THE WINTER SEASON

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

Field trips
• Workshops
• Evening programs
Target species include Rosy-Finches, Chukar, Three-toed Woodpecker, Burrowing Owl, and more!

www.aba.org/mtgs/2008snowbird
This adult White-tailed Eagle turned up on Kaua'i Island, Hawaii in February 2007 and remained throughout the remainder of the winter season (here on 5 March at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge). This bird furnished a first state record, though there are subspecies remains of the species from Hawaii. The Hawaiian Islands Region does have a record of Steller's Sea-Eagle—an immature that was found in early February 1978 at Kaua'i Atoll and refound in March on Midway Island. Photograph by Brenda Zorn/United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

The Winter Season: December 2006 through February 2007

**NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS • AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION • VOLUME 61 • NUMBER 2 • 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Pelagic birds off South Carolina and northern Georgia: An update on status of selected species</td>
<td>Nathan Wescoat Dias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>Pelagic birds of the southern South Atlantic Bight</td>
<td>R. D. Wallace and Russ Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>The Changing Seasons: Foods for thought</td>
<td>Marshall J. Riff and Derek Lovitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>Atlantic Canada</td>
<td>Brian E. Darrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>Pierre Bannom, Olivier Bardenh, Normand David, Samuel Denault, and Yves Aubry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>New England</td>
<td>Pamela Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>Hudson-Delaware</td>
<td>Frank Rohrbacher, Robert O. Paxton, and Richard F. Veit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>Middle Atlantic</td>
<td>Todd M. Day and Edward S. Brinkley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>Southern Atlantic</td>
<td>Ricky Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Bruce H. Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Blake A. Mann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>Eastern Highlands &amp; Upper Ohio River Valley</td>
<td>Victor W. Fazio, III, and Rick Wiltrout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263</td>
<td>Illinois &amp; Indiana</td>
<td>James Hengeveld, Keith A. McChleen, and Geoffrey A. Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>Western Great Lakes</td>
<td>Adam M. Byrne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>Iowa &amp; Missouri</td>
<td>Robert Ceil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>Tennessee &amp; Kentucky</td>
<td>Chris Sloan and Bradnalm Palmer-Ball, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>Alabama &amp; Mississippi</td>
<td>C. Dwight Cooley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>Arkansas &amp; Louisiana</td>
<td>Steven W. Cardiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>283</td>
<td>Northern Canada</td>
<td>Cameron D. Eckert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285</td>
<td>Prairie Provinces</td>
<td>Rudolf F. Koes and Peter Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287</td>
<td>Northern Great Plains</td>
<td>Ron Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>288</td>
<td>Southern Great Plains</td>
<td>W. Ross Silcock and Joseph A. Grzybowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Mark W. Lockwood, Randy Pinkston, and Ron Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td>Colorado &amp; Wyoming</td>
<td>Tony Leukering, Lawrence S. Semo, and Bill Schmoker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>Idaho &amp; Western Montana</td>
<td>David Trochlell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>Great Basin</td>
<td>Rick Fridell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Sartor O. Williams, III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Mark M. Stevenson and Gary H. Rosenberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Thede Toshob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>314</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Donald G. Cecil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>Oregon &amp; Washington</td>
<td>Steven Miladinov, David Iorns, and Bill Tweit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321</td>
<td>Northern California</td>
<td>Ed Pandolfino, Scott B. Terrill, Michael M. Rogers, and Steven A. Glover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>326</td>
<td>Southern California</td>
<td>Gay McCaskie and Kimball L. Garrett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>Baja California Peninsula</td>
<td>Robert A. Hamilton, Mark J. Billings, Roberto Carmona, and Gregorio Ruiz-Campas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>334</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Héctor Gómez de Silva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340</td>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>H. Lee Jones and Oliver Komar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>West Indies &amp; Bermuda</td>
<td>Robert L. Norton, Anthony White, and Andrew Dobson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>Hawaiian Islands</td>
<td>Robert L. Pyle and Peter Donaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>Audubon's Oriole (Icterus gradu- cauda) in Indiana: First United States record away from Texas</td>
<td>Don Gorney and Jason Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>358</td>
<td>First record of Yellow-browed Warbler (Phylloscopus inornatus) for Mexico</td>
<td>Steven M. Mloдинow and Kurt Radamaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>363</td>
<td>Pictorial Highlights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contents**
North American Birds
is published by the American Birding Association.

The mission of the journal is to provide a complete overview of the changing panorama of our continent’s birdlife, including outstanding records, range extensions and contractions, population dynamics, and changes in migration patterns or seasonal occurrence. We welcome submission of papers in these areas; papers and other communication should be sent to North American Birds, 106 Monroe Avenue, Cape Charles, VA 23310. For correspondence on photographic material, contact the Photo Editor at the email address below.

PUBLISHER
American Birding Association

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS
Bryan Patrick

PUBLICATIONS CHAIR
John C. Kricher

EDITOR
Edward S. Brinkley
(ensilcra@aol.com)

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Louis R. Bevier
P. A. Buckley
Stephen J. Dinsmore
Alvaro Jaramillo
Paul E. Lehman
Bill Prantry

PHOTO EDITOR
Brian Sullivan
(heraldpetrel@gmail.com)

REGIONAL EDITORS

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Brenda Gibb

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Jim Harris
Ed Rother

ADVERTISING
Ken Barron

North American Birds (ISSN 1525-3708) (USPS 872-200) is published quarterly by the American Birding Association, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Colorado Springs, Colorado, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: return postage guaranteed; send address changes and POD forms 3579 to North American Birds, 4945 N. 30th Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80919-3579; (800) 850-2473. Subscription prices: $30/year (US) and US$33/year (Canada). Copyright © 2007 by the American Birding Association, Inc., all rights reserved. Printed by Publishers Printing, Shepherdsville, Kentucky. The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of each contributing writer and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the American Birding Association or its management. ABA is not responsible for the quality of products or services advertised in North American Birds, unless the products or services are being offered directly by the Association. GST Registration No. R135943454.
Remote. Wild. Unbelievable
- Home to 1,000,000 Fur Seals
- Spectacular Seabird Colonies
- Arctic Fox and Reindeer
- Brilliant Showcase of Wildflowers
- Historic Russian Church
- Native Aleut Culture

Looking for a Birding Adventure?
Go offshore with Seabirding

- Pelagic trips since 1986
- Departures from Virginia Beach, VA
  Oregon Inlet, NC
  Hatteras, NC
  aboard the best & fastest boats available
- Friendly knowledgeable leaders
  with extensive offshore experience
- Chum for bringing the birds close
- Winter trips for Great Skua and alcids
- Spring & summer trips for Gulf Stream specialties
  including rare Pterodromas and tropicbirds
- Late summer trips for White-faced Storm-Petrel

For more information contact
Brian Patteson
Seabirding
P.O. Box 772
Hatteras, NC 27943
(252) 986-1363
http://www.seabirding.com

New in paperback
WorldTwitch 2003 Best Bird Book—North America

Raptors of North America
The Wheeler Guides
Brian K. Wheeler

Raptors of Eastern North America and its companion volume, Raptors of Western North America
are the best and most thorough guides to North America’s vultures, hawks, eagles, and falcons.
Each volume is abundantly illustrated with hundreds of full-color, high-quality photographs and
the most detailed species distribution maps yet to be published. They are essential field references
for anyone seeking to identify these notoriously difficult birds, navigating the reader through the
pitfalls of raptor identification, including the birds’ often extreme variation by age and sex as well
as the existence of numerous “confusion” species. The exhaustive, authoritative text covers all
aspects of raptor biology in an easy-to-read and consistent format.

“These two books are major contributions to the literature of North American vultures and
Falconiform raptors. . . . [B]oth Wheeler books should be owned by every hawk watcher and
raptor biologist.”
—Donald S. Heintzelman, International Hawkwatcher

Raptors of Eastern North America The Wheeler Guide
456 pages. 559 color plates. 37 maps. 6 x 9.
Paper $29.95 978-0-691-13476-5
Raptors of Western North America: The Wheeler Guide
560 pages. 622 color plates. 56 maps. 6 x 9.
Paper $29.95 978-0-691-13477-2

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2
Pelagic birds off South Carolina and northern Georgia: An update on status of selected species

NATHAN WESCOAT DIAS • P. O. BOX 362 • MCCLELLANVILLE, SC 29458 • (EMAIL: OFFSHOREBIRDERS@YAHOO.COM)

Abstract
This paper summarizes records of selected seabirds observed in the pelagic waters of South Carolina and northern Georgia since the mid-1980s, with emphasis on those species whose status has become better understood in the past 20-25 years. Observations were both opportunistic (made from fishing vessels) and more ornithological (from boats chartered to study birdlife) in nature.

Data collection
The species accounts in this paper draw from several somewhat disparate sources. In the middle and late 1980s, the author was a crewman on a commercial grouper/snapper fishing vessel that worked out of Charleston in the fall and winter. The author was also a crewman or guest aboard multiple offshore sport-fishing charter vessels during the 1980s–early 1990s and since 2003 has organized and led pelagic birding trips off the state (Table 1). The birding opportunities in these three activities are strongly influenced not just by season and the marine environment visited but also by the type of vessel, its course and speed, and the predominant activity aboard, which differ markedly in each instance.

During stationary fishing operations on the snapper/grouper vessels, there is often an abundance of discarded marine life that is attractive to birds. When large fish are boated, for instance, they usually disgorge recent meals that consist of crabs, small fish, cephalopods, and other prey. These disgorged meals, along with fish below the legal size limit and other bycatch (that is, marine life caught but not targeted by fishing operations), are then hosed or tossed overboard by the crew. The discarded undersized fish often have distended swim bladders, which causes them to flatter on the surface for some time. In addition, the larger commercial grouper/snapper vessels gut their catch periodically before placing the fish in refrigerated storage or on ice in insulated compartments (smaller vessels usually do not gut fish at sea; they generally return to port each day, with occasional 48-hour trips). The livers, stomachs, and other entrails produced by the gutting process are then dumped at sea. These various types of floating chum attract jaegers, gulls (including kittiwakes), the occasional Manx Shearwater (Puffinus puffinus) or Northern Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis), and rarely a skua to the vicinity of the vessel. Northern Gannets (Morus bassanus) and Common Loons (Gavia immer) are also observed feeding on discarded fish and other offal.

In contrast to these cold-weather commercial bottom-fishing ventures, the spring and summer trips aboard smaller vessels were spent trolling fishing lines along the Continental Shelf edge and in the western portions of the Gulf Stream. Participants aboard these charter fishing ventures remain watchful for bird activity, which usually indicates fish activity, and so there are often opportunities to observe birds at close range on such day trips. When multiple sport-fishing boats are in proximity to one another, captains often communicate about the bird activity they observe.

While fishing boats, both commercial ventures and sport-fishing trips, can afford good opportunities to observe seabirds off South Carolina, pelagic birding trips off the state since 2003 have attempted to optimize such opportunities by combining local fishermen’s assessments of the changing marine environment (and its interaction with submarine features known to attract and concentrate wildlife) with the latest technology for interpreting aspects of this environment—above the sea surface, at the surface, and below the surface. Unlike pelagic trips off some other ports, those from Charleston do not have pre-
arranged or fixed survey routes; the boat's course is not determined until the morning of the trip and is subject to continual modification. The boat's course is determined by factors including (but not limited to): recent wind/weather patterns, Gulf Stream position and configuration (and the presence of filaments and eddies), sea surface temperature readings and forecasts, satellite-derived chlorophyll and alimetry data, recent and real-time reports from area fishing captains (who share up-to-the-minute news of birds or bird-attracting features), and occasional consultations of commercial fishing forecasts (e.g., Roffer's Ocean Fishing Forecasting Service reports).

Reef communities and other submarine features

Off the coast of South Carolina and northern Georgia lie hard seafloor areas—also known as hardground reefs, hardgrounds, hard-bottom areas, or live-bottom areas. Hardgrounds provide rare interruptions of large expanses of sand and mud on the Continental Shelf and Continental Slope off the southeastern United States. Composed of limestone, sandstone, and other mineral formations, they provide stable platforms to which reef-forming organisms can attach (Reed 2004). These reefs provide food and shelter for all manner of life, including the fish, arthropods, cephalopods, and other organisms that provide food for pelagic birds. South Carolina's artificial reefs, formed upon old ship hulls, masses of concrete, and other man-made objects, also host communities that provide food sources for pelagic birds. Even when ephemeral features that attract birds—such as deepwater upwellings, pelagic algal masses, or thermoclines (water temperature fronts)—cannot be located, hardground reef communities still attract pelagic birds. But when such ephemeral phenomena occur in the immediate vicinity of hardground reefs, the bird-attracting effects appear to be magnified.

The Gulf Stream, the massive warm-water current that flows northward along the Continental Shelf edge off the southeastern United States, varies in its speed and in its proximity to shore. These variations sometimes occur over relatively short periods of time. A significant influence on the Gulf Stream's path in the way up the food chain. Among sport fishermen, the Bump is well known as a Swordfish (Xiphias gladius) spawning ground, a Blue Marlin (Makaira nigricans) hot spot in August and September, and a prime spot for American Wreckfish (Polyprion americanus) and other deepwater species. The Bump has importance to pelagic birds as well as fish, but it needs much more investigation and study from an ornithological perspective.

Aspects of the marine environment off South Carolina

Aside from moderate bathymetric differences, the marine environment off South Carolina is relatively similar to that off North Carolina, where the Gulf Stream's movement is likewise affected not just by submarine features but also by other currents and seafloor masses. These interactions produce features at the surface and below the surface that are relevant to discussions of foraging seabirds, as they concentrate prey and thus both predatory fish and seabirds. "Filaments" are projections of warm water that grow westward from the Gulf Stream proper and move slowly northward with the Stream. They vary in size and intensity and are usually connected to the Gulf Stream at their northern end. In filaments, the warm water current circulates in counterclockwise fashion. This flow tends to concentrate fish and birds at the southwestward-pointing end of the filament, where there is usually the greatest contrast between warm filament water and cooler water outside the influence of the Gulf Stream. The western and southwestern edges of filaments often have well-formed "rips," that is, areas of turbulence caused by the interaction of warmer Gulf Stream waters with cooler inshore waters. These turbulent seafloor fronts may concentrate rows of pelagic macroalgae (genus Sargassum) and flocks, which harbor or shelter prey attractive to pelagic birds.

"Warm-core eddies" are very large filaments that eventually become separated from the Gulf Stream and cease to move northward with the Stream. Eddies are caused by deflection of the Gulf Stream by large underwater
features such as the Charleston Bump. When this phenomenon occurs at the Charleston Bump, the Gulf Stream proper bends sharply eastward, then back to the northwest, before bending northeastward again, under the influence of the southward-flowing Labrador Current. The westward bend often splits into two flows: the main flow, which continues northeastward, and a counterclockwise-rotating eddy called the Charleston Gyre, which moves toward the southwest from the main Gulf Stream current. This backwards progression of warm water from the main Gulf Stream current often lasts for several days or more before it dissipates. The Charleston Gyre often begins forming to the east-southeast of Georgetown and then gradually extends southward across a feature known as the Georgetown Hole (centered at approximately 32° 34' 23.88" N, 78° 35' 40.26" W). Here, the southward-moving mass of warm water encounters the Continental Shelf edge, and upwelling occurs. Warm-core eddies are often found much closer to shore than the Gulf Stream's western wall, and they can hold deep-water birds such as the larger (Oceanodroma) storm-petrels, gadly petrels (Pterodroma), tropicbirds (Phaethon), and other warm-water specialists.

Finally, "weed lines" or "grass lines," the fisherman's vernacular for Sargasso seaweed, are elongated masses of pelagic algae brought from the Sargasso Sea by the Gulf Stream. These lines are often formed along the seawater fronts and water masses by winds that push together masses of Sargassum and concentrate floatsam and jetsam as well. These algae masses primarily float on the sea surface, but on occasion they extend down several meters. Besides being good indicators of the Gulf Stream edge, Gulf Stream eddies, water temperature boundaries (that is, seawater fronts, or thermoclines), weed lines offer food and shelter to baitfish, juvenile pelagic fish, crustaceans, and other fauna. They are essentially mobile reef communities embedded in wider, more nutrient-poor pelagic habitat; they are sometimes termed the "pelagic drift community" (Haney 1986a).

Species accounts

Offshore birding off South Carolina over the past three decades, just as in North Carolina, has permitted numerous revisions to the status of many seabirds previously unknown or thought to be accidental. While South Carolina still lacks accepted records of many species documented off North Carolina—among them, Yellow-nosed Albatross (Thalassarche chlororhynchos), Bermuda Petrel (Pterodroma cahow), Fea's/Zino's Petrel (P. feae/madeira), Trinidad Petrel (P. arminjoniana), Cape Verde Shearwater (Calonectris diomedea), Bulwer's Petrel (Bulweria bulwerii), Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (Fregetta tropica), Swayne's Storm-Petrel (Oceanodroma monorhis), European Storm-Petrel (Hydrobatess pelagicus), Red-billed Tropicbird (Phaethon aetherus), Roseate Tern (Sterna dougalli), Great Skua (Stercorarius skua), and South Polar Skua (S. maccormichi)—the status of nearly a dozen species has been revised, though many of the relevant records remain unpublished or unsummarized. South Carolina waters are herein defined as those waters bounded by latitude 33° 51' 07.9" N on the north and by 32° 02' 02" on the south, and extending seaward 200 nautical miles (nm), or 368.25 km, from the nearest point of land.

The species accounts below offer the most current information; but they are worded conservatively: in many cases, greater birding coverage in deepwater areas, particularly during the peak of spring migration and in the cooler months, would reveal that species thought to be rather rare are in fact fairly common passage migrants during a narrow window of time, particularly in spring seasons with abundant easterly winds, or are fairly regular wintering species. Georgia, a state with moderate pelagic seabird data (see Haney 1983, Beaton et al. 2003), also lacks records of most of the species listed above, excepting being one sight report of a Fea's/Zino's Petrel 9 November 1984 (Haney et al. 1993), several records of South Polar Skua (Hass 1993), one record of Red-billed Tropicbird (Haney 1984), and at least one record of Roseate Tern (Beaton et al. 2003).

Of the birds detailed in this paper were recorded in Georgia waters; these waters are defined herein as bounded by latitude 32° 02' on the north and 30° 42' 45.6" N on the south, and extending seaward 368.25 km from the nearest point of land. The Georgia records are noted as such in the species accounts.

Northern Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis)

Very rare and localized offshore visitor, January through early March, during incursion years; casual to accidental in other years.

Northern Fulmars were observed on ten occasions during two winters off South Carolina, in December-January 1988 and January-February 1989, while the author was working on the MV Marsh Grass, a seasonal commercial bottom-fishing vessel docked in Charleston; this vessel was also a sport-fishing charter vessel during the spring/summer seasons. During winter, the Marsh Grass functioned as a commercial grouper/snapper fishing vessel and also carried tuna fishing gear, which was used when surface-fishing tuna were sighted. Northern Fulmars were observed around commercial bottom-fishing operations, when the fulmars came to feed with other pelagic birds on discarded bycatch, fish entrails, and other chum. On one occasion, a fulmar fed upon popcorn and sandwiches tossed overboard. Fulmars were also seen in association with bird-flocks attracted to baitfish driven to the surface by larger predatory fish.

Fulmar observations were invariably over hardgrounds along the Continental Slope, adjacent deep water. Depths at these sightings ranged from approximately 35 to 65 meters, and the water temperature ranged from circa 9–11°C (48–52°F). The majority of fulmar observations occurred near a feature known as the "Southwest Banks," a large area of live bottom reefs roughly 95 km east-southeast of Charleston Harbor (centered at approximately 32° 29' 48.66' N, 78° 47' 48.36" W). Other fulmar encounters occurred along the 45-m Shelf break to the southeast of the Southwest Banks, similarly. The highest single-day count was three individuals in mid-February 1990, the individuals were distinguished by color morph and plumage patterns.

This species is found almost annually on pelagic trips off Virginia and North Carolina; numbers fluctuate interannually. In some years, North Carolina pelagic trips encounter dozens of individuals (J. B. Patess, pers. comm.). Haney reported the species off Georgia on 21 February 1983 (Haney 1983), February 1984 (Haney et al. 1986), and on five other occasions (Haney 1986d). The first record of the species for South Carolina came from Kiawah Island on 27 February 1998, when a dead juvenile light-morph bird was discovered on the beach (specimen CHM 1998:13.01; Post et al. 1998). Off South Carolina, the author recorded fulmars at Southwest Banks on the following dates (single birds unless otherwise noted): 30 December 1988, 15, 21, and 27 January 1989, 7, 20 [2 birds], and 28 January 1990, and 1 and 17 [3 birds] February 1990.
Black-capped Petrel  
(Pterodroma hasitata)
Uncommon well offshore April–October, typically from the western portions of the Gulf Stream toward the 200-m contour. Rare offshore April–October from the 200-m contour toward the 60-m contour, usually in association with Gulf Stream eddies or abnormally westerly Gulf Stream edge (see Haney 1986b, 1986c, 1987; pers. obs.).

From March through early May, Black-capped Petrels are often observed closer to shore off North Carolina, in waters as shallow as 30-40 m (pers. obs.; J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.). The inshore movements in spring off South Carolina are usually associated with temporary localized upwellings over/near live bottom areas; examples of such locations include the Edisto Banks, Royal Terrace, Southwest Banks, and the Winyah Scarp. Recent records of the species in October at depths of less than 90 m may indicate a fall influx into shallower waters that mirrors the species' spring movements. The lack of South Carolina records in the cold months is probably indicative of insufficient coverage of Gulf Stream waters November–March; there are records of the species for every month off North Carolina.

Black-capped Petrels have been observed on all deepwater pelagic birding trips off South Carolina since 2003 (Table 1), and many have been documented with photographs (Figures 2-9). Birding trips venturing into north Georgia waters from South Carolina ports have also recorded Black-capped Petrels in numbers with regularity. Recent birding trips off South Carolina have employed slicks of fish oil (cod liver, Menhaden oils) and shark liver chum to attract Black-capped Petrels. In addition to the slicks' olfactory attractors, the circling and landing petrels surely serve to recruit more petrels visually. Thus, counts of the species on recent South Carolina trips have been higher than during research cruises and birding trips that did not employ such methods of chumming.

Manx Shearwater  
(Puffinus puffinus)
Rare but annual visitor, mostly December–April, clearly more regular and occurs in greater numbers than previously suspected; found mainly in Continental Shelf and Slope waters.

The first documented specimen of Manx Shearwater for the state was a partially oiled, tideline corpse found by Will Post and Mark Spinks 17 April 1991 on Cape Island, South Carolina (specimen ChM 1992.15.053; Post and Spinks 1993). There are three previous South Carolina records listed in Haney (1986), all of single birds, 29 September 1983, 10 October 1983, and 7 April 1985, all well offshore (112–155 km from shore); Lee (1995) lists another Haney record, 17 April 1985, at 32° 53' N, 78° 53' E. These birds were found in water ranging in temperature from 10° to 28.3°C and ranging in depth from 20 to 300 meters (Lee 1995). On multiple occasions during the late 1980s, the author observed single Manx Shearwaters from commercial fishing vessels off Charleston, South Carolina. Dates recorded include single birds at the Southwest Banks 21 January 1989; at Winyah Scarp 17 February 1990; and at Georgetown Hole 19 March 1990. Other single Manx Shearwaters (specific dates not recorded) were occasionally seen feeding upon surface-stranded bycatch from commercial fishing operations; these records were in February and March, roughly 95 km east–southeast of the Charleston harbor entrance, in the general vicinity of the West- South Banks. In addition, there are two unpublished spring records from South Carolina. On 10 April 2004, the author and C. Hocevar observed a Manx 64 km east–southeast of Charleston. On 9 April 2005, I. Pitts, S. Compton, and the author observed one about 60 km southeast of Charleston.

Given the abundance of records of northbound spring migrant Manx off Florida and North Carolina, it is likely that many more pass through South Carolina and Georgia waters than have been detected thus far. Moreover, summer-period records from North Carolina have increased in recent years, and the species should be looked for year-round off South Carolina.

Sooty Shearwater  
(Puffinus griseus)
Rare but annual April–June, during migration.

Single Sooty Shearwaters were observed three times (out of eight forays) off South Carolina in May–June 2004 and 2005 (Table 1). Records have all been inshore of the western Gulf Stream edge, usually in less than 200-m depths, often near the 50-fathom ledge, a rather steep underwater shelf at the beginning of the Continental Slope.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel  
(Oceanodroma castro)
Locally uncommon visitor, late May through late August, to certain deepwater areas and oceanic features, found in water with >26.7°C (80°F) surface temperature.

First discovered in South Carolina waters by Jay Shuler (1978) in 1975, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was until recently classified as casual in South Carolina waters (Post and Gauthreaux 1989). However, recent pelagic birding trips off South Carolina—which travel to deeper waters and utilize effective chumming techniques—have proven Band-rumped Storm-Petrel to be a localized late-spring and summer resident of South Carolina waters beyond the Continental Shelf. Numbers of this species off South Carolina peak in early and middle June, with reduced numbers present from late June through mid-August. Numbers fall through late August and early September; there are no records from late September. The species is detected on nearly every Gulf Stream pelagic birding trip out of the North Carolina Outer Banks during the May–August season (J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.) and also occurs along the Gulf Stream edge off Georgia at this time of year (Haney 1985; pers. obs.).

Off South Carolina, there are certain locations slightly offshore of the 200-m contour where Band-rumped Storm-Petrels are found most consistently, regardless of the position of the western wall of the Gulf Stream. These areas are characterized by semi-permanent deepwater upwellings over depressions that are significantly deeper than the surrounding area. The upwellings are caused when Gulf Stream eddies, Gulf Stream edge flow, or generalized northward current flow passes over depressions adjacent to sharp rises in the Blake Plateau. The minerals and nutrients in these upwellings nourish phytoplankton, which attracts organisms all the way up the food chain. Haney (1985) noted that Band-rumped Storm-Petrels also favor ephemeral upwellings caused when the Gulf Stream moves offshore (eastward) over several consecutive days, as well as cold-core edges between Gulf Stream eddies and the Stream proper.

Records from late April through August (Table 1) come most consistently from the following areas: the "380 Hole" (named for its depth in fathoms; 32° 07' 36.6" N, 78° 56' 42.0" W); an unnamed sea valley that lies 0.8–5.6 km southeast of the 380 Hole; the Beaufort Valley (32° 23' 25.11" N, 78° 13' 04.7" W); an unnamed sea valley between 32° N, 79° W and 32° 05' N, 79° W, thus spanning Georgia and South Carolina; and the "226 Hole," a feature just south of the South Carolina/Georgia border, centered at 32° 00' 41.2" N, 79° 05' 46.4" W. On the seven Charleston, South Carolina pelagic trips that
encountered Band-rumped Storm-Petrels (Table 1), all birds were found in water 350–762 m deep, with surface temperatures that ranged between 26.8° and 29.44° C (80.3°–85° F). The species appears to be solitary for the most part, but during spring migration (late May through early June), multiple individuals are often observed in close proximity. On 30 May 2004, Burton Moore obtained two photographs of the species 104 km southeast of Charleston at the “380 Hole” (Figure 10).

Leach’s Storm-Petrel
(Oceanodroma leucorhoa)
Rare spring migrant, late April through mid-June.

Leach’s Storm-Petrel has been observed on six occasions off South Carolina in 2004–2005 (Table 1). It is likely that more trips to deep water in the warmer months will produce more records, as off North Carolina, where the species can be relatively numerous between late May and August (J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.).

White-tailed Tropicbird
(Phaethon lepturus)
Rare offshore, mid-May through August.

Encountered more often in some years than in others, with below-average numbers present since 2003. Found in Gulf Stream waters, along the western Gulf Stream edge, and in “blended” waters of the Continental Shelf. Crews aboard Charleston area sport-fishing boats and head boats report tropicbirds annually, with most reports occurring in late May and June. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Randolph Scott, Captain of the Carolina Clipper charter fishing boat, reported White-tailed Tropicbirds off South Carolina on multiple occasions during late May and June to Dennis Forsythe (Post and McNair 1993). The author also encountered White-tailed Tropicbirds off South Carolina multiple times annually in late spring during the mid-to-late 1980s, and, more recently, an adult on 19 June 2006, just north of the South Carolina/Georgia border at 32° 03’ 28.5” N, 78° 55’ 19.32, in 400-m depths. In late May 2003 and late May 2004 (Memorial Day weekends), the first mate of the Thunderstar sport-fishing boat reported White-tailed Tropicbirds to the author. Red-billed Tropicbird could well be involved in some of fishermen’s reports of tropicbirds; North Carolina has about 30 records of the species (J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.).

Magnificent Frigatebird
(Fregata magnificens)
Very rare visitor along the coast in spring and offshore in summer.

Onshore observations of Magnificent Frigatebirds grow more common during May and early June, when incursions of the species may extend well up the Eastern Seaboard. Offshore, birds are usually encountered in the vicinity of the Gulf Stream, in waters beyond the 200-m contour. Off South Carolina, sightings of frigatebirds have often occurred in conjunction with the presence of Blue Marlin.

Great Skua
(Stercorarius skua)
Hypothetical.

On 27 January and 17 February 1990, the author observed a skua (large Stercorarius;
formerly Catharacta) off South Carolina. The birds appeared uniformly dark, with broad wings, heavy neck, and wide tail. The first, seen more clearly, showed no pale collar. Both sightings occurred in the vicinity of the Southwest Banks, the first directly over the south end of the Banks, the other took place between Banks and the Georgetown Hole. In neither of these cases could South Polar Skua or other species of skua be conclusively ruled out (see Brinkley 1994). Both Great and South Polar Skuas have been documented off North Carolina, the former mostly in winter, the latter mostly spring through fall. There are no firm records of Great Skua south of North Carolina. Off Georgia, South Polar Skua has been documented at least three times (Beaton et al. 2003) and is certainly an expected spring migrant and summer/fall visitor to South Carolina waters, as in North Carolina waters, where recorded annually.

Black-legged Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla)
Rare offshore, late December through mid-March; very rare to casual closer to shore in winter, at locations such as the Charleston jetties, Murrell’s Inlet jetties, Winyah Bay jetties, and the Fripp Island shipwreck.

Off South Carolina, wintering Black-legged Kittiwakes are found in the cooler waters that lie well inshore of the Gulf Stream. They are most often found along the Continental Shelf break, mainly from Edisto Beach northwards. This is perhaps due to the larger expanses of cold water north of Edisto Island. The author frequently observed Black-legged Kittiwakes scavenging near commercial bottom-fishing vessels during winter. It is not uncommon for three or four of these vessels to spend days anchored around areas such as the Southwest Banks or Winyah Scarp. The prolonged presence of these boats and their offal serves to attract and retain flocks of birds that can include Black-legged Kittiwakes. The species was recorded feeding upon discarded small fish (12-15 cm), the eyes of larger discarded fish, discarded fish entrails, popcorn, and on baitfish driven to the surface by predators. Feeding flocks of kittiwakes were observed on roughly two-thirds of winter trips to hard-ground reefs along the Continental Shelf when large commercial grouper/snapper boats were present. Counts range from three to 12 birds, the latter maximum recorded 17 February 1990 at Winyah Scarp.

Arctic Tern
(Sterna paradisaea)
Rare offshore spring migrant, late April through late May.

Though it has proven difficult to obtain diagnostic photographs and videotape of this species, it is now observed almost annually off South Carolina by experienced observers (Table 1). The South Carolina Bird Records Committee recently reviewed, and accepted as valid, videotape of this species obtained by Jack Peachey off Murrells Inlet, South Carolina in May 2004 (Slyce et al. 2005). Off South Carolina, Arctic Terns have usually been encountered in the “blended” waters of the Continental Slope, also favored by shearwaters and other tern species. In this zone, turbid inshore waters mix with the clearer, more saline water of the Gulf Stream. Arctic Terns are frequently found near Sargassum masses and along thermoclines, the latter often visible because of a distinctive color change between cooler green water and warmer blue water of the Gulf Stream. On their northbound migration in spring, most Arctic Terns likely occur east of the western Gulf Stream boundary and thus escape detection by mid-Atlantic observers, though easterly winds occasionally result in larger counts on the western wall of the Stream (Lee and Cardiff 1993, Brinkley 1994; J. B. Patton, pers. comm.). The author has also observed Arctic Tern flocks shadowing schools of surface-feeding Yellowfin Tuna (Thunnus albacares) along the eastern Gulf Stream edge off Florida. Perhaps the eastern Gulf Stream edge serves as a migration route for Arctic Terns in spring.

Brown Noddy
(Anous stolidus)
Rare late summer and fall visitor; formerly typically encountered on shore during or just after the passage of tropical cyclones and until recently, considered casual offshore and in periods of normal weather (Post et al. 2005).

During spring 2005, summer of 2005, and summer 2006, both adult and immature Brown Noddies were encountered in South Carolina waters (Table 1). The observations had no obvious connection with tropical storms, hurricanes, or other severe weather. Brown Noddy was observed off South Carolina on four of 11 offshore birding/fishing trips...
in 2005 and 2006, and these records are reported in detail below. Prior to 2005, South Carolina had four Brown Noddy specimens and seven sight reports (Post et al. 2005).

On 28 May 2005, a pelagic birding trip encountered an adult Brown Noddy 108 km southeast of Fort Sumter, along the western edge of the Gulf Stream; the bird was first observed at 32°02′ 24.2″ N, 79°04′ 37.1″ W, flying along an extremely large Sargassum weed line that ran for several kilometers. Water depth at this location was 442 m and water temperature was 27°C (80.6°F). Other birds in the immediate vicinity were Black-capped Petrel, Audubon’s Shearwater (Puffinus lherminieri), and Cory’s Shearwater (Calonectris diomedea). Observers included L. Glover, C. Snook, C. Feeney, S. Compton, J. B. Hines, W. Hemby, and the author. Compton and Feeney obtained diagnostic photographs of the bird.

On 13 August 2005, a pelagic birding trip discovered an immature Brown Noddy 72.5 km southeast of Charleston in 30-m deep water, where a ledge drops sharply to ca. 61-m depths; the location is 32°16′ 57.1″ N, 79°06′ 57.9″ W. The bird was in the presence of Common Terns (Sterna hirundo) and Bridled Terns (Onychoprion anaethetus). Observers included L. Glover, S. Calver, C. Snook, J. B. Hines, C. Feeney, and the author.

On 17 September 2005, a pelagic birding trip encountered an immature Brown Noddy 90 km southeast of Charleston and 141 km east of extreme northern Tybee Island, Georgia. The noddy was over 76-m-deep water, with four Cory’s Shearwaters, two adult and three juvenile Sooty Terns (Onychoprion fuscatus), and 5 Bridled Terns. The flock was first sighted in Georgia waters at 32°00′ 45.4″ N, 79°19′ 54.1″ W. The birds were following a school of foraging fish, apparently Little Tunny (Euthynnus alleteratus), which was driving baitfish to the surface. We followed this flock for 4 km and lost it while on a heading in a northeasterly direction through South Carolina waters (32°02′ 59.5″ N, 79°18′ 58.1″ W). Observers included J. Sewell, D. Vickers, C. Feeney, J. B. Hines, A. Mercer, and the author.

On 5 August 2006, a pelagic sport-fishing expedition with the author aboard encountered an adult Brown Noddy 121 km southeast of Charleston at 32°02′ 33.9″ N, 78°48′ 02.3″ W. The bird was patrolling a Sargassum line between the edge of the Gulf Stream and a significant deepwater upwelling. This location is at the southeastern end of a 15-km-long sea valley, whose end lies near the seafloor depression known as the “380 Hole.” A mini-DV format videotape of this bird, converted to MPEG video file and a frame-grab still image, are posted on the Internet (<http://www.crbo.net/August06Noddy.html>).

Figure 3. This Black-capped Petrel was located on 17 September 2005 about 201 km east of Ossabaw Sound, Georgia, over the near end of the Charleston Bump, which lies 131 km southeast of Charleston. Many of the pelagic birding trips that depart from Charleston harbor visit northern Georgia waters as well as South Carolina waters, and these trips usually encounter Black-capped Petrels. Photograph by Dan Vickers.

Figure 4. Black-capped Petrel flying with a piece of shark liver at the “226 Hole,” a 435-m depression located just seaward of the 180-m contour, on 13 August 2005. The location lies 104 km southeast of Charleston, South Carolina and about 172 km east of the mouth of the Savannah River. Patient chumming utilizing fish oils and shark’s liver has proved to be an excellent method to study this species well off South Carolina. Photograph by Chris Snook.

Figure 5. This Black-capped Petrel and this Wilson’s Storm-Petrel were photographed in the Gulf Stream 108 km southeast of Charleston, South Carolina (or about 151 km east of Hilton Head Island) on 20 August 2005. Black-capped Petrels show variable appearance in the white collar, from starkly white-collared birds (here, and Figures 4, 6–9) to more dusky-naped birds (Figure 3). The majority show white collars. Photograph by Chris Snook.
PELAGIC BIRDS OFF SOUTH CAROLINA AND NORTHERN GEORGIA

Figure 6. This photograph shows four molting Black-capped Petrels and a Wilson’s Storm-Petrel 106 km southeast of Charleston 13 August 2005. Black-capped Petrels often roost on the water with storm-petrels. Photograph by Chris Snook.

Figure 7. This juvenile Black-capped Petrel is in the process of landing to take chum 161 km east of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, 20 August 2005. Black-capped Petrels swallowing food are often observed rocking or pumping the head and body up and down, sometimes with tail and wings raised (see Haney 1987). Photograph by Chris Snook.

Figures 8, 9. This Black-capped Petrel can be aged as a juvenile by the neat, pale fringes of the greater secondary coverts. The species is often said to have a “white rump,” but in fact the rump is dark brown, while the bases of the rectrices and rectrix coverts are mostly white. Black-capped Petrels tend to fly with spread wings and tail mostly under low wind conditions and when foraging actively; when traveling dynamically in higher winds, the species has a sleeker appearance, with wings and tail trimmed. Photographs by Chris Snook.

Figure 10. A species first detected in 1975 off South Carolina, when it was called “Harcourt’s Storm-Petrel,” Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was first documented by photograph in the state only much later. This bird was photographed above a seawater upwelling at the “380 Hole,” located 105 km southeast of Charleston, on 30 May 2004. The taxonomy of this species is still very much in flux, and it is possible that multiple taxa of Band-rumpeds occur off the Southeast. Photograph by Burton E. Moore, III.
Literature cited
Register Now for 2008
Take your birding to another level!

Demystifying Gulls
6-12 January 2008
Location: Northern California
Instructor: Alvaro Jaramillo
Bunting by Ear
21-26 April 2008
Location: Concan, TX
Instructor: Mark Suomala

Owls & Trogons
11-18 May 2008
Location: Portal, AZ
Instructors: Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood

Ornithology Field Camp
TBA 2008
Location: Missouri River, Great Falls, MT
Instructor: Terry McEneaney

Colorado Bird Community Ecology
6-10 June 2008
Location: San Luis Valley, CO
Instructors: Ted Floyd and Bill Schmoker

Flycatchers
21-27 July 2008
Location: Sierra Vista, AZ
Instructor: Chris Benesh

Hummingbirds
27 July-3 August 2008
Location: Bisbee, AZ
Instructors: Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood

Colorado Bird Community Ecology
6-10 June 2008
Location: San Luis Valley, CO
Instructors: Ted Floyd and Bill Schmoker

Flycatchers
21-27 July 2008
Location: Sierra Vista, AZ
Instructor: Chris Benesh

Hummingbirds
27 July-3 August 2008
Location: Bisbee, AZ
Instructors: Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood

East Coast Shorebirds
16-23 August 2008
Location: Newburyport, MA
Instructor: Wayne Petersen

Ornithology Field Camp
23-30 August 2008
Location: Flathead Lake, MT
Instructor: Terry McEneaney

Neotropical Bird Ecology
10-17 October 2008
Location: Canopy Lodge & Tower, Panama
Instructor: John Kricher

Ultimate Migration
26 October-1 November 2008
Location: Cape May, New Jersey
Instructors: Clay and Pat Sutton

Field Study and Classroom Education
- EMAIL: ifo@aba.org
- WEBSITE: www.americanbirding.org/ifo
- PHONE: 800-850-2473 Ext. 233

We have you in our sights!
Please Support Birders’ Exchange

For more than a decade, Birders’ Exchange has been helping to promote bird research and conservation by providing equipment to a variety of partners in Latin America. We depend on the generous financial and in-kind support of individuals like you who realize the power of putting tools into the hands of people.

bpetersen@aba.org ~ 4945 N, 30th Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80919 ~ www.americanbirding.org/bex
Pelagic birds of the southern South Atlantic Bight

Abstract
This paper summarizes records of pelagic seabirds from 1901 offshore trips in the central and southern South Atlantic Bight, from Georgia to central Florida. Most of these records have not been previously published or summarized. Additionally, the status of several other species not yet recorded in offshore waters is considered, either because the species has been recorded farther north, off North Carolina, or in the South Atlantic Bight in inshore waters or as a beachcast specimen. Finally, this paper identifies gaps in present knowledge of seabird distribution in the region.

Introduction
Pelagic bird distribution is still one of the great ornithological frontiers of the southeastern United States. Few data are available for seabirds in the waters from Florida to southernmost North Carolina, in the so-called South Atlantic Bight. Other than J. Christopher Haney's 173 days of seabird surveys made between 1982 and 1985 from Florida to the Carolinas (see references in Literature section), there have been no regular surveys of birds made in this region, and for this reason, there are gaps in knowledge of the distribution, abundance, and seasonality of many of the species that are found here. The exhaustive BirdLife of Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994) includes very few records from offshore waters, as there have been no regularly scheduled pelagic trips out of any Florida port. Most of the state's records of pelagic species are from dead or moribund individuals washed up on the beaches. Likewise, Georgia (Beaton et al. 2003) and South Carolina (Post and Gauthreaux 1989, Post and McNair 1993) have relatively few records of truly pelagic species from their territorial waters compared to states to the north.

J. Brian Patteson's birding trips off North Carolina, which began with a regular schedule in 1993, have provided a wealth of data on the segment of the Gulf Stream between Oregon Inlet and Hatteras and offer just a hint at what probably remains to be documented offshore farther to the south. His discovery of at least five tubenose species new to North American waters—and his evidence that several other taxa once thought rare are in fact regular visitors to these waters—indicates how little is really known about the movements of pelagic species off the Southeast. This paper summarizes previously unreported data from the area of the Atlantic Ocean off the states of Georgia and Florida and suggests avenues for future research.

The South Atlantic Bight
The "South Atlantic Bight" is a convenient term that describes the offshore waters that extend from about Cape Hatteras, North Carolina to West Palm Beach, Florida. A bight is defined as a long, gradual bend or recess in the coastline that forms a large, open bay. The label—if not entirely accurate in oceanographic terms (bights are usually more tightly bounded embayments) or in geographical terms (the South Atlantic lies south of the Equator)—is nevertheless useful because the region has many features that distinguish it from neighboring regions. Here, the Continental Shelf varies from 40 to 140 km wide and is covered patchily (20 per cent of the shelf bottom) by rock reefs supporting algae and animals, known as hardground reefs (or "live bottoms"). This is a higher percentage of hard bottom than is found in regions to the north and in the Gulf of Mexico, with the exception of the Florida Keys. The Bight is strongly influenced by the Gulf Stream as it flows through the Straits of Florida and heads northward toward Cape Hatteras before it veers northeastward into the North Atlantic. Over this distance of approximately 1120 km (700 mi), the Stream lies just 2 km off the coast of Florida at West Palm Beach, up to 50 km off Cape Canaveral, passing about 170 km
offshore of Savannah, Georgia, then again closer to land, usually about 50 km off Cape Hatteras. It averages 90 km wide and maintains an average surface temperature of 84°F in the summer and 74°F in the winter. This provides a unique ecosystem that is markedly warmer than surrounding waters, especially in winter and spring.

Between Florida and North Carolina, this ecosystem is fairly homogeneous. Fish species diversity and seasonality is quite similar throughout the Bight; the well-known pelagic sport fish species of Blue Marlin (Makaira nigricans), White Marlin (Tetrapturus albidus), Sailfish (Istiophorus albicans), Dolphin (Coryphaena hippurus), Wahoo (Acanthocybium solandri), and Yellowfin Tuna (Thunnus albacares) are found throughout this region and caught at similar times of year off Florida and the Carolinas. In June, for instance, marlin fishing reaches its peak at Ponce Inlet, Florida and off Cape Hatteras, 800 km apart; the abundance of Dolphin, one of the primary food sources for marlin, also peaks in summer. However, since the water is fairly similar in temperature over much of the range, and stays relatively warm even during winter, dolphin can be found at almost any month of the year, throughout this range. The same is true for many of the bird species. A migrating shearwater, with a cruising flight speed of greater than 20 knots (35 kph), can easily cover the length of the South Atlantic Bight in a day.

Pelagic bird distribution in the Bight is heavily influenced by the movement of the Gulf Stream. This movement, ultimately generated by the earth's rotation, is greatly affected by wind, by undersea bottom features, and by other ocean currents. In parts of the Bight, the western wall of the Gulf Stream runs along the edge of the Continental Shelf. Beyond the Continental Shelf, which extends offshore to a depth of 180 m, there is a rapid drop-off to a wide area known as the Blake Plateau, which extends east at depths of 600-900 m to the Blake Escarpment, which drops to 3000 m deep. Off of the northern Bahamas, this deep drop is in some places only 4-5 km offshore, whereas off Cape Hatteras, the Escarpment is 50 or more kilometers offshore. At Ponce Inlet in northern Florida, it is 460 km offshore. The Blake Plateau has several seamounts, such as the Charleston Bump, which rises 360 m off the bottom in 690 m of water, about 184 km east of Savannah. The Plateau is also interspersed with several canyons, but these are not as deep as the Norfolk or Hudson Canyons off the middle Atlantic coast of the United States.

The combination of changing winds, northward flow of current, and the structure of the ocean floor creates upwellings, warm-core eddies (as spin-offs from the edges of the stream), and seawater frontal boundaries (rips) where the warm water edge of the Stream meets colder inshore or offshore water. These edges and upwellings produce accumulations of plankton, nekton, macro-algae (genus Sargassum), and baitfish, which in turn attract predatory fish and seabirds (Haney 1986a). Haney (1985) describes the greatly increased densities of seabirds in areas of eddies, edges, and upwellings. Areas devoid of these edges have much lower densities of seabirds. In addition, centrifugal forces of the earth's rotation tend to move plankton and bait towards the "outside" boundaries of the Gulf Stream off of Ponce Inlet, Florida. This is not an outside bend and has relatively low densities of seabirds. Cape Hatteras, North Carolina is not only an outside bend of the curve but also adjacent to very deep (3000 m) water.

One of the difficulties of seabird data collection is the daily change in weather, winds, and current eddies, causing plankton, Sargassum, and bait to move great distances or disperse in short periods of time. Even when utilizing satellite Sea Surface Temperature imaging to determine potentially productive locations in advance, birders take their chances that these conditions will persist long enough to be located and investigated. Haney (1985) utilized 300-m-wide transects and regular counts at specific intervals, but most data that have been collected are not from standardized transects but from fishing boats on which routes and regular surveys are seldom repeated. These types of counts do not provide spatial data collection but can at least be used for baseline information on seasonality and relative abundance, when data are collected conservatively.

Observations: Sources and summaries

The data that we have been able to obtain have come from four primary sources.

Records off Cape Canaveral, Florida

Captain Johnnie Johnson made 1701 trips out of Port Canaveral, Brevard County, Florida over a span of 25 years from 1956-1980 (Table 1). On those trips, he took careful data on pelagic species he saw 14 or more kilometers offshore. Johnson's data add greatly to the knowledge of the pelagic bird species off the Atlantic coast of Florida. Many of his detailed reports appear in The Birds of Brevard County (Cruickshank 1980). The vast majority of Johnson's trips were taken on a party boat (that is, a boat hired out by a group to go fishing), so he spent most of his time inshore of the western wall of the Stream, fishing over hard bottom (deep coral reefs) in about 30-60 m of water. Correspondingly, many species that spend a majority of their time in true Gulf Stream waters are under-represented in his reports. For example, he only recorded four Black-capped Petrels (Pterodroma haitata) and one Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (Oceanodroma castro) in the entire 25-year period and never once recorded Northern Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis). Johnson did make a few trips on commercial fishing vessels, which took him out to 110 km offshore. His trips were also taken during most months of the year, spread out evenly during the different seasons. Charles Burhman, with assistance from Dave Goodwin and Sharon Sparkman, collated Johnson's data painstakingly and provided a copy for summary in the present paper. While the original handwritten notes from Johnson have apparently been lost, photocopies were made and remain in the possession of Charles Burhman and at Archbold Biological Station, near Lake Placid, Florida.

Pelagic birding trips made off of Georgia

The understanding of pelagic bird distribution and movement off the coast of Georgia is continually advancing. In fact, a large part of what is known about abundance and distribution has only been discovered since 1982 with several trips done by J. Christopher Haney in pursuit of his doctoral dissertation (Haney 1986b). By 1986, he had described ten species new to the state off the Georgia coast. Until the updated Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds (2003), several species were not on the state's regular checklist. In the 1990s, Giff Beaton and Bill Blakeslee organized offshore trips, yielding further information about pelagic bird abundance. A reason often cited for the lack of attention to Georgia coastal waters is the largely featureless Continental Shelf, which extends out to the shelf break (200 m depths) often 110-130 km offshore. The extensive travel time needed to reach deeper water can make for a very strenuous day at sea. However, on the Shelf there are more than a few areas with relief, or live bottom, capable of protecting
and sustaining an abundant food web. Even today, the shelf off Georgia is still in the process of being discovered and mapped by marine biologists and oceanographers. It seems clear that the relatively small area of these shelf floor outcroppings in relation to the vastness of the so-called Georgia Embayment of the South Atlantic Bight has an impact on the numbers and species of birds to be seen on Georgia pelagic trips. Furthermore, since Haney's original reports, at least 21 well-designed near-shore artificial reefs have been created by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and eight U. S. Navy communications towers have been constructed some 50-90 km offshore.

Pelagic trips organized by Wigh since 2002, currently conducted by Bob Zaremba and Pierre Howard—including many day and overnight trips on which Wigh has been the guest of either the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography—are consistently finding pelagic birds over these reefs, some of which are in nearshore (littoral) waters. These discoveries present substantial evidence that pelagic species in Georgia waters are influenced not simply by certain physical characteristics of water masses but also by the topography of the seafloor, its communities and prey resources. It is likely that patterns of seabird occurrence described in the 1980s are now changing in response to new artificial reefs, which have begun to mature.

In spite of what we have learned in over 20 years of trips (Table 2, summarizing 154 excursions offshore), the difficulty of getting to and staying in the Gulf Stream and deep water off Georgia has restricted our knowledge of abundance and distribution on the eastern edge of the South Atlantic Bight. Some of the species for which we have very few data, such as Black-capped Petrel and the larger storm-petrels (Oceanodroma spp.), are more closely identified with deeper ocean. It is likely that this institutional larges, and a sizable vessel, will be required to canvas this still-remote area more thoroughly.

| Table 1. Pelagic birds observed by Captain Johnnie Johnson off Florida's central Atlantic coast, 1956-1980. Compiled by, and courtesy of, Charles B. Buhrman. |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Species/Speci
Stream: Bridled Tern (Onychoprion anaethetus), Wilson's Storm-Petrel (Oceanites oceanicus), Audubon's Shearwater (Puffinus auriantius), Cory's Shearwater (Calonectris diomedea), Red-necked Phalarope (Phalaropus lobatus), Red Phalarope (P. fulicarius), and all three jaegers: Parastic (Stercorarius parasiticus), Pomarine (S. pomarinus), and Long-tailed (S. longicaudus). Migrating passerines are frequently encountered in spring and fall trips. This region is the one of the areas that has been visited by birders and researchers in previous trips off of the Florida coast (P. W. Sykes, jr., pers. comm.), but only few records of individual species are published (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

East of the Gulf Stream off central Florida

This data set consists of records from 14 trips by Wallace to an area locally known as "The Other Side," located from 166-276 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida. This area lies beyond the eastern edge of the Gulf Stream on the Blake Plateau at depths of 750-900 m. This is a region in which the Antilles Current, flowing north along the eastern side of the Bahamas, mixes with the Gulf Stream. The eastern edge of the Gulf Stream is characterized by large rips, weedlines, and a decrease in surface temperature by 1-2°C. There are numerous canyons and small seamounts that cause upwellings. Within the past 10 years, it was discovered that large schools of Yellowfin Tuna and other tuna species migrate northward through this region, primarily during the summer months from June to September. Occasionally, these fish are found throughout the year, even in winter. Associated with these tuna schools are large flocks of Sooty Terns (Onychoprion fuscatus), sometimes numbering in the thousands, up to three species of shearwaters, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, three storm-petrel species, jaegers, South Polar Skuas, and frequently tropicbirds.

Fishermen use high-powered radar on their boats to find the flocks of tuna-following birds at a distance of up to 10 km. In addition to tuna, there are often marlin and dolphin present, as well as cetaceans such as Sperm Whales ( Physeter macrocephalus), Short-finned Pilot Whales ( Globicephalus macrocephalus), and Atlantic Spotted Dolphins ( Stenella frontalis).

This area has not been birded previously, and until Wallace began making these trips, it was not known to be a significant summer feeding ground for Sooty Terns in such large numbers. Greater Shearwater ( Puffinus gravis), characterized by Stevenson and Anderson (1994) as an irregular visitor to nearshore waters west of the Gulf Stream, is the most common shearwater during June, with Cory's Shearwater increasing in numbers in July, and the Greaters all but gone by late July. Cory's is seen regularly fairly close to land, sometimes within sight of the coast (Stevenson and An-

<p>| Table 2. Pelagic species records for Georgia (all sources combined, representing 154 excursions), 1932-2006. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species/Month</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Fulmar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed Petrel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory's Shearwater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shearwater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sooty Shearwater</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-necked Phalarope</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon's Shearwater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson's Storm-Petrel</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leach's Storm-Petrel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band-rumped Storm-Petrel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-tailed Tropicbird</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-billed Tropicbird</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-footed Albatross</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Booby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gannet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnificent Frigatebird</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-necked Phalarope</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Phalarope</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>999</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td>3114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Gull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabine's Gull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-legged Kittiwake</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Noddy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridled Tern</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Tern</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arctic Tern</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Polar Skua</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomarine Jaeger</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parastic Jaeger</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-tailed Jaeger</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverkie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(see note)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razorbill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total species recorded</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of observation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = In November 1932, during the most far-reaching wreck of the species recorded on the Atlantic coast, "thousands" passed a ship off Tybee Island, headed to the south. Specimens were recovered from Florida and Cuba.  
2 = Common to uncommon; numbers not recorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species/Month</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black-capped Petrel</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory’s Shearwater</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shearwater</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manx Shearwater</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon’s Shearwater</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson’s Storm-Petrel</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leach’s Storm-Petrel</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band-rumped Storm-Petel</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-tailed Tropicbird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-billed Tropicbird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masked Booby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gannet</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnificent Frigatebird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-necked Phalarope</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Phalarope</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Noddy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sooty tern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridled tern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Tern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemarine Jaeger</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasitic Jaeger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-tailed Jaeger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total species recorded</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of observation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

There are numerous limitations in the existing data, as noted above; most available information comes from fishing excursions rather than birding trips or ornithological research cruises. Unlike pelagic birding trips made off North Carolina, little effort has been made to chum or draw species into the boat for close observation—although in the case of Johnnie Johnson’s excursions, bottom fishing on charter boats creates a somewhat similar situation. Data are also skewed in that trips are weather dependent, and most trips have been made in summer, during the calmest weather conditions. Species present during the windier seasons of fall, winter, and spring are underrepresented in the data.

The lacunae in our knowledge of the South Atlantic Bight’s avifauna are many; particularly off Georgia, but our understanding of seabird migration through the region is perhaps the largest of these. There have been very few trips during spring and fall, certainly the best times of year for species diversity, and thus very few data on seabird migration in the region. Recent GPS satellite tagging of Greater Shearwaters (Ronconi 2007) shows a “figure-eight” migrational pattern as they follow trade wind and ocean current patterns between the North and South Atlantic Ocean, and suggests that they should be most common in the late spring as they move to the North Atlantic. Trips to the “Other Side,” east of the Gulf Stream on the Blake Plateau, have shown that this is a consistent feeding ground for this and other species. Yet some Greater Shearwaters occur all year in the Bight. How many other species show a similar migration pattern?

Likewise, few trips have been made during winter, primarily because the frequent high winds associated with cold fronts make going offshore next to impossible, even in large craft. Haney (1987) found that Black-capped Petrels were present every month of the year in the Gulf Stream (except January, when he did not survey offshore waters), and, similarly, Lee (1995) found that a few non-breeding Manx Shearwaters (Puffinus puffinus) were found offshore all year. Johnson’s data also support this observation, as do data from adjacent waters of the Carolinas (J. B. Paterson, pers. comm.). Alcids, which are considered very rare south of Cape Hatteras, appear erratically and typically in very low numbers in the winter months. However, on rare occasions, incursions appear in larger numbers in...
the southern South Atlantic Bight. For example, Johnson found Dovekies (*Alca alle*) off Florida only twice, but on one occasion, 122 were counted. (Most other records of alcids off Florida are from birds washed ashore.) In February 2005, Wigh found 106 Razorbills (*Alca torda*) off the southeastern coast of Georgia, 52 of which were at 31° N, 80° 36'29" W; this, appears likely that this species enters Florida waters during such irruptions. Alcids of all species are probably more of more regular occurrence offshore than is currently known, but no observers have ventured out to seek them. The "Other Side," on the Blake Plateau, east of the Gulf Stream is an area of rich productivity, teeming with tuna and smaller fish, and potentially one of the richest areas for birdlife in the Bight, both in terms of diversity and densities. Virtually no birding trips have been made to this region during migration, or winter, yet catches of tuna, marlin, and dolphin have been reported from all seasons. Since fishermen locate the tuna schools by using radar to spot the feeding flocks of birds, there must be some bird activity here year-round. This could be a possible spot for alcids as well, as many species winter far offshore farther north.

### Species summaries

The following brief descriptions summarize the status of pelagic species that have occurred in the South Atlantic Bight.

**Albatrosses (Thalassarche spp.).** Vagrant, known from only three sightings. Most documented sightings in North Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico are of Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (*T. c. chlororhynchos*), of which J. Johnson reported one on 13 July 1958. Johnson also observed a Black-browed Albatross (*T. melanophris*) on 13 September 1974. An albatross observed 166 km east of Ponce Inlet, Florida by Wallace 3 July 2004 was not formally identified to species, but was thought to be a juvenile Yellow-nosed (and submitted as such) and was certainly a Thalassarche.

**Northern Fulmar.** Rare winter visitor, probably more frequent than is currently known. The only firm records from Florida involve beached birds, one at Satellite Beach, in the Melbourne area of Brevard County 19 April 2005 (Anderson 2005b), Haney (1983, 1986c; also Haney et al. 1986) recorded the species off Georgia on at least seven trips, mostly in February. More winter excursions are needed to clarify the status of this species.

**Black-capped Petrel.** Regular to common spring migrant, April-May, in the Gulf Stream or in the "Other Side" off central Florida, with a few present June-August (Figure 1). Because the species breeds on Hispaniola and possibly Cuba and occurs in large numbers off Cape Hatteras May-October, and in at least moderate numbers off South Carolina as well (N. Dias, pers. comm.), many individuals must at least pass through the offshore waters of the southern South Atlantic Bight. Small numbers have been observed migrating northward along eastern Bahamas in April-May (Wallace, pers. obs.) A few are apparently present in the Gulf Stream year-round (Haney 1987).

**Fea's/Zino's Petrel (Pterodroma feae/madeira).** One sight report off Georgia 9 November 1984 (Haney et al. 1993). Fea's Petrels are observed annually off Cape Hatteras in late spring and summer (May-August) and probably occur throughout the Bight in spring and summer, especially far offshore. Zino's Petrel, difficult to distinguish in the field from Fea's,
Figure 1. This Black-capped Petrel, photographed about 166 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida in May 2007, shows a dusky gray rather than white collar, which is true of a minority of birds recorded in the southern South Atlantic Bight. Photograph by R. D. Wallace.

Figure 2. This Cory’s Shearwater is apparently of the borealis subspecies, in which the underside of the primaries appears strongly brown against the white underwing coverts; in the nominate subspecies, rarely recorded in the South Atlantic Bight (but confirmed by Georgia specimen), the underside of the primaries appears more whitish. This bird was photographed 74 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida in June 2007. Photograph by R. D. Wallace.

Figure 3. This Greater Shearwater, photographed 74 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida in June 2007, was one of many foraging in the vicinity. Recent pelagic trips to the “Other Side” of the Gulf Stream have proven that this species, formerly thought to be scarce off Florida, is actually quite common during spring migration. Photograph by R. D. Wallace.

Figure 4. Sooty Shearwater is surprisingly uncommon in the southern South Atlantic Bight, though seawatches from shore during spring migration, particularly during strong easterly winds, may indicate that it is more numerous than current records indicate. This individual was photographed 11 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida in May 2007. Photograph by R. D. Wallace.

has not been recorded off North Carolina with certainty, but several candidates have been photographed (e.g., North American Birds 59:527).

Bulwer’s Petrel (Bulweria bulwerii). One report off Florida in May, over 185 km offshore of Jacksonville (Haney 1985).

Cory’s Shearwater. Common in summer and fall, May–November. Found in the Gulf Stream, and often inshore, sometimes within sight of land. Often in flocks of hundreds around tuna schools east of the Gulf Stream. Both subspecies, diomedea and borealis, are documented by specimen (Figure 2), but the former appears to be rather rare.

Greater Shearwater. Common May–October offshore. Relatively rare inshore (Kale 1963, Stevenson and Anderson 1994) but found in flocks of hundreds around tuna schools east of the Gulf Stream during June–July; with numbers declining through the summer. Smaller numbers sometimes found in fall and winter in the Gulf Stream (Figure 3).

Sooty Shearwater (Puffinus griseus). Rare to uncommon spring and early fall migrant, mostly May–June, August–September (Figure 4). There are scattered reports from Florida throughout the year (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Manx Shearwater. Uncommon but regular spring and fall migrant. Some individuals can be seen off east coast of Florida all year, especially during winter months (Lee 1995).

Audubon’s Shearwater. Common throughout the Bight, April–November, peaking in September (Figure 5). Sometimes seen close to land, especially during strong easterly winds.

Leach’s Storm Petrel (Oceanodroma leucorhoa). Rare migrant, seen primarily April–June but also occasionally in fall.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel. Uncommon but regular in small numbers May–September in the Gulf Stream, chiefly along edges and eddies (see Haney 1985, Dias 2007; Figure 6).
Wilson's Storm Petrel. Common to very common in summer (April-September) in Gulf Stream throughout the Bight. Frequently found in large flocks, often in the middle of the Gulf Stream.

White-tailed Tropicbird (Phaethon lepturus). Uncommon but regular (e.g., seen on 36% of trips by Wallace) April-October on the "Other Side" of the Gulf Stream east of central Florida (Figure 7, Frontispiece); regularly observed in the Gulf Stream farther north to Cape Hatteras.

Red-billed Tropicbird (P. aethereus). Very rare April-October in the Gulf Stream throughout the Bight.

Magnificent Frigatebird (Fregata magnificens). Uncommon but regular in the Gulf Stream April-November throughout the Bight; sometimes seen close to shore.

Brown Booby (Sula leucogaster). Rare visitor April-October, with most records in summer (Figures 8, 9).

Masked Booby (S. dactylatra). Rare visitor April-October, with most records in summer.

Red-footed Booby (S. sula). Rare vagrant, with one record of dark morph by Wallace from the "Other Side" of the Gulf Stream, 132 km east of the central Florida mainland, on 3 April 2007 (Figure 10). The species is rarely recorded from the Atlantic side of Florida, with the most recent record being from inshore waters: one light-morph bird at Boynton Inlet, Palm Beach County 8-9 November 2003 (B. Pranty, pers. comm.). The northernmost record in the western North Atlantic
This juvenile Brown Booby, the same individual as in Figure 6, shows a heavier head/tail and broader wings than Red-footed (see Figure 10). Photograph by R. D. Wigh.

This photograph of a subadult Red-footed Booby, taken 138 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida on 3 April 2007, furnishes one of very few records for Atlantic off Florida. Compared to the Brown Booby in Figure 9, this is a slenderer bird, in wings, head/neck, and tail, and the tail appears longer.

The underwing coverts of younger Red-footed Boobies tend to be more uniformly dark than those of young Brown, which are contrastingly pale or white, recalling the adults. Juvenile Red-footeds are invariably dark, and this bird is probably about one year old, thus about two years away from definitive adult plumage, though from this photograph, it is difficult to ascertain whether this youngster will turn out to be a light or a darker morph as an adult. The nominate subspecies is the only subspecies recorded in the Atlantic Basin. Photograph by R. D. Wollace.

Phalarope is by far the most common jaeger observed in the South Atlantic Bight and has been recorded in all months. This second-cycle bird with rather interesting barred neck and speckled head was photographed 12 November 2006 about 64 km off Ponce Inlet, Florida. "Poms" can often be lured for closer views with chum. Photograph by R. D. Wollace.

comes from South Carolina, a beached bird that later died, found 27 July 1986 on Edisto Island, Charleston County (Post and Gauthreaux 1989; Chit 51.3: 65).

Northern Gannet (Morus bassanus). Common to abundant November–April, usually inside of the Gulf Stream. Often seen in flocks of hundreds feeding over baitfish, often within sight of land. During migration, often seen flying in long lines low over the water in the Gulf Stream.

Red Phalarope. Uncommon to common migrant and winter visitor (July–May), with peaks occurring in January–February and in August, chiefly along western edge of Gulf Stream.

Red-necked Phalarope. Uncommon to common migrant and winter visitor, July–May, with peaks occurring in February, April, and September, chiefly along western edge of the Gulf Stream (see Haney 1985).

Black-legged Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla). Uncommon to rare in winter, November–March, more common in northern part of Bight, rarely farther south.

Sabine’s Gull (Xema sabini). Rare migrant in spring and fall, usually far offshore.

Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea). Rare to uncommon spring and rare fall migrant, mostly far offshore, April–May and July–August.

Sooty Tern. Common to abundant around tuna schools on the “Other Side,” April–October, far offshore of central Florida. Uncommon to rare in the Gulf Stream throughout the Bight. Sometimes thought to move north of breeding grounds only when driven by storms (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but clearly forages regularly in the Bight outside the context of storms.

Brighled Tern. Common in the Gulf Stream, especially along edges, April–October, but rare inshore of the Stream (Figure 11). Less regular farther north in the Bight.

Brown Noddy (Anous stolidus). Rare in the Gulf Stream, uncommon but regular around tuna schools on the “Other Side,” far offshore of Florida, April–October. Previously thought to move north of breeding grounds only when driven by storms (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).
South Polar Skua (Stercorarius maccormicki). Very rare in summer May—August in the Gulf Stream, occasionally inshore, and rare but regular offshore around tuna schools.

Pomarine Jaeger. Present year-round. Common in migration in the Gulf Stream August—October and April—May, uncommon to common in winter November–March, usually inshore of the Stream, with a few present June—July, especially far offshore around tuna schools.

Parasitic Jaeger. Common in migration August—October and April—May, uncommon to common in winter November–March; a few present during summer. Often seen from shore during migration.

Long-tailed Jaeger. Rare migrant, March—May and August–November.

Common Murre (Uria aalge). Very rare winter visitor to the northern Bight, December–February. Most records from inshore waters.

Thick-billed Murre (U. lomvia). Very rare winter visitor to the northern Bight, December–February. Most records from inshore waters.

Razorbill. Irruptive, rare to locally common in winter, December–February, primarily north of Florida, though may occur farther south periodically. Florida records are entirely coastal (Stevenson and Anderson 1994, Anderson 2005a).

Dovekie. Irruptive, rare to locally common in winter, December–February, primarily north of Florida, though may occur farther south periodically.

Atlantic Puffin (Fratercula arctica). Irruptive, rare winter visitor to Bight, December–February. The southernmost records in the Bight are of single beached birds at North Jupiter Beach, Martin County 6 December 1986 (Brooks 1988) and another from St. Augustine Beach, St. John's County, Florida 23 December 2004 (Anderson 2005a; photograph at <http://www.fosbirds.org/RecordCommittee/images/2005/04-558.html>). There are no other records from Florida.

**Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank Charles Burman for generously providing data from his unpublished manuscript on the pelagic sightings of Johnnie Johnson, which was the impetus for us to begin this undertaking. We would also like to thank David Goodwin and C. Wesley Biggs, both friends of Johnson's, for their anecdotes on Johnson's life and for editorial review and suggestions, and Bill Pranty for assistance with Florida records. Finally, we would like to thank the Yellow-billed Loon (Gavia adamsii) that was present south of Atlanta, Georgia in January 2005. It was this bird that allowed the authors to meet and to discover a mutual interest in pelagic birding.

**Literature cited**


The Changing Seasons: Foods for thought

M AR SHALL J. I L I FF • 2 8 2 P E R H A M S T R E E T • W EST R O X B U R Y , M A S S A C H U S E T T S 0 2 1 3 2 • (E M A I L : M L I F F @ A O L . C O M)  
D E R E K L O V I T C H • W I L D B I R D C E N T E R O F Y A R M O U T H • 5 0 0 R O U T E O N E , S U I T E 9 • Y A R M O U T H , M A I N E 0 4 0 9 6 • (E M A I L : Y A R M O U T H W B C @ Y A H O O . C O M)

Weather
The title of the Changing Seasons column for last year's winter season (Brinkley 2006) lamented the "Winter that Wasn't." When we committed to writing this article in early January 2007, it looked as though we would simply be able to reaffirm the trends observed in that warm winter—but then came the cold weather! Much of the eastern two-thirds of the continent felt winter's grip from mid-January through early March, and some places, from Yukon to Colorado to Missouri, had heavy snow and ice to contend with. In the North, most fresh water had frozen by mid-February, with the predictable effects on grebes, waterfowl, and gulls. As often occurs, the Southwest showed an inverse pattern—cold and snowy (in montane areas) in the first part of the season, warmer in February—and the Pacific Northwest and Alaska also had most of their colder weather and storm energy pass through in the first half of the season.

In a radical departure from past Changing Seasons essays, we will refer the reader to the regional reports for longer discussions of the season's weather. We do this for three reasons: first, to reduce repetition in the journal overall; second, to emphasize that almost none of the bird records we consider below show obvious connections to meteorological phenomena, other than the general warming trend; and third, to make room for more discussions of trends rarely mentioned in this forum: exotic snails and plants and their effects on bird distribution. But first, we'll take a look at some of the trends in bird distribution that leapt out as we studied the regional reports.

Short-term phenomena?
Ted Floyd's Changing Seasons essay discussing the winter of 2004-2005 (Floyd 2005) considered, among other things, short-term trends in bird distribution—that set of birds that moved southward during that season in response to local conditions but that did not appear to form part of longer-term patterns. Floyd called them "Category S" birds. The poster children of such erratic irruptions are the winter finches and owls, grist for the mill of many a Changing Seasons essay. But this year was abysmal for irruptive species. With a few local exceptions, usually in areas where the species in question are regular winterers, the entire suite of northern irruptives—including Great Gray, Northern Hawk, and Boreal Owls, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Siskin,
Purple Finch, both crossbills, both redpolls, and Evening and Pine Grosbeaks—remained near their regular wintering ranges. We’ll discuss below what few exceptions we found.

Snowy Owl • Numbers of this symbol of winter failed to impress anywhere east of the Rockies, but the Pacific Northwest had a modest flight (down from 100+ last winter), with at least 31 to Washington, four to Oregon, and one even to California, where the species is quite rare. This bird, in Solano County, became a local celebrity and was most easily seen by chartering local fishing boats! Aside from one in the previous winter, it had been almost three decades since California had recorded Snowy Owl.

Gray Jay • The fall Changing Seasons essay (Schmoeker and Leukering 2007) noted an invasion of Gray Jays that took place in the upper Midwest and Prairie Provinces. By this season, Adam Byrne in the Western Great Lakes region reported that the “irruption petered out by December, leaving only a few strays in northwestern Minnesota.” In the Prairie Provinces, Rudolf Koe and Peter Taylor noted that “Gray Jays continued their strong showing outside the boreal forest in southeastern Manitoba, but none was reported west of the Red River valley,” with some birds staying through mid-March. North Dakota also had above-average numbers continuing through the winter, with at least 15 in Grand Forks County and three at Icelandic State Park. No Gray Jay movements were reported elsewhere, and we don’t have the answers for why this species irrupted, but most passerines from the same region and habitat (e.g., Boreal Chickadee) didn’t show similar signs, the notable (if minor) exception being American Three-toed Woodpecker, which appeared out of habitat at typical range around the Great Lakes in Ontario, Quebec, Minnesota, and Michigan.

Bohemian Waxwing • The scene was certainly a unique one in eastern Newfoundland, where in December Bruce Macavich described looking up through a pumpkin-colored downpour of waxwing droppings to a wheeling flock of 3000 Bohemians overhead; later in the winter, the maximum estimate had increased to 7500. Away from this northeasternmost province, the scene was more subdued, with a few flocks of tens in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, whereas in Quebec and New York they were “virtually absent.” Pamela Hunt’s prediction last winter (Hunt 2006) of a boom year in winter 2006-2007 in New England was not borne out; the winter instead saw the “lowest counts in a decade” of the species, with all reports coming from the region’s northern reaches. There was no more evidence of a flight around the Great Lakes, where they were “very scarce” in Ontario, and Wisconsin saw its “poorest winter...in decades.” The Great Plains, where the species is often rare, had a few birds visiting a single Nebraska locale, and the Great Basin had none, while Colorado had only one “notable” report. Even in the Yukon, numbers were down, which Cameron Eckert blamed on a May frost that affected the Mountain Ash berry crop. Other than Newfoundland, the only other northern areas that saw elevated numbers were Saskatchewan, where up to 4000 were in Saskatoon, and central and southeastern coastal Alaska. Thede Tobish attributed the late arrival of Bohemian groups to the lateness of the first appreciable snowfall; perhaps this was true in Canada as well.

White-winged Crossbill • Although this species occurred nowhere outside of its regular range, there was a large movement to certain areas of the Northeast. In New Brunswick, Brian Dalzell wrote that it was “abundant in north and central New Brunswick, with 500-1000 per day easily found in Madawaska, Restigouche, or Gloucester,” the birds apparently attracted to a strong cone crop from White and Red Spruces and Balsam Fir. In Quebec, White-wingeds “remained abundant throughout the boreal and mixed forests; adults gathering nest material were reported in February, and a male was seen feeding 2 juveniles as early as 9 February.” Large numbers also reached the boreal forests of central and eastern Maine, where the “largest flocks tended to be in the northern and western parts of the state.” Almost none reached the southern coastal plain of Maine, and above-average numbers were not specifically noted from New Hampshire and Vermont, although the Adirondacks had “a moderate invasion.” Crossbills are well known for their habit of occasionally breeding in midwinter, at least when food supplies are exceptionally high; this season, nesting behavior was noted at least in Maine, Vermont, Quebec, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

Redpolls • Although specifically noted as scarce or absent throughout the Northeast and west to Ontario, southerly Common Redpolls reached southwestern Ohio, Tennessee (two), Nebraska, and central Missouri. These birds were probably the fringes of a movement that brought “high numbers” to Saskatchewan and “good numbers” to the Dakotas, the only places that reported any real influx. The southernmost outlier was in northern Texas; there are few records of the species for the entire state. Heany Redpoll, similarly noted as scarce (even in areas where regularly seen), was also represented by odd outliers this season, the most impressive of these being one in Story County, Iowa.

A necessary caveat in discussing trends of these northern irruptives: we tend to discuss “good years” and “bad years” from the point of view of our human population centers, which are largely urban. We have at best a very fragmentary sense of what goes on with these species in their core ranges. Often, the “best” years for the species themselves are those in which few or none move south of their normal range, which typically indicates good supplies of food in the north. Without observers in much of the Canadian taiga, we

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>28,700</td>
<td>DeSoto NWR, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvasback</td>
<td>37,100</td>
<td>Lee County, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Scap</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>Lake Barkley, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Goldeneye</td>
<td>9235</td>
<td>Kentucky Lake, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring-necked Pheasant</td>
<td>1307</td>
<td>Garrison Dam area, North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp-tailed Grouse</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>Arrowwood NWR area, North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-billed Loon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dungeness Bay, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamm Shearwater</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>Guadalupe, Lesser Antilles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Harrier</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Lacassine NWR, Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowkie</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>Pelagic waters off New York state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Macaw</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Jauamine, Tamaulipas, Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasian Collared-Dove</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>Roswell area, New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-eared Owl</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Grand Forks County, North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Raven</td>
<td>1377</td>
<td>Yellowknife area, Yukon Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Dipper</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Lower Little Selma River, Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh Wren</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Thonmell, Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Robin</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>Lake Apopka, Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthen’s Sparrow</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Iquique de Emergencia, Coahuila, Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Bunting</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Landglaube, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
can only speculate that this was a year with good food availability virtually across the continent in the north. But if the (presumed) good food availability this year translates to exceptionally high breeding success, a bumper crop of young might deplete whatever food supplies are available through the year. By the time you read this, attentive field observers in the north will already know the answer to this question.

"Zooties" and more

As with the winter finches, it is darn near impossible to write any Changing Seasons column without some comment on the real vagrant surprises—or "Category Z" birds (Floyd 2005). We'll limit the notes below to a summary of firsts for county, province, or state, birds sometimes characterized as "zooties." Among these are birds whose long-term expansions reached new territories; others are examples of birds previously overlooked, usually because they were only recently elevated to species level, or because interest in field identification of subspecies has grown in recent years. The summary of first state records below (many still pending official acceptance by the state records committee, of course) provides a good snapshot of vagrancy patterns around the country, including a few real shockers that should open our eyes to even more possibilities.

We were shocked to read, for instance, about an Inca Dove in Huntington, West Virginia 3-10 December; with a few exceptions (e.g., Green Violet-ear, landlocked in West Virginia does not lead the "East" in the discovery of western vagrants. The Inca Dove expansion has been a long-term phenomenon (Leukering and Gibbons 2005), but unlike the explosive dispersals of White-winged Dove and Eurasian Collared-Dove, Inca Dove had not reached the East—aside from a bird a month earlier in Maryland, 5-6 November. An Inca Dove noted 18 October—14 December in Hamblen County, Tennessee, that state's third, may also indicate an eastward turn in vagrancy. The species' eastward spread along the Gulf Coast may be a clue to this turn: in Louisiana, there were numerous indications that Inca Doves are no longer confined to the southwestern part of the state, while in Mississippi, 14 in Arcola 10 February were considered "amazing." Inca Dove's northern boundary in the Great Plains continues to move northward as well, and it is now regular locally across Oklahoma, with singles located this season as far north and west as Keith County, Nebraska and Morton County, Kansas. Although no signs of spread were noted beyond the two Colorado strongholds, Montana's first Inca Dove reached Terry 2 December (found dead two days later). There will almost certainly be more such records of "pioneers," successful or otherwise, in seasons to come.

On the East Coast, where birder coverage has been thorough for almost a century, it continues to astound that the pool of new species is not drying up. St. Pierre et Miquelon made the best progress in their overall list, with their first Golden-crowned Sparrow (a very rare vagrant anywhere in the East) and, remarkably, their long overdue first Barrow's Goldeneye. Maryland joined the Carolinas, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine among East Coast states with a Tropical Kingbird record. Although Maine's record is from 1913, most other eastern records have been since 1990. Are these records explained by climate change—or because yellow-bellied kingbirds are checked much more carefully now than in the past? Given that the Maryland bird was identified as Ash-throated Flycatcher and then as a Western Kingbird before being nailed down, the latter explanation may be more plausible. New Jersey at last recorded Long-billed Murrelet, adding another eastern state to the list of states that have hosted vagrant Long-billeds; Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts also have records. A state-first Calliope Hummingbird was found in Connecticut, joining three others in Massachusetts November-January for a record total in New England. Both of these species have shown relatively recent (rather than long-term) patterns of dispersal.

Snow Geese are much less common in the New England region than in Atlantic states farther south (through North Carolina), and vagrant Ross's Geese are correspondingly much harder to find in the Northeast than in the Hudson-Delaware and Middle Atlantic regions (indeed, Todd Day notes that interest has "waned" in reporting this species, which is regular at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia now). But Ross's Goose has been a very recent addition for Maine and Massachusetts—and one in Connecticut this winter will represent that state's very first. The East Coast's first came in 1971 at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina, and records have increased almost exponentially since that winter. In the Palearctic, in Iceland and Greenland, populations of Pink-footed Goose have increased substantially in recent years, and, correspondingly, the tempo of vagrant records from the Northeast has accelerated: Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Quebec, Newfoundland, and Massachusetts all have recent records, and older records in the East come from New York and Delaware. Rhode Island got into the game this year, when two state-firsts birds near Newport in January—February joined six other goose species, among them six Cacklings, a Barnacle, and four Greenland Greater White-fronteds.

In the 1990s, the prospect of multiple Scott's Oriole east of the Mississippi would have seemed preposterous. This season, both Kentucky and Pennsylvania had state firsts of this southwestern oriole, the former found in early February, the latter found 19 February. The nearest record of the species comes from Georgia, where that state's first was documented 3-8 November 2002. Indiana's first Bullocks Oriole pales in comparison to its Audubon's Oriole, seen 24 January—15 February. Although Audubon's Oriole has been expanding slightly in Texas (note the Hill Country records in this season's report), it is essentially unknown as a vagrant and has not been recorded in the United States outside of Texas (other than a sight report from Ohio, 20 December 1995). Almost as remarkable, a state-first Red-breasted Sapsucker in Iowa joins the three in Texas as the only records from a state east of the Rocky Mountains. Could this species stray as far east as Louisiana and New York, as has Williamson's Sapsucker? West Virginia's first Inca Dove is discussed above, but its first Virginia's Warbler visiting a feeder in Harper's Ferry 10-15 February also represents one of the few eastern records before fall 2006, when singles were in Maine 28-30 September and Rhode Island 8 October; older eastern records come from New Jersey in October 1962, Labrador in September 1994, Nova Scotia in November 1994, and Maine in May 1998. Was this a boom year for the species in the East?

Several species showing long-term expansions crossed arbitrary political boundaries for the first time this season: Wisconsin's first Great-tailed Grackle finally turned up at Horicon Marsh, and a Eurasian Tree Sparrow snuck across the Iowa border to a Nebraska feeder. A Slaty-backed Gull (discussed below), first found in Iowa, also visited Nebraska this season. To the south, the Gulf Coast had two significant vagrants. First, a male Common Eider shot by a hunter in Nueces County, Texas 8 January is the first for Texas. The Gulf Coast has no records of this species west of Florida but has a handful or more of the more northerly breeding King Eider. Mlodinow (1999) discusses this and other discrepancies in eider vagrancy. Common Ei-
der has recently made inroads in the southern states, and on the West Coast, there have been recent firsts for Washington and California, both back in 2004. Perhaps more remarkable, a Mangrove Cuckoo (Figure 1) turned up along the Mississippi River in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana 23-24 December. With about ten records of vagrants from Texas, falling primarily April-August (Lockwood and Freeman 2004), and few other records outside of their limited U.S. range, a Christmastime record from Louisiana would seem far-fetched, were it not for two Texas records from December.

West of the Rockies, the haul of firsts was somewhat lower but included some remarkable species. Gulls were at the forefront, with a Western Gull in Utah, Iceland Gull in New Mexico and Utah, and Lesser Black-backed Gull in Arizona (discussed below). A possible Gilded Flicker in southwestern Utah was surprising, considering that this species has been stable or declining in its northern and northwestern margins. Not without precedent, but still not expected anywhere away from Texas, a vocal Couch's Kingbird discovered feeding on dead honeybees in a western Arizona ham-

Figure 1. Although not entirely unprecedented in winter on the Texas Gulf Coast, this Mangrove Cuckoo in St. Bernard Parish 23-24 (here 24) December 2006 furnished the first record of the species for Louisiana. Photograph by Dave Patchen.

let provided a remarkable first state record. Just two others had previously been identified west of Texas: one in New Mexico and one in Orange County, California, first found 31 December 1997. How many other Couch's have been passed over as Tropical Kingbirds? In Washington, a Whooper Swan at Snohomish was overdue, considering that California has had over a dozen records, and some of those birds have crossed into Oregon as well (McEneaney 2004). A White-tailed Eagle photographed at Kilauea, Hawaii Island (and seen eating a Layman Albatross!) prompts the question: should West Coasters be watching for White-tailed Eagles too? Absolutely.

In Mexico, state lists have not traditionally been kept as passionately as in the United States, but there is increasing momentum in that direction, and students of bird distribution will be the beneficiaries, as the avian biogeography in Mexico is tracked more rigorously and accurately. The state lists for the Baja California Peninsula are being carefully tracked by the Regional Editors, with Erickson et al. (2001) as a framework. The northern state added the overdue Lesser Black-backed Gull, but the southern state (with a lower overall list) fared quite a bit better, documenting its first White-winged Scoter as well as its first Common Black-Hawk. But the zoetics of zoetics in Baja California Sur was one of the most remarkable of the winter season—a Yellow-browed Warbler found wintering in a bird-rich town at the peninsula's tip. With just three Alaska records and one sight record from Wisconsin, this Siberian bird was surely a shocker as a Mexican first. In Sonom, a Red-necked Grebe photographed at Puerto Peñasco this winter follows two previous December sight records from the same location (1996 and 2001). Some other Mexican highlights included an Arizona Woodpecker well east in Camino Real, Tamaulipas; this species has no known pattern of vagrancy within the United States, and a record so far outside the mapped range (see Howell and Webb 1995) may be more of a shocker than the Yellow-browed Warbler! Some other less surprising “firsts” included Red-shouldered Hawks in the Distrito Federal; descriptions of two Golden-cheeked Warblers and a heard-only Central American Flycatcher (for well-birded Cozumel Island, on the coast of that state. The Bahamas scored two new birds this season as well, its first well-documented (second reported) Bufflehead and its first-ever Eastern Bluebird, with its first Ross’s Goose continuing from November. But the big news item in the Caribbean was the discovery of a Brown Trembler on Antigua; previous reports on that island had been poorly documented and so not given much credence.

While summarizing first state records in the East, we noted many of the more surprising vagrants from the southwestern states or Mexico were found: 1) at feeders, and 2) in late January through February. These attributes were true of a Townsend’s Warbler in Massachusetts, Scott’s Oriole in Pennsylvania and Tennessee, a Virginia’s Warbler in West Virginia, and many others. Not surprisingly, these records coincided with the abrupt cold snap at that time, which almost certainly forced these non-hardy birds to the only consistent food sources: bird feeders. Birders who speculate on such things often debate detectability. For example, do western hummingbirds arrive in the East in August and September and tend to find feeders in late October and November, when it first turns cold? Or do they actually arrive in late October and November? The prevalent theory explaining the arrival of many southwestern vagrants...
with a vengeance in mid-January, we presume that those insectivores were suddenly between a rock and a cold place and were forced out of their previously insect-rich wintering grounds and sought out other food sources, finding hospitable feeders in places such as Jefferson County, West Virginia (Virginia’s Warbler), Jefferson County, Indiana (Audubon’s Oriole), and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania (Scott’s Oriole). We know of no previous winter season with a comparable list of feeder vagrants across such a wide swath of the East and Northeast.

Of escargots and bird distribution

Iliff has been fortunate to conduct tours for the past three winters from a ranch at El Tuito, south of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico. In the six-year gap between Howell and Webb’s 1995 Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America and the onset of North American Birds coverage of this area (in 2001), numerous changes in bird distribution took place, and two species—Limpkin and Snail Kite—illustrate perfectly how rapidly some tropical birds respond to changes in food resources. In January 2006, Iliff was surprised to flush a Limpkin from an irrigation ditch near Cruz de Loreto, Jalisco (Figure 2), and doubly stunned to see another at the mouth of the Río Ameca, north of Puerto Vallarta, a few days later. Brian Gibbons found more in the area the next month, including several in Cruz de Loreto and at Laguna de Quelele in adjacent Nayarit. In early 2007, at least 6 were at Cruz de Loreto, and Gibbons found one at a small pond in El Tuito. This season, Iliff was even more stunned to see a female-plumaged Snail Kite at Cruz de Loreto 7 January (Figure 3).

Howell and Webb (1995) show essentially the same range maps for both species: resident along the Gulf coast from Honduras and northern Guatemala north through the Yucatan Peninsula to central Veracruz, with a small lobe across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to the Pacific Slope of Oaxaca for Snail Kite and a coastal sliver from southern Oaxaca to El Salvador for Limpkin. The recent history of Snail Kite in Panama is instructive. As of Wetmore’s (1965) treatment of the country’s avifauna, there had been but a single record. The species’ status had changed little as of Ridgeley and Gwynne’s (1989) update on the country’s avifauna: five sight records from the Canal Zone and the western province of Chiriqui, including “several pairs evidently breeding (one nest seen)” in 1973. Angehr (1999) detailed the dramatic next chapter. Although much of Panama was forested and devoid of extensive marsh systems during the nineteenth century, the successful completion of the Panama Canal in 1914 brought with it the creation of Gatun Lake, which now occupies 420 square kilometers in central Panama. Snail Kite remained essentially unknown from this area for 80 years, with its closest population centers in western Colombia and the Tempisque Basin of Costa Rica (350 and 650 km distant, respectively). Starting in the late 1980s, the apple snail Pomacea latrepia (per Cazzaniga [2002], Pomacea taxonomy is complex; P. latrepia may be a synonym of P. flagellata) was introduced from Guatemala in an attempt to control the invasive aquatic plant Hydrida verticillata. The introduction was successful, and the snails spread throughout the lake within a few years and drastically reduced the Hydrilla. A native Pomacea snail had provided an unsuitable food source for Snail Kites, as it was a bottom dweller, but this new species, which fed on floating vegetation, proved much more accessible to Snail Kites, and their colonization of the area followed within just a few years. Kites were first observed at Barro Colorado Island in Gatun Lake in May or June 1994, with 14 present in February 1995, along with several nests under construction. Three months later, 37 kites were found at two sites at Barro Colorado, and numbers have since swollen such that up to 100 can be seen in this area on a single train trip across Gatun Lake. Angehr (1999) considers it possible that the species expanded to Barro Colorado after first colonizing another part of the lake, but whatever the vector, the kites quickly found and exploited the new food resource at Gatun Lake, colonizing within less than a decade. Females may breed at only 10 months of age (Angehr 1999), but even so, the extremely rapid colonization of this area is remarkable and suggests immigration. The Central America report comments twice on the species this winter. Fifly were counted at recently created wetlands site 8 kilometers west-northwest of Cañas, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica, along a presumptive flight path for birds moving be-
between the two major population centers at Palo Verde and Caño Negro: another example of Snail Kites colonizing a new area.

Returning to western Mexico, we find a similar tale. Both Limpkin and Snail Kite are now regular at the Manzanillo marshes of Colima, about 120 kilometers southeast of Cruz de Loreto. A single Limpkin there in November 1994 constituted the first record north and west of the area of regular occurrence in eastern Oaxaca, some 1000 km to the east-southeast (Howell 1994). Two there in March 1995 swelled to six in December 1995 and 20 in February 2001 (Howell 1994, 2004). By 2000, the species had also spread 270 km north-northwest to San Blas, Nayarit (Howell 2004), where it is now rather common. In Jalisco, Palomera-Garcia (2006) reports records at a minimum of four locations in southern Jalisco from 1999, 2001, and 2005.

Although lagging a few years behind the Limpkin, Snail Kite’s immigration in Mexico has been similar. Palomera-Garcia (2006) reported a nesting pair at Manzanillo marshes as early as 1998, and Howell (2004) further reported records of three birds (including an adult male and a juvenile) from the Manzanillo marshes in February 2000, which had grown to five birds by February 2002. Howell (2004) further clarifies the nearest Pacific Slope record, mapped by Howell and Webb (1995): four (one adult male, three female/immaatures) at Ometepec Junction, in eastern Guerrero, 18 April 1988, about 700 kilometers east-southeast of Manzanillo. Snail Kites were discovered at San Blas shortly after Manzanillo, being noted there from January 2000 on (Howell 2004). Palomera-Garcia (2006) reports Jalisco’s first Snail Kite report, a sight record from Laguna de Tule, Barra de Navidad, in December 2004; the one photographed at Cruz de Loreto could have been a wanderer, but the species does have the potential to colonize the irrigation canals and scattered marshes, as have the Limkpins in the area.

Limpkin and Snail Kite have remarkable dispersal abilities that are under-appreciated by birders. Limpkin has occurred north to North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland (twice), and Nova Scotia. Snail Kite has a less impressive pattern of vagrancy, but two have reached south Texas (22-26 July 1977; 17-29 May 1998; Lockwood and Freeman 2004), and one adult male was widely enjoyed in South Carolina during at least 14 May–June 2007; the bird dined extensively on crayfish. But vagrancy is one thing, while colonization is yet another, especially for a dietary specialist. The story of colonization of Snail Kites in Panama prompted us to look more carefully at the situation in western Mexico. It turns out there is a story here as well. Pomacea flagellata, the favored food of the kites and Limpkins in southeastern Mexico, had historically been restricted to Veracruz, Chiapas, and the Yucatan Peninsula. However, in 1990, this aquatic snail was discovered in Colima, and its range appears to have since spread to at least Laguna del Rosarito, Jalisco, where Jalisco’s first was recorded when a shell was recovered after the snail was eaten by a Limpkin (Palomera-Garcia 2006). One might assume that the snail is established around San Blas as well, given the presence of Snail Kites and Limpkins there. Birders in western Mexico should be alert for the presence of Pomacea snails at other freshwater locations and likewise should be aware that Snail Kite and Limpkin may continue to expand their ranges. Furthermore, birders in Texas and on the Gulf coasts should be aware that a suitable food source, more so than dispersal ability or any other limitation, may be the limiting factor for those species there. Introduced Pomacea, which could have serious environmental repercussions should they spread, have been found in multiple counties from Houston to southern Texas (Howells 2005), which raises the possiblity that Limpkin or Snail Kite could colonize southern Texas as well!

Larophilic nirvana
Has the reader noted the steady increase in photographs of gulls in this journal over the past decade? From the Pacific Northwest to Baja California, Utah to Arizona, Minnesota to eastern Mexico, and New Hampshire to Florida, this winter was a great one for gulls and those who watch them. Although Ross’s and Black-tailed Gulls were conspicuously absent, two species stole the show: Lesser Black-backed and Slaty-backed Gulls. The Lesser Black-backed Gull invasion of the continent has a saga for well over 50 years. It was first reported in North America in 1934 (Edwards 1935) and first confirmed with a specimen from Assateague Island, Virginia/Maryland, in 1948 (Buckalew 1950). As recently as the late 1970s, it was still a red-letter bird along much of the East Coast. The pace quickened in the 1980s and by the 1990s, triple-digit counts were to be had at select East Coast sites (especially Bucks County, Pennsylvania). In some regions, the species has become so numerous as to escape enumeration, though Riky Davis couldn’t help but remark on high counts in the Southeast (e.g., 52 at Tybee Island, Georgia) this season, and Pennsylvanians bragged of their 315 counted at Peace Valley Park. (Anyone who doubts that the species is nesting in North America should visit the 200 largest Herring Gull colonies north of the Canadian border to prove the case. But this is a winter column, so no more talk of nesting birds.)

Lagging somewhat behind this boom on the East Coast has been a burgeoning number of midwestern and western records. Away from the immediate East Coast, the species drew comment from Florida, Indiana, Illinois... well pretty much every region south of Canada (the Western Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest being notable exceptions). Among several comments on the species in Texas were that El Paso County got its third, and in Colorado counts of five and four at a single location are already prompting yawns; Colorado got its first in 1977 and its second in 1988. In well-watched California, the state’s first came in 1978, followed by five records 1985-1987; the next record in 1994 marked the beginning of annual occurrence for the species, with a total of 23 records by the end of 2003; by the end of 2005, another five had been found. But last winter, the dam broke, and the pattern in California reverberated.
ed throughout the West. At the Salton Sea alone, there were no fewer than nine (possibly more), with two elsewhere in the state for a record total of 11 birds. Baja California birders have been actively seeking the peninsula's first for several years now, and this year at least four were found: three in the Mexicali Valley and one within yards of the Baja California Sur state line. Even in gull-depauperate Arizona, a state first showed up near Palo Verde 10-16 December, while New Mexico got its second at Elephant Butte Lake 24 January–7 February. In Utah, three adults were scattered around the state 8 December–11 February, and two were in British Columbia. South of the border (and away from Baja), there were no other Pacific reports, but eight at a single location in Tamaulipas seemed impressive, and amazingly the species is now considered so commonplace on the Yucatan Peninsula that this season's reports were not detailed. Back on the Atlantic Coast, Christmas Bird Counts found 31 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Grand Bahama Island 15 December.

So, two questions remain. How many years until Hawaii gets its first Lesser Black-backed (our guess is less than three), and where and when will the North American nesting grounds be found? The species likely has multiple colonies in Canada that have been creeping westward. Maybe this year was the year that the westernmost colony had a boom year of recruitment of new adults and new fledglings (a handful of birds west of the Plains states were first-year birds). Oops—did we say no more talk of nesting birds?

Although Slaty-backed Gull originates from the other side of Eurasia, the question puts itself: is Slaty-backed the new Lesser Black-backed? Consider its history in North America. The first Slaty-backed for the Lower 48 was a red-letter adult found in St. Louis, Missouri/Illinois, in December 1983, back when any dark-backed gull there was red-letter. Goetz, Rudler, and Snetsinger (1984) wrote an excellent paper detailing the identification of this outlandish vagrant, with special attention to wing pattern. They describe the known distribution at the time as “uncommon summer and rare fall visitor to western Alaska and Aleutians, rare on north coast [...] Additionally, it has become a fairly regular fall visitor as far east as Anchorage on the Pacific coast (T. G., Tobish, pers. comm.), although it had been unrecorded at Anchorage prior to 1979.” Although recent summer counts of up to 30 at Nome seem high (North American Birds 60: 566), they are matched by counts of 39+ as far back as to 9 July 1984 (Kessel 1989). Even this year, nothing unusual seemed to be afoot in Alaska. Tobish comments: “the only Slaty-backed Gull away from the Bering Sea was a single that was considered a local returner.” Prior to the St. Louis bird, the only record south of Alaska was one at Clover Point, Victoria, British Columbia on 1 March 1974 (Robson 1980); in the years since then, singles have appeared in such diverse locations as Iowa/Illinois (December 1988–February 1989), Brownsville, Texas (February 1992), Niagara, New York (November–December 1992), Mississippi (February 1993), Indiana (March 1993), Key West, Florida (September 2002), and Balmorhea Lake, Texas (December 2003). Reports of Slaty-backed-like gulls have been equally widespread. But surprisingly, in the intervening years, its abundance in Alaska has changed little.

The pattern south of Alaska has clearly changed. In January 2005, California got its overdue first at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, followed by two more at the same location in the next two months. The next winter, 13 more were reported, most of them at Half Moon Bay, and a 2001 photograph from Half Moon Bay surface and was accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. This winter there were “only” two at Half Moon Bay, but either due to increased awareness elsewhere (or, more probably, to a larger “invasion” throughout), seven others were found at four new locations from Monterey County all the way north to Humboldt County (with more to follow in the spring report). Could this widespread invasion be tied to the “amazing” 39+ Glaucous Gulls in northern California? Although recent Slaty-backeds have been restricted to the northern half of the state, California’s chronological first was just accepted when a 5 February 1995 record of a second-winter in Ventura County was re-evaluated and accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. A dark-backed adult gull in Hawaii may have been a Slaty-backed, a species with just a dozen state records. Mexico awaits its first, presumably that a “probable adult” reported 12 December from Playa Bagdad, Tamaulipas does not qualify as the country’s first. To the north of California, Washington had just one this year, its eleventh (10 since 1994).

To the east, an adult photographed in western Iowa 17-21 December, the state’s second, may have been the same bird that provided a potential first for adjacent Nebraska 21 December. In the western Great Lakes, Minnesota’s second (the first was 21 July–14 August 2006; North American Birds 60: 530–531) was furnished by an adult in Dakota County; a fourth-winter in Washington County that moved to the Mississippi River provided a Pierce County, Wisconsin record too. Wisconsin had two other reports as well, but photographs showed that one of these was likely the same bird seen in Pierce County (further demonstrating the importance of securing good images of these birds!). New York had two, one at Niagara Falls 2-3 December, the other photographed at the Monticello Landfill, Sullivan County, 24 January–10 February. In southern New Hampshire, a remarkable landfill that had hosted New England’s first Slaty-backed (found 23 December 2003) had another adult this winter 2-22 January; and, when Illiff, Jeremiah Trimble, and Bob Saxe visited 18 January, they found a third-winter Slaty-backed! Finally, at our easternmost extreme, at least three different adults were at the gulf mecca of St. John’s, Newfoundland this winter, possibly the same as the two adults and one third-winter found there the previous winter (the only previous provincial records). Two decades after the second Lower 48 record, no fewer than eleven Slaty-backed Gulls were found. Can Iceland’s Europe’s first be far behind? So if the occurrence of Slaty-backed Gull is not increasing in Alaska concurrent with its explosion elsewhere, what is going on? Have breeders colonized High Arctic areas east of Alaska? Are “reverse migrants” coming over the pole? Are seaward gulls shortcutting from Kamchatka to California? Or is Alaska vast enough, and the birds’ transit time short enough, that an increase there has not been apparent?

And what of Vega Gull? This (relatively) distinctive form of Herring Gull (Larus argentatus vegae), split as a separate species by some authorities, outnumbers Slaty-backed Gull essentially throughout western Alaska, but it remains little known away from its “normal” range. In Alaska, records away from normal areas of occurrence on the Bering Sea and Aleutians are extremely scarce. To the south, there has been a rash of sightings, many with photographs but few with consensus, from the California coast and spottily east to at least Texas. This year, one at Renton 28 December was considered Washington’s first, while the northern California editors cautioned: “as we gain an understanding of variation in the Herring Gull complex, it will be interesting to determine the status of this taxon in the Region.” Larus argentatus vegae remains an identification
enigma. Most reports thus far have been of immature; why are there not more adults? Not only is it a gull (and thus variable and hard to identify), but we are still quantifying, or rather speculating upon, the normal variation within smithsonianus Herring Gulls, especially those on the West Coast that seem more prone to show a tail band (Howell and King 1998, Howell and Dunn 2007). European Herring Gull (Larus argentatus argentatus), which would seem a likely candidate to occur across much of the continent, may in fact be inseparable in subadult plumages from vegae (Howell and Dunn 2007). And what about the potential of hybridization between smithsonianus and Lesser Black-backed? Could genetic analysis of apparent hybrids resolve some of the riddles we observe in the field? Would more color-band- ing of gulls at their colonies help? Well, if nothing else, North American gull-watchers will continue to have something to discuss on the Frontiers of Field Identification listserv for the next decade or two.

Ignoring all caveats about taxonomic uncertainties in the Thayer’s-Kumlien’s-Iceland complex, we note that “Iceland Gull” was reported in no fewer than ten states west of the Mississippi River this year. Although many of these will be subject to deliberation by state records committees, it seems apparent that some Iceland Gulls do occur as vagrants as far west as the Pacific. From East to West, notable reports this year included: Florida’s eleventh at Perdido Landfill, Escambia County; the sixth and seventh for Alabama; a first-winter bird at Pace Point, Tennessee; “good numbers” in Wisconsin and two in Minnesota; two in Iowa; two in North Dakota; and a possible sixth state record for South Dakota. Farther west and south, Iceland Gulls get really newsworthy. In Texas, single first-winter birds at Houston and El Paso follow just a handful of previously accepted records. The El Paso bird shared its time across the border in New Mexico, furnishing that state’s first, which was quickly followed by its second 100 kilometers to the northwest. Colorado had one or two as well, and Utah probably had that state’s first. Along the Pacific Coast, three reported as Kumlien’s in Alaska included two at Ketchikan in February and one in Cook Inlet; Alaska has had “a handful of document- ed records,” mostly from autumn.” And finally, two different birds were reported from northern California, a state where Iceland Gulls have a notoriously difficult time getting approved by the state records committee, although two recent records (of classic-looking Ice-lands) gained much easier acceptance than such birds did a decade ago. In a winter that seemed so good for the species south and west of its normal range, Ricky Davis noted that “white-winged gulls were practically ab- sent” in the Southeast, with just one report of Iceland; white-winged gulls were generally scarce around the south of the Great Lakes and Pennsylvania as well. But this is not un- usual in a warm winter. Most reports of strong numbers of white-winged gulls in the Mid- west and East came in after the onset of cold weather in mid-January.

Other gull records that caught our eye in- cluded: third-winter Western Gulls in Utah (first state record) and Nevada; a Thayer’s Gull well documented in Provincetown, Massa- chusetts, a state with inexplicably few records; a probable Great Black-backed Gull at Redwood Creek, Humboldt County; an odd-looking gull that resembled a Kelp Gull × Lesser Black-backed Gull cross at Playa Bagdad, Tamaulipas, Mexico (heaven knows what that was); and the Saltom Sea’s first Black-headed Gull. Always among the sexiest of winter gulls (and increasingly so as their habitat melts away), Ivory Gulls reached An- chorage, the Yukon, and the lower Hudson River of New York. The latter bird was an adult enjoyed by a large number of lucky birders who got there on the one day that its presence was known to birders. Two more were in eastern Newfoundland, where one brazen bird “came into a backyard kennel to piffer dog food”—we’ve instructed our own dogs (Chula and Sash) that if they share their food politely with any Pasquali, we’ll make it worth their while in prime rib!

We can’t help but conclude with a wet blan- ket. Gulls are gulls. This means that not only do we have to contend with a dizzying array of age-related plumage variation, we must also sort out an equally dizzying array of individual variation. And a glance at the 25 pages of hybrid gull photos in the superb new Gulls of the Americas (Howell and Dunn 2007) should hopefully inspire caution in even the cockiest lapidophile. Six of those photographs are of presumed Slaty-backed hybrids. An oft-cited paper by Gustafson and Peterjohn (1994) suggests that such hybrids are rare. The authors ascribe mantle shade as ranging from as dark as gmelini Lesser Black-backed to as pale as Vega Herring Gull. King and Carey (1999) offered a con- trary opinion, pointing out that known hybrid pairings have been reported with Glaucoous-winged and Vega Gulls, and that the wide vari- ation in mantle color reported by Gustafson and Peterjohn (1994) is almost certainly due to this hybridization. In fact, the pale individual shown in Figures 6 and 7 of the Gustafson and Peterjohn (1994) article shows bleached wingtips and is almost certainly a hybrid with a paler-winged species such as Glaucoous-winged or Glaucous. Similarly, the Ohio record has been questioned (e.g., Modinow and O’Brien 1996) and does not appear to us to be a pure Slaty-backed Gull. We point this out to stress that not all published information on Slaty- backed Gull seems to be correct and also to stress that hybrid Slaty-backeds are a distinct possibility. Given that Slaty-backed Gulls in eastern Siberia are the most geographically proximate to the United States, and given that those birds on the limit of their range may be the most likely to form hybrid pairings with another species (e.g., Glaucoous-winged Gull), we should be especially cautious in assessing our out-of-range birds. Indeed, a Slaty-backed identified in Maryland 6-23 February 1999 had a wing with an odd pattern and a narrow white trailing edge; some have offered the opinion that it was in fact a hybrid, possibly with Vega Gull. Although it is now clear that Slaty-backed Gull can appear literally anywhere, state au- thorities should always consider the hybrid question first and assure that the bird is consistent with known identification criteria—birds with paler mantles than normal should not be promoted as Slaty-backeds. Much the same could be said for extralimit Lesser Black- backed Gulls, Iceland Gulls, Thayer’s Gulls, Kelp Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, and a number of other species. Not only can hybrids with these species cause confusion, but sometimes hybrid combinations of two totally differ- ent species can end up resembling another (e.g., Kelp Gull × Herring Gull hybrids can re- semble Lesser Black-backed Gulls; Dittman and Cardiff 2005). As more and more rare gulls are sought and found around the country, we would all do well to take a little extra time to ask of each one: Why aren’t you a hybrid?

**Paying ever closer attention**

It is gratifying to see more and more regional reports discussing interesting bird records at levels other than that of species. Talk of maxima Canada Geese can be found from southern California to Rhode Island; elegans and lineatus (group) Red-shouldered Hawks were identified in Idaho and New Mexico, respec- tively; a Brown Pelican in inland Chiapas 21 January 2006 was identified as californicus; and Hector Gomez de Silva commented on an unseasonable Gray Hawk in Durango that re- sembled costaricensis (Gray-lined Hawk), even though that taxon is known no farther
north than Costa Rica! A number of other surmountable frontiers remain open to North American birders: field-identifiable subspecies of Sandhill Cranes, White-winged Scoters, Common Eiders, Green Herons, and many others present challenges that birders have only begun to study. Authoritative identification papers on all of these groups remain to be written (from a North American perspective, at least), and the distributional limits of the taxa remain to be mapped in detail.

While it is gratifying to read so much in these pages about subspecies, it is just as frustrating to see instances where subspecies or subspecies groups are not reported: was the Niagara River Mew Gull not identified to subspecies? What about other Red-shouldered Hawks in Kansas, Nevada, and Mexico City? Are those who find out-of-range Willets not specifically noting the subspecies, even with great new identification sources available (O'Brien 2006, O'Brien et al. 2006)? Or are Regional Editors not adding a word (Western, or inornata) to clarify the identification? (Or is it already obvious that these pertain to Western Willet?) A disappointment to us as New Englanders was that borealis Common Eider received no mention in the New England report. One was found and superbly photographed by James Smith at Provincetown, Massachusetts 28 December 2006–4 January 2007, and another followed at Gloucester 1 January 2007 (ph. D. Pavlik et al.). This subspecies has been known from specimens from Maine (A.O.U. 1937), Massachusetts (Charif 1947, Velt and Petersen 1993), Connecticut (A.O.U. 1937), and New York (Levine 1998) but had not been identified by field birders south of Maine, where at least two recently have been found (D. Lovitch, pers. obs.; L. Bevier, pers. comm.) prior to this year. Are they regular in small numbers among flocks of dresseri Common Eiders in Massachusetts and south to Montauk, New York? Are southerly Common Eiders necessarily the more proximate dresseri, or might some borealis “overshoot,” as do King Eiders (which breed much farther north than borealis)? We won’t really start to understand its status until field birders start tackling this problem—one that some British birders have begun to investigate (Garner and Farrelly 2007). And by the way: Of what subspecies was the Texas Common Eider specimen?

The regional accounts are still reverberating from the Cackling Goose split in 2006. In just a few years, most East Coast states have learned that nominate Cackling Geese are regular migrants or winterers in small numbers. Yet after the split, in many states the species was immediately placed on the review list for the state records committees, which have been scrambling to identify the true temporal and spatial parameters of their occurrence. Had more birders been paying attention to, and documenting, these smaller geese prior to the split, our collective catch-up period would not have been so frantic. Are birders (like politicians) not learning from history and thus doomed to repeat it? On the other side of the coin, the good news from the Canada Goose split—and the hint of further action by the A.O.U. (Banks et al. 2004)—seems to be that some birders have been prompted to work out the subspecies within the two white-cheeked goose species. Baja California and Orange County, California both reported first solid records of Lesser Canada Goose (B. c. parvipes) this season, while the New England report mentioned the identification of several Giant Canada Geese (B. c. maxima) in Rhode Island and two more in the same Orange County flock. Although definitive identification and taxonomic articles for the subspecies within the white-cheeked goose complex have not been published (but stay tuned to this journal), it is good to see North American Birds contributors doing some of the legwork.

Invasive plants & our avian environment

In the Changing Seasons essay for last winter, Brinkley (2006) discussed possible explanations for changes in winter bird distributions. Specifically, the discussion followed some of the causes of the increasingly northerly occurrence of the so-called half-hardies and other birds “overwintering” north (or sometimes west, or upslope, etc.) of expected ranges. Brinkley cited a paper by Vallela and Bowen (2006), which analyzed Christmas Bird Count data from Cape Cod and concluded that the “local amelioration of winters, as well as global-scale warming, have been followed by clear shifts in the winter avifauna of Cape Cod, with southern species becoming more common and northern species less so.” But other factors are surely involved in the shifting ranges of such birds as well; Brinkley (2006) mentions habitat modification (succession, destruction, or in some cases, creation), stochastic weather events, breeding success/failure, “reverse-migrant” phenomena, misoriented migrants, and observer effort. Most likely, surely, changes in bird distribution occur because of a combination of these factors, as well as others we have not even begun to consider Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, Project FeederWatch, eBird, and the many sightings found within the pages of this journal can give us a more refined understanding of where birds are—why they are found where they are is a far more challenging set of questions.

But to the current of weather, climate, and vagrancy, which occupies so much of our interpretive framework in birding, and nowhere more so than in North American Birds, we would add another factor worthy of consideration: the proliferation of non-native and invasive plants, especially those that produce large quantities of fruit eaten by birds. The explosion of invasive plants is certainly having an impact in New England and most other places. In the Northeast, for instance, plants such as Oriental Bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus), various species of honeysuckle (Lonicera spp.), Russian Olive (Eleagnus angustifolia), Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora), Euonymus spp., Porcelain-barberry (Ameloplosis brevipendula), and others provide an abundant supply of foodstuffs when native foods are less readily available. They often grow in disturbed areas and produce fruit in larger quantities than many native species. Meanwhile, climate change, development, disturbance, and even such factors as seed dispersal by frugivorous birds themselves continue to promote the spread and increase of a number of these plants.

It has long been understood that such plants could increase survivorship for some species—and “reverse migrant” and “lurking” birds are among those associated with invasive exotic plantings. Furthermore, these dense patches of foodstuffs may increase our detection of said species by keeping them alive (long enough to be found), concentrate them in such locations that birders are learning to check, and perhaps because they tend to flourish in disturbed areas close to humans. No matter how the half-hardy gets there, once it finds the food, it can survive, and it can then be detected by the growing legions of birders. Many have opined, too, that species such as Rufous Hummingbirds have changed their winter distribution in response to artificial food sources, including both feeders and plantings. Why would a winter-season frugivore (or nectarivore) fly to Central America if it doesn’t have to—particularly in ever-warmer winters? California offers a number of examples: orioles wintering in Eucalyptus groves, coastal fields of fennel holding fall-migrant passerines, and Mediterranean grasses in the desert supporting grassland-nesting species that were probably much rarer prior to
invasion, such as Western Meadowlark. From coast to coast, examples of native birds exploiting non-native plants are many.

In Portland, Maine, in one of Lovitch’s local patches called Dragon Field (an old municipal landfill), a Gray Catbird spent the winter of 2006-2007. Lovitch checks this site weekly and, in fact, each time a catbird was present in a corner of the park. Due to the frequency of its visits, and the behavior (feeding within the same row of shrubs) of this bird, we are reasonably certain that this bird was present since at least mid-September, when most of our other catbirds had moved on. Thus this catbird may have remained from the summer breeding area or close nearby through the winter months. Between October and April, the bird fed on Staghorn Sumac (Rhhus hirta), Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, and “bush” honeysuckle—either Morrow’s (Lonicera morrowii), Amur (L. maackii), Tatorian (L. tatorica), or Bell’s (L. X bella), all rather difficult to distinguish. All except the sumac are invasive plants here. In early April, this catbird began to sing, well over a month before any other catbirds had arrived in Maine. When other catbirds had arrived, this bird was already on territory and likely therefore had the “home field” advantage. Of course, without having hauled the bird, there’s no way to confirm whether or not this was the bird that successfully bred here this summer. Is this Gray Catbird an example of a “pioneer” proposed by Brinkley (2006)? Although it was an extremely mild winter, it seems unlikely that this bird would have survived without the non-native plantings (or southward migration). A few kilometers away, in a park on the urban Portland peninsula, two other catbirds wintered, there feeding on Russian Olive, Oriental Bittersweet, bush honeysuckle, Multiflora Rose, crabapple (Malus spp.), Mountain Ash (Pyrus americana), and hawthorn (Crataegus sp.).

Even without speculation on any long-term changes in a species’ wintering range or migratory patterns, it seems clear that invasive plant food sources are playing a role in both survivorship and detection of half-hardies, whether they are early, late, lingering, or just plain lost. In the same season, birders in New Hampshire noted a Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Odiorne State Park feeding heavily on Oriental Bittersweet and buckthorn (Rhamnus sp.), while online discussions in Massachusetts debated the value of invasive plants and included considerations of what lingering half-hardies were observed eating them.

There is no question that our birds are eating invasive plants; and there is no question that birds are keenly interested in a number of these birds. One study (White 1989) suggests that passerines’ use of exotic fruits in New England and the mid-Atlantic states has increased from 13% of fruit taxa recorded in frugivore stomachs in the period from 1881-1950 to 33% by the 1980s. Laleur (2006) found American Robins and European Starlings were as likely to take Glossy Buckthorn (Frangula rhannus) fruits as they were to take Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum), even though the buckthorn was unrecorded in robins’ diets prior to 1950. Morrow’s Honey- suckle was found to be one of the fruits most frequently consumed by American Robins and European Starlings 1988-1993, despite the fact that it was not recorded in pre-1950 diets of these species (Whitmer 1996).

So what were frugivores up to in winter 2006-2007? According to the regional reports, large numbers of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings erupted into Florida and down into Mexico. In the Torreon area, in the state of Coahuila, Mexico, roadside mulberry (Morus sp.) plantings helped to sustain American Robins and Cedar Waxwings. Mountain Bluebirds and Varied Thrushes were on the move in the West, Midwest, south-central Canada, and elsewhere; the latter, when found out of range in winter, often appears in backyards or around ornamental plantings. Orioles, notably Baltimore Orioles in the East and in Southern California, continue to be found with increasing frequency during the winter season. In Alaska, Thebe Tobish noted that Bohemian Waxwings once again wintered in “good numbers” in Anchorage, thanks to the planting of non-native fruiting species for landscaping. While two Gray Catbirds wintered in Berks County, Pennsylvania, surviving on Multiflora Rose, an Ash-throated Flycatcher in Saco, Maine was seen feeding on Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, and apple (Malus sp.); Virginia’s Ash-throated was found in a copse of sumac and blackberry (Rubus sp.). Clearly, even the little bit of anecdotal reporting on frugivory in these pages suggests that these fruits sustained birds through the winter, whether in extralimital or more normal settings.

This topic is a fascinating one—and one that has never laid due consideration in this column. We will attempt to rectify that in the pages that follow. However, we should restrict the discussion here to invasive plants. Thousands of non-native, or “exotic,” plants are planted in North America, with varying impacts on birds, but only a fraction of these plants will survive without gardener’s care. A small fraction of garden plants move beyond the backyard. Of those, fewer will spread aggressively and become invasive. Generally, we refer to a plant species as “invasive” when it outcompetes native plant communities. Though there are many invasive plants that produce vast quantities of seeds for granivorous birds to eat—Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum), Spotted Knapweed (Centauraea cyanus), Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), for instance—the seed biomass of these invasives does not appear to concentrate particular bird species in relatively small areas. By comparison, fruit is more easily studied and does appear to concentrate birds in such a way. For much of this discussion, we use the thickets of eastern Massachusetts as a case in point, mostly because the area is familiar to us. We posed two questions for ourselves. First: Are invasive plants good for birds? And second: Are invasive plants good for birds?

**Are invasive plants good for birds?**

It does seem that invasive plants have been good for birds in some locations. Let’s consider eastern Massachusetts. In a highly urbanized environment, packed with people and traffic, many of the best birding opportunities are to be found in small remnants of green space, in dense thicketts surrounded by the concrete jungle of Greater Boston. What little open space remains can be a magnet for birds—from the most common of migrants to the rarest of vagrants: concentrated first by factors such as weather and geography, birds gather in these remaining patches of habitat and eat whatever there is to be eaten. More often than not, these thickets contain non-native, invasive plants: Oriental Bittersweet, Multiflora Rose, various Euonymus species, Glossy Buckthorn, privet (Ligustrum spp.), Japanese Honeysuckle (L. japonica), and bush honeysuckle. Birds eat these fruits and survive long enough to be discovered by eastern Massachusetts’ many dedicated birders. Christmas Bird Counts and November Big Days are much the more exciting for these birds. Birders search thickets of bittersweet in November for rarities such as Ash-throated Flycatchers and search fields overtaken by Multiflora Rose for lingering birds such as catbirds in midwinter. And we forget easily how exciting Northern Mockingbirds and Carolina Wrens were to New Englanders a few generations ago; mockingbirds have marched northward in step with Multiflora Rose (Stiles 1982), while the wrens
are now common in the thickets of eastern Massachusetts.

In almost any urbanized area of the East, one could find similar examples. Even in South Florida, where winter hardness is not the issue it is in Boston, non-native fruit-bearing plants, both invasive and non-, have certainly increased birding opportunities. For better or for worse, however, some of these “new” birding opportunities include non-native birds. From Red-whiskered Bulbul (Pycnonotus jocosus) to a variety of psittaci- cids, many “new” species are part of today’s birding in South Florida thanks to “new” species of fruiting plants now found in the region. In the West, Himalayan Blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) forms dense thickets in riparian areas of California’s Central Valley, and these areas harbor many of the Orange-crowned Warblers that winter in these regions—and also most of the wintering vagrant warblers found here, along with Wrentits, Zonotrichia brunneonotata, Fox Sparrows, and Spotted Towhees. Based on these examples (and many others), it is clear that these non-native plants provide opportunities for birding that almost certainly would not be available with native plants.

Are invasive plants good for birds?
The much more difficult question is whether birds themselves benefit from the proliferation of invasives that bear consumable fruit. Fortunately, the question interests ornithologists, and several good studies have been conducted that merit mention. One study in central New Jersey (White and Stiles 1992) found that introduced species of fruits accounted for 0.4–14% of fruit biomass and 3–30% of the lowness fruit biomass in birds’ diets. In winter in such areas, introduced plant species can account for as much as 50% of the overall fruit biomass available to birds. Highly persistent, low-quality fruits, which mature late in the fall (after the passage of most migrants), now rival native species in fruit diets of many frugivorous birds in late fall and winter, based on analyses of stomach contents (White and Stiles 1992). Clearly, then, there are a lot of fruits out there being produced by invasive plants, and there are a lot of birds eating them.

One of the few relatively clear connections of a native bird being positively influenced by the introduction of a new food source is the well-known example of Northern Mockingbirds and Multiflora Rose (Stiles 1982). In this case, the rose appears to be the key factor in allowing pioneering Northern Mockingbirds to survive northern winters. Stiles (1982) showed that it would be unlikely for mockingbirds to maintain the positive energy balance needed for survival in the northern parts of its range without Multiflora Rose fruit. On the other hand, the secondary compounds that permit the persistence of Multiflora Rose fruits (Drummond 2005) may make these fruits unpalatable to other birds. Nevertheless, in the case of the mockingbird, this bird has proceeded northward much more rapidly than changes in mean monthly winter temperatures, and the proliferation of Multiflora Rose (which also provides good nesting habitats) seems to be the reason. However, Drummond (2005) postulates that increasing abundance of Multiflora Rose could dramatically disrupt the relationship between Cedar Waxwings and a specific Viburnum in Maine (Drummond identifies it as V. opulus, but we suspect V. trilobum, High-bush Cranberry, is the relevant species). There is at least the potential for negative impacts on the winter diet of waxwings and on the dispersal of this plant’s seeds.

Valiela and Bowen (2006) found that the changes in the number of southern species in Cape Cod Christmas Counts—including some of our so-called “hard-hardies”—seemed unrelated to changes in local habitats, since the increase also took place in aquatic species whose preferred habitats did not change materially in these areas. However, habitat changes at Cape Cod in the past 100 years or so clearly include the proliferation of invasive plants. If climate change, both local and global, is the primary factor in altering birds ranges, then the question begs to be asked: Just how are the fruits provided by invasive plants? Looking beyond our field observations of birds eating invasive plants, we should carefully consider a number of other issues and influences in answering the question of whether or not invasive plants are indeed good for birds.

Selective foraging
While it may not be a conscious decision, we know birds “choose” what they want to eat. Some species fine-tune their search image to a very specific range. “Choices” are likely made by sight (hence the bright color of many fruits) and not via other senses. This “selective foraging” has evolved over many thousands of years and can be very specific in some species. Neotropical hummingbirds that can only feed on one particular blossom are extreme examples; however, even seeming generalists such as Cedar Waxwings and American Robins are known to “pick and choose” their foodstuffs. “The food that birds eat over their lifetimes or even a single day is a complex result of numerous foraging decisions” (Wheelwright 1996). Color, secondary compounds, nutrition, seed size, and other variables can affect the fruit selection of frugivores (Jung 1992). How does the proliferation of invasive plants affect these decisions? Are “our” birds being fooled into eating something that they “shouldn’t” be? In fact, a fair amount of research has been conducted on fruit preferences of frugivorous birds, at least in temperate regions. Cedar Waxwings and American Robins are frequent subjects for such research. Some studies suggest that Cedar Waxwings prefer fruits high in sugar and low in lipids, while American Robins—like other thrushes—prefer fruits rich in both (Witmer 1996, Yong and Moore 1997). Differences between foraging behavior and food choice can even vary between individuals and age groups of the same species (Jung 1992, Stevens 1985). In another study, Cedar Waxwings seemed to be more opportunistic, eating whatever was most abundant. In the laboratory setting, however, they prefer small, red berries (Brush 1990). Oriental Bittersweet and most honeysuckle species are abundant and are small and red. Cedar Waxwings certainly eat them. In fact, they are eating so much of one of these, that it is even changing their plumage! Morrow’s Honeysuckle contains abundant rhododaxanthin (a carotenoid), which has been shown to be the cause of the abrant orange color seen with increasing regularity in the tail tips of Cedar Waxwings in the Northeast, usually in juvenile plumages (Brush 1990). Is there a cost to this change? Although rarely seen in adults, could this recent—and relatively sudden (Brush 1990)—change affect the fitness of one of our favorite frugivores? Razoaxanthin from bush honeysuckle has also recently been implicated in abrant plumages in Baltimore Orioles in Ontario and elsewhere, and across the East and Midwest, there have been reports of Yellow and Kentucky Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, basic-plumaged Scarlet Tanagers, and White-throated Sparrows in which a carotenoid, likely rhododaxanthin, has apparently changed yellow-pigmented feathers to orange. The potential evolutionary impacts of such changes, on mate attraction or physical fitness, are unknown (Flinn et al. 2007).

Several studies (e.g., Stevens 1985, McPher son 1987, Witmer 1996) have demonstrated that there is much variability in how birds select food. How does limiting the potential choices by reducing biodiversity affect the
overall diet of our frugivores? Lafleur (2006) found that European Starlings and American Robins actually preferred invasive fruits to native ones (especially Autumn Olive) in controlled experiments using three native and three invasive species of fruits. Other studies using other species of birds and plants have produced different results. In a study in Maine, frugivores preferentially consumed fruit from the invasive Tatarian Honeysuckle and the native Silky Dogwood (Cornus amomum) but did not discriminate between the invasive Multiflora Rose and a native viburnum during choice trials. In this case, these two native species had the higher caloric content, yet the energy density of these two natives did not correlate with fruit removal or fruit preferences (Drummond 2005).

**The value of invasive plants**

Even invasives such as the much-maligned “Common Reed” or Phragmites (Phragmites australis), which outcompete native wetland environments, can have some value for native birds. In New Jersey, for example, Phragmites wetlands provide nesting habitat for dozens of species, including a few State Threatened and Endangered Species for breeding, wintering, and migration stopover habitat (Kane 2000). Before they were destroyed by well-meaning state agencies, large stands of Phragmites on the Virginia coast hosted enormous roosts of Bobolinks—as many as 40,000 around Labor Day each autumn, along with hundreds of Eastern Kingbirds and, later in the season, countless Tree Swallows. Purple Loosestrife is another wetland invasive, but yes, it does feed Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and later in the fall, migrant sparrows (see Benoît 1999, Madow 2005, Whitl 1999 for these and other examples). If “Phag” and loosestrife have their benefits, other bird-food producing invasives probably also have some redeeming qualities. Any birder who has visited South Florida knows about Brazilian Pepper (Schinus terebinthifolius). Dense, impenetrable tracts of this invasive from South America produce large quantities of fruit. While dispersal of the seed seems to occur mostly via racoons and opossums, bird species, particularly American Robins, also feed on this fruit and facilitate the dispersal of the seed. Many other native bird species feed on the fruit of Brazilian Pepper. However, significant ecological consequences have been detected. A Breeding Bird Survey in Everglades National Park showed a lower density of breeding species and individuals in Brazilian Pepper forests than native plant habitats. Furthermore, it has been suggested that wading bird rookeries in mangroves may be abandoned when surrounded by forest of pepper (Florida DEP). Brazilian Pepper produces a wealth of food for some species—but at clear cost to others.

Climate change, forest fragmentation, suburbanization, bird feeders, and other anthropogenic factors have also coincided with the period of expansion of certain bird species. Is it possible to eliminate these variables when discussing how closely tied these species might be to invasive plants? Unfortunately, we cannot. In eastern Massachusetts, wintering Hermit Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, and other half-hardies have certainly increased. All eat fruit, and all are observed eating the fruit of invasive species. However, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice, and Northern Cardinals, among others, have also increased considerably in the area. Is this because of the new abundance of fruit? That seems unlikely. Are the factors—such as suburbanization, bird feeders, and global climate change—that we often “credit” with facilitating their range expansion also the ultimate cause of the range expansion of frugivores as well? Northern Cardinals, for example, have been expanding northward since the 1800s—likely due to habitat changes, bird-feeding, and moderating winter temperatures, not primarily because of invasive plants. Climate change in particular seems difficult to rule out as the potential ultimate factor in allowing these species to spread northward. According to Merriam’s (1894) “Laws of Temperature Control of the Distribution of Land Animals and Plants,” animals and plants are restricted in northward distribution by the total quantity of heat during the season of growth and reproduction (the “life zone” model). Therefore, increasingly warm temperatures would not only spur more northward colonization by plants—both native and non—but by birds as well (see Valicla and Bowen 2006).

The nutritive value of exotic fruiting plants is a subject of much study, though there is still much to be learned. It is well known that Oriental Bittersweet and many other invasive plants’ fruit are low in lipids (White and Stiles 1992), the building blocks for the fat deposits that birds need in order to migrate. If an isolated habitat in which a migrant has sought refuge contains only lipid-poor foods, would that then force a bird to consume vast quantities only to stay alive? Furthermore, caloric content (both sugars and lipids) is only one part of a fruit’s nutritive value. Fruit selection is also based on nutrients and secondary compounds that the fruits contain (Witmer 1996). Many frugivores have specific digestive and physiological adaptations that allow them to process certain fruits more efficiently than others (Witmer 1996, Place and Stiles 1992). Yellow-rumped Warblers and Tree Swallows, for instance, are among a small group of birds in temperate North America that regularly eat waxy fruits. “Yellow-rumps” feed extensively on plants in the genus Myrica (Northern Bayberry, M. pensylvanica, and Wax Myrtle, M. cerifera) in autumn through early spring. In fact, the wintering range of Yellow-rumped Warblers coincides with the entire range of these Myrica species—hence the name “Myrtle Warbler.” Other waxy fruits, such as Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron radicans) are also important, especially beyond the range of Myrica. Yellow-rumped Warblers possess several gastrointestinal traits that permit efficient saturated fat assimilation from the wax of these fruits. These persistent fruits provide an energy-rich resource that, thanks to their adaptations, allow Yellow-rumped Warblers and Tree Swallows to winter farther north than any of their relatives (Place and Stiles 1992). What happens when Oriental Bittersweet and Japanese Honeysuckle thicken a thicket of Northern Bayberry in eastern Massachusetts? Myrica species might be the only fruits that are available in large enough quantities and that provide a dense enough caloric supply for them to survive. Are we trading our wintering population of Yellow-rumped Warblers for the occasional overwintering Townsend’s Warbler? In other words, are any of these “new” plentiful food sources the avian equivalent of a steady diet of Doritos? Sure, we could live on Doritos for a while, but the long-term costs are many (see below, on migration). For one thing, many of these plants have evolved to produce many fruits, which means less invested (energy, nutrients, etc.) in each fruit (N. Lafleur, pers. comm.). Furthermore, birders’ detection of these birds in some cases is probably a function of the food source being so nutritionally poor that birds are forced to spend more time consuming these foods. Extensive feeding might also increase the chances of predation, further diminishing the value of these plants to frugivores.

A case in point: Maine’s first winter record of a Wood Thrush was discovered in January by Lovitch. It was seen feeding on invasive Multiflora Rose and native Beach (or Virginia) Rose (Rosa virginiana)—but it ignored invasive Rugosa Rose (Rosa rugosa) and native Staghorn Sumac. It would come to the edge, gulp a number of fruits, and then sneak off.
into the deepest, darkest impenetrable thicket. If the observer walked by during one of these "rest" periods, the bird would likely have gone undiscovered. One out of two species the bird was observed feeding on was invasive, but a full feeding selection study was not performed here. But what if the only food sources were nutritionally lacking? Would the bird have to feed more often—improving its chances of detection (and predation)?

Invasive plants often thrive due to a lack of natural enemies—insects. Insects are a vital part of the diets of most birds, especially during the nesting season, when even frugivorous birds consume much insect matter. If invasive plants host fewer insects, do birds find less of the protein and nutrition necessary to sustain fitness and raise young? Are the birds observed eating Oriental Bittersweet in migration eating because that's all they can find—fewer native fruit sources, but also fewer bugs? About 120 species of insects are found feeding on Purple Loosestrife in Europe, but only 12 were found in a study in southern Manitoba (see http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/inhsreports/autumn-01/Resting.html). Non-native trees have also been found to support fewer species of insects than natives (Bessinger and Osborne 1982). While thickets in eastern Massachusetts harbor few insectivores in midwinter, many migrants—including some that are predominately frugivores—need some amount of insect matter to provide a balanced diet. Birds feeding on fruit are thought to gain energy more quickly than those feeding on insects (hence the reasoning used to explain the switch from insects to fruit by many passerines during migration), but the lack of insects on these plants would be even more problematic during breeding season (N. Lafleur, pers. comm.). That once again calls into question whether or not invasive plants are truly good for birds—at least in the long term.

Some fruits contain potentially toxic secondary compounds. A frugivore may only be able to consume a certain amount of a given fruit within a certain period of time to avoid accumulation of any single compound (Levey and Karasov 1989). What happens when the biodiversity is limited to the point that there are so few fruit options that a bird has must ingest toxic matter—or starve? "Persistent fruits" persist longer due to lower fat content, fewer nutrients, more secondary compounds (that make them less palatable to frugivores), and/or more resistance to damage by microbes and invertebrates (Reichard et al. 2001, Drummond 2005). These persistent fruits are often said to be of "low quality." Therefore, most frugivores "choose" high-quality fruits when they are available, turning only to the lower-quality, persistent fruits during winter, when other options are unavailable (White and Stiles 1992, Drummond 2003). Due to the prevalence of "low-quality" fruits in invasive plants, we are of the opinion that their overall, long-term value to native birds is low.

The impacts on movement and migration

It is impossible to argue that invasive plants don't compete with, and often outcompete, native plant species. In the case of the thickets of eastern Massachusetts, the various aforementioned species are seen outcompeting other native fruit-producing plants. The argument that "native fruit" doesn't last as long isn't entirely factual. It is true that many native species, such as viburnums and blueberries, don't last very long before being completely consumed by birds. In fact, many of these lipid and/or sugar-rich foods are devoured by migrants fueling up for the first (or next) leg of a journey. Birds need calorie-rich foodstuffs to pack on the layers of fat that they will need to burn during each extended leg of migration. The need to increase fat loads requires more foraging time and a longer stopover for refueling migrants (Yong and Moore 1997). A number of native fruit species ripen in late summer and early fall and become available, just before the onset of, or during the, southbound migration of many facultatively frugivorous birds (Baird 1980).

So what happens when a thicket of native viburnum is swallowed up by an explosion of Oriental Bittersweet? Low in fat—hence the winter-long persistence of the fruit—do some of these exotic food sources fail to provide the calories needed to produce the necessary fat reserves? What if the preponderance of invasive plants were reducing the amount of native, lipid-rich fruit (an oversimplification for sake of argument here; some invasive plants are high in lipids, some native fruits are not, of course) and essentially preventing a bird from migrating? Stopover ecology studies show us that birds work to gain sufficient weight before leaving. Fruit is a critical aspect of a migrant's diet, as it provides the calories needed to store fat for the energetic demands of migration (Parrish 1997). What if they can't pack on the pounds (well, grams)? A Gray Catbird landing one dawn in a thicket of invasives may not be able to leave, even if it wanted to. What if certain invasives were in fact causing birds to stop migrating? Call it a "Couch Potato Effect." Maybe the reverse-migrant Yellow-breasted Chat, lingering Gray Catbird, or pioneering Ruby-crowned Kinglet simply cannot leave? At the very least, low-quality food would likely cause birds to reduce travel distance to migration. Yong and Moore (1997) write: "As stopover habitat is transformed or degraded, the cost of migration increases, and the likelihood of successful migration is jeopardized. High-quality stopover areas probably are especially critical before and after migrants cross ecological barriers." How do invasive plants affect the utility of such stopover locations, such as the thickets of eastern Massachusetts?

Biodiversity and the Big Picture

Bird communities of residential and urban areas contain higher densities of birds than outlying natural areas, according to Bessinger and Osborne (1982), whose study in Ohio found a 6:1 ratio of non-native to native trees and shrubs in an urban setting resulted in 1.3 times the amount of birds when compared to a nearby forest. Nearly half of these birds, however, were European Starlings and House Sparrows. In fact, the six most abundant species in urban sites composed 78% of the individuals and 83.5% of the avian biomass. Meanwhile, the six most abundant species in wooded areas were found to account for only 45.8% of the individuals and 21% of the avian biomass. They concluded that "dominance by a few species that can rapidly colonize and reproduce in artificial habitats is characteristic of urban bird communities in North America." In fact, they found a 28% decline in species richness in urban areas. Yes, House Sparrow flocks act as wonderful magnets for wayward Dickcissels, but is such a tremendous increase in this invasive bird really good for birding? Is the reduction in bird biodiversity linked to the reduction in plant biodiversity as well?

Thinking back to our eastern Massachusetts example, we recall that many of these thickets are becoming frighteningly low on plant biodiversity. Ecology 101 teaches us that biodiversity is good. Biodiversity is in short supply in these thickets, and the addition of a vibrant here, a half-hardy there, and the colonization by one or two other bird species hardly seems to make up for virtual monocultures of foreign vegetation. This may be good for a few bird species—and for a few misguided individuals of other species. However, what is the ecological cost? What species no longer find valuable resources in these thickets? Are they able to adapt? If not, are they declining or just moving elsewhere?
In other words, what is the long-term impact on bird biodiversity—the very engine that moves the pastime of birding? Introduced species are a threat to overall biodiversity: one of the few facts we can ascertain in all of this thinking-out-loud. Therefore, we cannot consider the addition of one new food source to be either good or bad on its own right. We must consider the broader ramifications.

Invasive plants, whether they produce fruit or not, have replaced native species. Those replaced native species, whether in disturbed areas or not, have a role to play; a niche to fill, in the ecosystem. What niches are no longer filled now that the biodiversity of a specific habitat has been much reduced? What birds depended on food sources provided only by the now-absent native? How is the ecosystem affected? There is significant evidence that links invasive plants to a range of problems, from impeding the progress of forest succession to short-circuiting a healthy food chain. For instance, there are numerous examples of invasive plants that have altered communities of insects, which can exert a strong, negative effect on insectivores (Reichard et al. 2001), and invasive grasses are wreaking havoc on biodiversity from the Great Basin to the Southeast, limiting the diversity of native food sources for birds, while increasing the frequency and severity of fires (John Sterling, pers. comm.). Examples are nearly uncountable.

What would happen if the crop of Oriental Bittersweet, for example, were to fail one season for some unknown reason (although, with this plant, that does seem unlikely)? Has this, or any other invasive species that we have discussed, become such a large percentage of the biomass that its failure would doom hundreds of birds? Would Gray Catbirds, for whatever reason (fingerling, tardy, pioneer, etc.) in the thickets of eastern Massachusetts just drop dead one cold November day? That seems unlikely, but if the invasive plants are so important for birds, why wouldn’t their failure be as catastrophic as their success has been considered at least partly beneficial?

For many of us who live and bird in seminatural environments, we must confront some rather grim realities. Our last patches of birdable habitat may not be “good” for birds in the big picture, but they’re some of the last nearby green spaces left that produce birds we can enjoy. We find it impossible to argue that a new parking lot is more valuable than the last stand of vegetation, no matter how non-native. The only port in a storm is better than no port at all. So when invasive plants are used as an excuse for further development in already developed areas—such as when developers are allowed to plow under more and more acres of the already drastically reduced Hackensack Meadowlands of New Jersey because it’s only Phragmites!—we lose more and more ground in our effort to preserve whatever we can for birds. In the case of the thickets of eastern Massachusetts, it seems impossible to argue that we should build another Dunkin’ Donuts in the last undeveloped patch of habitat, just because it’s “only buckthorn!” A more pressing, and problematic, question is whether we should replace the buckthorn with something native.

Earlier, we discussed the Gray Catbird that overwintered last year in Portland, Maine. Assuming that bird successfully fledged young, and there was a genetic or “learned” trait that caused this bird not to migrate, then it would, in theory, be possible to develop into its own population—especially in the light of climate change. Well, we can throw that hypothesis out the window in this case, as Dumetella carolinensis dragonfieldensis did not survive—no Gray Catbirds were seen at this area after early October of this year. But what if it had? The sumac, Multiflora Rose, and Oriental Bittersweet that it consumed would not be present when a wandering flock of Bohemian or Cedar Waxwings arrived. In early March in Maine, persistent fruits such as Staghorn Sumac and rose hips feed and fuel early returning facultative migrants, such as American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds. Therefore, there is a cost to other species associated with the fruit consumption by this catbird—a bird that is “not supposed” to be there.

There are surely many other costs, hypothetical and real, associated with invasive plants, some of them quite complex. Many of the invasive plants that provide fruits for birds are spread by birds—one of the reasons that they’re so invasive. Simply put, birds spread fruit seeds faster and farther than do other vectors (Drummond 2005, Reichard et al. 2001). Larger quantities of fruit, higher germination rates, and widespread dispersal by birds all compound this issue. These plants become established in new areas, even new regions. A species that has become invasive in one region is significantly more likely to become invasive elsewhere, and dispersal by birds is one factor that can facilitate that (Herron et al., in ms.). Oriental Bittersweet, for example, does not usually become established in unbroken, mature forest. However, fragmentation and disturbance of this and other habitats allows these species to take root, survive, and sometimes flourish. At a local park in Yarmouth, Maine, Oriental Bittersweet has established itself on a sunny riverside slope (a natural “edge”). The tangle has progressed rapidly, engulfing tree after tree, steadily marching into the deeper woods. While Bayview Preserve is hardly an undisturbed old growth forest, it is home to mature woodland species such as Red-eyed Vireos and Ovenbirds. As the edge marches inward, so do such edge-loving and potentially problematic species such as Brown-headed Cowbirds. Opposite the river, the disturbed habitat of suburban yards hosts a number of invasive plants, such as bittersweet. If a local resident had controlled a patch of bittersweet there, would that seed have been available to be carried across the river in the droppings of a local robin? (Again, this is an oversimplification—the seeds are often carried much farther.) A little farther south, Oriental Bittersweet is overwhelming the native vegetation of a critically important nesting island. Tangles of bittersweet are encroaching onto the sandy beaches where colonies of Roseate Terns and Least Terns make their home. Meanwhile, bittersweet is crawling over the stunted canopy, rendering parts of the woods impenetrable and useless for the wading birds that breed here—including the northernmost breeding Glossy Ibis and Little Blue Herons on the East Coast. While vines are mostly edge species, invasive shrubs are often successful in secondary forest conditions, and some species of invasive trees have successfully penetrated mature forests (Herron et al., in ms.), so few habitats are truly safe from the potential impacts of invasive species.

And this may be the most pressing question we raise here: Does our tolerance of invasive plants in the few urbanized locations where they might seem “good for birding” contribute to the threat that invasive plants pose to biodiversity? The purpose of a plant spending its energy in making fleshy fruits is to attract birds to eat them in order to disperse their seeds far and wide, encouraging rapid range expansions (Lafluer 2006). We must then also consider the possibility that if our native birds are indeed “choosing” the invasive plants over native fruits, the native fleshy-fruited plants may be outcompeted for dispersal services (Lafluer 2006), further impacting biodiversity, and greatly impacting the potential food supplies offered by many native fruiting plants. Moreover, large quantities of fruit are also feeding species that may themselves directly or indirectly impact native birds. European Starlings are invasive birds that will feed read-

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2 221
ify on many species of invasive plants, especially Oriental Bittersweet. In fact, 84% of seeds collected from starting fecal samples were from this species (Lafleur 2006). Lafleur (2006) also demonstrated that the starting is likely to adopt a novel food more quickly than robins when no other choices are present, as is the case with many generalist foragers (Reichard 2001). European Starling populations could well be strengthened by the fruit of invasive plants as well, to the point that they further outcompete native secondary cavity nesters (see Renne et al. 2002, Bessinger and Osborne 1982). And what about Eastern Chipmunks and Red Squirrels? Both of these critters will feed on the nuts and nestlings of birds, at least on occasion. The supplemental food provided by invasive plants augmenting their survival as well, which, come spring, will add more nest-predation pressures for native songbirds?

Let us not also forget the significant and well-documented economic cost of invasive plants. For example, $34 billion are lost or spent annually in the United States to control “noxious weeds”—and an estimated $13.7 billion against “non-indigenous plants, birds, reptiles, fish, arthropods, mollusks, and microbes” (Pimental et al. 2000). “Invasive species are the second leading cause—after habitat loss—of species being listed as endangered or threatened, and infest more than 100 million acres across the United States,” according to Lori Williams of the National Invasive Species Council (<http://www.weedcenter.org/inv_plant_info/impacts.html>). Meanwhile, invasive plants infest an additional 700,000 hectares of wildlife habitat each year (Babbitt 1998), and many of the worst invasive plants are thought to be bird dispersed (Cronk and Fuller 1995). Invasive plants can also alter nutrient and even hydrologic cycles, and change the frequency and intensity of fires (Reichard et al. 2001). Worth a few more Gray Catbirds on New England Christmas counts!

Parting thoughts

Though we are not plant ecologists or avian nutritionists—and so often offer our thoughts in question form here—we do, like the readers of this journal, spend a fair amount of time birding, and in our lives, we’ve seen stark changes in the distribution of numerous species, both of birds and plants. We know that birds, sometimes in large numbers, move into a new area to take advantage of a food resource. It is hard to imagine that frugivores wouldn’t expand their range and grow their populations in response to a “new” source of food. However, questions regarding the nutritional value of some of these species, the overwhelming of important native food sources, increases in potential nest predators or competitors, and so on should cause us to pause before suggesting that invasive plants are “good for birds.” (The editor of this journal, in fact, admits to having planted Variegated Porcelainberry in his Virginia garden after witnessing a host of late-autumn vagrants foraging on the berries at Cape May, New Jersey. He has since, however, removed the invasive vine!) Furthermore, other variables, such as forest fragmentation, suburbanization and other development, and climate change certainly play a larger role in affecting the distribution of birds. How significant are these issues when compared to the addition of a non-native abundance of food? Would there be Carolina Wrens and Hermit Thrushes in the thickets of eastern Massachusetts nowadays, even without buckthorn, bittersweet, and their ilk? After all, there are Northern Cardinals, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Tufted Titmice here now.

We had hoped to offer strong conclusions on these and related questions. Unfortunately, hard facts have proved difficult to come by. Few studies have been conducted on the question of whether or not invasive plants are, in fact, good for birds. Rigorously quantified studies on the matter are scarce, as Reichard et al. (2001) emphasize. Christmas Bird Counts—with their numerous inherent and sometimes untestable variables—seem to furnish the only real, if indirect and incomplete, evidence to support the theory that invasive plants at the very least keep lingering hardy birds alive long enough to be discovered. However, for the most part, we are left to piece together anecdotes and other tidbits to draw conclusions. We will never return eastern Massachusetts to a “pristine” or “natural” (whatever that means) state. That mean we don’t try? Do we resign ourselves to celebrating the questionable virtues of bittersweet?

There are several observations that bear repeating here. First, increasing urbanization will accelerate the proliferation of invasive plants, and continued introduction of new species by the horticultural trade will almost certainly compound the problem (Reichard et al. 2001). Climate change will continue to affect the changing ranges of both birds and plants. Invasive plants will continue to spread rapidly, even with control measures. So, at the very least, we should increase our awareness of these various relationships (Reichard et al. 2001) and document the associations we observe on our local patches. Absolute conclusions may be elusive—even more than usual in a column that invariably raises more questions than it answers. But a little food for thought, outside the usual fare of this essay, will perhaps bring us to think on these matters again, when next we see a frosty catbird in a New England bramble—or an Audubon’s Oriole in an Indiana backyard.

Acknowledgments

Nancy Lafleur graciously provided helpful comments on an early draft of this article, and we are indebted to her for the assistance. We also thank Chris Martine for supplying a proof of his upcoming article, and Lewis Bevler helped track down some obscure references for us. Scott B. Terrill, Robb Hamilton, and Dan S. Cooper provided some thoughts on exotic, invasive plants in California. For contributing other information, literature, or thoughts on this article, we’d like to thank Richard A. Erickson, Kimball L. Garrett, Brian P. Gibbons, Steven G. Mlodinow, John Sterling, and Linnea Hall of the Western foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. Jeannette Lovitch provided helpful comments on various drafts of this article.

Literature cited


Renne, I. J., T. P. Spira, and W. C. Bridges, Jr. 2001. Effects of habitat, burial, age and passage through birds on germination and establishment of Chinese tallow tree in coastal...
Demystifying Gulls
6-12 January 2008
Location: Northern California • Instructor: Alvaro Jaramillo

Gulls are never truly easy birds to identify, but there are many tips and tricks which can take the fear out of this group, even for a beginner. We aim to clarify rather than confuse, and to make gulling fun! Whether you are a beginner just learning these skills or a veteran refreshing them, this workshop in the beautiful San Francisco Bay area, promises to be a fun and interactive experience as well as super gulling!

Field Study and Classroom Education

• EMAIL: ifo@aba.org
• WEBSITE: www.americanbirding.org/ifo
• PHONE: 800-830-2473 Ext. 235

New titles from the American Birding Association!

A Birder’s Guide to Southern California

All serious North American birders eventually end up in Southern California. The vast, varied topography that is Southern California has recorded over 555 naturally occurring bird species, many of which are endemic to its geography. Each of Southern California’s many habitats offers its own specialties, and this guide will help you to find them all. New to this edition are chapters covering Kern River Valley, the rugged Clark-Mountain wilderness, southeastern California’s Blythe region, Sespe Condor Sanctuary, coastal Ventura County, and birding hot spots in suburban San Fernando Valley. The maps, bar-graphs, and specialties section all have been updated to ensure that the reader has effective tools at hand for contemporary birding.

by Brad Schram
Revised 2002
440 pages, paper (lay-flat)

Item #123
ABA Member Price: $19.96
(List $24.95)

800/634-7736 • www.ahasales.com

The Changing Seasons: Foods for Thought

The Friends of North American Birds

SUPPORT THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS, THE ABA'S JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORD

Since its inception, the fund has allowed for many improvements to the journal's look and feel. The journal is now mailed in a protective wrapper to ensure its delivery in one piece. The content has benefited from an increase in page count which has allowed for additional articles with even more detailed analysis. The amount of color pages has increased which has allowed for expanded Pictorial Highlights and an occasional Photo Salon.

All of this has been made possible with your generous contributions.

There are more plans in the works for future issues but the fund does need your continued support. To become a "Friend of NAB", simply donate $50 or more. Each "Friend of NAB" will be recognized annually in the first issue of each volume of North American Birds.

Send donations to:
The Friends of NAB, ABA,
4945 N. 30th Street, Suite 200
Colorado Springs, CO 80919-3151

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
Cnt. Fort
G.C. Golf Course
G.P. Game Preserve
Hwy. Highway
I. (Is.) Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.) immature(s)
Jct. Junction
Juv. (Jvrs.) juvenile (plumage); juvenile(s)
km kilometer(s)
L. Lake
mm millimeter(s)
n.ob. many (or multiple) observers
M.C. (Mts.) Mount Mountain (Mountains)
N.A. National 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 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. 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)
v.t. videotape (by + initials)
W.A. Wildlife Area
W.M.A. Wildlife Management Area
W.T.P. (Waste) Water Treatment Plant/Pond

Italics indicate name of county, parish, or municipality.
December was mild, and January was the warmest on record. As Nova Scotia subregional editor Hans Toorn put it: "I was somewhat astonished by the recent news that January was the warmest in our historical record. So quickly we adapt to change, as do our birds, that this can happen without my notice. Our home, situated at the tree line above Chebucto Head, was a challenge for many overwintering birds (in the past) such as Mourning Dove and Dark-eyed Junco, but not this year. The junco, usually gone by early December, never left, and the doves normally devastated by winter are surviving in good numbers. Our regular winter denizen, American Tree Sparrow, has been leaving for northern climes at least a month earlier than in previous years. Overall, the diversity of bird life out here on the southern end of the Chebucto Peninsula is the lowest I've witnessed."

Writing from Labrador City in mid-March, veteran northern observer Gordon Parsons asked: "Why so few? The birds in general seem to have left early, and few winter birds turned up. We did get about 100 or so Bohemian Waxwings at peaks for a week or two, maybe 50 for a month or so and then 25 for last month, but lots of dogberries on the trees. Only this month have a few Common Redpolls been seen, Boreal Chickadees can be counted on one hand, same for Pine Grosbeaks and White-winged Crossbills, low numbers of Gray Jays even! Common Ravens seem to be holding their own, and no Snow Buntings yet." In Newfoundland, writing about finches, Bruce Macavish said simply: "Poor year, none common." The same held true for most of the rest of the Region, except for central and northern New Brunswick, where tens of thousands of White-winged Crossbills gathered to feast on a tremendous cone crop, provided by White Spruce, Red Spruce, and Balsam Fir.

Beginning in mid-December, clouds of Bohemian Waxwings and American Robins descended on St. John's to gorge on a huge crop of Mountain Ash. Macavish painted the scene of 28 December: "Stopped the car under a rain of orange waxwing droppings. Wires lined with Bohemians, tree tops full, roofs covered, dogberry trees with masses of hovering waxwings, snow beneath the trees red with berries. There was no Sharpie in the area, but every few minutes the flock would take to wing with a roar, circle and wheel about, and float back down to the wires and trees in fantastic moving shapes, as good as any huge shorebird flock or African finch scene. The combined twittering calls changed in volume, depending on the action of the birds. I know we've seen massive flocks like this before in the past, but this was awesome—in the true meaning of the word." He estimated about 3000 birds in the flock.

Long-time Audubon Christmas Bird Count editor for Atlantic Canada, Ian McLaren, observed: "Counts of regularly wintering passerines were mostly within or below recent ranges except for European Starling, with the most since 1999, and more pleasantly, a record high for Black-capped Chickadees. It was not a waxwing winter. Many partial migrants saw sparrows may have fed well and left, with those remaining less reliant on concentrations of food and shelter, and counts were well below average for recent years. Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak were scarcer than they have been in a decade or more, and the 10 Red Crossbills in St. John's 26 December were the second fewest since 1990-1991. House Sparrows continue to decline, with this year's count being the lowest since 1990-1991, even with smaller effort in earlier years."

The total species observed per province was average or above: New Brunswick 159 (ten-year average: 162; Stuart Tingley), Nova Scotia 204 (ten-year average: 194, Blake Maybank), Prince Edward Island 115 (David Seel), Newfoundland & Labrador 135 (Jared Clark), and St. Pierre & Miquelon 96 (Roger Etcheberry). A "depths of winter" tally during February turned up 131 species in Nova Scotia, about 75 per cent of the entire period list (Patrick Chuckers). Many thanks to Lance Laviolette of the Nova Scotia Bird Society for providing access to their timely reports, and to Roger Etcheberry at St. Pierre, for his ever-concise missives.

Abbreviations: A.P. (Avalon Peninsula, NF); 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 (In- sular Newfoundland); P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island); S.F.M. (Saint Pierre et Miquelon, France).

**WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES**

The maximum count of 1500 Canada Geese on P.E.I. came from Vernon River 2 Feb (DK), down from the peak of 5000 in 2006. The largest wintering flock in Nova Scotia is consistently found in H.R.M., where there were 4000 at West Jeddore 21 Feb (Lucas Berrigan). A pair of Trumpeter Swans was found at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 8 Dec (MN), while 2 swans at Goose Flat, Pembroke, Yarmouth, NS 14 Jan (Eric Ruff) were thought to be Tundra Swans. At least 12 Eurasian Wigeons passed the winter in St. John's, NF (m.ob.), while 5 were at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 2-11 Feb (MN). Prince Edward Island remains the undisputed winter headquarters for Gadwall in the Region, with 40 tallied at Chappels Creek, Queens 18 Feb (JDM). A count of 70+ Green-winged Teal, including 3 Eurasian Teal, was the Region's largest 12 Dec at Kelly's Brook, St. John's, NF (AH). Superior counts of Mallard were 975 at Moncton, NB 16 Dec (C.B.C.) and 889 at Lunenburg, NS 2 Jan.
(C.B.C.). A count of 863 American Black Ducks was a record high at Grand Barachois, Miqelon, SPM 15 Dec (RE, PB); a total of 4696 at Wolville, NS 16 Dec was also impressive, with next largest tally being 2573 at Pictou Harbour, NS 1 Jan (both C.B.C.). At least 212 Northern Pintails at St. John's, NF 26 Dec (C.B.C.) far exceeded all other flocks in the Region. A Blue-winged Teal was at New Minas, Kings, NS 15 Dec (JT), while another returned for a 3rd winter at Saint John, NB (JGW), another for a 2nd winter at St. Pierre, SPM (RE), and yet another was found on the St. John's, NF C.B.C. 26 Dec. A hen Northern Shoveler was at St. Pierre, SPM 6-10 Dec (PB, PA).

A dead Canvasback was found in late Feb at Quispamsis, Kings, NB (Joe Steele), while a live one was at The Hawk, C.S.I. 13 Dec (MN). Best counts of Redhead were 10 at Oyster Bed Bridge, PEI in early Jan (DS) and 15 at Pictou Harbour, NS 12 Feb (FL). There were 22 Ring-necked Ducks at Lower Sackville, H.R.M. 12 Dec (John Belbin). At least 10 Tufted Ducks passed the winter in St. John's, NF (m.ob.). Pictou Harbour, NS, which is kept partially open by warm water from a power plant, harbors the largest wintering flocks of waterfowl in the Region, including 5000 Greater Scaup 12 Feb (FL). The top tally of Lesser Scaup was about 90 on the Halifax–Dartmouth C.B.C. 17 Dec. There were 55 Harlequin Ducks at Sobei, H.R.M. 17 Feb (KM). A nice evening flight of 1185+ Long-tailed Ducks passed Point Prim, Annapolis, NS 23 Jan (JK), moving out of Annapolis Basin to raid on the open ocean overnight. A flock of 750 White-winged Scoters off the e. side of the Isthmus of Miqelon 15 Dec (RE) was the largest reported. Good counts of Black Scoter were 645 at St. Peter's, Richmond, C.B.I. (C.B.C.) and 350 off Daniels Head, C.S.I. 18 Jan (IN). Best counts for Barrow's Goldeneye were 110 on the Dalhousie, NB C.B.C. and 60 at Cocagne Bridge, Kent, NB 28 Jan (Roger LeBlanc); one at Grand Barachois, SPM 8 Dec–14 Jan was, remarkably, a new species for the islands (LJ). The favored early winter haunt for Hooded Merganser is the Northumberland Strait shore of Nova Scotia, where 250 were present at Haliburton Gut, Pictou 3 Dec (KM); a good count for Prince Edward Island was 34 at Black Pond W.M.A., Kings on the same date (DO, DS). A huge mob of 4451 Red-breasted Mergansers in Pictou Harbour 1 Jan (C.B.C.) must have been consumed much fish, with help from 932 Common Mergansers there. Some 465 Common Mergansers at Campbellton, NB 7 Jan were thought to be feeding on smelt (Margaret Doyle). The largest count of Ruddy Duck in the Region was 22 at Bissett L, Dartmouth, H.R.M. 10 Dec (BM). A large flight of alcaids observed 14 Dec from Brier I, NS included a Pacific Loon meticulously described by Maybank, there are about 10 previous sightings for the province. A Pied-billed Grebe at MacLellan Marsh, Pictou, NS 16 Dec (KM) was late for an inland site, which would normally be iced over. Numbers of Red-necked Grebe seemed down the winter report often, but one just made it at Port Maitland, Yarmouth, NS 1 Dec (MN). The only Black Vulture reported was at the East Prince County landfill, PEI 22 Dec (Finton MacKinnon). From all reports, there appear to be about 50 Turkey Vultures wintering in sw. Nova Scotia, with 30 reported at Yarmouth 13 Dec (Levi Cliche); the farthest e. was at Lunenburg 28 Jan (K. Lantz).

Raptors Through Shorebirds

An imm. Bald Eagle at Murray River, PEI 21 Jan chased a plastic milk bottle across the ice and eventually caught it. Half an hour later, it was seen flying around with the bottle stuck in its talons (Tim Sutton). A count of 447 (222 ad., 205 imm.) eagles on the 26th Cyril Coldwell Raptor Count 4 Feb in Kings, NS was close to the average of about 400 (Jim Wollford). A few Cooper's Hawks winter in New Brunswick, and likely in Nova Scotia, but they are seldom reported in the latter province; thus an imm. 16 Dec and 7 Feb at Port Williams, Kings, NS (Richard Stern) and an ad. at Pubnico, Yarmouth, NS 13 Jan (HJ) were notable. The only Broad-winged Hawk report came from Mill L., H.R.M. 3 Dec (HT). Fifty-eight Red-tailed Hawks were enumerated on the aforementioned raptor count in Kings, NS. The only solid report of a Golden Eagle was an ad. female photographed at Sheddary River Dana, Albert, NB 21 Jan (DSC). Wintering American Kestrels have an odd habit lately of only revealing themselves near the end of the period: reports of singles came from Biscay Bay, NF 23 Jan (DSH), Grand Pre, Kings, NS 24 Feb (JH), Riverside–Albert, Albert, NB 25 Feb (Woody Gilles), and Cocagne, Kent, NB 26 Feb (Jules Cormier). Five Gyrfalcon reports were received, all of single birds: from East Point, PEI 13 Dec (VL), Grand Pre, Kings, NS 14 Dec (BM), St. John's, NF 26 Dec (C.B.C.), Portugal Cove South, NF 30 Jan (DSH), and Canso, Guysborough, NS 4-5 Feb (TK). At least 5 Peregrine Falcons wintered in Nova Scotia, and a like number on the A.P. (m.ob.), with at least 2 ads. and one imm. around St. John's. One at Saint John, NB 9 Jan was identified as the tundrius subspecies (RB).

Ring-necked Pheasant does best in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, where 300 were tallied on the Wolfeville C.B.C. 16 Dec. Ruffed Grouse are apparently at a high in their population cycle throughout the Maritime provinces, as evidenced by 47 on the Caledonia, Queens, NS C.B.C. 17 Dec; 37 on the Eskasoni, Richmond, NS C.B.C. 26 Dec; and 13 at Monticello, Kings, PE 16 Feb (Gerald MacDonald). They even came into backyards in cen. New Brunswick, with 9 (2 males) attend-
Gray Partridge has just about died out in Nova Scotia, with only a few remaining in the Truro area. Good counts are still obtained in agricultural e. Prince Edward Island, where coys of 8-15 birds were not hard to find this winter (fide DS), especially near harvested grain fields. Salt is not used extensively on island roads, which may explain why they persist there. The prevailing sentiment is that the Nova Scotia birds have died of toxicosis caused by eating road salt.

A flock of 12 was found along Souris Line Rd., Hermanville, Kings 15 Jan (Warren Foulkes).

A few more American Coots than usual survived winter in the Region, with 5 making it into spring at St. John's, NF (Bmt), where one or 2 is the norm. As many as 16 were found at Bissett L., Dartmouth, NS 10 Dec (Bmy), with 7 still at nearby Sullivan's Pond in late Feb (m.ob.).

The first known successful wintering of a Sandhill Crane in the Region occurred at a farm in Bridgewater, Lunenburg, NS 1 Dec–28 Feb+, where the owner took an interest in keeping it alive (fide UH). Probably fewer than 100 American Woodcocks winter in far sw. Nova Scotia, with a few reported every winter from this area. There were singles near Tusket, Yarmouth, NS 16 Jan and along Canaan Rd., Yarmouth, NS 6 Feb (Paul Gould), while one that attempted to cross an open cove was accosted in mid-air and eventually killed by crows at Atwood's Brook, C.S.I. 11 Feb (Terry Crowell). Two Wilson's Snipe were doing well at Portugal Cove South, NF until 20 Feb (DSY), when one flew into utility wires. It was rescued and fed an earthworm substitute (squid). A Greater Yellowlegs in n. Nova Scotia at Apple River, Cumberland 15 Jan was unusual for that locale. The last of 3 Lesser Yellowlegs present through Dec at C.S.I. was seen 11 Jan at The Hawk (JH).

A flock of 30 Red Knots 8 Dec at Grand Barachois, SPB had been reduced to 10 birds near Miquelon Village by 7-11 Feb (LJ). Nova Scotia could not muster more than 5, at Cherry Hill Beach, Lunenburg 29 Dec (Sylvia Fullerton). An extraordinarily late flock of 22 Semipalmated Sandpipers passed through C.S.I. 2 Dec at Daniels Head (MN). Late White-rumped Sandpipers in the Region are probably crippled, as was the case with 2 near Cape Race, NF 3 Dec (Bmt), one of which made it to the C.B.C. 23 Dec., and another at C.S.I. on the C.B.C. 16 Dec. Purple Sandpiper numbers appear to be down by more than half over the past 25 years or so. Whereas 100-200 birds used to winter on Machias Seal I., NB (through the 1980s), the best count this winter was 70 on 21 Jan (Ralph Eldridge). However, 118 on the Miquelon C.B.C. 17 Dec was said to be record high (fide RE). Fewer than 250 Dunlins likely winter in sw. Nova Scotia annually, with up to 127 at C.S.I. 3 Dec (MN) and 26 as far e. as Three Fathom Harbour, H.R.M. 17 Feb (Robert Lindsay). A healthy bird was an unusual sight foraging in a grassy ditch at the St. John's, NF airport 14 Dec (Bmt); 3 at Grand Barachois, SPB 11 Feb (RE) were likewise unexpected there. A Semipalmed Plover at Renew's, NF 3-9 Dec (Bmt et al.) appeared to be healthy. A flock of 3 Killdeer at a ball diamond in Clarks Harbour, C.S.I. 2 Jan (MN) was down to one by 7 Feb (JC).

GULLS THROUGH OWLS

Six Mew Gulls (all of the nominate subspecies) passed through St. John's harbor during the period—"standard numbers" according to Mahtavich. One at a sewage lagoon in Charlottetown, PEI returned for its 3rd winter 11 Jan (DO). A "classic ad." Thayer's Gull was photographed in Sambro Harbour, H.R.M. 18 Feb (HT). Two Yellow-legged Gulls spent the winter in St. John's, along with at least 3 ad. Slaty-backed Gulls—confirmed as distinctly different individuals by wing tip pattern: one 26 Nov–Mar (m.ob.), one 31 Dec only (Paul Linegar), and one 22 Jan–26 Feb (Bmt, Ken Knowles). Previous provincial records of Slaty-backed include just 2 ads. and a third-winter bird Jan–Apr 2006. The best count of Lesser Black-backed Gull was of 15-20 at the Robin Hood Bay dump near St. John's 10 Dec (Bmt, Jared Clark). Black-headed Gull was commonest in Halifax harbour, with 113 found on the local C.B.C. 17 Dec. An estimated 2500 Bonaparte's Gulls off East Pt., PEI 14 Dec (DO, VL) was a good count for the island, while at least 4500 were still in Head Harbour Passage, Charlottetown, NF 9 Jan (NF). Five Little Gulls came to light: an ad. 3 Dec at East Point, PEI (DO, DS); an imm. at Sinclair L., Petit-Doux, NF 9 Dec (KM); an ad. off Swallowtail Light, G.M.1. 17 Dec (JGW); an imm. at Canso Causeway, Inverness, NF 28 Dec (DMQ); and an ad. at Pictou Harbour, NF 30 Dec (KM). An ad. Ivory Gull that begged for food at Quidi Vidi L., St. John's, NF 20 Jan–early Feb (m.ob.) became a virtual pet, feeding on various meats supplied by visiting birders. One at nearby Portugal Cove South 27 Feb+ came into a backyard kennel to pilfer dog food (DSH). Good counts of Black-legged Kittiwake were made in the outer Bay of Fundy, with 15,615 counted at North Pt., Brier L., NF 14 Dec (Bmy) and 5100 in Head Harbour Passage, NF 9 Jan (NF). The only Forster's Tern was found at West Pubnico, Yarmouth, NF 7 Jan (MN), while an ad. Common Tern in alternate plumage was at Ogden's Pond, Antigonish, NF 2 Dec (BS). Oddly, the highest numbers of Dovkie were found in the w. part of the Region early

Further evidence of the northward spread of avian cholera in the past three years was an outbreak along the e. coast of Newfoundland in late Jan. Initially, 6 dead gulls were diagnosed with the disease, including Great Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Black-legged Kittiwake. Many more sick gulls were reported at various offshore sites, though other marine species were not clearly affected. Public announcements suggested that people avoid contact with birds suspected of being infected with avian cholera. The disease was said to pose "minimal risk" to humans (Hugh Whitney, Chief Veterinary Officer).
in the period, with 3346 moving past North Pt., Brier I., NS 14 Dec (BMy). In contrast, they were "virtually absent" throughout the period around St. Pierre, with only 4 found on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 28 Dec (RE). At least 8215 Razorbills were in the impressive Brier I. flight 14 Dec, but very few Atlantic Puffins, as would be expected, given that they winter farther offshore.

Six brave (or foolish) Mourning Doves were huddled in a spruce tree at Labrador City 17 Feb (GP), while one that wintered at a feeder in St. Lewis (EL) was likely one of very few to do so on the s. Labrador coast. An indication of how far they have come in 50 years: 5536 were tallied on Nova Scotia Christmas counts and 3856 on New Brunswick counts. A White-winged Dove at Stoney Island, C.S.I. 16 Dec (JC) was about the 40th for the province. Quite unusual, and not noted annually, was a live Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Canso, NS 13 Dec (TK). There were a few Snowy Owls in Dec in Newfoundland, such as 6 along the Cape Race Rd. 3 Dec (BMt), but none were reported in Jan or Feb. There were a few elsewhere in the region, with about 10 reports each in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. An injured Long-eared Owl found in Stephenville, on the w. coast of Newfoundland, 6 Feb (jide Joe Brazil) was subsequently taken to a rehabilitation center in St. John's, it furnished just the 2nd record for the province. Uncharacteristically, the best one-day count of Short-eared Owl came from the A.P. where there were 2 at Portugal Cove South and one at Trepassy, both 23 Jan (DSh).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH CHICKADEES

A hatch-year male Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1-4 Dec at a feeder in Ballantrane Cove, Antigonish, NS (jide BMy) was most unusual for the month, anywhere in Canada. Belted Kingfisher posted a record high of 45 found on Christmas counts in Nova Scotia, while 4 were found at Cape Breyley, NF 19 Jan (BMt) and 2 at Barachois, Westmoreland, NB 3 Jan (Norm Beliveau). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at a feeder in Hansport, Hills, NS 6 Dec (Marion Fulton) was returning for its 3rd winter, another was seen 24 km away at Canning, Kings 12 Feb (MG). Northern Flicker is staying in greater numbers farther north in winter: there were 15 at Charlottetown, PEI and 37 at St. John's, NF (both 26 Dec on C.B.C.); Nova Scotia Christmas counts detected 128, about the 15-year average. A tally of 95 Pileated Woodpeckers on the counts was the 2nd highest ever, an indication that the species is moving into more urban habitats. The mild weather favored at least 4 Eastern Phoebes in Nova Scotia: 16 Dec at Wolfville (JT), 19-21 Dec at Lockeport, Shelburne (DC), 10 Jan at Greenwhich (BF), and 19 Jan at Milton, Queens (DP). A Say's Phoebe at Antigonish W.M.A. 17 Dec (BS) furnished about the 20th provincial record.

Up to 20 Common Ravens were enticed to a feeder supplied with roadkill (such as Coyotes and Bobcats) in Antigonish, NS throughout the winter (RL). A Bell's Vireo at Seaview Park, Halifax, NS 6-12 Dec (David Currie, Azor Vienneau) provided only the 3rd record for the province and the 2nd in winter. Bohemian Waxwing distribution was spotty, but only the A.P. of Newfoundland saw truly impressive numbers, with 7500+ estimated in the e. end of St. John's 12 Jan (BMy). A few

A rewarding find for a day of winter birding was this perky Say's Phoebe in a frozen cattail marsh, found on the Antigonish, Nova Scotia Christmas Bird Count 17 December 2006. Photograph by Bruce Stevens.

made it to the Maritimes, and late in the period, with maxima of only 25 at Gagetown, NB 18 Feb (Don Gibson), 100 at Vernon River, PEI 10 Feb (DK), 140 at New Victoria, C.B.I. 15 Jan (Clive & Theresa MacDonald), and 75 at Port Medway, Queens, NS 11 Feb (BMy). Although widely scattered, there were likely half as many Cedar Waxwings Regionwide, such as 80 in Charlottetown, PEI 18 Feb (JDM), 150 in St. John's, NS 15 Dec (BMt), 20 at Wolfville Ridge, NS 2 Feb (BF), and 10 at St. Pierre, SPM 29 Jan (SAM).

An Eastern Bluebird was unique at Murray Harbour, PEI 10 Dec (Virginia Jackson); two or three years may pass between winter reports in the whole Region. Five Hermit Thrush reports surfaced in Nova Scotia, but the farthest n. was one eating Mountain Ash berries at Marys Pt., Albert, NB 1 Jan (DSC). One that faithfully to a feeder 1-28 Feb+ at Crousetown, Lunenburg, NS showed a preference for rolled oats and Finch seed but ignored raisins, blueberries, chopped apple, and grapes (Nellie Snyder).

A Northern Mockingbird at St. Pierre Village, SPM 26 Jan (LJ) was notable, as was a record high of 500 European Starlings there 30 Dec, counted from a photograph (PB). Two Carolina Wrens at a feeder in Summerside, PEI 19 Jan-14 Apr+ (Bob Mulligan) was amazing, considering the location, and the fact that this province got its first record just last spring in Charlottetown. One surfaced in Nova Scotia at Canning, Kings 19 Jan+ (MG), and 5 was the total in New Brunswick, with 2 at Fredericton and one each at Hammond River, Moncton, and Memramcook. A House Wren was found at Portuguese Cove, Halifax, NS 25 Dec (TPA). A blue-gray Gnatcatcher was still at Lockeport NS 18 Dec (DC). Quite a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets are attempting to winter, and some are succeeding, with the help of feeders, as far n. as Sackville, NB 26 Jan-10 Mar (Kathy Popma). Others were found at Maximeville, PEI 25 Jan (Fred & Gisele Martin), at Campbellton, Restigouche, NB 16 Dec (Jude Irene Doyle), and at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 10 Feb (MN), the latter bird not attending a feeder. Boreal Chickadee was "more regular" than usual in Pictou and Antigonish, NS (JK) as well as in the rest of the Maritimes (m.ob.); the species was "fairly common and well reported" on St. Pierre (RE).

LARKS THROUGH FINCHES

The best counts of Horned Lark were 125 at Grand Pre, Kings, NS 14 Dec (BMy) and 100 at Earnislake, Queens, PEI 29 Dec (DS, JDM). American Pipit is increasing across the Region, albeit slowly, with good winter counts of 20 at Long Beach, Cape Race, NF 14 Jan (DSh), 24 at Hartliens Pt., H.R.M. 23 Feb (Suzanne Borkowski), and one at East Pt., PEI 7 Jan (DS). At least 12 Orange-crowned Warblers were reported in Nova Scotia, about normal, with the farthest n. being at a feeder in St. 44

Four Redwings in the Region is a lot, with 3 in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia's 2nd at Brooklyn, Queens 2-8 Dec (DP et al.). Starting 2 Dec (AH) and continuing into late Jan (BMy), there were at least 2 with the huge American Robin flocks in St. John's. (American Robins in St. John's numbered at least "several thousand" and were present until all the Mountain Ash berries were eaten (in the first week of Feb); there were also quite a few along the Bay of Fundy shore at St. Martins, NB, where 100+ were starting to take foods other than Mountain Ash 28 Jan (TS)). Another Redwing was found by a WINGS tour group on the barns at Cape Race 20 Jan (BMT, Jon Dunn). "Great to see a wild Redwing instead of one of those city siskins," remarked MacTavish, who added that "Redwing has (now) become part of the Winter Avalon Avifauna."
Anselme, *Westmoreland*, NB 30 Dec+ (Gilles Bourque). A Nashville Warbler was at Bissett L., Dartmouth, NS 7 Jan (TPA). Yellow-rumped Warbler is being found more often at feeders, with one returning for its 3rd winter at Fredericton, NB 21 Jan (John McLoughlin) and 40+ at Cape Tormentine, NB 3 Jan (m.ob.). By all accounts, 2500+ must winter along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia between Cape Breton 1. and Brier I. Two were found in “a wild state on the hills of St. Pierre” 14 Jan (Patrick Hacala). The only Yellow-throated Warbler report came from Heatheron, *Antigonish*, NS 15 Dec–15 Jan+ (jude RF). A Yellow Palm Warbler at Sackville, NB 16 Jan and 4 Feb (Anthony Erskine) provided one of fewer than five winter records for the province. An Ovenbird was late at Gaspereau, Kings, NS 11 Dec (Phil Taylor).

Two male Common Yellowthroats were found together at Canning, Kings, NS 16 Dec (An- gus & Stella MacLean). A Wilson’s Warbler (w. subspecies) was found in Halifax, NS 2 Dec (TPA), while one that persisted until 26 Dec in St. John’s, NF (m.ob.) was not identified as to subspecies. Accompanying the latter were 2 exceptionally late Yellow Warblers along an “enriched” stream bed (BM). A Yellow-breasted Chat at a feeder in Miramichi City, NB 30 Dec (Fred & Susan Hare) was notably far n. for the season.

Lapland Longspur was nowhere common, with maxima of 23 at Cherry Hill Beach, NS 13 Dec (JH, DP) and 17 at: Daniels Head, C.S.I. 1 Feb (JN). Excellent flocks of Snow Buntings were 1522 on the St. Leonard, NB C.B.C. 28 Dec and 2500+ at Cadman Corner, Westmoreland, NB 29 Jan (Ron & Linda Steeves). An enviable feeder flock at Portugal Cove South, NF grew from 70 birds 14 Jan to 150 by 11 Feb (DSH). Seven at Wabush 17 Feb (GP) made one of very few winter reports for interior Labrador. A Harris’ Sparrow tar- red at a feeder In East LaHave, Lunenburg, NS 18 Jan–28 Feb+ (Dave Watson). A White- crowned Sparrow at Mary’s Pt., Albert, NB 18 Jan (DSC) was of the subspecies expected here in winter, namely *gambelli*. A White- throated Sparrow made it until the end of Feb at a feeder in Labrador City (jude GP). Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported without details in Nova Scotia; one at Hebron, Yarmouth, 24 Dec (MN) and another along West Sable Rd., Shelburne 7 Jan (David Young). A Golden-crowned Sparrow photographed at St. Pierre village, SPM 3 Dec–28 Feb+ was an overdue first record for the French islands (SAM, PB).

A Grasshopper Sparrow was a rare find at Point Lepreau, Charlotte NB 16 Dec (RB, Eileen Pike, Janet Whitehead). A leucistic American Tree Sparrow, first noted 13 Feb (DSC) at Riverside-Albert, NB, was returning for its 3rd winter. The only Clay-colored Sparrow report came from Canso town, NS, where one survived the winter at TK’s prolific feeder. Single Field Sparrows are not unusual in winter in the Region, but 2 at two locations were notable, at Barachois, *Westmoreland* NB 28 Jan+ (Angela Leger) and at St. Andrews, NB 27 Jan+ (DG, James Goltz, Shirley Sloot). Single Vesper Sparrows were noted at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 7 Feb (N) and Grand Pre, Kings, NS 24 Feb (JH). A Lark Sparrow passed the winter at KMS feeder in Springvale, *Pictou*, NS 9 Dec+ and began singing in late Mar. Unusal were 3 Eastern Towhees together at Jol- limore, Halifax, NS 15 Dec+ (m.ob.); the easternmost of this species was a male at Witless Bay, NF 2 Mar (Chris Ryan).

Western Tanagers were noted at several sites in the Region, but only one survived the period, at West Pubnico, NS 1 Jan+ (Ethelda Murphy); other singles were at Eskasoni, C.B.I. 26 Dec (DMQ), at Newcombville, Lunenburg 28 Nov–early Dec (jude JH) and at Quispamsis, Kings, NB 15 Dec–9 Jan (Susan Tait). A Summer Tanager was present at St. George mid-Nov–Jan (Gail Mullen). A flock of 4–5 Dickcissels made it through the winter to a Canso, NS feeder (TK), and 2 were at St. Andrews, NB 1 Feb (Steve & Gail Smith). Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks turned up at Ferryland, NF 3 Dec (AH) and at St. Pierre village, SPM 28 Dec (Joseph Beaupre). A Black-headed Grosbeak was photographed at Goose Cove, near St. Anthony, NF 10 Jan (Darlene Rice) for a first provincial record. It had been present since late Dec. Northern Cardinal is doing well in suitable habitat in New Brunswick, with 48 found on the Ham- mond River C.B.C. 2 Jan (GWW), where there were but 12 in 2001. Single Indigo Buntings were at Liverpool, NS 12 Dec (JH) and Saint John, NB 3 Feb (Colin Eyben). A male Painted Bunting was a show-stopper far e. at Grande Etang, Inverness, C.B.I. NS 25 Nov–19 Jan (Damien & Melissa Welsh). A Baltimore Oriole was notably far n. at a feeder in St. An- thony, NF 16 Dec (jude EL). Only a single male Yellow-headed Blackbird turned up, at Port Williams, Kings, NS 3 Feb (M. Luke- man). A flock of about 20 Red-winged Black- birds (15 females) was a lot for New Brunswick, found at a Sussex feeder 31 Jan (Bill Winsor). A male made it through a tough winter on the s. coast of Labrador, coming to a feeder at St. Lewis 18 Jan+ (EL), leaving only when a female arrived 25 Apr! A Rusty Blackbird was feeding in a salt marsh, probably on intertidal invertebrates, at Mary’s Pt., NB 1 Feb (DSC). Brown-headed Cowbirds numbered 27 at Montague, PEI 30 Dec (C.B.C.) and 21 at Atwood’s Brook, C.S.I. 23 Jan (JN).

Pine Siskins were scarce in the Region, except for nw. New Brunswick, with ~200 on several C.B.C.s there. In cen. Newfoundland, numbers began to build in mid-Feb, with 40 at a Gander feeder 12 Feb and 90 by 24 Feb (JKB). A good count of 48 American Goldfinches was made 19 Dec at a feeder in St. Pierre Village, SPM (PB). Common Redpoll vanished into the taiga this winter, with very few making it to the Maritimes and even to w. Labrador, where the high count was only of 35 at Labrador City 27 Jan (GP). Best count for insular Newfoundland appears to have been 50+ at Gander 24 Feb (JKB). Pine Grosbeak was uncommon at best throughout the Region, with no more than 10 seen at any one time (m.ob.). The absence of Red Crossbills from Nova Scotia Christmas counts for the first time since 1969 “...raises serious questions about our regional population” according to venerable Audubon C.B.C. editor Ian McLaren. A “moderate” number seems to have wintered in the Caledonia highlands of Albert, NB, with indications of later breeding in Apr (DSC). White-winged Crossbill was abundant in n. and cen. New Brunswick, with 500–1000 per day easily found in Madawaska, Restigouche, and Gloucester. The top count of Evening Grosbeak was 100 at Mount Pearl, St. John’s 14 Jan (jude BM). Numbers in the Region have fallen back to 1950s and 1960s levels (IAM), much lower than the peaks found in the 1970s and 1980s.

Addendum: Not previously mentioned in these pages was discovery of the most signifi- cant wintering site for White-winged Scoters in the Region, in Passamaquoddy Bay, NB. On 29 Jan 2002, during a Harlequin Duck survey, 3900+ were found off Davidson Head, Deer L. (Dedreic Grecian).
Quebec

There were two seasons during the period. The first half of the winter was balmy with almost no ice on rivers and no snow on the ground, at least in the south, until mid-January. The second half was much more frigid, although there was no large amount of snow on the ground at any time. In summary, average temperatures ended up above normal despite a cold February, and overall precipitation was below average. The avifauna of early January seemed more like that of late November in southern Quebec. The mild conditions of early winter resulted in a lot of late migrants trying to winter in the region.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

A group of 4 Greater White-fronted Geese (2 ads., 2 immns.) lingered at Levis 27-29 Dec (OB), MR, ph); one was at Sherbrooke 9 Dec (SR, Y. Charette), while up to 2 at Champlain 4 Dec–10 Jan provided the region’s 2nd record ever for Jan (R. Chartier et al.). Thousands of Snow Geese were reported in s. Quebec until late Dec, while 2 wintered at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (fide PB). A Ross’s Goose at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 17 Dec provided a new Regional record-late date (SR). Cackling Geese were widely reported in Dec; one lingered at Saint-Georges until 10 Jan (RB et al.) and another at Laval as late as 14 Jan, providing a new record-late date for the Region (GL, EP). Canada Geese were ubiquitous in s. Quebec, including the Gaspé coast, until mid-Jan, probably one of the most notable sightings was a lone bird in Mont-Tremblant Park 7 Jan (L. Cadieux). A Mute Swan turned up at La Malbaie 17-25 Jan (S. Tremblay). At least 4 Wood Ducks, 50 Gadwalls, 3 Green-winged Teal, and 2 Ring-necked Ducks appear to have successfully wintered in s. Quebec (fide PB). A male Wood Duck at Val d’Or 22 Jan was only the 2nd found in Abitibi in winter (A. Lefebvre). A flock of 52 Harlequin Ducks at Gascons 11 Feb was certainly noteworthy (A. Couture, Y. Cyn), but 30 at Bergeronnes 18 Feb was a truly exceptional number for that location (MD). The three scoter species were reported more regularly this winter in the Gaspé Pen. (fide PP); while a Surf Scoter at Bergeronnes 18 Feb was remarkable (MD). Wild Turkeys now seem well established n. of the St. Lawrence R. especially in the Rigaud-Saint-Redempteur area, where 56 were counted 25-27 Feb (P. Tanas-sof, N. Felix). An escaped Lady Amherst’s Pheasant straddled around Bonaventure for a few weeks from 10 Feb+ before it was captured (E. Leblanc).

Late Horned Grebes included singles at Saint-Fabien-sur-Mer 6 Jan (G. Gendron) and at Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan 13 Jan (C. Leblanc). Ten Red-necked Grebes at Gascons 10 Jan were noteworthy (D. Lavoie, JRL), while one at Old Harry 6 Jan was apparently the first in winter for the Magdalen Is. (C. & J. Roy). One of the most curious sightings of the winter was a Northern Fulmar flying over a highway at Saint-Pierre-Montmagny 27 Dec (C. Aichu, C. Girard). The observers kept track of the bird from their car and could even record its speed as 70 kph. Rare in midwinter, single Double-crested Cormorants were located at Old Harry 4 Feb (C. Richard) and at Carleton 10 Feb (CL). Great Blue Herons were still widely reported in Jan, but one at Val-des-Monts 5 Feb appeared to be the latest (fide C. Lewis).

VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

Single Turkey Vultures at Disraeli 7 Jan (D. McCutcheon, R. Jacques), Roxton Ponds 9 Jan (M. Gauthier), and Saint-Gabriel-de-Brandon 10 Jan (R. Prevost) were late. Bald Eagles were numerous almost everywhere in s. Quebec, including in the Gaspé Pen. Late or likely wintering Northern Harriers included singles at Saint-Basile 1 Feb (RB), Yamachiche 11 Feb (S. Houle, J. Bouvrette), and Saint-Clet 20 Feb (W. Grubert). Single Cooper’s Hawks were e. of their winter range at Papineau 23 Jan (PP, G. Roy) and at Amqui late Dec-mid-Feb (R. Lang). No fewer than 5 Red-shouldered Hawks were detected in Feb, including 3 at Laval 10 Feb+ (L. P. Simard, G. LA, J. Bégin); these birds appear to have been very early migrants. A calvus Red-tailed Hawk showed up at Gatineau for the 3rd consecutive winter (A. Cloutier et al.). Rough-legged Hawks were found wintering in good numbers as far n. as in the L. Saint-Jean area and in the Abitibi region, where up to 14 were tallied n. of L. Abitibi in Jan (fide LL). An American Kestrel at Saint-Narcisse 24 Dec was the latest ever for the Lower St. Lawrence region (R. Belanger).

A record-late Virginia Rail amazed birders at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 20-21 Jan (E. Shaffer, C. Maurice). Several American Coots lingered until mid-Jan, including one at Saint-Mathias 13 Jan, one at Ile aux Fermiers 14 Jan, and 4 at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 14 Jan (PB). Three Sandhill Cranes present since last
summer continued at Dundee as late as 25 Dec, providing a new Regional record-date (AQ, ES, AL). Totally unexpected was a Dunlin spotted at Saint-Irénée 11 Feb (A. Côte). A Wilson’s Snipe at Saint-Ulric 17 Feb was at a new winter location (S. Mercier). Considering the scarcity of Dowkeys this winter, a bird at Saint-Siméon 19 Feb was quite unexpected, especially so far upriver (MD). A Thick-billed Murre visited Percé 3 Dec (RL et al.), while a Razorbill at Beauharnois 5 Dec was out of range (MD). A Eurasian Collared-Dove was an everyday visitor to a feeder at Gallichan (Abitibi) early Dec+, establishing our 2nd Regional record (S. Rivard, vt., vt.). The bird appeared very wary and showed no sign of having been kept in captivity. The three irruptive n. owls were very scarce s. of their breeding range. Short-eared Owls were present locally in small numbers across sw. Quebec, and 2 even successfully wintered at Pointe de Chambord, a first for the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean region (R. Bouchard, J. Rousseau, L. Chiricota et al.).

**KINGFISHER THROUGH WARBLERS**

Belted Kingfishers surviving deep into winter were spotted at Grand-Calumet 1 (fide DT), Lac-des-Écorces (G. Normandia), and Rivière-Bleue, Tamiskamina 29 Jan (M. Beaulieu). The female Red-bellied Woodpecker found in Nov at Sainte-Hedwig remained there throughout the winter period, while a male was in nearby Massueau 1-28 Feb+ (H. Volland et al.); another female wintered at Caplan, Gaspé (C. Saint-Denis). Surely a product of last summer’s successful nesting for the Chateauguay Red-bellied Woodpecker pair, up to 4 birds were counted 27 Dec (ES, AL). Of note were single Yellow-bellied Sap-suckers at Hudson 30 Dec (J. Reeves), Thivierge 2 Jan (CL), and Île Sainte-Hélène (Montréal) 12 Dec-25 Jan (PB, m. ob., ph.). The latter 2 furnishing only the 4th and 5th Jan records for the Region. Result of a good fall flight, both American Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers were found with relative ease across s. Quebec, more often than not peeling away bark from beetle larva-infested Larix spp. While fairly common in winter in s. Quebec, 3 Horned Larks at Palmarolle 21 Jan represented only the 2nd winter record for Abitibi (LI).

Carolina Wrens were reported in average numbers by twenty-first-century standards, one of which was as far e. as Saint-Jean-Port-Joli 29 Jan–3 Feb (M. Deschêne). Rarely living up to their name in Quebec, hardy Winter Wrens were reported at Ruisseau Robailla 3 Jan (P. D’Amours), a first in winter for Gaspé; at Cap Tourmente 22 Jan–11 Feb (S. Cloutier, m. ob.), where the species is now annual in winter; and at Châteauguay 28 Jan+ (J. Laplante). Surely aided by the warm weather into early Jan, late Ruby-crowned Kinglets were spotted singly at Laval 4 Jan (GLA, EP), Île Sainte-Hélène (Montreal) 16 Dec-25 Jan (PB et al.), and most remarkably at Haldimand (Gaspé) 4 Feb (O. Deruelle, G. Gélinas). Five Eastern Bluebirds were at Saint-Thomé 27 Dec (ES, AL); up to 4 bluebirds at Baie-Saint-Paul 10-21 Jan (M. Guillemette, L. Prudhomme, m. ob.) provided a surprising first Jan record for Charlevoix. A very late Swainson’s Thrush was at Beauport 8 Dec (Glo, J. Bernier), but its tougher relative, Hermit Thrush, was not to be outdone, with at least 8 birds reported into Jan. Gray Catbirds were reported in the Region for a 3rd straight winter, with birds at Rock Forest 10 Dec (R. Côté, fide B. Turgeon), Laval 4 Jan (GLA, EP), and Sainte-Foy 18 Jan (P. Savard). A Brown Thrasher wintered at Quebec City (T. & G. Clermont-Drolet), while one remained at Saint-Benoît-Labre through 28 Jan (G. Martel). Typically locally common even in the worst of years, Bohemian Waxwings were virtually absent throughout the Region this winter, with only a few scattered reports despite the bummer crop of Mountain Ash berries.

Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported far more often than usual beyond the relative “mildness” of Dec, with birds at Laval 5 Dec-3 Jan (GLA, A. Rizzi), Lachine 15 Jan–11 Feb (S. Pelletier), Rosebridge 5 Jan+ (J. Dion, S. Dumas, m. ob.), Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac 23 Jan (JCC), and throughout the period at Sept-îles (B. Duchesne, C. Couture et al.) and Pointe-du-Lac (J. J. T. Vallée, fide JG). The Black-throated Gray Warbler at Île Sainte-Hélène (Montreal) endured the cold to record a date of 16 Jan (PB). Winter Pine Warblers were once again restricted to the Gaspé Pen., with singles at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts through 15 Dec (S. Tremblay), Barachois 16 Dec (JW, DC) and 2 at Gaspé 7 Dec-21 Jan, although only one persisted past Christmas (D. Gagné, m. ob.). Late Common Yellowthroats were at Pointe des Prairies Park, Montréal 3 Dec (DD, DD) and Saint-Eustache 11 Dec (J. Couto, S. Vanier). A Wilson’s Warbler at Yamachiche Pt. 9 Dec was surprising (MBo).

**TOWHEES THROUGH CROSSBILLS**

A Green-tailed Towhee was a serendipitous find during a Montréal C.B.C. at a Rivière-des-Prairies feeder 17 Dec–3 Mar (ES, Robert et al., ph.). This represents only the 2nd Regional record, the first dating back to Oct 1957. Up to 9 Chipping Sparrows were reported, including successful overwintering at Gaspé, where 4 birds were present (P. Belanger, m. ob.), Saraguay Wood, Montréal (DD, DO), and Yamachiche (MBo, fide JG). A Field Sparrow was at Les Cedres 30 Dec (C. Geraghty, B. McDuff), while another at Saraguay Wood, Montréal 28 Jan+ was confirmed to have survived through winter (DD, DO). The Lark Sparrow at l’Anse-au-Grillon present since 24 Oct was last reported 16 Jan, a new record-late date (J. Lacasse, fide D. Jalbert). Two Fox Sparrows were reported past Dec: at Pemouille 18 Jan (C. Dulon) and Boischatel 8 Feb (MR). Excluding the not-so-rare Song Sparrow, noteworthy Melospiza sparrows were represented by a Lincoln’s at Neuville 10 Dec (M. Darveau) and a Swamp at Hudson 3 Feb (JCC). Abitibi hosted 2 Harris’ Sparrows this winter: a hatch-year bird at Préissac 9-12 Dec (N. Blanchette, ph.) and an ad. at Obaska 18-20 Feb (C. Bédard, F. Martel et al., ph.). White-crowned Sparrows showing features inconsistent with typical leucophrys were noted at Saint-Jérôme through 5 Feb (S. Auger, ph.) and Levis until 19 Jan (S. Begin, L. Plante). A male Dark-eyed Junco of the rarely recorded oreganus subspecies group was at Rawdon 26 Jan+ (L. Foulin, ph.).

A late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Saint-Léon-de-Ste-Anne 5-14 Dec (C. Rochefort, G. Morrisette, ph.). Wayward Eastern Meadowlarks were reported from Jonquière 9 Dec (M. Tremblay, D. Gervais et al., ph.) and Perce 1-3 Jan (DC, JW). A few male Yellow-headed Blackbirds were detected among roving cowbird flocks in Montréal, starting with 2 at Saint-Thomas 2 Dec (AQ), one of which...
remained in the vicinity until late Jan; another was at Howick 3 Feb (J. May, LS), and finally one was at Sainte-Julie from mid-Feb into Mar (G. Veilleux, ph., m.ob.). A few Rusty Blackbirds were seen into Feb, but sizeable flocks of 14 at Lachenal 17 Dec on the Longueuil C.B.C. and 40 at Saint-André-Est 15 Dec (L.S., E. Normandeau) were unusual. A well-studied female Bellock's Oriole was at Saint-François-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud 9 Dec-13 Jan, only a 3rd documented record for the province (M. Lavoie, m.ob.; ph.). Five Baltimore Orioles were reported in Dec, one of them making it to 17 Jan at Chandler (R. Garrett, m.ob.). White-winged Crossbills remained abundant throughout the boreal and mixed forests; ads gathering nest material were reported in Feb, and a male was seen feeding 2 jvs. as early as 9 Feb in the Gaspésie Park (R. Guillet).

Addenda. Two Trumpeter Swans were photographed at L. Duperquet (Abitibi) 8-15 Oct 2006, furnishing the 8th Regional record since 1990 (J. Lecours, fide D. Lepage). A White-winged Dove accompanying Mourning Doves made a brief pause at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré feeder 17 Nov 2006 (C. Tremblay, M. Lagacé, fide GLo).


Pierre Bannon, 1517 Leprisnon, Montréal, Québec H4E 1P1 (pibannon@videotron.ca)
Olivier Barden, 1652 rue de Bruyères Sainte-Foy, Québec G1V 3W1 (whitephasegryffalcon@hotmail.com)
Normand David, 516 Shakespeare Doliard-des-Ormeaux, Québec H1G 1A2 (normanddavid@videotron.ca)
Samuel Denault, 75 Beauchemin Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Québec J3H 1G6 (samuel.denault@videotron.ca)
Yves Aubry, Canadian Wildlife Service P.O. Box 10100, Sainte-Foy, Québec G1V 4H5 (yves.aubry@ec.gc.ca)

New England

Winter 2005-2006 showed few if any broad patterns in bird distribution. Except for White-winged Crossbills (which stayed up north), there was no movement of winter finches or Bohemian Waxwings. In terms of rarities, New Hampshire hosted its second Eared Grebe and second and third Slaty-backed Gulls, Connecticut had its first Lazuli Bunting and the Region’s first winter Cave Swallow. Among the usual plethora of surprises in Massachusetts were a Black-throated Gray Warbler and third state record of Bell’s Vireo. A Sooty Shearwater off Cape Cod in early January is also worthy of note. Geese made the news in Rhode Island, with a single site hosting both Pink-footed and Barnacle, among more mundane fare. Maine had the honor of hosting three Western Tanagers in December.

Abbreviations/locations: Eastham (Barnstable, MA), Gloucester (Essex, MA), M.V. (Martha’s Vineyard, Dukes, MA), P.I. (Plum Island, Essex, MA), Ptown (Provincetown, Barnstable, MA), Rockport (Essex, MA), Rye (Rockingham, NH).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES
It was the “Winter of the Goose” in Rhode Island in 2006-2007, with seven species reported on Aquidneck I., Newport Jan-Feb. Maxima during this period were as follows: 2500 Canada Geese (including 6 apparent Giant Canada Geese), 4 Greater White-fronted

Pamela Hunt

The New England weather once again lived up to the old Yankee adage: if you don’t like it, wait a minute. Or in this case a few weeks. The season started out exceptionally warm, with record temperatures through early January. In fact, December as a whole was the first or second warmest on record in all states except Maine. The southern portion of the Region pushed the 70-degree mark on 6 January, only to plunge into typical colder temperatures a week later, but the month as a whole still averaged in the warmest 20%. February picked up where January ended and actually averaged among the coolest 25% on record. December was dry, especially in the south, and the lack of snow was again cause for concern. January was about normal in terms of precipitation, although snow was still scarce. In February, two major snowstorms finally coated the ground in our accustomed winter color. Taken as a whole, the season was in the top 20% in warmth and bottom 20% in precipitation.

As for avian phenomena, there was no repeat of last winter’s profusion of half-hardies, and given the exceptional warmth early in the season, it is reasonable to assume that all the catbirds and thrushes in 2005-2006 were not lured to linger by the New England climate. Otherwise wouldn’t they have been even more common this year? Granted, this is an oversimplification, but the point is that while temperature may allow birds to survive, it is rarely likely to put them here in the first place. The exception may be when birds feel the urge to reproduce. This season there were two breeding records. One was nest-building behavior by White-winged Crossbills in Maine and Vermont, an activity that has never been tied to temperature and is not unexpected in midwinter. In contrast, a female Rufous Grouse with downy young in December—which survived into early February—is perhaps more indicative of what is possible when winter gets put on hold. One wonders how many grouse try to pull off a clutch in the wake of the brief fall drumming season but normally fail once December’s icy grip sets in.

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2

233
Among the multitude of geese that frequented the Newport, Rhode Island area during January and February 2007 were two Pink-footed Geese (one at left). These birds were in the area from 6 January – 19 February (here 9 January), along with a Barnacle Goose, four Greater White-fronted Geese, and six Cackling Geese. Photograph by Richard Johnson.

Geese, 2 Pink-footed Geese, a Barnacle Goose, 6 Cackling Geese, 7 Snow Geese and 50 Brant. The Pink-footed Geese were first found 6 Jan (R. Weaver) and frequented the area through 19 Feb (ph. m.ob.). The final sighting was from farther n. in the state at Richmond, Providence 28 Feb. The Barnacle Goose was present 13 Jan - 28 Feb (ph. DF m.ob.).

Connecticut also hosted a Barnacle Goose, at Newtown, Fairfield through the period (ph. m.ob.), plus a probable first state record Ross's Goose at both West Haven 11 Dec and Westport, Fairfield 16-29 Dec. The Nutmeg State also had 9 Greater White-fronted Geese and at least 5 Cackling Geese. Other Greater White-fronted Geese included at least a dozen in Massachusetts, one in far n. Maine at Caribou (Aroostook) 1 Dec, and a cross-border wanderer at Fryberg, Oxford, ME and Chatham, Carroll, NH 6-9 Dec. It's hard to compare totals of Cackling Geese for the Region, as birders were not paying as much attention to them prior to the split, but along with the Connecticut and Rhode Island birds, there were an additional 5 reported in Massachusetts and 2 in New Hampshire. Perhaps an indication of the continued mild weather into Dec was the seasonally high total of 10,000 Snow Geese from Burlingon, Chittenden, VT 8 Dec.

Northern Shoveler numbers were similar to last winter's and included at least 28 in Massachusetts, 14 in Rhode Island, 10 in Connecticut, and one on the Connecticut R. in Hinsdale, Cheshire, NH 31 Jan A male Tufted Duck appeared on n. L. Champlain for a 2nd consecutive winter at South Hero, Grand Isle 23 Feb (TM, AS). A count of 1000 Common Eiders at Mystic, New London, CT 1 Jan was well above the normal tallies for Connecticut (C. Taylor). Counts of Harlequin Ducks from the species' traditional spots were roughly normal, but less expected were 4 singles at inland locations: a male along the Kennebec R. in Waterville, Kennebec, ME that lingered from the fall through at least 10 Jan (Don Mairs, m.ob.); a female at Barkhamsted Res., Litchfield 10 Dec (P. Carrier), only the 3rd in-

now traditional localities of Portland and Ogunquit, York, ME and Ptown, MA. New Hampshire's 2nd-ever Eared Grebe frequented the coast at Rye 1 Dec - 4 Feb, only to disappear until seen slightly farther n. 28 Feb (ph. m.ob.). E. Gloucester's Eared Grebe returned for a 12th year, officially tying the longevity record for the species reported in The Birds of North America. Western Grebes made brief appearances at Old Lyme, New London, CT 31 Dec - 1 Jan and Pl. 6 Jan.

One wonders what climatic or food-related factors are resulting in the increasing numbers of winter shearwaters in the Region. This season there were 8 Greater Shearwaters at Eastham 2 Dec, along with 2 unidentified large shearwaters (BN); others were at Ptown 3 Dec (BN) and off Portland 16 Dec. Far more remarkable was a Sooty Shearwater at Eastham 2 Jan (BN), one of a small but recently increasing number of mid-winter records for the w. North Atlantic. Pelicans return to the winter summary with two reports of American White Pelican: one at Pl. 10 Dec (P. Roberts) and perhaps the same individual over S. Kingston, Washington, RI 3 Jan (P. Capobianco).

The exceptionally mild early winter was almost certainly a factor behind the large number of lingering herons (other than Great Blue) in the Region. Although Great Egrets have become fairly regular in early winter along Long Island Sound, this winter saw the species lingering both longer and farther n. than usual. Four were present in Massachusetts in early Dec, one of which was still on Cape Cod 14 Jan. More remarkable was a bird inland at Worcester, Worcester, MA 7 Jan. Late records were from Hamden, New Haven, CT 30 Nov and Eastham, MA 1 Feb. A Snowy Egret was in Gloucester through 15 Jan (m.ob.), and another stayed until 19 Jan in Stratford, Fairfield, CT (C. Barnard). Not staying quite as long was an imm. Little Blue Heron in Millbury, Worcester, MA 12-26 Dec (R. Johnson), but its inland location was most unexpected. A Green Heron in Lincoln, Providence, RI 28 Jan (ph. DF) was only the 2nd Jan record for the Ocean State. Despite the shift to strangely normal temperatures in midwinter, Black Vultures managed to hang on throughout the winter in Massachusetts, including individuals on M.V. in both late Dec and late Feb. As for Turkey Vultures, the n. edge of the wintering population in the
Maine eiders continued to be reported throughout the winter with a high count of 32 came from Eastham 27 Dec (BN), which also hosted the season’s latest 16 Jan. Throughout Dec and early Jan, up to 4 were reported from other coastal locations in Massachusetts. The only other jaeger was a Parasitic reported from Phillipsburg, Sagadahoc, ME 11 Dec, although no details accompanied the sighting A Thayer’s Gull from Ptown 21-29 Dec (ph. T. Johnson, m.ob.) awaits evaluation by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee. But the gulls of the season were the 2 Slaty-backed Gulls (an ad. and third-cycle bird) that visited the Rochester WTP, Strafford, NH 2-18 Jan (ph. MH, SM, JT, m.ob.). This is the same location that hosted the first state record two winters ago.

Although the days of massive Dovekie wrecks appear to be long gone, there was a slight influx of this littlest Atlantic alcid in car-
Hummingbirds continue to amaze. A first state record Calliope Hummingbird was in New Haven, New Haven, CT 2-7 Dec (ph. D. Sosensky, m.o.b.); concurrently, Massachusetts’s 2nd record of this species continued from the fall through 26 Jan at S. Dartmouth, Bristol (ph. G. Dennis, m.o.b.). After a good fall flight, 3 Rufous Hummingbirds were in Connecticut, with the latest staying through 16 Jan at Somers, Tolland (m.o.b.), while Massachusetts hosted 2, including one in Cataumet, Barnstable for the entire season. Unidentified hummingbirds include a Selasphorus in Rhode Island through 26 Jan and an Archilochus (Ruby-throated or Black-chinned) in Plymouth, Plymouth, MA 16-31 Dec (ph. D. Baptista). To the far n., where hummingbird fear to tread (at least in winter), American Three-toed Woodpeckers were in Stockholm, Aroostook, ME 1 Dec and Moose Bog, Essex, VT through mid-Jan. Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem to have slowed their recent advance into Maine (fide JD) but are still setting C.B.C. records in s. New Hampshire (fide DD).

Barely making it into the season was a Least Flycatcher in Cambridge, Middlesex, MA through 2 Dec (R. Stymeist), providing the 2nd latest record for the state. Although widespread, Eastern Phoebes did not show up in anything resembling the numbers from last winter. Reports from Massachusetts were evenly spread through the season, with 3-5 in each month. Elsewhere in s. New England, there were at least 8 in Rhode Island, with one persisting for the entire season, while a bird in Connecticut lingered until 27 Jan. More notable were 2 phoebes in Vermont: at Grand Isle 17 Dec (DH) and Brattleboro, Windham 9 Jan. Ash-throated Flycatchers were widespread (at least in a Regional context), with four records in Dec. Northernmost was a bird in Saco, Cumberland, ME through 12 Dec (ph. D. Lovitch). In Massachusetts, birds were at Annisquam, Essex 9-19 Dec (m.o.b.) and E. Orleans, Barnstable 19 Dec (D. Reynolds). Last but not least was one in Stamford, Fairfield, CT 17-20 Dec (ph., m.o.b.). Western Kingbirds were slightly more numerous, with 3 in Massachusetts (latest 24 Dec at Gloucester), one in Rhode Island (17-19 Dec at Napatree Pt., Washington), and one in Connecticut.

New Hampshire’s (and New England’s) second Slate-backed Gull was an adult at the Rochester wastewater treatment plant 2 January 2007 (left; here 10 January). This adult was joined briefly by a third-cycle individual (right; here 10 January) before both disappeared after 16 January. Photographs by Mike Harvey.

This Western Kingbird at Napatree Point, Rhode Island 17 (here) through 19 December 2006 was one of an impressive five that lingered in New England this winter. Photograph by Richard Farrel.

milder conditions, with 2 in Massachusetts and 4 in Rhode Island. Carolina Wrens continue to increase in s. New Hampshire, with numbers on C.B.C.s about three times the 1996-2005 average (fide DD).

KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS

Ruby-crowned Kinglets seemed somewhat more common than usual in the n. portion of the Region, where 2 lingered into mid-Dec in Vermont and several were tallied on New Hampshire Christmas counts. A total of 24 on Rhode Island’s Newport-Westport C.B.C. 16 Dec was the 2nd highest on record. For the 2nd year in a row, Hermit Thrushes seemed noticeably more common than usual in the north. Most definitely not usual by any measure was a Wood Thrush in Wells, York, ME 21 Jan (DL), observed feeding on rose hips in the same bush as an American Tree Sparrow. Another was in Rockport 28 Jan (M. Burns). The star of last winter’s half-hardy show, Gray Catbird, was scarce this season. Maine managed to turn up one (compared to 14 in winter 2005-2006), and the other states had neither none or single individuals.

In last winter’s summary I speculated on the shifting nature of Bohemian Waxwing incursions into New England. Numbers in 2004-2005 were unusually high for an “off-year,” and 2005-2006 had perhaps the lowest counts in a decade. If the species was simply re-setting its biennial clock, 2006-2007 should have seen an increase. But it did not, and in fact this winter’s “invasion” does not justify the term at all. Even in the traditional stronghold of Maine there were only six reports of no more than 15 individuals, most of which were in the n.-cen. portion of the state late Jan–mid-Feb. None were reported from New Hampshire at all, and the only Vermont records appear to have been from the w. part of the state in mid-Feb. To the s., there were two reports totaling 4 individuals in W. Massachusetts during the same time frame.

As usual, Massachusetts hosted a number of warblers lingering into early Dec, including a Nashville in Boston through the 12th, a Northern Parula in Gloucester on the 3rd, and a Black-throated Blue in Granby, Hampshire through the 19th. Another Black-throated Blue spent Jan and Feb in Boxford, Essex, MA (ph., m.o.b.). Another in Windham, Cumberland, ME through 23 Dec furnished only the 2nd winter record for the Pine Tree State.
There were 2 Cape Warblers this season: one in Rye, NH 1 Dec (SM), the other throughout Jan at Orleans, Barnstable, MA (JT). Also on Cape Cod was an Audubon's Warbler at Eastham 23 Dec+ (ph., m.ob.). Numbers of Myrtle Warblers were reported as lower than usual in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Two w. Dendroica were found by Massachusetts birders this winter: a Black-throated Gray Warbler on Nantucket 4 Feb (E. Andrews) and a Townsend's Warbler at a Cambridge feeder 22 Jan+ (ph. J. Orr, m.ob.). To the n., a Yellow-throated Warbler was at Waterville, ME 14 Dec-2 Jan (ph. D. Mairs, m.ob.). (It is worth noting that an out-of-range Black-backed Woodpecker was at the opposite side of town, providing Maine birders with a rare juxtaposition.) A Prairie Warbler in Middleton, Newport, RI 28 Dec provided one of few winter records for the Region. Wilson's Warblers staged a mini-invasion of sorts, with 3 in e. Massachusetts 3 Dec. Another found at Stanford, CT 14 Dec remained through 18 Jan. There was much speculation on whether the Connecticut bird was of a w. subspecies, as was the season's 5th bird: at Nahant, Essex, MA 3 Jan-14 Feb (ph., m.ob.).

**TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES**

A remarkable 3 Western Tanagers were reported in Maine during Dec: on Monhegan I. on the 4th, at Damariscotta, Lincoln on the 11th, and at Rockport, Knox on the 15th. Another was at E. Hadlock, Middlesex, CT 17-19 Dec (C. Taylor, E. Hagen). None of these birds appear to have lingered after Dec. Like so many of the 2005-2006 hard-harries, Eastern Towhees were scarce. However, a bird in Mapleton, Aroostook, ME 30-31 Dec was over 160 km n. of the species' breeding range in the state. This is perhaps as good a piece of evidence as any that many of these “linger- ing” birds are actually reverse migrants or otherwise displaced individuals. In other towhee news was a bird in Falmouth, Barnstable, MA Dec that appeared to be an Eastern Towhee x Spotted Towhee hybrid (RH et al.). The bird in question had both the white primary spot of an Eastern and the white scapular spots of a Spotted, along with an unmarked black back. A few Clay-colored Sparrows regularly occur in s. New England in the winter, but one in Concord, Merrimack, NH 17 Dec would be the first winter record for the Granite State (PB). Swamp Sparrows were also more common than usual in the n., with an unprecedented three Jan reports in Maine (fide JD), plus higher-than-usual numbers in coastal New Hampshire during Dec (fide DD). A Harris's Sparrow spent Jan-Feb in Georgetown, Essex, MA (A. O'Hare).

A young male Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared in Farmington, Hartford, CT 4 Feb (C. Donagher). Three Painted Buntings grazed the Region this season. The first was a male that continued from the fall through 5 Dec at Huntington, Hampshire, MA (ph. S. Hamlin). Also first found in Nov was a female in Wal- doboro, Lincoln, ME that persisted until late Dec, then made a brief reappearance in late Jan (ph. C. McIntyre, m.ob.). The 3rd was a green bird at New Haven, CT 16-21 Dec (A. Brand, m.ob.), the first of its species in Connecticut in over a decade. Within the Nutmeg State however, the latter record was easily trumped by a very carefully studied yearling male Lazuli Bunting just up the coast at Hammonasset S.P., New Haven, CT 4 Jan-11 Feb (ph. B. Yule, m.ob.). This bird represents the first state record for Connecticut and a first winter record for the Region. While the young male was on the Connecticut coast, an ad. male Lazuli Bunting appeared at a bird bath in Hadley, Hampshire, MA 30-31 Jan (ph., L. Currians), representing the 2nd record for the Bay State (and the 2nd Regional winter record). For the 2nd year in a row, a Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen in Stratham, Rockingham, NH, this time 21 Jan. A flock of 22 Boat-tailed Grackles in Stratford, CT was somewhat higher than usual for this traditional wintering locality.

It was the “winter that wasn’t” for winter finches. Pine Grosbeaks were scarce even in Maine, where there were only six reports, most of only 1-2 birds. The high count of 15 was from the n. tip of the Region in Fort Kent, Aroostook in mid-Jan. Elsewhere in the n., there was only a single report from New Hampshire and none from Vermont. In light of this scarcity in the n., a Pine Grosbeak that hit a window in Chatham, Barnstable, MA on Christmas Day was most remarkable (C. Kennedy); luckily, it was uninjured and was photographed before flying off to parts unknown. Common Redpolls showed a similar pattern: a scattering of reports in the single digits from the n. three states and a single report from Massachusetts, of 6 in Pittsfield, Berkshire 16 Dec. For observers in the n., there were at least crossbills to enjoy. Red Crossbills were sparsely distributed in New Hampshire and Maine, although in small numbers (fide DD, JD), but the real story was White-winged Crossbills. In Maine, the flight was considered the “best showing since 2000-2001” (JD). The largest flocks tended to be in the n. and w. parts of the state, with the southernmost report being a small flock in Wells, York 1 Feb (J. Stevens). Numbers in New Hampshire were about average on the state’s Christmas counts; otherwise there was a maximum of 110 in Pittsfield, NH 13 Jan (MH). In both Vermont and Maine, breeding behavior was observed in Jan and Feb.

Pamela Hunt, 26 Whitewater Drive
Penacook, New Hampshire 03303, (biodiva@verizon.net)
Hudson-Delaware

Frank Rohrbacher | Robert O. Paxton
Richard R. Veit

During the winter months, the weather is one of the most important variables in the distribution of birds in the Hudson-Delaware Region. Here, as well as most of the eastern part of the United States, the weather was balmy throughout the month of December and the first half of January. Temperatures in December averaged 6-8°F above normal. During the first two weeks of January, record-high temperatures were common, resulting in average temperatures of 10-12°F above normal. This warm period ended abruptly. Winter began in earnest in mid-January, with temperatures 6-8°F below normal continuing through the month of February. Fortunately, except along the lakeshores, snow levels continued below average.

Less hardy species lingered through the Christmas Bird Count period and were recorded in exceptionally large numbers on most counts. Baltimore Orioles, warblers, vrens, flycatchers, and tanagers remained in large numbers. Many eventually succumbed, but some survived, often with the help of feeders. Waterfowl were abundant but spread out all over the area, including the far northern stretches of New York, where the ponds and lakes were ice free though mid-February. The very warm weather and the exceptional food available in Canada resulted in an almost total absence of winter finches outside of the Adirondack area.

Unusual species reported this season included American White Pelican, Western Grebe, Mew Gull, California Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Ivory Gull, Long-billed Murrelet, Band-tailed Pigeon, Western Kingbird, Varied Thrush, Harris's Sparrow, Smith's Longspur, Western Tanager, and Bullock's Oriole.


WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in somewhat lower numbers than in recent years, with 12 reports of sightings in New York and seven in New Jersey. Five of the New York birds where reported from the Niagara area, where they are very rare in winter, including a group of 4 at Olcott, Niagara 24 Dec (Jim Pawlicki). Snow Geese took their time reaching their normal wintering grounds in Delaware and New Jersey. On the north shore of L. Ontario, for example, the last of the Snow Geese are usually gone by mid-Dec, but this year 20,000 remained at Ellisburg, Jefferson, NY until mid-Jan (DG, SG). Several Black Brant were reported: one visited Rıs Park, Queens, NY 29 Dec; one wintered in the traditional location at South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ; and another, probably the same bird that stayed there the past two winters, was at I.R.I. Three reports of Barrow's Goose is typical: one at Tilly Foster Farm Conservation Area, Putnam, NY 30 Dec-20 Jan (Bob Gochfeld, Doug Gochfeld); one on private land, Monmouth, NJ 23 Dec-1 Jan (Jim Fred Wirrazzb); and one in Cape May, NJ 17-24 Feb (Jason Guérard). A very large group of Trumpeter Swans lingered into Jan in the Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Wayne, with a maximum of

56 birds recorded 3 Jan (R&SS, Cathy Spahn). Nine additional swans were found on the Syracuse C.B.C. 16 Dec (BP), one was on Allegeny Res., Cattaraugus, NY 28 Jan (Tim Baird), and 8 were at Barneveld, Oneida, NJ 1 Jan (Cheri Sassin). All of these birds are presumed to be from introductions into the Great Lakes Region, including untagged birds from a "raise and do not restrain" operation at Savannah Dhu, Wayne, NY, but the numbers are well above the dozen or so that are normally reported. Only one bird was reported outside of N. New York and that was at Upper Greenwoo L., Pascia, NJ 19 Feb (Beverly Robertson); this one, like some of the N. New York birds, sported yellow wing tags confirming its Ontario roots. Eurasian Wigeon reports were about normal at 14: 7 in New York, 6 in New Jersey, and one in Delaware, with most of the sightings before the mid-Feb freeze. A Eurasian Teal was found at Reed's Bench, Cape May, NJ 15 Feb (Tom Reed, m.m.). This subspecies has averaged about one sighting per year over the past decade, but one wonders how many would be found if the American Ornithologists' Union were to recognize it as a full species. A Eurasian Teal x Green-winged Teal intergrade was reported in Brooklyn, Kings, NY 21 Jan. The high counts of puddle ducks recorded in the past few years were not reported this year, at least in part because the warm early winter allowed the birds to spread out. King Eider posted a scant 11 reports, and both Common Eider and Harlequin Ducks seemed to be down across the Region.
Region: 9 on L. Ontario, 6 around Long L., and 2 in New Jersey.

**GREBES THROUGH IBIS**

After a series of warm winters, Red-necked Grebe would be expected to remain on the Great Lakes. This was generally correct through Jan, with each bird making the migration into the wintering grounds. When the cold of the winter began in earnest, the Great Lakes froze, and by the first week in Feb, Red-necked Grebes arrived in good numbers all along the coast, with 6-8 total in Delaware. Two Eared Grebes returned to Lakes Bay near Atlantic City, Atlantic, NJ from 8 Dec–26 Jan (CV, m.o.b.) One was found in Napesgue Harbor near Amagansett, Suffolk, NY 21–24 Jan (HM), and another single was in Dunkirk Harbor, Chautauqua, NY 9–10 Dec (Dave Neveu, Joanne Goetz) in the Niagara region, where reports of this species have increased in recent winters. For the 4th consecutive year, a Western Grebe visited the region. This year, a bird was found at Trembleau Pt. on L. Champlain 25 Dec (Dana C. Rohleder); presumably the same bird showed up 24 km to the s. at Essex Harbor, Essex 1 Jan (J&PT). Five organized pelagic trips went out into area waters, resulting in good numbers of pelagic species being reported. Some 15 Northern Fulmars were seen this winter: one on a 3 Dec pelagic out of Freeport, NY (PG et al.); 3 on a 3 Dec trip out of Belmar, NJ (PG et al.); 2 on a 3 Jan trip out of Barnegat Inlet, NJ (AB); and 9 on a 25 Feb trip from Lewes, DE (PG et al.). Manx Shearwaters were found on two of the trips, with 11 on the 3 Dec trip from Freeport, NY (PG et al.) and 7 on the 3 Dec trip from Belmar, NJ (PG et al.).

American White Pelicans continue to appear in small numbers during the winter; one at Van Cortland Park in New York, NY 13 Dec (Dave Künstler); one at Round Valley Res., Somerset, NJ 14 Dec (Frank Sencher, Sr., FJS), possibly the same bird as at Van Cortland Park, 2 at Shark R. estuary, Sussex, DE 30 Dec (Sam Dyke). In past years, Brown Pelicans left the area well before winter, with an occasional bird lingering into the first week of Dec. This year, they stayed late enough to be found at Montauk, Suffolk, NY 2 Dec (Larry Merriman) and on four Christmas counts: Cape May, NJ 17 Dec; Barnegat, Ocean, NJ 31 Dec; Rehoboth, Sussex, DE 30 Dec; and Nossau, Long L., NJ 1 Jan—the latter exceptionally late for New York. Sightings of Brown Pelicans at Cape May Harbor on 7 Jan and 27 Jan ended this unusual streak. A Little Blue Heron stayed late in Barnegat Township, NJ 10–28 Dec (McDuffy Barrow), as did a number of Green Herons that managed to show up on C.B.C.s, including Binghamton, Broome, NY 17 Dec, Troy, Albany, NY 30 Dec, Orient, Suffolk, NY 30 Dec, Cape May, NJ 17 Dec, and Belleplain, Cape May, NJ 27 Dec. Only one Glossy Ibis was reported in the Region this winter, in Salem, NJ on the very late date of 15 Jan (Steve Glynn).

**HAWKS THROUGH CRANES**

A few Ospreys lingered into Dec, with 3 singles making it on New Jersey C.B.C.s and 2 in New York on the Rockland C.B.C. Bald Eagles were again reported in high numbers across the Region on C.B.C.s. Pete Nye, however, reported only half as many eagles this year as last after his aerial survey 11 Jan, covering the area of c. New York on the 2007 Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey. He observed that, for the first time in his 28 years of surveying, there was no ice whatsoever. He speculated that the eagles that normally winter in the area had remained in Canada. A Swainson’s Hawk at Medford, Burlington, NJ, 11 Dec (WD) would furnish the first state record after the month of Nov (Virginia and North Carolina have records of the species in Dec–Feb). The distribution of winter raptors is strongly influenced by weather. Jeff Belsinger, reporting on a raptor survey conducted by Gerry Smith in the towns of Cape Vincent and Point Peninsula in n. Jefferson, NY, writes: “It turned out to be an exceptional winter for raptors in n. Jefferson County, Northern Harriers were present in Cape Vincent in high numbers during the mild portion of the winter, but moved out, some apparently to Point Peninsula, when the cold and snow settled in during late January. At about the same time, large numbers of Rough-legged Hawks flooded into the region, with daily counts reaching 80+ in both Cape Vincent and Point Peninsula. At least 100 Short-eared Owls also wintered in these two towns.” Large numbers of Golden Eagles were recorded migrating through the area, this year with 57 tabulated at the Franklin Mt. Hawk-watching, Delaware, NY, in Dec alone. The number of sightings reported to hotlines after the Dec migrating birds had moved through was very low. The most interesting was a report of 2 adults and an imm. at Leeds Pt., Atlantic, NJ, plus an imm. at Amassas Landing, Atlantic, NJ 23 Jan (CS, JD). The only birds that apparently wintered here were an ad. and imm. at Sis-tering Mt., Delaware, NY (Chet Vincent) and the Atlantic, NJ birds. Three Gyrfalcons, all in the gray morph and all in New York, made a good total: one at Cedar Beach, Suffolk, Long L. 13– 20 Dec (Ken Feustel); one at Deposit, Delaware 13–14 Jan (m.o.b.); and one 11 Feb at Cumberland Head, Clinton (Mike Dragoon). A Black Rall, always a surprise in winter, was found at the Shark R. estuary during the Long Branch C.B.C. 30 Dec (Tim Vogel), a count first. A Purple Gallinule at Parkertown, NJ on the Barnegat C.B.C. 31 Dec (Rick Radis, TB) was also a count first—and almost a poster child for the mild season. Also impressive was a Common Moorhen at Cape May, NJ 15 Dec (m.o.b.); but 5 along the LaChute R., Essex 17–18 Jan (James Cunningham) were downright astonishing and provided a first winter record of the species for New York’s Adiron-dack-Champlain region. The only migrating Sandhill Cranes noted were 9 at the Savannah Mucklands, Wayne, NY through 3 Feb and one at the Chazy Rivers, Clinton, NY 12 Dec (Bill Krueger), the latter only the 3rd county record. Fourteen cranes roosted at Husted Landing Rd., Cumberland, NJ through the winter. Some were thought to be pure Sandhill Cranes, but the area is known to have a small number of Sandhill Crane x Common Crane hybrids.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH JAEGERs**

The number of American Oystercatchers reported this season was well above average,
with 573 birds counted in New Jersey led by the 273 found on the Oceanville C.B.C., Atlantic, NJ and 253 on the Cape May C.B.C., NJ. New York also did well, with 42 total, of which 33 were on the Southern Nassau C.B.C. 1 Jan. Small numbers of American Avocet have attempted to winter in the Delaware marshes for the past 10 years, but the 104 birds counted on Delaware Bay at Ted Harvey W.M.A., Kent, DE 11 Jan (Ben Weinstein) was by far the highest winter count. A Spotted Sandpiper was a good find on a survey of the DuPont facility at Carney's Pt., Gloucester, NJ 16 Dec (Jeff Holt et al.). Willet totals of 42 in New Jersey and 3 in New York and Marbled Godwit totals of 30 in New Jersey were slightly above normal. The winter distribution of Red Knots (as measured by the C.B.C.) is puzzling. In New York this year, 331 were recorded—the highest total for the state in the past 50 years of counts—and 350 of those were from the Central Suffolk C.B.C. In New Jersey, 74 were recorded on the Cape May C.B.C. Last winter in New Jersey, 736 Red Knots were counted, and five years ago, 998 were tallied—all in Cape May. It seems unlikely that these birds ultimately wintered in South America, but did they spend the harsh second half of the winter in our region? A few Red Phalaropes were recorded during the early winter organized pelagic boat trips: 2 off Freeport, NY 3 Dec (PG et al.); 4 off Belmar, NJ 3 Dec (PG et al.); and 3 off Barnegat Inlet, NJ 3 Jan (AB).

Little, Black-headed, and Bonaparte's Gulls appeared throughout the region in normal numbers despite the warm weather in Dec. As usual, an ad. California Gull was reported at N.P.P. 30-31 Dec and 6 & 14 Jan (WDA, William Watson). There were three reports of first-winter Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull hybrids, a bit above normal: Monticello Landfill, Sullivan, NY 24 Jan (JH); Prime Hook Beach, Sussex, DE 4-8 Feb (ES); and off Freeport, Nassau, NY 10 Feb (PG et al.). Two Slaty-backed Gulls were found this winter, at Niagara Falls, Niagara, NY 2-3 Dec (Kevin McGowan, WDA) and at the Monticello Landfill, Sullivan, NY 24 Jan—10 Feb (ph. JH, m.ob.). Black-legged Kittiwakes were counted on three of the offshore pelagic trips and in w. New York, with 8 between Hamlin Beach S.P. and Derby Hill on L. Ontario and one at N.P.P. during Dec and Jan. The gull of the season, probably the bird of the winter in this region, was an ad. Ivory Gull that was found and photographed in Piermont, Rockland, NY 25-26 Feb (Drew Ciganek, m.ob.). This bird, viewed at close range by many observers as it fed on the remains of a wintering Snowy Owls kills, will furnish New York's 5th documented record of this increasingly endangered species. A Caspian Tern found at Corbin City, Atlantic, NJ 6 Dec (CS, JD) was extremely late. After several years without any winter reports, 4 Pomarine Jaegers were seen, all in New York: one at Hardin Beach S.P., Monroe 7 Jan (DT); 2 at Derby Hill, Oswego 2 Dec; and one on the Niagara R. in Buffalo, Erie 3 Dec (Alan Woodward, Karl Oberman). A Parasitic Jaeger seen on the 3 Dec pelagic trip (PG et al.) from Freeport, NY was expected, but one harassing a flock of at Sandy Hook N.W.R. 19 Jan (Harvey Tomlinson, SB, Pete Bacinski)—the first record for the state, pending acceptance by the New Jersey Bird Records Committee.

A Band-tailed Pigeon spent several days at a feeder in Cape May, NJ 16-18 Feb (Michael O'Brien, Louise Zematis)—the 2nd state record and one of very few from the Atlantic Seaboard. Snowy Owls came down in good numbers but generally remained n. of New Jersey. Bohemian Waxwings were virtually absent from the region after several years of respectable numbers. 36 in Willsboro, Essex, NY 28 Dec and 2 singles in the Rochester area at Webster Park, Monroe 27 Dec (John Boettcher, Norma Platte) and Durand-Eastman, Monroe 30 Dec (m.ob.) were the only reports. There were 3 Ash-throated Flycatchers reported in the region this season: one in Marlton, Burlington, NJ 2 Dec (fide PD); one in Central Park, NY 4 Dec (Martin Butterfield, Frances Butterfield); and one in Stockton, Hunterdon, NJ 30 Dec—13 Jan (Larry King, m.ob.). Four Western Kingbirds was a high total: one at Tuckerton, Ocean, NJ 2 Dec; one at the Bronx Botanical Garden, Kings, NY 6 Dec; one at Stone Tavern L., Mercer, NJ in the Assunpink C.B.C. 17 Dec; and one at Cutchogue, Suffolk, NY 6-8 Jan (John Brush, Sr.). A few Cave Swallows were still moving through in early Dec. As usual, Cape May, NJ had the lion's share: a maximum of 10 birds on 2 Dec (PEL), the last day they were recorded there. On the same day, 2 were seen and photographed (France Dewaghe) at Augustine Beach, New Castle, DE, for a 2nd state record. The last report was of a single bird seen at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 9 Dec (Jim Schlick).

**ALCIDS THROUGH SWALLOWS**

With four pelagic trips getting out to sample the New York, New Jersey, and Delaware waters in Jan and Feb, hopes were high for strong counts of alcids. However, the number of Dovekies reported was staggering: 9000+ in New York on the 10 Feb trip from Freeport (PG et al.); 45+ in New York and 7 in New Jersey on the 3 Jan trip from Barnegat Inlet (AB); 7 on the 5 Jan Pelagic C.B.C. in New Jersey waters (PG et al.); and 338 in Delaware on the 25 Feb trip from Lewes (PG et al.). The two Feb pelagic trips produced a total of 11 Common Murres, but no Thick-billed Murres were seen anywhere in the Region this winter. Razorbills were found in about normal numbers, with 25-30 seen on each of the Feb boats, but fewer concentrations than usual were reported from shore. A Black Guillemot was at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 7 Dec (Shane Blodgett), but the alcid of the year was the Long-billed Murrelet seen and photographed

**THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES**

A total of 3 Varied Thrushes visited New York this year: at Cambria, Niagara, NY 1-15 Feb (m.ob.); at a feeder in Penfield, Monroe, NY 18 Dec+ (Rick Flood); and at a feeder in Chester, Orange, NY Nov+ (Kenneth McDermott). The Penfield bird was offered a selection of fruits and nuts when it arrived but showed a strong preference for Pepperridge Farm® Nutty Oat bread. At least 12 species of warblers were found this winter in the Region; most were half-hardy or slightly late birds: who can fault 7 Nashville Warblers, a Black-throated Blue Warbler, a Blackpoll Warbler, 6 Ovenbirds, and 9 Yellow-breasted Chats for spending a little extra time in the s. part of the Region when 70-degree temperatures lingered through the first week of Jan? Three birds stand out as unusual even given the weather. A Yellow-throated
Warbler at the Ausable Point Campgrounds and State Beach 15 Nov–18 Jan (Julie Latrell). Ausable Point is about as far n. as one can get in New York, sticking into L. Champlain about 60 km s. of Quebec. A Black-throated Gray Warbler at Marlton, Burlington, N.J. 1–9 Jan (John Maxwell, m.ob.) furnished just the previous winter record for the state. Finally, a Cape May Warbler was discovered in Riversides Park, Manhattan, NY 20 Dec–17 Jan (Geoff Nuelle), for the first state record of this species in the month of Jan.

Five Western Tanagers was an astounding total for this Region, with 4 in New Jersey (fully a fourth of all winter sightings for the state) and one in New York. The New Jersey birds were noted at Mt. Olive Twp., Morris 12 Dec–11 Jan (FS, Jr. et al.), at Higbee Beach, Cape May, NJ 13–17 Dec (EO, CV), at Echo Hill Park, Huntington 4 Jan–5 Feb (PK, m.ob.), and at the Mullica R. bridge, Atlantic, NJ 23 Jan (CS, JD; found dead 25 Jan); the New York bird was in Baldwin, Nassau 7 Feb into early Mar (J. & M. Stahl). A Clay-colored Sparrow was at Palmyra Cove, Burlington, NJ 3 Dec (WD et al.), and one was at Parma, Monroe, NY 17 Dec–2 Feb (PK, m.ob.). Vesper Sparrows were recorded as singles only in New Jersey, on the Cape May C.B.C. and on the Long Branch, Monmouth C.B.C. Two Le Conte's Sparrows that wintered in the Region this year were excellent finds: at Prime Hook N.W.R., Sussex, DE 24 Dec–4 Feb (ES, BPe) and at Abbott’s Farm W.M.A., Salem, NJ 17 Feb– (PD, Andy Urquhart). A Lincoln's Sparrow at Thompson Park, Middlesex, NJ 17 Dec was a nice find (Tom Boyle). A Harris's Sparrow visited a feeder in Irondequoit, Monroe, NY 2 Dec–late Feb. Gerry Leubner, who after 51 years retired as the Rochester C.B.C. compiler two years ago, hosted this bird and over 100 birders. Surprisingly, this is his 2nd Harris’s Sparrow here—the first visit 35 years ago. A Smith's Longspur was found at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 9 Feb–13 Mar (Ed Coyle, m.ob.); this will provide the 2nd New York state record. Four Dickcissels were found in New Jersey: one at Collier's Mills, Mercer 17 Dec (Fred Lesser); one at Palmyra Cove, Burlington 23 Dec (TB); one at Edgewater Park, Burlington 11 Jan (David White); and one in Cape May 18 Feb (PEL).

Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported, about average: one in Pennsville, Salem, NJ 3 Jan (fide SB); one in Pemberton Township, NJ 25 Feb (fide PD); and one in the Bombay Hook area, Kent, DE that was reported several times in Dec and Feb. The only reports of Brewer's Blackbirds were from Pennsville Township, Salem, NJ, where as many as 6 wintered at the same site as last year (Sandra Keller, PD, Dave Magpiong). Baltimore Orioles were reported 25 times, which is about normal, with the vast majority in New Jersey. At one point, in mid-Dec, 6–7 birds were reported daily in the Cape May, NJ area. An adult male Bullock's Oriole was found visiting a feeder in a yard in Phoenixia, Ulster, NY 6 Feb (Richard Guthrie)—furnishing just the 4th New York state record. An Indigo Bunting was found at a feeder in Eldora, Cape May, NJ 6 Jan (Karen Johnson, Brian Thompson, PEL) and remained through the season. The only Painted Bunting reported was one that visited a feeder in Seafood, Sussex, DE 23–30 Dec (David Fees).

Winter finches failed to impress. The number of Pine Grosbeaks that visit the Region is highly variable, but this winter had to be one of the poorest on record, as only one bird at Hogan Pt., Greece, NY 18 Dec (DT) was reported. Purple Finches were widespread at higher elevations throughout the Adirondacks, with 50 or more likely per day, with the maximum total of 180 at Bloomingleague Bog, Essex, NY 31 Dec (Matthew Young). For the rest of the Region, Purple Finches were essentially absent. Red Crossbills and White-winged Crossbills staged a moderate invasion into the Adirondack region but did not venture away from that area. Common Redpolls were reported in both the Adirondack and Rochester areas of New York. Pine Siskins, like Purple Finches, were prevalent in the Adirondack region, with a maximum of 154 on the Saranac Lake C.B.C., but they were few and far between outside of the boreal areas. There were no reports of Red Crossbills, White-winged Crossbills, Common Redpolls, or Evening Grosbeaks from Long Island, New Jersey, or Delaware.


Frank Rohrbacher, 5 Neva Court, Wilmington, DE 19810, (rohrbach@aol.com);
Robert O. Paxton, 400 Riverside Drive, Apt. 72, New York, New York 10027, (nap@columbia.edu);
Richard R. Veit, Department of Biology, College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314, (veitrr2003@yahoo.com)
Middle Atlantic

Todd M. Day | Edward S. Brinkey

The season was a study in contrasts: unusually balmy through early January, but often quite chilly, even bitterly so, in the second half of the period. The warm weather in December showed no connection to half-hardy or “lurking” species, which were noted in average or below-average numbers, and no real influxes of boreal birds appeared with the onset of cold weather, aside from minor increases in waterfowl and white-winged gulls. Precipitation was below average in most areas, and snowfall was negligible except in the highest elevations (and even then below average). In a year with acidity—especially Doyleville and Common Murres—breaking records along the East Coast, Maryland had several highlights from a single pelagic trip, but for the first time in over a decade not a single birding trip left port in Virginia. The mix of rarities—Green-tailed Towhee, Yellow Rail, Tropical Kingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, blue-morph Ross’s Goose, Wood Stork—was thrilling, if not overwhelming.

WATERFOWL THROUGH WOOD STORK

In Virginia, up to 11 Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in the Mountains and Valleys (Augusta, Staunton, Russell) 5 Dec–26 Feb, with the largest count being 6 at Elk Garden, Russell (T. Hunter, B. Riggs), and 4 were between three locations in the w. Coastal Plain (Fairfax, King William, Surry) 10 Dec–4 Feb, with 2 in the Piedmont in Culpeper 25 Feb (TMD). Maryland reported 8 Greater White-fronteds 3 Dec–23 Feb, including 2 ad. flavirostris near Union Mills 25 Jan–9 Feb (RFR et al.) and one in Calvert, MD 4 Feb (JLS et al.). An imm. dark-morph Ross’s Goose at Chincoteague N.W.R. 15 Dec (HTA) furnishes the 3rd sight report of this rare morph in the state—and one of very few on the East Coast. Only two other reports of the species came from Virginia: from Staunton (AL) and Prince William (KG et al.) in Jan. In Maryland, Ross’s Geese were widespread again (reports of 14 total, 7 Dec–25 Feb), and it is apparent that the many fewer Virginia reports of the species in recent years (the species is regular at Chincoteague N.W.R.) indicate waning zanje in reporting the species rather than an actual decline. Cackling Goose, which has come to occupy the niche of birders’ interest once held by Ross’s, was reported in 13 locations in Virginia, with the peak count of 5 coming from Bells Lane, Staunton, Augusta 21 Dec (AL). Other Virginia counts above 2 came from the Rte. 3 ponds in King George 3 Dec (3; FA) and near Radford 3 Jan (J. C. Kessler). Sixty-eight Cackling Geese were reported in Maryland 3 Dec–2 Feb, with a high of 5 at Westminster Res. 11 Dec (RFR). A Snow Goose x Canada Goose hybrid was noted at Elk Neck, Cecil, MD 7 Jan (WE et al.). The only report of Barnacle Goose was from Meadow L., Garrett 1-3 Dec (JLS).

In Virginia, 2 Trumpeter Swans (one clearly from the Ohio program) turned up at Airlie, Faquier 10 Dec–28 Feb, with one marked with neck collar reading “OA4.” In Maryland, one continued at Oxsho, Kent through 2 Mar (M. Stutzman et al.), one from a Canadian introduction program (with patagial tag “962”) at Upper Marlboro, Prince George’s through 27 Feb (ph. S. J. Davies), and a pair with 5 yearlings cruised Fairlee 16 Dec (L. & N. Dulak et al.). Counts of 1000 Gadwalls and 1000 American Wigeons came from Piscataway Park, Prince George’s, MD 10 Dec (T. Field, BH); no other concentrations came close to four digits. Five male Eurasian Wigeons in Virginia and 3 in Maryland, 1 Dec–3 Mar, was about normal, all in the Coastal Plain. The decline of Northern Pintail is most palpable in the s. parts of the Region; Armistead managed to count 473, a good recent count, at Blackwater N.W.R. 12 Feb. The only Eurasian Teal of the season was a male at Great Oak Pond, Kent 15-18 Jan (WE). An injured female Blue-winged Teal was on the New R. in Radford 21 Dec–3 Jan (C. Kessler); 10 were still at Elliott L. 16 Dec (BH).

Numbers of Redhead were reported only from Maryland, where the high was just 410 on the Honza R. 12 Feb (HTA); all other Aythya were in predictable numbers and locations. The only certain King Eider reported was an imm. male at Ocean City Inlet 19 Feb (E. Sirling); that location also had the only Common Eiders in the Region, with a whooping 17, including 8 ad. males, 5 Dec+ (S. Dyke, m.o.b.), Harlequin Duck reports included one to 2 at Ocean City (2 Jan–10 Mar), one at Point Lookout, MD (17 & 24 Feb), and an imm. male at C.B.B.T. 12 Dec (S. Devan, B. Blyston, B. Williams) through at least 13 May (ESB et al.). Rare for the mts. at any time, a subad. male White-winged Scoter was at Whiteethorn, Garrett, MD 25 Feb–4 Mar (M. Hafner). One at Cumberland 4 Feb (D. Yeany II) and 2 at Little Seneca Res., Montgomery 18-20 Feb and one km upriver from Little Falls 22-24 Feb (both D.C. et al.) were equally rare for Maryland’s w. half. A Long-tailed Duck at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham 16 Dec (G. Moyer) furnished one of few recent county records. A possible female Barrow’s Goldeneye was seen at Hooper’s L., MD 14 (HTA) & 15 Jan (D. Cole). Mergansers and Ruddy Ducks wintered in average numbers for recent years. Wild Turkey continues to proliferate, whereas Northern Bobwhite slowly disappears, and the introduced Ring-necked Pheasant has nearly vanished from the Region; reports of the latter were restricted to Maryland at three locations, with a high of 3 at Carmichael, Queen Anne’s 19 Jan (D. Poet). Common Peafowl has become locally common around Church Creek, Dorchester, MD, where 11 were counted 29 Dec (B. Mumford).

Red-throated Loons where rare in Virginia were on the Shenandoah R., Clarke 1-3 Dec (J. Coleman, E. Bogar), and at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg 4 & 13 Jan (fide A. B. Bryan), the latter now a more-expectable locale in the Piedmont for this species. A few were located in the greater D.C. area as well. Patient searching at Kerr Res. netted D’Onofrio another Pacific Loon, 10 Dec and 4 Jan. The only coastal Pacific Loon was one seen in a large loon and duck flight at Cape Charles, Northampton 13 Dec (ESB). Maryland had no reports of this species. A grand flight of Common Loons—885—passed hawkwatchers at Snicker’s Gap, on the line between Clarke and Loudoun 3 Dec (B. Abrams, J. Boudreau); in Maryland, 400+ passed Monument Knob the same day (D. Weesner). A Western Grebe was studied critically in the Pocomac R. off Washington’s Birthplace, VA 14 Jan (p.c.; C. Turner); this is a Maryland record. Only a dozen Red-necked Grebes were reported Region-wide; and aside from a single at Lehigham Cr., Talbot, MD 17 Dec (D. Carson, RFR), the only Eared Grebes were at 5. Holtson L., the only reliable spot in the Region for this w. species. A count of 64 Pied-billed Grebes at Loch Raven Res. 27 Jan (D. Terry) was heartening.

A Manx Shearwater at C.B.B.T. 14 Jan (BTA) was remarkably the only 2nd sight report for this well-watched spot. The only report of Northern Fulmar came from a 25 Feb pelagic trip off Ocean City, 22 birds total (PG et al.). In recent years, American White Pelicans are not nearly as numerous in Virginia as 

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

242
in Maryland; one was at Accotink Bay, VA 26 Nov–21 Dec, then at nearby Pohick Cr. 31 Dec (fide KG), for the only Virginia report. At Blackwater N.W.R., it was tough to keep track of all the reports of the species, but the high count during the season was 31 on 14 Jan (HTA), certainly the highest Regional count ever and mirrored in the steadily increasing numbers that winter in the e. Carolinas. Singles were at Ocean City and Jugi Bay in Dec-Jan as well. Brown Pelicans and Northern Gannets continue to forage farther n. in the Chesapeake Bay than historically, sometimes in large numbers. The only report of Cattle Egret came from Blackwater N.W.R. 25 Nov–9 Dec (D. Burggraaf). Late Green Herons were at Leeds Cr. 21 Dec (L. Roslund) and 6 Feb at Rigby’s Folly (E. Armistead). Two Glossy Ibis at Deal Island W.M.A. 28 Dec (C. & L. McCollough) were remarkable rarities for the season. A Wood Stork at First Landing S.P., Virginia Beach 19–23 Jan (K. & T. Beatty, m.o.b., ph.) may have been the first truly “twitchable” one in the state in over 20 years.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

A count of Bald Eagles of between 134 and 144 from Cat. Cr., Richmond 22 Feb (fide S. Spencer) was remarkable from such a small site. Single Ospreys continue to haunt the Region through the season, though there is a distinct “lull” in records in Jan, suggesting that many of the more northerly birds clear out by the end of Dec, and the Feb birds are returnees. However, the birds around Virginia Beach have at least a half-dozen through Jan in most recent years. Northern Goshawks remain very scarce; a female at Mt. Airy, MD ca. 28–31 Jan (G. Bach-Watson) was the only one reported. An albino Red-tailed Hawk n. of Taneytown, MD 25 Jan (RFR, D. Terry) surely stood out. In Virginia, Rough-legged Hawks were absent except in their stronghold, Highland, where up to 5 were seen; Maryland had singles at Shorters Wharf 27 Dec (F. Jacobsen) and at Elliott I. exactly a month later (HTA). Virginia Golden Eagles away from Highland (where tracked assiduously this season into spring and summer by local birders) were numerous: one Juv at Prince William landfill 10 Nov–17 Dec (JK, KG), one near the Dublin, Pulaski airport on New Year’s Day and a second 23 Feb (C. Kessler), 2 in e. Russell 20 Jan (R. Mayhorn et al.), and a third, in w. Rockbridge 23 Feb (P. Cave). Maryland held at least 11 Goldens, including up to 3 at Blackwater N.W.R. through the season. Peregrines and Merlins wintered in typical numbers and localities.

The only Little Gull report came from Ocean City 6 Jan (KG et al.). A Black-headed Gull at Prince William landfill 9–17 Dec (fide JK, m.o.b., ph.) was locally rare; Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were limited to that location and Fanquair landfill; none were reported coastally in Virginia. Five Iceland, 3 Glaucous, and 2 Glaucous x Herring hybrids in Maryland were likewise at or below par, but an ad. Iceland, a plumage rarely reported in the Region, was seen at Upper Marlboro, Prince George, MD 22 Feb (B. Schaefer). Ten thousand Ring-billed Gulls near Piccirick Creek 6 Jan (L. Roslund) made the only concentration away from a landfill. Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become too widespread to mention in this column. Only 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes were noted on the 22 Feb pelagic off Ocean City (PG et al.). Forster’s Terns hung on in Maryland through mid- and late Dec, but there were no reports after 28 Dec.

A Yellow Rail was caught in a mist-net, but not banded or photographed, by researchers working on marsh sparrows and wrens near Mockhorn W.M.A., Northampton 30 Jan (F. Smith). This furnishes the 3rd mid-winter report of the species for the Region. A few Common Moorhens made it into Jan in Maryland, but none were reported after the C.B.C. season in Virginia (though Northampton surely had several). The top count of American Coot came from Loch Raven Res., 1500 on 24 Feb (D. Terry). Sandhill Cranes are now numerous enough that tracking their numbers can be difficult. Maryland had reports of 12 birds 5 Dec–27 Jan, though some of these may represent duplications; Virginia had no winter reports at all. Shorebird numbers and diversity did not make for many copy in these. Word of a few late (and early?) Spotted Sandpipers, not unusual in warm winters, a few lingering Lesser Yellowlegs, and a few wintering dark Red Knots and Least Sandpipers reached the editors, but nothing more exotic; a tale of a lone Long-billed Dowitcher chased over the inlet at Ocean City by a Northern Harrier 9 Dec (Z. Bier) was memorable.

Representing a new Regional high count, 3885 Dovekie were carefully counted on the 25 Feb pelagic trip off Ocean City, along with 24 Razorbill, 10 large alcids, and a Common Murre. To put the Dovekie count in context, this is almost double the total of these little auks ever recorded in Virginia and quintuple Maryland’s previous high count! Single Thick-billed Murres from shore were noted at Ocean City 17 Feb–1 Mar (J. Elmer et al.) and possibly later. A Razorbill at Ocean City 3 Feb (J. Green et al.) was the only one reported from shore.

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Eurasian Collared-Doves were at the usual sites in Virginia and also seen at Hooper’s I, MD: one on 11 Dec (HTA) and 2 there 20 Dec–21 Jan (RFR et al.). Small numbers of Short-eared Owls were reported in both states, no site having more than 3 or 4, and 2 Long-eared Owls were detected in Queen Anne’s, MD 19 Dec (D. Gill). Rufous Hummingbirds have become annual winter residents, mostly at feeders, and have become difficult to track, as many are not reported. Maryland typically has far fewer reports than Virginia of the species; this year, one was seen at Silver Spring through 6 Dec (S. Long et al.), a female near Patapsco was banded 8 Dec, one was seen at Frederick through 5 Feb, and another was banded s. of Burtonsville Dec 8 (fide RFR). A female Black-chinned Hummingbird, flushed by a beagle from a thicket at Cape Charles 9–11 Dec (acc., ESB et al.), remained long enough to be photographed and was the 2nd for the town (the first was just a block away) and 3rd for the state. Recorded perhaps four or five times as frequently in winter in se. Virginia, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird was banded at Virginia Beach 20 Dec (S. Heath, B. Peterjohn). An unidentified hummer was at Rigby’s Folly, Tarboll, MD 13 Jan (HTA).

The rarest bird of the season was surely the Tropical Kingbird found near Widgeon, Somerset, MD 17 Dec (J. & L. Fry et al.) through 3 Jan (m.o.b., ph.). A first for the Region, it has some precedent, as there are records from North Carolina. An Ash-throated Flycatcher on Polk Kellam’s farm, Northampton was the first for the brand-new Nassawadox C.B.C. 17 Dec (T. Saunders, G. Tracy; ph. ESB); a Myiarchus near Centreville, MD 17 Dec (D. Poet et al.) was likely this species. Loggerhead Shrikes, now always on the radar, were reported in Russell, Fanquair, Shenandoah, Allemanie, Augusta, and Tazewell, VA 20–28 Feb but not in Maryland. Are wintering birds gone from the s. Piedmont of Virginia, or is the area just woefully underbinned? Common Ravens continue to inch eastward, with singles 9 & 17 Dec at the Prince William landfill (JK et al.), where now regular, and 21 Jan at Centreville, Fairfax (S. Baron); Maryland birds get closer and closer to the D.C. area as well (m.o.b.). A Pied Crow in the vicinity of the Brooklyn Park, Anne Arundel 12 Dec–4 Feb (V. Burke, B. Sykes, S. Byrd et al.) must have made a strange sight. The only out-of-place Black-capped Chickadees reported were 2 at Riley’s Lock, MD 27 Jan (J. Peters). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was the prize on the D.C. C.B.C. 16 Dec (P. G. Dumont). A Wood Thrush at Phoenix, MD 2 Dec (K. Jenkins) furnishes one of very few Dec records for the Region.
Warring through Weaver Finches

Lingering warblers were nothing to write home about this season. Single Nashville Warblers tarried at Huntley Meadows County Park, Fairfax, VA 2 Dec (B. Jesup) and wintered, probably, at L. Smith, Virginia Beach (seen only 4 Feb; K. & D. Schroeder) and at a feeder in Annapolis, MD (seen 18 Jan; C. Wible); C.B.C. birds were in Somerset 27-31 Dec (G. L. Armistead, C. Vaughn) and West Ocean City 28 Dec (M. J. Lifl et al.). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was found w. of Harrisonburg in Rockingham, for a rare montane record 7 Feb (E. Glick, C. Mellinger); another was rumored around Damascus, MD (T. Lipe), but dates were not reported.

A Yellow-throated Warbler of subspecies albilora (Sycamore Warbler) was at L. Smith, Virginia Beach, noted at least 8 Dec-4 Feb (K. & D. Schroeder); another was on the Fort Belvoir C.B.C. 31 Dec (male KG), in the Prince George’s, MD sector. An Audubon’s Warbler was the rarest of the parulid list, found 16 Dec at Brooklyn Park, Anne Arundel (p.a., M. Schwartz, P. Webb). Reports of more expected species—a Black-and-white Warbler, 3 Ovenbirds, a Wilson’s Warbler, and at least one Yellow-breasted Chat—came mostly from Maryland.

Virginia’s “Bird of the Season” award goes to the state’s first Green-tailed Towhee in ages, found by Bob Perkins (?) in his Galaxy yard 13 Feb and shared with scores of birders from four states, often with helpful updates and in-field assistance from Glen Eells; it was last observed 1 May (ph., m.ob.). This record (acc.) now moves the species from Category 2 to Category 1, as the single state specimen has not been located. American Tree Sparrows were limited to the w. and n. reaches of the region, as is typical. Clay-colored Sparrow was not found in Virginia but seen in five Maryland locations, 9 Dec-24 Feb. Interestingly difficult to find wintering in the region, Vesper Sparrow eluded searchers on the Virginia Eastern Shore and s. Virginia Beach, its last winter “strongholds” in the state (where counts of 12 or more in a day were common 25 years ago), but 3 were found along Steel Pond Rd., Worcester, MD 29 Dec (M. Hoffman) and 3 at Oak Grove, Caroline, MD 14 Jan (G. Lovelace). Results of a study of wintering site fidelity in sharp-tailed sparrows in Northampton, VA will be published by the Center for Conservation Biology (E. Smith et al.). Stass’s decades-long attention to this complex has borne fruit repeatedly, including 29 Dec at E. A. Vaughn W.M.A., Worcester, MD, where he found 6 Acadian and 21 James Bay (plus six unidentified to subspecies) Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrows, along with 11 Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows. No other counts in the Region approached these numbers. In Maryland, a Lincoln’s Sparrow was found along Big Mill Rd., Worcester 29 Dec (M. Hoffman), and others were reported at Lillypops 31 Dec in Boonsboro for most of Jan (Voice of the Naturalist). A Gambel’s White-crowned Sparrow was noted at Chesapeake Farms, MD 24 Feb (WE et al.); another, an imm., was near Worton, MD 25 Feb. Dark-eyed Juncos bearing some resemblance to Pink-sided Junco (p.a.) were at Sandy Point, MD 31 Dec (G.S., M. Watson, D. Mozurkewich) and Queenstown, MD 17 Feb (D. Poet). A female Oregon Junco spent 19-24 Jan at Frostburg, MD (M. Luttermund). Lapland Longspurs were limited to five Virginia and 12 Maryland areas, all expected counts and locations. Three Snow Buntings at First Landing S.P. Virginia Beach 17 Jan (K. Lipsky) were the only ones reported in e. Virginia; 93 were scattered among eight locations in e. Maryland, 15 Dec-27 Feb.

Dickcissels were unreported in Virginia but were noted twice in Maryland on C.B.C.s at year’s end. An ad. male Painted Bunting in Loudoun, VA 16-25 Feb (fide ANS) was rare for that part of the state, likewise a male in Arnold, Anne Arundel, MD 9 Dec (T. Hitter). The only Brewer’s Blackbirds noted were 2 at reliable Nokesville, Prince William 28 Jan (R. Rieger, KG); 2 males were also at Windmill Pt., Charles, MD 17-19 Dec (G. Jett, G. Brewer). Eight wintering Baltimore Orioles in Virginia and nine in Maryland made about average totals for recent years. Yellow-headed Blackbirds missed Virginia but dropped into Maryland near Blackwater N.W.R. 8 Dec (J. B. Churchill, M. Luttermund), near Ewington, Queen Anne’s 17 Dec (D. Gill), both ad. males, and at Rising Sun, Cecil, MD from late Jan through at least 3 Feb—3 birds, including an ad. male (S. Fogleman et al.). Winter finches? Not this winter. An eerie-looking House Sparrow with white eyes was noted at Columbia, MD 15 Jan (J. Twekrew).

Contributors (subregional/county compilers in boldface): Bob Abrams, Henry T. Armistead, Elaine Arnold, Stan Arnold, Fred Atwood (e. Virginia), Zach Bact, Scott Barcon, Tyler Bell, Michael R. Boattwright (cen. Virginia), Arun Bose, Joan Boudreau, David Brinker, Edward S. Brinkley, Carol & Don Broderick (C&DB), Don Burggraf, Larry Cartwright, Joe Coleman, David Clark (DC), Dave Czapak (DC2), Todd M. Day, Adam D’Onofrio (se. Virginia), Samuel H. Dyke, Glen Eller, Walter Ellison, Kurt Gaskill, Paul Guris, Matt Hafner, Susan A. Heath, Robert Hilton, Hans Holbrook, Mark L. Hoffman, John Hubbell, Bill Hubick, George Jeff, Jsy Kellers, Glenn Koppell, Allen Larner, YuLee Larner (Augusta, VA), Ellen Lawler, Roger & Linda Mayhorn (sw. Virginia), Sean McCandless, Helen Patton (Montgomery, MD), Bruce Peterjohn, Paul Pisano, Elizabeth Pitney (Tri-County Bird Club, MD), Kyle Rambo, Jan Reese, Robert F. Ringler, Les Roslund, Fran & Norm Saunders (N&FS), Lydia Schindler, Fletcher Smith, Gary Smyly, Jo Solem (e. Virginia), Brian L. Sullivan, Brenda Tekin, Craig Tumer, Bryan D. Watts, Dave Webb, Bill Williams (coastal Virginia). Many others who could not be personally acknowledged also contributed to this report; all have our thanks for the effort and interest.

Todd M. Day, 5118 Beaver Dam Road
Jeffersonian, Virginia 22274, (bkvulture@aol.com)
Edward S. Brinkley, 106 Monroe Avenue
Cape Charles, Virginia 23310, (emslera@aol.com)
Ricky Davis

This winter's weather was milder than normal in the first half and closer to normal in the second half. Only one period, mid-January to mid-February, experienced truly cold temperatures. Frozen precipitation was generally lighter than usual in most parts of the Region, and many areas received considerably less rain than average for the period. Possibly due to this mild weather, certain birds were mentioned as being more common or less common than usual. Many areas saw increased numbers of puddle ducks, while numbers of sea ducks, loons, gulls, and alcids were definitely reduced. Some passerines such as Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown creepers, thrushes, and some sparrows were mentioned as being present in higher-than-normal numbers. Also there seemed to be a wealth of lingering or overwintering passerines, such as flycatchers, warblers, and a few others. Winter finches however, as one might expect, were definitely present in the Region in very low numbers.

Abbreviations: E.L.H. (E.L. Hute 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 Spol Site, Jasper, SC).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

Numbers of wintering geese were down slightly from last year, but all three states had Greater White-fronted geese again, and Ross's Goose reports were about average. The most interesting sightings involved 2 Greater White-fronted geese at L. Townsend, Gulfport, NC 9 Feb+ (HLI, m.ob.) and a Ross's at Pee Dee N.W.R., NC 28-30 Dec (JB, m.ob.), both rare and unusual at those locations. Cackling Geese, all of subspecies hutchinski, were found again, now that observers are looking for them. Georgia had its 2nd report with 6 at Oxbow Meadows 6-13 Jan (WCh); one was again at L. Matt. 11 Jan (AG); and at least 2-3 were at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes N.W.R., NC 10 Dec-17 Feb (RD, SS, DC, JPI, LG, JL, CD et al.). Puddle duck numbers were up this year, especially at some coastal sites. American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal were especially numerous at several ne. North Carolina sites. North Carolina had at least 7 Eurasian Wigeons, while one was very rare in Georgia at Jekyll i. 2 Dec (Jfde TM). The only Cinnamon Teal was at Savannah N.W.R., SC, present from late Nov until at least 20 Dec (SBE et al.). Although noteworthy, a Eurasian Teal was a good find at Algator River N.W.R., NC 27 Jan (CBL). Dividing ducks were about average in abundance with the exception of the large flock of around 8000 Redheads at Pea i. 13 Jan (JL). Common Eiders were found in all three states, with the farthest s. being in the Jekyll i.-Goulds Inlet, GA area 2 Dec (Jfde JS; SB) and 23 Feb (SB). Harlequin Ducks made news this winter with an imm. male at Wrightsville Beach, NC 17 Dec-16 Jan (JSO, m.ob.), a female at H.B.S.P. 19-21 Jan (JSm, m.ob.), and a male inland at L. Brandt, Gulfport, NC 17 Feb+ (HLI, m.ob.). The latter bird represented the first documented occurrence for the Piedmont of that state. Georgia had all three scoters inland, the most unusual for any season. A Surf was at Carters L.,

Murray 7-8 Feb (MM, JSP), a White-winged and a Black were at Bear Cr. Res., Jackson until at least 4 Feb (MF, m.ob.), and another Black was at the Dalton W.T.P., Murray 16 Dec (SP et al.). A few reports of Common Mergansers were received, with the most interest being the 4 on Southwire L., Carrollton, GA early Jan+ (Jfde TM).

Loon numbers seemed down somewhat this winter; however, Georgia had 5 different inland Red-throateds and the only Pacifics found in the Region—singles at Tybee 1. 15 Dec (Jfde JF) and 11 Feb (CL), offshore of Tybee 1. 14 Jan (BZ et al.), on the Piedmont N.W.R. C.B.C. 18 Dec (Jfde TJ), and at West Point L. Dam 17 Feb (TM et al.). Red-necked Grebes were found in all states, and the farthest s. was one at L. Seminole, GA 6-27 Dec (EB, DM). Eared Grebes were present at the usual locations again this winter; the best total was 20 at L. Juliette, Rum Creek W.M.A., GA 4-Dec (EB, DM). Unusual for the Region, 2 different Western Grebes were found: one in the L. Walter F. George, GA dam area 6 Dec (EB, DM) through at least 19 Feb (CS et al.) and one at L. Normn, NC 17 Dec until late Feb (JWA et al.). The Georgia bird provided only the 2nd or 3rd report for that state. Also rare for that state were 3 Manx Shearwaters photographed off Tybee 1. 14 Jan (BZ et al.); this species is usually hard to find in Georgia waters, as it normally occurs far from shore.

American White Pelicans continued to increase in much of the Region. The top totals reported included 697 on the ACE Basin, SC C.B.C. 31 Dec (Jfde PL) and 467 on the McClellanville, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (Jfde ND). The 110 counted on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC C.B.C. 26 Dec (Jfde PS) was very noteworthy that far north. Impressive for a non-coastal location, 160 were at Bagby S.P. L. Walter F. George, GA 2 Dec (JFI, EH). With numbers like these, and the fact that the species is present among the s. coastal regions practically year-round, can nesting be a possibility in the near future for our Region? Anhingas also continue to winter in increasing numbers. The farthest n. and inland were the 2 at a pond in Hallifax, NC 24 Dec-27 Jan (ML, FE). Unusual reports of long-legged waders included a Least Bittern at L. Warren, Hampton, SC 12 Feb (JG), a white-morph Reddish Egret at Ft. Fisher, NC 31 Dec (RD), and a Green Heron far inland on the Greensboro, NC C.B.C. 16 Dec (Jfde HF). Roseate Spoonbills, rare in winter in the Region, were present in good numbers at a few sites. Up to 11 were at the S.S.S. until at least 13 Jan (SC), and 13 were found on the Cumberland L., GA C.B.C. 16 Dec (Jfde SW). Wood Storks also wintered farther n.
than usual in North Carolina, with highlights being 2-5 at Greenfield L, Wilmington until at least 9 Feb (KK, GM, m.ob.), one s. of Warsaw, Duplin 10 Jan (BS), one at the Grimesland ponds, Pitt 21-22 Jan (JW et al.), and one at the Bald Head I golf course Jan-Feb (fide JF); another second-hand report came from Manatee, Darien in mid-Jan (fide JL). Black Vultures made news this winter along the North Carolina Outer Banks: one was on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (fide PM), 2 were n. of there at Avon 27 Dec (fide GA), and one was on the Bodie-Peas Island C.B.C. 28 Dec (GA). This species had never been reported on the Banks before!

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

There were 3 Northern Goshawks found in North Carolina this winter, with an imm. near Chapel Hill 10 Dec (DC), an ad. at Raleigh 16 Dec (TS et al.), and an ad. along Canal B road at Pocosin Lakes N.W.R. 20 Jan (R&SBo). Easily the most unexpected wintering bird was the imm. intermediate/dark-morph Swainson's Hawk at Allisgar River N.W.R., NC 17 Dec+ (HL, m.ob.); a Jan record from coastal Virginia and a Dec record from New Jersey are the only comparable records n. of Florida! The only non-Eastern Red-tailed mentioned this winter were the returning light-morph Western in s. Murray, GA 8 Dec (JSp) and a Kirders's at Fite Bend Rd., Gordon, GA 1 Jan (AS et al.). Rough-legged Hawks, as usual, were found only in North Carolina (3 different birds), while Golden Eagles were noted more than usual, with reports from all three states.

Always noteworthy are sightings of Yellow Rails, even though they are regular winterers in coastal areas. This year, 3-6 were present at a wetlands restoration area at North R. Farms, Carteret, NC 10 Dec+ (JF et al.), and one was seen on the Winyah Bay, SC C.B.C. 14 Dec (fide LG). Good sightings of the elusive Black Rail included 2 at the Conway, SC W.T.P. 6 Dec (JP et al.), 2 at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA 17 Dec (EB, MB), one inland on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide RC), and one at Jekyll I., GA 22 Jan (fide KB). American Coot numbers rebounded nicely from the past several years with impressive counts of 13,855 on the L. Matt, C.B.C. 29 Dec (fide AB) and 9125 on the Bodie-Peas Island, NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (fide PS) leading the way. Sandhill Crane reports were about average this winter, with the most interesting being the 4 that were near Swansboro, Onslow, NC 20 Jan-mid-Feb (fide JF, m.ob.). Whooping Crane reports this winter involved 2 that wintered for the 3rd year in

C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide EU). Much rarer in winter is Black-necked Stilt. This year, one was at the S.S.S. until at least 17 Feb (SC), and the impressive count of 15 on a pond in Yemassee, SC 26 Feb (GN) probably represented mostly early spring migrants. Rare away from the coast, especially in winter, was the Willet at L. Juliette, GA 4 Dec (EB, DM). This bird was most likely a very late fall migrant. Long-billed Curlew numbers were down somewhat this year, being found only at the usual wintering sites. Silt Sandpipers apparently did not winter at the S.S.S. this year, with only 3 lingering until 30 Dec (SC). Quite rare in winter were 2 Short-billed Dowitchers found on the Macon, GA C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide MA). The best offshore count of Red Phalarope was 285 off Hatteras, NC 10 Feb (BPI). Gulls seemed to be down somewhat this winter, with the exception of Lesser Black-backed Gull, which continues to increase in the Region. The best counts this winter included 27 on the Kitty Hawk, NC C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide JL) and an impressive total of 52 at Tybee L, GA 17 Dec (EB, MB). Only one Little Gull was reported, that being Georgia's 4th, found off of Savannah 11 Feb (RW et al.). This is the first winter in many years that none were seen in North Carolina! Black-headed Gull reports involved one on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC C.B.C. 29 Dec (PN et al.), the returning ad. being seen sporadically at the L. Matt. causeway 29 Dec-Feb (JL et al.), and a first-winter bird at the L. Matt. causeway 17-22 Feb (CD et al.). White-winged gulls were practically absent from the Region this winter, a first-winter Glacous at Conway, SC 3-9 Jan (CH, JP) and an ad. Iceland at Kill Devil Hills, NC 28 Jan (JPI et al.) were the only exceptions. A Great Skua was found off Hatteras, NC 10 Feb (BPI), and Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers were seen from shore in the usual small numbers (three sightings each). The only alcid reported this winter was the expected Razorbill. The best reports included 65+ off Hatteras, NC 10 Feb (BPI) and 15 off Cumberland L, GA 26 Jan (fide KB). Smaller numbers were reported from a few coastal sites in the Carolinas.

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

White-winged Doves were once again reported from all three states. The farthest n. was at a feeder in Wilmington, NC 23 Dec (B). Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported as continuing in their usual spots with no signs of decreasing numbers. Short-eared Owls were mentioned from the usual locations but in somewhat reduced numbers this winter. Locally rare was the Northern Sawwhet Owl heard near Vance, Orangeburg, SC on the Santee C.B.C. 30 Dec (KC, CE). Two unidentifed nighthawks were found this winter at Atiken Bay, Atiken, SC 23 Dec (LS et al.) and in Conway, SC 28 Dec (CH). As has been mentioned before, Lesser Nighthawk is probably the most likely species to be found in the Region in winter. Single Chuck-wills-widows, very rare in winter, were found on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC C.B.C. 29 Dec (CH et al.) and near Wando, Berkeley, SC 13 Jan (JBE et al.). The more expected Whip-poor-will was found four times, with the most northerly being one found dead in Gloucester, Carteret, NC 11 Feb (fide JF).

Hummingbirds were present in good numbers again this winter. Ruby-throateds continued to winter along the immediate coast in North Carolina, with the best count being an amazing 25 on the Kitty Hawk C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide JL). There were at least 4 Black-chinned found in coastal South Carolina this winter, and at least 4 Calliope were present at three sites from Georgia to South Carolina. The rarest hummingbird was the easily female Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Mableton, Cobb, GA 19 Dec-13 Jan (RT, JFL, EHL), providing the 7th record for that state.

Flycatchers provided a great deal of excitement in the Region this winter. North Carolina hosted its 5th Say's Phoebe at the O'Berry Center, Wayne 9 Jan+ (MB, m.ob.) and its 4th
Vermilion Flycatcher, a female at Bettie, Carteret, 17 Dec–4 Feb (AB, m.o.b.). The latter bird provided that state with its first record of a wintering Vermilion. Elsewhere, the Eufaula N.W.R., GA Vermilion Flycatcher returned for another winter 15 Dec+ (fide SP, m.o.b.) and there were 4 Ash-throated Flycatchers reported this winter! One was near Newton, Baker, GA 16 Dec (fide AA), one near Newport, Carteret, NC 17 Dec (DA), one at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 1 Jan (RD et al.), and one at North R. Farms, Carteret, NC 7 Jan (JF et al.). The number of Western Kingbirds reported was definitely up this winter, possibly representing the most ever found in the region during a season: North Carolina had 4, South Carolina had 3, and Georgia had at least 10 individuals! Common Ravens continued to be found in cen. and e. North Carolina, with 4 on the Chapel Hill C.B.C. 24 Dec (fide WCo), 2 on the Falls Lake C.B.C. 3 Jan (fide BB), and one at Greenville 30–31 Dec (VP, PW). The most unexpected sightings of the season were the single Northern Rough-winged Swallows found on the Chapel Hill, NC C.B.C. 24 Dec (DC) and at Carter L., GA 1-2 Jan (AS et al., KB) and at the Barn Swallow on the Augusta, GA C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide AW). Numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches wintering in the region were down considerably this year, while numbers of Brown creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets were up. Observers from across the three states mentioned good numbers of kinglets especially. They also reported good numbers of American Robins and Hermit Thrushes at many locations in the region. Cedar Waxwings, on the other hand, were scarce in many areas.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two lingering Tennessee Warblers were noted this winter: one at Mills R., Henderson, NC 2 Dec (MW) and one at the E.L.H. 22 Dec (CL). Also rare in winter were single Northern Parulas at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 15 Dec (fide SP) and on Roanoke L., NC 31 Jan (JL). The number of Yellow Warblers found this winter was truly unprecedented for the season. One was on the Sun City–Oakatie, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide HC), 3 were on the Pettigrew S.P., NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (fide LW), and 5 were on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (JL). Several of the latter birds were still present as late as 14 Jan (SS). A Cape May Warbler was a good find on the Duke University campus, Durham, NC 9–10 Feb (TG, CRF et al.), as was a Black-throated Blue Warbler at the same spot 10 Feb (CRF et al.). Another Black-throated Blue was a surprise at Table Rock S.P., SC 6 Jan (PSe), providing a most unusual mt. sighting for the species increased as a wintering species in the past 10 years, or does the increased monitoring of feeding stations account for the upward trend? Bachman's Sparrows are known to winter in pines woods each year but are very tough to observe due to their secretive nature. Two in a new area of Croatan N.F., Carteret, NC 7 & 17 Dec (JF), on the Cumberland Island, GA C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide SW), and 3 at Camp Lejeune, Onslow, NC 3 Jan (JF et al.) were thus of note. Clay-colored Sparrow sightings included one at Myrtle Beach, SC 9 Dec (KF), 2 at North R. Farms, NC 10–17 Dec (JF et al.), and one at a feeder in Marshall, Union, NC 11 Feb (JSo). Lark Sparrows found this winter included 3 in the Morehead city; NC area 17 Dec+ (SCo, JF et al.) and one at Brick House Rd., Edisto L, SC 14 Jan (ND). Grasshopper Sparrow reports involved one at North R. Farms, NC 3 & 17 Dec (JF et al.), one on the McClellanville, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide ND), and 3 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (ND et al.). Henslow's Sparrows were detected in South Carolina and Georgia, with the best counts being 3 on the Sapelo Island, GA C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide WD), 2 on the Okefenokee N.W.R., GA C.B.C. 29 Dec (fide SW), and 2 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide RC). Le Conte's Sparrows were found in all three states, highlighted by 5–6 present all winter at North R. Farms, NC (JF et al.), 5 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (ND et al.), and 4 at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 4 Feb (BZ et al.). Lincoln's Sparrow reports also spread across the region, with the best count being 2 on the Falls L., NC C.B.C. 3 Jan (BB et al.). Lapland Longspurs, always noteworthy in the region, were seen on the Southern Pines, NC C.B.C. 17 Dec (2; BSo), on the Congaree Swamp, SC C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide JGr). Another warbler found more than usual for the winter season was Northern Waterthrush. There were seven reports, coming from all three states, and the best total was the 4 on the Savannah, GA C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide SC). Other regularly wintering warblers found in better-than-average numbers included Wilson's Warbler with six reports and Yellow-breasted Chat with eight reports.

Always rare in the region during winter, a Summer Tanager frequented a feeder in Gloucester, Carteret, NC 21 Jan+ (fide JF). And Western Tanagers were again found in all three states with 7 in North Carolina, 2 in South Carolina, and 2 in Georgia. Has this...
This Summer Tanager frequented a feeder in Gloucester, Carteret County, North Carolina from mid-January (here 21 January) 2007 until the spring season. Photograph by John O. Fussell.

This Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in a Manteo, North Carolina yard from 14 (here 23) December 2006 into January 2007. Linger and wintering grosbeaks have become almost an annual occurrence in the Southern Atlantic Region. Photograph by Skip Morgan.

Blackbird reports involved 2 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide RO) and one at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth, NC 30 Dec (fide PD). Two Boat-tailed Grackles on the Pettigrew S.P., NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (fide LW) added to the sightings of that species in an area away from the usual coastal range. South Carolina had several rare orioles this winter. Extremely rare and unusual at this season were 2 Orchard Orioles, both ad. males: one at the Hilton Head Island C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide NL), the other at a feeder in Sumter 30 Jan (ED). Not as rare but still noteworthy was the Bullock’s Oriole found on the Clemson C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide DL). Georgia had 2 Bullocks this winter: the male returning to the same pecan orchard as last year near Statesboro, Bullock 27 Dec-3 Feb (JP, BZ et al.) and another male at a feeder in Dublin 17-23 Feb (JFL, EH, LyW et al.).

Winter finches were definitely in short supply across the Region as compared to last year. Red Crossbill sightings, always noteworthy, involved 6 at Maggie Valley, Haywood, NC 30 Dec (WF et al.), one at Flowery Branch, Hall, GA 18 Jan (fide KB), one at Salacoa Creek Park, Gordon, GA 20 Jan (JSP), and 2 at Carters L., Murray, GA 8 Feb (JSP).

Contributors: George L. Armistead, David Allen, Marie Amerson, Alan Ashley, Steve Barlow, Jeff Beane (JBi), Sandy Beasley (SBe), Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm, Ken Blankenship, Brian Bockkahn, Rich & Susan Boyd (RSBo), Allen Boynton (ABo), Mary Bridges (MBr), Allen Bryan, John Buckman, Norm Budnitz, Steve Calver, Carolina Bird Club (CBCl), Derb Carter, Robin Carter, Walt Chambers (WCh), Helen Chatterton, Calvin Clyde, Will Cook (WCo), Sam Cooper (SCo), Evelyn Dabb's, Ricky Davis, Nate Dias, Phil Dickinson, William Doppson, Curtis Dylstra, Caroline Eastman, Frank Enders, Jim Flynn (JF), K. C. Fogg, Wayne Fosythe, Mark Freeman, John Fussell, Al Gamache, Ted Gilliland, Jason Giovannone, Lex Glover, John Grego (JGr), Herb Hendrickson, Chris Hill, Earl Horn, David Howell, Terry Johnson, Bruce Jones, Kitty Kosh, Carol Lambert, Drew Lanham, Pete Laurie, Harry LeGrand, Jr., Jeff Lewis, Henry Link (HLi), Nan Lloyd, Merrill Lynch, Greg Massey, Max Medley, Darlene Moore, Pat Moore, Terry Moore, Skip Morgan, Matthew Moskwik (MMo), Gretchen Nareff, Perry Nugent, Sandy Pangle, Veronica Pantezidis, John Parrish (JPa), Sam Pate (SPa), Brian Patterson, Inc. (BPI), Jack Peichey, Jeff Pippen (JPI), Jane Raney, Chester Robinson, Carl Rothfels (CRd), Chuck Saleeby, Paul Seridge (PSa), Jeff Sewell, Steve Shultz, Ted Simons, Jon Smith (JSm), Bruce Smith, Bruce Sorrin (BSa), Josh Southern (JS), Joshua Spence (JSp), Lois Stacey, Ann Stewart, Paul Sykes, Rusty Trump, Emil K. Urban, Judy Walker (JWa), Anne Waters, Marilyn Westphal, Lisa Williams, Lynda Williams (LyW), Sheila Williams, John Wright, Paula Wright, Russ Wright (RWt), Bob Zaremba.

Ricky Davis, 608 Smallwood Drive
Rocky Mount, North Carolina 27804, (RJDNC@aol.com)
The season was rather mild, with barely freezing temperatures reaching south to Lake Okeechobee twice, causing topial damage to vegetation in outlying areas from Orlando southward. The drought in the peninsula continued, with a cumulative half-meter precipitation deficit in some portions of the central and southern regions since 2005. The kinglet invasion that began in the fall continued, and countless flocks of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings reached well into southern Florida. State rarities included Thayer's Gull, Dowick's Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Mountain Bluebird, and Western Meadowlark. Given that up to 12% of Florida's 30,000+ Mottled Ducks are believed to hybrids with Mallard (<http://www.myfwc.com/duck/MottledDuck.html>), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced that it will step up its efforts to control Florida's feral Mallard population. In addition, the Commission will be initiating a study of Smooth-billed Ani, an endangered species in its limited United States range but one that has heretofore received little attention.

Abbreviations/definitions: F.O.S.C. (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee); report (any observation); record (only those reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence); UF (Florida State Museum).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CARACARA

Breeding throughout much of the peninsula, 458 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were n. at Gainesville, Alachua (C.B.C. data). In contrast, the greatest concentration of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, a species that outnumbered Black-bellieds a decade ago, was about 150 in Hendry (M. England). Geese were rare throughout.

The only Greater White-fronted Goose was at St. Marks N.W.R., Wahulla 16 Dec (C.B.C.). Snow Geese were in Leon (one; Glenda Simmons), Hernando (up to 4; A&RBH et al.), Volusia (6; C.B.C.), and s. Brevard (one; C.B.C.). Rarely reported inland or Gulfside, a Brant at Gainesville 29 Dec (AK), was likely the same imm. as seen at ft. Island Gulf Beach, Citrus 2-22 Jan (m.ob.). Mallard x Mottled Duck hybrids were in Hamilton (C.B.C.), Orange (BHA, RD), Brevard (DF), Pinellas (C.B.C.), Martin (C.B.C.), Lee (CE), Collier (DSu), Palm Beach (Robin Staffol), and Pasco/Hernando (200; C.B.C.). Cinnamon Teal were in Polk (one; RM, DR), and in Brevard (2), as was one Blue-winged Teal x Cinnamon Teal hybrid (m.ob.). For the 3rd consecutive year, a Eurasian Teal was found in Florida, with one at St. Marks 6 Jan (Joi et al.). The first Greater Scapaw was verified in the s. peninsula, was at Eco Pond, E.N.P., Monroe 30 Dec–13 Jan (ph. LM, m.ob.). Up to 2 Common Eiders were in St. Johns Dec 16 and 3-4 Feb (m.ob.), with singles in Nassau 9 Dec (RoS) and Volusia 23 Dec (MBr). The three scoter species appeared on both coasts; the rarest, White-winged, was in Franklin (one; AB, JM), Volusia (up to one; MBr), and Brevard (one; C.B.C.). Surf Scoters were s. to Levy (2; C.B.C.) and Brevard (up to 2; Mitchell Harris, DF), whereas Black Scoters were s. to Brevard (m. DF) and Pasco (one; BA, AB et al.). Long-tailed Ducks included singles in Wahulla (2; AB, AW) and Brevard (m. DF), with 3 in St. John's (ph. BW, BR). Rare were 3 Buffleheads inland at Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area, Orange 19 Dec (BHA, DR) and in Royal Palm State Park, Miami-Dade 8 Jan (RTA). A Common Goldeneye was again s. at Tangerine, Orange; this year brought an imm. male (BHA, DR). The Masked Duck discovered in the fall at Viera Wetlands, Brevard continued through 29 Dec and was joined by another 12-19 Dec (DF).

Red-throated Loons were in Gulf (one; C.B.C.), Franklin (up to 8; m.ob.), Citrus (one; MG), St. Johns (2; C.B.C.), Volusia (at least one; MBr), and Brevard (at least one; BHA et al., ph. CG). The only Pacific Loon was in Brevard 16-20 Dec (CG et al.). A Red-necked Grebe at Destin, Okaloosa 4 Feb (Charles Saleeby) was the 8th for the w. panhandle (BD). One Eared Grebe overwintered in Palm Beach (m.ob.), while 2 in Okaloosa since fall remained until 18 Dec (BD et al.). Other Eareds included singles in Manatee 10 Dec–24 Dec (JP, JD), s. Brevard 30 Dec (C.B.C.), and Volusia 25-27 Feb (MBr, MW). The only boobies were at Dry Tortugas N.P., Monroe 10 Masked, 15 Brown, and one Red-footed Booby 3 Jan (Sonny Bass, Stuart Pimm). Inland, Brown Pelicans were in Orange (at least one; HR, Andrew Boyle, CP) and Polk (up to 3; TP, PT). Surprising were Magnificent Frigatebirds in numbers far n. in Indian River 6 Jan (25; Nancy Soucy) and Martin 30 Dec (38; C.B.C.); farther n. was one in Taylor/Dixie 5 Jan (one; RoS). Two White-faced Ibis were at St. Marks 11 & 15 Jan (AW, AB et al.), and one at Lake Apopka 24 Jan (HR). Since Hurricane Wilma devastated Everglades N.P. in Oct 2005, the Greater Flamingo flock has been absent, with only an occasional individual being reported, as was the case in late Dec (C.B.C.).

The earliest reports of migrating Swallow-
(MW, Diane Reed et al.) was early. Broad-winged Hawks wintered n. to Brevard (at least 2; DF, C.B.C.) and Pinellas (2; C.B.C.). A Swainson’s Hawk was early in Hillsborough 25 Jan (Bob Landry). Single Golden Eagles were in s. Brevard (LoM), Orange 10 Jan and 4 Feb (HR), and Baker 10 Feb (LezRos). At new sites near the n. extreme of their range, Crested Caracaras were in Orange, at Lake Apopka (HR), at Hal Scott Preserve (BAh), and in Seminole, where at Chuluota, a pair was nest building on 1 Jan (LoM, CP). A caracara at Florida Panther N.W.R., Collier 19 Dec (DSu) was s. of the species’ usual range.

RAILS THROUGH DOVEKIE

Single Yellow Rails were at Hole-in-the-Donut, Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade 2 Jan (Mark Davis) and at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P., Okeechobee 20 Feb (DS). Lone American Golden-Plovers visited Lake Apopka 17, 27, & 29 Dec and 28 Feb (HR) and near Brooksville, Hernando 16 Dec–8 Jan (Alex Ayrcigg, MG et al.). Rare on the e. coast, a Snowy Plover was found in Duval 17 Dec (K. Dailey), for the 5th year. Up to 44 and 42 Piping Plovers wintered in Duval (C.B.C.) and Miami-Dade (RD), respectively. Black-necked Stilts wintered n. to Seminole and Orange (C.B.C.s); 10 stils on C.B.C.s in Wakulla and St. Johns 16 Dec were late. Single Solitary Sandpipers were in Pasco (KT) and West Palm 30 Dec (C.B.C.) and in Martin 31 Dec (C.B.C.). A Willet inland at Viera 28 Jan (Judy DF) was rare, as was a Long-billed Curlew at L. Kissimmee, Osceola 24 Jan, the first documented in Florida’s interior (ph. Terry Donovan). Other Long-billeds were coastal in Gulf Dec (AK et al.), while up to 4 were at Cutler Ridge, Miami-Dade 23 Dec (C.B.C.) and 4 at 20 Jan (AB, RT). An Iceland Gull was at Volusia landfall 11 Jan (BW), and another was at Perdido landfall, Escambia 13 Jan–17 Feb (ph. Laura Catterton, m.o.b.), the 11th accepted for Florida (FO.S.R.C.). In nearby Santa Rosa, a Lesser Black-backed Gull was discovered 16 Dec (Jude BD); rare in the panhandle, their numbers have continued to increase in the peninsula, with 27 on the upper keys 15 Dec (C.B.C.) and 20 at Stock L. Monroe 3 Jan (CG). Up to 3 apparent Herring Gull x Glau- cous Gull hybrids and one Glaucomous Gull were at the Volusia landfall 13 Jan (MW, ph. LA et al.) Other lone Glaucomous were found in Okaloosa 5-14 Feb (John & Carol Gross et al.), Duval 25 Dec and 28 Jan (BR), and St. Lucie 5 Feb (Jane Brooks). Rare Gulfside, at least 7 Great Black-backed Gulls wintered in Pinellas (LA), with singles at Little Estero Island Wildlife Conservation Area, Lee (DSu) and in Gulf (C.B.C.). Rare, an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake was found about 64 km off Ponce Inlet 29 Jan (ph. TDu et al.).

Usually absent in the n. peninsula, Gull-billed Terns were coastal with 5 at Talbot Is- land S.F., Duval 30 Dec (Robert Wears) and singles at Hernando Beach, Hernando 26 Dec (BR, BAH et al.) and Merritt 18 Dec (C.B.C.); inland, one was on the St. Johns R., Seminole/Volusia 31 Dec (Ken Bell et al.), and 4 were at Orlando Wetlands Park, Orange 1 Feb (BHA et al.). Also inland, Royal Terns were in Hernando (one; Clay Black et al.), e. Pasco 30 Dec (2; C.B.C.), and Orange 9 Feb (one; HR); up to 9 Royals were at two Folk locations 16 Dec–7 Jan, as were up to 4 Sandwich Terns (TR, PT et al.). Rare in winter, a Common Tern was at St. Vincent N.W.R., Franklin 28 Dec (C.B.C.). Two Sooty Terns at Dry Tortugas 3 Jan (C.B.C.) were early. One of the rarer finds this season was a Dovekie, seen in flight just beyond the surf at Canaveral N.S., Brevard 18 Dec (CG).
FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Least Flycatchers were n. to Brevard (one; DF) and Orange, where 11 were at Lake Apopka 22 Dec (HR). Florida's 2nd Hammond's Flycatcher was discovered on the heels of the first identified only three months before, in Pinellas. Documented by Jeffrey Gordon, it remained at Hal Scott Conservation Area, Orange 28 Jan–2 Mar (m.ob.). Vermilion Flycatchers were widespread: Wakulla (2; C.B.C.), Alachua (3; Dominick Martino, JDe et al), with singles in Columbia (4th year; DoR, RaS), Seminole (m.ob.), Collier (2nd year; AM et al.), and Monroe (Paul Bithorn, JBo). Ash-throated Flycatchers were all but absent this season; one was at Lake Apopka 17 Dec–31 Jan (HR), and a pale Myiarchus at Bald Point S.R., Franklin 16 Dec may have been this species (JMJ). Single Brown-crested Flycatchers were at Royal Palm 15–16 Jan (RT et al.), and Cassin's Kingbird remained there 3 Dec–14 Feb (HR). A Tropical Kingbird stopped at Lake Apopka 13 Dec, and a Cassin's Kingbird remained there 3 Dec–14 Feb (HR), where at least one has wintered since 1999. Western Kingbirds lingered in Franklin 14, 15, & 19 Jan (up to 2; Michael Hartley, JYM, AW) and in Leon 21–24 Jan (one; FD). In the n. peninsula, Westerns were at Cedar Key 28 Dec–21 Feb (up to 17 mostly subsisting on Sabal Palm fruit; DH), in citrus 28 Dec–mid-Jan (3; Daniel Smyth et al.), Flagger 30 Jan (3; Marilyn Bontly), and s. Marion, where up to 43 visited The Villages roost with up to 3 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (Jim Dinsmore). The kingbird roosts in Orange and Polk held up to 45 Westerns and 7 Scissors-tailed (C.B.C., BHA, DR) and up to 13 Westerns and 2 Scissor-tailed (TP), respectively. A late Scissor-tailed was found in Okaloosa in mid-Dec (C.B.C.). Rare along the e. coast, single Scissor-taileds were in Brevard 11 Dec–10 Feb (fide DF) and St. Lucie 16 Dec (C.B.C.). An early White-eyed Vireo appeared at Key West with other newly arrived migrants, including 2 Blue-headed Vireos 13 Feb (CG). One Bells Vireo was at Bradenton, Manatee 30 Dec–3 Jan (JD et al.), while one from fall at Southern Glades Wildlife Environmental Area, Miami-Dade remained throughout (m.ob.). Single Yellow-throated Vireos wintered in Orange (HR), Palm (C.B.C.), Monroe (C.B.C.), and at two locations in Miami-Dade (JBo, RD et al.). Two Yellow-throateds on the upper keys 1 Dec (C.B.C.), as well as singles in Escambia 16 Dec (C.B.C.) and Broward 17 Dec (C.B.C.), were late; the earliest to return was in Monroe 17 Feb (AB et al.).

Up to 7 Horned Larks remained at Basin, Jackson 14 Jan–3 Mar (AB, ph. BW, m.ob.). The earliest Purple Martins were reported 7 Jan in Duval (Patrick Learly) and Sarasota (R. Tina Messbarger). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow in Mackin 11 Feb (CB, JDe) was early. Cave Swallows were in Broward 17 Dec (11; C.B.C.), Palm Beach in late Dec (unspecified number; C.B.C.), Monroe 30 Dec (one; C.B.C.), Miami-Dade 23 Dec and 4, 5, & 14 Jan (up to 20; C.B.C., AB, JBo), and Breard 21 Feb (2; DF et al.). The only Barn Swallows reported were singles in Breard 17 Jan (DS) and Volusia 27 Feb (MW). Usually restricted to the Red Hills region of n. Leon, White-breasted Nuthatches dispersed to Osceola N.F., Baker 6 Dec (2; BR), Gainesville 27 Jan (one; Bob Holt), and New Smyrna 30 Dec (one; Jean McNeil). Brown Creepers and Winter Wrens were in better-than-average numbers this season, however, both species wandered as far s. as Alachua (R. Norton, ES, H. Warren, MM), except one creeper that reached Merritt 18 Dec (C.B.C.).

The fall kinglet invasion continued, with

With almost a dozen accepted records for Florida, this Iceland Gull was a one-day-wonder at the Volusia landfill 11 January 2007. The dark tail band, secondaries, and tertials suggest potential admixture with Thayer's Gull genets. Photographs by Bob Wallace.

17-20 Dec (CS) is an even more speculative subject. Smooth-billed Anis were in Broward (6; m.ob.) and Palm Beach (10+; fide BHA). Lone Short-eared Owls were in Wakulla (AW, JM), Orange (HR), Brevard (RH), and three locations in Monroe, the latter likely from the Antilles. Single Lesser Nighthawks were at Alligator Pt., Franklin 4 Dec (JM), Lake Apopka 22 Dec (C.B.C.) and 12 Jan (HR), and near Royal Palm, Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade 18 Dec and 16 Jan (RD). A maximum of 5 Lessers at Fleming 14 Jan (MB) was fewer than in recent years. A Common Nighthawk at Gainesville 19-22 Dec was audio-recorded (ES, RR; v.r. to UF) and the 2nd verified in winter; one was heard at Royal Palm 5 Jan (AB, MB et al.). Single Commons reported in Franklin 2 Dec (JM) and Orange 3 Dec (HR) were late. The first singing Chuck-will's-widow was heard 26 Feb at Sarasota (JP).

Fried Bassett banded 100 hummingsbirds: 3 Buff-bellied (Escambia [1] and Santa Rosa [2]), 37 Ruby-throated (Escambia [6], Santa Rosa [6], Okaloosa [3], Walton [2], Bay [1], Franklin [3], Leon [11], Duval [1], Alachua [2], and Hillsborough [2]); 9 Black-chinned (Escambia [3], Santa Rosa [2], and Leon [4]); 5 Calliope (Walton [2], Leon [2], and Duval [1]); and an impressive 46 Rufous (Escambia [12], Santa Rosa [1], Okaloosa [6], Walton [1], Washington [1], Franklin [1], Leon [19], Alachua [4], and Hillsborough [1]). One of Bassett's 11 recaptures (2 Ruby-throated, 2 Black-chinned, a Calliope, and 6 Rufous) from previous years was a Rufous in Escambia banded four winters ago. The fall female Buff-bellied Hummingbird at Naples, Collier remained through 12 Dec (Wayne Wauligman, Steve Carbol et al.). A Downy Woodpecker at Key West 10 Jan (Brian Gibbons, BM) and a Northern Flicker on nearby Boca Chica Key 11 Feb (CG) were unexpected.
Golden-crowned Kinglets s. in Volusia (one; C.B.C.), Orange, Seminole, and Lake (19; LoM, Paul Huer, C.B.C.), Brevard (4: C.B.C.), Pasco (19; BAH, BPR, C.B.Cs), Pinellas (10; LA, RoS, C.B.Cs), Hillsborough (6; Ken Allen, M. Keith, BAH), and Polk (one; C.B.C.). A record high of 874 Rubycrowns was tallied on the Gainesville C.B.C. 17 Dec. In extreme s. Florida, where, rare, 6 Ruby-crowns were in Miami-Dade (JBo) and 8 in Monroe, including 6 on the keys (CG, C.B.C.s) and one at Dry Tortugas 17-20 Dec (CS). A Mountain Bluebird photographed in a yard in Ft. Myers, Lee 30 Dec (ph. Susan Hooten) was Florida's 2nd. Alachua to Feb

 Twenty-one al., including 7 Red breasted Nuthatch, 7 Black-capped Chickadee, 5 Downy Woodpecker, 5 American Robin, and 3 American Goldfinch were reported s. Florida. Lee 30 Dec (ph. Susan Hooten) was Florida's 2nd. Almost as rare, a Swainson's Thrush on the Coot Kay, Everglades N.P. C.B.C. 30 Dec was sketched by observer Rafael Galvez. Hermit Thrushes were in greater numbers than usual, with 133 in Gainesville 13 Dec (C.B.C.); one was far s. at Boca Chica Key (CG). A late Wood Thrush was at Niceville 18 Dec (Pat Baker). In late Dec, American Robins invaded the region; driving from Cedar Key to Pensacola, the Duncans reported, "It would be difficult to estimate numbers, but surely it must be in the millions." For several days, robins passed overhead from dawn to dusk in the Orlando area (BHA), and Robinson estimated 240,000 at Lake Apopka 29 Dec. Seven robins were reported on the keys, including one at Boca Chica Key 7 Dec (BM, CG). Also rare in the keys, an American Pipit was at Dry Tortugas 17-20 Dec (CS). The only Sprague's Pipit was at Eglin A.F.B., Okaloosa 3 Dec (Lenny Fenimore). Cedar Waxwings invaded the state in greater numbers than usual, with 12 s. to Key West 30 Dec (CG). Surprising was a Cedar over open ocean 40 km off New Smyrna, Volusia 29 Jan (MG et al.).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Twenty-one species of warblers were reported this season. Nashville Warblers were in Alachua (one; B. Christensen), Pasco (one; D. Gagne), Orange (one; BHA, BO et al.), Miami-Dade (3; RD, JBo), and Monroe (one; C.B.C.). Late Northern Parulas lingered until 17 Dec in Hillsborough (BAH et al.) and Seminole (Paul Huerbe), where another was the farthest n. reported to winter (BHA); the earliest to return were 4 males at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P., Miami-Dade 26 Jan (RD). Single Yellow Warblers were found n. to Alachua 8 Dec (J. Powell, AK et al.), Seminole 31 Dec, and s. Brevard 24 Jan (AB et al.). Wintertime Magnolia Warblers were in Collier (one; fide AM), Miami-Dade 16 & 23 Dec (4; C.B.C.s), and Monroe (2; C.B.C.); one at Key West 13 Feb was with other newly arrived migrants (CG). Lone Black-throated Blue Warblers in Orange 6 & 16 Dec (Andrew Boyle, C.B.C.) and Brevard 10-21 Feb (DF) were likely migrants. Although Yellow-rumped Warblers arrived on schedule, large numbers were not noted until after the new year; Lillian and Donald Stokes estimated that 10,000 flew over the Sanibel Lighthouse, Lee towards the mainland 28 Jan. Black-throated Green Warblers wintered n. to Orange (BO) and Brevard (Gerry Day, LoM et al.). A Yellow-throated Warbler and an American Redstart were seen at Key West 13 Feb with a flock of newly arrived migrants (CG). Prairie Warblers wintered in greater-than-normal numbers in the cen. peninsula; farther n., one was at Fort Walton Beach Sanitation Facility, Okaloosa (BD), and 2 were at Jacksonville (C.B.C.). A Yellow Palm Warbler wintered at Key West (ph. BM, CG). American Redstarts wintered n. to Citrus (2; P. Pilny; BAH) and Orange (3; Jeffrey Gordon, Tom Rodriguez, C.B.C.); one farther n. in Alachua 17 Dec 5 (S. Robinson) was late. Two Worm-eating Warblers were in Monroe (C.B.C.). Although banding operations at Bill Baggs Cape Florida ceased for the winter months, wintering was suspected when a Swainson's Warbler, captured there several times during the fall, last on 3 Nov, was recaptured 12 Mar, shortly after operations resumed (RD). Lone Ovenbirds were in the panhandle in Okaloosa 18 Dec (Jim Kowalski) and Franklin 3 Feb (JO). Single Northern Waterthrushes wintered n. to Wakulla (AW et al.) and Alachua (AK); 21 were counted in Orange at Lake Apopka (C.B.C.). Single Louisiana Waterthrushes were at Miami, Miami-Dade 16 Dec (Bo, G. Jones, D. Jones), Gainesville 17 Dec (MM), Royal Palm 18 & 20 Dec and 5 Jan (RD, C.B.C., AB), and Coos Bay 30 Dec (C.B.C.). The first spring Louisiana was noted 25 Feb, with one at Lutz, Hillsborough (Anya & Tom Mason) and 2 at Lake Apopka (HR). Lone Hooded Warblers were in Pinellas at John H. Chesnut Jr, Park 8-14 Jan (TA) and at Largo throughout the season (KN), and another was at Fakakhetchee Strand Preserve S.P., Collier 4 Feb (AM). Wilson's Warblers were scarce, with singles in Okaloosa (Sandra Leistik), Alachua (JoH, MM et al.), Volusia (BO), Orange (HR), and Miami-Dade (AB et al); there were 3 in Pinellas (Cog) and 2 in Monroe (C.C.B.) and 2 in Key West and Dry Tortugas C.B.C.s. Lone Yellow-breasted Chats were in Franklin (JM), Bradford (C.B.C.), Orange (HR), and Pinellas (ph. Jay Jones), with dus in Alachua (MM, P. Colverson), Miami-Dade (RD), and Monroe (BM, C.B.C.).

Reported from 13 counties, from Okaloosa (Gene Estes) and Alachua (Ingrid Scales) s. to Collier and Miami-Dade (C.B.C.). One banded male Summer in Leon returned for the 5th year (Peter Holman) to Western Tanagers pleased birders at Niceville 31 Dec (Robin & Tom Stiles), Pensacola 18 Jan (Paula Palmer), Pines Prairie Preserve S.P., Alachua 2 Dec (BRo, Patsy Orr, Carolyn Retey), Gainesville 3 Dec (Ron Robinson), L. Distson, Flaggler 10 Feb (Erik Haney, DG), St. Augustine 20 Feb (Geoff Carter), e. of Naples 22 Feb (SM et al.), and Tallahassee at three locations: 19 Dec-21 Feb (male and female, FR, m.ob.); 23-26 Feb (female; J. Cavanagh); and 25 Feb (male, FD). A black-backed Western Spindalis, likely of the nominate Bahamian subspecies, was found at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P. 12 Dec and 9 & 14 Feb (RD). At Fort Lauderdale, a green-backed Western Spindalis was seen 19 Jan-11 Feb (reappeared in Apr; m.ob.) and was apparently of the subspecies townsendi.

While most sparrow species were not particularly common anywhere, 11 reached the southernmost peninsula and keys, where they are rare. Chipping Sparrows were reported s. to Collier (12; BSU) and Monroe (one, RD). Clay-colored Sparrows were in Orange (up to 4; HR), Hillsborough (2; Steve Backes, TA), Polk (5; C.B.C.), Sarasota (one; LA, JD), Miami-Dade (one; MBE et al.), and Monroe (up to 7, LM). A Vesper Sparrow was s. to Flamingo (Bo). Lark Sparrows were in Leon (GM, JA), Hillsborough (TA), Manatee (JD et al.), and Sarasota (perhaps 2; JD, Margaret Dunson). Henslow's and Le Conte's Sparrows were widely distributed in the peninsula, with Henslow's located in 10 counties from Alachua (17; C.B.C.) to Okeechobee, where 33 were banded (Marianne Korosy). Le Conte's were in Hamilton (2; C.B.C.), Alachua (up to 4; JH, CB, Peter Polshek et al.), Seminole (6, C.B.C.), Hernando (up to 3; BAH, DS et al.), and Miami-Dade (one; ph. LM). Gulfside, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows were at Cedar Key (one; C.B.C.), Fort Island Beach (one; Ros, BAH), and Sandy Key, Everglades N.P., Monroe (one; BM). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was far s. in Monroe (one; JBo, RT et al.). Fox Sparrows were widely reported in the panhandle; however, 3 in Alachua reached their usual s. limit in the peninsula. Song Sparrows were s. to Sarasota and Polk/Highlands (C.B.C.s) and at Boca Chica Key (one; CG). Lincoln's Sparrows were in Alachua (3; CB, MM, William Bolte et al.), Seminole (one; RH), Orange (up to 2; HR), Manatece (2; Cog, JD et al.), and at two Mia-
mi-Dade locations (2; AB et al., C.B.C.). Two Swamp Sparrows were s. to Flamboy (JBo). White-throated Sparrows were in above-average numbers in the cen. peninsula, wandering farther s. to Charlotte (one; Ros, BAh) and Monroe at Clive Key, Everglades N.P. (one; BM). By contrast, White-crowned Sparrows were scarce, with reports of lone birds in Alachua (BAh, RR, Ros), Brevard (DS), Pasco (KT), and Pinellas (Ros), up to 5 in Orange (HR), and up to 4 in Monroe (BM, RD, AB et al.). Dark-eyed Juncos were widespread and also in above-average numbers in the panhandle but were rare in the peninsula, with reports from n. Baker (one; BR), Columbia (one; C.B.C.), and Pinellas (3 in two locations; AB, LA, TA).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in St. Lucie 16 Dec (C.B.C.), Okaloosa 18 Dec (Bob Larson), Pinellas 7 Jan (KN), Orange 16 Jan (BHA), and Leon 21 Feb (C. Clarke), Blue Grosbeaks were scarce, with only singles in Orange 1 Dec–4 Feb (HR) and Hillsborough 17 Dec (BAh). A Painted Bunting was far n. in Okaloosa 18 Dec (C.B.C.). Lone Dickcissels were in Orange 9 & 11 Feb (Joie Clifton) and Sarasota at two locations 2 Dec–24 Jan and 1 Feb (Edith Miller, Janet Carlock, Owen Comora); up to 3 were near Flamboy 14 Jan–11 Feb (BRO, LM). Not verified in Florida since 1977, a Western Meadowlark remained in n. Escambia 19 Jan–22 Feb (m.o.b.) and was the 5th accepted for Florida. Single Yellow-headed Blackbird were in Orange 3 & 6 Dec (HR) and Hernando 26 Dec (BAh, BPr et al.). Rusty Blackbirds were in good numbers: about 50 in Escambia (Bob & Lucy Duncan); 104 in Bay (C.B.C.); 100 in Leon (AW); 70 at two Wakulla locations (SM, AB, AW); up to 27 in Alachua (CB, RR et al.); 8 in Samter (DG, Eric Haney); and one in Pinellas (BAh, BPr et al.). Brewer's Blackbirds were limited to the panhandle, in n. Escambia, about 75 in a mixed blackbird-species flock 19 Jan (Be&LRD) and a pure flock of 122 on 4 Feb (Be&LD, DoR, JM); 3 in Okaloosa 3 Jan (BD); and 2 in Bay 30 Dec (C.B.C.). Up to 8 Shiny Cowbirds were reported in Miami-Dade throughout (LM); singles were in Pasco 16 Dec (KT) and Highlands 28 Dec (C.B.C.). Only recently established in extreme s. Florida, 51 Bronzed Cowbirds were counted in Miami-Dade 16 Dec (C.B.C.); others were in Monroe (one; JBo), Collier (6 at two locations; AM), Hendry (3; Brent Bombkamp), Polk (5; C.B.C.), Hillsborough (2; D. Bowman et al.), and Orange 23 Dec (one; Steve Gast). Up to 2 Orchard Orioles were at Flamboy 30 Dec–27 Jan (JBo, ph. BM); one at Gainesville 14 Feb was early (Grace Kiltie). A female Bullock's Oriole lingered at Tallahassee 4 Jan–21 Feb (FR, m.o.b.). Rare, Purple Finches were in Okaloosa (unstated number; C.B.C.). Bay (3; C.B.C.), Leon (12 at two locations, AW, G. Menk), Wakulla (one; G. Menk), and Alachua 12 Feb (one; Ron Robinson). House Finches have been slow to colonize the e. peninsula; not yet verified breeding, 30 were counted on three Volusia C.B.C.s. Gulfside, where House Finches are established s. to Sarasota, 2 were farther s. in Lee 11 Feb (Layne Hamilton). The only Pine Siskins were 2 in Escambia 3 Feb (Ros) and singles in Leon 30 Dec (C.B.C.) and Orange (HR).

Corrigenda: In the winter 2005-2006 report (N.A.B. 60: 220), the last date that the Cackling Goose was reported should read “4 Jan,” not 14 Jan. In addition to the incorrect date, the caption of the photograph of the goose on the next page should read that the Cackling Goose would provide Florida’s “third record,” not second. In the same report, it was not a Bell's Vireo but a Yellow-throated Vireo that appeared at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P. 28 Feb.

Cited contributors and members of the Florida Ornithological Society Field Observations Committee: Brian Ahern (BAh), Bruce Anderson (BHA), Todd Arcos, Lyn Atherton, Andy Bankert, Mark Berney (MBe), Dave Bowman, John Boyd (JBo), Michael Brothers (MBr), Chris Burney, Jim Cavanaugh (JCa), K. Dailey, John DeLuca (JDe), Robin Diaz, Fred Dietrich, Jeannie Dubi, Bob & Lucy Duncan (B&LD), Thomas J. Dunkerton (TDr), C. Evans, Charlie Ewell, David Goodwin, Jefferay Gordon, Ron Halpin, Al & Bev Hansen (A&BH), Carl Goodrich, Dave Goodwin, Jeffrey Gordon, Dale Henderson, John Hintermister (Joh), Brian Hope, Paul Hueber, Grace Kiltie, Andy Kratter, Bob Landry, Lorne Malo (LoM), Mike Manetz, Larry Manfredi, Sean McCool, Gail Menk, Paul Miller (PMI), Trey Mitchell, Roy Morris II, Brennan Mulrooney, John Murphy, Alan Murray, Kris Nelson, Brenda Orr; Jeff Palmer, Tom Palmer, Cheri Pierce, Peggy Powell, Bill Pranty (BPp), Dexter Richardson, Bob Richter, Dotty Robbins (DoR), Bryant Roberts (BRO), Harry Robinson, Rex Rowan, Fran Rutkovsky, Earl & Ingrid Scales (E&IS), David Simpson, Chris Skelton, Ron Smith (RoS), Doug Soutor (DSu), Pete Timmer, Roberto Torres, Ken Tracey, Bob Waallace, Meret Wilson, Andy Wraithmell.

Bruce H. Anderson, 2917 Scarlet Road
Winter Park, Florida 32792, (scotzart@aol.com)
The winter 2006-2007 period experienced varied weather. Starting very cold in December, it quickly changed to unseasonably mild temperatures later in the month that persisted into January. The mild weather encouraged some birds to linger, resulting in record-breaking totals for some species on the Christmas Bird Counts, especially in waterfowl. Unusual for the north, open water remained well into January. It looked like we would not have a winter, but by mid-January, more seasonal weather arrived and remained until the end of the period. Northern species such as owls, waxwings, and finches stayed in the north for the most part due to abundant food resources. However, a light incursion of American Three-toed Woodpeckers into the south continued from the fall, especially in Algonquin Park. As well, both species of crossbills put in a good showing at Algonquin, where the cone crop was excellent. Some species such as Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross’s Goose, Turkey Vulture, and Golden Eagle continue to be reported more regularly during the winter months. Species in boldface are subject to review by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (O.B.R.C.).

A hybrid reported with increasing frequency, this male “Brewer’s Duck” (Mallard × Gadwall) was documented at Windsor, Essex County, on 27 January 2007. Photograph by Paul D. Printz.

**Blake A. Mann**

**Ontario**

Great White-fronted Geese were widely reported throughout the period: up to 17 birds were found throughout the province, including 4 on the Cedar Creek C.B.C. at Kingsville, Essex 16 Dec (ACP, DJW). One for the Midwinter Waterfowl Survey was an unexpected find and provided a new area winter record at Cedar Springs, Chatham-Kent 7 Jan (KJB). Greater Snow Geese were in unprecedented numbers in Ont. in Dec. At least 30,000 were near Casselman, Prescott-Russell mid-25 Dec (m.ob.). Ross’s Geese sightings continue to increase, and this species will no longer require documentation after 2006. Several were reported in the sw., with Chatham-Kent topping the list: 3 were on the Rondeau/Blenheim C.B.C. 17 Dec, with 2 at Ridgeway (JTB) and one at Blenheim (KJB). One remained at Ridgeway until at least 20 Dec (BAM). A single was on L. Simcoe at Keswick, Simcoe 21 Dec (ph. KD) and another at the base of Kettle Pt., Lambton 21-22 Dec (AHR). Waterfowl surveys 7 Jan recorded 3 Ross’s Geese at the Harwich Gravel Pits in Chatham-Kent (JTB) and one at Kingsville, Essex (ACP, DJW). Two Brant at Erieau, Chatham-Kent 7 Jan were a surprise for the waterfowl survey and provided the first winter record there in many years (JTB). Two at Southampton, Essex 20 Jan may have been the same ones seen previously at Erieau (RHo). Late singles were at Amherst I. 9 Jan (K.EN.) and Ottawa 18 Dec (JR). A record-high count of 2600 Canada Geese for the P.P.B.A. was tallied 8-11 Feb from the Onion Fields to Hillman Marsh (AW). A Barnacle Goose was at Beamsville, Niagara 9 Dec-7 Jan (JStMF).

Mallards were reported in record-high numbers on L. St. Clair during the Christmas count at S.C.N.W.A. 1 Jan. An estimated total of 35,800 eclipsed the previous high of 26,528 (june PAW). A Blue-winged Teal at Hillman Marsh 23 Dec was record late for the birds; and at Ottawa 2 Dec (BDL). An apparent Hooded Merganser × Common Goldeneye hybrid was at Toronto 1 Jan+ (JLa, M.D., m.ob.), and another was on the Thames R. in London, Middlesex 4 Feb (JMcG). A female Hooded Merganser at Costello Cr. in Algonquin P. 1 Jan was the 2nd only Jan record for that area (AK, june G).
PARTRIDGE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Gray Partridges were seen at their usual locations at the Brantford Airport and in various spots in e. Ontario. A covey of 7 near lOrigin, Prescott-Russell was nicely photographed 20 Dec (Bot). A strong showing of Sharp-tailed Grouse was reported from five different townships on Manitoulin I., with the largest covey up to 40 birds (SH). The first winter records of Wild Turkey in Algonquin P.P. were likely made possible due to the mild weather; one was sighted at Keartney Campground 18 Dec (PP) and another at km 13.2 on Louisa Lake Rd 20 Dec (P&RS).

A high count of 277 Red-throated Loons at Van Wagenaer Beach, Hamilton 1 Dec was quite noteworthy (RZD, CE, DRD). A total of 22 Horned Grebes in the Kingston area 7 Jan was also high (K.FN). Two on the same date at Sarnia, Lambton were rather late (AHR). A count of 87 Red-necked Grebes at Manitoulin 1, 16 Dec was excellent for that late date (m.ob.) and probably a result of the milder December weather and extensive open water. Two others were at Wolfe I. and P. E. Pt 7 Jan (K.FN). The first early spring migrants appeared in late Feb, with one at Rondeau P.P. 18 Feb (JTB) and 2 at Sarnia 26 Feb (BAM). A Pied-billed Grebe at Dupont s. I., Kingston wintered the entire period (K.FN). One at Big Rideau L., Lanark 25 Jan furnished a rare inland winter record (DW). A roving juv. Northern Gannet on L. Ontario was first seen at Bronte, Halton 17 Dec (GE) and later the same day at Hamilton (J.A., fide RZD). A lingering Double-crested Cormorant was last seen at Erieau 21 Jan (JTB).

A large number of Great Blue Herons congregated at the mouth of the Thames R. in late Jan; a high of 28 was counted at Lighthouse Cove, Essex 28 Jan (PDP). Two Great Egrets remained at Rondeau P. P. until 14 Dec (fide KJB), and 2 were at Kingsville 16 Dec, one along Wige Cr. (AW) and another along Cedar Cr. (fide PDP). Another extremely late individual was seen at Port Rowan 5-12 Jan (SAM et al.). The usual wintering roost of Black-crowned Night-Herons was on the Lower Don R., Toronto; a wintering more frequently in recent years.

A tardy Osprey in the Rondeau area was last sighted at Erieau 3 Dec, setting a new late date (KJB, JTB). Golden Eagles were recorded on several C.B.C.s in the s. and throughout the period, strengthening the speculation that this species is increasing in numbers. Later in the period, 3 near Glencoe, Middlesex 13 Feb were noteworthy (DP). A dark-morph juv. Red-tailed Hawk showing characteristics of the albus subspecies was well observed at Aldershot, Halton 16-25 Feb (PS et al.). Several Cardinals were reported during the period, but one in Algonquin P.P. 9 Jan near the e. gate was a rare spring sighting there (KH). Gyrfalcons were observed in several familiar locations, with Manitoulin I. recording 3 different individuals: 6 Dec (JS), 17 Dec (KB, RH), and 18 Jan (CB, JB). Others were at Thunder Bay 27 Dec (BJM) and at Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma 26 Jan 19 Feb (Ken Mellwick), while 2 together at Thunder Bay 18 Feb were a one-day wonder (BJM). A white-morph Gyrfalcon was on Wolfe I., Frontenac 24 Jan (NLD).

A Virginia Rail reported on Wolfe 1. 1 Feb (KH) was unusual. A new record for the G.T.A. was set when 44 Sandhill Cranes were seen flying over Lambton Woods 4 Dec (DL). A flock of 9 was seen flying westward at Stony Creek, Essex 16 Jan (AW). Many stayed all winter in the Long Point area (m.ob.), but a count of 320 was especially noteworthy 7 Dec (TBA). As well, 2 Lesser Sandhill Cranes were there 20 Feb (MB). Purple Sandpipers reached a high of 8 at Presqu'ile P. P. 10 Dec, with the last 3 seen 13 Jan (DS et al.). A Willet was noted at the tip of Kettle Pt. 2 Dec (MAP). An American Woodcock was flushed from a ditch at the Ojibway Provincial Nature Reserve 23 Jan (TP, fide PDP).

JAEGERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A juv. Pomarine Jaeger was observed at Fort Erie, Niagara 3 Dec (AW, KO), and a dark-morph juv. was off Fifty Point C.A. 31 Dec (RZD, CE). Little Gulls were widely reported throughout Dec. An ad. was last seen at Erieau 21 Jan (fide KJB). High numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls lingered through mid-Dec on L. Erie. The Cedar Creek C.B.C. 16 Dec recorded a new high of 12,364 (fide PDP). An ad. Mew Gull was observed at Adam Beck Lookout on the Niagara R. 29 Dec (RSK, JSK, fide KR). At Hamilton, a first-cycle California Gull 7 Jan provided the 3rd area record (RZD, DRD, CE, TCr). A third-cycle
Skaty-backed Gull was discovered above Niagara Falls 2 Dec by the Cayuga Bird Club of Ithaca, New York; it was seen until 13 Dec (m.o.b.). Great Black-backed Gulls were seen in unprecedented numbers at Ottawa, with 1650+ in early Jan (BDil et al.). A number of late Black-legged Kittiwakes delighted winter fowlers in the province. Six ads. and 5 imm.s. off Van Wagener Beach 1 Dec made a high count (RZD et al.), plus an ad. and an imm., which were seen there 29 Dec (BH, LR). A very cooperative Black-legged Kittiwake was in the harbor at Erieau 14-19 Dec (m.o.b.). Late juvs. lingered into Jan, with one on the Niagara R. (m.o.b.), and one at Hamilton 17 Jan (RW). Two Common Terms on the Fisherville C.B.C. 23 Dec were standouts there (fide LT). The famous Razorbill at Niagara-on-the-Lake was last reported 7 Jan (m.o.b.).

The only reports of Great Gray Owls during the period were 2 from the Ottawa area: one at Fitzroy Harbour 2 Feb (KMcK) and one at Kanata 6 Feb (RA). Another along Hwy 60 in Algonquin P.P. 29 Dec was likely an individual from the small resident population (fide RGT). A single Northern Harrow Owl was reported at Corbeil, Nipissing Jan–Feb (LB et al.). The unusually mild weather likely contributed to four reports of singing Northern Saw-whet Owls in Algonquin P.P. in early Jan. This was unusual due to the fact that none have ever been reported singing during Dec or Jan (fide RGT). The most northerly report of a Belted Kingfisher was one at Dorian Bay, Thunder Bay 29 Jan (BJM).

Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to decline in Ontario. One on the Bruce Peninsula C.B.C. 20 Dec was only the 3rd record for that count (fide EM). On the other hand, Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to increase, especially in the n., where there were several reports. (Norterly Red-bellied Woodpeckers no longer require documentation after 2006.) A light incursion into the s. of American Three-toed Woodpeckers continued from the autumn. Four sightings on Manitoulin I. were exceptional (fide CB). Several were reported around Ottawa (fide CL), 3 at North Bay (fide MP), and a single on Amherst I. (K.EN.). At Presqu’ile P.P. another was reported 5 Dec (JG), and reports in Northumberland County Forest 23 & 31 Jan were likely different birds (RF). Many were reported in Algonquin P.P. at various locations throughout the winter, with a record high number of 10 on the Algonquin seen 17 Dec near Morpeth, Chatham-Kent (JTB), and Cambridge tallied one the same day (fide TC). The Stratford C.B.C. 29 Dec recorded one as well (fide JPC). The only noteworthy American Crows were 2 that survived on suet and sunflowers seeds the entire winter at the Algonquin P.P. Visitor Centre (fide RGT). This corvid is normally rare or totally absent from that area in winter. A notable Common Raven in York was at Happy Valley Forest 1 Jan—the first one recorded there in 47 years (HBA, fide TH). A single Horned Lark at Whitney, Nipissing 6 Jan furnished the only winter record ever for that area (SRC et al.). A late Tree Swallow was noted on the Cedar Creek C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide PDP). Northerly Carolina Wren reports in late Dec included singles at Current R., Thunder Bay (JBO) and at Fort Frances, Rainy River, the latter furnishing the 2nd area record there (KR); one at Sheguiandah, Manitoulin 1-16 Feb was also noteworthy (CJ). A single House Wren was at Bronte 10-11 Feb (MJ).

Numerous Ruby-crowned Kinglets were observed around the province through Dec, but Elgin topped the list with 7 on the St. Thomas C.B.C. 26 Dec (fide DD), followed by the West Elgin C.B.C. 27 Dec with 6 (fide GP). The Kingston area did well, with a total of 4 birds: one on 17 Dec followed by 2 birds 19 Dec and another single 21 Dec (K.EN.).

Two reports of Townsend’s Solitaire came during the period: one on the Thunder Bay C.B.C. 26 Dec (fide NE), another at P.E. Pt. 27 Feb (VPM, B9). Several Varied Thrushes were present during the period. Two were visiting feeders in the n.: a male was at Kakabeka Falls, Thunder Bay; while a female was at Fort Frances, Rainy River. One was at Killarney, Sudbury 9 Dec; another at Kearny, Porry Sound 22 Jan–Feb (DJ). And yet another at Selkirk P. P. 17-28 Feb (TT, TK). Several late Gray Catbirds were reported in Dec and Jan. One at Ottawa 17 Dec (ET) was notable, while 2 were near Rondeau, Chatham-Kent on the same date (JTB). Wintering brown Thrashers took advantage of feeders throughout the period, with 2 at North Bay (VR), one at South Baymouth, Manitoulin (GC, JC), and another at Alu Vista, Ottawa until 21 Jan (LS). American Pipsits spent part of the winter near Erieau with 3 on 20 Jan then 2 only 22 Jan–19 Feb (JTB). Three at the Tip of Point Pelee 28 Jan were only the 2nd winter record for the P.P.B.A. (AW). Very scarce were Bohemian Waxwings, but 2 were observed at P.E. Pt. 20 Dec (K.EN.).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Orange-crowned Warblers were seen in Toronto: one at Kings Mill Park 9-11 Dec (BY) and one at Mimico Creek 17 Dec. (GC). Another was not far away at Oakville, Halton 16-24 Dec (SMcG et al.). The only Yellow-throated Warbler of the period succumbed to injuries after it hit a window e. of Brighton, Northumberland 7 Dec (NO). A very late Black-throated Green Warbler was a surprise at Britannia, Ottawa 15-27 Dec (HE, AG, CG). A tardy Nashville Warbler was watched at High Park in Toronto 1-6 Dec (SMF), while another was at Princess Point, Hamilton 21-26 Dec (BH, ER). An Ovenbird was discovered at the Keele Campus of York University, Toronto 17 Dec and it stayed until 13 Jan (RR). A late Wilson’s Warbler was a good find at High Park 1-6 Dec (SMF).

A Summer Tanager from the previous period stayed at North Bay until 5 Dec (VR). A Spotted Towhee was recorded at a feeder on the Kenora C.B.C. 2 Jan (ph CE, fide LH). Apparently this bird was present since Sep, unbeknownst to birders. In Middlesex, just outside London, a Vesper Sparrow was seen 16 Dec during the local C.B.C. (SGa), Savan-
Several Disappearing into Spruce Tree Tops Along Hwy. 60 on 21 Jan (MJC, HC, RP). A count of 25 at Hungry Hollow, Middlesex 23 Jan was a noteworthy report for that area (JPC). Common Redpolls were few and far between during the period. Approximately 150 near Barkway, Muskoka 27 Jan made a good number (RS). The only Hoary Redpoll reported was an individual on the North Monetville-Mashkinonj C.B.C. 29 Dec (AM).

This Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch spent 16 December 2006 through the end of the season at Red Rock, Thunder Bay (here 26 January); it was one of three reported in northern Ontario this winter. Photograph by Brian Ratcliff.


In many years, birds of this season re- 
eminded one of the post-El Nin ño winters 
ember invasion of Lake Erie by maritime 
species was felt well into December. An ear- 
ly December chill quickly gave way to soggy 
warth that turned spring-like across the 
Region after Christmas and entering the 
New Year. The heron family may never have 
been so well represented in winter as this 
season. Waterfowl and songbird species 
lingered, even going on migration altogether, 
some in extraordinary numbers, notably 
swallows. More seasonal temperatures re- 
turned in mid-January, but it took a severe 
chill in the waning days continuing through 
February to ice over much of the Region’s 
waterways. This wintry weather induced a 
number of species to move southward, while 
others were snared in the quickly 
forming ice. An open Lake Erie, offer- 
ing up lake-effect snow through much of 
the season, was mostly ice-bound by mid-February. Gull variety in- 
creased substantially inland to the 
Three Rivers area of southwestern 
Pennsylvania, while to the south, West 
Virginia enjoyed a tremendous incursion of 
waterfowl. Western additions to 
the Region’s avifauna included an 
Inca Dove and a Virginian Warbler, 
both firsts for West Virginia, and a 
Scott’s Oriole, a first for Pennsylvania.

Abbreviations: Deer Creek (Deer Creek 
Res., Pickaway/Ross, OH); C.C.S.P (Caes- 
ar Creek S. P., Warren/Greene, OH); 
G.L.R. (Green Lane Res., Montgomery, 
PA); J.H.N.W.R. (John Heinz NWR, 
Philadelphia, PA); M.C.W.M.A. (Middle 
Creek W.M.A., Lancaster/Lebanon, PA); 
O.D.N.R. (Ohio Department of Natural 
Resources); O.N.W.R. (Ottawa N.W.R., Lu- 
cas/Ottawa, OH); P.W.R.S. (Pennsylvania Winter 
Raptor Survey); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S. P., 
Erie, PA); P.M.W.B.C. (Philadelphia Mid-Winter 
Bird Census; 6 Jan); P.W.T. (Penn Warner 
Tract, Bucks, PA); P.V.P. (Peace Valley Park, 
Bucks, PA); R.C.B. (Robert C. Byrd Lock & 
Dam, Mason, WV); S.N.P. (State Nature 
Preserve); T.L. (Tullytown Landfill, Bucks, PA).

**WATERFOWL**

A late flight of Tundra Swans over Lake, OH 2 
Dec numbered 123 (JP); 1300-1600 wintered in 
Ottawa, OH (O.D.N.R. aerial survey, 
m.ob.), and 90 wintered at Kildeer Plains 
WA., Wyandot, OH 29 Dec (R. Lowry, BS, 
VF). Equally notable, 200 were found around 
Hamburg, PA 31 Dec (Jide RK) and 210 in In- 
diana, PA 27 Dec (M. Higbee). After 3 ap- 
peared in Jefferson, WV 2 Feb (MO), the 
species was widely observed across the state, 
peaking at 21 at R.C.B. 24 Feb (DP). Mute 
Swans ventured southward, with 4 in Mason, 
WV 24 Feb (R. Talbert). Two Ross’s Geese ap- 
appeared at Deer Creek 4-15 Dec (RR, m.ob.); 
perhaps the same 2 were located nearby in 
Ross, OH 9-20 Jan (JL, B. Whan, D. Hess et al.). Another was found in Ottawa, OH 11 Feb 
(JP). A flock of 6 was present near Martins- 
burg, WV 12-15 Jan (S. Harris, MO), match- 
ing the seasonal tally for Pennsylvania, where 
3 resided in Chester 6 Jan-25 Feb (m.ob.). While common in winter within the Eastern 
Highlands, Snow Geese were more prevalent 
among the 14 species of the Region in winter 
other than normal. Bob Powell makes a case that 
the 270 over O.C.S.P. 8 Jan and the 130 there 
10 Jan were different flocks. This correspond- 
ed with 130 moving southward over the 
Cincinnati area 6-10 Jan in scattered flocks 
(D. Morse, Jr., TU, KRo, GF). Elsewhere in 
Ohio, the species was encountered widely, 
with mid-season concentrations bracketed by 
38 at The Wilds 6 Jan (GC), 35 at Deer Creek 
(P. Gardner), 12 in Mercer (J. Bowers), 12 in 
Wayne (H. Ostermiller), and 12 at Hoover 2 
(Thurston). In West Virginia, after a fall 
flight of 60 over Jefferson 8 Dec (MO), the 
species could be found from scattered locations, 
led by a pair at R.C.B. 11 Jan (WA). In Ohio, a 17 
Dec Greater White-fronted Goose in Cay- 
hoga and one in Clermont 21 Feb (D. Morse) 
were consistent with fall and spring migration 
patterns. The species remains rare in midwin- 
ter in the w., so 2 in Adams 24 Jan (ph. VF), 
another in Auglaize 24 Jan (A. Werteis, Jr.), 5 in 
Greene 3-4 Feb (RA et al.), and 2 in Ottawa 11 
Feb (JP) were unusual. A flock of 6 near 
Lewisburg, WV 22-26 Feb (B. Williams) likely 
were spring migrants. Pennsylvania record- 
ed 8 for the season, including 4 in Chester, 
PA (mobo.) 3 alone in Unionville 25 Feb (NP). Few details now accompany Cackling Goose 
reports, but the species appears to be of rare 
but regular occurrence in winter. In Ohio, re- 
ports from six counties were led by 6 birds in 
Hamilton 15 Jan (J. Row). One report came 
from Mineral, WV 21 Dec (J. B. Churchill). 
More common to the e. in Pennsylvania, a 
seasonal total of 35-40 was reported, including 
11 from PVP 29 Jan (CR). A Brant was pres- 
ent within PVP 16-16 Dec (AM, SK) and Greetec- 
tile Res., Franklin, PA 22 Jan (D. Snell). Single 
Barreled Geese were seen at PVP 27 Dec 
(SK) and L. Chillicothe, Monrow, PA 17-23 
Dec (J. Beam).

The 119 Gadwalls on Kellett 1., Erie 20 Jan 

This first-cycle Black-headed Gull was photographed at Tullytown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania 12 January 2007; the species is recorded almost annually in the state. Photograph by Tom Johnson.
(O.D.N.R. aerial survey). Similarly, the Philadelphia Mid-winter Bird Census 6 Jan produced 416 Northern Shovelers. The 64 Gadwalls at R.C.B. 20 Jan (WA, MG) made a high mid-season count for West Virginia, while an equal number at L. Arthur, Butler, PA 24 Dec was an excellent total. Eight Northern Pintails and 66 American Black Ducks 19 Feb were superb tallies for the New R. in Summers, WV (Jim & Judy Phillips). Lingering Blue-winged Teal included single birds in Lawrence, PA 8 Dec–5 Jan (MV) and Washington, PA 8-10 Feb (R. Gallardy et al.). A male Eurasian Wigeon in Hamilton, OH 1-4 Feb (RF, m.o.b.) was a rare mid-winter record for the state. The 93 Redheads on the Shenandoah R. in Jefferson 26 Feb (MO) was a high count for the West Virginia panhandle. Indicative of the mild season through Jan, 130 Ring-necked Ducks remained in Summit, OH 23 Jan, 180 in Hamilton, OH 5 Feb (RF), while 91 concentrated on the Scioto R. in Columbus 31 Jan (RR). Atypical of recent winter seasons, the scaup composition favored Greater over Lesser. With 1600:1200 the ratio around Kelleys L., Erie 23 Feb (TB et al.). Maumee Bay saw scaup up to 24,000 on 31 Jan (O.D.N.R. aerial survey), a concentration more typical of migration. The fall sea duck parade on L. Erie continued into the first half of the season. A King Eider was seen at Pl.S.P. 23 Dec (JM); a female was seen at several locations in Lake, OH 1-2 Dec (RH, LR, JP). In the Central Basin, the counties of Lake, Cuyahoga, and Lorain had reports of up to 2 King Eiders 27 Jan (NA, RR, GL, m.o.b.), including a first-winter male. The flight of 6 Harlequin Ducks into the Central Basin 2 Dec (RH, LR) may explain the sporadic reports of individuals along the shoreline of L. Erie through 27 Jan (JP) from Lorain, Cuyahoga, and Lake. In the Western Basin, 2 apparently moved back and forth from mainland Marblehead, Ottawa 16 Dec (ph. P. Kowalski, P. Wetzel) across to Kelleys L., Erie through 20 Jan (JP, TB et al.). A strong flight in Lake, OH 2 Dec held 20+ Long-tailed Ducks and 150+ scoters (RH); farther e., 3295 Long-tailed Ducks were at Pl.S.P that day (JM). Subsequently, 91 White-winged Scoters were tallied at Pl.S.P. 11 Dec (JM). The fallout left remarkable numbers of scoters wintering through the late Jan freeze within the Central Basin. At Sims Park, Cuyahoga, there were 12 White-winged and 17 Surf Scoters 1 Jan, with 30 Surf there 21 Jan (NA). Although common in early Dec, Black Scoters numbered no more than 3 into late Jan in Ohio and at Pl.S.P. 12-21 Jan (JM). Scoters were mostly on L. Erie until the freeze, when single Surf and Black Scoters appeared at Alum Creek Res., Delaware, OH 2 Feb (RTh). One remained at L. Arthur, Butler, PA 9 Dec until the early Feb freeze-up (m.o.b.). Two White-winged Scoters frequent- ed the R.C.B. area 15-24 Feb (S. Albaugh). Five on the Ohio R., Beaver, PA 4 Feb were unusual (B. Smith, MV). Long-tailed Ducks were inland 19 Dec, with 3 in Medina and 2 at Deer Creek (RR) remaining there through 4 Feb (TB); one was s. to Hamilton, OH 26-27 Jan (L. Gruber, JL). Counts of 1350 Buffleheads 19 Jan, 1190 Common Goldeneyes 20 Jan, and 1900 Red-breasted Mergansers 22 Jan from Kelleys L., Erie, OH (TB) were well above the norm for L. Erie in mid-winter. A Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid was at Pl.S.P. 24 Jan (JM). The peak count of Common Mergansers was 1300 at P.V.P. 27 Jan (AM), and 10,500 on Maumee Bay 17 Jan (O.D.N.R. aerial survey) made up the bulk of the wintering population on L. Erie.

**TURKEY THROUGH RAPTORS**

An apparently fresh-lined Wild Turkey nest with 8 eggs was discovered 2 Dec in Marion, WV (Jde. J. Herron). Up to 6 Red-throated Loons along the Central Basin the first week of Dec trailed the fall flight (JP, RH, LR, m.o.b.); one was w. to Kelleys L. 28 Dec (TB). The species was found inland to C.C.S.P. 2 Dec (RA), on L. Arthur, Butler, PA 16 Dec (G. Wilhelmen), at P.V.P. 2 Dec (AM), on the Glenolden C.B.C. 16 Dec (Jde. NP), on Chambers L., Chester, PA 6 Dec (P. Fischer), and 2 were seen on the Delaware R. in Bucks, PA 22-25 Feb (N. Zahn, DF). A rare mid-seas on season record came from Lake, OH 9 Jan (JP). Single mid-season Common Loons were in Cuyahoga, OH 21 Jan (J. McComoor) and Chester, PA 2 Feb (J. Loomis). An Eared Grebe was found in Hamilton, OH 1 Dec (KH) and at Pl.S.P. 11 Dec (JM). A Rednecked Grebe at C.C.S.P. 10 Dec (LG) was late in the w., and up to 16 were reported across Pennsylvania for the season (m.o.b.). An American White Pelican was present at Green Lake Res., Montgomery, PA 14-16 Dec (L. & J. Hillegeiss); one at Deer Creek remained through 5 Jan (RR, m.o.b.). Up to 30 Double-crested Cormorants could be found on the Scioto R. in Columbus 28 Jan (J. Brown). The P.M.W.B.C. recorded a remarkable 51 Double-crested and 25 Great Cormorantis 6 Jan (Jde. KR).

Consistent with its history in Ohio during strong El Niño events, Great Egrets could be found well into the season: singles were in Highland 2-10 Dec (RA), in Stark 3 Dec (P. Soehnlen), at Deer Creek 7-12 Jan (E. Reiner, RR), and in Gallia 22 Jan (ph. VF), with 2 in Erie 16 Dec (VF). In West Virginia, one was in Mason 6-20 Jan (WA, MG, MO, m.o.b.). Six Great Egrets were recorded on the Glenolden C.B.C., PA 16 Dec, and 3 were recorded on the P.M.W.B.C. (Jde. KR). A Green Heron was at Crooked Run Nature Preserve, Clifton, OH 17 Dec–9 Jan (K. Robinson, JL, m.o.b.), a 2nd Jan record and new late date for Ohio. Black-crowned Night-Herons entered the season with 100 present along the Cuyahoga R. in downtown Cleveland (P. Lotano); 70 remained until 10 Jan (JL). A Least Bittern at Winton Woods, Hamilton 3 Dec (J. Bens, Jay Stenger) furnished only the 2nd winter record for Ohio. An American Bittern lingered in Chester, PA 18 Dec (J. Edge), while one near Circleville, Pickaway, OH 4-12 Feb (ph. T. Bain) was extraordinary. A Glossy Ibis at J.H.N.W.R. was recorded on the Glenolden C.B.C. 16 Dec (J. C. Miller).

Six Virginia Rails remained at Springfield Marsh S.N.P., Seneca, OH 1 Jan (TB et al.); the species wintered in Jefferson, WV (MO), and...
White-winged gulls, which often move southward in winter as large lakes in Canada begin to freeze, turned up in states south of the Great Lakes mostly in February 2007, as the season turned from unseasonably warm to bitterly cold. This first-cycle Glaucous Gull was photographed at Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 10 February 2007. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

2 were still present in Quakertown Swamp, Bucks, PA 13 Jan (DF, CR). A Common Moorhen lingered in Bucks, PA through 26 Jan (A. Birns). The w. flight of Sandhill Cranes materialized 7 Dec, with 1300 over Cincinnati (m.o.b.). Odd was a count of 37 from South Bass I. 8 Dec (L. Brohl). Many held on farther n., as from 5-12 Feb, 90 birds in four flocks were seen overhead in w. Ohio (E. Roush, T. Wheat, M. Flynn, JP). Where most years this corresponds with the early push northward, these flocks were all moving southward, coincident with the arrival of severe freezing and heavy snows. A Sandhill Crane was present at M.C.W.M.A. Dec-Feb (m.o.b.). American Coots have been enjoying the ice-free reservoirs of Ohio through early winter for some years now. An amazing 4000 entered Jan in Ohio, with an equally astounding 3000+ at P.I.S.P. through Jan (JM). However, dozens if not hundreds of birds died in Feb after a sudden freeze of inland reservoirs within Ohio. A Turkey Vulture remained on Kelleys L, Erie, OH 29 Dec-21 Jan (JP, TB et al.); or it another made its way to Magee Marsh, Ontario, OH 6 Feb (Kim Kaufman). The 542 Black Vultures on the P.W.R.S. was a record-high count (GG).

A late Osprey was seen at N. Nockamixon, Bucks, PA 9 Dec (B. Etter). The P.W.R.S. posted a record-high 107 Northern Harriers (GG). Of 480 Bald Eagles on the mid-winter survey across 53 counties in Ohio, 165 were found in the Western Basin (O.D.N.R.). A dark-morph Western Red-tailed Hawk was identified in Dry Fork, WV 22 Jan (C. Rucker). A Golden Eagle was reported from Deer Creek 6 Dec (J. Kuentzl); an imm. on Kelleys L, Erie, OH 23 Feb (TB) may have been a first for the L. Erie islands. Although declining for several years in Ohio, American Kestrels continued to post gains farther e., where a tally of 511, yet another record high, came from the P.W.R.S. Up to 22 Merlins were reported in Pennsylvania during the season.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Wintering Killdeer n. of the Ohio R. were limited to 6 at Pleasant Hill L., Ashland, OH 2 Feb (GC) and 4 at C.C.S.P. in mid-Jan (VF). Two late Lesser Yellowlegs were seen on the Glenolden C.B.C. 16 Dec (S. Conant). The latest Dunlins were 2 at Conneaut 29 Dec (JP). A strong flight of Purple Sandpipers brought 5 to Headlands through 17 Dec (RH et al.) with one remaining 20 Jan (J. Talkington et al.). One was w. to Maumee Bay S.P., Lucas 3 Dec (BZ), while 4 were on Kelleys L. 17 Dec, with one still present 30 Dec (JP). The species was also reported from Lorain 9 Dec (S. Landes) and P.I.S.P. 14 Dec (JM). A Least Sandpiper on the Southern Bucks County C.B.C. was new for the count (DF), and one was in Cumberland, PA through 17 Feb (V. Gauthier). The 5 Watson’s Snipe at Cowan L., Clinton 29 Jan (LG), a high mid-season count for s. Ohio, was easily exceeded by 30 at R.C.B. 3 Feb (WA, DP); one lingered in Chester, PA 17 Feb (NP), while 13 were reported during the season in Bucks, PA (m.o.b.), including birds into Feb at Maple Knoll Farm (R. Smith).

Reported from Deer Creek 4 Feb (E. Reinet), a first for s.-cen. Ohio. An ad. Glaucous Gull was at Charles Mill Res., Ashland, OH 31 Jan-8 Feb (GC, ph. B. Glick, m.o.b.), for a very rare inland record. Nelson’s Gull reports included 2 at L.T. 12 Jan (TJ) and one at Bristol, Bucks, PA 14 Jan (DF). White-winged gulls were scarce on L. Erie. Only 2-3 of each of Thayer’s and Iceland Gulls and up to 5 Glaucous Gulls were reported in the Central Basin. A notable concentration of gulls at the confluence of the Allegheny/Monongahela/Ohio Rivers in Feb held up to at least 6 Iceland, 3 Glaucous, and 2 Thayer’s (fide PH, m.o.b.). Single Thayer’s Gulls in Pennsylvania were at Memorial L., Lebanon late Dec-3 Jan (m.o.b.), in Erie 9 Jan (JM), and at T. L. 6-12 (DF) & 21 Jan (TJ).

An Inca Dove in Huntington, Cabell, WV 20 Dec (J. Rieber, ph. MO, m.o.b.) represents a first state and Regional record. An early Barn Owl nesting was reported 28 Jan in Northumberland, PA (W. Laubscher), although the 5 young succumbed to the weather. Barn Owls were found at five locations in Juniata, PA (C. Kaufman), an encouraging number. Northern Saw-whet Owls in the
an ad. female Rufous, was in Berks, PA 26 Nov-18 Jan (C. Cravotta).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES**

An Ash-throated Flycatcher was present at Lititz, Lancaster, PA 21 Dec-5 Jan (J. Sheaffer, ph. E. Haas)—just a 3rd record for Pennsylvania. A Western Kingbird was present near Morgantown, Berks, PA 25 Dec-11 Jan (H. Harthsho, m.o.b. ph.); a yellow-bellied kingbird seen briefly at Maumee Bay S.P., Lucas, OH 10 Dec (RZ; L. Safel) was thought to be a Western. Eastern Phoebes were widely noted in s. Ohio and w.-cen. West Virginia counties through Dec. Up to 9 were counted on the Cincinnati C.B.C. and 14 on the Charleston C.B.C., while 7 remained into Jan around sw. Ohio (RB; F. Hull, G. Fantiit, JL). Pushing their n. limits farther, wintering were birds at Hoover 27 Jan (RTh) and n. to L. Erie, where one was found 4 Feb at O.N.W.R. (m.o.b.). A hardier bird was found in Muskingum, OH 7 Feb (A. Lavy). There were six mid-winter reports of Eastern Phoebe in Berks, PA 30 Dec-18 Feb, including one that survived single-digit temps (RR). An unidentified Empidonax flycatcher was at Muddy Run, Lancaster, PA during the Southern Lancaster C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide BS). Two Common Ravens at Edinboro, Erie, PA 1 Feb were w. of the normal range (D. Peters). The 11 on the Hamburg C.B.C. was a new high (fide RR).

A surprising flock of 6 Tree Swallows appeared in Summers, WV 25 Feb (Jim & Judy Phillips); 3 more were in Putnam, WV 28 Feb (C. Ellis); and 2 on the West Chester C.B.C., PA 16 Dec were new for the count (D. Davis). Two Cave Swallows were reported in Lehig, PA 1 Dec (D. Wels). Single Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from Greenbrier, Jefferson, and Hardy, WV (BW, MO, M. Johnson). The total of 100 Golden-crowned Kinglets on Kelleys, OH 17 Dec was reminiscent of a Dec 1833 count on the islands. Once thought accidental after the C.B.C. period, Ruby-crowned Kinglets were widespread mid-season, with Ohio reports from Lawrence (VF), Jackson (VF), Pickaway (G. Stauffer), Butler (B. Beck), Franklin (K. Graham), Hamilton (2; N. Cade, W. Hull), and Kelleys 1, Erie 21 Jan (2; TB). A late blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen in Lancaster, PA 3 Dec (CR, D. Hoffman). A Marsh Wren lingered at Quakertown Swamp, Bucks, PA through 24 Dec (R. French, B. Etter), and one survived the winter at Buckingham Wetlands, Bucks (R. Hendrick). It was banner year across the Region for Carolina and Winter Wrens. Five lingering House Wrens in Pennsylvania included one on the EM.W.B.C. 6 Jan (fide RR). A Townsend's Solitaire was present in Fairview Twp., Erie, PA 31 Dec-3 Feb (M. Anderson, ph. JM). The 7600 American Robins on the Cincinnati C.B.C. 30 Dec were especially impressive, as were the 818 on Kelleys 1, OH 17 Dec (JP). Hundreds of robins could be found daily across Ohio R. counties of Adams, Scioto, and Lawrence through Jan (VF). Hermit Thrushes were common early in the season, as evidenced by 107 on Kelleys 1, OH 17 Dec (JP et al.). A Brown Thrasher wintered n. to Franklin, OH through 2 Feb (RTh). Wintering Brown Thrashers in Bucks, PA included one in Warwington Twp. 12 Dec-26 Feb (R. French) and one in Bedford Twp. 21-28 Feb (J. Mertz). Late Ohio Gray Catbirds included one in Stark 30 Dec (E. Snively) and one in Wyandot 1 Jan (M. Kauffman). Two Gray Catbirds survived in multiform rose at L. Ontelaune, Berks, PA through at least 25 Feb (S. Fordyce).

In up, to 25 American Pipits were at Madison 8 Jan (RR), while 115 appeared sw. of West Union, Adams in mid-Jan (ph.VF). Curiously, the species did not become conspicuous in West Virginia until later, when 16 appeared in Jefferson 14 Feb (B. Hayd) and 23 in Hardy 21 Feb (MO). A flock of 500 American Pipits in Berks, PA 21 Jan (RK) and another of 75-80 in Northampton, PA 5 Feb (RN, W. Pryzwanski) were excellent late-winter counts. Another late migration saw 110,000 European Starlings on Kelleys 1, OH 28 Dec (TB). Ohio's 4th wintering Orange-crowned Warbler was in Franklin 13 Feb (ph. N. Nye). A Virginia's Warbler appeared at the feeder of Dave and Kim Myles in Harper's Ferry, Jefferson, WV 10-15 Feb (ph. MO, m.o.b.) for a first state and Regional record and one of very few in the East/Midwest. A Nashville Warbler was in Hamilton, OH 4-6 Dec (L. Brumbaugh). Yellow-rumped Warblers were especially numerous across the Region. The 56 on Kelleys 1, OH in mid-Dec dwindled to 22 by 20 Jan (TB et al.). Another 56 were counted around Buckeye Furnace, Jackson, OH in mid-Jan (VF). A Pine Warbler was in Stark, OH through 4 Feb (S. Jackson, R. Macko), and another spent the period in Mason, Hamilton, Pennsylvania's third, this Ash-throated Flycatcher at Lititz, Lancaster County was sighted on the B.C.B. December 30, 2006. The species appears to be increasing as a late-autumn and early winter visitor to the East in the past several years. Photograph by Geoff Moisell.

**SA** An amazing 140 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were present on the P.M.W.B.C. 6 Jan, most at the Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant in Philadelphia; an estimated 200 were present in Dec. Large numbers have been recorded at this location in the previous two winters as well. This is believed to be the only U.S. location n. of s. Florida and s. Texas where the species currently winters in any numbers (KR). The swallow here apparently subsist on a species of Chironomid.
The American Birding Association, to help support a variety of activities and programs designed to inspire all people to enjoy and protect wild birds. Choose from two distinct designs: Red-billed Tropicbird or Rufous Hummingbird.

To apply call 1-800-853-5576 ext. 8396 or apply online today www.americanbirding.org

The credit card issuer of the American Birding Association VISA Platinum Card Is U.S. Bank National Association N.A.

EASTERN HIGHLANDS & UPPER OHIO RIVER VALLEY

This Western Kingbird at Morgantown, Berks County, Pennsylvania 30 December 2006 is not calling here but is regurgitating berry seeds. Photograph by Geoff Molosh.

Johnson, ph. and at J H N W R. 7-21 Jan (FW, m.ob. ph H. Esksin). A Lark Sparrow wintered at Maple Knoll Farms, Bucks, PA (R. & V. Smith). Three Savannah Sparrows were n. to L. Erie in Lucas, OH 17 Dec (GL1), where a Vesper Sparrow was also seen. A Harris’s Sparrow appeared 25 Jan in Holmes, OH, remaining through the period (ph W. Miller, m.ob.). A remarkable 101 White-throated Sparrows were still present on Kelleys I., OH 20 Jan, with 2 Oregon Junco there the next day (TB). A female Oregon Junco was carefully identified at Blenden Woods, Franklin 28 Jan (D. Linsell), and one was near West Union, Adams, OH (VF) for the 2nd winter in a row. The 200 Lapland Longspurs in Licking, OH 23 Feb (RR) made a high count for the Glaciated Plateau region. At least 13 lingering Baltimore Orioles in Pennsylvania included 4 in Backs, with singles through the winter at Levittown (G. Carmichael) and New Hope (S. Meyers). Four were recorded on the West Chester C.B.C. 16 Dec (NP), and 3 were at one feeder at Peach Bottom, Lancaster 9 Dec (BS). An ad. male Scott’s Oriole was present at Mechanicsburg, Cumberland, PA 19 Feb, a first for the Region (K. Atwood, ph., J. T. L., m.ob.). The count of 82 Rusty Blackbirds wintering at Quakertown Swamp, Bucks, PA (CR, B. Lishman) was exceeded by 100+ in Cumberland, PA 17 Feb (V. Gauthier). A Brewer’s Blackbird was at Greencastle Wetlands, Washington, PA (L. Helgerman et al.). Eastern Meadowlarks took advantage of a mild season, as 47 were in Hanlin 16 Dec (RC), 30 in Wyandot 28 Jan (BS), and 12 at O.N.W.R. 4 Feb (m.ob.). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak made a brief visit to a feeding station in Yellow Springs, Greene, OH 5 Dec (ph. N. Bouts). A Common Redpoll unexpectedly appeared in Sw. Ohio in Preble 29 Jan (C. Mathena, S. Tackett); a few scattered across the Highlands were in Allegheny, PA 7 Feb (PH), Beaver, PA 17 Feb (B. Walbeck et al.), and Bucks, PA 28 Feb (J. Merz). The only Evening Grosbeak reported was one in Juniata, PA 14 & 21 Jan (H. Petersheim).

Initiated observers (subregional editors in bold): OHIO: Nancy Anderson (NA), Rick Asamoto (RA), Tom Bartlett (TB), Gary Cowell (GC), Rick Counts (RC), Glen Crippen (GC), Vic Fazio (VF), Larry Gara (LG), Ray Hannamk (RH), Kathi Hutton (KH), Ned Keller (NK), Jay Lehman (JL), Gabe Ledy (GL), Greg Links (GL1), John Pogacnik (JP), Larry Rosche (LR), Robert Royse (RR), Bruce Simpson (BS), Rob Thorp (RTh), Brian Zweibel (BZ). PENNSYLVANIA: Devon Farbotnik (DF), Greg Grove (GG), Paul Hess (PH), Tom Johnson (TJ), Steve Kacir (SK), Rudy Keller (RK), Jerry McWilliams (JM), August Mirabello (AM), Nick Pulcinella (NP), Keith Russell (KR), Cameron Rutt (CR), Bob Schutsky (BS), Mark Vass (MV), Rick Wiltrout (RW), Frank Windfielder (FW). WEST VIRGINIA: Wendell Argabrite (WA), Jeanette Eker, Mike Griffith (MG), David Patick (DP), Matt Orsle (MO), Barry Williams (BW).

Victor W. Fazio, III, 18722 Newell Street, Floor 2 Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122, (bcrveo@sbcglobal.net) Rick Wiltrout, P.O. Box 294 Saylsburg, Pennsylvania 18353, rwiltrout@state.pa.us
The Region experienced a tale of two winters. Despite a cold start to the season, December and January were two of the mildest on record. The average high temperatures in Bloomington, IN during December and January were 60° and 38° F, respectively. By contrast, the average temperature in the Region through February was close to 10° F below normal, and there was a three-week stretch beginning 28 January and ending 18 February during which the temperature moved above the freezing mark on only a few occasions. Chicago’s average temperature during this stretch was 13.8° F below normal, and Fort Wayne experienced eight consecutive days of subzero temperatures in February, breaking the old record of six. This cold snap resulted in the freezing of virtually all bodies of water away from Lake Michigan.

Perhaps as the result of the prolonged high temperatures through much of the season or of increased observer effort (or a combination of the two), many species that are very rarely recorded in the winter, particularly in January, were reported this season. This list included American Bittern, King Rail, Sora, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House and Sedge Wrens, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Dickcissel, and Indigo Bunting. Rarities included Gyr Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Black-headed Gull, Burrowing Owl, and Say’s Phoebe. Also of note was the presence in southeastern Indiana of a Bullock’s Oriole and, more significantly, an Audubon’s Oriole, both of which would constitute first state records if accepted.

Abbreviations: Arklands (Arklands Reclamation Area, Perry, IL); Bev. Sh. (Beverly Shores, Porter, IN); Carl. L. (Carlyle L., s. II); EWA (Fish & Wildlife Area); G.P.EWA. (Goose Pond EWA, Greene, IN); Hawthorn (Hawthorn Mine, Sullivan, IN); Horseshoe L. (Madison, IL); I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P., Lake, IL); Mich. City (Michigan City Harbor, La Porte, IN); Rend L. (Jefferson and Franklin, IL).

**WATERFOWL THROUGH GALLIFORMS**

Illinois again hosted large numbers of wintering Greater White-fronted Geese, with exceptional totals of 7900 at Hennepin–Hopper Lake Restoration Area, Putnam 9 Jan (DFS) and 6094 at Chautauqua N.W.R., Mason 11 Jan (R&SB). Large numbers of Snow Geese were present in s. Illinois; notable totals included 300,000 at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) and 210,000 at Carl L. 2 Jan (KAM, C&L). Indiana also had its 2nd highest count of Snow Geese (23,000) in Knox 25 Feb (GeetLB). Although the count of 25 Ross’s Geese at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) provided one of Illinois’s top five wintering totals, it was still reduced from last year’s incredible numbers. Good numbers of Cackling Geese were recorded in Illinois, led by 500 in Woodford 1 Dec (MF) and five other triple-digit tallies. Swans were very evident in the Region. The usual stronghold for Mute Swans was again the L. Calumet area in Chicago, with 137 there 10 Feb (WJM). A record Illinois winter high count of Trumpeter Swans was set 13 Jan, with 30 in Jackson (RSR et al.). Tundra Swan numbers were also high, with peak counts of 321 along the Mississippi R. in Carroll 19 Dec (KJM et al.) and 103 at Kankakee EWA, Starke, IN 3 Dec (RH).

Though the 6255 Gadwalls seen 25 Dec at Arklands (KJM) reflected a good season for the species, dabblers otherwise occurred in reduced numbers in the Region. Seasonal high counts were low for American Wigeon, with a peak of 181 at Rend L. 16 Dec (KAM), and American Black Duck, with 61 at Chautauqua N.W.R., Mason, IL 23 Dec (R&SB). Four Blue-winged Teal in the Region was typical, with one at Pine Creek, Benton, IN 2 Dec (EMH), one lingering through 10 Dec at Horseshoe L. (FRH), and 2 in Franklin, IL 13 Jan (JA, TM). Other dabblers showing reduced seasonal highs were as follows: Northern Shoveler with 85 and Northern Pintail with 1507, both at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Williamson, IL 17 Dec (KAM, DMK), and Green-winged Teal with only 120 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK).

While Canvasback numbers were some-what reduced in the Region, with a peak of only 600 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK), diving ducks in general were present in strong numbers. Notable totals included 324 Redheads and 7598 Greater Scaup on L. Michigan off Lake Forest, IL 30 Dec (GAW, S&JH), and nice counts of 12,000 Ring-necked Ducks and 3100 Lesser Scaup at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM). Two Harlequin Ducks flew eastward past Mich. City 16 Dec (KJB, JKC, JJM, P&G), and 2 males in Chicago 25 Dec (SJH) were joined by a female, all 3 lingering through at least 28 Feb (m.ob.). A total of 40 Surf Scoters were recorded in the Region, 13 of which were at inland sites. The largest groups consisted of 11 at Dunes S.P., Porter, IN 2 Dec (JJM) and 5 at Heidecke L., Grundy, IL 7 Jan (AFS). Among several White-winged Scoters at the lakefront was a female at Hammond 20 Jan (KJB, SRB, JKC, LP et al.). Inland birds in Indiana included one at Pine Creek, Benton 2 Dec (EMH), another on L. Maxinkuckee, Marshall 5 Dec (MH), and a female/fmm. on the Ohio R. in Clark 14 Feb (BF). Small numbers of Black Scoters were also seen along the lakefront, including 2 at I.B.S.P. 23 Dec (RDH) and a female at Whiting 20 & 27 Jan (SRB, JKC et al.). A rare inland report was of a female at Eagle Creek Park, Marion, IN 1 Dec (LP). The peak-long-tailed Duck count was of 25 at I.B.S.P. 23 Dec (RDH), and among three Indiana records was a female on the Ohio R. 19 & 24 Dec (T&CB, BPP) that furnished the first record for Clark. An excellent tally of 6009 Common Goldeneyes was

Indiana’s first documented Prairie Falcon was at Hawthorne Mine, Sullivan County sporadically throughout the winter (here 16 December 2006) and was seen by many. Photograph by Timothy Avery.

James D. Hengeveld
Keith A. McMullen
Geoffrey A. Williamson
Jasper, IL 16 Feb (RES, SAS). Wild Turkeys continue to do well in the Region. Counts of 190 at Hawthorn 20 Dec (D&BW et al.) and 110 at Rend L. 16 Dec (DMK) were the highest of the season. Northern Bobwhites, however, remain scarce. A peak tally of 20 birds 30 Dec in Union, IL (VMP, KJM, BT, DFS) was one of only three double-digit tallies reported.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**

The Region's highest-ever count of Red-throated Loons—24, including at least 18 ads—was recorded at Mich. City 16 Dec (JKC, JMJ). Illinois' high count of 7 was set 1 Jan at L.B.S.P (EWW). The lone Pacific Loon report from the Region consisted of one 22 Jan at Horseshoe L. (JPZ, FRH) Single Red-necked Grebes were observed in Indiana at Hursttown Res., Allen 10 Dec (JAH), at Miller Beach, Lake 10 Dec (JJM), on L. Monroe 15 Dec (JDI), and on Morse Res., Hamilton 3 & 13 Jan (KW). A fine total of 5 Eared Grebes was reported, with singles at Summit L., Henry, IN 2 Dec (SAP), in Adams, IL 16 Dec (AGD), at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM), on L. Lemon, Monroe 3 Jan (J&SH), and at Burns Dutch, Porter 16 Feb (MB), the latter two records representing Indiana's first for Jan and Feb. A Western Grebe at Bev Sh., likely the same bird that was present in the fall, was seen 6 & 13 Jan (KJB, KJC, SRB, EMH et al.). Another Western Grebe, the first for L. Monroe, IN, was found 25 Jan (DRW) and remained through 3 Feb (m.ob.). Approximately 600 American White Pelicans were tallied 6 Jan along the Mississippi R., Madison (JWE). A large congregation of 4023 Double-crested Cormorants was noted 16 Dec at Rend L. (DMK), and small numbers wintered on the Indiana lakefront, continuing the pattern from the past few years.

Two American Bitterns were recorded at G.PEWA, 20 Dec and one, Indiana's first in Jan since 1959, was at that location on the 11th (LWS). Great Egrets in Indiana were seen in Marion 2 Dec (JRD), at L. Lemon 14 Dec (J&SH), and in LaGrange 17 Dec (GT et al.). Three imm. Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Wolf L., Lake, IN 6 Jan (KJC, KJB, SRB, PK et al.), and singles were at L. Calumet in Chicago 24 Dec (WJW) and at Union County C.A., IL 30 Dec (KJW).

**HAWKS THROUGH SANDPIPERS**

The maximum reported count of Bald Eagles was 600 along the Mississippi R. in Whiteside and Rock Island 17 Feb (DJS). Notably large tallies of 45 and 61 Northern Harriers were logged at Hawthorn 20 Dec (D&BW et al.) and at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM), respectively. Four Northern Goshawks were reported, all imm., with birds at Summit Lake S.P., Henry, IN 2 Dec (SAP), in Lee, IL 22 Dec (KJM), at Hawthorn 3 Jan and 23 Feb (DRW et al.), and in Urbana, IL all winter (RES et al.). Numbers of Golden Eagles in the Region seem to be on the rise, with 15 reported, including 2 at Pere Marquette S.P., Jersey, IL 3 Feb (JWE) and 2 at L. Monroe, IN 1 & 15 Dec (DRW). Winter Merlin numbers seem to be increasing as well, exemplified by 3 birds (perhaps the same individuals) at Hawthorn on both 20 (DG) & 26 Dec (JMJ). One of these birds was a pale ad male, apparently richardsonii; another richardsonii was at Willow Slough F.W.A., Newton, IN 1 Jan (SRB, KJB, KJC, LH et al.). The most exciting raptor of the season was an ad. gray-morph Gyrfal...
con seen feeding on a phoeasant 3 Feb in Livingston, IL (1DFS, ph. TH). For the 2nd consecutive year, at least one Prairie Falcon wintered at Hawthorn. A probable juv seen 13 Dec (DRW) was subsequently photographed 16 Dec (TA). An apparent ad. that was very light underneath, with very limited spotting/streaking, was seen 24 Dec (EMH) and subsequently 23 Jan (DRW). These birds would represent the 7th and 8th records for Indiana (p.a.).

A Ringed Redstart seen at GPEWA, 13 (DRW) & 20 Dec (PS) represented the only 3rd winter record for Indiana and the first since 1956. A Virginia Rail was found at Rend L. (KAM) 16 Dec, one was in Bev. Sh. 16 Dec (JKC, JMJ) and 13 Jan (KJB, JKC, SBR), and 2 were at Willow Slough, Newton, IN 5 Jan (JHH). A Sora in nw. Monro 30 Dec (DRW) provided the 2nd record for Indiana and the first since 1900. Three Lesser Yellowlegs in Knox 25 Feb (G&LB) were the earliest ever for Indiana, and a Pectoral Sandpiper at Whittewater S.P., Union (WIB) provided Indiana’s first Jan record. Three Least Sandpipers at L. Gibson 20 Jan (G&LB, LWS, JHD) provided Indiana’s 5th Jan record. A first-basic Purple Sandpiper in Chicago 19 Dec (RDH) was joined by another 22 Dec (TBL), and one was in Waukegan 19 Dec–13 Jan (MAM, m.ob.). An American Woodcock “peetning” in nw. Monroe 30 Dec (DRW) and another in Hawthorn 2 Jan (DG) furnished Indiana’s 6th Dec and Jan records, respectively.

**GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**

An imm. Laughing Gull found 1 Jan at I.B.S.P. (ph. PWS, RB, ph., *tGAW, MH, ph. EWW) provided the first Jan record for Illinois. An ad. Laughing Gull at L. Gibson that was present since Nov (fide GB) was seen 9 Dec (J, BB), 1 Jan (DAY, BF, CEM), and 24 Feb (BP, LWS, JHD), and another at L. Lemon, 28 Jan (J&SH), together with the L. Gibson bird, provided Indiana’s 6th and 7th winter records. The highlight for winter gulling came at season’s end when an ad. Black-headed Gull was found 23 Feb at Montrose Harbor in Chicago by John Hockman and Ann Hansen. It was relocated 28 Feb and seen by many (ph. KH, RDH, ph., *tGAW, *tWJM, m.ob.). A very good count of 6000 Bonaparte’s Gulls was tallied 1 & 3 Dec at Carl. L. (DMK). An ad. California Gull was seen 4, 6, & 16 Feb in East Alton, IL (WCR, FRH, KAM). Herring Gulls occurred in reduced numbers, the largest gathering consisting of only 2200 at Starved Rock S.P., La Salle, IL 24 Feb (DFS). Fifteen Thayer’s and 7 Iceland Gulls at Winthrop Harbor, IL 10 Feb (GAW et al.) were notable concentrations. On the Indiana lakefront, where gull numbers continue to drop, an ad. and a third-year Iceland Gull at Hammond Marina 3 Feb (JMK, KJB, JKC) were the only ones reported this season. Similarly, only 5, 2, and 9 Thayer’s, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls, respectively, were reported on the Indiana lakefront for the season. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Ohio R. near Jeffersonville (ph. BPB) furnished the first record for Clark. A first-year Great Black-backed Gull at L. Gibson 24 Feb (BPB, LWS, JHD) represented only the 5th Indiana record away from the lakefront. In Illinois, 7 Lesser Black-backed (JWE) and 7 Great Black-backed Gulls (WCR) along the Mississippi R. in Madison 11 Feb provided noteworthy counts. Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on L. Michigan at Lake Forest, IL 30 Dec (GAW, SJH), while one stayed at Baldwin L., Randolph, IL 17-20 Feb (PL et al.). An exceptional find was a Forster’s Tern at Rend L. on the late date of 16 Dec (tKAM).

More Barn Owls were found in the Region this season than is typical; among the 9 reported were 2 at Arklands 25 Dec (THI, KJM) and 2 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK). Of 5 Snowy Owls reported this season, 4 were in Illinois: one in Livingston 21 Dec–4 Feb (MJW, m.ob.), one 1-2 Jan in Madison (CJL, KAM, FRH) that was killed by a vehicle the day after it was discovered, another in Chicago 22 Jan (ph. PD), and one in DuPage 1-2 Feb (AK et al); the lone Indiana bird was observed along I-94 in LaPorte 11 Dec (BJG). A Burrowing Owl was again discovered at Pyramid S.P., Perry, IL, where one had been present Aug 2005–Mar 2006. This bird was seen 25 & 28 Dec and 1 Jan (JEM, TUM, DMK, MS). Long-eared Owls were well represented this winter, with a peak count of 11 at Carl. L. 1 Jan (DMK, MS). Several large concentrations of Short-eared Owls included 55 at Hawthorn 2 Jan (LWS), 35 at Peabody King W.A., St. Clair, IL 28 Feb (TUM), and 29 at Ferrin, IL 19 Dec (DMK, SDB). An impressive total of 10 Northern Saw-whet Owls was recorded in Hoosier N.F., Monroe/Jackson 16 Dec (LWS).

Indiana’s first Dec record of Ruby-throated Hummingbird was furnished by a *Lepidopetes grinnellii* bird that remained through 4 Dec (DG, RL). The Black-chinned Hummingbird that appeared at a feeder in Gibson, IN in Oct remained through 15 Dec (fide DG). No fewer than 5 Rufous Hummingbirds remained in Indiana into the winter period (fide DG), with 2 staying into late Jan and another 2 hanging on until 13 Feb, the latter pair including an ad. male in Harrison (T&JS, BPB).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS**

A dozen Eastern Phoebes were reported in Indiana during the period, including 2 each in Jan and Feb. Remarkably, the 2 Jan birds were both from Allen in ne. Indiana (JAH). A Say’s Phoebe wintered at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Jasper, IL, being present there 8 Dec–7 Feb (RES, KAM, CJL, m.ob.). There are 12 prior accepted records of this species for Illinois. Loggerhead Shrikes made a good showing this season in s. Illinois, with three reports of more than 2 birds: 5 in Edwards 28
Dec (RES), 4 in Marion 22 Feb (RES), and 3 at Carl L. 19 Dec (KAM, VMK). An impressive 42 Northern Shrikes were reported during the period, among which were relatively southerly birds at Moraine View S.P., McLean, IL 18 Dec (AC) and at the Bluegrass FWA, Warrick, IN 21 Feb (CJM, DRY). Notable was a Fish Crow at Horseshoe L 27 Feb (FRH).

Brown creepers were abundant in Illinois, the highest tally consisting of 33 at Milan Bottoms, Rock Island 28 Dec (LLB). A lingering House Wren 2 Jan at Horseshoe L (FRH) provided a rare winter record, as did a Sedge Wren in Union, IL 30 Dec (SDB). More expected, though still unusual, were the scattered Marsh Wrens found throughout the Region, including one at I.B.S.P. in the ne. corner of Illinois 1 Jan (EWW), 3 seen by separate parties at G.FEA, 20 Dec, and 2 in nw. Monroe, IN 30 Dec (DRW et al.). Indiana's 4th winter Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen in Lafayette 17 Dec (ph. KA) as well as multiple times subsequently through 27 Dec (KA, DA), the latter date representing the latest sighting ever for the state. Eastern Bluebirds were both more numerous as well as more widespread throughout the Region this winter. Illinois reports included exceptional counts of 199 in Massac 31 Dec (KJM et al.) and 134 in Jackson 1 Jan (KJM, VL et al.). On the other hand, Hermit Thrushes were less abundant. A female Varied Thrush was in Rochelle, IL 24 & 26 Feb (J, DTW, DJ). Gray Catbirds lingered 13-22 Dec in Boone, IL (AEB) and at Willow Slough EWA., Newton, IN 9 Jan (BHH).

The winter season provided a nice selection of out-of-season warblers. An Orange-crowned warbled 26 Jan – 1 Feb in Chicago (TFSS). Six reports totaling 9 Pine Warblers included 4 at L. Murphysboro S.P., Jackson 1 Jan (KJM, VL et al.) all sightings were confined to s. Illinois except the northernmost, in Greene–Sullivan S.F., Greene, IN 20 Dec (JG, RAB). Indiana's first confirmed (2nd overall) winter record of American Redstart was documented at Bev. Sh. 2 Dec (ph. JKC, JKB, SRB, JMM, SN). In Coles, IL, an Orenbird was recorded 8 Dec–6 Feb (RF). An unprecedented 7 Common Yellowthroats were reported in Dec throughout the Region, including 2 in Boone, IN on the 17th (SH) and a female at the Union County C.A., IL 30 Dec (KJM).

**SPARRWS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES**

Spotted Towhee reports included singles 6-13 Feb in Heyworth, IL (KS) and 10 Feb in Woodford, IL (JM). Chipping Sparrows were more prevalent than normal, with 12 reported from nine locations. The 7 Vesper Sparrows reported were well above the average and included a bird in Massac, IL 31 Dec (KJM, JEM) and one from Fayette, IN 11 Feb (WHB). On 20 Dec, 8 Le Conte's Sparrows were recorded at G.FEA, including 6 by a single group (JC et al.). Four other reports of Le Conte's Sparrows included 3 birds in Jasper, IL 15 Dec (RES, CHL). A fine total of 203 Song Sparrows was logged in the Brookville L., IN area 11 Feb (WHB). Four Lincoln's Sparrow reports included birds 3 Dec (KRW) and 7 Dec (JS) in Chicago, 31 Dec at Merrett L. (KJM), and 16 Dec in Hamilton, IN (JC). A Harris's Sparrow was found in W. Terre Haute, IN 16 Dec (SLL), and another that appeared at a feeder in New Albany, IN 13 Jan (GD) lingered through 28 Feb. (m.o.) The Feb cold snap brought lots of Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings into the Region, including 1873 of the former into Greene, IN 21 Feb (LWS).

Remarkable was an ad. male Indigo Bunting in full alternate plumage in Gibson, IN 17 Dec (ph. CEM). Two other Indigo Buntings were at Merrett L., Massac, IL 31 Dec (JEM), and yet another was at Renl D. 16 Dec (KAM). Indiana's 7th Dec record of Dickcissel was furnished by 2 birds at G.FEA. 20 Dec (JC et al.), and its 5th Jan record was represented by one in Vigo 17-20 Jan (DP, MRB).

The largest reported blackbird concentrations came from Renl D. 16 Dec: 1,080,000 Red-winged Blackbirds (DMK, JEM) and 1,013,025 Common Grackles (KAM). A Great-tailed Grackle was reported but not detailed 22 Jan at Horseshoe L. (FRH). More Yellow-headed Blackbirds than usual were evident this winter, with Illinois birds represented by 2 in Clinton 10 Feb (DMK, JWE) and single birds 2 Dec in Winnebago (MK, DTW) and 4 Feb at Matthiessen S.P., La Salle (DJS). The 3rd Jan record of Yellow-headed Blackbird in Indiana was furnished by a first-year male in Hammond 31 Jan (ph. JB); it remained for many to see, and an ad. male appeared s. of Hawthorn 23 Feb (DRW et al.). An ad. male Bullock's Orioles visited the home of Rose Trabue in Austin, Scott, IN 1 Jan through the end of the period (MT, DG), while in neighboring Jefferson, an ad. female Audubon's Oriole—for which there are no U.S. records outside of Texas—appeared at a feeder approximately 24 Jan–15 Feb (p.o., BSCS, LL, ph., tDG et al.).

It was a bleak winter for the Orange-crowned Warbler in the Region. The 50 Purple Finches located 28 Dec in Rock Island, IL (KJM) provided the lone double-digit tally among a reduced number of reports. Just 5 Common Redpolls, all in Illinois, and 6 Pine Siskins were reported. A welcome sight was a flock of 35-40 Evening Grosbeaks in Bev. Sh. 16 Dec (AA, MM, CVW); it represented the first Indiana lakefront record in five years.


The contributions of many other individuals who were not explicitly cited were critical to the preparation of this report; we thank them all for their observations.

James D. Hengeveld, 6354 Southshore Drive Unionville, Indiana 47465, (jdhengeveld@indiana.edu)
Keith A. McMullen, 1405 DeSoto O'Fallon, Illinois 62269, (warbler7@sbcglobal.net)
Geoffrey A. Williamson 4046 North Clark Street, Unit K
Chicago, Illinois 60613 (geoffrey.williamson@comcast.net)

266
Western Great Lakes

Adam M. Byrne

The season started with cold temperatures but quickly transitioned to mild conditions that lingered through January. A change in the Polar Jet Stream then brought down frigid Arctic air for much of February. Minnesota reported below-average precipitation for December and January. Duluth actually had a brown Christmas; this northern outpost’s first significant snowfall did not occur until late February!

Observers were treated to many rarities, most impressive among them the multiple Slaty-backed Gulls in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Minnesota and Michigan reported American Three-toed Woodpeckers, Green-tailed Towhee, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Other highlights were Curve-billed Thrasher in Minnesota and Great-tailed Grackle in Wisconsin, while Michigan reported Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Bullock’s Oriole.

WATERFOWL

Rare mid-winter records for Minnesota were Greater White-fronted Geese in Olmsted 27 Dec–1 Jan (JWH) and Lac Qui Parle 12 Jan (BJU) and a Ross’s Goose in McLeod 16 Dec–18 Feb (DMF, FRRH). Single Ross’s Geese were also reported on 16 Dec in Rice, MN (RBW) and Dane, WI. Wisconsin reported numerous wintering Cackling Geese, with a peak of 21 in Iowal 12 Jan (AH). Minnesota’s Cackling Geese were scattered across 11 s. counties, while Michigan had singles on 16 Dec in Midland (JS, JZ) and Washtenaw (DC), 10 in Saginaw 18 Dec (DP), and 3 in Huron 7 Jan (JCD). Noteworthy in Minnesota were 2 Greater Scap in Duluth, St. Louis through 1 Jan (PHS), a female in Benton 5 Feb (HHD), and another in Hennepin through 17 Feb (m.ob.).

An imm. male King Eider was a pleasant surprise at Grand Haven, Ottawa, MI 21–22 Feb (CD, CF, FE, CP). Minnesota had a near-average 4 Harlequin Ducks on L. Superior, including 2 in Dec–Jan at Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis, with one through 18 Feb. Wisconsin reported singles from nine locations and 2 in Kenosha 6 Jan (PSc), while Michigan had one in Berrien 9 Dec (MJ) and up to 4 at Port Huron, St. Clair 29 Dec–3 Jan (ATC). Michigan reported good numbers of all three scoters. Wisconsin had lingering fall White-wingeds through 10 Dec in Douglas (PHS). In Minnesota, singles were present in Washington 3–11 Dec (m.ob.), in Lac Qui Parle 19 Dec (BJU), at Two Harbors, Lake through 28 Jan (JW), and at Duluth, St. Louis through 18 Feb (m.ob.). Exceptional for Minnesota was a Black Scoter on Ten Mile L., Cass 11 Dec (BAW et al.). Wisconsin reported low numbers of Long-tailed Ducks along L. Superior and singles inland in Cass/Morrison 4–1 Jan (BAM et al., RBJ) and in Washington 13–15 Jan (FEB, m.ob.). Wisconsin’s largest concentration was of 1000+ in Sheboygan 19 Dec (DT); the state also had an inland record of 2 on 8 Feb in Winnebago (DK). Wisconsin had 2 Barrow’s Goldeneyes on the Kenosha C.B.C., as well as singles in Milwaukee 24 Dec (MB) and counties, including an unusual inland record at Baw Beese L., Hillsdale (KJ). Rare in Michigan were Western Grebes in Chippewa 23 Dec (SH, JD, RJ); Berrien 22–28 Dec (PCW, G, p.a.), and Marquette 30 Dec (HV), as well as a Western/Clark’s 30 Dec in Kenosha (JL). A tardy American Bittern was found in Saginaw, MI 5 Dec (EPD). Michigan had late Great Egrets in Monroe 1 Dec and Wayne 3–4 Dec (WGP), and an odd lingering egret in Winnebago 10 Dec–14 Jan (MS). Wisconsin also had a tardy egret present through 8 Jan in Ozaukee (DG). Michigan had 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons in Monona 17 Dec (ATC), and at least 2 spent the winter in Wayne (WGP); Wisconsin had a late Black-crowned in Marquette 15 Dec.

A mid-winter Turkey Vulture in Walworth, WI 5–9 Jan (DD) was unusual. An Osprey on the Little Bay De Noc C.B.C., Delta, MI was very unexpected. Wisconsin had a lackluster season for Northern Goshawks, with only three reports statewide. Golden Eagles were reported in good numbers from all three states. Wisconsin had 4 different Gyrfalcons, most unusual being one patrolling fields in Grant 13 Dec (RH). Minnesota had ad. gray morphs near Hastings, Dakota 19 Jan–20 Feb, JRo, JPM, DAC, m.ob.) and at Duluth, St. Louis 3 Jan–16 Feb (DLE, PHS, m.ob.), both of these birds likely returning individuals from previous winters. Michigan’s only Gyrfalcon was in Marquette 27 Jan+ (RDR).

RAILS THROUGH JAEKERS

Wisconsin reported a Virginia Rail in Jefferson 10 Feb (MP). Michigan had 3 late Killdeer in Manistee 16 Dec (TG); more difficult to classify were 3 on 29 Jan (TB, MH) and up to 6 from 8–18 Feb (TB, PJU) in Berrien, one in Hillsdale 27 Feb (JR), and 2 in Van Buren 28 Feb (MHW). Wisconsin had up to 4 Purple Sandpipers through 1 Jan in Sheboygan (DT) and another in Racine 28 Dec (JD); Michigan had up to 2 at New Buffalo, Berrien 22–23 Dec (MH, KM), one in Muskegon 21 Dec–2 Jan (JP, PCC), one at Saugatuck, Allegan 2 Jan (RBB), and one in Macomb 9–15 Jan (RP, ET, m.ob.).

Laughing Gulls were found in Winnebago 23–24 Dec and Racine 7 Jan (EH), both Wisconsin. Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported good numbers of Thayer’s and Iceland Gulls. Minnesota reported 2 Iceland Gulls at Black Dog L., Dakota, a first-cycle bird 2 Dec (JPM, PHS, CLW) and a second-cycle bird 20 Dec–8 Jan (JPM, FEB, m.ob.), plus up to 2 ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Hennepin/Dakota through 16 Dec (m.ob.). Wisconsin reported 7 Lesser Black-backed from six counties, while Michigan had birds in 10 counties.

A first-cycle Great Black-backed Gull was
present intermittently in St. Louis, MN through 6 Jan (m.ob.). More than two weeks later than any previous Minnesota record was a Black-legged Kitiwake at L. Pepin, Wabasha 11-12 Jan (DB, JWH et al.). Michigan had a kitiwake in Berrien 13-17 Dec (TB, MH, m.ob.) and a Parasitic Jaeger in St. Clair 2 Dec (AJR).

**HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WARBLERS**

Wisconsin hosted the only Selasphorus hummingbird through 8 Dec in Green (JR). Michigan's only Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Grand Traverse, where they have been present for the past three years. Minnesota had record-high counts of 43 in Renville 13 Dec (PME) and 22 in Brown/Cottonwood 28 Jan (BTS), as well as reports from an additional nine counties; Wisconsin had seven reports from five counties. Minnesota reported below-average Snowy and Northern Hawk Owl numbers. Michigan had at least 10 Snowy Owls in seven counties and Wisconsin reported only 6 birds; neither state reported Northern Hawk Owl. Great Gray Owls were also in low numbers; Minnesota had birds in five counties, Wisconsin reported one in Shawano 16 Dec (RB) and 3 in Bayfield 15 Jan–21 Feb (RB), and Michigan had no reports. Minnesota had more Short-eared Owl reports than normal, including up to 24 wintering in Willmar, 16 wintering in Anoka, and another 16 on the Warren C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide MJM). Michigan reported a maximum of 10 Short-eareds from 4 Dec–10 Jan in Soginaw (CS, LA, BG, m.ob.). A Boreal Owl was a rare find on the Little Bay de Noc C.B.C., Delta, MI (JF, MB).

Michigan had Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Lac Qui Parle 27 Dec (BJU), Dolata 14 Jan (MR), and Houson 6 Feb (AS); Michigan reported at least 7 sapsuckers from six counties. American Three-toed Woodpeckers were found in 10 Minnesota counties, with the southernmost records at the Pine/Carlin line 20–27 Dec (MCA, KS&CR) and in Pine 1–11 Feb (JMP). Michigan's last American Three-toed Woodpecker report was in 2002, so 2 females through 21 Dec in Kewenaw (CP, ZG, JY, m.ob.), one in Alger 28 Dec (SCH, JHo), and one in Marquette 20 Feb+ (RDR) were exceptional. Michigan's 3rd Vermilion Flycatcher lingered through 1 Dec and was found dead on 2 Dec in Marquette (m.ob.). The fall's Gray Jay irruption tapered off by Dec, leaving only a few strays in nw. Minnesota. A skittish Black-billed Magpie frequented a deer carcass in Kewenaw, MI 30 Dec–10 Jan (ZG, JK, m.ob.). Minnesota reported 5 Carolina Wrens from three counties, while the species was much more numerous in both Wisconsin and Michigan. The only Marsh Wrens were 2 in Monroe 17 Dec (ATC) and a very northerly bird in Marquette 11 Jan (ZG), both Michigan. Michigan reported Ruby-crowned Kinglets from six counties.

A female Mountain Bluebird was in Dakota, MN 18-30 Jan (JPM, DAC, m.ob.). Townsend Mockingbird in Alger 20 Dec (NFC), while Minnesota had late Jan reports in Hennepin and Lac Qui Parle. Michigan had Brown Thrashers in Berrien 17 Dec (JTW, m.ob.) and Kalamazoo 6-23 Feb (RLI, LS&MW). Wisconsin had thrashers in Dunn 20 Dec (MM), Richland 27 Dec (JC), and Dane 29 Jan (BS), while Minnesota had reports from Itasca 7 Dec (EEO), Clay 16 Dec (fide JM), and Dakota 11 Jan (R&CP). Minnesota's 4th Curve-billed Thrasher, reportedly present since Aug, lingered through 3 Dec at Nashwauk, Itasca (R&LL, p.a.).

Winter American Pipits are becoming almost commonplace in Michigan; this year's reports were one on 5 Dec and 4 on 22 Feb, both in Wayne (ATC), and up to 2 in Berrien 10-18 Feb (DCV, TB). With only three Bohemian Waxwing reports statewide, this was one of Wisconsin's poorest winters for this species in decades. Outstanding was a well-documented Yellow Warbler at Belle Isle, Wayne, MI 27-28 Dec (AD, N&S&G). A Black-throated Gray Warbler at Grand Rapids, Kent 17-20 Dec (CP) was found dead 21 Dec, providing Michigan its 6th record. A Pine Warbler wintered at a feeder in Outagamie, WI (DT), while Minnesota had a Pine Warbler at a feeder on the Duluth C.B.C., St. Louis 16 Dec (KRE). A Prairie Warbler lingered through 2 Dec in Milwaukee, WI (BA), while Michigan had a Common Yellowthroat in Wayne 17 Dec (ATC).

**TANAGERS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES**

Michigan had a rare winter tanager duo: a Summer Tanager lingering through 3 Dec at Grand Marais (TBI, JRA, KZ) and a Western Tanager 6-9 Jan at Munising (RE, SCH), both Alger. Providing Minnesota's 3rd winter record and 5th overall was a banded Green-tailed Towhee that wintered at Mountain Lake, Cottonwood (R&DG, EDS, DAC, m.ob.); photographs documented the band number, and it was eventually determined that this individual was banded as an ASY male at Thunder Cape B.O., Ontario 10 Jun 2006! Not to be outdone, Michigan hosted its 5th winter and 9th overall Green-tailed Towhee in Marquette (LFT, m.ob.). Minnesota reported a male Spotted Towhee in Mower 6-26 Feb (J&S, RNS) and another in Scott 29 Jan–2 Feb. Wisconsin had Eastern Towhees in Grant 26 Dec (DKO) and an amazing bird in n. Iron 15 Jan+ (RB), while Michigan had a towhee in Bay 29 Jan+ (G&SEP) and 4 in early Feb in Berrien (JHD, TB). Chipping Sparrows were present in St. Croix, WI 3 Jan+ (MRS), Ramsey, MN 21-27 Jan (SKE), Van Buren, MI 26 Feb (MHW), and Kalamazoo, MI 28 Feb (RS). Minnesota re-
ported a Clay-colored Sparrow, accidental in winter, at a feeder in Olmsted 12 Feb (WHJ) and a female/fmm. Lark Bunting near Duluth Airport, St. Louis 11 Dec (DAG, KRE, JWL). Michigan had Harris's Sparrows at Hastings, Barry 10 Dec (AK) and Traverse City, Grand Traverse 19 Feb. A phenomenal flock of 10,000 Snow Buntings was present in Landglade, WI 3-4 Jan (DT, TP). Rare in Michigan were 2 different Indigo Buntings, singles in Marquette 16 Dec (QJ) and Houghton 16 Dec—early Jan (O. Mills, J. Kaplan).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at a feeder in Ashland, WI 5-21 Dec (RB). Marking the mild winter was a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Nicotte 12 Dec (RMD) and at least 2 in Lac Qui Parle 31 Dec and 17 Jan (BJU). Michigan birders reported Rusty Blackbirds from six s. counties and Beltrami, Cass, Lake, and Otter Trail in the north. Wisconsin had Rusty Blackbirds in Waukesha 16 Dec (DG) and Rock 13 Jan (QV), while Michigan's only report was 5 on 17 Dec in Monroe (ATC). Wisconsin's first Great-tailed Grackle was present near Horicon Marsh, Dodge 31 Jan. (QB, m. ob.). A potential 5th state record was a Bullock's Oriole in Bangor Twp., Bay 3 Dec (GSEP, M&SW, p.a.). Minnesota reported a late ad. male Baltimore Oriole at Rochester, Olmsted 23 Dec (WJK).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were found in both Minnesota and Michigan. Minnesota had 3 of the "interior form" winter near Cloquet, Carlton (MS, m. ob.), while Michigan had its 5th state record at L'Anse, Baraga 17 Dec (+Mie, CP JK, m. ob.). Multiple Hoary Redpoll reports came from eight n. counties in Minnesota, while Michigan and Wisconsin had only singles in Marquette 5 Jan (B) and Iron 22 Jan (RB), respectively. Observers continue to comment on the declining presence of Evening Grosbeaks. Wisconsin reported a peak of 155 in Ashland 29 Jan (ASH), while Minnesota's high counts were only 40 in Attin 3 Dec (KS&CR) and 50 in Koochiching 28 Dec (TC). Minnesota's 6th Eurasian Tree Sparrow sporadically visited a feeder at Fergus Falls, Otter Tail 15 Dec—22 Jan (S&DE, DS&T); Michigan's 3rd made a return visit to a feeder at Topaz, Otsego 23 Dec—29 Jan (KJ, RSe).

Corrigenda: The 6 Ross's Geese reported on 22 Feb at Paw Paw L., Berrien included in the winter 2005-2006 report were not accepted by the Michigan records committee. Also in that report, the Northern Hawk Owl at Soo Junction should be in Luce, not Chipewa.


Adam M. Byrne, 11771 Rachel Lane
DeWitt, Michigan 48820, (byrneam@gmail.com)

NEW FROM ABA SALES!

A Birder's Guide to Florida
by Bill Pranty, published 2005; 672 pages; paper (lay-flat)

Item #175
ABA Member Price: $20.76
(List $25.95)

North American birders favor Florida as the place to see species not found elsewhere in the US or Canada, such as Snail Kite, Short-tailed Hawk, Black-headed Parakeet, Mangrove Cuckoo, Black-whiskered Vireo, or Florida Scrub-Jay. These are but a few of the Florida specialties that make a trip to the Sunshine State such an exciting adventure for birders. More than 330 birding sites are described, and more than 400 species accounts are now included.

A Birder's Guide to Michigan
by Allen Charter and Jerry Ziarno, published 2004; 672 pages; paper (lay-flat)

Item #288
ABA Member Price: $23.16
(List $28.95)

A Birder’s Guide to Southeastern Arizona
by Richard Cachar Taylor, revised 2005; 384 pages; paper (lay-flat)

Item #102
ABA Member Price: $19.96
(List $24.95)

Call to Order

800/634-7736

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2

269
Iowa & Missouri

While Iowans basked in the guilt pleasure of global warming during December, Missouri started the season under a foot of snow. Either way, it was still a balmy month, averaging about the 13th warmest on record. The first half of January remained warmer than usual, with the predictable effect on those species inclined to linger January finished with more normal temperatures, but it hardly seemed normal—Missouri was hit with snow and a severe ice storm, while Iowa endured repeated snowfalls. February was an unpleasant con-

that Iowa's climatologists declared the most destructive in 40 years. While most of the month hosted few birds and fewer birders, the intrepid and/or foolhardy braved ice and snow to chronicle the return of waterfowl during the middle of the month in Missouri and a few days later in Iowa. Overall, it was pretty much an average year for waterfowl, raptors, gulls, sparrows, and, unfortunately, winter finches, with noteworthy exceptions sprinkled throughout.

Abbreviations: R.M.B.S. (Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, St. Charles, MO); S.L.N.W.R. (Swan Lake N.W.R., Charlton, MO); S.C.N.W.R. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO).

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese stayed in good numbers as long as possible, e.g. 104 in Poweshiek, IA 11 Jan (MP) and 800 in St. Louis 15 Jan (JE), while Snow Geese reached 203,000 at S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan and 300,000 at S.L.N.W.R. 26 Feb, both usual areas of concentration. A handful of single Ross's Geese departed Iowa by early Jan; Missouri had midwinter reports of 2 at S.C.N.W.R. 10 Jan (TR) and 2 in Barton 11 Feb (LB, CB); returning were 28 at S.C.N.W.R. 27 Feb (TR), Cackling Geese remained in Iowa in Dec in good numbers, e.g. 531 at Raubun Res., Appanoose 14 Mar.

Iowa's third or fourth record of Gyrfalcon was seen by many in Boone County, Iowa on 28 January (here)-5 February 2007. Photograph by Reid Allen.

Two Harlequin Ducks spent the winter season (here 9 February 2007) through the season in Scott County, Iowa. Photograph by Reid Allen.

Dec (RLC), but Missouri only reported small numbers throughout the season. Canada Geese peaked at 12,275 at S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan (FD). Mute Swans were scarce, although there were up to 7 in mid-Feb in Scott, IA (SF; Dec (RLC), but Missouri only reported small numbers throughout the season. Canada Geese peaked at 12,275 at S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan (FD). Mute Swans were scarce, although there were up to 7 in mid-Feb in Scott, IA (SF; Dec (RLC), but Missouri only reported small numbers throughout the season. Canada Geese peaked at 12,275 at S.C.N.W.R. 3 Jan (FD). Mute Swans were scarce, although there were up to 7 in mid-Feb in Scott, IA (SF;}

Robert Cecil

two Harlequin Ducks spent the winter season (here 9 February 2007) through the season in Scott County, Iowa. Photograph by Reid Allen.
Jan (1TJ, m.ob.) and 2 at Pool 19 on 18-19 Dec, declining to one 20 Jan (SJD). Long-tailed Ducks appeared in above-average numbers in Iowa, with peaks of 4 in Red Rock Res. 22 Dec (SJD, AB) and 8 at Pool 19 on 20 Jan (SJD); there were up to 4 in Missouri, all in its n. half. Unexpected was a Barrow’s Golden-eye at a Decatur, IA farm pond 11 Jan (SNM, tBB, TJL). Common Merganser concentrations in Iowa included 14,000 at Red Rock Res. 13 Dec (AB) and 5300 at Saylerville Res. 17 Dec (SJD). Unusual were mid-winter Red-breasted Merganser reports from Iowa, including one in Story 7 Jan (WO), 2 in Decatur 1-12 Jan (JRL, NJM, BBA), 4 in Polk on 14 Jan and 7 at Pool 19 on 3 Feb (SJD); and 4 at R.M.B.S. 22 Jan (JE).

**LOONS THROUGH GULLS**

A Common Loon was late at Thomas Hill Res., Randolph 5 Jan (B), AF. There were 140 Horned Grebes at Stockton Res., Dade, MO 23 Dec (MR); early was one at Cedar L., Linn, IA 26-27 Feb (DP, BS). Other late grebe reports included a Red-necked at Red Rock Res. 5 Dec (ph. JF) and a Western at Fellow’s L., Greene, MO 11 Feb (LB, GS, CB). Continuing a trend, American White Pelicans are trying to winter in Iowa, e.g., 2 at Otumwa 20 Jan (SJD), one at Iowa City 24 Jan (JFL), and 3 at Lock and Dam 19 on 3 Feb (SJD). Continuing a Missouri trend of winter Great Egrets, one was noteworthy on 21 Jan at Otter Slough C.A., Stoddard (JE). In Iowa, Black-crowned Night-Herons did not return to Cedar L., ending the streak at eight consecutive years. Uncharacteristically, Iowa Cooper’s Hawk reports outnumbered Sharp-shinned by 3 to 1; Northern Goshawk, with five Iowa reports, appeared in typical numbers, but none made it to Missouri. Buteos had a normal year, and 5 Golden Eagles, all from Iowa, was also normal. A Boone, IA Gyr falcon (ph. RJA, 1FJA, tB, tGW) brought out birders 28 Jan-5 Feb and generated discussions about its provenance; it was accepted unanimously by the B.R.C. Prairie Falcons made five Iowa and seven Missouri appearances; the most eastly by far was at Columbia Bottoms C.A., St. Louis 7 Jan (BR). At least 7 Merlins returned to their winter roost at Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines (JG, RC), and numbers elsewhere were impressive: 11 from Missouri and 17 from Iowa in all.

The winter ral hotspot continues to be the Columbia, MO, S.T.P. near McBaine, Boone, with 7 Virginiacs and 2 Soraos there 16 Dec (JE). There were 7 Sandhill Cranes on at S.C.N.W.R. 6 Dec (TR); unusual were mid-winter reports from n. Iowa, including one in Cherokee 2 Jan (DB), one in Floyd 13 Jan (JG, SJD), and 5 in O’Brien 2-23 Feb (fide DK, LS). Interesting shorebird reports from Missouri included 2 Least Sandpipers at Winfield Slough, Lincoln 10 Dec (JE), a Baird’s Sandpiper at Big Lake S.P., Holt, MO 14 Dec (ph. tB), a 2nd state record in winter), and a Dunlin at Otter Slough C.A., Stoddard 21 Jan (JE). An ad. Franklin’s Gull was reported at R.M.B.S. 27 Jan and 13 Feb (DaR), while Bonaparte’s Gulls peaked at 365 at Stockton Res., MO (Mr). In addition to the Franklin’s Gull report, R.M.B.S. hosted the rest of Missouri’s best gull reports, including at least 2 Thayer’s Gulls (JU, BR), at least 4 Iceland Gulls (BR, JE, MT), at least 4 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (JE, JU, BR), 2 Glaucous Gulls (JE, DR, JU), and 3 Great Black-backed Gulls (JE, BR). In Iowa, ad. Thayer’s Gulls outnumbered first-year birds by 16 to 7; only a few birds in other plumages were reported. An Iceland Gull at Lock and Dam 15 on 16 Jan (SF) was an excellent find, as was a juv. on 3 Feb at Lock and Dam 19 (SJD) Lesser Black-backed Gulls peaked at 6 at Saylerville Res. 6 Jan (SJD, JG) and 3 during the season at Scott (SF, DoR). Exceptional was Iowa’s 2nd Slaty-backed Gull, an ad. at Lake Manawa S.P. 17-23 Dec (LP, BR, ph. AB, ph. JG, ph. tAJ). Adding some additional spice was a juv. Black-legged Kittiwake at Saylerville Res. 1 Dec-14 Jan (ph. tJG, AB, SJD, m.ob.).

**DOVES THROUGH PIPITS**

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue their expansion in both states, and in Iowa they set a new C.B.C. record. Among four Missouri reports of Greater Roadrunner, the most northeasterly was one in Wright 26 Dec (SM). Missouri reports of Barn Owl included singles in Barton 3 Jan and Newton 20 Jan (LH). Snowy Owls made it to nw. Missouri, with one in Livingston 7 Dec (DR) and another in Andrew 12 Dec (FD); Iowa had 11 additional reports from throughout the season. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls appeared in about average numbers in Missouri and above-average numbers in Iowa. Northern Saw-whel Owls made it to ne. Missouri, with 2 at North Sever C.A., Knox 27 Feb (PH), Iowa had 11 reports. Missouri continued its string of winter hummingbirds, with individuals present throughout the season: an imm or female Rufous Hummingbird in Cape Girardeau (ph. T1C, BE) and single Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbirds at Rolla, Phelps (ph. tGM, tNY) and through the season in Iron, MO (tNY).

Iowa’s first Red-breasted Sapsucker was completely unexpected on 4 Dec near Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie (ph. AF). There were 4 Loggerhead Shrikes in s. Iowa during the season, while Northern Shrikes visited in about normal numbers, including one in Holt, MO 14 Dec (B) and another in Clay, MO 26 Feb (BF). Black-billed Magpie numbers may be growing at Broken Kettle Grassland, Plymouth, IA, where there were 7 on 6 Jan (GV, PR). Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared in small numbers in both states, with an exception being 15 in Polk, IA 1 Dec (DT). A lingering Sedge Wren was at Prairie S.P., Barbon 23 Dec (MR), and Marsh Wrens were reported from the Red Rock Res. and Sioux City, IA C.B.C.s. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were also found on two Iowa counties: Saylerville Res. and Taylor. Townsend’s Solitaires, recently upgraded to Regular status in Iowa, were represented by 4 individuals: 2-23 Jan in Decatur (TSM, BDB, tJL), 6-28 Jan in O’Brien (LS), 11-20 Jan at Hawkeye W.A., Johnson (DF, CE, CC), and 31 Jan in Allamakeek (DK). American Robins were found in large numbers throughout Iowa and were reported in record numbers from its C.B.C.s; Iowa also hosted 2 Varied Thrushes: 6-28 Feb in Mason City (PH, CF) and 27-28 Feb in Sioux City (BH, PR). Unusual mimid reports included a Gray Catbird at Lake of Three Fires S.P., Taylor, IA 30 Dec, where one was found last year (KN). Northern Mockingbirds in n. Iowa—e.g., 2 in Cherokee 12 Dec-28 Jan
WARBLERS THROUGH SISKINS

Pine Warblers were in two S. Missouri localities: in Joplin 3 Jan (LH) and at Cape Girardeau 15-28 Feb (SJ). More unusual was an Ovenbird on the Cedar Falls—Waterloo, IA C.B.C., the state’s 3rd winter report in four years. Brightening up a Missouri winter was a Western Tanager in St. Louis 21-28 Jan (ph., *PM, *CM, *JM, m.ob.). Spotted Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow appeared in their usual small numbers in both states. Missouri’s 2nd winter season Lark Bunting in the past three years was in Stoddard 17 Jan–8 Feb (BL, *BR, BJ, JE). There were four reports totaling 6 Le Conte’s Sparrows in S. Missouri. Lapland Longspurs reached their highest numbers in Missouri at 1000 on 17 Feb in St. Louis (DrO) Smith’s Longspurs were noted 2 Dec in Clay, MO (BF) and 26 Feb at S.L.N.W.F. (SK). Snow Buntings made a poor showing overall, the most southerly was one at R.M.B.S. 2 Dec (JE). Unprecedented was Iowa’s first winter Indigo Bunting, an immature at Ames 31 Dec (ph., *SMa, ph. SJ). Interesting were 12 Brewer’s Blackbirds (just one a female) in Decatur, IA 19 Jan–4 Feb (BB). There were 20 Great-tailed Grackles in Warren, IA 15 Feb (AJ), down from recent years’ counts. A first-year Baltimore Oriole feeding on peanut butter and suet was a surprise in Jefferson, MO 19 Jan (†WG).

The most Purple Finches by far were 40 in Boone, MO from Dec-Feb (BJ), among a handful of other reports; Iowa had 15 reports, almost all of one to 4 birds. The only crossbill reports were of Reds: 4 at Busch Memorial C.A., St. Charles 15-16 Dec (JU, JE), one on the Taylor, IA C.B.C., and 4 at Cedar Rapids, IA 4 Jan (BS). A Common Redpoll appeared in s.-cen. Missouri in Maries 15-23 Jan (AN); there were five other reports of one to 3 birds in the Region. A Hoary Redpoll greatly increased visits to Brenton Arboretum in Story, IA 16 Dec–26 Jan (+TL, ph., †Ria, †Pla, m.ob.). Pine Siskins were found only at six Iowa locations. A Eurasian Tree Sparrow in Washington, IA 16 Jan (DP) marks a westerly movement for this species in Iowa.

Contributors (state compilers in boldface): Pam Allen, Reed Allen, Ben Baldwin, Ellen Bell, Lisa Berger, Dick Bierman, Aaron Brees, Bob Brown (Bob), Charlie Burwick, Chris Caster, Robert Cecil, Lanny Chambers, Ray Cummings, Stephen J Dinsmore, Frank Dur- bian, Joe Eades, Bill Eddleman, Chris Edwards, Carolyn Fischer, Bob Fisher, Andrew Forbes, Jim Forde, Steve Freed, Jim Fuller (JLF), Wally George, Jay Gilliam, Patrick Harrison (PHa), Lawrence Herbert, Paul Hentzel, Bill Huser, Brad Jacobs, Ann Johnson, Steven Juhlin, Steve Kinder, Darwin Koenig, Tom Lawson, Bob Lewis, Jeff Livingston, Charlene Malone, Jim Malone, Steve Maloy (Sma), Sherry McGowan, Paul McKenzie, Nathan Miller, Gary Mueller, Adam Nesbit, Kelly Norris, Loren Padelford, Babs Padelford, Diane Pesek, Andrew Peters, Mark Proescholdt, Bill Reeves, Dennis Ritter (DR), Mark Robins- don, Don Robinson (DrO), Tommie Rogers, David Rogles (DrO), Paul Roisen, Bill Rowe, Bill Scheible, Lee Schoenewe, Greg Swick, Mike Thelen, Dennis Thompson, Josh Ullman, Gerald Von Ehwegen, Edge Wade, Neal Young.

Robert Cecil, 1315 41st Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50311, (wewarb@aol.com)
The winter of 2006-2007 was one of the most variable on record in the Region. Temperatures were warmer than normal in December and January, in fact, January was the warmest month on record at Louisville. However, temperatures quickly transitioned to colder than normal in February. The frigid weather of early to mid-February was the coldest that the Region had experienced in several years and was responsible for a number of observations of note scattered throughout the following summary. Precipitation was overall below normal, with virtually no snow cover recorded outside of a two-week period in north-central Kentucky in early to mid-February.

 Rarity highlights included a Neotropic Cormorant, Sabine's Gull, returning Spotted Towhee, and Scott's Oriole in Kentucky and White-faced Ibis and two Common Redpolls in Tennessee. With natural and ornamental food crops seemingly in below-average supply, it was not a good winter for eaters of berries, cones, or mast, although Red-headed Woodpeckers were present in good numbers in the western portion of the Region. Northern finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches were nearly absent, with only a few Purple Finches and nuthatches present and virtually no Pine Siskins.

Abbreviations: Ballard W.M.A. (Ballard, KY); Ensley (Ensley Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, in sw. Shelby, TN); Jonathan Creek (embayment of Kentucky L., Marshall, KY); Kentucky Dam (at n. end of Kentucky L., Livingston/Marshall, KY); Long Point (Long Point Unit Redfoot N.W.R., Fulton, KY); Pace Point (Pace Point, Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN); Sauерheber (Sauерheber Unit Moulis W.M.A., Henderson, KY); Stander Gap (Stander Gap Marsh, Hamilton, TN).

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were again numerous in the w. portion of the Region this winter, with peak counts including a new Kentucky high count of 13,250 in the vicinity of Long Point 3 Jan (GP), 7000 at Sauerheber 29 Jan (MM), and 3000-4000 at Ballard W.M.A. during the first week of Feb (CW). Snow Geese were found in large numbers during early Feb, with 100,000 in the vicinity of Ballard W.M.A. and an additional 20,000 along the Mississippi R., KY, 10,000 along the lower Ohio R., KY 6 Feb (PH), and 15,000 at Sauerheber during the first week of Feb (MM). A Ross's Goose x Snow Goose hybrid was reported in w. Fulton, KY 22 Feb (DR, HC). An exceptionally high count of 95 Ross's Geese was made in w. Fulton, KY 22 Feb (DR, HC). There were a few reports of Cackling Geese in Kentucky, including 2 in Fulton 1 Dec (BPa, NM, KL, DW), 15-20 in Oldham 29 Jan (BPa); one in Rockcastle 3 Feb (RDr); and 2 in Hardin 10 Feb (RHe). All five regular goose species were reported in well above-average numbers from e. Tennessee, including reports of Cackling Geese from two locations. In w. Tennessee, as many as 31 Cackling Geese were at Shelby Farms, Memphis, TN 9 Dec-24 Feb (JW, JRW). One to 12 Mute Swans were reported at 11 Kentucky and three Tennessee locales during the season. The wintering flock of Tundra Swans at Sauerheber peaked at 42 birds 29 Jan (MM); otherwise, 5 were on the Ohio R., Bracken, KY 18 Feb (BSt, CBC), and single immns. were reported in Pulaski, KY 7 Dec (ph. RDr), at Bristol, TN 13 Dec-2 Mar (RK, m.ob.), on L. Cumberland, Russell, KY 15 Feb (ph. RDr), and on Middlebrook L., Sullivan, TN 16 Feb (DM).

A Blue-winged Teal wintered in Washington, TN (RK, DH). The Feb cold spell brought the highest counts of Canvasbacks to the Ohio R. in Kentucky in many years, including 300 in Union 10 Feb (CC); up to 240+ at and upstream from Louisville 17-19 Feb (DR, RDr et al); and 140 in Bracken 19 Feb (DR, RDr, LM). Redheads also showed up in good numbers at the same time, with 50 on the Ohio R., Jefferson, KY (BPa) and 110 on the Ohio R., Bracken, KY (RDr, LM), both 19 Feb. The cold spell also resulted in some impressive diving duck tallies from Kentucky L., Marshall, KY, where the following peak counts were reported 21 Feb (DR): 2850 Greater Scaup (new state high count), 5000+ Lesser Scaup, and 9235 Common Goldeneyes (new state high count). Some 11,400 Lesser Scaup counted on L. Barkley, Lyon, KY 21 Feb (DR, HC) represented a new state high count.

Single Surf Scoters were present at Cane Creek Park, Putnam, TN 27 Dec (SJ), in Hamilton, TN 18 Feb (KC, DJ), on the Ohio R., Bracken, KY 18-19 Feb (BSt et al), and in se. Muhlenberg, KY 28 Feb (BPa et al.). It was the best year in a long time for White-winged Scoters, with one to 3 reported at four Kentucky locales 29 Dec-27 Feb and an astonishing total of 21 reported from eight Tennessee locales 3 Dec-27 Feb. Single ad. male Black Scoters at Redfoot L., Lape, TN 15 Dec (JRW) and at Ballard W.M.A. 18-21 Dec (ph.RS, et al) were the only Blacks reported during the period. A female Long-tailed Duck was present on the Ohio R. upstream from Louisville 18-19 Feb (ph. T&C et al); a male was in Bristol, TN 15 Feb (RC, m.ob.). One to 20 Common Mergansers were reported at a dozen Kentucky sites, mostly during mid-Feb; they were also reported in above-average numbers in Tennessee. A count of 1000 Red-breasted Mergansers at Pace Point 15 Feb (MT) was noteworthy.

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

There were two reports of Red-throated Loon in Kentucky: one on Kentucky L., Marshall 11 Feb (ph. DR, TD) and one at Barren River L. 16-18 Feb (ph. DR, BPa). A juven. Pacific Loon on L. Barkley, Lyon 4 Dec (BL) was the only one reported in Kentucky; likewise, one
at Pace Point, 15 Feb (MT) provided the sole Tennessee report. A few Common Loons lingered through the winter in Kentucky; a count of 50–60 on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 21 Feb (DR) probably included some early migrants. There were two reports of Red-necked Grebe in Kentucky: one at Green River L., Taylor 29 Dec and 2 Jan (ph. BPa, AC, RDN) and one on the Ohio R., Bracken 19 Feb (ph. DR). For the 2nd winter in a row, a Red-necked Grebe and 2 Western Grebes were at Pace Point, this year on 15 Feb (MT). Two Red-necked Grebes were also at Reelfoot L. during the C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide MG). There were four reports of Eared Grebe in Kentucky: one in Muhlenberg 3–9 Dec (ph. DR et al) and again (possibly the same individual) 28 Feb (ph. BPa, ph. DR); one on Kentucky L., Caldwell 3 Jan (HC, WVe); and one on Kentucky L., Marshall 11 Feb (DR, TD). Up to 8 Eareds were present at their regular wintering location at S. Holston L., Sullivan, TN during the period (fide RK); one on the Tennessee R., Hamilton, TN 26–27 Feb (KC, m.ob.) constituted a first county record. Small or moderate numbers of American White Pelicans lingered on the lakes in the w. portion of the Region through the winter. Quite unexpected was a Neotropic Cormorant accompanying 3 Double-crested cormorants in Muhlenberg, KY 28 Feb (ph., tBPa, ph. DR); late in the day, the 4 birds headed off northward...one has to wonder where that bird will end up! A Great White Heron was on the Little R. near Townsend, Blount, TN 5 Dec–11 Jan (ph. WB); most of the handful of Regional records of this rare taxon have occurred in e. Tennessee over the past 15 years, including five from Sullivan. Great Egrets were reported widely across Tennessee, with 9 reported from six locations, in addition to an impressive 23 at Robco L.

Returning Ospreys again set record-early dates, with single birds at the Tennessee R., Hamilton, TN 24 Feb (CD), Knox, TN 27 Feb (SHo), Greene, TN 28 Feb (DM), and L. Barkley, Trigg, KY 28 Feb (HC). One found during the Knoxville C.B.C. 30 Dec and one in Hawkins, TN 1 Feb (SHu) were likely wintering. There were several reports of interesting Red-tailed Hawks: a dark- or intermediate-morph Harlan’s in Rocheastle, KY 8 & 23 Dec (ph. RDN); a dark-morph calurus in Pulaski, KY 17 Dec (RDN); a light-morph ad. calurus in s. Warren 8 Jan for at least the 3rd year in a row (DR); and a dark- or intermediate-morph Harlan’s in Pulaski 27 Jan (TRD). One to 2 Rough-legged Hawks were noted at several Kentucky sites through the period; the lone report from Tennessee was from Gibson 7 Dec (MG). One to 3 Golden Eagles were reported at six Kentucky and three Tennessee sites 3 Dec–18 Feb, an above-average showing. It was another decent winter for Merlins, with single birds (possibly 2 in one instance) reported at nine Kentucky and seven Tennessee sites during the period. A Peregrine Falcon was at a recent wintering site in Washington, TN (RK); a pair around the regular nesting location below Chickamauga Dam, Hamilton, TN was seen copulating 4 Feb (fide KC). In w. Tennessee, 2 birds were seen on three occasions at Ensey 6 Jan (JRW), in Memphis 8 Jan (KD), and at Paris Landing S.P., Henry 15 Feb (MT).

Six Virginia Rails were heard at three sites in se. Muhlenberg, KY 30 Dec (BPa, AC); 3, plus a Sora, were reported on the Savannah, TN C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide WRP). Virginia Rails were present at Stonewall Gap throughout the period, with a high of 13 on the Chattanooga C.B.C. 16 Dec (DPa); a Sora was also there 26 Feb (ph. JEvV). Southbound flocks of Sandhill Cranes continued through the C.B.C. period, with one to 60 reported on eight Kentucky counts; the mild weather that continued into Jan resulted in a large number of birds short-stopping in w. Hardin, KY without proceeding farther; the peak count at this locale was a new state high count of 6000 estimated there 30 Jan (DR). The cold weather of early Feb forced most to retreat a bit farther southward, but as soon as the cold weather broke during the 3rd week of the month, birds were moving northward in full force, with numerous flocks reported during the last week of the month.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS**

One or 2 Spotted Sandpipers wintered in Kingsport, Sullivan, TN (RP, m.ob.). Early or vagrant shorebirds included a Greater Yellowlegs in Todd, KY 21 Jan (ph. DR, MB); 3 Lesser Yellowlegs at Sevierheir 24 Feb (HC, ME, RDN); a Greater Yellowlegs at Rankin Bottoms, Cochee, TN 26 Feb (MS); and a Pectoral Sandpiper in s. Warren, KY 26 Feb (DR). Single late Greater Yellowlegs were at Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mts. N.P., Sevier, TN 14 Nov–13 Dec (WB) and Ensey 9 Dec (MTOS).
A tardy Western Sandpiper was present at Jonathan Creek 15 Dec (HC, BH). A few Least Sandpipers were seen off and on in W. Kentucky during the period, but they disappeared during the cold spell of Feb; the peak count was 109 at Jonathan Creek 29 Jan (BH).

A first-year Franklin’s Gull was in Pulaski, KY 1 Dec (ph. RDn). The mild early winter period entitled good numbers of Bonaparte’s Gulls to linger into midwinter in the Region, with 7000-10,000 estimated on Kentucky L., KY 11 Feb (DR, TD). It was an odd winter for Ring-billed Gulls, with below-average numbers reported across the Region prior to the cold snap in early Feb; however, up to 40,000 may have been present on Kentucky L., KY 11 Feb (DR, TD). Greatest numbers of Herring Gulls occurred during the Feb cold snap, with peak counts including several hundred at Kentucky Dam 6-7 Feb (BPa); 89 on the Ohio R. at Covington, Kenton, KY 15 Feb (FR); at least 105 at Cave Run L., Rowan, KY 16 Feb (BPa); 200+ in the vicinity of Marshall Dam on the Ohio R., Gallatin, KY 18 Feb (DR, RDv); and 415+ in the vicinity of Meldahl Dam on the Ohio R., Bracken, KY 19 Feb (DR, RDv, LM). The only reports of Thayer’s Gull were of an ad. below Kentucky Dam 7 & 10 Feb (ph. BPa et al.), an ad. at Barkley Dam 21 Feb (DR, HC), and a first-winter bird in Lake, TN 2-9 Dec (TW et al.). A first-winter Iceland Gull was at Pace Point 7 Feb (MT). A handful of reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull came from the lakes in the w. portion of the Region; however, the Feb cold snap brought reports of one to 2 on the middle Ohio R., KY where county firsts were reported for Gallatin (ph. DR, RDv) and Jefferson (JBr, PB, ph. BPa), 18 and 19 Feb, respectively. There were two reports of Great Black-backed Gull, a second-year bird below Kentucky Dam 6-7 Feb (ph. BPa) and 2 first-year birds over Markland Dam on the Ohio R., Gallatin, KY 18 Feb (DR, RDv). One of the highlights of the season was a juv. Sabine’s Gull at L. Barkley, Lyon, KY 16 Dec–3 Jan (vt. SW, et al.), a species exceedingly rare in winter anywhere in North America. Small numbers of Forster’s Terns were reported throughout w. Tennessee during the season, peaking at an unusually high 50+ at Lick Creek WMA, Benton, TN 3 Dec (MT). Two were in Marion, TN during the Hickjacket Lake C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide KC).

**OWLS THROUGH FINCHES**

European Collared-Doves are still scarce in e. Tennessee n. of Chattanooga, so reports from Washington (DH) and Carter (TM) were noteworthy, as was a first county record for Clay (BHS). The Inca Dove in Hamblen, TN lingered through 14 Dec (BBn). Two to 4 Long-eared Owls in Muhlenberg, KY during the period (BPa et al.) were the only ones reported in the Region. It was a better winter for Short-eared Owls, with one to 10 reported at seven Kentucky and four Tennessee sites during the period; one in Union, TN 24 Feb (CC) was a county first. The only report of a Northern Saw-whet Owl in Kentucky was of one heard in McCrory 3 Jan (RDn, JD); in Tennessee, one in Pickett S.P., Fentress, TN (JF) and one on the Bristol C.B.C. 31 Dec (JM) were the only reports away from Roan Mt., a regular breeding area.

The number of winter hummingbirds in the Region was somewhat reduced this year, with fewer oddities in the mix. Red-headed Woodpeckers were numerous in bottomland forests of the w. portion of the Region again this winter; they were especially conspicuous at Ballard WMA and in Land Between the Lakes N.R.A. Vireos tarrying included a White-eyed in Warren, KY 29 Dec (YDB) and a Blue-headed in Knox, TN 2 Dec (CG); another Blue-headed was seen at Bartlett, Shelby, TN 25 Jan (RI).

Fish Crows continue to be regularly reported in winter along the Tennessee R. in Knox, TN; future reports will not be noted in this summary absent additional developments. Common Ravens continue to spread farther outside the ms. in upper e. Tennessee, with reports from Washington, Sullivan, and Hawkins. The earliest Tree Swallows were 3 at Booker T. Washington S.P., Hamilton, TN 18 Feb (DI); as has been the trend in recent years, the species had moved into the state in significant numbers by late Feb. Very few Red-breasted Nuthatches were present in the Region this winter; one to 4 were reported on only six Kentucky C.B.C.s and three Tennessee C.B.C.s.

Tallies of 9 House Wrens and 4 Sedge Wrens during the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 16 Dec were unusually high (fide MG), the only other reports of House Wrens were of single birds in Greene, TN 18 Dec (DM); during the Savannah, TN C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide WRP); and on three Kentucky C.B.C.s. One to 2 Marsh Wrens were reported at three sites in Kentucky and six sites in Tennessee 16 Dec–6 Jan, but 9 at Stanfield Gap 16 Dec during the Chattanooga C.B.C. (BPa) was exceptional. Reports of Sedge Wrens away from Reelfoot L. included single birds at Stanfield Gap 16 Dec (DPa); at Shelby Farms, Memphis, TN 17 Dec (MTS); and in w. McCracker, KY 18 Dec (BPa, SR); and at Heritage Marsh, White, TN 21 Dec (JS, WWa). Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were in Knox, TN 10 Dec (SHo) and 17 Jan (MD). Eastern Bluebirds were numerous early in the winter (24-273 reported on 28 of 29 Kentucky C.B.C.s), but following the Feb cold snap, very few individuals appeared to be present in many portions of n. cen. Kentucky, suggesting that mortality may have been high in this area. Below-average numbers of Cedar Waxwings were present in Kentucky into early Jan (one to 124 reported on 17 of 29 Kentucky C.B.C.s), but influxes...
or waves of birds were noted in mid-Jan and early Feb. Only 4 Gray Catbirds were reported in Tennessee, all from the e. half of the state; this is still somewhat high but considerably lower than last winter.

An Orange-crowned Warbler was present in ne. Hart, KY in Jan (BPa, CF), and one to 2 were reported from seven Tennessee locations 2 Dec-2 Jan. A Tennessee Warbler on President’s I., Memphis, TN 17 Dec (ERK) represents an exceptionally rare winter record for the region; a Nashville Warbler in Knox, TN 9-10 Dec (fide Ho) was almost as exceptional. A male Cape May Warbler in Land Between the Lakes N.R.A., Trigg, KY 16 Dec (ph. DR) represented a first winter record for the state. Palm Warblers were scarce in Kentucky this winter, in Tennessee, numbers were higher but still down from last winter’s unusually high total, except for a count record total of 16 during the Chattanooga C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide K.C.). Single tardy Common Yellowthroats were in Pulaski, KY 5 Dec (RDn, GH), at the Birnam Levee during the Chattanooga C.B.C. 16 Dec (KW), and on the Savannah, TN C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide WRP); 2 were found at Reelfoot L., where the species may sometimes winter, during the C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide MG).

A female Summer Tanager in Hamilton, TN 11 Dec-7 Feb (MLB) may constitute the first winter record for the county. An ad. male was at a feeder in Knoxville, TN 9-17 Dec (ph. SP); one on the other side of the county early-21 Jan (fide MD) may or may not have been the same bird. The male Spotted Towhee that wintered ne. of Cammer, Hart, KY last year returned and was observed 12 Dec+ (CF, Bba et al.). One to 24 Clapping Sparrows were reported on 11 Kentucky C.B.C.s, with wintering documented at feeding stations in Warren (DR) and Trigg (BL, FL). A Lincoln’s Sparrow was in Putnam, TN 16 Dec (RB, DC). One to 6 Le Conte’s Sparrows were observed at six Kentucky and two Tennessee sites 5 Dec-28 Feb. Lapland Longspurs were present in typical numbers across the region, although the Feb cold spell brought another wave into n.-cen. Kentucky, where up to 75 were seen in Gallatin 15 Feb (Bpa) and 200+ were seen in Jefferson 17 Feb (BPa et al.). The Feb cold snap also brought Snow Buntings to p.-cen. Kentucky, with one to 19 reported from Boone, Brachen, Gallatin, and Jefferson, with a peak count of ca. 60 in w. Boone 19 Feb (LM). Single wintering Indigo Buntings were in Williamson, TN 22 Jan (Jbu) and Tippecanoe, TN 26 Feb (DRp). An ad. male Painted Bunting at a feeder in Knox, TN 13 Jan (ph. CFS) furnished only the 2nd record ever for e. Tennessee.

The only report of Western Meadowlark in Kentucky was of 2 in Fulton 22 Feb (vt. DR, HC). One to 12 Brewer’s Blackbirds were reported in Ballard, KY 18 Dec (Bpa) and Warren, KY 23 Feb (DR); 30 were in White, TN 5 Feb (DD). The rarity highlight of the winter season was an imm. male Scott’s Oriole that was present in a yard n. of Frankfort, Franklin, KY early Feb (fide SM, m-o.b.). Single wintering Baltimore Orioles were in Williamson, TN 5 Dec (Jbu), in Greene, TN 18 Dec (DM), on President’s L, Memphis, TN 27 Dec (ER, MW), and in Monroe, TN (Rho et al.). Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were present in extremely low numbers. The only Kentucky report of Pine Siskin during the entire period was one on the Richmond C.B.C. 16 Dec (SM) Single Common Redpolls, which are now casual in the region, were in Tipton, TN 9 Jan-16 Feb (DR, JGSP) and at Hohenwald, Lewis, TN 18 Feb (ph. BPa). Six Red Crossbills made a surprising discovery in Greeneville, Greene, TN 23 Dec (DM).

Cited contributors (subregional editors in boldface): Bruce Bardin (Bba), Tom & Colleen Becker, Jane Bell (Jbe), Pat Bell, Mark Bennett, Warren Bielenberg (WB), Kris Bolin, Ben Britton (Bbr), David Brown, Jean Buchanan (Jbu), Mary Lynn Buttram, Kevin Callison (e. Tennessee), Phillip Case (middle Tennessee), Hap Chambers, Cincinnati Bird Club (CBC), Daniel Combs, Amy Covert, Charlie Crawford, Frank Cross, Marcia Davis, Charles Dean, Julie Denton, Roseanne Denton (RDn), Robert Dever (RDv), Douglas Downs, Kemper Durand, Tom Durbin, Saundra Easley, Jim & Sue Ferguson, Carol Friedman, John Froeschner, Carole Gobert, Mark Greene, Pat Hahn, Barry Hart, Richard Healy (RHe), Gay Hodges, Ron Hoff (RHo), Don Holt, Susan Hoyle (SHo), Susan Hubley (SHu), Robert Iardi, Daniel Jacobson, Rick Knight (e. Tennessee), Jack & Vickie Leather, Ken Leggett, Bill Lisowsky, Paula Lisowsky, Sarah Martin, Joe McCune, Lee McNeely, Tom McNeil, Memphis Chapter, Tennessee Ornithological Society (MTOS), Don Miller, Nancy Moore, Mike Morton, Brainard Palm-aller, Jr. (Bpa), David Patterson (BPa), W. Rob Peeples, Rick Phillips, Gary Gough, Dick Preston (DPr), Shelley Przewrocki, Bill Pulliam (Bpu), Scott Record, Frank Renfrow, Ernest Restivo, David Roemer, Richard Schier, Carolyn Skrenksy (CSk), Michael Sledejek, Fran & David Sleznak, Chris Sloan, Bill Stanley (BSl), Barbara H. Stedman, Stephen J. Stedman, Mike Toddi, Kyle Waggner, Winston Walden (WWa), Martha Waldron, John Wallco, Donna Ward, Wendall Webb (WWe), Steve White, Charlie Wilkins, Jeff R. Wilson, Terry Witt. Many thanks go to the numerous additional individuals who contributed information that was used in this report.

Chris Sloan, 224 Hicks Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37221, (chris.sloan@comcast.net)

Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.
Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(brainard.palmer-ball@ky.gov)
Global climate change continues to affect weather in the Region. The season could only be characterized as warm and dry, continuing the trend of recent years. Generally, mean monthly temperatures in December and January were 3° F above the 100-year mean, while February was near 3° F below. Precipitation deficit for the season approached 18 cm, contributing to a 106-cm deficit over the past three years.

**Abbreviations:** E.N.W.R. (Eufaula N.W.R., AL); N.N.W.R. (Nokomis N.W.R., MS); W.N.W.R. (Wheelers N.W.R., AL).

**WATERFOWL**

The 50-year decline of Canada Goose populations in the Region has been well documented. Without the many thousands of Canadian Geese to sort through, birders are now finding that other species of geese are regular winter inhabitants. In Alabama, Greater White-fronted Geese were noticeable throughout the season at W.N.W.R., Limestone/Morgan, where a maximum of 85 was recorded 14 Feb (CDC, DSM, SGS). Away from this Regional center of distribution, 2 were near Gulf Shores 22 Feb (RAD, LRD) and one was near Magnolia Springs 25 Feb (MJJ), both in Baldwin. Ross's Geese continue to be widely reported, with an Alabama state maximum of 18 at W.N.W.R., Limestone 16 Dec (SWM) and 27 near McLeod, Noxubee, MS 10 Feb (TLS). In Mississippi, up to 261 Cackling Geese were in Sunflower 9-10 Feb, while one was in Humphreys 9 Feb and 2 at Yazoo N.W.R., Yazoo 10 Feb (JBD, PB, KB). Trumpeter Swans found their way to Mississippi, where 3 ads. and a juv. were near Tunica, Tipton 18 Dec (PDH, GK, SK, DDW); one of the ads. had been collared as a juv. near Harpers, OH in Aug 2005. An imm. Tundra Swan was at W.N.W.R., AL 11 Dec+ (JMB, FBL, CDC, m.ob.).

Determining the status of American Black Duck in coastal Alabama is challenging due to the presence of resident Mottled Ducks; one seen near Elberta, Baldwin 30 Dec (CDC, LBR, HD, AD, PD) during the Gulf Shores C.B.C. was of interest. Greater Scaup, once considered rare in the Region, have been recorded with increasing regularity over the past 10 years. Four males and a female were above Walter F. George Dam, Henry, AL 2 Dec (JE, EH et al.), while 3 males and a female were near Morgan City, Leflore, MS 31 Dec (PB, DDD, NW, KS) on the Sidon C.B.C. Scoter reports are sporadic in some years, and this year was no exception. Sixteen Surf Scoters were recorded on Mobile Bay, Baldwin, AL 25 Jan (BS et al.), while a female was on Browning Creek L., Okitibeha, MS 17 Dec+ (TLS, MS). Two White-winged Scoters, including an ad. female and a female-type at Fayette, Fayette, AL 13 Feb+ (JJ et al.), were the only ones reported. While the only Black Scoter reported was an imm. on Dauphin L., Mobile, AL 1 Jan (LBR, JFP), the 30+ unidentiﬁed scoters near Gulf Shores, Baldwin, AL 27 Jan (ALM) were likely this species. Long-tailed Ducks were reported on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec (Mike JFP) and at L. Shelby, Baldwin 28 Dec+ (SWM, m.ob.), both in Alabama; another was near Eupora, Webster, MS 22 Feb (DDW). Two female Common Mergansers were at Bear Cr., Colbert, AL 19 Dec (DJS), and one was on Browning Creek L., MS 9-23 Feb (TLS, MS), the 8th area record.

**LOONS THROUGH CRANES**

Single Red-throated Loons were at Bear Cr., AL 19 Dec (DJS) and Waveland, Hancock, MS 1 Dec (NB). Pacific Loons were widely reported. In Alabama, up to 2 were at Guntersville, Marshall 2 Dec+ (SWM, m.ob.); one was at Spring Cr., Lawrence 5 Jan (DJS); and one was at Gulf Shores 27 Jan (ALM). In Mississippi, one was at Bay St. Louis, Hancock 17 Jan (NB). Always rare in the Region, single ad. Red-necked Grebes were reported from Guntersville, AL 2 Dec (GJD, DGD) and End L., Yalobusha, MS 11-16 Feb (JBD, GK, SK). Alabama's 5th Western Grebe was at Walter F. George Dam 6-19 Dec (FB, m.ob.); in Mississippi, one was at Bay Springs L., Tishomingo 24 Dec-10 Jan (WRP, GK, SK).

Inland wintering American White Pelicans are now almost commonplace in Alabama: the flock at W.N.W.R. peaked at 281 on 19 Dec (CDC, FB, TA, m.ob.); 43 were at Gees Bend; Wilcox 3 Jan (RER); 2 were near Gadsden, Etowah 10-15 Jan (WJM et al.); and 3 were at E. N.W.R., Barbour 16 Feb (LW). Anhingas, rare inland during winter, were found on the Montgomery C.B.C., Montgomery, AL 30 Dec (Joe LFG) and on Bluff L. at N.N.W.R., Navalec 16 Dec-20 Feb (LC, EC, TLS), where to up to 2 were seen. An imm. Magniﬁcent Frigatebird at Perdido Pass, Baldwin, AL on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 30 Dec (SWM) was an unexpected ﬁnd.

The 13 Reddish Egrets on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec (m.ob.) made an excellent number for coastal Alabama in winter, and one along the Mobile Causeway, Mobile, AL 17 Dec (TS, JS) was unusual so far n. in winter. A Green Heron on the Birmingham C.B.C., Jefferson, AL 23 Dec was unusual, as was an ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (SHH) found in the same area as last year's count. In Alabama, White Ibis wintered far inland, with 3 near Camden, Wilcox 3 Jan (RER); the 80+ near Haccoda, Geneva 26 Feb (OJ) may have been early migrants. Six dark ibis were near Morgan City, MS 31 Dec (PB, DDD, NW) on the Sidon C.B.C. The apparently declining vulture populations in some areas may be slowing; the Alabama state maximum of 458 Black Vultures and winter maximum of 318 Turkey Vultures on the Guntersville C.B.C. 26 Dec were heartening.

The 32 Ospreys recorded on the Gulf Shores C.B.C., AL 30 Dec established a new state maximum. The largest number of Northern Harriers reported was 31 in Leflore, MS 10 Feb (JBD, PB, KB) at a roost. Ad. Golden Eagles were reported from near Camden, Wilcox/Dallas, AL 3 Jan (RER); N.N.W.R., Winston, MS 16 Dec (TLS, MA); and near Henleyfield, Pearl River, MS 20 Jan (NB). Single Merlins were reported near Smith L., Winston, AL 23 Dec (LB); near Montgomery, AL 1 Jan (CTS, PS, LGF et al.); from Shannon, Lee, MS 31 Dec (WRP); and in Tipton, MS 20 Jan (GK, SK). Peregrine Falcons wintered in good numbers inland. In Alabama, an ad. thrilled visitors with its aerial maneuvers at Wheeler Dam, Lauderdale/Colbert 6 Dec–20 Feb (DJS, m.ob.), 5 were recorded on the Christmas count at W.N.W.R., 16 Dec (m.ob.), and 2 were in Birmingham 21 Jan (PER, m.ob.). In Mississippi, an ad. female was in Tipton 18 Jan (GK, SK).

Up to 3 Virginia Rails and 2 Soras were at the Starkville Sewage Pond South, Okitibeha, MS through 20 Dec (TLS). Two Purple Gallinules near Flora, Covington 23 Feb (OJ) provided Alabama's 3rd winter and ﬁrst inland winter record. The number of Sandhill Cranes wintering in the Region continues to increase. In Alabama, 2130 were at W.N.W.R. 10 Jan (CDC), a new state maximum; 2000+ were
near Weiss L., Cherokee 22 Dec (LB, WB); 63 (57 in Alabama and 6 in Georgia) were at Escambia N.W.R. 15 Dec (BKF et al.), and 5 were at Key Cave N.W.R., Lauderdale 6-23 Dec (SRS, CDC, RJM), a first refuge record. In Mississippi, 80+ were in Tunica 20 Jan (SK, SJR); and 74 near McLeod 10-12 Feb (TLS, MS, DP, JP) was an area maximum. Whooping Cranes from the Operation Migration Project wintered at two locations in Alabama. A female, #508, was in Baldwin 9 Dec-2 Jan (BS), after which it moved to Tangipahoa, LA. A mated pair (#213 and #218) was at W.N.W.R. 9 Jan+ (TB, CDC, m.ob).

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**

Winter shorebird diversity continues to be high in the Region. Fifty-eight American Oystercatchers on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec (m.ob.) was encouraging. American Avocets wintered in Leflore, MS, where 24 were on the Sidon C.B.C. 31 Dec (SJD, BVM, PB, KB) and 37 were seen 10 Feb (SJD, PB, KB). Six Long-billed Curlews, rare in Mississippi, were at Moses Pier, Harrison 11 Feb (BB, AHe, m.ob.). The only report of Red Knot, a decidedly declining species in the Region, was of 8 on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec. A Pectoral Sandpiper was found on the Christmas count at W.N.W.R. 16 Dec (SWM, SRM), where the species is only occasional in winter. Long-billed Dowitchers were reported in good numbers in Mississippi, where 196 were in Sunflower and 395 were in Leflore, both 10 Feb (SJD, PB, KB).

Winter Laughing Gulls inland are always unusual in the Region. An ad. was at Grenada L., Grenada, MS 17 Feb (DDW). Franklin's Gulls have usually moved through the Region by early Nov, so an imm. at Perdido Pass, AL 2 Dec (HEH, TS, JS) was noteworthy. Peak numbers of Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls were 2900 on 11 Feb and 6500 on 12 Feb, respectively, at Sardis L., Panola, MS (SJG, DK). Alabama's 6th and 7th Iceland Gulls were imm's. at Magnolia Springs 12 Jan (ALM, RAD, LRD, BS) and Mallard-Cox Creek W.M.A., Morgan 18 Feb (SER et al.). Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to be widely reported. In Alabama, up to 4 were near Magnolia Springs through the period (BS, SWM, RAD, LRD); a second-year was at Wilson Dam 1 Jan-19 Feb (SWM, m.ob.); and an ad. was at Mallard-Cox Creek W.M.A. 20 Feb (SWM). In Mississippi, an imm. was at Bay St. Louis 15-17 Feb (NB). An imm. Glaucous Gull was at Guntersville, AL 2 Dec (DC, m.ob.).

The movement of White-winged Doves into the Region, chronicled previously in these pages, has continued unabated. In coastal Alabama, where they occur year-round, a state maximum of 400+ was recorded near Silverhill, Baldwin 4 Dec (BS); 4 were on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec; one was near Ft. Morgan, Baldwin 29 Dec (SWM); and 174 were on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 30 Dec (m.ob.). An amazing 14 Inca Doves were in Arcola, Washington, MS 10 Feb (SJD, PB, AB, AH). Increasingly rare away from the coast, the only Common Ground-Doves reported were singles at Ataguas, AL 29 Dec (TRP) and near Marble Valley, Coosa, AL 23 Jan (DJ). Short-eared Owl reports, all from Mississippi, were of 27 in Tunkat 20 Jan (GK, SK, SRM), one in Leflore 9 Feb (SJD), and 2 near Hillsdale, Pearl River 12 Feb (NB, LBo). A Chuck-will's-widow, rare in winter, was on Dauphin I., AL 26 Jan (DM).

Five Hummingbird species were reported in the Region. The only Ruby-throated hummingbird was a second-year male banded near Huntsville, Madison, AL 6 Jan (RBS, MBS). An ad. female Anna's was near Henleyfield, MS 8 Dec-early Jan (NB). In Alabama, single ad. male and female Callipines were captured in Lillian, Baldwin, AL 28 Dec (FB, JD, b). The male had been banded the previous year at the site. A female was banded in Fairhope, Baldwin 7 Jan (FB, DD, CD). Alabama's 12th Broad-tailed was banded in Mobile 27 Dec (FB, SH). Rufous Hummingbirds were widely reported. An amazing 8, a state maximum, were on the Birmingham C.B.C., Jefferson/Shelby, AL. In Mississippi, an imm. male was in College Hill, Lafayette 21 Oct+ (TH, DHo, GK, SK); an ad. female probably spent the 4th consecutive winter in Starkville 25 Nov+ (RK, TK, TLS); 2 were at Henleyfield 1 Dec-mid-Jan (NB, m.ob.); and an ad. female was in Columbus, Lowndes 24 Dec+ (MH et al.).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH ORIOLES**

Alabama's first winter record of Least Flycatcher was of one near Foley, Baldwin 17 Feb (FS). An ad. male Vermilion Flycatcher was near Kln, Hancock, MS 19 Dec-2 Feb (JB, NB). Western Kingbirds, as has been the case for the past few years, were widely reported in coastal areas of the Region. Fish Crows appear to be expanding their range northward in Alabama. One was at Mallard-Cox Creek W.M.A. 20 Feb (SWM), and up to 4 were at W.N.W.R. 27 Feb+ (CDC), the first refuge record. Purple Martins arrived a bit early in the Region. In Alabama, 2 were near Fairhope 13 Jan (DD, CD); one near Atmore, Escambia 23 Jan (JY, DY) provided an early inland coastal plain record; and a male at W.N.W.R. 12 Feb (CDC) was the earliest for the refuge. In Mississippi, the earliest reported arrival was one at Waveland 29 Jan (NB). Two Tree Swallows at Livingston, Sumter, AL 16 Feb (JE) were for the inland coastal plain. A lingering Barn Swallow was at Guntersville, AL 2 Dec (GD).

Always exciting in the Region, a Rock Wren, first seen in Oct, continued near Enid L., MS through 16 Feb (SK). Given the decline of Bewick's Wren in n. North America, one near Shannon, Lee, MS 19 Jan (WRP) provided a bright spot. Two Sedge Wrens at Sardis Wildlife Refuge, Fayette, MS 16 Dec (GK, VT) were late. A few Marsh Wrens winter in the Region every year. Four were on the C.B.C. at W.N.W.R. 16 Dec (RBS, MBS), and one was near Grenada L., MS 20 Dec (GK, SK). Without a doubt, the bird of the season was Alabama's 4th Northern Wheatear near Foley 3 Feb+ (JDI, KD, BS, m.ob., ph.). It remained in the area for an amazing 44 days and was seen by hundreds of birders. Yellow-throated Warblers, all in Alabama, were one near Auburn, Lee 20 Dec (BKF) and up to 3 along the Ft. Morgan Pen., Baldwin 16-19 Feb (SN). Occasional along the coast in winter, a Prairie Warbler was found on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 16 Dec (JTW). Palm Warblers were reported from several areas. An Alabama maximum was established on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 30 Dec when 378 were recorded. Inland, one was on the count at W.N.W.R. 16 Dec (SWM), and, in Mississippi, one was near Grenada L. 20 Dec (SK). Up to 4 were near Macon, Novabird, MS 6 Jan-10 Feb (TL, MS). Wilson's Warbler, occasional inland during winter, was near Opelika, Lee, AL 9 Dec, where a male was seen (QI). Reports of Yellow-breasted Chats came from the Ft. Morgan Pen., AL 1 Jan (MJ), and Old River W.M.A., Pearl River, MS 10 Feb (NB). Summer Tanagers, rare in winter in Alabama, were recorded on several occasions: an imm. and a female were near Bon Secour, Baldwin 1 Dec (JDI, KD), and singles were in Mobile 7 Dec-16 Feb (DB) and Gulf Sh.P., Baldwin 20 Jan (MJ).

A Clay-colored Sparrow, rare in the Region in winter, was at Silverhill, AL 24 Jan+ (BS, m.ob.). Grasshopper Sparrows were reported throughout the Region. Two were on the count at W.N.W.R. 16 Dec (RBS, MBS); one was in Montgomery, AL 29 Dec (CTS, PS); 4 were on the Ft. Morgan C.B.C. 30 Dec; and 2 were in Washington, MS 10 Feb (SJD, PB, KB). The highest count of Le Conte's Sparrows was of 4 to 10 near Starkville, MS 23-26 Feb (TLS, MS). Lincoln's Sparrow is rarely reported during winter in the Region. In Alabama, 2 were on the Montgomery C.B.C. 30 Dec (LFG, RB) and one near Opelika 16 Feb (RJ et al.). It was a good winter for Lapland
Longspur in the Region; 685 in Leflore, MS 9 Feb (SJ&D) and 90 in Lawrence, AL 29 Jan (DJ, DJ) were the top counts. Again this winter, a male Indigo Bunting frequented a feeder in Anniston, Calhoun, AL early–14 Dec (DMe). Rare in winter, a Dickcissel was in Foley, AL 23 Dec (MJ et al.).

Encouraging reports of Rusty Blackbird were of 40 at Blackley S.P., Baldwin, AL 17 Dec (MJ) and 600+ at Sardis Dam, MS 1 Jan (SK). Good numbers of Brewer's Blackbirds were reported near Leighton, Colbert, AL 17 Jan, where 100 were seen (DSJ), and in Leflore, MS 9 Feb, where 143 were recorded (SJ&D). Baltimore Orioles were widely reported in Alabama. Ad. males were in Greenville, Butler 5 Dec (AM), Montgomery 31 Dec (CHA), and at E.M.WR. 26-31 Jan (LW). Two males were at a feeder in Montgomery 16 Feb (GM et al.). An imm. male was near Shorter, Macon 23 Jan (EGS), another was on the Ft. Morgan Pen. 17 Feb (SN), and 2 were near Peterman, Monroe 18 Feb (GCh).


C. Dwight Cooley, U.S. Fsh and Wildlife Service Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 2700 Refuge Headquarters Road, Decatur, Alabama 35603 (sbrewing@earthlink.net)

Arkansas & Louisiana

D

ominating the winter scene in Arkansas was the continued diligent coverage of various reservoirs, which produced a nice variety of unusual waterfowl, loons, gulls, and other rarities. In Louisiana, records submissions more than rebounded from last winter's post-hurricane slump, thanks to restored coastal access and the return of hurricane-displaced birds, combined with increased statewide coverage associated with the inaugural season of the Louisiana Winter Bird Atlas (10 January–20 February).

Abbreviations: * = specimen deposited at Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science. County/parish names are italicized and indicated only for the initial mention of a specific locality; state is indicated only for the initial mention of counties/parishes, except to avoid confusion. For records of "review list" species, documentation has been received and records have either been accepted by, or acceptance is pending by, the respective state bird records committee.

**WATERFOWL**

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at Pine Bluff, Jefferson, AR 27 Dec (ph. RD, WS, DS) was an unexpected far inland winter visitor. Twenty-five Ross's Geese among 200 Snow Geese s. of Jonesboro, Polksett 26 Feb (NA) made a good Arkansas total. Reports of Cackling Geese, also noteworthy in Arkansas, included 23 at L. Fayetteville, Washington 18 Jan, 5 at Bentonville, Benton 26 Jan (both MAM), and 3 near Brinkley, Monroe 27 Jan and 18-19 Feb (LA). Arkansas hosted Trumpeter Swans for the 3rd consecutive winter, with 2 ads. at Carden bottoms, Yell 20 Dec (ph. DS, WS), 3 (ad., 2 jv.s.) at Boxley Mill Pond, Newton 24 Dec (Joyce & Harlan Shedell), and a possible record high of 126 at Magnes L., CLEBURNE 9 Feb (DB). Tundra Swan reports included an imm. at Magnes L. 5 Dec (ph. Robert Heron) and an ad. at Carden Bottoms 20 Dec (ph. DS, WS; red neck collar with white code "5H7") later relocated with 4 others at nearby Petit Jean W.M.A., Yell 6 Feb (Terry Gentry).

Eighteen Mottled Ducks [ph. of Arkansas City, Desha 25 Dec (DS&SB)] indicates a growing resident population. A Flyby male Cinnamon Teal was spotted but spared nicely documented by hunters s. of White L., near Pecan L., VERNON 1 Jan (ph. Jeff Hepperman, Craig Landry, Jodie Todd Guidry). A male Tufted Duck remained through the period for its 2nd consecutive winter on L. Dardanelle, Yell/Pope (K&LR, n.o.b.). Lake Dardanelle also hosted a Surf Scoter in Yell/Pope 15 Dec, 2 White-winged Scoters in Yell 16-17 Feb (both K&LR), and a Long-tailed Duck in Yell/Pope 16 Dec (KN), with another Surf Scoter on L. Maumelle, Pulaski 8 Jan (DB). In Louisiana, the sea duck hoard was L. Ponchatrain, where various Surf Scoters were seen off the New Orleans lakesfront. ORLEANS 9 Jan–23 Feb (DPM, PAW, EW et al.), including...
an impressive count of 21 on 7 Feb (DBo, ph. JB). Also from the New Orleans lakefront were a male White-winged Scoter 7-14 Feb (DBo, ph. JB, DPM), 3 Black Scoters 3 Feb (PAW), and a Long-tailed Duck 23 Feb (PAW). A more dependable imm. male Long-tailed Duck was at the Tchefuncte R. mouth, St. Tammany 28 Dec–20 Feb (CGB, DBo, ph. JB et al.). At Cameron, *Cameron*, a Surf Scoter was present 6 Dec (JWB, MJM, JR); a female White-winged Scoter 18 Feb (ph. DLD, SWC), and a female Black Scoter 28 Jan (DBo, JB). There were three Arkansas reports of the rare Common Merganser: 17 at L. Pine Bluff, *Jefferson* 26 Dec (RD), 10 at Big Lake N.W.R., *Mississippi* 29 Dec (DB), and 3 at L. Dardanelle, *Pope* 1 Feb (K&LN). An ad. male Red-breasted Merganser on Kincaid L., *Rapides* 25 Jan (Steve Shively, Daniel Jordan) and a pair at L. Dardanelle, *Yell* 3 Feb (DS) were unusual inland.

**LOONS THROUGH FALCONS**

An amazing 5 Red-throated Loons at L. Maumelle 21 Jan+ (DBr, WS, DS, Delos McCauley, Patricia Brady, ph.) appears to be a record number for Arkansas. Fifty-three Pied-billed Grebes at L. Elmdale, *Washington* 27 Jan (MAM) and 500 at L. Dardanelle, *Yell* 16 Feb (KN) were impressive inland winter concentrations. American Bitterns in *Arkansas* City 25 Dec (D&SB) and near Waldron, Scott 9 Jan (Ron Goddard et al.), and an imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron at L. Ashbaugh, *Greene* 18 Jan (George Hoover), added to the relatively few Arkansas winter records for those species. Out of place was an ad. Brown Pelican at Baton Rouge 11 Feb (BJO). A Least Bittern flushed by a rice harvester near Thornwell, *Jefferson* Davis 5 Dec (SWC, DLD) was late or possibly wintering. A very early Swallow-tailed Kite was at River Ridge, *Jefferson* 28 Feb (Craig Mineo). Up to 18 White-tailed Kites at the Louisiana’s N.W.R. Pool Unit, *Cameron* 12 Dec–23 Jan (Becky Harriet, SWC, DLD, BMM, ph. DP et al.) were associating with a spectacular communal roost of Northern Harriers estimated at 200 on 14 Dec (SWC, DLD). Another harrier roost involving 28 individuals was found in *Poinsett*, AR 22 Jan (DB).

Although a few typically winter in lower *Plaquemines*, LA, a minimum of 12 Broad-winged Hawks there 28 Jan–19 Feb (vt. PAW, ph. DPM, ph. RDP, vt. DBo, JB) was above average. An imm. Swainson’s Hawk at *Cameron* 3 Dec (JB, DBo) was likely a late migrant, but 4 in *Plaquemines* 30 Dec–19 Feb (vt. PAW, CR, ph. DPM, ph. RDP, vt. DBo et al.) were clearly wintering. A second-year White-tailed Hawk e. of Holmwood, *Cinacca* 10 Dec (ph. BMM, ph. DP, vt. PEC) and an ad. the same day just s. in *Cameron* (PEC) were only the 4th and 5th well-documented individuals for Louisiana. Despite the species’ popularity with falconers, an ad. Harris’s Hawk near Holmwood 3-18 Dec (Gay Gomez, ph. DLD, SWC, ph. JBW, JR et al.) was thought to be a legitimate vagrant and would represent only the 3rd accepted Louisiana record; another in *Orleans* 1 Jan (vt. PAW) is more likely to be labeled by some as a possible escape. Somewhat regular but always of interest, Golden Eagles (all imm.) were found at Erbie, Newton 3 Dec (Jack & Pam Stuart), on the Bayou De-View C.B.C., *Monroe* 22 Dec (WS, Jason Phillips, Katie Jacques), and at Wattersaw Bayou, *Prairie* 5 Jan (Irv Alexander).

Crested Caracaras continue to be reported with increasing frequency in sw. Louisiana, with at least 15 individuals reported 5–Dec–23 Feb from at least seven locations in *Calcasieu*, *Cameron*, *Jefferson* Davis (ph. DLD, SWC, ph. MJM, ph. JWB, ph. JR, BMM, DBo, JB, vt. PAW, DPM, Jeff Pittman, John Whittle), and farther e. than normal, a pair in *Vernilion* at White Lake W.M.A. (RPR et al.). Merlins at Chesney Prairie Natural Area, Benton 24 Dec (JN, MAM, JW, Scott Woolbright) and Holly Bend N.W.R., *Pope* 27 Jan (K&LN) were good winter birds for nw. Arkansas. Two Prairie Falcons seen together in the Maysville area, Benton 25 Dec (JN, MAM) apparently represented the first Arkansas occurrence involving multiple individuals; 2 were also suspected there 6 Jan (JN, MAM, JW), and another was at Holly Bend N.W.R. 27 Dec (LA, ph. Ben Meadors). Peregrine Falcons found unusually far inland in Louisiana included singles at Cotile L., *Rapides* 18 Dec and at Ketalen Gin, *Grant* 23 Dec (JWPH), and another intermittently through the period in *Bossier* (TD et al.).

**RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS**

Late rice harvesting near Thornwell 5 & 7 Dec produced 10+ Yellow Rails each day and a nice count of 81 Soras on 5 Dec (SWC, DLD, BMM). Both irregular in Arkansas in winter, a Virginia Rail was near Sanders lock and dam, *Jefferson* 27 Dec (RD, DS, WS), and a Sora was in *Arkansas* City 25 Dec (D&SB). Arkansas reports of Sandhill Cranes included 19 in Mississippi 24 Jan (DB), 2 in *Faunthaler* 20 Feb (Sharon Carter), and 2 in *Lawrence* *Geene* 27 Feb (Corinne Fletcher). In Louisiana, the Holmwood area Sandhill Crane flock continues to increase, with a record 450 counted 10 Dec (BMM, ph. DP, PEC); elsewhere, there were in *Louisiana* 28 Dec (ph. DP, SS), 12 were near Maurice, *Verinilion* 3 Feb (ph. EE), and 9 were near Loranger, *Tangipahoa* 3 Jan+ (ph. RM). Stockingly, the latter flock was accompanied by a wayward Whooping Crane sporting a satellite transmitter, the bird had originated from an introduced flock at Necedah N.W.R., Wisconsin and remained at the Louisiana site through 4 Mar (*Jude* RPR, Richard Urbanek, ph. RM).

An American Golden-Plover near L. Arthur, *Jefferson* Davis 13 Dec (SWC, ph. DLD) was exceptionally late and, suspiciously, at a location where one was found mid-Oct. Selden reported in winter, American Oystercatchers were detected at five barrier island locations from Belle Pass, *Lafourche* e. to Grand Terre East, *Plaquemines* 20 Dec (CGB, RS) and 5-11 Feb (DPM, BMM, SWC, ph. DLD, RDe), with 2-5 per site except for an exceptionally large flock of 25 at Grand Isle, *Jefferson* 11 Feb (DPM). Unusual in winter away from the immediate coast, Semipalmated Plovers were noted near Thornwell 7 Dec (SWC, ph. DLD, BMM) and near Crowley, *Acadia* 25 Feb (ph. PEC, DP). During intensive plower surveys on Louisiana’s barrier islands, 37 Wilson’s Plovers were found from Timbalier L., *Terrebonne* e. to Grand Terre East
5-7 Feb (SWC, ph. DLD, DPM et al.), a much larger-than-expected winter presence in Cameron, one was present at Rutherford Beach 7 Dec (vt. JWB, CJ), and one and 3 were at East Jetty on 28 Jan (DBo, JB) and 19 Feb (SWC, ph. DLD, respectively).

Scarce-in-winter Arkansas shorebirds included 20 Lesser Yellowlegs in Poinsett 2 Dec (NA, DB), 3 Spotted Sandpipers at Pine Bluff 27 Dec (DS, RD, WS), 250 Least Sandpipers nw. of Arkansas City 25 Dec (D&SSB), and approximately 75 Dunlins near Cash, Craighead 2 Dec (NA, DB). Sixteen American Woodcocks (flushed using dogs in 1.5 hours) in Yell 17 Feb (Jack Davis) was a relatively high count for Arkansas and thought to involve a buildup of northbound migrants.

**GULLS THROUGH NIGHTJARS**

A wintering Laughing Gull at L. Dardanelle remained through 25 Feb (K&LN). An imm. Franklin’s Gull near Cameron 1 Feb (SWC, ph. DLD) was the only report. A second-cycle Thayer’s Gull at L. Dardanelle dam, Yell/Pope 28 Jan+ (ph. K&LN, Cameron Cox et al.) was about the 3rd for Arkansas, and a first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull there 10 Dec (ph. KN, David Arbour; Berlin Hec) furnished about the 6th state record. Although gradually becoming more regular in winter on the coast, more noteworthy slightly inland Louisiana Lesser Black-backed Gulls included sightings of single ads. (some possibly involving the same bird) at flooded fields in Lafayette 28 Dec (MJM), Vermilion 20 Jan (JB, DBo), and Audubon 31 Jan (SWC, DLD, SOC), 3 different individuals at a landfill near Abbeville, Vermilion 17 Jan–24 Feb (ph. PEC), and one near Morgan City, St. Mary 8 Feb (ph. MJM). Southeast Louisiana produces the vast majority of the state’s Great Black-backed Gull records, and possibly up to 7 were encountered this winter in the Grand Isle region, including a near-ad. at Port Fourchon 20 Dec (MW), 2 ads. or near-ads. and a first-cycle imm. on the Timbalier Is. 6 Feb (ph. BMM, RedW, SPC, DLD), 2 first-cycle imm’s. on Grand Terre 7 Feb (SWC, DLD), and a first-cycle imm. on Grand Isle 24 Feb (ph. JB, DBo). Rare anywhere in the Region, Black-legged Kittiwakes (all imm’s.) were noted in Arkansas at Murray lock and dam, Pulaski 29 Dec (ph. R&I) and at L. Chicot, Chicot 6-7 Jan (ph. DB, DS); one in the Gulf of Mexico at Green Canyon block 610 on 24 Dec (ph. Brad Martin) provided one of relatively few offshore records.

Although continuing to expand northward in the Region, 2 White-winged Doves w. of Fayetteville, Washington 17 Feb (Kelly Chittwood) and one in Bosier 27 Feb (TD) provided the only reports outside s. Louisiana. One or 2 Inca Doves at several locations in Pointe Coupee, e. Iberville, and St. Tammany (ph. DPM et al.) were indicative that the species continues to spread eastward beyond sw. Louisiana. Increasingly erratic and possibly declining, 3 Common Ground-Doves in Orleans 23 Dec (PAW), 2 more on 2 Jan, and 2 in Plaquemines 15 Jan (both PAW, DPM) were the only reports. The bird of the season was Louisiana’s first Mangrove Cuckoo along the Mississippi R. at Meraux, near Chalmette, St. Bernard 23-24 Dec (ph. GO, R, DPM, PAW, ph. JPS, DPM et al.). Declining and now a review list bird in Louisiana, 2-3 Burrowing Owls were seen intermittently at Grand Isle 19 Dec–24 Feb (CGB, EJ, DPM, PAW, ph. DBo, ph. JB et al.). It was a relatively good winter for one of several well-documented North American wintering records, and only the second for Louisiana, was this Bebarkin in St. Martin Parish 20 January 2007. Photograph by Danny Dobbs.

Short-eared Owls in Arkansas, with at least five reports from across the state, including counts of 8 individuals each in Poinsett 22 Jan (DB) and Arkansas 10 Feb (DS); in Louisiana, in addition to several expected sw. reports, one at Grand Terre East 7 Feb (DPM, BMM, RedW) was a good find on the se. coast. The only nightjar reports were of a Whip-poor-will at Grand Isle 20 Dec (EJ, CGB), a Chuck-will’s-widow there 20 Dec and 3 Jan (RS, Vicki LeFevre, DPM, CR), and another “Chuck” at Oak Grove, Cameron 16 Dec (MW).

**SWIFTS THROUGH VIREOS**

The report of 2 Vaux’s Swifts at University L., Baton Rouge 19 Jan (DBo, JB, ph. EJ et al.) was consistent with the mid/late-winter appearances of a few there for the past several years. It was another exciting season for fall/winter hummingbirds in Louisiana, with approximately 750 individuals reported from late summer through winter, not including Ruby-throated (primarily for Tom Sylvester’s Western Winter Hummer Summaries), and included at least 45 Buff-bellieds, an unprecedented 53 Calliope, 9 Broad-tailed, and 7 confirmed Allen’s. Highlights included an ad. male Broad-billed Hummingbird at Hammond, Tangipahoa 5 Jan–25 Feb (ph. Rusty & DeeDec Mahoney, ph. Walter Clifton, b. B et al.) and a banded ad. male Anna’s at River Ridge through 20 Jan (Mike & Sue Roberts, Nancy L. Newfield), the first Louisiana “return” of that species. An ad. female Anna’s Hummingbird in Little Rock, Pulaski through the period (ph. Debbi Haines, b. MP on 19 Feb, HP, Perl Floyd et al.) and an imm. male Rufous Hummingbird at Stuttgart, AR 7 Dec (b. H&MP) were the only non-Louisiana hummers reported.

Completely unexpected were up to 3 Least Flycatchers at Cane’s Landing, Red R., Bossier lingering from late fall through Jan (TD et al.; somewhat more typical were a few wintering in s. Louisiana, including near Ft. Jackson, Plaquemines 30 Dec (vt. PAW, CR), near Kaplan, Vermilion 2 Jan (vt. Jane Patterson et al.), and near Thorne 20-21 Feb (ph. DLD, SWC). A Say’s Phoebe in Greene, AR 18 Jan (ph. DB, NA) provided one of very few Arkansas winter records. Four Ash-throated Flycatchers in coastal Louisiana was about normal and included birds at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R., Orleans 23 Dec (RS), New Orleans 13-14 Jan (vt. PAW, DPM et al.), s. of Gueydan, Vermilion 28 Jan (PEC, ph. DP, BMM), and W. Pointe a la Hache, Plaquemines 19 Feb (DPM, PAW). A relatively cooperative Great Kiskadee at Slidell, St. Tammany Jan–20 Feb (Craig Tucker, ph. DBo, ph. JB, CGB, LB et al.) was about the 10th for Louisiana. Always exciting, a probable Couch’s Kingbird was near Andrew, Vermilion 20-28 Jan (JB, ph. DBo, ph. PEC, ph. DP, BMM). At least 22 Western Kingbirds reported across s. Louisiana 13–29 Feb (SWC, ph. DLD, JWH, ph. Jim Johnson, ph. CGB, MW, ph. DPM, JWH, ph. PAW, ph. DBo) was phenomenal. About 10 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in s. Louisiana (28 Jan Plaquemines) was fairly typical, but one in Foulaire, AR 20 Dec (Gail Miller) was quite a surprise. A Bell’s Vireo located near Crowley 2 Jan (ph. DP, BE; SS) was the only report.

**SWALLOWS THROUGH LONGSPURS**

A Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Grand Isle 20 Dec (Phl Stouffer) could have been a late migrant; singles at Baton Rouge 20 Jan (SWC, DLD) and in Assumption, LA 2 Feb (JWH) could have been wintering or very early spring migrants. A Cave Swallow near Madisonville, St. Tammany 17 Feb (CGB, ph. DBo, JB) was Louisiana’s first well-documented winter record. Barn Swallows near Alexandria, Rapides 1 Jan (JWH) and in Plaquemines 28 Jan were probably winterers; individuals on 27 Feb in Concordia (RPR) and Bossier (TD) were considered early migrants. Red-breasted Nuthatch went completely unreported.
ed, but Brown Creepers persisted in good numbers after the fall influx, e.g., 24 at the Lake D'Arbonne S.P. area 19 Feb (DB, JB). Of 3 Rock Wrens that arrived at Arkansas's Millwood L. during the fall, one in Howard was last observed 3 Feb, and 2 in Hempsville/Little River stayed through the winter (all CM et al.). An estimated 400 Marsh Wrens flushed during a few hours of rice harvesting near Thornwell 5 Dec (SWC, DLD) attested to the incredible concentrations present in some fields during late fall and early winter. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Hollo Bend N.W.R. 27 Dec (LA) and 2 at Stuttgart 9 Jan (WS, DS) were very late or rare wintering birds for Arkansas. A late Wood Thrush was near Cameron 13 Dec (SWC, DLD); another in Plaquemines 6 Jan (vL PAW) was probably wintering.

Leading off a fair assortment of rare winter parulids were a Tennessee Warbler at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R. 2 Jan (DPM, vL PAW et al.) and a Northern Parula at Little Chenier, Cameron 16 Dec (ph. DP). A Yellow Warbler present at Lacassine N.W.R. since 1 Nov remained through at least 31 Jan (SWC, DLD, ph. JWB, MJM, BMM, DP); others were at Gibbstown, Cameron 16 Dec (ph. DP), near La Branche, St. Charles 29 Dec (Mahlon Ayme), and 8 km s. of Phoenix, Plaquemines 25 Jan (vL GO). Surprisingly infrequent in Louisiana, an Audubon's Warbler was in New Orleans 25 Jan+ (Peter H. Yaukey, vL PAW). Only one Black-throated Green Warbler, near Ft. Jackson 30 Dec (PAW, CR), was interesting, considering the relatively high numbers reported for some other rare but-regular winter species, e.g., at least 10 Yellow-throated Warblers found in se. Louisiana 30 Dec-28 Jan (DPM, vL PAW, RDP, J. T. Sylvest, LB et al.). In Arkansas, a Palm Warbler at Hollo Bend N.W.R. 20 Jan (K&SLN) and 2 male Common Yellowthroats at Wapanacca N.W.R., Crittenden 24 Jan (DB) were good mid-winter discoveries, as were 3 Prairie Warblers, 5 Black-and-white Warblers, an American Redstart, 4 Ovenbirds, 4 Northern Waterthrushes, and 3 Yellow-breasted Chats in s. Louisiana.

Putting in an appearance for its 5th winter was a male Summer Tanager at Fayetteville 16 Feb (ph. Sara Caulk); one in Pearl River, St. Tammany 26 Dec (Jeanne & John Wilson) was, surprisingly, the only Louisiana report. A female Western Tanager visited a feeder in Baton Rouge 23 Feb+ (ph. Kevin Morgan et al.), and an ad. male did likewise in New Orleans 25 Feb (Nancy Dickson, ph. EW). Above-average numbers of American Tree Sparrows were detected in nw. Arkansas (MAM), including a high of 23 at Chewey Prairie Natural Area 26 Jan (JN, JW). A Clay-colored Sparrow in Metairie, Jefferson 14 Jan+ (ph. Beth Wiggins) provided one of few Louisiana late-winter records. A Henslow's Sparrow near Indian Bayou, Vermilion 20 Jan (vL, DBO, JB) added to mounting evidence of modest numbers wintering in "atypical" (non-pine) habitats. Other noteworthy sparrow concentrations included up to 8-10 Le Conte's in the Lafayette area 4-10 Feb (JN) and 41 Harris's ("highest numbers since the 1960s") and 339 White-crowned ("all-time high") on the Lafayette C.B.C. 17 Dec (JN et al.). A Harris's Sparrow was farther s. than normal in extreme sw. East Baton Rouge 14 Jan (J. V. Remsen, D. Cagnolati). Concentrations of Lapland Longspurs included 170 in the Maysville area 20 Jan (JN, MAM) and an estimated 1000 in Craighead 2 Dec (NA, DB).

Good numbers of Smith's Longspurs were reported in s. Arkansas, with 4 transients at Fayetteville 2 Dec (MAM), 198 at Newport, Jackson 14 Feb (KN, BH), and 125 at Stuttgart 23 Feb (BH, Theo Whitcell).

**GROSBEAKS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS**

An imm. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Cameron 17 Dec (MW, ph. EJ), another imm. male near L. Arthur 23-24 Jan (near mori-bund and died), "Dale & Zen Hollister," and a Black-headed Grosbeak at Bonnet Carre Spillway, St. Charles 1 Jan (RJS, MW) were casual winter visitors. It was a relatively good winter for Blue Grosbeak in Louisiana, with singles near Johnsons Bayou, Cameron (Don Jenne, Ken Sartzeky) and at Cameron 17 Dec (MW, EJ), at Bonnet Carre Spillway 13 Jan (RJS), at E. Pointe a la Hache, Plaquemines 15 Jan (PAW, DPM), and an ad. male at L. Martin, St. Martin 28 Jan (ph. DPM). An ad. male Lazuli Bunting at Luling, St. Charles 9 Dec (ph. RS) may have been the same wintering bird documented there sporadically since winter 2000-2001; amazingly, another ad. male appeared at a New Iberia, Iberia, feeder 9 Jan (ph. MJM), only the 5th ever (and only the 2nd from winter) well-documented individual for Louisiana. No fewer than 25 Indigo Buntings were found on or near the Louisiana coast 2 Dec-4 Feb (DPM, vL PAW, PEW, BMM, DP, ph. JWB, JB, DB et al.); 16 were in Plaquemines, including a flock of 9 near Triumph 28 Jan (DPM, RDP, PAW).

Even more astounding were at least 26 Painted Buntings across s. Louisiana 19 Dec-19 Feb (CGB, RJS, DPM, PEW, ELL, Plaquemines, SWC, Cheryl Echeberri, RDP, Tracey W. Sherri, JB, DB, DF, Frank Rohner, BE et al.). Two Dickcissels in Stuttgart 16 Dec (Gail Northcutt) were casual so far north; more expected were 4 in Louisiana: at Cameron 17 Dec (MW, ph. EJ), near Duson, Lafayette 18 Jan (JWB, CJ), at Baton Rouge 31 Jan (SWC, DLD), and at L. Martin 24 Feb (ph. DMD).

Representing one of very few well-documented North American winter records and only the 2nd for Louisiana was a Bobolink at L. Martin 20 Jan (ph. DMD), Western Meadowlarks, infrequently detected in s. Louisiana, were singing near Cameron 28 Jan (DB, JB) and near Thornwell 21 Feb (SWC, DLD). An ad. male Yellow-headed Blackbird at Madisonville 28 Dec (Heydi Lopes, Pam Morgan, CGB, and 2 near Clohe, Calcienus 20 Feb (PEC) were the only reports. One of the rarer winter orioles, an Orchard Oriole was even more extraordinary visiting suet at Fairfield Bay, Van Buren, AR 15 Jan-20 Feb (ph. Jerry Goodman); 3 imm. males were also located in Plaquemines: E. Pointe at la Hache 15 Jan, Buras 28 Jan, and W. Pointe at la Hache 19 Feb (ph. PAW, DPM, RDP). Sixteen Baltimore Orioles in St. Tammany 26-28 Dec (Renee Sawyer, LB, Joelle Finley, HLP et al.) and 5 wintering at one Baton Rouge residence (CF; ph. DB, JB); more unusual was an ad. male at Hot Springs Village, Garland, AR late Jan-25 Feb (ph. Lu Otto).

An ad. male Bullock's Oriole was an exciting yard visitor in Marrero, Jefferson 31 Dec-1 Jan (ph. Paul Wolf). Still unusual away from sw. Louisiana, a Great-tailed Grackle was in Red River, Louisiana 1 Jan (ph. Jeff & Jean Trahan); a whopping 200 at Crigg Fish Hatchery, Benton 20 Jan (JN, MAM) was impressive but not unprecedented in nw. Arkansas. Rusty Blackbirds at Cameron 28 Jan (DB, JB) and at Oak Grove 31 Jan (SWC, DLD) were unusual on the immediate coast.


Steven W. Cardiff, Museum of Natural Science 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803-3216, (sc Cardiff@lsu.edu)
Northern Canada

Cameron D. Eckert

The novelty of increasingly warm winters has worn thin in the North. The long-term health of northern ecosystems depends on deep and persistent cold winter temperatures—conditions that are disappearing with the rapid onset of climate change. In southwestern Yukon, a decade of above-normal winter temperatures has spawned a massive Spruce Bark Beetle outbreak that now covers more than 350,000 hectares. Elders and people living on the land can no longer rely on their traditional knowledge to understand and predict winter conditions. This year, the trend continued, with temperatures well above normal (e.g., 5°C above) throughout Northern Canada. Along with the warmer temperatures, much of the Yukon experienced unusually high snowfall. In contrast to the general trend, southern Northwest Territories had below-normal temperatures in February. As always, our winter report benefits from Christmas Bird Count and Great Backyard Bird Count observations, and participation was record high in both this year.

Abbreviations: NU (Nunavut), NWT (Northwest Territories), N.N.P.R. (Nahanni National Park Reserve).

WATERFOWL THROUGH GULLS

The Yukon has the Region's highest number of wintering waterfowl, largely due to Whitehorse's reliable winter flocks of Mallards, which this year numbered 17 on 24-25 Dec (HG, TH, CE). Rankin Inlet, NU had 13 Common Eiders on its 26 Dec C.B.C. (fide BZ). A late but noteworthy fall report was of a single Black Scoter, a rare migrant in N.N.P.R., in the company of 9 Surf Scoters 7 Aug at Rabbitkettle L. (DT). Norman Wells, NWT continues to be among the Region's most reliable locations for Sharp-tailed Grouse, with 16 recorded on the 23 Dec C.B.C. (RP). Willow Ptarmigan were plentiful (414) on the Yellowknife C.B.C. 31 Dec (fide RB); 51 were recorded on the Norman Wells, NWT count 23 Dec (fide RP) and 15 in Cambridge Bay, NU 17 Dec (fide BZ), the latter location a mere 300 km n. of the Arctic Circle. The Region's only report of Rock Ptarmigan was submitted by Rankin Inlet, NU, on 30 Nov (fide BZ).

The ever-reliable pair of Bald Eagles was present at McIntyre Cr. in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 24 Dec (HG, TH); however, one was subsequently injured and spent the rest of the winter in rehabilitation, while the other made good on the 26 Dec C.B.C. (CE). An ad. Sharp-shinned Hawk photographed at Marsh Lake, 28 Dec provided the Yukon's first winter record (ph. DF, DS). The Yukon's rarity of the season was an imm. Ivory Gull, which came to a sad end when it was found starving at Johnsons Crossing 1 Jan and subsequently died (SP). The circumstances were similar to the two previous records for Ivory Gull in the area; an imm. bird found starving in late Nov 1999 at nearby Tagish, Yukon also died, and one on Attlin L., British Columbia in mid-Nov 1987 showed up in weak condition but fed on fish entrails and meat until its departure. In Northwest Territories, an Ivory Gull was found dead in Aklavik in late Feb, apparently killed by Common Ravens (MM).

DOVES THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES
A Mourning Dove seen at Rabbitkettle L., N N.P.R., 30 Aug (GS, DT) furnished a rare park record. Wintering Great Horned Owls in the Yellowknife, NWT area got a boost this winter from high Snowshoe Hare and ptarmigan populations (RB). A Great Gray Owl was heard in the Norman Wells, NWT C.B.C. circle during count week (CM). A Boreal Owl was seen nearly daily through most of the period on Joliffe L., Yellowknife, NWT (AS, ph. RB). Three Downy Woodpeckers, near the n. limit of their winter range, were recorded on the 29 Dec C.B.C. in Mayo, cen. Yukon (MOD). A Black-backed Woodpecker was observed at Pontoon L., near Yellowknife, NWT in mid-Jan (RS). Northern Shrike reports included one in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 5 Jan (BoS), one in Haines Junction, sw Yukon 13 Jan and 28 Feb (RJ, WJ), and one in Yellowknife, NWT 5 & 21 Jan (DR, RB, MB).

It seemed there was no turning back for many of the Steller's Jays that poured into the Yukon last fall; small numbers were reported throughout the season from Whitehorse, Teslin, Tagish, and Carcross. Now, having survived the winter, will they remain to breed? Black-billed Magpie was first seen in the Sahtu region, NWT only a few years ago and has now been seen in all five Sahtu communities (RP), this winter, singles were recorded 29 Dec in Deline (RP, BH) and 30 Jan in Tulita (RP, BH). Whitehorse edged closer to Common Raven supremacy this year, with 1.013 tallied on the 26 Dec C.B.C. (fide WN); but it wasn't enough to beat Yellowknife's 1377 recorded 31 Dec (fide RB). Inuvik, NWT recorded 466 Common Ravens (fide CD), and Nanaimu's highest total (105) was turned in by Cambridge Bay 17 Dec (fide BZ), with Arctic Bay posting a close second with 87 on 5 Jan (fide CK). Common Ravens demonstrated their opportunistic capacity for predation by killing the aforementioned Ivory Gull in Aklavik, as well as a Snowshoe Hare near Yellowknife, NWT (BC).

The Region's only American Robin was reported from Haines Junction, sw Yukon 4 Jan (BaS, ET). Bohemian Waxwings had to look to other food sources around Whitehorse, Yukon, as a hard frost back in May resulted in a very poor Mountain Ash crop; however, a few flocks of up to 100 birds were seen there throughout Dec. Elsewhere in the Region, 43 Bohemians along with 2 Cedar Waxwings were reported on the Hay River, NWT C.B.C. 17 Dec (fide RR), 17 were reported on the Yellowknife, NWT C.B.C. 31 Dec (fide RB) and 16 there 19 Feb (JS), and a flock of 26 was seen in Haines Junction, sw Yukon 21-23 Feb (IW, RW). Small numbers of Dark-eyed Jun-
NORTHERN CANADA

A handful of rare sparrows seen across Northern Canada this winter included this immature Golden-crowned Sparrow, which successfully wintered (here 3 January 2007) at Canyon, furnishing the Yukon's second winter record for the species. Photograph by Robyn Rufiange-Holway.

Contributors (subregional editors in boldface): Marianne Bromley, Robert Bromley, Barb Cameron, Boris Dobrowolsky, Craig Dockrill, Cameron Eckert, Margaret Garolitz, Bruce Green, Helmut Grunberg, Chad Gubala, Todd Heakes, Keith Hickling, B. Hoar, Rita Jux, Walter Jux, Dan Kemble, Clare Kines, Mara Ledegerger, Carl MacLellan, Nancy Maides, Mark Mallory, Wendy Nixon, Mark O'Donoghue, Clive Osborne, Shayne Parker, Doug Phillips, Richard Popko, Sharon Riedl, Wolf Riedl, Dean Robertson, Robyn Rufiange-Holway (RRH), Rand Rudland, Ben Schonewille (BeS), Michael Setterington, Glen Sibbosten, Andrew Spaulding, John Stephenson, Dale Stokes, Yammy Stote, Rosanna Strong, Barbara Studds (BaS), Bob Studds (BoS), Bill Swainson (BSw), Pat Swainson (PSw), Douglas Tate (Northwest Territories), Enid Tait, Iris Wilson, Ron Wilson, Brian Zawadzki.

Cameron D. Eckert, 1402 Elm Street
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 4B6, (cedeckert@northwestel.net)

The JiPV

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers nearly 2000 first-rate, full-color slides at reasonable prices.

Available individually or in specially priced sets. Some sets include written scripts or taped narration and bird sounds.

Perfect for educators, libraries, birders, artists, and commercial use.

Visit us on the Web at
http://birds.cornell.edu/closlides

Write or call for a free catalog
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Visual Services
159 Sipsucker Woods Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 254-2450
birdslides@cornell.edu

NET CONNECTIONS

The ABA's online birder resource to travel companies and destinations as well as birding products and equipment.

For rates and information, go to the ABA website at
www.aba.org/netconnections

American Birder
www.aba.org

NW NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS
Prairie Provinces

Rudolf F. Koes | Peter Taylor

Although the rest of the northern hemisphere apparently experienced another record-mild winter, the Prairie Provinces had good old-fashioned cold and snowy weather, particularly in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Many lingerers did not survive the brutal cold of February. Northern owls, which often add spice to an otherwise quiet day of birding, were virtually unreported. On the other hand, grouse and relatives obviously enjoyed good breeding success in 2006 and were reported in high numbers. Likewise, redpolls were present in the best numbers in years.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Notable waterfowl included a Trumpeter Swan on the Fort Qu’Appelle, SK C.B.C. 16 Dec (fide GWP) and a Canvasback and 7 Greater Scaup at Gardiner Dam, SK 24 Feb (WW). Long-tailed Ducks were well represented in Alberta, with 2 at Banff N.P. 14-16 Dec (JR), one at Waterton N.P. 7 Dec (YA), and 3 on the Calgary C.B.C. 17 Dec. Also unusual was a Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye hybrid on the Calgary C.B.C. (TK) and a Red-breasted Merganser at Calgary 3-19 Dec (GY). Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers were high, notably the C.B.C. total of 390 at Lyleton, MB 4 Jan. Similarly, Gray Partridge were widely reported, e.g., six coys totaling 66+ birds were in the Grosse Isle-Marquette, MB area (KG).

Second provincial winter records were provided by a Red-throated Loon at Pine Falls, MB 2 Dec–9 Jan (M.N.S., m.ob., ph.) and a Pacific Loon at Calgary 12-17 Dec (GY). Tardy grebes included single Red-necked at L. Minnewanka, AB 1 Dec (JR) and Bracken Falls, MB 2 Dec (M.N.S., m.ob.), 7 Eared at Frank L., AB 3 Dec (GW), with 3 there 10 Dec (AS), 4 Horneds at Waterton N.P. 7 Dec (YA, BW), and a Western at Banff N.P. 7 Dec (JR). The last of 2 lingering American White Pelicans at Pine Falls was seen 11 Dec (M.N.S., PT, RZ, m.ob.). Great Blue Herons were at Moose Jaw, SK 8 Dec (DC), near Banff 1 Feb (JB), and at Saskatchewan, SK 25 Feb (FR).

Bald Eagles wintered Regionwide in higher numbers than usual, with a record-high 24 on the Calgary C.B.C. 17 Dec, 25+ near High River, AB 10 Feb (MSu, CS), and 26 at Gardiner Dam 18 Dec (RJ, m.ob.), plus widespread reports in agricultural areas of s. Manitoba. At least 10 Sharp-shinned Hawks were noted in s. Alberta, while Saskatchewan had two reports and Manitoba four. A Ferruginous Hawk at Maple Creek, SK 26 Feb was likely an early migrant. Gyrfalcons made a good showing, with at least 10 in s. Alberta, 5 in Saskatchewan, and 7 in Manitoba. These included a white-morph bird captured and banded at Saskatchewan 3 Jan (ph. MS) and another white bird near Kleefeld, MB 11 Jan+ (DE, m.ob.).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

There were three sightings of Killdeer in s. Alberta and 2 different Glacous Gulls at Gardiner Dam 3 & 18 Dec (NS, RD, GWP, m.ob.). Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers were particularly high in s. Saskatchewan, with maxima of 40 at Estevan (KH) and 37 at Swift Current (MD). Of all the owl species, only Snowy Owl was reported in good numbers. Northern Hawk Owl and Great Gray Owl reports were at their lowest in years. Rare in winter were single Long-eared Owls at Strathmore, AB 2 Feb (TK) and at Winnipeg, MB 11 Feb (RW). Short-eared Owls were widespread in s. Alberta, with peaks of 14 near Calgary 21 Jan (TK) and 9 at High River 23 Feb (DS). Manitoba had four Red-bellied Woodpecker reports: at Chater, Cypress River, Grosse Isle, and Turtle Mountain P.P. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Estuary, SK 4 Jan was a winter rarity (fide GWP).

Gray Jays continued their strong showing outside the boreal forest in s. Manitoba, but none was reported w. of the Red R. valley. By mid-Mar, the last birds departed. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee frequented a Jasper, AB feeder late Nov–Feb (JD, m.ob., fide JR), while a Carolina Wren at Winnipeg 28 Dec (N&SJS) was not confirmed. Tardy Hermit Thrushes were at Winnipeg 1 Dec (m.ob.) and at Regina, SK 27 Dec (BGSE). Varied Thrush numbers in s. Manitoba were unprecedented, with at least 11 birds reported in Winnipeg and many small towns; 4 were noted in Saskatchewan (m.ob.). A tardy Gray Catbird was at Winnipeg 4 Dec (fide RP). The Curve-billed Thrasher previously reported at Dalmeny, SK was last seen mid-Dec (DF, m.ob., ph.). Brown Thrashers were at Good Spirit Lake P.P. 15 Dec (B&SA), Hodgeville 5 Feb (fide BL), and Swift Current about 12 Feb.

SPARRROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A Spotted Towhee was a good find on the Saskatoon C.B.C. 26 Dec (fide RD). Lingering sparrows included 4 Chippings in s. Manitoba, with the latest one noted in Winnipeg 1 Jan (G&JG), a Fox in Winnipeg 6 Jan (DB), a Song throughout winter at Portage la Prairie, MB (AS) and another at Eastend, SK 1 Jan (GWP), a Lincoln’s at Winnipeg 6 Nov–5 Dec (WC), single wintering White-crowned at Kleefeld and Winnipeg, and 2 Harris’s in s. Manitoba and 10+ in s. Alberta. At least 5
American Birding
NORTH, ABA I

Varied Thrushes regularly wander east into Saskatchewan and Manitoba in late fall and early winter, but the winter of 2006-2007 saw unprecedented numbers in these provinces. This male was at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on 17 February 2007. Photograph by Nick Saunders.

Northern Cardinals were reported in s. Manitoba, where the species seems forever poised to become a regular breeder. More unexpected were 2 at Lumsden, SK throughout the period (fide BL) and one at Olds, AB 7 Feb–Mar (CL, m.ob., ph.). A first-year male Indigo Bunting at a Nanton, AB feeder 2 Dec provided the region’s first winter report (BW). Most notable of lingering blackbirds were 24 Rusty Blackbirds on the Lyleton C.B.C. 4 Jan, 10 on the Pike Lake, SK C.B.C. 2 Jan, and 8 at Millarville, AB 26 Jan (DK).

Single Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were at Swan River, MB 15 Dec–24 Jan (NJ, m.ob., ph.), Pike L. 18 Dec (fide RD), Regina 23 Dec–Feb (BL), and Prince Albert, SK mid-Jan–23 Feb (fide BL, ph.). Pine Grosbeak numbers were high across the Region, whereas Red and White-winged Crossbills continued to be scarce. The latter species was noted nest-building at Regina 12 Feb, but the nest was later abandoned (BL). Redpoll numbers, including those of Hoary Redpoll, were high throughout the Region after a dismal showing last winter. A flock of 1500 redpolls was at Frank L. 10 Feb (MSu, CS), and in Saskatchewan they were in their highest numbers since 2004. Conversely, few Pine Siskins lingered.

Addenda: Several notable records, all from spring through fall 2006, have come to light recently. A White-winged Dove was seen briefly near Val Marie, SK 6 Jun (MM). A Whip-poor-will, found at Calgary 28 Oct, recovered during rehabilitation and will be released in spring (SN, ph.). It provided the first fully documented record for Alberta. A first for the Region was an Acorn Woodpecker at Sundre, AB Jun–Jul (G&R, ph.). A Summer Tanager at Pike L. 17 May was about the 4th for Saskatchewan (BG, ph.).


Rudolf F. Koes, 135 Rossmere Crescent Winnipeg, Manitoba R2K 0G1, (koes@mts.net)
Peter Taylor, P. O. Box 597 Pinawa, Manitoba R0E 1L0, (taylorp@granite.mb.ca)
Northern Great Plains

Ron Martin

Continuing the trend from most of 2006, December and January were warmer and drier than average. However, February turned cold and wet. Overall, it was another very open winter in most of the region, and many records of semi-hardy species were tallied. There were good numbers of straggling waterbirds, and raptors made another strong showing. Gallinaceous birds continued strong, and owl numbers were well above average. Straggling sparrows were notable, and redpolls were numerous. The Gray Jay invasion continued in North Dakota, and Montana had a state-first Inca Dove.

GEESCOES THROUGH CORMORANTS

Winter reports of Greater White-fronted Geese are becoming more regular in North Dakota. This season, a single was with Canada Geese at Garrison Dam 29 Dec (REM). Two spring migrant Greater White-fronted Geese were at Freezeout L., MT 25 Feb (MS). A flock of 2500 Cackling Geese was at Freezeout L., MT by 23 Feb (MS). Furnishing the first winter-season report for North Dakota, a Trumpeter Swan from the Carson area was brought to the Bismarck Zoo 4 Dec for rehabilitation (fide HCT). Casual in Jan in North Dakota, an American Black Duck was at Tewaukan N.W.R. 6 Jan (MAO). A Green-winged Teal wintered at Garrison Dam, ND, the 2nd for the state in winter (REM); 2 were at Great Falls, MT 16 Jan (DW). The earliest ever spring migrants for North Dakota, 4 Hooded Mergansers were at Jamestown 26 Feb (LDI). Ring-necked Pheasant and Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers remain at high levels in North Dakota; peak counts were 1107 pheasants on the Garrison Dam C.B.C. 15 Dec and 498 grouse on the Arrowwood N.W.R. C.B.C. 18 Dec.

Providing the 7th record for Montana, a Yellow-billed Loon was discovered 4 Jan in Great Falls and remained for several days (DW). A Pied-billed Grebe near Bowdoin N.W.R. 12 Jan provided a first winter record for that area (DP, MT). The 2nd latest for the state, a Horned Grebe was at Garrison Dam, ND 17 Dec (SDL). Casual in winter in South Dakota, a Western Grebe was at Pierre 15 Jan (RDO). Late American White Pelicans were singles 17 Dec at Garrison Dam, ND (REM) and 21 Dec at Pierre, SD (RDO). Tardy Double-crested Cormorants were in Oliver, ND (HCT) and Ft. Peck, MT 13 Dec (CC).

VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

Very unusual in the Region in winter, a single Turkey Vulture was in Yellowstone, MT 10 Dec (BH), and 2 were near the North Dakota border n. of Winku, MT 26 Jan (RL). It was another outstanding winter for raptors in the Region. Small numbers of Northern Harriers wintered widely in North Dakota, and 3 spent the season in Grand Forks (EEF, DOL). For the 2nd consecutive year, Ferruginous Hawks wintered in North Dakota, with 6 noted in sw North Dakota 10 Feb (SM). Rough-legged Hawks peaked at 80 in Grand Forks, ND 23 Jan (EEF). Gyrfalcon reports were widespread. A Virginia Rail 10 Feb in Yankton, SD provided the 3rd winter record for the state away from the Black Hills (p.a., DS). Accidental in winter, a Franklin’s Gull was at Yankton, SD 5 Jan (p.a., BH). Mew Gulls were at Ft. Peek, MT 11-29 Dec (p.a., CC, GS) and in Pierre, SD 16 Dec-16 Jan (p.a., RDO, KM, JSP). The 2 Iceland Gulls reported in the fall season at Garrison Dam, ND remained through 17 Dec (REM). A possible 6th record for South Dakota, an Iceland Gull was at Pierre 15 Jan (p.a., RDO, KM). The first record for Montana, an Inca Dove came to a feeder in Terry 2 Dec (SC); the bird was found dead 4 Dec. Casual in North Dakota, a Northern Hawk Owl was photographed in Grand Forks 4-5 Dec (p.a., EEF). Three undocumented Great Gray Owl reports came from North Dakota, two in Dec and one in Feb. An amazing 141 Short-eared Owls were tallied in Grand Forks, ND 8 Dec (EEF, DOL).

KINGFISHERS THROUGH BLUEBIRDS

An unusual number for North Dakota, single Belted Kingfishers wintered in three counties. Casual in winter in North Dakota, 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers were noted on the Bismarck–Mandan C.B.C. 17 Dec. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were late 9 Dec in Union (BH) and 17 Dec in Yankton, SD (DS). Good numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were again reported in North Dakota w. of usual areas. Of nine reports, five were from the Bismarck–Mandan area. The Gray Jay invasion first reported in the fall season continued into the winter in North Dakota. At least 15 were thought to be in Grand Forks, ND (DOL), and 3 were noted at Iceland S.P. Common Raven numbers continue to increase in North Dakota. Peaks this winter included 35 at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R. 10 Dec (GAE) and 40 on the Christmas count at Iceland S.P 19 Dec.

Accidental in winter, a Rock Wren was near Great Falls, MT 2 Dec (p.a., BM). The 5th record for North Dakota, and the 3rd in winter, a Carolina Wren was in Cass 22 Dec–4 Feb (p.a., LG, JG). In South Dakota, a Carolina Wren was in Minnehaha 16 Dec (MS). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was in Jamestown, ND 15 Dec (p.a., LDI); the species is accidental in winter in the state. Very rare in South Dakota, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was in Rapid City 20 Dec–24 Jan (MM, JLB).

This Inca Dove appeared at a feeder in Terry, Montana 2-4 (here 4) December 2006, but perished on the latter date; it was the first of its species recorded in the state. Photograph by Scott Carlton.

unexpected in winter, an Eastern Bluebird was in Morton, ND 17 Dec (CDE); in South Dakota, one seen 10 Feb at Pierre may have been an early migrant (RDO).

THRASHERS THROUGH REDPOLLS

The Curved-billed Thrasher reported in the fall season from the Bull Mts., MT remained through the season (WH, LH). A Gray Catbird 21 Feb in Rapid City, SD provided the first Feb record for the state (p.a., MM). The only Yellow-rumped Warbler reported was from Yankton, SD 17 Dec (DS). With the open winter, sparrows made a good showing. Continuing a recent trend in North Dakota, a Chipping Sparrow remained on the NDSU
Only the fifth for North Dakota, but the third winter record, this Carolina Wren was in Cass County 22 (here 29) December 2006 through 4 February 2007. Photograph by Joe Gregg.

Well to the east of the species’ usual haunts in the North Dakota Redlands, this Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch of the Hepburn’s subspecies was present in Barnes County 19 (here 20) December 2006 through the end of the period. Photograph by Dean Riemer.

campus in Fargo until 30 Jan (p.a., DPW). Very rare in South Dakota in winter, a Field Sparrow was in Yankton 17 Dec (p.a., DS) Accidental in winter in South Dakota, Swamp Sparrows were in Yankton 17 Dec (p.a., DS) and in Fall River 28 Dec (p.a., JSP). Furnishing the first winter report for South Dakota, a Black-headed Grosbeak was in Pennington 2-4 Dec (p.a., TBW). Casual in winter in the Dakotas, Brown-headed Cowbirds were in Jamestown, ND 13 Dec and 27 Jan–10 Feb in Lake, SD (JSP).

A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch of the Hepburn’s subspecies was at a feeder in Barnes, ND 19 Dec+ (p.a., PRS, DWR) Pine Grosbeaks made a very good showing, with seven reports in North Dakota and one each from South Dakota and Montana. The Red Crossbill peak in North Dakota was a flock of 70 at the Minot Country Club 23 Dec (REM). Small numbers of Hoary Redpolls were widely reported in North Dakota. A single was in Sully, SD 6 Jan (RDO). In Montana, a single was seen intermittently at Ft. Peck (CC), and one was in Choteau 6 Jan (JN).

Contributors (state editors in boldface): MONTANA: Scott Carlton, Charles Carlson, Luther Harris, Waneta Harris, Billie Hicks, Ross Lagasse, Bob Martinka, John Nordrum, Dwayne Prewitt, Mike Schwitters, Gary Swant, Dave Williams. NORTH DAKOTA: Corey D. Ellington, Gary A. Eshinger, Eve E. Freeberg, Joe Gregg, Linda Gregg, Larry D. IgI, Dave O. Lambeth, Sherry D. Leslie, Ron E. Martin, Steve Millard, Mark A. Onst, Dean W. Riemer, Paulette R. Scherr, H. Clark Talkington, Dennis P. Wiesenborn. SOUTH DAKOTA: Jocelyn L. Baker, Bill Huser, Michael Melius, Kenny Miller, Ricky D. Olson, Jeffrey S. Palmer, Mark Schmidtbauder, Dave Swanson, Tom and Brenda Warren. Ron Martin, 16900 125th Street SE.

Sawyer, North Dakota 58781-9284, (rjmartin@ndak.net)

Southern Great Plains

W. Ross Silcock | Joseph A. Grzybowski

It was a relatively quiet winter in the Region for rarities. Of note are the increasingly larger numbers of waterfowl, cranes, and icterids lingering or wintering increasingly farther north. Shorebird and waterfowl migration seemed to jump-start early, particularly in southwestern Oklahoma. However, also of note was the paucity of some species such as Yellow-rumped Warblers and Spotted Towhees in central Oklahoma, or some corvids in western Nebraska. Some observers have speculated that West Nile virus or drought may be culprits in these situations, but no connections are clear.

Abbreviations: Hackberry (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Harlan (Harlan County Res., NE); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (playa wetlands s.-cen. Nebraska); Red Slough (W.M.A., McCurtain, OK), Sandhills (large area of native grassland in n.-cen. Nebraska); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller; Sequoyah, OK).

GEES GEES GEES

A spectacular estimate of 307,000 geese, including the five expected species, came from Quivira 14 Dec (fide LM). Unexpectedly late were 5 Greater White-fronted Geese at Desoto N.W.R., Washington, NE 3 Jan (BB). A find in its own right was a dark-morph Ross’s Goose photographed at Harvard Marsh, Clay, NE 26 Feb (PD). A survey of traditional Trumpeter swan wintering areas in the Sandhills located 166 on 2 Jan (Nebraska Game and Parks, fide JG). Wintering Trumpeters southward in the Region were widely reported, as is becoming the norm, including 14 in Kansas (fide LM) and as many as 19 in Oklahoma (fide JL). Now
the rarer swan in the Region, 5 Tundras were claimed at Quivira Dec–Feb (MR, another in Coffey, KS 27 Jan (MG, AM), 4 in Garvin, OK 21 Dec (Ebe), and 2-6 in Custer, OK 13 Dec–Jan (BS, Ebe).

Unusual mid-winter stragglers were 2-3 Wood Ducks in Lancaster, NE 28 Jan and 4 Feb (LE). Now rare in the Region, the only American Black Ducks reported were 2 in Douglas, KS 14 Jan (MG, AM). An impressive 28,700 Mallards were reported at DeSoto NWR, Washington, NE 20 Dec (BB). Early returning Blue-winged Teal were a single in Tillman, OK 25 Feb (L&MT) and 4 at Red Slough 26 Feb (DA). An excellent count of Greater Scaup was 86 at McConaughy 27 Dec (SJD). Elsewhere, one Greater was in Lancaster, NE 9 Jan (JG), 5 in Tillman, OK 2 Dec (L&MT), and 6 in Douglas, KS 17 Dec (PW, RW). White-winged Scoters were noted in Doniphan, KS 16 Dec (2; DC), in Tulsa, OK 10-26 Feb (at least one; JH, SM, m.ob.), and in Alfalfa, OK 22 Feb (one; SW). Among the Black Scoters located were singles in Lancaster, NE 1 Dec (LE), Butler, KS 4 Feb (KG), and Tulsa, OK 10-23 Feb (TC, m.ob.). Two Long-tailed Ducks were in Douglas, KS 4 Feb (MG, AM), and at least one was in Tulsa, OK 16 Dec–Feb (DH, m.ob.). A regular occurrence in Scotts Bluff, NE was the female Barrow’s Goldeneye 26 Jan (KDL), but up to 4 Barrows in Kansas was unusual; 2 in Sedgwick 16 Dec (PJ), possibly a 3rd at a different Sedgwick location 6 Jan (DS&FV), and another at Quivira 9 Jan (L&Q). Common Mergansers winter in large numbers in the Region; best counts for each state were 11,750 at McConaughy 28 Dec (SJD), 18,040 in Mitchell, KS 17 Dec (MR), and 10,000 in Blaine, OK 3 Feb (NV, DW); the latter number somewhat remarkable in recent years, as Commons have remained largely n. of Oklahoma lately. “Hundreds” of Hooded Mergansers in Blaine, OK 3 Feb (NV, DW) and another 285 in Woodward, OK 6 Dec (DG) were top counts mentioned.

Greater Prairie-Chickens numbered 100+ in Lincoln, NE 28 Jan (TJW). The only Red-throated Loons reported were all in Oklahoma; singles were in Oklahoma 17 Feb (PV, TU, JW), Bryan 21 Feb (BH), and 3-6 were at the “loon magnet,” T Cape in, 26 Jan–10 Feb (JWA). Up to 8 Pacific Loons were at T Cape in 26 Jan–27 Feb (JWA, m.ob.) among the many Common Loons, whose peak count hit 253 on 27 Jan (JWA). Another healthy count of Commons came from L. Texoma, Marshall, OK 8 Feb (Ebe)—118 birds. The northernmost Commons were single juvs. in Keith, NE and Lincoln, NE 27 Dec (SJD). Now annual at T Cape in, a Yellow-billed Loon was observed there 6-26 Jan (JWA) and 27 Feb (CC). A juv. Red-necked Grebe was late at McConaughy 27-28 Dec (SJD). Tenkiller also hosted 281 Horned Grebes 27 Jan (JWA). Tardy and wintering were single Eared Grebes at Red Slough 2 Dec (DA) and Tillman, OK 25 Feb (L&MT), with up to 9 in Comanche, OK 8 Jan (JAG) and 25 Feb (FK). Western Grebes winter in parts of the Region in small numbers, as open water permits, n. as far as McConaughy, where “a few” were present 7 Jan (TJW). Elsewhere, 8 Westerns were in Kansas through 2 Jan, one on the latter date as far e. as Linn (AM; fide LM), and at least 3 were in Oklahoma into Feb (fide JL), one of those e. to Cherokee (JWA). The only Clark’s Grebes reported were a late single at McConaughy 28 Dec (SJD) and one in Comanche, OK 3-25 Feb (L&MT, m.ob.).

Very late were a Least Bittern in Johnson, KS 2 Dec (DF), a Great Egret in Sedgwick until 3 Dec (H&SG), and a Little Blue Heron in Oklahoma 11 Dec (PV). Another Great Egret wintered at Red Slough (DA). Also challenging their thermoregulation abilities were 3 Black-crowned Night-Herons in Sedgwick through at least 12 Feb (DS&FV). Perhaps Nebraska’s first documented winter record of a Turkey Vulture came from Scotts Bluff 15 Jan (AK, LK). Returning Turkey Vultures were as far n. as Box Butte, NE by 26 Feb (KK). Definitely a “zooite” was the White-tailed Kite in Oklahoma, OK 6 Feb (DW, TU). The best count of Bald Eagles was of 155 in Grady/Clay, KS 8 Jan (C&JQ). This was a normal winter for Northern Goshawks, with the 3 reported in Kansas being the most southerly (fide LM). One of fewer than five records for Nebraska and Kansas was an apparently wild Harris’s Hawk photographed in Sedgwick, KS 11 Jan (fide PJ). Red-shouldered Hawks continue to edge westward, with 3 as far so as Harvey, KS (G&JF; fide LM). A late Swainson’s Hawk was in Cleveland, OK 18 Dec (MP). Golden Eagles were reported e. to Red Slough (ad.) 5 Feb (DA) and 26 & 28 Feb (DA). Merlins continue their more prominent presence in the Region, where they are now being more routinely reported in towns. The Peregrine Falcon pairs that nest in Omaha and Lincoln, NE appear to be resident (JG, GB). A Peregrine was also noted in Manhattan, KS 25 Feb (DR). A Prairie Falcon wandered e. to Linn, KS 6 Dec (MG), with a surprising 2 in McCurtain, OK through the period (J&DV).

### RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A King Rail in Lincoln 15 Dec was identified by its single kek calls (TJW)—if accepted, the 2nd Dec record for Nebraska. The first returning Sandhill Cranes were in Kearney, NE 5 Feb (fide RL); about 10,000 were in the cen. Both rare in Oklahoma, these White-winged and Black Scoters were photographed at Lake Keystone, Tulsa County 17 February 2007. Photograph by Steve Metz.

Both rare in Oklahoma, these White-winged and Black Scoters were photographed at Lake Keystone, Tulsa County 17 February 2007. Photograph by Steve Metz.
season were 23 Long-billed Dowitchers at Hackberry 18 Feb, with 62 there by 25 Feb (L&M). Oddball Franklin's Gulls in alternate plumage appeared in Cedar, NE 5 Jan (BFH), Comanche, OK 8 Jan (JAG), Lancaster, NE 12-15 Jan (LE), and Oklahoma, OK 11 Feb (DW, KB, JCu). An excellent count of 3000 Bonaparte's Gulls was made in Sequoyah, OK 27 Jan (JWA). California Gulls in Nebraska included 30 presumed migrants tagging along with 500+ Ring-billed Gulls at Harlan 23 Feb (G&WH). Rarer southward, 2 California Gulls were found in Kansas in Dec (DE, MR, RP), and 2-4 were in Oklahoma through the period (JAG, JWA, JL, GK). Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls are now regular in winter throughout the Region; about 18 Thayer's and 8 Lesser Black-backed were tallied from all three states (fide WRS, fide LM, fide JL). Another regular in winter, Glaukous Gulls were reported s. to Alfalfa, OK 16 Dec (2; AW et al.), Blaine, OK 3-15 Feb (NV, DW, m.ob.), and Oklahoma 15-24 Feb (PV, JW, GK), with several in Tulsa through the period (JWA, TC, JW). A Slaty-bellied Gull reported (p.a.) from Sarpy, NE 21 Dec may have been the well-documented individual found a km from the Region, in Iowa, in late Dec. Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported; one in Coffey, KS, present since 11 Nov, was seen 2 Dec (DG), with another in Cherokee, OK 10 Feb (JWA).

Eurasian Collared-Doves were gathering twigs as early as 23 Feb in a Cheyenne, NE yard (AS). While also invading much of the Region, the 142 White-winged Doves in Finney, KS 11 Dec (T&SS) made a shocking total. Inca Doves, now regular locally across Oklahoma, are also increasing and spreading in the Region, with singles located as far n.

and w. as Keith, NE 28 Dec (ph. SJD) and Morton, KS 30 Dec (SP). Spreading more slowly, Greater Roadrunners were found Clark, KS 28 Dec (GP) and Cowley, KS 24 Dec (GJ). Of 8 Snowy Owls reported, 7 were in Kansas (fide LM) and the other in Nebraska (SJID). Barred Owls are moving westward, with one in Clark, KS 28 Dec (GP) and 2 in Jefferson, NE 18 Feb (RE). Long-eared Owls were widely reported in Nebraska and Kansas, with a best count 14 in Lancaster, NE 16 Dec (fide JG). Only 4 Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported, 2 each from Nebraska and Kansas (WS, EB, fide DWo, CG&JO, fide BG). A Red-headed Woodpecker in Madison, NE 23 Dec (fide DWo) was northerly for the date. Far to the ne. of the usual sw. Regional locations, a female Ladder-backed Woodpecker appeared in Riley, KS 9-11 Dec (ph. LJ) in the same location a female had been seen in 2001 (LJ). Another indication of warming trends, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers again wintered more commonly than usual n. to se. Nebraska (fide WRS).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Baird's Sandpiper is normally rare anywhere in the United States in the winter season, but this bird was one of six noted at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Alfalfa County, Oklahoma on 26 February 2001. Photograph by Steve Metz.

Flycatchers through Waxwings

 Becoming an expected event now, a (or the) Black Phoebe continued at Broken Bow Dam in McCurtain, OK, remaining at least through 10 Feb (DA, BH, EB,). Eastern Phoebes are hardy for flycatchers, but the 2 in Neosho, KS 6 Jan (RM) and one in Riley, KS 16 Dec (DR) were pushing their luck. Northern Shrikes penetrated southward to Cimarron, OK 27 Jan (JW, MF), and Alfalfa, OK 15-16 Dec (AW), about as expected. C.B. compilers in Scotts Bluff and Lancaster, NE (AK, JG) noted the scarcity or absence of Black-billed Magpies; along with Black-capped Chickadees and American Crows, these species appear to have had significant population reductions in recent years in cen. Nebraska, although chickadees may be rebounding (fide LBK).

Arriving early were a Purple Martin in Tulsa, OK 21 Feb (PDe) and a Tree Swallow at Red Slough 22 Feb (DA). Displaced Rock Wrens included one far to the e. in McCurtain, OK for the period (BH, m.ob.); northerly were 2 in Russell, KS through 11 Jan (MR) and one in Ellsworth, KS 7 Jan (DG). Two wintering pairs of Carolina Wrens as far w. as North Platte, NE (fide T&JW) continued this species' northward expansion. A tardy or lingering House Wren was at Quivira 14 Dec (MR). Winter Wrens were reported on Christmas counts n. to Washington, NE 23 Dec (fide JT) and w. to Russell, KS 16 Dec (MR). A northerly Sedge Wren was at Quivira 14 Dec along with 24 Marsh Wrens (MR), while a northerly Marsh Wren was knocking on South Dakota's door in Cedar, NE 16 Jan (MB).

Chancing its metabolic functions was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Scotts Bluff 16 Dec (AK). Good numbers of Eastern Bluebirds are remaining well into Nebraska during Dec, with 143 in Lancaster 16 Dec (fide JG) and 65 n. to Dodge 3 Jan (D&J). Large numbers of Mountain Bluebirds were in w. Kansas; 686 in Barber 30 Dec (P&J) and 624 in Russell 16 Dec (MR). Eye-boggling must have been the 100,000 American Robins estimated in McCurtain, OK 21 Dec (BH). Always an exciting find in the Region, 3 Varied Thrushes appeared in ne. Nebraska mid-Dec-23 Jan (fide DL, LE, JK, KL, L&CF), and another made it s. to Ellis, KS 1 Jan (T&JW). Another displaced westerner, a Sage Thrasher, made it e. as far as Nowata, OK 28 Dec (MD), and our resident Stouts, NE Curve-billed Thrasher,
which arrived in Oct 2002, was still present through the period (jude AK). The only report of Bohemian Waxwing were of a flock of 60 in Dawes, NE 7-8 Feb and a smaller flock there 21 Feb (JF).

**WARBLERS THROUGH WEAVERS**

Half-hardy parulids w. of usual sites were 2 Pine Warblers as far n. as North Platte, NE 7 Dec (TJV) and another in Cleveland, OK 25 Dec (JAG). A Western Palm Warbler was in Douglas, KS on the unprecedented date of 20 Feb (DG). A Common Yellowthroat was in Cleveland, OK 9 Feb (RG), later than the latest Jan records. Unexpected so far w. in Oklahoma, Eastern Towhees were in Cadle 7 Dec (NV, ME, NH), Comanche 21 Jan (L&M), and Blaine, OK 15 Feb (H&M, KM). Northernly Chipping Sparrows were in Riley (DR) and Shawnee, KS 16 Dec (GH), and as many as 18 were in Alfalfa, OK 16 Dec (AW et al.). In addition to Chippings, other half-hardy sparrows included a Field Sparrow in Clark, KS 28 Dec (GP) and single Vesper Sparrows in Alfalfa, OK 16 Dec (AW et al.) and Tulsa, OK 19 Jan (GT). At the likely n. edge of their winter range, up to 5 Henslows' Sparrows were at Red Slough through the period (DA, DWD et al.). Single Fox Sparrows in Cimarron, OK 27 Jan (WJ, MF), Otoe, NE 17 Feb (L&CF), and Lancaster, NE 23 Feb (CNK) may have been getting a jump on the season, although single Swamp Sparrows in Cass, NE and Sarpy, NE 1 Feb (WF) must have been wintering, a rare occurrence that far north. A regional “zooetic,” with fewer than 20 records in all, a Golden-crowned Sparrow was found in Harvey, KS 16 Dec (JS, DP). Rare during winter in Nebraska, 2 White-winged Juncos in Dawes 3 Jan (B&DW) were the only ones reported. Snow Buntings were more in evidence than usual in Nebraska; some 72 were reported, but only to about the Platte Valley (jude WRS).

Great-tailed Grackles keep staying farther n., in larger numbers, with 80 still in Harlan, NE 1 Dec (G&W), 1500 in Leavenworth, KS 31 Dec (JS), and 600+ in Douglas, KS 14 Jan (MG, AM). Only moderate numbers of Purple Finches appeared, including one as far w. as Scotts Bluff, NE 2 Dec (KDL). Common Redpolls were found in small numbers in Nebraska also, with 13 reported, including 9 in Washington 23 Dec (EB, WRS). Pine Siskins were few except in the w.; 76 were in Scotts Bluff, NE 16 Dec (jude AK). A candidate for best bird of the season was the Eurasian Tree Sparrow photographed near Norfolk, NE 3 Feb (MB) and seen again 11 Feb (PR, BFH). This species has been gradually expanding northwestward in Iowa over the past few years; the nearest Iowa record previous to this Nebraska sighting was some 112 km e. of the Nebraska border.

Cited observers (area editors in boldface): NEBRASKA: Bob Barry, Elliott Bedows, Gary Berthelsen, Mark Brogie, Linda R. Brown, Kathy DeLara, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Paul Dunbar, Rick Eades, Larry Eisenmann, Larry & Carol Falk (L&CF), William Flack, John Flavin, Joe Gubanyi, Glen & Wanda Hoge (G&W), Bill F. Huser, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Lee Kenitz, Dan Kim, J. Kirk, Clem N. Klashake, Ken Kranik, Keith Lacy, Dan Leger, Richard Luchins, Don & Jan Paseka (D&JP), Paul Roisen (PR), W. Ross Silcock, Audrey Sterkel, Terry Toll, Bruce & Donna Walgren (B&DW), T.J. Walker, Duane Wolf (DWO), KANSAS: Donna Chance, Dave Fischer, Gregg & Joanna Friesen (G&S), Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish, Harry & Sharon Gregory (H&SG), Bob Gress, Kevin Groeneweg, Gary Haden, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Robert Mangile, Terry & Sam Maniell (T&SM), Lloyd Moore, Aaron Mitchell, Chuck & Jaye Otte (C&JO), Sebastian Patti, Rob Pennet, Galen Pittman, Dwight Platt, Lee & Jane Queal (L&JQ), Mike Rader, David Rintoul, Tom & Sara Shane (T&SS), Joe Soukup, Don & Fran Vannoy (D&FW), Phil Wedge, Ryan Williams, Gene Young. OKLAHOMA: David Arbour, James W. Arterburn, Karen Bays, Eric Beck (EB), Cameron Cox, Jane Cunningham (JC), Tom Curtis, P. Detrick (PD), Melinda Droge, Max Fuller, David Gill (DG), Joseph A. Grzybowski, Richard Gunn, Berlin Heck, Neland Hill, Jim Hofman, Donna Horton, George Kamp, John Loyd, Kurt Meisenzhal, Steve Metz, Michael Patten, Brady Suther, Lou & Mary Truex (L&M), Terry Underhill, Joyce & Don Varnett (J&DV), Patricia Velte, Nancy Vicars, Dora Webb (DWE), Anne Wilbur, Don Winslow, Doug Wood (DWD), Jimmy Woodard, Shane Woolbright. W. Ross Silcock, P.O. Box 57 Taber, Iowa 51653, (silcock@rosssilcock.com) Joseph A. Grzybowski, 715 Elmwood Drive Norman, Oklahoma 73072, (j_grzybowski@sbcglobal.net)
This winter season had more that its share of inclement weather. On the positive side, this did mean above-average precipitation in many areas of the state. However, several observers reported impacts to bird populations and in a few cases die-offs of owls and other less-hardy species. This weather did not bring with it invasions of finches, jays, or some of the more regular montane species. Notable by their near-absences were Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin. Good numbers of Mountain Bluebirds were reported throughout the western half of the state and above-average numbers of Western Bluebirds in the northwest and Trans-Pecos. Overall, the season was a mixed bag, and many observers reported that the birding was generally lackluster. North-central Texas seemed to be the hot spot of rarities in the state, with several species of unusual gulls, Costa’s Hummingbird, Snow Bunting, and Common Redpoll. However, these highlights did not overshadow the fact that many other more regularly occurring winter residents seemed to be in low numbers, presumably due to the sustained drought conditions in various regions of the state.

WATERFOWL THROUGH GREBES
A blue-morph Ross’s Goose was at McNary Res., Hudspeth 17 Dec–7 Jan (BZ, JPa). A white morph at L. Waco 18 Dec (EH, KA) was the 3rd for McLennan. One to 3 Cackling Geese stayed with a small flock of Canada Geese at McNary and Ft. Hancock reservoirs 7-28 Jan (JPa) for just the 2nd Hudspeth record. A Brant in Lubbock, Lubbock 4-5 Jan (CS, ph., 6BB et al.) was the 22nd for Texas and the 7th for the South Plains. Tundra Swans were reported in five locations, including 6 near Quanah, Hardeman 5-8 Jan (ph.

Swe, DFO et al.) and 3 near Clarksville, Red River 25 Jan–23 Feb (JSm, ph. MWh), the latter providing only the 2nd record for ne. Texas since 1984. The only Eurasian Wigeons were males at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso 29 Dec–10 Feb (ph., TJS, m.ob.) and at O. H. Ivie Res., Concho 2 Dec–28 Jan (TJAP et al.). Cinnamon Teal were reported in above-average numbers in the El Paso area and the Upper Texas Coast. Greater Scaup were more common than usual in n.-cen. Texas, with an impressive inland total of 48 at L. Diversion, Archer 3 Feb (DDC, DL, GC). An ad. male Common Eider was collected by a hunter in the n. Laguna Madre, Nueces 8 Jan (jkl KK); the bird was subsequently photographed and will be a first state record if accepted by the state bird records committee. A Surf Scoter in the Brownsville Ship Channel, Cameron 17 Dec (BMC) was s. of its normal range. Inland White-winged Scoters included one that wintered at Firestation Pond, Grayson (TR) and 4 noted at Joe Pool L., Dallas 18 Feb (DR). Single Long-tailed Ducks were at Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson 2 Dec (TR), Padre Island National Seashore, Kenedy 13 Dec (PKn), Galveston’s East Beach 30 Dec (JSl), and Sea Rim S.P., Jefferson 31 Dec (SMa, JPI, LH). Common Mergansers were more common than usual in n.-cen. Texas, with 8 seen at Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson 2 Dec (TR).

Red-throated Loons were seen at Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson, with one 10 Feb (GCo, TR) and 2 on 25 Feb (TR, BoS); a single was at L. Buchanan, Llano 10-12 Dec (ph. TFe). Pacific Loons were reported on L. Waco, McLennan 16 Dec (FB, JM), L. Ray Roberts, Denton 23 Dec (BFR), L. Lewisville, Denton 31 Dec (MR), Canyon L., Comal 21 Jan and 13 Feb (DPu), and L. Tawakoni, Van Zandt 10 Dec–4 Feb (RK). Up to 8 Common Loons at L. Meredith, Hutchinson 3-28 Dec (BPl, RC, LS) was a high count for the Panhandle. An impressive 29 Western Grebes were tallied on L. Buchanan, Llano 3 Jan (TFe). Horned Grebe numbers were up, with estimates reaching 5000 at L. Tawakoni, Rains in mid-Feb (RK). A Red-necked Grebe was observed at L. Kickapoo, Archer 28 Jan–4 Mar (1SLo, DHO, DPA et al.), representing a first county record. An impressive six grebe species including the Red-necked and a Clark’s Grebe were noted in Archer 3 Feb (DDC, DL, GC).

PELICANS THROUGH RAPTORS
A Brown Pelican was inland at L. Alan Henry, Gurza 17 Feb (JRo). An impressive count of 128 Anhingas was made at San Bernard N.W.R., Brazoria/Matagorda 15 Dec (m.ob.). A Neotropic Cormorant in Hunt 4 Jan (MWh) may provide a county first record. A Reddish Egret at Lubbock, Lubbock 12 Feb (EM) represented the 2nd record for the South Plains; one that turned up at Stillhouse Holow L., Bell in late Oct was present until 7 Jan

When this Northern Saw-whet Owl was brought to the attention of area birders in Lubbock, Texas, it had been present for several weeks. It roosted in the same location from 9 February through 14 March (2002). Photograph by Brandon Best.
served at Calaveras L., Bexar 10 Feb (MR, SCo) provided a rare inland record. A Wood Stork at La Sal del Rey, Hidalgo 22 Dec (DJ) furnished a rare local winter record.

Out-of-range Turkey Vultures included one at L. Meredith, Hutchinson 3 Dec (BPI), one near Clairemont, Kent 24 Dec (AH), and up to 6 at El Paso until 4 Jan (JSp). A White-tailed Kite at Palo Duro Canyon, Randall 11 Jan (RM) represented the first winter record for the Panhandle, and 2 near Girard, Kent 24 Dec (AH) made the 2nd winter record for the South Plains. Out-of-range Bald Eagles included a first-year bird at Laguna Atascosa, Cameron 3 Feb (SBA) and an ad. at Hazel Bazemore County Park, Nueces 7 Dec (JMc).

A Common Black-Hawk was at Salmino, Starr 10 Feb (KE). Extralimital Harris’s Hawks were near Sutherland Springs, Wilson 2 Feb (LBD), in Somervell 24 Dec (MR, SCo), and on the Freeport C.B.C., Brazoria 15 Dec (6 birds; m.ob.)—the latter part of record-high numbers on the Upper Texas Coast. Four reports of wintering Red-shouldered Hawks from the eon. Trans-Pecos were exceptional (m.ob.). Ferruginous Hawks were reported farther s. than expected, with 3 in Kenedy 29 Dec (BFr) and a single at La Sal de Vieja, Willacy 17 Feb (MHJ). The Crested Caracara expansion continued, with a first record for Leon in the Central Brazos Valley 23 Jan (DWO) and singles along Winscott–Plover Rd., Torrance 11 Dec (GE) and elsewhere in Torrance 24 Dec (MR, SCo). Merlins were reported in above-average numbers, with rare East Texas sightings in Angelina, Harrison, and two locations in Nacogdoches (jmd DWO, PBA). An imm. Aplomado Falcon wandered to Brazoria N.W.R., Brazoria 14 Dec (JSO). Prairie Falcons were found s. to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with one e. of Harlingen, Cameron 23 Dec (MG) and 2 near Sebastian, Willacy 26 Dec (DJ).

RAILS THROUGH GULLS

Four Black Rails were found at Sargent, Matagorda 15 Dec, and an amazing 13 were found in this same location later in the period (JLI, CB et al.). A Purple Gallinule at Brazos Bend S.P., Fort Bend 4 Feb (BT, BG, ph. GLA) may represent the first Feb record for the Upper Texas Coast. Three Common Moorhens at Gibbon Creek 28 Dec (L&TGH, SWH) provided the 2nd winter record for Grimes. Five Sandhill Cranes were near Huntsville, Walker 25 Dec (RBe), and a flock was heard near the Trinity R. the same day (DWO), providing the first winter reports from the Pineywoods. The Whooping Crane flock at Aransas N.W.R., Aransas was estimated at 237 individuals; no mortality was recorded for the season (TSO).

Four Snowy Plovers at L. Tawakoni, Rains 3 Dec (MWh) were late, while 35 found at La Sal del Rey, Hidalgo 21 Jan (DJ) made a high count for an inland location. High winter counts of Wilson’s Plovers came from East Beach, Galveston: 10 there 17 Dec (MWh) and 16 on 31 Dec (TE). Nine Mountain Plovers found in agricultural fields near Del City, Hudspeth 27 Jan (LBD) were further evidence that the species winters there. Counts of 250 Mountain Plovers near Kippa, Uvalde 17 Dec (MWh) and 100 in Bexar 20 Jan (BD) were encouraging. Solitary Sandpiper numbers were up, with 4 counted on the Austin C.B.C., Travis 16 Dec (m.ob.), one at Lubbock, Lubbock 16 Dec (PKI), and another at Alazan Bayou W.M.A., Nacogdoches 17 Dec (ph. DWO). Wintering Solitary Sandpipers were noted at Waco, McLeannan (JY) and in Harris (DD). A Whimbrel on the Katy Prairie, Harris 3 Dec (JGr) was unusual, as this species is extremely rare away from the immediate coast in winter. Single Long-billed Curlews were reported at Miller’s Creek Res., Throckmorton 22 Dec (GCo, TR, DH, BoS) and in ne. Travis 3 Jan (BFr). An impressive 8 Pectoral Sandpipers were at Brazoria N.W.R., Brazoria 17 Dec (BNl). A Dunlin found at L. Waco 7 Dec (EH) furnished a first winter record for McLeannan. An American Woodcock near Quannah, Hardeman 5 Jan (MT) is believed to mark a first county record, while another at Bentsen S.P., Hidalgo 17 Jan (RSM) was a rare Lower Rio Grande Valley record. A Wilson’s Phalarope lingered until 17 Dec at McNary Res., Hudspeth (BZ); perhaps more expected were 109 at La Sal del Rey, Hidalgo 17 Dec (DJ).

Noteworthy were 4 Laughing Gulls on L. Pflugerville, Travis 20 Dec (ph. TFe). A count of 20 Franklin’s Gulls at Houston area landfills, Harris 20 Dec (MR) indicates how many of these birds linger into early winter, also, one was at White Rock L., Dallas 6 Jan (BGI) and one along the Houston Ship Channel, Harris 3 Feb (CTL). A Little Gull was observed at L. Ray Hubbard, Dallas 10 Dec and 27 Jan (RCo, TR, BoS); 2 were at White Rock L., Dallas 1 Jan+ (CR, BoS, t.m.ob.). An ad. Black-headed Gull was observed at L. Lewisville, Denton 1 Jan (MSc, SCo). A Bonapart’s Gull at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 17 Dec (AH, m.ob.) was a rare find for the South Plains. A Mew Gull was at L. Lewisville, Denton 31 Dec (TMR). Inland California Gulls were seen at L. Tawakoni, Hunt 20 Nov (MWh) and at White Rock L., Dallas 17 Dec and 27 Jan (PGCo, BoS). First-winter Thayer’s Gulls were observed at a Houston landfill, Harris 20 Dec (MR) and at L. Tawakoni, Rains 31 Dec (MWh); ads. were reported from Galveston 28 Jan and 28 Feb (MA). A first-winter Iceland Gull was well documented at a Houston area landfill, Harris 20 Dec+ (TMR); another in New Mexico 5 Dec–26 Feb was observed intermittently and photographed in w. El Paso 25 Dec–10 Feb (tph. JPa, BZ). Pending acceptance, this record is potentially a first for the Trans-Pecos. Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to be reported in large numbers on the Upper Texas Coast (CTL, MR). Also, at least 4 wintered on various n.-cen. lakes (GCo, PBA, JISL, et al.); an ad. at L. Livingston, Polk 2 Jan (RSc) repre-
DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase on Christmas Bird Counts, with a jump on the Tyler C.B.C., Smith from 7 on last year's count to 33 this year being typical of the growing population (A&KB). White-winged Doves reached a new high of 1020 on the Bell County C.B.C., nearly doubling the previous high. One at Terrell, Kaufman 24 Feb was a county first (RK). A high count of 570 Green Parakeets was tallied at Santa Ana N.W.R., Hidalgo 16 Dec (MCa et al.). Two Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls were once again present at Benten, Hidalgo throughout the period (RB); also of interest were calling birds near Salineño, Starr 6-7 Feb and near Mission, Hidalgo 9 Feb (SBa). Three Elf Owls at Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area, Edwards 14 Dec (ML) provided a first winter record for the Edwards Plateau. Burrowing Owls were plentiful in cen. Texas, with reports of 3 in Bell, 9 in Williamson (TFe), and one in McLennan (JE). Single were at Sea Rim S.P., Jefferson 31 Dec (JWh), and at Fort Travis Park, Galveston 27 Jan-6 Feb (BH et al.). Five roosts totaling approximately 30 Long-eared Owls were found in El Paso and Hudspeth (JPa et al.), possibly a result of abundant autumn rainfall creating a large prey base. There were multiple reports of Short-eared Owls from the Lower Rio Grande Valley, including one on S. Padre L., Cameron 5 Dec (RA), 3 and a road-killed individual near Weslaco, Hidalgo 25 Dec (MG), and another at Benten 3 Jan and 22 Jan (MG et al.). A Northern Saw-whet Owl in Lubbock 9 Feb-14 Mar (Dk&Ki, Tph, BB, m.ob.) was well photographed and represented the 3rd record for the South Plains.

A Lesser Nighthawk at High L., Galveston 29 Jan (WB) constituted a rare winter record. A Common Nighthawk over Lufkin, Angelina 5 Dec (LD) was only the 2nd winter record for the Pineywoods. Common Nighthawks were more conspicuous than usual on the Upper Texas Coast, with birds reported 12 Dec in sw. Houston, Harris (KKI), 8 Feb at High L., Galveston (CD), and 18-19 Feb in Cove, Chambers (PF). Another was reported at White Rock L., Dallas 16 Dec (GCo, BG). A Common Poorwill at White River L., Crosby 30 Dec (AH, m.ob.) was a rare record for the South Plains. Above-average numbers of Buff-breasted Hummingbirds were reported in the Upper Texas Coast, including 5 at Freeport, Brazoria 17 Dec (m.ob.). Amazingly early was a Black-chinned Hummingbird near Utopia, Uvalde 28 Feb (MHe). Accidental e. of the Trans-Pecos, an imm. male Costa's Hummingbird was at Hudson's Oaks, Parker 20 per Texas Coast, with birds reported 12 Dec in sw. Houston, Harris (KKI), 8 Feb at High L., Galveston (CD), and 18-19 Feb in Cove, Chambers (PF). Another was reported at White Rock L., Dallas 16 Dec (GCo, BG). A Common Poorwill at White River L., Crosby 30 Dec (AH, m.ob.) was a rare record for the South Plains. Above-average numbers of Buff-breasted Hummingbirds were reported in the Upper Texas Coast, including 5 at Freeport, Brazoria 17 Dec (m.ob.). Amazingly early was a Black-chinned Hummingbird near Utopia, Uvalde 28 Feb (MHe). Accidental e. of the Trans-Pecos, an imm. male Costa's Hummingbird was at Hudson's Oaks, Parker 20ter near Utopia in Bandera (Julie MHe). A well-described Red-naped Sapsucker found in Brazoria 17 Dec (JA) was the 3rd for the Upper Texas Coast. A Downy Woodpecker in w. El Paso 2-4 Jan was very rare (JPa, ph. BZ).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

A Greater Pewee near Ft. Davis, Jeff Davis 19 Dec-23 Jan (TFe&Ch, m.ob., ph.) was the only 2nd winter record for Texas. Least Flycatchers were reported from several locations, with a record 8 seen on the Freeport C.B.C., Brazoria 17 Dec. Unprecedented for the Pineywoods, a possible Hammond's Flycatcher was observed in San Augustine 7 Dec (DWo). Another Hammond's was photographed at Hucal Tank State Historic Site, El Paso 16 Jan (StL.), where there are fewer than five local winter records. A Dusky Flycatcher found in w. El Paso 2-4 Jan (BZ, ph. JPa) was only the 2nd El Paso winter record. The Black Phoebe in nw. Houston, Harris, present since the fall, remained through the period (SGa et al.). Another Black Phoebe near Justiceburg, Garza 2 Dec (BB) was noteworthy for the South Plains. A Say's Phoebe in Randall 17 Dec (LS) was very rare for the Panhandle. Up to 3 Great Kiskadees were evident this winter on the Katy Prairie, Harris/Waller. Couch's Tropical Kingbirds were reported from the Galveston and Freeport Christmas counts, in addition to birds seen on the Katy Prairie, Waller (m.ob.), Galveston, Galveston (L.R), and Cullinan Park, Fort Bend (Je). Western Kingbirds were observed at Freeport, Brazoria 17 Dec (FO) and at Sea Rim S.P., Jefferson 31 Dec (BT, HJ). Amazingly, an Eastern Kingbird at Mitchell L., Bexar 26 Jan (P&SM, ph. HE) provided the first fully documented winter record for the state. A very late Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen 27 Dec in Denton (BG), others lingered through 30 Dec at scattered locations farther south.

The continued decline of Loggerhead Shrike in the Pineywoods was noted on several regional C.B.C.s. The Northern Shrike previously found 11 Nov near Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson continued through the reporting period (LLe, m.ob.) another was reported at L. Meredith, Hutchinson 3 Dec (BF). A Yellow-throated Vireo was at Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Cameron 4 Feb (DBe). A Cassin's Vireo was reported from Galveston 11 Dec (JSi). Only 3 Brown Jays are known to exist in Texas as of this winter, attending feeders at Salineño and Chapasño, Starr throughout the

This Yellow-throated Warbler frequented a peanut butter feeder at Lake L. B. Johnson, Burnet County from late January through late (here 5) February 2007. This unexpected find represented the first documented winter record for the Texas Hill Country. Photograph by David Bryant.
season. As recently as the early 1980s, 50+ could be found daily along the same Rio Grande woodlands. Two Fish Crows were new for the Longview C.B.C. in Gregg 16 Dec (fide PBA); in 4 Angel Park, Harris 10 Feb (Dave Allen) reflect a rising number of sightings from this area. A Chihuahuan Raven reported in Stephens 28 Jan (GCo, RH) was a seasonal rarity. Three Purple Martins in Clarendon, Dowley 28 Feb (fide) represented a very early arrival date for the Panhandle. Early Cliff Swallows were found in Midland 25 Feb (A&D); more unexpected were 4 at L. Arrowhead, Archer 27 Feb (SLO). Cave Swallows continue to push northward; good numbers wintered as far n. as Austin, Travis, and Gibson Creek, Grimes. However, a late Jan ice storm dealt a blow to some populations. This was in Brazos, where a roosting population in College Station dropped from 100-120 to only 15, with numerous dead found in the vicinity (EB). Two Cave Swallows near Clarendon, Kent 23 Feb (AH) were early arrivals on the South Plains. Quite unusual in the Trans-Pecos were 2 Barn Swallows in El Paso 26 Dec-18 Jan (JPa, BZ, JSp).

**NUTHATCHES THROUGH TANAGERS**

A White-breasted Nuthatch at Sea Rim S.P., Jefferson 31 Dec (BT) was at an unexpected location. Rock Wrens lingered from the fall at several locations well e. of the expected range, including 2 at L. Tawakoni S.T., Hunt (RRI), up to 3 at Miller's Creek Res., Baylor (GCo, BGT, FBI et al.), and one at L. Georgetown, Williamson (fide) through the season. Single Rock Wrens were present at Stillhouse Hollow Res., Bell until 28 Jan (RPI) and Wright Patman L., Cass until 21 Jan (MD). A House Wren at Mitchell Creek, Dowley 17 Dec (BP) afforded a rare winter record for the Panhandle. Winter Wrens were found in higher numbers than normal on the Upper Texas Coast; in the Trans-Pecos, single birds were near Ft. Hancock, Hudspeth 17 Dec (MSc, JZ), Pt. Bliss, El Paso 28 Dec-7 Feb (DBr, BPe, BZ), and at Big Bend N.P., Brewster 30 Dec (fide MF). A Sedge Wren at L. Meredith, Potter 17 Dec (fide RM) was only the 7th record for the Panhandle. Large numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets were present in the e. half of the state, with record-high counts recorded on many Christmas counts. Blue-gray Gnatchasers lingered into the winter in n.-cen. Texas, with 2 at Hubbard Creek L., Stephens 1 Dec (DP), one in Fort Worth, Tarrant 16 Dec (DBr, SJ), and one in Johnson 14 Jan (MR).

A count of 46 Western Bluebirds at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 17 Dec (BB, AH) represented a new high for the South Plains, and one was farther e. at White River L., Cross by 30 Dec (RKe, PKi). Mountain Bluebirds staged a major irrigation eastward: flocks of birds were seen at many locations in the Hill Country, including sites as far s. as Killean, Bell (RKe), Menard (RPI), Blanco (BST), Throckmorton (m.o.b.), and McCulloch (DF, BoF). A Varied Thrush was at Balcones Canyonlands N.W.R., Travis 2 Jan (tCSe). After a banner fall with Sage Thrashers dispersing eastward, few were noted in the winter: singles at Peach Point W.M.A., Brazoria (GL et al.) and near Choke Canyon S.P., Live Oak 27 Jan (SGr, RW, DPe) and 2 in Throckmorton 18 Feb (GCo, BoS). A Crissal Thrasher was at Soda L., Midland 28-29 Jan (DKe, RMS).

Lingering Blue-winged Warblers were at San Bernard N.W.R., Brazoria 2 Dec (ph. MB) and Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Cameron 18 Dec (GCo, RH). An Orange-crowned Warbler at L. Meredith, Potter 17 Dec (fide RM) provided a very rare winter Panhandle record. A Nashville Warbler was in Fort Worth, Tarrant 16 Dec (TG). A Northern Parula at High L., Galveston 2 Dec (JK) may have been a lingering migrant, but one at Sheldon Lake S.P., Harris 7 Jan (SMc) was likely a wintering bird. A Tropical Parula at Aransas N.W.R., Aransas 10 Jan (JMc) was n. of the species' normal range. A Magnolia Warbler was well described at Brazos Bend S.P., Fort Bend 9 Jan (JB). A Black-throated Gray Warbler in El Paso 27 Dec (DBr, BPe) was only the 2nd for El Paso in winter; singles elsewhere were in San Antonio, Bexar 7 Dec (HR) and Rio Grande Village, Brewster 30 Dec (MF). Two Townsend's Warblers were at Anzalduas County Park, Hidalgo 5 Dec (BMC, MG), as was a Hermit Warbler 5 Dec (MG, RSN, m.o.b.). A Yellow-throated Warbler was present at Lake L. B. Johnson, Brewster late Jan-late Feb (ph. DaB), making it the first documented winter record for the Hill Country; another wintering bird was reported at Utopia, Uvalde (MMe); and singles were also found at Pearland, Harris 30 Dec-13 Jan (ph. DWh) and Houston, Harris 1 Dec-13 Jan (JK et al.). A Pine Warbler at Lubbock, Lubbock 10 Dec-28 Jan (WWe, AH) provided a rare local record. A Palm Warbler in Mason 14 Dec-2 Jan (DF) provided a very rare Hill Country record; one apparently wintered at Austin, Travis (EF). A Black-and-white Warbler in Midland, Midland 20 Dec (WWo) provided a first local winter record. An American Redstart was in Weslaco, Hidalgo 30 Dec (DJ). Prothonotary Warblers were found on the Guadalupe Delta, Refugio 1 Jan (LdPS) and on the King Ranch, Kleberg 2 Feb (BW). A Northern Waterthrush was at Brazos Bend S.P., Fort Bend 9 Jan (JK et al.). A Louisiana Waterthrush at San Antonio, Bexar 28 Jan-14 Feb (DM, WS, CH) provided an unexpected cet. Texas record. Two birds believed to be Gray-crowned Yellowthroats were briefly observed at the Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Cameron 2 Dec (BMC); though these were reported through the remainder of the season, no documentation was received. A female Hooded Warbler at Brazos Bend S.P., Fort Bend 13 Jan (DWh) may have wintered locally. A Wilson's Warbler at Big Bend N.P., Brewster 30 Dec (fide MF) provided a rare winter record for the park. A Summer Tanager was at San Antonio, Bexar 26 Jan (HR).

**TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES**

Canyon Towhees were noted in s. Throckmorton 31 Dec (DDC, DL) and 18 Feb (GCo, BS). A Clay-colored Sparrow in w. Williamson 19 Jan (BS) and a few in Bastrop 24 Jan (BFe) provided rare winter records for cen. Texas. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow at La Sal del Rey, Hidalgo 28 Jan (ST) was well e. of the expected range. Le Conte's Sparrows wandered a bit westward, with one at Lubbock, Lubbock 16 Dec (AH, m.o.b.), 2 at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 17 Dec (PKi, m.o.b.), and one near Girard, Kent 24 Dec (AH). A Harris's Sparrow at El Paso 13 Feb-4 Mar (JSp, ph. JP) provided a rare El Paso record. An Oregon Junco in Temple, Bell 11-28 Feb (RPI) was e. of the normal range. A flock of 500 Laphland Longspurs near Matador, Motley 21 Jan (BB) was a good count; up to 8 were at Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches 14-17 Dec, with 2 remaining until 2 Jan (DWh). Very rare for the Pinewoods, a flock of 6 Smith's Longspurs was at Nacogdoches 17 Dec (DWh et al.). One of the birds of the season was a Snow Bunting at L. Lewisville, Denton 26 Dec-13 Jan (HKL, m.o.b.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks wintered in unprecedented numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Highlighting this occurrence was up to 9 birds at Bentsen S.P., Hidalgo 15 Feb (RR). Farther n., singles were at Dallas, Dallas 16 Dec (Shb) and near Mathis, Live Oak 4 Feb (RBr). Black-headed Grosbeaks were found at Bennett Park, Jackson 27 Dec (RW), near Cibolo, Guadalupe 6 Jan+ (ph.}
This adult male Common Redpoll frequented a feeder near Decatur, Wise County, Texas between 22 January and 1 March (here 18 February) 2007, providing the eighth record for the state.  Photograph by Ken Hunt.

SS), and Weller 17 Jan (CC). Very unexpected was a male Blue Grosbeak at Texas City, Galveston 3 Jan (ph. StM). An Indigo Bunting at L. Tawakoni, Rains 10 Jan (RKi) was well n. of areas where expected in winter. Male Painted Buntings were noted at a number of Upper Texas Coast locations from 15 Dec (m.o.b.), suggesting the species must have wintere in small numbers in the Region. Perhaps more unexpected were single Painted Buntings at Glen Rose, Somervell 12 Jan (male, JJ) and Fort Worth, Tarrant 17 Feb (green bird; GCo). Winter occurrences of Dickcissel are always of interest, and this season's singles were at Texas City, Galveston 26-27 Dec (ph. StM), Lake Jackson, Brazoria 24 Jan (Ja et al.) and College Station, Brazos 29 Jan (ER).

Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds in Amarillo, Randall 16 Dec (fide RM) provided a rare local winter record. Rusty Blackbirds made a very good showing away from traditional areas. Of particular note were 22 at Muleshoe NWR, Bailey 17 Dec (AH, m.o.b.), 20 at Gibbons Creek, Grimes 28 Dec (MM, DS), one at Utopia, Uvalde 29 Dec (MHe), one on the King Ranch, Kleberg 17 Jan (BW), and as many as 300 at Bastrop 22-24 Jan (Kr). A flock of 14 Common Grackles was an unusual sight in El Paso 2 Feb (JSp). A female Bullock's Oriole was in Midland, Midland 16 Jan (DSjM)—the 4th year in a row that a female Bullock's has been reported from this location in mid-Jan. A male Bullock's was in Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches early Jan–8 Feb (L&dW, m.o.b., ph. RSc). Audubon's Orioles continue to be found in the s.-cen. Hill Country, with up to 4 near Utopia, Uvalde through the season (MHe). An ad. male Common Redpoll graced feeders near Decatur, Wise 22 Jan–1 Mar (ph. KH et al.), providing the 8th record for Texas.

Cited observers (southern editors in boldface): Reid Allen, Karen Arquette, John Arvin, Mike Austin, Lynn Barber (Lba), Sharon Barkr (Shb), Peter Barnes (Pba), Scott Barnes (Sba), Jason Barnett, Mark Bartosik, Rick Bello (Rbe), David Benn (Db), Brandon Best, Peter Billingham (Pbi), Lyle Blankshep (Lbi), David Bradford (Db), Rik Brittain (Rr), Charles Brewer, Kelly Bryan, David Bryant (DB), Frank Bumgardner, Winnie Burkett, Alun & Kris Byboth, Rudy Cadra, Mike Carlo (Mc), Sherman Coffey (Sc), Fred Collins, Carlton Colmenera, Greg Cook (Gco), Mel Cooksey (Mc), (South Texas: 16 Townhouse Lane, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. email: ssi@stx.rr.com). Grant Critchfield (Gcr), D.D. Currie (North-central Texas: 2703 Colleen Dr, Arlington, TX 76016. email: ddbirder@sbglobal.net). Louis Debetz, Drew Dickert, Carolyn Dill, Mike Dillon, Bob Doe, Kim Eckert, Jim Edwards, Howard Eskin, Ted Eubanks, Paul Fagala, Ed Fair, Tim Fennell (Tfe), Dixie Feuerbacher, Mark Flippa, Bobbye Frazier (BoF), Brush Freeman (BrF), Bert Frenz (Bf), Fred Frenz (Bf), (East Texas: 221 Rainbow Dr., #12190, Livingston, TX 77359-2021. email: bert2@bafrenz.com). Steve Gast (Sta), Jeff Gerbracht (Jg), Brian Gibbs (Bi), Bill Godfrey (Bgo), Johnnie Greene (Jgr), Tolbert Greenwood, Steve Gross, Mary Gustafson, Martin Hagene (Mha), Rebecca Haney, S. W. Harris, Larry & Tonna Harris-Haller, Curt Harwerth, Eric Haskell, Dale & Karen Hayden, Mitch Heindel (Mhe), Anthony Hewetson (Northwest Texas: 4407 36th St., Lubbock TX 79414. email: tterrverts@yahoo.com), Derek Hill (Dhi), Jim Hinson, Bill Hutchcock, Tom & Carol Hobby, Dave Holbert (Dho), Levie Horton, Ken Hunt, Simone Jenion, Dan Jones, Jim Jones, Harrison Jordan, Alvin & Donna Kelly, Donna Kelly (Dke), Joe Kennedy, Dwight Kersten (Dkw), Tom Kirk (Tk), Keith Kincaid (Kki), Richard Kinney (Rki), Phillip Kite (Pki), Paul Knowles (Pkn), Rich Kostecke (Rko), Kevin Kriegel (Kkr), Howard Laidlaw, Greg Lasley (Gl), Greg Lavavy (Gla), Cin-Ty Lee, Lee Lemmons (Lle), Leslie Linehan (Lle), Dell Little, Keith Lockhart, Mark Lockwood, Scotty Lolland (Sl), Robert & Kay Lookingbill, Stephan Lorenz (Stl), Steve Mahurin (Stm), Mike Manson, Peggy & Bob Mastok, Ray Matlock, Steve Mayes (Sm), Ellen McBride, Jon McIntyre (Jmc), Brad McKinney (Bkm), Stennie Meadours (Sm), Don & Joann Merritt, John Mulrow (Jmu), Derek Muschalek, Brooke Nicotta, Brent Ortega, Jay Facker (Jaf), Jim Paton (Jpa) (Trans-Pecos: 4325 Boy Scout Lane, El Paso, TX 79922. email: paton-jp@netzero.net). Dan Patrick (Dpa), Dick Peake (Dpe), Brandon Percival (Bp), Barrett Pierce (Bp), Randy Pinkston (Rip), Jeff Pittman (Jp), David Powell (Dp), David Pucpelle (Dpu), Ross Rasmussen, Ellen Rattoosh, Martin Reid, Helen Rezek, Lance River, Thomas Riecke, David Ringer (Dri), Jan & Will Rissler, Dale Roberts (Dro), Joshua Rose (Jro), Chris Runk, Laura Sare, Rick Schaefer (Rsc), Susan Schaezler, David Scott, Mary Scott, Willie Sekula (Central Texas: 7063 Co Rd. 228, Falls City, TX 78113-2627. email: wsekula@peoplepc.com). Larry & Pati Smedhard, Chuck Sexton (Cse), Jim Sipiora (Js), Jim Smith (Jsm), Rick Snider (Rsn), Rick & May Snider, Tom Sorrell (Tso), John Sproul (Jsp), Tom Stehn (Tst), Jim Stevenson (Jst), Cliff Stogner (Cst), Bob Stone (Bos), Byron Stone (Bst), Rose Marie Stortz, Bill Tarbox, Jay & Verne Teague, Matt Thompson, Sandy Turner, Don Verser (Dve), Larry & Diara Walker, Michelle Wayman (Mwa), Ron Weeks (Upper Texas Coast: 110 Indian Warrior, Lake Jackson, TX 77566 email: empl ionox@sbglobal.net), Steve Wellborn (Sw). William Wenthe (Wwe), David Whipple (Dwh), Matt White (Mwh), John Whittle (Jwh), Walter Wiggazz (Wwi), Brian Williams, David Williams (Dwi), Jennifer Wilson (Jwi), David Wolf (Dwo), Joe Yelderman, Jimmy Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer. 

Mark W. Lockwood, 402 East Harriet Avenue Alpine, Texas 79830, (mark.lockwood@tpwd.state.tx.us)
Randy Pinkston, 3505 Hemlock Court Temple, Texas 76502, (dpinkston@sbglobal.net)
Ron Weeks, 110 Indian Warrior Lake Jackson, Texas 77566, (emplionox@sbglobal.net)
During the first half of December, the Region sported mild temperatures and large numbers of geese, particularly white geese in the lower Arkansas River valley. A series of blizzards and heavy snow marked the rest of the month, with eastern and southeastern Colorado especially hard hit. The strongest storm, primarily 20-21 December, closed Denver International Airport for 45 hours and resulted in a declared state of emergency with the National Guard deployed to rescue thousands of stranded travelers and, later, assist with hay delivery to livestock. Wintering plains birds were hit hard, too. When the deep freeze set in mid-month, most open water froze, sending waterfowl packing either for running water or for more temperate climes. Particularly noteworthy by their relative absence in much of the Region, especially compared to the situation in recent winters, Cackling Geese were very hard to find, except, oddly enough, in northern Colorado between Fort Collins and Greeley. Non-migratory southeastern plains birds appeared to be devastated by the nearly 140 cm of accumulated snow. Survivors often resorted to roadside foraging, leading to much mortality. Starving Western Meadowlarks were observed cannibalizing their road-killed compatriots (fide DN). The snow pack was heavy enough in southeastern Colorado that many roads remained closed for much of the period, creating the unusual opportunity to cross-country ski into birding areas like John Martin Reservoir. The snow-bound landscape may have caused an exodus of Chihuahuan Ravens, which showed up in unusual numbers outside typical range and were particularly noted in Boulder County (TF; BS).

Normal precipitation through the rest of the period kept Colorado much above normal for the seasonal sun. This moisture removed nearly the entire state from drought that has been a recurring theme in this synopsis. Wyoming, however, missed the heavy winter storm activity, with precipitation in December and February near normal and in January below normal. Unfortunately this was not sufficient to alter drought conditions there, and by the end of the reporting period, the entire center and the eastern regions of the state were still characterized by extreme drought, transitioning through severe and moderate drought in the northern, western, and southern portions of the state. As a whole, Colorado’s winter temperatures ranked below normal, while Wyoming’s ended up near normal.

Open water was more limited than usual throughout much of the Region this season, producing a concentrating effect on wintering birds utilizing the remaining ice-free areas. Hybrid ducks were found in a pleasing spectrum of combinations, six unusual wintering sandpiper species were noted, and the winter gull tally reached a respectable 12 species. A Barn Owl managed to winter in northern Wyoming about 40 km south of the Montana border, and it was a grand season for wintering thrushes, both in number and variety.

Abbreviations: Adams S. Platte (South Platte R. between 70th & 104th; Adams); Bonny (Bonny Res., Yuma); Cherry Creek (Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso/Pueblo; particular county noted in text); John Martin (John Martin Res., Bent); Vaultmont (Vailmont Res. complex, Boulder). ‘West Skope’ 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. Because most rarities are seen by multiple observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird(s) are noted.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Two Greater White-fronted Geese just s. of Durango, La Plata 2 Jan and 4 there on 23 Feb (JB; SA) provided relatively rare sw. Colorado records. A party wandering around n. Colorado trying to study Cackling Geese 27 Jan found at least 10 apparent taverenari at and near Pierce, Weld (SM, TL, B. Tweit); though specimen records exist for the state, little is known of the taxon’s occurrence here. Swan reports included those of presumed returning Trumpeters: lack of open water made these either more difficult to find than in past years (as in Larimer) or simply pushed others out of the area for the winter (as in Chaffee). Single ad. Trumpeter Swans in Boulder 8-26 Feb (L. Andes-George, ph. BS) and at John Martin 26 Feb (DN) may have been wandering winters or spring migrants. Single ad. and imm. Tundra Swans at Pueblo 16 Jan (BKP et al.) provided not only the sole solid seasonal report but one difficult to interpret, due to the apparently short mid-season stay. Wood Ducks are rare in winter in the Region away from the Pueblo and Grand Junction areas, so 4 at Lochbuie, Weld 31 Dec (LS) and 10 at Ft. Collins through the winter were certainly of interest. Last winter’s male Eurasian Wigeon returned to the Rocky Ford, Otero area 13 Dec (SO), but the mid-month cold snap probably kicked it out after the 23rd. A very late male Blue-winged Teal was on the Adams S. Platte 1 Jan (TF), as was the first Cinnamon Teal of

Most Long-tailed Ducks that make it to Colorado are in immature or female plumages. Especially rare in the state (and correspondingly delightful to local birders) are individuals in adult male plumage, as this one found 29 January 2007 (here) on the South Platte River in Adams County. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

The most interesting of the six reports of Greater Scaup was of a single at Sands L., Chaffee 2 Jan (TL) in the mls., where the species is not at all common. Surf Scoters are Regionally rare in winter, but both individuals found graced the two most likely locales: John Martin 13-14 Dec (DN, ph. TL) and Pueblo Res. 4 Jan+ (P. Hurtado, m.ob.). Long-tailed Ducks made up for their poor fall showing by occurring this winter in what was probably unprecedented numbers. We received at least eight reports of some 12 individuals. An ad. male on the Adams S. Platte 29 Jan-Feb (SM, ph. TL, ph. BS) may or may not have been the same individual that brightened Cherry Creek earlier in the winter (see fall report); the two sites are at opposite ends of the Denver Urban C.B.C. circle. Per-
SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ROADRUNNER

For this Region, the six species of sandpiper reported this season was a large number. Included among these were five reports of Greater Yellowlegs, with one wintering at Walden Ponds (A. Brown), four of Spotted Sandpiper—with one spending its 2nd winter at Valco Ponds S.W.A., Pueblo and being joined there by another early in the season (BKP)—three of Least Sandpiper (with one at Valco Ponds 16-26 Dec [ph. BKP]), plus a late Baird's Sandpiper at Lake Chereau, Otero 5 Dec (SO). On the last day of the season, an American Avocet appeared at Highline S.P., Mesa (R. Lambeth), shattering the West Slope arrival record by nearly a month.

After mid-Dec and the hard freeze that locked up most water for the winter, Valmont and Pueblo Res. became the reliable gull spots, accounting for 11 of the 12 species of gull reported during the season; only the juv. Black-legged Kittiwake 7-16 Dec at Cherry Creek (ph. GW) was not recorded at either site. Two New Gulls (an ad. and a first-cycle) were in Pueblo, being most reliable at Pueblo Res. 11-20 Dec (RM, BKP). A first-cycle pale-winged gull seen a few times, but never really well, at Valmont 19 Dec-15 Jan (TF) may have been an Iceland Gull. A darker first-cycle Iceland spent 11 Jan-25 Feb at Pueblo Res. (ph. BKP, TSM, m.ob.). Five was the high count of Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Pueblo Res., including 2 first-cycle birds (BKP TL); 4 at L. Loveland, Larimer in the first half of Dec (CW et al.). A first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull at Pueblo Res. 1-8 Dec (BKP) was followed there by what was probably a first-cycle Glaucous-winged hybird 11 Dec (BKP). A first-cycle Glaucous-winged at Valmont 19 Dec (TF) may have been seen again there on 15 Jan. A third-cycle Glaucous-winged hybrid was at Pueblo Res. 27 Dec (J. Drummond), and another imm. Glaucous-winged was at Big Johnson Res., El Paso 1 Jan (BM). At least 15 Glaucous Gulls were present in Colorado this winter, one of the best winter showings ever, with the high count being of 3 (2 first-cycles, one second-cycle) at L. Loveland 7-23 Dec (J. LaFleur). Pueblo Res. held 2-3 Great Black-backed Gulls, and others were at L. Loveland 4-18 Dec (ad.; CW) and and Valmont 20-30 Jan (ad. and first-cycle; TF), the latter of which might have accounted for the report of a similar-aged individual at nearby Erie Res., Boulder 10 Feb (TF).

Band-tailed Pigeons have been wintering in Colorado recently, and this year was no exception, with a single s. of Rye, Pueblo 30 Dec (P. O'Brien) and a flock of >15 all winter at the Green Mountain Falls, El Paso/Teller feeder that has been reliable for the species for over a decade (R. Bunn). We received eight reports of White-winged Dove, with the farthest n. being the single at Loveland, Larimer 15 Dec (ph. TL, MP), the farthest w. being the 2 at Cortez, Montezuma 6 Jan (D. & M. Hill), and the largest number being the 82 wintering in Pueblo (J. Witters, m.ob.). Unlike the rapidly colonizing Eurasian Collared-Dove and White-winged Dove, Colorado's Inca Doves still seem to be stuck in Lamar, Powers and Rocky Ford, and those groups do not seem to be increasing in size. A Greater Roadrunner sw. of Cortez 26 Dec (JBY, BB) may provide one of very few good West Slope records (p.a.).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

As Wyoming's winter weather is typically less than that of Colorado, Barn Owls are

Great Black-backed Gulls increased their profile in Colorado with another strong showing this winter. Among the visitors was this adult (far right) in Loveland, Larimer County, present 4-18 (here 15) December 2006. Also illustrated in this photograph are Lesser Black-backed, Thayer's, California, and Herring Gulls. Photograph by Tony Leukering.
Cringan); another tion in Feb (m.ob.). It is still uncertain if the concentra-

tion in this two-county area is due to true attrac-
tiveness to Sphyrapicus or to the absence of a few of the local birds; we would ar-
gue for the latter.

Lingeri ng Say's Phoebe's were noted around the Pueblo Res. area, with 6-7 present during the first half of Dec, with at least some staying into Jan. Surprisingly, one tried to survive far n. on the Jefferson/Denver line, where present 16 Dec–23 Jan (K. Stecher, T. Jones); early spring migrants were first noted in Pueblo 19 Feb (BKP). Chihuahua Ravens are widespread breeders and rare and local winterers in the Region only in se. Colorado; reports farther n. are almost always met with skepticism, especially considering the difficulties of raven identification. The Boulder area has a recent intriguing history of claims of Chihuahua Ravens, and this winter observers reported up to 6 there 15 Jan–20 Feb (ph. BS, TF et al.). Unprecedented, a Barn Swallow was near Durango, La Plata 30 Dec (R. & H. Morris, L. Flores). Bushtits moved somewhat farther eastward and northward of the Front Range of Colorado, with 4 at Chico, El Paso furnishing a rare ranch record (BKP), as well as groups of birds in Denver and in Arapahoe.

Westerly by a few counties was the White-

brea sted Nuthatch (nominate subspecies) in Pueblo 14 Dec (DS); and late was a Rock Wren at Red Rocks Park, Jefferson 16 Dec (B. & L. Brown). In Proms, the resident Carolina Wren continued at Lamar through the season (DAL, m.ob.); one at Cañon City through the season was more unusual (RM, m.ob.). Colorado is generally between the migration and wintering ranges of the e. and w. populations of Winter Wren, but wintering numbers of both types are apparently on the increase; 11 birds were reported from Boulder, El Paso, Fremont, Pueblo, Otero, and Bent this winter. Very rare in winter away from Grand Junction, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at John Martin 14 Dec (DN).

Bluebirds were present in above-

average numbers along the Region's Frontier Range, with Easterns particularly more common, even as far n. as Larimer (m.ob.). In Wyoming, 2 East-

erns were at Casper, Natrona 29 Jan and apparently continued for a bit afterward (H. Scott, CM); this is the 3rd consecutive winter that the species was present in cen. Wyoming. Western and Mountain Bluebirds were noted n. of normal, with as many as 25 Westerns tallied on the Boulder C.B.C. 17 Dec (TF; some lingering through 12 Jan [D. Walmann]) and with groups of up to 36 Mountains present during the period in Douglas, Boulder, and Larimer. A Mountain Bluebird at Bonny 6 Jan (GW) represented a very rare winter n. Colorado record. Hermit Thrushes winter only rarely in Colorado, and usually only in the Grand Junction area; thus, the report of 8 during the winter was interesting, with the most notable being singles (probably faxonii) at Bonny 5-6 Jan (BS) and Boulder 15 Jan (TF); one at Rocky Ford, Otero 9 Jan (SO); one in the sw. near Bondad, La Plata 20 Jan (K. & L. Stransky); and an apparent western-subspecies individual in Boulder 20 Feb (TF). In an excellent winter for Varied Thrushes, at least 5 were located, all males: at Crow Valley Campground, Weld 1-19 Dec (ph. DAL); at Fort Collins, Larimer 21 Dec–2 Jan (B. Blinderman, ph. TL) and possibly the same bird 29-31 Jan (A. & J. Cringan); on the Penrose C.B.C. near Florence, Fremont 5-6 Jan (ph. SO); in Boulder 21-23 Jan (D. Sparn); and at Durango 25 Jan (J. Foster, H&RM).

**MIMIDS THROUGH FINCHES**

Rare in winter were a Gray Catbird at Rock-

creek, Fremont 5 Jan (DN) and a Northern Mockingbird in Casper 10 Dec (K. Keffer et al.). A Brown Thrasher in Fremont, Wyoming 30 Dec was very far n. (BH), no fewer than 8 noted in Colorado was surprising, particularly the 3 in Boulder, a location where the species is rare during any season, 3 Dec–20 Jan (TF et al.). The only notable report of Bo-

orado, and usually only in the Grand Junction

area; thus, the report of 8 during the winter

was interesting, with the most notable being

singles (probably faxonii) at Bonny 5-6 Jan

(BS) and Boulder 15 Jan (TF); one at Rocky

Ford, Otero 9 Jan (SO); one in the sw. near

Bondad, La Plata 20 Jan (K. & L. Stransky);

and an apparent western-subspecies individu-

al in Boulder 20 Feb (TF). In an excellent

winter for Varied Thrushes, at least 5 were

located, all males: at Crow Valley Campground,

Weld 1-19 Dec (ph. DAL); at Fort Collins,

Larimer 21 Dec–2 Jan (B. Blinderman, ph.

TL) and possibly the same bird 29-31 Jan (A.

& J. Cringan); on the Penrose C.B.C. near

Florence, Fremont 5-6 Jan (ph. SO); in Boul-

der 21-23 Jan (D. Sparn); and at Durango 25

Jan (J. Foster, H&RM).

**MIMIDS THROUGH FINCHES**

Rare in winter were a Gray Catbird at Rock-

creek, Fremont 5 Jan (DN) and a Northern

Mockingbird in Casper 10 Dec (K. Keffer et

al.). A Brown Thrasher in Fremont, Wyoming

30 Dec was very far n. (BH), no fewer than 8

noted in Colorado was surprising, particularly

the 3 in Boulder, a location where the species

is rare during any season, 3 Dec–20 Jan (TF et

al.). The only notable report of Bu-


dard Ovils are not especially noted for their winter hardiness, under-

scoring the significance of this individual found on 8 January 2007 in

frosty Ucex, Sheridan County, Wyoming, only about 40 km south of the

Montana border. Photograph by Ernesto Scott.

hematic Waxwing was the single at La Veta,

Huerfano 24 Dec (DS). Five species of war-

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2

299
Colorado's breeding Fox Sparrows, of the Slate-colored group, generally depart the state's mountains in early autumn and proceed to wintering areas without delay—and are thus extremely rarely encountered on the plains, even in migration. This individual, found on the Bonny Christmas Bird Count in Yuma County 5 January 2007 was doubly extraordinary for its location (within 10 km of Kansas) and date. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

Bill Schmoker, P.O. Box 660, Brighton, Colorado 80601 (greatgrayowl@aol.com)
Lawrence S. Semo, 9045 Dover Street Westminster, Colorado 80021 (bsemo@swca.com)
Bill Schmoker, 3381 Larkspur Drive Longmont, Colorado 80503 (Bill@schmoker.org)
David Trochlell

The winter of 2006 was relatively mild, despite a widespread period of subzero temperatures in mid-January. December and January were disappointingly dry with unusually meager snowfalls, and even February's ample precipitation failed to bring moisture levels back up to normal. It was yet another no-show winter for the winter finch fraternity, as has been the trend for many years now; numbers were either very low or the birds were absent. Mild weather encouraged waterfowl and a surprising variety of other hardy birds to linger in unusually high numbers, and this was reflected in a bevy of record Christmas Bird Count totals. Other avian highlights of the period included a flurry of first winter records and a few remarkable vagrants.

The Idaho Bird Records Committee (I.B.R.C.) has reconvened; many thanks to its Secretary, Shirley Sturts, and webmaster, Stacy Peterson, for their work in revitalizing this important group. In the last six months of 2006, Sturts and Peterson collected and prepared scores of bird reports—a daunting backlog of over 300 records, some of which go back almost 40 years.

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

**GESeE TROUGH Doves**

Single Idaho Greater White-fronted Gee near Hagerman 23 Dec (fide SH) and Rupert 30 Dec (fide RL) were noteworthy, because they are casual in early winter. Even less expected were 2 in Warm Springs, MT 10 Feb (NK), where there are only four previous winter records. A total of 13 Cackling Geese was recorded, nearly double last winter's tally. Above average were reports of 4 Eurasian Wigeons in Idaho in early through mid-Feb. The season's tally of 11 Long-tailed Ducks likely topped all previous highest counts. If accepted, a Yellow-billed Loon at Sandpoint 29 Dec (fide GM) will make Idaho's 6th record. Idaho's 7th winter Red-shouldered Hawk was an imm. elegant in Canyon 18 Dec (1CW), the typical age and subspecies documented in most reports. Perhaps record early was a spring migrant Turkey Vulture near Boise, ID 23 Jan (NM). Six GyrFalcon, all from usual w. Montana locations, was a fairly typical season total. Establishing a first winter record for Montana was a Greater Yellowlegs near Three Forks 26 Dec (MG et al.). A Lesser Yellowlegs near Rexburg 15 Dec (ph. DCI) brought in Idaho's 7th winter record. With only about 15 winter precedents, a Spotted Sandpiper in Twin Falls, ID 16 Dec (JR) was noteworthy. Idaho's 16th winter Least Sandpiper was near Bruneau 23 Dec (LR); the species appears to be increasingly reported in sw Idaho in winter. The rare winter gull tally was respectable, with reports of 3 Mew, 4 Thayer's, 3 Glaucous-winged, and 6 Glaucous Gulls. Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to thrive in Idaho, as evidenced by a record 87 recorded on Idaho Christmas counts, this represented a 40 per cent increase from last year.

**OWLS THROUGH SPARRROWS**

Just about average were reports of 3 Snowy Owls in w Montana 16 Dec–4 Feb. Western Montana's first winter-period Burrowing Owl was near Dillon 6 Dec–13 Jan (SS). With only four previous winter records in Montana, a Boreal Owl near Missoula 16 Dec–25 Feb (DH) was great news. Two rare Idaho Anna's Hummingbirds held over into Dec (SP), where they add to about 13 previous winter reports. Montana Bewick's Wrens made headline news: one in Lake 17-21 Dec (DC) provided a first winter record for Montana, and a pair stayed near Missoula 20 Dec+ (TT) to garner a first record of overwintering. It was a better-than-average Blue Jay flight year in Idaho, with 14 recorded. Another winter first for w Montana was a Northern Mockingbird near Dillon 21 Dec (GS). A vagrant Eastern Bluebird at Montana City 20 Jan+ (DH, ph. BM) represented a winter first for Montana and the Region. An incredible first for Lattiong 38 was a Brown Thrasher that wintered near Bozeman, MT 23 Dec–28 Feb (KO, ph. JP). One of the top birds of the season was a hardy Curve-billed Thrasher (subspecies oerholseri) that survived the winter at Eureka 1 Dec+ (WB) to bring in a first record for w. Montana. Another winter first for Montana was a Green-tailed Towhee near Bozeman 28 Dec+ (KC). Incredible was a Chipping Sparrow recorded in Hamilton, ID 1-18 Dec (ph. PWP) that provided a winter first for Lattiong 19. A rare Clay-colored Sparrow in Moscow 3-13 Dec (ph. TG) was Idaho's first winter period report and 16th overall sighting. Representing Idaho's 8th winter record and a first for Lattiong 25 was a Vesper Sparrow near Hagerman 23 Dec (fide SH). Both states reported very rare Red Fox Sparrows; one overwintered near Ola, Gen, ID (FZ), and 3 were near Red Lodge, MT 2 Jan (B). Rare Zoothera daohongzi were relatively numerous, with 7 White-throated Sparrows and 13 Harris's Sparrows reported. Likely a winter-period first for Idaho was a record-early Black-headed Grosbeak in Garden Valley 24 Feb (MV).

Contributors (subregional editors in boldface): IDAHO: Kathleen Cameron, Earl Chapin, Darren Clark, Kas Dunmore, Terry Gray, Sarah Harris, Ron Lynch, Nancy McCallough, Stacy Peterson, Larry Riderhour, Hadley Roberts, Jeff Ruprecht, Shirley Sturts, Mike VanDyk, Cliff Weisse, Poo Wright-Puliam, Fred Zeilemaker. MONTANA: Wayne Butts, Katie Cadly, Dan Casey, Mary Geis, Don Hoffman (DHo), Denver Holt, Barb Jacquth, Nate Kohler, Bob Martinka, Kenneth Ostlund, John Parker, Steve Sherman, Don Skaar, Gary Swant, Terry Toppins.

David Trochlell, 2409 E North Avenue
La Grande, Oregon 97850, (detrochlell@verizon.net)

---

**North American Birds**

A Quarterly Journal of Ornithological Record

Subscriptions are available for $32 for US or $37 for Canadian.

Renew or give a Gift Subscription, today!

(800) 850-2473

VOLUME 61 (2007) • NUMBER 2
It was a cold but dry winter, with both temperatures and precipitation well below average throughout much of the Great Basin. It was also a relatively uneventful season in the Great Basin for wintering northern specialties. There were no reports of Bohemian Waxwings or Common Redpolls, following several consecutive winters with above-average numbers. However, more regular northern winter visitors—Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Shrikes, American Tree Sparrows—occurred in moderate numbers throughout much of the region. Rare and vagrant highlights included a White-tailed kite in Nevada lingering at Carson Lake, plus Utah's first documented Western gull and second record of Scaled Quail.

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); Farmington Bay (Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis, UT); 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, Esmaralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

Trumpeter Swans turned up at several unusual locations this winter, including H.B.V.P. 12 Dec (JbR, CP, MB) and Farmington Bay 9-10 Feb (SG, ph. TA). A drake Eurasian Wigeon was again found this winter at the Rosewood G.C., Reno, Washoe, NV 22 Dec–2 Jan (GS et al.); another was on Swan L., Washoe, NV 25 Dec–14 Feb (TL, WR et al.). Two female Surf Scoters were observed at Antelope I. 1 Dec (GB), and 2 female White-winged Scoters were spotted there the following day (NB et al.). Surprisingly, Black Scoter was the most abundant scoter species in the Region this winter, with 3 individuals documented: one at the Hite-Bullfrog ferry crossing of L. Powell, Garfield, UT 21 Dec (LG) and 2 at Sand Hollow S.P., Washington, UT 23 Feb–14 Mar (ph. RF, JW et al.). Long-tailed Ducks made a good showing in Utah this winter, with 2 at Hyrum S.P., Cache 2–26 Dec (BR et al.), one at Antelope I. (3–17 Dec (NB et al.), and one at Mountain Dell Res., Salt Lake 6-13 Dec (DH et al.).

Three Scaled Quail, found 6 Jan in Montezuma Canyon, San Juan, UT (JS, DSH), drew observers from far and wide to the seldom-birded southeastern corner of the state. The well-documented and photographed quail (TDW, ph. LG, JB) lingered through at least 20 Mar and became the 2nd accepted state record. A Red-necked Grebe was a major surprise on New Year's Day at Pyramid L., Washoe, NV (Dse et al.). A single White-faced Ibis made a rare winter appearance in Utah at Springville, Utah L., Utah 17 Dec (LG, BS, KAS). Large concentrations of wading birds were observed 17 Dec during the Fallon C.B.C. near the S-DM; it was present through at least 27 Jan (BH) and provided great photographic opportunities (ph. MM, ph. ST et al.). Another White-tailed kite was reported 31 Dec near Blanding, San Juan, UT (p.a., MMe) but could not be relocated. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from several Nevada counties (Clark, Lincoln, and Washoe) between 1 Dec and 24 Feb; none were reported in Utah. A Swainson's Hawk photographed 17 Dec at the Salt Lake City airport marshes, Salt Lake, UT (ph. CN, S&CS) is likely the first found in the Region during the winter.

It was a great winter for observing gulls, with many rare and unusual sightings. Mew Gulls were found in Washoe, NV at Paradise Park 11 Dec (EK), at Pyramid L. 1 Jan (GS, DM), and at Lemmon Valley 14-19 Feb (WR, ph. MMe). The only Mew Gull reported from Utah was an ad. at Farmington Bay 21 Jan (JS&KB). High numbers of Thayer's Gulls were observed this winter from various locations around the Great Salt Lake, UT, including 7 at the Bountiful Landfill, Davis 23 Dec (TA), 5 at the Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 28 Dec (TA et al.), and 3 at Farmington Bay 15 Feb (RJ et al.). A good candidate for Utah's first Iceland Gull (p.a.) was found at Farmington Bay 26 Feb (TP, ph. Pj). Three ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from various Utah locations: Logan Landfill, Cache 8 Dec (FA), Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 32 Jan (S&CS, JB, J&KB), and Farmington Bay 10-11 Feb (TA). Utah's first accepted Western Gull was found 27 Dec at the Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake (ph., TA, CN, m.ob.); it remained at these ponds through 20 Jan, then remarkably was relocated at Farmington Bay 25-3 Mar (KP et al.). A Western Gull also made a rare Nevada appearance at Walker L., Mineral 5 Jan (TL, Dse). Both Western Gulls were reported this season were in third-winter plumage. Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported 8 Dec at the Logan Landfill, Cache, UT (KA), 15 Dec in Reno, Washoe, NV (MMe) and 1 Jan at Pyramid L., Washoe, NV (GS, DM).

This female Black Scoter was found 5 November 2006 at the Dyer Pond and almost certainly represents the first record for the nearly waterless Esmaralda County, Nevada. Three Black Scoters were observed in the Great Basin in the winter 2006-2007 season, a very high number. Photograph by Greg Scrypski.

HAWKS THROUGH TERNs

One of the highlights of the season was a very cooperative White-tailed Kite found at Carson L., Fallon, Churchill, NV 18 Dec (Dse, DM); it was present through at least 27 Jan (BH) and provided great photographic opportunities (ph. MM, ph. ST et al.). Another White-tailed kite was reported 31 Dec near Blanding, San Juan, UT (p.a., MMe) but could not be relocated. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from several Nevada counties (Clark, Lincoln, and Washoe) between 1 Dec and 24 Feb; none were reported in Utah. A Swainson's Hawk photographed 17 Dec at the Salt Lake City airport marshes, Salt Lake, UT (ph. CN, S&CS) is likely the first found in the Region during the winter.

It was a great winter for observing gulls, with many rare and unusual sightings. Mew Gulls were found in Washoe, NV at Paradise Park 11 Dec (EK), at Pyramid L. 1 Jan (GS, DM), and at Lemmon Valley 14-19 Feb (WR, ph. MMe). The only Mew Gull reported from Utah was an ad. at Farmington Bay 21 Jan (JS&KB). High numbers of Thayer's Gulls were observed this winter from various locations around the Great Salt Lake, UT, including 7 at the Bountiful Landfill, Davis 23 Dec (TA), 5 at the Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 28 Dec (TA et al.), and 3 at Farmington Bay 26 Feb (RJ et al.). A good candidate for Utah's first Iceland Gull (p.a.) was found at Farmington Bay 26 Feb (TP, ph. Pj). Three ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from various Utah locations: Logan Landfill, Cache 8 Dec (FA), Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 32 Jan (S&CS, JB, J&KB), and Farmington Bay 10-11 Feb (TA). Utah's first accepted Western Gull was found 27 Dec at the Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake (ph., TA, CN, m.ob.); it remained at these ponds through 20 Jan, then remarkably was relocated at Farmington Bay 25-3 Mar (KP et al.). A Western Gull also made a rare Nevada appearance at Walker L., Mineral 5 Jan (TL, Dse). Both Western Gulls were reported this season were in third-winter plumage. Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported 8 Dec at the Logan Landfill, Cache, UT (KA), 15 Dec in Reno, Washoe, NV (MMe) and 1 Jan at Pyramid L., Washoe, NV (GS, DM).
Several first-winter Glaucous Gulls were also observed in Utah: at the Logan Landfill, Cache 8 Dec (KA), at Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 2 Jan+ (LG, DS, m.ob.), and at Farmington Bay 2 Feb+ (J&KB et al.).

**OWLS THROUGH THRASHERS**

A Short-eared Owl was found 26 Dec at Corn Cr. (CT, IP). Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported from n. Nevada locations 6 Jan (Indian Lakes, Churchill, BH) and 15 Feb (Stead, Washoe, BG). At least 5 Acorn Woodpeckers were observed 3 Dec in the Kolob Meadows, Washington (RF, KC), likely part of an undocumented breeding colony in sw. Utah. A first-year Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was photographed 26 Jan–5 Feb at the Bunkerville City Park, Clark, NV (RS, DG). A Red-breasted Sapsucker made a rare Utah appearance at Lytle 26 Jan–4 Feb (KE, LT, ph. LG, m.ob.). A probable female Gilded Flicker was briefly observed 19 Feb on the Beaver Dam Slope.

**SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES**

A Swamp Sparrow was a nice winter find 13 Jan at Utah L., Utah, UT (5&CS, JB). White-throated Sparrows were reported from only two Nevada counties (Churchill and Clark); however, 11 were found in seven Utah counties: Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, San Juan, Wasatch, and Washington. The only Nevada Harris’s Sparrow was at Manzanita Park, Reno, Washoe 16 Dec (GS et al.), while 5 were found between four Utah locations: 15 Dec at South Weber, Davis (KP); 4 Dec+ at Lytle (LT et al.); 22 Jan at Howell, Box Elder (BB); and 26 Jan–10 Feb at Wallarid Bay S.P., Box Elder (KP et al.). As in previous years, the wintering longspur hotspot in the Great Basin was at Carson L., Churchill, NV. A single McCown’s Longspur was found there 26 Dec (TL), and 5 were reported 6 Jan (MME). At least 3 Lapland Longspurs were found at Carson L. 20 Dec–13 Jan (MME, RS et al.), and a Chestnut-collared Longspur was there 26 Dec (TL). Counts of more than 20 Lapland Longspurs were reported from opposite ends of Utah: longspurs were observed mixed with Horned Lark flocks in the Hurricane Fields, Washington (14 Jan–1 Feb, RF et al.) in the sw. corner of the state and near Howell, Box Elder (18–22 Jan; KP et al.) in the nw. corner. Snow Buntings graced Wash Valley, Tooele, UT 30 Dec (TA), Howell, Box Elder, UT 21–22 Jan (ph. TA, CN), and Farmington Bay 4 Feb (J&KB). An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak brightened a residence in s. Reno, Washoe, NV 10 Dec (JH).


**DISCLAIMER**

All content is provided "as is" for informational purposes only. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Use of trade names is for identification purposes only and does not necessarily imply endorsement by the U.S. government.
Sartor O. Williams III

Winter 2006-2007 was characterized by heavy snows in December and January, but a February warming trend ushered in early migration and breeding by several species. Improved grassland conditions across the south resulted in strong showings by many species, especially grassland raptors, pipits, and sparrows. Gulls were much in the news, including New Mexico's first Iceland Gulls and second confirmed Lesser Black-backed Gull.

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

**SWANS THROUGH VULTURES**

A good tundra Swan season found 3 in the Maxwell area 2 Dec-7 Jan (ph. DC, JEP, MW), 3 at Cherry L., Mora 7 Jan (MW), 4 at L.V.N.W.R. 2 Dec (JEP), and one at B.L.N.W.R. 1 Dec (JH). An impressive 47 Wood Ducks were at Mesilla Dam 8 Dec (CGL); noteworthy for the sw were 2 at Glenwood 21 Jan (Steve D. Beatty) and one in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (JEP). Getting an early start was a Mallard nesting at Santa Fe 23 Feb (LS). High count for Greater Scaup was 9 at Ute L. 9 Dec (ph. DC), where there were 4 on 6 Jan (JEP) and 2 on 28 Jan (NP MB). Continuing from Nov. 2 Surf Scoters lingered at Deming until 9 Dec (LM, JO). A White-winged Scoter was in the Maxwell-Stubblefield area 3 Dec-1 Jan (ph. DC, JEP ph. MH). Up to 2 Long-tailed Ducks were at Stubblefield L. 7 Dec-28 Feb (ph. DC, JEP NP, MB, BN, CR). Noteworthy for s. Hidalgo was a Bufflehead at McKinney Tank w. of Antelope Wells 23 Feb (DG). Maintaining a Colfax presence were a male Barrow's Goldeneye at Stubblefield L. 2 Dec-6 Jan (JEP ph. DC), where there was a female 1-6 Jan (ph. DC); a male was there again 23 Feb (DC).

Single Pacific Loons at Conchas L. 4 Jan (MH) and Sunland Park 17 Dec (BN, CR) provided the only reports. An impressive raft of 35 Horned Grebes was at Ute L. 4 Jan (MH); in the R.G.V, singles were at Cochiti L. 10 & 26 Dec (WH) and Caballo L. 16 Feb (JEP), and up to 2 were at E.B.L. 14 Dec (RD) and 27 Jan (BN, CR). North for the season were an American White Pelican at Ute L. 7 Jan (MW) and a Double-crested Cormorant at Farmington 16 Dec (AN). Neotropical Cormorant made a small comeback in the R.G.V, with highs of 14 at Bosque 28 Jan (WH), 16 at E.B.L. 19 Feb (CR), 24 at Caballo L. 3 Feb (WH), 8-9 at Burn L. 9-10 Feb (JEP, MS, JZ), and one at Sunland Park 5 & 12 Jan (MS, JZ, Egret was at B.L.N.W.R. 19 Dec-4 Jan (ph. JH), where one had been present in Oct. A Cattle Egret was n. to Bosque 7 & 15 Jan (BN, CR, RD); others were in Doña Ana Dec-Feb, including a high count of 74 at Las Cruces 1 Dec (TL). A White-faced Ibis wintered at Belen 16 Dec-24 Feb (m.o.b.), and at least one was at B.L.N.W.R. 27 Dec-21 Feb (JH), where 2 were seen 2 Jan (SW). Late were 2 Turkey Vultures at Roswell 16 Dec (SB); unexpected in winter was one e. of Animas 12 Jan (JB).

**KITES THROUGH GULLS**

Good grassland conditions proved attractive to White-tailed Kites in s. New Mexico, with reports from four counties, including one in the Animas Valley 9 Jan (SS, JY), a pair plus a single e. of Hermannas 22 Feb (RM), a pair near Isacc L. 7-24 Dec (ph. JH, ph. CGL, ph. DG, m.o.b.), and one at Seven Rivers W.M.A. 9-21 Dec (ph. SW, JO). Another raptor that benefited from healthy grasslands was Northern Harrier, which was unusually numerous statewide, including detections on 26 of 29 Christmas Bird Counts. North in the R.G.V. was a Harris's Hawk at Sevilleta N.W.R. 19 Dec (NE & SC), 4 were near Tularosa 6 & 22 Feb (CR, CGL), while in the sw., 7 were in Luna (LM) and 2 were in Hidalgo (fide RSS) 2 Dec. An ad. Red-shaodowed Hawk, apparently one of the e. subspecies, was near Ruidoso Springs 11-15 Feb (MS, ph. JH, m.o.b.). High counts for Ferruginous Hawk were 21 at the Navajo farms s. of Farmington 3 Feb (AN) and 13 at Las Vegas 27 Dec (DE). For s., a Rough-legged Hawk was at Clovis 18 Feb (GB, SS), and 2 were at Six Mile Dam 23 Jan (SW). An imn. Crested Caracara was in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (ph. CGL, ph. CR, CR), the 2nd consecutive winter for the species in Hidalgo. Merlins were well distributed Dec-Feb, especially in the sw., including a high 5 on the Peloncillo Mountains C.B.C. 31 Dec (AC); noteworthy for the e. was one at Jal 4 Feb (SW). Single Peregrine Falcons lingered into Dec at several s. locales, including 2 in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (AC); one in w. Doña Ana 7 Jan (MS, JZ) provided the only detailed Jan report.

Late for the n. were 3 Virginia Rails at Stubblefield L. 1 Jan (DC). Noteworthy for Hidalgo were 300 Sandhill Cranes at Virden 29 Dec (JEP) and over 1000 at Cotton City 31 Jan (DG); an albino Sandhill was near Hermannas 30 Jan (J. Krakowski). Black-necked Stilts again wintered at Sunland Park, including 5 on 2 Jan (MS, JZ) and 4 on 12-13 Jan (JEP, CGL); 14 were there 9 Feb (JEP). Late American Avocets were 5 at Lordsburg Playa 5 Dec (DG) and at Sunland Park 10 Dec (NP); earliest were 2 in Doña Ana 15 Feb (LM) and 8 at...
Lordsburg Playa. 22 Feb (ph. J. Bird). Noteworthy for midwinter was a Lesser Yellowlegs with 3 Greaters at Bosque 7 Jan (BN, CR); another was with 2 Greaters near Loving 23 Dec (SW). Increasingly evident in winter, 83 Long-billed Curlews were in the Loving area 23 Dec (C. Cranston, SW); in Luna, 13 were of Hermannas 16 Jan (LM), and 11 were there 22 Feb (RM), while 9 were w. of Columbus 27 Jan (DH). Nicely documented were single Dunlins at Holloman L. 8 Dec–22 Feb (JO, ph. JB, m.ob.) and Lordsburg Playa 3 Feb (ph. RFS). Typically scarce in winter, Bonaparte’s Gull this season included 15 at Santa Rosa L. 17 Dec (WW), 30 at Six Mile Dam 23 Jan (SW), and 40 at L. Atonal 21 Feb (SW), in the R.G.V., one was at E.B.L. 22 Dec (CGL), and one to 2 were at Caballo L. 9 Dec (CGL) and 3-19 Feb (m.ob.). A strong showing by Mew Gull produced an ad. at Farmington 16 Dec (ph. T. Reeves), one to 2 ads. at E.B.L. 3-11 Feb (JEP, DK, WH, ph. GF), an ad. at Caballo L. 29 Dec–27 Jan (ph. CGL, ph. MB, ph. MH), and an ad. at Sunland Park 6 Dec–12 Jan (JNP, MS, JZ, ph. CRB). Herring Gulls were unusually plentiful at E.B.L., with 12-22 counted on various dates 25 Jan–7 Feb (m.ob.) and a high 25 there 11 Feb (WII); noteworthy for Mora was an ad. at Callely’s L. 10 Feb (BN, CR). The gull excitement at E.B.L. produced an ad. at Thayer’s 13 Jan–11 Feb (JEP, m.ob., ph.). Providing a New Mexico first was an extensively documented first-cycle Iceland Gull at Sunland Park 5 Dec–25 Feb (ph. JNP, ph. JO, ph. CGL, ph. GF, ph. JB, ph. MB, ph. JZ, m.ob.); another imm. Iceland was discovered at Caballo L. 4 Feb (ph. CGL), some 100 km nw. of Sunland Park. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull at E.B.L. 24 Jan–7 Feb (GB, ph. JO, ph. MB, ph. MH, ph. CGL, ph. JB, ph. SC, m.ob.) provided the 2nd confirmed New Mexico record.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Now a conspicuous component of New Mexico’s avifauna, Eurasian Collared-Dove was found on 27 of 29 C.B.C.s., including a high 929 at Roswell 16 Dec (SB) and, in the w., 102 at Farmington 16 Dec (AN), 33 at Zuni 30 Dec (JT), and 95 at Silver City 17 Dec (RSS). A vocal pair of Inca Doves was n. to Aztec 23 Jan (W. McNall). Another good Ruddy Ground-Dove season found a male at Cotton 29 Dec–4 Feb (JEP, ph. CGL, CB, JO), a male in the middle Animas Valley 31 Dec (JEP), and a female near Radium Springs 15 Jan–3 Feb (MS, ph. JZ, DG); a Common Ground-Dove was with the Ruddy at Cotton City 29 Dec–27 Jan (JEP, CRB). Apparently another refuge from the cagebird trade, a Military Macaw was at Sunland Park 24 Dec (WW) and 9 Jan (JY). Up to 6 Whiskered Screech-Owls were active in Clint Canyon 12 Jan (ph. MH). Some 25 Long-eared Owls were in a saltcedar roost near Santa Teresa (CGL) & 16 Feb (MS, ph. JZ); other day roosts included 8 in saltcedar near Cimarron 27 Feb (DC), 5 in

Mew Gulls were documented at four New Mexico locales this season, including these two (left and background right, with Ring-billeds) at Elephant Butte Lake, Sierra County 11 February 2007. Photograph by Gary K. Froehlich.

Providing a first for New Mexico, this Iceland Gull split its time between Sunland Park, Doña Ana County (here) and nearby El Paso, Texas 5 (here) December 2006 through 26 February 2007. Photograph by Gary K. Froehlich.

sumac at Hiblar Tank near Las Cruces 16 Dec–11 Feb (DG, CGL), and 6 in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (JEP); very early, a Long-eared was incubating a nest in mesquite n. of Hatchita 22 Feb (RM). Improved grasslands resulted in multiple Short-eared Owl reports: singles near Maxwell 10 Feb (BN, CR), Zuni Tekapo L. 28-30 Dec (JT), and C.C.N.P. 16 Dec (SW), 3 near Rodeo 30 Dec (CR), and 4 in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (CR); one

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Wintering Empidonax flycatchers continued to increase, including single apparent Hammonds at E.B.L. Dam 13 Jan (JEP), Percha 17 Dec–13 Jan (BN, CR, CGL, LM, JEP), near
Rincon Feb 4 (MS, ph. JZ), and in the Animas Valley 13 Jan (MH), apparent Duskeys were one at Bosque 15 Dec (DH) and another at a different site there Dec–Feb (DH), and one at Leasburg 14 Jan and 3 Feb (CGL). Empidonax flycatchers of undetermined species were up to 3 at Bosque 15 Dec (DH), 2 in the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (fide AC), 2 at G.B.A. 9 Dec (RSS) and singles there 22 Dec and 2 Feb (RSS), and singles near Cliff 25 Jan (LM) and 11 Feb (SW), Percha 17 Dec (BN, CR) and 13 Jan (JEP), Roswell 16 Dec (fide SB), and C.C.N.P. 16 Dec (fide SW). Black Phoebe in the n. were 2 at Zuni’s Blackrock Dam 29 Dec (JT) and singles at Grants 18 Feb (CG), Dixon 16 Dec (RT), and Española 23 Dec (BF); 2 Say’s lingered at Farmington 16 Dec (AN). North was an Eastern Phoebe at Corrales 17 Dec (DK, CR); one was w. to Cliff 30 Dec (RSS). Vermilion Flycatchers increased their wintering presence across s. New Mexico, with multiple reports for Grant, Hidalgo, Socorro, Sierra, Dona Ana, and Eddy; n. were singles at Glenwood 23 Dec (R. Skaggs) and Albuquerque 24 Dec (CR). For the 2nd consecutive year, an Ash-throated Flycatcher wintered below Caballo Dam, where seen and heard 29 Dec (DH) and 10 Feb (JEP).

Northern Shrikes were conspicuous in Colfax, with singles reported from several locales Dec–Feb (m.o.b.) and 3 at Raton 25 Dec (DC); one was s. to Lamy 10–18 Feb (BN, CR, ph. JB). Wintering vireos with useful details were a Plumbeous at Percha 3 Dec (ph. CGL) and a Blue-headed near Aguirre Springs 8 Jan (MS, ph. JZ). Maintaining an Organ Mts. presence were 5 Hutton’s Vireos at Aguirre Springs 25 Feb (MS, JZ) and 2 in Filmore Canyon 7 Jan (ph. CGL). Blue Jays were especially prevalent in Colfax, with reports from several locales and including 5 at Yankee 23 Dec (DC), 5 at Chase Ranch near Cimarron 18 Dec (DC), 4 on Pomol Cr. near Cimarron 11 Feb (BN, CR), 3 at Cimarron 21 Dec (ph. EW), and 2 at Raton 19 Jan (JEP). Pinyon Jays continued scarce in the n. but were numerous in the sw, including 500 at G.B.A. 1 Dec (RSS), 953 at Silver City 17 Dec (RSS), and 70 at Bear Canyon L. 3 Jan (EL). Several swallows arrived unusually early; remarkable was an ad. male Purple Martin at Deming 27 Feb (LM). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow lingered near Santa Teresa 8 Dec (CRB, CGL) and 5 Jan (MS, JZ); presumably early were one atRadi um Springs 9 Feb (JEP) and 3 there 16 Feb (MS), one to 2 at Mesilla 16 Feb (CRB), 2 at Percha 19 Feb (CR), and one at Caballo L. 19 Feb (CR). Also early were numerous Cliff Swallows in Dona Ana 25 Feb (CGL). Fourteen Cave Swallows were at Grants 3 Feb (JEP) and an early Barn was at Carlsbad 23 Feb (SW).

**Wrens through Warblers**

Noteworthy at 2620 m was a Canyon Wren at Black L., Colfax 7-16 Feb (ph. P. Monk). North for the season were single House Wrens at Cerrillos 4 Feb (LS) and Madrid 7 Feb (LS). Winter Wrens were singles at including 54 there 31 Dec (AC); others in the w. included 2 at Zuni 30 Dec (JT), 25 at G.B.A. 16 Dec (RSS), and 6 at Deming 6 Dec (LM); Easterns were plentiful from the R.G.V. eastward, including highs of 97 at Albuquerque 17 Dec (HS) and 80 in the Caballo–Percha area 30 Dec (BV). Western Bluebirds were matting at Cerrillos 7 Feb (LS); a record 1033 Mountains were at Farmington 16 Dec (AN). Herrt Thrush remained n. in numbers, including 4 at Farmington 16 Dec (AN), 8 at Española 23 Dec (BF), 12 at Santa Fe 2 Jan (DE), and one at Cimarron 11 Feb (DC); 39 were at Albuquerque 17 Dec (HS). A Brown Thrasher at Corrales 17 Dec (DK) marked the 6th winter for the species there; another was at Elko 9 Dec–11 Jan (ph. J. Nelson-Moore). Pushing the northern envelope were single Curve-billed Thrashers at two Cimarron sites 15-16 Dec (ph. DC, ph. EW) and one at Dixon 16 Dec (RT); a Crissal was n. to Santa Fe 2 Jan (DE).

Lush grasslands produced record numbers of Sprague’s Pipits in the sw, especially near Hermances, where there were 42 on 2 Dec (DH), 9 on 16 Jan (LM), 13 on 27 Jan (DH), and one 17 Feb (ph. CGL, CRB); others included 4 in w. Dona Ana 7 Jan (MS, JZ), where there were 3 on 13 Jan (ph. CGL) and 2 on 17 Feb (CGL, ph. CRB), up to 2 e. of Hatchett 17 Feb (CGL), 3 in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (CR), and 2 in McKinney Flats near Antelope Wells 5 Dec, plus singles there 20 Dec–25 Feb (DG); farther n., at least one Sprague’s was in Socorro grasslands w. of Bingham 16 Dec and 5 Jan (JEP). A Phainopepla pair was n. to Socorro Dec–Feb (P. Basham), and singles were at two Bosque sites 15 Dec (WH, C. Brozek). Two Olive Warblers were vocal at Aguirre Springs 7 Jan (DG) and 25 Feb (MS, JZ).

Now regular in winter in the lower R.G.V., Orange-crowned Warblers were noted at eight Dona Ana sites Dec-Feb (m.o.b.); lingering into mid-Dec were singles at Silver City 17 Dec (RSS), Animas Valley 20 Dec (DG), the Avalon–Brantley area 17 Dec (T. Hines), and R.S. 16 Dec (SW). Remarkably late was an ad. male Black-throated Gray Warbler at Caballo Dam 26 Dec (fide EB). A Pine Warbler was a surprise at Velarde 16 Dec (ph. M. MacRoberts). Unexpected was a male Wilson's Warbler near Radium Springs 25 Dec (MS, ph. JZ); a female was seen earlier at Mesilla Dam 2 Dec (ph. CGL) and apparently wintered, as it was seen 8 Feb (CGL).
Historically scarce in New Mexico, Lapland Longspur has been found with increasing frequency in recent years; these were part of a flock of some 150 near Maxwell, Colfax County 3 February 2007. Photograph by David J. Cleary.

**SPARRROWS THROUGH FINCHES**

A Cassin’s Sparrow was singing e. of Las Cruces by 17 Feb (Jude HS). A high count of 72 Rufous-crowned Sparrows came from the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (AC). Two American Tree Sparrows were s. to Albuquerque 24 Dec (CR). Both Chipping and Brewer’s Sparrows were abundant across the south, northerly Chippings included 2 at Farmington 16 Dec (AN), 12 at Albuquerque 17 Dec (MH), and 8 in the Sandia Mts. 26 Dec (W. Rowe, NV), while northerly Brewer’s were one at Zuni 27 Dec (JT), 4 at Petroglyph N.M. 17 Dec (NP), and 92 at Sevilleta N.W.R. 19 Dec (N&SC). Unexpected in winter, single Clay-colored Sparrows were at Rodeo 21 Jan (R. Webster) and Columbus 29 Dec (CR). A Black-chinned Sparrow was n. to the Sandia Mts. 26 Dec (NP, MB). An impressive 26 Lark Sparrows were at Virden 29 Dec (JEP), and 20 were there 26 Jan (JEP); other credible reports were at Cotton City 4 Feb (JO) and singles at Columbus 29 Dec (CR) and near Mesilla 9 Dec (CRB) and 7 Jan (p. CGL). Conditions favored Lark Buntings in the sw., with 2500 near Columbus 29 Dec (CR) and 1000 near Animas 30 Dec (JEP).

Grasshopper Sparrows where rarely encountered in winter were singles w. of Bingham 25 Jan (CRB, CGL), at San Simon Cienega 26 Jan (JEP), and at 1950 m above Owl Canyon, Peloncillo Mts. 27 Dec and 22 Feb (CDL); a high count of 30 came from the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (AC). Baird’s Sparrows with useful details were 4 in the middle Animas Valley 31 Dec (CR), up to 5 in the s. Animas Valley 18 Feb (SS, GB), and 2 in McKinney Flats near Antelope Wells 17 Jan, with one there 24 Feb (DG); one or more passed through Otero Mesa grasslands in early Dec (RM). A Le Conte’s Sparrow was at Carlsbad 17 Dec (SW); undetailed was another reported on Otero Mesa in early Dec (RM). Fox Sparrow made a strong showing, with one to 3 at 11 sites in nine counties, including singles n. to Montezuma 1 Feb (TB, ph. CB), e. to Ute L. 28 Jan (NP, MB), w. to the Peloncillo Mts. 17 Feb (CDL), and s. to Sunland Park 2 Jan (JNP). Lincoln’s Sparrows were especially numerous in mountain foothills in the south, including a high 259 in the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (AC); n. were 2 at Española 23 Dec (BF). Noteworthy Swamp Sparrows were singles n. to Cimarron 2 Jan (ph. DC) and Española 23 Dec (BF), one at Deming 22 Dec (LM), and a high 6 w. to the Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (AC). North were single White-throated Sparrows at Sugarite 30 Dec (DC),崖城 Canyon 25 Dec (DC), and Montezuma 20 Jan (TB, ph. CB). One to 2 Harris’s Sparrows were at 10 sites in Colfax, Sandia, Bernalillo, Socorro, Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, and Eddy Dec-Feb. A good Golden-crowned Sparrow season produced singles at Santa Rosa 17 Dec (WW), Placitas 30 Dec (JJM), Petroglyph N.M. 17 Dec (NP), and Peloncillo Mts. 31 Dec (P. Abbott). A White-winged Junco was w. to Zuni’s Mullen Canyon 28 Dec and 1 Jan (JT). Continuing from Nov, Lapland Longspurs were conspicuous in the Maxwell area, with small numbers there Dec-Jan but an impressive 150 n. of Maxwell 3 Feb (ph. DC); away from Colfax, 8 were near Ute L. 6 Jan (JEP), and 2 were s. to McIntosh 18 Feb (CR). Impressive numbers of Chestnut-colored Longspurs made good use of s. grasslands, including some 3400 near Hermanas 2 Dec (DH), over 1800 at Sevilleta N.W.R. 21 Dec (DK, MH, Ne&SC), and over 1100 in the Animas Valley 31 Dec (CR). Two Northern Cardinals were at Santa Rosa 17 Dec (WW).

Historically scarce in winter, Yellow-headed Blackbirds numbered some 2200 at Deming 15 Dec (LM), 3000 near Hermanas 4 Feb (JO), 300 at Mesilla 5 Dec (CGL), and 500 at Sunland Park 12 Jan (JEP). Nicely documented were 4 Rusty Blackbirds at Ute L. 9 Dec (ph. DC) and at least 2 at Davies Tank, Doha Ana 20 Dec-8 Jan (ph. CGL, CRB, MS, ph. JZ). A record 326 Brewer’s Blackbirds were n. to Farmingdon 16 Dec (AN). Far w. was a Common Grackle at Virden 29 Dec (JEP). A high 30 Bronzed Cowbirds were at Las Cruces 16 Dec (TL), and smaller numbers lingered there Jan-Feb; 5 Brown-headed were n. to Maxwell 5 Jan (ph. DC). Rosy-finches returned in numbers to Sandia Crest where, through 11 Mar, 773 had been banded this season: 579 Blacks, 186 Gray-crowned (including 104 Hepburns), and 8 Brown-capped (N&SC); elsewhere, one Gray-crowned was at Placitas 29-30 Dec (JQ), 14 Brown-capped were at Montezuma 20 Jan-12 Feb (TB, ph. CB), and a flock of 15 Rosy-finches was on Mt. Taylor 18 Feb (CG). Lawrence’s Goldfinch staged a mini-invasion in the sw., with singles at Radiant Springs 15 Dec (JO) and the Carlisle Mine, Grant 31 Dec (ph. RFS) and 7 at San Simon Cienega 5 Jan (NP, MB).


**Sartor O. Williams III**

Southwest Natural History Institute
1819 Meadowview Drive NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104-2511
(sunbittern@earthlink.net)
Arizona

Mark M. Stevenson (Non-passerines)
Gary H. Rosenberg (Passerines)

Abnormally dry conditions favored observers, but a hard mid-January freeze damaged crops and routed many insects. The first state record Couch's Kingbird made do with dead honeybees. Another first, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, came earlier in the season. Red-necked Grebes were found in unprecedented numbers.


WATERFOWL THROUGH TERNs

The persistent Fulvous Whistling-Duck alternated between two Scottsdale locations all season (m.o.b.). Very rare in Arizona, a bluesharp Ross's Goose was at Cibola N.W.R. 21 Dec (B. Hart). More Cackling Geese (p.a.) were reported, with a "probable" in Phoenix 25 Dec (DS), 3 in Scottsdale 6-9 Jan (TC, ph. PD), one in Goodyear 20 Feb (ph. M. Hering), and the fall bird still in Goodyear through 25 Feb (KR, m.o.b.). Tundra Swans were seen in above-average numbers; 24 at Whitewater 5 Dec (SW, TW), up to 6 at Watson L. 5 Dec-19 Feb (BN, S. & S. Burk, CST), 2 in Pinetop 16 Dec (jde J. Videle), one at Benson 18 Dec-26 Feb (CC, ph. M. Auslander), one at A.V.S.T.P. 20 Dec (AC), one at Palo Verde 24 Dec-27 Jan (DpO, TC et al.), and 4 at Havasu N.W.R. 28 Dec (jde N. Miller). A female Eurasian Wigeon was a good find in Scottsdale 20-21 Dec (KR, ph. PD). In greater Phoenix, at least 6 male Barrow's Goldeneye was at Sedona S.T.P. 23 Dec (T. Linda). In the past 20 years, numbers of Hooded Mergansers wintering in Arizona have increased substantially; 94 were found on the Phoenix waterfowl survey 20 Jan (jde TC), and 17 were at Pinetop 18 Feb (MMo). In Chandler, up to 400 Common Mergansers in Jan (DP) was a large concentration; up to 200 were at Willcox in Jan (EW, SH). Red-breasted Merganser is rare away from the L.C.R.V. Up to 3 were in Palo Verde 2-24 Dec (TC, KR), one was at Arizona City through 6 Dec (m.o.b.), and up to 2 were at Casa Grande S.T.P. through 1 Dec (P. Salomon et al.).

There are only about 10 records of Red-throated Loon in Arizona, so one on the Bill Williams Arm of L. Havasu 9-26 Dec (fCB, SSi, ph. MMS) created a stir. Two were together there 16-17 Dec (ph., fMMs, MP; B. Sutton). Pacific Loons are rare even in the L.C.R.V. One with an injured wing was at L. Havasu, Site 6 between 19 Dec and 14 Feb (W. Sutton, CL); at Katherine Landing, 2 were seen 14 Jan (R. Will) followed by 4 there 20 Jan (JY et al.), and one was on the Bill Williams Arm 3 Feb (R. Haaseth, D. Finch). Four Common Loons were on Lefter L. 1 Dec (N. Gaines), 14 were on L. Havasu 9 Jan (MMS, MP), 2 were at Katherine Landing 20 Jan (JY et al.), and one was at Arizona City 20-27 Feb (B. Burns et al., DJ). A Yellow-billed Loon reported on the Bill Williams Arm 14 Jan (R. Will) went unconfirmed.

Horned Grebes, expected on the L.C.R.V. in winter, are rare elsewhere in Arizona. Fifteen continued on L. Havasu 15 Dec (MMS, MP), 2 were in Tucson 19 Dec-11 Jan (J. Higgins, ph. MMS), one was on Saguaro L. 22 Jan (TC), and one continued in Palo Verde through 24 Dec (TC et al.). The late-fall Red-necked Grebe at Kearny was the harbinger of a spate of winter reports across the Southwest. In Arizona, one was on the Bill Williams Arm 7 Dec-20 Jan (K. Blair, ph. T. Godfrey, MMS), 2 were at Mesquite Bay, L. Havasu 26 Dec-8 Jan (S. Barlow, ph. MMS), with possibly one of the same birds at Site 6 on 23 Feb (ph. K. Brinnell), and one was above Davis Dam 25 Jan (TC).

Stray Brown Pelicans winter irregularly in the L.C.R.V. One was on Martinez L. 27 Dec (M. Chambers), 4 on L. Havasu 1 Jan (GB), and one on Misty L. 5 Feb (DS). The 20 Jan Phoenix area waterfowl survey tallied 190 Neotropic Cormorants and 450 Double-crested Cormorants, reflecting the explosive increase in numbers of both species there in recent years (jde TC). At Patagonia L., 16
Neotropics were present 9 Feb, with numbers swelling to 25 by the end of the period (R.W., S.H., et al.). In the Prescott area, 38 Double-crested were on Willow L. 16 Feb (BN); smaller numbers were reported from Goldwater L. and Lynx L. (B.N., S. Burk). American Bitterns are rare visitors to Arizona. Singles were at Rio Salado, Phoenix 16 Dec-11 Feb (M. Scott, TC), Tres Rios, Phoenix 2-3 Feb (L. Miller), and Yuma 19 Feb (S. Detwiler). A Least Bittern was calling at Saguaro L. 22 Jan, where they apparently have not previously been detected in winter (TC). Great Blue Heron nests with partially grown nestlings in Chandler 21 Jan (TC) suggested very early egg-laying; rookeries typically form in Feb in the low desert. A new heronry was found at Saguaro L. 22 Jan (TC). Five Great Egrets were at Watson L. 25 Dec (BN); and one was at Willow L. 9 Jan (BN), where they have been considered accidental in winter. In wintering flocks of up to 250 White-faced ibis, a bird identified as a Glossy ibis at Rio Salado, Phoenix 20 Jan-16 Feb (T.G., ph. J. Holloway, M. Van dewaar, H. Speicher) was controversial; it will be reviewed by the A.B.C.

White-tailed Kites were widely reported again, with more than 25 seen across s. Arizona from Yuma (HD) to San Bernardino N.W.R. (REW). The highlight was a group of 10 together in the San Rafael Valley 6 Dec (SH). This first-cycle Thayer's Gull at Katherine Landing 7-20 (here 7) January 2007 provided one of the few well-documented records of this species from Arizona. Photograph by Mark M. Stevenson.

Red Phalaropes, with one at Green Valley S.T.P. 13-17 Jan (M. Suomala, ph. A. Tozier), one grounded at Redfield Canyon 13 Jan (ph. J. Feldman), and one at Whitewater 23 Jan (SH). Also on 13 Jan, Bonaparte's Gulls were put down: one at Willcox (ph. R. Shantz), 6 at Arizona City (DP, ON), and 3 at Picacho Res. (DP, ON). A casual straggler from the s. in any month, a Heermann's Gull was at Whitewater 12 Dec (C. Fuller, ph. S. Swarts). Also considered casual in winter, 4 California Gulls were at scattered s. Arizona locations 13-15 Jan (DP, ON, SH, JY), and one was at Willcox 25-2 Feb (SH, EW). Herring Gulls were more common than usual away from the L.C.R.V., with one at Palo Verde 9-12 Dec (KR, DPo), one at Kearny L. in Dec (ph. B. winter's sensational total; 3 at Cook's L. 30 Dec (D. Laugh, fide TC), one at Tubac 12 Jan (K. Kaufman), one at Tacna 12 Jan (R. Jones, SS), and 2 at Kino Springs 7 Feb (SH).

A wandering Western Screech-owls was found dead along Hwy 89 s. of Bitter Springs 2 Feb (CL). Both Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were present in relatively large numbers in Arizona this winter, suggesting a good prey base after last summer's rains. Northern Saw-whet Owls wandered too. One was found dead w. of Bellomont 2 Jan (CL), one in a Tempe yard 3-12 Jan (R. Birmore, ph. ON), and another was in Fountain Hills 13 Jan+ (ph. S. & C. Wood). A Broad-billed Hummingbird arrived early in Portal 9 Feb (REW). Despite the hard freeze in Jan, single Violet-crowned Hummingbirds stayed all winter in lower Ramsey Canyon (J. & M. Hirth) and the Mule Mts. (TW, SW), in addition to several others reported into Dec, including one in Bisbee 28-31 Dec (ph. D. Danforth). The Violet-crowned Hummingbird x Broad-billed Hummingbird hybrid stayed at B.T.A. all season. Apparently the same male Allen's Hummingbird that provided Arizona's first winter record last year returned to a Huachuca Mt. foothills feeder 18 Dec-21 Jan (ph. C. Melton) but vanished after a snowstorm.

Fewer Elegant Trogons were reported than last winter. Two were in the Huachuca Mts. 23 Dec (M. Preti, B. Dunke), up to 3 were reported at Patagonia L. (P. Lehman, B. Adler, SH), 2 were in the Patagonia Mts. (M. Brown), and a spring migrant was along the S.P.R. near Hwy 90 on 23 Feb (D. Beaudette, SH). A few Green Kingfishers were seen in the S.P.R. valley on either side of the coldest weather: one was s. of Hwy 90 between 9 Dec and 10 Jan (SH), and one was in St. David 22 Dec (fide TW), with possibly the same bird nearby 10-24 Feb (R. Forrest). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a rare winter visitor, was reported in Tucson 9 Dec (DS), at Sweetwater 15 Dec (AC), at B.T.A. 31 Dec-11 Mar (E. Hough, ph. PD), and in Montosa Canyon, Santa Rita Mts. 15 Jan (RW, SS). More problematic to identify are female daggettii Red-breasted Sapsuckers and their hybrids. Individual birds reported as Red-breasted were at Coon Bluff along the Salt R. 7 Jan-4 Feb (ph. J. Weser), along lower Sabino Cr. 22 Jan (B. Guldseth; ph. fTW), and at Peña Blanca L. 23-26 Feb (S. Johnson, ph. A. Tozier); these will be reviewed by the A.B.C. Hairy Woodpeckers wandered out of habitat to Catalina S.P. 1 Dec (E. Wright) and Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts. 16 Dec (G. Warren,
FIELD CROWS THROUGH THRASHERS

A Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was at Robbins Butte 19–27 Dec (TC); all documented winter records of members of this complex are of Pacific-slope Flycatcher. No fewer than 7 Eastern Phoebes were detected during the winter (3 found originally during the fall); this species has become regular in small numbers in s. Arizona during the late fall and winter. An impressive 75 Vermilion Flycatchers were found 17 Dec on the Tucson C.B.C. (Jude S. Birky), a new high count that continues a steady increase of wintering individuals in recent years. At least one pair was investigating nest sites at Duncan on the very early date of 17 Feb (TC). The only winter report of Dusky-capped Flycatcher was of one seen and heard at Kino Springs 9 Jan (SH); this species is casual at best in the state during winter. Without a doubt, the bird of the season in Arizona this winter was the Couch’s Kingbird discovered at Tacna 11 Jan–7 Mar (PL, ph. KR, MMS, GHR, v. PD). This individual remained present for nearly two months and was observed feeding on dead honeybees at the edge of an alfalfa field during the cold snap. It was extremely well documented by recordings of its diagnostic vocalizations and by photographs. If accepted, this will represent a first Arizona record. Although Cassin’s Kingbirds usually linger into the late fall and winter in s. Arizona (typically around Tucson), one in Hereford 10 Feb (P. Sockness) was thought to be an early arriving migrant. A Thick-billed Kingbird found in Yuma 9 Jan–15 Mar (HD) was a returning bird for the 5th winter in a row. Casual in Arizona in winter, an ad. male Rose-throated Becard was present at Patagonia Lake S.P. 20 Dec–28 Feb (B. Adler et al., SH).

Casual during winter, Bell’s Vireos were seen at Rio Salado, in Phoenix 23 Dec (TG) and at G.W.R. 9 Jan–8 Mar (RW et al.). A Gray Vireo was located in Spook Canyon in the Gila Mts. 3 Mar (HD, S. Detwiller); this species is seldom searched for during the winter in the remote areas in which it regularly winters in sw. Arizona. American Crows have the propensity to show up at odd locations in Arizona during winter; this year, one was reported in Tucson 16 Dec (KK, JM, BN) and one s. of Amado 20 Feb (M. Brooks). A count of 36 Tree Swallows on the Gila River C.B.C. 27 Dec (Jude TC) was high for s. Arizona in winter. A Violet-green Swallow at Gilbert 14 Feb (DP) was likely an early spring migrant, as was a Cliff Swallow at the same location 10–14 Feb (PD). Scattered Barn Swallows were found at s. Arizona locations during Dec, while singles at Santa Cruz Flats 26 Jan (DJ) and at Sweetwater 28 Feb (DS) may have wintered locally.

The more than 15 winter Wrens found this winter statewide, 3 were identified by call (and plumage) as “Eastern” Winter Wrens. One was at Huachuca Canyon 3 Dec (RH), one along the S.P.R. s. of Hwy 90 7 Dec–13 Feb (SH), and one was at Tubac 7 Jan (WR). The status of “Eastern” Winter Wren in Arizona is still poorly understood, as identification requires detecting subtle call differences, as well as somewhat variable plumage characteristics.

Lowland reports of Golden-crowned Kingslets gleaned from eBird data included one in Tucson 10 Dec (RW), one at H.R.P. 8 Jan (C. Miller), and one in Portal 21 Feb (R. LaFond). Black-capped Gnatcatchers continued at several locations where they have been found in recent years, including Patagonia Lake S.P., Sonota Creek above Patagonia Lake, Proctor Rd. below Madera Canyon, and in Montosa Canyon in the Santa Rita Mts. One potentially “new” location was Chino Canyon, where a pair was reported 28 Dec (SJ); this is a location that hosted this species in the 1980s and intermittently during the 1990s, but it has seldom been checked thoroughly in recent years. Eastern Bluebirds are extremely rare along the S.P.R. corridor, therefore, up to 10 at the San Pedro River Inn 1 Dec–11 Jan (MM) and 4 along the river near Hwy 90 on 3 Jan (EWF) were of interest. Up to 4 Easterns were also found at San Bernardino N.W.R. 14 Dec–17 Feb (REW), where this species is casual at best. It was a major flight year this winter across s. Arizona for Mountain Bluebird, but rarely is the flight actually witnessed as it was this year: on 7 Dec, along Hwy 64 between Valle and Tusayan, between 3000 and 5000 were estimated, and in the Pinetop Show Low area, some 757 were found on the local C.B.C. 16 Dec. Intriguing was a report of a Hermit Thrush of an e. subspecies (probably jaxonii) at Madera Canyon 9 Dec (WR); its large size and buffy flanks were noted. There are no verified records of e. Hermit Thrushes in Arizona. It was a better-than-average year for Rufous-backed Robin in s. Arizona, with one at Whetol Dam 7 Dec (Jha), one along Sonoyta Creek below Patagonia Lake 7 Dec (B. Adler), one on the Tres Rios C.B.C. in Phoenix 19 Dec (Jude Yellin), one at B.T.A. 24 Dec–20 Jan (E. J. Pekel et al.), one at Jake’s Corner, Gila 10–20 Feb (ph. & C. Wood), with another there 19 Feb+ (ph. Mark Brown; ph. D. Nelson, KR), and finally the one reported at the H.R.P. during the fall season was present until at least 20 Jan (J. Hammon). The Varied Thrush found during the fall along the S.P.R. s. of Hwy 90 was still present 1 Dec (D. Beaudette).

The only Gray Catbird reported was one in Bisbee 23 Jan (WW). Unambiguous Brown Thrashers were at Catalina S. P. 3–26 Feb (R. Payne; ph. A. Rogers) and one continuing at the B.T.A. all season (m.o.b.). An intriguing thrasher reported as a possible Long-billed Thrasher (which would be a first for Arizona) at E. Whitetail Canyon, Chiricahua Mts. 1 Jan–11 Feb (ph. RT) may well have been a Brown Thrasher × Curve-billed Thrasher hybrid. The A.B.C. is reviewing this record, the results of which will be published later.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An Olive Warbler at Pine 16 Dec (JE) was well n. of this species’ usual winter distribution in Arizona. Northern Parulas were on the Tres Rios C.B.C., Phoenix 16 Dec (J. Jones, TC) and on the Tucson C.B.C. 17 Dec (M. Kehl). Four Yellow Warblers and 5 Chestnut-sided Warblers were found during the winter (mostly on C.B.C.s), about average for s. Arizona in winter. A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was reported at Bill Williams N.W.R. 6 Feb (K. Blair), and the male that was located in Huachuca Canyon during the fall remained until at least 9 Dec (ph. J. Hand). A first-year female Pine Warbler was well documented in the Mule Mts. near Bisbee 22 Jan+ (TV; ph. SW, MMS); this species is casual during winter in s. Arizona. A Palm Warbler was at White-
water 4-6 Dec (SH, GHR), and another was at Rio Salado, Phoenix 28 Jan–16 Feb (ph. PD); this species is also casual at best during winter in s. Arizona. No fewer than 7 Black-and-white Warblers were found during the winter season, more than usual. The only American Redstart was one at Topock 15 Dec (MMS, MPO). A Worm-eating Warbler attempting to winter along the Santa Cruz River near Tubac 22 Dec–17 Jan (S. Johnsen et al., ph. C. Cathers) was quite unusual. Unprecedented were four different winter reports of MacGillivray’s Warblers, one at Sweetwater 20 Dec–9 Jan (C. Taylor), one at Soldier Creek, Sierra Vista 22 Dec (D. Beaudette, SH), one in Tucson 27 Dec (P. Sockness), and one at the B.T.A. 16 Jan (R. Wilt); this species is casual in Arizona during the winter, and none of the above reports were documented. A Hooded Warbler, also casual during winter, was reported along the Hassayampa River s. of Wickenburg 12 Dec (R. Strickland, D. Ghiglieri). At least 10 different Wilson’s Warblers were reported, above average for a winter, most were during Dec and before the heavy freeze in mid-Jan. Almost unheard of in winter, Red-faced Warblers were found along South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon 16 Dec (J. Puschlock) and in Humboldt Canyon, Patagonia Mts. 14 Feb (Matt Brown).

Small numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows appeared to be present all winter along the S.P.R. (M. Marsden, EW) and at San Bernardino N.W.R. (REW); this species is an irregular fall and winter visitor mostly in the extreme s. portion of the state. At least 20 Fox Sparrows were reported statewide, most of which were the expected Slate-colored form from the Rocky Mts., while a few were this type. A Lincoln’s Sparrow at Flagstaff 30 Dec (CL) provided one of the few winter reports ever for n. Arizona. At least 6 different Harris’s Sparrows were found during the winter, an above-average number for this rare wintering sparrow. Still considered a review species by the A.B.C., and still surprisingly rare in Arizona, single Lapland Longspurs were at Rousee Soda Farm, Scottsdale 6 Dec (ph. R. Wider) and in the Sonoita Grasslands near Elgin 12 Feb+ (ph. CDB, ph. GHR, MMS, MPO). Chestnut-colored Longspurs away from known wintering areas included 5+ at Reservation Tank 9 Dec (CL), 2 at Scottsdale 9-11 Dec (M. Scott, H. Beatty), one at Palo Verde 26 Dec (KR), and 7 e. of Flagstaff 28 Jan (CL).

Winter Rose-breasted Grosbeaks included one in Ash Canyon 13 Jan (R. Behrstock) and a male at Sweetwater 27 Feb+ (P. Kline; ph. C. Postmus). Up to 2 Common Grackles were in Bisbee 20 Dec–10 Feb (ph. WW, J. Hirth, m.ob.), there have been only about 10 prior documented reports from Arizona accepted by the A.B.C. Four different Orchard Orioles were documented with photographs this winter, with one at Phoenix 22 Dec (J. Burns), one at a different location in Phoenix 24 Dec (ph. B. Grice), one in Surprise, Maricopa 28 Dec (ph. D. Bradford), and one in Mesa 21 Jan (ph. L. Fetter); most of the records of this species in recent years have been during the winter season. The Streak-backed Oriole that returned to G.W.R. during the fall season was seen regularly throughout the period (m.ob.). Numerous Lawrence’s Goldfinches were detected in normal wintering areas where this species irregularly appears (Santa Cruz River Valley), but 8 in Elmerville on the Sedona C.B.C. 23 Dec and 2 at San Bernardino N.W.R. 3 Feb (REW) were both in areas away from their normal winter distribution in the state (that is, when they occur).

Observers: Charles Babbitt, Jack Bartley, Chris D. Benesh, Gavin Bieber, Cliff Cathers, Andrew Core, Troy Corman, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Jeff Estis, Shawnie Fennegan, Tom Gaskill, Stuart Healy, Doug Jeeness, Keith Kamper (Tucson RBA), Chuck LaRue, Paul Lehman, Michael Marsden, Michael Moore (MMo), Oliver Niehuis, Brian Nordstrom, David Pearson, Dave Powell (DPo), Molly Pollock, Gary H. Rosenberg, Kurt Radamaker, Bill Russell, Scott Schuette, Sig Stangeland (SSt), Dave Stejskal, Mark M. Stevenson, Rick Taylor, Carl S. Tomoff, Wezil Walraven, Richard E. Webster, Sheri Williamson, Erika Wilson, Janet Wittman (Maricopa), Tom Wood, Rick Wright, John Yerger.

Mark M. Stevenson (Non-passerines)
4201 East Monte Vista Drive, #3207
Tucson, Arizona 85712-5554, (tbrodr@att.net)
Gary H. Rosenberg (Passerines)
P.O. Box 91856, Tucson, Arizona 85752-1856
(phrosenberg@comcast.net)

Alaska

An intense and lengthy high-pressure system that sprawled over the Region for the entire month of November eventually gave way to nearly a month of winter low-pressure systems. Heavy snows then blanketed the state south of the Alaska Range, and the same storms brought endless rain and wind to most of the Southeast. The strong November freeze-up seemingly gave little hope for late southbound birds or lingering semi-hardy forms, which is more typical. But there were near-record numbers and a nice diversity of December passerines, mostly on the immediate North Gulf Coast. The remainder of the season alternated from high-pressure cold spells to large low-pressure storms, punctuated by a near month-long continental high drifting over the Mainland from the High Arctic in February. This ridge pushed all storms from the Aleutian Low well south of the North Gulf Coast, and these hampered the Southeast with near-record snows and rains farther south. The season ended with well above-average snow accumulations south of the Alaska Range. It was otherwise a very quiet season, more like winters from the 1970s and 1980s.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CORMORANTS

Whooper Swans again ventured eastward in the Aleutians to Adak, where 3 were present.
at Clam Lagoon 10-11 Feb (MT) into Mar. Small flocks or family groups of Whooper Swans are occasional through the winter, usually after Nov at larger fresh water bodies, typically from Amchitka and Adak in the cen. Aleutian Chain. Ketchikan's drake Wood Duck from Nov remained at its favorable site through 16 Dec (AWP, ph. SCH), while a pair appeared in Juneau 11 Jan–26 Feb (m.ob.). The season's only Eurasian Wigeon reports were a pair in Juneau 19 Feb (PS) and a single male on the Homer Spit 15 Feb (CS). Notable dabbler highlights, probably neutralized by the heavy Nov freeze, were limited to a few Northern Pintails in the Anchorage area through the season (TT), a hardy Northern Shoveler at Fairbanks cooling pond through 20 Dec (ABO), and a Eurasian Teal in Cordova 4 Dec (AL). Kodiak however, posted record-high dabbler numbers, including 223 Gadwall, 25 Northern Pintail, and amazing 60 Green-winged Teal on their 17 Dec C.B.C. (RAM). These numbers must have been supplemented by mainland groups seeking suitable habitat after the Nov freeze. Another Tufted Duck wintered on Cordova's very productive Eyak Lake 4 Dec+ (AL), the Region's most consistent Tufted Duck site away from the Aleutians. Although White-winged Pintails are regular and local in the Chugach Mts., a group of 7 in the South Fork Valley of Eagle River 23 Dec (BM) made a new Eagle River area C.B.C. high count. These South Fork tawees and the nearby Arctic Valley Bowl are the most consistent and accessible winter pintail sites in Upper Cook Inlet.

Coastal loon concentrations seemed about average, although 4 Yellow-billed Loons in Ketchikan 28 Jan (AWP, SCH) was a new local high and unusual for s. Southeast. The Region's Brandt's Cormorant hotspot in protected waters near Ketchikan produced only 3 this season off Mountain Pt. 28 Jan (AWP, SCH).

RAPTORS THROUGH DIPPER
Bald Eagles were well accounted for at their n. winter limits in Upper Cook Inlet, with season peaks of 255 estimated in the Palmer–Wasilla area 23 Dec (BW) and another 32 for the Anchorage C.B.C. 16 Dec (SM). Probably because of widespread atypical early winter redpoll concentrations, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Merlins made a surprisingly strong showing, especially s. of the Alaska Range. Single Sharp-shinned were noted, mostly in Dec, from Fairbanks 30 Dec (jide ND), where they are casual, around Anchorage through 16 Dec (SM) and at Kodiak in mid-Dec (RAM), while 2 were found in Homer 16 Dec (jide DE), and up to 6 hunted around Juneau all season (GVV).

Shorebirds provided limited highlights or unusual numbers this season, save for a Dec new record maximum count of 301 Dunlins from the Cordova C.B.C. 16 Dec (AL). Observers at two sites provided photographic documentation for Iceland Gulls, with 2 around Ketchikan 8-15 & 6 Feb+ (AWP, SCH, ph.) and a single n. in Cook Inlet at Kenai 3-14 Feb (ph. TB, TE). Both birds seemed to represent humilieni types, of which there are a few documented Alaska records, mostly from autumn. The only Slaty-backed Gull away from the Bering Sea was a single considered a local returnee to Kenai 30 Dec–14 Feb (TB, TE). Most exciting was a wavy Ivory Gull that joined the Kenai R. mouth gull hordes 30-31 Dec (TB, TE)—Upper Cook Inlet's first winter record and about the 5th here overall. Nearly all of the Region's extralimital Ivory Gulls, i.e., away from the Bering Sea, are from Cook Inlet. Marbled Murrelet concentrations did not materialize at traditional sites except for an aggregation of 2000 estimated in Clover Passage near Ketchikan 25 Feb (AWP, SCH). Northern Hawk Owls showed their usual early-winter propensity to wander across the s. edges of their normal range, but a single in the panhandle at Juneau's Eaglecrest ski area 2 Dec (DR, KT) was extralimital and casual in Southeast. Three Northern Pygmy Owls in the Ketchikan area 10 Dec–7 Jan (AWP, SCH) and 5 around Juneau for the season were about average and from typical winter sites. The season's first Boreal Owl seemed early, singing from spruce woods near Fairbanks 8 Jan (ND), while the first Northern Saw-whet Owl was close to on cue in the Anchorage area 18 Feb (SBr).

Possibly 2 different Anna's Hummingbirds, one of which first appeared in mid-Nov, may have traded time at a Cordova feeder through 16 Dec (jide AL), while the Ketchikan bird, also first seen in Nov, was noted there through 15 Jan (AWP, SCH). Not unexpectedly for this winter, no Northern Flickers were accounted for after mid-Dec. Christmas counts may be showing a long-term local decline in Gray Jays from the more populated and developed South-central communities, but Steller's Jays seem to be doing well and expanding at their n. limits. A new high C.B.C. tally of 14 Steller's from the Eagle River area 23 Dec is indicative of that. In a season with such an extreme and early freeze-up, American Dippers were concentrated in lower-elevation open channels. Although these are eye-brow-raising tallies, they may only hint at the winter distribution and status of this aquatic obligate, at least inland of the North Gulf Coast. The Palmer–Wasilla area C.B.C. produced a phenomenal 80 dippers, including 53 on 13-km stretch of the lower Little Susitna R., while Anchorage included a new local high of 33 on limited open water 16 Dec (SM).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES
Two Townsend's Solitaires each at Anchorage 16 Dec (SM) and Eagle River 23 Dec (LS)
were the season's only report and the fewest seen for as many years. American Robins defied the winter conditions and concentrated in record low numbers s. of the Alaska Range. While a single or 2 were noted between Eagle River and Palmer into early Jan., some 246 were tallied on the Homer C.B.C. 16 Dec (GL, *fide* DE) and easily 100+, encountered in a loose flock in s. Anchorage 5-12 Jan (BT, PP), was indicative of extreme numbers there. Some 15 years ago, robins were a big deal anywhere away from the immediate North Gulf Coast after early Dec; a single American Robin was certainly casual in Fairbanks 2 Jan (*fide* KR). A one-day wonder Northern Mockingbird was uncovered in the Ketchikan area 16 Dec (ph. AWP), a 2nd record there. Most of the Region's handful of records have come in fall. With appreciable snow cover delayed across the state until well into Dec, Bohemian Waxwing concentrations materialized later than average at their standard sites. And good numbers remained throughout the season mostly in the Anchorage area, where exotic landscaping provides plentiful fruit. Farther south, where Bohemians are sporadic in smaller numbers, Ketchikan produced a new local maximum of 120 on 5 Dec (AWP). Far more curious and significant were Cedar Waxwings in South-coastal areas through the season. Following the fall season reports there, which were indicative of the occasional westward drift into the North Gulf Coast of presumably birds from the Southeast mainland, were 12 on the Homer C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* DE). A single surfaced with a robin flock in Anchorage 12 Jan (BT), followed by at least 6 in Anchorage 19 Feb (TT) and another 9 there, across town, 22 Feb (GF). We have few winter records and perhaps a half-dozen total Dec records collectively between Anchorage, the Kenai Pen. coast, and Kodiak.

Not surprisingly, but unusual after the past few years, the only warbler for the season was a Yellow-rumped Warbler at an Anchorage suet feeder through at least 16 Dec (DFD). There are about five previous Upper Cook Inlet Dec reports of the species. The Homer area continues to harbor relatively large numbers of winter sparrows, this season highlighted by unparalleled numbers of 17 American Tree Sparrows, 31 White-crowned Sparrows, and 24 Golden-crowned Sparrows, all from the local C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* DE). The Tree Sparrow tally certainly rivals the highest single-day winter total on record. Significant, semi-hardy sparrow finds otherwise included a rare winter Savannah Sparrow at Kodiak 17 Dec (ph. RAM), a Fox Sparrow, casual in winter in Fairbanks. 6-Feb (ABO), a local record high 4 Lincoln's Sparrows in Kodiak through the seas-

son (*fide* RAM), a first Interior winter record Lincoln's at an Ester feeder s. of Fairbanks all season (DDG), and a good northerly Upper Cook Inlet showing of 5 White-crowned in Butte near Palmer 17 Dec (+ *fide* BW). Three White-throated Sparrows were located in Ketchikan, 2 of which were there all season and the other present 14-26 Dec (JFK, AWP, SCH), and a single was farther nw. at Kodiak 17 Dec (+ *fide* RAM). Dark-eyed Juncos, the hardest sparrow to winter in the Region, were unremarkable save for about 4 around the Fairbanks area 30 Dec-Feb (ABO) and a "few" that survived in Delta Junction through the season (SD). Interesting Snow Buntings away from their known winter coastal fringipeak habitats included 3 in Fairbanks 11 Jan (MS, *fide* ND), 90 in the Delta area farm fields 9 Feb (NC), and one n. at Gambell 12 Jan (GK).

The season's Red-winged Blackbird reports included one again in Anchorage, where casual, for most of Dec (*fide* SB) and 5 in the Juneau area through mid-Jan (GVV). A first-ever Aleutian Islands' Brown-headed Cowbird found the only record in Dutch Harbor 14 Dec-10 Jan (ph. SG). There are a few Bering Sea area records from fall only, and not many other winter records from the Region. Three Pine Grosbeaks were a long way from boreal forest when they appeared in the willow thickets at Dutch Harbor 12 Jan (SG), a first Unalaska I. record. Gibson has uncovered a westward Pine Grosbeak expansion over the past 20 years. Small numbers moved from the nw. side of Kodiak I. into the tall-brush habitats on the Alaska Pen., farther into the Shumagin Is. and alpine thickets near Cold Bay, and then near False Pass on e. Unimak I., where he saw them certainly nesting in Jun 2002. Two different Purple Finches were in the Ketchikan area 13-14 Dec and 13 Feb (RM, AWP, SCH), the only Alaska locale where this otherwise casual winter visitor is nearly annual. Common Redpolls staged an unusually early and widespread winter dip into the s. half of the Mainland, with large flocks encountered from Fairbanks to the North Gulf Coast in Dec. A typical redpoll season otherwise advances such numbers southward in late Feb, with early Mar peaks more standard. Interestingly, this year's flocks dispersed in Feb. The harsh early season and heavy Dec snow certainly contributed to huge fringillid numbers out in the North Gulf at Kodiak, where the 17 Dec C.B.C. established local high counts for Red Crossbills (*Christmas*), Common Redpolls (297), and Pine Siskins (2488) (+ *fide* RAM).


Theo Tobish, 2510 Foraker Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99517
(toldt@gsi.net)

One of at least 12 Cedar Waxwings that hung around an Anchorage neighborhood all season, this bird was photographed in the Regional Editor's yard 25 February 2007. There had been only one prior Cook Inlet winter record. Photograph by Thade Tobish.
Donald G. Cecile

Winter 2006-2007 will be remembered as one of the stormiest on record in British Columbia, as Pacific systems battered the Region until mid-January, after which the storm frequency decreased. During the lulls of Pacific energy, Arctic air made sure it wasn’t forgotten and blanketed the Region a few times. Mountain snowpacks were near or above historical levels over many areas by the end of the period, and valley snowpacks in the northern three-fourths of the interior were also substantial.

GEESE THROUGH GULLS

Very rare in winter along the outer coast, Greater White-fronted Geese lingered near Tofino: 3 on 4 Dec, 2 on 12 & 17 Dec (all AD). Rare but regular along the coast in winter and early spring, 2 Eurasian Teal were in Duncan 26 Dec (DM). A very late Ring-necked Duck was on the Fraser R., Prince George 18 Dec (DMG et. al.) for a first local winter record. Casual in the province, a male Tufted Duck garnered much attention after it was located on King’s Pond, Saanich 1 Feb+ (GA et. al., ph. MY). An ad. Clark’s Grebe off Gordon’s Beach, Sooke 26 Dec (RTO, LH) was out of place. Following a rash of late-fall sightings, a juv. Brown Pelican was seen flying past Clover Pt., Victoria 20 Dec (JG) and was relocated on the 27th, when another flew in to join it (RS); one remained until 29 Dec (JF), and 3 were off Gordon’s Beach 23 Dec (RTO, LH). Rarely found in the interior during winter, an imm. Double-crested Cormorant was along the South Thompson R. at the mouth of Chase Cr. 26 Dec (JBr) for a first local Dec record.

Black-crowned Night-Herons are few in number but known to be residents at Reifel; one on the Duncan C.B.C. 1 Jan (RoT, BN), however, was a surprise. Turkey Vultures have cleared out of the s. interior by Oct, but one late individual was seen in flight over Penticton 18 Dec (BH). Least Sandpipers are scarce in winter and found along tidal flats of the lower Mainland, but for the first time ever, 4 were found on the w. coast of the island in Tofino Harbour 16 Jan (DL). The Lesser Black-backed Gull first located in Vernon this past fall wandered southward to Penticton 1-10 Dec (LN et. al.), back in Vernon 11 Dec (DGC), then at the Kelowna Landfill 16 Dec (MP), and then again in the Penticton area through 4 Jan (RC). It was joined by a second-cycle imm. in Penticton 6-10 Dec (ph. LN, DB). All previous 14 records in the province have been of single birds, and of those eight are from the interior. On the heels of a strong Pacific storm, a Black-legged Kitiwake, rarely encountered in winter, was seen off Pt. Roberts 6 Jan (GP). Casual in winter, a Tufted Puffin was off Gordon’s Beach, Sooke 31 Dec (RTO, LH).

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

Two Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Delta 1-10 Dec (GP et. al.), reportedly present since Aug. This species appears to be gaining a foothold in the s. Okanagan, with regular reports of them in Okanagan Lake and now Oliver, where a dozen birds appeared in early Jan (fide BMK). A Barn Owl found dead at Tofino 2 Dec (GB) provided the first w. coast record.

The first arriving Rufous Hummingbird appeared in Sooke 13 Feb (fide RTO). Although Say’s Phoebes are early migrants, they are very rare in Jan; one was located along the Okanagan lakeshore during the Oliver-Okanagan C.B.C. (L&CB, T&MS). A late Barn Swallow was seen flying over the ice at Reifel 9 Dec (CG), and 2 were seen in Victoria 11 Jan (CSa et. al.). A rare resident of the cen. interior, 2 White-breasted Nuthatches wintered at Cottonwood Island Park, Prince George, while another was found nearby 25 Jan (CCo). Very rare on the coast, a rather cooperative Rock Wren was at Island View Beach, Saanich 1-28 Jan (ph. T2). The interior’s first record of Bewick’s Wren was established during the Kelowna C.B.C. 16 Dec and remained through 4 Jan (TDCG et. al.) at the Summerhill Winery. A Northern Mockingbird spent the winter in Summerland; it was first located 1-5 Dec (EH), then reappeared 29 Dec, having survived temperatures as low as −20°C, reappeared 11 Jan (CONC), and was finally relocated 27 Feb+.

Rarely encountered in winter in the cen. interior, a White-throated Sparrow was at a Prince George feeder 17 Dec (NK et. al.) along with a White-crowned Sparrow (PS, BS). Casual in the province and accidental in winter, a Dickcissel was in Port Alberni 31 Dec (RS); 4 Jan, associating with House Sparrows at a feeder (KC, ph. GLM) and returned to the feeder following a snowstorm 10 Jan (KC). Of 16 Regional records, this constitutes the 2nd documented in winter. A Bullock’s Oriole furnished a first winter record for the Parksville–Qualicum checklist area 26
Oregon & Washington

Steven Mlodinow | David Irons

Bill Tweit

From early December 2006 into mid-January 2007, the Region was buffeted by a series of storms featuring high winds as much as precipitation, but storm-related avian events seemed minimal. Overall, temperatures were average, except February, which was about 2°C above normal. Precipitation was also unremarkable, except during January, which witnessed about two-thirds the normal rainfall and snow.

This winter was notable for an influx of Asian/Alaskan waterbirds and an irruption of Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls juxtaposed with the continuing trends of northward range expansion (e.g., Red-shouldered Hawk, Black Phoebe) and wintering by species considered accidental as recently as 1990 (e.g., Wilson’s Warbler, Western Tanager).


WATERFOWL THROUGH RAILS

Sightings of hybrid waterfowl continue to increase rapidly, along with increased observer scrutiny. Greater White-fronted Geese paired with "white-checked" geese were accompanied by their progeny, and 2 greater White-fronted Geese × minima Cackling Geese at Shillapoo Bottoms, Clark 17 Feb (ph. SM) and 2 Greater White-fronted Geese × Dusky Canada Geese (B. c. occidentalis) at Basket Slough, Polk through the season (M. Monroe); interestingly, this latter hybrid has occurred "occasionally" at Basket Slough and Finley in the past (Fred R. Jarvis). Emperor Geese showed well again this winter, with 3 in w. Washington and 4 in w. Oregon. Now annual among wintering Snow Geese in Skagit/Snohomish, an imm. Blue Goose brightened Fir L., Skagit through 24 Jan (CCx, SM), and an ad. was there 24 Feb+ (M. Axelson). A Ross’s Goose × Snow Goose hybrid hied among hordes of Snows on Fir L. 20 Jan (ph. SM).

Only 3 stray Ross’s Geese were noted: 2 in w. Washington and one in w. Oregon. Two dark Canada Geese near Sylvania, Snohomish 3 Dec (CCx) were probably remnants of the flock of B. c. aficus that has wintered annually nearby for more than three decades, once numbering over 100 (R. Canfield). Five Black Brant on the westside away from salt water represented an above-average winter; per usual, 4 were among wintering flocks of Cackling Geese, but one was at Hyatt L. 16 Feb, furnishing Jackson’s 5th record (R. Keckum). A Bewick’s Swan near Brady, Grays Harbor 26-31 Dec was about Washington’s 8th (ph. P&R). Most previous Bewick’s records were from Skagit, and thus it is not shocking that 3 ad. and one imm. Tundra Swan near Conway 20 Jan appeared intermediate between Whistling and Bewick’s Swans (SM, B. Carlson). Somewhat overdue, Washington’s first Whooper Swan visited Snohomish 25 Dec-1 Jan (SM) before moving to Conway + Jan-17 Feb (TA) and then Ferndale, Whatcom 24 Feb-2 Mar (M. Jordan).

A gathering of 500 Wood Ducks at Boardman, Gilliam 24 Feb was likely an eastside record (B. Taylor). The Eugene Falcated Duck remained throughout the winter. An unremarkable 10 Eurasian Wigeons were noted on the eastside; single Eurasian Wigeon × American Wigeon hybrids, first reported from the eastside in spring 2006, were identified at Vantage 3 Dec (M&SM) and Richland 11 Feb (BW). Not annual during winter, a Blue-
winged Teal was near Coquille, Coos 7 Jan (M. Whiler). A Washington-record 60,000 Northern Pintails gathered at Lummi Bay, Whatcom 10 Dec (SM, CW, JB). A subsp 7 Eurasian Teal and 6 Eurasian Teal × Green-winged Teal intergrades were detected this winter. A Ring-necked Duck × scapu hybrid graced Vancouver 17 Feb (SM). Following an excellent fall, Ring-necked Ducks continued in good numbers through the winter, exemplified by counts of 1342 at Rocky Beach Pool and 1142 at Wells Pool in the n. Columbia Basin 8-9 Jan (RH) and 1100 at Post Office L., Clark 1 Feb (TA). Two Tufted Ducks, about par, included one at N.S.C.B. 14 Dec (TR) and a returning bird at Meares L., Tillamook 18 Feb (+ J & B Woodhouse). A female Steller's Eider reported from Bray's Pt., Lane 3 Feb would be Oregon's 2nd, if accepted by the Oregon B.R.C. (C. Wild, AC). A King Eider at Drayton Harbor, Whatcom 7 Dec–31 Jan was Washington's 18th but the first in more than a decade (P. Woodcock, S. Frank). Single White-winged Scoters brightened Desert Aire, Grant 3 Dec (DG) and Colville Flats, Pend Oreille 26 Jan (GS, TL), and a Surf Scoter enlivened Vantage 13 Dec (DS, RH); neither species is annual during winter on the eastside. A Black Scoter, extremely rare away from salt water, was at Finley 13 Jan (WDR). Six Long-tailed Ducks on the interior westside included Jackson's first, at Lost Creek Res 2 Dec (J. Hostick), which was joined by a 2nd bird 12 Dec (N. Barrett), and both remained into Feb. On the eastside, only 3 Long-tailed Ducks were found. Surprisingly, this species is not annual on the interior westside, but e. of the Cascades, about 5 per winter has been the recent norm. A tally of 65 Barrow's Goldeneyes at Foster Res., Linn 2 Jan was about triple the norm for this site (M. Nikas); excepting the small flock at Foster Res., this species is not annual in the WV Three Common Goldeneye × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrids


A goodly 5 Pacific Loons were noted on the eastside, where rare during winter, 1 Dec–31 Jan. An Arctic Loon near Pateros, Douglas 16–20 Jan is about the 5th for Washington (FGS, ph. P. Lott, R. Taylor). This winter produced a stunning 15 Yellow-billed Loons, the most in 16+ years, the maximum was a Regional record 7 in Dungeness Bay, Clallam 17 Dec (BLB, CW). A w. Washington record 203 Eared Grebes were between Fox and McNeal Is. in the P.T. 16 Dec (BLB) Seven Clark's Grebes in w. Washington was a fair total, but 2 at Richland 14 Jan (NL) and singles at Port Kellet, Walla Walla 17 Feb (M&SMD) and Vantage 17 Feb (S. Downes) provided extremely rare eastside winter records. Single apparent Clark's Grebe × Western Grebe hybrids were near Clarkston, Asotin in late Dec (C. Swift) and Vancouver L., Clark throughout the winter (SM); this cross is not reported annually in the Region but should be expected given the apparent frequency of hybridization.

Two Black-footed Albatrosses were seen from Cape Arago, Coos 18 Dec (T. Shelnard, D. Smith); there are only about 10 from-shore records for the Region. A Northern Fulmar, extremely rare in the P.T., passed RN.P. 3 Jan (VN). Single dead Mottled Petrels were on

The bills of these adult Tundra Swans near Conway, Skagit County, Washington 20 January 2007 range from 10% to 22% yellow when measured in profile. According to Evans and Sladen (1980: Auk 97: 697-703), this places two of the birds as intermediate between Bewick's (22.9% or more yellow on bill) and Whistling Swan (15.8% or less yellow on bill). The immature in this photograph also appeared intermediate between these subspecies. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.

This Barrow's Goldeneye × Common Goldeneye hybrid associated with a nearly pure flock of Barrow's Goldeneyes at Mukilteo, Snohomish County, Washington (here 1 March 2007). The bird's head gloss varied from bronzey maroon to bright green. Note the intermediate head shape and facial spot, the Barrow's-like wing coverts and scapulars, and the lack of dark shoulder bar. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.
wreck, mostly along the Oregon coast, that stretched well into Mar and will be discussed further in the spring 2007 column. Single Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwaters, barely annual in the P.T., visited PN.P 13 Dec (VN), Edmonds, Snohomish 27 Dec (T. Peterson), and Bainbridge 1. 6 Jan (BSW). A decade ago, Brown Pelicans in late Nov elicited comment; now they are annual well into winter. This year, 9 lingered at Brookings, Carry until 26 Dec (D. Cavaness), and singles were near Florence, Lane 15 Jan (DI), at Tahkenitch Beach, Douglas 15 Jan (TR), and Depoe Bay, Lincol n 7 Feb (K. Madison). For the 2nd consecutive winter, a Pelagic Cormorant was nearly 160 km up the Columbia R. near Corbett, Multnomah through 7 Jan (A. Frank); Pelagics are exceptionally rare away from salt/brackish water.

For the 2nd consecutive winter, an American Bittern was found on the eastside, with one at Yakima 28 Jan (J. Hebert); this appears to be only the 4th or 5th e. Washington winter record. Perhaps American Bitterns will follow in the footsteps of Great Egret. The first e. Washington winter record of Great Egret was 18 years ago. Now they are annual, with sightings at five e. Washington locations this winter. Additionally, 52 Great Egrets in the Tillamook Bottoms, Clark 17 Feb was a remarkable late-winter tally (SM); consider that only 30 Great Egrets were tallied on all Washington C.B.C.s between 1973-1998! Following a poor fall showing, no Cattle Egrets were located this winter. A count of 111 Black-crowned Night-Herons at Moses L., Grant 16 Dec bested last winter's Washington record winter-tally of 90 there (DS, B. Schonevail). A Turkey Vulture near E. Wenatchee, Douglas 20 Jan was only the 4th for e. Washington during Dec/Jan (T. Taylor, R. Taylor), while 3 at Clallam Falls 10 Feb were about five weeks early for e. Oregon (KS). Turkey Vultures also appeared early in w. Oregon, with a flurry of sightings. 23 Jan+. Overwintering Turkey Vultures are also on the increase, with up to 16 at Eugene. Three Ospreys were in w. Washington, where increasingly regular during winter, but one in Richland, Benton 30 Dec furnished an extremely rare eastside winter record. Washington has accumulated 17 winter Osprey records since 2000, compared to only 18 records prior to 1990. This species is also on the increase in Oregon, where 5 were found. A White-tailed Kite at P.N.P 18 Jan was unusually far n. (TA, KB, R. Lawson). Even more unusual were 2 White-tailed eagles near Clallam Falls early Jan (J. VanMoorthem); this species is not annual in e. Oregon, with peak occurrence during Aug. Red-shouldered Hawks continued to push northward. Twenty were recorded on the Eugene C.B.C., where virtually unknown as recently as 1970, and in Washington, 5 were in the Ridgefield/Vancouver area (JE, TA, SM), one was at Bay Center, Pacific 1 Dec (K. Knittle), and another inhabited Kent, King 7 Dec+ (K. Aanerud). An excellent eastside winter for Rough-legged Hawks was highlighted by a stunning 73 in n. Lake 19 Dec (K. Boddie). Approximately 10 Gyrfalcons in Washington and 3 in Oregon represented a fairly typical winter, but a white-morph bird near Ediso n, Skagit 21 Feb was most unusual (TA); almost all of the Region's records are of gray morphs. Five w. Oregon and 2 w. Washington Prairie Falcons represented a typical winter. Single Falcons, now annual during winter in Washington, appeared at Skagit W.M.A. 24 Dec (CCx, SM) and Nisqually 2 Feb (SMI).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Groups of 88 Black-bellied Plovers near Harrisburg 28 Dec (R. Armstrong) and 75 near Corvallis 30 Dec (WDR) were unusual for the W.V. away from favored E.R.R. and likely set records for Linna and Benton. A Pacific Golden-Plover near Edison, Skagit 1 Jan (CCx) may have been the same bird that resided there last winter, furnishing Washington's 7th winter record. A Greater Yellowlegs was at Primeville, Crook 14 Dec (CG); though annual in Washington's Columbia Basin, they are not annual during winter in e. Oregon. Both yellowlegs have become more numerous during winter on the westside. This year, 100 wintered around F.R.R. (DI), up from a norm of about 50 a decade ago. A flock of 58 Greater Yellowlegs (with one Lesser Yellowlegs) at Shillapoo Bottoms, Clark 17 Feb exceeded any previous Washington winter count away from the outer coast and may have been very early migrants (SM). Ten years ago, Lesser Yellowlegs were barely annual in Oregon and essentially unrecorded during winter in Washington. This winter, there were 4 in Oregon, including a maximum of 3 at E.R.R. 5 Jan (DI); singles in Washington appeared at Olympia 17 Dec (KB) and near Centralia, Lewis 18 Dec (B. Shermidne). A Willet at the Kennedy Creek Estuary, Mason 1 Dec added to only eight Washington winter records away from the outer coast (J. Buchanan). A Spotted Sandpiper enlivened Union Gap, Yakima 16 Dec (J. Hebert); now almost annual in e. Washington, this species was recorded only once there prior to 1996. Rare away from the outer coast, 7

This Mottled Petrel carcass was found on Arcadia Beach, Clatsop County, Oregon 25 February 2007. Most records of this species in the Pacific Northwest involve either five birds far offshore or dead birds on beaches between October and March. Photograph by Tony Gay.
about the Region’s 16th during winter (J. Sullivan). Washington’s first Black-headed Gull since 1998 (and 16th overall) inhabited Bainbridge 1. 19-31 Dec (BSW) and then reappeared at nearby P.N.P. 21 Feb–1 Apr (VN); most antecedent records were from mid-Aug into early Nov. Two Heermann’s Gulls visited Sequim Bay, Chalumna 1 Apr (G. Krider), and singles stopped at Bainbridge 1. 1 Dec (BSW) and Port Angeles 24 Feb+ (A. Wheelan); Heermann’s are not annual during winter in Washington. A gathering of 19 Mew Gulls at Hood R. 15 Dec eclipsed the eastside record high count (SJ). Washington’s first Vega Herring Gull graced Renton, King 28 Dec (CW, CCx). Washington’s 11th Slaty-backed Gull turned up at Renton 25 Dec+ (CCx); all records but one have been since 1994. This winter’s 54 Glaucous Gulls exceeded any total during the last decade by more than 50%, but only 5 were found on the eastside, distinctly subpar for that subregion. Most were first detected after 1 Jan, with a peak of 7 at Yaquina Bay, Lincoln 12 Jan+ (C. Ash, W. Hoffman). Finally, a Glaucous Gull at L. Billy Chinook 12 Jan was only one. Oregon’s 3rd away from the Columbia R. and Jefferson’s first (CM). There was an inland push of Black-legged Kittiwakes in mid-Dec, coinciding with the small pulse of Red Phalaropes. A Black-legged Kittiwake at Hood R. 15 Dec was only the 5th for e. Oregon (SJ), while one at White City 16 Dec was Jackson’s first (J. Harleman); singles at P.N.P. 13 Dec (VN), Seattle 15 Dec (M. Bartels), and Budd Inlet, Thurston 17 Dec (BT) provided the first winter records for the P.T. since 2001. A Caspian Tern at the Necanicum R. mouth, Clatsop 25 Feb was two or more weeks early and provided Oregon’s first winter record (S. Warner).

Enormous numbers of alcids occupied the “interior” marine waters between Port Angeles and P.N.P. throughout the winter. Admurity Inlet provided the following exceptional tallies: 2800 Common Murres + Feb (SM, JB, CCx, BSW), 750 Pigeon Guillemots 23 Dec (SM, BSW, D. Watkins), and 650 Marbled Murrelets + Feb (SM, JB, CCx, BSW); additionally, 1000 Ancient Murrelets were at Pt. Wilson, Jefferson 27 Jan–4 Feb (SMi). Adding to 14 previous Washington records was an al-

Long-billed Murrelets will likely lead to a re-evaluation of all Washington reports. Four Cassin’s Auklets, very rare in the P.T., passed Marrowstone Pt., Jefferson 23 Dec (SM). A dead Horned Puffin was noted at Seaside 6 Jan (D. Bailey).

Single Band-tailed Pigeons graced Walla Walla 10-11 Dec (B. Davie, ph. MSMD) and Union Gap, Yakima 29 Jan (J. Hetsch, AS); there are fewer than five antecedent winter records for e. Washington, and the Walla Walla bird was only that county’s 2nd ever. The Eurasian Collared-Dove explosion continued, with over 80 in e. Washington, including maxima of 18 at Goldendale, Klickitat 6 Dec (DP) and 17 in Mansfield, Douglas 3 Dec (K. Kemper). The only w. Washington sighting was of 4 at Woodland, Cowpitz 18-25 Feb (PGRR). Oregon suffered a similar surge, with a maximum of 25 at Hines, Harney 26 Jan (S. Dowlan) and first records for Josephine (DV) and Polk (RG). Last winter there were but 18 collared-doves found in the Region, and during the winter of 2004-2005 there were only 4!

Snowy Owls staged an “echo-invasion” involving 35+ birds this winter, following last winter’s tally of 88; both eastside and westside were well represented, but only 4 made it s. to Oregon. Five Burrowing Owls in w. Oregon was better than average, as was 7 in e. Washington. A Burrowing Owl on Whidbey I. was banded, having been reared in captivity near Vancouver, British Columbia and later released in e. British Columbia. This is the 2nd such bird to appear in w. Washington in the past several years. A Great Grey Owl, very rare w. of the Cascades, spent most of Jan near Mulino, Clackamas, elev. 180 m (C. Ledford). Amazingly, Anna’s Hummingbirds are now regular during winter e. of the Cascades, where the winters can be quite harsh. In Bend, where annual, 3 wintered (DT, E. Crabtree, D. Hale), while singles appeared in e. Washington at Selah, Yakima 13-16 Dec (DG) and Richland 1-30 Dec (D. Gilmour, NL). This winter’s Costas’s Hummingbirds visited Bend 13 Jan (DT) and Salem 16 Jan (RG). An unidentified Selasphorus hummingbird wintered in Eugene (P. Johnson); any Selasphorus during DecJan is quite rare. The W.V. had 3 Lewis’s Woodpeckers this winter, average; as recently as 1975 they were still locally fairly common in w. Oregon. Acorn Woodpeckers continue to maintain their Washington foothold near Lyle, Klickitat, with 2 there 17 Dec (SJ). Leading this winter’s sapucker extravaganza
Red-breasted Suckers (M. xanthochlorus) in Washington's Okanogan County were recorded as early as February 2007. Washington's 4th Williamson's Sapsucker at Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, Skamania County 3 Dec (R. Koppenderayer), this species is rare anywhere in Washington during winter. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Vancouver, Clark 19 Dec was about Washington's 8th (ph. K. Lowrie). A goodly 4 Red-naped Sapsuckers were found this winter; all were w. of the Cascades, where they are rare at any season. On the flip-side, 3 Red-breasted Sapsuckers were found e. of the Cascades, where rare. Equally rare, a Red-breasted Sapsucker x Red-naped Sapsucker hybrid stayed in Yakima 31 Dec (DG). A Hairy Woodpecker along Telford Rd., Lincoln 24 Feb was well away from known breeding areas (TL).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES
Washington's 10th Black Phoebe visited Elma, Grays Harbor 26-27 Dec (ph. P&RS); all but 2 of Washington's Black Phoebes were documented within the past decade. Black Phoebes also continued to consolidate their foothold in the W.V., where 19 were reported. Four were also found on the Klamath Falls C.R.C. (RS); this species has been annual in the Klamath Basin since 2000, but during the 1990s there were only one or two winter records for all of e. Oregon. A Say's Phoebe, rare in e. Washington during midwinter, enlivened Spangle, Spokane 4 Jan (M. Woodruff), whereas a superannual 9 were located in e. Oregon. Five Loggerhead Shrikes in e. Washington was about par for recent winters. Surprisingly, none were detected on the westside. Oregon's 2nd winter Cassin's Vireo visited a Corvallis feeder 23 Feb (B. Dugger). This winter's 10 Blue Jays made an unremarkable total; the maximum was 5 at Fossil, Wheeler, where they wintered for the 4th consecutive year (L. Bouchard). Western Scrub-Jays continue to wander widely on the eastside, the most remarkable of which was one (A. c. californica) in the Spokane Valley during late Jan, likely the northeasternmost record for Washington (R. Bohn). Elsewhere on the eastside, stray scrub-jays ventured to Grant, OR, Jefferson, and Yakima. On the eastside, one journeyed n. to Concrete, Skagit, where noted annually (GB). Virtually annual of late in the W.V., a Black-billed Magpie visited Milwaukee, Clark 4th Dec (D. Hazem).

Eighteen Horned Larks at N.S.C.B. 17 Dec was exceptional for the s. Oregon coast, where seen annually (fide TR). Small flocks of Tree Swallows were observed sporadically around F.R. and Finley, Dec-Jan (S. Maolding, D. & A. Heyerly, WDB), and Washington's first northbound Tree Swallows were at Lewis Flats, Cowiing 18 Jan (BT) and Ridgefield 20 Jan (SMO); this species is not annual during winter prior to the arrival of northerly migrants, typically during mid- to late Jan in Oregon and early Feb in Washington. A Cliff Swallow at Scappoose Bottoms 4 Dec was about two months late and yielded the Region's first winter record since 2001 (H. Horvat). For the first time since 2001, however, there was no early wave of Barn Swallows. A few more than usual lingered into Dec, with 7 in w. Washington and 4 in w. Oregon. After that, only 4 were found in w. Oregon, and one was on the eastside at Tygh Valley, Wasco 10 Jan (J. & D. Stentz). What prompted, and then terminated, the peculiar phenomenon of northbound Barn Swallows arriving en masse during Jan remains mysterious.

This falls Rock Wren on Indian L., Jefferson lingered through the winter, providing the westside's first winter record in three years (D. Johnson). Oregon's 2nd Sedge Wren appeared Luckiamute Landing, Polk 4 Jan and remained at least two weeks (WDB); there are fewer than 10 antecedent records from Pacific Coast states/provinces, only two of which were from winter. A number of American Dippers strayed short distances from their usual haunts, the most notable of which was one at Moses L., Grant 16-17 Dec (R. Finger, D. Graham); dippers are extremely rare in the Lower Columbia Basin. For the 6th consecutive winter, Western Bluebirds appeared in w. Washington, with 15 birds at four locations; prior to the late 1990s, this species was virtually unknown during winter in w. Washington, excepting occasional records from breeding areas in Thurston and Pierce. In e. Washington, 2 near Spokane 17 Dec (M. Woodruff) and 8 near Maryhill, Klickitat (SJ) provided a rare Dec-Jan record. A Mountain Bluebird was near Brady, Grays Harbor 14 Jan–25 Feb (SMI, K. Stewart), 2 were in Spokane 15 Jan (M. Frobe), and one was at Richland, Benton 30-31 Dec (BW); this species is not annual during winter in Washington and is rare any time w. of the Cascades. Twelve Northern Mockingbirds, 9 in Oregon and 3 in Washington, furnished the best winter in five years. Sage Thrashers, very rare during winter, were near Bridgeport, Douglas 16 Dec (R. Hendrick) and Hines, Harney 22 Jan (W. Bowers). Oregon's 12th winter Brown Thrasher was near Eugene 18 Dec+ (D. Turner, J. Houle).

Formerly casual, but now annual during winter, single Nashville Warblers brightened Coos Bay 17 Dec (DL, R. Hoyer) and Corvallis 2-21 Feb (D. Boucher). Not yet annual during winter, 3 Hermit Warblers were in the W.V., and one was on the outer coast at S. Beach, Lincoln (R. Check). A Hermit Warbler x Townsend's Warbler hybrid was in Beaver, Washington 23 Jan (P. Christenson); these hybrids have only been recorded a handful of times during winter. Three Palm Warblers, rare away from the outer coast, were noted in the W.V. and PT. Oregon's first winter Ovenbird graced Medford, Jackson 16-19 Jan (ph. J. & B. Elision). Very rare during winter, a Northern Waterthrush inhabited Skagit W.M.A. 25 Dec–4 Jan (K. Andrich), this may well have been the same bird found there this fall. A Wilson's Warbler visited Portland 3 Feb (S. Cleary). Prior to 1990, the Region had about seven winter records; now about two per winter is typical. Oregon's 2nd winter Summer Tanager was found at Alvadore, Lane 5 Jan+ (M. Decker, J. & G. Jacobson); the Region's two prior winter records were also of birds attending feeders. Oregon's 11th winter Western Tanager was discovered at Portland 10 Jan (B. Stites); this is the 9th consecutive winter during which this species has appeared in the Region, yet there were only about three winter records prior to 1990.

This Ovenbird was present at Medford, Jackson County 16-19 January 2007, furnishing Oregon's first and the Oregon & Washington Region's second winter record. Photograph by Bruce Elision.

Oregon's 4th winter Green-tailed Towhee visited Bend 22 Jan (A. Auger). American Tree Sparrows were relatively scarce on the westside but appeared in above-average numbers on the eastside, exemplified by 52 along Lyons...
Ferry Rd., Walla Walla 11 Feb (M&MD, DP). A stunning 28 Chipping Sparrows were found in w. Oregon, mostly in W.V filbert orchards, with maxima of 12 near Albany, Linu 31 Dec (R. P. Moore) and 9 at Turner, Marion 29 Dec (RG); the Region has only one or two most winters. Have more been present, unnoticed among the hazelnut trees? Five Clay-colored Sparrows, all in w. Oregon, was above average. A Lark Sparrow near Eugene 31 Dec provided the Region's first winter record away from the Rogue R. valley in five years (DI). Sage Sparrows arrived about two weeks earlier, with 2 at Toppenish, Yakima 11 Feb (AS) and singles at Primeville 11 Feb (CG) and Hood R. 10 Feb (J. Gilligan, O. Schmidt); the latter bird was also extralimital, providing Hood River's 2nd record. Single Red Fox Sparrows adored L. Terrill, Whitcom 10 Dec (ph. SM, CW, JB) and Luckiamute Landing, Polk 31 Dec (JC); this taxon group is now detected annually in the Region. An apparent longivagans Fox Sparrow was along Mounts Rd., Pierce 6 Jan (ph. CW); the mysterious longivagans is thought to winter s. of our Region. Sixty Lincoln's Sparrows near Kent, King 25 Dec matched the Washington winter record (CW). This winter's 25 Swamp Sparrows was Washington's best total in four years and about thrice the norm. The maxima was 7 in the Ridgefield/Vancouver lowlands 2 Dec (SM, CW, JB), and eastside records included singles at Toppenish, Yakima 17 Dec-7 Jan (S. Downes) and Crow Butte, Benton 17 Feb (DR). Oregon had a more typical 22 Swamps, including up to 7 at Millacomma Marsh, Coos (TR). White-throated Sparrows had another good year in Oregon, evidenced by 20 wintering at Wilson W.M.A., Benton (JG). Harris' Sparrow numbers remained depressed, with 18 reported. A tally of 320 Golden-crowned Sparrows in the Vancouver/Ridgefield lowlands 2 Dec was unprecedented for Washington in winter (SM, CW, JB). A Golden-crowned Sparrow x White-crowned Sparrow hybrid was along Mounts Rd., Pierce 6 Jan (ph. CW); this cross is now noted nearly annually. Washington's first Gray-headed Junco was near Enumclaw, King 17 Dec-11 Jan (ph. S. Daniels, K. Steener). The closest breeding population is in se. Oregon's Harney, and there seems to be but one other record nw. of Harney: Qualicum Beach, Vancouver I, 8-10 Nov 1975.

A Black-headed or Rose-breasted Grosbeak near Spokane 2 Dec was most unusual (fide CC); Washington has but three winter records of Black-headed and two of Rose-breasted. A Rose-breasted at Corvallis 10 Dec added to about 10 prior Oregon winter records (fide K. Fairchild). Tricolored Blackbirds continue to solidify their range in our Region despite declines in California. The largest wintering flock in the Columbia Basin was 50 at Othello 12 Jan (BF), and the Prineville, Crook flock peaked at 75 on 10 Dec (S. Dougill); strays included 2 at Grants Pass, Josephine 16 Dec (DV) and 2 at Mil-tion-Freewater, Umatilla 6 Jan (M&MD). Unprecedented for w. Washington was a count of 225 Western Meadowlarks on the Samish Flats, Skagit 30 Dec (G. Walker, P. DeBryun). A Yellow-headed Blackbird, rare during winter in w. Washington, adored Issaquah, King 18 Jan (D. Weinstein). A Rusty Blackbird at Milton-Freewater 6 Jan was about the 14th for Oregon (M&MD), while an excellent 5 were detected in Washington, including 3 at Carnation, King 24 Jan (MB); despite apparent dramatic declines across the continent, this species' occurrence in our Region seems stable. This falls Hoods Oriole at Reedsport, Douglas returned sporadically throughout the winter, furnishing the Region's first winter record in 13 years (T. Gannon). A Bullock's Oriole near John Day Dam, Klickitat 30 Dec provided e. Washington's 3rd winter record (J. Hadley, R. Robinson), while another near Florence 1 Dec was in w. Oregon, where this species has become nearly annual during winter (fide D. Petey).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were unusually numerous on the eastside, while w. of the Cascades, a mini-irruption included 27 on Mary's Peak, Benton, 2 at Seaside, Clatsop 3 Dec (S. Warner), and singles at Lewis Flats, Cowitz 18 Jan (BT) and Yachats, Lincoln 3 Dec (A. Walker). Pine Grosbeaks continued to irrigate into the Region, with no fewer than 69 in w. Washington and 12 in w. Oregon. The peak westside tally was 24 at Skagit W.M.A. 8 Jan (R. Merrill), and the southernmost were in Portland (W. Gross, K. Scott, G. Lillie). On the eastside, maxima included a stunning 100 at Ft. Spokane, Lincoln 19 Jan (TL) and 60 along the Little Spokane R., Spokane 30 Dec (C. McCormack). Extremely rare outer-coast records included 9 near Nenah, Pacific 16-17 Dec (G. Exum, J. & M. Green) and 7 on Nicolai Mt., Clatsop 12 Dec (MP). Interestingly, most seem to have departed the lowlands by late Jan, and it seems almost certain that these birds did not originate from the Region's relatively small breeding population. Two Cassin's Finches were near Banks, Washington 15 Jan (L. Norgren), and singles visited Eugene 18 Jan (DI) and Mulino, Clackamas 5 Feb (C. Karlen, Paul Sullivan); Cassin's are not annual w. of the Cascades. A Red Crossbill, rare in the Columbia Basin, visited Moses L., Grant 16 Dec (G5, G. Harer). Starting in mid-Dec, Common Redpolls joined Pine Grosbeaks in our Region, but their irruption was unusually weighted towards the westside, including a staggering 215 near Nehalem, Whatcom 17 Dec, part of 525 counted on the N. Cascades C.B.C. that day (B. Kutz, GB); these represent the highest westside tallies since 1917! Two Common Redpolls at Coos Bay 25 Dec (J. Randolph), plus singletons at N. Bend, Coos 17 Dec (L. Norgren) and Brookings, Curry 17 Feb (B. Stewart), provided extremely rare sw. Oregon records. As with the Pine Grosbeaks, most redpolls had departed by late Jan. Five Lesser Goldfinches at Starbucks 11 Feb furnished Columbia's first record (M&MD, DP), while singles at Underwood, Skamania 3 Dec (S) and Kennewick, Benton 16 Dec (NL) were also quite unusual. As of 1993, there were but two Washington records away from Clark and Klickitat, but subsequently, there have been approximately 15 such sightings. Oregon's 5th Lawrence's Goldfinch was near Grants Pass, Josephine 1 Dec (M. Browning); prior records were split between spring and winter.

Corrigendum: Last winter's Red Phalarope in Umatilla was actually the 2nd, not the first, eastside winter record.

Initiated observers (subregional editors in boldface): Tom Aversa (Washington), Jessie Barry, Range Bayer (Lincoln), Gary Bletis, Keith Brady, Marv Breece, Alan Conterras, Craig Corder (Spokane), Cameron Cox (CCX), Mike & Merry Lynn Denny (M&MD), Dennis Duffy, Joe Engler (Clark), Bob Flores, Chuck Gates (Crook), Roy Gerg (Polk, Marion), Denny Granstrand (Yakima), Randy Hill, Eugene Hunn, Stuart Johnston (Kichita), Bruce LaBar (BBR), Bill Laframboise (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy Laframboise, David Luiten, Terry Little, Tom Mickel (Lane), Craig & Marilyn Miller (Deschutes, Jefferson), Scott Mills (SM), Harry Neils (OR), Vic Nelson, Bob Norton (Olympic Pen.), Clarence & Marilyn O'Leary (Grant), Michael Patterson (Clatsop), Dennis Paulson, W. Doug Robinson (Benton, Linn, Marion), Tim Rodenkirk (Coos, Curry), Doug Schonenwold, Gina Sheridan, Kevin Spencer (Klamath), Andy Stepniowski, Patrick & Ruth Sullivan (P&RS), David Tracey, Dennis Vroman (Josephine), Brad Waggoner (BSW), Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright.

Steven Moshin, 4831 Gardner Avenue Everett, Washington 98203, (560ld@eol.com)

David Irons, 2125 Hayes Street Eugene, Oregon 97405, (2125@msn.com)

Bill Tweet, P.O. Box 1271 Olympia, Washington 98507, (Seabright@eol.com)
A
fter a fairly normal December, January was dry with a cold snap mid-month that set new records over much of the Region. February was also dry but warmer than normal. The season's highlight was California's third Smeew, enjoyed by birders from all over the state and beyond. County birders were thrilled to have six Eurasian Wigeons in four Sierra foothill counties (Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa), where even “common” ducks can be hard to find. Gull enthusiasts continue to produce multiple Slaty-backed Gulls in the Region, a remarkable phenomenon, considering this species was only added to the state list two years ago. Additionally, an apparent Great Black-backed Gull would represent an overdue first state record if accepted by the state records committee. Varied Thrushes stage occasional winter invasions into parts of the state where they are normally rare, and this season saw one of the biggest, rivaling or exceeding the banner winter of 1994-1995 in many areas.

Abbreviations: B.S.O.L. (Big Sur Ornithology Lab); C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.V. (Central Valley); C.R.P. (Consunmes R. Preserve, Sacramento); C.C.E.S. (Coyote Creek Field Station, Santa Clara); Fl. (Southeast Farallon Is., San Francisco); H.R.S. (Hayward Regional Shoreline, Alameda); P.R.B.O. (Pt. Reyes B.O.); S.F. (San Francisco, not State Forest); U.C. (University of California). 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 Fl. 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.

WATERFOWL

The Fulvous Whistling-Ducks found in fall at the “Dead Pig Ponds” n. of Angiola, Tulare continued through 16 Jan (4 birds, Tony Kurz et al.). A Greater White-fronted Goose w. of Cathey's Valley 21 Feb–11 Mar (Jlx, m.o.b.) was only the 2nd for Mariposa, at the same pond where the first was found 16 Feb–8 Mar 2005. It was accompanied by up to 2 Snow Geese 21–28 Feb (Jlx, JSL, DEQ, m.o.b.), also rare in Mariposa. Three ad. Emperor Geese were among a swirling flock of 4000 geese of five species above C.R.P. 15 Feb (JTr). Coastal Blue Geese included one along the Petaluma R., Sonoma 13 Jan (Bob Dyer) and up to 2 at H.R.S. 5–20 Dec (2 on last date; RJR). A neck-collared Ross's Goose near Richvale, Butte 3 Feb (JHS) had been banded sixteen and a half year earlier as an adult. The Palo Alto Brant first reported last season was seen through 9 Jan (ph., m.o.b.); remarkably, a 2nd Santa Clara Brant was found along the Guadalupe R. in San Jose 14–22 Feb (ph. Peggy Don, m.o.b.). Cackling Goose reports involving leucopareia and minimina were widespread, with large flocks reaching the central coast, including 70 over San Jose, Santa Clara 1 Jan (MDo), 70 to 85 at H.R.S. 9 Jan–16 Feb (RJR), and 60 n. of Petaluma, Sonoma 10 Feb (Kwi); the only report of another subspecies was of a taurerneri at Kutras L. in Redding, Shasta 5 Feb (BED et al.). The Dusky Canada Goose (occidentalis) at Venice S.B., San Mateo continued through 22 Jan (RSTH). Trumpeter Swan reports included an undocumented report of 3 birds at Steamboat L., Shasta Valley W.A., Siskiyou 22 Dec (Bob Smith) and one of an imm. of Willows, Glenn 6 Feb (tJHS). A Bick's Swan was seen ne. of Marysville, Yuba 1 Dec (ph. Mike Schwitter); one was seen with an ad. Whistling Swan and 3 yearlings 13 Jan in the same area (JHS). Two ad. Bicks with a yearling were ne. of Willows, Glenn 6 Feb (JHS).

Good numbers of Eurasian Wigeon were reported from 21 counties, including the 1st ever for Mariposa: a male along White Rock Rd. 18 Feb–11 Mar (JRow, Liz West, m.o.b.), joined by a 2nd male there 23 Feb (DEQ), and another male along Merced Falls Rd. 24 Feb (EP). Other male Eurasian Wigeons in unusual locations included the continuing 2nd Calaveras record along Paloma Rd. 16 Jan (Stephen Long), one 5 km w. of Sutter Creek, Amador 27 Jan–16 Feb (Don Marsh), and one along Rock River Rd., Tuolumne 3 Feb+ (SUm, JSL). A male American Black Duck shot n. of Delevan N.W.R., Colusa 21 Dec (Yancey Forest-Knowles) will become a live mount at U.C. Davis; difficulties eliminating Mallard intergrades and questions of natural occurrence have resulted in only a single first-winter female, shot 1 Feb 1911 near Willows, Glenn, being accepted by the C.B.R.C. An impressive 18 Eurasian Teal reported from 12 counties included a first for Napa, at American Canyon wetlands 2–28 Feb (1MB, m.o.b.). Twelve Tufted Ducks in 11 counties included up to 3 ad. males among record-large scapu flocks at Borax L., Lake 16 Dec–20 Feb (ph. FHA, JRW). White-winged Scoter reports continue to dwindle, with only one fairly inland on Grizzly Bay 2 Jan (RYe, ph. OSI) being unusual for Solano. Over 30 Long-tailed Ducks from nine counties included only one report well inland, a continuing bird at Mono L., Mono, present through 3 Dec (ph. Susan Steele). Among numerous Barrow's Goldeneye reports was Mendocino's 2nd, a female at Westport S.T.P. 1–6 Feb (RLEv, ph. MMitt et al.). Undoubtedly the highlight of the season, an ad. male Smeew spent 20–29 Jan consort with Hooded Mergansers in the small Sierra foothill town of Soulsbyville, Tuolumne (SUm, ph. m.o.b.). This classy bird, which drew birders from far and wide, constitutes only the 3rd California record, following a male that spent three winters in Foster City, San Mateo 19 Dec 1981–22 Jan 1984 and a male near Tracy, San Joaquin 20 Jan–29 Feb 2000.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Of the three commonly occurring loons in the Region, Red-throated Loon is the scarcest inland. Inland occurrences included one at Stampede Res. 13 Dec (BDW), a first for Sierra, one at Fall River 11 Dec. (Ken Abe), a 3rd for Shasta; and one at Crowley L., Mono 3 Dec (DHo, JLD, JvH). As is typical, several inland Pacific Loons were reported: Thermalito Afterbay, Butte 25 Feb (Jay Bogiatto); 2 re-
remaining until 16 Dec at L. Shastina, Siskiyou (RE); and 2 at Crowley L., Mono 5 Dec (KNN). Scarce inland, especially in winter, a Red-necked Grebe was near Glenneden, Lake 17 Feb (FrO, JRow). Counts of 6356 Eared Grebes and 6643 Clark’s Grebes on Clear L. 16 Dec represented record highs for Lake (Fide JrW). After several winters of sparse Black-vented Shearwaters, this species was again present in robust numbers, with a peak of 1255+ in three hours off Pt. Pinos, Monterey 18 Dec (BLS). Brown Boobies continued to invade the Region. In Humboldt, the imm. and ad. female continued from the previous period at Trinidad through 9 Dec (m.ob.). One to 3 continued (?) on Ft. 2 Dec+ (Derek Lee, JtF, Pete Warzybok). Singles were in Monterey Harbor, Monterey 28 Dec–21 Jan (Dave Weber, ph. m.ob.), as well as at Jug Handle State Reserve 13 Jan (Teresa Faxon) and Noyo Harbor 23 Feb (LHg, CCh) in Mendocino. A testament to the success of the Federal Endangered Species Act, Brown Pelican numbers continue to increase, as indicated by 6000 counted heading n. off Pigeon Pt., San Mateo 14 Jan (RSTh).

The Del Norte Little Blue Heron continued at the Alexandre Dairy near Ft. Dick through the period (ph. ADB et al.), Wandering White-faced Ibis included one at Moss Landing W.A., Monterey 7 Feb (Tam) and another surprisingly far n. for winter at Tule Lake N.W.R., Siskiyou 22 Jan (Charlotte Ann Kising). An ad. White-tailed Kite at Sierraville 26 Jan (Deren Ross) was the 3rd for Sierra. Northern Goshawks seen just s. of Cape Mendocino, Humboldt 2 Dec (inn.; KGR, DCo) and flying northward at Colma 23 Feb (4th San Mateo record; ADeM) were in usual lowland locations. Swainson’s Hawks well away from wintering areas included one at Pt. Joe, Monterey 29 Dec (Tea, JCS, AB) and an early migrant over the Presidio, S. F. 17 Feb (Huc). In addition to the Harlan’s Hawks reported last season, another returned to Valley Ford, Sonoma for its 3rd winter 18 Dec–7 Jan (RS, KWi, m.ob.). Other Harlan’s included one in Willow Cr. Valley, Lassen 14 Dec (EP, JRa), one at the Sacramento River N.W.R., Butte 1 Jan (JHS), and light-morph birds n. of Bodega Bay, Sonoma 4 Dec (Roger Marlowe) and at Manchester, Mendocino 1 Jan (RS, Ko). Several coastal Rough-legged Hawks were reported, most just passing through in mid-Dec, but one at the Las Gallinas S.T.P., Marin stayed 10 Jan–14 Feb (Nick Whelan, m.ob.). At least 3 different Crested Caracaras were found this winter. One spent the season at the Ferndale Bottoms, Humboldt 8 Dec (ph. Merritt Perry, Bruce Slocum, Ft. GSl, ph. DCo); the ad. in coastal n. Monterey continued through the season (m.ob., ph. DR), being joined by a first-winter bird at Pt. Joe 25 Feb (Jso, Mark Sorensen, ph. DR, RC). Black Ralls were reported on two Nevada C.B.C.s 16 or 30 Dec (ECB et al.).

SHOREBIRDS

A Pacific Golden-Plover sw. of Madera 21–26 Dec (ph. GaW) provided one of very few records for Madera; one n. of Binghamton, Solano 15 Dec (Charlie Walker) was likewise well away from the usual wintering locations for this species. Coastal Mountain Plovers included Humboldt’s 10th at the Mad R. estuary 14–17 Jan (ph. RfB, Mb, Kru, DCo, COg, KGR) and one or 2 birds sw. of Sonoma, Sonoma 11 Jan (DgSh). Three found at Crowley L. 2 Dec included one that lingered through 6 Jan (Jld, ph. Mike Williams, m.ob.), furnishing the latest record for Mono (and longest stay of any recorded there).

Good numbers of Mountain Plovers were reported again this season from s. of Alhambra, Tulare, with a peak count of 426 on 26 Feb (FJm). A Solitary Sandpiper along Coyote Cr. s. of Coyote, Santa Clara 30 Dec–1 Jan (Mmj, ph. SGR, ph. MMr, ph. WGB, ph. Peggy Don, m.ob.) was only the 4th winter record for n. California. A Pectoral Sandpiper at H.R.S. 27 Feb (Peter Danner) was likewise unseasonal; its presence on this date may have been related to its injured leg. Southerly Rock Sandpipers included one at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 9 Dec–8 Feb (Gdg, RSTh, AME) and a bird returning to Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz for a 3rd winter 11 Dec+ (Ryt, m.ob.). Wintering Ruffs included a continuing male in Alviso, Santa Clara 9 Dec–4 Feb (Jim Thomas, m.ob.), an ad. at Sherman L., Sacramento 20 Dec–2 Jan (Rob Power, EF, MB, OSJ, m.ob.), one at Conaway Ranch, Yolo on the Sacramento to C.B.C. 30 Dec (WEH), and 2 in Merced, one of Los Banos 28–31 Dec (ADEM, John Fulton, CLU, LLG, GO), the other s. of Merced N.W.R. 9 Feb (male; ADeM).

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS**

A late Franklin’s Gull was at L. Shastina, Siskiyou 30 Nov–21 Dec (RE). Though regular on the w. side of the Sacramento Valley, a Bonaparte’s Gull at the Marysville S.T.P., Yuba 21 Dec (17DB, Jir, Jla) may be a first for the e. side of the Valley. Very low inland Mew Gulls were reported, with singles at Ellis L., Marysville, Yuba 5 Jan–12 Feb (HG, DCR, FrO), Knuts L., Shastu 15 Jan–3 Feb (BED), and one near Mendota, Fresno 10 Jan (Pete Fahesy, Lyh, ph. GaW). Several potential Vega Herring Gulls were reported. As we gain an understanding of the Herring Gull complex, it will be interesting to deter-
within groupings in the Thayer's/Iceland complex. Part of the difficulty in analyzing some of these records is created by the apparent morphological continuum from Thayer's Gull to Iceland Gull and determining where to draw the somewhat arbitrary line between the groups. Other problem identifications are associated with hybrids and aberrant individuals of other species. Iceland Gulls were reported from Humboldt Bay, Humboldt 1 Jan (ph. TTEa, P. Tanner Easterla, TJEH, TRh, TJTz et al.) and Redwood Cr., Humboldt 5 Jan (ph. Laurie Lawrence, Linda Doerrfänger, JCE). These reports awaited C.B.R.C. review. Three others were reported without details from Yolo 30 Dec. A Lesser Black-backed Gull at L. Kaweah and Bravo L. 3 & 24 Feb, respectively (ph. John Lockhart, KIK), would represent a first for Tulare if accepted by the C.B.R.C. After the documentation of multiple Slaty-backed Gulls at Venice S.B., San Mateo established the first state records just two winters ago, multiple birds continued to occur at this location for the 3rd winter, with an addition 5 Jan–21 Feb (ph. AJ, TRSTh et al.) and a second-cycle present 13-30 Jan (ph. AJ, TRSTh et al.). As might be expected as awareness of this species in the Region increases, individuals are being reported at a variety of new locations (all of these records are pending C.B.R.C. review). These reports include: a second-cycle bird at Pt. Pinos 2 Feb (ph. BLS), which would represent a first for Monterey, and another from Monterey at the Salinas R. mouth 13 Feb (ph., TVDP); 3 at San Quentin 19 Feb (ph. TTEa, Tanner Easterla), which would represent a first for Marin; and finally a third-cycle bird at Humboldt Bay 31 Dec (TTEa, Tanner Easterla, TJEH) and an addition 1st at Redwood Cr. mouth 2 Jan (ph. TTEa, 1st Tanner Easterla, TJEH), which would represent potential firsts for Humboldt. Glaucomous Gulls invaded the Region, with an amazing 39+ reported. Virtually all of these birds were coastal, with the exception of 3 ads. 27 Jan (JKn) and one imm. 16 Feb (JCS) at the Yolo County Landfill, Yolo. A possible Great Black-backed Gull photographed at Redwood Cr. mouth, Humboldt 30 Dec (ph., 1st Jeff Allen) was never relocated. If accepted by the C.B.R.C., this would represent a first state record. Black-legged Kittiwakes were generally present in small numbers until a sudden influx to the ocean waters off Monterey in mid-Feb, when 20,000 were estimated to have passed Pt. Pinos 18 Feb (BLS, DR, RC) and the same number was estimated during an offshore aerial survey from the Monterey Pet. s. to the Big Sur Coast 1 Mar (JND, LHe, TMH). This species is generally quite rare inland, and one at Mono L. 2-3 Dec was a first for Mono (JLD, JuH). Two tardi Elegant Terns were reported: one at Moss Beach, San Mateo 16 Dec (RSTh) and one at Pt. Pinos, Monterey 28 Dec (TEa, Tanner Easterla). A Thick-billed Murre flew by Pt. Pinos, Monterey 11 Dec (YBLs). Ancient Murrelets were reported in better-than-average numbers. High counts included good numbers in Monterey, with 169 estimated during an offshore aerial survey from Pt. Pinos to Garrapata (JND et al.) and 116 around the Monterey Pen. 28 Dec (fide DR). Elsewhere, 150 at Pt. Ross, Sonoma 3 Jan (KnO, RSTh), 41 at Venice S.B., San Mateo 7 Dec (RSTh), and 48 at Moss Beach, San Mateo 7 Dec (RSTh) represented robust numbers for those counties. Rhinoceros Auklets staged major flights past Pt. Pinos, Monterey, with 1250 on 2 Jan (BLS), 7785 in three hours 4 Jan (BLS), and 6000+ 10 Jan (BLS, RyT et al.). Horned Puffins were offshore Pacific Grove, Monterey 23 Dec (Liga Auxins, Tom Wurster), 4 Jan (ph. BLS), and 11 Feb (RyT, ph. S. N. G. Howell, Shj). It is unknown if these observations involve the same or different birds, but an influx of this species into the Region became apparent just after the end of the period, indicating that these reports likely involved multiple birds.

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

A White-winged Dove was near the Carmel R. mouth, Monterey 1 Dec (MtS, RTIY). A Barn Owl along the n. shore of Mono L., Mono 12 Dec was a rare find for the Mono Basin (KNN, JuH). For a 2nd consecutive winter, a Snowy Owl grazed Salolan, this after a nearly 30-year absence from California. First found by fishermen 30 Dec and confirmed on 1 Jan (JCS), many were able to enjoy the bird via organized "pelagic" trips conducted by Dan Thiemann through 22 Feb (Charles & Dave Strickland, m.ob.). A Spotted Owl at Boggs L., Lake 16-19 Dec was a first for the Clear Lake C.B.C. (DWv). Six Long-eared Owls sw. of Madera 22 Jan–28 Feb provided a rare Madera record (GwW). Thirty-three Short-eared Owls at Grizzly L., Solano 18 Dec provided a new high count for the Benicia C.B.C. and an impressive tally for this declining species (TFI). Among numerous Short-eareds at unusual locations was one at the Presidio 2 Dec, one of few ever found in S.E. (ASH, HuC). Very rare on the C.V. floor, though probably overlooked, Northern Saw-whet Owls were at Orangevale Park, Sacramento 31 Dec (Mark Martucci et al.), Fair Oaks, Sacramento 24 Feb+ (DJo), and Ryer L., Solano 16 Feb+ (2 birds by 28 Feb; ph. RCLs, Raye Hanson, m.ob.). A Costa’s Hummingbird attempted to winter at a feeder at Hamill Valley, Mono 1 Dec–13 Jan (Andy Zdon) but apparently succumbed during the extreme cold of mid-Jan. Other Costa’s included 2 at Redding, Shasta through at least 28 Feb (Mike Damoth) and a male at Rancho Cordova, Sacramento 17 Feb–9 Mar (Paul Buchanan, m.ob.). An Anna’s Hummingbird at Hamill Valley 17 Dec was the latest ever found in Mono (Andy Zdon).

Lake’s 2nd Williamson’s Sapsucker, an imm. male, was near Boggs Mt. 7 Dec (BMc). Seven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers included one near Marysville, Yuba 21 Dec (Jimm Edgar, Kent Fickett) and L. Tulloch, Calaveras 28 Jan (Penny & David Kiehl); each was thought to be a county first. Nine Red-naped Sapsuckers were at widely spaced locations throughout the period. A Pileated Woodpecker 28 Dec at Henry Coe S.P., Santa Clara was one of few ever found in the Diablo Range (JY, AJ). A Hammond’s Flycatcher along Adobe Rd., Sonoma 23 Nov (RS) may have been a lingering migrant, but another at Pacifica 24-28 Dec provided just the 2nd winter record for San Mateo (ph. JMc). Most remarkable was the discovery of a Dusky Flycatcher 4 Feb at U.C. Davis, Yolo, possibly providing the first winter record for the Region (ph. JCS, TEa). Five Eastern Phoebes were reported, including no fewer than 3 in Monterey 17 Dec–24 Feb, one near Winters, Yolo 17 Dec–3 Jan (Brent Campos), and another sw. of Madera, Madera 15-20 Jan (ph. GwW, m.ob.). Say’s Phoebes are essentially absent in winter from far n. California, so the presence of 25+ around Fall River Mills, Shasta 20 Feb is a superb demonstration of just how early this species migrates (BR&CY). An Ash-throated Flycatcher banded at C.C.F.S., Santa Clara 21 Feb must have wintered somewhere nearby (Roy Churchill).
SHRIKES THROUGH THRASHERS

Just 2 Northern Shrikes were noted away from typical n. coast and Great Basin habitats: one ne. of Fairfield, Solano 30 Nov–26 Feb (Brent Campos, m.ob.) and another at Willow Hill Res., near Folsom, Sacramento 31 Dec (+Craig Swolgaard, Ginny Huss). A Plumbeous Vireo along the Guadalupe R. 7 Dec provided Santa Clara's 5th record and continues a pattern of late-fall occurrences in the Region (JFJa). Five Cassin's Vireos were all coastal except for one near Winters, Yolo 17 Dec (DES, Roger Willmouth). A Yellow-billed Magpie described from Potter Valley 12 Feb was just the 2nd ever found in Mendocino (Jim Armstrong, GEC). Four Northern Rough-winged Swallows at the San Jose–Santa Clara W.T.P., Santa Clara 17 Dec may have been later migrants, but until recent years even a Dec record was virtually unheard of (WGB, Jim Thomas). At least 66 Barn Swallows were tailed in Dec-Jan, fewer than in recent years but far more than would have been dreamt of a decade ago.

A Black-capped Chickadee 17 Feb at the Mattole R. mouth, Humboldt provided the southernmost documented record of this species for California (ph. JFTZ). A Chestnut-backed Chickadee at Carmichael, Sacramento 2–3 Feb furnished just the 3rd county record (EP, CCo, KLL). Though a modest irruption of Golden-crowned Kinglets was noted in Santa Clara, we received no reports of unusual numbers anywhere else in the Region. Out-of-place Mountain Bluebirds included a male at upper Elk Horn Slough, Monterey 2–4 Dec (RF et al.), one at Coyote Pt., San Mateo 6 Dec (Dean Manley), and 2 males at Las Gallinas W.T.P., Marin 7-10 Jan (Jim White, Nick Whelan). Varied Thrushes were offted mentioned this winter. At least 10 different C.B.C.s from all over the Region reported record-high numbers for this species. The Region's 6 Sage Thrashers included 2 near Merced Falls in Mariposa 28 Feb (ADEM) and singles at Big Sur R. outlet, Monterey 17 Dec (SRv). Deer Cr. near Stool Ponds, Tulare 5 Jan (SDS), Payen Rd. in e. Sacramento 12-13 Feb (Frank Gray, Stefan Schlick), and Flood Rd. in e. San Joaquin 10 Feb (pb. Bob Stahler). Our only Brown Thrasher was a heard-only bird singing at C.R.P., Sacramento 2-5 Jan (AEF, Irene Engilis, JFTZ).

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

It was a good season for warbler diversity (20 species). Numbers were also generally high, with 5 Tennessee's, 27 Nashville's, 13 Yellows, 11 Hermit's (in San Mateo), a whopping 41 Palms, 11 Black-and-white, 3 American Redstarts, and 6 Wilson's. All these were coastal or S.F. Bay birds except one Wilson's Warbler at C.R.P., Sacramento 4 Feb (JTr). A Black-throated Gray Warbler at the very n. edge of the Central Valley was the first ever recorded on the Redding C.B.C., Shasta 30 Dec (BY, BED). The Blue-winged Warbler first found in Oct at the Carmel R. mouth, Monterey (MxB) stayed well into winter and was banded 21 Dec (B.S.O.L.), subsequently photographed showing off its new jewelry (ph. RTy), and last seen 9 Jan (CHZ). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen in a yard in Moss Beach, San Mateo 10 Dec (J. R. Blair).

A Worm-eating Warbler was seen on the Big Sur coast, Monterey 18 Dec (Jessica Giffiths). This record, if accepted by the C.B.R.C., would be our Region's 8th winter record. An Ovenbird apparently returned for the 2nd winter to a site along Putah Cr. on the counties with a remarkable total of at least 8, possibly 11 individuals. Two Western Tanagers found on the Peace Valley C.B.C. 19 Dec in Sutter were the first for that county (AEN, BedM, fde BED).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

American Tree Sparrows found last fall continued at Fall R./McArthur, Shasta 2-11 Jan (Ken Able, Randy van Orden, BY, BED) and Yolo Bypass W.A., Tolo 30 Dec–21 Jan (TC, Roger Adamson); singles were also found at Arcata Bottoms, Humboldt 13 Dec+ (KI, m.ob.) and Tomales Bay, Marin 3 Dec (ph. CCo, DWN, Bob Battagin). Shasta had its first winter record for Chipping Sparrow at Fall R./McArthur 2 Jan (Ken Able). A Clay-colored Sparrow first found in Nov in Eureka, Humboldt continued through 18 Dec (TWL, PAH, Lew & Judy Norton), and another Humboldt Clay-colored was found Dec 31 at Port Keynot (Rebecca Green). Tulare hosted its 2nd or 3rd Clay-colored Sparrow 11-13 Feb at Bartlett C.P. (KIk, SDS, ph. Tony Kurz). A Clay-colored, the 2nd for Stanislaus, was at the w. end of Beckwith Rd. 13 Jan+ (ERC, m.ob.), and another was at Año Nuevo S.R., San Mateo 23–30 Dec (RSTh).

Coastal Vesper Sparrows included 2 at Año Nuevo State Reserve, San Mateo 30 Dec–6 Jan (RSTh, GRH) and another at Arcata Bottoms, Humboldt 2 Dec (RBe). A female Lark Bunting at Byron Hot Springs 11–26 Feb provided Cona Costa with its 2nd record (Mark Miller, m.ob.). As is frequently the case, the Sierra foothills hosted wintering Lark Buntings: one on Crabtree Rd. in e. Stanislaus from 22-29 Jan (DVP, MtB, m.ob.) and another on White Rock Rd. in e. Merced 24 Feb (ph. SAG). Four Grasshopper Sparrows—a species probably regular in our Region in winter, but barely detected—were found on Coyote Ridge, Santa Clara 30 Dec (ph. SCR). Our only Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow report was from Elk Horn Slough, Monterey 1 Jan (KIk).

All but 2 of our 24 Swamp Sparrows were on the coast or S.F. Bay. The two inland records included Nevada's first at Speniceville WA 4-12 Feb (BDW, m.ob.) and a bird found during the Lost L/Fresno C.B.C., Fresno 27-29 Dec (Jy. Bruce Willford, m.ob.). Eighty White-throated Sparrows were reported from 16 different counties. San Mateo had 2 Harris's Sparrows, one continuing from late Nov at Coyote Pt. 2 Dec (CLO), and another at the Gazos Cr. mouth 10 Dec (G. J. Strachan). Harris's Sparrows visited two backyards in Humboldt-McKinleyville 1 Dec (KGR, Mark Morrisee, Ed Debelueve) and Arcata 19 Jan–25 Feb.
(S.C., K.Bu)—plus another backyard in Dixon, Solano 17 Dec–20 Jan (Gordon Murphy). Both McCown’s (3–5) and Lapland Longspurs were found on County Line Rd., Yolo 7 Jan–4 Feb (Tea, SCH, MP). Laplands were also at V Street Loop, Humboldt 1–24 Dec (Adam Brown), Mono L., Mono 12–30 Dec (KNN, JuH), Rat Farm Rd., Shasta 1 Feb (Ken Able), Goose L., Modoc 23 Feb (SCR), and Rds. 16 and 90B, Yolo 1 Jan (JCS). Both Chestnut-collared and Lapland Longspurs were together in two locations in Humboldt: Eel R. mouth 3 Dec (KMS, Karly Moore) and Bear R. Ridge 2 Feb (EE). Only the Eel R. flock was sizable, containing 80+ Laplans. A single Chestnut-collared was at Goose L., Modoc 24 Feb (SCR). Two Snow Buntings were at the nest jetty in Humboldt Bay, Humboldt 3 Dec (Ben Zyla, SC, ph. DCo), and another Humboldt Snow Bunting was present 15–21 Jan at Mad River C.P. (Hirtz Kellermann, SC, ph. DCo, TFB, IV, TJTz).

The only Rose-breasted Grosbeak reported this winter was visiting a feeder in Moss Beach, San Mateo from 21–24 Feb (Mar Devine). Over the past 10 years we have averaged about six reports each winter with never fewer than three. Usually, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are on or near Black-headed Grosbeaks in winter, but not this year. Black-headed Grosbeaks were at H.R.S., Alameda 16 Feb (RJ) and Coyote Valley, Santa Clara 30 Dec (Bonnie Bedford-White et al.). A Blue Grosbeak photographed during the Rio Cosunnes C.B.C. at Merritt L., Yolo 2 Jan (SCH, ph. Roger Adamson) marked a rare winter appearance for this species. Sacramento’s first Common Grackle was near Galt 16–18 Jan (Sue Ye, ph. DGY, ph. TEP, JSL). Interestingly, another Sacramento Common Grackle was reported on Sherman L. 11 Feb (Tbob Power), a mere 43 km (as the grackle flies) e. of the original find. An Orchard Oriole was at Ft. Mason Community Garden, S.F. 25 Dec–17 Jan (D. Armstrong, CLo), and another visited feeders for a 2nd winter in Manteca, San Joaquin 10 Jan–19 Feb (T. Tiny Gehrike). A Hooded Oriole was present 1–3 Dec in Oroville, Butte (Jay Bogiat- 0, Fred Shelly Kim, EED, m.o.b.). Another Hooded Oriole visited a feeder in Menlo Park, San Mateo 3 Jan (PKB). Bullock’s Orioles were at C.R.P., Sacramento 2–4 Jan (AE, Irene Engs, WEH, JTR), Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 14–21 Jan (AJ), and McKinleyville, Humboldt 22 Jan (John Zirpoli). The closest we came to a Baltimore Oriole was an apparent Baltimore Oriole x Bullock’s Oriole hybrid in Eureka, Humboldt 25 Jan–2 Feb (Heather Brown, SMCA). An ad. male Scott’s Oriole in Golden Gate Park, S.F. 13–19 Jan was an excellent find (ASH, CLo, PBM, ph. m.o.b.).

Lawrence’s Goldenfinch put in a good showing, with birds noted in Clearlake, Lake 20 Feb (JW), n. of Molten S.P. 21 Dec (SRv), and of Gonzales 1 Jan (Tam) in Monterey, and at three different locations in Santa Clara: Isabel Valley 2 Jan (MMR, MM), San Antonio Valley 2 Jan (WGB), and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve 2 Jan+ (GRH). Evening Grosbeaks were present in numbers exceeding 150 near Oakdale, Madera 7 Feb (GaW). Our only other Evening Grosbeak report was of a heard-only bird at the Big Sur R. mouth, Monterey 17 Dec (SRv, RT).

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Tim Amaral, Alan Baldridge (AB), Alan D. Barron (ADB) (Del Norte), Edward C. Beedy, Murray Berner (Napa), William G. Bousman (Santa Clara), Penelope K. Bowen, Matthew Brady, Ken Burton, Eric R. Caïne, Scott Carey, Rita Carratello, Joe Cerlani, George E. Chaniot, Joseph Clark, Terry Colborn, Daryl Coldren, Luke W. Cole (Rings), Chris Conard (CCO) (Sacramento and Yolo), Chris Corben, (CCb) Hugh Cotter, Jeff N. Davis (Madera), Gary Deghi, Al DeMartini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Matthew Doeder, Jon L. Dunn, Todd Easterla, Mark W. Eaton (San Francisco), Alan M. Eisner, Ray Ekstrom (Siskiyou), Elias Elias, Andrew Englis, Brian Fitch, Tim Fitz, Rich Fournier (RF), Rob Fowler (RBF), James H. Gain (Stanislaus), Steve A. Glover (Contra Costa), Helen Green, George Griffith, Tanya M. Haff, Steve C. Hampton, W. Edward Harper, Chris Hartzell, Garth Harwood, Floyd Hayes, Lynn Hemink (LyH), Laird Henkel (LH), Pablo A. Herrera, Rob Hewitt, Justin Hite, Alan S. Hopkins, Debbie House, Lisa Hug, John E. Hunter (Trinity), Ken Irwin, Alvaro Jaramillo, Tim Jenkins, David Johnson, Oscar Johnson, Shearwater Journeys, Robert J. Keiffer (Mendocino), Jon King, Kim Kuska, Kimya Lambert, Amy Lauterbach, Robin L. C. Leong (Solano), Tom W. Leskiw, Gary S. Lester, Ron LeValley, Cindy Lieurance (CLU), Leslie Lieurance, Jim Lomax, Calvin Lou (CLO), Jon S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Timothy D. Manolis, Matthew A. Matthiessen, Sean McAllister, J. Mac McCormick (Plumas and Sierra), Bryan J. McIntosh, Peter J. Metropulos (San Mateo), Joe Morlan, David W. Nelson, Kristie N. Nelson (Mono), Chet Ogan, Frances Oliver, Kris Olson, Ed Pandolfino (Placer), Janna Pauser, Michael Perrone, Jade C. Power (Humboldt), David E. Quady, John Ranlett, David C. Rice, Robert J. Richardson (Alameda), Don Roberson (Monterey), Michael M. Rogers, Kerry G. Ross, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Steve Roval, James Rowoth, Ruth A. Rudesill (Sonoma), Ivan Samuels, Fran Scarlett, Donald E. Schmid, Jeff Seisy, Doug Shag, Keith M. Slusson, Jim H. Snowdon, John Sorensen, Rich Stalcup, John C. Sterling (Modoc, Alpine, and Calaveras), Tim Steurer (Amador and El Dorado), David L. Sudjiana (Santa Cruz), Brian L. Sullivan, Steven D. Summers (Tulare), Ryan Terrill (Marin), Ronald S. Thorn, James Ti- etz (Humboldt and EL), Francis Tolf, John Trochet, Steve Umland (Boulder), Kent Van Vuren (Merced and San Benito), David Vander Pluym (Mariposa), Jerry R. White (Lake), Brian D. C. Williams (Nevada), Ken Wilson, Gary Woods, Dave Woodward, David G. Yee, James Yurchenko, Bob & Carol Yutzy (Shasta). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated.

Ed Pandolfino (Thrashers to Finches) 5530 Delrose Court, Carmichael, California 95608 (erpinfmac@aol.com)
Scott B. Terrill (Loons to Frigatebirds, Larids to Alasks) H.T. Harvey & Associates 3150 Almaden Expressway, Suite 145 San Jose, California 95118 (sterrill@harveyecology.com)
Michael M. Rogers (Waterfowl to Quail, Herons to Shorebirds) 499 Novato Avenue, Sunnyvale, California 94086 (m.m.rogers@comcast.net)
Steven A. Glover (Doves to Wrentit) 6526 Conestoga Lane, Dublin, California 94568 (countrylines@chbglobal.net)
record-low rainfall amounts occurred this winter through most of the Region. Los Angeles, for example, received just under 63 cm of rain from July through March (normal rainfall would be about 35 cm for that period). As always, drought impacts have a lag time, likely to be seen in the patterns of concentration of spring migrants and in winter survival and breeding success in resident birds, breeding patterns of summer visitors, and over the longer term the impacts of what will likely be a greatly reduced annual seed crop next fall and winter. The late fall and winter saw moderate flocks of some of our irruptive passerines (Mountain Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush) and exceptional numbers of Mountain Bluebirds on the coastal slope; other species (e.g., Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red Crossbill, and Pine Siskin) were virtually absent in the lowlands. Spectacular concentrations of gulls at the Salton Sea were responding to an abundance of small tilapia fish, and even with huge fish die-offs late in the winter, the numbers of live tilapia remained high at the end of the period. The gull flocks were dominated (in descending order) by California, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls, but included an impressive nine Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Most of the important rarities during the period were birds remaining from the fall; the most notable bird found during the period was a Black-headed Gull at the Salton Sea.

Abbreviations: N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.A.F.B. (Vandenberg A.F.B., nw. Santa Barbara). Museum collectors abbreviated in the text are: LACM (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) and SDNHM (San Diego Natural History Museum). Because most rarities in s. California are seen by multiple observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and/or identifying the bird are included. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (C.B.R.C.) review list is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. Secretary and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Two blue-morph Ross's Geese were at S.E.S.S. through the winter (GmCc); one or 2 have been found here each winter in recent years. Amongst the wintering Canada Geese at Bolsa Chica, Orange was an apparent parvipes 5 Jan-1 Feb and 2 possible maxima 11 Jan-8 Feb (Rae), little is known about the status of other subspecies in S. California. A Bratt showing characteristics of the "gray-bellied" form was on s. San Diego Bay 2-14 Feb (MJB, MSt). A Tundra Swan on L. O'Neil near Oceanside, San Diego 12-17 Dec (PAG), 5 at Borrego Springs, San Diego 22 Dec (PJ), and 9 near Blythe, Riverside 20 Jan (RH) were the southernmost this winter. Numbers of Blue-winged Teal wintering in this Region continue to increase, as indicated by over 50 on Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo through the period (TME), 298 in coastal Orange 31 Dec (DRW), and 24 at N.E.S.S. 9 Dec (RmCc). A Eurasian Teal was near El Monte, Los Angeles 27 Jan-10 Mar (JSF). A male Tufted Duck, unreported in San Diego County in recent years, was at the Kern N.W.R., Kern 19 Jan (TK). White-winged (13 reported s. of San Luis Obispo) and Black (16 reported) Scoters, along with Long-tailed Ducks (3 reported), continue to be scarce along the coast. Two White-winged Scoters at N.E.S.S. 2 Jan-5 Mar (AD, CMcG) and another near Westmorland, Imperial 10-18 Mar (MT, HD) were inland, where rare. The Surf Scoter found inland at Parker Dam, San Bernadino 11 Nov remained through 13 Feb (MP), and the 2 found at S.E.S.S. 28 Oct remained through 19 Dec (GmCc); 2 at N.E.S.S. 13 Jan-18 Feb (RmCc, GmCc) were also wintering locally, but one near Seeley, Imperial 7 Feb (GmCc) appeared to be an early spring migrant. Single Long-tailed Ducks on Pleasant Valley Res.
were the only ones found along the coast. The American Oystercatcher found on Point Loma 26 Aug remained through 26 Dec (PEL), then moved northward to La Jolla 28 Dec–6 Mar (TM).

Single Solitary Sandpipers in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara 18 Dec (DW) and near Seeley 3 Oct–9 Jan (GMcC), with 2 present at the latter locality 8-13 Dec (MScM), were evidently attempting to winter locally. Over 12,000 Long-billed Curlews were counted in the Imperial Valley agricultural fields 20-21 Jan (KCM). Twenty-five Rudy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. throughout the period (GMcC) was a large number to be wintering inland. The Rock Sandpiper found at Marina del Rey 22 Nov remained through 24 Apr (MBy). A Short-billed Dowitcher at S.E.S.S. 8 Dec (CAM) provided only the 2nd record for this species at the Salton Sea in winter. A Red Phalarope near Ridgecrest 17 Dec (BSO) was inland, where rare.

An abundance of fish (small tilapia) at the Salton Sea attracted a large number and variety of gulls, as indicated by a count of 160,000 total gulls during a survey of the entire shoreline on 5-6 Feb (KCM); California Gulls, in particular, were exceptionally abundant, and at least 10 Thayer’s, 20 Yellow-footed, 10 Western, and 25 Glaucous-winged Gulls were seen in Jan–Feb. Single Laughing Gulls at Oceanside 3 Feb (KW) and at the San Diego R. mouth 30 Dec (DT) and 21 Feb (CMcG) were on the coast, where rare, and numbers remained high at the Salton Sea, as indicated by 96 at S.E.S.S. 19 Dec and 30 still present 15 Feb (GMcC). First-winter Little Gulls were found on the Salton Sea at N.E.S.S. 20 Jan–9 Feb (TMcG, ST), Salton City 5 Feb (MBy), and S.E.S.S. 9-19 Jan (GMcC, KZK). A first-winter Black-headed Gull at N.E.S.S. 15 Jan–9 Feb (DG, CMcG) was only the 8th in the Region and the first at the Salton Sea. The number and location of Bonaparte’s Gulls wintering on the coast appears to have changed noticeably in the past 40 years, so observers should monitor the species in the future. An ad. and a first-winter Heermann’s Gull were present at S.E.S.S. throughout the winter, and one on Cachuma L 11 Jan (LM) provided the first inland record for Santa Barbara. At least 5 Mew Gulls, rare inland, were found on the Salton Sea during the period. A Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Doheny State Beach, Orange 11 Feb (N&MF), and 9 more were present on the Salton Sea,
with an ad. at N.E.S. 6-17 Feb (JSF), a first-winter bird at Salton City 22 Feb (TE), up to 3 ads. (8 Oct-23 Feb), 2 third-winter birds (10 & 10-24 Feb), and one second-winter (16 Jan) and a first-winter bird (23 Feb) at S.E.S.S. (GMcC). Two Glaucous-winged Gulls at Lancaster, Los Angeles 16 Dec (KLG) were e. of the coast range. Six Glaucous Gulls were found along the coast, with single first-winter birds near Piedras Blancas, San Luis Obispo 5-26 Jan (MPB), at Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo 9-18 Feb (MPB), around Long Beach, Los Angeles 21 Dec-17 Mar (KGL), at Dockweiler State Beach, Los Angeles 13 Feb (MSanM), at Dana Point 26 Jan (JMo, DSS), and at Imperial Beach 18-19 Feb (HY), at S.E.S.S., an ad. was at Red Hill 16 Jan (GMcC, PAG), and a first-winter bird was there 5-23 Feb (KLG, GMcC). Black-legged Kittiwakes were scarce, as indicated by only 15 seen during an organized boat trip off San Luis Obispo 13 Jan (TME), one off Dana Point 20 Jan (JEP) and 2 at La Jolla 12 Jan (PAG) were the southernmost.

A Gull-billed Tern at S.E.S.S. 18 Feb (WTF) was probably wintering locally. An Elegant Tern at Dockweiler State Beach 27 Feb-6 Mar (MSanM) evidently wintered locally. A Marbled Murrelet at Dockweiler State Beach 29-30 Jan (JSF) was unusually far south. A count of 13 Ancient Murrelets off Santa Barbara 30 Dec (BKS), along with smaller numbers reported between San Luis Obispo and San Diego through the period, suggested the presence of greater-than-expected numbers in s. California waters this winter.

**PARROTS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS**

A flock of 350-400 Red-crowned Parrots in La Verne, Los Angeles in Dec (MJSanM) was an exceptionally large number for that area and suggests continued population growth for this non-native bird. White-winged Doves continue to expand their winter range into s, California, as indicated by the presence of 7 at widely separated locations in the Imperial Valley during the period (GMcC) and one at Blythe 11 Feb (RH); 7 along the coast this winter were at locations where considered rare at any time of the year. The only Ruddy Ground-Doves known present were 3 near Calipatria through the period (GMcC), a male present near El Centro all winter (KZK), and one continuing in La Cañada, Los Angeles through 24 Jan (MH).

A Northern Saw-whet Owl discovered in Palm Desert 11 Feb (SSw) and found dead 2 Mar (*LACM) was in the low desert, where unexpected. Fifty or more Long-eared Owls at a roost in the Caliente Range, San Luis Obispo 23 Feb (BWS) was an impressive concentration. A Lesser Nighthawk in Brawley 14 Jan (BML) was undoubtedly wintering locally. Wintering Vaux’s Swifts included up to 12 around Bakersfield, Kern 17 Dec-22 Feb (KH-L, JCW) and one in San Diego 13 Jan (GMcC). A Broad-billed Hummingbird at Mission Viejo, Orange 25 Nov-14 Jan (DRW) was the same female present last winter. Single Allen’s Hummingbirds in Riverside 5-6 Jan (JS&MT) and near El Centro 24 Feb and 3-4 Mar (KZK) were in areas where few have been identified; one in Ocean Beach 26 Dec (PU, *SDNHM) was of the resident subspecies sedentarius, providing additional evidence that this subspecies is expanding its range southward into San Diego.

A Williamson’s Sapsucker in Santa Barbara 30 Dec (RAH) was only the 3rd recorded in coastal Santa Barbara, and another was in Pajcina, Los Angeles 13-15 Dec (DSC). Thirteen Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported from scattered locations throughout the Region. A White-headed Woodpecker at La Cumbre Peak in the Santa Ynez Mts., Santa Barbara 24-30 Dec (WTF), and another at Holiday L. in the Antelope Valley, Los Angeles 9 Dec. (EO, JD), were outside this species’ normal range and habitat.

Numbers of wintering Empidonax flycatchers were well below average. Four Hammonds Flycatchers reported during the period was about average; but amazingly only 5 Gray Flycatchers and 2 Pacific-slope Flycatchers were reported (compared with about 50 and 30, respectively, in winter 2005-2006). A Least Flycatcher in Riverside 24-29 Mar (CMcG) was undoubtedly wintering locally. A Dusky Flycatcher was in Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles 23 Dec (JEP), and another bird felt to be that species was in Lompoc, Santa Barbara 17 Dec (BKH). Ten Eastern Phoebes during the period included at least 4 returning for multiple winters. Six Tropical Kingbirds on the coast during the period was about average; on the se. deserts, the returning bird near Seeley, Imperial remained through 25 Mar (GMcC). A Cassin’s Kingbird in Bard, Imperial 1 Mar (DRW) was in an area where rare and from which virtually no winter records exist. The returning Thick-billed Kingbird in Wilmington, Los Angeles re-
SHRIKES THROUGH WARBLERS

Although steep Loggerhead Shrike declines are still evident on the coastal slope, an encouraging 26 birds were found on the three Orange Christmas Bird Counts (compared to only 9 during winters 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, DRW). The Bell's Vireo (nominate subspecies) in Pasadena, Los Angeles remained from 4 Nov through 26 Apr (Ga), and the Long Beach wintering bird of the “expected” subspecies pusillus was last seen 17 Mar (KGL). Once again, Plumbeous Vireos (30 birds) easily outnumbered Cassin's (7) during the period.

Steller's Jays in Ridgecrest 8 Dec (BMc) and Inyokern 26 Dec–1 Jan (SSW) were on the Kern desert, where casual. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow in the n Antelope Valley 7 Feb (MSanM) was the earliest ever for Kern. Three Bank Swallows at 5 E S S 19 Dec (EH) were in an area where the species is nearly regular in winter. A Cliff Swallow in Long Beach 17 Jan (JG) was unseasonal. Mountain Chickadees staged a minor incursion into the Region's coastal lowlands, but Red-breasted Nuthatches were virtually absent this winter. A few Brown Crows were found in the lowlands, including one at 5 E S S 13 Jan–3 Apr (EM). A moderate flight of Goldman-crowed Kinglets was noted in coastal areas, but 2 near Calipatria 13 Dec–23 Feb (GMCc) were in an area where always very rare. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, casual in winter in Inyo, were in Bishop 16 Dec (AK) and FCR. 22 Dec–4 Feb (V&GW). An impressive flight of Mountain Bluebirds into the coastal lowlands included over 150 birds in coastal Santa Barbara

3 Dec–13 Jan (WTE, CP, MPB), up to 20 in Ventura, Ventura (OJ), and well over 100 in Orange (DRW). An apparent Mountain Bluebird x Western Bluebird hybrid was photographed in Round Valley, Inyo 16-17 Dec (JLD). Up to 8 Western Bluebirds in Brawley, Imperial 1 Dec–3 Feb (GMCc) were in an area where rare and erratic. Numbers of Varied Thrushes were considered to be above average, at least in San Luis Obispo (TME) and Orange (DRW). Wintering Brown Thrashers remained from the fall until 3 Mar in San Pedro (KGL) and 7 May on Pt. Loma (CH). The Red-throated Pipit in Irvine remained from 23 Nov to the exceptionally late date of 20 Dec (LDT, LO).

Three Sprague's Pipits were in a field near Calipatria 19 Dec (OJ), and up to 2 were in a field 3 km away 29 Dec–3 Feb (GMCc).

Tennessee Warblers, presumably wintering, were in Montecito, Santa Barbara 29 Dec–24 Feb ( Pel), Long Beach 18 Dec–6 Jan (KSG), Placentia, Orange 20 Jan (DRW), and Pt Loma 25 Feb–14 Mar (MSa). A Virginia's Warbler near Whittier, Los Angeles 10 Dec (Lsc) was possibly a very late fall vagrant. Only Lucy's Warblers reported were 2 different birds in Goleta 2 Dec (DMC) and 24 Nov–3 Mar (RPH). Northern Parulas included a returning winterer in Torrance, Los Angeles 7 Dec–19 Apr (KGL) and one in San Diego 26 Dec–7 Apr (PAG). A female Black-throated Blue Warbler, one of our rarest winter warblers, was in Pasadena 6 Dec–25 Jan (ST). The only Black-throated Green Warbler was in Goleta 25 Dec–17 Mar (MAH). Exceptionally late for the n interior were Yellow Warblers in Bishop 16 Dec (C&RH) and at F.C.R. 2 Jan (V&GW). A Hermit Warbler at Pine Mountain Club 5 Dec–20 Jan (KC) was only the 2nd ever to be found in winter in Kern. A Yellow-throated Warbler in Costa Mesa, Orange 12 Nov–11 Mar (DRW) was of uncertain subspecific identity but showed some characters suggesting the nominate. Two returning Grace's Warblers were on Pt. Loma Sep–19 Mar and Sep–14 Apr (RF, PAG), and a different individual was there.

A male Hepatic Tanager, photographed on 21 February 2007, spent the winter on the coast in Imperial Beach, San Diego County, California. The dark coloration on the throat was stain acquired when feeding on coral tree (Erythrina) flowers. Similar staining can be seen on warblers and other birds feeding on eucalyptus flowers through the winter.

Photograph by Thomas A. Blackman.

23 Feb–7 Mar (MSa), the returning bird in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara was present through 10 Mar (DMC). A female Pine Warbler was in San Diego 7 Jan (PEL, DWA). A dozen Palm Warblers along the coast during the period was about average, as were the 15 Black-and-white Warblers and 13 American Redstarts (plus 7 redstarts at the Salton Sea). A Worm-eating Warbler was in Irvine 31 Dec–10 Mar (BED). Only 4 Northern Waterthrushes were reported during the period. A Common Yellowthroat n. of Bishop 16 Dec (T&JH) was exceptionally late for the n. deserts. The only MacGillivray's Warbler found during the period was in Huntington Beach 28 Oct–31 Dec (BED). A stunning Hooded Warbler in Mission Viejo 17 Dec–14 Jan (JEP) was only the 3rd to be found in winter in Orange. The perception that Painted Redstarts are a regular part of our winter avifauna is reinforced by the frequency with which birds return for multiple winters, returning birds were in San Dimas, Glendora, and Los Angeles, Los Angeles through the period and in Harmony Grove,
A male Hepatic Tanager was in Imperial Beach 12 Jan–1 Apr (GMcC); this species is casual in winter and anywhere in the lowlands. Six Clay-colored Sparrows were at scattered localities on the coastal slope during the period. An American Tree Sparrow in Bishop 14-20 Jan (C&RH) was in an area where regular, but one photographed at N.E.S.S. 3-5 Mar (DG, GMcG) was among the few ever found on the se. deserts. The winter and migrant status of Black-throated Sparrows remains poorly understood; 3 in coastal sage scrub n. of Castaic, Los Angeles 6 Feb (BED) were certainly unexpected. Grasshopper Sparrows are equally poorly known; single birds in the Carrizo Plain, San Luis Obispo 17 Feb (TK) and in the foothills behind Santa Barbara 30 Dec (MBA) were in areas where rare. At least 5 Red Fox Sparrows (P. l. zaboria) were found in San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, and Orange; a bird of the Sooyi (unaliaschensis) group in Big Pine 21 Jan (T&JH) was casual in that area. Coastal Harris's Sparrows were in Long Beach 30 Dec–15 Mar (LLA, TEW) and Escondido, San Diego 14-16 Dec (EH); interior birds were in Bishop 24 Dec–1 Mar (C&RH), Big Pine 22 Feb–10 Mar (BSC), and near Calipatria 18 Dec–20 Jan (WTF). Seven Golden-crowned Sparrows around S.E.S.S. during the period (GMcG) was a large number for that area. Golden-crowned Sparrow x White-crowned Sparrow hybrids included a returning bird at Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo (BKS) and an ad. near Castaic 27 Dec (KLG). Single McCown’s Longspurs near Santa Ynez 12 Dec–9 Jan (WTF) and Cuyama, Santa Barbara 6 Jan (NAL) were only the 2nd and 3rd ever found in Santa Barbara. Up to 75 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were near Santa Ynez 6-15 Jan, with 7 still present 17 Mar (WTF); a very obliging single bird was in Santa Barbara 19 Nov–31 Dec (HPR), and the only other report was of 3 in Rancho Bernardo, San Diego 19 Dec–23 Jan (RTF). The presence of only 2 Lapland Longspurs (and no other species) around Calipatria 2-18 Dec (GMcC, WTF) was a far cry from the >300 birds of four species found here last winter.

Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks during the period (including a late Nov bird not included in the fall report) were outnumbered by 8 Black-headed Grosbeaks. An ad. male Painted Bunting in San Diego 22 Feb (DCr) was considered an escapee. A male Tricolored Blackbird at N.E.S.S. 21 Jan–18 Feb (TEW, LL) was in an area where casual. An imm. Common Grackle seen in the area 1 Dec–20 Jan (GMcC, MBJ) was the only 2nd to be found in Imperial. Orchard Orioles were found in Arroyo Grande Nov–23 Jan (DG, GMcC); Montecito 3 Dec–8 Feb (JEL), Santa Barbara 30 Dec (JLD), and Palos Verdes, Los Angeles 6 Dec–21 Apr (KGL). A Hooded Oriole in Oceano, San Luis Obispo 26 Feb (MLS) was in an area where very rare in winter, and one in Solvang 20 Jan (KJ) was the first in winter in Santa Barbara area away from the coast. Five Baltimore Orioles were found near the coast during the period. An impressive concentration of Lawrence’s Goldfinches at Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve in interior San Diego built up to 400-500 birds in Feb (JMa).

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Alex Abela, Douglas W. Aguillard, Lila L. Auzins, Morgan Ball (MBA), Richard Barth, Mark J. Billings, Tom A. Blackman, David V. Blue, Jeff Boyd, Matt Brady (MBR), Mark P. Brown, Martin Byhower (MBY), Barbara Carlson, David M. Compton (Santa Barbara), Daniel S. Cooper, Chris Coulter, Dick Crandle (DCr), Brian E. Daniels, Johanna Dawes, Al Demartini, Henry Detwiler, Jon L. Dunn, Todd Easterla, Tom M. Edell (San Luis Obispo), Fred Emerson, Richard A. Erickson, Jon S. Feenstra, Bob Fowler, Susan Frank, Nick & Mary Freeman (N&MF), Wes T. Fritz, John Garrett (JGa), Kimball L. Garrett (Los Angeles), Karen S. Gilbert, Peter A. Ginsburg, David Goodward, Jesse Grantham (JGr), John F. Green (Riverside), Ed Hall, Robert A. Hamilton, Jeff Hanson (JH), Jim Hardisty (JHar), Christine Harvey, Matthew T. Heindel, Tom & Jo Heindel (JH), John Heindel-Levinson, Roger Higson, Brad K. Hines, Ron P. Hirst, Mark A. Holmgren, Chris & Rosie Howard (C&R), Mark Hunter, Karen Johnson, Oscar Johnson (Ventura), Paul Jorgensen, Howard B. King, Andrew Kirk, Alexander E. Koonce (San Bernardino), Kenneth Z. Kurland, Tony Kurz, Kevin G. Larson, Paul E. Lehman, Curtis A. Marantz, John Martin (Jma), Liz Mason, Sarah B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie (Imperial), Todd McGrath, Chet McLaugh, Robert McKeever, Mike McQuerry, Bob Meade (BNM), Bob Miller (BMM), Steve Modnow, Kathy C. Molina, Elizabeth Morgan, John Morgan (JMe), Joseph Morlan (JMo), Thomas Myers, Leo Ohtusuki, Eleanor Osgood, Jim & Debby Parker (JS&DP), Robert T. Patton, Cruz Phillips, James E. Pike, Molly Pollcock, Hugh P. Ranson, Matt Sadowski (MSA), Michael J. San Miguel, Jr., Mike San Miguel, Robert Schallmann, Larry Schimah (LS), Brad K. Schram, Barbara Schuck (BS), Lisa Sheffield (LSH), Melissa Sherwood, Mitch Siemens (MSI), Daniel S. Singer, Maggie L. Smith, Bob W. Stafford, Bob Steele, Susan Steele (SSS), Emilie Strauss, Sandy Swan (SSW), Ryan S. Terrill, Don Thomson, Jennifer & Michelle Tobin (JMT), Larry D. Tripp, Philip Unitt, Ken Weaver, Jeff Wells, Douglas R. Willick (Orange), Dan Williams, John C. Wilson (Kern), Vicky and Gerry Wolfe (V GW), Thomas E. Wurster, Herb Young. An additional 40+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season; all have our thanks.

Guy McCaskie, 954 Grove Avenue Imperial Beach, California 91932, (guymcc@pacbell.net)
Kimball L. Garrett
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90007
(kgarrett@nhm.org)
Baja California Peninsula

Unusually large numbers of waterbirds were present in the Cape District, where flocks of Eared Grebes and Bonaparte's Gulls were particularly impressive. Common Black-Hawk, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and Yellow-bellied Warbler were Regional firsts, the last also new for Mexico. Christmas Bird Counts fared well this season, with especially interesting passerines in Ensenada, gulls and terns in the Río Colorado Delta, and waterfowl and shorebirds in Ensenada de La Paz. Seven Northern Parulas and one Tropical Parula were seen in the Cape District.

Abbreviations: C.P.G.P. (Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds); E.S.J. (Estero San José, San José del Cabo).

WATERFOWL THROUGH JAEGERS

Greater White-fronted Geese were exceptionally numerous in the n. this winter, with at least 84 reported 11 Nov–11 Feb. Seven and 4–5 Snow Geese were in the ne. and nw., respectively. An ad. Ross's Goose at Lagunas de Chamilta 5 Nov–28 Mar (ph. VA, ph. SGM et al.) provided Baja California Sur with its 2nd record, and others were at C.P.G.P. 19 Nov (2; MJB, RAE, MAP) and Tijuana 10 Jan (ph. MJB). A Eckling Goose at Lagunas de Chamilta 12–18 Nov was joined by 2 others on the last day of its stay (ph. VA, NA). Singles were at E.S.J. 6–7 Jan (KC, ph. SGM et al.) and the El Centenario tank 3–28 Mar (ph. MJB, ph. SGM et al.). None was conclusively identified to subspecies, despite several supportive photographs. Eleven moffitti Canada Geese in the n. were expected, but an apparently paurica near Ejido Chiapas #3 on 6 Jan (ph. KAR et al.) established the first well-documented record for the subspecies in the Region.

Wood Ducks were seen again at the Mexicali Zoo, but a male near Ejido Chiapas #3 on 6 Jan was at a new location (ph. KAR et al.). An extremely worn male Eurasian Wigeon at Lagunas de Chamilta 10 Jan (ph. SGM et al.) was only the 3rd in Baja California Sur; 4 were in the far north. An apparent male Northern Shoveler x Gadwall hybrid at Lagunas de Chamilta 28 Nov (ph. VA) was last seen at the El Centenario tank 28 Mar (SGM). Canvasback is on the decline in the Region, with only 3 tallied during the 29 Dec Ensenada C.B.C., down from 125 on 19 Dec 2002 (fide MJB, RAE, EM). It is considered rare in the n., so 2 at C.P.G.P. 25 Jan were noteworthy (RAH et al.).

A Greater Scaup in Guerrero Negro 18 Nov (AG-A, GF, MF) and a female at E.S.J. 7 Jan (SGM et al.) were southerly but not as fancy as an ad. male White-winged Scoter at Laguna Ojo de Liebre 15 Dec (ph. RC, IM), establishing the first confirmed record for Baja California Sur. Two Black Scoters reached the nw 10–11 Nov (MDC et al.), but a Red-breasted Merganser made it as far as E.S.J. 6–14 Mar (ph. MJB, RAE, REW), one of few in the s. Cape District. A Horned Grebe in Mexicali 21 Dec (ph. MJB, RAE) was the first found in the Region's deserts. Achmophorus grebes are rarely reported from the s. Cape District, where 2-3 Westerns were in La Paz 16 Dec–10 Jan (fide EP, SGM et al.).

A total of 9 Short-tailed Shearwaters at the Nine Mile Bank 31 Mar (DWP et al.) surely topped the previous high count for the Region. Red-billed Tropicbirds well offshore between Ensenada and La Guadalupe 15 Mar (MJB et al.) and off Cabo Colonet 26 Mar (2, PAG) were unseasonal. A Brown Booby was an overdue first for L. Guadalupe, at its s. end 16 Mar (PP, MJB et al.). An impressive 259 American White Pelicans were tallied during the 16 Dec Ensenada de La Paz C.B.C. (fide EP), but a long-dead Brown Pelican at Leyes de Reforma 30 Jan had probably arrived the previous summerfall (ph. MJB, RAE; *UBAC 1738).

Two American Bittern at Laguna de Cipres 29 Dec (MJB et al.) were at a location where previously recorded, but an imm. Bald Eagle nearby the same day (MJB, ph. JAM et al.) was one of the biggest surprises on the Ensenada C.B.C. An imm. Mississippi Kite was near San José del Cabo 24 Mar (SGM), precedent having been set in winter by one at Todos Santos 10 Jan 1988 (Monographs in Field Ornithology 3: 121). A Sharp-shinned Hawk at La Guadalupe 16 Mar (MJB et al.) and a Merlin the following day (MSM) were new for the island. An imm. Common Black-Hawk at Miraflores 26 Mar (ph., SGM) was the first to be confirmed in the Region. An ad. Broad-winged Hawk at Miraflores 6 Jan (KC, ph. SGM et al.) was followed by it or another ad. and 2 imm. 26 Mar (ph. SGM). Swainson's Hawks put on a good show in the s.; one was at E.S.J. 6 Jan (SGM et al.), 3 were at the El Centenario tank 3 Mar (ph. MJ), and 91+ were with 110 Crested Caracaras on a recently cut alfalfa field in San Juan de los Planes 5 Mar (ph. MJ). A Ferruginous Hawk at the El Centenario tank 12 Jan (SGM, TL et al.) was the 4th for the peninsula's tip and first away from La Laguna, while an ad. male Merlin at Miraflores 8 Jan was of the unexpected richardsoni subspecies (ph. SGM et al.).

Sandhill Cranes were found again in the ne., with 3 at the Mesa Andrade wetlands 7 Dec (ph. ESM) representing only the 3rd modern record for the Region. Solitary Sandpipers seem to be rare-but-annual winter visitors in the s. Cape District; up to 3 were at Santiago 8 Jan–27 Mar (ph. SGM et al.), and one was at E.S.J. 6 Mar (MJL). To our knowledge, a Ruddy Turnstone at Playa Coyote, n. of La Paz, 11 Jan (SGM et al.) established the first recent record for the Cape District. Lugunas de Chamilta hosted a Pectoral Sandpiper 16 Dee–29 Mar (fide EP; SGM) and a first-winter Ruf 28 Nov–29 Mar (ph. VA, ph. SGM et al.), the former a 2nd in winter and the latter a 3rd ever for Baja California Sur.

Two Thayer's, a Yellow-footed, and 2-3
Glaucoous-winged Gulls were typical for the Mexicali Valley, but a Mew at the Mexicali Country Club (ph. KAR) and a first-winter Western at a landfill w. of Colonia Pacífico (E.S.J., both 29 Dec, were the 2nd and first in the valley, respectively. Overdue for Baja California, and coinciding with unprecedented numbers to the n. at the Salton Sea, were records of 4-5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls: a third-winter and a first-winter Gull were together at the Rio Colorado delta 20 Dec (†RAE, †MJB); an ad. at the landfill was well photographed, but a first-winter bird there was not documented 6 Jan (ph. KAR, RJ, DP), and an ad. at Laguna Guerrero Negro 25 Jan was just n. of the state line (ph. RC, AC).

Gull-billed Terns were found in the ne. for the 3rd consecutive winter: 4 at the Rio Colorado delta 20 Dec (MJB, RAE) and 3 at C.P.G.P. 25 Jan (MJB et al.). Up to 7 were around La Paz 10 Jan–3 Mar (SGM et al.). There are few Regional winter records of Common Terns, but they were well represented in the Cape District 6 Jan–26 Mar: 10 at E.S.J., 1 at La Paz, up to 15 at Punta Arena, one near Pichilingue, and 2 at the Chametla Flats (ph. SGM, et al.). Up to 3 Elegant Terns were reported around La Paz 16 Dec–11 Jan (†EP; SGM, et al.). Since there are only four records of overwintering Black Skimmers at the Salton Sea (Patten et al. 2003: Birds of the Salton Sea), 2 at C.P.G.P. 21 Dec (MJB, RAE) are best considered late, but the species is regular in the n. Gulf of California in winter. Two Parasitic Jaegers at the Rio Colorado delta 20 Dec (MJB, RAE) were unexpected, but even rarer were 3 Long-tailed Jaegers seen from shore at Punta Arena 4 Mar (ph. MJB), establishing the 2nd winter record for the Region.

**OWLS THROUGH ORIOLES**

A Short-eared Owl at Mesa San Jacinto 12 Nov (MDC et al.) was the Region's first in more than four years. Similarly scarce in the coastal lowlands is Long-eared Owl, yet early in the morning of 29 Dec one was seen on the Maneadero Plain (†PAG, WF) and 2 were heard on the lower Rio Santó Tomás (JEP). Rare winter hummingbirds seen on the 29 Dec Ensenada C.B.C. included 2 Costa's (†MJB, EM) and an unidentified *Selasphorus* (SBT). Another *Selasphorus* in the nw. was s. of Playas de Tijuana 24 Nov (RAE). Two imm. male Black-chinned Hummingbirds at E.S.J. 7 Jan (SGM et al.) and an apparent imm. female there 6 Mar (ph. MJB) join a small number of previous winter records from the Cape District. One of 2 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers found on the 29 Dec Ensenada C.B.C. was found the next day (SBT, ph. RST et al.). Another sapsucker to reach I. Guadalupe was a probable Red-naped Hummingbird (KAR, MSM). Downy Woodpeckers, rare visitors to the nw., were s. of Playas de Tijuana 28 Dec (ph. DSC, MSM) and at Playas de Tijuana 7 Jan (MJB). Three birds showing characteristics of Yellow-shafted Flicker were found this season, on the Maneadero Plain 29 Dec (†TPP), roughly 6 km w. of Tecate 20 Jan (JS), and at Ojos Negros 30 Jan (MJB, RAE); unfortunately, none was seen well enough to confirm all relevant characteristics. Ten Tropical Kingbirds were found in the Cape District during early Jan (SGM et al.), but a recently discovered kingbird roost at E.S.J. hosted up to 3 Westerns 5 Jan–13 Mar (SGM et al.) and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 30 Jan–13 Mar (ph. LB, ph. REW).

Single Bell's Vireos were found at three locations on the Maneadero Plain 29 Dec (†MJB, EM), one of them a colorful individual thought to be of the nominate subspecies, last seen 30 Dec (ph. †DSC, MSM). The only northerly Plumbeous Vireo was at the Mexicali Zoo 29 Dec–25 Jan (KAR et al.). Five Horned Larks (3 singing) at the El Centenario tank 3 Mar (ph. MJB) were record far s.; they appeared to match the s. subspecies *eretosa*. As usual, Mountain Bluebirds were found at scattered locations in the nw., but 4 at Mesa Andrade 26 Jan (MJB et al.) were the first found in the ne. since 1928. An ad. Red-throated Pipit near the El Centenario tank 3 Mar (ph. MJB) furnished the 4th winter record for the s. Cape (and Region).

Warbler-power fueled the 29 Dec Ensenada C.B.C., including 4 Nashville's, 6 Yellows, singles of Black-throated Gray, Hermit, Palm, and Black-and-white, 4 American Redstarts, and 6 Wilson's, but most remarkable was the ad. *albibora* Yellow-throated Warbler at Estero Beach 29-30 Dec (ph. RST et al.). Otherwise, warbler highlights included a Tennessee Warbler at E.S.J. 1 Jan–13 Mar (SGM et al.); 2 Orange-crowned Warblers of *V. c. celata* at E.S.J. 7 Jan (†SGM); a Nashville in Mexicali 25 Jan (RAE et al.); a Lucy's at Miraflores 6 Jan (SGM et al.); Northern Parula at E.S.J. 6 Mar (†MJB), El Salto on the w. side of the Sierra de La Laguna 15 Mar (ph. REW), and Todos Santos 8 Apr (KAR, CR); a female Tropical Parula again at Todos Santos 4 Mar–8 Apr.
(ph. MJJ, ph. REW et al.); a male Black-throated Blue in Guerrero Negro 15 Nov–30 Mar (AG-A, ph. RC et al.) for its 3rd consecutive winter; 2 Black-throated Grays at the Mexicali Zoo 21 Dec (male; ph. MB, RAE) and 25 Jan (female; RAE); and a Hermit in Tijuana 15 Nov–8 Jan (ph. MJJ); Palms at Punta Arena 5 Mar (MJJ) and E.S.J. 24 Mar (SGM); a female Black-and-white returning to the Mexicali Zoo for perhaps its 4th winter 24 Oct–25 Jan (RAE, ph. MJJ); and 4 additional northerly American Redstarts. Modlinow’s thorough coverage of small towns in the s. Cape District 25-30 Mar yielded a nice variety of vagrant warblers: Nashville, 3 Northern Parulas, Chestnut-sided (still present 7 Apr; KAR, CR), Magnolia, and Ovenbird at Miraflores; Lucy’s at Caduano; and another Northern Parula at Agua Caliente. A 16-19 Mar visit to I. Guadalupe produced up to 8 Audubon’s, a Myrtle, and a Townsend’s Warbler (LLM et al.).

An ad. male Hepatic Tanager was a welcome surprise at Santo Tomás 31 Dec (TMB, ph. RST et al.), and wintering Summer Tanagers in Baja California out numbered Westerns by 13 to 11 (both above-average totals). Only 2 Summers were seen in Baja California Sur. Three Brewer’s Sparrows were on the Manecado Plain 29 Dec, as was a single Vesper (fide MJJ, EM). The season’s only Red Fox Sparrow was in El Rosario 27 Dec (ph. JEP). Single Swamp Sparrows were on the Manecado Plain 29 (fide JEP) & 30 Dec (ph. MS, DWP). Single White-throated Sparrows were in Tijuana 16 Nov (ph. MJJ), on the Manecado Plain 29 Dec (fide MJJ, EM), and roughly 6 km w. of Tecate 29 Dec–19 Jan (JS). Unusual juncos in Baja California included 4 Slate-coloreds of varying purity, single Pink-sideds at Santo Domingo 28 Dec (ph. JEP) and in the Mexicali Valley 26 Jan (MJJ), and 3 Gray-headeds in the Mexicali Valley 25-26 Jan (MJJ, ph. MJJ et al.) followed by one on the Manecado Plain 11 Mar (MJJ, RAE, TM). A Phaeuctis gosbeak heard in Ensenada 29 Dec sounded like a Black-headed but was treated only as a member of the genus (SBT, RAIH). Two Common Grackles were in El Rosario 26-27 Dec (ph. JEP), with one still present 26 Feb (ph. MJJ, WTH). Three Great-tailed Grackles at Punta Abreojos 24 Jan (EDZ-H, fide HGDS) were at a new location for the species, slightly s. of previous peninsular records. Winterting orioles included 2 Orchards at E.S.J. 7 Jan (KC, DL); a Bullock’s roughly 6 km w. of Tecate 17 Nov–19 Mar (JS) and 2 on the Manecado Plain 29 Dec (PP); and Baltimores in Tijuana 8 Jan (ph. MJJ) and San José de Comondú 17 Mar (REW).


Robert A. Hamilton, 7203 Stearns Street
Long Beach, California 90815, (rob@arahamilton.com)
Mark J. Billings, 3802 Rosencrans Street, PMB #334
San Diego, California 92110, (markjbillings@yahoo.com)
Roberto Carmona, Departamento de Biología Marina
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur
Apartado Postal 19-B, La Paz, Baja California Sur, México (beauty@uacs.mx)
Gorgonio Ruiz-Campos, Facultad de Ciencias
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Apartado Postal 1653
Ensenada, Baja California, 22800, México
U. S. mailing address: PMB 064, P.O. Box 189003
Coronado, California 92118-9003, (gruiz@uacs.mx)
NORTHERN MEXICO

DUCKS THROUGH OWLS

Nine Muscovy Ducks were at Presa El Cuchillo, N.L. 13 Dec (MDC). A female Wood Duck was on an irrigation channel near Rio Bravo, Tamps. 13 Dec (MDC), and 2 males and a female were at Balneario El Tigre, Tamps. 10 Jan (HGdS). At least 2 Ross's Geese were among Snow Geese at Presa Cavazos, Tamps. 11 Jan (HGdS). Two ad. Tundra Swans were seen flying low over a field 2 km w. of Rio Bravo 11 Dec (MDC). A Canvasback was in the Las Huertas sewage pond between the cities of Torreón, Coah. and Gómez Palacio, Dgo. 6 Jan (MRLL, FVP), and a group of 3 was in Cañón de Fernández S.P., Dgo. 14 Jan, along with 4 Redheads and 20 Lesser Scapul (MRLL, 2 Feb (SS, RW ph., DS, SG). The 3rd Least Grebe in the Cañón de Fernández S.P was seen 14 Jan (MRLL, WB, AVJ, FVP). Two juv. Northern Gannets were seen 100 m from shore at Playa Bagdad, Tamps. 12 Dec (MDC). An ad. female Anhinga was noted at Presa El Cuchillo, N.L. 13 Dec (MDC). A Snowy Egret was at Laguna Fierro, Chih. 5 Jan (DK, JR). Nine ad. Tricolored Herons were at Presa El Cuchillo 11 Jan (MDC). Two ad. Black-Hawk Eagles were photographed 1.5 km s of Lo de Márco, Nay. 4 Jan, and one was still there 17 Jan (SNGH). Two ad. Double-toothed Kites were noted soaring high overhead at Cerro San Juan, Nay. 21 Feb (ESB, DMc), where one been seen and photographed by Steve N. G Howell 14 Jan (also, onc ad. photographed by Howell at the same site in late Mar 2006). An ad. Gray Hawk photographed at Parque Estatal Cañón de Fernández, Dgo. 27 Jan (SLRR) showed features of birds from Pacific Costa Rica southwards (light gray barring on wing coverts and back, single white tail band prior to the terminal band), suggesting the possibility of a migrant from the south; additionally, this is the earliest record yet of this typically summer visitor in the Laguna region. A juv. Red-shouldered Hawk was in grassland habitat near Tanque de Emergencia, Coah. 2 Dec (MDC). A juv. Broad-winged Hawk that showed up in Chihuahua, Chih. was a state first (JDMA, JFAG, ph.). A Bat Falcon was at Copala, Sm. 18 & 20 Feb (ESB, moh); the species is rare in Sinaloa.

Three Sandhill Cranes were at Presa El Cuchillo 11 Dec (MDC). There were around 400 Sandhill Cranes at Tanque Aguilerrero, a shallow artificial lagoon in Viesca, Coah. 5 Jan, the largest group sighted so far in the Laguna region (MRLL, FVP). Several Ruddy Crakes were calling at Altamira, Tamps. at the n. limit of their range 6 Dec (MDC). Thirty-four Piping Plovers were on the beach between Playa Bagdad and the mouth of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) 12 Dec (MDC). A solitary Sandpiper was on a stock pond 37 km e. of Monterrey, N.L. 13 Dec (MDC). Two Dunlins were near the mouth of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) 17 Feb (HGdS ph., FC ph.). Four Still Sandpipers were at Laguna de Quelele, Nay. 12 Jan (MJF). This season had the highest number of Wilson’s Phalaropes reported in the Laguna region, with a group of 50+ in the Las Huertas sewage pond 27 Dec (FVP).

A first-winter Thayer’s, a potential Kelp Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull hybrid, a probable ad. Stary-backed Gull, and at least 7 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at Playa Bagdad 12 Dec (MDC). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Las Higueraillas, Tamps. 16 Feb (HGdS), and at least 6 ads. and 2 imm. were at Playa Bagdad 17 Feb (HGdS, FC ph.), Five Bonaparte’s Gulls, furnishing the first record for the Laguna region, were observed at the Las Huertas raw sewage pond 27 Dec (FVP).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

Carmody estimated 150-200 Military Macaws visited the fruiting nopal in Jaumave, Tamps. 9 Dec A Eurasian Collared-Dove was at Nuevo Padilla, Tamps. 12 Jan, 3 were at Matamoros, Tamps. 18 Feb, and one and 3 were on the outskirts of Ciudad Maite, S.L.P. and near Jiménez, Tamps. 21 Feb (HGdS); 160 counted in the Epizo San Pedro C.B. 3 Jan was a new record for this C.B.C. (jide WH) A group of 13 Long-eared Owls found in Dec at El Uno ranch, Chih. (JC et al., jide WH) was still roosting there 3 Jan. Three more were found in Casa de Janos, Chih. 3 Jan (DK, ph.). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuck-
ers were at Cañón de Fernández S.P. 14 Jan and 7 Feb (MRLL, WB, AVJ, FVP). An Arizona Woodpecker was on the lower foothills of Camino Real, Tamps. 12 Jan (HGdS). A Red-naped Sapsucker was seen in Bosque Venustiano Carranza, Torreón 5 Feb (MRLL, FVP). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported on the Ejido San Pedro C.B.C. 3 Jan (WW, JN-M).

Two to 3 Eastern Phoebes were in the Ejido San Pedro C.B.C. 2 Jan (WH, vt.). Two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were with a group of kingbirds 15 km w. of La Pesca, and another was at La Pesca, Tamps. 5 Dec (MDC). A Plumbeous Vireo and a late Philadelphia Vireo were at La Florida, Tamps. 8 Dec (MDC). A Philadelphia Vireo was at La Bajada, Nay. 20 Feb (ESB). A flock of 25-30 Tamualipas Crows were farther inland than usual 15 km w. of Linares, N.L. 4 Dec (MDC). Around 8-10 Barn Swallows were still present at Altamira, Tamps. 6 Dec (MDC). Several Mangrove Swallows were on the Río Tampón near Puente de Dios de Santiguillo, Ciudad Valles, S.L.P in mid-Jan (EMBZ). A Winter Wren was found 2 & 4-5 Jan in riparian forest s. of Casa de Janos; its call note indicated it was of the e. subspecies group (WH, vt., DM, DK, JR, SJ, SD). A Brown-backed Solitaire was low at La Florida 20 Feb (HGdS et al.). Seven Aztec Thrushes were on the road to Aserradero El Batel, Sin. 14 Feb (ph. ESB, DMC et al.). Two Gray Catbirds were somewhat inland in Parque La Estanzuela, Monterrey, N.L. 2 Feb (AH, ph.). A Sprague’s Pipit was near Playa Bagdad, Tamps. 28 Jan (FC, ph.), and at least 7 were seen at Tantque de Emergencia, Coah. 2 Dec (MDC).

A single Tennessee Warbler was in a mixed warbler flock at La Pesca 5 Dec (MDC). A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was in a mixed flock near Espinazo del Diablo, Dgo. 21 Jan (BG). A Yellow-throated Warbler was just e. of the Alamos, Son. cemetery 5 Nov 2006 (RW). Outstanding was a Cape May Warbler foraging at sapsucker wells in a tree in a garden in Garza García, N.L. 27 Jan (RGG, ph.). A male Hooded Warbler was following an ant swarm near Singayta, near San Blas, Nay. 23 Jan (BG). A Western Tanager was at Presa Hacienda Santa Engracias, Tamps. 10 Jan (HGdS). A Baird’s and 56 Worthen’s Sparrows were located at Tanque de Emergencia, Coah. 2 Dec (MDC). Fifteen Worthen’s Sparrows were seen on the San Rafael, N.L. grasslands 3 Dec (MDC). Exceptional numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows were recorded in and near the Ejido San Pedro, Chih. C.B.C. circle 2 Jan during scouting for the count—probably 100+, although count day had fewer due to bad weather (jde WH). A Red Fox Sparrow was found along the Río Casas Grandes, Chih. 1 Jan, providing probably only the 2nd Chih. record of this species usual at El Meco, near El Naranjo, S.L.P. 7 Dec (MDC). A Scrub Euphonia in Singayta road, Nay. 19 Jan was at somewhat low elevation (ESB, DMC).


**CENTRAL MEXICO**

**Ducks Through Hummingbirds**

Fourteen Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were on Laguna San Bernandino, Pue. 8 Dec 2006, well above normal elevation (AM, JM). A male Wood Duck was at Rancho Primavera (town of El Tuito), Jal. 7 & 11 Jan (ph. MJL, ph. AMCD). Waterbirds at Presa Cajon de Peña, Jal. 7 Jan included 100 Lesser Scap, a female Ring-necked Duck, and 50 Eared Grebes, along with 15 Laughing Gulls, the latter surprisingly far inland (MJL). Three Crested Guans were well seen near Bito, Jal. 9 Jan (MJL). Three Bearded Wood-Partridge cloruses were heard along the Hueyapa rd. exiting the n. edge of Tlanchinol, Hgo. 21-22 Feb (BG, DT).

Several Brown Pelicans seen along Río Coatzacoalcos near Peña Blanca, Ver. 21-22 Jan 2007 were well inland of normal range (AM, JM). There was only one American White Pelican at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco, D.F. 21 Dec (RW) but 120 there 24 Jan (RW, AMH, HGdS)—and only a few Great Egrets there 21 Dec (RW), whereas there had been more than 50 all summer and again 24 Jan, a reversal of the usual pattern (the
species is typically a winter visitor to D.F. with only rare summering individuals). There were 20 Black-crowned Night-Herons at Bosque de Aragón, D.F. 30 Dec (HGdS, MPV).

An imm. Snail Kite was near Cruz de Loreto, Jal., 7 Jan (MJI, ph). A pair of ad. Red-shouldered Hawks at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 19 Jan (HGdS, ph) made a first record for D.F. A Peregrine Falcon was at Xela and Coyoacán, D.F. 22 Feb (HGdS). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was at Rancho Primavera near El Tuito, Jal. 7 Jan, and an ad. was there 8 Jan (MJI). A Limpkin was heard at Tierra Colorada, Gro. 17 Dec (HGdS), and at least 4 were near Cruz de Loreto 5 & 10 Jan (MJI, ph). A first-winter Franklin’s Gull was in downtown Puerto Vallarta, Jal. 6 Jan (MJI ph). Three Bonaparte’s Gulls were in the Rio Ameaca mouth, Jal./Nay. (MJI ph.), probably related to the irruption in Baja California Sur this winter. A Black-legged Kittiwake 5 km off San Blas, Nay. was a surprise 8 Jan (SNGH).

A Short-eared Owl was at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 24 Jan (HGdS, AMH, RW). Hundreds of Vaux’s Swifts entered a large chimney at Periférico and Ejército Nacional, D.F. just before dusk (HGdS). A Wedge-tailed Sabrewing was at El Tajín, Ver. 17 Jan (BF et al). A Mexican Woodnymph was well up La Básica rd., Jal. 5 Jan (MJI ph). A male Violet Sabrewing in Xalapa, 18 Feb was n. of normal range (AM, JM). A Smoky-brown Woodpecker was at Becotama ll., Tamps. 19 Feb, and another was at La Florida, Tamps. 20 Feb (HGdS, m.ob.). Three Gray-breasted Woodpeckers were near Azumbilla, Pue. 8 Dec, well n. of normal range (AM, JM).

**KINGFISHERS THROUGH FINCHES**

An Eastern Phoebe was at Rancho Primavera 11 Jan (MJI et al, ph). A Gray Flycatcher was at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 24 Jan (HGdS, AMH, RW). Seven Hammond’s Flycatchers were in Xalapa, Dec 18 Feb were e. of normal range (AM, JM). A Dusky-capped Flycatcher was at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 21 Dec (RW). One Western Kingbird was slightly n. of its usual wintering range near the coast in Jal., about 1.5 hours’ drive s. of Puerto Vallarta 30 Jan (BG). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in the Cruz de Loreto area, Jal. also about 1.5 hours s. of Puerto Vallarta 15 Feb (BG). A pair of Boucard’s Wrens near Azumbilla 8 Dec 2006 was well n. of normal range (AM, JM). A White-breasted Nuthatch was at the UNAM botanical garden, D.F. 16 Feb (GdO).

A White-throated Robins was at Desierto de los Leones, D.F. 26 Feb (GdO). An Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush encountered on the Veracruz side of Rio Tonto was slightly out of normal range and below normal elevation (AM). A Blue Mockingbird was in the D.F. at km 33.5 of the old rd. to Cuernavaca 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV, RCP). Seven European Starlings were in and near Parres, D.F. 21 Dec (HGdS, MPV), 2 were near Tehuacan, Pue. 23 Feb (RK et al.), and 8 were at Bosque de Aragón 6 Jan (HGdS, MPV).

A Colima Warbler was at the entrance to the El Rosario butterfly sanctuary, Mich. 12 Dec (HGdS, MPV). A female Northern Parula was near Aquiles Serdán, Jal. 30 Jan (BG), and 2 were at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco 21 Dec (RW). Two Chestnut-sided Warblers were at Rancho Primavera 9 & 11 Jan (MJI). A Yellow-throated Warbler was in pine forest well up on La Básica rd. 10 Jan (MJI). A Northern Waterthrush was near the end of Canal del Bordo, Xochimilco, D.F. 12 Feb (AMH). An Ovenbird was at Viveros de Coyoacán, D.F. 21 Dec (GdO). An ad. male Hooded Warbler was at Rancho Primavera 10 Jan (MJI ph). A female Black-throated Blue Warbler seen 2 Feb near Francisco Villa was well out of normal range (AM). A pair of Red-throated Ant-Tanagers was at El Tajín 17 Jan (JR, BF et al.). A Cinnamon-bellied Flower-piercer was seen for the first time at Viveros de Coyoacán 21 Dec (GdO). A flock of around 35 Lark Sparrows was at Teotihuacán, Mex. 29 Jan (GdO ph). A female Elegant Euphonia was well described at El Tajín 17 Jan (G&SIS). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at the UNAM botanical garden, D.F. 26 Feb (GdO ph.). A Red Crossbill was heard 5 Jan flying over La Básica, and 4 large-billed birds were seen there 10 Jan (MJI).

**Contributors** (area compilers in boldface): Rafael Calderón Parra, Bert Frenz, Brian Gibbons, Héctor Gómez de Silva, Gerardo del Olmo, Steve N. G. Howell (Wings, Inc.), Marshall J. Iliiff, Rudolf Koes et al. (Brad Carey, Rudolf Kocs, Larry & Brigitte de March, Reto Zach), Alejandro Meléndez Herrada, Amy McAndrews, Amy McDonald, Jorge Montejoe Monica Pérez Villafana, Judy Radocha, Glenn & Iris Scott, Declan Troy, Beverly Wallace.
WATERFOWL THROUGH SWALLOWS

A female/male Hooded Merganser was at Piedra Azul dam near Teotitlán del Valle, Oax. 17-20 Dec (RA, EAM, MG ph); all localities are in Oaxaca unless otherwise indicated. A probable Singing Quail was heard at Candonia–Chajul 18 Jan (MDC). Two Scarlet Macaws were at Bonampak 16 Jan; 20+ were seen at Las Guacamayas 17-18 Jan; and 10+ were observed while at the Chajul field station 19-20 Jan (MDC). Single Guatemalan Pygmy-Owls were recorded at Lagunas de Montebello, Chis. 21 Jan and near San Cristóbal de las Casas 22 Jan (MDC). A male Stripe-tailed Hummingbird was seen near Nuevo San Juan Chamula on the Guatemala/Chiapas border 21 Jan (MDC). A Plain-capped Starthroat was at El Zapotal (ZOOMAT). Tuxtal Gutierrez, Chis. 17 Dec (CMC, FA, ph.). Many Pale-vented Pigeons seen 1-2 Feb near Francisco Villa, Ver. were out of normal range (AM, JM). A Slate-headed Tody-Tyrant was at Yaxchilán 2 Dec (HGeDS, MPy). A Gray Kingbird was seen on the Cuyu de Alfaro Obregon rd., Chis., n. of Hwy. 186 on 23 Jan (MDC). Two lovely Cotongas were seen at Bonampak 16 Jan, and an imm. male was at Fénalque, Chis. 23 Jan (MDC). A Gray-breasted Martin seen of Benemerito de las Americas 17 Jan was perhaps early.


YUCATÁN PENINSULA

Subregional Report written by Barbara MacKinnon

This photograph of an adult Gray Hawk in Parque Estatal Cañón de Fernández, Durango, Mexico 27 January 2007 is especially interesting because it is the first adult to be photographed from this part of Mexico and because its tail pattern and barred upperparts resemble the subspecies found from southern Costa Rica southwards. Photograph by Sandro Luis Ramos Robles.

There were lots of interesting finds this winter, including the addition to the subregion of Central American Pygmy-Owl well identified by voice, and a probable Golden-cheeked Warbler at Punta Laguna in northern Quintana Roo. In addition, there was a second well-documented record for the subregion of a Sandhill Crane, the first record being a sight report by Raymond Paynter on Banco Chinchorro in 1949. A Northern Barred-Woodcreeper heard calling at Chichén Itzá clarifies that species' distribution within the state of Yucatán, and a Vermilion Flycatcher was new for the Cozumel Island list.

Abbreviations: R.L. (Río Lagartos), S.A.C. (San Antonio Chel, Hunucmá, Yucatán), S.F. (San Felipe, Yucatán), S.K.B.R. (Sian Ka'án
Biosphere Reserve, Q. Roo; V.C.R. (Vigia Chico Rd., Sian Ka'an Reserve, Q. Roo); Chuncuclumil (refers to the road to Chuncuclumil located along the inland border of the Celestun Biosphere Reserve, Yuc.).

**TINAMOU THROUGH RAPTORS**

Few people report actually seeing a Little Tinamou, but one group of birders did at km 34 in Calakmul 14 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). A flock of 50-100 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were seen at Laguna Serravia 12 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). Three Muscovy Ducks were at Santa Elena 3 Dec (IN), and an American Wigeon was in a pond behind San Cristiano 1 Jan (BM, DW), while another was in a coastal pond behind Palmar reserve 28 Jan (AD). Three Ring-necked Ducks, quite rare in the subregion, were seen in a roadside pond 4 km s. of S.F. 5 Dec (SC, ER), and another was seen 15 Dec on the Morrocy rd., Q. Roo (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). A female Red-breasted Merganser was at Celestun 11 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT), and another, or the same one, was observed in the area in salt pond behind Hotel Xixim 23 Dec (AD).

A Crested Guan was near the parking lot near the ruins at Calakmul 14 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT), while 8 were heard on the V.C.R. 27 Dec (GG, GM, IN). Two tour groups enjoyed views of Greater Curassow in Calakmul, the first seeing a total of 4 males and 2 females with 2 poultis 13-14 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT), and the other group seeing 5 males 12 Jan during drive in and out of Calakmul (MC). Ocellated Turkeys have been more visible this year as well, with 2 seen 9 Dec at Chichen Itza, where 6 or 7 have been hanging out of late, according to the locals. An incredible 75 were seen in Calakmul 14 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). Other reports included 3 along the V.C.R. 27 Dec; another at Coba 29 Dec (GG, LM, IN); 3 at Coba 18 Feb (IN); and one at Chuncuclumil 5 Jan (AD).

An incredible 50-100 Pied-billed Grebes were estimated on the lake at Coba 4 Dec, which would appear to be a concentration of migrants (KA, PB, TM, DS, JR, HS, RT). An American Bittern was sighted 3 km s. of S.F. 21 Dec (BM, ER, WR) in the roadside savannah, while a total of 8 Jabirus was counted during a drive along the Palizada Rd. n. of Hwy. 186 on Campeche–Tabasco border 13 Jan (MC). Large numbers of Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures were reported at two locations within 15-20 km of R.L. 6 Dec and a dozen at Celestun 11 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). However, there was only one sighting of a King Vulture, in flight over V.C.R. 28 Dec (GG, LM, IN). A dark-morph Hook-billed Kite was seen from the hwy. near R.L. 6 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT), and another on the coastal rd. n. of Celestun 10 Feb (AD). A White-tailed Kite was seen 11 Dec on the rd. from Uxmal to Mérida and an views of a Barred Forest-Falcon at the aguada at km 20 in Calakmul 13 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). Collared Forest-Falcon was reported at several locations, including Sayil 10 Dec, where a pair was seen in flight, and at Uxmal, a dark-morph individual, on San Simón Rd. the same day (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT); 3 were heard or seen on the V.C.R. 27 Dec; another was at Coba 29 Dec; and another was at R.L. 30 Dec (all GG, LM, IN).

**RAILS THROUGH POTOO**

A Rufous-necked Wood-Rail was at the petrified forest at Celestun 23 Dec (AD). A juv. Spotted Rail was seen at Coba 29 Dec (GG, LM, IN). About a dozen Purple Gallinules were at Laguna Serravia 12 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT), and a juv. with dark head along with 5 ads. were at pond with a juv. and 12 ad. Common Moorhens and 30 American Coots in a small aguada near Dzonot Carrero 16 Dec (BM, EP). Approximately 7000 American Coots were in the Celestun estuary 23 Dec (AD); and 1000 were seen in the coastal lagoon at Sisal 25 Feb (BM, AM, RM).

Exciting news this winter was the 2nd report of Sandhill Crane on the peninsula, this one an ad. located in wet savanna 7 km s. of R.L., where it was photographed in the early morning feeding on a locust infestation 6 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). It was also photographed in same location in the afternoon of the same day (EC, DN) and once more 11 Dec (DB, EG, BM, GT). It was not in the area at the end of Feb. This was the first confirmed record since Raymond Paynter reported it at Banco Chinchorro in 1949.

Regular but rare on the peninsula were 2 Piping Plovers on a sandbar in R.L. 6 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). Winter records of American Avocet are not common and so are reported here: 30 were noted 26 Nov at Celestun (EC); one was still in the area 3 Dec (EC, BM, MM, RM); another 4 were at Las Coloradas 21 Dec (MT); and 14 were in coastal pond at San Cristiano 1 Jan (BM, DW). A Whimbrel was at Telchac Puerto 2 Dec (DB), and 20-30 Marbled Godwits were at R.L. 6 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). A rarely identified Semi-palmated Sandpiper was at Palmar 28 Jan (AD), and 50 Silt Sandpipers were at R.L. 30 Dec (GG, LM, IN). A single Wilson's Phalarope was seen at Ce-
lestùn 3 Dec (AD, EG), and another was in a salt pond behind Hotel Xtilim 1 Dec (AD).

A Pomarine Jaeger was identified 800 m offshore from Celestún 23 Dec (AD). Ring-billed, Herring, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were all reported again this year, the latter obviously increasing, but they are no longer considered unusual for the subregion. Gull-billed Tern seems to be increasing in the area, and a pair of one mostly basic plumage appeared to be on a nest 7 Dec at Las Coloradas, but this was not confirmed (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). A total of 20 was seen at R.L. 30 Dec (GG, LM, IN), and one at San Crisanto caught a locust on the wing 1 Jan (BM, DW). Caspian Tern is also increasing in the subregion, with the largest flock reported to date being 44 at Las Coloradas 7 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). Forster’s Tern is also reported now each winter, but still in low numbers, with one seen 6 Dec at R.L. (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT); 4 in same area R.L. 30 Dec (GG, LM, IN); one at Celestún 23 Dec (AD); another at Palmar 28 Jan (AD); and 6 at San Crisanto 1 Jan (BM, DW).

 Mourning Doves are common in Yucatán but not so in Quintana Roo, where one was seen at Puerto Aventuras 26 Jan (BS). On the other hand, White-crowned Parrot is common in s. Quintana Roo but not registered for Yucatán; however, a possible flock of 15 was heard 9 Dec at Sayil. A Phaean Cuckoo was seen sunbathing, with back feathers lifted, at Uxmal 13 Jan (AD), and a Barn Owl was roosting in a post-hole in a side road at Calakmul 13 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). Also at Calakmul, a Central American Pygmy-Owl was heard calling 13 Dec along the entry rd, at about km 35 (RT). This report constitutes a new species for the subregion. (The species was previously reported in the area, but without the detailed voice description provided by RT.) Two Yucatan Poorwills were calling, and one eventually was seen, at Uxmal 9 Dec on the San Simon Rd. (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT), and 6 were seen or heard V.C.R. 26 Dec, with several seen at a farmhouse along the V.C.R. (GG, LM, IN). A possible Chuck-will’s-widow was found at Celestún in Dec (IN); the only confirmed record for this species is from Cobá in 1977, when fresh feathers were found (BM). A Yucatan Nightjar was on V.C.R. 27 Dec (GG, LM, IN), and a Northern Potoo was near Cobá 4 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT).

HUUMINGBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS

At San Crisanto on 1 Jan, a female Mexican Sheartail was seen passing a piece of lichen-like blue paint to her nest that contained one egg; the nest was located in a bush that the locust swarms had just stripped of vegetation (BM, DW). At Sisal, a female was observed feeding in the area of her nest, which held 2 young nestlings, located in a black mangrove 25 Feb (BM, AM, RM). A total of 11 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were at R.L. 21 Dec (BM, MM, RM, AM, AR, MT), and 7 were at Hacienda Tzulancab, Izamal 10 Feb (DB, GT). A female Green Kingfisher was seen leaving a freshly dug nest tunnel in the freshwater mangrove channel at San Crisanto 11 Feb (BM, RM). A rarely seen Chestnut-colored Woodpecker was spotted 2 km n. of Botes, Q. R., 28 Dec (BM), and a Buff-throated Poggelesear was seen 13 Dec at around km 52 on the entry rd. to Calakmul (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). A single Olivaceous Woodcreep was just outside its normal habitat in the mangrove at El Corchito, Progreso 10 Feb (AG). Even more stunning was a Northern Barred-Woodcreep heard 8 Dec in Old Chichén (RT), which changes the known distribution of this species, previously recorded only from the extreme ne. and s. borders of Yucatán.

An Ochre-bellied Flycatcher was observed at Calakmul 13-14 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT), and Eastern Wood-Pewee was still in the subregion as late as 5 Dec on the S.K.B.R. n. coast (WS), as well as at Calakmul 13 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). A female Vermillion Flycatcher on Cozumel 1.2 Dec was a new record (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). Although Tropical Kingbirds are more frequently found in coastal zones, they can also be found inland, such as one at Chichén Itzá 9 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT). Philadelphia Vireos were found 14 Dec at Calakmul and on the V.C.R. 16 Dec (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). Fifty Purple Martins were returning northward over the Chuchumil rd. 10 Feb (AD), while Tree Swallows were also early, with 20 spotted 3 Dec on the coast at Celestún (IN); 100 were at Muyl 28 Dec and

PROVIDING THE FIRST RECORD FOR HUÉVOS LEÓN WAS THIS CANOE MEXICO WARBLER FOUND IN SAN PEDRO GARZA GARCIA, MONTERREY 27 JANUARY 2007; THE BIRD OFTEN EAT AT SAPPERS’ SAPP-WELLS. PHOTOGRAPH BY RICARDO GUERRA DE LA GARZA.

PROBABLY PROVIDING THE FIRST RECORD FOR GIHUHUAHUA, THIS WINTER WREN WAS FOUND BY WILLIAM HOFF 2 JANUARY 2007 (HERE) AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SEEN BY OTHERS THROUGH 5 FEBRUARY. PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM HOFF.

WARBLERS THROUGH MUNIANS

A potential new record for the subregion was an ad. male Golden-cheeked Warbler well identified at Punta Laguna 5 Dec but unfortu-
nately not photographed (RT). Curiously, a less-experienced observer reported one 6 km e. of the Chumpion entrance to S.K.B.R. 12 Feb, noting its very black crown (WS). Reports for rarely seen warbler species included a Worm-eating Warbler 2 Dec 30 km sw. of Progreso (AD) and a Swainson’s Warbler 4 Dec on the n. coast of S.K.B.R. (WS). Reports of wintering Louisiana Waterthrushes are increasing, with one on Cozumel 2 Dec, one at Chichén Itzá 9 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT), and one in Celestún 9 Jan (DS). An ad. male Kentucky Warbler was on Cozumel 2 Dec, and two were seen 13-14 Dec at Calakmul by the same group (KA, PB, BBs, JR, DS, HS, RT). A Wilson’s Warbler was at R.L. 30 Dec (LM), and a male was seen 12 Feb in S.K.B.R. (WS). Blue-gray Tanagers are now known to be distributed throughout the subregion, including the state of Yucatán, as made clear by the following sightings: one in Valladolid 5 Dec (KA, HS); 4 at Tizimin 9 Dec, with 6 Yellow-winged Tanagers (IN), and 2 at Kinchil 3 Dec (DB). The only reports of sparrows were 2 Savannah Sparrows at Xixim, Celestún 1 Dec (AD) and a Lincoln’s Sparrow at R.L. 15 Dec (IN).

EXOTICS
Reports of Eurasian/African Collared-Doves, which invaded the subregion at least as early as 2002, included the following: one at Playa del Carmen, Q. Roo 3 Dec (KA, PB, TM, JR, DS, HS, RT); one at Progreso 17 Feb–5 Mar (BS); and one at Celestún 23 Dec (AD). Seven Tricolored Munias were seen 20 Dec at Progreso, near where they were originally discovered in 1993 (AG).

Central America

H. Lee Jones | Oliver Komar

Both birds and birders appeared to be on the move this winter. No fewer than 98 contributors (an all-time high for the Region) commented on more than 100 species considered worthy of mention in this season’s report. A number of species are clearly expanding their ranges in the Region, some rapidly, others incrementally. For some, however, the question remains open as to whether they are expanding into new areas or only now being discovered in places where they have been overlooked in the past. Unfortunately, all too many species expanding their range are doing so in response to ongoing deforestation. Two species that are clearly on the move in Costa Rica are Tropical Mockingbird and Black-cowled Oriole. Wood Storks were found nesting in El Salvador for the first time, and Amethyst-throated Hummingbird may be colonizing Los Volcannes National Park in El Salvador, 50 km from its nearest known breeding site.

Winter 2006-2007 saw an irruption of Cedar Waxwings, which in recent years, at least, have exhibited a pattern of incursion every other winter. Two other species, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Olive-sided Flycatcher, neither common, were reported more frequently in northern Central America this winter than typically. Whether Golden-checkered Warbler is expanding its winter range (perhaps a reflection of successful recovery efforts on its breeding grounds?) or is only now being documented in a number of localities where it had been overlooked, is an open question.

Despite the abundance of reports this season, none represented new country records. With this report, we welcome Tom Jenner as the new El Salvador country compiler.

Abbreviations: M.N.C.R. (Museo Nacional de Costa Rica); S.F. (Shrimp Farm); WS. (Wildlife Sanctuary).

DUCKS THROUGH KITES
Two Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on a roadside pond near Altun Ha, Belize 30 Jan (BF et al.) were among the few recorded in Belize away from Crooked Tree WS. On 14 Feb about 100 Northern Shovelers, an impressive concentration for n. Honduras, were at oxidation ponds just outside the city of El Progreso, Yoro (DA). A male Mallard seen 15 Jan in the R. Tarcoles estuary, Puntarenas (PM, LC) was thought to be of wild origin. It was seen on only one day where LC conducts almost daily boat tours. This species, a casual winter visitor in Central America, occurred more regularly in the past, but this was the first recent Costa Rica record of a presumed wild bird. A

El Salvador’s fourth Double-toothed Kite visited the bird monitoring station at El Imposible National Park on 6 December 2006 (here). Photograph by Letty Andino.

Miguel de Turnucares in the w. Central Valley 19 Dec (RIG et al.). Belize recorded its 6th through 9th Red-breasted Mergansers since the first 2 were recorded in Dec 2002. A group of 3 was at Nova S.F. Ladyville, Belize 17 Dec (LJ, JB et al.), and another was at Placencia, Stann Creek 21 Feb (GC).

A flock of 17 American White Pelicans flying ssw. over Copán Ruinas, Copán 21 Jan (RG) were in an area where the species had not previously been recorded. In Honduras, it had only been recorded in Atlántida and from wetlands on the Pacific coast. In Belize, a group of 6 Brown Pelicans seen following the New R. inland at Hill Bank, Orange Walk 27 Jan, and a Magnificent Frigatebird seen farther inland flying over August Pine Ridge, Orange Walk on 5 Feb (both BF et al.). Both species are recorded inland on occasion, but so far no strong seasonal pattern of inland occurrence for either species has emerged. A Reddish Egret at the Gután Spillway, Colón 10 Jan (CB) was the 6th recorded in Panama and the 2nd recorded from this site. Further n., 7 Reddish Egrets at Bahía de Jiquilisco, La Paz 3 Feb (OK, EM, OB, CF) established a high count for this species in El Salvador. An Amagí Heron in the R. Tarcoles estuary 22 Jan (LC, KEA) was the first recorded from the Pacific slope n. of Carora in 20 years and one of few for the entire Pacific slope of Costa Rica. A first for heavily blobbed Tikal N.P., Petén, was an ad. White ibis seen flying overhead 15 Dec (RC, KE, CA). Eleven Wood Stork nests found in a heronry at Cerrón Grande, Chalatenango 4 Feb and 40 nests there 12 Feb provided the first breeding records for El Salvador (ph. RI, LQ, LRod). More than 220 storks were counted at the site during an aerial survey 20 Jan (KKr).

Three Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures on the s. shoreline of L. Managua 15 Feb (NK, SP, JM, WA) were at an unexpected locality on the Pacific side of Nicaragua. Four ad. King Vultures seen in the Honduran Emerald Reserve in Olancho, Yoro 18 Feb (RG, VENT Tour) made an unusually high concentration for this area. In El Salvador, a single Hook-billed Kite seen soaring over Nancuchiname 9 Feb (Rl) was apparently only the 2nd recorded in Usulután. In Costa Rica, 50 female-plumaged Snail Kites 8 Jan (LR, OR) were at a recently opened Tipalpa S.F. near Hotel La Pacifica, 8 km wsw. of Cañas, Guanacaste, just off the Pan-American Hwy. along the road to Upala. Although this location is along the flight path for birds moving between the two major population centers at Palo Verde and Caño Negro, such an impressive concentration at a distant, recently created habitat illustrates the species' ability to find and take advantage of an unpredictable resource. On 9 Feb, only one female and 5 males were around these ponds (JZ). In Honduras, many ads. and juvs. (number not given) were seen around L. Yojoa, Cortés in mid-Feb after several years of low numbers (RG; VENT tour). At El Imposible N.P., Ahuachapín, an imm. Double-toothed Kite 6 Dec (ph. LA, JR, RV) furnished only the 4th record for El Salvador.

ACCIPITERS THROUGH SKIMMERS

Near Cerro Verde, Sonsonate, a juv. Cooper's Hawk was well seen as it circled overhead 27 Jan (TJ). There are few documented records of this species in El Salvador. A juv. Harris's Hawk 4 Jan at Finca Palma Quemada 1 km n. of Hatillo between Quepos and Dominical (JZ) may have been the first reported from the s. Pacific slope of Costa Rica. Old winter reports from Panama, which has no breeding population, suggest that this may have been a wandering individual in search of new territory or a migrant rather than part of an undetected resident population. The area's extensive, seasonally plowed agricultural fields surrounded by tall trees, is similar to habitat found in Guanacaste where the species is relatively common. Similarly, a juv. White-tailed Hawk 4 km s. of the R. Savegre bridge between Quepos and Dominical 24 Feb (JZ), representing one of the few reliable records in Costa Rica outside Guanacaste, was in ideal habitat, a recently plowed rice field. A rare-but-regular visitor in Belize, an ad. Zone-tailed Hawk was observed 7 km nw. of Spanish Lookout, Cayo 15 Feb (BF, LGr, MH, JH, GGrS). Crested Eagle is rarely reported anywhere in n. Central America, so an ad. at Hickatee Lodge, only 3 km s. of Punta Gorda, 16 Dec (IM, fide LJ) was quite a surprise and in an area of s. Belize where not previously reported.

Not unusual in Belize but at an unexpected locality was an ad. Orange-breasted Falcon perched in a tree in a residential yard in Belmopan most of the afternoon of 27 Dec (LJ). The nearest active aerio is 20 km to the s. near Blue Hole N.P. On 28 Feb, a dead Paint-billed Crake with a crop full of rice was found at La Gama, 6 km nw. of Golfito, Puntarenas (JS, *M.N.C.R.), and a live bird was seen in the same rice field six days later (FM et al.). This species is seldom reported in Costa Rica, and these are believed to constitute only the 3rd and 4th records from the Pacific slope. Two Rufous-necked Wood-Rails were reported from R. Frio n. of Caño Negro W.R., Alajuela 8 Jan (OR). This species is occasionally reported from Costa Rica's Caribbean slope, where it likely occurs, at least seasonally, in small numbers. A Uniform Crake observed as it crossed the Mollejon Dam road s. of Arenal, Cuy on 17 Feb (BF, JH) provided one of the few sight records of this elusive rail in Belize. Belize's 2nd Southern Lapwing made an appearance on the Belize City shoreline 26 Dec (RB, fide PB). Meanwhile, Belize's first Southern Lapwing remains at Crooked Tree Village, where it was first reported in spring 2004.

An ad. Wattled Jacana was at La Gamba, 6 km nw. of Golfito, Puntarenas, 20 Feb (PW). This species is reported nearly annually now near the Panama border along the Pacific slope. Establishing a high count for El Salvador were 174 Marbled Godwits at Bahía de Jiquilisco 3 Feb (OK, EM, OB, CF). Also establishing a high count for El Salvador were up to 4 first-cyclic Herring Gulls seen at and near the mouth of R. Jiboa, La Paz 3-18 Feb (MR, OK, NKj, JvD, TJ). Six Sclater-billed Terns there 3 Feb (MR, TJ) was also a large number for this under-reported species in El Salvador. In Belize, a Gull-billed Tern at Edenthal near Tres Leguas, Orange Walk 5 Feb (CL, BB) may have been one of 2 seen last Sep in the nearby Blue Creek rice fields. A first-cycle Common Tern was at Punta Gorda 19-23 Dec (LJ, ph. JB, JU). This species is a casual winter visitor in Belize. And in Costa Rica, a Forster's Tern 5 Dec (LG) at the mouth of R. Tarcoles was also noteworthy. Rarely reported in the interior anywhere in Central America, 5 Royal Terns were seen 10 Dec on L. Petén Itzá, Petén (RBM), and one was seen 1 Feb+ at San Pedro La Laguna, L. Atitlán, Solola (RBM, ph. CA). Five Elegant Terns at the mouth of R. Jiboa, La Paz 10 Feb (OK, NK, JvD) may have been earlier than usual migrants; whereas, 3 Black Skimmers on L. Petén Itzá at Flores 10 Dec (RBM) represented the first record for Petén and for inland Guatemala.
PIGEONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Two calling Ruddy Pigeons at Cerro Chucani, Darién 6 Jan (DM) provided the first record for this area of Panama. White-winged Doves are being reported with increasing frequency in winter in the s. half of Belize where this season there were close to a dozen reports. Migrants can be fairly common along the cen. and s. coast in Oct/Nov, but the species typically does not remain through the winter and is absent in spring and summer. A Caribbean Dove was heard in littoral forest 17 Dec at Nova S.F. in Ladyville, Belize in the same spot where one was heard five years and one day earlier (both LJ). This species is seldom reported on mainland Belize, and Nova S.F. is the southernmost locality of record. At Rincón de La Vieja N.P., sector Paílas, Guanacaste, a Violaceous Quail-Dove 18 Jan (RD) was the first reported in recent years from this heavily visited area. Although formerly occurring regularly in the Panama Canal Area, a small flock of Brown-throated Parakeets at Veracruz on the w. bank of the Panama Canal and 2 in the mangroves near Diablo Heights 10 Dec (KK, RM, DM) provided the only recent reports.

Providing a first record for Pico Bonito N.P., *Atlantida* was a well-seen Pheasant Cuckoo along the ridge trail at The Lodge at Pico Bonito 20 Feb (RG, RZ, BM). In Nicaragua, a Pheasant Cuckoo near Masueño, Nueva Segovia 4 Feb (JM, NL) was noteworthy, as this species is still rather poorly known in Nicaragua. Rarely reported for Costa Rica was a Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo at Hotel Tierras Entomoradas along the hwy. between San Ramón and La Tigrá, Alajuela 31 Jan (JZ). And in El Salvador, a seldom-seen Northern Potoo was observed in mangroves at Corral de Mulas, Usulután 3 Feb (OK, EM, OB, ph. CF). Perhaps representing the northernmost record in Belize was a Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift heard and seen over Fireburn, Corozal 5 Jan (IM, LJ).

Two male Amethyst-throated Hummingbirds captured at the monitoring station at Los Volcanes N.P., *Santa Ana* 12 Dec (ph. VG) were indicative of either an unusual migration or a remarkable colonization event. A female was captured there in Nov (see fall season report) but was thought at the time to have been a vagrant. Three years of intensive monthly monitoring had not detected this species, nor had avian inventories at the volcano in 1927, 1993, and 2004. The Brown Violet-crowned Hummingbird at Altos de Maria, Panama last winter was relocated at virtually the same spot 31 Dec–7 Jan (TS, DR, KA et al.). Rarely seen at Hill Bank, Orange Walk was an Azurecrowned Hummingbird 27 Nov (BR, BF et al.), at the n. end of its range in Belize. A female Purple-throated Mountain-gem below the mirador at Cerro La Gaita 7 Jan (KA, TS) was the 2nd reported from this locality in Panama at the e. edge of its range. It was first reported in Jun 2005. A male Garnet-throated Hummingbird was observed 13 Dec at Montecristo N.P., *Santa Ana* at 1780 m (ph. CF, OB). This species had not previously been reported in pine-oak forest in El Salvador. Additionally, 3 (male and 2 female) Sparkling-tailed Hummingbirds were observed there Dec 19 (ph. LA, ph. CF, OB), also in pine-oak forest, and several male Wine-throated Hummingbirds were observed nearby at 1825 m singing and performing their U-shaped display flights to at least one female on 15 Dec (ph. CF, OB).

MOTMOTS THROUGH MANAKINS

Perhaps a sign of altitudinal migration, 2 Keeled-billed Motmots seen 24 Feb about 15 km apart in La Virgen de Sarapiquí and La Guaria near La Selva (JS) were in the lowlands outside their known range, which extends to the Tilarán Mts. Noteworthy for El Salvador was a pair of Amazon Kingfishers at R. Chiquitito, Chapeltique, *San Miguel* 20 Dec (ph. NH). A male Acorn Woodpecker at Santa Elena, Petén 13 Dec (KE, CA) was the 2nd reported from the L. Petén Itzá/Tikal area in several decades. One was seen nearby in Jun 2003. Normally an uncommon winter visitor in n. Central America, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported in higher numbers than usual in Belize, with multiple reports from all districts but Corozal. Two Strong-billed Woodcreepers seen at Montaña de Carmona, 5 km se. of Antigua Guatemala, *Sacytæpes* 25 Feb (AF) furnished just the 2nd record at this site after one was heard in Jun 2006 (reported in this journal). In Panama, Thicket Antpitta was only recently recorded in *Kuna Yala*, so one seen 6 km n. of Burbayar 6 Feb (JT) was noteworthy.

A Rufous-browed Tyrannulet was found on the Sora–El Valle rd., just above the village of Mato Agohado, *Panamá* 7 Jan (vr. KA, TS), where the species was found last May. At only 500 m, a Rough-legged Tyrannulet at Bijagual along the e. border of Carara N.P. 3 Dec (JS) was at an unusually low elevation and slightly n. of its known range. However, species typically restricted to higher elevations are often reported from the lowlands in this part of Costa Rica. Eye-ringed Flammules were found on three consecutive days in cen. Panama: one on Cerro La Gaita 7 Jan (KA, TS), one on the Zaña Trail outside El Valle 8 Jan (KA, AR), and one from the Canary Tower 9 Jan (vr. KA). KA has pointed out that the species was first recorded in *C. Cokle* in the 1990s by DR and in 2001 by DE, not in 2005 as reported in *North American Birds* 60. 154. Three reports were received of individual Olive-sided Flycatchers in the lowlands of Guatemala and Belize, where they are seldom seen in winter: on the Tikal N.P. C.B.C. 14 Dec (ph. KE); at Soldier Creek along the Coastal Road, Belize 13 Feb (CB, LH); and at Aguateca Lagoon, Cayo 17 Feb (CB, CL, MH). In Guatemala, perhaps as many as 5 Acadian Flycatchers were at Los Tarrales Reserve, *Sichpitépes* 23 Feb (vr. and ph. AJ), and 2 or more were identified there on several dates between 22 Feb and 3 Mar. The species has not been previously recorded in winter in n. Central America, however, whether these were wintering birds or early spring migrants is an unresolved question. AJ believed them to be wintering, not early migrants, as they responded to playback and were in similar spots over a week apart. Migrant Acadianos normally do not appear until mid-Mar, and most songbird migrants do not hold territories and remain for only a few days before moving on. However, OK has suggested that some Acadian Flycatchers may have a staged spring migration with some arriving early and staying one to two weeks at a site before continuing northward.

A Fork-tailed Flycatcher, undoubtedly a migrant, was present 20–26 Dec (OV) at La Guaria, *Heredia* on the Caribbean slope, where it is rarely and irregularly reported.
Two Gray-headed Piprites were reported from the upper ridge trail at The Lodge at Pico Bonito 20 Feb (RG, BM). This species is rarely reported in Honduras. Unexpectedly far n. was a well-studied female or juv. Turquoise Cottinga at Ensenada Lodge, Abangares, Puntarenas on the n. shore Gulf of Nicoya 31 Jan (RO et al.). The species has not been reported n. of Carara, although it does wander widely within its range. La Ensenada is known for attracting nomadic frugivores (e.g., Three-wattled Bellbird, Cedar Waxwing), as fruiting trees abound there. On 15 Dec, JCG and MR observed a female or juv. Bare-necked Umbrellabird in Omar Torrijos Park above El Copé, Cojutepeque, where there have been few previous reports. At a newly reported location was a single long-tailed Manakin heard calling at Cerro de Guazapa, San Salvador 10 Feb (RI). It remains to be seen if this species is resident there, and if so, whether it is recently arrived or representative of a long-present but overlooked population.

VIREOS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A Blue-headed Vireo in Belmopan 18 Feb (PB), although the 2nd for this locality (the first was recorded in Dec 2000), was only the 3rd recorded in Belize. A Brown-capped Vireo 17 Feb at Hotel Vitala Lapa, just s. of Carara N.P. (AD et al.) was at an exceptionally low elevation (see the Rough-legged Tyrannulet note, above). Another species not recently reported from Diablo Heights, Panamá, was a Rufous-browed Peppershrike seen in mangroves there 10 Dec (KK, RM, DM). Following last fall’s report of 3 Brown Jays at Hotel Perkin Lenga, Morazán, 2 were still present 2 Dec (TT) and 1 Feb (vt. CF, OB). At least one of these was a young bird with a yellow bill. Confirming that the restricted-range Bushy-crested Jay is not just a vagrant at Cerro de Guazapa where it was reported once before, at least six groups were observed there 10 Feb (RI). Two male and 2 female Purple Martins 30 Jan (BF et al.) near Altun Ha, Belize were a full week earlier than the previous early record in Belize.

Around 20 Tree Swallows at Cerro Grande 10-11 Jan (ph. RI, IV) lend support to last year’s prediction, based on reports from Costa Rica in late Nov, that this may be an invasion year. While these Tree Swallows provided the 4th record for El Salvador, they were the first to be documented with photographs. A Cliff Swallow was exceptionally early 5 Feb (JH), seen perched with other swallows at Rio Bravo, Orange Walk. Previously, the earliest arrival date for Belize was 10 Mar, Honduras’s 2nd report of Cave Swallow, following close on the heels of 7 seen in

El Jicarito N.W.R. last winter, was one perched on a low wire near Marcala, La Paz 25 Feb (ph. RG and JJe). There are few reports of this species from Guatemala, so individuals seen in Antigua Guatemala 17 Feb and 5 km s. at Montaña de Carmona 25 Feb (both AJ) were noteworthy. All three Cave Swallow reports were in montane areas and undoubtedly involved migrating birds, as the Central American wintering grounds are on the Pacific coastal plain.

Noteworthy because of its rarity in Panama was a Slate-throated Gnateater 5 km n. of Burbayar, Kuna Yala 28 Jan (JT). A Hermit Thrush reported 18 km s. of Marcala, La Paz at 1850 m 25 Feb (RG, IG, JJ, BM, HM, MD), if confirmed, would establish just the 2nd record for Honduras. Although it was closely studied, no details have yet been provided. Tropical Mockingbird continues to expand its range in Costa Rica. Four at 1400-m Las Concavas, Cartago 16 Dec (RG et al.) were the most yet reported together and at one of the highest elevations yet reported (the highest was at 1600 m). At least in recent winters, Cedar Waxwing invasions have occurred at two-year intervals (2001, 2003, 2005, and now 2007). After being absent last year, this, the latest arriving of all winter visitors in the Region, was back again in force. First reported in San Salvador 30 Dec (OK), by 19 Jan, several groups totaling more than 70 birds were being reported in El Salvador at Cerro El Pericon and R. Sapo (RM, TJ), both in Morazán. In Belize, 80 were on Glover’s Reef 9 Feb (Z&PW), and 76 were seen on Caye Caulker the same day (JB). In Costa Rica, a flock of 35 was at Hotel Villa Caletas near Jacó by 18 Jan (LCf). About 200 were seen at Montaña de Carmona, 5 km s. of Antigua Guatemala, 26 Feb (AJ).

WARBLERS

A male Blue-winged Warbler was noteworthy at Finca Filadelfia, 3 km n. of Antigua Guatemala, 25 Feb (AJ). Both of the rare Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler hybrids were found on their wintering grounds this year. At Brewster’s Warbler was well studied as it came to a small puddle in the road n. of Chan Chich, about 3 km n. of the Cedar Crossing gate, Orange Walk (BZ et al.). A male Lawrence’s Warbler at the Tisay Nature Reserve, Estelí 22 Jan (PSO, PBO) may have been the first to be documented in Nicaragua. The first report of Northern Parula in Costa Rica in two years came from the U. of Costa Rica campus in San José 6 Dec (LS). Providing only the 3rd record for El Salvador was a male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Montecristo

SA

With only four reports prior to fall 2003, the globally endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler was not known to winter in El Salvador. But with greatly increased coverage in recent years (and perhaps with an increase in population size in response to recovery efforts on its breeding grounds), the number of winter reports has steadily increased. This winter, no fewer than 16 Golden-cheeked Warblers were reported in El Salvador, most as part of a range-wide winter ecology study, supporting the expectation that El Salvador lies within its winter range. Individuals were found at Bosque La Montana, Chalatenango 10 Dec (US) and 6 Jan (OB, CF); 9 were found at Montecristo N.R., Santa Ana 12-19 Jan (OB, CF, JH, JA); 4 were at El Manzano, Chalatenango 24 Dec (OB, CF, JH, ST); and a single bird was seen at Candalaria de la Frontera, Santa Ana 19 Feb (WR).

Similarly, 6 Golden-cheeked Warblers were found at two sites in Nicaragua, where only five previous country records existed: 3 were at Tisay—Estanzuela, La Granada, Estelí 17-18 Jan, and 3 were at Diriamba, Loma Fría, Nueva Segovia 8-11 Feb (IM, PSO, PBO). In Guatemala, 9 birds were recorded in the ecology study (AJC, BG) at previously known wintering sites, but a female in Chelem.ind Reserve, Alta Verapaz 25 Feb (KE) in primary cloud forest with tall oak stands, was a first for the reserve. Honduran pine-oak forests have long been known as the core wintering range for Golden-cheeked Warblers, but this winter’s study, which documented 26 individual birds in Honduras (JH, JJ, ST), added a new locality on the s. fringe of its range: 4 were observed at La Botija, San Marcos de Colón, Choluteca 14-18 Feb. In all, 50 Golden-cheeked Warblers were recorded in the survey within n. Central America, and another 30 were recorded in neighboring Chiapas, Mexico (Sde OK).
N.P. 13 Dec (JF, CF). On the Caribbean side, where it is seen more regularly, though still considered rare, a female was observed 1 km s. of Punta Gorda on 20 Dec (PB, EB).

In Guatemala, a female Hermit Warbler in a pine reforestation area in Chelumá 23 Feb (KE) was a first for that reserve. A Palm Warbler at Ensenada Lodge, Ahanares, Puntaarenas 11 Feb (RC), along with three additional reports from Costa Rica last fall, marked a good year for this rare winter visitor in Costa Rica. Five Red-faced Warblers, a species rarely reported in El Salvador, were observed 12-19 Dec in Montecristo N.P. (JF, CF, OB, LA). A Golden-crowned Warbler observed in the Montibelli Private Reserve, Managua 23 Dec (JM, PS) was at 300 m elevation. This species is not common at low elevations in Nicaragua. The only report of Yellow-breasted Chat in Costa Rica this season was on 27 Feb at Hacienda La China, Sabalito de Coto Brus (JZ). Interestingly, this bird had an orangish breast. The distribution and preferred habitat of Gray-throated Chat in Belize is an enigma. While relatively common in “hato” forest in n. Belize, it is also found locally in scattered locations in other broadleaf forest types throughout the country, both in the lowlands and at higher elevations in the Maya Mts. A pair and 3 others in two well-separated locations of upland broadleaf forest in the e. Coelvesom Basin W.S. 29 & 30 Jan (LJ) were the first recorded from this well-birded locality.

TANAGERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

On 3 Jan, a Rosy Thrush-Tanager was seen and heard at Las Tumbas de Pérez Zeledon on the ocean side of the coastal range above Dominical (LS, LSz), a new location for this spottily distributed and rarely reported resident. All previous reports in Costa Rica have been from the interior valleys of the s. Pacific slope. A female Scarlet Tanager at Wilson’s Landing near Punta Gorda 5 Dec (LJ) was either a very late fall migrant or a wintering bird. There are only two previous winter records for Belize. Also new for Chelemhá Reserve, Alta Verapaz was a male Western Tanager in primary cloud forest 25 Feb (KE). A pair of Flame-colored Tanagers at Cerro de Guazapa 10 Feb (RD) were at a new and isolated location for this species in El Salvador. With few reports of Gray-and-gold Tanager as far w. as Kuna Yala, one 6 km n. of Burbayar 7 Feb (JT) was of interest.

On 11 Feb, a male Slate-colored Seedeater was seen in spiny bamboo at Monkey Bay, Belize (CL), the same site where Blue Seedeaters, another bamboo specialist, have been consistently seen for the past 15 years. Slate-colored Seedeaters also have been recorded recently a few km to the sw. in similar habitat along the Sibun R. Another of the rare, nomadic species that follow episodes of bamboo seeding is Peg-billed Finch. Soon after Chusquía sp. bamboo came into flower in Costa Rica’s Monteverde Reserve, single singing males were heard in separate locations within the reserve at ca. 1500 m on 27 & 29 Jan (LS). Thus far, this is the only bamboo specialist that has been reported, but others may show up once the plants start to seed. On 20 Dec, a flock of 40 Grassland Yellow-Finches was seen at The Dump, Toledo (LJ), less than a km from where 65 were seen back in Nov. Adding to the long list of likely ship-assisted birds that have turned up at the entrance to the Panama Canal (e.g., Great Tit last fall), and thus confounding the issue of true vagrancy in the area, was a

This female Golden-cheeked Warbler at Montecristo National Park 14 December 2006 provided the first photographic evidence that the species winters in El Salvador. Photograph by Carlos Funes.

Dark-eyed Junco at Sherman 30 Dec (DM, DeM). It was assumed to be ship-assisted because it was so far s. of its normal winter range. This was the 2nd Dark-eyed Junco to have turned up at the Panama Canal.

A Giant Cowbird at Clayton in Panama City 17 Jan (AA) was in an area where it is rarely seen. Black-cowled Oriole continues to expand its range into the s. Pacific region of Costa Rica, the most recent record coming from Bahía Ballena, Uvita 22 Jan (NU). In the past three years, it has been reported from several new locations as far s. as Rincón de Osa on the neck of the Osa Pen., perhaps indicative of a colonizing trend. A few km n. of the n. limit of its known range in Belize were single Chestnut-breasted Oropendolas at Black Rock Lodge (JR) and near Arenal (CL, BB), G yoga 18 & 20 Feb, respectively. Five species of euphonias seen feeding in the same group of mistletoe in front of the reception area at The Lodge at Pico Bonito 21 Feb (RG) provided quite a treat. Most interesting were at least 2 White-vented Euphonias, a species that is seldom seen in Honduras. The humid forests of Pico Bonito N.P. may be the best place in the country to find it. Red Crossbill is not commonly reported in El Salvador or Guatemala, so the following are noteworthy: in El Salvador, 5 were seen in pine forest at Montecristo N.P. 14 Dec (vF, ph. CF, OB), and 2 were at Cerro El Campanario, Municipio de Concepción Quetzaltepeque, Chalatenango 6 Jan (RP); in Guatemala, 2 were seen at Chumisquín, Huichietutempa 18 Dec (AIC, BG).

Contributors (country coordinators in boldface): Ken Allaire, Agnès Aguille, Carol Anderson, David Anderson (Honduras), Lety Andino, George Angehr (Panama), Wayne Arendt, Philip Balderamos, Bob Berman, Carlos Bethancourt, Jim Beveridge, Rigoberto Blanco, Oscar Bolarios, Pier Drouault (PBo), Emelendo Bustamante, Luis Campos, Raphael Campos, Leo Chaves (LCh), Ana Jose Coher, Glenn Crawford, Robert Dean, Henry and Mary Dill, John van Delft, Adolfo Downs, Kevin Easley (KEa), Knut Eissermann (Guatemala), Dodge Englemann, Jesse Fagan, Dirk Francisco, Bert Frenz, Carlos Funes, Vicky Galán, Irma Gallardo, Robert Gallardo, José Carlos Garcia, Leonardo Garruz, Richard Garuz (RG), Byron González, Leonard Graf (LGr), Chris Hatten, Janine Hubinger, Mark Hubinger, Paul Hunt, Ricardo Ibarra Portillo (RIP), Alvaro Jaramillo, Tom Jenner (El Salvador), Jessica Jenner (JJ), Jorge Jiménez, Lee Jones (Belize), Rosely Juárez, Karl Kaufman, Ken Kriege (KK), Nick Komar, Oliver Komar, Nate Lennihank, Cindy Lippincott, Jeffrey McCrary (Nicaragua), Roan Balas McNab, Paco Madrigal, Israel Manzanero, Romain Martin (RMA), Esmeralda Martinez, Rosabel Miró, Álvaro Moisés, Darién Montañez, Delicia Montañez (DeM), Barbara Murphy, Randall Ortega, Shany Perez, Ryan Phillips, Leonor Quevedo, Judy Radocha, Marvin Rivas, Lief Robinson, Olga Robinson, Danilo Rodríguez, Leonel Rodríguez (LRod), Wilfredo Rodríguez, Vladimir Rodríguez, Pomasal Salmerón, Julio Sánchez, Luis Sánchez (LSz), Tino Sánchez, Luis Sandoval, Glenn and Iris Scott, Pablo Solomarba (PSo), José Tejada, Sofia Trujillo, Noel Ureña, Isela Vega, Ricardo Vélásquez, Zoe and Paul Walker, Peter Westra, Robert Zappala, Jim Zook (Costa Rica).

H. Lee Jones, 901 East Washington Street, Apartment 126
Colton, California 92324
(lee_jones@att.net)

Oliver Komar
SalvNATURA Conservation Science Program
33 Avenida Sur #640, San Salvador, El Salvador
(olkomar@salvnatura.org)
This winter the Bahamas hosted an exceptional number of unusual visitors from North America, the majority of which were found on Grand Bahama, the northwesternmost large island. It is difficult to say whether this year’s bounty was due to weather conditions or the presence of more birders with greater skills. Extensive notes from Cuba were much appreciated this season!

**WATERFOWL THROUGH TERNs**

A nine-day birding trip to Cuba produced some high numbers of waterfowl (AK, WS, BHe, JC). Thirty-five West Indian Whistling-Ducks were counted 21 Jan at Cayo Coco (Playa Las Coloradas Lagoon #5), Cuba, while at Antigua, the maximum counts were of 12 at McKinnon’s Salt Pond and 15 at Jolly Harbour Pools 25 Dec (SB). A Snow Goose arrived on Port Royal G.C., Bermuda 13 Feb (AD). An imm. Ross’s Goose, found at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 18 Nov, remained throughout the winter (m.ob). A Canada Goose was at Ruby and Reef Golf Courses, Grand Bahama 16 Dec (BP)-10 Feb (BH). A Wood Duck was at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera 13 Dec (JDW, RB, SL), one and possibly more at Ruby G.C., Grand Bahama 17 Dec (C&BM, JG), and 2 at Abaco 16 Dec (C.B.C.). A female American Wigeon arrived at Jubilee Rd., Bermuda 24 Feb (AD), and 3 were present at McKinnon’s Ponds, Antigua 25 Dec-5 Jan (SB). Twenty American Wigeons and 25 Northern Shovelers were seen 21 Jan at Cayo Coco, Cuba, along with a few Northern Pintails and 20 Green-winged Teal (AK, WS, BHe, JC). A drake Northern Pintail was on Warwick Pond, Bermuda 9-13 Feb (DW), 4 wintered at Millills Ponds, Adelaida, New Providence (m.ob.), and one was on the large pool at McKinnon’s Salt Pond, Antigua 25 Dec-6 Jan (SB). Potworks Dam, Antigua produced 3 Ring-necked Ducks (a male and 2 females) 4-5 Jan (SB). The Surf Scoter remained on Mangrove L., Bermuda 27 Nov-12 Feb (EA). The first documented record of Bufflehead in the Bahamas was established by a female at Ruby G.C. 13-18 Dec (TW, TSG, C.B.C., m.ob.). A Hooded Merganser was found in Abaco N.P. 12 Dec, and 2 were there 16 Dec (C.B.C.); 3 wintered at Chiton Cay Pond, New Providence (m.ob.). Two Red-breasted Mergansers at Banana Beach, Grand Bahama 15 Dec (PD et al.) and one on Harrold Pond, New Providence 17 Dec (PD et al.) were included in the Christmas Bird Counts. Two Ruddy Ducks were also noted 21 Jan at Cayo Coco (Playa Las Coloradas Lagoon #5), Cuba (AK, WS, BHe, JC).

A Pied-billed Grebe was seen with chick at Farson’s Road Pond, Bermuda 9 Jan (PW). A Horned Grebe was off Smith’s L., Bermuda 20-22 Feb (PW). A Cory’s Shearwater 16 km sw. of Abaco 24 Jan (EB et al.) was the only tubenose reported from the Bahamas this winter. At Guadeloupe, Levesque continues to put in the time necessary to document the northward movement of Manx Shearwaters and other seabirds from shore (Table 1). A desiccated Masked Booby corpse found at Cabo Rojo N.W.R., Puerto Rico 22 Dec (JR, PM) was a first for the location. A Double-crested Cormorant at Warderick Wells, Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park 13 Feb (BP) was the first reported from the park. A single American Bittern 25 Jan near Playa Larga, Cuba was found at a wet spot in a drying marsh, seen by two observers (Jide JC). Darkwood Salt Pond, Antigua produced a Reddish Egret 24 Dec-3 Jan (SB), and a Little Egret was at nearby Jolly Harbour Pool 25 Dec and still present 4 Jan (SB). The long-staying Gray Heron was present 28 Feb at Tucker’s Town, Bermuda (ph. AD). Six Greater Flamingos found in the Marks, Abaco in Feb were believed to be birds that escaped from an Abaco resort two years ago (Jide AK, JB).

A Northern Harrier was seen at Rock Sound, Eleuthera 30 Nov and 7 Feb (RB, JDW). Five Red-tailed Hawks in a. Abaco 2 Dec (JSKSS) were a good count. Four Gundlach’s Hawks were seen in Cuba: a pair on Cayo Coco 21-22 Jan; one at La Turba 25 Jan; and one at Rio Hatiguaniaco 27 Jan (AK, WS, BHe, JC). A Crested Caracara was seen at Bermejas, Cuba 25 Jan (WS, Jide JC). Five Merlin were roosting together on Hawkins L., Bermuda 9 Feb (PW). A Purple Gallinule was seen at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 27 Jan and

| Table 1. Seawatch results (AL) at Petite-Terre Nature Reserve, Guadeloupe, winter 2006-2007 |
| SPECIES | December (9 hrs) | January (10.5 hrs) | February (9.75 hrs) |
| Black-capped Petrel | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Petrodroma sp. | 3 | | |
| Cory’s Shearwater | 2 | 1 | 261 |
| Manx Shearwater | | | |
| Audubon’s Shearwater | 1 | 1 | |
| Puffinus sp. | 8 | | |
| Least’s Storm-Petrel | 1 | 1 | |
| Oceanodroma sp. | | | 1 |
| Sula sp. | 1 | 1 | |
| Parasitic Jaeger | | | |
| Stercorarius sp. | | | |

This Lesser Black-backed Gull was photographed 5 January 2007 at the Rivière Sable on Guadeloupe. Photograph by Anthony Levesque.
Rare in Guadeloupe, this Ring-billed Gull was at the Rivière Sâlée 5 January 2007. Photograph by Anthony Levesque.

A prized find in Bermuda, this Long-eared Owl was photographed 1 February 2007 on Smith's Island. Photograph by Bobby Doe.

Pigeons Through Waxwings

Seven Plain Pigeons were counted in Najasa area, Cuba 23 Jan (JL). Two Key West and 4 Gray-headed Quails-Doves were seen at Bermejas, Cuba 26 Jan; a female Ruddy Quail-Dove was noted at Rio Hatiguanico, Cuba 27 Jan (AK, WS, BHE, JC). No Cuban Parakeets or Cuban Parrots were seen in Zapata area; but both were seen at usual haunts in Camaguey region, with 90 parakeets and 5 parrots at La Belén 23 Jan (AK, WS, BHE, JC). Ten Cuban (Bahama) Parrots at Winding Bay, Grand Bahama were unexpected at that location. A Chuck-will's-widow at Coral Harbour, New Providence was heard singing 3 Feb (CW). A Long-eared Owl, extremely rare in Bermuda, was photographed 1 Feb on Smith's Is. (PB). Two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds wintered in Bermuda: an imm. female at St. David's 9 Dec-18 Feb (LO, TM) and an ad. female at the Botanical Gardens 29 Dec-10 Feb (LC, AD). Two Bee Hummingbirds were at Bermejas and one was near Palpite, Cuba 25 Jan (AK, WS, BHE, JC). Two Fernandina’s Flickers were at Bermejas, Cuba 26 Jan (AK, WS, BHE, JC).

Eastern Phoebes were reported in Bermuda at Spittal Pond 1 Dec-12 Feb (KR), at St. David's 20 Jan (GSH), and at High Point 8 Feb (DW). A Brown-crested Flycatcher was heard and recorded but not seen at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 24 Feb (LM, BP). The recording was played for Fr. Tom Pincell of Texas, who agreed that the calls were those of a Brown-crested Flycatcher. If accepted, this will be the first record for the Bahamas and the West Indies; the species is a rare but regular vagrant in winter to s. Florida. Up to 4 Western Kingbirds were seen at Ruby and Emerald G.C., Grand Bahama throughout the winter (LC, TM) and 2 were at Clifton Cay Beach, New Providence 13 Jan (TH). A Western Kingbird was at Bermuda Airport 22 Feb (DW). Two very late Gray Kingbirds were at Fresh Creek, Andros 4 Dec (CW). Now a single-island endemic, 2 Giant Kingbirds, one seen and one heard, were noted at La Belén, Cuba 23 Jan (AK, WS, BHE, JC).

White-eyed Vireos (2) were noted at Cayo Coco, Cuba 22 Jan; and another was at
Bermejas 25 Jan (AK, WS, BHe, JC). Ten Thick-billed Vireos were counted at Cayo Paredon Grande, Cuba 21 Jan, and a Yellow-throated Vireo was noted at La Guira 19 Jan; another was at Bermejas, Cuba 25 Jan (AK, WS, BHe, JC). Single Blue-headed Vireos were seen at Big Bird Poultry Farm, Abaco 12 Dec (EB, BH), the Retreat, Nassau 29 Dec (CW, PH), and Bahama Palm Shores, Abaco 11 Feb (BH, TW, EB). At Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe, a Caribbean Martin seen 14 Jan furnished the earliest date for Guadeloupe; 10 days later, 323 were in the town center (AL). A Cliff Swallow, 2 Bank Swallows, and 3 Cave Swallows (first report for island) were seen at Port-Louis swamp, Guadeloupe 4 Dec (AL, AR). Up to 7 Cave Swallows were counted 10 Dec (EB) at Guadeloupe; and one was still present 23 Feb (AL, FD), along with 300 Barn Swallows, a Cliff Swallow, a Cave Swallow, and a Bank Swallow. A highlight of the month was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow (first for Guadeloupe) found at Gaschet Res. 9 Feb (AL, PP); another was seen at Ste. Anne 19-21 Feb (AL, AR, EBe).

LM and BP found 4 Brown-headed (Bahama) Nuthatches on Owl Hole Rd., Grand Bahama 24 Feb. One of the rarest Cuban endemics, 2 Zapata Wrens were found at Rio Hatoiguanico 27 Jan (AK, WS, BH, JC). About 8 Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintered in Bermuda (AD). An Eastern Bluebird photographed near High Rock, Grand Bahama 24 Feb provided the first confirmed record for the Bahamas (ph. LM, BP). Two Northern Mockingbirds were reported in Bermuda at Boaz I. and in Somerset (both PH). Pearly-eyed Thrashers are vagrants in the n. Bahamas, so single birds at the Retreat, Nassau 15 & 29 Jan (CW, L&JD, PM) and a pair at St. Augustine’s Monastery 26-27 Feb (PD, ph. TH, NMc) were unusual. A Cedar Waxwing at Rock Sound 8 Feb (RB) preceded a large incursion; 50+ were found at Shannon G.C., Grand Bahama 20-27 Feb (SR, m. ob.) and 15-20 at St. Augustine’s Monastery, Nassau 26 Feb (PD, TH, NMc). 4 were at La Guira, Cuba 19 Jan (AK, WS, BHe, JC).

**WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS**

Among more than 20 species of warbler wintering in Bermuda were a Blue-winged Warbler seen 14 Jan Talbot Estate (AD) and a Nashville Warbler at Lagoon Park 4 Feb (DW). A male Golden-winged Warbler seen 1 Jan and again in the same area near Walls Res., Antigua 5 Jan (SB) provided one of the few reports of this species in the Lesser Antilles. Two Tennessee Warblers were at La Guira, Cuba 19 Jan; the species apparently overwinters in small numbers in Pinar del Rio Province (AK, WS, BHe, JC). An

![Image of Ruby-throated Hummingbird](https://example.com/..)

This adult female Ruby-throated Hummingbird was present in the Botanical Gardens of Bermuda 29 December 2006 through 10 February 2007 (here 30 January). Photograph by Andrew Dobson.

On 27 Dec, SB took the trail up the rocky slope adjacent to the overflow on the Wallings Res., over the stone-lined stream bed, and up the slope towards the crossroads of trails at the top of the ridge. At about 50 m short of the top of the ridge, he came across a group of thrashers feeding high up in the canopy. He plied to get them closer. A bird flew onto a branch about 7 m ahead—not one of the thrashers but a Brown Trembler! He noted the following in field notes: "The bird had a dark gray, decurved bill. The head was dark gray, the eye was a yellow-orange color. Upper parts were a warm chestnut brown, and underparts a sandy brown. The bird frequently drooped its wings, and cocked its tail, as well as giving its distinctive tremble. The warm brown tones of the upperparts, the coloration of the underparts, and the eye color eliminated Gray Trembler." He saw the bird on three subsequent occasions in the same area 1, 3, & 4 Jan. On 4 Jan, (or another) was at the bottom of the trail, next to the reservoir overflow.

There have been other reports of trembler from Antigua, dated Feb 1976 (Holland and Williams 1978, American Birds 32: 1095-1105), which Bord (1980) dismissed as lack of details, and from a more recent report by BHa from 2005, with more detail. Brown Trembler is resident on islands (Saba and St. Kitts) located w. and slightly s. of Antigua’s position. This additional detailed occurrence should provide strong suspicion that the trembler is not a vagrant but an overlooked, albeit secretive and rare resident on Antigua.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow, previously unconfirmed in Guadeloupe, was photographed for the first time 9 February 2007 at Gaschet Reservoir. Photograph by Anthony Levesque.
Hawaiian Islands

Robert L. Pyle | Peter Donaldson

Changes to a local chat list caused some disruption to the flow of bird observations early in the season, but the new chat list worked well thereafter. A few observations raised some eyebrows, but photographs documented the occurrence of some spectacular rarities. Weather did not cause much disruption to bird observations.

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.); Kahana (Kahana Pond, Maui I.); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I.); Kī (Kī Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., O‘ahu I.); Kokee (Kokee S.P., Kaua‘i I.); K.P. (Kīlauea Pt. N.W.R., Kaua‘i I.); M. (Maui I.); Midway (Midway Atoll N.W.R.); O. (O‘ahu I.); Ohe‘ilpolo (Ohe‘ilpolo Pond, Moloka‘i I.); Pouhala (Pouhala Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, O‘ahu I.), Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O‘ahu I.); Wailoku (Wailoku Preserve, Maui I.).

WATERFOWL

Two Greater White-fronted Geese remained at Hanalei Dec+ (BZ), and single White-fronteds were observed at Kaulapuu Res., Moloka‘i I. 18 Dec+ (ADY, m.ob.) and Waiakaa Pond, H. Jan+ (RD). Greater White-fronted Geese are rare in the region. Snow Geese are even rarer. One imm. Snow Goose was at Kawainē, K. 14 Dec+ (DK, DL, m.ob.), and another was seen at Kawainē 28 Dec (DK). An imm. Snow Goose remained at Kealia Jan+ (MN). A Brant remained at Hanalei Dec+ (BZ), and 2 continuing at the Kaliu shrimp ponds from Nov (MW) were joined by another bird 6 Jan+ (PD, MW, MO). This 3rd Brant may have been the same bird seen in Kane‘ohe, O. 17 Dec (EV). Up to 3 Cackling Geese were observed at Waiaka Pond, H. Jan+ (RD, DL, m.ob.), 2 remained at Hanalei Dec+ (BZ), and singles wintered at Kī (m.ob.) and Kealia (MN, GE). Brant and Cackling Geese are un-
Swans of any kind are very rare in the Islands, so it was quite an event when 2 imm. Tundra Swans were spotted at an aquaculture farm on Molokai’s I. 7 Dec (ph. ADY, JD). The bill pattern indicates they were of the Eurasian subspecies, Bewick’s Swan. The 2 Bewick’s were observed at various Molokai’s wetlands through 5 Feb (m.ob.), and one was seen at Kualapu’u Res., Molokai’s I. 15 & 16 Feb (ADY). Amazingly, 2 more imm. Tundra Swans were found at the Kauai Lagoons, K. 29 Jan (ph. RD, EV). These turned out to be of the North American subspecies, Whistling Swan. Apparently, the 2 Whistlings had been around for weeks before any birders got wind of them. The Whistling Swans were observed through 20 Feb (m.ob.).

A Gadwall at Waiakea Pond, H. 9 Jan (RD) and 16 Feb--(DL) was a rare find. Northern Shovelers and Northern Pintails are the usually most common migrant ducks in the Region and usually provide a good benchmark for migrant duck numbers. The peak count of shovelers was 294 at Kealia 4 Jan (MN), down from the previous year’s peak of 359. The peak count of pintails was 268 at Kealia 4 Jan (MN), close to last year’s peak of 255.

ALBATROSES THROUGH FALCONS

Two Black-footed Albatrosses were spotted at sea off the Kona (w) coast of Hawaii’s I. 6 Dec (RB, DW). One Black-footed was seen at a nesting colony of Laysan Albatross at K’ena Pt., O. 11 Feb (EV). Black-footeds are rare near Hawaii’s and rare onshore on any of the main islands. A Murphy’s Petrel was photographed at sea off Kona 6 Dec (ph. RB, DW). A Hawaiian Petrel (Endangered) and a Black-winged Petrel were seen off Kona 4 Dec (RB, DW). Single Sooty shearwaters were observed off Kona 6 Dec (RB, DW) and n. of Oahu 27 Dec (TC). A count of at least 9 Leach’s Storm-Petrels off Kona 6 Dec (RB, DW) is unusually high for the Region.

A large imm. heron observed in Kauhuku, O. in Sep (m.ob.) proved to be a Great Blue Heron. The bird remained in Kauhuku Dec+ (ph. MW, m.ob.). Great Blues are rare but regular in the Region. Three White-faced Ibis were seen regularly at Honolulu Dec+ (ph. PD, MO), a White-faced remained at Kii Dec+ (m.ob.), and one was seen at various wetlands on Moloka’i 1 Dec+ (ADY). White-faced Ibis are historically rare in the Region but have been reported frequently over the past few years.

Laysan Albatrosses are large birds, so there are probably not many raptors that would take on an ad. Laysan. Thus there was some skepticism when a very large raptor was reported eating a Laysan Albatross at Kilauea 30 Dec (CG). The identity of the raptor remained a mystery until the bird was photographed 5 Mar (ph., BZ). The photographs leave no doubt that the raptor was an ad. White-tailed Eagle. There are no historical records of the species in the Region—but subfossil bones of White-tailed Eagles have been found here. Hawaiian Hawks (Endangered) are reported regularly on Hawaii’s, but usually only 1 or 2 at a time. A count of 7 Hawaiian Hawks along the e. side of the island 14 Feb (RP) is unusually high. We received a very high number of Peregrine Falcon reports, mostly from Oahu.

Single Peregrine Falcons were reported in Waimanalo, O. 31 Dec and 3 Jan (TC). Two Peregrines were seen together in Waimanalo 20 Jan (TC, KP), and single Peregrines were seen in Waimanalo 23 & 24 Jan (TC). Elsewhere on Oahu’s, singles were seen at Kii 20 Jan (DW, 3 Feb MO, RP), and 23 Feb (PD). A Peregrine was spotted at Kealia 4 Jan (MN), and one was observed chasing a pair of Hawaiian Greese (Endangered) in Hawaii Volcanoes N.P. 17 Jan (KM).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH PASSERINES

Single Black-bellied Plovers were seen at Kealia 4 Jan (MN), at Pearl Harbor, O. 17 Jan (PD), and at the Kuhuku shrimp ponds, O. 14 Feb (MW). Two Semipalmated Plovers were observed at the Kuhuku shrimp ponds 5 Dec and 14 Feb (MW) and at nearby Ku 23 Feb (PD). A Lesser Yellowlegs was seen at an aquaculture farm on Molokai’s I. 18 Dec (ADY). These three species are uncommon in the Region. Pretty good numbers of Bristle-thighed Curlews wintered on Oahu's. (m.ob.). The peak winter count on Oahu was 33 on 21 Dec (TC, KP). One to 3 Bristle-thigheds wintered on Molokai’s I. (ADY). A
Conflicting theories about the identity of a large bird observed on Kaua‘i Island, Hawaii, first seen in February 2007, persisted for several weeks — until 5 March, when this magnificent White-tailed Eagle was photographed at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. Note how the Red-footed Booby, a bird with a wingspan of 150 cm, is dwarfed by the eagle.

Photograph by Brenda Zaun/United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

Least Sandpiper was seen at Kealia 14 Feb (GE), and one Pectoral Sandpiper was at Kealia 18 Jan (MN). Single Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were observed at Ohaiipolo 18 Dec (ADY) and at Kīi 17 (MO) & 23 Feb (PD). These three sandpipers are uncommon in the Region, especially in winter. As many as 5 Dunlins were observed around Pearl Harbor, O., Dec+ (MW, PD, PK, MO). Dunlins are regular in the Region, but 5 is an unusually high count. One to 3 snipe were observed in the Kahuku area of O‘ahu I. Dec+ (KP, m.o.b.). All the snipe that were seen well were identified as Wilson’s.

Laughing Gulls were widespread over the winter, with as many as 5 at Kawa‘ele, K. 15 Feb (DL). Two Ring-billed Gulls remained around Pearl Harbor, O., Dec+ (m.o.b.). Large gulls were scarce again this winter. A first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull turned in to rehabilitators at Hanalei 3 Feb died within the hour (BZ). An ad, dark-backed gull at Kilauea in early Jan may have been a Slaty-backed Gull (ph. MW); we are trying to obtain more details and a better copy of the photograph. A tern at Kāna‘ah Beach, M. 10 & 14 Dec (ph. F&KS) may have been a Sandwich Tern, but a photograph of the bird is not quite clear enough to be definitive. There is only one record of a Sandwich Tern in the Region. A Caspian Tern was observed in Kaneohe, O., 14 & 16 (TC), 17 (EV), & 21 Dec (TC, KP). A Common Tern was seen at Honouluili 6 & 25 Feb (ph. PD). A Least Tern was spotted at Kīi 23 Feb (PD). The latter three species are uncommon in the Region. Over 1000 Sooty Terns were observed near Moku Manu, a small island e. of O‘ahu 18 Dec (EV). Large numbers of Sooty Terns were seen around nearby Manana I. 18 Dec+ (TC, m.o.b.).

Mourning Doves continued to be seen regularly around Honouluili Dec+ (PD); one was seen in Waimea, H. 5 Feb (DL, LC). We have received few Mourning Dove reports from Hawaii I. recently. A Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush was spotted at Huleia N.W.R., K. 14 Feb (DL). This shy babbler is seldom reported. Good numbers of Western Meadowlarks were seen in n. Kaua‘i I. by an observer searching for the White-tailed Eagle 9 Feb (MO). We wish we could persuade observers to provide more information on native forest birds. We receive infrequent reports, and most provide no information on the numbers of individuals or other details. One (possibly 2) ʻAkohekohe (Endangered) was observed at Waiakamoi 7 Feb (CP).

Contributors: Robin Baird, David Brenner, Les Chibana, Tom Coles, Reg David, Eric DeFonso, Arteonee Dibben-Young (ADY), Peter Donaldson, Gil Ewing, Josh Fisher, Cindy Granholm, Hawaii Forest & Trail (H.F.T.), David Kuhn, Dan Lindsay, Kathleen Misajon, Mike Nishimoto, Aaron Nedig, Mike Ord, Rob Pacheco, Kurt Pohilman, Chuck Probst, Robert Pyle (RP), Mike Silbernagle, Forest & Kim Starr, Eric VanderWerf, Michael Walther, Dave & Abby Watson, Daniel Webster, Mike Williams (MWI), Brenda Zaun.

Robert L. Pyle, 1314 Kalakaua Avenue, #1010 Honolulu, Hawaii 96826, (ripyle@hawaii.rr.com)
Peter Donaldson, 2375 Ahahapu Street Pearl City, Hawaii 96782, (pdnlidsn.bird@mac.com)
SEE, HEAR & INSTANTLY IDENTIFY BIRDS ON DVD!

“A skillful mix of video and stills that will delight and inform.”
—New York Times

“Not only authoritative, but also literate, witty and full of interesting facts. Enthusiastically recommended.”
—Library Journal

“An important addition to printed field guides.”
—Philadelphia Inquirer

Audubon’s VideoGuide to the Birds of North America is the ideal application of DVD technology to a reference source. Beautiful moving footage and stills, bird calls and sounds, annotated visuals, authoritative narration and range maps help users quickly and precisely locate any of 247 bird species in DVD I, 258 species in DVD II, or all 505 species in the two-disk set, at the touch of a button. By using your DVD player’s remote control you can repeat a segment, a shot or any part of a bird’s description as often as you like, or even study footage in slow motion.

Add a portable DVD player or laptop and you can easily bring this unique reference into the field, for immediate on-site identification. Informative 64-page Mini FieldGuide to 505 Birds of North America included with each DVD VideoGuide. If you liked the VideoGuide on VHS, you’ll love it on DVD!

In DVD I you’ll find 247 birds including Loons; Grebes; Pelicans and their allies; Swans, Ducks and Geese including Dabbling Ducks, Greylag, Sea Ducks; Mergansers, Whistling-Ducks and others; Vultures, Hawks and Falcons covering Eagles, Kites, Accipiters, Buteos, Harriers and others; Chicken-like (or Scattering) Birds which include Turkey, Quail, Grouse, Prairie-Chickens, Pheasant, Ptarmigan and others; Wading birds, covering Spoonbill, Woodstork, Egrets, Herons, Bitterns, Ibises, Limpkin, and Cranes; Shorebirds, including Plovers, Sandpipers, Curlews, Phalaropes, Turnstones, Oystercatchers, Avocet and many others; Gulls and Jaegers; Terns; Aleids, which include Puffins, Auks, Murres and Guillemots; Owls; and Kingfishers.

In DVD II you’ll find 258 birds including Pigeons and Doves; Cuckoos and Anis; Nightjars; Hummingbirds and Swifts; Elegant Trogon; Woodpeckers; Flycatchers; Horned Lark; Swallows; Crows, Jays and Magpies; Chickadees and Titmice; Red-tailed Hawk; Bushtit; Nuthatches; Brown Creeper; Wrens; American Dipper; Kinglets and Gnateaters; Bluebirds, Robins and other Thrushes; Wrentit; Mimic Thrushes; Water Pipit; Waxwings; Shrikes; Phainopepla; Vireos; Warblers; Blackbirds and Orioles; Orioles; Hummingbirds; and Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos, Longspurs, and Finches.

505 birds on set of two DVDs $69.95

VHS set of five videos containing 505 birds $89.95
VHS I 116 species of water birds, raptors and chicken-like birds $19.95
VHS II 122 species of water and shore birds $19.95
VHS III 76 species, including owls, hummingbirds, and woodpeckers $19.95
VHS IV 88 species of songbirds, including thrushes and vireos $19.95
VHS V 108 species of songbirds, including warblers and finches $19.95

ORDER: 1-800-876-0091 EXT. 103 OR: www.mastervision.com
Or mail check or money order to Mastervision, Dept. 103, PO Box 807, New Hudson MI 48165-0807. Add $5 S+H per Order.
Audubon’s Oriole (*Icterus graduacauda*) in Indiana: First United States record away from Texas

**DON GORNEY - 6207 CARRINGTON DRIVE - INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46236-8209 - (EMAIL: DONGORNEY@YAHOO.COM)**

**JASON LEWIS - U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - 24279 STATE HIGHWAY 51 - PUXICO, MISSOURI 63960**

**Abstract**

This paper documents the presence of an after-second-year female Audubon’s Oriole (*Icterus graduacauda*) of the subspecies *audubonii* from Jefferson County, Indiana, during late January and early February 2007. The criteria used in identifying it to subspecies, age, and sex, as well as the larger context for this record and the issue of provenance, are also discussed.

**Field Encounter**

On approximately 24 January 2007, Bill Smock noticed an unfamiliar yellow and black bird at his feeders east of Canaan, Jefferson County, Indiana (38.88° N, 85.25° W, elev. 257 m). It visited irregularly, so it was several days before his wife, Carol, and a family friend, Dale Sides, were able to observe the bird. In early February, Bill Smock identified the bird as an Audubon’s Oriole (*Icterus graduacauda*) by use of a field guide. On 6 February, Jason Lewis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was contacted to confirm the observation, and the next day, Lewis contacted Gorney, discussed the report, and visited the Smock home. Upon arriving at the Smock residence, Lewis spotted the oriole in a bare Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) next to the house and obtained several photographs. During the next hour, the oriole was observed near the house as well as in an adjacent small apple orchard. Photographs obtained by Lewis and shared later that day with Gorney and others conclusively identified the bird as an Audubon’s Oriole.

Gorney visited the site on 8 February with Lewis, obtained additional photographs, and took detailed field notes. The bird was in view for approximately 40 minutes during this two-hour visit. The bird was seen feeding at two oil sunflower seed feeders, foraging and resting in...
a bare Silver Maple, and foraging in matted grasses and cattails bordering a small snow-covered, frozen pond. While at the feeders it primarily perched on the wooden platforms to feed, but it was also observed feeding on the ground. The oriole and the other species present were wary. A vehicle pulling into the driveway or movement outside of the house would cause the oriole to fly away.

During the next week, the oriole sporadically visited the Smocks’ feeding area. Bill Smock reported that it was absent from the feeders for one 48-hour period and sometimes for hours at a time on days when it did visit. The bird was occasionally seen flying towards or at several locations on the property; thus it appeared to make wide use of the Smocks’ 110-acre homestead. There are few other residences besides the Smock home in the vicinity, so the bird was likely obtaining food on its own when not present at the feeders. Several other birders besides those mentioned above were able to observe the oriole during the remainder of its stay. Wildlife photographer Ron Austing obtained photos on 11 February (Figures 1 and 2). The Audubon’s Oriole was last seen on 15 February 2007 by Bill Smock. No vocalizations were heard from the bird.

Physiographically, the local region is a plateau of up to 330 m above sea level and dissected by streams that may be 150 m below the hilltops. Natural communities include glades, barrens, and mesophytic forests associated with ravines. The area surrounding the Smock home is decidedly rural and undeveloped, with agriculture and natural vegetation being the primary land cover (Campbell 1997, pers. obs.).

Identification
Audubon’s Oriole is a distinctively marked species. The individual observed in Indiana was a large oriole with a black hood; yellow underparts; olive-yellow back, scapulars, and rump; bright yellow collar separating the hood and the back; black wings with white edging on each remex and the greater coverts; and a long, black, graduated tail with pale edging on the underside of the rectrices. The hood extended past the crown but did not reach the nape. It extended onto the chin, throat, and breast. Eye color was black. The medium-length, pointed, and mostly black bill was thicker at the base and narrowed to a fine point. The mandible was powder blue from the base to a point slightly more than halfway to the tip. Only a minor projection of the maxilla was so colored. The tips and the outer edges of the undersides of the outermost tail feathers (R6) were extensively marked with a combination of off-white and dull yellow. The markings were most extensive on R6 and appeared less so on each feather moving towards the central tail feathers (R1). Compared to other species present at the feeders, the oriole was closest in size to Northern Cardinal but was slightly bigger and bulkier.

While several species of orioles in definitive plumage show variations of yellow and black—e.g., Scott’s (I. parisorum), Black-cowled (I. prosthemelas), and Yellow-backed (I. chrysater)—Audubon’s Oriole is unique in having a black hood and yellowish back. Immatures of several oriole species are yellow and black but can be eliminated by a variety of factors such as body shape and size, bill shape, wing markings, lack of hood, and overall coloration (Jaramillo 1999). Female Crimson-collared Grosbeak (Rhodotorula canela) can be eliminated by differences in wing and tail color, overall duller coloration, and bill shape and size. The long, graduated tail and the unique undertail pattern also points to the Indiana bird as being an Audubon’s Oriole.

Four subspecies of Audubon’s Oriole are currently recognized: audubonii, dickyae, graduacauda, and nayaritensis. Audubonii is the only subspecies known to occur in the United States (Flood et al. 2002; Brush, pers. comm.). It also occurs in the Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas (Brush 2005). The remaining three subspecies are found only in Mexico (Jaramillo 1999). Flood et al. (2002) state that the four sub-
species are moderately well marked but they integrate where ranges meet. The Indiana bird was identified as an *auduboni* primarily because the remiges and greater coverts were boldly edged with white (Figure 1), which eliminates all subspecies but *auduboni*. The nominate subspecies *graduacauda* resembles *auduboni* but is smaller and lacks white edges on the inner secondaries and white tips on the coverts. Determining the subspecies of the Indiana bird based on size is impractical. However, *graduacauda* specimens at the Field Museum, Chicago, were noticeably smaller than *auduboni* specimens and appeared closer in size to Bullock’s (*i. bullockii*) and Baltimore (*i. galbula*) Orioles. The Indiana bird was stocky and appeared bulkier and larger than the Bullock’s Oriole that Gorney had observed elsewhere in southern Indiana on 7 February, the day before he observed the Audubon’s Oriole. *Nayarintesi* is similar to *graduacauda* and therefore can be eliminated for the same reasons given above for that subspecies. *Dickeyae* is the most distinct of the four subspecies, being similar to *graduacauda* but larger and lacking white edges on any wing feathers (Jaramillo 1999, Flood et al. 2002). Jaramillo (1999) speculates that further study might show *ickeyae* to constitute a separate species.

The bird was identified as an after-second-year female by review of pertinent references, examination of specimens, and evaluation of photographic evidence. Juvenile plumage in Audubon’s Oriole is quite distinct from adult plumage, the most striking differences being the olive-colored tail and upperparts and the lack of a black hood, throat, and breast mark. The partial Prebasic 1 molt includes the hood, throat, and breast, the central and possibly other rectrices; and from some to all of the wing coverts and tertials. The primaries and secondaries are not replaced and remain brownish (Flood et al. 2002, Pyle 1997). An individual after Prebasic 1 molt appears similar to one in definitive plumage except that the brownish primaries and secondaries contrast with the black coverts and tertials, most of the rectrices remain olive-colored, and the upperparts are extensively olive-colored (Jaramillo 1999; pers. obs.). The Definitive Prebasic molt is complete and occurs from June through September of a birds second year (Flood et al. 2002). Because the Indiana bird had no olive-colored rectrices, showed no contrast between primaries/secondaries and coverts/tertials, and had an olive-yellow back and rump, we determined the bird’s age to be after second year.

Although many references indicate that adult males and females are similarly marked (e.g. Sibley 2000, Pyle 1997), there appears to be one key field mark and several more subtle characteristics by which one can sex the species. Jaramillo (1999) was the only readily accessible reference that addressed the undertail patterns of male and female Audubon’s Orioles. The text indicates that males have an all-black tail, sometimes with a small white tip to the tail feathers. In contrast, the outer tail feathers of females typically show an olive tip or extensive amounts of olive. Other rectrices also may be olive-tipped. We found considerable variability in the undertail markings of females at the Field Museum. However, every female examined showed at least some pale tips to the outermost feathers (R6), most of them being extensively marked. Usually the other tail feathers had pale tips as well. The amount of marking on each feather decreased towards the central tail feathers, which were often unmarked. The undertails of male specimens, on the other hand, were entirely black except in a few instances of birds with minimal markings, usually restricted to R6 and probably noticeable only with a bird in the hand. The Indiana bird had an extensively marked undertail, including a small pale tip to the central tail feathers, an indication that the bird was a female (Figure 2).

Another difference between the sexes that is mentioned in most references is that the males’ upperparts are duller than those of the female, with the back and rump appearing olive rather than yellow. The authors found this mark to be inconclusive when they examined old, presumably faded, specimens, although they still found that males were often brighter than females. The Indiana bird had an olive-yellow back and rump, another indication that it was a female.

Field marks that appeared useful in sexing specimens but that are not well addressed in references include the raggedness of the margin of the hood at the nape, the shaggy lower hood, and the overall size of the breast marking (Gorney 2007). Male specimens tended to have a poorly demarcated edge to the hood along the nape or the back of the head. The edge was usually ragged, with straggly feathers radiating out into the back. Females, on the other hand, had a fairly well demarcated edge to the hood with few, if any, straggly feathers. Male specimens tended to have a hood that ended with a large breast spot with shaggy edges and black streaks radiating outward. Females tended to have a smaller breast spot, edges that were much less ragged, and little to no dense streaking emanating from the breast spot. We believe that although these subtle features vary, they are useful in sexing the species. This opinion is shared by Alvaro Jaramillo, who indicated that, based on his experience with specimens, most birds can be sexed by plumage (pers. comm.). The Indiana bird showed a well demarcated edge to the hood at the back of the head and had a small, clean breast spot that lacked the ragged appearance of many males (Figure 2). All field marks again suggested a female.

**Discussion**

According to Flood et al. (2002), Audubon’s Oriole is known from Texas, Mexico, and Belize, with a reported vagrant from Puerto Rico. Despite previous reports and references in the literature, the species has not been verified in Belize (Bruce W. Miller, pers. comm.). The single sighting in Puerto Rico was reported as an adult male seen by two observers near Ramey on 12 June 1993. Details of the sighting do not allow for subspecies determination but do point to an Audubon’s Oriole. The observers assumed the bird to be a former captive because of the great distance from its normal range and the lack of vagrancy.
records for the species (Bunkley-Williams and Williams 1996). Within the United States there are no accepted records of Audubon’s Oriole outside of Texas (Brush 2000). Its range in Texas appears to be expanding northward. Vagrants have been noted well away from the species’ known permanent range (Mark Lockwood, pers. comm.). A review of TexBirds listserv postings point to a number of birds seen away from the core range including an unconfirmed report of a bird seen in September 2005 in Anguilla County, Texas, approximately 224 km north-east of Houston and only 96 km from the Louisiana border (Booker 2003). At least some individuals in Texas move or wander seasonally (Flood et al. 2002, Brush 2000, 2005), and up to four birds wintered in the southern-central Hill Country at Utopia, Uvalde County in winter 2006-2007 (M. Lockwood, pers. comm.). However, the extent of their extralimital movements is not well understood, and indeed many details of the species’ life history are poorly known because of its secretive nature, breeding habits, limited distribution, and the extensive private land ownership that limits access (Brush 2001). It is clear, however, that Audubon’s Orioles are occasionally found during winter in parts of southern Texas where they no longer breed, which provides some evidence of a migratory or wandering component in the *auduboni* subspecies (Brush, pers. comm.). In Mexico, the *auduboni* subspecies occurs along the U.S. border, including in the Sierra del Carmen mountain range across from Big Bend National Park in the state of Coahuila. A specimen was taken from that mountain range in 1940, and pairs of Audubon’s Oriole, including singing males, were noted at elevations between 2100 and 2550 m in the same area in June 2000 (Brush 2005). Either these birds are resident and can tolerate cold over-winter temperatures or they move down-slope in winter (Brush, pers. comm.).

**The issue of provenance**

There is no obvious outward evidence that would suggest captive provenance for the Indiana Audubon’s Oriole. The International Species Information System (ISIS), a database of captive animals maintained by zoological institutions around the world, contains no record of any Audubon’s Orioles in captivity. Indeed, very few native orioles, either species or individuals, were held by zoos in the United States and Canada (ISIS). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service reported that no federal migratory bird permits had been issued to legally possess a live oriole of any species in the United States (Andrea Kirk, Division of Migratory Birds, pers. comm.). However, Eduardo E. Inigo-Elias, an expert on the North American caged-bird trade, currently employed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, indicated that orioles, including Audubon’s, are indeed part of the caged-bird trade in Mexico. While passerines are smuggled into the United States, psittacids command much higher prices and thus tend to be the species of choice for smugglers (Inigo-Elias, pers. comm.).

Birds brought illegally into the United States may be confiscated by either U.S. Customs and Border Protection or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. While both agencies have reporting systems to track seizures, data was only obtained from the latter. The extent of bird seizures by Customs and Border Protection is unknown, although information from their website (http://www.cbp.gov) indicates that they likely confiscate as many birds as does the Fish and Wildlife Service, if not more. Data obtained from the LEMS reporting system (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service) concerning confiscated passerines for the period 2000 through early 2007 was meager. Only 46 cases, representing 1036 birds, were listed. Of the total, one seizure in Miami of 910 birds, mostly finches of various species, represented the overwhelming majority of individuals. No orioles of any species were listed on the LEMS report, and no reports of oriole seizures were listed on the Customs and Border Protection website.

Although North American birds are protected by federal laws (e.g., Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Lacey Act), native species are trapped within the United States for the caged-bird market (Sykes et al. 2006, Paul Beiriger, Special Agent, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, pers. comm.). It is unclear how widespread in the United States local trapping might be and what effect it has on local bird populations. The market appears to have an affinity for brightly colored species with unique and melodious vocalizations, such as Painted (*Passerina ciris*) and Indigo (*P. cyanea*) Buntings, Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), and Northern Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*). Special Agent Gary Young of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service reported that Easter is a time during which Northern Cardinals are particularly targeted. Special Agent Paul Beiriger speculated that local trapping of songbirds within the United States might result in a higher number of caged-birds than birds being smuggled across the border. Beiriger has personally confiscated birds such as Northern Cardinals that had been trapped locally at feeders and kept as pets.

Although the Audubon’s Oriole that appeared in Indiana may have been trapped in Texas or Mexico and transported to the Midwest, Inigo-Elias did not think that was the case. After reviewing photographs of the Indiana Audubon’s Oriole, he stated that the bird did not appear to have been held captive recently because the plumage and overall condition of the bird was inconsistent with that of a captive bird (Inigo-Elias, pers. comm.). Captive birds in the Mexican bird markets tend to be in poor condition, often missing feathers or injured as a result of having been held under substandard conditions (Inigo-Elias, pers. comm., Hamilton 2001). Captive birds brought illegally into the United States are often in similarly poor condition and frequently do not survive the smuggling process due to the deplorable conditions in which they are held (Inigo-Elias, pers. comm.). Dr. Inigo-Elias believes that very few rare bird reports in the United States involve formerly captive birds.

**Weather as a factor**

Although there are no previous confirmed records of Audubon’s Oriole north of Texas, factors that together suggest that the Indiana bird was almost certainly of wild provenance include: 1) seasonal movements by some individuals during autumn and winter, 2) severe drought in Audubon’s Oriole’s range, 3) weather systems that moved warm air from Texas into the Ohio River Valley prior to the bird’s discovery, 4) appearance of a number of orioles in the eastern United States during the same period, and 5) previous sight records of Audubon’s Orioles outside of Texas. One might also add, in larger context, that many Texas/Mexican species have been detected farther and farther north in recent years, some in large numbers (e.g., Cave Swallow [*Trochelidion fulva*]).

Ecological conditions ranging from prolonged periods of drought to temporary weather fronts can factor into movements of individual birds. Numerous authors have shown that periods of drought can lead to the dispersal of birds, at any time of year, within a geographical area (e.g., Vega and Rappole 1994, Dunning and Brown 1982, George et al. 1992). Vega and Rappole (1994) found that many Texas species, including Audubon’s Oriole, usually considered to be permanent residents, were absent from their study areas during winter during a drought. Data from the U. S. Drought Monitor (http://drought.unl.edu/dms) indicated that much of the northwestern range of Audubon’s Oriole (based on Lockwood 2004 and TexBirds listserv posts) in Texas was experiencing extreme drought.
Audubon's Oriole in Indiana

Drought conditions for much of the latter half of 2006. Drought conditions in this area, which includes Bandera, Uvalde, Medina, Bexar, and Zavala Counties deteriorated to "exceptional drought" status for the 12 December 2006 report and remained at that maximum drought category through the end of January 2007. Much of the remaining portion of southern Texas, away from the Gulf Coast, also was in drought, ranging from moderate to extreme, during the latter half of 2006 and the beginning of 2007. In the drought areas, soil moisture was low, vegetative health was fair to poor, and streamflow was low (National Climatic Data Center).

A series of weather events from late November 2006 through mid-January 2007 supplied the greater Ohio River Valley and large sections of the eastern United States with warm, southerly winds largely from or including Texas. Examination of weather data for Kentucky, located at the heart of the Ohio River Valley and in close proximity to the Audubon's Oriole sighting, revealed mild weather in late November and the first few days of December, with temperatures 8° F above normal due to southerly winds. After a week of below-normal temperatures during the week of 4 December, a series of systems brought a relatively consistent flow of southerly winds from Texas and the Gulf coast area from mid-December 2006 through mid-January 2007. During this period, the warm southerly winds helped push temperatures in the greater Ohio River Valley to well above normal. Still using Kentucky as a proxy for the region, average weekly temperatures for the five-week period beginning 11 December and ending 14 January were 15°, 13°, 9°, 15°, and 13° F above normal, respectively (Priddy 2007, 2006).

The Audubon's Oriole in Indiana was not the only oriole reported in the greater Ohio River Valley from December 2006 through February 2007. Other orioles included Bullock's Oriole from Indiana, Scott's and Baltimore Orioles from Kentucky, Scott's and Baltimore Orioles from Pennsylvania, and Baltimore Orioles from Illinois, Ohio, and Tennessee (see Table 1). The 22 Baltimore Orioles reported for these states compare to the eight reported during the winter of 2005-2006, along with no other oriole species, and two Baltimoreos reported for the winter of 2004-2005, in addition to two Bullock's Orioles in North American Birds. During the 2006-2007 winter season, Baltimore Orioles were reported in more than a dozen additional eastern states and provinces, and Bullock's Orioles were also reported from Georgia and New York (C.B.C. data, state listservs). Many of the orioles were observed at feeding stations. Interestingly, a number of these birds were first noticed at feeders during periods of mild weather with above normal temperatures, suggesting that inclement weather was not the proximate reason for their unexpected appearances at the feeders.

When speaking specifically about oriole records from the Great Backyard Bird Count in mid-February 2007, Paul Green of the National Audubon Society noted, "We've got Baltimore Orioles in 14 states, Orchard Orioles in five different [states], and Scott's Oriole in Pennsylvania. They shouldn't be here. They should be way south" (O'Driscoll 2007). Another unusual species well represented in the eastern United States during this period was Western Tanager, with 21 reports including individuals in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan (Whan 2007). In his seasonal report, Whan, like many other birders and authors, described winter sightings of White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus) and Orange-crowned (Vermivora celata) and Nashville (V. ruficapilla) Warblers as lingerers. However, given the weather patterns and the unusual number of seasonal vagrants that appeared in the eastern United States during the winter of 2006-2007, early or reverse migration should be considered in such cases; "lingerers" may be a misleading term in some cases (Sullivan 2005).

While there are no accepted U.S. records of Audubon's Oriole away from Texas, the species has been reported from at least three other states. Arizona has at least three reports, New Mexico two, and Ohio one. The latter appears the most credible, a tantalizing winter record. Arizona's reports are from 30 April-1 May 1973 at Cave Creek Canyon, Cochise County (Speich 1973), 1 May 1975 in Madera Canyon, Santa Cruz County (Rosenberg 1999), and April 2001 at Nogales, Santa Cruz County (Boyd 2001, pers. comm.). The 1973 and 1975 records were reviewed by the Arizona Bird Committee but not accepted. The 2001 report was communicated verbally to another birder with no details provided. New Mexico's reports are from Eddy County in April of an unknown year (but prior to 1978) and from Luna County on 21 May 1980. The former record is an apparently secondhand report lacking any details, while the latter report came from an out-of-state visitor who also reported a Streaked-back Oriole and a pair of Black-vented Orioles from the same area. The 1980 Luna County report was not accepted by the New Mexico Bird Records Committee. Both reports from New Mexico are considered to be erroneous identifications (S. O. Williams, pers. comm.). Ohio's report is from Allen County on 20 December 1995. A man and his wife twice saw a yellow-and-black bird perched in a tree just three meters from their window. The husband documented the sighting on 22 December 1995. He reported that the bird was approximately the size of an American Robin or Common Grackle. It had a totally black head and sharp contrast between the black hood and lemon-yellow upper back and breast. Wings were dark with whitish wing bars. The bill was dark, long, and thin. A simple drawing submitted with the documentation shows a bird with an oriole bill, black hood, dark wings with wing bars, and lemon-yellow back and underparts. Although the documentation is not comprehensive, the written details and the drawing are extremely suggestive of an Audubon's Oriole and seem to rule out other possible species. The only field mark lacking in the description is the black breast spot. The Ohio record was not accepted by the Ohio Bird Records Committee; the vote was eight to three (Fazio 1990). Origin apparently was a more critical factor than identification in the decision to reject the record (V. Fazio, pers. comm.).

Summary
The appearance of an Audubon's Oriole in Indiana seems to defy conventional wisdom, as the species is thought to be relatively sedentary throughout its range. We held a skeptical view upon learning of and then observing the bird. However, the available evidence provides a credible explanation of how an Audubon's Oriole might appear well away from its range in Texas. Indeed, there is no direct evidence pointing to captive provenance, and all anecdotal information points away from such speculation. While in the end we eschewed conventional birding wisdom and believe that the Audubon's Oriole was most likely of natural provenance, time and additional wanderings and sightings of the species will provide the most convincing evidence of that. Documentation and photographs have been submitted to the Indiana Bird Records Committee.

Acknowledgments
We thank David Willard for access to the collections at the Field Museum in Chicago, Dr. Eduardo E. Itigo-Elias for his insight into the caged-bird trade, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for data and access to the special agents who provided enlightening comments, Timothy Brush, Alvaro Jaramillo, Sator O. Williams, Mark Lockwood, Gary Rosenberg, Pam Zeller, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Ed Boyd, Bruce W. Miller, Jan Shaw, Chris Sloan, and Victor Fazio for valuable com-
ments and references, and several reviewers, especially William Murphy, who strengthened this paper.

**Literature cited**


First record of Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) for Mexico

STEVEN G. MLODINOW • 4819 GARDNER AVENUE • EVERETT, WASHINGTON 98201 • (EMAIL: SGMLOD@AOL.COM)
KURT RADAMAKER • 16313 E. CRYSTAL POINT DRIVE • FOUNTAIN HILLS, ARIZONA 85268 • (EMAIL: KURTRAD@MEXICOBIRDING.COM)

Abstract
This paper documents the presence of a Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) at Miraflores, Baja California Sur, Mexico from 25 March to 7 April 2007. A detailed description of the bird from field notes is provided, supplemented by photographs and a sonogram. The circumstances surrounding this bird’s detection are discussed, as is its identification as a Yellow-browed Warbler. Finally, this record is put into context by reviewing Yellow-browed Warbler vagrancy in general and reviewing records of other *Phylloscopus* warblers in North America.

Miraflores
Miraflores is an agricultural village of approximately 1 400 people near the foothills of the Sierra de La Laguna. It is at an elevation of approximately 200 meters and lies about 40 kilometers north of San José del Cabo and 40 kilometers inland from the Sea of Cortez. The habitat is predominantly a mixture of planted and fallow agricultural fields (including small mango and palm orchards), plus extensive patches of native thornscrub (see Figure 1). Trees of the legume subfamily Mimosoideae—including Sweet Acacia (*Acacia farnesiana*), Palo Eban (*Chloroleucon mangense*), and Gua-muchilar (*Pithecellobium dulce*)—dominate the native woodlands, but there is also a substantial live-oak (*Quercus* spp.) and hackberry (*Celtis* spp.) component. An arroyo that usually has water (in the form of a flowing stream or pools) skirts the village, and there are often small puddles of water in the fields and orchards from irrigation. Miraflores recently has become well-known for harboring vagrant birds, including the Baja California Peninsula’s first Streak-backed Oriole (*Icterus pustulatus*) in January 2006 (Erickson et al. 2006a) and a flock of eight Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) in October 2005 that furnished the Peninsula’s second record (Erickson et al. 2006b).

Figure 1. Typical Miraflores thornscrub woodland. This woodland is dominated by legumes in many areas, though some locations have a large live-oak component. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow on 25 March 2007.
Field encounters

On 25 March, at approximately 7:15 a.m. (about 40 minutes after sunrise), Mlodinow was pishing near the arroyo that runs past Miraflores. At this location, fallow fields and pasture meet relatively lush native thorn-scrub. The pishing rapidly attracted a large flock of passerines dominated by Orange-crowned Warblers (Vermivora celata) into a Guamuchiar. He had been pishing for about five minutes when a small whitish-bellied bird joined the commotion. It was only about ten meters away, and after a period of initial disbelief, Mlodinow recognized it as a Yellow-browed Warbler. The Yellow-browed Warbler then disappeared and reappeared several times, providing about four minutes of actual observation time over a ten-minute period at distances of ten to 15 meters.

On 7 April, Kurt and Cindy Radamaker went to Miraflores hoping to relocate this bird and eventually found it around 12:00 p.m., fewer than 100 meters from where Mlodinow had originally discovered it. They watched it intermittently over a two-hour period in the dense foliage. It was often relocated by its habit of flicking its wings or hover-gleaning in a kinglet-like fashion.

Description

This was a small passerine with a kinglet-like jizz. It was noticeably smaller than the nearby Orange-crowned Warblers and appeared to be a bit larger than a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Regulus calendula), though none of the latter were present for direct comparison. The bill was small and kinglet-like, with a pale pinkish-flesh base that extended halfway out the mandible; the maxilla was dark. The tail was short, dark, and notched. The undertails were mostly an unstreaked dull white, but there was some yellow wash along the sides of the breast near the bend of the wing and on the undertail coverts. The back was uniform greenish olive, the exact brightness of which was difficult to judge. The crown was similarly colored and without any crown stripe. There was a bold, long, and yellow-washed supercilium that went from over the bill backwards nearly to the nape. The thickness of this supercilium was fairly uniform, without any obvious posterior flaring, and the two supercilia met over the eye. The eye looked dark. From the bill, through the eye, and to the rear of the auriculars was a narrow but prominent dusky line that was darker than the crown. The actual auriculars were moderately mottled in dusky or olive. Below the eye was a narrow whitish arc. The wings showed two bright whitish wingbars, with the upper wingbar not as thick or long as the lower but still readily apparent. The greater coverts between the wingbars were relatively dark (darker than the back). Similarly, the bases of the secondaries were quite dark, forming a blackish bar behind the greater-covert wingbar (much as is seen in a Ruby-crowned Kinglet). The secondaries otherwise were dark and narrowly edged in yellowish green that was brighter than the color of the back. The blackish tertials were edged brightly in white, with the white tips appearing as a white triangle or chevron at the end of each tertial. The tertial tips appeared whiter than the wingbars. The legs were dusky pinkish.

Mlodinow did not hear the bird call, but the Radamakers did hear it, and through a great deal of persistence, recorded it (Figure 2). The call was a high-pitched disyllabic upward-influenced tse-sweep. The pitch and cadence were much like the position-call of a male Pacific-slope Flycatcher (Empidonax difficilis).

Identification

The bird’s small size, bright wingbars, white tertial tips, and plain crown eliminate all species except Yellow-browed Warbler and Hume’s Leaf-Warbler (Phylloscopus humei). Visual criteria for separating Yellow-browed and Hume’s Leaf-Warblers are detailed by Baker (1997) and generally supported by the species’ accounts in del Hoyo et al. (2006); these firmly point to its identification as a Yellow-browed Warbler, rather than a Hume’s (see Figures 3-5).
1) In Hume's, the upper wingbar is dull and often absent in worn (spring) plumage.
2) The mandible in Hume's shows little or no pale, while the basal half is typically pinkish in Yellow-browed.
3) Hume's has blackish-brown legs versus flesh-brown in Yellow-browed.
4) Blackish basal color to tertials and wing coverts is typical of Yellow-browed but not of Hume's.
5) Secondary edges are more brightly colored than the back in Yellow-browed, most easily noted in moderately worn plumage.
6) The bold white edges to the tertials are typical of Yellow-browed and would be unusual in Hume's, particularly in worn plumage.

Furthermore, analysis of the Miraflores bird's call identify it as a Yellow-browed Warbler. Luijendijk (2001) compared fall and winter call-notes of Yellow-browed and Hume's Leaf-Warblers, demonstrating that the call of Yellow-browed is higher in pitch and longer in duration than that of Hume's. Hume's rarely reaches a frequency higher than 6 kHz, but Yellow-browed almost always reaches a frequency of 7 kHz. Additionally, the typical call of Hume's is short and disyllabic, with the first syllable stressed and an obvious downward inflection on the second part, likened by Marshall J. Illiff (pers. comm.) to the hui call of Hutton's Vireo (Vireo huttoni). In contrast, the pitch, inflection, and duration of the Yellow-browed Warbler's call closely resemble those of a male Pacific-slope Flycatcher's call (Hein del 2006), as noted by the Radamakers in the field. The song made from the Radaker's recording matches that of Yellow-browed Warbler not Hume's (Figure 2).

Differences between first-winter and basic-plumaged adult Yellow-browed Warblers are very subtle and virtually disappear by spring (Baker 1997). Consequently, we were unable to determine the age of this bird.

**Yellow-browed Warbler distribution**

Yellow-browed Warbler breeds from the Ural Mountains east to eastern Siberia and south to Mongolia, northern Manchuria, and possibly northern Korea (Baker 1997). It winters from central Nepal east to southeastern China and Taiwan and south to the Malay Peninsula and Vietnam (Baker 1997). Note that much of the normal wintering range is at the same latitude as Miraflores (23.35° N). Interestingly, Yellow-browed Warbler is one of the most numerous Siberian passerine vagrants to western Europe, with 2648 records between 1958 and 1985 in Great Britain, almost all from fall (Dymond et al. 1989). Additionally, 81 had been found in Iceland through 2003 (Petursson and Kolbeinsson 2007). The few spring records from Britain and Ireland are from late March through early May (Vinicombe and Cottridge 1996), and del Hoyo et al. (2006) note that northbound migration in Asia begins during late March and early April.

The first North American record of Yellow-browed Warbler came as recently as 23-24 September 1999 from Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska (Lehman 2000a, 2000b). The second North American record was also from Gambell on 30 August 2002 (Lehman 2005). Most interesting are two additional sightings from the fall of 2006: one photographed at Atsu Island, Alaska on 21 September (Tobish 2007) and a sight record from Milwaukee County, Wisconsin on 21 October that has been accepted by the Wisconsin Bird Records Committee as a single-observer sight record and thus hypothetical (Svingen 2007).

**Other Phylloscopus records away from Alaska**

Only two other species of Phylloscopus warblers have been recorded in North America away from Alaska: Dusky Warbler (P. fuscatus) and Arctic Warbler (P. borealis). The breeding range of Dusky Warbler fits fairly well into the western half of the range of Yellow-browed Warbler, while its winter range is similar to that of Yellow-browed (Baker 1997). Dusky Warblers have been recorded ten times in California, all between 27 September and 3 November, and all but one record was coastal (Hamilton et al. 2007). There are also two records from the northern half of the Baja California Peninsula, 15 October 1991 and 20-23 October 1993 (Erickson et al. 2001). Interestingly, Dusky Warbler, like Yellow-browed Warbler, has occurred predominantly as a fall vagrant in Beringia (Lehman 2005).

Arctic Warbler is a fairly common breeder in western and central Alaska (Hein del 2006), yet it has been recorded but seven times away from that state. There are four records from coastal central California spanning 7 September through 1 October (Hamilton et al. 2007), plus records from Baja California Sur's Visccaino Peninsula, 12 October 1991 (Pyle and Howell 1993) and the Canadian Arctic at Prince Patrick Island, Northwest Territories, 21 July 1949 (Godfrey 1986, Jan tunen 2003).

**Other Phylloscopus species from Alaska**

The occurrence of Yellow-browed and Dusky Warblers south of Alaska, despite relatively few records from that state, suggests that it
would be worthwhile to look at the other species of *Phylloscopus* that have occurred in Alaska but have not yet been detected elsewhere on the continent. There have been two Wood Warblers (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*): one on Shemya Island, 9 October 1978 (Gibson 1981) and one on St. Paul Island, 7 October 2004 (Tobish 2005). Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) has been recorded once (Gambell, 25-30 August 2002; Lehman 2003), and Pallás's Leaf-Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*) has been recorded once (Gambell, 25-26 September 2006; Lehman and Rosenberg 2007).

**Discussion**

Had this bird spent the winter locally or was it a northbound migrant? It was not seen in Miraflores during a January visit by Mlodinow and others, but it could easily have been missed. Furthermore, the Radamakers found the bird 13 days after Mlodinow, which seems like a long time for a migrant to remain in one place, especially during spring migration. Additionally, through-migrant passeresines are known to occur almost exclusively during fall in southwestern Baja California Sur (Erickson and Howell 2001). On the other hand, Mlodinow found many more passeresines at Miraflores during March 2007 than during January 2007 (S. Mlodinow, unpubl. data).

This local increase in passerine numbers could be due to the arrival of northbound migrants, but it could also be the result of local movements. Insight can be gained by examining the region’s climate. Precipitation and humidity in the Cabo San Lucas/La Paz region peak in August and September and reach their nadir from March through May (International Station Meteorological Climate Summary, version 4.0). Consistent with these data, southernmost Baja California (from La Paz southward) appeared distinctly more verdant in January 2007 than during March (Mlodinow, pers. obs.). This seasonal variation in precipitation would likely lead to a decline in the availability of moist habitats as winter progresses into spring. Consequently, it is quite conceivable that insectivorous and frugivorous passeresines would be more widely distributed during early winter and midwinter, later concentrating in the remaining moist areas as the surroundings become more arid. The concurrent bloom of the thornscrub trees (including *Pithecellobium dulce* and *Acacia farnesiana*) at these oases, with their attendant invertebrates, would provide a particularly attractive food source. A similar phenomenon appears to take place in southeastern Arizona’s deserts, where willows (*Salix spp.*) bloom in March, suddenly attracting both vagrant and regularly occurring passeresines (W. Russell, pers. comm.). While southern Baja California Sur’s aridity during spring might concentrate locally wintering birds, it would also make the region unattractive to migrants, especially as they would have to cross open water for a relatively small target. For any individual bird, such as this Yellow-browed Warbler, no determination can be made, but given the details described above, it seems quite likely the bird had wintered nearby and was not a migrant.

Was the Miraflores Yellow-browed Warbler part of a larger phenomenon? The two Yellow-broweds found during fall 2006 would suggest so, at least for that species. Furthermore, Great Britain also had an unusual number of Yellow-browed Warblers during fall 2006, with 526 reported, the fourth highest total in the past 20 years (L. Evans, UK-400 Club master database). On the other hand, there was not an unusual number of Siberian passeresines in general found on mainland North America during the fall and winter of 2006 (P. E. Lehman, T. Tobish, G. McCaskie, R. A. Erickson, pers. comm.). Consequently, it seems that the Miraflores Yellow-browed Warbler was part of an unusual year for vagrancy in that species, but it was not part of a phenomenon that increased passerine vagrancy from Siberia to mainland North America as a whole.

**Acknowledgments**

We owe a great debt of thanks to Marshall J. Iliff, who reviewed earlier versions of this manuscript and greatly improved them. Paul E. Lehman and Richard A. Erickson also substantially improved this manuscript. We also owe a debt of thanks to Pierre Deviche for helping create the sonogram included herein and to T. J. C. Luijendijk for providing us with information on separating Yellow-browed Warbler from Humé’s Leaf-Warbler using this sonogram. Jon Rebman was kind enough to help total strangers sort out the tree species of Miraflores. Finally, we are grateful for the inspiration, data, and stimulating conversations provided by Cindy Radamaker, Will Russell, Rob Hamilton, Mark Stevenson, Lee G. R. Evans, Thede Tobish, Guy McCaskie, and James Frank.

**Literature cited**


Hamilton, R. A., M. A. Patten, and R. A. Erickson, eds. 2007. Rare Birds of California. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, California.
Vinicombe, K., and D. M. Cottridge. 1996. Rare Birds in Britain and Ireland: A Photographic Record. HarperCollins Publishers,
1 - One of very few photographs of a Cooper's Hawk ever taken in Nova Scotia, this immature was present throughout the period at Port Williams, Kings County (here 16 December 2006). Photograph by Richard Stern.

2 - After a remarkable fall flight to the northeastern quadrant of the continent (with outliers to Bermuda and Florida), this Northern Wheatear in Baldwin County, Alabama (here 23 February 2007) was not without context—but hardly expected at this location and on this late date. Photograph by John Pascheck.

3 - Long overdue in Arizona, this first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull present at Palo Verde 10-16 (here 11) December 2006 provided a first state record. Photograph by Chris D. Benesh.

4 - A species now annually recorded in Arizona during winter, a Violet-crowned Hummingbird frequented a Birbee feeder 28-30 (here 28) December 2006, arriving during a snowstorm. Photograph by Doug Danforth.

5 - Arizona's first record of Couch's Kingbird came at Tuscon 11 (here 28) January 2007, where it remained, eating dead honey bees, until 7 March. The bird's identification was confirmed by recordings of its distinctive vocalizations. Photograph by Gary Rosenberg.

6 - The Longmont (Boulder County) Colorado Christmas Bird Count in Colorado had the unusual honor of recording all four ABA Area Zonotrichia sparrows on 16 December 2006. Among the expected White-crowned Sparrows were single White-throated, Harris', and, the state's rarest, Golden-crowned. Many birders were able to see the more elusive species in lulls between blizzards through 1 January 2007 (here 28 December). Photograph by Bill Schmoker.
1. Furnishing one of very few records east of the Mississippi River Valley, this Inca Dove at Huntington, West Virginia was present 2-16 (here 10) December 2006. Photograph by Matt Orsie.

2. Continuing the rather incredible streak of southwestern and western birds in that state, this Virginia’s Warbler blessed Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia 10-16 (here 15) February 2007. Photograph by Matt Orsie.

3. Scott’s Oriole is not the first bird species that comes to mind when one thinks of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, but this male attended a feeder in this small city 19 February into March (here 23 February) 2007. This bird marks the first state record. Photograph by Howard Eskin.

4. Florida’s second Hammond’s Flycatcher was discovered near Orlando, Orange County 28 January 2007 (here) and remained through 2 March, only three months after the state’s first record in Pinellas County. Photograph by Jeffrey Gordon.

5. Dennis Serdehely and Dave McNinch located this White-tailed Kite 18 December 2006 at Carson Lake, Churchill County, Nevada during the Fallon Christmas Bird Count. Fortunately, it remained through at least 27 January 2007 (here 31 December) and was enjoyed by many observers. Photograph by Steve Ting.


7. This young male Western Tanager was nicely documented at Echo Hill Park in Hunterdon County, New Jersey 3 February 2007. Photograph by Phil Jeffrey.
1 & 2 • Rare anywhere in the East, this Smith’s Longspur at Jones Beach’s Teddy Roosevelt Nature Center in Nassau County, New York furnished just the second state record. Photographs by Lloyd Spitalnik (left); Edward Coley (right).

3 • Iowa’s second Slaty-backed Gull appeared on 17–23 (here 23) December 2006 in Pottawattamie County, Iowa. Photograph by Ann Johnson.

4 • This adult male Bullock’s Oriole spent the winter (here 10 February 2007) in Scott County—a first for Indiana. Photograph by Michael Brown.

5 • Northeast of Madison, on the Ohio River in Jefferson County, Indiana, this adult female Audubon’s Oriole appeared at a feeder on approximately 24 January 2007 and remained until 15 (here 11) February. The winter of 2006–2007 saw dozens of wayward orioles visiting feeders in the Midwest and East, particularly after the weather turned cold in mid-January. Photograph by Ron Austing.

6 • This Harris’s Sparrow visited the feeders of Gerry Leubner at Irondequoit, Monroe County, New York 2 (here 23) December 2006 into late February 2007; Leubner, who compiled the Rochester Christmas Bird Count for 51 years, hosted his first Harris’s Sparrow here 35 years earlier. Photograph by Richard Ashworth.

7 • Of the two Calliope Hummingbirds in the Region this winter, this female in New Haven, Connecticut provided a first state record. It frequented a butterfly garden 2–7 (here 3) December 2006. Photograph by Mark Szantyr.
PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1 • This Tropical Kingbird at Trinity, Somerset County, Maryland was nicely photographed 28 (right) and 30 (left) December 2006—a first state record. Photographs by George M. Jett and Mikey Lutmerding, respectively.

2 • One of many extralimital Western Tanagers found in the East and Midwest in winter 2006-2007, this bird was found "in the wild" (away from feeders) in False Cape State Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia 28 December 2006. Photograph by George L. Armistead.

3 & 4 • Unprecedented in New England was the discovery of two Lazuli Buntings in winter. In Connecticut, a young male (right) visited Hammonassett State Park in New Haven 4 (here 20) January-11 February 2007, a first state record. An adult male (left) appeared in a backyard in Hadley, Massachusetts 30-31 (here 30 or 31) January 2007, just the second record for that state (and second in winter). Photographs by Louise Currins (adult male) and Julian Hough.

5 • Furnishing a first Iowa record was a Red-breasted Sapsucker on 4 December 2006 (here) near Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County. Photograph by Andrew Peters.

6 • Taking advantage of lush grasslands, Sprague’s Pipit made an unusually strong showing in southwestern New Mexico this season, including this one near Hermanas, Luna County 17 February 2007. Photograph by Charles R. Britt.

7 • Furnishing the seventh record for Montana, this Yellow-billed Loon was found 4 (here 5) January 2007 on the Missouri River in Great Falls and remained for several days. Photograph by Bob Martinka.
1. This Dusky Flycatcher at the University of California at Davis, Yolo County on 4 February 2007 likely represents the first winter record for the Northern California Region. Photograph by John Sterling.

2. This adult male Smew attracted birders from throughout California during its stay in the remote town of Soulsbyville, Tuolumne County 20-29 (here 29) January 2007. It spent time courting female Hooded Mergansers on a small pond in a rural subdivision in this Sierra foothill community. Photograph by Arlene Ripley.

3. Washington’s first Whooper Swan covered much ground in winter 2006-2007. It inhabited Snohomish County 25 December through 1 January, then moved north to Skagit County from 4 January to 17 February (here at Conway, 20 January), and was last seen farther north yet in Whatcom County from 24 February to 2 March. Unlike most Whoopers detected south of Alaska, this bird was west of the Cascade Mountains and kept company with Trumpeter rather than Tundra Swans. In theory, the Whoopers found east of the Cascades meet up with their Tundra companions in the Seward Peninsula or Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta (where there are no Trumpeter Swans) and then migrate southward with them. Similarly, Whoopers found west of the Cascades likely join their companions on the Alaska Peninsula or in south-coastal Alaska. Photograph by Ric Merry.

4. This Green-tailed Towhee at a Rivière-des-Prairies, Montréal feeder 17 December 2006 through 3 March 2007 (here 3 February) furnished the second for Quebec, the first dating back to October 1957. Photograph by Sylvie Robert.

5. Washington’s sixteenth Black-headed Gull lingered at Bainbridge Island, Kitsap County 19-31 (here 21) December 2006 and reappeared at nearby Point No Point 21-24 February 2007. All but one of Washington’s prior records were between 1986 and 1996, and some may pertain to returning birds. Photograph by Charlie Wright.

6. Always a very rare winter visitor to Texas, this Red-necked Grebe was present at Lake Kickapoo, Archer County from 28 January through 4 March 2007 (here on the last date). Photograph by Scotty Lofland.
As do most Atlantic gadfly petrels, Bermuda Petrels often gather together in inshore roosts prior to entering nesting burrows in darkness. This composite image is one of two “Cahows” photographed at dusk three kilometers south of St. David’s Head, Bermuda on 26 November 2006. Late October through mid-November is prime season for studying the species at sea in this location; individuals can also be seen with a spotting scope from nearby Cooper’s Point. Photographs by Andrew Dobson.

This immature female Scott’s Oriole in Franklin County, Kentucky was the state’s first; it was first noted in early February 2007 (here 12 February) and lingered through the end of the winter period. Photograph by David Knapp.

Bermuda’s first live record of Gray Heron was furnished by this individual, which has been present since 22 April 2006 (here 1 March 2007) at Tucker’s Town. Photograph by Andrew Dobson.

On 5 February 2007, Gilles Leblond found this White Stork feeding in fallow fields of a banana plantation near the mouth of Rivière du Lorrain in northeastern Martinique. Could this individual have been migrating on a return to Europe from points farther south? This is the second record in the West Indies Region of this species; the other report comes from Antigua 14 August 1993 (published in El Pitirre), a bird observed in an open area adjacent to mangroves at Cook’s Dump, outside St. John’s. Photograph by Gilles Leblond.

Minnesota’s fifth Green-tailed Towhee at Mountain Lake, Cottonwood County was confirmed during the local Christmas Bird Count but had been present since before Thanksgiving, according to the homeowner (here 2 January 2007). Photograph by David A. Cahlander.

This Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, furnishing Michigan’s fifth record, was present 17 (here 29) December 2006 and on later dates at L’Anse, Baraga County. Photograph Kirk Zufelt.
**Featured Endorsed Tour**

**Custom Tours: Hawaii 2008**

Jan 20-31 – Zapata Peninsula, Northern Archipelago & Eastern Endemic Regions of Cuba. Once again, pending license from the US Treasury, the Cuba Bird Study Program will visit the birding hotspots of Cuba. This is always an opportunity that depends on government relations at the highest level, however their past history has been successful in receiving the required permits. Cuba Bird Study Program, Gary Markowski, cubirds@aol.com, (860) 350-6752.

Mar 8-15 – Family Birding Trip in Ecuador. This Ecuador trip is designed for families who are interested in the best variety of nature, culture and birding in the Quito region. Trip includes subtropical rain forests, hummingbird reserve, waterfalls and swimming holes, and evening walks for bats and owls. Tropical Nature Travel, www.tropicalnaturetravel.com, travel@tropicalnaturetravel.com, (877) 888-1770.

April 3-12 – Zapata Peninsula, and the Mountains and Forests of Western Cuba. This trip covers locations in western, central, and southern endemic habitats, and visits the southern Caribbean coast; excellent opportunities to see most of Cuba’s endemics.

April 14-18 & 21-25 – Texas: High Island Migration. Take in the coastal beaches and marshes for huge numbers of shorebirds, to the famed migrant traps of High Island, then inland to the Pinewoods for that Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Birding America, www.birding-america.com, info@birding america.com, (800) 744-6150.

May-June – Pribilofs – St. Paul Island. St. Paul Island is home to millions of seabirds nesting in easily observed colonies along the steep shores of the island. Thousands of migrating gulls, shorebirds, seabirds, ducks and passerines are drawn to this remote island in the Bering Sea. Wilderness Birding Adventures, www.wildernessbirding.com. info@wildernessbirding.com. (907) 694-7442.

**May 10-21 – Birding in Peru with Barry Walker.** This favorite tour includes lodges in Lima (sea level), Cusco (11,600 feet), Machu Picchu and of course the Manu Wildlife Center. To fully enjoy this trip, participants must be in sufficient good health (walking, uneven ground, high elevations). Find high Andean waterfowl, mixed flocks of tanagers, flycatchers, furnariids, plus plus! Target endemics of the area, with several days at the Manu, known for its high biodiversity, thus abundant variety of bird life. Contact Siemer & Hand Travel, www.siemerhand.com, (800) 451-4321.

**May 26-June 9 – China: Sichuan and the Tibetan Plateau.** Referred to as the “Heavenly Kingdom”, this area’s natural beauty and spectacular scenery provide a wonderful backdrop for most of the central Chinese endemics as well as up to 10 amazing pheasants. Tropical Birding, www.tropical birding.com, info@tropicalbirding.com, (800) 348-5941.

**June – Gambell and Nome Tour.** Visit two of the most famous birding spots during spring migration where streams of birds fly by. Great opportunities for Asian migrants and unusual breeders in a very special place. Wilderness Birding Adventures, www. wildernessbirding.com, info@wilderness birding.com, (907) 694-7442.

For more tours go to www.aba.org/tours
Give the Best in Birding Optics and Accessories

Popular Optics at Competitive Prices

Swarovski
EL 10x42 Binoculars
EL10x42 $1899.00

Swarovski
65mm HD Straight Scope
ST65HD $1799.00

Leica
Ultravid 8x42 Binoculars
40261 $1669.00

Zeiss
FL 8x42 Binoculars
FL8x42 $1749.99

Pentax
DCF SP 8x43 Binoculars
P62615 $599.00

Stocking Stuffers

OP/TECH Classic Strap
205BLACK, 205BLUE, 205GREEN $15.95ea.

ROR™ Lens Cleaner
ROR $8.00

Slide & Flex Bino-System
971 $19.95

www.abasales.com • 800-634-7736 • Hours: 9am to 5pm (EST)