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On the cover: This adult four-year gull, found 11 February 2006 off the coast of Long Island, New York, was ultimately identified as a Western Gull of the nominate subspecies. Western Gull is very rarely recorded away from the immediate Pacific coastline, and many gull experts have believed it an unlikely candidate for vagrancy to the East. However, there are a few well-documented records from the continent's interior, as far east as Chicago. Discussions of this gull via the Internet were extensive, and, as of press time, authorities on gull identification appear to support the identification as Western Gull strongly. Photograph by Martin Lofgren.





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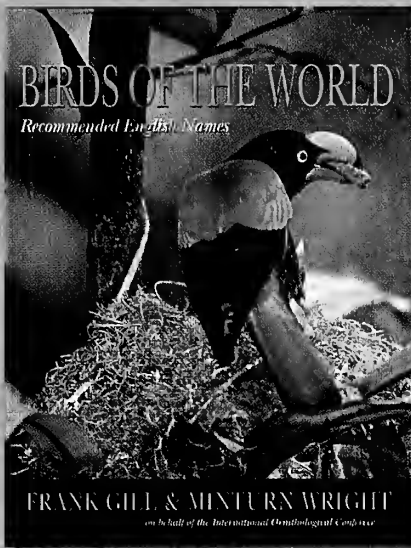
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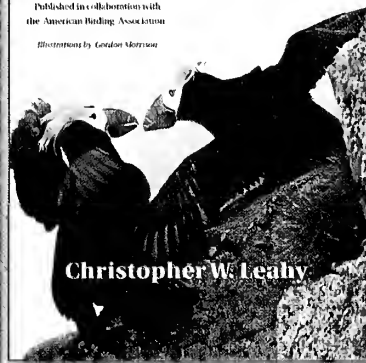
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First photographically documented record of Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) for the United States

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Abstract

We present the first fully documented record of Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) for the United States, a single bird present at Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas from 7–14 January 2005.

Field encounter

On 7 January 2005, Arvin discovered a Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) near the headquarters of the World Birding Center, located adjacent to

Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas (Figures 1, 2). The bird was initially heard calling from a row of Huisache (*Acacia smallii*) along an irrigation canal on the northern border of the state park. It disappeared before it could be photographed but was relocated on 8 January along the edge of a resaca (an oxbow lake of the Rio Grande) within the state park. This former tent-camping area has manicured grass with numerous large trees and a dense, narrow woodland along the edge

of the resaca. For much of the duration of the observation, the bird remained largely hidden from view, occasionally making sallies up to the tops of the trees. It was not particularly vocal, calling only irregularly. Initially, it was highly responsive to playback, but this behavior diminished with exposure.

In addition to occasional sallies for insects, the bird was observed eating fruits of Anacua (*Ehretia anacua*) and Sugar Hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*). During the remainder of its stay, it moved between the former tent-camping area and the adjacent densely wooded portions of the state park, primarily frequenting the canopy and edges of the taller woodland. It remained in this area through 14 January. Photographs taken on that date (Figure 1) seem to show an injury that was not noticed prior to that day. The right leg appeared twisted and non-functional and its right flank was smeared with blood. The flycatcher was not seen after that date and is presumed to have succumbed to this injury.



Figure 1. This Social Flycatcher exhibited plumage characteristics and behavior consistent with populations in northern Mexico. Although the species is not known to wander, this individual represents the second sighting in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. This photograph was taken on the final day of its week-long stay, 7–14 January 2005. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

Discussion

Social Flycatcher is a distinctly marked species. The individual observed at Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park had bright yellow underparts contrasting with olive-brown upperparts. Its wings and tail appeared

slightly more brownish in color than its upperparts. Its crown was a dark gray bordered by a broad white supercilium. The remainder of the head plumage consisted of a slaty gray "mask" (lores, auriculars, and adjacent plumage) and white throat. Its pale gray irides contrasted with this mask. Although concealed most of the time, its crimson central crown stripe was well seen by several observers on 9 January, when the bird was feeding low in a vine tangle. Its bill was small and somewhat triangular in shape. The bird's overall size was described as slightly shorter than that of a kingbird (*Tyrannus* species). It called occasionally, giving a distinctive, shrill *see-yh*. Less often, it broke into a longer vocalization. This vocalization was given mostly in response to playback and may be transcribed as *teeya*, *tortilla-tortilla-tortilla*. Arvin audio-recorded this vocalization on 9 January.

This plumage pattern of Social Flycatcher is shared with numerous Neotropical flycatchers. Of particular interest in the identification of this individual are Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), which is locally common in southern Texas, and Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*), which occurs in northeastern Mexico but has not been recorded in the United States. Great Kiskadee is a larger bird with obvious rufous in the wings and tail. Its face pattern consists of black (as opposed to slaty gray) crown stripe and mask. It often displays its bright yellow central crown stripe in interactions with other birds. It is also vocally distinct. Boat-billed Flycatcher is similar in overall coloration, though lacking rufous tones, but is even larger than a Great Kiskadee and has a massive bill. It is also very distinctive vocally. In addition, a number of geographically remote species in the genera *Conopias*, *Philohydor* (merged by the American Ornithologists' Union [1998] with *Pitangus*), and *Phelpsia* share the "kiskadee" pattern. These could also be eliminated from consideration by a combination of plumage and vocal dif-

ferences. The very similar congeneric Rusty-margined Flycatcher (*M. cayanaensis*) has rufous inner webs on the primaries, has blackish (not gray) crown and mask stripes, and gives a long, thin, up-slurred whistle, a distinctive vocalization. Despite careful study, we were not able to determine the age of the Social Flycatcher in Texas.

Social Flycatcher ranges from northeastern Mexico south to Bolivia and Argentina (Howell and Webb 1995, Ridgely and Tudor 1994). In Mexico, the species' northernmost known population is found in central Tamaulipas in the drainages of the Río Corona and Río Purificación, within 200 km of the Río Grande. In Tamaulipas, Social Flycatchers are present year-round in low elevations, and, where forest has been cleared, occur up to an elevation of 1000 m (Arvin 2001). A well-described sight record of the species comes from Anzalduas County Park, Hidalgo County, Texas in 1991. This location is about 5 km downriver from Bentsen-Río Grande Valley State Park. This species is apparently not prone to wandering, and the two records from Texas are the only re-

ports away from the known range.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Geoff Malosh and Pierre Howard for the use of their excellent photographs. Petra Hockey, Eric Carpenter, P. A. Buckley, J. Van Remsen, and Louis R. Bevier reviewed previous drafts of the manuscript and provided many helpful suggestions.

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Figure 2. On 7 January 2005 (here), the Social Flycatcher was largely quiet and remained within the woods' edge and canopy. Photograph by Pierre Howard.

First Record of European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) for Massachusetts

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Abstract

This article documents a record of European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) from Tuckernuck Island, Nantucket, Massachusetts on 19 July 2001. Previous North American records of the species are known for the French island of St. Pierre, off Newfoundland, and the Florida Keys, in May 2001 and April 1990, respectively; these records have not been universally accepted as referring to naturally occurring vagrants, but all three records fall within the clear temporal pattern of vagrants to Iceland.

Field Encounter and Identification

On 20 July 2001, Natalie Brewer of Tuckernuck Island, Nantucket, Massachusetts brought to my attention a dead bird that proved to be a European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) (Figure 1), a European species not previously reported in Massachusetts. Conversations with locals revealed that the bird had been run over by a truck the previous day, 19 July. The driver of the truck stated that he was driving at about 10 mph and that the dove unexpectedly failed to get out of the way.

The Tuckernuck dove was clearly identifiable as European Turtle-Dove rather than Oriental Turtle-Dove (*S. orientalis*) on the basis of measurements and coloration. The range of wing lengths for Oriental is 188–201 mm (Cramp 1985), and the wing of the Tuckernuck bird measured 170 mm. Similarly, the range of tarsus lengths for Oriental is 24.7–29.3 mm (Cramp 1985), and that of the Tuckernuck bird was 20.0 mm, smaller than Cramp's range of European, which is 22.1–24.2 mm. Furthermore, the tips of the rectrices on the Tuckernuck bird were white, not gray as they are in Oriental Turtle-Dove.

I studied *S. turtur* specimens at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to see if I could identify the

Tuckernuck specimen to subspecies. There are two African subspecies, *hoggara* and *rufescens* (the latter now including *isabellina*; del Hoyo et al. 1997), both of which differ considerably in coloration from the nominate subspecies of Europe and from the Tuckernuck bird. The subspecies *arenicola* breeds from North Africa and the Middle East through western China; it differs from the nominate in being smaller and paler, with paler (rufous rather than chestnut) fringes to the wing coverts and scapulars, a whiter face, and a paler crown. Based on my perusal of the AMNH skins (78 *turtur* and 69 *arenicola*), it does not seem possible to assign a single specimen unambiguously to *arenicola* rather than the nominate subspecies. Nevertheless, the Tuckernuck bird was darker than virtually all *arenicola* there, and even darker than most *turtur*, so it seems safe to conclude the Tuckernuck bird is in fact *turtur*, thus belonging to the population most likely, on geographical grounds, to disperse to North America. The Massachusetts specimen of European Turtle-Dove is now #336150 in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University.

Discussion

The European Turtle-Dove on Nantucket represents a first record for Massachusetts (and has been accepted to the state list by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee [Rines 2006]) and the third record of the species for

North America. Single birds have been documented previously at Lower Matecumbe Key, Florida on 9 April 1990 (Hoffman et al. 1990) and on the French island of St. Pierre, south of Newfoundland, in May 2001 (Maybank 2001). The American Ornithologists' Union has accepted the Florida record and placed the species on its main check-list (A.O.U. 1998). Citing reservations about the provenance of the Florida bird (DeBenedictis 1994), the American Birding Association included the species only within its "Origin Uncertain" category on the *ABA Checklist*; however, on 8 February 1997, the ABA abolished that category, thus removing European Turtle-Dove from the checklist entirely (A.B.A. 2002).

European Turtle-Dove is a long-distance migrant that regularly strays to Iceland, the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Cape Verde Islands. There have been numerous (>200) published records of European Turtle-Doves initiating long-distance dispersal towards North America from Europe; and most records of vagrants appear to be from the coastlines of islands. Greenland apparently has no record of the species (Boertmann 1994), at least through 1993, probably reflecting the low level of birding coverage there. European Turtle-Dove is uncommon to rare in captivity in North America (ISIS [International Species Inventory System] database; accessed most recently 10 February

2006). Like most highly migratory birds, European Turtle-Doves are difficult to keep in captivity because of the migratory restlessness that they develop during spring and fall. Presumably for this reason, they are relatively rare in North American zoos and other collections. Only 10 individuals are listed in North American collections, compared with many hundreds of the sedentary African Collared-Dove (*S. roseogrisea*) and Spotted Dove (*S. chinensis*). Certainly there may be illegally imported or



Figure 1. Specimen of European Turtle-Dove from Tuckernuck Island, Massachusetts, 20 July 2001. Photograph by Jarrod Santora.

otherwise unreported European Turtle-Doves in North America not listed by ISIS, but it seems likely that the relative rarity in collections of European Turtle-Dove is factual and moreover that bird smugglers would not tend to import this generally undesirable species.

Evidence from the life history and recent population dynamics of European Turtle-Dove suggest that it is an excellent candidate for long-distance vagrancy, especially to eastern North America. Columbids in general, including several *Streptopelia* doves, are renowned for their dispersals and for colonizations of oceanic islands (Bond 1980, Diamond 1975, Pratt et al. 1987, Sinclair and Langrand 1998); in many cases, this extensive distribution is surely the result of repeated instances of long-distance vagrancy. One of the best-documented instances of population expansion is the rapid colonization of Europe by Eurasian Collared-Dove (*S. decaocto*) (Fisher 1953) and the species' subsequent colonization of North America, from the Bahamas (Romagosa and McEaney 2000).

Data on the occurrence of European Turtle-Dove in Iceland support the notion that the North American occurrences involve vagrants: the species has increased substantially as a vagrant to Iceland, with a sharp increase beginning about 1960 (Figure 2). This increase is certainly real, as *Streptopelia* doves are not secretive or difficult to identify, and indeed many of the records involve birds found in populated and frequently birded areas. The Icelandic data show seasonal peaks of occurrence in June and September–October (Figure 3). The three North American records (April, May, July) fall within the span of dates noted in Iceland. Interestingly, the increasing numbers of vagrants recorded in Iceland do not correspond to population growth in Great Britain (Browne and Aebischer 2005) as would be predicted by models that link vagrancy to population growth (Veit and Lewis 1996, Veit 2000). In fact, Browne and Aebischer (2005) show a declining trend in Great Britain beginning in about 1975 and continuing through the 1990s. It is possible, of course, that some subpopulation within Great Britain (or elsewhere within the European range of the species) has been expanding in recent decades, which might account for the increase in numbers of vagrants to Iceland 1960–2006. On the other hand, it is possible that vagrancy may in some instances be a response to declining population growth. Birds may search for new, more suitable territory if reproductive success is declining within their current range.

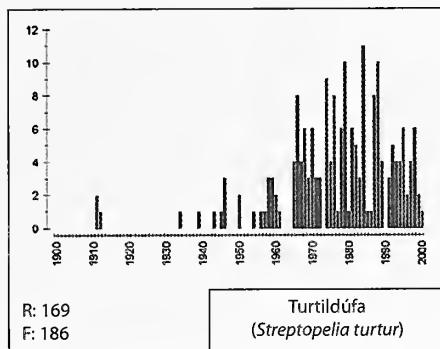


Figure 2. Increasing occurrence of European Turtle-Dove in Iceland, 1900–2000. From the “Birding Iceland” website (<<http://www.hi.is/~yannk/>>) by Yann Kolbeinsson. Graphic courtesy of and © Gunnlaugur Pétursson.

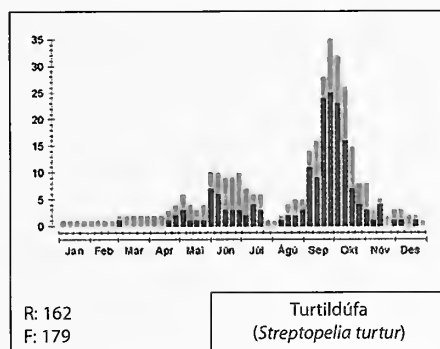


Figure 3. Seasonal occurrence of European Turtle-Dove in Iceland. From the “Birding Iceland” website (<<http://www.hi.is/~yannk/>>) by Yann Kolbeinsson. Graphic courtesy of and © Gunnlaugur Pétursson.

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The Changing Seasons: Winter that Wasn't

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From north to south, from coast to coast, the regional reports tell a remarkably consistent story about the winter of 2005-2006. In the Atlantic Provinces, Brian Dalzell writes that "abnormal" is the new normal weather, it would seem, and this winter was the warmest on record." In New England, Pam Hunt notes that "winter 2005-2006 ranked in the top 15% warmest winters in 111 years of record keeping." And writing for Southern California, Guy McCaskie and Kimball Garrett again supply the title for this column: "With temperatures warmer than average and precipitation less than expected during the winter period, this seemed like the winter that wasn't in Southern California."

Overall, the meteorological winter (which includes only the months of December, January, and February) was the fifth warmest on record in the contiguous United States, according to scientists at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina (Figure 1), who report that the average winter temperature in the Lower 48 States was 36.3° F, some 1.2° F above the 1895-2005 mean. In Canada, however, it was the warmest winter on record since standardized record-keeping began in 1948, according to Environment Canada, which found that the winter was overall 7° F above the average, beating out winter 1986-1987, which was a mere 5.4° F above the average (Figure 2).

These characterizations represent broad averages, and there was plenty of real "winter" early on, particularly in early to middle December in the northeastern quarter of the continent. The first half of December was bitterly cold in the Midwest, with -19° F in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on 7 December 2005 a remarkable low; temperatures in Illinois and Indiana averaged 11° F below normal for the first three-fourths of December, all the product of strong upper-level air flows that brought polar and arctic air southward. But by the third week of the month, temperatures became milder, ice melted quickly, and January was the warmest or second warmest on record in Iowa and surrounding states; Chicago saw temperatures that averaged almost 14° F above average between late



It was a memorable winter for Snowy Owls across southern Canada, the northern tiers of the United States, and even as far south as Virginia, Oklahoma, and California. Wandering southward to Osage County, Oklahoma, this Snowy became a popular local attraction 18 through (here) 27 December 2005. Photograph by Warren Williams.

December and late February. Likewise, across the Great Plains and into the Rockies, January temperatures broke records in North Dakota, Montana, and nearly in Idaho, which had its fourth-warmest January in 112 years of record keeping. Alaska had "nearly a carbon copy of the previous [record-warm] winter," according to Thede Tobish. Across Canada, very mild to moderate temperatures persisted through the same period: the Northwest Territories, Alberta, and Saskatchewan all experienced their warmest winter on record, with temperatures almost 11° F above average in each; the Atlantic Provinces' temperatures averaged almost 9° F higher than normal; and winter temperatures in Québec were at least 3.6° F above normal. It was not only the warmest winter so far recorded in Canada; it was the most overheated season of any season on record.

More typical winter weather returned in the latter part of February to northern reaches of the continent—from New York to the Midwest to British Columbia. The pattern of a warm midwinter bracketed by much cooler spells in the early and late parts of the season is surprisingly constant across most of the continent; only the Pacific Northwest recorded normal temperatures in midwinter.

Precipitation levels varied from region to region over the winter, notably in the interior West, but only a few areas received a bounty, mostly the northern Pacific coast

(from British Columbia through northern California; Seattle recorded its third rainiest January) and northern Rocky Mountains. Canada overall had precipitation just 0.4% above normal, making it the twenty-fourth wettest season of 59 on record. Very dry conditions plagued most parts of the East, particularly the mid-Atlantic region, and exceptional drought struck from southern Texas through eastern Oklahoma, western Arkansas, and southwestern Missouri. Tulsa, Oklahoma had its driest winter since record-keeping began in 1888: just 4 cm of precipitation was detected during the three-month period. Snow cover was

well below average from Alberta to the Western Great Lakes to New Hampshire's White Mountains to Prince Edward Island, where "great clouds of red dust swirled over the normally snow-covered potato fields," according to Dalzell. Southern Yukon had bountiful snowfall in late November but lost it in an early December melt and a rather dry winter otherwise—a serious problem for bird species that rely on snow for cover and water. In eastern Montana, snow amounts were normal or better, but the above-average temperatures meant that snowpack was lost to melt. A similar situation was seen in the northern mountains of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, but the southern reaches of those states were contrastingly dry, and severe drought returned to New Mexico and Arizona (attributed to La Niña conditions), where snowpack was nearly nil: Flagstaff had just 4 cm of snow, compared to a normal total of 184 cm. Phoenix had a record 143 consecutive days without rain. In New Mexico, it was the driest winter ever recorded (Figure 3). The dry conditions contributed to wildfire activity that burned over one million acres since the first of November, according to data from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Most wildfire activity has been in the southern Great Plains, particularly Oklahoma and northeastern Texas, and in Florida.

In stark contrast to the dry central,

southwestern, and eastern reaches of the continent, the Northwest and parts of the West were hit by a series of powerful Pacific storms in December and January, making Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada wetter than average for the season (Figure 3). Several significant snow storms brought moisture to the Northeast, including one 11-12 February that struck New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut with more than 52 cm of snow in many areas—making it a Category 3 (“major”) snow storm according to the new Northeast Snowfall Impact Scale.

Some meteorologists noted that the season’s dominant weather patterns could be linked to conditions in the western Pacific Ocean, which had abundant thunderstorms in tropical areas in the three-month period, apparently connected with a northward shift in the East Asian Jet Stream. This jet stream, which does not normally extend much past the International Dateline, reached well into western North America through much of the season, bringing almost continual low-pressure systems into the Pacific Northwest and, overall, warmer Pacific air throughout the continent. This pattern took hold roughly at the onset of astronomical winter (that is, 21 December) and was dominant well into February. Another consequence of this pattern was heavy precipitation in Hawai’i, which made birding difficult or impossible in some areas because of flooding.

Warm weather, winter extralimitals

Despite the doses of cold weather early and late in the season, signs of spring came in January and February across large areas east of the Rockies: frog choruses tuned up from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia; spring harbingers such as ground-squirrels, salamanders, and butterflies made very early appearances from Alberta to Pennsylvania; a woodcock displayed through January in Berrien County, Michigan; and typical March migrants, such as vultures, gulls, geese, Sandhill Cranes, and winter thrushes, made early northward pushes across a broad front. And despite the cold snaps, many birds we call “half-hardies” or “lingerers” made it through the season, es-

Dec 2005-Feb 2006 Statewide Ranks

National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA

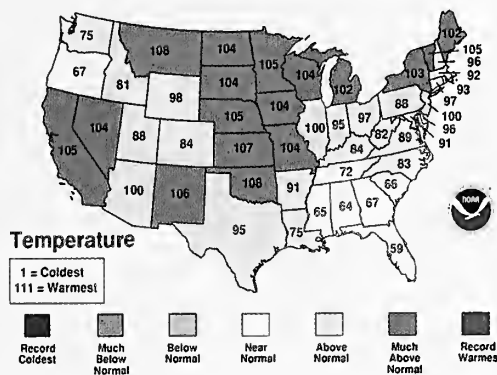


Figure 1. The Lower 48 States experienced, as a whole, their fifth warmest winter on record since 1895; only the Southeast and Pacific Northwest had winters nearer the average. The numbers indicate the season’s coldness rank (out of 111 winters) for each state. *Graphic courtesy of National Climatic Data Center, Asheville, North Carolina.*

TEMPERATURE DEPARTURES FROM NORMAL Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) 2005/2006 ANOMALIES DE LA TEMPÉRATURE PAR RAPPORT À LA NORMALE Hiver (dec, jan, fev) 2005/2006

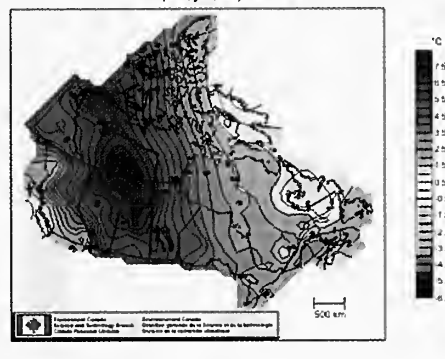


Figure 2. The winter of 2005-2006 was the warmest winter Canada has experienced since nationwide records began in 1948, 7° F above normal, based on preliminary data. With the exception of the springs of 2002 and 2004, seasonal temperatures in Canada have remained above normal for more than eight years, according to Environment Canada. *Graphic courtesy of © Environment Canada.*

pecially mimids, thrushes, phoebes, and warblers.

As Dalzell and Hunt suggest, we have had to adjust our expectations of winter weather, which has shown an overall tendency to follow the warming of climate around the northern hemisphere. Simultaneously, expectations about our local winter avifauna now encompass, almost invariably, more species than in the past. “From Sora to Pacific Golden-Plover to Williamson’s Sapsucker to Western Tanager,” write Steve Mlodinow, David Irons, and Bill Tweit, “species considered megararities during the winter season a decade ago are now almost greeted with yawns.” In Alaska, Tobish echoes that “many birds

previously considered rare and/or irregular a decade ago” are now annual visitors. In some regions, long-term observers of both wintering birds and winter meteorological conditions note strong correlations between warmer winters and a changing avifauna, an observation advanced in decades past (e.g., Able 1980) but also often questioned by writers of this column. “Each year, it seems as if the winter window narrows in the Region, even disappears in the southern portions of the Region,” write Joe Grzybowski and Ross Silcock; “Nebraska’s winter recalls Oklahoma’s of 25 years ago, and Oklahoma’s is now more like that of northern Texas.” They continue: “Bird distribution appears to be adjusting to the gradually warmer winters. Waterfowl stay farther north. Once crowding Oklahoma reservoirs by the thousands, few Common Mergansers now make it as far south as Oklahoma.”

Ornithologists working with models of global climate change have predicted shifts in the ranges of many bird species (e.g., Price and Root 2000), although most studies concentrate on breeding range rather than wintering range, and some focus on southern species wintering increasingly farther north, rather than northern species withdrawing northward. Over 10 years ago, Terry Root and Jason Weckstein (1994, 1996; see <<http://biology.usgs.gov/s+t/noframe/m8003.htm>>) looked at winter distribution of 58 bird species as documented by Christmas Bird Count (C.B.C.) data. They found that only four species—Northern Pintail, Common Merganser, Pied-billed

Grebe, and Brown-headed Cowbird—showed large-scale evidence of range contraction or retraction. However, for the purposes of their study, the species had to disappear from an entire state to be placed into this category, so the gauge is rather crude, and it is probably the case that a more nuanced study would find more species of northerly distribution that show such northward withdrawal. Ivan Valiela and Jennifer Bowen (2003) looked at similar C.B.C. data but on a smaller scale, solely from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and found that across all habitats (aquatic, edge, grassland, forest), the recorded number of bird species of northern affinity declined significantly after 1970, whereas the

number of bird species of southern affinity increased markedly: specifically the ratio of southern/northern species rises from 2.5 in 1970 to 5 in 2000. "This is consistent," they write, "with the notion that as the world warms, we will find a poleward shift of species' ranges." We should never be surprised that bird populations change dynamically (Floyd 2005); but if we are diligent in collecting and tending our observations of birds whose distributions appear to be changing quite rapidly, we might allow ourselves some freedom to think about the implications of our observations.

To hunt for the effects of climate change in a season's bird sightings may seem imprudent, or overeager, but we should recall that birders were among the first to suspect the severity of the warming climate. Writing this column three decades ago, P. William Smith (1976) noticed: "It is interesting that almost all range changes noted in the regional reports were *northward* expansions." Our observations may often lack a scientific framework, but that does not make them trivial; in fact, they often spur on scientific research. Since the 1980s, several studies (e.g., Root 1988) using recent C.B.C. data have shown correlation of expanding winter ranges in North American passerines with rising average minimum January temperatures. So many studies are currently underway or just being published that it will take some dedication to read through them and weigh their arguments (see Leukering and Gibbons 2005), but the message thus far seems to be consistent: "These results suggest that we might be in the midst of global-scale biological changes, changes that are not only relevant to those interested in species distributions but that could have major consequences for many other aspects, including fisheries, agriculture, and public health" (Valiela and Bowen 2003).

In addition to northward retractions and northward expansions of birds' winter ranges, changes in the phenology of short-distance migrants and facultative migrants received comment this season, as in the Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley region, where Vic Fazio and Rick Wiltraut write of a "decade-long trend toward a compression of the migration for several non-passerines, notably Sandhill Crane and Turkey Vulture." And even the

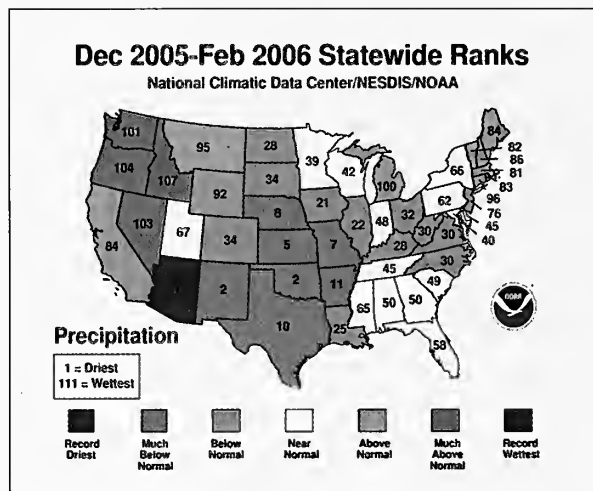


Figure 3. Ranks of dryness for the contiguous United States, winter 2005-2006. The numbers indicate the season's precipitation rank (out of 111 winters) in each state. *Graphic courtesy of National Climatic Data Center, Asheville, North Carolina.*

most casual of birders are now taking note: "Steeped in tradition and lore, the return of the 'Hinckley Buzzard' on the Ides of March was as much a sign of spring for northeastern Ohioans as the swallows of Capistrano; no more." In some areas, first-arrival dates have been recorded for quite some time, so that editors can say with confidence, for instance, that American Robins in 1999 arrived in higher-elevation nesting areas of Colorado 14 days earlier than they did in 1981 (Inouye et al. 2000). In some cases, species that formerly arrived in breeding areas in meteorological spring (March-May) now arrive in the winter season (see Mills 2005), but this journal's winter reports often focus on irruptions of northern species, so that the late-February arrivals of former March migrants, for instance, may go unmentioned in many cases.

One can argue that this winter marked a turning point, at least in the United States, for the public discussion of continental weather patterns in light of scientific evidence for climate change: for the first time, the subject was openly discussed as *scientific fact* throughout the mass media, and it continues to be a daily presence in the media through press time. Skeptics seem increasingly scarce and marginalized. Former Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, addressed the issue squarely in a widely distributed film, *An Inconvenient Truth* (see <www.climatechange.net> for expanded discussions and ideas for reducing carbon dioxide emissions). Writers of this column, too, may have reached a turn-

ing point: we need no longer treat the subject of global climate change as though it were controversial. Indeed, most of the skepticism on the subject was generated not by the scientific community but by mass media and by industrialists.

Nonetheless, we birders are still bound to struggle in attempts to account for changes in bird distribution—some of which perhaps have little to do with changes in climate per se (such as changes resulting from habitat modification, succession, destruction, or creation), and many of which continue to pose riddles. And whatever the causes of the many changes in bird distribution, we as birders struggle in winter, just as we do at other seasons, with the categories into which we often blithely place extralimital and/or

unseasonable birds: "lingerer," "half-hardy" ("semi-hardy"), "irruptor," "invader" ("colonizer"), "vagrant," and more. In looking at the winter season's more remarkable bird records, I would like to consider how various regions' birders and editors apply terms such as these, how we might reflect on their implications and limitations, and how such terms might be connected to similar semantics of movement in other seasons, such as "shift" and "displacement," which have multiple meanings but have been used differentially (e.g., by Howe 1978) to denote large-scale, patterned changes in bird distribution, including those occurring during migration (a "shift") versus singular records of extralimital birds showing little or no pattern (a "displacement"). In the spring season, certainly, many of the species that might have fallen under the rubric of the "displacement"—birds we usually call vagrants—now often appear in larger numbers and show clear patterns, thus becoming "shift" species (see Brinkley 2001b, 2003; Leukering and Gibbons 2005). The same has become true in winter: we seem to be in the midst of so many distributional changes that to put a label to them has become a confusing endeavor, particularly in the context of a regional report to this journal, which is subject to dreaded deadlines!

In general, birders understand the distinction between a "lingerer" and a "vagrant" to be clear-cut: the former is a bird (either locally nesting or transient) that has stayed on in autumn or winter well

past the point that its conspecifics have moved southward, while the latter is a species that does not normally nest in or migrate through the area at all. Moreover, "vagrants," to most editors, are not found annually or even nearly so: they are often called "casual" species in some columns, meaning (depending on the source) found once every few years to once every 20 years; in some regions, editors count their "vagrants" by the dozens or hundreds rather than on one hand, but they are still birds that are rare, if regular. With some extralimital birds, it is obvious that the birds have not lingered within breeding range: in this past winter, there were Ash-throated Flycatchers in the East, Long-billed Thrashers in Colorado, Tropical Kingbirds on both coasts (California, North Carolina), and widespread extralimital Cave Swallows, a few of which survived into January (in North Carolina, Virginia) and even February (Georgia, South Carolina). McCaskie and Garrett, in Southern California, are clear that some of that region's vagrants—including multiple Broad-billed Hummingbirds, Thick-billed Kingbirds, Dusky-capped Flycatchers (also noted in Baja California this season), Grace's Warblers, and Painted Redstarts—probably came from Mexico rather than Arizona. For some of these species (Cave Swallow in the East, Tropical Kingbirds in California), we now have a decade or two of solid patterns of occurrence; for other species that lack such patterns, which some would call the true (or "mega-") vagrants, there seems to be no pattern or only a weak pattern: Long-billed Thrasher, for instance, is considered mostly sedentary, with few records of vagrants anywhere. Why such birds, even those with clear, predictable patterns, disperse northward (or northeastward, northwestward) rather than migrating southward remains a puzzle: despite some correlation with weather patterns, these movements' ultimate causes are matters of speculation. For all we know, these movements indicate misorientations caused by environmental toxins.

The term "lingering" seems to imply that the bird has not budged, that it has become sedentary, stuck in an area, rather than actively engaged in some sort of migratory/wintering behavior, whether or not the behavior is a rewarding one, but that it may at some point move on. This implication deserves questioning, of course. In this season's reports, editors from California clear to the Atlantic Seaboard are quick to

point out that some birds labelled as "lingers" probably came *northward* in autumn from areas to the south of their regions. This is an idea that has been around for some time but seems to be gaining more and more currency as birders' sightings can be more easily communicated and compared over greater distances than in the past. For instance, certain Neotropical migrants found wintering at northern feeders within their breeding ranges—Indigo Buntings, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks—are usually assumed to be individuals either too ill, weakened, or belated to undertake onward migration; records of such species rarely show patterns in any winter. In winter 2005-2006, most of us probably assumed that such birds, along with singular regional rarities such as New York's Veery and Wood Thrush, Virginia's Broad-winged Hawk, and Kentucky's Mourning Warbler, were ailing birds that never left—"lingers" that did not survive the season. And our intuition may be correct in these cases; but it may not be. We have no evidence that such birds did not come from areas to the south of their presumably final destinations, and, if we attend to patterns of bird migration on the coastlines (where migrants are often concentrated), we might well suspect that such "lingering" birds found within their normal breeding ranges are more likely to be misoriented (reverse) migrants, now tied to an artificial food source or other limited microclimate after having migrated in what we consider the wrong direction. Every winter season, even the bitterly cold ones, seems to have such "gee-whiz" birds (Kaufman 1998, Brinkley 2001a).

Tanagers and buntings frosty at Ontario feeders, Mourning Warblers in the Midwest marked for an early end: such birds represent an extreme in a spectrum of birds we often label "lingers"—these birds are usually not at all "hardy" away from artificial sources of food, at least in the given geographic context. Those winter birds called "half-hardy" are slightly north of their core winter ranges and always irregular in occurrence at the northern margins of winter range. In some reports, they are called "overwintering" rather than "wintering" birds, to mark their marginal or extralimital statuses, but often the label "lingering" is applied. In this issue's regional reports are many hundreds of records of such birds. Unlike the Mourning Warbler in Kentucky, these half-hardy birds are not boldfaced and thus eas-

ily overlooked in a skim of the reports. However, they are tracked well by most editors, particularly where human populations are dense and Christmas Bird Counts and other such efforts abound, e.g., around the southern margins of the Great Lakes and in the so-called Northeast Corridor, between the District of Columbia area and eastern Massachusetts. Here, as Pam Hunt observes, birds that typically winter farther south (largely in the Southeast) invariably "generate much excitement when they linger long enough to be tallied on New England Christmas Bird Counts." The list of such species was impressively long in winter 2005-2006: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Winter Wren, Eastern Towhee, and several species of warbler and sparrow. But, as Hunt rightly notes, "weather does not explain [these species'] exceptional abundance during the Christmas counts." She continues: "It is conceivable that the inclement weather of the 2005 breeding season played a role in their tardiness: perhaps early-nesting species failed on their first attempts and had to re-nest in midsummer, resulting in many late fledglings. Without detailed data on age ratios, and perhaps from banding stations, we may never know what was behind the pattern."

This essay has typically shied away from analyzing patterns of lingering/overwintering/half-hardy passerines, and one reason for this is probably the difficulty in quantifying the differences between warmer and colder winters: we countenance average meteorological conditions, over large areas, which tells us very little about how individual birds might fare during local cold spells or bouts of inclement weather. We know very little about how these birds fare in midwinter (how many could be found if we conducted Christmas counts in late January?), how many survive, or how many might be facultative migrants, those that leave the area when the conditions become too harsh. Another reason might be that such species become more difficult to track in areas where they are not quite rare enough to receive mention in print. But the main reason is that our enterprise here is not an analysis based on decades' worth of data but a limited overview of a single season. Even when we look back on multiple past seasons, we deal mostly with impressions and are rarely able to adjust even our careful tallies of extralimital birds to take into account

“observer effort.” And so even careful tracking of species such as Eastern Phoebe in West Virginia and Ohio (see the thoughtful S.A. item by Victor Fazio and Rick Wiltraut) can be difficult to put into comparative context.

But speculation without shame has always been a forte of this column; we should not let a winter season pass without skating on thin ice. And so what of these northerly Gray Catbirds that were reported so widely in the eastern half of the continent? In reading the regional reports, we see that they were not evenly distributed in December–January. Over 30 catbirds were found between the Atlantic Provinces and Québec, a record; Maine had 14; and Vermont and New Hampshire had at least a dozen between the two states. Some New England Christmas Bird Counts set record highs for the species: in Rhode Island, 90 and 96 were on the Newport–Westport C.B.C. and Block Island C.B.C., respectively. Indeed, Rhode Island counts found 315 catbirds in total, almost double the previous high. To the south, 20 on the Southern Bucks County, Pennsylvania C.B.C. and 129 on Cape May’s were remarkable numbers. In the Midwest, however, catbirds were more thinly distributed: just two each in Illinois and Minnesota, four each in Ohio and Michigan. To the south, in Kentucky and Tennessee, 13 catbirds was a very high winter count, and two in West Virginia was above average. Farther west, where catbirds are regular vagrants, seven were in Colorado, three in New Mexico, singles in Wyoming and Nebraska, and one made it through 8 December near Osoyoos, British Columbia.

There is a wider context for the catbird numbers: mimids made news in many areas east of the Rockies. Single Brown Thrashers out of place included singles in Newfoundland, northern New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and New York’s Adirondacks, and there were five in Québec, four in the Western Great Lakes, scores in New England, and 71 on Cape May’s C.B.C. The eight-catbird “mimid winter” in Colorado and Wyoming also boasted 12 Northern Mockingbirds, 38 Sage Thrashers, three Brown Thrashers, and two Long-billed Thrashers. Other errant thrashers were a Sage at Port Weller, Ontario 24–27 February and three in Kenedy County, Texas 21–22 February; and a Northern Mockingbird in the Yukon 13 November–14 January.

While it is conceivable that late fledg-

ings resulted in more lingering birds in the Northeast, another set of explanations also commends itself, particularly in light of this broader context of wayward mimids. In the East, autumn 2005 was noteworthy for strong cold fronts that moved record-high numbers of mid- and late-season migrants toward the coast. In several locations in the Hudson–Delaware region, local counts of several species shattered previous high counts by a wide margin. Catbirds figured prominently in several such fallouts. Several systems also brought large numbers of birds northward as apparent reverse migrants; by the hundreds, at least, catbirds arrived across Atlantic Canada as so-called reverse migrants on 18 October. Yet another wave of birds, including catbirds, arrived in Atlantic Canada, especially Nova Scotia, in late October as exhausted entrainees of Hurricane *Wilma*, the impact of which was considerable in the Canadian Maritimes (Dinsmore and Farnsworth 2006). Some of the displaced *Wilma* birds remained into December—species as diverse as Northern Shoveler, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Forster’s Tern, Tree and Barn Swallows, but some of these were not observed after early December (see Dalzell’s column); catbirds continued in some places well into winter. To the south of Canada, *Wilma*’s influence was hard to perceive after the last few Magnificent Frigatebirds and Chimney Swifts trickled through in November and late December, respectively. The “spectacular” autumn fallouts of migrants from New England through northern Delaware—in addition to the *Wilma* survivors and the waves of reverse migrants arriving on the southwesterly winds preceding frontal passages—certainly could have contributed to the record-high numbers of Gray Catbirds, Hermit Thrushes, and Winter Wrens found on Christmas Bird Counts in the Northeast. The mild weather may then have permitted them to thrive and made them more detectable—after all, humans tend to vote, and to survey birds, more readily under sunny skies. This set of observations might account for the higher overall counts of mimids in Northeast than the Midwest, which was hit harder with cold weather in December and which was farther from the autumn’s fallout zones. Together with the elevated numbers of species like Eastern Phoebe and Hermit Thrush in adjacent states (Pennsylvania, Ohio) and states just to the south of the Midwest (West Virginia, Kentucky) and elevated numbers of, for in-

stance, Rusty Blackbird—both in core range and extraliminally, the first time in over a decade for such positive news about this declining species—the large numbers of mimids and of mid- and late-season migrants overall suggest a good breeding season for many species.

This familiar old formula (productive breeding season + strong autumn storms + warm winter = high diversity/numbers of half-hardy birds) may be satisfactory to explain some patterns of winter bird distribution, but what of the broader continental context? After all, the larger-than-average numbers of mimids and Hermit Thrushes in Colorado are probably not connected to the autumn weather patterns that made birding so memorable in locations such as Central Park in New York City. And birds far (1000–2000 km) out of winter range, such as Colorado’s Long-billed Thrasher or Ontario’s Sage Thrasher, probably have no connection to coastal storm activity, for instance. Moreover, as Pam Hunt rightly suggests, we have no way of knowing that at least some of the catbirds on the Christmas counts were not local birds just hanging out or hanging on. Analyzing birders’ assumptions about fall migration, Sullivan (2004) emphasized that Atlantic coastal fallouts must certainly be comprised not only of properly oriented migrants but also of mis-oriented migrants—birds that had been moving northward through the interior in the autumn as others moved southward but are then pushed coastward (either on southwesterly or northwesterly winds). Clearly, the winter season “inherits” a great many of these late-autumn birds, so the question of birds’ movements in relation to the weather in the autumn is germane to an understanding of the winter season. Certainly, most of us have come to view bird fallouts not as the product of a uniform migratory wave of birds directed by a single aspect of weather but as a cross-section of intersecting movements of birds. Although we experience fallouts as singular experiences, they are surely composed of multiple components; radar ornithology has begun to unravel some of the complexity of bird movements, especially during nocturnal migration. The Long-billed Thrashers in Colorado, like other surprising post-nesting wanderers of late (Pyrrhuloxia in Ontario, Short-tailed Hawk in Michigan), spur us to reflect on how we use comfortable, casual labels such as “lingerer” or “vagrant” for our wintering birds: if we consider these more extreme records in light of the larger

picture of a season's bird distribution (for instance, the mimid winter east of the Rockies this season), the thought may occur to us that the Long-billed Thrasher at Chico Basin Ranch, Colorado, the Brown Thrasher on Miscou Island, New Brunswick, and the Curve-billed Thrasher in Sioux County, Nebraska (a long-time resident!) might not be indicators of disparate phenomena but of a single phenomenon that is manifested in different aspects or to different degrees, depending on the individual and the species. Could it be that the warming climate is a common stimulus that links apparently disparate bird phenomena—the apparent increases in vagrants, in reverse migrants, in so-called “lingering” birds, and in spring overshoots? Could a warming climate be a goad for some individuals to remain farther north for longer periods, for some to disperse *northward* rather than southward in autumn, for some to fly well north of typical range in spring as well? (The scientific debate still rages about whether increased hurricane activity is a result of global climate change, but one could in theory add this to the list, and with it, the two Gray Catbirds on the St. Pierre C.B.C. off the Newfoundland coast.) In other words, could the terms we use to describe changes in bird distribution—whether the given term falls under the general umbrella of “shift” or “displacement”—be reducible to a single concept, such as “dispersant” or “pioneer”? The former term is neutral enough, the latter perhaps too colorful, but let's use “pioneer” anyhow, to remind ourselves that some of these wanderers can sometimes put down roots and extend their winter ranges.

We are comfortable with what we consider the established winter ranges in New England of Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren; but reading back on reports in *Bird-Lore* and *Audubon Field Notes* from many years ago, one perceives quickly that both editors and observers were very excited, even astonished by the patterns of northward dispersal in autumn, northerly overwintering, spring overshooting, and range expansion in these and other species (Glossy Ibis, Black Vulture, etc.). Perhaps we moderns are now in the position of the Vermonter of 1924, utterly bowled over to see a Northern Cardinal appear among the Pine Grosbeaks at her feeding station. Are today's nine Dusky-capped Flycatchers and nine Painted Redstarts in southern California—birds we might call vagrants or reverse migrants today—the heralds of

expanded winter ranges in these species? Carolina Wren has expanded not just to the north, of course, but also westward, and this season saw pioneers either continuing or appearing in Arizona, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba. Although we may perceive the wren's range expansion (or the cardinal's, etc.) as a slow, steady annexation of new areas, the reality of most such range expansions has been much sloppier, involving many wildly extralimital outliers, including many pioneers that did not survive or thrive in the new environments. For the wren, pioneering by no means produces a stable northern border of range—its fortunes rise and fall annually, depending on the severity of the winter, as do those of other species (Root 1988). In this issue's reports, we perceive weak patterns of northerly wintering in Golden-crowned Kinglet (Yukon, North Dakota, Manitoba), Blue-headed Vireo (Illinois, Kentucky), and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota, Vermont, Nova Scotia—and 14 in Colorado!). These patterns bear watching: they are probably more likely to indicate the beginnings of wintering range extensions than are the records of Indigo Buntings shivering at feeders in the north country (Kaufman 1998).

Other patterns of pioneering are quite strong but evolving with dizzying rapidity. We have seen the western states' and border states' hummingbirds, those seemingly fragile miniatures, storm the continent over the past several decades, and this winter spectacle shows no signs of slowing. As with Carolina Wrens, and probably like some of the more recent pioneers, there has been a pattern of jaw-dropping vagrants, thousands of kilometers from home, accompanied by a much less startling gradual expansion from core range. Broad-billed Hummingbird, still in the jaw-dropping phase, turned up this season in Arkansas, Nevada, and coastal Texas, and three were in southern California; Broad-tailed Hummingbirds represented remarkable records for Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia (three!), Arkansas, and El Salvador; an Anna's was in Ohio; single Costa's were in Rockport, Texas (Figure 4) and Montgomery, Alabama; a Violet-crowned was in northern California (the state's fifth); and in *one birder's yard* in Victoria, Texas this season, there were at minimum 124 hummers of nine species: 41 Buff-bellied, 37 Rufous, 23 Black-chinned, 8 Allen's, 5 Broad-tailed, 5 Anna's, 3 Calliope, and one Ruby-throated,

in addition to the above-noted Broad-billed, seen only on 26 February. We often imagine the hummers' range expansion to be a product of the hummingbird-feeder craze, but in southern states from Texas to Florida, even into the Carolinas, these birds are frequently seen eating insects and attending flowers away from feeding stations. Feeders and exotic plantings are certainly crucial in most areas, particularly the northerly areas, but they are not the birds' sole means of sustenance. Each species presents a different pattern of winter-season expansion, but the general dual pattern of extreme extralimital records and rather gradual expansion of new wintering ranges, mostly in the Southeast, holds true for the majority. The astonishing numbers in the Texas garden illustrate, roughly, the ratios of hummers expected farther east, with the exception of Buff-bellied—for now, at least; but how much longer until North Carolina gets a Buff-bellied, for instance?

Swallows would seem to be following the hummingbirds' daring attempts to winter well away from core range, leading one wit to opine that “swallows are the ‘new hummingbirds.’” Barn Swallows in the West and Cave Swallows in the East are scarcely the only species involved in this phenomenon. Ted Floyd (2005) noted that winter Northern Rough-winged Swallows in the Philadelphia area were perhaps without precedent but not without context; as if to underscore that understatement, 125 were found at the Northeast Water Treatment Facility, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania through December, with 95 still there 7 January and some hanging on into March. At Pointe Mouillee State Game Area in Michigan, Tree Swallows had never been recorded wintering, but two dozen were there 29 December and three through at least 15 February. Single Tree Swallows wintered at Glacier Ridge Metropark, Ohio and at Hamlin, in upstate New York. A Bank Swallow at Huntington Beach State Park, South Carolina on 7 January was just as unexpected. Whereas Tree Swallows may eat small fruits to survive moderately cold winters, other American swallow species are not known to do this, and so these insectivorous species so far from normal wintering areas must in many cases perish. It is difficult to see such behavior as consistent with a concept of pioneering, as it would seem to us—as for the Bell's Vireo in Halifax, Nova Scotia this past December—a dead end.

And what of the strange phenomenon

this season with Townsend's Warblers this past winter? As the storms began to pound the Pacific Northwest in late December, reports of the species in coastal Oregon and Washington flooded the Internet. The C.B.C. in Eugene logged 141 on New Year's Day, and a week later, regional editor David Irons found a staggering 59 on a short walk around his Eugene neighborhood. Oregon birders found 300 in January, with some backyard feeders hosting as many as a dozen birds; and feeders in southwestern Washington recorded up to 22 birds! Although the species is regularly found wintering in small numbers in this part of the world, these counts were several orders of magnitude larger than normal. Were these birds simply out in the countryside, already locally present, but driven toward the warmer microclimates of feeders and suburbs by the heavy weather? Or does this represent a consolidation of the winter range of the species at its northern terminus? The two disjunct winter ranges of the species provide some food for thought: partly in the mountains of Mexico, partly along the Pacific Coast. Was the latter range established gradually, over centuries, as some few birds remained on the breeding grounds later and later, others migrated toward wintering zones but reversed course at some point? Are several other species poised to make a similar movement, including warblers that currently winter south of the border, such as Hermit Warbler, three of which (plus a hybrid) were found in Oregon among the Townsend's flocks?

In other words: the winter birds we may consider foolhardy today may be just the vanguard of birds to be considered normal winter residents in the future. Indeed, even this winter's apparent kamikaze birds—Alaska's White Wagtail, Ontario's Sage Thrasher, Yukon's Northern Mockingbird—may not look all that unusual in just a few years, just as birders in Oregon and Washington now (allegedly!) almost yawn when hearing about yet another wintering Western Tanager or Williamson's Sapsucker. With long-term projects such as the Christmas Bird Count, eBird, Project Feederwatch, and others, it should be possible to document changes in wintering ranges and in turn to analyze these against meteorological data, to see if there is strong correlation between warming trends and changes in winter ranges. Our participation in such cit-



Figure 4. This male Costa's Hummingbird brightened a garden in Rockport, Texas from 19 (here 21) February through 3 March 2006. The obliging bird provided the second record for the central bend. *Photograph by Susan Beree.*

izen-science projects will be important for scientists seeking to fine-tune the avian data against the climatological data.

Most of this column has been devoted to landbirds thus far; of course, waterbirds, too, have been wintering north of their typical winter ranges in recent years. With the exception of waterfowl, waterbirds often take a back seat to landbirds in the winter season, a bias perhaps indicative of the great number of feeding stations set up for passerines and extremely low number of such stations for grebes, shearwaters, phalaropes, and their kind. Many extralimital/unseasonable seabirds show little or no patterns, just scattered reports, such as this winter's lost and/or late Sooty Shearwaters (Nova Scotia, Virginia), Black-capped Petrel (Virginia), Pomarine Jaegers (Ontario, Ohio, Alabama), Parasitic Jaegers (Illinois, Virginia), Common Tern (Indiana), Royal Tern (Arizona), and Sandwich Tern (New Jersey). Such records seem to offer little insight beyond documenting extreme dates/locations for these seabirds in a warm winter. Perhaps at least some of these birds, like the feeder-bound Neotropical migrants mentioned above, were mis-oriented and/or not in good health. But perhaps, like more numerous species, they are pioneers whose strategies will turn out to be productive in the long term. We have seen several examples since the 1980s of this, in both ardeids and pelicans, which were recorded north of normal areas quite frequently again this winter (and also in spring). In the East, American White Pelicans have been reported increasingly often, and farther north (and/or inland), than in

the past. Their numbers continue to increase in relatively new wintering areas in the Carolinas and Georgia—e.g., 109 in the ACE Basin of South Carolina, 80 in Camden County, Georgia, and up to 30 in Carteret County, North Carolina. Likewise in interior Alabama, where once rare in winter, large counts up to 116 were tallied. Probably related to their increasing presence in the Southeast, up to 25 were counted between New York and Maryland, and one on the Ohio River in Cabell County, West Virginia 17 February was unprecedented. Winter Brown Pelicans, no longer a winter novelty in many areas, were reported twice in Maryland, twice in New Jersey, and once in Washington state and Delaware; far-inland birds in Georgia, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and western Texas were also unusual.

Before closing this section, we should remind ourselves that long-term winter phenomena continued this season. Many dove species, particularly Ruddy Ground-Doves in the Southwest and White-winged Doves almost everywhere but also Inca Doves, wintered farther north or attempted to do so. Geese of almost all species continued to show increases in number and in some cases in extent of winter range. Mexican birds visited new spots in the border states, notably Rufous-backed Robins (Arizona, California, Texas), Yellow Grosbeak and Green Kingfisher (New Mexico), and Red-faced Warbler (Arizona, where rare in winter). We often focus on rarities and miss important context: if you passed quickly through the Arizona report, for instance, did you see that 50 wintering Ash-throated Flycatchers received boldfaced type? (And who noticed that a single bird wintered in New Mexico?) Most Ash-throateds winter in western Mexico, but wintering birds are now found in Gulf Coast states, and one overwintered in Richmond, Virginia this season. Are the November birds we see on the East Coast each year simply outliers in a bold pioneering of new winter range as indicated by these sharply elevated Arizona numbers?

Influxes, irruptions, invasions (& wrecks, early migrants, and 'Expresses')

Some familiar winter "flights" of birds, as they are often poetically called, appear to have no obvious connection to climate change at all. The erratic influxes and wanderings of wintering owls, finches, hawks, waxwings, and other species well away

from their core ranges in the North are often the most engaging and enjoyable aspects of winter for birders, who are lately able to predict, monitor, and even map (see <www.ebird.org>) such species more efficiently than ever before. But this season saw few such events in North America, whether of altitudinal migrants in the West or latitudinal ones in the East. A few extralimital finches here and there, notably Purple Finches, and a modest "echo" flight of last year's large influx of Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owls, were confined to predictable corridors. A few Pygmy Nuthatches strayed out onto the Plains, Bohemian Waxwings made news in the Great Basin and northern New York, and Dovekies made a remarkable showing off Long Island—1675 counted on 11 February, the best count in 70 years! But, by and large, editors noted that this was an "off year" for irruptive species.

One exception was Snowy Owl. California's first Snowy since 1978, near Davis on 13-14 January, was among many indications that this flight was more a western and Midwestern phenomenon than an eastern one: Washington had 74 (best flight since 1996), Oregon 14, British Columbia "a good showing," Idaho nine, western Montana 41+ (probably record high; recent averages three per winter), eastern Montana and North Dakota "good numbers," and South Dakota up to 20. In the Midwest, at least 161 were in Minnesota (the state's second largest invasion on record), at least 118 in Wisconsin, and 30+ in Michigan. The Atlantic Provinces tallied about 25, and Québec had above-average numbers (with an excellent count of 23 on the Hébertville plain). Interestingly, southern Ontario detected no major flight of the species, and New England had a below-average flight: up to 15 in Massachusetts, three each in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine, and singles in Vermont and New Hampshire. Surprisingly, the Hudson-Delaware region recorded 60 Snowy Owls, Maryland four, and Virginia one, the southernmost of the season. That's about 650 Snowy Owls reported to regional editors, certainly well above most winters, and widespread mortality (so often the case) was not reported, so perhaps at least some of these birds made it through the season.

Occasionally, an irruption of one species collides with an irruption of another. The powerful coastal storms in the Pacific Northwest 20 December through 10

January produced several winter wrecks of Red Phalaropes—a "wreck" being an irruption thought to be occasioned by harsh weather, which causes birds to become weakened and move inshore or onshore, particularly when food is scarce. In California, 1500 were at King Salmon and 2000 on Humboldt Bay, both 23 December; in Oregon, 2841 were counted on the Port Orford C.B.C. that day, and 1000 were at Coos Bay the next. Observers on these dates saw phalaropes fall prey to Snowy Owls, which were concentrated in coastal areas such as Ocean Shores, Washington, which recorded up to 10 owls. At King Salmon, phalarope numbers peaked 1 January at 2399 before falling off through the month. To the south, where safe from Snowy Owls, phalarope counts of 500-750 were made as far south as Pescadero 26 December, and counts of up to 75 as far as San Luis Obispo County, California. Singles to dozens were recorded well inland, in all manner of habitats, even east of the Cascade Crest, where one was found near Umapine, Washington 23 December. Interestingly, both the phalarope wreck and the Snowy Owl invasion made headlines in the mass media. (An unrelated sidebar: Eastern Screech-Owls, which appear to be expanding in Texas, and again recorded in eastern New Mexico this season, were found several times preying on another expanding species—White-winged Dove—in Texas.)

Another exception in the mostly irruption-free winter was the large flight of Black-capped Chickadees, which spanned eastern Canada through central Maryland, the most extensive such flight in some years (Dinsmore and Farnsworth 2006). This irruption began in mainland eastern Canada in October but by December reached well into the mid-Atlantic. Over 130 were recorded in central/eastern Maryland, one in north-central Virginia, three in southern New Jersey, and 15 in Delaware—the latter a remarkable count for the Delmarva Peninsula. As usual, a few Boreal Chickadees got into the act, with singles away from typical locations in Monroe County, New York 1 December, Greene County, New York 16 January, in southern Vermont and southern New Hampshire, plus three in Massachusetts. We tend to ascribe large irruptive flights to multiple factors—typically a productive breeding season followed by scarcity of food in the core range—and at least the latter was almost certainly to blame for the wandering Snowy Owls and Black-capped Chick-

adees. We have well over 150 years of ornithological history that suggests such irruptions predate the current era of warming; however, tundra- and taiga-nesting species may be particularly vulnerable to a warming climate, so that tracking their southward irruptions is an important endeavor. Even though these birds are more familiar than visitors from the south, the dynamics of their distribution are well worth monitoring. Black-capped Chickadee irruptions have become quite rare in recent decades as far as the shores of Chesapeake Bay, so there is at least some evidence of range retraction in this species.

In the "almost-irruptive" category, western thrushes have been found out of range rather frequently in recent winters, notably Varied Thrush and Townsend's Solitaire. While solitaires out of range were fewer this year than last (Floyd 2005)—just three in Ontario, eight in Minnesota, nine in Wisconsin, four in Québec, and singles in Michigan, Indiana, and Nova Scotia—following a strong fall, Varied Thrushes had one of the more far-reaching winter flights in recent memory: 24 in Minnesota, eight each in Ontario and Wisconsin, seven in Manitoba, six in Michigan, four each in Québec and Texas, three in Utah, two each in Nebraska, Saskatchewan, and Massachusetts, and singles in Maryland, North Carolina, Kentucky, and New Mexico. Both patterns are typical for these species, whose extralimital numbers vary from winter to winter but may be showing a long-term increase despite the irregularity of their appearances. The subject might make for an interesting paper, as these species are usually well tracked, but the reasons for their irregular dispersals out of range are not known, though food shortages very probably play a role.

While we often call birds that make erratic appearances from the north or from montane habitats "irruptive," southern birds that might appear in similar patterns usually win that label only in summer and early autumn, not in winter. Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, which historically have wandered in spring and fall, and are quite unpredictable wanderers among American waterfowl, put in winter appearances in places where unrecorded in some years. At California's Salton Sea, four were shot by hunters in about early November, and singles were in Goleta and El Monte; in Utah, three were seen at Bear River 21 January (Figure 5); in Baja California, Lagunas de Chametla had three on 23 December (and

one later in March); in Arizona, a single bird, presumably the November Scottsdale bird, reappeared nearby through January, and other singles were in Mesa and Topock Marsh—but a golf course in verdant Green Valley hit the jackpot with a flock of 18, historically precedented but not in 20 years. In Texas, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks often linger into midwinter in the extreme southern part of the state, but they are extraordinarily rare elsewhere in February; 20 birds counted between Harris, Travis, and Fort Bend Counties were noteworthy, as were two in Cameron Parish, Louisiana 28 February, though these could also have been early migrants. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, which usually attract attention in spring and summer, were likewise found out of range this past winter. One shot at Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee 2 January was the most extralimital to the north, but one on Grenada 21 December was almost as far from home (if more likely of the nominate subspecies from South America?). Black-bellied peaked at 1160 in New Orleans's Audubon Park—with four Fulvous among them, 30 January. Were these Fulvous Whistling-Ducks simply taking cues for spring migration during midwinter—as, clearly, dozens of bird species appear to be doing lately? Should they be considered “early migrants” or, instead, belated late-autumn “irruptors” that continued to straggle northward into a mild winter?

Could we call certain gulls irruptive? Nineteen Slaty-backed Gulls away from Alaska in a season was unheard of: three different singles at St. John's, Newfoundland 28 January–12 February, 18 March–2 April, and 23 April–7 May); one at the Point Pelee Birding Area, Ontario 22–26 January; one near Rochester, New York 11 February and later; 10 at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California 2 December–8 March; one at the Alviso Salt Ponds, Santa Clara County, California 14 January; one at Fremont, Alameda County, California 9 March; one at Renton, Washington (a ninth for the state); and one at a Houston, Texas landfill 22 February. Have these birds always been among us, only to be slowly discerned by patient gull-watchers like Dave Tetlow, Alvaro Jaramillo, Dan Singer, David VanderPluym, Dean Ware, Martin Reid, Bruce Mac-tavish, and Cameron Cox? Or do

the far-flung records hint at a coming invasion, the start of a winter-range extension into the Americas like that of Lesser Black-backed Gull? After all, just a solo Slaty-backed Gull at St. Louis, Missouri—well, plus a Smew, a Whooper Swan, a Siberian Accentor, a Siberian Stonechat, a Siberian Rubythroat, two Rustic Buntings, and at least a dozen Bramblings (Lehman 1984)—were responsible for the notion of the “Siberian Express” in this column back in the chilly winter of 1983–1984, and the majority of these birds had arrived in the fall season. Coming from roughly the same area as the Slaty-backed this season, an apparent *kamschatschensis* Mew Gull (sometimes called Kamchatka Gull) was carefully studied in Providence, Rhode Island 6 January–11 February. (Two other Mew Gulls, subspecies unknown, were found in Ohio.) Also from Siberia, Vega Gull—a taxon listed as the *vega* subspecies of Herring Gull by North American authorities—made quiet headlines alongside the Slaty-backed in California at Venice State Beach, where apparently three different first-winter birds were seen 8–15 February and a third-winter bird 21 February (<www.coastside.net/chucaogulls/Vega.htm>). Other birds that almost certainly came from eastern Eurasia or Alaska this season were late-season (rather than mid-autumn) migrants: Bramblings in British Columbia and Iowa (and more in spring), Baikal Teal in Oregon and California, a Falcated Duck (returning) in Oregon, Bewick's Swans in British Columbia and Washington (five!), and 11 Emperor Geese between coastal Ore-

gon and northern California. This may still fall short of an “Express,” but we are reminded that not all influxes are from the south or north: some are from the west, from Siberia, and a few are from the other side of Eurasia: in this season, Newfoundland's now-routine Yellow-legged Gulls (two adults through mid-February, one third-winter 28 May), a European Herring Gull in Florida (11–21 February), Pink-footed Geese in Connecticut (4–12 February), Québec (25 March), and Nebraska (30 January), and Barnacle Geese in New Brunswick, Québec, Connecticut, New York (three), New Jersey (one or two), and Maryland must have come from the direction of Greenland, Iceland, or the eastern North Atlantic—still, scarcely a European Express.

How many of us are actually scanning slowly through enormous flocks of gulls and geese to look for European Herring Gull (now split by European ornithologists from our American Herring Gull, *Larus smithsonianus*), or Vega Gull (also now split in Eurasia from Herring Gulls), or Yellow-legged Gull (split from Herring over a decade ago), or Pink-footed Goose (now increasing on the nesting grounds, as near as Greenland—and easy to overlook among thousands of Canada Geese)? And for those of us who live among scads of Great Black-backed Gulls: are we looking carefully for Slaty-backed Gulls among them? A refined understanding of the distribution of such subtle species depends entirely on our acumen and our careful field work: although there are many biologists who study geese on the wintering grounds, few study gulls, and there are zero funded studies of vagrant gulls in North America! Although the continent's overall increase in observer effort cannot account for many of the changes in bird distribution we document, a few keen observers who regularly check local gull aggregations can rewrite the distributional maps over time.

The strong flight of Asian gulls that spanned the continent seems, oddly, almost pale next to the documentation of New York's (and the Atlantic Coast's) first Western Gull, an adult off the coast of Long Island 11 February. This bird, apparently of the nominate (northern) subspecies, could be the product of



Three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were observed 21 January 2006 at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder County, marking just the third occurrence of the species in Utah and the first documented since 1959. These were part of a widespread invasion of the Southwest that also reached Arizona, California, Baja California, and probably Texas. Photograph by Paul Higgins.

the same meteorological anomaly that kept the Northwest so rainy and the continent so warm: the unusual extension of the East Asian Jet Stream. The term "Siberian Express" has been convincingly applied to autumn weather patterns that bring Siberian migrants across the Bering Sea and into North America—a decade or so after the phrase was coined, we are already jaded by widespread Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Long-billed Murrelets—but has never been used to explain movements of mostly sedentary birds of the Pacific coast of North America. Could such a pattern, if it occurred in midwinter rather than autumn (the pattern did not appear in autumn 2005), account for a vagrant Western Gull off New York? Or a Glaucous-winged Gull in Newfoundland (21 March)? We tend to assume that such coastal species are sedentary, but the heavy weather that brought a Red Phalarope inland as far as Umapine, Washington might also have moved a gull over the Cascade Mountains and perhaps farther eastward. It is difficult to imagine that we could see a pattern of Western Gulls appearing in the East, but perhaps no more difficult than coming to terms with eastern records of Heermann's Gulls or Black-tailed Gulls. Because such movements (displacements—or whatever the term!) occur along an east-west axis, unlike the northward expansions of so many species, it is also difficult to grasp how they might relate, if at all, to a warming planet. However these birds came to be where they ended up, the Fulvous Whistling-Ducks and the Slaty-backed Gulls could well be considered "irruptors" if future seasons do not reveal an increasing trend, either in the long term or the short. However, if such birds do show increases, along with consolidation of regular winter range, in the long run, we may consider them "invaders" instead.

Whatever the ultimate causes of their movements, and however we choose to label them based on our deductions about these causes, we can be assured that the fast-paced changes in bird distribution in our era will leave us few dull moments. We birders are privileged to perceive concrete signs of a crisis on our planet, but unlike past crises—the wholesale destruction of habitats, the proliferation of pesticides—we often witness not the loss of species, not the canary-in-a-coalmine metaphor turned literal, but the appearance of fascinating new birds on our local patch. Those of us who have grown up in the culture of birding, a culture scarcely a half-century

old, are invariably elated on finding a Painted Bunting or a Yellow Grosbeak or a Hooded Oriole hundreds of miles north of its range. Our eyes and minds tell us: this is a marvelous discovery and a beautiful bird. But intellectually, we are coming to realize that such birds are almost certainly the harbingers of a coming wave of environmental calamities. Perhaps we birders should, without losing our deep sense of wonder at what we are witnessing, become the modern-day counterparts of the ancient Greek augurs—people who could observe flights of unusual birds and put an interpretation to them, make sense of them for people who had no understanding of bird movements. Do our friends and relatives understand the urgency of the current crisis? Would a view of the world through our eyes open theirs? Are we all working together to reduce our negative effects on the planet and all its inhabitants? In 2006, most scientists believe that it is still feasible to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and slow the warming of the planet and the rapid melting of glaciers and of polar ice. But most also believe that we have very little time in which to act effectively. I think it's high time we add augury to our arsenal, lest we, and those who follow us, lose the luxury of "birding" as we know it.

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Editors' Notebook

“These synoptic weather maps were reproduced incorrectly in Figure 5, A–H, of the Changing Seasons essay by Stephen Dinsmore and Andrew Farnsworth, *North American Birds* 60: 17. We apologize to these authors, and the readers, for the printing error and hope everyone will go back and read the article anew, with these corrected maps.”

—The Editors

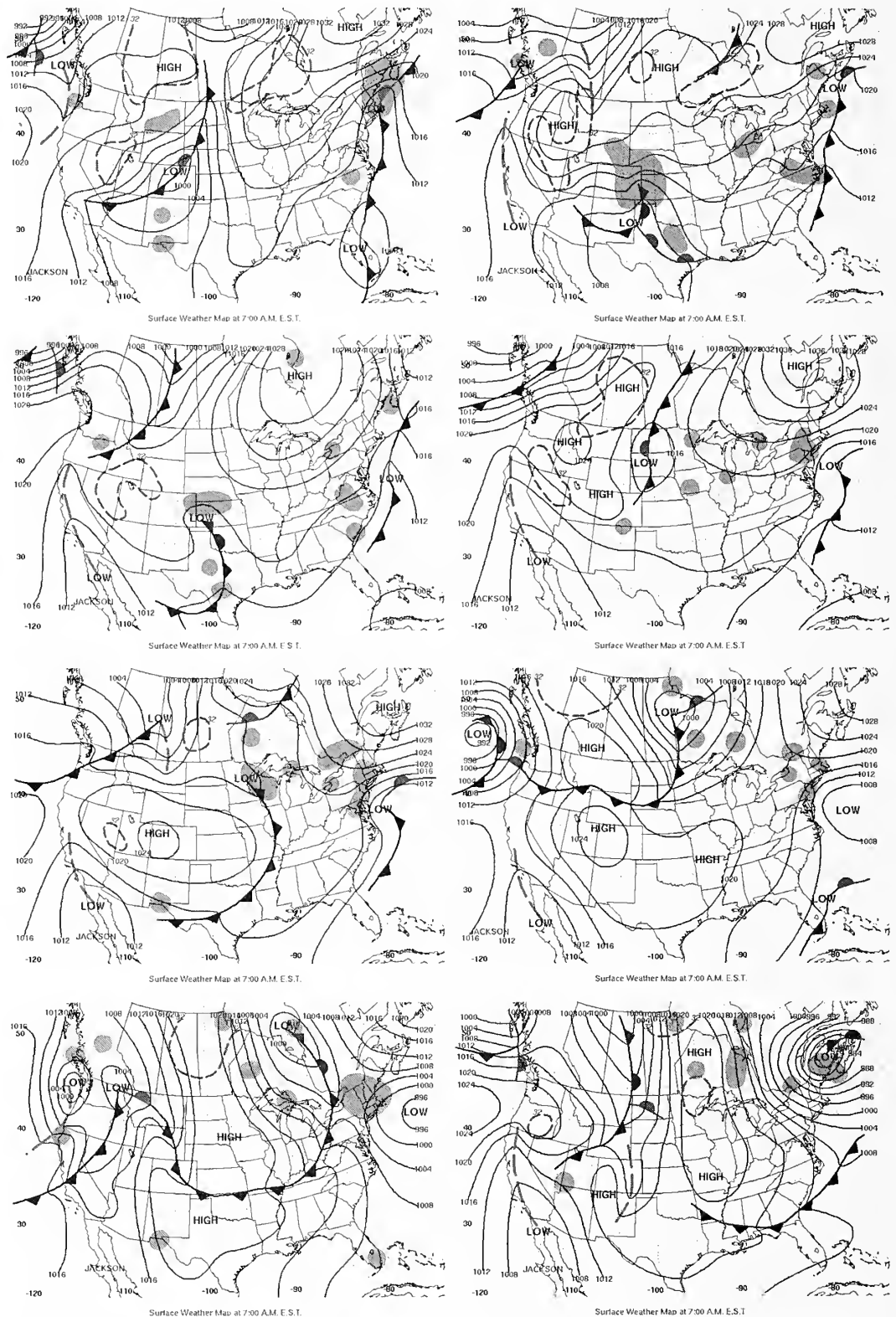


Figure 5 A-H. A mosaic of synoptic maps showing the 0700 Eastern Standard time positions of progression and occlusion of frontal boundaries on dates in 2005: A) 9 October, B) 10 October, C) 11 October, D) 12 October, E) 13 October, F) 14 October, G) 15 October, and H) 16 October. The first six (A-F) maps show a frontal boundary that has stalled off the Atlantic coast. To the west of the front, winds are generally northerly and easterly, with scattered precipitation visible on each day. By 15-16 October (maps G, H), low pressure off the coast of New England has intensified and started to move northward and eastward out of the region. Simultaneously, a stronger cold front approaches from the west, creating conditions favorable for a large-scale movement of birds.

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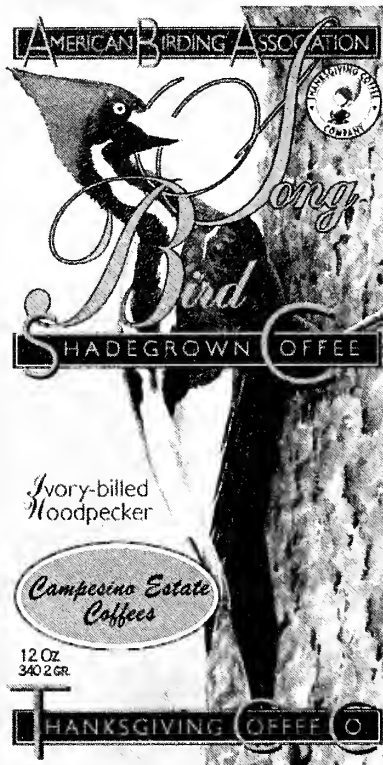
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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

*	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

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Great Egret by H. Douglas Pratt

Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon



Brian Dalzell

“Abnormal” is the new normal weather in the Atlantic Provinces, it would seem, and the winter of 2005–2006 was the warmest on record. The traditional “January thaw” lasted all month, with temperatures almost 5° C higher than normal, but with precipitation down a third (snowfall by 40%). Heavy rains fell over most of the Region in mid-January, when temperatures of 10° C caused Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers to commence calling, Ruffed Grouse to drum, and dandelions to flower. On Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick, maple syrup production began in mid-February, a full month ahead of normal. Northumberland Strait did not freeze over for the first time in recent memory, forcing Gray Seals to pup on-shore, and great clouds of red dust swirled over the normally snow-covered potato fields of western Prince Edward Island. As the global climate continues to change, we expect more of the same.

The only regions to experience normal snow cover were Labrador, western Newfoundland, and northwestern New Brunswick; eastern Newfoundland got buried in snow late in the period. The mild weather allowed many “Wilma waifs” from late October to survive much longer than normal, and lingering/wintering species were legion this year: American Bittern, Great and Snowy Egrets, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Long-billed Dowitcher, Forster’s Tern, Tree and Barn Swallows, and Gray Catbird, among others. Waterfowl such as Brant, Canada Goose, and Long-tailed Duck took advantage of mild conditions to return early or to remain in larger-than-normal numbers. New Brunswick had its highest-ever winter list (175 species), Nova Scotia tied their best total (214), and even Prince Edward Island tallied

a respectable 116 species for the season. I thank Blake Maybank, Ian McLaren, and Bruce Mactavish for their extensive assistance in the preparation of this report.

Abbreviations: C.B.I. (Cape Breton I., NS); C.S.I. (Cape Sable I., NS); G.M.I. (Grand Manan I., NB); H.R.M. (Halifax Regional Municipality, NS); NF (the island of Newfoundland, as opposed to the province of Newfoundland & Labrador [NL]); SPM (St. Pierre et Miquelon, France).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

Snow Geese were notable along the outer coast of Nova Scotia and s. Newfoundland in mid- to late Dec: 13 were at Dean’s Corner, Lunenburg, NS 26–27 Dec (JH), 9 at Hartlen’s Pt., H.R.M., NS 22–28 Dec (TP), 4 at Frenchman’s Cove, Burin Pen., NF 12 Dec+ (Allan Nolan), and 4 at Miquelon 23 Dec (Guillaume Desmalles). This flight likely brought Newfoundland’s first Ross’s Goose to St. John’s, an ad. 16 Dec+ (m.ob.). A Barnacle Goose at Moncton, NB into early Dec was of note (SIT). Canada Geese normally vacate Prince Edward I. in winter, but this year, thousands remained, such as 5000+ at Vernon R. throughout. Fair numbers of Brant began returning to spring staging areas in mid-Jan,

The best counts of American Wigeon were 75 on the Halifax C.B.C. 19 Dec and about 75 throughout the season at Wentworth Park, Sydney, NS. Eight Eurasian Wigeons wintered at St. John’s (BMT), 4 were at Glace Bay, NS 27 Dec (m.ob.), 4 at Grand Barachois, SPM into Dec (RE), 2 in se. New Brunswick in early Dec (SIT), and 2 at Sullivan’s Pond, H.R.M. in Feb (m.ob.). Near-record numbers of American Black Duck were found at St. Pierre et Miquelon, with counts of up to 575 at Grand Barachois, which notably did not freeze over significantly this winter (RE). Ten Blue-winged Teal included a pair at St. John, NB throughout (m.ob.), 2 on the Halifax–Dartmouth, NS C.B.C. 18 Dec, 3 at Lunenburg Harbour, NS 12 Jan (EM), one at Brier I., NS 13 Dec (EM), and a pair at C.S.I. throughout (MN). The total of 15+ Northern Shovelers was well above normal; notable were 6 in Antigonish, NS 16 Dec+ (RL), 3 at St. John’s (BMT, “a rare event”), 2 at Yarmouth, NS 14 Jan (GS), a female at St. Pierre (a *Wilma* evacee; RE), and singles at Montague, PEI 14 Jan (Charlie Trainor) and Windsor, Dominion, Dartmouth, and Port Williams, NS.

Three Canvasbacks were found at Cherry Hill Beach 1 Jan (SF) and one at Sackville, NB 25 Jan+ (Kathy Popma). Following last fall’s big flight, many Redheads remained behind to



At East Chezetcook, Nova Scotia, this Great Egret stayed at least into February 2006, the latest on record for the province (here 25 January). Photograph by Hans Toom.

principally at G.M.I. and C.S.I., a full month ahead of normal. Two imm. Mute Swans at Pembroke, Yarmouth, NS 11–18 Dec may have come from the nearest established population in s. Maine (MN); they furnished the 2nd provincial record of the species.

winter, e.g., 7 at Cap Bimet, Westmoreland, NB 1–4 Dec (SIT), 10 at Three Fathom Harbour, H.R.M. 29 Jan, and 5 at Oyster Bed Bridge, PEI 18 Feb (DO); and Newfoundland’s first winter record was furnished by a drake throughout at Spaniard’s Bay (BMT).

The largest wintering flock of Ring-necked Ducks to come to light was 10 at Salmon River, H.R.M. throughout (Joan Czapaly). Winter flocks of Greater Scaup continue to increase in Newfoundland; 100 through Feb at Miquelon Salt Pond was a notable number there (RE). King Eider is seldom reported from the Bay of Fundy shore of Nova Scotia, where 2 drakes were present at Port George 25 Jan+ (m.ob.). Long-tailed Duck wintered in greater numbers than normal around Prince Edward I. due to the lack of sea ice in protected bays—much to the consternation of mussel farmers, whose sites are normally frozen in. A good count of Barrow's Goldeneye for Nova Scotia was 12 at North Sydney 15 Jan (Andrew MacDonald).

Up to 6 Pied-billed Grebes wintered successfully along the coast of Nova Scotia, w. of Halifax; one near Miquelon Village, SPM 13 Dec was most unusual (RE). A Sooty Shearwater off C.S.I. 10 Feb was probably attempting to winter (GS); there are fewer than 10 records of the species in the w. North Atlantic in midwinter. One American Bittern per winter is normal, so 4 in Nova Scotia represents somewhat of an invasion: singles on the Halifax C.B.C. 19 Dec, at Lockeport 19 & 30 Dec (DC), at Smelt Cove, Lunenburg 7-9 Jan (JH), and very late near Dingwall, Victoria at the n. tip of Cape Breton 18 Feb (Fritz McEvoy). Great Egrets set winter survival records, with birds lasting until 23 Dec at St. Johns, NF, 1 Jan at Trinity Bay, NF (*vide* BMT), 28 Jan at East Chezzetcook, H.R.M. (Tim Wershler), and 20 Jan at Seal River, PEI (Walter Conohan). A Cattle Egret remained until 1 Dec near Grand Tracadie, PEI (Roy McNab). Single Snowy Egrets pushing the envelope were at St. Pierre Harbour, SPM 1-6 Dec (m.ob.) and at St. John's late Oct–23 Jan, the latter found dead 25 Jan (*vide* BMT). Tardy Black-crowned Night-Herons were found at C.S.I. in mid-Dec (*vide* MN) and St. John's 9 Dec (Dave Brown, KK), the latter found dead a few days later. The center of abundance for wintering Turkey Vulture in the Region is in Digby and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia; 10 were found on the C.B.C. at Brier I. 14 Dec, 20 at a Chebogue offal feeder 10 Feb (Jennifer LeBlanc), and an outlier at Shelburne 28 Feb (Roland Chiasson).

HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Cooper's Hawk is now a rare-but-regular winter resident throughout its breeding range in New Brunswick, where they appear to subsist principally on Rock Pigeons. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was carefully studied at Antigonish, NS 18 Dec (RL), while the identification



A species now annual in December in Newfoundland, this Dickcissel was photographed 7 December 2006 at Lower Cove. Photograph by S. LeShane.

of one at Mader's Cove, Lunenburg, NS 19 Dec was less certain (JH). A Red-shouldered Hawk at Pembroke, Yarmouth, NS in Jan provided one of very few winter records for the province (JN). An imm. Golden Eagle at the St. John's landfill 26 Dec+ was very rare for Newfoundland (BMT). Six imm. Bald Eagles together on the Isthmus of Miquelon 4 Jan was a high count locally (Christine Hebert). Reports of wintering Peregrine Falcon continue to increase: C.B.C. birds included 2 at Miquelon 3 Jan, 3 at Memramcook, NB 26 Dec, 3 at Halifax–Dartmouth, NS 18 Dec, plus singles in at least six other Nova Scotia and s. New Brunswick locales. A dark-morph Gyrfalcon found at Brier I., NS 14 Dec was the only report of the species (EM).

A moribund Virginia Rail found in a Christmas tree lot at Canso, NS 21-22 Dec (SB) was later taken into rehabilitation. A Purple Gallinule picked up on a street in St. John's, NF 30 Dec following strong southerly winds was later released in a city marsh (BMT). A few American Coots wintered in Nova Scotia as usual, but one at St. Pierre 5-29 Dec was notably far east (m.ob.). Further evidence of a warm winter, 19 species of shorebird were found in Nova Scotia this season. The rarest shorebird by far was a Northern Lapwing at St. Lawrence, Burin Pen., NF 30 Nov–4 Dec (Gail & Norman Wilson). The highest count of Black-bellied Plovers was 17 at C.S.I. 14 Jan (MN). Five Killdeer at St. Pierre 6 Dec were likely *Wilma* birds (PB); one lasted there until 17 Jan at Grand Barachois. Two American Avocets (leftover from *Wilma*) remained at Morien Bar, C.B.I. through 1 Dec (DM) The odd Greater Yellowlegs attempts to winter in sw. Nova Scotia, but one at Apple River, Cumberland, NS 1 Jan+ (Kathleen Spicer) was most unusual. A Lesser Yellowlegs was found at Cole Harbour, H.R.M. 15 Dec (Ian McLaren). A Marbled Godwit, also from *Wilma*, lingered until 6 Dec at Ogden's Pond, Antigonish, NS (RL). In the Region, Red Knots winter princi-

pally at St. Pierre et Miquelon, where 15 were found on the Isthmus of Miquelon 24 Dec (RE), and C.S.I., where 11 was a high count 14 Jan (MN). Four Semipalmated and 5 White-rumped Sandpipers were carefully studied at C.S.I. 14 Jan (MN), while a Least Sandpiper near Cape Race, NF 3 Dec was very late (BMT). A Baird's Sandpiper reported at River Bennett, C.B.I. 16 Dec was most unusual (SM, John McKay).

Purple Sandpiper winters regularly at St. Pierre et Miquelon, but 217 on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 19 Dec set a record. A flock of 45 Dunlins at Evangeline Beach, Kings, NS 17 Dec was away from usual winter haunts along the s. shore (PK, Barry Youll), where 68 were found at C.S.I. 14 Jan (MN). Notably late, thanks to *Wilma*, was a Stilt Sandpiper through 3 Dec at Three Fathom Harbour, NS (SM); the hurricane also bequeathed significant numbers of Long-billed Dowitchers, many of which remained well into winter, such as 13 in Antigonish, NS 18 Dec (RL), 19 at Rainbow Haven, H.R.M. 31 Dec (TP), 19 at Melbourne, Yarmouth, NS through 31 Jan (PG), 5 at C.S.I. 20 Feb (MN), and singles at Cymbria, PEI 4 Dec (D&ES) and G.M.I. 21 Dec (BED). An American Woodcock at C.S.I. 19 Feb (MN) was in a known wintering area, but one at Wolfville Ridge, Kings, NS 20 Jan (Bernard Forsythe) definitely was not. It was flushed from a stream with moss-covered banks in woods with many tangled, fallen trees. Five Wilson's Snipe together at St. Pierre 19 Dec was quite a sight but upstaged by one that landed on the street in front of Etcheberry in Miquelon 18 Feb! A few Red Phalaropes are sometimes reported in the outer Bay of Fundy in early winter, but one inland at the head of the Bay on 13 Dec in a sewage lagoon at Windsor, NS was certainly unexpected (PK).

GULLS THROUGH SKIMMERS

The last of a dozen *Wilma* Laughing Gulls in St. John's, NF was seen 15 Dec (m.ob.); another that had arrived in late Oct at St. Pierre was found dead 9 Dec (RE). At least 200 Black-headed Gulls in St. John's harbor in early Dec was the "highest ever" (BMT). The only Little Gull to come to light was an ad. 9 Dec at Canso Causeway, C.B.I. (Angus MacLean). A Thayer's Gull at Stratford, PEI 16 Jan was returning for a 2nd winter (Dwight Cargill). At least 15 Lesser Black-backed Gulls wintered in St. John's, with only scattered singles found elsewhere in the Region. At least 3 Mew Gulls of the nominate subspecies wintered in St. John's; one at Stratford, PEI 26 Dec was an excellent find for the province (DO). Two ad. Yellow-legged Gulls were regularly

seen and well photographed in St. John's mid-Dec–mid-Feb (BMt, m.ob.). An ad. Slaty-backed Gull at the St. John's landfill 28 Jan–12 Feb (Dave Brown, BMt et al.) was a first for Newfoundland (but followed closely by a third-winter bird there 19 Mar!). A late Caspian Tern was at Ogden's Pond, Antigonish, NS 6 Dec (BMy), certainly a *Wilma* bird, as were 2 Common Terns at Canso, NS 14 Dec (TK) and single Forster's Terns through 1 Jan at Florence, C.B.I. (DM), 6 Feb at Conrad's Beach, H.R.M. (m.ob.), 19 Feb in normally frozen Northumberland Strait, at the Pictou Causeway, NS (Ken McKenna), and through the period in s. coastal Lunenburg (m.ob.). Only slightly more unusual, and another *Wilma* refugee, was a Black Skimmer 6 & 16 Dec at Canso harbor, NS (TK).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS

Single White-winged Doves were found at Alma, NB 4-16 Dec (Doreen Rossiter) and Canso, NS through 21 Dec (TK). "Barely a handful" of Snowy Owls was found in Newfoundland (BMt), while "more reports than usual" (10+) came from Prince Edward I., up to 5 were found on G.M.I., NB in late Dec (BED), and 2 were at C.S.I. in late Feb (MN). Great Horned Owls were apparently starving in w. Labrador, with at least three reports of birds carrying off small dogs (at least two on leashes!) in and near Labrador City. At least one attack was successful, with another resulting in the death of the owl after the dog's owner beheaded it with a hunting knife (*vide* GP). Up to 8 Short-eared Owls were present on the Grand Pré dykelands, Kings, NS in late Dec (m.ob.). A dead Boreal Owl was found at Coleman, PEI in late Feb (*vide* DO), while a live one responded to a taped call somewhere in the wilds of Antigonish, NS 26 Feb (RL). The last of *Wilma's* Chimney Swifts bravely survived until early Dec in Nova Scotia, with singles noted at Halifax 2 Dec (Jean Hartley) and River Bourgeois, C.B.I. 6-7 Dec (GD).

Very few Red-bellied Woodpeckers showed up in the Region following last winter's record flight, with about 12 reports in Nova Scotia, 8 in New Brunswick, and one in Prince Edward I. Three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers came to light in Nova Scotia, including one returning for a 2nd winter to a feeder in Hantsport, NS. An unidentified *Empidonax* flycatcher at St. John's 4 Dec was "probably a good one" (John Wells et al.). A Western Kingbird survived until 26



Yellow-legged Gull is now annual at St. John's, Newfoundland in winter. An adult returning for its fourth consecutive winter and this new individual (here 8 January 2006) were seen regularly from December into February. Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.

Dec at Oakland, Lunenburg, NS (*vide* JH), while an Eastern Kingbird lasted until 16 Dec at Canso, NS (SB). The Bell's Vireo found in Nov in Halifax survived until at least 4 Dec (m.ob.). It appears some of the swallows deposited in the Region by *Wilma* tried to make their way back southward. Nine Tree Swallows were still at Chebogue, Yarmouth, NS 20 Dec (PG), while 2 at Melmerby Beach, Pictou,



Representing a first record for Newfoundland and second for the Atlantic Provinces region, this adult Slaty-backed Gull was found 29 January 2006 (here) and remained through 12 February at the city landfill at St. John's; another Slaty-backed was found there on 19 March. The so-called "string of pearls" pattern of the primaries is visible on both sides of the wing. Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.

NS 10-20 Jan (Harry & Jean Brennan) and one at Point Michaud, Richmond, C.B.I. 8 Feb (GD) were obviously intent on wintering. Barn Swallows lasted until early Dec, with one

at Cape Race, NF 3 Dec (BMt), one at C.S.I. 2 Dec (MN, JN), 2 at Cape Tormentine, NB 5 Dec (*vide* SIT), and 12 at Soldier's Cove, Lunenburg, NS through 6 Dec (Helen MacDonald).

NUTHATCHES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were very low in the Maritimes but amazingly high at the extreme n. edge of their range in w. Labrador. For example, 40+ per day could easily be found in suitable habitat throughout the period at Smokey Mt., Labrador City (GP). The only Carolina Wren was one at Saint John, NB throughout (*vide* JW). A House Wren was at Ferryland, NF until 18 Dec, while a Marsh Wren found nearby 17 Dec (BMt et al.) was only the 7th for Newfoundland & Labrador. Only at St. Pierre et Miquelon did American Robin elicit comment: where there are usually none, 102 were on the Miquelon C.B.C. 3 Jan, 200 were near Mirande L. 5 Feb, and 100 were in St. Pierre 15-16 Feb (RE). After last winter's unprecedented flight, only a single Townsend's Solitaire was found, near Lameque, NB 18 Dec (Marianna Duguay). A Varied Thrush at a feeder in Penobsquis, NB 14-18 Dec died after hitting a window (Bob Secord; *New Brunswick Museum), while one at a feeder in Renewes, NF was present late Dec–late Feb (Joe Hynes), the province's 5th. A Fieldfare at Cymbria, PEI 11 Jan+ (D&SE) was a first for the province and spent most of its time in plowed fields with starlings.

Gray Catbird was found in unprecedented numbers, probably thanks to *Wilma*, with 20+ in Nova Scotia, 5+ in New Brunswick, and even 2 on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 19 Dec. Groups of 2-3 birds were found in parts of Nova Scotia, where most likely wintered successfully. Brown Thrashers are not unusual at feeders in Nova Scotia and s. New Brunswick, but outlying singles were at Miscou I., NB 7 Jan (Frank Branch), Huntley, PEI 6 Jan (Theresa D'Armour), and Lumsden, NF (near Gander) through the period (m.ob.). Bohemian Waxwings were said to be uncommon and late in Newfoundland, with a few flocks in the hundreds (BMt). In s. New Brunswick and e. Prince Edward I., fair flocks (250-500) were found in late Dec, with the largest counts in Nova Scotia, such as 2000 at Canning 18 Feb (Merrit Gibson), 1800 at Granville Ferry 1 Jan (BMy), 1500+ on the Springvale C.B.C. 17 Dec, and many flocks of 500+ in the Annapolis Valley

in Feb. Cedar Waxwing was outnumbered by Bohemians about 25:1. A flock of 20 was at Miquelon 4 Jan (Laurent Jackman), and the largest flock reported was 55+ at Charlottetown, PEI 14 Jan (Ian Scott).

WARBLERS THROUGH SPARROWS

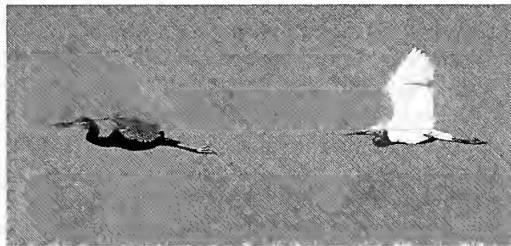
A male Black-throated Blue Warbler at St. Pierre through at least 4 Jan was unique in the Region (PB). Four Yellow-throated Warblers turned up in New Brunswick, with singles in Dec at Richibucto, at Taymouth (subspecies *dominica*), and at Moncton; another lasted 27 Nov–31 Jan at Fredericton (Ron Wilson), one at Middle Musquodobbitt, NS 13 Jan was observed feeding on flies (*vide* BMT), and another at St. Pierre 22 Jan (*vide* RE) was locally very rare. Pine Warbler continues to increase each winter, with many reports of single birds at feeders throughout the Region. The only Prairie Warbler of the period was at Biscay Bay, NF 3 Dec (PL). A Black-and-white Warbler lasted until 26 Dec at St. John's. An Ovenbird was found at Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, NS 7 Jan (JH). An imm. Cape May Warbler in Halifax 1 Dec (Andy Horn, BMy), and a male at a feeder in Kentville, NS 13-20 Dec (David Webster) provided the first winter records from the province in about 15 years. New Brunswick's 2nd Townsend's Warbler was eventually killed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk at Gondola Pt. 9 Dec (*vide* JW). Two more made it into Dec in St. John's, one through 1 Dec and another 4 Dec (BMT), the latter being about the 13th for Newfoundland & Labrador. A Common Yellowthroat was at Mundy Pond, St. John's 12 Jan (BMT). There were several reports of Yellow-breasted Chat surviving into Feb in Nova Scotia, such as one 10 Feb at Lockeport (DC) and one at Sullivan's Pond 19 Feb (Ann Morrison).

The female Western Tanager attending a feeder in Port Hawkesbury, NS was last reported 3 Jan (Weldon MacPhail). As usual, there were several reports (10+) of Eastern Towhee at feeders in the Maritimes. Clay-colored Sparrows at feeders included one at Canso, NS 21 Dec–9 Feb (TK) and another at St. John's, NF through 10 Feb (PL). The only Lark Sparrow wintered at a Murray River, PEI feeder (*vide* DO). A Grasshopper Sparrow was a good find at Cape Race, NF 3 Dec (BMT, John Wells, KK), and 2 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Saint's Rest Marsh, Saint John, NB 13 Dec probably attempted to winter (SIT). Careful examination in recent years has indicated that most White-crowned Sparrows found in the e. part of the Region in winter are of the *gambelli* subspecies. Four were found in Nova Scotia, while singles at St.

Pierre and at Ferryland, NF were the first confirmed reports of the subspecies in those jurisdictions. A few Lincoln's Sparrows sometimes turn up in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in winter, but one at Memramcook, NB 18-28 Feb (YL) and another in Labrador City in late Dec (GP) were of note. New Brunswick's 4th Golden-crowned Sparrow was present at a Memramcook, NB feeder 26 Dec+ (YL), while the 8th for Nova Scotia was at a Barrington feeder 2 Jan+ (MN). A Fox Sparrow successfully wintered at a feeder in Labrador City (GP). A total of 68 Dark-eyed Juncos on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 19 Dec was said to be a record for the islands (RE).

CARDINALIDS THROUGH FINCHES

Northern Cardinal is resident in sw. Nova Scotia; 50+ were found in a day of birding in Yarmouth and Shelburne 13 Dec (MN), with as



Accompanying the Western Reef-Heron (left) at Stephenville Crossing, Newfoundland through most of the summer and early autumn was a Little Egret; first noted 30 May 2006, it became inseparable from the reef-heron and was even observed in a mixed colony of Black-headed and Ring-billed Gulls, passing sticks with the reef-heron, as if nesting (no nest was observed). The Little Egret was last seen 20 September. Remarkably, another Little Egret had been seen in Newfoundland in late May, at Cape Freels. Photograph by Paul Linegar.

many as 10 at some feeders. In Lunenburg, small roaming flocks of 3-6 birds were encountered in late Jan (JH). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at Jeddore, NS 8 Dec (Lucas Berrigan), at Shediac, NB 1 Dec (*vide* SIT), and at a feeder in Wabush, Labrador early Oct–19 Dec and apparently later (Sandy Slaney). A Black-headed Grosbeak at Clifton Royal, NB 28 Dec–9 Jan (Jean MacDonald) was about the 4th for the province. The only Blue Grosbeak reported was at Fredericton, NB 10 Dec (Peter Pearce). One Indigo Bunting report per winter seems to be the norm, with this season's bird present at a Yarmouth, NS feeder 18-25 Feb (Eric Ruff). An ad. female Painted Bunting found at Bridgewater, Lunenburg, NS 8-10 Feb (*vide* JH) provided only about the 13th provincial record. Eastern Meadowlarks were very scarce, at both Sackville (Nev Gerrity) and Marys Point, NB (David Christie) in the last week of Feb. There were 6 Dickcissels reported from Nova Scotia, including up to 3 at one Canso feeder, and 2 in Newfoundland. Balti-

more Orioles survived much longer than normal, all at feeders, but many more likely perished. Notable outside Nova Scotia were one at Moncton in the last week of Feb (BED) and another at Mayfield, PEI 26 Jan (Bill Evans).

Pine Grosbeak had a good winter, with the best count being 160 on the Wabush–Labrador City C.B.C. 19 Dec. The species' numbers were called "normal" in Newfoundland but drew comments in sw. Nova Scotia, where it had not been reported for at least five years. Examples of flock sizes were 16 at Round Hill, Queens 13 Dec (Peter Hope) and 12 at Eel Lake, Yarmouth 18 Dec (MN). Purple Finch was common only in w. Newfoundland and sw. Nova Scotia. At C.S.I., heavy snow 16 Jan brought 60 to a feeder (GS), where they eventually built up to 87 birds by 20 Feb. Red Crossbill was uncommon at best, mostly at feeders, e.g., 5 at Port Blandford, NF 18 Feb (*vide* BMT), 6 near Buctouche, NB in late Dec (Roger LeBlanc), 9 at Barrington, NS 14 Jan (MN), and a "number" the same day in Lunenburg, NS (SF). White-winged Crossbill was common in Labrador, abundant in w. Newfoundland, and uncommon in e. Newfoundland and the rest of the Region. Common Redpoll had a peak winter, as it does every other year, although really large flocks did not reach as far s. (to sw. Nova Scotia, for example) as during winter 2003–2004. Hoary Redpolls were few and far between, with the southernmost being 2 at Mader's Cove, Lunenburg, NS 22 Feb (JH). Pine Siskin was common only in w. Newfoundland and sw. Nova Scotia. Evening Grosbeak had its best winter in years but still not close to historical highs in the 1970s and 1980s; a flock of 33 at Montague, PEI 30 Dec (Gary Schneider) was called the "largest in a long time," while 20 at Windsor, NS 18 Dec were labeled the "most in many years" (Angela Slaunwhite); some feeders in se. New Brunswick had up to 65 birds.

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Although winter 2005-2006 was not nearly as warm in Québec as it was in western Canada, Québec also experienced above-normal temperatures, with most of the province being at least 2° C above normal. Overall, the province also experienced above-normal precipitation, a significant part of it falling as rain in the south. As a result, some rivers of southern Québec had more open water than usual, prompting waterfowl to winter farther north. A prolonged spell of mild weather in early February lured some early migrants into the Region.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Two Greater White-fronted Geese were located at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 5 Dec (LG). A first for the Saguenay region, a Snow Goose wintered at Saint-Fulgence (C. Cormier), while a flock of 40 very early migrants showed up at Elgin 5 Feb (C. Lemoyne). Canada Geese also appeared early in the Upper Richelieu valley, with counts of 100 on 4 Feb (E. Samson, A. Lacasse) and 250 on 5 Feb (MG); farther n., 2 wintered at La Baie (M. Tremblay, S. Tremblay et al.), while one was noted at Cap-d'Espoir 12 Feb (ML, C. Tremblay) and 2 at Barachois 12-24 Feb (JW). The number of wintering Wood Ducks was up significantly: a female survived at Beauport (JF. Rousseau et al.), as did 2 at Boisbriand (LS, PS); elsewhere, a male turned up at Noyan 1 Feb (MG, PB), a female at North Hatley 19 Feb, and a female at Victoriaville in Jan (J. Ducharme). A group of 23 Gadwalls wintered successfully at the bottom of the Lachine rapids, Montréal (PB), but singles at Chandler 15 Dec-21 Jan (AC, m.ob.) and at Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG) were more exceptional. A fe-

male American Wigeon was totally unexpected at Lac-Beauport 25 Dec-25 Feb (PL, J. Labrecque). A Northern Shoveler lingered at Gatineau until 18 Dec (R. Schreyer), but single imm. males at Sherbrooke 31 Dec (L. Germain) and Beauport 27 Jan-28 Feb (C. Chevalier, N. Hallé) were unprecedented. A Northern Pintail at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 12 Feb represented a first Feb record for the Gaspé Pen. (DM, R. Garrett). An apparent Mallard × Northern Pintail hybrid, a male, was photographed at Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG). A Green-winged Teal wintered at Bécancour (*vide* RB), while 3 at Barachois 18 Dec were late (JW); 22 at Lachenaie 18 Dec (SD et al.), increasing to 34 on 25 Dec (S. Robert), topped this exceptionally late influx.

A Redhead at Chandler 9 Dec-3 Jan (JRL, m.ob.) and 2 at Cabano 18 Dec-1 Jan (M. Beaulieu) were late. A wintering Ring-necked Duck was reported at Sherbrooke 3-19 Feb (B. Turgeon), while up to 95 Greater Scaup spent the winter at Tadoussac (RP). A Surf Scoter at Cap Bon Ami 11 Feb was a first for Feb in the Gaspé Pen. (D. Jalbert, T. Bernier). It was an excellent winter for the Bufflehead in the Gaspé Pen., as evidenced by sightings from six different municipalities (*vide* PP). An apparent Hooded Merganser × Common Goldeneye hybrid, a male, was reported at Sainte-Catherine 4 Jan (PB); this hybrid combination is seldom reported.

Single Common Loons lingered at I. Sainte-Hélène until 5 Jan (S. Guimond) and on L. Memphrémagog until 3 Feb (BT). Pied-billed Grebes were well represented, with singles at LaSalle 4 Jan-7 Feb (P. Lamontagne, m.ob.), Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG), Boucherville 15 Feb (P. Joly), and Magog 8-15 Jan (SR). The 125 Red-necked Grebes at Gascops 1 Dec represented a very high count for the date (AC, Y. Cyr). A Northern Fulmar at Les Escoumins 9 Dec was noteworthy (RP, V. Plante). A dozen Great Blue Herons spent the month of Jan at Bécancour, with one remaining until 16 Feb (RB).

VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

The last Turkey Vultures of the season were singles at Hébertville 4 Dec (J. Gauthier, D. Larouche, M. Savard) and Hemmingford 27 Dec (D. Ouellette), but migrants soon reappeared with the onset of mild weather in early Feb: one at Saint-Armand 4 Feb (PB, GZ), one at Orford 9 Feb (S. Bergeron), and a few feeding on a carcass at Bécancour in early Feb (*vide* RB). A very late Osprey was spotted at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix 13 Dec (R. Saint-Jean). Bald Eagles were thriving this winter in the Region; among many sightings, 11 delighted observers at Eardly 26 Jan (D. Dal-

laire). An ad. Cooper's Hawk wintered e. of its range at Rimouski (*vide* RS, m.ob.), and a Red-shouldered Hawk spent most of the winter at Québec City (P. Otis, m.ob.); a Red-shouldered at Boisbriand 4 Feb was thought to be an early migrant (LS, PS). Gyrfalcons were widespread, including 2 birds roosting nightly at Mont-Saint-Hilaire (m.ob.).

A record-late Virginia Rail at Rimouski 25 Dec was astounding (R. Pitre), while a Common Moorhen at Gatineau 18 Dec was very late, although previous winter records are known for the Region (*vide* M. Aubé). A Killdeer at Lachenaie 17-18 Dec was also late (G. Cyr, J. Perras), as were 2 Sanderlings reported on the Magdalen Islands C.B.C. 10 Dec (C. Roy, B. Vigneault.). A Wilson's Snipe spent the winter at Val-d'Or, Abitibi for the 7th consecutive winter (C. Siano et al.), and 2 were at La Pocatière, a locality where the species has wintered previously (C. Auchu, C. Girard).

An ad. Franklin's Gull at Tadoussac 3 Dec (RP) and a Bonaparte's Gull at Cap-des-Rosiers 8 Jan (M. Côté, MC. Rancourt) were both record late. An ad. Ivory Gull at Cap-aux-Meules, Magdalen Is. 21-22 Feb was certainly one of the best finds this winter (A. Richard, DGG, CA. Gaudet et al.). A very late Forster's Tern was a surprise at Barachois 6 Dec (AC). A peak of over 3000 Dovekies was counted at Les Escoumins 9 Dec (RP). A Thick-billed Murre stopped at Chandler 28 Jan (AC, JRL).

Eastern Screech-Owls are capable of reaching high densities in suitable habitat, as evidenced by a high count of 15 at Mont-Saint-Grégoire 28 Jan (MG et al.). Though not present in epic proportions, Snowy Owls were more numerous than in most winters, almost throughout the Region. An impressive count of 23 came from the Hébertville plain, Lac-Saint-Jean 7 Jan (*vide* GS). Northern Hawk Owl reports were few and scattered, while Boreal Owls went virtually unnoticed, with only two reports from the Québec City area. Great Gray Owls staged a strong post-invasion appearance over most of the Region, with an interesting concentration of up to 8 birds at Cap Tourmente (*vide* JL).

KINGFISHER THROUGH WARBLERS

Six Belted Kingfishers were seen in Jan and Feb in s. Québec, but singles at Notre-Dame-du-Laus in the Laurentians 11 Feb (D. Tremblay) and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 14-27 Jan (ML et al.) were most surprising. A single Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered at Saint-Godefroi on the Gaspé Pen. (MA), and a pair was observed at Châteauguay 4 Feb onwards (DD, m.ob.). A late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

was at Sainte-Pétronille 10 Dec (OB). A hardy Eastern Phoebe was at Carignan 12 Dec (SD).

A total of 11 White-breasted Nuthatches in Abitibi was unprecedented (*vide* LI); an individual at Tadoussac was the first to winter successfully on the North Shore (RP). Both Carolina Wren, with 16 individuals across the Region, and Winter Wren, with multiple wintering birds, were well in evidence this winter. Townsend's Solitaires made solo appearances across the Region: at Pointe-Platon 1 Dec (PL, MR et al.), at Charlesbourg 18-21 Dec (JF Bédard), at Beauport 20 Jan+ (JMG), and at Chicoutimi 22 Feb (C. Imbeau). A Hermit Thrush made it through the winter at Sherbrooke (P. Dulude, M. Garneau, *vide* BT). Three Varied Thrushes were reported at different ends of the province: at La Ferme, Abitibi 25 Nov-18 Dec (AG. Bemier et al.), at Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville 30-31 Dec (P. Bouchard), and at Grande-Rivière 18 Jan+ (J.C. Hallé, *vide* AC, m.ob.). Two Gray Catbirds in winter was a remarkable event: singles were at Boucherville 3 Dec-28 Jan (S. Picard, m.ob.) and Hudson 12 Feb (A. Bentley), the latter establishing a new record-late date. Brown Thrashers were unusually well represented, with singles at Saint-Gédéon 1 Dec-18 Feb (G. Saint-Pierre et al.), Val d'Or 4 Dec+ (C. Siano, R. Ladurantaye), Trois-Rivières 15-20 Dec (S. Saint-Louis), Montréal 17 Dec-17 Jan (*vide* F. Hilton), and Maria early Feb+ (L. Audet, R. Saint-Onge, *vide* CL).

A welcome diversity of warbler species complemented the clement weather in early Dec, with some surviving the first harsh cold snaps. An Orange-crowned Warbler was at I. Sainte-Hélène, Montréal 1-4 Dec (DD), and most probably the same was at nearby I. Notre-Dame 17 Dec (GZ et al.). The female Black-throated Blue Warbler at Sept-Îles was present until 9 Dec (H. Hamel, G. Hamelin). The male Audubon's Warbler at I. Sainte-Hélène remained in the area until 6 Dec (DD, m.ob.). Multiple Pine Warblers were seen across the Gaspé Pen., with one at Gaspé through 30 Dec (O. Deruelle, DJ et al.), 2 at Pabos Mills 9 Dec (JRL), and one at Matapédia 6-7 Jan (C. Pitre, G. Gallant, G. Bélanger).

A record-late Palm Warbler was a surprise at Percé 11 Dec (DM, PP). Late Common Yellowthroats included singles at Châteauguay 1 Dec (PB) and LaSarre, Abitibi 4 Dec (J. Aubé).

TOWHEES THROUGH CROSSBILLS

The Spotted Towhee at Les Escoumins found last Nov stayed put throughout the winter into Mar (J.G. Beaulieu). Single Eastern Towhees were reported exclusively to the n. and e. of the province, with feeder-dependent birds at Moisie 4-20 Dec (JFL et al.), at Sept-Îles until at least 2 Jan (BD et al.), at Rivière-Brochu 17 Jan (J. Blais), at Roberval 6 Dec-12 Jan (J. Rousseau et al.), and at Gaspé 29 Jan+ (D. Gagné et al.). Always one of the rarer sparrow species in winter, Chipping Sparrows were notable finds at Sainte-Pétronille 14 Dec (MR), Penouille 17 Dec (J. Fournier, D. Attendu), Lachenaie 26 Dec (F. Rousseu), and Saint-Laurent, Montréal 24-25 Jan (F. Riou). The spate of rare winter sparrows continued with a Field Sparrow found at Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 2 Jan-12 Feb (JL), on the heels of a Savannah Sparrow at the same location 25 Dec-7 Jan (MR). Other Savannah Sparrows were seen at Saint-Alexandre 17 Dec (D. Dessureault et al.) and Moisie until at least 2 Jan (BD). Two Fox Sparrows were reported from Anse-au-Griffon 15 Dec (J. Lacasse), and singles were at Maria 3-26 Dec (CL), at Chambord 28-31 Dec (M. Poitras), at Chelsea until at least 24 Jan (R. Godbout, *vide* D. Saint-Hilaire), and at Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 2 Jan-11 Feb (JL). A tough Lincoln's Sparrow was at Québec City 8 Dec-6 Feb (PL, m.ob.), and a Swamp Sparrow was at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois 5 Feb (A. Quenneville). An unusually high number of wintering White-crowned Sparrows was recorded, including 3 of the subspecies *gambelli*: an imm. at Sainte-Pétronille 14 Dec (JMG), another imm. at the prolific cattle farm in Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 28 Dec+ (OB, I. Lechasseur), and one at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 1 Jan (LG).

Single male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Sherbrooke 26 Dec (D. Lebreux), Saint-Georges-de-Beauce 1 Jan (M. Poulin, D. Pa-

quet), and Orford 12-23 Jan (J. Tougas) were quite surprising. The Region's first winter records of Indigo Bunting were established by singles at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 4 Dec (C. Gariépy) and Sept-Îles 11 Dec (J. Blais). Among the scattered reports of wintering Rusty Blackbirds came a stunning group of 12 at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 26-28 Feb (JL, m.ob.). Single Baltimore Orioles were at Saint-Godefroi 3 Dec (MA), Cap-aux-Os 10 Dec (DJ), and Sept-Îles 3-22 Dec (JFL, M. Le-tourneau). Winter finch numbers, particularly those of White-winged Crossbills, were very low this winter across almost all regions of the province.

Corrigendum: The report of a Harris's Hawk at Gatineau 27 Apr 2005 (N.A.B. 59: 402) should be deleted; the identification was correct, but the bird was not photographed in the wild.

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Pamela Hunt

For the second year in a row, the winter in New England was unremarkable in terms of weather, at least if we've reset our standards to the recent average. In other words, it was warm. Overall, the Region ranked in the top 15% warmest winters in 111 years of record keeping. December started the season on a normal note, both in terms of temperature and precipitation, but January saw a thaw that ranked in the top five and had above-average precipitation, much of it in rain. February continued generally warm but drier, and much of the precipitation that fell was rain. In fact, some athletic events in New Hampshire's White Mountains had to be cancelled because there was not enough snow for cross-country skiing.

This was a winter for the record books when it comes to those birds we generally categorize as "half-hardies." These are the birds that normally winter in the southeastern United States and that generate much excitement when they linger long enough to be tallied on New England Christmas Bird Counts. But as the cold weather intensifies and food supplies run out, they either succumb or move farther south to more hospitable climates. This season, an exceptional number of these birds did not have far to go, and if we consider for a moment the numbers of individuals that are not reported, the numbers of half-hardies in the Region in the winter of 2005–2006 must have been mind-boggling. The stars of the show were Gray Catbirds, Hermit Thrushes, and Winter Wrens, but Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Towhees, a few warblers, and perhaps even bitterns, rails, and crows were part of the phenomenon. Were all these birds able to survive through February because of the mild winter? Perhaps, but the weather does not ex-

plain their exceptional abundance during the Christmas counts. It is conceivable that the inclement weather of the 2005 breeding season (N.A.B. 59: 568-573) played a role in their tardiness: perhaps early-nesting species failed on their first attempts and had to re-nest in midsummer, resulting in many late fledglings. Without detailed data on age ratios, and perhaps from banding stations, we may never know what was behind the pattern.

Rarities were diverse and widespread, including the expected collection of western wanderers (California Gull, three *Scelaphorus* hummingbirds, 5 Townsend's Solitaires, Townsend's Warbler, 6 Western Tanagers, Spotted Towhee); southern surprises (Purple Gallinule, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, several warblers, Painted Bunting); and northern nomads (Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, winter finches). The rarest of the rare, however, originated from outside the continent: two Pink-footed Geese in Connecticut, a possible *kantschatschensis* Mew Gull in Rhode Island, and a Redwing, also in the Ocean State.

Abbreviations: Gloucester (Essex, MA); M.V. (Martha's Vineyard, Dukes, MA); P.I. (Plum I., Essex, MA); Rockport (Essex, MA); Truro (Barnstable, MA).

WATERFOWL THROUGH TUBENOSSES

Among the more noteworthy records of the winter, 2 Pink-footed Geese were along the Connecticut R. in Enfield, *Hartford*, CT 4-12 Feb (ph. M. O'Leary, m.ob.), a 2nd state and Regional report and first for winter. These geese were in the company of a large flock of 5000 Canada Geese that also included 2 Cackling Geese through most of Feb (ph. JS, m.ob.). Other Cackling Geese were reported from Marlborough, *Middlesex*, MA 5 Dec (B. deGraaf); Storrs, *Tolland*, CT 12 Jan (F. Gallo); and Shelburne Bay, *Chittenden*, VT 22 Jan (ph. TM). The latter location also hosted a Greater White-fronted Goose 1 Jan (ph. TM). To the s., where this species is more expected, there were 10 in Connecticut, 2 in Rhode Island, and one in Massachusetts. Only 4 Tundra Swans were reported in the Region this winter, 3 in Rhode Island and one on Cape Cod. Mute Swans continue to increase in the Connecticut R. valley, with a seasonal high count of 20 at Turners Falls, *Franklin*, MA.

Northern Shovelers continue to increase as a wintering species in the Region, with at least 24 in Massachusetts and 7 in Rhode Island this season. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was in W. Harwich, *Barnstable*, MA 28 Jan (A. Curtis). While Redheads are regular in the s. parts of the Region, this win-

ter saw unusually high numbers along the coast n. of Massachusetts, including a flock of 24 at Monmouth, *Kennebec*, ME 2 Dec (P. Vickery); up to 9 in Scarborough, *Cumberland*, ME throughout the season; and 4 into Jan on Great Bay, NH (SM et al.). The Region's only Tufted Duck came from L. Champlain, where a male was seen at Grand Isle, *Grand Isle*, VT 14 Feb (B. MacPherson).

Common Eider numbers were higher than normal on Christmas counts in Rhode Island (*vide* RF). Peak counts of Harlequin Ducks included 135 at Rockport, 62 at Ogunquit, and 39 at Jamestown, *Newport*, RI. In addition, a count of 850 from Isle au Haut, *Knox*, ME was the first report from the primary wintering site in the Region for several years (*vide* WT). There were more Ruddy Ducks in New Hampshire than usual in early Dec, with 13 in Exeter, 24 in Derry, and 30 on Great Bay (all *Rockingham*). Farther s., 537 were at Trustum Pond, *Washington*, RI 6 Jan, and a record 300 were tallied on Block I. 20 Feb. Given the dramatic decline in the Region's Northern Bobwhite populations in recent years, a report of 11 from Rockport 7 Jan (S. Morse) is most likely the result of local stocking. However, this editor remembers hearing the species in this area roughly 20 years ago.

Red-throated Loons showed up inland in early Dec, with 2 on L. Champlain and a grounded bird in Canaan, *Grafton*, NH 12 Dec. The latter was rescued by a police officer and released on nearby Mascoma L. subsequently. Although Pacific Loons have become regular in the Region in the winter months, they should still be thoroughly documented by observers. Of the 4 reported this season (2 each in Maine and Massachusetts), only one was documented: at Salisbury, *Essex*, MA 11 Dec (JS). The now-famous Eared Grebe returned to E. Gloucester for its 11th winter. Among the more usual seabirds observed off Rockport were 3 Northern Fulmars 16 Dec. Farther n., a Greater Shearwater was reported without details off Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, ME 24 Dec.

HERONS THROUGH ALCIDS

While American Bitterns occasionally winter in the s. coastal portions of the Region, records in the n. and interior are rare. In fact, a bird at Phippsburg, *Sagadahoc*, ME 2 Jan (S. Cronenweth) is the only winter record on file for the state since 1986 (*vide* JD). Another spent 15 Dec–5 Jan in Jericho, *Chittenden*, VT (S. Bellomo). Maine and Rhode Island each hosted lingering Great Egrets. Most were in the first week of Dec, although one stayed through 24 Jan in Wickford, *Washington*, RI (R. Graefe). The three s. states each had a



This gull at Burlington, Vermont 10-13 (here 13) December 2005 was thought to be a Thayer's Gull, but a Kumlien's Iceland Gull (or hybrid) is also a possible identification, based on the pale tertials and rather petite build. Photographs by Heather Forcier.

Snowy Egret in Dec, with the latest making it until 8 Jan in Stamford, *Fairfield*, CT. Reports of Black Vultures away from traditional areas in Connecticut were down this season, with only 2 in Rhode Island and 5 in Massachusetts. None of these were observed during the heart of winter, 12 Dec–17 Feb. By contrast, Turkey Vultures were much in evidence throughout the season. In New Hampshire, they left in mid-Dec and started showing up roughly a month later. Observers in Maine noted that this species arrived roughly a week earlier than usual in early Feb.

Single Ospreys in Massachusetts and Rhode Island in early Dec are becoming expected in recent years. Not so an Osprey in Boothbay Harbor, *Knox*, ME 27 Feb (J. Morse), perhaps an exceptionally early migrant. Numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were relatively low in Massachusetts, and the species went unreported in Rhode Island. In contrast, a statewide total of at least 15 in Maine was above average for the past decade.

Is Merlin increasing as a wintering species in the Region, perhaps in conjunction with its expanding breeding range? Totals of 8 and 30 for Maine and Massachusetts, respectively, are at or near record highs. The only Gyrfalcon reported was a white morph on PI. 11 Dec.

Virginia Rails were reported in higher-than-usual numbers, with at least 17 in Massachusetts, 11 in Rhode Island, and one in Maine, although the latter bird died at a rehabilitation facility. The rail of the season was an imm. Purple Gallinule found dead at Pemaquid, *Lincoln*, ME 30 Dec (ph. T. Arter). American Coots occurred in higher-than-usual numbers in the n., with up to 20 in Rockland, *Knox*, ME and 14 on Great Bay, NH.

As is true of other groups this season, the shorebird list is dominated by species lingering much later than in most winters. Four Black-bellied Plovers in Scarborough, *Cumberland*, ME 24 Jan (E. Hynes) were three weeks later than the usual latest report in the Pine Tree State. Semipalmated Plovers have

usually left Massachusetts by mid-Dec, so single birds at Dennis, *Barnstable* 1 Jan and on PI. 2 Jan were noteworthy (R. Everett, RH). In Maine, 2 American Avocets lingered from the fall through 1 Dec at Wells, *York* (A. Kimball). Perhaps the biggest shorebird surprise was the presence of 2 Spotted Sandpipers in the extreme s. portion of the Region: on the S. Kingston C.B.C. in *Washington*, RI and on the Stratford–Milford C.B.C. in *New Haven*, CT, both 26 Dec; the latter was relocated in Branford, *New Haven* on the unprecedented date of 21 Jan (R. English). The only unusual peep was a White-rumped Sandpiper in W. Gloucester, MA 11 Dec (RH). A Marbled Godwit apparently wintered successfully in E. Wareham, *Plymouth*, MA, where recorded 8 Jan and 8 Feb. Long-billed Dowitchers are early winter stragglers in the Region, with the latest this season present on M.V. 7-20 Jan; an unidentified dowitcher was found on the Biddeford C.B.C., *York*, ME 17 Dec.

Reports of jaegers were relatively few this season, and most were not identified to species. The more noteworthy of the latter were in the n., including a probable Pomarine on the Isles of Shoals C.B.C., NH/ME 18 Dec and one s. of Great Duck I., *Hancock*, ME 4 Jan. The high count from Rockport was of 3 Pomarines 16 Dec (RH). Unusual gulls were located in three of the Region's six states, starting with a Franklin's Gull that lingered from the fall through 13 Dec at Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, MA (S. Jaffe, m.ob.). Also in Massachusetts, a second-winter California Gull on Nantucket 1-2 Jan (ph. B. Harris, m.ob.) was likely last winter's individual returning for another season. A bird showing several characteristics of Thayer's Gull showed up at the Rochester W.T.P., *Strafford*, NH 28 Dec (p.a., †SM); another was in Burlington, VT 10 Dec (p.a., †TM et al.). Without a doubt, however, the gull of the season was the apparent *kamschatschensis* Mew Gull that visited Providence, RI 6 Jan–11 Feb (ph. C. Pedro, m.ob.). Most records of Mew from the Region refer to the nominate subspecies, though there are reports of *brachyrhynchus* as well. "Kamchatka Gull" was not expected to occur here, although East Coast records of c. Asian gulls (Black-tailed and Slaty-backed in particular) provide some context for its appearance.

Forster's Terns seemed more common than usual this winter, with at least 10 reported. Most noteworthy were 3 at Provincetown, MA 4 Feb (ph. BN), one in nearby Truro 19 Feb (J. Liller), and one at Cape Elizabeth, ME 21 Jan (*vide* JD). Of the 3 Dovekies reported, one staged its own mini-wreck, being found in the woods of M.V. 12 Dec (T. Kozul). High murre counts came from Rockport, where 43



Very rare in midwinter in New England, this Cape May Warbler was photographed on 16 February 2006 in Rutland, Vermont. Photograph by Heather Forcier.

Commons and 4 Thick-billeds were seen 3 Jan (RH). Razorbill numbers seemed about average at seawatch sites at Rockport and Cape Cod. One clear exception was a tally of 8400 from N. Truro, MA 28 Jan (BN).

OWLS THROUGH WRENS

A total of 4 Eastern Screech-Owls in se. New Hampshire is unusually high for the Granite State, despite this species' abundance just to the s. in Massachusetts. Snowy Owls occurred in relatively low numbers Region-wide, with 10-15 in Massachusetts, 3 each in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine, and singles in Vermont and New Hampshire. Maine hosted 2 Northern Hawk Owls: one at Presque Isle, Aroostook 16 Dec-1 Jan (ph. BS, m.ob.) and another at Stacyville through 20 Dec (BS). Just one Great Gray Owl was reported in the Region last winter, but 5-6 appeared this season. The most reliable bird frequented a pipeline corridor e. of Milford, Penobscot, ME 27 Jan-25 Feb (ph. T. Montgomery, m.ob.), where another may also have been present. Elsewhere in the Pine Tree State, Grays were seen in Fairfield, Somerset 29 Dec (fide Maine Audubon), Kenduskeag, Penobscot 31 Jan-4 Feb (C. Dorchester), and Medway, Penobscot 21 Feb (L. Little). To the w., one was reported without details from Acworth, Sullivan, NH 4 Dec (fide DD), and there was a third-hand report of a bird photographed in the n. half of the Granite State.

Rhode Island held the bulk of the Region's hummingbirds this winter, with one Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird in W. Warwick, Kent throughout the period (ph., m.ob.), and 2 imm. female *Selasphorus* lingering from the fall: at S. Kingston through 19 Dec and at Warwick through 17 Jan (m.ob.). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird on M.V. 1-7 Dec (ph. M. Rogers, m.ob.) was the first winter record for Massachusetts and 2nd for the Region. Although the numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in s. Maine was down after the record

highs set the previous winter, the total of 26 reports was still the 2nd highest on record (fide JD). First in the long list of half-hardies that wintered in unusually high numbers is Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: at least 14 were reported from Massachusetts and 3 from New Hampshire, while Vermont hosted one and the Connecticut email listserv noted "several."

Second in the half-hardy list is Eastern Phoebe. Our closest thing to a "winter" flycatcher was reported throughout Dec from coastal regions s. of Portland. As winter progressed, phoebes remained somewhat reliable in Massachusetts, where at least 10 were reported in Jan and 3 in Feb. A bird found 19 Feb in Saco, York, ME appears to have survived by frequenting an area near the warm water outflow of a sewage treatment plant (R. Harrison). Single Western Kingbirds appeared at Westerly, Washington, RI 10 Dec (D. Finizia) and on M.V. 25 Dec (ph. L. Reese), but the rarest flycatcher of the season was the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that lingered from the fall through 7 Dec at Swampscott, Essex, ME (ph. L. Pivacek, m.ob.). Crows made news in Maine, with a Fish Crow unusually far ne. at Seal Cove, Hancock 16 Feb (P. & N. Wharton) and hundreds of American Crows in Presque Isle throughout the season, a location where this species is not common in winter (BS).

Despite the plethora of other half-hardies, Tree Swallows did not appear in unusual numbers or places, although a "probable" individual of this species in S. Portland 6 Feb was noteworthy (fide DL), perhaps the same



This Mew Gull, a first for Rhode Island, frequented East Providence 6 January through (here) 11 February 2006. Several characters suggest that it represents the eastern Asian subspecies *kamtschatschensis*, including a relatively dark mantle, large size in relation to Ring-billed Gulls, and bright yellow bill and legs. Photograph by Paul L'Étoile.

bird as recorded on the Portland C.B.C. 17 Dec. A single Barn Swallow barely made it into the season at Barnstable, Barnstable, MA 1 Dec (M. Keleher). After a notable southward movement of Boreal Chickadees in fall 2005, it was not unexpected to have several individuals frequenting feeders in the s. portion of the Region: 3 were in Massachusetts,

while s. Vermont and New Hampshire hosted one each. House Wren is next on the list of half-hardies for the season. After the usual smattering of Dec records, including a remarkable 9 on Rhode Island counts, 4 made it into Jan, and the latest was in Westport, Bristol, MA 4 Feb (M. Lynch). Winter Wrens were even more abundant, with 59 on four Rhode Island counts (previous state high of 27), at least 29 in Massachusetts in Jan-Feb, and a record 12 on the Block I. President's Day Count 20 Feb. A Marsh Wren in Portsmouth, NH 25 Jan was unusually late for the Granite State (fide DD).

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

It was a good winter for w. thrushes in the Region. Two Townsend's Solitaires lingered from the fall in N. Truro, MA until 27 Dec (BN, m.ob.), while a 3rd for Cape Cod was in Barnstable 27 Dec (M. Kelleher). Also that day, an unconfirmed report of the species came from Orono, Penobscot, ME. To the s., yet another solitaire was discovered at Sleeping Giant S.P., New Haven, CT 22 Jan (K. Zyskowski), at which location observers found another bird 28 Jan. Both were last seen 22 Feb. Varied Thrushes in Massachusetts included birds in Boston, M.V., and New Salem, Franklin, while another was present in Orono, ME for part of Dec (ph. B. Duchesne, m.ob.). An observer on the S. Kingston C.B.C. heard an unusual song above him and looked up to see a Redwing, which he then observed for over 10 minutes (p.a., C. Nunes). If accepted, this would constitute a first state and Regional record. Records are documented from several nearby states, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York, but many more records are known for e. Canada. Finally, Hermit Thrushes were seemingly everywhere in s. and coastal areas. A record 9 were reported in Maine, numbers in New Hampshire were "above average" (fide DD), and several Massachusetts localities reported totals greater than 10 well into Jan.

But if there was a star in the Region's half-hardy show, it was Gray Catbird. Christmas Bird Counts in Connecticut and Rhode Island shattered previous highs for this species, such as 37 at Woodbury-Roxbury, CT and 90 at Newport-Westport, RI. Top honors go to the Block Island C.B.C., on which 96 were tallied 22 Dec. To place the Rhode Island data in perspective, the previous record state C.B.C. total was 160—while 312 were tallied in 2005, just under half the record Regional total set for this species two winters ago. Birders in e. Massachusetts were still recording 10 or more catbirds at some locations throughout Feb. Maine hosted at least 14 catbirds, with reports

as far ne. as Mount Desert I., and at least 10 were found in se. New Hampshire. Even Vermont had a share of the action, with a catbird in Brattleboro, *Windham* 11 Jan (A. Jones). Although not reported in anything resembling the numbers of the catbirds, Brown Thrashers were more numerous in the Region than in most winters.

An American Pipit in Addison, *Addison*, VT 8 Jan was exceptionally late for an inland location (TM). It will be interesting to see what happens with Bohemian Waxwings over the next few years. For a long time, this species' occurrence in the Region was very close to biennial, with the possible exception of n. Maine. Last winter, there was an unusually large "off-year" incursion, and available data suggest that this season's numbers were lower than in 2004–2005. As usual, the highest counts came from Maine and New Hampshire, but only a few flocks contained over 100 birds. Overall, this winter's numbers were lower than those of two seasons ago and may rank as the lowest of the last decade. Has the biennial cycle been broken, or has it simply shifted a year, so that we should not expect the Bohemians in 2006–2007? Time will tell. The high count for the Region came from Vermont, where 900 were tallied in Burlington 12 Feb, along with 250 Cedar Waxwings (TM). To the s., all counts from Massachusetts were of 1–5 birds, and none made it to Connecticut or Rhode Island.

An impressive 19 species of warblers were reported this season. Among the species that normally winter in the Region, both Orange-crowned and Palm Warblers lingered into Jan, including one of each in New Hampshire. These species tend to be facultative migrants, and it should be noted that 2 of the Orange-crowns were at feeders. Birders at Marstons Mills, *Barnstable*, MA were most definitely not dealing with facultative migrants 11–12 Dec, when they encountered the following species feeding on a hatch of winter moths: single Yellow Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, and American Redstart (J. Hoye, A. Strauss, m.ob.), an unprecedented assemblage that also held an Orange-crowned and 4 Palm Warblers, plus a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. This group of birds is similar to collections of "reverse migrants" in St. John's, Newfoundland in Nov–Dec in some years. Far to the n. of Cape Cod, another Cape May Warbler continued from the fall at a feeder in Rutland, *Rutland*, VT, where it survived the winter on peanut butter and mealworms (ph. F. Bates, m.ob.). Also unusual so far n. were a Prairie Warbler at Kittery, ME 4 Dec (J. & S. Walker), 2 Ovenbirds that wintered at New Hampshire

feeders, and an Audubon's Warbler in Rye, NH. Two other Audubon's were in Charlestown and Wersterly, both *Washington*, RI 28 Jan and 11 Feb, respectively. A quick run-down of other noteworthy warblers includes a Nashville on Cape Cod through 20 Feb, Black-throated Blues in Connecticut and Massachusetts, a Black-throated Green in



Two Pink-footed Geese associated with a large flock of Canada Geese on the Connecticut River in Enfield, Connecticut 4–12 (here 7) February 2006. If accepted, these would represent the first winter record of the species for New England. Photograph by Rollin Tebbetts.

Massachusetts 4 Dec, a wintering Yellow-throated in East Haven, CT, a Northern Waterthrush on M.V. 29 Dec, and a Wilson's Warbler lingering through 6 Dec in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A conservative estimate places at least 6 Western Tanagers in the Region this winter, 3 each in Maine and Massachusetts. The Maine birds—at Winterport, *Waldo*; S. Portland; and Machias, *Washington*—stayed through the end of the season. All the Massachusetts tanagers were on Cape Cod, at N. Truro, Orleans, and Chatham. There is a possibility that there were 2 birds in Orleans, but all pertinent details were not available. The less-expected Scarlet Tanager was reported from two locations: a male in Ridgefield, *Fairfield*, CT 6 Dec (ph. B. Oko) and another male throughout Dec at Falmouth, MA.

Eastern Towhees were more common than usual in the Region this winter: Rhode Island C.B.C.s averaged over 20 birds each, locations in se. Massachusetts reported over 10 birds into Jan, and one managed to winter successfully in coastal New Hampshire. Connecticut's first Spotted Towhee was at Groton 31 Dec–mid-Feb (S. Tsagarakis). While a few salt-marsh sparrows linger through the C.B.C. period in most winters, they are far less likely to be seen in midwinter. This season, sharp-tailed sparrows (either Saltmarsh or unidenti-

fied) were still present on M.V. 12 Jan, P.I. 22 Jan, and Portland 25 Jan. A Seaside Sparrow was reported as late as 25 Jan at Newburyport, Essex, MA, where 2 were present 2 Jan. Other unexpected sparrows included a Clay-colored at S. Kingston, RI 16 Jan and a Lincoln's in Fairhaven, *Bristol*, MA 2 Jan. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was something of a surprise at Presque Isle, ME 1 Jan (BS)—but not as surprising as a green Painted Bunting in Newmarket, *Rockingham*, NH 22 Jan (ph. SM).

We do not normally think of Eastern Meadowlarks in the same category as Hermit Thrushes and Eastern Towhees, but they are, and like those species they were a little more common than usual this season. A count of 44 on the Newport–Westport C.B.C., RI 17 Dec was a ten-year high, and 11 were still on Block I. 20 Feb. A Yellow-headed Blackbird frequented feeders in Stratham, *Rockingham*, NH through at least 2 Jan, while another was found at W. Bridgewater, *Plymouth*, MA 26 Feb. Like so many other species, Rusty Blackbirds were either more abundant or farther n. than usual, although not dramatically so. Baltimore Oriole totals include at least 3 in Connecticut, one in Rhode Island, 10 in Massachusetts, 5 in New Hampshire, and 6 in Maine.

Winter finches made few headlines. Pine Grosbeaks were almost entirely restricted to n. New England, where they were fairly common but not in large flocks. The exception to this pattern was a single bird in Litchfield, CT 17 Dec (B. Stanowski). A flock of up to 30 Purple Finches frequented a feeder in Little Compton, *Newport*, RI, but otherwise this species was quite scarce. Common Redpolls staged a modest invasion, and, as was true of Bohemian Waxwings, this marked the 3rd season in row in which they were reasonably common. The vast majority appeared in n. and cen. Maine, where 10 flocks of over 100 birds were reported (*vide* JD). Flocks to the s. and w. averaged fewer than 50, with numbers generally increasing in mid-Jan. At this time, a few stragglers made it to Connecticut and Rhode Island. Among the Commons was the requisite smattering of Hoary Redpolls, with one to 3 each in the three n. states.

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Hudson-Delaware



Joseph C. Burgiel | Robert O. Paxton
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This winter was one of our mildest ever. December began cold, with significant snowfall early in southern portions of the Region and in mid-month in extreme northern portions. After about the 20th, temperatures became unusually mild, producing one of the warmest Januaries on record and continuing a week into February. The remainder of February was average but—except for a storm confined to the immediate coast on the 11th and 12th—produced relatively modest snowfall.

In addition to a few uncommon ones, most of our normal semi-hardy species were present in unusually high numbers, with many surviving through the season. Perhaps most unusual was a Veery. But also illustrative were records of five species of tern, 3 Ovenbirds, a Northern Waterthrush, and totals of 71 for Brown Thrasher and exceeding 100 for both Gray Catbird and Eastern Towhee on one C.B.C. The mild weather and resulting open water also kept waterfowl plentiful. Unusual species included Slaty-backed Gull, Western Gull, Northern Hawk Owl, Pacific Loon, Western Grebe, American White Pelicans, Yellow and Black Rails, Western Kingbird, and Western Tanager.

Abbreviations: Brigantine (Brigantine Unit of Forsythe N.W.R., Atlantic, NJ); I.R.I. (Indian River Inlet, Sussex, DE); Montauk Pt. (Montauk Point S.P., Suffolk, NY); M.N.W.R. (Montezuma N.W.R., Seneca/Wayne, NY); Sandy Hook (Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway National Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ).

WATERFOWL

Reports of 35 Greater White-fronted Geese represent a new Regional high, with 16 in New York, 15 in New Jersey, and 4 in Delaware. Typically, counts in recent years have been in the low to middle twenties. Twelve Ross's Geese was fairly normal, with 5 each in New Jersey and Delaware and up to 2 at M.N.W.R. 2 Jan–1 Feb (m.ob.). Hybrid geese were found at Colliers Mills, NJ: an apparent Snow Goose × Ross's Goose hybrid 30 Jan, and 4 apparent Greater White-fronted Goose × Canada Goose hybrids (with one Canada and 2 White-fronteds) 5 Feb (all Fred Lesser, ph. Alex Tongas). Up to 3 Black Brant (2 ads., one imm.) were present in the normal location at South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ 8 Feb+ (SB); elsewhere, single birds were at Wantagh, Nassau, NY 8 Jan (AG, AW) and Staten I., NY 18 Feb (Michael Shanley). A bird resembling the so-called "Gray-bellied Brant" (or possibly a pale Black Brant) visited Wantagh 4 Feb (SM, PJJ). Small numbers of Barnacle Geese continue to winter in the Region: one at Eisenhower Park, Nassau, NY early Dec+ (Charleen Conway, m.ob.); one at Calverton, Suffolk, NY 27 Jan (Andy Baldelli);

in the Great Lakes region) was about normal; but one at Cape May, NJ 18 Dec–5 Jan (m.ob.), which was probably the same one as the single at Hoopes Res., New Castle, DE 25 Jan (Sharon Speck), was far afield.

Some 22 Eurasian Wigeons was about double the normal total, with 11 in New York, 8 in New Jersey, and 3 in Delaware. Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal visited Brigantine 18 Feb (LS) and Mannington Marsh, Salem, NJ 28 Feb (Chip Krilowicz). Numbers of Redhead were outstanding. In their w.-cen. New York stronghold, 9000 were reported at Kendall, Orleans 8 Jan (DT, MD), 6000 at Conesus L. 15 Jan (T. & P. Smith), and about 5000 near Cayuga, NY in mid- to late Jan. Most unusual, however, were numbers at two Long I. locations: 115 at Capri Pond, W. Islip 4 Feb (SM, PJJ) and 104 at Eastport Pond, Eastport 25 Feb (SM, PJJ)—extraordinary counts for recent years, though peak counts on Long I. exceeded 1000 in the early 20th century. New Jersey tallied over 50 and Delaware 9, also on the high side. Ten to 11 King Eiders, well under last year's 30, was the lowest count in six years. Five were in New York and 5–6 in New Jersey. While 3000 Com-



These seven American White Pelicans were photographed at Sandy Hook, New Jersey 11 December 2005; some of them were probably recorded at Cape May Point and Sandy Hook in New Jersey and at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware as well. This species has been recorded in the New York, New Jersey, and/or Delaware in small but gradually increasing numbers for the past five years. Photograph by Mike Fahay.

and one on the Raritan R., at Califon, Hunterdon, NJ 9–10 Jan (Alan Remie, FS), with probably the same individual at nearby Spruce Run Res. 23 Feb (FS, Frank Sencher, Sr.). Reports of about 60 Cackling Geese were widely scattered over the Region, with some bias toward more n. portions; as expected, this number has increased dramatically since the species was split from Canada Goose. Eleven Trumpeter Swans scattered in n. New York (presumed as usual to be from introductions

mon Eiders at Montauk Pt. 31 Dec (PJJ, SM) was not surprising, numbers along the coast elsewhere were unusually high. Up to 250 remained in Shinnecock Bay, NY, a non-typical location, through the season. The S. Nassau County, NY C.B.C. reported a record high 115 on 1 Jan. A large flock peaking at 200 on 30 Jan (SB) was present near Barnegat Inlet, NJ mid-Dec+, and smaller numbers were present along the coast as far s. as I.R.I. Sixty-three Harlequin Ducks was about normal, with the

largest flock as usual at Barnegat Inlet through the season, peaking at 34 on 23 Jan (JD, Doyle Dowdell). Twelve Barrow's Goldeneyes was average, with 9 near the n. edge of New York, 2 on Long I., and one in New Jersey.

GROUSE THROUGH PELICANS

Ten Ruffed Grouse were recorded on the Sherburne (*Chenango*, NY) C.B.C. 17 Dec and 15 on the Ithaca, NY C.B.C. 1 Jan, reminding us how habitat degradation has reduced the population farther south. Likewise, 24 Northern Bobwhite on the Quogue-Watermill (*Suffolk*, NY) C.B.C. 17 Dec, one of only two reports of the species, reminds us that except where stocked for hunting this species also has been reduced to very small numbers. At Sheldrake, *Seneca*, NY, a Pacific Loon frequented Cayuga L. 28 Jan–3 Feb (m.ob.). Thirty-five Red-necked Grebes made this a good though not a peak season: 27 were reported in New York, 6 in New Jersey, and 2 in Delaware, with nearly all of them mid-Dee–late Jan. A single Eared Grebe returned 17–24 Dec to Lakes Bay, *Atlantic*, NJ (WD et al.), where 2 were present last year. Other singles were found at the Batavia W.T.P., *Genesee*, NY 31 Jan (+Elaine Dart, Doug Beattie), where regular, and at Aurora, *Cayuga*, NY (m.ob.). For the 3rd consecutive year, a Western Grebe visited the Region: this year, at South Amboy, NJ through 7 Dec (T. Frantz); what was probably the same individual was observed at Sandy Hook 9–16 Jan (m.ob.). Present in small numbers in four of the preceding five winters, American White Pelicans returned this year in quantity, with possibly as many as 20 present. On the morning of 11 Dec, 12 were observed flying over Rehoboth Beach, DE (Steve Collins). That same morning, about 25 km across Delaware Bay, 7 passed over Cape May, NJ (Garr Kerr), flying northward. That afternoon, 7 flew in off the ocean at Sandy Hook and remained until the following day (SB, Tom Boyle). It is believed that the birds at Sandy Hook and at Cape May were the same; also it is entirely possible that they were part of the group of 12 from Delaware, having flown some 200 km in about six hours. One more was present at Hook Pond, East Hampton, *Suffolk*, NY 14–15 Dec (HM). Similarly, Brown Pelican is becoming nearly annual in winter; singles were in Newark, DE 12 Dec (*vide* Kim Steinger), near Barnegat Inlet 1 Jan (Tom Bailey), and at Cape May 20 Jan (CH).

VULTURES THROUGH CRANES

In New Jersey, some high counts of Black Vulture included 139 on the Salem County Raptor Census 2 Feb and 99 on the Princeton C.B.C. 18 Dec; 992 Turkey Vultures on the

same census and 426 on the Cumberland County C.B.C. 1 Jan established new records. Bald Eagles were again widely reported and present in respectable numbers. The South-eastern New York Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey reelected 172 on 9 Jan, while the combined total for the N. and S. New Jersey Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Surveys was 194 on 14–15 Jan. Forty-two or more Golden Eagles was a fairly normal number, with 15 at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, *Delaware*, NY on 4 Dec alone. Though reported as still declining in some areas, American Kestrel was present in modestly better numbers this year than last. One really bright report came from the Salem County Raptor Census, with a total of 36, the most since 1997 and close to the 23-year average. With about 60 reported, Merlins made their best showing in perhaps a decade. As usual, the top single-location count was at the roost of 7 all season at the state university campus in Buffalo. Three Gyrfalcons was an excellent total: one along the barrier beaches of Long I. 18 Dec–1 Jan (R. J. Kurtz et al.), re-found at Wantaugh 3 & 5 Jan (Ted Levinus, Tony Tierno); another, an imm. gray morph, at M.N.W.R. 21 Jan (DT, MD, Bard Prentiss); and an ad. gray morph at Peru, *Clinton*, NY 15 Dec (Candace Hess).

A Yellow Rail flushed on the Cape May C.B.C. 18 Dec (+Tom Magarian, +Bob Fogg) provided the first accepted winter record for New Jersey. Also a surprise was a Black Rail found at flood tide near Southampton, *Suffolk*, NY 14 Feb (Paul Stoutenburgh). A small number of winter records for this species suggests that it may be present more often than is known at this season. Sandhill Cranes were more in evidence than normal this winter: one at Cape May 3 Dec–18 Feb (m.ob.); one at Meeklenberg, *Schuyler*, NY 22 Jan (Steve Kress); 2 on the Elmer, NJ C.B.C. 28 Dec; 3 at Mannington Marsh, *Salem*, NJ 11 Feb (NH et al.); and one at M.N.W.R. in Feb (David Wheeler). Nine apparently pure Sandhills were reported on the Cumberland County C.B.C. 1 Jan, with 8 there 16 Jan (CS); all were in an area known to have hosted Sandhill Crane × Common Crane hybrids/baekersoses, 2 of which were found near New Egypt, *Ocean*, NJ 6 Feb+ (SB, LM, ph. Alex Tongas).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Reports of nearly 400 American Oystercatchers, nearly all in New Jersey, made this year one of the Region's best for the species. The leading total was 229 on the Oceanville, NJ C.B.C. 17 Dec, 100 of which were still at Brig-

SA On the same day as onshore birders were studying a Slaty-backed Gull, offshore birders found and photographed an interesting ad. four-year gull not far from Freeport, Long Island, NY 11 Feb—a bird they ultimately identified as a **Western Gull**, potentially the first conclusively documented in the East and first e. of the Midwest (Chicago). The photographs of the bird posted to the web were initially confusing to gull enthusiasts, as, in some images, the bird appeared paler dorsally than the bird did in life, and, on some computer monitors, the eye ring appeared pink rather than yellow (a pink eye ring would point away from Western Gull). But examination of a multitude of photographs, along with extensive discussions between observers of the bird and gull identification experts, have clarified these apparent discrepancies and have resulted in strong support for the identification as a typical ad. Western Gull of the nominate subspecies.

First spotted by Frank Gallo, the bird stayed with the boat long enough for photographers to have a field day and for note-takers to record the following features: ad. bird with immaculate white head, underwing coverts, and tail and no hint of brown in upperparts; pinkish legs, with a hint of orange in tarsus; mostly black primaries, with large white mirror in p10; broad white trailing edge to the wing; deep yellow orbital ring; broad white tertial crescent; upperparts similar in shade to *graellsii* Lesser Black-backed Gull, perhaps slightly darker; heavy, deep, rich yellow bill, noticeably deep at the gonys, imparting a bulbous look; orange-red mark on the mandible at gonys, with a small spot of black distal to it; and pale yellow iris, appearing a bit darker at a distance. Hybrid combinations that might look similar are discussed in detail on Angus Wilson's website (<www.oceanwanderers.com>). If approved by the New York State Avian Records Committee, this will provide a first state and Regional record of the species.



After thorough discussion of other possible identifications with correspondents from all over the continent, observers of this gull, which was photographed 11 February 2006 off the coast of Long Island, New York, have concluded that it is a Western Gull of the nominate subspecies. Photograph by Martin Lofgren.

antine I., *Atlantic*, NJ 2 Jan (FW). A flock at the Longport Sodbanks, *Atlantic*, NJ 1 Dec–24 Jan peaked at 54 on 12 Dec (CS, JD); and numerous others were scattered in smaller numbers along the coast. Two Western Willets were again at Pt. Lookout, *Nassau*, NY 5 Dec; 29 were recorded on the Oceanville, NJ C.B.C. 17 Dec and still present on Brigantine I. 25 Jan (Fred Weber). The Oceanville C.B.C. recorded 37 Marbled Godwits, 24 of which were still at Brigantine I. 2 Jan (FW); elsewhere, 21 others were recorded, making a total of 58.

Indicative of the warm winter, 6 Laughing Gulls were present this season, the latest at East Hampton, *Suffolk*, NY 15 Jan (Angus Wilson). An ad. California Gull visited the Niagara R. at the power project, *Niagara*, NY 28 Dec (AG, RG), where they have become nearly annual, unlike in the remainder of the Region. Up to 7 potential Thayer's Gulls were reported in New York and one in New Jersey. In a good year for white-winged gulls, 66 Iceland Gulls were scattered in small numbers almost throughout the Region, with the highest single-location count being 7 at the Perinton Ponds near Rochester, NY in Jan (MT). Also at Perinton, a Slaty-backed Gull was reported 11 Feb (DT, MD, †MT, †Joanne Tetlow). New York has the only prior records of this rare gull in the Region. The movement (to a location several km away) of dump operations across the river from Florence, *Burlington*, NJ, has meant a slight drop in gull numbers at sites favored in the recent past; nevertheless, Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers continue to increase: over 170 were reported, with highest counts of 22 both at the Cherry I. Landfill near Wilmington, DE 17 Dec (FR) and at Florence 10 Feb (LS). As with Iceland, about 50 Glaucous Gulls made a good count this year, widely scattered, all in small numbers, although the southernmost parts of the Region had below-average counts of white-winged gulls.

Extremely rare in winter, 2 Caspian Terns were reported, one each on the Staten I., NY C.B.C. 17 Dec and the Cape Henlopen–Prime Hook, DE C.B.C. 1 Jan (DE), the former being possibly the first n. of Delaware in winter for the Region. An imm. Sandwich Tern near Longport, NJ 30 Dec (JD, CS) provided what is apparently the first winter record for the entire Region. Also present this season were a Royal, 2 Common, and about 40 Forster's Terns, one of the latter seen at Cape May as late as 17 Feb (Chris Vogel). With the mild weather, 2 Black Skimmers were almost not surprising at Stone Harbor, *Cape May*, NJ 20 Dec (KK, Barbara Heibsch, Scott Elowitz). An 11 Feb pelagic trip se. of Jones Inlet produced

1675 Dovekies (PG et al.), probably the highest Regional total in the past 70 years, plus 20 Common Murres, one or 2 Thick-billed Murres, and an Atlantic Puffin. Four Thick-billed Murres seen from shore was outstanding: one at Avalon, *Cape May*, NJ 17 Dec (Cameron Cox, Gail Dwyer); one the same day on the Montauk C.B.C.; one on the Sagaponack, NY C.B.C. 18 Dec; and one at Avalon 9 Feb (CS). The highest count of Razorbills was 100 at Montauk Pt. 16 Dec (HM et al.); ca. 45 more were scattered along the coast as far s. as I.R.I. A Black Guillemot at Barnegat Inlet 3 Dec–12 Jan (†NH, †m.ob., ph. KK) provided a great opportunity to view the species in New Jersey; nearly all of the few recorded in the state remained only a few hours. Two or 3 others were present in New York: one at Montauk Pt. 25 Dec (Vicki Bustamante); probably the same individual at nearby Culloden Pt. 11–29 Jan (PJJ, SM, m.ob.); and another at Jones Beach, *Nassau*, NY 4 Jan (AG).

DOVES THROUGH KINGLETS

A White-winged Dove visited Jones Beach 5 Dec (John Fritz); the species is still rare in the Region but has been nearly annual in the past decade. About 60 Snowy Owls were reported, including 12–13 on Long I. and in New Jersey. Two Northern Hawk Owls were reported: at Yates, *Orleans*, NY 7 Jan+ (Paul Schnell, Anne Terninko, Mike Crane, m.ob.); said by locals to have been present more than two weeks prior to its discovery by birders) and at Piercefield, *Franklin*, NY 14 Feb (Peter O'Shea). These add to over 50 previous reports of the species in the state. Four Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds remained from the fall season: at New Lisbon, *Burlington*, NJ through 5 Dec; at Paulsboro, *Gloucester*, NJ through 5 Dec; at Glenwood, *Erie*, NY through 9 Dec; and at Verga, *Gloucester*, NJ through 17 Dec. There was no echo of last year's major incursion of Red-headed Woodpeckers: only 12, an average number, were reported, 6 each in New York and New Jersey.

Some 50 Eastern Phoebes were reported, an excellent total, about half on C.B.C.s, with the largest count being 6 at Cape May 18 Dec (*vide* Pete Dunne); one at Hartshorn Woods, *Monmouth*, NJ 23 Jan+ (LM) survived the winter. A Western Kingbird at Cape Henlopen S.P., DE 6 Jan (Lorraine Logan) may have provided the first Jan record for the state, although there are at least 25 Dec reports. Northern Shrikes were widely reported in n. New York but were sparse elsewhere. A late Blue-headed Vireo visited the Brooklyn Botanical Garden 10 Dec (AW), and another, very late, was reported in Pequannock, *Morris*, NJ 30 Dec (Marie Kuhnen). Common

Ravens were present in good numbers in the n. parts and continued their expansion in New Jersey at the se. edge of their range. Two were reported over most of the season near Secaucus, *Bergen* (Ken Witkowski), and an influx in Jan and Feb included 2 at Oxford, *Warren* and up to 10 at Round Valley Res., *Hunterdon* (*vide* FS).

Tree Swallows remained into Jan at many locations, but the hardest were one at Hamlin, *Monroe*, NY 6 Feb (DT) and 22 at Brigantine 8 Feb (LS). Black-capped Chickadees staged a minor irruption s. of their range: 3 were reported in s. New Jersey, and an amazing 15 reached Delaware: the largest count was 6 at a feeder in Centerville, *New Castle* (Esther Speck) and the farthest s. one at Mud Mill Pond, *Kent* (Chris Bennett). There were few reports of Boreal Chickadee away from the usual Adirondack locations; most noteworthy were singles at Webster Twp., *Monroe*, NY 1 Dec (DT, MD) and Palenville, *Greene*, NY 16 Jan (ph. Larry Federman). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was way out of place at Hurricane Mt., near Glenmore, *Essex*, NY 31 Dec (John & Patricia Thaxton).

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

A Veery in Webster Twp., *Monroe*, NY 4 Dec–7 Jan (†AG, †Steve Daniel, m.ob.) was nothing short of astonishing; the species occurs in the United States only seldom in winter. A Wood Thrush at a feeder in Plattsburgh, *Clinton*, NY 21 Dec (Charles Mitchell) was nearly as rare. As in most recent winters, Varied Thrushes were reported: one was in Webster Twp., *Monroe*, NY through Feb (MD, DT, Dominic Sherony et al.), another at Hamburg, *Erie*, NY 1 Jan (†Mike Zebechazy). The former launched a "Patagonia picnic table effect," in which Boreal Chickadee and Veery were also found. Gray Catbirds were abundant, and a good estimate of how many were actually present is difficult to make. Most were in the south, but singles were present as far n. as Potsdam and Massena, *St. Lawrence*, NY. The Cape May C.B.C. recorded 129 on 18 Dec. At least one made it through the season at Utica, NY (MZR). Well over 100 Brown Thrashers were reported, with 71 on the Cape May C.B.C. alone. The northernmost was a remarkable bird on the Elizabethtown C.B.C. in *Essex*, NY 31 Dec; and one survived the season at Alexandria Twp., *Hunterdon*, NJ (FS). Bohemian Waxwings staged an incursion, with high numbers confined to the most n. counties: 700, in flocks of 20–200, were counted in e.-cen. *Essex*, NY 16 Feb (RG), and at least two-dozen other reports of up to 400 came from *Essex* and neighboring *Clinton*. All reports farther s. were of very small numbers, with the southernmost being of 2

on the Montauk C.B.C. 17 Dec.

Nine species of warbler visited this season, seven of them "expected" in a mild winter, with Ovenbird and Northern Waterthrush definitely rarer than others. More than 20 Orange-crowned Warblers were reported, about 10 on Long I. and the rest in s. New Jersey. Three Nashville Warblers were detected, one at Green Cr., *Cape May*, NJ 3 Dec (PEL); one at Centerville, DE until 17 Dec (Mike Weaver); and one on the Sagaponack, NY C.B.C. 18 Dec. Totals of 9 Pine Warblers and 21 Palm Warblers (15 at Cape May) were mostly from Long I. and s. New Jersey. Three Ovenbirds were found: one each on the Sagaponack C.B.C. 18 Dec and the Orient, NY C.B.C. 31 Dec and one on Jakes Landing Rd., *Cape May*, NJ 15 Jan (Derek Stoner, Judy Montgomery). There are very few recent winter records for this species for the Region, and 15 Jan is close to record late. A Northern Waterthrush remained until 13 Dec at Central Park, New York City (m.ob.); there are also few recent winter records for this species in the Region. Nine Common Yellowthroats included a count of 5 at Elsinboro Twp., *Salem*, NJ 18 Dec (WD, PD, Colin Campbell, Allison Ellicott) and a late bird 10 Jan at Conesus L., *Livingston*, NY (RS, P. Debes). Reports of Yellow-breasted Chats, all close to the coast, included 3 in New York and one in New Jersey.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Adding to 10 previous New Jersey winter records, Western Tanagers were noted at Brigantine 4 Dec (NH) and at Sandy Hook 14 Jan (Jim Schlick). Eastern Towhees were widespread and very numerous, with 123 recorded on the Cape May C.B.C. and 68 on the Elmer, NJ C.B.C. The high count of Chipping Sparrows was a very surprising 120 on the Cumberland County, NJ C.B.C. 1 Jan. Two Clay-colored Sparrows visited e. Long I.: one on the Sagaponack C.B.C. 18 Dec and one at Orient 28 Jan (Tony Lauro). Six Vesper Sparrows were reported, all in New Jersey and all singles, the latest at Alpha, *Warren* until 18 Feb (Mike Hitot). An excellent find was a Grasshopper Sparrow near Cape May 22 Dec (CH); there are fewer than 10 previous winter records of the species in New Jersey. Twenty Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at I.R.I. 30 Dec (FR) was a good tally. A Lincoln's Sparrow at Bombay Hook N.W.R., *Kent*, DE 18 Dec (Bill Stewart) was the only one reported; the species is rare in winter but is noted with increasing regularity in Dec. Very rare was a Golden-crowned Sparrow at Colt's Neck, *Monmouth*, NJ 9-12 Jan (SB, LM), the state's 6th.

Occasional at feeders in Dec, 3 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen: at Wappingers Falls,

Dutchess, NY 13 Dec (Ed Hartmann, Carena Pooth), on the Cape May C.B.C. 18 Dec (Bev Linn), and in Vermontville, *Franklin*, NY 13 Jan (Joan Kogut), the last both far n. and very late. Painted Buntings at Wallington, *Bergen*, NJ 14 Dec-17 Jan (Robert & Tonette Benz) and at Montville, *Morris*, NJ 17 Dec (Ray Hinkle), both green birds, represent the state's 36th and 37th records, about one third of which have been in this season. Six to 8 Dickcissels were reported, one each on Long I. and on Staten I., NY, the remainder in the Cape May area. The only Yellow-headed Blackbird of the season was found at the Thompson Pond Nature Preserve, *Dutchess*, NY 1 Jan (Chet Vincent). In *Salem*, NJ, 7 Brewer's Blackbirds were near Pennsville 5 Feb+ (LS, m.ob.); one visited Swedesboro 11 Feb (LS); and one was present near Woodstown 23 Feb (Sandra Keller). This area has hosted Brewer's Blackbirds in small numbers for the past several years. As expected in a warm winter, Baltimore Orioles were numerous, with a total of 22+. The northernmost, quite far out of place, patronized a feeder at Lake Placid, *Essex*, NY 30 Dec-13 Jan (Larry Master); the latest, at Browns Mills, *Burlington*, NJ 21 & 23 Feb (LS), may have survived the season.

In a lackluster year for n. finches, the largest number of Pine Grosbeaks was 20, recorded at Plattsburgh, NY 7 Feb (Judy & Roger Heintz). Others in smaller numbers were present in the ne. and w. corners of New York. About 20 Red Crossbills were reported in or near the Adirondacks, and only 5 were seen farther south. White-winged Crossbills fared marginally better, with reports of 30 at Herkimer, NY 21-22 Jan (MZR), 30 at Selkirk Shores S.P., *Oswego*, NY 28 Jan (BP), and 25 at Greene, *Chenango*, NY 28 Feb (Mark Tannis). Over 1000 Common Redpolls were reported, with the highest totals being of 280 on the Saranac L., NY C.B.C. 1 Jan, which included 250 at a single feeder, and 350 at a feeder in Potsdam, NY 23 Jan. Others were widely scattered nearly to Cape May. Two Hoary Redpolls were reported at the Potsdam feeder on 26 Dec and 8 Jan (Joan Collins). Evening Grosbeaks were present in numbers similar to those of recent years, with largest totals of 122 on the Elizabethtown, NY C.B.C. 31 Dec; up to 75 at Barnes Corners, *Lewis*, NY Jan-Feb and at Boylston Twp., *Oswego*, NY 12 Jan; and a surprising 67 far s. at Neversink, *Sullivan*, NY 26 Dec (Sue Rayano). Other reports, mostly of small numbers, were spread over n. New York.

Corrigendum: Dates for the Brown-headed Nuthatch in New Jersey (N.A.B. 59: 576) should be 23-28 Jul, not Jun.

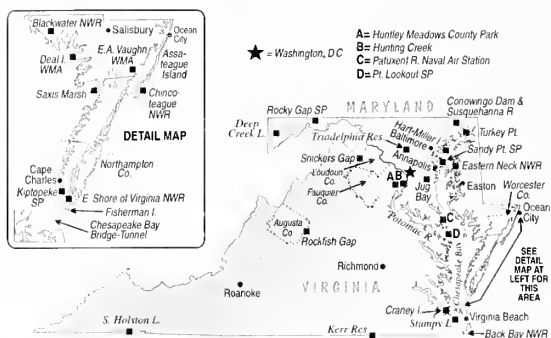
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Middle Atlantic



Todd M. Day

Winter 2005–2006 made its debut on schedule, with a memorable pre-Christmas cold front marking the decisive seasonal break, but for the rest of the winter, we waited for the other shoe to fall, listening to frog choruses throughout the usually bleak midwinter months, watching vultures, waterfowl, and Palm Warblers begin northbound movements in mid-January, even birding barefoot and tallying multiple butterfly species (at least on the coast) during unusually warm spells in January and February. It was also one of the driest winters ever recorded in both Maryland and Virginia.

Whether technically “lingering” or not (as some were probably reversed migrants to start with), the winter’s roster of unseasonal birds hearkened back to 1973, 1984, years almost forgotten: Sooty Shearwater in December, Ruff in January, and Black-capped Petrel, Parasitic Jaeger, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Broad-winged Hawk in February! Among 13 warbler species, successfully wintering Black-throated Blue and Yellow-throated Warblers were highlights.

Invasions were few but widely enjoyed, including a fine run of Black-capped Chickadees into eastern Maryland, the first in decades of that magnitude (and southernmost extent of the enormous flight), five Snowy Owls, and the return of Red Crossbills to a formerly favored hairpin turn in the Virginia mountains. A few rarities were about, including the continuing Hammond’s Flycatcher in Maryland, where Varied Thrush, Townsend’s Warbler, and Barnacle Goose were also widely seen, and five alcids, a long-staying Allen’s Hummingbird (555 km from Virginia’s first record, in Bristol), and a returning Clark’s Grebe were recorded in Virginia.

Abbreviations: Bay (Chesapeake Bay); Black. (Blackwater N.W.R., *Dorchester*, MD); Chinc. (Chincoteague N.W.R., *Accomack*, VA); Craney (Craney I., *Portsmouth*, VA); D.C.

(District of Columbia); E.S.V.N.W.R. (Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R.); Hart (Hart–Miller I., *Baltimore*, MD); Kipt. (Kiptopeke S.P., *Northampton*, VA); O.C. Inlet (Ocean City Inlet, *Worcester*, MD).

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

It was an above-average winter for Greater White-fronted Geese, with over 20 reports of the species in the Region, almost twice the average. Only two reports pertained to more than single birds, including 6 at Clear Creek Lake G.C., *Washington*, VA 31 Dec+ (RC, m.ob.). One apparent *frontalis* was reported at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute duck pond, *Montgomery* 27–30 Jan (ph., †MH, Kim Caughey, m.ob.); at least some of the others were *flavirostris*, but most were left unidentified to subspecies. At least one bird was in D.C., seen from various locations in the same general area around the Potomac R. 10–22 Dec (PP, m.ob.). A Bar-



Apparently rare in the Middle Atlantic region, Greater White-fronted Geese of the *frontalis* subspecies are seldom reported in Virginia and Maryland; this bird, thought to be *frontalis*, was present 27–30 (here 29) January 2006 in Montgomery County, Virginia. Photograph by Matt Hafner.

nacle Goose at Great Oak Pond, *Kent*, MD first noted 15–16 Oct was seen again 19 Jan (WGE, NLM). Ross’s Geese were reported from two regular coastal locations (Black. and Chinc.), as well as some unexpected venues: Oak Grove, *Cecil*, MD 3 Dec (Glen Lovelace); on the Hopewell C.B.C. 18 Dec (ph. LL); Clear Creek G.C. 31 Dec–29 Jan (RC et al.); Richlands Airport, *Saint Paul*, *Tazewell*, VA 5–7 Feb (David Raines, R&LM, ph. Richard Kretz); and at Wildwood Park, *Bridgewater*,

Rockingham, VA 18 Feb (Tom Pendleton, *fide* Ken Hinkle). At least 22 reports of Richardson’s Cackling Geese (the nominate subspecies) reached the editor, with 13 of them in Maryland; most were of single birds, but two were of counts of 5 and one of 6. The Trumpeter Swan from the Ohio reintroduction program seen at *Airlie*, *Fauquier* in fall was last reported 8 Mar (W. J. L. Sladen, John Whissel, ph. TMD); 2 of unknown provenance were among Tundra Swans at *Fairlee Cr.*, *Kent*, MD 15 Feb (WGE, Peter Mann). The drake Eurasian Wigeon that has been seen in several ponds near *Warrenton*, *Fauquier* for the previous 10 winters was present 5 Dec–12 Mar (Anna Green, TMD, SAH); the drake at *Ridgeway Park* at *Hampton*, VA that arrived again in fall was seen throughout winter, last reported 12 Mar (Ben Copeland, Dave Hewitt, m.ob.); another drake was seen at E.S.V.N.W.R. 13 Feb, which may have been the same bird found at the *Riverside Farm* in fall (GK, MAK). Maryland had six reports totaling 7 drakes: 4 Dec–12 Jan at *Loch Raven Res.*, *Baltimore* (SA, EA, RFR); 6 Dec–18 Feb at *Eagle’s Landing G.C.*, *Worcester*, with 2 present 10–11 Dec (C&DB, BH, m.ob.); 8–13 Dec near *Leonardtown*, *Saint Mary’s* (Patty Craig, RFR); and at the *Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center*, *Queen Anne’s* 28 Dec–28 Jan (JB, DP, m.ob.). Twenty-eight Blue-winged Teal were noted along *Elliott Island Rd.*, *Dorchester* 22 Jan (HTA). A drake Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was at *Huntley Meadows*, *Fairfax*, VA 14 Jan–16 Feb (RH, ph. Derek Richardson, m.ob.).

A tally of ca. 8800 Lesser Scaup came from a n. Virginia waterfowl count around *Mason Neck*, covering the *Potomac R.* and *Gunston Cove*, *Fairfax* and *Charles*, MD (KG). Common Eiders were reported from *O.C. Inlet*, with 4 noted 25 Feb, the latest report (SHD); and from the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec but not thereafter (RLAk, RLAn, ESB). A hen King Eider was at *O.C. Inlet* 8 Jan (SHD et al.). Up to 4 Harlequin Ducks were reported from the C.B.B.T. through 20 Feb (m.ob.); a less-likely location was on the *Choptank R.* near *Cambridge*, *Dorchester*, MD 2–21 Jan (one bird; LW, LR, HTA, m.ob.). Three Surf Scoters visited *Little Seneca Res.*, *Montgomery*, MD 3 Dec (DCz). A White-winged Scoter was at *Centennial Park*, *Howard* 4 Dec (EH et al.). An impressive 40 Black Scoters were at *Cobb I.* at the mouth of the *Wicomico R.*, *Charles* 11 Feb (JB, BH, HH). A Long-tailed Duck was on *Centennial L.*, *Howard*, MD 11–17 Dec (Kurt Schwarz, m.ob.); another was on the *Potomac R.* at *Violettes Lock*, *Montgomery* 18 Dec (Scott Baron, Bob Clarquist). Two impressive counts of Ruddy Ducks were reported in

Maryland: an estimated 5000-10,000 on 25 Feb along the lower Patuxent R., MD (Doug English) and ca. 10,000 on the Potomac R. 26 Feb, seen from Westmoreland S.P., Westmoreland, VA but in Charles waters (FA).

A Pacific Loon was again found at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg, VA this winter, seen 1 Feb+ (p.a., Jeff Blalock, †AD, m.ob.); this marks the 3rd consecutive winter the species has been found at this inland Piedmont location; also at Kerr was a Red-throated Loon seen 5-26 Feb (BTe, SAH, H. Fenton Day). Single Pacific Loons were also seen 4-5 Dec at S. Holston L., Washington (Rick Knight, Wallace Coffey, m.ob.), the first record for the Mountains & Valleys, and on the ocean seen from Back Bay N.W.R. 4 Dec (RLAk, m.ob.). Forty Common Loons at Claytor L., Pulaski, VA 4 Dec was a good count (Bob Abraham, *vide* CK). The Cape Charles C.B.C. amassed 6582 Red-throated Loons 30 Dec, the 2nd highest total in the count's 41-year history (HTA). Ten Horned Grebes were at Riverview Park, Radford, VA 5 Dec (CK). Red-necked Grebes away from the immediate coast and lower Bay included a brace at Leonardtown, Saint Mary's through 4 Dec (Sigrid Stiles) and a single at S. Holston L. 23 Dec, along with 8 Eared Grebes (Thomas McNeil, Don Holt). Two Eared Grebes were at Craney 1-2 Dec, hold-overs from fall (Elisa Enders, SE); another fall bird was at Piney Run Park, Caroline, MD through 12 Dec (RFR); one was at the Beauview Ponds, Saint Mary's ca. 6-13 Dec (RFR, Marty Cribb); and 2 were seen on the ocean at Ocean City, Worcester 20-25 Feb (MLH, RFR, DT). A Clark's Grebe again made an appearance off First Landing S.P., Virginia Beach 31 Dec (ESB, BL); it or another has appeared in this spot in five previous winters, typically in late Dec.

A Black-capped Petrel was found just 45 km offshore in cold (8.3° C) water off Virginia Beach 18 Feb (JBP, ESB, ph. m.ob.), a first in winter for the state and one of few offshore records (most have been recorded after hurricanes). On the same date, a close Sooty Shearwater was seen from the beach at Back Bay N.W.R. (†RLAk et al.), and there were other reports of single Sooties from the Virginia Society of Ornithology weekend field-trip to Back Bay, from C.B.B.T., and from ca. 30 km off Virginia (John Fox), all in early



Ash-throated Flycatchers are typically discovered in Virginia in November; this bird was found along the James River in the City of Richmond on 7 (here 8) January and stayed through at least 4 March, likely aided by the mild winter. Photograph by Larry Lynch.

Dec. Field separation of Sooty from Short-tailed Shearwater is difficult at a distance, and however unlikely the latter may seem, it is commendable that most of these dark shearwaters were left formally unidentified. A Manx Shearwater was new to the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec (RLAk, RLAN, ESB); one or 2 were seen on a Virginia Beach pelagic trip 11 Feb (JBP, ESB et al.).

A small group of American White Pelicans spent most of winter at Black., where 2 were first seen 4 Jan (LW, *vide* LR) and as many as 5 would ultimately be reported though 18 Mar (m.ob.); wintering in Maryland is decidedly rare. A Brown Pelican was seen 18 Dec off North Beach, Calvert, MD (JLS); 2 were seen at Cobb I., Charles, MD 22 Dec (Jeanie Ping, *vide* GMJ). An American Bittern was found road-killed in w. Augusta 26 Feb, the 2nd winter record there. A Great Egret at Blue Mash Nature Trail, Montgomery, MD 11 Dec was a good Piedmont find (Rick Sussman). Two Little Blue Herons at the W. Ocean City Pond 12 Feb provided one of only a handful of mid-winter records in Maryland (Elliott Kirschbaum). A Tricolored Heron was at E.S.V.N.W.R. 13 Feb (GK, MAK); 7 were at Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset, MD 18 Feb (Kye Jenkins).

OSPREY THROUGH ALCIDS

An Osprey was late at Brighton Dam, Howard on Christmas Day (JSo, EH). The Rappahannock River winter Bald Eagle survey produced 276 eagles in Jan (127 ads., 137 imms., 12 unknown) and 247 in Feb (117 ads., 128 imms., 7 unknown); about half of these birds were noted in Cat Point Cr., Richmond. Many nests were noted in Feb (Sandy Spencer, Bill Portlock). A Broad-winged Hawk was seen 10 Feb along I-95 at Ashland, Hanover (Samuel W. Stuart et al.). Only two previous winter reports exist in Virginia from the late 1970s. Rough-legged Hawks were reported from typical locations at Maryland's coastal marshes and in Virginia's highlands 6 Dec-26 Feb. As is typical, the majority of Vir-

ginia's Golden Eagle reports were from Highland or Tazewell, whereas Maryland's winter reports were on the Eastern Shore; the exceptions were singles at Elson Green, King William, VA 1 Jan (FA, SAH) and at Wachapreague, Accomack, VA 7 Jan (CLW).

At least 2 King Rails wintered at Occoquan Bay N.W.R., Prince William, VA, with reports 19 Dec-25 Feb (Sharon Lynn, MR, JK). A high 11 Common Moorhens were found on the Cape Charles C.B.C. 30 Dec (HTA). Two Sandhill Cranes were at North Fork Wetlands, Prince William 18 Dec on The Plains/Airlie C.B.C. (CT, Craig Tufts et al.); another was seen on a pasture in Botetourt, VA 19 Jan (*vide* TMD); and one was at Hansonsville, Russell, VA 29 Jan (Nancy Gilmer).

An American Golden-Plover was reported on the Wachapreague C.B.C., Accomack 19 Dec (*vide* BW); details have not been seen but hopefully rule out other golden-plovers. A Ruff was present 29 Jan-7 Feb along Griffith Neck Rd., Dorchester (ph. Stephen Davies, m.ob.); a Long-billed Dowitcher was noted there 4 Feb (MH, BH, JLS et al.). Some 84 Red Knots were noted between Back Bay N.W.R. and False Cape S.P. 29 Dec (Dorie Stolley); one party on the Wachapreague C.B.C. 17 Dec found 10 knots, plus 324 Willets (HTA).

A Parasitic Jaeger was seen offshore of Virginia Beach 11 Feb (JBP, ESB et al.). Up to 5 Laughing Gulls were seen at the Fauquier landfill 16-17 Dec (TMD, SAH); inland landfills are still relatively unexplored in Virginia.



This cooperative Snowy Owl thrilled scores of birders, as it was easily observed from a parking garage at Dulles International Airport, Loudoun County, Virginia between 20 (here 28) January and 17 March 2006.

Photograph by Mike Bowen.

A Franklin's Gull was found at the Salisbury landfill, Wicomico, MD 10 Dec (ph. BH, ph. GMJ). Little Gulls were noted on four occasions in Virginia: a first-winter bird at C.B.B.T. 26 Dec with an ad. Black-headed Gull (also noted there 15 Dec), among ca. 950 Bonaparte's Gulls (ESB); at Fort Story, Virginia Beach 31 Dec (DLH); and offshore 2 each 11 & 18 Feb (JBP, ESB et al., ph. Bob Wallace). Two ad. Black-headed Gulls were on the Little Creek C.B.C. at Fort Story 31 Dec (DLH), and one was at Sandy Pt. on the Nanticoke R. 2 Feb

(SHD). The Prince William and Fairfax area remains the most reliable place in the Region to find wintering California Gulls. Hunting Cr., Fairfax and Alexandria, had an ad. reported 11 Dec (†Rob Young), 8 Jan (†RH, George Wheaton), and 21 Jan (Sherman Suter); an ad. was reported from Neabsco Cr.,

Prince William 28 Dec (†MR); and an ad. and a third-winter were at the Prince William landfill 12 Jan (SE, Robert Hindle), with an ad. there 21 Jan (PP, RH). Six Iceland Gulls were reported from four locations in Virginia 26 Dec–5 Feb; Maryland had 4 birds in four locations, notably a rare ad. 2 Feb at Violettes Lock, *Montgomery* (DCz). Glaucous Gull in Virginia numbered 6 at four locations 3 Dec–27 Jan, including an ad. at the Prince William landfill 21 Jan (PP, RH); Maryland's reports, 10 Dec+, included 4 birds at four locations.

Up to 2 Razorbills were seen at O.C. Inlet 17 Jan–26 Feb (C&DB, EJS, m.ob.), the only ones reported inshore. Three pelagic trips found a combined total of 45 Razorbills, 3 Atlantic Puffins, and 2 Dovekies, but the 11 Feb trip out of Virginia Beach found singles of Common Murre and Thick-billed Murre (ph.), both rare off Virginia (JBP, ESB et al.).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS

A White-winged Dove at E.S.V.N.WR 1 Dec (SE) lacked recitatives, thus probably different from the fall Cape Charles bird. A Snowy Owl delighted legions of birders at Dulles International Airport, *Loudoun*, VA 26 Jan–17 Mar (Justin Dysart, ph. SAH, m.ob.). Other Snowy Owl reports came from Hart 17 Dec–22 Dec (EJS et al.); Elliott Island Rd., *Dorchester* 17–21 Dec (LR, Carolyn Roslund, ph. BH, m.ob.); Chester R. near Centreville, *Queen Anne's* 18 Dec (DP); and Annapolis, *Anne Arundel* 18 Feb (*vide* Jeff Shenot). Short-eared Owls again found the fields near Remington, *Fauquier* appealing, with up to 10 observed per visit (TMD, Carole Miller, m.ob.). Seven Short-eareds at Black. 28 Jan (Brian Cassell) was a good count. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was singing in early Jan on several visits to Highland Retreat Camp, *Rockingham*, VA, an area where breeding could well occur (Charles Ziegenfus).

There were at least 8 Rufous or Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds at feeders in the Region this winter, with several enduring the entire season. The first-year male Allen's Hummingbird at a Cape Charles feeder first noted 26 Oct (and banded 11 Dec) was last seen 30 Dec (ESB). During Dec, an extensive survey of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker

SA A small invasion of Black-capped Chickadees pushed into the Region, almost entirely confined to the Upper Bay, specifically *Cecil*, with scattered reports in other areas and one in Virginia at Bull Run Mt., *Fauquier* 16 Jan (GW). First noted by banders at Chino Farms, *Queen Anne's* 18 Oct (JG), the flight's next indication was 30 Oct at Turkey Pt., *Cecil*, where ca. 15 were seen. Thereafter, there were many reports, some into spring (Table 1), with some *Cecil* observers reporting Black-capped Chickadees at feeders for the entire winter. Identification of Black-capped Chickadee in this Region requires careful observation, and many reports without details were not included here.

Table 1. Maryland Black-capped Chickadee sightings, fall 2005–spring 2006.

Date	Number	Location	County	Observer
18 Oct	1	Chino Farms	Queen Anne's	JG; b.
30 Oct	15	Turkey Pt.	Cecil	SM
1 Nov	1	Chino Farms	Queen Anne's	JG; b.
2 Nov	6	Turkey Pt.	Cecil	MH
2 Nov	11	Cromwell Valley Park	Baltimore	BH, KG
5 Nov	"several"	North East Town Park	Cecil	SM
6 Nov	13	Turkey Pt.	Cecil	SM
8 Nov	1	Chesapeake Landing	Kent	WGE, NLM
9 Nov	4	Susquehanna S.P.	Harford	MH
11 Nov	1	Conowingo Dam	Harford	PV
12 Nov	3	Elkton	Cecil	MWW
13 Nov	"many"	Turkey Pt.	Cecil	MWW
19 Nov	2	Loch Raven	Baltimore	TM
20 Nov	8	Cromwell Valley Park	Baltimore	BH
24 Nov	20	Fair Hill	Cecil	SM
27 Nov	1	Serpentine Barons	Cecil	MH, MB
27 Nov	1	Susquehanna S.P.	Harford	MH, MB
4 Dec	1	Bald Friars Rd.	Cecil	BH, MH
18 Dec	5	Charlestown area	Cecil	CS
23 Dec	1	Columbia	Howard	HH
1 Jan	"many"	Hances Pt.	Cecil	CS
25 Jan–9 Apr	1–5	Elkton	Cecil	SM
28 Jan	1	Cecil Landfill	Cecil	EJS
29 Jan	1	ne. Frederick County	Frederick	RFR
3 Feb	2	Tolchester Beach Rd.	Kent	MH
18 Feb	1	Darnestown	Montgomery	DSi
13 Mar	2	Drayton Manor	Kent	DSm
15 Apr	1	Fair Hill	Cecil	SM

population at Piney Grove Preserve, *Sussex*, VA by biologists from the Center for Conservation Biology and The Nature Conservancy identified 26 woodpeckers by unique color-band combinations. Of these, 16 originated in the preserve, 9 were translocated from breeding populations in the Carolinas, and one has a band combination that does not match any bird banded or released in the preserve; 12 were either first- or second-year birds, though one was in at least its 10th year, and another in at least its 6th. (I thank Bryan D. Watts of the Center for Conservation Biology for the information summarized here.)

Maryland's Hammond's Flycatcher that was found 23 Nov remained at the N. Central Railroad Tract, *Baltimore* through 14 Dec (Hank Kaestner et al.). An Ash-throated Flycatcher made an unprecedented visit to Virginia, and the Piedmont at that (albeit barely), being first discovered 7 Jan at the w. base of the Manchester bridge in Richmond, VA, and

staying through at least 4 Mar (AB, ph. LL, m.ob.)—clearly a bird aided by the mild winter. Another report of an Ash-throated Flycatcher was 10 Jan at Dutch Gap, *Chesterfield*, VA by a veteran bander (p.a., Bob Reilly). All previous Regional records come from Nov and Dec, with one Maryland visitor staying until 3 Jan. Loggerhead Shrikes continue to hang on in Virginia, with a handful of reports for the season: 3 Dec and 8 Jan at Blandly Experimental Farm (John Drummond, MR; BL, Jon & B.J. Little); 11 Dec at Blacksburg, *Montgomery*, VA, where reported wintering since 2003 (John Kell); 28 Dec at the Dulles Wetlands, *Loudoun* (Rich Rieger, KG, Russ Taylor); 9 Jan in *Bedford*, VA at a known breeding location (Gene Sattler); and 15 Jan near Swoope, *Augusta* (JSp).

Common Ravens were reported very near Virginia's Coastal Plain (where rare) at Occoquan Regional Park, *Fairfax* 2 & 21 Jan (Larry Kline, JK); a leucistic raven that appeared uniformly brownish-gray was twice seen in cen. *Loudoun* 2 Feb and 3 Mar (CT, Ian C. Topolsky). Two ravens were at Patapsco Valley S.P., *Howard* 19 Feb (Keith Eric Costley); another was near Sykesville in se. *Carroll*, MD 20 Feb (RFR, DT). Two Cave Swallows were at Craney 2 Jan, the first Jan record for the Region, likely owing to the mild winter (ph. Audrey

Whitlock, Paul W. Sykes, Jr.).

NUTHATCHES THOUGH CROSSBILLS

A Brown-headed Nuthatch was discovered on the Ft. Belvoir C.B.C. at Occoquan Regional Park 31 Dec, possibly the first for *Fairfax*, and seen sporadically through 26 Feb (JK, Mike Friedman, m.ob.). Several Brown-headed Nuthatches were noted along Lloyd Bowen Rd. near Jefferson Patterson Park, *Calvert* 21 Jan (TB) and again 20 Feb, when at least 5 were noted and activity around a nest- or roost-hole observed (SA, EA). The northernmost population along the w. shore of the Bay extends typically only into s. *Saint Mary's*, with a sporadic outpost population at Solomon's I., *Calvert*. Only two or three records of strays—or perhaps of range extension—exist for n. *Calvert*. A Sedge Wren was at North Beach, *Calvert* 18 Dec (JLS).

Twenty American Pipits at Kenilworth Park 10 Dec were a good find for urban D.C.

(PP, RH). A **Varied Thrush** was at Lothian, *Anne Arundel*, MD 18 Feb–26 Mar (ph. GMJ et al.); there are three accepted records for the state from 1965–1966, 1977, and 1987. A Nashville Warbler was in a Bowie, *Prince George's* yard 25 Dec (Maren Gimpel); another was at Carroll Park, *Baltimore* 25 Jan–6 Apr (Jim Wilkinson, MH, m.ob.). The warbler of the season was a Townsend's Warbler found along the C&O Canal near Noland's Ferry Rd., *Frederick*, MD 2–6 Jan (Claire Wolfe, Lydia Schindler, Jeff Gould, ph. DCz); it or another would be re-found briefly in spring 16 km from the original location. A Cape May Warbler was at Fishersville 2 Jan, *Augusta's* 2nd winter record (AL, *vide* YL). A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was photographed in an urban *Arlington*, VA garden, present 31 Dec–21 Mar (AS, LF). Three Yellow-throated Warblers spent winter at feeders in the Region: an *albilora* 27 Dec–21 Jan at L. Smith, Virginia Beach (ph. Debbie Schroeder); another *albilora* at West Ocean City, *Worcester* 7 Jan–21 Feb (N&FS); and a *dominica* at Indian Head, *Charles* 7 Jan–2 Apr (Carol Gheblian). A Prairie Warbler was discovered on the Ocean City C.B.C. at Mystic Harbor 28 Dec (N&FS). A Black-and-white Warbler was at Conowingo Dam, *Harford* 16–17 Dec (Molly Daly, *vide* Phil Davis, ph. Greg Futral); another was seen at Dutch Gap, *Chesterfield*, VA 27 Dec (Al Warfield). An Ovenbird was at Suitland, *Prince George's* 9 Dec (David Bridge, *vide* Joe Coleman). A Wilson's Warbler was along Hunting Cr., *Alexandria* 14–26 Dec (LM, KG); another was discovered on the D.C. C.B.C. at Oxon Hill Farm, *Prince George's* 17 Dec (RFR). Less unexpected was a Yellow-breasted Chat in a *Henrico* yard 9 Dec (Robert King).

A Clay-colored Sparrow was picked out of a flock of about 50 Chipping Sparrows 4 Dec at Mt. Olive Church Rd., *Worcester* (SHD). A Lark Sparrow was found 29 Dec on the Back Bay C.B.C., but no Le Conte's was noted on that count; the latter had been recorded annually in that area 1988–2004, but feral pigs have destroyed most of the suitable habitat on the refuge (ESB). A Le Conte's Sparrow at Green Springs Trail, *James City*, VA 1 Jan was first noted 27 Nov there (BW). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow of subspecies *subvirgatus* was at Assateague I., *Worcester* 25 Feb (MH, JLS, HH); others of this subspecies were seen through the season in n. Suffolk (CLW). A Nelson's was noteworthy in Central Vaughn, *Worcester* 26 Feb (MH, JLS, ph. BH). A Lincoln's Sparrow was found on the D.C. C.B.C. 17 Dec near Hunting Cr., *Alexandria* (KG, MR, LM et al.); another was seen the same day at Schooley Mill Park, *Howard*

(Nancy Magnusson, *vide* JSo); 2 were seen at Wye Island W.M.A., *Queen Anne's* 22 Dec (Zach Baer); and one was at Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, *Howard* 8 Jan (JSo, Bonnie Ott). An Oregon Junco was seen intermittently at a Frostburg, *Allegany*, MD feeder 15–30 Dec (JBC). As many as 34 Snow Buntings were seen at Poplar I., *Talbot* 13 Dec, the highest count reported in the Region (Jan Reese, *vide* LR). Remarkably, no Snow Buntings were reported in Virginia, the first winter "miss" of the species in over 30 years. A Painted Bunting was in a Newport News yard 14 Jan (Matthew Snow). A Dickcissel



This frigatebird was photographed at the Great Dismal Campground, City of Chesapeake, Virginia 9 November 2005. It might have escaped mention in this column, but it was dutifully reported via eBird <www.ebird.org>, complete with photograph! On the same day, a female Magnificent Frigatebird was observed near Kiptopeke State Park, to the north; these birds were probably evacuees from Hurricane Wilma, which had passed offshore a week earlier. Photograph by Steve and Margie Pitcher.

was along Myers Mill Rd., Jeffersonston, *Culpeper*, VA 11 Dec (KG, JK, LM).

An ad. male Yellow-headed Blackbird was near Mt. Olive Church Rd., *Worcester* 3 Dec (Gary Smyle, Mike Welch); another was at Principio Station Rd., *Cecil* 18 Dec (Russ Kovach, Dave Ziolkowski). As Rusty Blackbird is in what appears to be steep decline across the continent, birders are encouraged to report any sightings of the species to data collectors, local listservs, eBird <www.ebird.org>, or any similar database where the sightings can be logged. There was only one report with more than 100 birds this winter: 550 on 20 Dec near Beulahville, *King William* (FA); however, the Hopewell C.B.C. compiled a total of 1054, a new count record (*vide* AD). A Brewer's Blackbird was at Hermitage, *Augusta* 9–15 Dec (Barbara McSweeney, *vide* YL); one was along Griffith Neck Rd., *Dorchester* 4 Feb (BH et al.); and 2 were near Greenville, *Fauquier* 18 Feb (KG, JK). The mild winter likely contributed to seven reports of Baltimore Orioles away from somewhat-expected areas in the Region. A Common Redpoll took advantage of a Herndon, *Fairfax* feeder after 25 cm of snow fell 12 Jan (Glen Gerada, Kathy Burger); other reports included 2 from *Howard*: 15–16

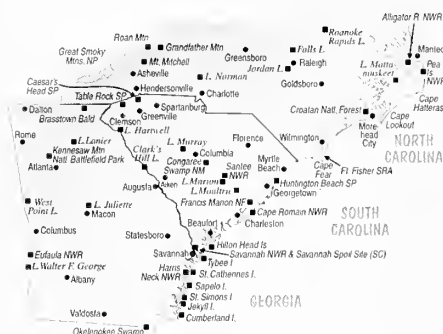
Dec at Kings Contrivance, *Columbia* (Erin Eve, Tracy Eve, *vide* JSo) and a male at Sandchain Rd., *Columbia* 13 & 15 Feb (Jane Coskren, *vide* JSo). For the first time in many years, Red Crossbills were reliably found near the Confederate Breastworks, *Highland* and *Augusta*, with 10 first noted 13 Jan (TMD, Eric M. Hynes) and seen throughout the reporting period, with as many as 15 seen 22 Jan (JSp, Lisa Hamilton).

Addenda/corrigenda: Reports of birds banded at Chino Farms, *Queen Anne's* were inadvertently omitted from the fall 2005 report; of note there was a Clay-colored Sparrow 24 Sep and an Oregon Junco 8 Nov (JG). A Magnificent Frigatebird was at Great Dismal Campground, Chesapeake, VA 9 Nov (ph. Steve & Margie Pitcher). The report of Black-bellied Plovers in *Wicomico* (*N.A.B.* 59: 579) should have been listed as *Worcester*, MD.

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Southern Atlantic



Ricky Davis

This winter's weather was generally mild, with December and January temperatures decidedly warmer than usual. Only in February were temperatures closer to normal. Rainfall was definitely not normal. Many areas, especially the inland portion of the Region, experienced rainfall deficits averaging over 15 cm. The mild winter was probably not too rough on the wintering birds and was clearly responsible for increased numbers of lingering species and winter rarities, as well as for reduced numbers of waterfowl. Highlights this season involved the continued increase in goose numbers, more reports than usual for western Red-tailed Hawks, a good variety of flycatchers, wintering Cave Swallows, wintering warblers and tanagers, and an influx of Bullock's Orioles.

Abbreviations: E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach S.P., Georgetown, SC); Hoop. (Hooper Lane, Henderson, NC); L. Matt. (L. Mattamuskeet N.W.R., Hyde, NC); Pea I. (Pea Island N.W.R., Dare, NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

WATERFOWL THROUGH WADERS

Wintering goose numbers were again higher this winter, continuing the trend that started in the 1990s. Greater White-fronted Geese were found in all three states, in eight Georgia, three North Carolina, and two South Carolina locations. The best total was 17 on the Eufaula N.W.R., GA C.B.C. 19 Dec (*vide* SP). Snow Goose numbers at the traditional e. North Carolina wintering areas passed the 90,000 mark: 72,053 on the Pettigrew S.P. C.B.C. 30 Dec (*vide* LW) and 18,000 on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (*vide* AB). Small groups of Snows were also found throughout the Region, the farthest s. being 12 on Little St. Simons I., GA 19 Jan (*vide* NVL). Ross's Geese were noted in all three states; 8 at the Bradley Unit, Eufaula N.W.R., GA 11-13 Dec (SM, PL, PH) was the largest count. Cackling Geese, all apparently *hutchinsii*, were reported again:

1-3 at L. Matt. 11-29 Dec (RD, HL, WC), 2 at Bear I. W.M.A., SC 5-6 Jan (RS, DF, RC, CE et al.), one at the Pungo Unit, Pocosin Lakes N.W.R., NC 4 Feb (RD), 5 in s. Twigg's, GA 19 Feb+ (JFI, EH et al.), and one at Santee N.W.R., SC 26 Feb (LG). Puddle duck numbers were down in many areas this winter, as is expected in mild winters. Diving ducks seemed to be present in normal numbers, with interesting counts including 150 Red-heads at Garden Lakes, Rome, GA 23 Feb (MD), almost 2200 Ring-necked Ducks at the E.L.H. 7 Jan (CL et al.), and 33 Black Scoters at Carters L., GA 3 Dec (BZ et al.), the latter providing a new high count for the Piedmont of that state. There were only two reports of Common Eider in each of the Carolinas, while South Carolina had 2 Harlequin Ducks: an ad. male at Myrtle Beach 17 Jan-early Feb (PL et al.) and an imm. male at H.B.S.P. 7-15 Jan (ST et al., ND et al.). Noteworthy inland waterfowl included a White-winged Scoter at West Point L., GA 7 Dec (EB, MB), up to 19 Common Goldeneyes there 26 Dec (KB), a

the best count once again coming from Plant Scherer-L. Juliette area, Monroe, GA 3 Dec (JS et al.). Rare from shore were 2 Manx Shearwaters, one at Ft. Fisher, NC 21 Dec (JE) and one at Nags Head, NC 5 Jan (RK).

American White Pelicans continue their increasing presence in the Region. The best counts included 109 on the ACE Basin, SC C.B.C. 1 Jan (*vide* PLa), 80 near St. Mary's, Camden, GA 3 Feb (PS et al.), and up to 30 at Drum Inlet, Carteret, NC 22 Jan (*vide* JF). The farthest inland were the 15 at West Point L., GA 3 Dec (EB, MB) and 9 at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 8 Jan (JFI et al.). Only one inland Brown Pelican was found, that being at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 3 Dec (JFI, EH). Farther inland than usual in winter was the Anhinga at Holt's L., Johnston, NC 10 Dec (CS). The most unusual reports of long-legged waders were a Great Egret far inland on the Peachtree City, GA C.B.C. 17 Dec (*vide* TM), 2 Cattle Egrets at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, GA in Jan (LS), and a Green Heron far inland at L. Acworth, Cobb, GA 10 Jan (SPg). Georgia had single



There are few documented winter reports of Chuck-will's-widow in North Carolina. This individual was located in Buxton Woods, Dare County, North Carolina 27 December 2005; a photograph from the same location appears in *North American Birds* 55: 247. Photograph by Audrey Whitlock.

Common Merganser at Parr Res., Newberry, SC 12-14 Feb (TK, RC, CE), and another Common at Carter's L., GA 12 Feb+ (JSp et al.). Two Red-throated Loons at West Point L., GA 7 & 14 Dec (EB, MB) and one on L. Norman, NC 23 Dec (DW et al.) were the only ones reported inland. Only one Pacific Loon was noted 31 Dec (DC) in the Common Loon flock at Wrightsville Beach, NC this winter, a far cry from the 3 last year. Red-necked Grebe was at L. Walter F George, GA 19 Feb (EB, MB), the only report. Eared Grebes were found in normal numbers, with

Reddish Egrets in three locations, about average for recent winters.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

There was one report of Northern Goshawk this winter, an imm. seen briefly but well at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 20 Dec (BC). Reports of "Kriders"-type Red-tailed Hawks included an imm. in Gordon, GA 11 Dec (KB), another at the Jekyll I., GA causeway 18 Dec-18 Feb (PH et al., LT, SB), one near Cartersville, Bartow, GA 26 Dec (T&JFo), an ad. at the Savannah N.W.R., SC 1 Jan (SW),

one n. of Santee N.W.R., SC 1 Jan (LM), and an ad. in *Gordon*, GA 21 Feb (JSp). In Georgia, dark-morph *calurus* Red-taileds were reported at Oxbow Meadows 7 Jan (WCh) and in *Bartow* 28 Jan (JS, CL) and 19 Feb (JSp). Single light-morph Rough-legged Hawks were at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 10 Dec



Chris Eley found this Ash-throated Flycatcher vicinity of the campground at Cape Point, in Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Dare County, North Carolina 27 December 2005. There are about 10 previous records for the state. Photograph by Jim Reuter.

and 6 Jan (RD, HL, JP, RK) and in w. *Orange*, NC 10 Dec (DS et al.). This season's Golden Eagle sightings included an ad. in *Walker*, GA 3 Jan (JSp), an ad. at Stone Mountain S.P., NC 3 Feb (EHa), an imm. on the Pettigrew S.P. C.B.C. in North Carolina 30 Dec (SH et al.), an imm. at Alligator River N.W.R. 1 (JL) & 7 Jan (*vide* JL), plus an ad. there 16 Jan (RH et al.). Sandhill Cranes were reported more than usual this winter. The most interesting reports involved the excellent total of 5888 on the Atlanta, GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (*vide* BZ), 35 on the Clemson, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (SG et al.), and up to 6 in *Carteret*, NC 18 Dec+ (JF, m.ob.).

Wilson's Plovers regularly winter in small numbers in s. coastal areas, so of interest was the count of 71 at *Jekyll I.*, GA 12 Jan (RW), record high for that state. Another count of note was of 26 Piping Plovers on *Cumberland I.*, GA 3 Feb (PS). The Black-necked Stilts that lingered at the S.S.S. from the fall were last seen 15 Dec, when 2 were noted (SC, PL), providing a very rare winter report. Spotted Sandpiper reports were lower than usual, but one near *Barnardsville*, *Buncombe*, NC late Dec-late Jan (KC) was most unusual for the winter season. Seven Long-billed Curlews wintered at *Cape Romain N.W.R.*, SC (ND), the highest count, and 3 were at *Little St. Simons I.*, GA 3 Feb (BZ). Winter reports of Stilt Sandpiper, rather unusual, were of singles at the S.S.S. in late Dec (SC) and in nearby *Colleton*, SC 25 Feb (ND). Also rare in winter was the Ruff photographed in *Col-*

leton, SC 25 Feb (ND). There are few documented winter Ruffs in the Region.

Apart from the usual handful of sightings of jaegers along the beaches, a juv. Pomarine inland at *Walter F. George L.*, GA 10-12 Dec (SM, PL) was a complete surprise. Franklin's Gull is not expected in the Region during winter, but there were two reports this year. The second-year bird at *Tybee I.*, GA from the fall season was last noted 17 Dec (RW). In North Carolina, one was found at *Mann's Harbor*, *Dare* 14 Dec (JL), and it remained in the area until at least 15 Jan (DS et al.). What was presumably the same bird was then sighted nearby along the beach in the *Oregon Inlet* area 19 Jan (DL). Black-headed Gull sightings involved the returning ad. at the *L. Matt. causeway* 11 Dec-16 Jan (RD, DS et al., RH), one at the *Jacksonville*, NC W.T.P. 3-24 Feb (GG, JO et al.), and one at the *Georgetown*, SC W.T.P. 12 Feb (JBH et al.). Georgia got another California Gull report, a first-winter bird at *Tybee I.* 19-20 Feb (SB, JS et al.). The first for that state came in winter 2004-2005, near *Macon*, interestingly also a first-winter bird; North Carolina's reports of California Gull involve mostly adults. The only Thayer's Gull reported was the ad. inland at the *Wake*, NC landfill 11 Feb (DC). Other inland gulls of note were an imm. Glaucous at the *Merry Ponds*, *Augusta*, GA 17 Dec-early Jan (AW, LS) and a Lesser Black-backed at *L. Norman*, NC 18 Dec (TP). Alcids were scarce this winter as compared to last. Thick-billed Murre reports included one in the *Murrells Inlet*, SC jetty area 29 Dec (*vide* JPe) and again 15 Feb (ED et al.) and 2 in the surf at *Nags Head*, NC 11 Feb (Virginia Society of Ornithology, *vide* WC). Razorbills included one on the *C. Hatt.* C.B.C. 27 Dec (RD) and 2 on the *Wilmington*, NC C.B.C. 31 Dec (JF, JFe).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Doves continued to increase, with Eurasian Collared-Doves being found in increasing numbers at various locations throughout the Region, and White-winged Doves again being noted from all three states. The best count of White-wingeds was 3 at *Cadwell*, *Laurens*, GA during the winter (*vide* BZ). Northern Saw-whet Owls were found several times: 2 at *Alligator River N.W.R.*, NC 1 Jan (JL), 2+ in the *Burrell's Ford* area, *GA/SC* 15-24 Jan (KB et al., *RWa* et al.), and one near *Brevard*, NC 6

Feb (*vide* NS). Winter goatsuckers included a Whip-poor-will near the *Newport R.*, *Carteret*, NC 1 Dec (JF), another on the *St. Catherine's I.*, *GA C.B.C.* 17 Dec (*vide* EU), a *Chuck-will's-widow* on the *C. Hatt.* C.B.C. 27 Dec (PS et al.), and another at *Ocracoke*, NC 31 Dec (*vide* PV). The latter species is considerably rarer in winter than the former species.

Hummingbird reports were once again widespread. Highlights this winter included a female Ruby-throated banded far inland near *Cohutta*, *Whitfield*, GA 22 Jan (RT), the returning ad. male Black-chinned at *Savannah*, *GA Dec-Jan* (SC), an imm. male Calliope banded at *N. Augusta*, SC 27 Dec (DCu), Georgia's 4th through 6th Broad-tailed Hummingbirds (RT; 2 in the Atlanta area, one in *Rabun*), a female Rufous returning to a *Shelby*, NC yard for the 7th year (SCb), and the presence of 5 *Selasphorus* together all winter at *Bakers Mt. Park*, *Catawba*, NC (JSu, DM).

Flycatchers provided much excitement in the Region this winter. An unidentified *Empidonax* was a good find on the *Savannah*, *GA C.B.C.* 1 Jan (*vide* SC). North Carolina got its 4th Say's Phoebe when one was found at a large farm complex in *Carteret* 1-6 Dec (SCo, DC et al., *WI*, JL). In recent years, Vermilion



This Ruff, probably an early migrant, was photographed in *Colleton*, South Carolina on 25 February 2006, providing documentation of a rare winter-season occurrence for the Southern Atlantic region. Photograph by Nathan Dias.

Flycatcher has been almost annual in Georgia in winter. This year's bird was present at the *Bradley Unit*, *Eufaula N.W.R.* 12 Dec (PL, SM) through 29 Jan (MEM). North Carolina had at least 2 Ash-throated Flycatchers: at *C. Hatt.* 27 Dec (CE et al.) and at the *Pungo Unit*, *Pocosin Lakes N.W.R.* 28 Jan (*vide* WC). An unidentified *Myiarchus* at *Alligator River N.W.R.* 13 Jan (JSo) was probably also this species. North Carolina's 3rd Tropical Kingbird, present from the fall near *L. Phelps*, *Washington*, was last seen 26 Dec (K&JBe). Western Kingbirds were found five times this winter: one on *Ocracoke I.*, NC 7 Dec (PV et al.), one on the *Okefenokee N.W.R.*, *GA C.B.C.* 30 Dec (*vide* SWi), one at the *Fulton County Airport*, *GA* 20 Dec-25 Feb (DH et

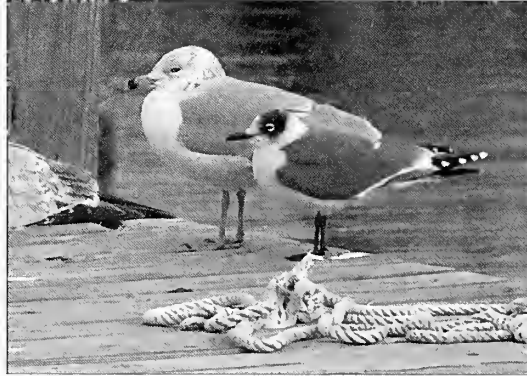
al.), 2 near Fitzgerald, *Ben Hill*, GA 22-29 Jan (JFI, EH), and 2 at Jekyll I., GA 2-18 Feb (GK, SB). Providing a very rare winter sighting was the Yellow-throated Vireo on Sapelo I., GA 1 Dec (DCo). Compelling documentation of these winter-season Yellow-throated Vireos is lacking and very much needed; confusion with bright Pine Warblers is possible. Not as surprising were the 4 Fish Crows in *Cherokee*, GA 28 Jan (V&HD); this species has been found farther and farther inland during winter across the Region.

Swallows of note included a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at the Merry Ponds, Augusta, GA 1 Dec (EB, MB), another at Oxbow Meadows, GA through 7 Jan (WCh), a Bank Swallow at H.B.S.P. 7 Jan (ST et al.), a Barn Swallow at Carolina Beach, NC 31 Dec (RD), and another Barn at H.B.S.P. 7 Jan (ST et al.). There are only one or two previous winter reports of Bank Swallow in the Carolinas! Cave Swallows continued in the Region after the fall influx. Amazingly, the H.B.S.P. area hosted a flock of these swallows for almost the entire winter. The peak count was 38+ on 7 Jan (ST et al.), and 20 were still there as late as 18 Feb (JPe). Other Cave Swallow reports included 6 at Pawley's I., SC 29 Dec (SCp et al.), one on the Bodie-Pea I., NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (PS et al.), one on the L. Matt., NC C.B.C. 29 Dec (RD), and one at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA 4-18 Feb (JFI, EH, GK, SB). Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce this winter as compared to last. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, however, seemed to be somewhat more common than usual at various Coastal Plain sites. Most intriguing was the report of a female Varied Thrush seen three times during the last week of Dec in *Orange*, NC (GT). There have been a few reports from that state, but the species has never been documented.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Rather rare away from the usual Coastal Plain wintering range were single Orange-crowned Warblers at Charlotte, NC 26 Jan (JB) and in *Gordon*, GA 1 Feb (JSp). Nashville Warblers were in North Carolina on the Wayne County C.B.C. 17 Dec (Ede et al.), on the Durham C.B.C. 18 Dec (DK et al.), and on the Morehead City C.B.C. 18 Dec (JC). In South Carolina, singles were at Conway 9 Dec (PL), on the Savannah, GA C.B.C. 1 Jan (fide SC), and at H.B.S.P. 27 Feb (D&PD). Georgia hosted one in Columbus 20 Dec (PF et al.) and one in *Gwinnett* 5 Jan (EH). Eight Nashvilles Regionwide is a high count for winter. Northern Parula reports were up, too, with singles on Roanoke I., NC 12 Dec-10 Jan (JL), on the C.

Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (PS et al.), on the St. Catherine's I., GA C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide EU), and the Cumberland I., GA C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide SWi). Yellow Warbler sightings involved singles at L. Matt. 29 Dec-14 Jan (JL, HL et



This Franklin's Gull was present 14 December 2005 (here) through 15 January 2006 at Manns Harbor, Dare County, North Carolina. Winter records of this species are very few in the Southeast, and the length of stay of this individual was unprecedented in the Southern Atlantic region. Photograph by Jeff Lewis.

al., LD), at Savannah N.W.R., SC 4 Feb (GK et al.), and on the Macon, GA C.B.C. 17 Dec (J&MA). Of interest was the Audubon's Warbler returning for a 2nd year to a yard in Chapel Hill, NC for about a week in late Jan (JM). Always rare in winter, a Black-throated Green Warbler was a good find on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 17 Dec (JF et al.). Another



Very rare for the mountains, especially in winter, was this Yellow-headed Blackbird found on the Balsam Christmas Bird Count in Haywood, North Carolina on 29 December 2005. Photograph by Wayne Forsythe.

er warbler of interest was the unidentified *Dendroica* seen briefly on the Floyd County, GA C.B.C. 31 Dec (fide GB). The bird was thought to be a Blackburnian, but the more likely Townsend's was not ruled out. Other warblers of note included 2 Yellow-throated Warblers on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (fide AB), 15 Black-and-white Warblers on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 31 Dec (fide LG), an American Redstart on the Hilton Head I., SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide NL), a Northern Wa-

terthrush at the S.S.S. 15 Dec (PL, SC), a wintering Common Yellowthroat in *Henderson*, NC 18 Dec-8 Jan (ST, BO, MW), a Wilson's Warbler at the Bradley Unit, Eufaula N.W.R., GA 13 Dec (PH), and 2 Wilson's on the *Wayne*, NC C.B.C. 17 Dec (JF et al.). Wintering Ovenbirds included one at Southern Shores, NC 18 Dec (JK), one on the Pettigrew S.P., NC C.B.C. 30 Dec (AB, RD), one in n. *Greene*, GA 3 Dec (PS), one on the Harris Neck N.W.R., GA C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide SC), and one on Jekyll I., GA 4 Feb (BZ). Yellow-breasted Chats were reported more than usual, with all three states hosting several individuals.

The Region held three species of tanager this winter. The rare-in-winter Summer Tanager was represented by a female at a feeder in Whispering Pines, *Moore*, NC 28 Jan+ (SCb), while an even rarer Scarlet Tanager, a female/imm., visited a feeder in Conway, SC 2-20 Dec (GP, JPe). Both birds were photographed. Western Tanager reports were down from last year

but still impressive: a male a feeder in Morehead City, NC 15 Jan (fide JF), a female in Wilmington, NC Jan-Feb (fide SCb), an imm. male at a feeder in York, SC late Feb+ (fide BHT), and singles in Georgia at Powder Springs, *Cobb* 9-11 Feb (fide JS, BZ) and Marietta 26 Dec (fide TM). Bachman's Sparrows are notoriously difficult to observe in winter; thus of note were the 7 found in Moody Forest Natural Area, *Appling*, GA 29 Jan (JFI, EH). Clay-colored Sparrows are rare-but-regular winter residents in the Region. This year, North Carolina had practically all the reports of the species, with the best totals being 4 on the Pettigrew S.P. C.B.C. 30 Dec (AB, RD) and 2 on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (fide AB). Very rare away from the Coastal Plain were single Clay-colored in the French Broad R. area, *Henderson* 19-22 Jan (WF) and near Lenoir, a bird that wintered for the 2nd year in a row (fide KF). The only Lark Sparrows reported were at Funston Rd., *Brunswick*, NC 31 Dec (GM) and on the Greenville, NC C.B.C. 31 Dec (KH). The most interesting *Ammodramus* sparrow reports included 10 Grasshoppers on the Clemson, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide DLa), 3 Le Conte's on the Clemson, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide DLa), a Henslow's in *Transylvania*, NC 1 Jan (EG et al.), and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed at Clemson, SC in the first week of Dec (PC), the latter two furnishing very rare inland reports for those states. Lincoln's Sparrows were reported frequently again, with the best counts being 8 on the Pettigrew S.P. C.B.C. 30 Dec (RD, AB) and 3 on the Southport-Bald Head I., NC C.B.C. 1 Jan (GM et

al.); several in the North Carolina mts. provided rare sightings away from the usual Coastal Plain wintering areas: one was on the *Henderson C.B.C.* 18 Dec (WF, BO, ST), 2 were in *Transylvania* 30 Dec (NS), and another was in another part of the county 1 Jan (B&NS). This season's Lapland Longspur reports involved up to 7 at Red Hill, *Edgecombe*, NC 28 Jan–11 Feb (RD, SS et al.), at least 5 n. of St. Matthews, *Calhoun*, SC 10 Dec (RC, PL), 3 at Hoop. 22 Dec (WF), and one at Fite Bend Rd., *Gordon*, GA 17 Feb (JSp). North Carolina had the only Snow Buntings reported: singles were at Oregon Inlet 3 Dec (RD) and 5 Jan (RK), at C. Hatt. 3 Dec (EDe), and at Wrightsville Beach 10 Dec (BS).

Rare winter Indigo Buntings were located at Southport, NC 1 Jan (GM et al.) and at Charlotte, NC 2 Feb (JB). Painted Buntings continued to be found as regular but quite local winter residents, usually at the coast. Thus the most interesting reports were inland, where singles on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 17 Dec (R&PT), on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 31 Dec (*vide* LG), and at a feeder in Glennville, *Tattnall*, GA 15 Jan (GW) were documented. Only 2 Dickcissels were mentioned: singles on the Savannah, GA C.B.C. 1 Jan (*vide* SC) and near L. Phelps, NC 2 Feb (DL). Very rare for the mts., and the only one reported this winter, a female Yellow-headed Blackbird was found along Ratcliff Rd., *Haywood*, NC 29 Dec (MW et al., WF). The most interesting Brewer's Blackbird reports involved 3–5 near Townville, SC 17 Dec–28 Feb (SG et al.), 3 near Plymouth, NC 28 Jan (HW et al.), one at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 1 Jan (JL), and one at Congaree Swamp, SC 18 Dec (*vide* RC). There was a mini-invasion of Bullock's Oriole into the Region this winter, with 4 birds being documented by photograph. In Georgia, one was at a feeder in Smyrna, *Cobb* 15–21 Dec (GS et al.), and another was found in an orchard w. of Statesboro, *Bulloch* 27 Dec (JPa, *vide* GB). These provided the 6th and 7th records for the state. In North Carolina, one was at a feeder in Conover 14 Jan (*vide* DM), and another was at a feeder n. of Pittsboro late Jan+ (CC et al.). Baltimore Orioles seemed to be reported in better-than-average numbers across the Region as well.

Red Crossbill sightings of note included an impressive count of 26 on the Chattahoochee, GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (*vide* GB), up to 2 at Carters L., GA 13–28 Feb (JSp), one in *Fannin*, GA 10 Jan (NSe), one at a feeder in s. *Cobb*, GA 12 Jan (PM), one at Jordan L., NC 20 Dec (TKr et al.), and 2 at Johnston's Mill Preserve, Chapel Hill, NC 24 Dec (SPh). An Evening Grosbeak at a feeder in Black Mountain, NC

on Christmas Day (SGi) was the only one reported.

Corrigendum: The Little Egret included in the fall 2005 report (*N.A.B.* 60: 55) was not accepted by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee and should be deleted.

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Bruce H. Anderson

It was another rather mild winter, with barely freezing temperatures reaching south to Orlando only once, in February. The season was also drier than normal, the central and southern regions of the peninsula ending the season with a deficit of about 8 cm, which sparked wildfires fueled by the debris of two brutal hurricane seasons. In some areas of the western panhandle and southern peninsula, where vegetation has been severely impacted by recent hurricanes, resident birds were extremely scarce. Conspicuously absent were any Bahamian and/or Antillean vagrants.

Abbreviations/definitions: E.N.P. (Everglades N.P.); F.O.S.R.C. (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee); N.S.R.A. (North Shore Restoration Area, Orange); report (any observation); record (only those reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence); UF (Florida State Museum).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CARACARA

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continue to increase in the n., with high counts of 17 in Leon (Don Bethancourt, *vide* TE) and 159 in Alachua (Dan Pearson). Greater White-fronted Geese were widespread, with one in Okaloosa 10–19 Dec (DWa, RAD et al.), 2 in Hamilton 12 Nov (JK), 2 in Levy 2 Dec (Jape Taylor), 5 in Orange 17 Dec–7 Jan (Gian Basili et al.), 5 in Hendry 27 Jan at Diner Island Ranch W.M.A. (Tim & Lesa Pan-

to), and one in Palm Beach 25 Feb at Loxahatchee N.W.R. (ph. John J. Lopinot). Snow Geese penetrated s. to Highlands in Dec (C.B.C.) and to n. Sarasota, where about 30 were in flight 17 Jan (Tina Mossbarger). One Snow Goose was seen captured by an American Alligator at St. Marks N.W.R., Wakulla (Harry Hooper)! Unprecedented, 9 Ross's Geese were in Okaloosa 10–19 Dec (L&RAD et al., ph. PJ), while singles visited Wakulla Nov–17 Dec (PLH et al.) and Brevard 17 Dec–3 Jan (DF et al., ph. Tom Dunkerton). One small white goose in Pasco (BP et al.)

was believed to be a Snow Goose × Ross's Goose hybrid (F.O.S.R.C.). If accepted by the F.O.S.R.C., a small white-checked goose in Okaloosa 10 Dec–14 Jan will be Florida's 3rd verified Cackling Goose (L&RAD et al., ph. PJ). Nearly annual, an American Brant was at Canaveral N.S., Volusia 18 Feb (Tad Fyock, BW). Single Eurasian Wigeons were in Brevard 13 Jan (BR) and Polk 18–20 Dec (LAI), with 2 in Collier 9 Nov (AM). Lone Cinnamon Teal visited Lake Apopka N.S.R.A., Orange 4 & 9 Dec (HR) and Brandon, Hillsborough 18 Dec–2 Feb (EK et al.).

For a 2nd year, a male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was at Gainesville, Alachua 27 Jan–10 Feb (BRo, PBu et al.), while another paused at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 22 Jan (HR). Inland, 4 Greater Scaup were at Hamilton

Gulf, while on the Atlantic, 2 Surfs were found far s. at Key Biscayne, Miami-Dade 23 Dec (Roberto Torres et al., ph. TR), and there was a high count of 42 at Cocoa, Brevard (C.B.C.). The season's only White-winged Scoter was at Honeymoon Island S.R.A., Pinellas 18 Dec (Wilf Yusek et al.). In good numbers on the Atlantic coast, 320 Black Scoters were s. to Hutchinson I., St. Lucie 17 Dec (J&EH); most unusual were 2 Black Scoters in downtown Pensacola, Escambia 17 Dec (RAD et al.), and a high count of 520 came from waters off Amelia I., Nassau 14 Dec (PLH). The only reported Long-tailed Duck was one inland at Hamilton mines 12–17 Dec (JK, PLH). A female Bufflehead 21 Jan+ was only the 2nd for Broward (MBe). Common Goldeneyes staged a minor inland invasion, with 2 at Hamilton mines 14 Dec (PLH) and singles at Tallahassee, Leon 30 Dec (SM), Gainesville 14–15 Dec (Scott Flamand, RR et al.), Tangerine 20 Dec–8 Feb (ph. AV, DR et al.), Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 27 Dec–28 Jan (HR, ph. AV), and Viera Wetlands, Brevard 10 Dec (Diane Reed).

Three Red-throated Loons were in Duval and one was at Merritt I., Brevard in Dec (C.B.C.). Gulfside, up to 4 visited Franklin in Jan (JM, Rodney Cassidy et al.). Common Loons strayed far s. to Monroe, with 2 in the Florida Straits off Long Key 20 Jan (BHA et al.) and 2 at Key West 31 Dec (C.B.C.). Mulroony reported that Commons were unusually plentiful in Florida Bay, with 6 near Cow-



Florida's first European Herring Gull (split from North American *smithsonianus* by European ornithologists) frequented a Volusia County landfill 11–21 (here 15) February 2006. Photographs by Lyn Atherton.



mines 14 Dec (PLH), 2 were at L. Dora, Lake 20 Dec (AV, DR), and up to 5 were s. in the Zellwood/Tangerine area, Orange 2 Dec–19 Feb (HR, AV et al.), these reports roughly approximating the species' s. limits along both coasts. A lone Surf Scoter at St. Marks N.W.R. 13 Dec (PLH) was the only report from the

pens Key 16 Dec.

Apparently no Eared Grebes wintered; singles visited Hamilton mines 12 & 14 Dec (JK, PLH) and Auburndale, Polk 20 Dec (PF, LA). Very rarely reported, 4 Manx Shearwaters were seen 74 km off Ponce Inlet, Volusia 1 Jan (BW, MBr). A moribund Masked Booby at

SA Florida's migratory **Whooping Crane** population increased by 19 this season, as ultra-light aircraft guided these yearlings to Chassahowitzka N.W.R., *Citrus* from Wisconsin's Necedah N.W.R. Of the presumed still-extant 41 Whooping Cranes that had been led to Florida during the previous four years, 33 returned to Florida this season, while others wintered in Tennessee (4), North Carolina (one), South Carolina (one), and 2 were lost to tracking after reaching Alabama and Tennessee. The first 2 cranes to return to Florida reached *Madison* 15 Nov, with 5 more arriving in *Citrus* four days later. The first 2 cranes to begin their return flight left Florida on 2 Feb (<www.operationmigration.org/Field_Journal.html>).

Ponce Inlet 9 Dec died the same day (*fide* MBr; *UF 45042, *fide* TW). Farther s., at Jupiter Colony Inlet, *Palm Beach*, a live Brown Booby was seen 20 Dec (J&EH). At Dry Tortugas N.P., *Monroe*, 32 Masked and 48 Brown Boobies were counted 4 Jan (C.B.C.). Lone Brown Pelicans were inland in *Leon* 25 Jan and 10 Feb (GM et al.), *Alachua* 27 Dec (Helen Warren), and *Polk* 2 Dec (Tom Palmer). Stunning in alternate plumage, a Great Cormorant remained on Doctor's L., *Clay*, off the St. Johns R. 23 Feb+ (Dianne Wears et al., ph. AV). A tardy Magnificent Frigatebird was over coastal *Duval* 15 Dec (RCI). A brightly plumaged **Scarlet Ibis** photographed at Ft. Myers Beach, *Lee* this season was likely the same one seen sporadically over several years and believed to be an escapee (ph. John Dougherty, *fide* CE). Now annual, a White-faced Ibis was identified at St. Marks N.W.R. 8 Dec (Andy Wraithmell et al.), and 3 were at Micanopy, *Alachua* 25 Feb+ (JoH, AK et al.). Greater Flamingos were not located anywhere in Florida this season and have not been reported in the state since the passage of Hurricane *Wilma* (*fide* BM). The species has been reported nearly annually since the 1950s at Snake Bight, E.N.P., but *Wilma* devastated the Park 24 Oct 2005.

The earliest Swallow-tailed Kites were 2 noted in *Pinellas* 26 Feb (JF). Single White-tailed Kites, scarce in Florida, were spotted at Hole-in-the-Donut, E.N.P., *Miami-Dade* 4 Dec (JHB), near Lake Placid, *Highlands* 29 Dec (C.B.C.), on Sanibel I., *Lee* 15 Jan (Kay & Paul Kiefer), along Canoe Creek Rd., *Osceola* 8 Feb (B&LC), and in Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P., *Okeechobee* 22 Feb (GQ). A Snail Kite remained far n. at L. Tsala Apopka, *Citrus* 18 Jan (Frank Aumack), where at least one pair nested last summer. The only Broad-winged Hawks reported n. of the s. peninsula were 3 at Ft. De Soto C.P., *Pinellas* (LAt), one in *Hillsborough*, and 2 in s. *Brevard* (C.B.C.). A Short-tailed Hawk at I.M.C. Peace River Park, *Polk* 21 Jan was early (PF et al.). Rare in the panhandle, a migrant Swainson's Hawk was at Ft. Walton Beach Sewage Facility 10 Dec (RAD et al., ph. PJ), while up to 2 lingered at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 20 Dec–16 Jan (ph. AV). A Swainson's at Brandon 5 Feb (Chris Rasmussen) was likely an early migrant. A very rare Golden Eagle was seen attempting to kill a Wild Turkey at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve

S.P. 20 Feb (GQ). A Crested Caracara at Turtle Mound, Canaveral N.S., *Volusia* 23 Feb (ph. PH) was ne. of its known breeding range.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Surprising were single Yellow Rails flushed at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P. 28 Jan (Jim McGinity et al.) and 23 Feb (GQ et al.). A



This apparent Cackling Goose in Okaloosa County, Florida 10 December 2005 (here) through 14 January 2006, pictured here with one of nine Ross's Geese also present, will provide Florida's second record. Photograph by Paul Johnson.

Sandhill Crane over Fernandina Beach, *Nassau* 1 Dec (PL) was far e. of usual areas.

Rare in winter, up to 3 American Golden-Plovers were at Hole-in-the-Donut, E.N.P. 21–22 Dec (RD et al.), and singles were at St. Marks N.W.R. 1 Dec–29 Jan (JCa et al.) and Merritt Island N.W.R. 19 Dec (C.B.C.) and 1 Feb (DF). Rare on the Atlantic coast, a Snowy Plover visited Talbot Island S.P., *Duval* 23 & 26 Dec (PL). For the 2nd year, the high count of Piping Plovers (38) occurred at Crandon Beach, *Miami-Dade* 31 Jan (RD). Rare in the panhandle, lone American Oystercatchers were found at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* 8 Dec

(RAD) and Pensacola 17 Dec (Jan Lloyd). Black-necked Stilts were widespread, with up to 19 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A., *Lake* (AV, BHA) and *Sarasota* (C.B.C.) throughout the season. Other stilts were reported at Merritt Island N.W.R. (DF, PH), *Polk* mines (PT, CG), Myakka S.P., *Sarasota* (BHA et al.), and on C.B.C.s in *Wakulla*, *Seminole/Volusia*, *Manatee*, *Miami-Dade*, and *Monroe*. Two Long-billed Curlews were spotted at Cedar Key, *Levy* 29 Dec (DH et al.), one was found at Ft. Myers Beach 17 Jan (BHA et al.), and 2 wintered at Ft. De Soto C.P. (LAt). Purple Sandpipers occupied the usual jetties along the Atlantic coast as far s. as Sebastian Inlet S.R.A., *Indian River* (one bird; Frank Haas, *fide* Dotty Hull). American Woodcocks were very much in evidence this season, with reports from *Santa Rosa* (RAD), *Jackson* (RoS), *Wakulla* (SM), *Levy* (DH), *Hernando* (A&BH), *Seminole* (BHA), *Orange* (HR), *Pinellas* (JF), and *Miami-Dade* (MBe et al.), as well as on C.B.C.s in *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Bay*, *Leon*, *Franklin*, *Alachua*, *Duval*, *Pasco*, *Brevard*, and *Highlands*.

A Franklin's Gull was found near Sanibel I. 4 Jan (CE). The *Volusia* landfill attracted an unprecedented 3 Iceland Gulls (2 first-winter birds and Florida's first verified second-winter) 11–21 Feb (ph. AV, ph. BW et al.). Also present were at least 8 apparent Herring Gull × Glaucous Gull hybrids and Florida's first European Herring Gull (*Larus* [a.] *argentatus*; second-winter) 11–21 Feb (ph. AV, ph. LAt et al.). Only casual inland, a Great Black-backed Gull was at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 27 Jan (HR). More than 5 Great Black-backed Gulls wintered along the Gulf in *Pinellas* (LA), and one wintered as far s. as Key West (C.B.C.). A Black Tern at Merritt Island N.W.R. 6 Dec (RD), and a Common Tern in *Pinellas* 17 Dec (DP) were late. Rare in winter, 3 Sooty Terns were observed on 4 Jan at Dry Tortugas N.P. (C.B.C.).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A White-crowned Pigeon strayed n. to Ft. Lauderdale, *Broward* 18 Dec (C.B.C.). White-

SA During the 1980s, the Smooth-billed Ani population in Florida began a steady decline; causes for this crash are a matter of speculation, but a series of strong cold fronts may have been responsible for at least some of the local extirpations (see Mlodinow, S. G., and K. T. Karlson. 1999. Anis in the United States and Canada. *N.A.B.* 53: 237–245). The northward flow of immigrants, probably from the West Indies through the Dry Tortugas and the Keys, has apparently abated, as anis have rarely been reported at those locales since the decline began. More recently, the once reliable flock in *Broward* known to many birders was reduced to a single pair that bred last summer; the ads. and their 4 young survived Hurricane *Wilma* in Oct, but they have not been reported more recently. The Tropical Audubon Society Miami Bird Board (<www.tropicalaudubon.org>) has posted several recent Smooth-billed Ani sightings: at least 2 were seen near Miami Springs, *Miami-Dade* in Nov; one was seen near Loxahatchee N.W.R. 16 Dec; and one was photographed near Cutler Ridge, *Miami-Dade* in Apr. In addition, a single was located at Kendall in Mar (Bill Boeringer). An unidentified ani in *Brevard* 18 Dec may have been Smooth-billed (RP et al.). Single Groove-billed Anis were seen at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 9 Dec (HR) and 29 Jan (RCI). Smooth-billed Ani is holding on, but at present, there appears to be no reliable location where this species can be found. Although still widespread in the Caribbean, the species should be considered endangered in the United States.

winged Doves continue to expand their range northward in *Alachua* and westward to Bronson, *Levy*, where 2 were found 13 Feb (RR). Apparent w. migrant White-wingeds were in *Wakulla* 17 Dec (C.B.C.) and at Alligator Pt., *Franklin* 19 Jan (SM).

A Burrowing Owl was captured 13 Feb in a parking lot on a barrier island at Vero Beach, *Indian River* (*vide* Billi Wagner), where the species is not known to breed. A census of the very isolated Eglin A.F.B., *Okaloosa* colony on 15 Jan turned up 15 Burrowing Owls (Lenny Fenimore). A Lesser Nighthawk briefly paused at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 7 Dec (HR). On 3 Dec, at least 12 Lessers returned to Frog Pond W.M.A., *Miami-Dade* (BRo), and 2 were at nearby Long Pine Key, E.N.P., *Miami-Dade* 20 Dec (C.B.C.), both traditional wintering sites. One Lesser was found n. on a *Broward* C.B.C. 28 Dec. Reported almost annually, Common Nighthawks have eluded verification until this season, when 2 were seen, heard and video/audio-recorded in Homestead, *Miami-Dade* 14 Dec (*vr.* LM). Elsewhere, up to 3 nighthawks were seen at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 28 Dec+; a Common was heard there 2 Jan (BHA, AV). From farther s. near Kissimmee, *Osceola* came a report of up to 9 nighthawks in Jan (*vide* BP). Rare in winter in the n., a Chuck-will's-widow was flushed at St. Marks N.W.R. 29 Dec (RoS), while the first of the season reported singing was at Merritt I. 27 Feb (DF). Reports of *Chaetura* swifts came from *Alachua* (up to 20, 9 Dec–5 Jan; SC, JoH et al.), *Wakulla* (one, 17–20 Dec; ES), and *Hernando* (one, 10 Dec; Clay Black); all birds were identified as Vaux's by one or more of the observers; however, the E.O.S.R.C. has not accepted any reports of this species that it has reviewed. One must consider the possibility that at least some of these swifts were Chimney Swifts left over from Hurricane Wilma.

Again this winter, Fred Bassett canvassed n. and cen. Florida, banding hummingbirds. Handling six species, he banded 68 of the 82 that he captured (the remainder were recaptured Ruby-throated [7] and Rufous Hummingbirds [7]). Single Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were banded in *Okaloosa* and *Leon*. Twenty-two of 31 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 30 of 39 Rufous Hummingbirds and 6 of 7 Black-chinned Hummingbirds captured ranged from Pensacola to Tallahassee. Bassett banded other Rufous in *Alachua* (7) and *Hernando* (2), one Black-chinned in *Hernando*,

one Calliope Hummingbird in *Leon* (26 Jan), and 2 Allen's Hummingbirds in *Leon* (14 Jan and 22 Feb). Another Buff-bellied (20 Jan+; ph. Mark Faherty, LM et al.) and at least one Black-chinned (31 Dec+; LM et al.) were at Miami. A Ruby-throated visited Fernandina Beach 18 Jan (PL), where the species is occasional in winter. Other Rufous/Allen's were reported at *Orange* (Helen Dowling), *Brevard* (ph. RP), and *Hillsborough* (EK).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Least Flycatchers were reported n. to *Orange*, with a high count of 9 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 30 Dec (HR) and *Seminole*, where a

N.S.R.A., where up to 36 Westerns and 8 Scissor-taileds gathered 11 Dec+ (HR, BHA et al.). Two new roosts were discovered this season: one to the s. near Bartow, *Polk* was not revealed until 15 Mar, when 32 Western and 5 Scissor-taileds were reported (CG et al.), and up to 37 Westerns and 4 Scissor-taileds used a roost at The Villages, *Marion*, noted 18 Jan+ (James Dinsmore, Al Rouch), the northernmost kingbird roost known in Florida. Only of casual occurrence farther n., a Western Kingbird visited Tallahassee 28 Dec–21 Jan, as did a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 7–22 Jan (SM et al.). A Scissor-tailed was n. at Gainesville 29 Jan (Dee Thompson). The

most exciting flycatcher of the season was a Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 10 Dec–15 Jan (ph. AV, DR et al.), the first for winter in Florida.

In *Miami-Dade*, a Bell's Vireo wintered at Frog Pond W.M.A. (RD, LM et al.), as did a Yellow-throated Vireo (JHB), while an early migrant Bell's appeared at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P. 28 Feb (RD). On C.B.C.s, Yellow-throateds were in *Pinellas*, *Hillsborough*, *Sarasota*, *Collier*, *Miami-Dade* (3), and *Monroe* (3). Smith reported the season's earliest Purple Martins (3) at Paynes Prairie Preserve S.P. 14 Jan and first Northern Rough-winged Swallows (2) at Lake City, *Columbia* 28 Jan. The last Bank Swallow was at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 13 Dec (HR),

and the earliest to return was 28 Feb at Viera Wetlands (DF). A Cave Swallow of the subspecies *pelodoma* was at Cantonment, *Escambia* 8 Jan (Laura Catterton, *vide* RAD), and farther e., one was at St. Marks N.W.R. 22 Feb (GM et al.). Three Barn Swallows were late in *Alachua* 19 Dec (RR, G. McDermott). Early Barns were singles in *Brevard* 27 Feb (DF) and *Hernando* 28 Feb (A&BH), while "several" at Homestead 15 Jan (JHB, BM) may have wintered. More than 322 km s. of its nearest known breeding range, a Carolina Chickadee continued at Greynold's Park, *Miami-Dade* throughout the season (AHR, PBI et al.). Lone Red-breasted Nuthatches were at Alligator Pt. 12 Dec–17 Jan (JM) and Gainesville 10–30 Jan (Steve Daniels). Winter Wrens were reported at their usual haunts in *Jackson* (PF, DB), *Leon* (PLh), and *Columbia* (PBu et al.). Two Marsh Wrens at Dry Tortugas 4 Jan were the first for the N.P. (RD). Two Hermit Thrushes were far s. at E.N.P., *Miami-Dade* 16 Jan (RD), as were several American Pipits heard at Frog Pond W.M.A. 7 Jan (JHB).



This Iceland Gull was one of three at a Volusia County landfill 11-21 (here 11) February 2006 and was the first in second-winter plumage to be verified for the state.
Photograph by Alex Vinokur.

total of 5 was counted at two locations (BHA; C.B.C.). Vermilion Flycatchers returned to previous winter territories in *Miami-Dade* (JHB), *Hamilton* (JK et al.), *Alachua* (JS, RR et al.), and *Wakulla* (ES, JM et al.). Elsewhere, migrant Vermilions were at *Santa Rosa* 11–12 Dec (Larry Tilley et al.) and St. Vincent I., *Franklin* 9 Dec (Thomas E. Lewis). Ash-throated Flycatchers were not widely reported this season, although a high count of 12 came from Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 23 Dec (HR). Single Ash-throateds were found in *Seminole* (BHA), *Santa Rosa* (DWa), and *Okaloosa* (RAD). Also at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A., 2 Brown-crested Flycatchers were seen 28 Dec–9 Jan (BHA, HR). Another Brown-crested was at Black Point Marina, *Miami-Dade* 24–26 Dec (LM et al.).

A Tropical Kingbird was audio-recorded at Apalachicola, *Franklin* 27 Dec–8 Feb (TE et al.). Up to 2 Cassin's Kingbirds were at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 11 Dec+ (HR), with another in s. *Hillsborough* 18 Dec–6 Feb (BP, ph. LA et al.). The best-known kingbird roost in the cen. peninsula is located near Lake Apopka

Twenty-three species of warblers were reported this season. Single late Blue-winged Warblers were in *Broward* 11 Dec (AHR, PBI et al.) and at Weeki Wachee, *Hernando* 23 Dec (BH, Rita Grant), while one at West L., E.N.P., *Monroe* 22 Jan and 14 Feb (MBe, Monte Stickel) may have wintered. Tennessee Warblers were late on 17 Dec in *Brevard* (DF et al.), *Seminole* (C.B.C.), and *Miami-Dade* (JHB, Greg Jones). Single Tennessee Warblers at two locations in *Miami-Dade* 10 Jan (JHB) and 5 Feb (TR) may have wintered. Lone wintering Nashville Warblers were found in *Seminole* 5 Jan (ph. PH), Jacksonville, *Duval* 6 Jan and 25 Feb (JCo), Matheson Hammock, *Miami-Dade* 8 Jan (AHR), Mashles I., *Franklin* 8 Jan (JM), Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 20 Jan+ (HR), and L. Washington, *Brevard* 21 Jan (AB). Five Nashvilles reported from *Okaloosa* to *Miami-Dade* 11–19 Dec (Jim Kowalski, AV, AHR et al., JHB et al., C.B.C.) may have been late migrants. The earliest migrant Northern Parulas were in *Miami-Dade* 31 Jan (RD). Yellow Warblers were reported on C.B.C.s n. to Lake Placid, Apalachicola, and Pensacola. Three Black-throated Blue Warblers at Merritt I. 17 Dec (DF et al.) were late. A fall Black-throated Gray Warbler at New Port Richey, *Pasco* was last seen 16 Dec, and there was a one-day wonder at Gainesville 13 Feb (Grace Kiltie).

A Black-throated Green Warbler was found far n. in *Columbia* 21 Jan (JS). A Prairie Warbler at St. Augustine, *St. Johns* 17 Feb (Jacqueline Kern) was early, as was an American Redstart at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 14 Feb (HR). A redstart was late at Gainesville 18 Dec (Scott Robinson), and one wintered n. at Oakland Nature Preserve, *Orange* (TR). An Ovenbird was discovered n. at Orange Park, *Clay* 10 Jan (Lenore McCullagh). Northern Waterthrushes wintered n. to *Alachua* (Mike Paczolt et al.); Robinson counted 13 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 15 Jan. Very rare in winter, a Louisiana Waterthrush remained throughout the season at Gumbo Limbo Trail, E.N.P., *Miami-Dade* (JHB et al.), and one was seen father s. at Coot Bay, *Monroe* on the C.B.C. Wilson's Warblers were reported from *Duval* (JCo), *Hamilton* (JA), *Alachua* (MM, RR), *Seminole* (BHA), and *Orange* (HR). Yellow-breasted Chats were found n. to *Alachua* (A. Kent). Wintering Summer Tanagers were reported n. to Tallahassee (2; Peter Homann, RM), Pensacola (RAD et al.), and *Polk* (PF et al.); one in

Alachua 18 Dec (PBU) was late. A Western Tanager photographed at Pensacola remained 24 Jan+ (fide RAD).

Up to 8 Clay-colored Sparrows were at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 9 Dec+ (HR), while one in *Hillsborough* wintered at a feeder (Steve Backes). A Vesper Sparrow was far s. at Frog Pond W.M.A. 7 Jan (JHB). Unexpected were 26 Henslow's Sparrows banded at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P. (PMi et al.); others were reported on Christmas counts in *Hamilton*, *Alachua* (2), and *Hillsborough*. Up to 4 Le Conte's Sparrows were at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 18–21 Dec (BHA, AV); one was identified at *Polk* mines 9 Jan (PT, CG), and



Probably annual in winter in extreme southern Florida, a few Semipalmated Sandpipers were carefully documented by the photographer this season (here 28 February 2006) in Florida Bay. Photograph by Brennan Mulrooney.

2 were banded at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P. 20 Jan and 22 Feb (GQ). The only Fox Sparrows reported were 2 at O'Leno S.P., *Columbia* 5–25 Feb (PBU, MM). Lincoln Sparrows were widespread, with reports from *Levy* (MG), *Orange* (HR, AV), *Polk* (PF et al.), *Palm Beach* (MBe, B. Hope), *Miami-Dade* (JHB), and on counts in *Franklin*, *Alachua*, *Brevard*, and *Sarasota*. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Ft. Walton Beach, *Okaloosa* 19 Dec (Pat Baker) and Research Rd., E.N.P., *Miami-Dade* 22 Dec (RD) were late, whereas singles at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 5 & 14 Feb (HR) were likely early migrants. Three rare Black-headed Grosbeaks were found in the e. panhandle: at Panama City Beach, *Bay* (Tony Menart) 29 Dec, at Apalachicola the same day (JaD, JM, ph. John Spohrer), and at East Point, *Franklin* 10 Jan+ (ph. Sheila Klink, fide JaD). Photographs of the *Franklin* grosbeaks show them to be different individuals. With winter numbers increasing annually, an unprecedented 30 Blue Grosbeaks at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 27 Dec was nevertheless almost predictable (AV); one was at Lake

Wales, *Polk* 31 Dec (PF, DB), and on the C.B.C., 2 were at Lake Placid and one at Key West. Dickcissels were reported in *Alachua* (A. Kent, SC), *Orange* (up to 3; BHA, AV), and *Sarasota* (Rick Greenspun).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was photographed at Joe Overstreet Landing, *Osceola* 18 Jan (Tom Tams), while one was at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 26 Dec–6 Jan (HR). Also reported by Robinson at Lake Apopka was a very rare Brewer's Blackbird 6 & 22 Jan. Rusty Blackbirds reported included a loner in *Franklin* 11 Dec (RM) and 50 in *Hamilton* 17 Dec (C.B.C.). Bronzed Cowbirds were noticeably absent at their usual locations this season, with only one report of a single in *Collier* 28 Dec (AM). A female Bullock's Oriole was well studied at Tallahassee 18–28 Feb (Fran Rutkousky et al.). Pine Siskins were scarce, with singles reported in *Leon* (Jan Clark Jones) and *Alachua* (Becky Enneis, Bob Carroll, MM).

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Maris Apse | Mark Cranford

Bird activity for the winter period was light. Winter finches did not materialize, nor did northern owls following last winter's Great Gray Owl invasion. An early start to winter in December set the tone for the period. A cold snap in the second week moved many birds out of the province. Weather for the remainder of the season was milder than usual, with less precipitation, and consisted of a brief series of freezes and thaws. Notable rarities included Ivory Gull and Slaty-backed Gull from the Point Pelee Birding Area, a Sage Thrasher at Port Weller, and a Purple Gallinule rescued from beneath a Christmas tree near Peterborough. We thank Margaret Bain and Alan Wormington for extensive assistance in assembling this report.

Abbreviations: K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists); N.W.A. (National Wildlife Area); P.E. Pt. (Prince Edward Pt.); P.P.B.A. (Point Pelee Birding Area); P.P.N.P. (Point Pelee N.P.); T.O.C. (Toronto Ornithological Club); O.B.R.C. (Ontario B.R.C.); O.F.O. (Ontario Field Ornithologists); ROM (Royal Ontario Museum).

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Notable Greater White-fronted Geese included 5 in Cobourg 11-13 Jan, probably exceptionally early spring migrants (MJCB, m.ob.), and 3 at P.P.B.A. 23 Jan, building to 10 by the end of season (AW et al.). Our knowledge of the status of Cackling Goose continues to be refined in the Region; small flocks were at Markham, with 8 on 1 Dec (SL), and at P.P.B.A., where 3 were found 28 Jan (DJW, AP); singles were noted in Ottawa through 4 Dec (m.ob.), at P.P.B.A. 5 Dec (AW), at Whitby, *Durham* 7 Dec (DJL), on Wolfe I. 18 Dec (GFV, RDW), at Sarnia 23 Feb (AHR), and in *Brant* 11-24 Feb (DMA,

m.ob.). Ten Ross's Geese visited P.P.B.A., starting with the first 21 Feb (DJW et al.). Mute Swans continue to winter at Presqu'ile P.P., with a record 350 there 19 Jan (BMD). Most southbound Tundra Swans left the province with cold weather in mid-Dec; 8 on L. Erie at Nanticoke 28 Jan were an exception (JBM, South Peel Naturalists' Club). Early northbound migrants (or wintering birds?) were 24 at Port Weller 25 Feb (ALA, *fide* Ontbirds). A Blue-winged Teal on Manitoulin I. 17 Dec (DC) was late.

Lingering diving ducks occasionally winter in numbers off Manitoulin I., but this year the last White-winged Scoter was seen 3 Dec, and a maximum of just 12 Long-tailed Ducks was found over the winter period (*fide* CBe). A good count of 350 Red-breasted Mergansers came from Cobourg 11 Feb (LWe). The 8 Jan Lake Ontario Mid-Winter Waterfowl Inventory produced near-record numbers of many species, thanks in part to congregations at Hamilton and Kingston. Of these, 843 Tundra Swans at Kingston and 925 Ruddy Ducks at Windermere Basin in Hamilton stood out. Three Barrow's Goldeneyes lingered through the period at the Remic Rapids in Ottawa (m.ob.), along with a Barrow's Goldeneye ×



The second recorded in Ontario's Niagara Frontier, this Sage Thrasher hung on despite very cold weather at Port Weller 24-27 (here 26) February 2006. Photograph by Karl Egressy.

Common Goldeneye hybrid through 1 Jan; 2 Barrow's Goldeneyes were in the Kingston region, one wintered at Stoney Creek (m.ob.), and another was at Burlington 8 Jan (DBr et al.). Far rarer was a female Barrow's on L. Erie off Hillman Marsh 20-21 Dec (AW et al.), only the 3rd record ever for the P.P.B.A. Hamilton had a Common Goldeneye × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid present throughout the period (KAM), as well as an apparent Common Goldeneye × Hooded Merganser hybrid 3 Feb (RZD).

Gray Partridge is still found in small covies along the Québec border from Ottawa to the St. Lawrence. The only other report of Gray Partridge was from a traditional site at the

Brantford Airport (*fide* CE). Wild Turkey continues to increase across s. Ontario, with record numbers tallied on many Christmas Bird Counts. Common Loons remained in Algonquin P.P. until freeze-up 6 Dec (BPa, RSh, JSc); the Toronto area had a higher-than-usual 14 reported over the period. A Red-necked Grebe was seen on the Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey on the St. Clair R. 7 Jan (BAM), and another was in L. Erie off Hillman Marsh 11 Dec (AW). Two Pacific Loons were reported: from Wolfe I. 18 Dec (RDW) and from Duffins Creek 1-4 Dec (ph. JI, RJP, m.ob.). It was a big year for wandering imm. Northern Gannets on L. Ontario and L. Erie, with singles reported at Port Credit, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Long Pt., and Pt. Pelee (m.ob.); it is likely that some of these reports involved the same individual. Three Double-crested Cormorants at Cornwall Power Dam 5 Feb were noteworthy (BMD); up to 35 wintered in Windermere Basin, Hamilton (BMA). Up to 8 Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at two sites in Toronto and Hamilton. More Turkey Vultures are lingering well into Dec, and more may be wintering, e.g., 3 reported from Northumberland through the season (m.ob.); apparent returning birds were seen in Smithville as early as 20 Jan (LT, JT).

HAWKS THROUGH OWLS

Reports of Gyrfalcon included an imm. gray morph at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa 21 Feb (CT), a white morph at Wolfe I. 18 Dec (MWPR), an ad. white morph at Holiday Beach 4 Dec (Carl A. Pascoe, Rachel Pascoe) and another at Wheatley Harbour 24 Dec (TRP), and a gray morph at Duffins Creek 4 Dec (KO, AW et al.). A late Osprey was reported 4 Dec in Oakville (BM). An imm. Golden Eagle wintered at Port Bruce near L. Erie (RK). A Red-tailed Hawk showing characters consistent with subspecies *calurus* was seen at Waterloo 8 Dec (MVAB, KB), and at Woodstock a Red-tailed similar to "Kriders" (pale morph of *borealis*) was noted 31 Jan (JHo). Two Peregrines wintered in London (m.ob., *fide* PAR).

A juv. Purple Gallinule was found 6 Feb n. of Peterborough beneath a discarded Christmas tree (*fide* Kate Siena). A Virginia Rail was noted on the C.B.C. 2 Jan at St. Clair N.W.A. (BAM), 2 were seen at Pelee Marsh Boardwalk 14 Dec (HRW), and fresh rail tracks (presumably made by a Virginia) were seen at Wheatley P.P. 13 Dec (AW). A group of 25 Sandhill Cranes over Burlington 2 Dec were very late migrants (MG), as were 5 over Hamilton 6 Dec (DL, GL). Among the few shorebirds reported was a Purple Sandpiper at Humber Bay 20 Dec (IS), a late Ruddy Turnstone at Hamil-

ton Harbour 27 Dec (TS), and a late Dunlin at Wheatley Harbour 13 Dec (AW). The gull migration through the Niagara R. was average this year, with relatively few reports of extralimital larids; the regular California Gull at Adam Beck Generating Station 28 Dec (AG, RG) was an exception. Away from the river, a Black-legged Kittiwake at Toronto 10 Dec (DJM) was noteworthy. A late-Dec thaw in L. Erie generated a large movement of gulls (34,000 Ring-billed and 7000 Herring, plus a Pomarine Jaeger) past the Tip of Point Pelee over a 4.5-hour period 31 Dec (AW). The PPB.A. hosted two rarities new to that area: an imm. Ivory Gull at Hillman Marsh 8-13 Jan (AJH, RAH, m.ob.) and a third-winter Slaty-backed Gull at Wheatley Harbour 22-26 Jan (DJW, m.ob.). An apparent Herring Gull x Great Black-backed Gull hybrid was noted 23 Jan at Wheatley Harbour (PSB).

Northern owls appeared to remain in n. Ontario this winter, with a report of 14 Great Gray Owls, 2 Northern Hawk Owls, and 2 Snowy Owls from Hearst, *Cochrane* 11 Feb (MJ). Farther s., there were relatively few reports of Great Gray Owls, mostly singles from Thunder Bay and Kenora, s. to Shelburne, *Dufferin* (KL). A Northern Hawk Owl at Orleans through 22 Jan (m.ob.) furnished one of few reports from s. Ontario; another was at North Bay in Feb (DT). A Barred Owl wintered at the Leslie Street Spit in Toronto. Two Boreal Owls were in Thunder Bay in early Feb (BN, AG, BH).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A Rufous Hummingbird attended the feeder of Alice Kenzie in London 18 Nov-9 Dec (*fide* PAR); it was identified biochemically from a molted feather. Two pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered in Pinery P.P. (AHR, MA), as did the pair at Constance Bay for a 2nd year (BMD); an ad. wintered at Holiday Harbour through at least 23 Feb (JMG, JNF et al.); and 4 were counted 31 Dec on the Fisherville C.B.C. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, now regularly seen in s. Ontario, still deserve mention in n. Ontario: a male frequented a feeder in Thunder Bay until at least 10 Jan (JSt, SSt), and another was at Jackfish L., e. of Terrace Bay, 6 Feb (AF). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen at Arkona, *Lambton* 17 Dec (PC), at P.P.N.P. 19 Dec (HHB, PJB, DR et al.), at Trenton 14 Dec (*fide* RTS), at Napanee 12 Jan (EB, OW), and in Walsingham, *Norfolk* Dec-13 Feb (DiS), the last attending a feeder.

A Northern Flicker on Manitoulin I. 13 Jan (NS) was unusual; 10 at P.P.N.P. 27 Dec (AW) made a high winter count for s. Ontario.

As expected in a mild season, single Eastern Phoebes lingered at P.P.N.P. 19 Dec (PDP

with both birds feeding on the bumper Mountain Ash berry crop 27 Dec and 13 Feb (BMo); another was seen at Reevecraig late Dec+ (RN, SuL, m.ob.). Single Hermit Thrushes were widely reported from Gravenhurst to



A first for Point Pelee and the third for Ontario, this third-winter Slaty-backed Gull was photographed at Wheatley Harbour 22 January 2006. Photograph by Brett Groves.

et al.), at Spring C.A., *Elgin* 28 Dec (JMc) and 1 Jan (DMa, LWI, RSn), at Long Pt. 14 Dec (AEMA) and 26 Jan (SAM, FN), and at Ajax 1-2 Dec (MJCB), the latter furnishing a record-late date for *Durham*. A Black-billed Magpie at McGregor, *Essex* 19 (JiH) & 20 Dec (RoH) may have been an escapee. A Gray Jay at Madoc, *Hastings* 25 Dec (*fide* RTS) was out of range. Common Ravens continue to drift southward, with several reports from locations mostly n. of Toronto. Up to 3 hardy Barn Swallows were at Kingston 9 Dec (VPM). Some feeders in and around North Bay hosted Boreal Chickadees, with up to 6 at Powassan 26 Jan (JK); in the Ottawa area, there was one at Constance Bay 6-11 Dec (JSk, SA) and one at Forest Park, e. of Embrun, 9 Jan-28 Feb (TFMB, m.ob.). A White-breasted Nuthatch in Pickle Lake, *Kenora* 6 Jan (LCo) was very far north.

Carolina Wrens were reported n. to Deep River and North Bay. Single Winter Wrens were reported from Bracebridge and Ottawa; Wheatley P.P. had a total of 6 and also a Marsh Wren 30 Dec (AW). Single Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in Toronto 22 Dec (JeB, AEM) and 23 Feb (SMF), at Wheatley P.P. 13-19 Dec (AW et al.), and at the Visitor Centre in P.P.N.P. 10 Feb (SER). Two sightings of Townsend's Solitaire came from Thunder Bay,

P.P.N.P. There were at least eight widely scattered reports of single Varied Thrushes, and single Gray Catbirds lingered at several locations in the s., with one n. to Thunder Bay in early Feb (CS, JLi). In n. Ontario, reports of Northern Mockingbirds included 2 in Ottawa and singles in Powassan and Thunder Bay. A Sage Thrasher 24-27 Feb at Port Weller (BA et al.) caused much excitement, and many local birders braved the brutally cold and windy location to search for the bird, just the 2nd recorded in Niagara Region (the first was in Oct 1966). Single Brown Thrashers were n. to Bracebridge 18 Nov-mid-Jan and again late Feb (BT); Providence Bay (EG et al.) and Tehkummah (JBe), both on Manitoulin I., 17 Dec-3 Jan; Chalk River all season (m.ob.); and at Manitouwadge, *Algoma* 10 Jan (TaH, *fide* MT).

Reports of American Pipits were unusually numerous, owing to the mild weather and many snow-free fields. One on the Gore Bay C.B.C. 18 Dec provided the first Manitoulin winter record; other singles were at Presqu'ile P.P. 18 Dec (DPS), at Niagara Falls 22 Dec (RP), at Wheatley Harbour 19-30 Dec (GTH, HAC et al.), and the Tip of Point Pelee 5 Jan (AW); in Toronto, 13 were seen 3 Dec (NMu), with singles there 4 Dec (SMF) and 18 Feb (NMu); Port Rowan had 2 on 3 Dec (DiS);

and 6 were in P.P.N.P. 10 Dec and 2 there the next day (AW). A locally rare Bohemian Waxwing was at P.P.N.P. 3-21 Feb (JB et al.); flocks as large as 300 birds were reported from across the province n. of Toronto.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Yellow-throated Warbler was photographed at a Grafton feeder 17 Nov-14 Dec (J. & E. Brunton, m.ob.), a 5th *Northumberland* record. Single Pine Warblers were at Whitby 3 Dec (DJM), at P.P.N.P. 19 Dec (PJB, CR), at Niagara Falls 22 Jan (WCD et al.) and again 28 Feb (MA), at Bronte 13 Dec-28 Feb (D&KO, m.ob.), and at a Scarborough feeder 11 Dec (JFa, *fide* GC), where up to 3 were seen on different dates through the end of the period. A Palm Warbler at Cobourg 4 Dec (MJCB) provided a 2nd county winter record; others were at Niagara Falls 18-19 Dec (Bpo, VR), at P.P.N.P. 4 Dec (HRW), and at Sturgeon Creek 23 Dec (SER). An Ovenbird was seen 9-13 Dec in Burlington (CE, m.ob.).

Single Eastern Towhees were reported from Nipigon 10 Jan (KMa), Huntsville 13 Dec+ (BCa et al.), Oshawa 24 Jan-6 Feb (D. Pazaratz), and P.P.B.A. 7 Dec+ (HTO et al.). Chipping Sparrows were also reported in above-average numbers, with singles in Richmond 21-22 Jan (PW), Toronto 6 (SMF) & 10 Dec (JFa), Brantford 31 Dec (BLa), P.P.N.P. 1 Dec (AW), and Camlachie through the season (AHR); 2 were at Wheatley Harbour 14-20 Dec (AW et al.). Field Sparrows were widely reported, with 23 reported during the period in the P.P.B.A. Single Vesper Sparrows were at Brighton 18-19 Dec (RDM, FH), at Milton 21 Dec (DRD), at Port Stanley 8 Jan (MA), at Shrewsbury 18 Dec (AW), and at Hillman Marsh 11 Dec (AJH, RAH). There were at least 10 reports of single Savannah Sparrows in s. Ontario; a flock of 17 at Wheatley Harbour 14-19 Dec (AW et al.) was comprised of multiple taxa. A Le Conte's Sparrow at the Pelee tip 3 Dec (AJH) and another on Wolfe I. 18 Dec (ph. MWPR et al.) were recorded late. In s. Ontario, several Fox Sparrows were reported from Long Point, P.P.B.A., Hamilton, Toronto, and *Northumberland*, but singles at Levigne 3 Dec (AM), Gloucester 18 Dec-5 Feb (KZb), and Deep River 20 Nov+ (JU) deserve specific mention. Single Lincoln's Sparrows were reported from Toronto I. 1 Dec (DBe), Binbrook 13 Dec (BH), Dundas 1 Jan (RZD, BC), Turkey Pt. 9 Dec (MA), and the

London C.B.C. 17 Dec (PR). Harris's Sparrow was reported in Manitouwadge 10 Jan (TaH, *fide* MT), London 29 Dec (DW, *fide* AW), and Holiday Harbour 18 Dec+ (JMG, JNF et al.). An unusually large flock of 250 Lapland Longspurs was at Ste-Rose-de-Prescott 20 Dec (m.ob.); there were 20 on 31 Dec on the Fisherville C.B.C., 30 at the Pelee Onion Fields 5 Dec (AW), 20 through the period near Forest (PC, AR), plus scattered singles and smaller

sumed to be the bird first seen 18 Dec on the Presqu'île C.B.C.) was seen 11-31 Jan (RDM, m.ob.). Rusty Blackbirds were reported in better-than-average numbers, at least for recent seasons. At the Tip of Point Pelee, 60 were seen 16 Dec (AW); 120 were at Sturgeon Creek 27 Dec (AW); and 27 were at Port Hope 11 Dec (ERM). Two Brewer's Blackbirds were found at Shrewsbury 9 Dec (JTB), 2 at Erie Beach 18 Dec (KTB, SC), 2 w. of Wheatley



This first-winter Ivory Gull spent 8-13 (here 13) January 2006 at Hillman Marsh, Ontario, a first record for Point Pelee. Photograph by Timothy C. Lenz.

groups. There were patchy reports of large flocks of Snow Buntings from the sw. portions of province, with a high count of 5000 during most of Jan between Arkona and Forest (PC, AHR).

Two male Northern Cardinals were seen in Thunder Bay 28 (MCo) & 29 Jan (JCl). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a Mindemoya feeder 24 Jan (CBe) was likewise far north. A first-basic male Indigo Bunting spent 11-13 Feb at Brent Clutterbuck's feeder near Fingal, *Elgin* (*fide* DMa). Substantial numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds lingered, especially in Dec close to L. Erie and the Niagara pen., but n. reports came from Manitouwadge, with one 10 Jan (THa, *fide* MT); Manitoulin I., where 3 on 17 Dec (CBe) constituted their first winter record; and Algonquin P.P., which had one 25 Jan (BFi, CG, JaH, KL), only the 2nd recorded there in winter. Single Eastern Meadowlarks tarried at Port Rowan 3 Dec (DiS) and in the P.P.B.A. 15 (AW) & 19 Dec (STP, MB); 3 were tallied 27 Dec on the West Elgin C.B.C. (HC). A male Yellow-headed Blackbird at a feeder in Embury 9 Jan (LHe, m.ob.) delighted Ottawa area birders; a female e. of Brighton (pre-

Harbour 13 Dec (AW), and singles were at Sturgeon Creek 19 Dec (STP, MB) and Fisherville 15 Dec (*fide* CE). In early winter, Common Grackles were seen all along L. Erie and L. St. Clair, usually in mixed flocks with Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds; exceptions were one at Gravenhurst 18 Dec (*fide* BT) and 2 in Callandar 12 Feb (LHi). A female Baltimore Oriole, surviving on suet, was at South Bay, *Prince Edward* 4-14 Dec (*fide* RTS).

Pine Grosbeaks were regular in Thunder Bay, becoming scarcer as winter wore on, with a leucistic individual found in mid-Jan (ph. BRA); Algonquin P.P. feeders hosted a flock of 20-30, with a few being seen along Hwy. 60. Ottawa had small numbers irregularly; the Toronto area had 12 at Palgrave C.A. 19 Jan (PG, *fide* TH), with 2 nearby 22 Jan (DEP); in London, 3 were seen 8-10 Jan at Fanshawe C.A. (WGL); and the most sw. report was of 3 at Pinery P.P. 29 Jan (PR). Purple Finches were seen in small numbers on Manitoulin I. all winter, Kingston reported 8 at feeders 6-26 Dec (K.F.N.), 25 were at Camden East 8 Feb (PJG), and P.P.N.P. had 14 on 1 Dec (AW), 2 on 19 Dec, and 7 on 24 Dec (DJW, AW). Red

Crossbills were in very low numbers across the province. In Algonquin P.P., all reports were from Barron Canyon Rd., where small numbers were seen 6 Dec and 28 Jan at five locations (MWPR), with 6, including singing males, noted 26 Feb (JSk). White-winged Crossbills were reported as occasional transients in small numbers throughout winter in Ottawa; just two flocks were reported along Barron Canyon Rd. 6 Dec (MWPR); 7 were in Bracebridge 8 Dec (*vide* BT); and one was at Wheatley P.P. 13 Dec (AW). Common Redpolls were noted in good numbers in more n. areas, but only 4 singles were reported in the s., at Arkona 17 Dec (PC et al.), on the Fisherville C.B.C. 31 Dec (2 birds), and at St. Marys 17 Dec (D. & E. Brown). There were scattered reports of Hoary Redpolls. Pine Siskins were in good numbers in late fall, increasing during Dec, and abundant in Jan-Feb, e.g., on Manitoulin I. (CBe). Likewise, American Goldfinches abounded all winter on Manitoulin I. and in Muskoka, and flocks of 12-280 were observed flying southward off the Tip of Pelee 1-24 Dec (AW, AJH, DJW). On Manitoulin I., Evening Grosbeak numbers built from early Dec and were still increasing in late Feb (CB); similarly in Muskoka, Evening Grosbeaks began to arrive in Nov, and there were 135 at Six Mile L. 19 Feb (BT). By contrast, Ottawa reported having good numbers early, decreasing in Feb, and there were just 7 at Kingston 14-21 Dec (EB, K.F.N.) and 12 at Bedford Mills 11 Jan (North Leeds Birdwatchers).

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Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley



Victor W. Fazio III | Rick Wiltraut

Seesaw temperatures plunged to record-low levels in December, soared to well-above average temperatures in January, and were followed by mostly seasonable, wintry weather in February. The season left birds somewhat bewildered, as northern gulls massing for migration early in December were found lingering through the period along the ice-free shores of Lake Erie for much of the remaining winter. A tremendous number of "half-hardy" songbirds (including numbers of Gray Catbird, Hermit Thrush, and Eastern Phoebe) appeared across the Region well into the dead of winter. This accords with the decade-long trend toward a compression of the migration for several non-passerines, notably Sandhill Crane and Turkey Vulture.

Abbreviations: C.C.S.P. (Caesar Creek S.P., Warren/Greene, OH); G.L.R. (Green Lane Res., Montgomery, PA); H.B.S.P. (Headlands Beach S.P., Lake, OH); Hoover (Hoover Res., Delaware/Franklin, OH); K.P.W.A. (Killdeer Plains W.A., Wyandot, OH); L.N.S.P. (Lake Nockamixon S.P., Bucks, PA); M.B.S.P. (Maumee Bay S.P., Lucas, OH); O.N.W.R. (Ottawa N.W.R.); P.V.P. (Peace Valley Park, Bucks, PA); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA); Y.C.S.P. (Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana, PA).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

A strong fall flight of Greater White-fronted Geese had up to 16 visit M.B.S.P. 4 Dec (BZ), 8 in Hamilton, OH 17 Dec (R. Cottrell), and up to 8 on Sandy Creek, Wood, WV through 24 Dec (J. Benedetti, RE, m.ob.). Considered accidental in midwinter only 10 years ago, Greater White-fronted was widely noted from Ohio this season, with 5 in the sw. (Hamilton, Montgomery, and Clark), 5 in cen. counties (Marion, Wyandot), and one in the n. (Erie). The spring flight rarely matches that of fall, so 49 in Pickaway, OH 20-21 Feb (E. Reiner, B. Sparks) made a dramatic sight, while an excellent count of 12 came from L.N.S.P. 11 Feb (D. Farbotnik). Cackling Goose is known to be a regular fall migrant, and some linger into the winter: one was at

M.B.S.P. 4 Dec (BZ), 3 were in Clark 11 Dec (DO) and 3 in Clinton, OH 7 Jan (CS), 2 were in Lake, OH 3 Jan (JP), and 7 were at P.V.P. 6 Jan (AM). The species remains a rare spring migrant, with 2 noted 12 Feb at Castalia, Erie, OH (JP) and 4 at G.L.R. 9 Feb (KC, GAF). A Ross's Goose in Erie, OH 17 Dec (ph. C. Rieker et al.) may have been the same bird as reported from Bay Village, Cuyahoga 9 Jan (L. Richardson) and Wellington Res., Lorain 28-29 Jan (D. & J. Hoffman, S. Snyder). One spent 21 Dec-7 Jan in the company of 23 Snow Geese in Clinton, OH (LG m.ob.); and singles seen 4-8 Jan near Circleville, Pickaway, OH (TBn, G. Stauffer) and 22-24 Jan in Darke (C. Ploch, R. Schieltz) added substantially to the few mid-winter records for Ohio. A Ross's Goose was among the mixed goose flock near Parkersburg, Wood, WV 18-23 Dec (J. Tharp II, m.ob.) and occasionally crossed the river into Ohio at Belpre, Washington. Apparently part of the spring flight, one was at O.N.W.R. 12 Feb (JP) with 200 Snow and 14 Greater White-fronted Geese. Ohio's 7th Ross's Goose for the season appeared in Highland 16-21 Feb (TBn) with



This potential Bullock's Oriole found near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 5 January 2006 (here) remained through the season. Photograph by Steve Wolfe.

18 Snow Geese. The spring Snow Goose flight in Ohio included 38 at Buck Creek S.P., Clark 19 Feb (JMc). The Region's peak Snow Goose concentration was 50,000 on the Hamburg C.B.C., Berks, PA 2 Jan (RK). Adding to several Ohio records, an apparent Snow Goose x Ross's Goose hybrid was nicely documented at Woodlawn Cemetery in Toledo, 28 Jan (MP, ph. S. Leatherman), and an apparent Snow Goose x Greater White-fronted Goose hybrid was reported from Wood, WV 18-23 Dec (RE). Two ad. Mute Swans appeared 11 Dec in Cabell, WV (DP). Two untagged Trumpeter Swans were at L.

Ontelaunce, Berks, PA 2 Feb (M. Spence). A modest fall flight of Tundra Swans peaked 5 Dec with 200 over w. Stark (W. Sarno), 150 over Oglebay Park, Ohio, WV (SA), and 91 at Tappan L., Harrison, OH (T. Ford). The next day found 42 s. to Wood, WV (JB).

Away from L. Erie marshes, 5500 Mallards was a notable count at Hoover 12 Dec (M. Hagar). Once exceptional in mid-Jan, the 30 Northern Pintails at K.P.W.A. are further evidence of the mild season (LG); an early spring concentration of migrants numbered 239 at Big Island W.A., Marion, OH 18 Feb (CB). Wintering flocks of 60+ Northern Shovelers in both Hamilton and Clermont, OH were noteworthy (RF). A male Eurasian Wigeon at Y.C.S.P. 21-26 Feb was early (MH et al.). A male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal at Alcoa Marsh, Lancaster 27 Jan+ (m.ob., ph. T. Johnson) was the 3rd in as many years in the Region. The 340 Redheads at C.C.S.P. 22 Feb (LG) was a sizable flock so early in the season; 340 Ring-necked Ducks in Hamilton, OH 24 Dec (RF) were equally notable so late in the season.

The fall flight of scoters included 17 Black Scoters off Cuyahoga, OH 3 Dec (NA), 4 Surf Scoters at G.L.R. 4 Dec (GAF, KC), and a Black Scoter in Wood, WV 16-21 Jan (RE, JB), a county first. White-winged Scoters remain scarce on L. Erie, with one or 2 w. to the Islands 6 & 18 Dec (L. Brohl, TB, m.ob.). Inland, 14 could be found on the Susquehanna R. in Dauphin, PA 4 Dec (fide AH), and 2 appeared on Cheat L., Monongalia, WV 6-15 Dec (JB, MO). After a weak showing in recent years, Harlequin Duck was encountered several times in the Central Basin: a female was in Lake, OH 7 Dec (JP),

another in Erie, OH 26 Jan (SZ), and 2 were at H.B.S.P. 18 Feb (E. Bacik); the same 2 may have been a bit farther e. earlier in the season at P.I.S.P. 16 Dec (ph. JM). Long-tailed Ducks were scattered across the Region, with 2 s. to the New R., Summers, WV 13 Dec and 2 Feb (BWs, M. Hank). The 1831 Common Goldeneyes around Kelleys I., L. Erie 21 Feb (TB) was normal for the season. Bufflehead fortunes in the Western Basin continue their 15-year increase, with 1944 counted around Kelleys I. 15 Jan (TB et al.). This adds credence to estimates of 4000-5000 staging, if not wintering, in the vicinity of the L. Erie Islands—

a sizable concentration anywhere in North America. On the same count, 3665 Common Mergansers were in line with seasonal expectations for the Western Basin. The 50 Hooded Mergansers at Hoover 13 Jan (CB), and 170 in *Hamilton*, OH 9 Jan (RF) further attest to the mild season. An apparent Hooded Merganser × Common Goldeneye hybrid persisted in the Region, appearing 11 Feb at C.C.S.P. (R. Asamoto).

A Red-throated Loon passed the watch point in *Lake*, OH 10 Dec (JP). Mid-winter Common Loons were restricted to sw. Ohio (LG) and P.I.S.P. (JM). One was quite late on the Penn-Warner Tract, *Bucks*, PA 27-29 Jan (DF, CR). Three Red-necked Grebe reports were limited to Pennsylvania, as was the only Eared Grebe, a bird at P.I.S.P. 5-6 Dec (C. Wood, J. Dunn). Up to 2 Northern Gannets wintered in the Central Basin along the L. Erie shorelines of *Lorain*, *Cuyahoga*, and *Lake*, OH (T. Lepage, RHn, J. Talkington, ph. JP, m.ob.). An American White Pelican on the Ohio R., in *Cabell*, WV 17 Feb (WA, T. Igou) was completely unexpected. The 45 Double-crested Cormorants at Winfield Locks, *Putnam*, WV 26 Dec dwindled to 25 for the winter (DP, m.ob.). Inland, the winter Black-crowned Night-Heron roost along the Olentangy R., *Franklin*, OH numbered a record 10 birds (D. Horn, A. Sewell, m.ob.). Along the Cuyahoga R. in Cleveland, the species wintered in exceptional numbers, with 75 accounted for through Jan. An increase to 95 in early Feb suggests newcomers from elsewhere in the Region (PL, m.ob.). Two Great Egrets appeared within this roost 8 Dec (MSr), while a flock of 6 lingered at East Harbor S.P., *Ottawa*, OH 26 Dec (I. Kern) and a single wintered at Crab Creek, *Mason*, WV (R. Talbert, G. Rankin, m.ob.). A Turkey Vulture 5 Jan over *Carey*, *Wyandot*, OH (Z. Baker) was late for the nw. corner of the state. The 6 over *Lima*, *Allen*, OH 28 Jan (M. Moser) and a lone bird farther n. over *Toledo* 25 Jan (MP) were coincident with a spring-like warm-up. The species continues to winter within more forested e. areas and took up residence in the Hinckley, *Medina*, OH "buzzard" roost 15 Jan, when 9 were noted (J. Kolo-Rose). Steeped in tradition and lore, the return of the "Hinckley Buzzard" on the ides of March was as much a sign of spring for northeastern Ohioans as the swallows of Capistrano; no more. Black Vultures continue to push their n. limits in sw. Ohio, with 45 in a *Wilmington*, *Clinton* roost (CS) and one in *Clark*, OH 16 Dec (DO).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Of 3 Ohio Northern Goshawks for the season, a subad. at East Harbor S.P., *Ottawa* 8 Dec may have represented a late migrant (J. McCormac); others were s. to *Logan* 3 Jan (T. Shively) and *Clinton* 8 Jan (D. Morse, Jr.). One at Greenbottom W.A., *Cabell*, WV 9 Feb (WA)



These Sandhill Cranes were nicely documented in Greenfield Township, Erie County, Pennsylvania on 30 December 2005. Photograph by Jerry McWilliams.

was away from the high country. Leaving little left to conquer, Bald Eagles were found nesting in *Cuyahoga*, OH—that state's most urbanized county, home to metropolitan Cleveland. Among the larger concentrations for the Region, 70 Bald Eagles were along the Lackawaxen R., *Pike*, PA 31 Jan (J. Wilson), and 54 were counted in *Hardy*, WV 8 Jan (MO). Golden Eagles in Pennsylvania included singles in *Huntingdon* 11 Feb (GG), *Luzerne* 20 Jan (R. Koval), and *Berks* 15 Jan (fide L. Goodrich). Two wintered at The Wilds, *Muskingum*, OH (A. Parker); one along the Ohio R.



These Harlequin Ducks, photographed 16 December 2005 at Presquisle State Park, Pennsylvania, may have been the same two that were found 18 February at Headlands Beach State Park, Ohio, to the west. Photograph by Jerry McWilliams.

at *Lesage*, *Cabell*, WV 16 Dec was a local first in winter (HS); and one at K.P.W.A. 11 Feb (J. Estep) furnished the only report away from the e. Highlands. There were 10 reports of Peregrine Falcon and nine of Merlin from Pennsylvania, while in Ohio wintering Merlins are branching out from their suburban haunts. Notable Jan reports came from *Pickaway*, *Wyandot*, *Union*, *Warren*, *Highland*, *Adams*, and *Hardin*. Ohio's 2nd Prairie Merlin (subspecies *richardsoni*), an ad. male, ap-

peared at K.P.W.A. 4 Jan (ph. B. Mathys). A record high number, 488 American Kestrels were noted on the P.W.R.S. (fide GG).

Two Virginia Rails lingered in *Bucks*, PA 26 Dec (CR); 3 at *Altona Marsh*, *Jefferson*, WV 17 Dec (MO) dwindled to one in Feb. The Ohio Sandhill Crane fall flight was relatively weak through Dec, with 700+ birds recorded from five w. counties. Mid-winter birds included 7 late migrants in *Auglaize*, OH 1 Jan (J. Bowers), 17 in *Hamilton*, OH 6 Jan (RF), and up to 78 in *Eric*, PA 23-30 Dec (T. Wallin). A wintering flock of 8 at Funk Bottoms W.A., *Ashland*, OH (T. Shue) was dwarfed by the 45 through the winter at Plain Grove, *Lawrence*, PA (MV, m.ob.). A Lesser Sandhill Crane was reported in Greenfield Twp., *Eric*, PA 30 Dec (ph. JM). The return flight of cranes began 16 Feb with 3 at Pickerington Ponds, *Franklin*, OH (JW). The 16 birds 21 Feb at Acton L., *Preble*, OH had Bill Heck asking "Didn't they just leave?" Indeed, the winter window between fall and spring flights of the species has narrowed from roughly 10 weeks to just six over the past 25 years.

Among the shorebirds, distinguishing late-fall/winter residents from early spring migrants requires assessment of their behavior and habitat use. Two Killdeer flying northward over *Castalia*, *Eric*, OH 23 Jan (MSr) and 2 in *Hardin* 30 Jan (R. Counts), despite the early dates, fit the profile for "spring" migrants, surely birds encouraged by the warm spell. A Greater Yellowlegs was in *Summers*, WV 17 Dec (C.B.C.). A Spotted Sandpiper on the Shenandoah R., *Jefferson*, WV 17 Dec (C.B.C.) was exceptional. A Least Sandpiper lingered through early Feb near Walnut Bottom, *Cumberland*, PA (m.ob., ph. GM), while another was found at Beech Fork Lake S.P., *Cabell*, WV 28 Dec (M. Griffith, J. Keating). Single Purple Sandpipers made their annual pilgrimage to H.B.S.P. 1-5 Dec (G. Meszaros) and P.I.S.P. 16-17 Dec (JM, Adam Troyer); another was reported from Eastlake, *Lake*, OH 11 Dec (RHn), on which date a Red Phalarope was also found. Early spring American Woodcocks were widespread across the Region 3-4 Feb.

Two late jaegers off *Cuyahoga* 2 Dec (PL) were left unidentified, as was one at P.I.S.P. 1 Dec (JM). A Pomarine Jaeger 20 Feb off *Lake*, OH (JP) fits a developing "spring" pattern of occurrence on L. Erie. Inland concentrations of Bonaparte's Gull are few, so 1300 at Hoover 1 Dec was notable (CB); the normal phenology of the species on L. Erie was apparently al-

tered, as a Dec absence from many sites was followed by a clear influx in mid-Jan: the species is normally absent here late Jan–Feb. Where these concentrations occurred, about

12 Little Gulls were discovered. A flight of 8600 Bonaparte's Gulls at H.B.S.P. 23 Jan included 6 ad. Little Gulls (VF), while the 4000 Bonaparte's at Avon L., Lorain, OH 11 Jan harbored 2 (SZ), and up to 6 were at P.I.S.P. 4 Dec–15 Feb among up to 5000 Bonaparte's (25 Jan; JM). The hooded gulls are largely migrants through the Region, with the scarcer hooded species also more often encountered in spring and fall. In keeping with the extraordinary mid-season presence on L. Erie of Bonaparte's and Little Gulls, an ad. Black-headed Gull was discovered 7 Jan and a Franklin's Gull 2 Jan, both from Lorain, OH (JP)—only to be topped by an ad. Laughing Gull in alternate plumage that wintered along the Lorain–Cleveland lakefront (ph. JP, m.ob.). A Black-legged Kittiwake at P.I.S.P. 3 Dec (JM) may have wandered to various Central Basin locales in Cuyahoga and Lake, OH 17 Dec–1 Jan (LR, JP, m.ob.). Two reports of Mew Gull from the Central Basin of L. Erie are pending committee review. The gull variety this season (15 species in the Central Basin) was not coincident with vast gull numbers, as Ring-billed Gulls were limited to peak concentration of 80,000 at Lorain Harbor, Lorain, OH 7 Jan (JP). In the highlands, a record 35,683 Ring-billed Gulls were counted on the Bernville C.B.C., Berks, PA 1 Jan (*vide* RK).

Ad. California Gulls were reported by gull watchers in the Central Basin in Cuyahoga 30 Dec (RHn), at Conneaut 16 Jan (JP), and in Lorain 26 Jan (SZ), while one was detected e. to P.I.S.P. 20 Feb (JM). Are there really that many California Gulls on L. Erie, or are we

seeing a highly mobile individual? A seasonal average 14 Lesser Black-backed Gulls from L. Erie included 3 from the Western Basin on Kelleys I. 15 Jan (TB et al.). Ohio's token inland report came from

Mosquito L., Trumbull, OH 22 Jan (EK). An ad. Thayer's Gull in mid-Feb on Kelleys I., Erie (VF et al.) was a rare find for the L. Erie Islands. Elsewhere in the Western Basin, up to 2 each of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls visited the Maumee R., in Lucas (*vide* G. Links). White-winged gulls were scarce

in the Central Basin, where no more than 4 Glaucous Gulls and 3 Iceland Gulls were briefly encountered at any given site. The Eastern Basin, as seen at P.I.S.P., hosted more typical numbers, with 4 Thayer's Gulls, up to 15 Iceland Gulls, and 25 Glaucous Gulls (JM, BC et al.) for the season. Away from L. Erie, a Glaucous Gull in Luzerne, PA 12 Dec furnished a 2nd county record (WR), and 8 on the S. Bucks County C.B.C., PA was a record high number there (*vide* AM). A remarkable 11 Iceland Gulls were present during the season at Tullytown, Bucks, PA (*vide* AM). An apparent Great Black-backed Gull × Herring Gull hybrid appeared in Lake, OH 7 Dec (J. Brumfield) and another at P.I.S.P. 10 Feb (JM), where a Herring Gull × Glaucous Gull hybrid was seen the next day (BC). A Great Black-backed Gull was inland to Hoover 11 & 22 Feb (D. Linzell, J. Hammond, R. Schroeder).

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

A White-winged Dove at Upper Makefield Twp. 9–20 Dec was a first for Bucks, PA (M. Rusnak). In se. Pennsylvania, Barn Owl is on the verge of extirpation, so 2 on the Hamburg C.B.C., Berks, PA (*vide* RK) made welcome news. A minor flight of Snowy Owls appeared as the season progressed. In addition to 5 or

more along the L. Erie shoreline (SZ, m.ob.) from Ottawa to Cuyahoga, there was a notable presence in the nw. sector of the Region, where 3 birds appeared in Jan in Paulding and Van Wert (DMD, J. & J. Perchalski) and another in Wood 10 Jan (ph. T. McGlaughlin). Snowy Owls in Pennsylvania were e. to Berks, PA 18–27 Dec (M. Wlsawnski), Mifflin mid-Dec–9 Jan (K. Spicher), and Centre 22 Jan+ (m.ob.). Lingering Rufous or Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds in Pennsylvania included a Rufous/Allen's at Albion, Erie 11 Dec (M. Lipinski), a Rufous in Beaver 7 Dec (R. Hoge), and a Rufous in Bucks 7 Dec (*vide* AM). The West Chester, Butler, OH Anna's Hummingbird remained through 24 Dec (Dan & Wanda Schmidt, m.ob.).

Very early spring Tree Swallows are known from the last days of the winter period within the Region, so it is tempting to label the 2 at O.N.W.R. 3 Feb (P. Sherwood) as merely extraordinary over-migrants. Confounding this interpretation is the unprecedented wintering of a Tree Swallow at Glacier Ridge Metropark, Union, OH through 8 Feb (*vide* JW). A Tree Swallow circling a nest box in Athalia, WV 26 Feb (HS) was surely a new arrival. For the 2nd year in a row, Northern



A Least Sandpiper at Walnut Bottom, Cumberland County (here 21 January 2006) remained at least into early February, a very unusual record for Pennsylvania. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

Rough-winged Swallows wintered at the Northeast Water Treatment Facility, Philadelphia, PA. An amazing 125 were found there on the Pennypack C.B.C. in mid-Dec, and 95 were still present 7 Jan (D. McGovern). Several of these birds survived into Mar, unheard of for this Neotropical migrant.

Northern Shrikes numbered 5 in Erie, PA 1 Dec–11 Feb (JM, m.ob.) and 5 on the Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (*vide* GG). The only Loggerhead Shrike report came from Tucker, WV 28 Jan (C. Rucker, K. Sturm). Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a substantial invasion of the e. highlands, spilling into the w. in more modest numbers, with 32 noted at Winton Woods, Hamilton, OH 12 Jan (Jack Stenger). Two Common Ravens in Union City, PA were unusual for Erie (D. Peters),



This juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake photographed at Presque'isle State Park, Pennsylvania on 3 December 2005 may have been the same bird that was seen later along Lake Erie in Ohio. Photograph by Jerry McWilliams.

SA Normally confined in winter to sheltered waterways such as the Ohio R. and then only through the first half of the season, Eastern Phoebes were striking for their widespread persistence through this winter season: one could be found anywhere, it seemed, throughout the period. Within the s. riparian micro-climates (where at best of casual occurrence in winter), the species was numerous, with 15+ individuals reported through Jan along the Ohio R. counties from Hamilton through Scioto n. to Ross (Jay Stenger, R. Foppe, VF, m.ob.). Stenger notes that in the first 34 years of the Cincinnati C.B.C., phoebes appeared 44% of the time vs. on 72% of the last 25 years' counts. In sw. Pennsylvania, there were 5 phoebes (*vide* PH), while 4 in Cabell, WV 28 Dec (C.B.C.) were also in an Ohio R. county. Beyond these limits, noteworthy individuals wintered in Kanawha, WV (H. Good), through 28 Jan at Lake City Wastewater Plant, Erie, PA (EK), at G.L.R. 28 Jan (*vide* KC), at Spring Valley W.A., Warren, OH 24 Jan (J. Beale), in Fayette, WV 13 Jan (D. Beutler), in Preston, WV 12 Jan (J. Boback), at Chagrin Falls Park, Lake, OH 12 Jan (JP), at C.C.S.P. 8 Jan (S. Tackett), at Shaker Lakes, Cuyahoga, OH until 8 Jan (J. West), and at Woodbury W.A., Coshocton, OH 4 Jan (*vide* G. Miller). Normally, a 26 Feb report from the L. Erie shoreline in Cuyahoga, OH (PL) would be treated as an early spring migrant, but this season turned many such clear-cut distinctions on their heads.

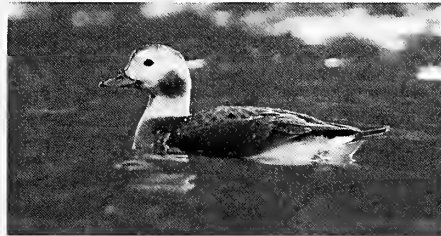
and their presence in sw. Pennsylvania throughout the year is a "new phenomenon" (PH). A Common Raven reported from Fernwood S.F., *Jefferson*, OH 29-31 Jan (p.a., SA et al.) would represent a substantial range extension. A number of sizable crow roosts were reported, led by the 50,000 estimated on Wheeling I., *Ohio*, WV 17 Dec (SA). Spreading in the West Virginia panhandle, 7 Fish Crows were found in *Hardy* 25 Feb (MO). After a unique fall record for the L. Erie Islands, a Tufted Titmouse was a welcome addition to the Kelleys Island C.B.C. 18 Dec (TB et al.).

Ruby-crowned Kinglets enjoyed success wintering across Ohio, where they sometimes linger into Jan along the Ohio R. and its tributaries: of 3 recorded on Kelleys I. in Dec, at least one wintered (TB et al.). Two additional mid-winter records from the n. came from *Cuyahoga* (NA et al.), while a *Logan* bird 29 Jan (DO) was a local rarity. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen on the S. Bucks County C.B.C. (R. Mellon). A combined count of 418 Carolina Wrens from *Bucks*, PA C.B.C.s was led by a record 141 on the Central Bucks County C.B.C. (fide AM). Across the Region, Hermit Thrushes drew comment, most observers noting an abundance rarely seen in winter, e.g., 95 on Kelleys I., *Erie*, OH 18 Dec (TB, JP, m.ob.) and 52 on the three C.B.C.s in *Bucks* (fide AM). American Robins found plenty to tide them over in the Region, as more than 10,000 were Christmas-counted in Dec in *Bucks* (fide AM), and 4100 were counted 27 Jan at Hanging Rock Park, *Lawrence*, OH (VF). Gray Catbird was yet another half-hardy species that took advantage of the mild season; among the more notable reports for location or count were: singles at C.C.S.P. 27 Jan (CS), Lakeshore Park, *Lake*, OH 20 Jan (JP), Newtown Falls, *Trumbull*, OH 4 Jan-1 Feb (EK), until 14 Jan in *Putnam*, WV (K. Kazmierski et al.), *Greenbriar* S.F., *Greenbriar*, WV 5 Jan (BWs), and Rockmill W.A., *Hocking*, OH 31 Dec (E. Reiner)—plus 20 on the S. Bucks County C.B.C., PA (fide AM). Five Brown Thrashers on that count was likewise an excellent total. Flocks of 20+ American Pipits were reported from *Wood* and *Hardy*, WV in mid-Dec (K. King et al.), but there was only one mid-Jan report from the n., in *Maehoning*, OH (G. Bennett).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The Upper Bucks County C.B.C. found 149 Myrtle Warblers 18 Dec; 80 were tallied in a survey of the Ohio Brush Creek riparian corridor in *Adams*, OH 20 Jan (VF); and 30 were at Indian Creek W.A., *Brown*, OH 26 Jan (RF). A male Audubon's Warbler appeared at *Castalia*, *Erie*, OH 19 Feb (ph. BZ). Indicative of the

mild times, Pine Warblers enjoyed another banner season, with 3 n. to *Lucas*, OH, where one wintered near Maumee Bay S.P. (ph. BZ), and another appeared at Wildwood Park 18 Feb (MP). Two in Mt. Airy Forest, *Hamilton*, OH 23 Feb (S. Pelikan) may have been early spring arrivals, while one in *Bucks*, PA 2 Feb (B. Keim) more likely wintered. A Summer Tanager visited a Columbus feeder late Dec-8 Jan for Ohio's 2nd winter record (ph.; fide JMc). The northernmost wintering Chipping Sparrow visited a *Cuyahoga*, OH feeder (NA). A Clay-colored Sparrow was in New Britain Twp., *Bucks*, PA 23 Dec (DF). Eastern Towhees



This adult female Long-tailed Duck was one of two found on the Beaver River, Beaver County, Pennsylvania on 8 January 2006. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

were noted in above-average numbers across the Region, with some extraordinary concentrations in the Ohio R. Valley. Ohio Winter Atlas efforts revealed hundreds wintering through *Adams*, *Scioto*, and *Lawrence*, OH, with single flocks up to 50 and 60 birds (VF). The Lark Sparrow at Limerick, *Montgomery*, PA was present through 5 Feb (S. Grunwald); another at Chambersburg, *Franklin*, PA was cooperative 10 Jan+ (m.ob., ph. GM). Late Lincoln's Sparrows in Pennsylvania included singles on the *Indiana* County C.B.C. 26 Dec (Len & Linda Hess) and the *Pittsburgh* C.B.C. 31 Dec (J. Valimont). A male Oregon Junco was present in Tionesta Twp., *Forest*, PA 4 Feb-2 Mar (F. McGuire, ph.).

The ad. Harris's Sparrow present in Oakland Mills, *Juniata*, PA in the fall remained through the period (Aden & David Troyer), and a first-winter Harris's was in Seemsville, *Northampton*, PA 5-15 Dec (B. Mescavage). A strong showing of Snow Buntings in Ohio was highlighted by a flock of 400 in *Paulding* and *Defiance*, OH 15 Dec (fide DMD). Lapland Longspurs reached far sw. Ohio in double digits; in West Virginia, 2 made it to *Hardy* (M. Johnson et al.) and 2 to *Putnam* (S. Aaron).

A Dickcissel spent the entire period at a feeder at C.C.S.P. (LG, M. Ruane, m.ob.). Single Brewer's Blackbirds in Pennsylvania were reported from *Allegheny* 8 Dec and *Beaver* 22 Dec (B. Shema). Absent from most reports in the Region, the flock of 82 Rusty Blackbirds in *Jefferson*, WV 30 Dec (MO) stands apart. An ad. Baltimore Oriole 14 Jan through Feb in

Peter's Twp., *Washington* ignored oranges and fed on peanut butter (MV); 2 others were noted in *Bucks*, PA during Jan-Feb (AM, J. Hritzo et al.). Ohio reports came from a Dayton feeder, where an ad. male visited 27 Dec and 26 Feb (ph. J. Barkeley), and from *Clermont* 3 Jan (J. Bens). A potential Bullock's Oriole was present in Bethlehem, *Northampton* 5 Jan+ (S. Wolfe, RW, ph., vt.); the back appeared to show a "scalloped" pattern, possibly indicative of Baltimore Oriole genes.

A Pine Grosbeak reported from New Indiana, *Indiana* 26 Dec is among very few reported in the Region in recent years (M. Peterson, fide MH). A strong fall passage left good numbers of Purple Finches across the s. portions of the Region. Flocks of 20-25 w. along the Ohio R. Valley were commonplace, while 120 were at L.N.S.P. 25 Dec (CR) in the east. Otherwise, winter finches did not leave the e. highlands, where Red Crossbills included 5 in *Berks* 20 Jan (KG) and 6 at Powdermill Nature Reserve 31 Dec (ML). Common Redpolls numbered 14 in *Bradford* 26 Dec (T. Gerlach), and 60 Pine Siskins were in *Huntingdon*, PA (D. Wentzel), while 70 Evening Grosbeaks were near Maple Grove, *Luzerne*, PA 5 Jan (R. Mose).

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): OHIO: Nancy Anderson (NA), Tom Bain (TBn), Tom Bartlett (TB), Charlie Bombaci (CB), Mike Busam, Doug & Micki Dunakin (DMD), Vic Fazio (VF), Robert Foppe (RF), Larry Gara (LG), Ray Hannikman (RHn), Ned Keller, Ethan Kistler (EK), Greg Links, Paula Lozano (PL), Jim McCormac (JMc), Kevin Metcalf, Doug Overacker (DO), M. Plessner (MP), John Pogacnik (JP), Larry Rosche (LR), Carleton Schooley (CS), Matthew Studebaker (MSr), John Watts (JW), Sean Zadar (SZ), Brian Zweibel (BZ). PENNSYLVANIA: Kevin Crolley (KC), Ben Coulter (BC), Devich Farbotnik (DF), George A. Franchois (GAF), Greg Grove (GG), Paul Hess (PH), Margaret Higbee (MH), Armas Hill (Philadelphia Birdline), Rudy Keller (RK), Mike Lanzone (ML), Robert C. Leberman (RCL), Geoff Malosh (GM), Jerry McWilliams (JM), August Mirabella (AM), William Reid (WR), Mark Vass (MV), Cameron Rutt (CR), Rick Wiltraut (RW). WEST VIRGINIA: Scott Albaugh (SA), Wendell Argabrite (WA), John Boback (JB), Jeanette Esker, Richard Esker (RE), Matt Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), Harry Slack (HS), Barry Williams (BWs).

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Illinois & Indiana



James Hengeveld | Keith A. McMullen
Geoffrey A. Williamson

The cold spell that hit the Region in late November continued through the first three weeks of December. During this period of December, temperatures averaged 11° F below normal, and the highs rarely reached normal. These low temperatures resulted in the freezing of all inland lakes and Lake Michigan's harbors. By 22-23 December, the weather mellowed, bringing some 44 days (through 3 February) of temperatures that never dipped below normal. In Chicago, temperatures averaged 13.8° F above normal during that period, with no single day less than 5° F above the historic mean temperature. For the Region as a whole, January was the warmest on record; Bloomington, Indiana experienced 15 January days with highs exceeding 50° F. During this warm spell, all ice disappeared on Lake Michigan and the adjacent harbors.

Seasonal highlights included strong migrations of geese in late winter, few rarities, and several unexpected lingering species, such as Common Tern, Parasitic Jaeger, and Blue-headed Vireo.

Abbreviations: Arklands (Arklands Reclamation Area, Perry, IL); Bee. M. (Bee-hunter Marsh, Greene, IN); Bev. Sh. (Beverly Shores, Porter, IN); Carl. L. (Carlyle L., Clinton, Fayette, & Bond, IL); F.W.A. (Fish & Wildlife Area); Mich. City (Michigan City Harbor, La Porte, IN); Miller (Miller Beach, Lake, IN).

WATERFOWL

There was an impressive flight of geese throughout the Region. Greater White-fronted Geese were widespread and continued a

pattern of increasing abundance. Four of the top-ten all-time Illinois counts occurred this winter, with the 15,000 at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) setting a new record high count and 7500 at Union County C.A. 30 Dec (KJM, HDB) providing the state's 3rd highest count. Of six triple-digit tallies of Greater White-fronted Geese in Indiana, the peak count was 343 at Universal Mines 16 Jan (DG). By far the highest ever count of Snow Geese in Indiana was made at L. Gibson 25 Feb (DL, G&LB), when clouds of these birds were estimated at 75,000. Snow Goose counts of 300,000 at Carl. L. 22 Jan (DMK) and 90,000 at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) exemplified the strong presence of this species in the s. tier of Illinois. More impressive, however, was the record-setting presence of Ross's Geese in the Region. Indiana's highest ever tally of Ross's Geese, 37, was logged at Kankakee F.W.A. 19 Jan (BJG). Numerous and widespread Illinois reports were led by a count of 200 at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM), more than triple the previous record high count of 65. The total of 23 at Union County C.A. 18 Jan (KAM), Illinois's 5th highest count ever, seemed small by comparison. Indiana's 2nd highest ever winter tally of Cackling Geese consisted of a single-species flock of 64 at Hawthorn Mines 12 Feb (J&SH, BK, KRY). A report without details of



This second-winter Kumlien's Iceland Gull at the Hammond Marina, Indiana 7 January 2006 was notable in having very light primaries, more like those of nominate *glaucoides*. Photograph by John K. Cassidy.

20 Trumpeter Swans 27 Dec in Jackson, IL (DGd) would represent a record winter high count in modern times for Illinois. Tundra Swans were not recorded on the Indiana lakefront this season, though 100 were seen in s. La Porte 2 Dec (DG).

Counts of 97 Wood Ducks in Alexander 29 Dec (KJM) and 150,000 Mallards at Carl. L. 3 Dec (DMK) were reflective of above-average numbers in Illinois this year. A late Blue-winged Teal 31 Dec at Mermet L. (KAM, DMK) and an early one 25 Feb at Carl. L.

(DMK) made for a typical winter showing of this species. Numbers of most other dabblers were close to normal. Greater Scaup, though scarce on L. Michigan, with high counts of just 764 at Illinois Beach S.P. 1 Jan (GAW) and 100 at Mich. City 10 Dec (JJM), showed numbers higher than average inland: 22 at L. Lemon 13 Dec (J&SH) was the highest ever inland count for Indiana. Other *Aythya* duck numbers were rather typical, aside from 5000 Lesser Scaup at Carl. L. 3 Dec (DMK), an above-average congregation for winter. The season's rarest waterfowl was a female Tufted Duck seen 16 Dec at East Fork L., Richland, IL (p.a., †LH, †BS), potentially Illinois's 5th.

A new Indiana seasonal maximum was set for Harlequin Duck with 4 birds, 2 imm. males and 2 females, at Mich. City 17 Dec (JKC, PBG, DG, AS et al.). One male and 2 female Harlequin Ducks were also noted 8 Feb+ in Chicago (JSp, m.ob.). This species is only rarely seen in numbers greater than 2 in the Region. It is also quite rare away from L. Michigan, making a Harlequin Duck 17 Dec-25 Feb at L. Decatur (ph. TAM, †HDB, m.ob.) a pleasant surprise there. Scoters were in short supply in the Region. Two Surf Scoters at Winthrop Harbor 26 Feb (AFS), one at L. Decatur 11 Feb (TAM et al.), and an ad. female on L. Lemon 16 Dec (J&SH) were the only reports. The only report of White-winged Scoter consisted of 5 at Bev. Sh. 11 Feb (BJG). Single Black Scoters were at West Beach, Porter, IN 7 Jan and Bev. Sh. 14 Jan, and a pair was at Indiana Dunes S.P. 28 Jan (SRB, m.ob.). Long-tailed Ducks also posted a below-average season. The peak lakefront counts were 19 in Waukegan, IL 28 Jan (AFS) and 5 at Bev. Sh. 24 Dec (BJG). Singles 5 Dec (DG) and 3 & 16 Jan (LP, JCr) in Indianapolis and 30 Jan in Lafayette (EMH) joined five inland reports from Illinois. Common Merganser numbers were diminished, too: a peak tally of only 1545 was made 16 Feb at Chautauqua N.W.R. (R&SB), and they

were scarce at the Indiana lakefront, with the maximum consisting only of 70 birds at the Port of Indiana, Porter 18 Feb (JKC et al.).

GALLIFORMS THROUGH HERONS

Two Gray Partridges in Kendall, IL 22 Jan (DFS) were the only ones reported. Greater Prairie-Chickens were restricted to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, where 52 were noted 23 Dec (JW). That Northern Bobwhites were not reported at all from the cen. portion of Illinois causes some concern. Red-throated

Loons were restricted to Indiana but appeared there in good numbers. A record winter count of 11 was logged at Mich. City 17 Dec (KJB et al.). Other lakefront records included counts of 7 at Indiana Dunes S.P. 28 Jan (JKC et al.), an all-time high for Jan, and 8 at Indiana Dunes S.P. and Bev. Sh. 11 Feb (BJG), the highest ever Feb tally. There were no inland reports. For Common Loons, the Indiana lakefront experienced its lowest winter total in 15 years, while numbers inland were higher, especially in early Dec. Commons Loons were also scarce in Illinois, with just two reports, both in the far south. A count of 57 Pied-billed Grebes at Patoka L. 20 Dec (J&SH) was Indiana's 3rd largest for the winter, and a single wintered along the Grand Calumet R. in Hammond, IN (KJB et al.). Horned Grebes were less abundant than usual in Illinois, but several were reported at the Indiana lakefront through Jan. An Eared Grebe, representing Indiana's 3rd Jan lakefront record, was discovered at Mich. City 2 Jan (JM) and was subsequently observed through 10 Jan (DS, RJP et al.). The Region hosted 2 additional Eared Grebes: one 17 Dec at Rend L. (DMK) and one in *Elkhart*, IN 18 Dec (DS). No Red-necked or Western Grebes were reported.

The high count for Double-crested Cormorants for the season, 55, was made on 25 Feb at L. Gibson (G&LB, DL, TT et al.). The 28 Double-crested Cormorants tallied 24 Feb at Rend L. was well below the normal wintering population at that location (KAM). Just a handful of Jan records of Great Egret in Illinois exist, all from the s. part of the state, making the 8 Jan sighting in the n. county of *Will* (†UG) quite exceptional. A Black-crowned Night-Heron that appeared to be in fresh juv. plumage was found along the Grand Calumet R. in Hammond, IN 21 Jan (SRB, JKC, KJB).

VULTURES THROUGH SANDPIPERS

Black Vultures continue to be seen in good numbers to the n. and w. of their stronghold in the se. part of Indiana, but they appeared to be less abundant in Illinois, with 25 at Mermet L. 31 Dec (KAM, DMK) providing the best count in the state. Impressive counts of Turkey Vultures were made in Indiana throughout the period; particularly noteworthy were 20 birds in n.-cen. Indiana (*Marshall*) 22 Jan (MH). There are only about 10 winter Turkey Vulture records from n. Illinois, making sightings in *Kane* 14 Jan (RH), in *Kankakee* 1 Feb (JBH), and of 4 in *DuPage* 1 Feb (KF) quite notable.

Good numbers of Bald Eagles along the Mississippi R., though reduced from the level of the past two years, were evidenced by 626 in *Rock Island*, IL 14 Jan (KJM). The mid-winter eagle count in Indiana 9 & 11 Jan tallied 195 Bald Eagles (JC, AH), the 3rd highest state total. Raptor numbers in general were fairly typical in Illinois, with the more notable totals being 56 Northern Harriers at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) and 13 Cooper's Hawks in *Champaign* 17 Dec (EJC). Four Northern Goshawk reports from Illinois was typical for that state. Three Golden Eagles logged at L. Monroe 29 Jan (DRW) provided a record Indiana winter high count. Twenty-two Merlins were reported throughout the Region, but the most exciting falcon of the season was Indiana's 6th Prairie Falcon, found at Hawthorn



Harlequin Ducks are rare in the Illinois & Indiana region away from Lake Michigan. This female was photographed 21 December 2005 on inland Lake Decatur, Illinois, where the photographer had found it 17 December 2005 during the local Christmas Bird Count. The bird remained through 25 February 2006.

Photograph by Travis Mahan.

Mines 21 Dec (BW, †DRW, D&IB). Interestingly, all but one of these records occurred during the winter period.

A notable concentration of 10,000 American Coots was observed at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM). In addition to staging at the traditional site at Jasper-Pulaski F.W.A., Sandhill Cranes have been stopping at the Ewing Bottoms near Brownstown, *Jackson*, IN, where 10,000 were estimated to have gathered 1 Feb (AM); a single Whooping Crane from the reintroduced Wisconsin population was seen with the Sandhills on 19 & 25 Feb (JD, J&SH). Also noteworthy were 2 Sandhill Cranes discovered 17 Dec at Rend L. (KAM), furnishing only the 2nd C.B.C. record there in the past 10 years. Single Virginia Rails were heard at Bev. Sh. 17 Dec (JKC) and at Pigeon River F.W.A., *Steuben*, IN 18 Dec and 5 Jan (JJM, JAH). Indiana's latest ever Baird's Sandpiper, representing only the 3rd winter record

for the state, was seen at L. Monroe 16–17 Dec (†JDK, CB, KG). A Dunlin was noted 31 Dec at Mermet L. (KAM, DMK, FB); one winter report of this species is typical.

JAEGERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Winter records of jaegers are very rare in the Region, so 2 was an exceptional number: a well-described Parasitic Jaeger 25 Dec in Chicago (p.a., †SH) and an unidentified jaeger observed flying past Bev. Sh. 5 Jan (BJG), the latter only the 2nd Jan record for any jaeger in Indiana. A notable congregation of 60,000 Ring-billed Gulls was at Carl. L. 14 Jan (DMK). This winter featured 2 California Gulls: a first-year bird at Carl. L. 3 Dec (DMK) and an ad. at L. Calumet 4 Feb (ph. RDH, ph. WSS, †WJM). Numbers of other gulls were much reduced in Illinois this winter, and with the closing of the La Porte landfill four years ago, Indiana lakefront gull numbers have continued to slide. A total of 37 Thayer's Gulls was reported Regionwide, with 10 Thayer's Gulls 11 Feb in Winthrop Harbor (GAW) the highest count. Only 10 Iceland Gulls were noted, including an interesting pale-primaried, second-year Iceland that lingered at Hammond Marina 7 Jan–11 Feb (JKC, KJB, JAH, LP et al.). Just one Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported at the Indiana lakefront, while an inland ad. at L. Lemon 13 Dec (J&SH) was noteworthy. In Illinois, 4 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were tallied at three different locations. In addition to 28 Glaucous Gulls recorded at L. Michigan sites, a single first-year bird at L. Monroe 3 Jan (†SE) was a notable record for s. Indiana. The peak tally for Illinois came from the Mississippi R., with 4 noted in *Rock Island* 5 Jan (SF). All but 3 of 90 Great Black-backed Gulls reported at L. Michigan were at Indiana locations. The high count consisted of an impressive 20 birds between two *Lake*, IN sites 25 Feb (SRB, JKC, RJP). One of the most remarkable finds in Indiana this season, representing only the 2nd ever winter record (first since 1948), was that of a Common Tern in basic plumage seen at Miller 26 Dec (J&AC).

The count of 46 Eurasian Collared-Doves in *Macon* 26 Dec (TAM) tied Illinois's 2nd highest daily total; a state high count of 13 was set 2 Jan in rural *Newton*, IN (SRB, KJB, LyH et al.). Individuals continue to show up at new locations. A new high tally of Monk Parakeets in Indiana was also registered this season, as 16 were seen at the Hammond nesting site 11 Feb (LP). Illinois hosted 12 Snowy Owls this winter, with 3 in *La Salle* 18

Feb (DJS, m.ob.). Two Snowy Owl reports from Indiana included an unusually dark imm. found in *Jasper* 7–16 Jan (BJG, JGi, m.ob.) and one in *Starke* 20 Jan (BH) that unfortunately was found dead beside the road 23 Jan. The Burrowing Owl in Pyramid S.P., IL continued into the winter and was reported as late as 9 Jan (DMK, KAM, MM, AFS). The peak counts among a relatively small number of Long-eared Owl reports were 5 at Green River W.A., IL 24 Dec (KJM) and 2 at Kingsbury F.W.A., IN 31 Dec (JJM et al.). Though numbers were down slightly in Indiana relative to recent years, overall Short-eared Owls appeared in good numbers, with notable gatherings of 38 at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area 23 Dec (JW, m.ob.), 32 at Hawthorn Mines 3 Dec (LWS), 11 at Glacial Park, *McHenry*, IL 21 Jan (EWW), and 7 at Rollins Savanna, *Lake*, IL all winter (EWW). Only four reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl came from Illinois. In Indiana, 4 were heard at *Jasper-Pulaski* F.W.A. 7 Jan (BJG), and 2 were heard at *Patoka* L., IN 20 Dec (RB, LWS). The traditional Tremont, *Porter*, IN site yielded a single bird on only one occasion, 2 Dec (AS, JGr). An imm. female Rufous Hummingbird that was banded in *Posey* (CHu, *vide* DG) attended the same feeder throughout the period (S&WB, C&SS, *vide* DG), providing Indiana's first successfully wintering individual of the species.

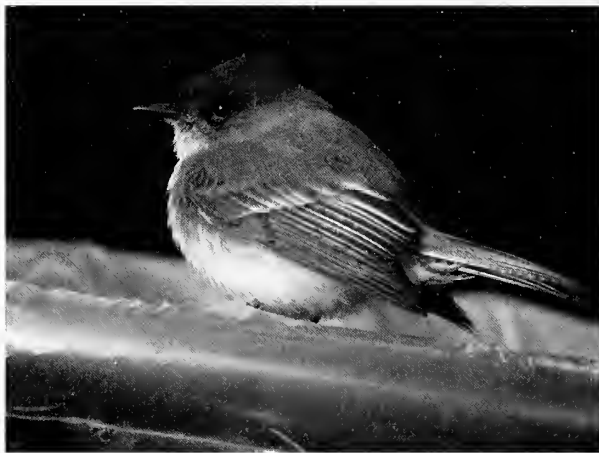
FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

An Eastern Phoebe found 29 Dec in Chicago remained at least through 15 Jan (Chi, ph. SH); there are only four prior Jan or Feb records from n. Illinois. Late lingering Eastern Phoebes were also more numerous in s. Illinois, with 12 noted up to 1 Jan. Another was seen 24 Feb in *Johnson*, IL (KAM), possibly an early spring migrant. Illinois's 12th and 13th Say's Phoebes appeared during the season. One was present at Crane L. in *Mason* 17–22 Dec (ph. †HDB, ph. PSW); another was at Jim Edgar Panther Creek State F.W.A. in *Cass* 3 Jan–13 Feb (CSw, KR, ph. EWW).

Only 10 Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from Illinois, all in the s. section, with half of those noted at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area 23 Dec (JW et al.). Northern Shrikes put on a fine showing, with 12 in Illinois and 13 in Indiana, all single birds except for 2 at Goose Pond F.W.A., *Greene*, IN 21 Dec (LWS, JB, BF) and 2 at Paul Douglas Forest Preserve, *Cook*, IL 1 Jan (CF). At Big Oaks N.W.R., *Jason* P. Lewis was able to study in-hand a Blue-headed Vireo that had struck a window 20

Jan (the bird was apparently uninjured). This bird represented not only the first winter season record for Indiana but the first report between 19 Nov and 3 Apr. The only Illinois winter record for this species was one 10–11 Dec 1992 in Springfield.

A Fish Crow heard and seen 24 Feb at Mermet L., IL was likely an early spring migrant (KAM). Two Tree Swallows at L. Gibson 25 Feb were also early (DL, G&LB et al.), while



This Eastern Phoebe was located 29 December 2005 in Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo and remained there through at least 15 January 2006 (here); the species is quite rare in winter in northern Illinois, with only a handful of records for January or February. Photograph by Steve Huggins.

2 Barn Swallows recorded 30 Dec in *Union*, IL were very late (KJM, HDB). This Dec was the 4th of the last five in which Barn Swallows have been noted in Illinois. The season's only double-digit record of Red-breasted Nuthatch in Illinois was of 23 in *Champaign* 17 Dec (EJC). Three lingering House Wrens were noted in *Massac*, IL 31 Dec (KJM, RSR). The peak tally of Winter Wrens for Indiana consisted of 4 at the Marian College Ecolab, *Marion* 5 Jan (JC), while 13 in *Alexander* 29 Dec was an excellent count for Illinois (KJM). Four Marsh Wrens at Bee. M. 21 Dec (J&SH, JD, BH) constituted the state's first winter record of multiple birds.

Thrushes were evident in good numbers. A tally of 93 Eastern Bluebirds in *Jackson*, IL 1 Jan (KJM, VL, SJ) was impressive. One of the Townsend's Solitaires that was at West Beach, *Porter*, IN through the fall lingered well into winter, with sightings in the period 5 Dec–9 Jan (CS, MT). Hermit Thrushes were quite abundant this winter: 51 were seen 29 Dec in *Alexander*, IL (KJM), a large total. American Robins were plentiful throughout the Region: 46 were tallied at Bev. Sh. 24 Dec (SRB, KJB, JKC, CM), a nice total for the Indiana lakefront, and 900 in Bloomington, IN 12 Jan (GH) and 1500 at Carl. L. 22 Jan (DMK) represented significant concentrations. An astounding 8000 American Robins were seen

migrating southward 18 Dec in *Cook* (WJM, WSS), tying the record winter season high count for Illinois.

Only 2 Gray Catbirds were noted this season, both from n. Illinois. Two lakefront records of Northern Mockingbird consisted of a Michigan City bird that was seen multiple times and one seen in Bev. Sh. 3 Dec and 21 Jan (DG, JKC, KJB, SRB). A late-lingering American Pipit was observed 3 Jan at Illinois

Beach S.P. (EWW). Cedar Waxwings were generally present in low numbers in Indiana, with the maximum count consisting of 300 in Valparaiso 29 Jan (CS); Illinois saw three reports of 300 or more individuals.

WARBLERS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES

Yellow-rumped Warblers remained in above-average numbers through the winter, especially in the s. sections, with a peak of 75 noted at Carl. L. 22 Jan (DMK). Two Orange-crowned Warblers were reported without details: 2 Dec in *Urbana*, IL (RJ) and 17 Jan at Horseshoe L., *Madison*, IL (JPZ, YH, SM). A Pine Warbler was at Carl. L. 22 Jan and 26 Feb (DMK), and another was in *Cook*, IL 25 Jan (ph. ASz).

A Palm Warbler at L. Gibson 25 Feb (G&LB, TT, DL et al.) provided Indiana's 2nd Feb record and the first since 1950.

Two Eastern Towhees were in Chicago, one 26 Dec–21 Jan (KW) and the other 10 Jan (JA), providing two of only seven Jan records for n. Illinois. Spotted Towhees included one in *Kane*, IL 2 Dec (KAM) and another in *Fulton*, IL 12 Feb (KAM). Less common sparrows included a Vesper Sparrow 24 Dec in *Lee*, IL (†KJM) and 3 Le Conte's Sparrows 9 Jan at Rend L. (KAM). Fox Sparrows were present in above-average numbers around the Region. The largest among three double-digit counts in Illinois was 17 at Oakwood Bottoms 1 Jan (KJM, VL, SJ). A single at Bev. Sh. 21 Jan (JKC, SRB) was especially notable, as the species is rare on the lakefront in winter. Three winter reports of Lincoln's Sparrow made an above-average count for Illinois. The only Harris's Sparrow was at Horseshoe L., *Madison* 6 & 12 Feb (KAM, FRH). The Region's peak winter count of Snow Buntings consisted of 80 birds at Pigeon River F.W.A., *Steuben*, IN 18 Dec (JJM et al.). A nice count of 1500 Lapland Longspurs was tallied 22 Jan at Carl. L. (DMK).

Indigo Buntings are absent from Illinois most winters, making notable the reports of single birds 11 Dec and 20 Feb at Carl. L. (DMK) and 31 Dec and 11 Jan in *Jasper* (LH,

BS). A huge flock of blackbirds, estimated at 1,000,000+, was seen flying over Bee. M. 21 Dec (J&SH, JD, BH). The flock consisted of approximately 300,000 European Starlings, 200,000 Red-winged Blackbirds, 400,000 Common Grackles, and 100,000 Brown-headed Cowbirds, providing Indiana high counts for all of the species except Red-winged Blackbird. The maximum seasonal count of Brewer's Blackbird (14) was recorded at Hawthorn Mines, IN 3 Dec (LWS et al.). A very late Baltimore Oriole was photographed at a feeder in Greenfield, Hancock, IN 20 Dec (ph. J&DW, *vide JC*).

The peak Purple Finch tally was 80 in Rock Island, IL 4 Jan (BLB, KJM). Purple Finches were well represented in downstate Indiana, with 65 birds in Washington (JSe) providing the high count. Other winter finches were quite scarce. Five Red Crossbills in Rockford 3 Dec (DTW) and one in Kane, IL 17 Dec (EES) were the only reports. Common Redpoll sightings were limited to 7 birds at Indiana Dunes S.P. 28 Jan (BJG), 3 in Cass, IL 6 Jan (EES), and one at Carl. L. 14 Dec (RSR). The highest total for Pine Siskins was 32, recorded in Highland Park, IL 4 Dec (DRD). In Indiana, Pine Siskins were remarkably scarce statewide, as the high count for the season was a paltry 4 in Greene 2 Dec (J&MG). Numbers of Eurasian Tree Sparrows were up

this winter, with a peak total of 232 in Mercer, IL 28 Dec (KJM, m.ob.).

Undocumented reports: A Prairie Falcon in Champaign, IL 22-27 Jan was reported without details. This species is on the Illinois review list.

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Western Great Lakes



Adam M. Byrne

December started out very cold, but by Christmas the Region was experiencing a warming trend. All three states reported an exceptionally mild January; Duluth, Minnesota had its warmest January on record. This long warm stretch helped many semi-hardy species to overwinter successfully, highlighted by a handful of Tree Swallows in southern Michigan! The season finished with a return to cold temperatures in late February.

Snow cover in southern areas was below average, with many areas having little or no snow most of the winter; northern areas had average to above-average snowfall.

Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owl numbers were down from last winter, but all three states reported the largest Snowy Owl invasion in many years. Other highlights were a Barrow's Goldeneye, several Gyrfalcons, Black-legged Kittiwakes, and Barn Owl in Minnesota, and Ferruginous Hawk and Eurasian Tree Sparrow in Wisconsin. Michigan had an exceptional season, with multiple Ross's Geese, a Barrow's Goldeneye, two Pacific Loons, two Western Grebes, Northern Gannet, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Spotted Towhee, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in four Michigan counties, with a maximum of 38 in Berrien 21-22 Feb (TB). Wisconsin had numerous Feb sightings of Greater White-

fronteds, with the first in Dodge 2 Feb (JB). Also in Wisconsin was a late fall migrant Ross's Goose in Dane 2 Dec (ST) and 6 spring arrivals in Racine 23 Feb (EH). Michigan records were 3 on 17-27 Feb (TB, m.ob., p.a.) and another 6 on 22 Feb (TB, p.a.) at Paw Paw L., Berrien and one in Huron 26 Feb (JCD). Cackling Goose was reported from all three states, with Wisconsin having 3 spend the winter in Dane (ST). Minnesota had reports from four counties, while Michigan birders found at least 25 birds in six counties. Wisconsin reported a high of only 6 Trumpeter Swans 21 Jan in Winnebago (DT). An American Wigeon 17 Dec-4 Jan at Grand Marais, Cook was an unusual mid-winter record for far ne. Minnesota. Rare for Michigan were 4 Blue-winged Teal 27 Dec in Cass (SMG). Providing the first overwintering record for n. Minnesota, and one of few from anywhere in the state, were 5 Greater Scaup at Duluth, St. Louis (PHS, m.ob.).

Minnesota had near-average numbers of

Harlequin Ducks in *Cook* and *Lake*; away from L. Superior, a female and imm. 8 Jan–22 Feb at Fergus Falls, *Otter Trail* (SPM, m.ob.) represented a 3rd record for this w.-cen. location. Wisconsin reported several singles from various locations along L. Michigan and 3 in *Sheboygan* 14 Jan (RH), while Michigan had 2 at both New Buffalo and St. Joseph, *Berrien* and 2 in *Manistee* (BAA). Michigan birders reported a Surf Scoter at Douglas, *Allegan* 4 Dec (RB) and 2 at St. Joseph, *Berrien* 8 Feb (CB, JTW, m.ob.); Wisconsin had one in *Milwaukee* 28 Jan (DT). Unexpected were 2 White-winged Scoters at Duluth, *St. Louis*, MN 11 Feb+ (CF, m.ob.). Wisconsin had fall migrants linger through 27 Dec in *Door* (R&CL), and Michigan reported low numbers from eight counties. In Wisconsin, a few Black Scoters spent the winter along L. Michigan in *Ozaukee* (TU); Michigan's birds were on the opposite shoreline, with 4+ through 7 Jan in *Berrien* and 3 in *Allegan* 15 Jan (RB). Long-tailed Duck numbers were down this season; the largest concentration was 1000+ in *Manitowoc*, WI 5 Dec (DT). Despite very few reports from L. Superior, Minnesota birders found single Long-taileds in six inland counties. All three states reported ad. male Barrow's Goldeneyes: one from fall–9 Feb at Omena Pt., *Leelanau*, MI (MB, AMB); one throughout the period in *Milwaukee*, WI (m.ob.); and one at L. Pepin, *Wabasha*, MN 19 Feb (ph. NC, PEJ).

GROUSE THROUGH VULTURES

Sharp-tailed Grouse continue to decline in Wisconsin, where only 14 were found in *Burnett* and *Taylor*; Michigan had 2 in *Chippewa* 3 Jan (JCD). Wisconsin reported a high of 5 Greater Prairie-Chickens 17 Dec in *Portage* (DTe). Lost Nations S.G.A., *Hillsdale*, MI hosted 10 Northern Bobwhite (JR), an increasingly difficult species to find in Michigan.

Red-throated Loon was reported from three Michigan counties, with a peak of 5 on 4–13 Dec in *Allegan* (RB); Wisconsin had 2 linger through 21 Dec in *Ozaukee* (TU) and singles in *Sheboygan* 3 Feb (AH, KK) and *Milwaukee* 12 Feb (AS, TP). Rare for Michigan were 2 Pacific Loons in *Baraga* 10 Jan, with one remaining through 3 Feb (p.a., JK). Wisconsin had a Common Loon in *Milwaukee* 3 Jan (JF); Michigan had the species in five counties, including 15 on 4 Dec in *Allegan* (RB). Pied-billed Grebe wintered in *Otter Tail*, MN (SPM et al.) and in *Dane*, WI (ST). Michigan had four Dec and two Jan reports of Horned Grebe, while Wisconsin had only one in *Walworth* 29 Jan (WM). Impressive in Michigan were 23 Red-necked Grebes 29 Jan in *Benzie* (RB) and 16 in *Marquette* 17 Dec (LFT); Wis-

consin had one 8 Feb in *Ozaukee* (DT). Rare in Michigan were Western Grebes 8–9 Dec in *Alger* (SCH, p.a.) and 28 Feb in *Marquette* (SH, p.a.).

A Northern Gannet was found stuck in the ice at Grosse Pointe Farms, *Wayne* 8 Dec and later died in captivity (*fide* BR); if accepted, it would be Michigan's 10th state and 3rd winter record. Wisconsin hosted 4 wintering American White Pelicans near their nesting grounds in *Brown*, as well as one on the opposite side of the state in *Buffalo* 28 Dec (T&IB). Continuing the trend of uncommon wintering birds, Wisconsin recorded Double-crested Cormorants in five counties, with 12 in *Brown* 28 Dec (T&IB); birds in *Bay* and *Wayne*, MI were more expected. Providing further evidence of the mild winter was a Great Blue Heron in *Otter Tail*, MN (SPM et al.); Wisconsin had a few dozen Great Blues in 12 counties. Rare for Michigan were 2 Great Egrets in *Wayne* 1 Dec (WGP) and 2 more in *Monroe* 17 Dec (JJ). Becoming more frequent were numerous Dec and Jan Turkey Vulture reports in Michigan; the first spring migrants were noted by 2 Feb.

RAPTORS THROUGH DOVES

A Ferruginous Hawk in *Crawford* 7 Jan (p.a., RZ) provided Wisconsin's 2nd winter record. Golden Eagles were again seen in good numbers. All three states also reported Gyrfalcons. Wisconsin had four separate sightings, with one consistent bird in *Ashland* (RyB). Michigan had singles 29 Dec at Manistique, *Schoolcraft* (RBA), 3 Jan at Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (JCD), and 27 Jan at Sugar L., *Chippewa* (TRW). An ad. gray morph near Hastings, *Dakota*, MN 25 Dec+ (ph. JPM, PEB, m.ob.) may have been a returning individual from last winter. Birders at Duluth, *St. Louis*, MN reported ad. gray morphs 29 Dec (PHS) and 23–29 Jan (MLH, ph. PHS), sightings that may have involved the same bird, and a juv. 21–28 Jan (PHS, KRE, BAW). The only Prairie Falcon reports came from Minnesota, with individuals 31 Dec in Ross Twp., *Roseau* (JM), SAS) and 8 Feb in Freeland Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* (BJU).

Wisconsin had a Virginia Rail through 31 Dec in *Columbia* (ASh), as well as several Killdeer in Dec and one 29 Jan in *Sauk* (AS). Very late in Michigan were a Spotted Sandpiper 14 Dec at Muskegon Wastewater, *Muskegon* (DV) and a Willet from fall–1 Jan at Whiting Power Plant, *Monroe* (LEH, ATC, DOB, m.ob.); not nearly as late but still noteworthy were 2 Sanderlings 4 Dec in *Berrien* (DCV, JTW) and a Dunlin 2 Dec in *Monroe* (TWe). A Wilson's Snipe through 20 Feb at Duluth, *St. Louis*, MN was n. of normal.

Michigan had snipe linger through 11 Dec in *Berrien* (DCV, JTW), 17 Dec in *Monroe* (ATC), and 20 Feb in *Kalamazoo* (*fide* RS). Providing a rare Jan record was a very optimistic American Woodcock displaying 19–30 Jan in *Berrien* (MM, JTB, CB).

Wisconsin birders were treated to excellent gull numbers and diversity, highlighted by a Mew Gull 31 Dec–15 Jan (m.ob.) and a California Gull seen in early Dec (JI, DT) and again 24 Jan (SL), all in *Milwaukee*. They also reported dozens of Thayer's Gulls from every county along L. Michigan, 16 Iceland Gulls from seven counties, 6 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, dozens of Glaucous Gulls, and numerous Great Black-backed Gulls, including an amazing 22 in *Kewaunee* 21 Jan (DT). In contrast, Minnesota reported 4 Iceland, one ad. Lesser Black-backed, and 2 Great Black-backed Gulls. Excellent finds were Black-legged Kittiwakes 4 Dec at Coon Rapids Dam Park, *Anoka* (GP) and 7–24 Dec at Black Dog L., *Dakota/Hennepin* (ph. JPM, AXH, m.ob.) in Minnesota, and 1 Dec at Belle Isle Park, *Wayne* (ATC) and 10–30 Jan along the Saginaw R., *Bay* (DD) in Michigan. Wisconsin's 2nd Band-tailed Pigeon wintered at a feeder in *St. Croix* (ph. JA). Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported from all three states. Unusual for n. Minnesota were mid-winter reports from *Grant* (BJU) and 8 birds in *Otter Tail* (m.ob.); s. Minnesota had reports from five counties, including 10 at Comfrey, *Brown* 28 Jan–15 Feb (BTS et al.) and a first county record in *Nicollet* (RMD). Wisconsin had one 17 Dec in *Columbia* (P&GS) and 16 counted on three C.B.C.s; Michigan had 2 in *Berrien* 29 Jan+ (TB, AM), along with the continuing birds in *Grand Traverse*.

OWLS THROUGH WARBLERS

An ad. Barn Owl was found dead 20 Jan after crashing into a window at North Oaks, *Ramsey*, MN (KN, KK, ph. AXH). Echoing last winter's record-high numbers in Minnesota were over 125 Northern Hawk Owls this year, all in n. Minnesota within the coniferous forest zone. Michigan had birds at Shelter Bay, *Alger* (SCH, LFT) and Soo Junction, *Chippewa* (PKB, RB). Minnesota also had an above-average total of 66 Great Gray Owls for fall and winter 2005–2006, including a first county record in *Norman* 26 Feb+ (ph. PBB); this was way below expectations following last winter's estimated 5225 Great Grays. Wisconsin had a few Great Grays in *Bayfield* (RyB), and Michigan had singles at Munising, *Alger* 18 Feb (SCH) and at Brimley, *Chippewa* (RB). Wisconsin's largest concentration of Long-eared Owls was 10 in *Waukesha* (DG), while Michigan had 2 at Sarett Na-

SA On the heels of last winter's record-high numbers of Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owls, this winter saw one of the best Snowy Owl invasions in memory. Preliminary counts from Minnesota indicate that no fewer than 161 Snowy Owls were reported in 2005–2006, more than 105 of which were found during the winter season; this will be considered the state's 2nd largest invasion. Wisconsin birders reported at least 118 Snowy Owls from more than half the state's counties. Michigan had many fewer birds but still tallied over 30 different owls in 13 counties.

ture Center, *Berrien* (CB, MM). All three states reported Short-eared Owls, highlighted by a remarkable 18 at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw*, MI 26 Feb (BG, CS, LA). An injured Boreal Owl was found 18 Feb in *Menominee*, MI (DBJ); Minnesota reports included a dead Boreal in *Aitkin* and singles lurking around bird feeders in *Cook* and *St. Louis*. Exceptional were 8 calling Northern Saw-whet Owls in *Sauk*, WI 7 Feb (AH), while Michigan had up to 3 all season at Belle I., *Wayne*, one 3 & 7 Jan at Independence L. Park, *Washtenaw* (MJS), and one 25 Feb at Muskegon S.G.A., *Muskegon* (BJ, LU).

Minnesota had a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker winter in *Fillmore* (NBO) and a female American Three-toed Woodpecker in *Koochiching* and 4 in *Lake of the Woods*. Black-backed Woodpeckers were reported from seven Minnesota counties but only from *Forest* 9 Jan (DT) in Wisconsin. Wisconsin had exceptionally high numbers of wintering Northern Flickers; reports were received from nearly every county. Rare winter finds were Eastern Phoebes at Lakeside, *Berrien*, MI 17 Dec (KS) and *Columbia*, WI 22 Dec (p.a., P&GS). Nothing better illustrates the season's mild temperatures than the unprecedented overwintering Tree Swallows at Pointe Mouillee S.G.A., *Monroe*, MI; there were 24 birds 29 Dec, with 3 remaining through at least 15 Feb (LW, AMB, TS, m.ob.). Wisconsin reported Carolina Wrens from 10 counties, including 5 in *Dane* 17 Dec (CC); Minnesota had reports from seven counties, with firsts in *Freeborn* 17 Dec+ (AEB, RBJ, NFT), *Pine* 1 Jan (RBJ), *Blue Earth* 9–15 Jan (SD, ph. DBM), and *Mille Lacs* 23 Feb (*vide* HS). A Marsh Wren at Minnesota River Valley N.W.R., *Scott*, MN 28 Dec–22 Jan (DWK) provided an unusual mid-winter record. Michigan had the only Ruby-crowned Kinglets in *Berrien* (JTW) and *Lapeer* (MS).

Minnesota had fewer Townsend's Solitaires than usual, with 4 in *Cook*, 2 in *Sherburne*, and singles in *Kandiyohi* and *Lac Qui Parle*. Wisconsin had 8 solitaires at their regular wintering grounds in *Sauk* (m.ob.) and one in *Ashland* (RyB). One at Brighton S.R.A., *Livingston* 15 Jan+ (LEH, PKB, ATC, m.ob.) was very unusual for s. Michigan. Michigan enjoyed its best Varied Thrush invasion in recent memory, with at least 6 birds in five counties. Minnesota had an above-average

year, with 24 Varied Thrushes in 19 counties, while Wisconsin reported single birds in eight counties. A Gray Catbird 17 Dec in *Marquette* (LFT, GC) was rare for n. Michigan; other reports were singles 28 Dec at Humbug Marsh, *Wayne* (DOB), 1 Jan at Pointe Mouillee S.G.A. headquarters, *Wayne* (LEH), and 20 Feb at Bath, *Clinton* (JR). Minnesota had catbirds at Tofte, *Cook* 5 Jan (AB, PR) and Oakwood Cemetery, *Olmsted* 23 Jan–12 Feb (JWH). Wisconsin and Minnesota had Brown Thrashers successfully overwinter, while Michigan had 2 birds in Dec. An early Dec American Pipit in *Kenosha*, WI (DT) was not uncommon, but a Jan bird in *Milwaukee* (m.ob.) was exceptional; Michigan had an amazing 7 pipits in three counties. Both Wisconsin and Minnesota reported overwintering Yellow-rumped Warblers, while Michigan had Pine Warblers 2–19 Dec at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw* (SFK) and 19–30 Dec in *Baraga* (JK).

TOWHEES THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES

Michigan hosted its 4th Spotted Towhee 17 Dec–27 Jan at Hancock, *Houghton* (OM, m.ob.), and Minnesota had one at Cook, *St. Louis* (E&CR, m.ob.). Michigan had good numbers of Eastern Towhees, including an extraordinary 5 at St. Joseph, *Berrien* 6 Feb (BT); Wisconsin had one 16 Dec–21 Jan in *Waupaca* (DT). Michigan had Chipping Sparrows in four counties, while Wisconsin had 4 Savannah Sparrows (p.a.) in Dec. The only Harris's Sparrows reported were visiting Wisconsin feeders in *Dane* 18 Dec (RHe) and *Marathon* 10 Feb (DB). A phenomenal flock of 5000+ Snow Buntings was recorded 22 Jan in *Shawano*, WI (DT).

Michigan had Rose-breasted Grosbeaks linger through mid-Dec in *Baraga* (LW, GW) and early Jan in Walton Twp., *Eaton* (RCF, LRK) and one 24 Dec at Whitefish Pt., *Chippewa* (LD). Wisconsin had a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Bayfield* 16 Dec (AW) and very late Indigo Buntings visiting feeders from fall–3 Dec in *Waukesha* (DG) and in *Brown* 1 Jan (RM). Michigan had numerous Eastern Meadowlarks, with at least 18 birds in six counties, and a rare winter Yellow-headed Blackbird in *Monroe* 18 Dec (JV). Wisconsin birders found late Rusty Blackbirds in *Waukesha* 21 Dec (DG) and *Brown* 28 Dec (T&IB).

An ad. male Bullock's Oriole treated Michigan birders by visiting a feeder at Brighton, *Livingston* (CH, m.ob.); if accepted, it will be the 4th state record.

Most winter finches were reported in low to moderate numbers this winter. The only Hoary Redpoll reports were from ne. Wisconsin in *Brown* 9 Dec (EF) and *Forest* 25 Jan (DT). Good numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were reported in both Michigan and Minnesota; the latter had 200+ in three different counties, plus sightings in another 11 counties; Wisconsin's highest total was 200 in *Menominee* 29 Jan (DT). A Eurasian Tree Sparrow 18 Feb in *Kenosha*, WI (p.a., NW) will join a handful of state records, while Michigan's first record from last fall lingered through the period in *Cass* (D&MJ, m.ob.).

EXOTICS

Wisconsin reports Great Tits in four counties, a Eurasian Siskin specimen collected in *Iron*, and a European Jay at a feeder in *Sheboygan* 16 Dec.

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Iowa & Missouri



Robert Cecil

The first ten days of December were frigid reminders of winter's potential for making us miserable and for driving typical lingering birds out of the Region, including waterfowl, gulls, and semi-hardy passerines. For Missouri, it was coldest such period in almost 30 years; in Iowa, it hit -19° F in Cedar Rapids on 7 December and produced subzero temperatures somewhere in the state during the first week and a half of the month. More seasonable temperatures then returned in the middle of the month, then warmed up considerably by the third week. Snowfall was widespread and light in Iowa; in Missouri, it was primarily limited to the northern and central parts of the state.

"Delightful January" seems an oxymoron, but delightful it was. Depending upon the calculation and the state, it was either the warmest or second warmest January ever recorded. Ice vanished throughout Missouri and well into Iowa, and the balmy temperatures lured small to moderate numbers of numerous opportunistic species northward. Waterfowl, gulls, Turkey Vultures, and some passerines reappeared in January and early February, in some cases making it to northern Iowa. January precipitation was below normal for the Region except for southeastern Iowa

and southeastern Missouri.

February temperatures were above normal for Missouri and a roller-coaster for Iowa, where temperatures were erratic but did produce the coldest day since 2001 with -26° F at Elkader. Many of the birds that ventured northward during January were squeezed out by the cold temperatures, but not for long, and most had reappeared by the end of the month. Precipitation was below normal throughout. Always of interest, winter finches were no-shows during the season: 5 Red Crossbills, 2 Common Redpolls, and a handful of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins made up the entire invasion—unless one counts Iowa's possible Brambling.

Abbreviations: R.M.B.S. (Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, *St. Charles*, MO); S.C.N.W.R. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., *Holt*, MO); S.L.N.W.R. (Swan Lake N.W.R., *Chariton*, MO); S.L. (Smithville L., *Clinton* and *Clay*, MO); W.L.D. (Winfield Lock and Dam *Lincoln*, MO).

GEESE THROUGH GROUSE

Like many waterfowl species this season, Greater White-fronted Geese were lured



Inca Dove, an increasing species in the Mississippi River Valley, was detected 8-28 (here 16) February 2006 at the Springfield Nature Center, Greene County, Missouri. Photograph by Tommie Rogers.

northward during the Jan thaw, e.g., 400 on 15 Jan at Pool 19 in Iowa (CC, CE); the highest count was of 2730 on 27 Feb at S.C.N.W.R. (FD). Snow Goose numbers at

S.L.N.W.R. and S.C.N.W.R. were huge and pretty typical; less typically, 40,000 wintered at the latter location (TR). A rare dark-morph Ross's Goose was identified on 20 Feb in *Stoddard*, MO (BL, SDi). Cackling Geese made a good showing in Iowa, with 1200 on 25 Feb in *Worth* (†PH) and 200 in *Hamilton* (KW), and details were provided for small numbers s. to cen. Missouri, such as 50 on 23 Dec at R.M.B.S. (BR). Three *hro-ta* Brant at Pool 19, *Lee*, IA 14 Jan (†SD) would be one of about six records for the state. An actively growing Trumpeter Swan population included 135 on 15 Jan at R.M.B.S. (DR). Enigmatic was a Wood Duck in *Mason City*, IA 10 Jan (RG); migrants made it to *Lee*, IA 18 Feb (RC) and *Woodbury*, IA 20 Feb (GE). Small numbers of most other dabblers (apparently except Northern Shoveler) pushed into s. and cen. Iowa during the first half of Jan but departed with the return of cold temperatures in Feb; all had returned by the end of the period. Canvasbacks appeared in the usual large Dec numbers at Pool 19, while the next high count was of 357 at R.M.B.S. 26 Dec (JE). Of the other *Aythya*, Redheads were scarce; Ring-necked Ducks peaked at 750 on 4 Feb at S.L.N.W.R. (SK) and 108 on 5 Feb in *Union*, IA (SD, JG); and 419 Greater Scaup were on the *Keokuk*, IA C.B.C., with 100 at *L. Jacomo*, *Jackson* MO 7 Jan (BF). Sea ducks were scarce: a Black Scoter on the *Keokuk* C.B.C. 19 Dec., a White-winged Scoter at W.L.D., MO 1-3 Dec (DRo, JE, JU), and a total of 7 Long-tailed Ducks (five reports, all in Dec except for 2 birds at Pool 19 on 10-14 Jan; JF, JD). By far the most northerly mid-winter Hooded Mergansers were up to 4 in *Woodbury*, IA 1-3 Feb (BH, GE); the high count was 50 at S.L., MO 7 Jan (BF). As expected, the big concentrations of Common Mergansers were on the Iowa reservoirs: 8000 each at *Rathbun* 16 Dec (RLC) and at *Red Rock* 21 Jan (JG, JB, SD). Post-C.B.C. reports of Red-breasted Mergansers were also from Iowa: 3 on 14 Jan at Pool 19 (SD) and 2 migrants on 19 Feb in *Scott* (CC). There were 30 Greater Prairie-Chickens at *Dunn*

Ranch, Harrison, MO 24 Dec (SK), a usual location.

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

A Common Loon was stranded on the ice at Saylorville Res. 16-19 Dec, providing both a rare C.B.C. report and a meal for a Bald Eagle 20 Dec (JD, SD, m.ob.); in Missouri, there were 10 at Stockton L., Cedar/Dade 21 Dec (MR) and one at Table Rock L. 11 Jan (DRi, CB, DB). Pied-billed Grebes returned to n. Missouri and s. Iowa by mid-Feb; Horned Grebes were not reported after 6 Dec. Two American White Pelicans wintered near Davenport, IA (SF), and migrants in Iowa appeared on 25 Feb, with 2 in Lee, IA (WO) and one in Scott, IA (DP). The latest Double-crested Cormorant was one in Des Moines, IA 10 Jan (JF).

Late Great Egrets were newsworthy in Missouri, with 5 in Lincoln 1 Dec (JE), one at S.C.N.W.R. 7 Dec (†TR), one at W.L.D. 3-11 Dec (†JU), one near S.L.N.W.R. 6 Dec (SK), one at Springfield 4 Jan (CB, †GS), and one at Otter Slough C.A., Butler/Stoddard 10 Jan (BB, BL). A Black-crowned Night-Heron remained at Cedar L. in Cedar Rapids, IA until 15 Dec, the 8th consecutive winter report for this species at this location (BS). There were 3 Black Vultures and 70 Turkey Vultures in St. Genevieve, MO 14 Jan (JE); a few Turkey Vultures ventured into the s. half of Iowa in early Feb. Northern Harriers had a good season, with peak counts of 20 going to roost in Livingston, MO 6 Feb (SK, LL) and 15 at Taberville Prairie, Barton, MO 21 Dec (MR).

Northern Goshawks were scarce; the only reports were of one in Scott, IA 7 Dec (KP, SP), one that struck a window in Polk, IA and went to the Iowa State University raptor rehabilitation center (SD), and one in Greene, MO 18 Feb (GS). Iowa's four Red-shouldered Hawk reports were all eastern. Rough-legged Hawks were numerous; 8 were seen hovering over a Liberal, MO field 28 Dec (JC, KB, AK). Golden Eagle numbers were normal, with Iowa reports from Polk, Marshall, Taylor, Grundy, and Warren and Missouri reports from Lincoln and Nodaway. The Merlin roost returned to Des Moines, with at least 6 there during the season (JG, RCe); there were 3 at Taberville Prairie, MO 21 Dec (MR) and about 20 other reports from throughout the season, mostly in Iowa. Prairie Falcon reports included 3 in Iowa and 9 at seven Missouri locations, with the most easterly at W.L.D., both 3 Dec and 8 Jan (ph., †JU) and at another Lincoln, MO location 22 Dec (SS).

RAILS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

The Columbia, MO S.T.P. near McBaine, Boone has become the place to find winter

rails: this year, there were 12 Virginias on the C.B.C. 17 Dec, plus a Sora 5 Feb (CM). A Sandhill Crane was in Union, IA 24 Dec (SD); another remained 14 Jan+ at Cedar Rapids, IA (BS, DP, CE). A few Killdeer pressed into s. Iowa in early Feb. Five Greater Yellowlegs at W.L.D. 3 Dec were unusually late (†JU). Least Sandpipers made Missouri appearances including 10 on 3 Dec and 4 on 22 Dec at W.L.D. (JU), one in Lincoln 10 Dec (JE), and one in Boone 31 Jan+ (SK, CM). Two American Woodcocks were window-killed 15 Dec in West Des Moines (DT); a few were displaying 22 Jan near St. Louis (JU). A California Gull on at Ft. Madison, Lee IA 2 Dec (p.a., †JF) would represent one of a handful of state records. Thayer's Gulls made it to R.M.B.S., with a first-winter bird and an ad. 16 & 17 Dec, respectively (JU, JE), a first-winter there 1 Jan (JE), plus an ad. at Smithville L., Clay,



This Townsend's Solitaire was a great find at Meramec Community College, St. Louis County, Missouri on 28 (here 31) December 2005. Photograph by Joshua Uffman.

MO 2 Feb+ (DW, †KM); Iowa had about 15 reports of the species, all from the Mississippi R. or the large reservoirs. There was a first-winter Iceland Gull at R.M.B.S. 20-29 Dec (JE), plus 4 in Iowa. Seven or more Lesser Black-backed Gulls were in St. Charles, MO (m.ob.), and 5 were in Iowa, 4 of those in Scott (SF). Among about 13 reports of Glaucous Gull, two were away from the Mississippi R. or the big Iowa reservoirs: one at L. Manawa, Pottawattamie, IA 1 Dec (LJP, BKP) and 2 or 3 during the season at Camp Branch Marina, Clay (KM, DW). Great Black-backed Gulls were reported only from Iowa: one on 2 Dec and another on 10 Jan at Pool 19 (JF), and up to 4 first-winter birds from late Dec+ in Scott (†SE, †JG, †DAk). A first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake appeared 2-4 Dec at Saylorville Res. (ph. AB, †JG, †SD); presumably the same bird was at Red Rock Res. 10 Dec (ph., †SD).

A White-winged Dove made a brief appearance in a Dickinson, IA yard 31 Dec-1 Jan (†LS). Eurasian Collared-Doves continue their expansion in the Region, with high counts of 75 at St. Joseph, MO (LL) and 41 in

Lee, IA (CC, CE). An Inca Dove at the Springfield Nature Center, Greene 8-28 Feb provided Missouri's 4th record, its 2nd in two years (AD, ph. CB, m.ob.). The only Barn Owl was one found dead 28 Feb at S.C.N.W.R. (RB). Long-eared Owls were scarce in Missouri, with only two reports totaling 13 birds, while Short-eared Owls were well represented in both states. A Rufous Hummingbird again appeared in Missouri, this one spending the season in Farmington, St Francois (BL).

WOODPECKER THROUGH FINCHES

Red-headed Woodpeckers may be declining in the Region but not at S.L.N.W.R., where a record 289 were found the C.B.C. 28 Dec. The most northerly Loggerhead Shrike was at Rathbun Res. 21 Jan (RC), while the season's most southerly Northern Shrike was at St. Joseph, MO (LL); numbers of the latter were a little above average in Iowa. Black-billed Magpies were again found at Broken Kettle Grasslands, Plymouth, IA, with 5 on 31 Dec (†JB, JG). There was a Marsh Wren on the Keokuk, IA C.B.C. 19 Dec; 5 Sedge Wrens were late in Barton, MO 21 Dec (MR). Unusually late too was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Lee, IA 14 Jan (ph. SD). A Townsend's Solitaire at Kirkwood 28 Dec+ (AM) enlivened the St. Louis area birding scene; in Iowa, there were singles on the Taylor County C.B.C. 30 Dec and in O'Brien 21-22 Jan (DT, †LS). There were two Gray Catbird reports after the C.B.C. period: in Lincoln, MO 8 Jan (†JU) and in Busch C.A., St. Charles, MO 26 Feb (DR). American Pipits were in Story, IA 1 Dec (WO) and on the Red Rock, IA C.B.C. 17 Dec; there were also 5 in Lincoln, MO 18 Dec (JU).

In Missouri, an Orange-crowned Warbler in St. Louis was a good mid-winter find 3-4 Jan (JU), and a whopping 788 Yellow-rumped Warblers were recorded on the Taneey County C.B.C. 1 Jan. There were 8 Spotted Towhees reported from throughout the Region and the season. If confirmed, a report of Lark Bunting in Decatur, IA 19 Jan (†NM) would be a very unusual winter record. An unusually late Savannah Sparrow was found on New Year's Day in Worth, IA (†PH). Le Conte's Sparrows were found at two Missouri locations: 4 at Bradford Farms, Boone 21 Jan (BJ) and 3 on the Clarence Cannon C.B.C. 29 Dec. Lapland Longspurs made it to the St. Louis area, with 100 counted on both 11 Dec and on 1 Jan in St. Charles (JU). Smith's Longspurs in Missouri included one in Barton 21 Dec (MR) and 15 in Benton 11 Jan (AF). A Snow Bunting was in St. Charles, MO 18 Dec (JU). Unexpected was an Indigo Bunting in the Duck Creek C.A.,

Bollinger/Stoddard/Wayne, MO 8 Jan (BR). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was very late 21 Jan in *Pocahontas*, IA (†LAS). Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from three counts (Southeastern Webster County, Rathbun, and Shenandoah) in Iowa; in Missouri, there were 15 in *St. Charles* as late as 16 Dec (JU) and 3 in *Buchanan* the next day (LL, SK). The Region's most northerly wintering group, 50 Great-tailed Grackles were in *Warren*, IA (AJ). What could be Iowa's first Brambling was fuzzily photographed during its 1-21 Jan stay in *Linn* (ph. JH). Of Missouri's five reports of Purple Finch, all were in the north; Iowa had an average year. The only crossbill report was of 5 Reds at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in *St. Joseph*

19 Dec (DW). Only 2 Common Redpolls were reported: one in *Boone*, MO 14 Dec (PM) and one on the *Ames*, IA C.B.C. 17 Dec. By far the most southerly Pine Siskins reported were 2 in *Springfield*, MO 2 Dec; the most by far were 40 at the *Sheldon Cemetery*, *O'Brien* 31 Dec (JB, JG).

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Tennessee & Kentucky



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Like the autumn leading into it, the winter 2005–2006 season was overall warmer and drier than normal. Slightly colder-than-normal months of December and February were more than made up for by an extremely warm January. In fact, there were only two relatively short bouts of cold weather, the first immediately prior to Christmas, when the temperature dipped to 10° F at Louisville and 15° F at Nashville on the morning of 20 December, and a second in mid-February, when temperatures dipped to season lows of 7° F at Louisville and 12° F at Nashville on the morning of the 19th. Precipitation was average to below normal, with hardly any periods of snow cover and no significant snow events. In fact, at no time during the season did Louisville have more than three inches (7.6 cm) or did Nashville have more than a trace.

Rarity highlights during the season included a veritable smorgasbord in Tennessee:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Yellow-billed Loon, Inca Dove, continuing Broad-tailed Hummingbird and Black-throated Sparrow, and a Region-first Golden-crowned Sparrow. Kentucky's more modest list included a Varied Thrush, a Harris's Sparrow, and two Spotted Towhees. With natural and ornamental food crops in good supply, it was a good winter for berry, cone, and mast eaters, with American Robins present in above-average numbers and Blue Jays and Red-headed Woodpeckers back to more normal numbers.

Abbreviations: Kentucky Dam (n. end of Kentucky L., *Livingston/Marshall*, KY); Pace Pt. (Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., *Henry*, TN); Sauerheber (Sauerheber Unit Sloughs W.M.A., *Henderson*, KY); Standifer Gap (Standifer Gap Marsh, *Hamilton*, TN).

WATERFOWL

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck shot at *Reelfoot L.*, TN 2 Jan (*fide* NM) added to the handful of Regional records and represents the first mid-winter record. The peak count of Snow Geese was 150,000 at *Ballard W.M.A.*, KY 6 Feb (CW), a new Regional high. A bird that possessed the characters of a Greater White-fronted Goose × Snow (Blue) Goose hybrid was present at *Long Point Unit*,

Reelfoot N.W.R., *Fulton*, KY 2 Dec (BP, JD, NM). One to 46 Cackling Geese were reported at seven Kentucky and six Tennessee locales through the period. Mute Swans continue to increase in the Region, with some birds now appearing to exhibit winter site fidelity. In Kentucky, one to 25 birds were reported at 11 sites through the period. One at *Bell's Bend*, *Davidson*, TN 17 Dec (GC, PC) was the only report from Tennessee. The wintering flock of Tundra Swans at *Sauerheber* peaked at a new state-high count of 56 on 1 Feb (MM), with 5 still present there 27 Feb (MM). One to 2 birds were reported at two additional Kentucky locales in mid-Dec. In Tennessee, 2 immes. were at *Hatchie N.W.R.*, *Haywood* 24

Dec–10 Jan (ph. JRW et al.), and 3 were in *Dyer* 23 Feb (AW).

Overall, numbers of dabbling ducks were unimpressive. A male Mallard × Gadwall hybrid at *Sauerheber* 15 Dec provided a first record of this combination for Kentucky (BP, DA). There were four reports of winter Blue-winged Teal in the Region: one in *Fayette*, TN 17 Dec (PD); one during the *Reelfoot L.* C.B.C.

(*fide* MG); one in *Hawkins*, TN 21 Dec (SHU); and a male at *Cooley's Pond*, *Wayne*, KY 7 Jan (ph. RD).

Except for Redheads, which were present in above-average numbers towards the end of the season, divers were not represented much better than dabblers. One to 13 Surf Scoters were



This very accommodating pair of Western Grebes lingered in various parts of the Big Sandy Unit of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge through the end of the season (here at Pace Point, Henry County, 7 January 2006). *Aechmophorus* grebes are very rare in the Tennessee & Kentucky region. Photograph by Mike Todd.

present at five Kentucky and two Tennessee locales 3–10 Dec; a female/imm. on Kentucky L. above the dam 26 Jan (BP) was more unusual during midwinter. There were two reports of Black Scoters: 5, including an ad. male, on L. Cumberland, Russell, KY 6 Dec (RD) and a female on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 22 Feb (DR, HC). Single female/imm. White-winged were at Robco L., Shelby, TN 9 Dec (JRW) and Old Hickory L., Sumner, TN 1–2 Jan (CAS et al.). A few Common Mergansers put in a showing during the season, with peak counts of 8 on the Calloway, KY C.B.C. 31 Dec (*fide* HC) and 8 on the Ohio R., Bracken, KY 20 Feb (LM et al.), and above-average numbers in e. Tennessee: 2 females at Douglas L., Sevier 26 Jan (RK), a female at Bristol, Sullivan 31 Jan–7 Feb (BS et al.), and a male with 3–4 females at Bristol, Sullivan 17–28 Feb (RK, m.ob.). Another female was in w. Tennessee at TVA L., Shelby 13 Dec (ph. JRW).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

The Region's 6th and Tennessee's 5th Yellow-billed Loon (ph. JRW), as well as a Red-throated Loon, were in Henry, TN 4 Dec (JRW). Single Pacific Loons were at S. Holston L., TN 4 Dec (†RK, m.ob.) and at Pace Pt. 31 Dec and 16 Jan (JRW). A count of 740 Horned Grebes at Boone L., Sullivan, TN 5 Dec (RK) was exceptional for the Region. There were four reports of Red-necked Grebes: one each at Lexington, KY 10 Dec (ph. JP) and S. Holston L., TN 23–25 Dec (TM, DH et al.) and 2 at Pace Pt. 31 Dec+ (ph. JRW, ph. MT, m.ob.). Two Western Grebes were discovered at Britton Ford, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN 23 Dec (ph. MT); possibly the same 2 were then present through the remainder of the period at Pace Pt. (m.ob.).

An American Bittern at Standifer Gap 17–18 Dec (DP) was only the 2nd for the Chattanooga C.B.C.; one in Muhlenberg, KY 1 Jan (MB, RD, SD) was at the same location where one has been found on two previous occasions in winter. Quite unusual for Kentucky were 3 Great Egrets on the Land Between the Lakes C.B.C. 17 Dec (*fide* CMO). In Tennessee, 3 were at Eagle Creek, Henry 4 Dec (JRW), and singles were in Blount 1 Dec+ (CMu), Reelfoot L., Obion 3 Dec (JRW, MT), and Amnicola Marsh, Hamilton 29 Jan+ (JC).

Single Ospreys in Greene, TN 1 & 26 Dec (DH, RN) and Hawkins, TN 19 Dec–18 Feb (SHu) were unusual winter visitors for the Region. There were several scattered reports of w. subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk in Kentucky, including a returning light-morph Harlan's Hawk that was present for the 5th consecutive winter in Warren (DR). Rough-legged Hawks were scarcer than usual, with



Merlins have increased as winter residents in Kentucky in recent years; this female of the prairie race (*richardsoni*) was one of six birds present in a relatively small area in southeastern Muhlenberg County 5 February 2006. This photograph provides the first documentation of the prairie race in Kentucky. Photograph by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

only one to 2 reported from one Tennessee and three Kentucky locales. Up to 3 Golden Eagles were seen during Dec and Jan in their normal Bernheim Forest, Bullitt/Nelson, KY wintering location. Otherwise, the only report in Kentucky was for one in Butler 19 Jan (DR). In Tennessee, an impressive 4 (2 ads., an imm., a sub-ad.) were just s. of Pace Pt. 24 Dec (JRW); a sub-ad. was still present there 5 Jan (MT). Six Merlins were observed in Muhlenberg, KY 5 Feb (BP, AC), a new high count for the state; one was of the prairie subspecies *richardsoni* (ph. BP). Single Merlins were also reported at three additional Kentucky locales. In Tennessee, Merlins were widely reported across the state, with one to 3 reported from seven locations 16 Dec–25 Feb. A few Peregrine Falcons wintered in the Region, with one to 2 birds reported from five Kentucky and six Tennessee locations.

RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Virginia Rails were reported at three Muhlenberg, KY locales between 1 and 15 Jan (BP, AC, WR), with 3 at one marsh 1 Jan (BP, AC), an impressive 13 were at Standifer Gap 17 Dec (DP). A number of normally transient shorebirds were either unusually late or wintering, including: single Lesser Yellowlegs in Knox, TN 4–10 Dec (SHo) and Crocket, TN 16 Jan (MG); a juv. Long-billed Dowitcher on L.

Cumberland, Pulaski that established a new late departure date for Kentucky by lingering until 15 Dec (ph. RD); 4 Long-billed Dowitchers at Reelfoot L., Lake, TN 16–17 Dec (JRW, Reelfoot L. C.B.C.); and up to 2 Spotted Sandpipers in Kingsport, Sullivan, TN 20 Jan–20 Feb (RP et al.). A Lesser Yellowlegs in w. Henderson, KY 19 Feb (JMe) was likely a very early transient.

An ad. Laughing Gull was present at Barren River L., KY 26–30 Jan (DR). An ad. Franklin's Gull was at Ensley Bottoms, Shelby, TN 19 Jan (ph. JRW). Single ad. and first-year Little Gulls continued at Reelfoot L., Lake, TN through 3 Dec (JRW, MT). Mild weather resulted in greater-than-normal numbers of wintering Bonaparte's Gulls in Kentucky. Thayer's Gulls were only reported from Kentucky L./L. Barkley, with an ad. below Barkley Dam, Lyon, KY 16 & 18 Dec (ph. BP), 2 first-year birds below Kentucky Dam 17 Dec (†BLi), and a first-year bird at Pace Pt. 1 Jan (JRW). Peak counts of Herring Gulls were unimpressive and included 85 below Kentucky Dam 18 Dec (BP). The only Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Kentucky were an ad. on the Ohio R., McCracken 31 Dec (†FB) and an ad. on L. Barkley, Lyon 22 Feb (DR, HC); an ad. was at Eagle Creek, Henry, TN 16 Jan (ph. JRW). A first-year Glaucous Gull and second-year California Gull were at Paris Landing, Henry/Stewart, TN 24 Dec (JRW). A Caspian Tern at Hatchie N.W.R., Haywood, TN 2 Jan (ph. MT) was an exceptional discovery for midwinter. As is the norm, a few Forster's Terns lingered on Kentucky L. as far n.



This adult Harris's Sparrow was present in a southeastern Daviess County, Kentucky yard for much of the season (here in late January 2006). Photograph by Bobby Lloyd.

as Marshall, KY through the season (m.ob.); 2 were in Lake, TN 3 Dec (MT, JRW).

Ninety Eurasian Collared-Doves in w. Daviess 12 Nov (JH) made a new high count for Kentucky Single Common Ground-Doves, very rare in the Region, were in Obion, TN 25 Jan (MG) and Murfreesboro, Rutherford, TN 28 Jan–11 Feb (TW, m.ob.). An Inca Dove frequented a yard in Fayette, TN mid-Nov–7 Dec (T&DG, ph. JRW, m.ob.), potentially a 2nd record for Tennessee after the one reported from the fall 2005. Short-eared Owls were quite scarce this winter, with one to 2 reported at five locales in Kentucky and one to 4 at two locales in Tennessee. The only Long-eared Owls reported were 2 in Muhlenberg, KY 28 Jan (BY, MY). Hummingbirds were again widespread and carefully studied across the Region (Table 1). The imm. male Broad-tailed

Table 1. Records of hummingbirds in Kentucky and Tennessee 11 September 2005-9 April 2006.

First date	Last date	Species	Age	Sex	Location	County	State
unknown	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Kingston Springs	Cheatham	TN
unknown	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Brentwood	Williamson	TN
unknown	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Chattanooga	Hamilton	TN
9/11/05	3/30/06	Rufous	SY	M	Cookeville	Putnam	TN
9/25/05	10/2/05	Rufous	HY	M	Ballardsville	Oldham	KY
9/30/05	3/28/06	Rufous	AHY	F	Clinton	Anderson	TN
10/1/05	10/15/05	Rufous	HY	M	Sewanee	Franklin	TN
10/1/05	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Elizabethton	Carter	TN
10/5/05	12/20/05	Rufous	AHY	F	Byrdstown	Pickett	TN
10/7/05	12/10/05	Rufous	HY	M	Georgetown	Scott	KY
10/15/05	1/26/06	Rufous	SY	M	Louisville	Jefferson	KY
10/20/05	3/29/06	Rufous	AHY	M	Corbin	Knox	KY
10/21/05	3/20/06	Rufous	SY	F	New Market	Jefferson	TN
10/26/05	10/26/05	Selasphorus	U	U	Elizabethton	Carter	TN
11/2/05	11/4/05	Selasphorus	U	U	Brentwood	Williamson	TN
11/5/05	unknown	Rufous	HY	F		Knox	TN
11/5/05	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Norris	Anderson	TN
11/6/05	unknown	Rufous	HY	F	Knoxville	Knox	TN
11/11/05	unknown	Rufous	HY	F	Fountain City	Knox	TN
11/15/05	unknown	Rufous	AHY	F	Loudoun	Loudoun	TN
11/17/05	11/27/05	Rufous	HY	M	Shelbyville	Shelby	KY
11/17/05	12/27/05	Rufous	HY	F	Nicholasville	Jessamine	KY
11/20/05	4/2/06	Rufous	AHY	F	Knoxville	Knox	TN
11/23/05	11/25/05	Rufous	AHY	M	Owensboro	Daviess	KY
11/24/05	12/12/05	Broad-tailed	HY	M	Signal Mountain	Hamilton	TN
12/16/05	12/16/05	Unidentified	U	U	Sevierville	Sevier	TN
12/29/05	1/28/06	Rufous	AHY	F	Loudoun	Loudoun	TN
1/7/06	3/26/06	Rufous	AHY	F	Lookout Mountain	Hamilton	TN

Hummingbird at Signal Mt., Hamilton, TN lingered through 12 Dec (DW).

VIREOS THROUGH THRUSHES

There was an above-average number of winter reports of Blue-headed Vireo: one in Taylor 28 Dec (RD, †BP) represented only a 2nd winter record for Kentucky; in Tennessee, singles were seen in Dekalb 27 Dec (SJS), at Standifer

Gap 8 Jan (DP), and at Memphis 26 & 31 Jan (RB, BI). Returning Tree Swallows were first noted 17 Feb in Blount, TN (JA). One on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide MG) was likely a late transient. An imm. Barn Swallow at Reelfoot L., Lake, TN 3 Dec established a new late date for the Region, outside of a few isolated mid-winter records. Red-breasted

Nuthatches staged a modest movement into Kentucky, with one to 19 reported on 14 Kentucky C.B.C.s, but they were scarcely reported from Tennessee.

Single Sedge Wrens were seen at two different locations in w. McCracken, KY 27 Dec (BP, SR); at Brainerd Levee, Hamilton, TN 17 Dec (JE); and in Gibson, TN 7 Feb (MG). There were three reports of Marsh Wren in Kentucky: one to 2 at two Muhlenberg locales and

one in Pulaski (RD); the species was more widely reported in Tennessee, with one to 2 at six locations. Single House Wrens were reported from five Kentucky locales during the season. Exceptional numbers were reported from se. Tennessee, with 7 reported on both the Chattanooga C.B.C. 17 Dec and Nickajack Lake C.B.C. 29 Dec. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in n. Madison 17 Dec (†BM, KN) will

represent a first winter record for Kentucky if accepted. In Tennessee, singles on the Memphis (18 Dec) and Savannah (2 Jan) C.B.C.s were also very rare. Gray Catbirds are very rare in winter in the Region, so reports of 13 from one Kentucky and 10 Tennessee locations are astoundingly high numbers. A female Varied Thrush in a Louisville yard 4 Feb+ (ph. D&CP) furnished a 5th Kentucky record.

Orange-crowned Warblers were widely reported from Tennessee, with singles at eight locations, mostly in late Dec. Palm Warblers were positively abundant in Tennessee, with reports from 12 counties, including 6 on the Chattanooga C.B.C. 17 Dec. Only a few Palms were observed in Kentucky, with one to 4 reported from six locations. A male Mourning

Warbler in Marshall, KY 17 Dec was an unprecedented winter find (†CMo). Three Common Yellowthroats were seen on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide MG).

Kentucky hosted two male Spotted Towhees, one that returned to the same thicket in w. McCracken for the 3rd straight winter and another in ne. Hart from the last week of Dec into Mar (CF, BB, †SK, †BP et al.). American Tree Sparrows are very rare in e. Tennessee, so one in Sullivan 8 Dec (JMo) was noteworthy. Chipping Sparrows continue to increase in Kentucky as a winter bird: one to 40 were reported on 10 C.B.C.s, and additional reports of one to 7 came from other scattered locales. In se. Tennessee, the Chattanooga and Hiwassee C.B.C.s reported their highest counts ever—168 and 311, respectively. A Vesper Sparrow in Hamilton, TN 9 Jan (DJ) was unusual for midwinter. The Region's first Black-throated Sparrow lingered in Lincoln, TN through 27 Feb (MW, m.ob.). One to 6 Le Conte's Sparrows were found at four Kentucky and three Tennessee locales. A Grasshopper Sparrow in Muhlenberg 1 Jan (†BP, AC) represented one of only a few winter records for Kentucky. Lincoln's Sparrows are Regionally rare in winter, so reports from Celina, Clay, TN 14 Dec (BHS) and Obion, TN 25 Jan (MG) were noteworthy. An ad. Harris's Sparrow was present in a se. Daviess, KY yard late Dec-Mar (ph. BLo et al.); one was in Collierville, Shelby, TN 15-22 Jan (JW et al.). The Region's first Golden-crowned Sparrow was in Covington, Tipton, TN 4 Dec-16 Jan (K&PK, ph. MT, ph. JRW, m.ob.).

A male Indigo Bunting in basic plumage in e. Pulaski, KY 31 Dec and 12 Jan (†CN, WN) provided one of only a few winter records for the state. Two different male Baltimore Orioles



Blue-winged Teal are very rare in Kentucky in winter; one to a few are reported nearly every winter, but few are documented as well as this male present in Wayne County 7 January 2006. Photograph by Roseanna Denton.



This Yellow-billed Loon on Kentucky Lake, Henry County, Tennessee 4 December 2005 provided the Tennessee & Kentucky region's sixth record; all records come from recent years. Photograph by Jeff Wilson.

were reported in Tennessee: one in Hamilton 17 Dec (ph. KC) and one in Nashville 12-15 Dec (JK et al.). Purple Finches staged one of the better flights in recent years, with 2-61 reported on 17 Kentucky C.B.C.s and peak counts of 47-72 at four locales during the season. Numbers in Tennessee were smaller. Pine

Siskins staged a modest flight, with one to 4 on only four Kentucky C.B.C.s; the only sizable flock in Kentucky all winter was 50+ in Elliott 11 Feb (EM, et al.). Siskins were barely reported in Tennessee. The only Evening Grosbeak reported was a female in Morgan, KY 4–5 Jan (ME).

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Central Southern



C. Dwight Cooley

In winter 2005–2006, the southeastern United States continued to assess, and suffer through, the effects of the terrible 2005 hurricane season. Those familiar with bird distribution in the Region will note the significant decline in records from traditional coastal sites such as Cameron, Hackberry, Grand Isle, Gulfport, Dauphin Island, and Gulf Shores, resulting not only from habitat loss but also coastal residents trying to pull their lives back together.

Abbreviations: B.S.N.W.R. (Bayou Sauvage N.W.R.), N.N.W.R. (Noxubee N.W.R.), W.N.W.R. (Wheeler N.W.R.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH IBIS

The eastward surge of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks advanced strongly into se. Louisiana, where a peak of 1160 (plus 4 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks) was recorded in

Audubon Park, New Orleans, Orleans on 30 Jan (RDP). One wonders when coastal Mississippi and Alabama will begin seeing such numbers. Two Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on Lacassine Pool, Cameron, LA, 28 Feb (SWC, DLD) were either wintering or early migrants. The largest reported concentration of Greater White-fronted Geese was of 70 at N.N.W.R., Noxubee MS 4 Jan (TLS). Ross's Goose continues to be widely reported, with 50 in Tunica, MS 1 Jan (GK, SK) the largest number reported. Only two Cackling Goose records were received, down from 15 last winter. In Arkansas, 52 were on the Univ. of Arkansas Farm, Washington 17 Dec (MM), while in Mississippi, 3 were seen 25 Jan on Lower L. Sardis (GK, SK). The number of Trumpeter Swan reports continues to increase, with some question as to their provenance. In Alabama, 2 immes. were near Marvyn, Lee 17 Feb+ (p.a., GEH, m.ob.). In Arkansas, 3 ads. were at Bald Knob N.W.R., White 1 Dec (KN, BA); 98 were on Magness L., Cleburne 2 Dec (RH); 2 were on Mill Pond, Newton, 15 Dec–4 Feb (JSt, TB, SC, m.ob.); and an ad. was in Pulaski 27 Dec (RH). Two ad. Tundra Swans were near Hope Hull, Montgomery, AL 30–31 Dec (CTS, PSn, LFG). In Arkansas, an imm. was on Magness L. 2 Dec and 3 Jan (RH, KN, LDN), and 5 ads. and an imm. were at Big Lake N.W.R., Mississippi 19 Dec (DB).

Mottled Ducks continued their expansion up the Mississippi R.: up to 13 were near Arkansas City, Desha, AR 23 Dec–25 Feb (DB, SDe). Cinnamon Teal is a rare winter visitor to the Region. In Louisiana, ad. males were recorded in Rapides, where 2 were seen 29 Jan (DLD, SWC), and at Lacassine N.W.R., where one was reported 12 Feb (JBo, DBo, JS). The bird of the season had to be Arkansas's 2nd

Tufted Duck, an ad. male on L. Dardanelle, Yell 20 Feb+ (p.a., KN, LDN, m.ob.). Inland scoter records are always of interest. Two female-type White-winged Scoters were on Oktibbeha County L., Oktibbeha, MS 14–15 Dec (TLS), while up to 2 female-type Black Scoters were at Guntersville, Marshall, AL 1–27 Dec (LBR, RAR, LW, m.ob.). In Arkansas, L. Dardanelle hosted a scoter trifecta, with imm. Surf, White-winged, and Black Scoters 17–18 Dec, 29 Dec+, and 10 Dec+, respectively (KN, LDN, m.ob.). The only Long-tailed Duck reported was a first-year male at Avery I., Iberia, LA 7–25 Jan (EL, m.ob.). Common Mergansers, somewhat rare in the Region, were reported with some regularity. In Arkansas, 3 were on L. Sequoyah, Washington 11 Dec (MM, DC); 4 were seen on Mallard L., Mississippi 19 Dec (DB, JB, TJB); an ad. female was in Millwood S.P., Little River 25 Dec (DS); and up to 5 were on L. Dardanelle 26 Dec–25 Feb (KN, LDN). In Mississippi, a female was on Lower L. Sardis, Panola 17–25 Jan (GK, SK). Ruffed Grouse reaches the s. limits of its distribution along the Cumberland Plateau in ne. Alabama, where records are usually of drumming birds. One seen at Skyline W.M.A., Jackson, AL 26 Feb (AS) was noteworthy.

Traditional loon wintering sites continue to produce. As many as 4 Red-throated Loons were at Guntersville, AL 26 Dec–21 Jan (LBR, RAR, SH, DH, m.ob.), while one was noted 29 Jan on Bay Springs L., Tishomingo, MS (WP). Up to 2 Pacific Loons were recorded at Guntersville, AL 25 Dec–21 Jan (SWM, m.ob.), and one was at Bay Springs L., MS 26 Dec (WP). Always rare in the Region, single Red-necked Grebes were reported from Limestone Bay, W.N.W.R., Limestone, AL 19 Nov–10 Jan (DBr, m.ob.); from W.F. George Dam, Henry,

AL 19 Feb (EBe, MB); and from L. Pine Bluff, Jefferson, AR 4–8 Jan (p.a., DB, DM, DS). Continuing the trend of recent years, single Western Grebes were on L. Beaverfork, Faulkner, AR 17 Dec+ (MJ, HR, WS, DS, JH) and Bay Springs L., MS 29 Jan (WP).

Once rare inland during winter, American White Pelicans are now almost commonplace: 116 were found 17 Dec on the W.N.W.R. C.B.C., Limestone/Morgan, AL, while 17 were seen below Wilson Dam, Colbert, AL 26 Jan (GDJ, DGJ, m.ob.). Brown Pelicans, possibly hurricane-assisted, were found inland across the Region: an ad. was on L. Pine Bluff, AR 26 Dec–3 Jan (RDo, DM, WS, DS); 4 were in Rapides, LA 31 Dec (EVM, MG, DG); and a juv. was seen throughout the reporting period on Choctaw L., Choctaw, MS (JO, TLS, MS, m.ob.). The only Anhingas reported were a female in Alabama at Montgomery 31 Dec (LFG) and ad. males in Mississippi at Oktibbeha County L. 1 Jan (TLS, MS) and N.N.W.R. 31 Jan (TLS).

The 6 Reddish Egrets on E. Timbalier/Grande Terre I., Lafouche/Plaquemines, LA 23 Jan (DLD, SWC, RD) was a good number for midwinter. An ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on the Birmingham C.B.C., Jefferson, AL 23 Dec (DPG, SSH) was unexpected. White Ibis wintered far inland, with one at Millwood L., Howard, AR 4 Feb (CM), 10 on Moore Bayou, Desha, AR 27 Feb (RH), and 73 on the Shreveport C.B.C. at Cross L., Caddo, LA 17 Dec (JI, CL, RG). Three Glossy Ibis were near Mamou, Evangeline, LA 30 Dec (MW), where they are decidedly uncommon.

RAPTORS THROUGH SWIFTS

Osprey numbers continue to rebound, with an Alabama maximum of 29 on the Gulf Shores C.B.C., Baldwin and a good count of 15 near Venice, Plaquemines, LA (PAW, DPM, RS), both 30 Dec. White-tailed Kites continue to hold their own in Louisiana, where singles were seen in Vermilion 21 Dec–23 Feb (BV, LA, m.ob.) and Evangeline 14 Feb (BV, JP, LA, EB, WSy). Roosts of Northern Harriers in Desha and Poinsett, AR topped 26 birds on 7 Jan and 46 birds on 17 Feb, respectively (DB, m.ob.). An ad. Harris's Hawk, a common falconer's species that frequently escapes, was seen on Dauphin I., Mobile, AL 8 Jan+ (DMc, HD, SD, m.ob.). On the heels of last winter's sighting in the same general area, Mississippi's 3rd Ferruginous Hawk was a subad. in Tunica 1 Jan (p.a., GK, SK). Two Rough-legged Hawks, a

light and a dark morph, were at a traditional wintering site below Guntersville Dam, Marshall, AL 21 Jan (RAR, m.ob.), where they have become rare in recent years. A dark morph was near Carlisle, Lonohe, AR 18 Dec (DS). The only Golden Eagle reported was an ad. along the Yocona R., Lafayette, MS 27 Dec (GK). Merlins were reported widely in Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. In Alabama, 3 Peregrine Falcons were found on the W.N.W.R. C.B.C. 17 Dec, and one was on the Birmingham C.B.C. 23 Dec. A Peregrine in downtown Little Rock, AR 9 Dec (TF, PP) furnished the only report from that state.



Furnishing only a second state record, this Lark Bunting was found 24 (here 26) February 2006 near St. Charles, Arkansas County, Arkansas and remained into the spring season. Photograph by Jimmy McMorran.

Two King Rails were at N.N.W.R., MS 17 Dec+ (TLS, MS), establishing the 6th area winter record. Virginia Rails were widely reported. In Arkansas, 2 were near Pine Bluff, Jefferson 28 Dec (RDo, WS, DS), and one was at Ned's L., Crawford 6 Jan (SB, RK). Four at the Starkville Sewage Pond South, Oktibbeha, MS established the 6th area winter record, while a Sora at the same location was the first area winter record, both species being recorded throughout the period (TLS). One indication of rail winter densities was established by Steve Cardiff and Donna Dittman in Louisiana. On 2 Dec, they counted rails flushed during an unusually late rice harvest operation near Crowley, Acadia, LA. During the operation, 30 Yellow Rails, 150 Virginia Rails, and 75 Soras were recorded. While these densities may be typical of the season, opportunities to document rail numbers are rare this late in the year.

The number of Sandhill Cranes wintering in the Region continues to increase. In Alabama, 1775 were at W.N.W.R. 3 Jan (CDC, SGS, FBL, DSM, KH), establishing a new state maximum. In Louisiana, 18 Snowy Plovers in Cameron 3–5 Feb (BV) and 24 Wilson's Plovers in Lafourche/Jefferson/Plaquemines 23–24 Jan (DLD, SWC, RD) were good numbers. Also in Louisiana, 35 Piping Plovers were reported from Lafourche/Jefferson/Plaquemines 23–24 Jan (DLD, SWC, RD, BV), while 35 were in Cameron 4–5 Feb (BV). A Long-billed Curlew, rare in se. Louisiana, was on Grand I. 6–22 Jan (SWC, DLD, RDP), and 2 were in Gulfport, Harrison, MS 27 Jan (CG, CE).

Alabama's 2nd and 3rd inland Pomarine Jaegers were at W.F. George Dam 10 Dec (SWM, PEL) and W.N.W.R. 16–17 Dec (CAB, SWM, m.ob.), respectively. Franklin's Gulls usually move through the Region well before Dec, so an imm. near Magnolia Springs, Bald-

win, AL 9 Jan (RAD, BMM) and an ad. at Oktibbeha County L., MS 23 Dec–14 Jan (TLS, MS, DJS) were noteworthy. The only Little Gulls reported were an ad. and an imm. on Millwood L., Little River/Hempstead, AR 10 & 23 Dec, respectively (CM). California Gulls are rare but increasingly regular in the Region. In Arkansas, an ad. was at L. Dardanelle 3 Dec–28 Feb+ and an imm. was near Russellville, Pope 17 Dec (p.a., KN, LDN), while in Louisiana, an imm. was near Maurice, Vermilion 31 Dec–1 Jan (PC) and an ad. was on L. Pontchartrain, Orleans 18 Feb (DBo, JBo). Up to 5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, in various plumages, were near Magnolia Springs, AL, 29 Dec–19 Feb (GDJ, RAD, BMM, m.ob.), and an ad. was on E. Timbalier I. West, Lafourche, LA 23 Jan (DLD, RD, SWC). In Alabama, an imm. Glaucous Gull near Southside, Etowah 11–27 Dec (LW, NC) established the first record for the mt. region; and an imm. was seen at several locations in Colbert/Lauderdale/Lawrence 7 Jan–4 Feb (DJS, m.ob.). Rare inland, an imm. Great Black-backed Gull was in Guntersville, AL 1 Jan (SM).

The movement of White-winged Doves into the Region has been nothing short of amazing. In Alabama, where they now occur year-round, 161 in Baldwin 30 Dec (HEH) established a new state maximum. One was in Monroe, AR 3 Jan (WS, CR, AM), while 200 near Crowley, LA 2 Dec (DLS, SWC) was a good number away from the coast. The only Inca Doves reported were 3 near Texarkana, Miller, AR 4 Feb (CM). Short-eared Owls were scarce in many traditional areas, with the exception of the Mississippi R. Valley in Arkansas, where 4–8 were seen near Arkansas City 28 Jan–26 Feb (DB, SDe) and near Jonesboro, Poinsett, where 16 on 17 Feb (NA, DB, SDe, EM) established a new state maximum. The only lingering Common Nighthawk was one in Hoover, Jefferson, AL 4 Dec (PHF). Vaux's Swifts were in Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge, LA for the 5th consecutive Feb: 7–8 were reported there 20–24 Feb (DL, PB, DBo, JBo).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH ORIOLES

Arkansas's first Broad-billed Hummingbird was in White Hall, Jefferson through the period (BW, CB, MBr, m.ob.), and a first-year male was in New Iberia, Iberia, LA 13 Dec (MJM, m.ob.). Eleven Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were banded in Baldwin/Mobile, AL 6 Dec–25 Jan (FB); another was banded in Roland, Pulaski, AR 26 Dec (VM, MP, HP). Anna's Hummingbirds were reported in Louisiana at New Iberia 13 Dec–2 Jan (JVH, MJM) and in Slidell, St. Tammany 28 Dec–2 Jan (LB, PS); another was in Bay St. Louis, Hancock, MS 22 Dec (JBi, DBi, MMy, CMY).

Alabama's first **Costa's Hummingbird**—and the first for the eastern United States—was an imm. male in Montgomery late Nov–17 Feb (FB, m.ob.). An imm. male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** was in Mobile, AL 15 Dec (FB), while an ad. female was near Beebe, White, AR 7 Jan (p.a., JBe, WB).

A lingering Least Flycatcher was at B.S.N.W.R., Orleans, LA 4 Dec (PAW), while one on Grand I., LA 7 Jan (SWC, DLD) undoubtedly wintered. An ad. Say's Phoebe was at the Fayetteville W.T.P., AR 25 Feb+ (GM, GMa, m.ob.), and an ad. male Vermilion Flycatcher was at W.N.W.R. 19 Nov–10 Feb (DBr, m.ob.), a first for the Tennessee Valley of Alabama. An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Eufaula N.W.R. 12 Dec (SWM, PEL) was the 4th inland for Alabama, while one on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 30 Dec (WJB, GB, m.ob.) was more expected. A **Couch's Kingbird**, seen and heard in Red River, LA 2 Jan (PD, m.ob.), was a local first and quite unexpected.

Rock Wren is recorded in the Region most years, usually in Arkansas. In keeping with that trend, one was at Millwood L. 27 Dec–8 Feb (CM, DoH, DHa, MD, m.ob.). Bewick's Wren, increasingly scarce in the e. United States, was seen at Craighead Forest Park, Craighead, AR 20 Jan (NA). A Sedge Wren was at the Stuttgart Airport, Prairie, AR 16 Feb (WS, MR), where rare in winter. A phenomenal 200 Marsh Wrens were recorded during an unusually late rice harvest operation near Crowley, LA 2 Dec (SWC, DLD). Two Townsend's Solitaires were at Mount Magazine S.P., Logan, AR 18 Dec–23 Jan and possibly later (DS, KN, LDN). Providing Alabama's 2nd winter record was a Swainson's Thrush at Ft. Morgan, Baldwin 10 Dec (BKF). A Wood Thrush was at St. Catherine Creek N.W.R., Adams, MS 19 Feb (WM). Sprague's Pipit probably occurs more often than reported. One was at the Stuttgart Airport, AR 3 Dec–16 Feb (DS, WS, EF, TF), and 3 were in Caddo, LA 19 Feb (TD, JI).

Yellow Warblers are exceedingly rare anywhere in the Region during winter. Singles, all in Louisiana, were in Acadia 14 Dec (PH, MRi, AT), Baton Rouge 27 Dec–24 Jan (JS, m.ob.), and B.S.N.W.R. 16 Jan (PAW). Black-and-white Warblers become rare in the winter away from the coast. Arkansas had reports of a female at Cache River N.W.R., Prairie 15 Dec (JM) and at White River N.W.R.: a male 15 Dec (NB) in Desha, a female in Desha 25 Jan (JR), and a male in Arkansas 2 Feb (JM). In Louisiana, single Northern Waterthrushes were found at B.S.N.W.R. 10 Dec (PAW) and Lafayette 12 Jan (JWB, BF). Rare in Alabama in winter, female Summer Tanagers were recorded in Anniston 13 Dec–11 Feb (DeM),

Mobile 1 Feb (LF), and Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa 19 Feb+ (JCH). A female Scarlet Tanager was at Bon Secour, Baldwin, AL early Dec–early Feb (JD, KD et al.). A male Western Tanager, rare during any season, was in New Orleans, LA 30 Dec (PAW).

Two American Tree Sparrows in Clay, AR 19 Feb (DB, NA) were the only ones reported. The 20 Lark Sparrows in Caddo, LA 19 Feb (TD, JI) made one of the largest concentrations recorded in the Region. Arkansas's 2nd Lark Bunting, an ad. male, was near St. Charles, Arkansas 24 Feb+ (p.a., JM, SW, m.ob.). The only Henslow's Sparrows reported, all in Arkansas, were 8 in Drew 20 Dec (EK) and one at the Stuttgart Airport 1 Feb (WS, DS). Harris's Sparrow records, both in Arkansas, were of 35 in Maysville, Benton 14 Jan (JN, MM) and 4 near Harrison, Boone 19 Feb (SR). Sixteen Smith's Longspurs were at the Stuttgart Airport 3 Dec (DS, WS, EF, TF), a normal number there for winter, and one was at Ft. Chaffee, Sebastian, AR 8 Dec (WS). Arkansas's 4th Snow Bunting was a male at Mount Magazine S.P. 17 Dec (p.a., DS).

An ad. male Black-headed Grosbeak was in Lafayette, LA 29 Nov–6 Dec+ (SS), and a first-year male was in Reserve, St. John, LA 10 Jan (RJS). Rare inland in winter, single male Indigo Buntings were in Anniston, AL 11 Dec (DeM) and Parkway Village, Pulaski, AR 5 Jan (HP, MP, LY). A Dickcissel was in Mobile, AL 18 Feb (CH). Alabama's 2nd confirmed Western Meadowlark in 30 years was on Dauphin I. 24 Feb (p.a., BG, m.ob.), while 7 were in Maysville, AR 14 Jan (JN, MM). In Louisiana, male Orchard Orioles were in Reserve 28 Dec+ (RJS, NLN) and New Orleans 18 Feb (DBo, JBo). Up to 2 Bullock's Orioles were in New Orleans, LA Oct–27 Jan (IC, PAW), and an imm. male was in Kaplan, Vermilion, LA 26 Dec (MMo, KM, RM, ED). Baltimore Orioles were widely reported. In Alabama, a male was in Silverhill, Baldwin 21 Dec (BS); an ad. female was in Galion, Marengo 11 Jan (JSe, DSe); and an ad. male was in Montgomery 27 Jan (CHA). In Louisiana, an imm. female was in Batture, Jefferson 22 Jan (PAW); 3–4 were in New Orleans 4–5 Feb (PAW); and 5 were at a different location in New Orleans 18 Feb (DBo, JBo).

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Northern Canada



Cameron D. Eckert

Northerners put up with the cold but love the snow. The same is true for northern birds that use snow to their advantage to survive intensely cold conditions. The delight that greeted southern Yukon's copious late-fall snow turned to disbelief when an early December melt set in. The remainder of the winter saw very little snow, with one nasty cold snap toward the end of the season. Northwest Territories experienced the warmest winter on record: temperatures for the period were about 6° C above average, with the Slave River valley in the southeast experiencing the greatest increase over seasonal norms. A few unusual bird records may be attributable to these temperatures. Our appreciation, as always, goes to the diligent contributors who seek out signs of bird life during the long dark season.

WATERFOWL THROUGH OWLS

The traditional wintering flock of Mallards at McIntyre Cr. wetlands in Whitehorse, s. Yukon numbered 22 on 26 Dec (CE). A male Lesser Scaup at Carcross, s. Yukon 9-17 Dec (CE; HG, RH; DK; PS) provided a rare winter record. A count of 9 Common Eiders was made on the Rankin Inlet, Nunavut C.B.C. 27 Dec (BZ). The waters below the Whitehorse dam, s. Yukon have proven to be the Region's winter hotspot for Barrow's Goldeneye; an ad. male seen there 29 Dec-31 Jan (BB; ph. HG) provided the only report of the season. Yellowknife's surprise C.B.C. bird was a lone Bufflehead on the Yellowknife R. 2 Jan (fide VJ). The count of 58 Willow Ptarmigan on the Norman Wells C.B.C. 27 Dec (RP) was up slightly from previous years and furnished the high total for the Northwest Territories counts. The Willow Ptarmigan count (7) narrowly edged out Common Raven (4) as the more common of the two species on the Arvi-

at, Nunavut C.B.C. 1 Jan (fide MS). Rankin Inlet, Nunavut reported the only Rock Ptarmigan, with 4 on 27 Dec (fide BZ), and the only Sharp-tailed Grouse recorded were at Norman Wells, NWT, with 4 on 27 Dec (fide RP).

A late Bald Eagle was seen during an aerial moose survey near the Northwest Territories/Alberta border w. of Ft. Smith, NWT 12 Dec (LG). The Yukon's ever-reliable wintering pair of Bald Eagles was right on cue at McIntyre Cr. for the 26 Dec Whitehorse C.B.C. (CE). Northern Goshawks seen in the Sahtu region, NWT included one on 9 Dec at Prohibition Cr., one eating a freshly killed Snowshoe Hare 7 Jan at Vermillion Cr., and one on 6 Feb at Norman Wells airport (RP). Unusual in winter was a dark-morph Gyrfalcon at Norman Wells 7 Jan (DF). Southern Yukon seemed poised for a strong showing of Northern Hawk Owls until the rapid melt in

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES

A Pileated Woodpecker seen during count week in Yellowknife, NWT (fide VJ) provided a rare winter record. A Northern Shrike, scarce in winter, was noted at Shallow Bay, s. Yukon 2 Dec (CM). A Steller's Jay at Tagish, s. Yukon 14 Feb+ (CA, CR) may be the same one that has been seen in the area for the past few years. It's a lonely life for the single Black-billed Magpie in Norman Wells, NWT, which has been counted on the C.B.C. for the past five years (RP). Yellowknife continues its reign as the Region's "Raven Capital," with a count of 1218 on the 2 Jan C.B.C. (fide VJ); Whitehorse was a close runner-up, with 1075 on 26 Dec (fide WN); and Nunavut's highest total was turned in by Cambridge Bay, 300 km n. of the Arctic Circle, with 54 on 14 Dec (BZ). Nunavut participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count (17-20 Feb) from Artic Bay, Iqaluit, and Kugluktuk reported Common Raven as the lone species seen (fide GBBC website). Mountain Chickadee is highly local-



The Yukon's first Northern Mockingbird, discovered in Whitehorse in November 2005, proved elusive until 19 December, when it finally posed for this photograph. Apparently, it survived until mid-January. Photograph by Cameron D. Eckert.

early Dec severely reduced the snow cover; as snow conditions slowly improved, a few were seen in the Whitehorse area, and 3 were recorded on the Haines Junction C.B.C. 27 Dec (fide DH). In Northwest Territories, single Northern Hawk Owls were reported at Norman Wells the last week of Dec (RP), at Hay River for much of the winter (BL), and at Ft. Simpson 25 & 27 Feb (PK, RK; JT). A Snowy Owl, first seen in Nov, lingered long enough to provide a C.B.C. record at Norman Wells, NWT 27 Dec (RP).

ized in the Region, occurring only in s. Yukon; C.B.C. totals this year included 5 in Carcross 17 Dec (fide DK), one at Marsh Lake 18 Dec (fide HG), 3 in Whitehorse 26 Dec (fide WN), and one in Haines Junction on 27 Dec (fide DH). A Red-breasted Nuthatch, a winter rarity in Northwest Territories, was at Ft. Smith through the season (SS, WS).

It has been just over 10 years since the last winter report of Golden-crowned Kinglet; this year, a count of 5 was made on the Carcross C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide DK), and 5 were



This Song Sparrow, first seen in Whitehorse in autumn 2005 (here 16 December), provided the Yukon's first winter record and was a hardy bird, surviving a cold spell with temperatures down to -40 degrees C. Photograph by Cameron D. Eckert.

noted on the lower slopes of Montana Mt. at Carcross 28 Feb (ph. CE). The Yukon's winter prize, a Northern Mockingbird, first spotted 13 Nov, finally stayed in one place long enough for a photograph 19 Dec (ph. CE, PH, HG); it was seen infrequently through 14 Jan (CE; GP, AS, CS) but not thereafter. The Region's only reported American Robin lingered long enough to be recorded on the Ft. Smith, NWT C.B.C. 19 Dec (JM). Bohemian Waxwings wintered in Ft. Simpson, NWT, where 16 were on the C.B.C. 17 Dec (JC, JO). Large flocks of many hundreds of Bohemian Waxwings seen in Whitehorse, s. Yukon from late fall through early winter had all but disappeared by the 26 Dec C.B.C.; a late winter



Extremely rare in winter, a few Golden-crowned Kinglets were noted around Carcross in southern Yukon in winter 2005–2006 (here 28 February 2006). Photograph by Cameron D. Eckert.

flock of 30 in Dawson 28 Feb (ML) may have been a vanguard of spring.

Rare sparrows in Whitehorse, s. Yukon were a Song Sparrow first reported in late fall that apparently survived through the winter

(ph. CE; HG) and a White-throated Sparrow 26 Dec–18 Jan (MW; ph. HG; AR; HS). White-crowned Sparrow reports, all from s. Yukon, included an imm. in Whitehorse 8 Dec+ (BaS, BoS, HG), an ad. near Shallow Bay 1 Dec+ (CM, KO), and an ad. in Whitehorse 26 Dec (CO, HG). Dark-eyed Juncos were reported in small numbers in the Whitehorse area and Teslin, s. Yukon; elsewhere in the Region, 4 were recorded on the Norman Wells C.B.C. 27 Dec (*vide* RP); 3 were at Nahanni Butte, NWT through the winter (GB, MV); one was recorded on the Mayo, cen. Yukon C.B.C. 29 Dec (*vide* MOD); and most impressive was one that survived all winter in Dawson, cen. Yukon, where temperatures got down to -46° C (ML). Small numbers of Snow Buntings were reported across s. Yukon through the season.

A Pine Grosbeak was picked from the top of a spruce tree and eaten by a Common Raven in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 16 Feb (MW). The bumper crop of White Spruce cones likely contributed to higher-than-average numbers of Pine Grosbeaks around Hay River, NWT (BL) and Ft. Simpson, NWT (DT, m.ob.). Red Crossbills were seen in higher-than-normal numbers through the season in Whitehorse e. to Teslin, s. Yukon. The abundant White Spruce cone crop in s. Yukon and sw. Northwest Territories attracted high numbers of White-winged Crossbills. Redpoll numbers were very low throughout much of the Yukon, and the typical late-winter buildup never materialized. Hoary Redpolls were common in Ft. Simpson, NWT in early winter, with 216 counted on the 17 Dec C.B.C.

(*vide* DT); however, both Hoary and Common Redpolls became much less common as winter progressed. A flock of a dozen Hoary Redpolls on 11 Dec was the only non-raven report from Iqaluit, Nunavut during this period (MM). It is not clear if 2 Pine Siskins seen 26 Feb in Teslin, s. Yukon (BeS) were wintering birds or early spring migrants. House Sparrows are found in just a few settlements in the Region, as evidenced by C.B.C. totals of 48 in Ft. Simpson, NWT 17 Dec (*vide* DT), 201 in Yellowknife, NWT 1 Jan (*vide* VJ), and 13 in Arviat, Nunavut 1 Jan (MS).

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A dramatic early December melt likely made life difficult for the numerous Northern Hawk Owls that turned up in southern Yukon in late fall 2005. A few, such as this one photographed 7 January 2006 at Whitehorse, toughed it out and remained in the area for the winter.

Photograph by Cameron D. Eckert.

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Prairie Provinces



Rudolf F. Koes

The winter of 2005–2006 was the mildest on record for Canada, with both Alberta and Saskatchewan registering 6° C above normal. It was so balmy in January that ground-squirrel activity was noted in Alberta. A few brief cold snaps occurred in December, with a somewhat longer spell in the second half of February. Snow cover ranged from above-average in southeastern Manitoba to almost non-existent in much of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Several species established first winter records, particularly in Manitoba. Winter finches were at their lowest levels in decades, whereas several owl species were locally common.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A Cackling Goose at Winnipeg, MB 24 Nov–2 Jan provided the first provincial winter record (RN, JP, m.ob., ph.). Others were noted on C.B.C.s at Estevan, SK and Gardiner Dam, SK, and 5 were reported in Calgary 28 Jan (RW). A swan at Windygates, MB 28 Feb may well have been a Trumpeter, given the early date (*vide* AS). Two Northern Shovelers overwin-

tered at Frank L., AB (m.ob.). An imm. male King Eider at L. Minnewanka, Banff N.P. 17–26 Dec was found predated on the latter date (PP, RS, TF, JR, m.ob., ph.). It represented only the 2nd record for Alberta, the other being an 1894 specimen! A lone White-winged Scoter at Great Falls, MB 1–3 Dec (PT, m.ob.) and 2 at Cold L., AB 10 Dec (TH, m.ob.) were late. A Ruddy Duck overwintered at Frank L. (m.ob.). Wintering waterbirds at Wabamun L., AB included 15 Tundra Swans, a Trumpeter Swan, 10 Greater Scaup, a White-winged Scoter, 300 Common Mergansers, 2 Horned Grebes, a Red-necked Grebe, 7 Western Grebes, 2 Double-crested Cormorants, and 240 American Coots (*vide* MH).

A total of 14 Wild Turkeys on C.B.C.s at Broadview, Kyle and Leader, SK were found away from established populations and presumably resulted from recent releases. A tardy Pacific Loon was retrieved for rehabilitation just across the Saskatchewan border near Flin Flon, MB 4 Dec (*vide* KD). Great Blue Herons lingered at Chain Lakes P.P., AB until at least 2 Feb (J&MM) and at Elie, MB until 29 Dec (DS). One near Elkhorn, MB 27 Feb may well have been an early migrant (KE). An injured Turkey Vulture at New Bergthal, MB 9 Dec provided the first confirmed winter record for the province (*vide* AS). A Northern Harrier at Douglas, MB 27 Feb was probably an early migrant (ES). Continuing a trend of the past few years, Sharp-shinned Hawks wintered in numbers, with sightings at Brandon, Dauphin, Holland, Kleefeld and Winnipeg, all in Manitoba, and at Saskatoon, SK. Rough-legged Hawks lingered in numbers until early January, with a few remaining through the season. Six Gyrfalcons were reported in Manitoba,

while 4 visited Saskatchewan. Manitoba had two Prairie Falcons and Saskatchewan 6. Both species were well represented in s. Alberta.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Two Wilson's Snipe wintered at Mt. Lorette, AB (PS). Few gulls lingered, but Cold L. harbored 10 Ring-billed, 22 Herring, one Thayer's, and one Glaucous 10 Dec (TH, m.ob.). Burgeoning numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves were found in Saskatchewan, with up to 20 at Estevan (KH), 3 at Kyle 2 Jan (*vide* DZ), 30 at Moose Jaw 29 Dec (DC), 25 at Swift Current 31 Dec (*vide* RJ), and 4 at Weyburn 18 Dec (D&VT). Two were at Winkler, MB, a new location, 27 Feb+ (LBr). Up to 8 Mourning Doves frequented one Estevan location (KH).

The mild weather triggered one Winnipeg Great Horned Owl pair to lay eggs by mid-Jan, record-early by a month and a half, based on photographs of month-old young in mid-Mar (ph. DSw). Snowy Owls were present in good numbers across the s. part of all three provinces, with up to 8 in a day noted e. of Calgary (TK), while 10 were near Kronau, SK 20 Dec (SW) and 11 were spotted between Regina and Swift Current 25 Dec (GK). Great Gray Owls and Northern Hawk Owls were prominent in se. Manitoba, particularly the latter species, with a maximum count of 34 on 28 Feb (PT, RK). Elsewhere, these species were scarcer than in the past few years, although 7 hawk owls were found on the Squaw Rapids, SK C.B.C. 5 Jan (GW, MS). An amazing concentration of Short-eared Owls was present at Beaverhill L., AB. Up to 100 birds could be seen in one area; hundreds



This Cackling Goose, here with two Canada Geese, lingered on the Assiniboine River at Winnipeg, Manitoba until 2 January 2006 (here on the Winnipeg Christmas Bird Count, 18 December 2005). It provided the province with its first winter record of the species. Photograph by Christian Artuso.

SA A remarkable trio of wren species highlighted a list of unusual lingering passerines in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A **Carolina Wren** first seen at Delta, MB in summer 2005 survived until 1 Feb (HD, m.ob., ph. CA), while another at Pinawa, MB was present mid-Nov–22 Jan (AD, LC et al., NB, ph.), furnishing the 2nd and 3rd winter records for the province and Region. Also at Delta, a **Winter Wren** 28 Feb (HD) was likely the same bird seen there 20–21 Nov 2005 (BC, LD), finally living up to its name with a first Manitoba winter record. Another provincial winter first was a **Marsh Wren** at Stalwart Marsh, SK 23 Jan (*vide* BL), as was an **Orange-crowned Warbler** at a Lorette, MB feeder Nov–16 Feb (MW, m.ob.). Almost as unusual was Saskatchewan's 2nd winter **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, observed at Coldwell Park 17 Dec (WR, JJ).

were likely present (LP, m.ob.). Gradual drying of the lake had apparently created ideal habitat for voles. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Winnipeg 28 Dec–21 Mar provided Manitoba's first winter record (K&MK, m.ob., ph.).

PASSERINES

Horned Lark migration was noted as early as late Jan in Alberta (TK). Boreal Chickadees were outside their usual haunts at Pike L., SK 11 Dec (DN) and 6 Jan (FR), plus two Regina locations (BE et al.). A Pygmy Nuthatch visiting a feeder at Treherne, MB during Jan was well described but unfortunately not confirmed (*vide* LV).

An American Dipper at Eastend, SK 4–28 Dec was a good find (HJ, BG, m.ob.). Golden-crowned Kinglets remained in larger numbers than usual in s. Manitoba, with multiples noted at Brandon (CC), Grosse Isle (KG), Morden (LB), Pinawa (RZ), Seven Sisters Falls (m.ob.), Winnipeg (m.ob.), and elsewhere.

Varied Thrushes were prominent in Manitoba, with 7 birds reported, whereas only 2 were noted in Saskatchewan. For the 2nd year

widespread and in high numbers, e.g., 35,298 on the Edmonton, AB C.B.C. and 20,012 on the Calgary C.B.C., both on 18 Dec, and a flock of 2000+ at Saskatoon 18 Feb (m.ob.). A late Cape May Warbler was at Calgary 1 Dec (BJ); several others were reported without details in Alberta until mid-month.

An Eastern Towhee at Regina 26 Dec–3 Jan was out of range and a winter rarity (SW, BL, JC, m.ob.). The Fort Walsh, SK C.B.C. tallied 92 American Tree Sparrows, including a flock of 57 on 17 Dec (GW, JCI, BE). A Swamp Sparrow lingered at St. Norbert, MB until early Feb (AA, m.ob.), while a Song Sparrow was at Eden, MB 18 Dec (RD). Calgary had single White-crowned Sparrows 12 Dec–26 Feb (JG) and 24 Dec (A&DW). Snow Bunting numbers were poor in s. Alberta (TK).

A Northern Cardinal present since fall at Regina disappeared in mid-Feb; 4 were noted in s. Manitoba (m.ob.). Western Meadowlarks rarely survive through winter in Manitoba, but singles at Grosse Isle from fall until 24 Feb+ (J&JM, KG) and near Virden 18 Feb (CH) may well have done so. Icterids were

(TK).

Feeders in small towns across s. Manitoba attracted dozens of American Goldfinches, but otherwise winter finches were exceedingly scarce through the Region. Crossbills went almost unreported, and Common Redpolls were at their lowest in decades. Not one Hoary Redpoll was reported in the south.

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Another winter first for Manitoba, this Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found 28 December 2005 and survived until at least 21 March (here 6 February) 2006 at a suet feeder in downtown Winnipeg. The previous latest fall date was 29 October. Photograph by Christian Artuso.



This Pacific Loon was rescued just across the Saskatchewan border near Flin Flon, Manitoba on 4 December 2005 and sent for rehabilitation to Winnipeg, Manitoba. It gave the province its first winter record of the species. Photograph by Harvey Schmidt.

in a row, a Northern Mockingbird wintered in Alberta. Found 10 Dec at Nanton, it remained into Mar (KO, RR, m.ob., ph.). A Brown Thrasher at Fort Qu'Appelle 17 Dec furnished the 4th C.B.C. record of the species for Saskatchewan. Bohemian Waxwings were

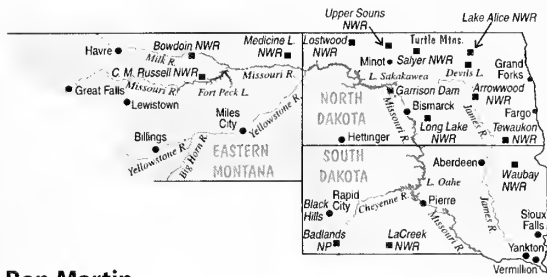
generally scarce, but a feedlot near Strathmore, AB held a Red-winged Blackbird, 2 Rusty Blackbirds, 7 Brewer's Blackbirds, and a Brown-headed Cowbird 31 Dec (BW). Most of these birds, including the cowbird, a winter rarity, were still present at season's end

bach, J. & J. Minker, J. & M. Macdonald, D. Neves, R. Nickel, K. Ottenbreit, J. Peters, P. Poole, L. Priestly, W. Renaud, J. Rogers, R. Rowell, F. Roy, E. Schmitz, A. Schriit, P. Sherrington, R. Sommerhalder, D. Stepler, M. Stoffel, D. Swayze (DSw), P. Taylor, D. & V. Thomas, L. Veclma, G. Wapple, S. Weir, A. & D. Wiczkowski, B. Wilson, M. Wojnowski, R. Worona, R. Zach, D. Zazelenchuk. ☺

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Northern Great Plains



Ron Martin

The Region experienced one of the mildest winters on record. December temperatures were well above average, followed by record-breaking temperatures in January. The average January temperature in Minot, North Dakota was 28.3° F, five degrees above the previous high mark. In Grand Forks, North Dakota, the January temperature was 16° F above average. For the first time in recorded history, the temperature did not go below zero in January in Bismarck and Minot, North Dakota. In Malta, Montana, the temperature did not go below zero from 22 December through 15 February. Colder temperatures returned by mid-February, with most areas recording below-average temperatures for the month.

As is not uncommon in the Northern Great Plains, precipitation amounts varied widely. Eastern North Dakota had average precipitation, but the western Dakotas were devoid of snow for most of the winter. In eastern Montana, snow amounts were above average, but the mild temperatures melted most snowfalls within a few days. As might be expected, feeder activity was very low. Northern finches were almost non-existent. Good numbers of late and semi-hardy species were noted, and raptors made a good showing in the Dakotas.

GEESE THROUGH GREBES

Small flocks of early Snow Geese were moving into e. South Dakota by late Jan, and a Ross's Goose was record early in *Oliver*, ND 28 Feb (CDE). A flock of 160 Cackling Geese wintered in *Union*, SD (BH), and migrant Cackling Geese reached *Oliver*, ND by 28 Feb (HCT, CDE). Unusual in winter, 5 Trumpeter Swans were at *Freezeout L.*, MT 4 Feb (MS). Ducks were moving into se. South Dakota by late Feb. A Surf Scoter wintered at *Great Falls*,

SA The number of wintering raptors in much of North Dakota is usually low, except for the sw. corner of the state, where moderate numbers can be encountered. This winter, an unprecedented concentration occurred in the sw. counties of *Slope*, *Bowman*, *Adams*, and *Hettinger*. Notable peak numbers included 111 Rough-legged Hawks and 49 Golden Eagles 30 Jan (JPL). Up to 3 Ferruginous Hawks were noted, the first wintering records for North Dakota (DWR, DOL). The Prairie Falcon peak was 12 on 28 Jan (DWR). Gyrfalcon numbers were also unprecedented. Lefor estimated 8-9 in the four-county area. Gyrfalcon numbers in the *Pierre*, SD area were also above average, with *Backlund* estimating a minimum of 21 (7 juv. and 14 ad./subad.) within a 60-km radius of the capitol city.

MT (AE), and one that lingered through 30 Dec in *Hughes*, SD (SJD) provided the latest record for the state. White-winged Scoters lingered through 29 Jan at *Great Falls*, MT (AN) and through 14 Jan in *Sully*, SD (RDO). Only the 2nd winter record for South Dakota, a Black Scoter remained in *Sully* until 11 Jan (p.a., RDO). Well above average were reports of 5 scattered Long-tailed Ducks in Montana in Jan and Feb. A Common Loon was late in *Sully*, SD 23 Dec (RDO). Single Pied-billed, Horned, and Western Grebes wintered in *Great Falls*, MT (AN). In South

Crane was in *Sully* 1 Jan (p.a., RDO). Unusual in Montana, 2 Sandhill Cranes were in *Stillwater* 23-24 Jan (BH), and the species was reported in mid-Feb in *Yellowstone* (CW).

A Franklin's Gull was late 30 Dec at *Ft. Randall*, SD, as were 12 Bonaparte's Gulls at the same location (SJD). A potential 4th record for South Dakota, an Iceland Gull was in *Pierre* 11-25 Feb (p.a., RDO); another was photographed at *Great Falls*, MT 8 Dec (p.a., AN). Good numbers of Snowy Owls were present in South Dakota, sw. North Dakota, and in Montana. Twelve were noted in the *Glasgow/Ft. Peck* area of Montana 7 Jan (AS), and 15-20 were reported for South Dakota. A



Furnishing a third record for Montana, this Northern Cardinal was present since July near *Nashua*, Valley County (here 9 December 2005). Photograph by *Chuck Carlson*.

Dakota, a Western Grebe 14 Jan in *Sully* provided a rare mid-winter record (RDO).

RAPTORS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Bald Eagles were again widespread in North Dakota, and the annual winter survey along the *Missouri R.* produced a record 75 birds (NDGFD). An imm. Red-Shouldered Hawk on the C.B.C. at *Upper Souris N.W.R.* 23 Dec. furnished the first winter record of the species for North Dakota (p.a., RR, DR, TP).

An American Coot wintered at *Nelson L.*, *Oliver*, ND, a first wintering record for the state (HCT, CDE). Also furnishing the first winter record for South Dakota, a Whooping

Northern Hawk Owl was in *Pembina*, ND 6-14 Jan (p.a., JM, REM, CDE). Casual in winter in North Dakota, a Red-headed Woodpecker was on the C.B.C. at *Icelandic S.P.* 20 Dec. Late Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included one in *Grand Forks*, ND 12 Dec (EEF) and one in *Yankton*, SD 29 Jan (RD).

CHICKADEES THROUGH WARBLERS

Two Mountain Chickadees and a possible Mountain Chickadee × Black-capped Chickadee hybrid spent the season at *Ft. Peck*, MT (CC). A Carolina Wren remained through 2 Dec in *Brown*, SD (ET), and an individual photographed at *Devils Lake* provided the 4th record for North Dakota (p.a., EA). The bird was seen once in Dec and once in early Feb and then 22-27 Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglets wintered in good numbers in North Dakota, possibly a result of the unusually mild winter. Casual in winter in North Dakota, 4 Eastern Bluebirds were in *Bismarck* 18 Dec (SD, JH, LS). Single Mountain Bluebirds were unusual in *Stillwater*, MT 12 Jan (BJ)

and in Valley 12 Feb (BL). Also casual in winter in North Dakota, a Hermit Thrush remained through 6 Jan in *Grand Forks* (DOL).

Two Dec Northern Mockingbird reports in North Dakota brought the total for 2005 to 12 individuals. Another was reported 7 Jan at Minot (DW). Casual in winter, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was in *Kingsbury*, SD 14 Jan (JSP).

TOWHEES THROUGH REDPOLLS

The 4th report for North Dakota, and the first documented, a Green-tailed Towhee wintered near Grafton, Walsh, ND (p.a., LM). First reported to the birding community in



Present since September, this Green-tailed Towhee wintered near Grafton, Walsh County, North Dakota (here 21 December 2005). The fourth report for the state, this represented the first documented record. Photograph by Tim Driscoll.



This possible Kumlien's Iceland Gull was photographed in Great Falls, Montana 8 December 2005. The status of Iceland Gull in Montana is currently under review. Photograph by Alan Nelson.

tered near Grafton, Walsh, ND (p.a., LM). First reported to the birding community in

mid-Dec, the bird first appeared at that location with another individual in late Sep. Usually very rare in the winter season, 5 White-crowned Sparrows were reported in North Dakota, with at least 2 individuals wintering. Northern Cardinals made a strong showing in North Dakota, with reports of 13 individuals. Present since Jul, a Northern Cardinal wintered near Nashua, Valley, MT (p.a., †LS, †CC; ph.), apparently the 3rd record for the state.

The only Pine Grosbeak report was of a single bird at Denbigh Experimental Forest, ND 3 Dec (REM). Only 2 Red Crossbill reports were tallied in the Dakotas away from regular haunts in w. pine areas, while 2 White-winged Crossbills in *Jamestown*, ND 16 Dec were the only ones noted (LDI). Only 5 Common Redpolls were reported from three locations in North Dakota, and South Dakota had two Dec reports of the species.

Contributors (state editors in boldface): MONTANA: Charles Carlson, Arla Eckert, Billie Hicks, Barb Jaquith, Bill Lauckner, Alan Nelson, Alan Scheer, Mike Schwitters, Linda Sibley, Carl Wolf. NORTH DAKOTA: Eldon Anderson, Shelly Doyle, Corey D. Ellington, Eve E. Freeberg, Jean Hushhagen, Larry D. Igl, David O. Lambeth, Jack P. Lefor, Lydia Maendel, Ron E. Martin, Janne Myrdal, North



Providing a first winter-season record for North Dakota, this Red-shouldered Hawk was found on the Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota Christmas Bird Count 23 (here 26) December 2005. Photograph by Ron Martin.

Dakota Game and Fish Dept., Tom Pabian, Dean W. Riemer, Darrel Rytter, Russ Rytter, Linda Stewart, H. Clark Talkington, David Walsh. SOUTH DAKOTA: Doug Backlund, Roger Dietrich, Steve J. Dinsmore, Bill Huser, Ricky D. Olson, Jeffrey S. Palmer, Erika Tallman. ☺

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Southern Great Plains



Joseph A. Grzybowski | W. Ross Silcock

Each year, it seems as if the winter window narrows in the Region, even disappears in the southern portions of the Region. Nebraska's winter recalls Oklahoma's of 25 years ago, and Oklahoma's is now more like that of northern Texas. Bird distribution appears to be adjusting to the gradually warmer winters. Waterfowl stay farther north. Once crowding Oklahoma reservoirs by the thousands, few Common Mergansers now make it as far south as Oklahoma. While Trumpeter Swans may be on the rise in the Region, wintering Western Grebes and California Gulls are on the wane in Nebraska.

Perhaps because of drought conditions this season, gulls and shorebirds provided fewer highlights than usual—indeed, the season was most memorable for its lack of the unusual. Even irruptive species were scant, with exception of Pygmy Nuthatch and possibly Purple Finch.

Abbreviations: Hackberry (Hackberry Flats W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Harlan (Harlan Res., Harlan, NE); McCurtain (L. McCurtain, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A. McCurtain, OK); Sutherland (Sutherland Res., Lincoln, NE); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

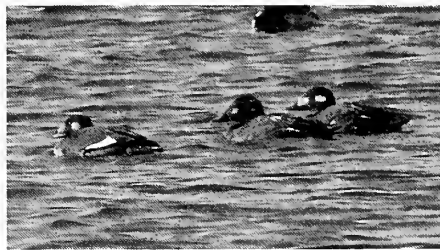
WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

A Pink-footed Goose in Clay, NE 30 Jan raised the usual question of provenance (ph. PD). Unusual numbers of Greater White-fronted Goose lingered through at least 9 Jan in Clay, NE (60 birds; PD) and in Dawson, NE to 3 Jan (112 birds; SJD, JC); by 28 Feb, 10,000 had arrived in Clay, NE (RE). Mid-winter Snow Goose numbers were also high

in Nebraska, with 5000 in Gosper and Dawson 3 Jan (SJD, JC), 5000 in Clay 9 Jan (PD), an amazing 50,000 on the ground there 29 Jan (JGJ, PD) and 200,000 by 28 Feb (RE). The 62 Ross's Geese arriving with the Snows in Clay, NE were a bit early 31 Jan (PD).

This was a good season for swans. Numbers of Trumpeter Swan seem to be on the increase; about 40 were reported from Nebraska (*fide* WRS), 24 from Kansas (*fide* LM), and 4+ from Oklahoma—2 in Alfalfa, OK 20 Dec (CO) and 2–3 from Tulsa (RJ) and from Osage, OK 9 Jan–3 Feb (SM, JH, FS; m.ob.). Now the less-likely swan in the Region, imm. Tundras were located at Sutherland 3 Jan (SJD, JC; ph.), Ellis, KS 4 Dec (TM), and Comanche, OK 10 Dec (EBk), with 4 birds in Coffey, KS 13 Dec (DW), 3 in Texas, OK 11 Feb (GK), and 5 at Quivira 25 Feb (B&NB).

Some good duck counts included 19,500 Mallards at McCurtain 2 Jan (*fide* SJD) and 20,000 at Sutherland 25 Feb (SJD). Hanging n. were 2 Wood Ducks in Morrill, NE 9 Jan (KK), one in Jefferson, NE 11 Jan (RE), and one in Washington, NE 9 Feb (BB). A male American Black Duck in Clay, NE 9 Jan (PD) was the only one reported. A Blue-winged Teal in Lancaster, NE 24 Feb (RE) was record early by four days. Unusual were the 120 Ring-necked Ducks lingering as far n. as



These three White-winged Scoters (here 6 December 2006) in Tulsa, Oklahoma were among seven recorded in the area in early and mid-December. Photograph by Steve Metz.

Scotts Bluff, NE 30 Dec (P&DD) and the 2000 estimated 3 Jan at Lynne Lane Res., Tulsa (JWA, JCo). Greater Scaup were found scattered across the Region, with the better counts of 50–125 in Tulsa 3 Dec–21 Jan (JWA), 15 at McCurtain 2 Jan (*fide* SJD), and 15 in Shawnee, KS 21 Feb (DG).

Scoters, always Regional treats, included single Blacks 8 Feb in Osage, KS (DG) and 25 Nov–21 Jan in Tulsa (JWA, m.ob.), plus 4–7 White-wingeds 6–18 Dec in Tulsa (SM, JWA; m.ob.). Single Long-tailed Ducks were found at three locations in Nebraska—Harlan (G&WH; KS, JM), Scotts Bluff 30 Jan–6 Feb (AK, KD), and Keith 26 Feb (SJD)—and from four in Kansas: Coffey (ML, AM), Sedgwick (DV), Russell (MR), and Osage (DG). A Barrow's Goldeneye in Sedgwick, KS 8 Dec was a zootie (BG), ditto the young male Harlequin

Duck in Cedar, NE 27 Feb (SV; *fide* RD), the 4th for Nebraska. Common Mergansers, which now stay n., numbered up to 15,000 at McCurtain 1–3 Jan (SJD)—almost none were present in former Oklahoma haunts. However, Red-breasted Mergansers seemed more common, with rafts on lakes in Tulsa and Oklahoma (m.ob.). Among hybrid ducks were a male Mallard × Gadwall in Wagoner, OK 23 Dec (JWA) and male Hooded Merganser × goldeneye in Tulsa 26 Dec–3 Jan (JWA).

Tenkiller came through again, with four species of loons including a high count of 192 Commons 23 Dec, up to 8 Red-throateds through the period, up to 4 Pacifics, and a Yellow-billed Loon discovered 26 Feb, all documented by Jim Arterburn. Unusual loons at other locations were Pacifics in McCurtain, OK 29 Dec (BH, m.ob.) through 26 Feb (DA) and in Wagoner, OK 21 Jan (JWA). Over 400 Horned Grebes also adorned Tenkiller 21 Jan (JWA). Western Grebes, on the other hand, were almost non-existent: only one could be found on McCurtain 1 Jan (SJD). American White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants wintered n. to Sutherland (SJD, JC, WF). An American Bittern was flushed in Cleveland, OK 11 Feb (DGu). Three Great Egrets lingered in Sedgwick, KS through 29 Dec (PJ), with mid-Jan observations for Tulsa (PR) and Oklahoma (JAG). A Black-crowned Night-Heron was located in Oklahoma City 21 Feb (BH, TU). Two juv. White Ibis lingered through 7 Dec at Red Slough (DA). Turkey Vultures appeared in Jan n. to Cherokee (RM), Butler (DV), and Leavenworth, KS (JS), with one arriving in Nemaha, NE 26 Feb (RE).

Quite a surprise was a White-tailed Kite in Greer, OK 22 Jan (MP). Outside Nebraska, Northern Goshawks were reported from Pawnee, KS 11 Jan (SS), Sedgwick, KS 9 Feb (DV), and Ellis, KS 11 Feb (PJ, ML, MG). Golden Eagles were noted e. to McCurtain, OK 12 Dec and 5 Feb (BH), Quivira 2 Jan (DKa), and Dakota, NE 10–11 Dec (BFH, PR). No small surprises were single Crested Caracaras at different locations in McCurtain, OK 18 Jan and 14 Feb (BH). Merlin has become so regular in the Region that we receive few specific reports; many have become town birds, with abundant access to juncos and House Sparrows. Peregrine Falcons maintained residence in at least two cities: Wichita, KS (PJ) and Tulsa, OK (JWA). Prairie Falcons wandered eastward to Seward, NE 17 Dec (*fide* JG), Dodge, NE 8 Dec (D&JP), and Tulsa 21 Jan (JWA).

A King Rail persisted into Feb in drying conditions at Red Slough (DA). Virginia Rails continued to be found wintering across the

Region n. to the Niobrara R., NE, where 2 were located 10 Jan (JED). Four Yellow Rails were located at Red Slough 20 Dec but not later (DA, BH); might they have wintered locally? Sandhill Cranes heading northward were seen as early as 4 Feb in Russell, KS (MR), with "thousands" along the Platte R., NE by 9 Feb (CG). A few small flocks were early, including 24 in Hall, NE 7 Jan (PD) and 12 over Lincoln, NE 8 Jan (TJW).

Early arrivals were a Pectoral Sandpiper at Red Slough 21 Feb (DA) and 65 Long-billed Dowitchers at Hackberry 27 Feb (L&MT). Franklin's Gulls that should be s. of the border are rare but apt to appear in several places in the Region during winter; this season, singles were at Tulsa 11 Dec (JWA), Sutherland 3 Jan (SJD, JC), and Jefferson, KS 23 Jan (TM). As in recent years, few California Gull reports came in, just 3-4 birds seen 1-2 Jan at McConaughy (fide SJD), where 415 Herring Gulls were counted 21 Jan and 653 on 26 Feb (SJD). Among them were 5 Thayer's Gulls 2 Jan (fide SJD); scattered reports of 9 Thayer's came from Kansas (fide LM). Three Lesser Black-backed Gulls frequented McConaughy 31 Dec-3 Jan (SJD), single first-winter birds were in Sedgwick, KS 23 Dec (PJ, ML, MG) and Lancaster, NE 26 Feb (LE), and an ad. was documented in Oklahoma 28 Dec (PV). Glaucous Gull reports included 3 at McConaughy 31 Dec-18 Feb (fide SJD, PR), one at Sutherland 25 Feb (SJD), and one at Keystone Dam, Tulsa 15 Jan-Feb (PR, m.ob.), plus 5 in Kansas (fide LM). Great Black-backed Gull is becoming regular at McConaughy, where 2 were found: a second-basic bird 31 Dec-2 Jan (SJD) and an ad. 26 Feb (ph. SJD); one was also seen in Douglas, KS 21 Dec (DF). Forster's Tern can now be said to winter in e. Oklahoma; up to 317 were seen in Wagoner, the high count 12 Feb (JWA). And our seasonal Black-legged Kittiwake came in Cedar/Knox, NE 6 Dec (MB), a first-winter bird.

DOVES THROUGH PASSERINES

A Band-tailed Pigeon is quite unexpected in Kansas, making the 3 observed at a grain elevator in Sheridan, KS 3 Dec (MC) all the more bizarre; this species does, however, sometimes flock with Rock Pigeons in winter. White-winged Doves are being found in numbers comparable to those of Eurasian Collared-Doves in the Region; Nebraska's 2nd for winter was in Scotts Bluff 17 Dec (LR, RH), while 98 were counted in a yard in Finney, KS 14 Jan (T&SS). Nebraska's 5th Inca Dove was seen in Sarpy Nov-26 Feb (fide CNK), while 2 were in Grant, KS 9 Dec (KH); Incas are now becoming established in an increasing number of

towns across Oklahoma (fide JAG).

Greater Roadrunners are also "running" northward; 2 were in Sedgwick, KS 29 Dec (fide PJ). Only 4 Snowy Owls were reported, 3 in Nebraska 21 Dec-1 Jan (DS, SJD, fide KS); the bird noted in Osage, OK 18-27 Dec (SM, WW, m.ob.) succumbed to gunshot injury. Westerly was a Barred Owl in Morton, KS 31 Dec (KG, MT); there are fewer than 10 records for the w. half of Kansas. Much tougher to observe in the Region are Northern Saw-whet Owls; singles were reported in Hall, NE 17 Dec (KS) and Riley, KS 4 Jan (RK). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were prominent in Nebraska, with one of the 9 reported (fide WRS) as far w. as Frontier 22 Feb (WF). Likely the same Black Phoebe that wintered last winter was noted at Broken Bow Res., McCurtain, OK through much of the season (DA, m.ob.). The southernmost Northern Shrike was in Cimarron, OK 3 Dec (SM), where rare but regular; 6 were reported from Kansas (fide LM). Purple Martins arrived 17 Feb in McCurtain, OK (TS, fide DA), with Tree Swallows following 28 Feb (DA).

A reduction in counts of Black-capped Chickadee, first noted in 2002-2003, continued in Nebraska, most notably from Lancaster w. as far as Scotts Bluff (m.ob.). This drop coincided with the arrival of West Nile virus, potentially the cause of the decline. In contrast, high chickadee numbers have continued in the Missouri R. Valley (BG, RSc), for reasons that are unclear (TEL, TL, TJW). Perhaps representing a mini-irruption were the elevated numbers of Pygmy Nuthatches on two nw. Nebraska Christmas Bird Counts: 104 at Harrison 1 Jan (fide EB) and 27 at Crawford 31 Dec (fide B&DW). Rock Wrens, rare in Kansas, were noted in Russell (DK) and Morton (SP), both 31 Dec. Far to the n. was a Carolina Wren in e. Cherry, NE 10 Jan (JED); this species continues to expand its range n. and w. in the Region. Again this winter, 2 Winter Wrens were seen in Cherry, NE along the Niobrara R. 10 Jan (JED), well n. of expected wintering areas. In the Nebraska Panhandle, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Scotts Bluff, NE 1 Jan-13 Feb (P&DD) was likewise unexpected.

Two Varied Thrushes offered a spice to Nebraska birding: one was in Scotts Bluff for a few days through 17 Dec (KD), and one was at McConaughy 26 Feb (SJD). Tardy or foolhardy was a westerly Gray Catbird in Lincoln, NE 6 Dec (fide TJW). How can we fail to mention the resident Curve-billed Thrasher, continuing its lonely stay in Sioux, NE (fide AK), now present since Oct 2002? Also lingering were an Orange-crowned Warbler in Johnson, KS 25 Dec-Jan (PW), an Audubon's Warbler

in Morton, KS 31 Dec (SP), and a westerly Spotted Towhee in Dawes, NE 31 Dec (fide B&DW). Rare in winter in ne. Kansas, a Field Sparrow appeared in Leavenworth 21-25 Feb (JS). Good numbers of Savannah Sparrows were found in midwinter in Kansas, where normally absent, notably 100+ in Montgomery 15 Jan (SS) and several in Pawnee 26 Jan (SS). Continuing a pattern of northward wintering were 5 Grasshopper Sparrows in Comanche, OK 20 Dec (VF, EBk) and 2 in McCurtain, OK 7 Jan (JAG, JWA, JCo). Up to 3 Henslow's Sparrows, ever enigmatic in winter, were detected at Red Slough 20 Dec-21 Feb (DA et al.). Single Lincoln's Sparrows n. of normal were in Omaha 28 Feb (PS) and McConaughy 2 Jan (fide SJD), while 3 White-throated Sparrows at McConaughy 2 Jan (fide SJD) were w. of typical areas. Somewhat out of winter range was a Smith's Longspur at Red Slough 18 Jan (DA). The only Snow Buntings reported were in Nebraska, where good numbers were noted (fide WRS).

Single lingering Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in Scotts Bluff, NE 17 Dec (fide AK), in Ellis, KS 1 Jan (TM), and in Tillman, OK 24 Dec (L&MT). The only Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches reported were the 30 at a regular wintering location in Sioux, NE 16 Dec (HKH). Adding to the small number of sightings eastward in winter in the North Platte Valley of Nebraska was a single Cassin's Finch at McConaughy 2 Jan (fide SJD). Few Red Crossbills were reported, all from Nebraska; the best count was 85 in Sioux 1 Jan (fide EB); easterly were 3 in Dodge 29 Dec (fide D&JP).

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It has become a tired refrain of this column, but for much of the state the key word was *dry*. Across much of the Trans-Pecos, no measurable rain fell for the entire period. It was not quite as bad for most of the remainder of the state, but below-average precipitation was the rule. This has resulted in reservoirs across the state falling to levels as much as 5 m below normal. This drought was combined with above-average temperatures for most of the winter. For north-central Texas and the Rolling Plains, the disastrous results were many large wildfires that burned thousands of hectares and even three small towns. Large wildfires also spread through the Panhandle near the end of the period, resulting in nearly 400,000 hectares burned. These hot fires removed virtually all avian habitats in their wake. In the long term, however, much of the area that burned in the Panhandle was in grassland habitats, and these fires have the potential to have a beneficial effect on the overall health of these prairies.

The dry conditions obviously have a depressing effect on avian populations. Frugivores were in very low numbers or absent from virtually the entire state. Particularly noted was the absence of American Robins, bluebirds, and Cedar Waxwings. Likewise, there was no real invasion of montane species

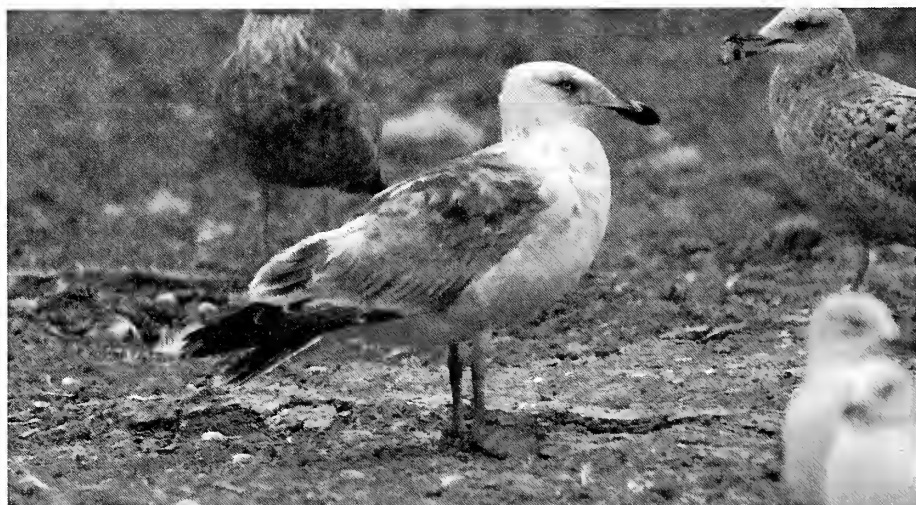
or finches. The only species to make an unexpectedly strong showing in the state was Rusty Blackbird. In strong contrast to the 2004–2005 winter season, the Lower Rio Grande Valley was fairly quiet. Still, there were a few rarities to add some spice to the season. There was definitely a horse race for what was the more unexpected bird this season in Texas: the Snow Bunting on South Padre Island or the Rufous-backed Robin near Bastrop!

WATERFOWL THROUGH GREBS

By Feb, when the last lingering Fulvous Whistling-Ducks have retreated and migrants have yet to arrive, the species is quite rare away from extreme South Texas; thus 6 at Bear Creek Park, *Harris* 1 Feb (Sat), 12 at Hornsby Bend in Austin, *Travis* 5 Feb (BL), and 2 present 13 Dec–10 Feb at Brazos Bend S.P., *Fort Bend* (BGo et al.) were all notable. A Brant in Plainview, *Hale* 14 Jan (ph., †JB) was just the 6th for the South Plains. Two ad. and 3 imm. Trumpeter Swans in *Hutchinson* 26–31 Dec (BP, ph., †LBA) and another reported near Childress, *Childress* 19 Jan (DS) were potential indicators of the success of recent reintroduction programs in the n. states. Three Tun-

dra Swans located s. of the normal wintering range in *McLennan* 31 Dec during the Waco C.B.C. were seen until 7 Feb (FB, JMu); an imm. in *Morris* 11–13 Feb provided only the 3rd report for ne. Texas and first since 1984 (DB, LBr). The Eurasian Wigeon reported from the fall at El Paso was seen sporadically until 15 Feb (†JSp). Blue-winged Teal were unusually conspicuous in nw. Texas, with singles at Muleshoe N.W.R., *Bailey* 18 Dec (AHe), at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson* 29 Dec (RaM), and elsewhere in *Hutchinson* 31 Dec (BP). A White-winged Scoter in *Harrison* 22–31 Dec (DB) was notable, as this species is casual in the Pineywoods. Long-tailed Duck sightings included singles at Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 14 Dec (JMc), Thompson Park, *Potter* 21 Feb (BMu), and Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* 9 Dec (BGi et al.), with 2 present at the latter location 13–26 Dec (BGi, TR, RR). An exceptionally large group of 200 Hooded Mergansers was at Hagerman N.W.R. 10 Dec (BGi et al.). Common Mergansers were found e. of their normal winter range at Hagerman N.W.R. 10–12 Dec (BGi et al.), L. Texoma, *Grayson* 31 Dec–2 Jan (GCo, TR et al.), and Lake O' the Pines, *Marion* 31 Dec (m.ob.).

Two Red-throated Loons at L. Meredith,



This second-winter Slaty-backed Gull made a one-day appearance at a private landfill near Houston, Texas on 22 February 2006. It provided the fourth record for the state and the first record of a bird not in adult (or near-adult) plumage. Photograph by Martin Reid.

Hutchinson 31 Dec–31 Jan (BP, BiM, LSa et al.) represented just the 3rd record for the Panhandle. Four Red-throated Loon reports in n.-cen. Texas included 3 at L. Texoma, *Grayson* 31 Dec (GCo, TR). Pacific Loons were reported from L. Tawakoni, *Van Zandt*, with single birds 16–18 Dec (RKi) and 12 Feb (MWh et al.) and 2 or 3 birds there 24 Feb (BGi, GCo); one at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson* 21 Jan (BBE); 2 at L. Brownwood, *Brown* 26 Feb (DLi, DDC); and one at L. Buchanan 22 Dec (JKe). Least Grebes wintered at Austin, with an impressive total of 17 on the Austin C.B.C. 17 Dec. Good numbers were also present on the U.T.C., as might be expected, but one at El Paso 31 Dec–21 Jan was just the 2nd for the county (BJ, JKi, ph. BZ, m.ob.). Up to 18 Western Grebes at L. Buchanan, *Llano/Burnet* 19 Feb (TFe) followed a trend in recent winters. More unexpected were 2 at Granger L., *Williamson* 19 Feb (TFe) and one at Canyon L., *Comal* 28 Jan and 25 Feb (DPu et al.).

PELICANS THROUGH RAPTORS

An imm. Brown Pelican at Balmorhea L., *Reeves* 7–11 Feb was a very nice mid-winter find for the Trans-Pecos (GW, ML). Continuing a recent trend, lingering Magnificent Frigatebirds included one seen from the Bolivar Ferry, *Galveston* 9 Dec (WB) and another at the Port Aransas jetties, *Nueces* 2 Jan (MCo). At least one Least Bittern was present throughout the period at the Port Aransas Birding Center, *Nueces* (LJ). Single Great Egrets were at two Lubbock, *Lubbock* locations 1 Dec–28 Feb (AHe, TSo, m.ob.), representing the 2nd and 3rd wintering records for nw. Texas. Two Snowy Egrets at Lubbock lingered through 8 Dec (AHe). Seven Cattle Egrets at L. Arrowhead, *Clay* 4 Dec (DMc, JuM) were unexpected. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on the Gibbons Creek C.B.C., *Grimes* 20 Dec (J&KA, ES, LDe) was a count first. The Greater Flamingo discovered during the fall, with bands indicating Yucatan origin, was present throughout the period in *Aransas* and easily seen from Whooping Crane excursion vessels (m.ob.). Amazingly, another Greater Flamingo—but this one an escapee from captivity and of the Old World subspecies *roseus* (sometimes considered a separate species)—was discovered on the Whitmire unit of *Aransas* N.W.R., *Calhoun* 10–25 Jan (ph. PK). There are several instances of this subspecies escaping in the state.

White-tailed Kite has become something of an enigmatic species in the Trans-Pecos, popping up here and there at all seasons. Singles at Cattail Falls, Big Bend N.P., *Brewster* 3 Feb

(PWe), 16 km s. of Pecos, *Reeves* 7 Feb (GW), sw. of Marfa, *Presidio* 16 Dec (RDa), and along RR 505 near US 90 in w. *Jeff Davis* 3–4 Feb (ph. ML, KBr; 2 at that location on 24 Feb) were of interest. A Common Black-Hawk seen associating with a flock of White-tailed Kites 27 Dec near Mission, *Hidalgo* provided a rare record for the L.R.G.V. (DD). Harris's Hawks were found in numbers n. and e. of their typical winter range. The U.T.C. had at least six



During the past three winters, Baird's Sparrows have been detected in the mixed grasslands on the Marfa Plateau of Trans-Pecos, Texas. Habitat access is limited to roadsides, so that these few observations suggest regular wintering in the area. This bird was one of three present near Marfa on 6 December 2005. Photograph by Mark W. Lockwood.

records, including up to 2 at Freeport, *Brazoria* 26 Dec+ (JAR et al.); the Austin area had at least four sightings, with 2 near Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 8 Jan (A&JB). A Red-shouldered Hawk was near Big Bend's Santa Elena Canyon, *Brewster* 28 Feb (GLE), where the species is considered accidental. Another was at Lubbock 26 Dec (TSo), where the species appears to be becoming more regular. A Broad-winged Hawk at Santa Ana, *Hidalgo* 13 Feb (TB) was likely overwintering. Ad. Swainson's Hawks were found on the U.T.C. at Freeport, *Brazoria* 8 Jan (ph. GLa) and near Iowa Colony, *Brazoria* 12 Feb (CTL). Zonetailed Hawks were reported from four L.R.G.V. locations, and others were detected over pastureland in *Jim Wells* 14 Feb (BCr) and over agricultural land e. of Bishop, *Nueces* 23 Feb (KT). Unexpected Ferruginous Hawks were in *Wise* 11 Jan (CC) and on *Galveston I.* 26 Feb (JSt). Out-of-range Prairie Falcons were found near Granger L., *Williamson* 18 Dec (ph. TFe) and at La Sal del Rey, *Hidalgo* 27 Feb (TW).

CRANES THROUGH TERNS

An estimated 15,000 Sandhill Cranes in e. *Brazoria* 15 Dec (JSt) must have been a spectacular sight, but a peak of 150,000 reported from Muleshoe N.W.R., *Bailey* 10 Jan was breathtaking (HB). Over the winter, one ad. and 4 juv. Whooping Cranes died, bringing the estimated peak flock size of 220, up 3 from last year's record 217 (TSt). A 1 Mar

count of 215 at *Aransas N.W.R.*, *Aransas* comprised 189 ads. and 26 young. A wandering Whooping Crane was present s. of the normal wintering range near Raymondville, *Willacy* 2 Dec–25 Feb (SBe, m.ob.). The Texas portion of the U.S.F.W.S. 4th International Census of Snowy, Wilson's, and Piping Plovers conducted over several days in late Jan recorded an encouraging 956 Snowy, 66 Wilson's, and 1080 Piping (RC). Lesser Yellowlegs are less than annual in winter in the Trans-Pecos, so one at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, *El Paso* 3 Dec–12 Feb was notable (JSp, JPa). Single Spotted Sandpipers at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson* 29 Dec (LSa) and Greenbelt L., *Donley* 1 Jan (IO) provided rare Panhandle winter records. A lingering Baird's Sandpiper at L. Tawakoni, *Hunt* 11 Dec (RB) was exceptionally tardy; a late Pectoral Sandpiper was at L. Tawakoni, *Rains* 1 Dec (RKi), while one at the Waco sewage ponds 26 Feb was the earliest ever for *McLennan* (JY). A Purple Sandpiper on the jetty at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun* 7 Feb (†BFR) was a county first. A Dunlin present 8 Jan–25 Feb at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson* represented the 2nd winter record for the Panhandle (BP). Two Stilt Sandpipers at L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 3 Dec–24 Feb represented a first wintering record for n.-cen. Texas (GCo, BGi). Over 300 Long-billed Dowitchers were at L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 18 Dec–24 Feb (GCo et al.). Higher-than-average American Woodcock numbers were noted nearly statewide, but this likely had more to do with the best habitat being in irrigated residential areas due to near-drought conditions than a higher wintering population. A Wilson's Phalarope lingered at Mitchell L. in San Antonio, *Bexar* well into Jan (SC et al.). Two seen flying along *Galveston I.*, *Galveston* 17 Feb (JSt) and another 2 in *Burnet* 22 Feb (DFe) may have been very early migrants.

A Laughing Gull was observed at L. Lewisville, *Denton* 26 Dec (DH, ph. BGi). A Franklin's Gull in *El Paso* 12 Dec (JPa) was noteworthy. A Little Gull 3 Jan at Boca Chica, *Cameron* (ph. HH) was a first for the L.R.G.V. Additional Little Gulls were reported from L. Tawakoni, *Hunt* 12 Dec (ph., †MWh), L. Wright Patman, *Bowie/Cass* 15–25 Jan (†BGi, MD et al.), and *Dallas* 23–27 Feb (ph., †BGi et al.). A Mew Gull was at L. Worth, *Tarrant* 31 Dec–7 Jan (ph., †LBA). Up to 10 California Gulls were reported statewide, including an ad. in *El Paso* 12 Dec (JPa). The first-winter gull that was thought to be a possible Yellow-legged Gull continued from the fall in *Galveston* until 1 Feb (MR, m.ob.). Up to 4 Thayer's Gulls were reported from scattered U.T.C. locations. A Lesser Black-backed Gull at L.

Mercedith, *Hutchinson* 11-21 Jan furnished a first Panhandle record (BP, BBe). Another was present in *Bexar* 26 Jan-19 Feb (MMS et al.), and n.-cen. Texas hosted returning birds at White Rock L. and L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* (BGi et al.). Large numbers of Lesser Black-backed were noted on the U.T.C., including 30+ during a 22 Feb census of *Galveston* and *Harris* landfills (MR). A Slaty-backed Gull was discovered the same day at a Houston, *Harris* landfill (ph., †MR), providing a 4th state record. A Glaucous Gull in w. *El Paso* 21 Dec-1 Jan was a local first (JPa, ph. BZ, m.ob.). Another was present in *Bexar* 26 Dec-4 Jan (MCR, MR, ph. WS). A Great Black-backed Gull at L. Mercedith, *Hutchinson* 26 Dec-21 Jan (ph., †BP, †BBe et al.) represented a first Panhandle record and only the 2nd inland record for the state. First-winter birds were found at San Luis Pass, *Galveston* 30 Jan+ (ph., †TE, JSt et al.) and at a Houston landfill, *Harris* 22 Feb (ph., †MR). A rare ad. Black-legged Kittiwake was present 21-24 Dec in *Cameron* (ph., †BMc). A first-winter bird was present at Quintana, *Brazoria* 30 Dec-16 Jan (†RW, ph. MGr et al.). Two Forster's Terns in *Donley* 14 Jan were noteworthy for the Panhandle (BiM).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A pair of Eurasian Collared-Doves at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* Jan 1+ was new for Big Bend N.P. (m.ob.). Continued expansion of White-winged Doves reached *Grimes* and *Rusk* (BMe) in c. Texas. Amazingly, Gehlbach recorded three instances of Eastern Screech-Owls feasting on White-winged Doves in *McLennan*. A Ruddy Ground-Dove at Estero Llano Grande S.P., *Hidalgo* 28 Dec-22 Feb (†TB, m.ob.) was the first documented in the L.R.G.V. since 1989. Barn Owls occurred in record numbers throughout nw. Texas (*fide* AHe); 8 at a *Throckmorton* cemetery 8 Dec was a large number for one location (BGi et al.). As many as 14 Burrowing Owls wintered in cen. Texas, with multiple sightings 3 Dec-19 Feb. The fall Burrowing Owl at McFaddin N.W.R., *Jefferson* remained through the winter (*fide* JWh). It was a good winter for Long-eared Owls on the South Plains (*fide* AHe). Four Lesser Nighthawks in *Bexar* 28 Dec (KBa) were quite late. Single Chuck-will's-widows made unexpected appearances at

Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 5 & 14 Jan (ScG, SM). A Whip-poor-will flushed at Freeport, *Brazoria* 18 Dec (MA) provided one of very few winter records there. Several *Chaetura* swifts on coastal C.B.C.s went unidentified; Vaux's has yet to be documented in the state. One or 2 Buff-bellied Hummingbirds visited feeders in *Austin* through mid-Jan (SR, BiB, MaC). Large numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds apparently wintered on the U.T.C., highlighted by 8 on the Freeport C.B.C. (CB). A male from the fall remained in *Washington* through the winter (JRe). For the 2nd winter, a female Black-chinned Hummingbird re-



Varied Thrushes made a good showing in Texas this season, including this female at Kerrville from 8 January (here) through 1 March 2006. This bird was a sporadic visitor to a backyard water feature and provided the first record for the Edwards Plateau. Photograph by Max Traweek.

maintained in *Nacogdoches*, this year until 9 Feb (RH, DW); while another was present near Utopia, *Uvalde* 7-13 Feb (MH). Anna's Hummingbirds staged a major invasion into Texas this winter, with multiple birds reported from cen. Texas and scattered coastal sites. A male remained at Conroe, *Montgomery* 10-17 Dec (LSc, ph. KAC). A stunning male Costa's Hummingbird was present in Rockport, *Aransas* 19 Feb-4 Mar (ph., †SuB, m.ob.). Calliope Hummingbirds were reported from *Brazoria* 20 Feb (TC) and from *Atascosa* 27 Dec-5 Jan (MGi). Single Broad-tailed Hummingbirds visited three *Travis* locations, with the longest stay from 8 Dec+ (SAs). Another Broad-tailed wintered in Bellaire, *Harris* (DVe). An ad. male Allen's Hummingbird in Alpine, *Brewster* from the fall remained until 15 Dec (ML). An Allen's recaptured in *Brazoria* (CB, DFr) had been banded three weeks earlier in *Harris*. Another ad. male, first observed in the fall in Houston, remained through Jan (S&AW).

Ringed Kingfishers made an unprecedented incursion into the Central Oaks and Prairies: 2 at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* all season (m.ob.), one at Georgetown, *Williamson* 1 Dec-14 Jan (TFe et al.), and another, or the same bird, 11 km downstream 18 Dec (TFe). Another Ringed Kingfisher provided a county first at *Grimes* 19 Nov-Dec (DKu), while one along the Lampasas R. in w. *Bell* 26 Jan-4 Feb (GCr, RPi) was also a county first. The Lewis's Woodpecker at Guadalupe Mountains N.P. remained through the period (JWo, m.ob.), as did 4-5 Acorn Woodpeckers in w. *El Paso* (JPo, m.ob.). The first Williamson's Sapsucker for *Washington* was a male seen 3 Dec (DVo) near Chappell Hill. A Red-naped Sapsucker at Santa Ana N.W.R. 18 Dec-22 Jan provided a rare L.R.G.V. record (DJ, BMC, m.ob.); another was found on the Mad I. Marsh C.B.C., *Matagorda* 14 Dec (BO). Unusual were multiple reports of Hairy Woodpeckers from *Harris*, *Galveston*, and *Orange* on the U.T.C.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

It was a good winter for *Empidonax* in the Trans-Pecos, with four species reported, including a Hammond's (KBr) and a Dusky (ML) in *Jeff Davis* 17 Dec, a Dusky in Guadalupe Mountains N.P. 18 Dec (ScL), and a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher in *Hudspeth* 17 Dec (MSc, JZ). A Hammond's was seen in *Uvalde* 25 Dec-late Jan (ph. MH). A Gray Flycatcher at Muleshoe N.W.R., *Bailey* 4 Feb (AHe, AvH) was unexpected, as was a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher on the Medina R., *Bexar* 20-22 Feb (ph. RE, BD). Extralimital Black Phoebe were reported from *Randall* 9 Dec (RaM), *Harris* through 14+ Jan (SGa et al.), *Travis* 14 Jan-18 Feb (A&JB), and *Burnet* 9 Dec-11 Feb (BS). This was a banner season for wintering Say's Phoebe in cen. and n.-cen. Texas, with scattered reports too numerous to list. Amazingly, on the Granger C.B.C., the county roads of *Williamson* produced more Say's than Easterns! One at Buffalo Lake N.W.R., *Randall* 2-24 Dec (KS, JC) and another in *Fort Bend* 2 Jan (CD) were still more unexpected. Noteworthy Vermilion Flycatchers were reported from *El Paso* through the period (JSp), *Baylor* 11 Dec (BGi et al.), and *Brazos* 7 Jan (DVo, AF). An imm. Vermilion present at Austin's Hornsby Bend, *Travis* since the fall remained through 25 Feb (m.ob.). Two *lawrencei* Dusky-capped Flycatchers were present near Los Indios, *Cameron* 18 Dec+ (ph., †TFu, m.ob.). An Ash-throated Flycatcher wintered again at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* (EC). Unexpected in winter were calling Great Crested Flycatchers in *Brazoria* 18 & 31 Dec (RMa, RW). Three Brown-crested Flycatchers were

SA The hummingbird feeding/banding station at Ortego's residence near Victoria, *Victoria*, offers a cross-section glimpse of potential winter hummingbird populations. During the reporting period (Dec-Feb), Ortego and his helpers reported one Broad-billed Hummingbird (on 26 Feb), 41 Buff-bellied Hummingbirds (with one 9-year-old recapture), 37 Rufous, 23 Black-chinned, 8 Allen's (two returns from previous year), 5 Broad-tailed, one Ruby-throated, 5 Anna's, and 3 Calliope. Drought conditions could have positively influenced these numbers, which are nonetheless staggering: 124 hummingbirds of nine species in one yard in one season.

reported 16 Dec in *Brazoria/Matagorda* and another 14 Jan in *Fort Bend* (ph. GLa et al.). A Great Kiskadee in *Wichita* 13 Dec–20 Feb was regionally significant (ph. GM); up to 5 were present in *Harris* (m.ob.). A well-documented Cassin's Kingbird in *Lubbock* 26 Dec was a first local winter record (TSo). A Western Kingbird in *Midland* 24 Feb was very early (MaC). Lingering Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were reported from *Williamson* 11 Dec (TFe), *Dallas* 21 Dec (SBa), and *Bexar* 7 Jan (HR).

A White-eyed Vireo was unexpected at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* 10 Dec (DLe), and one in *Dallas* 3 Dec (BGi et al.) and mid-Feb (RR) were also rare. Other unusual vireos included a Cassin's in *Bexar* 7 Jan (HR), a Hutton's in *El Paso* 2 Jan (BZ), and a Warbling 18 Dec in *Brazoria* (NB, SM). A vagrant Blue Jay appeared at *Bentsen S.P.*, *Hidalgo* 11 Dec (DD). A lone *Cyanocorax* jay, either Yucatan Jay or San Blas Jay, was found with Green Jays at *San Ygnacio*, *Zapata* 13 Feb+ (JRu, m.ob.). Observers were divided on the identity of the bird, which was certainly an escapee in any case. Two Common Ravens near Ft. Hancock, *Hudspeth* 17 Dec were locally unusual (JPa).

An astonishing 104 Tree Swallows were counted at *McNary Res.*, *Hudspeth* 17 Dec (BZ). Northern Rough-winged Swallows n. of the normal winter range included 2 in *Nacogdoches*, *Nacogdoches* 14 Dec (DW), 4 in *Burleson* 17 Dec (CLi), and one at *Village Creek Drying Beds*, *Tarrant* 17 Jan (DPO). Cave Swallows continue to march northward each winter. This season, sightings of particular interest included 331 on the Gibbons Creek C.B.C., *Grimes* 20 Dec (DPh et al.) and up to 50 at *El Paso* 30 Jan (JSp). Tardy Barn Swallows included one in *Bell* 17 Dec (*vide* RKO) and 4 at *Balmorhea L.*, *Reeves* 18 Dec (ML, ph. KB), while an early bird was in *San Antonio* 8 Feb (HR).

NUTHATCHES THROUGH WARBLERS

White-breasted Nuthatch made a very nice showing in nw. Texas, with one at *Palo Duro Canyon S.P.*, *Randall* 10 Dec–5 Feb (RaM, LSa), 3 in *Amarillo*, *Potter* 17 Dec (PT, m.ob.), one at *L. Meredith*, *Hutchinson* 16 Feb (BP), and one at *Yoakum County Park*, *Yoakum* 18 Feb (AHe). A Brown-headed Nuthatch was well out of range at *Freeport*, *Brazoria* 18 Dec (DMe). A surprising concentration of 20+ Brown Creepers was noted at *Sandy Creek Park*, *Jasper* 2 Jan (KEl). Rock Wrens lingering from the fall included one at *L. Tawakoni*, *Rains* (m.ob.) through the season and one at *Koehne Park*, *McLennan* until 23 Jan (EH); another was at *Anzalduas County Park*, *Hidalgo* 29 Dec+ (MGu, KP, SP). An early Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was near *Midland*, *Midland*

4 Feb (m.ob.). Two Western Bluebirds at *Palo Duro Canyon S.P.*, *Randall* 22 Dec (KS) were a nice find. A Wood Thrush was present the entire season at *Salineño*, *Starr* (P&GD, ph. KEc, m.ob.). A Clay-colored Robin in *Corpus Christi*, *Nueces* 13 Feb+ (MCo, m.ob.) provided the 6th county record of the species. One of the birds of the season was the ad. Rufous-backed Robin at *Utley*, *Bastrop* 7 Jan+ (ph., †BFR, m.ob.). Following the strong start in the fall, *Varied Thrushes* made a good showing, with a male in *Andrews* 17 Dec (†KH), a female at *Kerrville*, *Kerr* 8 Jan–1 Mar (ph., †MT), and up to 2 males in *Big Bend's Boot Canyon* 17 Jan–17 Feb (†DLe; ph., †EC et al.). Three Sage Thrashers in e. *Kenedy* 21–22 Feb (BFR, GP) were a rare find for the e. South Texas Brush Country. A *Crissal Thrasher* at *Midland*, *Midland* 31 Dec–24 Feb (DKe; ph., †MaC) furnished a first county record. Always a good winter find in n.-cen. Texas, 2 *Sprague's Pipits* were at *Lewisville L.*, *Denton* 3 Dec (LDu), and another was at *L. Tawakoni Rains* 20 Dec (DH).

Single Orange-crowned Warblers made rare winter appearances in the Panhandle at *Amarillo* 21 Dec–10 Jan (KS) and *L. Meredith*, both *Potter* 29 Dec (RaM). Unexpected were single *Nashville Warblers* at *Caddo L.*, *Marion* 10–28 Dec (Jl) and *L. Wichita Park*, *Wichita* 5 Feb (Sol). A *Northern Parula* was at *High Island*, *Galveston* 6 Jan (JSt); a *Tropical Parula* was in *San Antonio*, *Bexar* 15 Dec+ (MCR, m.ob.). A *Black-throated Gray Warbler* lingered in *El Paso* until 28 Dec (BZ), a first Dec record for the *El Paso* area; another was in *San Antonio* 29 Jan (T&CF). A *Pine Warbler* in *Amarillo*, *Potter* 1 Dec–1 Feb (KS) represented only the 2nd winter record for the Panhandle; one in *Midland* 28 Dec–31 Jan (RMS, MSi) was nearly as rare. Single *Prairie Warblers* at *Brazos Bend*, *Fort Bend* 17 Dec (AW) and at *Sea Rim S.P.*, *Jefferson* 2 Jan were nice finds; and one wintered at *Sabine Woods*, *Jefferson* (*vide* JWh). A *Palm Warbler*, perhaps a lingering migrant, was in *Williamson* 10 Dec (SH, BS). Single *Black-and-white Warblers* were reported from *Farmers Branch*, *Dallas* 7 Dec (RDu) and *White Rock L.*, *Dallas* 17 Dec (JH); a female in *Salado*, *Bell* 17 Dec (RPI) provided a first winter county record. A well-described *Ovenbird* along the *Window Trail*, *Big Bend N.P.*, *Brewster* 30 Dec (J&DC) marked the first winter record for the park; more expected was one in *Dickinson*, *Galveston* 18–19 Feb (BH). Winter *Northern Waterthrushes* included singles at *Brazos Bend S.P.*, *Fort Bend* 18 Dec (JSt), *Lake Jackson*, *Brazoria* 11 Jan (JAr), and *San Bernard N.W.R.*, *Brazoria* 12 Feb (RW, SGr). Providing yet another rare documented winter record

for the state was a *Louisiana Waterthrush* banded at *Guadalupe Delta*, *Calhoun* 14 Dec (GS); another was reported from *Brazos Bend S.P.*, *Fort Bend* 10 Feb (BGo et al.). Providing a rare winter record for the U.T.C., a *MacGillivray's Warbler* was discovered on the *Armand Bayou C.B.C.*, *Harris* 17 Dec (NB et al.). Continuing from the fall, one or possibly 2 *Gray-crowned Yellowthroats* were at the *Sabal Palm Sanctuary*, *Cameron* throughout the period (JlP, †BMc, m.ob.). A male *Hooded Warbler* at *Lake Jackson*, *Brazoria* 5 Feb (DFr) may have wintered locally. Single *Wilson's Warblers* made unexpected appearances in *San Augustine* 5 Feb (LoD) and *Angelina* 13 Feb (LoD, JWi). A *Yellow-breasted Chat* in *Aransas* 29 Dec (BFR, PH) provided an unusual winter record for the *Coastal Bend*.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

An exceptional find for n.-cen. Texas was a *Summer Tanager* in *Dallas* 18 Dec (RT et al.), while another returned for its 3rd consecutive winter to *Bellaire*, *Harris* (DVe et al.). *Spotted Towhees* were virtually unrecorded from much of the *Trans-Pecos* for the entire period, despite much searching. *Lark Sparrows* are scarce and local in winter, so a flock of 21 near *L. Tawakoni*, *Rains* was notable 12 Dec (MWh). A *Lark Bunting* was on the *Katy Prairie*, *Harris* 18–26 Feb (HL, SGr, HS). *Grasshopper Sparrows* n. of the normal wintering range include one near *Morton*, *Cochran* 18 Dec (AHe), one at *L. Tawakoni*, *Rains* 22 Dec (DH), and 2 near *Mound L.*, *Terry* 18 Feb (AHe). Following the fall reports, 3–4 *Baird's Sparrows* were sw. of *Marfa*, *Presidio* 6–17 Dec (ph., †ML, †RDa); another was in w. *Jeff Davis* 23 Dec (†ML). Two *Swamp Sparrows* were at *L. Rita Blanca*, *Hartley* 21 Jan (BBc); the species is rare at this season in the Panhandle. A *Golden-crowned Sparrow* near *Ft. Hancock*, *Hudspeth* 17 Dec (MSc, †JZ, ph.) provided a 2nd county record. *McCown's Longspurs* graced the shores of *L. Tawakoni*, *Rains* throughout the period (m.ob.), with a high count of 25 on 19 Feb (GCo, DH); also here were up to 1321 *Lapland Longspurs*, recorded on the *Tawakoni C.B.C.* 1 Jan. (RKi et al.). Good concentrations of *Smith's Longspurs* included 400–500 in *Lamar* in mid-Dec (SLo); 30 in *Harrison* 19 Dec (ER) were likewise noteworthy. One located by call and seen in flight in e. *Brazoria* 22 Dec (JSt) made just the 2nd record for the U.T.C. Flocks of 6 to 50+ *Chestnut-collared Longspurs* in *Kenedy* 2 Dec (BFR) were well s. of the normal range of this species in Texas. Vying for the most extraordinary record of the season was a *Snow Bunting* at *South Padre I.*, *Cameron* 24 Dec–6 Jan (ph., †P&RA, m.ob.),

representing the 6th state record and by far the farthest south.

A Pyrrhuloxia near Anderson 20 Dec (KR, JeM, JD) was a first for Grimes, while another near Schmidt, Waller 12 Feb (S&AW) was one of very few records in recent years for the U.T.C. A male and 2 female Varied Buntings along Terlingua Cr., Brewster 31 Jan (EC) provided more evidence that this species occasionally winters in the Big Bend region. Very rare in winter, particularly away from the coast, a Painted Bunting was in Archer 24 Jan (ScL). A Yellow-headed Blackbird in Archer 16 Jan (ScL, DPa) provided a nice winter n.-cen. Texas record. Rusty Blackbird made a very good showing in the state, with high counts in the e. half of the state that included 70 at Tawakoni S.P., Van Zandt 12 Dec (RB), 247 at Longview, Rusk 31 Dec (PB, BMe), and 110 at L. Tawakoni, Rains/Van Zandt 1 Jan (RKi). Farther w., this species made news, with 4 at El Paso 11 Dec (†JSp) and one at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 18 Dec (AHe). A report of 199 Brewer's Blackbirds in Burlison 17 Dec (CLi, EO) was unusual, considering the rarity of the species in the Central Brazos Valley. A female Bullock's Oriole appeared for the 3rd consecutive year in Midland 14 Dec+ (D&JM). An Audubon's Oriole was seen near Utopia, Uvalde 20 Feb–1 Mar (ph. MH), providing a rare record for the Edwards Plateau. Lesser Goldfinches are expanding their range to the n. and e. in Texas, so one at Henrietta, Clay 19 Dec–16 Jan (GJ) was less of a surprise than it would have been a decade ago.

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**Tony Leukering | Bill Schmoker
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Yet another season of above-normal temperatures in the Region created many opportunities to document the general northward shift in the winter ranges of several species and to find unusual winterers as well. Precipitation ranged from above average in Wyoming and Colorado's northern mountains to below average in Colorado's southern mountains and eastern plains, lead-



A species now found almost annually in Colorado, this Yellow-billed Loon was photographed at Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo County on 4 December 2005. Photographs by Brandon Percival.

ing to a dichotomy of water-"haves" and "have-nots" across the Region. Yet another Mexican/South Texas species delighted Colorado birders, as the state's third and fourth Long-billed Thrashers wintered in different locations. The season proved outstanding for other mimids, remarkable for Hermit Thrushes, and provided a first Regional record for a wintering Northern Waterthrush. A well-traveled Yellow-billed Loon provided a case study of the species' ability to cover large distances in a short time, as well as birders' ability to use modern communication technology to keep abreast of a rare bird's movement. The excitement of these birding opportunities is tempered with concern about the effects of warming climate and shifts in precipitation patterns on local ecosystems.

Abbreviations: Big Johnson (Big Johnson Res., El Paso); Bonny (Bonny Res., Yuma);

Chatfield (Chatfield S.P., Jefferson/Douglas); Cherry Creek (Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo/El Paso); DMNS (Denver Museum of Nature and Science); John Martin (John Martin Res., Bent). "West Slope" denotes locations w. of the Rockies. 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.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Greater White-fronted Geese seemed more numerous in and near the Front Range urban corridor than usual; white geese were mostly unremarkable in occurrence; and Black Brant were a bit more numerous than typical this winter. There were seven reports of Trumpeter Swan, the most interesting coming from *Garfield*—at Rifle 4 Jan (K. Potter, A. Dahl)—and *Mesa*, at Jerry Cr. 13-16 Jan (D. Jandreau, LA). Six ad. Trumpeters were a first for *Chaffee* at Salida 28 Dec-4 Mar (SY, ph. TL, m.ob.). A male Eurasian Wigeon put in two appearances at Rocky Ford, *Otero* 15 Dec and 31 Jan (MP, m.ob.). The first Cinnamon Teal was earlier than usual, even for that early spring migrant, in *Boulder* 12 Jan (P. Hansley). Either Greater Scaup is becoming more regular in winter in the Region or, more

likely, more birders are becoming comfortable with identifying them, as we received 15 reports of 38 individuals. All three scoters were found this winter: single Surfs in *Fremont* and *Pueblo* and single White-wingeds in *Boulder* and *Douglas* in Dec, when still somewhat expected, with a rarer Black 3-4 Dec at *Chatfield* (JK, m.ob.). The surprise, though, was an unseasonal White-winged



Providing a third winter record for Colorado was this Black Phoebe along the Arkansas River in Pueblo, Pueblo County on 11 December 2005 (here); it remained into March 2006. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

near *Henderson*, *Adams* 25-26 Feb (GW, m.ob.). Of 14 Regional reports of Barrow's Goldeneye, only one came from Wyoming, 6 at *Gray Reef Res.*, *Natrona* 5-25 Jan (*fide* G&JL). A goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid was a nice find at *Pueblo Res.*, *Pueblo* 26-28 Feb (BKP et al.). The only wintering Ruddy Ducks were reported from *Pueblo Res.* (BKP) and *Totten Res.*, *Montezuma* (JB).

Odd for so far n. in winter, single Red-necked and Clark's Grebes were reported from the *Valmont Res. complex*, *Boulder* 21 Jan (BS, TF et al.). American White Pelicans occasionally winter in Colorado, particularly at the two large se. reservoirs, *Pueblo* and *John Martin*, where they did this winter. Almost unprecedented, however, was a single that survived the winter at *Cherry Creek* (m.ob.). In Wyoming, where the species is even scarcer at this season, 2 were near *Glenrock*, *Converse* 11 Feb (CM). A Turkey Vulture s. of *Pueblo*, *Pueblo* 14 Dec (T. Crisler) was virtually unprecedented in the state in winter. An amazing 6 Northern Goshawks were reported this winter at low elevations, spread from *John Martin* on 14 Dec (a juv.; TL et al.) to *Tamarack Ranch S.W.A.*, *Logan* 8 Jan (a juv.; SL). Only one of these was an ad. (though the ages



This Eastern Towhee at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County (here 14 January 2006) was one of three that wintered in Colorado this season; it was heard giving call notes typical of Eastern Towhee in winter but in April gave several calls typical of Spotted Towhee. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

of 2 were unreported), at *Colorado City*, *Pueblo* 2 Feb (DS). A gray Gyrfalcon (age unreported) visited *Clark's Corner*, *Natrona* 12 Dec (CM).

RAILS THROUGH OWLS

Three Soras were tallied on the *John Martin C.B.C.* 14 Dec (TL, MP et al.), in an area where they are annual in some numbers, but one upriver at *Rocky Ford*, *Otero* 15 Dec (MP, TL) provided a first local winter record. Presumably, more effort to locate Soras in winter in Colorado would greatly expand our understanding of their winter range in the Region. Early Sandhill Cranes num-

SA In addition to 6 Common and 2 Pacific Loons, 2 Yellow-billed Loons were reported this season. One at *Highline Res.*, *Mesa* 25 Dec-16 Jan (LA, R. Levad, m.ob.) provided the first West Slope record of the species. A juv., first found at *Chatfield* 3 Dec (JK, m.ob.), was present until the early morning of 5 Dec (MP), when it apparently departed. Later that morning, *Maynard* found what was presumably the same bird at *Big Johnson* (some 112 km south), where it was seen into the early afternoon. However, by the time *Peterson* showed up at *Big Johnson*, the bird was not present, and *Percival* had found a juv. Yellow-billed at *Pueblo Res.*, another 56 km farther south. So this loon was seen on three bodies of water in four counties in one day! It remained at *Pueblo Res.* until 14 Dec.



In a fine winter for sapsuckers in Colorado, five Red-naped Sapsuckers were located, including this male at Trinidad, Las Animas County 21 January 2006. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

bered 2 at Cañon City, Fremont 11 Feb (RM), 6 near Nepesta, Pueblo 19 Feb (SO), and one at Salida, Chaffee 26 Feb (SY). Three winter reports of Greater Yellowlegs was more than normal, but 7 Greater Yellowlegs at John Martin 15 Feb (DN) were, presumably, very early spring migrants. For the 2nd year in a row, Spotted Sandpiper successfully wintered at Pueblo (BKP, m.ob.). Single Least (2-9 Dec) and Baird's (2 Dec) Sandpipers were late below Pueblo Res. (BKP). As many as 4 Dunlins wintered e. of Greeley, Weld 3 Dec-31 Jan (J. Himmel) for a surprising n. Colorado record. Of somewhat more regularity, a single Dunlin spent the winter along the Arkansas R. at and below Pueblo Res. 11 Dec-20 Feb (BKP, m.ob.).

Odd was an ad. Franklin's Gull in full alternate plumage at Cherry Creek 27 Dec (B. Brown). Seven reports of Mew Gull, a large number, was highlighted by 2 (an ad. and a first-cycle bird) at Pueblo Res. 17 Dec+ (MP, CLW, ph. BKP), a second-cycle bird at Fossil Creek Res., Larimer 26 Feb (CW), and a first-

cycle bird at Erie Res., Boulder 27 Feb (BS). The 13 reports of 21 Lesser Black-backed Gulls seemed a bit below the recent average. A first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull was a brief visitor to Pueblo Res. 15 Dec (BKP). A possible Herring Gull x Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid was present at the same location 26-28 Feb (BKP); Colorado birders have yet to confirm this hybrid combination in the state, though a few odd gulls have shown characters consistent with it. Five reports of 6 Glaucous Gulls was typical, but 6 Great Black-backed Gulls was above average, though a poorer showing than last winter's record season.

A Band-tailed Pigeon at No Name, Garfield 1 Jan (T. McConnell) provided a first local mid-winter record. The spread of White-winged Doves continues, as evidenced by the six reports of 27 of these invaders this winter, all in se. Colorado. Inca Doves continue in their two Colorado strongholds, Lamar, Prowers (DAL) and Rocky Ford (SO). Kellner found an imm. Snowy Owl in the middle of the night in s. Kiowa 7 Jan, providing the only Regional report this winter. A Burrowing Owl photographed in Pueblo 31 Dec (P. Hurtado) provided a very rare Regional winter record away from the se. corner of Colorado.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH THRUSHES

A Red-headed Woodpecker (age unreported) found 11 Mar near Torrington, Goshen, WY was thought to have wintered locally (G&JL). The Region's sole outpost of resident Acorn Woodpeckers continues to prosper near Du-



One of a remarkable four Pine Warblers reported in Colorado this winter, this bird frequented a feeder in Fort Collins, Larimer County throughout the winter (here 17 December 2005). Photograph by Rachel Hopper.

rango, La Plata (m.ob.). It was a crazy sapsucker winter in Colorado. An incredible 6 Williamson's Sapsuckers (only one female) were found, half in Fremont, where sapsucker searchers have been finding the species regularly in recent winters. However, Montezuma, Chaffee, and Pueblo got in on the action this year, each with single birds. Also amazing, 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were recorded this winter (including 5 in Fremont and 4 in Pueblo). This species may eventually be removed from the state's review list. Oddly, the most interesting aspect of this sapsucker winter was the unprecedented 5 Red-naped Sapsuckers scattered from Mesa to Las Animas with, of course, one in Fremont.

A Black Phoebe at Valco Ponds S.W.A., Pueblo 11 Dec-23 Feb (BKP, m.ob.) provided only the 3rd Colorado winter record. The 12 reports of 17 Say's Phoebes seemed a higher-than-typical number for a Colorado winter. The "elusive" Craig, Moffat Blue Jay was noted on 2 Jan (FL). Bushtits basically stayed in the mts. this winter, as the e. extent of sightings this season was marked by 8 on the Inverness Golf Course 9 Feb (S. Stachowiak) and 4 at Cherry Hills Village 26 Feb (K. Stecher), both in w. Arapahoe, which is barely onto



Minimally 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a high count, were detected in Colorado in winter 2005-2006; this one was photographed 18 December 2005 at Cañon City, Fremont County. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

SA The winter of 2005-2006 will long be remembered in Colorado because of the remarkable mimid show. Included in the festivities were 7 Gray Catbirds in five counties (plus one in Wyoming at Cheyenne, Laramie 7 Dec (DF)), 12 Northern Mockingbirds in eight counties (plus one in Wyoming at Casper, Natrona 16 Dec [D. Walgren]), 38 Sage Thrashers in seven counties, and single Brown Thrashers in each of three counties.

In the context of these records, two discoveries of Long-billed Thrashers were nevertheless mind-boggling. Following up on a 6 Jan sighting of Eastern Towhee on the Chico Basin Ranch C.B.C., Percival photographed a *Toxostoma* thrasher 14 Jan; it appeared to be a candidate for Long-billed. Maynard re-found the bird 22 Jan and confirmed Percival's suspicion that the bird was a Long-billed, the 3rd for Colorado. Interestingly, the Russian Olive grove that harbored the Eastern Towhee and the Long-billed Thrasher also supported a Gray Catbird (found 6 Jan; MP), a Brown Thrasher (found 6 Jan; TL), and 1-2 Curve-billed Thrashers (and little else), and certainly provided for one of the best single-site mimid shows in Colorado winter history.

On 20 Feb, Susan Anderson noted a thrasher in her urban yard in Denver. The report made it to the Colorado birding listserv (CObirds), and Andrew Spencer checked on the bird the next day, confirming the suspicion that it, too, was a Long-billed Thrasher! Maynard confirmed that the bird at Chico was still present 21 Feb. Both Long-billed Thrashers survived through late Apr.



Forty-three thrashers of three *Toxostoma* species were found in Colorado in winter 2005-2006, among them this Long-billed Thrasher, the state's third, at Chico Basin Ranch 14 January through (here) 22 February 2006. Photograph by Bill Maynard.

the plains. A Carolina Wren at the Lamar Community College first found 12 Aug was joined by another for the winter (DAL); other singles were found at Valmont Res. 21 Jan (TF) and at Two Buttes S.W.A., *Baca* 22 Jan (BKP, MP). Reports of Winter Wrens were fairly numerous this winter and were highlighted by three reports of "Western" Winter Wrens, which are thought to be quite rare in Colorado (most winter records are of "Eastern" Winter Wrens): Colorado City 29 Jan–2 Feb (DS), Cañon City 18 Dec (CLW, TL), and Ft. Collins, *Larimer* 23–25 Mar, the latter a bird that was thought to have wintered (TL). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 18 Dec at Sundance,



Part of Colorado's unprecedented mimid show this winter was this Gray Catbird (here 31 January 2006) that wintered at the Chico Basin Ranch, one of eight found in the Colorado & Wyoming region over the season. Photograph by Bill Maynard.

Crook, WY (J. Adams) was very late. Four Eastern Bluebirds gracing the Salida C.B.C. 21 Dec (SY, R. Hancock) were rare that far w. and provided for a first *Chaffee* record. The 12 Hermit Thrushes reported this winter in Colorado made a completely unprecedented number; seven counties, from *Mesa* to *Baca*, had single Hermits.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Floyd was involved in the finding of 2 different Northern Parulas this winter, both in Boulder, *Boulder*. The first was an ad. male found 3 Dec, the other a female or imm. male found dead on a sidewalk 15 Jan (A. Carpenter, TF; *DMNS). There is only one previous Colorado winter record for the species. An apparent imm. Cape May Warbler was seen very poorly but heard calling quite well by a few observers 16–18 Dec at Pueblo City Park (BKP). An amazing 4 Pine Warblers were found this winter, one each in *Jefferson*, *Pueblo*, *Larimer*, and *Boulder*. All but the *Pueblo* bird wintered and were photographed. However, the warbler highlight of the winter was the Northern Waterthrush found 17 Dec on the Ft. Collins C.B.C. (CW; ph., m.ob.) that provided the first solid Regional winter record of any waterthrush.

Two single Green-tailed Towhees were rus-

ted up this winter in Boulder—18 Dec (J. Harlan) and 28 Jan (M. Arp)—providing rare winter records, particularly for that far north. Three Eastern Towhees apparently wintered in Colorado: a male spent in Boulder 21 Nov–7 Apr+ (ph. R. Byers), a female was at Bonny 22–23 Dec (ph. BS), and the aforementioned male was at Chico 6 Jan into Apr. Despite the latter bird giving nothing but Eastern Towhee call notes in Jan, the bird was heard giving Spotted Towhee-like calls in Apr, sometimes interspersed with Eastern Towhee-like calls (TL). A Spotted Towhee wintering in the same grove may have influenced call-types in this phenotypically pure Eastern Towhee.

A Chipping Sparrow noted 29 Jan at Chico (BKP) but not before or subsequently provided an odd winter record. Two Field Sparrows were found, one at John Martin 14 Dec (*vide* DN) and one at Navajo S.P., *Archuleta* 21 Jan (JB, P. Derven); the latter would provide only the 2nd sw. Colorado record if accepted. A Savannah Sparrow at Brush Hollow Res., *Fremont* 23 Feb (p.a., RM) would provide a first foothill winter record. Eleven Lincoln's Sparrows in Colorado was a high number for winter, particularly compared to the relative paucity of Swamp Sparrows (only 14); Lincoln's Sparrows are usually found with Swamp Sparrows here at this season. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was a nice surprise at Fruita, *Mesa* 12 Feb (J. Beason). A female Chestnut-collared Longspur was w. of normal, particularly for winter, s. of Colorado City 11 Feb (DS). We received only two Colorado reports of Snow Bunting this winter, one from the w. edge in *Moffat*, the other on the e. edge in *Yuma*.

Two of the nine reports of Northern Cardinal came from areas w. of normal, single birds near Greeley at the end of Dec (*vide* P. Lightsey) and at Aurora, *Arapahoe* in Jan–Feb (ph. L. Giesecke). A female-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak posed for photographs in Perry Park, *Douglas* 3–4 Dec (C. Zwahlen). The only Rusty Blackbirds this winter were singles at Cañon City 18 Dec (TL, CLW) and at Ft. Collins 29 Jan (LS, RH). Common Grackle seemed more widespread than usual at this season, with reports from eight counties, including *Mesa* and *Fremont*. A male Bullock's Oriole × Baltimore Oriole hybrid was quite unseasonable at Lamar 20–28 Feb (D. Russell). The three Purple Finch reports were all of single brown birds, all from sites of previous recent occurrence: at Las Animas, Bent 2 Dec (DN) and at L. Beckwith, *Pueblo* 25 Dec (DS) and 5 Nov–17 Jan (J. Thompson). The only Colorado winter reports of Common Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak came from w. of Bonny 23 Dec (m.ob.) and Allenspark,



In Colorado, Cañon City was again a hotspot for wintering sapsuckers, with representatives of three species found, including this female Red-naped Sapsucker, here 18 December 2005. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

Boulder 1 Dec (B. Kaempfer), respectively. Addenda: A first-year Broad-winged Hawk was a superb find near Kelly, *Teton*, WY 22 Jun 2005 (J. Bens); there are very few Regional records for the summer period. An office building in Fort Collins, CO claimed the lives of two notable birds: a Golden-winged Warbler 11 May 2005 (the only other state specimen, from 1881, lacks location data) and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in early Jun 2005 (both *DMNS; *vide* J. Harrison).

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Idaho & Western Montana



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The winter of 2005 featured unusually mild mid-season weather sandwiched between very cold periods in early December and mid-February. January 2006 was the fourth warmest January in 112 years of Idaho records and the warmest January ever recorded in Montana. Precipitation amounts varied widely across the Region, but most areas received normal or above-average precipitation for the period. Unfortunately, it was a season of few notable avian highlights, and the lack of migratory winter finches was a widespread lament. In general, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were few, Common Redpolls were unusually rare, and Cassin's Finches were absent. At least partly compensating for this shortfall was the Region's most significant Snowy Owl irruption in memory.

Abbreviation: Latilong (area encompassed by one degree latitude and one degree longitude used in mapping bird distribution in both Idaho and Montana).

GEESE THROUGH OWLS

Unexpected in w. Montana was a Greater White-fronted Goose near Deer Lodge 15-18 Jan (NK, GSw). Very rare in winter was a Snow Goose in Flathead, MT 5 Feb (DC). A total of 5 Cackling Geese was reported in Idaho, representing only about a fourth of last winter's tally. Also weak for the Gem State was a total of only 2 Eurasian Wigeons. By contrast, Idaho's winter count of 10 Long-tailed Ducks may have set a new high record. Especially rare in winter was a Pacific Loon



A good-to-spectacular irruption of Snowy Owls was one of the many highlights of winter 2005–2006. This image of four sleepy Snowy Owls was captured on film near Pablo National Wildlife Refuge, Lake County, Montana by subregional editor Dan Casey on 7 February 2006. The roost at this site reached 29 birds in midwinter, a large concentration for any location in the United States. Photograph by Dan Casey.

near Harrison, ID 4 Feb (LH). An excellent total of 9 Gyrfalcons was recorded. Very surprising were 4 Greater Yellowlegs wintering in Gem, ID 8 Jan, but even more unusual was an unidentified dowitcher there 8 & 23 Jan (RM). Rare wintering larids were scarcer than usual, with reports of only one Mew, 3 Thayer's, 2 Glaucous-winged, and 3 Glaucous Gulls. Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase in their se. and s.-cen. Idaho strongholds, but new this season were 5 in Owyhee, ID 31 Dec (MC), 3 in Gem, ID 21 Feb (FZ), and 11 in Bozeman, MT 17 Dec (JP). Representing a winter latilong first was a Burrowing Owl in Cassia, ID 12 Jan (SB).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

The only Anna's Hummingbird was one in Burley, ID that held over from last fall through 8 Dec (SP). A tardy Lewis's Woodpecker in Eureka, MT 10 Dec (LY) provided a first winter record in Latilong 1. Representing Idaho's 3rd winter record was a Williamson's Sapsucker in Valley 29 Jan (CS). Only 6 Idaho Blue Jays were reported throughout the period, providing a stark

contrast to last winter's record irruption. Single extralimital Western Scrub-Jays were noted in Lapwai (m.ob.) and Payette, ID (P&LC) during the period; both were apparently of the *californica* subspecies. Unexpected both geographically and temporally was a Northern Mockingbird in Blaine, ID 6 Dec (GS). A Swamp Sparrow was discovered near Hagerman, ID 22 Dec (*fide* BD), where they are now almost expected in winter. Rare *Zonotrichia* sparrows were scarce, with only 2 White-throated, one Golden-crowned, and 4 Harris's Sparrows noted. A record-early Western Kingbird showed up in Ada 25 Feb (MM), representing Idaho's first winter record. The only Rusty Blackbird found was near Kalispell, MT 1 Jan (LK, LW).

Contributors: (subregional editors in bold-face): IDAHO: Steve Bouffard, Kathleen Cameron, Pete and Lynn Carter, Mark Collie, Bob Davis, Kas Dumroese, Lisa Hardy, Russ Manwaring, Mike Morrison, Stacy Peterson, Hadley Roberts, Gary Stitzinger, Shirley Sturts, Charles Swift, Chuck Trost, Poo Wright-Pulliam, Fred Zeilemaker. MONTANA: Dan Casey, Leslie Kehoe, Nate Kohler, John Parker, Don Skaar, Gary Swant (GSw), Terry Toppins, Linda Winnie, Lewis Young. ☉

SA The major story of the season was the unusually high, probably record-high numbers of Snowy Owls that visited the Region. At least 41 were recorded in western Montana and 9 in Idaho, whereas for the past 20 years the winter tally has averaged three reports. Most sightings occurred at a spectacular roost site near Pablo N.W.R., Lake, MT, where Snowy Owl numbers peaked at 29 in midwinter.

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Rick Fridell

There was a marked contrast between winter weather in the northern and southern parts of the Region, with the northern portion receiving average to above-average snowfall, the southern persistent dry conditions. It was also a mixed bag for northern birds wintering in the Region: high numbers of several species, such as Bohemian Waxwing, were offset by moderate-to-low numbers of most irruptive species, such as Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrikes. Although Snowy Owls were found this winter in neighboring northern states, there were no confirmed sightings in the Great Basin. Two Boreal Owls, however, were photographed in Utah. As these were only the third and fourth Boreal Owls confirmed in the state, they may have been part of a southward winter irruption. Other highlights include three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in Utah and a male Broad-billed Hummingbird in Nevada.

Abbreviations: Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); Lake Mead (Lake Mead N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills Golf Course, St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

One of the highlights of the winter season was the brief appearance of 3 Fulvous Whistling-

Ducks at Bear River 21 Jan (ph. PH, RC, †KP). Although there were several reports of vagrant Fulvous Whistling-Ducks from elsewhere in the sw., this was by far the northernmost location reported. Trumpeter Swan sightings have been on the increase in the Region, and this winter was no exception, with 10 reported 12 Dec–25 Feb from four Utah counties (Juab, Millard, Utah, and Washington). Remarkably, a male Eurasian Wigeon showed up for the 6th consecutive winter 21 Nov+ at Lakeridge G.C., Washoe, NV (GS et al.). Washoe, NV provided all other reports of Eurasian Wigeon, with males at Sparks 8 Jan (FP) and Lemmon Valley 21 Feb (MM). A female Black Scoter, first reported during the fall period, lingered until 11 Dec at Antelope I. (ph. TA). As usual, Long-tailed Ducks made a strong winter showing at Antelope I., with up to 6 reported this winter (12-16 Dec, TA et al.). Utah supplied all additional Long-tailed Duck reports, with females at East Canyon

were in short supply this winter. Twelve Least Sandpipers were an unusual find on the Carson City C.B.C., Carson, NV 18 Dec (GS et al.). Up to 4 Dunlins were observed 2 Jan at the H.B.V.P. (JBr), with at least 2 remaining throughout the season. An ad. Mew Gull made a rare Utah appearance 17-20 Dec at the Orem Sewage Treatment Ponds, Utah (KCh, ph. JK). Thayer's Gulls were reported 15 Dec–15 Feb from four Utah counties (Box Elder, Davis, Cache, and Salt Lake). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was located 15-19 Dec at the Bountiful Landfill, Davis, UT (CN, TA et al.). Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported from three Utah locations: 16 Dec–6 Jan at the Bountiful Landfill (JBi, BH et al.); 21 Jan–15 Feb at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis (BS, TA); and 28 Jan at the Logan Landfill, Cache (J&KE). Glaucous Gulls also made a strong showing this winter in Utah, with singles at the Bountiful Landfill 16 Dec–4 Feb (JBi, BH, ph. TA et al.), Salt Creek W.M.A., Box Elder 5



Large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were observed in the northern portion of the Great Basin in late winter. This flock containing approximately 300 birds remained at Rye Patch Reservoir, Pershing County, Nevada for much of the season (here 7 February 2006). Photograph by Martin Meyers.

S.P., Morgan 11 Dec (KP), Bear River 4 Feb (KM), and Quail Creek S.P., Washington 28 Feb (RF).

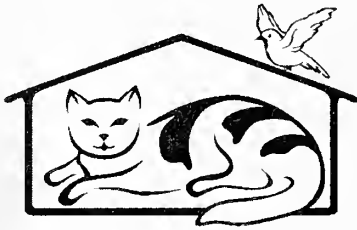
HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

The only Red-shouldered Hawk reported this season was found 10 Jan in Cedar Valley, Iron, UT (KG). Several contributors reported moderate numbers of Rough-legged Hawks in the n. portions of the Region; however, their numbers in the s. were well below average this winter. Significant shorebird sightings

Feb (KP), and Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis 15 Feb (TA et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Just a few years ago, Eurasian Collared-Doves were big news in the Great Basin, and now they are regularly observed throughout Utah and Nevada, with flocks of several hundred individuals reported in s. areas. White-winged Doves are always rare winter visitors in the Region; however, a flock of 10-12 spent a 4th straight winter in Washington City,



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Washington, UT (RF et al.). More surprising was an extralimital White-winged Dove observed 10 Dec+ at Bluff, *San Juan*, UT (LG). Up to 7 Long-eared Owls were observed at Corn Cr. 19 Feb+ (DaS, DeS et al.). Utah's 3rd and 4th confirmed Boreal Owls were photographed in n. Utah in mid-Jan. The first was found 21 Jan in Card Canyon, *Cache* (ph. KE), the other 24-25 Jan along the Bluebell Hwy., e. of Bluebell, *Duchesne* (AB, ph., †BM). A small population of Boreal Owls has long been rumored in n. Utah's Uintah and Wasatch Mts.; however, whether these recent sightings were rare resident owls or part of a southward winter irruption is unknown. A male Broad-billed Hummingbird made a rare appearance in the Region at a Las Vegas, *Clark*, NV residence 16 Dec-5 Feb (SPe, *fide* PG, ph. PW, ph. SPa et al.). A tough male Anna's Hummingbird feeding in the snow was an unexpected sight during the Carson City C.B.C., *Carson*, NV 18 Dec (GS et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Utah's first winter *Empidonax* flycatcher records were documented during this period. Two flycatchers at Red Hills caused some initial confusion before their identification was sorted out in mid-Jan. The first *Empidonax* was observed 26 Dec at Red Hills (MT) and reported in late Jan. On 15 Jan, a Dusky Flycatcher was photographed at Red Hills (ph. TA, MW, RF); a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was also observed there that day (TA, ph. RF), and another was photographed along the Virgin R. near the Washington Fields Diversion, *Washington*, UT 16 Jan (KCo, ph. RF). All 3 flycatchers remained through at least the end of Jan. Conventional wisdom suggests that Pacific-slope Flycatchers are much more likely to winter in the Southwest than Cordilleran; the species is currently not on the official Utah checklist. An Eastern Phoebe reported at Lytle 12 Feb (LT) was another surprising winter visitor to the Region.

Varied Thrushes, very rare winter visitors in Utah, were observed at Emigration Canyon, *Salt Lake* 29 Dec (SPr), Millcreek Canyon, *Salt Lake* 1-21 Jan (J&KB et al.), and at Brigham Young University, Provo, *Utah* 2-22 Feb (NN, JK). A Brown Thrasher visited Corn Cr. 19 Feb+ (DaS, DeS et al.). Bohemian Waxwings made an outstanding showing in the n. portion of the Region but went unreported in the s. portion. Flocks with 300+ individuals were observed in several n. Utah locations (*Cache*, *Summit*, *Salt Lake*, and *Weber*), and at Rye Patch Res., *Washoe*, NV 7 Feb-3 Mar (ph. MM, DSe et al.). A Black-throated Magpie-Jay, first discovered 15 Sep,

continued to brighten a Las Vegas neighborhood through at least 17 Feb (CT et al.); it is certainly an escapee.

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A Green-tailed Towhee, observed 28 Dec in Provo, *Utah*, UT (KCh), was perhaps the first ever reported in the Region during winter. A Swamp Sparrow was a nice find 4 Feb at the H.B.V.P. (MB). White-throated Sparrows were found at Carson Lake, *Churchill*, NV 16 Dec (DM), Orem, *Utah*, UT the next day (KCh, JK), and City Creek Canyon, Salt Lake City, *Salt Lake*, UT 7 Jan (ph. J&JB). Harris's Sparrows made a strong winter showing, with 2 in *Washoe*, NV 1 Dec-1 Jan (RSt, CD, JT) and 3 in *Salt Lake*, UT 17 Dec-1 Jan (BW, PF, EL). Carson Lake, *Churchill*, NV was again the hotspot for longspurs in the Region, with 4 Lapland and 25 Chestnut-collared observed 15 Dec (MM et al.) and 5 McCown's found there 22 Jan (GS et al.). Numbers there peaked 24 Jan, with over 40 Lapland and 50 Chestnut-collared observed (MM, DSe et al.). Five Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found 18-29 Dec at Washoe Lake, *Washoe*, NV (GS et al.), and 8 were at Swan Lake, Lemmon Valley, *Washoe*, NV 3 Jan-21 Feb (FP, BG et al.). Great-tailed Grackles are now being observed throughout most of Nevada and Utah, as attested by a flock of 50 in n. Nevada near the Oregon border at Winnemucca, *Humboldt* (MM et al.). A female Hooded Oriole made a very late appearance at a hummingbird feeder 6 Dec in Las Vegas, *Clark*, NV (RSc).

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Sartor O. Williams III

Winter 2005–2006 brought a return to serious drought throughout much of New Mexico, and unseasonably warm temperatures were recorded in January and February. Diligent birding, however, resulted in a good season for vagrant waterbirds and unexpected winter holdovers, turned up remarkable numbers of mimids in many areas and grassland species in the south, and culminated with a popular Yellow Grosbeak seen by hundreds at Albuquerque.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); C.C.N.P. (Carlsbad Caverns N.P.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte Lake); G.B.A. (Gila Bird Area, *Grant*); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.); Maxwell (Maxwell N.W.R. and vicinity); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); R.S. (Rattlesnake Springs area, *Eddy*).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

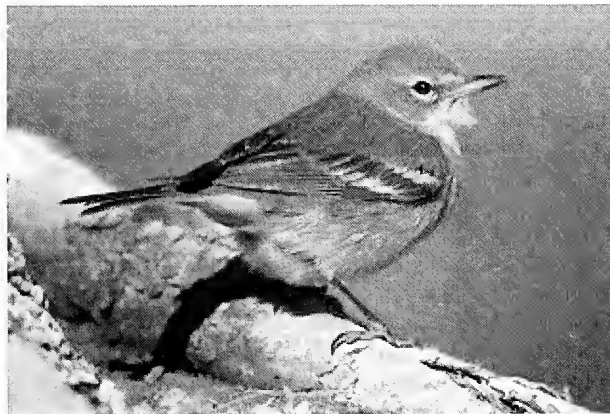
Blue-morph Snow Geese are scarce in New Mexico, so noteworthy were 201 among some 23,000 Snows at Bosque 17 Dec (DH); other blue-morph Snows included 7 at Clayton 14 Dec (CR) and singles at Farmington 17 Dec (AN) and Sevilleta N.W.R. 16 Dec (NC, SC). At least one blue-morph Ross's Goose was at Bosque 10 & 31 Dec (BN, MS, JZ); 2 others there 9 Jan (ph. BZ) were possibly hybrids with Snow Goose. Tundra Swan made a strong showing, with reports from eight locales from the R.G.V. eastward, including up to 15 in the Maxwell area 6 Dec–11 Feb (m.ob., ph. DC), 6 at Tucumcari L. 9 Dec (JO), 2 each at Charette L. 2 Dec (JO) and L.V.N.W.R. 16 Jan (WW), and singles at Belen 2–5 Jan (JEP, CR, ph. JO), Bosque 9–19 Dec (JEP, CGL), Sumner L. 8 Dec (JO), and L. Avalon 24 Dec–8 Jan (m.ob.), the latter found shot 27 Jan (SW). A

male Eurasian Wigeon was at Albuquerque's Mariposa Park 16 Dec–19 Feb (m.ob.). Seldom reported in the upper R.G.V., 2 male Greater Scaup were at Pilar 22–23 Dec (FO). Single Long-tailed Ducks were at E.B.L. 3–6 Jan (B. Locke) and Jal 10 Dec (JEP). Barrow's Goldeneye made an impressive showing e. of the mts. in *Colfax*, *Mora*, and *San Miguel*, with 2–3 at Stubblefield L. 24 Dec–24 Feb (m.ob., ph. DC, ph. JO), a male at French L. near Cimarron 18 Dec–27 Feb (EW, ph. DC), up to 2 males at Mora 20 & 23 Dec (ph. EW), and a female at L.V.N.W.R. 1 Dec (ph. JO).

A productive loon season found single Red-throated Loons at Conchas L. 10–19 Dec and 1–24 Feb (m.ob., ph. JO) and Brantley L. 12 Dec–3 Feb (m.ob., ph. JO). One or more Pacific Loons were at Conchas L. 18 Dec (WW) and 20–21 Feb (CR, JEP, NP, ph. JO), but reports of a possible Arctic Loon there 20 Feb were not confirmed. A Yellow-billed Loon at Brantley L. 12 Dec–7 Jan (m.ob., ph. JO, ph. WH) provided New Mexico's 13th overall record. Horned Grebes were rarely reported included up to 2 at Cochiti L. 15

far n. was one below Navajo Dam 11 Dec–7 Jan (AN). Late Snowy Egrets were 2 in the lower-most Pecos Valley 19 Dec (JO), plus one each at Brantley L. (JO) and L. Avalon (SW) 24–25 Dec; early was one at Cliff 6 Feb (DB). Unusual for winter was a Cattle Egret n. to Bosque 17 Dec (DH) and 9 Jan (BZ); 4 were at Las Cruces 1 Jan (CGL). A White-faced Ibis lingered at Belen 3 Dec (CR, BN) and 2 Jan (JEP).

Persistent reports of up to 2 Turkey Vultures at Roswell 24 Dec–4 Jan (ph. WH, MB, NP, I. Palma) culminated in discovery of 14 at a roost there 7 Jan (DK, JR); early were 2 at Silver City 4 Feb (P. Boucher). Late was an Osprey at Hatch 11 Dec (CR, BN); at least one wintering in the E.B.L. area was seen 4 Dec (CGL), 1 Jan (BZ), and 20 Jan (JEP). White-tailed Kite increased its presence across s. New Mexico, with 3 near Rodeo 1 Jan (RW, ph. JO), one in the middle Animas Valley 3 Dec (B. Cavaliere) and 3 there 31 Dec (CR, ph. JO), 2 in *Grant* w. of Hachita 18 Feb (ph. CGL), 2 in *Hidalgo* s. of Hachita 4 Jan (C. Brozek), one at Mesilla 26 Feb (CR, ph. MR), and one at Seven Rivers W.M.A. 4 & 14 Feb (SW, RD, SOW).



One of two Pine Warblers documented in New Mexico this season, this apparent male was at Socorro's New Mexico Tech 1 (here) through 21 January 2006. Photograph by Brian Holliday.

Jan–1 Feb (JEP, WW) and 3 at Mescalero L. 13 Dec (JO). A good Red-necked Grebe season produced single imms. at Cochiti L. 15 Dec–8 Jan (MB, NP, WW, CGL, ph. JO) and E.B.L. 8 Jan–3 Feb (ph. BZ, ph. JZ, ph. JO, ph. CGL). Noteworthy so far n. in winter were 730 *Aechmophorus* grebes at Morgan L. 6 Jan (AN); high counts at E.B.L. amounted to only 2770 on 6 Jan (MW) and 2116 on 24 Jan (RD), most of which were Westerns.

Neotropical Cormorant has largely vanished from the state; this season, only 2 were reported, those at Caballo L. 18 Dec (BV). Single American Bitterns were at B.L.N.W.R. 17 Dec (JB) and 15 Feb (GW) and at L. Avalon 30 Jan (T. Hines). Wintering Great Egrets were much in evidence in the R.G.V. and Pecos Valley, including 17 near Radium Springs 2 Jan (CGL);

Rare s. to *Eddy*, a Bald Eagle was at Brantley L. 23 Dec (WH, CR); noteworthy were 39 at Heron L. 4 Jan (MW). Harris's Hawk continued in the Tularosa Valley, with 4 at Alamogordo 6 Jan (ph. CGL) and 3 near La Luz 30 Dec (J. Mangimeli). A Crested Caracara near Rodeo 3 Dec (D. Jasper, ph. K. Maynard) was the first for *Hidalgo* since 1985. Merlins occurred statewide Dec–Feb, including one or 2 on 16 C.B.C.s 15–31 Dec; one was e. to House, *Quay* 10 Jan (DS).

Single native Aplomado Falcons were in *Otero* 25 Jan (J. Frey) and *Luna* on various dates 20 Dec–27 Feb (RM et al., ph. JB). Wintering Peregrine Falcons continued to increase, including in the Gila Valley, middle and lower R.G.V., and lower Pecos Valley; farther n. were 2 at Pilar 22 Dec (FO), plus up to 4 in *Taos* Dec–Jan (FO) and one in *Rio Arriba* 25 Jan (DS).

RAILS THROUGH POORWILL

North for the season were one Virginia Rail at Española 31 Dec (BF) and 5 each near Cimarron 30 Jan (DC) and Clayton 14 Dec (CR). A Common Moorhen was n. to Bosque 17 Dec (WH). A Black-bellied Plover lingered at B.L.N.W.R. 7 Dec (GW). Rarc in winter, a Snowy Plover was at Brantley L. 23 Dec (CR, ph. WH) and 21 Jan (SW), and 3 were near

Loving 17 Dec (SW); earliest arrival at B.L.N.W.R. was one 15 Feb (GW). Another winter surprise was a Black-necked Stilt at B.L.N.W.R. 7 Dec–2 Feb (GW, JH, JEP), as were 2 at Sunland Park 2 Jan (MS, JZ). Late American Avocets were 3 at B.L.N.W.R. 17 Dec (GW); earliest arrivals were 16 at B.L.N.W.R. 15 Feb (GW) and 7 at Bosque 18 Feb (JEP). Unexpected in winter n. to Colfax, 2–4 Greater Yellowlegs were at Springer L. Dec–Feb, including 2 on 14 & 20 Jan (ph. DC). Noteworthy Spotted Sandpipers were singles at Farmington 17 Dec (AN), G.B.A. 2 Dec–17 Feb (RS), and Ruidoso 17 Dec (A. Powell). Lingering or wintering Long-billed Curlews included 24 at Loving 17 Dec (CC), 3 s. of Roswell 7 Jan (JEP), and singles at Deming 28 Dec (LM), near Percha 8 Jan (BZ), at Six-Mile Dam 5 Feb (SW), and in s. *Chaves* 13 Feb (RD). Late for the n. was a Dunlin at Stubblefield L. 4 Dec (ph. DC); elsewhere, one was at E.B.L. 30 Dec (JO) and a high 12 were near Loving 17 Dec (SW).

Unexpected so late was a Franklin's Gull at Sunland Park 9 (CGL, MB, NP) & 14 Dec (JNP). A good Mew Gull season produced singles at Tyrone 4 Dec (EL, ph. DZ, ph. LM), Albuquerque 11–25 Feb (WH et al., ph. DK, ph. JO), and E.B.L. 5–11 Feb (BN, CR, ph. MB, NP, JEP). Small numbers of California Gulls wintered in the R.G.V. in *Sandoval*, *Bernalillo*, *Sierra*, and *Doña Ana* Dec–Jan. An ad. Thayer's Gull was at E.B.L. 11 & 18 Feb (JEP). Glaucous Gull staged its best winter ever in New Mexico, with (assuming no duplication) up to 5 first-winter birds at four locales: at least one at Sunland Park 6 Dec–2 Jan (JNP et al., ph. JO) and 2 there 9–11 Dec (JNP, ph. CGL, MB, NP, BN, CR), plus singles at Caballo L. 31 Dec (DH), E.B.L. 23 Jan–26 Feb (WW et al., ph. JO, CGL), and Brantley L. 6 Jan–4 Feb (JEP, DK, SW). Rounding out the rare gull news was an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at Brantley L. 23–27 Dec (ph. WH, CR, JO, MB, NP).

A Band-tailed Pigeon was early at Signal Peak 12 Feb (R. Mansbach). Now entrenched in New Mexico, Eurasian Collared-Dove was common and conspicuous statewide, including on 26 C.B.C.s; singing began at Albuquerque 29 Dec (SOW) and P. O. Canyon 3 Jan (CDL). White-winged Dove was found n. to Farmington (AN), Española (BF), Santa Fe (DE), and Tucumcari (JO); at Silver City, where formerly absent in winter, 145 were counted 17 Dec (RS). Single Common Ground-Doves were near Cliff 31 Dec (E. Lewis) and at Las Cruces 15–29 Dec (ph. DG). Two to 3 Ruddy Ground-Doves were in the Rodeo area 2 & 11 Dec (P. Hulce, N. Dias) but were not found later. Far n. for winter were single Barn Owls at Maxwell 1 Jan and

24 Feb (ph. DC) and Clayton 14 Dec (CR). An apparent Eastern Screech-Owl was vocal at a wooded rest stop w. of Las Vegas in the early hours of 29 Dec (P. Valentik); there is but one certain record for the state. A Burrowing Owl was late at Farmington 11 Dec (J. Rees); singles wintered n. to Corrales (DK, JR), Albuquerque (SC, JEP), and B.L.N.W.R. (GW), and 2 were near Fort Sumner 10 Jan (DS). Long-eared Owl was conspicuous in the e. and s., including roosts of up to 10 each near Cimarron and at Maxwell Dec–Feb (m.ob.) and 4 in the Animas Valley 25 Dec (AC, NM-C). Undetailed were C.B.C. reports



This Yellow Grosbeak, present at Albuquerque from early December 2005 (here 28 January 2006) into the spring season, attracted hundreds of birders and generated endless speculation about its provenance. Apparently a subadult male, it was the second to be photographed in New Mexico (the first was near Santa Fe 18–21 October 2002) and central New Mexico's fourth since 1999. Photograph by David W. Nelson.

of single Short-eared Owls at Maxwell 15 Dec (*vide* L. Mowbray), Loving 17 Dec (*vide* CC), and C.C.N.P. (*vide* SW). Suggestive of wintering, a Common Poorwill was near Rodeo 31 Dec (*vide* AC) and a "fresh" feather was found at C.C.N.P. 20 Dec (*vide* SW).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH VERDIN

On the hummingbird front, a male Broad-billed was at a Carlsbad feeder 10 & 24 Dec (SW, WH, CR), and a female was at another Carlsbad feeder Dec–Mar (E. Pierce), including 6–7 Jan (JEP, CGL). Late was an ad. male Magnificent Hummingbird at L. Roberts 1 Dec (J. Day-Martin), as was a female Black-chinned at Carlsbad 7–15 Dec (SW). An Anna's Hummingbird wintered at Carlsbad 24 Dec–10 Jan (SW et al.), singles were in w. Las Cruces 19 Jan (L. Hinesley) and ne. Las Cruces 22 Dec and 20 Jan (CGL), and 2 wintered at Radium Springs Dec–13 Jan, with one there through 2 Feb (MS, ph. JZ). An ad. male Costa's Hummingbird was a surprise at Las Cruces 29 Nov–2 Jan (ph. T. Lawton). Up to 3 apparent Rufous Hummingbirds were in Carlsbad 9–24 Dec (SW, JEP, JO); lacking details were several possible Rufous at Las Cruces 17 Dec (*vide* GE) and Silver City Dec–Feb (*vide* DB).

Previously unreported from New Mexico, a Green Kingfisher was seen on the Pecos R. near Malaga 17 Dec (R. Wiedenmann); unfor-

tunately, exhaustive efforts to relocate it in subsequent weeks failed, so verification of the species for the state must wait. Noteworthy were 12 Lewis's Woodpeckers e. to Sugarite S.P. 9 Feb (CH); maintaining a conspicuous presence in the upper R.G.V. were 20 at Questa 15 Dec (R. Weber), 24 at Dixon 17 Dec (R. Templeton), and 50 at Española 31 Dec (BF). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was w. to Columbus 18 Feb (LM, ph. R. Matthews). Unexpected was a Ladder-backed Woodpecker near Cimarron 9 Dec (ph. DC). While it is clear that *Empidonax* flycatchers are wintering in s. New Mexico in increasing numbers, the species involved are not always clear. Among the reports this season were single likely Dusky Flycatchers at Percha 27 Jan (JO) and 3 Feb (JEP, CR), Redrock 5 Feb (CR), and Bosque 20 Feb (DH), single Dusky/Hammond's at Mesilla 2 & 29 Jan (CGL) and R.S. 6–7 Jan (JEP, CGL), singles reported (without details) as Grays in the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (*vide* AC) and at C.C.N.P. 21 Dec (*vide* SW), and unidentified singles at Silver City (P. Taber) and Mimbres (DB) in Dec. A Black Phoebe was n. to Zuni 17 Dec (JT); single Easterns were w. to Cliff (RS) and the Peloncillo Mts. (AC), both 31 Dec. Unexpected so far n. in winter were a remarkable 4 Say's Phoebes at Farmington 17 Dec (AN), 3 at Española 31 Dec (BF), 2 at Santa Fe 26 Dec (DE), and singles at Pihlmont 17 Dec (ph. EW) and Maxwell Dec–Feb, including 14 Jan (DC). Wintering Vermilion Flycatchers were in evidence in the s. in *Hidalgo*, *Grant*, *Socorro*, *Sierra*, and *Eddy*. A vocal Ash-throated Flycatcher wintered at Caballo Dam 9 Dec–4 Feb (JEP et al.).

Northern Shrikes were reported across the n. counties, including multiple reports from *Taos* (FO) and *Colfax* (DC et al.) and singles s. to El Malpais 18 Feb (C. Grimes) and Tucumcari 11 Dec (ph. JO). A good season for Plumbeous Vireo found 2 at Percha 4 Dec (CGL) and singles there 16 & 31 Dec (ph. CGL), plus singles at Radium Springs 24 Feb (MS, ph. JZ), Mesilla Park 7 Jan (BZ), and Deming 10 Dec (CGL). A Hutton's Vireo was n. to Socorro 29 Dec (J. Shipman), and another was e. to Aguirre Springs, Organ Mts. 7 Jan (BZ); the 17 on the Peloncillo Mts. C.B.C. 31 Dec (AC) established a record high there. Rushing the season was a Blue Jay building a nest at Clayton 29 Dec (JO). Noteworthy for winter was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Santa Teresa 2 Jan (MS, JZ); earliest spring migrant was one near Radium Springs 14 Feb (MS, JZ) while the earliest Tree Swallow was at E.B.L. 18 Feb (JEP). Notably early were 2 Cave Swallows near Whites City 19 Jan (R. West). North in the R.G.V. was a Verdin near Belen 12

Dec (DH); one was lining a nest with feathers at Spring Canyon S.P. 13 Jan (LM).

WRENS THROUGH WARBLERS

A wren killed by a cat at Sugarite S.P. 13 Jan (P. Walsh) proved to be a Carolina Wren (CH). A House Wren wintered n. to Luis Lopez, where seen 2 Jan–23 Feb (JO). Unprecedented numbers of Winter Wrens were found nearly statewide, with reports from 13 locales and including up to 8 in the Corrales area 21 Dec–16 Feb (TF), 2–3 at Los Lunas 29 Dec–8 Feb (M. Stake, G. Garber), and 2 at Eagle Nest Dam 14 Dec (DC), plus singles at Cimarron Canyon 13 Dec and 1 Mar (ph. DC), Ponil Cr. near Cimarron 9 Dec and 4 Feb (ph. DC), Santa Fe 26 Dec (DE), Cochiti 8 Jan (CR), near Pecos 17 Dec (JK), Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW), R.S. 15 Jan (SW), Zuni 17 Dec (JT), and G.B.A. 31 Dec (RS). Scarce in the Sacramento Mts., 2 American Dippers were at Ruidoso 4 Dec (CR, BN). Far n. was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at a Farmington suet feeder 20 Dec (L. Lesperance); a high 3 were at Mesilla 2 Jan (CGL). Black-tailed Gnatcatchers n. in the R.G.V. included 5 at Bosque 17 Dec (DH), with one there 14 Jan (JEP, JO), 2 there 22 Jan (JB), and 2 in the town of Elephant Butte 4 Feb (JEP); others of note in Sierra were 10 in the Fairview Mts. 13 Jan (CGL) and 3–4 at three sites in the n. San Andres Mts. 13 Jan–24 Feb (CGL).

Moderate numbers of Eastern Bluebirds were found on 15 C.B.C.s, primarily from the R.G.V. eastward, plus at Zuni and Gila; 10 C.B.C.s reported all three bluebird species. An ad. male Varied Thrush was near Mesilla Dam 29 Jan–16 Feb (ph. CGL, ph. JO, MS, JZ). Unexpected anywhere in New Mexico in winter, single Gray Catbirds were at Ranchos de Taos 28 Jan (FO), Sevilleta N.W.R. 16 Dec (D. Prichard), and Elephant Butte Dam 3 Feb (JEP). Northern Mockingbirds were unusually numerous across the s. half of the state; singles were n. to Cimarron 29 Dec–16 Jan (ph. DC), Sugarite S.P. 19 Dec–21 Jan (ph. DC), Clayton 14 Dec (CR), Conchas L. 18 Dec (WW), s. of Mosquero 1–2 Feb (MM), and near Madrid 14 Feb (LS). Sage Thrasher wintered in unprecedented numbers across s. and cen. New Mexico, including in areas where not previously known in winter; found on 14 C.B.C.s in Dec, including n. to Orilla Verde, Española, and Santa Fe, numbers increased in Jan, including 45 at E.B.L. 9 Jan (BZ), 70 in Rhodes Canyon, n. San Andres Mts. 13 Jan (CGL), 10 at Madrid 2 Jan (LS), and 92 in the Caja del Rio area near Santa Fe 7 Jan (MR). Noteworthy for Colfax was a Curve-billed Thrasher near Cimarron 18 Dec (fide DC); another was n. to Española 31 Dec (BF). Northerly Crissal Thrashers were singles at Tesuque Dec–Feb

(S. Tanner) and Zuni 17 Dec (JT); Crissals were singing in the Sandia Mts. 14 Jan (BN) and the Peloncillo Mts. 18 Jan (CDL).

Searches for wintering Sprague's Pipit were successful in grasslands of the n. Jornada del Muerto e. of San Antonio, where several were found on various dates 26 Dec–11 Feb (WW, JEP, JB, BN, CR, SW), including a high 7 on 21 Jan (JEP); elsewhere, 3 were near Brantley L. 23 Dec (WH, CR), up to 3 were in Luna 13 Jan (DG) and 27 Feb (RM), and one was in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (RW). Cedar Waxwings began drifting back into New Mexico in late Jan, including 20 at Mesilla Park 20 Jan (CGL), 8 at Socorro 22 Jan (BN, CR), and 4 at Valmora 29 Jan (CR). Phainopeplas were more common than usual in the Peloncillo Mts. (CDL); n. were 4–5 at G.B.A. 4 Jan and 3 Feb (RS), one at Socorro 22 Jan (CR), up to 2 at Luis Lopez 5 & 22 Jan (JO), and one at B.L.N.W.R. 19–21 Dec (JH). An Olive Warbler at Cherry Creek C.G. 22 Feb (LM) may have wintered locally. Small numbers of Orange-crowned Warblers again wintered in the lower R.G.V. and the Pecos Valley; noteworthy were 5–6 at Mesilla Park 1–20 Jan (CGL). A possible Yellow Warbler was at Las Cruces 17 Dec (H. Harrison). Going for higher education, a Pine Warbler visited the University of New Mexico campus at Albuquerque 8–19 Dec (MB, NP, JO, W. Talbot, BN), and another was on the New Mexico Tech campus at Socorro 1–21 Jan (ph. B. Holliday, BZ, ph. JO, CGL, JEP, CR), where there was also an Ovenbird 14 Jan (JEP, ph. JO).

TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES

A Green-tailed Towhee was n. to Bosque 2 & 22 Jan (JEP). Careful attention to grassland sparrows helped to clarify the status of Cassin's Sparrow, with 2 e. of San Antonio 26 Dec (WW) and at least one there 11 & 13 Feb (JEP, WW), one at Brantley L. 23 Dec (WH, CR), 4 at Las Cruces 17 Dec (DG), and 13 in the middle Animas Valley 31 Dec (CR et al.). A remarkable 130 Rufous-crowned Sparrows were reported at C.C.N.P. 21 Dec (SW); Rufous-crowneds were singing in the Peloncillo Mts. by 17 Feb (CDL). Single American Tree Sparrows were s. to Albuquerque 17–18 Dec (N. Shroud), Bernardo W.M.A. 21 Jan (JEP), and Luis Lopez 23 Dec–11 Jan (ph. JO). Late for the n. were 2 Chipping Sparrows at Conchas Dam 11 Dec (MB, NP) and one at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW); early was one n. to Corrales 29 Jan (DK). Two likely Clay-colored Sparrows were in the middle Animas Valley 31 Dec (JO, CR). Sin-

gle Field Sparrows were near Conchas Dam 1 Feb (WW) and at Carlsbad 11 Dec (SW), and 2 were at Maddox L., Lea 12 Dec (ph. JO); an unprecedented 9 were reported at C.C.N.P. 21 Dec (SW). North were 2 Black-throated Sparrows at Cochiti 2 Jan (DK) and a Vesper Sparrow at Albuquerque 18 Dec (JK). Early was a Sage Sparrow near Cimarron 25 Feb (ph. DC). Savannah Sparrows were moving northward by Feb, as evidenced by 35 near Conchas Dam 1 Feb (WW), 4 near Datil 18–19 Feb (CR, BN), one at Farmington 22 Feb (AN), and 10 at Springer L. 25 Feb (DC). Among the grassland surprises e. of San Antonio was a Baird's Sparrow 13 Feb (WW); one was s. of Deming 28 Dec (JB), and 2 were in the middle Animas Valley 25 Dec (AC, NM-C). Lingered from Nov was a Le Conte's Sparrow at Clabber Hill Ranch below Conchas Dam 10 Dec (JEP, ph. JO).

A good Fox Sparrow season found singles n. to Peña Blanca 3 Jan (WW) and Ute L. 27 Dec (DC); farther s., one to 2 were at 12 sites in Bernalillo (JEP, DZ), Valencia (TF), Sierra (CGL), Doña Ana (N. Stotz), Grant (RS), Hidalgo (CDL), and Eddy (JEP, CGL). North was a Swamp Sparrow at Springer 14 Jan (DC); w. were 2 each at L. Roberts 6 Dec

(DB) and the Animas Valley 31 Dec (ph. JO). Two Harris's Sparrows were at Ranchos de Taos 13 Dec (FO); singles were at Rio Rancho 19 Jan (TF) and Bosque 4 Dec–26 Feb (m.ob., ph. CGL, ph. G. Froehlich). Unusual in winter, 5 dark-lored White-crowned Sparrows were at Rodeo 31 Dec–1 Jan (ph. JO); early was one at Silver City 19 Feb (DZ). A Golden-crowned Sparrow at Rock House Spring, San Andres Mts., Sierra 24 Feb (CGL) furnished a local first; at Bosque, one was found along the Marsh Loop 16 Jan (CGL), and presumably another was at the headquarters feeder 18 Jan (DK). Two to 15 McCown's Longspurs were in grasslands e. of San Antonio 2 Jan–13 Feb (JEP, SW, CR, BN, WW); Chestnut-collareds were common there all season. Lapland Longspurs were restricted to Colfax and Union; the high count was 11 at Eagle Nest 3 & 13 Dec (ph. DC).

Northern Cardinal continued its presence in the ne., including 5 each at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW) and the Conchas Dam area 18 Dec (WW), 2 s. of Mosquero 1 Feb (MM), and 3 along Pajarito Cr. near Tucumcari 11 Dec (JO). Pyrrhuloxias drifting northward included singles at L. Roberts in early Dec (F. Land), San Lorenzo 23 Feb (P. Walker), San Acacia 15 Feb (RD), and Causey, Roosevelt 11 Dec



New Mexico's rarest grebe species, a Red-necked Grebe entertained many at the Dam Site Restaurant, Elephant Butte Lake, Sierra County 8 (here 9) January through 3 February 2006. Photograph by James E. Zabriskie.

(JO), and 3 at Valley of Fires, *Lincoln* 4 Dec (CR, BN). Attracting national attention was a **Yellow Grosbeak** at Albuquerque. First noticed in early Dec (ph. R. Powell) and 5 Jan (ph. M. Ratliff), it was discovered by birders 22 Jan (JEP, JO et al.) and enjoyed (and photographed) by hundreds through the season. Apparently a subad. male, the grosbeak frequented feeders in the North Valley through 1 Feb, then relocated to the University area mid-Feb–Mar (m.ob.).

An impressive **Rusty Blackbird** season produced 3 at Ute L. 27 Dec (ph. DC), one at B.L.N.W.R. 1-3 Dec (JH, JEP, ph. JO), 3 at R.S. 17 Dec–7 Jan (JEP, ph. JO, JB, DK, CGL), and 2 at Las Cruces 17 Dec (W. Whitford). Common Grackles continued to linger or overwinter n. and w. of expected, but haphazard reporting continued to confuse the issue; credible reports included one w. to Playas 10 Jan (P. Lehman) and 2 at Deming 29 Jan (LM), singles n. to Albuquerque 18 Dec (A. Rominger) and San Antonio 2 Jan (JEP), 3 at Eagle Nest 3 Dec (DC), one at Maxwell 1 Jan

(ph. DC), and 6 at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW). Up to 10 **Bronzed Cowbirds** were at Las Cruces Dec–Feb (m.ob., ph. BZ). A male **Bullock's Oriole**, first noted at Percha in late Nov, remained Dec–Jan (ph. CGL, ph. JO, JEP) and was last reported 3 Feb (BN, CR). The dependable three-species flock of **rosy-finches** entertained many at Sandia Crest, where 271 were banded through 25 Feb—203 Blacks, 39 Brown-capped, and 29 Gray-crowned (NC, SC et al.); a three-species flock of 30 at Eagle Nest 13 Dec (DC) provided the only additional locale. What was described as an eastern **Purple Finch** was at Percha 24 Jan (G. Bieber). Montane finches were notably scarce—small numbers of **Cassin's Finches** were reported on seven widely scattered C.B.C.s, **Red Crossbills** were detected only twice during the season, and the few **Evening Grosbeaks** reported were largely restricted to the Sangre de Cristo Mts. **Lesser Goldfinch** continued to make its winter presence known n. of expected, including outnumbering **American Goldfinch** 28 to 24 at Farmington 17 Dec (AN).

Initialed observers: Jonathan Batkin, Matt Baumann, David Beatty, David Cleary, Nancy Cox, Steve Cox, Alan Craig, Craig Cranston, Robert Doster, Deanna Einspahr, Trevor Fetz, Bernard Foy, David Griffin, David Hawksworth, William Howe, Jeff Howland, Charles Hundertmark, Jim Krakowski, David Krueper, Carroll D. Littlefield, Carl G. Lundblad, Martin MacRoberts, Larry Malone, Raymond Meyer, Narca Moore-Craig, Alan Nelson, Bruce Neville, Frank Oatman, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, Nick Pederson, Mary Ristow, Christopher Rustay, Janet Ruth, Lawry Sager, Marcy Scott, Roland Shook, Dale Stahlecker, John Trochet, Brad Vaughn, Gordon Warrick, Mark Watson, Richard Webster, Steve West, William West, Elton Williams, S. O. Williams, James Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer, Dale Zimmerman. 🌐

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Arizona



Abbreviations: A.B.B.A. (Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas), A.B.C. (Arizona Bird Committee), A.V.S.T.P. (Avra Valley S.T.P.), B.T.A. (Boyce Thompson Arboretum), G.W.R. (Gilbert Water Ranch), H.R.P. (Hassayampa R. Preserve), L.C.R.V. (lower Colorado R. valley), P.L.S.P. (Patagonia Lake S.P.), S.P.R. (San Pedro R.), Whitewater (Whitewater Draw W.A.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CORMORANTS

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks have been extremely scarce in Arizona in recent decades. The one-day Scottsdale record from Nov heralded a change. What was presumably the same bird was relocated 2-29 Dec on Chaparral L. (H. Bond, ph. PD) and again 7 Jan+ at nearby McCormick Ranch (TC, DY). In Green Valley, a flock of 18 was on a golf course pond 3 Dec (ph. C. Tribble), and other singles turned up in e. Mesa 4 Dec–29 Feb (M. Tomme, ph. MW) and at Topock Marsh 13-28 Dec (†A. Haskew; D. Henderson). Casual in Prescott, 2 **Snow Geese** were present 18 Dec+ (CST). **Ross's Goose** is accidental in the Grand Canyon region, so 5 at CRM-8 on 4 Feb (CL, ph. G. Nealon) were remarkable. Still very rare in the state, **Cackling Goose** reports included 3 in Scottsdale 17 Jan–3 Feb (†PL; ph. N. Kaznajian), 2 near the confluence of the Gila R. and Agua Fria R. 13 Feb (ph., †MMo), and 3 on L. Mary 19 Feb (JP).

Six unbanded **Trumpeter Swans** seen at Kino Springs 6-9 Jan (R. & R. Thompson, ph. L. Smith) relocated to Corona de Tucson S.T.P. 15-26 Jan (B. Howard, ph. A. Tozier); there are only two prior records for se. Arizona, both since 1994, and few for the state. **Eurasian Wigeon** reports included one at Flagstaff 9-21 Dec (ph. N. Gaines) and 2-3 in Scottsdale (TC, J. Jones, m.ob.) all season. A hybrid wigeon was at Sun City 23 Nov–13 Dec (CST); another returned to Willcox 24 Dec+ (SH). In addition to the **Mexican Ducks** reported in the fall at Gilbert, another was in Chandler 12 Feb (MMo).

Surf Scoter is a rare, primarily late-fall migrant; reports came from Prescott L. 28-30 Nov (CST, ph. S. Burk), Many Farms L. 1 Dec (MMS, MP), and Ashurst L. 3 Dec (JP). By far the rarest scoter in the Southwest, a **Black Scoter** at Saguaro L. 18 Feb–3 Mar (J. Rusinow, S. Fried, ph. KR) made only the 8th state record. Nearly annual in the state in winter, single **Long-tailed Ducks** were at Watson L. 3-13 Dec (ph. S. Burk) and Parker Dam 4 Dec–19 Feb (H. Van Oosten). While 3 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at Parker Dam 8 Dec–15 Jan (H. Van Oosten) were fewer than expected there, an ad. male near the confluence of the Gila R. and Agua Fria R. 29 Jan–4 Mar (ph. BG) was only a 2nd *Maricopa* record and one of very few from s. Arizona away from the L.C.R.V.

Mark M. Stevenson | Gary H. Rosenberg

La Niña conditions resulted in an extremely dry winter statewide: there were 143 straight days without rain in Phoenix, a record, and essentially no snowpack in the mountains. Mild temperatures allowed many species to winter in unusually high numbers. Two potential first state records were documented, a **Royal Tern** and a **Brown-chested Martin**.

Chukars inhabit some of the least-visited areas of n. Arizona, so knowledge of the extent of their range is incomplete. In lower Glen Canyon, 37 were seen 1 Oct at the mouth of Waterholes Canyon (G. Nealon), several flocks were near Lowery Thumb 17 Dec (CL), 12 were on Echo Peaks 28 Jan (CL), and 40 were near Lowery Spring at the base of Vermilion Cliffs 18 Feb (JP), apparently representing a recent range expansion (*vide* CL). In Tucson, both of the long-reported Least Grebes were present all season (m.ob.) One reported from P.L.S.P. 14 Dec (†G. Jones) will be reviewed by the A.B.C.; they are typically found on small ponds. Horned Grebe is a casual transient and



This apparent Brown-chested Martin was found by Rick Wright on 3 February 2006 at Patagonia Lake State Park, Santa Cruz County, Arizona. If accepted, it will furnish a first record for Arizona and a third for North America. Photograph by Gregg Rosenberg.

wintering species away from the Colorado R.; singles were reported near Granite Cr. 25-26 Nov (CST), P.L.S.P. 24-30 Dec (W. Russell), and Roosevelt L. 26 Dec (KR). Although Western Grebes may nest in almost any month in the L.C.R.V., most nesting occurs Apr-Jul (A.B.B.A.) and even later at higher elevations; five or six pairs with downy young at Roosevelt L. 4 Jan (KR) were very early there. Dependent juv. Clark's Grebes at Martinez L. on 16 Jan (HD) were early even for the L.C.R.V. A few Brown Pelicans wintered in the L.C.R.V., with one at Mitty L. 23 Jan (T. Staudt) and up to 6 on L. Havasu through 14 Feb (K. Blair). Continuing the recent range expansion and population growth, several hundred Neotropical Cormorants were reported from greater Phoenix (TC, DY et al.). At their traditional P.L.S.P. location, none were present until 2 Feb (SH).

EGRETS THROUGH ANI

A Great Egret at Lyman L. 25 Dec-8 Jan (PL, JO) was unexpected that far n. in winter. Also farther n. than usual was a Green Heron at Willow L. 11 Dec (CST). The enigmatic White Ibis was seen again in the Arlington area 18-27 Dec (TC et al.); what is apparently the same individual has been present there in multiple consecutive seasons. Black Vultures winter along the international border from Nogales westward, near Phoenix, and irregularly in the Santa Cruz valley; thus, 2 at Douglas in Dec were unexpected (A. Moorehouse). Numbers of White-tailed Kites have fluctuated in s. Arizona since the species first arrived in the late 1970s. Some 21 reports this season represented a big upswing from recent winters: 3 near Portal (DJ), one or more near Elfrida (GB, H. Hansen), 2 at Hereford (MMA), one near Lochiel (R. Wolcott), 4 in the San Rafael Valley (C. Braun), one near Elgin (m.ob.), one near

A.V.S.T.P. (J. McCabe, RT), 2 in the Santa Cruz Flats (m.ob.), up to 3 at Paloma (TC, TM), one near Buckeye (J. Hammon), and 2+ in the Tacna-Welton area (PL, HD). Red-shouldered Hawk is casual in the state except for a resident pair at H.R.P. This winter, two pairs were reported in and near the preserve by several observers (C. Fisher, H. Beatty, TC, TM). A Zone-tailed Hawk in the Santa Cruz Flats 18 Jan (PL, ph. N. Kazanjian) was in an area where they have not been reported in winter. Continuing recent trends, Crested Caracaras wandered farther outside their core w. Pima range, including one near Portal 3 Dec (DJ), up to 4 in the Santa Cruz Flats (MW, M. Kehl), one near the

Gila R.-Agua Fria R. confluence 29 Dec-13 Feb (K. & L. Bielek), one near Whitewater 1 Jan (D. Palmer), one near Arlington 22-27 Jan (TC, T. Hildebrandt), one at Red Rock 23 Jan+ (RW), and one near Marana 2 Feb (K. Kroesen).

A Black Rail reported from Topock Marsh 28 Dec (†N. Miller) was at about the n. limit of the species' range in the L.C.R.V. The wintering Sandhill Crane count in the Sulphur Springs Valley was the 2nd highest ever at 30,000+ (Arizona Department of Game & Fish). Reports of Mountain Plovers included 300+ in Yuma 1-14 Dec (HD), up to 50 in the Santa Cruz Flats (MW, PD), and up to 41 near Elfrida (SH, EW). Given the large amount of agricultural habitat that goes unsurveyed, it is difficult to assess the true size of the species' wintering population in Arizona. A few northbound American Avocets arrived several weeks early at multiple locations in se. Arizona beginning 13 Feb. Casual in the state in winter, a Lesser Yellowlegs was at G.W.R. 10 Dec-18 Feb (R. Ditch, RH). A flyby Dunlin at A.V.S.T.P. 21 Dec (DS) and 2, farther n. than is typical, at Willow L. 31 Dec-5 Jan (W. Bull, W. Anderson) were the only ones reported. An ad. Heermann's Gull was at Parker Canyon L. 15 Jan (MB); the species is casual in every season but occurs primarily in late fall. Sparse away from the L.C.R.V., 2 Herring Gulls were at Roosevelt L. 2 Dec (MMS, MP), and one was at Saguaro L. 3 Dec+ (KR). There are virtually no tern records from se. in winter, so it was doubly surprising when a first state record Royal Tern made a few turns around the large pond at Willcox 15 Feb (ph., †M. Victoria). The species is uncommon year-round on the Sea of Cortez but rarely strays inland; even at the Salton Sea it is only a casual summer visitor.

Ruddy Ground-Doves had another impressive season. Outstanding was one that sur-

vived single-digit temperatures in Flagstaff 6 Dec-4 Jan (CL, ph. J. Coons), providing a first *Coconino* record. Not quite as far n., one was in Granite Cr. Park, Prescott 21-28 Nov (B. Pranter, S. McDougall et al.); one seen one km away 21-24 Jan (CST) may have been the same individual. Notable concentrations included up to 19 at Red Rock 4 Dec (GB), 10 at Kino Springs (SH), 12 at El Mirage 15 Dec (TC), and 27 in a yard in w. Phoenix 15 Jan (TC, TM). Smaller numbers were at scattered locations from Yuma to Whitewater and n. to Mesa. The Groove-billed Ani at G.W.R. was last reported 11 Dec (m.ob.)

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A male Broad-billed Hummingbird in Yuma 25 Nov-14 Dec (ph. HD) furnished one of fewer than 10 records for the L.C.R.V., where it occurs as a fall and winter transient. In addition to 5 wintering Violet-crowned Hummingbirds in se. Arizona, northbound migrants began appearing in the 2nd week of Feb, with 6 in by the end of the month, a strong early showing. Unexpected in winter, a Costa's Hummingbird was in Portal through 12 Feb (DJ). Casual in winter, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were reported from Ash Canyon all winter (MJB), Phoenix 30 Oct-23 Jan (P. Hershberger), in Prescott (first local winter record) 21 Dec+ (CST), and in Clarkdale 24 Dec-5 Jan (ph. D. Van Gausig). An early imm. male Broad-tailed was at G.W.R. 11-18 Feb (RH, ph. J. Holloway). By the last week of Feb, early individuals were as far n. as Payson and Pine (J. Estis, L. Estis). The first northbound Rufous Hummingbirds arrived in Yuma on the early dates of 17 Feb (HD) and 18 Feb (A. Borgardt). The hummer of the season was an imm. male *Selasphorus* that wintered at a feeder in lower Miller Canyon, eventually molting to reveal itself as Arizona's first winter Allen's Hummingbird (C. Melton, ph. C. van Cleve). Another sign of the warm winter, Elegant Trogons were more widely reported. Of 16 reported, 4 in Humboldt Canyon, Patagonia Mts 28 Dec+, 3 together below the mouth of Madera Canyon 28 Dec (*vide* R. Freeman), and one taking suet in Ash Canyon 25 Jan+ (MJB, ph. C. van Cleve) were the most remarkable. Scarce Green Kingfishers were reported on the upper S.P.R. (m.ob.) and at P.L.S.P. (m.ob.). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports included singles in Marana 3-8 Dec (GB, †RH), near Portal 1 Jan (N. Moore-Craig), in Seven Springs Wash 2 Jan (TC), and in Bisbee, a juv. 4 Feb (J. Whetstone). With the challenges presented by intergrade sapsuckers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers reported from the Catalina Mts. 4 Dec (ph. M. Kehl),

Yuma 2 Jan (ph. HD), and Avondale 9-20 Jan (ph. J. Truan) will be reviewed by the A.B.C. Another individual was well described from E. Whitetail Canyon in the Chiricahua Mts. 25 Feb (RT) but was not photographed.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

Greater Pewee is rare to casual in s. Arizona during the winter, mainly in the lowlands; therefore, several reports in late fall and early winter from higher-than-usual elevations were indicative of the dry, warm winter: singles were near Prescott 18 Nov (CST), in Madera Canyon 11 Dec (G. Jones), in Ramsey Canyon 18-29 Jan (EW), at Patagonia 20-22 Jan (JWo), and again in Madera Canyon 22-26 Jan (SF). Hammond's Flycatcher winters regularly in riparian areas in s. Arizona, but reports from the Prescott area in Granite Basin 19 Dec-1 Apr (CST), Granite Dells 21 Dec-24 Mar (D. Moll), and Lynx Cr. 1 Jan (S. & S. Burk), as well as singles at Sunflower 16 Jan (TC) and Bill Williams N.W.R. 9 Feb (K. Blair), were likely a result of the mild winter. A Dusky Flycatcher was at Sunflower 16 Jan (TC). "Western Flycatchers" (Pacific-slope/Cordilleran) are normally rarer than the other *Empidonax* species during winter, but reports of no fewer than 6 (likely all Pacific-slopes) were received. Although Eastern Phoebe is a rare-but-regular winter visitor, nine reports was a greater number than usual for one season. A high count of 67 Vermilion Flycatchers on the Tucson Valley C.B.C. in late Dec (*vide* S. Birky) was nearly double the previous high, another indication of the mild conditions. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher at Quigley W.A. near Yuma 25 Dec-12 Jan (HD, PL) provided one of few winter records ever for the L.C.R.V. In a normal winter, there might be a scattering of Ash-throated Flycatchers found in proper winter habitat in s. Arizona; this winter no fewer than 50 were reported, clearly indicating that this species wintered farther n. than the typical winter range, which is largely in w. Mexico. Cassin's Kingbirds also lingered into the winter, with one in Tucson 28 Dec (GHR), at least 6 in the Santa Rita Mts. 1 Jan (G. West), and one near Painted Rock Dam 26 Feb (KR et al.) providing the first *Maricopa* winter record. The Thick-billed Kingbird that returned to Yuma for a 3rd winter remained throughout the period (HD). A Rose-throated Becard (either female or imm. male) at P.L. S.P. 4 Dec-4 Feb provided one of the few winter records for Arizona.

A Bell's Vireo, casual at best during the winter in Arizona, was at G.W.R. 15 Jan+ (RH). Another reported from Tucson 27 Feb (V. McKinnon) may have been an early migrant. Two Warbling Vireos at Yuma 28 Feb+ (A. &

H. Borgardt, HD) were likely early migrants. The sensational bird of the year (or decade!) was a probable Brown-chested Martin photographed at P.L. S.P. 3 Feb (†RW, D. Smyth; ph. Greg Rosenberg). If accepted by the A.B.C., this would represent the first record for Arizona, as well as for the w. United States; there are just two other U.S. records. It is always difficult determining whether swallows seen during the winter season are lingering individuals, wintering birds, or early migrants. This season, scattered Tree Swallows were reported in early Dec, then again in mid-Feb. A Violet-green Swallow was in Hereford 8 Jan (M. Marsden), and several were reported from Saguario L. 28 Jan (D. Stuart). Northern Rough-winged Swallows were numerous in Dec, with a high total of 214 on the Salt/Verde Rivers C.B.C. 14 Dec (*vide* KR), followed by scattered reports in Jan. At least 12 Barn Swallows were also reported during the winter; individuals reported in late Feb likely represented early returning migrants.

The Carolina Wren found in Cave Creek Canyon near Portal in fall was reported into Mar (ph. O. Niehuis, v.r. PD; †J. Hirth); one of the two previous state records remained for nearly two years. About 12 reports of Winter Wrens were received from scattered localities in s. Arizona, perhaps slightly more than usual; both "eastern" and "western" call-types were reported, once again suggesting that birds of both subspecies groups winter in Arizona, though the actual status of each is still uncertain. A pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers along Sonoita Cr. sw. of Patagonia 18 Dec (†MMS, MP) perhaps represent a previously unreported pair. Pairs continued at several established localities, including Proctor Rd. below Madera Canyon, Montosa Canyon, and P.L.S.P. Exceptional for the winter season, a Wood Thrush was in Cave Creek Canyon near Portal 4-12 Dec (M. Meyers; ph. M. Brooks); most of the previous Arizona records are from either fall or late spring. It was an above-average winter for Rufous-backed Robin, with 3 found: one in lower Miller Canyon 3 Jan-3 Mar (C. van Cleve; ph. C. Melton), one at B.T.A. 8 Jan-27 Mar (ph. O. Niehuis, M. Weber), and one in Ramsey Canyon 11-31 Jan (R. Romea). Varied Thrush, casual in the state during winter, was found in Huachuca Canyon 3 Dec (*vide* E. Wilson), nearby Scheelite Canyon 7 Dec (RW, D. Smyth), Granite Basin near Prescott 11 Jan (CST), and in Flagstaff mid-Feb-7 Mar (R. Ray, *vide* P. Kegley). The 2 Gray Catbirds found in Portal in fall wintered there (L. Gates). Sage Thrashers were found farther n. than usual this winter: singles were at Prescott 21 Dec (CST), Overgaard 29 Dec (K. Penland), and at several oth-

er sites above the Mogollon Rim (m.ob.); this species is casual at best during winter in n. Arizona. The Brown Thrashers found during the fall season at B.T.A. and near Hereford were both present throughout the season. A Curve-billed Thrasher was found wintering in Prescott 12 Dec+ (J. Morgan), where this species is considered accidental. A Sprague's Pipit found on the Gila River C.B.C. 27 Dec (TC) was n. and w. of this species' normal winter range in Arizona.

WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

An Olive Warbler reported on the San Francisco Peaks w. of Flagstaff 11 Feb (J. Prather) was perhaps the first winter report from n. Arizona. A Tennessee Warbler, casual in the state during winter, was in Sabino Canyon 21-31 Dec (WR). A Nashville Warbler in Yuma 23 Feb-1 Mar (A. & H. Borgardt, HD) was likely a very early spring migrant. Extraordinary was the report of a Lucy's Warbler from Whitewater 4 Dec (RH); the species is virtually unknown from the state in winter. Northern Parula, normally very rare in the state in winter, was seen with more frequency than usual, with no fewer than nine sightings, mostly during Dec. Another indication of the very mild winter, at least 13 Yellow Warblers were reported in s. Arizona. Four Chestnut-sided Warblers, about normal for any given winter, included one in Scottsdale 2-15 Dec (J. Newel), one in sw. Phoenix 4-17 Dec (TC), one in Marana 14 Dec (RH), and one at Imperial N.W.R. 18 Dec (ph. HD). A Magnolia Warbler, casual in the state in winter, was reported from Rio Rico 17 Dec (J. Ambrose). Black-throated Blue Warbler is also casual in winter; a male was in Sawmill Canyon 10 Dec (A. & A. Miller), while one in Granite Basin near Prescott 19 Dec-6 Jan (D. Moll, CST) provided a first local winter record. Two Yellow-rumped Warblers found on 18 Dec (E. Morral) provided a Mormon Lake C.B.C. first. A Hermit Warbler, casual in the state in winter, was reported from nw. Tucson 18 Dec (E. Moll, S. Walker, M. Flory). The Prairie Warbler found at G.W.R. during the fall was last reported 4 Feb (m.ob.). Another first-year female Prairie was in Chandler 7-21 Jan (†TC; D. Yellan); this species has become more prevalent in Arizona during the past 15 years. The only Palm Warbler reported was at Punkin Center 11-19 Feb (ph. KR), probably representing a first Gila record. Ten Black-and-white Warblers were reported between 3 Dec and 2 Jan. Only one American Redstart was reported. The Ovenbird found at the Phoenix Desert Botanical Gardens during the fall was still being seen as of 27 Feb (ph. PD). Louisiana Waterthrushes wintered at the same localities as last year, along Sonoita Cr. above

Patagonia L. and along the S.P.R. s. of Hwy. 90. Common Yellowthroats were found at higher elevation and farther n. than usual during the late fall and winter; 2 were at Willow L. 11 Nov–6 Jan (CST), one was at Lynx Cr. 25 Nov–21 Dec (W. Anderson), and up to 3 were at Watson L. 6 Jan (CST). Scattered Wilson's Warblers were reported later than usual into Dec, with one exceptionally late at Pena Blanca L. 29 Jan (B. Hilsenhoff). One of the best finds of the winter was a Red-faced Warbler in Humboldt Canyon in the Patagonia Mts. 24 Dec+ (J. Stewart, MB); there are very few U.S. winter records. A Rufous-capped Warbler discovered in upper Sycamore Canyon, Santa Cruz 6 Dec+ (D. Jones, KK; ph. DS) provided the first relatively accessible individual in the state since the species disappeared from French Joe Canyon.

A Western Tanager, casual in the state in winter, was at B.T.A. 26 Dec–19 Feb (G. Burgess et al.). Green-tailed Towhees were found farther n. than usual, with several reports from the Prescott area Nov–Dec (*vide* CST). A Field Sparrow reported from Springerville 12 Feb (†H. & C. Fellows) is under review by the A.B.C. and would represent only a 7th Arizona record if accepted. A Lark Sparrow at Watson L. 21 Dec (ph. S. Burk) was n. of its usual winter range in the

state. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Paloma Ranch 28 Jan–26 Feb (TC) was in an odd habitat; this species is seldom seen away from the grasslands in the se. portion of the state, where it is resident. At least 20 Fox Sparrows were found statewide in the expected ratio (about 75% *schistacea* from the Rocky Mts. and 25% *zaboria* or *iliaca*). No fewer than 20 Swamp, 20 White-throated, 8 Harris's, and 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported this winter, all above normal counts. Up to 2 McCown's Longspurs were present at A.V.S.T.P. 8 Dec–20 Jan (DS, MP), w. of the species' normal winter range in the state. Two Lapland Longspurs, still only casual in the state, were at Reservation Tank 43 km e. of Flagstaff 4 Feb+ (J. Prather et al.).

Both casual in the state in winter, an imm. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in Scheelite Canyon 1 Jan (SH) and a female Black-headed Grosbeak was reported from Portal 5 Feb (M. Willys, *vide* DJ). A male Indigo Bunting was at Banning Cr. in the Mule Mts. 20 Jan (PL); there are very few mid-winter reports from Arizona. A female Orchard Oriole wintered in an Ahwatukee yard for a 4th consecutive year 15 Nov+, and a male appeared there 15 Feb+ (G. & S. Barnes). Another male was in a Queen Creek yard 22–26 Dec (ph. D. Sejkora), and yet another male reappeared in

a Tucson yard 18 Feb+ (N. Markowitz, J. Ogden et al.). Casual in winter, female-plumaged Hooded Orioles were at Ahwatukee 1 Dec+ (G. & S. Barnes) and at Yuma 14 Dec (HD). The Streak-backed Oriole found during the fall at G.W.R. remained until 22 Mar; another was located along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia 18 Dec (ph. GHR, DS), with the same individual being seen sporadically at different locations upstream until 22 Jan (T. Watkins, MB et al.), only a 2nd Santa Cruz record.

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With mild conditions lingering from a late fall season and a slow snow-pack deposition across most of the Region, winter 2005–2006 was nearly a carbon copy of the previous winter. Indeed, because of a fairly stable Aleutian Low coupled with sporadic freeze-up conditions and moist, northerly upper-atmosphere flows, at

least the coastal sections of the southern half of the state continued to produce above-average numbers of late migrants and semi-hardy species. Christmas Bird Counts were at or slightly above long-term averages for species totals and high-lights, and waterbirds, as is typical, dominated accounts of noteworthy species. Many birds previously considered rare and/or irregular in

Alaska a decade ago are now, because of better coverage and experiences of local residents, being found annually and in many cases are widespread, at least on the coastal periphery.

Abbreviation: North Gulf (North Gulf of Alaska). Referenced documentation is on file at the University of Alaska Museum. *Italicized place names or dates* denote especially unusual locations or dates for the noted species.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Although there are occasional reports of Snow Goose into early Dec, an imm. around Juneau 14 Dec–5 Feb (GVV, DM) was unique and one of the Region's few "true" winter reports. Two Brant were very late and rare at Cordova 17 Dec–16 Jan (AL), especially given that most fall migrants bypass the North Gulf, a few, usually singles, winter in milder North Gulf sites. Unusual and late Cackling Geese were reported from Kodiak, with a single present through 18 Dec (ph. RAM), and the Juneau area, with 2 present 14 Dec–15 Jan (GVV). Dabbling ducks covered North Gulf habitats in near-record numbers, which diminished only slightly through the season. Examples of unprecedented winter tallies included 1235 Gadwalls around Kodiak 31 Dec (SS), 638 American Wigeons and 3988 Mallards on the Juneau C.B.C. 17 Dec, 71 Northern Pintail in Gustavus 17 Feb (BP), and 169 Green-winged Teal in Juneau 17 Dec (all *vide* GVV, PS). Collectively, these probably represent the highest counts of "regular" wintering dabblers for the North Gulf subregion. No-

table diving duck reports included 4 Ring-necked Ducks in Gustavus 20 Feb (BP), where they are not annual in winter, at least 9 in Ketchikan 13 Dec (TLG), and another 2 offshore at Metlakalta 18 Feb (AWP, SCH, DWS, AL, BD); an exceptional Southeast tally of 24 Lesser Scaup in Juneau 17+ Dec (*vide* GVV, PS); and a single female Hooded Merganser in Cordova 6 Jan (AL), plus 2 males out in the Gulf at Kodiak 16 Feb (ph. LM). Tufted Ducks were certainly in evidence, with a male in Cordova Oct–6 Jan (AL) and at least 3 on Kodiak lakes 31 Jan–19 Feb (ph. RAM, JBA). Both of these relatively mild coastal sites have a history of harboring winter Tufteds, at least sporadically.

A one-day count of 46 Pacific Loons near Gustavus was noteworthy 18 Feb (BP). The season's only Pied-billed Grebe report was of 2 at Ketchikan's Ward L. 10 Dec+ (ph. SCH, AWP). Only one Brandt's Cormorant was located in the Ketchikan area, where it was seen sporadically all season (ph. AWP, SCH). At the edge of what has become known to be the w. limit of its winter range were 12+ Great Blue Herons in the Kodiak–Old Harbor area through the period (*vide* RAM). Raptor highlights include 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks in Gustavus 8 Jan–3 Feb (ND, PV, BP) and at least 6 in the Ketchikan area all season (AWP, SCH) and a few northerly Merlins in Anchorage through 3 Feb (TT) and Palmer 6 Feb (AL). At least 4 Red-tailed Hawks in the Ketchikan area, where singles are only occasional in winter, were noted 1 Jan–27 Feb (ph. SCH, AWP), a high winter tally; the later birds were considered northbound migrants, but one 27 Feb was a well-documented light-morph Harlan's Hawk, previously unsubstantiated in the state in winter. Moreover, there are few substantiated records of *harlani* from any season in Southeast. An imm. Golden Eagle was a rare coastal winter find in Juneau 16–28 Feb (BD, AL, DWS, ph. MS et al.).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Significantly late but within the range of recent late fall reports was a single Black-bellied Plover in Gustavus 2 Dec (ND). Killdeer went unreported from all coastal sites except for the Juneau area, which produced extremely high counts of 29 on N. Douglas I. 20–27 Feb (PS) and 11 near Salmon Creek 25 Feb (GVV). Juneau's habitats supported up to 50 through the season, which continues a recent trend of unusually high numbers there. Two

different mid-season Greater Yellowlegs showed up in the Gustavus area, 1 Dec–5 Feb and 19 Dec (ND, BP, PV). Any *Tringa* after early Dec is unprecedented. Gustavus also had above-average peaks of 500 Sanderlings and 3000 Dunlins 19 Feb (BP). Two banded Dunlins from that group had been captured from a breeding population on the Yukon Delta near the Tutakoke R. in 2004 and 2005. The Upper Cook Inlet wintering population of Rock Sandpipers (nominate subspecies) shifted to the e. side of the Inlet, probably in



This female Brewer's Blackbird in Gustavus, Alaska 11 through (here) 17 February 2006 represented the state's most northerly winter record. Photograph by Nat Drumheller.

response to the mid-Dec cold snap; upwards of 10,000 birds remained in the Kasilof–Kenai Flats through the period, in areas where few had ever been found previously (TE, REG). Unprecedented as a winter species was a lone Long-billed Dowitcher in the Gustavus area 7 Dec–18 Feb (BP, ND); most are gone from the North Gulf by mid-Oct. Of the handful of winter Wilson's Snipe observations, a tally of 7 in the Ketchikan area 15 Jan (AWP, SCH) set a local mid-winter record and one of the Region's high counts after Dec.

Larid highlights were surprisingly few after late migrants noted from Dec, including an ad. California Gull at Juneau that remained through late Feb (RJG), an ad. Slaty-backed Gull in the Homer Spit flocks late Dec–8 Jan (NH, AL, BD), and several ad. and first-winter Thayer's Gulls area through the period in the Kodiak area (ph. RAM), where they are not annual. The season's only notable Marbled Murrelet concentrations came from the Ketchikan environs, with a local peak of 2000 estimated 12 Feb at Mountain Pt. (AWP, SCH, TLG). Cassin's Auklets also made a rare showing in the same area, where they are generally absent in winter, with counts of 32 from Clover Passage 14 Jan (AWP) and another 3

near Pt. Higgins as late as 20 Feb (AWP, SCH). Most Cassin's presumably winter well offshore of the Alexander Archipelago. Crested Auklets appeared well inshore in the North Gulf, both at Kodiak, where numbers are often detected, and into Resurrection Bay, where they are casual in winter. Small numbers, 5–10, were described from off the Seward docks 14–15 Feb (CG), and up to 30 were noted in the vicinity through the period. At Kodiak, MacIntosh noted that although Cresteds can be abundant offshore and at several traditional sites in winter, this year's observations included huge flocks occupying inshore waters, with a maximum count of 14,433 from the Narrow Cape area 31 Dec and later (RAM).

OWLS THROUGH PIPITS

Following trends of the past few years, owls made news early and across the Region's s. half. Again, Great Gray and Boreal Owls were vocalizing during warming trends from the Tanana R. Flats s. of Fairbanks in Jan–Feb (*vide* Alaska B.O.). Apart from Ketchikan's regulars, the season's only Western Screech-Owl was one calling 19 Feb in the Gustavus area (ND), where they have been nearly regular the past few years. Snowy Owl sightings were above average at sites where they

are not annual after fall migration, including at least 5 in the Gustavus flats 4 Dec–8 Feb (ND, BP, PV), several of which likely perished; another specimen from Annette I. off Ketchikan from 1 Dec (*vide* SCH); a single in Petersburg 15 Dec+ (RL); and one from Kodiak 12 Dec (HH). Northern Hawk Owls are always rare out onto the Southeast coast, so singles at Gustavus 28 Dec–7 Jan (KW, ND) and in Juneau 7 Dec+ (EB, JJ) were special. Following what was considered a record fall season for Northern Pygmy-Owls in Southeast, at least 4 remained in the Ketchikan area through the period (AWP, SCH), up to 3 were located around Juneau 3 Dec–14 Feb (GVV, PR, MS, PS), and maybe 3 others were documented in Gustavus 20 Dec–17 Feb (ND). Prior to about 2000, this mainly winter visitor had been confined to coastal Southeast sites from Juneau southward, with an occasional summer report from the Southeast mainland watersheds. Winter reports are now more widespread and even annual along several Southeast rivers, especially in the Chilkat Valley. Two Short-eared Owls were unusual for Gustavus 1 Dec–5 Feb (ND, BP, PV), and 2 were on the Kodiak flats 1 Dec–8 Feb (RAM, ND, JD, MM, IB). Furnishing one of few local

reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl after Dec, one around Anchorage 30 Dec–19 Jan (*fide* SS) was unusual.

Northern Flickers were more in evidence this winter compared to long-term averages, especially in the Ketchikan area, where a count of 25 on the C.B.C. 17 Dec (*fide* AWP) was representative of their presence through the season. Scattered singles were reported from other coastal sites. Following a very normal fall passage, Northern Shrike reports were few except for a good count of 6 wintering at Kodiak through at least 31 Dec (RAM). Few observers mentioned Golden-crowned Kinglets, even within their regular winter ranges and habitats, and there were no reports from the ephemeral habitats along the North Gulf or from the Boreal/Coastal Forest interface in Cook Inlet or Prince William Sound. Anecdotally at least, it seems this species has been retreating out of these ephemeral wintering areas for the 10 years or so.

This winter's Townsend's Solitaire reports again came from Upper Cook Inlet, with singles located in Bird Creek 26 Dec (TT) and in Anchorage 3-4 Feb (*fide* SS). As has been the case for years, the presence of solitaires in the Region in winter is attributable to the widespread availability of exotic plantings of fruit-bearing landscape plants in the greater Anchorage area; sheltered local concentrations of Mountain Ash in Turnagain Arm and in Homer also support frugivores, especially in low snowpack years. The season's latest Hermit Thrush was a single in Gustavus 17-21 Dec (ND). American Robins were widespread in slightly elevated numbers led by a peak count of 115 from the Ketchikan C.B.C. 17 Dec (*fide* AWP). Probably the most northerly winter record for the continent, the wail White Wagtail, first located in Nov in Ketchikan, remained in disturbed edges of gravel parking lots there through the period (ph. SCH, AWP). American Pipits made a very strong showing this winter, with a record 21+ present in Ketchikan all season (SCH, AWP), including maximum day counts of 8 each from Ketchikan 15 Jan and Annette I. 18 Feb (SCH, AWP, DWS, AL, BD) and singles from Juneau 13 Feb (BA, PS) and Kodiak 31 Dec (RAM). These likely represent the most ever reported from a winter season.

About average in the winter warbler trend for the past decade were an Orange-crowned Warbler in Juneau 12 Dec–5 Jan (ph. MS, GVV, RJG) and single Yellow-rumped Warblers from Annette I. 18 Feb (SCH, AWP, DWS, AL, BD) and from well n. at Trapper's Creek Dec–20 Feb (*fide* DP): the latter represents the Region's northernmost winter record of any parulid. Semi-hardy sparrows

were found in scattered coastal sites, often at feeders, in numbers slightly above long-term averages. Always rare anywhere in the Region after Nov, a Savannah Sparrow wintered in the Ketchikan area 31 Dec–9 Feb (AWP, SCH), a 2nd local winter find. A single Lincoln's Sparrow offshore in Southeast on Annette I. 18 Feb (AWP, SCH, DWS, AL, BD), and about 4 in the Kodiak area all season (RAM), was a normal winter tally. One of the fall season's Swamp Sparrows lingered at a Juneau feeder through 20 Dec (PS); although the species is now annual in Southeast in fall, there are still few mid-winter records. Three White-throated Sparrows at Homer late Dec–8 Jan (*fide* AL, BD), Juneau Dec–25 Feb (GVV), and Ketchikan 17 Dec+ (SCH) made an average season for the species, which is rare but regular in fall and winter at coastal sites. A Harris's Sparrow in Homer late Dec–8 Jan (*fide* AL) provided the only report of the species, which was very rare but nearly annual at feeders in Southeast for a long stretch of winter seasons in the 1970s and 1980s but not since. White-crowned Sparrow reports of note included one n. of the Alaska Range at a Fairbanks feeder 5 Dec–31 Jan (*fide* Alaska B.O.) and 5 on Annette I. 18 Feb (AWP, SCH, DWS, AL, BD). Two Snow Buntings found on one day in Fairbanks 3 Jan (Alaska B.O.) were not without precedent for midwinter but certainly represented a rare find from the Interior. McKay's Buntings staged a mini-in-cursion s. and e. of their normal Bering Sea coast winter range, with 2 at Kodiak 17-28 Feb (ph. RAM), where they are occasional, and 2 n. to Cook Inlet near Kenai 25-28 Feb (*fide* TE). These are the northernmost McKay's for Cook Inlet.

Red-winged Blackbirds are casual in winter, usually in Dec as late migrants, so a male in Anchorage 30 Jan–8 Feb (*fide* SS) and up to 9 in the Juneau area 11-23 Feb (GVV, LE) were significant mid-winter records. On the heels of local fall reports, a Western Meadowlark made a winter living on some ball-fields near Ketchikan 4 Dec–23 Feb (ph. SCH, AWP), a 6th Ketchikan record. Single Brewer's Blackbirds in Gustavus 11-17 Feb (ph. ND, PV) and Ketchikan Oct–18 Feb (ph. SCH, AWP) made an average winter tally, at least for recent years; the Gustavus bird represents the Region's northernmost in winter. The Ketchikan area's fall Common Grackle remained at its favored feeder through 17 Feb (SCH, AWP). There are few Alaska winter reports of this generally casual visitor.

Two Bramblings that materialized in Kodiak late in the fall remained at a local feeder through Feb (*fide* RAM), the season's only report. Wandering Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches

were presumably pushed out of coastal or alpine winter niches into Anchorage neighborhoods, one each from 30 Jan–8 Feb and 6 Feb (SS). Rosy-finches are found occasionally away from more traditional North Gulf Coast winter sites and into Upper Cook Inlet. One Purple Finch in Juneau (LE, BW) and a female n. to Cordova, both 17 Dec (AL et al.), were likely late migrants and furnished the season's only reports; it is surprising that this species is not more widely found in fall and winter, given its range and distribution over the Coast Range and n. into w. British Columbia and sw. Yukon Territory. Only Gustavus observers noted an abundance of the conifer cone crop, with an associated late-Dec incursion of White-winged Crossbills. Several nests with young were found there in Feb (ND). Few to none were reported elsewhere in the entire Region. For the first time ever, late-winter population increases of Common Redpolls, which typically bring massive numbers of birds across much of the Region by mid-Feb, never materialized. Most locations had few to no redpolls, save for an occasional flyby pair, whereas hundreds to thousands are typically the norm. Redpoll wanderings have been shown via band returns to include circumpolar trips to and from Alaska and northern sections of the Palearctic.

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British Columbia



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The season began and ended with cold snaps, but the bulk of the winter was yet another mild one. The most notable event was the month-long spate of rain in the South Coastal sections beginning mid-December. Valley snowfall was meager everywhere in the interior. It was a stormy season for the outer coast, with Solander Island off the northwestern side of Vancouver Island recording peak gusts exceeding 130 km/h on 14 days between 1 December and 4 February, topping out at a wild 172 km/h on 31 January. The generally mild weather allowed many species to remain farther north than usual. Most notable this winter, however, was the absence of finches.

WATERFOWL THROUGH DOVES

Hanging out with both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, an ad. Bewick's Swan was in Delta 20 Jan–21 Feb (ph. RTo et al.). A male Gadwall was late in Williams L. 2 Dec (PR). Northern Pintails remained unusually far n. and late this winter. A male was in Prince George 10 Dec (SL, CA), later joined by a female 7 Jan (SL, NK), a first winter checklist record; one was at the n. end of Kootenay L. 6 Jan (MJ); and 3 overwintered at Williams L. for the first time ever (PR). Long-tailed Ducks are rare in the s. interior, so a female was notable at Robson 16 Dec (MMc). Few scoters were reported from the interior this winter, one exception being a White-winged Scoter rather late in Williams L. 2 Dec (PR). Several Red-breasted Mergansers found in inland locations remained into Feb, such as one at Lardeau (MJ).

An imm. Yellow-billed Loon was on Woods Lake 14 Dec (CC, GW, CS), rare for the interior, particularly in the winter season. Clark's Grebes were more numerous along the coast this winter; one offshore from Es-

quimalt Lagoon furnished a first Victoria record in 20 years (*vide* DA), and yet another was at the Little Qualicum Estuary 13 Dec (GLM et al.); probably the same individual was seen at the mouth of the Englishman R. Estuary 4 Jan (GLM). Turkey Vultures returning to the interior tied last year's record-early date with a single bird in Naramata 10 Feb (JT). Gyrfalcons were more prevalent in the s. interior this winter than last, with at least 3 present, one just n. of Vernon 3 Dec (DGC). Dunlin is very rare in the interior in winter; one was found at Castlegar 30 Dec–3 Jan (MJ, JA). In a flooded corn stubble field near Parksville, a Ruff was discovered 23 Dec (†GLM); winter sightings of this species are rare, and this may represent the first winter record for the province. Winter coastal storms in mid-late Dec resulted in Red Phalaropes wrecking in coastal areas: at least 10 birds were found onshore at Carmanah Light Station 23 Dec (JE), and flocks of live birds reported included 54 at Jordan R. and 19 at Wifin Spit 30 Dec (GD et al.). This was a fine year for coastal Slaty-backed Gulls, with single ads. near Courtenay 4–5 Dec (JB, GLM) in Chilliwack 22 Jan (ph. GG); others were noted in early spring. Vernon's Lesser Black-backed Gull reappeared 2 Dec–14 Jan (ph. DGC) at the mouth of Vernon Cr; it later appeared along the Pentiction waterfront 2–3 Feb (ph. LN) and was sporadically seen back in Vernon through the end of the period (DGC). The small Cawston resident population of Eurasian Collared-Doves was counted at a record-high 174 on 29 Dec (*vide* DB).

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Snowy Owls had a good showing this winter throughout the interior and were particularly prevalent in the Boundary Bay area. Northern Hawk Owls were reported in singles from around the interior in average numbers, whereas Northern Pygmy-Owls were very scarce. Northern Saw-whet Owls were numerous, especially in the s. Okanagan, where a stunning 52 were tallied 27 Dec (RJC, RCa, CD, BS) during the Vaseux Lake C.B.C. While this doubles the previous Canadian C.B.C. record, it is just shy of the overall C.B.C. record of 61 (*vide* RJC). Anna's Hummingbirds wander as far n. as Prince George almost annually, but they rarely survive; one was in P.G. 16 Dec (*vide* EL). A Rufous Hummingbird was very late in Victoria 3 Dec (DA). A hybrid male Northern Flicker may not have survived the winter n. of Dawson Creek had it not learned to feed on suet (MD).

Two exceptionally late Say's Phoebes were found along the w. side of Osoyoos 1 Jan (DH). Indicating an increase in numbers in

the Kootenays, 9 Blue Jays were tallied on the Creston C.B.C. 29 Dec. American Crows rarely stay the winter in the Peace R. area, but 6 were still in Chetwynd 2 Dec (MP). Common Ravens tallied at a roost near Bessborough came to an astounding 2697 on 25 Feb (MP), by far the largest roost ever recorded in the province. Northern Rough-winged Swallows have occasionally participated in the late-winter swallow invasion, and this year 2 were found at the Carmanah Point Lightstation 15 Feb (JE). Two Barn Swallows were at Swan L., Victoria 23 Jan (CSa); 3 were along the S. Thompson Rd. e. of Kamloops 26 Jan (JBr); and a single endured -4° C weather in Fort St. James 12 Feb (RR). This winter's swallow invasion was modest compared to the past few winter seasons; whether this pertains to less reporting or an actual decrease in the number of birds involved is unknown.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were present in unprecedented numbers in the s. interior, with a high count of 7 along Mission Cr., Kelowna 7 Jan (RyT). An American Robin that probably stayed the winter in Dawson Creek, where very rare, was found 22 Feb (MP). An exceptionally late Gray Catbird was hiding out in one of the oxbows just n. of Osoyoos 8 Dec (†LN). A rather stunning find was a Northern Mockingbird on the Merritt C.B.C. 3 Jan (ph. MoMc et al.), which had been in the area in late Dec feeding on Mountain Ash berries; yet another was in Cranbrook 7 Jan (GR). American Pipits are very rare in winter in the interior; 5 were along the Okanagan River Channel just n. of Osoyoos 8 Dec (LN), and one was along the Nechako R. 18 Dec (ph. DD, TH, HA), a first local winter record. A Cape May Warbler was a terrific winter find in Nakusp 2–27 Jan (CC, KS; ph. GSD). Also late in Nakusp was a Myrtle Warbler 2 Jan (CC, KS). The province's first Pine Warbler, found at the tail end of the fall season, was last seen at Lillooet 2 Dec (vt. IR). A Western Meadowlark spent mid-Dec–mid-Jan at Cluculz L. (ph. DW et al.), and another 5 wintered in Quesnel (*vide* PR), both sites rather far n. for wintering meadowlarks. Although Common Grackles are a relatively common sight in the Peace R. area in summer, they are extremely rare in winter; one spent 1–7 Jan in Arras (MP). Despite the lack of winter finches across the province, American Goldfinches were still found in relatively good numbers, e.g., 46 at Milburn L. 26 Feb (*vide* CA) and 5–6 at Buckhorn 11 Feb (ph. MK), the latter a first winter record for the Prince George area. Casual in the province, a Brambling was discovered in Duncan 28 Jan+ (DM).

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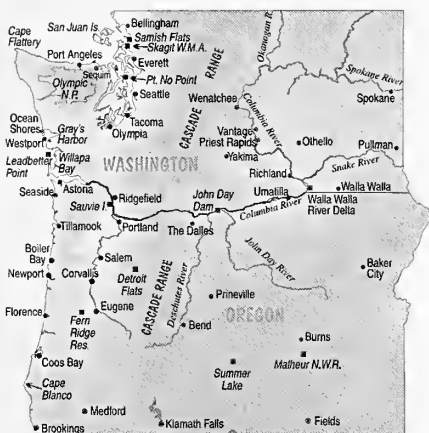
Antoniazzi (Prince George), Helen Antoniazzi, Jack Bowling (weather summary), Jan Bradshaw, John Brighton, Doug Brown, Richard J. Cannings, Russell Cannings, Chris Charlesworth, Chris Dale, Gabe David, Gary Davidson (Kootenays), Molly Donaldson, Dan Dunlop, Jerry Eitzkorn, Gordie

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Oregon & Washington



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During December, most of the Region was 2–4° F below normal, except coastal regions, which were slightly warmer than average. The first few weeks were very dry (though in many places, very foggy), and then the rain began. From mid-December through January, the Region was drenched, Seattle having its third wettest January ever, while precipitation in Oregon was 86% above normal. February was a touch drier than typical and had near-normal temperatures, allowing birders to return to the field.

The season's main event went almost unnoticed. From Sora to Pacific Golden-Plover to Williamson's Sapsucker to Western Tanager, species considered mega-rarities during the winter season a decade ago are now almost greeted with yawns. The absence of northern species from this list, along with these overwintering birds, implies a real and climate-related phenomenon.

Abbreviations: F.R.R. (Fern Ridge Res., Lane), N.S.C.B. (N. Spit Coos Bay, Coos); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor); P.T. (Puget Trough), W.V. (Willamette Valley), W.W.R.D. (Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla). "East-side" and "westside" indicate locations east and west of the Cascade crest, respectively.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAILS

Emperor Geese "invaded" for the first time since 2001–2002, with 8 detected, all in w. Oregon, including 3 at Astoria 22 Feb (MP) and 2 at Eugene 12 Feb (C. Haskell). Prior to 1995, there were but two westside Blue Goose records, yet this year one was found again among the hordes of Snow Geese on Fir I., Skagit 12–25 Feb (CCx, SM, JB); these Snow Geese breed on Siberia's Wrangel I., and over the past decade, small numbers of Blue Geese have occurred annually at both Wrangel I. (K. Litvin) and that population's wintering areas in Skagit/Snohomish. As many as 10 peculiar geese, all of similar lineage, have appeared during late winter/early spring over the past few years in e. Washington's Columbia Basin (see N.A.B. 58: 423 and 59: 317). Careful study has revealed that these are hybrids, or backcrosses, between Snow (or Blue) and Canada Geese. This winter's birds appeared more like Blue Goose × Canada Goose hybrids than Snow × Canada: one near Moses L., Grant 16 Feb (ph. MB) and 2 at McNary N.W.R., Walla Walla 25 Feb (ph. SM, BF, M&MLD). Ross's Geese showed poorly away their normal se. Oregon haunts, with only 4 singles found, all on the westside; the Region has averaged 10 per winter over the past five years. Three interior westside Black Brant represented an average winter: Eugene, through the winter (S. Maulding), Shillapoo Bottoms, Clark 13 Jan (P&RS), and near Corvallis 31 Jan (M. Momroe). For the 2nd consecutive year, an apparent intergrade Brant, thought to be Black Brant × Dark-bellied Brant (*nigri-*

cans × *bernicla*), appeared in the Puget Trough, this one at Useless Bay, Island 31 Dec (ph. SM); in 1997, five mixed colonies of *bernicla* and *nigricans* were found in Siberia, and *nigricans* banded in Siberia have appeared in North America (Kear 2005, *Ducks, Geese, and Swans*; N.A.B. 59: 133). Two Greater White-fronted × Canada/Cackling Geese hybrids stopped near Moses L. 16 Feb (MB), while a Greater White-fronted Goose × Cackling Goose visited McNary N.W.R. 25 Feb (SM, BF); there is only one prior Regional record of this cross. Two Dusky Canada Geese (subspecies *occidentalis*) at Nisqually 15 Jan–7 Feb were in the P.T., where very rare during winter (T. Leukering, CCx, SM). Five *minima* Cackling Geese, rare in e. Washington, were at McNary N.W.R. 25 Feb (BF, SM, M&MLD), and 8 visited Moses L. 26 Feb (SM, DSc); these birds were likely migrants, and one wonders where they spent the winter.

Trumpeter Swans continue to thrive, with 1500 near Clear L., Skagit 12 Feb (B. Boyd) and an Oregon-record 62 at Airle, Polk 9 Jan (JG). It was a banner year for Bewick's Swans, with an ad. and an imm. near Mt. Vernon, Skagit 2 Jan (DD, ph. SM), a different ad. near Bow, Skagit 7 Jan (†SM, M. Axelson), an ad. on Fir I. 25 Feb (JB, †CCx), and an ad. near Centralia, Lewis 26 Feb (vt. BT); 4 or 5 birds were involved, adding to only three previous Washington records, the first of which was in 2002. This change appears real, not just a reflection of increased observer effort. A gathering of 300 Wood Ducks at Springfield, Lane 8 Feb was exceptional (LM). The male Falcatid

SA In these pages, we've detailed the northward range expansion of many species, but one has escaped mention: Cackling Goose. Cackling Geese were rare winterers in our Region until the mid-1970s, when thousands (apparently mostly *B. h. taverneri*) suddenly appeared in the W.V. (B. Jarvis). In the late 1980s, these were joined by approximately 20,000 *B. h. minima* (almost the entire population at that time), which had abruptly shifted their wintering grounds from California to the W.V. and lower Columbia R., possibly due to drought in California (B. Jarvis). By the late 1990s this population had exploded to approximately 250,000 (*Birds of Oregon*, Marshall et al. 2003). In 1990, several hundred Cackling Geese started wintering about 160 km farther n. at Nisqually, with the flock increasing to about 1500 by the year 2000 (P&RS); this winter, the flock was approximately 60% *minima* and 40% *taverneri* (SM). About 800 Cacklings, with a similar mix, appeared 80 km farther n. in Kent, King this winter as well (SM, JB, CW), and a flock of 30 *taverneri* plus one *minima* was near the Canadian border at Ferndale, Whatcom 19 Feb (SM, JB, CCx). It seems likely that within a decade Cackling Geese will be wintering throughout the P.T.

Duck returned to the Eugene area for the 3rd straight winter, spending most of Dec in Coburg (P. Patricelli) and then reappearing in nw. Eugene 5 Feb (R. Robb). *Klamath* has traditionally attracted numbers of Eurasian Wigeon unheard of elsewhere on the eastside. Ten were found there 25–26 Feb (DI); elsewhere on the eastside, the season's total of 17 was above normal. A swarm of 250,000 Mallards, approximately one percent of the North American population (Wetlands International, 2002. *Waterbird Population Estimates*), was on Samish Bay, *Skagit* 2 Jan (SM, DD). A Blue-winged Teal, not annual during winter, visited Tillamook 21 Dec (KT). Oregon's 2nd Baikal Teal was shot by a hunter on Sauvie I. 17 Dec. (*vide* J. Riutta); ironically, the first met a similar fate near Corvallis in 1974. Only 5 Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal and 2 Common × Green-winged Teal intergrades were detected, well below recent norms. Canvasback numbers were supra-normal in w. Oregon, as demonstrated by a flock of 250+ at Jackson Bottoms, *Washington* 6 Jan, which about doubled the previous W.V. record (S. Pinnock). A huge flock of *Aythya* ducks in Priest Rapids Pool, *Grant/Kittitas* contained 4820 Redheads and 1000 Ring-necked Ducks 12 Jan (RH). Two Tufted Ducks this winter was about par: one in Kent, *King* 8–22 Jan (JB, SM) and one at Meares L., *Tillamook* 11 Feb+ (B. McDermott). Continuing recent trends, enormous numbers of Greater Scaup were found along the Columbia R. A gathering of 10,000 scaup at Priest Rapids Pool 12 Jan (RH) likely contained about 9000 Greaters, while 4800 Greaters were identified across from Government Camp, *Hood River* 5 Jan (SJ). Approximately 5% of North America's Greater Scaup and 2% of the continent's Redheads appear to winter along the Region's stretch of the Columbia R. A King Eider enlivened Waldport, *Lincoln* 5–17 Dec (S. Lockyear, AC); Oregon has but eight accepted records, the last from 1999. An astonishing 80,000+ Surf and 35,000+ White-winged Scoters passed Boiler Bay, *Lincoln* 30 Dec (PP, D. Tracy). On the eastside, where not annual during winter, a White-winged Scoter inhabited Potholes Res., *Grant* 5–11 Dec (DSc), and 2 were near Vantage, *Kittitas* 10 Feb (P&RS). A tally of 1335 Common Goldeneye in Priest Rapids Pool 12 Jan was exceptional (RH). Five eastside Long-tailed Ducks represented the worst winter showing since 1999. Though Banks L., *Grant* attracts more Red-breasted Mergansers than elsewhere on the eastside, 76 there 19 Dec was unprecedented (RH).

A late pulse of 2500 Red-throated Loons passed Lincoln City 2 Dec (PP). Rare during winter on the eastside after mid-Dec, a Pacific

Loon stopped at Kennewick, *Benton* 2 Jan (R. Johnson). Only 5 westside Yellow-billed Loons were found, but one at Washburn I., *Okanogan* 5–21 Feb yielded a very rare eastside record (†R. Hendrick, M. Spencer). Seventeen westside Clark's Grebes furnished a fine seasonal total and included a maximum of 3 at Tacoma 17 Dec (CW); one at Richland, *Benton* 1 Jan made an extremely rare eastside winter record (BL, NL). A Northern Fulmar, extremely rare in the P.T., was near Anacortes, *Skagit* 5 Feb (DP). A windstorm 28 Dec drove several dark shearwaters into the P.T., where very rare, including 3 Short-taileds at Seattle (ST), 3 Short-tailed/Sooty at Richmond Beach, *King* (DD), and 2 at Edmonds, *Snohomish* 28 Dec (DD). Winter Brown Pelicans have become almost annual in Oregon, but not in Washington, so one at Long Beach, Pa-



Prior to 1993, there were but three Oregon–Washington winter records of Western Tanager. Subsequently, Western Tanagers have become nearly annual in winter. This year's contribution was this male at Eugene, Oregon on 17 January 2006. Photograph by Barbara Combs.

cific 6 Jan was quite unexpected (C. Flick, S. Fletcher); in Oregon, 3 were in *Lincoln* and *Clatsop* during early Jan. Pelagic Cormorants up the Columbia R. at Woodland, *Cowlitz* 14 Jan (P&RS) and near the mouth of the Sandy R., *Multnomah/Clark* 12 Jan–6 Feb (S. Shunk, WC) were unprecedented so far inland. Extremely rare on the eastside during winter, an American Bittern enlivened Columbia N.W.R., *Grant* 5 Dec and 19 Jan (RH). Great Egrets again appeared on the eastside this winter, with singles at Pasco, *Franklin* 17 Dec (DR), Kennewick, *Benton* 20 Jan (DR), and Casey Pond, *Walla Walla* 12 Feb (M&MLD). Two Cattle Egrets were at Port Orford, *Curry* 23 Dec (*vide* TR); this species is nearly annual during winter, typically as holdovers from fall, so these 2 were quite surprising inasmuch as the fall's only Cattle Egret was 180 km offshore! A tally of 90 Black-crowned Night-Herons at Moses L., *Grant* 4 Dec was utterly unprecedented for winter in Washington (DSc). Turkey Vultures are very rare in Washington before mid-Feb, but this year nw. Washington had one during Dec and 7 in Jan, and 2 were near Yakima 8 Jan (*vide* D. MacRae), providing only the 3rd Dec/Jan

record for e. Washington. Wintering Turkey Vulture numbers in Oregon continue to increase as evidenced by 16 wintering near Eugene (DH).

Osprey, very rare during winter on the eastside, were at Redmond, *Deschutes* 21 Dec (S. Dougill) and Bend 21 Dec (S. Dougill). A tally of 68 Bald Eagles near Fort Rock, *Lake* 5 Jan was a goodly count for anywhere on the eastside, especially this area devoid of large lakes (CM, MM). Washington's only Red-shouldered Hawk remained near Rochester, *Thurston* 31 Dec–18 Feb (ph. GG, P. Hicks), while one near Klamath Falls 25 Dec–23 Jan was in se. Oregon, where now nearly annual during winter (D. Haupt, F. Lospalluto). Huge numbers of raptors wintered in *Umatilla* and *Walla Walla*, including 210 Red-tailed Hawks near Umapine, *Umatilla* 19 Jan (M&MLD) and 108 along Frog Hollow Rd., *Walla Walla* 21 Jan (M&MLD). Swainson's Hawks overwintering near Alvadore, *Lane* (F. Chancey, ph. DH) and at Ankeny N.W.R. 9 Feb (ph. KT) provided the 2nd and 3rd Oregon winter records for a species once considered absent from North America in winter. Ferruginous Hawks were unusually numerous and widespread this winter. Sixteen were near Fort Rock, *Lake* 5 Jan (CM, MM), while an amazing 4 were found on the westside, where very rare: Airlie, *Polk* 8 Jan+ (JG), near Perrydale, *Polk* 16 Jan (J. Gatchet, M. Ratzlaff), near Monmouth, *Polk* 9 Feb (J. Harding, B. Thackaberry), and New R. bottoms, *Curry* 26 Feb+ (D. Pitkin). In ne. Oregon and se. Washington, migrant Ferruginous were numerous by mid-Feb, about two weeks early, with the first occurring in *Walla Walla* 2 Jan (M&MLD, C. Johnson) and near Benton City 5 Feb (BW). A tally of 53 American Kestrels near Umapine 19 Jan was exceptional (M&MLD). A Prairie Merlin (subspecies *richardsoni*), very rare in the Region, visited Soap L., *Grant* 25 Feb (†DSc). Only 6 Gyrfalcons were found in Washington, about half the norm, while 3 in Oregon was near average; the most southerly was at Cape Blanco, *Curry* 26 Dec (TJW). Three Prairie Falcons in w. Washington was a tad above average, while they were again present in above-average numbers in the W.V. A species that has recently attained "annual-during-winter" status in Washington is Sora, with singles near Wiser L., *Whatcom* 18 Dec (D. McNeely) and at Bowerman Basin, *Grays Harbor* 2 Jan (P&RS). The oft-ignored American Coot collected in staggering numbers at Priest Rapids Pool, where they feasted on Eurasian Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), with 23,300 tallied 12 Jan (RH). A Sandhill Crane was near Fall City, *King* 8 Dec–1 Jan (EH, A. Bauer), 2

flew past Seattle 17 Dec (J. Bragg), and one was near Bellingham in late Dec (*vide* T.R. Wahl); Sandhills are very rare in n. Washington during winter.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Washington's 7th winter Pacific Golden-Plover inhabited the Samish Flats, *Skagit* 24 Dec–12 Feb (MB); now annual during winter in Oregon, one graced Halsey, *Linn* 26 Dec (M. Nikas, R. Armstrong). Ever-increasing numbers of Snowy Plovers are wintering at Midway Beach, *Pacific*, with a Washington-record 60 there 26 Feb (MB). Another species that has recently attained "annual-during-winter" status in Washington is Lesser Yellowlegs; one was at Crockett L., *Island* 6 Feb (DP). In Oregon, where more established as a winter visitor, Lesser Yellowlegs adorned Turner, *Marion* 11 Dec (R. Gerig) and ER.R. 23 Feb (S. McDonald). Two Marbled Godwits graced Port Washington, *Clallam* 19 Dec (S. Atkinson), and one was near LaConner, *Skagit* 8 Jan (*vide* G. Bletsch); this species is rare during winter away from the outer coast. Now nearly regular during winter on the eastside, up to 6 Least Sandpipers inhabited Moses L., *Grant* through 14 Jan (DSc), and one visited Benington L., *Walla Walla* 4 Jan (M&MLD). The Region's first winter Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was found on Fir I., *Skagit* 5 Dec (C. Wise, L. Kittleson). Good numbers of Dunlins were again noted in the Columbia Basin, with 82 at W.W.R.D. 25 Feb (BF SM) and 40 at Moses L. 5 Dec (DSc). The Region's first winter Curlew Sandpiper visited Charleston, *Coos* 18–22 Dec (AC, ph. DH). There were several winter wrecks of Red Phalaropes, resulting in large numbers on the coast, such as 641 on the Grays Harbor C.B.C. (*vide* B. Morse), 1000 at Coos Bay 24 Dec (TR), and 2841 on the Port Orford C.B.C. 23 Dec (*vide* J. Rogers). Interestingly, many of these fell prey to Snowy Owls. Top inland tallies were 21 at Forest Grove, *Washington* 27 Dec (M. A. Sohlstrom) and 23 at ER.R. during late Dec (S. Maulding). Most notable, however, was the eastside's first winter Red Phalarope near Umapine, *Umatilla* 23 Dec (ph. C. Freese).

Six Mew Gulls near Wallula, *Walla Walla* 25 Feb was a record for the far eastside (SM, M&MLD, BF), while 18 at Hood River 2 Dec matched last year's record high count established at the same location (SJ). Washington's 5th Lesser Black-backed Gull visited Wallula 25 Feb (ph. BF, ph. SM); all but one of Washington's records are from the eastside. Washington's 9th Slaty-backed Gull was at Renton, *King* 8–18 Feb (†CCx, ph. JB). A goodly 33

Glaucous Gulls were detected, with a maximum of 6 at Wallula 30 Jan (M&MLD). An apparent Glaucous Gull × Herring Gull hybrid visited Tacoma 18 Feb (JB, CCx, SM). A winter storm blew a Black-legged Kittiwake into farmland near Brady, *Grays Harbor* 5 Feb (T. O'Brien). A Cassin's Auklet, very rare in the P.T., was near Restoration Pt., *Kitsap* 31 Dec (†W. Palsson). Two dead Parakeet Auklets washed up along the beach near Newport 6 Feb (Bob Loeffel); this species is not quite annual in Oregon, and most records are of dying or dead birds found after Dec.

Eurasian Collared-Doves exploded across e. Washington, while inexplicably disappearing from Oregon: 11 were near Moses L., *Grant* 17 Dec–8 Jan (ph. RH), up to 3 were in Mansfield, *Douglas* 7 Jan–12 Feb (vt. BT, BLB, K. Brown), 2 remained through the winter at Washtucna, *Adams* (BF), one was in Davenport, *Lincoln* 29 Jan (GS), and one was in Sprague, *Lincoln* 2 Feb (T. Munson); 35 col-

ington and 14 in Oregon; maxima included 10 at O.S. 10 Dec (P&RS), 8 on the Waterville Plateau, *Douglas* 25 Feb (DSc), and 8 at Skagit W.M.A. 20 Feb (TA). The southernmost was in *Klamath* 8 Feb (MM). Thirteen Burrowing Owls in e. Washington was well above normal, while in w. Oregon, only one was found: Perrydale, *Polk* 15 Dec (G. Lindeman). A Barred Owl, very rare in the Columbia Basin, resided in Kennewick, *Benton* 31 Dec–16 Feb (DR).

Anna's Hummingbirds continued to spread across the Region. At O.S., the C.B.C. formerly yielded one or 2 per count, but last year there were 11 and this year 24 (B. Morse). In e. Washington, where rare away from *Klickitat*, singles were Clarkston, *Asotin* 29 Dec+ (C. Vande Voorde) and Ellensburg, *Kittitas* through late Jan (C. Caviezel). Now annual during winter in *Deschutes*, 4 Anna's wintered in Bend (CM, D. Tracy); they had not been recorded there prior to 1995 (MM).



These Bewick's Swans (an adult and an immature) near Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington 2 January 2006 were two of as many as five different Bewick's Swans detected in Oregon and Washington this winter. Heavily birded Skagit County has had five or six Bewick's Swans during the past three winters but no previous reports, suggesting that the recent surge in records is more than the result of increased observer effort. Note the relatively short, thick neck of the adult, a mark that could be useful for separating Bewick's from Whistling Swans. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.

lared-doves have now been recorded in Washington, only 4 of which were seen prior to Jan 2005. A White-winged Dove near Burns, *Harney* 2–6 Dec was just the 2nd for e. Oregon and the 2nd for winter in the state (ph. R. Muser); most records have been from fall along the coast. Snowy Owls staged their first major invasion since 1996, with 74 in Wash-

Costa's Hummingbirds seem to have become annual winter visitors to Oregon; this winter, one inhabited Florence, *Lane* 16 Dec–4 Jan (*vide* D. Pettey), while another first found in Nov remained at North Bend, *Coos* until 27 Jan (B. Griffin). A very rare mid-winter *Sceloporus* was at L. Forest Park, *King* 12 Dec (EH). Rufous again returned early, with sin-

gles at Geumes I., *Skagit* 25 Jan, Maury I., *King* 5 Feb, and Lady I., *Clark* 6 Feb (WC); the "traditional" arrival time has been early Mar. Similarly, an Allen's Hummingbird in Bandon, *Coos* 24 Jan was about three weeks early (DL, KC).

Formerly accidental during winter in Washington, Williamson's Sapsuckers were detected for the 5th consecutive winter, with singles at Conboy L., *Klickitat* (K. Glueckert) and Walla Walla 18–19 Dec (M&MLD). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, now virtually annual during winter in Oregon, visited Sublimity, *Marion* 17 Jan (J. Liesch). Red-naped Sapsuckers inhabited Seattle 17–30 Dec (A. Slettebak) and Finley N.W.R. 3–6 Feb (C. Jimenez, N. Strycker); this species is rare w. of the Cascades at any time and anywhere in the Region during winter. Similarly rare e. of the Cascades, Red-breasted Sapsuckers visited Holliday S.P., *Grant*, OR 14 Dec (C. O'Leary, M. O'Leary) and Grand Coulee, *Grant*, WA 21 Feb (S. Chaffce).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Black Phoebe again wintered in the W.V. n. to *Polk* and on the coast to *Tillamook* (M. Simper). The Kent Say's Phoebe returned for its 2nd winter, noted 26 Dec+, and another was on Puget I., *Wahkiakum* 1 Jan (R. Koppen-drauer); Say's remain extremely rare during winter in w. Washington. In w. Oregon, where more numerous, a near-average 6 were detected. Another Say's at Potholes S.P., *Grant* 5 Dec provided a rare e. Washington Dec/Jan record (DSc). Loggerhead Shrikes were unusually prevalent this winter, with 4 in e. Washington (RH), 3 in w. Oregon, and 5 in ne. Oregon's *Gilliam* 7–8 Jan (Paul Sullivan, C. Karlen). A Hutton's Vireo near Husum, *Klickitat* 24 Feb continued a string of sightings from w. *Klickitat*, implying that this species may indeed be resident here (KG); prior to five years ago, this species was considered accidental in e. Washington. Fifteen Blue Jays—6 in e. Washington, 2 in w. Washington, 4 in e. Oregon, and 3 in w. Oregon—was more than normal but far short of last year's massive incursion. Extralimital Western Scrub-Jays implied continued range expansion, with one e. to LaGrande, *Union* 26–30 Dec (M. Penninger, T. Bray) and one n. to Cle Elum, *Kittitas* 15 Dec (M. Hobbs).

Far more Tree Swallows than normal lingered through Dec (28 in Oregon and 10 in Washington), with a few lasting into early Jan before the vanguard of northbound birds appeared a little early, in late Jan; 6 at Lower Klamath N.W.R. 11 Dec provided an extremely rare eastside winter record (J. Meredith). Violet-green Swallow sightings, very

rare during Dec/Jan, included one at Nisqually, *Thurston* 4 Jan (P&RS) and 5 at Eugene 8 Jan (J. Sullivan). For the 5th consecutive winter, northbound Barn Swallows arrived in Jan. The magnitude of this year's incursion, however, was not as great. Per usual, a few Barn Swallows lingered into Dec, with 4 in Washington and Oregon each. Only one was found 1–18 Jan, but in late Jan, 73 were detected, including 47 near S. Bend, *Pacific* 30 Jan (CW). Fifty-one were reported in Feb, but as birders have become accustomed to seeing this species during winter, some undoubtedly went unmentioned. Still rather noteworthy on the eastside, sightings from there included one at White Salmon, *Klicki-*

SA Starting in late Dec, there was an unprecedented surge in Townsend's Warbler reports from w. Oregon and sw. Washington. On 1 Jan, the Eugene C.B.C. broke its all-time record for Townsend's Warblers by 48 individuals (141 total), tripling its 25-year average of Townsend's Warbler/observer-hour. This prompted Irons to query Oregon observers via Oregon Birders Online (OBOL) to better quantify the incursion. About 300 Townsend's Warblers were reported during a three-week period in Jan. Several involved groups of 8–12 birds attending suet feeders. On 8 Jan, Irons found 59 Townsend's during a short walk around his s. Eugene neighborhood, including one pure flock of approximately 30 birds. While the epicenter of this event did, indeed, seem to be *Lane*, it was not limited to that county, and in addition to the Oregon reports, 22 Townsend's visited a Vancouver, *Clark* yard for several days in Jan (K. Kohlschmidt). Careful scrutiny of these flocks produced a Townsend's Warbler × Hermit Warbler hybrid at Oregon City, *Clackamas* 3 Jan (†A. Ahlgrim), plus apparently pure Hermit Warblers at Astoria 18 Dec (MP), Eugene 4 Jan (M. Rudolph), and Corvallis 10 Feb+ (R. Armstrong). Oddly, there appeared to be a relative dearth of Townsend's Warblers in Washington's P.T.

tat 7 Jan (P. Moyer), one along Stonecipher Rd., *Walla Walla* 5 Feb (M&MLD), one at Potholes S.P., *Grant* 12 Feb (DSc), 2 at Washburn I., *Okanogan* 12 Feb (D. Stephens), and 3 at Wanapum Dam 20 Feb (S. Downes). A tally of 80 Horned Larks near Snohomish 17 Feb was exceptional for w. Washington (CCx). The isolated *plumbeus* Bushitit population persisted at Potholes Res., *Grant*, with 20+ there 8 Jan (DSc). Bewick's Wrens at Bend 16 Dec (K. Boddie) and n. of Sisters, *Jefferson* 6 Feb (C. Gates) were rare for these cen. Oregon locales. For the 5th consecutive winter, Western Bluebirds were found in w. Washington, with 22 at four locations; numbers were also elevated in w. Oregon (*vide* HN). Four Mountain Bluebirds near Alderdale, *Klickitat* 28 Dec–27 Jan furnished a very rare winter Washington record (KG). American Robins were even more abundant than usual during mid- to late Feb, with the westside maximum of 20,000 between Coburg, *Lane* and Peoria, *Linn* 19 Feb coinciding with a passing cold front (DI). Northern Mockingbirds showed poorly for the 4th consecutive winter, with only 3 detected, including one wintering at Eugene (AC), one at N.S.C.B. 10 Dec (TR, DL, KC), and one at Touchet, *Walla Walla* 27 Jan (M&MLD). Fifty American Pipits in *Walla Walla* 25 Feb provided an exceptional eastside winter tally (M&MLD).

Rarely identified in the Region, but perhaps of regular occurrence, an Orange-crowned Warbler apparently of the nominate subspecies visited Klamath Falls 9 Dec (ph. M. Iliff). For the 9th winter of the last 10, Nashville Warblers were detected, with singles at Coos Bay 4 Dec (TR) and Tillamook 17 Dec (J. Gilligan). Still extremely rare during winter, a Yellow Warbler enlivened McMinville, *Yamhill* 11 Dec (F. Schrock). A congregation of 350+ Yellow-rumped Warblers in a small apple orchard near Royal City, *Grant* 26 Feb set an e. Washington winter record (SM, DSc). The Region's 2nd winter Black-throated Green Warbler adorned Klamath Falls 9–22 Dec (ph. M. Iliff).

A tally of 15 Palm Warblers on the Curry coast 23 Dec was exceptional (J. Rogers). Washington's first winter American Redstart lingered in Auburn through 2 Dec (MB). The Puget I., *Wahkiakum* Ovenbird remained until 1 Feb, providing Washington's first winter record (G. Exum). Common Yellowthroats, formerly very rare after Dec in Washington, are now nearly annual. This year, one visited Kent, *King* 1 Jan (CW). Formerly a "megararity" in winter, Wilson's Warblers have become annual. This year, singles visited Seattle 8 Dec (M. Vernon), Brownsmead, *Clatsop* 29 Dec (MP), and Eugene 13 Jan (G. Morsello). For the 8th consecutive winter, a Western Tanager graced the Region, this one at Eugene 17 Jan (ph. B. Combs).

A Spotted Towhee of subspecies *oregonus* at Umatilla 25 Feb was apparently a first for e. Oregon (SM, BF); in Washington, this subspecies occurs regularly to cen. *Klickitat* (Jewett et al. 1953, *Birds of Washington State*), and it would be surprising if *oregonus* did not occur e. to *Sherman* in Oregon. An American Tree Sparrow, rare in w. Oregon, remained in White City, *Jackson* 11 Dec+ (J. Livaudias). Five Clay-colored Sparrows, all from the westside, was about twice the recent norm. Rare in w. Oregon during winter, a Chipping Sparrow was in Springfield, *Lane* 30 Jan+ (R. Robb). Thirteen Savannah Sparrows at Iowa Beef, *Walla Walla* 12 Feb was

exceptional for the eastside during winter (M&MLD). A Grasshopper Sparrow at Coos Bay 18 Dec furnished the Region's 6th winter record (T. Shelmerdine). A Sooty Fox Sparrow at Umatilla 10 Dec added further evidence that this subspecies group may be of regular occurrence in e. Oregon (ph. D. Herr). A tally of 112 Sooty Fox Sparrows near Hoquiam, *Grays Harbor* 3 Jan was exceptional for Washington (P&RS). It was a slow winter for Swamp Sparrow and an abysmal one for Harris's Sparrow. There were but 9 Swamps in Washington and Oregon each, including 3 on Bainbridge I., *Kitsap* 3 Dec (B. Waggoner, D. Watkins) and 7 throughout the season at Millacoma Marsh, *Coos* (TR). The Region had only 5 Harris's Sparrows, about 20% of normal. A flock of 14 Golden-crowned Sparrows at Umatilla 25 Feb was exceptional for the far eastside (BF, SM). A *pugetensis* White-crowned Sparrow at Umatilla 25 Feb (SM, BF) was apparently the first recorded in e. Oregon, despite being a regular visitor to Washington's Columbia Basin and fairly common e. to cen. *Klickitat*. Oregon's first winter Chestnut-collared Longspurs were 2 in *Benton* 12 Feb (R. Moore). A flock of 800 Snow Buntings near Joseph, *Wallowa* 16 Jan likely set an Oregon record (J. Carlson, Paul Sullivan).

Washington maxima for Tricolored Blackbirds included 12 near Corfu, *Grant* 24 Feb (BF) and 10 at Othello, *Adams* 12 Feb (BF); 3 were found again Shillapoo Bottoms, *Clark* 14 Jan, the only known location for Tricoloreds in w. Washington (SM, B. Deuel). Eastern Washington's 2nd winter Bullock's Oriole adorned Moses L., *Grant* 17 Dec (†L. Cooke), while the 8th for w. Washington visited Florence, *Snohomish* 21 Jan (M. Dufort); despite being nearly annual in Oregon, Washington had not had a winter Bullock's since 1998.

Crook's first Purple Finch was located on the Prineville C.B.C. 31 Dec (*fide* CG) and was followed by 5 in Prineville 18 Jan (CM, MM). The season's sole report of White-winged Crossbill was of 2 on Mt. Spokane 25 Jan (GS, CC, JC). A flock of 50 Common Redpolls at Enterprise, *Wallowa* 16 Dec. (M. Marsh) and 6 in Portland 26 Feb (P. Johnson) were unusual for a non-invasion year. Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins were nearly absent from the Region. The Lesser Goldfinch at Walla Walla remained through 19 Dec (M&MLD), while one in Bellingham, *Whatcom* 27 Feb+ (MB) furnished only the 4th record for the heavily birded P.T. A gathering of 80 Evening Grosbeaks near Stanwood, *Snohomish* 22 Dec provided w. Washington's highest winter count in 10+ years (SM, DD).

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Tom Aversa (Washington), Jessie Barry, Marv Breece, Wilson Cady, Kathy Castelein, Alan Contreras, Craig Corder, Judy Corder, Cameron Cox (CCx), Mike and Merry Lynn Denny (M&MLD), Dennis Duffy, Bob Flores, Chuck Gates (*Crook*), Roy Gerig (*Polk, Marion*), Greg Gillson, Kevin Glueckert, Dan Heyerly, Randy Hill, Eugene Hunn, Stuart Johnston (*Klickitat*), Bruce LaBar (BLB), Bill LaFramboise (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy LaFramboise, David Lauten, Larry McQueen, Tom Mickel (*Lane*), Craig and Marilyn Miller (*Deschutes, Jefferson, Lake*), Harry Nehls (Oregon), Bob Norton (Olympic Pen.), Michael Patterson (*Clatsop*), Dennis Paulson, Phil Pickering, Dennis Rockwell, Tim Rodenkirk (*Coos, Curry*), Doug Schonewald (DSc), Gina Sheridan, Patrick and Sullivan (P&RS), Sam Terry, Khanh Tran, Dennis Vroman (*Josephine*), Terry J. Wahl, Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright. ☉

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A very wet late December and early January Regionwide included the worst storm in 30 years to hit Humboldt County. Winter also brought a number of ex-

citing rarities, including the state's first Snowy Owl since 1978. Following the state's first Slaty-backed Gulls last winter, careful gull surveys by Jaramillo and others turned up an astonishing 10-12 Slaty-backed this winter.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.V. (Central Valley); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.C.F.S. (Coyote Cr. Field Station); FI. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); P.R.B.O. (Pt. Reyes B.O.); S.F. (San Francisco rather than State Forest). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation of C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933. Birds banded on FI. should be credited to Pt. Reyes B.O. and those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to the Big Sur Ornithology Lab of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

GEESSE THROUGH SHEARWATERS

An imm. and 3 ad. Emperor Geese were reported from Lower Klamath N.W.R., *Siskiyou*

14 Dec (†Mike McVey). A group of 5 Snow Geese in Diamond Valley 2 Dec (ph. TEa) was thought to mark only the 2nd record for *Alpine*. Following 3 in fall, another coastal blue-morph Snow Goose was found, this time at College L., *Santa Cruz* 10 Dec (DLSu, ph. RgW). A lone Ross's Goose with a domestic goose flock at Camanche Res. 9 Feb (KMz) was a first for *Calaveras*. "Extraordinary counts" of *minima* Cackling Geese were reported in *Humboldt*, with 123 at s. Arcata Bottoms 20 Dec (EE, JTz) and 81 on the Centerville Beach to King Salmon C.B.C. 1 Jan (*fide* SWH); perhaps this is related to the increased numbers wintering in the Willamette Valley in Oregon (*fide* DFx). An Aleutian Cackling Goose (subspecies *leucopareia*) at 900 m elevation along Stumpfield Mt. Road 17-23 Jan (JTz, m.ob.) was apparently *Mariposa's* first. Well-documented family groups of Trumpeter Swans were found 3 km se. of Durham, *Butte* 23 Dec-6 Feb (up to 3 ads. and 3 imms.; JHS, †BED, †DEQ, ph. DWN et al.) and 7 km n. of Willows, *Glenn* 15-17 Jan (2 ads. and 6 imms.; †CLu, vt. LLu, JLx).

Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal were reported in better-than-average numbers, with 12 birds found in five counties; 7 Common × Green-winged Teal intergrades were also reported. Evidence of intergradation is often not obvious, and the recent increase in such reports suggests that observers are commendably submitting apparent Common Teal to close scrutiny. Eleven male and 3 female Tufted Ducks were reported from 10 counties, with 3+ males and 2 hybrids on Borax L., *Lake* 16 Jan–25 Feb (FHA, m.ob.) being the largest concentration. Notable records included the first for *Plumas*, a male at L. Almanor 25 Feb (Phil Johnson et al.), and a male at O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* 16–17 Jan (ph., †Greg Gerstenberg). An unconfirmed imm. male Steller's Eider at King Salmon, *Humboldt* 22 Dec (MWa) was reportedly seen both before and after this date by local hunters; it would be just the 4th for the Region if accepted by the C.B.R.C. The imm. male Harlequin Duck at the Stockton S.T.P., *San Joaquin* was present until at least 25 Feb (KMz). A White-winged Scoter at Lcwiston L. 26 Jan was *Trinity's* 3rd (ph. SAG, JLx). The male Barrow's Goldeneye below L. McSwain, *Mariposa* was present until at least 15 Dec (JTz). The male Hooded Merganser × Barrow's Goldeneye returned to L. Merritt, *Alameda* 19 Jan (Matt Ricketts). A Red-breasted Merganser at Black Butte Res. 8 Dec (BED, RoS) may have been just the 2nd for *Tehama*.

Normally coastal loons reported from inland locations included 4 Red-throated and 6 Pacific. A Pacific Loon at Bass L. 15 Jan (JLx) was *Madera's* 2nd. Typically the most common inland loon, only 4 Common Loons were reported from such locations. Twenty-six Red-necked Grebes at King Salmon 17 Jan–20 Feb (MWa, RHw) represented a very high count from a single location in the Region and a record high for *Humboldt*. Other noteworthy Red-necked Grebes included singles at Glenburn Church, *Shasta* 2 Jan (BY, CY); San Jose, *Santa Clara* 7–9 Jan (found dead on the last date; *fide* Roy Churchwell; MMR, MJM, AME); Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* 22 Jan (RSTh); and Clearlake Oaks, *Lake* 25 Jan (JLx). A Laysan Albatross (RS, m.ob.) and an imm. Short-tailed Albatross (ph., †RyT, ph., vt., m.ob.) were present with 22 Black-footed Albatrosses near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 4 Dec. Although Northern Fulmars (950), Pink-footed Shearwaters (18), and Flsh-footed Shearwaters (2) were present in normal numbers on the same trip to Cordell Bank, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters were present in very low numbers, just 3 and 17, respectively. Similarly, only 3 Sooty and 3 Short-tailed Shearwaters were observed on Monterey Bay, *Monterey* 5 Feb (Shj).

BITTERN THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The only Least Bittern report was of up to 2 birds at C.R.P. in Dec and Jan (JTr). An imm. Little Blue Heron was seen near Ft. Dick, *Del Norte* 3–16 Feb (Owen Head; ph., †KGR et al.). Cattle Egrets were better reported than usual, with reports received from 10 counties. The high count was of 231 birds at Sebastopol, *Sonoma* 8 Jan (LHg). A group of 29 about 13 km s. of Corning 13 Feb furnished only the 4th record, and by far the largest number, for *Tehama* (BED); one flying along Hwy. 140 across the county line into *Merced* 17 Feb was



Pleasant crowds of birders in Alviso, Santa Clara County, this juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper spent 7–18 (here 10) December 2005 roosting and foraging with peeps. This species has now been recorded a remarkable three times on the San Jose Christmas Bird Count, the only California count ever to have recorded it. Photograph by Glen Tepke.

the first for *Mariposa* (DLSu). The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron reported last season was present at Inverness, *Marin* at least through 5 Dec (GEC). An impressive 4000 White-faced Ibis were seen going to roost along Rd. 40, *Tulare* 12 Dec (SDS, MSanM).

Swainson's Hawks were seen at several locations away from known wintering areas, including a dark morph at Gray Lodge W.A., *Butte* 3 Dec (†BED et al.), an imm. on the spit of Humboldt Bay, *Humboldt* 15 Dec (ph., †KGR), and a light morph at Pacific Grove, *Monterey* 27 Dec (†RbF, †SRv). The first migrants returned to the C.V. 15 Feb (2 w. of *Madera*, *Madera*; GaW). Returning Harlan's

Hawks were found at Bayside Cutoff n. of Eureka, *Humboldt* 5 Dec+ (7th winter; EE, ph. KGR, m.ob.) and along Devil's Den Rd. near Hwy. 33, *Kings* 6 Jan (3rd winter; JSy). Another sw. of *Madera* 21 Dec (ph. JND) was only the 2nd for *Madera*. The *Santa Cruz* Crested Caracara continued through the season near Davenport (m.ob.). A hardy Common Moorhen at over 700 m elevation in Isabel Valley, *Santa Clara* 2 Jan provided the first record for the Mt. Hamilton C.B.C. (MMR, MJM). The only coastal Sandhill Crane reported was associating with Wild Turkeys n. of Willits, *Mendocino* 8–31 Jan (GEC, CEV, MMt, RJK, BD, m.ob.).

Mountain Plovers were reported in good numbers and at new locations this season. A count of 645 along Rd. 80 s. of Allensworth, *Tulare* 12 Dec (SDS, MSanM) is the highest total in our notebooks in over a decade. They were again present at the location discovered last year sw. of *Madera*, *Madera*, with 286 present 20 Feb (ph. GaW); 7 of these were color banded, 6 in Colorado and one in Montana. Coastally, 4 Mountain Plovers e. of Sears Point 28 Feb+ were the first for *Sonoma* (ph. LHg, AWgh, RAR). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper found at Alviso Marina C.P., *Santa Clara* 7 Dec (Mike Tyner, Cliff Cordy) lingered just long enough to be tallied on the San Jose C.B.C. 18 Dec (ph., †m.ob.). Six Rock Sandpipers at Laguna Pt. 2 Jan was an "all-time high" for *Mendocino* (DT). The *Santa Cruz* Rock Sandpiper continued through the season (m.ob.). One Ruff was reported, an apparent male at the Vic Fazio Yolo W.A., *Yolo* 26 Feb (ph. Sami LaRocca).

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

An ad. Little Gull approximately 36 km sw. of Bodega Head (†SBT, †RyT, RS et al.) in *Marin* waters 4 Dec represented one of the few offshore records for the Region. Five Mew Gulls were reported from inland locations, where scarce: near Fresno, *Fresno* 18 Dec (GWPo et al.); at Eagle L., *Lassen* 21 Dec (†SBT, ph. LTer); at Turtle Bay East, *Shasta* 31 Dec (Red

SA Following the paucity of reports last season, Red Phalaropes staged the largest "wreck" in over a decade, with reports from all our coastal counties in late Dec garnering extensive coverage by local news media. First noted in *Humboldt*, *S.F.*, and *Santa Cruz* on 20 Dec, numbers in *Humboldt* built quickly to 1500 at King Salmon (MWa) and 2000 on s. Humboldt Bay (DFx) 23 Dec. Farther s. in *San Mateo*, numbers peaked 26 Dec, with 579 heading s. off Moss Beach and 750 in flooded fields in the town of Pescadero (both RSTh). Slightly inland in *Santa Clara*, 38 were found at 11 locations 26 Dec, including inland percolation ponds and reservoirs as well as bayside marshes and salt ponds. Up to 2 at L. Hennessey 28 Dec–4 Jan (BDP, m.ob.) and 2 at the Huichica Creek W.A. 29 Dec (JLx) provided only the 2nd and 3rd records for *Napa*. Other inland records included birds at Chain I., *Sacramento* 28 Dec (JTr), at Lafayette Res., *Contra Costa* 4–10 Jan (Martha Breed, m.ob.), and far inland at Mono L., *Mono* 29 Dec (Heidi Hopkins). The total of 2399 recorded on the Centerville Beach to King Salmon C.B.C., *Humboldt* 1 Jan was almost four times the previous high for the count. Numbers dwindled rapidly after New Year's Day, particularly away from *Humboldt*. In *Humboldt*, "only 94" were found 12 Jan (s. Arcata Bottoms; RbF), and the last bird was reported at King Salmon 19 Jan (MWa).

Modeen, Nancy Modeen); at Kutras L., *Shasta* 7 Jan (possibly the same bird as 31 Dec; Ray Bruun); and near Kettleman City, *Kings* 10 Feb (JSy). Venice S.B., *San Mateo* was once again the Region's winter gull hotspot. Gulls showing characters of Iceland and "Vega" Herring Gulls were there 23 Jan (ph. DVP) and 11 Feb (ph., †DVP, Osear Johnson), respectively. Additional potential Iceland Gulls were at Terrace Pt., *Santa Cruz* 16 Feb (ph., †SGe) and Redwood Cr. mouth, *Humboldt* 28 Dec and 11-12 Feb (Jeff Allen). These records await review by the C.B.R.C. Remarkably, at least 9 and perhaps 11 Slaty-backed Gulls were detected 2 Dec+ among the thousands of gulls roosting at Venice S.B. (ph., †AJ, †RSTh, ph., vt., †m.ob.). These observations follow the discovery of 3-4 Slaty-backed Gulls (comprising the first accepted records for California) from the same location last winter (*N.A.B* 59: 320). Another Slaty-backed Gull was at the Alviso salt ponds 14 Jan (*Santa Clara's* first; ph., †AJ). Scarce inland, 6 Western Gulls were noted in the Region's interior. Twenty to 30 Glaucous-winged Gulls at Kutras L. 2 Jan (BY, CY) represented a record count for *Shasta* and a very high number for any well-inland location. Of the 25 Glaucous Gulls reported, at least 6, a high number for a single location anywhere in the Region, were at Venice S.B. throughout the period (AJ, RSTh, m.ob.); one at Kutras L. and Whiskeytown L. 2-31 Jan marked a first for *Shasta* (BY, CY). Caspian Terns are scarce in midwinter in the Region, so up to 6 observed throughout the period in *Humboldt* (*vide* DFX) are of interest; elsewhere, 2 at Clifton Court Forebay 21 Dec (*vide* Jimm Edgar) followed the first winter record for *Contra Costa* last winter. The South S.F. Bay wintering flock of Black Skimmers continues to increase, with up to 30 at Charleston Slough and Salt Pond A1, *Santa Clara* 19 Dec-1 Jan (WGB et al.).

High densities of Marbled Murrelets were observed along the *San Mateo* coastline, with 310 and 275 counted off Venice S.B. 21 & 24 Feb (RSTh), respectively, and a county high of 503 off Moss Beach 1 Mar (RSTh). Coupled with these high counts were record-high numbers observed via aerial surveys along the inshore waters of coastal *Santa Cruz*: 246 on 24 Jan and 232 on 8 Mar (*vide* LHe). Suddjian comments that these high numbers suggest that many of these birds were likely wintering migrants from the n. and not members of the *Santa Cruz* Mts. breeding population. Marbled Murrelets made a good showing in *Humboldt* as well, with 31 on the Arcata C.B.C. 17 Dec (*vide* DFX). Four Horned Puffins were reported: one at the n. jetty of *Humboldt* Bay, *Humboldt* 21 Jan (*vide* SWH); one picked up at



Although usually considered a rare summer visitor to southern and central California, this immature Little Blue Heron lingered from 3 (here) through 16 February 2006 near Fort Dick, Del Norte County, in the extreme northwestern corner of the state. The two previous county records have also been of wintering immatures in the same area. Photograph by Kerry Ross.

Bradley Beach, *San Mateo* and transported to a bird rescue center 17 Feb (Michelle Bellizzi); one off Pajaro Dunes, *Santa Cruz* 21 Feb (LHe, Hannah Nevins); and one off La Selva Beach, *Santa Cruz* 27 Feb (*vide* Michelle Bellizzi). It is possible that the latter two records involved the same individual.

DOVES THROUGH WRENTIT

The Eurasian Collared-Dove conquest of the Region continued, with noteworthy records that included 3 near Durham, *Butte* 8 Jan (EP, ClH) and one at C.R.P. 3 Jan, a first for *Sacramento* (JTr). Eagerly awaited by many, California's first Snowy Owl since 1978 thrilled hundreds of birders during its brief appearance s. of Davis, *Solano* 13-14 Jan (JMHu, Betty Berteaux, Sami LaRocca, ph., m.ob.). This



This Snowy Owl, present in Solano County, California 13 (here) and 14 January 2006 thrilled hundreds of observers, particularly those not active when California's last Snowy was seen back in 1978. Photograph by Chris Conard.

is the 3rd record for the C.V., following a *Butte* record from 1916 and a *Yolo* record from 1967; the other 70 state records were strictly coastal or nearly so, with 57 of the records coming from *Humboldt* or *Del Norte*. Though it is known that at least small numbers of Common Poorwills winter in the Region, we

receive few reports; no fewer than 10 birds this season appears unprecedented. A Chuckwill's-widow was picked up at Crescent City, *Del Norte* 2 Dec and taken into rehabilitation (ph. Greg Frankfurter, *vide* EE). It will provide just the 3rd record for California if accepted by the C.B.R.C., though there is some question as to whether the photographs are sufficient to confirm the identification.

Completely unexpected was the appearance of a Violet-crowned Hummingbird at Grass Valley, *Nevada* 8 Feb (vt. Jan & Barbara Collins), providing the Region's 3rd and the state's 5th record. Single Costa's Hummingbirds were at McKinleyville, *Humboldt* 17 Dec (female; Jake Houck, ph. RLeV), Meder Canyon, *Santa Cruz* 13 Jan ("female-type"; SGe), and Napa, *Napa* 18 Jan-10 Feb (DeH). Four Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were detected, all coastal; one at Pinto L., *Santa Cruz* 9 Feb (Wayne Macon) was the only one reported after Dec. A Pileated Woodpecker 31 Jan at Carmel Highlands (CHz) was well s. of the species' known range and provided about the 6th record for *Monterey*.

A Hammond's Flycatcher at Auburn Ravine 28 Dec provided a first winter record for *Placer* (AEñ); one at L. Solano, *Solano* 4 Jan was likely a returnee (RMu). Though Gray Flycatchers routinely winter in s. California, one at Tres Pinos, *San Benito* 5 Feb was one of few ever found to do so in our Region (†RJA). Single Eastern Phoebes were near Davis, *Yolo* & *Solano* 8-11 Dec (Brent Campos, m.ob.) and near Año Nuevo, *San Mateo* 31 Dec (FrT). One of *Monterey's* male Vermilion Flycatchers at Moonglow Dairy successfully wintered through at least 12 Feb (RF, DR, RC, m.ob.); the other male present in fall was last noted 22 Oct. Individual Dusky-capped Flycatchers included a continuing bird at Arcata, *Humboldt* through 11 Dec (m.ob.), one at Meder Canyon 5 Dec-11 Mar (7th for *Santa Cruz*; SGe, m.ob.), and one well described at Venice S.B., *San Mateo* 28 Dec (†Richard Trinkner). Regional Bell's Vireo records have slowly begun to increase in recent years, the newest addition being one along the San Joaquin R. near Friant 5-25 Jan, the first for either *Fresno* or *Madera* since 1956 (ph. PR.B.O., *vide* Julian Wood). Four wintering Cassin's Vireos included a first for the Benicia C.B.C. near Benicia, *Solano* 19-20 Dec (DLc, Tom Harris, RLCL) and a 2nd winter record for *Santa Clara* at C.C.FS. 25-29 Jan (b.; Rita Colwell).

A Blue Jay at Fairfield 19 Dec-28 Feb provided a startling first county record for *Solano* and a 2nd for the C.V. (Dorothy & Wayne Little, Margaret Barson, Barbara Barter, ph., m.ob.). Though likely present as much as three weeks prior to this, the bird was not

confirmed until the Benicia C.B.C. Wintering Northern Rough-winged Swallows, virtually unknown in the Region just a few years ago, were detected once again, this time with singles at Chesbro Res., *Santa Clara* 30 Dec (WGB) and Pajaro Dunes, *Santa Cruz* 1 Jan (BBrr). Though no longer a novelty, the mid-winter appearance of Barn Swallows throughout much of the Region was much noted again this season, with a bare minimum of 225 birds tallied, mainly between mid-Dec and mid-Jan. Though this recent phenomenon has primarily been coastal, this winter brought inland sightings from *Mendocino*, *Napa*, *Butte*, *Sacramento*, *Contra Costa*, and even *Mono*, where 2 were at Mono L. on the wintry date of 27 Dec (KNN). *Yolo*'s wintering Mountain Chickadee was noted through at least 25 Mar (MP, m.ob.). A Chestnut-backed Chickadee at *Sacramento* 28 Feb was just the 2nd detected in *Sacramento* ever (ClH). A singing House Wren at Junction City 12 Jan was the first found wintering in *Trinity* (MMo, PAH). A Townsend's Solitaire at Big Basin Redwoods S.P., *Santa Cruz* 12 Dec (DLSu) was at a reasonably expected time and location, but one at Fl. 15 Jan (P.R.B.O.) seems completely anomalous during midwinter at an offshore site with no suitable habitat. Two Wrentits at the Butte Sink, *Colusa* 20 Dec may have been at a normal location but nevertheless provided the first solid record for the Peace Valley C.B.C. (BDW et al.).

WAXWINGS THROUGH FINCHES

The only Bohemian Waxwings reported were one at Simis Ranch, *Mono* 27 Dec (KNN) and 2 at Cedarville, *Modoc* 11 Feb (RoS). Warblers reported this season included 2 Tennessees, 6 Yellows, 15 Palms, 8 Black-and-whites, and 5 Northern Waterthrushes. A Virginia's Warbler was at Laguna Grande, *Monterey* 3 Dec (DWer). A Northern Parula was at S.F.'s Presidio 31 Dec+ (Matt Zlatunich, Andy Kleinhesselink, ph. MWE). A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was in Golden Gate Park, S.F. 8 Jan (ASH, ph. MWE, Pat McCullough). An American Redstart spent 10 Dec-4 Feb along Coyote Cr., *Santa Clara* (MJM, m.ob.). The Ovenbird first found in fall along Putah Cr., *Yolo* was refound 15 Dec on the *Solano* side of the creek for a first county record (Roger Adamson, Richard Hall); it continued throughout the period until 19 Mar (*fide* CCc). A male Hooded Warbler was in San Jose, *Santa Clara* 12-17 Dec (Donna Yokote, ph. Judy Leonard) and 4-20 Feb (Kay Partelow, ph. Kay Matthews). A Yellow-breasted Chat 14 Dec in McKinleyville (Linda Doerflinger) was the first *Humboldt* record ever between 5 Oct and 1 Feb (*fide* DFX). A

male and female Summer Tanager were in Golden Gate Park, S.F. 28 Dec-20 Feb (Matt Zlatunich, ph. MWE, Pat McCullough, m.ob.); a male was at Carmel, *Monterey* 25 Jan-18 Feb (Mike & Nancy Bobay). Ten Western Tanagers were reported.

Two American Tree Sparrows were at Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 27-29 Dec (KNN). Clay-colored Sparrows were in Ferndale (1 Jan; GSL) and Arcata (29 Jan; GAB), *Humboldt*, and at a feeder in Richmond, *Contra Costa* 20 Feb-4 Mar (ph. Paula & Kevin Landdeck). Two Brewer's Sparrows were at Yokohl Valley, *Tulare* 26 Dec (†AWgh). The Region's 25 Swamp Sparrows included 8 in *Humboldt*, 6 in *Santa Cruz*, and 7 in other coastal or Bay Area counties, as well as singles at Cache Creek Settling Basin, *Yolo* 10-14 Dec (may be continuing fall bird; JCS, m.ob.); Friant, *Fresno/Madera* 10-20 Dec (JSy, LyH); Dechambeau ponds, *Mono* 27-29 Dec (KNN); and s. of Fountain Springs, *Tulare* 21 Feb (SDS). Of the 139 White-throated Sparrows, 40 were in *Humboldt* (*fide* DFX), 38 in *Santa Cruz* (*fide* DLSu), and a remarkable 14 inland in *Contra Costa* (*fide* SAG).

A McCown's Longspur was seen 7 km w. of Elverta, *Sacramento* 4 Jan (TEa); the only other one reported was a female at Shasta Valley W.A., Siskiyou 21 Jan with the Lapland flock there (RE). This wintering Siskiyou longspur flock of up to 150 Laplands 4 Jan-1 Feb included a Chestnut-collared 16 Jan (RE). Small numbers of Laplands were found in *Humboldt* as expected, and one was heard in Salinas, *Monterey* 23 Dec (RyT), but most unusual was one at Fl. 15 Jan (P.R.B.O.). In what has become an almost annual occurrence in *Humboldt*, up to 3 Snow Buntings were along the Big Lagoon spit 12 Dec-22 Jan (ph. TWL, Sue Leskiw, Rob Santry, RbF). Four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were along the coast, and one was in Redding, *Shasta* 7 Dec-14 Jan (Lou & Linda Simpson); Black-headed Grosbeaks included one male 19 Dec at Stanford, *Santa Clara* (Dick Stovel) and a male and female at a feeder n. of Soquel, *Santa Cruz* intermittently 16 Dec-30 Jan (JPo, DLSu). A male Painted Bunting at a feeder ne. of Sebastopol 8-25 Feb (ph. Kathy Biggs, Dave Biggs, BDP, AWgh, †RAR, ph. RLeb) would be *Sonoma*'s 2nd (the first since 1966) if accepted by the C.B.R.C.

A female Rusty Blackbird was in a flock of 6000 blackbirds in rural s. *Yolo* 11 Dec (JMHu). Experienced oriole watchers were humbled this winter, with 7 birds in *Humboldt*, *Santa Clara*, and *Santa Cruz* remaining unidentified. *San Francisco* retained its mantle as "Oriole Central," with 3 Orchard Orioles at Ft. Mason in the period (Kathy Robertson, ASH, MWE, m.ob.), a Bullock's

29 Dec-24 Feb at the Presidio (Matt Zlatunich, BFi), and a Scott's at the Presidio 8 Jan (ph. CLo, HaF). *Humboldt* also had a triffecta, with a Hooded 24 Jan at Arcata (ph. KGR), a Baltimore in Eureka 4 Dec (TWL, Sue Leskiw), and a Bullock's in Fortuna 1-30 Jan (ph. Dee Myers). A Bullock's was at Edenvale Garden Park, *Santa Clara* 30 Dec (Bruce Barrett et al.).

A Cassin's Finch seen during the Benicia C.B.C. 19 Dec was a first for *Solano* (DLc, Tom Harris). Two House Finches 29 Dec at Mono City, *Mono* provided only the 2nd winter record for the Mono Basin (KNN). Feeders in Lee Vining, *Mono* continue to attract a growing winter flock of Lesser Goldfinches, which numbered up to 35 over 29 Dec-20 Feb (KNN). The only Evening Grosbeaks reported were 5 in a flock over Davis, *Yolo* 9 Feb (MP).

Observers (county compilers in boldface type): R.J. Adams, Bruce Barrett, Murray Berner (*Napa*), Gary A. Bloomfield, William G. Bousman (*Santa Clara*), Adam Brown (Fl.), Rita Carratello, George E. Chanot, Luke W. Cole (Kings), Chris Conard (*Sacramento* and *Yolo*), Jeff N. Davis (*Madera*), Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Barbara Dolan (BD), Todd Easterla, Mark W. Eaton (*San Francisco*), Alan M. Eisner, Ray Ekstrom (Siskiyou), Elias Elias, Andrew Engilis, Brian Fitch, David Fix (*Humboldt*), Rick Fournier (RF), Rob Fowler (RbF), Harry Fuller, James H. Gain (*Stanislaus*), Steve Gerow, Steve A. Glover (*Contra Costa*), Denise Hamilton, Stanley W. Harris, Chris Hartzell, Cliff Hawley, Floyd Hayes, Laird Henkel, Pablo A. Herrera, Rob Hewitt, Alan S. Hopkins, Lisa Hug, Joan M. Humphrey, John E. Hunter (*Trinity*), Al Jaramillo, Robert J. Keiffer (*Mendocino*), Rick Lebaudour, Darrell Lee (DLc), Robin L. C. Leong (*Solano*), Tom W. Leskiw, Gary S. Lester, Ron LeValley, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Jim Lomax, Calvin Lou, Michael J. Mammoser, Matthew A. Matthiessen, J. Mac McCormick (*Plumas* and *Sierra*), Peter J. Metropulos (*San Mateo*), Kurt Mize, Mark Morrisette, Roger Muskat, David W. Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (*Mono*), Ed Pandolfino (*Placer*), Benjamin D. Parmeter, Michael Perroné, Jeff Poklen, Gary W. Potter, Jude C. Power (*Humboldt*), David E. Quady, Robert J. Richmond (*Alameda*), Don Roberson (*Monterey*), Michael M. Rogers, Kerry G. Ross, Steve Rovell, Ruth A. Rudesill (*Sonoma*), Mike San Miguel, Rob Santry, Jeff Seay, Shearwater Journeys (ShJ), Jim H. Snowden, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling (*Modoc*, *Alpine*, and *Calaveras*), Tim Steurer (*Amador* and *El Dorado*), David L. Suddjian (*Santa Cruz*), Steven D. Summers (*Tulare*), Linda Terrill,

Ryan Terrill, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz, Dorothy Tobkin, Francis Toldi, John Trochet, Steve Umland (*Tuolumne*), Charles E. Vaughn, Kent Van Vuren (*Merced* and *San Benito*), David Vander Pluym (*Mari-rosa*), Matt Wachs, Dave Werner, Jerry R. White (*Lake*), Alan Wight, Brian D. Williams,

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Southern California



Guy McCaskie | Kimball L. Garrett

With temperatures warmer than average and precipitation less than expected during the winter period, this seemed like the winter that wasn't. This perception was reinforced by the near-absence of irruptive northern species pushing into the Region, or mountain species moving into the lowlands. The presence of "Arizona specialties" included three Broad-billed Hum-



The only species of golden-plover known to winter in California is Pacific Golden-Plover. This one, photographed on 14 January 2006, was present on Mission Bay in San Diego through the winter season. Photograph by Douglas W. Aguillard.

mingbirds, three Thick-billed Kingbirds, an amazing nine Dusky-capped Flycatchers, six Grace's Warblers, and nine Painted Redstarts; of course we really have no evidence that these birds come from Arizona (the nearest area where significant numbers breed), and it is indeed possible that many represent reverse migrants from well into Mexico. The season's

rarities included California's sixth Baikal Teal (and the first to be seen by birders), five Lesser Black-backed Gulls, a Rufous-backed Robin, and a wintering Smith's Longspur.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); F.C.R. (Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley N.P., Inyo); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.C.R.E. (Santa Clara R. estuary near Ventura, Ventura); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.C.G.P. (Ventura County Game Preserve near Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura). Museum collections abbreviated in the text are: SDNHM (San Diego Natural History Museum). 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 Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

The presence of 4 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks shot by hunters on the Wister Unit at S.E.S.S. in late Oct-early Nov (Aaron Freitas, *vide* KCM), along with one in El Monte, Los Angeles 17-28 Dec (LS), and another in Goleta, Santa Barbara 1 Dec+ (KB), suggests the movement of these birds into se. Arizona spread into s. California. At least 2 blue-morph Ross's Geese accompanied white morphs at S.E.S.S. through the winter (BM, GMcC), and another was at C.L. 9 Dec-21 Jan (SSt). Two Tundra Swans at Desert Center, Riverside 7 Dec (CMcG) and another near Westmorland, Imperial 4-10 Dec (AK) were at the s. extreme of this species' winter range. Numbers of Blue-winged Teal wintering along

the coast now equal or exceed those of Cinnamon Teal, with flocks of up to 81 in *San Luis Obispo* and 36 in *Orange*; in addition, numbers at the Salton Sea continue to increase, as indicated by 30+ at the mouth of Salt Cr. on the e. shore of the Salton Sea, Riverside 26-31 Dec (MSanM, GCH). A Baikal Teal in Lompoc, Santa Barbara 10 Dec-9 Jan (WTF) was the 6th to be found in California, the other 5 having been shot by hunters. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal, rare in s. California, in Goleta 14 Dec-11 Jan (WTF) was the same bird present during the past three winters, and single males were near



This Fulvous Whistling-Duck in Goleta, Santa Barbara County, California was present from 1 (here 13) December 2005 through the winter season; it was believed to be associated with the movement of these ducks into Arizona, Baja California, and Utah in November 2005 through January 2006. Photograph by Jamie M. Chavez.

El Monte 24 Dec (CAM) and on Upper Newport Bay, Orange 8-10 Feb (SSm). Two or 3 Harlequin Ducks on the coast of *San Luis Obispo* were the only ones reported. A Surf Scoter at F.C.R. 17-26 Dec (V&GW) and up to 2 at the mouth of Salt Creek 21-26 Dec (GMcC, MSanM)—along with a White-winged Scoter at Tinemaha Res. near Big Pine, Inyo 13 Dec (T&JH) and up to 3 at the mouth of Salt Creek 4 Dec+ (PS)—were inland, as was a Long-tailed Duck on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, San Bernardino 18 Dec-29 Jan (HV). The continued decline in the number of White-winged Scoters on the coast of s. California

is illustrated by reports of only 6 this winter. Twenty Black Scoters along the coast, along with San Clemente I.'s first on 8 Dec (ELK; see *Western Birds* 36: 158-273, 2005), was about average. Ten Long-tailed Ducks along the coast, including 3 together on Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo* 10 Dec-27 Feb (DML), were fewer than normal. A Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid with 3 Barrow's below Parker Dam 18 Dec (HV) was believed to be the same bird present here each of the past two winters; a Barrow's at the mouth of Salt Cr. 19 Dec-22 Jan (AH) was one of a very few ever on the Salton Sea.

A Pacific Loon on L. Castaic, *Los Angeles* 8-28 Dec (MSanM) was inland, where considered rare. A Red-necked Grebe on Silverwood L., *San Bernardino* 3-4 Dec (SJM) was inland, where considered casual, and another at Imperial Beach, *San Diego* 17 Dec-27 Feb (SW) was exceptionally far south. Northern Fulmars were scarce in s. California waters this winter, with up to 12 in Santa Monica Bay, *Los Angeles* through the winter (KGL) being the largest number reported. Short-tailed Shearwaters appeared scarcer than normal, but one at La Jolla, *San Diego* 11 Mar (MS) was late for s. California waters. A Manx Shearwater 8 km off Marina del Rey, *Los Angeles* 6 Jan (JSF) was believed to be the same bird seen from nearby Pt. Vicente 30 Dec (TMcG). At least 2 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels at Cambria, *San Luis Obispo* 2 Jan (MJI) were pushed close to shore by stormy weather.

A Tricolored Heron at the mouth of Salt Cr. 22 Dec-3 Jan (DVP, MSanM) is one of a very few at the Salton Sea in winter. At least 8 Reddish Egrets were in coastal *San Diego* and *Orange* through the period. Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons found in Imperial Beach in Jun were present through Feb (GMcC). A Wood Stork near Escondido 31 Dec (KW) was a bird that has been resident in the San Diego Wild Animal Park since 1986.

A White-tailed Kite at Mountain Pass in e. *San Bernardino* 22 Dec (BD) was far from any area of regular occurrence. A Harris's Hawk of unknown origin was around Blythe, *Riverside* 11 Nov-17 Dec (RH). A young Broad-winged Hawk in Lake Forest, *Orange* 18 Dec (JEP) was the first to be found in winter in s. California in many years. Five Swainson's Hawks at Borrego Springs, *San Diego* 6 Feb were the earliest of the spring migrants to pass through that area, with 183 counted by the end of the month (HC, PJ); one near El Centro, *Imperial* 8 Feb (KZK) was also an early spring migrant, but single birds over Long Beach, *Los Angeles* 18 Dec (TEW) and Fullerton, *Orange* 29 Jan (DRW) were either very late/early migrants, or wintering locally. Wintering Zone-tailed Hawks included single birds at Goleta, *Santa Barbara* 13 Oct-20 Jan (HPR), in Ojai, *Ventura* 18 Dec (BT), at Rancho Santa Margarita, *Orange* 28 Jan (VL), 2 around Escondido, *San Diego* through the period (KW), and single birds inland at Blythe 14 Dec-23 Jan (RH) and near El Centro 24 Sep-22 Dec (KZK); in addition an injured ad. was captured in a residen-



Totally unexpected, and establishing one of a very few mid-winter records for anywhere in North America, was this Baird's Sandpiper in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County, photographed on the first day of its 9-12 January 2006 stay. Photograph Mark Brown.

tial area of San Diego 23 Jan (*fide* PU; *SDNHM). At least 2 Rough-legged Hawks around the Carrizo Plain, and another in the nearby Cuyama Valley, appeared to be the only ones present this winter. The presence of a Crested Caracara near Pt. Conception, *Santa Barbara* 10 Jan (JRS) and another at the S.C.R.E. 5 Jan (DLG) adds two more records to the ever-increasing number from along the coast of California.

PLOVERS THROUGH ALCIDS

Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers included 3 at Guadalupe, *Santa Barbara* 22 Dec (WTF), up to 3 at Seal Beach, *Orange* through the period (RS), single birds at Bolsa Chica, *Orange* since mid-Aug (BED) and on Mission Bay in *San Diego*. 29 Dec-14 Apr (JRJ), and up to 5 near Imperial Beach through the period (RTP). An American Oystercatcher was in La-



One of a remarkable six present along the coast of southern California this winter, this Grace's Warbler was found in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County on 22 February 2006 (here 4 March). Photograph by Oscar Johnson.

guna Beach, *Orange* 27-29 Dec (KLP), and another was on Santa Cruz I. 8 Jan (OJ); a black-and-white oystercatcher at Scal Beach 1 Jan (TAB) was believed to be a hybrid.

Single Whimbrels inland at Rosamond and nearby Lancaster, *Los Angeles* 12 Feb (MSanM) were believed to be exceptionally early spring migrants. A Black Turnstone with at least 15 Ruddy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. 3 Feb-16 Apr (BM, GMcC) is thought to be the same bird present since Aug. Single Sanderlings inland on the Salton Sea at the mouth of Salt Cr. 4 Dec (CMcG) and at Red Hill 5 Nov-24 Feb (GMcC) were believed to be wintering locally. A Baird's Sandpiper in Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara* 9-12 Jan (MB) provided the first winter record for California. A Stilt Sandpiper at the V.C.G.P. through the period (RB) and another at the San Diego R. mouth, *San Diego* 10-26 Feb (PD) were on the coast, where most unusual, particularly so in winter. The Ruff found at S.E.S.S. 31 Jul remained

through 14 Apr (DR). One Red-necked and 6 Wilson's Phalaropes at S.E.S.S. 20 Dec (KLG) were either exceptionally late fall migrants or attempting to winter locally. Red Phalaropes strewn along the coast of *San Luis Obispo* in early Jan, with up to 75 at some locations, were correlated with a strong Pacific storm, but virtually none were found farther s.; one in the Cuyama Valley, *San Luis Obispo* 3 Jan (TME) was well inland, and another in Huntington Beach, *Orange* 1 Jan (SGM) was only a few km inland.

A Laughing Gull, rare in the Salton Sink in winter, was near N.E.S.S. 3 Jan (MSanM), and up to 2 were near Imperial, *Imperial* 9-22 Jan (BM); in addition, 4 were on the coast, where even rarer, with 2 in Goleta 31 Jan (DMC, OJ) and single birds at the San Diego R. mouth 8-23 Feb (MJB) and Imperial Beach 25 Dec (BC). A Franklin's Gull, even rarer in winter, was in Goleta 31 Dec (DA), and another was in Placentia, *Orange* 25 Nov-3 Jan (JEP). The Little Gull found on L. Perris, *Riverside* 12 Nov was still present 27 Mar (HBK). A Heermann's Gull, rare inland, was at S.E.S.S. 17 Feb-4 Mar (GMcC). At least 4 Mew Gulls were present well inland around S.E.S.S. during the winter. Five Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported, with single ads. on the coast in Goleta 18 Jan (WTF) and at Doheny Beach S.P., *Orange* 12-15 Dec (MJI), and inland an ad. on Obsidian Butte at S.E.S.S. 4 Dec (GMcC), a different ad. at nearby Red Hill 22 Feb-4 Mar (KLG), and a first-winter bird at the mouth of Salt Cr. 22 Feb (KLG). A Western Gull inland near Lancaster 25 Feb (MSanM) was one of a very few ever found in the Antelope Valley, but another near Chino, *San Bernardino* 3 Dec (CMcF) was in an area where found in recent winters. The only Glaucous Gulls were an ad. at Pt. Piedras Blancas, *San Luis Obispo* 19-20 Feb (DR), and first-winter birds 8 km off Marina del Rey 25



The number of Common Grackles reaching California has increased every decade since the first was found in 1967. This one near Imperial Beach, San Diego County was recorded 17 (here 19) December 2005 through 26 February 2006, one of two known in southern California this winter.

Photograph by Matt Sadowski.



This Dusky-capped Flycatcher, photographed in Brawley, Imperial County on the last day of its 1-6 December 2005 stay, was one of an unprecedented nine found in southern California this winter. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.

Feb (JSF) and at Dana Pt., Orange 5-17 Feb (N&MF). Black-legged Kittiwakes were remarkably scarce, with only 5 reported s. of *San Luis Obispo*.

An Elegant Tern at San Elijo Lagoon, *San Diego* 12 Dec (RTP) was late, and another in *Santa Barbara* 2-15 Feb (GR) was evidently wintering locally. A Black Skimmer at N.E.S.S. through 2 Jan (CMcG) remained at this inland location later than expected. A Marbled Murrelet at *San Simeon* 20-25 Feb (TME) was at the s. limit of this species' normal range.

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

White-winged Doves are now common residents at Anza Borrego S.P. in e. *San Diego* but are unusual elsewhere in winter, so one on the coast in *Los Osos*, *San Luis Obispo* 20 Feb (GPS), one in *Niland*, *Imperial* 20 Dec (ELK), and 2 in *Brawley* 3 Mar (DRW) were noteworthy. A Ruddy Ground-Dove at *F.C.R.* 25 Dec (V&GW), up to 3 around *Blythe* 14 Dec-1 Jan (RH), one near *El Centro* through the winter (KZK), and another near *Imperial*, *Imperial* 22 Dec (AH) were the only ones reported away from the resident population at *Calipatria*. A Spotted Owl in *Silverado Canyon* 18 Dec (DL) is believed to be one of fewer than 10 resident in *Orange*. Totally unexpected were single Lesser Nighthawks on the coast at the *Santa Ynez R.* estuary, *Santa Barbara* 18 Dec (WTF) and in *Santa Barbara* 31 Dec-2 Jan (RAH); these provide the first winter records for *Santa Barbara*. Three Broad-billed Hummingbirds were found, with one in *Mission Viejo*, *Orange* 6 Dec-22 Feb (JEP) joined by



Single Crested Caracaras have been found along the entire coast of California since the fall of 2001; this individual was photographed at the Santa Clara River estuary, Ventura County on 5 January 2006. Whether these records pertain to just one or two birds moving up and down the coast, or instead to more sedentary birds that remain undetected for long periods of time, is a puzzle under consideration by the California Bird Records Committee. Photograph by Daniel L. Grant.

another 17 Dec-22 Jan (DRW), and a male inland at *Borrego Springs* 5 Dec-8 Feb (HC). Single Costa's Hummingbirds in *Los Osos*, *San Luis Obispo* 10 Feb (GPS) and near *San Miguel*, *San Luis Obispo* 19 Feb (MTy) were farther n. than expected in winter. A Nuttall's Woodpecker at N.E.S.S. 2 Jan (CMcG) was outside the species' known range. About a dozen Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found scattered throughout the Region, as is normal.

A Least Flycatcher in *Long Beach*, *Los Angeles* 6 Dec-7 Feb (TEW, KSG) and a Dusky Flycatcher on the *Palos Verdes Pen.*, *Los Angeles* 11 Dec-28 Jan (KGL) were the only ones reported. Hammond's Flycatchers continue to prove regular in winter on the coastal slope, with 5 noted during the period; Gray (about 50 reported) and Pacific-slope (about 30) Flycatchers are still our "default" winter *Empidonax*. Eleven Eastern Phoebes during the period was a bit above normal. A male Vermilion Flycatcher s. of *Nipomo* 23 Feb+ was only the 2nd for *San Luis Obispo*. An amazing 9 Dusky-capped Flycatchers were recorded this winter: coastally, birds were in *Goleta*, *Santa Barbara* 31 Dec-20 Feb (CAM), in *Los Angeles* at *La Verne* 6 Dec-10 Jan (MJSJ), *Lakewood* 18 Dec-3 Mar (SB), *Arcadia* 17-20 Dec (EB, JP, TEW), and at *Costa Mesa*, *Orange* 30 Nov-22 Feb (JEP); in *Imperial* birds were at *Picacho State Recreation Area* 27 Nov-19 Dec (GCH), *Brawley* 1-6 Dec (BM), *Wister* 2 Dec-4 Mar (ToE), and *Ramer L.* 20 Dec-17 Feb (BM). Seven Tropical Kingbirds wintered along the coast, and a returning bird was near *Seeley*, *Imperial* from the fall through 19 Mar (GMcC). Thick-billed Kingbirds continued from the fall in *Santa Paula*, *Ventura* (reported only through 19 Dec but likely wintered; SH), *Wilmington*, *Los Angeles* through 20 Apr (KGL), and *Lake Hodges*, *San Diego* through 13 Apr (PEL). Western Kingbirds are casual in the Region in winter, so one in *Culver City*, *Los Angeles* 13 Jan (RB), up to 2 in *Long Beach* 29 Jan-2 Feb (TMi, KSG), and one in *Escondido*, *San Diego* 23 Jan (BZ) were noteworthy; another in *Santa Ana*, *Orange* 18-19 Jan 2005 (DRW) was inadvertently omitted from last

winter's report. The *Irwindale*, *Los Angeles* Scissor-tailed Flycatcher remained through the period; others were in *Alhambra*, *Los Angeles* 4 Jan (TC) and *Santee*, *San Diego* 25 Jan-18 Mar (BZ).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

A Bell's Vireo returned for its 3rd winter in *Long Beach* 11 Oct-5 Mar (KGL). Gray Vireo's sole wintering arca in California is around the *Elephant Tree* groves in *Anza-Borrego S.P.* (see *Western Birds* 31: 258-262, 2000); this winter, one was found there on 18 Jan (LH). Plumbeous Vireos, amazingly unknown in California until 1960, are proving to be uncommon but expected winter visitors to the Region, with some 36 noted this winter on the coastal slope and another 5 on the deserts; in contrast, only about 10 Cassin's Vireos were reported (all coastal). Warbling Vireos, casual in winter, were in *Coronado*, *San Diego* 17 Dec (EAC) and in *South Pasadena*, *Los Angeles* 30 Jan (SMI).

The obscure Western Scrub-Jay reported in fall near *Holtville*, *Imperial* was still present there 9 Mar (DRW). Two Yellow-billed Magpies in *Santa Barbara* through the period (GR) were possibly escapees, and one at *Bolsa Chica*, *Orange* 30 Jan-17 Feb (AB) was almost certainly such. Up to 10 Bank Swallows were present through the period at S.E.S.S. (GMcC), but a Cliff Swallow there 17 Feb (GMcC) was probably an early spring transient. High Barn Swallow winter counts are now an annual phenomenon, e.g., 25 in *Goleta* 3 Jan (DMC) and up to 150 at S.E.S.S. through the period (GMcC); up to 9 in the cold *Owens Valley*, *Inyo* 17 Dec-9 Jan (T&JH) reinforce this trend. Five Pygmy Nuthatches in *Santa Maria*, *Santa Barbara* 23 Feb (MPB) were somewhat out of range. A House Wren in *Little Lake Canyon* 21 Dec (SLS) was only the



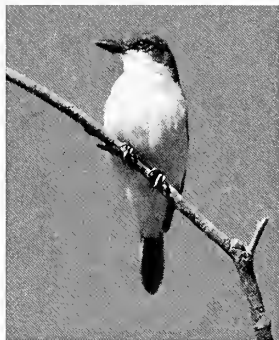
This Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal on Upper Newport Bay, Orange County, photographed here on 10 February 2006, shows the strong pale lines on the face, which are much less prominent in the North American subspecies, *californiensis*. Photograph by Herbert Clarke.

4th to be found in *Inyo* in Dec. A Winter Wren in *Malibu*, *Los Angeles* 18 Dec gave call notes typical of boreal/eastern *hiemalis* (KLG).

A Rufous-backed Robin at *Wister*, S.E.S.S.

21 Dec–20 Jan (TaE) established California's 14th record. Sage Thrashers are remarkably early "spring" migrants in the Region, but their status is complicated by a scattering of wintering individuals; some this season were clearly winter birds, such as one in San Luis Obispo 16–25 Dec (RJ) and one in Huntington Beach 8 Jan (RAE), but several late-Jan sightings were in areas where none wintered, and the push of migrants was illustrated by counts of 12 near Mojave, Kern 9–10 Feb (HLJ), 31 in the Antelope Valley, Los Angeles 12 Feb (JSF), and 22 on the Carrizo Plain, San Luis Obispo 13–14 Feb (AFS). Brown Thrashers were found in Long Beach 18 Dec–8 Mar (E&VZ) and at El Capitan State Beach, Santa Barbara 22 Dec–9 Feb (DF). A Sprague's Pipit was near Calipatria 13 Nov–10 Dec, with another there 20 Dec (GMcC).

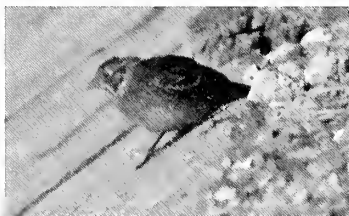
A dozen coastal Nashville Warblers during the period were expected, but a Virginia's Warbler at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles 5–12 Mar (RB) was at a season when casual in the Region. Lucy's Warblers, very rare coastally and in winter, were in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara 25 Jan–8 Feb (PAG) and Goleta 22 Feb–11 Mar (DMC). A Northern Parula in Morro Bay 1 Dec–12 Mar+ (LA) was the first to winter in San Luis Obispo; 2 others were in s. coastal Los Angeles (KGL). A lingering Yellow Warbler in Bishop 17 Dec (C&RH) was the latest for Inyo by a week. A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Huntington Beach remained from the fall through 13 Apr (PEL); others were in Mission Viejo, Orange 6 Dec–21 Jan (JEP) and near Arcadia, Los Angeles 17 Dec (ES). A returning female Black-throated Green Warbler was in



This Thick-billed Kingbird, photographed at Lake Hodges, San Diego County on 20 February 2006, was one of three known to be wintering in California in winter 2005–2006. Photograph by Thomas A. Blackman.

Costa Mesa 26 Dec–25 Feb (PTC), and another continued in Riverside 5 Nov–12 Feb (DG). The 4 wintering Grace's Warblers continued on Pt. Loma, San Diego through the period, with at least 3 still present 12 Mar (MTH) and one remaining through 15 Apr (PGi); a returning winterer in Del Mar, San Diego was seen 22 Dec (MJB), and one was in

Santa Maria 22 Feb–10 Mar (JMC). Pine Warblers were found in planted pines in Fountain Valley, Orange 3–11 Jan (JEP) and Santa Maria 26 Feb–7 Mar (DMC). About 15 Palm Warblers along the coast were expected, but 3



A male Smith's Longspur near Calipatria, Imperial County 20 December 2005 through 17 February 2006 (here 13 January) was only the seventh to be recorded in California and the second in winter. Photograph by Bob Miller.

ington Beach 29 Nov–1 Mar (JEP).

The male Hooded Warbler found in Santa Monica, Los Angeles 24 Nov remained until 8 Feb (LP). Some 40 Wilson's Warblers on the coast included one on Santa Rosa I. 7 Feb (RF). In addition to the 4 wintering Painted Redstarts noted in the fall report, single birds were in Los Angeles at Monrovia 12 Dec–9 Mar (TEW), Newhall 28 Dec–20 Feb (BA) and Eaton Canyon 20 Mar (MCL), and in San Diego at Coronado 17 Dec–15 Jan+ (EAC) and Rancho Santa Fe 22 Dec (CM). A Yellow-breasted Chat in the San Felipe Valley 30 Dec (LH) was the latest ever for San Diego.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 20 Summer Tanagers were found at various coastal localities. A Western Tanager in Bakersfield 4–18 Dec (K&BK) was very late for Kern. Six Green-tailed Towhees were on the coastal slope from Los Angeles to San Diego, and 6 Clay-colored Sparrows were scattered the length of the coast. Black-chinned Sparrows are very rarely noted in migration and winter, so up to 7 in the Anza–Borrego S.P. area 20 Dec–18 Jan (KL, LH) and single birds in Escondido 30 Dec (KW) and near L. Henshaw 14 Jan (PU) were of note. A Black-throated Sparrow was e. of San Juan Capistrano, Orange 17 Dec (LC, LN). A Grasshopper Spar-

row was on Santa Rosa I. 19 Feb (RF). The last of 3 wintering Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Seal Beach, Orange was seen 13 Mar (JF); another was in Imperial Beach 31 Dec (MUE). Up to 2 Lark Buntings were on the Carrizo Plain 30 Dec–21 Feb (RHZ, AFS). Over 30 Swamp Sparrows were reported along the coast, and 8 were at S.E.S.S. during the period. The only Harris's Sparrow was in Fountain Valley 9 Dec+ (JEP). The fields ne. of Calipatria again hosted large numbers of longspurs, with up to 15 McCown's 20 Dec–17 Feb, up to 25 Laplands 10 Dec–26 Feb, and up to 300 Chestnut-collareds 10 Dec–26 Feb, with 2 still present 2 Mar (GMcC); among these was a Smith's Longspur, only the 7th to be found in California, 20 Dec–17

Feb (ToE). A Lapland Longspur in Goleta 15 Dec (DMC) was along the coast, where scarce.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (8 this winter) and Black-headed Grosbeaks (5) were in near-normal numbers. The Indigo Bunting found 29 Nov in Morro Bay remained until 3 Dec (DB); a male was well photographed in Northridge, Los Angeles 31 Dec–5 Mar (ET). A Lazuli Bunting in Irwindale 17 Dec (AL) was unseasonal. A green Painted Bunting was in Goleta 30 Dec (WTF).

Five Tricolored Blackbirds at N.E.S.S. 2 Jan (CMcG) and an ad. male near Niland 22

Dec (ToE) were out of range. Single Common Grackles, still only casual in California, were near San Luis Obispo 27 Nov–22 Dec (JSR) and near Imperial Beach 17 Dec–26 Feb (GMcC). A flock of 80+ male Great-tailed Grackles in Oceano demonstrates the magnitude of this species' expansion into San Luis Obispo. Five hundred Brown-headed Cowbirds s. of Big Pine 13 Dec (T&JH) was an unprecedented winter count for Inyo. An imm. male Orchard Oriole was in Costa Mesa 1 Jan (JEP). The expected small numbers of Hooded and Bullock's Orioles were found this winter; a Bullock's at Cuyamaca Rancho S.P., San Diego 7 Jan (GLR) was at an unexpectedly high elevation. Nine Baltimore Orioles were reported through the period. Three male Scott's Orioles at Black Rock Campground, Joshua Tree N.M., San Bernardino 24 Feb (MTo) may have been exceptionally early spring arrivals.

Cited observers (county coordinators in bold-face): Dustin Alcalá, Lisa Andreano, Brian Ash-



At the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, this Lesser Black-backed Gull was findable 22 (here 26) February through 4 March 2006; it was one of five reported in Southern California in winter 2005–2006. Photograph by Henry Detweiler.

ton, Ed Barajas, Richard Barth, Tom A. Benson, Mark J. Billings, Al Borodayko, Suzanne Bowers, Dick Boyd, Kyle Braunger, Mark P. Brown, Dick Cabe, Barbara Carlson, Jamie M. Chavez, Hal Coen, Laura Cohen, Tori Collender, David M. Compton (*Santa Barbara*), Peyton T. Cook, Elizabeth A. Copper, Brian E. Daniels, Bill Deppe, Pete Dunne, Tanner Easterla (TaE), Todd Easterla (ToE), Tom M. Edell (*San Luis Obispo*), Richard A. Erickson, Michael U. Evens (*San Diego*), Jon S. Feenstra, John Fitch, Dan Fontaine, Rob Fowler, Nick & Mary Freeman, Wes T. Fritz, Peter A. Gaede, **Kimball L. Garrett** (*Los Angeles*), Pete Ginsburg (PGi), Dave Goodward, Daniel L. Grant, John F. Green (*Riverside*), Robert A. Hamilton, Lori Hargrave, Gjon C. Hazard, Sandy Hedrick, Matthew T. Heindel, Tom & Jo Heindel (*Inyo*), Roger Higson, Andrew Howe, Marshall J. Iloff,

Joseph R. Jehl, Jr., Oscar Johnson, H. Lee Jones, Ryan Jorgeson, Paul Jorgensen, Al Kalin, Eric L. Kershner, Howard B. King, Alexander E. Koonce (*San Bernardino*), Kenneth Z. Kurland, Ken & Brenda Kyle, Kevin G. Larson, Dave M. Lawrence, Andrew Lee, Paul E. Lehman, Vic Leipzig, Kurt Leuschner, Dan Lockshaw, Michael C. Long, Carol Manning, Curtis A. Marantz, Guy McCaskie (*Imperial*), Cathy McFadden, Chet McGaugh, Todd McGrath, Steven J. Meyers, Thomas Miko (TMI), Bob Miller, Steve Mlodinow (SMI), Kathy C. Molina, Steve G. Morris, Laura Norton, Robert T. Patten, Kaaren L. Perry, James E. Pike, Lucien Plauzoles, Joan Powell, Hugh P. Ranson, Gage Ricard, Don Roberson, Geoffrey L. Rogers, George Roland, Jim S. Royer, Matt Sadowski, Mike San Miguel, Michael J. San Miguel Jr., Robert Schallmann, Larry Schmahl, Alan F.

Schmierer, Peter Siminski, Gregory P. Smith, Steve Smith (SSm) Susan Steele (SSt), Ed Stonick, John R. Storrer, Mary Beth Stowe, Bob Talryn, Ed Thomas, Mike Todd (MTo), Mike Tynner (MTy), David Vander Pluym, Philip Unitt, Herman Vanoosten, Stanley Walens, Ken Weaver, Walter Wehtje (*Ventura*), Douglas R. Willick (*Orange*), John C. Wilson (*Kern*), Vicki & Gerry Wolf, Thomas E. Wurster, Roger H. Zachary, Barry Zimmer, Elias & Val Zuniga. An additional 25+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season; all have our thanks. ☺

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Baja California Peninsula



Richard A. Erickson
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There was plenty to write about this season, as the north and south ends of the Region were well covered. We appreciate reports from visitors to Los Cabos who are not necessarily focused on birding. Highlights included the Region's first confirmed Streak-backed Oriole, Baja California's first Dusky-capped Flycatchers and Blue-headed Vireo, rare waterfowl, the return of Sandhill Cranes to the Mexicali Valley, Long-tailed Jaegers in the Gulf of California, and numerous rare passerines.

Abbreviations: C.P.G.P. (Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds); E.S.J.C. (Estero San José del Cabo).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck went unrecorded for the first winter this decade, while Fulvous Whistling-Duck sightings at Lagunas de Chametla continued from our last report: 3 on 23 Dec (IMC, RV) and one 18–22 Mar (ph. MJI). All six of the Region's goose species were reported. Only 2 of 20 Greater White-fronted Geese, but 8 of 10 Snow Geese, were in Baja California. An imm. Ross's Goose at the Río Guadalupe estuary 17–18 Dec was relocated at Real del Mar 20 Dec–31 Jan (TJM, ph. MJB et al.). We consider many of the following white-cheeked goose reports tentative at the subspecies level, especially at the *taverneri* Cackling/*parvipes* Canada species interface (cf. N.A.B. 59: 329). Aleutian Cackling Geese (*B. h. leucopareia*) were at the Manadero Plain 10 Oct (6; ph. RAH et al.) and El Descanso 3 Dec (ph., †MJI, MJB), and *minima* Cacklings were at Guerrero Negro 7–30 Nov (5, AG-A) and C.P.G.P. 24 Jan (1, MJI, RAE). Up to 3 *taverneri* were at C.P.G.P. 24 Jan–25 Feb (ph. MJI et al.) and "Lessers" at Heroes de la Independencia 21 Jan–26 Feb may have included one *taverneri* and 4 *parvipes* (†MJB, ph. TJM, DP), but we still consider *parvipes* unconfirmed in the Region. Lastly, up to 40 *moffitti* Canadas were at C.P.G.P. 9 Dec–24 Jan (ph. GR-C, GDLG et al.).

Wood Ducks were well reported, with up to 5 at the Mexicali Zoo 22 Sep–25 Feb (ph. MJI et al.), a female in Tijuana 7–16 Jan (ph. MJB, TJM), and a male record far s. in Baja California at Lagunita El Ciprés 29 Jan (ph. MJB et al.). A male Eurasian Wigeon at E.S.J.C. 18–23 Jan (ph. DSC, ph. SGM) was the 2nd for Baja California Sur; 3 were found in the Region's far north. Also rare in Baja California Sur, 3 Mallards at E.S.J.C. 25 Jan (†MN, CN)



Sandhill Cranes had not been seen in Baja California for nearly 25 years, so these birds dropping in to roost at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 24 January 2006 were a welcome sight. Their long necks, long bills, and especially their extensive red caps all indicate they were Greater Sandhill Cranes (subspecies *tabida*), which has recently become more prevalent in the adjacent Imperial Valley.

Photograph by Marshall J. Iloff.

were the first found since Sep 2000. Last winter's female Garganey apparently returned to E.S.J.C., where it was seen 17–22 Mar (ph. MJI). The most unusual of 9 Greater Scaup was a male at E.S.J.C. 21 Jan (†SGM). The female Harlequin Duck at La Joya 11 Nov–31 Jan (ph. MJB et al.) was presumably the same one seen there in Mar 2003 and Mar–Jun



One of the highlights of the 19 December 2005 Ensenada Christmas Bird Count was this first-year female Pine Warbler on the Maneadero Plain, the first to be photographed well in the Baja California Peninsula region.

Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

2004, one of only 2 found in the Region. Additional rare sea ducks were 5 Black Scoters in the far nw. and Long-tailed Ducks at La Fonda 3 Dec (MJB, †MJI) and Estero Punta Banda 19 Dec–31 Jan (†MSM, LAC, AG-A). A Hooded Merganser was at E.S.J.C. 22 Jan (ph. SGM), and 7 were seen in the far north.

Notable seabird sightings included Laysan Albatrosses on both sides of the peninsula near I. Santa Margarita 14 Feb and near I. San José 16 Feb (both PAG, PJ), a *Pterodroma* petrel (probably not *Cookularia*) just s. of I. del Carmen 5 Mar (†MG), and a Nazca Booby near Gorda Bank 21 Feb (MG). Two Magnificent Frigatebirds in the San Felipe area 26 Feb (MJB, ph. TJM, DP) were unusual so far n. in winter.



The Baja California Peninsula region rarely generates reports of Long-tailed Jaegers and, like most places in the northern hemisphere, had produced none in winter. These molting adults/near-adults near Isla Santa Cruz in the southwestern Gulf of California 18 February 2006 were among 23 seen in the area over a two-day period.

Photograph by Aaron Remy.

HERONS THROUGH TERNS

Two American Bitterns at Lagunita El Ciprés 21 Jan (ph. EDZ-H) were the only ones reported, and up to 2 Least Bitterns in Tijuana 28 Aug–7 Jan (MJB) and at least one at E.S.J.C. 22 Jan–15 Mar (MN, CN, MJI) were in areas lacking recent records. All Bald Eagles seen were ads. in the far north: Laguna del Indio 14 Dec (RAE et al.), C.P.G.P. 24 Jan (MJI, RAE), and Laguna Hanson 26 Jan (ph. GR-C). An ad. Broad-winged Hawk at E.S.J.C. 20 Feb (†PAG) may have represented the re-

turn of the imm. that was seen there in Jan 2005. An imm. on the Maneadero Plain 18 Dec–31 Jan (ph. RAE et al.) was seen by many. Twelve Swainson's Hawks were noted in s. Baja California Sur, including 3 s. of La Paz. A Merlin on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (ph. MJI, DSC) matched the dark nw. subspecies *suckleyi*; previous Regional reports have been considered tentative (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 122). Four Sandhill Cranes (apparently *G. c. tabida*) coming in to roost at C.P.G.P. 24 Jan (ph. MJI, RAE) were the first seen in the Region since 1982 (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 123). Solitary Sandpipers were found again in the Cape District: 2 at Santiago 23 Jan (SGM) and one at E.S.J.C. 17–22 Mar (MJI).



This female Harlequin Duck at La Joya, Baja California on 11 November 2005 was believed to be the same individual present there in March 2003 and March–June 2004.

Photograph by Mork J. Billings.

The season's biggest surprise was 23 ad./subad. Long-tailed Jaegers in three groups in the s. Gulf, from near I. Santa Cruz to near I. Partida, 18–19 Feb (†PAG, ph. AR, PJ). The species' winter range is not well known, especially in the Pacific, but there appear to be no records n. of Panama and the cen. Pacific (Wiley and Lee, *Birds of North America* account). A first-winter Mew Gull at E.S.J.C. 15–17 Mar (ph. MJI) was the 2nd to be confirmed in Baja California Sur. Disturbing was the report from Bahía Magdalena 28 Feb of ad. Western Gulls: "many... had obviously yellow legs, but otherwise looked and sounded like Westerns" (DAS). On the heels of last year's first winter record in Baja California, 4 or 5 Gull-billed Terns were found in the ne. 13 Dec–24 Jan: at C.P.G.P., Laguna del Indio, and the Río Colorado delta (RAE, ph. GDLG et al.). Up to 4 were at El Centenario 27 Jan–19 Mar (SGM, DAS, MJI). Elegant Tern was found again in the Cape District in winter, with 2 at La Paz 17 Dec (*fide* EP) and one at E.S.J.C. 22–25 Jan (MN, CN).

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

The Flickers reported much on small doves at Bahía de Los Angeles. An Inca Dove 30 Jan–6 Apr (ph.) followed one there 19 Oct 1999, es-

tablishing the only records away from the northeast. The Ruddy Ground-Dove present since Oct was joined by 3 more 30 Jan, and all remained through Feb. Two at Algodones 27 Dec (KAR) were the first for the northeast. An Elf Owl at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 25 Jan (NA, VA) was nw. of previous state records; the unusual habitat suggests a wandering bird. A high count of 775 Lesser Nighthawks at E.S.J.C. 20 Jan (SGM) may have included wintering birds from the n. in addition to local residents. Up to 20 Vaux's Swifts were at E.S.J.C. 18 Jan–21 Mar (†DSC et al.). Rare hummingbirds in the s. were an imm. male Broad-billed near Ciudad Constitución 16 Mar (†MJI) and an imm. female Black-chinned at E.S.J.C. 15 Mar (ph., †MJI). In the nw., wintering Costa's Hummingbirds are remarkably hard to come by (e.g., it was missed on the first four Ensenada C.B.C.s), so 7 on the coast s. to Maneadero 17 Dec–1 Apr (ph. RAH, ph. MJB et al.) was an unexpectedly robust total. The male Downy Woodpecker at Playas de Tijuana since 27 Aug was last recorded 29 Jan (ph. MJB et al.), and another male was at the Río Guadalupe estuary 9 Feb (†CGE et al.).

A Dusky Flycatcher on the Río Colorado at Ejido Chiapas #3 on 8 Mar (†MJI, MJB, RAH) provided the Region's first (presumed) winter record. A calling Pacific-slope Flycatcher s. of nearby Pachuca 8 Mar (MJB, ph. MJI, RAH) probably was also wintering, as were 6 individuals along the nw. coast (ph. MJB et al.). Baja California's first Dusky-capped Flycatchers corresponded with a banner year for the species in California: Playas de Tijuana 18 Dec–1 Apr (ph., †DSC et al.) and Ejido Chiapas #3 8–12 Mar (ph. RAH et al.). Four Tropical Kingbirds were seen in the Cape District



A flock of over 100 Blue-winged Teal at Estero San José del Cabo, Baja California Sur, included this female Garganey 17 March 2006. It was assumed to be a returning individual from one year before.

Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

and one was at Ensenada 19 Dec (EDZ-H, †RAH). Wintering Western Kingbirds were at La Paz 17 Dec (*fide* EP) and on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 26 Jan (SGM). A



A male Eurasian Wigeon at Estero San José del Cabo 18-23 January 2006 was the first to be photographically documented in Baja California Sur. The only prior record hails from nearby La Paz 13 April 1970. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher roosted with Cassin's Kingbirds at Cantamar 18 Dec–28 Jan (MJI, ph. MJB et al.).

Noteworthy wintering vireos included a Bell's on the Maneadero Plain 20 Dec (TJM, ph. MJB et al.) and a Plumbeous at the Mexicali Zoo 28 Dec (KAR). Best was a singing first-winter Blue-headed Vireo, Baja California's first, at Ejido Chiapas #3 8–12 Mar (ph. MJI et al.). The winter swallow concentration at E.S.J.C. is renowned; this year's maxima included 20 Tree, 1000 Violet-green, 100 Northern Rough-winged, 25 Bank, 10 Cliff, and 400 Barn. On the e. side of the Sierra Juárez, 135 Western Bluebirds at Cañon de Guadalupe 1 Jan (BLS) was a high number for a lowland site. The season's only Varied Thrush was on the Maneadero Plain 19–20 Dec (ph. PAG et al.). A Red-throated Pipit of uncertain age at E.S.J.C. 17–22 Mar (ph., v.r. MJI) was where one wintered the previous year.

WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

Lucy's Warblers were present at Rosarito 11 Nov–28 Jan (ph. MJB et al.) and at E.S.J.C. 21–23 Jan (ph. SGM, †MN, CN). At Guerrero Negro, the returning male Black-throated Blue Warbler was present Nov–20 Feb (ES, AG-A et al.), and near Ciudad Constitución, the returning male Grace's Warbler was present 16–23 Mar (ph. MJI). The Region's 3rd Pine Warbler, a first-year female on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (ph. MJI), eluded subsequent searchers and so was not confirmed as the Peninsula's first overwintering bird. After being unrecorded in the fall, 2 Palm Warblers were on the Maneadero Plain 18–19 Dec (ph. MJI et al.), and one was at E.S.J.C. 21 Jan–17 Mar (SGM, ph. MJI). Up to 3 American Redstarts were on the nw. coast 18 Dec–29 Jan (DSC et al.), and an ad. female was at the Mexicali Zoo 13 Dec–24 Jan (RAE, ph. MJI). The Region's 2nd wintering Ovenbird was at Miraflores 18 Mar (MJI), and a male MacGillivray's Warbler on the

Maneadero Plain 18–19 Dec returned for at least its 5th winter (RAE, LAC, MJI). Summer Tanager was unrecorded in Baja California in fall 2005, but 8 were found this season, including 3 at the Mexicali Zoo. A female Western Tanager at the zoo 24 Jan (RAE, ph. MJI) was the first in the ne. in winter; 7 were seen in the northwest.

Sparrows of interest included 2 Clay-colored on the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (ph. MJI et al.), a Black-chinned in nearby Arroyo San Carlos 1 Jan (DSC), up to 3 Grasshoppers at E.S.J.C. 19–20 Jan (ph. DSC, ph. SGM), a Swamp at Real del Mar 3 Dec–16 Jan (ph. MJI, ph. MJB, TJM), White-throateds at Punta Banda 18–19 Dec (ph. MJB, TJM) and the Maneadero Plain 19 Dec (MJI), and a singing ad. *pugetensis* White-crowned at El Descanso 3 Dec (ph., †MJI, MJB). Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in the nw., another was at Ejido Lagunero 1 Jan (NA, VA), and 2 were in the far south. Up to 60 Tricolored Blackbirds at Laguna Hanson 4 Dec–27 Jan (ph. GR-C et al.) were the most ever reported in the mountains.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds are seldom found in the Cape District, but up to 150 were at E.S.J.C. 17–21 Mar (ph. MJI). A female Bronzed Cowbird at Lagunas de Chametla 19 Mar (ph. MJI) was in an area where one or more females were seen on 25 Jan and 7 Oct 2005. The season's only Orchard Oriole was an ad. male at Playas de Tijuana 18 Dec–8 Jan (†DSC, ph. MJB et al.). Northerly female Hooded Orioles were at Ensenada 19 Dec (†RAH, EDZ-H) and Tijuana 3 Mar (MJI, MJB). A Streak-backed Oriole (possibly an ad. female) at Miraflores 22 Jan (ph., †SGM)



Prior to this year, a Dusky-capped Flycatcher collected in the Sierra de La Laguna 24 June 1896 provided the Region's only record. The second of two this winter was found on 8 March 2006 on the Rio Colorado near Ejido Chiapas No. 3. Photograph by Robert A. Hamilton.

was an overdue first for the Region (cf. *Mono-graphs in Field Ornithology* 3: 191). Baltimore Orioles were found at the Mexicali Zoo 28 Dec–25 Feb (KAR, ph. MJB et al.), the first for

the nc., and in the Cape District at Santa Anita 19 Jan (ph. DSC).

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This Black Merlin (subspecies *suckleyi*)—photographed on the Maneadero Plain, Baja California on 18 December 2005—was the first one well documented on the Peninsula and showed no obvious signs of introgression.

Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

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Héctor Gómez de Silva

In winter 2005–2006, numerous new state records and records of species far out of their known ranges continued to accrue, perhaps the most astounding of all being records of two Neotropical eagle species in northern Mexico: a Solitary Eagle in Tamaulipas and a Black Hawk-Eagle in Nayarit.

NORTHERN MEXICO



Sinaloa and Nayarit were very dry throughout the period, with little measurable rain over most regions since early October. Flower-banks were relatively barren away from streambanks. Carmody reports much less song (except in Fan-tailed Warbler and Rosy Thrush-Tanager) and less responsiveness to audio recordings than is usual at this season. On the other hand, he noted that nearly any highway median strip that had not been grazed held small numbers of Botteri's and Grasshopper Sparrows in February, also probably a consequence of the arid conditions.

WATERFOWL THROUGH DOVES

About 1000+ Ross's Geese and 450 Snow Geese (including 5 or 6 blue morphs of the latter) were at Laguna Fierro, along with 4 Common Mergansers 5 Dec (DK, DMe, JRu, JRa). An apparent Ross's Goose × Snow Goose hybrid and 800+ Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were on a large stock pond in Rancho Ciudadela, along the La Noria road, ne. of Mazatlán, Sin. (MC, ph. JL). A Greater White-fronted Goose was in riparian habitat s. of the bridge into Casas Grandes, Chih. 8 Dec (DK, DMe, JRu, JRa). About 1150 Snow Geese and one ad. Ross's Goose (ph.) were seen 20 Nov at Laguna Sayula, Jal.; one of the Snows wore a yellow neck collar that indicated it had been banded in 2002 at Queen Maud Gulf, Nunavut (SJD et al.). Four Buffleheads, an uncommon duck in the area, were seen in the Cañón de Fernández S.P. on

the Río Nazas 15 Jan (RLL, WB, FVP).

A dozen ad. Clark's Grebes were seen in Tanque Aguilereño and Tanque Genty, shallow dams s. of Torreón, 3 Jan (FVP) and 6 Feb (RLL, FVP). An Eared Grebe, 4 Clark's Grebes, an American White Pelican, and a Snowy Egret were at Laguna Fierro, Chih. 5 Dec (DK, DMe, JRu, JRa). A Great Blue Heron nest, and one carrying nesting material, were seen 4 Feb near La Cottina along the Río Grande de Santiago, e. of Tepic, Nay (JM,

the same area, no Northern Harriers were reported—for the first time in many years. An imm. Solitary Eagle in the El Cielo Biosphere Reserve between Gómez Farias and Alta Cima, Tamps. was documented 21 Feb during one of the field trips of El Cielo Nature Festival (PL, RJ, SO, EP, ph. RC, m.ob.); this would furnish a first state record. The El Cielo Nature Festival is an effort to promote sustainable development through avitourism; local guides are available year-round, and several special events are hosted each year (<www.elcielofestival.com>). Another outstanding eagle record was of an ad. Black Hawk-Eagle found at La Bajada, near La Palma, Nay. 15 Feb (GK, MC, ph. KK).

Two groups of Sandhill Cranes totaling 45 birds were seen flying over Tanque Aguilereño at dawn 6 Feb (RLL, FVP). A Pacific and 5 American Golden-Plovers were reported from the coast 10 km n. of the town of Golfo de Santa Clara, Son. 26 Aug (MG, ME, ES); 4 of the latter were at Bahía Adair, Son. 6 Dec (MG, EL, ES). A remarkable count of 318 Snowy Plovers came Laguna Sayula, Jal. 20 Nov (SJD et al.). A Wandering Tattler was along the rocky coast n. of Punta Mita, Nay. 24 Jan (MD); 3 were noted on the Islas Marietas, Nay. 27 Jan (M.N.T.C.). An ad. Wilson's Phalarope was at San Blas 23 Feb (JL, MC). Six Silt Sandpipers were farther n. than usual in winter near the Mazatlán airport 9 Feb (MC). A Long-billed Dowitcher was at Laguna Fierro 5 Dec (DK, DMe, JRu, JRa). One and 2 Black Turnstones were at Playa Cerritos n. of Mazatlán at the head of Emerald Bay 8 & 18 Feb, respectively (MC). An American Woodcock was found just outside Parque Estanzuela in Monterrey, N.L. in early Feb (IG, *vide* AGS). A group of 20+ Sandwich Terns was reported well out in the Bahía de Banderas about two-thirds of the way between Nuevo Vallarta and Islas Marietas 27 Jan (M.N.T.C.). A female Ruddy Ground-Dove was photographed in riparian habitat near Casas Grandes 8 Dec (DK, DMe, JRu, JRa), providing the 2nd documented record from Chihuahua. A Eurasian Collared-Dove was in a large cattle pen in the La Noria road with many Ruddy Ground-Doves and White-winged Doves 9 Feb (KC, MC).



This female Ruddy Ground-Dove frequented riparian habitat near Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico 8 December 2005; it furnishes just the second confirmed record for the state of Chihuahua. Photograph by Dave Krueper.

shouldered Hawks were seen in the subregion: an ad. at Cañón de Fernández S.P. 20 Nov and 4 Dec (RLL, WB, AVJ, FVP), 2 ads. there 11 Dec (RLL, AVJ, WB), and a juv. at Bosque Venustiano Carranza, an urban park in Torreón, 2 Jan (ph. FVP). Interestingly, in

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

Several Lucifer and up to 10 Costa's Hummingbirds were seen near La Cortina at about 300 m elevation 4 Feb (AM, JM). Anna's continues to be the most common hummingbird species in Bosque Venustiano Carranza (FVP et al.). Three species of sapsuckers were found along the Durango Hwy in Feb: 2 fe-

male Williamson's and a male Yellow-bellied near El Palmito, Sin. 11 & 19 Feb, plus a female Red-naped below El Batel, Sin. 19 Feb (MC). Near the latter spot, a pair of Eared Quetzals foraged amid a large mixed-species flock containing warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, woodcreepers, and flycatchers 27 Feb (DM et al., ph. ESB, vt. LC). A pair of Pale-billed Woodpeckers with fledglings at a nest hole were on the El Cuarentano Rd., Nay. 23 Feb, and a pair was on the coast n. of Mazatlán at Emerald Bay 8 Feb (MC). A Say's Phoebe was seen near Santa Fe, e. of Tepic 28 Jan (JM, AM), and another was in the large field at Rancho La Noria, Nay. 13 & 23 Feb (MC). A male Gray-collared Becard was in a patch of forest at the s. end of Bucerías, Nay. 24 & 26 Jan (M.N.T.C.). A Bright-rumped Attila was high at an elevation of 2170 m near El Palmito 19 Feb (MC); another was high at 1980 m along the Durango Hwy. w. of Barranca Rancho Liebre 27 Feb (DM, ESB et al.). At a lower elevation on the hwy., a Blue-headed Vireo was seen well near Cerro el Elefante 26 Feb (LC).

At least 250 Sinaloa Crows were noted in various locations in Bucerías 20-29 Jan (M.N.T.C.). A Tree Swallow was at Laguna Fierro 5 Dec (DK, DME, JRu, JRa). Two Colima Warblers were on the El Cuarentano road 23 Feb, where they have recently been found to be regular (MC). Two or 3 Chestnut-sided Warblers were noted in El Guamuchil, Nay. 23, 25, & 29 Jan (M.N.T.C.). A Townsend's Warbler n. of Santa Fe 31 Jan (JM, AM) was somewhat low at about 300 m. A male Hooded Warbler was in the forest at the s. end of Bucerías 17 Jan, and a Pyrrhuloxia was noted there 24-30 Jan (M.N.T.C.). Two Clay-colored Sparrows were seen in riparian areas near Casas Grandes 8 Dec (DK, DME, JRu, JRa), where rare in winter. A Swamp Sparrow was at Laguna Fierro 5 Dec (DK, DME, JRu, JRa). A Song Sparrow was reported 17-29 Jan at the s. end of Bucerías (M.N.T.C.); if this report can be confirmed, it will constitute the first record for Nayarit.

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CENTRAL MEXICO



HERONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A Least Grebe frequented a res. near Trinidad, 15 km s. of Guanajuato, Gro. 21-29 Jan (MW); 100 Eared Grebes and a similar number of American White Pelicans were there 5 Feb (MW). Eight Magnificent Frigatebirds soared over Rancho Primavera, Jal. 19 Jan, an extraordinary count well inland (MJI), and around 300 Blue-footed Boobies were feeding off the Río Ameca mouth, Jal. 13 Jan (MJI).

An American Bittern was seen in Rancho Primavera, Jal. 19 Jan (MJI). An apparent Snowy Egret x Little Blue Heron hybrid was at the Maito, Jal. estuary 18 Jan (MJI). A Reddish Egret that flew over the pond in Cruz de Loreto, Jal. 9 Jan (MJI) was unusual being away from the immediate coast. An ad. White Ibis was inland at L. Colotitlán, Jal. 5 Feb (HGdS, MPV). A female

Lesser Scaup was at Bosque de Aragón 31 Dec (HGdS, MPV). A male and 2 female Buffleheads were at Parque Ecologico Xochimilco 13 Dec (RW). A female Hooded Merganser was at the res. near Trinidad 21 Jan (MW). A Crested Guan was heard and seen near Bioto road, Jal. 9 & 18 Jan (MJI), and 2 were seen at Los Mazos microwave towers, Jal. 16 Feb (BG).

Five Roadside Hawks were seen near Cruz de Loreto 10 Feb (BG). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was at La Primavera ranch, Jal.

11 Jan, and 2 ads. and an imm. were observed soaring over Cajón de Peña dam, Jal. 18 Jan (MJI). A Harlan's Hawk was photographed at Aquiles Serdán W.T.P. 18 Jan (ph. MJI). A Peregrine Falcon was at La Cima, D.F. 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV), and another was in San Gerónimo, above the Periférico 25 Jan (MG). Single Limpkins were noted in Cruz de Loreto 7 Jan (MJI), at the mouth of Río Ameca, Jal. 13 Jan (MJI), and at L. Colotitlán 5 Feb (HGdS, MPV); this species was only recently recorded in Jalisco and seems to be spreading in that

state. An imm. Purple Gallinule was at a pond along Las Barrancas road, Ver. 19 Feb (HGdS).

Among interesting birds seen at the res. near Trinidad 15 Jan-5 Feb were a Laughing Gull 15 Jan, 50 Caspian Terns (including 2 color-banded birds) 5 Feb, and a Snowy Plover 29 Jan (MW). At the Aquiles Serdán, Jal. W.T.P. 9, 18, & 21 Jan (MJI) and 8 Feb (BG) were up to 4 Stilt Sandpipers. An ad. Common Tern was a surprise at the Río Ameca mouth 7 Jan (MJI). A first for Jal. was a Eurasian Collared-Dove photographed about 3 km inland from the mouth of the Río Ameca on the Jal. side of the river 15 Jan (MJI, ph. DW). A Monk Parakeet was at Parque Ecologico Xochimilco 11 Dec (MG). Ten White-collared Swifts were at La Báscula road, Jal. 12 Jan (MJI), a small flock was above El Tuito 27 Jan, and around 25 were flying over Hwy. 200 about 20 km s. of Puerto Vallarta, Jal. 29 Jan (BG). A Mexican Hermit was at hibiscus along the La Báscula road 9 & 18 Jan (MJI). An imm. male Costa's Hummingbird was between Rancho Primavera and Tehua 9 Jan, and an ad. male was near Llano Grande, Jal. 18 Jan (MJI). A displaying Bumblebee Hummingbird was 100 m past the two towers at Los Mazos microwave towers 16 Feb (BG).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES

Single Smoky-brown Woodpeckers were at Laguna La María, Col. and on the lower slopes of Volcán de Fuego, Jal. 8-9 Feb (HGdS, MPV). An Olive-sided Flycatcher, rare in winter, was near Rancho Primavera 12



Anna's Hummingbird continues to be the most common hummingbird in Bosque Venustiano Carranza, an urban park in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, where this photograph was taken in January 2006.
Photograph by Ernesto Cabrera.

Jan (MJI). A mixed flock of magpie-jays at Rancho Primavera held at least 4 Black-throated and 2 White-throated (MJI). A Slaty Vireo was found just above the first large tower at Los Mazos microwave towers 16 Feb (BG). Three Golden-crowned Kinglets were at La Cima 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV). More than 15 Aztec Thrushes were in the area of Viboras microwave towers, Jal. 15 Feb (BG). A pair of American Dippers was seen investigating a potential nest site at Magdalena Contreras, D.F. 16 Feb (SA). A European Starling was on the sw. outskirts of Guadalajara, Jal. 5 Feb (HGdS, MPV).

A female Golden-winged Warbler was on the Ciénega de Ojuelos road about 10 km towards Puerto Vallarta from El Tuito, Jal. 26 Jan (BG). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen 12 Jan in a bamboo thicket at Ciénega de Ojuelos road, Jal. just n. of La Báscula road, the same location at which one was found a year ago (MJI). A Yellow-throated Warbler, probably of the race *albilora*, was in pines at the entrance of Ciénega de Ojuelos road 12 Jan (MJI). A Black-throated Green Warbler was above Provincia on La Báscula road 9 Feb (BG), and another was at Laguna La María 8 Feb (HGdS, MPV). A Myrtle Warbler was at La Provincia on La Báscula road 16 Jan (MJI). A female American Redstart was at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 11 Dec (MG), and a female Hooded Warbler was in the drainage just n. of Rancho Primavera 11 Jan (MJI). A Red Warbler was seen in Viveros de Coyoacán, D.F. 3 & 9 Feb, where it was a rare visitor to this urban park. An Ovenbird was at Viveros de Coyoacán 9 Feb, and another was at the UNAM botanical garden 20 Feb (GdO). A Slate-throated Redstart and a pair of Olive



An immature Red-shouldered Hawk 2 January 2006 in Bosque Venustiano Carranza in Torreón was one of three or four reported in Coahuila this season. Photograph by Francisco Voldés Perezgasa.

weedy scrub near the three small ponds just behind the football field in Aquiles Serdán, w. of El Tuito 8 Feb (BG). Four Grasshopper Sparrows were near Cruz de Loreto 17 Jan (MJI). An imm. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was near Llano Grande 18 Jan (MJI). A Varied Bunting was at Parque Ecológico Cuicuilco, D.F. 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV). Around 300 Dickcissels flew past near Cruz de Loreto 17 Jan (MJI). A male Orchard Oriole was at Trabajo Social, Ciudad Universitaria, D.F. 20 Dec (HGdS), and a female was there 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV).

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SOUTHERN MEXICO

The interior valleys of Oaxaca were very dry



in January and February, and flowers were well below average for January, but the level of the Piedra Azul reservoir was extremely high, so there must have been good rains through early winter at least: at least two species new for the state of Oaxaca were documented there in January. In the highlands above Oaxaca City, weather was often cool and cloudy. Locations are in Oaxaca unless otherwise stated.

WATERFOWL THROUGH THRUSHES

Noteworthy ducks at Piedra Azul res. above Teotitlán del Valle included a male and 2 female Wood Ducks 25 Jan–25 Feb (the first record for the state of Oaxaca and apparently the southernmost anywhere; MSM, KK, ph. ESB, MC, RAn, ph. HGdS, CDB, m.ob.), up to 5 Ring-necked Ducks, up to 6 Cinnamon

Teal, and a male Lesser Scaup 15 Jan–25 Feb (m.ob.). A West Mexican Chachalaca was photographed 28 Jan in the switchbacks above Piedra Azul res., a regular location for the species since at least 1997 (ph. MC, ESB et al.). An Eared Grebe was on Presa Emiliano Zapata 3 Dec (AM, JM, RAr). Many Brown Pelicans were seen inland at Presa Miguel Aleman 6 Dec (AM, JM, RAr). An imm. Reddish Egret was feeding along the edge of Presa Emiliano Zapata 3 Dec (AM, JM, RAr). Many White Ibis were feeding in flooded fields just e. of Cosamaloapan 8 Dec (AM, JM, RAr).

A Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture near Xpujil ruins, Camp. 23 Jan was at high elevation and away from water (BF, CL). Two Ospreys were at a large res. w. of Tehuantepec 4 Dec (HGdS). An ad. Broad-winged Hawk at Hotel Misión de los Ángeles, Oaxaca City 17 Feb was apparently a first for the well-birded gardens here (HGdS). An Ornate Hawk-Eagle was reportedly shot and killed at 2100 m near the El Portillo–San Juan Yaguila road, Ixtlán 9 Jan (*vide* RAr). A Peregrine Falcon was at Yagul 4 Dec (HGdS) and 15 & 20 Jan (MSM, KK). A Sora was at Piedra Azul res. 15 & 20 Jan (MSM, KK); in the same area, Roque Antonio found 2 Virginia Rails, 8 Soras, and several Common Moorhens, Jan–Feb. Single Semipalmated Plovers were at the small dam e. of Teotitlán del Valle 4 Dec and the flooded



This Eurasian Collared-Dove near the mouth of the Río Ameca 15 January 2006 represents the first record of the species for Jalisco. Photograph by David Woltman.

Warblers at the UNAM botanical garden, D.F. 8 Dec (GdO) were rare visitors from the nearby montane forest.

Amazing was a Black-throated Sparrow in

fields just e. of Cosamaloapan 8 Dec (AM, JM, RAr). Numbers of Least Sandpipers at Piedra Azul res. were high, fluctuating between 40 on 20 Jan and 120 on 15 Jan (MSM, KK), dwindling to 70 by 15 Feb (HGdS). Four Short-billed Dowitchers were at the same location 28 Jan (ph. ESB, MC) and 15 Feb (HGdS).

A Eurasian Collared-Dove near Piedra Azul res. 15 Jan (MSM, KK) represents a new record for Oaxaca. A Yellow-lored Parrot reported from Palenque ruins, Chis. 23 Jan (BF, m.ob.) was either a vagrant displaced by Hurricane *Wilma* or an escapee. More certainly an escapee was a White-fronted Parrot at San Agustín Etla 19 Dec (MG). A Lesser Roadrunner was rather high (ca. 2900 m) at the base of the trail to the La Cumbre microwave towers 27 Jan (MC, ESB et al.). Four Buff-col-

lared Nightjars were heard along the road to Dainzú 28 Jan (MG), and one was heard at San Felipe Park near Oaxaca City 12 Feb (EdV). A possible Azure-crowned Hummingbird was seen at Nochixtlán 29 Dec (MG); the bird had upper mandible black, the basal two-thirds of lower mandible red, a white postocular spot, greenish sides of neck, and greenish head contrasting with greenish-gray back and tail. The identification of some white-bellied *Amazilia* hummingbirds in the



This Long-billed Dowitcher in Mérida, Yucatan 1 December 2005 is probably the first to be photographically documented for the state. It was identified as a Long-billed Dowitcher by call, bill length, and its rather straight supercilium. Photograph by Manuel Grosselet.

cen. valleys of Oaxaca is still a mystery. Again this year, a Green-fronted Hummingbird was found feeding in *Erythrina* on the lower slopes of Hwy. 175 below El Estudiante 24 & 27 Jan (MC, ESB et al.). A male Broad-tailed Hummingbird was at La Cumbre 16 Dec (HGdS). A female Lucifer Hummingbird at Yagul 23 Jan (MC, ESB) was in an area where Beautiful Hummingbirds are far more regular.

A Northern Barred-Woodcreeper was photographed at Finca Sinai above Nopala 7 Jan (ph. MG); a Strong-billed Woodcreeper was at km 79 of Hwy. 175 n. of Oaxaca City 18 Jan (MSM, KK). A Greenish Elaenia was above Piedra Azul res. 15 Jan (MSM, KK). Three Northern Beardless-Tyrannulets were at high elevation in the forest above Arroyo Guacamaya 14 Dec, as was one near La Cumbre 16 Dec (HGdS). Often difficult to find in winter, single Pileated Flycatchers were found below El Estudiante 14 Dec (HGdS), above Piedra Azul res. 15 Jan (MSM, KK), and at Monte Albán 26 Jan (ESB, MC et al.). As often occurs in winter, Tufted Flycatchers and Greater Pewees were noted downlope of their usual habitats in cen. Oaxaca, with Tufteds at Piedra Azul res. 15-28 Jan (m.ob.), near Oaxaca City 13 Feb, and near San Miguel Etna 14 Feb (HGdS), with a Greater Pewee near San Miguel Etna 14 Feb (HGdS). Most unusual for the location, a Buff-breasted Flycatcher was studied at Monte Albán 14 Feb (RAR, RS, m.ob.). A White-throated Flycatcher was in cane near Tuxtepec 18 Feb (HGdS). An Eastern Phoebe was at Piedra Azul res. 25 Jan (ESB, MC et al.). Several Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were around Presa Emiliano Zapata 3 Dec (AM, JM, RAR). A female Gray-collared Becard was at the monument at km 96.5 along Hwy. 175 n. of Oaxaca City 18 Jan (MSM, KK).

Twenty Dwarf Jays were seen well near La Cumbre 24 Jan (MC, ESB et al.), and 13 were

above Arroyo Guacamaya 19 Feb (MG). A Clay-colored Robin was at San Gabriel Etna 19 Feb (MG, ph. AD, RP). A Golden Vireo was s. of El Estudiante 17 Feb (HGdS). A Slaty Vireo was above San Gabriel Etna 22 Jan (MG); another, plus a Dwarf Vireo, was at La Cumbre 24 Jan, part of a large mixed-species flock found during cold, foggy, rainy weather; both vireos were at their upper elevational limits at just under 3000 m (MC, ESB et al.); Crewe also found a Slaty Vireo near

this spot 25 Dec. A Happy Wren was at Puente de Hierro 16 Dec and a pair s. of El Estudiante 14 Dec, with one there 17 Feb (HGdS). Two Marsh Wrens were noted at the small dam e. of Teotitlán del Valle 4 Dec (AM, JM, RAR). A Barn Swallow was at Piedra Azul res. 20 (MSM) & 25 Jan (MC, ESB et al.), with a Tree Swallow also present 28 Jan (MC). Aztec Thrushes were widely reported in small numbers: one was at Arroyo Guacamaya 22 Dec (MG); one to 2 were near the La Cumbre microwave towers 28 Dec (MC et



Three Wood Ducks joined other waterfowl at Piedra Azul dam above Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico 25 January—25 (here 15) February 2006. These birds represent the first record of the species for the state of Oaxaca and the southernmost anywhere. Photograph by Héctor Gómez de Silva.

al.), 19 Jan (MSM, KK), and 27 Jan (ESB, MC et al.); a female was at Arroyo Jilguero 25 Jan, and 4 (a female and 3 males) were there 28 Jan (MC, ESB et al.). Two Black Robins were at La Cumbre 27 Jan and 2 at Arroyo Jilguero the next day (MC, ESB et al.). A Clay-colored Robin was reported near El Punto 19 Jan (MSM, KK).

WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A Tennessee Warbler was at San Pedro Nexicho 22 Jan, and another was mist-netted at the Santo Domingo botanical Garden, Oaxaca City 26 Feb (MG). A Hooded Yellowthroat was again found below El Estudiante 24 Feb (CDB et al.). An American Dipper was at the stream that crosses the road to Arroyo Gua-

camaya above San Gabriel Etna 22 Jan (MG). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were at La Cumbre 25 Dec (MC et al.), continuing a string of recent sightings in this area. A male Yellow-throated Euphonia was with 2 Scrub Euphonias, the latter apparently of the nominate subspecies, w. of Tehuantepec 4 Dec (HGdS, MPV). A Summer Tanager of the w. subspecies *cooperi* was at Monte Albán 26 Jan (ESB, MC et al.), possibly the 2nd record of this subspecies from Oax. For the 3rd winter, a pair of Red-headed Tanagers was found in eucalyptus below El Estudiante 27 Jan (MC, ESB et al.). Two flocks totaling more than 100 Red-legged Honeycreepers were found along the road to Pluma Hidalgo (about 12 km down from La Soledad) 1 Jan (MC et al.).

A male Yellow-faced Grassquit was seen 18 Jan in roadside scrub at km 162 of Hwy. 175 near Gueletao (MSM, KK), a regular location for the species. A Oaxaca Sparrow and a Rufous-crowned Sparrow were at Arroyo Jilguero 28 Jan (MC, ESB et al.) and 16 Feb (HGdS). Female-type Lazuli Buntings were noted near Guelatao 18 Jan (MSM, KK), below El Estudiante 27 Jan (MC), and at the location known affectionately as “garbage gulch” (or “valle de los pañales”) below El Estudiante 21 Feb (ph. HGdS); records of this species from the valleys of Oaxaca are increasing. There were at least 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Arroyo Guacamaya 15 Dec (HGdS), and an ad. male was near Yuvila 17 Jan (MSM, KK).

A pair of Melodious Blackbirds was at the village on the turnoff to Guien Gola 4 Dec (HGdS, MPV). A Streak-backed Oriole was at San Juan Guelavia 30 Jan (MG). Two Baltimore Orioles were near Piedra Azul res. 15 Jan (MSM, KK). A Bullock's Oriole x Baltimore Oriole hybrid was mist-netted at the Santo Domingo botanical Garden, Oaxaca City 26 Feb (ph. MG). A male Abeille's Oriole was at La Cumbre, where a rare winter visitor, 24 Jan (MC, ESB). Two siskins at La Cumbre 17 Jan were described as having a contrasting dark-streaked crown and bold yellow wingbars, typical of young juv. Black-capped Siskins (MSM).

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YUCATAN PENINSULA



Very bad news this winter came from Cozumel Island, which took the brunt of Hurricanes *Stan* and *Wilma* last season. Annual January visitors to the island noted a *complete absence* of parrots, cuckoos, owls, nightjars, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, tanagers, or Yucatan Vireos; only one dove and nine individual warblers (of five species) could be found in three days. Fallen and standing dead trees litter the island.

There was good news this winter from the Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve, where there was a successful nesting pair of *Jabirus* that increased the local population of the species by three. Two new species were added to the Reserve's list.

Abbreviations: H.S.A.C. (Hacienda San Antonio Chel, Hunucmá, Yuc.); R.L. (Río Lagartos, Yuc.); R.L.B.R. (Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve); R.S.F. (Rancho San Francisco, just s. of R.L.B.R. behind El Cuyo); R.S.S. (Rancho San Salvador, 15 km se. of Río Lagartos); S.F. (San Felipe, Yuc.); T.P. (Telchac Puerto).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Four Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were seen between Celestún and Chunchucmil 14 Jan (DB, DY). Two Gadwalls and a Green-winged Teal were seen at R.S.F. 27 Feb (AC, MM, MS). Another rare winter migrant, a Cinnamon Teal was seen near the entrance to Progreso 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS). A total of 245 Lesser Scaup, mostly females, was counted 21 Jan at Uaymitún (DB, EG, DS). Sightings of Red-breasted Merganser are on the rise, with a female at S.F. 20 Dec (AP, ER, MT), 8 in front of the Hotel Reef Club, T.P. 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS), and one in a temporary puddle on the beach in Celestún 3 Feb (ph. DB). A rare Masked Duck was at R.S.F. 27 Feb (AC, MM, MS). A Singing Quail was taped 24 Feb at R.S.S., a new location for the species in the R.L.B.R. (AC, MM, MS).

Least Grebes nested on Cozumel I. this winter: 2 ads. with chicks were seen there 7 Jan (MC, SC). Along the mangrove loop

trail at Muyil, in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, a rare Agami Heron was observed using the boardwalk as a fishing perch 16 Jan (MC, SC)—one of the few benefits of the extremely high water levels. Boat-billed Herons were nesting at Progreso by 5 Feb (DB), and 2 Glossy Ibis were reported at Celestún 21 Dec (DB). The nesting of a pair of *Jabirus* in the R.L.B.R. made big news this winter. Nest-building began in early Dec, and 3 chicks hatched in Feb. Two King Vultures were seen flying over R.S.S. 24 Feb, almost a regular occurrence in the area of late (IN). A single Gray-headed Kite was seen near El Cuyo 6 Jan (AC), and another or the same bird was seen over Dzonot Carretera between El Cuyo and R.L. 4 Feb (AC). A single White-tailed Kite was at Xcambó 15 Dec (EG), and a male Northern Harrier flew low over R.S.S. 20 Dec (DN). A Crane Hawk was seen in Celestún 21 Dec (DB), and 3 were together on the road to Chunchucmil 14 Jan (DB, DY). A female Merlin was at Petén Tichá 20 Dec (BM, DN, RM).

RAILS THROUGH SKIMMER

At least five pairs of Ruddy Crakes were at the sewage pond on Cozumel I. 6 Jan (MC, SC), while 3 Soras were seen along the road to Chunchucmil from Celestún 14 Jan (DB, DY). Around 5000 American Coots were at Celestún 31 Dec (DB), while 50 Wilson's Plovers were counted in the coastal lagoon behind the Celestún Reef Club during the Tex-Mex Shorebird Survey 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS, AS). A single ad. Piping Plover was found at Las Coloradas for the C.B.C. 20 Dec (BM, RM, DN). A large number of Killdeer (36, with 29 of them in one flock) was counted at El Cuyo 21 Dec (BM, MM, GP, ER, MT), and a Solitary Sandpiper was reported from Celestún 15 Jan (DB, DY). A single Whimbrel was at Las Coloradas 20 Dec (BM, RM, DN), and another was at Chelem 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS). A Marbled Godwit was at Celestún 15 Jan (DB, DY), and 15 were resting on a sandbar at Río Lagartos 21 Jan (SC, ER). Two rare Red Knots were on flats behind Chixchulub, e. of Progreso 21 Jan

(DB), and 3 Dunlins, which are increasingly being identified, were at Las Coloradas 20 Dec (BM, RM, DN). A 2nd state record of Ruff came from the coastal salt flats on the turnout to Xcambó, 30 km e. of Progreso 30 Dec; the bird was observed for 20 minutes at a distance of 20 m as it rested and preened (MB, BM). Some 50 km w. of this location, the same or another Ruff was viewed through a scope at 30 m on a sandbar at Chuburná harbor 21 Jan (BM, AS). A Long-billed Dowitcher was photographed at El Vivero, Mérida, Yuc. 1 Dec. Two Red-necked Phalaropes were feeding in salt ponds at Las Coloradas 21 Jan (IN, DN).

An ad. Herring Gull, a scarce winter visitor to the n. coast, was at El Cuyo 21 Dec (BM, MT). An ad. and 2 imm. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were in the coastal lagoon behind Chelem Ría 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS); and another ad. was seen at Chuburná 21 Feb (AD, BM). This species is definitely increasing in the area, as is Gull-billed Tern, with 13 at the Telchac Puerto harbor 21 Jan (DB, EG, DS). Caspian Terns are also on the increase along the n. coast of Yucatan: 10 were at Uaymitún 27 Jan (MB, BM). Three Forster's Terns were at Celestún 15 Jan (DB, DY). A favorite location for wintering Black Skimmers is the sandbar at the Chuburná harbor, where a minimum of 700-800 can be found roosting during the day, as on 20 Feb (AD, BM).

PIGEONS THROUGH VIREOS

A consequence of Hurricane *Wilma*, a White-winged Dove was the only columbid seen on Cozumel I. 6-8 Jan (MC, SC). Eurasian Collared-Doves are being reported more frequently: one was feeding with ground-doves at Celestún 21 Feb (EG), and one was along the main avenue at Playa del Carmen 22 Feb (IN). A total of 75 Olive-throated Parakeet in flocks of 10-25 were feeding on the seeds of the Tajonal bush (*Viguiera dentate*) along the road from Sierra Papacal to Chuburná 21 Jan (MJE, BM, AS). A Barn Owl with 2 young was observed 22 Feb in the ruins at Dzibanché, Q.R. (LT), and 2 Vermiculated Screech-Owls were recorded calling 15 Jan near El Cuyo (v.r. AC). A rare Black-and-white Owl was seen at Chachoben in s. Quintana Roo in early Feb; however, the bird has not been seen since then (LT). Yucatan Nightjars were heard calling every night 26-27 Jan and 7-14 Feb at El Eden, Q.R. (AC). Two Keel-billed Toucans—a new species for the R.L.B.R.—were observed along the road to Tekal 12 km s. of El Cuyo 23 Feb, at same location where Collared Araçari was seen in 2004 (AC).

A Smoky-brown Woodpecker was taped calling 24 km s. of El Cuyo at Sta. Pilar, the s. point of the R.L. reserve 25 Feb (MS). A Gold-

en-olive Woodpecker was excavating a nest hole in a tree on the road to Tekal behind El Cuyo 1 Feb (AC). A Ruddy and a Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, plus a Northern Barred-Woodcreeper, were seen at Kiuic, Yuc. 6 Dec (BM, ph. AH), confirming this as a site with five species of woodcreepers (*vide* BM). At least 2-3 Tropical Kingbirds remained on Cozumel I. 6-7 Jan (MC, SC). Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, another species that is more frequently reported in the past few years, was seen at R.L. 1 & 20 Dec (DN; BM, RM) and in dune vegetation at Chuburná 21 Feb (AD, BM). A male Gray-collared Becard was seen Vallalodid on 15 Jan (MC, SC). Two Black-crowned Tityras were on Chunchucmil road 14 Jan (DB, DY) and 2 more on the road to Tekal behind El Cuyo 21-22 Jan (AC).

A female Mangrove Vireo (containing one egg) was mist-netted at El Cuyo 4 Jan (AC). At least 5-6 Cozumel Vireos were seen and heard on Cozumel I. 6-7 Jan (MC, SC), which suggested they survived the autumn hurricanes better than many other species. A Blue-headed Vireo was reported in vegetation near Xcan toll station on toll road between Cancún and Vallalodid 9 Jan (AR, SM). A Warbling Vireo was at Hacienda San José Cholul 5 Feb (BM, AS), and another was at San Antonio Muliz, Yuc. 12 Feb (BM, RM). Some 180 Tree Swallows were counted flying over R.L. 20 Dec (BM, RM, DN, MT); 50 passed over Chuburná 20 Feb (BM, AD); and thousands were behind El Cuyo daily 2 Jan-27 Feb (AC). Two Cozumel Wrens were noted on Cozumel I. 6-7 Jan (MC, SC).

More and more often, White-lored Gnatcatchers are reported inland, such as one at Hacienda Yaxcopoil, Yuc. 9 Jan (DB, GT) and a pair at H.S.A.C. 18 & 26 Feb (EC, BM, AM, JS). The same can be said for Black Catbird, although it is more prevalent in coastal dunes, where one was found 3 km w. of El Cuyo 21 Dec (BM, MM, GP, ER, MT); another was on road to Chunchucmil near Celestún 21 Dec (DB); but on Cozumel I., only 2 were seen 7 Jan during a three-day stay (MC, SC). Twelve were together 3 km from village square of H.S.A.C. 18 Feb (EC, BM, AM, JS).

PIPITS THROUGH ORIOLES

Two American Pipits at R.S.S. 20 Dec (BM, DN) added yet another species to the R.L.B.R. list; 2 more were reported in Celestún in dune vegetation near the port 3 Feb (ph. DB). A Tennessee Warbler at Celestún 15 Jan (DB, DY) wintered, and 4 were at Chichén Itzá 4 Dec (and again in Mar). The local subspecies of Yellow Warbler on Cozumel I. appeared to have survived the landfall of Hurricane *Wilma*; at least 6-8 were seen there 6-7 Jan (MC, SC). As in the previous winter, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler wintered at Chichén Itzá, where seen in mid-Feb (AR, SM). Only one Black-throated Green, one Hooded, one Yellow-throated, and 2 Magnolia Warblers and 4 Common Yellowthroats were found on Cozumel I. 6-8 Jan (MC, SC). A male Prothonotary Warbler was at Celestún 21 Dec (DB) and 14 Jan (DB, DY). A resident pair of Gray-throated Chats, locally rare, was near Vallalodid 15 Jan (MC, SC). A male Rose-

throated Tanager was observed at Tekal behind El Cuyo 2 Feb (AC). At least one Western Tanager again wintered atop the pyramid at Izamal: last winter (in Dec 2004), an imm. male was seen feeding on the fruits of *Sideroxylon americanum* (BM); this winter, an ad. male and a female were observed there 19 Feb feeding on the same fruit (EG). Two Blue-gray Tanagers were in Kinchil Park 3 Feb.

A single Green-backed Sparrow was observed on road to Tekal 2-3 Feb (AC); this is the only area where this species is found regularly in Yucatan. Botteri's Sparrow is present in numbers around R.L., but on 3 Feb one was found at the entrance to the village of Tetiz, well inland from Celestún (DB). Four Baltimore Orioles and 2 ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in Kinchil Park 3 Feb (DB); 3 of the latter were at H.S.A.C. 26 Feb, plus 9 Painted Buntings (EC, BM, AM, JS).

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Central America



H. Lee Jones | Oliver Komar

The expansion of open-country species through deforested regions of Central America continues unabated. In Costa Rica alone, Pearl Kite, Southern Lapwing, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Melodious Blackbird, and Crested Oropendola, none of which were on the Costa Rica list two decades ago, continue to extend their ranges, occupying once-forested areas of the country. A more recent example, Tropical Mockingbird, is expanding rapidly after the first birds believed to be of wild provenance were recorded near Palo Verde less than three years ago. Elsewhere, Eastern Meadowlarks have been reported in pastureland and other man-altered grassland areas in Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras in the past few years, all in regions where they did not formerly occur. But a species that has the potential to have the greatest impact on local, and even regional, economies is the non-native Tricolored Munia. In the region, it first appeared in Costa Rica in 1999 and has subsequently spread into nearby rice-producing areas, causing justifiable concern. It was first recorded in Honduras and Belize in 2003 and El Salvador in 2004; it has now, in 2006, reached Panama.

Continuing an unbroken string of "country firsts" each season were the first Pacific Screech-Owl and Cave Swallow for Honduras, El Salvador's first documented Green-winged Teal and Broad-tailed Hummingbird, and Panama's first Tricolored Munia.

DUCKS THROUGH STORKS

A flock of about 200 Muscovy Ducks at Laguna de San Juan del Gozo, *Usulután* 24 Feb (ph. RV) was a remarkable concentration for El Salvador, although apparently a similar group was at the same site last year. Three female American Wigeons at a shrimp farm at Chomes, on the n. shore of Gulf of Nicoya, 4 Jan (JZ) were noteworthy. This species winters regularly in small numbers in Tempisque Basin, but it is much rarer in other areas of Costa Rica. A pair of Green-winged Teal 13 Jan at Lago Güija, *Santa Ana* (ph. LP) established the first documentation of the species in El Salvador and first record since an aerial

survey reported it in 1947. In Panama, 4 Lesser Scaup on R. Chagres at Ft. San Lorenzo, *Colón* (KK, RM) were in an unexpected locality. And in Guatemala, 6 Ruddy Ducks were in San Miguel Dueñas, *Sacatepéquez* 5 Jan (KE, CA).

Approximately 150 Audubon's Shearwaters 55 km offshore from e. El Salvador 14 Dec (AM) provided the first winter record for El Salvador. A Magnificent Frigatebird was seen over Tres Leguas, nw. *Orange Walk*, Belize 3 Feb (BF); most published inland records of this species have been from late summer. In Guatemala, 2 Least Bitterns were seen in Monterrico N.P., *Santa Rosa* 12 Dec (KE). A Great Blue Heron nest at Turneffe Atoll on 1 Feb (BF) was attended by a pair comprised of a blue morph and a white morph, the latter not often seen in Belize. Seventeen Roseate Spoonbills in a marsh near Las Lajas Beach 5 Feb (GA) provided the 2nd report for *Chiriquí*



With no more than a half-dozen previous reports for Costa Rica, this Nashville Warbler, found in the Botanical Gardens at Tirimbina Rainforest Center 13 and (here) 22 February 2006, was the first to be photographically confirmed in the country. Photograph by Ryan Terrill.

and largest number reported for the province. An extraordinary 120 Jabirus in with 300 Wood Storks at Fresh Catch Fish Farm near La Democracia, *Belize* 27 Jan (CP, CC, RR, SR) were easily the largest concentration ever recorded in Belize or in Central America.

RAPTORS

The imm. Gray-headed Kite reported from Caye Caulker last spring was still present through the end of the period and is now an ad. (ph. BF, ph. EMc). In El Salvador, 3 Hook-billed Kites at El Imposible N.P., *Ahuachapán* 16 Feb (†PP, CA) were noteworthy and possibly represented transients. A rare winter visitor in Costa Rica, single Northern Harriers were at Parque, 10 km s. of Los Chiles, in the n. Caribbean lowlands, 8 Jan (KEa et al.) and

at La Guinea, 10 km e. of Filadelfia, along R. Tempisque, *Guanacaste* 26 Jan (JZ). The Parake bird was an ad. male. A pair of ad. Crane Hawks was seen 10 Jan (LS) with several other raptor species over fallow rice fields that were being plowed in preparation for cultivation at Sierpe in the s. Pacific lowlands near the mouth of R. Sierpe. This species is very rarely reported anywhere in Costa Rica away from its two centers of abundance in Tortuguero and the lower Tempisque Basin.

In Panama, in the forest along Old Gamboa Road near Summit, an area where the species is seldom reported, 2 ad. Plumbeous Hawks were seen chasing each other and calling 22 Feb (GLA). Now that people are looking, Zone-tailed Hawks are being seen more frequently in the Caribbean lowlands of Honduras. One soaring 2 km s. of Las Mangas, *Atlántida* 19 Feb (MB) and another in the Valle de Aguán w. of Olanchito, *Yoro* 28 Feb (DA) continue a recent trend of one to three reports per year. An intermediate-morph ad. Swainson's Hawk at Blue Creek rice fields, *Orange Walk* 11 Dec (LJ, PB, EB, LH et al.) was thought to be the same individual seen there last winter. In Costa Rica, Swainson's Hawk is an irregular winter visitor in small numbers; however, up to 25 birds attracted to burning sugar cane and rice fields in Bagatzi adjacent to Palo Verde N.P. 6–12 Jan (JZ) represented an unusually large number for the season.

A White-tailed Hawk, very rare in the Panama Canal area, was seen near Metropolitan Nature Park, Panama City 18 Dec (JAC). Quite unexpected was an imm. Harpy Eagle at Quebrada de Oro, *Bladen N.R.*, *Toledo* 15 Dec (JM, SM, ph. SB, SoM, JR). There are very few documented reports of this majestic species from Belize, and this was the first to be confirmed photographically. An ad. Ornate Hawk-Eagle flying over Pipeline Road 23 Feb (GLA) was in the Panamanian lowlands, where it is rare. In Costa Rica, wintering Merlins were at La Fortuna by Volcán Arenal 28 Dec (LC) and at La Guinea, 10 km e. of Filadelfia, along the R. Tempisque, *Guanacaste* 25–26 Jan (JZ). The latter may be the same individual reported from this locality in the fall and perhaps in previous winters.

RAILS THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS

At the Gatún Drop Zone in Sherman, *Colón*, a Gray-breasted Crane was seen 2 Jan (CM), and 2 were seen there 2 Feb (BB, JC, DM); this rarely reported species has only recently been found at this site. A *Sungrebe* carefully observed at Estero de San Diego, *La Libertad* 23 Jan (MC) was in the same place where El Salvador's first record was obtained 13 months earlier. The Southern Lapwing first

recorded in Belize at Crooked Tree W.S. in Apr 2004 was still present through the end of the period (BZ et al.). A Long-billed Curlew was at Costa del Este in Panama City 9 Feb (AMc). What was thought to be one of 2 Marbled Godwits that have wintered on Caye Caulker the past several winters returned again this winter (J&DB, BZ et al.). A surprising 4 Ring-billed Gulls were at Panama Viejo 9 Feb (MJI), and an ad. Elegant Tern in basic plumage was found 28 Feb among 1000 Sandwich Terns at a beach near downtown Panama City (ph. CB). In El Salvador, a flock of more than 600 Black Skimmers 18 Feb was an exceptional concentration at Barra de Santiago, *Ahuachapán* (OK et al.).

Three Scaled Pigeons at Tortuguero N.P. 6 Dec (DL) were apparently the first reported from the heavily birded Tortuguero area; this species is very seldom encountered in the Caribbean lowlands in the e. half of Costa Rica and may exhibit pronounced seasonal movements. Normally restricted in Honduras to cloud forests at elevations above 1200 m, a White-faced Quail-Dove was observed at close range for several minutes 24 Feb (MB) in the lowlands at 150 m at Pico Bonito in *Atlántida*. A Pheasant Cuckoo heard singing at 1500 m from the forest edge at Las Alturas on the s. Pacific slope of Cordillera Talamanca 6 Feb (JG, AO, JZ) was only the 3rd reported from this area of Costa Rica, the others having been recorded nearby last year.

A Pacific Screech-Owl, the first ever documented in Honduras, was found 11 Feb with a mate on Isla Zacate Grande, in the Gulf of Fonseca (ph. TJ, OK), where it has long been expected. Short-tailed Nighthawk is one of Honduras' most poorly known resident (?) species. Two were reported this winter: one seen about 30 minutes after sunset flying over the soccer field at Cuero y Salado N.W.R., *Atlántida* 12 Jan (D&ES); another flying low over a seasonally flooded pond 30 to 10 minutes before sunrise 29 Feb (RG) and 1 Mar (MB, LSo) 16 km w. of Olanchito, *Yoro*. These sightings support the premise that this species is most likely to be seen in the darkest twilight hours, perhaps explaining why it is not reported more often. The Olanchito sighting is the first report for Honduras away from the Caribbean coast.

SWIFTS THROUGH TOUCANETS

In the company of 50+ Chestnut-collared Swifts were at least 4 male Black Swifts at El Imposible N.P., *Ahuachapán* 15 Feb (†PP). This represents either the first winter record for El Salvador or earliest spring migration record. A Vaux's Swift seen in a large flock of Short-tailed Swifts above the Gamboa bridge

over the R. Chagres 26 Dec (DM) was unexpected, as this species is rare in the Panama Canal area. A Violet Sabrewing 15 Feb (ph. JiW) at duPlooy's resort in w. *Cayo* was the first reported for this heavily birded area at the n. edge of the species' range in Belize, and a Brown Violet-ear singing from a high perch at Altos de María, *Panamá* 2 Feb (MJI) was the first reported in that area. Two individuals of the rarely reported Emerald-chinned Hummingbird in El Salvador were captured at the Santa Ana volcano, *Santa Ana* 25 Feb (ph. LA). Four Rufous-crested Coquettes (an unusually high number for any locality in Panama) were at El Valle, *Coelá* 3 Feb (MJI). A male Black-crested Coquette 30 Jan (CG et al.) at 150 m in the Oro Verde reserve in Uvita on Costa Rica's cen. Pacific coast was visiting cashew tree flowers. The species is only occasionally reported from the Pacific slope, and this one was exceptionally far s., well be-



This attractive adult male Prairie Warbler was mist-netted in the Playa Naranjo mangroves in Santa Rosa N.P. 25 December 2005. The species winters in the Caribbean and is a treat anywhere in mainland Central America. Photograph by Maureen and John Woodcock.

yond its normal range limit. In Panama, a female Green Thorntail was at Canopy Lodge, El Valle 16 Dec (GA), and 3 females and an ad. male were there 3 Feb (MJI). Twelve Snowcaps seen at Altos de María, *Panamá* 2 Feb (MJI) was an extraordinary number for this rare species. Convincing details were provided for what was almost certainly a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird seen at El Imposible N.P. 15 Feb (†PP, CA). The species is hypothetical in El Salvador based on two undocumented sight reports. An American Pygmy Kingfisher was at Summit Ponds 18 Dec (DM). Previously rarely reported from the Summit area, it is now being reported more frequently. In El Salvador, one at Estero San Diego 23 Jan (MC) provided the first record for *La Libertad*.

On 16 Feb, at about 450 m in Pico Bonito, seasoned observers saw Yellow-eared Toucanets feeding in the same tree (*Vireo kochmyi* or "sangre") with Keel-billed Toucans, Collared Araçaris, and Emerald Toucanets (MB, LSo, DA). The elevational distribution of this

species in Honduras has proven enigmatic; at present, it is rather common above 350 m in Pico Bonito N.P., with only a few recent reports in Pico Bonito below 350 m and from the Moskitia. In his *Distributional Survey of the Birds of Honduras*, Monroe described it as a lowland species rarely reported above 500 m, citing specimens from the n. coast and in Olancho at elevations below 500 m.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen in Panama at Metropolitan Nature Park 17 Jan (JT) and in Gamboa and the Ammo Dump Ponds about 3 km away 4 Feb (MJI). A Bare-crowned Antbird, rarely reported in Belize, was heard between the villages of Blue Creek and Jordan, *Toledo* 26 Jan (LJ). Farther s., a pair was at Dúrika de Buenos Aires 14 Jan (LS), a location in Costa Rica where it was first reported last fall. Seldom reported in the region away from Caye Caulker, where there is a small resident population, a Caribbean Elaenia was carefully studied at Altun Ha, *Orange Walk* 28 Feb (ph. BF et al.). In Panama, a rarely reported Rufous-browed Tyrannulet was at Altos de María, *Panamá* on 2 Feb (MJI).

A Northern Scrub-Flycatcher was at Ft. San Lorenzo, *Colón* 2 Jan (GB), and a Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant was heard on the s. side of R. Chagres near Gamboa 26 Dec (DM). The former is rare on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal area, and the latter has not been reported previously this far onto the Atlantic slope. A Bran-colored Flycatcher near the s. end of Old Gamboa Road near Summit 18 Dec (DM) was the first reported in recent years from that locality. A Yellow-margined Flycatcher that responded to a pre-recorded tape was seen and heard at Uvita 5 Dec (CU, NU, CV, PW). In Costa Rica, this primarily Caribbean-slope species is now fairly common in the Pacific lowlands around Ciudad Neily and Paso Canoas near the Panamá border, and it has been recorded at Golfito a little farther west. Uvita is much farther up the coast. It is yet to be determined if this observation is indicative of a species that has been overlooked on the Pacific slope in areas very seldom visited by birders or if it is indicative of a species that is expanding its range.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was observed along the Coastal Hwy. s. of La Democracia, *Belize* 12 Feb (BF et al.). While relatively common in winter in the Maya Mts., this species is seldom observed in winter in the coastal plain of Belize. A pair of Cattle Tyrants was discovered delivering food to a nest in a palm tree at Tocumen Airport, *Panamá* 15 Feb (MJI). The nest appeared to

have at least 3 half-grown young. This represents only the 2nd known breeding locality for the species in Panama. A Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at Tocumen Marsh 24 Feb (DM, HO) was early. It is not usually reported in the Region before early Mar. About 10,000 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers coming to a nocturnal roost at Barra de Santiago, *Ahuachapán* 18 Feb (OK, PP et al.) was the largest concentration recorded in El Salvador.

BECARDS THROUGH MOCKINGBIRDS

A Gray-collared Becard at Mayflower–Bocawina N.P., *Stann Creek* 16 Dec (LJ) was noteworthy, as this species is not often reported in Belize. A White-eyed Vireo was at the Gatún Drop Zone in Sherman, *Colón* 2 Feb (BB, JC, DM). Even more impressive, a Warbling Vireo, only the 2nd ever recorded in Panama, was observed at Finca Hartmann, above Santa Clara, *Chiriquí* 14 Feb (JT). Philadelphia Vireos, normally uncommon to scarce in winter in Belize, were reported more frequently this winter than is typical. A male Gray-breasted Martin in Punta Gorda 14 Dec (LJ) established the earliest “spring” arrival date for this species in Belize, where it is normally absent late Sep–late Dec.

At least 7 Cave Swallows at El Jicarito N.W.R., *Choluteca* 11 Feb (OK, ph. TJ) provided the first record for Honduras, although the species was expected as a winter visitor on the Pacific coast. A Slate-colored Solitaire was mist-netted 26 Feb at the unusually low elevation of 150 m at Pico Bonito, *Atlántida* (MB). The species had not been recorded previously in Honduras below 500 m, and it is decidedly uncommon below 900 m. Why this species and White-faced Quail-Dove, mentioned previously, were so low and at the same location is intriguing. Noteworthy were a Wood Thrush seen on the first part of Pipeline Road, *Soberanía* N.P. 26 Dec (DM) and another seen at Achiotte Road, *Colón* 28 Feb (LPa, CW, RW). This is a rare winter visitor in the Panama Canal area. Tropical Mockingbird is in the process of colonizing Costa Rica. Birds of presumed wild provenance were first noted in *Guanacaste* in Mar 2003 and have been noted at several other locations since. One at La Fortuna, near Volcán Arenal 28 Dec (LC) through at least mid-Jan was at a new location for this species.

WARBLERS

A male Nashville Warbler in the botanical gardens at Tirimbina Rainforest Center 13 & 22 Feb (ph. RT) provided one of the few con-

firmed records for Costa Rica. It was observed pumping its tail, which is apparently more typical of the w. subspecies *ridgwayi* (“Calaveras Warbler”) than of the nominate. In Panama, Northern Parulas were at the Gatún Drop Zone (DM) in Sherman and at Ft. Davis 2 Jan (KK, RM). In Guatemala, one was near L. Yaxhá, *Petén* 3 Dec, and another was found in mangroves in Monterrico, *Santa Rosa* 13 Dec (both KE). What was likely the same Cape May Warbler in imm. female plumage was seen feeding in flowers at Metropolitan Nature Park 9 Feb (MJI) and 21 Feb (JT). These sightings represent the first for the Pacific side of the Panama Canal area. Rare anywhere on the mainland, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Saint Catherine Academy, Belize City 18 Feb (PB), and 2 males were at the Keköldi Reserve on the s. Caribbean coast of Costa Rica 25 Jan+ (PPo, DM). One of the latter was captured and banded.

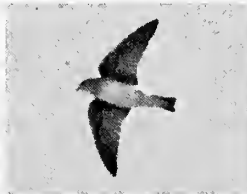
Above-average numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported in some parts of the Region this winter. Worth mentioning were 5 at El Jicarito N.W.R., *Choluteca* 11 Feb (TJ, OK) and one at Pijije, 20 km se. of Liberia, *Guanacaste* 13 Jan (JZ), an area of Costa Rica where it is not often found. In Panama, where it is normally a rare visitor, one was at Altos de Maria, *Coclé* 2 Feb, and

Punta, *Chiriquí* 13 Feb (JT). The species was first recorded in Panama last winter in the same area. In El Salvador, 2 males at Bosque La Montañona 4 Dec (†LG, EM) established the first record for *Chalatenango*. Another male at the same locality and in appropriate pine-oak habitat 20 Dec (EM) suggests that this may be a regular wintering locality for the species. With only about nine previous records for El Salvador, and only two of these from the coastal volcanic highlands, 2 Yellow-throated Warblers at Merliot, *La Libertad* 20 Jan (AM) were unexpected. An ad. male Prairie Warbler was mist-netted at the Playa Naranjo mangroves in Santa Rosa N.P., *Guanacaste* 25 Dec (ph. M&JW). The species is an exceptionally rare winter visitor in Costa Rica. Rare in Panama were 2 Palm Warblers at Gatún Drop Zone, Sherman, *Colón* 10 Feb (GA) and 2 Blackpoll Warblers, one at Metropolitan Nature Park 17 Jan (JT) and one at Tocumen Marsh 24 Feb (DM, HO).

Rare in winter was a female Cerulean Warbler at Achiotte Road, *Colón* 21 Jan (JT). A Worm-eating Warbler at Metropolitan Nature Park 21 Feb (JT) was both farther e. in Panama than expected and in the Pacific lowlands, where it is rarely recorded. An Ovenbird at 2000 m Cerro Alux, *Guatemala* 15 Jan was at an atypically high elevation (KE, CA). Three Common Yellowthroats were reported from Panama, where it is a rare winter visitor: 2 at Tocumen Marsh 7 Feb (MJI) and one at the Ammo Dump Ponds near Gamboa 13 Feb (AA). A female Hooded Warbler at Palo Verde N.P. 6 Jan (JZ) was in an area of Costa Rica where it is unexpected. In Panama, where it is relatively rare, 3 were reported this winter: one each on the s. side of R. Chagres near Gamboa 26 Dec (DM), just s. of Gamboa, also along the s. side of R. Chagres 4 Feb (MJI), and at Hotel Sol de Melia near *Colón* 24 Feb and 1 Mar (GLA).

TANAGERS THROUGH MUNIAS

Rosy Thrush-Tanagers continue to be reported from Dúrika de Buenos Aires, Costa Rica, where a small population was discovered last fall. The nomadic and unpredictable Slate-colored Seedeater is always worth reporting. At least 3 were heard singing from a woodland at Sabalito de Coto Brus in the se. Pacific region of Costa Rica at 900 m 13 Feb (JZ). This species was very common in this area in 2002 during a big fruiting episode of the local understory bamboo. Elsewhere, Slate-colored Seedeaters, including multiple singing males, appeared in Carara N.P. along the Meandrica Trail and near the visitor’s cen-



Cave Swallow records have long been expected in Honduras, and this one at El Jicarito, Choluteca Department, on 11 February 2006, was part of a flock of seven. Photograph by Tom Jenner.



One of two captured at Los Volcanes National Park, El Salvador, this female Emerald-chinned Hummingbird was caught 25 February 2006; the species is rarely observed here. Photograph by Leticia del Carmen Andino.

one was at Ft. San Lorenzo, *Panamá* 6 Feb (both MJI). Golden-cheeked Warblers continue to be reported from new or surprising localities. Providing only the 2nd record for Panama, a female was seen along the road to Respingo in Volcán Barú N.P. above Cerro

ter, as well as just outside the park near the Villa Lapas Hotel, in late Feb+ (MV et al.). Interestingly, there is no sign of seeding bamboo in the area. A Stripe-headed Brush-Finch was seen 1 Feb at about 600 m along the Vistamares Trail in Altos de Cerro Azul e. of Panama City, where it is not often reported (BB, JC, DM). Belize recorded its first winter-season Dickcissels 14 Dec, when 7 were seen at The Dump rice fields, Toledo 14 Dec (MT, DT, RC).

A singing male Red-winged Blackbird at Rubelsanto, *Alta Verapaz* 20 Dec and 7 Feb was apparently the first ever recorded in that region of Guatemala (KE). Three Eastern Meadowlarks at Big Falls, Toledo 14 Dec (MT, DT, RC) were about 35 km s. of the species' known range in Belize. It has been expanding its range elsewhere in the region in response to expanding agriculture. A male Shiny Cowbird seen near the Ammo Dump Pond 26 Dec (DM) was the first reported from the vicinity of Gamboa, and an Altamira Oriole at Chan Chich, *Orange Walk* 24 Feb (BZ, VE et al.) may have been the first recorded from that heavily birded locality in Belize. Noteworthy in Costa Rica was a Bullock's Oriole seen 26 Dec (LR, OM) feeding with a group of Baltimore Orioles in the town of Tarcoles near Carara N.P., and in Guatemala, a male Red

Crossbill was seen carrying pine needles (probably as nesting material) in Novillero, *Sololá* 1 Jan. A singing male and a female were seen there the next day (KE, CA). Panama recorded its first Tricolored Munia 6 Feb just w. of Summit Nature Park, *Panamá* 6 Feb (MJI); another was seen and photographed in Metropolitan Nature Park the following day (JT). Although these could have been escaped cage birds, this Asian native is spreading elsewhere in Central America, and these likely represented part of the first wave of a spontaneous colonization of the area.

Corrigenda: In the 2003 Fall Season report (N.A.B. 58: 157), a Bare-necked Umbrellabird was mistakenly referred to as a Bare-throated Umbrellabird. The Prairie Warbler was observed last winter at Ciudad Colón, *San José*, not simply "Colón" (N.A.B. 59: 340).

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West Indies & Bermuda



Anthony White | Robert L. Norton
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Winter is always a busy season in the West Indies. The combination of more birds and more observers produces more and longer reports. Increased reporting from Cuba and the Lesser Antilles was especially noticeable this winter and included some remarkable records of threat-

ened endemics and strays from the Old World and North America. A new species for the A.O.U. Area, White-winged Swallow, was seen and photographed.

Taxonomists continue to re-evaluate West Indian birds. Garrido, Wiley, and Kirkconnell (2005). The genus *Icterus* in the West Indies. *Ornithologia Neotropical* 16: 449-470) have proposed splitting Greater Antillean Oriole (*Icterus dominicensis*) into four species: Bahamas Oriole (*I. northropi*), Cuban Oriole (*I. melanopsis*), Hispaniolan Oriole (*I. dominicensis*), and Puerto Rican Oriole (*I. portoricensis*). This proposal is under consideration by the A.O.U. Check-list Committee.

Eighteen dead birds (14 Greater Flamingos, 3 Roseate Spoonbills, and a cormorant) were found on Great Inagua, Bahamas 26-27 February. There was speculation that the birds may have died from "avian flu." The birds were determined to have died from other causes, but articles in the international press led to cancellation of tourist reservations in the Bahamas. This incident reflects the high level of concern over avian diseases

and the care one must exercise when mentioning dead birds (*vide* EC, various newspaper and Internet articles).

DUCKS THROUGH FLAMINGO

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was photographed 21 Dec at a marsh near Telescope, Grenada (JF). Four ad. West Indian Whistling-Ducks with 8 ducklings were at Laguna Cartagena, Puerto Rico 19 Dec (FS), and 12 ads. were noted at La Belen Res., Najasa, Carmaguey Province, Cuba 25 Jan (WS, JC, DO). The C.B.C. on Grand Bahama 16 Dec found 7 Canada Geese on island golf courses. Three Snow Geese were at Bermuda Airport 11-13 Dec (G&SH), and 2 spent Feb at the Emerald Bay G.C., Great Exuma, Bahamas (J&BM). Six Wood Ducks were seen at Ruby G.C., Grand Bahama 16 Dec (BH, C.B.C.); 3 were still there 24 Jan (EG). Waterfowl provided two exciting new species for Guadeloupe: a male Garganey at Le Gosier 14 Jan-27 Feb (AL) and an American Black Duck (also first for the Lesser Antilles) at La Desirade 16 Jan-13 Feb (AL). Also in Guade-

loupe, one Green-winged Teal was found 10 Dec at Grand Cul de Sac Marin, and 2 were at Petit Terre Nature Reserve 21 Feb (AL). Two Eurasian Wigeons were at Seymour's Pond, Bermuda 29 Dec–28 Feb+ (*vide* AD). Twenty Northern Shovelers and 42 American Wigeons were at Grog Pond, Great Exuma in Feb (J&BM). A Common Merganser was in Mangrove L., Bermuda 13 Jan (JM) and then moved to the Great Sound to 28 Feb+ (DW). A Red-breasted Merganser was unusual at Las Salinas, Zapata, Matanzas Province, Cuba 22 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

Sea-watching from Petit Terre Nature Reserve, Guadeloupe produced 4 unidentified *Pterodroma* petrels and a Masked Booby in Dec; a Black-capped Petrel, 2 Manx Shearwaters, and 3 Parasitic Jaegers in Jan; and 116 Manx Shearwaters and 2 Leach's Storm-Petrels in Feb (AL). On 18–19 Feb, 8 shearwaters including 3 probable Manx were observed flying northward along the w. edge of the Little Bahama Bank (BP). A White-tailed Tropicbird between New Providence and Andros 9 Jan was early (JS), another early one was seen off Spittal Pond, Bermuda 30 Jan (PW). They arrived in numbers (13) at Little Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas 20 Feb (ABL). Two imm. Northern Gannets were seen regularly off Bermuda 9 Dec–28 Feb+ (PW); another was found dying at Dockyard and died in captivity at Bermuda Aquarium Museum and Zoo 13 Dec (PT). Two American White Pelicans in the Marls w. of Treasure Cay, Abaco 4 Feb (EB) and one 24 Feb between Hog Cay and Leaf Cay at the s. end of the Exumas, Bahamas (DL) were noteworthy. An unidentified white pelican flying past Lauren Pt., Grenada and Red-footed Boobies off the n. coast of Grenada were unusual 21 Dec (JF). The Great Cormorant that wintered in Great Sound, Bermuda 24 Dec–Feb 28+ was almost certainly the same bird as was seen there last winter (PW). The Anhinga at Lakeview Ponds, Paradise I., Bahamas remained throughout the winter (m. ob.). In Bermuda, an imm. Magnificent Frigatebird was present through at least 7 Jan (DBW), a leftover from Hurricane *Wilma*, and an ad. male was seen 12 Feb at St. George's Harbour (ABr).

A first-year Purple Heron, Barbados's 2nd, was found at Foster's 4 Dec and remained at Graeme Hall Swamp, Barbados until 11 Jan (EM, MF). At least 4 Little Egrets at Graeme Hall Swamp 18 Jan suggest residency and a source for further expansion into the West Indies and beyond. Several Tricolored Herons 21 Dec at Telescope were the first for Grenada (JF). A Least Bittern was heard at La Turba, Zapata 25 Jan (*vide* AK). An American Bittern was seen at Rio Hatiguanico, Zapata 23

Jan (*vide* JC), and another was at Rock Sound airport, Eleuthera, Bahamas 28 Feb (RB, DC, EJ). The Barbados C.B.C. recorded a Glossy Ibis at Graeme Hall Swamp. One thousand or more Greater Flamingos at Las Salinas, Zapata 22 Jan was a good count (WS, JC, DO).

VULTURES THROUGH TERNS

A Black Vulture over Chippingham, Nassau was the first for New Providence and 4th for the Bahamas (CW, E&PA, F&SZ). On 4 Dec, an Osprey was seen fishing over Southwest Bank, 11.26 km from New Providence, the nearest land (PM). Two Hook-billed Kites on Grenada 19 Dec were a welcome sight after 2004's hurricane (JF). A Northern Harrier wintered at Bermuda Airport (DBW), and singles were seen at the fruit farm, Abaco 13 Dec and 4 Jan (EB, TW) and at South Westridge Estates, New Providence 19 Feb (PD). The



This Western Marsh Harrier (here shown in composite of two photographs) was observed on 27 February 2006 from the new observation deck on the southwestern side of Laguna Cartegena, now a National Wildlife Refuge, Puerto Rico. Photographs by Chris Wood.

Western Marsh Harrier continued at Laguna Cartegena, Puerto Rico, where it was seen 19 Dec (FS) and 27 Feb (CLW et al.). In Cuba, Gundlach's Hawks were reported at La Guira, Pinar del Rio Province 20 Jan (WS, JC, DO), s. of Palpite, Zapata 27 Jan (WS, JC, DO), and at Rio Huatiguanico, Zapata 27 Jan (AK). The dessicated remains of a Sharp-shinned Hawk were found at Montagu Foreshore, Nassau 25 Feb (*SBu). Common Black-Hawk was said to be common on St. Vincent 13–19 Feb (LGo). A Broad-winged Hawk was noted at Cueva de los Portales, Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba 19 Jan (AK et al.). Two long-staying Red-tailed Hawks were seen over the Hamilton Harbour Is., Bermuda 22 Jan (NB).

A Black Rail at Laguna Cartegena, Puerto Rico 19 Dec was a great find (FS)—one of the few reported in recent years in the Region. A Virginia Rail, possibly the first for Andros, was seen at Davis Creek near Small Hope Bay Lodge in the week of 9 Jan (JS, AF, SB). A King Rail and a Spotted Rail were reported at La Turba, Zapata 25 Jan (AK et al.). Seven Soras were at La Desirade, Guadeloupe 27 Feb (AL).

The Barbados C.B.C. found a Purple Gallinule at Graeme Hall Swamp 31 Dec; a subad. was at Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, Grand Cayman 7 Feb (ME). Numbers of Green Heron, Purple Gallinule, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Limpkin, and Northern Jacana along the canal to Rio Hatiguanico, Zapata were greatly reduced this year, apparently due to removal of canal-side invasive vegetation and accidental introduction of exotic catfish (WS, JC, DO). Jacanas, however, were numerous at La Belen Res., Najasa 25 Jan (WS, JC, DO), as were unidentified coots at Las Salinas, Zapata 22 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

Seven American Oystercatchers on North Andros the week of 9 Jan was a good count (JS, AF, SB). A flock of 10–15 Snowy Plovers was observed over Buena Vista Cay, Ragged Is., Bahamas 31 Jan (R&WO). A team surveyed Andros for Piping Plovers 27 Jan–3 Feb; they found 11 at Andros Town, 43 at Cargill Creek, 6 at Blanket Sound, 68 at Staniard Creek, and 38 at Mars Bay (PD et al.). Three Semipalmated Plovers and 2 Piping Plovers wintered at Grape Bay with a Willet (AD); this constitutes the 2nd wintering record of Willet in Bermuda. Two Willets on Long Cay, s. of Highborne Cay, Exumas, Bahamas 12 Jan (MR) were unusual for midwinter. In the Grenadines 23 Dec, a Wilson's Plover and 3 Stilt Sandpipers were on Mayreau I. and a Red Knot on Union I. (JF). Over 100 Lesser Yellowlegs with a few Greater mixed in were at Diamond Crystal Salt Ponds, Long I., Bahamas 31 Jan (DL). A Solitary Sandpiper seen at Jubilee Rd. 24 Jan (DBW) provided the first winter record for Bermuda. A Red Knot was at Riddell's Bay G.C., Bermuda 4 Dec–17 Jan (DW). The Eurasian Whimbrel (nominat subspecies) found at Petit Terre Nature Reserve, Guadeloupe last fall remained there through the winter (AL). Two Whimbrels and an unidentified godwit were w. of Deadman's Cay, Long I., Bahamas 25 Jan (DL, SM). Four Long-billed Dowitchers that were photographed 16 Dec on Ruby G.C., Grand Bahama (BH, C.B.C.) were last seen 9 Jan (EG, M.A.S.), a 2nd record for the Bahamas. Another was at S. Princess Pond, Bermuda mid-Dec–2 Jan (AD). High counts for shorebirds at Green Turtle Cay, Abaco this winter were 12 Red Knots and 18 Piping Plovers 30 Dec and 100+ Dunlins, 100+ Short-billed Dowitchers, 35+ Wilson's Plovers, and 50+ Semipalmated Plovers, all 1 Feb (EB).

A winter-record 20 Laughing Gulls in Bermuda were mainly in Hamilton Harbour (AD), almost certainly holdovers from *Wilma*, as were single Franklin's Gulls in Hamilton Harbour 3 Dec (AD) and Castle Harbour 11 Feb (JM). A Franklin's Gull at West End,

Grand Bahama 15-16 Dec was the first for the Bahamas (†BH, BM, DG). The Black-headed Gull found 13 Nov was present through the season on Bermuda (AD). At Great Salt Pond, St. Martin there were 2 Black-headed Gulls 14 Jan and 5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and a Herring Gull 28 Jan (AB, E.P.I.C.) Guadeloupe's 3rd Great Black-backed Gull was at Rivière Salée 21 Jan (AL, AM, FD). During the Bahama C.B.C.s, 14 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found on Grand Bahama 16 Dec, and 12 (plus one Great Black-backed Gull) were on New Providence 18 Dec. Another Lesser Black-backed was seen at Lowe's Sound, Andros 28 Jan (PD, LH, ph. LL). The Barbados C.B.C. found 3 Lesser Black-backed.

Christmas counters found a Caspian Tern at Dover Sound, Grand Bahama 16 Dec (T&GD, †EG, PMo). Five Royal Terns wintering in Bermuda were seen most often at Dockyard (AD), and 2 Sandwich Terns remained in the Hamilton Harbour area until early Feb, with 3 Forster's Terns there throughout the season (PW); these birds were first noted following Hurricane *Wilma*. A Forster's Tern was seen off Union I., Grenadines 23 Dec (JF); another spent 9 Jan feeding off Caves Pt., New Providence, Bahamas (TW). Four Common Terns were seen at Grand Cul de Sac Marin, Guadeloupe 21 Jan (AL, AM, FD). Nine Black Skimmers at Las Salinas, Zapata 22 Jan made a pleasant surprise (WS, JC, DO).

DOVES THROUGH WAXBILLS

Rock Pigeon is apparently established at Kingston, St. Vincent (LGo). Eurasian Collared-Doves are becoming more numerous in Havana (WS, JC, DO). Eared Doves are fairly common in Bequia, Grenadines, where 15 were counted (JB). Bermuda's 2nd White-winged Dove was discovered at St. George's 5 Dec and 1 Jan (PW). One was s. of San Andros, Bahamas in the week of 9 Jan (JS, AF, SB), and another visited a feeder at Coral Harbour, New Providence regularly throughout the winter (CW). The critically endangered Grenada Dove was heard at Mt. Hartman 19 Dec (JF) but not found at Perseverance Estate. A Bridled Quail-Dove banded 3 Feb at Loterie Farm provided the first record for St. Martin (AB, E.P.I.C.). A Blue-headed Quail-Dove was reported at Soroa, Pino del Rio Province, Cuba 20 Jan (AK). On 24 Jan, 2 Gray-headed Quail-Doves were at Palpite, Zapata (WS, JC, DO), with one at Bermejas (AK et al.). A dozen endangered St. Vincent Parrots were seen easily from the lookout on the Vermont Nature Trail 14 Feb (LGo). At the Northern Forest Reserve, Dominica 16 Jan, 30-50 Red-necked and 2 Imperial Parrots were noted (JB). Cuban

Parrot numbers were clearly up from five years ago: boisterous flocks were seen at Playa Larga, Bermejas, and other Zapata locations, while Cuban Parakeets were not found in the Zapata area but were seen at La Belen Preserve, Najasa 25 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

A reliable Stygian Owl remained through Feb around the grounds of Hotel Mirador, San Diego de los Banos, Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba (WS, JC, DO). Bee Hummingbirds were not seen at a formerly dependable location s. of Palpite, where the species has been hard to find since last year's hurricanes (WS, JC, DO), but a female was seen at Bermejas, Zapata 24 Jan (AK et al.). A Northern Flicker (one of the Yellow-shafted taxa) was seen on the Ruby G.C., Grand Bahama 17 Dec and 28 Jan; if accepted, this would be the first for the Bahamas (†BH, EB, PD, TW, EG, †CJ, PS). Three Fernandina's Flickers were noted at Bermejas 22 Jan (WS, JC, DO). The only Eastern Wood-Pewee reported this winter was at the fruit farm, Abaco 8 Dec (EB). An Eastern Phoebe was found 16 Dec and 24 Jan at Ruby G.C., Grand Bahama (BH, EG); another was seen on New Providence at Bahamas Association for Social Health 7 & 10 Jan (TW, ph. TH, O.G., LG, M.A.S.). At Grenada, 2 Grena-

returned to Havana 27 Jan (WS, JC, DO). Large groups of Tree Swallows (150+) were at Rio Hatiguanico, Zapata, Matanzas Province, Cuba 23 Jan (WS, JC, DO); 60 were at Najasa 25 Jan; and others were scattered individuals (WS, JC, DO). At least 1000 Barn Swallows were seen at sunset over Gaschet Res., Guadeloupe 11 Feb (AL). About 6 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were mixed with the Tree Swallows at Najasa, Cuba 25 Jan (WS, JC, DO). A few Cave Swallows had returned to Cueva de los Portales, Soroa, Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba by 19 Jan; 2 were at Limones-Tuabaquey Reserve, Sierra Cubitas, Camagüey Province, Cuba 26 Jan (WS, JC, DO). A White-winged Swallow photographed at George's Harbour, Grenada 20-25 Dec (ph. JF) constituted the first record for Grenada, the West Indies, and the A.O.U. Area. A Barn Swallow over Pembroke Dump, Bermuda 28 Dec-8 Jan was unusually late (DBW). A Winter Wren remained at the Port Royal G.C., Bermuda until 15 Dec (EA). A pair of Zapata Wrens, including a singing male, was at Rio Hatiguanico 23 Jan (WS, JC, DO). The St. Vincent subspecies of House Wren was moderately common and vocal at Petit Byahout 13-19 Feb (LGo).

SA A Bare-eyed Thrush banded 10 Jan at Loterie Farm, St. Martin represents a first island record and first report from the northern Lesser Antilles (AB, E.P.I.C.). The steady march northward of this essentially South American species resembles that of Pearly-eyed Thrasher and Shiny Cowbird in previous decades. Bond (1987, Twenty-seventh Supplement to the *Check-List Birds of the West Indies*) reported the species had reached St. Lucia and Martinique by 1951 and was already well established. Indeed, on 2 Sep 1988, 11 were found actively singing and common in the southeast near Le Diamont, Martinique in the dry habitats widely used then for charcoaling (RW, RLN). Bond (1987) suggested that heavily forested and wet-regime islands to the north would pose a barrier to further range expansion in the Lesser Antilles by this species. This record clearly indicates an ability to prospect appropriate habitats; Antigua and perhaps Barbuda should be watchful for the next colonizing wave.

da Flycatchers were at Perseverance Estate 15 Jan (JB). Single Western Kingbirds were at Kindley Field, Bermuda 5 Dec (PW) and s. of San Andros airport, Bahamas 28 Jan (PD, ph. LL, LH). A late Gray Kingbird at Coral Harbour, New Providence was last seen 3 Dec (CW, O.G.). Giant Kingbird, a threatened Cuban endemic, was reported at Cuevas de los Portales 19 Jan (AK), along a roadside in Najasa 22 Jan (AK et al.), with 2 at La Belen Preserve, Najasa 25 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

A White-eyed Vireo banded 7 Jan at Loterie Farm, St. Martin (AB, E.P.I.C.) made the 2nd island record. In Bermuda, single Blue-headed Vireos were at Port Royal G.C. 4 Dec (AD, PA) and the Old Perfumery 29 Dec (DBW); in the Bahamas, one was seen on the Grand Bahama C.B.C. 16 Dec (PD). Twenty Bahama Swallows on Mayaguana, Bahamas 7 Dec (ABI) were probably winter wanderers; others stayed closer to home: 40 along the Great Abaco Highway 21 Jan and 4 at Fresh Creek, Andros 24 Jan (ALS). A few Cuban Martins

A Wood Thrush in Somerset, Bermuda provided a rare wintering record 31 Jan-26 Feb (DW). Two American Robins were seen on Wreck Road, Bermuda 31 Jan (DW). American Pipits have been scarce on Bermuda Airport, with just 8 on 22 Jan (AD). At least 22 species of warblers were recorded in Bermuda during the winter. The more unusual included a Prothonotary Warbler 29 Dec at Pilchard Bay (PW) and 2 Swainson's Warblers at Hog Bay Park 29 Dec-14 Jan (WF). In the Bahamas, single Nashville Warblers were seen at Cable Beach, New Providence 18 Dec (BH, C.B.C.) and Waterloo, Nassau 15 and 22 Feb (PD). On 23 Dec and 27 Jan, there was a Nashville Warbler at Capesterre Beau-eau, Guadeloupe (AL); a Louisiana Waterthrush there 23 Dec was also relocated 27 Jan (AL). A Kirtland's Warbler was seen and photographed at an undisclosed location on New Providence 4, 5, & 11 Feb (PD, ph. LL, KHL, LH). Eight Olive-capped Warblers were at La Guira, Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba 20 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

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Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Richard H. Payne, President/CEO, 03 October, 2006, I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information requested on the form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).		

A Chestnut-sided Warbler banded 3 Jan at Loterie Farm, St. Martin furnished the 5th island record (AB, E.P.I.C.). Two Black-throated Green Warblers banded 3 Jan at Loterie Farm, St. Martin (AB, E.P.I.C.) were just the 2nd and 3rd for the island (see Table 1). A Swainson's Warbler was reported at Bermejas 24 Jan, Cuba (AK), an unusual location for this species. Nine Oriente Warblers were counted, despite heavy rain, at Limones-Tuabaquey Reserve, Cuba 26 Jan (WS, JC, DO).

Table 1. Warblers banded at Loterie Farm, St. Martin, from 1 January–2 February 2006.

Species	Number
Black-and-white Warbler	44
Northern Waterthrush	4
Hooded Warbler	5
Ovenbird	6
Northern Parula	16
American Redstart	67
Prairie Warbler	2
Yellow Warbler	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
Black-throated Green Warbler	2
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1

A Summer Tanager seen in Nov–Dec and on 24 Feb (SR) clearly overwintered in the Arboretum, Bermuda. In Cuba, Summer Tanagers were found at Cueva de los Portales 19 Jan (AK et al.), Gaspar, Camagüey Province 24 Jan (WS, JC, DO), and Limones-Tuabaquey Reserve 26 Jan (WS, JC, DO). On the New Providence, Bahamas C.B.C., introduced Cuban Grassquits outnumbered indigenous Black-faced Grassquits for the 4th consecutive year (*vide* NMc). Vesper Sparrows were at Port Royal G.C., Bermuda 4 Dec (AD, PA) and Ferry Point 9 Dec (G&SH). On 8 Dec, a late Blue Grosbeak was seen at Parson's Rd., Bermuda (DW). Seven Zapata Sparrows at Rio Hatiguanico, Zapata 23 Jan (WS, JC, DO) were a good find; according to park personnel, invasive tree removal and subsequent increase in grassy, scrubby areas have been responsible for this species' increase (*vide* WS, JC, DO). A Snow Bunting was present at Bermuda Airport 12 Dec–28 Feb+ (PW).

The Bahamas' first documented Boat-tailed Grackle was found at Port Lucaya, Grand Bahama during the C.B.C. 16 Dec (EB, ph. MH, CBC). In Nassau, Bahamas, single Baltimore Orioles were at Camperdown 10 Jan (TH, LG, M.A.S.) and at Waterloo 22 Feb (PD). Two teams of observers noted that House Sparrows are now established at Lowe's Sound, the n. end of Andros (JS et al., PD et al.). House Sparrows have also become much more evi-

dent in smaller towns in Cuba and at rest stops along the autopista (WS, JC, DO). There seems to be an expansion of House Sparrow populations throughout the Region in the past 10 years. At least 200 Nutmeg Mannikins were at St François, Guadeloupe 18 Dec (AL, MLC); a Common Waxbill, nearly gone from Bermuda, was seen in Devonshire Marsh 24 Feb (SR).

Addendum: A White-crowned Pigeon was seen twice on Anguilla in Aug 2005—the species had not been reported on the island for over 20 years (SH).

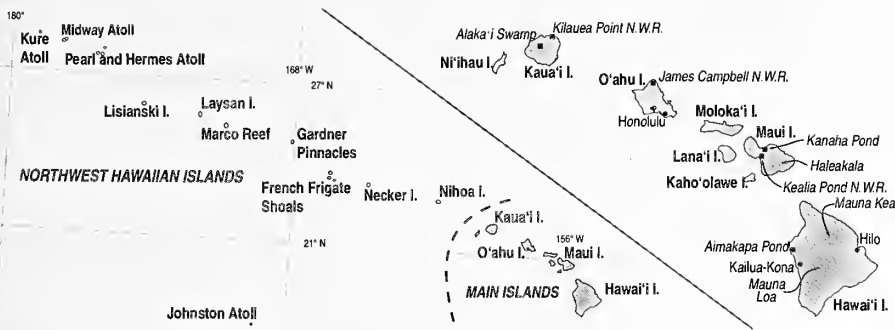
Corrigenda: In the fall 2005 report, records of Franklin's Gull, Wilson's Phalarope, and Long-billed Dowitcher at Barbados were credited in error to MF; these initials should instead have been Sidney Maddox. We offer apologies to both observers.

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The weather through mid-February was a mixture of wet and dry. Starting in late February, a blocking pattern over the northern Pacific resulted in persistent heavy rain, especially over Kaua'i and O'ahu. The weather was bad enough to restrict bird observations, especially in wetland areas. Some wetland areas became completely inaccessible, and roads were blocked because of flooding in some areas. This winter was notable for a complete lack of large gulls and for changes in the distribution of estrildid finches and francolins.

Abbreviations: H. (Hawai'i I.); HRBP (Hawaii Rare Bird Documentary Photograph; used with image catalog number from the HRBP file at Bishop Museum, Honolulu); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., Hawai'i I.); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kaua'i I.); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu I.); K. (Kaua'i I.); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui I.); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I.); Kii (Kii Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu I.); Kokee (Koke'e S.P., Kaua'i I.); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kaua'i I.); M. (Maui I.); Midway (Midway Atoll N.W.R.); O. (O'ahu I.); Ohiapilo ('Ohi'apilo Pond, Moloka'i 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.).

GEESE THROUGH TURKEY

A Greater White-fronted Goose remained at Kii Dec+ (m.ob.); another, first noted at Hanalei 13 Nov (BZ), remained in n. Kaua'i through Feb (m.ob.). Brant were unusually widespread, and these conspicuous birds were frequently reported. There were at least 2 individuals on Kaua'i I., with one bird at Hanalei 7 Dec and an emaciated bird delivered to the refuge staff there the same day (BZ). A Brant at Kii 21 Nov–18 Dec (m.ob.) may have moved to Pouhala, where one individual was observed 17 Dec+ (m.ob.). A Brant at Waiakea Pond, H. 10 Dec (RD) remained

there through at least 3 Feb (m.ob.). Finally, 2 Brant were observed on Moloka'i I. 12–19 Dec (ADY).

Numbers of ducks were higher than they have been for several years. The most numerous migrant ducks in the Region are Northern Shovelers and Northern Pintails. The high count for shovelers was 359 at Kealia 5 Jan (MN)—up from a peak of 238 last winter. The high count for pintail, 255 at Kealia 5 Jan (MN), was much higher than last winter's high count of only 75. Two Gadwalls at Ohiapilo since Nov were joined by 4 more 8 Feb (ADY). Gadwalls are rare in the Region, and 6 is an unusually high count. A female Cinnamon Teal spotted at Honouliuli 15 Feb (PD) was seen again 18 (MM) & 26 Feb (ph. BD). A female Garganey observed at Honouliuli 15 Feb (PD) was spotted again 18, 25 (MM), & 26 Feb (BD). A male Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was observed at Kii 9 Feb (ph. KP); another was at Honouliuli 25 (MM) & 26 Feb (BD).

There were also good numbers of bay ducks. One good find, a female Redhead spotted in Kahuku, O. in late Oct, remained through the period at the Kuilima S.T.P., along with 3 Canvasbacks (m.ob.). Three Canvasbacks were seen regularly at Hanalei in Dec–mid-Feb (BZ, DL), with 4 reported there 15 Feb (JD). Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup were widespread, with peak counts of 9 Ring-neckeds at Honouliuli 11 Feb+ (m.ob.) and 28 Lessers in Kahuku, O. 19 Jan (MO). The rarest duck of the season was a female Hooded Merganser on O'ahu. The merganser,

first seen at Kii 17 Nov (KP), was seen at Kii 2 Feb (KP) and at Honouliuli 11 Feb (BD, RM, KP, MO).

Gray Francolins have been increasing their range on O'ahu I. They are now being seen regularly in Ewa and Kapolei and have been spotted in early Feb between Ewa and Waiialua (RM). Three Black Francolins were also spotted between Ewa and Wailua 13 Feb (RM). Black Francolins have been rarely reported on O'ahu. Wild Turkeys are locally common on Hawai'i I., but a count of 100+ birds 26 Dec (H.F.T.) is unusually high.

ALBATROSSES THROUGH FALCONS

Black-footed Albatrosses are reported regularly near the main islands but unlike Laysans are seldom seen on land, so a Black-footed with Laysans at Barking Sands, K. 19 Dec (BZ) is notable. The bird had been banded, and the same individual was spotted on French Frigate Shoals 16 Jan (BZ). A light-morph Northern Fulmar was observed 16 Jan from Makapu'u Pt., O., by a birder familiar with the species in his native Scotland (BD). One Wedge-tailed Shearwater was spotted 28 Jan off Lai'e Pt., O. (BD). Wedge-taileds are rarely reported in Jan. Red-tailed Tropicbirds had not yet returned to a nesting colony in Waimanalo, O. 8 Feb but were back by 16 Feb (MW). A Great Blue Heron was observed at Lokoaka Pond, H. 31 Dec and 6 & 13 Jan (KI); the species is rare but regular in the Region. A white egret, larger than nearby Cattle Egrets, was spotted at Kii 16 (KP, DK), 22 (GS, JA), & 24 Dec (RM, RtM). Most of the observers thought the bird was probably a Great Egret, but the bird never allowed prolonged observation or photographs.

Ibises remained on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui Dec+ (m.ob.), with single birds on Kaua'i and O'ahu and a high count of 6 on Maui in late Jan (MW). An ibis at Waimea, K. 10 Feb (JD) and one at Hanalei 13 Feb (GE) had red eyes and were thus identified as White-faced Ibis. The rest of the birds are also thought to be White-faced, the only species documented in the Region. An Osprey was observed Dec+ near Honouliuli (m.ob.). Single Peregrine Fal-

SA The Hawaii State Division of Forestry and Wildlife conducted a biological survey of Moku Manu, a small, rocky island off the ne. coast of O'ahu 28 Feb. Eric VanderWerf, of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, helped survey the birds and reported the results. The ornithological highlight was a **Nazca Booby**, apparently paired with a Masked Booby, on a nest with 2 eggs. (It would be interesting to find out what the offspring will look like.) Other interesting observations included a pair of **Christmas Shearwaters** in a small cave. This species was found breeding on the island around 30 years ago, but there have been no recent records of birds on the island. One hundred sixty Red-footed Booby nests, 123 Brown Booby nests, and 33 Masked Booby nests were counted. Five years ago, Red-footeds had abandoned nesting on Moku Manu because a long drought had killed most of the vegetation suitable for Red-footed nest platforms. There were at least 22 Great Frigatebirds on Moku Manu, including 2 recently fledged imm. birds. At least 70 ad. Gray-backed Terns with 24 nests were counted. Many thousands of Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies were observed but not counted.

cons were spotted at Mokolea Pt., K. 10 Dec (BZ) and along Chain of Craters Rd., H. 12 Dec (KM) and 21 Feb (KH). Ospreys and Peregrines are rare but regular in the Region.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH PASSERINES

One Killdeer remained at Kii and nearby aquaculture ponds Nov–11 Feb (m.ob.); another was seen at Kealia 25 Jan (MW). An American Avocet, the only one ever reported in the Region, remained at Kealia Dec+ (MN, MW). Bristle-thighed Curlew numbers continued unusually high over the winter, with several counts of more than 30 birds and a peak count of 46 birds 7 Dec (PD). A Whimbrel spotted at Kii 26 Nov (MO) lingered at the refuge Dec+ (m.ob.). A Marbled Godwit that remained at Kii Dec+ (m.ob.) represents only the 3rd record for the Region. A Red Knot, possibly the same bird first seen at Kii Oct 10 (PD), was observed 7 Dec+ (m.ob.). Red Knots are uncommon in the Region. There were good numbers of Dunlins around Pearl Harbor, O., with 6 observed at Pothala

17 Dec (KP) and 19 Jan (PD). A Curlew Sandpiper made a brief appearance at Honouliuli 15 Feb (PD). Curlew Sandpipers are rare in the Region but have been reported more frequently in the past several years.

Glaucous-winged Gull has been one of the most frequently reported species in the Region, so it is unusual that none were reported this winter. Laughing Gulls were widespread Dec+ (m.ob.). A Bonaparte's Gull spotted at Honouliuli 11 Feb (BD, RM, MO, KP) stayed there Feb+ (m.ob.). A Caspian Tern spotted in Nu'upia Pond 8 Jan (PD, RM) lingered through at least 8 Feb (m.ob.).

Palila (*Endangered*) were reported regularly at Pu'u La'au, H. (H.F.T., DL), but it was troubling to hear reports of people on off-road vehicles roaring through the habitat of this rare bird (DL). Another troubling report came from Kokee, where no 'Iwi were found during a day of birding 4 Feb (BD). We received no reports of any of the rare Maui forest birds this winter.

Some of the small introduced finches, in-

cluding African Silverbill and Nutmeg Mannikin, were reported to be unusually scarce over the winter in parts of nw. Hawai'i I., where they are usually abundant (DL, RD). On the other hand, a flock of 30 Black-rumped Waxbills 21 Feb (RD) is one of the highest counts ever for the Region.

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SHORT TRIPS FOR TARGET SPECIES

Migrants on a Prairie River: Nebraska's Platte

Nebraska's Platte River plays host every spring to a migration phenomenon unmatched anywhere on the continent, with half a million Sandhill Cranes, up to two million Snow Geese, and 80% of the American population of Greater White-fronted Geese filling the fields and marshes. Add prairie grouse, several million ducks, and a mind-boggling abundance of raptors, and it is not hard to see why central Nebraska in spring is high on every birder's list of dream destinations! 23-28 March 2007. Leader and contact: Rick Wright, Aimophila Adventures, www.birdaz.com, birding@birdaz.com, (520) 544-8643.

Springtime in Texas Hill Country

Designed as a pre-tour for the Lafayette Convention, this trip begins and ends in San Antonio on the edge of the Edwards Plateau. The Hill Country is Texas' most beautiful natural region. The targets are two very special endangered species, the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo, both of which restrict their entire breeding range to the plateau. In addition to these two gems, we will seek out other Texas specialties such as the Green Kingfisher, Golden-fronted Woodpecker and Cave Swallow. A special visit to the Frio River Bat Cave will treat us to the evening exodus of 10 million Free-tailed Bats. 17-22 April 2007. Contact: Stephen Shunk, Paradise Birding, (541)408-1753 or steve@paradisebirding.com.

Trans-Gulf Migration Watch—Mississippi and Mobile Bay, Alabama

In conjunction with the Lafayette Convention, WINGS has arranged a pre-tour to maximize the birding opportunities along the central flyway with leader Cavin Bieber. Witness the miracle and spectacle of migration in one of the best places in the United States: the central Gulf Coast. As millions of birds make their way to their breeding grounds by crossing the Gulf of Mexico, we will be in good position for the opportunity to experience a "fall-out". The coastal areas of Fort Morgan peninsula and Dauphin Island also offer excellent access to water and migrant shorebirds. After taking in one of North America's busiest banding stations, we will bird along the coast, stopping at the largest remaining patch of coastal Long-leaf Pine forest on the Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR. 19-23 April 2007. Contact: WINGS, www.wingsbirds.com or 888.293.6443.

East Texas Woodpeckers & High Island Migrants

Join woodpecker expert Steve Shunk of Paradise Birding on a quest for seven of the Lone Star State's ten nesting woodpecker species (see two of the remaining three on our pre-tour!). We'll spend two nights in the Pineywoods to look for Red-cockaded, Red-headed, Red-bellied plus Hairy, Downy, Flicker and Pileated. This habitat also hosts Hooded and Pine Warblers, Brown-headed Nuthatch and Bachman's Sparrow. Our other two nights will have us based on the upper Texas coast with visits to Brazos Bend, Quintana Sanctuary, High Island, Bolivar Flats and Anahuac Refuge. This trip is timed to see hordes of migrants, including Yellow-bellied and Acadian Flycatchers, plus 20 different warblers and nearly two dozen shorebird species. 30 April-4 May 2007. Contact: Stephen Shunk, Paradise Birding, (541)408-1753, or steve@paradisebirding.com.

Spring Warbler Migration in Tennessee

Join John C. Robinson, author of the "Annotated Check-list of the Birds of Tennessee", for the spring bird migration in the heartland of the eastern US. Once experienced, no one can forget the eastern warblers—one of the most highly sought-after group of birds in North America. Learn to identify them by sight and by sound, a technique that John uses on all his tours. Destinations include Cross Creeks and Reelfoot NWR's. Mississippi Kite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 20 plus species of warblers, and Orchard Oriole should be seen. 6-11 May 2007. Contact: On My Mountain, 5055 Business Center Drive, Suite 108, Box 110, Fairfield CA 94534, www.OnMyMountain.com/aba, (707)864-8279.

MEXICO

Mazatlan and the Durango Road

After initial explorations near Mazatlan for coastal species we will begin the climb from the seaside to the high, and plain east of the Sierra Madre Occidental. As we climb through the mountains there is a marked change in flora, and hence, in the birds. The prize endemic of the trip is Tufted Jay among the 35+ endemics. Led by PD Hulce, our most experienced leader. 5-12 November 2006. Contact: Bob Odear, OBServ Tours, Inc, www.observtours.com, observtours@bellsouth.net, (615)292-2739.

CARIBBEAN

Zapata Peninsula, Northern Archipelago & Eastern Endemic Birding Regions of Cuba

This trip covers locations in western, central and eastern endemic habitats and visits both the Atlantic and Caribbean coasts, offering the best opportunities for the greatest number of endemics and other species. 17-28 January 2007. Contact Gary Markowski, Cuba Bird Study Program, cubirds@aol.com, (860) 350-6752; CBSP, PO Box 355, New Milford, CT 06776.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

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After two nights in Buenos Aires, fly to Ushuaia to board the *Clipper Adventurer* destined for Punta Arenas. Zodiac landings offer better birding opportunities, with albatross, petrels and penguins on the agenda. 22 February-8 March 2007. Contact Clipper Cruise Line, www.clippercruise.com, groupres@intrav.com, (800)456-0020.

Quito: Pre and Post Tours, ABA Conference

Tropical Birding will be offering six pre tours, as well as the same six tours afterwards to make more of your trip to Ecuador. Some trips will offer extensions for a fuller experience. Destinations of the tours will be to the Galapagos (small group), Southern Ecuador (endemics of the Tumbesian, Jacotoco Antipitta), Northwest Ecuador (tanagers and hummingbirds), Canade Reserve (forest trails/experienced birders), Eastern Ecuador (tanagers and quetzals, including Sacha Lodge & canopy walkway), and the Ecuadorian Amazon (6 days at Sacha Lodge). All trips will begin and end at the conference hotel. Contact Tropical Birding, www.tropicalbirding.com, quito2007@tropicalbirding.com, (800)348-5941.

Quito: Pre and Post Tours, ABA Conference

Neblina Forest is offering pre and post tours to the conference as well to accommodate the attendees for additional trips while in Ecuador. Destinations include Pichincha (antipittas galore), Napo Wildlife Center (observation towers, parrot licks) and Careno Lodge (target species: Harpy Eagle). All trips will begin and end at the conference hotel. Contact Neblina Forest, www.neblinaforest.com, info@neblinaforest.com, (800)538-2149.

Birding Bonanza in Northern Argentina

See the birds and natural history of Northern Argentina with visits to the Andes Lagoons, Calilegua National Park, the Province of Salta, the Ibera Marshes, and Iguazu National Park. Join John C. Robinson and experienced local field guides on an unforgettable tour. Search for specialties such as Giant Coot, Lyre-tailed Nighthawk, Rufous-throated Dipper, and Red-ruffed Fruitcrow. 1-14 July 2007. Contact: On My Mountain, Inc., 5055 Business Center Drive, Suite 108, Box 110, Fairfield, CA 94534, www.OnMyMountain.com/aba, (707)864-8279.

EUROPE AND UK

North Norfolk Bush Bash

This is a very exciting time to visit what many people regard as being the premier birding county in the UK. Begin in London, exploring the RSPB reserve at Tichwell and its environs, then the reserve at Cley along the coast. Spot migrating terns and four species of skuas, plus shorebirds galore. Explore the East Coast of

Norfolk for migrant warblers. A boat charter for offshore seabird passages is included, plus visits to other RSPB reserves for maximum observations. 19-27 September 2007. Contact and leader: Neil Donaghy, Celtic Bird Tours, Birds@celtic-tours.org.uk, 044-1615-645-709.

Spain

This customized trip is designed to see the maximum numbers of birds in the height of southward migration from Europe to Africa. There is no better place to see the spectacle of hundreds of migrating birds and raptors! Visit rocky habitats and marshlands for endemics as well. Fall 2007. Contact Siemer & Hand Travel, www.siemerhand.com, travel@siemerhand.com, (800)451-4321.

AFRICA

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A melanistic Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) in Colorado

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Abstract

This paper documents the presence of a melanistic male Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) of the *cafer* subspecies group (Red-shafted Flicker) at Fort Collins, Colorado on 21-22 April 2006, possibly the first instance of this plumage aberration in this subspecies group.

Field encounter

The authors watched a melanistic male Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) in Fort Collins, Colorado, on 21 April 2006 from 1700-1900 MST. Blume photographed the bird with a Canon EOS 10D camera and an image-stabilized, 70-200mm, f/2.8 Canon lens (Figures 1, 2). The bird spent this entire time within an area of about 10x10 m, resting, sleeping, drinking, and feeding on sunflower seeds and suet. It appeared to be tired and permitted the authors to approach to within 5 m. The bird reappeared the next morning around 0600 and was then seen several times over a period of 20 minutes. It drank and fed much more actively at this time. It has not been seen in this location subsequently.

From distances of 5-10 m, this flicker appeared to be almost as dark as a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). The red malar patches and reddish shafts of the remiges and rectrices were apparent only when observers used a binocular (Bushnell 7x35) or telephoto camera lens. The rump was dark; the



Figure 1. Ventral view of melanistic male Red-shafted Flicker, late afternoon 21 April 2006. Photograph by W. Jeffrey Blume.

bill and feet were dark gray; the underwing coverts were tinged with salmon-pink. The ventral spotting and dorsal barring of a typical Red-shafted were both discernible only with close views. The crown, auriculars, and crescent on the breast were all about equally dark.

Discussion

After consulting the literature, we concluded that this flicker's dark plumage indicated a case of extreme melanism. Moore (1995)

does not mention melanistic aberrations in his description of the plumage of Northern Flicker, but there have been several reports of melanistic Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flickers (that is, nominate subspecies or *luteus*): Gross (1965) cited two nineteenth-century records, and G. Hanisek (1997 and pers. comm.) reported a melanistic Northern Flicker in Connecticut, presumably of subspecies *luteus*. Thus the Fort Collins bird may represent the first documented case of a melanistic Red-shafted Flicker; the subspecies found locally is *collaris*. This bird had not been noticed in the neighborhood previously, nor has it been reported since the initial observations of 21-22 April 2006. It was probably a transient and apparently stayed in the vicinity only about 13 hours.

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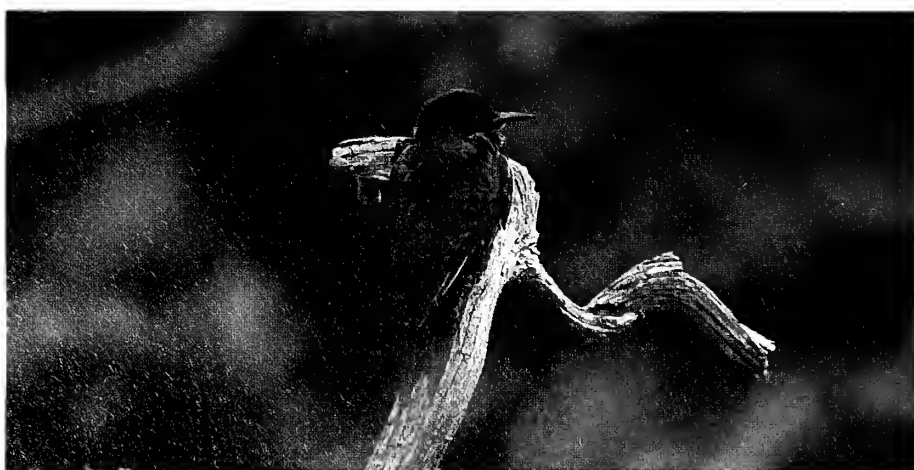


Figure 2. Dorsal view of melanistic male Red-shafted Flicker, late afternoon 21 April 2006. Photograph by W. Jeffrey Blume.

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Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) on San Clemente Island: First record for California, with review of its occurrence in North America

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Abstract

This paper documents a photographic record of a Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) on San Clemente Island, Los Angeles County, California on 20-21 October 1995, the first record for California and one of only two North American records outside of Alaska.

The California record

On 20 October 1995, while working as a biologist on San Clemente Island, Los Angeles County, California, Robert Patton found an unusual bird in the dry vegetation surrounding a vernal pond at the north end of the island. He photographed the bird (Figures 1, 2) and took brief field notes; however, the bird was at that time identified as a Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), a potential first for the island. Patton returned to the research laboratory and alerted others to the presence of the bird; he was able to relocate the bird later in the same day and showed it to five other researchers. The bird was seen again on 21 October, but attempts to locate the bird after that date were unsuccessful.

While compiling information for a comprehensive paper documenting birds recorded on San Clemente Island (Sullivan and Kershner 2005), the authors asked Patton to provide documentation for the Vermilion Flycatcher, and he submitted his

photographs for review. Although not ideal images, the photographs showed a bird having features inconsistent with Vermilion Flycatcher, being too warmly colored with peach-buff coloration on the breast, with incorrect shape and posture, and very long tarsi. The photographs were sent to numerous authorities on bird identification, and the consensus was that the bird was a Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*), likely one of the Siberian subspecies (i.e., of the *maura* group; see Urquhart 2002). Patton's field notes indicated that the behavior of the bird was also consistent with the typical foraging style of stonechats rather than with that of Vermilion Flycatcher: hawking for insects from the ground, fanning tail, and flitting wings. The record was reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee and was accepted as the first state record (Cole et al. 2006).

Discussion

Stonechat has a very modest presence as a vagrant in North America. Only one other record has been reported away from Alaska: one photographed on Grand Manan Island, Charlotte County, New Brunswick on 1 October 1983 (*American Birds* 38: 178; Wilson 1986). This individual was identified as being of the Siberian subspecies group *maura*, which is split by some authorities as Siberian Stonechat (*S.*

maura), based on differences in natural history, vocalizations, morphometrics, plumage, and genetics (Urquhart 2002).

There are nine confirmed Alaskan records of the species, but just two are from the autumn. Six records are from 24 May through 6 June at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island: one male 6 June 1978 (Gibson and Kessel 1992); one male 5 June 1985 (Gibson and Kessel 1992, A.B.A. 2002); one female 4-5 June 1992 (A.B.A. 2002); one "immature" 31 May 2003 and one adult male 3 June 2003 (both Tobish 2003); and one 24-26 May 2006 (T. Tobish, pers. comm.). One at Gambell 6 September 2005 (Tobish 2005) is the only fall record from that location. There is also a sight record from 8 September 1992 from Gambell; it has incomplete documentation and is not generally considered verified. There are two Alaska specimens, both of the eastern Siberian subspecies *S. t. stegnegeri* (in the *maura* subspecies group): one found in a Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) nest-burrow at Galena 19 April 1986, the specimen thought to have been preserved since the previous fall (Osborne and Osborne 1987, Gibson and Kessel 1992); and one from Middleton Island on 28 September 1990 (Gibson and Kessel 1992). The late September date of the Middleton Island record suggests that perhaps some fall Stonechats arrive in Alaska after birding coverage has ceased for the season.

The 20-21 October date of the California Stonechat falls roughly within the autumn window for many other Siberian vagrant passerines encountered in California (all from C.B.R.C., in press): one record of Lanceolated Warbler (*Locustella lanceolata*) 11-12 September 1995; nine accepted records of Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*) between 27 September and 31 October (bird on the latter date remained through 3 November); three records of Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*) 13 September 1995, 29 September-1 October 1996, and 7 September 2000; one record of Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tar-*



siger cyanurus) 1 November 1989; 11 accepted records of Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) between 15 September and 6 November (the bird on the latter date remained through 10 November), plus one spring record 11 June; 12 records of apparent Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) between 27 August and 21 September; one accepted record of Gray Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) 9-10 October 1988; at least eight records of White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba ocularis*) 9 October–23 December (bird on the latter date remained through 6 March and returned to winter in the next two seasons); at least 12 records of Black-backed Wagtail (*Motacilla alba lugens*) 7 August–25 January, plus four spring records, 26 April and 10, 13, and 22 May; one record of Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*) 26-29 September 1998; at least 204 accepted records of Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) 9 September–11 November, with strong peak between late September and mid-October; two records of Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*), 21-24 October 1991 and 27-28 September 2002; and four accepted records of Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*), 25 November–8 January. Clearly, there are distinctions among these Asian species: the mostly insectivorous taxa, such as the motacillids, tend to arrive earlier, whereas the granivores, such as emberizids, may arrive later. Such distinctions conform to expectations based on their migration phenology in Asia as well as Alaska. Two other Siberian landbird species have been recorded in California: Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*), two records from 20-22 October 1984 and 26 November 1986–26 April 1987; and Oriental Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*), two records from 29 October 1988 and 9-23 December 2002.

The mechanism by which such vagrants appear in California is a matter of speculation and debate. During autumn in western Alaska, particularly in the Bering Sea on St. Lawrence Island, such species most often appear with storm systems coming from Asia (Lehman 2003; Brinkley and Lehman 2003); perhaps farther south, such as in California, the pattern of the jet stream also plays a part in displacement of migrants (Sullivan 2004). Some unique combination of weather and migratory confusion combine to produce such records in California, but much is to be



learned. A straightforward connection can be drawn between the arrival of Asian landbirds in Alaska and strong weather systems moving northeastward from Asia toward Alaska, but the connection is less clear in the case of Asian landbirds in California, Oregon, and Washington. In autumn, the easterly air flows and typical storm tracks move from the Sea of Japan, northward toward the latitudes of Aleutians and southern Kamchatka Peninsula, and then back southeastward across the Bering Sea–North Pacific interface and into the Gulf of Alaska. These large-scale base flows apparently generate and/or steer (advection) the weather systems that bring these (probably misoriented) migrants to western Alaska. Farther south, dramatic weather events are less frequent, and the number of Asian landbirds far smaller, making inferences about the possible connections between weather systems and Asian vagrants more difficult. The growing population of astute birders, and improvements in meteorological technology, may permit an understanding of such long-distance landbird vagrants in the future.

Acknowledgments

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A brief report on the illegal cage-bird trade in southern Florida: a potentially serious negative impact on the eastern population of Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

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Abstract

Populations of Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) have been declining annually over the past 35 years. A cursory survey indicates that illegal trapping of Painted Buntings for a black market cage-bird trade is widespread in southeastern Florida. Coupled with other negative factors confronting the eastern population, the trapping of buntings for the cage-bird trade may, in time, produce dire results for this native songbird. Law enforcement personnel need to continue to monitor the illegal activity of trapping native passerines for the local songbird market and to continue to arrest those who support it.

Background

The North American Breeding Bird Survey data from 1966–1999 show an annual declining trend in populations of Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) of 2.9% range-wide (Robbins et al. 1986, Robbins et al. 1989, Sauer and Droege 1992, Pardieck and Sauer 2000, Sauer et al. 2000). The eastern population of Painted Bunting breeds in a rather narrow corridor from the vicinity of Beaufort, North Carolina through Titusville, Florida (Sykes and Holzman 2005) and winters in the southern half of Florida, Cuba, the northern Bahamas, and possibly the Yucatan Peninsula (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994, Howell and Webb 1995, Raffaele et al. 1998, White 1998, Garrido and Kirkconnell 2000). This eastern population is a highly ranked Species of Concern by the states of Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, as well as Partners in Flight (Hunter et al. 1993). The eastern Painted Bunting has recently been classified as a “Watch List Species” (moderately abundant or widespread with declines or high threats) in *Partners in Flight North American Landbird Conservation Plan* (Rich et al. 2004). A research project entitled *Annual Survival in the*

Southeastern Coastal Breeding Population of the Painted Bunting (P. W. Sykes, W. Kendall, and J. Meyers, in ms.) is in progress, and its results are currently being analyzed. In tandem with this survival study, the authors made a brief survey of the illegal cage-bird trade in southeastern Florida. Our findings indicate that this trade may be contributing to the decline of Painted Buntings (together with habitat degradation and loss, predation, and brood parasitism), but to what degree is unclear. The cage-bird trade is also a problem in Cuba (Sykes et al., in prep.).

The trapping of Painted Buntings for the cage-bird trade probably dates back at least to the early 1700s (Latrobe 1835), and John James Audubon (1841) reported it in the early 1800s. Since the early 1900s, when laws were passed in the United States to protect native songbirds, such activity has been illegal. Painted Bunting and other native birds are protected at the federal level by the Lacey Act of 1900 and amendments of 1981, 1984, and 1988, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916 (expanded in 1936 and 1972). Both acts are administered mainly by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The species is also protected under Florida Statute 372.922, Chapter 39-4.001, of the state Administrative Code, for which the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the enforcement agency. In addition, most cities, towns, and communities in Florida now have laws protecting songbirds within their jurisdictions.

Recent evidence of captive Painted Buntings in southeastern Florida (as well as in Cuba) prompted our brief surveys. For instance, during the morning of 30 March 2003, a local Audubon Society member discovered a trap east of Krome Avenue in an undeveloped part of Miami-Dade County. The trap contained an adult male Painted Bunting and a Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), which

quickly were released. The trap (Figure 1) was removed from the site and is now in the possession of Sykes. Six people in a dark pickup truck and a white sport utility vehicle were apparently involved with trapping at this site. The incident was promptly reported to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission law enforcement personnel, but no one was apprehended at that time. The license plate of the pickup was recorded, and it was subsequently learned that it had been switched with that of another vehicle.

Methods

Because Painted Buntings have in recent decades been favored as cage-birds mostly in the Latino community, we restricted our efforts to small independent pet shops, flea markets, and similar operations in Miami-Dade County, Florida. (We made the assumption that stores of the major pet-shop chains would not risk the legal implications, financial costs, and bad publicity generated by the sale of protected native birds.) An Internet search located 85 small pet shops in the Miami metropolitan area. We selected a total of 26 shops (12 in Hialeah, one in Naranja, 10 in Miami, and three in Opa-locka), plus a regular flea-market-like gathering that features several species of finch-like birds. Each establishment was visited once in late January 2004 to see if Painted Buntings were present. At each shop, we simply observed the operations. At several shops, we asked a few questions in Spanish to obtain some key information, but otherwise tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible.

Results

In our survey of 26 pet shops, we found only one Painted Bunting offered for sale, at a shop in the Allapattah area of Miami. Following our purchase of this bird, for \$12.00, the clerk stated: “Don’t show it to anyone because it is

against the law," or words to that effect. We measured, aged, sexed, and banded the bunting with a unique color-band combination before releasing the bird into a Princeton, Florida neighborhood, which supports a small population of wintering Painted Buntings. At the time of its release, the bunting was in good condition, with no sign of worn plumage, and all the nails were sharp-tipped, indications that it had been caught fairly recently. We observed this bird three weeks later in the area where it had been released. While only one Painted Bunting was found for sale at a pet shop during our search, we were told at several other pet shops that they could get us a "mariposa" (the Cuban name for the Painted Bunting) if we were ready to buy. One shop owner said that adult male Painted Buntings were selling for \$55, with females or subadult males selling for \$35 each. Adult male Indigo Buntings (*P. cyanea*) were being sold for \$45 each. We found Indigo Buntings, all brown-plumaged, for sale at one pet shop and at an open-air market. This clearly indicates there is a black market for Painted and Indigo Buntings in southeastern Florida.

On 25 January 2004, we visited an open-air gathering in southeastern Hialeah, where birds (mainly finches) were shown; some birds were for sale. This informal event takes place every Sunday morning on the north side of Hialeah Drive with its intersection with NE 9th Court. Cages with birds were displayed along both sides of NE 9th Court and in parking lots behind nearby buildings. An estimated 50–60 people were present while we were there, all men, and all Spanish-speaking. One individual was selling birds from the rear of a van. He kept the rear door of the van closed except when showing his birds to prospective buyers or making a sale. However, he set on the sidewalk next to his van a cage that contained two adult male Painted Buntings. Later, from across the street we watched him sell the more brightly plumaged male and another unidentified bird from out of the van. A second individual in a sport utility vehicle was showing his bird inventory using a digital video camera.

Traps for catching small birds, identical or similar to the trap shown in Figure 1, were relatively easy to locate in southeastern Florida. We found one displayed at the open-air event in Hialeah along with a much smaller

trap made of hardware cloth. Traps such as that shown in Figure 1 were found at three pet stores visited: one shop had seven on display, and another had three. We were told these traps sell for \$75–85 each.

We later learned of a conversation in Spanish that was overheard at a large permanent indoor flea market just east of Tampa in Hillsborough County, Florida. A customer asked a flea market stall operator (who was selling primarily birds, bird cages, and cage-bird supplies) how she might purchase a "mariposa." The response was that he had none at that locality, but could obtain one in several days.

In early March 2004, we turned over all the information that we had collected in Florida to the Division of Law Enforcement, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia, and the field office at Miami, Florida. On 29 August 2005, the U. S. Department of Justice, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission jointly announced the unsealing in Miami of a twenty-one count indictment charging six Miami-Dade County residents with illegally dealing in protected species of migratory birds. The six indicted were charged with the unlawful sale and offering for sale of Indigo and Painted Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks

(*Guiraca caerulea*), and Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) between 24 October 2004 and 11 July 2005. According to statements in court, the charged individuals conducted regular sales activities almost every Sunday at an informal market on Hialeah Drive. Undercover officers made direct purchases of birds from the various defendants during the months-long investigation, which was dubbed Operation Bunting. Juries in Miami found all six defendants guilty on the 21 counts of unlawfully selling and offering for sale the four species of songbirds listed above, in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Title 16, United States Code, Sections 703 and 707 (U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, 3 Feb 2006; <<http://www.usdoj.gov/us20/fls/060203-01.html>>). Each of the 21 trafficking indictments is punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$250,000 fine (U.S. Department of Justice News Release, 29 August 2005).

The six defendants appeared before three U.S. District Court judges for sentencing between 12 January and 13 March 2006. Defendant No. 1 pled guilty on one felony count and received one year of supervised release, \$100 special assessment, and \$648 in restitution to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC). Defendant No. 2 pled guilty to three felony counts and received one year

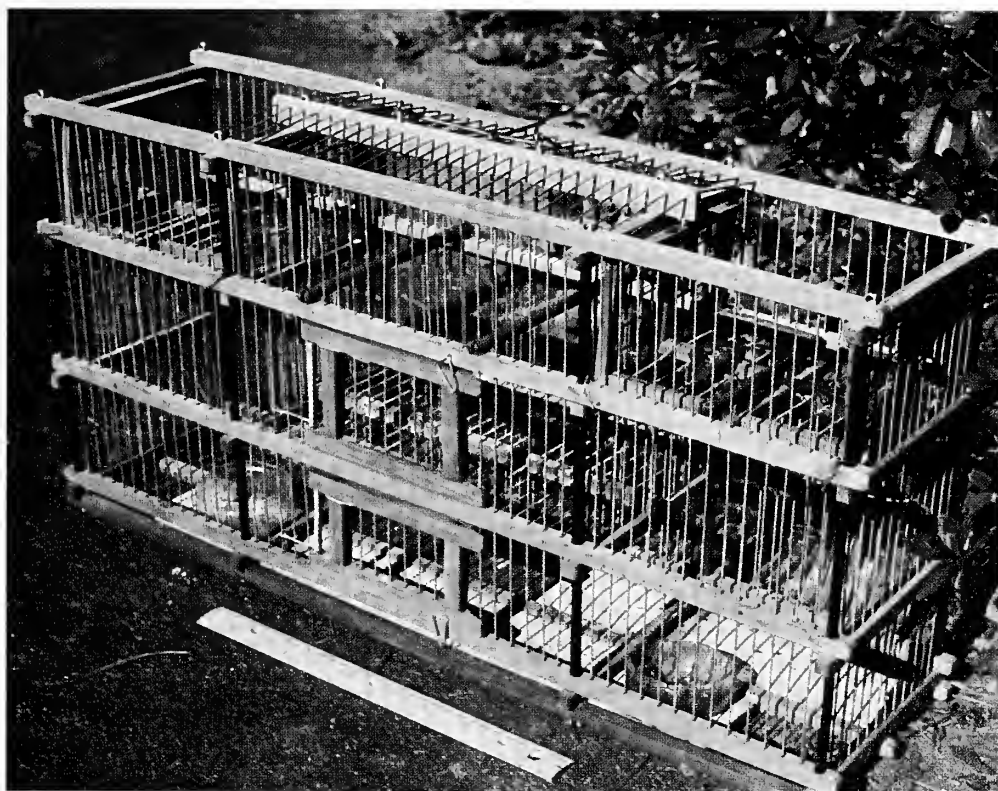


Figure 1. This is a trap used to illegally capture Painted Buntings and other small passerines in southern Florida. Such traps may be mass-manufactured somewhere in the United States. Photograph by Paul W. Sykes, Jr.

probation for each count to run concurrently and a \$300 special assessment. Defendant No. 3 pled guilty to one felony count and received three years probation, \$2000 in fines, \$100 special assessment, and \$1650 in restitution to the FFWCC. Defendant No. 4 pled guilty on two felony counts and received three years probation, \$2000 in fines, \$200 special assessment, and \$544 in restitution to FFWCC. Defendant No. 5 pled guilty to one felony count and received three years probation, \$8290 in fines, \$400 special assessment, and \$6000 or so in restitution to FFWCC. Defendant No. 6 was found guilty on four felony counts and received three years probation and \$400 special assessment (Federal Wildlife Officers Association Web Site; <<http://www.fwoa.org/>>).

Charges were also filed against three pet shops in the Miami-Dade County area for selling protected native songbirds and apparently were linked to the ring of those trapping (American Bird Conservancy, *Bird Calls* 10.1: 8, March 2006). We have no further details on these three cases.

Discussion

From our perspective, the sentences and fines the six convicted felons received amounted to little more than a slap on the wrist and the costs of doing business. The sentences for the six felons totaled 12.5 years, all on probation, and all the various fines combined amounted to only \$22,147. This is interesting, as each of the 21 felony counts could bring up to a \$250,000 fine apiece if the maximum had been given, but the total of all the fines for the six convicted felons was only 8% of the maximum for one felony count. Although we do not know the actual costs for the government agencies to carry out their investigations, make arrests, and cost for the trials, we venture to say the combined total of all fines was a rather small percentage of the overall costs to bring the six individuals to justice. The question remains: Were the penalties sufficient to stop these convicted felons and others from trapping and selling songbirds in the future within the United States?

Based on our rather cursory survey of bird markets, plus additional information provided to us by an eyewitness to other events, we suspect that the trapping of Painted Buntings, Indigo Buntings, and other songbirds for the cage-bird trade is widespread in southeastern Florida. While the aforementioned situation probably involved Painted Buntings and other colorful passerines trapped in Florida, the demand is such that the illegal trapping could be expanded to include the breeding grounds from northeastern Florida northward. Male

Painted Buntings are highly territorial for much of the breeding season from mid-April through mid-July (Lowther et al. 1999). Trapping efforts to capture Painted Buntings in Cuba, Mexico, and elsewhere in Middle America target mostly the adult males (E. Iñigo-Elias, pers. comm.), and this is probably the case in Florida as well.

The style of trap (Figure 1) used to capture Painted Buntings and other songbirds is the same or similar to those used widely by bird trappers throughout Cuba (E. Iñigo-Elias, pers. comm.). In Florida, this style of trap is precision-made, and we suspect those we have observed have been manufactured somewhere in the state, based upon the materials used in manufacture. The trap is generally used with a live bird inside as a decoy to attract other males. This type of trap is quite efficient in capturing birds in Cuba. In the province of Pinar del Rio, Cuba, Eduardo Iñigo-Elias (pers. comm.) witnessed three trappers using a large series of these traps (hanging from wires strung between poles) capture approximately 700 adult male Painted Buntings in one weekend in early May 2004. The trap can also be used on the ground or hung from a shrub or tree.

Given the efficiency of this trap, we are gravely concerned that, in addition to the trapping of Painted Buntings on their wintering grounds in Florida, trapping might be conducted on the breeding grounds, particularly if stepped-up law enforcement makes the illegal trapping in southeastern Florida too risky. Given the territorial behavior of the males during the breeding season, a bird trapper could place a trap on a male's territory and catch that individual in a matter of minutes and then move on to the next territorial bird. By so doing, male Painted Buntings of the eastern population could literally be vacuumed from their territories in their rather narrow, limited breeding range along the Atlantic coast (see Sykes and Holzman 2005). Such activity could be conducted with little chance of detection. Therefore, it is extremely important that the land management and law enforcement agency personnel with Painted Bunting habitats within their areas of jurisdiction be aware of, and on the alert for, this possible threat. Also, the birding community, and the general public using these areas, should be made cognizant of the problem during the warmer months, when eastern Painted Buntings are present on the breeding grounds along the Atlantic coast from northeastern Florida north to southeastern North Carolina. Any suspicious activities should be immediately reported to the appropriate agency with details (license numbers,

description of vehicles, people involved, etc.), so that quick action can be taken to apprehend individuals attempting to trap Painted Buntings.

The Painted Buntings along the Florida coast from the Georgia border south to Cape Canaveral have declined for as yet unknown reasons in recent years. Is it possible that this decline is in part due to illegal trapping? The situation is in need of investigation. Given the large and increasing human population of Florida, and given its demographics, the demand for Painted Buntings as pets could be substantial and may well increase in the future. The necessary laws and statutes already exist, but greater vigilance by the public and increased law enforcement effort is required. A robust educational outreach program is needed in Florida and perhaps elsewhere to curb the trade in wild-caught colorful songbirds as pets as well as the cultural traditions that support such trade.

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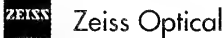

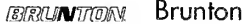

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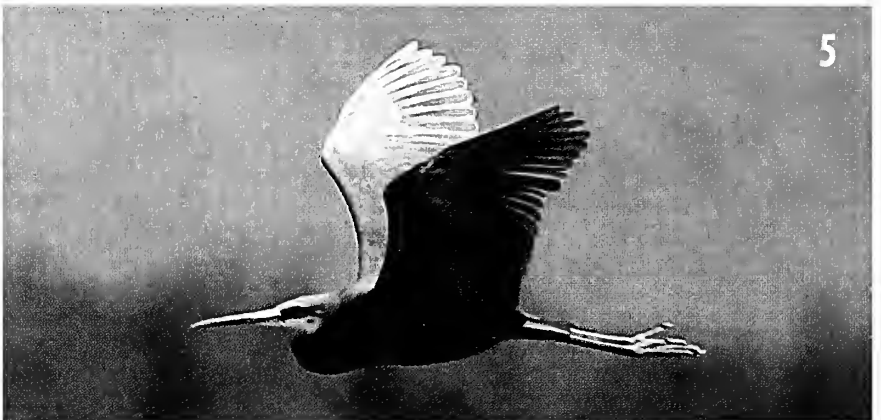
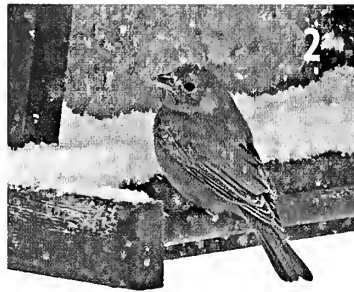


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Pictorial Highlights



1 • Nova Scotia's second documented Bell's Vireo, evidently a bird of the nominate (eastern) subspecies, was present in Lower Sackville through late November 2005 but only confirmed and photographed on 3 December (here). It was last seen the following day. *Photograph by Cindy Creighton.*

2 • Nova Scotia's eighteenth Painted Bunting (but just the third in winter) was sustained through the season (here 10 February 2006) at a feeder in Bridgewater. *Photograph by Hans Toom.*

3 • Two Cape May Warblers lingered into December 2005 in Nova Scotia, and this adult male at Kentville, photographed 20 December, remained to grace the local Christmas Bird Count. *Photograph by Richard Stern.*

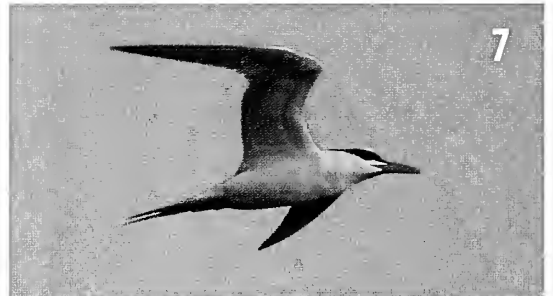
4 • This male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Saint Pierre (here 4 January 2006) was an extremely rare find for the French Islands in midwinter. *Photograph by Patrick Boez.*

5 • Western Reef-Heron is known in North America only from one record, a long-staying bird on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts in 1983—until this individual (of the nominate subspecies, *gularis*) turned up at Stephenville Crossing, Newfoundland on 14 June 2005; it remained in the area, to be seen by hundreds of observers, through at least 6 September. *Photograph by Paul Linegar.*

6 • Newfoundland's first Ross's Goose appeared in St. John's during an unexpected mid-December 2005 influx of Snow Geese. The bird was photographed here on 16 December, within the first hours of its four-month stay! *Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.*

7 • Royal Tern is rare virtually anywhere inland in North America, and this individual at Wilcox Playa, Arizona on 15 February 2006 was all the more astonishing in winter. *Photograph by Mott Victorio.*

8 • Wisconsin's second Band-tailed Pigeon spent the winter at a feeder in St. Croix (here on unknown date in February 2006). *Photograph by John Agger.*





1 • This adult Streak-backed Oriole was found by Gary Rosenberg on private property along Sonoita Creek during the Patagonia Christmas Bird Count 18 December 2005 (here) and seen nearby through 22 December. It represents only the second documented record for Santa Cruz County, with the first being photographed near Tumacacori earlier in 2005. *Digiscoped photograph by Dave Stejskal.*

2 • The juvenal-plumaged Gray-headed Kite first seen on Caye Caulker, Belize on 17 February 2005 (N.A.B. 59: 508) was still present a year later, by which time (here 31 January 2006) it had molted into definitive plumage. *Photograph by Bert Frenz.*

3 • Baja California's first well-documented Blue-headed Vireo was this first-winter male photographed 8 March 2006 on the Rio Colorado near Ejido Chiapas No. 3. The two prior records from the Peninsula were of early October migrants in Baja California Sur. *Photograph by Marshall J. Hiff.*

4 • Harpy Eagle is a very rare bird at the edge of its range in northern Central America. This immature bird was found 15 December 2005 at Quebrada de Oro in the Bladen Nature Reserve, Belize. *Photograph by Steven Brewer.*

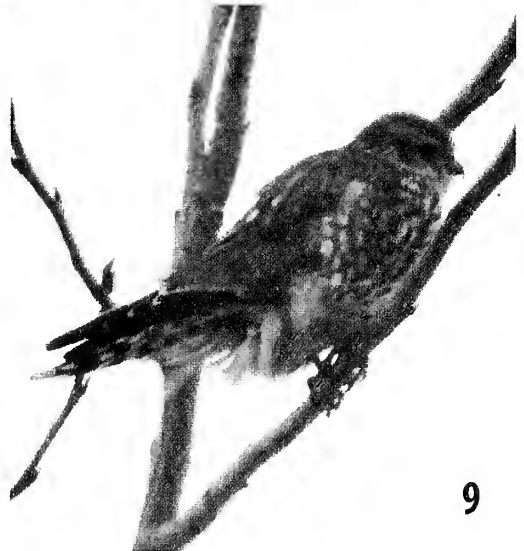
5 • This Pacific Screech-Owl at Isla Zacate Grande, in the Gulf of Fonseca, was found with a mate 11 February 2006; this furnishes the first documented record for Honduras, although the species is well known here by local residents. *Photograph by Tom Jenner.*

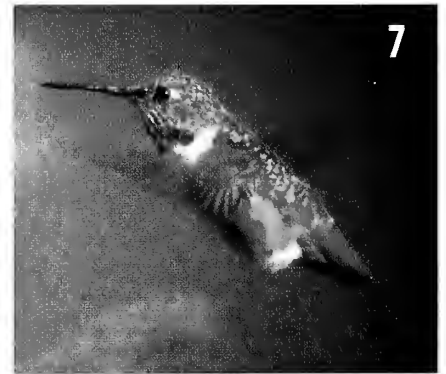
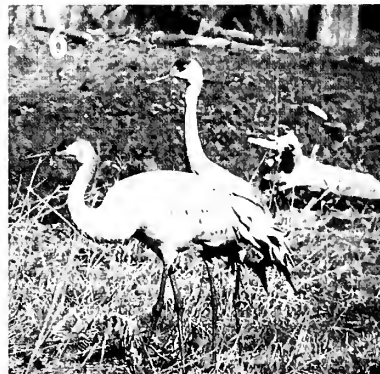
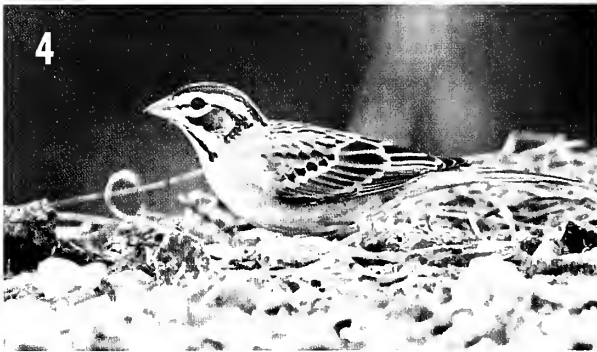
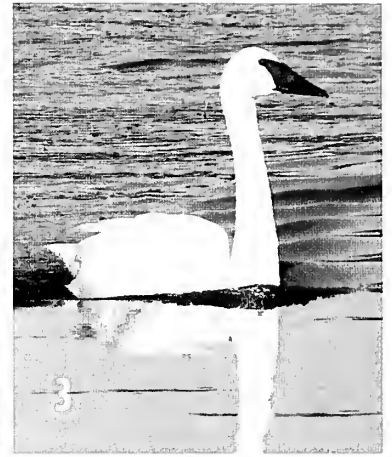
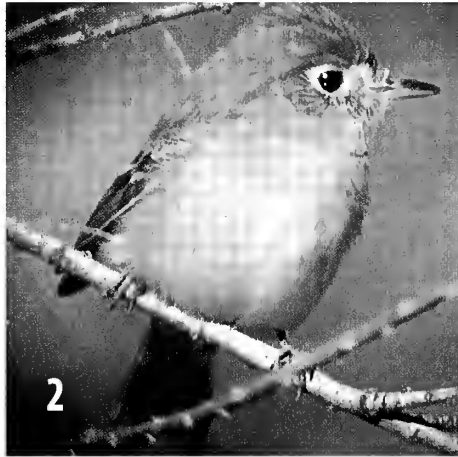
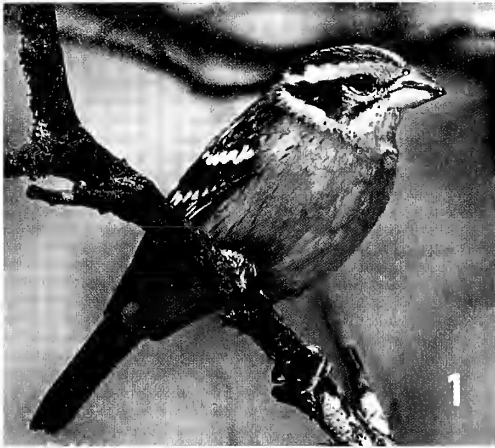
6 • A male Green-winged Teal at Lake Guija, Santa Ana Department, El Salvador was the first documented in the country since the species was reported by an aerial survey in 1947 (here 13 January 2006). *Photograph by Luis Pineda.*

7 • Outstanding photographs such as this one helped to confirm the identification of this Northern Waterthrush, which wintered (here 24 January 2006) along the Cache la Poudre River in Fort Collins, Larimer, Colorado. *Photograph by David Leatherman.*

8 • Colorado's fourth record of Long-billed Thrasher followed the state's third by only about a month, when this bird was reported 20 (here 23) February 2006 in a Denver neighborhood; it remained well into the spring season. *Photograph by Glenn Walbek.*

9 • Furnishing just the second state record of the subspecies, this Prairie Merlin (subspecies *richardsoni*) at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area, Wyandot County, Ohio was photographed 4 January 2006. *Photograph by Blake Mathys.*





1 • Winter 2005–2006 had three reports of Black-headed Grosbeak in Florida’s panhandle. This immature male visited a feeder in East-point, Franklin County from 10 January (here 12 February) into the spring season. Photograph by Jahn Spahrer.

2 • This *Empidonax* flycatcher, either a Pacific-slope or a Cordilleran, was photographed 18 January 2006 along the Virgin River near the Washington Fields Diversion, Washington County, Utah—one of two “Western” Flycatchers found wintering in southwestern Utah this season. Along with a Dusky Flycatcher record from this winter, these furnish the first documented records of *Empidonax* wintering in Utah. Photograph by Rick Fridell.

3 • Trumpeter Swans, probably from recent re-introduction programs in the Great Lakes, have been appearing for over a decade in northern New York. This one strayed farther south. First identified at Davey’s Lake, Cape May Point, New Jersey as a Tundra Swan on 17 December 2005, it remained there until 6 (here 5) January 2006 and was probably the same individual that visited the Hoopes Reservoir in northern Delaware on 25 January. Photograph by Karl Lukens.

4 • This Lark Sparrow appeared at Chambersburg, Franklin County 10 (here 21) January 2006 and remained through the winter season. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

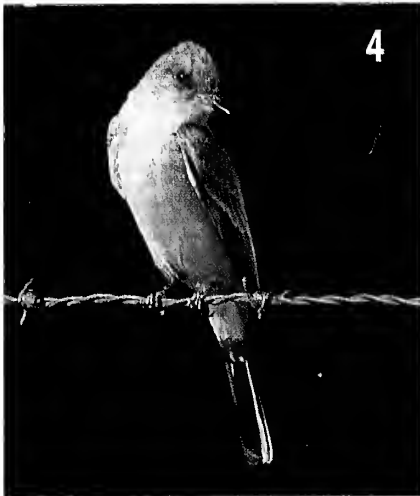
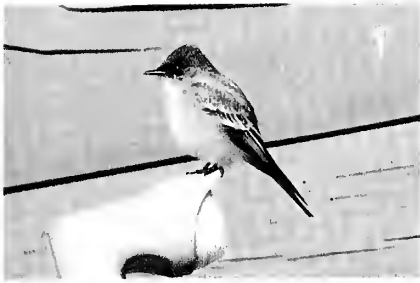
5 • This Black Guillemot at Barnegat Inlet, New Jersey remained from 3 (here 17) December 2005 through 12 January 2006. New Jersey has only 11 previous records of the species, only one of which was for more than one day (in winter 1962–1963). Photograph by Kevin Karlson.

6 • Two Sandhill Crane × Common Crane hybrids were present at New Egypt, New Jersey from 6 February 2006 through season’s end, probably part of the legacy of a Common Crane that escaped from an upstate New York farm in 1991 and produced offspring with a Sandhill Crane in southern New Jersey in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Observers throughout the East should study each crane carefully for signs of hybrid derivation. Photograph by Alex Tongas.

7 • One of four *Selaspharus* hummingbirds, most probably Rufous but possibly Allen’s, in the Hudson–Delaware Region this season, this one at Verga, New Jersey remained from the fall season through 17 (here 12) December 2005. Photograph by Karl Lukens.

8 • This Northern Saw-whet Owl was found at Ledges State Park in Boone County, Iowa on 11 February 2006; although probably an uncommon (if irregular) wintering species in the state, it is difficult to locate in most winters. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmare





1 • One of two Say's Phoebes in Illinois in winter 2005–2006, this bird was photographed 20 December 2005 at Crane Lake in Mason County. It had been found there 17 December by H. David Bohlen on a Christmas Bird Count. Prior to this season, there were 11 records for the species in Illinois. *Photograph by Peter S. Weber.*

2 • This Pine Warbler at Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg, Illinois 25 January 2006 (here) was the northernmost of three reported in Illinois in winter 2005–2006. It foraged between patches of melting snow at the end of what was otherwise a relatively snow-free and record-warm January in northeastern Illinois. *Photograph by Alan Stankevitz.*

3 • This Varied Thrush remained at Lothian, Anne Arundel County, Maryland 18 (here 21) February through 26 March 2006, representing just a fourth confirmed state record. *Photograph by George M. Jett.*

4 • Only a handful of observers saw this Say's Phoebe (North Carolina's fourth), which was located on a large private farm in Carteret County 1–6 (here 2) December 2005. *Photograph by Will Cook.*

5 • This female Eared Quetzal was one of a pair found near El Batel, in Sinaloa, Mexico 27 February 2006; although the species is frequently seen along the Durango Highway in the state of Durango, it is very scarce in this part of Sinaloa. *Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.*

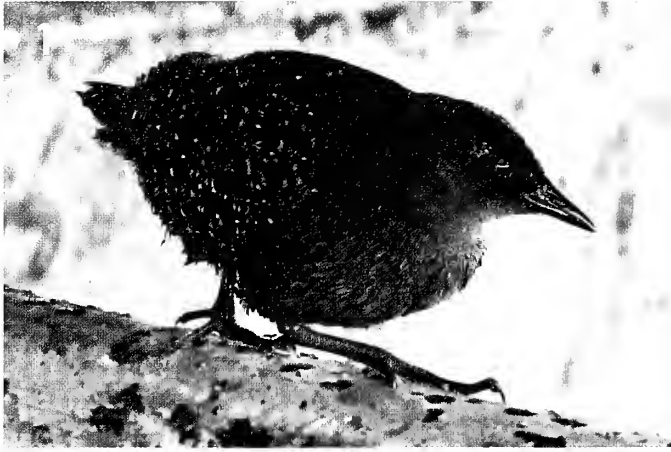
6 • This female Varied Thrush remained in a Louisville yard 4 February 2006 (here) through the end of the season and represented at least a fifth record for Kentucky. *Photograph by David Pallares.*

7 • Following autumn reports of multiple individuals from four New Mexico counties, at least two naturally occurring Aplomado Falcons were documented in the state during the winter, including this one in Luna County 28 December 2005. *Photograph by Jonathan P. Batkin.*

8 • This immature Solitary Eagle in El Cielo Biosphere Reserve, Tamaulipas was a spectacular find 21 February 2006 (here) during the El Cielo Bird Festival and was superbly documented. This photograph confirms this as the first record of the species for Tamaulipas and one of few for northeastern Mexico. Aside from details of plumage, it resembles a black-hawk, but several distinctive structural features are apparent: enormous feet, eagle-like proportions of the head, and wingtips that reach just about to the tail tip. *Photograph by Rick Cech.*

9 • This adult Black Hawk-Eagle at La Bajada, Nayarit 15 February 2006 was far north of its previously known range; this species is thought to be sedentary. *Photograph by Kevin Kalhoon.*





1 - Normally a very secretive species, a Black Rail spent over five hours perched atop a canoe that was moored under the interpretive center at the Palo Alto Baylands, Santa Clara County on 31 December 2005. Photograph by Ashok Khosla.

2 - This cooperative Short-tailed Albatross was found on a pelagic trip to the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary 4 December 2005. Increasing records of this rare species off the West Coast of North America attest to successful conservation efforts on the breeding islands off Japan. Photograph by Roger Harshaw.

3 - On 18 December 2005, this very late Le Conte's Sparrow was photographed at Wolfe Island, Ontario. Photograph by Mike Runtz.

4 - A series of winter storms drove large numbers of Red Phalaropes onto the Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia coastlines during December 2005 and January 2006, with some small flocks travelling into the interior of western Washington and Oregon. One bird, however, outdid the rest, landing near Umapine, Umatilla County, Oregon (here 23 December 2005), providing the first winter record for either eastern Oregon or Washington. Photograph by Cliff Freese.

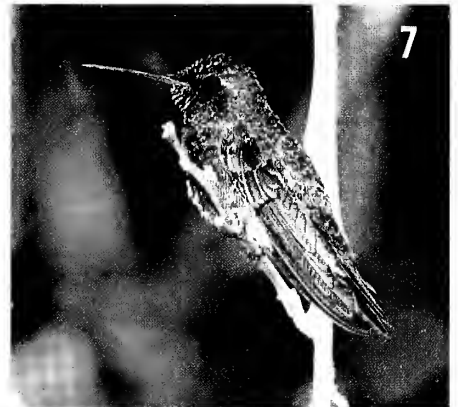
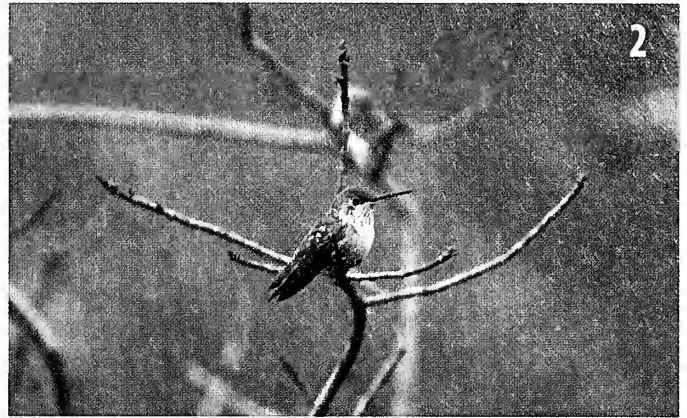
5 - The burgeoning numbers of breeding Lesser Goldfinches at the northern limit of their range have apparently spawned a number of vagrants recently, including this male some 400+ km north of its normal range in Bellingham, Washington, first detected on 26 February (here 1 March) 2006. Photograph by Marv Breece.

6 - Pacific Golden-Plover was once extremely rare in Oregon and Washington during winter, with only about six records prior to 1990. Over the past decade, however, this species has become an annual winter visitor. This individual visited Halsey, Oregon on 26 December 2005. Photograph by Mark Nikas.

7 - Oregon's eleventh Black-throated Green Warbler, and second during winter, adorned Klamath Falls from 9 (here) through 22 December 2005. Photograph by Marshall J. Iloff.

8 - Prior to the past few years, Sooty Fox Sparrows (*unalaschensis* subspecies group) were virtually unrecorded in eastern Oregon, despite being of regular occurrence in eastern Washington. This bird is typical of that subspecies group, with dusky flanks, a dull facial pattern, no wingbars, and an unstreaked brown back. It was photographed at Umatilla, Oregon on 10 December 2005. Photograph by David Herr.





1 • This long-lingering Carolina Wren was banded soon after its August 2005 arrival at Delta, Manitoba, where it remained until 1 February 2006. Although it proved very elusive, it was eventually seen by several observers and photographed on 8 January 2006, thus providing the province's second winter record. *Photograph by Christian Artuso.*

2 • Georgia had three Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in winter 2005–2006; this immature male was one of two in the Atlanta area (here 3 December 2005). Prior to this season, the state had just three documented records of the species. *Photograph by Bob Zaremba.*

3 • This Scarlet Tanager was present in a Conway, South Carolina yard 2–20 (here 5) December 2005; the species is very rare in winter in the Southern Atlantic region. *Photograph by Gary Phillips.*

4 • Bullock's Oriole staged a minor invasion into the Southeast this winter. This, the first of two in Georgia, attended a feeder near Smyrna, Cobb County 15–21 (here 20) December 2005 and provided the sixth state record. *Photograph by Bob Zaremba.*

5 • Not to be outdone by neighboring states, North Carolina had two Bullock's Orioles in winter 2005–2006. This one was present in a yard north of Pittsboro, Chatham County from late January until the spring season (here 4 March 2006). *Photograph by Will Cook.*

6 • This Henslow's Sparrow was apparently one of several to winter in the southeastern corner of Oklahoma at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, McCurtain County (here 30 December 2005). *Photograph by Dave Arbour.*

7 • This obliging adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird spent 5 (here 10) December 2005 through 8 February 2006 at at Borrego Springs; it one of three present in southern California this winter. *Photograph by Matt Sadowski.*

8 • This photograph of the Baikal Teal present in Lompoc, Santa Barbara County, California 10 (here 16) December 2005 through 9 January 2006 not only shows the diagnostic head pattern but also the differences in the wing patterns useful in distinguishing the species from the similar-sized Green-winged Teal. *Photograph by Larry Sansone.*



1 • This Plumbeous Vireo photographed in Goleta, Santa Barbara County on 22 December 2005 was one of over 40 reported in southern California in winter 2005–2006. *Photograph by Jim Greaves.*

2 • Most observers found this Rufous-backed Robin at the Wister Unit Headquarters near Niland, Imperial County, California 21 December 2005 through 20 (here 5) January 2006 shy and difficult to observe. However, as is evident in this shot, it did pose for some photographers. This image not only shows the rufous on the back but also the lack of white crescents above and below the eyes and the extensive black streaking on the throat that differentiate it from American Robin. *Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.*

3 • This blue-morph Ross's Goose was one of at least two such birds present through the winter at the south end of the Salton Sea, California (here 9 January 2006). *Photograph by Bob Miller.*

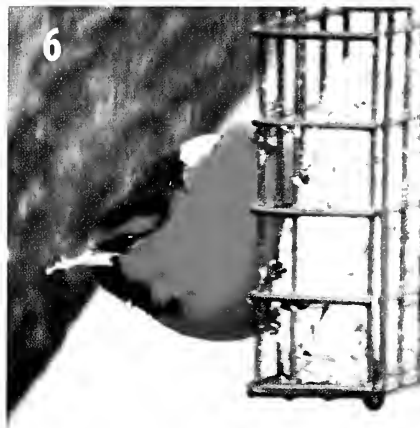
4 • A bird of the season in Texas has to be this female Snow Bunting at South Padre Island 24 December 2005 (here) through 2 January 2006. This bird was the sixth of its species to be documented in Texas and the farthest south—in a year when vagrants from the north were very scarce. *Photograph by Reid Allen.*

5 • This Rufous-backed Robin was present near Utley, Bastrop County, Texas between 7 January 2006 and the spring season (here 12 January), providing an unexpected first record for central Texas. *Photograph by Shawn Ashbaugh.*

6 • This stunning male Bullock's Oriole visited the feeders of Chris and Jean Hensick of Brighton, Livingston County, Michigan from 15 (here 19) February through 1 March 2006; if accepted, it will represent Michigan's fourth record of the species. *Photograph by Coleb Putnom.*

7 • Among three Rufous-backed Robins found in Arizona in winter 2005–2006, this bird at Boyce Thompson Arboretum was found 8 January (here) and last seen 27 March. *Photograph by Oliver Niehuis.*

8 • This American Black Duck was seen between 16 January (here; on the Wetlands International Survey) and 13 February 2006 on Desirade Island; it was a first for Guadeloupe and probably for Lesser Antilles. *Photograph by Anthony Levesque.*





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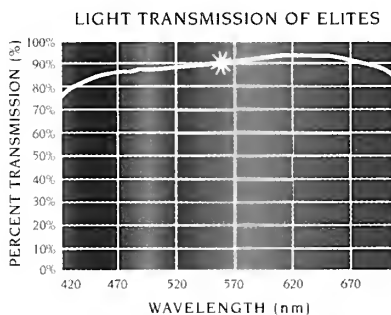
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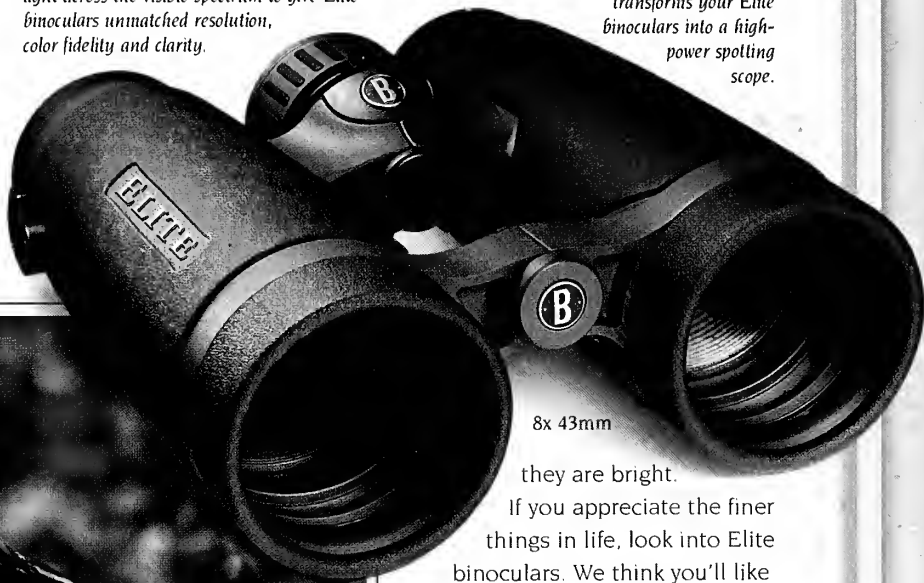
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