter. *Birding* 37:446–457). Virginia has just one confirmed record and one other report, though an observer in *Accomack*, VA provided a reasonable description of a Hoary at his feeders 9 Dec 2003 (p. a., Randall Shore).

Most experienced regional birders would have predicted a season-long movement, so the rapid drying up of this year's flight was unexpected. It is clear from the uniquely coastal nature of the event, the behavior of the birds, and the coordinated timing, that thousands of these birds had been displaced offshore, probably well to our north, and struggled to return to the coast. A redpoll invasion was already well underway in the Atlantic Provinces and the Northeast in Nov, but the late Dec weather conditions really set the stage for the fallout.

On 26 Dec, a low-pressure system over s. Ontario moved northeastward, toward the Atlantic Provinces, bringing snow and cloudy conditions. The low interacted with a high-pressure system over the Ohio River Valley to create a very strong corridor of westerly and northwesterly winds throughout n. New England and Atlantic Canada, with sustained winds of 35+ m.p.h. Windy conditions continued through the mid-day on 27 Dec before the building high pressure took hold along the Eastern Seaboard and brought calm winds, warmer temperatures, and clear skies.

The large pulse of redpolls on the morning of 27 Dec was probably displaced offshore from Nova Scotia by the strong westerlies; as redpolls are thought to be mostly diurnal migrants, this could well have happened on that morning. Once offshore, many of the redpolls must have been carried downwind, and the advancing high would have carried them southward and then westward in the anticyclonic winds, helping the hapless finches to regain the coast, albeit up to 24 hours later. Mortality must have been very high offshore, and some of the birds appeared exhausted upon arrival, especially on the outer beaches, where birds were seen flying in from the ocean (also the case on North Carolina's Outer Banks 27 Dec), alighting and feeding on Seaside Goldenrod in many cases.

gusta, and *Montgomery*. A Bohemian Waxwing was found and photographed 7 Feb at the Tuckahoe Nursery, *Queen Anne's*, the 2nd for Maryland and 4th for the Region. The bird was located again 8 & 10 Feb (p. a., ph. JLS, EB, ph. DCz, Scott Crabtree). Considering the number of birds that wintered to our n., it is mildly surprising that no others were reported in the Region.

A Black-throated Gray Warbler discovered in a grove of planted pines and evergreens at Blandly 27 Dec was the first in Virginia since 1975; it was photographed extensively and seen regularly through 13 Jan (acc. †Doug Poffenbarger, ph. LL, ph. BTe, m. ob.). A Nashville Warbler spent the winter at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, D.C., along with an Orange-crowned, 22 Dec–29 Feb+ (Paul DeAnna, *vide* PP, m. ob.). A female Northern Parula was at Conowingo, *Harford* 4 Dec (Greg Futral), and another was on the Annapolis C.B.C., *Anne Arundel*, MD 4 Jan. A Prairie Warbler was found 4 Jan at Cove Pt., *Calvert* for the Patuxent River C.B.C. (Arlene Ripley). An ad. male Black-throated Blue Warbler was late at Solomon's, *Saint Mary's* 7 Dec (Mike

Rudy). An Ovenbird was present at the Mary Ripley Gardens in D.C. until 29 Dec. A Wilson's Warbler was a frequent visitor at a Waterford yard, *Loudoun* through 10 Jan (acc., ph., †Nicole Hamilton). A Yellow-breasted Chat was found on the Central Loudoun C.B.C., *Loudoun* 28 Dec (GJ).

Cape Charles feeding stations supplied up to 13 individual Baltimore Orioles with nectar and fruit in Dec, with 3–4 present through the rest of winter and the latest bird noted 15 Apr (ESB); these kept company with a Yellow-breasted Chat (5–30 Dec) and a Dickcissel (5 Dec–Mar). An Ipswich Sparrow away from the immediate coast was seen 16 Feb at Hooper's I., *Dorchester* (HTA), establishing the 10th Bay record for Maryland. An Indigo Bunting visited a feeder 24 Jan in *Charles City*, VA (Margaret O'Bryan), while a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was present early Dec–28 Feb at a feeder near Lynchburg, *Bedford*, VA (*vide* Thelma Dalmas). At least one of 2 Harris's Sparrows discovered in fall spent the winter at Julie Metz Wetlands, *Prince William*, present through 29 Feb+ (p. a., KG, †Erika Wilson, m. ob.). A Clay-colored Sparrow also wintered there 1 Dec–14

Feb (PS, Sharon Lynn, m. ob.). Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported in Maryland: an ad. male 24 Jan s. of Berlin, *Worcester* with 2 Brewer's Blackbirds among a flock of 100,000 blackbirds (N&FS); one at Willards, *Wicomico* 28 Jan (SHD); and an imm. 28 Jan at Upper Marlboro, *Prince George's* (Susan Henyon). The lone Virginia report was an imm. at Magotha Rd., *Northampton* 21 Feb (LC et al.). Nokesville, *Prince William* remains a reliable location for Brewer's Blackbirds, where they were seen regularly 10 Dec–24 Jan, with a peak count of 20 on 6 Jan (LC, KG, SH, m. ob.). Other Brewer's Blackbirds reports were: one at Salisbury, *Wicomico* 19 Jan (SHD); 3 on 28 Jan in *Caroline*, MD (Les Roslund); 6 at Horsehoe Farm, *Culpeper* 30 Jan (G&RH); one at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe*, VA 29 Jan (GE); and 4 at Elsing Green, *King William* 31 Jan (FA). Evening Grosbeaks were barely reported this winter, with three of four reports coming from the mts., the best of these being about 20 birds in Hancock, *Washington*, MD 15 Jan (AS). The lone report away from the ridges was a bird visiting a *Spotsylvania*, VA feeder 14 Feb–12 Mar (Jackie Nelson).



This Trumpeter Swan (at left, with Tundra Swan) was part of a family group of four birds present at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina during late (here 25) February 2004. Most recent records of Trumpeter Swan in the East are attributable to the introduction programs in Canada, the Midwest, and several eastern Great Lakes sites. Photograph by Joy Greenwood.

Pickens, SC 24 Jan (*fide* SS).

Quite rare in winter, Least Bitterns were good finds at L. Matt. 29 Dec (*fide* AB) and at the Santee Coastal Res., SC 4 Feb (JP et al.). The Great White Heron found at Bear I. W.M.A., SC during the fall season remained at least until late Feb (MM). As usual, there were several Reddish Egrets in the Region this winter, with at least 3 in Georgia and one in South Carolina. Reports of lingering/wintering long-legged waders included at least 6 Cattle Egrets and 8 Green Herons, about normal for the season. Definitely not normal, however, was the Wood Stork found at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes N.W.R., NC 24–25 Feb (*fide* HP), apparently a first for that state for Feb.

WATERFOWL

Although waterfowl numbers were relatively average this winter, there was no short supply of interesting occurrences. A Fulvous Whistling-Duck was at Bulls I., SC 4 Jan (ND et al.), the only whistling-duck reported. Geese, on the other hand, were widespread and present in good numbers. Greater White-fronted Geese, present in all three states, were especially numerous in Georgia (7+ locations) and South Carolina (4+ locations). The South Carolina reports of 20 at Bear I. W.M.A. 29 Jan (G&JH) and 22 at the S.S.S. 3 Jan–20 Feb (SC, v.o.) provided record counts for that state. Snow Geese were found in all three states, as were Ross's Geese. The best Ross's counts were 8 on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (*fide* AB) and 7 at L. Horton, Fayette, GA 16 Dec (EB). Other L. Matt. geese of note on 29 Dec included 3 Richardson's Canada Geese, a Greater White-fronted Goose of the Greenland race *flavirostris*, and the Barnacle Goose, which continued from the fall season

(RD, DT). The presence of the Greenland White-fronted would seem to support the case for wild provenance for the Barnacle Goose. Swans also made news this winter, with Tundras being found in all three states again. Their numbers continue to increase, especially in the e. North Carolina wintering areas. Generating much excitement was the trapping of 3 Trumpeter Swans in North Carolina during Tundra Swan banding at the Pungo Unit of

Pocosin Lakes N.W.R. 25 Feb; the Trumpeters were trapped, photographed, and released unbanded (WS et al.). Then on 28 Feb, 4 (a family group) were observed in the same area (DC, RD, JW et al.). There are historically a few vague references stating that this species wintered to the Southeast, but the literature for the Southern Atlantic Coast (south of Chesapeake Bay) is inconclusive. The suspicion, of course, is that these Trumpeters came from successful introduction programs in the Midwest and East, but their provenance cannot be traced in the case of unbanded individuals. In North Carolina, the statuses of Barnacle Goose and Trumpeter Swan are under review by the state records committee.

Eurasian Wigeons were well reported, with at least 8 in North Carolina and 2 in South Carolina. This season's Cinnamon Teal was a male at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA 28 Feb+ (PH, JS, IS, v.o.). Unusual diving duck numbers included impressive counts of Redheads, with 204 at Garden Lakes, Rome, GA 12 Feb (MD) and 100 on L. Julian, NC 22 Feb (TJ). The King Eider is quite rare in the Region; thus of note was a female found at the Garden City, SC pier 8–10 Jan (BM, RL, v.o.), providing about the 7th sighting for that state. Common Eider reports totaled 7 North Carolina individuals and 2 South Carolina birds. Inland water-

fowl of note included a female Surf Scoter on L. Chatuge, NC 7 Dec (RT, AK), a White-winged Scoter in Henderson, NC 27 Jan (WF et al.), 4–5 Long-tailed Ducks at the Merry Brickyards, Augusta, GA 9–14 Jan (LS, AW, MDa), and 4 Common Mergansers at Greenville, NC 16 Dec–4 Jan (VP, HV).

KITES THROUGH ALCIDS

Of great interest was a report of a White-tailed Kite for one day near Denton, Davidson, NC 27 Feb (MZ, *fide* KB). This individual was observed closely and if accepted, would provide about the 5th for that state. There were two reports of the very rare Northern Goshawk from North Carolina this winter. An ad. was observed several times during Dec at Cedar Park, Chapel Hill (TD, *fide* WCo), and another ad. was along the L. Matt. causeway 15 Feb (KC). Rare Krider's Red-tailed Hawks included single birds near Americus, GA 31 Jan (PH) and at the S.S.S. 31 Jan (ST et al.). There are only about four or five previous reports of this form for each state. The only definite Rough-legged Hawks this winter were at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 6 Dec–16 Feb (BS, SBa) and in Walton, GA 16 Jan (*fide* MB). Golden Eagles were well represented this winter, with birds in all three states. The best total was of 3 at Bakers Mt., Catawba, NC 12 Dec (JSu et al.). Only one Yellow Rail report was received, that being of one flushed at North R. marsh, Carteret, NC 13 Dec (R&PTy et al.). Apart from the usual Georgia migration reports of Sandhill Crane, of interest were the 3 returning to winter in the



This Gull-billed Tern at the Altamaha Wildlife Management Area, Georgia was photographed 24 January 2004, only the fifth documented in winter for the state. This bird overwintered, which is most unusual. Photograph by Earl Horn.

North R., Carteret, NC area (JF, v.o.), 11 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 27 Dec (*fide* LG), and an impressive flock of up to 4000 apparently overwintering in w. Floyd, GA (MD).

Interesting plover reports included a very

late American Golden-Plover in *Carteret*, NC 12 Dec (JL), a peak of 44 Wilson's at Jekyll I., GA 19 Jan (JS), and South Carolina's 3rd Snowy Plover, last seen 11 Feb (SM et al.). Long-billed Curlews were found at the usual places, with the best total being the 4 on Little St. Simons I., GA 26 Jan (BN et al.). Winter Stilt Sandpipers included 19 at the S.S.S. 14 Jan (SC), one at Altamaha W.M.A., GA 22 Feb (JS et al.), and one on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*fide* ED), providing only the 2nd winter report for that state. Coastal jaeger sightings were highlighted by the one Pomarine and 5 Parasitics at Jekyll I., GA 23 Dec (GB et al.). The peak Little Gull count came from North Carolina's Outer Banks, with 4 on the Hatteras pelagic trip 14 Feb (BP et al.). Much more unexpected was the ad. Little Gull found inland at Jordan L., NC 21 Feb (RD, SSh). This was the 2nd inland report for that state, the first being at the same lake in Mar 1994! Black-headed Gulls made news this winter. North Carolina sightings included an ad. along the L. Matt. causeway 5 Dec (BS, HS), an imm. at C. Hatt. 27 Dec (BSu) and 18 Jan (WCo et al.), and an ad. and imm. at the Jacksonville, NC W.T.P. 24–28 Feb (JO, BG). In South Carolina, where decidedly rarer, a first-winter bird was at the Conway W.T.P. 7–26 Jan (RL, v.o.), and an ad. and second-winter bird were at the Georgetown W.T.P. 22 Jan–23 Feb (RL, v.o.). As usual, California Gulls turned up on the Outer Banks, with singles at C. Hatt. 18 Jan (JPI et al.) and 1 Feb (R&SB). The only Thayer's Gull report was of an ad. off Hatteras, NC 14 Feb (BP et al.). Iceland Gulls were found in all three states this winter, with single first-winter birds at Tybee I., GA 18–20 Jan (EH, GK), at the Conway, SC landfill 13–23 Feb (CH, RL), and at Ocracoke, NC 24 Feb (S&KW). Glaucous Gulls of note included inland first-winter birds at L. Townsend, NC 20 Dec (HLi) and L. Busbee, Conway, SC 31 Dec (ND), an ad. inland at Jordan L., NC 15–18 Feb (HW et al., JPI, v.o.) and an ad. at Hatteras Inlet, NC 27 Dec (RD). Adult Glaucous Gulls are rarely seen in the Region. The only Black-legged Kittiwake report involved 2 on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (*fide* PM).

Georgia had its 5th winter record of **Gull-billed Tern** 15 Dec (DCo) until at least 24 Jan (EH, BZ) at the Altamaha W.M.A. Dovekie sightings included a weak individual found on a road (later released back into the water) near Masonboro Inlet, NC 23 Dec (JPa), 3 off Hatteras, NC on the 14 Feb pelagic trip (BP et al.), and 4 moving with Razorbills at C. Hatt. 15 Feb (RD).

DOVES THROUGH MIMIDS

Georgia had the only **White-winged Dove** report, that being of one in *Bartow* 5–15 Dec (TE, BD). The **Common Ground-Dove**

found in *Carteret*, NC during the previous season was last seen 7 Jan (JF et al.), providing a most unusual report for a species that has almost completely disappeared from that state. The only **Northern Saw-whet Owl** reported was on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (JF et al.), in the same spot as one on the previous year's count. A **Common Nighthawk** was seen and heard in Wilmington, NC 29 Nov–3 Jan (DD, GM, SCo, v. o.). There is only a handful of definite winter records of this species in the Region. Also unusual was the **Whip-poor-will** heard in sw. *Randolph*, NC 2 Jan (JnL). This species is normally a rare winter resident along the immediate coast and completely absent from the Piedmont! **Hummingbirds** continued to increase as part of our wintering avifauna. The number of **Rufous Hummingbirds** in all three states was higher than ever, and **Ruby-throateds**, **Black-chinned** (6 from all three states), and **Calliopes** (8 from three states) were higher as well. A **Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker** was found at Birdsong Nature Center, *Grady*, GA 31 Jan (MBL et al.), almost assuredly the same individual that was there during Jan 2001!

Tying the **Yellow-billed Loon** for bird-of-the-season honors was the **Gray Flycatcher** found near Jordan L., *Chatham*, NC 28 Dec–22 Jan (JR et al., DC, v.o.). Video footage and photographs were obtained as the bird fed in low weedy areas of a cow pasture. The pale color, longish bill, complete eye-ringing, long tail with phoebe-like habit of tail wagging pointed to the identification as a Gray. Of interest was the presence of another **Gray Flycatcher** in the East at the same time, in Ontario. A **Say's Phoebe** near Townville, SC 21 Dec (JE et al.) was another excellent flycatcher find for the Region. The bird, although a one-day wonder, provided about the 4th for that state. Georgia had 2 **Vermilion Flycatchers** this winter, with singles at Youman's Pond, *Liberty* 17 Jan (*fide* JS) and in *Sumter* 17 Jan–22 Feb (PHa, DF, CRa). The **Ash-throated Flycatcher** found in

Carteret, NC during the previous season was last reported 13 Dec (JF). Other flycatchers of note included a **Western Kingbird** at the S.S.S. 3 Jan (SC et al.) and a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** sw. of L. Oconee, *Putnam*, GA 29 Feb (EW, *fide* GB).

Common Ravens continue to be found in some Piedmont areas of the Carolinas. In North Carolina, one was s. of Hillsborough, *Orange* 13 Dec (GT) and again near that area 20–22 Dec (DC). In South Carolina, one was observed at Glassy Mt. Heritage Preserve, *Pickens* 1 Jan (RC). Very late swallows included a **Northern Rough-winged** near Moultrie, GA 25 Dec (WC), another on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*fide* ED), a **Cave/Cliff Swallow** at the Yawkey Wildlife Center, SC 18 Dec (LG et al.), and a **Barn** at Augusta, GA 20 Dec (AW, LS). Very early were **Northern Rough-wingeds** in *Cobb*, GA 10 Feb (TE et al.) and n. *Greene*, GA 29 Feb (PS). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** numbers were way down this winter, not surprising when one considers the slow fall season for the species. Numbers of wintering **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were up, as evidenced by the excellent total of 25 at Santee N.W.R., SC 27 Dec (*fide* LG). Of interest was the belated report of a male **Mountain Bluebird** present for several days at Celo, *Yancey*, NC in Jan (*fide* SCA). This report will be under review by the state records committee, as it would be the 2nd sighting for that state; the first was from the mts. as well. Another extreme rarity was the **Swainson's Thrush** photographed on St. Catherine's I., GA 13 Dec (PH, GB). The bird, apparently present for several weeks from the fall season, provided the first fully documented Dec record for the species in the state. **Gray Catbirds** were found wintering inland more than usual, with individuals in all three states. The farthest inland were at Atlanta, GA all winter (PH) and in *Lumpkin*, GA 29 Dec (GB, JFI).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Georgia once again had single Tennessee

SA Razorbills were found in all three states this winter. In Georgia, several were in offshore waters off of Savannah 14–23 Feb (*fide* RW), and in South Carolina, one was at H.B.S.P. 15 Feb+ (CR, v. o.). In North Carolina, away from the Outer Banks, small numbers were found in several areas such as Ft. Macon and Ft. Fisher.

Along the Banks, however, there were unprecedented numbers. The pelagic trip out of Hatteras 14 Feb produced 350+ (BP et al.), but the next day at Cape Point, Buxton, a staggering count of 8875 southbound Razorbills was made in only 2.5 hours of observation (RD, GA, DC, JPI et al.). Along with some northbound birds and birds sitting close to shore, a conservative 9000+ were estimated—probably representing a substantial portion of the Atlantic population! Past winter counts from shore have topped only 1184 on 14 Feb 1994 (*N.A.S. Field Notes* 48: 198): to put this in context, prior counts in the state pertained mostly to *single individuals*. In the late winter of 1993–1994, fishermen reported up to 3000 Razorbills just offshore, but these numbers were thought exaggerated and remained unconfirmed. It seems clear that this species has the capacity to invade at least the n. portion of the Region in substantial numbers; however, it is also likely that this is a relatively recent phenomenon, perhaps driven by prey scarcity farther n., as the irruptive nature of the phenomenon suggests. This dynamic area of the Region cries out for a standardized seawatching effort, such as has been established at Avalon, New Jersey and recently at Smith I., Virginia.

Warblers, in Atlanta 11 Dec (SBw) and at Oxbow Meadows 4 Jan–9 Feb (JFI, EH, WC). Other noteworthy winter warblers included a Nashville in Apex, NC 27 Dec (SSH), a Yellow at Donnelley W.M.A., SC 29 Jan (G&JH), a Yellow at Savannah N.W.R., SC 31 Jan (ST et al.), a Yellow at L. Matt. 29 Dec (JL), a Black-throated Blue at Oxbow Meadows, GA 7 Dec–4 Jan (WC, JFI, EH), a Black-throated Blue and 2 Black-throated Greens on the Kitty Hawk, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*vide* JL), and an American Redstart at Savannah N.W.R., SC 31 Jan (ST et al.). Ovenbirds are known to winter at a few extreme coastal locations; thus very unexpected were singles inland at Raven Rock S.P., NC 30 Dec (GL) and Amicalola Falls S.P., GA 29 Dec (GB, JFI). Northern Waterthrushes were found in all three states, with the most interesting count being 2 at the S.S.S. 3 Dec (SC). One of the latter remained through the winter. There were at least 3 Wilson's Warblers found in both North Carolina and Georgia this winter, about normal for the season. Very rare and unusual during winter, Summer Tanagers were reported multiple times. A female was at a feeder near Savannah, GA during Jan (*vide* RW), and an ad. male was at a feeder in Thomasville, GA 17 Jan (EH, JFI). In North Carolina, a female was at a feeder in Winston-Salem late Dec+ (*vide* RS). This season's Western Tanagers included an ad. male in Charlotte, NC early–20 Jan (*vide* TP, v. o.) and another in Summerville, SC in Jan (*vide* TP, v. o.).

The best count of the secretive Bachman's Sparrow was 7 at Ichauway Plantation, Baker, GA 16 Feb (MBI). Reports of American Tree Sparrow are always noteworthy in the Region. This year, 5 were in the dunes at Kitty Hawk, NC 20 Dec (*vide* JL), one was at Piney Creek, Alleghany, NC 28 Jan–5 Feb (JC), and one was in Hertford, Perquimans, NC 15 Feb (*vide* JR). Clay-colored Sparrows were found wintering at several sites, with the best report involving a record number—up to 9 birds—near North R., Carteret, NC early Dec+ (JF et al.). Elsewhere, 3 at Smith's Landing, L. Seminole, GA 23 Jan (EB, MB) were good finds. Also of note was the count of 42 Vesper Sparrows in n. Greene, GA 10 Jan (PS, MB), an excellent count for this localized, uncommon sparrow. South Carolina had the only Lark Sparrows, with up to 2 at the Myrtle Beach High School 11–30 Jan (KF, v.o.). Peak grassland sparrow totals involved 2 Grasshopper Sparrows in Carteret, NC 26 Dec–17 Jan (JF et al.), 4 Henslow's Sparrows at Birdsong Nature Center, Grady, GA 20 Dec–31 Jan (MBI et al.), and 2 Le Conte's Sparrows on the Santee N.W.R. C.B.C. 27 Dec (*vide* LG). Lincoln's Sparrow reports were about average, with the most interesting being 2 on the

SA This winter saw a major invasion of **Common Redpolls** into North Carolina, surely the greatest on record. The first one was inland at a feeder at Bakers Mt., *Catawba* 5 Dec (JSu), followed by 1–2 at Frisco 10–13 Dec (BP, v.o.). Many veteran observers in the state had the opportunity to see the species for the first time in Frisco.

What happened in late Dec, however, was totally without precedent in the Region and the Southeast. During the early morning of 28 Dec, a major fallout of Common Redpolls occurred along the Outer Banks. Flocks were seen coming in off the ocean during most of the morning, and small numbers were found at most areas checked. During the Bodie–Pea I. C.B.C. that day, all parties reported the species. The total for the count was a whopping 167 (*vide* PS)—three times the previous maximum count for North Carolina! And following that day, redpolls were found all along the Banks, with small groups being noted at Mackay Island N.W.R., Manteo, Frisco, and Ocracoke. The Ocracoke birds remained until at least mid-Feb (J. Hanrahan). Other sightings included one at Roanoke I. 5 Jan (JL) and one at a feeder in Greenville, NC 20–28 Feb (*vide* JW). Elsewhere, one was a very good find at a feeder in Tucker, GA 29 Jan–4 Feb (JJ), a very rare report for that state and the southernmost report in the fall flight in e. North America.

Rocky Mount, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (RD), one on the Southern L. Norman, NC C.B.C. 21 Dec (*vide* TP), and one at the Newman Wetlands Center, Clayton, GA 16 Feb (CL). Lapland Longspurs were scattered across the Region this winter, with mostly 1–2 birds being found. The one major exception was the flock at Hoop. that wintered in that area: the highest count for North Carolina, ever, was provided by the 100 there 6 Dec (HL, JPi, WCo), with at least 75 there as late as 27 Jan (WF). The only Snow Bunting sightings were of 14 at Bulls I., SC 4 Jan (DH, BMo), one at H.B.S.P. 8 Dec (*vide* DS), and one near Oregon Inlet, NC 6 Dec (JW et al.). Rare winter Rose-breasted Grosbeaks included 4 different individuals in Georgia in early Dec (*vide* JFI) and a female at a feeder in Brevard, NC in late Dec (*vide* NS). Much rarer in winter was the trio of Blue Grosbeaks in North Carolina, with individuals on the Durham C.B.C. 14 Dec (NB, DK), at Carolina Beach S.P. 22 Jan (BS), and at a feeder in Clayton 28 Jan (DW). Rare in winter, several Indigo Buntings were good finds: a male was in Lawrenceville, GA 8 Dec (KT), while 2 were at a feeder in Winston-Salem, NC all season (RH, RSn, v.o.). Painted Buntings are known to winter in small numbers along the immediate coast; thus of interest inland were one on the Durham, NC C.B.C. 14 Dec (JPi, JSu) and up to 2 at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, GA 20 Dec–21 Feb (AW et al.).

North Carolina had all the Yellow-headed Blackbirds this winter, with singles s. of Goldsboro during Dec (ED, GH), at L. Matt. 29 Dec (JL), and at Twin Lakes, Sunset Beach during Dec (*vide* MM). Brewer's Blackbirds were found in all three states, the best counts being of 30 in Carteret, NC 12 Dec (JL et al.), 200 in Murray, GA 16 Jan (*vide* TM), and 200 at Oxbow Meadows, GA 18 Jan (WC). The only Red Crossbill report of note was of 3 present in the Asheville, NC area 30 Dec–late Feb (ST). Only a handful of Evening Grosbeak reports were submitted, with 6 at a feeder on Skidaway I., GA 2 Dec (*vide* RW), one at L. Acworth, Cobb, GA 21

Jan (SP), and one at a feeder in Simpsonville, SC 19 Feb (PW) most noteworthy.

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The season began with near-average temperatures until mid-December brought several nights of freezing temperatures to the northern portion of the Region. Thereafter, freezing temperatures did not extend as far south as Orlando. Overall, the season was rather mild and rainfall was below normal. Early in the season, American Goldfinches were reported as absent in many parts of the Region, but near-normal numbers were present through the northern and central portions by the end of the season. Cedar Waxwings were very scarce throughout until the latter half of February. There were unconfirmed reports of Gray Heron in Orange County and Broad-billed Hummingbird in Alachua County, both of them potentially new species for Florida.

Abbreviations/definitions: C.A. (Conservation Area); R.A. (Restoration Area); report (any observation); record (only those reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence).

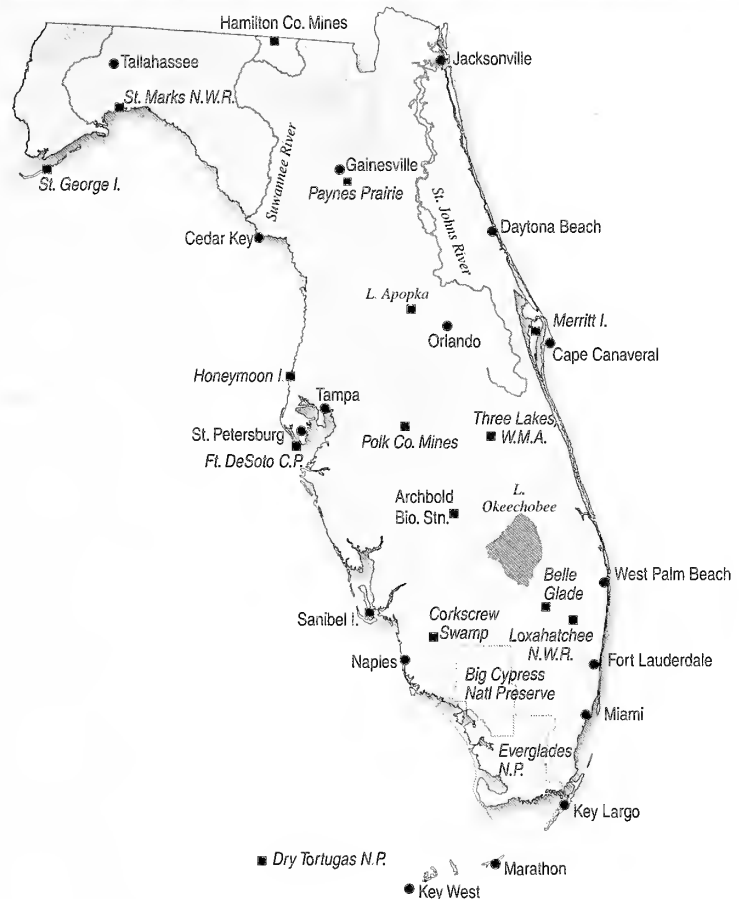
LOONS THROUGH CARACARA

One Pacific Loon was identified at Alligator Pt., Franklin, in company of 5 Red-throated Loons 24 Jan (JM, JDo). At L. Santa Fe near Gainesville, Bolte reported high inland counts of 50 Common Loons and 105 Horned Grebes 18 Dec. Eared Grebes were at Lakeland, Polk 20 Dec (PF), Quarantine I., Duval 28 Dec (BRi), and Polk phosphate mines 8 Jan–26 Feb (PF et al.).

Rare in winter, 2 Brown Boobies were off St. Lucie Inlet, Martin 3 Jan (JG, JaH). Single Magnificent Frigatebirds over Honeymoon I. S.P., Pinellas 31 Dec (WY) and Cedar Key, Levy 2 Jan (DHe et al.) were far n., while one over Wakulla 25 Feb (John Murphy) was early. A 4th for Pasco was a juv. Great White Heron 42 km inland 22 Dec (EH et al., vt. BP), while another was documented at Crystal River, Citrus 27 Dec (Ken Spilios et al., ph.). Pink ibis in Pasco 22 Dec (RoS) and Duval 1 Feb+ (Charlene Green et al.) were apparently hybrid White Ibis x Scarlet Ibis. A species becoming annual in the Region, a White-faced Ibis was at Lake City, Columbia 17–21 Jan (JHi, DR et al.). Two Roseate Spoonbills at Brooksville, Hernando 19–25 Jan (Kristen Wood et al.) and one at Crystal River 17 Feb (Betty Smyth) were far north.

Nine Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Zephyrhills 22 Dec (KT et al.) provided the 2nd report for Pasco. At Emerald Marsh C.A., Lake, 18 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks 5 Dec (JP) and 93 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks 17 Jan (PMA) were high counts that far north. Four other Fulvous were seen 17 Dec at Newnans L., Alachua (AKr). The only Greater White-fronted Goose reported was one on L. Davis, downtown Orlando,

Florida



Orange the last week in Feb (Andy Boyles, ph. DoF et al.). The bill was bright orange, suggesting the Greenland race *flavirostris*, which is not definitively recorded in Florida. Singles or small groups of Snow Geese were reported from Alachua, Brevard, Franklin, Leon, Orange Pasco, Pinellas, Seminole, and Wakulla (v. o.). In Orange, a group of 10 Chen geese at L. Apopka R. A., Orange 28 Dec included 2 smaller blue morphs believed to have been hybrid Snow Goose x Ross's Goose (DL et al., ph.). Leon hosted 3 Ross's Geese 17–29 Jan (Michael Hill et al.), and one was found in the St. Johns R., Seminole 28 Dec (DSi). Very rare, 3 Brant were discovered at Pelican Island N.W.R., Indian River 3 Jan–16 Feb (John Taylor et al.). Two American Black Ducks were identified at Lake Apopka 11 Feb (HR). A female Mallard in the surf at Jetty Park, Brevard 16 Feb was unusual at that location (JP). A Cinnamon Teal at Myakka River S.P., Sarasota 15 Dec (Ken Alvarez, Belinda Perry) was the only Regional report. Three Surf Scoters were at Indian River Lagoon, Brevard 20 Dec (DSi), with another at Ft. Island Gulf Beach, Citrus 22 Feb

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(MGa). Small numbers of Black Scoters were distributed along both coasts as far s. as Lee (v. o.) and Martin (JaH). For the 3rd year, a Common Goldeneye visited a pond at Punta Gorda, Lee 27 Nov–4 Dec (JBo, MGa). Casual in the Region, a male Common Merganser was found at the mouth of the St. Johns R., Duval 27 Dec (Nancy Penny et al.). Some 28 Buffleheads visited L. Santa Fe 18 Dec (JaB et al.); other high inland counts were of 18 Red-breasted Mergansers at Gainesville 2 Dec (Mary Landsman) and 12,000 Ruddy Ducks on L. Apopka 4 Feb (HR).

A Swallow-tailed Kite at Myakka River S.P. 15 Dec (Steve Harris et al.) was very late; the earliest "spring" migrant was at Faka Union

Canal, *Collier* 6 Feb (DSu). Found on Virginia Key, *Miami-Dade* 20 Dec was a Great Black-Hawk of unknown provenance (RD); black-hawk species have been found in the area since the early 1970s. Reported in the cen. peninsula annually but seldom verified, 2 Broad-winged Hawks wintered at Ft. De Soto (v. o., LA, ph.). A Short-tailed Hawk at New Port Richey, *Pasco* 8 Jan (KT) was likely an early arrival. Single juv. Golden Eagles were over Lake Wales Ridge S.F., *Polk* 12 Dec (vt. BP) and about 4 km e. of Pa-hay-okee, Everglades N.P., *Miami-Dade* 23 Dec (Bob Row et al.). A Crested Caracara pair observed near Mims, *Brevard* 21 Dec represented a slight northward range extension on the e. coast; another caracara at Sanford, *Seminole* 5 Jan was at the northernmost limit of its breeding range (LoM).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Black Rails continue to winter in coastal *Hernando* (BP). While not yet officially established, Purple Swamphens are spreading westward from their Pembroke Pines stronghold: 4 were reported at Stormwater Treatment Area 5, *Hendry* 7 Dec+ (Steve Siegel) and 3 at Moonshine Bay, L. Okeechobee, *Glades* 11 Feb (Paul Gray, Chris Farrell). A Purple Gallinule remained at St. Marks N.W.R. 22 Dec-5 Feb (John Erickson et al.), where irregular in winter. The first report of northbound Sandhill Cranes, presumably of race *tabida*, was of three flocks totaling 56 cranes over Lake Wales Ridge S.F. 5 Feb (BP). On 8 Dec, 16 Whooping Cranes in single file followed an ultralight aircraft to complete their journey from Wisconsin to Chassahowitzka N.W.R., *Citrus* (<http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/back/2003fall/12-8-03.htm>). This was the 2nd southbound migration for this flock of migratory trainees, a part of a project to create another migratory population.

Sixty-five Wilson's Plovers at Weeki-wachee Preserve, *Hernando* 14 Feb were early migrants (A&BH). Surprising was a high count of 34 Piping Plovers (2 color-banded in the Canadian Maritimes) far s. on Crandon Beach, *Miami-Dade* (RD). An American Oystercatcher at Miami 20-23 Dec was one of few reports that far s. on the e. coast (BM et al.). Single Solitary Sandpipers were reported in *Alachua* (AKE), *Broward* (Paddy Cunningham), *Collier* (DSu), *Orange* (HR), and *Osceola* (TM), while 2 each were seen in *Polk* (Byron Bratlie et al., SR et al.) and *Sarasota* (Barbara Brigham et al., JP et al.). From one to 5 Long-billed Curlews were found in *Brevard* (v. o.), *Collier* (Ted Below), *Lee* (fide CE), and *Pinellas* (v. o.). Three wintered at Cedar Key (DHe et al.), while 3 others were at Honeymoon I. 11 Feb (A&BH). Purple Sandpipers were at their usual haunts, with up to 5 at Ft. Clinch S.P., *Nassau* (J. Rink,

fide BAh), one at Smyrna Dunes S.P., *Volusia* (Stefan Schlick), and up to 2 at Port Canaveral (v. o.). A lone Purple foraging on coquina rocks at Biscayne N.P. 8-12 Dec (LaM et al., ph.) was one of only a few *Miami-Dade* reports.

Now a four-year veteran, Florida's first Heermann's Gull, which wanders during winter, appeared at Ft. De Soto 31 Jan+ (ph. LA, IH). A first-basic Iceland Gull was seen at Port Canaveral 25 Jan-3 Feb (v. o., ph. LA). An ad. Glaucous Gull visited the same beach 26 Jan-2 Feb (v. o., ph. LA), as did one in first basic plumage. This latter Glaucous was taken to a local rehab hospital 31 Jan, where it recovered and was released 20 Feb. Small numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls wintered along the Gulf coast, with reports from *Pinellas* (v. o.), *Collier* (MGo et al.), and *Pasco* (MGa), the latter a county first. Up to 12 Great Black-backed Gulls and up to 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls wintered on Crandon Beach (RD). A first inland report for the Region, a Sabine's Gull was a one-day wonder on L. Emerald, Ft. Lauderdale 20 Feb (Susan Epps). Wintering Gull-billed Terns were found n. along the coasts at Merritt I. (RP, DaF) and *Hernando* (6; BP et al.), as well as inland to *Polk* mines (PF et al.).

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

White-winged Doves continue to expand along the coasts (v. o.). Short-eared Owls were scarce, with one at its usual haunt near Panacea, St. Marks N.W.R. (v. o.), and 2 at Lake Apopka (HR). Up to 8 Lesser Nighthawks wintered at Eco Pond, Everglades N.P., *Monroe* (v. o.), as did one at Loxahatchee N.W.R., *Palm Beach* (v. o.), both regular wintering sites. The first Chuckwill's-widow was reported singing at Golden Gate Estates, *Collier* 24 Feb (TD). Ace hummingbird-bander Fred Basset again visited the n. Region this winter and banded a total of 40 hummingbirds: 26 Rufous (18 at Tallahassee and 8 in *Alachua*); 6 Ruby-throateds (3 at Tallahassee, 2 at Lakeland, and one at Valrico, *Hillsborough*); 5 Black-chinneds (3 at Tallahassee and 2 at Gainesville); 2 Calliopes (Gainesville 28 Dec and Tallahassee 7 Feb); and one Allen's (Tallahassee 7 Feb). Another Calliope frequented a feeder at Bald Point, *Franklin* 9-12 Dec (JDo, ph.). At least 3 Rufous and one Ruby-throated spent much of the season at Valrico (SB). An unidentified *Selasphorus* was at Cedar Key 7 Jan-25 Feb (DHe).

Least Flycatchers were reported in *Alachua* (JHi et al.), *Highlands* (LA et al., ph.), *Miami-Dade* (up to 3; RD), and *Orange* (up to 20; HR et al.). A male Vermilion Flycatcher wintered near the entrance to Everglades N.P., *Miami-Dade* (v. o.). Other Vermilions were at Gainesville (3) 14 Dec-3

Jan (GMc, RR et al.), Piney Z L., *Leon* 29 Feb (GMe et al.), Lake City, *Columbia* 18 Jan-15 Feb (DR, JHi et al.), and Anclote River Ranch, *Pasco* 15 Jan-21 Feb (Manny Lopez et al.). One Ash-throated Flycatcher was found at Guana River S.P., *St. Johns* 4 Dec (AKE). Several Ash-throateds wintered at L.A.R.A. (v. o.), where regular, but a loose flock of 10 Ash-throateds and one Brown-crested Flycatcher 2 Feb (HR) was unprecedented in the Region and probably in the United States in winter. A Brown-crested was at Matheson Hammock, *Miami-Dade* 27 Dec (Dick Cunningham et al.), with another on Key Largo, *Monroe* 11 Jan (BM). Remaining at L. Apopka from the fall, the Tropical Kingbird wintered, whereas the Gray Kingbird was last seen 28 Jan (HR). Other late Grays were singles at Islamorada, *Monroe* 6-7 Dec (BM, ph.) and Black Point Marina, *Miami-Dade* 27 Dec (BM, DL, ph.). The only Cassin's Kingbirds were at Lake Apopka R.A. where up to 2 were found throughout the season (BHA, LA, v. o.). Up to 35 Western Kingbirds roosted at Lake Apopka R.A. (BHA, v. o.), where annual. Two Westerns at Gainesville 14 Dec (RR, Lloyd Davis), 2 at Alligator Pt. 30 Dec (SM), and one at Merritt I. 20 Feb (DaF) were likely migrants. One Scissor-tailed Flycatcher again wintered n. to Seven Springs, *Pasco* (KT), with up to 7 others at Lake Apopka R.A. (BHA, v. o.), where regular. Other Scissor-taileds were at Lake City 21 Jan (JHi) and Umatilla, *Lake* 23 Feb+ (JP), and Key West held a flock of up to 17 through the season (v. o.).

The Bell's Vireo found in Nov at Frog Pond W.M.A., *Miami-Dade* remained until 5 Jan (RD). Up to 2 Yellow-throated Vireos wintered at w. Kendall, *Miami-Dade* through 2 Feb (JHB), with one at Collier-Seminole S.P., *Collier* 24 Jan (TD et al.); another at Street Nature Center, *Polk* 26 Feb (PF) might have been a migrant. The earliest Purple Martin was one observed at Lake Wales, *Polk* 8 Jan (B&LC). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Tampa 3 Feb (DW, LS) was early. An early Barn Swallow was at Lake Apopka R.A. 20-22 Feb (Becky Payne et al.). Late, or possibly wintering, was a Bank Swallow at St. Petersburg 20 Dec (RoS). Rarely reported in the Region in winter, one Cliff Swallow was seen at Frog Pond 5 Jan (RD), while 2 Cliffs photographed at Ft. De Soto 26 Feb (LA) furnished the Region's first verified winter record. At Homestead, *Miami-Dade*, 120 Cave Swallows of the resident Antillean race *fulva* were estimated 27 Dec (BB et al.), while one at Frog Pond 11 Jan was believed to be *pelodoma* (JHB, RD). Brown Creepers made it s. to Gainesville, where up to 2 were seen at San Felasco Hammock 28 Dec-8 Feb and another elsewhere 4 Jan (DSt et al.). A Golden-

crowned Kinglet at Sanford 14 Dec (LoM) provided the only Regional report. A Hermit Thrush was s. to Opa Locka, *Miami-Dade* 20 Dec (BRa), as were 60 American Pipits at Frog Pond 5–14 Jan (RD).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Only occasional in winter, single Blue-winged Warblers were found at Hollywood, *Broward* 10 Dec–25 Jan (Russell MacGregor, WG et al., vt.) and Everglades N.P., with sightings at West L. 4 Jan–3 Feb (RD, DE) and Bear L. 3 Feb (DE). Single Nashville Warblers were reported at Cape Florida S.P., *Miami-Dade* 21 Dec–14 Feb (RD), Lake Apopka 15 Dec–14 Jan (HR), and New Port Richey, *Pasco* for the 2nd year (KT). About 10 Northern Parulas at Cape Florida 1 Feb (RD) were early. Lone Yellow Warblers were seen in *Miami-Dade* 14 Jan (RD) and *Palm Beach* 24 Jan (JHB, RD et al.). A Magnolia Warbler was n. to Myakka River S.P. 15 Dec (John Ginaven et al.). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen at Jacksonville 2 Jan+ (Jamie Ross). Black-throated Green Warblers were found n. to *Orange* (Alex Vinokur) and *Pasco* (DG, BP et al.). Lone American Redstarts were n. to Gainesville 14 Dec (Adam Kent) and Henry Park, *Leon* 21 Dec+, with 2 there 24 Feb (David Chaffin, Michael Evans et al.). Five Northern Waterthrushes wintered at Lake Apopka R.A. 4 Feb (HR), while the Louisiana Waterthrush there 11 Feb was early (HR). The MacGillivray's Warbler remained at Davie, *Broward* through 5 Jan (WG). Wilson's Warblers were found in *Alachua* (Pat Burns et al.), *Miami-Dade* (RD, Jill Rosenfield et al.), *Orange* (HR), and *Putnam* (BC). Yellow-breasted Chats were reported in *Duval* (Laura Johannsen), *Miami-Dade* (RD), and *Orange* (HR). Two Summer Tanagers wintered at Tallahassee (PS, Peter Homann), with another at Gainesville 10 Jan+ (Joanna Levine, Ivan Samuels). Western Tanagers were widely found, with singles at Tallahassee 1 Jan+ (FR et al.), Jacksonville 17 Jan (Julie Cocke), Osprey, *Sarasota* 20 Dec (Alison Bishop et al.), and Oakland Park 7 Feb (WG, Mark Berney). In *Monroe*, a black-backed male Western Spindalis was at

Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological S.P. 23 Jan–6 Feb (Michael O'Brien, ph. LA, m. ob.).

A Chipping Sparrow at Plantation Key, *Monroe* 19 Dec (Ann & Rich Paul) was s. of normal wintering areas. Clay-colored Sparrows were widespread, with one in *Duval* (Roger Clark), 3 in *Miami-Dade* (RD), 4 in *Orange* (HR), and 11 in *Polk* (PTi). Lark Sparrows were also reported widely: 3 were at Homestead 11 Dec–29 Jan (JHB et al.), and singles were seen at Frog Pond 11 Dec (DW), Balm, *Hillsborough* 14 Dec (DG et al.), Lake Apopka R.A. 28 Dec (HR), Umatilla 3 Jan (Mary Remer et al.), and Rye Wilderness Park, *Manatee* 18 Feb (KAn). Single Henslow's and Le Conte's Sparrows were found at Sunnyside R. A., *Marion* 18 Dec (JP). Other Le Conte's were recorded at San Felasco Hammock 20 Dec–1 Jan (BC et al.) and Lake Apopka R.A. 28 Dec (JBo). Two Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Ten Thousand Islands N.W.R., *Collier* 30 Dec (TD) were unexpected. Lone Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows were on the Gulf Coast at St. Marks N.W.R. (JCa) and Caladesi Island S.P., *Pinellas* 27 Dec & 9 Jan (EK). Fox Sparrows were found at two *Alachua* locations: Lochloosa W.M.A. 14–15 Dec (one; MM et al.) and Paynes Prairie Preserve 22 Feb (2; AKe). A Lincoln's Sparrow at Eco Pond, Everglades N.P. 3 Jan (RoS) was rather far s. of typical range; singles were notable in *Alachua* (RR) and *Polk* (PF, SR), and 5 in *Orange* (HR). Single singing White-throated Sparrows were far s. at Cape Florida (RD) and Key Largo (Stuart Pimm). A Harris's Sparrow was located e. of Sunniland Station, *Hendry* 24 Jan–7 Feb (v. o., Arthur Wilson ph.). The only reports of White-crowned Sparrows came from *Highlands* (Rick Lavoy), *Orange* (HR, BHA et al.), and *Polk* (PTi). Dark-eyed Juncos were found at San Felasco Hammock 12–20 Dec (GK, BC), Lake Apopka R.A. 17 Dec (HR), and Tallahassee 14 Feb (2; Harry Hooper). Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were at Tallahassee 5 Dec (D Houle), Lake Placid, *Highlands* 31 Dec (JG), and Lake Apopka R.A. 27 Feb (HR). Late Blue Grosbeaks included 3 at

Emeralda Marsh 5 Dec (JP) and 3 in *Alachua* through 7 Dec (Steve Collins et al.); one at Alligator Pt. 7 Feb was early (JDo). Wintering grosbeaks were 2 at Homestead 27 Dec (BB et al.) and 16 at Lake Apopka R.A. 31 Dec (HR). Also at Lake Apopka R.A. were 6 Dickcissels 21 Dec (HR). Rare near the Gulf Coast, a Painted Bunting was in e. *Pasco* 22 Dec (DP, BP). Other Painteds were n. to Jacksonville 1 Jan+ (Anne Turner) and Tallahassee, where one wintered and was joined by a 2nd 18 Feb (Barbara Buford).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Dunedin, *Pinellas* 7 Dec (Kris Nelson), and another was at w. Boca Raton, *Palm Beach* 21 Dec (Linda McCandless). Rusty Blackbirds were not reported s. of *Wakulla* (Stephan Barlow) and *Columbia* (JHi). The only Shiny Cowbirds reported were singles at Lake Apopka R.A. 3 Dec (HR) and Cedar Key 12 Dec (JHi, GMc). Bronzed Cowbirds were reported in *Franklin* (SM), *Hillsborough* (DW & LS), *Polk* (B&LC), and *Sarasota* (JP et al.), with up to 40 at Naples, *Collier* (DSu et al.). A first-winter Orchard Oriole at Cape Florida 3 Feb (RD) was early. Very rare in winter, Purple Finches were found in *Franklin* (JDo) and *Leon* (FR). The only Pine Siskin report came from Valrico 24 Jan (SB).

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SA This season brought the 3rd and 4th records of **Red-legged Honeycreeper** to the ABA Area. Both were males, and both were seen in *Miami-Dade*. One was at Cape Florida 18–19 Jan (ph. Alex Harper) and the other at Everglades N.P. 21–26 Feb (ph. Colin Gjervold, v. o.). The nearest known population is in Cuba. While the Florida observations may represent a pattern of vagrancy, escapees cannot be ruled out. Paul Sykes and Larry Manfredi visited several animal dealers and importers in the Miami area in 2003. In addition to finding Yellow-faced Grassquits, Painted Buntings, Cuban Bullfinches, and Greater Antillean Bullfinches for sale, they were told that a Miami dealer has imported 200–300 Red-legged Honeycreepers from Surinam three to four times. Sykes and Manfredi were told by two sources that another importer sells several species of honeycreepers locally. Research by David Cutler indicates that such levels of importation for Red-legged Honeycreeper extend at least back into the late 1960s, which makes the recent discoveries of four birds in relatively remote parts of Florida surprising.

Ontario



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December was fair to mild, and the Christmas Bird Count period was marked by generally benign weather conditions. There was open water in the south, but around the fifth of January, a deep freeze set in for a month. Again and again, we would note the latest date for a half-hardy species would be 6 or 7 January. February was only slightly milder than January but was also much colder than the longtime average.

Abbreviations: P. E. Pt. (Prince Edward Point); W.R. (Wildlife Refuge).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Red-throated Loons were generally scarce, so the count of 21 on the Niagara Falls C.B.C. was quite outstanding. There were a few scattered Horned Grebe reports, but an Eared Grebe (DP) was a good find 20 Jan near the mouth of the Credit R. Increasingly in recent years, imm. Northern Gannets seem to be discovering the Niagara R. in late fall. On 8 Dec,

there were 2, one at the Whirlpool Rapids and the other downstream from the Adam Beck Generating Station. One flew past Sayers Park 13 Dec in Stoney Cr. (BCh), and on 16 Dec it or another flew past Whitby.

The only American Bittern report came from the Presqu'ile C.B.C. 21 Dec; it was a few km w. of the park. A Black Vulture was at Prinyer's Cove 17 Jan (*vide* RTS). Turkey Vultures began migrating early, with a pair on 27 Feb at Grimsby. The last of the diehard Tundra Swans were seen going s. off the tip of Point Pelee on 6 Jan. Earliest to return was the flock of 19 near Hillman Marsh 21 Feb. There were several Greater White-fronted Goose reports until the big freeze. The first 4, all juvs., were above Niagara Falls 10 Dec (HC, RP). There were 2 at Lasalle Park in Hamilton 13–25 Dec (KN) and a single at Jack Miner's 28 Dec–3 Jan (DW). A flock of 13 on 3–5 Jan (GC, MPe) was at the Smithville Sewage ponds (NS, JB), with a final single at Sarnia 8 Jan (JMi). West of the usual migration route were single Brant on the Fisherville C.B.C. 14 Dec and at Port Stanley 27 Dec (JS).

A Wood Duck at Hillman Marsh 22 Feb (DW) was very early, as was a Green-winged Teal there that day. At Algonquin Park, both the American Black Duck on the Madawaska R. 3 Jan (MP, DS) and the Mallard 3 Jan at Whitefish L. (DT) were the first ever in Jan at this frozen inland location. An oddity was the sight of 580

Mallards flying s. off Point Pelee 3 Jan (AW). An interesting hybrid Gadwall x Mallard (or "Brewer's Duck") was found by AJ at Humber Bay West 2 Jan. A Blue-winged Teal on the St. Clair W.R. was new for that C.B.C.; another was on the Desjardins Canal in Hamilton 11–20 Jan (JC). These observations were dwarfed by the count of 30 on the Fisherville C.B.C.—a record-high count for any Canadian C.B.C. A Eurasian Wigeon discovered 18 Dec (PV) was tallied on the 21 Dec Toronto C.B.C., a new species in the 105-year history of that count. It remained on the Leslie Spit until 7 Jan.

A Tufted Duck (KR) on the Weller Canal at St. Catharines was observed 24 Jan–29 Feb. A Common Eider was at P. E. Pt. 17 Feb (RTS). Harlequin Ducks were widespread, with singles 1 Dec (FP) at Stoney Creek and 14 Dec on the Blenheim C.B.C., the Fisherville C.B.C., and on Wolfe I. (RDW, GFV). There were 3 on the Bruce Peninsula C.B.C. 17 Dec. Twenty-three Surf Scoters were at East Beach, Point Pelee on the late date of 3 Jan (DW). A male Barrow's Goldeneye turned up at a traditional place from the early 1990s, just s. of Lakefield 15 Dec; another drake was at Wolfe I. 8–13 Dec (CM, MCr), and a female was at P. E. Pt. 20–21 Jan (JHE, BR). Others were noted on the Ottawa R.. The count of 391 Ruddy Ducks at Windermere Basin 20 Dec (RC, GS) was very high.

HAWKS THROUGH OWLS

At Point Pelee, AW counted 37 Rough-legged Hawks moving s. 19 Jan. Northern Harriers overwintered in good numbers: there were 20 on the Oshawa C.B.C. 21 Dec, and 45 were on Wolfe I. on 14 Dec. A gray-morph Gyrfalcon (JHE) at Kingston 25 Jan was s. of the normal range. Counters tallied 6 Northern Bobwhite at Walpole I., which has become the only location in Ontario for that declining species, on the Wallaceburg C.B.C. A Purple Gallinule at Ottawa 30 Nov was taken to a rehabilitation center, where it recovered. Noteworthy Sandhill Crane reports include 31 at London 2 Dec (ML) and a flock of 110 at Big Creek that diminished to none by the end of Jan.

A Killdeer on the 14 Dec Marathon C.B.C. was exceptionally far north. A Greater Yellowlegs at Featherstone Pt., Lake Erie 7–10 Dec was late (A&DT). A Least Sandpiper at Bluffer's Park in Toronto was last seen 17 Dec (m. ob.); another was on the Fisherville C.B.C. 14–18 Dec at the Taquanyah C.A., and yet another was at Sturgeon Cr. 1 Dec. (DM). Single Purple Sandpipers were at Spencer Smith Park in Burlington 7 Dec (BCh, DD) and at the mouth of Mimico Cr. 17 Dec (m. ob.). Again this year, they were scarce above the Niagara Falls. A Wilson's Snipe on the Marathon C.B.C. 14 Dec was very far north. Not quite as surprising was the discovery of 2 at Ottawa 14 Dec, one of which survived until 1 Feb (BC).

The number of Black-headed Gull reports is increasing each winter. On 8 Dec, there was one at the Whirlpool and another at Queen-

ston (m. ob.). The bird at Queenston remained at least until 8 Jan (RJ), and another was seen on the evening flyby at Niagara-on-the-Lake until 16 Jan, when there were 2. By this time, there were practically no Bonaparte's Gulls present. Another Black-headed was at Kingston 2 Jan (KH). An ad. Mew Gull was found above Niagara Falls 7 Dec (CJ) and again just n. of Adam Beck 14 Dec. The usual California Gull was at Adam Beck and near the falls 1 Dec–16 Jan (m. ob.). Unusual was the sight of an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at Amherst I. on 21 Dec (RDW). The Band-tailed Pigeon at London was a frequent target of *Accipiter* attacks but survived with help briefly from a local rehabilitation center, from where it was released; it remained in London to the end of the period. A Northern Hawk Owl was first found 8 Dec (CB) near Almonte. It disappeared for six weeks, then returned 18–29 Feb. Another was discovered at Bracebridge 4 Jan (MP). Great Gray Owls got no farther s. than Algonquin (where possibly resident), and Boreal Owls were not found in s. Ontario at all this season. A count of 36 Long-eared Owls 14 Feb in the Pelee area was an all-time record high for the Region. Northern Saw-whet Owls were somewhat scarce, with a peak report of 7 on Amherst I. 21 Dec.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

The Rufous Hummingbird remained just e. of Kingston until 7 Jan. A Red-bellied Woodpecker present throughout the winter at Atikokan was the first ever in that area. It frequently dined on dog kibbles. Another was a good find on the Thunder Bay C.B.C. Several C.B.C.s had record-high counts of the species, including Owen Sound (6), West Elgin (117), and Strathroy (49). There were reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: at Dundas 26 Dec (MCI), at Aldershot 26 Dec (JC), at Brantford 7 Jan (SM), and at Shoreacres 18–19 Jan (Arlene & Jim McCaw). Another was at a Thunder Bay feeder 27 Jan (BL), very far n., and still another at London (BDM). The usual smattering of American Three-toed Woodpeckers included C.B.C. singles at Burks Falls 18 Dec, Algonquin 3 Jan, and Dunrobin 3 Jan. There were 2 at Ottawa 12 Dec. Algonquin had four or five reports over the winter.

Certainly the bird of the winter in Ontario was the Gray Flycatcher (ph.) found on the Fisherville C.B.C. 14 Dec. The 3rd ever for Ontario, it was later witnessed by hundreds and remained until 7 Jan. An oddity at Kaministiquia was an albino Gray Jay. Blue Jays were scarce everywhere, apparently owing to a shortage of acorns and beech nuts. American Crow winter populations have shifted dramatically because of the West Nile virus. Only 76 were found on the Toronto C.B.C. (approximately 7% of the long term average). The count of 90 on the Mississauga–Oakville C.B.C. was also extremely low, as was St. Catharines' at 105 and Niagara's 144. Hamilton was 30% above the 10-year

average of 1993–2002, but locals say the city population is way down. Other areas had normal crow counts.

The Kettle Point C.B.C. turned up 21 Tufted Titmice, and Wallaceburg had 70, but their numbers there seem to fluctuate: Wallaceburg had 19 in 2002 but 69 in 2001. A House Wren remained at Wheatley Harbour until 27 Dec (DW), and another was on the West Elgin C.B.C. Solo Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were along the Pelee Woodland Nature Trail 2–9 Dec (DM, MA), at Rondeau 7 Dec (BM), and on the Fisherville C.B.C. 14 Dec. The count of 122 Eastern Bluebirds on the West Elgin C.B.C. was quite high. A Townsend's Solitaire was discovered at Inverary 7 Feb (JV) and remained until 20 Feb. There were only 3 Varied Thrushes reported: at Marathon 23 Dec (PC), at Thunder Bay until 8 Feb (*vide* NE), and ne. of Sudbury 4–31 Dec (M. & Y. Lavoie). American Pipits staged a major movement in mid-Dec. On the 14 Dec Fisherville C.B.C., over a hundred were estimated, and 247 were tallied off the tip of Pt. Pelee on their C.B.C. the next day.

Bohemian Waxwings were noted in good numbers in late winter. There were 20 at King City 22 Jan (AL), 25 at Guelph 28 Feb (LM), and 120 near Kirkwall 17 Feb (RD). By 29 Feb, there were bigger flocks, with 155 e. of Ottawa and 250 at P.E. Pt. There was a Nashville Warbler on the Peel-Halton C.B.C. Truly amazing was the female Yellow Warbler found on the St. Catharines C.B.C. 15 Dec at the base of the Port Weller peninsula. Cape May Warbler has been turning up in late fall in recent years. There was one at Hanlan's Pt. in Toronto 3 Dec (GB). Yellow-rumped Warblers were at a peak of 43 on 20 Dec on the P. E. Pt. C.B.C. There were 2 Pine Warblers at Turkey Pt. 20 Dec (DD et al.). An Ovenbird was at High Park 28 Dec–2 Jan (SL).

Northern Cardinals continue to expand their range northward. North Bay had 15 all winter; the first area record came only in 1987. A young male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen 31 Jan at Kitchener (DJ). A first-winter Black-headed Grosbeak was discovered 24 Nov–28 Dec near Almonte (BJ); on 25 Dec, it had moved to a different feeder, where the occupants discouraged visitors. A first-winter male Dickcissel visited a feeder near Woodstock 23 Dec–7 Jan (DC). An Eastern Towhee was found on the West Humber C.B.C. 15 Dec, and another was at a feeder in Marathon 2 Dec (PC, BC). There were 2 Field Sparrows at Cranberry Marsh in Whitby 3 Jan (MW), and one remained until the 12th. Three more were at Port Stanley 26 Dec (JS). A Vesper Sparrow was at the Leslie Spit 2 Jan, one was on the London C.B.C. 20 Dec, and another was at Cultus 18 Dec (RZ). Savannah Sparrows were at Turkey Pt. 12 Dec (DP), on the London C.B.C. 20 Dec, on the Long Point C.B.C. 20 Dec (2), and along the North Dike Road at Pelee 25 Jan (AW). Far rarer in winter, a single Grasshopper Sparrow on the Fisherville

C.B.C. 14 Dec was only the 6th ever on a Canadian C.B.C. Amazingly, another Grasshopper Sparrow was found recently dead (PR) in London 8 Dec. There was a Fox Sparrow in the far n. at a Current River feeder 13 Dec–6 Jan. For the first time in the Rainy River District, a Lincoln's Sparrow survived the winter. It was at Dave Elder's feeder in Atikokan. Another was in a backyard in Thunder Bay 4 Dec–11 Jan (MC). A Swamp Sparrow was discovered on the Atikokan C.B.C. 15 Dec. A Harris's Sparrow was on Manitoulin I. 18–21 Dec (CB). A tally of 9290 Snow Buntings on the Pt. Pelee C.B.C. likely includes some duplication but is an impressive figure nonetheless.

An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen in the onion field n. of Pelee 2 Jan (DW). A single Brewer's Blackbird was observed on 15 Dec at Peacock Pt., there were 3 at Turkey Pt. on the Long Point C.B.C. 20 Dec, one was at Kingsville 31 Jan, and one on the Wallaceburg C.B.C. 27 Dec. A major rarity was the female Great-tailed Grackle (ph.) seen 7–8 Feb at Turkey Pt. (GBe, KK, RR, DL). A Baltimore Oriole was found on the West Humber C.B.C. 15–19 Dec, another was a first ever for the Long Point C.B.C. 20 Dec, and yet another was on the Port Hope-Cobourg C.B.C. 20 Dec. Red Crossbills continue to be scarce in Ontario at all seasons, but there were 5 on the Algonquin C.B.C. White-winged Crossbills were more numerous, with 149 that day, but there was no sign of breeding over the winter. There were no Evening Grosbeaks in Algonquin all winter, but 125 were tallied at nearby Minden on their C.B.C. 14 Dec, and there were 48 on the Petroglyphs C.B.C. 28 Dec.

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Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley



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Harsh winter conditions came early and, except for a brief period in early January, snow cover was above average and persistent. Inland, most lakes and reservoirs remained ice-covered, thus many of the more uncommon waterbird sightings came from the area's swifter rivers. Winter raptors such as Short-eared Owls and Rough-legged Hawks were a major feature of the season—well documented in Pennsylvania by a statewide winter raptor survey (>100 routes) coordinated by Greg Grove. More than the usual number of wintering warblers and sparrows were reported, but the winter finch show was minor, for the second year in a row.

After a five-year stint as editor, this is my last Regional report for *North American Birds*, as I move on to new projects and semi-retirement. This comparatively brief foray

into editorship has given me a new perspective on, and a greatly increased admiration for, the steady, significant contributions of my friend and colleague, Dr. George Hall, who wrote these seasonal reports for more than 40 years. So, it is with a bit of reluctance but also relief that I pass editorship of this Region to the exceptionally capable hands and pens of Nick Pulcinella and Vic Fazio. It has been an enjoyable and an educational experience, and my sincere thanks go to many old and new friends for their patience, for their contributions, and for their assistance over these years. Good birding!

Abbreviations: O.N.W.R. (Ottawa N.W.R., Ottawa/Lucas, OH); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Scattered inland records of Red-throated Loons included a bird at Dayton, OH 4–6 Dec (C. Mathena), one at L. Cary, Wyoming, PA 14 Dec (BR) and 2 at Nockamixon S.P., Bucks, PA 27 Jan (BE). Four Common Loons in the mountainous Pipestem S.P. area of West Virginia 4 Jan provided an exceptional mid-winter count for that area (JPH). The Camp Dennison gravel pits, Hamilton, OH held 80 Pied-billed Grebes 12 Dec (E. Kitchen), and 40 remained there 17 Jan (B. Lacker). Pennsylvania's larger, swifter rivers

such as the Ohio, Allegheny, and Susquehanna attracted a scattering of mid-winter Red-necked Grebes, topped by 4 on the Schuylkill R. at Valley Forge 31 Jan (ph. JFr). Great Blue Herons remained in good numbers into winter, with, for example, 88 remaining at O.N.W.R. 7 Dec (EP); 2 survived a long freeze at L. Ontelaunee, Berks, PA by approaching ice fishermen who occasionally threw them small fish (RKe). A late Green Heron remained at L. Somerset, Somerset, PA 6 Dec (A. Marich), and another was seen at Raccoon Cr. Twp., Beaver, PA 1–2 Jan (E. Richards, MV). An early Black-crowned Night-Heron had returned to Hummelstown, Dauphin, PA by 20 Feb (TJ).

Vultures continued to expand their wintering range within the Region. Flocks of up to 25 Turkey Vultures were seen all season in the Ligonier Valley, Westmoreland, PA, where the species previously was all but unknown in winter (RCL, RM), and up to 27 were seen in Dec at Sewickley, Allegheny, PA (*vide* PH). About 500 Turkey Vultures roosted at Strouds Run S.P., Athens, OH this season (E. McElroy), and 32 Black Vultures at a Knox, OH roost were indicative of the gradual northward extension of wintering range (J. Larson).

Forty-eight wintering Snow Geese were listed on an O.N.W.R. census 1 Feb (EP), and 100 migrants were considered noteworthy over Vandalia, Montgomery, OH on the 18th (*vide* Dayton Rare Bird Alert); an estimated 90,000 Snows were at Middlecreek W.A., Lancaster, PA 22 Feb, where the population reached an all-time high of 150,000–170,000 by 2 Mar (Pennsylvania Game Commission survey, *vide* DH). Single Ross's Geese were found at three sites in Ohio and four localities in Pennsylvania, and 3 birds were at Middlecreek, PA 27 Feb (DH, C. Berthoud). Two Richardson's Canada Geese, flocking with larger Canadas, were a rare find locally in Wood, WV 1–12 Feb (JE, D. Esker, J. Benedetti). A flock of 35 Brant was headed s. over Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, Berks, PA 2 Dec (DB), one was on L. Caroline, Bucks, PA 15 Jan (DF), and another frequented farm ponds near Loundonville, Ashland/Holmes, OH 17 Jan–11 Feb (BG, J. Herman). A Pink-footed Goose was discovered at Coatesville Res., Chester, PA by Grier Saunders and Holly Merker 9 Jan. It was relocated the next day at nearby Chambers L. in the same county by Larry Lewis. The bird remained in the area for 10 days, frequenting one of those two water bodies. What was most likely the same individual frequented Greenfield Estates, Lancaster, PA 29 Feb+ (DH, J. Karnicky). The 36 Trumpeter Swans listed on the C.B.C. at O.N.W.R. was evidence of the success of Ohio's introduction efforts; Trumpeters are increasingly showing up in Pennsylvania, where an unmarked bird appeared at Pymatuning L., Crawford 1–3 Jan (RCL, RFL).

Twenty Wood Ducks at Winesburg,

Holmes, OH 3 Jan made a good winter count for that area (SS), as did 68 Northern Shovelers that passed the season at the Camp Dennison gravel pits, *Holmes*, OH (R. Foppe). Up to 20 Northern Pintails were unexpected in the mts. at Indian L., *Somerset*, PA 5–11 Jan (JPa), and a Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal created much birder excitement near Bellville, *Mifflin*, PA 27 Feb+ (J. Zook, m. ob.). At Nockamixon S.P., PA, American Black Ducks peaked at 200 on 21 Dec, a good count for that area (BE). The 1000+ Canvasbacks on an O.N.W.R. census 4 Jan (EP) were apparently short-term stopovers on their flight southward, while 3500 northbound Redheads put down at Metzger Marsh W.A., *Lucas*, OH 29 Feb (T. Kemp). The season's only Harlequin Duck report came from the Eastlake Power Plant, *Lake*, OH 31 Jan–2 Feb (LR, JPo). In a heavy flight, 2842 Common Mergansers and 11,040 Red-breasted Mergansers passed Lakeshore Reservation, *Lake*, OH 22 Feb (JPo).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

In a post-season count at Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, PA, volunteers listed 18 migrating Bald Eagles 16 Dec–31 Jan (DB). A mid-Jan Ohio Dept. of Wildlife winter eagle survey reported a record 352 Balds (271 ads., 81 imms.) from 57 counties—including 67 in *Sandusky* alone. Good numbers of Northern Harriers were reported from throughout the Region, topped by a gathering of 28 over Miami–Whitewater Wetlands, OH on the evening of 14 Feb (PW). The most noteworthy result in the 4th year of a 100+ route Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (GG) was the large number of Rough-legged Hawks scattered across the state—a total of 341 birds. High Ohio counts of the species included 30 near The Wilds, *Muskingum* 19 & 26 Feb (LR). Wintering Golden Eagles were widely reported in small numbers, and an early migrant was spotted moving n. along Laurel Ridge, *Somerset*, PA 20 Feb (ML). Heavy, persistent snow cover undoubtedly contributed to the smaller-than-usual number of American Kestrels observed during the Penn-

sylvanian raptor survey (268), less than half of the 2001 and 2002 counts (GG). Undoubtedly the raptor of the season was the Prairie Falcon found near The Wilds 15 Feb+ (M. Flynn, m. ob.), for Ohio's 2nd record.



This Pink-footed Goose was photographed Chambers Lake, Chester County, Pennsylvania 17 January 2004; the bird had originally been found 9 January at nearby Coatesville Reservoir in the same county. Possibly the same bird was reported at season's end in Lancaster County. Pink-footed Goose is recorded infrequently in the Northeast, with the southernmost records coming from Delaware and Pennsylvania; most North American records are recent, perhaps reflecting the increasing population in Iceland in the past two decades. *Digitized photograph by Dirk Robinson.*

Several Virginia Rails lingered in the Region through the C.B.C. period, including an amazing 7 at Quakertown Swamp, *Bucks*, PA 3 Jan (DF, CR) and one apparently wintering



Sea ducks such as this male Surf Scoter are rare but regular during the winter on ice-free inland water bodies in much of the Northeast. This photograph—taken along the Beaver River on 2 February 2004 near Big Rock Park, Beaver County, Pennsylvania—shows the prey item nicely: a crayfish. *Photograph by Scott Kinsey.*

bird at Spring Valley Wildlife Area, *Greene/Warren*, OH 8 Feb (R. Kolde). A rather late imm. Common Moorhen was still at O.N.W.R. 7 Dec (EP). At Least 16 Sandhill

Cranes wintered in ne. *Lawrence*, PA—presumably from a recently established local breeding area (PH, m. ob.); elsewhere, early migrants appeared at Murrysville, *Westmoreland*, PA 22 Feb (TK), at Waterford, *Erie*, PA 24 Feb (JSC), and Montoursville, *Lycoming*, PA 27 Feb (SP).

A Semipalmated Plover listed on an O.N.W.R. bird census 7 Dec (EP) represented a new late date for Ohio. Early migrant Wilson's Snipe included 25 at Blue Marsh L., *Berks*, PA 17 Feb (RKe) and one 19 Feb at Fairview, *Erie*, PA (JMc). Three Purple Sandpipers stopped over at Conneaut, OH 8 Dec, and one was at Headland Beach S.P. 8–12 Dec (*vide* RH); more unusual was a mid-winter bird at Eastlake, OH 25 Jan (CH, J. Kuenzli). Four late Dunlin remained at Conneaut through 29 Dec (CH).

The lone winter jaeger record was of a Pomarine Jaeger on the Elyria-Loraine, OH C.B.C. 20 Dec, where the season's only Franklin's Gull was also spotted. A lingering Laughing Gull at Akron, OH barely made this winter's report, last seen 1 Dec (G. Bennett). The Bonaparte's Gull count reached 2500 at Cleveland 13 Jan, and 20,000 Ring-billed and 10,000 Herring Gulls had gathered there Christmas Day (LR). However, the highlight among the larid flocks at Cleveland was a California Gull, in third-winter plumage, found 8 Jan (LR). In Pennsylvania, single Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull hybrids were reported from P.I.S.P. 1 Feb (BC) and at the Penn-Warner tract, *Bucks* 15 Jan (DF); and five different such hybrids were photographed along Ohio's L. Erie front, including 3 at Cleveland (JPo). Also along the L. Erie shore, up to a maximum of 3 Iceland Gulls were listed in *Ashtabula* and *Cuyahoga*, OH, while 7 reports came from P.I.S.P. or *Erie*, PA 28 Dec+ (JMc, BC). Two Great Black-backed Gulls were great finds on the Ohio R. near Pittsburgh 21 Jan+ (GMa MV), as were 2 on the Ohio in *Cabell*, West Virginia 24 Feb (W. Argabrite). An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake was seen off Lakeshore Res. 3 Dec (JPo).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

On 3 Jan, for the 3rd time in recent years in

Somerset, PA, a Barn Owl was found dead due to a farm machinery accident—this time in a silo unloader (*fide* JPa). Do such events play a significant role in the scarcity of Barn Owls in some areas? In Ohio, where the species seems to be faring better, a high count of 11 came from the Ragersville C.B.C., and a pair was nesting in *Tuscarawas* by 11 Feb (GMi). A single Snowy Owl was reported from Coshocton, OH 23 Jan (ph.

Pennsylvania raptor survey routes (GG).

A decade ago, it would have been hard to imagine a time when wintering Rufous Hummingbirds would become so numerous in the Region as not to merit individual listing. This season, however, Ohio birders reported 7 Rufous Hummingbirds, plus another 2 hummers identified as Rufous/Allen's (*fide* RH), and at least 4 Rufous were listed from across Pennsylvania. A wintering Log-

Red-breasted Nuthatches invaded the Region in moderate numbers at best, but a flock of 10 was a good find in n. *Washington*, PA 20 Feb (SC). A Varied Thrush appeared near French Creek S.P., *Berks*, PA 6–7 Dec following a heavy snowfall (RKe, C. Hurner), for a 3rd county record.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Except for the widespread, often locally common Yellow-rumped Warbler, any wintering parulid is a good find in this Region. Discoveries this season included single Orange-crowned Warblers in the Columbus, OH area 8–15 Dec (RR), in *Tuscarawas*, OH early Dec–11 Feb (BG, ES, m. ob.), and at Camp Hill, *Cumberland*, PA 14 Feb (D. & P. Williams). But was the Orange-crowned in Forest Hills, *Allegheny*, PA 7 Mar (A. Bledsoe) a wintering bird or an early migrant? Even more unusual were an imm. male Yellow Warbler present near Ragersville, OH early Nov–26 Dec (ph. ES, BG, m. ob.) and a Cape May Warbler at Silver L. Nature Center, *Bucks*, PA 21 Feb–1 Mar (M. Jeitner, B. Mercer, D. Filler). An Audubon's Warbler that appeared at a Parma Heights, *Cuyahoga* feeder 19–24 Jan (ph. S. Zadar) apparently furnished the first mid-winter record of the race for Ohio. Palm Warblers, a winter rarity anywhere in the Region, appeared on C.B.C. lists from Pipestem S.P., WV 20 Dec (JPh), from Lower Makefield Twp., *Bucks*, PA 20 Dec (C. Crinkleton, E. Ryan), and Ragersville, OH 26 Dec (BG, ES). The lone winter report of Ovenbird came from *Huntingdon*, PA 21 Dec (R. Creswell).

Eastern Towhees were reported in better than usual numbers, topped, perhaps, by a mid-winter count of 11 at Findlay Twp., *Allegheny*, PA 22 Jan (DW). A Lark Sparrow was a great find at Rumpke Park on the w. *Hamilton*, OH C.B.C. 21 Dec (ph. W. Wauligman), for perhaps just the 5th state winter record, and a Grasshopper Sparrow was exceptional at Headlands Beach S.P., OH 27 Dec (K. Metcalf). Ohio's first winter Henslow's Sparrow was reported on the Cincinnati C.B.C. 28 Dec (J. Bens, R. Atwater). A Harris's Sparrow that appeared at Upper Mount Bethel Twp., *Northampton*, PA 31 Jan+ attracted much birder attention (*fide* D. DeReamus), as did another at Sugar Grove, *Warren*, PA 12 Dec+ (S. Stolenson, ph. JMc). Good numbers of wintering Lapland Longspurs were reported across much of Pennsylvania and Ohio, and large flocks of spring migrants were funneling through w. Ohio by season's end, including 1500 in Lucas 29 Feb (T. Kemp) and 1000+ at Wyandot 7 Feb (R. Counts). The high count for Snow Bunting this season was of 700 in Holmes, OH 18–20 Jan (B. Jackson). An ad. female Indigo Bunting was described from Resthaven W.A., *Erie*, OH 1 Jan (VF). Rare in



Winter 2003–2004 was not notable for irruptions of White-winged Crossbills, and this bird at a Saylorburg, Monroe County, Pennsylvania feeder on 18 January 2004 was one of only a few reported in the Region over the season. Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.

Coshocton Times), while in Pennsylvania, singles were seen at Conneaut L., *Crawford* 1 Jan (RFL), McKean, *Erie* 17 Feb (L. McWilliams), and *Franklin* in mid-Jan+ (DH, m. ob.). Bill Whan was aware of at least 89 Long-eared Owls scattered over 14 counties in Ohio, an unusually high number, with 20 at Maumee Bay S.P. (G. Links) the largest concentration, in Pennsylvania, as many as 12 were at Nockamixon S.P. throughout the period (AM, DF, BE). Short-eared Owls, too, were unusually common and widespread, with as many as 31 at and near The Wilds, OH 23 Feb (RR) and at least 10 in n. *Washington*, PA 20 Feb (SC). Twenty-six Short-eareds were listed on the diurnal

gerhead Shrike was a rare find at Killdeer Plains W.A., OH 13–18 Dec (TS, RR). At least a dozen Northern Shrikes were seen in Ohio, including birds as far s. as *Muskingum* (D. & J. Hoffman) and *Montgomery* (TS), and in a rather heavy invasion, numerous Northern Shrikes were listed across Pennsylvania.

Among the more exceptional C.B.C. finds was that of a White-eyed Vireo at Huntsdale Fish Hatchery, *Cumberland*, PA 4 Jan (RKO, TJ, J. Renninger), for the latest state record. Good Horned Lark counts included 400 near New Castle, *Lawrence*, PA in Jan (B. Dean), while Ohio counts included 555 (in 21 flocks) in *Butler* 1 Feb (PW) and 500 at Funk Bottoms W.A., *Wayne* 28 Feb (SS).

winter, single Dickcissels were at Holmes, OH through mid-Jan (M. Weaver, GMi) and at an Athens, OH feeder 4 Feb (S. Schafer).

Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen in a massive flock of icterids in s. Lancaster, PA 21 Feb (ph. GMa). At least 8 Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from Ohio, including 2 at Columbiana 13 Feb (CH); in Pennsylvania, singles were at Pittsburgh 27 Dec (R. Byrom), at Bedminister, Bucks 7 Dec (B. Tompkins), and at Perkasié 16 Dec (H. Rufe). In Bucks, PA, a Baltimore Oriole was found at Doylestown 10 Dec (fide BE), and 2 were at Peace Valley Park, PA 11 Jan (K. Rieker, I. Baldock).

It was, generally, a slow season for n. finches. The sole report of Pine Grosbeak was of 4 from LaPorte, Sullivan, PA 29 Dec (R. Kovel). Ohio's only Red Crossbill was at Whitehouse, Lucas 3 Dec (M. Anderson), while a few sporadic sightings were made in Wyoming, PA over the season (BR), and one was near Hamburg, Berks, PA 8 Dec (K. Grim). A male White-winged Crossbill was in Richmond, OH 7-22 Dec, with a female at the same site 7 Dec-13 Jan (JH); one was at a feeder at Saylorburg, Monroe, PA 11 Jan (RW), and a few sightings were made in Wyoming, PA (BR). Common Redpolls were widespread, usually in small numbers, but in e. Pennsylvania, high counts included 160 at Hawk Mt. Sanctuary 29 Feb (DB) and 250 near the Tussey Mt. hawkwatch on the same date (B. Fowles). Pine Siskins were also widely reported, peaking at 150 at a feeder near Berlin, Somerset, PA 1 Feb (JPa). Evening Grosbeaks were essentially missing (or badly underreported), with one at Eckville, Berks, PA 1 Feb (RKe) and just 3 birds reported from Ohio (fide RH). A European Goldfinch was at a Holmes, OH feeder 12 Feb (GMi), where it apparently had been present for several weeks.

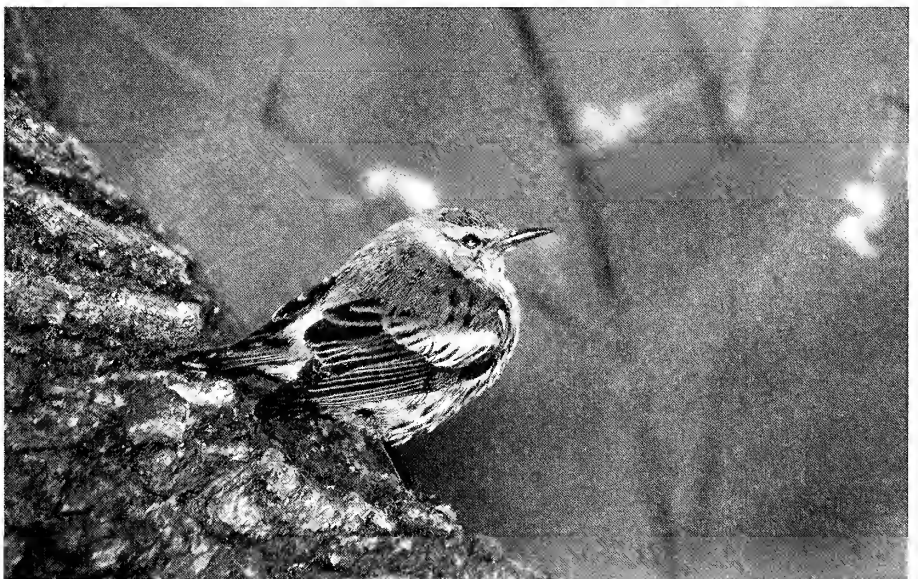
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Orange-crowned Warbler, a rare winter visitor in central Ohio, was seen on several occasions in the Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley region this season. This bird frequented a feeding station north of Sugarcreek, Tuscarawas County, Ohio from early December 2003 through 11 February 2004 (here 31 January). Photograph by Bruce Glick.



Almost unheard of in Ohio in winter, this Yellow Warbler delighted birders at a feeder near Walnut Creek, Holmes County from early November through 27 December 2003 (here 6 December). Photograph by Bruce Glick.



In a bitter winter such as that of 2003-2004, the successful overwintering of species that depend on insects and nectar is unexpected. This Cape May Warbler attended feeders at the Silver Lake Nature Center, Bucks County, Pennsylvania from 21 (here 27) February 2004 into the spring season. Photograph by Terrilyn Van Kirk.

Illinois & Indiana



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Most of the season's "real" winter temperatures occurred during the final two-thirds of January and the first third of February. Outside this interval, it was a relatively mild winter. Precipitation was near normal and storms were of moderate intensity. Mild conditions in December caused scores of birds to linger, a boon to the Christmas Bird Count totals. Regarding the Region's birds, Kelly McKay aptly summarized the winter of 2003–2004 as "one of the most diverse ever recorded." The season's bird list was indeed quite eclectic: in addition to the presence of virtually every expected species, birders found a plethora of lingering migrants, a nice mix of semi-hardy species, and a modest selection of rarities.

Among lingering migrants were Great Egret, Pectoral Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Indigo Bunting (8 of them!), and Dickcissel. The most surprising bird in this category, however, was a Say's Phoebe that may have wintered locally.

Abbreviations: Carl. L. (Carlyle L., Clinton, Fayette, & Bond, IL), C.A. (Conservation Area), I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P., on the lakefront 17 km s. of the Wisconsin border), Jax. P. (Jackson Park on the Chicago lakefront), L. Cal. (L. Calumet), L. Chau. (Lake Chataqua N.W.R., IL), L. Gibs. (Lake Gibson, sw. Indiana), Mill. B. (Miller Beach, IN, the southernmost point on L. Michigan).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Red-throated Loons were reported only on the Indiana lakefront, where a peak count of 7 was logged at Mill. B. 6 Dec (MT, BJG). Single Pacific Loons were reported at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 5 Dec (FHo, KAM, JE) and at L. Gibs. 22 Dec (ph. †JJM, LBo).

Horned Grebes were unusually plentiful in s. portions of the Region, with peak tallies of 198 at Rend L., IL 20 Dec (FB) and 105 at L. Gibs. 10 Jan (JH, SH, m. ob.). Reports of the less-common grebes improved a bit over last winter, with 3 Red-neckeds and 6 Eareds observed this season.

Sizeable American White Pelican counts included 188 in Madison, IL 11 Jan (EW) and 86 at L. Chau. 12 Dec (RGB, SBj). Good numbers of Great Blue Herons lingered in the Region; the peak count was 146 at L. Chau. 9 Jan (RGB, SBj). Remarkably, a Great Egret dallied in s. Illinois at Mermet L., where it was seen 31 Dec, 1–2 Jan, and 24 Jan (FB, KAM, CL). Following the pattern of recent years, Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered in n. reaches of the Region. This species was present all winter at L. Cal. (WJM, KW, JA) and 2 lingered at the Fort Wayne Zoo, IN until at least 20 Dec (fide EP). Peak Black Vulture counts of 60 birds were recorded in Johnson, IL 6 Dec (KAM, m. ob.) and at Patoka L., IN 23 Dec (JSC et al.). The only triple-digit Turkey Vulture report consisted of 118 in Clark, IL 28 Feb (EW).

WATERFOWL

Overall, waterfowl numbers were slightly below average. Greater White-fronted Goose numbers followed this trend, with counts well below those of recent years; maximum tallies included 1420 at L. Chau. 27 Dec (RGB, SBj) and 931 at Union County C.A., IL 30 Dec (KAM, SJD). Snow Goose numbers followed suit, with the largest counts down 90 percent from last winter. In contrast, it was a good season for Ross's Geese, with a peak count of 53 at Union County C.A., IL 30 Dec (KAM, SJD), plus some 14 other reports. The largest Trumpeter Swan tallies included 13 in Fountain, IN 31 Dec (AWB) and 9 in Massac, IL 20 Dec (FB). Excellent winter Tundra Swan reports included 85 in Winnebago, IL 17 Dec (MK) and 80 in Elkhart, IN 12 Dec (DSt).

Puddle-duck numbers were generally modest this winter, as the season's only noteworthy report consisted of an early Blue-winged Teal at Mermet L., IL 28 Feb (KAM, TAM). Bay ducks were also below normal, but peak counts of 5000 Ring-necked Ducks at Mermet L., IL 2 Jan (KAM, CL) and 2932 Greater Scaup at I.B.S.P. 1 Jan (GAW) provided encouragement. It was a typical sea-duck winter, with most members of this group appearing in average numbers. An ad. male Harlequin Duck appeared off the Hammond Marina, IN 24 Jan (ph. GAW, BJG, JJM et al.), for the only report on L. Michigan. Inland Harlequins are casual to accidental; consequently the ad. female Harlequin Duck discovered at Butterworth Park, Rock Island, IL 29 Feb (AJF, KJM, m. ob.), was most noteworthy. As expected, scattered flocks of up to 5 scoters, of all

three species, were reported across the Region. Extremely low Long-tailed Duck numbers were reported in Illinois (KJM), but this species appeared in average numbers on L. Michigan. Tops among four Common Goldeneye counts that exceeded 2000 was a tally of 3000 on the Mississippi R., *Rock Island*, IL 9 Feb (JCh). For the 2nd consecutive year, a male Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser appeared at the Hammond Marina, IN 10 Jan (ph. JJM et al.). The best, among several fine Common Merganser tallies, was a count of 2548 on the Mississippi R., in *Whiteside* and *Carroll*, IL 18 Dec (KJM, RTS, m. ob.).

OSPREY THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A very late Osprey observed in *Jasper*, IL 9 Dec appeared to have an injured foot (BS, LHR). Peak Bald Eagle counts included 1243 on the Mississippi R. in *Rock Island*, IL 10 Jan (KJM) and 55 in sw. Indiana 5 Jan (JSC). Northern Goshawks were decidedly scarce this winter, with only 2 in Illinois and one in Indiana. It was another fruitful season for vagrant Red-tailed Hawks: 2 Harlan's Hawks were in Illinois, with 2 more in Indiana, and there were 2 Krider's in Illinois. Rough-legged Hawks invaded this winter and were both abundant and widely distributed, especially in Feb. Peak Rough-legged tallies included 40 (28 light and 12 dark morphs) in *Steuben*, IN 21 Feb (JWi et al.), 33 (26 light and 7 dark) in *Sullivan*, IN 15 Feb (DRW), and 19 (15 light and 4 dark) at Goose Lake Prairie S.P., IL 1 Feb (EW). Golden Eagles were reported in typical numbers, with 5 in Indiana and 2 in Illinois. Compared to last winter's poor showing, Merlin numbers rebounded

strongly, with 9 in Illinois and 3 in Indiana.

The precarious Illinois Gray Partridge population is still holding on; a report came from the Rockford area 20 Dec (DTW), and 6 were in *Whiteside* 24 Dec (JB). The Region's Greater Prairie-Chicken counts included 21 in *Marion*, IL 27 Feb (JW, TE) and 15 in *Jasper*, IL 19 Dec (JW, m. ob.). In contrast, Wild Turkeys are flourishing, with 206 observed in *Winnebago*, IL 20 Dec (DTW), along with two additional reports that exceeded 100 birds. The winter's only rail was a Virginia at Beverly Shores, IN 20 Dec (JKC). An excellent winter tally of 115 Sandhill Cranes was logged at Chicago's Morton Arboretum 14 Dec (JC, EES). In Indiana, many Sandhills lingered well into Dec, as evidenced by the observation of southbound flocks totaling 5800 and 5635 over *Monroe*, IN 19 & 20 Dec, respectively (DRW, SBl et al.).

A number of shorebirds took advantage of the mild Dec temperatures and tarried in the Region. Tardy Least Sandpiper reports included 3 at L. Gibs. 10 Jan (GB, LBo et al.), 4 at Rend L., IL 20 Dec (FB, DMK, TAM), and 2 at L. Gibs. 22 Dec (JJM, LBo). The season's most remarkable shorebird report was of a mid-winter Pectoral Sandpiper at Mermet L., IL, where it was seen 19 & 24 Jan (FB). Dunlins also stayed late, with 40 at Rend L., IL 6 Dec (KAM m. ob.), 2 at Brookville Res., IN 8 Dec (JJM), and 8 at Mermet L., IL 31 Dec (FB). The shorebird of the season was the Purple Sandpiper: an ad. appeared on L. Michigan at Waukegon, IL 18 & 23 Dec (ph. TAM, KT), where it is very rare, and an inland bird was at L. Gibs. 10 Jan (GB, LBo, ph. JH, SH et al.), where this species is casual.

GULLS THROUGH OWLS

Little Gulls were reported only at inland sites, with single ads. at Brookville Res., *Union*, IN 6-8 Dec (WHB, LBr, SD, ph. JJM) and at Mermet L., IL 27 Feb (FB). Peak counts of the common gull species included 1300 Bonaparte's at Rend L., IL 6 Dec (KAM m. ob.), 8000 Ring-billeds at L. Springfield, IL 11 Jan (RJK), and 3200 Herrings at East Alton, IL 9 Feb (KAM). Among the season's most interesting gulls were 2 probable Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull hybrids, an ad. on the Whiting, IN lakefront 17 Jan+ (KJB, JKC) and a third-year bird at Starved Rock S.P. 31 Jan (MLR). The less-common large gulls were also well represented this winter, with high counts of 8 Thayer's at Starved Rock S.P., IL 31 Jan (DTW, TAM, m. ob.), 7 Iceland's at Starved Rock S.P. 31 Jan (DTW, TAM, MLR, m. ob.), 5 Lesser Black-backed in East Alton, IL 1 & 7 Feb (KAM, WCR), 7 Glaucous on the Whiting, IN lakefront 21 Feb (SRB, JKC, LSH et al.), and 20 Great Black-backed in the Hammond marina area, IN 24 Jan (JJM, BJG), the latter an all-time high count for the state.

The myriad Eurasian Collared-Dove reports included peak counts of 79 at Neoga, *Cumberland*, IL 21 Dec (JW) and 40 at Havana, IL 3 Jan (EJC, m. ob.). One of the White-winged Doves reported at Waltonville, IL last summer, remained through the winter. It was seen 6 & 27 Dec and 2 & 20 Jan (ph. TAM, DMK, KAM, FB, CL). On 3 Jan, 36 large nests and 81 Monk Parakeets were observed at the established Burnam, IL colony (WJM). The always hard-to-find Barn Owl was observed at Cypress Creek N.W.R., IL 6 Dec and 2 & 19 Jan (FB, KAM, DMK, TAM, CL). Long-eared Owls were



In recent winters one or two Pacific Loons have been reported almost annually in the Illinois & Indiana region. This basic-plumaged Pacific Loon (at right, with Common Loon) was at Lake Gibson in southwestern Indiana 22 December, one of two reported this season. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

widely reported, with 20 in Indiana and 14 in Illinois. The only large accumulation consisted of 10 at Summit L., IN 22 Feb (SAP). Short-eared Owls were also quite plentiful, with peak counts of 57 at the Hawthorn Mine, Sullivan, IN 6 Dec (LSt), 31 at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, IL 19 Dec (JW, m. ob.), and 24 at the Ayrshire Mine, Warrick, IN (JJM). Northern Saw-whet Owl reports were near average, with 6 birds reported in Illinois and 5 in Indiana.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Of the banded Rufous Hummingbirds reported in the fall summary, one lingered in Richland, IL through 20 Dec (PW, LHR, BS) and one in Monroe, IN was last seen 8 Jan (CMY). Additionally, Cathy Hutcherson banded winter birds at Belleville, St. Clair, IL 24 Dec–3 Jan (KAM, CL) and in Carbondale, IL 28 Dec and 1 & 3 Jan (RSR, m. ob.). An Eastern Phoebe lingered in s. Illinois through most of Jan, where it was seen at Mernmet L. 2 & 23 Jan (FB, KM, CL). Far more astonishing, however was the (re)appearance of a Say's Phoebe at Carl. L. 22 & 26 Feb (MaS, MiS, ph. DMK, FHo, KAM)—at the exact site at which one was reported last Oct, leading to speculation that it might have wintered. The bird was observed feeding on early midges (KAM). Northern Shrikes were plentiful this winter, with 14 in Illinois and 3 in Indiana. The report of 168,400 American Crows in Vermilion, IL 17 Dec (likely a high C.B.C. total) suggests that the population is rebounding from West Nile virus.

A fine late-winter Brown Creeper tally was logged 28 Feb, when 25 were found in the Milan Bottom, Rock Island, IL (KJM, AJF). Also extraordinary for the late winter was a Sedge Wren in Pulaski, IL 28 Feb (TAM, KAM). Tardy Marsh Wrens re-



Only one of two Little Gulls seen (both inland) in the Illinois & Indiana region, this adult at Brookville Reservoir in Union County, Indiana (at left, with Bonaparte's Gull) remained for three days, 6 through (here) 8 December 2003. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

mained in La Salle, IL through 28 Dec (KW, JD, KJM) and Mernmet L., IL until 31 Dec (FB). Above-normal numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered into winter; the peak tally was 12 in Massac, IL 31 Dec (KJM, CBI). An ad. female Varied Thrush in Sangamon, IL 29–30 Dec & 17 Jan (ph. TAM, KB, HDB, m. ob.) provided the season's only report. Winter Gray Catbirds were widespread, with 5 in Illinois and 4 in Indiana; the northernmost reports included singles in Moline, IL 14 Dec (TMu, SF), Jax. P. 22 Dec (PRC), and Beverly Shores, IN 11 Jan

Yellow Palm at Patoka L., IN 13 Dec; ph. JJM), and 3 Common Yellowthroats. Less expected were an imm. male Northern Parula (Indiana's first winter record) in Monroe, IN 20 Dec–30 Jan (Rjb, JH, ph. SH, DRW), a male Cape May Warbler in Montgomery, IN 5–27 Jan (AA, ph. CCM), Indiana's first winter Yellow-throated Warbler at the Ballard's suet feeder in Marion 3–19 Jan (ph. KFe, CA, TMy), and an Ovenbird in Owen, IN 3 Jan (RB, DH, TZ).

For Hoosier birders, the season's top attraction was Indiana's 2nd Green-tailed

(EMH). Later American Pipit reports included 2 in Allen, IN 20 Dec (JG, †SSc), one in Steuben, IN 21 Dec (EP, CP), and one at Fort Sheridan, IL 27 Dec (ph. †GAW), but the most impressive tally was of 202 at L. Gibs. 14 Dec (JJM, DA, BJB, JH). Cedar Waxwings appeared only in modest numbers; the peak count consisted of only 435 in Winnebago, IL 3 Jan (DTW).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

It was another remarkable year for winter warblers: nine species were reported within the Region. Among the more expected species were 3 Orange-crowns, scores of Yellow-rumpeds, 2 Pines, 4 Palms (including a

Towhee. This exceptionally cooperative bird arrived at Gary Dorman's New Albany feeder 10 Dec and was seen there regularly through 5 Feb (ph. JKC, ph. JJM, †RLH, †m. ob.). Spotted Towhees were reported in Illinois at Chicago 16 & 19 Dec (GAW, MBC), in Du Page 20 Dec & 17–24 Jan (TAM, BF, KFi, KAM, CL), and in Jersey 14 Feb (CMI, LHn). As evidenced by a count of 500 in Winnebago, IL 25 Jan (DTW), American Tree Sparrows were unusually plentiful this winter. Although one or 2 Chipping Sparrows are reported most winters, this



A Say's Phoebe was found 22 and 26 February 2004 at Carlyle Lake Wildlife Management Area, dining on hatching midges. This bird was at the exact site at which one was discovered 31 October 2003, leading to speculation that the same individual might have overwintered. Photograph by Don M. Kassebaum.

year's tally of 9 was exceptional. Unexpected winter sparrows included a Vesper in *Massac*, IL 31 Dec (KJM) and a Grasshopper in *Cook*, IL 22 Dec (ph. †GAW, JD). Harris's Sparrows were reported only at Horseshoe L., *Madison*, IL, where 3 were found 15 Feb (FHo). Peak Lapland Longspur tallies included 278 in *De Kalb*, IL 1 Feb (JC) and 200+ in *Fountain*, IN 31 Dec–10 Jan (AWB, PP). A fine peak Snow Bunting count of 500 birds was recorded in *LaGrange*, IN 13 Jan (Haw, FHD, SSc), and a good flight occurred in early Feb, as a wave of Snow Buntings pressed deeply into Indiana, providing numerous reports much farther s. than normal and a peak tally of 200 in *Monroe* 1 Feb (DRW). As occurs most years, a few Indigo Buntings lingered into winter; this year's crop included an impressive 7 in Illinois and one in *Wayne*, IN, which visited a feeder 8 Jan–19 Feb (ph. WHB). A tardy Dickcissel appeared in *O'Fallon*, IL 26 Dec (KAM).

Among the more interesting icterid reports were Feb Western Meadowlarks at three Illinois locations and a count of 30 Brewer's Blackbirds at Carl. L. 22 Feb (KAM). It was generally another lean season for the winter finches. The best showing was by Purple Finch, with numerous double-digit counts across the Region. Crossbills were reported only in Illinois, with 2 Reds in *Kane* 10 Jan (EES) and 2 White-wings in *Vermilion* 27 Dec (EJC, m. ob.). In late winter, small to modest Common Redpoll numbers were widespread across n. reaches of the Region. The maximum Illinois count consisted of a flock of 50 in *Winnebago* 8–29 Feb (DTW), and the largest Indiana tally was of 22 at *Indiana Dunes S.P.* 1 Mar (BJC). Four Redpolls pressed s. to *East Alton*, IL, where they were seen 2, 7–8, & 10 Jan (FH, KAM, ph. TAM et al.). Peak Pine Siskin counts included 120 in *Rockford*, IL 28 Dec (DTW), 91 at *Chicago's Morton Arboretum* 13 Dec (EW), and 25 in *Allen*, IN 19 Feb (RPR). Evening Grosbeaks have not been reported in the Region in six winters. The Eurasian



The season's only reported Varied Thrush in the Illinois & Indiana region was this female in Sangamon County, Illinois 29–30 December and 17 January (here 30 December). Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.

Tree Sparrow continues its steady march northward through Illinois: an impressive count of 174 was logged in *Mercer* 19 Dec (KJM, m. ob.), and 169 were in nearby *McDonough* and *Fulton* 29 Dec (LLH, m. ob.). The northernmost report came from *Cordova*, IL, where 2 were found 23 Dec (KJM).

Addendum: An ad. Little Gull was observed at *Brookville Res.*, IN 4–7 Jan 2003 (WHB, DGo et al.). This species is casual away from L. Michigan.

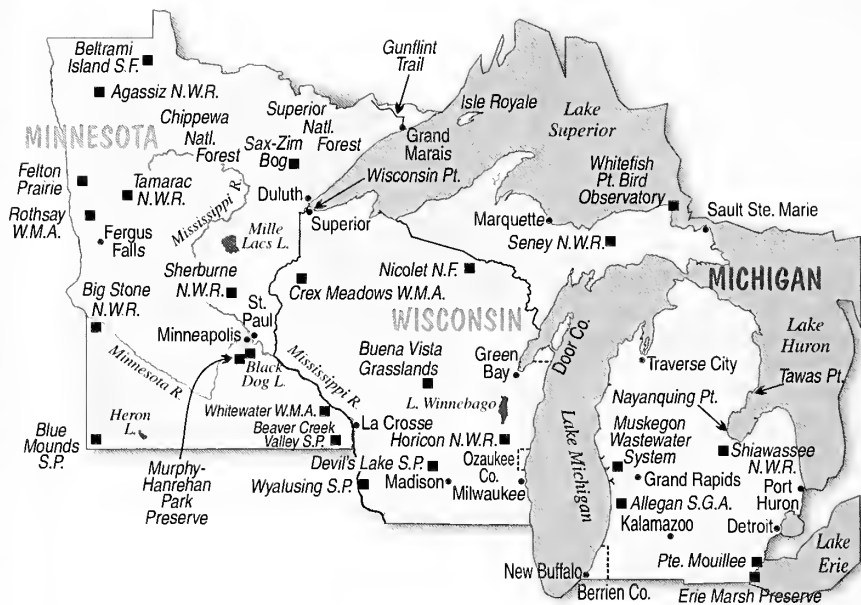
Corrigendum: The observer list for the Rufous Hummingbird on 24–28 Jul at *Springfield*, IL (*N.A.B.* 57: 592) should read (BL, ph. HDB, TAM et al.).



Part of a modest redpoll invasion, this Common Redpoll in *East Alton*, Illinois 2 through (here) 10 January 2004 was among the Region's southernmost birds. Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.

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Western Great Lakes



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Weather in the Region was mild in December but became more winter-like in January and February. The northern portions of the Region received heavy snows in January and February that remained through the end of the period. In Michigan, this snowfall reached near-record amounts in many northern locations. There was less snow in the southern portions of the Region, but the entire Region received very cold temperatures through much of January and February. The mild start to the season resulted in good numbers of lingering species in all three states, while the late cold weather kept any early migrants from returning. Minnesotans complained of a very dull season, with the only highlight being several Gyrfal-

cons. Wisconsin fared better, with several unusual records including Cinnamon Teal, Gyrfalcon, Mew Gull, California Gull, and a Spotted Towhee. Michigan had a very good season with Western Grebe, Rufous Hummingbird, Green-tailed Towhee, Spotted Towhee, and Lark Sparrow.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A Red-throated Loon 4 Jan from Manitowoc (AH, JHo) was the only report in Wisconsin, while Michigan had several reports, including 8 on 27 Dec at New Buffalo, Berrien (STe, PC, JW, BM). The Pacific Loon at Two Harbors, Lake remained until 7 Dec (PJ, JSt, JL, PS), a 3rd winter record for Minnesota. Red-necked Grebes lingered in Michigan, with reports coming from four counties. The Western Grebe in Munising Bay, Alger, MI was seen through 8 Dec (SHi), with another, or perhaps the same bird seen 20 Dec at Duluth (PS)—the 2nd latest record for Minnesota.

In Wisconsin, single American White Pelicans were present 4 Dec–10 Jan in Waukesha (AM, DG, DC, JHa, BD, MWi), 4–6 & 20 Dec in Brown (TE, DV, TB, IB), and 31 Dec–25 Feb in Winnebago (PB, RK). There are only three previous Dec records of this species in Wisconsin. Unexpected in Michigan was a Least Bittern on 21 Dec at Pointe Mouillee S.G.A., Monroe (AB, BM, STe, GB). Casual in Min-

nesota during the winter, a Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported on 6 Dec at Black Dog L., Dakota (WB). Also rare in Wisconsin in winter, Black-crowneds were found 14 Dec at Walworth (JBi) and 27 Dec and 6 Jan at Racine (DG). An early Turkey Vulture was reported 29 Feb in Minnesota at Caledonia, Houston (SM), while individuals lingered in Wisconsin through 22 Dec in Sauk and 27 Dec in Fond du Lac (BV).

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in four Wisconsin counties, the latest being on 2 Jan in Kewaunee (JJ), and spring migrants arrived in late Feb, with the highest total being 50+ in Dane 28 Feb (JP). Returning Greater White-fronteds arrived in Minnesota on 28 Feb, with 105 seen in Jackson and 24 in Nobles (PJa). In Michigan, where the species is much less common, one was present at Lake Michigan College until 6 Dec (JW, m. ob.), and 5 were found 28 Feb at L. Chapin (DVi), both locations in Berrien. Wisconsin had reports of Ross's Goose 29 Feb in Dane (AS) and Dodge (TP), while Minnesota had its 3rd earliest arrival, with 3 on 28 Feb in Jackson (PJa) and another 29 Feb at Rochester, Olmsted (JH, CB). Michigan had reports of singles on 8 Dec at Grewes L., Isabella (SH), 19 Dec at L. Chemung, Livingston (LH), 27 Dec along the Grand R., Ionia (KT), and 28 Feb at Allegan S.G.A., Allegan (JG), all pending review. The highest Trumpeter Swan numbers in the Region came from Minnesota, where 830 were found 6 Feb at Monticello, Sherburne/Wright (KB); the high total in Wisconsin was of 167 near Hudson 15 Feb (LP).

Two Cinnamon Teal of unknown provenance were reported 19 Dec–14 Jan in Crawford, MI (DF, SJ, KJ et al.). A Canvasback that overwintered at Red Wing, Goodhue (KL) was considered noteworthy in Minnesota, as was a Greater Scaup 23 Dec at Duluth, St. Louis (KB). High for Wisconsin were 900+ Red-heads reported 29 Dec in Door (RL, CL). Harlequin Ducks were reported throughout the Region, with singles in Wisconsin 7 Dec–4 Jan in Milwaukee (TW, MK, JF, DT) and 25–26 Feb in Racine (EH). In Minnesota, one overwintered in Two Harbors, Lake (m. ob.); another was reported 31 Dec–2 Jan on the French R., St. Louis. Michigan had records 11 Jan at Douglas, Allegan (SS) and 8–10 Feb at Wyandotte, Wayne (WP, AC, m. ob.). Casual in Minnesota in winter, a White-winged Scoter was reported 31 Dec on the French R. (*vide* DB). Also noteworthy were 7400 Common Goldeneyes 2 Dec on Pool 8 at the Upper Mississippi N.W.R. between Minnesota and Wisconsin (KB). Wisconsin had "numerous" reports of Barrow's Goldeneye from Milwaukee 7 Dec–3 Jan (TW, RHu, MK, TU, JF), though no clear total emerged. A high total of 48,200 Common Mergansers was recorded 5 Dec at L. Pepin, Goodhue/Wabasha, MN (KB).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Golden Eagles were reported in five counties in Wisconsin, while in Michigan, 2 were reported throughout the period at the Muskegon Wastewater System, *Muskegon* (SH, KT, SJ, m. ob.). Gyrfalcons were reported from all three states: a single 10 Jan–3 Feb in *Douglas*, WI (CF, PS, JP, JHn, RJ et al.); 2 throughout the period at Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa*, MI (SJ, m. ob.); and Minnesota had singles 20 Dec+ at Duluth, *St. Louis* (DE, m. ob.), 11 Jan at Rosemount, *Dakota* (JM), and 5 Dec at Odessa Twp., *Big Stone* (BU). The only Prairie Falcon report came from Minnesota, where one was in Yellow Bank Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* 11 Dec (BU).

Record high for Minnesota was a count of 1030+ Ring-necked Pheasants 1 Feb in *Lac Qui Parle* and *Chippewa* (BU). In Wisconsin, Gray Partridges were reported in *Brown*, *Manitowoc*, and *Door*. Wild Turkeys have shown a 96% increase on Wisconsin C.B.C.s, as reflected by the 411 seen 6 Dec in *Adams* (SK). In Wisconsin, 2 Virginia Rails were found 3 Jan in *Columbia* (ASH), while Michigan had one 1 Jan in Lambertville, *Monroe* (KO, DFR). Also in Michigan, a Sora was present to 8 Dec in Grosse Pointe, *Wayne* (fide BR). Twelve Sandhill Cranes 29 Feb in *Houston* (SM) tied the early arrival date for Minnesota. A Pectoral Sandpiper 4–19 Dec at Finn Road Park, *Bay* (DD, MW, MH) was very late in Michigan. Also in that state, up to 2 Purple Sandpipers were present 6–29 Dec at Pere Marquette Park, *Muskegon* (JG, PC, m. ob.), with one 19–24 Dec at Oscoda, *Iosco* (SJ, m. ob.). Wisconsin had a Purple Sandpiper 3–4 Jan in *Milwaukee* (DC, JHf, TW). In Michigan, Dunlin lingered into late Dec. A Wilson's Snipe 5 Feb provided a first winter record for the Wisconsin county of *Portage* (MB).

The Laughing Gull in *Monroe*, MI stayed until 26 Dec (AB, PC, BM, m. ob.). Record late in Minnesota was a Franklin's Gull on 30 Dec at Black Dog L., *Dakota* (KB). The lone Little Gull report came from Michigan, where one was present 27 Dec at the Au Sable R. mouth, *Iosco* (REr). An ad. Mew Gull present from the fall in Wisconsin lingered through 3 Jan in *Milwaukee* (p.a., DG, TW, RHu). Also in Wisconsin, a California Gull was found in *Winnebago* 2 Jan (p.a., DT) and a probable third-winter bird was seen 3 Jan in *Milwaukee* (p.a., JI). A Thayer's Gull on 2 Dec at Lock and Dam #2, *Winona* (KB) provided a first record for that Minnesota county. Michigan reported Iceland Gulls from four counties, while in Minnesota first-winters were present from 20 Jan+ in Two Harbors, *Lake* (KE, JL, m. ob.) and on 31 Dec at Black Dog L., *Dakota* (JM). Wisconsin had Iceland Gulls 20 Dec–19 Jan in *Dane* (ES, ST, NP, MMc, CM), 20 Dec & 7 Jan in *Milwaukee* (TW, AP), 28 Dec in *Kewaunee* (JT, SP), and 14 Jan in *Sauk* (AH). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported inland in Wisconsin in *Dane* from 20 Dec–4 Jan (ST, AS, CM,

AHo) and *Walworth* (SF). A Glaucous Gull 1 Jan in Cerro Gordo Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* (BU) provided a rare record for w. Minnesota, though in the rest of the state the species was seen in above-average numbers in Dec, including up to 7 in *Dakota* (JMa, KB et al.). Glaucous Gulls were also seen in good numbers in Wisconsin, including inland records in *Dane*, *Sauk*, and *Columbia*.

DOVES THROUGH KINGLETS

Eurasian Collared-Doves reported in Minnesota included 6 in *Chippewa*, 7 in *Farmington*, *Dakota*, 3 in *Caledonia*, *Houston*, and one in Thief River Falls, *Pennington*. Wisconsin had as many as 3 in *Columbia* 3 & 28 Jan and 29 Feb (MFO, SFO), 3 in *Pepin* 27 Dec & 19 Feb (CK, JPo), and 3 on 1 & 22 Feb in *Oconto* (JS, KS). Seven were reported on the Traverse City C.B.C., *Grand Traverse* in Michigan and were seen on and off in Jan (p. a.). Care should be taken to in identification of Eurasian Collared-Doves, as Ringed Turtle-Doves and their hybrids with collared-doves are possible in our Region.

Snowy Owls were found in unremarkable numbers in the Region, with only 12 found in Minnesota and reports from three counties in Michigan and seven in Wisconsin. Minnesota had the bulk of the Northern Hawk Owl reports, with singles from *Cook*, *Lake*, *Lake of the Woods*, and *Roseau*, although Wisconsin had one 4 Jan–17 Feb in *Brunett* (JWi). The only Great Gray Owl reports came from Minnesota, where about 26 were reported from their typical n. range. Michigan had a good number of Long-eared Owl reports, with individuals found in *Schoolcraft*, *St. Clair*, *Van Buren*, *Washtenaw*, and *Wayne*. Wisconsin had reports from *Marquette*, *Rock*, *Oconto*, and *Dane*. Minnesota reported Short-eared Owls in better-than-average numbers, with reports from six counties and peaks of 7 in *Polk* and 9 in *Wilkin*. The only report of Boreal Owl for the winter was a bird found dead at the Wetlands, Pine and Prairie Audubon Sanctuary, *Polk*, MN, s. of normal. Michigan had an above-average number of Northern Saw-whet Owl reports this season, with individuals in eight counties, mostly along the southernmost tier.

A Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 7–12 Dec in *Milwaukee* (JI) provided Wisconsin its latest winter date. The Rufous Hummingbird present in the fall in Michigan at St. Joseph, *Berrien* (acc. AC, JW, KM) remained until 26 Dec, while another from the fall in *Calhoun* (acc.; fide JW) remained to the same date. There were two reports of American Three-toed Woodpecker in Minnesota, with 2 on 8 Jan in Beltrami Island S.F. (MKe) and one near Big Falls, *Koochiching* (KB). A Black-backed Woodpecker in that state 15 Feb in *Isanti* (SW) was s. of normal. Wisconsin had only one Black-backed Woodpecker report, one 14 Dec in *Vilas* (JBi). S. of normal in Minnesota were Common Ravens 13 Feb at *Lac Qui Parle* L., *Lac Qui Par-*

le (BU) and 3 Jan in Kingston Twp., *Meeker* (DFI), both first county records.

Very late in Michigan was a Barn Swallow 5 Jan at Coopersville S.P., *Ottawa* (DS). Unexpected in Michigan was a Rock Wren 7–21 Dec at the Au Sable R. mouth, *Iosco* (SJ, BH, m. ob.). Carolina Wrens were well reported in the w. part of the Region, with reports from five counties each in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Casual in Minnesota in winter were Marsh Wrens through 24 Jan at Bass Ponds (SC et al.) and 6–21 Dec at Coleman L. (SC), both in *Hennepin*. Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered in Michigan, with reports from three counties.

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

Minnesota had fewer than normal Townsend's Solitaires, with individuals 1 Jan in Hantho Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* (BU), 21 Feb near Pipestone N.M., *Pipestone* (RE), and 17 Jan at Lanesboro, *Fillmore* (JH et al.). Wisconsin had an average number of reports, with individuals 24 & 28 Jan in *Sauk* (AS, TP, DT) and 2 on 16 Feb in *Portage* (JS, TO). A single bird 16 Dec–Jan at Marquette, *Marquette* (SHi, LT) was typical for Michigan. Minnesota had Varied Thrush reports from only five counties this season, while Wisconsin had reports from four. In Michigan, where the species has been increasingly rare over the past few winters, there was an individual 8 Dec in *Bridgeman*, *Berrien* (KK). A Gray Catbird 2 Dec in *Dakota* (CM) was a good find in Minnesota, where the species is casual in winter; singles 4–31 Dec in *Detroit*, *Wayne*, MI (KO) and 13 Dec in *Brown*, WI were less unusual (DV). Exceptional in Michigan was an American Pipit 10 Feb in *Berrien*, while Wisconsin reported one 5–22 Dec in *Racine* (EH, SF, DG). Notable in Wisconsin was a high of 140 Bohemian Waxwings 1 Jan in *Vilas* (JBi). Two Yellow-throated Warblers graced Michigan this winter, one 1–2 Dec in *Romeo*, *Macomb* (KO) and the other 12 Dec–20 Jan at Grand Rapids, *Kent* (SJ).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two Summer Tanagers were reported from Michigan: on the Rogers City C.B.C. (BG) and a continuing bird through 3 Dec in *Manistee* (KW). Michigan hosted a Green-tailed Towhee 13 Dec–1 Feb in *Livonia*, *Wayne* (p.a., AC, SJ, m. ob.), and a Spotted Towhee 13 Dec–25 Feb in *Hamburg* Twp., *Livingston* (p.a., AC, JL) would be only the 2nd for Michigan. A Spotted Towhee in *Wausessa*, WI lingered through period (DG). Wisconsin had a good number of Chipping Sparrow with reports coming from five counties, plus a late Vesper Sparrow 14 Dec in *Columbia* (KBU, BD) and *Savannah* Sparrows 27 Dec in *Walworth* and 20 Dec in *Dane* (ST). A Lark Sparrow 24–25 Jan & 29 Feb in *Dearborn*, *Wayne* (JC, DO, AC) provided one of few winter records in Michigan. A Lincoln's Sparrow lingered in Wisconsin through 17 Dec in *Grant*, (ASH) while another was present in

Michigan 1–29 Dec in Detroit, Wayne (KO). Also in those states, single Harris's Sparrows were seen 5 Feb in *Brown*, WI (NW) and 19–22 Jan in Watervliet Twp., *Berrien*, MI (DCh).

Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were rare lingerers in Michigan 4–5 Dec in Benton Twp., *Berrien* (CW), through late Dec in Davisburg, *Oakland* (BM), and 3 Jan–Feb in *Baraga* (BA). Also in that state was an unexpected Indigo Bunting that lingered through 20 Dec in *Houghton* (JK). Rare so late in Wisconsin were the single Baltimore Orioles 2 Dec–7 Jan in *Dane* (ST, RW; only the 3rd post-Dec record) and 13 Dec in *Brown* (TB, IB). Michigan also reported this species 22–26 Dec in Chickaming Twp., *Berrien* (TBa, JPe) and through 20 Jan in Alpena, *Alpena* (BG). Pine Grosbeaks were found in excellent numbers in n. Michigan and Wisconsin. Other winter finches were sporadic and found in lower numbers, with exception of redpolls, which were present in good numbers, particularly Hoary Redpolls in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): Tim Baerwald (TBa), Karl Bardon (Minnesota), Ida Baumann, Ty Baumann, Glenn Belyea, Chris Benson, Dave Benson, Murray Berner, John Bielefeldt (JBi), Paul Bruce, William Bruins, Kay Burcar (KBu), Adam Byrne, Steve Carlson, Diane Chandler (DCh), Allen Chartier, Daryl Christensen, Phil Chu, Julie Craves, Bob Domagalski, Dan Duso, Kim Eckert, Roger Erickson (REr), Tom Erdman, Ron Erpelding, Dave Evans, Craig Faanes, Sean Fitzgerald, Dan Floren (DFI), Mark Foote-Martin (MFO), Sue Foote-Martin (SFO), Jim Frank, Darlene Friedman (DFr), Dave Fritz, Jim Granlund, Bill Grigg, Dennis Gustafson, Lyle Hamilton, Jan Hansen (JHn), Judy Haseleu (JHa), Skye Haas, Etter Hale, Scott Hickman (SHi), John Hockema, Bob Holdreigh, Aaron Holschbach, Jim Holschbach (JHo), Allen Holzhueter (AHO), Mark Hubinger, Judith Huf (JHF), Robert Hughes (RHu), John Idzikowski, Joe Jacyna, Paul Jantscher (PJa), Scott Jennex, Per Johanssen, Karen Johnson, Robbye Johnson, Scott John-

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Iowa & Missouri

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It was unseasonably mild for the first half of the season, but around 15 January, it turned into one of those winters that only kids like—cold, lots of snow, and lots of snow days. Waterfowl exited all but the Mississippi River by early January, quickly followed by gulls. Two Mississippi River gull hotspots produced good birds throughout the season: the Davenport, Iowa area and the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area north of St. Louis. Curiously, of three Arctic raptor species, two—Rough-legged and Northern Shrike—appeared in unusually high numbers, while Snowy Owl was unreported for the first time in many years.

The snow cover of the last half of the season produced high counts of open-country species, but was boom or bust for winter finches. Invasion status could be conferred on Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin (at least in Iowa), and it was a very good year for Purple Finch. Conversely, neither crossbill was reported, nor were any of the more esoteric species such as Pine and Evening Grosbeaks. Although the last half of the season's weather was harsh, it did not prevent an early return of numerous species. For example, waterfowl, American Robins, and icterids began trickling into Iowa between 18

and 22 February, and within a few days they had reached the northern part of the state.

Overall, it was a good year for rarities. The best are boldfaced below; others include Ferruginous Hawk, Iceland Gull, Mountain Bluebird, Bohemian Waxwing, Ovenbird, and Baltimore Oriole.

Abbreviations: H.N.A. (Hitchcock Nature Area, Pottawattamie, IA); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles, MO).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Single Common Loons lingered until 4 Jan in Johnson, IA (JF); in Missouri, there was one 1 Jan at R.E.D.A. (CM, JM) and one 17 Jan at Table Rock L. (DR, m. ob.). Continuing a multi-year run, 2 Pied-billed Grebes wintered at Cedar Rapids, IA (BSc, CC, MD). Single Horned Grebes lingered until 4 Jan at West Okoboji L. in Dickinson, IA (ET, LS), 4 Jan at R.E.D.A. (JU), and 17 Jan at Table Rock L. (DR, m. ob.). Very unusual was a Western Grebe at Table Rock 17 Jan (DR, GS, LB, CB). On 21 Feb, American White Pelicans returned to R.E.D.A. (CM, JM); a single made it to Red Rock Res. (WO), and others arrived in cen. Iowa by the end of the month. Double-crested Cormorants had departed Iowa by mid-Dec, while up to 25 wintered at R.E.D.A. (JU). There were 2 crippled birds on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD); one wonders how many of these very late aquatic species may be unable to migrate. For the 6th consecutive year, Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Cedar Rapids, IA, this year a subad. and an imm. (BS, MD, JF). Turkey Vultures are lingering at more northerly Missouri locations, such as one on 23 Dec at Nodaway (DE), one in Jackson 1 Jan (JZ, m. ob.), and 4 on 3 Jan in St. Charles (CM). Very early returning birds included 4 on 16 Feb in Boone, MO (BG) and one on 24 Feb in Black Hawk, IA (RG). A decent fall count of Greater White-fronted Geese for Missouri was 800 on 9 Dec in Holt (TR); good numbers of migrants had arrived in both states by the end of the period. On 28 Feb, Snow Goose numbers were estimated at 180,000 at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO (TR) and 4000 in Union, IA (AB). Missouri's only Ross's Goose was at Clarence Cannon N.W.R. in Pike 28 Feb (JU, JM, JE), while Iowa had 6 in Dec, none in Jan, and peaks of 11 on 28 Feb in Woodbury (BH) and 5 on 29 Feb at Clear L. (PH). Missouri fared better (or worse) than normal with Mute Swan, where up to 4 wintered in Boone (KM, BG) and one was seen 1 & 28 Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM, m. ob.). The Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program seems to be coming right along, with 72 on 31 Dec at R.E.D.A. (TR) and about 10 other reports of one to 3 from Iowa and the n. half of Missouri. Tundra Swans were scarce; the only reports after the C.B.C. period were of 3 on 1

SA Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines provided birders around the Region a unique opportunity to study Merlins up close. Unprecedented, at least in Iowa, was a roost where birds arrived each evening near sunset, resting conspicuously in deciduous trees until finally retiring for the evening in nearby conifers. The group included one ad. male of the Taiga race, one female Taiga, one ad. male Prairie (Richardson's), one ad. female Prairie, and 2 first-year female Prairies (JG, RC, m. ob.). As this location has been a reliable hangout for Merlins in past winters, it is possible that this roost has been in use for some time. Interestingly, similar phenomena may be taking place in Missouri, where 4 ad. males (3 Prairie and one nominate) were observed simultaneously 29 Dec at Taberville Prairie, St. Clair (MR); 3 were also seen here in winter 1998-1999. In addition to the Des Moines and Taberville Prairie birds, there were about 17 Merlin reports in the Region.

Jan+ in Buchanan, MO (TR) and one 15 Feb+ at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM). A Whooper Swan in Marshall, IA in Feb (†MP, BPr) will probably not be accepted as a wild individual by the state records committee.

With the usual exception of very small numbers wintering on open water, dabbling ducks were squeezed out of Iowa by 1 Jan, and most were out of Missouri soon after. In Iowa, divers followed the dabblers out a few days later. The only large number reported was 12,000 Canvasbacks 29 Dec at the usual Pool 19 staging area (SD). Peak Greater Scaup counts were 17 on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD) and 25 during Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR); the only Jan report was of 4 on 3 Jan at Saylorville Res. (BE). A Harlequin Duck was among the standouts of Iowa's winter season: the first since 1976 and the 3rd overall was a female/imm. at Saylorville Res. 12-14 Jan (†AB, †AJ, m. ob.). Amazingly, another, a female, was found 29 Feb on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities but was seen "in the middle of the river," making it an Iowa bird as well (†AF, †TK; ph.). Missouri alone scored a scoter hat-trick, with all three at R.E.D.A.: 2 Surfs 4-7 Dec (CM, JM, BR, JU), 2 Blacks 7 & 9 Dec (JU) and one until 1 Jan (CM, JM), and up to 3 White-winged through the season (JU, CM, JM, BR). In Iowa, there were 6 White-winged Scoters 6 Dec at West Okoboji L. (LS,

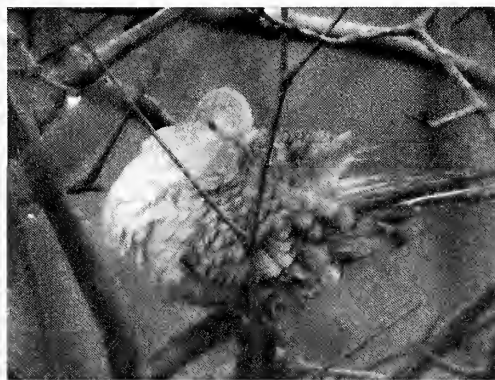
Merganser x Common Goldeneye was identified 28 Jan at R.E.D.A. (CM).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

An Osprey was in Pottawattamie, IA 3 Dec (†JT). An excellent Northern Harrier count was of 51 on 29 Dec in se. Missouri, with 27 in St. Clair (MB); otherwise, numbers were normal. Interesting was a 28 Dec report of a Northern Goshawk in Dallas, MO that captured and dined on a Bantam rooster (PS); the only one in s. Iowa was seen 28 Dec in Union (SD). Unusual in nw. Missouri was a Red-shouldered Hawk 24 Jan in Buchanan (JH); unusual in nw. Iowa was one on 3 Jan in Dickinson (LS). Single Ferruginous Hawks were seen 10 & 18 Dec at the H.N.A. hawkwatch in Pottawattamie, IA (†MOr). This species may prove to be annual at this heavily monitored site. It was an excellent season for Rough-legged Hawk. The H.N.A. hawkwatch set a daily record of 10 on 16 Dec (MO); there were 8 on 21 Feb in Appanoose, IA (TJ), and about 50 others reported in Iowa. Among about 10 Missouri reports of 13 birds, the most southerly was one on 9 Feb in Dallas (PS). Prairie Falcon reports included 2 on 18 Dec at H.N.A. (MO, CK), 2 on 29 Dec in Barton, MO (JU), and one on 8 Jan in Poweshick, IA (MP).

Gray Partridge were unreported in the s. third of Iowa; the somewhat higher number of statewide Iowa reports this season was due to snow cover. There were 16 Northern Bobwhites, 61 Wild Turkeys, and 58 Ring-necked Pheasants 14 Dec at the Maryville, MO C.B.C. Again this year, 5 Virginia Rails were at the Columbia, MO S.T.P., this year on 20 Dec. Very early was a Lesser Yellowlegs 28 Feb in Stoddard, MO (BL). Least Sandpipers again wintered near Winfield Dam in Lincoln, MO, with up to 8 on 21 Jan (CM).

Missouri had an excellent selection of gulls this year, all at R.E.D.A. Iowa's main hotspot was in the Davenport area at Lock and Dams 14 & 15, but there were some good birds from other locations. A Missouri birder found an alternate-plumaged Franklin's Gull in Wapello, IA 27 Dec (†KA); this or another bird was at R.E.D.A. 31 Dec-2 Jan (CM, JM), and a first-winter bird was at Pottawattamie, IA (BP, LP). The only Bonaparte's Gull report was of 25 on 12 Dec at R.E.D.A. (JM, CM). A Laughing Gull was reported 30 Jan at R.E.D.A. (p. a., JU). At Lock and Dam 14 & 15, Steve Freed reported Thayer's Gulls 8 Dec+, with a peak of 8 (3 ads.,



This Inca Dove found on New Year's Day (here 4 January 2004) in the St. Louis area, St. Charles County, Missouri provided a third state record; the bird remained until 22 February. Photograph by Jim Malone.

ET); the only Blacks were 2 on 7 & 11 Dec at Saylorville Res. (AB) and 1 on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD). Missouri reported no Long-tailed Ducks. Among four Iowa reports totaling 11 birds, the only ones after the C.B.C. period were 3 on 21 Feb in Lec (BS). Divers returned to Iowa between 17 and 21 Feb. A Hooded

3 juvs., one second-winter, and one third-winter) 16 Feb that probably represented most of the birds reported there by many observers. A very pale juv. there 1 Jan generated much discussion (†MCD, THK). Other Iowa reports included up to 4 birds until 4 Jan at Red Rock Res. (AB), an ad. 20 Dec at Iowa City (†MD), and a juv. 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD). At R.E.D.A., where CM observed that the increased incidence of Thayer's Gull reports may be a function of more observer scrutiny, somewhere between 6 and 10 were found 24 Jan+, split roughly between ad. and first-winter birds (CM, JM, BR). In Iowa, Iceland Gulls (all p.a.) were reported as follows: one first-winter 10–29 Feb at Lock and Dam 14 (ph., †SF), one first- or second-winter in the same area 8–12 Feb (†SF), and one on the Keokuk C.B.C. (AB). R.E.D.A. reports included one first-winter 15 Feb (†BR) and the same or another 20 & 22 Feb (JM, CM). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was found 12 Dec at Red Rock Res. (ABr); a first-winter and 2 ads. were at Lock and Dams 14 & 15 on 15 Jan+ (JF, SF, DR, TK). From mid-Jan through mid-Feb, R.E.D.A. produced about one first-winter, one third-winter, and 2 ad. Lessers (BR, CM, JM, JU). The first Glaucous Gulls included one juv. 12 Dec and one ad. 17 Dec at Red Rock Res. (AB); there were about 5 others reported this season. Missouri's first Glaucous Gulls of the season were 3 on 1 Feb+ at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM, JM, JU). Great Black-backed Gulls included one ad. 22–26 Feb at Lock and Dam 14 (†CE, †CC, m. ob.) and a first-winter and a first- or second-winter 7–24 Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR, JU).

DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase in the Region, with 19 on 28 Dec in *Union*, IA (AB) and 14 on 1 Jan in *St. Charles*, MO (JM, CM); reports from *Lee* and *Plymouth* bring to 29 the number of Iowa counties in which it has been reported. Missouri's 3rd Inca Dove was found 1 Jan in *St. Charles*, where it remained until 22 Feb (ph., †CM, †JM, RF, m. ob.). For the first time in many years, there were no Snowy Owls in the Region. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were scarce, especially in Missouri, where there were only two reports of Long-eareds, the most being 6 on 24 Jan in *Worth* (KG, PK), and six reports totaling 11 Short-eareds. The most southerly of 7 Northern Saw-whet Owls reported was in *Warren*, IA (JS, JG).

Truly bizarre was a Rufous Hummingbird 10–14 Jan in *St. Louis* (†LC, JU). The only mid-winter reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were 1–25 Jan in *Warren*, IA (AJ) and 19 Jan in *Buchanan*, MO (JH). The season's only Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker was 23 Jan–25 Feb in *Cerro Gordo*, IA (CF, RG). Impressive was the count of 9 Loggerhead Shrikes on the Maryville, MO C.B.C.; there were no Iowa reports. In Iowa, the winter's count of 40 Northern Shrikes was roughly double the average of

the past six years; about 3 made it to extreme nw. Missouri. Very early or possibly wintering was a vocalizing Fish Crow 9 Feb at R.E.D.A. (CM); Dec and Jan birds have been noted in nearby Illinois. A Common Raven 22 Feb in *Allamakee*, IA (p. a., RZ) was most unusual. Two Tree Swallows 28 Feb at R.E.D.A. were early (JE, JU, JM, CM). It was a lackluster year for Red-breasted Nuthatch, with about 15 reports from the Region, the most southerly of those being three Missouri reports from *Boone* (BG) and *St. Charles* (JU). A Carolina Wren wintered at Mason City, IA (CF, PH, RG), and a Bewick's Wren was seen 29 Dec in *Vernon*, MO (JU). There were 6 Marsh Wrens again this season at the Columbia, MO S.T.P., this year on 20 Dec (BG), and another was in *St. Charles*, MO 3 Jan (BR). Five Sedge Wrens were counted 29 Dec in *Barton*, MO (MB). The only Ruby-crowned Kinglet report following the C.B.C. period was one 28 Feb in *St. Charles*, MO (JU).

An ad. male Mountain Bluebird was discovered on 28 Feb in *Black Hawk*, IA (†FM), where the species is casual. The season's only Townsend's Solitaires were one 20 Dec–2 Jan in *O'Brien*, IA (LS), and one 15 Jan and 16 Feb in *Buena Vista*, IA (LS). In Iowa, American Robins almost completely left the state in midwinter; evidently, they found cen. Missouri to be more to their liking, where huge numbers, estimated in the millions, descended in flocks "darkening the sky for an hour and a half." An excellent cedar berry crop enticed them to stay through the season (BJ). The only Varied Thrush was one 7 Dec in Iowa City (ph. RD). The most northerly Northern Mockingbird of midwinter was near the Missouri border in *Appanoose*, IA 10 Jan (TJ). A Brown Thrasher wintered in *Mason City*, IA, and another was found 8 Feb at *Saylorville Res.* (BE). Single Bohemian Waxwings were seen 3–7 Jan in *Cerro Gordo*, IA (*PH, RGo) and on the *Sioux City*, IA C.B.C. The most northerly mid-winter Yellow-rumped Warbler report was of one 10 Jan in *O'Brien*, IA (LS). Presumably wintering were singles 21 Feb in *Buchanan*, MO (JH) and 29 Feb at *Davenport*, IA (DR). Pine Warblers arrive in Missouri much earlier than in Iowa; this year, a singing male was in *St. Louis* on 26 Feb (CM). Iowa's earliest dates are from mid-Apr. A freshly dead Ovenbird found 13 Dec in *Boone*, MO was very unusual (KP); the specimen was deposited at the University of Kansas.

TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES

There were four reports of Spotted Towhees after the C.B.C. period, the most easterly being one 10 Jan in *St. Charles* (JM). Except for the usual suspects, sparrows generally left the Region after the C.B.C. period, although C.B.C.s in Iowa produced convincing reports of one or 2 Vesper, Savannah, and Lincoln's Sparrows. The stellar sparrow of the season was Iowa's 3rd Golden-crowned Sparrow, an imm. male 24 Jan–15 Feb in *Winneschick* (†DC, ph. †TK, m. ob.). As expected, the highest counts of La-

pland Longspurs in the Region coincided with the snow cover of late Jan and Feb: peak counts were 300 on 31 Jan in *Clinton*, IA (PV) and 300 on 1 Feb in *Worth*, IA (PH); in Missouri, top counts were of 200 on 7 Feb in *St. Charles*, MO (JU) and 130 on 15 Jan in *Holt* (TR). The most southerly Snow Buntings were 5 on 6 Feb in *Atchison* in the extreme ne. corner of Missouri (DE); Iowa numbers were about normal.

Western Meadowlarks wintered in high numbers in the *St. Louis*, MO area (BR). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was found on 4 Jan in *Iowa City* (RH). Rusty Blackbirds were scarce in Iowa in midwinter but appeared in both states by the end of the season. Great-tailed Grackles are expanding their wintering range, with up to 100 in *Warren/Polk*, IA (AJ) and 60 near *St. Louis* in *Lincoln*, MO (CM, BR). A female Baltimore Oriole at a feeder 3 Jan in *St. Charles*, MO was found dead on 7 Jan (†CM). After a series of off years, Purple Finches appeared in excellent numbers: 134 on 16 Dec at *H.N.C.* (MO), 112 on 13 Jan in *Macon*, MO (TR), and up to 57 through the period in *St. Charles*, MO (JU). It was also an invasion year for Common Redpolls, with small numbers appearing in Iowa in mid-Dec and peak counts of 31 on 21 Feb in *Winneschick*, IA (DK) and 50 on 25 Feb in *O'Brien*, IA (JV). Beginning 5 Feb, Missouri had seven reports of 9 birds, mostly in the nw. corner; by far the most southerly report was one on 13 Feb in *St. Louis* (Jeanne Giebe, *vide* JU). Another invading winter finch was Pine Siskin, at least in Iowa, where there were the most reports in several years. In addition to 69 on the *Burlington*, IA C.B.C. and reports from numerous other C.B.C.s, there were 10 Iowa reports of up to 12 birds after the C.B.C. period. Missouri's most southerly Pine Siskins were from the *St. Louis* vicinity, where there were four reports of 11 birds.

Cited observers (subregional coordinators in boldface): Mike Beck, Lisa Berger, Aaron Brees, Charles Burwick, Dennis Carter, Chris Caster, Robert Cecil (Iowa), Lanny Chambers, Robert Dick, Steve Dinsmore, Mike Dooley, Joseph Eades, David Easterla, Chris Edwards, Bery Engbretsen, Carolyn Fischer, Robert Fisher, Steve Freed, Al Frohlich, Jim Fuller, Jay Gilliam, Bill Goodge, Rita Goransen, Kirby Goslee, Paul Hertz, Jack Hilsabeck, Rick Hollis, Bill Huser, Brad Jacobs (Missouri), Ann Johnson, Tom Johnson, Tom Kent, Clem Klaphake, Darwin Koenig, Peter Kondrashov, Bob Lewis, Charlene Malone, Jim Malone, Knox McCroly Jeannie Moe, Francis Moore, Wolf Oesterreich, Mark Orsag, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Kay Palmer, Beth Proescholdt, Mark Proescholdt, Dean Rising, Don Robinson, Tommie Rogers, Bill Rowe, Bill Scheible, Lee Schonewe, Patrick Sensenig, Jim Sinclair, Greg Swick, Ed Thelen, Ric Zarwell, Joshua Uffman, Paul Van Nieuwenhuysse, James Zellmer. 🌐

The winter 2003–2004 season was overall warmer than average with lower-than-average precipitation. However, a cold spell in late January and early February was one of the coldest periods in several winters. Despite the period of colder weather, snowfall was below normal, and in large part due to a good crop of natural foods (perhaps as a result of a mild, wet summer), a surprising variety of species that normally winter farther south lingered through the winter in good numbers.

As expected, the banner fall season for Rufous Hummingbirds continued, with additional reports into midwinter. In fact, for the first time ever documented—and despite the cold snap of late January and early February—two *Selasphorus* hummingbirds (an unidentified bird in Lexington and a female Rufous south of Bowling Green) successfully wintered in Kentucky. Other rarities included Yellow-billed and Pacific Loons, Black-headed, Little and Great Black-backed Gulls, Say's Phoebe, two Spotted Towhees, Harris's Sparrow, and two Vermilion Flycatchers. Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches lingered only in small numbers, but numbers of Purple Finches appeared to be the highest in several years.

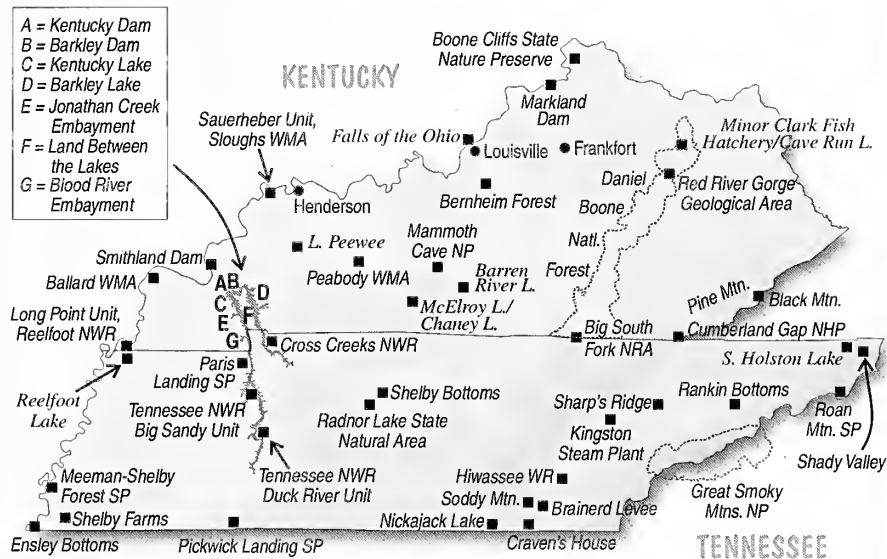
Abbreviations: Barkley Dam (Barkley Dam, Cumberland River, Lyon/Livingston, KY); Kentucky Dam (Kentucky Dam, Tennessee River, Marshall/Livingston, KY); Long Point (Long Point Unit, Reelfoot N.W.R., Fulton, KY/Obion, TN); Pace Point (Pace Point, Big Sandy Unit of Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN).

LOONS THROUGH IBIS

Rare loon species were reported in above-average numbers. Red-throated Loons were reported from several locations along Kentucky L. from Marshall, KY (BP, BY, DR) s. to Pickwick Landing S.P., TN (JRW et al.), including as many as 5 seen from Pace Point in late Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.). Away from Kentucky L., a single Red-throated Loon was reported from S. Holston L., TN 5 Dec (†RK). Up to 3 Pacific Loons were observed at Pace Point 13 Dec–29 Feb+ (ph. JRW, m. ob.), and another was reported on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 26 Feb (DR). The star of the loon parade, however, was the Region's 3rd (first to be photographed) Yellow-billed Loon at Pace Point 21–29 Feb+ (ph. JRW, m. ob.). A Red-necked Grebe, rare in the Region, was at Pace Point 13 Dec (DM, MT). Single Eared Grebes, also unusual in the Region, were at L. Peewee, Hopkins, KY 6 Dec (†BP, BY) and Center Hill L., DeKalb, TN (SJS, NL). An *Aechmophorus* grebe at Dale Hollow L., Clay, TN 13 Dec (FB, SB, †RH, DAM) was too distant for identification to species.

Quite rare for winter were single American Bitterns in Muhlenberg, KY 14 Feb

Tennessee & Kentucky



(†MS), Madison, TN 27 Dec (†MG), and at Shelby Bottoms, Nashville, TN 14 Jan (MO, T&VC). Two Great Egrets at Robco L., Memphis, TN 7 Dec (CHB, VR) and one in Hardin, TN 13 Feb (JRW) were unusual finds. Even more unusual were two winter reports of single Cattle Egrets: one on the Knoxville C.B.C. 3 Jan (CN) and one at Robco L., Memphis, TN 22 Feb (CHB, WRP, SV). A well-photographed Glossy Ibis at the Duck River Unit of Tennessee N.W.R. 9–15 Jan (ph. CF) may represent a first winter record for the Region.

WATERFOWL

Both Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese were reported in above-average numbers across the Region during Jan and early Feb, with the highest numbers coming from nw. Tennessee and sw. Kentucky as expected. A count of 21,650 Greater White-fronted Geese in the vicinity of Long Point 8 Jan (CD) represents a new high count for the Region. Likewise, the Region's highest ever Snow Goose count was an impressive 150,000 in the vicinity of Reelfoot L. in late Jan (fide KL). Ross's Geese, a mega-rarity in the Region only 15 years ago, were scattered across the Region in small numbers, with 21 reports, the highest single-site count being of 6 birds.

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There were many reports of swans this winter, mostly in Kentucky, but many of the reports could not be confirmed to species. Mute Swans presumed to have come from Great Lakes populations included one on the Memphis C.B.C. 14 Dec (fide WRP); 5 at Bernheim Forest, Bullitt, KY 28 Dec (JB, PB)–16 Feb (RDv); 2 on the Shelbyville, KY C.B.C. 3 Jan (fide HB); an imm. at Cave Run L., KY 9 Jan (†LK, FBu); 8 at Paintsville L.,

Ft. Loudoun L., *Loudoun*, TN 25 Jan (FB); a female on the Tennessee R., *Hamilton*, TN 30 Jan–28 Feb (JN, m. ob.); and one on Kentucky L., *Marshall*, KY, 8–26 Feb (BP, MS, DR). Five Black Scoters were reported: one shot by a hunter at Reelfoot L. 2 Dec (*vide* NM); a female at the T.V.A. Allen Plant in sw. *Shelby*, TN 4 Jan–22 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.); one on *Tellieo L.*, *Loudoun*, TN 11 Jan (DT); and a female on the Ohio R., *Campbell*, KY 17 Jan–28 Feb+ (FR, ph. LH). Six Surf Scoters were reported: 3 at Piekwick Landing S.P., TN 26 Dec (JRW); one at *Norris L.*, *Anderson*, TN 11 Jan (AT, HH); and 2 at *Tellieo L.*, *Loudoun*, TN 17

Jan (S&RS). There were nine reports of Long-tailed Duck, including impressive flocks of 18 on L. *Cumberland*, *Pulaski*, KY 10 Jan (ph. RD, JD) and 6 on the *Chatanooga* C.B.C. 20 Dec (BJ, JN).

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES

Two Ospreys on 3 Jan— one at *Kentucky L.*, *Calhoun*, KY (JTE, WWb) and one at *S. Holston L.*, TN (LM et al.)— were unusual winter finds. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were average. Golden Eagles were reported mostly from traditional areas in *Bullitt/Nelson* (m. ob.) and *Fulton*, KY (KL), and *Henry* (JRW) and *Meigs* (BJ, JN), TN, but

one in *Martin* in far e. *Kentucky* (CL) was relatively unusual for the *Cumberland Plateau*. Merlins continue to increase in winter in the Region, and this season was no exception, with up to 3 reported from no fewer than 19 locations throughout the Region. Likewise with wintering *Peregrine* Falcons, with single birds reported from seven locations.

Quite noteworthy for *Kentucky*, but perhaps becoming regular, were one or 2 *Virginia Rails* in *Muhlenberg* 30 Dec–3 Jan (BP et al.). As many as 6 were present throughout the period at *Standifer Gap Marsh*, *Hamilton*, TN, where this species now occurs year-round (DP). A

Sora at *Shelby Bottoms*, *Nashville*, TN 1 Jan (PC, SH, KO) and 22 Feb (BH) was an uncommon winter find. As is usually the case in a predominantly mild winter, *Sandhill Cranes* were reported throughout the season, with southbound birds lingering into early to mid-Jan and northbound birds returning by late Jan. A report of a wintering flock in *Todd*, KY, is of interest (DMo, *vide* Barbara Wilbur). In what appears to have become an annual occurrence, the *Hiwassee* C.B.C. recorded a new high count of cranes—13,951—at the *Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge*, *Meigs*, TN 1 Jan (*vide* KC).

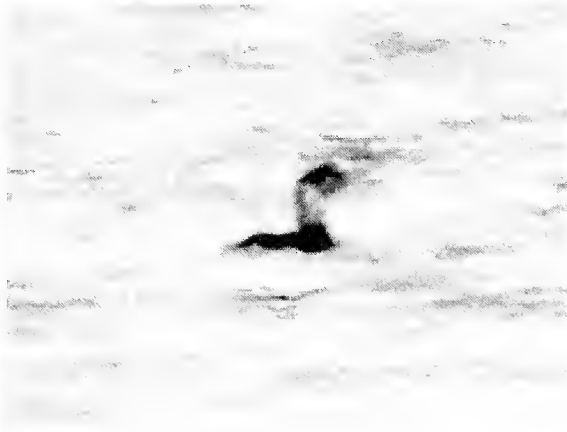
SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

Yellowlegs are rare winter visitors in the Region, so one *Greater* and 4 *Lessers* at the *EARTH* Complex, sw. *Shelby*, TN 14 Jan (JRW et al.) were a surprise, as was a single *Greater* on the *Hiwassee*, TN C.B.C. 1 Jan (BHy et al.). Also unusual was a winter *Spotted Sandpiper* along L. *Barkley*, *Lyon*, KY 13 Jan (†ME).



This Glossy Ibis photographed at the Duck River Unit of the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge 12 January 2004 represented the first winter record for the Tennessee & Kentucky region. Photograph by Clayton Ferrell.

The latest *Laughing Gull* to be reported in *Kentucky* for the fall/early winter season was a second-year bird at *Kentucky Dam* 14 Dec (HC et al.). A first-year *Little Gull* on *Kentucky L.* above the dam, *Livingston/Marshall* 14–29 Feb+ (†HC, vt. DR et al.) represented a 3rd state record for *Kentucky* and the Region's 5th. An ad. *Black-headed Gull* seen just e. of *Pace Point* 25 Jan (†JRW) was the 2nd ever reported in *Tennessee* and 3rd for the Region. One to 3 or more *Thayer's Gulls* were observed in the vicinity of *Kentucky Dam* and *Barkley Dam* 13 Jan (DR)–21 Feb (BP). An extremely pale first-year bird that was present at *Kentucky Dam* 25 Jan (ph. BP)–26 Feb (ph. DR) may have been a *Thayer's/Iceland* intergrade or darker *Iceland*. Farther s., 2 first-winter *Thayer's Gulls* were seen regularly at and near *Piekwick Dam*, *Hardin*, TN 9 Jan–21 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.), furnishing the first definitive photographs of



This Yellow-billed Loon at *Pace Point*, *Henry County*, *Tennessee* (here 22 February 2004) furnished the first photographic documentation and the third overall record for the *Tennessee & Kentucky* region. Surprisingly, a second individual was discovered shortly after this one—and possibly a third bird was photographed nearby in *Kentucky*! Photograph by Michael C. Todd.

Floyd, KY 24 Jan (SM); 2 on L. *Cumberland*, *Pulaski*, KY 2 Feb (RD); 8 in *Wayne*, KY 11–14 Feb (RD); and one in ne. *Jefferson*, KY 14 Feb (BBC). In addition, one of the resident pair along *Cypress Cr.*, n. *Muhlenberg*, KY was observed during Feb (WR). The following *Tundra Swans* were reported: an imm. on *Cave Run L.*, KY 22 Dec (CCa); 4 on *Cave Run L.*, KY in late Jan (†WM), the flock at the *Sauerheber Unit* of *Sloughs* W.M.A., *Henderson*, KY built up to a peak count of 25 during mid- to late Jan (CC, RDv, MMr); an ad. at the *Falls* of the *Ohio*, *Jefferson*, KY during the last week of Jan (BE, ph. AG); 8 above *Meldahl Dam*, *Bracken*, KY 29 Jan (KR, SC), with 5 still there 2 Feb (CCa); and one near *Boston*, *Nelson*, KY 25 Feb–1 Mar (ph. MHR).

A count of 2256 *Northern Shovelers* near *Long Point* 8 Jan (CD) represents a new high for the Region. *White-winged Scoters* were well represented, with one at *Middlebrook L.*, *Bristol*, TN 21–23 Jan (†RK, m. ob.); one at *Boone L.*, *Sullivan*, TN 23 Jan (DH); 5 at



This first-winter *Thayer's Gull* photographed near *Pickwick Dam*, *Hardin County*, *Tennessee* 14 February 2004 was one of two identified here this season. These photographs provide the first conclusive documentation of this species in *Tennessee*. Photographs by Jeff R. Wilson.



An adult California Gull photographed at Pace Point, Henry County, Tennessee (here 25 February 2004) is only the third ever documented in the Region.

Photograph by Jeff R. Wilson.

the species in Tennessee. That same location also hosted these additional rarities: a first-winter California Gull 10 Jan (†JRW, CB), a first-winter Great Black-backed Gull 7–15 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.), and one first-winter, one second-winter, and one third-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull 10 Jan–7 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.). A well-photographed ad. California Gull frequented Pace Point 25–27 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.). One to 2 or 3 first-year Glaucous Gulls were present in the vicinity of Kentucky Dam and Barkley Dam during the period. A first-year Great Black-backed Gull was present below Kentucky Dam 8–17 Feb (ph. DR et al.). At Least 5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen in the vicinity of Kentucky Dam during the period, with all four age-classes represented. As has become the norm, a few Forster's Terns appear to have wintered on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY (HC, ME).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

An apparent hybrid Eurasian Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove at President's I., Shelby, TN 1 Jan (ph. JRW) may be the first

such hybrid ever documented. A Common Ground-Dove on President's I., Memphis, TN 14 Jan was a rare find (MW, ER, HG). Short-eared Owls were present in what are probably slightly below-average numbers, with the peak count being 20 on the Paradise, Muhlenberg/Ohio, KY C.B.C. 3 Jan (BP et al.). The only Long-eared Owl reports were one to 2 in Muhlenberg, KY 6 & 30 Dec (BP et al.). Quite impressive was a total of 6 Northern Saw-whet Owls in Pulaski, KY 1 Feb (RD), even more so the 27 banded in Blount, TN mid-Nov–early Jan (JG et al.). As

in most recent years, 3 Common Nighthawks lingered through 3 Dec at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN (JSD). The winter 2003–2004 season was the best ever for lingering hummingbirds (mostly *Selasphorus* sp.) in the Region, with no fewer than 50 different birds reported (see Table 1). Table 2 summarizes the winter hummingbird banding efforts. Two birds in Kentucky became the first ever known to survive the winter in that state (JE, RSb).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SPARROWS

Vagrant flycatchers provided a winter highlight for many birders. A Say's Phoebe was photographed in Larue, KY 26 Dec (ph. B&LA); another was reported in Tipton, TN 27 Dec (DDP, KK). Two imm. male Vermilion Flycatchers—one near Gray's Camp, Lake, TN 5

Dec–26 Jan (B&AJ, ph. JRW, m. ob.), the other at Hatchie N.W.R. 22–29 Feb (ph. JRW, m. ob.)—appear to expand a pattern from states to our south. Only a modest movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches occurred, with small numbers of birds relatively widely dispersed during the season.

The Sage Thrasher in Knoxville, TN lingered through 17 Feb (SHy). A Sprague's Pipit in Hardin, TN 9 Jan (†DDP) was a rare find, and the first ever away from the Mississippi R. bottoms. A late-departing Tennessee Warbler was observed in Daviess, KY 1 Dec (MTh). A well-described male Townsend's Warbler in Carter, TN 13 Jan (†RK) represents the Region's 3rd record (all from Tennessee).

Two different Spotted Towhees were found in Kentucky, one in w. McCracken 30 Dec–29 Feb+ (ph. BP et al.) and one in e.



This first-winter Great Black-backed Gull, one of two in the Tennessee & Kentucky region, was present at Kentucky Dam, Marshall County, Kentucky 8–17 (here 15) February 2004. Photograph by David Roemer.

Muhlenberg 3 Jan–29 Feb+ (†BP, AC). Very rare for Kentucky were 3 Vesper Sparrows in Trigg 1 Jan (†BL); 26 in Hardin, TN 10 Jan (JRW, CB) was an exceptional winter count for Tennessee. Lincoln's Sparrows are normally very uncommon in the Region in winter, so three reports in Kentucky and seven in Tennessee were noteworthy. Le Conte's Sparrows are generally present in small numbers in the Region in suitable habitat, but 10 in a field in Dyer, TN 7 Dec (JRW et al.) was a noteworthy concentration. An imm. Harris's Sparrow was present in a yard in se. Ballard in mid-Feb–29 Feb+ (ph. RHo et al.). The season's snowiest period brought with it a few reports of Snow Bunting into n.-cen. Kentucky 30 Jan–1 Feb (m. ob.), with up to 75–80 birds present in ne. Jefferson (BY).

Generally, small numbers of Purple Finches were well distributed across all parts of the Region, with moderate to high numbers reported in a few locales. Peak counts in Kentucky included 100+ at Mammoth Cave N.P. 2 Dec (MM) and ca. 60 in

SA Perhaps in part due to the presence of an abundant wild food crop and relatively mild winter conditions, a significant number of frugivores and insectivores that normally winter farther south lingered late into the winter throughout the Region, including several winter firsts. It was also a good winter for the more typical wintering frugivores, with above-average numbers of Hermit Thrushes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings in the Region. Among noteworthy reports were: House Wren (15); Gray Catbird (10); **Blue-winged Warbler** (a Regional winter first in Shelby, TN 14 Dec (†DDP, VH); Palm Warbler (at least 80, including 30 on the Knoxville C.B.C.); Northern Waterthrush (one on the Reelfoot L. C.B.C., Lake, TN 20 Dec (†JSD, BF) furnished the 4th winter record for the Region); Summer Tanager (female at Munford, TN 15 Jan–17 Feb (DDP); there are fewer than 10 winter records for the Region); **Scarlet Tanager** (female at Munford, TN 13 Jan–18 Jan (†DDP), probably a Regional winter first); **Hooded Warbler** (male at Cleveland, Bradley, TN 1 Jan (R&LL), a Regional winter first); Baltimore Oriole (imm. male in Blount, TN 15–28 Feb+ (KH)); Blue-headed Vireo (one at Pickwick Landing S.P., TN 13 Jan (MT) and one in Carter, TN 15 Feb (DH et al.); Ovenbird (singles in Nashville, TN 2 Dec (ST) and Putnam, TN 20 Dec (TKB, DC)); **Mourning Warbler** (imm. female in s. Warren, KY 9 Dec (†DOR), the first winter season record for the Region); Wilson's Warbler (ad. male in Madison, KY 13 Dec (†A&TR), the 3rd winter season record for the Region); Yellow-breasted Chat (singles in Dekalb, TN 30 Dec (†MH) and Putnam, TN 23–24 Jan (ph. SJS, WW), the 12th and 13th Regional winter records); Indigo Bunting (one at Shelby Bottoms, Nashville, TN 10 Dec (PC)); and **Bobolink** (one in Putnam, TN 20–28 Dec (KM, MH, GE, ph. SJS) furnished a winter first for the Region).

Table 1. Hummingbirds recorded in the Tennessee & Kentucky region, Winter 2003–2004.

First Observed*	Last Observed*	Other	Species	Age	Sex	City	County	State
	4/9/2004		Rufous	HY	F	Clinton	Anderson	TN
	11/27/2003		Rufous/Allen's	U	F	Kingsport	Sullivan	TN
	1/26/2004		Rufous	AHY	M	Mt. Washington	Bullitt	KY
	4/17/2004		Rufous	AHY	M	Ooltewah	Bradley	TN
	12/25/2003		Rufous/Allen's	U	F	Crestwood	Oldham	KY
8/9/2003	8/9/2003		Selasphorus	AHY	F	Rocky Hill	Knox	TN
8/10/2003	11/10/2003		Rufous	AHY	M	Bowling Green	Warren	KY
8/17/2003	8/17/2003		Rufous	AHY	M	Paris	Henry	TN
9/1/2003			Rufous	AHY	F	Farragut	Knox	TN
9/2/2003	9/2/2003		Selasphorus	U	U	Roan Mountain	Carter	TN
10/1/2003			Rufous	HY	F	Cookeville	Putnam	TN
10/25/2003	1/16/2004		Selasphorus	U	F	Berea	Madison	KY
10/7/2003	4/15/2004		Ruby-throated	AHY	M	Knoxville	Knox	TN
10/9/2003	3/2/2004		Rufous/Allen's	U	U	Elizabethton	Carter	TN
10/12/2003	4/7/2004		Rufous	AHY	F	Bowling Green	Warren	KY
10/15/2003	12/14/2003**		Rufous/Allen's	U	F	Verona	Boone	KY
10/15/2003			Rufous	AHY	F	Norris	Anderson	TN
10/15/2003	10/31/2003		Unidentified	U	U	Farragut	Knox	TN
10/16/2003			Rufous	AHY	F	Greeneville	Greene	TN
10/19/2003	1/27/2004		Rufous	AHY	F	Nashville	Davidson	TN
10/21/2003			Selasphorus	U	U	McDonald	Bradley	TN
10/25/2003			Ruby-throated	HY	F	Goodlettsville	Sumner	TN
10/25/2003			Rufous/Allen's	U	U	Signal Mountain	Hamilton	TN
10/25/2003	12/11/2003		Rufous	HY	F	Russellville	Logan	KY
10/25/2003	10/26/2003		Rufous	HY	M	Spring Hill	Williamson	TN
10/28/2003			Rufous	HY	M	Madison	Davidson	TN
10/29/2003	11/5/2003		Calliope***	AHY	M	Louisville	Blount	TN
11/1/2003			Ruby-throated	HY	F	Franklin	Williamson	TN
11/1/2003			Rufous	AHY	F	Sevierville	Sevier	TN
11/6/2003	11/26/2003		Selasphorus	U	U	Hampshire	Maury	TN
	1/11/2004		Rufous/Allen's	U	F		Jefferson	KY
11/8/2003	1/6/2004		Rufous	AHY	F	Rich Pond	Warren	KY
11/14/2003	11/14/2003		Unidentified	U	U	Cookeville	Putnam	TN
11/19/2003	11/21/2003		Selasphorus	U	U	Franklin	Williamson	TN
11/21/2003			Rufous	AHY	F	Knoxville	Knox	TN
11/23/2003			Rufous/Allen's	U	U	Sharps Chapel	Union	TN
11/23/2003	3/24/2004		Rufous	U	M	Maryville	Blount	TN
11/24/2003			Rufous	HY	F	Nashville	Davidson	TN
11/25/2003			Rufous	HY	M	Knoxville	Knox	TN
11/26/2003			Selasphorus	U	U		Knox	TN
11/29/2003	11/29/2003		Unidentified	U	U	Elmwood	Smith	TN
	3/24/2004		Rufous	AHY	F	Lexington	Fayette	KY
12/4/2003	1/4/2004		Rufous	U	F	Knoxville	Knox	TN
		12/11/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Tellico Village	Loudoun	TN
		12/13/2003	Rufous/Allen's	U	F	Clarkson	Grayson	KY
		12/20/2003	Rufous	AHY	M		Hamilton	TN
		12/20/2003	Selasphorus	U	U	Chattanooga	Hamilton	TN
		12/20/2003	Selasphorus	U	U	Signal Mountain	Hamilton	TN
		1/6/2004	Unidentified	U	U		Fayette	TN
		2/14/2004	Rufous	U	M	Morristown	Hamblen	TN

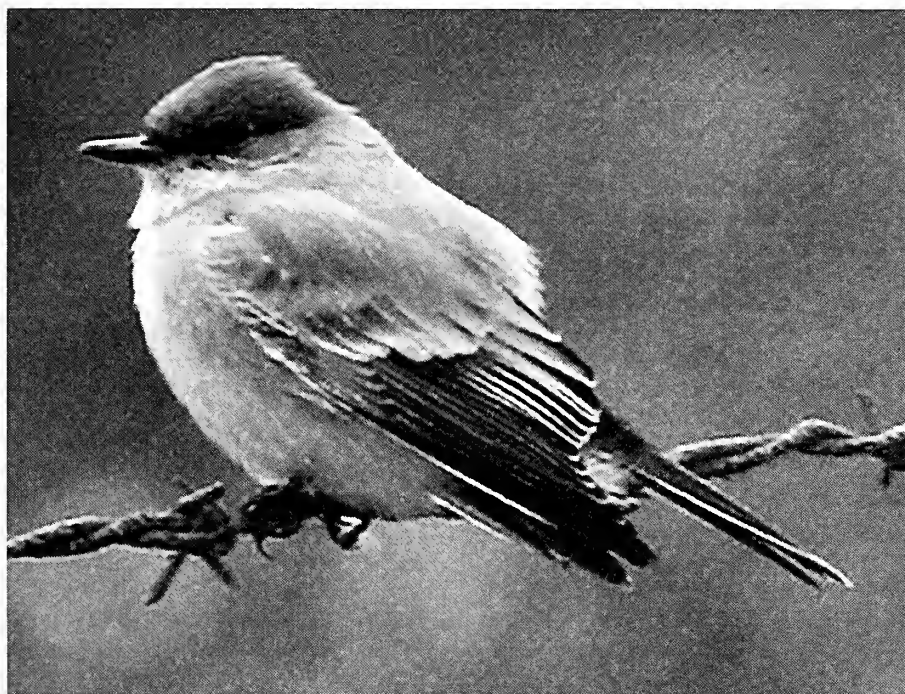
*In some cases, first and last observed dates are approximate.

**This bird was captured by a rehabilitator on this date, and it died in captivity 1/5/04.

***Photos clearly showed a band on this bird's right leg, but the bird eluded several attempts to capture it.

Table 2. Hummingbirds banded in the Tennessee & Kentucky region, Winter 2003–2004.

Date	Species	Age	Sex	Bander	City	County	State
10/25/2003	Rufous	HY	M	Sloan, Chris	Spring Hill	Williamson	TN
11/4/2003	Ruby-throated	HY	F	Macmillan, Portia	Goodlettsville	Sumner	TN
11/9/2003	Ruby-throated	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Franklin	Williamson	TN
11/11/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Moore, Fred	Norris	Anderson	TN
11/22/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Cookeville	Putnam	TN
11/24/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Moore, Fred	Sevierville	Sevier	TN
11/25/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Moore, Fred	Greeneville	Greene	TN
11/25/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Moore, Fred	Tellico Village	Loudoun	TN
11/29/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Nashville	Davidson	TN
11/29/2003	Rufous	HY	M	Sloan, Chris	Madison	Davidson	TN
11/30/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Bowling Green	Warren	KY
11/30/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Bowling Green	Warren	KY
11/30/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Russellville	Logan	KY
12/4/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Nashville	Davidson	TN
12/7/2003	Rufous	AHY	M	Sloan, Chris	Ooltewah	Bradley	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Gray	Washington	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Gray	Washington	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Knoxville	Knox	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Knoxville	Knox	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	HY	M	Sloan, Chris	Maryville	Blount	TN
12/13/2003	Rufous	HY	M	Sloan, Chris	Knoxville	Knox	TN
12/16/2003	Rufous	HY	F	Moore, Fred	Tellico Village	Loudoun	TN
1/13/2004	Rufous	AHY	F	Moore, Fred	Chattanooga	Hamilton	TN
1/31/2004	Rufous	AHY	F	Sloan, Chris	Cookeville	Putnam	TN
1/31/2004	Rufous	HY	F	Sloan, Chris	Cookeville	Putnam	TN



This Say's Phoebe, Kentucky's third, was photographed in rural Larue County on 26 December 2003 but was not relocated. Photograph by Lyn Atherton.

se. Jefferson during Feb (AL, *vide* BW). A male White-winged Crossbill at a feeder in Monteagle, Marion, TN 21 Jan (JW) was a surprising rarity. Very small numbers of

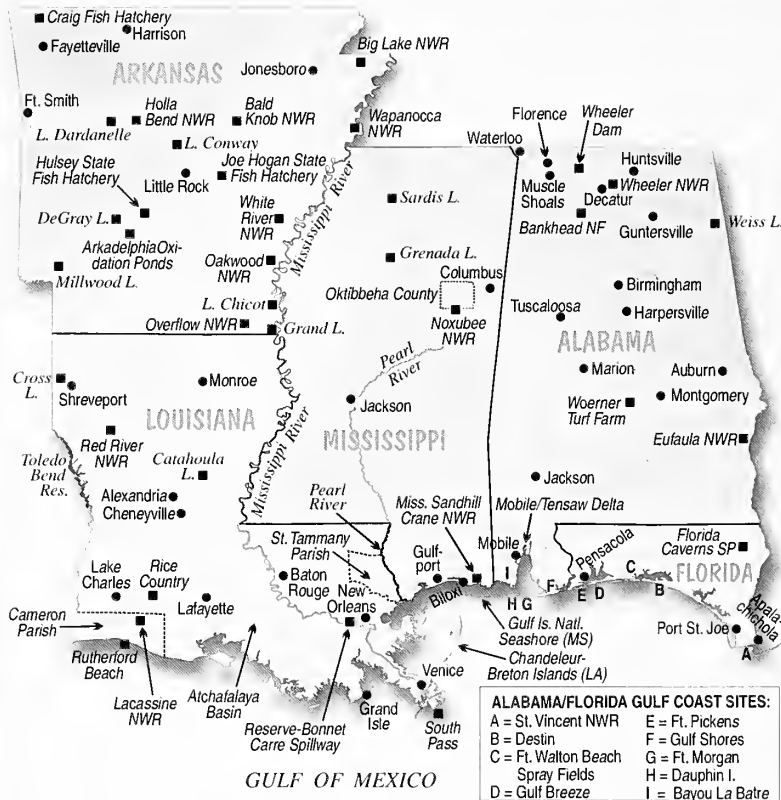
Pine Siskins were widely distributed across most of the Region. A single Evening Grosbeak in Morgan, TN 29 Dec (JK) was the only one reported for the season.



With only a handful of records of the species from Kentucky, the presence of two Spotted Towhees in winter 2003–2004 was especially noteworthy. This bird (photographed 24 January 2004) was present in rural western McCracken County from 30 December 2003 through the end of the period, while another in Muhlenberg County stayed from 3 January 2004 through the season. Photograph by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

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Central Southern



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Winter was warm and dry early and cool and wet late, continuing the trend of recent years. The first major cold front blasted through the Region during the first week of January, dropping temperatures to below 20° F in many areas. Precipitation was below normal during December and January and above normal in February. Many observers voiced the perception that populations of many common species seemed to be well below normal.

Abbreviations: FW.B.S.F. (Fort Walton Beach Spray Facility, FL), L.S.U.M.N.H. (Louisiana State University Museum of Natural History), M.C.R.A. (Mallard Creek

Recreation Area, AL), O.N.W.R. (Oakwood N.W.R., AR), Y.N.W.R. (Yazoo N.W.R., MS), W.N.W.R. (Wheeler N.W.R., AL).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Red-throated Loons were reported widely. In Alabama, immes. were at M.C.R.A., Lawrence 31 Dec (CDC) and Guntersville, Marshall 11 Feb (RAR, LBR). Elsewhere, singles were on Choctawhatchee Bay, Okaloosa, FL 15 Dec (JW, ST), Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa, FL 25 Jan (RAD, LD), Ft. Pickens, Escambia, FL 29 Jan (BW, DW), and Bay Springs L., Tishomingo, MS 18 Jan–3 Feb (SJD, GK, SK, m. ob.). Single Pacific Loons were at Lillian, Baldwin, AL 28 Dec (RAD, JD), M.C.R.A., AL 30 Dec (SWM), Perdido Key, Baldwin, AL 3–10 Jan (RRR, GDJ), Guntersville, AL 6–15 Feb (BMc, m. ob.), Niceville, Okaloosa, FL 15 Dec (JW, ST), Ft. Pickens, FL 7–29 Jan (AWK, LAT, JG, BW, DW), and Bay Springs L., MS 18 Jan–3 Feb (GK, SK, SJD).

The largest concentrations of Horned Grebes reported were of 343 in coastal Harrison, MS 29 Feb (SJD) and 235 at Guntersville, AL 1 Feb (DPG). An ad. Red-necked Grebe, Alabama's 14th (p.a.), was at Guntersville 30 Dec–Feb 28 (RAR, m. ob.). Eared Grebes were widely reported, with singles at Town Cr. Marsh, Colbert, AL 30

Dec (SWM), Guntersville, AL 6 Feb (BMc), FW.B.S.F., Okaloosa, FL 2 Dec–22 Jan (JW, RAD, CB, TN, m. ob.), up to 3 at the Crescent Acres Landfill, St. Bernard, LA 27 Dec–11 Jan (TDC, JOC, CR, SW, m. ob.), and 3 on Ross Barnett Res., Madison, MS 24 Jan (SJD). Rarely encountered in the Region, single Western Grebes (p.a.) were seen at Holly Beach, Cameron, LA 20 Dec (PC, DPa) and Bay Springs L., MS 18 Jan (SJD, GK, SK), while a Western/Clark's Grebe (p.a.) was off Rutherford Beach, Cameron, LA 21 Dec (BMM, CS). The usual movement of American White Pelicans into the Region in late Nov/early Dec was evident. Many lingered inland, especially in n. Alabama. Fifty were on Weiss L., Cherokee 2 Dec (LB, WB); up to 93 were at W.N.W.R., Limestone/Morgan 22 Nov–6 Jan+ (CDC, SWM, EH, FBI, m. ob.); and up to 35 were at Town Cr. Marsh 25–27 Feb (GNP).

Northwestern Arkansas's first winter record of Great Egret was at Craig Fish Hatchery, Benton, where up to 2 were seen 6 Dec–27 Feb (MML et al.). There were several inland Cattle Egret records: one at Bald Knob N.W.R., White, AR 1 Dec (BA, RP), plus Mississippi birds at Sardis Dam, Panola 7 Jan (WMD), at the Grenada Airport, Grenada 17 Dec (2; GK, SK, JRW), and 4 near Moorhead, Sunflower 27 Jan (SJD). Green Herons lingered throughout the period in Alabama, with singles at Smith L., Cullman 21 Dec (VM) and near Blountsville, Blount, 11 Feb (HHH, EHu), plus 5 on the Gulf Shores CBC, Baldwin 3 Jan. At least 4 White-faced Ibis and 37 unidentified Plegadis were at Y.N.W.R., Yazoo, MS 31 Jan (SJD, PB, KB, m. ob.). Another unidentified dark ibis was in coastal Jackson, MS 8 Feb (SJD).

Waterfowl numbers in the Region continue to be lower than one would expect, given the effort expended over the past 20 years to conserve nesting and wintering habitat. Good counts of Greater White-fronted Geese came from usual haunts at W.N.W.R. (up to 100 through early Jan; CDC, SS, SWM, m. ob.), Noxubee N.W.R., Noxubee, MS (69 on 22 Dec; TLS), the Mississippi R. Delta (2500 near Little Texas, Tunica, MS 5 Dec; RBr, WMD), and O.N.W.R., Desha, AR (1000 on 24 Dec; JC). Elsewhere in Alabama, where rarer, there were 3 near Montgomery 17 Dec (LFG), 2 near Russellville, Franklin 15 Jan (DJS), 3 near Magnolia Springs, Baldwin 27 Dec (AWK), one near Linden, Marengo 21 Feb (DS, JS), and 5 near Florence, Lauderdale 22 Feb (JJ, JCa, GNP). The largest number of Snow Geese reported was of 100,000± near Little Texas, MS 5 Dec (RBr, WMD). Ross's Geese were reported from 13 locations, with a maximum of 1000 in Humphreys, MS 22 Feb (SJD). Trumpeter Swan was again found in the Region, this time at Ross Barnett Res., MS 24 Jan (ph.

SJD). The only Tundra Swan reported was one at L. Magness, Cleburne, AR 13 Dec (KN, LDN).

Greater Scaup continue to be reported in increasing numbers. Fifteen were at Mills Dam, Arkansas, AR 24 Dec (JC). In Mississippi, there were 97 on Ross Barnett Res. and 51 on L. Caroline, Madison 24 Jan, while 3 were on Dalewood Shores L., Lauderdale 6 Feb and one was off Pascagoula, Jackson 26 Feb (all SJD). An ad. male was in Jefferson Davis, LA 14 Dec (RB, WW), where decidedly rare. Alabama's 5th Harlequin Duck, and the first since 1979, was an imm. male seen and photographed near the e. end of Dauphin I., Mobile 8 Feb (p.a., GEH et al.).

Surf Scoter reports, all from Mississippi, included 2 imms. each at Browning Cr. L., Oktibbeha 4 Dec (RW, LW, TLS) and L. Caroline 29 Jan (GK, SK). A female-type was at Dalewood Shores L. 6 Feb (SJD), and up to 94 were present off coastal Harrison, 8–29 Feb (SJD, DM, WMD). White-winged Scoters were reported from Little Bear Cr. Res., Franklin, AL 15 Jan (DJS) and L. Dardanelle, Pope/Yell, AR 21 Feb (KN, LDN). Five Black Scoters were off Gulf Shores, AL 31 Jan–10 Feb (SWM, ECS) and one off coastal Harrison, MS 8 Feb (SJD). Single Long-tailed Ducks were reported from Dauphin I., AL 20 Dec, the Montgomery Zoo, AL 31 Jan–29 Feb+ (LFG, LWi), near Des Arc, Prairie, AR 2 Feb (KN), and at L. Caroline, MS 24 Jan (SJD). Up to 7 were at Guntersville, AL 11 Jan–29 Feb+ (BM, LBR, m. ob.) and up to 3 on L. Dardanelle, AR 11 Jan–29 Feb+ (KN, LDN). Common Mergansers, erratic visitors to the Region, appeared in Arkansas, where up to 5 were present on L. Sequoyah, Washington 14 Dec–7 Feb (MMI, JN, DP), and in Mississippi, where singles were at both Enid L. 31 Dec (SJD) and Cossar S.P., Yalobusha 2–3 Jan (GK, SK, DM), plus 4 at Arkabutla Dam, DeSoto 19 Jan (SJD, GK).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An Osprey at Mountain Home, Baxter, AR 15 Dec (MM, MW, NB) was late. Early Swallow-tailed Kites in Alabama were singles near Magnolia Springs (DL) and Dauphin I. (PM), both 24 Feb. Broad-winged Hawks are consistently reported from se. Louisiana in winter; single imms. were at Fort Jackson, Plaquemines 2 Jan (PAW, CR), Grand Isle, Jefferson 22 Jan (DPM, BMM), and New Orleans 1 Feb (PAW, DPM). An ad. Swainson's Hawk was near Thornwell, LA 13 Dec (BMM, PAW). The only Rough-legged Hawk report was of one in Lonoke, AR 14 Dec

(DPH, SP). Golden Eagle singles were at Dugger Mt./Talladega N.F., Cleburne, AL 6 Feb (RyS), Holla Bend N.W.R., Pope, AR 16 Dec (LA), and near Collins, Drew, AR 27 Dec (WB), while 2 were at Mollicy W.M.A., Morehouse, LA 23–24 Jan (m. ob.). Crested Caracara is found consistently in the Region only in sw. Louisiana; 2 were in Jefferson Davis 14 Dec (m. ob.), an imm. was n. of Avery I., Iberia 22 Dec (DPa, PC), and one was in Calcasieu 25 Feb (JK). Merlins were widely reported, with 3 in Alabama and 8 in Mis-



Casual in Mississippi, and particularly rare inland, this adult Red-throated Loon was photographed 4 February 2004 at Bay Springs Lake, Tishomingo County. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.

issippi. Alabama's 4th Prairie Falcon (p.a.) was at Guntersville Dam, Marshall 19 Feb (RAR, LBR). Another was near Arkadelphia, AR 20 Dec (DH, JMi), where it is a rare winter visitor.

Arkansas's first winter record for Virginia Rail was of one near Fayetteville, Washington 8 Jan (MMI). Two ad. Purple Gallinules at Lacassine Pool, Cameron, LA 7–14 Dec (JK, KF, MG) were late, and 2 Common Moorhens at Y.N.W.R., MS 31 Jan (SJD, PS, KB, m. ob.) were likewise unexpected at this inland location. Wintering Sandhill Crane numbers continue to increase throughout the Region; winter maxima were 446 at W.N.W.R., AL 28 Jan (m. ob.), 196 in Calcasieu, LA 28 Feb (JK, JG, JM), and 85 in Tunica, MS 8 Feb (m. ob.).

A Black-bellied Plover in Humphreys, MS 9 Dec and 22 Feb (SJD) probably overwintered. American Golden-Plovers returned early: 2 at Broussard Beach, Cameron, LA 23 Feb (DFL, JMa, TP) tied the earliest arrival date for the state, while one at F.W.B.S.F. was

the first Feb record for nw. Florida. Numbers of wintering Snowy Plovers in the Region continue to be low: 2 at E. Jetty Beach, Cameron, LA 20 Dec, 2 at Fourchon Beach, Lafourche, LA 8 Feb (PAW et al.), and 4 on Horn I., Jackson, MS 27 Feb (SJD, PB, KB, DM) were representative numbers. The 8 Wilson's Plovers at E. Jetty Beach, LA 20 Dec (PAW, DPM, CR) may have overwintered, whereas 2 at Fourchon Beach 8 Feb (PAW et al.) may have been early migrants. The report of 31 Piping Plovers on Horn I., MS 27 Feb (SJD, PB, KB, DM) was encouraging.

Greater Yellowlegs appeared to linger farther inland than usual. One at the Craig Fish Hatchery, AR 26–27 Dec (MMI et al.) was only the 2nd winter record for nw. Arkansas. The 148 in Prairie 2 Feb (KN) represented a winter high for Arkansas. Eight Marbled Godwits in Harrison, MS 8 Feb (SJD, DM, WMD) was a good count for the season. Two Sanderlings were far inland near Y.N.W.R., MS 22 Feb (SJD). The only inland Western Sandpipers were 105 in Humphreys, MS 9 Dec (SJD). Least Sandpipers were in good numbers in the Mississippi R. Delta. In Arkansas, 400 were in

Prairie 2 Feb (KN). In Mississippi, 516 were in Humphreys 9 Dec and 237 in Sunflower 22 Feb (SJD). A White-rumped Sandpiper at White River N.W.R., Arkansas, AR 3 Jan (JRW) was unprecedented. Pectoral Sandpipers arrived back a few days early. Three were in Humphreys, MS 22 Feb (SJD), while singles were in Orleans, LA (DPM) and at Catalpa Cr. Bottoms, Lowndes, MS (TLS), both 26 Feb. In Mississippi, Long-billed Dowitchers peaked at 7000 near Cleveland, Bolivar 5 Dec (RBr, WMD), and up to 82 were in Leflore 31 Jan–22 Feb (SJD, PB, KB, m. ob.) and 51 in Humphreys 22 Feb (SJD).

JAEGERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

An ad. Pomarine Jaeger from the Dauphin I./Ft. Morgan Ferry, Baldwin, AL 8 Feb (GDJ) was the only jaeger reported. Laughing Gulls continue to winter inland in the Region, with five reports totaling 6 birds in Arkansas and Mississippi. A second-winter Franklin's Gull near Hickory Plains, Prairie, AR 17 Jan (KN, LDN) was an excellent find.

SA An itinerant flock, estimated to contain 5000+ gulls at times, roamed s. Baldwin, AL for most of Jan. Greg Jackson estimated that the flock was 75% Ring-billed and 25% Herring Gulls, with a few "others" thrown in. Those "others" would captivate birders for most of the month. Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded 2 Jan (SWM), and by month's end, the number grew to 6 of various ages. On 12 Jan, a first-year California Gull—Alabama's 5th—was found (p.a., GDJ). The California was seen through 25 Jan, and Alabama's 3rd Iceland Gull (p.a.), a first-winter bird, was found that day as well, along with an apparent first-winter Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull, a first for the state (BSu, ALM).



Red-necked Grebes that turn up in the Central Southern Region are almost invariably immatures. This adult near Guntersville, Marshall County, Alabama 31 December 2003 (here) through at least 28 February 2004 was seen by hundreds of birders. Digiscoped photograph by Steve W. McConnell.

An ad. winter Little Gull at M.C.R.A. 28–30 Dec (p.a., JRW, m. ob.) was Alabama's 8th. An imm. flying over the Arkansas R. near Van Buren, *Crawford*, AR 3 Jan (SB, KM) is one of handful of records for the state.

A second-winter California Gull on L. Dardanelle 10 Jan (KN, LDN, CM, MP, HP) afforded Arkansas its first winter record, while a first-winter bird at Guntersville 20 Jan (p.a., RAR, LWe) was potentially Alabama's 6th. Alabama's 3rd Thayer's Gull, a first-winter bird, was at Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale/Colbert* 9 Feb (p.a., DJS). Single Lesser Black-backed Gulls were widely reported coastally, with birds at Gulf Breeze, FL 20 Dec (BB et al.), *Jefferson Davis*, LA 14 Dec (PAW, DPu), the Buras Marina, *Plaquemines*, LA 2 Jan (EW, DPu, BiM, LM), in *Harrison*, MS 7 Feb (SJD, DM, WMD), on L. Pontchartrain, *Orleans*, LA 21 Feb (PAW, DPM), and in *Orleans*, LA 22 Feb (DPM). Glaucous Gulls in Alabama, where rare, were at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence* 28 Dec–9 Feb (JRW, DJS) and Guntersville 19 Jan (JNe, DJ, JH). A first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake on L. Dardanelle, AR 31 Jan (KN, LDN) was a nice find.

White-winged Doves appear to have extended their range along the n. Gulf Coast: an amazing 160 were near Foley, *Baldwin*, AL 3 Jan (HEH) and up to 22 at Gulf Breeze, FL 6 Dec (RAD). In Louisiana, Inca Doves were at the Zoo of Acadiana, *Broussard*, *Lafayette* 21 Dec (JWB, EV), where a fledgling represented an extremely late nesting, and near Thibodaux, *Lafourche* 28 Dec (JP, LP). Greater Roadrunners were found in their usual haunts in w. Arkansas 1 Dec–8 Feb (m. ob.). A Burrowing Owl was near Hollandale, *Washington*, MS 22–24 Feb (SJD, GK, SK, m. ob.). Alabama's 7th Northern

Saw-whet Owl was heard in Little River Canyon N.P., *Cherokee* 30 Dec (p.a., BHS). Up to 6 Vaux's Swifts were at City Park L., *East Baton Rouge*, LA 8–29 Feb+ (p.a., CCW, GG, RS, VAL).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Vermilion Flycatchers certainly warm a cold winter day. In Alabama, where rare, an ad. male and an imm. male were near Foley 28 Dec–4 Feb (CH, EB, m. ob.) and 3 Jan–4 Feb (BSu, m. ob.), re-

spectively. An ad. male was at FW.B.S.F. 16 Dec (LF et al.), while in Louisiana, 4 were at Lacassine Pool 7 Dec–28 Feb (JK, KF, MG, m. ob.), an imm. male was near Thornwell 13 Dec (PAW, BMM), an ad. male was on Avery I. 22 Dec (DPa, PC, EL), and another ad. male was near New Orleans 1–21 Feb (PAW, DPM). Ash-throated Flycatchers were at Lacassine Pool 14 Dec (JK, MG, MSe), Bayou Sauvage N.W.R., *Orleans* 27 Dec–7 Feb (RS, VAL, m. ob.), near Duson, *Lafayette* 28 Dec (PC), *Triumph*, *Plaquemines* 2 Jan (DPu, EW), and *Chalmette Battlefield*, *St. Bernard* 27 Jan (PAW), all in Louisiana. In nw. Florida, one was at FW.B.S.F. 15 Dec (DWa). As in the past few years, Brown-crested Flycatchers (p.a.) were reported only from Louisiana, with 2 at Ft. Jackson 2 Jan (PAW, CR) and one in *Orleans* 24 Jan (PAW). Unusual in the Region, a Couch's/Tropical Kingbird was in *St. Martin*, LA 3 Jan (MJM). A Great Kiskadee was an exciting find near Bayou Sauvage N.W.R., LA 27 Dec–29 Feb+ (p.a., RS, VAL, m. ob.). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were widely reported, with a maximum of 43 at a Boothville, *Plaquemines*, LA

roost 2 Jan (DPM, PAW).

A Yellow-throated Vireo in Niceville 15 Dec (JW, ST) provided nw. Florida's 3rd Dec record. Rare in winter, a Northern Rough-winged Swallow was in *Terrebonne*, LA 28 Dec (JCo). Mississippi's first fully documented Cave Swallow was at the Seaman Road Sewage Lagoons, *Jackson* 28 Feb (GK, SK, SJD). A Rock Wren was at Dardanelle Lock and Dam, *Pope*, AR 15 Feb (KN, LDN). The only Bewick's Wren reported was from O.N.W.R., AR 24 Dec (JC). Sedge Wrens wintered inland at several locations. One was at W.N.W.R. 20 Dec (CDC, SG, DZ). In Arkansas, up to 3 were at Fayetteville, 11 Dec–31 Jan (MMI, RSh), one was at O.N.W.R. 24 Dec (JC), and one was at the Stuttgart Airport 8 Jan (WS, WB). One was in *Leflore*, MS 22 Feb (SJD). The only Marsh Wren reported was at O.N.W.R. 24 Dec (JC). Rarely encountered in the Region, a Sage Thrasher was near Mansfield, *DeSoto*, LA 14–15 Feb (p.a., RS, VAL, VN, JI).

Exceedingly rare in the Region in winter, single Tennessee Warblers were reported from Hollins, *Clay*, AL (b., MW) throughout Feb, at the University of Arkansas Farm, *Washington*, AR 17 Dec–3 Jan (MMI), and at Pensacola, FL 6 Jan (Jat, JG). Alabama's 4th winter record of Nashville Warbler was one on Ono I., *Baldwin*, AL 3 Jan (RRR), while another was near Boothville, LA 2 Jan (DPM, RS). Northwestern Florida's 2nd Dec Yellow Warbler was at Valparaiso, *Okaloosa* 15 Dec (CG, PG), its 3rd winter record came from Pensacola 20 Dec (CB), and its first Jan record was at FW.B.S.F. 24 Jan (BCM et al.). Two were near Venice, LA 2 Jan (DPM) and one at the Zoo of Acadiana, LA 22 Feb (JWB). Northwestern Florida's 2nd winter Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Pensacola 6 Dec (MC). An ad. male Black-throated Gray Warbler was at Couterie Arboretum, *Orleans*, LA 8–25 Feb (p.a., EW, PAW), while a MacGillivray's Warbler was in *Orleans*, LA 28–29 Feb (p.a., DPM, PAW).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A female-type Western Tanager was at a feeder in Ocean Springs, *Jackson*, MS 19

SA The number of hummingbirds reported in the Region continues to grow each year, a sign of the ever-increasing number of hummingbird gardeners, feeders, and banders. Though certainly not an exhaustive tally, the following 904 hummingbirds of eight species were reported to this editor: Broad-billed (4); Buff-bellied (73); Ruby-throated (41); Black-chinned (136); Calliope (45); Broad-tailed (11); Rufous (381); Allen's (19); and *Selasphorus* (194). Details on some of the more unusual species follow. Alabama's 3rd and 4th **Broad-billed Hummingbirds** (p.a.) were an ad. female near Frisco, *Monroe* 20 Dec (b., FB, SBy) and an ad. male in Mobile, present from early fall through 6 Jan+ (b., FB, CW). In Louisiana, a nearly ad. male (p.a.) was in Reserve, *St. John*, 23 Oct–29 Feb+ (b., RSt, NN et al.) and a second-year male (p.a.) was in Pearl City, *St. Tammany* 30 Jan (b., MMy, JB). At least 2, perhaps 4 Calliope Hummingbirds were in *St. Gabriel*, *Iberville*, LA throughout the period (DLD, SWC, DPa, PBe), while in Mississippi, an imm. male was near Canton, *Madison* 27 Dec (b., BS, MS) and an ad. male in Cleveland, *Bolivar* 31 Jan (KBo, NS, BDD). Florida's first ad. male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** was in Pensacola 30 Dec–30 Jan (b. GB, FB). A single Allen's Hummingbird well inland near Shreveport, LA 6 Feb (b. RS, BWo, SH) was the first *Caddo* record.



This apparent first-winter Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull hybrid in southern Baldwin County, Alabama 25 January through 7 February (here 1 February) 2004 was a first for Alabama and the Central Southern region. *Digiscoped photograph by Steve W. McConnell.*

Jan-27 Feb (AD, m. ob.). Wintering Clay-colored Sparrows were at Ft. Pickens, FL 4 Dec-6 Feb (RAD, CB, TN, m. ob.) and Plainview, Sabine, LA 7 Jan-29 Feb+ (KE). An interesting sparrow at Ft. Pickens, present since 24 Sep and seen again 26 Dec (RAD, LD, m. ob.), was thought to be a Brewer's Sparrow; if accepted, this bird would be the first for Florida and one of few e. of the Mississippi R.; as of this writing, however, no photographs of the bird have circulated. Alabama's 7th Lark Bunting was near Foley 13 Jan (p.a., JDi). Nine Henslow's Sparrows at Mississippi Sandhill Crane N.W.R., Jackson, MS 27 Feb (SJD, PB, KB, GK, SK) was a good number. Le Conte's Sparrow was widely reported, with a maximum of 13 at Sardis Waterfowl Refuge, Lafayette, MS 20 Dec (GK, SK, VT). First-winter Harris's Sparrows were near Jonesboro, Craighead, AR 7-29 Feb+ (NL, CL) and L. Washington, MS 22 Feb (SJD), while in Louisiana, single ads. were in New Orleans 27 Dec-4 Jan (PAW, DPM, DPh) and Vermilion 28 Dec (MB, LBr).

Sixty Smith's Longspurs were at the Stuttgart Airport, AR 8 Jan (WS, WB). A male and female Rose-breasted Grosbeak were near Lillian, AL 28 Dec (JD), while a female frequented a feeder in Underwood, Lauderdale, AL 11-15 Feb (PDK, DEK). Single female Black-headed Grosbeaks were in Pensacola, FL, 20 Dec-7 Feb (BB, BF, m. ob.) and in New Orleans, LA 11 Jan and 1-3 Feb (DPM, PAW). A Lazuli Bunting frequented a feeder in Luling, St. Charles, LA for at least the 4th winter mid-Jan-7 Feb (MT, BMM, GO, DC). An unprecedented Bobolink was collected in severely emaciated condition (*LSUMNH) along the Mississippi R. levee, West Baton Rouge, LA 4-12 Jan (CCW, SWC, DLD). Alabama's 7th through 10th records of Bronzed Cowbird were in s. Baldwin 8 Jan-8 Feb (p.a., GDJ, DGJ, AWK, m. ob.),

while one was at FWB.S.F. 30 Jan (AWK), and up to 25 were in New Orleans, LA 5 Jan-16 Feb (PAW). A Scott's Oriole (p.a.) was near Rutherford Beach, LA 21-26 Dec (CR, PAW, m. ob.). Purple Finches were reported in good numbers throughout the Region. The only report of Red Crossbill was one male near Arkadelphia, Clark, AR 10 Dec (DHa). A female Common Redpoll, one of a few Regional records, was near Corning, Clay, AR 20-29 Jan (GH).

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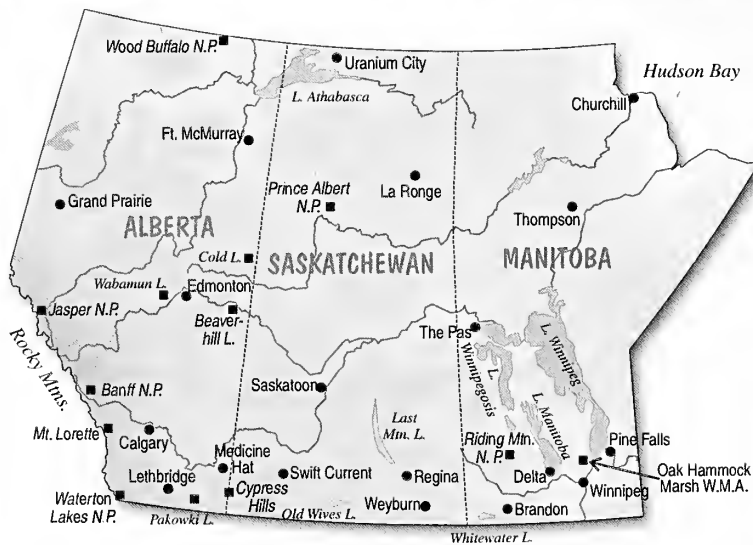


Bronzed Cowbirds made quite a showing in coastal Alabama in winter 2003-2004. This adult male photographed at Orange Beach on 8 January 2004 provided Alabama's seventh record. *Photograph by Greg D. Jackson.*

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Prairie Provinces



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Moderate temperatures in December and February contrasted with severe cold spells in early and late January. When long-time Saskatchewan residents use phrases like “absolutely bone-chilling” and “horrific bout of savage temperatures,” there is no doubt that there was a real cold snap! At the nadir, towards the end of January, daytime temperatures edged up toward -30° F with overnight lows well below -40° F in many areas. Combined with substantial snow cover across much of the Region, this resulted in unexceptional birding apart from the high visibility of Gray Partridges and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

GREBES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Pied-billed Grebe remained at Henderson

L., Lethbridge, AB through 16 Jan, accompanied by an Eared Grebe until 27 Dec (D&TD, WG). There were at least 5 Great Blue Herons in Alberta in early winter, the latest being at Calgary 10 Jan (PS et al.) and High River 12 Jan (KWa).

Relatively few waterfowl were reported after the C.B.C. period. Highlights at Calgary included an overwintering Tundra Swan (m. ob.), an American Black Duck 9–12 Jan (B&TG), and a Long-tailed Duck for the 3rd consecutive winter (m. ob.). Mallard survived well at a few Manitoba locations, with 114 plus a Northern Pintail in Winnipeg 3 Mar (GH) and 10 throughout the season at Minnedosa (CC). Six Redheads were reported at Gardiner Dam, SK 20 Jan (AH). A Common Merganser somehow survived at a tiny patch of open water at St. Norbert, MB (AC).

The usual wintering Bald Eagles near Whitemouth, MB pulled out in Jan (m. ob.), while a pair was already on territory at Calgary 16 Feb (TK) and 2 early migrants passed Eden, MB 28 Feb (RD). A female or imm. male Northern Harrier was unusual just w. of Palo Siding, SK 29 Dec (GW). A Red-tailed Hawk in Regina in early Dec appeared to be preying on Rock Pigeons atop tall downtown buildings (*vide* TH). Rough-legged Hawks were scarce except in sw. Saskatchewan. It was a banner year for Gyrfalcons in s. Alberta, while one of 5 reported in Saskatchewan was an apparent window-kill in Regina. Prairie Falcon sightings included 2 near Gardiner Dam 8 & 22 Dec, and one seen frequently just n. of Winnipeg for

much of the season (D&JB, RK, m. ob.).

Many C.B.C.s reported Gray Partridges in the hundreds, while 126 were counted in three hours se. of Winnipeg 31 Jan (BN, FG), and 130+ were seen in the Craven-Lumsden, SK area 29 Feb (JC, BL). Greater Sage-Grouse are close to extirpation in Canada, so a rancher's report of 7 near Govenlock, SK in late Dec was heartening (*vide* GW). Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers were exceptional, with many three-figure totals in s. Saskatchewan and se. Alberta. In Medicine Hat, AB, they were reported “on city rooftops, in trees, on golf courses and even telephone wires” (DB). Most exciting was a report of two Greater Prairie-Chickens within a large gathering of Sharp-tailed Grouse s. of Weyburn, SK 22 Feb (CB, MB).

Exceptional in winter, a Sandhill Crane was observed at Yorkton, SK landfill 30 Dec (J&SJ, MW, BA). Even more unusual, though of uncertain origin, was a well-documented Common Crane near Leader, SK 29 Dec–8 Jan; on the last date, it was apparently killed by an imm. Bald Eagle (KW, m. ob.). Rare anywhere after early Dec, a Glaucous Gull was videotaped by a fisherman at La Ronge, SK 17–24 Jan (*vide* TH). Low Great Horned Owl numbers in s. Manitoba (CC, KG) and s. Saskatchewan (BL et al.) led to speculation about possible vulnerability to West Nile virus. Snowy Owls were also unusually scarce Regionwide, while Northern Hawk Owls and Great Gray Owls made only a modest showing. Given the snow cover and extreme cold, five Jan sightings of Short-eared Owls in s. Saskatchewan (AH, GW) were surprising. Boreal Owls staged a “mini-invasion,” with three Dec records in Calgary (*vide* MH).

Single Red-bellied Woodpeckers were present in Neu Bergthal, MB to 9 Feb or later (T&DK, *vide* AS) and just n. of Winnipeg in late Feb (RI, m. ob.). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found in Medicine Hat 12 Jan (BV) was unlikely to survive. Northern Flicker was one of several “half-hardy” species thought to have suffered much mortality in Jan. Pileated Woodpeckers are defi-



Rare anywhere in the Prairie Provinces in winter, this Great Blue Heron at High River on 10 January 2003 was one of five reported in Alberta during December and January. Photograph by Terry Korolyk.

nately increasing outside the boreal forest across s. Manitoba (m. ob.).

PASSERINES

Red-breasted Nuthatches thrived in the prairie city of Swift Current, SK, with 25+ in one city park 21 Feb (M&LD). Brown Creepers are making increasing use of feeders, where they glean peanut butter, suet crumbs, and sunflower seed fragments. A Winter Wren turned up at a Millarville, AB farm 31 Dec (TK). There were fewer reports than usual of both Townsend's Solitaire and Varied Thrush in Saskatchewan (*vide* BL). A Hermit Thrush survived in Brandon until at least 11 Jan (BR). Over 30 Cedar Waxwings were still in Regina 9–13 Feb (JN). Inevitably, 2 Yellow-rumped Warblers in Calgary succumbed to the late-Jan cold.

Wintering sparrows, other than Dark-eyed Juncos, were relatively scarce, with only one American Tree Sparrow reported in s. Saskatchewan. Unusually far n. were 5 Dark-eyed Juncos at Nelson House, MB 3 Feb (RB). Likewise, heavy snow cover apparently drove Lapland Longspurs s. of the border. Three Northern Cardinals were reported in Saskatchewan, with a male surviving to at



This Prairie Falcon spent most of the winter just north of Winnipeg, Manitoba (here 1 March 2004), where it fed on an abundant supply of Rock Pigeons. Rare in the province at any time of the year, it attracted numerous observers.

Photograph by Christian Artuso.

least 17 Feb at Theodore (D&CA) and a female to 22 Feb in Saskatoon (*vide* DW), and there were sightings at five s. Manitoba locations. A flock of 12 Rusty Blackbirds overwintered near Regina (JN, BL).

Over 1000 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were reported at Exshaw, AB in early Feb (J&MM). Pine Grosbeaks irrupted farther s. than usual in Saskatchewan, while White-winged Crossbills made a good showing across most of the s. tier. Common Redpolls

were widespread in good numbers, while Pine Siskins were numerous only in Alberta. At least 16 American Goldfinches survived the Jan cold at Regina, SK (*vide* BL); flocks of 30 were noted at feeders at Gretna, Horn-dean, and Winkler throughout the winter in extreme s. Manitoba (*vide* AS). Evening Grosbeaks seem to be declining even in their main strongholds along the s. edge of the boreal forest.

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A mild December was followed by six weeks of severe cold, when some areas of northern North Dakota and northeastern Montana saw temperatures drop to -40° F. In late January and early February, the temperature did not rise above zero for a twelve-day stretch at Minot, North Dakota. Milder temperatures returned by mid-February.

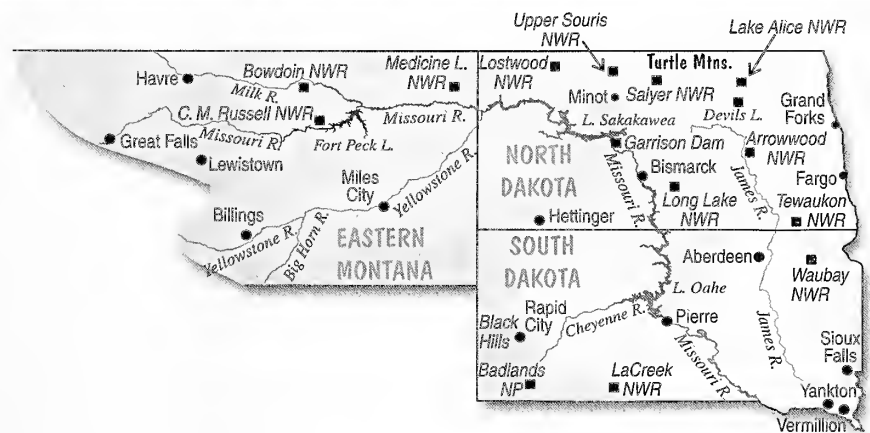
Along with the cold, some northern areas also saw record snowfall during the period, often accompanied by high winds. Two to three feet of snow cover was common in these areas. Glasgow, Montana saw a record snow season with over 150 cm. Much of the Region, however, saw snowfall closer to the long-term average.

GREBES THROUGH HAWKS

A Horned Grebe 20 Dec in Hughes, SD provided the 4th winter record for the state (KM). Also in Hughes, a Red-necked Grebe on Christmas Day furnished the 2nd winter season record for South Dakota (ph. DB). In Montana, a late Eared Grebe was noted on the Chester C.B.C. 14 Dec. The Great Blue Heron in Grand Forks, ND 12 Jan provided the latest record for the state (EEF).

Two Greater Scaup at Garrison Dam 10 Jan furnished the first Jan record for North Dakota (REM). Two Greater Scaup reports were also received for South Dakota: 2 at Yankton 6 Dec (JC) and occasionally through the period at Pierre (RDO). The 2nd

Northern Great Plains



state record Harlequin Duck first noted at Pierre, SD in the fall season remained through the winter and was enjoyed by many—"many" being a relative term in the Northern Great Plains. A Barrow's Goldeneye was in Perkins, SD 14 Dec, the 5th consecutive winter season this species has been reported in South Dakota away from the usual

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The first for North Dakota since 1997, this Northern Hawk Owl was digiscoped 22 February 2004 in McHenry County, where it remained into the spring season. Photograph by Ron Martin.

wintering area at Rapid City (p.a., DCG).

Bald Eagles were widespread, with a peak of 56 on the Yankton, SD C.B.C. 14 Dec. Sixty individuals on 13 North Dakota C.B.C.s made the 2nd highest count on record. Northern Goshawks made a strong showing in North Dakota, with 11 C.B.C.s reporting 26 individuals. The Garrison Dam C.B.C. recorded a new high when 11 were tallied 14 Dec. The peak for Rough-legged Hawks was 69 on the Spearfish, SD C.B.C. 4 Jan.

PARTRIDGE THROUGH GULLS

Gray Partridges have recovered from the lows of the 1990s in many areas, particularly in nw. North Dakota and ne. Montana. The Upper Souris N.W.R., ND C.B.C. tallied a record 319 on 19 Dec, and the state total of 654 was the highest in years. The Ft. Peck, MT C.B.C. recorded 152 on 30 Dec. Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers were spectacular in North Dakota and e. Montana. The peak in North Dakota was 571 on the Upper Souris N.W.R. C.B.C. 19 Dec. Numerous other C.B.C.s and day-counts exceeded 200 individuals. In Montana, 398 were tallied on the Ft. Peck C.B.C. 30 Dec, and other day-counts in the hundreds were reported. Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey numbers were similarly notable.

Virginia Rails were located in two areas of Lawrence, SD 4 Jan and 14 Feb (AB, PB, SCBC). There are only three previous winter records for the state. An early American Coot was in Grand Forks, ND 28 Feb (EEF).

Following the flurry of Mew Gulls in the Dakotas in the fall season, one or more of this species wintered in the Pierre, SD area (RDO, KM). In North Dakota, the last was noted 26 Dec at Garrison Dam (DNS). Casual away from the Missouri R. in e. Montana, a Glaucous Gull was at Eureka Res. 15 Jan (JN). The only Black-legged Kittiwake reported was a single 12 Dec in Charles Mix, SD (p.a., RM).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported in two new areas, with singles in Brookings, SD 28 Feb (BH) and Ft. Peck, MT 2 Feb (p. a., CC). The peak for the season was at Pierre, SD 20 Dec, when 49 were tallied on the C.B.C. Snowy Owl numbers were very low. A Northern Hawk Owl was photographed in McHenry, ND 22 Feb and remained to the end of the period (p.a., BD, ph. REM, DNS); another was reported in Hazelton, ND on the same day but could not be relocated (p.a., PF). These represented the first reports in North Dakota since 1997.

Additions to the list of extralimital sightings of Red-bellied Woodpeckers from the fall season were a single in Perkins, SD 3 Jan (BD) and 3 in the Minot, ND area through the period (REM). Northern Shrikes were widespread, and 59 were noted on 13 North Dakota C.B.C.s. A Boreal Chickadee was reported 28 Feb at Denbigh Experimental Forest, McHenry, ND (p. a., BD). This furnished the 13th report for the state and the first in 12 years. A Rock Wren 4 Dec in Custer, SD would provide the 2nd winter record for the state (p.a., KH).

Winter season reports of Eastern Bluebirds in North Dakota have become more regular in recent years. This year, 2 were noted 1 Dec in McHenry (GAE). A Mountain Bluebird 15 Dec in Dickinson, ND provided the 2nd latest report for the state (p.a., JPL). Casual in winter in e. South Dakota, a Mountain Bluebird was in Hughes 8 Feb (DB). An astounding 120,000 American Robins were tallied in the Yankton, SD C.B.C. 14 Dec.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Furnishing the 5th winter season report for

North Dakota, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was photographed at a feeder near Minot 26 Jan (p.a., REM). Regular for several weeks at the feeder, the bird did not reappear the morning of 28 Jan, when the temperature hovered at -32° F. In South Dakota, a Yellow-rumped Warbler wintered at Pierre (DB, RDO). Two Chipping Sparrows were seen in the Mandan 20 Dec, the 3rd year in the last four that this species has been reported in winter in North Dakota (p.a., TH). Nineteen Harris's Sparrows on eight North Dakota C.B.C.s was well above the long-term average. A notable flock of 20,000 Snow Buntings was seen in Cass, ND 23 Jan (MO).

Red Crossbill reports were scarce, but White-winged Crossbills were present in good numbers in North Dakota. One hundred on six C.B.C.s was the most in a number of years, and birds were reported from 10 other locations in the state. The peak noted was 87 in n.-cen. North Dakota 21 Feb (BD, REM). Common Redpolls were everywhere, and small numbers of Hoary Redpolls were widely reported in North Dakota. Casual in cen. South Dakota, a single Hoary Redpoll was in Sully 21 Feb (KM). Hoary Redpolls were reported from two locations in e. Montana. Pine Siskin numbers were very low, continuing the trend of recent years.

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Affording the fifth winter report for North Dakota, this Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler was present in rural Ward County until 27 January 2004 (here 26 January). The bird did not reappear 28 January, when the morning low temperature was -32° F. Photograph by Ron Martin.

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This was, in many respects, a "typical" winter, but one without major weather events. Nebraska, at least, returned to some modicum of normal winter harshness—relative to the recent decade of milder winters—and there was even some accumulation of snow. This resulted in a more "normal" exodus and arrival of most species. Waterfowl and blackbirds generally departed in early January and returned at the end of February, as in old times. "Half-hardies" were still much in evidence, with typical winter limits for some species, especially shorebirds, now reaching into Oklahoma. Sapsuckers seemed particularly abundant, with some even into Nebraska.

Nebraska had an influx of Common Redpolls, and the entire eastern edge of the Region had Purple Finches in good numbers, an unusual event in recent times. Accipiters were also conspicuous, especially in Oklahoma. Huge numbers of geese arrived in Nebraska in late February, and amazing sparrow counts were made in Kansas. It was a phenomenal winter for gulls throughout the Region, especially at L. McConaughy, where 11 species were recorded. On the down side, numbers of Black-capped Chickadees appeared to plummet in parts of Nebraska and Kansas.

Abbreviations: Harlan (Harlan County Res., Harlan, NE); Hefner (L. Hefner, Oklahoma, OK); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa, OK); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

All the loon excitement was in Oklahoma, with Tenkiller hosting its recently amazing aggregations, including a remarkable 428 Commons on 22 Jan (JWA). Peak Red-throated count at Tenkiller was 7 on 22 Jan (JWA); one to 2 were in Oklahoma 29 Dec and 24 Jan (JWA, JAG). The high count of Pacific Loons at Tenkiller was 5 on 27 Feb (JWA), and singles were in Custer 19 Dec (DE, JAG, JO) and Cherokee 21 Jan (JWA). The icing on the loon cake was provided by the 2 different Yellow-billed Loons at Tenkiller 22 & 24 Jan (JWA, m. ob.) and 27 Feb (JWA, JL). Tenkiller also hosted a remarkable 400 Horned Grebes 27 Feb (JWA, JSt, KM).

Providing Nebraska's 2nd latest fall date for Eared Grebe were a juv. in Lincoln (SJD) and 3 at McConaughy (SJD, KN), both 19 Dec. The 71 Western Grebes at McConaughy 19 Dec (SJD) declined to 5 by 21 Feb (DAE, TR, PK, WRS). Westerns were noted eastward in Oklahoma to Murray 24 & 26 Feb (BC, EBr, GLa; 2 birds) and Noble 11 Jan (TH, LH). Rather late were one to 2 Clark's Grebes at McConaughy 19 & 21 Dec (SJD). The only other Clark's reported was in Comanche, OK 7–10 Dec (KD, m. ob.); the species is rare in Oklahoma.

Surprising was an imm. Brown Pelican in Jackson, OK 5 Jan (DB) that was later found dead. A Neotropical Cormorant provided an unexpected winter record for Coffey, KS 3 Jan (ML, MG). Late and early were Great Egrets in

Southern Great Plains



Oklahoma, OK 11 Dec (JAG) and McCurtain, OK 13 Feb (BH). A bit w. of the usual range was a Black Vulture in Pawnee, OK 27–28 Jan (PP).

WATERFOWL

Indicative of a northward shift in wintering patterns were the 35,000 Snow Geese still present at Harlan 22 Dec (SJD, GB). Spring build-ups were already spectacular by Feb, with 250,000 Snows flying over Harlan 22 Feb (LR, RH) and at least 200,000 Canada Geese in Sioux, NE by 15 Feb (KDe). Numbers of Ross's Geese continue to increase; 2000 were in Pawnee, KS 27 Jan (SS), with more than 800 in Coffey, KS 10 Jan (TH, CS). Surprising was a Brant in Texas, OK 1–13 Jan (JSt, m. ob.), one of fewer than 5 ever documented for Oklahoma.

Trumpeter Swans from reintroduction programs are becoming numerous farther s. during winter. Birds with red collars from Iowa reintroductions were found at six locations in e. Nebraska and e. Kansas (*vide* WRS, LM, KG), while others from extreme sw. Minnesota (marked with orange patagial tags) were at

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three locations in e. Kansas (*vide* LM). A male Trumpeter with a green neck collar (hatched in Washington in 1994 and released in Iowa in 1995) was photographed in *Johnson*, KS in Feb (*vide* LM). There were five reports of 37 Trumpeter Swans in Oklahoma, including 14 in *Custer* 19 Dec (NV) and 8 each at the Salt Plains 12–30 Jan (AW) and in *Oklahoma* 14 Dec (PM). The only Tundra Swans were 11 at the Salt Plains 1 Dec–28 Jan (RS).

A male Eurasian Wigeon in *Texas*, OK 29 Dec–13 Jan (LMA, JW, NH) was quite unexpected. An American Black Duck was a bit far afield in *Gosper*, NE 19 Dec (SJD), with others in *Douglas*, KS 20 Dec (GP) and *Butler*, KS 21 Feb (DW). Rather early were one to 2 Blue-winged Teal at Red Slough 22–25 Feb (DA, BH). Mid-winter reports of Northern Shoveler now extend into Nebraska, with a female in *Dawson* 12 Jan (LR, RH) and 5 at North Platte SL 2 Feb (TJW).

Redheads were largely absent in many areas this winter but returned with a flurry by 22 Feb, with 700 at Harlan (LR, RH) and 450 at McConaughy (WRS, DAE, TR, PK). For the 5th winter, a male

Tufted Duck was at L. Ogallala, *Keith*, NE 19–22 Dec (SJD, KN). Continuing a pattern of higher frequency for Greater Scaup was a scattering of reports, with high counts of 100 in *Tulsa*, OK 2 Jan (BGe) and 50–60 in *Douglas*, KS 19 Jan (DG). Strangely, the only scoter was a White-winged in *Douglas*, KS 2–19 Jan (GP, KaM, MP, DG).

Long-tailed Ducks were most common in Kansas, with 7 reported (*vide* LM, SJD); Nebraska's lone bird was at Harlan 22 Dec (SJD, GB), with others in *Tulsa*, OK (JWA, m. ob.), *Blaine*, OK 17 Feb (BH, JSt), and *Sequoyah*, OK 26 Jan (BB). Quite a surprise was a female Barrow's Goldeneye in *Custer*, OK 19 (JAG, DE, JO) & 21 Dec (BH). A good count of Hooded Mergansers was of 150+ in *Russell*, KS 8 Dec (MR). Amazing tallies of Common Mergansers were the 40,000 holding on in *Mitchell*, KS 21 Dec (MR) and the 36,000 at McConaughy, also 21 Dec (*vide* SJD).

Among hybrid ducks reported, Mallard x Northern Pintail and Gadwall x Northern Pintail males were in *Oklahoma*, OK 29 Dec and 25 Feb, respectively (JWA, JAG, JSt, KM). Male Common Goldeneye x Hooded Mergansers were in *Oklahoma*, OK 4 Dec (JWA) and at McConaughy 19 Jan (MI); this hybrid has been reported at McConaughy during two of the three winters beginning 1999–2000, probably the same bird. A photographed male goldeneye first thought to be a Barrow's in *Blaine*, OK 3–7 Feb turned out to be a Barrow's Goldeneye x Common Goldeneye hybrid (DT, m. ob.).

OSPREY THROUGH CRANES

An Osprey in *Tulsa*, OK 20 Dec (ER) was very tardy. Best count of Bald Eagles was of 240 at McConaughy, including 60 percent ads., on 22

Feb (DAE, TR, WRS, PK). A White-tailed Kite appeared briefly in *Comanche*, OK 6 Dec (KM), an unprecedented record. *Accipiters* were widely reported in the Region, with good numbers in Oklahoma (*vide* JAG). Eight Northern Goshawks were noted, 6 in Nebraska (*vide* WRS), with singles in *Jefferson*, KS 18 Dec (SJD) and as far s. as *Washington*, OK 31 Dec (BG). Golden Eagles, rare in e. Oklahoma, were found in *Osage* 22 Feb (JC) and in *McCurtain*



This adult Black Brant at Guymon, Texas County, Oklahoma 13 January 2004 was photographed resting in a local park after forays to local fields. The state has only a handful of records of this subspecies. Photograph by James W. Arterburn.

on four occasions through the winter (BH, DA). Merlin reports declined drastically southward, with 33 in Nebraska (all 16 identified to subspecies were *richardsoni*), only 2 in Kansas (*vide* LM), and 6 from Oklahoma (*vide* JWA, JM). Easterly was a Prairie Falcon in *Sarpy*, NE 1 Jan (CNK). Peregrine Falcons in *Mitchell*, KS 21 Dec (MR), Harlan 22 Feb (LR, RH), and in *Lancaster*, NE 27 Dec (*vide* LRB) and 20 Feb (TR, DAE, WRS, PK) were likely of wintering *anatum*; none were found in Oklahoma.

Surprising were the 2 King Rails at Red Slough 11 & 13 Jan (DA, BH); the species may be establishing year-round residency there. Also a surprise at Red Slough were 5 Sandhill Cranes 4–25 Feb (BH, DF, DA), although the 5000 in *Barber*, KS 3 Jan (PJ) were more exceptional for at that latitude in winter.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Rather late was a Black-bellied Plover in *Johnston*, OK 8 Dec (BC, EBr). American Avocets were all over Oklahoma: one was still at Salt Plains 8 Dec (JWA), 3 were in *Sequoyah* 2 Dec (CH), and one of the 3 present in *Oklahoma* 4 Dec (JWA) wintered (JAG, JWA, PV, FS). There was a scattering of half-hardy shorebirds in the s. part of the Region, including the 11 Least Sandpipers n. to *Coffey*, KS 3 Jan (ML, MG). Also of more notable interest in Oklahoma were the single Spotted Sandpipers in *Cherokee* 20 Dec (MM, DJ, JN, DC) and 24 Jan (JWA), and in *Wagoner* 27 Dec (VO, JD) and 15 Feb (JM, BH, JD), a Dunlin in *Cleveland* 4 Jan (JAG, B&SD, CBy), and as many as 38 Long-billed Dowitchers at Salt Plains 12–13 Jan (GL, AW), with 2 in *Noble* 11 Jan (LH, TH). An excellent count of Wilson's Snipe was of 70 in *Sequoyah*, OK 24 Feb (JM).

Gulls continue to educate and excite the Region's birders, with 11 species just on the McConaughy C.B.C. 21 Dec (*vide* SJD), and 14 species total plus one hybrid for the Regional season total. To start with those found only in Oklahoma, Laughing Gulls were in *Cherokee* 10 Feb (JM) and *LeFlore* 1 Jan–29 Feb (SB, DT, m. ob.), with up to 2 Franklin's Gulls in *Tulsa* 2 Dec–3 Feb (BGd, JWA). Bonaparte's Gulls have been lingering later northward and in numbers; a group of 284 at McConaughy 19 Dec (SJD) also yielded an ad. basic Little Gull and an ad. basic Black-headed Gull (SJD, KN), the latter only the 2nd for Nebraska. Both birds were seen again on 21 Dec (*vide* SJD). An imm. Bonaparte's Gull persisted at McConaughy until 21 Feb (WRS, DAE, TR, PK), Nebraska's first winter record. Merely rare at McConaughy were basic ad. Mew Gulls 19 (SJD) & 21 Dec (WRS, KN; 2 birds), but a definite "zootie" was the 3rd for Oklahoma in *Blaine* 4–7 Feb (DT, m. ob.).

California Gulls are regular in low numbers in winter at McConaughy but rare elsewhere. Single Californians were at Harlan 14–27 Dec (GH, WH), *Sedgwick*, KS 30 Jan (PJ), *Tulsa*, OK 13 Feb (BCL), and *Cheyenne Bottoms* 24 Feb (SS), with one to 2 in *Oklahoma*, OK 11 Dec (JAG) through 24 Jan (JWA, CB, PF). Herring Gulls are only locally more common, but by far the best tally was an amazing 650, including 85 percent ads., 22 Feb at McConaughy (WRS, DAE, TR, PK). Thayer's Gull reports declined southward, with 9 from Nebraska (*vide* WRS), 3 from Kansas (MR, AS), and one or 2 birds in Oklahoma at Hefner (JWA, JAG, m. ob.). Clearly one of the rarer gull species in the Region is Iceland Gull; a first-winter bird was at McConaughy 21 Dec–1 Jan (SJD, WRS, BKP, TL, MI, ph.).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls are increasing in numbers; this winter, the Region hosted about 9, including 3 that wintered in *Oklahoma*, OK (JAG, m. ob.) and one in *Stephens*, OK 27 Dec (KM, SM, L&MT). Glaucous Gull is also more regular northward, with a total of 15 in Nebraska and Kansas (*vide* WRS, LM); from Oklahoma, only 4 were reported this season (*vide* JWA). A Glaucous recovered at Hefner 8 Jan apparently succumbed to a fungal infection in its air-sacs, probably *Aspergillus* (JAG). Less conspicuous was an apparent ad. Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull hybrid at Hefner 8 Jan (JAG), possibly the same bird as suspected two years ago. Finally, a first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was well described at McConaughy 19 Jan (MI). An excellent count of Forster's Terns was the 45+ wintering as far n. as *Wagoner*, OK (JWA, JM).

DOVES THROUGH WRENS

Barely rating a mention, Eurasian Collared-Doves are now found throughout the Region. White-winged Doves are moving northward

also; northerly was one in Elk, KS 20 Dec (GJW), and 2 were in Cimarron, OK 9-18 Dec (JAG, JWA, BH, JSt). Inca Doves also are moving northward, with 2 in Meade, KS 11 Dec (TF) and an amazing 16 in Wagoner, OK through the period (JH, m. ob.). Still a rarity, however, is Common Ground-Dove: the only reports were of singles in Cleveland, OK 27 Dec (RG) and 27-28 Jan (JHy). Sporadically reported in extreme sw. Kansas, a Western Screech-Owl was in Morton 27 Dec (SP). The only other known location is in neighboring Cimarron, OK. Only 2 Snowy Owls came to light, one in Lancaster, NE 18 Dec (fide KP), another as far s. as Rogers, OK 28 Jan (GS).

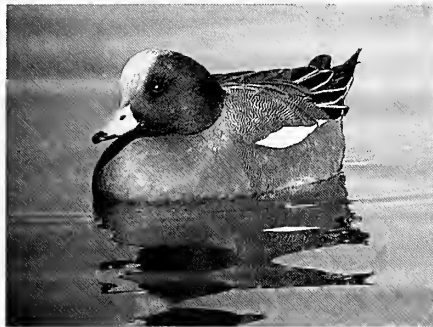
A few hummers survived at food sources, all Rufous or simply *Selasphorus*. Most northerly was a Rufous in Saline, KS Oct-10 Dec (NH). A Rufous in Cleveland, OK succumbed 12 Dec (RL), while another, along with 3 *Selasphorus*, wintered at Tulsa, OK residences (fide JWA). Another *Selasphorus* wintered in Comanche, OK (BM, EM, KM). An unusual cluster of 3 Lewis's Woodpeckers wintering in Comanche, OK were e. of their usual range (KM, WW, RA, m. ob.). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were numerous, both in Oklahoma (fide JAG) and in Nebraska, where an exceptional 22 were noted, including a juv. nw as far as Brown 15 Jan (fide MB).

An early Eastern Phoebe was as far nw. as Alfalfa, OK by 7 Feb (PJ, KG), and a late Say's Phoebe was still in Cimarron, OK 16-17 Dec (BH, JSt). Most surprising was Oklahoma's 2nd mid-winter Ash-throated Flycatcher in Murray 15 Jan (BJ). Not unexpected, but a good count, were the 4 Blue-headed Vireos in McCurtain, OK 11 Dec (BH). A high (or supplemented) winter count was the 96 Fish Crows in McCurtain, OK 13 Feb, up from 37 on 8 Dec (BH). The first Purple Martin appeared in Tulsa, OK 19 Feb (DS), followed closely by 5 Tree Swallows in Sequoyah, OK 24 Feb (JM, JHr).

Nebraska observers expressed considerable concern about low counts of Black-capped Chickadees. Two e. Nebraska C.B.C.s reported record low counts that were 10-15 percent lower than previous lows (fide JG, LRB), and a similar pattern was noted in ne. Kansas (fide LM). West Nile virus was suggested but unconfirmed as the culprit. A Rock Wren at McConaughy 21 Dec (LR, RH) was most tardy, while the one or 2 at Fort Gibson Dam in Cherokee, OK 27 Dec-15 Feb (JHr, SR, CR) were out of range. Other northerly wrens included several Carolina Wrens; one as far n. and w. as Scotts Bluff, NE 20 Dec (TR, WRS) provided the first Nebraska Panhandle record. Also risking the elements were a House Wren in Leavenworth, KS 28 Dec (MS, JS) and single Sedge Wrens in Tulsa, OK 10 Jan (TM) & 10 Feb (BGe, BF).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

A Varied Thrush in Cowley, KS 21 Dec (GY) was the only one recorded. Unusually far n.



With only a few records for Oklahoma, this male Eurasian Wigeon at Guymon, Texas County (here 13 January 2004) was a popular visitor here. Photograph by James W. Arterburn.

was a Gray Catbird in Adams, NE 19 Jan (PD). Three Sage Thrashers persisted in Cimarron, OK 16-17 Dec (BH, JSt), as did a Brown Thrasher in Madison, NE 20 Dec (fide DH). The Curve-billed Thrasher in Sioux, NE entered the 18th month of its stay there (fide AK). Two Orange-crowned Warblers hoping for a tepid winter were in Sedgwick, KS 20 Dec (PJ), as were 2 Audubon's Warblers in Cimarron, OK 10 Dec (JAG, JWA), 18 Myrtle Warblers in Knox, NE 26 Dec (MB), with 2 in Lincoln 17 Jan (LR, RH). A Palm Warbler at Red Slough 16 Dec (DA) was most unexpected. Two tanagers attempting to survive the winter were a female Summer in McCurtain, OK 17 Jan+ (BH) and an even more surprising female Western Tanager at a Riley, KS feeder 31 Jan (DR).

Incredible numbers of sparrows were found in Cowley, KS, including 3000 American Tree Sparrows and 5000+ Harris's Sparrows (fide MT). Unusual in midwinter, single Lark Sparrows appeared in Oklahoma in Alfalfa 9 Feb (GL, LL, JLa) and Osage 29 Jan (RA). A Savannah Sparrow in Otoe, NE (LE, CF) was only the 2nd in midwinter for Nebraska, as was a Lin-



A rare find was this female Western Tanager coming to a feeder in Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas 31 January 2004. Photograph by Dove Rintoul.

coln's Sparrow in Dixon 24 Jan (BFH). Rare Dark-eyed Junco sightings included a Pink-sided e. to Sarpy, NE 1 Jan (CNK) and a Gray-headed wintering in Sioux, NE (HKH). The southernmost Snow Bunting was in Sumner, KS 2 Feb (TH).

The only report of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was of 35 wintering at a regular location in Sioux, NE (HKH). Purple Finches were widely reported in e. parts of the Region after a

few lean years, including several counts of 50+ in Nebraska (fide WRS), 47+ in Jefferson, KS 29 Dec (MG), and a high count of 17 as far s. as McCurtain, OK 11 Dec (BH). Red Crossbills were inconspicuous this winter; Nebraska had only three reports (fide WRS), with 6 in Morton, KS 27 Dec (SP), 2-3 in Wagoner, OK 25 Nov (JWA), and one or 2 in Cherokee, OK 4 Feb (JM). This was a fairly good year for Common Redpolls in the Region, with about 30 scattered statewide in Nebraska Jan-Feb (fide WRS) and a few in Kansas s. to Finney 7 Dec-18 Jan (T&SS), Riley 14 Dec (TC), and Saline 3 Feb (JZ), the latter a report of 4 birds. Few Pine Siskins were reported. A first winter record of Lesser Goldfinch in Pittsburg, OK 26-29 Feb (BGh) was noteworthy by both date and e. location.

Cited observers (state editors in boldface): NEBRASKA: Mark Brogie, Gordon Brown, Linda R. Brown, Kathy DeLara (KDe), Stephen J. Dinsmore, Paul Dunbar, David A. Easterla, Carol Falk, Laurence Falk, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, David Heidt, Glen Hoge, Wanda Hoge, Helen K. Hughson, Bill F. Huser, Marshall Iliff, Alice Kenitz, Clem N. Klaphake, Peter Kondrashov, Tony Leukering, Kay Niyo, Brandon K. Percival, Kevin Poague, Lanny Randolph, Tommie Rogers, T.J. Walker, W. Ross Silcock. KANSAS: Ted Cable, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Tom Flowers, Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish, Kevin Groeneweg, Tyler Hicks, Nancy Highgate, Pete Janzen, Gloria Jones-Wolf, Mark Land, Kathy McDowell (KaM), Lloyd Moore, Sebastian Patti, Marie Plinsky, Galen Pittman, Mike Rader, David Rintoul, Carolyn Schwab, Scott Selman, Tom & Sara Shane, Mike Stewart, Jon Strong, Art Swalwell, Max Thompson, David Weible, Gene Young, Judy Zanardi. OKLAHOMA: Randy Anderson, David Arbour, James W. Arterburn, David Barrett, Bill Beall, Sandy Berger, Eric Brewer (EBr), Bill Carrell (BCl), Bill Carter, Cyndie Browning, Chet Bynum (CBy), Bill Carter, David Chapman, Jeff Cox, Jim Deming, Bill & Sandy Dengler, Ken Dorrell, David Elmendorf, Phil Floyd, Bill Foster, Dave Frericks, Bonnie Gall, Bob Gard (BGd), Bob Germany (BGe), Billy Graham (BGh), Kevin Groeneweg, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Richard Gunn, Jim Harman (JHr), Jim Harris, Jay Healy (JHy), Berlin Heck, Craig Heflebower, Leon Hicks, Tyler Hicks, Neland Hill, Doug James, Pete Janzen, Barry Jones, Rhondi Large, Jean Larrabee (JLa), Gary Lawley (GLa), Glenda Leslie, Lloyd Leslie, Jo Loyd, Larry Mays (LMa), Jeri McMahon, Kurt Meisenzahl, Sharron Meisenzahl, Beth Mercer, Earl Mercer, Terry Mitchell, Mike Mlodinow, Patty Muzny, John Neal, Valerie O'Brien, Jack Olson, Pascal Pelletier, Elaine Renning, Clarence Ruby, Susie Ruby, Ron Shepperd, Dick Sherry, Gary Siftar, Jerry Sisler (JSi), Frank Stanford, John Sterling (JSt), Doug Tozer, Lou & Mary Truex, Pat Velte, Nancy Vickers, Wally Walling, Anne Wilber, Jimmy Woodard.

Texas



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The first half of the winter was characterized by dry conditions throughout the most of the state, but the last two months of the period saw good rains in all areas except far West Texas. El Paso's drought continued through the winter: the city's 2003 rainfall barely exceeded 10 cm, approximately half of normal and the fourth lowest annual total of the last 125 years. The Chihuahuan Desert had almost no grass or seeds this winter, and species that are normally common in this season (e.g., Brewer's, Rufous-crowned, and Black-throated Sparrows) were scarce. Far western Texas did see a strong invasion of Western Scrub-Jays, a

few White-breasted Nuthatches, and record numbers of Acorn and Lewis's Woodpeckers. In South Texas, the weather could be considered "mild to normal," with no sustained freezing temperatures. This produced an abundance of rodents, which seemed to enhance the raptor population. This is a plausible explanation (*vide* JA) for the unprecedented overwintering of five or more Broad-winged Hawks in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The highlight of the season was the unprecedented movement of western gulls into the state, including two Slaty-backed Gulls and a state-first Glaucous-winged Gull. These mega-rarities were joined by larger-than-normal numbers of California and Thayer's Gulls and were just one part of the interesting gull story that unfolded this winter in Texas that continued into the spring.

Abbreviation: U.T.C. (Upper Texas Coast). The following are shortened names for the respective local, county, state, or national

parks, and wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Bentsen, Big Bend, Big Bend Ranch, Buescher, Buffalo Lake, Caprock Canyons, San Bernard, Santa Ana, Sea Rim, and Trinity River.

LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Red-throated Loons made a good showing this season, with one at E.V. Spence Res., Coke 31 Dec (EC) and 2 there 11 Jan (BL), up to 2 at L. Benbrook, Tarrant 15 Jan+ (MR), and 2 at L. Buchanan, Burnet 1 Feb (TFe). This was also a banner year for Pacific Loons, with up to 12 birds reported from various locations around the state. Common Loons were present in good numbers on L. Meredith, Hutchinson, as many as 7 at a time. Rare in far w. Texas, a lone Common Loon was at McNary Res., Hudspeth 9 Jan (BZ). Two ad. Least Grebes with 2 chicks were at Mitchell L., Bexar 22 Feb (SCo). Two Horned Grebes at McNary Res. 14 Dec were notable (†BZ), as was a single bird at Balmorhea L., Reeves 7–20 Dec (ML, MAD). Red-necked Grebes were found at Kurth L., Angelina 1 Jan+ (†GG et al.) and Wright Patman L., Bowie 24 Jan (†MD). Two Western Grebes were present on L. Buchanan, Llano 28 Feb (TFe), and more unexpected was one at L. O' the Pines, Marion 6 Dec (DB). Also special were Clark's Grebes at L. Meredith 14 Dec (BP, RSc), the latter a first county record.

A flock of 84 American White Pelicans at Balmorhea L., Reeves 7 Dec was the largest count ever at this site (ML). Representing only the 2nd winter record for Brown Pelican in the Oaks & Prairies region, one was picked up in Temple, Bell 28 Dec (*vide* TFe). A Neotropic Cormorant at L. Buchanan, Llano 22 Dec (TFe) provided a rare winter record for the Edwards Plateau. An astonishing 52 Neotropic Cormorants was a notable winter concentration at L. Somerville, Washington 1 Jan (CMe); also of note was one in the company of Double-crests in Dallas 20 Dec (KC). Double-crested Cormorants are being found in the Panhandle in increasing numbers each winter; this year, 30 were found on Childress and Baylor Lakes, Childress 25 Jan (BP, RSc). Unusual in winter for ne. Texas was a small flock of Anhingas near Eastland, Eastland 30 Dec (THu).

As in other recent winters, an American Bittern visited the restored cienega at Balmorhea S.P. 15 Jan+ (TJo), and another was reported along Big Bend's Rio Grande Village Nature Trail 16–19 Feb (CN, DT). Snowy Egrets made news in n.-cen. Texas this winter, with 2 along Mountain Cr., Dallas 20 Dec (KC, MMi), 2 at L. Worth, Tarrant 4 Jan (MR), and one at Richland Cr., Freestone 22 Feb (PBa). The Snowy Egret and Little Blue Heron found 2 Feb (TFe) in Austin were either very early or very late but certainly unexpected. Three Little Blue Herons were at

the Fort Worth Nature Center, *Tarrant* 1 & 4 Jan (EF; JC), with a juv. Tricolored Heron there 1 Jan (EF). The Reddish Egret present in Lubbock in the fall was last seen on 2 Dec (BB). A rare winter find was a Green Heron near Mitchell L., *Bexar* 1 Jan (SCo). Unexpected was an imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron in Amarillo, *Potter* 2 Jan (KS). A Roseate Spoonbill was documented at Corsicana, *Navarro* 30 Dec (TFe). Two Wood Storks were seen over the Brownsville Dump, *Cameron* 10 Jan (JA), a rare winter sighting. Extremely early was a leap-year Turkey Vulture over Lubbock 29 Feb (AF).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Larger and larger numbers of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are overwintering along the U.T.C., as attested by record-high counts on several C.B.C.s. One on the Gibbons Creek C.B.C., *Grimes* 18 Dec provided an overdue first county record (JWi, TS). A Fulvous Whistling-Duck at College Station, *Brazos* 14 Dec (DPH) provided a 2nd county record; the other was 3 May 1964. A nice concentration of 3000 Greater White-fronted Geese was tallied near Uvalde, *Uvalde* 3 Jan (MH); a group of 45 Greater White-fronted Geese at Caddo L., *Harrison* 6 Dec was also noteworthy (PBa). Among the geese counted by Heindel near Uvalde on 3 Jan were 12 Ross's. Good numbers of geese wintered in far w. Texas at McNary Res., *Hudspeth*, with high counts of 227 Ross's and 75 Snows 14 Dec. A rare blue-morph Ross's Goose was present with this group on 14 & 22 Dec, an extraordinary find and a first for the Trans-Pecos (†BZ).

A group of 6-7 Trumpeter Swans were located near Lockney, *Floyd* 16 Dec (JB, MCo), but not before 2 were shot and killed and 3 others injured. These birds were from the Iowa reintroduction program. Details of 2 unbanded imm.

Trumpeter Swans reported near Springlake, *Lamb* 14 Feb (†JST) will be reviewed by the state records committee. A few Tundra Swans were also reported from the Panhandle, including 3 near Springlake, *Lamb* 27 Nov-12 Dec (JB, J&TS), 8 on Cactus L., *Moore* 13 Jan (BP), and one in *Potter* 22 Feb (BP). Other Tundra Swans reported included one near Jolly, *Clay* 22 Jan (DMc) and 2 at Hagerman N.W.R. 21 Feb (MMo).

Good numbers of Redheads invaded the U.T.C. in mid-Jan, when they were seemingly everywhere, with the high count of 780 at

Brazoria N.W.R., *Brazoria* in Feb (RW). Greater Scaup were reported in higher-than-normal numbers in many areas of the state; whether this represents an actual increase in numbers or improved observer skill in identification is unclear. In the Trans-Pecos, a single Surf Scoter was at Tornillo Res., *El Paso* 27 Dec (EC) and 2 at Balmorhea L. 7-20 Dec (m. ob.). The Long-tailed Duck reported in Amarillo in the fall remained until 24 Jan (m. ob.), and a female was at L. Tawakoni, *Rains* 16 Feb (RB). A large count of 71 Hooded Mergansers was made on the Longview C.B.C., *Gregg* 20 Dec (*fide* PBa), and an amazing concentration of 767 Common Mergansers occurred at McNary Res. 14 Dec (BZ). Always a good find in ne. Texas, a female Common Merganser was in *Bowie* 27 Dec (CMi, MD). Red-breasted Mergansers were particularly numerous in far w. Texas this winter, with a high count of 24 at McNary Res. in Dec (BZ); a casual winter visitor to the Panhandle, one was at Greenbelt L., *Donley* 25 Jan (BP, RSc).

Quite unexpected was an Osprey at L. Alan Henry, *Garza* 21 Feb (AF), as was one

reviewed by the state records committee. An ad. Gray Hawk wintered at Big Bend's Cottonwood Campground, providing the Region's first winter record and a seasonal highlight for the park (m. ob.). An ad. Common Black-Hawk was seen at Santa Margarita Ranch, *Starr* 14 Feb (KE), and an imm. was noted at San Ygnacio, *Zapata* 20 Feb (J&MK).

Any winter record of Broad-winged Hawk in Texas is noteworthy, but this season saw an unprecedented number of records, with 2 juvs. present at Bentsen the entire season (JA, TB, KE), one at Sabal Palm Sanctuary, *Cameron* 14 Feb, and 2 at the Anacua Unit of the Las Palomas W. M. A., *Hidalgo & Cameron* 30 Dec (JA). White-tailed Hawks wandered well n. of their normal range to Crawford, *McLennan* 20 Dec (†KA, NW, JGa) and Granger L., *Williamson* 25 Jan (RKA). An imm. Zone-tailed Hawk over Houston Heights, *Harris* 29 Dec was the first for the U.T.C. (PDH). Providing very rare winter records for the Edwards Plateau were single Zone-taileds near Canyon L., *Comal* 4 & 17 Jan (GSc et al.) and Ingram, *Kerr* 20

Jan (TGa). Always a nice find in the Trans-Pecos was a Harlan's Hawk in Big Bend on 28 Dec (MF). Ferruginous Hawks noted on the U.T.C. this season included singles near Mykawa, *Brazoria* 21 Feb (SP) and near Danbury, *Brazoria* 19 Feb (DiP, SB). A well-described Golden Eagle was observed in e. *Clay* 14 Dec (GM). Perhaps an indication of the expanding range of the Crested Caracara, a lone bird was in alfalfa fields in *Midland* 6 Jan+ (RMS, MSU). In n. cen. Texas, a pair of Crested Caracaras was noted in sw. *Tarrant* 30 Nov (MiF), and a single was seen near Midlothian, *Ellis* 29 Feb (GSC).

An Aplomado Falcon on Follet's I., *Brazoria* 4 Dec (JSt) was the first U.T.C. report since the summer of 2000 of this reintroduced species. Peregrine Falcons were noted well

n. of their expected winter range in Lubbock 12 Jan (PK) and *Jeff Davis* 20 Jan (LB, ph.). A Prairie Falcon was present in *Willacy* through the period and represents only the 4th modern record for this species in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (JA). Other noteworthy Prairie Falcon sightings include singles at Kingsville, *Kleberg* 7 Feb (JSt), Boerne City L., *Kendall* 16 Feb (CHa), and *Tarrant* 3 Jan-12 Feb (MR et al.).

GROUSE THROUGH TERNS

An encouraging 38 Atwater's Greater



MMMacwhat? Broad-winged Hawks wintered in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in unprecedented numbers this year. All were first-winter birds and were found in the various wooded preserves along the Rio Grande in Cameron County and Hidalgo County. This individual was photographed at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park on 19 January 2004. Photograph by John Arvin.

photographed at McNary Res. 14 Dec (BZ). An imm. Bald Eagle soared over Guadalupe Mountains N.P. headquarters, *Culberson* 5 Dec (KB), with other notable sightings of singles at White Rock L., *Dallas* 28 Dec (BGi), L. Halbert, *Navarro* 30 Dec (TFe), and Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro* 23 Feb (PBa). A pair of Cooper's Hawks was observed tending a nest in *Dallas* 28 Feb (KC); if successful, this may represent a first modern record of nesting in *Dallas*. Details of a Northern Goshawk sighted at White River L., *Crosby* 3 Jan (†RKO) will be

Prairie-Chickens were found on the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken N.W.R. C.B.C., Colorado/Austin. A strange find was a Lesser Prairie-Chicken that wandered into a n. Lubbock yard 1 Dec (AF, RLe). It is speculated that the bird got to Lubbock on its own, as there is a population of prairie-chickens within 50 km, and the species is known to wander in winter. A good count of 7 Virginia Rails was noted below the dam at Balmorhea L. 20 Dec (JGe, CE). A Sora at L. Marvin, Hemphill 24 Jan (BB) was certainly unexpected. A total of 194 Whooping Cranes returned to the Aransas N.W.R., Aransas this winter, including a pair with 2 young—only the 3rd known instance of a pair of Whoopers with 2 young at Aransas (RLi).

Providing a first winter record for the South Plains was a Snowy Plover at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 14–21 Dec (BB, SH, HH). A high count of 25+ Snowy Plovers at Imperial Res., Pecos 26 & 28 Dec was exceptional (EC). An impressive count of 20 Wilson's Plovers was made on the Galveston C.B.C., Galveston 16 Dec. One of the many interesting discoveries of the season was a concentration of 19 Mountain Plovers near Dougherty, Floyd 24 Jan (JST, LV, ph.), providing a first winter record for the South Plains. Fewer birds than normal were found this season in the Granger L. area; Fennell did not know if there were actually fewer plovers or if they were more widely dispersed in the area. It may have been the latter, since new wintering sites were found in Bell by Pinkston.

American Avocets lingered into the winter at several inland locations: up to 6 at L. Wright Patman, Bowie 6 Dec–15 Feb (EC, MD), 2 at Hagerman N.W.R. 7 Dec (IK), one near Springlake, Lamb 13 Dec (BB, AF), and 2 in El Paso 7 Jan (BZ). A Pectoral Sandpiper near Mission, Hidalgo 1 Jan—early Feb provided a very rare winter occurrence for the state (*vide* JA). Always a rarity in the Trans-

Pecos in winter, 2 Dunlins were noted at Imperial Res. 26 Dec and 4 there 28 Dec (EC). A report of 45+ Stilt Sandpipers near High I., Galveston 21 Dec was a notable winter total (WB). A breeding-plumaged female Wilson's Phalarope reported from w. Galveston I., Galveston 26 Feb was very early (SL).

A Laughing Gull at Ascarate L. 1–2 Jan provided a first El Paso winter record (BZ). Also of note was a Laughing Gull at L. Wright Patman 6 Dec–15 Feb (EC, CMI, MD). Three Franklin's Gulls in Brazos 18 Dec (ER) and one in Rusk 10 Jan (JPi) provided rare winter records, while an imm. at Fort Worth 5 Jan provided a rare winter record for n.-cen. Texas (MR). A Black Tern at Galveston's East Beach 16 Dec was the first winter record in many years (DwP).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A White-tipped Dove at Uvalde, Uvalde 3 Jan provided a first county record (MH). As many as 13 Monk Parakeets were noted in Freeport, Brazoria, where they appear to have established a stable population. A high count of 13 Eastern Screech-Owls was made at White River L., Crosby 3 Jan (m. ob.). An active Great Horned Owl nest discovered at Greenbelt L., Donley 14 Jan (MEr, BP) was the earliest record of nesting for that species in the Panhandle by a month. At least 2 calling male Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls were present throughout the season at Bentsen, and the species was also reported from Santa Ana and Anzalduas County Park, Hidalgo, perhaps indicating that they are attempting to re-establish their former range in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (JA). An Elf Owl at Big Bend 28 Feb was early (GL, LF). A high count of 16 Short-eared Owls was tallied on 19 Feb at Granger L., Williamson (TFe). A female Anna's Hummingbird frequented a Lubbock yard 1 Dec–15 Feb (RE et al.); also noteworthy was a female Anna's at West Columbia, Brazoria 10 Jan (CB, MV). A well-

described male Costa's Hummingbird was present at Big Bend's Panther Junction 2–23 Feb (†MF, A&RD). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were noted in several locations in the e. third of the state, with 2 in Washington early Oct–11 Dec (F&MB, DVo), one in w. Harris 13–14 Dec (KY), and one in Nacogdoches 20 Dec. Allen's Hummingbirds documented this season included an imm. male at West Columbia 30 Jan (†CB, MV), with ad. males at Corpus Christi, Nueces 10 Jan (†GSw), Lake Jackson 14 Feb (†CB, CHi), Houston, Harris mid-Oct–15 Feb (StW, †SP), and Rockport, Aransas 31 Dec–27 Feb (†SBe).

Two Green Kingfishers were found at the Guadalupe Delta, Calhoun 17 Jan (PDH), for an unusual northerly Gulf Coast record. A female Green Kingfisher was at Rio Grande Village, Brewster 25 Jan (MF), and 2 were reported from the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande, well to the e. of the national park, on 6 Feb (GL). This winter was a particularly good one for Lewis's Woodpeckers, with no fewer than 11 birds reported during the period, the easternmost being the one reported during the fall at Balcones Canyonlands N.W.R. and another at Utopia, Bandera 4–15 Jan (MH). Always rare in El Paso, 3 Acorn Woodpeckers wintered in the w. portion of the city (BZ). A pair of Ladder-backed Woodpeckers found in Plano, Denton 23 Feb+ (MW et al.) are now known to have been present for at least a year. Providing a rare cen. Hill Country record was a Downy Woodpecker wintering along the Sabinal R., Bandera (MH). Rare for Travis, a Hairy Woodpecker was at Webberville Park 20 Jan (BFR).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH JAYS

One of the outstanding finds of the season was a Greater Pewee discovered along the San Antonio R. in San Antonio 26 Dec (EB), where it remained until 24 Jan (†WS, m.

SA This winter saw an unprecedented movement of gulls from w. North America into Texas. The factors leading to this phenomenon are unclear, but the results were startling. Two **Mew Gulls** were well documented, with one at L. Worth, Tarrant 3–5 Jan (†MR) and the other at El Paso 7 Jan (†JPa). California Gulls were well represented, with at least a 16 individuals reported from almost all regions of the state. The most noteworthy was an ad. at L. Buchanan, Llano 22 Dec (TFe). In addition to 5 Thayer's Gulls documented during the fall, a first-winter bird was at Balmorhea L. 12 Dec–9 Jan (†MAu et al.), a first-winter at Galveston 26 Jan (†MR), and an ad. at Corpus Christi, Nueces 28 Feb (†WS). Even more astounding was the ad. **Slaty-backed Gull** at Balmorhea L. 1–10 Dec (†CO, †DO et al.), providing a 2nd state record—followed quickly by another at Corpus Christi, Nueces 21–24 Dec (†MC, WR)! A first for the state was an apparent second-winter **Western Gull x Glaucous-winged Gull** at Corpus Christi, Nueces 7 Feb+ (†MR, WS). But the capper on this list of w. gulls was the first state record of **Glaucous-winged Gull**, an ad. found by Reid (†) in Fort Worth 6–9 Jan.

Gulls from Eurasia were also located in the state this season. Lesser Black-backed Gulls, now relatively routine at least coastally, were reported in above-average numbers inland, with singles at Lewisville L., Denton 13 Dec (KL), White Rock L., Dallas 17 Dec (BGi, PBi) and 21–22 Dec (MW et al.), Fort Worth, Tarrant 30 Dec–6 Jan (MR), and L. Livingston 27 Feb (m. ob.). While perusing gulls at the productive Corpus Christi Landfill 24 Jan, Sekula (†) located a first-winter four-year gull that showed both structural and plumage characters of a **Yellow-legged Gull** of one of the w. European taxa. The cooperative, distinctive bird remained in the area through the period and was extensively photographed. After careful scrutiny of photographic evidence, worldwide gull experts were convinced that the identification was correct, the bird likely being of the *atlantis* population rather than the mainland *michahellis*. If accepted by the state records committee, this will represent another first state record.

Of great interest, too, an apparent **Kelp Gull x Herring Gull** was found at the Brownsville Dump, Cameron in late Feb (MI), a first-winter Glaucous Gull was present at Port Aransas, Nueces 3 Dec+ (LJ et al.), and a first-winter Great Black-backed Gull at Galveston 31 Jan (†MA). The Regional winter total of 14 gull species, plus two very rare hybrids, is unprecedented and rivals any place on the planet for gull diversity!

ob.). A Least Flycatcher was discovered at Nacogdoches 20 Dec for a first winter record for the Pineywoods (*vide* DWo). A Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was carefully studied at the Anacua Unit of the Las Palomas W.M.A., *Cameron* 25 Jan (JA), with another at Guadalupe Delta, *Refugio* 31 Dec (BFR, PH). A Black Phoebe in Bellaire, *Harris* 31 Jan+ was just the 4th U.T.C. record (DVE et al.). Two Eastern Phoebes were present throughout the period in Lubbock, and another was at different site within the city on 31 Dec (m. ob.). Say's Phoebes are only occasionally found in winter in the Panhandle, but this season found one at Buffalo L., *Randall* 24 Jan (KS) and one at Palo Duro Canyon S.P. 5 Feb (TLJ). Remarkable was a male Vermilion Flycatcher in Amarillo, *Potter* 24 Dec–5 Jan (EK, G&MI et al.); there is only one previous winter record for the Panhandle. An Ash-throated Flycatcher near Salado, *Bell* 14 Dec (RPI) represented a county first winter record. A truly outstanding find this season was a Great Kiskadee discovered in Amarillo, *Potter* 29 Dec–9 Feb (JJ et al., BP ph.); a report of a kiskadee by a non-birder about a mile away on 16 Sep (MaS) was thus of interest! Providing a very rare winter record for the Hill Country were 2 Couch's Kingbirds in Utopia, *Bandera* through the period (MH). Also of note were 4 Couch's migrating in e. *Matagorda* 26 Feb (RW et al.). Very unusual was a Western Kingbird at Seadrift, *Calhoun* 12 Dec (BFR, PH). One of highlights of the season was a returning Thick-billed Kingbird at Selkirk I., *Matagorda* 15 Dec+ (+SG, m. ob.)—the easternmost documented record for Texas (and the United States). Interesting observations of lingering Scissor-tailed Flycatchers included groups of up to 10 birds roosting in trees near spotlights at a McDonald's Restaurant in Belton, *Bell* 1 Dec–2 Jan (RPI) and another group of 10 birds roosting together in Irving, *Dallas* 2 Dec (DL).

The only Northern Shrikes reported during the season were singles at Muleshoe N.W.R. 21 Dec (PK, B&SR) and Buffalo L. 26–27 Dec (JR, RSc). White-eyed Vireo records of note included 3 that wintered in the Sabinal R. Valley (MH) and one at Rio Grande Village 20 Feb (MF). A Bell's Vireo at San Ygnacio, *Zapata* 22 Feb was a puzzling winter record for a species that is almost unknown in winter in Texas (AW). Lone Gray Vireos were reported from separate Big Bend locations 7 (MP, THa, GL) & 29 Dec (PP), and 2 others were found 26 Feb (KB). Another excellent find of the season was a lone Cassin's Vireo in San Antonio 15–22 Feb (MR, SCo, WS). Rare in the Trans-Pecos, Blue-headed Vireos were at Big Bend's Cottonwood Campground 16 Dec (J&WR) and Lajitas, *Brewster* 17 Jan (LC, MF). In contrast to recent years, only

a single Steller's Jay wintered in El Paso, seen 17 Feb (BZ). A Fish Crow was seen and heard at San Bernard, *Brazoria* 15 Dec (DIP).

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Tree Swallows put in appearances in the Trans-Pecos, with 5 at McNary 9 Jan (BZ)



This Greater Pewee spent much of the winter (here 31 December 2003) along the San Antonio Rivier in central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. It was just the third Greater Pewee to be found during the winter in Texas and the fourteenth to be documented in the state. Photograph by Willie Sekula.

and up to 3 at Balmorhea L. 9–20 Dec (m. ob.). Huge numbers of Tree Swallows overwintered on the U.T.C., with record-high tallies on several C.B.C.s. Early-arriving Cliff Swallows were encountered at Midland 21 Feb (DK) and e. *Travis* 28 Feb (BFR). Cave Swallows apparently are wintering in small numbers in the Trans-Pecos, as individuals were noted at McNary and Balmorhea during the season. Perhaps more noteworthy were Cave Swallows farther e., with up to 3 at College Station, *Brazos* 1 Nov–1 Mar (ER), 2 at Round Rock, *Williamson* 24 Dec (TFe), approximately 200 in *Robertson* 18 Jan (CS), 16 in *Bastrop* 25 Jan (BFR), and 24 at L. Buchanan, *Burnet/Llano* 1 Feb (TFe). An excellent discovery was a lingering Barn Swallow at McNary Res., *Hudspeth* 14 Dec.

An apparently "pure" Tufted Titmouse was studied near Holland, *Bell* 25 Jan, where only hybrid forms are normally found (RPI). A surprise to Midland observers was a flock

of 10–20 Bushtits from 10 Jan+ (AW, SE et al.), providing a first county record. Red-breasted Nuthatches were extremely scarce in the state this season and were undetected in many areas. Winter Wrens wandered to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with single birds present through the period at Bentsen and the Santa Margarita Ranch (JA) and one at San Ygnacio, *Zapata* 22 Feb (AW). Three Sedge Wrens were present in Lubbock through 7 Feb (m. ob.). A single Sedge Wren was at Balmorhea L. 6 Dec (DO, CO); 3 were located in the same habitat 20 Dec (JGe, CE). Golden-crowned Kinglets were reported in far-below-normal numbers throughout the e. half of the state this season. Rare in winter were 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Balmorhea L., *Reeves* 9 Jan (ML) and one in *Dickens* 3 Jan (AF).

Wood Thrushes were noted in *Bastrop* 29 Dec–25 Jan (BFR) and Washington-on-the-Brazos S.H.P., *Washington* 26 Feb (BV). The Gray Catbird reported near Lorenzo, *Crosby* in the fall remained until 21 Dec (*vide* ML). In the Trans-Pecos, Gray Catbirds were reported from Balmorhea S.P., *Reeves* 3 Jan (TJo) and at Guadalupe Mountains N.P. the same day (JW, JGa). A Sprague's Pipit at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* 29 Dec (DWA) was an excellent find. Twenty

Sprague's Pipits in *Franklin* 1 Feb (MW) made a good count for ne. Texas. Cedar Waxwings were late arriving and were generally reported in low numbers this season throughout the state.

A Nashville Warbler foraging at Big Bend's Persimmon Gap 23 Jan (BC) was unexpected. A first winter record for the South Plains was provided by a Northern Parula in Lubbock 23–31 Dec (MCA et al.). Two Yellow Warblers wintered at Anzalduas County Park, *Hidalgo* (JA) and a male Yellow Warbler—of the chestnut-headed "Mangrove Warbler" (*erithachorides*) group—was present on a small island in the Laguna Madre, *Cameron* 1 Dec–1 Mar († ph., ScC). A highlight of the season was a well-documented Chestnut-sided Warbler in San Antonio, *Bexar* 27 Dec+ (BS, m. ob.). Black-throated Gray Warblers away from normal wintering areas included singles at San Antonio 26 Jan (BD) and at Big Bend's Cottonwood Campground 9 Feb+ (PBR). A

surprise was a Yellow-throated Warbler at San Antonio 1 Jan+ (MG, m. ob.). Another unexpected inland warbler was a Prairie Warbler at Canyon L., *Comal* 4 Jan–3 Feb (DPu et al.). It was a good winter for Prairie Warblers on the U.T.C., with singles noted at two locations in Galveston, as well as Sea Rim and Sabine Woods, *Jefferson*, and at San Bernard, *Brazoria*. A nice find was a Palm Warbler along the Pecos R. at U.S. Hwy 90, *Pecos* 14 Feb (RH). Freeman and Hockey tallied an amazing 20 Palm Warblers at the Guadalupe Delta, *Refugio* 11 Jan. A very early Black-and-white Warbler was singing near L. Weatherford, *Parker* 21 Feb (DPi). A nice discovery was a male American Redstart in Dallas, *Dallas* 31 Dec (†BBa). A Louisiana Waterthrush was banded as it overwintered along two small creeks in *Washington* (†DVo), an unprecedented event for the cen. Brazos Valley. A very early Louisiana Waterthrush was at Brazos Bend, *Fort Bend* 13 Feb (DH, BGo). Presumably the same male MacGillivray's Warbler that wintered last year was at the same w. Galveston I. location 28–29 Feb (DiP, DwP). One of the highlights of the season was a male Gray-crowned Yellowthroat at the Sabal Palm Sanctuary, *Cameron* 8 Feb+ (BGe, †BMc, m. ob.), which constitutes only the 7th modern record for Texas and the U.S. An out-of-range Wilson's Warbler was at Boerne, *Kendall* 2 Feb (ES). Another interesting winter Wilson's Warbler was at Rio Grande Village 29 Dec–10 Jan (DWA, ML). The Painted Redstart that wintered last year in Richmond, *Fort Bend* returned 7 Dec (WHE).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Interesting Summer Tanager sightings included singles in Houston, *Harris* 4 Dec–31 Jan (DVe et al.), San Antonio, *Bexar* 2 Jan (HR), and in *Nacogdoches* 27–31 Jan (CDF). A male Western Tanager was at Buescher S.P., *Bastrop* 28 Dec (CMe). Greater scrutiny of towhees in the w. half of the state continues to provide records of Eastern Towhee. This season, 3 were in the L. Marvin area, *Hemphill* 3 Jan (m. ob.), and another was in Palo Duro Canyon 31 Jan (KS); in the Hill Country, one was noted in *Mason* 29 Dec–31 Jan (DF). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow wandered to the L.B.J. National Grasslands, *Wise* 22 Jan (MCu). An American Tree Sparrow reported at the Caddo Grasslands 20 Dec (TGr) adds to the very few ne. Texas records. A Clay-colored Sparrow near Rio Grande Village 29 Dec (MAd, LL, M&ME) provided a rare winter record for Big Bend. A Baird's Sparrow was well observed near Marfa, *Presidio* 20 Dec (†ML, †EC). More unexpected was a Baird's Sparrow reported near Longview, *Gregg* the

same day (†DMe). In the Panhandle, a Le Conte's Sparrow was a rare find in Palo Duro Canyon 11 Dec (KS), while an amazing 21 were tallied at Kickapoo Caverns, *Kinney* 31 Jan (ML). A Red Fox Sparrow was noted in El Paso 10 Jan (JPa). Always a good find in Texas, a White-winged Junco was documented at Guadalupe Mountains N.P. 3–4 Jan (GW, †KB).

A Black-headed Grosbeak, casual in East Texas, was in *Walker* 29 Dec (BM). Painted Buntings were found in Beaumont, *Jefferson* 31 Dec (*fide* HJ), League City, *Galveston* 30 Jan (BH), and Armand Bayou, *Harris* 7–20 Feb (RR et al.). Four Rusty Blackbirds were found in near Lubbock, *Lubbock* 20 Dec (BB, B&SR) and 2 others in the city 31 Dec (MCA, AF). A female Orchard Oriole at Rio Grande Village 20 Feb (MF) and a female Hooded Oriole there 22 Feb (GL) were very early, possibly wintering birds. Providing rare winter records, a female Hooded overwintered at Rancho Viejo, *Cameron* (BMc), and an ad. with and 3–4 female or imm. birds were at Salineño, *Starr* 14 Feb (KE). A female Bullock's Oriole was in Midland 1 Jan–14 Feb (D&JM). Scott's Orioles at Mason 25 Dec (Dixie Feuerbacher, Bobby Frazier) and near Boerne, *Kendall* 4 Jan (SuW) provided rare winter records for the Hill Country. A Purple Finch wandered to Lubbock 24–25 Jan (E&TM). Unusual was a group of 6 Lesser Goldfinches in Amarillo, *Potter* the last week of Feb (JPr).

Undocumented: The following Texas Bird Records Review Species were reported without documentation: Mew Gull at White Rock L., *Dallas* 28 Dec; Thayer's Gull at East Beach, *Galveston* 12–21 Dec, 14 Feb.

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Idaho & Western Montana

December's weather fell into line with the past five consecutive mild winters but brought above-average precipitation to most areas. Although early January was frigid, the later two months of the season were judged to be about average for temperatures and precipitation. Clement December weather produced an impressive list of lingerers, but most of these disappeared and perhaps perished in the early January cold. As in the last five years, migratory winter finches were scarce or absent throughout the entire period. For most people, the season will be best remembered for several outstanding rarities such as Great Black-backed Gull, Northern Hawk Owl, Siberian Accentor, and Brambling.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Reservoir, Bingham and Power, ID); Latilong (area encompassed by one degree latitude and one degree longitude used in mapping bird distribution in both Idaho and Montana); L.M. (Lee Metcalf N.W.R. near Stevensville, MT).

EGRETS THROUGH OWLS

A tardy Great Egret at A.F.R. 20 Dec (JT) provided an unlikely first winter record for Latilong 27. As in last year, a White-faced Ibis lingered in Gooding, ID 20 Dec (LB), providing the Region's 2nd winter record. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal present in Bonner (EC) throughout the period was good news; apparently this subspecies has not previously been recorded in Idaho. Another first for the Region was a Blue-winged Teal that overwintered in Canyon, ID (m. ob.). In addition, reports were made throughout winter of 5 other Blue-winged Teal scattered across sw. Idaho. Only 5 Eurasian Wigeons were reported, less than half of last year's total. Another winter first for Idaho was a record-late Harlequin Duck near Kingston, Shoshone 8 Dec (LH). A total of 9 Long-tailed Ducks was found, which surpassed even last winter's excellent count. Ospreys stayed unusually late again in s. Idaho, with singles in Gooding 13 Dec (KF) and Boise 16-21 Dec (MC, DT). Montana's first White-tailed Kite remained at L.M. through 12 Dec (WT). Gyrfalcons came through in excellent numbers, with a total of 8 reported. A late Franklin's Gull in Pocatello 13 Dec (MCr) represented a 2nd winter record for Idaho. The tally of rare-but-regular gulls was fairly typical, with 4 Mew, 6 Thayer's, 5 Glaucous-winged, and 7 Glaucous reported. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull in Boise, ID 8-22 Dec (RLR, DT) added Idaho's 7th record. The bird of



the season was the Region's first Great Black-backed Gull in Boise, ID 13-22 Dec (ph. MC, †C&LW); the species is known from only a few midcontinental records (e.g., Colorado).

Although winter-period Greater Yellowlegs reports are not annual, no fewer than 3 were tallied in s. Idaho throughout the season. A Long-billed Curlew pushed the season in Gem 21 Feb (CS), representing Idaho's 2nd winter record. Unlike recent years, the only Dunlin reported was at Mann L., Nez Perce, ID 24 Jan (TG). Always rare in Idaho, a Snowy Owl was discovered in Kootenai 22-28 Jan (CC, EH). A highlight of the season was a crowd-pleasing Northern Hawk Owl that wintered at Elkhorn, Blaine, ID (KC, PWP). Extralimital Barred Owls visited s. Idaho, with one below A.F.R. 18 Dec-Feb 2 (CT) and another in Canyon 14 Jan (DH).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH REDPOLLS

For the 6th consecutive year, a hardy Lewis's Woodpecker wintered near Hamilton, MT (WT). Any winter-period sapsucker is unusual, but the flock of 4 Red-naped Sapsuckers found in Nez Perce 17 Jan (HK) was unprecedented. A well-documented Red-breasted Sapsucker that visited Mountain

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Home 7 Dec (ph. SP) provided Idaho's 2nd record. Blue Jays made a poor showing in Idaho, with only 3 reported. Blue Jay x Steller's Jay hybrids showed up again, with 2 present in Coeur d'Alene, ID (NM) all season. Amazingly, lingering Gray Catbirds were found near Bozeman 20 Dec (PE, BK) and in Ravalli, MT 27 Dec-3 Jan (WT). Reports of Northern Mockingbirds are especially unusual in winter, so singles present in Idaho's Jefferson 22 Dec (DCI) and Gem 23 Jan-27 Feb (F&MZ) were newsworthy. The Siberian Accentor present in Park, MT since late fall remained throughout the period (SW).

A total of 9 Orange-crowned Warblers was reported in s. Idaho, a fairly typical winter tally. A Chipping Sparrow held over in Gem 8 Dec-29 Feb+ (F&MZ), providing an interesting first record of overwintering for Idaho. A record-early Sage Sparrow landed



There's no telling what will show up at your feeders during a winter cold spell. For Kuna, Idaho resident Neva Black, this past January's cold weather produced a male Brambling, which arrived 5 January 2004 (here 9 January) and stayed for five days, a second record for Idaho. Photograph by Ryan Brady.

in Fremont, ID 27 Feb (CW), a surprising winter first for Latilong 16. The tally of seasonally rare sparrows included at least 10 each of Savannah and Lincoln's Sparrows in s. Idaho, an unusually high count. Also interesting were reports of 7 wintering Swamp Sparrows in s. Idaho; the species has not pre-

viously been annual at this season. Even more unusual in the Region's n. was a Lincoln's Sparrow in Kalispell, MT 4 Jan (BT) and Swamp Sparrow in Bigfork, MT 20 Dec (DC). The tally of rare-but-regular *Zonotrichia* sparrows was lackluster, with only one White-throated, one Golden-crowned, and 10 Harris's reported. Rusty Blackbirds, rare but regular in both states, made a great showing. One was in Blaine, ID 3 Jan-15 Feb (KC, PWP), 2-4 were in the Helena Valley, MT 5-7 Jan

(BM, JS), and up to 12 were near Kalispell, MT 15 Jan-5 Feb (BR). Idaho's resident Great-tailed Grackle flock downsized to only one male in Ada 8-29 Feb+ (HK). Purple Finches are rare and irregular winter visitors to the Region's n., so 8 tallied near Kalispell, MT 4 Jan (BMi) was likely a record count. A

male Brambling, Idaho's 2nd, was present in Ada 5-10 Jan (NB, ph. RB). Although Common Redpolls were relatively common and widespread, the only Hoary Redpolls tallied were singles near Bigfork, MT 20 Dec (LBt), in Blaine, ID 3 Jan-29 Feb (BS), and Kalispell, MT 4 Jan (LHi).

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Colorado & Wyoming

It was another relatively dry and mild winter for most of the Region, with a wide variety of lingering birds from Band-tailed Pigeons to Lesser Goldfinches. There were no major invasions of mountain/winter finches, waxwings, or any other group of winter irruptives, although the handful of Common Redpolls and Snow Buntings appeared in just enough places to keep us longing for more.

After eight years at the editors' desk, Brandon Percival and Van Truan have retired from writing the reports from the Mountain West Region, now rechristened the Colorado & Wyoming Region. We join our fellow subscribers in thanking them for the thousands of hours they spent compiling records and writing reports for this Region, and we are thrilled that Brandon will continue to compile reports from southeastern Colorado and to help in many other ways with record-keeping for the Region.

Abbreviations: Barr (Barr L. S.P., Adams); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso/Pueblo); E.K.W. (Edness Kimball Wilkins S.P., Natrona, WY); Eleven Mile (Eleven Mile Res., Park); Jumbo (Jumbo Res., Logan & Sedgwick); W.H.R. (Wyoming Hereford Ranch, Laramie, WY); Yellowstone (Yellowstone N.P., Park & Teton, WY). Due to reporting biases, all locations can be assumed to be in Colorado except that each Wyoming location is noted as such the first time it appears in the text.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Last fall's ad. Red-throated Loon at Standley L., Jefferson remained until 8 Dec (LS). The Regional total of southbound Pacific Loons for 2003 climbed to 42, including 8 during the first 10 days of Dec. A Pacific Loon at Grey Reef, Natrona, WY 4 Dec-3 Jan (Betty Rickman, m. ob.) was very tardy. Given the rarity of mid-winter Pacifics in the Region, it is reasonable to speculate that the ad. Pacific Loon at Valmont Res., Boulder (Tim Lenz, TF) 4 Jan was the same individual. Grebe numbers were lower than in recent years. Highlights included at least one Red-necked Grebe that remained at Pueblo Res. until 4 Dec (BKP, m. ob.), an Eared Grebe at L. Beckwith, Pueblo 3 Jan (DS), and a Western Grebe at Big Johnson Res., El Paso (MP, m. ob.). We know of only one Clark's Grebe that wintered, that being at Pueblo Res. (BKP, m. ob.).

American White Pelicans lingered at Pueblo Res. until 10 Jan (BKP, m. ob.), and an injured bird in Kiowa apparently wintered successfully (v. o.). In addition to the regularly wintering population along the S. Platte in Denver, single Black-crowned Night-Herons were found in Ft. Collins 12 Jan (DAL), Grand Junction 16 Feb (B. Moston), and at gravel ponds near Arvada (4 birds; LS).



Greater White-fronted Geese were widely noted in ne. Colorado and suburban areas along the I-25 corridor, with reports from at least 14 counties. A juv. Black Brant was seen at Greeley 12-16 Dec (BG, m.ob.), and what was probably the same bird was at Lower Latham Res., Weld 29 Dec (NK) and Broomfield 5 Jan-16 Feb (E. Zorawowicz, m. ob.). After their best fall showing ever, Trumpeter Swans continued to be seen all winter. The 2 at L. Maria, Huerfano remained until 19 Dec (DS, m. ob.). Two ads. were at Walker Gravel Pit, Douglas 6 Dec (GW). Three n. of Boulder and 5 s. of Ft. Collins (v. o.) wintered. Surveys at Seedskaadee N.W.R., Sweetwater, WY revealed 66 Trumpeters 19 Feb (SP), and weekly surveys at Yellowstone counted between 549 and 43 (TM). Wyoming's beloved Whooper Swan at Yellowstone remained all winter (tTM, m. ob.). Tundra Swans were also widely noted in the Region, with reports of 14 total from Larimer, Boulder, Pueblo, Huerfano, and Bent. Three others wintered at Confluence Park in Delta (LA, m. ob.).

A male Eurasian Wigeon was seen at Barr L. 1-3 Dec (DF, GG, TL). Very rare in winter, 2 Blue-winged Teal were found: one at Pueblo Res. 20 Dec (LS ph., TL) and one at Rocky Ford 19 Jan-23 Feb (DL, JT, DE).

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Roughly 45 Greater Scaup were reported in Colorado, an average winter showing. The only Surf Scoter was at Horsetooth Res., Larimer 1 Dec (JB). White-winged Scoters were found near Florence, Fremont 14 Dec (TL, m.ob.), Ft. Collins 1 Dec (JB), Aurora Res. 12 Dec (GW, AS), and Soda Butte, WY (TM). Perhaps the rarest of the wintering scoters, a Black Scoter was at Long Pond 3-4 Dec (RH, DAL). Long-tailed Ducks were

more numerous than usual, with at least 17 in Colorado and 3 in Wyoming. A Hooded Merganser along the Madison R., *Teton*, WY 9 Jan (TM) was unexpected. Barrow's Goldeneyes were recorded from their usual winter locations, with a high count of 64 at Carbondale 1 Jan (T&KM).

HAWKS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Many observers felt that numbers of Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks were low, particularly in the San Luis Valley. By contrast, Harlan's Hawks put on a strong showing, including 10 on the Boulder C.B.C. 14 Dec; one at Silt, *Garfield* 31 Jan–8 Feb (TM) provided one of very few West Slope reports. Up to 8 Soras were found in the Ft. Lyon area (DN, m. ob.), perhaps the only location where this species regularly winters in the Region.

Early winter continued to be productive for lingering shorebirds. Two Greater Yellowlegs were found at John Martin Res. 3 Dec (DN), and another was along Boulder Cr. 14 Dec (CLW). A Spotted Sandpiper was in Grand Junction 14 Dec (CD, LA), and even more remarkably one was at Wilson, *Teton*, WY 26 Dec (R. Smith). At least one Least Sandpiper remained until 11 Dec at John Martin Res. (DN), which also hosted 5 Long-billed Dowitchers through 4 Dec (DN). Rare at any season, 2 Dunlins were at Pueblo through at least 14 Feb (SO, BKP, m. ob.).

Mew Gulls put on another good showing: 2 in Boulder 13 Dec–26 Jan, one in Pueblo 19 Dec–11 Jan, and one at Big Johnson Res. 9 Jan (MP). Near-normal numbers of Lesser Black-backed (ca. 22), Thayer's (ca. 18) and Glaucous Gulls (ca. 10) were recorded in the Region, all in Colorado. Two Iceland Gulls led the larid list with a first-winter at Pueblo Res. 5 Jan (BKP) and an ad. at John Martin Res. 29 Jan (DN). Glaucous-winged Gulls (and gulls with apparent Glaucous-winged genes) continue to present identification challenges in the Region. At least 3 were reported, but none appeared to be pure birds. A second-winter bird in *Boulder* 13 Jan–30 Jan (CLW, TE, m. ob.) was thought have at least some Herring Gull genes. One at Confluence Park in *Delta* 13–23 Feb (m. ob.) was thought to be a hybrid Glaucous-winged x Western (m. ob.), while photo-

graphs of another looked more like a Thayer's Gull. The only Great Black-backed Gulls were the ad. present for yet another winter at Pueblo Res. and one at John Martin Res. 15 Dec (DN). The ad. Arctic Tern at Pueblo Res. remained until 3 Dec (BKP, ph. MP et al.), the latest ever recorded in the Region.

Band-tailed Pigeons may occasionally be found in Colorado in winter, but this season was superb, with some 200 birds reported along the Front Range, with one as far n. as *Boulder* 14 Dec (S. Dooley, R. Davis). White-

of West Nile virus decimating bird populations, particularly corvids, the Bonny C.B.C., *Yuma* 18 Dec had a record-low 17 Black-billed Magpies (mean 67) (*vide* CLW). In Jackson, WY, American Crow is rare in winter, so the 11 found there 29 Jan were noteworthy (Roger Watson). An impressive number so close to the mts., 2500 Horned Larks swarmed around Big Johnson Res. 30 Dec (MP). The Bonny C.B.C. also recorded the lowest number of Black-capped Chickadees in its history, with only 26 birds found (mean

107) (*vide* CLW). Bushtits staged another winter excursion away from their usual haunts, with flocks found in *Bent*, *Otero*, and *Weld*, the latter furnishing perhaps the 2nd county record. The isolated population of Bushtits on Coal Mt., *Natrona*, WY had at least 28 birds 14 Feb (JL). We received reports of at least 17 Winter Wrens between 2 Nov and 28 Feb. Two Marsh Wrens were found at Mammoth Hot Springs, *Yellowstone* N. P., *Park*, WY 5 Feb (TM). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher continued to be found in early winter in w.-cen. Colorado, with one bird in *Montrose*, *Montrose* 1 Dec (TW) and another in *Grand Junction*, *Mesa* 14 Dec (CD, LA).

Known to nest only in ne. Colorado and near Grand Junction, Eastern Bluebirds were found along the Front Range this winter, with approximately 109 birds reported 2 Dec–29 Feb. One in *Hotchkiss*, *Delta* 17 Jan was the most out-of-range (LA, m. ob.). Several Hermit Thrushes lingered into mid-Dec, and one found in *Fremont* on 21 Feb may have wintered in the area (RM). Two ad. male Varied Thrushes, one 28 Jan–7 Feb at a private residence in *Douglas* (TO, DF et al.), the other in *Grand Junction*, *Mesa* 7–10 Feb (B. Moston, RW, D. Steele), elated birders. Another lingered near Glenrock, *Converse*, WY 7–14 Jan (Bruce & Donna Walgren). Uncommon in winter, Northern Mockingbirds numbered 11 this season, the northernmost coming from the 2-Bar Ranch near Casper, *Natrona* 1 Jan (Joe Scott). A Sage Thrasher was found on the *Grand Junction* C.B.C. 14 Dec (CD, LA), and the report of one in *Glenwood Springs*, *Garfield*, would provide a first winter record for that montane county. Bohemian Waxwings were scarce this winter, with the only reports coming from *Rio Blanco* 7 Feb (DH) and *Prowers* 17 Jan (DL).



Providing a third record for Wyoming, this Long-billed Murrelet was found on a forest road above Blacktail Creek in the Bear Lodge Mountains in Crook County on 18 November 2003 (here), treated, and released at McNenny Hatchery in South Dakota. Photograph by Jerry Hogen.

winged Doves continue their range consolidation and expansion, with birds found in Pueblo, Colorado City, Rocky Ford, and Springfield—an astonishingly high count of up to 15 was noted in Rocky Ford 9 Dec–14 Feb (SO). Up to 7 Inca Doves were in Rocky Ford 10 Jan (SO), with others seen in Pueblo and Lamar. The female *Anna's Hummingbird* remained in Bow Mar, *Jefferson* until 5 Jan (TJ, m. ob.), establishing a first Colorado C.B.C. record. It was a sensational sapsucker season, perhaps the best ever, with 7 Williamson's Sapsuckers (*Fremont*, *Pueblo*, and *Teller*) and 16 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The only Red-naped Sapsucker was reported from *Grand Junction* 12 Dec (LA).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Casual in winter, an Eastern Phoebe in *Garfield* 13 Dec may have also been a first county record for this w. county (KP, HK, TM). Several Say's Phoebes remained in *Pueblo* and *Fremont* into early Jan. Four were on the *Grand Junction* C.B.C., *Mesa* 14 Dec, where somewhat more regular in early winter. Contributing to the anecdotal evidence

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Last fall's Yellow-throated Warbler remained at the Holy Cross Abbey, *Fremont* until 2 Jan, providing one of only a handful of winter records (MP, TL, m. ob.). Patience rewarded birders looking for the Pine Warbler in Greeley, *Weid* 19 Dec–24 Jan (SM, m. ob.). A Palm Warbler in Highlands Ranch, *Douglas* 19 Jan was unexpected (BB, LB). Winter Common Yellowthroats are very rare, but the one found on the Grand Junction C.B.C. 14 Dec was even more exceptional that far w. (CD, LA). The Wilson's Warbler in *Boulder* 3 Dec was late (BS). An ad. male Scarlet Tanager in Fort Collins, *Larimer* 6–21 Dec delighted birders (D. Swartz, RH) and provided, amazingly, the 2nd winter Colorado record. A Green-tailed Towhee (of apparently 2 in the county) successfully overwintered at a feeder in Montrose, *Montrose* 25 Dec–29 Feb (CK). Eastern Towhees have been recently found in the state during winter, with this season producing an imm. female at a private residence in Big Thompson Canyon, *Larimer* 22 Dec–29 Feb (BA et al.).

A wintering Chipping Sparrow in Lamar 18 Jan–29 Feb (in alternate plumage on the latter date) defied precedent (DL, JT, m. ob.). A Field Sparrow 5 & 12 Dec near Colorado City, *Pueblo* (with a Vesper Sparrow on the latter date) was also a rare winter find (DS). The Black-throated Sparrow found in Grand Junction 13 Dec provided one of few winter records for this species (B. Moston). A Lark Bunting at Higbee Canyon, *Otero* 20 Dec was quite late (SO). Continuing the theme of rare sparrows, Savannah Sparrow put in a good showing, with 8 reported, including the first for the Bonny C.B.C. (*vide* CLW). At least 4 Le Conte's Sparrows wintered at what is now considered their usual location at Fort Lyon, *Bent* (DN, m. ob.). A Red Fox Sparrow in Nucla, *Montrose* lingered from the fall through the winter season and was heard singing (CD, BW, GS, KG). We received reports of 22 Lincoln's Sparrows, normally a very rare winterer. Swamp Sparrows invaded the state, with reports totaling 121 birds, including an incredible 30 reported from *Bent* alone (DN). White-throated and Harris's Sparrows put on less dramatic shows, with only 35 and 27 reported, respectively. Two Golden-crowned Sparrows wintered at a private residence in *Delta* 28 Dec–29 Feb (DG).

Expected in winter only in *Baca*, the wintering flock of 30–50 McCown's Longspurs near Adobe Creek Res., *Bent* 7 Dec–25 Jan was a bit surprising. Lapland Longspurs appeared in good numbers, with the most southerly report, of 100 birds, coming from *Pueblo* 22 Feb (DS, D. Johnson). Five Chestnut-collared Longspurs on the John Martin C.B.C. was an unusually high count for the state (*vide* DN). Snow Bunting numbers were

low in Colorado, with a flock of 5 in *Routt* 1 Jan (*vide* DFi) being the high count. Wyoming fared a little better with a flock of 50 at Soda Butte 26 Jan (TM). The Northern Cardinal in *Bent* was a little w. of usual range (DN). Very rare in winter in Wyoming, a Western Meadowlark wintered in Jackson, *Teton* 1 Dec–29 Feb (Terry Amireen). Three Rusty Blackbirds at Valco Ponds 21 Nov–25 Feb provided the high count of this rare but expected winterer (BKP, m. ob.). Representing a first winter record for *Routt*, a male Brewer's Blackbird was photographed in *Craig* 30 Jan (DF).

Finches were generally scarce, and many observers commented particularly on the scarcity of Evening Grosbeak and Cassin's Finch. Even the usually ubiquitous Pine Siskin was relatively scarce. The mild winter and relatively dry winter accounted for the difficulty of finding rosy-finches. Unawep Canyon, *Mesa* 9–11 Feb was the hotspot for Black Rosy-Finches this season, with 50–100 present (RL, m. ob.). Three female-plumaged Purple Finches were found, one each at *Rye*, *Pueblo* 12 Dec–19 Jan (D. Silverman), *Colorado City*, *Pueblo* 3 Jan (S. Moss), and *Las Animas*, *Bent* 7 Jan (DN). Lesser Goldfinches, by contrast, were widespread this season, with the most unusual reports coming from *Lamar* 28 Feb (TF) and 5 at *Bibber Cr.*, *Jefferson* 3–4 Feb (D. Mullineaux).

Cited observers (subregional editors in boldface): Susan Allerton, Jim Beatty (sw. Colorado), Bob Brown, Lea Ann Brown (LAB), Peter Derven, Coen Dexter (w.-cen. Colorado), Lisa Edwards, David Ely, Doug Faulkner, Dicky Filby (DFi), Ted Floyd, Peter A. Gaede, Peter Gent, Bryan Guarante, Gregg Goodrich, Tim Gorman, Donna Hilkey, Ann Hines, Rachel Hopper, Tina Jones, Joey Kellner, Hugh Kingery, Urling Kingery, Nick Komar, Jim and Gloria Lawrence (J&GL) (statewide R.B.A.–Wyoming), David A. Leatherman, Tony Leukering (R.M.B.O.– Colorado), Rich Levad, Forrest Luke (nw. Colorado), Bill Maynard, Tom & Kay McConnel, Terry McEneaney (Yellowstone), Chris Michelson (Casper, WY), Rich Miller, SeEtta Moss, Duane Nelson, Stan Oswald, Ken Pals, Susan Patla (Jackson, WY), Brandon K. Percival (se. Colorado), Mark Peterson (cen. Colorado), Nathan Pieplow, Bert Raynes (Jackson, WY), Betty Rickman (BRi), Gene Rutherford, Bill Schmoker (Denver–Ft. Collins Metro), Larry Semo (ne. Colorado), Dave Silverman, Janeal Thompson, Andrew Spencer, Glenn Walbek (n.-cen. Colorado), Christopher L. Wood, Brenda Wright, Mark Yaeger. Many other individual observers contributed information to this report but could not be personally acknowledged here; all have our thanks and appreciation. 🐦

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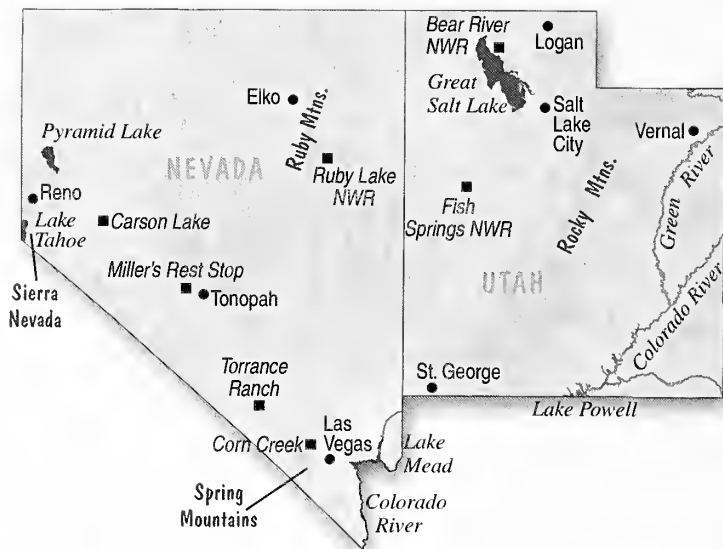
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After several consecutive seasons of drought, this winter brought welcome relief to much of the Great Basin, with some areas, particularly in the northern half of the Region, receiving almost normal levels of snowfall. However, through most of southern Nevada and Utah, water levels in lakes, reservoirs, and streams remain well below normal. Higher-than-normal numbers of regularly wintering northern species were observed (e.g., Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Shrike) in southern portions of the Region. The most unexpected sightings of the season included a Ruff near the Great Salt Lake, a Broad-billed Hummingbird at Lake Mead, and a Smith's Longspur at Carson Lake, Nevada.

Abbreviations: A.I.C. (Antelope Island S.P., Causeway, Davis UT); Bear River (Migratory

Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Carson L. (Churchill, NV); Corn Cr. (at Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); Farmington Bay (W.M.A., Davis, UT); Fish Springs (N.W.R., Juab, UT); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark NV); L. Mead (N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington UT); Overton (W.M.A., Clark, NV); Pahrnatagat (N.W.R., Lincoln, NV); P.L. (Pyramid L., Washoe NV); Q.C.S.P. (Quail Creek S.P., Washington, UT); Red Cliffs (R.A., Washington, UT).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The only Pacific Loon reports were of a single individual at Q.C.S.P. 13–25 Jan and 2 at the same location on 23 Feb (RF). A Yellow-billed Loon was observed during the Walker Lake C.B.C., Mineral, NV 30 Dec (p.a., DGh, RSt) but was not reported thereafter. A few Horned Grebes, rare but regular visitors to the Region, were reported wintering at P.L. in Nevada (DSe et al.) and at Q.C.S.P. in Utah (J&KB). Single out-of-season American White Pelicans were reported from Fallon, Churchill, NV 1 Dec (DT), Walker L., Mineral, NV 29 Dec (DSe, GS), and Southgate G.C., Washington, UT 9 Dec–7 Feb (SS et al.). A high count of 16 Trumpeter Swans was reported from Ruby Lake N.W.R., Elko, NV 15 Dec (DGh, RSt). Typically, a few Greater White-fronted Geese are found wintering in the Region; this year, one to 6 were observed in Clark, Churchill, and Washoe, NV (JW, SM, MMe). Eurasian Wigeons were observed at three locations in Utah: 2 males at Fish Springs 4 Jan (fide CoN), a male at Riverside G.C., Utah 17–24 Jan (CaN, ph. MMo et al.),

and one at Deer Creek S.P., Wasatch 27–29 Jan (DSh). Eurasian Wigeons were also reported from Lakeridge G.C., Washoe, NV 30 Nov+ (GS) and at Pahrnatagat 12 Jan (CT, HH, JAB, RSc). A few Long-tailed Ducks typically winter at Utah's Great Salt L., and they were reported throughout the season at A.I.C., with a high count of 10 on 28 Dec (MMo, DGh, ph. TA). Another was observed at Bear R. 1 Dec (AJ). The only Surf Scoter report was of an imm. at P.L. 12–16 Dec (DSe, DT), and the only White-winged Scoter observed during the winter period was also at P.L. 1 Dec (JW).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Single Red-shouldered Hawks were observed at several Nevada locations including Numana Wetlands, Washoe 13 Dec (DSe), Floyd Lamb S.P., Clark 14 Dec–22 Feb (RSa), Las Vegas, Clark 16 Feb (SG), and Overton 17 Feb (JW). The only report from Utah was of an imm. photographed at Gunlock, Washington 30 Jan (LT). A first-winter Harris's Hawk was a big surprise at Overton 25 Jan (RSt, DGh, JW, ph. LT); it was last reported 6 Mar, having been observed by many Regional birders. The provenance of this bird is unknown; however, there was no indication it had been in captivity and, it may well have been a natural vagrant from Arizona.

A Sharp-tailed Grouse was out of place at Willard Bay S.P., Box Elder, UT 11 Jan (KCh, EH). A Common Moorhen at Powell Slough, Utah, UT 13 Feb (KCh) was n. of expected range. A Snowy Plover was a surprise winter visitor to the A.I.C. 18 Jan (CoN), and there were several other unexpected wintering shorebirds observed in the Region. Spotted Sandpipers were seen in both n. Nevada and Utah, with single individuals at Truckee Meadows, Washoe, NV 20 Dec (JT, RSt), and at Utah L., Utah, UT 22 Dec (CDa, ND). A single Long-billed Curlew was reported from Carson L. 13 Dec (JW, RSt, DGh), and 9 were observed at Walker L., Mineral, NV 30 Dec (EA, JBa). A Pectoral Sandpiper was a rare winter find at Carson L. 13 Dec (JW, RSt, DGh). Wintering Dunlin are also rare in the Region, so a flock of up to 40 at Carson L. 13 Dec–14 Jan (JW, RSt, DGh, TL) and 2 observed at Truckee Meadows, Washoe, NV 20 Dec (JE, HJ, LB) were noteworthy. Certainly the shorebird of the season was a well-studied Ruff at Farmington Bay 14–17 Feb (BS, LG, ph. JL, ph. TS, †J&KB).

A first-winter Mew Gull was photographed at Virginia L., Washoe, NV 20 Dec (ph. GS, MMe, JD) and remained through 13 Feb (FP). The Bountiful Landfill (Davis, UT) enhanced its reputation as a hotspot for viewing rare gulls this season by hosting up to 5 Thayer's Gulls 12 Dec–16 Feb (CW, MMo et al.), one or 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls 5 Jan–2 Feb (ph. †EH, KCh, CoN, PF, GB), a first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull 17–29 Jan (ph. CoN et al.), and a Glaucous Gull 12 Dec–23 Jan

(MMo et al.). Another Lesser Black-backed Gull, or perhaps the same individual seen at the Bountiful Landfill, was observed at nearby Farmington Bay 22 Feb (J&KB). First-winter Glaucous-winged Gulls were also observed at two locations around P.L. 12 Dec–15 Mar (JW, DSe).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their rapid colonization of the Region. They continued to be reported from previously documented locations in Clark and Washoe, NV, and Iron, Utah, and Washington, UT and were observed at several new locations in Utah, including Snowville, Box Elder 12–13 Dec (PF, JV), Duchesne, Duchesne 14 Dec (KCh, EH), Mona, Juab 27 Jan (KCh), Huntington, Emery 7 Feb (MW), and West Jordan, Salt Lake 18 Feb (ph. JoM). A flock of up to 12 White-winged Doves spent the 2nd consecutive winter in Washington City, Washington, UT. Inca Doves are being reported with ever-increasing frequency in s. Nevada and sw. Utah. An albino Roadrunner—first reported at Kayenta, Washington, UT 11 Nov (LT, BD, MD)—entered observers throughout the period.

A female Broad-billed Hummingbird was discovered 1 Feb visiting feeders at Boulder Beach Campground, L. Mead (ph., †LT). Fortunately, this cooperative hummingbird remained throughout the season and was observed and photographed by nearly all Nevada (and several Utah) birders (ph. MMe, ph. GS, ph. CT et al.). Anna's Hummingbirds were observed in their usual locations in s. Nevada (RSa et al.) and sw. Utah (CS et al.), where they are gradually becoming more common. However, reports from n. locations of North Ogden, Weber, UT 30 Nov–5 Jan (MS, JBi et al.) and Reno, Washoe, NV 21 Dec (GS) were unexpected.

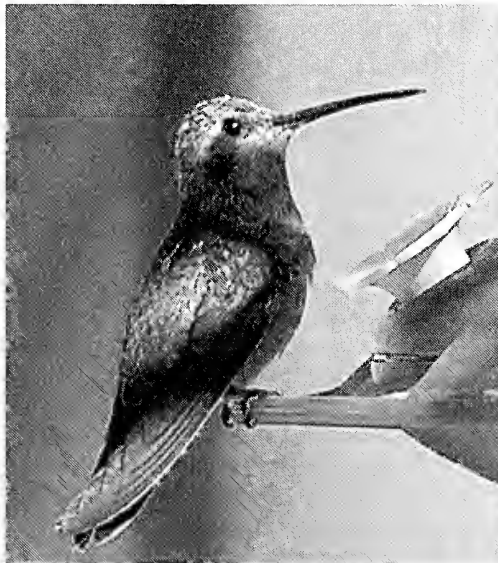
Following an unprecedented fall 2003 showing, Acorn Woodpeckers continued to be reported from many Nevada locations. A pair was observed throughout the season at Spring Mountain S.P., Clark (ph. RSa, DC, J&MC); another was found at Truckee Meadows, Washoe 20–22 Dec (CDo, ph. DM, JT, RS†); and finally one was in Reno, Washoe 17–21 Jan (JT, NB, DT, MMe). A Red-breasted Sapsucker was reported during the Cedar City C.B.C., Iron, UT 19 Dec (CS et al., p. a.). If submitted and accepted, this would be only the 4th documented record in Utah. Williamson's Sapsuckers are rarely reported during the winter in the Region, so a female along the Truckee R., Washoe, NV 17 Jan (JT, NB) and a male at Overton 17 Feb (JW) were nice finds.



This Ruff, present 14–17 (here 15) February 2004 at Farmington Bay Wildlife Management Area, Davis County, provided Utah's third confirmed record of the species. Photograph by Jerry Liguori.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

Vermilion Flycatchers are occasional winter visitors in the s. portion of the Region, so reports from Logandale, Clark, NV 12 Dec (RSc, JC) and Bloomington, Washington, UT 4–24 Jan (M&KD et al.), as well as 4 at Overton 17 Feb (JW) were somewhat expected. More unexpected, however, was an early Cassin's Kingbird observed at the H.B.V.P. 1–8 Feb (JH, CP). Above-average numbers of Northern Shrikes were reported in the Great Basin this winter. Northern Shrikes were reported from five Nevada counties (Carson City, Elko, Lyon, Nye, and Washoe) and five Utah counties (Box Elder, Davis, Duchesne, Juab, and Washington). A Plumbeous Vireo put in a very rare winter appearance in the Region at Hurricane, Wash-



This female Broad-billed Hummingbird was located on 1 (here 8) February 2004 at the Boulder Beach Campground, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Clark County, Nevada. It remained throughout the season and was enjoyed by dozens of observers. Photograph by Larry Tripp.

ington 20 Dec (SH). A Blue Jay graced a North Ogden, Weber, UT neighborhood 7 Nov–20 Dec (MMo et al.). Varied Thrushes are rare winter visitors in Utah, so the following reports are of note: one at the Logan Country

Club, Cache 11 Dec–1 Mar (SP) and one at Beus Pond, Weber 17 Jan–16 Feb (BF, ph. MS et al.). Single Brown Thrashers were found at Corn Cr. 23 Nov–28 Feb (RSa, DC et al.) and at Lytle 27 Jan–15 Feb (MW, ph. LT et al.).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An out-of-season Yellow Warbler was a very unexpected find at the Virgin River Trail, St. George, Washington, UT 7 Dec (LT). It was a typical winter for American Tree Sparrows, with a few reported from n. portions of the Region (Elko, NV, and Davis and Uintah, UT). A wayward Lark Sparrow was a surprising find during the Truckee Meadows C.B.C., Washoe, NV 20 Dec (JE, HJ, LB). Slate-colored Fox Sparrows were reported from two Washoe, NV locations: Mayberry Park, Reno 18 Dec (RB) and Davis Cr. Park 19 Jan (NB, JT). The only Fox Sparrows reported during the winter in Utah were a pair of Slate-colored Sparrows observed near Silver Reef, Washington 20 Dec (KW, EM). A Swamp Sparrow was an excellent find at the Virgin River Trail, St. George, Washington, UT 21 Dec–18 Feb (ph. LT et al.). Another was briefly observed at the H.B.V.P. 21 Feb (MB, *vide* JAB). White-throated Sparrows were observed at several locations in the Region this winter. They were found at three Nevada locations: Fernley, Lyon 7–12 Dec (DSe), Reno, Washoe 9 Jan (LP), plus 2 at L. Mead 1–9 Feb (LT, JW). They were also observed in Cedar City, Iron, UT 1 Jan (SS, PS) and at two Washington, UT locations: Bloomington 19 Jan (KCo, RF) and Red Cliffs 28 Nov–18 Apr (RF, DSh, LG, KW). It was a very strong winter season for Harris's Sparrows in the Region, with six reports from Utah: Spanish Fork River, Utah 26 Dec–22 Feb (DSh, AT et al.), Jensen, Uintah 5 Jan (KPa), Provo, Utah 10 Jan–25 Apr (TR), Virgin River Trail, Washington 11 Jan–15 Feb (ph. SS, PS), Moab, Grand 12 Jan (*vide* DF), and Heber Valley, Wasatch 29 Jan (KCh). The only Harris's Sparrow report from Nevada was of an individual observed at Fernley, Lyon 31 Jan (RSe). Rounding out the Zonotrichia in Utah were 2 Washington Golden-crowned Sparrows (they are more regular in Nevada): one at Red Hills 6 Dec–5 Jan (LT, RF) and one at the Virgin River Trail, St. George 13 Jan–28 Feb (RF, J&KB).

One of the highlights of the season was the incredible array of longspurs observed at Carson L., Churchill, NV. The fun started on 16 Dec, when several Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs and a first-year female Smith's Longspur were observed accompanying the huge flocks of wintering Horned Larks (†JW et al.). Eventually a McCown's Longspur was also discovered 28 Dec–31 Jan (JW, DT, ST), and a Snow Bunting was observed 17 Dec–19 Jan

(ph. GS et al.). Many birders enjoyed the spectacle, with high counts of 15+ Lapland Longspurs observed through 10 Feb, up to 3 Smith's Longspurs observed through 17 Jan (JW, ph. TL, JD, DT, MMe et al.), and 5+ Chestnut-collared Longspurs observed through 31 Jan (JW, GS, MMe, DSe et al.). In this group may be Nevada's first documented record of Smith's Longspur (p.a.) and one of only a few Snow Bunting records. Additional Lapland Longspurs observed during the period included singles at Ruby Lake N.W.R., Elko, NV 15 Dec (DGH, RSt), Bear River (CW) and A.I.C. 1 Jan (J&KB), Flora-tech Fields, Washington 4 Jan (RF, KCo), plus 2 near Corinne, Box Elder 4 Jan (KPU). As usual, the A.I.C. also produced a few wintering Snow Buntings 1 Jan–21 Feb (J&KB et al., ph. ND).

A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was an unexpected visitor at Lytle 6 Dec (DGr, LT) and provided one of only a few winter records in the Region. Another excellent find was a female Rusty Blackbird observed along the Riverdale Parkway, Weber River, Weber, UT 9–15 Feb (M&CS et al., ph. MMo, ph. JBi, †MW). And finally, 3 Common Redpolls graced a feeder in Elko, Elko, NV 29 Dec–8 Feb (LJ, ph. GS, M&LP et al.).

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New Mexico



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Winter 2003–2004 saw dry and mild conditions continue through December and January, but February brought rain, snow, and cooler weather to much of the state. The birding season was marked by extreme scarcity of grassland sparrows, a near absence of montane species in the lowlands, and a continuation of the trend of northward range expansions. Birders were rewarded, however, with the discovery of a surprising number of genuine rarities.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); C.H.R. (Clabber Hill Ranch, private land on Canadian R. below Conchas Dam); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte L.); G.B.A. (Gila Bird Area, riparian habitat on Gila R. below Riverside); K.K. (Katfish Kove, private ponds and trees adjacent to Mimbres R., nw. Luna); 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); R.S. (Rattlesnake Springs area, Eddy).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Two Red-throated Loons at Ute L. 19 Jan–17 Feb (m. ob., ph. JO, ph. DC) likely had lingered since Nov; another Red-throated was at Conchas L. 28 & 30 Jan (WW, vt. JO). Ute L. proved attractive to other loons, including a Pacific 19 Jan–14 Feb (m. ob.) and a high 18 Commons on 19 Jan (JO). High counts for Horned Grebes were 16 at Santa Rosa L. 14 Dec (WW), 10 at Ute L. 30 Jan (JO), and 7 in the Avalon–Brantley area 26 Dec (TH). Owing to shrinking lake levels, fewer *Aechmophorus* grebes wintered at E.B.L., with 1800 on 8 Jan (MW) the high count. Surprising were 17 American White Pelicans soaring over the Peloncillo Mts. 6 Jan (CL); moderate numbers wintered in the Rio Grande and Pecos Valleys, including 100 in the Elephant Butte–Caballo area 8 Jan (MW) and 120 at Brantley L. 11 Jan (SW). Neotropical Cormorants are now greatly reduced in the R.G.V., with 6 at Bosque 19 Jan (GE) & 22 Feb (WH) and 2 at Caballo L. 4 Jan (BZ) the “high” counts. In the Pecos Valley, some 400 Double-crested Cormorants were at Brantley L. 4 Dec (MW), with at least 140 remaining 11 Jan (SW). Single Ameri-

can Bitterns were at Bosque 10–13 Jan (JEP, WW, BZ, ph. JO) and B.L.N.W.R. 7 Jan (GW). At least 2 Great Egrets were n. to B.L.N.W.R. 10 Dec–26 Feb (GW), and small numbers overwintered in *Eddy*, where formerly absent in winter (SW). Late was a Snowy Egret at Belen 9 Dec (JO), as were 12 Cattle Egrets at Las Cruces 14 Dec (GE). Very rare in the winter season, single Green Herons were at Elephant Butte Dam 26 Dec (ph. DC) and Six Mile Dam 20 Feb (JEP, JO). Five White-faced Ibis lingered at Belen 9 Dec (JO), where there were 2 on 31 Jan & 12 Feb (JEP, JO). Turkey Vultures are not known to winter in New Mexico, so surprising were one in e. *Sierra* 2 Dec (ph. P. Mathis), 7 at Roswell 20 Dec (*vide* S. Bixler), and 2 s. of Animas 2 Jan (J. Krakowski).

Typically scarce in midwinter, one to 9 Greater White-fronted Geese were at nine sites in *Colfax*, *San Miguel*, *Bernalillo*, *Socorro*, and *Chaves* 13 Dec–25 Jan (m. ob.). Ross's Geese continued to increase in the Farmington area, where there were 40 on 20 Dec (AN); a rare blue-morph Ross's was at Clayton L. 27 Dec (CR). With fewer than six previous records, *Brant* is one of New Mexico's rarest waterfowl; a dark-bellied individual was among Canadas at Ute L. 24 Jan–14 Feb (ph. DC, ph. JO, JEP, DE, BN, CR). Tundra Swans made a good showing, with up to 6 at Maxwell 1 Dec–28 Feb, 2–4 at L.V.N.W.R. 1 Dec and 13 Feb, one to 3 at three R.G.V. sites (Cochiti L., La Joya, Williamsburg) 3 Dec–16 Feb, and one to 2 at three Pecos Valley sites (Bosque Redondo, B.L.N.W.R., L. Avalon) 2 Dec–20 Feb (m. ob.). A male Eurasian Wigeon entertained many at Albuquerque's Mariposa Park and vicinity 29 Jan–29 Feb (m. ob., many phs.); at least one Eurasian has wintered in Albuquerque eight of the past nine years. Shrinking lakes resulted in large waterfowl concentrations; at E.B.L., aerial surveys counted 3720 Northern Pintails 3 Dec (MW) and 14,570 Gadwalls plus 4300 Northern Shovelers 8 Jan (MW). A first for New Mexico was a male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal at Bosque 18 Feb (RH, GE, JEP, ph. JO). Always a treat, single Long-tailed Ducks were at Maxwell 13 Dec (ph. JO), Brantley L. 3 Jan (ph. JO), and Holloman L. 10–17 Jan (MS, ph. JZ, ph. JO). Unexpected away from *San Juan*, single female Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported at Stubblefield L. 27 Jan (DC) and L.V.N.W.R. 5 Feb (WW). Red-breasted Mergansers were unusually prevalent in the Canadian and Pecos valleys; high counts included over 100 at L. Avalon 24 Jan (JEP), over 200 at Brantley L. 3 Jan (JO), and some 190 at Ute L. 17–18 Feb (DC), where there were also over 250 Commons (DC).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

Far n. for the season was an Osprey at Nava-

jo Dam 1 Jan (AN); at least one was in the E.B.L. area 5 Jan–7 Feb (WW, JO, JEP) as well. Single White-tailed Kites appeared at K.K. 6 Dec (MS, JZ) and Bosque 24 Feb (S. Grubelich). A notable concentration of 49 Bald Eagles was counted at Cherry L., *Mora* 5 Jan (MW); in contrast, the 36 counted in the drying Elephant Butte–Caballo area 28 Jan (D. Ahlers) was down considerably from counts there in previous years. Far e. was a Northern Goshawk at Ute L. 28 Jan (WW). A Harris's Hawk was n. to Bosque 13 Feb (T. Bulow); 5 Harris's were near Alamogordo 24 Jan (MS, JZ), where recently established. Some 18 Ferruginous Hawks plus one Rough-legged were at the Navajo farms s. of Farmington 21 Feb (AN). Merlins were noted at 18 sites primarily from the R.G.V. eastward; highs were 3 at Bosque 20 Dec (SC) and 6 at Las Cruces 14 Dec (GE). One to 2 Peregrine Falcons wintered at Albuquerque Dec–Feb (m. ob.), and another was at Las Cruces 26 Dec (GE) and 17 Jan (MS, JZ); elsewhere, singles were at K.K. 6 Dec (MS, JZ), Sitting Bull Falls, *Eddy* 1 Jan (*vide* SW), Peloncillo Mts. 3 Jan (*vide* AC), and Eldorado 27 Feb (DS).

The escaped Chukar at Sandia Crest continued to compete with juncos and finches at feeders through Jan (KS et al.). Fifteen Soras were counted near San Marcial 23 Dec (RD), a large number for the winter season. Unusual for the season and locality was a Common Moorhen at L. Roberts 14 & 23 Jan (EL). Latest Snowy Plovers were one at B.L.N.W.R. 17 Dec (GW) and one to 2 near Loving 20 & 23 Dec (SW, C. Cranston); earliest were 2 at B.L.N.W.R. 11 & 26 Feb (GW). A flock of 191 Killdeer was in an Otis alfalfa field 27 Jan (SW). Very late were 12 Mountain Plovers w. of Gage, *Luna* 11 Dec (RM). Also late was an American Avocet at B.L.N.W.R. 3 Dec (GW), while apparently wintering were up to 4 at Caballo L. 4–11 Jan (BZ, JNP, JEP, JO). North for the season were single Spotted Sandpipers at Española 21 Dec (BF) and Santa Rosa 3 Jan (JEP). Late were 125 Long-billed Curlews in *Luna* 6 Dec (DH); unexpected were 6 in the Uvas Valley near Nutt, *Luna* 11 Jan (MS, JZ). Northerly Least Sandpipers were 4 at Morgan L. 1 Jan (AN) and 3 at Hudson L., *Quay* 24 Jan (DC). Lingering Dunlin were singles at Morgan L. 1 Jan (AN) and Bosque 13–18 Jan (BZ, WW, JO) and 3 at Hudson L. 31 Jan–18 Feb (ph. DC).

Far n. for midwinter were 3 Bonaparte's Gulls at Springer L. 5 Jan (DC), as was one at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW); a remarkable 252 Bonaparte's were in the Avalon–Brantley area 26 Dec (TH), with at least 19 at L. Avalon 31 Jan (CR) and 50 there 16 Feb (DE, BN). The Sunland Park racetrack again proved productive for gulls, with a first-winter Mew Gull there 17 Dec–1 Jan (JNP, MS, JZ) and an ad. Mew there 16 Jan–16 Feb (JNP, ph. JO). Also

at Sunland Park (and lingering from Nov) was a first-winter Thayer's Gull 1–18 Dec (ph. JNP, MS, JZ); an ad. Thayer's was at E.B.L. 17 Jan–15 Feb (ph. JO, WW, JEP). Noteworthy for midwinter were 3 Forster's Terns at L. Avalon 24 Jan (JEP, JO).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Moderate numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves were found virtually statewide, including on 18 C.B.C.s located in all corners of the state and including an impressive (or disturbing?) 938 at Roswell 20 Dec (SB); evidence of early nesting was noted in *Sierra* 4 Jan (MS, JZ) and *Union* 24 Jan (JB). Continuing a trend, White-winged Doves were much in evidence in the n. half of the state, including one at Maxwell 15–22 Dec (ph. DC), a high 41 at Santa Fe 4 Jan (D. Einspahr), and one singing at Los Alamos 14 Feb (C. Jarvis); a mere 42,521 were tallied at Las Cruces 14 Dec (GE et al.).

The state-first Eastern Screech-Owl, discovered at Portales in Nov, remained there through the period (J. Avery et al., ph. JO). Five Long-eared Owls were roosting in junipers in the Los Pinos Mts. 16 Dec (SOW, WH, WW). A Short-eared Owl at Zuni 20 Dec (JT) provided the lone report. Leading the hummingbird news was an ad. male Calliope Hummingbird present at an Albuquerque feeder Nov–15 Feb (ph. D. Foreman), the first to overwinter in the state. Elsewhere, a late Magnificent was banded at L. Roberts 2 Dec (JD-M), single Black-chinneds were at P.O. Canyon 19 Dec (CL) and near Carlsbad 26 Dec (SW, TH), and single Rufous were at Las Cruces 8–14 Dec (b. JD-M) and near Carlsbad 26 Dec (SW, TH). An Anna's at Las Cruces since Oct remained until at least 16 Jan (L. Schulte, b. J-DM), another was at Albuquerque 14 Dec (HS), and another was at a White's City feeder 14 Dec–31 Jan (m. ob.). Lewis's Woodpeckers continued in evidence s. of expected, including singles at Deming 1 Dec–3 Feb (LM), Mesilla 30 Dec (GE), and Otis 20 Dec (SW). Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers found their way to Santa Rosa 14 Dec—a male in town (D. White) and a female s. of town (WW). Unusual for the lower R.G.V. were 2 Hairy Woodpeckers at Percha 4 & 11 Jan (BZ).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Several *Empidonax* flycatchers lingered well into the season, including an apparent Dusky at Bosque 20 Dec (DH, PB) and 10 Feb (PB) and an apparent Hammond's at Elephant Butte Dam 10 Jan (JEP, vt. JO) and possibly 7 Feb (JEP); at least one probable Dusky was in the G.B.A. 5 Dec, 9 Jan, and 14 Feb (RS). Eastern Phoebe were at nine sites from the R.G.V. eastward; w. were singles near Cliff 4 Dec (C. Fugalai) and K.K. 15 Jan (JZ). Vermilion Flycatchers were conspicuous in the

R.G.V., with up to 2 at Luis Lopez (JO, WW), Bosque (m. ob.), Palomas (GE), and Percha (BZ) Dec–Feb. One to 4 Northern Shrikes were at eight locales, including singles s. to Sevilleta N.W.R. 18 Dec (PB), Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW), and Bosque Redondo 20 Dec (JEP, JO). Noteworthy was a Hutton's Vireo at Radium Springs 29 Jan–21 Feb (MS, JZ). A Steller's Jay wandered to Percha 4 Jan (BZ), but, in sharp contrast to last winter, the species was otherwise absent from lowland areas. Lingering swallows were 12 Trees and one Northern Rough-winged in the Caballo–Percha area 4 Jan (BZ, GE). Most unusual were 4 Cave Swallows at Carlsbad Cavern 2 Jan (R. West). Early swallows were a Northern Rough-winged at Mesilla 11 Feb (GE), a Barn at Bosque 18 Feb (RH), and 4 Trees at Loving 22 Feb (SW).

Unusual was a Black-capped Chickadee in the Sandia Mts. 21 Dec (NV, RG). Two Cactus Wrens in the Manzano Mts. foothills e. of Bernardo 15 Jan (JS) furnished a new locale for this expanding species. Late was a House Wren n. to Corrales 13 Dec (JEP); apparently wintering were single House Wrens at Carlsbad 4 Jan (SW), G.B.A. 9 Jan (RS), and Alamogordo 1 Feb (SW). A good season for Winter Wrens found singles at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW), Albuquerque 14 Dec (DM), G.B.A. 19 Dec (RS), Silver City 16 Dec (RS), and Mesilla 11 Feb (GE). Late for the n. were 3 Marsh Wrens at Morgan L. 1 Jan (AN); notable were 33 at C.H.R. 28 Dec (WW). Scarce n. to Socorro and Sierra, one to 2 Black-tailed Gnatcatchers were at Sevilleta 18 Dec (DH), Bosque 20 Dec (NC, SC), E.B.L. area 10 & 22 Jan (JEP, WW), and Caballo L. 4 Jan (BZ).

Eastern Bluebirds blanketed e. New Mexico, with multiple reports from 17 counties from the R.G.V. eastward, including a high 100 at Bosque Redondo 20 Dec (JEP, JO); w. were one at Zuni 18 Dec (JT) and 7 in the Florida Mts. 26 Feb (LM). Northerly Hermit Thrushes included one at Farmington 20 Dec (AN) and 2 at Española 21 Dec (BF); 9 were in a Russian Olive tree near Bernalillo 6 Jan (H. Walker). A well-described Varied Thrush near Gila Hot Springs 5 Feb (D. Russell) provided a *Grant* first. A Gray Catbird lingered in Cimarron Canyon, *Colfax* through 14 Dec (LH); another was at R.S. 31 Jan (CR) and 7 Feb (JO). Northern Mockingbirds typically are scarce (or absent?) in n. New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were 2 at Farmington 20 Dec (AN), and singles at Clayton 27 Dec (CR), Ute L. 24–25 Dec and 24 Jan (ph. DC), and *Harding* 30 Jan (M. MacRoberts). Single Brown Thrashers were at Silver City 16 Dec (RS), R.G.N.C. Dec–Feb (m. ob.), C.H.R. 28 Dec (WW), and near San Jon 14 Feb (CR), and up to 3 were at R.S. 31 Jan–20 Feb (DE, BN, CR, JO).

Surveys for grassland birds found 2 Sprague's Pipits on Otero Mesa 21 Dec (RM)

and one there 21 Jan (RM), one at a site on White Sands Missile Range 9 Jan (NC) and 17 Feb (SC), one in the Five Points area of Sevilleta N.W.R. 16 Dec (CR, RV, J. DeLong), 2 near Deming 10 Dec (RM), and one w. of Gage 13 Dec (RM). Three Phainopeplas wintered n. to Socorro, where present Dec–Feb (PB). Additional evidence of wintering by Orange-crowned Warblers was provided by reports of singles near Cliff 3 Jan (RS), Silver City 16 Dec (RS), Caballo L. 4 Jan (BZ), and Carlsbad Caverns N.P. 14 Dec (SW), plus a hefty 13 at Las Cruces 14 Dec (GE). Single Yellow Warblers were reported at Las Cruces 14 Dec (GE) and near Santa Teresa 1 Jan (JNP). One to 2 Common Yellowthroats wintered at R.S. 14 Dec–8 Feb (SW, JEP, JO, CR).

TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES

An Eastern Towhee at R.S. 16–20 Feb (DE, BN, JEP, vt. JO) provided the state's 8th overall record. Providing a first for the Zuni Mts. region was a Rufous-crowned Sparrow at Zuni 20 Dec (JT). An American Tree Sparrow was near Farmington 21 Feb (AN), where unusual, and another wintered s. to R.G.N.C. Dec–Feb (m. ob.); a high 15 were s. to C.H.R. 28 Dec (WW). Reflecting the effects of prolonged drought and poor livestock management, normally common grassland sparrows such as Chipping, Brewer's, and Vesper were conspicuously scarce or altogether absent in much of s. New Mexico. Two Black-chinned Sparrows were n. to the Los Pinos Mts. 16 Dec (WH). Searches for Baird's Sparrows on Otero Mesa found one on 22 Dec and 3 at the same site 15 Jan (RM), plus singles at three nearby sites 25–28 Jan (RM); another was near Deming 10 Dec (RM). Reddish Fox Sparrows were one at Maxwell 6–7 Dec (ph. DC) and up to 2 at R.S. 24 Jan–20 Feb (JEP, JO, DE, BN); a grayish Fox Sparrow was near Cliff 25 Feb (LM). Northerly Lincoln's Sparrows included 3 at R.G.N.C. 1 Jan (JEP) and singles in Cimarron Canyon 14 Dec (LH), Peña Blanca 12 Feb (WW), and Albuquerque's North Valley 25 Jan (DM). Swamp Sparrows where rarely noted in winter included 2 at Raton 16 Dec (DC) and one along Ute Cr., *Harding* 30 Jan (JEP); 5 were at Corrales 11 Dec (WH), and 20 were at C.H.R. 28 Dec (WW). Noteworthy *Zonotrichia* included a dark-lored White-crowned banded at R.G.N.C. 8 Feb (NC, SC), single Harris's at Bernardo 31 Jan (JEP) and e. of Tularosa 4–7 Dec (J. Hird), and single Golden-crowneds in the Sandia Mts. 21 Dec (NV, RG), at Albuquerque's North Valley 11 Jan (S. Norris), at Bosque 7 Jan (GF), and at Silver City 16 Dec (RS). A Lapland Longspur was s. to E.B.L. 6 Dec (JEP, JO); in the ne., Laplands were at seven sites in *Colfax*, *Union*, *San Miguel*, and *DeBaca*, including highs of 20 at Eagle Nest 30 Dec (ph. DC) and 44 at Stubblefield L. 28 Jan (DC).

A male Northern Cardinal was n. to Santa

Rosa 5 Feb (WW). Pyrrhuloxias at higher-than-usual elevations were singles at L. Roberts 25 Jan & 28 Feb (JO) and Ruidoso 20 Dec (A. Powell). A male Rusty Blackbird was at Clayton 27 Dec (CR), and single females were at R.G.N.C. from 18 Jan (JS) through Feb (m. ob., vt. JO) and Bosque 20 Dec (RV, RB). Common Grackles lingering in the n. included singles at Eagle Nest 1 Dec (DC) and Maxwell 15–21 Dec (ph. DC) and 5 at Clayton 27 Dec (CR); 5 were at Radium Springs 15 Jan (MS, JZ). Unusual for the season was a Brown-headed Cowbird at Zuni 17 Dec (JT). New Mexico's 2nd photographically documented Streak-backed Oriole put in a brief appearance near Radium Springs 20 Dec (MS, ph. JZ). Perhaps owing to poor snow cover, rosy-finches were generally scarce. About 60 mostly Black Rosy-Finches wintered at Sandia Crest Dec–Feb (KS et al.), where 21 Blacks and 7 Gray-crowneds were banded Jan–Feb (NC, SC); a three-species flock at Taos Ski Valley 6 Feb contained about 40 Blacks and 15 each of Gray-crowneds and Brown-capped (JEP, JO). Up to 4 Pine Grosbeaks were singing at Taos Ski Valley 6 Feb (JEP, JO), and 10 were s. to Sandia Crest 7 Dec (KS), where there were 4 on 30 Jan (*vide* KS); unusual was one w. to Zuni's Mullen Canyon 20 Dec (JT). Quite rare in New Mexico, single Purple Finches were documented at R.G.N.C. 8 Feb (RB, NC) and Eldorado 22 Feb (ph. JB). Cassin's Finches were scarce statewide and were largely absent from submontane areas. Red Crossbills likewise were scarce, with 65 in the Sandia Mts. 21 Dec (NV, RG) a notable exception. Lesser Goldfinches continued to winter in greater numbers and farther n. than previously known, including 3 at Costilla, *Taos* 6 Feb (JEP, JO) and 3 or more at Sugarite S.P., *Colfax* 9 Jan (JEP, JO). Lessers outnumbered Americans 65 to 38 at Farmington 20 Dec (AN), 30 to 6 at Maxwell 1 Jan–15 Feb (DC), and 45 to 40 at Albuquerque 14 Dec (HS), where Lessers largely replaced Americans in the North Valley Jan–Feb (DM).

Initialed observers: Pat Basham, Jonathan Batkin, Ryan Beaulieu, David Cleary, Nancy Cox, Steve Cox, Alan Craig, Joan Day-Martin, Robert Doster, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Bernard Foy, Gary Froehlich, Rebecca Gracey, David Hawksworth, Richard Heil, Lois Herrmann, Tom Hines, William Howe, Eugene Lewis, Carroll Littlefield, Larry Malone, David Mehlman, Raymond Meyer, Alan Nelson, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, Christopher Rustay, Kenneth Schneider, Hart Schwarz, Marcy Scott, Roland Shook, Dale Stahlecker, James Stuart, John Trochet, Raymond VanBuskirk, Nick Vaughn, Gordon Warrick, Mark Watson, Steve West, William West, S. O. Williams, James Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer. 🌐

Abbreviations: Arizona Bird Committee (A.B.C.), Avra Valley S.T.P. (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.), Navajo Indian Reservation (N.I.R.), Sulphur Springs Valley (S.S.V.), Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson (Sweetwater), White-water Draw Wildlife Area (Whitewater).

LOONS THROUGH MERGANSERS

A Pacific Loon on L. Havasu 6 Dec–9 Jan (CB, SS) was the only one reported. In Tucson, both of the intermittent Least Grebes re-appeared: the Sweetwater bird 10 Dec+ (DTo, m. ob.) and the Sam Lena Park bird 1 Feb+ (J. Massey, m. ob.). A Horned Grebe was reported from Gilbert Water Ranch 5 Dec (D. Stuart). Clark's Grebes were reported from Talkalai L. 21 Feb (KKA et al.), and 6 were at Willcox 23 Feb (SH); they remain casual in winter away from the larger lakes. American White Pelicans are irregular in winter away from the L.C.R.V. Flocks of 17 at Willow L., Prescott 3 Dec (W Bull), up to 92 at Gillespie Dam 25 Dec–17 Feb (TC, m. ob.), and up to 60 at San Carlos L. 5–21 Feb (JE) were notable. Casual in winter, 2 Brown Pelicans were reported from L. Havasu 6 Dec (CB, SS), and singles were sighted again in the Phoenix area 27 Dec–10 Feb (A. Mendoza, TC).

Neotropical Cormorants were undocumented in Arizona before 1961 and remained restricted mainly to the Patagonia–Nogales area for many years. After several years of building numbers in *Maricopa*, a nesting colony was discovered at a golf course development in Chandler this winter, with 30–35 pairs estimated on 21 Feb (R. Edwards, TC). The only prior nesting in the state was a single failed nest at Paloma. At the species' old stronghold of Patagonia L., numbers rose from 2 to 20 through the season (m. ob.). Double-crested Cormorant numbers are also up in Chandler, with 200–300 reported 12 Jan+ (C. Ross, TC, m. ob.). Holding ponds and artificial lakes in housing developments now support a population that likely exceeds historical numbers in the area.

A Least Bittern at H.R.P. 15 Feb (W. Thurber) was a new locality record. Two were reported from seldom-birded Talkalai L. on 21 Feb (KKA et al.). A Tricolored Heron at Tucson 1 Dec (J. Higgins, ph. MMS) was the latest ever in se. Arizona. Only the 2nd winter Arizona record, a Reddish Egret was at Paloma 2 Jan (ph. BG). Just as surprising in winter was a White Ibis in Palo Verde 27 Dec+ (TC, ph. MMS), though it may have been a bird reported intermittently since last spring.

A first for *Yavapai*, an ad. blue-morph Snow Goose was at Prescott 1–15 Dec (CST) with 4 white ads. A small Canada Goose at Kayenta S.T.P. 6 Feb (CL) was consistent in size with Cackling forms. Thirty Tundra Swans at Becker L. 27 Nov–2 Dec (JV et al.) was the largest flock reported in recent years. Near Fort Thomas, 2 were present 29 Dec (ph. J. Williams et al.), then just one 1 Jan+ (ph. JE, m. ob.).

It was a good year for Eurasian Wigeon, with single males at McCormick Ranch, Scottsdale 17 Jan–8 Feb (J. Hansen et al.), Paradise Garden, Scottsdale 20 Jan–24 Feb (ph. L. Miller, m. ob.),

Arizona



Tucson 2 Feb+ (RH, ph. MMS), and Chandler 29 Feb (TC). The hybrid wigeon continued at Willcox through the period (SH, m. ob.). Greater Scaup were slightly more numerous than usual in s. Arizona. At A.V.S.T.P., an imm. male was present 4 Dec (ph. GHR, MMS), a female on 11 Dec (ph. DS), and another male 26–28 Feb (KKA et al.). Single males were at Patagonia L. 13 Dec–10 Mar (C. Marantz, m. ob.) and Tempe 11 Jan–28 Feb (TC). Three were reported from L. Havasu 23 Jan (DP). In contrast, only 10 were seen on a boat trip through their usual Glen Canyon haunts 5 Jan (J. Grahame et al.). The only scoter reports were of 2 Surf Scoters at Parker Dam 6 Dec (CB, SS) and single White-winged at Parker Dam 6 Dec–20 Feb (CB, SS, ph. J. Cochran) and Glen Canyon Dam 5 Jan (MMS, JC et al.). Counts of Barrow's Goldeneye were unimpressive: up to 6 at Parker Dam 2 Dec–15 Feb (CB, SS, m. ob.) and just 11 at Glen Canyon Dam 5 Jan (CL et al.). Hooded Mergansers were more widespread than usual statewide. A Red-breasted Merganser at Kayenta S.T.P. 12 Dec (CL) was the latest fall migrant ever for the N.I.R. Singles at Scottsdale 11 Jan (TC) and Talkalai L. 21 Feb (KKA) were rare.

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KITES THROUGH DOVES

White-tailed Kite numbers remained low. Two continued in the San Rafael Valley (m. ob.), another 2 were seen near Red Rock 29 Dec–30 Jan (JE et al.), and one was at Paloma 26 Jan (BG). A fly-by Northern Goshawk was in the lowlands at B.T.A. 14 Dec (RD). Reports of Gray Hawk along the Santa Cruz R. from Amado to Tumacacori 15 Jan–23 Feb (K. McBride, KKa, DP) likely represented a single bird. There are few winter records. The H.R.P. Red-shouldered Hawk(s) continued through the period (K. & L. Bielek et al.). Along Granite Cr., Prescott, one was seen on 19 Dec–9 Jan, when it was joined by a 2nd bird (†CST). An amazing find was a Broad-winged Hawk picked up from a street in Chandler 26 Jan; it was taken to a rehabilitator but succumbed (ph. A. Payton). Only the 4th *Maricopa* record, it was one of very few Arizona winter records. As has become expected, Zone-tailed Hawks wintered in the Tucson area (m. ob.) Widespread but irregular reports suggest the presence of several birds. Less expected were Zone-taileds at Green Valley 10 Dec (GB), Molino Basin, Catalina Mts. 19 Dec (M. Ali), and Yuma 24 Dec (DT, *fide* HD). The only Rough-legged Hawks reported with details were from Red Rock 12 Dec–29 Jan (GB, †KKa, m. ob.) and near Portal 9 Feb (RWe). One of very few winter N.I.R. reports, a Peregrine Falcon was in Pasture Canyon 8 Dec (CL).

A mostly white Sandhill Crane in the S.S.V. flocks 29 Dec–15 Feb (ph. T. Wood et al.) was a real oddity. Surprising were 2 Snowy Plovers at San Carlos L. 21 Feb–17 Mar (†DJ, KKa). There are few winter records. Up to 60 Mountain Plovers at Paloma 21 Dec–17 Feb (BG, RD) were the first in *Maricopa* in over a decade (*fide* JW). More than 50 were in Yuma in Dec (DTo, HD). In contrast, they were sparse in se. Arizona, with only 3 near Friendly Corner in Dec (KKa et al.) and a single report of 15 in the S.S.V. 3 Jan (T. Wurstel *fide* CDB). Casual in Prescott in winter, 3 Spotted Sandpipers were present in Dec, with one lingering into Jan (W. Anderson, CST, B. Thomen). Casual at any season, single Red Phalaropes were at Patagonia L. 26 Dec (P. Walsh) and Whitewater 28 Dec–3 Jan (R. Hunt, ph. CDB). A Heermann's Gull in Tucson 11 Dec (JM et al., ph. DS, MMS) was a casual wanderer from the Sea of Cortez. A California Gull at Kayenta S.T.P. 6 Feb (CL) was the earliest spring N.I.R. record. The Glaucous-winged Gull at Palo Verde was last reported on 4 Jan (m. ob.).

A few White-winged Doves were noted in the n., where reports are slowly accumulating. Singles were on the Camp Verde C.B.C. 29 Dec (*fide* RR), at Lcupp 27 Jan (CL), and Kayenta 6 Feb (CL). Up to 5 in Prescott 29 Nov+ (W. Bull, CST) were a first for winter. An Inca Dove in St. Johns 27 Dec (DR) was also far north. Ruddy Ground-Dove numbers were more typical than during last year's major influx. Up to 11 were near Red Rock 4 Dec+ (ph. GHR, m. ob.), 4 were in Tacna 8 Jan (PL), 2 were in Palo Verde 24 Jan (PM), and 2 more were in the Santa Cruz Flats 14 Feb (RT). One at Granite Dells, Prescott 2–4 Jan (M. Leeper, *fide* CST) was accidental.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FLICKERS

A Broad-billed Hummingbird again wintered at B.T.A. 6 Dec–4 Jan (JB et al.). On 18 Feb, an apparent Berylline Hummingbird x Magnificent Hummingbird hybrid was seen in upper Ramsey Canyon on a perch used the previous two springs by a Berylline (J. Hirth). Violet-crowned Hummingbirds took advantage of feeders again this winter, with 9 present in Dec and Jan across se. Arizona. Spring migrants began to arrive in early Feb (R. Baxter, S. Williamson, m. ob.).



This second-year Reddish Egret at Paloma Ranch 2 January 2004 furnished only the second winter record for Arizona.

Photograph by Bill Grossi.

Prescott saw its highest number of wintering Anna's Hummingbirds ever (CST), reflecting a mild winter. Late Rufous Hummingbirds were at Portal 1–18 Dec (T. & L. Gates), Ash Canyon 7 Dec (M.J. Ballator), and B.T.A. 1–4 Jan (*fide* SG). There are very few records later than Dec.

Elegant Trogons winter in small numbers in se. Arizona; singles were upstream from Patagonia L. 19 Oct+ (m. ob.), in lower Madera Canyon 4–6 Feb (RH et al.), and Montosa Canyon, Santa Rita Mts. 19 Feb (B. Koenig). Green Kingfisher numbers remain low. The only reports were of one heard above Patagonia L. 4 Jan (WR) and another seen along the Santa Cruz R. from Tubac to Tumacacori 1–5 Feb (DP, B. Zimmer et al.). Becoming more regular but still rare, single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Continental 10 Dec+ (GB, †C. Blake), in lower Madera Canyon 18 Feb (ph. RH), and below Patagonia L. 18 Feb (DS, †MMS). Four others were reported without details. A Red-naped Sapsucker in Canyon de Chelly 4–13 Dec (CL, M. Murov) was one of few winter N.I.R. records. One of few recent well-documented Red-breasted Sapsuckers, a *daggetti* type, was at Oak Flat near Superior 4 Jan–7 Feb (PM, ph. C. Donald, MMS). Another was reported from Kingman 28 Nov (K. Garrett). Hybrid or intergrade sapsuckers masquerading as Red-breasted were reported from Patagonia L. 30 Nov–18 Dec (PD, R. Palmer, ph. MMS, GHR), Tucson 25 Dec–4 Jan

(MMS et al.), and Yuma West Wetlands 8–16 Feb (ph. J. Coker, HD). Out of habitat, a Downy Woodpecker was in pinyon-juniper at Saddle Mt., *Cocoino* 11 Jan (CL). Another was at Watson L. 21 Dec–10 Jan (CST), where casual. Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flickers were at the Salt River/91st Ave. Cobble Ponds 17 Dec (TC) and Welton 8 Jan (PL).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

A Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet found on the Superior C.B.C. 4 Jan (*fide* SG) was n. of where this species normally winters. Both Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers are rare and irregular winter visitors anywhere n. of se. portions of the state. A Hammond's wintering at Granite Basin, *Yavapai* 18 Dec–11 Mar (D. Moll, CST), and another found on the Salt/Verde Rivers C.B.C. 16 Dec (KR), were both considered north of usual winter occurrence. The Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers found during the winter season were in sw. Phoenix 18 Dec (TC) and on the Gila River C.B.C. 30 Dec (*fide* TC); all certain winter records pertain to Pacific-slope. A Black Phoebe at Tuba City 16 Jan (CL) represented one of the few winter records ever for the N.I.R. Only 3 Eastern Phoebes were found this winter; the Patagonia L. individual from fall remained into Mar (SH, m. ob.), another was found along the Santa Cruz R. near Tubac 24–25 Feb (DP et al.), and one was foraging near a swimming pool in a Tucson yard 12–22 Jan (D. Smyth). This species remains a rare but somewhat irregular winter visitor to s. Arizona. As many as 3 Vermilion Flycatchers, casual in winter anywhere n. of Phoenix, were found at Chino Valley 1 Dec, with at least one remaining until 1 Jan (R. Duerksen et al., *fide* CST). Another was found on the Camp Verde C.B.C. 29 Dec (RR et al.). The Tropical Kingbird (eventually heard) that was located at the Gilbert Water Ranch in Nov was last reported 7 Dec (B. Ison et al., ph. RJ). As reported during the fall, Cassin's Kingbirds lingered in numbers late into the season; our latest reports received included one at lower Ramsey Canyon 2 Dec (J. & M. Hirth), one in the San Rafael Valley 7 Dec (M. Moore), and at least 2 wintering on a Tucson golf course seen into Mar (D. Davis, GHR et al.). A Thick-billed Kingbird returned to a Yuma neighborhood for 2nd year 18 Feb+ (ph. J. Coker, HD); the few previous winter records for Arizona are all from the L.C.R.V. Perhaps one of the best finds of the season was a male Rose-throated Becard along the Santa Cruz R. at Tumacacori 27 Jan+ (GB et al.; ph. J. Woodley), representing only a 3rd winter report from Arizona.

Normally, when there is a major corvid flight into se. Arizona, there are telltale signs during the fall. While Western Scrub-Jays appeared in the fall, this year's semi-impressive flight of Steller's Jays into s. Arizona began in early Dec, with much of the movement detected later in Jan. Two Black-billed Magpies on the Havasu C.B.C. 30 Dec (*fide* N. Miller) were well s. of normal areas of occurrence and are thought likely to have been escapees. American Crows were apparently on the move in n. Arizona, with

relatively large flocks detected between mid-Dec and mid-Jan at Canyon de Chelly and near Tuba City (CL). The only s. Arizona reports were of 200 at Pima, *Graham* (B. Meitheny) and 3 near Red Rock 14 Feb (RT).

Late or lingering Barn Swallows included 2 at A.V.S.T.P. 10–11 Dec (DJ, DS). Even scarcer were a few mid-winter reports, one from Palo Verde 7 Jan (MP, MMS), one from Marana 26 Jan (DJ), and 2 from Tucson 6 Dec–3 Feb (PS, GB, JM). At least 2 Mountain Chickadees were detected in the lowlands, one at the B.T.A. 6 Dec–12 Mar (JB et al.) and another at H.R.P. 7 Feb (E. Latturner). Also unusual were House Wrens lingering in n. Arizona into the winter, with one in Flagstaff 27 Dec (JC), perhaps providing a first local winter record, and another in Pasture Canyon 16 Jan (CL), providing only a 2nd winter N.I.R. report. Perhaps not a coincidence, unusually high numbers were detected in the Prescott area (CST). No fewer than 11 Winter Wrens were found nearly statewide this winter; it is an irregular but sometimes uncommon winter visitor mainly to s. Arizona.

A relative explosion of Black-capped Gnatcatcher reports were received this winter, some well documented, others unconfirmed. Given the unprecedented nature of the number of reports, the past possibilities of hybrids, and the possibility that observers have become somewhat complacent with regard to reporting this species in recent years, the A.B.C. would like to review documentation on all of the following reports: the pair that was located upstream from Patagonia L. along Sonoita Cr. during the fall was seen again 4 Jan (JB, MMS et al.); another pair that was located in Montosa Canyon, Santa Rita Mts. during the fall was seen again 17 Jan–25 Feb (PL et al.); the pair that nested successfully at Patagonia L. last summer remained until at least 4 Jan (M. Brown et al.), then was found again 14 Feb+ (MMS et al.); one was reported along the Elephant Head Bike Trail 19 Dec (S. Johnsen); one was reported from Chino Canyon 3 Jan (*vide* R. Freeman); one was in the Tumacacori Mts. n. of Rock Corral 30 Jan (K. Graves), and a pair was nearby at Rock Corral Springs 1–23 Feb (MK, DS, †MMS et al.); one was along Proctor Rd. near Madera Canyon 18 Feb (RH et al.); and finally another pair was detected downstream from Patagonia L. 18 Feb (DS, †MMS).

The only Rufous-backed Robin of the winter was one continuing along Sonoita Cr. through the period (R. Shaw, ph. GHR, J. Cochran). No fewer than 9 Varied Thrushes were reported, a greater number than usual, with sightings scattered from Flagstaff to Portal. Quite amazing was a Gray Catbird found in Pasture Canyon 8 Dec–16 Jan (J. Grahame, JC, CL et al.), providing the first winter N.I.R. report. The Brown Thrasher that wintered last year at B.T.A. returned for another season (m. ob.; ph. DS), while another was located at Patagonia L. 30 Dec–4 Jan (B. Fitch, CDB et al.). Amazingly early by at least two weeks was a Le Conte's Thrasher nest with three eggs found near Tacna 8 Jan (PL).

OLIVE WARBLER THROUGH ORIOLES

Olive Warbler is a rare but regular winter resident, normally involving overwintering individuals in areas where the species breeds. Therefore up to 2 present at the B.T.A. 4 Jan–29 Feb (SG, CST et al.) and one at Camp Creek 1 Jan (TC) were of interest. An Orange-crowned Warbler at Cow Springs L. 12 Dec (CL) represented the latest N.I.R. report away from the Colorado R. Northern Parulas, rare but annual during the winter, were reported at Dudleyville 3 Jan (TC), in Tucson 4–12 Jan (C. Green, m. ob.), and at Phoenix 9 Jan (MK). Normally, Yellow Warbler is casual at best in s. Arizona during the winter, yet this year no fewer than 7 were reported, all from either Tucson or Phoenix areas. A Chestnut-sided Warbler at Granite Creek near Prescott 14 Dec–8 Jan (C. Woodley et al., *vide* CST) provided the first local winter report. At least 9 Black-and-white Warblers were found this winter, a few more than usual. The only American Redstart (usually more regular in winter) was one upstream from Patagonia L. 4 Nov–17 Dec (MK et al.). Five different Louisiana Waterthrushes were reported, with up to 2 along different sections of Sonoita Cr. (SH, WR, m. ob.), one in Florida Canyon 23 Jan (R. Wilt), one along the Santa Cruz R. near Tumacacori 8–27 Feb (T. Linda, m. ob.), and one seen sporadically along the San Pedro R. near Hwy 90 beginning last fall. A male MacGillivray's Warbler in Flagstaff 27



This male Rose-throated Becard along the Santa Cruz River at Tumacacori 27 January 2004 (here) and later provided Arizona with its third winter record of the species. Photograph by Joe Woodley.

Dec–12 Feb (JC) was considered to be an injured bird. Two Wilson's Warblers found at Sweetwater lingered into mid-Dec, with one remaining to at least 1 Mar (GB, m. ob.), while singles were on the Tres Rios C.B.C. 18 Dec (*vide* TC) and near Tubac 12 Feb (GB); like Yellow Warbler, Wilson's has been considered casual at best during the winter. Unreported since Sep, the resident Rufous-capped Warblers in French Joe Canyon were noted 31 Jan+

(KKa et al.). Another was reported (for the 2nd time this year) from Pima Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts. 14 Dec (†J. McCabe), which would represent the northernmost record for the state.

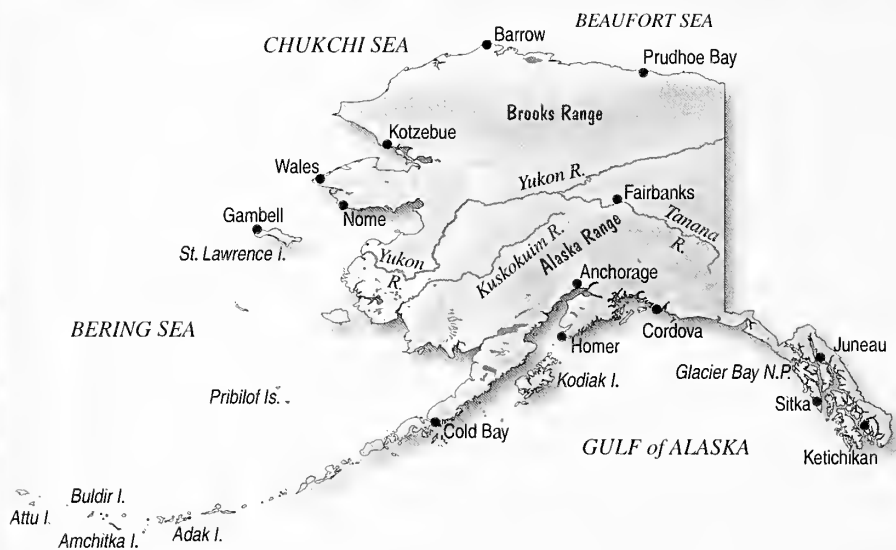
Always exciting and providing one of the latest reports for the state, a Scarlet Tanager was found at Parker 6 Dec (†CBA). A very late Western Tanager was at Canyon de Chelly 16 Dec (CL). Another found along Sonoita Cr. 6 Dec remained until 1 Jan (KKa et al., †DTo), and another was in Tucson 9 Jan (B. Pollock); this species is a casual winter visitor anywhere in s. Arizona.

Following what was certainly the best fall ever for Clay-colored Sparrows in s. Arizona, one was in Scottsdale 1 Jan (†RJ), for only an 8th *Maricopa* record, one was in Tucson 4 Nov–18 Feb (MMS et al.), and another bird was located in Tucson 24 Feb (MMS). A Savannah Sparrow was seen on the strange date of 6 Feb in Pasture Canyon (CL), where this species does not winter. Of the 9 different Fox Sparrows reported, several different subspecies were thought to have occurred, but without documentation received for any of the reports, it is difficult to sort out what exactly was seen. A Lincoln's Sparrow was at Pasture Canyon 16 Jan (CL), where it is casual during winter. Despite generally low numbers of sparrows overall, no fewer than 30 Swamp Sparrows and 20 White-throated Sparrows were reported statewide, a far greater number than usual for each. More in line with past seasons, 4 Harris's and 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported. Up to 6 McCown's Longspurs were found at Green Valley 8 Dec+ (GHR et al.), away from known areas of occurrence. As many as 12 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found in Arlington 25–27 Dec (TC), the first local reports since 1988 (*vide* JW).

A male Black-headed Grosbeak, casual in winter, was found along the Santa Cruz R. at Tubac 25 Feb (S. Johnsen, B. Massey). Up to 7 Brewer's Blackbirds in Flagstaff 13 Jan (JC) provided, amazingly, a first local winter record. An Orchard Oriole, also casual in winter, was reported on the Gila River C.B.C. 29 Dec (*vide* TC), while another returned to an Ahwatukee yard for the 3rd winter in a row (ph. G. & S. Barnes). Also casual, a female Bullock's Oriole was at the B.T.A. 9–14 Jan (MK, MMS, DS).

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Although observers were primed for a winter of atypical birding—following the incredibly mild fall season and late onset of snow cover—conditions altered abruptly in early December into a “classic” Alaskan winter. Consistent snow accumulations, extended strong high pressure, and subzero cold snaps clearly limited this season’s highlights. The species counts on Christmas Birds Counts were down, with below-long-term average totals and fewer individuals. All but the outer Southeast coast was mired in frozen conditions for the period, in direct contrast to last year, when many areas were snow-free and with considerable open fresh water. Nonetheless, and probably because of tenacious observer coverage, this winter produced or revealed some interesting trends for semi-hardy forms, exceptional extralimitals, raptors, and certain waterbirds.

Abbreviations: A.B.O. (Alaska Bird Observatory); S.E. (Southeast Alaska); S.C. (South-coastal Alaska); U.C.I. (Upper Cook Inlet). Referenced details, specimens, photographs, and videotape are on file at the University of

Alaska Museum. *Italicized place names* denote especially unusual locations for the noted species.

LOONS THROUGH COOT

Perhaps because of the harsh season, loon concentrations and peak winter grebe counts were way down or missing completely from standard coastal sites. No Pied-billed Grebes were reported either. Although pelagic coverage was lacking this year, reports of noteworthy inshore seabirds again came in from S.E., including *Ketchikan’s* first ever Northern Fulmar after a storm on 22 Dec (LS, *fide* SCH), and late single Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels near Sitka 11 Dec (MLW, MET) and in Ketchikan 22 Dec (SCH). Great Blue Heron reports away from S.E. were subpar, and only a single was noted in Seward through 27 Dec (RLS, TT). At the species’ extreme w. winter limit were 3 around Kodiak town all season (RAM) and another 5+ on the island’s w. side at Old Harbor (MB), where good habitat holds decent numbers every winter at the limits of post-breeding dispersal. One of few ever found in winter, a Great Egret managed to make it n. to the coast in Juneau 31 Dec–6 Jan (MS, GVV, KH *), at which point it succumbed to cold and icy conditions. There are a few winter reports from the Central Aleutians of presumed Old World forms.

It was an unusually sparse waterfowl highlight season, perhaps because a mild fall was quickly followed by full-on freeze-up in early Dec. Noteworthy reports, other than a sporadic Green-winged Teal in Anchorage and a female Bufflehead there through the season

(DFD, RLS, TT), were submitted from the coastal zone from Kodiak through S.E. Inclusive in this year’s short list were 3 each Eurasian Wigeon at Kodiak through Feb (RAM) and Juneau 19 Jan–29 Feb (PS); single drake Common-type (*nimia?*) Green-winged Teal also at Kodiak 16 Feb (ph. RAM, MMM) and Juneau 30 Jan–26 Feb (PS), where this form is casual mainly as a migrant; up to 4 Ring-necked Ducks offshore in the Gulf at Kodiak 21 Dec–16 Feb (ph. RAM, MMM); one female Tufted Duck also there 16 Feb (ph. RAM, MMM); and a good S.E. count of 15+ Lesser Scaup in the Juneau area 14 Feb+ (GVV).

Diurnal raptors fared well, especially considering this season’s tough conditions, which likely concentrated semi-hardy forms more than is typical. An incredible C.B.C. tally of 183 Bald Eagles in the Eagle R. area, while certainly not a conservative calculation, nevertheless represented a strong Dec showing at the extreme n. limits of the species’ winter range in U.C.I., where most were attracted to the Anchorage landfill (*fide* RLS). A few dozen is a typical mid-season high count. Sharp-shinned Hawks were present in Dec s. of the Alaska Range, highlighted by a couple scattered around U.C.I., mainly near Anchorage through mid-month (*fide* DFD, RLS), up to 3 in the Juneau area even later from 16 Jan–28 Feb (GVV, MB), and more significantly, one around an *Unalaska* feeder in the e. Aleutians 10 Dec–Mar (ph. MK)—an Aleutian Islands first. The season’s only mid-season Red-tailed Hawk was a single offshore at Sitka 1 Feb (MLW, MET), where casual. Notable Golden Eagle sightings were singles in alpine habitats near Anchorage in late Dec (RLS), where a few are often found in winter hunting ptarmigan, and offshore in the *Sitka* area, where casual in winter, 24 Jan (MLW, MET). Juneau’s American Kestrel from the past two winters again occupied its favored grass flats near the airport all season (GVV et al.), while at least 3 Merlins wintered in the greater Kodiak area 27 Dec–29+ Feb (RAM). American Coots were only accounted for in Sitka, with 4 on productive Swan L. 1 Dec+ (MLW, MET).

PLOVERS THROUGH ALCIDS

It was a surprisingly good season for shorebirds that are considered sporadic or semi-hardy, possibly because these were able to linger from the late and mild fall. After several years of fairly widespread winter coastal distribution, the season’s only Killdeer were 6 in the Juneau area 1–29 Feb (PS). Usually the Region’s best site, Kodiak’s winter Black Oystercatcher concentrations peaked consistently at 400+ all season (RAM). Significant after early Nov and casual in winter were single Greater Yellowlegs in Gustavus to 14 Dec+ (ND, PV) and in Juneau through 5 Jan (DR), in the same area where one survived last winter. The Spotted Sandpiper that survived through 25 Jan in Juneau’s Auke Bay beaches

(NM, MS, GVV) became the Region's first true mid-winter report. Since most of the world's nominate Rock Sandpipers winter in the intertidal fringes of Cook Inlet, reports of extralimitals were notable, including at least one in Kodiak 25–29 Feb (ph. RAM), a first Kodiak record, and 2 in Juneau 17 Jan (GVV). Although this winter's Cook Inlet Rock Sandpiper concentrations were elusive, or essentially gone from winter haunts in Feb, high counts from the "shoulder" portions of winter were otherwise about par with the past few years (*vide* REG). Dunlin were limited to a few sites but in very good numbers, highlighted by up to 950 in the Gustavus–Glacier Bay coast 8 Dec–16 Feb+ (ND, PV) and at least 46 in Kodiak 22–29 Feb (RAM). The season's only Wilson's Snipe was a single offshore in Sitka 25 Jan–15 Feb (MLW, MET).

Gulls also made a relatively poor showing, including very few lingerers from the mild fall. A group of 250 Thayer's Gulls was a decent winter tally from n. of Juneau 6 Dec, which had dwindled to about 40 there by 18 Jan (GVV). Bucking a now fairly long-term trend of decent winter distribution, only a single Slaty-backed Gull report was submitted, a third-year bird in the Petersburg Narrows early–29 Jan (ph. RL, *vide* SCH). The season's only onshore Marbled Murrelet aggregation was of 1500 estimated off Juneau 15 Feb (GVV). An Ancient Murrelet inshore near Kodiak 20 Dec (RAM) was considered rare for the season there. MacIntosh noted that the fall season's Crested Auklet concentrations (q.v.) persisted through Feb in unseasonably high winter numbers for the area.

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Owls made big news and were best represented in S.E. this season. An early calling Western Screech-Owl was noted in the Sitka area 24 Feb+ (MLW, MET), the site of the Region's historic initial records. Unprecedented numbers of Northern Pygmy-Owls staged an incursion along the n. half of S.E., with an incredible 20+ cautiously tallied along the Greater Juneau area road system through the season (m. ob., *vide* SZ, GVV). This tally alone probably better any previously collective total for the entire Region for any season. At least 3, probably 4–5, were noted to the n. between Glacier Bay N.M.'s Bartlett Cove and Gustavus 1 Dec–16 Feb (ND, PV), while another wandered offshore to Sitka 24 Feb (MLW, MET), where there are few records. Two Barred Owls around Juneau 27 Dec–4 Feb DB, DR) and another w. at Sitka 9 Feb (MLW, MET) were about an average winter showing for S.E., while 2 Short-eareds in the Juneau area 6 Dec–29 Feb+ and 1 Feb (GVV, BA, PS) were more unusual, especially for a harsh winter. Both our knowledge and the distribution of Barred Owls have evolved significantly since the first Alaska record

from Oct 1977. Although Boreal Owls are considered resident within their range, winter reports are always notable, so a single in Gustavus 15 Feb (ND, PV) was a local first and rare for S.E. At least 2 Northern Saw-whet Owls were conspicuous through early Jan in w. Anchorage (DFD, SS), where there are occasional winter reports.

Not always annual in winter, Red-breasted Sapsuckers were widespread within S.E., highlighted by at least 6 in the Ketchikan area 1 Dec–6 Feb (*vide* SCH). A notable and extreme extralimital was a male that attempted to winter at a *Kenny L.* feeder, which it found in Oct and where it remained roosting in a hole in the fascia of a home through at least 29 Dec (LR, ph. BH, *vide* RM). This Interior community is a long way from favored coastal forests and in the heart of sub-zero winters. The Juneau area's Interior *septentrionalis* Hairy Woodpecker, which had visited a feeder there earlier in the fall, overwintered there, a rare S.E. occurrence (*vide* MM). A Northern Flicker in Sitka all season (MLW, MET) was about average for this occasional winter lingerer.

Northern Shrikes were reasonably widespread within their typical range on the Mainland, while a single reached s. to Ketchikan 19 Feb (JFK), where not annual in winter. Unusual for a tough winter, but probably just late migrants, were 4 Horned Larks in Gustavus 9–14 Dec (ND, PV). Rare dispersants out of the Interior were Black-capped Chickadees in S.E., including one in Juneau to 14 Dec (MM, GVV) and 2 n. in Gustavus 6–14 Dec (ND, PV, BPP). Black-cappeds are occasional in late fall to the North Gulf. Interior sightings of Brown Creeper from the isolated and elusive Fairbanks area population, where small numbers are resident in older White Spruce stands, were submitted for 1–28 Dec (BEL, TW, A.B.O.). There were no reported excursions of boreal forest semi-hardy forms, with Red-breasted Nuthatches and Golden-crowned Kinglets generally staying put. Following a lead from a local photographer, Anchorage birders located a fine *Mountain Bluebird* along the s. slopes of Turnagain Arm near Rainbow, s. of Anchorage 2–15 Dec+ (*vide* DWS, PP, EM, et al.). Providing a haven for berry eaters, this productive area was covered with snow-free patches of mountain ash and supported an active mixed flock of frugivores, which included a Northern Flicker, 32+ American Robins, and at least 2 Townsend's Solitaires, all either casual or present in winter in very low numbers (RLS, TT, DWS, DFD). There are few winter records in the Region for *Mountain Bluebird*, which is casual in S.C. This winter's only *Hermits Thrush* was one in Kodiak 10–12 Jan (JP, ph. CH), only the 2nd in winter there and one of few ever for S.C. Seven American Pipits lingered quite late along Kodiak's Narrow Cape shores to 27 Dec (RAM), while up to 2

remained close to town through 13 Jan (ph. RAM), a surprising number for such a tough winter.

WARBLERS THROUGH FRINGILLIDS

The only warblers of the winter were 2 Yellow-rumpeds at Juneau area feeders 14 Dec & 1 Dec–29 Feb (MM, GVV, SZ, MB). American Tree Sparrows were scattered mostly as singles at a few coastal sites, highlighted by 2 in Ketchikan, where not annual in winter, 6 Jan and 1 Dec–29 Feb (SCH, AWP). Following a great fall showing of 3 individuals from the Ketchikan area were 2 more Swamp Sparrows in Saxman 9 Dec (SCH, AWP). The majority of Alaska's fall reports of this casual migrant have come from this area. Only 2 White-throated Sparrows were found all season, both from the same Ketchikan feeder 7 Dec and 30+ Jan (JFK); most of the Region's winter reports come from Ketchikan. Golden-crowned Sparrow highlights were above the norm, including 7 in Kodiak 16 Jan+ (JD, SD), 3 in Ketchikan Dec–Feb (SCH), and a single at Sitka all season (MLW, MET). Wayward Snow Buntings included two groups of 10–20 birds in the Fairbanks area 6 Dec–11 Jan (A.B.O., LH), where rare, up to 150+ in S.E. in the Gustavus area 4 Dec–15 Feb (ND, PV), and at least 25 in Juneau 23–28 Jan+ (PS, GVV). McKay's Buntings wandered to the e. of their winter range, with 2 documented in Kodiak 9–22 Jan (ph. RAM, SB, CH) and a single even farther e. to Seward 27 Dec (RLS, TT), where casual. As is typical, these individuals were mixed in with Snow Buntings. Certainly the bird of the season was a waif Hawfinch that appeared at a *Dillingham* feeder 27 Dec–23 Jan (*, ph. RJ, *vide* RM), the Region's first winter record and only the 2nd ever for the Mainland.

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British Columbia & Yukon



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The Region experienced a winter similar to that of the previous year, with a mild December and February bookending a colder January. In fact, January was rather unsettled, with wild week-long swings between frigid Arctic and milder Pacific air. Seasonal precipitation was below normal except for the northern half of the Yukon and some parts of southern British Columbia. As a result, Christmas Bird Counts were heavily influenced by the local conditions: early counts fared well, but some were unlucky, such as Fort St. James, which endured the bone-chilling majesty of -40°C temperatures to start their count day. Needless to say, most talliers stayed in bed! The Yukon experienced a typical winter—a rather nasty cold spell in January (temperatures plunging to -50°C in some areas) and record-high snowfalls in the Dawson area.

Irruptive species were unremarkable this season. Northern Pygmy-Owls were the only owls really seen on the move. Winter finches were in very low numbers in most parts of

the Region, with only a token southward gesture by redpolls, but other finches were notably scarce. The rarity of the season was a Fieldfare that furnished a first record for the region.

Abbreviations: P.G. (Prince George), R.B.M.S. (Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Ladner), R.P.B.O. (Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Victoria), Whse. (Whitehorse, Yukon).

LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

An ad. Laysan Albatross was picked up in Coquitlum 26 Dec and later released w. of Victoria 1 Jan (*fide* RTo). Remarkably, this was the 2nd record for the Vancouver checklist area. The bands on the bird indicate that it was originally banded off the S.E. Farallon Islands (*fide* RTo). The crew of the *Queen of Prince Rupert* picked up a frigatebird 14 Jan between Bonilla I. and Sandspit (ph. TR). The bird was emaciated and sent to rehabilitation and later identified as a first-year female Magnificent Frigatebird. This constitutes the 5th confirmed record for the province and the first winter record.

Near the n. edge of their winter range, 2 so-called Gray-bellied Brant—rare but regular in British Columbia—were observed near Parksville 23 Jan (GLM). Only a few of the Skagit County, Washington wintering flock remain this far north. The bands on one of the birds identified it as a male banded on Melville I. in Aug 2002 (SB). Canvasbacks continue their decline on the w. coast, with one or 2 present in Tofino 6–30 Jan (AD). An ad. male King Eider was in Fanny Bay 10–14 Feb (JF); this species has appeared annually in the Comox area for the past three years. A female Barrow's Goldeneye, casual in winter in the Yukon, was seen on the Yukon R. in Whse. 26 Dec (JH et al.) and 15 Feb (HG). A pair of ad. Bald Eagles, rare in winter, was observed at their traditional winter location on McIntyre Cr. wetland in Whse. 26 Dec (CE) and 15 Feb (HG).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH OWLS

Casual in winter along the s. coast, a Pacific Golden-Plover wintered at Boundary Bay 3 Dec–22 Feb (JAM, m. ob.). American Avocets wintered successfully once again along the Serpentine R., with 3 present Nov–29 Feb (JA, m. ob.); this species is casual in winter in the lower mainland. Also casual in winter along the s. coast in winter, a few Red Knots were late: one in Delta 2 Dec (JAM); 3 in Ladner 6 Dec (RTo et al.); and a single again in Delta 7 Dec (RTo). Iceland Gulls continue to make regular winter appear-

ances at a few reliable locations: there were 3 in the lower mainland 7 Dec–10 Feb (*fide* RTo) and 2 in Vernon 26 Jan–16 Feb (DGC et al.). A third-basic Lesser Black-backed Gull was discovered in Vernon 10–13 Dec (ph. DGC†) for a 3rd Okanagan record. This location has had 3 different individuals over the past three winters. Single Slaty-backed Gulls can be seen most winters in Delta, such as the ad. that remained Nov–14 Dec (ph. RTo); however, elsewhere in the province, they are casual visitors, such as the ad. that was relocated in Cumberland 6–7 Dec at the sewage lagoons (JF et al.).

The Yukon's only Rock Pigeon population, hunted by a Northern Goshawk through the winter (*fide* LC), was down to the 4 in Whse. by early Mar (LC; CE; HG). A Sora, casual in winter, was present at R.B.M.S. 31 Dec–18 Jan & 1–13 Feb (JI et al.). The tally of 3821 California Quail on the Oliver–Osoyoos C.B.C. furnished the highest Canadian count ever (*fide* RJC). This was not a winter for owls, aside from the prevalence of Northern Pygmy-Owls in the interior. Single Northern Hawk Owls were seen near Goundbirch 27 Feb (MP) and in Whse. 29 Feb (CE). Great Gray Owls made big news along the lower mainland, with at least 6 birds present, the most sought-after being the bird in Stanley Park 14–28 Dec (ph. JMC et al.); strangely, though, there were few reports elsewhere in the Region. A Short-eared Owl, casual in winter in the Yukon, was seen along the North Klondike Hwy. just n. of Whse. 21 Dec (MB, JS).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Rare on the outer coast, an Anna's Hummingbird visited a feeder in Tofino 29 Dec (PW). With only a handful of winter records for the s. coast, a Rufous Hummingbird was a very rare sight in Victoria 17 Dec (†AS). Single White-headed Woodpeckers were located in the s. Okanagan on 9 Dec at Anarchist Mt. e. of Osoyoos (*fide* RJC) and 17 Dec in Naramata (HB). The string of sightings in recent years is positive news for this scarce species. A few Northern Shrikes remained in the n., with singles ne. of Chetwynd 13 Feb (MP), in Whse. 6 (HG) & 26 Dec (JK), in the Jackfish Bay area all winter (AR et al.), and at Swan L., n. of Whse. 28 Feb (BD, HD).

A Steller's Jay, casual in the Yukon, spent all winter in Tagish (TF). Blue Jays were noteworthy by their relative absence this winter, which seems surprising following the flood of sightings in the past few years. The only individual of note was one in Rich-

mond 21 Dec+ (TP et al.). The Region's 6th Western Scrub-Jay, present since Oct, remained in Ladner to the end of period (DK, LJ et al.). Providing the Yukon's first true winter record was a ragged Horned Lark completely missing its tail at the Whse. landfill 14–15 Jan (DK, CE). The recent winter Barn Swallow phenomenon was again noted this winter; however, the numbers of birds involved were much reduced. At least 45 birds were seen either on Vancouver I. or the lower mainland from 14 Jan to end of the season. Amazingly, Barn Swallows ventured into the interior again this winter, with 2 at Hanceville, on the Chilcotin R. 12 Feb (ph. RMK) and a single bird crossed the 54th parallel to reach Giscome, 50 km ene. of P.G. 29 Feb (CA, MA)—likely the most northerly winter record of this species in North America. This latter bird was described as an ad. male and constitutes the first confirmation that ads. are at least occasionally involved in these winter movements. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was along the outer coast of Vancouver I., seen from Cheewhat Beach 18 Jan (JE) and from Carmanah Light 21 Jan (JE). This is the earliest arrival on record.

CHICKADEES THROUGH FINCHES

Two Mountain Chickadees on the newly established Carcross C.B.C. on 2 Jan provided a new winter location for the species (compiler DK). The Yukon's first winter records for Brown Creeper were provided by singles at Haines Junction 18 Dec (WR) and along the Auriol Trail near there 20 Dec (JB, TS). The rarity of the season was a Fieldfare, discovered during the Port Coquitlam C.B.C. 28 Dec (ph. LC), a first provincial record. Fortunately, the bird was photographed; it was not subsequently relocated. Fieldfare has been recorded at least four times in Alaska, but it is more often recorded in the ne. North America, in the Canadian Maritimes and New England, where casual. Very rare in the interior in winter, a Hermit Thrush was found at William's L. 30 Dec (CK, PR). Very late holdovers from the fall, remarkably, 2 imm./female Western Tanagers remained at R.B.M.S through 11 Dec (JI et al.).

A Palm Warbler was very late in Tofino 1 & 14 Dec (AD). Arguably the best consistent winter locale for Yellow-rumped Warblers in the Region is Stubbs I., just n. of Tofino, where 26 birds were tallied 28 Dec (AD). Casual in winter, a Black-and-white Warbler was in Stanley Park 28–29 Dec (HD). An American Tree Sparrow, casual in winter in the Yukon, was noted during the first few days of Dec at Teslin (CAI, DH). One of few winter records of Chipping Sparrow for the Region involved a single bird in a field loaded with sparrows in Surrey 9–29 Feb (IR, VO et al.). Given the dates involved, it

is difficult to know if this represents a successful overwinterer or an exceptionally early spring migrant. As it remained at this location for such a length of time, it seems rather likely that it overwintered. Two Savannah Sparrows were very late on the outer coast at the Long Beach airport 26 Dec (GB). A single imm. Harris's Sparrow was in South Surrey 9–17 Dec (CG et al.). A few single White-crowned Sparrows remained n., with singles in Dawson Creek 3 Jan (MP) and Dawson City, the latter a holdover from the fall that remained through 24 Jan after which the temperature had dropped to -50° C for three successive nights (ML). Two Dark-eyed Juncos, casual in winter in the cen. Yukon, were recorded on the 29 Dec Mayo C.B.C. (compiler MOD).

A Western Meadowlark was well n. in downtown P.G. 15–22 Jan (RTe) and probably did not survive the cold snap that followed. Rare in winter, a male Rusty Blackbird was in Richmond 1–21 Jan (MTo). Accidental in winter, an imm. male Baltimore Oriole was in White Rock 31 Dec (†PSP). Redpolls were a bit late moving s. this winter but were nevertheless widespread by Jan. Pine Siskins were scarce, at least in the interior, but began to return in Feb. A sizeable flock of 50 American Goldfinches was well n. of usual summer range at Kersley in early Jan (*vide* PR). A male Evening Grosbeak, rare in s. Yukon, was observed at a feeder in Whse. 29 Feb and again on 6 Mar (JMI, MD). Elsewhere in the region, Evening Grosbeaks went missing and seemed to have departed the Region completely!

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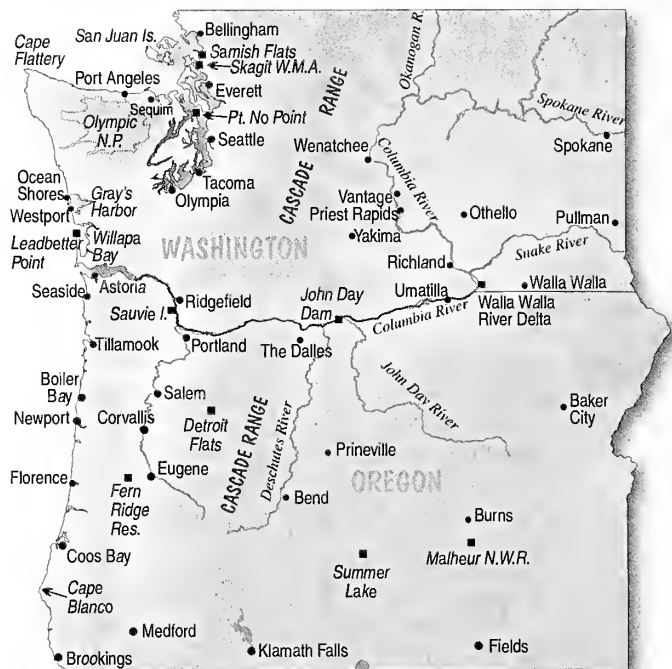
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Oregon & Washington



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Typically, December provides the best winter has to offer, both in tardy migrants and genuine vagrants. This December, however, was depauperate of both and seemed to bode poorly for the months to come. But January brought a roster of rarities and—most oddly—delivered two first Regional winter records after a week of ex-

tremely cold weather. Among aseasonal birds, largely shorebirds and sparrows, Washington had four sightings of birds with fewer than four previous winter records, while Oregon had three such sightings. And once again, a mid-winter pulse of Barn Swallows was detected: the sudden, unexplained shift in this species' migratory behavior could be one of the biggest bird stories of the decade—if only it were understood.

The weather depended largely on the month and Regional location. Overall, however, the winter started warmish (3–8° F above normal during December in much of Oregon) and ended cool (much of the Region 0–8° F below normal in February). Oregon was rather wetter than normal, while Washington was near average in precipitation. Compared to norms, the eastside was moister than the west.

Abbreviations: ER.R. (Fern Ridge Res., Lane, OR); N.S.C.B. (N. Spit Coos Bay, Coos, OR); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor, WA); Ridgefield (Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark, WA); W.W.R.D. (Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla, WA), Y.R.D. (Yakima R. delta, Benton, WA). "Eastside" and "Westside" designate locations east and west of the Cascade crest, respectively.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Yellow-billed Loons continued to rebound from their nadir in the 1990s, with 11 in

Washington and 2 in Oregon this winter, the highest total in at least 14 years. Maxima included 4 between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, Clallam 15 Dec (CW, BT, BLB, V. Gross) and 2 from the Hood Canal Bridge, Jefferson 1 Jan (SM, CCx, DD, RTS, CW); another at Chelan 14–15 Feb provided a very rare eastside record (H. Jennings, ph. RS). After a very poor fall showing, westside Clark's Grebe numbers were up this winter, with 8 in Washington and 5 in Oregon. Top counts were 4 at ER.R. throughout the winter (DI), 3 off Ketron I., Pierce 20 Dec (CW, BLB), and 2 at O.S. 18 Feb (BW). Unfortunately, no pelagic trips made it out this winter. A dead Northern Fulmar at Keystone, Island 21 Feb provided the only Puget Trough record following this fall's unprecedented incursions (DD, SM). A dead Mottled Petrel on Ona Beach, Lincoln 17 Dec was the first in the Region since fall 2001 (fide R. Bayer); about half of the previous records have been of dead birds, and the occurrence of this species in our Region seems linked to influxes of fulmar. Eight Short-tailed Shearwaters off Seal Rock S. P., Lincoln 4 Jan furnished a good from-shore count (J. Fontaine, S. Dinsmore).

An American White Pelican lingered at Bridgeport, Douglas 31 Dec–15 Jan (MB, KK); this species is rare during winter in Washington away from the lower Columbia Basin. Winter numbers of Great Egrets continue to increase. A stunning 144 were near Scappoose, Columbia 7 Dec (HN), and for the 5th consecutive winter, Great Egrets graced the Columbia Basin, with one at Moses L., Grant 20 Dec–3 Jan (DSc) and 12 at Ringold, Franklin 8 Jan–7 Feb (A. & J. Dittmer). Two Black-crowned Night-Heron roosts along the Link R., Klamath yielded an impressive 385 birds on 7 Feb (K. Larsen). Numbers of wintering Turkey Vultures in the Willamette Valley continued to increase, with up to 11 overwintering near ER.R. (Anne & Dan Heyerly) and another near Corvallis (Joe Fontaine). A Turkey Vulture near Cle Elum, Kittitas 22 Feb was early for e. Washington but not totally unexpected (D. MacRae).

The 2 Pink-footed Geese remained at Hoquiam, Grays Harbor until 10 Jan, when one mysteriously disappeared. The lone bird was last seen 11 Jan. Then on 21 Feb, a single Pink-footed Goose, presumably one of the original two, appeared about 30 km to the e. in Elma and remained into Mar (RS, PtS). Further investigations have shown that, though rare in captivity, Pink-footed Geese are kept by several aviculturalists across North America; the possibility of captive origin thus cannot be ruled out and may not be insignificant (G. Toffie). The Port Angeles

Emperor Goose survived another winter (CCx, JB), but no other Emperors were detected. A Snow Goose was at Spokane 16–17 Jan (G. Lynch); this species is very rare in e. Washington during winter away from the lower Columbia Basin. Ross's Geese again showed well, with 7 in w. Oregon, 3 in w. Washington, and one in e. Washington; notably, most were found with *minima* Canada Geese. An apparent Greater White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose hybrid, very rare in the Region, was at Ridgefield 18 Dec (TA). A Trumpeter Swan, very rare on Oregon's outer coast, visited Eckman L., *Lincoln* 6 Jan (R. Lowe). Washington's 2nd Bewick's Swan was on Fir I., *Skagit* 10 Jan into Mar (vt. SM, CCx, ph. JB).

Oregon's first Falcated Duck was discovered in a large wigeon flock at F.R.R. 14 Feb (J. Houle, D. Turner). The bird then disappeared for several days before reappearing nearly two weeks later (ph. M. Nikas). It was another banner winter for eastside Eurasian Wigeon, with 10 in e. Washington and 18 in e. Oregon, including an eastside record 12 at Lower Klamath N.W.R. 29 Feb (KS). On the westside, Eurasian Wigeon numbers seemed up in Oregon but unremarkable in Washington. A Mallard x Northern Pintail was at Olympia 14 Dec (JP); this hybrid is almost annual in the Region. A Blue-winged Teal visited Sauvie I. 21 Dec (Karen Bachman), and 2 were at Camp Rilea, *Clatsop* the same day (MP); this species is not annual during winter. Likely setting a Regional record, 18 Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal were detected this winter, including very rare eastside singles at L. Pend Oreille 8–9 Feb (S. Lindsay) and Bend, *Deschutes* 28–31 Dec (M. Miller); additionally, 4–5 Common Teal x Green-winged Teal hybrids were reported from the westside.

A tally of 1000 Ring-necked Ducks at Daroga S. P., *Douglas* 10 Jan was exceptional (CW, RTS, BLB), as was a gathering of 2640 Greater Scaup near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum* 1 Feb (SM, DD). Apparent Ring-necked Duck x scaup hybrids were at Renton, *King* 24–26 Dec (CCx, †CW), Lane Community College 20 Jan (†DI), and Fernhill Wetlands, *Washington* 19 Jan (ph. GG); there have been few, if any, previous records of this hybrid in the Region. A Tufted Duck at Siltcoos L. 30 Jan (ph. DP) was Lane's first, while another at Finley N.W.R. 9–27 Feb (ph. HH) was Benton's 2nd; the Region averages about 2 per winter. The Tufted Duck x scaup remained near Maryhill, *Klickitat* through 28 Dec (*vide* SJ). A Harlequin Duck, very rare on the eastside during winter, overwintered at the mouth of the Deschutes R. for the 2nd consecutive year (T. Herzig). Surf and White-winged Scoters are very rare during winter on the eastside: a Surf stopped at Bridgeport, *Douglas* 29 Feb (S. Pink), while single White-wingeds visited Wanapum Pool, *Kitti-*

tas 7 Dec (CW) and Black Butte Ranch, *Deschutes* 14 Dec (SS). A remarkable 990 Long-tailed Ducks were tallied between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, *Clallam* 15 Dec (CW, BT, BLB, V. Gross); eastside sightings included singles at Bridgeport, *Douglas* 15 Jan–14 Feb (G. Sheridan), John Day Dam 13 Dec (MD, MLD), and Pelton Dam, *Jefferson* 13 Jan (C. & M. Miller). A single Barrow's Goldeneye spent its 3rd consecutive winter at Willamina, *Yamhill*, where quite rare (Q. Nice), while another at Jackson Bottoms, *Washington* 30 Dec (J. Blowers) was equally unexpected; this species is very rare in the



This Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, only Washington's fourth, was found at Hood Park, Walla Walla County on 19 (here 29) February 2004 by Mike Denny and remained into March. Photograph by Denny Granstrand.

Willamette Valley away from the Columbia R. The Common Goldeneye x Bufflehead lingered at Wenatchee, *Chelan* through 18 Dec (DB). For the 2nd year, large numbers of Common Mergansers were found near Tacoma, with 1276 counted on 20 Dec (CW, BLB), while a tally of 800 at F.R.R. 27 Jan likely set an Oregon record (R. Robb).

Adding to about 10 winter records from e. Washington, an Osprey traveled between Selah and Zillah, *Yakima* from early Dec into early Jan (DG); in w. Washington, where not quite as rare, one was at Fall City, *King* 22 Jan (J. Meyer). White-tailed Kite roosts hosted 24 birds at F.R.R. 20 Dec (J. Sullivan) and 20 at Tillamook 20 Dec (*vide* O. Schmidt), providing further evidence of this species' increase in the Region. A large die-off of goldfish in F.R.R. during late Feb attracted up to 62 Bald Eagles, easily a record number for the s. Willamette Valley (DF). For the first winter since 1998–1999, there was merely one Red-shouldered Hawk found in Washington, an ad. at Ridgefield 21 Dec (WC). In

e. Oregon, one visited Lower Klamath N.W.R. 10 Feb (S. Seibel); though several per fall is now the norm in e. Oregon, they are still very rare there during winter. Two well-described light-morph Swainson's Hawks over Canyon Terrace, *Benton* 11 Feb (K. Criddle, *vide* BL) furnished Washington's first winter record since 1920 (*Auk* 46: 511). A Ferruginous Hawk, rare during winter in Washington, was near Lyons Ferry, *Franklin* 29 Feb (A. Winter). A single Ferruginous was also reported near Agate L., *Jackson* 13 Feb (N. Barrett); away from the Rogue Valley, they are quite rare w. of the Cascades. Nine Gyrfalcons in Washington and 3 in Oregon represented a fairly typical winter, though one was quite far s. at N.S.C.B., only the 4th for Coos (TR). A Prairie Falcon on the Bellingham C.B.C. 14 Dec furnished w. Washington's lone record this winter (*vide* TRW), while approximately 12 in w. Oregon was about average.

A group of 130 Wild Turkey near Teanaway, *Kittitas* 7 Dec afforded evidence of this species' increasing numbers (R. McNair-Huff). Not annual in n. Washington during winter, a Sandhill Crane was at the Lummi Flats, *Whatcom* 14 Dec–Jan (*vide* TRW). Soras, very rare during winter in Washington, were near Raymond, *Grays Harbor* 8 Dec (RD) and at Ocosta, *Grays Harbor* 3 Jan (L. Heinz). In Oregon, where annual in winter, Soras were detected at Siltcoos L., *Lane* 15 Jan (DI, DP) and Killin Wetlands, *Washington* 8 Jan (Dennis Manzer).

PLOVERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

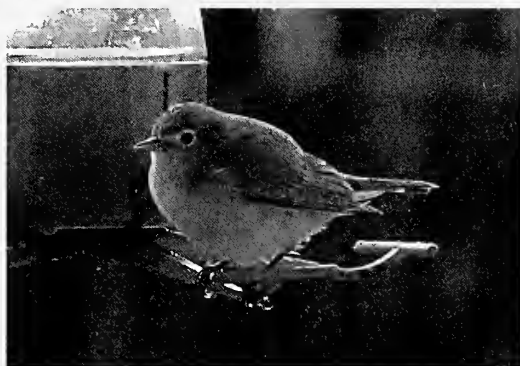
Nearly annual during recent winters, a Pacific Golden-Plover was at Clatsop Spit 8 Dec (HN); another returned for its 3rd winter near Tangent, *Linn* (M. Nikas). A gathering of 50 Snowy Plovers at Midway Beach, *Grays Harbor* 11 Jan set a Washington record, most unexpected given this species' Regional decline (M. Bartels). Washington's first winter American Avocet remained at Alice Bay, *Skagit* until 24 Dec (TA), and what was likely the same bird appeared briefly near Stanwood, *Snohomish* 2 Jan (*vide* D. Swayne). For the 4th consecutive winter, a Lesser Yellowlegs was found in Washington, near Sequim, *Clallam* 13 Dec (B. Boekelheide); in Oregon, one overwintered near F.R.R. (LM). Most unexpected, a Solitary Sandpiper appeared then disappeared near Stayton, *Mari-on* 18 Jan (ph. R. Hoyer, P. Pisano); there are no prior Regional records between 22 Oct and 24 Mar. A Willet, very rare away from the outer coast in Washington, fed at Kennedy Creek, *Mason* 17 Jan (B. Shelmerdine). Five Marbled Godwits, rare away from the outer coast during winter, were near Sequim 6 Dec (RD, SM, DD), while 1500 roosting at Tokeland, *Pacific* 20 Jan provided a record Washington maximum (SM, DD). A total of 740 Black Turnstones at Oak Har-

bor/Penn Cove, *Island 4* Dec was the Region's highest ever for winter (SM, D. Paulson, TA, RD). A Red Knot, very rare during winter, was at Dungeness Spit, *Clallam* 15 Dec (J. Acker, D. Waggoner, B. Waggoner), while 2 lingered at Coos Bay until 6 Dec (TR). Least Sandpipers may be more regular than realized during winter on the eastside, as they have now been found during four of the last five winters. This year, 37 were at Cold Springs N.W.R., *Umatilla* 10 Dec (CC, JC), and one was at Finley, *Benton* 28 Dec (DR). During a winter full of wonderment, the Best Bird award must go to the Baird's Sandpiper at Moses L., *Grant* 31 Jan–1 Feb (ph. DSc, BF, RH). Not only did this supply the Region's first winter record, it likely represented the first verifiable mid-winter record for all of North America! Mundane by comparison, numbers of Dunlin again wintered in the Columbia Basin, with maxima of 160 at Cold Springs N.W.R. 10 Dec (CC, JC), 71 at W.W.R.D. 25 Feb (MD, MLD), 65 at Y.R.D. 3 Dec (BW), and 46 at Moses L. 11 Jan (DSc). A gathering of 25,000 Dunlin at Ankeny N.W.R., *Marion* 29 Dec nearly doubled any previous Willamette Valley tally (RPM). Excluding years during which "wrecks" occur, Red Phalaropes are rare during winter on marine waters and very rare inland. This year, 13 were at Dungeness Spit 15 Dec (J. Acker, D. & B. Waggoner), one was near Florence, *Lane* 27 Dec (J. Carlson), and one was inland at Ankeny N.W.R. 28 Dec (RPM).

Mew Gulls are increasingly reported from the eastside, perhaps in part due to increased observer effort. This winter, at least 10 were found, with maxima of 3 each at Lyons Ferry, *Franklin* 21 Feb (C. Swift) and E. Kennewick, *Benton* 3 Jan (DR). The *Walla Walla* Lesser Black-backed Gull returned for its 5th consecutive winter; it was first detected near College Place 14 Feb and was then near W.W.R.D. 16–22 Feb (MD, MLD). Washington's 6th Slaty-backed Gull intermittently visited Renton, *King* 20 Jan–4 Feb (ph. MD, MLD, vt. SM), while singles at Tillamook 3 Feb (†IT, †DMa) and Astoria, *Clatsop* 8 Feb (ph. MP) brought Oregon's total to about 10; most have been 30 Dec–10 Mar. A Western Gull, extremely rare in e. Oregon away from the Columbia R., was at Redmond, *Deschutes* 29 Jan (K. Owen). At least 25 Glaucous Gulls were reported, the best total in four years but well below counts from the 1980s and early 1990s. The Region's first Great Black-backed Gull, apparently a second-year bird, graced Renton 12 Jan–16 Feb (†E. Hunn, ph. CW, ph. DG); the only previous Pacific Coast record comes from Kodiak I., Alaska Feb–Apr 1995 (*Western Birds* 28: 62). Rare in the Puget Trough, 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes were off Pt. Defiance, *Pierce* 8 Dec (CCx). An extremely confused ad. Red-legged Kittiwake was discov-

ered 50 km inland at the Jewell Elk Refuge, *Clatsop* in late Dec and brought to rehabilitators (D. Horning); there are about 10 previous state records, nine between 31 Dec and 25 Mar. Tallies of 750 Pigeon Guillemots and 1802 Ancient Murrelets between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, *Clallam* 15 Dec were among the highest in years (CW, BT, BLB, V Gross).

A Band-tailed Pigeon, exceptionally rare in e. Washington during winter, was near Teanaway, *Kittitas* 20 Jan (†M. Hobbs). For the 2nd consecutive winter, Snowy Owls showed poorly, with 2 near Reardan, *Lincoln* 10 Jan through Feb (JA) and one near Pot-holes Res., *Grant* 23 Dec (RH) being the only ones detected; typically, during a non-invasion winter, about a dozen are found. A



Oregon's second Lucy's Warbler appeared at this Harbor, Curry County, Oregon feeder on 15 (here 19) January 2004 and remained into February. The state's first record, some 17 years ago, was also of a bird on the coast during winter. Photograph by Sheila Chambers.

Burrowing Owl survey in the Columbia Basin once again showed how poor birders are at finding this species: the researcher found 27 in the Tri-Cities area in mid-Jan and 17 near Othello/Quincy during late Jan/early Feb (C. Sanders); birders found only 3–4 in e. Washington. In w. Oregon, 5 Burrowing Owls was a better-than-average total. Great Gray Owls seemed to be on the move this winter, with 3 at lowland Puget Trough locations, plus singles in *Chelan* and lowland *Walla Walla*. Rare in e. Washington away from *Klickitat*, 2 Anna's Hummingbirds were near Wapato, *Yakima* 1–15 Dec (AS, ES). Washington's 5th Costa's Hummingbird, and the first for winter, overwintered in Vancouver, *Clark* (E. & T. Bjorkman, ph. S. Hagen, WC). In Oregon, 4 Costa's spent the winter, adding to approximately 11 previous winter records: singles were at North Bend, *Coos* (B. Griffin) and Portland (D. Anderson), while 2 were in Salem (*vide* J. Lundsten). Unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, extremely rare in Washington during winter before mid-Feb, were at Diamond Point, *Clallam* Oct–18 Jan (S. & J. Shenar) and at Edmonds, *Snohomish* 27–30 Dec (D. Harville); almost as unusual were 2 in Brookings, *Curry* 24 Dec (DM). Two to three weeks early were Rufous Hummingbirds at

Astoria, *Clatsop* 24 Jan (B. Barnett) and Glenwood, *Lane* 26 Jan (M. Maffei).

Very rare on the Outer Coast, a Lewis's Woodpecker at North Bend 13 Feb was only Coos's 7th (M. Wihler). A Williamson's Sapsucker was at Conboy N.W.R., *Klickitat* 28 Dec (J. Larson); thought to be very rare during winter in Washington, this species may winter regularly in *Klickitat*. Washington's 4th Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Hood Park, *Walla Walla* 19 Feb–Mar (ph. MD, MLD, ph. DG); prior Washington records were also from winter. In Oregon, adding to approximately 15 previous records, single Yellow-bellieds visited Burns, *Harney* during Dec (ph. R. Vetter) and Florence, *Lane* 18 Dec through Feb (ph. G. Hamman). A Red-naped Sapsucker resided on Vashon I., *King* 11 Dec–1 Jan (ph. Richard Rogers); this species is very rare in Washington w. of the Cascades and anywhere in the state during winter. Rare e. of the Cascades, a Red-breasted Sapsucker graced N. Richland 7 Jan, providing a *Benton* first (A. Haun), while another was near the Summer L., *Lake* 7 Feb (S. Lay).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

The Black Phoebe near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum* remained through at least 14 Feb (m. ob., vt. SM), while another was in the town of Ridgefield, *Clark* in mid-Dec (†S. Van Leuven); the latter bird was likely the same individual found during fall at the nearby N.W.R., and if so, Washington's total for this species remains at five. In Oregon, this species' range expansion continued, with seven extralimital westside records barely worthy of mention; in e. Oregon, where formerly very rare, Black Phoebes are now somewhat regular in the Klamath Basin, with 3 tallied on the Klamath Falls C.B.C. (KS). The Say's Phoebe at Silverdale, *Kitsap* lingered to 27 Dec (B. Waggoner), and another was near Nisqually, *Thurston* 14 Dec (G. Wiles); w. Washington had only one previous early to mid-winter record. Say's typically arrive in e. Washington in mid- to late Feb and are occasionally found on the westside that early. This Feb, one was at Steigerwald L., *Clark* 15 Feb (J. & A. Allinger), increasing to 3 there 17–28 Feb, setting a w. Washington record high count (WC). Five Say's Phoebes this winter in w. Oregon was about average, but 2 early winter birds in e. Oregon were unusual: Ladd Marsh, *Union* 12 Dec (Trent Bray) and near Helix, *Umatilla* 25 Dec (CC, JC). For only the 4th winter ever, one of the fall's Tropical Kingbirds lingered into Dec, with one at Gearhart, *Clatsop* remaining to 6 Dec (S. Warner).

Rare during winter in Washington, Loggerhead Shrikes were at McNary N.W.R., *Walla Walla* 22 Dec (A. McClelland) and near Corfu, *Grant* 5 Feb (BF). Three Blue Jays were found, well below average: one over-

wintered at Othello, Adams (RH) and 2 did so at Thornhollow, Umatilla (CC). Horned Lark numbers were up in w. Washington, with 130 near Woodland, Cowlitz 11 Jan likely setting a modern-day record (R. Koppenderayer); not quite as impressive, a flock of 35 near Snohomish 25 Dec–3 Jan was the largest in the Puget Trough in a number of years (SM, CCx). Unfortunately, these were not of the Endangered breeding race, *strigata*. Swallows are increasingly becoming part of the Region's winter avifauna. Tree Swallows were more apparent than normal this winter, with small numbers throughout the winter at FR.R. (LM) and N.S.C.B. (TR), plus scattered sightings elsewhere in Oregon during Dec and the first half of Jan; returning birds, a few weeks early, were noted by mid-Jan, and by late Jan, migrants were evident throughout the westside. Two closely studied Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Merlin, Josephine 14 Jan provided Oregon's first Jan record (DV).

The isolated *plumbeus* Bushtit population near Potholes Res., Grant persists, with a maximum of 5 located on 26 Feb (T. Pieper). In ne. Oregon, 3 Bushtits were at Enterprise, Willowa 14 Dec., where they are virtually unknown; at least one remained 8 Jan (Paul Sullivan). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Rook's Park 8 Dec provided a first Walla Walla valley record (MD, MLD); they are resident nearby in the Blue Mts. A Rock Wren at Oak Grove, Clackamas 17 Dec provided the first westside winter record in three years (R. Farr). A Bewick's Wren at Umtanum Canyon, Yakima 1 Dec was at the edge of that species' expanding range (J. Duemmel). Though northbound Western Bluebirds arrive in Washington by Feb, early and mid-winter sightings are rare, particularly on the westside; more than usual were found this winter, with 3 near Sequim, Clallam 6 Dec (SM, RD), 3 at North Cove, Pacific 2 Jan (B. Shelmerdine), 6 at Midway Beach, Grays Harbor 4 Jan (PtS, RS), and 6 through Dec at Desert Aire, Grant (*vide* DG). A Mountain Bluebird, very rare during winter on the westside, was in N. Portland 31 Dec (D. Bailey). A total of 9 Townsend's Solitaires in w. Washington, mostly during Dec, was well above average. A flock of 150 American Pipits in Everett 3 Jan may well have set a winter record for Washington (SM, DD,

CCx). This winter followed last year's in being poor for Northern Mockingbirds, with only 2 reported: Newport, Lincoln 18 Jan (D. Faxon) and Cape Blanco, Curry 24 Jan (C. Gates). A Sage Thrasher at FR.R. 20 Dec provided only the 2nd westside winter record (J. Sullivan), while one at Hines, Harney 2 Dec was merely two months late for the eastside (P. Bowers)

A Lucy's Warbler frequented a Harbor, Curry hummingbird feeder from 14 Jan into Mar (ph. S. Chambers); Oregon's only previous documented record was also on the Outer Coast during winter. The Region averages about one Hermit and one Black-throated Gray Warbler every other winter. This year, a Black-throated Gray was at Pistol R., Curry 8 Feb (R. Robb), and a Hermit was at Finley N.W.R., Benton 9 Feb (HH). Eastern Washington's 3rd winter Townsend's Warbler was near Wapato, Yakima 16 Dec (AS, ES). Rare inland, a Palm Warbler was at FR.R. in early Dec (DDW). A Black-and-white Warbler at Daroga S. P., Douglas 6–30 Dec was Washington's first for winter in five years (DB). Oregon's 4th winter MacGillivray's Warbler was Jackson Bottom, Washington 20 Dec (†Dennis Manzer). Five w. Washington Common Yellowthroats 21 Dec–2 Jan was exceptional, but none apparently survived Jan's cold snap; oddly, only 2 were found in w. Oregon, both during early Dec. Very rare during winter, a Wilson's Warbler visited Grants Pass, Josephine 23 Dec (DV). Amazingly, Western Tanagers were recorded in the Region for the 6th consecutive winter, with singles at Roseburg, Douglas 9 Dec (L. Balaban) and Fidalgo I., Skagit 18 Dec (J. Shifflett). Prior to 1998, Washington had only one winter record; now it has 10.

Oregon's 3rd winter Green-tailed Towhee was at Sisters, Deschutes 13 Dec (Norma Funai). An American Tree Sparrow was near Bandon, Coos 21 Dec (D. Lauten, K. Castelein), and up to 3 were at FR.R. 4–11 Jan (LM); tree sparrows are rare in w. Oregon. For the first winter since 1999–2000, there was only one Chipping Sparrow found in Oregon: Eugene 4–21 Jan (DI, D. Arendt). There were "only" 3 Clay-colored Sparrows this winter, with singles near Eugene 26–28 Dec (A. Prigge), at Woodland, Cowlitz 19 Jan (MD, MLD, KK), and at Gold Beach,

Curry 27 Jan (TR). Oregon's first well-described winter Brewer's Sparrow was at Siltcoos L., Lane 17 Dec. (B. & Z. Stotz). Very rare during winter, a Vesper Sparrow was at FR.R. 11 Jan+ (S. Maulding). A Grasshopper Sparrow at FR.R. 10 Jan provided the Region's 6th winter record (S. Maulding). It was a banner fall for unusual Fox Sparrows in Washington. Slate-colored Fox continues to manifest itself as a rare but annual part of Washington's winter avifauna, with singles at Nisqually, Thurston 6 Dec (B. Shelmerdine), near Florence, Snohomish 20 Dec–1 Jan (RTS, CCx), near Clear L., Skagit 7 Feb (SM, RTS, CCx, JB), and near Trout L., Klickitat 25 Feb (K. Glueckert). Adding to approximately 13 Washington records, single Red Fox Sparrows were at Battle Ground, Clark 7–8 Jan (ph. J.W. Williams), near Monroe, Snohomish 2–16 Feb (†CW, K. Brady), and another near Monroe 14 Feb–4 Mar (KA, vt. SM, DD, TA). A total of 7 Swamp Sparrows in w. Washington was fairly typical, but rarer were eastside sightings including 2 along Frenchman Hills Wasteway, Grant 29 Feb (DSc, BF, RH) and 3 at McNary Pk., Umatilla 4 Jan (CC, JC). In w. Oregon, the peak tally was 7 at Millacoma Marsh, Coos 3 Dec (TR). A Washington record 11 White-throated Sparrows were near Woodland, Cowlitz 19 Jan (MD, MLD, KK). Harris's Sparrows numbers were low this year, with 7 on the eastside and 6 on the west. A White-crowned Sparrow of one of the black-lored subspecies was on Ebey I., Snohomish 25 Dec (†SM, CCx); *leucophrys* has never been recorded in Washington, and *oriantha* has never been found during winter or on the westside. White-crowned Sparrow x Golden-crowned Sparrow hybrids were found near Mt. Vernon, Skagit 7 Feb (SM, CCx, RTS, JB) and at Sauvie I. 28 Feb (J. Gilligan, M.A. Sohlstrom).

Adding to six prior Oregon records, 2 McCown's Longspurs were located at Lower Klamath N.W.R. 27 Jan, with 6 found there 31 Jan (F. Meyer); this species has been detected during three of the last four winters in Oregon. Vying for the Region's record maximum, 15,000 Snow Buntings swarmed across fields near Harrington, Lincoln 22 Jan (JA, C. Pillsbury); not quite as impressive, a count of 55 Snow Buntings near Stanwood, Snohomish 28–29 Jan was, nonetheless, the best for the westside in over a decade (CW). Oregon's 2nd McKay's Bunting was found and photographed by a lucky visiting California birder at Depoe Bay, Lincoln 3 Jan, never to be seen again (K. Mahouski). Black-headed Grosbeaks visited Mt. Vernon, Skagit 1 Dec–7 Jan (ph. K. Ranta) and Bellingham, Whatcom 30 Dec (*vide* TRW); there was only one previous Washington winter record.

Tricolored Blackbirds are relatively new additions to Washington's avifauna, having been first found in 1998. Othello, Adams is

SA For the 3rd consecutive winter, Barn Swallows performed a mid-winter appearing act. Though not quite matching last winter's totals, this incursion still exceeded that of 2001–2002. In Washington, where numbers were carefully tracked, 15 were found in mid- and late Dec, well above the norm, but none were located in early Jan. In mid-Jan, 16 were detected, rising to 54 in late Jan and 47 in early Feb. Numbers were still present later, with 14 in mid-Feb and 22 during late Feb. The largest concentration was 36 at Skagit W.M.A. 7 Feb (CW). In Oregon, approximately 180 were reported from 16 widely scattered westside locations, with a maximum of 40 in the Coquille Valley, Coos 31 Jan (TR). This winter's incursion also included a number of eastside sightings of singles, virtually unprecedented prior to last winter: Frenchglen, Harney 16 Dec (*vide* HN), W. Richland, Benton 30 Dec (H. Newsome), Bridgeport, Douglas 31 Jan (M. Spencer), Wenatchee, Chelan 6 Feb (DB), Hanford Site, Benton 14 Feb (SM), Deschutes R. mouth 16 Feb (J. Gatchet), and Vantage, Kittitas 20 Feb (S. Ray). The questions remain: what drives this new phenomenon, and will it continue to repeat?

establishing itself as a regular wintering location. This year, one was there 30 Dec (RH), and by mid-Feb, at least 13 were present (RH, BF, vt. SM). Two were also at the only known Washington breeding location, Wilson Creek, *Grant* 31 Jan (†N. Wendt). A tally of 100 Western Meadowlarks on Fir I., *Skagit* 1 Jan was exceptional for w. Washington (R. Merrill). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds, rare during winter on the westside, were on the Lummi Flats, *Whatcom* 7 Feb (CCx, JB, RTS, SM). Only one Rusty Blackbird was detected this winter, a single near Walla Walla 14–15 Dec (MD, MLD). A grackle at Liberty L., *Spokane* 12–13 Jan was initially reported as a Common; photographs appear to suggest a Great-tailed. Now nearly annual during winter, single Bullock's Orioles were at Eugene 20 Dec (T. Harrell) and Astoria, *Clatsop* 18 Jan+ (M. Yowell, L. Campbell, MP).

Two Cassin's Finches, extremely rare in Washington w. of the Cascade high country, were near Concrete, *Skagit* 5 Jan (ph. P. Vannoy). For the first winter in four years, no White-winged Crossbills were reported. Small numbers of Common Redpolls were widespread in e. Washington and ne. Oregon, with maxima of 60 near Bridgeport, *Douglas* 28 Dec (G. Fredricks) and 40 at Tumalo Mtn., *Deschutes* 30 Dec (D. Tracey); rather surprising, however, were sightings on Oregon's coast of 25 at Astoria, *Clatsop* 21 Dec (L. Cain) and 4 at Alsea Bay, *Lincoln* 4 Jan (J. Fontaine).

Addenda: Two sightings were not included in the fall report due to delays in receiving documentation: a Red-shouldered Hawk was near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum* 21 Sep 2003 (†DR), and e. Washington's 8th Ancient Murrelet was on the Columbia R. below Wanapum Dam 14 Sep 2003 (†M. Monda).

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Kevin Aanerud, Jim Acton, Tom Aversa (WA), Jessie Barry, Range Bayer (*Lincoln*), David Beaudette, Wilson Cady, Craig Corder, Judy Corder, Cameron Cox (CCx), Ricky Davis, Merry Lynn Denny, Mike Denny (ne. Oregon), Don DeWitt (DDW), Dennis Duffy, Joe Engler (*Clark*), Dan Farrar, Bob Flores, Chuck Gates, Joel Geier, Greg Gillson, Denny Granstrand (*Yakima*), Hendrik Herlyn, Randy Hill, Stuart Johnston, Bruce LaBar (BLB), Bill LaFramboise (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy LaFramboise, Larry McQueen, Tom Mickel (*Lane*), Randall P. Moore, Don Munson, Harry Nehls (OR), Bob Norton (Olympic Pen.), Michael Patterson (*Clatsop*), Jason Paulios, Diane Pettey, Dennis Rockwell, Tim Rodenkirk (*Coos*), Doug Schonewald (DSc), Ryan T. Shaw (RTS), Kevin Spencer, Dan Stephens (*Chelan*), Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Patrick Sullivan (PtS), Ruth Sullivan, Terry R. Wahl, Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright. 🌐

Middle Pacific Coast



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The Region had a relatively mild winter, with a fair amount of rain. There were very few reports of outstanding rarities. Intriguing was a reported Least Tern—a first for the Region in winter—that may have been something even more exciting. Other birds unusual in the Region, or for the season, included our third winter Solitary Sandpiper, a King Eider, and a Le Conte's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California Bird Records Committee); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); P.R.B.O. (Point Reyes Bird Observatory); R.P. (Regional Park); R.S. (Regional Shoreline); S.F. (San Francisco); W.P.C.P. (Water Pollution Control Plant). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation for C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933.

LOONS THROUGH IBIS

A well-described Pacific Loon at Camanche Res. 24 Jan (†TEa) represented an overdue first for *Calaveras*. Another inland bird was at L. Shastina, *Siskiyou* 17 Dec and 4 Feb (RE). Also rare inland in the Region, a Red-necked Grebe was at North L. Tahoe, *Placer* 4 Dec (WRi), and another was on Clear L., *Lake* 31 Dec–6 Jan (JLx, GJH).

"Al" the Laysan Albatross returned to Pt. Arena, *Mendocino* 27 Dec (RJK), where hun-

dreds of birders have seen him, from land, over the past 10 winters. The only other Laysan report was of one 9 km w. of Eureka, *Humboldt* 19 Jan (John Mahan). Scarce in Jan, 3 Flesh-footed Shearwaters were on Monterey Bay, *Monterey/Santa Cruz* 24 Jan (ShJ). The only Black-vented Shearwaters reported were 1–7 at Shelter Cove, *Humboldt* 21 Dec+ (RBS). This report, from the far n. of the Region, is fairly remarkable, as this species is typically associated with warm-water incursions into the s. portions of the Region, where it was evidently completely absent. Very high counts, however, came from s. California this season.

Pelagic Cormorants are virtually unknown away from the oceanic coastal zone. Thus, the recent pattern of foraging over a mile upstream in *Santa Cruz* rivers (*fide* DLSu) is quite interesting. In addition, one was far up the San Francisco Estuary, where quite rare, at the Napa R. mouth, *Solano* 7 Jan (RMu). A frigatebird photographed near Santa Rosa, *Sonoma* 22 Dec (ph. Sandy Etchell, Paula Peretty) was too distant to identify to species.

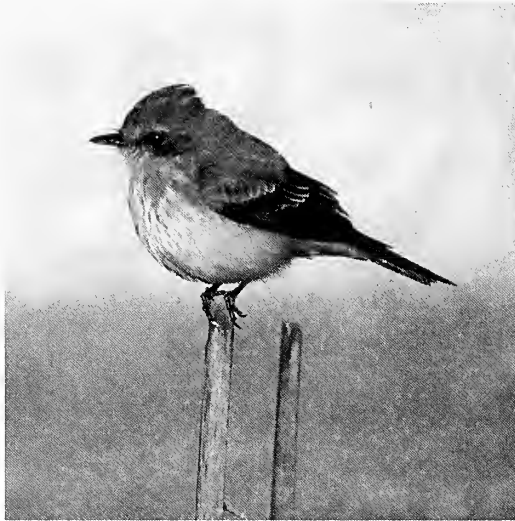
Great Blue Herons began nesting early at Vasona Res., *Santa Clara*, with apparent incubation underway by 11 Jan and first hatching in early Mar (Linda Sullivan). Several nests in this small colony were destroyed by winds and storms in late Feb. Seven Cattle Egret reports from five C.V. counties 14 Jan–4 Feb involved groups of up to 55 birds; 130 e. of Knightsen 20 Dec (SAG, DEQ) constituted one of the largest flocks ever recorded in *Contra Costa*. The only other report was of a single lingering bird at Arcata Bottoms, *Humboldt* 29 Oct–30 Dec (RbF, JTz, m.ob.). It was a good winter for coastal White-faced Ibis, with reports of up to 5 birds at various locations in *Santa Cruz* 4 Dec–17 Feb (Matthew Coale, DLSu, RgW et al.) marking the first time that ibis have been present throughout the season in that county. Ibis were also found in adjacent *Monterey*, with 4 at McCluskey Slough 17 Dec (RF), a wintering bird at "Totino" in the Moro Cojo drainage 4 Jan into Mar (RF), and 7 in Moro Cojo Slough 7 Feb (RC, ph. DR). Two ibis at the Oakland Airport, *Alameda* 14 Dec, the first ever for the Oakland C.B.C., had apparently been present for the previous three weeks (Eric Covington et al.).

GEESE THROUGH SANDPIPERS

A surprise among coastal Snow Goose reports was one of 3 blue morph ads. with Canada Geese at the Carmody Road ponds, *Sonoma* 7 Jan (RS, Heather Cameron). A flock of 1500 Ross's Geese at the Holland Tract 24 Feb (SAG) was likely the largest number ever recorded in *Contra Costa*, although distant large flocks of white geese are

often not identifiable to species. Most surprising among a smattering of coastal Tundra Swans were 2 imms. at Searsville L., *San Mateo* through 13 Dec (PLaT, ph. Phil Leighton, m.ob.) and what were probably the same 2 birds near Felt L. (John Kriewell) and over Palo Alto 13 Dec (Marty Sidor; both *Santa Clara*)—and possibly the same birds farther n. at Crystal Springs Res., *San Mateo* 9 Jan–14 Feb (RSTh, m.ob.).

It was another good winter for Eurasian Wigeon, with reports of over 100 birds from 13 counties, including high counts of 41 on the Peace Valley C.B.C. at Gray Lodge W.A., *Butte* 30 Dec (BED), and 14 (plus 2 Eurasian Wigeon x American Wigeon hybrids) on two salt ponds in Alviso, *Santa Clara* 1 Feb (MMR, MJM). Blue-winged Teal were similarly well reported, with at least 128 found in 12 counties. Eight Eurasian Green-



Now annual in winter in California's Central Valley, this male Vermilion Flycatcher (here 25 December 2003) wintered near Lodi, San Joaquin County. Photograph by Steve Abbott.

winged Teal from five counties were typical of recent winters; indeed, many of these may be returning birds, as locations were similar to those of past winters. A count of 278 Red-heads on an Alviso salt pond 9 Jan (MMR, MJM) nearly doubled the previous high count for *Santa Clara*. Sixteen Tufted Ducks and a Tufted Duck hybrid were reported from 11 counties; over half were seen for only a single day, so this total may include some double-counting of wide-ranging birds. A male found at the Butte Sink 30 Dec was the first for the Peace Valley C.B.C. and only the 2nd for *Sutter* (3 Greater Scaup at the same location were also a C.B.C. first; all †BWb). A female King Eider off Lincoln Park 13 Dec (HuC, ph. †MWE, ASH) was S.F.'s first. Harlequin Ducks inside S.F. Bay included the resident male at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 9 Dec–17 Jan (RSTh, AME) and a first for the Oakland C.B.C. near Treasure I., *Alameda* 14 Dec (*fide* RJR). White-winged Scoters continue to be scarce; for the first

time since 1966, none were found on the Santa Cruz C.B.C. (*fide* DLSu). Thirteen Long-tailed Ducks included inland females at Tule Lake N.W.R., *Siskiyou* (Mike & Dewey Robbins) and at the Winters W.T.P. 14–15 Dec (3rd *Yolo* record; Mary Schiedt, JMHu, m.ob.). Another first for the Peace Valley C.B.C. was a male Barrow's Goldeneye at the Butte Sink, *Sutter* 30 Dec (†BWb).

Among numerous Bald Eagle reports was a bird building a nest at L. Hennessey, *Napa* 19 Feb (Murray Berner), where the species has bred since 2000. In addition to the now somewhat expected wintering Swainson's Hawks in *Solano* and *Sacramento* 10 Jan–11 Feb, coastal birds included one at Bodega Bay, *Sonoma* 20 Dec (Ted Eliot, DASH) and a dark-morph ad. at China Camp S.P., *Marin* 27 Feb (DN). A cooperative Yellow Rail was seen at Tomales Bay, *Marin* 23 Dec (RS et al.), and another was found on Grizzly I., *Solano* 17 Feb (Pat Graham, *fide* Chad Fein).

American Avocets continue to increase in *Humboldt*, with a count record 218 found on the Centerville Beach to King Salmon C.B.C. 4 Jan (*fide* SWH). A Solitary Sandpiper e. of Woodlake, *Tulare* 15 Feb (†AWgh) is apparently only the 3rd winter record for the Region. A Wandering Tattler at the San Leandro Marina, *Alameda* 27 Jan–1 Feb (KGH, MMR, RJR, m.ob.) was unexpected. For the 3rd consecutive winter, no tattlers were found in *Santa Cruz* (*fide* DLSu). Surfbirds continued to roost at the Hayward R.S., *Alameda* during high tides 21 Dec–8 Feb, with a high count of 37 there 25 Jan; 27 were seen farther n. at the San Leandro Marina 1 Feb (both *Alameda*; both RJR). Inland winter Sanderlings were found near Kettleman City, *Kings* 3 Dec (EP) and at the Modesto W.T.P., *Stanislaus* 19–22 Dec (ph. JHG, JSL). Southerly Rock Sandpipers included singles at Bodega Head, *Sonoma* 20 Dec–8 Feb (John E. Parmeter, DASH, LHG, m.ob.), at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 20 Dec and 19 Jan (GDg, DSG), and along a 9-km section of coastline at *Santa Cruz* 17 Jan–11 Mar (*Santa Cruz*'s 4th; Brian Fitch, m.ob.). Winter Ruffs included an ad. male at the Thermalito Afterbay, *Butte* 30 Dec (†Sandy Koonce) and 2 imm. males at New Chicago Marsh, *Santa Clara* 26 Dec–Mar (RWR, †MMR, ph. Peggy Don); at least one of the latter birds was present throughout Dec. An unseasonal Wilson's Phalarope was at the *Yolo* Bypass W.A., *Yolo* 26 Dec (Mary Schiedt).

GULLS THROUGH TERNS

Inland Mew Gull reports included singles at Marysville, *Yuba* 16 Dec (TDM); L. Shastina, *Siskiyou* 8 Jan (RE); Fresno, *Fresno* 14 Jan (JND); and a high count of up to 8 throughout the period at the inland gull hotspot, the Nimbus Fish Hatchery, *Sacramento* (CCo).

Five Thayer's Gulls 15 Dec–15 Jan (†JND et al.) were at various locations in *Fresno*, where there was only one previous record. Increased attention to gulls in the C.V. should lead to a continued increase in reports of this species there. Other inland reports included 3 at the Modesto W.T.P., *Stanislaus* 19 Dec (JHG); one at L. Shastina, *Siskiyou* 8 Jan (RE); several at Camanche Res., *Calaveras* 9 Jan (TEa) and one there 12 Jan (JCS, JSL); and one at Lincoln W.T.P., *Placer* 30 Dec (EP, TEa et al.).

The Lesser Black-backed Gull discovered at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery, *Sacramento* in Nov was last observed 12 Dec (*vide* CCo); another was seen briefly in Sunnyvale, *Santa Clara* 14 Jan (WGB). An ad. Western Gull was at L. Almanor 17–30 Jan (†CPD et al.); although inland occurrences of this species are increasing, this was a first for *Plumas*. There were also 4 Western Gulls in *Yolo* dur-

plumages other than alternate adult.

DOVES THROUGH NUTHATCHES

Single White-winged Doves reached Ft. Bragg, *Mendocino* 1 Dec–22 Feb (DT, m.ob.) and Oak Hills, *Monterey* 23 Feb (BGE). A count of up to 24 Short-eared Owls at Mad R. Slough W.A., *Humboldt* 20 Dec was one of the Region's highest in a decade (JTz). Eight Vaux's Swifts over Almaden Res., *Santa Clara* 28 Dec provided a rare winter record for the Region (Greg Meissner). Three wintering Costa's Hummingbirds were detected: a male first found 3 Sep at Fortuna, *Humboldt* was present to 4 Jan (Beverly Neal); a female was at Bayside, *Humboldt* 15–20 Dec (DFx, JCP); and a female was at Stinson Beach, *Marin* through 27 Dec (present since fall; RS). A male at Little Panoche Detention Res., *Fresno* 10 Feb may have been an early migrant (Ed Case, BBr, GWPo, m.ob.). Four Lewis's

Ronneberg, m.ob.) and another male at Los Banos N.W.R., *Merced* 27–31 Dec (Greg Gerstenber, ph. KVV). Tropical Kingbirds at Pacifica, *San Mateo* 8–28 Dec (B. Nerricio et al.) and Elk, *Mendocino* 27 Dec (Dave Jensen, AGM) were the only ones reported. Just one Scissor-tailed Flycatcher had ever been found wintering in the Region, so 2 birds this season was extremely surprising. The first record for *Yolo* (and only the 4th for the entire C.V.) was found at Davis 14 Dec (ph. Sylvia Wright) but not seen again until 16 Jan; it remained cooperative at that site until 14 Feb (m.ob.). The bird was later detected at an alternate afternoon site just to the s., where it remained to at least 6 Mar, furnishing a first for *Solano*. The 2nd Scissor-tailed was at Pacifica, *San Mateo* 16–26 Dec (Judy Spittle, ph. JM, m.ob.).

Very rare in winter in the Region, a Warbling Vireo in South S.E. 21 Dec provided just the 2nd winter record for *San Mateo* (RSTh). Records of wintering Northern Rough-winged Swallows have increased in recent years, and this winter brought a hefty six records of at least 8 individuals 13 Dec–24 Jan, all coastal or near coastal except for one in the C.V. at the Yolo Bypass W.A., *Yolo* 26 Dec (Mary Schiedt). Barn Swallows once again staged an impressive mid-winter invasion into the Region. The first bird detected, one of 5 found in the C.V. 12 Dec–19 Jan, was at the C.R.P. 12 Dec (CCo). As in the past, the majority of records were from coastal *Monterey* and *Santa Cruz*, including a whopping 75 at College L., *Santa Cruz* 31 Dec (DLSu). Except for small numbers in *Humboldt* into early Feb, it appeared that the vast majority had apparently continued n. past the Region by mid-Jan, a flock of 28 at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 24 Jan (RJR) being a notable exception.

A vagrant Yellow-billed Magpie flew over Menlo Park, *San Mateo* 7 Feb (WGB). Single American Crows, *Mono* rarities, were on the Mono Lake C.B.C. 3 Jan (Greg Reis) and at Mammoth Lakes 29 Jan (KNN). Large flocks of Horned Larks are routinely recorded in the s. C.V., but a flock estimated to contain 50,000 birds near Mendota, *Fresno* 4 Feb appears to far exceed anything in the 50 years of our notebooks (JND). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Manchester 27 Dec was a coastal rarity for *Mendocino* (RJK).

THRASHERS THROUGH TANAGERS

A Sage Thrasher 12–16 Dec at the Sunnyvale W.P.C.P. (MMR, MJM, ph. Rob Pavey, m.ob.) furnished *Santa Clara's* 9th record. A skulky Brown Thrasher first mist-netted 31 Oct (Andy Pfeffer, P.R.B.O.) at Woodbridge R.P., *San Joaquin*, was seen intermittently through 23 Feb (m.ob.).

It was an average season for wintering warblers, except in *Santa Cruz*, which had



This Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Pacifica, San Mateo County (here on 26 December 2003) was one of two found this winter in northern California. Photograph by Joseph Morlan.

ing the period (*vide* CCo). Uncommon inland, approximately 15 Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported from the Sacramento Valley, where the majority of inland reports originate. The highest local concentration of Glaucous Gulls was in *Santa Cruz*, with 10 reported at 10 different locations during the period (some duplication possible).

A tern identified as a Least Tern was videotaped 26 Feb on a Capitola, *Santa Cruz* beach after a windy Pacific storm (vt., †Paul Donahue). Although this species reaches its n. Pacific breeding limit in the Region, there are no previous winter records for the Region (nor are there any Jan–Mar records for the entire state, *vide* GMcC). It is probably not possible to rule out other small terns such as Little and Saunders's. The former has reached the Hawaiian Islands on multiple occasions (it has bred on Midway) and should be considered a possible candidate for reaching California, especially considering an extreme outlier such as this one. Unfortunately, it may not be possible to distinguish these closely related species in

Woodpeckers at Snow Camp Mt., *Humboldt* 16 Dec (Ken Jarvela), one at Mail Ridge, s. *Humboldt* 23 Feb (John Gaffin), and up to 6 at Alpine Pond, *San Mateo* through 31 Mar (m.ob.) were all in areas where rare. Their almost complete absence in traditional foothill wintering locations first noted last fall continued throughout the period. An Acorn Woodpecker on the Arcata C.B.C. 20 Dec was a first for that *Humboldt* count (MMo). Seven Yellow-bellied and 5 Red-naped Sapsuckers were detected, all from the lowlands, including *Amador's* first Red-naped near Ione 4–19 Jan (KvG, KKw, Roger Marlowe, Julie Blumenthal, ph. JM).

A strong winter for *Empidonax* flycatchers featured 5 coastal and 2 C.V. Hammonds, one Pacific-slope at Clear Lake S.P. 27 Dec–19 Jan (*Lake's* 3rd in winter; Jlx, JRW), one Pacific-slope/Cordilleran at the C.R.P. 5 Jan (WEH), and 2 C.V. birds that were left unidentified. This winter brought 2 more Vermilion Flycatchers to the C.V. portion of the Region: an obliging imm. male near Lodi 20 Dec–12 Feb (*San Joaquin's* 2nd; Terry

an embarrassment of riches. Reported were 2 Tennessees, 23 Nashvilles (8 in *Santa Cruz*), 13 Black-throated Grays (including one in *e. Contra Costa*, one in *Lake*, and one or 2 in *Sacramento*), 29 Hermits (20 in *Santa Cruz* alone!), 27 Palms (11 in *Santa Cruz*), 14 Black-and-whites, and one American Redstart, all coastal unless otherwise noted. Notable was a Palm Warbler at Alensworth S.P. 28 Feb (ph. Susan Steele), a first for *Tulare* and one of few records for the C.V. A male Northern Parula 26 Dec at L. San Antonio (ph. Julian Donahue) was the first winter record for *Monterey*. A Black-throated Blue Warbler 7–9 Dec at Henry Cowell Redwoods S.P., *Santa Cruz* (Mark Rollins, DLSu) may have been a late migrant, while a male in Martinez 12 Jan (ph. Anne & Nikhi Kumaranayagam) was only *Contra Costa's* 3rd, the first in winter. A well-described Townsend's Warbler x Hermit Warbler hybrid was in Mountain View, *Santa Clara* 15–21 Dec (Bill Carver, †MMR). A Northern Waterthrush was at the Charleston Road marsh, *Santa Clara* throughout the period (RGJ, m.ob.). Among 8 Common Yellowthroats reported, 3 at the Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* in Feb were exceptional (RbF, M. Millman), while one at L. Hennessey, *Napa* 1 Jan was a new species for the Angwin C.B.C. (BDP, Mary Schiedt). Inland Wilson's Warblers included singles at C.R.P. 25 Dec (JTr) and Merced N.W.R., *Merced* 17 Jan (KVV).

A Summer Tanager at a Fortuna feeder 6–17 Jan was the first in *Humboldt* since 1990 (Dee Meyers, m.ob.); 4 others were scattered along the coast from *Sonoma* to *Monterey* (AB, R.J. Adams, Myra Ulvang, S. Blauman, Jack & Deyea Harper). Twenty-one Western Tanagers, including 2 in *Sacramento* and 4 in *Yolo*, were more than expected; *Santa Clara's* 8 were "double or triple" normal numbers (*vide* WGB).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A single American Tree Sparrow was near Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 3 Jan (Deanna Doolan). Better than average were the 7 found on the Tule Lake C.B.C. in *Siskiyou* 3 Jan (Mike & Dewey Robbins, RE). Four Clay-colored Sparrows in *Humboldt* were a good showing; one w. of Winters 14 Dec (JMhu, Doug O'Bannon) was just the 4th record for *Yolo*. Another was at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo* 20 Dec (PJM). Unusually, we received no Lark Bunting reports this winter.

A cooperative Le Conte's Sparrow 2–31 Dec at Mad R. Slough W.A. was the first confirmed record for *Humboldt* (Rebecca Green, JTz, m.ob.) and the first in our Region since 1997. A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was at South S.E., *San Mateo* 7 Dec–21 Jan (CLO, AME), 2 were together at Inverness, *Marin* 23 Dec (RS), and one was at Arrowhead Marsh, *Alameda* 21 Jan–21 Feb (Travis Hails, Courte-

ney Peddle, ES, m.ob.). Forty-five Swamp Sparrow reports included 6 at the Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* 20 Dec (JTz, EE, Rebecca Green, BCa, PLo), up to 2 at C.R.P. 2 Dec–5 Jan (JTr, AEn), and 2 in inland *Contra Costa*: 14 Dec at Lafayette Res. (John C. Robinson) and 20 Dec at the Holland Tract e. of Knighten (SAG, DEQ). Of the 101 White-throated Sparrows reported, 51 were from *Santa Cruz*, a record high for the county in winter and about 50 percent higher than the average over the past 10 years (*vide* DLSu). Harris's Sparrows included singles 23 Nov–29 Feb in St. Helena, *Napa* (Bob Frescura, RLCL), 4 Jan in Quincy, *Plumas* (Bob Battagin), and early Jan at Mt. Hebron, *Siskiyou* (ph. Elizabeth Frost). Good numbers of Lapland Longspurs winter annually in the Tule L. area of *Siskiyou* and *Modoc* (*vide* RE) and appear along the coast as well: 14–20 were in *Humboldt* this winter (DFx, JCP, JCS, JSL, JLx, JTz), and 4 were at Hayward R.S., *Alameda* 11 Jan (RJr). Single Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at the Shasta Valley W.A., *Siskiyou* 2 Jan (male; RE) and the C.R.P. 5–20 Jan (Rob Melcer, JTr); up to 10 were at and near their regular wintering location along Road 16 in *e. Yolo* 22 Dec–6 Jan (SCH, JKn, m.ob.). A Snow Bunting at San Leandro Marina 25–26 Jan (RJr, ph. Kathy Robertson, ph. JM) was just the 2nd for *Alameda*; a cooperative male at Clifton Court Forebay 27 Feb+ (ph. Akira So, vt. LLu, m.ob.) was *Contra Costa's* first solid record and just the 2nd for the entire C.V. (the first being in *Glenn* in 1961).

Three Rose-breasted Grosbeak reports were below average. A male Black-headed Grosbeak coming to a feeder in Fort Bragg throughout the period (ph. Helen Mace) provided the first winter record for *Mendocino*. An Indigo Bunting was at Soquel, *Santa Cruz* 22–26 Dec (DLSu, Chris G. Emmons); another was at the Charleston Road marsh 22 Jan (Dave Weber), the first winter record for *Santa Clara*. The only Dickcissel reported was a male attending a feeder in Arcata, *Humboldt* 1–10 Jan (Bill & Pearl Kelso, SWH). A Common Grackle was at Arcata Bottoms, *Humboldt* 28 Nov–14 Jan (KGR, RLeV, COG); singles were reported without details from Monte Rio, *Sonoma* and the Alexander Dairy, *Del Norte*. Female Orchard Orioles were reported 29 Dec–27 Feb at Pacific Grove, *Monterey* (SBT, RyT) and 15 Jan–22 Feb at Eureka, *Humboldt* (Louise Bacon-Ogden, BS), but the hub of Orchard Oriole activity was S.F., where an ad. male was in Cole Valley 5 Sep–4 Feb (†PSa), and 3 birds—2 imm. males and a female-type, all originally identified as Hooded Orioles—were together in Golden Gate Park 27 Dec+ (PJM, m.ob.). Our only Baltimore Oriole report was a female visiting a feeder in Eureka, *Humboldt* 19 Jan+ (BS). Seventeen Bullock's Orioles were widely scattered along the

coast, with 9 in *Santa Cruz*.

There was no discernable appearance of winter finches or crossbills in the Region; for example, the number of Pine Siskins on the *Santa Cruz* C.B.C. was two percent of its 10-year average (*vide* DLSu). A single male Common Redpoll at Sierra Valley 3 Jan (†CPD, Angela Dillingham, Henry Dillingham) will provide the first record for *Plumas* if accepted by the C.B.R.C.; the provenance of a specimen reportedly taken in *Plumas* in 1899 has been controversial. A tiny Lesser Goldfinch flock wintering in Lee Vining, *Mono* has grown to 15–20 birds from just 1–2 pioneers in recent years, perhaps with the help of local feeders (Santiago Escruecia). The only Evening Grosbeak reported was 1 Dec at Arcata, *Humboldt* (Scott Carey).

Observers: Dick Ashford, Alan Baldrige, William G. Bousman (*Santa Clara*), Beverly Brock, Bryon Cariss, Rita Carratello, Luke W. Cole (*Kings*), Chris Conard (*Sacramento & Yolo*), Hugh Cotter, Jeff N. Davis, Gary Deghi, Bruce E. Deuel (*n. C.V. counties*), Colin P. Dillingham, Todd Easterla, Mark W. Eaton (S.F. City), Alan M. Eisner, Ray Ekstrom (*Siskiyou*), Elias Elias, Bruce G. Elliot, Andrew Engilis, David Fix (*Humboldt*), Rick Fournier, Rob Fowler (RbF), James H. Gain (*Stanislaus*), Steven A. Glover (*Contra Costa*), Kevin Guse, Steve C. Hampton, W. Edward Harper, Stanley W. Harris, Gjon Hazard, Kevin G. Hints, Alan S. Hopkins, Lisa Hug, Joan M. Humphrey, John E. Hunter (*Trinity*), Richard G. Jeffers, Robert J. Keiffer (*Mendocino*), Jon King, Keith Kwan, Peter LaTourrette, Robin L.C. Leong (*Napa & Solano*), Ron LeValley, Les Lieurance, Paul Lohse, Jim Lomax, Calvin Lou, John S. Luther, Mac McCormick (*Plumas & Sierra*), Michael J. Mammoser, Guy McCaskie, Timothy D. Manolis, Peter J. Metropulos (*San Mateo*), Joseph Morlan, Art G. Morley, Mark Morrisette, Roger Muskat, Dan Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (*Mono*), Chet Ogan, Ed Pandolfino (*Placer*), Benjamin D. Parmeter, Gary W. Potter (*Fresno*), Jude C. Power (*Humboldt*), David E. Quady, Robert W. Reiling, Will Richardson, Robert J. Richmond (*Alameda*), Don Roberson (*Monterey*), Michael M. Rogers, Kerry G. Ross, Ruth A. Rudesill (*Sonoma*), Paul Saraceni, Barry Sauppe, Shearwater Journeys, Daniel Singer, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling (*Alpine, Calaveras & Modoc*), Emilie Strauss, David L. Suddjian (*Santa Cruz*), Robert B. Sutherland (RBS), Ryan Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz, Dorothy Tobkin, John Trochet, David Vander Pluym (*Mariposa*), Kent Van Vuren (*San Benito*), Bruce Webb, Jerry R. White (*Lake*), Alan Wight, Roger Wolfe, Bob & Carol Yutzy (*Shasta*). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated. ☺

Southern Pacific Coast



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Precipitation in the Region through the period was a bit below normal, and many observers commented on the relative scarcity of wintering *Zonotrichia* sparrows and other common species. And once again this year, there were no clear incursions of irruptive landbird species. Declining numbers of waterbirds (particularly fish-eating birds such as American White Pelicans) on the Salton Sea point to its continuing problems as freshwater input is reduced. Highlights this winter included a Roseate Spoonbill in the Imperial Valley, only the Region's second in the last twenty years, and California's first January Scarlet Tanager. Other wintering birds of note included a Yellow-throated Vireo in San Diego, a Blackburnian Warbler in Imperial Beach, three wintering Grace's Warblers in San Diego,

Santa Barbara County's first Verdin, and two Curve-billed Thrashers near Parker Dam.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.A.F.B. (Vandenberg A.F.B. in nw. Santa Barbara); 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 of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Pacific Loon inland near Mecca, Riverside 3 Jan (EAC) was believed present since 15 Nov, so is best considered a late fall migrant. Single Red-necked Grebes near Point Mugu, Ventura 4 Jan (WW) and Coronado, San Diego 14 Dec (DPo) were unusually far s., while one inland on L. Perris, Riverside 16 Dec–5 Mar (HBK) was believed to be the same bird present here during the past two winters.

An albatross, most likely Laysan, flying along the Long Beach Freeway in Long Beach, Los Angeles 5 Jan (MCE) was presumably a bird that had ridden a ship into the Port of Los Angeles and become confused. Numbers of Northern Fulmars along the coast declined in Jan, but small numbers continued to be seen through the end of the period. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, rare off s. California, was off Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo 17 Jan (BKS). A concentration of 50–80,000 Black-vented Shearwaters attracted to schooling sardines off La Jolla, San Diego 23 Jan–10 Feb (SES, SW) contained a substantial portion of the world's population. The Masked Booby found on San Clemente I. 10 Aug remained through 8 Jan (BLS). The Anhinga found near Seeley, Imperial 8 Nov was last seen 16 Jan (MLF).

An ad. Little Blue Heron at Upper Newport Bay, Orange 26 Dec (DE) was the only one reported on the coast away from San Diego; an ad. at S.E.S.S. 3 Feb (GLM) was only the 3rd to be found at the Salton Sea in winter. A Tricolored Heron on Upper Newport Bay 21 Dec (GeH), then at Seal Beach, Orange 27 Dec–19 Mar (JFi, BS) was the only one this winter. The Reddish Egret found at S.E.S.S. 8 Nov remained through 24 Mar (GMcC). What was probably the second-year Roseate Spoonbill photographed near Seeley 5 Jan (RF) was seen e. of Brawley 5 & 17 Feb (REM, *vide* BM) and at S.E.S.S. 21 Mar–13 Apr (JFG); this is only the 2nd in California since 1983.

Up to 2 blue-morph Ross's Geese, very rare, were at S.E.S.S. 6 Dec–7 Mar (AKK, GMcC). A Brant near Seeley 23 Feb (JD) was an early spring migrant from the Gulf of California. Three Tundra Swans in Goleta, Santa Barbara 3 Dec (DMC) were the southernmost on the coast, and 12 in flight over Palm Springs, Riverside 11 Mar (PM *vide* KL) were the southernmost in the interior. Up to 2 male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal were in Goleta 24 Nov–24 Feb (WTF), and another was on

Upper Newport Bay 13 Feb (W&DJ). Four Harlequin Ducks were found along the *San Luis Obispo* coast this winter (DK, AFS, FH), and the male found on San Diego Bay Mar 2001 was still present at the end of the period. Single Surf Scoters on the Salton Sea at the mouth of Salt Cr. 13 Dec (PS) and the Alamo R. mouth 16 Dec (MJI), a White-winged Scoters on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, *San Bernardino* 20 Dec–20 Feb (*vide* MSt, TE), 2 around N.E.S.S. 13 Dec–10 Jan (PS, DAG) and 2 more at S.E.S.S. 17 Dec–1 Jan (JL, SAG) were all inland, where rare. A Long-tailed Duck remaining at Barstow, *San Bernardino* through 28 Dec (HBK), one at N.E.S.S. 6 Dec (DAG), and another at S.E.S.S. 14–15 Feb (*vide* BM) were the only ones reported inland. A male Barrow's Goldeneye at Blythe, *Riverside* 14 Dec–1 Jan (RH) and 2 females there 11 Jan (BED, CAM) were the southernmost of the small number found wintering on the Colorado R.; one near Bishop, *Inyo* 10 Dec–9 Jan (J&DP) was the only one found away from the Colorado R. Interesting was an ad. male Common x Barrow's Goldeneye with both species of goldeneye below Parker Dam 8–30 Jan (JLD, GMcC).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Wintering Zone-tailed Hawks included an imm. near Fallbrook, *San Diego* 17 Dec–11 Feb (MJW, RR), and returning ads. around Goleta, *Santa Barbara* through 1 Feb (NAL), near Escondido, *San Diego* through 23 Jan (CR), and Brawley, *Imperial* through 16 Feb (GMcC); an imm. at Casper Wilderness Park, *Orange* 20 Dec (SM) may have been a late fall wanderer. A Swainson's Hawk photographed near Cuyama, *Santa Barbara* 18 Jan (WTF) was evidently wintering locally; the first migrant was one in the San Jacinto Valley, *Riverside* 20 Feb (DRW), followed by 134 passing over Borrego Springs, *San Diego* the following day (PJ). For the first time in many years, Rough-legged Hawks went unrecorded in the Owens Valley (T&JH), indicating that very few ventured s. into this Region.

Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers included 3 near Pt. Mugu 9 Mar+ (DDesJ), up to 4 at Seal Beach, *Orange* through the period (JFi), one at Bolsa Chica, *Orange* 27 Sep–3 Mar (JEP), another around Imperial Beach, *San Diego* through the period (RTP), and up to 6 on San Clemente I. 27 Jan–19 Feb (BLS). Nine Mountain Plovers on V.A.F.B.

(n.) 14 Dec (AA) and up to 22 at Seal Beach 27 Dec–28 Feb (JFi) were the only ones known wintering along the coast Hybrid American Oystercatcher x Black Oystercatchers were reported from Albert's Anchorage on Santa Cruz I. 15 Feb (DH), at White Pt. on the Palos Verdes Peninsula,



Pacific Golden-Plovers have overwintered regularly at only a very few locations in southern California in recent years, one of those being San Clemente Island, where this one was photographed 19 February 2004. Photograph by Brian L. Sullivan.

Los Angeles 1 Feb (JFc), and at Newport Beach, *Orange* 31 Dec (LDT).

A Solitary Sandpiper in the Prado Basin 16 Mar (JEP) probably wintered in that area; spring migrants are not expected before mid-Apr. The Wandering Tattler found inland near Calipatria, *Imperial* 25 Nov was still present 28 Feb (GMcC), and what was



Ruffs are found in southern California in most winters. This female was photographed on the south shore of the Salton Sea, Imperial County on 16 January 2004, one of three in the area in winter 2003–2004. Photograph by Brian L. Sullivan.

presumably another was photographed at S.E.S.S. 15 Dec (BED). Ruddy Turnstones again wintered at S.E.S.S., with a high count of 15 there 16 Dec (GCH, MJI). Reports of single Ruffs came from V.C.G.P. 7

Feb+ (LS), near Norco, *Riverside* 22–24 Dec (HBK), near Calipatria 25 Nov–4 Jan (MJI, BM), and S.E.S.S. 16 Dec–2 Jan (MJSanM, SAG) and 14 Jan–18 Feb (PEL, BP). Two Short-billed Dowitchers at S.E.S.S. 16 Dec (TE) were the first to be found inland in winter. A Wilson's Phalarope at Bolsa Chica 21 Nov–20 Mar (VL, PK, LRH), 2 at S.E.S.S. 16 Dec (GCH), and another there 18 Feb (BM) were wintering locally, as was a Red-necked Phalarope on s. San Diego Bay 16 Jan (RTP). A Parasitic Jaeger around N.E.S.S. 15 Nov–3 Jan (EAC) established the latest date for a presumed fall migrant at the Salton Sea. A first-winter Laughing Gull in Oceano, *San Luis Obispo* 7 Jan–4 Mar (PEL), and an ad. at Pt. Vicente, *Los Angeles* 24 Jan (KGL) were on the coast, where rare; a first-winter bird at the Prado Regional Park near Chino 29 Jan–16 Mar (HBK, JEP) was only the 2nd to be found in *San Bernardino*. Up to 2 ad. Little Gulls were at the Prado Regional Park 21 Dec–16 Feb (ME, NM), one was on L. Mathews, *Riverside* 15 Nov–28 Dec (KFC), and another was on L. Perris 18 Feb–5 Mar (HBK, JFG). A late fall

migrant Mew Gull was inland at C.L. 18 Dec (SSt), and at least 4 were found around S.E.S.S. during the winter (GMcC). An ad Yellow-footed Gull at Dana Pt. 20–21 Dec (JWc) was the 3rd to be found in *Orange*, and a first-winter Western Gull at the Prado Regional Park 24 Dec–16 Mar (CAM, JLD) may be only the 2nd to be found in

San Bernardino. A first-winter Glaucous Gull at Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo* 19 Dec–18 Jan (TME), another in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 11 Jan (KGL), and a 3rd at Bolsa Chica in Dec (*vide* DRW) were the only ones reported. A first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake inland at the Prado Regional Park 4–13 Jan (SBT) was certainly lost, and the species was virtually non-existent along the coast, with only 6 reported. As Elegant Terns are normally gone from California by the end of Nov, one in Coronado 19 Dec (MSa) and up to 3 in Cayucos, *San Luis Obispo* 28–29 Dec (KJZ) were unusually late.

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Far greater numbers than normal of Band-tailed Pigeons present in the lowlands of *Orange* in Dec (DRW) suggested a movement of these birds from higher elevations. Eurasian Collared-Doves are now established as resident in Ridgecrest, *Kern* (LL) and Bishop (T&JH), these being the northernmost

areas colonized by birds arriving from the East. Wintering White-winged Doves included 5 in *Santa Barbara*, where for some unknown reason they are of annual occurrence, one at N.E.S.S. 3 Jan (CMcG), and at least 6 in the Imperial Valley through the period (GMcC). An Inca Dove near Victorville, *San Bernardino* 21 Dec (CMcG) and 3 in Loma Linda, *San Bernardino* 6 Feb (DG) were w. of where previously recorded. A Ruddy Ground-Dove in Bishop 14 Dec–13 Jan (JAP) established the northernmost record for California; at least 12 remained near Calpatria through the period, with a recently fledged young there 16 Feb (GMcC, PU), and another was in Niland 16 Nov (BED). This species appears to be following in the footsteps of the Inca Dove, expanding its range northwestward into se. California.

At least 4 Lesser Nighthawks were known to have wintered in the Imperial Valley, *Imperial* (BM, GMcC), where small numbers appear to be annual, but a nighthawk, probably Lesser, photographed in Goleta 16–26 Dec (GT) was totally unexpected. A male Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Claremont, *Los Angeles* 14 Dec–14 Feb (JIE) was one of a very few found wintering in California. The Gila Woodpecker found at Borrego Springs 22 Sep was still present 16 Feb (PJ). A Williamson's Sapsucker in Goleta 3–19 Jan (MJK) was on the coast, where unexpected, and another near Bakersfield, *Kern* 13 Jan (K&BK) was the first to be found in the s. San Joaquin Valley. Reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included 11 along the coast and 5 more inland, supporting the idea that this woodpecker is a rare but regular winter visitor to s. California.

A Willow Flycatcher at Morro Bay 20–21 Dec (KAH) was exceptionally late; there are very few winter records for the Region. The only Least Flycatcher was in El Monte, *Los Angeles* 4 Jan (BED). A few Gray and Pacific-slope Flycatchers were noted on the coastal slope, as expected, but a bird of the latter species remaining near Bishop through 7 Dec (J&DP) was exceptionally late for the far n. interior. Hammond's Flycatchers are now regularly recorded in early winter in the Region; at least 6 were found in Dec and early Jan along the coast, with a returning bird in San Diego 13 Dec (GuH) remaining through the end of the period. Six wintering Eastern Phoebes in the Region, at least



Mew Gulls are relatively rare inland. This adult was faithful to one location at the south shore of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, California 9 December 2003–27 March 2004. This flight portrait, taken 16 January, shows the pattern typical of the expected North American race *brachyrhynchus*: the white mirrors on primaries 9 and 10 (the outermost) almost touch the broad white markings on the middle primaries. The Eurasian races *canus*, *heinei*, and *kamtschatschensis* show more black through the primaries. Photograph by Brian L. Sullivan.

2 of which were returning birds, included 4 in *Imperial*.

A Dusky-capped Flycatcher, a species casual in the Region, was in Fountain Valley 9 Dec–15 Feb (JEP), establishing the 11th winter record for *Orange*. Ash-throated Flycatchers, very rare in winter away from the se. deserts, were near Imperial Beach 22 Nov–10 Jan (GMcC) and at Prado Regional Park 14 Dec (HH). Expected were 4 Tropical Kingbirds along the coast during the



This adult Little Gull photographed at Prado Regional Park, San Bernardino County, California on 23 December 2003 was one of up to two present there between 21 December 2003 and 16 February 2004. Photograph by Matt Sadowski.

winter, but one at Prado Regional Park 4–18 Jan (LT, AEK) was well inland; other singles near Seeley 14 Mar (GMcC) and at Wister, S.E.S.S. 14 Mar–13 Apr (GMcC) were undoubtedly the same birds found at

these locations in the fall and thus constituted the first wintering birds for the Salton Sink. Forty-five Cassin's Kingbirds through the period constituted the highest winter count for *San Luis Obispo* (TME). Western Kingbirds, casual in mid-winter, were near Camarillo, *Ventura* 3–6 Feb (V. Wilson, *vide* WW), in Costa Mesa, *Orange* 28 Dec (JEP), and San Diego 11–14 Dec (GMcC). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were at Pt. Piedras Blancas, *San Luis Obispo* 20–28 Dec (SG) and Irwindale, *Los Angeles* 7 Dec–11 Jan (JFe).

SHRIKES THROUGH PIPITS

An ad. Northern Shrike at Tinemaha Res., *Inyo* 25 Jan–16 Feb (T&JH) was in an area where the species is regular; more unexpected was an imm. in Wofford Heights near L. Isabella, *Kern* 20 Jan–20 Mar (JS). The *pusillus* Bell's Vireo found on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, *Los Angeles* in Oct remained to 19 Feb (KGL); another in Niland 16 Dec (BED) was felt to be too green and yellow to be *pusillus*. A Gray Vireo in Anza-Borrego Desert S. P., *San Diego* 6 Dec (AH) was in the species' only known wintering area in the Region. A Yellow-throated Vireo in San Diego 11 Dec–18 Jan (JOZ) was only the 3rd to occur in midwinter in the Region. Once again, Plumbeous Vireos outnumbered Cassin's during the winter, with 22 of the former (all but one on the coastal slope) and only 6 of the latter (all coastal) reported. A Warbling Vireo, casual in midwinter, was in Redlands, *San Bernardino* 11 Jan (RLMcK).

Five Yellow-billed Magpies near Gaviota, *Santa Barbara* 2 Jan+ (JLaB) were at a coastal locality where now very rare. An exceptional count of 21 Bank Swallows was made at S.E.S.S. 16 Dec (GMcC). A Cliff Swallow in Playa del Rey, *Los Angeles* 29 Dec (KGL) and another at Prado Regional Park 1 Jan (MSanM) were unseasonal. Barn Swallows continued their unprecedented winter abundance, with high counts including 23 in *Santa Barbara* 3 Jan (DMC), 47 in coastal *Orange* 28 Dec (DRW), and 250+ at S.E.S.S. in Dec (GMcC).

Up to 3 Juniper Titmice w. and nw. of Bishop in Dec and Jan were w. of their normal White Mts. range (J&DP, JLD). A Verdin in *Santa Barbara* 21 Dec–6 Jan (MAH) was well out of range and the first for the county. Up to 2 Pygmy Nuthatches in Morro Bay 10–20 Dec (GPS) were the first for that area since 1989. Three

Marsh Wrens on San Clemente I. 11 Jan (BLS) were the first to be found in winter on the island. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Tinemaha Res. 6–24 Dec (JWi) was very late for the far n. interior. Up to 21 Western Bluebirds at S.E.S.S. 16 Dec–28 Feb (GMcC) were more than expected for that area. A Gray Catbird was in a patch of willows in Gardena, Los Angeles 22 Dec–7 Feb (MJB), and a Brown Thrasher was in Claremont 24 Jan–15 Feb (CMcF). A Curve-billed Thrasher, casual in California though numerous in nearby Arizona, was at Black Meadow Landing near Parker Dam Nov–20 Feb (*vide* BD), and another was below Parker Dam on the latter date (TE). In addition to the 5 Sprague's Pipits found near Calipatria in late Nov, another 4 were in a different set of dormant fields near there 15 Dec–17 Apr (GMcC).

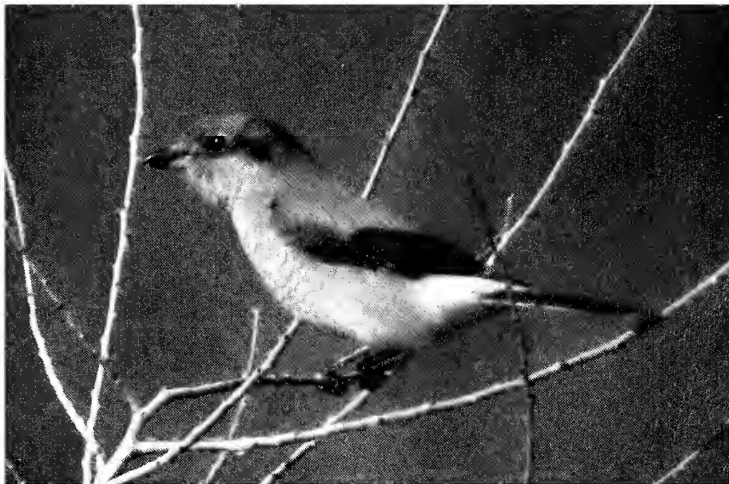
WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

Twenty-four species of warblers were noted during the winter period. A Tennessee Warbler was near Pismo Beach 1 Dec (JA). Some 16 Nashville Warblers were in coastal areas during the period, with another inland near Mecca 3 Jan (EAC). The only Northern Parulas found were up to 2 at Picacho State Recreation Area, Imperial 14 Dec–2 Feb (TE). A Chestnut-sided Warbler wintered in San Diego 19 Nov–9 Apr (MSa), and another was near Calipatria 7–8 Dec (GMcC). Black-throated Blue Warblers are casual in winter in the Region, but this year saw 2: near Pismo Beach 29 Feb (MSm) and at Picacho State Recreation Area 14 Dec–18 Feb (TE, HD). Black-throated Green Warblers included an imm. male in Lake Forest, Orange 14 Dec–3 Jan (JEP) and a returning male in National City, San Diego 12 Jan (DWA). A Townsend's Warbler in Indio, Riverside 6 Dec (SSw) was one of the few to be found in winter in the Salton Sink. A wintering imm. female Blackburnian Warbler near Imperial Beach was present 8 Dec–10 Apr (MSa, GMcC); there are very few winter records of this species in North America. An amazing 3 Grace's Warblers



This Sprague's Pipit (right), one of four that overwintered in the area (into April), was photographed 14 February 2004 in a grassy field near Calipatria, Imperial County, California, about 14 kilometers east of the south end of the Salton Sea. This species had been considered casual in the Salton Sink. In the same vicinity on the same date was this Large-billed Savannah Sparrow (left); this subspecies is a regular winter visitor to the Salton Sea area but is normally only found near the shoreline. Photographs by Martin Meyers.

were on Pt. Loma, San Diego 3 Jan (SBT, GMcC, MTH); all appeared to be wintering, as 2 were first found during the fall period. A Prairie Warbler was in Gardena 21 Dec–16 Feb (KGL). The 5 Pine Warblers recorded were an ad. male in Morro Bay 12–14 Dec (TME), a dull female in Long Beach 1–29 Feb (KSG), a male in Newport Beach 16 Feb–12 Mar (PC), and 2 near Imperial Beach 7 Dec–27 Jan (MB). At least 11 Palm Warblers were noted near the coast,



In southern California, Northern Shrikes are extremely rare away from the northern half of Inyo County, so this first-winter bird photographed near Wofford Heights, Kern County attracted much attention during its stay between 20 January (here 24 January) and 20 March 2004. Photograph by Kelli Levinson.

with another at Wofford Heights 4 Jan (MH) and 2 different birds at S.E.S.S. 7 Feb (BLS) and 25 Feb–2 Mar (SaS, JBa). Approximate totals of 22 Black-and-white Warblers and 10 American Redstarts were found in coastal areas, with up to 8 more redstarts in regular winter haunts at S.E.S.S. through the period. Northern Waterthrush-

es included a returning bird at V.C.G.P. through the period (RB), one near Imperial Beach 14 Dec (GMcC), one in Riverside 7–31 Dec (HBK), and a bird at Wister, S.E.S.S. 14 Mar–3 Apr that had been seen earlier in Oct and Nov (GMcC). A Prothonotary Warbler was in San Diego 12–15 Dec (DWA). A MacGillivray's Warbler, casual in winter in the Region, was in Newport Beach 28 Dec–14 Feb (BED). In addition to numerous Wilson's Warblers on the coastal slope, one was at S.E.S.S. 7 Feb–6 Mar (CC, TEW).

Summer Tanagers found during the period included 35+ along the coast plus single birds in Niland 16 Dec (BED), Calipatria 13–15 Feb (GMcC), and Bard, Imperial 27 Dec (MSanM). A male Scarlet Tanager in San Diego 2 Jan (GMcC, SBT, MTH) represented the first Jan record for California; apparently a very late fall straggler, it was not present after this date.

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

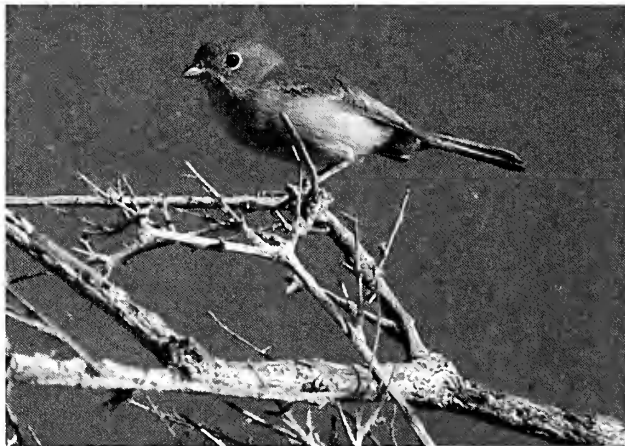
The only mid-winter Clay-colored Sparrow reports were of a bird continuing from the fall to 1 Mar near Lake View Terrace, Los Angeles (KLG) and one in Newhall, Los Angeles 2 Jan (MSanM). Two Black-throated Sparrows in the Lakeview Mts., Riverside 16 Dec (CMcG) were on the coastal slope and a bit out of range. Two Grasshopper Sparrows near Niland 21 Feb (BM) marked the 2nd consecutive winter this species has been found in the Salton Sink. Up to 2 Lark Buntings were in Santa Clarita, Los Angeles 24 Feb–2 Mar (BED). A few Large-billed Savannah Sparrows occurred in coastal salt marshes, including up to 6 banded at Morro Bay 1 Dec–19 Feb (TME). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found at Morro Bay 1 Dec–22 Jan (2 b.; RO), V.C.G.P. 5 Feb (DD), and Seal Beach N.W.R., Orange from the fall through 19 Mar (up to 4; JFi). A Red Fox Sparrow was at Montaña de Oro, San Luis Obispo 6–20 Dec (KJZ). About 17 Swamp Sparrows were reported, the northernmost inland bird being at C.L. 30 Dec–15 Jan (SSt). Harris's

Sparrows were in Santa Barbara 27 Dec–19 Jan (HPR), San Elijo Lagoon, *San Diego* 28 Nov–6 Jan (JBe), Wildomar, *Riverside* 28 Jan (CMcG), Blythe 12 Feb (RH), and near Niland 8 Jan–16 Feb (BM), with up to 4 around Bishop 25 Dec+ (T&JH). Concentrations of longspurs included up to 15 Laplands and 175 Chestnut-collareds near Calipatria 26 Nov–7 Feb (GMcC) along with 3–4 McCown's Longspurs there 15 Dec–5 Jan (TE), up to 15 Chestnut-collareds near Niland 16 Jan–13 Mar (BM, JBa), and up to 9 Laplands and 2+ McCown's near Palmdale, *Los Angeles* 16 Dec (JFe); a single Chestnut-collared was near Lakeview, *Riverside* 15 Dec (CL). The Snow Bunting first found on San Clemente I. 15 Nov was seen intermittently through at least 21 Feb (BLS).

Eight Black-headed Grosbeaks were found in coastal areas through the period, double the count of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks found in Goleta 5 Feb (S&AL), Laguna Niguél, *Orange* 10–24 Jan (GM), and San Diego 3 (GuH) & 17–19 Jan (JWi). An Indigo Bunting photographed near Bishop 13 Dec (J&DP) was exceptionally late.

Southeast of their normal haunts were male Tricolored Blackbirds in Anza-Borego S. P. 24 Feb (DA) and near Calipatria 22 Feb (DSC). A male Common Grackle in Willowbrook, *Los Angeles* 11 Jan–7 Feb (KGL) was likely a returning bird. An ad. male Orchard Oriole was in Goleta 18–19 Dec (WTF). Seven Hooded Orioles were reported in coastal counties, with another in e. Bakersfield 20 Jan+ (A&RD) being only the 2nd in winter in Kern. A few Bullock's Orioles wintered in coastal areas, but it was the opinion of observers in *Orange* and *Los Angeles* that winter numbers of this species are declining (DRW, KLG); this species is quite rare on the deserts in winter, so 2 in Rancho Mirage, *Riverside* 5 Dec (RH) and one near Calipatria 16 Dec (PN, JWi) were of interest. Baltimore Orioles included up to 2 in Goleta 18 Dec–28 Jan (MC, ADeM), one in Irvine through the period (JEP), one in Fountain Valley 28–29 Dec (LO), and one in Santa Ana, *Orange* 28 Dec–3 Jan (DPu). Northwest of their normal winter range, 2 Scott's Orioles were in Montecito, *Santa Barbara* 14–31 Dec (JEL).

A Purple Finch was at Picacho State Recreation Area 27 Dec (MSanM), an area where quite rare. A Cassin's Finch in Santa Ynez, *Santa Barbara* 10 Feb (JMC) was the first to be found in that area. Small flocks of American Goldfinches appear only sporad-



It was only in December 1999 that Gray Vireos were found to winter in California, so this photograph taken in Anza-Borego Desert State Park, San Diego County 6 December 2003 provides welcome documentation of its presence at this time of year. Photograph by Robert McMorran.

ically in the Salton Sink, so 10 in Niland 25 Jan (PJ) were of interest.

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Alex Abela, Don Adams, Douglas W. Aguillard, Jerry Ambrose, James Barr, Richard Barth, Jim Bente (JBe), Mark Billings, Martin J. Byhower, Kurt E. Camp-



The Picacho State Recreation Area on the Colorado River, Imperial County, California hosted a pair of eastern parulids for most of the winter: a Northern Parula (left) and a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, the county's fifth and the first during the winter, respectively (both photographed 17 December 2003). Photographs by Bob Miller (left) and Henry Detweiler.

bell, Eugene A. Cardiff, Jamie M. Chavez, Mike Collins, David M. Compton (*Santa Barbara*), Chris Conard, Peyton Cook, Daniel S. Cooper, Brian E. Daniels, Al DeMartini, Bill Deppe, Don DesJardin, Henry Detweiler, Jim Dowdell, Jon L. Dana, Todd Easterla, Tom M. Edell (*San Luis Obispo*),

Dan Emory, Josh I. Engel, Marcus C. England, **Michael Evans** (*San Diego*), Martha Estus, Michael L. Feighner, Jon Feenstra (JFe), John Fitch (JFi), Rob Fowler, Wes T. Fritz, **Kimball L. Garrett** (*Los Angeles*), Donn Gaede, Karen S. Gilbert, Steven A. Glover, David A. Goodwood, **John E. Green** (*Riverside*), Shirley Green, Freeman Hall, Murrelet Halterman, Karen A. Havlena, Loren R. Hays, Gjon C. Hazard, Allison Heather, Matt T. Heindel, **Tom & Jo Heindel** (*Inyo*), Harsi Heilpern, Roger Higson, David Hill, Gus Hollenbeck (GuH), Mark A. Holmgren, Gerco Hoozeweg (GeH), Marshall J. Iliff, William and Delores Jenisch (W & DJ), Paul Jorgensen, Al K. Kalin, David Keeling, Melissa J. Kelly, Howard B. King, Peter Knapp, Alexander E. Koonce (*San Bernardino*), Ken and Brenda Kyle (K&BK), John LaBonte, Kevin G. Larson, Lisa Lavelle, Cin-Ty Lee, Paul E. Lehman, Vic Leipzig, Joan E. Lentz, Susan and Andy Lentz (S&AL), Nick A. Lethaby, Kurt

Leuschner, James Lomax, Paula Magazine, Curtis A. Marantz, Gillian Martin, Robert E. Maurer, Guy McCaskie (*Imperial*), Cathy McFadden, Chet McGaugh, Robert L. McKernan, Steve Metildi, Bob Miller, Nathan Moorhatch, Guy L. Monty, Leo Ohtsuki, Regina Orr, Phil Nelson, Ed Pandolfino, Jim and Debby Parker (J&DP), Robert T. Patton, John A. Peterson, James E. Pike, David Povey (DPo), Bob Power, Dick Purvis (DPu), Hugh P. Ranson, Christine Rideout, Royce Riggan, Matt Sadowski (MSa), Michael J. San Miguel, Mike San Miguel (MSanM), Larry Sansone, Bob Schallman, Alan F. Schmierer, John Schmitt, Brad K. Schram, Peter Siminski, Gregory P. Smith, Maggie Smith (MSm), Susan E. Smith, Susan Steele (SSt), Mark Stevenson (MSt), Sam Stuart (SaS), Brian L. Sullivan, Sandy Swan (SSw), Linda Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, George Thompson, Larry D. Tripp, Philip Unitt, Stanley Walens, Walter Wehtje (*Ventura*), Joel Weimtraub (JWe),

Douglas R. Willick (*Orange*), Matthew J. Williams, James Wilson (JWi), John C. Wilson (*Kern*), Thomas E. Wurster, James O. Zimmer, Kevin J. Zimmer. An additional 35± observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season; they have our thanks. ☺

Observer coverage—especially in the Mexicali Valley and Cape District—was robust this season, and the fourth Ensenada Christmas Bird Count, held on 19 December, was a great success. Among the record-high 202 species tallied were such rarities as Black-chinned Hummingbird, Bell's Vireo, a White-crowned Sparrow of the *pugetensis* race, and four oriole species. The Mexicali Valley hosted several duck species in relative abundance, as well as the Region's first Greater Pewee. In Baja California Sur, Anna's Hummingbirds were confirmed nesting in Guerrero Negro, the Region's first Grace's Warbler topped an extensive bill of noteworthy parulids, and a Ruff provided a state first.

TUBENOSES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Northern Fulmars remained close to the nw. shoreline through at least early Jan, including 204 recorded off Ensenada during the 19 Dec C.B.C. Brown Boobies continue to be seen regularly at Islas Los Coronados, with 3 females and 2 males there 8 Feb (MB). Two American Bitterns were at Estero Punta Banda 10–11 Dec (KW). Approximately 10,000 White-faced Ibis at Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds (hereafter, C.P.G.P.) 15 Dec (MJI, MSM) fell short of the 15,000 estimated there 4 Jan 2003 (N.A.B. 57: 260).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued at Lagunas de Chametla, with up to 11 there 8 Jan–12 Mar (DRP et al.). Two Snow and 2 Ross's Geese were at El Descanso 18–20 Dec (MSM et al.), and 9 Ross's at C.P.G.P. 18 Jan included one neck-ringed the previous year in Nunavut (†KAR, CR); one remained there 27 Jan (MJI, RAE). The season's 6 Canada Geese, all *B. c. moffitti*, were evenly split between Ensenada 19 Dec (SNGH, RAH) and the Mexicali Valley 27 Jan (MJI, RAE). Quite unusual for the Colorado Desert were up to 2 Wood Ducks at the Mexicali Zoo 27 Jan–26 Mar (ph. MJI et al.) and up to 2 Eurasian Wigeons at C.P.G.P. 15 Dec–27 Jan (MSM, ph. KAR, ph. MJI et al.). Greater Scaup ranged far and wide, including 4 at C.P.G.P. 18 Jan (†KAR, CR), 2 at Guerrero Negro 3 Feb (JEP), and up to 3 at Lagunas de Chametla 20 Jan–9 Mar (vt. SGM, ph. JEP, MJI). Rare scoters included a White-winged at La Joya 3 Nov (BLS et al.) and 6 Blacks along the coast s. to Bahía San Quintín (TMcG et al.). A high count of 16 Common Goldeneyes at C.P.G.P. 15 Dec (MJI, MSM) presaged 100+ at nearby Canal Colima—between Algodones and Ejido Pachuca—24 Jan (KAR, CR), an estimate refined to 156 on 27 Jan (MJI, RAE). Seven Hooded Mergansers was a healthy seasonal total for Baja California (JEP et al.), while a female at San Ignacio 4 Feb (ph. JEP) and a first-winter male at Estero San José del Cabo 11 Mar (ph. MJI) represented only the 3rd and 4th records for Baja California Sur. Up to 19

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Common Mergansers were recorded in the ne., including 5 near Ejido Chiapas 18 Jan (KAR, CR) and 14 at C.P.G.P. 27 Jan (ph. MJI, RAE).

The report of a Common Black-Hawk circling with Turkey Vultures above Lagunas de Chametla 18 Jan was possibly correct, but Zone-tailed Hawk is frequently mistaken for this species; in the absence of a photograph or other physical evidence, the description did not meet the editors' standards for accepting such a significant and unexpected occurrence. The increasing use of digital cameras to document unusual sightings (including digital photos taken through scopes and binoculars) has been a welcome development that can help to resolve such situations, which frustrate observers and editors alike.

An imm. Bald Eagle was unexpected at Estero San José del Cabo 10 Jan (DRP), and dry conditions at Laguna Hanson precluded their usual wintering there. Swainson's Hawks were found foraging in recently burned fields in the Mexicali Valley:

8+ near Mezquital 18 Jan (†KAR, CR) and 3 dark ads. n. of Villa Hermosa 27 Jan (MJI, RAE); in Baja California Sur, 3 were at Ciudad Constitución 9 Feb (DVP), and a second-year bird was at Ejido Conquista 19 Feb (JEP). Baja California's 2nd Harlan's Hawk was near Santo Domingo 21 Feb (ph. JEP). An ad. female Merlin of the *richardsoni* subspecies, one of few recorded in the Region, was at Ojos Negros valley 18 Dec (RAE et al.). At least 80 Clapper Rails were recorded at Estero Punta Banda 10–11 Dec (KW), and one was heard along the Río del Rosario 1 Feb (JEP).

Pacific Golden-Plovers are not known to winter regularly in the Region away from Isla Guadalupe, so 4 at Estero Punta Banda 19 Dec (MSM, †MJI et al.) were a welcome surprise. Twenty of the wintering Mountain Plovers at Mesa San Jacinto, n. of Camalu, were still present on 2 Mar (TEW, LA). Solitary Sandpiper occurs scarcely in Baja California Sur during winter (Carmona, R., D. Galindo, and L. Sauma. 2003. New and noteworthy shorebird records from south Baja California Peninsula, Mexico. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 101/102: 62–66); 2 were encountered at Santiago 19 Jan (vt.

SGM, CB), and another was at San Ignacio 5 Feb (ph. JEP). A Pectoral Sandpiper at Lagunas de Chametla 9 Dec (LA) was likely a late fall migrant; one at Estero San José del Cabo 16–17 Jan (vt. SGM, CB) should



Wetlands around La Paz, Baja California Sur are building a reputation for attracting unusual shorebirds. Marshall Iliff found this adult male Ruff, a first for the state and perhaps third or fourth for Mexico, at Rancho Santageda on 10 (here 12) March 2004. Photograph by Andrés González Peralto.

be considered the Region's first winter record. Baja California Sur's 2nd record of Stilt Sandpiper, and the first in winter, came from Lagunas de Chametla 9 Mar (ph. MJI). Rancho Santageda held the



Though common in the Gulf of California, Yellow-footed Gulls are seldom seen on the Pacific side of the Baja California Peninsula. Limited data suggest, however, that small numbers may cross over regularly in southern Baja California Sur. This adult, photographed with Western Gulls on 9 February 2004, was the first to be found at Bahía San Quintín. Photograph by Kathy C. Molino.

state's first Ruff, an ad. male, 10–12 Mar (ph. MJI, ph. RC, LS).

GULLS THROUGH THRUSHES

A first-winter Franklin's Gull was at Presa

Rodriguez, above Tijuana 18 Dec (TMcG, †MSM). An ad. Yellow-footed Gull, rare on the Pacific coast, was at Bahía San Quintín 9 Feb (KLG, ph. KCM). Up to 4 Gull-billed Terns wintered at El Centenario 23 Jan–12

Mar (vt. SGM, ph. MJI, RC). An Elegant Tern was at La Paz 21 Jan (SGM et al.). Long-eared Owls turned up at Laguna Chapala on 21 Feb (†DVP) and at Laguna Agua Amarga (km 41 on the road to Bahía de Los Angeles) on 1 Mar (TEW, LA). Broad-billed Hummingbirds are quite rare throughout the Region, and the season's only report was of an ad. male at Ciudad Constitución 10 Feb (†DVP). A female Black-chinned Hummingbird remained at Estero Beach, near Ensenada 19 Dec–27 Mar (†PP, DSC). At least 7 female Anna's Hummingbirds built numerous nests in Guerrero Negro between mid-Nov and the end of the period (ph. AG, ph. ES), giving Baja California Sur its first breeding records; other southerly birds were at Villa Benito Juárez 9 Feb and 9 at Ciudad Constitución 10 Feb (both JEP).

The Region's first Greater Pewee was found at the Mexicali Zoo 27 Jan (†RAE, ph. MJI). The season's northernmost Gray Flycatcher was at Cataviña 3 Feb (ph. JEP). Single Tropical Kingbirds were noted 5–10

km e. of San José del Cabo 4 Jan (DRP), at Lagunas de Chametla 20 Jan–9 Mar (vt. SGM et al.), at Estero San José del Cabo 24 Feb–Mar 11 (KB, MJI), and in La Paz 13 Mar (MJI). Fourteen Thick-billed Kingbirds were encountered around Agua Caliente and Santiago 14–15 Feb (ph. JEP); approximately 14 were found elsewhere (SGM et al.). The only definite wintering Western Kingbird found was roosting with Cassin's Kingbirds at Caliente and Santiago 13–14 Feb (ph. JEP). A Bell's Vireo on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (†DSC, PP) appeared to be of the expected race *pusillus* and was the first to be found in Baja California in winter. A northerly Plumbeous Vireo was at Tijuana 22 Dec (MDC). Cassin's Vireos seen away from the s. Cape District—where

the brightly colored *V. c. lucasanus* resides—included 3 around San Javier 8 Feb (ph. JEP) and one nw. of La Paz 19 Feb (DVP). Wintering Bank Swallows were once again found in the Cape District, with 4 at Estero

San José del Cabo 16 Jan (SGM, CB) and one or 2 at Lagunas de Chametla 18 Feb (JEP). A surprising 800 Barn Swallows were present at Estero San José del Cabo 17 Jan (SGM, CB). A Varied Thrush was at Cataviña 3 Dec (EP).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Nashville and Lucy's Warblers are not known to winter regularly in the Region, but Baja California Sur yielded 7 of the former 5–27 Feb (DVP et al.) and 13–14 of the latter 18 Jan–18 Feb (JEP et al.). Lucy's were found in relative abundance on the peninsula in autumn 2003 as well. Have these species been overlooked in the past, are their numbers increasing, or were these high winter totals anomalous? Tennessee Warblers, very unusual in winter, were found near Ligui, s. of Loreto, 21 Dec (KB) and at Santiago the same day (BL). Presumed returning were a male Northern Parula at Caduaño 16 Feb (ph. JEP), a female Magnolia Warbler there 17 Jan–11 Mar (SGM et al.), and a male MacGillivray's Warbler on the Maneadero Plain 23 Sep–19 Dec (†DSC et al.; its 3rd winter). Another wintering Magnolia Warbler was at Agraria Reforma No. 2 on 19 Feb (ph. JEP), only the 2nd Regional winter record. The imm. male Black-throated Blue Warbler continued at the Santo Tomás Winery through 26 Feb (ph. JEP et al.). An imm. male Grace's Warbler at Ciudad Constitución 10 Feb (ph. JEP) was the Region's first. A male Prairie Warbler at Villa Benito Juárez 9 Feb (ph. JEP) furnished the Region's 2nd winter record. Nine Palm Warblers in the season (extended to 12 Mar) included 6 in Baja California Sur. Northerly Black-and-white Warblers were on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (PP) and at El Rosario 1 Feb (JEP); one at the Mexicali Zoo 27 Jan–26 Mar (RAE et al.) constituted a first for the Colorado Desert portion of the Region. Northerly American Redstarts were seen at La Misión 20 Dec (RAH, PAG) and at El Rosario 1 Feb (JEP). A Prothonotary Warbler at Boca de San Jacinto, Baja California Sur 6 Jan (DRP) provided the Region's first definite winter record. Also unprecedented in the Region in winter was an Ovenbird at Ciudad Constitución 10 Feb (ph. JEP). The only Northern Waterthrush noted in Baja California was on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (†PP). A high count of 21 Belding's Yellowthroats was tallied at Santiago 19 Jan (SGM, CB).

Summer Tanagers were found in surpris-

ing numbers, with 8 in Baja California and 10–11 in Baja California Sur (JEP et al.). Baja California's only Western Tanagers were 2 at Ensenada 19 Dec (RAH, SNGH) and 2 at El Rosario 21 Feb (JEP). Three Green-tailed Towhees were found 19 Dec on the Ensenada C.B.C., and another was at El Descanso the same day (SG). Single Clay-colored Sparrows near Ojo Negros 18 Dec (PP, RAE) and at Estero Punta Banda 19 Dec (ph., †MJI) were n. of usual wintering areas. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Santiago 19 Jan (SGM, CB) was the only one recorded. Fox Sparrows were scarce, with only 5 found 19 Dec on the Ensenada C.B.C. and one at Cataviña 3 Feb (JEP). Single Swamp Sparrows at San Ignacio 4 Feb and near Las Cuevas 17 Feb (both JEP)



The first Greater Pewee for the Baja California Peninsula was found 27 January 2004 at the Mexicali Zoo. Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

were just the 2nd and 3rd for Baja California Sur. A White-throated Sparrow was on the Maneadero Plain 19–20 Dec (†PP et al.). Mexico's first record of a White-crowned Sparrow of the *pugetensis* subspecies was encountered on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (ph., †JEP).

Lazuli Buntings were unusually widespread in Baja California Sur, including an apparently pure flock of 79 along the road to San Antonio de la Sierra on 12 Feb (JEP). The only Indigo Bunting recorded was at Santiago 19 Jan (SGM, CB). A caged Dickcissel at Parque Morelos, Tijuana 22 Dec (MDC) had been present since May 2003. A male Tricolored Blackbird near Laguna Hanson 18 Dec (PP et al.) provided the Region's first montane record. Seven hundred Yellow-headed Blackbirds 19 Feb were at a stockyard in Ciudad Insurgentes (ph. JEP), where 1000 were seen in Jan 2002. A flock of 25 Great-tailed Grackles at

Guerrero Negro 4 Feb (ph. JEP) represents a new high count for Baja California Sur. Bronzed Cowbirds find ideal habitat in Mexicali stockyards, where 16 convened on 24 Nov (ph. MJI); the first wintering record for the nw. occurred on the Maneadero Plain 20 Dec (PP, SNGH, †RAE), close to where one was seen on 31 Oct. Solitary Orchard Orioles on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (†DSC, PP), at San José del Cabo 6–11 Jan (DRP), and at Tijuana 15 Mar (RAE) add to the few Regional winter records. Lone Bullock's Orioles, typically scarce in winter, were at Ensenada 19 Dec (SNGH, RAH) and San Ignacio 29 Feb (TEW, LA); an imm. male in Tijuana 15 Mar (RAE) was likely wintering as well. The only Baltimore Oriole found was an imm. male in Ensenada 19 Dec (†SNGH, RAH), and the only out-of-place Scott's Oriole was an ad. male at La Bufadora 19 Dec (RAE, MJM). A high total of 23 American Goldfinches was recorded 19 Dec on the Ensenada C.B.C.

Non-native species: Two years after its last sighting, the ad. male African Darter reappeared in Ensenada 19 Dec (SNGH, RAH). In Mexicali, 17 apparently "pure" Eurasian Collared-Doves (ph. MJI) plus 2 apparent hybrids were the first to be photographically documented in the Region; 2 at Villa Jesus Maria 3 Feb (JEP) and 4 there on 29 Feb (TEW, LA) were well s. of previous Regional records (Ringed Turtle-Dove hybrids were reported there in Oct 2003).

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Mexico

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NORTHERN MEXICO

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Several dozen Clark's Grebes were studied on Tanque Aguilareño and Tanque Genty, two small, neighboring reservoirs straddling the municipalities of Viesca (in Coahuila state) and San Juan de Guadalupe (in Durango) 3 Jan. Some were young individuals, suggesting a breeding population (FVP, JRA). Three Northern Gannets were seen well at La Pesca, Tamps., during passage of a cold front 2 Feb (RK et al.); the same observers tentatively identified 4 smaller but distant sulids as Brown Boobies at Barra el Tordo, Tamps. 17 Jan. Brown Boobies are not mapped in Howell and Webb (1995) at this location.

A single Ross's Goose was recorded on the Rio Nazas just off Hwy. 40, at a site known as Puentes Cuates near Cañón de Fernández, Dgo. This is a new species for the subregion (FVP, WB). The population of Wood Ducks in Cañón de Fernández on the Rio Nazas produced healthy numbers for the period, 54 on 1 Jan and 32 on 22 Feb; most birds were paired at this time, though agonistic encounters between males were often observed (FVP, WB, AVJ). A male Eurasian Wigeon was among 1000+ American Wigeons at Yávaros, Son. 13 Jan (KG, KCM).

A year after the hurricane hit San Blas, Nay., both Rufous-necked Wood-Rail and Rufous-crowned Motmot seem to have recovered rather poorly, according to Carmody, who visited there in late winter. A group of 27 Swainson's Hawks was seen feeding over burning grass along Hwy. 15 on the Sinaloa/Nayarit border 18 Feb; one was soaring above the Singayta trail 20 Feb (MC). Several Peregrine Falcons continued to perch on and hunt from the Canal 9 television towers at Torreón, Coah.; present year-round, they are clearly local residents and possibly nesting (FVP). A Dunlin was at a tidal pond n. of Mazatlán, Sin. 14 Feb (MC). A second-year Glaucous-winged Gull at Yávaros 13 Jan (KG, KCM) was s. of any record mapped by Russell & Monson (1998).

A Eurasian Collared-Dove was carefully identified at Soto la Marina, Tamps. 15 Jan, and at least 4 were recorded in and around San Fernando, Tamps. 3 Feb (RK et al.). Male and female Anna's Hummingbirds were seen throughout the period in Bosque Venustiano Carranza, the Torreón urban park. Anna's are now the most frequently recorded hummingbird species at this site (FVP, WB). A Greater Pewee was in a small park in Hermosillo, Son. 14 Jan (KG, KCM). A Willow Flycatcher was at Rosario de Tesopaco, ne. of Ciudad Obregón, Son. 12 Jan (KG, KCM); this species has not previously been recorded in Sonora in winter.

A Varied Thrush was seen eating berries from a tree in Paradiso Resort at San Carlos, Son. 30 Dec (CB). A male Kentucky Warbler was found near the first crest on the La Bajada road 21 Feb, perhaps the same bird that has shown up there in recent winters (MC). Two Western Tanagers were seen in roadside scrub in the hills about halfway between Soto la Marina and La Pesca, Tamps. 15 Jan (RK et al.). Lark Buntings were at Cañón de Fernández, Coah. 25 Jan, a first record for this site (FVP, WB, JRA). A Swamp Sparrow was calling at a cattail marsh at Tular Lagoon in Guaymas, Son. 14 Jan (KG, KCM). An ad. White-throated Sparrow was carefully scrutinized at Rosario, Sin. 18 Feb (MC), perhaps the only state record.

Contributors: Clark Blake, Manuel Bujanda Rico, Michael Carmody, Kimball Garrett, Rudolf Koes (with Andy Courcelles, George Holland, Richard Staniforth), Kathy C. Molina, Juan Rodriguez-Andrade, Alfredo Villalobos-Jauregui.

CENTRAL MEXICO

Héctor Gómez de Silva



A juv. Northern Gannet was seen feeding close to shore with a group of Laughing Gulls at Playa Esmeralda near Nautla, Ver. 1

Feb (RK et al.). Some 2000 American White Pelicans in flight over Tecolutla, Ver. 19 Jan was impressive (RK et al.). A subad. Mississippi Kite was seen moving s. at Xalatlaco, Méx., sw. of Volcan Ajusco 5 Oct (MC). A Bat Falcon was soaring over Barranca el Choncho, Jal. 10 Dec (BC). A Virginia Rail was heard 23 Jan in marshy lakeside area at La Jungla at L. Catemaco, Ver. (RK et al.). Some 14 Double-striped Thick-knees were seen along the Las Barrancas road s. of Veracruz, Ver. 21 Jan (RK et al.). Up to 2 Green-breasted Mangos attended flowering bougainvilleas at Hotel Playa Azul, Catemaco, Ver. 22-25 Jan (RK et al.). A Cliff Swallow and 2-3 Barn Swallows were noted at the Río Hondo bridge on the toll road near Cosamaloapan, Ver. 31 Jan (RK et al.). Two Colima Warblers were at San Andrés Totolapan, D.F. 25 Dec (MG), and another 2 were seen at Parque Ecológico de la Ciudad de México, D.F. on various dates in Jan (AOI). A Prothonotary Warbler frequented the edge of a sewage lagoon immediately w. of Tecolutla 19 Jan (RK et al.). Two Lark Sparrows were found on a dike through marshes just w. of Tecolutla 19 Jan (RK et al.).

Contributors: Michael Carmody, Bob Cecil, Manuel Grosselet, Rudolf Koes (with Andy Courcelles, George Holland, Richard Staniforth), Adán Oliveras de Ita.

SOUTHERN MEXICO

John Forcey

We include several October 2003 records from Guerrero, received too late for inclusion in the fall report. All locations in Oaxaca state unless noted otherwise.

Abbreviations: B. J. (Benito Juárez); C. V. (Cuatro Venados); Jilguero Arroyo (above Teotitlán del Valle); La Nevería (above San Miguel del Valle); S. J. G. (San Juan Guelavía); S. F. P. (San Felipe Park); P. A. D. (Presa Azul Dam).

A Great Blue Heron was high at La Nevería,

2860 m above sea level 6 Jan. Six Muscovy Ducks (wild status not determined) were seen in flight at Presa Tuxpan, interior Gro., 6



Oct (MC). Eight Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures were around the shortgrass prairie n. of Playa Carrizil, Gro. 9 Oct (MC).

A Broad-winged Hawk kettle of 9 birds was seen over the Tetipac Road, n. of Taxco, Gro. 6 Oct (MC), and a White-tailed near Tierra Colorado, Gro. the same day was rare for the Pacific slope here. At least 2 Roadside Hawks were again seen on and near the grounds of Hotel Misión de Los Angeles, Oaxaca City (where they apparently nested in late Feb 2003) 22 Dec—late Jan (MEC); the species is essentially unknown in the Valley. Two Harris's Hawks were seen 5 Feb at S. J. G. A Swainson's Hawk was seen on Christmas Day near El Tule (A&BB), first winter report for the species in this area, though mid-winter Swainson's are often encountered along the Oax. coast between Puerto Angel and Puerto Escondido. The 2nd Northern Goshawk for the cen. Oaxaca area was reported 27 Dec at the Jilguero Arroyo (AB).

American Coots were notably absent from P.A.D. this winter, with just a single bird present 2 Feb. A Collared Plover was at Presa Tuxpan, Gro. on 6 Oct (MC). Winter Solitary Sandpipers were recorded at P.A.D. on Christmas Eve (A&BB) and 17 Jan, while Wilson's Snipe were seen there 6 Jan, and 2 snipe were high at La Nevería on the same date. A Sandwich Tern with a flock of 60 other terns (Caspian and Royal) was seen roosting 9 Oct at the coastal lagoon n. of Atoyac de Alvarez, Gro. that is reached via the Las Tunas road (called locally Playa Paraiso).

Two displaying Greater Swallow-tailed Swifts—"magnificent birds" (MC)—were noted halfway up the Filo de Caballos road, Gro. 11 Oct. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird, very rare in midwinter in the Oaxaca Valley, was seen 2 Feb at P.A.D. Typically scarce in winter, Greenish Elaenias were seen 17 Jan at Jilguero Arroyo, 2 Feb at P.A.D., and 8 Feb at Río Grande de Guelatao. Five Buff-breasted Flycatchers made a high count 4 Dec at Cuatro Venados, where a Say's Phoebe and a Cassin's Kingbird were at high elevation. Two Western Kingbirds were at P.A.D. 2 Feb, probably northbound migrants. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen at Yagul 23 Dec (A&BB). A Rose-throated Becard was seen around a mixed flock of jays and Gray-barred Wrens above Guacamaya 4 Feb.

A Marsh Wren was heard 5 Feb at S. J. G., and a Golden-crowned Kinglet, until recently

almost unknown in Oax., was recorded 15 Jan at B.J. (MG). A late Swainson's Thrush was seen 22 Dec at L. C. (A&BB). Aztec Thrushes, always unpredictable in cen. Oax., were reported on the C.B.C. 26 Dec (location unknown; A&BB), 17 Jan at B. J. (one bird), and on the same date, 2 were seen feeding in fruiting tree with about 7 Brown-backed Solitaires and 15 White-throated Robins at the Jilguero Arroyo, with 2 still there 5 Feb. About 50 American Pipits were high at Cuatro Venados 4 Dec, and about 20 were seen in a flock near Teotitlán del Valle on 5 Feb.

An early Golden Vireo was heard singing 3 Feb at S. F. P. A rare winter Tennessee Warbler was reported 22 Dec at L. C. (AB). A single wintering Yellow Warbler was recorded 18 Jan at the Jardín Botánico in Oaxaca City



(MG). A single Black-throated Blue Warbler, seen 4 Jan (Rich Hoyer, Jim Tietz, Rebecca Green) and again 10 Feb (RA, KW) on the Oaxaca-Pochutla highway near the Copalita exit, represents a new species for the state of Oaxaca. Yellow-breasted Chat was recorded at Monte Albán 20 Dec (A&BB). The Fantailed Warbler previously reported from S.F.P. was seen again 16 Jan.

Three Red-headed Tanagers seen 28 Dec at the ford on the Guacamaya road represented the first firm winter record of the species from the Oaxaca Valley (A&BB). A Yellow-throated Euphonia was seen 2 Feb, accompanying a mixed flock of seed-eating birds in a brushy field at Rojas de Cuauhtémoc. This would represent a first record for the interior valleys of Oaxaca. Two male and one female Yellow-faced Grassquits were seen 18 Feb at Huitzo dam, again a first record in the Oaxaca Valley, although this species is very commonly captured and sold in city markets.

About 15 Striped Sparrows were seen 4 Dec

at Cuatro Venados, and a single Vesper Sparrow was near Teotitlán del Valle 5 Feb. Savannah Sparrows were recorded 5 Feb at S. J. G. and near Teotitlán del Valle. A scarce wintering Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported 28 Dec from an unknown location in the Oaxaca Valley on the C.B.C. (A&BB). A fairly bright male Lazuli Bunting was seen 28 Feb near Huitzo Dam. One Hooded Oriole was recorded 17 Jan at the Hotel Victoria, Oaxaca City. Scott's Oriole was reported 15 Feb at B. J. (MG). About 10 Red Crossbills were seen 4 Dec at Cuatro Venados. Two or more pairs of Slate-blue Seedeaters were detected in the bamboo n. of Iguala, Gro. 13 Oct (MC). A single Evening Grosbeak was seen at B. J. 5 Feb; apparently never common, the species has become very scarce in the state.

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YUCATÁN PENINSULA

Barbara MacKinnon

After a twelve-year hiatus, Christmas Bird Counts were restarted in Yucatán state. The three carried out included Celestún on 14 December, Río Lagartos on 21 December, and El Cuyo on 4 January. Participants included local bird guides, reserve personnel, and conservationists. There were few unusual sightings for the Region during the winter season.

Abbreviations: R.L.B.R. (Río Lagartos Biosphere Reserve); H.S.A.X. (Hacienda San Antonio Xpakay; entrance road located at Km 52 on road to Tekit from Tekoh, Yuc.).

A total of 12 Least Grebes (ads. with young) and 3 Least Bitterns were located at two ponds behind the coast at El Cuyo 4 Jan (BM, JM, MT, RM), and another Least Bittern was reported 23 Jan at Uaymitún (DB). A single ad. Black-crowned Night-Heron was at Celestún during the C.B.C. 14 Dec (BM, AD, MT), while an ad. Boat-billed Heron with 2 young was seen at Río Lagartos 2 Dec (SNGH, IN).

Two male Snail Kites were observed during

the C.B.C. behind El Cuyo 4 Jan (BM, JM, MT, RM), and an ad. male Northern Harrier was sighted flying over a savannah area on the Chunchucmil road e. of Celestún on the C.B.C. 7 Dec (BM, AD, MT). One Great Black-Hawk was at X'cambo 23 Jan (DB); another was watched by members of the Club Toh as it devoured a snake while perched on a snag on the road leading to H.S.A.X. 8 Feb (BM, AE, EG). A Zone-tailed Hawk was sighted 12 km e. of Celestún 7 Dec (BM, AD, MT) and another between Progreso and Uaymitún 23 Jan (DB). A Collared Forest-Falcon was heard and seen briefly on the road to H.S.A.X. 8 Feb (BM, AE, EG, RM).

An ad. Ruddy Crake with one juv. was observed in a mangrove area e. of Celestún 7 Dec. Three Soras were at ponds behind the coast of El Cuyo during the C.B.C. 4 Jan (BM, JM, MT, RM). Other sightings later that day included a flock of 36 Willets and three flocks of Sanderlings totaling 360 in the coastal lagoon 10 km w. of El Cuyo (BM, JM, MT, RM). A total of 16 Marbled Godwits were in the lagoon behind Chichchulub 7 Dec (AE, BM, RM, BS), while a flock of 150 Least Sandpipers was in the coastal lagoon 10 km w. of El Cuyo 4 Jan (BM, JM, MT, RM). About 100 Stilt Sandpipers and 100 Short-billed Dowitchers were seen 23 Jan between Progreso and the X'cambo turn-off (DB). A single Franklin's Gull was reported at Río Lagartos 2 Dec (SNGH, IN), while 4 Gull-billed Terns were seen between Progreso and the X'cambo turn-off 23 Jan (DB). Among the small flock of Caspian Terns at Uaymitún on 7 Dec was a juv. still begging (AE, BM, RM, BS). A total of 15 of these wintering Caspians were on a sandbar 2 km s. of Celestún 14 Dec (BM, AD, MT), while 8 Forster's Terns were reported at Ria Lagartos 2 Dec (SNGH, IN).

A single Zenaida Dove, a species becoming increasingly difficult to find on the Yucatan coast, was seen 8 km w. of El Cuyo 4 Jan (BM, JM, MT, RM). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a regular but never abundant winter resident in the subregion, was reported 22 Jan at Chichén Itza and another at X'cambo the next day (DB). A first for the archeological zone of Muyil at Chunchucmil, Q. Roo, was a single Chestnut-colored Woodpecker 26 Jan (IC). A Bright-rumped Attila, apparently feeding at an ant swarm, was seen in a low tangle under a canopy of deciduous forest along road leading into H.S.A.X. 8 Feb (BM, EG), while a single Wood Thrush was observed in same area that same morning (BM, EG, RM). Five Savannah Sparrows were in the low brush 10 km w. of Telchac Puerto 7 Dec (AE, BM, RM, BS).

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Central America



The winter season was an impressive one, especially for El Salvador. Oliver Komar reports: "This winter was one of the most active periods in the history of El Salvador ornithology. Four long-term mist-netting (bird monitoring) stations were established, with monthly visits at Montecristo, El Imposible, and Los Volcanes National Parks, and at a coffee plantation in Izalco. Separately, a team conducted inventory work in pine-oak forests at Montecristo National Park and La Montañona forest. In addition, 22 biologists collaborated to conduct the first park-wide one-day bird count at El Imposible National Park. Finally, local biologists continued with regular waterbird censuses at several freshwater lakes." Now, if we could only have this kind of coverage in the other six countries...

Most Panama records in this season's report are from just two Victor Emanuel Nature Tours led by Marshall Iliff. Imagine how much more useful information could be assembled for this column if other tour operators would start sending in their Central American trip reports!

The string of "country firsts" remains unbroken, with El Salvador's first and second Black-throated Blue Warblers and first and second Audubon's Warblers.

Abbreviations: C.R.N.M. (Costa Rica National Museum); K.U.N.H.M. (University of Kansas Natural History Museum); M.H.N.E.S. (Museo de Historia Natural de El Salvador); V.E.N.T. (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours).

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TROPICBIRDS THROUGH DUCKS

The Red-billed Tropicbird is an uncommon visitor off the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, but a juv. found freshly dead in the yard of PM well inland at 1800 m in San José de la Montaña, Heredia 6 Feb (*C.R.N.M.) was a truly extraordinary extralimital occurrence. American White Pelicans continue to turn up in C.A. with increasing frequency. Five were seen moving e. down the coast at the Kékoldi raptor migration count station at Hone Cr., Limón 3 Dec. All recent Costa Rica reports have come from the Caribbean coast, mostly from Tortuguero. A group of 38 Brown Pelicans was seen flying east-northeastward over La Democracia, Belize 10 Jan (PB), and 13 were seen flying eastward over Chan Chich Lodge, Orange Walk 13 Feb (SS). Brown Pelicans are occasionally seen flying high overhead in inland Belize, presumably commuting between the coast and Lago Petén Itzá in Guatemala. Thus far, no seasonal pattern

of inland occurrences has been discerned.

American Bitterns were reported in Costa Rica this winter for the first time in nearly a century. One was seen well 20 Jan (†ND) at a small roadside pond on the main road to Quepos about 5 km s. of the turnoff to Playa Hermosa. Two-and-a-half months earlier, on 5 Nov, HH and a British birder (name not given) saw 3 American Bitterns not far away in a roadside marsh between Parrita and Quepos. Photographs were reportedly taken by the British birder. Seldom reported in the Region, Least Bitterns were at Lago de Yojoa, Cortés, Honduras 23 Feb (RG) and at Ammo Dump Pond near Panama City 1 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.). A well-seen Agami Heron on Pipeline Road, Soberanía N.P. 4 Feb (ph. MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.) was another trip highlight. Twenty Roseate Spoonbills, the largest concentration in El Salvador since 1972, were at Laguna El Jocotal 28 Dec (NH). In Guatemala, at least 2 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were seen flying in a flock of about 15 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Monterrico, Santa Rosa 24 Dec (KE), and 12 or more Ring-necked Ducks were seen near San Juan on L. Atitlán 4 & 6 Jan (ph. TJ). Both species are rarely reported in Guatemala, although Fulvous Whistling-Ducks are often present in the hundreds at L. Güija on the Guatemala/El Salvador border.

HAWKS THROUGH GULLS

Two ad. Tiny Hawks at Achioté Road near Colón 3 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.) were unusual. The 2nd confirmed nesting record of Short-tailed Hawk in El Salvador came 16 Dec when one was seen carrying nesting material at Montecristo N.P., Santa Ana (NH, OK). Three Swainson's Hawks at Tocumen e. of Panama City on the unexpected date of 5 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.) were most likely overwintering. In Costa Rica, a Crested Eagle was seen and heard calling at Quebrada González ranger station, Braulio Carrillo N.P. 5 Feb (SW, LC et al.). Typical of a mated pair, 2 Orange-breasted Falcons were observed handing over prey at Tikal N.P. in Guatemala 30 Dec and 1 Jan (KE). A Peregrine Falcon at Toncontín Airport in Tegucigalpa 21 Jan (DAR) was unexpected, as this species is seldom reported on mainland Honduras. Six Crested Guans at Volcán Lakes, Chiriquí 8 Feb (MJI, AB, V.E.N.T.) were at a locality where the species has not previously been reported. The Crested Guan is rare in Chiriquí. Noteworthy was a Spotted Rail seen near Hotel Agua Azul along the shoreline of Lago de Yojoa 28 Jan (DAR, AMc). Although there are only

about six records for Honduras, all have come from Lago de Yojoa. Two Sunbitterns were seen at Río Mendoza on Pipeline Road, Soberanía N.P. 4 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.).

Southern Lapwing is now present year-round in Costa Rica; however, no direct evidence of breeding has been obtained. In addition to those seen in the usual places, 2 wintered at a pond at Montaña de Fuego Hotel, Arenal Volcano. An ad. Wattled Jacana at Laguna San Jaquín near San Vito airport 22 Feb (JS, JZ, DM et al.) may have been the same individual reported as a juv. here at about the same time last year. The 4th winter record for Long-billed Curlew in El Salvador was established when one was seen at Punta San Juan, Bahía de Jiquilisco, Usulután 23 Feb (TJ). A Long-billed Curlew has been seen regularly at Panama Viejo since its discovery on 24 Oct 2002. The most recent sighting was on 6 Feb (ph. MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.). All reports presumably pertain to the same individual. Extraordinary were the first three winter records of Pectoral Sandpiper in Costa Rica: one was at the waste-banana dump at El Quizarrá, Guapiles 22 Dec (EC, EV, AG); another was seen a few km e. of the turnoff to La Selva 3–4 Feb (†RiG), and a 3rd was at Tarcoles 23 Feb (RiG). A light-morph ad. Parasitic Jaeger in basic plumage was seen bathing in Río Tortuguero Lagoon near Tortuguero 28 Feb (RK, FA et al.). Jaegers are seldom reported on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, and most have been juvs., not ads. A third-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Costa del Este e. of Panama City 24 & 29 Feb (RM, KK, GA, JT). There are fewer than 10 records of this species for Panama.

PARAKEETS THROUGH ANTBIRDS

A small flock of Brown-throated Parakeets discovered s. of Playa Zancudo in the Golfo Dulce region 11 & 13 Feb (JD, ph. JH) constitutes the first record of this species in Costa Rica. The North American subspecies *Aratinga pertinax ocularis* was, until now, thought to be endemic to the Pacific slope of Panama. In El Salvador, a pair of White-fronted Parrots at El Imposible N.P., Ahuachapán 30 Dec (NH) represented the first record for the park, and at least six pairs and an active nest in the pine forest at Montecristo N.P. 11–22 Feb (NH) established the first breeding record for Santa Ana. Extraordinary in winter was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo 30 Dec at El Imposible N.P. (†NH). In Costa Rica, 2 Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoos were seen together at 800 m in Rincon de la Vieja N.P. 19 Feb

(RG, BQ et al.). This represents a new location for this very rare species and perhaps the first reported from the Pacific slope. In El Salvador, 2 Whiskered Screech-Owls found in pine-oak forest at Metapán 9 Feb (NH, *K.U.N.H.M., *M.H.N.E.S.) represented yet another first for Santa Ana. Two carefully documented Chestnut-collared Swifts over the Canopy Tower on Semaphor Hill 5 Feb (MJI, CB, JSO) were the first for the Panama Canal area. In Honduras, 10 White-throated Swifts at Celaque N.P. 3 Feb, and 3 Blue-throated Motmots there the next day (both RG), were the first of each species recorded in Lempira.

A Green-fronted Lancebill was seen at Respingo, Chiriquí 10 Feb (AB, V.E.N.T.), and a singing male Brown Violet-ear was at Macho de Monte near Guadalupe, Chiriquí 7 & 10 Feb (ph. MJI, AB, V.E.N.T.). Both of these species are rare and local in Panama. With only one previous park record, the Green Violet-ear was assumed to be a vagrant at El Imposible N.P., but 3 found there 30 Dec (OK) suggest that the species may be resident, at least in winter. A male Rufous-crested Coquette at Cerro Azul n. of Panama City 5 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.) was in an area where it is rarely reported. A male Amazon Kingfisher at Río Acelhuate near Colima 13 Dec (TJ) was the first recorded in Cuscatlán and only the 3rd reported in El Salvador since 1975. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported more frequently in Costa Rica this winter than in most winters. A Strong-billed Woodcreeper, rare in El Salvador, was at La Montañona, Chalatenango 6 Feb (OK). A family of Wing-banded Antbirds seen about midway along the Pipeline Road 4 Feb (ph. MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.) was noteworthy, as this species is rarely seen in Panama.

TYRANT-FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRUSHES

A previously unknown, perhaps recently established population of Ochre-bellied Flycatchers was discovered in pine-oak forest at Montecristo N.P. near the Honduras border 11 Feb, when one was captured in a mist-net (ph. JRS). Four others were collected there 11–22 Feb (NH, *K.U.N.H.M.). Two Yellow-green Tyrannulets were seen at Metro Park, Panama City 6 Feb (MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.). This Panama endemic is seldom reported. Another first for Gracias a Dios was a pair of Gray-collared Becards observed in Celaque N.P. 20 Jan (RG). Throughout much of its restricted range in C.A., the Lovely Cotinga is as rare as it is beautiful, so 3 in two days in Guatemala (KE) is an accomplishment.

A male was at El Ceibal, *Petén* 28 Dec, and a pair was at Yaxhá, also in *Petén*, the next day. Although a common winter visitor in ne. Central America, White-eyed Vireo is rarely seen as far s. as Costa Rica, so an imm. seen in the Selva Verde Lodge Botanical Garden 20–21 Jan (RiG, CK, JTy) was quite unexpected.

As recently as 1987, Brown-capped Vireo was still considered hypothetical in El Salvador; however, it has since proven to be fairly common in three cloud forest sites. The first photographic documentation of its occurrence came 20 Jan, when one was mist-netted in Montecristo N.P. (JRS). A Common Raven was seen at the Santa Barbara city dump 27 Jan (AMC); this species is seldom reported in Honduras, although it may be more common than the few records would indicate. Four Black-capped Swallows seen in Celaque N.P. 22 Feb (RG) represented only the 2nd Honduras record in over 40 years. Although there are now a number of sight reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in El Salvador, the first photographic documentation was obtained 30 Dec (OK) in El Imposible N.P. Additionally, 3 observed 6 Feb at La Montaña (OK) were the first reported in *Chalatenango*. Three Wood Thrushes were reported at two sites in El Salvador this winter: singles banded at Los Volcanes N.P. 20 Nov and 18 Feb (ph. JRS) and one at El Imposible N.P. 30 Dec (TJ). About one bird per season is the norm. In Costa Rica, Wood Thrushes appeared to be more numerous than in most winters.

WARBLERS THROUGH MUNIAS

Two Nashville Warblers were reported in El Salvador this winter: one at Izalco, *Sonsonate* 21 Dec and another near Tacuba, *Ahuachapán* 30 Dec (both OK). Two Northern Parulas were reported in Guatemala: one at Monterrico, *Santa Rosa* 22 Dec (TJ) and another at Rocjá Pomtilá se. of Lachuá, *Alta Verapaz* 24 Feb (JC, RC). In Costa Rica, a Northern Parula was at Tapanti N.P. 14 Dec (LC), and Cape May Warblers were at Universidad Tecnológica, Cartago 14 Dec (LC), Hacienda Guachipelin, Rincon de la Vieja 18 Feb (BQ), and Savegre Mt. Lodge, Cerro de la Muerte 2 Mar (RZ, CS). All of these warblers are rare winter visitors in these countries. One species and one subspecies of warbler were recorded for the first time in El Salvador this winter. A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Los Volcanes N.P. 16 Jan (ph. JRS) and a male was just outside the entrance to Montecristo N.P. 11 Feb (HM). El Salvador's first Audubon's Warbler was seen

at Lago de Güija, *Santa Ana* 29 Dec (ph. NH). Less than a month later, at least 4 were at La Montaña 24 Jan (ph. TJ). Two ad. male Golden-cheeked Warblers were present at Montecristo N.P. 15 Dec (EM), establishing the first winter records for El Salvador. Another was present 14 Feb (NH, EM, MR). One of these birds was near the locality of an individual reported last Oct. In Honduras, a Golden-cheeked at the Copán Ruins Archaeological Park 4 Feb (RG) established the first record for *Copán*. A Hermit Warbler at Cerrón Grande de Apaneca, *Ahuachapán* 28 Dec (AM) was the 3rd recorded in the coastal volcanoes region of El Salvador. Four Yellow-throated Warblers were reported in El Salvador this winter, doubling the number of previous country records. One at Merliot, *La Libertad* 13 Dec (ph. TJ) was the 2nd from the coastal volcanic highlands. In the interior highlands, 2 were at Montecristo N.P. 16 Dec (OK), and another was at La Montaña 24 Jan (TJ). The species may be more common in winter in the interior mts. near the Honduras border than the few records indicate. In Costa Rica, a Yellow-throated Warbler was at Talari Mountain Lodge 29 Dec (JB).

A Blackpoll Warbler seen at L. Arenal 26 Dec (+SH) provided one of the very few winter records for Costa Rica, and a Prothonotary Warbler at Monterrico, *Santa Rosa* 21 Dec (TJ) provided one of the few winter records for Guatemala. In Costa Rica, a Masked Yellowthroat in a wet pasture at about 1100 m elevation along the San Isidro–Dominical Rd. near Alto de San Juan Isidro 8 Dec (NU) may have established the northernmost record for the species. A male Hooded Warbler at Hotel Perkin Lenca in Perquín 27 Dec (TJ) was the first recorded in *Morazán* since 1976. The last time Red-faced Warbler was recorded in El Salvador was in 1980, so one at Montecristo N.P. 16 Dec (OK) was unexpected, and 3 at Cerrón Grande de Apaneca 28 Dec (AM) were noteworthy. The impressive numbers of Red-faced Warblers, as well as other rare warblers, in El Salvador this winter were at least partially the result of increased observer effort.

A male Western Tanager was at the Canopy Tower 7 Feb (ph. MJI, CB, V.E.N.T.). This apparently represents the first record for cen. Panama. A female Elegant Euphonia in Montecristo N.P. 16 Dec (OK) was the first recorded there since the 1970s, and a Blue Seedeater in El Imposible N.P. 30 Dec (OK) established the 9th record for El Salvador. All records to date have been between Oct

and Feb, so it may be a winter visitor only. An ad. male Black-headed Grosbeak at Mirador de Quetzal, Km 70 of the Pan-American Hwy s. of San José 18 Jan (DC), established one of the few records for Costa Rica. Except for Belize (one record) and heavily birded Costa Rica, the species may be unrecorded s. of Mexico.

A group of 23 Melodious Blackbirds in the Garrigues' yard in the greater San José area 14 Feb (DG) is the largest concentration yet recorded in Costa Rica. Although this species is now well-established in the country, it has hitherto been recorded only in small groups. A male Bullock's Oriole, rare as far s. as Costa Rica, was at Santa Rosa N.P. in late Feb (JE). Three Red Crossbills, representing El Salvador's 4th record, were seen 16 Dec in Montecristo N.P. (ph. NH, OK), where 5 were reported last Oct. Lesser Goldfinches continue to be seen in the Orange Walk area of Belize, where the species was first reported in 1998. The population appears to be stable. Belize's 2nd record of Tricolored Munias came just five months after the first, when 3 were seen at Booth's R., *Orange Walk* 10 Jan (JU).

Undocumented: Tawny-chested Flycatcher is a little known Central American endemic restricted to the Caribbean slope of e. Nicaragua and ne. Costa Rica. One reported near the village of Las Mariás in the Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve, *Gracias a Dios* 14 Feb and briefly described would represent the first record for Honduras, if substantiated.

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PETRELS THROUGH TERNS

Three Audubon's Shearwaters off Peterson Cay, Grand Bahama 7 Feb (NM) were unusual for midwinter. A cruise aboard the *Sea Cloud* through the e. Caribbean from St. Vincent n. to Antigua 3–10 Jan (V.E.N.T.) recorded four solid species with Brown, Red-footed, and Masked Boobies all seen near Roca Redonda, along with an ad. Northern Gannet close to the boat 9 Jan. A Northern Gannet at Ferry Reach, Bermuda 8 Jan (PH) was the first of 3 imms. to appear there in Jan.

On Cuba, a team from Rouge River Bird Observatory led by Julie Craves, with resident experts William Suarez (Museum of Natural History, Havana) and Orlando Garrido, the museum's Curator Emeritus, surveyed birds primarily in the Zapata N.P. area to Soplillar

region and Cayo Coco 7–19 Feb. Among many other interesting reports, noted below, they found an American White Pelican 1 Feb at Las Salinas, which furnished the 9th Cuban record (JC). A Double-crested Cormorant at Arecibo, Puerto Rico 14 Dec (JAC) was unusual there. A Least Bittern was found at Embalse Ejercito Rebelde, Havana 30 Jan (JC et al.). In the Bahamas, American Bitterns were at Wilson's Pond, New Providence 14 Dec (PD, LL) and Bahama Star Groves, Abaco 27 Feb (EB, MS). Bermuda's 3rd Little Egret was discovered at Spittal Pond 5 Feb (IF). A rare Glossy Ibis was on Bermuda at the airport 15 Dec–29 Feb+ (DH). A group of about 100 Glossy Ibis was seen at Trou Caiman, Haiti 31 Jan (JRC), where receding water levels provided good feeding habitat. A White Ibis at

Caño Tiburones, n. Puerto Rico in Jan was unusual there (*fide* RR). Seven Wood Storks were found at Las Salinas, Cuba 1 Feb, about the same number seen the previous year, while Greater Flamingos numbered 470 there 4 Feb, apparently down from the previous year's count, although the tide was down during this survey (JC et al.). Flying over Andros, Bahamas, JS located an airborne flock of about 400 Greater Flamingos 30 Dec; the flock consisted of about 30 to 40 per cent juvs. A rare Greater Flamingo at Savannah Sound, Eleuthera 31 Dec (TT) was also noteworthy.

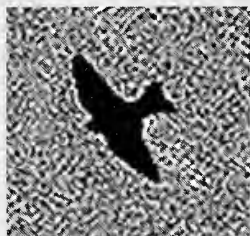
Five wintering Canada Geese was a record high for Bermuda, with 4 at Spittal Pond and one at Jubilee Road 11 Dec–29 Feb+ (AD). In the Bahamas, single Canada Geese were reported at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 16–20

SA A month-long series of Rapid Biological Inventories (R.B.I.) in Feb co-sponsored by the Field Museum (Chicago), Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and several Cuban organizations (including BioEco and the University of Santiago de Cuba) covered e. Cuba this winter, primarily the La Bayamesa area in the Sierra Maestra range of w. Granma and s. Santiago de Cuba provinces and the La Melba–Baracoa sectors of Parque Alejandro de Humboldt in Holguin and Guantanamo provinces (AF, Tim Barksdale, Greg Budney, Freddy Rodriguez, Ken Rosenberg, Doug Stotz). During these surveys the teams made several important discoveries, among them the documentation of dozens of **Black-capped Petrels** seen from the shore near the town of Uvero (s. coast of Granma province) 9 Feb (25 birds) and 24 Feb (46 birds). Most birds were noted beyond 100 m from shore, generally moving closer to shore just after local sunset. After dark, a number of the birds moved into a small inlet and were seen and heard flying inland up a small valley.

Breeding has been suspected in this rather isolated area (connected by road to Santiago only in 1962) since the late 1970s, when four specimens were taken "on the coastal mountain La Bruja between Uvero and Ocuja in Sierra Maestra by Dr. Nicasio Viña Bayes" on 29 Jan 1977 (Bond, J. 1978. Twenty-second Supplement to the *Check-List of Birds of the West Indies*. Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia). O. H. Garrido and A. Kirkconnell (2000. *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York) list this site as "Las Brujas" (The Witches), also famous in the region as the subject of a legend speaking of the eerie and tortured sounds of "the spirit from La Bruja." The R.B.I. team, accompanied by Dr. Viña, felt confident, after discussions with local people, that the petrels' calls were indeed the source of this legend; however, as in other Spanish-speaking American cultures, the "witch/bird" might refer to almost any nocturnal bird. A widespread Caribbean name for Black-capped Petrel, "Diablotin" (Devil), is echoed in many old vernacular names for other gadfly petrels. While the precise location of nesting grounds and the total numbers of birds in the area remain unknown, it seems likely that a small population nests in the high peaks of the Sierra Maestra range.

SA A Cuban Martin—a “displaying” male at Punta Jagüey, Cabo Rojo N.W.R. in extreme sw. Puerto Rico—was photographed and voice-recorded by Brinkley and Armistead and observed simultaneously by John Puschock and Tom Rodriguez 22 Jan. (This date is close to the earliest spring arrival date, 27 Jan, of the species on Cuba but about a month before most return there; the wintering range of the species is unknown.) The bird circled the small peninsula many times, affording remarkably good views of the typically obscure pale plumage (thus the specific name *cryptoleuca*) of the ventral area. The bird’s repeated vocalizations were “unlike anything heard from Purple Martin,” “close to the rollicking song of Caribbean Martin,” and “almost mockingbird-like in quality.” The dark-bodied male was pursued in flight by four white-bellied female-type martins, all of which could well have been Cuban Martins but which were not carefully studied, as the observers concentrated on photographing and recording the adult male. The latter birds were noted to be very similar in plumage to female Caribbean Martin. Though the observers have no previous field experience with Cuban Martin, they are familiar with Southern, Peruvian, Purple, Caribbean, Sinaloa, Gray-breasted, and Brown-chested Martins.

Away from Cuba, only one other record of Cuban Martin has been confirmed, that of an immature male collected at



Key West, Florida 9 May 1895 (Banks, R. C. 2000. The Cuban Martin in Florida. *Florida Field Naturalist* 28: 50–52). Puerto Rican birders, however, report that several dark-bellied male martins, all unidentified, have been seen over the years on Puerto Rico, and that one apparently nested on the n. coast. Further details on this record will be published in this journal.

The first Cuban Martin for Puerto Rico was voice-recorded and photographed at Punta Jagüey, very near the Cabo Rojo lighthouse, in southwestern Puerto Rico 22 January 2004. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

Dec (EG, BH, m. ob.) and South Ocean G.C., New Providence 27 Dec (JB); 2 Snow Geese were with the Canada at Reef G.C., and another 2 were at Ford’s Landing, Long Island 3 Dec (FM). In Bermuda, 10 Snow Geese wintered between Outerlea Farm and Mid-Ocean G. C. Some 30–40 American Black Ducks arrived following a storm on 15 Jan at Bermuda (AD). A female Eurasian Wigeon was at Warwick Pond, Bermuda 1 Feb (EA), and up to 2 males were at Laguna Cartagena N.W.R., Puerto Rico in Jan (*fide* RR). Gadwalls are rare in the Bahamas, but a drake was at Lyford Cay 26 Feb+ (AW, CW, ABA, ph). A single American Wigeon was noted at Fresh Pond, St. Martin on 5 Feb (AB). The C.B.C. on 17 Dec found 3 Northern Shovelers at Emerald G.C., Grand Bahama. A male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal stayed on Warwick Pond, Bermuda 25 Jan–29 Feb+ (SR). A flock of 15 Lesser Scaup was seen at Embalse Ejercito Rebelde, Havana 30 Jan (JC et al.). A Bufflehead was noted at Lowlands Pond, St. Martin 22 Jan (AB) for perhaps the first record from the Lesser Antilles. A White-winged Scoter seen at Fairylands Creek, Bermuda 22 Jan (DBW) was picked up dead 24 Jan, while another was at Somerset Long Bay, Bermuda 25 Jan–29 Feb+ (AD, SR); these represent only the 3rd and 4th records for Bermuda. Fourteen wintering Hooded Mergansers was a Bermuda seasonal record (AD), while a female Common Merganser at Watford Bridge, Bermuda 25 Jan (PJH) was very rare there.

Two Crested Caracaras were seen along the highway between Havana and Zapata 31 Jan (JC). A Gundlach’s Hawk, the rarest *Accipiter* in the Region, was noted near the Parque Alejandro de Humboldt 12–21 Feb (AF et al.). We again received stunning documentation of a female Marsh Harrier (again of the nominate subspecies, sometimes split as Western Marsh Harrier) in the Region—this time from

Laguna Cartagena N.W.R., Puerto Rico 20–30 Jan (ph. RR, m. ob.), where a Northern Harrier also wintered. This constitutes the 2nd Regional and New World record (see N.A.B. 57: 564–565). A Northern Harrier at Grog Pond, Great Exuma, Bahamas 17 Jan (BM) was unusual there. A Purple Gallinule was on Paget Marsh Pond, Bermuda 6 Jan–Feb+ (AD); the species is almost annual on Bermuda. A nest of Yellow-breasted Crake was a superb find at the Humacao refuge, s. Puerto Rico in Jan (*fide* RR). The Bahamas’ first Sandhill Crane remained on a farm on North Andros during the first two weeks of Dec (ph. RS).

A Piping Plover was seen throughout the winter to at least 26 Feb at Petite-Terre Nature Reserve, Guadeloupe (AL). Piping Plovers in the Bahamas included 8 at Barbary Beach, Grand Bahama 17 Dec (AW, C.B.C.), 5 near Winding Bay, Eleuthera 4 Jan (DC), 2 at Forfar Research Station, Andros 21–24 Feb (EBS), and 10–15 at Green Turtle Cay throughout Feb (EB). During Feb, Bracey also found up to 100 Dunlin, 10–15 Red Knots, 40–50 Sanderlings, and 25 Western Sandpipers at Green Turtle Cay. A Solitary, a White-rumped, and a Pectoral Sandpiper lingered at Jubilee Road, Bermuda, before departing in early Dec (AD). Up to 129 Stilt Sandpipers frequented mangrove mudflats s. of Guanica, Puerto Rico 21–25 Jan (ESB, GLA). An injured Red Phalarope found on Point Finger Road, Bermuda 31 Jan (JG) provided a rare winter specimen record when it died several days later.

A Pomarine Jaeger flew past Dockyard, Hamilton, Bermuda 28 Dec (PJH). A Parasitic Jaeger was seen 5 Feb in the Gulf Stream between Port Everglades, Florida and Grand Bahama (RN). Of the smaller gulls to arrive at Bermuda, a first-winter Black-headed Gull was at Rockaway 28 Jan (IF, PW), a flock of 15 Bonaparte’s Gulls was over Spittal Pond in Jan

(JM, SR), and a single Black-legged Kittiwake was at Watford Bridge 9 Dec (PJH). A first-winter Bonaparte’s Gull was at Emerald G.C., Grand Bahama 15–19 Dec (BH, m. ob.). Ten Ring-billed Gulls were seen at Embalse Ejercito Rebelde, Havana 30 Jan, and one was noted at Las Salinas 1 Feb (JC et al.).

It was a big year for gulls in the Region, with numbers of Herring, Lesser Black-backed, and Great Black-backed Gulls wintering as far s. as St. Kitts. In the Bahamas, 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at Arawak Cay, New Providence 14 Dec (SB, LG, C.B.C.), 3 were at West End, Grand Bahama 16 Dec (BH, T&JG, AW), and 5 were at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera 11 Feb (AW). Single Great Black-backed Gulls were seen on Grand Bahama 16 Dec (BH, T&JG, AW) and 6 Feb (RN, SN), with one on Dog I., Anguilla 25 Jan and 4 at St. Martin throughout Feb (both AB). A Great Black-backed Gull was observed at Great Pond, St. Martin 26 Feb (AB). Herring Gulls numbered up to 10 at various sites around Cayo Coco, Cuba 19–24 Feb. At St. Kitts, a second-winter Herring Gull was seen along with a Lesser Black-backed Gull on 21 Feb (AB). A single Herring Gull was noted at Embalse Ejercito Rebelde, Havana 30 Jan. During a Cuban field ornithology course conducted at Cayo Coco in Feb, Peter Burke recorded a Great Black-backed Gull 27 Feb at Cayo Guillermo, near Cayo Coco, as well as a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the bridge from Cayo Romero to Cayo Coco that day. A Glaucous Gull was noted along North Shore, Bermuda 15 Jan (JM). A third-year Iceland Gull was seen with Ring-billed Gulls at near Port Lucaya, Grand Bahama 8 Feb (RN, SN, p.a.), representing the first record from the Bahamas and apparently the Caribbean (there are several records from Bermuda). Details will be published elsewhere. A Royal Tern was seen in St. George’s, Bermuda in Dec (PW). A single Gull-billed Tern was noted at Las Salinas, Cuba 1 Feb (JC).

QUAIL-DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

The Cuban endemic Gray-headed Quail-Dove (now split by most authorities from Hispaniolan Quail-Dove) was noted at both La Bayamesa in the Sierra Maestra and in Parque Alejandro de Humboldt (AF et al.), while a single Key West Quail-Dove and 3 Gray-headed Quail-Doves were noted at Bermejas, Cuba 2 Feb (JC). Eurasian Collared-Doves apparently are out-competing Mourning Doves at Abaco, Bahamas (EB); Mourning Doves were formerly more common at disturbed areas such as the dump, and at fruit and chicken farms, but their numbers are now eclipsed by collared-doves at such sites. East of La Parguera, Puerto Rico, collared-doves appear to have hybridized with “Ringed Turtle-Doves” in several sites, as observed in Jan (ESB, GLA). Six Zenaida Doves at Shannon G.C., Grand Bahama 26 Dec was a good count (EG).

Cuban Parakeets are still considered relatively scarce on Zapata Peninsula, where 2 were seen at Bermejas 2 Feb (JC et al.). Cuban Parakeets numbered 73 at Parque Alejandro de Humboldt 12–21 Feb, while Cuban Parrots numbered 71 at Parque Alejandro de Humboldt and near Santiago, Cuba 12–28 Feb (AF et al.); about 50 were noted from 2–4 Feb at Palpite, Soplillar, and Bermejas (JC). The Abaco C.B.C. 5 Jan found 177 Cuban Parrots in the count circle that includes Abaco N.P. The V.E.N.T. tour recorded one Imperial and up to 150 Red-necked Parrots at the Syndicate, Dominica 8–9 Jan, a tribute to the parrot recovery work (PBr et al.); one St. Lucia and 10 St. Vincent Parrots were also seen on their respective islands 5–6 Jan (V.E.N.T.).

Three Short-eared Owls were seen at Bermuda's airport 2 Jan (PW). At Hole-in-the-Wall, Abaco, Bahamas, a Chuck-will's-widow was seen 26 Jan (EB, HP). A Greater Antillean (Cuban) Nightjar roosting in a tree at Bermejas provided nice looks 2 Feb (JC). Two Bee Hummingbirds were noted n. of Playa Larga 1 Feb (JC). The Bahamas' and Region's 2nd Red-bellied Woodpecker, a male, was at West End, Grand Bahama 16 Dec (BH, AW, T&JG) —not 15 m from where the first, a female, was found 17 Feb 1999. On 12 Feb, SD found a Hairy Woodpecker at Rock Sound, Eleuthera—the first for that island. Five Ferdinandina's Flickers were seen at Bermejas 2 Feb (JC et al.). In the Bahamas, an Eastern Wood-Pewee was at Rock Sound, Eleuthera 2 Feb (SD), and on 15 Jan, single Eastern Phoebe were seen at Stanniard Cr., Andros (MB) and Treasure Cay, Abaco (EB). Giant Kingbird, now a single-island endemic with the extirpation of the Bahamas population, numbered as many as 8 between La Bayamesa in the Sierra Maestra and the Parque Alejandro de Humboldt 2–21 Feb (AF et al.).

A single Yellow-throated Vireo was noted at Bermejas 2 Feb (JC), and another was seen at Parque Alejandro de Humboldt (AF). At a mist-netting site named Rak Bwa in the Macaya Biosphere Reserve, Haiti, 11 Golden Swallows, a Threatened endemic, were recorded 7–11 Feb (CR et al.), with at least one pair behaving as if it were prospecting for a nest site.

Three endemic Zapata Wrens were encountered 31 Jan along Río Hatiguanico Canal (JC). A high count of 10 Cuban Gnatcatchers was noted at Cayo Paredon Grande, Cuba 4 Feb (JC). A well-documented report of Bicknell's Thrush on 14 Dec at Hog Bay N.P., Sandys, Bermuda (PJH) is only the 2nd winter record there.

The first of 3 Horned Larks was at Bermuda Airport 31 Jan (EA). Ten American Robins wintered around Morgan's Pt., Bermuda (AD). Two or three Forest Thrushes were located 8 Jan on Dominica (V.E.N.T.); this is one of the hardest endemics to find in the Region. At Cayo Coco on 5 Feb, JC et al. counted 7 Gray

Catbirds; one at Arecibo, Puerto Rico on 14 Dec was one of the few records in the e. Greater Antilles (JAS). An American Pipit was at Spittal Pond, Bermuda in early Dec (DW). Bermuda's and the Region's 2nd record of Bohemian Waxwing was of a single bird at Port Royal G.C. 18 Jan (SR); the first record was of a flock of 5 in 2001!

WARBLERS THROUGH SISKINS

A male Blue-winged Warbler was seen at Loma de Cunagua, Cuba 19 Feb, and a first-year Nashville Warbler was on Cayo Coco 14 Feb (both PB). An Orange-crowned Warbler was noted at Coral Harbour, New Providence 24 Jan (PD, ABA, LH, AW), and another was at Treasure Cay dump, Abaco, Bahamas 28 Feb (EB). A Yellow Warbler was at St. George's G.C., Bermuda 10 Jan (PW). A Chestnut-sided Warbler at Ferry Point Park, Bermuda 14 Dec (SR) provided only the 3rd wintering record. Other unusual winter records were of a Blackpoll Warbler at Lagoon Park, Bermuda 28 Dec (DW) and a Kentucky Warbler at Morgan's Pt., Bermuda 31 Dec (AD, DW). A Worm-eating Warbler was seen at Fermanthe, Haiti, at elevation 1350 m 14 Feb (JRC). Five Swainson's Warblers were netted at Rak Bwa and at Plaine Boef, Haiti 7–14 Feb (CR et al.), providing the first documentation of the species in Haiti; another 5 were recorded on various dates from 18–27 Feb on Cayo Coco, including 2 mist-netted birds (PB). A single Swainson's Warbler netted at Anguilla (AD) on 17 Jan may be the first such record e. of the Virgin Islands (RN). Another was at Owen's Town, Andros, Bahamas 9 & 12 Jan (MB). At Humacao Marsh, e. Puerto Rico, DF found a male Mourning Warbler on 24 Feb. Over 50 Bahama Yellowthroats were counted at Bahama Star Grove, Abaco, Bahamas on 24 & 27 Feb (HP, BB, EB), a remarkably high number. White-winged Warbler, a Hispaniolan endemic, was found at Rak Bwa, Haiti, where CR et al. found small groups of 3–8 birds 7–11 Feb. Three Zapata Sparrows, another Cuban endemic, were seen along Río Hatiguanico Canal, while 2 were at Cayo Coco 5 Feb (JC). A Lark Sparrow was a genuine surprise on tiny Horn Rock, Bermuda 1 Dec (JM). A Lincoln's Sparrow was noted on 24 Feb at Bahama Star Grove, Abaco (EB). Six wintering Swamp Sparrows made a winter maximum at Bermuda (AD). A Lapland Longspur was a

good find by AD at Bermuda's airport 7 Feb. Two Blue Grosbeaks at Spittal Pond Farm, Bermuda 14 Dec (AD, JG) provided a rare winter record.

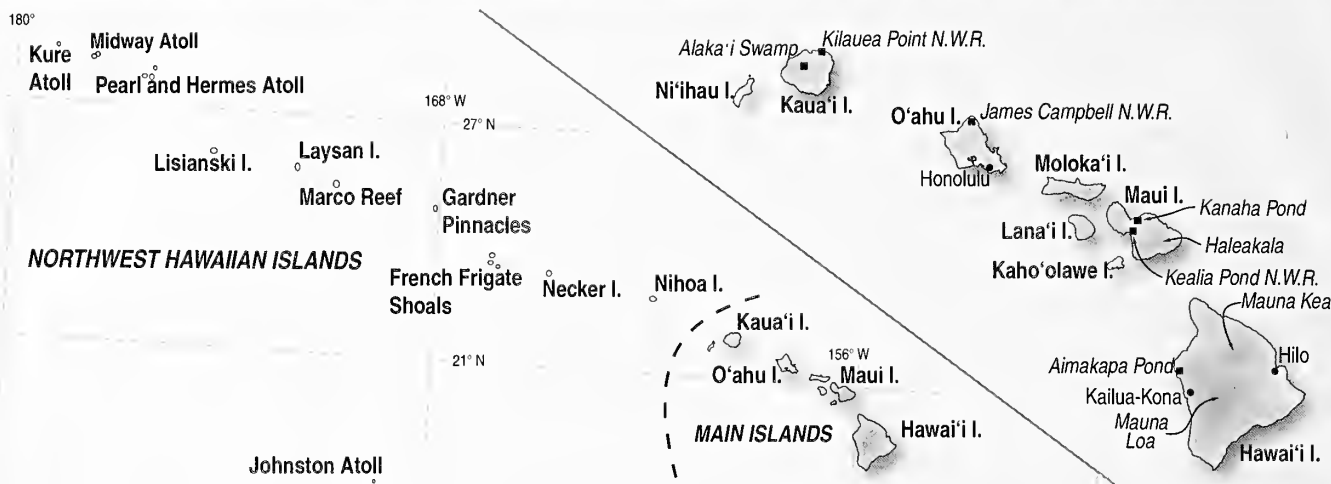
Eight Tawny-shouldered Blackbirds were noted throughout the period from 12–28 Feb at Parque Alejandro de Humboldt and Santiago, Cuba (AF et al.). On 24 Feb, DF counted 403 Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds leaving their roost at dawn near La Parguera, Puerto Rico. Six of Cuba's resident Eastern Meadowlarks were noted sparingly throughout Feb (AF). A study of this insular population's genetics may prove interesting. Up to 10 Hispaniolan Crossbills were noted from 11–14 Feb in small flocks at Plaine Boef, Haiti (CR et al.). An influx of Common Redpolls in mid-Dec at Bermuda provided sightings from Dockyard to St. Georges, with the largest flocks being of 9 at Gibb's Hill Lighthouse 14 Dec (EA) and 30 at Shelly Hall 9 Jan (DBW). Three Pine Siskins (the first since 1986) were seen on Morgan's Pt., Bermuda 14 Dec (EA). At Fermanthe, Haiti, JRC found several Antillean Siskins 14 Feb.

Addendum: The Little Stint photographed at Montserrat was reported by Eddie Massiah and Bo Dalsgaard (ph.); this was the 4th Little Stint seen by Massiah in the West Indies, the other 3 being recorded from Barbados.

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SA Some of the **Bicknell's Thrush** habitat in Haiti is located in the Morne Cavalier, a mesic limestone forest situated on the sw. peninsula of the Macaya Biosphere Reserve, which is threatened with fragmentation from encroaching agriculture and by cutting for fuel (FS). Twelve of 14 Bicknell's Thrushes encountered in the study areas Rak Bwa and Plaine Boef from 7–14 Feb were netted and measured, thus confirmed here for the first time. CR has done similar work in the Dominican Republic portion of Hispaniola, where the highest known densities of wintering Bicknell's Thrush occur. The Macaya work, though preliminary, suggests that there may be habitat segregation by sex and even age, which could have important implications for species survivorship here. A dedicated group of Haitian conservationists and international planners has been working to protect the Biosphere Reserve and other habitats that support Neotropical migrants and the high level of endemic bird fauna of the region.

Hawaiian Islands



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ALBATROSSES THROUGH EGRETS

Single Black-footed Albatrosses, infrequently reported from the main islands, were seen flying over K.P. 4 & 12 Feb (BZ). Observers on the Christmas Bird Count found 267,653 Laysan Albatrosses, 11,460 Black-footed Albatrosses, and 2949 Bonin Petrels on Sand I. at Midway. Wedge-tailed and Newell's (Threatened) Shearwaters become hard to find around the main islands after young have fledged in mid-Dec. This winter, our last reports of Wedge-taileds were 14 Dec at K.P. (BZ) and 2 seen from a boat w. of Kauai 23 Dec (DK). A Newell's was turned in to the staff at K.P. 14 Dec and released 16 Dec (BZ). Two storm-petrels were turned in to Sea Life Park on O'ahu, one on 24 Dec and one on 28 Dec. The birds were examined and determined to be Leach's, which winter in the central Pacific (PD, ph. MM, RM). Both birds were weak and later died.

The distribution of Red-footed Boobies roosting around e. O'ahu this winter changed markedly since the previous year. Numbers in Ulupau Crater, O. dropped from 1000 to 550, while numbers on Moku Manu I., about one km offshore, increased from 20 last year to 150 on 14 Dec (EV). More rainfall over the past year has increased plant cover on the offshore island, so at least some of the birds may have moved from the crater to take advantage of the additional roost sites offshore.

At least 12 Cattle Egrets were observed on Midway Dec+ (JK), with as many as 18 counted 1 Jan (MO), a new high count for the refuge. The origin of the birds is unknown. There is a large (introduced) population on the main islands, but it is possible that birds from the s. Pacific or Asia could have made their way to Midway.

IBISES THROUGH HAWKS

The high count for *Plegadis ibis* in the Region increased to 11 when a group of 10 plus a lone bird were counted at Hanalei 6 Jan (BZ). All 11 were seen together 21 Jan (ph. BZ). The ibis were observed regularly Dec+ but remained in juv. plumage, leaving us uncertain if the birds are White-faced Ibis, the only species previously documented in the Region, or Glossy Ibis.

A single Canada Goose remained at Kii early Dec+ (MS, ph. PD, m. ob.). Two Brant were observed at Hanalei 2 Dec-21 Jan (BZ). One Brant at Kealia 5 Dec was joined by another 5 Jan+ (MN). A single Brant at Kawaieie, K. 11 Feb might have been one of the Hanalei birds, and a single Brant on Molokai 8 Feb (AD) may have been one of the Kealia birds.

Numbers of many migrant duck species were rather low again this winter. Wigeons were reported on Kauai, O'ahu, and Maui, with high counts of 8 Eurasian Wigeons and 4 American Wigeons at Honouliuli 21 Jan (PD, JP, LTk). Single Blue-winged Teal were spotted at Kealia 5 Dec (MN) and in Kaneohe, O. 21 Dec (EV). The two most common migrant ducks are usually Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. The peak count for shovelers, 180 at Kealia 14 Feb (LT), was higher than the dismal numbers of the previous two winters but still quite low. The peak count of pintails, 88 at Kealia 5 Dec (MN), was also low. A count of 120 Green-winged Teal at Kealia 19 Feb (JR) was nearly twice as high as the previous high count for the Region. It is possible that these secretive little ducks may have been undercounted in the past. Clearing of vegetation at Kealia may have enabled us to get a better picture of ac-

For the first time in several years, our winter weather was very active. The islands were drenched by heavy rains, swept by strong winds, and battered by huge waves. There were even severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, and blizzard conditions over the higher volcano summits. In a few cases, the weather seemed to have an observable effect on the birds.

Abbreviations: H. (Hawai'i I.); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., Hawai'i I.); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai I.); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu I.); K. (Kauai I.); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui I.); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I.); Kii (Ki'i Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu I.); Kokee (Koke'e S.P., Kauai I.); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kauai I.); M. (Maui I.); Midway (Midway Atoll N.W.R.), O. (O'ahu I.); Pouhala (Pouhala Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, O'ahu I.); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu I.); Waikamoi (Waikamoi Preserve, Maui I.).

tual numbers. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was observed at Kii 4 & 6 Dec (MO). A single Canvasback, uncommon in the Region, was at the Kona S.T.P. H.12-30 Dec (R&S D), and a single Tufted Duck, rare in the Region, was at the same location 14 Dec-31 Dec (R&SD, H.F.T.).

As usual, native Hawaiian Hawks (Endangered) were reported regularly on Hawai'i I., the only island where they are found (H.F.T.). Single Peregrine Falcons were observed on Lehua I. 31 Jan and 6 Feb (DK).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

One Black-bellied Plover was observed in Kaneohe, O. 21 Dec (EV), and 2 were seen at Makapu'u Beach Park, O. 12 Feb (LF). Single Semipalmated Plovers were reported at Kealia 5 Dec (MN, AH), in Kaneohe, O. 21 Jan (EV), and at Kii 31 Jan (PD). These plover species are uncommon but regular in the Region. Much rarer was a Killdeer observed in sw. Kaua'i 8 Feb (ph. DK).

Hawaiian Stilt (Endangered) nests were discovered at Waiawa 21 Jan (PD, JP, LTK) and at Hanalei 28 Jan (BZ), and chicks had hatched at both locations in Feb. These were unusually early dates; the species normally begins nesting in late Mar. Water levels at Waiawa had been very low for many months before heavy rains filled the ponds. It seems likely that the rain and rising water prompted the early nesting.

The count of 25 Bristle-thighed Curlews at Kii 27 Dec (PD) was rather high for the main islands. A Bristle-thighed at Kiholo, H. 30 Jan (GD), an unusual location, was reported to have been there for eight months or more. Observers on the C.B.C. found 108 Bristle-thighed Curlews on Sand I. at Midway 1 Jan (MO). A Red Knot—rare in the Region—was observed at Kealia 3 Dec (†LT). Single Pectoral Sandpipers were observed at Kealia 5 & 18 Dec (AH, MN) and 5 Feb (CP), and a Ruff was seen at the same location 30 Jan (RP, CP). Pectoral Sandpipers and Ruffs are both regular in fall but rare in winter in the Region. A flock of up to 15 dowitchers at Kealia Dec+ included both Long-billeds, regular in the Region, and Short-billeds, which are rare. A snipe at Kii 4 Dec-10 Jan (MO, ph. PD, m. ob.) was observed well enough to determine it was a Wilson's Snipe. Single snipe at Kealia 3 Dec (LT) and Waipahu, O. 9 & 20 Dec (PD) were not seen well enough to determine the species.

Gulls were unusually widespread and abundant. The three most common species in the Region are Laughing, Glaucous-winged, and Ring-billed Gulls. Laughings were reported in several locations Dec+ (m. ob.), with 6 at Kii 27 Jan (MS). That matched the highest count ever reported in the Region. Glaucous-wingeds were also widespread Dec+ (m. ob.), with 4 at Kii 13 Jan (PD). Somewhat surprisingly, no Ring-billeds were reported over the winter. A single Bonaparte's Gull remained on Maui 5 Dec+ (MN, AH). One to 3 Caspian Terns were observed on O'ahu at Kaneohe and Kii Dec+ (m. ob.). The Caspians were probably flying back and forth between the two locations. By late Feb, the tropical terns were returning on their breeding sites. An estimated 20,000 Sooty Terns were observed swirling around Manana I., off O'ahu, 27 Feb (PD).

DOVES THROUGH PASSERINES

A single Mourning Dove was heard and seen at Honouliuli 26 Jan (MS). This represents only the 2nd record of the species on O'ahu. As many as 120 Mitred Conures were observed in e. Maui in late Jan (CP, LT). The increasing numbers of introduced parrots is causing concern in the Region.

Pu'u La'au, H., small numbers of 'Akiopola'au (Endangered), and Hawaii Creepers (Endangered) on Pu'u 'O'o Ranch, H. Dec+ (H.F.T.) and 'Akepa (Endangered) in Hakalau Dec+ (H.F.T.). Some of the world's rarest birds were seen in the remote Maui rainforest on the Pu'u O Kaka'e C.B.C. Researchers found 3 Maui Parrotbills (Endangered), 2 'Akoheohe (Endangered), and one Po'ouli (Endangered) in Hanawi 14 Dec (M.F.B.R.P.). One 'Akoheohe was seen from the boardwalk at Waikamoi 15 Feb (RPT).

Red-checked Cordonbleus were seen regularly early Nov through late Jan near Pu'uwa'awa'a, H. (RP). This species is the rarest of the introduced finches established in the Region, and it is unusual for the species to be reported regularly anywhere.

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Ibises make their way to the Hawaiian Islands rarely and usually in small numbers, so a count of 11 on Kauai was completely unexpected. These unidentified *Plegadis* ibis were photographed near Hanalei on 21 January 2004. As of the end of February, these birds remained in juvenal plumage and had not yet developed the characteristic facial pattern of either Glossy or White-faced Ibis; the latter is the only species of ibis so far recorded in Hawaii. Digital photograph by Brenda Zaun, United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

Eric VanderWerf reported that many O'ahu 'Elepaio (Endangered) nests failed because of the heavy rain. The wet weather also resulted in an increase in avian pox affecting the 'Elepaio. Birding tour groups continued to find Palila (Endangered) at

Robert Pyle (RPy), Jaime Rader, Bill Rathman, Jason Rogers, Kevin Schneider, Mike Silbernagle, Forest and Kim Starr, Keith Swindle, Leilani Takano (LTK), Lance Tani-no, Eric VanderWerf, Dave & Abby Watson, Brenda Zaun. 🌿

Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis*) at Hoquiam, Washington: a first state record

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Field encounter

On 7 December 2002, while scouting for a Christmas Bird Count, Patrick and Ruth Sullivan found an adult Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis*) in the company of seven Canada Geese. The flock was feeding along the runway of a small airport next to Bowerman Basin National Wildlife Refuge, Hoquiam, Grays Harbor County, Washington. The Sullivans returned the next day to photograph it, whereupon news of its discovery became widespread. Over the ensuing nine days, it was seen by many observers, either at the airport or on nearby ball-fields and lawns. It was always in the company of seven very large dark Canada Geese, likely Vancouver Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis fulva*); on many occasions, however, individuals from a wide variety of races were present, predominantly Lesser/Taverner's (*B. c. parvipes/taverneri*) and Western (*B. c. moffitti*) but also Dusky (*B. c. occidentalis*) and Cackling (*B. c. minima*), affording multiple opportunities for comparison of size and structure. It was last seen 17 December 2002.

The week prior had been one of mild temperatures and mist/fog on Washington's outer coast. The Bean Goose was found on 7 December (but could have been present for some time at this infrequently visited location), and on 9 December persistent, strong southerly winds (averaging 15.5 mph/25.4 kph) began. These subsided on 17 December, the last day the Bean Goose was seen, which would suggest that its departure was weather-related.

Description

A large brown goose readily picked out from the Canada Geese with which it associated, it was as tall and long as most of the *fulva* and *moffitti* present but seemed somewhat slimmer. It walked with an awkward bow-legged waddle and often fed by angling its head sideways and then pulling out grass at

its base. This was distinctly different from the Canada Geese, which seemed to nibble the grass from the top. The flock (presumably *fulva*) with the Bean Goose was somewhat skittish when alone but calmed down when among the larger flock that contained *moffitti* and others. In flight, the Bean Goose gave a yelping *ronk-onk* call.

The bird was grayish-brown throughout, except for white undertail and uppertail coverts. Its body color was quite similar to that of *moffitti*, but a bit darker and richer. The head, neck, and underparts were generally unmarked and fairly uniform in hue, but there was a mottled dark dusky patch at and behind the tarsi (bordering the undertail coverts). The upper neck and head were a bit darker than the chest, particularly on the anterior face near the bill, where the color was also richer. There were fine, darker longitudinal striations on the neck. The folded wings were darker brown than the underparts, with narrow pale terminal tips to the upperwing coverts and crisp, pale fringing to the tertials, causing the wings to look barred. Back color was similar to that of the underparts and appeared unbarred. The tail was blackish-brown with a narrow whitish band at the tip.

The bill was large, long, and mostly black, except for a narrow, pale yellow-orange subterminal band occupying the distal portion. The profile of the bill, combined with the sloped forehead, recalled that of an immature Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). The culmen was convex, and there was a minimal bulge to the lower mandible. The forehead often appeared to have a bump just in front of, or over, the eye, although this was somewhat dependent on the bird's activity and posture, being most evident during feeding. The legs were bright orange and quite stout, being somewhat thicker than those of a Canada Goose of similar size.

The Bean Goose companions: Vancouver Canada Goose

The subspecific identity of the Bean Goose's companions has potential implications both for the identification of the bird and for speculation about its migration route. The seven Canada Geese with which the Bean Goose traveled were a rich dark brown throughout the underparts but lacked the

purplish tones of Cackling Canada Geese. This coloration fits both *B. c. fulva* and *B. c. occidentalis*, two subspecies formerly treated as a single subspecies under *B. c. occidentalis* (see Palmer 1976, Mowbray et al. 2002) breeding coastally from southeastern Alaska (Prince William Sound) to northern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and wintering south to the lower Columbia River and Willamette Valley of western Oregon. In size, the seven dark Canada Geese were noticeably larger than the *B. c. taverni/parvipes* that often foraged nearby and were similar in size to the *B. c. moffitti* also present. Because *fulva* averages slightly larger than *occidentalis*, and thus closer in size to *moffitti*, these were probably Vancouver Canada Geese.

There are no known diagnostic plumage characteristics to separate *fulva* and *occidentalis*; their differentiation is based entirely on morphometrics (Pearce and Bollinger 2003). *B. c. fulva* is intermediate between *occidentalis* and *moffitti* in size; there is overlap in linear measurements and weight between *fulva* and *occidentalis* as well as between *occidentalis* and *moffitti*, though this is somewhat limited (Pearce and Bollinger 2003). Notably, all seven of the Bean Goose companions were similar in size to each other, and they were very similar in size to nearby *moffitti*. It seems unlikely that all seven of these dark Canadas were at the very large end of *occidentalis* and that the nearby *moffitti* were also all smaller than average. Consequently, the Bean Goose's companions were most likely *fulva*.

When first separated from *occidentalis*, *fulva* was thought to be a largely non-migratory (A.O.U. 1957, Ogilvie and Young 1998). More recently, however, a few birds have been found wintering south as far as the Willamette Valley of western Oregon (Ratti and Timm 1979, Mowbray et al. 2002). The estimated fall population of Vancouver Canada Geese is in excess of 84,000 (Delany and Scott 2002). A recent study of harvested birds initially considered *occidentalis* in southwestern Washington and northwestern Oregon included 7.9–11.4% birds with the mtDNA genetic characteristics of *fulva* (Pearce et al. 2000). Small flocks of *fulva* have also been found wintering near Tofino, British Columbia (Hatler et al. 1978), in Snohomish County, Washington (D. Kraege, in litt.), and in Yamhill County, Oregon (Hansen

1962), though the latter (wintering) population may no longer exist (B. Bales, *in litt.*). Migrating *B. c. fulva* are known to use the southern Washington coast (D. Krage, *in litt.*; Hansen 1962) and have apparently been found as far south as Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, California (Delacour 1954, A.O.U. 1957). Further complicating matters is that *occidentalis* were transplanted from the Copper River delta to the southern Washington coast in the 1950s and have interbred with the resident *moffitti* (C. Stenvall, pers. comm., J. Welch, pers. comm). Typically, offspring from these pairings tend to be paler than pure *occidentalis* or *fulva* (B. Bales, *in litt.*; P. Springer, *in litt.*).

Ultimately, whether the companions of the Bean Goose at Hoquiam were *fulva* or *occidentalis* may not make much difference to speculation about the vagrancy vector of the Bean Goose in Washington. Both Vancouver Canada Geese and Dusky Canada Geese breed in the fjords and marine areas of northern British Columbia and Alaska. To the north of these areas, the races of Canada Goose are smaller, and a large goose such as a Bean might not select the smaller forms for flock-mates. It is conceivable that the Bean Goose's crossing into the Nearctic brought it into contact with multiple races of Canada Geese but that it joined larger *fulva* somewhere in southeastern Alaska or the Pacific Northwest on their southward migration.

Bean Goose Status and Distribution

Bean Goose consists of five widely recognized subspecies: *fabalis*, *johanseni*, *middendorffii*, *rossicus*, and *serrirostris* (Ogilvie and Young 1998). These five forms fall into two distinct taxonomic groups, Tundra Bean Goose (consisting of *rossicus* and *serrirostris*) and Taiga Bean Goose (consisting of *fabalis*, *johanseni*, and *middendorffii*); the two groups are sometimes treated as separate species in Europe (Sangster and Orel 1996, Oates 1997). Tundra Bean Goose breeds across much of northern Siberia and winters in two widely separated locations, *rossicus* in western Europe and *serrirostris* in China, Korea, and Japan (Ogilvie and Young 1998). Taiga Bean Geese breed south of the Tundra Bean Geese from Scandinavia to eastern Siberia, with *fabalis* wintering in western Europe and *johanseni* and *middendorffii* wintering in China and Japan (Ogilvie and Young 1998). *Middendorffii* breeds in eastern Siberia and *johanseni* in western Siberia. In Japan, *middendorffii* first arrive on Hokkaido (from Kamchatka) during early September and depart during March and

April (Brazil 1991). Breeding populations are estimated at 45,000–65,000 for *serrirostris*, 600,000 for *rossicus*, 100,000 for *fabalis*, and 50,000–70,000 for *middendorffii* (Delany and Scott 2002). No population data are available for *johanseni*.

In North America, Bean Geese are almost annual spring migrants in the western Aleutians, casually as far east as Adak Island, and are casual on the Pribilofs, St. Lawrence Island, and the mainland coast of southern Alaska (A.O.U. 1998). There are only two fall records from Alaska, neither identified to race. Interestingly, both were in September 2002, one at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island and another on Shemya Island (Tobish 2003). Among Alaskan spring records, there are five specimens, of which four have been identified as *serrirostris* and one as *middendorffii* (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959, Gibson and Kessel 1997). Furthermore, most Alaskan birds photographed appear to be *serrirostris* (D. D. Gibson and T. G. Tobish, pers. comm.). Outside of Alaska, there are five previous North American records: a *rossicus* specimen from Cap Tourmente, Québec,

14–21 October 1982 (Godfrey 1982); a *middendorffii* documented at Cap Tourmente, 14–15 October 1987 (Eckert 2000); a *middendorffii* photographed at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska/Iowa, 29 December 1984–10 January 1985 (Wilson 1985, Wright and Grenon 1985); a *middendorffii* documented at Funk Lagoon, Nebraska, 4 April 1998 (Sharpe et al. 2001); and a *rossicus/serrirostris* photographed at Whitehorse, Yukon, 23–24 October 1999 (Eckert 2000). A previous Bean Goose report from Hoquiam on 26 April 1993 was quite likely correctly identified (*American Birds* 47: 447), but the report was not accepted by the Washington Bird Records Committee, as the written details were brief and the observer unaccompanied (Tweit and Skirletz 1996).

Identification

Besides Bean Goose, there is only one species fitting the above description: Pink-footed Goose (*A. brachyrhynchus*). Pink-footed Geese, unlike the Hoquiam bird, typically have pink legs and a pink band on the bill, though rarely individuals can show aberrant soft part coloration (Scott 1956). Furthermore, Pink-footed Geese are smaller, with more delicate rounded heads and shorter bills than any race of Bean Goose. Thus, Pink-footed Goose was eliminated by size, structure, and bare-part coloration.

The racial identification of the Washington Bean Goose is not as simple. Taiga Bean Geese average larger than Tundra Bean Geese (Oates 1997, K. Litvin, *in litt.*). Comparison of the Hoquiam Bean Goose with accompanying Canada Geese seemed to suggest that the Washington bird was large for a Bean Goose: Ogilvie and Young (1998) give a length of 90–100 cm for both *B. c. fulva* and *B. c. moffitti* compared with 75–90 cm for *middendorffii*. The comparability of these measurements is unknown, however. More importantly, Taiga Bean Geese show longer bills with a less prominent lower mandibular bulge than Tundra Bean Geese (Oates 1997, Ogilvie and Young 1998), and the Washington bird clearly falls within the Taiga group. In particular, *serrirostris* also shows a culmen bulge (K. Litvin, *in litt.*)—which is clearly not the case in the Washington bird, which showed a long bill with minimal bulge in the culmen. Call is also said to separate Taiga from Tundra Bean Geese, with Taiga said to produce a nasal gang gang and Tundra a higher-pitched *ayayak* (Barthel 1995, Oates 1997). Our bird's vocalizations better fit Taiga Bean Goose.



Figures 1, 2. Bean Goose in company with Canada Geese, Bowerman Basin, Grays Harbor County, Washington, 8 December 2002. The presence of Canada Geese of the races *parvipes/taverneri*, *moffitti*, *occidentalis*, *minima*, and almost certainly *fulva* permitted size comparisons with the Bean Goose that confirmed its race as either *middendorffii* or *johanseni*, similar races of the "Taiga Bean Goose" group that are not distinguishable in the field on present knowledge. The orange on the bill, restricted to a narrow band, argues against the other member of the Taiga group, *fabalis*, but is not definitive. Races of the Taiga group share the long, sloping bill/head profile, reminiscent of an immature Trumpeter Swan, which helps rule out "Tundra Bean Goose" taxa such as *serrirostris*. Photographs by Patrick Sullivan.



Within the Taiga group, *fabalis* can be eliminated by bill pattern, as the colored region of the *fabalis* bill is not confined to a band but rather extends proximally along the cutting edge (Ogilvie and Young 1998). This leaves *johanseni* and *middendorffii* for consideration. *A. f. middendorffii* has the largest morphometrics of all the Bean Goose races, and the above size comparisons would seem to argue for this race, as would geographical distribution. However, it is doubtful that *johanseni* can be truly eliminated, and so the identification as *middendorffii/johanseni* is appropriate in the case of unmeasured birds and specimens. Photographs taken by R. Sullivan and C. Wright were reviewed by Malcolm Ogilvie, who felt this bird was clearly *middendorffii* (as opposed to *serrirostris*). These photographs, plus videotape taken by S. Mlodinow, were reviewed by Konstantin Litvin and several other Russian goose biologists, who also identified this bird as *middendorffii* (again, as opposed to *serrirostris*). The Russian biologists went further to suggest the bird was most likely from the Anadyr River basin, mostly based on geographical proximity (K. Litvin, *in litt.*).

Bean Geese in captivity

Bean Geese are little known in captivity. As of 2002, none were listed in the International Species Information System (ISIS) (G. Toffic, pers. comm.), which covers all zoos and some other collections in North America. It would appear that Bean Goose may be unknown in captivity anywhere in North America; in addition, *middendorffii* is exceedingly rare in captivity even in Eurasia (P. Dye, M. Lubbock, pers. comm.).

Whence and whither

The Hoquiam Bean Goose and its companions apparently left the Hoquiam area during the lull in weather on the 17 December 2002. The arrival date is unknown, as the Hoquiam area is not often visited by birders. Whether or not its companions were *B. c. fulva* or *B. c. occidentalis*, this flock was likely bound for Oregon, but birders in that state were not able to relocate the Bean Goose, and efforts to refind the bird in southwestern Washington also failed. Given the rarity of Bean Geese in captivity, especially *middendorffii*, the Hoquiam Bean Goose was most likely a wild bird that crossed the Bering Sea north of the Alaska Peninsula, or perhaps just as likely farther south.

It is curious that three of the five previous North American records of Bean Geese away from Alaska involved *middendorffii*, whereas most Alaskan records pertain to *serrirostris*. Prior to 2002, all Alaskan records of Bean Goose were from spring, whereas four of the five non-Alaskan records were from fall/early winter, and the one spring bird from Ne-


braska surely arrived on the continent during fall. Consequently, those factors that bring Bean Geese to Alaska in spring are likely different from those leading to fall appearances of the species elsewhere in North America.

Acknowledgments

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A Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) at Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, with comments on North American reports of the species

Abstract

This article treats the occurrence of Wyoming's first Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), provides an overview of the species' distribution in North America, and considers the problems posed for the ornithological record by waterfowl that have escaped from collections, specifically Whooper Swans.

Introduction

Waterfowl (order Anseriformes) are some of the most studied and observed groups of birds in North America, with countless publications available on the subjects of waterfowl identification and ecology. Although likely of Southern Hemisphere origin (Livezey 1996), waterfowl are now most diverse and especially abundant in the Northern Hemisphere, where many species are highly migratory. Aviculturalists and/or private propagators, zoological parks, and other venues with collections of regional and exotic waterfowl are widespread in these same zoogeographic regions. Escapees and presumed escapees from such collections pose regular difficulties for bird records committees around the world, which often cannot determine the provenance of individual birds with certainty and thus have sometimes taken to tabling, discarding, or rejecting outright most or all records of potentially vagrant waterfowl species. The treatment of Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) in North America by avian records committees has been uneven, with western authorities recently including reported birds on official avifaunal lists but most central and eastern North American committees not including or, most often, not reviewing such reports. The recent record of a Whooper Swan at Yellowstone in Wyoming, in mid-continent, prompted synoptic consideration of past reports of this species on a continental scale and an evaluation of its status in North America.

The Yellowstone Whooper Swan, 2003–2004

Weekly winter surveys of Trumpeter Swans (*C. buccinator*) have been

conducted in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming since 1986. On 26 November 2003, a day with sunny skies and temperatures in the twenties Fahrenheit, I was conducting one of these surveys in "the Narrows" area of Hayden Valley and located a swan (Figures 1–4) with the following characteristics, observed at 1100 MST with an 8 x 42 binocular at a distance of 70 m:

A large swan, the size of a Trumpeter Swan [of which 503 were present]; all white in plumage but with faint gray tinges on the neck; black legs and feet; a black bill with a bright lemon-yellow rhamphothecal material extending from the eye and the basal portions of the upper mandible to the nares, forming a lemon-yellow triangular patch on the bill. At the interface of the bill and the forehead was a thin black border. The lower mandible appeared black at a distance but on closer examination showed a triangular lemon-yellow patch, largest at the base of the bill and tapering off to a point approximately one-third down the length of the underside of the lower mandible. The

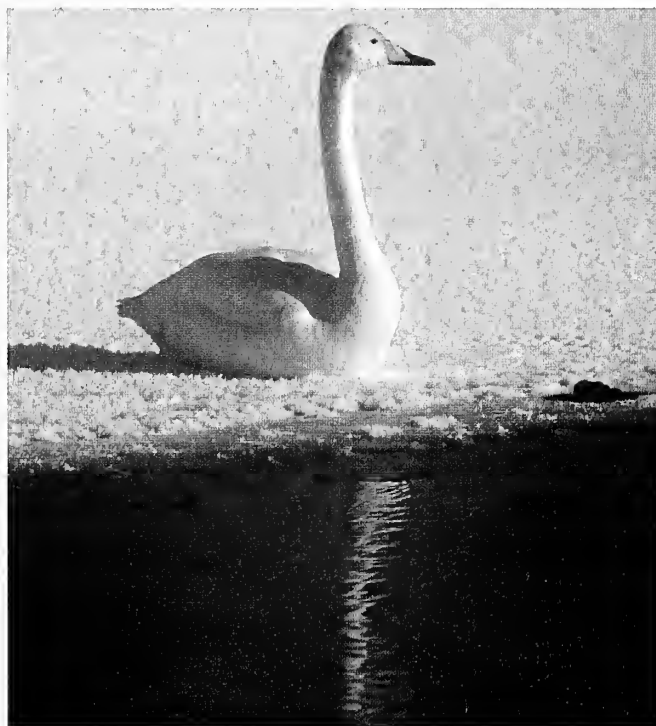


Figure 1. Whooper Swan at Yellowstone National Park, along the Yellowstone River in Hayden Valley, 19 December 2003. Photograph by Terry McEneaney.

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bird occasionally delivered a *whoop-oup* call, in contrast to the familiar *ko-hoh* bugling of the Trumpeter Swans. Both legs were seen clearly when the bird walked onto the ice, and both were seen to be without band; the halux was present on both legs. Tips of retrices and remiges were unworn, and the bird was unpinioned. Behavior as wary as accompanying Trumpeter Swans.

Having logged more than 200,000 Trumpeter Swan sightings in 20 years with Yellowstone National Park and at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, I was quickly able to rule out an aberrant Trumpeter Swan and to rule in Whooper Swan, a species familiar from an Alaskan trip in 2000 (McEneaney 2004, in press). I alerted local and regional birders, and over the course of the winter, some 700 observers were able to see this individual, which traveled over the course of the season from the Yellowstone River in Hayden Valley to the Firehole River near Biscuit Basin, eventually returning to Hayden Valley before it departed some time after 1 March 2004, when last observed.

Distribution in Eurasia and North America

The current nesting range of Whooper Swan stretches from the tundra-like habitat of Iceland, to northernmost Scotland, through the boreal forest/taiga zone of Scandinavia, and across northern Russia through northeastern Siberia, including the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Gulf of Anadyr. The southernmost limits of the nesting range extend to Mongolia and Kazakhstan. Wintering grounds lie in Iceland and in western and central Europe south

as far as the Baltic Sea and eastward through the Black, Caspian, and Aral Seas to coastal China and Japan (Brazil 2003).

Although the Whooper Swan has been characterized as an ecological counterpart or "replacement" of the Trumpeter Swan and the two species have at times been considered conspecific or to form a superspecies, evidence suggests that the Whooper Swan is a larger derivative of the same stock that gave rise to the Tundra Swan (*C. columbianus*), including the Eurasian form known as Bewick's Swan (*C. c. bewickii*), which also shows a large area of yellow at the base of the bill (Parkes 1958, Livezey 1996). Whooper Swans differ from their similarly shaped counterpart in lacking an enlarged bony case on the sternum and are somewhat intermediate towards Tundra Swan in this regard. Also, the breeding range of Whooper Swan is more northerly than Trumpeter, and Whooper Swans undertake long-distance migrations that differ markedly from the restricted range of Trumpeter Swan, at least in modern times, and from the sedentary nature (in some contexts, as at Yellowstone) of Trumpeters (Brazil 2003). Although easily recognizable in the field as adults or subadults, Whooper and Trumpeter Swans are more difficult to distinguish as cygnets.

Whooper Swan formerly bred in easternmost North America in Greenland, where Bent (1962) notes that it "is said to have been exterminated [...] by the natives, who

pursued and killed young birds and the adults, when molting and unable to fly" and cites Hagerup (1891, *The Birds of Greenland*) that the species "formerly nested in South Greenland, but is now only a rare visitor," also noted by Salomonsen (1950). At present, the species is only a vagrant to Greenland according to Boertmann (1994), who lists 10 records (all May through September) from Southeast Greenland, nine records (June through September) from Northeast Greenland, and lists the species as occurring "probably annually" between February and October in West Greenland, where it is seen most often between Qaqortoq and Sisimiut.

In mainland eastern North America, records of Whooper Swan accrue chiefly from the northeastern quadrant of the continent, as is almost invariably the case with other large Palearctic waterfowl that breed westward to Greenland and/or Iceland, such as Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose (*A. albifrons flavirostris*), and Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (A.O.U. 1998). Nevertheless, because aviculturalists and others hold Whooper Swans in collections, most records of the species have been treated as probable or possible escapees and do not appear on state or provincial avifaunal lists (Table 1). A record of a Whooper Swan at Mud Lake, Alexander, Washington County, Maine on 10 September 1903 (Palmer 1949; photograph in Knight 1908, but data incor-

rect there) has sometimes been cited as referring to a bird of wild provenance, but waterfowl collections were already a part of American life in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, there were no outward indications of captivity on the specimen (Palmer 1949). The relatively small wing measurements suggested to Palmer (1949) that it might have come from the Icelandic population, which although reportedly small birds are apparently no more so than individuals elsewhere (Palmer 1976). A search of the literature and correspondence with state and provincial bird records committees has produced no eastern North American records accepted by such committees. Nonetheless, dozens of Whooper Swans have been detected in the East and Midwest, and some of these birds have been of undetermined or indeterminate provenance, whereas others have been traced to waterfowl

collections. Most of the northeastern Canadian and U.S. records after 1992 have been assumed to be connected with the introduced breeding population of Whooper Swans in Massachusetts, present 1993–2002, or with several individual Whoopers known to have been released or to have escaped (see section on feral breeders below).

In Alaska, Whooper Swan has been documented both photographically and by specimen, of which there are at least seven (Gibson and Kessel 1997). The first Whooper in Alaska was reported in the Pribilof Islands at St. Paul, up to three birds in November and December 1941 (Wilke 1944), and subsequent early records come from the western and central Aleutian Islands on Atka (Kenyon 1963) and Amchitka (Kenyon 1961, 1963; Williamson et al. 1971). Though probably found wintering there one hundred years earlier (Turner 1885), it was first confirmed on Attu Island in the far western Aleutians in 1981, where it has also nested successfully in 1996 and 1997 (Sykes and Sonneborn 1998), the only North American breeding of wild birds recorded away from Greenland. Byrd et al. (1974) described Whooper Swans as arriving in small flocks of five to fifteen to winter at Adak, arriving as early as 9 November (1970) and departing as late as 9 April (1970). Kessel and Gibson (1978) term the species an "uncommon local winter visitant in the western and central Aleutian Islands from early November through mid-April" (earliest: 26 October 1957; latest 20 April 1975 and 8 May 1976) and a "very rare visitant at any season" in the Pribilofs, with records of single birds there between November and July in 1949, 1970, 1976, and 1977, in addition to the record of three in 1941. There are far fewer reports of the species for the mainland. Johnson and Sladen (1983) reported two near Kotzebue in 1971. Kessel and Gibson (1978) note a western mainland Alaska record of two at the Noatak River Delta on 19 June 1967, two at Wales 11 June 1975, three on St. Lawrence Island on 12 June 1976, one on the mainland at Selawik in June 1965, and two on the south-central mainland at Cordova on 23 October 1977. The highest count of the species in North America is apparently of 31 at Amchitka 10 April 1970 (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

A search of post-1978 literature indicates that most Alaska records involve singles or small groups (fewer than 10 birds) seen in the outer Aleutians (e.g., Shemya, Attu, Adak, Amchitka, Little Kiska, Buldir) and are from the nonbreeding season, fall and spring in particular; there are also few spring records from St. Lawrence Island. A late-spring record from the mainland at



Figure 2. Whooper Swan at Yellowstone National Park, on Firehole River north of Old Faithful geyser, 14 January 2004. The pattern/shape of yellow on Whooper Swans' bills appear to differ regionally. Study of the precise patterns could yield clues as to the provenance of individual swans (Brazil 2003). Photograph by Jay Lehman.

Table 1. Records and reports of Whooper Swans in eastern North America exclusive of Greenland, 1903–2004, arranged chronologically.

DATE (DAY/M/Y)	LOCATION	NUMBER	SOURCE/NOTES
10/09/1903 S	Mud L., Alexander, ME	1	Palmer 1949
07/1973	near Davidsonville, MD	2*	Johnson and Sladen 1983
winter 1978–1979	Hamilton/Oakville, OH	3 y.	James 1991
03/02/1980	Bronte, OH	1	Godfrey 1986
winter 1981–1982	near Hamilton, OH	1	James 1991
11/12/1983	Greensboro, Caroline Co., MD	1	Peterjohn and Davis 1996
11/03/1993+	around Robert Moses S.P., NY	3	Schiff and Wollin 1993, Perkins 1995 †
05/1993–19/10/2002	Essex Co., MA	3–12*	Berry 1997; <i>vide</i> J. Berry †
20/01/1992(2)	Clermont, Lake Co., FL	2	<i>vide</i> B. Pranty
25–27/08/1992	Sargent Co., ND	1	Bergman and Homan 1995
02/1993	Black Dog L., Dakota Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
21/07–11/08/1994	Penouille, Gaspé, PQ	3	Aubrey and Bannan 1995a
18–20/08/1994	Cape North, Labrador, NL	3	Mactavish 1995
23/10/1994	Hennepin Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
20/01–14/02/1994	L. Mattamuskeet, NC	1	Davis 1995, <i>vide</i> R. Davis
01/1995	Martha's Vineyard, MA	3	Nikula 1995
~02/20–25/04/1995	Octarara L., Lancaster Co., PA		<i>Pennsylvania Birds</i> 9: 33, 91
03/1995	location unknown, MD	1	Brock 2000
~15–30/05/1995	several locations, NB	1	Maybank 1995
11–16/06/1995	Anticosti I., PQ	2	Aubrey and Bannan 1995b
10/1995	Jordan, Scott Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
~1996	Plymouth, MA	1	<i>vide</i> T. French
02/1996	Black Dog L., Dakota Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
04/1997	Carlos Avery W.M.A., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
16/04/1996	Nashua, NH	1 ^a	<i>vide</i> T. French
25/05/1997–10/01/1998	Grand Manan archipelago, NB	1	McLaren 1998
05/04/1997	Hampton, NH	1	Perkins 1997
06–12/1997	Great Bay, NH	4	Berry 1997; <i>vide</i> S. Mirick
02/02/1998+	Great Bay, NH	1 m.	Berry 1997; <i>vide</i> S. Mirick
13/06–04/07/1998	Washington Co., MN	5*	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
05/1999	Carlos Avery W.M.A., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
08/1999	Great Bay, NH	1 f.	<i>vide</i> S. Mirick
12/10/1998–03/1999	Lubec, ME	1 b	Ellison and Martin 1999, Hunt 1999
winter 1998–1999	Connetquot S.P., NY	7	Schiff and Wollin 1993
14/03/1999	Hagar Pond, Marlborough, MA	1 ^c	<i>vide</i> T. French

17/01/1999	Eastham, MA	1	Hunt 1999
02/05/1999	Saint-Barthélemy, PQ	1	Bannon and David 1999
14/05/1999	Cowansville, PQ	1	Bannon and David 1999
07/05/1999 (text)	Great Bay, NH	6 y.	<i>vide</i> S. Mirick
08/06–27/07/1999	Trois-Pistoles, PQ	5	David et al. 1999
08/1999	Cobbessecontee L., ME	1	Ellison and Martin 2000
07/01–05/04/2000	Miss. River, Lee County, IA	1	Brock 2000
08–30/03/2000	Mason, near Cincinnati, OH	1	Brock 2000; <i>vide</i> J. Lehman
22/01–14/02/2000	Camp Dennison	1	Brock 2000; <i>vide</i> J. Lehman
27/01/2000	Foster, ND	1 d	Martin 2000
25–26/02/2000	Miller Beach, IN	1	Brock 2000
14/05/2000	Bucks Co., PA	1	unconfirmed; Internet
27/08/2000	Yamaska Park and Granby, PQ	1	Bannon et al. 2001
30/12/2001	St. Albans, VT	1	Hunt 2002
02/02/2002	Ferrisburgh, VT	1	Hunt 2002
21/04–30/06/2002	Galeton L., Potter Co., PA †	1	<i>Pennsylvania Birds</i> 16: 123
31/07/2002	Port Stanley, OH	2	unconfirmed; at S.T.P.
11/11/2003 & 21/03/2004	L. Susquehanna, NJ	1	<i>vide</i> J. Burgiel, unbanded
24/03/2003	Kittatinny Valley S.P., NJ	1	<i>vide</i> J. Burgiel
16/04/2003	Licking Co., OH	1	<i>vide</i> J. McCormac
25/10–01/11/2003	Campbell L., McLeod Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
01/01/2004	Scott Co., MN	1	<i>vide</i> P. Swingen
05–08/02/2004	Marshall Co., IA	1	<i>vide</i> J. Dinsmore

Although many of the above reports cannot be linked conclusively to released or escaped birds, none has been accepted by a state records committee as representing a record of a wild Whooper Swan (very few reports have been reviewed). Many northeastern U.S. and Canadian reports of Whooper Swans have been assumed (in published sources) to be connected with the Whooper Swans that established themselves in northeastern Massachusetts 1993 through 2002 (see text). Many of the other reports, both in the East and the Midwest, clearly represent multiple sightings of the same individuals, whatever their provenance. In addition to the reports above, there were several reports of Whooper Swan in Minnesota during the 1980s, but I have been unable to ascertain their dates/locations.

^a This adult appeared at a small office park pond; its aggressive behavior led to its being captured by staff at the office park, who released it at Kittery, ME on 30 April 1996.

^b Believed by most observers to be the same individual as seen at nearby Grand Manan, NB several months earlier.

^c This bird was captured the next day by wildlife officials and put in a captive facility.

^d This toe-clipped bird was found near the Carrington golf course by Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge employees and taken to a local zoo.

† Brazil (2003) incorrectly gives the year of the escaped Long Island birds as 1991 and the year of the first report of three Whoopers in Essex County, MA as 1992.

S The date and location for this specimen (photograph in Knight 1908) are incorrectly given in many sources.

◇ The year of this report is incorrectly published in most sources as 1991; these birds were known to be escapees.

* = Breeding records of feral birds; see main text. m. = male, f. = female, y. = yearling

Safety Sound, Nome from May through 24 June 1994 (Tobish and Isleib 1992) was unusual for the location.

As records of wintering Whooper Swans have apparently increased in Alaska, so too have they increased in western North America, particularly in the western third of the continent (Table 2). Nevertheless, Whooper Swans recorded in the contiguous United States have usually been combined under the category "controversial" (A.O.U. 1998). The increase in Whooper Swan reports along the West Coast, in concert with the proliferation of Alaskan records of the species, has led the California Bird Records Committee to accept some Whooper Swan records, as has the Oregon Bird Records Committee (Table 2). In some instances, Whoopers have been observed in close association with Tundra Swans, occasionally with juvenile birds whose identities have not always been clear, and published sources have offered inconsistent accounts of the identification of young birds seen in Oregon and along the Oregon–California border in particular (see

notes, Table 2). Observations of juvenile birds that associate with adult Tundra Swan as well as Whooper Swan have produced speculation as to the hybrid derivation of these birds, but hybrid young have only been reported from feral nesters in Alberta (Table 2). The association of Whooper with Tundra Swans has also sometimes produced assumptions of captive provenance in such birds, but a record of an adult Whooper Swan apparently bonded with a Tundra Swan at Golovin, Alaska 11–23 November 2000 and later (Tobish 2001) has perhaps tempered this assumption.

The Yellowstone Swan: contexts

In weighing questions of provenance, it is sometimes useful to consider the flockmates. In recent years, the Trumpeter Swans resident in Yellowstone have numbered between 16 and 20. The Whooper Swan, however, accompanied 503 Trumpeter Swans on the first day of its observation. Several neck-collared Trumpeter Swans present that day were birds marked on nest-

ing grounds at Nahanni National Park, Yukon Territories, and Grand Prairie, Alberta. In the past decades, data from neck-collaring studies and population trend analysis have indicated an influx of migrant Canadian Trumpeter Swans into Yellowstone beginning in mid-October. Many of these swans travel to Yellowstone in the fall by way of the East Front of the Rockies in Montana. As colder weather approaches, Yellowstone's swan numbers increase to several hundred individuals in the late autumn, certainly due to the influence of geothermal waters, particularly on the area's river systems. Once large lakes such as Yellowstone Lake begin freezing in late December or early January, most Trumpeters begin leaving the Yellowstone area. The few Tundra Swans that appear in Yellowstone in the fall typically leave the area earlier, usually just after the first cold spell.

For the Yellowstone Whooper Swan, it is not difficult to construct a plausible theory of wild provenance. Whooper Swan populations, as documented on the Japanese win-

Table 2. Records and reports of Whooper Swans in western North America exclusive of Alaska, 1977–2003, arranged chronologically.

DATE (DAY/M/Y)	LOCATION	NUMBER	SOURCE/NOTES
winter 1978–1979	Hamilton/Oakville, ON	3 y.	James 1991
11/11/1977	near Port Hardy, BC	1 ^a	Campbell et al. 2001
17–19/01/1984	near Grimes, Colusa Co., CA	1 *	Roberson 1986
20/11/1985	Pescadero, CA	2	unreviewed/unconfirmed
16/12/1988	Venice I., near Stockton, CA	1	Yee et al. 1989
28/01/1989	Mountain Lake Park, CA	1	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
24/11/1991	Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA	1 ^b	Yee et al. 1992a,
18/01/1992			
9–10/12/1993	Richvale, CA	1 *	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
winter 1993–1994	Olivehurst, Yuba Co., CA	1 *	unreviewed/unconfirmed
21/12/1993	Howard Slough W.A., CA	1 *	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
10–21/11/1994	Summer L., OR	1 ^c	St. Louis 1995; Tweit and Gilligan 1995
26–27/02/1994	Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA	1 *	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
17/01–07/02/1995	near Grimes, Colusa Co., CA	1	Yee et al. 1995
03–04/01/1996	near Grimes, Colusa Co., CA	1	Bailey and Singer 1996
25–27/07/1996	Seal Bay, Vancouver I., BC	1	Campbell et al. 2001
27/11–01/12/1997	Airle, Polk Co., OR	1	Tweit and Gilligan 1998, Tweit and Tice 1998
24–28/01/1998	Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA/OR	1	C.B.R.C. (in ms.), O.B.R.C.
5–7/11/1998	Courtenay, Vancouver I., BC	1	Brazil 2003; D. Cecile, <i>in litt.</i>
01/01/1999	Seven Mile Ln., Glenn Co., CA	1	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
17–19/04/1999	Irricana Sloughs, AB	1	Koes and Taylor 1999
7–17/11/1999	Mamit Lake, BC	2 ^d	Campbell et al. 2001
4–11/04/2000	Irricana Sloughs, AB	1 ^e	Koes and Taylor 2000
01–06/11/2000	Summer L., OR	4	Mlodinow and Tweit 2001a
01/01–10/03/2001	Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA/OR	4	Glover et al. 2001, Erickson and Hamilton 2001 Mlodinow and Tweit 2001b Mlodinow et al. 2001

11/01/2001	Fairmont Hot Springs, BC	1	D. Cecile, <i>in litt.</i>
10/03/2001	Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA	1 ^f	Cole and McCaskie 2004
5–11/03/2001	Somers, MT	?	Trochilell 2001
19/12/2001	L. Almanor, Plumas Co., CA	1	C.B.R.C. (in ms.)
15–30/11/2003	Somers, MT	1	Trochilell 2003
26/11/2003–01/03/2004	Yellowstone N.P., WY	1	present paper

Records in boldface print have been reviewed and accepted as referring to birds of wild provenance by state records committees or state-level monographs. Between the Oregon and California records, there is assumed to be much duplication of individuals. There are no reports of the species for Saskatchewan (*contra* Patten 2000, Brazil 2003).

^a Campbell et al. (2001) note that this record was in context of a large Trumpeter Swan flock and that Kessel and Gibson (1978) list 2 Whooper Swans among a flock of 26 Trumpeter Swans at Cordova in south-coastal Alaska 23 October 1977.

^b This bird was also reported on the Oregon side of the refuge 07/12/1991–22/02/1992 but was not accepted as having actually been in the state of Oregon (*vide* Oregon B.R.C.).

^c This bird was in close association with a Tundra Swan and three immature birds that were initially published as hybrid young, but the birds were observed at great distance and assumed to be hybrids only because of their apparent association with the Tundra Swan. No case for hybrid derivation was based on close study of plumage or structure (*vide* H. Nehls). Most regional observers believe that the Summer L., OR birds are the same individuals as those documented in several winters at Lower Klamath N.W.R., OR/CA, based on typical movements of swans in the area after the freeze-up of Summer L.

^d According to observers Wayne Weber and Andy Raniseth, this bird was in close association with a Tundra Swan and two immature birds that were also believed to Whoopers, although some observers suggested they young have been hybrids. Campbell et al. (2001) indicate the presence, however, of one adult and one HY bird and do not indicate hybrid derivation for the juvenile.

^e Evaluated by the Alberta Records Committee and “determined to be an escapee from the Irricana area that mated in the previous summer with a feral Tundra Swan and raised two young in Irricana. These birds may be the source of the family group reported from nearby interior British Columbia in fall 1999” (*vide* R. Koes).

^f While one adult and 3 juvenile Whooper Swans present at Unit 4 of Lower Klamath N.W.R., CA 01/01–10/03/2001 was approved by the California Bird Records Committee, “the identification of a smaller adult at adjacent White L. on the same refuge on 10/03/2001 was questioned and not accepted (although endorsed by a majority), with at least one member suggesting it was a Whooper Swan x Tundra Swan hybrid from a mixed pair with three young present during the winter of 2000–2001” (Cole and McCaskie 2004).

* Not published in *North American Birds* and predecessor journals because of missing or partial seasonal report. C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee; O.B.R.C. = Oregon Bird Records Committee.

tering grounds, have increased steadily, from 7500 in 1982 to 18,000 in 1990 to 32,000 in 2000 (Brazil 2003). During the same period, Alaskan records—all assumed to be of wild birds—have shown increases as well, although the ornithological exploration of the western Aleutian islands has also increased in the past three decades, and the apparent increase in Alaskan records may be owing in part to better coverage. The species is known to fly at high elevations and to cover large distances in a single flight (Brazil 2003), and birds from eastern Siberia that turn up in mainland Alaska occasionally flock with Tundra or Trumpeter Swans. The appearance of the Yellowstone Whooper Swan was preceded by a powerful low-pressure system that crossed from Siberia 19–22 November, which apparently also brought a Siberian Accentor (*Prunella montanella*) to Paradise Valley of Montana, about 50 km from the Hayden Valley, 22 November and later. In wider context, many Siberian species that have proven to be regular visitors to Alaska also show pronounced patterns of occurrence south along the Pacific coast and weaker but detectable patterns in the interior West.

Nevertheless, given the presence of feral/released Whooper Swans in the western Midwest (the North Dakota birds could pertain to Minnesota releases), as well as breeding feral Whoopers in Alberta and a

recent suspected escapee seen in 2001 and 2003 in Somers, Montana (Table 2; not the same individual as the Yellowstone swan), it is not possible, strictly speaking, to rule out captive provenance in any of the western Lower 48 records. However, there are many reasons to weigh the condition, behavior, and arrival timing of each individual when evaluating records.

Aviculturalists’ perspectives on escapees

Was the Yellowstone bird a wild swan or more likely an escapee? I conducted a thorough review of Whooper Swan captivity records in the area, communicating directly with both aviculturalists and wildfowl propagators. All captive Whooper Swans around Yellowstone—in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming—could be accounted for by owners. Together with information on the condition of the swan, this finding indicates that the provenance of this individual was certainly not a waterfowl collection within the region.

My interviews with aviculturalists, including the primary propagator of Whooper Swan in North America, impressed me with how knowledgeable they are—and how committed to their avocation of breeding or raising waterfowl in captivity. My impression, too, has been that aviculturalists are a very private and rather close-knit group, with few adherents inclined to express their views

publicly on escapees or other subjects. Most of the aviculturalists I contacted expressed the opinion that far fewer waterfowl have escaped from captivity in North America in recent years than in times past, and that those few that do rarely stray more than about 50 km from home collections. Most are unfit for long flights or coping with predators and other hazards, and almost all captive-reared birds seem reliant on humans when away from home collections, according to most collectors, some of whom have relocated escapees and returned them to collections. The expense and investment of time that captive waterfowl represent to these owners mean that virtually all of them are loath to lose their birds.

In the United States of America, recent regulations appear to have reduced markedly the number of waterfowl lost from collections, in the opinion of aviculturalists interviewed. Because of the threats to endemic wildlife by exotic diseases and introduced species, for instance, both the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and various state wildlife agencies have instituted new restrictions on private propagators of waterfowl. Those possessing Mute Swans (*C. olor*), for instance, must possess a permit and complete an annual report, as this species is now covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In some states, aviculturalists with captive birds are required to complete annual

reports and pass annual inspections of their birds and their facilities and sanitation practices. In many cases, captive birds are required to be rendered permanently flightless, which sometimes requires a surgical procedure. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service encourages federal bands to be placed on waterfowl in addition to private identification bands. Escaped birds, particularly hatch-year birds, are always a concern for state agencies, and so most aviaries are required to have netting or even double-netting installed.

In discussing specifically the case of the Yellowstone Whooper Swan with aviculturists, all felt that the bird could not have been of captive provenance, especially given the harsh conditions of the park. Yellowstone National Park is one of the most hostile winter environments in the Lower 48 States. Temperatures of -30° to -45° F are not uncommonly recorded in the park (lowest on record is -66° F), and the winter season of 2003–2004 was particularly harsh, with deep snows and temperatures in the range of -30° F recorded on several days. In the opinion of aviculturists, an escaped captive bird would have a very difficult time surviving both the winter weather and various large predators. Of interest in this regard, a now-extirpated population of some 120 feral Mute Swans in the nearby Paradise Valley of Montana never ventured up into the harsher environment of Yellowstone (McEneaney 2001). The aviculturists also expressed the opinion that a captive-bred bird would almost certainly show unwary behavior and probably approach humans for food.

History of nesting feral Whooper Swans in eastern North America

One reason for the difficulty in sorting out records of Whooper Swan in eastern North America in recent years, especially the 1990s to the present (the period from which most reports accrue), is that there have been multiple instances of escaped/ released Whooper Swans, most on the East Coast but several also in the Midwest. The accounts below treat released Whooper Swans that were documented to have nested (or believed to have nested and published as such); additionally, there is a report of a feral Whooper Swan that allegedly nested successfully with a feral Tundra Swan in Alberta (Table 2).

• Maryland 1970–1973
In May 1967, a resident of

Arnold, Anne Arundel County, Maryland purchased a pair of Whooper Swans and released them on his property. In May 1970, they nested, but all four cygnets were killed by predators. A second brood produced three fledglings that year, one of which paired with the adult female (after the death of the male), the other two pairing together in a nearby pond but ranging around the county. In May 1973, the young pair attempted to nest but was unsuccessful, again owing to predators. This pair relocated to the Patuxent River near Davidsonville, where again unsuccessful in nesting. They were banded and neck-collared 22 July 1973 and have not been seen in the area since that time (Johnson and Sladen 1983).

• New York 1993

In early March 1993, during a strong winter storm, waterfowl collectors on Long Island and in upstate New York apparently lost three and two Whooper Swans from collections, respectively, when outdoor holding areas collapsed (Schiff and Wollin 1993, Nikula 1995); the upstate birds were eventually recaptured (E. Brinkley, *in litt.*), but the Long Island birds were not. It was widely assumed in the birding community that the Long Island birds found their way to Massachusetts (Perkins 1993), where they were thought to have ranged as far initially as Martha's Vineyard (Nikula 1995). However, a clear connection between the New York and Massachusetts birds (see next section) has never been established, and so it is unclear what happened to the 1993 Long Island birds.

• Massachusetts 1994–2002

The saga of Whooper Swans in Essex

County, Massachusetts resists brief summary. In the spring of 1993, three Whoopers were observed among the local Mute Swans in Ipswich, Massachusetts. These birds—based on the presence of a band on one individual and their tame behavior—were believed at that time to have come from a waterfowl collection whose location was unknown (Berry 1997, French 1997). It was later learned that these birds were almost certainly from a propagator in Gloucester, Massachusetts, who had given or sold probably four Whoopers to a property owner in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The farm was sold, and the new owners were unaware of the history of the swans, but at least two were free-flying as of at least 1995 (T. French, *in litt.*). One bird, possibly injured, was killed by a pair that returned in spring, according to the new property owners.

The following summary is taken from Berry (1997) and from communication with Jim Berry, who kept close track of these birds during their stay in this area, through 2002. In the spring of 1994, the original three were joined by three more Whoopers that retained some gray in the plumage (thus second-year [SY] birds). These younger birds were not seen in summer 1994, although at some point in 1994, the Whoopers of Ipswich numbered four adults, and it is thought that one of the three SY birds may have remained. These swans spent time between Clark Pond and Rantoul Pond, with two males eventually becoming nest-helpers to nesting Mute Swans (no hybridization occurred)—at Rantoul Pond during the 1995 through 2002 nesting seasons and at Clark Pond during the 1996 through 2001 nesting seasons. Because these males were not mating with swans of their own species and producing young, the



Figure 3. The Whooper Swan at Yellowstone (center bird; here 26 November 2003) flocked exclusively with Trumpeter Swans, with which it was thought to have arrived from northern Canada, based on neck-collar codes of several flock-mates. Photograph by Terry McEneaney.

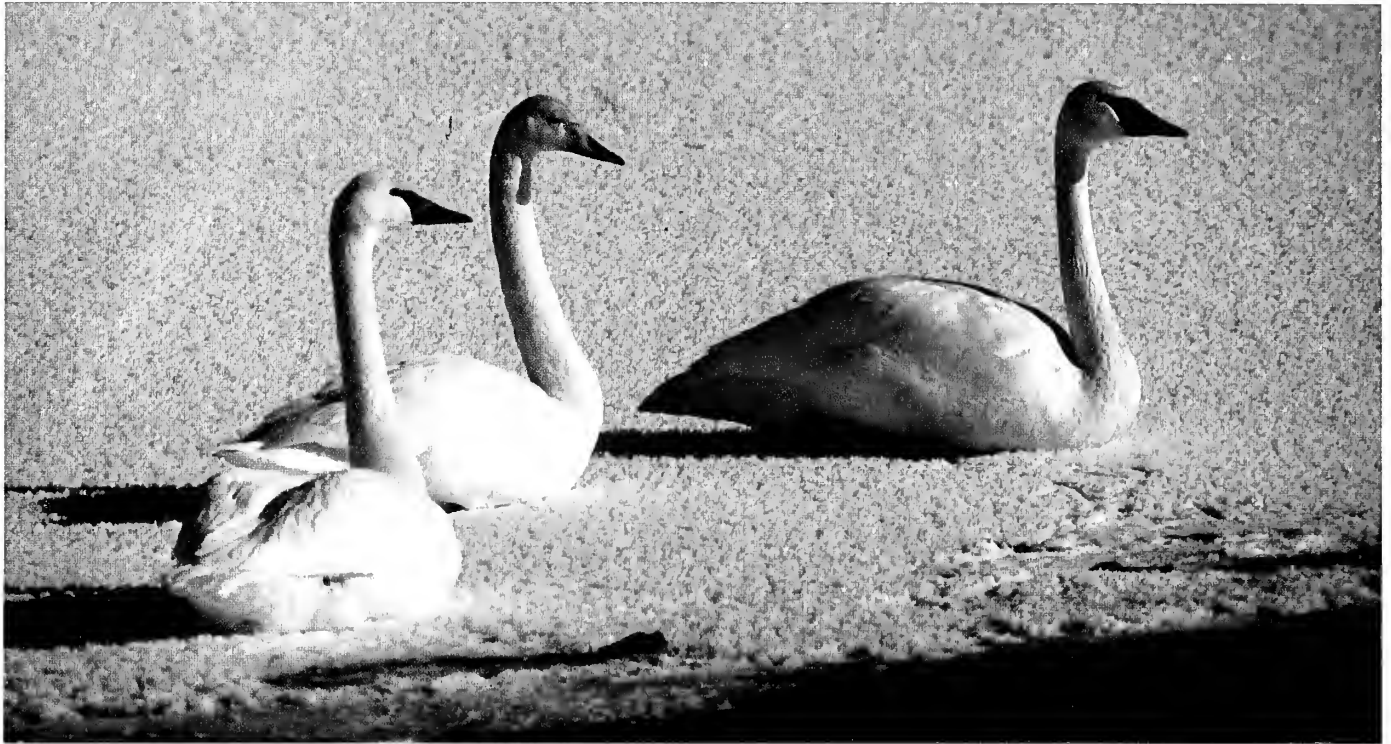


Figure 4. The Whooper Swan at Yellowstone (center; here 19 December 2003 along the Yellowstone River in Hayden Valley) spent the winter in company with migrant and local Trumpeter Swans, a species sometimes considered to be the closest relative of the Whooper. Photograph by Terry McEneaney.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife elected not to remove them (French 1997). The only mortality documented in the Essex County birds was the killing of a crippled adult by a nesting pair in early spring of 1996 (T. French, *in litt.*) and one HY bird shot later that year, but the Clark Pond Whooper most likely died in March 2002 (J. Berry, *in litt.*).

Breeding of Whooper Swans was confirmed on two occasions in Massachusetts: first at a small farm pond along Argilla Road about one km west of Rantoul Pond in Ipswich in 1996, when four young fledged, and in 1998, when five young fledged. Both of these nesting records came to light only recently, however, and have not been previously published. The 1996 brood was noted on Rantoul Pond on 1 and 13 October, but the observers had no knowledge that the birds had been raised locally at that time (J. Berry, *in litt.*). Later that season, this family group of six birds in all moved to the Plum Island section of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, where present well into July 1997 and later. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife attempted to capture the birds in this year without success. No other nestings of the species have been documented, though other nestings are suspected. A group of six year-old Whoopers seen on Rantoul Pond in April 1999 was assumed retrospectively to have been the offspring of the Argilla Road pair—but the previous year produced supposedly five, not six cygnets.

At one point, the state was host to no fewer than 12 Whooper Swans (seven adults and one brood of five young), a peak count that was documented in Ipswich on 15 November 1998, but sightings of the species in Massachusetts have dwindled since 1999, a year in which the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Animal Rescue League of Boston captured and vasectomized the breeding male Whooper of the known pair (13 April; T. French, *in litt.*). The last sighting of the species in the state came from Rantoul Pond, two adults seen on 19 October 2002 (J. Berry), with no sightings subsequently published in *Bird Observer*.

• New Hampshire 1997–2001

At Hampton, New Hampshire, an adult male Whooper Swan that was clearly of captive provenance turned up at in April and May 1997; though at first thought to be from the Essex County group, there is stronger evidence to suggest it and at least three others were unintentionally lost by an unlicensed collector in Newcastle, New Hampshire (Hunt 1999; T. French, *in litt.*). In early June 1997, an unbanded adult and then later three unbanded SY Whoopers turned up at Great Bay, New Hampshire, not far away and only about 48 km from Ipswich. Simultaneously, in Massachusetts, most of the local Whooper Swans (four at Plum Island, two in Ipswich) were accounted for, thus leading to speculation about a second nesting in 1996 somewhere

in New England—possibly the missing two of the six first seen in Essex County in 1994 (Berry 1997). These Great Bay birds eventually dispersed.

On 2 February 1998, a male Whooper Swan again visited Great Bay and remained there, off and on, for a year. By January of 1999, that individual had bonded regularly to a human male at the site, attacking the man's wife and tenant regularly for the next two years, through February 2001, when it was last seen (*vide* S. Mirick). The adult male ignored all other Whoopers in the area that later visited, including a somewhat wary female in August 1999 and a flock of six SY Whoopers on 7 May 1999 at the site—almost certainly the same six that had visited Rantoul Pond the month before (*vide* S. Mirick). (This behavior is typical of a captive human-imprinted bird that has been released.) Thus it would seem that the Massachusetts and the New Hampshire swans had come into contact with one another by 1999 (T. French, *in litt.*).

In another similar instance, an immature Whooper that turned up 25 May 1997 on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick stayed through 1 January 1998. Though its provenance was unknown (usually presumed to be from Massachusetts), it accepted hand-outs and allowed close approach, as was true of most of the Massachusetts birds. At one point, in late November 1998, it was rescued from a small remaining open hole in the ice, with the rescuer essentially risking his own life to save it (*vide* B. Dalzell). Similar tales

come from Lubec, Maine (very close to Grand Manan), where presumably the same swan spent part of the winter and evaded capture, and from Nashua, New Hampshire and Middlesex, Massachusetts (Table 1). Most observers who approached the escaped adults and subsequent progeny from the Massachusetts birds found them at least "unwary" and in most instances rather tame.

Between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the highest combined total of Whooper Swans for a single day was 16 birds counted between Essex County (12) and Great Bay (4) on 10 November 1998 (T. French, *in litt.*). Given the lack of evidence that these swans have since been removed from the wild or died, it is entirely possible that over a dozen Whooper Swans from this population are still present somewhere in North America.

• Minnesota

The only documented nesting of Whooper Swan in Minnesota comes from June–July 1998 in Washington County, where an adult was observed with four cygnets. No other adult was present, but it is assumed that this pairing was of two Whooper Swans (*vide* P. Svingen; see Table 1). In 1993, Parker Backstrom interviewed several propagators in eastern Minnesota. Likewise speaking on condition of anonymity, one propagator admitted that he had raised and deliberately released into the wild an unknown number of Whooper Swans over a period of several years. Moreover, this propagator deliberately released Whooper Swan x Trumpeter Swan hybrids in to the wild, as he considered them unfit for sale to collectors or other breeders. Peder Svingen (*in litt.*) reports that all of the dozen or more reports of Whooper Swan in the state, including those that have shown up in the winter with wild swans, are considered to be of former captives. The population of Minnesota's breeding Trumpeter Swans, which now stands around 1000 birds, could well have an admixture of Whooper genes, if the allegedly released Whoopers and the hybrid swans have survived (*vide* P. Svingen).

Resources and recommendations for records committees

Because of released individuals, some of which may persist in the wild for many years, it may indeed be nearly impossible to determine the provenance of most Whooper Swans in the eastern and middlewestern parts of North America. According to propagators, the states of Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Texas, Kansas, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts all have considerable numbers of Whooper

Swans in private collections. These collections are very dynamic enterprises, with many transfers annually. Nevertheless, most state-level natural resources departments keep track of such collections, and some are willing to share their databases with ornithologists. In addition, zoos, aviaries, tourist entertainment facilities, city parks, estates, subdivisions, and various foundations also have the capacity to be home to waterfowl such as Whooper Swan, and these should be investigated where possible. The International Species Inventory System (ISIS), an excellent on-line resource available free to the public at <www.isis.org>, reports for instance that 20 Whooper Swans are held in professional facilities such as zoological parks in North America (archive accessed 16 July 2004). A check of this site can reduce the amount of time needed to narrow down the search for the source of lost birds.

As of the time of this writing, only a few reports of Whooper Swan have ever been reviewed by records committees in the East, with even fewer images of these birds archived for the permanent record. This is understandable, given the large number of feral birds documented over the past three decades, most of whose current whereabouts are unknown. Nevertheless, if we are ever to make sense of the movements of wild Whooper Swans in North America, observers must first change the practice of leaving these birds undocumented, and records committees at the state and provincial level that do not currently do so would do well to establish ties with authorities who monitor captive waterfowl and the facilities that keep them, in order to be able to research more thoroughly and adjudicate more evenly the provenance of waterfowl reported in their regions.

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Pictorial Highlights



This adult Slaty-backed Gull was found 26 December 2003 (here 4 January 2004) at Glace Bay harbor, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, where it remained into early February. There are no confirmed records of the species closer than southern Ontario or western New York and just a handful for the East anywhere. *Photograph by Cathy and Allan Murrant.*



Part of a major incursion of Bohemian Waxwings that stretched from Newfoundland to Maryland (and even Bermuda), this bird at Sandy Hook 14 February 2004 was one of at least eight found in New Jersey—where occurrence of more than a single individual in a winter is almost unprecedented. *Photograph by Mike Fahay.*



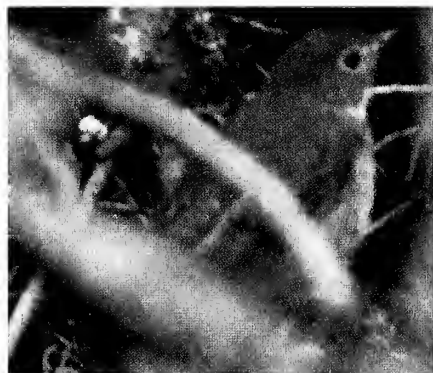
Most unexpected in the Southern Atlantic region, a first-winter Yellow-billed Loon was found on Lake Horton, south of Atlanta, Georgia in late December (here 1 January 2004). This bird remained here into the spring season, one of four of its kind east of the Mississippi River this winter, the others in Tennessee and Kentucky. *Photograph by Bob Zaremba.*



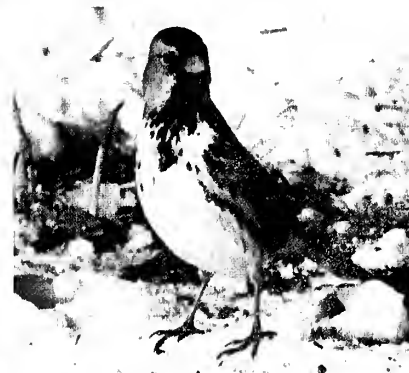
This Black-throated Gray Warbler at Blandly Experimental Farm, Clarke County, Virginia on 27 (here 28) December 2003 was found by Doug Poffenbarger, the first in the state in almost three decades. A cooperative bird that foraged in evergreens in this lovely arboretum, it remained through at least 13 January 2004, seen by many scores of birders during its stay. *Digital photograph by Larry R. Lynch.*



With Rufous Hummingbirds now expected every year in the East in fall and winter, identifying the much scarcer and nearly identical Allen's Hummingbird has become an annual challenge. This Allen's, New Jersey's second, was a long-staying bird at Cape May (here 11 January 2004) banded in November 2003 and measured to confirm the identification. *Photograph by Scott Elowitz.*



Swainson's Thrush is extremely rare in North America in the winter, and winter-season reports north of southern Florida are not documented by photograph. This bird was on St. Catherine's Island, Georgia 13 December 2003. *Photograph by Giff Beatan.*



This Harris's Sparrow at Stone Church, Northampton County, Pennsylvania (here 31 January 2004) was one of two in the state this winter. Over the past decade, the species has clearly increased as a visitor to the East. *Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.*



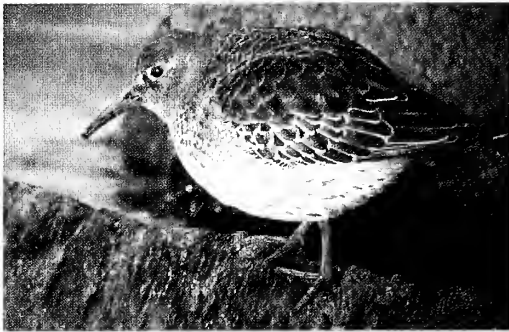
A Gray Flycatcher was an exceptional find on the Christmas Bird Count at Jordan Lake, Chatham County, North Carolina on 28 (here 31) December 2003. The bird was present until at least 22 January 2004 but could not be located after a severe winter storm in the third week of January. *Photograph by Will Cook.*



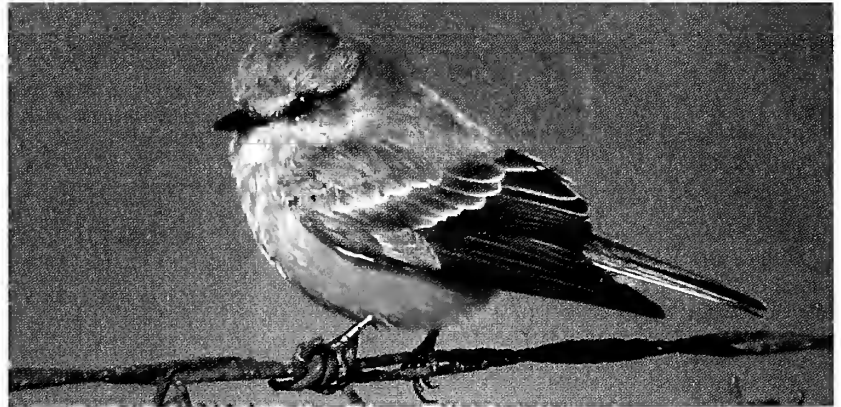
This Gray Flycatcher discovered 14 (here 22) December 2003 on the Fisherville Christmas Bird Count near Cayuga, Ontario provided the third record for the province, the first in winter, and the first record for a Canadian C.B.C. This bird fed on tiny insects even in very cold weather and was last seen on 7 January 2004. *Digital photograph by Jean Iron.*



Indiana's second Green-tailed Towhee thrilled Hoosier birders by lingering accommodatingly at Gary Dorman's New Albany, Floyd County feeders from 10 (here 13) December 2003 through 5 February 2004. *Photograph by John K. Cassidy.*



This confident adult Purple Sandpiper in the Chicago area at Waukegon, Illinois 18 and (here) 23 December 2003—in beautiful light—provided a genuinely rare opportunity to study the purple highlights in mantle feathers, scapulars, and tertials. *Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.*



This immature male Vermilion Flycatcher was photographed at Reelfoot Lake, Lake County, Tennessee on New Year's Eve day 2003, one of two found in western Tennessee during the season. *Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.*



Brightening a Midwestern winter, this quartet of warblers from Indiana added a splash of color and several first winter records for the state. A Yellow-throated Warbler (top left) was present for most of January in Marion County (here 11 January 2004), a first in winter. A Yellow Palm Warbler (top right) photographed 13 December 2003 at Patoka Lake afforded rare documentation of the *hypochrysea* subspecies for the state. A bright male Cape May Warbler was captured on film 5 January 2004 during its three-week stay at a feeding station in Montgomery County (lower right), while a young male Northern Parula provided a first winter record on Christmas Day during its month-long stay at a Monroe County feeding station. *Photographs by Kathy Feldman (top left), Jeffrey J. McCoy (top right), Clint C. Murray (lower right), and Susan Hengeveld (lower left).*

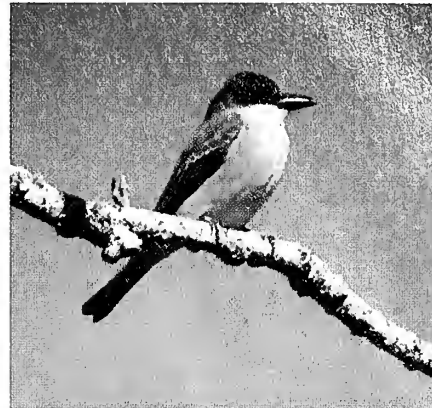
This dove, almost certainly a Eurasian Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove hybrid, was photographed in Memphis, Tennessee 31 January 2004, apparently the first documented instance of hybridization between these two species. *Photograph by Jeff R. Wilson.*



Photographed 28 February 2004 at the Seaman Road sewage lagoons in Jackson County, Mississippi, this Cave Swallow represents the first photographic record for Mississippi of this expanding species. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.



This Mountain Plover was one of 19 near Dougherty, Floyd, County, Texas on 24 January 2004. The declining species is a very rare winter visitor to the South and High Plains of the state. Photograph by Jo-Szu Tsai.



This returning Thick-billed Kingbird at Selkirk Island, Matagorda County, Texas was first discovered on the local Christmas Bird Count in December 2002 and found again a year later, almost to the day, on 15 (here 20) December 2003. This essentially Mexican species is extremely rare in Texas, where nesting is known only from the Big Bend area. Photograph by Brush Freeman.



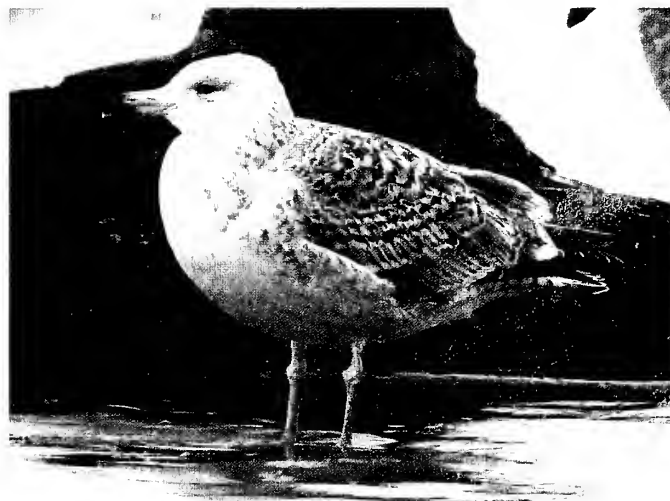
Very unexpected at any season in northern Texas, but particularly so in the winter, this Great Kiskadee tarried in Amarillo 29 December 2003 (here) through 9 February 2004, a first record for the Panhandle. Photograph by Barrett Pierce.



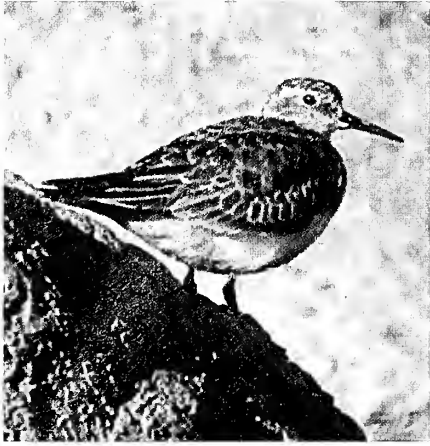
This Ancient Murrelet, Wyoming's third, was found by high school students in an Afton High School parking lot, Lincoln County on 30 October 2003. Photograph by Susan Potlo.



A first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was discovered in Boise, Idaho on 13 December 2003 by Cliff and Lisa Weisse—a stunning first record for Idaho and only the third record of the species west of the Continental Divide (Alaska and British Columbia have records). During its three-week stay at Boise's landfill, it was the dominant bird in a large gull flock that contained a record nine species and as many as 5000 individual gulls. The bird was last seen 2 January 2004 (here). Photograph by Mark Collie.



This second-winter Great Black-backed Gull was found by Eugene Hunn at Renton, King County, Washington 15 (here 18) January 2004, providing Washington's first state record. The large amount of pink on the bill prompted some discussion, but experts from Europe and eastern North America concurred on this bird's identification. Great Black-backed Gull numbers are increasing in the Great Lakes, and additional records from far western North America are to be expected. Photograph by Denny Gronstrand.



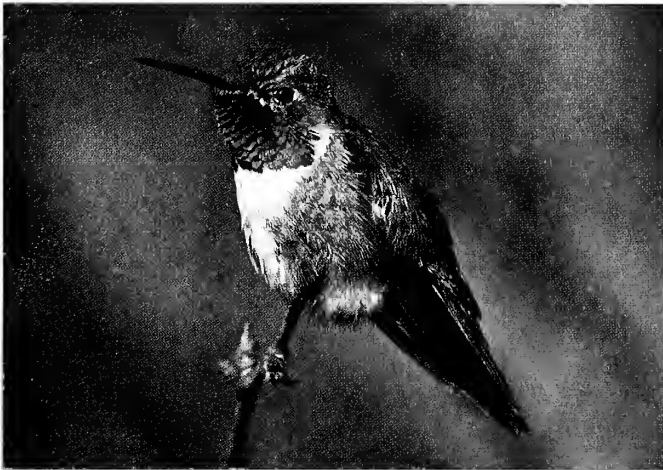
This Baird's Sandpiper at Moses Lake, Washington 31 January through (here) 1 February 2004 was completely unexpected. Baird's Sandpipers normally winter in southern South America, and mid-winter records from North America are heretofore unknown. Temperatures in mid-January at Moses Lake dropped to -10°F . Photograph by Doug Schonewald.



Another utterly unexpected shorebird in the Pacific Northwest during winter, a Solitary Sandpiper made a one-day appearance near Stayton, Marion County, Oregon 18 January 2004 (here). This species overwinters in the United States only in very small numbers in southernmost Florida and Texas. Photograph by Rich Hoyer.



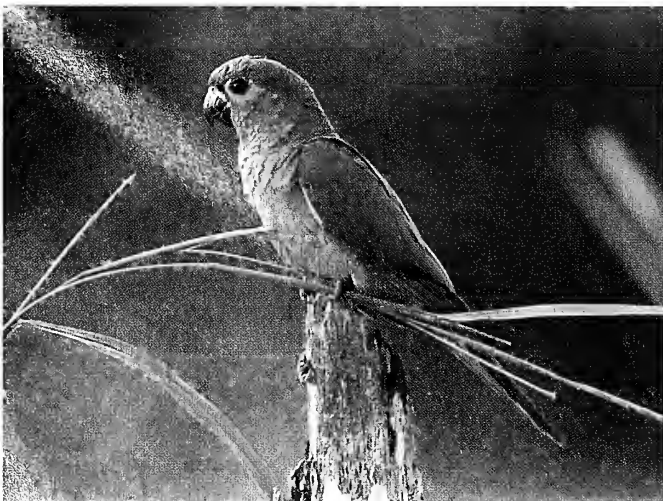
This glorious male McKay's Bunting was found by a very lucky visiting birder at Depoe Bay, Lincoln County, Oregon on 3 January 2004, furnishing Oregon's second record and the fifth for the Oregon & Washington region. Photograph by Ken Mahouski.



With fewer than six winter records of Broad-tailed Hummingbird in southern California, this male in Claremont, Los Angeles County was a genuine rarity (here 18 December 2003). Photograph by Dan Guthrie.



This Grace's Warbler was found in a row of *Casuarina* trees in Ciudad Constitución, Baja California Sur 10 February 2004, furnishing a long-awaited first record for this species on the Baja California Peninsula. Photograph by James E. Pike.



Photographed in February 2004, this Brown-throated Parakeet was one of a small flock that, according to local residents, frequented this site in the Golfo Dulce region of southwestern Costa Rica. A highly variable species with fourteen named subspecies, this race—*Aratinga pertinax ocularis*, the only representative found in North America, where endemic to the Pacific slope of Panama—is sometimes considered a separate species, Veraguas Parakeet. This constitutes the first record of the species from Costa Rica. Photograph by Jon Hunter.



This male Western Tanager at the famed Canopy Tower in Panama Province, Panama on 7 February 2004—photographed here with a Palm Tanager—represents potentially the southernmost record ever for the species and the first for central Panama. Digiscoped photograph by Marshall J. Hiff.

Short Trips for Target Species

Dovekie, Alcids, and Boreal species: This trip focuses on finding Dovekies in harbor or other sheltered site where they can be well seen. On some winters we have had many other Atlantic alcids; we may find boreal passerines, too, if snow conditions permit observation in the forests. From Halifax, Nova Scotia. Blake Maybank leads, 6–10 January 2005.

Yellow Rail, Whooping Crane, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl: The trip works the Texas coastal plain from Houston. We wade the brackish marshes for the rail, take a boat ride for the cranes, and visit a ranch where the owls reside. P.D. Hulce is the leader, 12–16 January 2005.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird, White-collared Seedeater, and "LRGV" Specialties: we cover the lower Rio Grande Valley from the Gulf to San Ygnacio in the Chihuahuan Desert country of Texas. The trip usually gets all of the Valley specialties and a vagrant species or two from Mexico, as well. From McAllen, Texas, led by P.D. Hulce, 17–23 January 2005.

Colorado Chickens: White-tailed Ptarmigan, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Sage Grouse, Gunnison Sage Grouse, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Greater Prairie-Chicken. Most are seen on lekks at good range. Three rosy-finches at feeders. Blue Grouse is usually seen, as well. From Denver, with Nick Komar leading, 8–14 April and 16–22 April 2005.

Black-capped Vireo, Golden-cheeked Warbler: Travel into the Texas Hill Country for the two target birds at the time of year when they are vocalizing and the fields are ablaze with wildflowers. We usually get some "Valley" species such as Cave Swallow. From San Antonio. P.D. Hulce leads, 17–20 April 2005.

Collina Warbler, Gray Vireo, Montezuma Quail, Common Black-Hawk: Travel through Big Bend National Park and on to the Davis Mountains for the target species plus Lucifer Hummingbird and Varied Bunting. From Midland-Odessa, Texas, led by P.D. Hulce, 20–24 April 2005. Bob Odear at OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

North Dakota Prairie Birds: Le Conte's, Baird's, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows; Sprague's Pipit, six species of grebes, and woodland songbirds such as Mourning Warbler and grosbeaks; Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks, and much more. Schedule your personalized tour now. Buffalo Commons Birding Safaris, 2704 10th Avenue NW, Mandan, ND 58554; (701) 228-5271 or (701) 663-4980; tgbison@ndak.net; barnhart@btinet.net.

Pailia, Akepa, Akiapolaau, Amakihi, Apapane, Elepaio, Hawaii Creeper, Iiwi, Io, Omao, and Pueo. From Kailua-Kona (Hawaii). One and two-day packages any time of year. Hawaii Forest & Trail, 74-5035 B Queen Kaahumanu Hwy, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740; (800) 464-1993; info@hawaii-forest.com.

Bahama Parrot, Bahama Woodstar, Western Spindalis, Bahama Swallow, Bahama Yellow-throat, Black-faced Grassquit, Greater-Antillean Bullfinch, Bahama Mockingbird, breeding tropicbird, Sooty Tern, Brown Noddy. 22 Bahamian specialties in all. Abaco, Bahamas. Led by Ron Pagliaro. One, two, and three-day packages available year-round. Abaco Outback, 5530 NW 21st Terrace, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309; (242) 367-5358; info@abacoutback.com.

Southern California

From Los Angeles. Coastal marshes for terns and gulls, coastal scrub for California Gnatcatcher, interior desert birds at remarkable Anza-Borrego State Park, the Salton Sea, and moister, higher elevations for regional passerines like Oak Titmouse and Clark's Nutcracker. Most California specialties are possible on this trip to a very birdy region. Rob Hamilton is the leader; limited to seven birders. September 18–27, 2005. Bob Odear at OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Add southern California specialties to your life list on this enjoyable trip that hits all the birding hotspots in the area, including the Salton Sea. Led by Bob Miller. January 2005 dates to be announced. Southwest Birders; (760) 455-1413; bob.miller@mindspring.com.

South Florida and the Dry Tortugas

We visit at the height of spring migration for Florida specialties, exotics, seabird colonies and possible Caribbean strays, including a three-day trip to the Dry Tortugas. Led by Adrian Binns. 17–26 April 2005. Jaeger Tours, (215) 364-4407; binns@jaegertours.net; www.jaegertours.net.

Gambell, Nome, and Pribilofs

Bird spring migration at the Pribilofs (St. Paul Island), Gambell, and Nome with a small group of hearty birders. Peak time for vagrants and Alaskan specialties. Stay in Siberian Yupik Eskimo home in Gambell; search for Bristle-thighed Curlew outside Nome; seabird colonies and fur seals rookeries on St. Paul. Small group, reasonable price. Pribilofs, 23–25 May 2005; Gambell and Nome, 27 May–4 June 2005. Wilderness Birding Adventures, 5515 Wild Mountain Road, Eagle River, AK 99577; (907) 694-7442; wildbird@alaska.net.

Caribbean

Island Endemics

OBServ Tours, Inc. has put together a package of Caribbean birding tours that focus on island endemics.

Bahamas Endemics: Abaco and Andros islands are visited to get all the species found only in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Cayman, because there is no one island in the Bahamas that offers them all. There are 11 such species, and the trip usually sees about 90 species in all. The trip is led by Paul Dean of Nassau. 7–13 February 2005.

Jamaica Endemics: The interior of Jamaica is ruggedly beautiful, and the birds are fabulous. There are 28 endemics from Mandeville to Cockpit Country to Hardwar Gap to Ecclesdown. All are usually seen on this trip, along with 60 other species. The trip is led by Ann Sutton and/or Brandon Hay. 14–20 February 2005.

Cayman Islands: This short trip to a tourist haven targets two endemic species and features a visit to the largest Red-footed Booby colony in the Americas. Visit all three islands for different species. Led by Brandon Hay. 20–23 February 2005.

Puerto Rico Endemics: Puerto Rico has widely varying ecological zones, from xeric thorn forest to salt marshes to moist forests to high mountains. Of course that results in a wide variety of birds. There are 17 Puerto Rico endemics, and we usually see nearly 100 species. Led by José Colon. 25–29 March 2005.

Dominican Republic Endemics: Our oldest West Indies tour takes you to the southwest portion of the country, where dry thorn forest covers the lowlands and moist forest clothes the great Baharuco Mountain range. There is even a huge salt lake below sea level. As always, diversity of habitat leads to diversity of bird species. There are 25 Dominican endemics, and we usually find a total of approximately 100 species. Led by Kate Wallace, 3–8 April 2005. OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Cuban Endemics

Our fourth winter with the ABA in Cuba will feature two birding programs. A 12-day itinerary led by Brett Walker and Arturo Kirkconnell covering Cuba's western highlands, northern archipelago, eastern reserves, and Zapata Peninsula, and a 10-day itinerary led by Dr. William Suarez and Nancy Norman to the western mountains and parks and the Zapata Peninsula. Legal travel programs approved by the U.S. Treasury Department. 17 February–1 March and 3–12 March 2005. Gary Markowski; (860) 350-6752; Cubbirds@aol.com; CBSP, P.O. Box 355, New Milford, CT 06776.

Trinidad and Tobago

Join Richard French, author of the Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago, to explore the rich avifauna of this beautiful island nation. From the new Cuffie River Lodge in the forests of Tobago and the famed Asa Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad's Northern Range, we will enjoy the best tropical birding in the West Indies. 9–19 January 2005. Caligo Ventures, (800) 426-7781; abatrip@caligo.com.

Mexico

Oaxaca

Join Michael Malone birding in Mexico's Oaxaca state. Visit the Valley of Oaxaca, Monte Alban, and the Pacific coast at Puerto Escondido seeking Mexican endemics. 29 January–6 February 2005. Siemer & Hand Travel, 750 Battery St. Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94111; (800) 451-4321; (415) 788-4000; fax (415) 788-4133; travel@siemerhand.com.

Yucatán

The trip begins in Cozumel with several insular endemics, goes south through the "Maya Riviera" to the famed Sian Ka'an refuge, then heads west across the peninsula to the new Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, which is on a high plateau that extends into Guatemala. Finally we bird near the west coast on the Gulf of Campeche. More than 25 endemics may be encountered, and about 150 other species. Leader is David Bacab. 5–15 February 2005. OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Southern Veracruz and the Tuxtla

At one time this area produced the highest Christmas count in the world. The parts of the area have been converted to agricultural uses, but this remains one of the most productive birding areas in Mexico. We cover the coastal plain as well as the Tuxtla volcanic complex. There are 26 species of special interest. Bob Odear and Bob Straub lead. 3–10 March 2005. OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Central Veracruz Sierra

Beginning in coastal Veracruz, we head immediately to Xalapa, Capital of the state. Birding from there, we explore various elevations and rainfall zones. There are 18 endemics in this area, a place of great civility

and beauty. Bob Odear and Bob Straub lead. 30 March–3 April 2005. OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Northeast Mexico

This is an area of desert and high forested mountains. We begin in Monterrey and go immediately to the high, dry plateau near Saltillo for three endemics. We next head south along the base of the Sierra Madre Occidental to the famed area around Rancho Cielo and finally to mountains west of Ciudad Monte in southern Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosi. Approximately 30 endemics are possible. P.D. Hulce and Bob Odear lead. 14–17 May 2005. OBServ Tours, Inc., 3901 Trimble Road, Nashville, TN 37215; (615) 292-2739; observ@bellsouth.net; www.observtours.com.

Europe

North Wales and Norfolk

Highlands, islands, and wetlands: the contrast of the mountains, oak woods, and moorlands of North Wales and the coastal plain of North Norfolk may offer the most diverse range of habitats currently available on a United Kingdom tour. All of the highlights from of spring in these remarkable regions can be found. With ample time to enjoy the beauty of these unspoiled regions, this tour offers a first class introduction to birding in the UK. Led by Neil Donaghy and Steve Cale. 7–20 May 2005. Neil Donaghy, Celtic Bird Tours, 84 Coity Road, Bridgend CF31 1LE, Wales, UK; telephone (+44) 01656 645709; cell (+44) 07971 983227; Birds@celticbirdtours.org.uk; www.celticbirdtours.com.

Pacific Ocean

Hawaii

We visit three islands—Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island—each markedly different, including the geologically oldest and youngest. We visit rainforests and deserts and explore the incredible variety of habitats at elevations ranging from sea level to more than 12,000 feet, to see the greatest number of bird species, both endemic and introduced. Rob Pacheco and other professional birders will lead this group. 8–18 March 2005. Siemer & Hand Travel, 750 Battery St. Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94111 (800) 451-4321; (415) 788-4000; fax (415) 788-4133; travel@siemerhand.com.

Fiji, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia

Cruise on the *Clipper Odyssey* from the Fiji islands to New Caledonia in the South Pacific, an area rich in endemic bird species. With well-appointed stops to see island endemics via zodiacs, Clipper Cruise Line has agreed to modify their traditional itinerary to make this cruise for birders. Beginning in Fiji, the *Odyssey* cruises to small islands of the Vanuatu Republic including Vila, Pele, Espiritu Santo, Ambrym, and Tanna Islands before arriving in Lifou and other islands in New Caledonia. ABA Leader: Board member Mike Ord. 15–26 November 2004. In-trav/Clipper Cruise Line, 11969 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146-3220; (800) 456-0020; groupres@intrav.com.

Galapagos Islands

Join this short cruise among the Enchanted Isles aboard the Santa Cruz built for exploration of these islands. Many of the islands remain the same as when Darwin himself saw them. Come see Darwin's finches and other island endemics. 22–28 May 2005. Clipper Cruise Line, (800) 814-9393; x6813; esperry@intrav.com or (800) 456-0020, groupres@intrav.com.

Passage to Easter Island Polynesia

Cruise aboard the beautiful 106-guest Orion from Valparaiso, Chile to Papeete, Tahiti. Island stops include islands of the San Fernandez Archipelago, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), the Pitcairn Archipelago, and the Tuamotus, ending at Papeete, Tahiti. Pelagic birding and island specialties. 19 February–15 March 2005. With Robert Kiste and Robert Woollacott. Travel Dynamics International 132 East 70th St. New York, NY 10021 (800) 257-5767 www.traveldynamicsinternational.com, sales@traveldynamicsinternational.com.

Asia

China

This expedition explores China's geographical diversity. Join us as we visit many of the best birding locales in China. Led by some of China's foremost ornithologists. April/May 2005. Siemer & Hand Travel, 750 Battery St. Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94111 (800) 451-4321; (415) 788-4000; fax (415) 788-4133; travel@siemerhand.com.

Africa

Morocco

Morocco boasts the richest bird life in North Africa, and along with its endemic, rare, and specialty birds, its Moonish and Berber culture and stunning scenery make this trip truly memorable. Led by Adrian Binns. 3–19 March 2005. Jaeger Tours, (215) 364-4407; binns@jaegertours.net; www.jaegertours.net.

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*Birds aren't the only ones who flock to Alabama
for our spring and fall migrations.*

Birding enthusiasts from all across the country have spotted something truly amazing: Alabama. Our Coastal Birding Trail is host to hundreds of species, from Herons to Loons, Plovers to Peeps. And our spring and fall migrations make Alabama truly worth the journey. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 800-ALABAMA OR LOG ON TO 800ALABAMA.COM.

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