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ON THE COVER: Very rarely reported away from their breeding and wintering range in northeastern Nunavut and Greenland, Hornemann’s Redpoll (currently considered the nominate subspecies of Hoary Redpoll) was widely reported across a large area of eastern Canada, the Great Lakes states, and New England in winter 2010–2011. Blessed with multiple records of this taxon, Ontario had a small, dedicated army of birders and photographers who documented Hornemann’s as well as a larger-than-average flight of the similarly large Greater Redpoll, the rostrate subspecies of Common Redpoll, also from Nunavut and Greenland. This Hornemann’s was photographed near Matheson, Ontario on 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

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PUBLISHER
American Birding Association

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS
Bryan Patrick

EDITOR
Edward S. Brinkley
(thalassoica@gmail.com)

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Louis R. Bevier
P. A. Buckley
Adam M. Byrne
Stephen J. Dinsmore
Alvaro Jaramillo
Paul E. Lehman
Alan Womington

PHOTO EDITOR
Brian Sullivan
(heraldpetrel@gmail.com)

REGIONAL EDITORS

SUBSCRIPTIONS
LeAnn Pilger
Liz Gordon

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Jim Harris

ADVERTISING
Ken Barron

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In the winter of 2010–2011, large numbers of both Common Redpoll (Acanthis flammea) and Hoary Redpoll (A. hornemanni) were detected in southern Canada, most of these from eastern Manitoba eastward, and in the United States, birders in the Midwest and Northeast also detected large numbers, usually at feeders. Most were of the expected subspecies, A. f. flammea and A. h. exilipes. (These subspecies are sometimes referred to as Southern Common Redpoll and Southern Hoary Redpoll, but we will use “nominate Common” and “exilipes Hoary” here.)

As observed during the redpoll influx of winter 2007–2008, some redpoll flocks contained relatively large numbers of Common Redpolls identified as subspecies rostrata, known as Greater Redpoll, which is larger, darker, and more heavily streaked than nominate Common. In addition, a few fortunate birders found Hornemann’s Redpoll, the large nominate subspecies of Hoary Redpoll, usually just a single bird. In Canada, most Hornemann’s nest farther north than Greater: Hornemann’s breeds on Ellesmere, Axel Heiberg, Devon, and Bylot Islands, where Greaters are unrecorded. The two breed sympatrically in northern Baffin Island (Godfrey 1986) and also breed sympatrically in Greenland, and although the extent of overlap there is not well understood, Hornemann’s tends to breed farther north than Greater (Boettmann 1994).

On 18 December 2007, three days after Ron Tozer and Doug Tozer found a Hornemann’s Redpoll on the Minden Christmas Bird Count in Ontario, Ron Pittaway (2007) issued his online Redpoll Challenge—the goal being to document all four New World redpoll taxa in a single flock. As Pittaway noted in his widely read Challenge, this feat had been accomplished at least twice: south of Ungava Bay, northern Quebec on 12 March 1944 (Todd 1963) and at Hamilton, Ontario on 23 March 1958 (Curry 2006). Since issuing the Challenge, Pittaway has received credible reports of all four taxa together from Quebec City and Ottawa—and has even seen all four at his own feeders in Toronto. Although there are confirmed records of both Greater and Hornemann’s Redpolls in the northeastern quadrant of the Lower 48 United States, no one in the United States has reported seeing these two High Arctic sub-
species simultaneously among gatherings of the more expected nominate Common Redpoll and exilipes Hoary Redpoll.

On 8 January 2011, Michael Butler, paying careful attention to redpoll flocks in his backyard at Marathon, Ontario, on the north shore of Lake Superior, photographed a Hornemann’s Redpoll. In reviewing his images, Butler noted that one bird in the background appeared to be a Greater Redpoll, and another in the foreground was an exilipes Hoary (Figure 1). Experts in the identification of redpolls, Ron Pittaway and Michel Gosselin, agreed: all four taxa were visible—the first time the four North American taxa were known to have been photographed together! Following Butler’s discovery, it became clear that redpolls of all sorts had made it to northeastern Ontario as well, and Brandon Holden made his way to Matheson on 18 February 2011, to discover at least five Hornemann’s and many Greater Redpolls among redpolls flocks at feeders. Southern New England and upstate New York had scattered reports of Greater and Hornemann’s Redpolls, and many birders there got to observe these big redpolls for the first time. Along with many other web-based conversations and shared images, Holden’s and Butler’s websites, full of fine images of these birds, became the impetus for the present Photo Essay.

In the history of North American Birds and its antecedent journals, the little-known Hornemann’s Redpoll has been mentioned infrequently, and black-and-white photographs have been published only twice, from Quebec (Audubon et al. 1988) and possibly Pennsylvania (Brinkley et al. 1994). Generally accepted records of Hornemann’s Redpoll extend south to Maryland and west as far as Michigan and Manitoba, whereas records of exilipes Hoary Redpoll extend south to Virginia and much farther to the west, with records from South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Greater Redpoll has been documented in New England and the northern Great Lakes region, with outlying records extending to southern New York and New Jersey; there are also single records from Colorado and Maryland. Pittaway (1992) reports that Greater Redpolls are more common than Hoaries during some winters in southern Ontario. The relative abundance of Greater Redpoll in the northeastern United States is not as well understood.

With the rise of Internet-based communication, numerous observers have posted images of redpolls, including Hornemann’s and Greater, from their areas, along with observations about redpoll identification. As often occurs, many of the formerly active hyperlinks have become inactive, and some of the discussion that remains archived in scattered places includes misleading material and errors. There are numerous published articles on redpolls and their identification, and some are readily available from their publishers or are even archived online. Some of these are based on scientific studies, but many were written by people who witnessed a redpoll irruption in their areas. During the winter of 1993-1994, for example, Dave Csapak (1995) studied hundreds of redpolls at his Germantown, Maryland feeders—and documented not just 17 exilipes Hoary Redpolls but also at least one each of Greater and Hornemann’s. In Ontario, Pittaway (1992) summarized what was known about the identification of North American taxa based on his extensive encounters with redpolls during irruptions in Canada. In the United Kingdom, a 1984 irruption of nominate Common and exilipes Hoary Redpolls was the occasion for a paper treating differences between those taxa (Lansdown et al. 1991), and other authors have followed suit after subsequent redpoll flights in the United Kingdom (Riddington et al. 2000, Pennington and Maher 2005).

Using Michael Butler’s photographs from Ontario’s Thunder Bay District and Brandon Holden’s images from the Cochrane District (near the Quebec border), this Photo Essay showcases the High Arctic redpolls among their smaller relatives and also illustrates some distinctions between Hoary and Common, whose identification continues to provide challenges. We look first at distinctions between exilipes Hoary and nominate Common Redpoll, then at differences between Hornemann’s Redpoll and exilipes Hoary Redpoll, and lastly at differences between Greater Redpoll and nominate Common Redpoll. Thankfully, Hornemann’s and Greater have very dissimilar plumages, but a few of the images that follow depict the two together.

Redpoll identification: history and cautionary considerations

Although most field guides to North American birds illustrate basic differences between typical adult Common and Hoary Redpolls fairly well, the field marks emphasized in these guides must often be used in conjunction with subtle characters to make a strong case for identifying many individuals. Redpoll plumages have been critically described in the American scientific literature since Coutes (1861) and Ridgway (1901). Various authors have recognized between one and six species of redpoll, though most recognize just two in North America, Hoary and Common, these being distinguished chiefly by plumage features rather than measurements. Troy (1985) collected redpoll specimens (nominate Common and exilipes Hoary only) from Alaska to northern Quebec and focused on streaking in undertail coverts, rump, and flanks as a way to evaluate plumage variation in redpolls, which he treated as a single species. That treatment has not been followed by subsequent authors, who treat Common and Hoary as distinct species (Molau 1985, Knox 1988, Herremans 1990, Seutin et al. 1992, 1993, 1995). Most authors indicate that differences in streaking have some value when distinguishing the generally less-streaked Hoary from the more-streaked Common, but all authors who discuss field identification caution that some individuals may not be identifiable to species or subspecies.

Knox and Lowther (2000b), for instance, indicate that nominate Common Redpoll (Figure 2) usually shows “broad streaks on undertail coverts” and a “rump normally with extensive streaks; adult male [exilipes] Hoary Redpolls have at most 1-3 hairline streaks on longest undertail coverts.” Also in exilipes, the flanks and breast tend to show less streaking (and generally finer streaks on average) than in nominate Common, and mantle feathers and scapulars tend to be paler, as do the edges of upperwing coverts and secondaries. Finally, the uppersparts tend toward white and gray in Hoary, toward buffy and brown in Common, though some exilipes Hoaries have buffy tones in the head and back (Knox and Lowther 2000b) and Hornemann’s frequently have such tones (van den Berg et al. 2007).

These general differences between the palest, least streaked Hoary Redpolls and the darkest, most heavily streaked Common are helpful when an observer is just gaining confidence in identifying redpolls to species. As one begins to look carefully through large flocks of redpolls, however, it becomes clear that there are many birds that seem to be intermediate between the more stereotypical Common and Hoary and that differences in plumage appear to form a continuum, with some individuals falling into a gray area not adequately treated in field guides. As Pittaway (1992, 2007) has emphasized, part of the reason for the extensive variation we observe is that each taxon shows plumage variation by age and sex—thus each has mini-
Figure 2. Common Redpolls of the nominate subspecies normally make up over 99% of the redpolls observed in feeder flocks in southern Canada and the United States. Their plumage tones are generally browner than in Hoary, their streaking below more extensive and broader, especially along the flanks, their cap and facial markings more extensive, and the white in their remiges and coverts less extensive. Adult males, such as these, usually show pink and rose colors in the underparts, especially pronounced from midwinter into spring, as the pale edges of these feathers wear. Adult females show limited or no rosy tones below, and first-year birds often have none. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

Figure 3. "Duller-plumaged" leucistic redpolls pose real problems for field identification. Common or Hoary? The small bill and very small red "poll" might suggest the latter. Ottawa, Ontario, 19 February 2011. Photograph by Wilson Hum.

Figure 4. Obviously leucistic redpolls with patchy, "piebald" plumages can sometimes be identified to species by looking carefully at the parts of plumage that are normally pigmented or by comparing the bird's bill to adjacent redpolls. However, some individuals, such as this one at Cobourg, Ontario on 6 March 2011, may be best left unidentified. Photograph by Harvey Gold.

Figure 5. Especially when seen together, "classic" exilipes Hoary (left) and nominate Common (right) Redpolls are straightforward to identify. Hoary's much whiter plumage, more sparsely streaked (or unstreaked) flanks, smaller bill, as well as its (sometimes) less extensive red "poll" and reduced dark plumage around the bill, make it stand out next to a darker, streakier, more colorful Common. When comparing bills of redpolls, observers should assess relative size/shape when birds are in perfect profile (cf. Figure 7), rather than when bills are turned and thus foreshortened, as with the Common here. The photographer notes that these redpolls were both small birds, comparable in size, thus the Hoary was certainly an exilipes rather than a nominate bird. The extent of pink on the Common's breast suggests a male, while the grayish head and mantle of the Hoary and its lack of rosy tones below suggest that it is not an adult male but possibly an adult female. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

Figure 6. This adult exilipes Hoary Redpoll shows the extensive feathering covering the bill that is often, but not always, seen in Hoaries. The rich rosy cap and pink tones in the breast suggest an adult male, some of which show very little pink below, especially early in the winter, when the plumage is still relatively fresh. Marathon, Ontario, 28 January 2011. Photograph by Michael Z. Butker.
mally four plumages that may be present in a flock. As with one's first encounters with mixed-species flocks of rosefinches (Leucosticte spp.), sorting through the different plumages can be daunting. Articles on redpoll identification that use photographs of specimens and/or captured birds often show disheveled plumages or birds in odd poses, which can obscure some distinctions. Studying birds in life has its challenges but is a requisite for understanding redpoll plumages and structures.

Probably because Hoary Redpoll has been considered very rare in most areas, observers have often assumed that birds that appeared "intermediate" between the field guide illustrations were paler-than-average Common Redpolls. In some cases, that may be accurate. In field identification, birders frequently opt for the species presumed to be most likely; one could say that birders often apply Occam's razor, the law of parsimony, when faced with possible new hypotheses. Over the past several decades, however, assumptions about the status, distribution, and identification of Hoary Redpoll have given way to the realization that even some southerly redpolls flocks (e.g., Czaplak 1995) may contain multiple Hoary Redpolls—and that few if any of these will be adult males. Echoing the findings of Knox (1988), Kaufman (1994) summarized the problem facing birders: "it may be that our image of the 'typical' Hoary is really based on extreme individuals. This conservative approach to identifying this species is commendable but may skew our perception of its actual numbers, with only the palest individuals being detected most of the time." One might modify that sentiment: with only the palest individuals being readily accepted by the birding community and records committees. We might rightly suspect that at least some birds identified in the past as 'pale Commons' were instead first-year exilipes Hoary Redpolls. Of course, Common Redpolls also show variation, no less important to study and consider than variation in exilipes Hoary and other taxa.

Birds of intermediate appearance have also sometimes been presumed to be hybrids. As yet, no documentation exists of either a mixed redpoll pair or a hybrid in North America, and field studies suggest that nominate Common and exilipes Hoary behave as separate species (see Molau 1985, Knox 1988, Seutin et al. 1992, 1993, 1995). Detailed studies over large parts of these birds' breeding ranges are lacking, however, and many questions remain unanswered; hybridization is certainly possible. Although studies have thus far detected low genetic distinctiveness between the redpoll taxa (Seutin et al. 1995, Mathisens et al. 2008), authors of the latter study acknowledged that genetic differentiation could be too recent and/or rapid to be detected with the genetic markers they investigated. Indeed, a recent study of the diverse Darwin's finches detected surprisingly high genetic homogeneity (Freeland and Boag 1999). It is certainly possible that some birds considered "intermediates" or hybrids in the past (e.g., Wetherbee 1937) were so classed because redpolls' plumage variations by sex, age, and degree of wear were under-appreciated, as some authors have maintained (Molau 1985, Knox 1988; see Coues 1861). Birds with aberrant plumages may also pose problems. Leucistic Common Redpolls have been photographed, for instance, though such birds have shown blotchy patterns of white, rather than being uniformly paler in plumage; nevertheless, a "dilute-plumaged" Common Redpoll could surely be mistaken for a Hoary (Figures 3, 4). As is true of a great many congeners, some redpolls of intermediate appearance are best left unidentified: to record a "redpoll sp." is to acknowledge honestly a limit of field identification. Taking notes on such birds, photographing them, and discussing them with others is a superb way to move the conversation forward on redpoll identification.

Continued on page 212

Figure 7. Distinguishing Common and Hoary Redpolls becomes most difficult when dealing with the least-differentiated plumages, namely those of females and young birds. The larger bill, heavy brownish flank streaking, and generally brownish tones of the bird on the left indicate a Common Redpoll, and the lack of color in the breast suggests that it is not an adult male—more likely an adult female or a first-year bird. On the right, the tiny bill, unstreaked undertail coverts, small red "poll," and overall fainter tones point toward an exilipes Hoary Redpoll, but again, not an adult male, more likely a first-year bird. In the wing, the Hoary shows more extensive white edges to remiges and coverts than the Common. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

Figure 8. This rather streaky exilipes Hoary Redpoll, a first-year bird, shows a very limited area of white in the rump, similar to many Commons. The buff tones in the cheek are more often seen in first-year Hoaries, but some adults also have buff in the face (Lansdown et al. 1991). This bird's very small bill and whitish ground color permit identification as exilipes Hoary. Once thought to be the "gold standard" for redpoll identification, rump color/pattern in young redpolls, and even adults, can be useful for identification, but extensive variation in both species limits its value. According to Pyle (1997), the tapered rather than truncate tips of the outer three rectrices indicate a first-year (HY/SY) individual here. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.
This apparent adult Hornemann’s Redpoll shows a blush of pink not just in the breast but also in the malar area, the rump, and the outer rectrices. The identification as Hornemann’s was made when it was near nominate Common Redpolls. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.
PHOTO ESSAY: REDPOLLS FROM NUNAVUT AND GREENLAND VISIT ONTARIO

Figure 15. When a redpoll looks like a snowball, it's worth a photograph. Although this bird near Marathon, Ontario has fluffed its plumage and raised its wings, exaggerating the rotundity of its appearance, its overall whiteness and limited streaking certainly indicate an adult male Hoary. However, its size, when observed a few moments later among nominate Common Redpolls, was similar to its flockmates, which suggests an adult male exilipes Hoary rather than Hornemann's. Judging size of redpolls is extremely difficult without the context of other individuals, ideally of other taxa! Marathon, Ontario, 6 January 2011. Photograph by Michael T. Butler.

Figure 16. This exilipes Hoary Redpoll, probably an adult, possibly female, shows the feathering around the tibia, the "pantaloons," often seen in this species. Marathon, Ontario, 11 January 2011. Photograph by Michael T. Butler.

Figure 17. A Hornemann's Redpoll, possibly an adult female, with a nominate Common Redpoll. On paper, differences in length of 10-14% may seem slight, but Hornemann's also average significantly heavier than both nominate Common and exilipes Hoary. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

Figure 18. First-year Hornemann's Redpolls show more streaking below, lack pink tones in the breast, and are less strikingly white overall than adults, but they still almost always appear much larger than the smaller taxa (here with a nominate Common, most likely an adult male), especially when seen in close proximity. Matheson, Ontario, 18 February 2011. Photograph by Brandon R. Holden.

Figure 19. With the extensive buff in mantle, head, and upper breast, this Hornemann's Redpoll may be a first-year bird. Note the extensive white edges of tertials and greater coverts and very large snow-white rump. Matheson, Ontario, 27 January 2011. Photograph by Michael T. Butler.

Figure 20. Readily identifiable by plumage as a Hoary and by size as a Hornemann's (a Greater Redpoll behind it was judged to be of similar size), this bird appears less whirlist in tone and has more streaking below than an adult male. It is probably a first-year bird or possibly an adult female. Marathon, Ontario, 6 January 2011. Photograph by Michael T. Butler.
Redpolls, like young jaegers, show enough variation in plumage that no single feature or even small set of features has been considered reliable for producing an accurate identification in the field. Instead, it is necessary to evaluate all aspects of plumage, and structure, to build a case for identification, at least for the more challenging individuals. Many of the features associated with one species or the other require qualification, and indeed even some of the more reliable features that permit many individuals to be identified to species should not be applied in an absolute sense. Beginning students of redpoll identification will profit from prolonged field study and from extensive photographic documentation of the birds they observe. Plumage tones and contrasts can appear to vary because of lighting (and photographic exposure and manipulation), and in redpolls they also vary with sex and age, with adults being generally paler and more colorful than first-year birds and males likewise being paler overall and also more colorful (in crown, rump, and breast, where plumage shows red or pink) than females. Variation by age and sex has yet to be the subject of a large scientific study in North America, though for nominate Common Redpoll, for instance, we do know from field studies that adult males show the most rosy red or pink in the breast (Figure 2), that first-winter males tend to be darker than adult males and often show just a wash of pink, that adult females may show just a blush of pink but usually lack it, and that first-year females tend to be darker overall than other plumages, with more streaking and no pink in the breast. The red/pink breast color in nominate Common Redpoll intensifies toward spring, as the pale tips of breast feathers wear (Lansdown et al. 1991). Other redpoll taxa show similar age- and sex-related distinctions between plumages, but many of the age/sex labels applied to redpolls in the field must be considered educated guesswork, especially when birds are not examined in the hand.

Even structural differences used to identify redpolls, such as the supposedly smaller, "pushed-in" (more obtuse) appearance of exilipes Hoary's bill, should be applied with caution: studies have found minimal or no difference in the length of the bill between these species in North America (Knox and Lowther 2000b). A redpoll that turns its head even slightly out of perfect profile may appear to have a stubbier bill than it actually does (Figure 5); some Common Redpolls have bills that appear small, and some exilipes Hoaries' bills do not exhibit a "pushed-in" appearance (Lansdown et al. 1991)—and Hornemann's Redpoll has a comparatively larger bill (van den Berg et al. 2007). Redpoll observers have noted that the smaller-billed look of exilipes Hoary results in part from having more extensive plumage covering the base of the bill, but this aspect is also variable (Figure 6). Redpolls of all species often fluff up their plumage against cold conditions, and in the process, their plumage may appear suddenly paler or whiter, as dark-centered feathers become concealed beneath the lighter plumage. A redpoll's overall body shape, head shape, and relative size may also appear to change, depending on the bird's activity. To gauge relative proportions and size with accuracy, it may be necessary to study and photograph individuals over many minutes, which is not always easy with flighty, fidgety flocks. Generally, Hoary's very dense plumage gives it a bulkier appearance in body, head, and neck than Common, and this, along with exilipes Hoary's paler plumage, is normally how birders begin the process of separating these species in a mixed flock (Figure 5).

In areas where most birders encounter them in winter, redpoll flocks are usually predominantly composed of nominate Commons, with a few exilipes Hoaries mixed in on occasion, though winter 2010–2011 saw more reports of Hoaries than usual in many areas.
Distinguishing *exilipes* Hoary from nominate Common
All of the distinctions illustrated in the field guides will help birders correctly identify a classic Common or Hoary Redpoll, and a careful birder would be unlikely to mistake a typical dark Common Redpoll for an adult Hoary. But there are many exceptions to the familiar field marks. A few Commons, almost certainly males, show minimally streaked undertail coverts and flanks, remarkably white rumps, and little pink in the breast (especially in fresh plumage in autumn and early winter), thus closer to a Hoary. Likewise, a first-winter female Hoary is generally the darkest of the post-juvenile plumages in that species, thus approaching female Common Redpoll in general appearance (Figures 7, 8). (Note: the feathers referred to as the “rump” here are those between the mantle and the uppertail coverts, Figure 9.)

With birds away from the obvious extremes of typical Common or Hoary, it is necessary to consider not just the well-known distinguishing features but also the “soft” distinctions. Some *exilipes* Hoary Redpolls, for instance, show a markedly smaller red forecrown patch than a typical Common (Lansdown et al. 1991; Figures 5, 7). Most also show less extensive black in the chin and lores than Commons of the same age/sex, and this area of darker plumage in Hoary often looks more gray or brownish gray than truly black (Knox and Lowther 2000b; Figure 5-8, 10-12). Also, compared to nominate Common Redpoll, corresponding plumages of *exilipes* Hoary show much less pink on the breast, with adult males often showing very little (Knox and Lowther 2000b; Figure 12). The quality of the pink is also typically much less intense than in Common Redpolls, though there is much variation in this feature in Common (Lansdown et al. 1991). (Lighting conditions can either diminish or exaggerate this tone.) Some redpoll observers indicate that Hoary also shows not just more feathering around the bill, on average, than Common but also more feathering around the legs (Figures 6, 16). These features can be difficult to study, evaluate, and document. Description of most of them is subjective by nature—and some have in fact been called “useless” for distinguishing these taxa. But they may be supportive of a case for identification that is built primarily on other aspects of plumage.

Distinguishing Hornemann’s from *exilipes* Hoary
Its remote haunts and snow-white plumage made Hornemann’s Redpoll (Figures 13-14, 17-22) a subject of fascination for early North American ornithologists. More recently, birders have attempted to familiarize themselves with this taxon through the “Life Histories of North American Birds” series edited by Arthur C. Bent, which contains extensive descriptions of both Hoary Redpoll subspecies (Austin 1968, Baldwin 1968), and through illustrations in a few field guides (National Geographic Society 1983; Sibley 2000). But this taxon receives rather thin treatment in most twentieth-century articles on Hoary Redpoll identification (Lansdown et al. 1991, Jannes 1995, Tietjer et al. 2000) and in the Hoary Redpoll accounts in more recent specialty guides (e.g., Beadle and Rising 2006). In fact, there have been very few convincing images of Hornemann’s published in North America, and only a handful of birders know it well in life. Yves Aubry, Michel Gosselin, and Richard Yank (1987) wrote of Hornemann’s: “a huge and distinctive white bird,” “a great rarity south of the tundra at any season.”

Averaging 14.0 cm in length, Hornemann’s is the largest of all redpoll taxa, about 11% longer than most *exilipes* (averaging 12.5 cm) and slightly larger than Greater Redpoll (Knox and Lowther 2000b). Such size differences may seem slight, but they are sometimes apparent in the field when birds of different taxa are seen together (Figures 24, 25).
15, 17, 18, 20)—and they are especially useful when one is studying a plumage other than adult male (Figures 18, 19, 21). Hornemann's exaggerates the features most associated with exilipes when compared to Common, appearing even whiter overall than most exilipes (in all parts of the plumage), with even bulkier body, longer wings and tail, thicker neck, and extensive feathering around the tobia that look like wispy "pantaloons"—a phrase coined by Adirondack bander John M. C. Peterson during what was likely the largest irruption of Hoaries ever recorded in the eastern United States (Buckley and Kane 1974). Adult males have less pink than exilipes, some showing only a trace of suffused pink on the breast, but some also show pink in the rump (Knox and Lowther 2000b; Figure 12). Adult females and first-year birds are not as blindingly white as adult males but are often recognizable by their size when compared directly to the smaller taxa flammea and exilipes (Figure 17, 18). These plumages appear to show more buffy tones in the head, breast, and mantle and no pink whatsoever (Herremans 1991; van den Berg et al. 2007).

The American Ornithologists' Union's Check-list Committee (A.O.U. 1998) suggests that the two taxa of pale redpolls "may represent separate species, C. exilipes (Coues 1861) [Hoary Redpoll] and C. hornemanni [Hornemann's Redpoll]." In North America, the attractive Hornemann's has been detected as far from typical range as Fairbanks, Alaska (A.O.U. 1998). The mainland of Europe has records of Hornemann's from near Abbeville, France (Degland and Gerbe 1967), at Bauvin, Pas-de-Calais, France 1 February 1966 (Dubois et al. 2009), and on Ushant Island, France 19-21 October 1986 (Dubois et al. 2008), as well as from Germany and Belgium (Höppop 1996; Herremans 1991), and a recent vagrant Hornemann's in Holland was the occasion for a paper that advocated restoring Hornemann's to full-species status (van den Berg et al. 2007). It is certainly worth keeping Hornemann's in mind when watching redpolls anywhere.

Distinguishing Greater Redpoll from nominate Common Redpoll
Much as Hornemann's Redpoll can be considered a larger, whiter, and less-streaked version of exilipes Hoary, so Greater Redpoll resembles a darker, larger version of nominate Common, averaging about 10% longer and at least 25% heavier (Knox and Lowther 2000a). When observed in direct comparison with nominate Common—and even when observed alone—Greater has a distinctly different shape, with a heavier body (especially neck and breast), heavier bill, and longer tail (Beadle and Henshaw 1996) (Figure 23). Many Greaters also seem to have a more bulbous culmen than nominate Commons (Beadle and Rising 2006). Greater's plumage tones are also darker, with reduced pale feather edgings in comparison to nominate Common. The streaking of the underparts (breast, sides, and undertail covers) is heavier and darker in Greater than Common, the black adjacent the bill (chin, lores) is more extensive (Figure 24), and the nape and auriculares are also darker overall. The dark streaking below is so extensive that it dominates the underparts, with many streaks both thick and long/continuous (Figure 25). The intensely rosy red tones of some adult male nominate Commons are almost never matched by adult male Greaters, and Beadle and Rising (2006) indicate that male Greaters show no red in the malar area, which male nominate Commons sometimes do show. The more lightly marked Greaters (Figure 26), probably first-year birds, may be best distinguished by their larger size—and often by their shape, both huskier in the chest and longer in the bodytail. Some observers assert that Greaters resting in trees appear to perch more upright than nominate Commons, and this tendency, combined with their larger size, darker plumage, and heavier bill, has led some observers to liken their shape to that of House Finch (Carpodacus mexicanus).

Closing thoughts
When studying redpolls, observers should also be alert for subtle differences in behavior and should try to record vocalizations of individual birds that appear different. Some observers who have spent a lot of time watching mixed redpoll flocks have indicated that they can sometimes pick out an adult male Hoary Redpoll in flight, though identification should be verified by plumage features. Many observers have described subtle but distinctive differences in calls between Hoary and Common, which agrees with the limited literature on the subject (Knox 1988, Herremans 1989, Lansdown et al. 1991). So strikingly large and white were the Hornemann's in mixed redpoll flocks in February 2011 (Figure 27) that Brandon Holden called them the "abominable snow monsters." Greaters may also be first detected by vocalizations; according to some, their calls generally sound harsher than those of nominate Commons.

Observers in eastern Canada might also want to be on the lookout for the rather small, streaky Lesser Redpoll (A. cabaret) of Europe, a specimen of which was taken in eastern Greenland at Kuummit on 6 September 1933 (Boertmann 1994). And even closer to North America, Common Redpolls that nest in Iceland, subspecies islandica, can be quite variable, with many appearing intermediate between nominate Common and Greater, but some birds being quite pale, very similar to exilipes or to the palest nominate Commons (Knox 1988, Lansdown et al. 1991, Pennington and Maher 2005). So how would one rule out an Icelandic Redpoll in the case of an "intermediate"-looking bird in northeastern Canada, for instance? We do not know.

There is surely much more to discover in our own backyards.

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Literature cited
The Weather

In a departure from the norm, let’s look at the weather in Europe last winter, which many online weather prognosticators said would surely be mild to average. If we were to exclude weather conditions from late November through early January, their forecasts would have been accurate.

Europe’s cold spell started in earnest in late November, when a low-pressure area moved across Russia and Scandinavia toward the Low Countries and the British Isles. As in winter 2009, a strong dome of high pressure was stationed over Greenland, which is anomalous; the effect of this high, combined with the low centered over the Baltics on 24 November, was to draw very cold Arctic air southward. The Icelandic Low, usually positioned between Iceland and Greenland, moved well to the east of Iceland on several occasions, exacerbating the cold over the United Kingdom and western Europe.

Heavy snowfalls startled cities accustomed to very little snow, especially in the United Kingdom, where temperatures were also much colder than normal (and colder much earlier than normal). According to the UK Met Office, both Wales and Northern Ireland recorded their coldest November temperatures ever, −17.3°C (0.9°F) in Wales and −9.5°C (14.9°F) in Northern Ireland, both 28 November. In December, mean temperatures across the British Isles were a full 5°C below average. January was about average and February actually warmer than average by almost 2°C. So although the meteorological winter season (December through February) didn’t shatter any all-time records as a whole, the month of December was the coldest the United Kingdom had seen in more than 100 years. Widespread snowfalls in early December and again from mid- through late December played havoc with holiday travel, as was widely broadcast by North American news media.

Meteorologists continue to discuss the possible relationships of Europe’s early winter pattern to broad-scale atmospheric features such as the Siberian Anticyclone, La Niña conditions, and even the recently described Arctic Dipole Anomaly, but birders in the United Kingdom, and increasingly in North America, attend mostly to the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) index, available online considered at length in this essay just last year (Brinkley 2010). Strongly negative NAO indices are associated with cold and with precipitation in the eastern United States and western Europe, and the index averages for November 2010, December 2010, and January 2011 were −1.84, −1.80, and −1.53, respectively—not the stark figures of the previous winter (such as −2.69 of February 2010) but big dips from the middling indices of the late autumn 2010. In the United Kingdom, this cold early winter came on the heels of the brutal 2009–2010 winter; its coldest winter in 30 years, associated with strongly negative NAO indices but also believed to be linked to the rather strong El Niño event. Perhaps the reason that so many people predicted a much milder subsequent winter in Europe was that La Niña had replaced El Niño (and this may be true of January and February).

Issuing its winter forecast for the United States on 21 October 2010, the Climate Prediction Center (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) called for a cold, wet winter in the Pacific Northwest and a warm, dry winter in the South and Southeast—but hedged its forecast: “A moderate to strong La Niña will be the dominant climate factor influencing weather across most of the U.S. this winter. […] Last winter’s El Niño contributed to record-breaking rain and snowfall leading to severe flooding in some parts of the country, with record heat and drought in other parts of the country. Although La Niña is the opposite of El Niño, it also has the potential to bring weather extremes to parts of the nation.” Their report also contained the additional, now annual caveat: “Some of these factors, such as the North Atlantic Oscillation, are difficult to predict more than one to two weeks in advance. The NAO adds uncertainty to the forecast in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic portions of the country” (NOAA 2010). So, reading between the lines a bit, we have one broad-scale atmospheric feature, La Niña, that is usually associated with mild winters in the South and Southeast, but another index, the NAO, which meteorologists cannot forecast in the longer term and which, if it goes negative, could easily offset whatever effects La Niña might have. As considered in this essay last winter, the Arctic Oscillation (AO) index may also have short-term predictive value, especially for those attempting to antici-
pate weather trends in the eastern part of North America. As with the NAO, index data for the AO are made available online by the Climate Prediction Center on a daily basis (Climate Prediction Center: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/daily_ao_index/ao_index.html>). And folks watching this index saw it plummet sharply in December 2010: down more than two points to −2.63.

So those keeping up with the NAO and AO last winter were among the few not to be taken off guard by the cold air and snowstorms that again clobbered many of the large cities of the East, from Atlanta to Boston, during the winter. The shock and awe of the television weather forecasts were already old news to you, and, having watched the previous winter's pattern, you are likely not surprised to see Blake Maybank's characterization of the winter in easternmost Canada as "unmemorable": "A desultory mix of snow, rain, and sunshine. There were several modest storms, including two frisky blows in the second half of January, slightly troublesome..." As we know, high pressure over Greenland in winter changes the normal wind pattern in the northwestern Atlantic. This "Greenland block," as it is nicknamed, brings warm air into northeastern Canada and cold air into western Europe and across much of eastern North America, aside from northern New England and the Atlantic provinces (Figure 1). With the polar jet stream riding high above the block, Arctic air spills southward on either side, drawn down from northern Canada and from Siberia alike, into the deep troughs flanking the block. In the American West (the other side of the trough), temperatures were quite warm: New Mexico had its second warmest December, both Colorado and Arizona had their fourth warmest, for instance, while much of the East was in the meat locker.

In this Greenland block pattern, too, low-pressure systems advected along the jet stream tend to be "blocked" from progressing around the high, stalling for a time over Canada's easternmost provinces, which brings a southerly flow there but a strong northerly or northwesterly flow from the Arctic to most of the eastern half of North America. Along with online (and even television) discussions of the NAO/AO, coverage of the Greenland block was all the rage on The WeatherChannel, giving birders a serviceable, real-time understanding of the weather phenomena driving at least some of the bird distribution anomalies we documented as the season progressed, and especially the winter's most memorable events—the widespread influx of European birds into the Northeast, the push of many field birds south of typical areas, and even the reverse flights of Killdeer in December. In addition, we saw a great mix of winter bird movements, of redpolls and dovekies, that are usually called "irruptions" but that certainly may share common attributes with the less-expected flights, some of which are often called "escape flights."

But before we get to the birds, we should do our duty by the weather patterns in greater detail. The winter temperatures for the United States averaged almost a degree cooler than normal, with most of the colder-than-average weather experienced east of the Rockies, a familiar refrain to readers of this column. Unlike in Europe, the winter's grip persisted well into February for most states, though Maine had a comparatively mild season, along with easternmost Canada. Georgia and Florida had winters nearly 4°F below their twentieth-century averages, with devastating losses to agriculture in Florida from freezing conditions, as Bruce Anderson and Andy Bankert write. In fact, Florida and Georgia's December was their coldest ever in the 1895–2010 record, and eleven states, in the Midwest, mid-Atlantic, and Gulf coast, logged their tenth coldest, or colder, December. Although the winter was wet and warmer than usual—as predicted—in the northwestern part of the continent, thanks to the Pineapple Express, much of the winter was dry across the South and the Southeast. Expanding drought conditions in the southern Great Plains and Southeast were ominous already in December, and by the end of that month, fully one quarter of the area of the Lower 48 states was categorized as being in moderate to extreme drought. Part of the problem for the southern tier of U.S. states, an area of high pressure was frequently stationed over the Gulf of Mexico, which kept moisture-laden low-pressure areas away. Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina all had their third driest winter seasons ever. This dryness also makes sense, given broad-scale atmospheric features identified this season: La Niña is often associated with conditions in the southern tier states, and a strongly negative AO index is also associated with dry conditions in the same region. The generally dry winter was mere preamble to the catastrophic drought that would be the hallmark of the spring and summer of 2011 from the desert Southwest to the Carolinas. December was also memorable for the unwelcome intensity of cold and strong storms across very large areas, including tornadoes in the Mississippi River valley and Midwest through the end of the year. More than half of the United States had snow cover by Christmas, and parts of Georgia—including, for the first time, Atlanta—experienced a rare White Christmas, according to Ken Blankenship. The first big blizzard of the season struck the
East 26-27 December, and though many forecasters believed it would be a non-event, the storm dropped abundant snow from the Carolinas to New England, with snowfall totals as high as 40 cm in western North Carolina, a record 50 cm in coastal Virginia, 50 cm in New York's Central Park (the sixth largest recorded there), and up to 80 cm in New Jersey and downtown New York. In the West and the northern Great Plains, Pacific moisture flowed into many areas south of Alaska, giving the Great Basin states of Utah and Nevada their wettest December in the 116-year record, with Minnesota and North Dakota recording their fourth and fifth wettest. California's December was its seventh wettest, and by the end of the month, the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada had up to 2.5 m (8 feet) of snow twice the norm. As a result of December's precipitation events, and continued wet patterns well into April, spring 2011 would see very high river levels in many parts of the western mountains, often featured on television using footage from Yosemite National Park. After all the snow had settled, the month was the seventh snowiest December on record for the Lower 48 states.

The December pattern, with a high-pressure ridge dominating the West, a low-pressure trough over the East, continued through January, which was 0.8°F below the 1901-2000 average, though most of the cold was in the East. The (PNA), another useful atmospheric circulation index, was negative in December (around ~1.78) but positive during much of January (averaging 1.29). A positive PNA index value in winter is typically associated with warmer-than-normal temperatures along the Pacific coast, and such was certainly the case in January. As in December, Pacific storms continued to come ashore in the Northwest, cross the mountainous West, and dump copious amounts of rain in the central and northern Great Plains, while areas to the south stayed dry. The month was in fact the ninth driest January on record in the United States, with the Great Basin and Southwest suffering severe setbacks after their rainy December. Other storm systems developed in the southern Great Plains, bringing Arctic/Canadian air with Gulf moisture to create snow-maker storms, most memorably 8-13 January and again 25-27 January, both far-reaching storms that snowed in major cities, though most had under two feet in total. At Hartford, Connecticut, 145 cm (almost 5 feet) of snow fell in January, a new record. Although snowfall was considered heavy in many areas of the East and even Southeast, the actual precipitation totals were in fact still well below average in most places, despite appearances to the contrary.

Many of us recall a storm or two in February, which was a wild ride across most of the continent, as the polar jet stream shifted sharply southward, bringing temperatures as much as 15°F below normal from the southern Great Plains to the Southeast. Even the West got a slug of real cold weather at last, and snow fell across much of the northern two-thirds of North America, with only the southernmost areas snow-free at mid-month. The severe “Groundhog Day Blizzard” of 1-2 February brought snow to 22 states and five provinces, from New Mexico and northern Texas to the Great Lakes, New England, and eastern Canada. By 10 February, almost two-thirds of Lower 48 had snow cover; Florida was the only state with none. In the middle of February, the jet stream lifted, and storms tracked chiefly across the West and the northern United States. Temperatures warmed during this period, but severe winter storms and dozens of tornadoes struck again at month’s end. Though the South and Southeast got a little rain early in February, the month was mostly warm and dry there, and the earlier rain was not enough to prevent widespread wildfires, which burned 187,000 acres, the second worst February on record for acreage burned. Drought conditions expanded to cover almost 30 percent of the United States, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, but from Montana to the Dakotas to Manitoba and Minnesota, precipitation throughout the season set the stage for catastrophic flooding later in the year. The Missouri River and the Mississippi River flooding in spring was some of the worst in recorded history, comparable to the Great Floods of 1927 and 1993.

Escapes I: European birds

Despite some feelings of guilt for leading the essay once again with the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec, one must give the eastern Canadians their due. They turned up a marvelous array of European birds this season: as many as a dozen Northern Lapwings, three Common Snipe, a Jack Snipe, four Redwings, a Fieldfare, a Common Chaffinch, even a European Greenfinch (Table 1; the greenfinch is assumed to have been an escaped cage bird, but see Maybank’s S.A. Box in the lead regional report). New England also had two lapwings a few days earlier (see the Fall Migration issue).

So what do we have in these reports? The number of lapwings is difficult to tally accurately, as they tend to disperse widely after arrival, and birders are thinly distributed in Newfoundland, so dates of New World arrival versus dates of detection are probably far apart for some individuals, and there is al-
Figure 3. Surface weather conditions in the eastern North Atlantic at 6:00 p.m. (Dublin, Ireland), 30 November 2010. In theory, at least some of the Northern Lapwings that departed Europe and the British Isles to arrive in Canada in early December could have done so at this time, as bitter cold settled over much of Europe. Map courtesy of the National Climatic Data Center/U.S. Department of Commerce.

most certainly some duplication of individuals in the sightings. Nevertheless, it seems that many must have departed the Old World between the last few days of November and the first half of December, the time of the deepest cold in western Europe and the United Kingdom. It seems clear that these birds were fleeing the cold conditions. What about the snipe? Their dates of detection are much later, in mid- to late February. But snipe are much less conspicuous than the flashy lapwings, tending to keep a low profile in ice-free ditches, creek edges, and sheltered coves. As a matter of fact, the snipe at Torbay were first noticed there on 1 February, but it was not until weeks later that their tricky identification was worked out. An even less conspicuous species, the Jack Snipe was seen only once, 14 February, but it could have been present for some time as well. Even where Jack Snipe are not especially rare, they can be only slightly less difficult to locate and see than Yellow Rail, so the finder, Paul Linegar, is to be commended not just for finding the bird but also photographing it after sunset! The passerines from Europe, finches and thrushes, were few in number and not concentrated in time. The number of thrushes, moreover, is not all that unusual for recent winters in the Maritimes.

So we have mostly a lapwing flight that ties to our weather phenomenon, with possibly some snipe as well. Few Northern Lapwings were seen in Iceland this past season, just singles 2 and 4-14 November and another 1-3 January (“a bad winter for them,” Yann Kolbeinsson, pers. comm.), so the Canadian lapwings probably came from the British Isles, the nearest to Canada being Ireland. Common Snipe breeds in Iceland abundantly, but relatively few winter there; and Jack Snipe is a rare late-autumn visitor there, usually found near seeps that are kept ice-free by natural hot springs. So the snipe could have come from Iceland, but we should consider the British Isles, the likely source of the lapwings, as a stronger possibility. It may be difficult for us to imagine cold-stressed birds making a successful trans-Atlantic flight, but if we look at the air flow during much of the period in question, we see that the high over Greenland produced strong easterlies, favorable for travel between Ireland and Newfoundland (Figures 3, 4) but very unfavorable for birds moving to or from Iceland. Just as a classic Greenland block pattern in springtime shunts northbound migrants such as European Golden-Plovers westward toward Canada, so in theory it would permit “escape flights” of some species across the Atlantic during periods of killing cold.

There are very few trans-Atlantic flights of lapwing on this scale with which to compare the 2010–2011 flight. A larger influx in mid-January 1966 (Christie and Emery 1966) included about 33 birds. In December 1927, Canadians witnessed a flight of several thousand lapwings, elegantly described by Withersby (1928) for American audiences in Bird-Lore, the earliest predecessor of North American Birds, with supplemental records from Labrador provided by Austin (1929). Aaron M. Bagg, whose essays on weather and bird movements are still among the most engaging this journal has featured (Bagg 1957, Bagg and Baird 1961) and who was editor for the journal's Northeastern Maritime region (1959–1965), composed a detailed article on both flights for The Living Bird (Bagg 1967). Newfoundland meteorologist J. J. Moakler (1969) also wrote a short piece on the flights for the journal Atmosphere. Withersby, Bagg, and Moakler all stress the importance of a powerful low-pressure system in the North Atlantic that acted as conveyor to the birds, which were already observed to be moving in large numbers away from Scotland/England and the continent toward the warmer climes of Ireland, a fairly common movement during cold snaps. They also discuss the high pressure farther north, over Scandinavia, a feature that brings down the cold air mass that occasions the facultative movement of the lapwings. In the case of the 1966 event, the high pressure area shifted westward over several
days to include Iceland and much of Greenland. Withbery, Bagg, and Moakler theorize that the lapwings were driven westward to Canada by the strong easterlies generated between these high- and low-pressure areas. Withbery (1928) calculates the birds’ ground speed at about 100 miles per hour and notes that the transit of 2000 miles could be made in under 24 hours.

We see in the weather maps for 1927 and 1966 (Bagg 1967; Figure 6) that the usual winter Icelandic Low is not in place; instead, high pressure is found over or near Iceland, with low-pressure areas well to the south, in the North Atlantic. And what were the monthly averages for the NAO index back then? In January 1966, it was -2.54. In December 1927, it was -3.50, a monstrous number. If we look at North Atlantic weather maps for late November and early December 2010 (Figures 3, 4), we see a set-up similar to that of mid-January 1966 (Figure 6), with highs to the north, lows to the south, and easterlies blowing from Ireland to Newfoundland. No lapwings at all were recorded in Iceland in 1927, and only six were noted there in January/February 1966 (Bagg 1967; Yann Kolbeinsson, pers. comm.). So high pressure near Iceland keeps westbound lapwings mostly away from Iceland; those that are found in Canada probably flew straight downwind, with the easterlies. As Bagg (1967) opined of the twentieth-century lapwing flights, there were almost certainly multiple departures of birds over the course of several days or even weeks; and even though the number of birds observed in 2010-2011 was smaller, the span of dates suggests that the same was true of last winter’s flight.

And the lagniappe of the lapwing flights of yore? There were no other European birds found in North America in January 1966, it seems. The 1927 flight, however, brought in not just thousands of lapwings but a Jack Snipe and a Common Snipe at Jack Lane Bay, Labrador 24 December 1927 (Austin 1929). (Oliver L. Austin, Jr., by the way, confessed to being astonished that the local woman from Makkovik who shot both snipe recognized the Common Snipe as being different from Wilson’s Snipe, which nests in that area.) In addition to the two vagrant snipe, five Eurasian Coots were detected in eastern Canada in December 1927—one at Separation Point, Sandwich Bay, Labrador in the period 18-24 December; one at Tanganavik Island, Anaktalak Bay, not far from Nain, Labrador in late December; and three at Exploits Harbour on the island of Newfoundland in December, one of which was collected (Austin 1929; Austin writes “Anaktalak” for Anaktalak; it is now the site of a massive nickel-mining operation). These are the only records of either snipe in Canada until 2011—and the only records of the coot for Canada except for an ailing bird picked up at Kegaska Harbour, Quebec 14 December 1995 (Aubry and Bannon 1996). I include the specifics of these records here because subsequent publications misspell location names, give incorrect locations, lack dates, or are missing some of the records altogether. (And speaking of rotund railbirds ... one wonders whether Newfoundland’s first-ever-in-winter Common Moorhen at Chapel’s Cove 25 January–5 February 2011 was in fact a North American bird, now known again as Common Gallinule. The Old World bird, now split and known as Eurasian Moorhen, has never been verified in North America.) Given the vast, complex coastlines of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the scarcity of humans there in December 1927 (as now), one suspects that many vagrant snipe, lapwings, and coots went undetected in that extraordinary flight. And given the massive declines in Northern Lapwing populations across Europe, by more than 50% just in the past three decades (based on data from 25 countries; Risley et al. 2011; see also EBBC 2011), it seems unlikely that we will witness a flight...
the likes of 1927 again, no matter what the weather patterns or how many eyes we muster along windward coasts. Indeed, one wonders whether the 1966 and 2010 flights were in fact on similar scale to 1927, in terms of the percentage of the species population.

It may seem surprising that waterfowl do not seem to have trekked across the Atlantic to escape the cold European winter. True, eastern Canada recorded two Pink-footed Geese, two Graylag Geese, multiple Greenland White-fronted Geese, and dozens of Eurasian Teal and Tufted Ducks, but most of these birds appeared in late autumn, and visitors of most of these species have been increasingly gradually for several years (or more), as most of their populations increase. Many of these birds are probably from Greenland or Iceland (or possibly Nunavut or Labrador?), and most have been found, also in increasing numbers, in New England and some also sparingly into the mid-Atlantic states. Records of Barnacle Geese have also been increasing in the American East for about ten years now, and many were reported in fall and early winter 2010, including one as far south and west as Arkansas, its first (and now accepted) record. For even the most stalwart skeptics among us, there was even an indubitably wild Barnacle Goose detected this season, an adult that had been banded as a first-year bird in Scotland in 2002 and that visited both New York and Connecticut (Figure 5).

Although waterfowl of many types abandon northerly climes during periods of very inclement and cold weather, in North America we think of most such movements as being southward, by and large; we also see northward movements during warm spells in midwinter, as occurred in southern Ontario in the past two winters, notably with Northern Pintail. We know, from satellite studies, banding returns, and field observations over centuries that Northern Lapwings do fly southward, to France, Spain, and Portugal, in response to cold weather, but also that many, sometimes thousands, cross the Irish Sea and North Sea to Ireland, where the west coast, warmed by the Gulf Stream, often has unfrozen ground when the rest of the British Isles do not. I asked Irish birder Anthony McGeechan what other bird species make similar "escape flights" to Ireland during cold winters like the last two there. "Birds that are denied access to feeding grounds are the big movers. Many lapwings come west as standard, and when cold hits, many more follow suit. Lapwings feed mainly on grassland, which is unusable when frozen. Coastal birds that feed on open mudflats are much less affected by the cold: so huge numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits, Red Knots, Eurasian Curlews, etc. scattered around estuaries in Britain and Europe never come westward; they don't have to." McGeechan notes that "a scatter of wildfowl" moves westward in the harshest winters, among them Eurasian Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Eurasian Wigeon, but that most waterfowl seem to stay put during such cold spells. However, he writes, "Goosander is a good example of (almost certainly) British stock coming westward due to freezes. An unprecedented influx reached Ireland in winter 2010–2011. Normally, Goosanders are few and far between, and those few that are here in winter are probably derived from the handful of pairs that breed here." So North Americans in the Northeast should perhaps be on the lookout for the Old World counterpart of our Common Merganser, which also evacuates northern rivers and lakes as they freeze over. Harry Armstrong counted a staggering 705 at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Maryland 11 February this season, clearly indicating a cold-weather exodus from the north. Another, very far south of usual range, made it to Florida's Pensacola Beach 21 December.

Considering the lapwing situation, McGeechan compares the harsh winter of 1983–1984 to the very different 2010–2011 season. "I go out to a small island (inishbofin) west of Galway (in other words, so far west that the next house is Bruce Macavish's). There, around ten pairs of lapwings breed and are pretty much resident. In early January 2011, I saw no lapwings except dead ones. Locals told me that they saw lots (50?) during the Christmas snow. This pattern would have been repeated all along the Irish west coast. I reckon that weakened birds from here and all across Ireland (comprising locals, normal winter visitors, and snow-fleeing immigrants) were thrown together into a life-threatening situation. Going westward and expecting to encounter mildness is usu-

Figure 5. One of at least 10 Northern Lapwings (but as many as 14) found in North America during the flight of winter 2010–2011, this bird spent 17 days at Portugal Cove South on Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula 4–20 (here 7) December. Photograph by Robert L. Ake.
ally what saves them. In December 1983 and January 1984, hard weather hit Europe, Britain, and parts of eastern Ireland. But the west of Ireland was fine. Ten thousand or more lapwings went west to County Kerry (in the southwest of Ireland). Sadly, the west of Ireland was hardest hit by the winter weather of December 2010 and January 2011, and the carriages there were grim. Not just lapwings died (or went westward to, mainly, a wetury grave), but huge numbers of Redwings were also lost. Common Snipe and Eurasian Woodcock were everywhere, and even Jack Snipe were widely reported. On Ishbofin, all the aforementioned species were abundant. Even today [summer 2011], when I’m there, I find Redwing remains. The influx of snipe onto the west of Ireland provides strong context for the Newfoundland snipe, and perhaps even some of the passerines—the chaffinch, greenfinch, Redwings, or Fieldfare—found in eastern Canada this past winter were propelled there by well-aligned weather features. We can only speculate.

Arguably the rarest European escape artists found in the New World, though, were not in Canada but Barbados: four Common Pochards turned up there 6 February 2011. Although the species is found in very small numbers annually in Iceland, there is no record of the species for Greenland (David Boetmann, pers. comm. to P. A. Buckley), and in eastern North America, the only other confirmed record is of a male at Sainte-Barthelémey, Québec 2-11 May 2008 (Bannon et al. 2008). Though the Barbados pochards may have only the most general connection to the flight of lapwings, or possibly none at all, they remind us that some phenomena we consider regional may be hemispheric.

Escapes II: Northern birds south
As in Europe, so in North America: we witnessed southward movements of many species during the unusually cold weather of December. Mark Adams and Matt Hafner describe a record flight of American Woodcocks down the Delmarva Peninsula during December, culminating with a count of 759 on the peninsula’s southernmost Christmas Bird Count at Cape Charles 30 December. Woodcocks depend on unfrozen ground in order to feed on earthworms, and prolonged periods of cold can lead to starvation, as was documented this past winter. This concentration of birds was similar to the spectacle of snipe, woodcock, and lapwings in western Ireland described by McGeehan, although Wilson’s Snipe were extremely scarce by late December on the Delmarva. Probably more surprising were very southerly woodcocks in the Rio Grande Valley, at San Benito, Texas 18 December and near the Alameda bridge in New Mexico 10 February; a short distance away in Mexico, there are very few records of the species. Open-country passerines, many of which may be relatively hardy, also make occasional escape flights when their food becomes inaccessible, usually because of ice or snow cover. Such was the case across a broad swath of the middle latitudes this past winter, and sparrows—even hardy northerners such as American Tree Sparrow (Figure 8)—moved well south of usual areas, in patterns recalling past winters of the mid- and late 1970s and February/March 1993. Georgia’s fifth ever (and first since 1978), one American Tree Sparrow even reached Carters Lake 15-21 January, a montane location not far from the border with Tennessee. Others made it south to Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, Oklahoma 13 February and Henderson County in eastern Texas 6 February. In Kentucky and Virginia, Fox Sparrows were counted in locally very high numbers: up to 50-60 per day were seen in Kentucky, while the same Christmas Bird Count that maxed out on woodcock, at Cape Charles, tallied 333, a new high. Also at this latitude, from eastern Colorado to the Carolinas, Snow Buntings were widely reported, sometimes in high numbers. Kansas recorded 25 buntings (Figure 9), North Carolina about 10, Kentucky and Missouri each had about 13, southern Illinois five, southern Indiana two, and two reached as far south as Bartow County, Georgia 13 January. A high count of 110 (in company with 117 Ipswich Sparrows) at Metompkin Island, Virginia 6 February must have put a smile on the face; all

Figure 6. Surface weather map for the North Atlantic for 15 January 1966 included in Bagg (1967; Figure 6). Bagg indicates that by this day, the strong westward flight of lapwings to Ireland had already begun, owing to severe cold across Europe. Over the next two days, the high pressure over Iceland would shift westward, to include Greenland, while the low-pressure features between Canada and Europe would shift to a bit southwest and strengthen. The result would be strong, sustained easterly winds between Ireland and Newfoundland. Map by Paul H. Conroy, reproduced with permission from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell University.

Figure 7. This adult Barnacle Goose first appeared in New York but then moved to coastal Connecticut 2 December 2010 through 7 January 2011 (here at Westport, Connecticut on 31 December). The bird was banded as a juvenile in Islay, Scotland in late 2002. Photograph by Bruce Finan.
the sites in the state reporting this species scarcely had more buntings combined. In the
tier of states to the north, numbers were
clearly elevated in Pennsylvania (flocks “like
the old days” of up to 430), Iowa (up to 653
per flock), and Nebraska (up to 600). In the
Rocky Mountain states, Snow Bunting is rel-
atively rare well south, but Colorado binders
enjoyed singles in four counties, plus a trio
in Moffat County and a flock of 15 (!) in
Larimer County 23 February. One must sim-
ply imagine what 15,884 Snow Buntings at
Dinosaur Provincial Park, Alberta + January
looked like. Although counts of some open-
country birds were high, not all were—Lap-
land Longspurs, for instance, posted only a
few notable counts (Indiana, Iowa) and were
scarce over much of the East. It could well be
that the larger counts represent not just in-
fluxes caused by heavy snow and ice to the
north but also a robust reproductive season
in 2010.

**Escapes III: Other**

Many people made a special effort to see
Northern Lapwings during the recent flight,
but how many people rushed out to see the
Canadian flight of our lapwing-equivalent—
Killdeer—a flight whose data are also neatly
displayed in the Atlantic Provinces report?
Maybank indicates that the flight started just
after the lapwings, around 9 December, dur-
ing a period of strong southeasterlies. The
very large area of low pressure responsible for
this event is easily seen on weather maps of 7-
8 December (Figure 10). As did most lap-
wings, these birds dispersed shortly after ar-
ival, though it’s not clear in which direction.
And beginning 29 December, there appeared
to be another influx of Killdeer, detected
mostly farther north, on St. Pierre et
Miqelon and on the Avalon Peninsula; in
this instance, charts of upper-level air flow
show a smaller but very strong upper-level
low farther east and south, centered over
Nova Scotia. It’s not clear, notes Maybank,
whether the Killdeer seen in Newfoundland
at the end of the year were birds from the ear-
lier flight or whether they had traveled a
much greater distance, such as from the Car-
olinas or Georgia. On Bermuda, Killdeer were
found in extremely high numbers beginning
in mid-December; regional editor Andrew
Dobson counted the season’s maximum, 504,
on 2 January. These birds were undoubtedly
refugees from the same event or events but
“fell out” earlier in the course of their dis-
placement offshore.

There are plenty of winter records of
Killdeer in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland,
but there are few “flights” on record of this
sort. One well-documented, enormous flight
hit the shores of the Northeast, from New
York to Nova Scotia, in late November 1888
(Chadbourn 1889). Chadbourn’s article on
this event was almost certainly a forerunner
of the glamorous lapwing pieces, with a large
table of extralimital records arranged by state
and province and copious descriptions of
the birds’ behavior and body condition, along
with weather data and analysis. Chadbourn
theorizes, correctly I believe, that the Killdeer
were swept up in a strong nor’easter that ran
up the coast from the Carolinas and stalled off
New England, where most of the birds were
deposited. He suggests that the birds were en-
trained by the storm while they were migrating
southward. It is impossible to guess the
number of birds involved, but it was surely
in the many thousands, as numerous observers
describe them covering large areas of the
coast in several states. As with the lapwings’

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Figure 8. This American Tree Sparrow in Avery County, North Carolina 25-29 (here 26) December 2010 was one of four that turned up in the Southeast during the winter season. Photograph by Mark Swanson/Swanson Media.

Figure 9. Part of a flight of Snow Buntings that reached well to the south of usual in winter 2010–2011 was this bird photographed at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Kansas 30 December. Photograph by Dave Williams.
latest flight, we must wonder whether the modern world holds a sufficient number of Killdeer to produce a spectacle like that of November 1888.

The displacement of migrating Killdeer makes for fascinating comparison with the lapwings’ escape flight. The basic urge in these cases would appear to be identical: *flee toward warmer areas.* The downwind direction for the lapwings led to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and the downwind direction for the Killdeer led to the same area. It is not clear that large numbers of these plovers perished in these events, but one assumes that they probably did (but note Pam Hunt's mention, in the New England report, of an unusual February influx of Killdeer during the first break in the winter weather—could those birds have been coming *southward*?). Although both plover events of the winter have similar origins and probably similar outcomes for the birds, we view them differently: the lapwings were flying in a westerly direction, as many typically do when seeking refuge from cold; the Killdeer were swept up by a low-pressure event (rather like birds in a tropical cyclone) and, because they found themselves over ocean, were forced to fly northward, in the direction *opposite* of their intended or typical flight during a cold snap. Both species, however, were flying downwind, as both Chadbourne (1889) and Witherby (1928) note, in order to conserve what energy reserves they had. As with the lapwing flight, so there were fellow travelers among the Killdeer. The earlier wave brought with it an American Golden-Plover to Fort Beausejour, New Brunswick 15-16 December, and the second wave also had one, at St. Pierre et Miquelon 29 December (Chadbourne [1889] notes a very late golden-plover among the Killdeer at Newport, Rhode Island). Far more incredibly, an Upland Sandpiper turned up at Trepassey, Newfoundland 18 December 2010, one of very few ever recorded in the winter season in the Northeast. This species has normally vacated the United States by October, en route to South America, so its presence on the Avalon Peninsula in mid-December is unexpected. Perhaps this bird is the starkest example of the differences between the Lapwing Express, which followed easterlies between the “bottom” of highs and the “tops” of lows, and the Killdeer Carousel, which shuttled southbound birds offshore and northward, boomerang style, around the east side of a large low. The first was mostly a longitudinal movement, the latter a latitudinal displacement.

We should take a moment to look back on how we come up with counts of plovers, how we assemble the raw data on which our musings rest. Today, we have a common resource: we can report our sightings to eBird, and we can also see the sightings of others there as well. It takes mere moments. Email has all but replaced hand-delivered personal correspondence, since at least the early 1990s, and text-messaging can link birders in the field in what we now call “real time.” Bagg (1967) describes a lengthy process of mail correspondence with regionally well-known ornithologists, each of whom had strong ties to communities, even remote ones, in their regions. Moakler (1969) also expended much energy in searching for records—until someone mailed him a copy of Bagg’s article (but only on loan!). Those who can remember the care that went into such correspondence will appreciate the amount of work involved in assembling these databases. Witherby (1928) even includes radioed messages from Arctic explorers such as Captain Donald Baxter MacMillan, who saw lapwings near Nain just before Christmas 1927.

And Arthur Chadbourne? How did one conduct research on avian vagrancy in the 1880s? His articles, as is true of the lapwing commentators’, is replete with gratitude for those who helped him uncover records: “My data would have been far from satisfactory had it not been for the kindness of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Division of Economic Ornithology of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who sent circulars to all the lighthouse keepers on the Atlantic coast, asking about the occurrence of Killdeer Plover in the fall of 1888, and to these reports I am largely indebted for what I have been able to find out about the flight in question.” Circulars to lighthouse keepers! He also gleaned information from market gunners in eastern Massachusetts and from local residents’ private letters. We should keep in mind, who we enjoy the fruits of satellite images and a National Weather Service, that no such technology or office existed in 1888, so piecing together an understanding of weather from the Carolinas to New England also involved extensive communication with multiple sources. And there was then, of course, no radio or telephone.

By contrast, I watched the European and American winters unfold by means of television and Internet essentially in real time, with the daily NAO index, current satellite photographs, analytical charts by crackerjack meteorologists all available free online. I saw news of lapwings pop up in my email box within minutes of their discovery, heard immediately about the snipe hunts in Newfoundland from a very excited tour guide, and (still surprising to me) got word of the Common Pochards on Barbados within hours of their identification. Admittedly, as a shorebird fan, I spent more time looking through local Killdeer flocks for lapwings than through Aythya flocks for vagrant pochards. We enjoy the luxury of nearly instantaneous communication about birds, for the first time in the history of bird observation—our text-messaging is a far cry from circulars sent out to lighthouse keepers by a
single Director of Economic Ornithology. The pochards were found at a sandpit by a novice birder; the Eurasian Coot in 1995 was found by schoolchildren; and the snipe double-header on Christmas Eve 1927 was the handiwork of an astute local hunter, who prepared and saved the skins and showed them to Harvard professor Oliver Austin, who happened to pass through her small village during the following summer. Maybe the lesson here is not just to monitor the electronic chatter for the latest news—we should keep lines of communication open with members of the community who spend time outdoors, too. (As some will have already guessed, we will be returning to lighthouse keepers in the spring column...)

Finally, in the “Escapes: Other” category, we might include the surfeit of Mexican birds observed in southernmost Texas during the season. We have witnessed more than one very cold (negative NAO index) winter that produced a Tex-Mex bounty, so the Internet was ablaze with anticipation as the temperatures began to plummet in late November. Regrettably, a very wet late autumn meant that some of the most prized places for birding in the Lower Rio Grande Valley were not accessible because of high water. Nonetheless, a glance at the Texas regional report gives one the sense that the association between cold weather and Mexican birds in southern Texas is no wives’ tale: three Crimson-collared Grosbeaks, six Blue Buntings, three Rufous-backed Robins (one north to Uvalde County, as was a Red-billed Pigeon), a Yellow-faced Grassquit, a Tufted Flycatcher, and a dapper Black-vented Oriole (Figure 11) made a superb season, despite access problems, for “snowbirders” escaping the winter weather at home. Whether these mostly Mexican birds were on the move because of cold stress (as past essays have suggested), or problems finding food, or perhaps were attracted to the Valley because of the wet conditions, is not known, but the phenomenon bears watching.

**Irruptions:**  
**Flights old & new, borrowed & blue**

*Old & New*

When birds vacate an area because of scarce or absent food resources, rather than inclement weather per se, and appear suddenly in another area where not seen regularly, we call their movements “irruptions” rather than “escape flights,” with “influx” potentially a synonym for either, and the word “invasion” used by writers in order to get birders’ blood racing.

As noted above, many birds fleeing cold or inclement weather may be doing so because (as with the lapwings) the weather has made their food unavailable. And for all we know, some “irruptions” of winter finches, which we don’t refer to as “escape flights,” could occur for similar reasons. Birds of the highest latitudes, such as redpolls and alcids, are most commonly associated with the concept of “irruption,” particularly in the eastern portion of the continent, and both made the news in winter 2010–2011. Unlike for the plover influxes, we don’t usually have to look as far back in time to find precedence for such events, and for that reason, veteran birders who have lived through a few epic finch or alcid winters may feel that such events are “old news.” Remembering the emotions on getting a first close look at a Hoary Redpoll or a Dowkie, especially if hard winter field work was involved, is a good way to relate to the thrill of many younger birders, whose enthusiasm for the irruptions this past winter was quite palpable on chat-lines, facebook, and other social media.

Flocks of Common Redpolls, with many Hoary Redpolls in tow, were said to be “abundant most everywhere” in Quebec, “plentiful” in New York, and “widespread” around all the Great Lakes, with hefty counts well into Ohio and Pennsylvania. Especially large numbers were recorded in Ontario and Minnesota. All
of New England’s six states had redpolls by the end of December, but Pam Hunt reports that large areas of that region lacked them altogether and that the birds seemed to be settled by the New Year; however, another wave appeared in February, and she wonders: “Was this pattern related to local conditions, or was the second pulse comprised of redpolls starting to return to breeding areas late in the winter season?” Flock sizes and counts tended to drop off quickly farther south and nearer the coast, with New Jersey, Long Island, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia getting their redpolls (all Commons) mostly as scattered singles and very small flocks later in the season. The southern edges of the Common Redpoll flight were defined by one in Iowa on Christmas Eve, three groups totaling 16 on Bermuda, a few singles in North Carolina and West Virginia, and (drumroll please) Florida’s first photographed record at Vero Beach 26 and 28 February. Something new!

The total of Hoary Redpoll reports (Figure 12)? Always difficult to say. In places where the species is more expected, we don’t have specific counts, but we read that the species was present in above-average numbers at Iqaluit, Nunavut; “had an excellent season” in upstate New York; and staged “a short-lived, mini-invasion” 26-27 February in Wisconsin. New England had reports of about 50 (two dozen in Vermont alone), and Pennsylvanians and Michiganders found at least four per state. At the end of the season, a single Hoary in Sandusky County, Ohio 26 February was also the southernmost. The western extent of the main Hoary flight appeared to be in southern Manitoba, where redpoll flocks had “an exceptionally high proportion” of them. The “something new” in this flight wasn’t the geographic scope of the flight, which was almost textbook typical; rather, it was the pleasing presence of small numbers of the nominate subspecies, Hornemann’s Redpoll, among their smaller et al. kin. The excitement over these rather huge, very white birds in Ontario spread quickly via Internet, and birders across the northern tier of U.S. states were glued to feeders, hoping for a chance to see one of these birds from Greenland or Baffin Island in their own backyard. Were these birds, which are thought to winter mostly near their breeding areas, visiting the balmy climes of Ontario because their food supplies were short—or did snow cover or other meteorological factors play a role? Escape flight, or irruption?

The winter status and distribution of Atlantic alcids have been changing rather dynamically in the past 20 years. Among the more remarkable recent trends has been the southward shift in Common Murres (Figure 13) in the western North Atlantic. Once the rarer of the two Uria species, Common is now by far the more common from New York to northeastern North Carolina. Farther north, though the species was “barely reported at all” in Massachusetts, Connecticut recorded its first Common ever on 30 January. In the Hudson-Delaware region, which had record-high counts in winter 2009-2010, at least 90 Common Murres were reported, doubling the previous winter’s total, with a few south to Delaware and 17 off Maryland in February (two boat trips). North Carolina had four, all off Hatteras, which is twice the Southern Atlantic region’s total for all time. The reasons for this stark change in status over the past 10 years are not known; butmurres seem to be following the strong southward shift of Razorbills, a species once rare off North Carolina but now boasting several high counts in the thousands. Are they coming farther south because prey stocks are reduced to the north, or are they able to winter farther south because ocean currents or conditions have been changing, providing new foraging opportunities? They do not appear to be in distress, and essentially none are found on beaches (unlike with Common Murres on the Pacific coast, which frequently wash ashore during periods of extreme prey scarcity), so perhaps we are witnessing an expansion or shift in range rather than a situation of desperation.

The same cannot be claimed of Dovellie. Living at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, where the bay meets the Atlantic, I have great expectations each year of the December procession of gulls, especially thousands of Bonaparte’s Gulls, thousands of Northern Gannets and Red-throated Loons, and many other piscivores as they follow large schools of fish migrating out into the ocean and southward.

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Figure 12. Always a highlight in Pennsylvania, this Hoary Redpoll (right) was present at Presque Isle State Park, Erie County 18-31 (here 22) January 2011, hanging out with as many as 150 Common Redpolls. Although unseen, the "invasion" of Hoary Redpolls, which included some of the prized Hornemann’s subspecies, was one of the best in recent memory in winter 2010-2011. Photograph by Jerry McWilliams.

Figure 13. Until recently considered impossibly rare off the Carolinas, Common Murre arrived decisively there in winter 2010-2011, with this bird seen 29 January being one of four off Hatteras for the season. Photograph by Chris Sloan.

Figure 14. Not all observations of Dovellie at sea are of dots in the distance. This canny little bird used the pelagic birding boat Stormy Petrel II as shelter from large gulls off Hatteras, North Carolina 28 January 2011. It was one of 643 Dovellies observed that day, during a record-smashing season for the species in the state. Photograph by Chris Sloan.
That spectacle, much reduced through overfishing of key species by essentially unregulated factory fishing fleets owned by conscienceless corporations, is a shadow of its former glory; but I still look forward to it in the second half of December. This year, even a minor pageant failed to materialize. Part of the reason seemed to have do with water temperatures in the bay and ocean, which were unseasonably cold from late November through mid-January; causing sudden fishkills over large areas and a very rapid southward movement of fish earlier in the season than usual. The cold water mass, some 12°F or more cooler than usual for the mid-Atlantic region, may have contained plankton attractive to Dovekies, which were counted in record-high numbers near the southern terminus of this cold water: counts of 643, 871, 425, and 495 came from off Hatteras through mid-February (Figure 14), and observers from Rhode Island to South Carolina were able to see at least a few from shore, most of them appearing to be in good health.

But instead of seeing the southward movement of Dovekies as simply an accompaniment to a mass of cold water, we should back up and look at the situation in the Northeast, and also look briefly at older theories of this little auks' irregular appearances south of usual range. Dovekies were already on the move southward in late November 2010 and "staged a mini-invasion" in early December in New England, where counts ranged as high as 296 from shore 2 December. A few weeks later, many were found in towns and roads in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, wrecked there during a nor'easter, as occasionally—but by no means regularly or predictably—happens during such heavy weather. A count of 2129 off Long Island 11 December was exceptional, and although Maryland has counts much higher than 155 (seen 5 February off Ocean City), triple-digit totals are always noteworthy far south.

For decades, it has been assumed that Dovekies appear in inshore waters, or even inland areas, not simply because of foul weather but also because they are starving; their energy reserves being too low to allow them to remain offshore. Our friend Oliver L. Austin, Jr. described the Dovekies he banded on Cape Cod during the great Dovekie wreck of 1932 (Murphy and Vogt 1933) as being "fat and in fine condition" on the morning of 10 November, but by the next evening, the birds were said to be "either dead or so thin and weak that they could not fly." A week later, 19-20 November, another storm hit, and many more Dovekies were found this time, tens of thousands of them, even south to Cuba and Florida, and most were in very poor physical condition when found. Murphy and Vogt (1933) write: "By Tuesday, the 22nd, nothing more was heard of live birds away from the sea, except for a few that elected to remain in coves and ponds where they evidently found food. The great ocean flight also passed southward or out to sea very quickly." By the last few days of November, thousands were observed from a lightship stationed off Tybee Island, Georgia, and on 1 December, birds began to reach Florida and Cuba in numbers.

Almost all of the birds observed 19 November and later were found to be in emaciated condition, many having no fat and much-reduced muscle tissue, according to Murphy and Vogt (1933), whose account makes riveting reading. They speculate that the wreck was a product of several factors: 1) a large number of low-pressure events in the North Atlantic, where the birds forage through the winter, which has the effect of causing their chief prey, plankton, to descend to depths beyond the reach of Dovekies; 2) an anomalous weather pattern involving easterly, not the typical westerly, winds across the North Atlantic, which drives the weakened birds westward; and 3) a series of low-pressure events along the Atlantic coast of North America, forcing the birds to expend large amounts of energy to stay off the shorelines (they do not normally encounter landmasses in winter). Aha! I thought—easterly winds in the northern North Atlantic, low-pressure systems to the south. . . . November 1932 must have been one of those months with a strongly negative NAO index! As if to goad this thinking further, on 20 November that year, a lapwing was shot on Block Island, Rhode Island, in the midst of the Dovekie wreck (Bagg 1967). Alas, no; the November 1932 NAO index averaged 0.64.

"Why did the [Dovekie] flocks continue southward, long after the subsidence of unfavorable weather conditions, toward such new fields as Florida and Cuba?" asks Murphy and Vogt (1933). They answer this question, perhaps the most difficult one, very tentatively with a theory of "mass emigration," a response to overpopulation in which some individuals of a species strike out in an entirely new direction and in which many or all individuals perish. They also speculate that the distressed Dovekies could have been from Old World nesting populations displaced westward during autumn, rather than from the Greenland population, which typically winters off eastern Canada. If so, then perhaps some of the wrecks we witness in the western North Atlantic could be the pelagic equivalent of the lapwings' "escape flight." What a fascinating and fertile ground for study with modern scientific techniques—but we hope for the birds' sake that such large wrecks remain rare. The 2010-2011 Dovekie winter, much less dramatic than the November/December 1932 event, nevertheless could represent a lesser version of the same phenomenon, whatever its ultimate causes.

Long-time readers of this journal can remember winter reports in which Black-legged Kittiwakes, another Arctic nester, were hardly ever reported away from the ocean coasts. In recent decades, with more intense scrutiny of the Great Lakes (and large reservoirs of the interior), birders have discovered a fair flight of the species, mostly juveniles, in late autumn. Normally, the journal's fall issue mentions two-dozen such records. But winter Kittiwakes inland or well south are mostly a recent phenomenon, and this past winter had more than a few. South Dakota and Indiana each had six, Ontario recorded five, Illinois four, Michigan and Texas each four, Nebraska three, North Dakota two, and singles were found in Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, New Mexico, some of these very deep into the winter season. Still not impressed? How about one still in the mountains of Colorado at Lake Estes 20 December? Or one near St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba 30 December? The species is clearly cold tolerant, but what is driving the apparent increase in inland appearances—and these winter dates?

Perhaps related, perhaps not, the appearances of adult Ross's Gulls in the Lower 48 states also continued from late autumn: Colorado's bird at Cherry Creek Reservoir 19-26.
November didn’t quite make the winter period, but the Yankton, South Dakota (and adjacent Cedar County, Nebraska) Ross’s, found 26 November, remained through 7 December, and another was found in South Dakota at Fort Randall Dam 4-13 December. Nebraska birders rallied and also discovered another, the state’s third, in Lancaster County 3 December. Still waiting for the “something new”? How about two Ross’s Gulls in Michigan’s Keweenaw Bay 14 December? Just a single Ross’s in the Lower 48 makes a red-letter season. Recording seven in one fall/early winter period is unprecedented, and maybe unsettling. We know that in some places, such as Barrow, Alaska, Ross’s Gulls and kittiwakes forage in flocks with other birds, including Red Phalaropes and Ivory Gulls (Mallory et al. 2008), and although they are not taking the same prey species, perhaps there is a link between the large number of winter kittiwakes and the Ross’s Gulls seen across the continent’s southern half this season. We surely can’t tie these inland records to the (far more familiar, if not yet predictable) Dovkie wrecks, but it would be edifying to understand the mechanisms involved in such appearances, whether related to population dynamics, weather phenomena, prey availability—or, as Murphy and Vogt (1933) might suggest, all of the above.

We should not forget that displacements, or whatever we decide to call extralimitial appearances of birds in various contexts, are not limited to northern birds far south in winter. Take a moment to look at counts of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, plus a few north of usual winter range (remember, this past winter was cold). And what do we call the wanderings of Crested Caracara witnessed over the past decade? Certainly not an irruption; perhaps we should apply the favored euphemism “pioneering”? In the harsh winter we had, the caracara pioneering in Gibson County, Indiana 12 January could not have been too happy with its vacation decision. In December, caracaras were noted in Oklahoma and Mississippi, and Alabama had its second ever in February. We have plenty of explanatory models to account for Rough-legged Hawks found far south of typical range (one made it to Florida this season), but Gibson, Indiana in mid-January for a caracara? We call such a bird a vagrant, and though caracaras are known to be increasing in some border states, this combination of location and season seems outlandish. But then, not too many years ago, we said the same thing of Black Vultures wintering in northern New England and Anhingas wintering in Virginia. How many more seasons before we shrug at northerly caracaras? And to push the question farther south: What about the Greater Ani found in Florida this season (Figure 15)? The recent records of vagrants north of typical range, and the tendency for long-distance dispersal in the genus, make the idea of a wild Greater Ani here seem plausible.

**Borrowed & Blue**

It was a good season to watch for Mountain Bluebirds out of range, it seems, and records spanned the continent, from the Southwest (where wintering birds are expected) to the Northeast, and from Alaska’s offshore to Florida’s. The first to turn up well out of range this season was in Hartford County, Connecticut 7 December (Figure 16), while the rest turned up around the Christmas Bird Count period: on Chichagof Island, Alaska 18 December; near Grande Isle, Louisiana 22 December; and the Virginia Eastern Shore and at Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida, both 30 December; and along the Little Sioux River in Iowa 8 January. The number of such eccentric birds is a higher than usual, but the geographic spread is especially surprising. Where we have no real pattern, perhaps we can reckoning, as we do for the redpolls (or Snowy Owls, or Dovkees?), that the breeding season may have been especially productive but the food supplies in normal wintering areas were low, or unavailable for some reason, and exodus was the response. eBird maps do not show an abnormal pattern of wintering closer to core range, but there were some notable local counts, such as the 143 in Barber County, Kansas 2 January.

A heavier blue bird, the blue morph of Ross’s Goose is a minor “grail” for those who patiently pore over flocks of Chen geese. So scarce is this morph that some have suggested that the blue allele in this species was “borrowed” from its closest relative, Lesser Snow Goose, in which the blue morph is very common (Ryder and Alisauskas 1993; thus this morph would be both borrowed and blue—yes, this theme is lame, but it’s late at night). As with almost all other North American goose species, populations of Ross’s Goose are increasing, with the likely consequence that vagrants push the envelope farther and farther (this winter, singles south to the Bahamas and the Yucatan Peninsula), and flock sizes seem to increase each season as well. Imagine the jaw-dropping sight of 15,000 Ross’s, accompanied by three blue morphs, near Pine Bluff, Arkansas 27 December, rightly called a “mega-flock.” Another Arkansawyer found two more blue morphs near Kelso 5 January, and regional editor Steve Cardiff photographed one near Thornwell, Louisiana 18 December. As we have asked in the past: are we more attentive nowadays to the possibility of blue morphs, or are there just more of them, as populations increase rapidly?

**Escapes IV: The Sky Is Falling**

Many of us were glued to the television set at the end of last year, as announcers told us that blackbirds, mostly Red-winged Blackbirds and...
Common Grackles, were “falling out of the sky dead” at Beebe, Arkansas on New Year’s Eve. Fireworks were to blame, some said. Soon, television producers started providing coverage of other “mysterious” deaths of birds (and fish) around the world, implying some sort of doomsday connection between the events. Watching the television took on an eschatological quality (perhaps an improvement from the usual scatological quality). Scientists, urging calm and discussing winter mortality, were permitted their usual few sound-bytes of commentary, but the circulation of the information through the Internet seemed to push the panic still further. The sky was falling, if ratings were not.

A meteorologist for NewsChannel5 in Cleveland, Ohio, Mark Johnson, didn’t join in the hype but instead started a blog that looked at each event separately. The only event that didn’t have an obvious explanation was the mass death of several thousands birds in Cuba. In studying the standard Doppler radar images from that area on New Year’s Eve, Johnson could make out the birds well enough, but nothing else seemed unusual. However, when he examined the three-dimensional Doppler images, he saw what he calls a “huge plume of turbulence” between 7000 and 12,000 feet, just over the area just as the birds began to fly. National Weather Service meteorologists were not able to identify the nature of the plume, but scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Lincoln Laboratory identified it as a sudden temperature inversion that occurred about 1500 feet above the birds. This unusual event, whose ultimate cause is not known, apparently served to amplify the sound of the fireworks greatly, terrifying the birds into sudden flight and leading them to collide with one another and with buildings, trees, and so on. The fireworks, after all, at least in part, rather than the End Time. This escape flight, however, was not a successful one for many of the frightened icters.

Watch for television coverage of this regrettable event on the National Geographic Channel in fall 2011. The working title of the program is, I am sorry to say, “Apocalypse over Arkansas.” Ratings, man.

**Subspecies, hybrids, and weird birds:**

Or, How do I put this in eBird?

Birders turn up the strangest things. On a recent episode of television’s “Law & Order: SVU,” a murderer finds a murder victim in Central Park. Most of us don’t come across such things, but we all have our stories. More usually, we come across strangely plumaged birds, and North American Birds has been pleased to feature such oddments over the years. Perennial favorites, initially disorienting when we come across them, are leucistic individuals, whether white in the face (Figure 17), in the head and wing (Figures 18, 19), upperparts and underparts (Figure 20), or most of the above (Figures 21, 22). Identification of such birds can usually be inferred from the parts of plumage that seem normally pigmented (if any), from structure, or from voice, in some cases. The Fieldfare that visited Quebec this past winter showed piebald plumage, with patches of white above, as they occasionally do. But what does one do, for example, with the white-and-yellow Cuban Grassquit in the Bahamas? The species is a fairly common cage bird in Cuba and is often bred to produce leucistic individuals. According to Tony White, our regional editor specializing in the Bahamas, few Bahamians keep grassquits. Was this a bird en route to Florida in the cage bird trade, or did it perhaps fly to the Bahamas from Cuba? A far more likely explanation would be that the bird is part of the small introduced population of Cuban Grassquit on Nassau, some of whose “founders” must have been similarly fancy. A birder who had just seen a Brown-headed Cowbird with a yellowish head but otherwise normal plumage, and identified it correctly, asked me not long ago: “So how do I put that in eBird?” I thought he was kidding; but no. Well, how would one put such a non-conformist into eBird, assuming one would like to be able to find the record quickly in the future? There has always been a nice space provided in eBird for recording notes on the birds you observe, but it would be difficult to locate a single record of an aberrant Brown-headed Cowbird among the great mass of cowbird records contained in one’s checklists. The solution turned out to be relatively simple: put this single bird on its own checklist, and give the location in eBird a memorable, personalized name: “Turner Farm (yellow-headed cowbird spot)” or similar. Voila—your strange bird is recorded so that you can find it, and is recorded for posterity.

In addition to such odd birds, North American Birds has also presented photographs of dozens of individual birds identified to the level of subspecies, and we continue to offer such images in the present issue, in Photo Essays on redpoll and sharp-tailed sparrow taxa. As we delve more deeply into subtler, more difficult identification issues such as these, we often push well beyond the settled limits of field identification—that is, identification based on studies and photographs rather than on specimens or genetic material. Whether in articles about taxa of Cackling Goose or American Pipits or storm-petrels, our authors...
supply abundant caveats about the tentative nature of this kind of work. To describe different appearances in the field in a pioneering mode is not to offer the final word but to open a dialogue about what is being seen and about what might be possible to distinguish reliably. There can be no question that almost any report not tied to a specimen can be questioned—and, of course, as Sibley (2005) pointed out regarding a specimen of Saltmarsh Sparrow attributed to Michigan, even specimens are not above suspicion in some cases. Most of the reports included in this journal are of birds not collected, and most are not even of birds photographed. They are sight records from reliable observers, often multiple observers, and most do not raise an eyebrow, whether the 300 Canvasbacks at Lake Havasu or the 3000 Bohemian Waxwings at Calgary. Other records create grand discussions that endure for decades. Many of the subalter identifications that we proffer raise questions that may not have clear answers. Are those blue-morph Ross’s Geese “100%” Ross’s? Could the dark-morph Kermadec Petrel photographed off the Kona coast of Hawaii this past season have been a Henderson Petrel—or perhaps a hybrid petrel, given the recent documented evidence of three-way hybridization among Herald, Kerma- dec, and Trinidad Petrels on Round Island, Mauritius (Brown et al. 2011)? Was the Black Merlin in Texas (Figure 23) a bird of the subspecies sukhelii, from the Pacific Northwest, or could it have been one of the similar blackish Merlins said to breed west of Lake Superior (Wheeler and Clark 1995)? Are the Horned Larks reported in Alaska as subspecies flavus in this issue pure flavus (Figure 24)? If we now know that many phenotypically “typical” Golden-winged Warblers are not genetically pure Golden-wingeds, then what of the far subtler species included in our regional reports, rare or otherwise? For regional editors to include a report, or for the journal to publish an article, there must be good reason to believe that the identifications advanced are accurate; and almost all of these identifications have been based on a bird’s appearance, which may tell us only part of the story. Field identifications, in other words, are based on reasonably supportable suppositions using available evidence, which normally does not include DNA analysis.

With at least 41 subspecies of Horned Lark worldwide, and with intergradation apparent between many, for instance, we are obliged to acknowledge that field identifications to subspecies in that group may be challenging. But the location of the apparent flavus Horned Larks, combined with their plumages, makes the identification a reasonable one. The degree of “certainty” in such cases is in the eye of the person examining the documentation, and little is more certain than the fact that opinions about certainty vary a great deal, in many human endeavors.

Field identification of many of the redpolls and sharp-tailed sparrows presented in this issue is difficult, or not possible to the level of subspecies, especially in the Nelson’s Sparrow group. On the wintering grounds, up to 30 per cent of the Nelson’s caught in the Delmarva study have been labeled as “alterus or nelsoni” rather than one or the other. (On a side note, “alterus” will almost certainly be changed to “alter” by the Classification and Nomenclature Committee’s new Subspecies Subcommittee, as other committees around the world have done.) Fortunately, the Center for Conserving Biology researchers have retained either feathers or blood from numerous birds, so that they will potentially be able to identify such supposedly intermediate birds as belonging to one of these allopatric subspecies. Our first Photo Essay thus continues a conversation—one that for many of us began with Sibley (1996, 2000), or Rising and Beadle (1996, 2001), or even earlier sources—about the identification of sharp-tailed sparrows, but in turn will be succeeded by still subtler treatments. With redpolls, whose ranges are even more remote than the sparrows’, we know even less, and
researchers looking into their genetic differences have so far found little to distinguish the taxa through such methods. Even genetic material may not give us the answers we hope to discover, though we are yet in the infancy of the biochemical study of birds.

In 1984, this journal offered a pioneering article on the identifications of small Calidris sandpipers by our own Richard R. Veit and noted artist Lars Jonsson, with beautiful paintings and photographs of “our” peep alongside “their” stints. Many of us read that piece over and over, drinking in its detail, conscious that field identification had made what felt like a quantum leap forward (fortunately, optical and camera equipment had also improved, in quality and affordability). Twenty-seven years later, to describe a dozen or more new field marks in a small species group of the northern hemisphere would be an even more astounding feat, and many birders who are passionate about field identification have turned their attention to birds of the tropics, so many of which are under-studied. But plenty of birders also try to work through local subspecies or even do a little hybrid-hunting, also an exercise in both patience and careful study. In this issue’s Pictorial Highlights, for instance, are little-known taxa of Savannah Sparrow and Song Sparrow from Baja California; and, for the first time, we received line images of an apparent Golden-crowned Sparrow × White-throated Sparrow hybrid (Figure 25), the latter the winner of our covered “Practiced Eye Award” for this season. Thanks to Scott Carpenter for finding and photographing this one; how many of us might have passed it off as an odd-looking Golden-crowned? An excellent runner-up would have to be the apparent Red-tailed Hawk × Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid photographed by Frank Gallo at Oxford, Connecticut 19 December. Both of these hybrids have been reported before, but how many of us have seen one? And how many of us are looking carefully enough to notice one? Even if the identification of such birds has a speculative quality, the ability to detect and to document their differences is most commendable.

How much subtler can birding get, one may wonder? Song Sparrow, for instance, may be the most geographically variable songbird
on earth, with about 53 named subspecies—many of these not known to be diagnosable in the field or even in the hand (though few have been studied with modern biochemical methods). Populations of Red Crossbills seem to defy our taxonomic conventions altogether, at least so far. Even Fox Sparrow, with a mere 18 or so described subspecies, and Dark-eyed Junco, with at least 15, present challenges more formidable than we see in sharp-tailed sparrows or redpolls—and for some named taxa, it's not even clear whether they represent subspecies in the conventional sense or hybrid swarms in areas where two or more taxa come together. For these, and for many others, the range of plumage variation has simply not been well documented. We have enormous opportunities for pioneering with such polytypic species, but we also have truly formidable challenges, even when we relax, slightly, our desire for “certainty.”

When I was very young, I can remember my eldest elders telling me that the only sure way to distinguish Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, or young Snowy and Little Blue Herons, was by collecting or capturing the bird and examining it. Although I still enter checklists with Sharp-shinned/Cooper's or Little Blue/Snowy (thank you, eBird, for letting me select my level of confidence about what I saw), it is far less controversial now than was in the early 1970's to claim an ability to identify these birds to species in the field. That should not be understood to mean that misidentifications of such birds are now rare—quite the contrary. But it means that our level of comfort and confidence has changed, along with (roughly) our competence. As we look more and more closely at subspecies, the majority of which are probably not identifiable in the field, we should avoid letting our confidence in “identifying” a bird outpace our competence, which with most subspecies (if not all) is necessarily minimal. How many of us have personally examined large series of museum specimens of various subspecies, using known-identity birds to determine field marks? For many taxa, this sort of work may be needed before identifying a bird to the level of subspecies—and entering the record in eBird as such (yes, eBird's latest updates include thousands of subspecies—just click “Show Subspecies” on the checklist). With redpolls, with sparrows, and with so many other birds, we should keep eyes and minds open, learning as much as we can, but keep a critical view of the process and resist the temptation to apply subspecies labels blithely.

Acknowledgments

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Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon

Blake Maybank

Reflecting meteorologically on the winter just past, one recalls... very little. It was unmemorable. A desultory mix of snow, rain, and sunshine. There were several modest storms, including two frisky blows in the second half of January, slightly troublesome in eastern Canada but more vigorous in New England. Temperatures across the region were slightly above normal for the period. There was no shortage of precipitation: over 450 mm at Halifax, Nova Scotia. 400 mm at Moncton, New Brunswick, and 600 mm at St. John's, Newfoundland, half of which fell in December. By the end of February, there was close to a meter of snow on the ground in Moncton and half that amount in St. John's—in sharp contrast to the 3 centimeters of snow in Halifax.

With respect to the total number of species reported during the three months of our beloved winter season, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had totals that merely equaled their respective long-term averages (197 and 162), and in these provinces, the birders' opinion of the birding mirrored that of the weather—generally unremarkable. But farther north and east in the region, the story was different. Prince Edward Island had an above-average 117 species, including a lovely array of rarities. St. Pierre et Miquelon achieved its highest total since keeping track 15 years ago; its 97 species list was well salted with rare birds. But pride of show went to Newfoundland and Labrador, where birders were spurred to constant vigil by a mesmerizing slate of rare birds, and the provincial single-season winter list reached 150 species for the first time. The Nova Scotia Winter List page (<tinyurl.com/ntswinter>) contains links to winter lists for all the other areas in the region and across Canada.

Waterfowl Through Rails

The remarkable autumn influx of geese, many from Greenland, continued into winter. Nova Scotia took goose bragging rights, with seven species noted. Three Greenland Greater White-fronted Geese (subspecies flavirostris) were found in Nova Scotia in the first half of Dec: the Colchester bird lingered through 1 Dec (C&AM), and singles were on the East R. at Pictou, Pictou (KM) and at Springville, Pictou (Steve Vines), both 18 Dec. Rumors of one shot near Village Green, PEI have yet to be confirmed. Nova Scotia's 2nd Pink-footed Goose was a cooperative bird discovered 27 Dec near Knoydart, Antigonish (John Kearney), lingering through 31 Dec (m.o.b., ph.) (the previous record was of a family trio). Another Pink-footed Goose was shot by a hunter on Prince Edward Island 2 Dec (Jake DSc; ph.). This bird, the 4th provincial record, may have been the one present for weeks in nearby New Brunswick, which departed just before the end of Nov. The Graylag Goose continuing from autumn in the Truro, NS area was last seen there 7 Dec, then turned up at Yarmouth harbor 23 Feb (EM). Another Graylag Goose, the region's 3rd (and Newfoundland's 2nd), was photographed at sea 288 km e. of Cape Bonavista, NL 3 Dec (Pierre Ryan). Snow Geese are now annual in winter in Nova Scotia; three sightings make a typical winter tally. One at St. Pierre et Miquelon 12 Dec made a 5th winter record there. The autumn Truro, NS Cackling Goose was last seen 1 Dec, and one in the New Glasgow R., PEI 4 Dec (DO, Thomas Oakley, ph.) was the latest of the province's 10 records and just the 4th documented. A Canada Goose sporting a Greenland neck band was in the Truro, NS area through 7 Dec.

Among a wintering flock of 85 Green-winged Teal at St. John's, Newfoundland were at least 35 male Eurasian Teal (here 28 February 2011). Record high numbers of this subspecies wintered in eastern Newfoundland, part of an unusual influx of European birds into eastern Canada in winter 2010-2011. Hard winter conditions in western Europe beginning in early December 2010 are believed to be the cause of this influx. Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.

There was a remarkable increase in Eurasian Wigeon sightings in Nova Scotia, with 40 noted, including 12 at Glace Bay (CM), 12 at Trenton, Pictou (KM), 10 in H.R.M., and 5 in Yarmouth. Nearly 20 on the Avon Pen., NL was a typical winter count there. Singles were reported in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. A female Blue-winged Teal near Cape Race, NL 15 Jan (BM, Jared Clarke) provided only the 3rd provincial winter record. Four Eurasian Teal represented a good number for Nova Scotia, but this total pales against the 35 present in the vicinity of St. John's, NL. A Redheads at St. Pierre et Miquelon 5 Jan-28 Feb locally rare (Jade PB) were the first to overwinter. There were 2 Tufted Ducks in n. Nova Scotia (Pictou Harbour and Glace Bay), but 35+ were around St. John's, NL. An imm. male King Eider was a good find 12 Dec off East Pt., PEI (DSc, DO, DM). Harlequin Ducks continue their gradual, gratifying increase in Nova Scotia, with more than 250 noted. Concurrent with this increase is the larger number of Barrow's Goldeneyes in the s. part of the region.

This Jack Snipe at Ferryland, Newfoundland 14 February 2011 was discovered by Paul Linegar while he was owlimg. This very retiring species can be difficult to relocate, and indeed this bird was not observed again. Photograph by Paul Linegar.
There were nearly 30 in Nova Scotia, including 9 in Halifax Harbour and 11 in Sydney Harbour, but Brian Dalzell carefully tallied an astounding 450+ at the mouth of the Eel R., Restigouche, NB 30 Dec. This grouping is part of the Barrow's Goldeneye population now known to breed in Quebec, n. of the St. Lawrence River. Most of that population, several thousand strong, winters in the Quebec City area.

A Snowy Egret at Lower East Chezzetcook, H.R.M. 10-14 Dec (fide Bob McDonald, m.o., ph.) made the first winter record for Nova Scotia and perhaps the 3rd for the Region. Turkey Vultures, increasingly common (and approaching “routine”) in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are now making their presence felt on Prince Edward Island, with that province's first winter records: 2 were seen at Belle River 16 Jan (Ray Cooke) and one at Point Prim 6 Feb (Scott Roloson). More remarkable was one well n. on the Trans-Labrador Hwy. s. of Lodge Bay 14 Dec (Warrick Chubbs). Cooper's Hawks may be mirroring the vultures' expansion in Prince Edward Island, and the province's 3rd winter record, of an imm., was well docu-

Shorebirds provided considerable excitement this winter, with notable (and perhaps overlapping) arrivals from opposite ends of the compass. A flight of Northern Lapwings moved through the Region in early Dec, with the first (and most) birds noted in Newfoundland, as expected. Once on the ground, the lapwings began to wander, making it difficult to arrive at an accurate tally of individuals, though photographs of distinctive birds did help to distinguish some of them (Table 1). There have been winter arrivals of lapwings in the Region previously but not on this scale since 1966.

Two flights of Killdeer into the Region this winter were without precedent (Table 2). In most winters, the Region's reports of Killdeer can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The first flight began 9 Dec, when strong southeasterly winds deposited Killdeer along the s. and e. coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The birds in Newfoundland were noted during searches for lapwings, but in Nova Scotia, frost weather (especially 11-12 Dec) meant there were few people in the field until 18 Dec, the first weekend of the C.B.C. period. Thus, though Killdeer apparently also arrived 9 Dec in Nova Scotia, the magnitude of the movement was not apparent for more than a week. Moreover, most of the coastal barrens, beaches, and islands where Killdeer would have put down are difficult to survey and so are rarely checked. Although we know where some of the Killdeer made landfall, their points of origin are not known.

Several other shorebirds might have been associated with this arrival: an American Golden-Plover at Fort Béarnoir, NB 15-16 Dec (SIT et al., ph.), the latest date for this species ever in the province; and an Upland Sandpiper at Trepassey, NL 18 Dec (Cliff Doran, ph.), the first winter record for that province.

What happened to these Killdeer after they disappeared is unknown. Some could have returned southward, as the Dec weather was mostly mild, at least in Nova Scotia. Or could they have continued northeastward, thus being the source of the subsequent wave that began around 29 Dec? This influx had a narrower and more northerly focus, including mostly St. Pierre et Miquelon and the s. and e. shores of the Avalon Peninsula. In both influxes, southeasterly gales preceded appearance of the Killdeer. As harsh weather set in after the New Year, Killdeer numbers quickly dwindled, with only a few surviving into Feb. In conjunction with this late Dec wave of Killdeer, St. Pierre et Miquelon had their 2nd winter record of American Golden-Plover 29 Dec (Mike P.B.).

In a typical winter, Wilson's Snipe are only slightly more numerous than Killdeer and usually encountered as singles, mostly in Dec. And so when 15 snipe were noted 1 Feb at Torbay, NL (PL), and 10 were seen in the Portugal Cove South, NL area 12 Feb (BMC), they were assumed to be Wilson's. However, careful study revealed a Common Snipe among the birds at Tors Cove 19 Feb (PL) and 2 Common Snipe at Ferryland 22 Feb (PL, DB, ph.)—the first records for Canada. A Jack Snipe photographed at Ferryland 14 Feb (ph. PL) was just the 2nd provincial (and Canadian) record and the first for insular Newfoundland.

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Table 1. Records of Northern Lapwings in the Atlantic Provinces And St. Pierre and Miquelon, winter 2010-2011.

<table>
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<th>Observer(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Carneville, NL</td>
<td>Bruce Bradbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-20 Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Portugal Cove South and Trepassey, NL</td>
<td>DSM et al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Whibourne, NL</td>
<td>Dick Whitaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Dec-3 Jan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Portugal Cove, Trepassey, Renewes, and Long Beach, NL</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Dec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monks Head, Antigonish, NS; 11th provincial record</td>
<td>KM et al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ellen's Creek, PEI; 3rd provincial record</td>
<td>Chris Martin, ph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Jan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Benavista Bay, NL</td>
<td>Karen Shano, ph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17 Jan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>White's Pt, Queens, NS; 12th provincial record</td>
<td>m.ob., ph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-31 Jan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Torbay, NL</td>
<td>Mark MaffeI</td>
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Table 2. Notable reports of Killdeer in the Atlantic Provinces, winter 2010-2011.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>9 Dec</td>
<td>14+</td>
<td>Ramea, NL</td>
<td>Richard Northcort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Portugal Cove South, NL</td>
<td>DSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. Pierre et Miquelon</td>
<td>Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Dec</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Southern Avalon Peninsula, NL</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Dec</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>Sable I, NS</td>
<td>Mike Moloney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grand Manan I, NB</td>
<td>Laurie Murdoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Dec</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Halifax area, NS</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Dec</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Halifax area, NS, including 14 birds at Crystal Crescent Beach P.P.</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Dec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Louisbourg, Cape Breton, NS</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Dec</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Louisbourg C.B.C., NS</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Dec</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Harbour/Bangor C.B.C., NS</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Dec</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sheet Harbour C.B.C., NS</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Dec</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>Southern Avalon Peninsula, NL, including 6 at Cape Spear</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Dec</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>St. Pierre et Miquelon</td>
<td>Mike Moloney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Dec</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Cape Race C.B.C., NL</td>
<td>Mike Moloney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Jan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Blackhead, NL</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Jan</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Ferryland C.B.C., NL</td>
<td>m.ob.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mented at Chapel Creek 1 Jan (DSc, Elaine Seeler). A Sora flushed from a marsh on Big Tancook I, NS 21 Jan (Hillary Dionne, ph.) confirmed just the 2nd provincial winter record in the past 30 years. Newfoundland had its first winter record of Common Moorhen, a single at Chapel's Cove 25 Jan–5 Feb (tide Jared Clarke, ph., m.ob.; the species is rare at any season in the province.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS**

A Greater Yellowlegs at Chance Cove, NL 30 Dec (BMt) was by three weeks the latest ever recorded in Newfoundland. Prince Edward Island also recorded several record-late shorebirds, including a Killdeer at Monticello 14 Jan (Gerald MacDonald), a Ruddy Turnstone at Borden 5 Jan (Scott Sinclair), and an injured Red Knot 26 Dec at Malpeque Bay (Dwayne Oakey). In contrast to last winter, Ivory Gulls went unreported in the Region. The St. John's, NL area again produced a fine array of gulls, including 2 Yellow-legged Gulls (now annual in winter), a Black-tailed Gull 2 Dec+ (DB, m.ob.; 2nd for the province), a Slaty-backed Gull 2 Dec+ (BMt, m.ob.), and a record-high 7 Mew Gulls, all of the nominate subspecies, as expected. New Brunswick recorded its first winter Caspian Tern at Cape Tormentine 16 Dec (Sandy Burnett, Kyle Wellbran). In mid-Dec, numerous Dowkies wrecked in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island during a nor'easter. Many presumably perished, though some were rescued, rehabilitated, and released.

**DOVES THROUGH FINCHES**

The White-winged Dove at Kelly's Brook, NL survived until 2 Dec, providing the 2nd winter record for the province. The Region recorded its poorest Snowy Owl flight in many years, with none in Newfoundland or St. Pierre et Miquelon and just singles in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Labrador, and Nova Scotia. A Northern Hawk Owl was reported on Devil's I. at the mouth of Halifax Harbour 31 Dec (p.a., MK; potentially the 2nd provincial winter record in 15 years). A Great Gray Owl was heard calling during an owl survey 12 Dec in Black Spruce forest near Dromore, PEI (p.a., DO, DSc, DM, a potential 6th provincial record). Newfoundland's 3rd Long-eared Owl was seen at twilight at Ferryland 12 Feb (BMt, JW, DB). Newfoundland's long-staying Anna's Hummingbird eventually succumbed to harsh winter weather, being last seen 7 Feb; at one point, the home owners were rotating two feeders every five minutes to ensure an unfrozen food supply.

An Eastern Phoebe in Hyde Park at Cornwall, PEI 1 Jan (Greg & Sandra Feetham, Les Homans) was the first winter flycatcher ever recorded in the province. Another Eastern Phoebe was on Brier I., NS 4 Dec (IM, EM). A Say's Phoebe at Lower Economy, Colchester, NS 14 Dec (Janet Quinn, ph.) was of the yahamensis subspecies, typical of other autumn and the two previous winter records. Wrens made news in New Brunswick: the 3rd provincial winter record of Marsh Wren was found at Cape Brule 5 Dec (Rose-Alma Mallet, et al., ph.), and at least 7 Carolina Wrens were noted, including 2 together in Fredericton. Part of the European winter, Redwings visited Newfoundland, 2 in Portugal Cove South 7–28 Feb (Richard Thomas, m.ob.) and one at Cape Spear 8 Feb (Richard Lowe). Few passerine strays from the West were noted, all late in the season: a Townsend's Solitaire at Louisbourg, NS 13–14 Feb (Philip Burke, Bill Bussey, ph.), a Varied Thrush at Cape Tormentine, NB 7 Jan–24 Feb (ST et al., ph.), and a Varied Thrush at Sealforth, H.R.M., NS 14 Feb (Marlene York, ph.). In Prince Edward Island, two sightings of Northern Mockingbird in Jan suggested they might have wintered.

Winter-season warblers showed a typical distribution this year (Table 3), with most reported in Nova Scotia. Among the least expected were a Yellow Warbler at St. John's, NF

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**Table 3: Records of warblers in the Atlantic Provinces, winter 2010–2011.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species / Province</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>NB</th>
<th>PEI</th>
<th>NL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange-crowned Warbler</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Warbler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape May Warbler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-rumped Warbler</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-throated Warbler</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Warbler</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Palm Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-and-white Warbler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Redstart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovenbird</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Yellowthroat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson's Warbler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-breasted Chat</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A well-described young male European Greenfinch (Chloris chloris) in Yarmouth, NS 28 Feb–1 Mar (Eric & Barbara Huff) was presumed an escapee, but there is precedent for records during similar winters. The journal Sea Swallow (15: 28) documents several greenfinches ca. 320 km w. of Ireland 30 Dec 1961 during the so-called ‘European Express’ winter, when in addition to numerous other European finches in the Northeast, a greenfinch was found 23 Dec 1961 at Pelham Bay Park, Bronx, New York by Paul Steineck and party, during the Bronx–Westchester C.B.C. (Auk 80: 201; fide P. A. Buckley). Charles Alford (British Birds 21: 282) noted: “On October 9th, 1927, the S.S. Alcmene started on her westward voyage from Southampton, England, and on the same day four Greenfinches (C. c. chloris) flew on board. One of them disappeared during the voyage, but three remained on the ship until the shores of Newfoundland were sighted, when they apparently flew ashore.” Another autumn greenfinch was seen fide of Iceland at latitude 59°N on 11 Oct 1973 (Sea Swallow 24: 33). In the Northeast, other records come from Lewis County, NY in Mar 1878 (Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club 5: 119), St. John, NB in Mar 1977 (American Birds 331: 977), and Point-Claire, Q. all winter 10 Dec 1987+ (American Birds 42: 239), Iceland has five records, 1997–2006, all in spring.

2 Dec–12 Jan (m.o.b.); a Pine Warbler at Cymbria, PEI 1 Jan (Jide DSe); a Prairie Warbler at Dartmouth, NS 1 Dec (Chris Pepper, BMy; IM, 4th winter record); a Black-and-white Warbler at Lower Sackville, NS all winter (m.o.b.); an American Redstart at Long Beach, Cape Breton L, NS 29 Dec–1 Jan (C&AM; ph.; 3rd in winter for the province); and a Yellow-breasted Chat at St. Pierre et Miquelon 30 Dec (PB; 4th ever in winter and only warbler of the season). Two imm. female Cape May Warblers were photographed in Nova Scotia: at Long Beach, Cape Breton L 29 Dec–16 Jan (C&AM) and at Halifax 13 Jan (Dennis Garrett), furnishing the 4th and 5th winter records for the province.

It was a mundane winter for sparrows, though a Clay-colored Sparrow on remote Fogo I., NL in mid-Feb was rare (Sheryl Miller, ph.), and a Harris’s Sparrow 1–9 Jan at Monticello, PEI (Gerald MacDonald, m.o.b., ph.) made just the 2nd provincial record. Nova Scotia’s 6th winter Summer Tanager, a female, made a brief appearance at Canning 11–12 Dec (Jim Woldorf et al., ph.), and the province’s 3rd winter Bobolink was nicely photographed at Dartmouth 19 Dec (MK et al.). Establishing Prince Edward Island’s 2nd winter record of Eastern Meadowlark, one was seen at Cymbria 5 Jan (Linda Thomas, Rick Hawkins). An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird roved with a blackbird flock at Wood Islands, PEI 14 Jan (Gary Schneider), only the 2nd ever recorded in winter for that province.

A female Common Chaffinch attended a feeder at Freshwater, Placentia Bay, NL 28 Jan–22 Feb (Mr. Chaytor, Powers family, ph., m.o.b.); there is but one other provincial record. The winter finch season was modest, although the Maritime provinces enjoyed a fair flight, including scattered flocks of White-winged Crossbills and Common Redpolls, with a few Hoary Redpolls mixed in.

Corrigenda: The correct date for the albatross noted in the past issue (North American Birds 65: 31) should be 6 Sep (not 8 Nov), and the correct spelling of the observer’s name is John Tramontano, to whom we apologize.

Contributors (subregional editors in boldface, for Nova Scotia unless otherwise noted): John Belbin, Patrick Boez, Dave Brown, Brian Dalzell (New Brunswick, Labrador), Roger Etcheberry (St. Pierre et Miquelon), Ulli Höger, Mike King, Ken Knowles, Paul Linegar, Bruce Mactavish (BMT; Newfoundland), Blake Maybank (BMy), Dan MacAskill, Ken McKenna, Jan McLaren, Eric Mills, Cathy & Allan Murriani, Susann Myers, Wayne Nelly, Dwaine Oakley, David Seeler (DSe, for Prince Edward Island), Dave Shepherd (DSh), Hans Toom.

Blake Maybank, 144 Bayview Drive
White’s Lake, Nova Scotia B3T 1Z1

( maybank@ns.sympatico.ca)

Québec

Pierre Bannon
Oliver Barden
Normand David
Samuel Denault

The first half of the winter was exceptionally mild in the north and rainy in the east. The Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower North Shore experienced anomalies ranging from 5.5° to 9.5° C above average in December, but Kuujuuaq bore the brunt, with an extraordinary 13° C above the norm. Gaspé received 360 mm of rain, 246 mm of which fell in the three days between 13 and 15 December.

The second half of the winter was more normal, but Kuujuuaq was still 7.5° C above normal in January. Gaspé had its 4th snowiest January, with 130 cm, but Québec City had its least snowiest January, with only 20 cm. February temperatures were almost normal, but a succession of storms brought large accumulations of snow at Gaspé and Sherbrooke. The monthly mean temperatures at Val d’Or, Montréal, Québec City and Mont-Joli have been above normal for 16 consecutive months now, from November 2009 through February 2011.

Regional rarities involved Anna’s Hummingbird, Fieldfare, Redwing, and Golden-crowned Sparrow, while one of the most exciting events of the season was the irruption of Willow Ptarmigans in the Lac-Saint-Jean area.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

A small group of 4 Snow Geese caused a surprise at La Pocatière 16 Jan (ph. CA; CG); only 2 remained 20 Feb. Other unusual waterfowl for winter included a male Eurasian Wigeon at Sept-Iles 1 Dec–1 Jan (HH; GH), 2 Northern Shovelers at Grosse-Ile (Magdalen Is.) 21 Jan (J.C. Richard), a Northern Pintail at Déglis 5 Feb (CA; CG), a Green-winged Teal at Sept-Iles until 18 Jan (HH; GH), and 4 Greec-
wingeds at Nouvelle 5 Feb (CL). A Canvas- 
back was reported at Deschenes 4-5 Dec (DT et al.), a female Redhead at Valleyfield 27 Dec (SD, P. Côte), and a male Redhead at Iberville 19 Feb+ (J. Mathieu). Single male Ring- 
necked Ducks visited Lac Saint-Charles 4-8 Jan-6 Feb (S. Leclerc), Sherbrooke 2-30 Jan (M. Roy), Gatinneau 2-29 Jan (2 males; RD), and North Hatley 13 Feb (M. Leclerc, E. Trem-
blay). A King Eider appeared at Percé 13 Feb (DM). An ad. male Harlequin Duck was pres-
ent off Île des Sœurs 17 Dec through at least 
early Mar (PB, m.ob.), while an imm. male was 
identified at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 18-23 Feb (DC). Single White-winged Scoters were 
found at Saint-Fulgence 11 Jan and 13 Feb (CC) and at Doria 2 Jan (BB, MM).

As expected at intervals of about 10 years, 
numerous Willow Ptarmigans moved farther 
southward than usual, to Chibougamau, Lac- 
Saint-Jean, and n. of Baie-Comeau but not to 
Abitibi. Daily counts of several hundred were 
made inland along the Trans-Taiga Rd. e. of 
James Bay, but few were seen near the coast 
(MAM et al.). The southernmost birds reached 
Saint-Fulgence 16 Dec (CC), Les Escoumins 6 
Jan and 4 Feb (JGB), and Tadoussac 22 Feb (S. 
Baillot, C. Lourdou, ReP). A male Rock 
Ptarmigan killed by a hunter at Saint-Ludger-
de-Milot (Lac Saint-Jean) 22 Feb was excep-
tionally far south (ph. A. Dufresne, J. H. 
Brunoni). Although the habitat appears mar-
ginal for the species, Wild Turkeys enroached into the Laurentides region, with birds seen at 
Saint-Faustin, Val-des-Lacs and 20 km n. of 
Saint-Sauveur (J. H. Brunoni).

Unusual numbers of wintering Common 
Loons involved 8 at Georgeville 8 Jan (B. Tur-
gon) and 3 about 42 km e. of Sept-îles 14 Jan 
(F. Gallant). A Pied-billed Grebe at Les 
Cèdres 2 Jan (BB, MM), a Red-necked Grebe at Les 
Escoumins 6 Jan (ReP, MH. Belanger), and a 
Double-crested Cormorant at Havre-aux-
Maison (Magdalen Is.) 23 Jan 
(SC et al.) were all worthy of 
mention. Single Great Blue 
Herons lingered at Sainte-
Marthe-de-Vaudreuil 8-23 Jan 
(ph. A. Quenneville, L. Deslos-
sés), Neuville 29 Jan (S. De-
shais), and Sainte-Catherine 
16 Feb (PB, R. Duval). 
Although some birds are pres-
tent almost every year until early 
Jan, there are very few records 
from Feb. In the wake of the 
fall’s irruption, a lone Cattle 
Egret was spotted at Drum-
mondville 5 Dec, providing a 
new record-late date for the 
Region (H. Leclerc). More sur-
prising was an imm. Black-crowned Night-
Heron seen at Quebec City 8 Dec–mid-Mar (P. 
Lane, M. Raymond et al.), a first record of 
successful wintering for the Region.

VULTURES THROUGH ALCIDS

Single Turkey Vultures turned up at Saint-
Ro-
saire 21 Jan (GH) and Saint-Ferdinand 22 Jan 
(ph. P. Buteau). Numbers of Bald Eagles are 
really exploding in the Region, as evidenced by 
16 on the Sainte-Anne-du-Lac C.B.C. 18 Dec, 
18 at Saint-Didace 20 Dec (B. Dagus, J. 
ReP), 15 on Île du Grand-Calumet C.B.C. 29 
Dec, and 4 at Lac Tremblant 30 Dec (G. 
Gauthier). Exceptional for Abitibi in winter, 
2 were still at Val d’Or 29 Jan (C. Siano, RL). 
Single Northern Harriers at Saint-Barthélemy 
12 Jan (GH) and Saint-Timothée 19 Feb (P. 
Laniel) were not totally unexpected, but 2 at 
Havre-Aubert 21 Jan represented a notable 
event for the Magdalen Is. (André Couture).

Red-shouldered Hawks wintered at Gatinneau 
(3), and Quebec City (m.ob.), and sing-
elles were at Rimouski 16 Dec (GH) and Saint-
Hubert 29 Dec (P. Vaillancourt, I. Langlois, 
Vaillancourt). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk 
was well documented at Repentigny 11-12 
Dec (ph. S. Favreau), providing a new record-
late date for the Region. Single Golden Eagles 
were detected at Saint-Didace 20 Dec (B. 
Dugas, J. ReP) and at Luskville 30 Dec (RD). 
Single American Coots showed up at Sept-
îles 25 Dec (B. Duchesne) and at Côteau-du-
Lac 2 Jan (S. Marcoux). Late shorebirds were 
represented by a Killdeer at Baie-Saint-Paul 9 
Dec (J. Bernier et al.), a Spotted Sandpiper at 
Matane 2 Dec (L. Fradette), a new record-late 
date for the Region; A Greater Yellowlegs at 
Marie 3 Dec (C.L); and a Red Knot at 
Hopetown 2 Dec (M. Chiasson). About 100 
Black-legged Kittiwakes at Cap-d’Espoir 18 
Feb (Albini Couture, DM) were probably ear-
ly migrants. A Little Gull in the Magdalen Is.

24 Dec (C. Roy) established a new Regional 
late date. Single ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls 
were located at Lac Témiscouata 1 Jan (J. 
Moreau), Sherbrooke 10 Jan (N. Bertrand), 
and Laval 20 Jan (G. Lachaine). One wonders 
what single Great Black-backed Gulls were 
doing at La Morandière 28 Jan (C. Letendre) 
and at Val-d’Or 3 Feb (RL). A Thick-billed 
Murre made a one-day appearance at Rimous-
ki 19 Dec (GG, D. Ruest)

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

A Barn Owl, last seen at Stanbridge Station 6 
Dec (M. Gauthier), had apparently been 
around for a few weeks. Very rare in midwin-
ter n. of the Montréal area, a Long-eared Owl 
was found dead at Les Escoumins 2 Jan (C. 
Sirois). To a lesser extent, the same could be 
said of Short-eared Owl, of which singles were 
found at Baie-Saint-Paul 10 Dec (A. Ras-
mussen, J. Laporte), Chicoutimi 19 Dec (R. 
Claveau), and Bic 4 Jan (D. Bertaux). A Bore-
al Owl was seen throughout Dec at Laval 
(m.ob.). The Val-d’Espoir Anna’s Humming-
bird was last seen 24 Dec; it was in apparent 
good form through the last days of its stay (J. 
ReP). It was the best winter since 2004–2005 
for Red-bellied Woodpecker, with 18 reported. 
Most notable was a female at Saint-Hedwidge 
in the Lac-St-Jean plain in Jan–Feb (M. Vachon 
et al.). Now reported annually in winter in the 
Laurentides region, a Belted Kingfisher win-
tered at Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac (J. Char-
bonneau), and singles were found in Outaouais 
at Le Péché 25-27 Jan (R. Fournier et al.) and 
Low 27 Feb (DT, R. Vanasse).

A Black-billed Magpie, the first both in 
Abitibi-Témiscamingue and in the province 
since 2006, was seen briefly at Lorrainville 
5 Feb (A. Cadotte, J. Fréchette). A Great Tit, 
a very infrequently reported escapee in the 
Region, set up residence in Lotbinière for the 
winter starting in late fall (L. Roy, A. Déry, 
ph.). Two Black-capped Chickadees at km #65 
of the James Bay Rd. (52°40’N, 77°22’W) in 
mid-Feb were surprisingly far north (MAM). 
Nowadays, few are the regions in which a Car-
olina Wren makes the headlines. Such was 
the case at Bonaventure, Gaspésie 16-22 Jan (D. 
Gauthier), where the species remains a rare 
visitor. Winter Wren was distinctly more 
common than usual, with at least 10 records 
coming from a variety of regions. Most notable 
were up to 3 wintering at Île des Sœurs (PB), 
and one as far n. as Sept-îles + Jan (J.P. 
Laporte). Single Ruby-crowned Kinglets didn’t 
give up at Sainte-Catherine 18 Dec (Monttréal 
C.B.C.) and Maple Grove 2 Jan (DO), but most 
impressive was one at feeders in Chauveau 
Park, Quebec City 16-22 Jan (ph. R. Robert).

An adequately described Northern
Wheatere was observed at Cap-aux-Ôs 6 Dec, providing Québec its first winter record (MC. Rancourt). Several Eastern Bluebirds were seen in Dec, and up to 3 were on Saint-Bernard I, Châteauguay sporadically throughout the winter until 12 Mar (P. Geoffrion). The winter's only Townsend's Solitaire paused at Sept-Iles 9 Dec (C. Couture). Notable Hermit Thrush records include one at L. Leamy, Gatineau 10 Jan+ (R. Auger, m.ob.), one at Charlebois 14 Dec–1 Feb (G. LaRue), and a record-late bird for Saguennay-Lac-St-Jean at Chicoutimi 19 Dec (E. Gagnon). A Fieldfare relied on crabapples at a residence in l'Anse-à-Griffon near the tip of the Gaspé Pen. 10 Jan–10 Mar (B. Chouinard, C. Côté, m.ob., ph.). This taste of the European winter witnessed farther e. in Newfoundland was the 9th or 10th of its species recorded in Quebec and first since 2004. The Fieldfare showed a lack of pigmentation in parts of its plumage. This season also produced a 2nd Regional record of another European Turdus: a Redwing videotaped during its brief stay at Frampton, Beauce 20 Dec (vt. CF. ride J.L. Lagueux-Tremblay).

Closing out this sensational winter for the thrush family were single Varied Thrushes at Nominingue, Laurentides mid-Dec+ (ph. R. Lajeunesse, F. Léonard, ride D. Lavoite) and at Sep-Iles 4 Jan (Y. Gallant, L. Filion, ph.).

RARELY SEEN PAST MID-JAN IN THE REGION, A Swamp Sparrow successfully wintered at Île des Sceurs 11 Dec+ (ph. PB, m.ob.). A Savannah Sparrow held on at a Saint-Stanislas-koska road shoulder 11–20 Jan (ph. DC), while a White-crowned Sparrow, unusually rare this winter, did the same at Saint-Constant 28 Jan–24 Feb (ph. PB). A first-winter Golden-crowned Sparrow photographed at Havre-aubert, Magdalen Is. 15 Feb (ph. G. Chiasson, ride AR) had apparently been present for about a month. This represents the first photographically documented record of the species in Quebec. An apparent Oregon Junco was seen at Chénéville, Outaouais 17 Jan (RD, D. Dallaire).

The falls last Summer Tanager was seen until 3 Dec at Saint-Luc (ride G. Boulet). The Western Meadowlark found at Les Escoumins in late Nov remained there throughout the winter months (ride JGB), providing a first wintering record for the Region. A first-year male Yellow-headed Blackbird lingered at Frampton 10 Dec–4 Jan (CF. m.ob.), while a female was at Bonaventure, Gaspé 7 Feb–5 Mar (JF. Poirier). A male House Finch at Saint-Anne-des-Monts 26 Jan provided a rare record for the n. shore of the Gaspé Pen. (M. Daudelin). Winter finch numbers were low across most regions, with the exception of redpolls, which were to be abundant most everywhere.

MIMIDS THROUGH FINCHES

Hardy Grey Catbirds were found at Montréal 14 Dec–10 Jan (J. Harrison) and Havre-aux-Maisons, Magdalen Is. 19 Feb (R. Charon, L. Turbide), though this last one lost its bid to survive the winter, being found dead 24 Feb (ride SC). It was a decent winter for Brown Thrashers, with records from LaSalle 4 Dec–4 Jan (DO, m.ob.), Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Launiatère 16 Dec (M. Beaulac), and Percé 29 Dec+, the latter quite an unusual record for the Gaspé Pen. (A. Boulanger, M. Joncas). A record-late Northern Parula was glimpsed at Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Montréal 6 Dec (PB).

Five Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported throughout the Region in Dec, the last ones making it through 6 Jan at Baie-Comeau (JP. Barry) and 12 Jan at Gatineau (M. Aube). Pine Warblers were discovered at Chandler 22 Dec–18 Jan (JR. Lepage), at Trois-Rivières mid-Jan–8 Feb (J. Richard), and at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts 23 Jan (ph. V. Amiard). A Common Yellowthroat discovered at Maizerets (Québec City) 19 Jan was record late (ph. JP. Marcil).

Notable Eastern Towhees were seen at Rimouski 2 Dec–18 Feb (ride CD), Rivière Saint-Jean 10 Dec (YR), and Saint-Félicien 29 Dec–15 Jan (R. Girard). A Field Sparrow made for an excellent C.B.C. find at Fasset, Outaouais 25 Dec (Y. Gauthier, F. Morand).

Contributors (subregional editors in boldface): Claude Auchu, Pierre Bannon (Montreal), Bob Barnhurst, Jean-Guy Beauchef, Denis Collins, Claudette Cormier, Sebastien Cyr, Samuel Denault, Claire Douville (Lower-St. Lawrence), Rodolphe Dubois, Colette Forges, Guy Gendron, Christine Girard, H. Hamel, G. Hamelin, Guy Huot, Louis Imbeau (Abitibi), Raymond Ladurantaye, Chantal Lamarre, Mabel McIntosh, Daniel Mercier, Marc-Antoine Montpetit, Daniel Ouellette, Raymond Piche, Renaud Pintiaux, Pierre Poulin (Gaspésie), Alain Richard (Magdalen Is.), Yann Rochepault (North Shore), Jean-François Rousseau (Québec City), Germain Savard (Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean), Daniel Toussaint (Outaouais).

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HELPING HANDS FOR AMERICA'S LANDS

Pierre Bannon, 1517 Leprohon Montréal, Quebec H4E 1P1, (ppbannon@videotron.ca)
Olivier Barden, 955 Léocard, APT 5 Québec, Quebec G2V 2W6, (olivierbarden@gmail.com)
Normand David, 10385A rue Clark Montréal, Québec H3L 253 (normand.david@videotron.ca)
Samuel Denault, 75 Beauchemin Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Québec J3N 1J6 (samuel.denault@videotron.ca)

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WATERFOWL

The Greenland Goose Invasion continues. This season, a Pink-footed Goose lingered from the fall at Sudbury, Middlesex, MA through 26 Dec (m.o.b.), and there were 2 Barnacle Geese, the first at Concord, Middlesex, MA through 18 Dec, the other at Stratford, Fairfield, CT 2 Dec (F Mantlik, ph., m.o.b.) and later at Westport, where it remained until 7 Jan. The latter bird, first located in New York in late Nov, was originally banded as a juv. in 2002 at a major wintering area for Barnacle Geese in Scotland, and it was observed annually in Scotland through at least 2005. These three geese follow in the wake of increasing numbers of Greenland Greater White-fronted Geese, which this season numbered at least 21 in the Region (one in Maine, 10 in Massachusetts, 4 in Rhode Island, and 6 in Connecticut). Another 10 Greater White-fronted Goose on Chappaquiddick, Dukes, MA 19-20 Feb (E. Potter, A. Keith, L. McDowell, ph.) showed pinkish bills, typical of one of the w. subspecies, much rarer in the Region. A Ross's Goose visited Nantucket 11 Dec-17 Feb (JF et al., ph). About 11 Cackling Geese were reported, including 5 in Connecticut, 4 in w. Massachusetts, and singles in Rhode Island and Maine; observers are urged to document each report of this species carefully, ideally with photographs. Unusual among the handful of Tundra Swan reports were 2 birds well inland at Pittsfield, Berkshire, MA 4-5 Dec (MJ et al.).

Although Gadwall is often a common wintering duck in the s. three states, there are very few records n. of Massachusetts's n. border. This winter, there were 4-2 in the Champlain Valley of Vermont (one through late Feb) and 2 in se. New Hampshire. Both of the latter were at wastewater treatment plants. Eurasian Wigeons numbered at least 13, scattered along the coast from Portland to Connecticut. Wintering Northern Shovelers have become almost routine in New England, but allow me one last summary. This season, the species grazed every state except Vermont, and given the likelihood that many birds moved around as ponds froze, an exact tally is impossible. In n. Massachusetts, about 50 were noted in Dec, which dwindled to 25 in Jan and 12 in Feb. To the n., both New Hampshire and Maine had 6 each, the most unexpected being one in Limestone, Aroostook, ME 30 Dec (BS). The only Eurasian Teal was in Westerly, Washington, RI 15-19 Feb (J. St. Jean, G. Williams).

The Ocean State also hosted the only Tufted Ducks in the Region: in East Providence 9 Jan (E. Slattery) and Warwick 16 Jan (D. Wil-

Pamela Hunt

In a break from recent trends, this past winter recalled the season's former glory—if by "glory" one means the climatological average of the past 116 years. In a nutshell, temperatures were limited to the expected incursions of redpolls and Bohemian Waxwings, the usual collection of geese from the eastern Arctic, lingering warblers, and a few vagrants from the west (among them four Townsends Solitaires). The cream of the crop included another set of Region-spanning American White Pelicans, a Northern Lapwing in early December, and first state records of Skybacked Gull in Vermont and Common Murre in Connecticut.

Abbreviations/locations: First Encounter (First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable, MA); Gloucester (Essex, MA); H.B.S.P. (Hammonasset Beach S.P., New Haven, CT); Newburyport (Essex, MA); P.I. (Plum I., Essex, MA); Ptown (Provincetown, Barnstable, MA); Rockport (Essex, MA).

It is not often that one sees a Northern Fulmar with trees in the background! This bird appeared in New Hampshire's Hampton Harbor 22 January 2011. Photograph by Jason Lambert.

For the second year in a row, American White Pelicans wandered the coastal areas of New England. These two were noted off Chebeague Island, Maine 3 January 2011. Photograph by Beverly Johnson.

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Six Pacific Loons were reported this season,
One of the standout rarities of the season in New England, this Northern Lapwing at Plum Island, Massachusetts 2 December 2010 was probably part of the exceptional flight of lapwings into southeastern Canada. Photograph by Jim Hully.

Grebe at Newport, RI 5 Jan (N. Paulson). A storm brought seabirds close to shore 1 Dec, with highlights including a remarkable 142 Red-throated Loons along the New Hampshire coast (SM) and 8 Great Shearwaters off Wellfleet, Barnstable, MA (MF), plus 85 and 575 Northern Gannets at these locations, respectively. Numbers of gannets never reached the totals observed in 2009–2010. On 2 Dec, one Manx and 7 Great Shearwaters were seen from First Encounter, and the season’s final Great was off Cape Cod 4 Dec (all BN). A Coral’s Shearwater was reported off West Quoddy Head, Washington, ME on the remarkably late date of 19 Dec (fake EH); there are but two prior Regional records in Dec, both from waters off Cape Cod. Nearly as unexpected was a Northern Fulmar inside Hampton Harbor, NH 22 Jan (ph. SM, JL).

Up to 16 Great Cormorants frequented the Merrimack R. in Manchester, NH through Feb, an unusually high count for this inland location. The saga of American White Pelicans began on Christmas Day, when 2 appeared in Waterford, New London, CT (fide G. Williams). Three days later, 5 were reported from Westport, CT (M. Silk) and 5 at Charlestown, Washington, RI 29 Dec (B. Tabor). Subsequently, 5-7 were in Whitefield, Lincoln, ME 31 Dec (fide EH), followed by singles at H.B.S.P. 1 Jan (J. Fisher) and at Guilford, New Haven, CT 2-3 Jan (D. Chodkowski). In Maine, 2 were on Chebeague I, Cumberland 3 Jan (ph. B. Johnson) On 4-5 Jan, one was in Newport, RI (ph. P. Long, C. Trocki, M. St. Sauveur), and the final live sighting for the Region came from Noank, New London, CT 5 Jan. The saga ended with a bird found dead in Guilford on 4 Mar. The hopscotch pattern of records makes a tally of total pelicans difficult, but it seems that at least 5 birds were present.

Lingering hirons included 2 Snowy Egrets in Connecticut (12 & 22 Dec), a Cattle Egret at Newportport through 8 Dec, a Green Heron in Cambridge, MA through 10 Dec, and an imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Stratford, CT 26 Dec. A total of 80 Black Vultures in New Milford, Litchfield, CT 7 Dec (A. Dumnitt) was considered high even by w Connecticut standards; smaller numbers (10 including 2 on the Block Island C.B.C. 16 Dec. The rest were in Massachusetts: 2 on Cape Cod 12 Dec (ph. BN), one on the Cape 8 Jan (WP et al.), and a well-described bird in Salisbury, Essex 17-18 Feb (D. Freiday). Noteworthy grebe reports included 112 Horned Grebes at Revere, Sussex, MA 5 Feb (ML); a late inland Red-necked Grebe in Hinsdale, Cheshire, NH 31 Dec (D. Clark, J. Russo); a Western/Clark’s Grebe at Rockport 6-7 Feb (ph. L. Ferraresso, m.ob.); and a Western cod 12 Dec (ph. BN), one on the Cape 8 Jan (WP et al.), and a well-described bird in Salisbury, Essex 17-18 Feb (D. Freiday). Noteworthy grebe reports included 112 Horned Grebes at Revere, Sussex, MA 5 Feb (ML); a late inland Red-necked Grebe in Hinsdale, Cheshire, NH 31 Dec (D. Clark, J. Russo); a Western/Clark’s Grebe at Rockport 6-7 Feb (ph. L. Ferraresso, m.ob.); and a Western

Maine’s share of the Townsend’s Solitaire invasion was this bird found at Etna 18 January 2011. It remained through the winter season (here 13 February). Photograph by Derek Lovitch.
or fewer) continue to winter in Rhode Island and w. Massachusetts. Southwesterly winds 13-14 Feb may have pushed 2-3 Black Vultures into coastal areas of Rockingham, NH 14-18 Feb (m.ob.). A presumed Red-tailed Hawk × Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid was seen in Oxford, New Haven, CT 19 Dec (E Gallo). Counts of Merlins and American Kestrels were both elevated, to 109 and 70 individuals, respectively (87 and 64 in the previous winter; eBird). The only Gyr Falcon reported was a dark morph at Burlington, VT 25 Jan (S. Morrical), although a “large falcon” in Portsmouth, NH 4 Dec (L. Medlock) may have been this Arctic visitor.

**RAILS THROUGH ALCIDs**

Nantucket continues to be the place to find rails in winter: 17 Virginia Rails, a Sora, and a Common Moorhen were noted there 11 Dec (JT et al.). Virginia Rails in less expected locations included one in Longmeadow, Hampden, MA 30 Jan (J. Wojjanowski) and 2 lingering into early Jan in coastal Connecticut. A Sora was on the Cape Cod C.B.C. 19 Dec, and one was found dead in Concord, MA 17 Dec (C. Corey). A Clapper Rail was also recorded on the Cape Cod C.B.C. 19 Dec, and one was found dead on Cape Cod 25 Jan (A. Gorr); another Clapper was at Newburyport, MA 23 Jan and 23 Feb (m.ob.). Two Purple Gallinules were taken to rehabilitators, one in Hull, Plymouth, MA 27 Dec (A. Cartoceti), the other in Martinsville, Knox, ME 9 Jan (fide EH). Unusual inland after Dec, an American Coot wintered on the Connecticut R. in Hinsdale (m.ob.). Sandhill Cranes were noted at Dartmouth, Bristol, MA 23 Dec (fide MR) and in Addison, VT 3 Jan (M. Palombo).

One of the outstanding finds of the season was a Northern Lapwing on PI. 2 Dec (ph. J. Huly), which followed Connecticut’s Nov record and a plethora of early winter records in Atlantic Canada. A few Semipalmated Plovers lingered into mid-Dec, as is now expected. A warm spell in mid-Feb may have been responsible for a coastal influx of Killdeer n. to Maine. American Oystercatchers typically vacate New England in Oct, so three records in single winter are unusual. The first, in Stonington, New London, CT 7 Dec (NB), could have been a very late migrant, and the last, at Kelsey L., New Haven, CT 20 Feb (D. DeRienzo), was an early returner to a known breeding area. On Martha’s Vineyard, an oystercatcher observed 4 Jan—13 Feb (ph. T. M. Day) provided a first mid-winter record for Massachusetts. A White-rumped Sandpiper on Crane’s Beach, Essex, MA 19 Dec (J.B et al.) furnished the first record for the Cape Ann C.B.C. in its 80-year history.

Vermont’s first Slaty-backed Gull was a third-cycle bird at Sandbar N.W.R., Chittenden 9-10 Jan (TM et al.). Massachusetts hosted a New Gull in Lynn, Essex 24 Feb (J. Quigley), and the region’s only Thayer’s Gull was at Gloucester, MA 14 Feb (P. Peterson). Up to 180 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 86 Iceland Gulls were on Nantucket in early Jan, and the season’s high count of Black-legged Kittiwakes was 550 at Rockport, MA 7 Jan (RH). Like rare gulls, jaegers were relatively scarce, with a Parasitic off Monhegan L., ME 4 Dec (fide WT); 24 Parasitic Jaegers counted from two locations on Cape Cod 27 Dec (BN) was the highest count. Dovekies staged a mini-invasion in Dec, with more double-digit counts than in most recent winters. The maximum count was of 296 at First Encounter 2 Dec, with 68 there 27 Dec (both BN). Other high tallies were 48 from a Northern Right Whale survey boat in the Gulf of Maine 18 Dec (M. Good) and 40 on the Cape Ann C.B.C. 19 Dec. Single individuals made it into Long Island Sound in Rhode Island and Connecticut in early Jan. Counts in the Gulf of Maine never exceeded 4 for the remainder of the winter. With the exception of a count of 87 on 18 Dec from the Right Whale survey boat, Common Murre bucked recent trends and was barely reported at all, with only one or 2 at traditional locations on Cape Ann and Cape Cod. Connecticut’s first record of Common Murre turned up at H.B.S.P. 30 Jan (ph. T. Green, m.ob.). A concentration of prey brought unusually high numbers of Razorbill to the mouth of the Piscataqua R., NH/ME through mid-Dec, with 78 there 18 Dec (BG, LK). The high count for the season came from Cape Cod 5 Dec, when 5850 were counted passing Truro (BN).

**DOVES THROUGH WRENS**

The only White-winged Dove of the season was at Watertown, Middlesex, MA 4-31 Dec
(ph. J. Beckwith) Irruptive owls were scarce, with only 3 Snowy Owls at Boston's Logan Airport (N. Smith) and perhaps 6-8 more for the rest of the region. Vermont hosted 2 Northern Hawk Owls, a long-staying individual at Berlin, Washington 27 Dec–23 Feb (N. Stambaugh, m.ob.) and one in Belvidere, Lamotte 2-7 Feb (J. Slagle). Four Rufous Hummingbirds lingered into Dec: 3 female types in Connecticut and a single in Massachusetts. One of the Connecticut birds (in Sterling, Windham) was present for 106 days through 23 Jan. At that point, because its bill started freezing while it was feeding, the bird was taken to a rehabilitator. Massachusetts also hosted a Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird. A Calliope Hummingbird in Guilford was last seen 1 Jan (H. Kranzfeld, m.ob.), the 3rd record for Connecticut.

Four Red-headed Woodpeckers visited the region (2 in Connecticut, one each in Massachusetts and Vermont), and a Red-bellied Woodpecker was well out of range in the Northeast Kingdom in Essex, VT. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were again well reported in the s. part of the region, with 60 in Connecticut, 32 in Massachusetts, 16 from Rhode Island, and 10 total from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine (fide RF; eBird). An intergrade Northern Flicker visited a feeder in Tolland, CT in late Jan (ph. J. Koscik).

Four Eastern Phoebes made it past early Jan: 2 each in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Fork-tailed Flycatcher found 17 Nov at Stamford, Fairfield, CT lingered through 4 Dec (m.ob.). A modest number of Northern Shrikes moved into the region, although only a handful made it all the way to Connecticut and Rhode Island. Wayward viresons were limited to a White-eyed on Rhode Island's Napatree C.B.C. 26 Dec and a Blue-headed in New Haven, CT 5 Dec (m.ob.). Migrant Fish Crows started to swell the ranks of wintering birds in e. Massachusetts around mid-Feb, while Vermont documented its first wintering Fish Crows (up to 6) in Burlington (TM et al.). Early Dec found a few Cave Swallows in Connecticut following this species' now expected late Nov influx. About 4 were detected at three locations in Fairfield and New Haven, with the last reported 7 Dec. More unusual was a single Cave Swallow somewhat inland at Ancôver, Essex, MA 8 Dec (W. Drummond). A wayward Boreal Chickadee lingered at Windsor, Berkshire, MA through 4 Dec, while another was in Epson, Merrimack, NH through at least 11 Dec (fide M. Suomala). In the midst of all the rafts noted above, observers on Nantucket also found a Sedge Wren 11 Dec (JT et al.).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

There was a nice array of thrushes in the region this winter. The rarest was the Mountain Bluebird at Windsor Locks, Hartford, CT 7 Dec–6 Jan (ph. R. Tebets, m.ob.). Townsend's Solitaires staged a mini-invasion, starting with one in Strafford, Strafford, NH early Dec–Mar (ph. S. Kern, m.ob.). Also in the Granite State was a solitaire in Bow, Merrimack 17 Jan (ph. J. Pietrzak, m.ob.), seen again just once, in early Mar. Other single solitaires were at Etna, Penobscot, ME 18 Jan–Mar (B. Barker, m.ob.) and Gardner, Worcester, MA 23–24 Dec (ph. T. Pirro et al.). Of 6 Varied Thrushes reported, 3 were in Maine: 2 at Brunswick, Cumberland 10 Jan–Feb (ph. E. Andrews, m.ob.) and one at Orono, Penobscot during roughly the same time frame (J. Smith, fide WT). Bolton, Chittenden, VT hosted a Varied Thrush 17 Dec–21 Feb (ph. D. & J. Kenney, m.ob.), as did Centerville, Barnstable, MA 2–23 Feb (ph. D. Graf, m.ob.) and Antrim, Hillsborough, NH late Feb–Apr (ph. M. Harris). Equally noteworthy was a Wood Thrush at a feeder in Canton, Hartford, CT 15 Dec (ph. P. Worley). Counts of American Robin were low compared to recent winters, with the vast majority of non-C.B.C. totals being less than 300 birds.

The pattern of Bohemian Waxwing wanderings was very similar to that of 2009–2010, with very few birds venturing s. of the n. three states. After arriving in late Nov, flocks built to a maximum of 100-150 by late Dec. For most of the winter, Vermont was the most reliable state for large flocks, including counts of 650 in Chittenden and 450 in Windsor in early Jan. Flocks in the n. were still in the 50-150 range throughout the end of the season. In Massachusetts, a few stragglers appeared briefly in coastal areas from mid-Dec–mid-Jan, but the real action came from areas w. of the Connecticut R. starting in mid-Feb, where up to 300 were reported in Berkshire.


This Passerina buntings at Narragansett, Rhode Island 4–21 (here 17) December 2010 generated much discussion. Originally identified as an Indigo Bunting, it was later considered potentially a hybrid or even a Lazuli Bunting, and its identification may never be resolved beyond Indigo/Lazuli. Photograph by Paul L'Etoile.

Lingering warblers were few and far between. Standouts in Boston included a Tennessee Warbler through 2 Dec (m.ob.), a Black-and-white Warbler through 3 Dec (m.ob.), an American Redstart through 7 Dec (ph. M. Garvey), and a Wilson's Warbler through 24 Dec (m.ob.). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler appeared at a feeder in Charlestown, Washington, RI 14 Dec and apparently stayed later (J. Van Wyk). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was a one-day wonder in Westport, Fairfield, CT 7 Dec (ph. FM). An unconfirmed Blackpoll Warbler was reported in Camden, Knox, ME ca. 13 Dec–4 Jan (K. Lundquist). The region's 3rd winter record of Hooded Warbler was documented along the state line in Seabrook, NH and Salisbury, MA through 8 Dec (ph. SM, m.ob.).

Two long-staying towhees from the West were recorded: a Green-tailed Towhee at Middletown, Washington, RI 18 Dec–31 Jan (ph. R. Larsen, P. L'Etoile, m.ob.) and a Spotted Towhee at Peterborough, Hillsborough, NH
early Jan–20 Feb (ph. C. Grumnon, m.ob.). Also from points west were 3 Lark Sparrows (2 in Massachusetts, one in Rhode Island), and 2 Harris’s Sparrows in Massachusetts. One of the latter was at Duxbury, Plymouth from the fall season through the winter (R. Bowes, v.ob.); the other spent 1–26 Feb at Fallmouth, Barnstable (H. Caswell). All three s. states had records of sharp-tailed sparrows, including several located by kayakers. Nelson’s Sparrows, apparently of inland subspecies, were found in four locations in Jan from Newburyport, MA to Fairfield, CT. A single Salt-marsh Sparrow spent much of the winter on Cape Cod (m.ob.), and one was seen in Rhode Island on the Newport–Westport C.B.C. 18 Dec. Rhode Island hosted 2 unidentified sharp-tailed sparrows, on Block Island 18 Dec (fide RF) and at Jerusalem, Washington 30 Jan (T. Auer). Seaside Sparrow, arguably the more expected of the saltmarsh-dwelling species in the Region in winter, was reported only from se. Massachusetts. Single Lincoln’s Sparrows appeared in Bristol, MA, Hartford, CT, and in both Cheshire and Rockingham, NH.

Massachusetts hosted a Western Tanager at Peabody, Essex in early Jan (ph. P. Brown, m.ob.), a Black-headed Grosbeak at Easthampton, Hampshire through 3 Dec (ph. N. Steepe), and 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, both continuing from the fall, at Malden, Middlesex through 1 Dec (fide K. Marshall) and at Arlington, Middlesex through 5 Dec (K. Hartel). Single Painted Buntings were at Stamford, CT 25 Dec (D. Beach) and Wellfleet, Barnstable, MA 15 Jan (J. Young). Identification of a Lazuli/Indigo Bunting (possibly a hybrid) at Narragansett, Washington, RI 21–22 Dec (ph. P. L’Etoile, m.ob.) remains unresolved. Rusty Blackbirds may be wintering more frequently in the Region lately, despite with most records from the s. coastal plain. Most this winter were in Connecticut, with a single flock in Hamden, New Haven peaking at 152 on 29 Jan (J. Zipp). Outside the Nutmeg State, the highest count was 20 at Bennington, VT 27 Feb (K. Hemeon). Apart from the usual collection of Baltimore Orioles (approximately a dozen, from all states save Rhode Island), the only other unusual icterid was a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Glastonbury, Hartford, CT 15 Jan (W. Asteriaides).

Pine Grosbeaks appeared in the northeastern most counties in late Dec and then largely disappeared from the Region until mid-Feb. They were never common, and the only birds to venture southward at all were single females at Kennebunk, York, ME 2 Jan (C.B.C.) and Deerfield, Rockingham, NH 12 Feb (SM). A small flight of White-winged Crossbills was concentrated in coastal areas from s. Maine through Cape Cod, which was reported from all six states. Pine Siskins were scattered throughout the Region but generally absent from the north and interior. Large flocks of 25–50 birds appeared to gather in selected locations and remain there for the duration of the winter. Common Redpolls first appeared in n. Vermont and e. Maine in early Dec, and by the end of the month, redpolls were found throughout the Region. As was the case with siskins, the largest flocks were scattered widely and seemed to stay put, with large swaths of New England seemingly without the small invaders. From mid-Jan through early Feb, there was some retraction from the southernmost areas, but some birds then returned in mid-Feb. Was this pattern related to local conditions, or was the second pulse comprised of redpolls starting to return to breeding areas late in the winter season? About 50 Hoary Redpolls were reported among the Commons, fully half of those in Vermont. This distribution accords with a larger-than-average movement of Hoary Redpolls observed farther to the west, in New York and Ontario.

Subregional editors (boldface), contributors (italics), and observers: Jim Berry, Mark Faherty, Rachel Farrell (Rhode Island), Greg Hanisek (Connecticut), Rick Heil, David Hoag, Eric Hynes, Marshall J. Iliff, Derek Lovitch, Frank Mantlik, Stephen Mirick, Ted Munir, New Hampshire Bird Records, Blair Nikula, Marjorie Rines (Massachusetts), Jeremiah Trimble, William Townsend (Maine). Bird also continues to provide a wealth of data, even if increasing volume makes simple summaries harder and harder each year. © Pamela Hunt, 26 Whitewater Drive Penacook, New Hampshire 03303 (biodiva@myfairpoint.net)

Hudson-Delaware

Frank Rohrbacher
Robert O. Paxton
Richard R. Veit

After record warmth for much of 2010, the weather turned cold in mid-November. December was extremely cold and wet, averaging 3–6°F below normal across the Region. It was one of the coldest Decembers ever recorded in the Region, with unusually heavy snowfall in the northern areas. Rochester had an all-time record 118 cm (46.5 inches) of snow, double the average, and New York City had 15 cm (20 inches) of snow 26–27 December. January through the first week of February continued this cold, windy weather with numerous small snowstorms and significant lake effect snow before a significant warm-up during the last three weeks of February. The winter snow totals mounted as the winter progressed, and New York City ended with 225% and Atlantic City with 260% of normal levels.

Less hardy species did not linger through the beginning of December, let alone the Christmas Bird Count period, as they have in past winters. Many of the Christmas Bird Counts in Delaware, New Jersey, and New York were run under very difficult conditions, and the numbers of species recorded on most were much below average. On the other hand, many winter birds and finches such as Bohemian Waxwings, redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, and crossbills were found in good numbers in the northern portions of the Region, and Pine Siskins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees, and Purple Finches made good showings as far south as Delaware.

Unusual species included Barnacle Goose,

Abbreviations: Barnegat (Barnegat Light, Ocean, NJ); Dunkirk Harbor (Dunkirk Harbor, L. Erte, Chautauqua, NY); Montauk (Montauk Pt., Suffolk, Long I., NY), Prime Hook (Prime Hook N.W.R., Sussex, DE); Sandy Hook (Sandy Hook Unit/Gateway National Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ), Seven Presidents Park (Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Long Branch, Monmouth, NJ).

**WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES**

Greater White-fronted Geese, mostly of the Greenland subspecies *flavipennis*, were reported frequently this year, with 19 in New York, 11 in New Jersey, and one in Delaware. Only one Black Brant was reported during the winter, a brief sighting at Floyd Field, Brooklyn, Kings, NY 11 Dec (Steve Walter). The cold weather in Nov and Dec moved Canada and Snow Geese into the s. parts of their winter ranges more quickly than in recent years, when warm late autumn temperatures caused flocks to linger farther north. The number of Snow Geese wintering in Delaware is difficult to estimate, but so far there has been little apparent change since the U.S. government loosened hunting regulations three years ago to reduce the Snow Goose numbers by half in the Atlantic flyway. A Barnacle Goose was at Belmont Lake S.P. and vicinity, Suffolk, NY 6-19 Jan (W. Becker). Another (reportedly with two bands on its legs) was seen briefly only a kilometer away at Pinekawn Memorial Park 11 Jan (GS), and another visited Glen Cove, Nassau, NY 15-22 Feb (Mike HM). A Eurasian Teal wintered at L. Takanassee, Monmouth, NJ 5 Dec-2 Feb, the 3rd year in a row for that species there (fide SB); another wintered at Mill Creek Marsh, Secaucus, Hudson, NJ 3 Jan-15 Feb (Don Smith). Eleven reports of Eurasian Wigeon, four from New York, four from New Jersey, and three from Delaware, was about average. The only report of Tufted Duck was of an ad. male at Cold Spring Harbor, Suffolk, NY 4-7 Jan (GS). There were about 28 reports of King Eider off the coast and on the Great Lakes, about average, with a maximum count of 6 at Montauk 29 Jan (PL, SM). Again this year, as in six of the past seven years, no King Eiders were reported in Delaware; previously, this species was reported annually in the state. Large numbers of Common Eiders were again reported, though counts did not rival the record-high tallies of the previous winter. Four hundred fifty were at Montauk 11 Dec (SA, GH), 380 at Barnegat 4 Dec (DF), and 8 in Lewes Harbor, Sussex, DE 2 Jan (FR et al.). Twelve Barrow’s Goldeneyes reported in New York included 3 on L. Erte, 5 on L. Ontario, 2 on L. Champlain, one on the Hudson R., and 2 on Long Island. The only report of Pacific Loon was a cooperative bird at Manasquan Inlet/Shark River Inlet, Ocean, NJ 25 Dec-10 Jan (Fred Weber). Red-necked Grebes were not plentiful along the ocean, but counts improved from the very poor numbers of last year, with a few reported s. to Delaware through the season. For the 2nd year in a row, Eared Grebes were scarce, with only 5 singles reported: at Batavia W.T.R., Genesee, NY 3-4 Dec (WW, Doug Beattie); in Monmouth, NJ 17 Dec-9 Jan (Tom Reed et al.); at Aurora, Cayuga, NY 11 Jan-5 Feb (Robert McGuire); at Dunkirk Harbor, NY 14 Jan-20 Feb (WW, JP); and at Avalon, Cape May, NJ.

This subadult male King Eider was photographed at Stewart Park, Tompkins County, New York on 5 December 2010. Although the species is recorded annually on the eastern Great Lakes, relatively nearby, New York’s Finger Lakes have few records of this species. Between New York, New Jersey, and Delaware in winter 2010-2011, there were about 28 reports of King Eider, which is near the recent average. Photograph by Kevin J. McGowan.

This White-winged Dove (right) attended a feeder in Lewes, Sussex County, Delaware 20-23 (here 20) December 2010. Photograph by Bill Fintel.

The Lewis’s Woodpecker discovered 30 October 2010 near Honeyeau remained through the winter and was last seen 9 April 2011 (here 23 December). Photograph by Jay McGowan.
7 Feb (CJV). Western Grebe has become annual in recent winters, but the only one this winter was at Seven Presidents Park, Monmouth, NJ during the Long Branch C.B.C. 1 Jan (Tom Boyle) and again 20 Feb (Tom Roche, Dave Roche). A dead American White Pelican was found at Bellport, Suffolk 8 Jan (Jude Nicole Carrao), but all other reports were of singles in Dec: at Bombay Hook N.W.R., Kent, DE 30 Nov–2 Dec (fide refuge staff), at Chelsea, Dutchess, NY 9 Jan (Rodney Johnson), at Floyd Bennett Field, Kings, NY 6 Jan (Shane Blodgett), and at East Setauket, Suffolk, NY during the Smithtown C.B.C. 29 Dec (Peter Scully et al.). This last bird flew in, landed on a pond, was photographed, and flew away. Normally, egrets and herons are well represented on Christmas counts, but this year Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, and Cattle Egrets were all no-shows. Other than Great Blue Heron, which is always fairly common, only 17 Great Egrets, one Tricolored Heron, and one Green Heron were counted in Dec in the Region. All vanished before Jan, when virtually all of the area marshes were frozen over.

Black Vultures continue their slow expansion into n. New York in the summer and are now showing up more frequently there in the winter. In 2010, one attempted to winter at Braddock Bay, Monroe, NY 7-30 Jan but was found dead 31 Jan. This year, what was likely an early arrival was reported in Parma, Monroe, NY 27-28 Feb (Paul & Anne Schnell), but this was still only the 3rd winter record for the Genesee region. Another Black Vulture was seen in Johnson City, Broome, NY 19 Jan (David Nicosia), and one, possibly the same bird, spent 23-31 Jan at Ithaca (Susan Danskin). Considering how brutal the weather was in late Nov and Dec, it was surprising that 2 Ospreys were reported on the Christmas counts: on the Cape C.B.C., Suffolk, NY 19 Dec and at Raritan Bay, Richmond, NY through 2 Jan. An extremely late Broad-winged Hawk was recorded on the Mohonk Lake–Ashokan C.B.C., Ulster, NY 18 Dec (Tom Sarro). This appeared to be a good year for Golden Eagles. Normally, Golden Eagles migrate through this area in Oct and Nov, with a few wintering, mostly in the s. and e. portions of the Region. In New York, where there were numerous sightings throughout the season in the c. and e. parts of the state, apparently wintering birds were reported in Delaware/Otsego and around Storm King Mt., Orange/Dutchess.

A Yellow Rail specimen was found at Leeds Pt., Atlantic, NJ 16 Jan (SB, Linda Mack), again indicating that some attempt to winter in the Region. Two Common Moorhens remained beyond mid-Dec this year: one was seen on the Lower Hudson C.B.C., NY 18 Jan, and one was at Kearny Marsh West, Hudson, NJ 1 Jan (Ed Borowik). In early Dec, Sandhill Crane reports were many. In n. New York, they are expected on migration, but a flock of 48 flying southward at Pompey, Onondaga was a record number for the Onondaga Lake Basin Region 4 Dec (Karl Curtis). For more than a decade, Sandhill Cranes and hybrids have frequented Husted Landing Rd., Cumberland, NJ. This season, up to 19 were seen, about half identified as Sandhill Crane × Common Crane hybrids. Up to 4 Sandhill Cranes were reported in and around at Cape Island Creek Preserve, Cape May 2-9 Dec (CJV), and 3 were found 2 Jan on the Somerset C.B.C. (John Collins). One originally found on 14 Sep at Newark, New Castle, DE (Susan Eggert) remained in the area until 10 Dec.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS**

The number of American Oystercatchers was average for a winter season, with 798 counted Region-wide, most of those on the Cape May C.B.C., NJ 19 Dec (487 birds) and the Oceanville C.B.C. in Atlantic, NJ 18 Dec (274). The same counts had a total of 71 Western Willets, above average. The Oceanville C.B.C. counted 27 Marbled Godwits, the only count to record this species. The total C.B.C. count of Red Knot was 17, the lowest early winter count in years, well below the ten-year average of 355. Eight Red
Phalaropes were seen on a fishing trip off Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk, NY 11 Dec (AW, JS). Black-legged Kittiwakes can be common well off the coast in the winter but are rarely seen from shore except at Montauk Pt., where double-digit numbers have been irregularly recorded. This year, offshore pelagic trips produced small numbers: 21 on the Freeport, NY pelagic 23 Jan (PG et al.), 17 on a fishing trip out of Belmar, NJ 15 Jan (PG, SG, MF, SB), 24 on a fishing trip off of Cape May 16 Jan (TJ et al.), 3 on a survey trip in Delaware waters 20 Jan (MO, LN, TJ), and 2 on the Lewes, DE pelagic 5 Feb (PG et al.). A kittiwake at the mouth of the Genesee R., Monroe, NY 12 Dec (Shawn Billerman, Tim Lenz, Matt Medler) and one seen passing Derby Hill, Oswego, NY 7 Dec (JP) furnished rare winter records for L. Ontario. Only 2 Laughing Gulls were recorded on Christmas counts, one each in New York and New Jersey. About 19,000 Bonaparte’s Gulls were estimated at Squaw 1 on the Niagara R. 5 Dec (Doug Gochfeld, Scott Whittle, Mike Creve). Nearby, an ad. California Gull continued from fall at Niagara Falls S.P., Niagara, NY 26 Nov–4 Dec (JP). An ad. Slaty-backed Gull found at Lewiston, Niagara, NY 22 Feb (JP) took top honors among the gulls this season.

Dovekies appeared to be offshore in average numbers, the exception being 2129 off Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk, NY 11 Dec (AW, JS). Two were seen from land in Monmouth, NJ: one in Manasquan Inlet 5 Jan (TJ), the other at Deal 6 Jan (WB). Common Murres continued their increase in the Region. Last year, 47 were seen from shore and on two pelagic trips. This year, more trips offshore produced record numbers: 31 on the Freeport, NY pelagic 23 Jan (PG et al.); 24 on a fishing trip out of Belmar, NJ 15 Jan (PG, SG, MF, SB); 26 on a fishing trip off of Cape May 16 Jan (TJ et al.), a new state record; one seen from shore at Manasquan Inlet 16 Jan (Alex Tongas); 4 on a Delaware offshore survey (MO, RN, TJ); one on a Lewes, DE pelagic 5 Feb (PG et al.); and several on a Delaware survey 17 Feb (MO, Tony Leukering, Glen Davis). Well above recent averages, there were four reports of Thick-billed Murre: one on the Freeport pelagic 23 Jan (PG et al.), one a fishing trip off Belmar, NJ 15 Jan (PG, SG, MF, SB); one on a fishing trip off Cape May 16 Jan (TJ et al.) and one found dead at Montauk 26 Feb (AW). In contrast to their large numbers last winter, Razorbill counts were closer to normal this year, though 350 at Montauk 11 Dec (SA, Gene Hershkovics) and 2000+ off Manasquan Inlet, Monmouth, NJ (WB) were noteworthy. Five Black Guillemots, a rare species in the Region, were reported: one at Montauk 4–12 Dec (John Collins, Carol Resch), one in the Manasquan Inlet channel, Suffolk, NY 24–29 Dec (LL), one at Sandy Hook 11 Jan (Stuart & Wendy Malmid), and 2 at Seven Presidents Park 9 Jan (Harvey Tomlinson, Nick Taylor, Chris Adams). There were only two reports of Atlantic Puffin: 35 on a fishing trip off Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk, NY 11 Dec (AW, JS), and one on a fishing trip off Belmar, NJ 15 Jan (PG, SG, MF, SB).

DOVES THROUGH CHICKADEES

About 20 Eurasian Collared-Doves persist at Selbyville, Sussex, DE, where first reported in 1997, but they do not seem to be expanding into surrounding areas. At Parma, Monroe, NY, there are now 8 collared-doves, up from 4 last winter (DT et al.), and one was seen in Lyndonville, Orleans, NY 27 Jan (Brett & Cheryl Ewald). A White-winged Dove was at the Cape May B.O. feeder 23–13 Dec (CJV), and another was at Lewes, Sussex, DE 20–23 Dec (Sally & Bill Fintel). Snowy Owls were very scarce in New York and absent from New Jersey and Delaware this season. An imm. female Rufous Hummingbird that arrived at a feeder in Brandywine Hundred, New Castle, DE 5 Nov (Allissa Kegelman) was banded and identified on 27 Nov and remained until 1 Dec. One of the premier birds of the season was a stunning Lewis’s Woodpecker that arrived at the feeder of Fred Jordan near Honeoye, Ontario, NY 30 Oct. He graciously allowed hundreds of birds to see this bird, New York’s 5th ever, which remained into spring.

An Ash-throated Flycatcher was at Hidden Valley W.M.A., Cape May, NJ 3–8 Dec (CJV).

This Painted Bunting managed to survive part of the winter at a home along Deep Branch Road in Sussex County, Delaware, where it was seen January through November 2010. Photograph by Chuck Fullmer.

Single Loggerhead Shrikes were at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 1–6 Dec (SM) and along Bennett’s Pier Rd., Kent, DE 6 Feb (ph. Chris Bennett), where one was also seen 5–6 Mar 2010. Dave Telford reports that the Genesee region of New York had its first winter records of Fish Crow this season. The first was found at Turning Point Park, Monroe on the Rochester C.B.C. 19 Dec (Kenny Frisch). Subsequent observers found 3, then 9, then 16 and finally 23 on 3 Feb. Sixteen Cave Swallows lingered into early Dec at a wastewater treatment plant in Greece, Monroe, NY but, not unexpectedly, perished, with the last 3 seen on 5 Dec (DT et al.). Black-capped Chickadees made a major irruption as far s. as n. Delaware. They began appearing in late Nov, and some remained well into Mar. One along Deep Branch Rd., Sussex, DE 22 Jan (Bruce Peterjohn) was especially far south. Another at a feeder in Cape May, NJ 26 Dec–7 Jan (MF) is believed to be the first satisfactorily documented for that county.

WHEATERS THROUGH FINCHES

Delaware had its first Northern Wheatear in over 50 years. The 2nd state record was established by a bird found by Colin Campbell at Fox Point S.P., New Castle 23–27 Dec. During its stay, it entertained numerous birders and photographers by being almost continuously present. A very cooperative Townsend’s Solitaire wintered at Point Peninsula, Jefferson, NY 19 Dec–4 Mar (Mike Steward). A female Varied Thrush frequented Central Park, Manhattan, NY 28 Nov–24 Apr (Mike Bryant, Ray Slyper, DA), where it was observed almost daily. Cape May’s first Varied
Thrush was an ad. male at a feeder 24 Dec (VR, P&S CS), and another was in Wurtsboro, Sullivan, NY in late Dec—3 Mar (Arlene Borko, John Haas). Bohemian Waxwings were fairly plentiful in n. and w. New York, but none were reported elsewhere.

An ad. male Western Tanager was great find at Montauk 29 Jan—22 Feb (Vicki Bastiane tante et al.), enjoyed by many area birders. The only reports of Clay-colored Sparrow came from New Jersey Christmas counts: one on the Walnut Valley C.B.C. at Columbia Lake W.M.A., Warren 19 Dec (jude Dennis Brede); one at Landisville on the Mizpah C.B.C. 30 Dec (Yong Kong, Dan Crumm); and one along the Cohansie R., Cumberland 2 Jan (Paul Guris et al.). Vesper Sparrows were found at five locations: one at the Beamery, Cape May 7 Dec—23 Feb (C)J; 3 on the Saganapock C.B.C., Suffolk, NY 19 Dec (Doug Futumya, Bob McGrath, HM); one on the Bombay Hook C.B.C., Kent, DE 31 Dec (jude Andy Ednie); one on the Pawling C.B.C., Dutchess, NY 1 Jan (Bill Wallace); and one very rare upstate at Kendal, Orleans, NY 26 Jan (DT). Lark Sparrows were reported at the Calverton Grasslands, Suffolk, NY 17 Dec—12 Jan (VP) and at Lewes, Sussex, DE 14 Jan—17 Feb (Lee Noles). A Grasshopper Sparrow was at Cape May S.P. 15 Jan (Sam Gallick). Five Le Conte’s Sparrows, rare in the Region in winter, included one at Calverton Grassland, Suffolks, NY 9-19 Jan (SA, Stella Miller), one at Cape May 29 Dec (VR, P&S CS), and 3 along Landing Wharf Rd. on the Cumberland County C.B.C., NJ 2-4 Jan (PD et al.). At least 5 Lincoln’s Sparrows were detected on Christmas counts, singles on three Long I. and two s. New Jersey counts, plus one at Cape May Point S.P. 28-29 Dec (CJ) and 13-24 Jan (R. Horn). A Harris’s Sparrow attended a feeder at Dryden L., Tompkins, NY 6 Dec—Apr (Nita Irby, m.ob.).

An ad. male Oregon Junco was a nice surprise at a feeder in Ellery, Chautauqua, NY 2-26 Feb (LeAnn Childs). Two Dickcissels lingered through at least mid-Dec, the first at the Cape May B.O. feeder 9 Dec (Mike Crewe), the other on the Assumbick C.B.C., Mercer, NJ 19 Dec. A green Painted Bunting hung on at a feeder on Deep Branch Rd., Sussex, DE 9 Jan—11 Feb (EPS). Five Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen this winter: an ad. female visited a feeder at Honeoye Falls, Monroe, NY 2-8 Dec (Brad Carlson); one was at the Great Swamp N.W.R., Sussex, NJ 4 Dec 9 (jude SB); an imm. male was along Cods Rd., Sussex, DE 11 Dec (BGP); one ad. male was at the Mannington Marsh, Salem, NJ 17-27 Feb (Sandra Keller); and one was in Shartoyn, Salem, NJ 20 Feb (Chuck & Elaine Crunkleton). The only report of Brewer’s Blackbirds was of 4 at Pile grove, Salem, NJ 27 Feb—7 Mar (Frank Sencher). Only 5 Baltimore Orioles were noted in Dec, with fewer in Jan: one at a feeder in Cape May 3 Jan (Kathy & Roger Horn); one at a feeder in Burlington, NJ 5-11 Jan (Bill King); and one at Brandywine Creek S.P., New Castle, DE 16 Jan (Andy Ednie). After last winter’s dearth of winter finches, this was a better year. Common Redpolls were plentiful in New York, recorded throughout mainland counties in Dec during the Christmas counts, and small numbers moved southward into Long Island, New Jersey, and finally in Feb to Delaware. Hoary Redpolls also had an excellent season in w. and n. New York, where many were photographed. Pine Siskins were also widespread and fairly abundant even into s. Delaware for most of the season. Crossbills, by contrast, were virtually absent, mostly detected singly or in very small groups in the n. part of the Region, at least in December. Christmas counts on the coast recorded about 5 Red Crossbills, while White-winged Crossbills were counted on only three C.B.C.s, with a total of 4 on two New York counts and one on one New Jersey count. Amazingly, the best area for finding crossbills was not in the Adirondacks but at Seven Presidents Park, Monmouth, NJ: By 6 Jan, one White-winged and 2-3 Red Crossbills were being seen; White-winged increased to 10 by early Feb, and these were seen into early Mar. Evening Grosbeaks were rare this winter in New York; a total of 396 came from 10 C.B.C.s, but as the winter progressed, few were noted.

Contributors (subregional compilers in boldface): Deborah Allen (Central Park, New York City), Seth Ausuble, Scott Barnes (North Coast of New Jersey; scott.barnes@ njudubon.org), Patrick Belardo (North-Central New Jersey; pbelardo@yahoo.com), Michael Bochnik (Lower Hudson Valley, Bochnik@es.com), Jeffrey S. Bolsinger (St. Lawrence, NY; jsbolsinger@yahoo.com), William Boyle, Thomas W. Burke (New York Rare Bird Alert), Barbara Butler (Dutchess County, NY), Colin Campbell, Mark Chao (Finger Lakes region of New York; markchao@ermit.org), Vince Elia (South Coast and Delaware Bay regions, NJ; vje@aol.com), Ken & Sue Feustel, Valerie Freer (Suffolk County Bird Notes), Mike Fritz, Paul Guris, Steve Guris, Tom Johnson, Laurie Larson (New Jersey Birdsリスト), Gary Lee (eightacrewoodmouse@hotmail.com), Pat J. Lindsay (Long Island, NY; plindsay@optonline.net), Gene Hershkovic, Hugh McGuinness (Eastern Long I., NY; P. O. Box 3005, Southampton, NY 11969), Shabai h Mitra (Long I., NY; mitra@mail.csi.cuny.edu), Mike Morgante (Niagara Frontier Region, NY; morgm@adelphia.net), Josh Nemeth, Michael O’Brian, Jim Pawlicki, Vinny Pellegrino, Bruce G. Peterjohn, Bill Purcell (Onelake Basin, NY; wpurcell@twcny.com), Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, Rick Radis (Northwestern New Jersey: isotria@verizon.net), John Shemilt, Virginia Redig, Ed P. Sigdik, Steve Sobocinski (Southwestern New Jersey: ssobocinski@comcast.net), Robert G. Spahn (Genesee Ornithological Society), Gary Strauss, Pat & Clay Sutton, Dave Tetro (Genesee region, NY; dkterlow@rochester.rr.com), Christopher J. Vogel, William Watson, Angus C. Wilson, Will Yandik (Howard—Mohawk Region, NY; wyandik@hotmail.com), Matthew A. Young (Susquehanna, NY; wyandik@hotmail.com), Robert P. Yunick. 

Frank Rohrbacher, 5 Neva Court Wilmington, Delaware 19810, (302) 429-9080.
Richard R. Veit Department of Biology, College of Staten Island 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314 (veit@ccsi.cuny.edu).
Mark T. Adams
Matt Hafner

December and January were quite cold, and many Christmas Bird Count observers had to contend with frigid temperatures, wind, and frozen water that made finding waterfowl difficult. A major coastal storm that struck Christmas night dropped the second-largest snowfall in southeast Virginia, with snow accumulations there and on the Eastern Shore of up to 48 cm (19 inches). Temperatures moderated in February to above-normal warmth everywhere except in the Maryland Piedmont, which was near normal. Overall, this winter was drier than average, especially across Virginia in January and February.

Severe winters have been relatively rare in the Region since the late 1970s, and so observers have often taken for granted that certain "winter" species are regular here. This winter, especially after the Christmas Bird Count season, many observers reported sharply reduced counts of species assumed to be winter hardies in the middle Atlantic states, at least in the lowest elevations: Yellow-breasted Sapsucker, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Palm Warbler were notable examples of species whose numbers were exceedingly low after early January. By contrast, counts of several sparrow species were unusually high, possibly because they were driven out of snow-covered habitats toward roadways and other more open environments and thus more detectable. However, the fates of the autumn flights of sparrows, kinglets, thrushes, and finches—particularly during the Super Storm of late October—may have played an important role in the numbers of wintering birds as well. Though we will never know what really transpired, it is possible that many kinglets and Hermit Thrushes, for instance, were unable to return to the coast after being moved offshore with the storm at night. Indeed, numbers of both species were said to be low in many areas in November and early December, well before the Christmas Bird Count season commenced. The same was not true of bluebirds. In Northampton County, Virginia, for example, bluebird counts dropped by more than half from mid-December to early January, which suggests that some probably perished during the period of deep snow and cold at year's end.

Both Maryland and Virginia recorded several all-time high counts and rare highlights, including Western Grebe, Ruff, Doves, Common Murres, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, Western Tanager, Mountain Bluebird, Townends Solitaire, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Common Redpolls. In addition to our many individual contributors, we thank Adam D'Ontofrio, YuLee Larner, Robert F. Ringer, Jo Solem, and Bill Williams for their assistance in compiling and interpreting the season's records.

Abbreviations: Assat. (Assateague L., Worcester, MD); Back Bay (Back Bay N.W., Virginia Beach); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel s. of Northampton); C.C.B. (Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William & Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack, VA.

WATERFOWL THROUGH STORKS

After a poor fall showing, at least 22 Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from 11 counties, mostly in Maryland. Nine near Salisbury, Wicomico, MD 4 Feb (SHo) made a notable high count. A Greater White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose hybrid was in w. Howard, MD 7-14 Jan (JLS, m.ob.). Thirteen neck-collared ad. female Greater Snow Goose observed around Oyster, Northampton, VA 30 Dec–15 Jan (ESB) had been marked at Seigneurie de Île-aux-Oies, Montmagny, Quebec and on the s. plain of Bylot I., Nunavut, all by Gilles Gauthier of the Université Laval, Quebec. Another Bylot-marked bird was seen at Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack, VA. 4 Dec and then again at Virginia Beach, VA 7 Feb (RL, fide BW).

Ross's Geese were reported 4 Dec–6 Feb, with peak counts of 3 birds each at Palmer Springs, Mecklenberg, VA 4-5 Jan (AD et al.), at Thashers L., Amherst, VA 6-23 Jan (MJ, m. ob.), and at Curles Neck, e. Henrico, VA 6 Feb (ph. Ab). A Ross's Goose photographed at Turney's Pond, Harford, MD 8-11 Jan (DK, RC, m. ob.) made a first county record. An injured Ross's Goose x Snow Goose hybrid was in Westmoreland, VA 9 Jan (fFA), one of few documented in the Region. Rare away from the coast, a Brant was a nice find at Winemere Farms, Dorchester, MD 10 Jan (GR). A Barnacle Goose was seen in flight in se. Loudoun, VA 23 Dec (BA, fide TMD). At least 35 Cackling Geese were reported 4 Dec, including an impressive 16 birds along Pickering Cr., Talbot, MD 22 Jan (JLS, EB). Observers are urged to document all Cackling Geese with photographs, as confusion with small Canada Geese persists, and at least two taxa of Cackling have been reported in the Region. We still know very little about the mid-Atlantic status and distribution of this newly recognized species.

Single drake Eurasian Wigeons visited a half-dozen typical Coastal Plain sites 2 Dec–20 Feb; a female Eurasian was a good find at Bayside Development Pond, Worcester, MD 5 Dec (ML et al.). An unusual concentration of 4000 Mallards and American Black Ducks was at Taylor's I., Dorchester 18 Dec (JB, MH). In Virginia, 340 American Blacks on Parramore I., Accomack 4 Feb (FSm, ESB) was a strong single-site count for the barrier islands. The 12 Blue-winged Teal at Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset, MD 14 Feb (JH, m. ob.) made a very good mid-Feb number. A Eurasian Teal was at Truit's Landing, Worcester 8 Jan–21 Feb (MB, BBA, m. ob.), the 2nd consecutive year for the subspecies there; others were at Fairmount W.M.A., Somerset 21 Feb (ph. MH, ELS, JB) and on the Cape Charles C.B.C., Northampton, VA 30 Dec (HTA et al.).

Two King Eiders at Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 1 Jan (DCz) made the only report, but Common Eiders peaked at 66 there 6 Feb (MH, RO), a total exceeded only by last winter's Maryland record-high counts. Eight Commons at the C.B.B.T. 4 Dec (BrR, RT) made the peak Virginia tally, but smaller numbers were noted throughout the season in both states. A drake Harlequin Duck was at the C.B.B.T. 4 Dec–19 Feb (BrR, RT, DSp et al.); another visited Pt. Lookout, St. Mary's, MD 1-17 Jan (ML et al.), where the species is nearly annual. Single Harlequins made excellent records at Ft. Armistead, Baltimore, MD 9 Jan (KC, m. ob.) and at Eastport, Anne Arundel 17-19 Jan (FM, m. ob.).

Nine White-winged Scoters at Riley's Lock, Montgomery, MD 31 Jan (DCz), 4 at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham, VA 19 Feb (DL), and up to 4 along Mill Creek L., Amherst 13-27 Feb (CHa, m. ob.) were all locally noteworthy. A Black Scoter at Port Deposit, Cecil/Harford, MD 26 Dec (MH) and another at Mecklenberg 4 Jan (fide BB) provided first C.B.C. records for the Rock Run and Kerr Res. counts, respectively. A female Black Scoter at Riley's Lock, Montgomery 28 Feb (DCz, m. ob.) made a first Feb record for this well-birded section of the Potomac. A Long-tailed Duck at Springdale Quarry, Howard 13 Jan (BHi, m. ob.) was inland, where the
A Maryland high count 14 Common Murres was tallied on a 26 February 2011 pelagic out of Ocean City, besting the previous high of four. These birds were part of a larger incursion into the mid-Atlantic that stretched to North Carolina. Photograph by Bill Hubick.

species is rarely recorded. An estimated 3600 Buffleheads at Hog Island Bay, Northampton, VA, in company with 570 Surf Scoters and 140 Long-tailed Ducks 6 Feb (FSm, ESB et al.), made quite a spectacle. The total of 16 Common Mergansers at Fairmount W.M.A., Somerset 21 Feb (MH, JLS, EB) was very high for this location. Common Mergansers are regular at Blackwater N.W.R., Dorchester, but Armstead's careful count of 705 there 11 Feb (HTA) was exceptional and indicative of a late winter movement of the species, likely due to frozen water farther north. An impressive 13,250 Rudy Ducks were at Scientist's Cliffs, Calvert, MD 30 Jan (SS).

The 26 Northern Bobwhite at Chinc., 17 Dec (JE) made an exceptional coastal tally for recent times. Counts of the species continue to decline, and the heavy snowfall at Christmas surely did not help this imperiled species. Though not reported last winter at this usually reliable location, a Pacific Loon was again seen from the Palmer Point Day Use Area, Kerr Res., Mecklenburg, VA 25 Dec-15 Feb (AD, ph. AB). A borrow pit at Sherwood Lakes, Virginia Beach hosted 108 Pied-billed Grebes 23 Jan (NE, EF), probably because most nearby freshwater sites were covered with ice. Single Red-necked Grebes were at ten locations 3 Dec, the most unexpected reported from Pinney Run, Carroll, MD 3-14 Dec (JD, m.ob.) and from the Shenandoah R., Clarke, VA 4 Dec (JC). An Eared Grebe at Black Hills Regional Park, Montgomery 18-28 Dec (DCz, m.ob.) was the sole report; sw. Virginia, where the species wintered annually at S. Holston Res. produced no reports this season. A Western Grebe on L. Anna, Spotsylvania, VA 8 Feb (ph. RC) was hooked by a fisherman 10 Feb. Fortunately, David and Georgia Paton witnessed the accident and were waiting at the dock to retrieve the bird from the fisherman. They brought the grebe to the Animal Medical Center in Louisa, VA, where staff (ph.) removed the hook, treated the bird's injuries, and released it back onto L. Anna 14 Feb. The bird was last reported there 15 Feb.

A shearwater, most likely a Sooty Shearwater, was noted on a Worcester pelagic 26 Feb (ML et al.), a first winter record for Maryland. Although photographs were not adequate to eliminate the much-less-likely Short-tailed Shearwater, Virginia now has several records of mid-winter Sooty Shearwaters, and North Carolina has about 12 records, almost all of them very recent. A Northern Gannet off Gloucester Pt. beach, Gloucester, VA 5 Dec (ML&LB) was unusually far up the York River. An American White Pelican at Pt. Story, Virginia Beach 30 Dec (RBr) made a nice count-week record for the Little River C.C. The lone, long-staying American White Pelican continued at Sewards, Dorchester through the winter, being joined at nearby Blackwater N.W.R. in late Feb by 7 others (HTA, m.ob.). A Tricolored Heron at Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset 20 Feb was the only Maryland report after 3 Dec (RO, MO, TO). Single Cattle Egrets were good finds at Assat. boat ramp 4-5 Dec (NS, m.ob.) and in Westmoreland, VA 9 Jan (FA). Notable Glossy Ibis singles were at Chinc. 4 Dec (RY) and Vienna, Dorchester 12 Dec (JS, JH). A Wood Stork at Pt. Lookout, St. Mary's 16-19 Feb (KS, fide PC) established a first winter record for Maryland.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS
At least 15 Rough-legged Hawks were recorded Region-wide, among them: one at Reese's Corner, Kent, MD 19-24 Dec (JG, m.ob.); a light morph at Campbell, VA 27 Dec (MJ) that furnished the first county record since 1973; one at Blue Mash, Montgomery 24-30 Jan (AM, m.ob.); and one at Pond Neck, Cecil 29 Jan-7 Feb (JLS, EB, m.ob.). C.C.B. staff flushed 9 Virginia Rails at Back Bay 25 Jan (FSm). A Back Bay aerial survey on 10 Dec tallied 4680 American Coots (JGs), less than 10% of the counts from the early 1970s there but a very high count for recent years. A Sandhill Crane continued from late Nov at Hampstead, Carroll until 29 Dec (Sc, m.ob.); another landed on ice among a flock of gulls at Northeast, Cecil 21 Dec (RG et al.) Two Sandhill Cranes flew over Brownsville, Northampton 17 Dec (SP). A winter plover survey coordinated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries found only one Piping Plover, on Assawoman l., Accomack 25 Jan (AD, fide RBo). Rare away from the coast in winter, 2 American Oystercatchers were nice finds at Rumbley, Somerset 26-27 Feb (JLS, m.ob.). The American Avocets at Chinc. 21 Feb ( JM, fide RHI) represented the only report. Exceptional inland in winter, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs made a first record for the Kerr Res. C.C.B., Mecklenberg 4 Jan (fide BB); and one was an extremely early migrant at the King Family Vineyard ponds, Albermarle, VA 26 Feb (MTA, JPM). At Willis Wharf, Northampton, 230 Western Willets and 195 Marbled Godwits were counted 8 Feb (HTA), both lower counts than in recent winters. The 41 Western Willets at the Over Sand Vehicle Zone, Assat. 4 Dec (RG, PB) made a new winter high count for Maryland. A Wachapreague C.C.B. team sighted 95 Red Knots at Cedar I., Accomack 18 Dec (RBo et al.); 166 were there 7 Feb (ESB); and singles were at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 18 Dec-23 Jan (AS, m.ob.) and at Back Bay 5 Jan (DLH, SM, CH). Rare away from the coast in winter, 2 Western Sandpipers were an excellent find at Taylor's I., Dorchester 25 Jan (JLS). An early Pectoral Sandpiper stopped at The Point, Prince William, VA 27 Feb (KG). The 21 Purple Sandpipers at Herrington Harbor, Anne Arundel 11 Dec+ (SA, m.ob.) established a new high count for the Bay's w. shore, shattering the previous record of just 4 birds, and this was the first time this species was documented wintering on the w. shore. Three Dunlins at Banister River W.M.A., Hatfield, VA 19 Dec (AD, HG, PG) were unusually far inland. A Ruff at Truitt's Landing, Worcester 10 Feb (ph. RG, BC) provided a 3rd winter record for Maryland.

An apparent Laughing Gull x Ring-billed Gull hybrid was at Skinner I., Worcester 12-13 Feb (BH, ML, m.ob.). Single Little Gulls
American Woodcocks, pushed southward from areas to then of the Delmarva Peninsula by extreme cold and snow cover, began appearing in elevated numbers in s. Northampton by mid-Dec. After the severe 25-26 Dec snowstorm, many dozens of woodcock could be found in urban yards in Cape Charles and throughout the lower Eastern Shore, where they huddled in groups under bushes and next to buildings for shelter (ESB, m.o.b.). On 30 Dec, during the Cape Charles C.B.C., observers counted a record-high 759 woodcocks, a new North American high count, eclipsing the previous mark of 570—also set on Cape Charles C.B.C. in 1993 (HIA et al.). The new number also probably represents the highest count of the species anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, mortality was high as a result of this storm—starvation, collision with vehicles and windows, and predation by cats and dogs were all documented in Dec and Jan.

were at Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 5 Dec (BH et al.), Chinc. 17 Dec (JE), and Back Bay 5 Jan (DLH, SD, CH). An ad. Black-headed Gull at Paper Mill Flats, Baltimore, MD 8-18 Dec (JCo, m.o.b.) was possibly the same bird seen there 18 Feb; another ad. visited Daniel Crouse Memorial Park, Caroline, MD 11-14 Feb (DHa, m.o.b.). Two ad. Black-headed Gulls were on an Elizabeth R. mudflats at Norfolk, VA 7 Feb (NF); another was at Chinc. 19 Feb (RH). An ad. Black-headed Gull at Port Deposit, Cecil 26 Feb+ (WS, MH, m.o.b.) made an early record for this location, where the species has been nearly annual Mar-Apr. An apparent Black-headed × Ring-billed Gull hybrid was carefully documented at Fairmount W.M.A., Somerset 12-21 Feb (BH, ML, m.o.b.). A first-cycle Thayer’s Gull was at Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 5 Dec (BH et al.), and an ad. was photographed at the Salisbury Landfill, Wicomico 27 Jan (ML). Typical numbers of first-cycle Iceland Gulls were at the usual locations 9 Dec–23 Jan; a third-cycle Iceland was at Brocous L., Richmond, VA 18 Dec (AB). A Lesser Black-backed Gull at Sandy River Res., Prince Edward 25 Feb (MC) was away from the species’ usual Virginia Piedmont locations.

The highest Black Skimmer count was of 26 at Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 1 Dec (m.o.b.); one lingered through 3 Jan, providing a very rare record for this month in Maryland. The species was formerly regular throughout winter at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach, but it is unclear that any were present there earlier than early Jan this season. A Dovekie found sitting on the beach at the Chinc. surf line 30 Dec (JBo, CMo) flew strongly out over the ocean when approached; another was seen close to shore several miles s. of Chinc. 12 Jan (JBo). A Back Bay/False Cape S.P. bird survey team reported a Dovekie that flew out and around their vehicle on the beach 4 Feb (DLH)! Two Dovekies were at Ocean City Inlet, Worcester 2-8 Jan (BH, m.o.b.), where the species has been seen somewhat regularly in recent years. Yet another Dovekie was at Assateague S.P., Worcester 4 Jan (ZB, MH). Highlights of a Worcester pelagic trip 5 Feb included 155 Dovekies and 3 Common Murres (PGu et al.). A Worcester pelagic 26 Feb saw 14 Common Murres, a new state and Regional high count (MHo et al.).

DOVES THROUGH TANAGERS
A White-winged Dove stayed at Kempton, Frederick, MD 9 Jan–8 Feb (ES, m.o.b.). Some 35-40 Eurasian Collared-Doves at Belspring, Pulaski, VA 30 Nov (MM, SB) represent an unprecedented number for any location in the Region. Observers visiting a Stoneybrook, Newport News, VA location where Monk Parakeets have nested for many years failed to find any birds (fide BW). Ten Short-eared Owls were noted on four different Virginia barrier islands, the highest count being 6 on Little Cobb L., Northampton 6 Feb (FSm, ESB).

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird visiting a feeder near L. Smith, Virginia Beach continued from the fall through 14 Jan (DS, TH); an ad. male was banded at Lynchburg, VA 4 Dec (b. BP) and remained into Jan; and one was at Lyndhurst, Augusta 4 Dec (TH, fide YL). A young male Anna’s Hummingbird banded at Middletown, Frederick 9 Dec (KdSd, m.o.b.) established a 2nd Maryland record; the homeowners said the bird had been present since 5 Nov, and it was not observed after 9 Dec. The state’s previous record is from Waldorf, 10-14 Nov 2004. The hatch-year female Allen’s Hummingbird that arrived at a Chester, Chesterfield, VA residence 20 Nov continued into the spring season and was enjoyed by hundreds of birders (JK, m.o.b.). Female Rufous Hummingbirds were numerous this year: an ad. again wintered at Silver Spring, MD, departing in Mar; imm. females were banded in Nov at College Park, MD (stayed through 14 Jan); at Silver Spring (departed in late Dec); near Trappe, Talbot, MD 22 Dec (stayed through late Dec); near Jetersville, VA 3 Dec (stayed through late Dec); and in Amberley, VA 4 Dec (stayed through mid-Dec). In addition, an imm. male Rufous was banded 4 Dec in Bedford, VA, and a Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird was at Earlysville, Albemarle 11 Dec (DSf, SM). Bruce Peterjohn, who banded these birds, writes: “Four hummingbirds were documented to have departed on 13 December this year (three in Virginia, one in Delaware), so there was clearly movement of these birds during the last half of December. Hopefully, we will some day be able to document where they go during this season.”

The C.C.B. identified 42 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers distributed across eight different cluster sites this winter at The Nature Conservancy’s Piney Grove Preserve, Sussex, VA (fide MW). This population continues to grow, and there was good retention of young birds from the last two banner reproductive years, with 12 of 18 woodpeckers fledged in 2010, and 11 of 15 fledged in 2009 still remaining in the population. As expected, a few ad. and young birds were not found this winter, most likely due to mortality and dispersal.

The Ash-throated Flycatcher at Assat. continued from late Nov through 12 Dec (JH, m.o.b.). This winter yielded reports of at least a dozen Loggerhead Shrikes. The Loggerhead Shrike at Asheviile Park, the first for Virginia Beach since 1978, often eluded seekers but remained through winter, 21 Nov–21 Feb (DC, EE, NF et al.). A Loggerhead Shrike at Pickering Creek, Talbot 29 Dec–17 Jan (ZB) was the first for the Maryland Eastern Shore in more than a decade. A Northern Shrike at Assat. continued from Nov through 27 Feb (RG, MWA, m.o.b.); another at Chino Farms, Queen Anne’s, MD (DS, MG, m.o.b.) also continued from the fall, spending its 4th winter at this location. A Blue-headed Vireo was locally rare at Blackwater Ecological Preserve, Isle of Wight, VA 29 Jan (NF). A Blue-headed at Pt. Lookout, St. Mary’s 1 Jan (ML) was possibly the same bird seen at this location in late Nov, though it was not seen in Dec.

The Black-capped Chickadee invasion that began in autumn in the n. reaches of the Region continued through winter, reaching well into the Virginia Piedmont and even the up-
per Coastal Plain, where the species is rare. The highest single-site count in winter was 8 in Harford; 2 birds in Kent were the southernmost documented on the Maryland Eastern Shore. A Black-capped Chickadee at a feeder adjacent Kiptopeke S.P., *Northampton* 21-22 Jan (JBe, ph. ESB et al.) was the southernmost in Virginia; the only records from this area occurred Oct 1978 and 1983 during major irruptions, though 3 were banded at Chinc. 8 Nov 2000. A Sedge Wren at Fishing Creek, Calvert 19 Dec-5 Feb (JLS, m.ob.) was a good winter find for the Bay's w. shore. Virginia's 2nd Mountain Bluebird was an ad. female discovered near Oyster, *Northampton* 30 Dec (acc.; ph.; ESB, GLA, m.ob.) and enjoyed by C.B.C. participants that day and daily by many observers through 6 Jan, with subsequent reports 16, 20, & 29 Jan. The state's previous record is of a single bird on a farm about 16 km to the south, 27-28 Nov 2004. Another rare thrush, a Townsend's Solitaire was discovered and studied briefly as it foraged with American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds during *The Plains/Airlie* C.B.C., *Fauquier*, VA 19 Dec (TMD). A high count of 726 American Pipits was noted on the Williamsburg C.B.C. 20 Dec (fide AD), shattering the count's previous record of 87 set in 1989.

Snow Buntings appeared in the highest numbers in Virginia in over a decade, especially on the coast. In addition to the 110 noted on Metompkin I. (see S.A. feature), a flock of 27-40 was seen repeatedly at Back Bay/False Cape S.P. 6 Dec-4 Feb (DLH et al., ph. BR); up to 31 were at Cranie l., Portsmouth, VA 9 Dec-3 Feb (RB et al., m.ob.); 5-11 visited Chinc. 17 Dec-12 Jan (DB et al.); and 25 were noted on the Wachapreague C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide HTA). The Ipswich Sparrow survey also detected 15 on Smith l., *Northampton* (MW, FBA) and 9 on Cobb l., *Northampton* (EE, BW). The only Orange-crowned Warbler reports in Maryland away from Worcester were from Chesapeake Farms, Kent 24 Dec (Ara et al.), Waterview, Wicomico 16-31 Jan (BH, m.ob.), and Mezzick Rd., Wicomico 4 Feb (JLS). Another return for the 8th consecutive winter season to a residential yard in Virginia Beach (RH, m.ob.). Single Nashville Warblers were surprising at Chinc. 17 Dec (JE) and along the George Washington Parkway, Alexandria, VA 24-25 Jan (SH et al.). A Northern Parula lingered in Hopewell, VA 12 Dec (ph. ABr). An Audubon's Warbler was photographed at a Rocks S.P. bird bath, *Northampton* 25 Oct-14 Dec (DBo, m.ob.), one of very few birds to be documented over such a long time period in the Region. A Black-and-white Warbler at Ft. Defiance, VA 18 Dec (fide AL) made a 2nd winter record for Augusta. An Ovenbird was at Schoolhouse Pond, *Prince George's*, MD 7-15 Dec (F5, m.ob.). An ad. male Western Tanager frequented a residential feeder in Settler's Mill, *James City*, VA 25 Jan+ (ph. BW, m.ob.) for the 2nd consecutive winter; another was reported from a different *James City* location in early-mid-Jan (F&SF).

**SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES**

Three American Tree Sparrows at the Bayside Development Pond 4-6 Feb (LS, JT, m.ob.) provided a very rare Worcester record. The 375 Chipping Sparrows recorded on the Cape Charles C.B.C., *Northampton* made that count's highest total, exceeding even the state record of 319 from August 6 May 1978. This high count, and that of Fox Sparrow, were certainly influenced by heavy snow cover that drove many sparrows into yards and roads, but Chipping have been increasing in winter on the coasts for some time now, though the largest counts have been during the mildest seasons. Single Clay-colored Sparrows were welcome finds in *Queen Anne's* at Chino Farms 21 Dec (DS, MG) and at Wye Island Natural Resource Management Area 29 Dec (ZB); a cooperative Clay-colored was at Ironbridge, Worcester 4 Jan+ (MOB, m.ob.)

In addition to several hundred other marsh-welting tern.

Ipswich Sparrow (Passercus sandwichensis) is a subspecies of interest in the Region and throughout its range. Restricted to Sable I., NS in the breeding season, Ipswich inhabits Atlantic coastal dunes in winter, and its migration and winter movements are poorly known.

To assess its winter status in Virginia, Fletcher Smith of the C.C.B. organized a survey on 13 of the state's 14 barrier islands; 29 Jan-15 Mar. Only Wadsworth I. was not surveyed, primarily because access is difficult (and the island lacks dune habitat). The team surveyed 137 km of coastal dune habitat, including several sites in the Chesapeake Bay and the entirety of Back Bay and False Cape S.P., Virginia Beach. For all Savannah Sparrows observed, volunteers marked a G.P.S. waypoint, estimated distance from the boat, noted whether the bird was on the ground or flushed, and described the vegetation type in the vicinity of the birds. A total of 278 Ipswich Sparrows was recorded, 11 of those being concentrated on Metompkin I., Accomac 6 Feb (DLH, DB)—more than triple the previous state high count of 37 from the Cape Charles C.B.C. 27 Dec 1986. This 6 Feb *Metompkin* I. visit also yielded 110 Snow Buntings (a very high count), 2 Lapland Longspurs, 13 Horned Larks, and 280 American Goldfinches. Other notable Ipswich counts for the survey included 58 birds on Assat. 5 & 11 Mar (FSm, ESB); 19 on Cedar L. 7 Feb (HTA, ESB); 17 on Wreck L. 6 Feb (ESB); and 15 at Back Bay/False Cape S.P., Virginia Beach 15 Mar (FSm, ESB). A pilot study to examine age and site fidelity of Ipswich Sparrows in Virginia was also initiated, with 20 birds banded and measured. More on the results of these efforts will be published elsewhere.

2 Le Contes' Sparrows were banded by C.C.B. staff at Back Bay 25 Jan (FSm). The 353 Fox Sparrows tabulated on the Cape Charles C.B.C. set a new Virginia high count (fide HTA), eclipsing the previous record of 317 set on the same count 40 years before. Vesper Sparrows, whose numbers along the coast have dwindled markedly in recent decades, were reported in surprisingly high numbers in Virginia, with two *Northampton* high counts of 6, along Magotha Rd. 29 Dec (KG et al.) and at Oyster Dec (JB) was also notable. A female Brewer's Blackbird was at Meadowbrook Park, *Howard* 23 Dec (JW). A cattle farm near Aden, *Prince William* that has hosted this species in past winters had up to 6 Brewer's Dec-16 Jan (LM, DE, DB, MS). On 25 Feb, a Cape Henry Audubon Society field trip to *Highland*, VA discovered a male Brewer's Blackbird among American Robins at a Wilmer Mt. Rd cattle yard—and 9 at a cattle yard along Rte. 637 the next day (DLH et al.). The species is especially rare in the mts. of Virginia. A male Boat-
tailed Grackle at Felgates Creek, York, VA 5 Feb (BW) re-set the local early date by nearly three weeks.

A Red Crossbill was a welcome surprise at Assat. 4 Dec (JB, ML). The 6 Red Crossbills along Briery Branch Rd., Rockingham 22 Jan—4 Feb (DL, ph. RK) made the season’s highest count, though the species was widely reported in the w. part of the state. White-winged Crossbills were reported from five Maryland locations 8 Dec—19 Jan, with a high count of 10 at New Germany S.P., Garrett, MD 19 Jan (FM). A White-winged Crossbill was an almost daily feeder visitor in Henrico 23 Jan+ (ph. TD, m.ob.); other reports in Virginia were undocumented. Single Common Redpolls were at eight Maryland and Virginia Coastal Plain locations 31 Dec+. The Common Redpoll high count was 5 birds at Assat. 29 Dec (MHo et al.); up to 2 were seen near the Back Bay visitor center 21-24 Feb (DLH, ph. DC). Pine Siskins were widespread but not as numerous as last winter. This season’s peak counts included 31 at South Boston, Halifax 22 Feb (JB) and 30+ birds in Botetourt, VA 28 Feb (ph. MP). Three Evening Grosbeak reports from Maryland spanned 8-23 Dec, an above-average showing for recent years.

Contributors: Bob Abrams, Mark T. Adams, Robert L. Ake, Henry T. Armistead, Stan Arnold, Fred Atwood, Zach Baer, Besty Bangert (BBa), Peter Barnes, Joe Beatty (JBe), Ruth Beck, Meredith & Lee Bell, Stan Bentley, Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Ruth Boettcher (RBo), David Boltz, Arun Bose, Debbie Bowers (DBo), Ed Boyd, Dana Bradshaw (DBr), Jim Brightman, Edward S. Brinkley, Renaxne Bruno (RBr), Allen Bryan (AlB), Joelle Buffa (JBu), Mike Burchett, Rick Checicante, Brad Cerrohorsky, Joanne Chevinning (JCh), David Clark, Joe Coleman, Jon Corcoran (JCo), Keith Costley, Rich Cox, Patty Craig, Dave Czaplak (DCz), Amanda Daisey (ADa), Thelma Dalmas (TDa), Todd M. Day, John Denney, Shirley Devan, Todd Dixon, Adam D’Orefio, Jennifer Elmer, Elisa Enders, Dave Engelen, Nick Flanders, Patti & Steve Flannary, John Gallegos (JGa), Kurt Gaskill, Maren Gimpel, Hannah Glass, Paul Glass, Jim Gruber, Paul Gursis (PGu), Ron Gutberlet, Dan Haas (DHa), Matt Hafner, Joe Hamfan, Candi Harris (CHA), Chris Hernandez, Steve Hersey, Bill Hill (BHI), Rob Hilton (RHI), Mark Hoffman (MHo), Scott Houston (SHo), Barbara Houston (BHo), John Hubbell (JHu), Bill Hubick, Renee Hudgins, David Hughes, Mark Johnson, Julie Kacmaric, Ryan Kelley, Dennis Kirkwood, Alex Lamot- eaux (ALA), Alan Larner, YuLee Larner, Diane Lepkowski, Jon & B.J. Little, Reese Lukie, Mikey Lutmerding, Frank Mareghni, Andy Martin, Joel Martin, Larry Meade, Stauffer Miller, Clyde Morris (CMO), Mark Mullins, J. Pete Myers, Michael O’Brien (MOB), Carol O’Neil, Mike Ostrowski, Robert Ostrowski, Tom Ostrowski, Steve Parker, David & Georgia Paton, Bart Paxton (BPA), Bruce Peterjohn, Mike Purdy, George Radcliffe, Bruce Richardson, Pat Rose, Nico Sarbones, Tom Saunders, Debbie Schroeder (DSc), Sharon Schwemmer (SSc), Karen & Don Serra, Fred Shaffer, David Shoch (DSH), Tom Shoemaker (TSH), Dan Small, Esther Smith, Fletcher Smith (FSm), Krystal Snyder, Amanda Spears, David Spears (DSP), Leslie Starr, James L. Stasz, Mike Stinson, Warren Strobel, Sherman Suter, Russ Taylor, Joe Turner, Mike Walsh (MWa), Bryan Watts (BWA), Jim Wilkinson, Bill Williams, Michael Wilson, Dave Ziolkowski.

Ken Blankenship

Cold and snowy—two normally uncommon words in the Southeast became commonplace in winter 2010-2011. Mean temperatures were well below average in December and January, with several remarkable events: Atlanta’s first “White Christmas” in history, over 46 cm (18 inches) of snow in eastern North Carolina the next day, and up to 25 cm (10 inches) of snow in early January followed by several days of high temperatures below freezing—which effectively paralyzed northern Georgia for a week. To round out a winter of extremes, temperatures normalized in early February, then abruptly soared, with highs near or above 80° F on multiple days in many areas. Probably owing greatly to the plunges of Arctic air, cold seawater temperatures, and various storm systems, several northern species were recorded the Region in above-average numbers. Alesis were numerous and diverse off Hatteras, North Carolina, and waterfowl were present in numbers rarely seen so far south. Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting reports from all three states, along with regional totals of four American Tree Sparrows and two Harris’s Sparrows, likewise indicated substantial displacements of central and northern wintering species into the Southeast.

Abbreviations: A.W.M.A. (Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, a portion of Altamaha W.W.A., McIntosh, GA); G.D.N.R. (Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame Program); L.W.F.G. (Lake Walter F. George, Clay, GA); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

Mark T. Adams, 2300 Rocky Run Charlottesville, Virginia 22901 (markdadmsph@yahoo.com)
Matt Hafner, 2163 Historic Drive Forest Hill, Maryland 21050, (mh1920@aol.com)

Southern Atlantic

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

An imm. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was still at Phinizy Swamp N.A., GA 28 Jan (m.ob.); 8 were recorded on the C.B.C. at Albany, GA 18 Dec. A likely result of harsh winter weather was an unprecedented number of uncommon geese reported Region-wide: 17 records of Greater White-fronted Goose, with a maximum of 18 at Santee N.W.R., SC 31 Jan (AG); an impressive 102,030 Snow Goose on the Pettigrew S.P., NC C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide DL), typical of elevated numbers in the Carolinas; 22 reports of Ross’s Goose, with high counts of 4 in Gordon, GA 13 Dec (JSp) and near Pungo L., NC 27 Jan (DC, HL); and six reports of Cackling Goose, with 4 near Creswell, NC 27 Jan (M&DM). A small Canada Goose, most likely B. c. varipes, was seen in Fannin, GA 29 Dec and 19 Feb (ph. NS). Other waterfowl were likewise present in huge numbers at the regularly monitored Clayton, GA Water Authority: 1495 Gadwall 2 Jan (m.ob.); a new state high count of 525 Northern Shovelers 25 Feb (JSe); and 5450 Ring-necked Ducks 2 Jan (m.ob.). A Eurasian Wigeon from fall continued at Bodie L., NC 7
Dec (AS); 2 males were at Bear Island WMA, SC 22 Jan (CS), and one was in Craven, NC 24 Jan (MG). Massive flocks of scaup (including both Lesser and Greater) were observed off Georgia's shores throughout the winter, with notable counts of 20,000 off Sea Is 22 Feb (KB, JM) and an incredible 80,000 off Sapelo Is 31 Dec (LS). Seven records of Common Eiders included 10 at Kitty Hawk, NC 18 Dec (RD). An above-average 11 reports of Long-tailed Ducks came in. A tally of 30 Common Goldeneyes was impressive at the annual wintering site at West Point Dam, GA 5 Feb (RH, VL). Among five reports of Common mergansers was a high count of 15 at L. Phelps, NC 5 Jan (R&SB).

Pacific Loons made quite a showing, with eight reports; this species has become annual not only off North Carolina beaches but also on inland reservoirs. There were eight reports of Red-necked Grebe, including 2 at Elijah Creek S.P., Lincoln, GA 5–9 Jan (MMcC, m.ob.) that were observed in display, a most unusual site for Georgia birders! A very rare incursion of Western Grebes was recorded off the region's beaches: one off Wassaw Is, GA 14 Jan (RH, m.ob.); one off Tybee Is, GA 24 Jan (RtH, TS); 2 off Sea Is, GA 23 Jan (JF, m.ob.); and a remarkable group of 5 off Cape Pt, Buxton, NC 4 & 13 Feb (BPI, ph. JL). Off Hatteras, a Northern Fulmar was recorded 22 Dec (BPI), a Great Shearwater 12 Feb (BPI), and single Sooty Shearwaters 11 & 12 Feb (BPI); the maximum count of Manx Shearwater was 11 off Hatteras 22 Dec (BPI). Some 1200 Northern Gannets off St. Simons Is, GA 17 Jan (NF et al) nearly doubled the previous state high count. The returning Great Cormorant was present at L.W.F.G throughout the period, and there were six other reports from the Carolinas.

A Great Egret seen near Richmond Hill, GA 13 Dec (MW) had been banded at L. Huron, ON in Jun 2010. Rare inland and more so in winter was a Tricolored Heron in Seminole, GA 5 Feb (NE, JM). There were only two reports of Reddish Egrets this winter: one on the Litchfield Beach, SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (JH, CH) and one at Hunting Beach S.P., SC 15 Jan (RC). Wintering Roseate Spoonbills were likewise scarce: 3 were recorded on the Cumberland L., GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (JF, SW), and one was on Dewees Is, SC 13 Feb (JF, JFJ). Two Wood Storks at Jordan L., NC 29 Jan (NB, RM) were n. and w. of normal, though there were many winter records of the species in the coastal mid-Atlantic, almost all of single juveniles.

A Northern Goshawk was spotted in Georgetown, SC mid-Jan (BM). Alligator River NWR, North Carolina is a site that appears to host Swainson's Hawks annually, an extremely rare wintering species in North America n. of the s. tier states. At least one was present throughout the period (m.ob.); 2 were tallied on the area C.B.C. 4 Jan and sporadically otherwise (JH, JH, Lewis), and one remained through at least 20 Feb (JP). Two w. subgroups of Red-tailed Hawk turned up in Georgia: a Krider's Hawk was at Phinizy Swamp N.A. 18 Dec and 26 Feb (LS), and another was in Berrien 29 Jan (WS); and a striking ad. Harlan's Hawk was in Forsyth 6 Feb (PM, KM, ph. JS). The Henderson, NC Rough-legged Hawk from fall continued throughout the period (m.ob.). Other reports came from near the Charlotte airport 29 Dec (KM), where 2 were noted the next day (RC); from near Pungo L. 16 & 27 Jan (light morph, RD, DC, HL); and near Bellhaven 27 & 29 Jan (SC, JE, m.ob.). All four reports of Golden Eagles were s. of North Carolina.

CRANES THROUGH ALCIDS

Single Yellow Rails were flushed at N. River Marsh, Carteret, NC 7 Jan (ScW, JSo) and in a wetland restoration area at nearby N. River Farms 20 Feb (JF, JF, MG). A winter count of 7 Purple Gallinules was noteworthy on the Bainbridge, GA C.B.C. 29 Dec (JF, OD). Tragically, 3 Whooping Cranes were found shot to death in Calhoun, GA 30 Dec (G.D.N.R.), the deaths of these first-year birds.
reduced the number in the e. reintroduction program to 96. On a more positive note, 3 again wintered in Lowndes, GA (ph. RB), and northbound migrants were spotted in n. Georgia 17 Feb (CM) and in Murray, GA 26 Feb (JD).

A Snowy Plover was on Jekyll I., GA 2-4 Dec (LT, m.ob.), providing the state’s 4th record. Among the most critical wintering areas for the species on the Atlantic coast, the mouth of the Altamaha R., GA hosted large numbers of American Oystercatchers, with 436 on Wolf Island Bar 4 Feb and 532 on Little Egg Island Bar 8 Feb. Band observations included 15 from Massachusetts; 7 from New Jersey; 2 from Delaware; 18 from Virginia; 22 from North Carolina; 4 from South Carolina; and 181 from Georgia. This species rarely strays from the area, thanks to abundant food supply and the remoteness of the sites (TK, G.D.N.R.). A Black-necked Stilt apparently wintered at the S.S.S., as it was present 2 Jan-18 Feb (SC). A late Pectoral Sandpiper was in Forsyth, GA 11 & 18 Dec (JF). High counts of Purple Sandpipers included 32 on the Wilmington, NC C.B.C. 1 Jan (jide SC) and 25 at the Savannah R. entrance jetty, GA 13 Feb (TM et al.). As many as 200 Red Phalaropes were off Beaufort Inlet, NC 4 Jan (JE, JV).

There were several reports of Black-legged Kittiwake: a juv. at Cape Pt., Buxton, NC 3 Jan (BPI); 2 in the same area 4 Jan (ad., juv.; BPI); and off Hatteras, NC 28 Jan (BPI); and a juv. at West Point Dam, GA 26 Jan-27 Feb (WC, m.ob.). All five Black-headed Gull reports came from North Carolina, with one at Beaverdam L. representing only the 2nd inland record for the state; 3 provided a high count at Cape Pt., Buxton, NC 4 Feb (BPI). Six sightings of Little Gulls came from Outer Banks beaches or off Hatteras (m.ob.). Single ad. California Gulls were at Cape Pt., Buxton 18 Jan and 4 Feb (BPI), and a juv. Thayer’s Gull was there 6-7 Feb (HW, JH, P&NM). Among 15+ sightings of Iceland Gulls (most from coastal or pelagic waters in North Carolina) was one well s., on the Cumberland L., GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (ph. BB). There were four sightings of Glaucous Gulls, plus one Glaucous x Herring hybrid at Cape Pt., Buxton, NC 4 Jan (BPI). Single Great Skuas were off Hatteras 15 & 28 Jan, and at least 2 were observed each day 11-12 Feb (BPI).

Alcids were well reported from mid-Atlantic waters, including North Carolina, this winter, and the influx was closely associated with a mass of very cold water that had worked its way to North Carolina by January. Amazing numbers of Dovekies were recorded off Hatteras: 643 on 28 Jan; a new state high count of 871 on 6 Feb; 425 on 11 Feb; and 495 on 12 Feb (all BPI); later in the month, numbers of Dovekie appeared to drop, as the water off Hatteras warmed. The species was also observed from shore, including 6 between Pea Island N.W.R. and Hatteras 30 Jan (RD, DC, HL) and one at Huntington Beach S.P., SC 3 Feb (RL). Two Common Murres were seen off Hatteras Inlet, NC 15 Jan (ph. BPI), and singles were recorded off Hatteras 28 & 29 Jan (BPI, ph. J.L & CS); prior to these sightings there were only two records in the Region. A Thick-billed Murre was off Hatteras 30 Dec (ph. BPI). Razorbill sightings were coming early and were present for much of the winter, though not in the thousands or high hundreds, as sometimes seen here: 40 were off Hatteras 3 Dec (BPI); 35 were counted between Pea Island N.W.R. and Hatteras 30 Jan (RD, DC, HL); and 425 were recorded off Hatteras 11 Feb (BPI). The southernmost report of Razorbill was 2 off Tybee I., GA 13 Feb (TM et al.). Atlantic Puffins, once thought quite rare in the Region, were likewise out in force off Hatteras, with notable counts of 9 on 22 Dec; 20 on 10 Jan; and 17 on 28 Jan (all BPI).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Five White-winged Doves were reported, about average. A very rare Long-eared Owl was recorded on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC C.B.C. 28 Dec (BB et al.). Among an above-average nine reports of Short-eared Owls was an astonishing count of 30 near Bellhaven, NC 13 Jan (SC). Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured in Lamar, GA 1 Dec.

Photographed 28 January 2011 off Hatteras, North Carolina, this Dovekie was one of hundreds observed during a record-breaking season for the species in the state’s offshore waters. Photograph by Jeff Lewis.

These Atlantic Puffins were among 17 encountered on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, North Carolina on 28 January 2011. Photograph by Jeff Lewis.
Hummingbirds wintering in the Southeast have been the subject of much study over the past two decades. It has only been since the late 1990s that some species were known to winter in our Region, and we have a better understanding of the status and distribution of those already known to visit during the colder months. Each winter deepens our understanding, and this season was highlighted by several outstanding rarities.

Our only breeding species, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, winter in considerable numbers in e. North Carolina, exemplified this winter by a state-wide C.B.C. total of 83, more than any other state in the Lower 48 states. Black-chinned Hummingbirds are annual visitors: a juv. male was in Mt. Pleasant, SC early Dec (DCs), and singles were recorded on the Sun City-Okatie, SC C.B.C. 14 Dec (fide HC) and on the Litchfield-Pawleys L, SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide CH). Two Anna's Hummingbirds graced the Carolinas this winter: a female near Charleston, SC 20 Dec–4 Jan (P&JE, DCs, m.ob.) provided a first state record; and an ad. male near New Bern, NC 17 Jan–11 Feb (AD, fide BH) represented only the 2nd record in that state. Our most numerous w. species in winter, a Rufous Hummingbird in Hendersonville, NC 4 Dec–3 Jan survived temperatures well below freezing on many nights and was observed at a feeder even after sunset (WF). A Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Douglasville, GA mid-Nov–18 Feb (BRWH, m.ob.) was the first in the state since 2008; an ad. male Allen's Hummingbird in Braselton, Hall, County, Georgia, the state's first since 2005. Photograph by Rachel Cess.

This adult female Allen's Hummingbird spent 18 December 2010 through 13 March (here 6 February) 2011 at Braselton, Hall County, Georgia, the state's first since 2005. Photograph by Rachel Cess.

This adult male Anna's Hummingbird at New Bern, North Carolina was present 17 January through at least 11 February (here) 2011; it was the state's second ever and almost certainly related to the massive influx in autumn and early winter 2010. Photograph by Ali lyooob.
Chats have a similar winter status in our Region, with 7 reported this season. A female Summer Tanager returned for a 3rd winter in Wilmington, NC, Dec 3 (AW), and one also visited feeders in Raleigh, NC, 11 Dec-7 Feb (CSH). A female Western Tanager visited a feeder in Wilmington, NC, 29-31 Dec (B&SM); another female was in Mt. Pleasant, SC, 8 Feb (DM), and a male was on Bald Head I., NC, 18 Feb (ph. NG).

The number of American Tree Sparrows uncovered this winter was truly remarkable: one at a feeder in Avery, NC, 23-29 Dec (MS); one in a yard in Ashe, NC, 23 Dec (MC); 2 at Green Valley Park, Ashe, NC, 15-30 Jan (Dra, DR); and one at Carter’s L., GA, 15-21 Jan (MMb, m.ob.), providing only the 5th state record and the first since 1978. A most impressive 16 Clay-colored Sparrows at N. River Farms, Carteret, NC, 20 Feb (JfJe, MG) represented a new state high count.

A Lark Sparrow mingled with Chipping Sparrows at the N. River Club G.C. near Beaufort, NC, 11 Dec-19 Jan (Jf). At least 7 Henslow’s Sparrows were detected during a banding effort at the annual wintering grounds at Pauls’s Pasture WMA, GA, 19 Feb (TS et al.); only one Le Conte’s Sparrow was reported, in a wetland restoration area at N. River Farms, Carteret, NC, 13 Feb (JfJe, MG). While eight reports of Lincoln’s Sparrows were par for the course, 2 Harris’s Sparrows were quite unusual: one in Laurens, SC, Dec 6 (fide Tka) and one at A.W.M.A. 30 Dec-24 Feb (AW, LS, m.ob.).

Several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at feeders in Georgia: in Washington 1 Dec (Lsc); in Gwinnett 3 Dec (KT); and in Bibb 4 Dec (JA), one not attending a feeder was on St. Catherine’s 17 Dec (NF). A male Indigo Bunting was a rare winter find at Florence, SC, 27 Jan (LM). North of their typical winter range were 3 Painted Buntings on the Bodie-Pe I., NC, C.B.C. 28 Dec (fide PWS) and a male that visited a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, NC for a 2nd consecutive winter (Gme). Dickcissels were recorded on the Athens, GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (Jn); on the Southport, NC C.B.C. 2 Jan (Gma); and in a yard in Clemson, SC 10-14 Jan (KF). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at L. Seminole, GA 4 Dec (RB, MMs). Up to 120 Brewer’s Blackbirds wintered at the regular site in Bartow, GA (m.ob.), and 75 were recorded on the Dublin, GA C.B.C. 27 Dec (JfA). An Orchard Oriole at L. Herrick, Clarke, GA was last seen 4 Dec (RH); the species is extremely rare in the Southeast after September. Though not a record-breaking season, both Purple Finches and Pine Siskins staged significant irruptions into the Region. Most notable among several are reports of Red Crossbills, which were seen at Falls L. NC, 21 Feb (fide BB); another was at Graham, NC 24-26 Feb (THu, m.ob.). A female Evening Grosbeak was seen at a feeder at Dalton, Whitfield, GA mid-Dec through 26 Dec (RS, m.ob.); the species has not been recorded in the state since 2003.

Contributors: (subregional editors in boldface) Jerry Amerson, Scott Baron, Fred Bassett, Giff Boonan, Art Joanne Beherer, Brad Bergstrom, Michael Bernard, Ken Blankenheim, Brian Bockhahn, Rich Susan Boyd, Roy Brown, Allen Bryan, Norm Budnitz, Steve Calver (SCa), Deb Carter, Walt Chambers, Helen Chatterton, Diana Churchill (DCh), Ron Clark, Sam Cooper, Doreen Cubie

For a 3rd winter in a row, Tennessee Warblers were recorded in Georgia in Dec, with singles at A.W.M.A. 2 Dec (GK), Sapelo I. 4 Dec (TK), and St. Catherine’s I. 18 Dec (DM). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was shocking discovery at Centennial Olympic Park, Atlanta, GA 21 Dec (NF), and a Cape May Warbler provided a very rare wintering record at a suet feeder in Winston-Salem, NC, 10 Jan-26 Feb (Jr). A count of 49 Yellow-throated Warblers on the Sun City-Okatie, SC, C.B.C. 14 Dec (fide HC) was tops among C.B.C. circles in the United States. An American Redstart was found on the Cumberland I., GA C.B.C. 18 Dec (GM). Region-wise, there were six reports of Ovenbird and four of Northern Waterthrush, both rare and local wintering species. Yellow-breasted Warblers through Finches

To 1-5 Jan and again 19-21 Feb, concerted efforts were made to study wintering Amphidromus sparrows in Georgia’s coastal marshes. Biologists, conservation groups, and volunteers spent time at several banding sites helping to capture, measure, and band the birds in an effort to better understand the relative abundance of the different subspecies of the sharp-tailed sparrows, Nelson’s and Saltmarsh Sparrows. In the process, other interesting data surfaced concerning habitat preference, subspecies segregation, and site fidelity (TK, CM, G.D.N.R.; FS, Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary).

Out of 118 banded sharp-tailed sparrows, 72 were Nelson’s and 46 were Saltmarsh. In addition to the sharp-tailed sparrows, 176 Saltmarsh Sparrows were banded, among which the local breeding subspecies (macgillivrae) was strongly outnumbered birds of the nominate subspecies, which breed farther north.

One banding area along Hwy. 17 near Jekyll I. held large concentration of all three species 19-20 Feb, leaving volunteers and biologists alike in awe of the spectacle of scores of normally elusive birds “rolling” along through dense stands of Black Needlebrush; at least 30 Nelson’s, 15 Saltmarsh, and 250 Sea Saltmarsh Sparrows were present there.
Florida

Bruce H. Anderson
Andy Bankert

With freezing temperatures and frost extending from the panhandle southward into the north-central peninsula last fall, it was not surprising that most of Florida experienced the coldest winter in more than a decade. The jet stream extended down the Great Plains and into the northern Gulf of Mexico, with mostly northerly to northwesterly winds bringing below-freezing temperatures to Florida. On the night of 13 December, freezing temperatures reached southward to the tip of the peninsula. Through January, there were at least a dozen freezing nights that reached south of Lake Okeechobee; on three or four of those nights, the only temperatures above freezing were in the Keys! By early February, freezes only occasionally extended southward into the north-central peninsula, allowing for an early spring throughout most of the peninsula.

A dry fall and winter pushed dabbling ducks to find suitable feeding habitat; many more dabblers than usual pushed as far south as Everglades National Park. Many areas in the peninsula reported a dearth of passerines throughout the season. Nonetheless, pending acceptance by the state records committee, Florida may add two or three species to the state list: Kelp Gull, Greater Ani, and Common Redpoll. The ani is the first noted anywhere in the United States. West Indian strays included White-cheeked Pintail, Masked Duck, and La Sagra’s Flycatcher, and western strays included Broad-tailed and Allen’s Hummingbirds, Say’s Phoebe, Cassin’s Kingbird, Sage Thrasher, Mountain Bluebird, Audubon’s Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, and Hooded and Bullock’s Orioles.

Abbreviations/definitions: big bend (the part of Florida from the Apalachicola R. and through Jefferson); L. Apopka (L. Apopka Restoration Area, in Orange unless otherwise noted); panhandle (that part of Florida from the Apalachicola R. through Escambia); Paynes Prairie (Paynes Prairie Preserve S.P., Alachua); record (only those records verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence); report (any observation); S.T.A. (Stormwater Treatment Area); S.T.F. (Spray Treatment Fields); Viera Wetlands (Ritch Grissom Memorial Wetlands at Viera, Brevard); Rocky Glades (Rocky Glades Public Small Game Hunting Area, Miami-Dade).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES
Geese were reported in good numbers, with high counts of 20 Greater White-fronted and 80 Snows at St. Marks N.W.R., Wabula 29 Dec (JH) and up to 8 Ross’s in n. Escambia 29 Dec–17 Jan (L&RAD). A Greater White-fronted strayed s. to Sarasota 15 Jan (Kathy Outwell), and a lone Snow was s. to Palm Beach 16 Feb (JHu, RuT). Ross’s Geese were widespread, aside from those in Escambia, one was at Ft. Walton Beach, Okaloosa (DW), 2 in Leon 15 Jan (AW), one at St. Marks N.W.R. 27 Dec (MBr), 4 at Molasses Junction, St. Johns Jan (GDs), and one at Gainesville, Alachua 19 Dec–9 Feb (John Martin, m.ob.). A probable Snow Goose s. Ross’s Goose hybrid was at in Viera Wetlands Dec–5 Jan (MH, m.ob.). A Tundra Swan was reported from Paynes Prairie throughout the season (Steve Collins et al.), and 2 were at Merritt Island N.W.R., Brevard 14 Dec (Tom Dunkerton). Gadwall continues to increase in Florida, with up to 338 at L. Apopka 31 Dec (C.B.C.), 28 in Hillborough 13 Jan–3 Feb (DGa, CC), a pair well s. in Palm Beach 29 Jan (JHB), and one s. to Miami-Dade 1 Jan (RoT).

Surprisingly, the only reports of Eurasian Wigeon or Cinnamon Teal came from L. Apopka, where a wigeon was seen 1 Dec and 9 Jan and a teal 8 Dec (HR). Rare in the peninsula, American Black Ducks were s. to L. Apopka 26 Dec (6; HR) and Cockroach Bay, Hillborough throughout the season (2; BAh, m.ob.). Of unknown provenance, a White-cheeked Pintail was at Grassy Waters Pre-
serve, Palm Beach 6-13 Jan (JHu, RuT), and 2 were at Fisher Island G.C., Miami-Dade 18 Dec (Orian Tzadik).

There were higher numbers of Redheads and Canvasbacks than in recent years, including 500 Redheads at Destin, Okaloosa 14 Feb (Wes Tallyn, DW) and 2000 at Palm Harbor, Pinellas 26 Dec (Irene Hernandez et al.), with 50 Canvasbacks at L. Seminole, Jackson 5 Feb (AW) and up to 23 at St. Petersburg, Pinellas 27 Dec-30 Jan (RoS, m.ob.). Annual in recent years, 5 Common Eiders were reported in Nassau and Duval 18 Dec-19 Feb (PL, KD, m.ob.). Scoters were widely reported. Two Surf Scoters made it to Collier 4 Jan (Caryl Thomas). A total of 53 White-winged Scoter, Florida's rarest scoter, were reported from nine locations, was an exceptional number. Of interest, only one White-winged was near the Atlantic coast, in St. Johns 4 Dec (Andrew Thornton), while another was inland in Leon 26 Feb (M. Earl Od); 30 were counted at Pensacola Beach, Escambia 18 Dec (A&DF), and 7 were at De Soto National Memorial, Manatee 19 Feb (Mary Zimmerman et al.). At least 6 Long-tailed Ducks were found, with singles to Manatee 29 Dec 3-Jan (DI) and Miami-Dade 31 Dec (JHB et al.), the latter furnishing a first county record. Common Goldeneyes were reported s. of their typical range in Sarasota 1 Dec-17 Jan (DI) and Collier 4 Jan (Jim Krakowski). Accidental, a Common Mer-
ganser was reported from Pensacola Beach 21 Dec (p.a., LCa). Another rarity, especially outside the peninsula, a Masked Duck was killed by a hunter at L. Miccosukee, Jefferson 26 Dec (p.a., ph. Scott Mobley, Robert Crawford), 2nd for the big bend.

A winter pelagic trip found an impressive 35 Red-throated Loons off Duval 6 Feb (AB, MB et al.); singles were seen s. to Brevard 3 Dec (DF) and 20 Feb (Bob Paxson, KL). Rare, but probably annual in the panhandle, a Pacific Loon was seen at Santa Rosa Sound, Santa Rosa 6-22 Jan (Ali et al.), while one wandered s. to Cedar Key, Levy 11 Feb (MG). Eared Grebes have not been widely reported in recent years, but reports of 10 surfaced this season, with a high of 4 at Garnier Bayou, Okaloosa 19 Dec (BP) and up to 2 s. to Cockroach Bay from fall through 10 Dec (DG et al., HW); other reports of loners came from Chocotawhatchee Bay, Okaloosa 20 Dec (BP), Parker, Bay 18 Dec (Bill McCandless, Rick Holden), St. Petersburg 11 Feb (RoS), and L. Apopka 10 Dec and 16 Feb (HR). All shearwater species are rarely reported in winter, so a Great Shearwater at Gulf Islands N.S., Escambia 4 Dec (RAD) and a Sooty Shearwater at Siesta Key, Sarasota 2 Jan (Rick Greenspun) were noteworthy. Brown Boobies wandered n.

to Sebastian Inlet S.P., Brevard 27 Jan (DF et al.) and Apollo Beach Nature Preserve, Hillsborough 28 Feb (CC). Casual away from the Atlantic, a Great Cormorant turned up at St. Andrews S.P., Bay 28-31 Jan (L. Semo). A Glossy Ibis at Pensacola 4 Jan (Patrick James) was rare for panhandle. Also rare but regular, 5 White-faced Ibis were at St. Marks N.W.R. 30 Jan (MB), and up to 2 were at L. Apopka 4-5 Feb (HR), while singles were identified in Pasco at McKeathan L. 1-16 Feb (AGBH et al.) and Trinity throughout the season (Ken Tracey et al.).

A Swallow-tailed Kite re-
turned early to John Chesnut Park, Pinellas 22 Feb (Bob Lane et al.). Six White-tailed Kites, listed as Endangered in Florida, were reported from Okeechobee (Jennifer Benson) to Miami-Dade (BA). A Broad-winged Hawk, either early or previously overlooked, was noted in Pasco 27 Jan (DG). Short-tailed Hawks were widely reported in the cen. peninsula (where they breed) but from locations n. of where they regularly winter in the state. An imm. Rough-legged Hawk was described from Emerald Marsh C.A., Lake 14 Dec (p.a., Lorraine Mato et al.) and 2 Feb (p.a., QO); there are fewer than 10 accepted reports of this species in Florida. Not as rare, 4 single Golden Eagles were found in n. Escambia 11 Dec (Bob Wallace, Dexter Richard-
son), at Tallahassee, Leon 2 Jan (Bob Henderson), in Duval 26 Dec (BoR), and at Melrose, Alachua 16 Dec (Jan Bolte et al.). Crested Caracaras were at the extreme limits of their range at St. Johns R., Semi-
nole/Volusia 31 Dec (Roy Book et al.) and Fakahatchee Strand Preserve S.P., Collier 14 Dec (Deborah Jansen et al.). Single Black Rails were reported in Pasco at Bayonet Point 1 Jan (MG) and Werner-Boyle Salt Springs S.P. 6 Feb (DG et al.), while 4 were seen/heard at St.

While Florida lies very near mild populations of White-cheeked Pintail, the species is commonly kept in waterfowl collections. Almost all reports of Whitecheeked Pintail, such as this individual at Grassy Waters Preserve, Palm Beach County 6-13 (here 6) January 2011, involve birds whose provenance is not known. Photograph by Carolyn Klein.

Rarely encountered along the Gulf of Mexico coast, this Great Cormorant (right) turned up at St. Andrews State Park, Bay County, Florida 28-31 (here 30) January 2011. Photograph by Ron House.

One of many recorded in the Southeast in winter 2010-2011, this Black-headed Gull (right) frequented Daytona Beach Shores, Volusia County, Florida 8-25 (here 11) February. Photograph by Danny Bates.

This second-year male Allen's Hummingbird at Niceville, Okaloosa County, Florida 14-28 (here 28) December 2011 shows the very narrow outer rectrix that helps distinguish this species from Rufous Hummingbird, at least in the hand. Photographs by Fred Bassett.

Johns N.W.R. 26 Jan (MG). Up to 8 Whooping Cranes wintered at Paynes Prairie (AKr et al.; both the newly created migratory flock that winters in the Region, and Florida's "reintroduced" nonmigratory birds, frequent the park.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

High plover counts included 38 Snowy and 51 Wilson’s Plovers at Anclote Key, Pinellas 4 Feb (DGa, BP) and 37 Pipings at Crandon Beach Park, Miami-Dade 26 Jan+ (RD). A Long-billed Curlew at Joe Overstreet Road, Osceola 10 Jan–5 Feb (Bob Sanders, m ob.) was rare inland and the 2nd for that location. Other Long-billeds were noted at Cedar Key 30 Dec (JoH et al.) and 19 Feb (PL), and at Pinellas Point 7 Dec (Mark & Sandy Turner) and 13–26 Feb (RoS et al.). The season’s highest Red Knot count was 800 at Caladesi L, Pinellas 14 Feb (HW). Semi-palmated Sandpipers are rarely identified most winters; this season, 3 were photographed at Cape Sable, Everglades N.P., Monroe 2 Jan, and 8 were reported from North Calusa Key, Monroe 17 Dec (RGr et al.) Up to 3 Purple Sandpipers wintered at Ponce de Leon Inlet, Volusia (MB, m ob.), the s. edge of its regular winter range. Stilt Sandpipers wintered in higher numbers than usual, with 50 at Merritt Island N.W.R. 25 Jan (MG). American Woodcocks were widely reported statewide, with a high of 12 at Old Town, Dixie 15 Jan (PL). Red Phalaropes are regular offshore in the Atlantic, so a count of 250 off Volusia 1 Feb (MB et al.) was not unexpected.

A rare Black-legged Kittiwake was at Caranval N.S., Brevard 20 Dec (CG et al.) A second-cycle Black-headed Gull was reported at several Volusia locations in and around Daytona Beach Shores, Volusia 8–25 Feb (James Smith, ph. MB et al.). Franklin’s Gulls continued to be reported on the Atlantic from fall through 8 Dec, with a single at Cutler Wetlands, Miami-Dade on the last date (BRa); another was reported on the Gulf coast at Destin 18-20 Dec (DW et al.). Definitely on the increase along Florida’s n. Atlantic coast, multiple white-winged gulls were reported: single Thayer’s Gulls were at Daytona Beach Shores 26 Jan+ (p.a., MB et al.) and Jetty Park, Brevard 18 Dec (MH); at least 2 Iceland Gulls were at Daytona Beach Shores 27 Jan+ (MB); and at least 4 Glaucous Gulls were at Daytona Beach Shores 24 Dec+ (MB et al.). Other single Glaucous on the Atlantic coast were at Cooca Beach, Brevard 22 Dec–4 Feb (Phyllis Mansfield et al.), Huguenot Memorial Park, Duval 26 Dec–10 Jan (JoH, BRo), and Little Talbot Island S.P., Duval 7 Feb (ph. park staff, fide PP). On the Gulf, a Glaucous visited Anclote Key 20 Jan (DGa, HW). Black-backed gulls were reported at scattered Gulf locations, where they are casual, with at least 3 and one Great found w. to Escambia (Andrew Haffenden, LG; 5 other Greats were reported, all in Pinellas (Judy Fisher, Eric Plage, Jim Wells). Florida’s first ever, a third-cycle Kelp Gull was at Anclote Gulf Park, Pasco 28 Dec–8 Jan (p.a., ph. Steve Mann, m ob.). Inland and n., single Gull-billed Terns were unexpected at Winter Park’s Genius Drive Nature Preserve. Orange 12 Dec (BHa et al.) and at Orlando Wetlands Park 10 Feb (BHA et al.). Rare in winter, Common Terns were reported from Rockledge, Brevard 18 Dec (CG et al.) and Tampa, Hillsborough 2 Jan (Ann Paul). Both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers were reported on both coasts, with a Pomarine s. to Boca Chica Key, Monroe 12 Dec (CG) and 2 Parasitics s. to Boca Caye N.P., Miami-Dade 19 Dec (BRa).

Four White-winged Doves at Bay Point, Bay 18 Dec (TM) were likely winter visitors from the w. population. Often difficult to detect in winter, Mangrove Cuckoos were at Biscayne N.P. 19 Dec (BRa) and Bear L., Everglades N.P., Monroe 23 Feb (JH). A Greater Ani photographed at Crandon Park Gardens, Miami-Dade 16 Dec (ph. Alex Wang) was the first documented for the state. The species breeds as close to Florida as Trinidad and Panama, and because it has been assumed to be a natural vagrant recently in other countries n. of that range, the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee is reviewing this record. The only Smooth-billed Ani reported was at Anhinga Trail, Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade 19 Jan (RoT). Rare Groove-billed Anis were photographed at L. Seminole Park, Pinellas 3 Dec (Don Ivey) and Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, Pinellas 2 Jan (James Brown, George Heinrich). Single Short-eared Owls found in Monroe at Christian Point 2 Jan (Bob Showler) and North Calusa Key 17 Dec (RGr et al.), and 2 at Frog Pond, Miami-Dade 5-8 Jan (RoT et al.) appeared to be from West Indian populations. Lesser Nighthawks were not as numerous in s. Florida as in previous winters, with 3 at “Dump Marsh,” Miami-Dade 10 Dec and a single there 20-26 Dec (RoT). The northermmost Chuck-will’s-widow detected was at Pelican Island N.W.R., Indian River 2 Jan (AB, KL). A male Broad-billed Hummingbird, Florida’s 4th, visited an Oviedo, Seminole feeder 23 Jan–24 Feb (p.a., ph. Zelda Ladan et al.). Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were banded.
at Chocowna Beach, Walton 4 Dec and Ft. Walton Beach 19 Dec (Fred Bassett). Bassett reported that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds continue to be the most commonly banded hummingbird species in the panhandle and big bend, where 41 were banded this season; from Escambia to Brevard, 20 Black-chinned and 17 Rufous Hummingbirds were banded. Other hummingbirds banded included a Caliope Hummingbird at Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa 27 Dec–22 Jan (Brenda & Charlie Roose), a Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Chocowna Beach 19 Dec–9 Feb (p.a., Sharon & Tom Maxwell), an Allen’s Hummingbirds at Niceville, Okaloosa 14–28 Dec (p.a., Stacy & Frank Meader), and another Allen’s at Brooksville, Hernando throughout the season (p.a., Helen Johnson, Terry Smith).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Rare and local in winter, Least Flycatchers were identified at Emerald Marsh C.A. 14 Dec (GQ). L. Apopka throughout the season (HR), and Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade 22 Dec and 30 Jan (BFA, RD). The Say’s Phoebe spending its 3rd winter at Astutula, Lake remained throughout the season (GQ). Only 2 Vermilion Flycatcher reports surfaced: one at Ft. Walton Beach S.T.F., Okaloosa from fall that remained through 24 Jan (LS&RAD), and one seen in Hamilton 7 Dec (Charles Law). Ten Ash-throated Flycatchers were reported, the southernmost being at Viera Wetlands 19 Jan–21 Feb (MH, m.ob.); one in n. Escambia 29 Dec (LS&RAD) was unusual for winter. Brown-crested Flycatchers are local in the s. peninsula, 3 were at two locations in Miami-Dade (RD, JHB, JHu), while another was at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Palm Beach 31 Dec (Bri-an Hope). Brown-crested is almost annual in the cen. peninsula at L. Apopka, where one was identified 19 Jan (HR). A La Sagra’s Flycatcher at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P., Miami-Dade pleased many birders 4 Dec+ (RD, m.ob.), as did a Cassin’s Kingbird at S.T.A. 5, Hendry from fall through 19 Feb (p.a., JHB, m.ob.), the latter a bird that returned for at least a 3rd season. Western Kingbirds were farther n. than usual, with singles at Naval Station Mayport 10 Dec–10 Jan (Dylan Beyer) and at nearby Duval locations 5 & 9 Feb (Kevin Dailey, DoR). Just s. of Duval, in St. Johns, 3 were found on 18 Dec (C.B.C.), with a loner there 9 Feb (DoR). At the northernmost established kingbird roost in the state in Marion, Dinsmore noted that up to 16 Westerns and one Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that had been observed from fall were not seen following the area’s first hard freeze 8–9 Dec—the exception being 5 Westerns seen there 1 Jan but not afterward.

Bell’s Vireos are found only in Miami-Dade with any regularity; singles were identified at A. D. Barnes Park 26 Dec and Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P. 10 Feb (both RD). Yellow-throated Vireos seen 14 Dec at both Carney Island Park, Marion (JJD) and Fakahatchee Strand Preserve S.P. (Richard Fagan, Deborah Jansen) may have been very late migrants. Up to 3 Horned Larks were near Greenwood, Jackson 6 Jan–5 Feb (BoR, AW), the only Floridas location where this species can be expected year-round. The first Purple Martin of the spring was reported at L. Apopka 9 Jan (HR). A Bank Swallow at Ft. Lauderdale, Broward 15 Dec (JHu, RoT) was late. The only Cave Swallow reports involved 3 in Broward 18 Dec (Bryant Roberts) and 13 in Miami-Dade 15 Dec (RD). Three Barn Swallows at Long Pine Key, Mi ami-Dade 20 Dec (JHB, MBe) were possibly wintering, while another at Merritt Island N.W.R. 28 Jan (MG, BHA) was early. Irregular in Florida, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported on the Gulf at Alligator Point, Franklin 10 Jan (JoH), 2 were at Cedar Key throughout the winter (Dale Henderson), and one was at Ft. De Soto Park, Pinellas 16–17 Dec (Tom Zinneman et al.). Brown Creepers were not widely reported, but 2 were s. to Gainesville through 21 Feb (Earl Scales, MM et al.). As usual, Alachua also had the southernmost Winter Wrens, with up to 5 from fall until 29 Jan (Caleb Gordon, MM et al.). Golden-crowned Kinglets wintered s. to the cen. peninsula, with several in Pinellas (DoR, RoS et al.) and Orange (DF, John Thornton).

A Mountain Bluebird photographed at Dry Tortugas N.P., Monroe 30 Dec (p.a., Chip Clouse) was the state’s 3rd, with the first coming from Everglades N.P. in 2002. A Sage Thrasher at Ft. Pickens, Escambia 15 Jan–25 Feb (p.a., JPF, m.ob.) was Florida’s 9th, the first in eight years; most records in Florida are from the panhandle. Sprague’s Pipits winter locally in the panhandle and big bend; one was at Ft. Walton Beach S.T.F. 12 Feb (AIH et al.), and up to 4 were at Apalachicola, Franklin 27–31 Dec (JM, MB et al.), a reliable location. Casual in Florida, a Lapland Longspur was at Ft. Walton Beach S.T.F. 27 Dec (DW). A species not recorded in Florida since 2004, single Snow Buntings were seen on the Atlantic coast at Huguenot Memorial Park 22–30 Jan (KD), at Matanzas Inlet, St. Johns 19 Jan–12 Feb (Teddy Shuler), and at Palm Coast, Flagler 7 Dec–31 Dec (Neil Davies, m.ob.)

Twenty-three warbler species were tallied in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe. Nashville Warblers were reported from seven locations, with one at Ft. Pickens 25 Feb (Bernie & Susan Master) the only report outside the peninsula. An Audubon’s Warbler at Paynes Prairie 16 Jan (p.a., AkR, Mary Hart) and a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Kendall, Miami-Dade 9 Jan (JHB) were the rarest of the western warblers noted this season. Black-throated Green Warblers extended n. into the cen. peninsula, with seven reports. A Prairie Warbler was n. to Panama City Beach, Bay 18 Dec (TM et al.), as were an Ovenbird in Okaloosa 20 Dec (BP) and a Northern Waterthrush in Holmes 13 Jan (GDa). A late Louisiana Waterthrush was at Greynolds Park, Miami-Dade 18 Dec (JHB); the earliest to return was at L.


As was Florida's first Heeded Grisole, the second—this male at Santa Rosa Beach, Walton County 8 January 2011—was on private property. Photograph by Lynn Ferguson.
Apopka 18 Feb (HR). Single late Hooded Warblers were at Ft. Lauderdale 18 Dec–22 Jan (JHu, RuT) and near St. Petersburg 18 Dec (Susan Harris, Susan Pepper) and 27 Dec (Mathew Poling). The only reports of Wilson’s Warblers received included one in the panhandle at Gulf Breeze 21 Dec (Scott Duncan) and singles in the se. peninsula in Palm Beach 31 Dec (CW, Ben Kolstad), Broward 12–18 Dec (JHu, RuT), and Miami-Dade 28 Jan (RF, RoT). At least 11 Yellow-breasted Chats were reported from Escambia (JPf) to Miami-Dade (fide JHB).

Presumably the same Green-tailed Towhee spent another winter at Ft. Pickens from fall until 25 Feb (p.a., Wil Domke, m.o.b.) for the state’s 4th record. Clay-colored, Lark, and Lincoln’s Sparrows were in higher numbers than usual and were widespread, with 18, seven, and 13 reports, respectively. A Field Sparrow was at Eco Pond, Everglades N.P., Monroe 31 Dec–2 Jan (BRA, JHB), and a southerly Henslow’s Sparrow was at DaPuis Management Area, Martin 20 Feb (CW, Bob & Cathy Burdette). Saltmarsh Sparrows are regular along both coasts in winter; on the Gulf, this species was identified in Manatee at Robinson Preserve 17-18 Dec (up to 2; DI) and in Pinelos at Honeymoon Island S.P. 28 Jan (one; DGa, Mark & Holly Salvato) and at Shell Key, where 3 were color-banded 6 Feb (Jon Greenlaw, RoS et al.). Rare but regular in the n. sections of Florida, Fox Sparrows were seen in Baker (2; BRa) and Alachua (7; AKr, MM et al.), while one at Smyrna Dunes Park, Volusia 2 Jan (Chris Lambrecht) was s. of typical wintering areas. Numbers of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos have declined over the past three decades; surprising were reports totaling 40 in n. Florida, with a high of 22 at Blackwater S.F., Santa Rosa 6 Dec (Peggy Baker et al.). Further s., juncos were found at Bayonet Point 1 Jan (MG) and at Merritt I. 18 Dec and 1 Jan (DF).

Lingering and sometimes wintering Summer Tanagers continue to increase annually; more than 20 were reported this season, including 4 visiting a feeder in Gainesville 13 Dec+ (AKr et al.). About average were 7 Western Tanagers for the season: one at Gulf Breeze 18 Dec (Dale Timmons, Jerry French), 2 at Tallahassee throughout the season (AW, Jim Cavanagh), one at Gainesville 26 Feb (AKr), one at Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P. 8 Dec (RD), and 2 at Dave, Broward 8 Dec (RuT). Rose-breasted Grosbeak is another species that has only recently been found in winter, and the number of reports increases annually. Of 6 Rose-breasted reported this season, one at Ft. Pickens 2 Jan (Brenda & Jerry Callaway) was well n. of typical areas. Many Rose-breasted are found in Jan and Feb, involve birds that do not linger, and are believed to be early “spring” migrants, such as the Escambia grosbeak, as well as one at Warbler Wetlands Park, Broward 22 Jan (JHu, RuT) and one at Bill Sadowski Park, Miami-Dade 30 Jan (RF). Blue Grosbeaks are expected in winter, although they are rare and local; one was at Gulf Breeze 5 Feb+ (RAD), 2 at L. Apopka through 28 Jan (HR), and one at Oviedo, Seminole 23 Dec (Ken Schmidt). A male Lazuli Bunting visited an Oviedo yard 6 Dec for a 4th winter (p.a., Paul Huerbel, Mary Ackern). Dickcissels were in about near-normal numbers in the peninsula, with a high count of 4 at Rocky Glades 11 Feb (RD).

Of the four reports of Yellow-headed Blackbird, a flock of 6 in w. Palm Beach 19 Feb (JHB) was the most impressive. Rusty Blackbirds showed well this winter, penetrating well into the peninsula, with reports of about 25 at Orlando Wetlands Park 10 Feb (BHA et al.), 24 at Salt Lake W.M.A., Brevard 11 Feb (MH), and one at Cockroach Bay Preserve 1 Feb (CC). Four male Euphagus blackbirds at Lucky Lake Strand, Collier 14 Dec (Larry Richardson, Dick Brewer) were likely Rusty, given the cypress-swamp habitat. High counts of 250 Rusty and 500 Brewer’s Blackbirds came from Morrison Springs, Walton 16 Dec (DW). During the past two decades, Boat-tailed Grackles have become rare and local in the panhandle and appear to be increasing; one pair was found at Fort Pickens 7 Feb (LD), 22 males were at Floridatown, Santa Rosa 3 Dec (LSRAD), and 24 were at Panama City, Bay 18 Dec (Beth Miller). Lone Bronzed Cowbirds wandered to Pensacola, Escambia 25 Dec (A&DF) and Ponce Inlet 6 Dec (MBr). Up to 45 Bronzed Cowbirds were at Halseah, Miami-Dade 18 Dec (Paul Bithorn), where this species breeds and appears to be established. Of the 4 Orchard Orioles reported, one at Spring Hill, Hernando 1-21 Dec (Betsy Hoef) was n. of normal areas; other loners were identified in Miami-Dade at Rocky Glades 10 Dec (BRa) and Redland 30 Dec–27 Jan (Patricia Aufhammer), and in Monroe, where one was seen “coming off the water” at Boca Chica Key 23 Dec (CG). A Hooded Oriole at Santa Rosa Beach, Walton 8 Jan (p.a., Lynn Ferguson, Ginger & Bob Alexander) furnished the state’s 2nd record. Surprisingly, a Bullock’s Oriole in n. Escambia 5 Feb (p.a., JPf et al.) was the only report; the species has been almost annual at Tallahassee since 1994. Rare but regular in n. Florida in winter, Purple Finches were in n. Escambia 22 Jan (10; ALH, Carl Edwards), in Columbia at Columbus 4-5 Jan (2, Jim Krumminich), and at Ichetucknee S.P. 21 Dec (6; JoH, Ginger Morgan et al.). Providing a first verified record for Florida, a Common Redpoll visited a feeder at Vero Beach, Indian River 26 & 28 Feb (p.a., ph. Tom Towles et al.). Although American Goldfinches were relatively sparse in the peninsula, Pine Siskins were widely reported again this winter, with one s. to Falkhatchee Strand Preserve S.P. 4 Jan (Richard Fagan, Deb Jansen) and 41 at Chinsegut Nature Center, Brooksville 7 Feb (Kristin Wood). Unconfirmed in Florida in more than 30 years, an Evening Grosbeak was heard flying overhead at Gainesville 30 Dec (AKr).

Contributors (and members of the Florida Ornithological Society Field Observations Committee, in boldface): Brian Ahern (BAh), Bruce H. Anderson, Andy Bankert, Mark Berry (MBe), John H. Boyd, Laura Catterton (LCa), Cameron Cox, Kevin Daily, Gary Davis (GDa), Robin Diaz, James J. Dinsmore, Lucy & Robert A. Duncan, Charlie Ewell, Roxanne Featherly, Ann & Dan Forster, David Freeland, David Gagne (DGa), Rafael Gaizew (RGa), Murray Gardall, Carol Goodrich, Al & Bev Hansen, Alex Harper (AHf), John Hintermister (JoH), John Hutchinson (JHu), Dan Irizarry, Adam Kent (AKr), Andy Kratter (AKr), Ken LaBorde, Patrick & D Leary, Mike Manetz, Tony Menart, Paul Miller, John Murphy, James Pfeiffer (JPf), Peggy Powell, Bill Pranty, Bruce Purdy, Gallus Quigley, Brian Rapoza (BRa), Bob Richter (BRo), Dottie Robbins (Dor), Harry Robinson, Ron & Lori Smith (LSoR), Russ Titus (RuT), Don Ware, Chuck Weber, Harley Winfrey, Andy Wraithem. [1]

Bruce H. Anderson, 2917 Scarlet Road
Winter Park, Florida 32792, (scizontail@aol.com)
Andy Bankert, 365 Spoonbill Lane
Melbourne Beach, Florida 32951, (abankert@ftl.edu)
WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were numerous compared to previous winters. Up to 47 were at La Salle, Essex 4-5 Dec (FDP et al.); elsewhere, 7 were at Carp, Ottawa 4-5 Dec (JR, m.ob.), 15 at Aylmer, Elgin 4-5 Dec (DAM et al.), one at Hamilton's Confederation Park 9-20 Dec (GEH et al.), then at Fifty Point C.A., Hamilton/Niagara 2-12 Jan (TK et al.), 2 at Kingsville, Essex 4-5 Dec (DJW et al.), then at Sturgeon Creek, Essex 10 Dec (AW), one at Port Weller, Niagara 13 Dec (BNG), and one at Long Point, Norfolk 17 Dec (JBr, SAM). An early spring migrant was just outside Point Pelee N.P. 27 Feb (RPC). A Ross's Goose from late Nov remained at Nepean, Ottawa until 1 Dec (m.ob.). Others along L. Erie included one at Erieau, Chatham-Kent 1 Dec (GTS, PAW), 2 at Erieau 5-21 Dec (KJB, JTB, m.ob.), and 2 at Port Stanley, Elgin 3 Dec (AGC). The only Brant of the period was a juv on the St. Clair R. at Sarnia, Lambton 4-5 Dec (LID, TD, m.ob.). The 3 Snow Geese at Burlington, Halton 18 Feb (CEE) were considered early a sudden mild spell around New Year's Day with an early spring migration in the extreme s. part of the Region: 5 were on the St. Clair R. at Sombra, Lambton 31 Dec (BAM), 12 at were at Point Pelee 1 Jan (AW), and 59 were counted in various flocks near the mouth of the Thames R., Chatham-Kent/Esses x 1 Jan (JTB et al.). Others probably not related to the event were 3 at Port Colborne, Niagara 2 Jan (BEF, JMF) and one at Mattawa, Nipissing 2-5 Jan (DT, BT).

A high count of 17,000 Greater Scaup was noteworthy at Point Pelee 8-20 Dec (AW et al.). King Eiders are reliably seen at scattered locations on L. Ontario each winter, and this year was no exception; at least 5 were first-winter males, and 2 were females. Ad. males were seen at Port Weller, Niagara 11 Dec-13 Jan (TK, m.ob.) and at Grimsby, Niagara 4 Dec (BRH, EH). A female was rare at Windsor, Essex 21-30 Jan (DS, m.ob.). Harlequin Ducks made a much better showing than last winter (Table 1). A Surf Scoter at Ingersoll, Oxford 24 Dec (JMH) furnished the first winter-season

This uncommon King Eider at Windsor, Essex County, Ontario was present 21-30 (here 30) January 2011. Photograph by Garry T. Sadler.

Abbreviations: G.T.A. (Greater Toronto Area), H.S.A. (Hamilton Study Area), K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists), Point Pelee (Point Pelee Birding Area, a standard C.B.C. circle centered just n. of Point Pelee N.P.), S.L. (Sewage Lagoon). Ontario is divided into northern and southern regions by 47° N latitude. Place names in italics refer to a county, district, or regional municipality.

Blake A. Mann

Winter came in like a lion and persisted throughout the entire period, with the exception of a brief mild spell at the New Year. Snow cover was nearly constant, as were below-freezing temperatures. All ponds, creeks, and rivers froze early, forcing many birds to depart. Although birders recorded good numbers of birds in early December, the woods became quieter by month's end, with the exception of feeding stations. As last winter, some puddle ducks (notably Northern Pintails) responded to the sudden mild spell in early January with an exceptionally early "spring" migration.

Although most northern irruptive species, including owls, were relatively scarce, Bohemian Waxwings were widespread and numerous. For the second straight year, a poor cone and seed crop, especially in Algonquin Provincial Park, resulted in a paucity of northern finches. Never before has Algonquin recorded two consecutive years with a poor seed crop. Common and Hoary Redpolls invaded the south in moderate numbers; among significant numbers of Hoaries were several of the nominate subspecies hornemanni. At least one backyard redpoll group in the north contained all four American redpoll taxa! Significant rarities of the season included two Spotted Towhees and two Mew Gulls.

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Red-throated Loon retrieved from a parking lot at Swastika, Timiskaming 13 Dec (LB) was very late for n. Ontario, the bird was then released into a nearby river, where it was last seen 16 Dec. The only Pacific Loon of the period was at Kingston 19 Dec (RKFE). A Pied-billed Grebe took advantage of open water and wintered at Lakefield, Peterborough (ACTB et al.). Notable Red-necked Grebes included a late migrant on the St. Clair R. at Sombra 24 Dec (BAM et al.) and 2 on the Thames R. at London, Middlesex 2-3 Feb (LM), likely forced out by ice farther north. A Great Egret at Embro, Oxford 4-5 Dec (SL, m.ob.) made the latest record for that area. Reports of Black-crowned Night-Heron included one at Port Colborne 29 Jan (BEF, JMF) and 6 that attempted to winter at Windermere Basin, Hamilton; last seen 6 Feb (m. ob.).

Unusual for Ontario in winter was a Black Vulture photographed at the Shuniah landfill, Thunder Bay late Dec+ (m. ob.), probably the same individual that was at nearby Sleeping Giant PP the previous fall and summer. Perhaps more unusual were 4 Black Vultures at Queenston, Niagara 5 (GB, GwB, AC, JD) & 27 Dec (KJR et al.). Turkish Vultures have been increasing as winter residents; 25 were noted at the landfill at Brantford, Brant (WGL, KAM). A very late Osprey was observed at London 11 (ACC) & 18 Dec (RB, AWH). A rufous-morph Western Red-tailed Hawk (subspecies calurus) was at Hamilton's Confederation Park 30 Nov-9 Jan (MV, m. ob.), while a dark-morph calurus was at Windemere Basin 2 Jan (JKB). A gray-morph Gyrfalcon flew over London 3 Jan (CL, BGL).

Fifty-five Sandhill Cranes passed through Erieau 21 Dec (J DV). The count of 700 American Coots established a new high for the G.T.A. at Cook's Bay 4 Dec (KRS), while 2 at Hillman Marsh 19 Feb (AW) were very early returning migrants. A Killdeer at Hamilton 24 Jan (GW, RWV) was a bit unusual for a harsh winter. Single Killdeer at Dorion, Thunder Bay 16 Feb (BMA) and Eagle Lake First Nation, Kenora 24 Feb (RK, DP) were exceptionally early for n. Ontario; both were foraging along plowed road edges. An American Avocet first found 29 Nov at Port Stanley remained until 1 Dec (m. ob.). A Spotted Sandpiper at Port Weller 11-13 Dec (TK, m. ob.) was pushing the envelope. A Lesser Yellowlegs at Wildwood L., Oxford 1-3 Dec (JMH et al.) furnished only the 2nd winter record for that county. The Ruddy Turnstone at Erieau from the fall lingered on the beach until 12 Dec (m. ob.), while the Least Sandpiper at Cobourg 27 Nov-6 Dec (RL, m. ob.) was record late for Northumberland. A Pectoral Sandpiper braved cold conditions at Blenheim S.L., Chatham-Kent-2 12 Dec (AW et al.). Purple Sandpipers included one at Erieau 5 Dec (BNC, RZD), one at Presquille P.P. 7-12 Dec (BMD), and one at Fifty Point C.A. 26 Dec (LM) that provided the latest record for the H.S.A. Two were at Niagara Falls, Niagara in late Dec (m. ob.), with one last seen 9 Jan (JEB, DS). A Dunlin at Hamilton Beach, Hamilton 16 Jan (DMB) was locally record late. A Wilson's Snipe at Peterborough 19 Dec was very late (JAD, ACTB). Three Wilson's Snipes once again wintered at a seep in Marathon, Thunder Bay (MTB), and an unfrozen stream near Blenheim held one until at
least 10 Feb (SRC, m.ob.), with 2 noted there 6-7 Jan (IW). A late American Woodcock was at Amherst I. 30 Dec (K.FN.), and a probable fall migrant was at Blenheim 2-8 Jan (JT8, IW). The very late Wilson’s Phalarope at Blenheim S.L. stayed through 5 Dec (m.ob.), when forced out by ice.

GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS
An ad. Mew Gull (subspecies not known) was at Niagara Falls 26-27 Dec (LAF et al.), and another ad. (subspecies brachyrhynchos) at Cobourg 13 Feb (RDM, m.ob.) furnished the 3rd record for Northumberland. The ad. California Gull that ranged from Queenston to Niagara Falls since 26 Nov (WCD, BP) was last reported 26 Dec. (m.ob.). A third-cycle Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull was on the Niagara R. 25-29 Dec (WCD, BP). Unusual for Ontario in winter, juv. Black-legged Kittiwake were recorded at five locations: Fifty Point C.A. 5 Dec (JKB), Sarnia 28 Dec–2 Jan (AHR, m.ob.), Burlington Beach, Halton 22 Jan (TK). Windsor 24 Jan–9 Feb (LAJ, m.ob.), and Cobourg 9-14 Feb (SP, m.ob.; Northumberland’s 2nd ever). A subad. Pomarine Jaeger was at Burlington Lakeshore, Halton 26 Dec (WFS et al.). A Barn Owl was briefly seen at Bronte, Halton 10 Jan (GWP). A Great Horned Owl of subspecies scalariventris (sometimes called “Snyder’s Great Horned Owl”) was on the Leslie Street Spit, Toronto 4-30 Dec (NCM, EWO, m.ob.). Snowy Owls were few and far between this season. Northern Hawk Owls made an incursion into s. Ontario, with singles at Deep River, Renfrew 14-18 Dec (MM), Burk’s Falls, Parry Sound 15 Dec–12 Feb (MP, KP, WW, m.ob.), Wiarton 20-24 Dec (fide JWJ), Woodville, Victoria 23 Dec (RJA), Dalrymple, Victoria 2 Jan (AL, ACTB, m.ob.), Algonquin P.P. 5 Jan (GW, RWW), Bardsville, Muskoka 9-16 Jan (TG, m.ob.), Kingston 20 Feb (JW et al.), Amherst I., Lennox and Addington 21 Jan–late Feb (JS et al.), near Ottawa late Jan–24 Feb (RA, CT), and Ottawa International Airport late Jan–24 Feb (CT). One was found dead near Dalrymple 14 Feb (JJH). At least 10 were on Manitoulin I. (fide CTB). Bearded Owls were scarce, with one at Wesleyville, Northumberland 23 Nov-17 Dec (PB) and 2 in Owl Woods, Amherst I. (m.ob.). The male Stepheirus humminigbird at Markham, York since early Nov was last seen 9 Dec (JG et al.). The only American Three-toed Woodpecker in s. Ontario was at Meldrum Bay, Manitoulin 19-20 Feb (IW).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS
An Eastern Phoebe attempted to winter at Point Pelee N.P. 20 Dec–17 Jan (MW, m.ob.). Rather late was a Blue-headed Vireo at Point Pelee N.P. 11 Dec (AW). A Gray Jay making rounds to feeders early in the period at Louise, Gray until 18 Dec was significant for s. Ontario (fide GM). A few Boreal Chickadees remaining from the fall incursion utilized feeders. One at Gravenhurst, Muskoka 5 Dec was joined by another 25 Dec (JH); another wintered at Presque’ile P.P. (m.ob.). In Algonguin EP, several resident Boreal Chickadees patronized suet feeders along the Spruce Bog Boardwalk, allowing close views for many observers. A tardy Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was discovered at Port Rowan, Norfolk 18 Dec (RWW). Three Townsend’s Solitaires were reported: at London 18 Dec (KK, CM, BY), at Wheatley P.P., Chatham-Kent 20 Dec (ICP), and at Point Peninsula, Frontenac 7-20 Jan (JBR et al.). A tardy Wood Thrush hung on at Lynde Shores C.A., Durham 19-29 Dec (CA, LA et al.). Varied Thrushes, all males, were reported at Moscow, Lennox and Addington 8 Dec–14 Feb (CMC, BM), Bamberg, Waterloo 17 Dec+ (EE, BE, m.ob.), Havelock, Peterborough 7 Jan (JBR, CA, CR, CR, 20 Dec–6 Jan (JT), and Bracebridge, Muskoka 24-28 Feb (fide TG). Several Gray Catbirds braved the harsh winter in s. Ontario, including an individual farther n. at Sault Ste. Marie 6 Jan (DMB). Northern records of wintering Brown Thrashers included one near Kakabeka Falls, Owen Sound 23 Jan (JHS), and at Coulee 25 Nov until found dead 8 Jan (HH), one at Ice L, Manitoulin late Nov+ (DS et al.), and one at Dryden, Kenora 28 Dec+ (GMC, JMC). A European Starling at Algonguin P.P. 15 Dec (ML, LAP) provided the latest fall record there.

Notable American Pipits were 7 near Fisherville, Halldimand 9 Jan (JMP) and 4 at Erie Beach, Chatham-Kent 10 Jan (JT8). Bohemian Waxwing flocks were numerous and widespread, with several flocks numbering over 500. In the Kingston area, 1524 were reported in the month of Dec alone (fide RDW), and up to 1300 were seen in the Cadden area 7 Jan (DJM). A Snow Bunting visiting a feeder at Moosonee, Cochrane 2-3 Jan (CJN) was unusual for that far north in winter. Single Pine Warblers were recorded at Hogsback, Oxford 18 Dec (JHS), Nepean, Ottawa 27 Nov-16 Jan (DR, KR, m.ob.), Orillia, Sinai 30 Nov–24 Feb (SD), Wainfleet, Niagara 30 Jan (BEF, JP), and Port Rowan 16-28 Feb (SAM et al.).
Yellow Warbler was a surprise at Ercau 5 Dec (KJB, JTB). A bright male Cape May Warbler stood out at Wesleyville 6 Dec (PH EB, FB). An Orange-crowned Warbler was at Hamilton’s Confederation Park 16 Dec (TK), and another was not far away on the Hamilton waterfront 26 Dec–9 Jan (CF, SAM, m.ob.).

The only Yellow-throated Warbler was at Brantford 29 Jan–7 Feb (DRG et al.) provided the H.S.A. with a first winter record. A male Red-winged Blackbird wintered at Elk Lake 14–19 Feb (Jde GT). Seven Eastern Meadowlarks wintering at Charing Cross, Chatham-Kent were noteworthy (IW, m.ob.), as was a Rusty Blackbird that wintered at Waldo, Kenora (AR, m.ob.). Brewer’s Blackbirds in the s. were all seen New Year’s Day, with singles at Jeannette’s Creek, Chatham-Kent (KJB, JTB), St. Clair National Wildlife Area (PAR, SR), and Port Royal, Norfolk (MVAB). A late Common Grackle at Moosonee 12 Dec (EBM) was a winter novelty at that northernly location. The only Baltimore Oriole reported was a male at Barhavven, Ottawa 6 Dec (DC).

Both crossbill species were only reported in low numbers throughout the period. Common Redpolls made a moderate invasion into s. Ontario, but it was an exceptional year for Hoary Redpolls, widely reported among the redpoll flocks (m.ob.). Individuals of the hornemanni subspecies (Greenland Hoary Redpoll, or Hornemann’s Redpoll) made numerous appearances. A single was at Elgin, Leeds and Grenville 9–22 Feb (MAC, PE), and at least 5 were near Matheson, Cochrane 18 Feb (BRH). Ten Common Redpolls of the rostrata subspecies (Greater Common Redpoll) were seen amongst the latter flock as well. Along Deer Lake Rd., Cochrane, a pure flock of 5 rostrata was seen 19 Feb (BRH). The “redpoll superlactes” was achieved when all four taxa of redpolls appeared in a flock at a feeder at Marathon 8 Jan (MTB et al.). At least 2 Common Redpolls of subspecies rostrata and one Hoary of the nominate subspecies were among this group, which stayed well into Apr.

Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley

According to our contributors, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia all experienced an "old-fashioned winter." Across the Great Lakes, cold temperatures and heavy snowfalls were the rule for much of the season, and even areas in the Ohio Valley (such as western West Virginia and Cincinnati, Ohio) recorded above-average snowfall amounts. Cleveland, which typically gets 159 cm of snowfall annually, received 177 cm this season, including 23 cm on 25 February. This winter was the coldest on record for Columbus and Dayton, but average temperatures were slightly warmer in Cincinnati than in the 2009-2010 winter. Cincinnati received 27 cm of snow above its average. Because of the persistent cold, snow cover and depths in Ohio were much greater than usual. Dayton, for instance, had 58 days with at least a little cover, and Warren saw record snowfall of 136 cm and a seasonal record of 263 cm.

In the areas of West Virginia adjacent Ohio, the winter was very similar to Ohio's, but the highlands of West Virginia had much harsher winter conditions than did the Ohio Valley, as is typically the case. Beckley, where the December-February temperature was 31°F on average, had below-normal temperatures. Much of Pennsylvania, especially the eastern half, suffered less snow than during the previous winter; however, beginning in December, prolonged cold dominated and continued almost without break through mid-February. At State College, December and January temperatures averaged 5° and 2°F below normal, respectively, while February was 2° above normal. Although there was less snow over most of the state than last winter, there were nevertheless a few substantial storms, of both snow and ice. Much of what fell remained on the ground, and most of the state was covered by some combination of snow and ice for most of the season. In northwestern Pennsylvania, the first major snowfall dumped up to 140 cm in the first week of December. With subfreezing temperatures, Presque Isle Bay froze over by mid-December. According to Jerry McWilliams, most waterfowl movements on eastern Lake Erie had ended by the third week of December, but with about half of Presque Isle Bay open again in the first few days of January, about 40,000 gulls moved in for a few days, through 6 January. Where open water was available, waterfowl persisted at some sites well into February.

Across the Region, gulls were recorded in above-average numbers, with especially interesting records from the Lorain and Cleveland, Ohio lakefront, where northerly winds and ice concentrated gulls, among them several rarities. Winter finches, especially Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Purple Finches, appeared in above-average numbers, indicating modest flights of these species. Notable reports came from many Christmas Bird Counts across the Region, as usual. Other highlights included Barrow's Goldeneye, Mew Gull, Dickcissel, Bohemian Waxwing, Harris's Sparrow, and Hoary Redpoll in Ohio; Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Harlequin Ducks, Gyrfalcon, Prairie Falcon, Anna's Hummingbird, Bullock's Oriole, and Hoary Redpolls in Pennsylvania; and Northern Goshawk in West Virginia.
In Pennsylvania, Allegheny County’s fourth record of Ross’s Goose was provided by these two at Bald Knob 28 February 2011. Probably the same two birds were seen the next day at a golf course 28 kilometers away, where they remained for at least another week. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

We would like to thank Victor Fazio for his assistance in assembling and editing this report. This column is dedicated to the memory of Richard Wiltrout, Sr., who passed away as this report was finalized.

Abbreviations: Armour Creek (Armour Creek backwater near Nitro, Putnam, WV); Byrd Dam (Robert C. Byrd Lock & Dam, Mason, WV); Caesar Creek (Caesar Creek S.P., Warren/Greene, OH); Green Bottom (Green Bottom W.M.A., Cabell, WV); Hoover Res. (Hoover Res./Dam, Franklin, OH); Killbuck Marsh (Killbuck Marsh W.A., Wayne/Holmes, OH); Killdeer Plains (Killdeer Plains W.M.A., Wyandot/Marion, OH); N.W.P.C. (Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant, Philadelphia, PA); P.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA); O.S.U. (Ohio State University, Franklin, OH); Spring Valley (Spring Valley W.A., Montgomery, OH); Wagoner’s Gap (Wagoner’s Gap hawkwatch, Cumberland, PA); Willow L. (Willow Island Lock & Dam, Pleasants, WV).

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at Bluffton, Allen OH 2 Dec (L. Houshower, P. Balson) remained throughout the month. In Ohio, records of Greater White-fronted Goose (Table 1) spanned from Cincinnati northeastward to Wellington, where the high count was 60 at Killdeer Plains 4-9 Dec (K. Ball et al.). Ten Greater White-fronted Geese were seen at the Byrd Dam 22 Feb (WA, MG, and up to 19 were seen in six Pennsylvania counties 17 Dec–26 Feb (m.o.b.), including 10 at L. Ontelaune, Berks, PA 17 Dec–15 Jan (S. Fordyce et al.). In West Virginia, 4 Ross’s Geese were at Lakin, Mason 23 Feb (DC) and one at Ghent, Raleigh 25 Feb (N. Snyder). Nine Ross’s Geese were in six counties in Pennsylvania 4 Dec–28 Feb (m.o.b.). Ten Cackling Geese were in Delaware, OH 5 Dec (SW). Twelve Trumpeter Swans were noted at the Wilds, Muskingum OH 3 Feb (DJE); 162 Tundra Swans at Mayfield, Cuyahoga, OH 5 Dec made a high count (K. Krynak). In Pennsylvania, 160 Tundra Swans were in Lancaster 3 Jan (K. Lutz) and 400 in Allegheny 5 Dec (fide PH). Spring migrants, 2500 Tundra Swans were counted at Long Level, York, PA 25 Feb (L. Carpenter). A late Wood Duck was at Wooster, Wayne, OH 24 Dec–9 Jan (SS); another was along the Ohio R. in Allegheny, PA 13 Jan (M. Vass); and 3 were in Chester, PA 11 Jan (L. Lewis). A Eurasian Wigeon at Green Lane Res., Montgomery, PA 20–27 Feb (m.o.b.) made the first record for that location. Some 760 American Black Ducks at L. Ontelaune, Berks, PA 25 Dec was an encouraging estimate (RK), and the same was true of 980 Redheads at P.S.P. 14 Dec (JM).

Two Harlequin Ducks seen at Byrd Dam 9 Jan (WA) represented the 2nd record of the species in West Virginia in the past 30 years (CR). Single male Harlequin Ducks in Pennsylvania were on the Juniata R., Huntingdon 19 Dec–1 Feb (D. & T. Kyler, G. Zelinski, ph.) and on the Delaware R. near Riverton 28 Dec–20 Feb, a first for Northampton (S. Kloiber, K. Sieminski, ph. RW). In the same state, Single Surf Scoters were at L. Nockamixon, Bucks, PA 8 Dec (D. Farbotnik), on the Ohio R. at Dashfields, Allegheny 10 Dec (M. Vass), and at P.S.P. 29 Dec (J. Flynn); other singles were at Avon L., Lorain, OH 20 Dec (S. Matterly), New Martinsville, Wetzel, WV 7 Dec (WJ), and Byrd Dam 1 Jan (WA, MGR, GR). Five Black Scoters were on the Allegheny R. at Natrona, Allegheny, PA 8 Jan (A. Henrici, P. McShea); 2 were at Kahl L., Venango, PA 1 Dec (G. Edwards); 4 were at Springfield L., Akron, Summit, OH 5 Dec (G. Bennett); 6 were at Caesar Creek 6 Jan (JC); and one was at New Martinsville, Wetzel, WV 7 Dec (WJ). Single White-winged Scoters were at L. Ontelaune, Berks, PA 2 Dec (M. Spence), on the Ohio R. at Rochester, Beaver, PA 23–28 Feb (M. Vass et al.), on the Allegheny R. at Blawnox, Allegheny, PA 27 Feb (D. Yagusie), at Caesar Creek 14 Dec (RA, JC), and on the Great Miami R. in Dayton, Montgomery, OH 20 Feb (LD); reports of multiple birds included 2 at Killbuck Marsh 4 Dec (L. Richardson, BG) and 6 at Meldahl Dam, Hamilton 20 Feb (JS). In West Virginia, White-winged Scoter is seldom recorded, but there were reports of singles at Winfield Lock and Dam, Putnam 29 Jan–5 Feb (TD), Byrd Dam 5 Feb (RT), and on the Monongahela R.

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**Table 1. Records of wintering Greater White-fronted Goose in Ohio, December 2010 through February 2011.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Observer(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 Jan</td>
<td>Lost Bridge, Hamilton</td>
<td>J. Koppa, P. Krusling, MG, G. Wulker, B. Wulker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 Jan</td>
<td>Fernald Nature Preserve, Hamilton</td>
<td>B. Wulker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27 Feb</td>
<td>Amledover Park, Hamilton</td>
<td>WH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16 Feb</td>
<td>Hamilton Camp Denison, Hamilton</td>
<td>R. Foppie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>27 Feb</td>
<td>Englewood, Montgomery</td>
<td>R. Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26 Feb</td>
<td>Gowman Lake, Clinton</td>
<td>RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 Jan</td>
<td>Melvin Quarry, Clinton</td>
<td>C. Moore, PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18 Feb</td>
<td>Pickerington Ponds, Fairfield</td>
<td>A. Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 Jan</td>
<td>Prairie Oaks Metro Park and Darby Bend Lakes, Franklin</td>
<td>LD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 Jan</td>
<td>Hoover Res., Delaware</td>
<td>PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 Jan</td>
<td>North Hoover Res., Delaware</td>
<td>T. Stremmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16–14 Feb</td>
<td>Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26 Feb</td>
<td>Delaware W.A., Delaware</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>10-13 Jan</td>
<td>Prairie Lake Wetlands, Wayne</td>
<td>CC, K. Ostermiller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 Jan (DC) this season. Thirty-one Long-tailed Ducks were at Caesar Creek 9-10 Dec (RA, JC). Long-tailed Ducks in West Virginia were in Wetzel 5 Jan (one; WJ, DC), on the Kanawha R., Charleston, Kanawha 24 Jan (3; B. Wright), and at Harris Riverfront Park in Huntington, Cabell 7-12 Feb (one; J. Hubbard, S. Aaron, B. Borda, MG, DP, GR, A. Talmage, RT). On 14 Dec, about 180 Long-tailed Ducks were noted at P.L.S.P. (JM). A Barrow’s Goldeneye was present at Avon L., Lorain, OH 23 Feb (JB). Only 2 Ruddy Ducks were found on the Genolden, PA C.B.C. 18 Dec—compared to 20,000 in 1980 (fide DE).

On the annual waterbird count at P.L.S.P., 681 Common Loons were tallied 3 Dec (JM). Several Red-throated Loons were at Avon L., Lorain, OH 7-9 Feb (MS, CC). Seven Red-necked Grebes were reported in five Pennsylvania counties 19 Dec–28 Feb (m.ob.). Fifty-four Double-crested Cormorants were at the Fish Hatchery/Byrd Dam 18 Feb (Ti), and 32 Great Cormorants were noted on the mid-winter census in Philadelphia, PA 8 Jan (fide F Windfield). An American White Pelican found at Cee L., Berea, Cuyahoga, OH 17 Jan (S. Hosko) made an outstanding winter record. In West Virginia, nice counts of Great Blue Herons included 14 on the Pipers Creek C.B.C. 18 Dec (Ph), 14 on the Kanawha C.B.C. 18 Dec (DB), and 19 at Byrd Dam 8 Jan (WA, MG, DP). Late Great Egrets in Pennsylvania included one at Wingfield Pines, Allegheny 8 Dec (J. McDonald), and one at John Heinz N.W.R., Delaware 12 Dec (M. Johnson). A late Green Heron was at Wood’s Edge Pond, Lancaster, PA 3-7 Dec (D. Heathcote, JB). There were relatively few reports on the Black-crowned Night-Heron roosts in Ohio at O.S.U., Cleveland, and Lucas. One was at Green Spring Fish Hatchery, Cumberland, PA 2 Jan (AM).

VULTURES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Except for in s. and sw. Ohio, Black Vultures are relatively uncommon in Ohio during the winter months. There were numerous eBird records for the Region, with a high count in Ohio of 63 on the e-cen. portion of the East Fork C.B.C., Brown 2 Jan (B. Stanley). Black Vultures were noted in 22 Ohio counties, with the northernmost record in Richland. The relatively large vulture roosts at Athens, Mercer and Bluestone R., Summers, WV numbered about 35 Black Vultures and about 130 Turkey Vultures, respectively, on 22 Dec (RC). Also, 35 Black Vultures were seen consuming a deer carcass near Elkins, Randolph, WV 25 Dec (SK). A tally of 46 Black Vultures on the Athens/Prince-ton, WV C.B.C. 23 Dec (RC) was impressive. The high count from eBird in West Virginia was 45 in Pocahontas 6 Dec (C. Bailey). On the Glenolden, PA C.B.C., 191 Black Vultures and 322 Turkey Vultures counted on 18 Dec were new local highs (DE). Bald Eagles were reported in strong numbers throughout the Region. Noteworthy in Ohio were 13 on the Lake-wood, Cuyahoga, OH C.B.C. 26 Dec (N. Howell). Nine on the Morgantown, WV C.B.C. 18 Dec. (L. Graffious) was a new high for that count, and 15 were at Moorefield, Hardy, WV 20 Dec (M. Johnson). Thirty-seven Bald Eagles counted at Raystown L., Hunting- don, PA 26 Feb was impressive (GG). The tally for Bald Eagles (through 31 Dec) at Waggoner’s Gap was an amazing 511 (fide DG). Fifteen Northern Harriers were at Killdeer Plains, OH 17-18 Feb (DJE). There were three Jan records of Northern Goshawks from the High Alleghenies of West Virginia:

• at Elkins, Randolph 22 Dec (R. Bartig, SK) through at least 7 Jan (RB); at Valley Head, Randolph 27 Jan (RB); and in Jefferson 30 Dec (MO). Rough-legged Hawks were in unusually high numbers and widely distributed throughout the Region. Up to 13 were located in Centre, PA 28-29 Jan (D. Weber). There were four or five records of Gold- en Eagles each from Ohio and West Virginia. In West Virginia, at least 4 were in Hardy 4 (D. Carr) & 24 Dec (JL, MO), 2 at Spencer, Roane 24 Feb (T. Fox), and singles at Rich Mountain near Harman, Randolph 24 Jan (M. Crockett) and Cabins, Grant 21 Feb (FA). Pennsylvania singles were near Martins Creek, Northampton 7 Jan (MS) and at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Pike 15 Jan (ph. RW); the final tally (through 31 Dec) at Waggoner’s Gap was 265 (fide DG). Lingering Ospreys in Chester, PA included one at White Clay Creek 3-4 Dec (S. McLaughlin) and one at Brandywine Creek, West Bradford 11 Dec (HM). A gray-morph Gyrfalcon at Waggoner’s Gap 6 Dec (DG, m.ob.) made the 3rd record for that hawkwatch. The Prairie Falcon returned for its 5th consecutive winter at Mud Level Rd., Cumberland, PA (m.ob.). Four Merlins were seen sitting together atop spruce trees at the golf course surrounding Coatesville Res., Chester, PA 16 Dec (L. Lewis, K. Pileggi). Although American Kestrels are still regularly found occupying nest boxes during the sum-
mer in e. Pennsylvania (RW), winter populations have dwindled dramatically. Only 2 were found on the Glenolden, PA C.B.C. 18 Dec, as compared to 66 in 1977 (fide DE).

Forty-six Sandhill Cranes flying over Pittsburgh, Allegheny, PA 8 Dec (K. St. John, T. Bledsoe) was extraordinary. Rather rare in winter, single Virginia Rails were reported from Portage, OH 1 Feb (B. Warner), near Holmersville, Holmes, OH 4 Dec (BG), Altona Marsh, Jefferson, WV 1-15 Jan (DC, MO), and Raleigh, WV 24 Dec (RC). A Lesser Yellowlegs lingered at Churchville Res., Bucks, PA through 10 Dec (B. Keim). A Least Sandpiper was found for the 6th consecutive winter at Big Spring, Cumberland, PA 7-31 Jan (V. Gauthier et al.). In Ohio, Purple Sandpiper records came from Lorain Harbor, Lorain 2 Dec (JP), South Bass Is., Sandusky 7 Dec (L. Brohli), and Caesar Creek 12 Dec (J. Lehman); 2 were at P.L.S.P. 2 Dec (JM). Seasonally rare Wilson’s Snipe were in Ohio at Cincinnati, Hamilton 16 (MG) & 29 Jan (J H) in Holmes 1 Jan (SS), and in Wayne 5 Jan (SS). In Ohio, American Woodcocks were heard calling as early as 13 Feb at Columbus, Franklin (ALS) and 15 Feb in Cincinnati, Hamilton (MG). In West Virginia, first-of-season records came from the Ohio Valley 17-18 Feb (MGr, TI). A lingering woodcock was on the Glenolden, PA C.B.C. 18 Dec (KF), and one was in Dauphin, PA 3 Jan (fide GG). Several were back on territory in at least six Pennsylvania counties in mid-to late Feb (m.ob.).

A Black-legged Kittiwake was at the Eastlake Power Plant, Lake, OH 21 Dec (J. Talkington). In West Virginia, 75 Bonaparte’s Gulls at the Monongahela River Dam, Monongahela 13 Dec (DC) was an impressive number for this species there. A well-documented Black-headed Gull was at Lorain Harbor, Lorain, OH 3 Dec (JP). In Ohio, northerly winds and lake ice forced many gulls closer to the L. Erie lakefront throughout the winter. Single Little Gulls were seen at Fairport Harbor, Lake, OH 5 Dec (JB) and Lorain Harbor, Lorain, OH 6 Dec (JP), and a Franklin’s Gull was at Lorain Harbor, Lorain, OH 2-5 Dec (JP, L. Rosche, JB). Single Little Gulls in Pennsylvania were at Boiling Springs, Cumberland 29 Jan (RKO) and at P.L.S.P. 6 Dec (JM). Lingerer Laughing Gulls numbered 24 at John Heinz N.W.R. 12 Dec (M. Johnson), and one was in Dauphin, PA 18 Dec (M. Wilson et al.). A Mew Gull was seen from the East 72nd Street Cleveland lakefront 23 Dec (P. Chaoon). An ad. Thayer’s Gull at P.L.S.P. 18 Dec (JM) made a first for the annual waterbird count there. Sixteen Iceland Gulls were tallied on the Southern Bucks C.B.C., Bucks, PA 18 Dec (fide AM), and 9 Glaucous Gulls were recorded at P.L.S.P. 7 Dec+ (JM). A new high for the count, 357 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were tallied on the Southern Bucks C.B.C., Bucks, PA 18 Dec (fide AM). Reports of Pomarine Jaeger in Ohio included an accepted record from Cayahoga 2 Jan (JB); a few Parasitic Jaegers were also reported from the Ohio lakefront.

A Eurasian Collared-Dove was at Celma, Mercer, OH 5 Dec (J. Bower). A Barn Owl was seen at Seaman, Adams, OH 18 Dec (RC). Barn Owls were found in six Pennsylvania counties 18 Dec-16 Feb, including an excellent 4 on the Lewisburg C.B.C. (fide GG). An amazing 237 Eastern Screech-Owls were tallied on the Upper Bucks C.B.C., Bucks, PA (L. & K. Moulton, D. Farbotnik, HM). Sadly, the cold and heavy snows resulted in 10 or more screech-owls brought into rehabilitation facilities during the season (fide GG) Up to 6 Long-eared Owls were seen at Killdeer Plains 22-29 Jan (CC, DG, HK, 1 Krise, JM).

The Anna’s Hummingbird reported during the fall at Shartlesville, Berks, PA survived sub-zero temperatures and was present throughout the season (m.ob.). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird banded at Devon, Chester, PA in Nov remained until 4 Dec (J. Flood, NP). Single Rufous Hummingbirds included one from the fall at Gettysburg, Adams, PA 18 Dec (fide S. Lockerman), one in Yardley, Bucks, PA banded on 16 Dec and present through 22 Jan (B. & R. Sullivan, S. Weidensaul), and one at Bryn Mawr, Montgomery, PA 3-8 Dec (NP, JB).

**PASSERINES**

The *Empidonax* flycatcher (thought to be a Least) reported in the fall at Tuscarora S.P., Schuylkill, PA was last seen 2 Dec (J. DeBalco) A hardy Eastern Phoebe was still at Tyler Arboretum, Delaware, PA 19 Jan (T. Reeves et al.). In Ohio, the flight of Northern Shrikes across the L. Erie lakefront was larger than last winter. Northern Shrikes were located in at least 14 Ohio counties, including Cuyahoga, Delaware, Geauga, Highland, Lorain, Mahoning, Marion, Muskingum, Ottawa, and Summit, Trumbull, Warren, Wayne, and Wyandot. At least 24 Northern Shrikes were found in Pennsylvania through the period and were well distributed throughout the state (fide GG). The only Ohio report of Common Raven came from Knox 14 Feb (J. Herman, LK), but 20 were on the Canaan, Tischer, WV C.B.C. 9 Jan (K. Sturm), and 16 were counted in Hardy 8 Jan (DC, JMA). Once again, up to 55 Northern Rough-winged Swallows attempted to winter at N.W.R.C. (m.ob.). Tree Swallows were observed as early as 18 Feb at Green Bottom (WA, MG, DP) and 25 Feb at Cowan L., Clinton, OH (LG, BP). Lingerer Tree Swallows included one at Black Rock Sanctuary, Chester, PA 4 Jan (L. Miller) and P.L.S.P. 9-24 Jan (S. Thompson et al.). After the massive irruption...
of Black-capped Chickadees during the fall, many were reported throughout the winter, and in counties like Delaware, PA, they caused some identification problems for those trying to sort them out from Black-capped × Carolina hybrids (DE). There were few reports of Black-capped Chickadees from Ohio, but 16 were noted in Hardly, WV 8 Jan (DC, JMa). A House Wren was on the Southern Bucks C.B.C., Bucks, PA 18 Dec (G. Johnson). Very few Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered, and the species was missed for only the 3rd time in 54 years on the Glenolden C.B.C. (fide DE). A late Wood Thrush was reported from Cabell, WV 1 Dec (BB). Six Brown Thrashers in Ohio this winter was above average; singles were in West Virginia at Pipestem 3 Dec (JPh) & 18 Dec (JPh), on the Raleigh County C.B.C. 19 Dec (AW), and on the McDowell County C.B.C. 31 Dec (AW). About 100 American Pipsis were near Meyerstown, Jefferson, WV 16 Jan (Jb); singles in Pennsylvania were seen through Feb in Bucks (fide AM) and Chester (fide HM), with one at a wastewater treatment plant in Erie 19 Jan–10 Feb (J. DePaul). A Bohemian Waxwing at Kelleys L., Erie, OH 19 Dec (T. Barletti) was the only one reported; the species is not annual in the Region.

Lapland Longspurs were reported throughout most of Ohio, and there were numerous ebird reports, with the high count of 100 at Ellis L., Butler, OH 2 Feb (C. Saunders). In West Virginia, 3 were at Byrd Dam 17 Jan (CE) and in Jefferson 18 & 22 Jan (DC, MO). The Snow Bunting flight was also relatively heavy: An excellent count of 430 came from Lawrence, PA Jan–Feb (fide PH), and 400 were found on the Hamburg, PA C.B.C., a new high for that count (fide RK). Warbler diversity was surprisingly high during the rough winter. Single Orange-crowned Warblers were in Erie, PA 8 Dec (MW) and at N.W.P.C. 4-5 Jan (TJ, MS). Yellow-throated Warblers were at Blue Marsh L., Berks, PA Nov–10 Feb (J. Silagy, ph. RW) and West Fairview Boat Launch, Cumberland, PA 20 Feb (Rko). Also in Pennsylvania, single Palm Warblers were at Bllawnox, Allegheny 26 Dec (D. Yagustie), on the Lancaster C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide GG), on the York C.B.C. 18 Dec (R. Phillips), and on the Southern Bucks C.B.C., Bucks, PA 18 Dec (fide AM), with 3 at the N.W.P.C. 4-8 Jan (Tj). Three Pine Warblers were on the Glenolden C.B.C. 18 Dec (C. Smith, B. Kelly, J. Malyneaux); one was at New Hope, Bucks, PA 22 Dec–3 Jan (B. Hoehne); one was at Ronks, Juniata 21-22 Dec (Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Lapp); and one was at Blue Marsh L., Berks, PA through the period (J. Silagy). A Blackthroated Blue Warbler was seen at Wissler’s Run, Lancaster, PA 5-7 Dec (JB). Two Common Yellowthroats were on the Curtin C.B.C., PA (RK, A. Troyer et al.) and one on Northampton, PA 2 Jan (RW). Lingerling Ovenbirds in included one in Erie, PA 4 Dec (C. Gehring) and one in Philadelphia 13 Dec (P. Myers). A Yellow-breasted Chat was seen on the Liritz, PA C.B.C. 26 Dec (D. & S. Wheeler). The Summer Tanager reported in the fall near Woodcock L., Crawford, PA was present until 4 Dec (C. Nicolls).

Eastern Towhees usually vacate West Virginia in winter, so a tally of 86 on four s. West Virginia Christmas counts is noteworthy (RC, AW, JP); 42 on the Kanawha, WV C.B.C. 18 Dec (DB) was especially impressive. Single Lark Sparrows were in Berkeley, WV 15-21 Jan (DC, MO, CDC) and 24 Feb (S. Corwin-Roach). Fifteen Savannah Sparrows were tallied at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason, WV 18 Dec (DP). There were numerous records of single Fox Sparrows attending bird feeders, mainly from n. Ohio. Twenty-six were on the Pipestem, WV C.B.C. 18 Dec (JPh), setting a new record (JPh). Five Lincoln’s Sparrows were reported during the season in Pennsylvania: at Devon, Chester 15 Dec–15 Feb (A. Guarente), at Muddy Run, Lancaster 18 Dec (T. Amico), at Second Mt., Lebanon 20 Dec (R. Brenner), on the Allentown C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide M. Boyd), and at the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, Montgomery 20 Jan–10 Feb (P. Driver). A well-documented Harris’s Sparrow spent much of Dec and early Jan in Apple Creek, Wayne, OH 24 Dec–5 Jan (SS). A male Oregon Junco was observed at Ft. Indiantown Gap, Lebanon, PA 11 Jan (D. McNaughton). A late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported at Evans City, Butler, PA 12-18 Dec (M. Little, R. Nugent). A Dickcissel was observed in the Cuyahoga Valley N.P., Cuyahoga, OH 6 Dec (photograph seen by SW).

A Brewer’s Blackbird was on the Southern Lancaster C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide GG), and 7 were on the York C.B.C. 18 Dec (T. Swam et al.). The only Brewer’s Blackbird report in Ohio came from Oak Harbor, Ottawa 17 Jan (V. & L. Harder). Rusty Blackbirds were widely reported, especially at bird feeders and in corn fields throughout Ohio and West Virginia in Dec and again during the Rusty Blackbird Blitz in Feb. Apparently, the flight of Rusty Blackbirds was relatively early and peaked in Dec, which is considered unusual (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology). A nice count of 200 came from Cabin Creek, Muson, WV 8 Dec (MG). In Pennsylvania, 70 Rusties were at Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana 1 Dec (Jb). The highest count of Red-winged Blackbirds was nearly 10,000 birds at Apple Creek, Wayne, OH 16-17 Jan along with a Yellow-headed Blackbird (SS, Lk). Other Yel-

Observers (subregional compilers in boldface): OHIO: Rick Asamoto (RA), Jen Brumfield (JB), Jason Cade (JC), Craig Caldwell (CC), Ron Canterbury (RC), LARRY GARA (LG), Dan Gesualdo (DG), Mark Gilsdorf (MG), Bruce Glick (BG), William Hull (WH), Paul Hurtado (PH), Laura Keene (LK), AL LA SALA (ALS), John Moore (JM), Doug Overacker (DO), John Pogacnik (JP), Bob Powell (BP), Mark Rozmarynowycz (MR), Mike Smith (MS), Jay Stenger (JS), Su Synder (SS), PENNSYLVANIA: Justin Bosler (JB), Kevin Crilley (KC), David Eberly (DE), Kevin Fryberger (KF), Dave Grove (DG), Greg Grove (GG), Paul Hess (PH), Tom Johnson, Rudy Keller (RK), Ramsay Koury (RKo), Andy Markel (AM), HOLLY Merker (HM), August Mirabella (AM), Nick Pulcinella (NP), Jerry McWilliams (JM), Matt Sabatine (MS), Mike Weible (MW), Rick Wiltraut (RW). WEST VIRGINIA: Wendell Argabrite (WA), Frederick Atwood (FA), Randy Bodkins (RB), Ben Borda (BB), Joette Borzik (JB), Terry Bronson (TB), DOREN BURRELL (DB), Kevin Cade (KC), Ron Canterbury (RC), Derek Courtney (DC), Todd Deal (TD), Carol Del-Colle (CDC), Cindy Ellis (CE), Dick & Jeanette Eiker (DJE), Gary Felton (GF), Stephen Kimbrell (SK), Tom Igou (TI), Jon Little (IL), Mike Griffith (MG), Judy Masi (JMA), Matt Orsik (MO), David Patrick (DP), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Jim Phillips (PH), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Tucker (CR), Rennie Talbert (RT), Allen Waldron (AW).

Rick Wiltraut
Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center
835 Jacobsburg Road, Wind Gap, Pennsylvania 18091
rwiltraut@state.pa.us
Ronald A. Canterbury
University of Cincinnati
Department of Biological Sciences
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, ron.canterbury@uc.edu

Illinois & Indiana

James D. Hengeveld
Keith A. McMullen
Geoffrey A. Williamson

The Region experienced an old-fashioned winter, with low temperatures, lots of snow, and very little open water. As was true last winter, Lake Michigan was choked with pack ice, and perhaps as a result, gull diversity and numbers were both elevated. Despite the severity of the winter, semi-hardy species were found in good numbers. Notable species included Crested Caracara (of unknown provenance), Mew Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Anna’s Hummingbird, Vermilion Flycatcher, Swainson’s Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, and Scarlet Tanager.

Abbreviations: Carlyle (Carlyle L, s. IL); Chautauqua (Chautauqua N.W.R., IL); E. Fork L. (East Fork L, Richland, IL); Eagle Cr. (Eagle Creek Park, Indianapolis); EP. (Forest Preserve); FWA. (Fish and Wildlife Area); Gibson (L. Gibson, Gibson, IN); Goose Pond (Goose Pond FWA., Greene, IN); Horseshoe (Horseshoe L, Madison, IL); Mich. City (Michigan City Harbor, Laporte, IN); Monroe (L. Monroe, Monroe, IN); Port of Indiana (in Porter, IN); Rend L. (Rend L, Franklin & Jefferson, IL).

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Goose numbers were above average throughout the Region. Tallies of Greater White-fronted Goose continue to climb: 5000 were at Carlyle 30 Jan (DMK) and 5000 at E. Fork L 13 Feb (CLH). An Indiana Department of Natural Resources (D.N.R.) waterfowl count at Gibson 4 Feb (LL) yielded 6927 Greater White-fronteds, a record count for the state by a factor of three, and 216,200 Snow Goose, the 2nd highest state total ever. The 100,000 Snow Goose at Carlyle 13 Feb (KAM) was also impressive. A nice count of 50 Ross’s Geese at Baldwin L., St. Clair, IL 9 Jan (TJD) illustrated their continued increase across the Region. The high Trumpeter Swan tallies were of 48 in Sullivan, IN 13 Feb (MRB) and 27 at Santa Fe Bottoms, Clinton, IL 21 Feb (DMK). Tundra Swan counts included 47 at Muscatatuck N.W.R., Jackson, IN 3 Dec (DMK), 32 at Hempen–Hopper Lake Restoration Area, Putnam, IL 2 Dec (TFA), and 20 at Chautauqua 18 Feb (RGB, SNB). Because of the severity of the winter, dabbling duck numbers, other than those of Mallards, were somewhat reduced. The Indiana (D.N.R.) waterfowl count 4 Feb (LL) produced Indiana’s 2nd highest total, 98,467; at Chautauqua, 11,505 were tallied 23 Dec (RGB, SNB). An early Blue-winged Teal arrived at Goose Pond 15 Feb (BF), and one was seen in Winthrop Harbor, Lake, IL 19 Feb (APS, APS, DFS, JWL). Likely one of the largest inland concentrations in recent history for the Region, 10,000 Canvassbacks massed at Carlyle 27 Feb (DMK). The 400 Redheads tallied in Lake and Porter 22 Jan (KJC, SBR, TD, DF) constituted the largest winter total ever for the L. Michigan lakefront in Indiana. An impressive 1200 Ring-necked Ducks accumulated at Stillwater Refuge, Monore, IN 23 Feb (DRW), while Lesser Scaup numbers peaked at Carlyle 27 Feb, when 6000 were recorded (DMK). In Indiana, a first-cycle male Harlequin Duck was at Mich. City 12 Dec (JCK), an ad. male was found off Whihala Beach, Lake 27 Dec (JG, DG, SF, WW), and a female was at Port of Indiana 28 Dec (JCK). In Chicago, a Harlequin was seen 11 Feb (DFS), and 2 were there 25 Feb (JRRS). The only Surf Scoters seen away from L. Michigan included 2 on Big Chapman L., Kosciusko, IN 2 Dec (JCK), one at E. Fork L. 11 Dec (CLH), and one along the Mississippi R., Rock Island 16 Feb (MAM, APS). White-winged Scoters were slightly more numerous and widespread. Of the 15 reported away from L. Michigan, 2 on Huntingburg L. 19 Feb (AK, NK) provided a first record for Dubois, IN; 3 each were on L. Lemon, Monroe, IN (DRW et al.) and on Carlyle (DMK) 26 Feb; and 2 were at E. Fork L. 27 Feb (CLH). The only non-lakefront Black Scoters included 2 on L. Lemon, Monroe, IN 5 Dec (JHH) and a male at E. Fork L. 27 Feb (CLH). Two Long-tailed Ducks on the Ohio R. at Louisville, KY crossed into Indiana waters 9 Feb (fide BPB); a male...
Long-tailed was near Francisco, Gibson, IN 13 (VWh) & 14 Feb (ph. SG); and a female was on L. Lemon, Monroe, IN 5 Dec (JDH). A male Barrow’s Goldeneye visited Rock Island, IL along the Mississippi R. 9-16 Feb (DTW, BCW, LGB, ph. AJ, JF, m.ob.). In a good winter for Hooded Mergansers, 1200 at Rend L. 22 Dec (DMK, MSS) were notable, as were 513 at Gibson & Cane Ridge, Gibson, IN 4 Jan (LL). A Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid was present in Chicago 11-28 Feb (DFS, DEW, NLB, m.ob.). At five Indiana lakefront sites, a state-record 3003 Common Mergansers were counted 22 Jan (JKC, SRB, TD, DF).

In Hoosier N. Lawrence, a Ruffed Grouse found 12 Jan (NK) provided Indiana’s first Jan record in five years. The Illinois wintering population of Greater Prairie-Chickens continues to decrease, as the maximum count consisted of only 30 at Prairie Ridge S.N.A., Jasper 16 Feb (RES). A nice total of 128 Wild Turkeys was tallied in Lawrence, IN 28 Jan (R&DB). Northern Bobwhite populations also seem to be decreasing, though the count of 38 in Sullivan, IN 9 Jan (VW) was notable. Six Red-throated Loons were reported in the Region. An excellent tally of 59 Horned Grebes was made at Clinton L., Decatur, IL 3 Dec (MEF). A single Red-necked Grebe was noted in Bloomington, McLean, IL 4 Dec (MEF; KAM, DMK, MSS). The 2 Western Grebes seen at Port of Indiana in the fall continued through 2 Dec (PBG); one was at Mich. City, IN 20 Dec (JSp); and a single was at Port of Indiana 26 Jan (JCK).

The 4000 American White Pelicans at Carlyle 27 Feb (DMK) constituted a sizeable northbound flock (DMK). A few isolated birds might have attempted to winter: one at the P&JK). Two Harlan’s Hawks were found near the Greene/Knox, IN line 15 Dec (DRW et al.). It was an excellent season for Golden Eagles in the Region, as 31 were recorded, including a record 26 in Indiana. On 12 Jan, a hunter photographed a Crested Caracara in rural n. Gibson, IN (fide BM). The bird, which was investigating a dead mole on the ground, was ultimately chased away by a Bald Eagle and was not found in subsequent exhaustive searches of the area. It would represent a first record for Indiana if accepted. Numbers of wintering Merlins continue to climb; 37 were noted in the Region this season.

Twelve Whooping Cranes from the Florida–Wisconsin migratory population staged at Goose Pond 1-6 Dec (fide BF). Before Dec temperatures dipped drastically, several shorebird species were noted, a few apparently attempted to winter. At Rend L., 3 American Avocets were noted 4 Dec (ph. EWW, LSt, DMK).

A Greater Yellowlegs seen at Carlyle 20 Feb (DMK) was an early spring arrival (DMK). A Lesser Yellowlegs at Cane Ridge, Gibson 17 Feb (ph. SG, HH), and 3 there the following day (LG, LB), were the earliest ever reported for Indiana; in Alexander, IL, 9 were noted 20 Feb (AD). At Brookville Res., Union, an apparently wintering Sanderling noted 24 & 31 Jan and 8 Feb (WHB) provided Indiana’s 2nd Jan and Feb records and the first in more than 50 years. Two Least Sandpipers were at Rend L. 4 Dec (EWW, LSt, DMK), and a Pectoral Sandpiper was found near Lacon, Marshall, IL 5 Dec (MAM, JAS, PAM). A first-cycle Purple Sandpiper at Mich. City 31 Dec (ph. SS et al.) was Indiana’s first Dec bird in five years, and the following day, presumably the same bird provided Indiana’s first Jan record in 11 years (KK, ph. JCK). Another young Purple Sandpiper remained at Whiting Retina Beach, Lake, IN 7 Jan (ph. MT) through 15 Jan (RLH et al.). Two Dunlins joined the avocets and Least Sandpipers at Rend L. 4 Dec (EWW, LSt, DMK). At Bluegrass FWA, Warrick, 16 American Woodcocks counted 16 Feb (ES) rep-
Anna's Hummingbirds made history across the eastern half of North America in autumn 2010, with many appearing (or being reported) in the winter season as well, such as this Anna's at the home of John and Ann Hayes near Chillicothe, Peoria County, Illinois 1-13 (here 6) December. Photograph by Nathan Goldberg.

2 juvs. were at Port of Indiana 27 Dec (JG, DG, SE WW); a juv. was at Mich. City IN 7 Jan (LS, FM et al.); a juv. was on L. Michigan in Chicago 15-20 Jan (SB, m.ob.); a juv. was at the city-state power plant, Lake, IN 22 Jan (RJS et al.); and finally, one was at Montrose Pt. in Chicago 22 Jan-7 Feb (ph. LGM, m.ob.). A fine count of 500 Bonaparte's Gulls was made at Brookville Res., Union, IN 2 Dec (WHB). A first-cycle Little Gull was at Monroe 11 Dec (DRW). An ad. Mew Gull was seen at Horse-shoe 5-6 Feb (FRH, WMR). An ad. California Gull was present at Illinois Beach S.P., Lake, IL 30 Dec (EWW), and another was in Chicago 6 (ph. JIE) & 12 Jan (DFS). It was an excellent year for both Thayer's and Iceland Gulls. The Indiana total of 44 of the former was the most ever for the state, and at least 37 were noted in Illinois. The earliest reported Thayer's Gulls were 3 in Winthrop Harbor, Lake, IL 6 Dec Harbor, Lake, IL 19 Feb (GAW, KAM, m.ob.); and 4 were at Carlyle 14 Dec (DMK). The 16 Iceland Gulls recorded in Indiana were the most since 2001-2002; among 19 reported from Illinois were 5 in Chicago's Monroe Harbor 17 Jan (EG), 5 at Starved Rock S.P. 12 Feb (EG), and 3 in Winthrop Harbor, Lake, IL 19 Feb (GAW, KAM, m.ob.). Indiana's 2nd and Illinois's 5th Slaty-backed Gull, an ad., was discovered just w. of the Hammond Marina, Lake, IN 29 Dec (JMJ, MT, JCK, AAA et al.). Over the next two days, it was seen primarily in Indiana (BB et al.) but also in Illinois (ph. WJM, ph. AAA, m.ob.). After a three-week absence, the bird appeared again at the original site 22 Jan (JCK) and remained through 29 Jan (JCK, JKC, SRB, G&LB et al.). Another remarkable record was provided by a first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull discovered at Winthrop Harbor 29-30 Jan (PWS, AFS, KAM, RE, BAH, m.ob.). Noteworthy were tallies of 11 Glaucous Gulls and 29 Great Black-backed Gulls at various Indiana lakefront sites 22 Jan (JCK, SRB, TD, DF). Single first-cycle Great Black-backed at Rend L. 22 Dec (CLH, DMK, MSS) and Carlyle 3 & 13 Feb (ph. DMK, KAM) were noteworthy due to southerly locations. Ten Forster's Terns remained at Rend L. 4 Dec (ph. EWW, LSt, DMN).

Three Barn Owls were noted in Franklin, IL 6 Dec (CLH, RES), and singles were seen in Lawrence, IN 19 Dec (AK, NK) and at Kiddle of observers in Carroll and Ogle, IL 25 Jan-15 Feb (DTW, BCK, PCn, m.ob.). In Laporte, IN, prison officer Douglas Hinchen found a Snowy Owl perched on a light pole within Westville prison 21 Feb. Fellow employee Patrick Krueger confirmed the Snowy and made arrangements for birders to see the owl, which was in an off-limits area. The owl, which became a favorite of the inmates and was nicknamed "Artie," lingered through the end of the period. A Long-eared Owl was found in Beverly Shores, Porter, IN 29 Dec (MT), 2 were discovered in Newton, IN Jan (JIM, ph. JKC, ph. LSH, KJB, SRB), and 2+ were in Elkhart 22 Jan (DS, LS, J&EH, RJS et al.); another was at the West Beach pinery, Porter, IN 29 Jan (SP). An excellent tally of 80 Short-eared Owls was made at Arklands, Perry, IL 27 Dec (JAS, THy). Northern Saw-whet Owls were noted in several locations, including 6 at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Williamson, IL 3 Jan (LSt, LBI), 2 in Hamilton, IL 29 Dec (LSt, LBI), and a. Illinois bird in Woodford 4 Jan-23 Feb (MEF). 5 were recorded in Indiana. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found in numbers well above average. The Region's first confirmed Anna's Hummingbird delighted many at the Jahn and Ann Hayes residence near Chillicothe, Peoria, IL 1-13 Dec (ph. VMK, m.ob.). An ad. male Rufous Hummingbird was equally entertaining at an Oakland, Coles, IL home 1-8 Dec (VMK, ph. DMK, KAM, MSS, m.ob.).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES**

Eastern Phoebes were reported in Dec, Jan, and Feb: one at Eagle Cr. appeared 28 Jan (KJ, BfL, fide LP), marking the 8th year in the past decade that a Jan bird has been recorded in Indiana; another seen 27 Feb in the Zim-merman Wetland Bird Habitat, Brown, IN (JR, JHC, SEH et al.) was probably a returning rather than a wintering bird. The male Vermilion Flycatcher that appeared at the Miller residence in Marshall, IN in late Nov remained through 2 Dec. Among 13 Loggerhead Shrikes reported in Illinois were 3 in Edwards 3 Jan (RES); one at Bluegrass FWA e. of Evansville 4-6 Jan (ph. SG, JHC, CEM) was the first winter bird seen in Indiana in four years. Northern Shrikes appeared in excellent numbers, with 7 reported in the Region, the southernmost in Indiana occurring near Stanley, Warrich 3 Jan (JHC), 23 Jan (ES), and 19 Feb (AK, NK). A very early Purple Martin in Browns-town, Jackson 27 Feb (LPS) furnished Indiana's first Feb record. South of its normal range, a Black-capped Chickadee was carefully identified at Eagle Cr. 19 Dec (CEK, fide LP). A record total of 100 Brown Creepers was reported in Indiana. On 20 Dec, a Swainson's

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**Table 1. Total reports of Chipping Sparrows from Indiana for each winter from 1992-1993 through 2010-2011.**

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*Source: North American Birds of the Midwest*
Thrush was found near Monroe (DD), providing Indiana's 4th winter record. Large winter roosts of American Robins were noted in Illinois: 3172 at Palos, Cook 19 Dec (WJM, WSS, m.o.b.), 2500 at Arklands, Perry 22 Jan (KAM), and 1249 at Clinton L, DeWitt 7 Jan (MEF). No fewer than 4 Varied Thrushes graced the region: one at a Steuben residence 6 Dec (HM) and another at Big Oaks NWR. 15 Dec (GT, WS) furnished Indiana's 3rd and 4th records of 2010; one brightened a DeKalb, IL backyard 15 Jan (KL, DTW, ph. NG, m.o.b.); and another that showed up for a Forreston, Ogle, IL backyard in late Dec disappeared for over a month and reappeared 13-14 Feb (AS, m.o.b.). Two Brown Thrashers were seen in Monroe, IN 22 Jan (SR) and at Eagle Cr. 28 Jan (LP), and one in Beverly Shores, Porter, IN 26 Feb (LSH, SRB, JKC, JKB) supplied the first Feb record for the Indiana lakefront. A Gray Catbird lingered in Richland, IL, with sightings 18 Dec and 2 & 4 Jan (CLH). A Bohemian Waxwing was located in Lake Forest, Lake, IL during a C.B.C. 1 Jan (AR, JDW), and perhaps this same bird was involved in the 9 (ph. FM, ph. BJS) & 15 Jan (AFS) sightings at the Chicago Botanic Gardens some 13 km distant in Glencoe, Cook, IL. A flock of 500 Cedar Waxwings visited E. Fork L 9 Dec (CLH).

A tally of 4300 Lapland Longspurs at several Sullivan sites 11 Feb (MRB) was Indiana's largest ever. Snow Buntings were not as numerous but were more widely distributed across the region, with several birds reaching the s. tier: 2 were at Gibson 5 Dec (AK, NK), 3 were in St. Clair, IL 26 Dec (TDJ), and 2 were at Carlyle 5-6 Feb (DMK). An Orange-crowned Warbler was a nice surprise at an O'Fallon, St. Clair, IL backyard feeding station 19 Dec (KAM). Yellow-rumped Warblers were in good supply throughout the winter, and Pine Warblers were unusually prevalent. Three Fines were seen at Arklands, Perry, IL 27 Dec (JS, THy); 2 were noted at Rend L. 4 Dec (ph. EWWW, LSt, Dm); 2 were in Johnson, IL 20 Dec (MM-L); and 4 other singles were found in Illinois and 4 in Indiana. A Palm Warbler was at Spring Mill S.P., Lawrence, IN 19 Dec (JSC et al.), and a Common Yellowthroat was in Alexander, IL 28 Dec (JAS).

A Spotted Towhee was present intermittently all season in Winnebago, IL, first appearing 12 Dec; it disappeared 30 Dec and reappeared 16 Jan–16 Feb (DTW, ph. MKH, m.o.b.). Winter Chipping Sparrow numbers continue to climb (Figure 1), exemplified by the remarkable total of 30 at Trail of Tears S.E. Union, IL 29 Dec (JAS, BJS) and by 9 in Terre Haute, IN 2 Dec (PES). A superb count of 9 Le Conte's Sparrows occurred in Morgan, IL 17 Dec (MM-L). Five Vesper Sparrows lingered in the region, including one in Kendall, IL 9 Dec (MAM), 3 on the Goose Pond C.B.C. 15 Dec (fide LWS), and one in Gibson, IN 19 Feb (AK). A Lincoln's Sparrow attended a feeder in Logansport, Cass, IN 12 Jan+ (ph. LN), providing Indiana's 3rd Jan and Feb records. Another Lincoln's was noted in Union, IL 29 Dec (DFS). A first-cycle Harper's Sparrow was at Monroe 6-18 Dec (MC, m.o.b.); one wintered at a Monroe, IL residence (ph. CS&P); and another was near Perks, IL 20 Dec (RSP). An unusually large number (8) of Oregon Juncos was reported in the region this season.

An ad. male Scarlet Tanager was observed feeding on pokeweed in sw. Monroe 4 Dec (TBG), providing Indiana's first winter record. An Indigo Bunting was a very rare visitor to a Wayne, IN feeder 15 Dec (WBB). Many Eastern Meadowlarks were seen in Alexander, IL 12 Feb, with 2 Western Meadowlarks accompanying the flock (EWW). A first-year male Yellow-headed Blackbird was a nice find at Gibson 5 Dec (GGRB). Rusty Blackbirds were less abundant this winter, the 120 recorded in both Monroe, IL 7 Jan (KAM) and Dubois, IN 3 Feb (AK) being the highest counts. A flock of 400 Brewer's Blackbirds was noted in the Sante Fe Bottoms, Clinton, IL 27 Feb (DMK).

The 53 Purple Finches at Loud Thunder FP, Rock Island, IL 2 Jan (KJH, SRH, MB) exemplified the season's fine flight of this species. The only White-winged Crossbill detected was one in Woodford, IL 9 Feb (MEF). Three Common Redpolls at feeders in n. Porter 17 Dec (fide KJH) and a single flyover at Eagle Cr. 1 Jan (ER) constituted the only Indiana records for the species this winter. In Illinois, 10 were seen in Kane 8 Feb (SAC); 6 were at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Cook 3 Jan (MCV); a peak of 5 visited a feeder in Chicago 17 Feb (CH); and 13 singles were scattered across the n. tier. Counts of 90 Pine Siskins in Westville, Laporte, IN 20 Feb (PK), 80 at Clinton L. 19 Dec (MEF), 70 at the Chicago Botanic Gardens, Glencoe, Cook, IL 5 Dec (FM), 54 at the Morton Arboretum, Lisle, DuPage, IL 13 Feb (DFS), and 44 at Loud Thunder FP, Rock Island, IL 2 Jan (KJH, SRH, MB) signified a good flight of this species as well. The 2 Evening Grosbeaks reported from Loud Thunder FP, Rock Island, IL 2 Jan (KJH, SRH, MB) made the only report for the Region.


James D. Hengeveld, 6354 Southshore Drive Unionville, Indiana 47466, (jehengev@indiana.edu)
Keith A. McMullen, 1405 DeSoto O'Fallon, Illinois 62269, (warbler7@sbcglobal.net)
Gregory A. Williamson, 4046 North Clark Street, Unit K Chicago, Illinois 60613 (geoffrey.williamson@comcast.net)
Western Great Lakes

Adam M. Byrne

The winter of 2010–2011 was snowy and cold in the Western Great Lakes. Southern and central Minnesota experienced record-setting snowfalls in December, with some areas receiving more than three times the historical average. January was near normal, but a major storm on 20-21 February pushed Minnesota’s February snowfall totals well above average. Michigan and Wisconsin also reported average to above-average snowfall totals that were also highlighted by a couple of major storms. Below-average temperatures and brief, if any, warm spells in January led to lingering snow cover. Mid-February, finally, brought balmy 50°F temperatures, ushering in the year’s first Turkey Vultures and other early migrants.

An unprecedented two Ross’s Gulls were found on a Christmas Bird Count in Michigan, the only sighting of multiple individuals in the Lower 48 states! Minnesota and Wisconsin again hosted a Slaty-backed Gull, as well as record counts of both Thayer’s and Iceland Gulls. Redpolls and siskins were noted in better numbers this winter, but it was still not what one would consider a major invasion. Other than good numbers of Red Crossbills in Michigan’s western Upper Peninsula, including confirmed breeding, crossbill numbers were rather modest across the Region.

WATERFOWL

Record-early northbound migrants were 27 Greater White-fronted Geese in Luc Qui Parle, MN 15 Feb (BJU). Unusual for Michigan’s Upper Peninsula were an impressive 63 Greater White-fronted Geese in Machinac 21 Feb+ (JJF). In Dane, WI, a Greater White-fronted (AP) and a Snow Goose (AN) both wintered. Large flocks of Snow Geese are infrequent in Michigan, so 500+ in Arenac and 300 in Iosco, both 1 Dec (WW), were noteworthy. Wisconsin still had lingering Ross’s Geese in Dane 3 Dec (ST), Kewaunee 6 Dec (JS), and Manitowoc 10 Dec (CS), while Michigan had 2 in Muskegon 31 Dec (AMB). A Brant in St. Clair 4-6 Dec (TL, SA) made Michigan’s first winter record since 1996. All three states reported Cackling Geese in Dec, but the only spring migrants were in Rock, WI 23 Feb (WM). A Mute Swan in Dakota, MN 16 Dec–1 Jan (JFM, RT, PEB, m.ob.) was unusual; Michigan’s peak count was 384 Mute Swans along the Detroit R., Wayne 29 Jan (JAC, DOB). The largest concentrations of Trumpeter Swans away from Minnesota were 150+ in Iosco, MI 9 Dec (PR) and 150 in St. Croix, WI 20 Dec (BW). Michigan harbored the Region’s highest Tundra Swan concentrations, peaking at 1500 in Wayne 13 Feb (AMB); a Tundra Swan arriving in Scott, MN 17 Dec successfully wintered (PEJ). Dabbling ducks were reported in good numbers from both Wisconsin and Michigan. Wisconsin had numerous late fall migrants. 

Byrne:

History's early Michigan’s first winter record since

A flock estimated up to 5000 Greater Scapu lingered in four Minnesota counties, with the last report in Scott 1 Jan. A flock estimated up to 5000 Greater Scapu was in Milwaukee, WI 20 Jan (TP), while Michigan had a peak of 2000 in Muskegon 9 Jan (SAJ).

Several numbers of Harlequin Ducks were reported in Minnesota: an imm. male in Scott 17-26 Dec (PEJ, CRM, RT); one in Ramsey 18 Dec (KS); a female in Otter Trail 18 Dec (SDM, DST); a female in Lake 6 Feb (CH, AK); and females in St. Louis 18 Dec (KRE) and 28 Dec (KR), which may have been the same individual. Wisconsin had a female Harlequin winter in Sheboygan (JS) and another female in Milwaukee 1-23 Jan (TW), while Michigan had at least 13 birds in seven counties. All three scoter species were reported from both Wisconsin and Michigan, with Michigan having a peak of 300. White-winged Scoters in Manistee 27 Feb (AMB, CP) and 21 Black Scoters in Allegan 3 Dec (RB). Large congregations of Long-tailed Ducks continue to frequent Michigan’s L. Michigan shoreline; this year’s peak was 22,315 in Ottawa 8 Jan (NG, JLB, JL). All three states reported male Barrow’s Goldeneyes: one through 5 Feb in Sheboygan, WI (EG); one on 17 Feb in Manistee, MI (p.a., BB); and one in Wright, MN 27 Feb (PEJ, DFN, DWK). Wisconsin birders recorded an impressive 5000 Red-breasted Mergansers in Racine 18 Dec; unusual were at least 3 Red-breasted Mergansers that wintered in Dakota, MN.

Quail through Gulls

Northern Bobwhite is rarely observed during the winter months, so reports from Eaton and Gratiot, WI were surprising; Wisconsin had a single report in Marquette 15 Dec (BD). Both Gray Partridge and Spruce Grouse were reported in above-normal numbers in Wisconsin, while Michigan had single Spruce Grouse sightings in Marquette (SS) and Delta (DL, CB). Red-throated Loons wintered in the same four Wisconsin counties as last winter; Michigan had Red-throateds in five counties, with a peak of 14 in Berrien 5 Jan (HL). Late for the Upper Peninsula was a Pied-billed Grebe in Baraga 14 Dec (JK, SH, JJ), while Wisconsin and Minnesota’s latest reports were in Waukesha 2 Dec (DG) and Wright 24 Dec (DB), respectively. Record early for Minnesota was a Horned Grebe in Dakota 16-17 Feb (PEJ); Michigan had an unusually early influx of 20 Horned Grebes in Marquette, MI 27 Jan (HD, CR). The only Eared Grebe lingered in Marquette, MI 4-25 Dec (SH). Western Grebes arrived in unprecedented numbers in Michigan, with one from fall remaining through 5 Jan in Berrien (TM, MB, m.ob.), in Marquette 18-24 Dec (SH, MHE, CW), and up to 2 in Otsego 23 Dec–9 Jan (CC, m.ob.), while Wisconsin had one in Kenosha 26 Jan (AB, SF).

An American White Pelican again wintered in Brown, WI, and Michigan had its first winter record in 15 years in Monroe 19 Dec-26 Feb (MW, m.ob.). Late for Michigan was an American Bittern that stayed until 4 Dec in Marquette (MH, BO). Record early in Minnesota was a Turkey Vulture in Rice 17 Feb (TBF); Wisconsin’s first vulture arrived 12 Feb in Walworth (DG). The only Osprey was in Macomb, MI 18 Dec (BMM). More surprising was an incredibly late Broad-winged Hawk in Douglas, WI 28 Dec (KJB). Gyrfalcons were found in Delta, MI 2 Jan (DL) and St. Louis, MN 10 & 17 Jan (SLF, DBF). Michigan hosted up to 4 Purple Sandpipers along L. Michigan and a Dunlin in Huron 7 Dec (KO); Wisconsin had a late Dunlin in Sheboygan 9 Dec (JS).

Black-legged Kittiwakes put on a good show this winter; Wisconsin had a kittiwake in Bayfield 7-9 Dec (RYB), and Michigan had one in St. Clair 23 Jan (JEV), up to 2 in Ottawa 31 Jan–19 Feb, and one in Wayne 9 Feb (ATC). Participants on Michigan’s Keweenaw Bay C.B.C. were treated to an amazing 2 Ross’s Gulls in Baraga 14 Dec (JL, WI, JL, m.ob.) Michigan’s first and the only report of multiple individuals in the Lower 46 states. Thayer’s and Iceland Gulls were recorded along the Minnesota/Wisconsin border in record-high numbers, thanks to the diligent surveys by Bardon. In Duluth, St. Louis, MN, at least 33 Thayer’s were documented, with a peak of 23 on 5 Dec, but in Douglas, WI up to 68 Thayer’s were recorded for the season (KJB)! Duluth also hosted at least 10 Iceland Gulls, with a
peak of 8 on 5 Dec, and 2 first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gulls from the fall season through 3 & 5 Dec (KJB). Lastly, the two-state area hosted an ad. Slaty-backed Gull 19 Dec–30 Jan (KJB, PHS, DJ), up to 20 Glaucous Gulls (KJB), and 11 Great Black-backed Gulls, including a record 9 at Duluth 26 Feb (PHS).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Eurasian Collared-Doves were recorded in 25 Minnesota and five Wisconsin counties, yet Michigan had only one reported, in Grand Traverse. Winter owls were scarce, with all three states reporting Snowy Owls in below-average numbers. The only Northern Hawk Owls were in nine Minnesota counties, with a peak of 6 in Roseau 5 Feb (SA). Great Gray Owls were found in only four Minnesota and two Michigan counties, and no one reported a Boreal Owl. Impressive were three species of hummingbird that lingered in Michigan: the state’s first winter Ruby-throated Hummingbird stayed through 1 Dec in Wayne (WS); a continuing female Anna’s Hummingbird was last seen 18 Dec in Alger (PG, SC); and a Rufous Hummingbird stayed through 13 Dec in Lake (KP). Wisconsin had a continuing Rufous Hummingbird until 9 Dec in Dane (KSI). Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to expand northward in Minnesota, with 22 of 34 counties providing reports. Minnesota had a lingering Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Hennepin until 19 Dec (TT, JJ), while one in Googe, MI 18 Dec (fide JE) was unusual for the Upper Peninsula. Black-backed Woodpeckers were reported in all three states, but only Minnesota birders located American Three-toed Woodpeckers (6 in three counties). A Black-bellied Magpie in Lac Qui Parle 19 Feb (BJU) made an unusual report for s. Minnesota. Common Ravens seem to be wandering more in Michigan; noteworthy this season was birds at Nayanquing Point S.W.A., Bay (RAE) and Muskegon 31 Jan (AMB, MR). A late Tree Swallow was noted in Monroe, MI 19 Dec (JM), while Wisconsin had 2 Tree sparrows and a Cave Swallow staying through 3 Dec in Milwaukee (DG).

Winter Wrens were found in 14 Michigan counties, including a rare Upper Peninsula bird in Delta 22 Dec (DL); Minnesota had Winter Wrens in Hennepin 12 Dec–16 Feb (SLC, MAO) and Sibley 18 Dec (fide CGW). The only Marsh Wren was in Tuscula, MI 31 Dec (JB). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Hubbard, MN 8 Dec (fide MAW) was unusually far n. and late; Michigan had hardy Ruby-crowned in Washkewin 18 Dec (fide JG) and Monroe 19 Dec (ATC). Minnesota reported at least 9 Townsend’s Solitaires from seven counties. Single solitaires were in Michigan’s Marquette

15 Dec+ (JDP, m.ob.) and Delta 18 Dec (RA), while Wisconsin had 3 in Sauk through 9 Feb (DJ) and singles wintering in Bayfield (RyB) and Portage (ADR). Minnesota had at least 6 Hermit Thrushes linger into Dec, one in Hennepin 7 Feb (SLC, DWK), and one in Rice through 24 Feb (TFB). Winter Hermit Thrushes are not unexpected in Michigan, but one in Dickinson 24 Dec (RAA) was noteworthy for the Upper Peninsula. Varied Thrushes arrived in lower numbers this winter, with 11 birds in Minnesota, 6 in Wisconsin, and only 2 in Michigan. Michigan hosted at least 6 Gray Catbirds and 10 Northern Mockingbirds, while Wisconsin had a catbird through 26 Dec in Walworth (EH) and a mockingbird in Trempealeau 7–10 Jan (DJ). Minnesota had Brown Thrashers in Steele until 18 Dec (TWH), Lake 19 Dec (JWL), Ramsey 31 Dec (MM), and St. Louis 25 Jan (fide JWL); Michigan had a thrasher in Jackson 2 Feb (RoT). Five Wisconsin counties along L. Michigan reported American Pipits, with the last one reported on 18 Dec in Milwaukee (TP); Michigan had single pipits 5 Dec (JTW) and 21 Dec (WEJ), both in Berrien. All three states reported large numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, with peak counts of 800 in St. Louis, MN 15 Feb (MSS) and Ashland, WI (RyB).

WARBLED THROUGH FINCHES

Michigan had several interesting lingering warblers, including an Orange-crowned Warbler in Monroe 15-19 Dec (MW, WW, ATC, JeJ), a Cape May Warbler in Berrien 19 Dec (AV, RJ, AJ). Yellow-throated Warblers in Mackin 4–12 Dec (RNm) and through 2 Jan in Washtenaw (AE, HE), and Pine Warblers through 1 Dec in Schoolcraft (AW) and 10 Dec in Berrien (TB). A Cape May Warbler stayed from the fall season until 10 Dec in Hennepin, MN (YK, SLC). Wisconsin also had some interesting warbler records, highlighted by an Audubon’s Warbler in Crawford 22 Dec (RyB) and a Palm Warbler 5 Dec (MF) and Wilson’s Warbler 3 Dec (DG), both in Milwaukee. A Green-tailed Towhee frequented a feeder in Oakland, MI 29 Jan (KMD, m.ob.). Eastern Towhees were present in four Minnesota counties: one in Hennepin through 5 Dec (DK), a male in Otter Trail from through 2 Jan (JSC, m.ob.), a male in Blue Earth (CH), and a female in Kandiyohi 12 Dec+ (RSF). Michigan reported Eastern Towhees from five Lower Peninsula counties. A Chipping Sparrow lingered in Hennepin, MN through 1 Dec (BH), while Michigan and Wisconsin had reports from seven and four counties, respectively. A Savannah Sparrow in Kandiyohi, MN 9-15 Jan (RSF, DBM) was unusually late; Wisconsin reported Savannas from four counties, while Michigan had one in Luce mid-Dec+ (LH) and another in Monroe 26 Dec (fide TC). Late Lincoln’s Sparrows were found in Michigan’s Jackson 18 Dec (RoJ) and Washtenaw 22 Dec (MS). Wisconsin’s only Harris’s Sparrow was in Jefferson 14 Dec–23 Jan (PF), and Minnesota had reports from six counties. Wisconsin’s 3rd Golden-crowned Sparrow visited feeders in Dane 20-30 Dec (MMD).

Michigan birders found the only Rose-breasted Grosbeak, one in Mason 15 Dec (VH) and a female in Cheboygan 18 Dec (JBr), and the only Eastern Meadowlarks, 8 birds in four counties. A late Yellow-headed Blackbird was in Chippewa, MN 10 Dec (HHD). Minnesota had Rusty Blackbirds lingering into Jan as far n. as Mahnomen and Becker, while reports from five Wisconsin counties were above average. Late for n. Minnesota was a Brown-headed Cowbird in Polk 2 Dec (SA). A female Bullock’s Oriole visiting a feeder in Menominee, MI 1-12 Dec (p.a., De) was found dead on 20 Dec; unfortunately, the specimen was not salvaged. Baltimore Orioles were in Columbia, WI 5 Dec (JaB) and Van Buren, MI 25 Dec (fide RS). Notably s. for Michigan were 3 Pine Grosbeaks in Cass 20 Dec (fide JoB) and another 3 in Berrien 21-22 Dec (NM). This otherwise this species seemed to be present in average numbers and distributed across its normal winter range Regionwide. Minnesota reported Red Crossbills from nine counties and Benton, Lac Qui Parle, and Sherburne in the s., with a peak of 23 in St. Louis 13 Jan (KJB). Red Crossbills were reported from eight Wisconsin counties, mostly from the ne. portion of the state, while Michigan had reports from four Upper Peninsula counties and Crawford and Kalkaska in the Lower Peninsula. White-winged Crossbills were present in six Minnesota counties, with a high of 30 in Lake of the Woods 2 Jan (fide JM). White-winged were present in modest numbers in seven Wisconsin counties; Michigan had reports from five Upper Peninsula and three Lower Peninsula counties, including a peak of 35 in Alger 19 Dec (fide SH) and a s. report from Saginaw 24 Feb (LMA). Common Redpolls were widespread in large numbers in n. Minnesota, with only scattered s. reports; Michigan reported Common Redpolls as widespread but in small flocks. Michigan reported good numbers of Hoary Redpolls, with reports from nine counties but only as far s. as Aitkin and Cass. Wisconsin had a short-lived, mini-invasion of Hoary Redpolls 26-27 Feb in five counties, while Michigan birders found 3 on 25 Jan and one on 26 Jan in Chippewa (HD, CR). Minnesota reported Pine Siskins as present everywhere except the sw. region, with a high count of 1000 in St.
Iowa & Missouri

The winter season was characterized by cold temperatures and significant snowfall. Temperatures varied greatly over the period, with lows of -22° to -30° F during all three months in Iowa. There were two major blizzards during the period in Iowa: the 1 February storm hit Missouri as well, with snow totals of a foot or more in many locations in both states. In Iowa, this was the fifth consecutive winter that was colder than normal and the fourth consecutive winter that was colder than normal.

In Missouri, December was much colder than average until the last few days of the month, when unseasonable warmth broke the cold snap. Then, on New Year's Eve, there was a series of violent storms and tornadoes in the state. In mid-February, there was a period of higher-than-average temperatures in both states, with many locations in both states reaching the 70s on one observer noted that the weather was among "the coldest and certainly snowiest winters I can remember in Missouri."

Highlights of the season in Iowa were Black-legged Kittiwake, California Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Mountain Bluebird, and two Summer Tanagers; Townsend’s Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, and Savannah Sparrow were also unusual in the state. In Missouri, highlights included an adult Harlequin Duck, Red-necked Grebe, a Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird, Golden-crowned Sparrow, a Gray-headed Junco, and a Lesser Goldfinch. This was not a great year for owls: only one Snowy Owl was reported, and both states recorded Long-eared and Short-eared Owls in numbers lower than average. Snow Buntings were seen in above-average numbers, but winter finches were scarce, with the exception of modest numbers of Pine Siskins in Iowa.

**Abbreviations:**
- F.R.C.A. (Four Rivers C.A., Vernon, MO)
- R.M.B.S. (Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, St. Charles, MO)
- Rathbun (Rathbun Res., Appanoose, IA)
- S.L. (Smithville L., Clay, MO)

**WATERFOWL**

Moderate numbers of waterfowl lingered into mid-Dec, and small numbers began returning...
northward about 20 Feb in the n. part of the Region. About 2700 Greater White-fronted Geese at Mt. Pleasant, Henry, IA 27 Feb (SJD) made the highest count of that species. Peak counts of Snow Geese were 46,900 at O.S.C.A. 8 Jan (CBA) and 45,000 at Rapp Park, Page, IA 17 Feb (KDY). Both states recorded small numbers of Ross's Geese, with the high of 8 in Dade, MO 8 Feb (CBu, GSw). About 320 Cackling Geese at Green Valley L., Union, IA 5 Dec (JG) made the season's top count. Up to 2 Mute Swans were seen at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 2 Dec-13 Feb (DE, MP, SJD, JG, RLC). Trumpeter Swans were widely reported, with a peak of 102 at Beemer's Pond, Hamilton, IA 12 Dec (SJD) and 74 at Columbia Bottom C.A., St. Louis, MO 1 Jan (MT). Small numbers of Tundra Swans were found in Iowa, including 5 in Scott, IA 13 Dec (WMZ); a single Tundra at R.F.C.A. 14 Dec (GSw, CBu) made the only Missouri report.

A few American Black Ducks were reported in both states, with highlights being 9 on the Columbia B.C.C., Boone, MO 18 Dec (PM) and 4 at Palo Marsh, Linn, IA 19 Feb (BSc). Some 120 Green-winged Teal at Rathbun 11 Dec (RLC) and 19 at Maryville Sewage Lagoons, Nodaway, MO 4 Dec (MT, RM) made the high counts in Iowa and Missouri, respectively. Again this year, 5 Blue-winged Teal were notably late on the Springfield C.B.C., Greene, MO 18 Dec (DB). The highest count of Canvasbacks in Iowa was 11,300 at Pool 19, Lee, IA 27 Feb (SJD), and 49 were seen at Maryville Sewage Lagoons, Nodaway, MO 4 Dec (DE). Other significant counts of diving ducks at pools 19, Lee, IA on 27 Feb were 134 Ring-necked Ducks, 134 Greater Scaup, 1125 Lesser Scaup, and 327 Common Goldeneyes (SJD). In addition, 51 Greater Scaуп were counted on the Maryville C.B.C., Nodaway, MO 18 Dec (DE), an impressive number for this location. First found in Nov, the ad. male Harlequin Duck at Maryville Sewage Lagoons, Nodaway, MO continued until 5 Dec (DE). All three scoter species were reported from Iowa, with one or 2 Surf Scoters in Cerro Gordo 2 Dec (CJF), in Union 5 Dec (JG), and on Pool 19, Lee 27 Feb (SJD); an ad. male White-winged Scoter in Scott 14-15 Feb (MB); and a Black Scoter at W. Okoboji L., Dickinson 6 Dec (ET). A female White-winged Scoter was at Binder L., Cole, MO 9 Dec (RD). Seven Long-tailed Ducks were found across Iowa, and one spent most of Dec at Binder L., Cole, MO (RD, PK). Three thousand Common Mergansers made the high count at Montrose C.A., St. Clair, MO 16 Jan (MR, MA, JK); 9175 were counted at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5 Dec (SJD); and 10,000 were tallied at Rathbun 11 Dec (RLC).

**GROUSE THROUGH RAPTORS**

Forty-three Gray Partridges were reported from six Iowa counties. Sadly, no Ruffed Grouse were reported during the period. Ring-necked Pheasants were few and far between, with declining habitat combined with harsher winters and wetter springs taking their toll on this species; 81 were reported from only six locations in Iowa. Greater Prairie-Chickens continue to struggle as well: only 13 were reported from five Missouri locations; and one wearing a radio transmitter was found dead at Maple Grove Prairie, Jasper, MO 18 Jan (JC).

Four Common Loons were reported from three locations in Iowa; in Missouri, a high count of 135 came from Stockton L., Cedar, MO 16 Jan (MR, MA, JK), possibly an all-time winter high count for the Region. A few Pied-billed Grebes lingered into Dec but not later. A high count of 254 Horned Grebes was one of the highlights of the Christmas count in Tanev, MO 1 Jan (CBu), a single was found at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area, Webster, IA 2 Dec (SJD). A tardy Eared Grebe was at S.L. 1 Dec (KB, KM). A Red-necked Grebe at Stephens L., Boone, MO 3 Jan (RD) was late and locally rare. Two Double-crested Cormorants lingered until 1 Dec at Duck Creek C.A., Stoddard, MO (CBu), with up to 3 at two of the large reservoirs and along the Mississippi R. in Iowa during Dec. Up to 30 American White Pelicans overwintered below the dam at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA, where 314 lingered as late as 18 Dec (JG, MP, AM, SJD). One hundred pelicans were still at R.M.B.S., St. Charles, MO 3 Jan (MT). An imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron, quite unusual in winter, was on the Christmas count at Horton-F.R.C.A., Vernon, MO 14 Dec (MR).

This winter's reports of Black Vulture in Missouri illustrate well the species' current range there, with the highest count of 455 coming from the heart of the population, tallied on the Christmas count in Tanev, MO 1 Jan (CBu). Thirty Turkey Vultures at Busch C.A., St. Charles, MO 2 Jan (PL) made the season's high count; early Iowa singles appeared 13 Feb at Sigourney, Keokuk (SJD) and 24 Feb at Cedar Rapids, Linn (BSc). Counts of Bald Eagle were higher than last year but not as high as they have been in recent warmer winters. Along the Mississippi R. in Scott, IA, 346 were noted 12 Jan (KMc), and up to 300 were present along the Elk R. and Shoal Cr. watersheds in Barry, MO in Jan (in ob.). Good numbers of Northern Harriers were found over most of the Region, with a high of 31 at O.S.C.A., Stoddard, MO (CBA). Three Harlan's Hawks were found in Iowa and 5 in Missouri, and a Krider's was seen in Warren, IA 20 Feb (JG). There were 32 reports total involving more than 52 birds of Rough-legged Hawk during the season in Iowa, with a total of 13 reported from Missouri. Seven Golden Eagles, 2 in Missouri and 5 in Iowa, were reported during the period. Missouri had an im-

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**Lesser Black-backed Gull continues to increase through most of the Midwest. This adult in alternate plumage appeared in early (here 28) February 2011 at Cedar Lake, Linn County, Iowa. Photograph by Linda Rudolph.**

**One of two in Iowa in winter 2010-2011, this Summer Tanager lingered until 17 (here 16) December at Conrad, Grundy County. Photograph by Jane Gallantone.**
pressive 8 Merlins, from all sections of the state, and Iowa had 10 individuals reported from eight counties, but only 2 were seen roost at Glendele Cemetery, Polk this winter (JCe, JG). In Iowa, 2 of the Merlins identified to subspecies were of the nominate and 4 were richardsonii, whereas Missouri had 3 identified as richardsonii. Nine Peregrine Falcons, 6 from Iowa and 3 from Missouri, were noted; some of the Iowa birds may have been from reintroduction projects. The Missouri Peregrines were seen along the Mississippi R. in St. Charles, St. Louis, and Mississippi (MT, CBa). There were four reports of Prairie Falcon from Missouri, all from the sw section of the state (MR, IA, JK), as expected.

RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Three Sandhill Cranes visited O.S.C.A. 12 Dec (CBa), 2 were at Grammer Grove W.A., Marshall, IA 1 Dec (MF), and 12 were at Riverton W.A., Fremont, IA 5 Dec (Kdy). A Kildeer at Montrose Marsh, Lee, IA 8 Jan (JLJ) was most likely attempting to winter. Missouri recorded several species of shorebirds during the season. There was an early northward push of Greater Yellowlegs: 2 at Horseshoe L., Buchanan 22 Feb (SK), 2 at Sand Prairie C.A., Scott 23 Feb (CBa), 2 at Dudley, Stoddard 26 Feb (DW, KN), one at S.L. 26 Feb (DW, KN), and 8 at O.S.C.A. 27 Feb (CBa). Two very early Lesser Yellowlegs were at O.S.C.A. 27 Feb (CBa). In Iowa, single Least and Pectoral Sandpipers were late on 2 & 4 Dec, respectively, at Waubonsie W.A., Fremont (Kdy). A late Long-billed Dowitcher was observed near Confluence S.P., St. Charles, MO 4 Dec (ph. BR). American Woodcock display began in earnest with a full moon in Newton (JG), Cape Girardeau (MH), and Stoddard (CBa), all 19 Feb.

Gull numbers were mostly unimpressive. A first-cycle Black-legged Kittiwake was at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5 Dec (SDJ, CG), and another was at S.L. in late Feb (WM, KI). A first-cycle Bonaparte’s Gull at Pool 19, Lee, IA 27 Feb (SDJ) was a record-early “spring” migrant; the high count of Bonapartes was 32 on the Iowa C.B.C. 1 Jan. Two thousand Ring-billed Gulls were estimated at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5 Dec (JSD), with 3000 at Rathbun 11 Dec (RLC) and 440 at Long Branch L., Macon, MO 19 Jan (BJ). Continuing from the fall season was an ad. California Gull at Saylorville Res., Polk, IA 4-5 Dec (AB); a first-cycle California was noted at Ottumwa, Wapello, IA 23 Dec (CG, CRE). High counts for Herring Gull were 450 at Rathbun 11 Dec (RLC), 325 at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5 Dec (JG), and 45 at Long Branch L., Macon, MO 1 Jan (PK). In addition to a few, expected Thayer’s Gulls at R.M.B.S., St. Charles, MO (MT), there were about 9 others: one was at S.L. 31 Dec, with 2 there 8 Jan (DW, KM); 3 were at Saylorville Res., Polk, 4-5 Dec (JB, AB, SJ); one was below the dam at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5-8 Dec (SDJ, MP); 2 were at Des Moines, Polk, IA 8 Dec (JG); 1 was at Rathbun 11 Dec (RLC); 2 were at Ottumwa, Wapello, IA 23 Dec (CRE); one was at Lock & Dam 14/15 in Scott, IA 14-30 Jan (JLF); and one was at Cedar L., Lynn, IA 20-27 Feb (SDJ). An Iceland and 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at R.M.B.S. 3 Jan (MT). Iowa had 4-5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls: singles at Saylorville Res., Polk 4-8 Dec (AB, JB, JG), at Red Rock Res., Marion 8 Dec (MP), at Bettendorf, Scott 21 Jan (JLJ), and at Cedar L., Lynn 3-28 Feb (possibly 2 birds; DP, To, DE, SD, BT, CRE). Single Glaucous Gulls were at Long Branch L., Macon, MO 9 Jan (RD), the Johnston gravel pits, Polk, IA 26 Dec (SDJ, JG), and Des Moines, Polk, IA 29 Dec (JG); 2 were at Ottumwa, Wapello, IA 23 Dec (CRE), and up to 2 were at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA 5-18 Dec (SDJ). A first-cycle Great Black-backed Gull was found along the Mississippi R. at Montrose, Lee, IA 26 Jan (IWM, DTH).

Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers of note were 26 at Montezuma, Poweshiek, IA 2 Dec (MP), 22 at Malcom, Poweshiek, IA 6 Jan (MP), 40 in Hamilton, IA 23 Jan (SDJ), and 30 in Cape Girardeau, MO 31 Dec (MH). A White-winged Dove turned up 2 Dec at the home of Keith Dych in Shenandoah, Page, IA (KDY). A Greater Roadrunner was observed in Greene, MO 11 Feb (G5a, G5w, AL, DL). At Cass Creek C.A., Newton, MO, a Barn Owl was seen 11 Dec (JG); a Snowy Owl in Kosuth, IA 9 Jan (Clayton Reese) made the only report of the species. Up to 20 Long-eared Owls were seen in Iowa, and n.-cen. Missouri had multiple reports from different areas of Livingston, with high counts of 6 on 10 Dec and 3 on 20 Dec (SK). Just 5 Short-eared Owls were found in Iowa counties, but they were widely reported in Missouri, the high count being 27 in Endre 3 Feb (CBu, Gsw). A Northern Sawn-whet Owl was banded in Boone, MO 16 Feb (DR, ED, fide BJ); only 5 were reported in Iowa, fewer than average.

A Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird continued from the fall season at a Jasper, MO feeder until 13 Dec (Kathy Easton, fide LH). An estimated 200 Red-headed Woodpeckers in Decatur, IA 1 Dec (NJM) was an astonishing count for such a rare species in winter and certainly an indication of a locally abundant acorn crop. Seventeen Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Iowa, mostly in the s. portion of the state, resembled the pattern of the previous winter. Six Red-shafted Flickers were reported in Iowa.

SHRIKES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Loggerhead Shrikes continued their decline in the Region; 3 were seen in Iowa, all in the s. two tiers of counties. Conversely, Northern Shrikes were widely reported, with 44 in Iowa, including several birds in s. Iowa, plus 2 in n. Missouri. Early Fish Crows appeared in Missouri in Cape Girardeau 13 Feb (MH) and Stoddard.
dard 26 Feb (CBa). Ten Tree Swallows at Swan Lake N.W.R., Clayton, MO 10 Jan (SK) made a surprising mid-winter record. A tardy Northern Rough-winged Swallow lingered through 6 Dec at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area, Webster, IA (and, ±SKD), the first winter record for the state. Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared in average numbers in both states, with most reports from s. Iowa southward; the high count was 10 in Clay, MO 15 Jan (SK). Numbers of Carolina Wren were down in Missouri but reasonably good in s. and e. Iowa, with one in Cherokee 12 Dec (DBI) near the nw. limit of this species’ range. Winter Wrens were well reported, especially in Iowa, with high counts of 5 through the period at Burlington, Des Moines, IA (JF) and 11 in Greene, MO 18 Dec (DBI). A Marsh Wren at Harrier Marsh, Boone 14 Dec (ph, LGD) made a rare winter report from Iowa. A Sedge Wren was an exceptional winter find in Buchanan, MO 5 Jan (SK, LL). Kinglets were scarce in Iowa this winter, but a Ruby-crowned was noted as late as 18 Dec in Appanoose (DT).

A Mountain Bluebird was a good find along the Little Sioux R., Cherokee, IA 8 Jan (ph, LAS). Eastern Bluebirds were more common than usual this winter, especially in Iowa, where many mid-winter reports exceeded 20 birds. Single Townsend’s Solitaires appeared in nw. Iowa at Little Sioux W.A., Clay 2-28 Jan (LAS) and at Waterman Prairie, O’Brien 3 Jan (DBI). Hermit Thrushes were widespread in both states this winter, with high counts of 13 on the Christmas count at Columbia, MO 18 Dec (JF) and 7 at Waubonsee S.P., Fremont, IA 24 Dec (KDy). Rounding out the thrush show, American Robins were also quite common this winter, with an estimated 5,000,000 in I, MO 1 Jan (CBu) and 3300 in Page, IA 15 Dec (KDy). Varied Thrushes visited Iowa at Rockford, Cerro Gordo 2 Dec (PH) and in Floyd the next day (CJF). Single Gray Catbirds were detected in Warren, IA 10 Dec (AMJ) and in Daviess, MO 18 Dec (MC, SK). Eight Northern Mockingbird reports in s. Iowa made an above-normal count, as did 4 Brown Thrashers 1 Dec-21 Jan. Several Missouri reports of single American Pipits were about normal for winter. Iowa had reports of single Bohemian Waxwings along the Little Sioux R. in Buena Vista 8 Jan and 19 Feb (LAS) and at Ames, Story 11 Jan (ph, WO).

LONGSPURS THROUGH FINCHES

Lapland Longspurs were more numerous in Iowa than Missouri, with a peak count of 5500 in Fremont 24 Dec (KDy). A Smith’s Longspur in Vernon, MO 18 Dec (MR) was unusual. Snow Buntings were widespread in both states, indicative of a strong southerly movement this winter. At their stronghold in n. and cen. Iowa, the peak count was 653 in Cerro Gordo 5 Dec (PH); in Missouri, 1-6 were noted at five locales 18 Dec-29 Jan. Among the three Missouri reports of Orange-crowned Warbler was one attempting to winter far n. at Chillicothe, Livingston 11 Jan-1 Feb (SK). Yellow-rumped Warblers are most numerous in the s. reaches of the Region in winter; Iowa had 13 reports of singles through 29 Jan. An Audubon’s Warbler was noteworthy at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO 16 Dec (PM). A few Pine Warblers were seen in s. Missouri, with one in St. Louis, MO 9 Jan (SS) the most northerly. Missouri Palm Warbler reports included up to 5 at O.S.C.A. 4 Dec-14 Jan (CBa) and one in Stoddard 2-8 Dec (CBa). A Common Yellowthroat in Buchanan, MO 5 Jan (SK) was pushing the n. limits of this species’ winter range in the Region.

There were six reports of Spotted Towhees in each state, an above-normal number, most were in the w. half of the Region. A wintering Spotted Towhee was found dead in Marshall, IA 8 Feb (Mike Stegman). In addition to a few reports of Chipping Sparrow from Missouri, one was n. to Cerro Gordo, IA 4-20 Dec (CJF). Field Sparrows are seldom found in midwinter in Iowa, so singles at Ames, Story Jan-11 Feb (ph, WO) and in Decatur 21 Feb (NJM) were noteworthy. Two Savannah Sparrows at Harrier Marsh, Boone, IA 13 Dec-28 Feb (ph, LGD) marked the first successful overwintering for the state; three reports from nw. Missouri in Jan were also of interest. The 378 Swamp Sparrows counted in Boone, MO 18 Dec (PM) represented an unusually high total. The 19 reports of Harris’s Sparrows from Iowa contrasted with just a handful of reports from Missouri. A cooperative Golden-crowned Sparrow wintered at Linn, Osage, MO 9 Jan+ (SD, m.o.b., ph.). Also in Missouri, a Gray-headed Junco was present at Rolla, Phelps 13-18 Feb (LF), the first Regional record for this subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco.

There were two reports of single male Summer Tanagers from Iowa: at Conrad, Grundy 26 Nov-17 Dec (ph, Jane Gallantine) and in Scott 1 Dec (ph, WMZ). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited a feeder at Ogden, Boone, IA 24-29 Dec (ph, DCH). Remarkably, 2 single, different Indigo Buntings attended a John- son, MO feeder 12-17 Dec and 15-16 Jan (Alan Branham). Notable icterid reports include a male Yellow-headed Blackbird at Ames, Story, IA 19 Feb (WO), small numbers of Rusty Blackbirds in both states, a Breeder’s Blackbird in Dallas, IA 19 Dec (LGD), and strong counts of Great-tailed Grackle, including 75 in Warren, IA 4 Dec (JS), 4 in Page, IA 15 Dec (KDy), and 65 in Greene, MO 30 Jan (CBu, GSw). Three Baltimore Oriole reports were all in Missouri: singles in Boone 7 Dec (LH), Vernon 14 Dec (SBR), and Cape Girardeau 6 Dec-21 Feb (SJ).

Winter finches were scarce, except for moderate numbers of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins in both states; the latter species appeared in good numbers only in Iowa. The only crossbill reported was a White-winged Crossbill in Platte, MO 23 Dec (SJ), and the lone Common Redpoll was noted in Cerro Gordo, IA 24 Dec (PH). A green-backed Lesser Goldfinch was documented in Jackson, MO 20 Dec (Ruth Simons). Eurasian Tree Sparrows continued to consolidate their range in se. Iowa with reports n. to Cedar and Johnson and w. to Keokuk (m.o.b.).

Contributors: IOWA: John Bissell (JB), Aaron Brees (AB), Mark Brown (MB), John Cecil (Je), Raymond L. Cummings (RLC), Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Keith Dyche (KDY), Chris R. Edwards (CRE), David Eastman (DE), Carolyn J. Fischer (CJF), James L. Fuller (JLF), Jay Gilliam (JG), Cory Gregory (CG), Ann M. Johnson (AMJ), Kelly McKay (KMc), Nathan J. Miller (NJM), Francis L. Moore (FLM), Diana Pesek (DP), Mark Proescholdt (MP), John W. Rutenbeck (JWR), William Scheible (BSc), Ed Thelen (ET), Dennis Thompson (DTh), Bill Tollefson (BT), Walter Zuurdeeg (WMZ), MISSOURI: Mike Anderson (MA), Chris Barriga (CBa), David Blevins (DB), Alan Branham (AB), Keith Brink (KB), Charley Burwick (CBu), Jeff Cantrell (JC), Myrna Carlton (MC), Kathy Cowens (KC), Joseph Eades (JL), David Eastier (DE), Kathy Easton (KE), Steve Dilks (SD), Andrew Donner (AD), Ida Donzalicki (ID), Ryan Douglass (RD), Ethan Duke (ED), Linda Frederick (LF), Lori Hagglund (LH), Lawrence Herbert (LH), Jack Hillsabeck (JH), Brad Jacobs (BJ), Timothy Jones (TJ), Steve Juhlín (SJ), Steve Kinder (SK), John King (JK), Andrew Kinslow (AK), Peter Kondrashov (PK), Larry Lade (LL), Ann Liles (AL), Dan Liles (DL), Pat Lueders (PL), Mark Haas (MH), Kristi Mayo (KM), Charlene Malone (CM), Paul McKenzie (PM), Mark McNeeley (MM), Terry McNeely (TM), Brian Miller (BM), Brad Pendley, Bill Reeves (BBB), Ben Raper (DR), Dean Rising (DR), Mark Robbins (MR), Bill Rowe (BR), Sara Boddy Rogers (SBR), Greg Samuel (GSa), Eric Seaman (ES), Ruth Simmons (RS), Al Smith (AS), Greg Swick (GSw), Shannon Sock (SS), Mike Thelen (MT), Dorothy Thurman (DT), Edge Wade (EWA), Doug Willis (DW).

Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield Street
Waterloo, Iowa 50703, (flmoore@forbin.net)
The winter of 2010–2011 was overall colder than normal across the Region, but subnormal precipitation resulted in few periods of snow cover. December began the season with temperatures well below normal and precipitation below normal, in fact, some recording stations registered the lowest temperatures of the winter during the month, and many recorded only one-half to one-third of normal precipitation. January continued slightly colder than normal across most of the Region, but precipitation continued to be abnormally low. In contrast, February was warmer and wetter than normal in most parts of the Region, although it remained dry in western Tennessee. Major snowfall events were lacking during the season, although Nashville received a record amount of snowfall, 11.4 cm (4.5 inches), during December. Natural and ornamental food supply appeared to be somewhat below average. Rarity highlights included four Red-necked Grebes, two Great Black-backed Gulls, and a Varied Thrush in Kentucky, and Spotted Towhee and Yellow-headed Blackbird in Tennessee.

Abbreviations: Ballard WMA (Ballard, KY), Barren River L. (Allen/Barren, KY), Big Sandy (Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN), including Face Pr and the waters visible from Trailor Rd., Port Rd., and other viewpoints across the bay, but not including Britton Ford; Black Bayou (Black Bayou W.M.A., Lake, TN), Cove Lake (Cove Lake S.P. Campbell, TN); Duck River (Duck River Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Humphreys, TN); Ensell (Ensell Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, sw Shelby, TN); Falls of the Ohio (Jefferson, KY), Kentucky Dam (Livingston/Marshall, KY); Sauerheber (Sauerheber Unit Sloughs W.M.A., Henderson, KY); Standifer Gap (Standifer Gap Marsh, Hamilton, TN).

Waterfowl through Egrets

Numbers of geese were well below average, with the following modest peak counts reported: several thousand Greater White-fronted at Sauerheber 1 Dec (DR) and 5000 Snows in Ballard, KY 20 Dec (JBS, BPA et al.). There were a few reports of Greater White-fronted e. of their traditional winter strongholds in the far w. portion of the Region, including 16 at Frankfort, Franklin, KY 17-21 Dec (BPA, GS et al.), 60 at L. Pee wee, Hopkins, KY 30 Jan (BPA, EHU), 7 in White, TN 19 Feb (DD), 4 at John Sevier L., Hawkins, TN (SH), and 2 in Washington, TN 28 Feb (RK). Ross's Geese were not particularly widespread, with the following notable high counts: at least 40 at Sauerheber 1 Dec (DR) and 36 at Duck River 19 Feb (CS, CR, SR et al.). Nineteen Snow Geese at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, Meigs, TN 27 Nov (MW et count, but a count of 140 at Sauerheber the previous winter during early Feb 2010 (fide MM) was only recently reported. In Tennessee, an imm. was at John Sevier L., Hawkins 14 Dec (SH), an ad. was at the Walmart Distribution Center, Greene 1 Jan (DM1 et al.), 4 were in Lake 31 Dec (JRW), and 3 imms. were in Hamilton 17-20 Jan (mo). Other reports of Tundras included an ad. at Frankfort, Franklin, KY 16-17 Dec (GS et al.); an imm. on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 18 Dec (BL); and an ad. that frequented a couple of locales in Hardin, KY 28 Dec–early Mar (p. RHe et al.). Four Trumpeter Swans were in Lake, TN 31 Dec (JRW).

Ducks were not particularly numerous, it is possible that the cold weather of mid-Dec pushed many farther s than normal. A few representative peak counts included 6000 diving ducks on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 26 Feb, a majority of which were Lesser Scap (BPA, EHU), and 720 Common Goldeneye on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 18 Dec (HC, ME).

It was an above-average season for Long-tailed Ducks in the Tennessee and Kentucky region, with reports from at least ten locales. These two were on the Ohio River at Louisville, Kentucky on 9 February 2011. Photograph by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.
(DS) & 11 Dec (T&CB); one on Barren River L. 15 & 18 Dec (DR), a male on the Watauga R., Carter, TN 10-20 Feb (B&JP et al.) and one at Elizabethon, Carter, TN 12 Feb (fide RK). White-winged Scoters put in a good showing across the Region, with one to 6 reported from a dozen locations 22 Dec+. Long-tailed Ducks were found in an above-average number of Kentucky locales for recent years, with 2-3 on the Ohio R. at and just upstream from 1802 River at Louisville 5 Dec (T&CB) and 30 Jan-9 Feb (MA et al.); up to 2 on Barren River L. 27 Dec-10 Feb (DR et al.); up to 2 on Cave Run L., KY 4 & 13 Jan (JH, EH, BP); on one on Kentucky L above the dam 14-15 Jan (DR, HC et al.) and 26 Feb (EH, BP); up to 4 on Ohio R. from above Meldahl Dam to Chilo, OH (Brachen, KY) 22 Jan-20 Feb (SC, JL, JY et al.); and one on the Ohio R., Gallatin 19 Feb (LM, ABa). One to 11 Long-taileds were at S Holston L., Sullivan, TN 17 Jan+ (RK, RK et al.) One to 30 Common Mergansers were reported at eight generally traditional Kentucky locales on the larger lakes and rivers, in Tennessee, the only reports were of 2 males at John Sevier L., Hawkins 11 Dec (SH) and 5 at Reelfoot L., Lake/Obion 18 Dec (fide MGr).

A Red-throated Loon at S Holston L., Sullivan, TN 18 Jan (RK et al.) and 3 at Pace Point, Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN 12 Feb (JRW) were the only rare loons reported. Common Loon numbers were below average for winter. There were four Kentucky reports and one Tennessee report of Red-necked Grebe: the late Nov bird at Lexington, KY continued through 5 Dec (Sh); one on Barren River L. 18 Dec (DR); one on the Ohio R. at Chilo, OH (Brachen, KY) 20 Feb (JL, JY); one at L. Rehe, Madison, KY 16-26 Feb (JW, PH, AU, ph. MBs, AN, CG); and one at Robco L., Memphis, TN 20-23 Feb (JRW). An Eared Grebe was present on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 28 Jan (DR) and 26 Feb (EH, BP). After only three sightings during the fall, no Eared Grebes were present at S Holston L., Sullivan, TN for the first time in many winters. Reports of American White Pelicans e. of their normal wintering range included one over the Ohio R. at Meldahl Dam, Gallatin, KY 19 Feb (RPw) and one at Cove Lake S.P., Campbell, TN 20 Dec (NM); in addition, the bird that was present n. of Bloomfield, Nelson, KY during the late fall lingered in the vicinity into mid-Jan (JN). Circa 1050 were at Reelfoot L., Lake/Obion, TN 25 Feb (SS). An American Bittern was at Sinclair W.M.A., Muhlenberg, KY at what may be a traditional wintering area 2 Jan (BP); one was found dead at FL Campbell, Montgomery, TN 19 Jan (DMo) A Great Egret at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan, KY 19 Dec (ph. GRo) was exceptionally late. As has been the norm in recent years, a few Great Egrets appeared to winter in Tennessee: 2-3 were in Knox/Blount through the period (m.ob.); 2 were at Brainerd Levee, Hamilton 18 Feb (DC); and singles were at Redfoot L., Lake/Obion 18 Dec (fide MGr) and at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, Meigs, TN 1 Jan (KAC).

**HAWKS THROUGH GULLS**

Tardy Ospreys were documented at Lexington, KY 18 Dec (JLS et al.) and on the Ohio R. below Meldahl Dam, Bracken, KY 27 Dec (YTS). Northern Goshawks are very rare in the Region, but 2 were reported in middle Tennessee: one in Lewis 7 Dec (BPu) and one in w. Nashville 21 Feb (TTL). Reports of interest of western subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk included observation on 30 Jan of both Harlan's Hawks that have wintered along Clear Gr., Hopkins, KY since winter 2005-2006 (BPu, EH); and a light-morph Harlan's near Dot, s. Logan, KY 27 Feb (FL, DR). It was an above-average year for Rough-legged Hawks in Kentucky in terms of the number of locales with sightings, although the traditional "hot spots" for the species were lacking in numbers; one to 3 birds were reported at 11 Kentucky locales during the period. Three Rough-leggeds were reported in Tennessee: singles at Ensely 19 Dec (ph. JRD, VR, SW), Ft. Campbell, Montgomery 12 Jan (DMo), and Joachim Bible Refuge, Greene 16 Feb (BBp). There were eight reports of Golden Eagle: one in Hohenwald, Lewis, TN 4 Dec (BPu); an ad. and an imm. at Hampton Creek Cove, Carter, TN 19 Dec (FA, RB et al.); one at L. Herndon, Logan, KY 24 Dec (TMBe); one at Barren River L. 25 Dec (DR, JRM); one to 2 at Bernheim Forest, Bullitt/Nelson, KY during the period (m.ob.); a subad. at Green River L., Adair, KY 28 Dec (DPc, BPu, EH); an imm. at Cave Run L., Bath, KY 13 Feb (TBW); and

This adult gull, probably a Laughing Gull × Ring-billed Gull hybrid, was present below Kentucky Dam, Livingston/ Marshall Counties, Kentucky 26 February 2011. It appears to represent the state's first report of this hybrid combination. Photograph by Eddie Huber.
Short-eared Owls staged a major irruption into central Kentucky during December 2010, with smaller numbers lingering through the winter. No fewer than sixteen locals reported the species during the season, with counts ranging from one bird to 30 per site. This one was photographed in Bourbon County 15 December 2010. Photograph by Kate Heyden.

an ad. photographed by a motion-sensing camera at a deer carcass in Shady Valley, Johnson, TN 23 Feb (TSLE). There were at least 18 Kentucky reports of Merlin (mostly singles) at 17 locales scattered throughout the period; in Tennessee, 6 were reported from six locales 4 Dec–26 Jan. The only report of a Peregrine Falcon in Kentucky away from traditional nesting or wintering territories was one at Lexington 5 Jan (SB); in Tennessee, 6 were reported from six locations 4–Dec–13 Feb.

Single Virginia Rails heard at two locales in e. Muhlenberg, KY 2 Jan (BPa), one at the Walmart Distribution Center, Greene, TN 19 Feb (GE, ABo), and one or more at Sandifer Gap through the period (m.o.b.), were the only ones reported. Southbound flocks of Sandhill Cranes continued into early Jan, with up to 3390 counted at two wintering roosts at Barren River L. 10 Jan (WT). Northbound birds began returning to Kentucky in numbers during the 3rd week of Jan, with the following peak counts: 11,680 at Barren River L. 10 Feb (WT) and 5130 in w. Hardin 14 Feb (EHa). Three at S. Holston L., Sullivan, TN 2–27 Jan (RK et al.) were well e. of their normal migration path. Four Greater Yellowlegs at TVA Lake, Shelby, TN 30 Jan (JRW) and one at Saurheber 20 Feb (ph. CC) were the earliest to be reported. A Spotted Sandpiper at Kingsport, TN wintered for the 6th consecutive year (RK et al.). Least Sandpipers typically attempt to winter on embayments of Kentucky L., Calloway and Marshall, KY but at least 5–7 present at Barren River L., KY 18 Jan–10 Feb (DR) apparently wintered at that locale for the first time. One was at Eagle Bend, Anderson, TN 29 Dec (RHo, DMY), and 28 were found during the Hiwassee C.B.C. 1 Jan (fide KAC). A few Dunlins lingered into early Dec, but 4 lingered at Barren River L., KY 15–31 Dec (DR et al.); after disappearing for a month during mid-winter, 2 were back at the same location 1 Feb, with 4 there 10 Feb (DR). In Tennessee, Dunlins are uncommon but regular in winter in e. Tennessee, so reports of 15 on the Hiwassee C.B.C. 1 Jan (fide KAC), 12 there 17 Jan (DT, BN), and 7 at Upper Douglas L., Cocke/Jefferson 29 Jan (MS) were not unexpected.

A Laughing Gull was reported below Kentucky Dam 5 Dec (HC, DR), and an ad. Laughing Gull × Ring-billed Gull hybrid was present there 26 Feb (BPa, ph. EHt), A concentration of 5000 Ring-billed Gulls on the Jonathan Creek embayment of Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 30 Jan (HC) was exceptional. One to 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls of various ages were reported at and near Kentucky and Barkley dams on nearly a dozen occasions during the season; additional reports included a first-cycle bird at Peace Point, Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN 12 Feb (JRW), a third-cycle bird on the Ohio R., Gallatin, KY 14 Jan (BPa, EHt), and an ad. on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 30 Jan (HC). One to 2 Thayer’s Gulls were present in the vicinity of Kentucky and Barkley dams through the period (m.o.b.); the only reports away from the dams were an ad. at the Jonathan Creek embayment of Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 18 Dec (HC, ME) and a first-cycle bird at Mel- dahil Dam, Bracken, KY 20 Feb (fJKSy), the latter representing the first local report. A second-cycle bird that was either a Thayer’s Gull × Iceland Gull cross or a dark Iceland Gull was seen at Meldahl Dam, Bracken, KY 6 Feb (fBPa, fTEhU, LM) and again on the Ohio R. at New Richmond, OH, Campbell, KY 13-16 Feb (fJKSy, fJSy, MG, ph. BPa, ph. LH, DM). Two Great Black-backed Gulls were present in Kentucky: a first-cycle bird at Kentucky Dam 19 Dec–11 Feb (fBPa, ph. EHt et al.) and an ad. on the Ohio R. at Markland Dam, Gallatin 13 Feb (ph. JKSy, JSy, MG). A first-cycle Glaucous Gull was present at Kentucky Dam 3 Jan–26 Feb (BPa, EHt et al.), with possibly a different one at Barkley Dam 16 Jan (DR) and at least 3 in the vicinity of Kentucky Dam 28 Jan (DR). One at Duck River 19–20 Feb (CS et al.; SS, ES) made the only report from Tennessee.

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Single Barn Owls were reported at one Tennessee and five Kentucky locales during the season. Short-eared Owls were reported in Kentucky in well-above-average numbers. One to 30 were reported in the following counties: Barren (DR et al.); two sites in Bourbon (DGA, KH, ph. KP); Clark (JHa); two sites in Fayette (JP, DPu, DSv, DL); Grayson (SK, JH et al.); Hardin (RHe, JJo); Jefferson (PB, JBe); Logan (FL); Madison (RO, AH, AN); Muhlenberg (JDi, CV, AK, fide EW); Oldham (MC); Pulaski (RD); Shelby (HB et al.); and Warren (DR). In Tennessee, a few were present at regular locations in Lake 17–18 Dec (fide MGr), and single birds were at Duck River 19 Dec (JE Dr) and Shelby Bottoms, Nashville 1 Jan (DR, PC, MH). The ad. female Rufous Hummingbird at Bardsdale, Nelson, KY was last seen 12 Dec (PG); one in Brentwood, TN remained through the period (DR).

A White-eyed Vireo was at the Reelfoot Lake S.P. headquarters, Obion, TN 2 Dec (SS). Two in Kingsport, TN 31 Dec, with one still present 15–18 Jan (ph. TH et al.; RK et al.), represented only the 5th Jan record for the state. A Fish Crow was heard in Holpenwald, Lewis, TN 15 Feb (BPa). A Purple Martin at Lyon, KY 19 Feb (AY) represented a new early arrival date for Kentucky. A Tree Swallow at Obion W.M.A., Fulton, KY 28 Jan (HC, ME) was extremely early; a flock of 80 at Austin Springs, Washington, TN 27 Feb (RK) was exceptional for such an early date. Red-breasted Nuthatches remained relatively scarce during the winter season in Kentucky, with only one to 5 reported on 14 C.B.C.s. Only 6 individuals were reported from three locations in Tennessee. A Brown-headed Nuthatch at Kinser Park, Greene, TN 18 Dec (DMI) was a first county record. Three Marsh Wrens heard in e. Muhlenberg 2 Jan (BPa) were the only ones reported in Kentucky. In Tennessee, one was found on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide MGr), and 3 were at the the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Greene 19 Feb (GE, ABo). A Sedge Wren on the Knoxville C.B.C. 2 Jan was the only one reported. A House Wren on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide MGr) was the only one reported in Tennessee.
Hermit Thrushes were locally numerous, where food supplies were good; a tally of no fewer than 29 (at one spot) at Yatesville Lake W.M.A., Lawrence, KY Jan (BPa, EHu) was an extraordinary total for Kentucky. A male Varied Thrush was present in a yard in w Marshall, KY from about 6 Feb into early Mar (ph. L&C et al.). In Tennessee, single Gray Catbirds were at Bell's Bend Park, Nashville 4 Dec (ES, FF, TL) and Kingsport 25 Jan (RK). Cedar Waxwing numbers were below average, and during the course of the winter, fewer and fewer were reported, until the species became quite scarce by early Feb. Lapland Longspurs were generally present at traditional wintering locales but not in notably high numbers, given the prolonged period of cold. A total of 52 on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec was the lowest since 1999. Also surprising, there were only three reports of Snow Bunting: 5-10 e. of Carrs, Lewis, KY 15 Dec (1JB); 2 at Lexington, KY 20 Dec (ph. JSw); and one w. of Bagdad, e. Shelby, KY 22 Jan (HB). Seventy American Pipits in Warren, TN 1 Jan (SMc) was a noteworthy high count.

Six Orange-crowned Warblers were reported, all in Tennessee: 3 on the Chattanooga C.B.C. 18 Dec (JHe, DJ), one on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. (fide MGr), one on the Kingsport C.B.C. (TH et al.), and one at Nickajack L., Marion, TN 7 Feb (TR). A Pine Warbler in Carter, TN 18 Dec (FA) was rare for winter in ne. Tennessee. A Yellow Palm Warbler was reported along Swan Pond Rd., Russell, KY 11 Dec (TRD). Numbers of Palm Warblers across Kentucky and in e. Tennessee were down, perhaps due to the harsh early winter weather; the only one reported in e. Tennessee was 6 on the Knoxville C.B.C. 2 Jan, elsewhere in Tennessee, one was reported from the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. (fide MGr), and one was in David- son 29 Jan (JSw). A Common Yellowthroat below Wolf Creek Dam, Russell, KY 11 Dec (TRD) was very late or attempting to winter, another was present at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Greene, TN 19 Feb (DMt).

A male Spotted Towhee was in Gibson, TN 11-24 Jan (MGr, TR, CB). An American Tree Sparrow on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide MGr) was the only one reported from Tennessee; a Chipping Sparrow (rare in winter in nw. Tennessee) and a Vesper Sparrow were also seen there on the Christmas count. Three Vesper Sparrows were in Warren, TN 6 Feb (SMc). There were only two Kentucky reports of Le Conte’s Sparrow: 8-10 at Long Point Unit, Reelfoot N.W.R., Fulton 18 Dec (BPa, AW et al.) and one at Ballard W.M.A., Ballard 20 Dec (BPa, EHu, JB, HC). The former comprised part of a count record 18 reported from the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide MGr). Exceptionally high numbers of Fox Sparrows were noted in Kentucky during the season, including at least 25 in a single flock. of Boston, Nelson 26 Dec (BPa), 60 in e. Muhienberg 2 Jan (BPa); at least 30 in a yard near Fisherville, se Jefferson 27 Jan (EHu, JHu); and at least 50 in a single flock off Figgett Bend Rd., Hart in early Feb (BBa, CF). A Lark Sparrow on the Kingsport C.B.C. 31 Dec (TH et al.) made only the 7th record for ne. Tennessee.

A striking yellow-pigmented Northern Cardinal was present in a yard in sw. Boyle, KY during late Jan–early Feb (ph. DG). A Summer Tanager frequented a feeder in Knoxville, TN 31 Dec–3 Jan (ph. fide KDF). A Western Meadowlark in Fulton 18 Dec (BPa, EHu) was the only one reported in Kentucky, in tennessy, 6 were reported on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide MGr), and 3 were at Ensley 22 Dec (JRW). It was a good season for Rusty Blackbirds in Kentucky, where numerous reports came from scattered locales across much of the state, including up to 250 reported on 18 Christmas counts. About 250 Rusties were spotted in Madison 18 Dec (fide GR). 200 were near Danville, Boyle 18 Dec (GC et al.), and at least 150 were near Nashville, Mcdon Dec (BPu). Small numbers turned up in yards at scattered locales across Kentucky commencing in early Dec. Other reports of interest included at least 500 at Griffin Park, Warren, KY 21 Dec (DR) and at least 30 (including a banded bird; surely from last winter’s study) at Cleaton, Muhienberg, KY during late Jan and Feb. A wintering flock of Brewer’s Blackbirds was again present in e. Grayson, KY, with up to 30 birds present early Dec–early Jan (JSh, LB, SK, JK). Other reports of interest included 2 at North Bend Bottom, Boone, KY 18 Dec (TNK, DGr); one near Clay, Webster, KY 30 Jan (BPa, EHu), 12 in w. Fulton, KY 5 Feb (FPk); and 2 n. of Franklin Crossroads, Hardin, KY 12 Feb (MA). Two in Spring Hill, Mauy, TN 13 Jan (DK) were rare for middle Tennessee. A female Yellow-headed Blackbird was near Old Hickory Dam, Davidson, Tennessee on 5 January 2011. Photograph by Frank Fekel.

This male Varied Thrush was present intermittently in a rural yard in Marshall County, Kentucky from early (here 23) February into March 2011. It represented Kentucky’s fifth documented record. Photograph by Larry Heavrin.

Yellow-headed Blackbird continues to be an occasional annual vagrant to the Tennessee and Kentucky region. This female was present near Old Hickory Dam, Davidson County, Tennessee on 9 January 2011. Photograph by Frank Fekel.

Purple Finches were a bit more widespread overall than in recent years, counts as high as 204 were reported from 25 Kentucky C.B.C.s, with the impressive tally of 204 coming from Mammoth Cave N.P 21 Dec (fide BFe). Relatively smaller numbers were widespread in the Tennessee. Small numbers of Pine Siskins lingered into early winter, with only one to report on five Christmas counts in Kentucky. Most birds disappeared by early Jan, although at least 100 continued near Gunlet, Elliott, KY into early Feb (EM), and 150 were in a yard in Marion, TN 18 Feb (TR). Fifteen Red Crossbills in Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains N.P., Sevier, TN 11 Dec (MR) constituted the only report.
Addendum: A male Orchard Oriole in a yard at Richmond, Madison, KY 27 Jan–Mar 2010 (R&C&GS) represented a Regional first for winter.

Cited contributors (subregional editors in boldface): Fred Alsop, Michael Autin, Andrew Baldelli (AbA), Bruce Bardin (BBA), Tom & Colleen Becker (T&CB), Jane Bell (JBe), Pat Bell, Mark Bennett (MB), Rob Biller, Clyde Blum, Simon Bonner, David Booker, Allen Boynton (ABo), John Brittain (JBr), Lisa Brittain, Ben Britton (BBt), Horace Brown, John Brunjes (JBr), Marilyn Burgess (MB), Marissa Buschow (MBs) Kevin A. Calhoun (se. Tennessee), Michael Callan, Phillip Casteel (middle Tennessee), David Chaffin, Hap Chambers, Suzanne Clingman, Granville Cox, Charlie Crawford, Roseanna Denton, Jason Dierio (JDI), Douglas Downs, Jerry Drewry (JDr), Melissa Easley, Todd & Lynn Eastin, K. Dean Edwards, Glen Eller, Frank Fekel, Blaine Ferrall (BFe), Bob Foppe (BFo), Carol Friedman, John Froeschauer, Diane Ganzer (DG), Paula Geils, Mark Gibsdorf (MGI), Carol Gobert, David Gourley (DGo), Darlena Graham (DG), Mark Greene (MG), Mark Hackney, Jim Hanssen (JHa), Erin Harper (EH), Richard Healy (RHe), Larry & Cheryl Hearvin (L&CH), Adam Heist, John Henderson (JHe), Kate Heyden, Ron Hoff (RHo), Eddie Huber (EHu), Jennifer Huber (JHu), Susan Hubley, Tom Hunter, Daniel Jacobson, Laura Keene, Ned Keller, Gail King, Janet Kistler, Steve Kistler, David Kirschke, Rick Knight (ne. Tennessee) (RK), Roy Knispel (RK), Andrew Kremski, Paul Kruszling, Tony Lance, David Lang, Bill Lisowski, Frank Lyne, Scott Marsh (SMa), Lee McNeely, Susan McWhirter (SMc), Don Miller (DM), Nell Moore, Evelyn Morgan, Donald Morse, Jr. (DMr), Mike Morton, Daniel Moss (DMo), Dollyann Myers (DMy), Jason Nally, Bill Nelson, Andy Newman, Ryan O’Connor, Jeff Oliver, Brainard Palmer-All, Jr. (BPA), Don Pelly (DP), Kiz Potensky, Brooke & Jean Potter, Bill Pulliam (BP), Doreen Pulliam (DP), Joe Pulliam, Virginia Reynolds, Gary Ritchison (GRI), Gerald Rube (GR), Tommie Rogers, David Roemer, Joan Roemer (JRm), Mike Roussin, Jeff Rowe (JR), Cyndi Routledge, Steve Routledge, Kelly Roy, Ed Schneider, Claire & Guenter Schuster, Lou Shain, Jan Shaw (JS), Michael Sledjeski, Chris Sloan, Scott Somersho, Gary Sprandel, Jack Stenge (JS), Jay Stenger (YS), Tommy Stephens, Del Striegel (DS), Dave Svetich (DS), Joe Swanson (JSW), Wayne Tammenga, David Trenly, Alyssa Underwood, Chantal Vil lenueve, Melinda Welton, Robert Wheat, Alan White, Eric Williams, Jim Williams (JW), Sue Williams, Jeff R. Wilson (JRW), Brian Wulkar, Aviva Yagurs.

**Chris Sloan, 224 Hicks Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37221, (cslan1973@gmail.com)
Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr
Kentucky State Nature Preserve Commission
881 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(brainard@mindspring.com)**

**Alabama & Mississippi**

**C. Dwight Cooley**

It was a dry, cold winter across the Region, with all stations reporting below-average precipitation and temperatures throughout the season except in February, when temperatures were above average. Snowfalls came early and often in a Region not accustomed to more than light dustings. Many got their wish for a white Christmas across much of northern Alabama and Mississippi when 6 cm of snow fell on Christmas Eve. Wintry weather persisted into the New Year, and Huntsville, Alabama recorded 23 cm of snow 9-10 January. Inland stations recorded up to 12 days with snowfall and 53 days where minimum daily temperatures fell below freezing. All the wintry weather doubtless contributed to the mix of unusual species found—and to the delight of observers fortunate enough to see them.

**Abbreviations:** E.N.W.R. (Eufaula N.W.R., Barbour/Russell, AL); N.N.W.R. (Noxubee N.W.R., Noxubee/Oktibbeha/Winston, MS); W.N.W.R. (Wheeler N.W.R., Morgan/Madison/Limestone, AL).

**WATERFOWL THROUGH GREBES**

Unlike recent winters, waterbird numbers and diversity were high this season. Greater White-fronted Geese peaked at 400 at WNW.R. Morgan 30 Jan (RU). Ross’s Geese were reported from several locations, with 25 in Lauderdale/Colbert 26 Feb (DJ, DCB) es-

Alabama’s second verified record of Crested Caracara was provided by this bird near Magnolia Springs, Baldwin County, very near the location of the first state record. Initially found 100 (here 11) February 2011, the bird delighted observers through the winter period. Photographs by Bill Summerour (top) and Kathy Hicks.
tablishing an Alabama maximum and up to 13 at Browning Cr., Oktibbeha, MS 15 Dec–1 Feb (TLS, DP, JPa, FD) a high count there. Cackling Geese were reported from W.N.W.R., Morgan, where up to 8 were seen 12 Dec–2 Feb (SWM, CDC, SRM, DH, m.ob., ph.) and near Magnolia Springs, Baldwin, AL, where one was found 21-28 Dec (DPI, BS, ph.). Always rare in the region, an imm. Tundra Swan was near Hope Hull, Montgomery, AL 6 Feb (LFG), and an ad. and imm. were near Ballentine, Panola, MS 22-24 Dec (RB).

Rarely reported inland in winter, 80 Blue-winged Teal at E.N.W.R. 16 Dec (JMc) made an Alabama winter inland maximum. Up to 7 Surf Scoters were at Gulf Shores, Baldwin, AL 2 Jan–15 Feb (MWR, JR, m.ob., ph.). White-winged Scoters, the most uncommon scoter species in the region, were reported from scattered Alabama locations: 16 were on Bon Secour Bay, Baldwin 8 Dec (DPI); 2 were on West Point L., Chambers 30 Jan (IwV); 3 female-types were near Huntsville, Madison 5-11 Feb (BM, ph.); and were near Smithsonia, Lauderdale 26 Feb (DJS, DCB). The only Black Scoters reported were 3 female-types at W. Dauphin L., Mobile, AL 9 Dec and a female at W.N.W.R., Limestone, AL 9 Jan (SWM). Up to 2 Long-tailed Ducks were reported from two Alabama sites: at Florence, Lauderdale 17 Dec–26 Feb (DJS, ph.) and at Guntersville, Marshall 27-30 Jan (LBR, RAR, m.ob., ph.). Unusual in recent years, Common Mergansers were reported across n. Alabama and Mississippi for extended periods. In Alabama, up to 6 females were on Limestone Bay at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec–11 Feb (SWM, SRM, CDC, m.ob., ph.) up to 6 females were along the Natchez Trace, Lauderdale 22-23 Dec (PDK), and a female was on Bear Cr., Colbert 29 Jan (JRW). In Mississippi, representing the area’s 9th and 10th records, respectively, a male was on Bluff L., N.N.W.R., Noxubee 2 Jan (TLS, FD, RS), and a female was on Ok-ti-bbeha County L., Oktibbeha 14 Dec–1 Jan (TLS, MHS).

A Red-throated Loon on Bay Springs L., Tishomingo, MS 23 Jan (WRP) was the only one reported, as was a Pacific Loon at Guntersville, AL 15-30 Jan (SRM, AH, m.ob.). About 400 Horned Grebes on Ross Barnett Res., Madison, MS 29 Jan (GK, JNW) made a good number. A species reported annually now, 2 Eared Grebes were at Bear Cr., AL 29 Jan (JRW). Alabama’s 7th Western Grebe was on L. Mitchell, Chilton 3 Jan+ (BD, AD, m.ob., ph.).

PELICANS THROUGH CRANES

The fall movement of American White Pelicans through the Region peaked 1 Dec, with 1400 recorded during a waterfowl survey at W.N.W.R. (CDC, TA, LL, RHU). Elsewhere, 14 in Andalusia, Covington, AL 24 Dec (TWS) and 1398 on the Gulf Shores C.B.C., Baldwin, AL (fide GDJ) were noteworthy. In Alabama, 2 Anhingas were on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide TS), one was near Midway Station, Bulklock (JAT), and 2-3 were at Mobile, Mobile 13-27 Feb (BN). Seventeen Reddish Egrets on the Dauphin Island C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide TS) tied the Alabama maximum established last winter. Unusual at any season, a Plegadis ibis was in Andalusia, AL 26 Dec (TWS). The only White Ibis were reported were 12 near Hartford, Geneva, AL 12-20 Feb (TWS).

Continuing the trend of recent years, Ospreys were widely reported inland. Singles were on the Guntersville C.B.C., AL 26 Dec (fide LBR), at W.N.W.R. 29 Dec (KU), and near Auburn, Lee, AL 29 Jan (PW, JW), and near Starkville, Oktibbeha, MS 23 Dec (DM), while 5 were on the Montgomery C.B.C., Montgomery, AL 2 Jan (fide LFG). Thirty Bald Eagles on the Gulf Shores C.B.C., AL 2 Jan (fide GDJ) provided a south Alabama maximum count. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk, rare in winter, was near Marion, Perry, AL 23 Dec (BCG, ph.). An imm. light-morph Rough-legged Hawk at W.N.W.R., Limestone, AL 5 Jan–11 Feb (CDC, TR, m.ob.) was only the 2nd verified record in the past 10 years at that refuge; in Mississippi, up to 2 frequented the State Migratory Refuge, Lafayette, MS 18 Dec–4 Feb (GK, SKn, JH, NL), and one was in Washington 2 Jan (fide PH). A Crested Caracara near Magnolia Springs, AL thrilled observers 10 Feb+ (DPI, m.ob., ph.); there is only one previous verified state record. Another Crested Caracara, Mississippi’s 4th,

As documented in previous reports, the status of Sandhill Crane in the Region has changed dramatically in recent years, and cranes are now widespread throughout the Region, with thousands wintering, though most counts are still in the dozens away from favored sites such as W.N.W.R. While their numbers are increasing and they are reported from additional sites each year, they appear to be limited by their preference for shallow-water roosting habitat and the availability of corn and other small grains. Nevertheless, areas of apparently suitable habitat in n. Alabama and Mississippi are currently unused; if the cranes begin to occupy such areas in winter, the region could become very important to the winter ecology of the species.

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Alabama’s second Mountain Plover was found near Magnolia Springs in Baldwin County 18 (here 19) January 2011 and remained through the reporting period. Photograph by Eric C. Soehren.
was at the Jackson County S.T.P., *Jackson* 30 Dec (MWO, CD, SML, LC, ph.). Merlins continue to be reported with regularity. In Alabama, 2 were at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec on the Christmas count (Jude CDC), and singles were near Lexington, *Laurel* 1 Jan, Huntsville 8 Jan, and Florence 8 Jan (all DJS). In Mississippi, an imm. female was at Browning Cr. 23 Nov-1 Dec (TLS, DP, JPa, FD). Peregrine Falcons were lightly reported, though one on the Guntersville C.B.C., AL 26 Dec (Jude LBR) and 5 on the Christmas count at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec (Jude CDC) were encouraging.

Yellow Rails are thought to be annual, low-density winter residents of marsh and pine savannah habitats in the Region, but records are few. Two captured and banded near Bayou La Batre, *Mobile*, AL 18 Jan (ECS, m.ob., b., ph.) added to our understanding of their status in the Region. Up to 2 Virginia Rails were at the Grenada Sewage Lagoons, *Grenada*, MS 15-30 Dec (GK, Skn, WRP), and up to 3 were near Brooksville, *Noxubec*, MS 19 Dec-29 Jan (TLS, MHS) for the 2nd consecutive winter. Single Soras were at the Grenada Sewage Lagoons, MS 15-30 Dec (GK, Skn, WRP) and near Brooksville, MS 19-27 Dec (TLS, MHS), the 5th area winter record. For the 5th consecutive year, Whooping Cranes from Operation Migra-

tion were recorded in the Region. At their traditional wintering site on W.N.W.R., up to 11 were found 1 Dec+ (CDC, LL, WRG, m.ob., ph.). In Cherokee, AL, Weiss L appears to be developing as a wintering site as well. Up to 9 were there 18 Dec-29 Jan (RH). However, 2 were found shot dead there 29 Jan, and the remaining 7 left the area later that day and were not seen again. There is a $30,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for these deaths.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**

Alabama’s 4th winter record, a Wilson’s Plover was on Grand Batture, *Mobile* 13 Jan (JNW). Alabama’s 2nd Mountain Plover was found near Magnolia Springs 18 Jan (DF, m.ob., ph.). It frequented a large sod farm, wandered widely, and was not easily found during its stay. Many birders spent long hours driving roads along the perimeter of the farm, and most were rewarded with looks at the bird. It remained through the end of the reporting period. A Black-necked Silt on Ok-tibbeha County L. 19 Feb (TLS, MHS) was the area’s 7th. A Solitary Sandpiper on the Gulf shores C.B.C., AL 2 Jan (Jude GDJ) was unexpected. Spotted Sandpipers continue to be widely reported inland during winter. One wintered for a 5th consecutive year at Ok-tibbeha County L., MS 2 Dec (TLS, MHS). A juv. White-rumped Sandpiper at Magnolia Springs 10-14 Dec (GDJ, DGJ, ph.) was Alabama’s first in winter. An amazing 60+ American Woodcocks were flushed during prescribed burning operations at Dixon Reserve, Covington, AL 10 Dec (TMS).

California Gulls staged a small movement into the Region. Alabama’s 9th, a third-cycle bird, was at Magnolia Springs 9 Dec (GDJ, ph.), and 2 (second-cycle and third-cycle) were at the Tunica County Landfill, MS Dec 28 and 6 Feb (JRW, Jude GK). First-cycle Thayer’s Gulls were at Guntersville, AL 15-29 Jan (MM, m.ob., ph.) and the Tunica County Landfill, MS 6-20 Feb (JRW, Jude GK). Reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to increase. In Alabama, up to 6, including 2 first-cycles and 4 adjs., were at Magnolia Springs/Summerdale, *Baldwin* 20 Nov-28 Jan (BS, GDJ, m.ob., ph.), and up to 4 were at Town Cr. and Wheeler Dam, *Colbert/ Lawrence/Lauderdale* 8 Jan–17 Feb (DJS, m.ob.). In Mississippi, a first-cycle bird was at Sardis Dam Lower L., *Panola* 9 Jan–13 Feb (GK, Skn, JW, NL), and up to 2 were at the Tunica County Landfill 6-20 Feb, where a first-cycle Glaucous Gull was also seen 28 Dec (both JRRW). In Alabama, an ad. Great Black-
backed Gull was on Dauphin I. 29 Dec-19 Jan (JNW, m.ob.), and a first-cycle bird was at Gulf Shores 2 Jan-19 Feb (GJ, m.ob., ph.). The eastward spread of Inca Doves continues, with 12 recorded on the Washington County South C.B.C., Washington, MS 2 Jan (fide Paul Hamel). A Short-eared Owl on Grand Barteau I., AL 14-28 Jan (JNW) furnished the only Regional report. Northern Saw-whet Owls, most banded, were reported from multiple locations. One on Chandler Mtr., St. Clair, AL 27 Nov was recaptured 19 Feb (FM, BMo, b.), 3 were in Clay, Jefferson, AL 4 Dec (RBS, MBS, ph., b.); one was in Hollins, Clay, AL 19 Jan (MW, DW, b.); one was found dead in Amite, MS 10 Dec (MI, MK); and one was in Laurel, Jones, MS 16 Jan (DB). An ad. Buff-bellied Hummingbird in Mobile, AL 28 Jan (FB, SK) returned to the site for a 5th consecutive year, and another was in Biloxi, Harrison, MS 20 Dec–early Jan (GM, JBe, b.). In Mississippi, single Anna's Hummingbirds were in Biloxi 14 Jan (GM, JBe, JNW, b.) and Terry, Hinds 26 Jan–15 Feb (AK, RRS, MBS, b.). An imm. male Allen's Hummingbird was in Theodore, Mobile, AL 17 Dec (FB, JP, WP, ph., b.), and one of reported age/sex was in Biloxi, MS 15 Dec (GM, JBe, b.).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES**

An Ash-throated Flycatcher was near Magnolia Springs, AL 5 Dec (BS, ph.), and Alabama's 5th inland record was provided by one near Hartford 21 Jan–8 Feb (RW, KW, ph.). Alabama's first inland Western Kingbird was near Hartford 5-19 Feb (RW, KW, ph.). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher near Normal, Madison 28 Nov–15 Feb (MB), and 2 near Hartford 5 Feb (RW, KW, ph.) furnished Alabama's first inland winter record. Single White-eyed Vireos were at Andalusia, AL 8 Dec–29 Jan (TWS) and E.N.W.R. 2 Feb (JAT), and 3 at Andalusia 20 Feb (TWS) were likely early migrants. Blue-headed Vireos appear to be wintering farther n. in Alabama. This winter, 3 each were at Coosa W.M.A., Coosa (JAT, ECS) and on the Birmingham C.B.C., Jefferson/Shelby 23 Dec (fide JAT), and 2 were on the Guntersville C.B.C. 26 Dec (fide LBR). A Red-eyed Vireo at Andalusia 9 Dec (TWS) furnished Alabama's first winter record.

The spread of Fish Crows northward from the coastal plain in Alabama appears to be continuing. Up to 8 were at Guntersville 4 Dec–29 Jan (SWM, ECS, m.ob.); up to 3 were at W.N.W.R., Limestone 15 Dec–6 Jan (CDC, SWM); one was near Wright, Lauderdale 18 Dec–19 Jan (DJS); one was at Weiss L. 18 Dec (RH); and one was in Rogersville, Lauderdale 23 Feb (DJS). Sedge Wrens rarely winter inland, so one at Hoover, Jefferson, AL 23 Dec–24 Jan (TK) was unusual. Up to 3 Marsh Wrens were at W.N.W.R., Limestone, AL 18 Dec–19 Jan (CDC, m.ob.), and one was on the Montgomery C.B.C. 2 Jan (PT). The count of 2006 American Pipits at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec (fide CDC) made an Alabama maximum.

Orange-crowned Warblers were widely reported from inland locations in Alabama, with singles on the Waterloo C.B.C., Colbert/Lauderdale 18 Dec (fide PDK), at Birmingham 20 Dec (HHW), on the Birmingham C.B.C. 23 Dec (fide JAT), at Madison 1 Jan (HP), at Winfield, Marion 22-23 Jan (JJ), and at Guntersville 29 Jan (ECS, JAT). Three were at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec (fide CDC). A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Fairhope, Baldwin 27 Feb (CPD, DWD) was Alabama's 2nd winter record. A Black-and-white Warbler was at E.N.W.R. 16 Dec (GEH). The only Yellow-breasted Chat report came from Barnwell, Baldwin, AL 3 Dec (KHI). A female-type Summer Tanager at Florence, AL 10 Jan (SM) was unusual so far inland. Two Bachman's Sparrows at N.N.W.R., Noxubee, MS 16 Jan (ZL, JL, JLo) furnished the 4th area winter record. The 364 Chipping Sparrows on the Collman C.B.C., Collman, AL 19 Dec (fide JAT) made a region maximum. A Clay-colored Sparrow at Clay, Jefferson, AL 27 Dec (RRS, MBS) was rare away from the coast. A Grasshopper Sparrow near West Point, Clay, MS 8 Feb (ZL, JL, JLo) was a first area winter record. Le Conte's Sparrows were reported widely in Mississippi. At N.N.W.R., Winston, one was in Prisssco Field 18 Dec (TLS, MHS), and 3 were in Smith Field 18 Dec (TB, MB); 4 were at the State Migratory Refuge 18 Dec–4 Jan (JL, SK, NL); one was near West Point 8 Feb (ZL, TC, JM); 2 were at Trim Cane W.M.A., Okitibeha 11-12 Feb (TLS, AG, EI); and one was on the Mississippi State University North Farm, Okitibeha 24 Feb (ZL, AM). Two Lincoln's Sparrows were at W.N.W.R. 18 Dec (fide CDC), and one was near Proctor, Limestone, AL 25 Dec (CDC). The area's first record, an ad. Harris's Sparrow was at Trim Cane W.M.A., MS 8 Feb (AM).

Lingering late in Alabama, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Florence, AL 24 Dec (PN) and a male Indigo Bunting at Grant, Marshall, AL 10 Jan (JB, ph.). A Dickcissel frequented a feeder in Foley, Baldwin, AL 10-19 Dec (MJJ). Four Western Meadowlarks were in Tuscaloosa, MS 13 Feb (BK, SK), and a female Yellow-headed Blackbird was near West Point, MS 26 Feb (AM). The only significant concentration of Rusty Blackbirds reported was of 200 along the Natchez Trace, Prentiss, MS 12 Dec (WRP). Alabama's 2nd winter record of Shiny Cowbird was of one on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 2 Jan (WJB). All Baltimore Orioles were reported from Alabama, where an imm. was at Greenville, Butler 16 Dec–late Jan (ANM), one was at Auburn 25 Jan–25 Feb (SW), and up to 2 were at Brewton, Escambia 20 Feb (BA). Two crossbills at a feeder at Birmingham 19 Feb (RSM, EM), apparently White-winged, represented only the 4th report of any crossbill in Alabama away from the Talladega Mountains.


C. Dwight Cooley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge Complex 2700 Refuge Headquarters Road Decatur, Alabama 35603, (sabrewing@earthlink.net)
It was another relatively cold winter but also relatively dry in southern areas of the Region. In the Benton Parishes area, although not quite as cold as early 2010, from December to mid-February there were at least 26 morning lows at or below freezing, and the first half of February was one of the coldest on record. In stark contrast, the second half of that month was one of the warmest on record. Arkansas and northern Louisiana had it much worse as far as wintry weather was concerned, with several substantial bouts of snow and icing, mainly during mid-January to mid-February, and extreme cold down into the minus teens, e.g., -18°F at Fayetteville and -21°F at Highfill, Arkansas 10 February (Ike Mike Mlodinow). The Louisiana Winter Bird Atlas Project (10 January–20 February; see: <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/WinterBirdAtlas.html>) continued into its fifth season.

Abbreviations: C.N.F (Camp Nine Farm, Desha, AR). Counties/parishes are indicated only for the initial mention of a specific locality, and states are 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. Significance for Arkansas records is based on *Arkansas Birds, Their Distribution and Abundance* (James and Neal 1986), and the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS) online bird record database (for records since 1986). Significance for Louisiana records is based on the bird record card file database and the Louisiana Bird Records Committee archives at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science, as well as the most recent draft of the forthcoming *Birds of Louisiana* (Remsen, Cardiff, Dittmann, and Dickson).

**WATERFOWL**

Only the 2nd winter record for Arkansas, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were observed commuting over Ogden, Little River almost daily Dec–early Jan, with a maximum of 60 on 5 Jan (CM). Winter concentrations in the New Orleans, Orleans, LA area continued to mushroom, with several thousand reported late Jan–early Feb and an astounding maximum of 7850 estimated 20 Feb (RDP, GO et al.). An amazing “goose day” near Pine Bluff, Jefferson, AR 27 Dec (K&L) was proclaimed with an unbelievable mega-flock of 15,000 Ross’s Geese, obviously a Regional and Arkansas high count and an impressive concentration anywhere; not too surprisingly given the size of the flock, 3 blue-morph Ross’s were a nice bonus. Two more blue-morph Ross’s were found near Kelso, Desha 5 Jan (ph. DB); these and the Pine Bluff birds represent only the 2nd and 3rd occurrences of this rare morph in Arkansas. Coincident with the Arkansas reports, an ad. blue-morph Ross’s Goose near Thornwell, Jefferson Davis 17 Dec (ph. SWC, DLD) provided one of very few reports from Louisiana and was possibly the first photographically documented in the state. Cackling Geese continue to increase steadily in the Region; there were numerous reports from Arkansas, with a maximum of 500 at C.N.F 16 Jan (DB), and 2440 were found by a single party in the Thornwell area 18 Dec (SWC, DLD). The incredible Pine Bluff goose bonanza (which also included Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Cackling Geese) was capped by a Barnacle Goose 27–28 Dec (ph. K&LHN, RHD). Although provenance was obviously a concern, the bird was associating with Cackling Geese and appeared during an “invasion” winter for the species into the Northeast, leading to its acceptance as a first Arkansas record. Arkansas Trumpeter Swans away from the now traditional site at Magness L., Cleburne included 6 at Cottonwood Farms, Miller 8 Feb (DS, Brad Townsend, Cameron Tamu) and 2 at Springdale, Washington 18 Feb (JCN, David Oakley et al.).

A Wood Duck at Grand Isle, Jefferson, LA 22 Dec (EJ) was a local oddity for this isolated coastal location surrounded by salt marsh. As American Black Ducks have declined, and as hybrids with Mallards, as well as inland occurrences of Mottled Ducks, have increased, definite records of American Blacks are now seldom submitted. Thus, an American Black Duck near Kelso 16 Jan (DB) was of interest. Fifteen Mottled Ducks at Amos Bayou, Desha 16 Jan (DB) suggested an expansion from the nearby resident population at C.N.F. Fifteen Blue-winged Teal on the Arkadelphia C.B.C., Clark 18 Dec (Donald Harrington) was a sizeable flock for this rare Arkansas winter visitor. The only report of Cinnamon Teal was of an ad. male at the La...
cassine N.W.R. Pool Unit, Cameron, LA 12 Dec (ph. Dennis Demcheck); a male Cinnamon Teal x Blue-winged Teal hybrid was spotted there 19 Feb (ph. DLD, SWC). Always an excellent find, inland White-winged Scoters were sighted at L. Hamilton, Garland, AR 16 Dec (LA) and at L. Martin, St. Martin, LA 9-14 Feb (ph. Matt Pardue); another 5 scattered among three locations along the Cameron coast: 29 Jan (ph. PEC, BMM) made for a very good season for the state’s rarest scoter and continued an upward trend in occurrences. Two rare Long-tailed Ducks at Pelican L., Terrebonne, LA 15 Dec (AK) and another inland near Boyce, Rapides 18 Jan (VH) were, surprisingly, all ad. males and the only ones reported. An ad. male Barrow’s Goldeneye at L. Dardanelle, Yell from 19 Dec through approximately 29 Jan (K&HN, m.ob.) was a 3rd for Arkansas; the species remains unrecorded in Louisiana. Of rarer winter waterfowl species, four reports of Common Mergansers were above average, all from Arkansas: 2 at Bob Kidd L., Washington 14 Dec (AS), 2 at L. Dardanelle, Pope 18 Dec (K&HN), one at Craighead Forest Park, Craighead 13 Jan (N&CL, MP) and 10 near Gentry, Benton 5 Feb (JCN et al.). Relatively rare inland Red-breasted Mergansers included singles in the Fayetteville area, Washington, AR 18 (JR, Donald Oueller) & 19 Dec (MAM), at Poverty Point Res., Richland, LA 13 Jan (DBb), and near Welsh, Jefferson Davis, LA 31 Jan (DBb); 1000 at Pelican L. late Dec–7 Jan (AK) made a spectacular concentration.

**GREBES THROUGH SPOONBILL**

A Red-necked Grebe at L. Chicot, Chicot 27 Feb (LA) provided Arkansas with its 10th record, and a Pacific Loon at L. Maumelle, Pulaski 30 Jan (DS, MP, KH, JD) was about the 15th for the state. The puzzling “inland Brown Pelican” phenomenon continued, with one both mated with Turkey Vultures near Welsh 31 Jan (DBb) and an ad. at Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge, LA 7 Feb (Brian J. O’Shea); also away from the immediate coast were 5 on the Intracoastal Waterway in the vicinity of Gibsontown near Cameron Prairie N.W.R., Cameron 20 Dec (PEC, BMM, JWH et al.), with one still there 20 Feb (DLD). Whether representing vagrants of the Pacific Coast subspecies or rare variants of the Atlantic subspecies, small numbers of “red-pouched” Brown Pelicans continue to be reported along the Louisiana coast, this season including several near Cameron, Cameron 6 Jan–25 Feb (ph. DP) and one nearby at Holly Beach, Cameron 25 Feb (ph. PEC). A Neotropic Cormorant at Moorningsport, Caddo, LA 4 Dec (TD, Mark Wilson) was unusual-

ly far inland, especially for so late in the year. An Anhinga at L. Chicot 27 Feb (LA, TM) was only about the 5th winter occurrence for Arkansas. Exceptionally late Magnificent Frigatebirds were spotted at Pelican L. 11 Dec (AK) and at Port Fourchon, Lafourche, LA 22 Dec (ph. SWC). A Least Bittern near Venice, lower Plaquemines, LA 7 Jan (EW) was the only report. Warm-weather waders lingering in Arkansas included a Snowy Egret at Millwood L. Hempstead 5 Jan (amazingly, only the 2nd winter occurrence for Arkansas, CM), a Little Blue Heron near Little Rock, Pulaski 7 Dec (only the 3rd winter occurrence since 1986; JD), 5 imm. Black-crowned Night-Herons at C.N.E., Desha 16 Jan (only about the 10th Arkansas winter occurrence since 1986; JD), Bill McCallum), and a total of 28 White Ibis at three sites. Arkansas locations 3 Jan–27 Feb (again, only about 10 previous Arkansas winter occurrences since 1986; Bobby Schat, Judy Blackwell, LA, TM). Two Roseate Spoonbills were a big surprise for so late and so far inland in Madison, LA across from Vicksburg, MS 18 Dec (ph. David J. Ringer, Bruce Reid, Blaine Elliott).

**OSPREY THROUGH FALCONS**

Ospreys at L. Atalanta, Benton 29 Dec (Vicky May) and on the Arkadelphia C.B.C., Clark 18 Dec (Wayne and Marty Lynch) were only the 3rd and 4th winter records for n. Arkansas and first reported since 1986. A White-tailed Kite in Beauregard, LA 27 Dec (JHV) was in the same vicinity where recent breeding has taken place, suggesting residency in the area. Only about 6 Broad-winged Hawks were reported along the Louisiana coast (m.ob.), a sharp decrease from recent winters, and Swainson’s Hawks were also down relative to the past few years, with only 3 reported from lower Plaquemines (m.ob.). Extremely rare in Louisiana, a Ferruginous Hawk near Johnsons Bayou, Cameron Parish 27 December 2010 was presumably the same individual first found there in late October, but this second individual located nearby on 27 December was all the more remarkable. Photograph by Paul E. Conover.
Although a few appear annually on the coast in winter, this Franklin’s Gull at Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish 11-14 (here 11) February 2011 represented only about the fourth winter record from well inland in Louisiana. More importantly, after several sight records in recent years, it provided the Arkansas and Louisiana region’s first photographic documentation of an individual sporting full breeding plumage in winter. Photograph by Amy Shutt.

Very rare in the Arkansas and Louisiana region and the only one found in winter 2010-2011, this cooperative first-cycle Black-legged Kittiwake entertained birders at the Cameron ferry, Cameron Parish, Louisiana 19-23 (here 23) December 2010. Photograph by Dave Patton.

A different individual from the one found in late November 2010, this adult Parasitic Jaeger in the Gulf of Mexico just off Cameron, Cameron Parish 1 December 2010 provided another definitive record for Louisiana. Photograph by Dave Patton.

on the C.B.C. at Wapapoca N.W.R., Crittenden 26 Dec (Dick Preston) and at Craig Fish Hatchery near Centerton, Benton 19 Jan (JCN). Arkansas claims the vast majority of the Region’s Rough-legged Hawk occurrences, but even in that state, the species is reported less and less frequently; the Benton observation was nw. Arkansas’s first since 1995. The 4-5 Golden Eagles reported included an ad. in Woodruff, AR 20 Dec (D&SS, J&RA), an imm. near Kelso 23 Dec (ph. DB, BMI, Jeff Baxter), 2 ads. at Holla Bend N.W.R., Pope 26 Dec (JD), one ad. there 5 Jan (LA), and one at Morganza, Pointe Coupee, LA 3 Jan (an injured bird recovered by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and rehabilitated at the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine, fide Jennifer Coulson and Dr. Javier Nevarez). Although the species is expanding its distribution in sw. Louisiana, a Crested Caracara at Duson, Lafayette 10 Jan (Beckie Harri) was still relatively far ne. of typical areas. There has been a gradual upward trend in reports of winter Peregrine Falcons in the s. interior, but the species remains rare at that season farther inland, where this season singles were observed near Shreveport, Caddo 6 Dec (TD) and at Holla Bend N.W.R., Pope 5 Jan (CK). A Prairie Falcon in Woodruff 20 Dec (D&SS, J&RA) was a nice surprise in e. Arkansas, where there are relatively few occurrences; statewide, there are now an impressive two-dozen or so records since 1951, and most have been found during the past 25 years. Prairie Falcon has yet to be satisfactorily documented in Louisiana.

CRANE THROUGH PHALAROPES
Arkansas reports of Sandhill Cranes included 2 near Kelso 23 Dec (DB, BMI) and one at Bragg L., Ouachita 7 Feb (Kelly Chitwood); Louisiana sightings away from well-known winter flock locations included one over the St. Gabriel area 5 Dec (JVR) and 7 nearby over the s. outskirts of Baton Rouge 9 Jan (REG), 16 at Bayou Chico, Evangeline 1 Jan (JBo, DBo), up to 305 in Richland 19 Jan–3 Feb (ph. SLP), up to 301 in Morehouse 14-16 Feb (ph. SLP), and 8 near Duson 31 Jan (ph. PEC). The flock of Sandhills in the Holmwood-Sweet Lake area of Calcasieu/Cameron had grown to a state record 1874 by 19 Feb (SWC, ph. DLD). Two Black-bellied Plovers at Delta Farms, Catahoula, LA 22 Dec (JBo, DBo) were unusually far inland for winter. Eight Semipalmated Plovers near Thornwell 18 Dec (SWC, DLD) extended the recent pattern of inland winter sightings. Not too long ago almost unheard of in sw. Louisiana at any time of year, and from almost anywhere on the coast in winter, 2 American Oystercatchers near Cameron 19 Dec (SWC) and 4 at Sabine Pass, Cameron 19 Jan (BMM, DP) provided further evidence of a small resident population establishing itself along the w. coast. Rumors of unprecedented winter numbers along the cen. and se. coast, including aggregations in the 50-100 range, could not be officially submitted or confirmed due to confidentiality restrictions imposed on contractors by the Natural Resource Damage Assessment. Twelve American Avocets near Kelso 22 Dec (DB) added to the few previous Arkansas winter occurrences; interestingly, the species was not recorded inland farther s. in Louisiana this season. Solitary Sandpipers are very rare in winter and almost annual, but three mid-season Louisiana occurrences were a surprise: at Alexandria 10 Jan (JVR), at Reserve 12 Jan (ph. MW), and at Avery L., Iberia 16 Jan (ph. Josephine Nixon). For the 2nd year in a row, Long-billed Curlews were detected near Holmwood 20 Dec (5 birds; ph. REG); the species is regular on the sw. coast in winter, but there are few winter occurrences more than a few km inland of the immediate coastline. Three Red Knots at Rio Grande Pass, Orleans 26 Jan (GO) were also unusual just slightly inland of the outer coastline. Very early were 3 Pectoral Sandpipers near Holmwood 19 Feb (SWC, DLD), and very late or wintering was a Dunlin well inland at L. Hamilton 16 Dec (LA). Adding to just a few previous winter occurrences were single Wilson’s Phalaropes near Belle City, Calcasieu 24 Jan (ph. MJM, Kevin Leigh) and near Kaplan, Vermilion 5 Feb (ph. PEC).

GULLS THROUGH JAEGERS
A Laughing Gull at Kincade L., Rapides 22 Feb (JH, SSh) was the farthest inland report of the season. One to a few Franklin’s Gulls, usually first-cycle in-
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According to bander Nancy L. Newfield, 2010-2011 winter hummingbird numbers (through Feb, at least) continued the downward trend from the peak years of 2000-2004. Newfield personally handled 241 individuals, including 184 new birds, 55 previously banded returns, and 2 foreign recaptures. The two "foreignes" were both Buff-bellied Hummingbirds: one was first noted at Hanahan, Jefferson, LA 8 Dec (LU), captured 11 Dec (NLH), and discovered to have been banded at Rockport, TX 4 Sep 2010; the other, wintering at Greenwell Springs, East Baton Rouge since 28 Nov (Janie and Allen Hill) and captured 18 Dec (NLH), had been banded at St. Simons 1.5 Jan 2010, at which time it represented Georgia’s 2nd occurrence! Another intriguing Buff-bellied anecdote involved a bird at Baton Rouge 31 Oct (S. NLH), then observed about 60 km w. at Lafayette where it stayed for about eight days 16 Nov-+ (ph. DP), and then was recaptured back at the original Baton Rouge yard on 31 Dec! Also of note among the 50 or so Buff-bellieds reported in Louisiana were no fewer than 8 appearing in one yard near St. Gabriel 7 Nov-Feb (ph. DLD, SWC, b. DP).

individuals, occur annually on/near the coast, but one at Cameron 19 Dec (SWC, ph. DLD) was more unexpectedly an adult. A first-cycle Franklin’s was found nearby the next day (ph. JBo, DBo). Another ad. at Baton Rouge 11-14 Feb (JVR, ph. Amy Sturt et al.) represented only about the 4th winter occurrence from well inland in Louisiana and more importantly provided the first Regional photographic documentation of an individual sporting full breeding plumage during the winter; the bird made another appearance in Mar, suggesting that it was not just an exceptionally early migrant that had undergone an accelerated molt. Arkansas’s 5th California Gull was a first-cycle bird at L. Dardanelle, Yell 23 Jan (K&LN). At least 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were observed during the period at L. Dardanelle, Yell, with an ad. 10 Dec+ (K&LN, D&SS, Bill Shepherd, KH et al.), a first-cycle bird 31 Dec-15 Jan (K&LN), and a second-cycle 4 Jan-27 Feb (K&LN); there are about 15 previous reports, almost all from this location and all from 1994+. Small numbers of Lesser Black-backed are now routine along the Louisiana coast, but 2 about 13 km n. of Crowley, Acadia 17 Jan (PEC) had commuted fairly far inland. Glaucous Gull was represented by single imms. at Cook’s Landing/Murray Lock and Dam, Pulaski, AR 23 Jan (JD), and near Holly Beach, LA 26 Feb (ph. PEC, BMM). Always an exciting bird in the Region, a cooperative imm. Black-legged Kittiwake patrolled the Calcasieu R. at the Cameron ferry landing 19-23 Dec (SWC, ph. DLD, m.ob.).

A rare inland Caspian Tern at L. Chicot 27 Feb (LA) was thought to have been driven inland by the passage of a strong storm moving out of the Gulf of Mexico. Two Sandwich Terns w. of Johnsons Bayou 29 Jan (PEC, BMM) added to the surprisingly few mid-to late winter occurrences for the Region. A Black Tern at Cameron 5-9 Dec (ph. PEC, DP) was presumably a very late fall straggler. Considered a different individual from the one found in late Nov 2010, an ad. Parasitic Jaeger in the Gulf of Mexico just off Cameron 1 Dec (ph. DP, BMM, ph. HH) provided another nice definitive occurrence for Louisiana.

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Still scarce in Arkansas, a White-winged Dove was at Wilson, Little River 7 Dec (CM), and 13 were counted in Fort Smith, Sebastian 18 Dec (Bill Beall, Jim Nieting et al.); an estimated 300 at Buras, lower Plaquemines 2 Jan (DBo, JBo) represented a possible record count for sc. Louisiana and almost certainly the highest state count since the big hurricane year of 2005. Ironon, Plaquemines hosted 8 Inca Doves 30 Jan (RPD, DPM, GO) and became the newest outpost in the species’ eastward push through Louisiana. A Long-eared Owl near Ralph, Marion, AR 16 Dec (LA) was the only one detected. Unusual for the Baton Rouge area was a Short-eared Owl 27 Dec (RB, vt. REG); Short-eareds penetrating as far s. as the coast included one recently dead near Holly Beach 19 Dec (WW, HM), one near Cameron the same day (SWC, ph. DLD), and one at Fort Fourchon 22 Dec (ph. SWC). Despite it supposedly being a “big year” for the species and considerable searching by Regional observers, only one Northern Saw-Whet Owl was reported: at Buffalo National Rivier, Newton 15 Dec (Jack & Pam Stewart); there are only about a dozen previous Arkansas occurrences, most recently in 2005, and many fewer for neighboring Louisiana. An Eastern Whip-poor-will near St. Gabriel 2 Dec (DLD, SWC) was apparently attempting to winter but could not be found after 28 Dec; another wintering individual was discovered near Sweet L., Cameron 20 Feb (DLD, SWC). Vaux’s Swifts are now annual during winter at Baton Rouge, and this season was no exception, but the only report during the official winter period involved 2 seen 11 Feb (Jacob Cooper, James Klarevas-Irby).

An amazing 7 Broad-billed Hummingbirds ventured to Louisiana during fall-winter 2010-2011, 6 of these within the winter season dates. All but one, a female at Robert, Tangipahoa 7 Nov-Feb (ph. Alma Chacez, b. Linda Beall, MMZ), were ad. or nearly ad.
This voice-confirmed Tropical Kingbird near Braithwaite, Plaquemines Parish 9 January–15 February (here) 2011 was initially assumed to be the returning individual that was found the previous winter, but two birds were seen together there starting 19 February and a third appeared in March. Photograph by Devin Boldt.

This female Mountain Bluebird near Grand Isle, Jefferson Parish 22 (here 24) December 2010 through 20 January 2011 was a first for the immediate southeastern coast of Louisiana, not to mention only the second for anywhere in southeastern Louisiana and only about the tenth for the state. Photograph by Devin Boldt.

Woodpeckers venturing unusually far southeastward included a rare se. coastal Red-headed at Hopedale, St. Bernard 5 Feb (ad.; ph. GO), a Downy at Grand Isle 31 Dec–8 Jan (perhaps the same colonist reported there over the past year or so; vt. PAW, EW), and a Pilate in lower Plaquemines 22 Jan (PAW). Although Yellow-shafted (and apparent hybrid) Northern Flickers are fairly regular in the West in fall and winter, Red-shafteds are found much less frequently in the East, and those that are reported are seldom documented. Thus, a female Red-shafted Flicker was an excellent find near Maysville, Benton, AR 10 Dec (ph. JB). About the 4th or 5th for Louisiana, and the 3rd from winter, a voice-confirmed Pacific-slope Flycatcher was an inexplicable “one-day-wonder” at well-covered Grand Isle, Jefferson 28 Dec (ph. Robert C. Dobbs, Meribeth Huizinga). A Say's Phoebe at Craig Fish Hatchery 18 Dec–19 Jan (MAM, JR, m.ob.) continued a recent uptick in Arkansas records, with at least 10 noted over the past five years. A solid assortment of Ash-throated Flycatchers included singles near Bell City 20 Dec (ph. WW, HM, Michael A. Seymour, Beau Gregory), near Mire, Acadia 28 Dec (Bill Fontenot, ph. Bill Vermillion, Patti Holland), near Kaplan 1–23 Jan (ph. PEC), at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R., Orleans 23 Jan (EW), and near Happy Jack, Plaquemines 19 Feb (ph. GO). Brown-crested Flycatchers were also relatively well represented, with singles at Ft. Jackson, lower Plaquemines 2 Jan (vt. PAW, ph. John P. Sevenair), New Orleans 26 Dec–8 Jan (JJ, vt. PAW), and at Braithwaite 15 Feb (DBo).

A Great Kiskadee at the White Lake C.A. near Gueydan, Vermilion 22 Feb (Gay Gomez) and a pair at Rockefeller Refuge near Grand Chenier, Cameron 25 Feb (JBo) were at known sites for the species in sw. Louisiana; a pair at Hackberry, Cameron 19 Dec–3 Jan (Matt & Gary Pontiff, ph. Tom Finnie, ph. DBo et al.) made the first “modern” record for this location where breeding was suspected way back in 1968–1971. A voice-confirmed Tropical Kingbird near Braithwaite, Plaquemines 9 Jan–15 Feb (vt. PAW, m.ob.) was initially assumed to be the same returning individual found the previous winter, but the plot thickened considerably when 2 were seen together starting 19 Feb+ (ph. DBo, JBo et al.); depending on records committee interpretations, these would be the 5th and/or 6th state records. Adding to the growing number of definitive occurrences in Louisiana, and only the 4th from the deep interior, was a voice-confirmed Couch's Kingbird just w. of Alexandria, Rapides Parish 15–22 Feb (ph. SSh, JHV et al.). Of the 50 or so Western Kingbirds reported...
from s. Louisiana 28 Dec+ (m.ob.), 39 were in one aggregation at Diamond 22 Jan (PAW); a total of 8 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, all in s. Louisiana 12 Jan+ (m.ob.), was a sharp drop from recent winters. One of the more intriguing birds of the season was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher x yellow-bellied kingbird hybrid discovered at Brathwaite 9 Jan+ (vt. PAW, ph. DPM, ph. Charles Lyon, m ob); probability and appearance suggest that Western Kingbird was the other parent, but some observers believed that the bird’s bill was too hefty for that combination. This would be the first record of any such hybrid in Louisiana.

VIREOS THROUGH MIMIDS

Two Bell’s Vireos was about normal; one was near Triumph, lower Plaquemines 2 Jan (GO, ph. Don Norman), and the other visited Nancy Newfield’s Casa Colibri in Metairie, Jefferson, LA 25 Jan (NLN). An unusually large presence of Blue-headed Vireos as far n. as cen Arkansas included 2 in the Ozark N F, Pope 17 Dec (first winter occurrence for Ozarks Region, CK), one at Dagmar N WR, Monroe 20 Dec (D&SS, J&RA), one at Pine Bluff Regional Park, Jefferson 27 Dec (RHD), one at Dardanelle, Yell 31 Dec (KN), and one on the Christmas count at Hollis Bend N WR, Pope/Yell 5 Jan (K&LN). Northwestern Arkansas experienced an unusual early “spring” influx of Fish Crows, with multiple sightings of up to 13 across Washington and Benton from as early as 14-15 Feb (Jim Morgan, Joan Reynolds, MAM, JB JCN). Three Horned Larks were a good find at Baton Rouge 2 Jan (IL, Celeste Louque, RB), the species is rare and irregular this far s. in Louisiana. One or 2 Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Grand Isle 22 Dec (EJ et al.) may have been very late migrants; one at L. Fayetteville, Washington 28 Feb (MAM), although officially only the 4th winter record for Arkansas, conceivably could have persisted to a very early spring migrant, as the earliest spring occurrences are from the first week of March. Somewhat similarly, a Barn Swallow at Grand Isle 22 Dec (EJ et al) may have been a very late fall migrant, and one at Holly Beach 26 Feb (PEC) was obviously an early spring arrival, less easily explained was a hapless Barn at Potsville, Pope 2 Feb (LA), sitting on a road amidst about 20+ cm of snow during blizzard conditions!

Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce in Louisiana, with only four reports, all fairly far s. in Louisiana: one near Lowry, Cameron 18 Dec (DPM, PAW), one at Reserve 12 Jan (ph. MW), and 2 at New Orleans 26 Feb (EW). As with the Downy Woodpecker noted above, a Carolina Wren at Grand Isle 31 Dec (PAW) may have been the same colonist reported there off and on over the past year. Although rare and declining, Bewick’s Wrens are more regular in the Region in Arkansas and nw Louisiana, from where about 8 individuals were reported this winter (m.ob.), one at Baton Rouge 2+ Jan (IL, JWH et al.) was much more unusual. A House Wren at Woolsey Wet Prairie near Fayetteville 6-22 Jan (JP) provided one of few mid-winter occurrences for nw Arkansas. At least locally, good numbers of Winter Wrens persisted from the fall irruption, e.g., 14 were counted in a relatively small area near St. Gabriel 2 Jan (SWC, DLD). A female Mountain Bluebird near Grand Isle 22 Dec-20 Jan (ph. JE, JWH, m ob) was a first for the immediate se. coast, not to mention only the 2nd for anywhere in se. Louisiana and only about the 10th for the state. A rare Wood Thrush at Grand Isle 24 Dec-18 Jan (JBo, DBo, PAW) was the lone report. Ten Gray Catbirds reported from Arkansas 17 Dec-27 Feb (m.ob.) was an excellent winter showing so far north.

WARBLERS

At least one of the Nashville Warblers at Grand Isle during the late fall (presumably) continued to be detected there 21 Dec-18 Jan (GO, ph. EJ, DBo et al.). Also at Grand Isle was a Northern Parula 31 Dec (PAW), and another was found near Triumph 8-19 Feb (DBo, JBo). Single Yellow Warblers visited Grand Isle 22 Dec (VL) and St. Bernard S P, St. Bernard 12 Jan (ph. TT, GO, MMe, Shelly Antoine). Surprisingly, there were no reports of Black-throated Green Warblers, usually one of the more reliable winter rarities, especially in lower Plaquemines. At least 7 Yellow-throated Warblers were reported from se. and s cen. Louisiana 2 Jan-16 Feb (m ob.), including a yellow-lored bird at Baton Rouge 12 Feb (JVR, Robert Frank). Also in above-average numbers in Louisiana during the period was Prairie Warbler, with about 8 reported (m ob.). Several Palm Warblers persisted well into the winter in Arkansas, including a very rare Yellow Palm far nw. in Fayetteville 13 Nov-19 Dec (MAM, Richard Staufacher, JCN, Nicole Hardiman), and single Western Palms at Felsenthal N WR, Union 3 Jan (amazingly, first winter occurrence for extreme sw. Arkansas, LA, TM), at Holla Bend N WR, Pope 5 Jan (LA), and at C N F 30 Jan (DB). Two American Redstarts at Palmieto Island S P, Vermilion 3 Dec (Elias Landry) were the only ones reported. A Black-and-white Warbler at Shreveport 19 Dec (Larry Raymond, Laurence Hardy) was a quality bird for the n. interior. A few Northern Waterthrushes are regularly found in s. Louisiana in winter, but this season’s 9 individuals 17 Dec-15 Feb (m ob.) marked another unusually good showing for the species. Ovenbirds were detected at Grand Isle 24 Dec-18 Jan (JBo,
ARKANSAS & LOUISIANA

Zonotrichia near Kaplan 17 Dec (ph. JBo, DBo) was thought to be a White-throated Sparrow x White-crowned Sparrow hybrid.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Four Summer Tanagers were scattered across s. Louisiana: at Thornwell 18 Dec (SWC, DLD), at Harahan 21 Dec (ph. LW), near Triumph 8 Feb (DBo), and at New Orleans 11 Feb (GO, Colleen Morgan). Also at Harahan was an even rarer Western Tanager 8 Jan (ph. LW), with another found at Baton Rouge 12 Feb (JVR). In a reversal of the normal pattern for winter Pheucticus, Rose-breasted out-numbered Black-headers 4:1. The Rose-breasted were near Milan 19 Dec–20 Feb (ph. Toddly Guidry), in St. Tammany 23 Dec (ph. Charlotte Seidenberg), at Butte La Rose, St. Martin late Dec–early Jan (ph. Jim Dela- houssaye), and at Boothville, lower Plaquemines 20 Feb (ph. DPM, vt. PAW, GO). The Butte La Rose bird was a stunningly plumaged partially leucistic individual. The only Black-headed Grosbeak was an ad. male reported near Milan 28 Dec–6 Jan (EIJ). Blue Grosbeaks were at Baton Rouge 23 Dec (Eric Liffman) and at L. Martin 19 Jan (Danny M. Dobbs). An Indigo Bunting at Crowley's Ridge Nature Center, Croighhead 22-23 Dec (N&CL, MP) was about the 8th or 9th winter occurrence for Arkansas. About a dozen Indigos in s. Louisiana 9 Dec–2 Jan (m.o.b.) was about normal or even below average for recent years (strangely, none reported from mid- through late winter), and in another reversal of the typical winter pattern, Indigos were outnumbered by the 22 Painted Buntings found over the same area 18 Dec–20 Feb (m.o.b.). Surprising given the relative abundance of other rare wintering cardinals, only 2 Dickcissels were found, solitary birds in Baton Rouge 25 Dec (Robert Sherman) and near Duson 31 Jan (ph. FEC).

Although probably overlooked, Western Meadowlarks are considered rare in s. Louisiana, so singles at Cameron 20 Dec (ph. JBo, DBo), near Oak Grove 17 Jan (MW), and near Lake Arthur 12 Feb (DBo) were worthy of mention. Arkansas's first winter Yellow-headed Blackbird since 1988 was near Decatur, Benton 21 Jan (ph. Terry Stanfill); most unusual among the 11 reported in s. Louisiana were singles at Buras 2 Jan (JBo, DBo) and at Ironton 30 Jan (RDP). Our two species of “large grackles” continue to push their breeding and winter distributions slightly northward and eastward into cen. Louisiana; this season's assortment included 27 Great-tailed in Natchitoches 14 Feb (JHV), an apparent territorial male Boat-tailed on the outskirts of Baton Rouge 27

Jan–14 Feb (same site where breeding has occurred the past two years, but the first winter occurrence; JVR, SWC, DLD), and 15 Boat-tailed at Morganza Spillway forebay. Pointe Coupee 14 Feb (Murrell Butler, James Mire). Bronzed Cowbirds continue to proliferate across s. Louisiana, but the species remains scarce in the Baton Rouge area, where separate individuals were reported 31 Dec and 2 Jan (both Daniel F. Lane). An imm. male Orchard Oriole at Metairie 19 Feb (ph. JG) represented the only report. Two Bullock's Orioles included an ad. male Scott's Oriole visited a feeder at Benton, Saline 4-11 Feb (ph. Peggy Roberson, DS). Purple Finchess and Pine Siskins were generally scarce, although there were scattered reports of concentrations into double figures. A few siskins penetrated to the outer coast, e.g., one over Port Fourchon 22 Dec (DLD) and one over Johnsons Bayou 27 Dec (JBo, DBo). Red Crossbills seem to shun Louisiana but were once again reported from Arkansas, this time 9 at Feltsenthal N.W.R. 3 Jan (LA, TM), not too far over the border... Only the 4th for Louisiana and the first since 1995, an ad. male Lesser Goldfinch at Pleasant Hill, Sabine was visited by many birds 6-8 Jan (ph. Debbie Ponder, ph. VL, m.o.b.).


Steven W. Cardiff, 435 Pecan Drive
St. Gabriel, Louisiana 70776, (scardiff@gmail.com)
We are pleased to welcome Clare Kines as Nunavut’s first subregional editor. Clare resides in Arctic Bay on Baffin Island, a town of about 750 people located 770 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle. Clare’s many reports over the years have helped shape our understanding of the Region, and his new role will better connect birders in this very remote and very fascinating part of North America.

Snowfall was at or below average over much of the eastern and northern Northwest Territories, but in parts of the Delcho and Sahtu regions of the Mackenzie Valley, the snowpack was considered normal to high. Nunavut experienced a very warm fall and early winter, particularly in the Baffin region. The Yukon’s winter was relatively cold, reminiscent of decades ago, but still without much in the way of prolonged bitter cold. Late fall snowfalls in southern Yukon accounted for the season’s relatively deep accumulation, even though snowfall through the rest of the winter seemed sparse.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS**

Trumpeter Swan is now a regular wintering species at Johnson’s Crossing, s. Yukon, a flock of 8 was there through the season (ph. AS). A lone Mallard on the Dawson C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide SJ) provided a rare winter record for cen. Yukon; a record-high count of 60 Mallards was recorded at McIntyre Cr., on the Whitehorse C.B.C. 26 Dec (CE). Three Common Eiders at Rankin Inlet, Nunavut 23 Dec (BE) were the only waterfowl recorded on any C.B.C. in Northwest Territories or Nunavut this year. The Region’s highest winter count of Common Mergansers was 42 at Tagish, s. Yukon 25 Jan (SVd).

Four Ruffed Grouse were seen at Henderson’s Corner, cen. Yukon 25 Jan (CE), and singles were recorded on Christmas counts at Norman Wells 27 Dec (RP), Ft. Simpson 19 Dec (DT), and Hay River 18 Dec (GV). Five Spruce Grouse were recorded on the Teslin, s. Yukon C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide BS), and 4 were seen near Swift R., s. Yukon 27 Dec (BS). Yellowknife, NWT typically records the Region’s highest C.B.C. totals of Willow Ptarmigan; 255 were tallied 2 Jan (fide RB), while 48 were recorded at Norman Wells, NWT 27 Dec (fide RP), and 8 Willow and a White-tailed Ptarmigan were found on the Haines Junction, sw. Yukon C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide JuB). A winter trip to Tombstone Park, cen. Yukon recorded 80 Willow and 2 Rock Ptarmigan 26-27 Jan (CE). Two White-tailed Ptarmigan, rarely reported in winter, were seen among Ptarmigan Cr. in the Swift R. area, s. Yukon 27 Dec, 1 Jan, and 12 Feb (BS). Norman Wells was the only C.B.C. to record Sharp-tailed Grouse, with 6 on 27 Dec (fide RP). A lingering Horned Grebe, casual in s. Yukon in winter, was at Tagish 5 Dec (SVd). Numbers of wintering Bald Eagles have been creeping higher around Whitehorse, s. Yukon; this year, a new high of 15 was recorded on the C.B.C. 26 Dec (CE). A Sharp-shinned Hawk, casual in winter, was reported from Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 22 Jan (LA).

**GULLS THROUGH FINCHES**

Unusually warm temperatures in late autumn allowed at least 20 Glaucous Gulls to linger in Iqaluit, Nunavut until about 17 Dec (MM). Northern Hawk Owls seemed somewhat scarce in the Region this winter; singles were reported from Silver Dollar L., s. Yukon 24 Dec (ph. AS), Tombstone Territorial Park, cen. Yukon 26 Jan (CB, CE), Norman Wells, NWT 27 Dec (JL), Yellowknife, NWT 2 Jan (RB), and along the winter road between Ft. Good Hope and Colville L., NWT 31 Jan (RP). Great Gray Owl is a highlight of any winter trip; one was seen between Ft. Good Hope and Colville L. 31 Jan (RP), and 2 were in that area 23 Feb (HSC); other singles were seen at Caribou, NWT 20 Feb (RP) and near Rancheria, s. Yukon 30 Jan (ph. CE). A Boreal Owl was seen at Norman Wells, NWT during count week (DF), and likely the same individual was seen again 22 Jan (WH); a roosting Boreal was a welcome yard bird in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 1 Jan (ph. CE, PS). A Northern Saw-whet Owl in Whitehorse 15 Feb (JG, LMa, ph. PS) furnished the Yukon’s first photographic record of a live bird. A single Pileated Woodpecker was seen in flight at Ft. Simpson, NWT 23 Feb (DT, StC, ScC, AD, MS). A Black-billed Magpie, rare in the Whitehorse area, s. Yukon, was seen at Wolf Cr. 16 Jan (JH).

Whitehorse, s. Yukon recorded the Region’s highest Black-billed Magpie count, with 143 on 26 Dec (fide JH). In Northwest Territories, Black-billed Magpies were noted on the Hay River and Yellowknife C.B.C.s, with counts of 18 on 18 Dec (fide GV) and 46 on 2 Jan (fide RB), respectively. This species continues to be rare elsewhere in Northwest Territories. Two American Crows in Whitehorse, s. Yukon through the season (ph. JeB; YL; ph. CE) provided a first winter record for the Region and further evidence of the species’ expanding population. Common Raven went unchallenged as the most abundant C.B.C. species in the Region, with Yellowknife reclaiming its crown with a new high count of 2613 on 2 Jan (fide RB), while Whitehorse was runner-up, with a total of 1964 on 26 Dec (fide JH). At Old Crow, the Yukon’s most northerly C.B.C., Common Raven and redpoll, each with a count of 6, tied for the most common species (BC, LS). At Arctic Bay, Nunavut, raven was the only species recorded on the C.B.C., with a count of 207 on 2 Jan (CK). Tagish in s. Yukon continues to produce the Region’s highest counts of Mountain Chickadee; 6 were noted there 26 Dec (SVd). Single Northern Shrikes, rare but regular in winter, were reported from Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 18 Jan (JuB), Canyon Cr., sw. Yukon 24 Jan (RRH), and Marsh L., s. Yukon 26 Feb (JK). An American Robin eating May Day (Prunus padus) berries kicked off the winter birding season in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 1 Dec (CC). A flock of 5 Bohemian Waxwings, casual in cen. Yukon in winter, were recorded on the Mayo C.B.C. 29 Dec (MOD).

True wintering Snow Buntings were at White Mt., s. Yukon 11 Jan (CE), but 20 at Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 27 Feb (CD) were more likely spring migrants. In Nunavut, Snow Buntings were reported to be at Qikiqtarjuaq all winter (MK) and were also seen at Pangnirtung 15 Feb (ph. DK). Single American Tree Sparrows, rare in s. Yukon in winter, were recorded at Morley Bay 14-18 Dec (ph. CA, DH) and on the Marsh Lake C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide CO). A hardy Song Sparrow, a highlight of the Ft. Simpson, NWT C.B.C. 19 Dec (ph. DT), survived the season thanks to a well-stocked feeder (DT, MH, LMo). Single tardy White-crowned Sparrows, rare in winter, were at Haines Junction feeders, sw. Yukon on 1-2 Dec (CD), 15 Dec (WR), and 7 Feb (BL); another attended a feeder at Takhini R., s. Yukon 1-2 Dec (LG, JH). A White-
throated Sparrow was unusual but not unprecedent on the Hay River, NWT C.B.C. 18 Dec (GV). Impressive numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos were recorded on Yukon C.B.C.s, with 68 at Haines Junction 19 Dec (fide JuB), 37 at Carcross 19 Dec (fide DK), 35 at Tagish 26 Dec (fide SnD), 29 at Whitehorse 26 Dec (fide JH), 20 at Teslin 18 Dec (fide BS), 5 at Marsh L. 19 Dec (fide CO), and one at Dawson 19 Dec (fide SJ); a lone Dark-eyed Junco wintered in Yellowknife (SM).

A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, casual in winter, frequented a feeder at Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 14-20 Jan (LA). Finches in general, and redpolls in particular, were very scarce in the Dechco area, NWT in early winter, but numbers gradually increased through Feb (DT). A hanner White Spruce cone crop across s. Yukon produced good numbers of finches, as evidenced by the Whitehorse C.B.C. 26 Dec, which recorded 221 Pine Grosbeaks, 141 Red Crossbills, 118 White-winged Crossbills, 328 Common Redpolls, a Hoary Redpoll, and 380 unidentified redpolls (fide JH). A flock of 150 White-winged Crossbills was seen at Wolf Cr., s. Yukon 21 Jan (JH), and a large flock of 400 Common Redpolls (and not a single Hoary!) was recorded at Whitehorse, s. Yukon 3 Feb (CE). Six Hoary Redpolls attended a feeder at Watson Lake, se. Yukon 30 Jan (CE). Hoary Redpolls were present in Iqaluit, Nunavut into Dec in numbers higher than normal (MM). A Pine Siskin was among Common Redpolls at a Whitehorse, s. Yukon feeder 29 Jan (BS); another hit a window at Destruction Bay, sw. Yukon in mid-Feb (MF). Evening Grosbeaks were only found on s. Northwest Territories C.B.C.s, with 8 in Ft. Simpson 19 Dec (DT), 10 in Hay River 18 Dec (GV), and 24 in Ft. Smith 21 Dec (JH). House Sparrows have declined dramatically in Northwest Territories; they were recorded only as a count week species in Ft. Simpson, with counts of just 3 at Hay River 18 Dec (GV) and 4 at Yellowknife 2 Jan (fide RB), down from a high count of 426 in 2003. The small House Sparrow population in Whitehorse, s. Yukon, with 28 counted on 26 Dec (HG), has been stable for the past few years.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): Libby Anderson, Julie Bauer (Jub), Jeremy Baumbach (Jeb), Chuck Blyth, Robert Bromley, Cathy Brooke, Smith Cameron (ScC), Steve Catto (ScC), Carolyn Couch, Aaron Donohue, Claude Dulac, Cameron Eckert, Maus Faber, David Fowler, Linda Gerrand, Jim Gilpin, Helmut Grunberg, Mary-Ann Hennaford, Jim Hawthorne, Wes Hodgson, Jurg Hoefer, Sebastian Jones, Jean Kapa, Dan Kemble, David Kitabuk, Clare Kines (Nunavut), Birch Kuch, Morris Kulaimee, Yvette Lepage, Brent Lidell, Jerry Loomis, Mark Mallory, Laura Markle (LMa), John McKinnon, Lisa Moore (LMo), Steve Moore, Mark O'Donoghue, Clive Osborne, Richard Popko, Wolf Reedl, Robyn Rufange-Holway, Heather Sainee-Crawford, Ben Schoneweille, Pam Sinclair, Adam Skrucksński, Mike Suitor, Leila Sumi, Douglas Tate (Northwest Territories), Shyla van Delft, Gary Viznikowski, David Wilderspin.

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

Prairie Provinces

Rudolf F. Koes
Peter Taylor

The Region experienced a cold winter, with well-above-average snowfall, especially in Alberta and Saskatchewan. As a result, few waterfowl or gulls lingered past the first week of December, while half-hardy feeder visitors were scarce, and mortality among them seemed to be high. Bucking the trend were several locally late waterbirds recorded at Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan. The second half of February was downright nasty, with bitter cold often accompanied by strong winds. At the end of the season, there had been very little snowmelt. The relative scarcity of northern owls and winter finches made it a rather quiet season, perhaps exaggerated by a negative feedback effect on observer effort.

WATERFOWL THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Canada Geese were present in appreciable numbers only in s. Alberta; a few Cackling Geese were with them at Calgary until 27 Dec (TK). Single Trumpeter and Tundra Swans survived through the period on the Bow R. in Calgary (m.ob.). Tardy ducks included an American Black Duck at Winnipeg, MB 5 Dec (RF), a Redhead at Fish Creek PE, AB 12 Dec–8 Jan (TK), a White-winged Scoter at L. Minnewanka, AB 9 Dec (BE, JP, RWo), a Long-tailed Duck at Pine Falls, MB 1-4 Dec (RK, Nature Manitoba), and a Bufflehead x Common Goldeneye hybrid at Calgary 27 Jan (TK et al.). Unexpected in midwinter were a Common Loon at Souris, MB 28 Dec (DF), a Pied-billed Grebe at Last Mountain L., SK through 2 Jan (fide GK), and a Double-crested Cormorant near Seven Falls, MB 26 Jan (GB, DD).

A record-high 30 Bald Eagles were tallied on the Calgary C.B.C. 19 Dec. Wintering Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers continue to increase; there were fewer than three in Saska-

ton, SK 27 Jan (NS), while in s. Manitoba at least 8 were noted from scattered locations. Cooper’s Hawks were seen on three occasions in Calgary and four times in s. Manitoba (m.ob.). Also noteworthy were a wintering Red-tailed Hawk at Regina, SK (m.ob.), a probable Harlan’s Hawk at Calgary once in Dec and again 12 Feb (JG), and a possible Harlan’s x Rough-legged Hawk hybrid at Calgary 16 Jan (TK).

A Sandhill Crane survived at a Deloraine feedlot until at least 17 Jan, providing Manitoba’s first mid-winter record (fide JW & KD, ph.). About 10 Killdeer were reported in the Calgary area in Dec but none thereafter. The only other shorebirds noted were single Wilson’s Snipe on the Cammone/Bannif C.B.C. 18 Dec and at Saskatchewan Landing P.P., SK 22 Dec (RD). A Black-legged Kittiwake landed briefly at the side of a four-lane highway near St. Jean Baptiste 30 Dec, providing Manitoba with its first winter record (ph. RM). Southern Manitoba’s previous two records, both in late fall, were equally bizarre: one rescued from a penitentiary parking lot, and the other road-killed at a hydroelectric dam. A Thayer’s Gull at the Gardiner Dam, SK 4 Dec (Saskatoon Nature Society) was a good find.

A Eurasian Collared-Dove at Gibbons, ne.
of Edmonton, AB 31 Dec (TH) provided the region’s northernmost record yet. Winter Mourning Doves seem to be increasing in Alberta, with 11 tallied on provincial Christmas counts this year. An Eastern Screech-Owl spent the season at Cypress Hills, SK, well w. of its established range (m.ob.). Northern owls were spottily distributed. Saskatchewan seemed to have the best Snowy Owl numbers, but they were considered sub-par in s. Alberta and s. Manitoba. Two or more Northern Pygmy-Owls at Fish Creek P.P. through the season attracted a lot of attention (m.ob.). Great Gray Owls were scarce, except in the High Level, AB area, where 30 were found 7-9 Jan (RC et al.). In Alberta, 3 Long-eared Owls were found on the Nanton C.B.C. 2 Jan, and one was at Taber 17 Jan (LB), while a “mixed flock” of Long-eared and Short-eared Owls hunted near Medicine Hat 22 Jan+ (MS, MSP). A Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered at Crooked River, SK (fide RD), and at least 6 were present in s. Manitoba.

JAYS THROUGH FINCHES
A probable Steller’s Jay was reported in Calgary 28 Jan (fide DP). Horned Larks were present in higher numbers than usual in sw. Manitoba, which is surprising, given the cold and snowy conditions (RW). Few Townsend’s Solitaires and Varied Thrushes wandered eastward, but singles of the latter survived at Regina and Saskatoon, SK and Cypress River, MB. A Hermit Thrush at Winnipeg was seen irregularly 13 Jan–6 Feb (DB). Bohemian Waxwing numbers were reported as fair to good across s. Alberta and s. Saskatchewan, but they were much scarcer in s. Manitoba; the largest flock was 3000 at Calgary 3 Jan (GY). A few lingering warblers are almost expected in early winter nowadays, but none was reported during the period. An Eastern Towhee at Swan River, MB until at least 1 Feb (fide GM), noteworthy anywhere in the region in winter, was rather far north. About 20 American Tree Sparrows, a high number, attended a feeder near Carstairs, AB (JK). A tally of 15,884 Snow Buntings at Dinosaur PP. 4 Jan provided the highest count ever on an Alberta C.B.C.

A Northern Cardinal pair wintered at Sherwood Park, AB (fide RKL), while at least 17 birds were recorded in s. Manitoba. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a Winnipeg feeder was captured for rehabilitation in mid-Dec (DDu, m.ob., ph.). Notable blackbird reports included 33 Brewer’s on the Taber C.B.C. 15 Dec (LB et al.), a Common Grackle at Shepard until at least 5 Feb (ph. TK), and a northerly Yellow-headed Blackbird on the Cranberry Portage, MB C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide CS). Well away from human habitation was a Rusty Blackbird at shallow open water on the Whiteshell R., MB 9 Jan (ph. AA, AS). On 9 Dec, a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch visited the Creighton, SK feeder that hosted a Rusty Bunting during the previous winter (B&HS). House Finch numbers are still climbing in Calgary, where a record C.B.C. total of 1551 exceeded the previous high of 1209 from 2009. Winter finches were generally scarce, although crossbill numbers were considered “normal” in Saskatchewan, and 195 Red Crossbills gave the Calgary C.B.C. its 2nd highest total ever. It was not a big redpoll year, but a mid-Jan influx in s. Manitoba had an exceptionally high proportion of Hoary Redpolls. Northern Saskatchewan had the highest number of Evening Grosbeaks in four years (fide GK), and the species made a comparably good showing in traditional areas of s. Manitoba.


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

Dan Svingen

This was the third consecutive winterly winter in the Northern Great Plains, and it shared many similarities with the previous two. Once again, the excitement of the Christmas Bird Counts quickly faded as the cold and repeated snowstorms wore birds and birders down across most of the Region. This year, however, South Dakota definitely bucked that trend, recording 147 species by season's end, according to Jeff Palmer. Over-all, snowfall was abundant. At Glasgow, Montana, almost 107 cm (42 in.) of snow fell in January, a new record for that locale. Temperatures were generally below average. As is often the case, many areas had a period of mid-season warming. Those events facilitated the formation of dense snow crusts, as the melted snow soon refroze with the return of more seasonable temperatures. The deep snow, typically cold temperatures, and hard crusts generated concern for wildlife, as well as for travelers, livestock herds, and sidewalk shovellers. The feared massive die-off amongst gallinaceous birds, however, did not materialize. Birding highlights included a continuation of South Dakota's gull bonanza and a wonderfully cooperative Northern Hawk Owl in North Dakota. Please note that all bold-faced records are pending acceptance by the appropriate bird records committee.

Ducks Through Gulls

Despite the weather, a pioneering male Wood Duck successfully wintered in Mandan, ND (DNS, CDE, HCT). An impressive 243 Common Goldeneyes were at Garrison Dam, ND 9 Jan (DNS). Casual away from Pennington, Barrow's Goldeneye sightings in South Dakota included an ad. male in Buffalo 2-6 Dec (MO, RO, JP) and a female in Lyman and Hughes 4-22 Dec (DB, KM, RO). Common Mergansers peaked at more than 200 below Ft. Peck Dam, MT 7 Jan (CC); at 263 below Garrison Dam, ND 9 Jan (DNS); and at 550 in Stanley, SD 5 Feb (RO). The 4 Common Mergansers found on the Medora, ND C.B.C. 19 Dec were seasonally unexpected, as was the Ruddy Duck at Yankton, SD 11-22 Feb (RD). The abundant grass cover and bumper crop yields carried high populations of gameducks into winter. Sharp-tailed Grouse may have benefited the most from the previous year's vegetative conditions, as witnessed on Christmas Bird Counts in South Dakota, e.g., 830 on the Shadehill C.B.C. 15 Dec. Counts in North Dakota also produced notable numbers, including 656 at Lostwood N.W.R. 16 Dec and 610 at Arrowwood N.W.R. 4 Jan. The 18 Dec Fargo-Moorhead C.B.C. found 16 Greater Prairie-Chickens on the North Dakota side of the count circle, where the species has been absent for decades.

Northerly Ferruginous Hawks for the season included one in Cascade, MT 1 Jan (AJ) and 2 in Hettinger, ND 19 Feb (CDE, JPL). Rough-legged Hawks were very spottily distributed. Twenty-nine were counted on the Shadehill C.B.C. in South Dakota 15 Dec, while in North Dakota, the top counts were 9 on the Bismarck-Mandan C.B.C. 18 Dec; 30 on the Grand Forks C.B.C. 19 Dec; and 93 in the Hettinger vicinity 19 Feb (CDE, JPL). An impressive 48 Golden Eagles were found around Hettinger, ND 19 Feb (CDE, JPL). Undoubtedly attracted to the high gameduck populations characteristic of that area, an attraction that has led to regular shooting of the raptors there (jide DNS). More than 200 American Coots were at Ft. Peck, MT 12 Feb (CC).

Owls Through Kinglets

An early winter Screech-Owl was found 17 Dec in the very small town of Moffit, ND (HCT), which is separated from contiguous deciduous woodland by more than 30 km; much remains to be learned about this species' dispersal in the n. Great Plains. The record-high 11 Eastern Screech-Owls on the Bismarck-Mandan, ND C.B.C. 18 Dec was gratifying, as the species seemed to have crashed about a decade earlier. Snowy and Short-eared Owls were present in moderate numbers, and in widely scattered locations, Region-wide. A well-photographed Northern Hawk Owl was enjoyed by many during its stay near Glenfield, ND 4 Jan (TGD, m.db.); the species is still considered casual in the state. Reports of Northern Saw-whet Owls were up this season, including one near Bowdon, ND 1 Dec (LDJ); one at Brookings, SD 18 Dec (KCJ); 3 on the Medora, ND C.B.C. 19 Dec; 2 in Cass, ND 29 Dec (DWR); one at Burlington, ND 17 Jan (SDL); one in Stark, ND 21 Jan-10 Feb (JWH); and 6 others in slightly more expected locations in South Dakota.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to expand in North Dakota. One present in Regent, ND for the entire period (Jan Sailer) was particularly far west. Black-billed Magpie numbers appear to be recovering, presumably from the impact of West Nile virus. Fourteen Christmas counts in North Dakota reported a total of 142. Common Ravens continue building in numbers in North Dakota after the species was extirpated for almost a century by secondary poisoning associated with the "wolf campaign" of the 1880s. A total of 59 were tallied on seven n. North Dakota C.B.C.s this season. Starling was the Common Raven reported in Potter and Sully, SD 19 Feb (RO), hundreds of miles s. of the slowly rebuilding population in North Dakota. The species is considered accidental in South Dakota. The 2000 Horned
THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES
An Eastern Bluebird was still in Fargo, ND 5 Dec (MAO). Townsend's Solitaires were reported from only two Christmas counts in North Dakota. American Robins also had an off-year, with only 526 found on 10 C.B.C.s in that state. Varied Thrushes again made a poor showing in North Dakota, with a single near Bowdon 1-28 Dec (LD) and 2 in Fargo in late Dec (fide CDE) the only reports. Another was in Hinsdale, Valley, MT 6-29 Feb (MD). By contrast, it was a rather good year for Bohemian Waxwings. Concentrations included 100 in Grand Forks, ND 4 Dec (DOL). 170 near Towner, ND 3 Jan (CDE), REM, and more than 400 at Ft. Peck, MT 3 Jan (CC). A Smith's Longspur was reported from Brookings, SD 25 Jan (KJ), a first winter-season record if accepted. A tardy Yellow-rumped Warbler was at Ft. Peck, MT 11 Dec (JC). A Yellow-throated Warbler was photographed during its 23-26 Jan stay in Pennington, SD (JJ, RL); there are fewer than 10 records for the state. An American Redstart in Yankton, SD 16 Dec (RD) will provide a first winter-season record if accepted. Among the sparrow highlights were an Eastern Towhee and Fox Sparrow on the North Dakota side of the Fargo-Moorhead C.B.C. 18 Dec. Another Fox Sparrow was in Charles Mix, SD 24 Jan (RM). A Swamp Sparrow was at L. Yankton, Yankton, SD 19 Dec (DS); one was found there in mid-Dec 2009 as well. A surprising 18 Rusty Blackbirds were found on the C.B.C. held near Moffitt, ND 17 Dec.

Eight Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were photographed at Crow Buttes, Harding, SD 21 Feb (Elizabeth Krueger). Winter finches otherwise made little impression this year. Common Redpolls numbers were modest; the species was most apparent in e. North Dakota, with the highest tally being 165 on the Icelandic State Park C.B.C. 16 Dec. In contrast to the usual pattern, Hoary Redpoll comprised a relatively high percentage of the birds. For example, at one West Fargo, ND home, 7 of the 37 redpolls present in late Feb were Hoary Redpolls (DWR). Evening Grosbeak irruptions into the region have all but ceased in recent decades, making even the single bird in Fairfield, Teton, MT 11 Dec (LC) of interest.

Contributors (state editors in boldface):

Dan Svingen, 240 West Century Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501, (dsvingen@fs.fed.us)

A genuine rarity in North Dakota, this Northern Hawk Owl was found by Tim Driscoll at Glenfield 4 (here 27) January 2011. It remained obligingly through the end of the winter season. Photograph by Bob Heugebauer.

Almost certainly part of the late-autumn 2010 influx of the species into the northern Great Plains and southern Canada, this Yellow-throated Warbler visited Rapid City, South Dakota 23-26 (here 23) January 2011. Photograph by Dan Ames.

All the more remarkable for hanging on through such a brutal winter, this Ruby-crowned Kinglet was at Rapid City, South Dakota 10-29 (here 23) January 2011. Photograph by Dan Ames.
Southern Great Plains

Joseph A. Grzybowski
W. Ross Silcock

This winter was pretty much a re-run of last winter, with several long periods of deep cold, including one in February that froze many large lakes well south into Oklahoma—a rare event. Again, and despite the cold, many species lingered farther north than usual, part of a long-term trend across many taxa but quite surprising in the least hardy birds, such as ibises, tanagers, and orioles. Many species once thought rare have become more expected, particularly among the gulls, and perhaps the least-expected gull species—Ross’s Gull—appeared in the region twice, apparently part of a broader flight of the species that stretched from the southern Yukon to Michigan.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms WMA, Stafford, KS); Hackberry (Hackberry Flat WMA, Tillman, OK); Hefner (L. Hefner, Oklahoma, OK); McConaughy (McConaughy Res., Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira NWR, Barton, KS); Red Slough (Red Slough WMA, McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains NWR, Alfalfa, OK).

WATERFOWL THROUGH IBISES

The Black-bellied Whistling-Duck found at an Oklahoma pond in fall was last seen 8 Dec (DeJP). Four Greater White-fronted Geese were unexpected in Kearney, NE 9 Feb (TH), as were several that wintered around Scotts Bluff, NE (KD). A Brant in Harvey, KS 2-7 Jan (CS, m.rob.) and another in Sedgwick, KS 7 Jan (LL) made the only reports of this Regional rarity. Trumpeter Swans have become almost ubiquitous; good numbers winter in Nebraska, with at least 30 found this season in Oklahoma (fide JL). Among the top counts of Trumpeters were 8 in Washington, OK 17 Jan (JE et al.), 34 in Shawnee, KS 8 Jan (DM), and 54 in Loup, NE 18 Jan (JGJ). Tundra Swans, now in the minority and requiring very critical identification, were found at Quivira 5 Dec (11 birds; SS) and mostly in Jan in Oklahoma (about 9 birds; fide JL). A male Wood Duck persisted n. to Custer, NE 21 Jan (TH). A Mottled Duck was still at Red Slough 9 Dec, and 2 were there 23 Feb (DA).

Five American Black Ducks, a species seen mostly along e. edge of the Region, were found in Wyandotte, KS 26-28 Dec (JW, JB), and singles were reported in Cherokee, KS 1 Jan (RT), Miami, KS 21 Feb (ML, CK, SH), Sarpy, NE 16 & 22 Jan (L&BP), and Douglas, NE 22 Jan (CNK); one was w. of usual areas in Keith, NE 2 Dec (TJW). A Cinnamon Teal in Sequoyah, OK 26 Feb (Dustin Taylor et al.) was both early and easterly. A Blue-winged Teal lingered in Omaha, NE 18 Dec (BG), with another in Barton, KS 16 Dec (RP), and 8 were at Red Slough 25 Jan (DA). Eight Northern Shovelers were still in North Platte, NE 6 Jan (TJW), while 24 possibly early spring migrants were in Scotts Bluff, NE 18 Feb (KD).

The high tally of 65 Greater Scapu at McConaughy 2 Jan (SJD) was perhaps overdue. The “scoter slam” this season included 1-2-tailed Ducks are regular in ne. Oklahoma, less so elsewhere; this season, up to 4 were in Blaine 22-28 Jan (BD, J Wo et al.) and up to 3 in Oklahoma (two different sites) 23 Dec-15 Feb (fide JAG). Nebraska and Kansas had their share, with one in Barton, KS 16 Dec (RP) and about 18 in Nebraska (fide WRS). Also a Regional rarity away from nw. Nebraska, Barrow’s Goldeneyes were found in Blaine, OK 22-28 Jan (BD et al.) and Sedgwick, KS (CM). Sutherland Res., Lincoln, NE hosted an impressive 630 Common Goldeneyes 3 Jan (SJD), as well as 12,235 Common Mergansers 1 Jan (SJD). Another very high count was the flock of 450 Hooded Mergansers on a lake in Woodson, KS (PJ, JN), and 250 were on Hefner during a cold snap 12 Feb (JAG). The count of 22 Ruddy Ducks in Omaha 5 Jan (CNK) was quite high for winter.

A Pacific Loon, a Regional rarity, was in Russell, KS 5 Dec (MR). Lingering n. of usual haunts were a Common Loon, 3 Horned Grebes, a Red-necked Grebe, a remarkable 776 Western Grebes, and 3 Clark’s Grebes at McConaughy 1-2 Jan (SJD), an Eared Grebe in Russell, KS 19 Dec (MR), a Western Grebe in Lincoln, NE 3 Jan (SJD), an American Bittern at Cheyenne Bottoms 17 Jan (RG), and a Great Egret in Sedgwick, KS 3 Jan (MT).

Surf Scoters at McConaughy 1-8 Jan (SJD, PD, BF); single White-wingedets at McConaughy 1-8 Jan (SJD, PD, BF), in Jefferson, KS 24 Dec (DL), and Wyandotte, KS 1 Jan (MG); and single Black Scoters in Lancaster, NE 3 Dec (JGJ), at McConaughy 2-8 Jan (SJD, PD, BF), and in Blaine, OK 22-30 Jan (BD et al.) Long-imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron in Hall, NE 18 Dec (SMo) was also tardy. A White-faced/Glossy Ibis was late in n. Cedar, NE 2-5 Dec (ph. KZ), a surprising 160 were still at Cheyenne Bottoms 5 Dec (SS), and one lingered at Hackberry Flat 31 Jan (VF)—all most likely White-faceds.
RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Apparently attempting to winter was an Osprey in Sedgwick, KS 31 Jan (PG). Two White-tailed Kites made quite a surprise in Noble, OK 17 Dec (JCo), possibly part of a pattern of northerly late autumn and winter vagrancy. Single Northern Goshawks were reported in Kansas in Riley 23 Dec (DR), in Ford 26-27 Dec (BS, MJ, JRA), and in Barton 14 Jan (MR) and 27 Feb (RP). Good counts of Rough-legged Hawks for Nebraska were the 30 in n.-cen. Nebraska 1-2 Feb (BFH) and 27 in Scotts Bluff 16 Jan (KD). Golden Eagles reached the s. corner of the Region again, with reports of singles from Red Slough spanning 9 Dec–13 Feb (DA). A Crested Caracara in Bryan, OK 20 Dec (MC, JCh) made one of few records for the state, though reports of extraliminal caracaras are increasing. Recent years have seen Merlin, more frequently now a town bird, become a regular find throughout most of the Region; at least 20 were reported in Kansas (fide JM). Mid-winter Peregrine Falcons were seen in Omaha and Tulsa (fide WRS, JL), probably introduced birds. Prairie Falcons e. of typical areas included up to 2 in Greenwood, KS 27 Dec (PJ, JN, fide DL).

A Yellow Rail was captured in Choctaw, OK 27 Jan (TS), adding another data point to our limited knowledge about the winter status of this species in the Region. A great winter count of Sandhill Cranes was 12,225 in Barber, KS 2 Jan (PJ). Three American Avocets lingered at Hackberry through 23 Dec (L&MT), a record-late date for the Region. A Greater Yellowlegs in Wyandot (VK, KS 2 Jan (MG) may have been attempting to winter, while 5 at Quivira 18 Feb (B&J) could have been migrants. Similarly, 4 very late Lesser Yellowlegs were at Hackberry Flat 6 Jan (VF), whereas 13 there 23 Feb (L&MT) were probably new arrivals from the south. A Long-billed Curlew arrived at Hackberry 2 Mar (VF), rather early. Not as surprising but still very early were 2 Baird's Sandpipers at Hackberry Flat 23 Feb (L&MT).

The only Black-legged Kittiwakes reported were in Nebraska, in Lancaster Nov–5 Dec (JC), in Cedar 8 Dec (MB), and in Lincoln 3 Jan (SD, WRS). A Bonaparte's Gull at McConaughy 3 Jan (SDJ) was two days from being Nebraska's latest. The ad. Ross's Gull in Cedar, NE until 7 Dec (MB, m.ob.) was followed by another ad. Ross's Gull in Lancaster, NE 3 Dec (vt. JC), the state's 3rd record. Rare but becoming regular in winter, Franklin's Gulls appeared at McConaughy 8 Jan (PD, BF) and in Oklahoma, OK 19 Jan (LM, MP), with up to 2 in Lancaster, NE 19–23 Feb (RSt, LE). Adding flavor to the Ross's Gull experience was a Mew Gull in Cedar, NE 1-2 Dec (DC, PR); up to 2 were also surprising in Sedgwick, KS 11-17 Jan (PJ, LL). California Gulls are being recognized more widely in the Region, McConaughy is a regular site, and 16 were there 2 Jan (SDJ), with other reports totaling 3 in Nebraska (fide WRS), in Kansas (fide LM), and one in Oklahoma 14 Feb (M&MP). Observations of Thayer's, Northern Shrike was in Barber, KS 9 Jan (LL), with several in the w. Oklahoma Panhandle during Dec (DRo, JAG) and one in Osage, OK 4 Jan (JM, MD et al.). Bushtits don't typically wander far—thus, 7 at Garden City, KS 15 Jan (T&S) were far afield. Red-breasted Nuthatches were generally in average numbers in the Region (fide WRS, fide LM, fide JL), but 2 Brown-headed Nuthatches found in Lancaster, NE in autumn extended their stay into midwinter, with one seen as late as 31 Jan (JCa, SSc). A vagrant Rock Wren was in Russell, KS 19 Dec (RP). Northwest of usual sites was a Carolina Wren in Lincoln, NE 3 Jan (SDJ). A Winter Wren was similarly unusual in Keith, NE 2 Jan (SDJ). Two Cliff Swallows and a Barn Swallow were at Red Slough 28 Feb (DA), presumably very early migrants. Northerly Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in Keith, NE 11 Feb (ph. JO) and Finney, NE 10 Jan (T&S).

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

The count of 2168 Eurasian Collared-Doves in Garden City, KS 2 Jan (T&S) represents explosive growth for this species; 143 White-winged Doves there 22 Dec (T&S) were also noteworthy. Inca Dove is increasing far more slowly in the Region, but the 11 in Finney, KS 2 Jan (T&S) was a good tally. Still rare in the Region, a Common Ground-Dove appeared in Barber, KS 2 Jan (PJ). Monk Parakeet has yet to establish a viable population in the Great Plains; one appeared in Saunders, NE 18 Feb (ADG, fide RW). The only Snowy Owl reported was in Antelope, NE 13 Jan (KDi, fide JCh). Likewise, only one Northern Saw-whet Owl was found, in Lincoln, NE 13 Feb (TJW). A brave Rufous Hummingbird lingered in El-

Hardly even a half-hardy, this Summer Tanager was still able to survive the terrible cold spell of mid-February 2011 (here 12 February) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photograph by Judy Gorman.
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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

lingering Hermit Thrush was in Lincoln, NE 18 Dec (TJW). While difficult to count, some large roosts of American Robins were estimated, including 460,000 in Cleveland, OK 5 Feb (JAG), 100,000 in Douglas, KS 18 Jan (JK), and 100,000 in Nowata, OK 26 Jan (MP). Rare wintering Gray Catbirds were noted in Butler, KS 31 Jan (BB) and in Comanche, OK 4 Feb (K&SM). A Brown Thrasher was northerly in Keith, NE 2 Jan (SJD), as was a Sprague's Pipit in Cimarron, OK 9 Dec (JAG, DRo). The only report of Bohemian Waxwing, an erratic winter visitor to the nw. part of the Region, was that of 4 in Sioux, NE 22 Dec (B&DW). Some 36,000 Lapland Longspurs estimated in Adams, NE 28 Jan (PD) and 30,000+ in Pawnee, KS 1 Jan (SS) were remarkably high numbers. Somewhat out of range was a Smith's Longspur in Reno, KS 15 Jan (KG). Snow Buntings made a good showing this season in Nebraska, with a Kansas “fallout” including 16 in Mitchell 28 Dec (HA) and 9 others statewide (fide LM); the best Nebraska count was of 600 in Pierce and Wayne 27 Dec (JJ).

The most northerly Orange-crowned Warblers were in Sedgwick, KS 6 Dec (BR) and Barton, KS 16 Dec (RP). Pine Warblers were found in cen. Oklahoma in Payne, Oklahoma, and Cleveland (fide JAG). Definitely not a hardy species in the Great Plains, a male Wilson's Warbler lasted through 29 Dec in Scotts Bluff, NE (AD). Spotted Towhees in Lincoln, NE 3 Jan (SJD) and Dodge, NE 11 Jan (RJ) were very late, and northerly Chipping Sparrows were in Omaha, NE 26 Dec (JR) and in Adams, NE 3 Jan (ph. PD). A wintering Field Sparrow in Custer, NE 7 Feb (TH) was unexpected so far n., while more southerly than expected was an American Tree Sparrow at Red Slough 13 Feb (DA). A Vesper Sparrow was seen as far n. as Quivira 14 Dec (MR). Savannah Sparrows were reported through the period in Kansas (fide LM), including “small numbers” in Summer 27 Jan (MG) and Johnson 1 Feb (MG). Single Le Conte’s Sparrows held on in Douglas 18 Dec (GP) and 17 Jan (JK) and at Quivira 14 Dec (MR). Red Fox Sparrows were in Keith, NE 2 Jan (WRS, Kdy) and in Cimarron, OK 14 Dec (Steve Fettig). Harris’s Sparrows on the n. edge of their wintering range were found in Scottsbluff, NE 15 Dec (AD) and in Lincoln 3 Jan (4 birds; SJD). A vagrant Golden-crowned Sparrow was in Finney, KS 13 Feb (MO). A Gray-headed Junco was in Scotts Bluff 18 Dec (AK). Quite a surprise was a wintering Summer Tanager at Tulsa, OK still present in Feb (Judy Garmaker).

A male Yellow-headed Blackbird in Dodge, NE 14 Dec (DLe, fide D&GP) was very late. Single Rusty Blackbirds wandered westward to McConaughy 1-2 Jan (SJD) and to Custer, NE 28 Jan (TH). Among the wintering Neotropical migrants was a Bullock's Oriole at a Texas, OK feeder 29 Nov-31 Dec (Rachel Randell). Ten Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were noted in Sioux 18 Dec (AK); the species is a localized Nebraska Panhandle winter visitor. Red Crossbill reports were unremarkable. As is often the case with Common Redpoll, good showings were followed by poor or no showings; after a strong season last winter, the only report this season was of one in Sedgwick, KS 9 Jan (JC). Surprisingly, Evening Grosbeaks were reported only from Kansas, where singles were in McPherson 19 Dec (TW) and Finney 16 Jan (BC).

Cited Observers (editors in boldface):
KANSAS: Henry Armmknecht, John Bollin, Bob Broyles, Jeff Calhoun, Barb Campbell, Matt Gearhart, Rob Graham, Paul Griffin, Kevin Groeneweg, Sharon Hatten, Pete Jansen, Barry Jones, Jon King, Christine Klein, Dan Larson, Larry Londagin, Terry Mannell, Debra McKee, Cheryl Miller, Lloyd Moore, Jim Nickel, Marie Osterbaur, Robert Penner, Galen Pittman, Jennifer Rader (JL), Mike Rader, Dave Rintoul, Ben Rogers, Carolyn Schwab, Scott Selzman, Tom & Sara Shane, Bill Sutton, Max Thompson, Rick Tucker, Don Weiss, Jeff Winters. NEBRASKA: Mark Brogie, John Carlini (JCa), Doug Chapman, Clem N. Claphake, Alex Delgado, Kathy Delara, Kenny Dinan (KDi), Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ann Duey, Paul Dunbar, Keith Dyche (KDi), Larry Einemmann, Bill Fink, Betty Grenon, Tim Hajda, Bill F Huser, Ria Jensen, Jan Johnson, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Dan LeGet, DLee, Steve Morris (SMo), Jim Oehsen, Loren & Babes Padelford, Don & Jan Pascka, Justin Pink, Paul Roisen, Sherri Schwartz (SSc), W. Ross Silcock, Ruth Starns, Bruce & Donna Walgren, T. J. Walker, Rick Wright, Karla Zeutenhors. OKLAHOMA: Dave Arbour, Bill Diffin, Jack Chiles (JCh), Mike Chiles, John Couch (JCo), Melinda Droege, Josh Englebert, Vic Fazio, Steve Fettig, Judy Garmaker, Joseph A. Grzybowski, John Kenington (JKe), Jo Lloyd, Larry Mays, Jeri Mahon, Kurt & Sharon Mesiezahl, Steve Metz, Mark & Mary Peterson, Rachel Randell, Dan Robinson (DRo), Terry Stuart, Dustin Taylor, Lou & Mary Truex, Mark Williams, Jimmy Woodward (JWo).

Joseph A. Grzybowski, 715 Elmwood Drive Norman, Oklahoma 73072 (j_grzybowski@sbcglobal.net)
W. Ross Silcock, P. O. Box 37 Tabor, Iowa 51653 (silcock@rosssilcock.com)
Eric Carpenter
Randy Pinkston
Ron Weeks

rrrr! A fairly typical Texas winter was interrupted by a chilling Arctic blast during the first week of February. The Dallas area experienced 100+ consecutive hours below freezing, much of central Texas was in the same state for 72 hours or more, and prolonged sub-freezing temperatures hit even the most southerly locations. Though not as extreme as some past freezes (1983, 1989), the 2011 freeze did have a measurable impact on birds, with several observers noting declines in a few species, primarily insectivores, after the cold spell ran its course. And drought conditions did not help matters during the period. The winter started with almost 30% of the state free of drought categorization, but by 1 March, only 9% of the state was free of drought, and a troublesome 13% of the state, mostly the southwestern Edwards Plateau and portions of east Texas, were in the Extreme Drought category.

We received reports from numerous observers, including many birders visiting from other states, who sought out Black-vented Oriole and Yellow-faced Grassquit, among others. Irruptive species noted in the fall report (Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and even Anna's Hummingbirds) kept at it through the winter season, though Cedar Waxwings continued to be scarce. Wintertime Neotropical migrants are not only regular into late December now but can now be expected in much of the coastal and southern part of the state into midwinter; we are able to mention just a fraction of those birds in this report.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS**

Winter sightings of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are rare in ne. Texas, so 100 at Callender L., Henderson 8 Dec (MiK) was surprising. In the Central Brazos Valley, where wintering birds have not been seen since 1980, 13 were in Chappell Hill, Washington 24 Jan (DV). Numbers of Chen geese continue to climb in many parts of Texas. On 22 Feb, 920 Snow Geese and 697 Ross's Geese were counted at the El Paso area reservoirs (BZ), with the vast majority in the wintering flock at McNary Res., Hudspeth. Three thousand Ross's Geese were noted at Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson 7 Dec (JCh). Cackling Goose is proving to be rare but regular in the El Paso area, where up to 2 hung out at Ascarate L., El Paso 1 Jan–17 Feb (BZ). A Trumpeter Swan in Midland, Midland 18–21 Feb (fph, SS) provided a first area record. Tundra Swans included up to 6 near L. Arrowhead, Clay 1-31 Jan (MA, m.ob.), 5 at Greenbelt L., Donley 11 Dec (BP), and one at Big Bend N.P., Brewster 10 Dec (DPa), where accidental. Three Muscovy Ducks seen near La Sal Vieja, Willacy 22 Dec (ph, JDL, BW) appeared to be wild birds, quite unusual away from the immediate Rio Grande corridor. Two Blue-winged Teal at the Skeen Playa, Lynn 11 Dec (AH) and 3 at L. Meredith, Hutchinson 31 Dec (BP) were notable, as they are very rare in winter in the extreme n. parts of the state. A Cinnamon Teal at Finifter L. 29 Dec (DDC, DL) made the first Brazos record since 1993; one at L. Tyler East 28 Feb (MBL) was only the 2nd record for Smith. Greater Scapul were in good numbers across most of the state, with the most notable being 107 at L. Bob Sandlin, Titus 15 Jan (OB). Eight were at Red Bluff L., Loving 6 Dec (SC, MR, WS), 2 at Tornillo Res., El Paso 16 Feb (BZ), and up to 3 at Ascarate L., El Paso 3 Jan–23 Feb (BZ). Scoter reports were fewer than usual: there were no inland reports, and only 2 White-winged were reported on the Upper Texas Coast (U.T.C.). Far fewer than annual for the Panhandle were 2 Long-tailed Ducks at L. Meredith, Hutchinson 9 Jan (BP). An impressive 142 Hooded Mergansers were at Trinidad, Henderson 20 Dec (TF). Red-throated Loons are recorded less than annually in the Trans-Pecos, so 2 at Red Bluff L., Loving 6 Dec (SC, MR, WS) and another at Balmorea L., Reeves 7 Dec were notable (SC, Mr. WS). Singles were also seen at L. Tawakoni, Rains 2 Jan (CF, RRA) and at the Copano Causeway near Fulton, Aransas early Dec–12 Jan (MR, SC, WS, JMc). No fewer than 8 Pacific Loons were found around the state, including one on L. Buchanan, Llano 22 Feb+ (CSe) and another in Corpus Christi Bay 2 Jan+, which may be a new Nueces record (JMc et al.). A Western Grebe found at L. Bob Sandlin, Titus 15 Jan (DB) provided the first e. Texas record since 2004. One at Hagerman N.W.R., Grayson 23 Dec was rare for n.-cen. Texas (RPa). A juv. Brown Booby was observed off the Packery Channel Jetty, Nueces 29 Jan (TJMc). Late Magnificent Frigatebirds were off of the seawall in Galveston, Galveston 3 Dec (HS) and at the Port Aransas ferry 5 Dec (JMc). Record-early frigatebirds included a male (species unidentified) near Packery Channel, Nueces 18 Feb (JMc) and a Magnificent at Quintana, Brazoria 24 Feb (ph, RJ, LJ).

**HERONS THROUGH RAPTORS**

A good inland count was 126 Neotropic Cormorants at Trinidad L., Henderson 20 Dec (TF); smaller numbers were noted in many cen. and e. Texas counties. Up to 3 Brown Pelicans wintered at L. Livingston Dam, Polk/San Jacinto 1 Dec–20 Feb (FC et al.). Of the 8 at McNary Res., Hudspeth 7 Dec, only 2 re-
Glaucous Gulls were removed from the Texas Review List in 1997, as they became regular visitors along the coast. They are still a prize to be found in other areas of the state, and this ghostly first-cycle bird at Lake Buchanan, Uvalde County, present 20 February 2011 (here) through the end of the season, made the first record for the Edwards Plateau. Photograph by Byron Stone.

Little Gulls are reported almost annually in northeastern Texas but have never been found regularly in other parts of the state. Thus, two first-cycle birds that appeared at Port Aransas, Nueces County 1 (here) 15 February 2011 delighted the many observers who came to see them through the end of the season. Photograph by Jan McIntyre.

Brazoria N.W.R., *Brazoria* and up to 2 at Brazos Bend S.P., *Fort Bend* (m, ob.) Up to 34 White-faced Ibises wintered at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro*/Freestone until at least 13 Feb (DB, LB, et al.) Two White-faced Ibises near Croshyton, Crosby 15 Dec (KH) and 12 at White River L., Crosby 1 Jan (CSt, m, ob.) supplied the first Dec and Jan records, respectively, for the nw Texas region. A lone Roseate Spoonbill at Mitchell L., Beav 15 Dec (DE) was lingering inland a bit later than usual.

Two Turkey Vultures in e. El Paso, *El Paso* 6 Jan (BZ, KZ) were unexpected. A communal roost in Jim Wells hosted 32 White-tailed Kites 24 Jan (JMc). Casual in El Paso, a Bald Eagle at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park 3-4 Jan (JR, JSp) was the first there since 2003. Nine Bald Eagles were e. of the Denison Dam, Grayson 11 Dec (MCh). A grassy field in Jim Wells held an amazing 74 Northern Harriers 24 Jan (JMc). A Common Black-Hawk at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 13 Jan (BDo) was unexpected for midwinter. Easterly Zone-tailed Hawks included one at L. Corpus Christi, *San Patricio* 4 Dec (LJo) and another in Victoria, Victoria 1 Dec (SH). It was an above-average winter for Ferruginous Hawks on the U.T.C., with singles at Paul Rushing Park, *Harris* 16 Dec (FC et al.), in *Fort Bend* 28 Jan (MS), on Galveston 1, *Galveston* 15 Jan-8 Feb (FF, FC et al.), and at Anahuac N.W.R., Chambers 18 Jan (MBa). Out-of-range Golden Eagles included one at Anahuac N.W.R., Chambers 5 Dec (DSa, SM), one with the Bald Eagles that regularly winter at Canyon of the Eagles, Burnet 29 Jan (ph. RA), and one in Johnson 16 Jan (JCo). Crested Caracara continues to range northward, as evidenced by one in Grayson 20 Dec (MCh) and another near the Texas Tech University Rangeland, Lubbock 18 Jan-10 Feb (PK, m, ob.) A Black Merlin (subspecies suckleyi) at Houston’s Bear Creek Park, Harris 10 Feb (ph. GP) is apparently just the 3rd of that subspecies to be photographed in Texas. The easternmost Prairie Falcon report was of one in Victoria 17 Feb (BF).

RAILS THROUGH JAEGERS

Three Yellow Rails at the Buffalo Creek Unit of San Bernard N.W.R., *Fort Bend* 23 Feb (CB, JW) were notable given the inland location. A Virginia Rail along North Long Dry Cr. 26 Feb was a first for *Wheeler* (AH). A Purple Gallinule lingered through the winter at the South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* (PD). A Common Moorhen was unusual for Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro* 28 Jan (MBl). Unusual for the location and date, 2 Sandhill Cranes were at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro* 31 Dec (JW). Whooping Cranes found away from the wintering grounds included one amongst 20,000 Sandhills near Electra, Wichita 30 Dec-1 Jan (DH, m, ob.) and a migrant near Pampa, Gray 28 Feb (JaM). A report of 12 Wilson’s Plovers on the Texas City Dike, Galveston 9 Jan was a very high winter count (AO, BDa). Four seen during the San Bernard N.W.R. *C.B.C.*, *Matagorda*/Brazoria 17 Dec furnished a new count high (MA). A first record for McLennan, 9 Mountain Plovers were documented near Waco 1-8 Jan (ph. BS, JY, GCu, FB, JMk); counts at known wintering locations included 19 at the Granger area, *Bell* (m, ob.), 23 at the Chapman Ranch, Nueces (BF), and 60 near Sebastian, Willacy (m, ob.). Western Solitary Sandpipers included 3 at Rio Grande City, Starr 27 Jan (AW) and 2 near Ft. Hancock Res., *El Paso* 20 Dec (ph. JP). As many as 13 Western Sandpipers at E. V. Spence Res., Cove 15 Jan was a high count for wintering birds so far inland (ph. EC). One at John Bunker Sands Wetlands, *Kaufman* 18 Dec was late (RAa). Two Pectoral Sandpipers at Anahuac N.W.R., Chambers 19-20 Dec (ph. MaK) were late migrants; far more surprising was one at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* 22 Jan (RB, CF). A nice winter find was a single Stilt Sandpiper at John Bunker Sands Wetlands, *Kaufman* 16 Jan (GC, m, ob.). Long-billed Dowitchers are rare in cen. and e. Texas in winter, so 87 at Trinidad L., *Henderson* 20 Dec-14 Feb (TFe et al.), 3 at Country Club L., *Brazos* 22 Dec (BN, LsA, MDW), and 43 at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro* 13 Feb, plus up to 9 on the Freestone side of that site 13-25 Feb (DB, LB), were surprising. Unexpected American Woodcocks were at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* through 18 Dec (AH) and one at the Canyon Lakes, *Lubbock* 16 Dec (PK). Even more surprising were woodcocks that showed up in drought-stricken areas of s. Texas: one in San Benito, *Cameron* 18 Dec provided a rare record for the Lower Rio Grande Valley (TFl), and at least 6 were in Nueces 2 Jan (MCo).

A Black-legged Kittiwake visited the L. Livingston spillway, *San Jacinto*/Polk 28 Dec (TDW, RT, m, ob.); another from the fall season continued at White Rock L., *Dallas* through 19 Jan (tCR); and others were at Padre Island N.S., *Kenedy* 4 Jan (tPH) and the Bolivar ferry landing, Galveston 6-11 Jan (tKs, tPh, CC, m, ob.) A first-cycle Sabine’s Gull was observed at the Galveston ferry landing 7-15 Jan (ph. ML, m, ob.); this is an extremely late date for the species and appears to be the first Jan record for Texas. An ad. Little Gull was at L. Ray Hubbard, Dallas 7-23 Dec (tCR); a first-cycle bird was at Southside W.T.P. Dallas 15-16 Dec (m, ob., ph., tB5); and 2 first-cycles delighted birders near the jetties at Port Aransas, Nueces 1 Feb (ph., tJMc, tM, ob.). Two Franklin’s Gulls...
Northern Shrikes are rare, low-density winter residents in Texas in the northernmost part of the Panhandle. Very few are photographed in the state as nicely as this immature north of Dalhart, Dallam County 10 February 2011. Photograph by Alan Warmingto.
through 21 Dec (tME, MEa). Three Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were banded in Bra- zoria during the season (CB), while another was on Galveston L., Galveston 22 Dec (DwP). A Black-chinned Hummingbird in Marathon, Brewster from the fall lingered through at least 8 Dec (HT, MY), and another was in the Davis Ms. Resort, Jeff Davis 10- 24 Dec (ph. ME, MEa). Anna's Humming- birds continued their widespread winter "invasion" from the fall, with more than 20 in- dividuals reported across scattered coastal, cen., and s. Texas locations. Most impressive were up to 6 in Port O'Connor, Calhoun 8 Dec+ (BF). A banded female Costas' Hummingbird returned for its 2nd winter at the Terlingua Ranch, Brewster, remaining through 15 Feb (tCO). Calliope Humming- birds were at Nederland, Jefferson 25 Dec-2 Jan (JWh, JoW), at Dickinson, Galveston 10 Jan (Hli, JL, SH), and at Richmond, Fort Bend 21-22 Jan (HB, JBa). Among the multiple wintering Broad-tailed Hummingbirds was a first Washington record near Chappell Hill 23-24 Dec (JG, DV). Allen's Humming- birds were well represented in the s. half of the state, with 5 netted on the U.T.C., 2 in the Trans-Pecos, another in Nueces, and a 2nd Hays record 21 Jan+ (ph. Lje, DC). A Red- naped Sapsucker was seen in Refugio 16 Dec (BF). Another Red-naped Sapsucker was at L. Weatherford, Parker 29 Dec (GCo), while one found at Brazos River County Park, Bra- zoria 23 Jan-19 Feb was only the 5th for the U.T.C. (SH, ph. GP, TM, JF). A tantalizing sapsucker initially thought to be a Red- breasted near Ottine, Gonzales 29 Dec (ph. BF; PHo) was determined to be a hybrid. A Northern Flicker that appeared to be a pure Yellow-shafted spent the entire period in El Paso, El Paso (JF). A Northern Flicker was seen in Brownsville, Cameron 3 Jan (RsU).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

A Northern Beardless-Tyranulet along the Guadalupe R. 26 Feb (DM, ph. WS) provided a county first for both Calhoun and Refugio. The Tufted Flycatcher at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster found in the fall was last seen 4 Jan (m.ob.). The Greater Pewee discovered in McAllen, Hidalgo 26 Nov lingered through 17 Jan (m.ob.). A Hammond's Flycatcher discovered at Corpus Christi's Rose Hill Cemetery 16 Jan (MCo, ph. WS) provided a 2nd Nueces record and remained throughout the period. Another Hammond's was well documented at Utopia, Uvalde 28 Nov-27 Jan (v.r., ph. MHe). Another Ham- mond's at Madden Tank 20 Dec (MSc, JZ) was a winter first for Hudspeth. A Gray Flycatcher delighted birders at Bentsen S.P., Hidalgo 4 Jan+ (m.ob.); another was in El Paso, El Paso 5 Dec (BZ). Good numbers of Gray and Dusky Flycatchers were reported from Big Bend N.P., Brewster through mid-Jan, probably a function of Tufted Flycatcher search efforts. Single Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers were found at Bentsen S.P., Hidalgo 14-15 Jan (JeC, FG) and at Brazos Bend S.P., Fort Bend 30 Jan (CTL). A Black Phoebe in San Saba 4 Dec (JBy) was just out of expected range. Not reported in ne. Texas since 2003, a Say's Phoebe was near Cooper L., Delta 2 Dec (MW). A Vermilion Flycatcher from the fall remained in Temple, Bell through 26 Jan (RP). Dusky-capped Flycatchers were reported near Mission, Hidalgo 3 Dec (ph., 1MR, DDu, JD) and Sabal Palm, Cameron 2 Jan+ (BM, m.ob.). An Ash-throated Flycatcher was a rare find 22 Jan near Chappell Hill, Washington (DV). A Great Crested Flycatcher was near Brazos River County Park, Brazoria 1 Jan (BO). A vocal Brown-crested Flycatcher was an unexpected winter find in Corpus Christi, Nueces 17 Jan (JMc). Among several extraliminal Great Kiskadee reports, one at the Lubbock Cemetery, Lubbock through 18 Dec (Ca, m.ob.) was the most noteworthy. A Western Kingbird at Balmorhea S.P., Reeves 2-19 Dec (ph. MLo) made for a very rare winter record. An Eastern Kingbird at Inglis, San Patricio 21-22 Jan provided an amazing winter record (ph. JMc). A Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Galveston Island S.P., Galveston 29 Jan+ Feb was just the 7th for the U.T.C. (MV, tJa, tIf, tPf, m.ob.).

Northern Shrikes were reported at Palo Duco S.P., Randall 12 Jan (MHa), L. Meredith, Moore 16 Jan (BP), and n. of Dal- hart, Dallam 10 Feb (AW). Single Yellow-throated Vireos were reported on the Houston C.B.C., Harris 18 Dec and at Lufette's Cove, Galveston 14 Jan (DPe). A Plumbeous Vireo was again present at Rose Hill Cemetery, Nue- ces 16 Jan+ (MCo). Cassin's Vireos were noteworthy in El Paso, El Paso 1 Jan (BZ) and at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 7 Jan (J0, PO). Most intriguing was an unidentified Progne martin detected in Busco, Nue-
ces 5 Dec (BF). The most northerly Tree Swallows were singles in Palo Pinto 1 (MA) & 13 Jan (AH). A nice winter find was a Bank Swallow at Estero Llano Grande S.P., Hidalgo 22 Jan (BN). Late Barn Swallows included one in Brazoria 1 Jan (BT et al.) and another at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso 8 Jan (JSp).

TITMICE THROUGH WARBLERS

Wandering a bit out of range was a Carolina Chickadee at Fort Clark Springs, Kinney 16 Feb (ph., BrC). Unexpected for the upper Panhandle was a Tufted Titmouse at L. Marvin, Hemphill 18 Jan (GL, CSe). White-breasted Nuthatches rarely reach the U.T.C. but were nicely represented this season, with one in Beaumont, Jefferson 1 Jan (RAJ, HJ), another near Harris Res., Brazoria 1 Jan (KP et al.), and one at Spring Creek Park, Harris 8 Jan (JeM et al.). Farther inland, county firsts were recorded near Round Top, Fayette 28 Dec (BeH) and Brenham, Washington 26 Jan (DV). The Trans-Pecos enjoyed a banner Winter Wren season: lone birds were at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 5 Dec (SC, MR, WS), at Davis Mountains S.P., Jeff Davis 18 Dec (MLo), at McNary Res., Hudspeth 20 Dec (BZ), with 2 there 28 Dec (JJ, BZ), at Ft. Hancock Res., El Paso 20-28 Dec (JP), and at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 7-25 Jan (JO, PO). Since Winter Wren and Pacific Wren were split, most westerly birds have been carefully scrutinized, and all confirmed by voice this season were indeed Winters.

Although Clay-colored Thrushes are now regular in most of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a group of 12 in Rio Grande City, Starr 24 Jan (AW) made a notable count. A White-throated Thrush discovered at Estero Llano Grande S.P., Hidalgo 29 Dec proved rather confiding and was present through the period (TDD, m.ob.). The Rufous-backed Robin present from the fall at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., Cameron remained until 30 Jan (m.ob.); another fall bird continued sporadically at Mission International Butterfly Park and nearby Bentzen S.P., Hidalgo through the season (DDA, JD). Much farther north and more unexpected was a Rufous-backed Robin well studied at Ft. Inge, Uvalde 18 Feb (†MHe). There were scattered sightings of Gray Catbird inland in the e. half of the state as far n. as San Augustine and McLennan (m.ob.). More impressive was this species’ presence in the Trans-Pecos: singles were at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 5 Dec (SC, MR, WS); at McNary Res. 20 Dec (ph. BZ), a first Hudspeth winter record; at El Paso, El Paso 24 Jan (JKI); at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 29 Dec-2 Jan (Jide BH, CR); and at Alpine, Brewster 20 Jan+ (MLo). An easterly Sage Thrasher was seen sporadically at San Luis Pass, Galveston 8-25 Jan (SL, m.ob.). Single Long-billed Thrashers pushing the n. boundary of their range were at South Llano River S.P., Kimble 1 Dec (RH), Blanco S.P., Blanco 20 Dec-10 Feb (ph. SW), and n. of Utopia, Bandera 1 Jan (MHe). Two or 3 Chestnut-collared Longspurs in e. Waller 1 Jan (JO) were unexpected for the Upper Texas Coast, while a rather southerly bird was studied near Sebastian, Willacy 25 Jan (PHc).

A Tropical Parula was along the Guadalupe R., s. Refugio 16 Dec (BF). A stunning male Black-throated Blue Warbler in s. Austin, Travis 18 Feb+ (ph. KM, m.ob.) provided a rare winter record for cen. Texas. A Black-throated Gray Warbler returned for the 2nd consecutive winter to San Marcos, Hays 5-18 Jan (ph. SR); another was at Ft. Clark Springs, Kinney 27-28 Dec (ph. BrC). Notable Yellow-throated Warblers include one in Young 30 Dec-1 Jan (MA) and a wintering bird in Brazos 20 Jan+ (JHa, LH). Pine Warblers made a strong showing, with a good southerly count of 8 at San Vyncacio, Zapata 25 Jan (AW) and as many as 100 present much of the season at Rose Hill Cemetery, Corpus Christi, Nueces (MCo, m.ob.). Outliers included one in Plainview, Hidalgo 2-20 Feb (RR) and another in El Paso, El Paso 13-20 Feb (JP). Completely unexpected in the winter was an ad. female Cerulean Warbler studied along River Rd., Refugio 24 Feb (JMc). Wintering Louisiana Waterthrushes were singles at Bear Creek Park, Harris 2-17 Jan (ph. GJ, JHI) and in Seguin, Guadalupe 22-29 Jan (DM), the latter returning for a 2nd winter. Quite surprising were 2 well-documented reports of male Kentucky Warblers on the Upper Texas Coast, one in n. Harris 23 Dec (DDH), the other at LaFitte’s Cove, Galveston 1 Jan (DPe). A female Hooded Warbler present at Blucher Park, Corpus Christi, Nueces 17 Jan+ (ph. JMc) made a rare winter record for the Coastal Bend. The Rufous-capped Warbler from the fall near Crystal City, Zavala remained through 8 Jan (BR, m.ob.).
Sparrows through Finches

Truly unexpected and amazing was a male Yellow-faced Grassquit discovered at Goose Island S.P., Aransas 30 Jan that remained through the period, to the delight of countless birders (ph., tST, m.o.b.). A Green-tailed Towhee at White River L., Crosby 19 Feb (Sc) was a rare winter find for the South Plains. An American Tree Sparrow in Henderson 6 Feb (JBo) was equally rare for East Texas. A well-described Clay-colored Sparrow visited Kilgore, Rush 26 Dec (Pha). Rare on the South Plains was a Black-throated Sparrow at White River L., Crosby 18 Feb (Ah). At least 4 Lark Buntings were present in Willer 15 Dec+ (HLa et al.). Single Le Conte's Sparrows near Quanah, Hardeman 1 Jan (DpO, m.o.b.) and White River L., Crosby 18 Feb (Ah) were unexpected for nw. Texas. A Harris's Sparrow at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend N.P., Brewster 12 Dec (ph. EB) was a less than-annual find for the Trans-Pecos.

Western Tanagers were in above-average numbers along the coast, with singles in n. Harris 4 Dec (KeK), at Bear Creek Park, Harris 25 Dec (JHl, CM) and at Houston, Harris location 27 Jan–14 Feb (TK) where a Western had been the previous winter. A male spent the winter at Pollywog Pond, Nueces, where it was joined briefly by a female 28 Dec (JMc), and another 2 wintered at Rosehill Cemetery, Corpus Christi, Nueces (McG, WS). A female Crimson-collared Grosbeak in Corpus Christi 17–22 Dec (ph., tKT) provided a first Nueces record and only the 2nd for the Coastal Bend. Farther s., a female fingered Nov+ in Allen Williams's yard in Pharr, Hidalgo (m.o.b.), and another was at Estero Llano Grande S.P., Hidalgo 29 Dec–9 Feb (tChC, CoC, MG). A Pyrrhuloxia at L. Meredith, Moore 31 Dec (BF) was farther n. than expected in winter. A Black-headed Grosbeak spent the entire season at the Davis Mountains Resort, Jeff Davis (ph. ME, MEl) for perhaps the first record of wintering for the Trans-Pecos. Elsewhere, 3 wintered at Pollywog Pond, Nueces (m.o.b.), and 2 individuals were at different nw. Houston, Harris locations 1 Feb+ (CM) and 27 Feb (LM). 3 Blue Buntings had one of their best winter showings in Hidalgo in years: one was at a Lower Rio Grande Valley N.W.R. 4 Jan (mMG); a female was at Santa Ana N.W.R. 15 Jan–13 Feb (Jyv et al.); a male and a female were at Bentens S.P. 21 Jan–15 Mar (tMB); and a window-killed specimen was recovered at Estero Llano Grande S.P. 9 Feb (HH). Farther w., an imm. female was at Rio Grande City, Starr 27 Jan (ph., tAW). A female Blue Grosbeak at Lafitte's Cove, Galveston 12 Jan (JKe) made the latest wintering record for the Upper Texas Coast. An Indigo Bunting in n. Houston 26 Dec (PB) was late.

A Boat-tailed Grackle 6 km w. of Kingsville, Kleberg 29 Dec (ph. JSJ) was well outside of its usual haunts. A stunning Black-vented Oriole showed up at Bentens S.P., Hidalgo 13 Dec (ph., tJDL, m.o.b.) and remained in the vicinity all season. A female Hooded Oriole wintered at El Paso, El Paso (BZ) for the 3rd straight winter. A male Baltimore Oriole was seen sporadically for the 4th winter in a row at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., Brewster (TG, CH, BOS, LSI). The highlight for the South Plains was an unprecedented count of 15 Cassin's Finches at Muleshoe N.W.R., Bailey 19 Dec (PS, m.o.b.), where this irruptive species is rarely recorded in such numbers. Lesser Goldfinches pushed noticeably eastward and northward of their usual winter haunts, with a lone bird in Wilbarger 26 Dec (RA), and another in sw. Houston, Harris 1–9 Jan (Jt et al.), one in Kilgore, Rush 25 Jan+ (Pha), and individuals in several locations in Tarrant 14–28 Feb (RC, MLJ).

Cited observers (subregional editors in boldface): John Arvin, Mike Austin, Ruben Ayala, Helen Baines, John Baines (JBA), Marcella Balestri (MBs), Ron Baltezar, Peter Barnes, Mikael Behrens (MBE), Mike Bloodsworth (MBL), Jim Book (JBo), Erik Breden, David Brotherton, Luanne Brotherton, Charles Brower, Frank Bumbgardner, Jimmy Byrd (JBy), Bryan Calk (BrC), Blaine Carnes (BLC), Eric Carpenter (Central Texas: 5604 Southwest Parkway #2222, Austin, Texas 78735, email: ecarpe@gmail.com), Cameron Carver (CCa), Ray Chancellor, Jack Chiles (JCh), Mike Chiles (MCh), Chuck Clark (ChC), Connie Clark (CoC), Sheldon Coffey, Fred Collins, Steve Collins (SCc), Don Connell, Jerry Connolly (JeC), Cody Conway (CcO), Greg Cook (GCo), Mel Coseley (MCcO), Joe Cox (JoC), Gail Cupit (GCu), D. B. Currie (DDC) (North-Central Texas: 2703 Colleen Dr., Arlington, TX 76016, email: dlbirdier@scbglobal.net), David Dauphin (DaDa), Jan Dauphin, tripod Davenport, Brenda Dawson (BDa), Pat DeWenter, Drew Dickert (DDi), Bob Doe (BDj), Marc Eastman, Maryann Eastman (MEA), Dodge Engleman, Frank Farese, Tim Fennell (TFs), Joe Fischer, Mark Flippino, Tony Frank (ToF), Phyllis Frank, Brush Freeman, Bert Frenz (BFe) (East Texas: 221 Rainbow Dr., #12190, Livingston, TX 77359-2091, email: bert@baten.com), Caleb Frome, Terry Fuller (TFu), Frank Gallo, Travis Gallo, John Groves, Mary Gustafson, Bryan Hale, John Hale (JHa), Linda Hale, Debra Halter, Cullen Hanks, Peggy Harding (Pha), Betsy Harwood (BeH), Mark Hassell (MHa), Susan Heath, Mitch Heindel (MHe), Patricia Heirs (PhE), Rhandy Helton, Anthony Hewetsont (Northwest Texas: 4407 36th St., Lubbock TX 79414. email: terrverts@yahoo.com), Kelly Himmel, Jim Hinson (JHI), Petra Hockey (PHI), Huck Hutchens, Laura Jelsmeyns (LJL), Mary Lee Johnson (MLJ), Linda Johnson (LlJ), Ronald Johnson, Harrison Jordan, Larry Jordan (LJo), Rose Ann Jordan (RAJ), Tracy Keltonic, Joe Kennedy (JKe), Keith Kingdom (KeK), Marilyn Kircus (MK), Mike Kirkpatrick (MiK), John Kissela (JKI), Kathy Kissela (KAK), Phillip Kite, Harvey Laas (HLa), Greg Lasley, Cin-Ty Lee (CTL), Javier de Leon (JDL), Howard Lindsey (HLJ), Jane Lindsey, Michael Lindsey (MLJ), Dell Little, Mark Lockwood (MLO), Stephan Lorenz, Lawrence Mayran, Karin McDowell, Jon McNulty (JMc), Brad McKinney, Cindy McNamee, Jeff Mohamed (JMe), Sandra Moore, Tom Morris, James Morton (JAM), John Muldrow (JMu), Derek Muschalek, Bruce Neville, John O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Alice O'Donell, Brian O' Shea (BOS), Carolyn Ohl, Brent Ortego (BOr), Greg Page, David Palmer (DPa), Jim Paton (Trans-Pecos: 4325 Boy Scout Lane, El Paso, TX 79922, email: jpaton@att.net), Dick Peake (DPe), Dwight Peake (DWP), Barrett Pierce, Randy Pinkston, Krissey Plunkett, David Powell (DPd), Stephen Ramirez, Bob Rasa, Rasmussen (Ras), Janet Rathjen (JRa), Ellen Rattoosh, Martin Reid, Liston Rice, Robert Rios (RRI), James Ruiz, Chris Runk, Laura Sare (LSa), David Sarkozki (DSa), Steven Schaferman, Mark Schenuer, Dennis Scott (DSc), Marcy Scott (MSc), Willie Sekula (South Texas: 7063 County Rd. 228, Falls City, TX 78113-2627, email: wssekula@cooper.net), Kelly Sempeck, Chuck Sewick (CSe), Jim Sinclair (JSJ), Patrick Skinner, Howard Smith, John Sprout (Sp), Rex Stanford (RS), Laura Sapp (LS), Cliff Stogner (CS), Byron Stone, Rodney Sullivan (RSv), Bill Tarbox, Kent Taylor, Samuel Taylor, Joann Thompson, Heidi Trudell, Robert Truss, Mort Voller, Darrell Voller, Ron Weeks (UTC: 110 Indian Warrior, Lake Jackson, TX 77566, email: ronweeks@scbglobal.net), James Wheat, Matt White, Jana Whittle (JWh), John Whittle (Jow), Jennifer Wilson (JWl), Mary Dynsey Wilson (MDW), Shirley Winslow, David Wolf, Alan Worthington, Bill Wright, Jim Wright (JWt), Joe Yelderman, Matt York, Jimmy Zubrikzicki, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

Eric Carpenter, 5604 Southwest Parkway #2222, Austin, Texas 78735 (ecarpe@gmail.com)
Pinkston, 3505 Hemlock Court Temple, Texas 76502 (dpinkston@scbglobal.net)
Ron Weeks, 110 Indian Warrior Lake Jackson, Texas 77566 (ronweeks@scbglobal.net)
Climate conditions didn't veer too far from average this season in the region, with Colorado's overall winter temperature ranking near normal and Wyoming's below normal. Many long-established Colorado Christmas Bird Counts garnered record species counts, attributed by most to what seemed like a very late onset of "true" winter this season. Wyoming benefited from overall above-normal precipitation during the period, while Colorado ranked near normal. By the season's end, Wyoming's dry areas waned, with only two patches of abnormally dry categorization remaining in parts of the Big Horn and Colorado River drainages. Colorado's Eastern Plains degraded into more extensive moderate and severe drought as categorized by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Regional bird highlights included a one-day wonder Tufted Duck and a season-long procession of rarities at a single location on the west side of Denver's metropole.

Abbreviations: John Martin (John Martin Res., Bent); Valmont (Valmont Reservoir Complex, Boulder). "West Slope" denotes locations w. of the Rockies. Due to reporting biases, all locations can be assumed to be in Colorado except that each Wyoming location is noted as such the first time it appears in text. Only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying cited records are identified here. Undocumented reports from Colorado of Colorado B.R.C. (C.B.R.C.) review species (www.cfo-link.org) that are deemed probably correct are summarized at the end of this report.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH GREBES**
Greater White-fronted Geese are somewhat unusual in the Region in winter, so the nine reports of 49 birds in nine counties made for a nearly unprecedented showing. Some 8000 Snow Geese, including 150 blue morphs, and 2000 Ross's Geese at Huerfano Res., Pueblo 30 Dec (VT) was a very high number of all three so close to the foothill edge. Cackling Geese are decidedly uncommon on the West Slope, so up to 6 at Confluence Park, Delta (JC) through much of the season and the 2 in the Grand Junction, Mesa area (m.ob.) were of interest. As many as 10 Trumpeter Swans, a large number at any time in Colorado, spent Christmas Day and the rest of the season at Browns Park N.W.R., Moffat; an ad. Tundra Swan joined them 25 Dec--9 Jan (DH). Three Trumpeter Swans at Twin Lakes, Lake 29 Jan--19 Feb (TK) were at very high elevation. Tundra Swans at atypical locations included an ad. at Ridgway, Ouray 4-21 Dec (KN) and a juv. at Jerry Creek Res., Mesa 1 Jan (LA) that might have been the same individual seen two days later at Confluence Park (JC). Unidentified swans were reported from Weld (2), Huerfano, and Mesa (ad.) during the course of the winter. A female Wood Duck 7 Dec at Carbondale, Garfield (DF) was at an atypically high elevation for the late date. The male Cinnamon Teal at Pueblo Res, Pueblo 25 Jan (RM) was the first of the "spring." The first Cinnamon on the West Slope was found 13 Feb at Grand Junction, Mesa (LA), and the first in the nts. was at Sands L., Chaffe the next day (S. York). Wyoming's only Northern Pintail report came from Platte 5 Dec (K. Kranik). A male American Wigeon x Green-winged Teal hybrid at Walden Ponds, Boulder 21 Feb--29 Mar (C. Stiles; ph. SGM) provided much grist for online discussion of hybrid-duck identification. A Tufted Duck at Longmont, Boulder 17 Jan (LS, SGM) provided a 3rd state record and also generated online discussion about ageing and sexing of the bird; no clear consensus was reached as to whether the bird was an ad. female or an imm. male. An ad. male Greater Scaup at Zink's Pond, La Plata 8 Jan (JBy) provided the most interesting of six seasonal records; the species is rare in sw. Colorado. After a spectacular fall showing, it is not surprising that all three scoter species were found into the winter, with a female Black Scoter exhibiting the tardiest departure, lingering from the fall through 1 Jan at Baseline Res., Boulder (m.ob.). Conversely, Long-tailed Ducks seemed to pop up at new sites throughout the winter, and Regional birders tallied an incredible 15 occurrences of 18 individuals, with the record of most interest being the one in Wyoming: an imm. male at Hot Springs S.P., Hot Springs 21 Jan (EC). The southernmost Barrow's Goldeneyes were appreciated at Lathrop S.P., Huerfano 2 Dec (female, ad. male; RM) and on the Animas R., La Plata 8 Jan (JBy). Three Hooded Mergansers along Bull Lake Cr., Fremont, WY 2 Feb (EC) were abnormally n. and w. for the season.

Single Pacific Loons were one-day wonders on Christmas counts at John Martin 16 Dec (BKR MP), at Pueblo Res. 18 Dec (DWF MP), and Marston Res., Denver 18 Dec (JBy). Only 2 Common Loons lingered into the New Year, with one at Valmont 14 Jan--6 Feb (KMD) the latest to depart. The Horned Grebe at Grand Junction 2-19 Dec (RB) accounted for a new late-date record for Colorado's West Slope. The 3506 Eared Grebes tallied on the Pueblo Res. C.B.C. (DWF) was an order of magnitude higher than previous winter high counts there, the only Regional site to support the species each winter; numbers dropped off fairly dramatically after that date. An Eared

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Tony Leukering
Bill Schmoker
Lawrence S. Semo

Very unusual in Colorado's mountains, a Curve-billed Thrasher was recorded near Carbondale, Pitkin County 4 January 2011. This individual appears to be of the western subspecies palmeri rather than of the more expected eastern subspecies obsoletus. Photograph by Jacob Cooper.
Grebe at McIntosh Res., Boulder 27 Feb (SGM) was presumably a very early spring migrant. Both Western and Clark’s Grebes were present through the winter at Pueblo Res. (89 and 3, respectively, on the C.B.C.), as is typical. Aechmophorus grebes away from large e. reservoirs, where quite rare, included Western Grebes at Grand Junction 2 Dec (one, RB) and Rifle Gap Res., Garfield 7-11 Dec (3; DF, TM), plus a Clark’s Grebe at McPhee Res., Montezuma 6 Dec (JBy).

PELLICANS THROUGH GULLS

Three American White Pelicans were late lingerers at L. Meredith, Crowley 15 Dec (MP, BKP), and another was a rare successful winterer at Barr L., Adams (m.ob.). Early spring migrant pelicans appeared at L. Henry, Otero 18 Feb (H; VT) and Prewitt Res., Washington 27 Feb (JL; JK, S. Larson). An American Bittern at Boulder 5-17 Dec (Plage) was seasonally unprecedented. A Turkey Vulture 26 Feb e. of Colorado City, Pueblo (B. B. Hahn) was record early locally and nearly so Regionally. If correct, the Osprey reported from the Glenwood Springs area, Garfield 15-18 Dec (TM) would provide for only the 2nd or 3rd winter record of the species for the Region. Peregrine Falcon is relatively rare in Colorado in winter, so the rash of sightings this season—singles in Boulder, Delta, Garfield, Mesa, Pueblo—was of interest. A Sora at the CF&I Lakes S. of Pueblo, Pueblo 30 Dec (MP) provided a new winter locality for the species.

A juv. Black-legged Kittiwake in the mts. at L. Estes, Larimer 20 Dec (S. Rashid, J. Nelson) was unprecedented for the winter season, though there was a large influx of the species in the Plains and Midwest in autumn and early winter of 2010. Bonapartes Gulls typically depart the Region before winter, with a small number often lingering into Dec at Pueblo Res. This season, 170 at that site on the C.B.C. (DWF) made for a record-high count, while small numbers at three other sites made for a more widespread Dec showing than normal. The 230 participants of the “Gullapalooza” trip to Valmont 8 Jan (TF et al.) enjoyed an ad. Mew Gull that was present through at least 6 Feb. That site also supported the seasonal high counts of Thayer’s (10) and Lesser Black-backed (7) Gulls (TF). Juvenile Iceland Gulls were found 5 Dec at both Love-Land, Larimer (CW, tNK) and Cherry Creek S.P., Arapahoe (TGW), the latter lingering through 14 Dec. Eleven Glaucous Gulls at seven sites made for a better-than-average showing, particularly the 3 (including an ad.) at Pueblo Res. 28-30 Jan (BKP).

DOVES THROUGH WRENS

The high counts of White-winged Dove this season came from the Christmas counts at Pueblo Res. (150) and Penrose (13), on 18 & 19 Dec, respectively. Also of interest were singles in La Veta, Huerfano 25 Dec–12 Feb (P&PFN), Rye, Pueblo 2 Jan (DS), and Grand Junction 4 Jan (N. Korte), plus 5 in Blende, Pueblo 30 Dec (VT et al.). A juv. Red-headed Woodpecker photographed in Wetmore, Custer 22 Dec–5 Feb (RM) was unprecedented in the mts. in winter. As has become annual now, all three sapsucker species were noted in Colorado, and, as has also become typical, the lion’s share of reports came from Fremont and Pueblo. However, the West Slope got in on the sapsucker action, with a female Williamson’s 3 Jan+, and a male Red-naped 3–14 Dec in Nucla, Montrose (both CD, BW) and a female Red-naped in Grand junction 5 Dec–30 Jan (LA).

Single Black Phoebes were found in Canon City; Fremont 13 Dec (MP, B. Steiger) and in the vicinity of Valco S.W.A., Pueblo 18 Dec–5 Feb (B. Maynard, L. Edwards); the latter is the wintering site of recent years. Of the 10 Say’s Phoebes reported, the latest, 22 Feb at Canon City (RM), was probably an early spring migrant. A flock of 25 Pinyon Jays through the winter was considered locally unusual at Steamboat Springs. Route (TL). Chihuahuan Ravens continue to be reported outside of “accepted” range; none of the three reports from Boulder this season was accompanied by definitive photographs or video, and indeed no Front Range reports are so supported. Given the difficulty in identifying Chihuahuan Raven in the field, all extralimital reports of the species should have strong documentation. A Tree Swallow at Pueblo Res. 18 Feb (BKP, M. Joy) was a very early spring migrant and unprecedented locally and Regionally. The 2 Mountain Chickadees at Rocky Ford S.W.A., Otero 15 Dec (BKP) provided the only plain report of the season, while a single Juniper Titmouse reported from Horseshoe Res., Larimer 22 Feb (CW) was both far n. and off the foothills. Also in the foothill-birds-on-the-plains department, flocks of Bushtits (6-10 birds) made appearances at two locations in Centennial, Arapahoe (E. Donman, C. Madsen) and at Brighton, Adams (P. Opler) this winter, as did 4 Pygmy Nuthatches in Pueblo 19 Feb (BKP). The two Rock Wren reports made for an incredibly poor winter showing.

GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Two e. Colorado records of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Dec about doubled the recent winter average (the species is regular in winter around Grand Junction), with the 5 Dec Barr L., Adams bird (fide BS) being seasonally quite far north. The other visited Pueblo 18 Dec (DM). An American Dipper wintered at the confluence of Clear Cr. and the S. Platte R., Adams (R. Caner). This site is the only one in a purely plains Colorado county that regularly hosts the species. It seemed a spectacular winter for Eastern Bluebird, with 18 reports from eight counties, with the most far-flung
also of Yellow Palms; the nominate subspecies is regular in both spring and fall. Surely the most warbler record of the season was that of the Blackpoll Warbler found dead on the top of the snow in front of a Boulder residence 30 Dec (N. Pieplow). A late Ovenbird was found at Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso 4-12 Dec (BKP).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A Spotted Towhee was quite odd in the Little yard in Steamboat Springs 9 Feb (TL), particularly as it was not seen previously or subsequently, and the species is quite rare in winter there. A Canyon Towhee seen from late fall 7 Jan in Parker, Douglas (L. Croissant, ph. GW) was well n. of normal and provided one of very few records for the species n. of the Palmer Divide. A Savannah Sparrow at John Martin Res. 16 Dec (BKP) was either a tardy individual or a rare wintering bird. A Fox Sparrow (subspecies group unreported) was seen in Delta 1 Jan (Jbn), a Red Fox Sparrow was documented in Boulder 19 Dec+ (J. Barr, ph. BS), and single Slate-colored Fox Sparrows were at No Name, Garfield (TM), where there are prior winter records, and at Pleasure Park, Delta 7 Jan (DL). Like Hermit Thrushes, Lincoln's Sparrows seem to be much more regular in recent winters. Eight reports of 9 birds from four counties came to light, with one from Montrose and 2 from Delta on the West Slope, where there are few previous seasonal records. Of the 10 reports of Swamp Sparrows, the highest count was of 7, in the Penrose, Fremont C.B.C. circle 19 Dec (Jbn). The six reports of 8 White-throated Sparrows included singles at Nucla, Montrose 11 Dec (CD) and Paonia 30 Jan-9 Feb (TL) on the West Slope and at La Veta 26 Dec (PSFNS) in lightly birded Huerfano. In the best winter for Harris's Sparrow in recent years, we received 18 reports of 21 individuals, with 3 at Florence 13 Dec-1 Jan (MP).

An imm. male Summer Tanager spent 3-7 Dec at a Centennial feeder (K. Corwin) for an exceedingly rare winter record. Also very rare seasonally and unprecedented on the West Slope, an ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Carbondale, Garfield 18 Dec (fide CD). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds (age/sex unreported) lingered at Union Res., Weld 12 Dec (B. Guarente) and Bonny S.P., Yuma 17 Dec (CW, NK). An ad. female Yellow-headed Blackbird seen s. of Lamar, Prowers 20 Jan (J. Stulp) could have been lingering or returning. There were only three reports of Rusty Blackbird this season, all in expected locales. A Common Grackle at Gunnison, Gunnison 18 Dec (Jbn) was the most unexpected of five reports of the species this season. With only two or three previous winter records of Bulkley's Oriole in the Region, it was surprising to have three such reports: in Boulder 6 Dec (M. Arp), in Larimer 9-28 Dec (ph. C. Kogler), and at Parker 30-31 Jan (ph. A. Spellman).

Undocumented rarities: The following review species were reported in the period from Colorado without documentation: Harris's Hawk (Jefferson); Black-legged Kittiwake (Huerfano, Weld); Laughing Gull (Washington); Mew Gull (Arapahoe, Washington); Iceland Gull (Adams, Weld); Herring Gull x Glacous-winged Gull (Arapahoe, Bent); Glacous-winged Gull (Morgan); Great Black-backed Gull (Arapahoe, Boulder, Pueblo); Pacific Wren (Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Pueblo); Pine Warbler (El Paso, Fremont, Larimer); Eastern Towhee (Douglas); Red Fox Sparrow (Yuma); Golden-crowned Sparrow (Jefferson, Yuma).

SA

A Golden-crowned Sparrow was found at the Trading Post at Red Rocks Park, Jefferson 16 Oct (O. Cameron). Feeders there have a history of hosting Golden-crowned Sparrows (there were 2 present one winter), so Colorado birders may be excused for not rushing to see this bird. However, the Golden-crowned was the first of an incredible string of interesting birds discovered this winter that had birders flocking to the Trading Post.

On 21 Oct, an out-of-place Curve-billed Thrasher showed up (M. Chavez) and remained through at least 14 May. On the same day, a White-throated Sparrow (TS) was found, and another turned up 17 Dec (MH). After a Harris's Sparrow arrived 29 Nov (MH), the superfauna of our Zonotrichia sparrow was recorded often and deep into spring, with the Harris's last reported on 9 May. On the last date of the Golden-crowned Sparrow's presence, 30 Apr, a Slate-colored Fox Sparrow joined the crowd and stayed until 13 May (L. Canny). Though this is the locally breeding Fox Sparrow type in the adjacent mts., individuals are very rare in the state away from montane breeding habitat at any season. On 31 Dec, all three species of rose-finch made appearances at this site (MH): 100+ Grey-crowned (about 1096 Hepburns) and a handful each of Black and Brown-capped. All were present off and on through late Feb.
Cited observers (subregional editors in boldface): Larry Arnold, Jason Beason (JB), Jim Beatty (JBy; sw. Colorado), Jim Berry (JBr), Robert Bradley, Jacob Cooper, Eva Crane, Todd Deininger, Coen Dexter (CDc, w-cen. Colorado), John Drummond (se. Colorado), Kathy Mihm Dunning, Doug W. Faulkner, Dick Filby, Ted Floyd, Dennis Garrison, Mike Henwood, Dona Hilkey, Tim Kalbach, Joe Kellner, Nick Komar, Tom Littler, Forrest Luke (nw. Colorado), Dan Maynard, Tom McConnell, Steve Miller (RMI), Steve G. Modinow, Polly & Paul Neldner, Kent Nelson, Brandon K. Percival (Pueblo area), Mark Peterson (San Luis Valley), Bill Schmoker (BSC; Colorado Front Range), Larry Semo (ne. Colorado), Dave Silverman, Van Tuan, Glenn Walbek (montane Colorado), Cole Wild, Brenda Wright. Many other individuals contributed information to this report but could not be acknowledged here; they have our appreciation.

Tony Leukering, 102 Delaware Avenue
Villas, New Jersey 08251 (greatgrayowl@aol.com)
Bill Schmoker, 3381 Larkspur Drive
Longmont, Colorado 80503 (billschmoker.org)
Lawrence S. Semo, SWCA Environmental Consultants
295 Interlochen Boulevard, Suite 300
Broomfield, Colorado 80021 (semo@swca.com)

**Idaho & Western Montana**

Al though the winter 2010–2011 weather was quite variable across the Region, most locations reported a cooler-than-average season coupled with a steady flow of precipitation that resulted in above-average, persistent snow cover. As has been the trend in most recent years, winter finches and montane species were scarce or absent in most reporting areas. Perhaps the season will be best remembered for a surprising diversity of unexpected waterfowl and passerines that persisted through December to be recorded on Christmas Bird Counts.

**GEES THROUGH GULLS**

The only reported Greater White-fronted Geese were in Idaho’s Canyon and Gooding in late Dec. Wintering Snow Geese were unusually abundant in Idaho, with small numbers of them recorded in Ada, Canyon, Gooding, Lemhi, and Power, and a surprising 46 in Owyhee late Dec–early Jan. Although not annual in winter, Ross’s Geese were identified in Ada and Owyhee, ID 19 Dec–2 Jan. About 27 Cackling Geese were reported from five locations in late Dec, a count that almost equaled last winter’s record total. Trumpeter Swan counts of 10 near Bigfork, MT 18 Dec (DC) and 1092 near Rexburg, ID 23 Dec (DCI) set new local records. Four Eurasian Wigeons were reported, representing an average winter total. An astounding 10 Blue-winged Teal in Gooding 19 Dec (SH) and 3 Cinnamon Teal near Bruneau 2 Jan (LR) added to very few previous winter records of these species in Idaho. While any scoter is unexpected in winter, up to 3 White-winged Scoters wintered in Flathead, MT 1 Dec–19 Feb (DC), and single White-winged were spotted at C. J. Strike Res. 23 Jan–14 Feb (JC) and below A.F.R. dam 28 Feb (JFe) in Idaho. Long-tailed Ducks made their best appearance in four years, with a total of 8 recorded. The Red-throated Loon discovered in Owyhee, ID 26 Nov was last reported 14 Feb (JC). Especially rare in winter, a Pacific Loon was a great find in Canyon, ID 11–18 Dec (LD, RM). An amazing 15 Great Egrets tallied near Hagerman, ID 19 Dec (SH) almost certainly represented a winter record count for the Region. Always rare in Idaho, Green Herons were spotted at Marsing 18 Dec (LD) and in Custer 26 Dec (RN).

An Osprey in Owyhee 2-19 Jan (LR) was remarkable; there are few mid-winter reports from Idaho. Ferruginous Hawks are unexpected in Montana in winter, making a report of one in Moissee Valley, MT 1 Dec (JB) noteworthy. Seven Gyrfalcons, most of them near Bozeman, MT (JP), represented the Region’s best winter total in five years. A Sandhill Crane that held over near Corvallis 12 Dec (WT) added to a handful of Dec records in Montana. Spotted Sandpipers in Owyhee 1 Dec–13 Feb (LR) and Lemhi 18 Dec (HR) were also quite unexpected. The rare-but-regular gull tally was above average, with 5 Mew Gulls, 4 Thayer’s Gulls, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 3 Glacous-winged Gulls, and 6 Glaucous Gulls. If accepted, a Western Gull in Owyhee 11-23 Dec (p.a., ph., tJC, CW) would be Idaho’s 2nd.

**DOVES THROUGH FINCHES**

An astounding 3710 Eurasian Collared-Doves were tallied on 36 of the Region’s Christmas Bird Counts, representing a 97% increase over last winter’s record count. A species not recorded annually in the Region, 2 Snowy Owls were at Pablo, MT 21 Jan (CA). Two Northern Hawk Owls were seen at Glacier N.P., MT 19 Dec (SG), and one near Kalispell, MT 2-28 Jan (JM) was much more unusual. An early-arriving Burrowing Owl in Ada 5 Feb (p.a., ph., tES) would represent Idaho’s first documented winter record. With only five accepted winter records in Idaho, Anna’s Hummingbirds in Marsing 1-3 Dec (KG, CH) and Boise 1 Dec–28 Feb (IV) were significant. Not annual in winter, Red-naped Sapsuckers were detected in both states: 2 were near Eureka, MT 18 Dec (GH) and one near Bruneau, ID 2 Jan (CH). A Red-breasted Sapsucker near Moscow 19-23 Feb (p.a., ph., tTG) would be Idaho’s 4th. A mere 5 Blue Jays in n. Idaho indicated a non-flight year.

New winter records were provided by california Western Scrub-Jays that remained in Idaho through the season at Boise and Bayview, and another was in Thompson Falls, MT. A Hermit Thrush discovered near Bozeman, MT 2 Feb (LAH) provided the first Feb record for Latilong 38, and another 32 km n. of Riggins (CS) was likely a winter first for Idaho’s Latilong 7. Typical in Idaho were Northern Mockingbirds in Bruneau 2 Jan (CH) and at C. J. Strike Res. 13 Feb (CH). A McCown’s Longspur detected in Canyon, ID 5 Dec (p.a., ph., tJC; CH) would be Idaho’s 2nd. Present in Boise, ID since late Nov, the Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warbler were last reported 16 Dec and 2 Jan, respectively.

(Boulder); Common Redpoll (Larimer); and Purple Finch (Pueblo).
Yellow-rumped Warblers were unexpected finds in Montana at Thompson Falls 1 Dec–25 Feb (JG), Missoula 18 Dec (LW), Troy 19 Dec (DJ), and Bozeman 20–26 Feb (MM). Spotted Towhees made an unusually good showing across the Region, with singles reported near Hamilton, MT 18 Dec (JO), at Coeur d'Alene, ID 18 Dec (SS), at Pocatello, ID 18 Dec (BN), at Bonners Ferry, ID 19 Dec (JR), and in Lake, MT 19 Dec (KR). Especially rare in winter away from SW Idaho was a Lincoln's Sparrow below the A.F.R. dam 13 Dec (EH). The rarer Zonotrichia sparrows made a good showing, with 3 White-throated and 13 Harris's Sparrows reported. Two Purple Finches, rare and irregular winter visitors to NW Montana, were a sensational find at Libby 18 Dec (SGe).

Contributors (subregional editors in boldface): Chad Adams, Jim Brown, Kathleen Cameron, Jay Carlisle, Dan Casey, Darren Clark (DC), Lynn Davenport, Kathy Gannuscio, Sandra Gerber (SGe), Steve Gniadek, Terry Gray, Jim Greaves, Ed Harper, Lou Ann Harris, Sarah Harris, Guenter Heinz, Cheryl Huizinga, Don Jones, Jeannie Marcure, Robert Mortensen, Mike Myer, Rick Nau, Barb North, John Orniston, John Parker, Jed Petersen (JPe), Larry Ridenhour, Hadley Roberts, Jan Rose, Kathy Ross, Erin Strasser, Shirley Sturts, Charles Swift, Wayne Tree, Heidi Ware, Larry Weeks, Cliff Weisse, Poo Wright-Pulliam.

David Trochell, 2409 East N Avenue
La Grande, Oregon 97850, (dtrotchell@frontier.com)

New Mexico

Following plentiful early autumn rains, winter 2010–2011 was dry, even by New Mexico standards. Then, deep cold arrived in early February and remained for a week or more, smothering temperature records south to the Mexican border; people were ice skating on ponds at Truth or Consequences, and bird numbers seemed to plummet along with the thermometer. Nevertheless, birding was brisk throughout the season, seed eaters and frugivores were unusually plentiful, spring migrants began to appear by mid-February, several interesting rarities were documented, and Rufous-winged Sparrow was added to the state list. Thanks to John Parmeter and Bill Howe for proofreading this report.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); C.C.N.P. (Carlsbad Caverns N.P.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte Lake); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.), N.R.T. (n. Roosevelt migrant trap w.

of Melrose); R.G.N.C. (Rio Grande Nature Center, Albuquerque); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); R.S. (Rattlesnake Springs area, Eddy).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

A good season for Greater White-fronted Goose produced records in the e. at Ute L. (JO) and L.V.N.W.R. (m.ob.) and in the R.G.V. from Corrales to Caballo L., including highs of 22 at Bosque 30 Jan (ph. J. Shipman), 15 at E.B.L. 9 Feb (ph. DC), and 9 at Caballo L. 4 Dec (DC); one was w. to Lordsburg 21 Feb (AC); and, in a class alone, 195 were seen migrating over Post Office Canyon, Peloncillo Mts. 19 Jan (CDL). Some 52 blue-morph Snow Geese were among 24,835 white ones at Bosque 18 Dec (DH), where there were 2772 Ross's the same day. At B.L.N.W.R., Ross's Geese outnumbered Snows 7442 to 4640 on 18 Dec (JS). Unreported in New Mexico since 2004, a Black Brant was at L.V.N.W.R. 7-29 Jan (RC, m.ob., ph. NH, ph. CW, ph. JB, ph. JO). A family of 4 Trumpeter Swans at L. Luther n. of Farmington 31 Jan–28 Feb (ph. T. Newman, ph. T. Reeves) was believed to be semi-feral birds produced at Pagosa Springs, CO. High counts for Tundra Swans included 9 at Cherry L., Mora 3 Jan (ph. MW) and 6 at L.V.N.W.R. 16 Jan (J. McPhee). A male Eurasian Wigeon visited Clovis 18 Dec–28 Jan (CR, ph. JO, JPh), where one has occurred in three of the past four years. A male Mexican Duck was n. to Corrales 6 Dec (ph. MO). Greater Scaup away from the R.G.V. were 3 at Clovis 18 Dec (CR) and a male at Deming 22 Dec (LM). Providing an Edy first was an ad. male Black Scoter at Brantley L. 20 Dec (Sw). A Long-tailed Duck made a brief visit to Las Crucen's Burn L. 1 Dec (AT). Single Barrow's Goldeneyes were at Maxwell N.W.R. 14 & 29 Jan (Ww; JP). A Chukar was at Los Alamos 28 Feb–1 Mar (ph. SF), there are no established New Mexico populations of this species. Also unusual was a Ring-necked Pheasant at Montezuma 24 Nov–15 Dec (ph. C. Benavidez).

The highlight of the loon season was a Red-throated Loon at Brantley L. 20 Dec (CR, SW). Single Pacific Loons were at Clovis 18 Dec–28 Jan (CR, ph. JO, JP); Springer L. 21 Dec (DH), and Ute L. 23 Feb (JP). Unusual in winter in Rio Arriba, a Common Loon was near Española 1 Jan (SF; ph. T. Hodapp). Noteworthy for Santa Fe were 3 Horned Grebes at Santa Cruz L. 18-21 Dec (JB, SF). Single Red-necked Grebes were documented at Caballo L. 25 Dec (ph. DC) and E.B.L. 27 Dec (ph. DC); under review is another re-
Brown Pelicans had become a familiar feature at New Mexico’s Elephant Butte Lake in Socorro County in 2010, with up to six still hanging on into winter 2010-2011, including this one on 9 January. However, all of them vanished after the arrival of subfreezing temperatures in early February. Photograph by Nancy E. Hetrick.

Unexpected in winter in New Mexico, this Wilson’s Phalarope was at Caballo Lake, Sierra County from 25 December 2010 through 7 January (here) 2011. Photograph by David J. Cleary.

CRANES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

An impressive 18,376 Sandhill Cranes were in the Roswell area 18 Dec (JS); an albino Sandhill caused some excitement in the Uvas Valley 12 Dec (C. Meyers). A possible Whooping Crane was reported flying with Sandhills s. of Grulla N.W.R. 8 Dec (M. Massey), but details, received two months after the sighting, were equivocal; the species remains unconfirmed in New Mexico. Continuing from Nov, a Black-bellied Plover lingered at Caballo L. through 11 Dec (ph. DC). Late Snowy Plovers were at Brantley L. 20 Dec (SW) and near Loving 26 Dec (C. Cranston). Two American Avocets were at the Lordsburg Playa 22 Jan (LM); 2 at Caballo L. 29 Jan (DC) survived the freeze, continuing there through Feb (JP, ph. DC). Two Greater Yellowlegs were n. to Española 1 Jan (BF). A Lesser Yellowlegs was carefully studied at Bosque 16 Dec (MB, ph. CW); reports of Lesserwelsewhere Dec-Jan were undetailed and may refer to Greeters. Three Long-billed Curlews were a surprise near Cannon AFB. 28 Jan (JL). Unexpected in winter anywhere in New Mexico, up to 4 Western Sandpipers were at Caballo L. 4 Dec-Jan 21 Feb (ph. DC, JP, WW). Dunlins likewise wintered at Caballo L. 4 Dec-Jan 21 Dec (DC, DH, JP), including 9 on 30 Dec (ph. DC); one lingered at Bosque 15 Dec (MH). Providing a Union first, an American Woodcock was near Clayton 15 Dec (DH); another was in the R.G.V. near the Alameda bridge 10 Feb (GO). Another winter surprise was a Wilson’s Phalarope at Caballo L. 25 Dec-Jan 7 Jan (ph. DC, DH). An imm. Black-legged Kitiwake was a treat at Brantley L. 20 Dec (MH, CR, SW). Among the rarer gulls at E.B.L. were an ad. Thayer’s Gull 3 Jan-18 Feb (ph. DC, MH, JP, DK, GP) and ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull 29 Dec-1 Feb (ph. DC, m.ob., ph.), plus a first-cycle bird 3 Jan-18 Feb (ph. MH, E.B.C.L., ph. KZ, ph. MB, ph. CW, DK), and a first-cycle Glaucous Gull 10 Dec (JP).

A White-winged Dove was in the snow at Zuni 3 Jan (JT); White-winged were reported on 24 C.B.C.s statewide, n. to Farmington, Dixon, Española, Santa Fe, Roswell, and Clovis. Unlike most doves, Inca Doves may be declining or disappearing in some areas, including in the Carlsbad area, where one seen 29 Dec (SW) was the only report. Single Common Ground-Doves were near Radium Springs 13-21 Dec and 20-24 Feb (MS, ph. J2) and at Guadalupe Canyon 16 Jan (MB). A Monk Parakeet continued at its nest structure near Albuquerque’s Alameda bridge, where seen 8 Dec-13 Feb (C. Hayes et al.). An early Burrowing Owl was at Clovis 28 Jan (JL). Late Common Poorwills were singles at Corrales 6 Dec (DK) and Las Union 7-11 Dec (ph. DB). Up
to 12 White-throated Swifts reached Buckman Mesa, Santa Fe 21 Feb (RC). On the hummingbird front, a female Broad-billed again wintered at Carlsbad, where present through 22 Jan (EP), and a male was in the area 20 Dec (SW); one at Las Cruces 17 Dec (AT) provided the only additional report. Anna’s Hummingbirds were relatively scarce, although 2 males wintering at Las Cruces survived almost four subfreezing days and nights in early Feb (K. Stinnett). An ad. male Costa’s Hummingbird was c. of Las Cruces 17 Dec (AT).

**TROGONS THROUGH WRENS**

Elegant Trogons have never before been reported in winter in New Mexico, but this season brought reports of one in Fillmore Canyon, Organ Mts. 13 Feb (ph. L. Foerster, G. Levandoski) and another in Guadalupe Canyon 20 Feb (CR). A high count of 29 Acorn Woodpeckers came from Ruidoso 4 Jan (A. Powell). Yellow-bellied SapSuckers with adequate details were singles along Trigg Rd., c. San Miguel 18 Feb (MM), at Torreon, Torrance 5 Dec (CR), at San Antonio 10 Dec (JP), at E.B.L. Dam 28 Dec–23 Feb (ph. DC), and at Percha 1 Jan (JP). One to 2 American Three-toed Woodpeckers persisted at Sandia Crest 5 Dec–13 Feb (JP, ph. CW), and up to 3 were in the Poretry Cr. area, w. Sierra Dec–Feb (ph. DC). Reports of apparently pure Yellow-shafted Flickers included singles w. to Guadalupe Canyon 15 Jan (MH) and Lordsburg 21 Feb (AC); farther e., singles were at Clovis (CR), Albuquerque (BV), Casa Colorado (GF), E.B.L. Dam (ph. DC, ph. SF), and Carlsbad (SW).

Wintering Empidonax flycatchers were again much in evidence, with some 23 individuals at 14 locales in eight counties from Glenwood, Corrales, and Roswell southward; most of these were adequately described to species. Apparent Hammond’s Flycatchers were at Ladder Ranch 29 Dec (WWe), Percha 26 Dec–18 Feb (ph. CGL, ph. BZ, ph. DC, JP, DK), La Union 1 Jan (ph. DB), and Guadalupe Canyon 3 Jan–19 Feb (up to 2 birds; m.ob.). Single Dusky Flycatchers were reported near the Alameda bridge 26 Dec (BV), at E.B.L. 6 Dec–14 Feb (ph. DC), at Williamsburg 3 Jan (DC), and along Tierra Blanca Cr. 8–25 Dec (ph. DC), and up to 2 were noted at Guadalupe Canyon 5–15 Jan (JP, JO, MH). Gray Flycatchers were at Big Creek, Peloncillo Mts. 2 Jan (MH) and the middle Animas Valley 2 Jan (NP). Unidentified Empidonax included 6 in the Cliff–Gila Valley 1 Jan (RS) and singles at Glenwood 18 Dec (E. Hough), Corrales 19 Dec (WH), Roswell 18 Dec (JS), and R.S. 18 (SW) & 21 Dec (MH). Single Black Phoebes lingered n. to Questa 18 Dec (MJK) and Dixon 14 Dec (RT). A Vermilion Flycatcher was n. to Roswell 18 Dec (JS). Remarkable for winter, but not unprecedented, was a well-described Cassin’s Kingbird at City of Rocks S.P. 30 Jan (K. Cassell).

One to 2 Northern Shrikes were at six n. sites in Colfax, Union, Mora, and San Miguel; southerly were singles at Embudito Canyon, Sandia Mts. 5–10 Feb (NP) and at E.B.L. 11 Feb (LM). A Steller’s Jay was s. to La Union 13 Feb (DB), where a continuing Blue Jay persisted Dec–Feb (ph. DB). Tree Swallows arrived across a broad front 17–20 Feb (m.ob.), including 30 in the Caballo L. area.
17 Feb (ph. DC), 2 Violet-green Swallows were at Las Palomas 18 Feb (DK), and 8 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were near Williamsburg 16 Feb (DC). A Juniper Titmouse pair was nest-building at Silver City by 22 Feb (PT). Single White-breasted Nuttahatches of the e. subspecies were identified at Clovis 18 Dec (CR) and Corrales 23 Jan (WH). A Pygmy Nuthatch stayed to Farmington 18 Dec (AN). Cactus Wrens were conspicuous along the w. base of the Sandia Mts., with one to 3 at Albuquerque Acres, Embudo Canyon, and Embudito Canyon during the season (n. ob.). Winter Wrens flooded the state from the R.G.V. eastward, with reports of one to 2 from 18 localities in Santa Fe, San Miguel, Sandoval, Torrance, Socorro, Sierra, Otero, and Eddy, plus 2 w. to Zuni’s Blackrock 2 Jan (JT). The only Pacific Wrens with details were singles at Zuni 2 Jan (JT) and Cedar Crest 19 Feb (DK).

A vocal Black-capped Gnatcatcher pair was in Guadalupe Canyon 3 Jan (NP, JB), where the species has been present since 2006. Eastern Bluebirds were in the R.G.V. from Española southward, including a high 60 at Albuquerque 19 Dec (HS), w. were 10 in the Cliff-Gila Valley 1 Jan (RS), 3 in the Black Range at Hermosa 26 Jan (ph. DC), 2 each at Zuni 2 Jan (JT) and Bear Canyon L. 21 Feb (LM), and one in the Peloncillo Mts. 2 Jan (NP). Continuing from Nov was a female Varied Thrush at Corrales 1-4 Dec (m. ob., ph.); a male was near Bosque village, Valencia 4-11 Feb (E. Andersen). Gray Catbird appears to have “arrived” as a wintering species, with singles at Corrales 5 Dec–27 Feb (DH, T. Fetze), Albuquerque’s Old Town 1 Jan (ph. J. Beltran) and elsewhere in Albuquerque 4 Dec (CR), Las Cruces all season (R. Casetter, ph. D. Simonetti), R.S. 8 Dec–12 Feb (SW, JP), Sandia L. near Hobbs 15 Jan (CLB), and w. to Pleasanton 20 Feb (A. Seeger). Northern Mockingbirds typically vacate n. New Mexico in winter, but this season found singles at Clayton 15 Dec (CR), Otto, Santa Fe 22 Jan (RC), and n. of Wagon Mound 30 Jan (NP). Sage Thrashers were more numerous and widespread than usual, including C.B.C. highs of 102 at Five Points, Socorro 14 Dec (NC), 99 in the Peloncillo Mts. 2 Jan (NP), 36 at C.C.N.P. 18 Dec (SW), 29 at Sevilleta N.W.R. 17 Dec (S. Cox), and 19 at Zuni 2 Jan (JT). One to 2 Brown Thrashers were at seven sites from the R.G.V. eastward, including one near Shoemaker, Mora 29 Jan (CR), a Curve-billed Thrasher was n. to Dixon 14 Dec (RT), and 2 were at Española 1 Jan (BF). Sprague’s Pipit went unreported in Jan; singles were on Otero Mesa 16 Dec (MB, CW), near Hermanas 7 Feb (LM), at Hobbs 11 Feb (WH), and on Otero Mesa 12 Feb (CW).

Noteworthy for the Peloncillo Mts. was an Olive Warbler in Brushy Canyon 12 Dec (CDL); Olives in the Black Range included 2 at Kingston 29 Dec (ph. DC), one at Hermosa 26 Jan (DC), and one n. of Kingston 12 Feb (DC). Providing a Santa Fe first were up to 4 Lapland Longspurs near Otto 11-13 Feb (ph. RC, JB); others included singles on Albuquerque’s West Mesa 1-2 Feb (NP, ph. CW, MH) and at Lordsburg 19 Feb (CR). Single Orange-crowned Warblers lingered in the R.G.V. n. to E.B.L. Dam 10 Dec (JP), Ladder Ranch 29 Dec (WWe), and Percha 28 Dec (DG) and 2 Jan (JD), and 6 were at Las Cruces 18 Dec (DG), elsewhere, singles were near Alamogordo 16 Dec (MB, CW) and in the Avalon-Brantley area 20 Dec (TH). Unexpected in winter, a Nashville Warbler was at...
Carlsbad 2 Jan (EP), a continuing Northern Parula was near Radium Springs until 10 Dec (MS, JZ), and another was at Burn L. 4 Dec (W. Treers), and a surprising Yellow Warbler was at Silver City 26 Feb (K. Beckenbach). Two Yellow-throated Warblers were seen by many, one at San Antonio 9-31 Dec (S. Santa Anna, m.ob., ph.) and one at the Albuquerque Marriott 25-26 Jan (BV, m.ob., ph.). A Palm Warbler was a surprise at Caballo L. 7 Dec (ph. DC), as was a Black-and-white Warbler there 1 Jan (DH). A male Common Yellowthroat wintered n. to Albuquerque's Alameda bridge 4-31 Jan (MH, CM, JP, ph. CW); another was at Sevilleta N.W.R. 17 Dec (DK), and 2 were at Bosque 18 Dec (DH, DK), where one was found 18 Jan (DK). A Wilson's Warbler was at Carlsbad 29 Dec (EP); the species has occurred in winter in New Mexico in three of the past five seasons.

SPARRROWS

Responding to an abundant seed crop, Green-tailed Towhees were especially numerous in sw. New Mexico, including a record 389 in the Peloncillo Ms. 2 Jan (NP); one was far n. to Las Vegas 26 Dec (CR). Continuing from Oct, the female Eastern Towhee at Madrid persisted through Feb (L. Sager, JP, ph. JB, WWI, GO). A high 10 Abert's Towhees were at San Simon Cienega 20 Feb (DH). Providing a New Mexico first were one to 3 Rufous-winged Sparrows in Guadalupe Canyon from 3 Jan through Feb (ph. NP, ph. JB, m.ob., ph.); apparently spreading from ne. Sonora, the birds believed to be a mated pair plus a territorial male. Often overlooked (or absent) in winter, Cassin's Sparrows were at several s. locales, including a high 31 in the Peloncillo Ms. 2 Jan (NP), one n. to Sevilleta N.W.R. 14 Dec (NC), one at the Aguirre Springs entrance 7 Jan (BZ, ph. KZ), one to 2 on Otero Mesa 16-17 Dec (CW, JP), and 2 at Seven Rivers W.M.A. 20 Dec (CR). American Tree Sparrows were notably scarce in their usual haunts in the ne. part of the state; nevertheless, one was s. to N.R.T. 18 Dec (JP), and 2 each were reported at Roswell 18 Dec (JS) and Ladder Ranch 29 Dec (WWI). Nicely described was a Clay-colored Sparrow at Seven Rivers W.M.A. 20 Dec (CR, MH). Field Sparrow made a strong showing in the st., where wintering birds included highs of 10 at N.R.T. 19 Dec (CR), 20 at Roswell 18 Dec (JS), 3 at Brantley L. 20 Dec (MH), 10 at C.C.N.P. 18 Dec (SW), 3 in the Black R. area 12 Feb (JP), 3 at Eunice 14 Jan (CLB), and 5 at Jal 14 Jan (CLB). A Black-chinned Sparrow was n. to Embudito Canyon, Sandia Ms. 28-31 Jan (ph. MO, CW). Surprising were 10 Lark Sparrows at Eunice 1 Jan (P. McCalson), where the species apparently winters in some years; in the R.G.V., one was n. to Bosque 18 Dec (RG) and another at La Union in Dec (DB); elsewhere, 2 were in the Cliff-Gila Valley 1 Jan (RS), and singles were at Cotton City 22 Jan (LM) and the Peloncillo Ms. 2 Jan (NP).

Getting an early start, a pair of Black-throated Sparrows was nest-building at City of Rocks S.P. 16 Feb (PT). Lark Buntings were in good numbers across the s., including a high 2500 near Cotton City 15 Dec (CDL); unusual was one n. to Questa 18 Dec (MJK). Small numbers of Grasshopper Sparrows were found in the sw. in Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, Doña Ana, and Otero; noteworthy was 10 w. of Clovedale 1 Jan (NP) and 3 at the Aguirre Springs entrance 7 Jan (ph. BZ, KZ). Four Baird's Sparrows were in Otero Meza grasslands 16 Dec (MB, CW), and one was at Ladder Ranch 29 Dec (WWI); another 4 were in the Animas Valley and vicinity 2 Jan (JFE). It was an impressive season for reddish Fox Sparrows, with 2 at Clovis and singles at Clayton, Alameda, Bernardo, and R.S. and w. to Zuni and Tyronne; slate-colored ones were at Caballo L. and Post Office Canyon, with undetailed singles at Las Vegas and in the Sandia Ms., plus 2 at Roswell. Lincoln's Sparrows were unusually plentiful across the s. half of New Mexico, including an amazing 462 in the Caballo L. area (JD) and 150 in the Peloncillo Ms. (NP) 2 Jan. Swamp Sparrow likewise was much in evidence, including high counts of 11 each at Sevilleta M.W.R. 17 Dec (ph. DK), Bosque 18 Dec (DH), and the Avalon–Brantley area 20 Dec (TH); n. were singles at La Cieneguilla 21 Jan (ph. JB) and Pecos 9 Jan (RC). One to 2 Harris's Sparrows were in Embudito Canyon, Sandia Ms. 9-30 Jan (ph. CW, ph. NH, m.ob.); elsewhere in the Albuquerque area were singles at Cedar Crest 26 Dec (RG), Tijeras 19 Jan (ph. MO), and Albuquerque's South Valley 28-28 Jan (DH); singles farther afield were at Farmington (AN) and Clovis (CR), both 18 Dec. Dark-eyed White-crowned Sparrows, unexpected in winter, were 2 at Zuni's Tekapo 1 Jan (JT) and singles at Zuni 3 Jan (JT), R.G.N.C. 23 Jan-8 Feb (MH), and N.R.T. 19 Dec (CR). Golden-crowned Sparrow made an unusually good showing, with 7 individuals at five sites, including in the Sandia Ms., with 3 in Embudito Canyon 1 Jan-26 Feb (A. Gorbet, m.ob., ph.) and singles in Domingo Baca Canyon 21 Jan (ph. CW) and at Tijeras 26-27 Dec (MH, CW); farther s., singles were at Las Cruces 28 Dec (J. Groves) and La Union 9 Dec-24 Jan (ph. DB). Scarce in New Mexico, a White-winged Junco was at Edge-wood 30 Dec (P. Nobel).

CARDINALS THROUGH FINCHES

Noteworthy Northern Cardinals included 2 males singing at Ute L. 25 Feb (JP) and a female at Silver City 13 Feb (D. Zimmerman); in Sierra, singles were along Tierra Blanca Cr. 8 Jan (ph. DC) and at Ladder Ranch 29 Dec (WWI). A late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at La Union 1 Dec (ph. DB). Other species unexpected in winter were an imm. Blue Grosbeak in Miner Canyon, Peloncillo Ms. 1 Jan (NP, JB) and a male Indigo Bunting at Las Cruces 20 Feb–Mar (Ph. W. Glenn). Far n. was a Yellow-headed Blackbird at Orilla Verde, Taos 21 Dec (D. Gledhill). Rusty Blackbird reports included 2 near Clayton (DH) and 2 at Holloman L. (MB, ph. CW), both 15 Dec, 5 at R.S. 12 Jan (WWI), and one at Black River Village 13 Jan (CLB). A Bronzed Cowbird at Las Cruces 18 Dec (DG) provided the lone report. The only rosy-finchies away from Sandia Crest were 37 Gray-crowned and 60 Brown-cappeds at Angel Fire 29 Dec (A. Gibson). Cassin's Finches were conspicuous in ms. and foothills s. to Silver City, the Black Range, and the vicinity of La Luz (m.ob.). Small numbers of Red Crossbills wandered s., including 9 near Radium Springs 19 Dec (MS, JZ) and 2 at Las Cruces 19 Jan (JZ). Evening Grosbeaks were largely restricted to the n., although a few roamed s. to the Albuquerque area, including 8 at Corrales 4 Dec (JP), 7 at Cedar Crest 4 Dec (NH), and 10 at Elena Gallegos 17 Jan (CMC).


Sartor O, Williams III
Division of Birds
Museum of Southwestern Biology
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(sunbittern@earthlink.net)
Mark M. Stevenson (Non-passerines)  
Gary H. Rosenberg (Passerines)

Arizona

A Niña conditions resulted in an abnormally dry winter, with northern Arizona experiencing one of the driest Januaries on record and southern Arizona not far behind. Compounding this insult to plants and animals was record hard freezes statewide at the New Year and again over two consecutive days in early February. Avian highlights included the state’s first Baikal Teal, continuing Least Grebes and Sedge Wren, a plethora of Winter and Pacific Wrens, and increased coverage of the lower Colorado River valley, which resulted in many interesting reports.


WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Northward migration kicked off with 55 Greater-fronted Geese flying over Bill Williams N.W.R. 19 Jan (DVP) and 50 at Whitewater 22 Jan (SW), while at Prescott 18 took a break 5-20 Feb (S. Drown, ph. SBu). The only Cackling Geese reported were 2 at Avondale 30 Dec–27 Jan (ph. S. Tjotta). This species remains very rare in Arizona. A Trumpeter Swan at Litchfield Park 19-22 Dec (T.G. Nunn, ph. J. Holloway) wore a non-standard band indicating its previous status. Eurasian Wigeon remains a sparse fall and winter visitor, with reports of single males from Flagstaff 24 Dec–19 Jan (J. Coons), Sun Lakes 15 Jan–18 Feb (T. Lewis, ph. PD), and Benson S.T.P. 6-8 Feb (ph. E Fray). The only report of an out-of-range Mexican Duck was of a male at Parker Dam 8 Jan (ph. DVP). A Bluewing Teal was a rare visitor to Lake Havasu City 27 Jan (DVP, LHa), and up to 16 were at Yuma 29 Jan–27 Feb (HD et al.). Five Cinnamon Teal were unusual in winter at Watson L. 17 Feb (SBu). An imm. male Baikal Teal at G.W.R. 2-10 Dec (ph., T.G. Nunn, ph. B. Grice, J. Jerome; †DVP) made an exciting first record for Arizona. A male Eurasian Teal returned to Tempe Town L. 7 Jan–27 Feb (ph. M. Watson; ph., †DVP); this is the 3rd year that it has appeared in the greater Phoenix area. At Sweetwater, a Eurasian Teal × Bluewing Teal hybrid was found 10 Dec (ph. S. Mlodinow). At L. Havasu, 300 Canvaseshacks 10 Dec (LHa, DVP, m.ob.) made a large count for the L.C.R.V. The past few years have seen increasing numbers of Greater Scaup in winter at B.W.D., but numbers were off the charts this winter, peaking at 307 on 9 Feb (DVP, LHa), a new state high count. The species remains scarce away from L. Havasu, with just 13 reported. The 6 Surf Scoters found at B.W.D. in Nov were present in decreasing numbers through 2 Jan (DVP, LHa). An imm. Bluewing Scoter was at Gila Bend S.T.P. 4-8 Dec (G. McCaskie et al., ph. WG), one rested briefly at Willcox 13 Dec (RAR), and one was on Mesquite Bay, L. Havasu 22 Jan (LHa, ph. DVP). Reports of Black Scoters have increased in recent years; this winter, one was at Parker Dam 10 Dec–21 Jan (ph., R. Fridell, ph., †DVP), one at B.W.D. 19 Dec+ (DVP, LHa; ph. J We), where apparently joined by the Barrow’s Goldeneye remains a very localized wintering species: up to 8 were at B.W.D. 2 Dec–14 Mar (K. Blair, m.ob.), 3 were below Parker Dam 12 Dec (DVP, LHa), several were below Glen Canyon Dam 4 Jan (CL), and one was below Davis Dam 26-29 Jan (TC). Away from the L.C.R.V., Red-breasted Mergrans was a rarity. Singles were at Palo Verde 5 Dec–18 Feb (D. Powell et al.), Fountain Hills L. 11 Dec (TC), Bartlett Res. 18 Jan (TC), and near Wahweap, L. Powell 4 Feb (SP).

At Patagonia L., 2 Pacific Loons continued through 30 Jan (ph. F. Kee, m.ob.). At L. Havasu, up to 3 were present 9-21 Dec (LHa, DVP), and singles were at Davis Dam 13 Dec (CL), and Wahweap, L. Powell 4 Feb (ph. SP). Common Loons away from the L.C.R.V. included up to 2 at Patagonia L. through 30 Jan (m.ob.), one at Kanab Settlement 10-12 Dec (A. & A. Miller), 2 on Roosevelt L. 14 Jan (TC), and one on Alamo L. 17 Jan (LHa, DVP). On L. Havasu, the season’s peak count was 37 on 23 Dec (LHa, DVP). A Yellow-billed Loon was a great find on the Parker Strip above Headgate Rock Dam 15 Jan–12 Feb (ph., T/VP, LHa; ph. S. Remley, JW), and relocated to L. Havasu above Parker Dam 21 Fe brs (m.ob.). Least Grebes continued all season at Peña Blanca L. with up to 8 present (m.ob.). Horned Grebe is a sparse winter visitor away from the L.C.R.V.; one was on Bartlett Res. 18 Jan (TC), one on Saguaro L. 22 Jan (TD), 2 on L. Mead at Temple Bar marina 30 Jan (LHa, DVP), and one at Gilbert 6 Feb–27 Mar (L. Langstaff; ph. PD). Nearly annual in recent years, a Red-necked Grebe was at Lake Havasu City 22 Dec (DVP, LHa).

Originally discovered along Arizona’s Parker Strip 15 (here 19) January 2011, this Yellow-billed Loon continued there through 12 February and was then relocated above Parker Dam 21 February. Provided only the seventh state record. Photograph by John West.

Large rafts of Eared Grebes are sometimes seen on L. Havasu, and an estimated 2500 present 16 Dec (LHa, DVP) was among the highest counts there. Clark’s Grebe is a rare visitor.
away from the larger reservoirs. Singles were at Kansas Settlement 8 Dec–16 Jan (W. Wilson), Willow L. 11-15 Dec (DM), Roper L. 3 Jan (ph. R. Shantz), and Willow L. 15 Feb+ (DM).

Eleven American White Pelicans were at Whitewater 15 Feb (D. Tourret), where casual in winter. In recent years, Brown Pelicans have appeared more regularly in Arizona in winter, but they are still rare. Singles were at Painted Rock Dam 7 Dec (CB), Willcox 19 Dec (M.P., MMS), Parker Dam 21 Dec (J. Richmond), and B.W.D. 27 Dec–12 Jan (K. Blair et al.). At Tempe Town L., up to 3 were present 26 Dec+ (M. Weber et al.). Numbers of Neotropic Cormorants increased in the L.C.R.V., with up to 2 at B.W.D./Parker Dam 12 Dec–20 Feb (LHa, DVP, ph. JWE), up to 2 at Catfish Paradise, Topock Marsh 14 Dec–3 Feb (ph. JWE; LHa, DVP), one at Headgate Rock Dam 15 Jan–14 Feb (DVP et al.), and 3 at Five Mile Landing, Topock Marsh 7 Feb (JWE). Some of these may represent the same birds moving up and down the river. Also at Topock Marsh, 88 Double-crested Cormorants were in a newly discovered nesting colony 25 Jan (ph. JWE). White-faced Ibis is accidental in winter in Prescott, so up to 4 at Willow L. 15-20 Dec (DM) made a notable record. The Roseate Spoonbills found in fall continued to wander around the Phoenix "west valley" area through the period (m.ob.).

An Osprey wintered in Tucson, where the species is considered casual (J. Higgins). Others in se. Arizona were reported from Patagonia L. 7 Jan (MM) and Green Valley 14 Jan (G. Hilden). A Gray Hawk again wintered at Amado (m.ob.), and one was reported on the Dudleyville C.B.C. 2 Jan (TC). Also wintering again was a Common Black-Hawk at Page Springs (P. Kegley, S. Ordway; ph. EH). Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from known locations: Pintail Slough 25 Dec–24 Jan (ph. JWE), 'Ahakhav Tribal Preserve 16 Jan (ph. JWE), and H.R.P. all season (TD). The wintering Tucson Short-tailed Hawk was last reported 26 Jan (B. Scott), apparently indicating an early departure for this returning bird. Among the winter reports of Zone-tailed Hawk, the most notable were from Fort Huachuca 24 Jan–5 Feb (T. Wood) and Yuma 31 Jan (D. Sussman, jde HD). As usual, a few Rough-legged Hawks were reported: one continuing at Kansas Settlement through 15 Mar (ph. S. Oehrle), one at Mormon L. 27 Jan (ph. JW), and one w. of Eagar 9 Feb (CMc). In the Santa Cruz Flats, the maximum count of Crested Caracaras was 26 (m.ob.). Away from typical areas, single caracaras wandered to Tucson 12 Dec (J. Porter), near Florence 1 Jan (D.E. Brown), Buckeye 13 Feb (ph. MH), and Avra Valley 16 Feb (J. Higgins). Sandhill Cranes away from typical areas included 7 along the upper San Pedro R. near Palominas 13 Dec (G. Lewis), one at Rio Rico 2 Dec (AS), 2 far n. along the Little Colorado R. below Woodruff 16 Jan (CL), and up to 10 in the Santa Cruz Flats 19 Jan–24 Feb (P. Wang, K. Murphy). The annual crane count in the Sulphur Springs and upper Gila R. valleys tallied 29,962 in mid-Jan (jde M. Rabe).

POLOWERS THROUGH SAPSUCKERS

Mountain Plovers were reported from just two areas. The peak counts were 82 in the Santa Cruz Flats and 21 in the Sulphur Springs Valley (m.ob.); the latter count reflects continued declining numbers in the valley in recent years. Marbled Godwit is extremely rare in winter, so one at Cibola NWR. 4 Dec (MH, B. Meding) was remarkable. At Willcox 29 Dec–1 Jan, a strange calidrid that resembled a long-billed Baird’s Sandpiper (ph. R. Fray) may have been a hybrid. Larid highlights included a Black-legged Kittiwake at Saguaro L. 21-22 Jan (ph., JTC), a first-cycle Mew Gull at Bullhead City 29 Jan–26 Feb (ph., JTHa, DVP), and a first-cycle Thayer’s Gull on L. Mohave at Katherine Landing 15 Feb (TDVP). All are less than annual in occurrence but have been found with greater regularity in recent years.

Ruddy Ground-Doves were found in decent numbers this season: up to 3 continued at G.W./A. all winter (m.ob.), 2 were at Patagonia 28 Nov–24 Dec (MM et al.), singles were in the Mohawk Valley 13 Dec (LHa, ph. DVP) and near Dudleyville 2 Jan (G. Clark, D. O’Bannon), and 2 were near Red Rock 18 Feb (CMc). In the Santa Cruz Flats, 3 found at a corral 6 Jan (R. Payne; ph. LH) multiplied to 12 by 28 Jan (ph. RT), with some persisting there through 27 Feb. Lesser Nighthawk is extremely rare in Arizona in winter, so singles at Tres Rios, Phoenix 10 Jan (T. Hildebrand) and at Scottsdale 11 Jan (W. Thurbert) were surprising. Reports of nighthawks from Papago Park, Phoenix 26 Feb (M. Weber) and Tucson 27 Feb–3 Mar (M. Ali) may represent early migrants. The Broad-billed Hummingbird found in fall at Yuma remained through 14 Jan (HD). One at a Scottsdale feeder 7 Feb (A. Shock) may have wintered locally. Despite several hard freezes, 4 Violet-crowned Hummingbirds successfully wintered, 3 in Tucson and one in Bisbee. Seven others were seen at feeders for shorter periods, a strong showing for winter. A Blue-throated Hummingbird visited a feeder in the lowlands at the outlet of Ventana Canyon, Tucson 19 Dec–11 Feb (L. Daniels), a site where they have wintered in the past. An Anna’s Hummingbird was n. to Payson 30 Jan–1 Feb (L. Estis), and another was in Prescott 6 Feb (B. Nordstrom). A male Calliope Hummingbird was later in lower Carr Canyon 9 Dec (H. Brodkin), while a male at the Patons’ feeders in Patagonia 20 Feb (ph. M. Todd) and another male at Hereford 26 Feb+ (ph. Tba) were very early migrants. A Broad-tailed Hummingbird survived all winter at Millet Canyon (T. Beatty); another lasted until 12 Feb in Tucson (M. Brooks). The first northbound Broad-tailed was early at Hereford 2 Feb+ (Tba). Rufous Hummingbirds present after the hard freeze at the New Year included one at Hereford 11 Jan (Tba) and up to 2 in nc. Tucson 15 Jan+ (C. Grossenda), and the first migrants began appearing 19 Feb, with 18 more reported before the end of the month.
This Rufous-backed Robin at Kingman 19-20 (here 19) January was one of nine found in Arizona in winter 2010-2011 and provided the northernmost record for this species in the state. Photograph by Lauren Harte.

Five Elegant Trogons were seen this winter, 3 as expected in areas where they nest; one again wintered at Patagonia L. (m.ob.), and another was in Rock Corral Canyon, Tusacacori Mts. 31 Dec (CMe). The only Green Kingfisher reported continued at San Bernardino N.W.R. through 25 Dec (B. Radke, REW). Only 2 Lewis’s Woodpeckers were reported in the lowlands, near Oracle 19 Dec+ (D. Sheppard, fide DJ) and at Dudleyville 2 Jan (B. & R. Powers et al.). Acorn Woodpecker is a rare visitor to the lowlands; 5 were reported in greater Phoenix, including 3 at Arizona State Univ. 3-27 Dec (L. Landrum, fide PD). A Gila Woodpecker was n. to Pine 5 Dec (B. Ison). It was an incredible year for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with many more than usual recorded; of 22 individuals tallied, all but 4 were in se Arizona. Red-breasted Sapsuckers were documented at Madera Canyon 22 Dec+ (ph. B. Uher-Koch, J. & R. W. Jahn), at Patagonia 2 Jan+ (R. P. Moore; ph. M. Todd), and at Tucson 10-17 Feb (ph. AC).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH LONGSPURS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher at Lynx Cr. near Prescott 6-7 Dec (SuB, K. O’Neill; ph. SBlu) provided the latest record ever for Arizona; there are no true winter records for the state. A Hammond’s Flycatcher at Granite Basin near Prescott 13 Dec (DM) was n. of usual winter distribution. A high daily count of 10 Hammonds in the Patagonia Mts. on the Patagonia C.B.C. 14 Dec (J. Stewart) was indicative of a good winter for this species in se Arizona. Dusky Flycatchers at Granite Basin 10 Dec (DM), and at Page Springs 26 Dec (R. Radd), were also n. of where they typically winter.

Single Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers were reported along the Santa Cruz R. near Red Rock 12-18 Feb (C. J. Jones), in Rock Corral Canyon, Tusacacori Mts. 30-31 Dec (CMe), and at Patagonia L. 2 Jan (LHa); all calling individuals in past winters have proven to be Pacific-slopes. No fewer than 10 Eastern Phoebes were scattered around s. Arizona this winter, a greater-than-usual number. Dusky-capped Flycatcher is a casual winter visitor in the state, so singles at G.W.R. 7-19 Dec (ph. JY), the Parker Oasis 8 Jan–10 Apr (LHa; ph. DVP, HD), along the Santa Cruz R. near Red Rock 12 Feb–27 Mar (TC, J. Jones), and along the Big Sandy R. near Wikieup (LHa, DVP; heard only) were of note. The long-returning Thick-billed Kingbird again wintered at the Yuma Main Drain, first detected 14 Nov (HD); amazingly, this is the 9th consecutive winter that it has wintered there.

Single Northern Shrikes were along Hwy. 160 w. of Kayenta 3 Jan (CL) and at Mormon L. 9-28 Jan (CL); this species is an irregular winter visitor across n. Arizona. The Bell’s Vireo that was present at B.T.A. in Nov was still present 19 Dec (JB, ph. M. Grube); others were at Dudleyville 2 Jan (MW) and near Parker 26 Jan–13 Feb (ph. DVP, LHa). This species is still a casual winter visitor anywhere in Arizona. Even rarer in the state in winter, a Warbling Vireo was reported from Peña Blanca L. 20 Feb (C. Lundblad), and another was at Sonoran Desert N.M., also 20 Feb (ph. C. Worthington); this species is accidental in the state in winter, and it is rather amazing that they survived the hard freeze during early Feb. Small numbers of Tree Swallows lingered at a few scattered locations in late Dec, including 2 at Patagonia L. 3 Jan (B. Walsh); early migrating birds began to arrive by the 3rd week of Jan. An early Violet-green Swallow was at Lake Havasu City 1 Feb (LHa). Lingering single Northern Rough-winged Swallows were at Whitewater 17 Dec (MP) and at Gila Bend 31 Dec (MW), while 4 were along the Santa Cruz R. 3 Mar (AM 3-14 Jan (RT); this species is a rare to casual winter visitor in s. Arizona.

Arizona’s first Sedge Wren, discovered at Peña Blanca L. 27 Nov, was present all season (m.ob.; ph. AC, GHR, C. Melton). A Marsh Wren at Flagstaff 1 Dec (JWl) was late for such a high elevation. Black-capped Gnatchatters were detected at several known locations, including Chino Canyon, Sonora Cr. near Patagonia, Guadalupe Canyon, Patagonia L., and Montosa Canyon. It will be interesting to see how the Feb freeze affects this species in se. Arizona. An American Dipper was at Picture Canyon near Flagstaff 1 Jan–5 Mar (JL; ph. JWL), where this species has not been known to breed; dippers move into non-breeding areas in the state during fall and winter, but it is unclear where they originate. It was an excellent winter for Rufous-backed Robin, with one banded and present at the H.R.P. 2 Dec–17 Feb (M. Oehler, ph. D. Sheraton), one at Tusacacori 9–10 Dec (ph. AS), one at Patagonia L. beginning 3 Dec, with 2 there 2 Jan–12 Feb (B. Adler, SH; ph. LH), one at St. David 1 Jan–Mar (ph. AR; ph. TB), one at the Patons’ yard in Patagonia 5–17 Jan (T. Arny), with 2 there 2 Jan (AS), one in the Santa Cruz Flats 16 Jan–23 Feb (ph. RF), one n. to Kingman 19–20 Jan (ph. LHa, DVP), and another (or one of the Patons’ birds) near Patagonia 25 Feb (MM). Also rare but regular in small numbers in the state during winter, single Varied Thrushes were reported at Yuma 18 Dec (ph. HD, DVP) and at Rock Springs Canyon in Fort

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Before it was split into multiple species, “Winter Wren” was simply considered a rare but regular winter visitor in s. Arizona. Now that Winter Wren and Pacific Wren are considered distinct species, observers are paying more attention to them in Arizona. Amazingly, the winter of 2010-2011 was perhaps the best year in memory for both species in Arizona, with no fewer than 10 Pacific Wrens and 14 Winter Wrens reported. The A.B.C. lists the eastern/boreal species, called Winter Wren, as a review species, and most were reported with photographs and descriptions (or recordings) of vocalizations, both critical in distinguishing the two species in the field. More data are needed to determine if the ratio we observed between Winter and Pacific Wrens this winter is typical.
Huachuca 16 Feb (M. Powers, S. Stone).

Gray Catbird is casual to rare in winter, and 3 were reported this season: one at Alhuatekue 2 Dec (P. and G. Halesworth), one at Portal 9 Dec (REW), and one at unusually high elevation at Page Springs 26 Dec (R. Radcl). Similarly, Brown Thrasher is regularly seen in Arizona during the winter in small numbers; one in nw. Tucson was found during fall was present all winter (L. Norris, L. Greene; ph. AC), another found during fall in Phoenix was also present all winter (F. Insana, D. Herron; ph. G. Rice, J. Stenshorn), and another was in Prescott for the 3rd consecutive winter 30 Dec–27 Feb (D. Manburg). A Curve-billed Thrasher near Willton, found in the fall, and seen again 13 Dec (LHa, DVP), was of normal occurrence in w. Arizona. Two Le Conte's Thrashers in Detrital Valley near L. Meat 30 Jan (LHa, DVP) were thought to be n. of normal range in n. Arizona; although this species is regular in s. Nevada, there are few areas where it occurs in n. Arizona. Olive Warbler is rare but regular in winter in the mts. of s. Arizona, yet a male at Granite Basin 10 Dec (DM) and another on Mt. Ord 26 Jan (TD) were n. of usual winter range in the state. One to 2 Lapland Longspurs were at Babbitt Tank, e. of Flagstaff, 9 Dec–29 Jan (ph. JC, J. Wilder; ph. TET), one was heard at McHood Park, Winslow 12 Dec (TET), and up to 3 were at Willow Tank near Portal 5-22 Feb (ph. REW), inexplicably, there are still only about 15 records for Arizona. McCown's Longspur is rarely seen away from known wintering areas in s. Arizona, so 4 s. of Coolidge 23 Jan (DJ, KK) and up to 10 at Willow Tank 5-22 Feb (ph. REW) were of interest. Thirty Chestnut-collared Longspurs near Palo Verde 29 Jan (B. Walsh) and about 200 at Willow Tank 5 Feb (REW) were both concentrations away from normal wintering areas in the state.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The Tennessee Warbler found at Sweetwater in Nov was still present 5 Dec (ph. AC); others were at Tumacacori 4-7 Dec (ph. M. Lester; ph. TMc) and Tempe Town L. 9 Jan (tDVP). Tennessee Warbler has become more regular in recent years during the winter, a departure from the past, when most of the records were either spring or fall. At least one Orange-crowned Warbler was in Prescott 23-27 Dec (DM), where this species is considered accidental in winter. An Orange-crowned Warbler at Tempe Town L. 9 Jan (TET, DVP) was thought to be of the seldom-reported e. subspecies celata, considered the rarest of the subspecies that occur in Arizona. The Nashville Warbler that was discovered at Sweetwater in Nov remained until at least 17 Jan (m.ob.), and another was present at Imperial N.W.R. 18 Dec (HD); this species is casual in the state in winter. No fewer than 7 Northern Parulas were found, a bit higher number than normal. Similarly, 7 Yellow Warblers were reported, another species that is rare but regular during winter. The only Chestnut-sided Warblers reported were at Rio Salado, Phoenix 13 Dec–15 Jan (TD) and along the Santa Cruz R. in Marana 3 Jan (RT). A nice bird for the winter season, a female Black-throated Blue Warbler was in a Portal yard 22 Dec (RAR, REW). More casual in the state was a Prairie Warbler at Bill Williams N.W.R. 29 Dec (p.a., tLHa); if accepted it would represent only a 15th record for the state. Casual to rare in the state in winter, a Palm Warbler was at Kino Springs 7 Dec–15 (C. Riddell, R. Carlson; ph. TET), and another was along the Santa Cruz R. at Marana 12-15 Jan (ph. PK, AC). Thirteen reports of Black-and-white Warbler made an excellent season, but only one American Redstart, a bird at Imperial N.W.R. 18 Dec (HD), was noted, fewer than usual for winter. The only Ovenbird reported was at Tumacacori 9–12 Dec (ph. AS). Now reported nearly annually in s. Arizona during winter, single Louisiana Waterthrushes were along Sonora Cr. near Patagonia 16 Dec–5 Feb (MMS, WR; ph. CDB) and at Madera Canyon 13 Jan (LH). The female Hooded Warbler found along the Santa Cruz R. at Tumacacori in Oct lingered until 13 Dec (m.ob.), and a male was reported at Red Rock 2 Feb (S. Ritt); this species is casual in the state in winter. No fewer than 7 Wilson's Warblers were reported from Dec and Jan, but the freeze in early May may have shortened their stays.

Two Rufous-winged Sparrows continued at San Bernardino N.W.R. 21 Dec+ (REW); this species has only recently been found in the extreme se. corner of the state. A Botteri's Sparrow was reported in Ash Canyon, Huachuca Mts. 18 Dec–29 Jan (RBe); this species is essentially unheard of in Arizona in winter. At least 6 Clay-colored Sparrows were detected this winter, about average for a single season. A Five-striped Sparrow was found in lower Sycamore Canyon on the C.B.C. 31 Dec (PK); this species has been found wintering in small numbers in the same areas where they summer, but detecting them can be much more difficult in winter. A Lark Bunting in House Rock Valley 6 Jan (SP) provided one of the few reports ever from midwinter in extreme n. Arizona. Grasshopper Sparrows were out of range at Prescott 5 Dec (CST) and in the Santa Cruz Flats 5 Dec (D. Smyth); this species is seldom reported in the state away from known wintering areas in the se. portion. A Red Fox Sparrow was reported from Slaughter Ranch 12 Dec (ph. REW); this subspecies group is casual to rare in the state. Individual Harris's Sparrows, rare but regular, were in Tucson 4 Dec–1 Mar (ph. J. Smith; ph. R. Carlson), near Yuma 12-18 Dec (PEL), and in Green Valley 29 Dec (DS). A Yellow-eyed Junco near Prescott 4 Jan (M. Reigner) was considered casual at that location.

At least 18 Hepatic Tanagers were reported, which is higher than usual, while only 2-3 Summer Tanagers across s. Arizona was a poor showing for winter. Black-headed Grosbeak is casual in the state in winter, so one at Tumacacori 21 Dec–2 Jan (ph. B. Higgins) and 2 along the Santa Cruz R. between Tumacacori and Tubac 13 Feb (GW) were noteworthy. An Indigo Bunting at Sweetwater 7 Feb (RH) was casual. A female Painted Bunting was found at Rio Salado 10 Jan (R. Dittoh), where one wintered in 2007–2008. A Dickcissel in the Mohawk Valley 24 Dec (J. Keller; ph. B. J. Stacey) provided one of few winter records for the state; this species is much more prevalent in early fall. A Streak-backed Oriole discovered in the Mohawk Valley near Willton in Nov was seen through 14 Feb (vt., PEL et al.), and another was present there 4 Dec–14 Feb (vt. PEL); this Mexican species remains a vagrant in Arizona, with most records from late fall and winter. A Lesser Goldfinch along the South Rim of the Grand Canyon 13 Dec (B. Gatin) was very late for n. Arizona. Odd lowland reports of Evening Grosbeak were received from the Patons' yard in Patagonia 2 Dec (P. Bent) and from Palominas 3 Jan (G. Lewis); in Arizona, this species is seldom seen away from the mountains.


Mark M. Stevenson, 4201 East Monte Vista Drive, #207 Tucson, Arizona 85712-5554 (dbdbird@att.net) Gary H. Rosenberg, P.O. Box 91856 Tucson, Arizona 85752-1856 (ghrosenberg@comcast.net)
Great Basin

Rick Fridell

The winter was marked with higher snowfall than average and lower-than-normal temperatures throughout much of Utah and Nevada. There were fewer northern species than usual detected, with Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Shrikes, and northern finches in notably short supply. Evening Grosbeaks, however, continued their impressive fall showing throughout the season and across much of the Region. Nevada highlights included a lingering Red-throated Loon, the state’s first documented Iceland Gull, and a Yellow-throated Warbler on New Year’s Day. Utah highlights included numerous Iceland Gull reports, the second documented Curve-billed Thrasher, and a Rusty Blackbird.

Abbreviations: Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT; Ash Meadows (Ash Meadows N.W.R., Nye, NV); 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); L Mead (Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller’s R.A. (Miller’s Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Oury (Oury N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Pahranagat (Pahranagat N.W.R., Lincoln, NV); Quail Creek (Quail Creek S.P., Washington, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Sand Hollow (Sand Hollow S.P., Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

WATERFOWL THROUGH GULLS

A Eurasian Wigeon was present for the 3rd consecutive winter at Hurricane, Washington, UT 3-18 Dec (ph. RF et al.). Mexican Duck intergrades were reported from Clark, NV at Floyd Lamb Park, Las Vegas 23-27 Dec (JT, CT) and Laughlin 5-20 Feb (ph. DV, LH et al.) A drake Blue-winged Teal was a surprising winter visitor in Cache Valley, Cache, UT 2 Jan (RO). A White-winged Scoter lingered at East Canyon S.P., Morgan, UT through 5 Dec (DH, BM) Antelope 1 is the only reliable location for wintering Long-tailed Duck in the Region, and a female was observed there 28 Dec (CG). More surprising were singles elsewhere: a first-winter female at Sand Hollow 8 Dec-11 Apr (RF et al.) and a first-winter male at Reno, Washoe, NV 3 Feb-7 Apr (AQ, ph. FP et al.) A Red-throated Loon wintered at L. Mead 1 Jan-2 Apr (ph. AL et al.). Pacific Loons were found at Sparks Marina, Washoe, NV 6-13 Dec (DeRS, ph. NH, ph KD), L. Mead 1 Jan-19 Feb (AL et al.), and Pyramid L., Washoe, NV 2 Jan (GS). The Sparks Marina loon sported a large scar on its neck, amazingly, this bird was observed at Reno as a wounded juv. 2-8 Nov 2008 (see North American Birds 63:135). An out-of-season White-faced Ibis was at Farmington Bay 5 Dec-21 Jan (DL, DW).

Seven Sandhill Cranes made a rare Washington, UT appearance 27 Feb (DT). A flock of 16 Marbled Godwits was late and out of place at Sand Hollow 30 Dec (RF). The Washington, UT Purple Sandpiper lingered at Sand Hollow through 4 Dec (RF et al.). A Dunlin was observed at Saltair Marina, Salt Lake, UT 10 Jan (DW). It was good winter for Mew Gulls in the Region, with singles seen at Logan, Cache, UT 11-12 Dec (RO, CF), Sparks, Washoe, NV 18 Dec (MM), Pyramid L., Washoe, NV 2 Jan (GS), Farmington Bay 20 Jan-3 Feb (CCo, KB), Laughlin, Clark, NV 29 Jan-26 Feb (ph DV, LH), and L. Mead 19 Feb (AL). Thayer’s Nevada's first Iceland Gull, an adult, was found 24 January 2011 at Paradise Park in Washoe County. It was observed at various Reno locations throughout February. Photographs by Fred Peterson (left) and Martin Meyers.

Utah's fourth documented Western Gull, this second-cycle individual, was originally found 11 January 2011 at the Bountiful City Landfill. It lingered through 23 (here 15) February at nearby Farmington Bay Wildlife Management Area in Davis County. Photograph by Rick Fridell.
Gull reports included 2 at Logan, Cache, UT 18 Dec (RO et al.), 2 at L. Mead 1 Jan–6 Feb (ph. AL et al.), 4 at Farmington Bay 15 Jan–3 Feb (TA et al.), and singles at Saltair, Salt Lake, UT 10 Jan (DW) and Virginia L., Washoe, NV 9–26 Feb (AQ, FP et al.). Numerous Iceland Gulls were reported this winter, including Nevada’s first documented record, an ad. at Reno, Washoe 24 Jan–11 Feb (ph., TF; ph. MM, mobb). Utah Iceland Gulls included reports from Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake 3 Jan (tCISW), South Shore Marina, Salt Lake 8–15 Jan (tCI et al.), plus 2 at Farmington Bay: an ad. 20 Jan (ph. CC, KB) and a first-cycle bird 22 Jan–1 Feb (tNJ, ph. TF). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found at Lake Park, Salt Lake 3–15 Jan (one; tCISW, EL) and Farmington Bay 15 Jan–Feb (2; tNJ, tCISW et al.).

A second-cycle Western Gull was documented at Bountiful/Farmington Bay 11 Jan–23 Feb (tCISW et al.). Glaucous-winged Gulls were at Antelope L. 26 Dec (J&KB), Great Salt Lake, Salt Lake 9–10 Jan (CI, S&CCS), and Farmington Bay 1 Feb (TAV et al.). Glaucous Gulls were observed at Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake, UT 3 Jan (CISW), Decker L., Salt Lake, UT 8 Jan (SC), Farmington Bay 20 Jan–1 Feb (CC, KB et al.), and Sparks Marina, Washoe, NV 26–29 Jan (MM et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A wayward White-winged Dove was observed at Oak City, Millard, UT 28 Dec (DA). A torpid Common Pouter was found at Corn Cr. 20 Feb (TA). Remarkably, there were 3 first-winter Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers observed in the Region: at Corn Cr. 4–6 Dec-Jan (ph. RS, tGS et al.), at Floyd Lamb Park, Clark, NV 18 Jan (GS), and at St. George, Washington, UT 13 Feb (ph., tNJ). A Red-breasted Sapsucker, apparently of the subspecies ruber, lingered at Zion Canyon, Zion 11 Dec–16 Jan (ph. RF; ph. SK et al.).

A Blue Jay was photographed at Liberty, Weber, UT 4 Feb (D&JL). Out-of-season Winter Wrens were at Ash Meadows 9 Dec (CL) and Zion 13 Feb (RF). Six blue-gray Gnatcatchers were a surprise at Sand Hollow 8 Dec (RF). Varied Thrushes were reported from Pyramid L., Washoe, NV 2 Jan (MA), Logan, Cache, UT 25 Feb (TR, RO et al.), and Dyer, Esmeralda, NV 25 Feb (GS). A Gray Catbird was out of place at Deer Creek Campground, Garfield, UT 1 Jan (MV), and a Brown Thrasher spent the winter at Corn Cr. 4–9 Apr (ph. RS, mobb). One of the highlights of the season was Utah’s 2nd Curve-billed Thrasher at Castle Valley, Grand 14 Feb–10 Mar (ph., tFJ et al.). The only Bohemian Waxwings reported this winter were 400 at Powder Mt., Weber, UT 12 Feb (RO).

Higher-than-expected numbers of Snow Buntings were found in Utah this winter, including singles at Corrine, Box Elder 1 Dec (DH) and Farmington Bay 9 Feb (JBL), 11 at Sage Cr. Junction, Rich 5 Dec (DD), and 6 at Antelope L. 8 Jan–28 Feb (ph. JBL et al.). A female McCown’s Longspur was at Bear River 1–2 Jan (DW, JBL), and a male was at the Ar- lemont Ranch, Esmeralda, NV 25 Feb (GS). Lapland Longspurs were found at Corrine, Box Elder, UT 1 Dec (DH), Ash Meadows 5 Dec (CL), Antelope L. 31 Dec (JBL), and Farmington Bay 10 Jan (ph. BO). A Yellow Warbler, extremely rare in the winter in the Great Basin, was photographed at St. George, Washing- ton, UT 14 Dec (KW, ph. PW). Remarkably, there were 3 Northern Parulas documented in the Region this winter: at Corn Cr. 4–12 Dec (ph. RS), St. George, Washington, UT 24 Dec (ph. RF), and L. Mead 26 Feb (ph. JM). A Yellow-throated Warbler found 1 Jan on the Moapa C.C.B. (N&KM, C&RT) lingered at Moapa N.W.R., Clark, NV through 17 Jan (ph. RS, ph. BL, ph. MM et al.). A Common Yellowthroat wintered at Springs Park, Washington, UT 6 Dec–3 Mar (RD et al.). A male Hooded Warbler, originally found 9 Sep, remained at Pahrump, Nye, NV through 27 Feb (CC, DF, ph. FO).

A Green-tailed Towhee made a rare winter appearance at Corn Cr. 17 Jan (GS). Equally surprising were 4 American Tree Sparrows at Pahranagat 23-24 Jan (GS, JC). A White- throated Sparrow along Bear R., Box Elder, UT 5 Dec (JS) made the only report of the season. Harris’s Sparrows were found at Corn Cr. 19 Dec–Mar (SCI, CL, ph. RS), Vineyard, Utah, UT 24 Dec (JCo), Oak City, Millard, UT 26 Dec–27 Mar (DA), and Dyer, Esmeralda, NV 15 Jan–25 Feb (GS). A Swamp Sparrow was a fine find along the Virgin R., Washing- ton, UT 6 Dec (RD). A male Rusty Blackbird was found during a C.B.C. at seldum-birded Torrey, Wayne, UT 14 Dec (tTS, ph. TW).


Rick Fridell, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 451 North SR 318, Hurricane, Utah 84737 (rifridell@burgoyne.com)
Winter 2010-2011 followed last year’s lead, with mostly uneventful conditions that were in keeping with long-term averages. Snow pack peaked above the norm north of the Alaska Range, but elsewhere it was more or less spot-on for recorded long-term averages, with a few local exceptions in Southeast. The season included only one significant chinook event in late December, part of the now familiar “Pineapple Express” phenomenon wherein the southern branch of the polar jet stream flow brings warm, moisture-laden, subtropical air into the Pacific Northwest (in this case, the Gulf of Alaska). Freeze-up was, as last winter, complete by the start of December, and the snow pack accumulated steadily through the month.

As is typical, many of the winter’s unusual sightings were concentrated in the Christmas Bird Count season and along the immediate coastal fringes in Southeast and in South-coastal Alaska. It was a rather slow passerine season this winter, especially in light of recent winter trends, which have been toward increasing numbers and diversity. This year’s rarities, as usual, included mostly waterbirds and semi-hardy passerines.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

The single Aleutian Cackling Goose that wintered in Kodiak’s Kalsin Bay 30 Dec-19 Feb (ph. RAM) was thought to be the same individual noted in the area in early Oct. Cackling Geese of any subspecies are rare in winter in the Region, especially after Dec. Three Brant in Gustavus 25 Dec (MDS) were extremely late and casual for the season away from the species’ traditional winter location at Izbekem Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula. A drake Wood Duck was found at Blind Slough, Mitkof 1.18-25 Dec (ph. BEB, BLH, BHP); over the past decade, this species has proven to be a rare annual visitor in fall, winter, and spring. Four Eurasian Wigeons each at e. Kodiak 1 Jan (DC, RAM) and at Homer 31 Jan (AJL) were the best counts for season, with just a few otherwise scattered through Southeast. Most specialized dabblers all but leave the Region soon after freeze-up, so a Northwestern Shoveler at Sitka 26 Dec (ph. MRG) and 3 in Kodiak’s Womens Bay 5 Jan (RAM) were notable, especially given this year’s cold conditions. Reports of Aythya ducks were disappointing this season across the North Gulf of Alaska, even at sites where they can be counted on to linger past Dec in most years. Up to 8 Canvasbacks made a strong count on Adak lakes at least into early Jan (IH), where small numbers are occasional in winter. Two Canvasbacks on the Unalaska C.B.C. 2 Jan (SG) were the first for that count. Two Redheads on Cordova’s Eyak R. 26 Feb-early Mar (CH; fide MGB) constituted a local first true winter record. A lone sabud. male King Eider discovered on the Seward waterfront 24 Jan (ph. CAG) remained in that area through the season. Wintering eiders, mostly imm. males, are occasional in the sheltered bays on the North Gulf coast e. of Kodiak. A very late Long-tailed Duck was noteworthy on open water pools at the Chena R. in Fairbanks 6 Dec (fide ND). Up to 5 Hooded Mergansers gathered on L. Eyak in Cordova through 26 Dec (TWL). Although Common Mergansers are typically one of the winter season’s most numerous waterfowl in Southeast, strong numbers wintered inshore at the Ketchikan waterfront, where the 1685 on the C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide AWP) nearly doubled the previous count record.

The season’s lone Pied-billed Grebe was at Sitka 29 Dec-2 Jan (BA, ph. MRG). Single Western Grebes located in n. Southeast at Bartlett Cove near Gustavus 14 Dec and 3 Jan (NKD; JFS) were well n. of usual winter concentration sites in sheltered areas of s. Southeast. Adding to a fairly recent trend, a few Brandt’s Cormorants were scattered around Ketchikan this winter, with 3 being the maximum count on 9 Jan. Six Great Blue Herons gathered in Kodiac’s Trident Basin 4 Dec (JP), and 6 wintered at their regular Old Harbor habitat on the se. side of Kodiak 1. (TB), which certainly represents the species’ westernmost winter location.

Rarer winter raptors made a good showing this year, at least at North Gulf of Alaska coastal sites. Northern Harriers are not annual in winter, so singles at Homer 27 Nov+ (ph. AJL et al) and well inland along the Russian Lakes trail in the cen. Kenai Pen. 2 Jan (fide TDE) were significant; one at Juneau through 7 Dec (GB) was likely a tardy migrant. Mac-Intosh estimated at least 4 harriers in the Kodiak grasslands 16 Dec-31 Jan, where singles are otherwise occasional but not annual. Noteworthy late Red-tailed Hawks included singles in Southeast at Juneau 9 Dec (NRH), Gustavus 13 Dec (NKD), and Ketchikan 17-18 Dec (WY); one that wintered offshore at Sitka (MRG) was casual for the season there. A Red-tailed described as a Western (subspecies calurus) at Soldotna on the w. Kenai Pen 27 Jan (WS, TAB) represented a first winter report for the Kenai Pen.—especially amazing because this is the coldest section of the peninsula. The season’s Buteo highlights culminated with at least 3 and possibly 5 Rough-legged Hawks in the Kodiak grasslands 17 Dec-31 Jan (ph. RAM), where the species is extremely rare and not annual in

In recent years, Wood Ducks have been turning up in small numbers in Alaska’s Southeast in late fall and early winter. Some stay through the winter, especially at sites like Blind Slough near Petersburg, which remains open through most winters and which hosted this male 18-23 (here 20) December 2010. Photograph by Barry E. Brocken. winter. What was considered the same American Kestrel popped up at several sites on the Kodiak road system 1-3 Jan (DC, JBA, ph. RAM), Kodiak’s 4th winter record for this otherwise casual winter visitor in Alaska.

A lone American Coot that surprisingly turned up way w. of normal at Adak 8 Jan (IH) was only the 2nd confirmed for the Aleu
tians. Up to 3 coots at Sitka all season (MRG, LPP) made an average winter total. An imm. Sandhill Crane was record late for Ketchikan 7 Dec (SCH), and 2 ads. and an imm. lingered later into Dec at Gustavus: the imm. was last seen 9 Dec and found dead 1 Jan, while the ads. remained through 29 Dec (NKD, MDS). Winter Sandhills past early Dec are casual and usually only reported in s. Southeast.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**

This season’s shorebird highlights included an extremely late Black-bellied Plover at Homer 5-25 Dec (MR, ph. AJL, LLR), a casual-in-winter Greater Yellowlegs at Ketchikan 15 Dec+ (JHL et al.), a very late, also casual Long-billed Dowitcher at Gustavus 2 Jan (NKD; one of very few winter records for Alaska), and a first-ever Red Knot for the Aleutians at Adak 9 Dec (H). The season’s peak Sanderling count reached 200 birds at Gustavus 7 Jan (NKD), normally its winter stronghold, while a single was considered rare at Kodiak 17 Dec (RAM). Wilson’s Snipe numbers were above average in Southeast, including the 7 that established a record Ketchikan C.B.C. tally 18 Dec (m.o.h.), one in Juneau through 30 Jan (NRH), and singles at Gustavus 20-21 Feb (NKD) and Sitka 16 Jan (MLW, MET).

Small numbers of Bonaparte’s Gulls tarried well into Dec at Ketchikan, with a late maximum count of 50 on 12 Dec and the latest found 19 Dec (SCH, WTY). The first-cycle California Gull in Ketchikan 5 Dec (SCH) was the latest of the fall season’s lingerers. Slaty-backed Gull reports were below average, the most notable being single ads. in the Juneau area 17 Jan and 22 Feb (GVB, ph. NRH, PMS), at Seward 23 Dec-4 Jan (ph. CAG), and at the Soldotna landfill 2-10 Dec (TAB). Not every winter produces multiple noteworthy alcids sightings, as most species winter well offshore. Three Ancient Murrelets were in Kodiak’s Chiniak Bay 9 Jan (ph. RAM, IM), where the species is at best occasional. At Sitka, conditions were right to bring several pelagic species near shore, where all are casual, including a Rhinoceros Auklet and a Horned Puffin 20 Feb (ph. MRG) and a Tufted Puffin 23 Feb (PHN).

After the recent fall showing, Eurasian Collared-Doves wintered in strong numbers and at more locations in Southeast than ever before. More than 50 were present in Southeast communities through the period, including 30-40 in Ketchikan (m.o.b.), 15 in Petersburg (BHP), one at Sitka (MRG), and 6-10 at Juneau (GVB, NRH); farther n., 4 at Gustavus were that site’s first in winter (NKD, ph. LMR, KO). Elsewhere, Cordova’s long-staying Eurasian Collared-Dove (since Jul 2010) continued regularly all season and was heard calling in late Feb (MGB). Observers noted breeding behavior, including the gathering of nest material and copulation, by early Jan. The Mourning Dove that spent the season at a Ketchikan feeder (ph. KMR) made for one of very few Alaska winter records past early December.

Northern Hawk Owls continued a recent trend toward scarcity, with few noted consistently anywhere this season, save for a few on the road network that connects Matanuska, the Susitna Valley, Anchorage, and Se-

Anna’s hung around Ketchikan feeders well into Jan (SCH, AWP, EO). A total of 3 Northern Flickers at South-coastal sites was slightly above the norm, with records from the Anchorage C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide SB), at Homer early Dec–27 Jan (SH), and farther e. at Fritz Cr. 25 Dec (CF).

**CORVIDS THROUGH PIPITS**

A single Black-billed Magpie at Sitka 22 Dec (KT) was unique for the outer coast; the species is regular in winter only at mainland sites in n. Southeast. Sitka has produced the bulk of winter offshore sightings. Northwestern Crows may be expanding northward on

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

*When first discovered 4 February 2011, this Western Meadowlark at Homer, Alaska sought exposed grassy areas after heavy overnight snow, and photographs were inconclusive. Fortunately, it was rediscovered 15 March, with definitive photographs providing a first for the Kenai Peninsula. Photograph by Aaron J. Lang.*
three prior winter records.

Two Brown creepers were on the Fairbanks C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide ND), where the species is a very rare and local resident. Only one Ruby-crowned Kinglet managed to make it past Dec at a Homer area feeder (ph. AJL). Since the early 1980s, small numbers of Ruby-crownsed occasionally survive with chickadee flocks at residential feeders, mostly in larger coastal communities. A male Mountain Bluebird near Hoonah on Chichagof I. 18 Dec (ph. NRH) was unex-pected; most of the occasional late fall and winter reports are confined to the mainland. Townsend's Solitaires made a surprisingly strong early winter showing, especially at sites where they are not annual, highlighted by singles at Kodiak 2-8 Dec (ph. RAM, SB) and from Soldotna 18-22 Dec (TAB, KT), both of which established local first winter records. Up to 5 on the Eagle River C.B.C. 19 Dec (fide RLS) was a new high count for that locality, where landscaping is starting to produce winter passerine food sources. A few Townsend's wintered in Anchorage, and one found in late fall in Homer appeared again 17 Feb–Mar (AJL). Equally unusual, single Hermit Thrushes were at Homer 4-5 Dec (ph. AJL, TT; a first local winter record), Gustavus 13 Dec (GPS), Sitka 1 Dec–3 Jan (MRG), Cordova 14-15 Dec (MGB; 2nd local winter record), and Ketchikan 3 Jan (JHL). Another Hermit at Ketchikan 28 Feb (JHL) was a first for that month there and made one of very few late winter records for Alaska. Less than 15 years ago, Hermit Thrush was basically unknown in the Region past the first few days of December. Since the early 1990s, American Robins have lingered later and later into winter, with coastal sites often harboring small flocks well into December. This year's winter reports continue the trend, with relatively large numbers overwintering at coastal sites. A record 273 were logged on the Anchorage C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide SB), where decent-sized flocks roamed the feeder circuits into March. Up to 56 camped out at an Anchorage feeder all season (TT), where they fed on sunflower chips. Another group of 125+ spent much of the season in downtown Homer, through at least mid-Feb (AJL), and 60 more frequented Mountain Ash trees to the east (DC, AJL, MK). Two American Robins were considered casual at Soldotna 18-24 Dec (TAB). American Pipits have also been staying longer into the season at coastal sites, and this season there were many in Kodiak, with 9 on the Narrow Cape C.B.C. 9 Dec followed by 2 in the same area through 7 Jan (RAM), plus one near downtown Kodiak 12 Jan (JBA). Elsewhere in Southeast, a few were around Ketchikan, Petersburg, and Juneau in Jan (m.o.b.), with singles as late as 8 Feb in Ketchikan (AWP) and 18 Feb in Gustavus (ph. NKD), followed by 3 in Ketchikan 27 Feb (AWP).

**WAXWINGS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES**

Local fruit production from plantings in the Anchorage area now support numbers of wintering Bohemian Waxwings. Historically, huge numbers of Bohemians descend into the Anchorage lowlands in Nov, where they stay until they exhaust berry crops of native Mountain Ash and Chokecherry, typically late Dec. Over the past five winters, however, increasing numbers have managed to remain through the winter season. This year's late observations included several flocks of 50-300 birds into Mar, the most ever for the season's latter half. Wintering Cedar Waxwings seem to be on the rise over the past decade or so as well. Three spent Dec–early Jan in a Ketchikan neighborhood (ph. JHL, MS, and a lone bird that lingered in the area until 7 Feb (JHL) represented a 4th winter record for that locality. Four wintered in Seward (CAG), and the Homer area produced up to 7 scattered between three locations, with the last report on 1 Feb (fide AJL). Notable mid-winter Lapland Longspur accounts included singles near Kodiak town 11 Dec–13 Jan (RAM), at the Kaslof R. mouth 4 Feb (TAB), and on the Homer Spit 5 Feb (LLR, ph. MF), plus 2 each at Juneau 16-22 Jan (PAR, NRH) and Gustavus 15-28 Feb (NKD). Longspurs are very rare after early Dec anywhere in the Region. Winter warbler reports were down from recent years, and this year's finds were limited to Dec observations, including single late Orange-crowned Warblers at Anchorage 18 Dec (fide SB) and Juneau 5 Dec (GBV), and lone Yellow-rumped in Ketchikan 18 Dec (AWP) and near Hoonah on Chichagof I. the same day (NRH).

The male Spotted Towhee that appeared at a Douglas feeder in Nov remained all season (PMS). Eight of Alaska's 10 towhee records have come from Juneau; this species breeds as close to Southeast as sw. British Columbia, where coastal populations are considered mostly sedentary. In Homer, up to 20 American Tree Sparrows attended a feeder through at least 26 Jan (AJL), the winter's best count by far. Casual after Dec in the Region, single Savannah Sparrows lingered late at Juneau 22 Jan (NRH), Ketchikan 2 Jan (AWP, SCH), and farther n. at Gustavus until 16 Dec (NKD). Fox Sparrows and Lincoln's Sparrows were reported in typical small numbers this winter. A lone Lincoln's at a Kenai feeder 22 Jan–Mar (TDE) likely provided a first record for the cen.-w. Kenai Pen., and another was near Palmer into late Dec (RW). Reports of Swamp Sparrow are increasing in s. Southeast, especially in fall, but the species remains a casual winter visitor. Five reports this season made the best showing ever: singles in Gustavus 7 Dec and 3 Jan (NKD), at the nearby State Crane Flats 16 Dec–26 Feb (NKD, MDS), in Juneau through 9 Jan (GBV, PAR), and at Ketchikan all season (ph. JHL). White-throated Sparrows followed on their very strong fall season: 5 of the 9 seen in Southeast were at Ketchikan in Dec, where 2 spent the full season (m.o.b.). Farther w., were located at Kodiak Nov–21 Dec (CH) and 12 Dec (RAM), while one at a Bethel feeder uploader turned up 4 & 18 Dec (ph. AJL, TT); and probably the same 2 were together in the area 1 Jan+ (ph. AJL et al.). A Harris's Sparrow at Juneau 7 Dec+ made the season's only report (PMS, ph. PAR). This species has been casual in late fall and winter since the winter sightings from the Juneau area in the 1970s. Reports of other semi-hardy sparrows were unimpressive, the exception being a White-crowned Sparrow that spent the season at a Fairbanks feeder (fide ND), where there are very few reports. At least 4 Dark-eyed Juncos were found on the Unalaska C.B.C. 2 Jan (SG), a new local high count, and another reached Adak 11 Jan (IH); both subspecies groups in Alaska (Slate-colored and Oregon Juncos) are casual in the e. Aleutians and essentially accidental farther west. A group of 20 Red-winged Blackbirds at Juneau 17 Jan (NRH) nearly doubled the Region's previous winter high count. Two reports of Western Meadowlark surfaced: a lone bird at Ketchikan 29 Dec (ph. SCH) established that area's 9th record, and one stayed 4-2 Feb–Mar at Homer (ph. JWM, ph. AJL), where it managed to forage at the bases of trees otherwise surrounded by deep snow. This Homer bird constituted a first for the Kenai Pen. and one of the westernmost reports for the state. Ketchikan produced the season's only other noteworthy blackbird highlights, including 2 Rusty Blackbirds all season (fide SCH), only the 2nd ever in winter there, and an ad. male Brewer's Blackbird that wintered after appearing in early Nov (JHL, AWP, SCH), an 8th local record. The season's lone Brambling report came in from a remote feeder e. of Homer 19 Feb–Mar (ph. VWW, GJM). As has been the pattern for years, Purple Finches appeared at a few sites.
including up to 3 brown birds 12 Dec–9 Jan at Ketichkan (AWP, SCH, JFKK), where the species seems about annual in winter, and another at Seward 26 Dec–Mar (ph. CAG). An excellent cone crop in n. Southeast at Juneau and Gustavus attracted very large numbers of Pine Siskins and crossbills (NKD, GBV et al.). But aside from this, and a few other local exceptions, none of the Region's sporadic cardueline finches appeared to be present in strong numbers anywhere, as was also true in the past two winter seasons. A male House Sparrow that reached Juneau 10–16 Feb (ph. PAR, GBV) provided a first local record and one of few away from the species' Ketichkan stronghold. At Ketichkan, local birders wonder if House Sparrows there arrived there via ships or barges or even in cargo containers. The current Ketichkan nest site is in a shipyard building.


Theo Tobish, 2510 Foraker Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99517, (TobishTG@ci.anchorage.ak.us)

British Columbia

Chris Charlesworth

WATERFOWL THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Eurasian Teal was at Martindale Flats near Victoria 10 Jan (Jide DB). Two Red-throated Loons were seen on interior lakes at Okanagan Landing, Vernon 15 Jan–16 Feb (CS, Pam Lating) and Shuswap L., Sunnybrae, near Salmon Arm, 16 Jan (TH). Rare but regular in winter along the outer coast, a Yellow-billed Loon was at NanOOSE Bay, Vancouver 1 Mar (RC). A Clark's Grebe on the Sooke C.B.C. 26 Dec was a nice find (Jide DB). In the Okanagan, an ad. gray-morph Gyrfalcon was seen in Kelowna 4 Dec (RC, Bill Beedle); another was just along Hwy. 5 n. of Kamloops 22 Jan (RH). A long-staying Iceland Gull was at Esquimalt Lagoon near Victoria 17 Dec–10 Jan (Jeremy Kimm, m.ob.); and an ad. was in the Okanagan at the Kelowna Yacht Club 16 Jan (Ryan Tomlinson). For almost the past decade, a Lesser Black-backed Gull has visited the Kelowna and Vernon areas. One was again noted on the Kelowna C.B.C. 18 Dec (MF) and seen again 15 Jan (RC).

Owls were scarce in the Central Interior of the province this winter, but a Snowy Owl was near Prince George +28 Dec (JB, Clive Keen et al.). On the Lower Mainland, a Northern Hawk Owl entertained lookouters 2 Dec–15 Feb (CB, RE, m.ob.). At Harrison Mills, a Boreal Owl was present 1-2 Feb (Kathy Steward). A long-staying Costa's Hummingbird continued throughout the period at a Vancouver feeder (Meg Brown, m.ob.). On the Abbotsford C.B.C., a female Acorn Woodpecker was discovered 27 Dec and stayed through 5 Feb (Stan Olson, m.ob.).

PASSERINES

Western Scrub-Jays appear to be increasing in the Lower Mainland, with one seen at Musqueam 4 Dec (Al & Donna Mackenzie). One that has been present for over a year at Maple Ridge continued throughout the period (Roger Craig, m.ob.). On the Penticton C.B.C., a Hermit Thrush was a surprise 19 Dec (RC). Likewise on the Vernon count, a Gray Catbird was a fantastic find 19 Dec (TS, CS, GD). Another wintering catbird was in the Okanagan at the Chichester Bird Sanctuary, Kelowna 13 Feb- (Annette Hathaway, Norma Coburn, m.ob.). In Nanaimo, a Northern Mockingbird was present 3-5 Feb (RC), m.ob.). In the Kootenay city of Nelson, a late Palm Warbler was seen 17 Dec (Janice Arndt). A very obliging Yellow-breasted Chat was observed by many at the Alaksen Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Ladner 30 Nov–14 Dec (PD, m.ob.). Very rare in winter in the interior, a Savannah Sparrow was a nice find near Road 22 near Osoyoos 1 Jan (Mike Bentley). On the Nakusp C.B.C., a Lincoln's Sparrow was unexpected 9 Dec (GD). Other wintering sparrows included a Swamp Sparrow along the Okanagan R. at Penticton 19 Dec (RC) and single Harris's Sparrows at Creston 20 Dec (LVD) and at Lake Country 14-20 Dec (RC et al.). In Penticton, a female Purple Finch was a nice species to add to the local Christmas count 19 Dec (RC).

Observers: Cathie Barron, James Bradley, Daniel Bryant, Russell Cannings, Ryan Cathers (RC), Don Cecile, Gary Davidson, Pete Davidson, Roger Foxall, Ted Hillary, Rick Howie, Tanya Seebacher, Chris Siddle, Linda Van Damme.

Chris Charlesworth, 571 Yates Road, #106
Kelowna, British Columbia V1V 2V5
(c_charlesworth23@hotmail.com)
responded with subpar numbers of Glaucous Gulls. Perhaps this is merely coincidental, but it bears watching. Finally, the Region’s most enduring avian mystery resumed after a one-year hiatus. Barn Swallows, which last year failed to make a mid-winter appearance for the first time since 2002, once again showed up in numbers during from late January through mid-February. Perhaps an examination of their molt patterns could provide some clue as to the source population of these winter waifs.

Abbreviations: E.E.W. (E.E. Wilson W.M.A., Benton); F.R.R. (Fern Ridge Res., Lane); Nisqually (Nisqually N.W.R., Thurston, WA); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor); P.S.B. (Port Susan Bay, Snowhomish); P.T. (Puget Trough); Ridgefield (Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark); W.V. (Willamette Valley); W.W.R.D. (Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla). “East-side” and “westside” indicate locations found e. and w. of the Cascade crests, respectively.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES**

The 116 Greater White-fronted Goose at Coos Bay through the season (TR) represented by far the largest-ever wintering flock for Oregon’s coast. Now detected annually in the Snow Goose flocks in Skagit/Snohomish, a Blue Goose was at P.S.B. 31 Dec (SM), and 2 were at Fir L., Skagit 1 Jan+ (RM). A Snow Goose x Ross’s Goose hybrid was detected amongst the Snows at P.S.B. 31 Dec (SM). Two late southbound Ross’s Geese at Asotin 3 Dec (K. Knittle, T. Mansfield) made just the 2nd winter-season report from e. Washington since 2004. Single Ross’s at Portland 12 Dec (D. Mandell) and Ridgefield 27 Jan (jde RH) were the only westside detections of the season and may have involved the same individual. Eight Lesser Canada Geese (subspecies parvipes) at Blackman’s L., Snowhomish 3 Dec was noteworthy, as there are very few winter records from the P.T. (SM, SP). A Dusky Canada Goose at Big Ditch, Snowhomish 3 Dec (SM, SP) and 12 at Ferndale, Whatcom 31 Dec–29 Jan (PW, SM) were well n. of this taxon’s winter range in sw. Washington. On the eastside, a very rare maxima Canada Goose was at McNary N.W.R., Walla Walla, 16 Feb (ph. SM). Cackling Geese subspecies (minima and tavernieri) continue to push their wintering ranges into nw. Washington. Twenty minima were tallied in four separate flocks in Skagit/Snowhomish, and 2 at Ferndale, Whatcom 29 Jan were the most northerly reported (SM). Reports of tavernieri included 14 at Blackman’s L., Snowhomish and 240 at Snowhomish Flats, Snowhomish, both 3 Dec (SM, SP). On the eastside, 6 minima Cackling Geese were at McNary N.W.R., Walla Walla 16 Feb (SM); this taxon is rare but regular in the Columbia Basin. An apparent Greater White-fronted Goose x Cackling Goose hybrid at W.W.R.D. 16 Feb (ph., +SM) made the 3rd record of this cross for the Region.

Though not established in the Region, a Mute Swan at found on the Wallowa County C.B.C. 19 Dec (jde A. Lueders) is of interest, as this species has been increasing in s. Idaho in recent years (per DT). Numbers of wintering Trumpeter Swans in Skagit continue to increase; 2700 counted at Conway 30 Jan (SM) represented Washington’s 2nd highest tally. Two Trumpeters e. of Coos Bay 5 Dec (TR) furnished the 5th Coos record, and another wintered at Flores L., Curry (TR); this species is rare at any season along the Oregon coast. A returning Trumpeter Swan x Tundra Swan hybrid was among a flock of Trumpeter Swans near Conway 28 Dec (SM); this swan was present last winter, establishing a Region al first for this combination and perhaps the first observed in the wild anywhere. Washington’s 12th Bickwick’s Swan was near Fir L. Skagit 28 Dec (15M); nearly all recent records—since 2002—have come from Skagit, suggesting that perhaps a returning bird(s) accounts for most of these reports. An apparent family group of Bickwick’s at Ladd Marsh W.M.A. 17 Jan (R. Osterman, ph. CN) was new for Union and yielded Oregon’s first report since Oct 2008; note that a returning Bickwick’s has wintered annually since at least 2004 on the California side of Stateline Rd. at Lower Klamath N.W.R.

A Mallard x American Wigeon hybrid, Washington’s 4th, enlivened Ridgefield 6 Dec–10 Jan (ph. D. Porter); this cross was unknown in the Region prior to 2008. A Northern Pintail x Mallard graced Everett 23 Dec (ph. SM); this cross is nearly annual in the Region. Blue-winged Teal were detected for the 4th consecutive winter, with one at Ridgefield 23 Jan (RH) and a male and 2 females at Scappoose, Columbia 27 Feb (HN); these birds are often found with Cinnamon Teal, which have wintered in ever-increasing numbers in the Region over the past two decades or so. A paltry 3 Eurasian Teal were noted in w. Washington this winter, while 6 represented a typical showing for w. Oregon. Conversely, a goodly 8 Eurasian x Green-winged Teal hybrids were tallied in w. Washington, while just one was noted from Ore gon. On the eastside, where neither Eurasian nor hybrid Eurasian x Green-winged is recorded annually, a hybrid was detected at W.W.R.D. 16 Feb (SM). For the 2nd consecutive winter, a Ring-necked Duck x scapu hy-
Although inland Surf and White-winged Scoters are expected inland in the Region (mostly Sep–Oct), winter birds are less than annual away from salt water. In the wake of a fall season that witnessed a group of 9 Surf Scoters and 8 White-winged Scoters lingering through Nov at Portland, there were multiple Dec-Jan reports of both species along the Portland to Longview, Cowitz reach of the Columbia River. Up to 5 Surfs remained at Portland through Jan (RW et al.), and 2 White-winged Scoters were recorded at Woodland, Cowitz 22 Jan (RR). Additionally, single Surfs were recorded at six widely scattered eastside locales 1 Dec–27 Jan, and an eastside group of 4 White-winged Scoters was at Mill Creek, Lincoln 27 Jan (J. Isaacoff). Punctuating these reports were 2 Black Scoters: a fall holdover that tarried at Spokane through Dec (R. Woodnuff) and a first-year male among the Surfs at Portland 2 Jan (ph., TD). These appear to be the first winter-season records for the Region’s interior, where there about 15 reports of Black Scoter from other seasons.

Less expected during winter. Three Yellow-billed Loons was half the seasonal norm; 2 continued at Port Townsend, Jefferson (m.ob.), and another visited Florence 20 Jan (D. Horgan). A subpar 7 Clark’s Grebes were detected in w. Washington. A Clark’s at Hood River 23 Jan (SF, DD) was on the eastside, where less than annual during winter.

A Wedge-tailed Shearwater found dead near Ocean City, Grays Harbor 18 Jan was Washington’s 2nd and the 4th for the Region (fide CW). A presumed Manx Shearwater was seen from Cape Meares, Tillamook 18 Dec (PP); this species is the default small black-and-white shearwater for the Region Mar–Oct, but this may not be a safe assumption with an apparently unseasonable bird. A Leach’s Storm-Petrel flew along the beach at Ocean City, Grays Harbor 17 Jan (DD, MB, SP), providing only the 4th winter record for the Washington coast. At least 4 American White Pelicans wintered in the WV; one inhabited E.R. 16 Jan (J. Sullivan); and 3 others produced widely scattered reports along the Portland to Longview reach of the Columbia R. 31 Dec (m.ob.). Three at Woodland, Cowitz (M. Willison) and one at Vancouver L. 26 Feb (JD, SF, DI, AN) made w. Washington’s first winter reports since Jan 2005. Following the recent pattern, hundreds

A Bar-tailed Godwit (front), making only the second winter record for Washington, was noted along Marbled Godwits at Toleleland, Pacific County 24 January 2011. Examination of photographs of this bird revealed it to be the same individual last noted at this location on 15 October 2010 but undetected during the interim. Photograph by Dave Hayden.
of Brown Pelicans lingered well into Dec
along the Oregon coast, but 470 at Westport,
Grays Harbor 29 Dec (BT, W. Johnson) was a
truly astounding number, given that just a
year earlier, 60 at O.S. had established a new
seasonal high count for Washington. Three
Brown Pelicans in the P.T. were also remark-
able, with singles visiting PN.P 1 Dec (M.
Westervelt), Pt. Wilson, Jefferson 9 Dec (S.
Rogers), and Bellingham 12 Dec (I. Werney);
there are only about 10 winter reports of this
species in the Puget Trough. Pelagic Cor-
morants almost never stray from saltwater
environs, thus one along the Columbia R.
ear Ridgefield 3 Dec (BF) was exceptional;
there appear to be fewer than five such
records for the Region, which include two
from neighboring Multnomah. An American
Bittern, present at Ladd Marsh Nov–2 Jan
(CN), provided just the 2nd winter record for
Union; bitterns were formerly extremely rare
in e. Washington and ne. Oregon Nov–Mar
but are now near annual there during this
season. The traditional Black-crowned Night-
Heron roost in n. Portland, the W.V.'s only
known winter roost, held just 2 (ads.)
through the season (m.ob.); the number of
birds using this roost, which formerly pro-
duced double-digit counts, has gradually de-
clined over recent years.

Turkey Vulture, though rare in w. Wash-
ington before mid-Feb, seems to be increas-
ing as a wintering species, with 7 noted at
five locations 20 Dec–28 Jan. Vultures rarely
winter on the eastside, so 2 at Hampton,
De-
schutes 18 Jan (M. Musser) were unusual;
singles along the Okanogan R. 19 Feb (M.
Spencer) and at Wenatchee 23 Feb (M.
Yawney) were likely to have been early north-
bound birds. Single Ospreys at Burns Jct.,
M Face 20 Dec (K. Cottrell) and Maupin,
Sherman 9 Jan (CM, MM) were the first win-
ter reports from the eastside since 2006.

Three White-tailed Kites at Julia Butler
N.W.R., Wäkhlahum 31 Dec (RK) were the
only ones noted in w. Washington this win-
ter; the population of this species in sw.
Washington has plummeted over the past
four years. Up to 132 Bald Eagles used a new-
ly discovered Tangent, Linn roost through the
season (J. Pleisner, m.ob.); this tally nearly
doubles any prior single-site count for the
Willamette Valley. Interestingly, this roost is
on the valley floor; whereas most in w. Oreg-
on are upstroke in the Coast Range or the
foothills of the Cascades. An imm. Red-
shouldered Hawk, originally detected by call
at Bingen, Klickitat 22 Dec (P. Moyer), was
seen and heard repeatedly through the season
(S); this makes only the 2nd winter record
for e. Washington. Just 2 Red-shouldereds
were noted in sw. Washington, but in nw.
Washington, where still rare, one visited Al-
ger, Skagit 24 Dec (J. Wiggers). Washington's
5th winter season Swainson's Hawk was near
Nisqually 2 Feb (ph. MB); all but two of the
Region's 11 winter records have come during
the past eight years. A Ferruginous Hawk
at Ladd Marsh 27 Dec (CN) was in ne. Ore-
gon, where not annual in winter, while 3
were noted in e. Washington 20 Dec–19 Jan,
where rare but now almost annual in autumn.

Only 2 Gyrfalcons were noted in w. Wash-
ington this winter, while an above-average
5 were in w. Oregon. Four Prairie Falcons in w.
Washington this winter was a good showing
and included a rare coastal bird: Pacific's first
grazed Tulekland 27 Feb (ph. BW, GGe).

Single Soras, now annual during winter in
Washington, appeared at Bainbridge L. Kitsap
8–26 Jan (GGe), Ridgefield 9 Jan+ (RH), and
Belfair, Mason 25 Feb+ (T. Brennan).

The 5500 American Coots on Dexter Res., Lane
5 Dec (AC) nearly matched the w. Oregon
winter record. A Sandhill Crane was at Allen,
Saggit 4 Dec–14 Feb (L. Mills), and one was at
Monroe, Snohomish 26 Dec–21 Feb (M. Jor-
dan); Sandhill cranes are very rare away from sw.
Washington in winter.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH
WOODPECKERS

A Mountain Plover, Washington's 6th, en-
listed in Ocean City, Grays Harbor 9–19 Jan
(ph. C. Sundstrom); all but a May 1968
record from e. Washington have occurred late
Oct–Feb on the outer coast. A species now
annual in the Region in winter, a Lesser Yel-
lowlegs wintering at Coos Bay (TR). A Long-
beaked Curlew, not annual during winter in
Oregon, was at Empire, Coos 13 Dec (fide
TR). A Bar-tailed Godwit, making only the
2nd winter record for Washington, was
among the Marbles at Tulekland, Pacific 24
Jan (ph. D. Hayden). Examination of photo-
graphs of this bird (in extremely abbreviated
alternate plumage) revealed it to be the same
bird last noted at this location 15 Oct; it went
undetected in the interim. Barely annual in
winter in Washington, 4 Ruddy Turnstones
were noted at three inland marine locations.

Single Red Knots were at Ediz Hook, Clallam
22 Dec (B. Paige) and Fort Flagler S.P. Jeffers-
on 6 Feb+ (DW); there are only about 10 pre-
vious winter records for Washington.

Short-billed Dowitchers, very rare during winter
in w. Washington, included one at Marmarstone
Pt., Jefferson 5 Dec (ph. SM, BW) and one at
Rexville, Skagit 28 Dec (SM). It was a modest
year for storm-blown Red Phalaropes. Aside
from the 142 that enlisted Port Orford, Cur-
ry 26 Dec (fide J. Rogers) and 12 seen from
Cape Meares 18 Dec (PP), all other reports
1 Dec–17 Jan involved 1–3 birds; one at Ocean
City 17 Jan (DD, MB, SP) was the sole Wash-
ington detection.

After back-to-back winters with hundreds of
Heermann's Gulls lingering in the Region
to Dec, a mere 7 (all in Oregon) were noted
along the outer coast 1–18 Dec. Given the no-
show along the Washington coast, 16 Heer-
mann's in the P.T. 17 Dec–26 Jan was, to say
the least, puzzling. A tally of 5000 Mew Gulls
at the Stillaguamish delta, Snohomish 6 Feb
(SM) equaled the record high for Washing-
ton. This same location also produced a record
winter w. Washington count of 2010
Ring-billed Gulls on 31 Dec (SM); the only
higher counts are both from fall. Single Les-
er Black-bailed Gulls along the Snake R.,
Asotin 3–4 Dec (K. Knittle, T. Mansfield, ph.
Keith Carlson) and at Yakima R. delta, Benton
(B. LaFrampoise, N. LaFrampoise)
were both in e. Washington, which has ac-
counted for more than 75% of the Region's
20+ records. Slaty-bailed Gull, which was doc-
umented in six consecutive winter sea-
sons 2002–2008, went undetected for the 2nd
winter season. After last winter's abysmal
showing, this season's 35 Glaucous Gulls 9
Dec+ (all but a few noted on the westside)
was only slightly subpar; the Region averaged
about 40 per winter 2002–2008.

Washington's 20th Thick-billed Murre was
off Southworth, Kitsap 25 Dec (11. Uihrow)
and most likely the same individual floated by
West Pt., King 4 Jan (K. Aanrud); most
records are from early Dec–mid-Feb. Ancient
Murrelets made an unprecedented showing
along Oregon's cen. coast, particularly at fa-
vored Boiler Bay, where an Oregon record 3+1
were recorded during a 1.75-hour seawatch
14 Dec (PP). From 1 Dec–early Jan, there
were many daily counts of 50–100 Ancients at
Boiler Bay (PP et al.), and 125 were counted
from Yaquina Head, Lincoln 9 Jan (PP). Rhi-
noceros Auklets are very rare away from salt
water, so one on L. Washington, King 5 Dec
was noteworthy (C. Haynie).

A Snowy Owl at Sequim 12 Jan made the
only westside report during this non-invasion
year (J. Gift, A. Gift); the last major westside
invasion of Snowy Owls occurred in 2005.
A Long-eared Owl graced Marymoor Park, King
20 Jan (MH, M. Bartels). Though a few Long-
ears are found wintering on the westside
each year, this species is likely more numer-
ous than these occasional detections might
suggest. A single male Costa's Hummingbird
visited a 36, Klickitat feeder 19 Dec (ph. E.
Essey), and another male spent the season at
Aloha, Washington (ph. K. Smith); this species
is detected nearly annually in the Region in

332 NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS
winter. For the 3rd consecutive year there were no wintering Selasphorus hummingbirds in the Region; Dec-Jan Rufous/Allen's were recorded annually 2000-2007. Following last winter's bonanza, only one Lewis's Woodpecker was reported from the W.V., one wintering at Dayton, Yamhill (D. Albright et al.). An Acorn Woodpecker wintered at Delta Park in n. Portland; though resident in multiple neighboring counties, this species is rarely recorded in heavily birdied Multnomah. A Williamson's Sapsucker at Suttle L., Jefferson 4 Dec (S. Shunk) was the season's lone report. A returning ad. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker spent its 2nd consecutive winter at E.E.W. (J. Geier, m.o.b.), while imm. Yellow-bellieds found in n. Portland 2 Jan (HDl et al.) and sc. Portland 9 Feb (RW) furnished Multnomah's first two records ever. The latter bird, initially found less than 50 m inside the county, ultimately spent most of its time a half a block to the s., resulting in a Clackamas first (AH, ph. CH). It was down year for wandering Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers, and no intergrades were reported. For the first time in at least five years, there was no report of a stray Red-breasted Sapsucker from the eastside, while the sole westside Red-naped Sapsucker was near Bandon 1 Jan (D. Munson).

PASSERINES

Wintering Black Phoebes at Ridgefield and Skagit WMA; Skagit were fall holdovers, and others were noted at Little L., Wahkiakum 31 Dec (RH) and near Vancouver, Clark 3-8 Jan (SC); though there are only about 20 records for Washington, Black Phoebes appear to be consolidating a foothold in sw. Washington. Another Black Phoebe wintered on Sauvie 1. (SF, DI, E. Elias, m.o.b.); Multnomah is one of the few w. Oregon counties where this species remains irregular. The 209 Black Phoebes tallied during the 1 Jan Coquelle Valley, Coos C.B.C. (fide AC) shows that a healthy population to the south is feeding the ongoing northward expansion. Oregon's 15th Eastern Phoebe inhabited the Winchuck R. mouth, Curry 9 Jan-21 Feb (RN et al.). A Say's Phoebe, rare in midwinter in e. Washington, was at Crescent Bar, Grant 15 Jan (BW, DW). Three-quarters of w. Oregon's 8 wintering (Dec-Jan) Say's Phoebes were on the s. coast, including 3 at Cape Blanco 1 Dec (fide TR), while additional westside singles at Eugene 19 Feb (D. Wendl) and at Williams, Josephine 26 Feb (D. Vroman) fell within the expected window for northbound birds. The bird of the season was a well-seen Ash-throated Flycatcher at Corvallis 4-5 Jan (N. Richardson, S. Richardson, R. Armstrong, m.o.b.); while this species has occasionally been reported during winter, this represents the first confirmed seasonal record for the Region.

Given that there were just three prior winter records of Cassin's Vireos for the Region, 3 in a season is nothing short of astounding. The first, in s. Corvallis 8 Jan (L. Millbank, ph. WDR), was quickly followed by another several km away in n. Corvallis 10 Jan (fWDR); and another Cassin's was at Portland 9 Feb+ (RW, SF, ph. DI). The latter 2 birds were both discovered as the observers were attempting to re-find other rarities. It was yet another non-invasion year for Blue Jays; singles wintered at Union, Union (CN et al.) and Warm Springs. Jefferson (fide HN), and another visited Steptoe Butte S.P., Whitman 22 Feb (B. Siems). Following a significant fall irruption of Western Scrub-Jays throughout the inland Pacific Northwest, at least one bird persisted at Union, Union through 17 Dec (ph. Ch); all the birds seen during this incursion have been of the "coastal" california group (DT). Single Clark's Nutcrackers near McNary Dam, Umatilla 9 Dec (B. Frazier) and at Yakima 5 Feb (S. Downes) were the only reports of downslope wanderers. Normally very rare in w. Washington, a Black-billed Magpie discovered near Fall City; King during autumn remained there through 22 Jan (A. Schiller), and another visited Vancouver 23 Jan (fide RH). These may have been remnants from last winter's mini-invasion; 8 magpies have been noted since last Jan in w. Washington. An apparent Mountain Chickadee x Black-capped Chickadee hybrid was studied at Dallesport, Klickitat 9 Jan (ph. RM, ph. SM, BW), and another was noted at Rock Island, Douglas 15 Jan (ph. BW, DW); this cross has been found several times in Washington during the past decade.

It was an exceptional year for wintering Tree Swallows, with no fewer than 61 reported 1 Dec-15 Jan; birds after the latter date are probably best considered northbound. The northernmost was at Nisqually 1 Dec (S. Thorp), while flocks of 10+ were noted at Sauvie 1. 19 Dec (WG), Coquelle, Coos 19 Dec (TR), Myrtle Pt., Coos 27 Dec-15 Jan (TR), and Finley N.W.R., Benton 29 Dec (WH). The largest gathering was at Ridgefield, with a maximum of 20 noted on 29 Dec (RH). Cliff Swallows made their first winter season appearance since Dec 2006, with 10 at Ridgefield 1 Jan (R. Weiland) and at 3 at South Beach, Lincoln 8 Jan (L. Osis). After being nearly absent last year, Barn Swallows once again appeared in numbers during Jan and Feb; 150+ Barns were widely scattered on the westside 15 Jan-19 Feb. Ridgefield, the epicenter of this winter's swallow activities, hosted the largest flock (65) on 19 Feb (RH), while most other sightings involved fewer than 10 individuals. As has been the case in past years, these birds were in a peculiar state of molt that does not match what is usually seen in the Barn Swallow populations that winter in the Northern Hemisphere (P. Pyle), raising the possibility that these birds may originate from the newly established breeding population in s. South America. Apparently unrelated to this phenomenon, up to 5 Barns were present at Ridgefield through 14-24 Dec (S. Nord, RS, RH); these birds fit the long-term pattern of a small numbers of Barn Swallows lingering on the westside into mid- or late Dec.

As last winter, a Rock Wren was found in w. Washington, this time at Burlington, Skagit 25 Jan-14 Feb (P. De Bruyn). Beckwitz's Waens continue to push their range into the Columbia Basin and beyond, as evidenced by one at Chewelah, Stevens 3 Dec (T. Little) and 14 on the Union County C.B.C. 2 Jan (fide DT). At least one House Wren inhabited Ridgefield 13 Dec+ (JD, AN), providing only the 2nd winter record for Washington; it was joined by another late in the season (m.o.b.). Single Mountain Bluebirds, very rare during winter on the westside, were at Samish Flats, Skagit 8 Jan (A. Knue) and at Golf Course Slough, Whatcom 23 Jan (PW). Multnomah's first Wrentit remains entrenched at the Sandy R. mouth, where it was first detected in spring 2010 (B. Vilhakas et al.); this is the northeastmost outpost for this sedentary species. Eight Northern Mockingbirds marked a return to the seasonal norm after just 2 last winter; singles through the season at Madras, Jef-

ferson (W. Wolfe) and Klamath Falls (D. He-

witt) were the only eastside birds. Two holdovers Bohemian Waxwings remained at Magnuson Park, King through 4 Dec (J. Puschock), and one visited Padilla Bay, Skag-
it 2 Jan (M. S. Dallas, L. Dallas); this species has been surprisingly rare in w. Washington of late. A Bohemian at Astoria 18 Dec (MP) was even less expected, as this species very rarely strays to the outer coast.

Though somewhat expected in the n. Great Basin, vast expanses of suitable habitat are rarely visited, thus reports of longspur flocks merit mention; 24 Lapland Longspurs were at Hart L., Lake 22 Dec (J.G., D. Ben-

son), and another 29 were L.K.N.W. 26 Dec (KS); 25 Laplands at Bandon 1 Jan (D. Ledig, T. J. Wahl) and 10 on Clatsop Beach 23 Jan (MP) represented the only coastal reports. Sixteen Snow Buntings at Warrenton, Clatsop 21 Feb (D. Leal) was the only west-

side flock. Single Nashville Warblers at Cor-

vallis 21 Dec (R. Hoyer, H. Herlyu), Florence
imm. Gold-Flynn) foothold searching, both Klickitat cades. Nearly are bluer Warbler showed at Ridgefield 13 Dec (ph. SC); images of this bird suggest that some such hybrids could be passed off as Golden-crowneds. Now detected annually, Golden-crowned Sparrow × White-crowned Sparrow hybrids were documented at Bothell, King 30 Dec (ph. RS, CW) and Nordlund, Jefferson 2 Feb (ph. SM, BW). A dark-lobed White-crowned Sparrow (Z. leucophrys or oriantha) found during fall near Sylvania, Snsmith persisted there through 31 Dec (SM); there are fewer than five records of such birds from w. Washington. A Gray-headed Junco (cyaneps subsp. group) was photographed at a LaGrande, Union feeder 30 Dec (ph. TB); this taxon has been encountered a few times in extreme se. Oregon, where it may breed.

A Black-headed Grosbeak at Florence 8 Jan (K. Larsen) adds to about 15 antecedent winter records; this species is rare after Sep in the Region. Two female Lazuli Buntings during Dec, both in Jackson, were completely unexpected, as this species is essentially unknown in the Region in winter: one attended an Eagle Point feeder 7-15 Dec (ph. B. Hunter), the other was near Eagle Point 18 Dec (J. James). Later in the season, a male Lazuli was seen twice in Ashland (J. AC). An imm. Bobolink on Sauvie 18-5 Dec (ph. L. Redmond) made just the 3rd winter record for the Region; most westside birds occur along the coast Sep-Oct.

A tally of 140 Western Meadowlarks at Monroe, Snohomish 3 Jan (RM) was among the highest w. Washington counts ever. Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Chimacum, Jefferson 19 Dec (BW) and Monroe 23 Feb (B. Johnson); this species is not annual during winter in w. Washington. Similarly, a Yellow-headed strayed to Tillamook 3 Dec (WG). Six Rusty Blackbirds included 5 on the eastside and one westside, the latter was near Monroe, Snohomish 29 Dec (MB. Ahnnes, J. Houston); Rusties are rare-but-annual visitors in w. Washington. A Washington record 1000 Brown-headed Cowbirds joined a large mixed blackbird flock at Desert Aire, Grant 14 Jan (BW, DW). After a considerable winter season drought, there have now been 3 Hooded Orioles over the past two winters; this season's bird was n. of Port Orchard mid-Dec-mid-Jan (S. Ecklund et al.). Now annual during winter in Oregon, this season's 3 Bullock's Orioles nearly matched last winter's record; 4 singles were at Coos Bay in early Dec (S. Cawley), Florence 18 Dec (jide R. Robb), and Corvallis 9-10 Jan (R. Enck). A male Purple Finch, exhibiting field marks consistent with the e. subspecies purpureus, brightened Friday Harbor, San Juan 19 Dec (TSM); a bird photographed in Oranagem Feb 2009 was the first of this subspecies to be documented in the Region. Single White-winged Crossbills at Wenzel Slough, Grays Harbor 27 Dec (TBT) and at Klamath Falls 21 Jan (B. Deuschman) were particularly noteworthy, given that this irruptive species was not reported from expected montane habitats. Seven Lesser Goldfinches at Vancouver 10 Jan (BW, RM, SM, BF) made the 2nd highest count for w. Washington and provided further evidence that they are establishing a foothold in Clark. Numbers and range of Lesser Goldfinches continue to increase in e. Washington, with a state-record 290 in the Maryhill, Klickitat area 9 Jan (SM, BW, RM), and in far se. Washington, flocks were present in Aton in the 2nd straight winter (C. McCormick).

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Range Bayer (Lincoln), Gary Bleisch, Trent Bray, Marv Breeze, Wilson Cad, Scott Carpenter, Art Clausning, Alan Contreras, Jim Danzenbaker, Mike & Terry Lynn Denny, Dennis Duffy, Shawnne Finnegan, Bob Flores, Chuck Gates (Crook), George Gerds (Gge), Greg Gillson (Washington; theBirdGuide pelagics), Wink Gross, Randy Hill, Michael Hobbs, Wayne Hoffman, Stuart Johnston (Skamania, Klickitat, Hood River), Bruce Labar, Ryan Merrill (Washington), Tom Mickel (Lane), Craig Miller, Marilyn Miller, Steven Mlodinow, Russ Namitz, Harry Nehls (Oregon), Vic Nelson, Ann Nightingale, Cathy Nowak, Mike Patterson (Clatsop), Phil Pickering, Steve Pink, Tim Rodenkirk (Coos, Curry), Ryan Shaw, David Trochlell (Union, Wallowa), Dan Waggoner, Phil Wegener, Rhett Wilkins, Charles Wright (eBird).

David Iorns, 2544 N.W. Marshall Street
Portland, Oregon 97210, (ildirsons@msn.com)
Douglas Schowenland, 1535 South Skyline Drive
Moses Lake, Washington 98837, (dschone8@donets.net)
Brad Waggoner, 7865 Fletcher Bay Road N.E.
Bainbridge Island, Washington 98110
(wagtail@soundssl.com)
Bill Tweet, P. O. Box 1271
Olympia, Washington 98507, (schneabigil@aol.com)
Ed Pandolfino
(Thrashers to Finches)
Stephen C. Rottenborn
(Loons to Frigatebirds, Larids to Alcids)
Michael M. Rogers
(Waterfowl to Quail, Herons to Shorebirds)
Jeff N. Davis
(Doves to Thrushes)

A steady series of weak fronts produced a very wet December without any significant storms. January was among the driest on record, with dry conditions continuing well into February. The second half of February was marked by several strong storm systems that pushed precipitation totals to near normal for the month. Highlights included the state's first winter Little Stint (pending acceptance) and two Central Valley firsts: Zone-tailed Hawk and Painted Bunting. The Evening Grosbeak irritation noted in our fall report built up steam in December and January before fading in February.

Abbreviations: C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes River Preserve, Sacramento); C.V. (Central Valley); E1. (Southeast Farallon 1, San Francisco); H.R.S. (Hayward Regional Shoreline, Alameda), PRBO (PRBO Conservation Science); S.F. (San Francisco, not State Forest). Reports of exceptional vagrants that lack documentation are not published. Documentation of C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McGaskie, Secretary, P. O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933.

WATERFOWL

An imm. Snow Goose and an ad. Ross's Goose on the n. side of Comanche Res., Calaveras 14 Dec (Don Marsh) were unexpected, as were 2 imm. Snow Geese along La Grange Rd. near the Hwy. 120 intersection, Tulevolume 22 Jan (SUM) and an ad. Snow Goose at McSwain Dam, Mariposa 27 Jan (DLSt). A Brant was noted well inside S.F. Bay at H.R.S. 18 Jan (RJR). A minima Cackling Goose at Fl. 5-28 Feb (ph. Sara Chandler) was apparently only the 2nd ever on the island. Observers are paying more attention to Canada Geese subspecies, with Dusky Canada Geese (occidentalis) being identified in Humboldt 22 Feb (ph. RBF), Mergansico 7 Dec (4 birds; RJK), Santa Clara 4 Dec-18 Jan (2 possibly returning birds; ph. SCR, RCP, JPa.), and Monterey 1 Jan (ph. DR, RC). A Lesser Canada Goose (parvipes) in S. Arcata Bottoms 21 Feb was thought to be Humboldt's first (ph. RBF), whereas one in Morgan Hill, Santa Clara 22 Jan (ph. SCR) was likely returning from last winter. Trumpeter Swans showed up in unprecedented numbers, with up to 14 at Modoc N.W.R. 28-30 Dec and 7 more at the s. end of the Surprise Valley 31 Dec (both Modoc; ph.: 15CR). Even more were seen in Butte, with 8 found 5 km n. of Richvale 11 Dec (tJHS) and 8 at the Adams Equinox Ranch 8 Jan (JHS); one of the latter birds had a green collar numbered 0831, confirming that the bird was from a captive flock in Bend, OR transplanted and released at Summer L. 15 Oct 2010. Up to 11 were at Durnel Rd., Butte 11 Jan (HJS, ph. WBW). Two Trumpeters were in American Valley, Plumas 18 Dec (David P. Arsenault, Kara Rockett), and 2 were w. of Lincoln, Placer 20-24 Jan (ph.: tDEI, Ron Pozzi, Scott Dietrich). Bewick's Swans was also well reported, with birds along Townsend Rd., Siskiyou 30 Jan (ph. Heather Sherman et al.), at the Modoc N.W.R., Modoc 28-30 Dec (ph. SCR), in District 10, Tuolumne 4-21 Dec (2-3 birds; MtB, BED, AEN et al.), at King L., San Joaquin 9-15 Jan (up to 3; DGY et al.), and a returning bird at Crowley L., Mono 12 Feb (DDo). Even more notable was an ad. Whooper Swan at King L. 9 Jan (tDGY), the 2nd for San Joaquin.

Notable Eurasian Wigeons included Alpines first at Indian Springs Res. 5-8 Feb (Don Marsh) and 2 birds each along Horntos Rd., Mariposa 28 Jan (tDLStu) and at Hensley L. 12 Jan (Maderas 6th record; Lowell Young, fide GA). Eight Eurasian Teal were found in six counties 12 Dec-6 Mar, with 6 more Eurasian Teal x Green-winged Teal in four counties Dec-22 Jan. Seven Tufted Ducks in six counties included returning males at L. Merritt, Alameda through the period (ph., m.o.b.) and at Clifton Court Forebay, Contra Costa 2 Jan (ph. Amy McDonald); the others were at Abbotts Lagoon, Marin 19 Dec (male; AKI), L. Mendocino, Mendocino 23 Dec-2 Jan (male; JWR, P. Hawks, m.o.b.), Stafford L., Marin 4 Feb (male; RS, m.o.b.), Borax L., Lake 8 Feb (male; JWR), and Shollenberger Park, Sonoma 22 Feb (female; ph. Eugene Huhn, RS, RAR). A King Eider graced Tomales Bay, Marin 22-29 Jan (ph. DWM). Harlequin Ducks were again found inside S.F. Bay in Contra Costa, S.F., and San Mateo. Black Scoters inside S.F. Bay were found in Solano, Contra Costa, and several Alameda locations. A notable 27-long-tailed Ducks in 12 counties included Sacramento's 2nd at Sherman L. 1 Dec (James Holmes). A male Bufflehead x Common Goldeneye hybrid returned to Coyote Pt., San Mateo 15 Dec (RST). Barrow's Goldeneyes were well reported, the most notable being 3 at Indian Springs Res. 5-8 Feb, one of few Alpine records (Don Marsh). The Barrow's Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid returned for an 8th winter to L. Merritt, Alameda 19 Dec (Kristi Whitfield). Two Red-breasted Mergansers continued at L. Shastina, Siskiyou through 6 Jan (RE, Jim Fleit), and up to 3 were at L. Almanor, Plumas 17 Dec-31 Jan (David P. Arsenault, BBg et al.).

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS

A Red-throated Loon on Folsom L. 11 Feb (WEH) provided the 2nd Sacramento record in the past 15 years. Among several reports of Arctic Loon, one at Dillon Beach, Marin 31 Dec-1 Jan (tDAW) was the best described (p.a.). Distinctions between Arctic and Pacific Loons can be difficult to discern in the field, and observers are strongly urged to obtain photographs of any potential Arctic. Six Pacific Loons at far inland locations represented a typical showing, November's juv. Yellow-billed Loon in Berkeley, Alameda continued through 5 Jan (m.o.b.), and what was perhaps the same bird was reported nearby at Alameda 19 Dec (Marilyn Nastir) and H.R.S. 28 Dec (RJR). Among a handful of inland Horned Grebes, one at L. McSwain 15 Dec (DLSt) provided the first winter record for Mariposa. Red-necked Grebes were in good numbers along the coast; 30 at King Salmon, Humboldt 31 Jan (MWd) provided one of the highest counts ever for the Region, and 14 on the Monterey Peninsula C.B.C., Monterey 27 Dec (fide Dr) were notable. Even rarer so far inland were 2 at Trout L., Siskiyou 26 Jan+ (RE, m.o.b.) and one at Camanche Res. 28 Feb (KPa, ph. m.o.b.), the latter providing the first record for Amador and the 3rd for Calaveras. Aside from the wintering Pt. Arena Cove, Mendocino Laysan Albatross, only 2 were reported: one at Navarro Canyon, Mendocino 16 Dec (JWR et al.) and one seen from the S.F. shoreline 23 Feb (tBFI). The die-off of Northern Fulmars noted in the fall report apparently peaked in car-
ly Dec. Approximately 1100 were found dead on 11 beaches in Santa Cruz and Monterey by BeachCOMBERS volunteers 1-7 Dec, with lesser numbers found n. to Bodega Bay, Sonoma (H. Nevis et al., <http://sanctuarysysion.org>); poor nutritional condition, possibly due to low food availability, was thought to be the cause. An ad. female Brown Booby was one km off Cypress Pt., Monterey 5 Jan (ph. Martijn Verdoes, RT). Brandt’s Cormorant is rare in Humboldt Bay, Humboldt in winter, so up to 3 there 2-15 Jan (RBf, Curtis Maranzt, Louis Bevier, m.ob.) were notable. Providing only the 5th Sacramento record, an ad. Brown Pelican at Sherman 1. 29 Nov-3 Dec (DaW, JSL) was last seen flying upriver. An ad. Pelagic Cormorant in Alviso, Santa Clara 19 Dec (SCR, MMR) was far inside S.F. Bay, though in an area with several records in recent years.

**BITTERNS THROUGH CRANES**

A cooperative Least Bittern at Martinez R.S. 26 Dec–15 Jan (Rob Thomas, m.ob.) was just the 2nd for Contra Costa; another at Yolo Bypass W.A. 21 Feb (Kathy DeFay) provided the white first winter record for Yolo. Four coastal Cattle Egrets included long-staying birds in Humboldt, Mendocino, and San Mateo. White-faced Ibis again wintered coastal, in Santa Clara (one bird), Santa Cruz (8s+), and Monterey (3).

Sonoma’s Common Black-Hawk continued at Laguna de Santa Rosa, being photographed 12 Dec and 21 Jan (ph. Stan Moore). Swainson’s Hawks wintering away from their normal Delta wintering areas included a juv. along Valley Ford Franklin School Rd., Marin 1 Jan–16 Dec (ph. RFC, Bruce Mast, Eugene Hunn) and 2 juvs. in Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 26 Nov-18 Dec (JRy, m.ob.), with one lingering until at least 24 Dec (MWE); 6 e. of Dos Palos 11 Dec (BLS) constituted the highest winter count for Madera. A Zone-tailed Hawk over Babel Slough 22 Jan (Ron Melcer, MP, Rachel Gardiner) was the first for Yolo and the 8th for the Region; it was later seen in nearby S. Sacramento 24 Jan and 7 Feb (ph. AEIN, Irene Englis), providing Sacramento’s first. Reports of Harlan’s Hawk included returning wintering birds at Jacoby Cr. mouth, Humboldt 5 Dec–17 Feb (RBf, TKz, DCo) and along N. Thornton Rd., San Joaquin 15 Feb+ (ph. Linda Pittman, m.ob.). Other Harlan’s were reported from along Russell Rd., Sonoma 16 Jan (KWI), nearby lithium, Lassen 18 Jan (RSTh), at C.R.P. 12 Feb (JTR), and at Stone Lakes N.W.R., Sacramento 13 Feb (Sarah Newton, ph. Dan Scott). Del Norte’s Crested Caracara continued through the season near Ft. Dick (Jude ADB).

As during the past two years, a Black Rail was again found calling at Coyote Hills R.P., Alameda late in the season, 27 Feb (PJM). The continuing Clapper Rail was found again at Heron’s Head Park, San Francisco 11 Dec (ASH). A juv. Sandhill Crane that visited L. Cunningham and nearby Thompson Cr. 19 Jan–7 Feb (ph. AV, m.ob.) provided an unusual record for Santa Clara.

**SHOREBIRDS**

American Golden-Plovers (both juvs.) lingered through record-late dates in Lolea Bottoms, Humboldt 8–11 Dec (LTu, SMca, MiB, Tkz, MMR) and Shollenberger Park, Sonoma 8-15 Dec (RS, PBC). A juv. Mountain Plover reached the coast at Clam Beach, Humboldt 23 Jan–23 Feb (Rich Ridenhour, ph. KGR, RBf, Tkz, m.ob.). Others away from established wintering areas included 16 along Cranmore Rd., Sutter 3-5 Dec (Tim Guida, JSL, BED, JCS) and 163 near Concon, Kings 6 Jan (Curtis Maranzt, Louis Bevier). A Solitary Sandpiper at L. Cunningham and nearby Thompson Cr. 26 Jan+ (DvWb, m.ob.) provided Santa Clara’s 3rd winter record and may have been a returning bird, as one was found there 5-8 Jan 2009. A Black Turnstone at the Mare 1. jetty 9 Jan (RMa) provided a rare record for Solano. A first-winter peep at Abbott’s Lagoon, Marin 16-17 Dec (ph. AKl, SNGH, ph. KH), identified as a Little Stint, awaits C.B.R.C. review and would constitute the first winter record for the state. Ten Rock Sandpipers at the n. jetty of Humboldt Bay 13 Feb (RBf) established a new high count for Humboldt; Santa Cruz’s wintering bird continued through its 8th winter along West Cliff Dr. in Santa Cruz (SG, Pam Myers, ELb, m.ob.). Winter Long-billed Dowitchers in unexpected locations included one along White Rock Rd., Martin 26 Jan (DLSu) and 2 in the American Valley, Plumas 26 Feb (Scott G. Edwards, Amber D. Edwards). Two wintering Wilson’s Phalaropes continued near Straitford, Kings through the season (JSy, MSy).

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS**

There are few winter reports of Sabine’s Gull in the Region, so one off Point St. George, Del Norte 31 Dec (EE, Jeff Jacobsen) was noteworthy. An ad. Laughing Gull in San Rafael, Marin 6 Feb+ (FHd, Doug Weidemann et al.) may have been the same bird present nearby last fall. A Franklin’s Gull e. of Woodland, Yolo 4 Dec (TEx) was the only one reported. Increased winter coverage of inland areas is finding Mew Gull to be more regular and widespread than was previously known. Still, the species’ abundance inland this winter seemed unusually high. Among 21 far inland, 4 at the Black Butte borrow ponds, Tehama 5 Jan (JCS, JSL) and one w. of Tipson, Tulare 9 Feb (SDS) provided 2nd county records, and one at Ellis L. 21 Dec (MaS, ADeM) was the 3rd for Yuba. Four near the Fresno W.T.P. 1 Dec (GWo) and 3 at L. Shasta 4 Dec (RE, Joey & Raymore Russell) provided new high counts for Fresno and Siskiyou, respectively. On S.F. Bay, tens of thousands of gulls attending a herring run on the Contra Costa shoreline in early Feb included 3000–4000 or more Mew Gulls (Eric Lichtwardt, m.ob.), one of the Region’s highest non-C.B.C. totals. The same herring run attracted Contra Costa’s first Slaty-backed Gull, 2 ads., to Miller/Knox R.S. 11 Feb (ph. TEx). Other well-documented Slaty-backed Gulls included a second-cycle bird at the Davis W.T.P., Yolo 5-21 Feb (ph. TEx, JCS et al.), a first-cycle bird at Half Moon Bay B.S. 23 Feb (ph. AJ), and an ad. near the Potrero Hills Landfill 25 Feb and 2 Mar (TRMu) that provided a first Solano record. Among a number of inland Western, Glaucous-winged, and Thayer’s Gulls, standouts were an ad. Thayer’s at n. Lake Tahoe, Placer 2 Dec (WbF), an ad. Western in Redding, Shasta 10 Feb (Ken Schneider), and Butte’s 3rd Glaucous-winged, at Gray Lodge W.A. 14 Dec (BED).

Once again, several Iceland Gulls (subspecies kamtschani) were reported. Photographs of some birds clearly pertained to Glaucous/Glaucous-winged Gulls or hybrids thereof, while in other cases, elimination of paler or fader Thayer’s Gulls may be impossible. First-cycle birds are particularly problematic, given the number of very pale first-cycle Thayer’s/Kumlien’s-type gulls that occur in the Region, especially in late winter. This season, the most promising and well-documented candidates for true Kumlien’s Gulls (p.a.) were second-cycle birds: in San Mateo, one at Pillar Pt. Harbor 4 Feb (ph. AJ, PA) and a different bird at Half Moon Bay B.S. 24 Feb (ph. AJ), plus one in Yolo at the Davis W.T.P. 19 Feb (ph. TEx). Most of the 50+ Glaucous Gulls reported were coastal or in S.F. Bay, as usual. Farther inland, 4 were at the Davis W.T.P. throughout Dec (TEx, SCH), and singles were at Rosemont, Sacramento 1 Feb (ph. Dan Brown), Empire Tract, San Joaquin 20 Feb+ (ph. SCR, KPa, JSL), and Whiskeytown L. 31 Dec (Jim Holnes), the latter providing a 2nd Shasta record. Four Lesser-backed Gulls were reported: an ad. at Nimbus Fish Hatchery, Sacramento 9 Jan–5 Feb (ph. Brian Gilmore, m.ob.) and first-cycle birds near Crescent City 3 Dec and 30 Jan (TLhB; a Del Norte first, p.a.), at Pillar Pt. Harbor, San Mateo 18 Jan (PA), and at the
Davis W.T. P. 20 Feb (ph. TEs). Up to 3 Caspian Terns were seen throughout the period at several locations around Humboldt Bay, 
Humboldt (m.ob.). Up to 16 Black Skimmers wintered in Mountain View, Santa Clara (m.ob.). The season's only Thick-billed Murre was a flyby at Pt. Pinos, Monterey 29 Jan (MtB, CEV) were very rare in winter on the n. coast, so singles off Point St. George, Del Norte 31 Dec (EFl, Jeff Jacobsen) and at Manchester S.B., Mendocino 27 Jan (MtB) were noteworthy. A Long-billed Murrelet off Crescent City Harbor, Del Norte 3 Feb (Jeff Jacobsen) continued the string of n. coast records of this species.

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Band-tailed Pigeons depend on annually fluctuating food crops, such as acorns, and their numbers sometimes fluctuate concomitantly. Perhaps illustrative was a total of 3 found in the San Felipe Cr. drainage portion of the Calero—Morgan Hill C.B.C., Santa Clara 26 Dec (MMR), compared with 449 tallied there during the 2009 C.B.C. One on Fl. 10 Jan (Sara Chandler) represented just the 3rd winter record for the island. Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to set records, establishing new C.B.C. high counts in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Sierra and the first winter occurrence for the Tahoe Basin with 2 at Tahoe Keys, El Dorado 22 Feb (TS, FS). A White-winged Dove, e. of Grayson 2 Jan (ph. Joe Devine, m.ob.) provided a first for Stanislaus. Also in Stanislaus, a total of 27 Barn Owls at Turlock L campground 22 Dec set a new high count for the La Grange C.B.C. and may represent the highest total for any C.B.C. in the Region. Great Gray Owls generally inhabit mid- to high-elevation Sierra meadows in our area, so one in a low-elevation (375 m) Blue Oak woodland n. of O'Neals, Madera 29 Jan (ph. Kathryn Purcell) was unusual. A Northern Saw-whet Owl in Royal Oaks 18 Jan (Cki) and another in nearby Walker Valley 29 Jan—2 Feb (RF) were in a portion of Monterey previously considered outside their normal range. These and other recent records suggest that the species may in fact be regular here. Outside what is generally considered normal winter range were 2 Common Poorwills in Humboldt, one in McKinleyville 4 Feb (Kathleen Brubaker) and another at Lamphere Dunes 9—11 Feb (CJr, Carol Ralph, KBe, Cindy Moyer, DCo, Tkz), as well as one found dead at Dye Creek Preserve, Tehama 1 Dec (Jackson Shield).

Vaux's Swifts are exceptionally rare in the Region in winter, and most records are of singles or flocks of 3 or fewer birds. A flock of 20+ over Stinson Beach 17 Dec (RS) established a new high winter count not only for Marin but for the Region as well. A more typical winter flock of 2 birds was over San Carlos, San Mateo 18 Dec (Don Pendleton). Setting a new high count for Napa for any season, 100 White-throated Swifts were at Butler Bridge 23 Dec (BDP, John Parameter). Only 2 Costa's Hummingbirds were reported, both from inland locations: one in Lemoore, Kings 4 Feb (ph. MSp) and one at Catheys Valley, Mariposa 28 Feb (Karyn O-'Hearn). A total of 100+ Lewis's Woodpeckers at Howard Ranch, Sacramento 29 Jan (Jr) was a high count. Meanwhile, the species apparently abandoned Lassen, where acorn crops failed (ide KAB). Furnishing the 3rd or 4th record for Santa Clara, a Williamson's Sapsucker made a brief appearance at Foothill College 20-22 Dec (Nancy Teater et al., ph. RWR, VF). Although the species is resident in Mariposa, another Williamson's was at the unusually low elevation of 480 m along Buckeye Rd. 27 Jan (DLSu). A total of 18 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, 13 coastal and 5 inland, was nearly twice the seasonal average. Ditto for the total of 15 red-naped Sapsuckers, 4 of which were coastal and 11 of which were inland. A female Nuttall's Woodpecker at Eagle L., Lassen 16 Dec+ (KAB, Blc, Terry Hunt, JLD, DEQ, LOr, Ron Beck) was out of place, well away from oak woodlands. Also out of place and establishing a first for Sonoma, a White-headed Woodpecker dropped in at The Sea Ranch 9-11 Dec (Diane & Brent Hichwa, BDP).

Reports of Hammond's Flycatcher included singles along Gazos Creek Rd., San Mateo 2 Jan (George Chishman), in Springville, Tu- lare 3 Jan (ph. Tkz), and Santa Cruz's first in winter along the San Lorenzo R. 7 Jan+ (David Sidle, ScG, Osj, m.ob.). An Empidonax flycatcher at Tilden Park, Contra Costa 22 Dec (ph. Mark Rauzen) may have been a Least, but brief observation and associated documentation did not allow for positive identification. Ten or 11 Eastern Phoebes included Sacramento's 2nd at Garden Hwy. 26 Dec—9 Jan (ph. DKo, Mkm, ph. CCo, m.ob.) and 3rd at C.R.P. 4 Jan+ (Jim Dunn, Nancy Sage, ph. CCo). Stanislaus' 3rd at Westley 2-8 Jan (ph. Joe Devine, Ssa, Daniel Gilman), Santa Clara's 5th at San Jose 26 Dec (BBr, Rob Paull), San Benito's 7th at Hollister 3 Feb+ (PA, ph. Don Doohlitte et al.), 3 or 4 in Santa Cruz, one in Mendocino, and one in Tuolumne. Our only Vermillion Flycatcher visited Valley Oaks G.C. in Visalia, Tulare 6-22 Jan (Deborah Nolan, m.ob.). Three Dusky-capped Flycatchers were reported, including Humboldt's 4th at Trinidad 2-4 Dec (ph. Will Lawton, Justin Brice, m.ob.), Santa Cruz's 8th at Wilder Ranch S.P. 15 Dec—22 Feb (Kathy Kuyyper, JHW, SGc, DLSu, m.ob.), and another in Marin at Pt. Reyes N.S. 19-21 Dec (Kathi Borgmann). Exceptional in winter, an Ash-throated Flycatcher loitered along Willowside Trail, Sonoma 7 Feb+ (Bill Doyle, m.ob.). Tropical Kingbirds included 3 in Santa Cruz and a holdover from last season in Yolo through 31 Dec. Yolo also hosted the only Western Kingbird, thought to be a late migrant, near Davis 3 Dec (Tim Guida, JCS).

Continuing to thrill birders from throughout California, the U.S., and beyond, Humboldt's first Brown Shrike remained at Vista Pt. ponds near McKinleyville through the period. Although expected on the floor of the Sacramento Valley, a Loggerhead Shrike w. of Auburn, Placer 18 Dec (Chl et al.) provided an unusual football record and a first for the Auburn C.B.C. Our most southerly Northern Shrike was at Howard Ranch, Sacramento 29 Jan (JrT). Cassin's Vireos included singles near Sanger, Fresno 26 Dec (BBr), at C.R.P. 22 Jan (JrT), and the Big Sur R. mouth, Monterey 12 Feb (MtB et al.). Another, or possibly a Blue-headed, was at Shays Park, Humboldt 4 Dec—4 Jan (RfB, Greg Chapman, Adam Wachtel, KMS). The only Warbling Vireo was at H.R.S. 5 Feb (JrR).

The wayward Steller's Jay discovered last season in Sacramento remained at Curtis Park at least through 27 Feb (DPM, Dan Alroila, ph. CCo, m.ob.). Apparently wintering Northern Rough-winged Swallows included 7 birds, all coastal except one at American River Parkway, Sacramento 22 Jan (CCo, DKo). The now fairly well-established pattern of mid-winter occurrences of Barn Swallows continued this season, with 18 reports totaling at least 60 birds. Rare anywhere in the C.V., a Pacific Wren discovered in Lemoore, Kings in autumn continued through the period (MSp). Six Townsend's Solitaires included singles at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, Santa Clara 28 Dec (RKe, FKe), Mt. Veeder, Napa 30 Dec (MBg, MFlR), Hood Mountain Regional Park, Sonoma 2 Feb (Bill Doyle), and Castle Rock S.P. 13 Feb (Robert Furrow), plus 2 on Skyline Blvd., Santa Cruz/Santa Clara 30 Dec (DLSu).

We received two reports of Swainson's Thrush. Both may be valid, but neither included documentation. There are very few verifiable winter records of this species in the state, so we urge observers to document such reports carefully in the future.

THRASHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Two Northern Mockingbirds in Trinity, one in Salyer 26 Dec (KBe, GAB) and the other in
Weaverville 16-23 Jan (Jr, JLx, JSL), made an unprecedented total for that county. Another in Sierraville 1-2 Feb (DeR, EP, m.ob.) supplied a rare winter record for Sierra. The only Sage Thrasher report came from near Clarksburg, Yolo 4-19 Jan (GML, m.ob.). A Brown Thrasher at Pt. Richmond, Contra Costa 5-21 Feb (Eric Lichtwardt, m.ob.) may have been the same bird reported there in fall. A flock of Bohemian Waxwings estimated at up to 120 along Taylor Cr., El Dorado 2 Feb–13 Mar (Alice Jones, Phil Stevenson, m.ob.) was likely the largest flock yet recorded in the Tahoe Basin; a flock of about 70 was on Sugar Hill, Modoc 28-29 Dec (ph. SCR et al.). The only Lapland Longspurs outside of Humboldt were a single flyby near Elkhorn Slough, Monterey 1 Jan (PJM), another lone bird at H.R.S. 3-18 Jan (RJR), and 2 in Sierra Valley, Sierra 6-12 Feb (CPD et al.). Our only Chestnut-collared Longspur was at H.R.S. 3 Jan (RJR).

Tennessee Warblers were near the Majors Cr. mouth, Santa Cruz 18 Dec (DLEK et al.) and at the Presidio, S.F. 28 Dec (PJM). Twenty-Nashville Warblers included the 2nd record for the Benicia C.B.C., Solano 20 Dec (MBe, Craig Cummings). A Northern Parula was attracted to a termite swarm in Carmel, Monterey 23 Dec (ph. BHD). Nine Yellow Warblers included just one inland bird at Merced N.W.R., Merced 24 Jan (PJM, DMo). Our only Chestnut-sided Warbler was along Thompson Cr., Santa Clara 20-23 Jan (Ginny Marshall, Anne Kelly, Amy McDonald). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Ft. Mason, S.F. throughout the period (MWE, m.ob.). Notable Black-throated Gray Warblers included a 2nd for the Red Bluff C.B.C., Tehama at Cone Grove Park (same spot as that C.B.C.’s 1st record from last winter) 19 Dec (EP, ph. PRs), and Trinity’s first winter record near Willow Creek 26 Dec (Cgo, RHw). The Año Nuevo C.B.C., San Mateo accounted for 7 of our 8 Hermit Warblers 2 Jan (fide ADEM), with the 8th in Rancho Del Oso S.F., Santa Cruz 6 Jan (DSLu). Palm Warblers turned up in numbers not seen for at least the past 20 winters, with 35 reports from nine coastal or bayside counties. Six Black-and-white Warblers included 2 in Santa Cruz and one each in Alameda, Solano, San Mateo, and Humboldt. If one assumes that birds that appear at the same site each season are the same individuals, one has to wonder just how long Northern Waterthrushes can live, given that at least one bird has been present each of the past 10 winters at Charleston Road Marsh, Santa Clara and another has been at Arcata Marsh, Humboldt for at least six winters. Both locations again hosted Northern Waterthrushes this winter (fide WGB; fide RBf). A MacGillivray’s Warbler at Reichmuth Park 26 Dec (vt. CCo) was likely the 2nd winter record for Sacramento. That county also hosted our only inland Wilson’s Warblers along the American River Parkway 4 Dec (Dan Brown, Mkm, Joanne Vinton, Jonilyn Okano) and at the Buttefahns 19 Feb+ (DKo, ph. CCo).

**SPARRROWS THROUGH FINCHES**

Green-tailed Towhees were n. of Boulder Cr., Santa Cruz 27 Dec+ (Kent Johnson, SBF, PDB, ph. Wendy Naruo, m.ob.) and along Indian Peak Rd., Mariposa 28 Jan (DSLu). Two frounced Sparrows along Clear Cr. w. of Redding, Shasta 28 Dec (Len Lindstrand, George Horn) may mark the most northerly location for this species in the C.V. Clay-colored Sparrows were in two locations in McKinleyville, Humboldt 11 & 27 Dec (both KMS), and another was at Half Moon Bay, San Mateo 26 Dec–8 Jan (RSTh, LBt). Lark Buntings were along White Rock Rd., Mariposa 16 Dec (DSLu) and at Springville, Tulare 4 Jan–13 Feb (JLD, SDS). A large-billed Savannah Sparrow was at Abbots Lagoon, Marin 21 Dec (Os, MtB), and another at Pillar Pt. Harbor 23 Dec (ph. MtB) was San Mateo’s 3rd. Inverness Park, Marin hosted at least 3 Nelson’s Sparrows 18 Dec–4 Feb (Tea et al.). Forty-eight Swamp Sparrows represented the highest total seen in at least the past two decades, while 90 White-throated Sparrows was a bit below average. A Harris’s Sparrow was along the American River Parkway, Sacramento 31 Jan+ (JML, ph. CCo, m.ob.). Interesting Dark-eyed Juncos included a Pink-sided near Acampo, San Joaquin 10-11 Dec (TDGY) and Modoc’s first Gray-headed near Dorris Res. 28 Dec (SCR).

Summer Tanagers were in Deer Park, Napa 8-11 Dec (Wendy Cole), Pacific Grove, Monterey 9 Jan–20 Feb (ph. RC et al.), and Roedding Park, Fresno 30 Jan+ (vt. EL, m.ob.). All Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were coastal, with an imm. in Pacific Grove, Monterey 18-27 Dec (ph. BTM), males visiting two Eureka, Humboldt resides 24 Dec (David Juliano) and 29 Dec–1 Feb (Kay Rocco et al.), and a female in Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz 15 Jan (BRA). Six Black-headed Grosbeaks included one in Loyalton 15 Dec (Bbg, Jim Battagin) that may be Sierra’s first in winter. Indigo Buntings were in Golden Gate Park, S.F. 1-3 Dec (ph. ASH, Bfi, DMo), Saratoga, Santa Clara 13-19 Feb (Gordon Barrett, ph. Linda Barrett), and Live Oak, Santa Cruz 19 Feb (ph. Gary Martindale). An imm. Painted Bunting in Stockton, San Joaquin 1 Feb+ (ph. Cheri Pillsbury, DGY, ph. CCo, ph. JCS, m.ob.) furnished a remarkable winter record for any part of the state and a first for the C.V. During the period this species was reviewed by the C.B.R.C. (through 2004), only two winter records were accepted, both in Dec. Reports of wintering orioles seem to be increasing. This winter, we received reports of 31, including 12 Orioles, 5 Hooded, one Hooded/Orchard, 11 Bullocks, and 2 Baltimores. One of the Baltimore Orioles was identified as a first-year female in Alameda, Alameda 19 Dec (JSL), and the other as a likely second-year male in Ft. Bragg, Mendocino 17 Jan+ (MtB, ph. ReLv, m.ob.). The Evening Grosbeak invasion that started in fall accelerated in winter, with reports totaling over 600 birds in 17 counties from Humboldt s. to Madera.

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated. Ken Able (Lassen), Peter Adrians, Bruce Barrett, Alan D. Barron, Leonie Batkin, Bob Battagin, Murray Berner (Napa), Gary A. Bloomfield, William G. Bousman (Santa Clara), Matthew Brady (Stanislaus), Beverly Brock, Phil D. Brown, Lucas Brung, Ken Burton, Rita Carrattello, Daryl Coldren, Peter B. Colansiti, Chris Conard (Sacramento), Rudy Darling (Nevada), Jeff N. Davis (Madera), Al DeMurrini, Bruce E. Deuel (n. C.V. counties), Colin P. Dillingham (Plumas and Sierra), Jon L. Dunn, Todd Eastela, Mark W. Eaton (San Francisco), David L. Ekdahl, Ray Ekstrom (Shasta), Elias Elias, Andrew Englis, Brian Fitch, Rick Fourth, Rob Fowler (Rbf; Humboldt), Steve Gerow (Santa Cruz), Steve A. Glover (Contra Costa), Cliff Hawley, Steve C. Hampton, Keith Hansen, W. Edward Harper, Floyd Hayes, Rob Hewitt, Bill Hill, Alan S. Hopkins, Debbie House, Steven N. G. Howell, John E. Hunter (Trinity), Alvaro Jaramillo, Oscar Johnson, Robert J. Keiffer (Mendocino), Clay Kempf, Roland Kenner, Pat Kenny, Andy Kleinheislink, Dan Kopp, Tony Kurz, Gary M. Langham, Jeri M. Langham, Earl Lebow, Robin L. C. Leong (Solano), Ron Levalley, Bob Lewis, Jim Lomax, John S. Luther, Thomas D. Mano-lis, Blake Matheson, Mark Martucci, Sean McAllister, Peter J. Metropolus (San Mateo), Dominick Mosur, Dan P. Murphy, Roger Muskat, Kristie N. Nelson (Mono), Chet Ogan, Frances Oliver (San Joaquin), Lew Oring, Ed Pollandino (Placer), Kathy Parker, Benjamin D. Parmender, Janne Pauser, Michael Perrone, Gary W. Potter (Fresno), Robert C. Power, David E. Quady, John C. Ralph, Bernadette Ramer, Robert W. Reiling, Will Richardson, Robert J. Richmond (Alameda), Michael F. Rippey, Don Roberson (Monterey).
Phil Robertson, Michael M. Rogers, Deren Ross, Kerry G. Ross, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Steve Rovell, Ruth A. Rudisell (Sonoma), Jennifer Ryenga, Mary Schiedt, Adam Searcy (Marin), Jeff Seay (Kings), Debra Love Shearwater, Keith M. Slauson, Jim H. Snowden, Mark Stacy, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling (Modoc, Alpine, Calaveras, and Yolo), Fritz Steurer, Tim Steurer (El Dorado), David L. Sudjjian (Santa Cruz), Brian L. Sullivan, Steven D. Summers (Tulare), Richard Ternullo, Ronald S. Thorn, Jim Tietz (FL), John Trochet, Leslie Tucci (Del Norte), Steve Umland (Tahomuna), Kent Van Vuren (Merced and San Benito), David Vander Pluym (Mariposa), Frank Vanslager, Chuck E. Vaughn, Ann Verdi, Matt Wachs, Jeff H. Wall, Bruce Webb (BWb), Dave Weber, Jerry R. White (Lake), Dan Williams, Ken Wilson, David Wimpheier, Gary Woods, David G. Yee, Bob & Carol Yutzy (Shasta). Many more observers are not specifically cited; all are appreciated.

Ed Pandolfino, 5530 Delrose Court Carmichael, California 95608, (erpfromca@aol.com)

Stephen C. Rottenborn
983 University Avenue, Building D
Los Gatos, California 95032
(rotttenborn@harveyecology.com)

Michael M. Rogers, 499 Novato Avenue Sunnyvale, California 94086, (mmc.roggers@comcast.net)

Jeff N. Davis, 11238 North Via Tevisio Way
Fresno, California 93730, (jdavis@colibri-ecology.com)

Southern California

Guy McCaskie
Kimball L. Garrett

The Region saw relatively warm temperatures and heavy rain in December and very early January; most of January and early February was dry, and February was colder than normal. Additional storms in late February brought precipitation totals to or above average for the winter in most areas; the cold late February storms also provided the mountains with a deeper than average snowpack (which increased with a series of major storms coming through in March).

Bird highlights included another record of Black-tailed Gull (on the heels of the Region's second record in November, and possibly the same individual) and a window-killed Swainson's Thrush that provided the state's first tangible documentation of a mid-winter occurrence. We have omitted from this report some early winter records that were noted, with end dates, in the fall season's report; this includes the well-documented bean-goose at the south end of the Salton Sea that remained through 12 January.

Abbreviations: C.L. (China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, extreme ne. Kern); E.C.R.

(Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley N.P., Inyo); N.E.S.S. (n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside); S.E.S.S. (s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial); V.C.G.P. (Ventura County Game Preserve near Pt. Magu Naval Air Station, Ventura). Museum collections 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, we generally only include the observer(s) initially finding and/or identifying the bird, but may also indicate observers who documented last dates of long-staying birds. Documentation for species on the California Bird Records Committee (C.B.R.C.) review list (see www.cali-forniabirds.org) is forwarded to the C.B.R.C. and archived at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Greater White-fronted Geese were in greater-than-usual numbers along the coast, as evidenced by such reports as three flocks totaling 65 in San Luis Obispo (TME), 68 on Cachuma L., Santa Barbara 15 Jan (LB), 9 in Fountain Valley, Orange 8 Oct–28 Jan (DRW), and 32 near Ramona, San Diego 22 Jan (EGK). Two dark-morph Ross's Geese were with the white geese at S.E.S.S. through the winter. Three Tundra Swans at S.E.S.S. 30–28 Dec (GMcC) were at the extreme s. limit of this species' winter range. A Eurasian Teal was in Irvine, Orange 6–28 Feb (BED), and Eurasian Teal x Green-winged Teal hybrids were in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo 1–13 Jan (CAM) and Irvine 6 Feb (L0); a few Eurasians (and hybrids) are found in s. California every winter. Three male Harlequin Ducks were on the San Luis Obispo coast (RHZ, GPS), where present every year, and one was 8 km off Faria S.B., Ventura 25 Nov (OJ). Inland, a Surf Scoter was on Senator Wash Res., Imperial 27 Nov–17 Jan (BLC, HD), up to 3 were at Salton City, Imperial 18 Jan–13 Feb (CAM, BB), and 2 were at S.E.S.S. 28 Dec (GMcC). Single White-winged Scoters were on Pyramid L., Los Angeles 4 Dec (KLG), on Quail L., Los Angeles 3 Jan–6 Feb (BW), at

Three Barrows's Goldeneyes (first-winter male, adult female, and adult male) on Senator Wash Reservoir, Imperial County, California 12 December 2010 were at the southern limit of the species' winter range. Photograph by Matt Sudowski.
Dec (DVP). A Pacific Loon, scarce inland, was at Castaic Lagoon, Los Angeles 28 Dec (KLG), and up to 2 were on Senator Wash Res 12-15 Dec (FEL, LBH). Of even greater interest was a Yellow-billed Loon on the Colorado R. between Parker Dam and Headgate Dam 15 Jan−28 Feb+ (DVP). Single Red-necked Grebes, rare in s. California, were on Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo 26-27 Dec (RSa), in Ventura 10 Nov−2 Apr (KR), at Pt. Dume, Los Angeles 23 Dec (JFGa), and at Huntington Beach 18 Jan (SGM). A Flesh-footed Shearwater, rare in s. California waters, was photographed 20 km w. of Point Loma, San Diego 8 Dec (MB). Observers along the entire coast were in agreement that Black-vented Shearwaters were virtually absent in s. California waters after the time of the year when the species is normally abundant over the inshore waters. Single Neotropic Cormorants were at Parker Dam 26 Dec (LBH) and 16 Jan−28 Feb+ (DVP), and 4, the largest number so far found together in California, were on Pig Lagoon near Seeley, Imperial 28 Nov−12 Dec (TE, GmCC). The discovery of over 200 Brown Pelican nests at Seal Cove on San Clemente I. in late Jan (ML) establishes the first breeding record for the island. No Reddish Egrets were reported on the coast n. of Orange, but one inland at N.E.S.S. since 7 Sep remained through the winter (JFG). Up to 3 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at Imperial Beach, San Diego through the period (GmCC) were the only ones reported.

VULTURES THROUGH MURRELETS
What is presumed to be the same Black Vulture present at Goleta, Santa Barbara 18 Jul−6 Nov was photographed over Buellton, Santa Barbara 14 Jan (BLS) and seen near Lompoc, Santa Barbara 22 Feb (KH). A Broad-winged Hawk at Encino, Los Angeles 28 Nov−20 Feb (MAS) was the first known wintering individual in this Region in many years. Three Swainson's Hawks near Lake Forest, Orange 9 Dec (DRW), and single birds at Hansen Dam, Los Angeles 11 Dec (KLG), Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego 11 Dec (PAG), El Tejon Ranch, Kern 17 Dec (RH), and over Coronado, San Diego 18 Dec (OJ, MB) were possibly exceptionally late fall migrants, but up to 3 at Seal Beach, Orange 2-10 Jan (RSb) and one in the Tijuana R. valley, San Diego 7 Dec and 2 Jan (GLR, TRS) were likely wintering locally—the first known migrants this spring were 8 at Borrego Springs, San Diego and 40 in sw. Kern on the very early date of 30 Jan (HC, SLS). Wintertime Zone-tailed Hawks included 6 on the coastal slope and single birds inland in the Imperial Valley at Brawley 20 Dec−16 Jan (DM, SDS) and near El Centro 26 Sep−9 Mar (KZK). Single imm. Zone-tailed Hawks at Mt. Palomar, San

C. L. 11-12 Dec (DVB), and at Desert Shores, Imperial 16 Jan (RC), and 2 were at S.E.S.S. 14 Dec−15 Jan (GmCC, RC). Single Black Scoters were on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, San Bernardino/La Pac 11 Dec−21 Jan (RF), at Senator Wash Res. 14 Dec−15 Jan (MS), and at S.E.S.S. 1 Jan (HBK); 1+ reported along the coast was about normal. Single Long-tailed Ducks on San Diego Bay 18 Dec (TABI) and adjacent Mission Bay, San Diego 8-28 Feb (ISb) were the southernmost of the only 9 found along the coast. Up to 5 Barrow's Goldeneyes at Senator Wash Res. 30 Nov−17 Jan (DG, HD) were at the s. limit of this species' winter range on the Colorado R. one on Klondike L. near Big Pme, Inyo 13 Jan (TShJH) and another at Desert Center. Riverside 17 Dec−6 Feb (CmCG) were at unusual locations. White-tailed Ptarmigans introduced into the cen. Sierra Nevada in the early 1970s appear well established near Aspendell, Inyo, where up to 16 were noted in Jan (SLS, C&RH).

A Red-throated Loon, most unusual far from the coast, was on Ferguson L., Imperial 15-18

One of two found in Southern California in winter 2010-2011, this Black-throated Green Warbler frequented a neighborhood in Brawley, Imperial County 13 (here 19) December through 7 January. Photograph by Thomas A. Benson.

Pine Warblers have proven to be annual in winter in Southern California. Two of the unprecedented eight birds found during winter 2010-2011 were on the southeastern deserts, including this bird in El Centro, Imperial County 13 December through 16 (here 8) January. Photograph by Kenneth Z. Kurland.
Diego 5 Dec (MS) and at Borrego Springs 14 Feb (SN) were likely on the move. An impressive “flock” of up to 25 Ferruginous Hawks was in the Kern portion of the Antelope Valley 16-23 Feb (DG). Two Rough-legged Hawks at Carrizo Plain N.M., San Luis Obispo 28 Dec-30 Jan (EB) and one at Daggett, San Bernardino 4 Dec (EAC) were the only three reported; numbers reaching s. California are way down from those of 20 years ago.

A Sandhill Crane at Desert Center 18 Nov-6 Feb (CMcG) was at an unexpected location. At least 8 Pacific Golden-Plovers were believed wintering in coastal Santa Barbara (2-3 at Guadalupe, JO'C), Orange (5-6 Seal Beach, JFI) and San Diego (one near Imperial Beach; RTP), but one at Salton City 19 Oct-15 Apr (DSC) was inland, where very rare. Twelve Mountain Plovers at North Vandenberg A.F.B., Santa Barbara, the last remaining regular winter site for this species in coastal s. California, 19 Dec (AAA) were the only ones on the coast. A Solitary Sandpiper in San Luis Obispo 9 Dec (JSR) and another in Goleta 27 Oct-30 Dec (KB) were exceptionally late, if not attempting to winter locally. Single Red Knots at S.E.S.S. 11-18 Dec (BK) and N.E.S.S. 1 Feb (CMcG) and single Sanderlings at N.E.S.S. 13-19 Jan (CMcG), Salt Creek on the e. shore of the Salton Sea, Riverside 23 Jan (JFG), and S.E.S.S. 13-17 Dec (OJ) were inland, where rare at this time of the year. A Pectoral Sandpiper on Morro Bay 10 Nov-16 Jan (KLE; TME) is only the 2nd recorded in winter in s. California. A Stilt Sandpiper, rare on the coast, particularly so in winter, was at Point Mugu Naval Air Station, Ventura 31 Dec-4 Jan (TMcG). A Red Phalarope at N.E.S.S. 13 Dec (DG) was inland, where rare.

Seawatchers were in agreement that Black-legged Kittiwakes were scarce in s. California waters through the winter, with the exception of small numbers off San Diego. A Black-tailed Gull at Malibu, Los Angeles 12 Feb (JLF) may have been the same bird that frequented Long Beach in Nov. At least one Heermann’s Gull was at S.E.S.S. 14 Dec-28 Feb+ (JFG, GMcC). Nine Mew Gulls around the Salton Sea 10 Nov-17 Jan was more than expected. Six Herring Gulls at various lakes in the Victorville area in Dec and Jan, along with a Thayer’s Gull at Spring Valley L. 29 Jan (TAEb) and a Glaucous-winged Gull at the Prado Basin 28 Jan (HJK), were noteworthy for San Bernardino. Seven Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported, including one returning for a 3rd winter to near Lakeview, Riverside 28 Dec-26 Mar (CMcG, HJK), 5 (2 returning from last winter) at scattered locations on the Salton Sea, and a first-cycle bird at Lower Otay L. 5-8 Feb (PFL), only the 2nd recorded in San Diego. Four Glaucous Gulls were found along the coast, including an ad. at Lower Otay L. 9 Jan (PEL), and 2 first-cycle birds were inland at S.E.S.S. 4 Jan-28 Feb (TAEb, JLD). An Elegant Tern, exceptional in winter, was photographed near Imperial Beach 24 Jan (KRE); the first of the summering birds arrived at Dana Pt., Orange 27 Feb (LA).

A Pigeon Guillemot, very rare in winter, was off South Vandenberg A.F.B., Santa Barbara 12 Jan (NAL). Six Marbled Murres at the Santa Maria R. mouth, San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara 1 Dec (BKS), 14 off N. Vandenberg A.F.B. 13 Feb (NAL), and one at Pt. Dume 23 Dec (JFGa) were a little s. of this species’ normal range. Above-average numbers of Ancient Murrelets continued into Jan, as indicated by counts of 9 at San Simeon, San Luis Obispo 17 Jan (MLS), 10 at Newport Beach, Orange 8 Jan (BED), and 10 at La Jolla, San Diego 7 Jan (BM).

**DOVES THROUGH VIREOS**

A count of 61 White-winged Doves near North Shore, Riverside 2 Jan (HJK) was unprecedented.
away from the Borrego Valley at this time of the year. Unidentified hawkswallows, almost certainly Lesser Nighthawks, were reported in Carpinteria, *San ta Barbara* 28 Dec (EC) and Goleta 1 Jan (PWA), and 2 Lesser Nighthawks in El Centro 2 Jan (AH) were undoubtedly wintering locally. A Vaux’s Swift found dead in downtown San Diego 21 Dec (*SDNHM*) and another seen near Oceanside, *San Diego* 23 Dec (KW) were probably attempting to winter locally. A male Broad-billed Hummingbird, a rare visitor to California, remained in Nestor, *San Diego* 17 Dec–17 Feb (OJ, MBr, MS), and another male frequented a feeder in Ventura 27 Dec–29 Jan (RMCM). A male Rufous Hummingbird, most unusual in winter, was well studied in Goleta 1 Jan (DMC). An Allen’s Hummingbird at a nest in Chino Hills 6 Feb (TAbe) provides the first record for breeding in *San Bernardino*. A Gila Woodpecker near Desert Center 27 Dec (CMG) was well away from any known area of regular occurrence. Eighteen Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers scattered around the Region was about normal. Well-described/photographed Gilded Flickers were near Parker Dam 21 Dec–14 Feb (KB) and Ferguson L. 2 Jan (AH); the current status of this species in California is unclear and requires monitoring.

The Least Flycatcher found 25 Nov in Long Beach, *Los Angeles* remained through 17 Feb (KSG). Hammond’s Flycatchers have been found with increasing frequency in winter in the Region, so it was surprising that only 2 were reported this winter: at Whittier, *Los Angeles* 12 Jan (LS) and at Long Beach 21 Oct–1 Mar (KSG). Remarkable for the n. interior was a Dusky Flycatcher attempting to winter along Birchim Cr. n. of Bishop, Inyo 1 Nov–1 Jan (J&DP). Wintering Gray and Pacific-slope Flycatchers were reported in unexpected numbers. Eighteen Eastern Phoebes were reported, well above average; island biogeographers might wish to note this species’ first occurrence on Disneyland’s Tom Sawyer’s L. in Anaheim, *Orange* 25 Dec (CHa). Three Dusky-capped Flycatchers, all in *Los Angeles*, included one returning for its 4th winter in La Mirada 15 Dec–6 Apr (JR), one in West Los Angeles 13 Dec (RB), and one in Bell Gardens 2 Feb–24 Apr (RB). Nine Tropical Kingbirds was as expected, but a Thick-billed Kingbird at Chula Vista, *San Diego* 16 Dec–23 Apr (RN) was only the 18th to be found in the Region. Western Kingbirds are now regular in early winter, with 4 in *Los Angeles* 22 Dec–13 Jan and another in *San Diego* 17 Jan (GN).

The Bell’s Vireo at the Salton Sca N.W.R. headquarters remained through 14 Feb (PEL, ETH); another nearby outside of Brawley remained from 20 Aug–7 Dec (DBr, DBr). A Gray Vireo photographed in Elephant Tree habitat in Anza–Borrego S.P., *San Diego* 22 Jan (DBC) was in an area where the species may winter regularly. Continuing a trend, Plumbeous Vireos outnumbered Cassin’s 36 to 16 during the winter, the latter species has always been rare but regular at this season, while Plumbeous has more recently established a significant wintering population. Casual in the Region, a Blue-headed Vireo was on Point Loma 30 Dec–24 Mar (DBr, DWA, PAG).

**CHICKADEES THROUGH WARBLERS**

A Mountain Chickadee in Los Osos 24 Dec (GPS) was only the 9th for *San Luis Obispo*. That Verdin undertake some seasonal movements was underscored by the 3 found in coastal *San Diego*; in Chula Vista 5 Dec–4 Jan (JD, GG), the Tijuana R. 24 Dec (DWP), and in Nestor 25 Dec–3 Jan (EGK, CAM), the last bird returning for its 2nd winter; also out of range was one on the U.C. Riverside campus, Riverside 26–27 Dec (JT, MT). A Brown Creeper at Avalon, Santa Catalina L. 23 Jan (NAL) was one of the few to have reached the Channel Islands. The well-documented Winter Wren at Point Loma remained 3 Nov–6 Mar (PEL, JZ).

A Swainson’s Thrush that collided with a window in Studio City, *Los Angeles* 24 Feb (WH, *ALACM*) provided the first verifiable mid-winter occurrence of this species in the Region; the specimen is of the Rossus-backed subspecies group, probably nominate *uastulatus*. The only Gray Catbird was at Rancho Bernardo, *San Diego* 7 Dec (JN). A Brown Thrasher was at Bard, *San Bernardino* 25 Nov–4 Dec (PEL). The Curve-billed Thrasher at Huntington Beach noted in the fall report was present through 21 Feb (BED, IH), and the bird at Wister, S.E.S.S. was last seen 14 Feb (PWE, ETH); another was at Black Meadow Landing, *San Bernardino* from mid-Oct through at least 3 Feb (EP); and a bird with a deformed bill se. of Holtville, *Imperial* 21 Jan–3 Feb (KLG, GMcC) was either this species or Bendire’s.

Lapland Longspurs lingering past early Dec were in the San Jacinto W.A., *Riverside* 28 Dec (CAM, J&SMT), in Imperial Beach Nov–6 Jan (PEL), w. of Lancaster, *Los Angeles* 26 Feb (DMC), and at Harper Dry L., *San Bernardino* 11–12 Jan (up to 2; JMcM, ETH). Chestnut-collared Longspurs have recently wintered regularly in the Santa Ynez Valley, *Santa Barbara*; the high count this winter was 25 on 28 Dec (WTF); another remained at Imperial Beach 16 Nov–6 Jan (PEL).

A Tennessee Warbler on Point Loma 26 Dec–12 Mar was joined by another 8 Jan–18 Feb (BJS, MST, PAG). Northern Parulas, casual in winter, were well represented, with birds at Whittier Narrows in El Monte, *Los Angeles* 12 Dec–2 Jan (KLG), La Mirada 7 Dec (RJo), Coronado, *San Diego* 17 Dec–27 Feb (2 different birds; MS, OJ, MBr.), Bakersfield 17 Nov–25 Feb (RAB), and nw. of Bishop at Rovana, Inyo 8–10 Dec (J&DP). Eight Chestnut-sided Warblers wintered from Los Angeles southward in coastal regions (half of them in *San Diego*). Four Black-throated Blue Warblers were more than expected; birds were at Tustin, Orange 1 Dec–15 Apr (WJG), at Point Loma 26 Dec–12 Mar (PEL), and at Blythe, Riverside 20–22 Dec (JoK), along with a very late straggler in Rovana, Inyo 8 Dec (JLD). A Hermitt Warbler in Bakersfield 27 Feb (JGW) was only 3rd to be found in winter in the Central Valley part of Kern. A Black-throated Green Warbler was at Point Loma 5 Jan–24 Mar (JaK), and one was in Brawley 13 Dec–7 Jan (PEL). Black-throated Gray Warblers are quite rare in winter in the desert interior; one at Brawley remained from Nov through 13 Dec (PEL), and another was at Borrego Springs, *San Diego* 19 Dec (PEL). The returning Grace’s Warbler at Gole ta remained from Sep through 4 Apr (NLG). A Yellow-throated Warbler, less than annual in winter, was at Lakeside, *San Diego* 27 Nov–29
Dec (JFr, JL). An exceptional showing of Pine Warblers was hard to explain; one continued from the fall at Santa Maria, Santa Barbara through 31 Dec (JMC), along with singles at another Santa Maria locality 2-3 Feb (JMC), at Hansen Dam, Los Angeles 27 Nov-11 Apr (KLG), at Palos Verdes Estates, Los Angeles 26 Dec (JEP), at Long Beach 18 Dec-6 Jan (RAH), at Bonita, San Diego 11 Dec-6 Feb (PEL), at Bard 6 Dec (GH), and at El Centro 13 Dec-16 Jan (MS, JLD). A Prairie Wren, casual, in winter, was at Santa Margarita L., San Luis Obispo 9-28 Feb (KIK). Seventeen Palm Warblers were found along the coastal slope during the period, with another at S.E.S.S. 20 Jan–14 Feb (JoK, ETH, GMcE). Other regularly wintering “eastern” warblers included 13 Black-and-white Warblers and 10 American Redstarts. The lone Ovenbird was in San Diego 20 Feb–21 Apr (TRS, BJS), and the only Northern Waterthrushes were at El Monte 18 Dec (JSE) and the Tijuana River Valley 18 Dec (BM) and 5 Jan (CGE). A male Hooded Warbler was present in a San Pedro, Los Angeles yard 8 Nov–5 Apr (KD). A Wilson's Warbler at Wister, S.E.S.S. 20 Nov–13 Mar (TAbc) was one of the few to have spent the full winter in the Salton Sink. The returning Point Loma Painted Redstart remained through 9 Jan (SBM), but only one other was found—at Jamul, San Diego 13 Jan–21 Feb (RBa). Quite surprising were 2 wintering Yellow-breasted Chats, one at Carpenteria 1 Dec–17 Mar (EC), which was only the 2nd to occur later than mid-Nov in Santa Barbara, and one at Dana Point 23 Dec–18 Mar (RBb), the first to be documented in winter in Orange.

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Seven Clay-colored Sparrows were on the coastal slope, with another inland at the Tejon Ranch, Kern 17 Dec (CO). Always rare in coastal regions, a Black-throated Sparrow was at Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo 4-21 Dec (RAu), and another was at Duratie, Los Angeles 5 Feb (JLF). The only Lark Bunting reported was at Bakersfield 15 Dec (JCP). A Le Conte's Sparrow in a recently created freshwater wetland near Niland, S.E.S.S. was enjoyed by many observers over its 14 Dec–13 Mar stay (MBr, MS); this was the 2nd ever to be found in the Salton Sink. Nelson’s Sparrows occurred once again at the regular winter sites in Morro Bay and coastal Orange, with a high count of 3 at Seal Beach N.W.R. 6 Dec (JFi); another was at V.C.G.P. 19 Feb (RB). A singing Savannah Sparrow of the saltmarsh subspecies beldingi was at Malibu Lagoon, Los Angeles 27 Jan (DSC). Ten Swamp Sparrows were in coastal areas from Santa Barbara to Orange, with another 5 in the interior. Harris' Sparrows were in Round Valley, Inyo 18 Dec (JLD), at Ramer L. near Calipatria, Imperial 5 Feb–3 Apr (Bk), and at Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles 27 Feb–24 Apr (MBY).

Hepatic Tanagers wintered in Pasadena, Los Angeles 2 Dec–8 Mar (JFJa) and Balboa Park in San Diego 10 Feb–3 Mar (PEL), along with the returning bird at Imperial Beach 10 Nov–9 Mar (Jsc, RJP). In addition to the myriad coastal Summer Tanagers noted above, one was at Bakersfield Nov–15 Dec (SDS), and one was at Twentynine Palms, San Bernardino 30 Dec (SR). An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak near Santa Ynez 8 Jan–25 Feb (Bob Field) established one of only three inland winter records for Santa Barbara, and another was at San Diego 3-7 Jan (SrRB); 5 Black-headed Grosbeaks were on the coastal slope. Casual in midwinter were a Blue Grosbeak at Point Loma 6-8 Jan (EGK) and an Indigo Bunting at Los Angeles 20 Feb–4 Mar (Andrew Birch). A Dickcissel was at FCR. 26 Dec (SLS, AMS).

A Tricolored Blackbird near Signal Mt., Imperial 23 Jan (HBK) was well out of range. A Yellow-headed Blackbird in Fountain Valley 13 Jan (SGM) was only the 2nd to be found in winter in Orange in the last decade. A Rusty Blackbird stayed only briefly at Whittier Narrows in El Monte 11 Dec (Jon L. Fisher). A Common Grackle, casual in the region, was in Willowbrook, Los Angeles 9 Dec–15 Mar (RB). In addition to the Orchard Orioles noted above, a returning male was at Costa Mesa, Orange 26 Nov–2 Jan (JEP). The northernmost Bullock's Oriole was at Oceanos, San Luis Obispo 17 Jan (CAM). Seven Baltimore Orioles were noted in coastal Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego. A male Scott's Oriole near Valyermo, Los Angeles was in typical Joshua Tree woodland breeding habitat on the odd date of 13 Jan (JM).

A male Black Rosy-Finch was photographed at Aspendell, Inyo 21 Feb (SLS, RJS). The falls Evening Grosbeak incursion continued into the winter; sightings included singles at Atascadero, San Luis Obispo 16 Dec (GPS) and Nestor 2-3 Jan (MJB), up to 6 in the vicinity of Bishop 8 Dec–27 Jan (JL), T&G/H, NJO, JeDP), 9 in the Piute Mts., Kern 5 Dec (RAB), and 3 in the vicinity of Big Bear L. 5 Dec–6 Jan (ETI, BD).

Cited observers (county coordinators in boldface): Ryan Abe (Rb), Alex A. Abela, Douglas W. Aguillard, Larry Allen, Rick Austin (RAu), Richard Barth, David Bell (DBe), Thomas A. Benson (TAbc), Louis Bevier, Mark J. Billings, Matthew Binns (MB), Andrew Birch, Thomas A. Blackman (TAbi), Kathleen Blair, David V. Blue, Matt Brady (Mb), Bob Brandriff, Kyle Braunger, Susan and Rich Breisch (SrRB), Dan Brown (Db), Eric Brunschwiler, Martin Byhower (MBY), Eugene A. Cardiff, Barbara L. Carlson, Jamie M. Chavez, Rich Cimino, Hal Cohn, David M. Compton (Santa Barbara), Daniel S. Cooper, Eric Culbertson, Brian E. Daniels, Brad Dawson, Kathy Day, Jay Desgrosseller, Henry Detwiler, Jon L. Dunn, Todd Easterla, Kim R. Eckert, Tom M. Edell (San Luis Obispo), Claude G. Edwards, Jon S. Fecnstra, Jon L. Fisher, John Fitch (Fi), Rick Fridell, Jack Friery (Jfr), Wes T. Fritz, Noah L. Gaines, John F. Garrett (JFGa), Kimball L. Garrett (Los Angeles), Karen S. Gilbert, Peter A. Ginsburg, Wayne Goochenour, David Goodward, Gary Grantham, John F. Green (Riverside), Robb A. Hamilton, Robert Hansen, Lauren B. Harter, Garth Harwood, Cliff Hawley (Ch), William Heckmann, Tom & Jo Heindel (Inyo), Kelli Heindel-Levinson (Kern), Ken Hollinga, Irene Horuchi, Chris & Rosie Howard, Andrew Howe, Oscar Johnson (Ventura), Eric G. Kallen, Jay Kelley (JaK), John Kelly (Jok), Kathleen I. Kent, Howard B. King, Alexander E. Koonce (San Bernadino), Barbara Krause, Kenneth Z. Kurland, Paul E. Lehman, Nick A. Lethaby, Mark Lowry, John Luther, Curtis A. Manzant, Dan Maxwell, Sara B. Mayers, Guy McCaskie (Imperial), Chet McGaugh, Todd McGrath, Jimmy McMorran, Robert McMorran, Robert B. McNab, Jim Moore, Steven G. Morris, Brennan Mulrooney, Gretchen Nell, Susan Nishio, Jan Nordenback, Rick Norgaard, Jack O'Connell, Chet Ogan, Leo Ohtsuki, Nancy J. Overholz, Jim and Debby Parker (J&SP), Robert T. Patton, Kären L. Perry, Jim E. Pike, David W. Povey, Ernie Psikla, Kay Regester, Steve Ritt, Geoffrey L. Rogers, Jonathan Rowley, Jim S. Royer, Matt Sadowski, Rick Sova (RSa), Robert Schallmann (RSb), Jim Schlickstein (Jsc), Larry Schmalz, Brad K. Schram, Alison M. Sheekey, John Shenon (JSh), Gregory P. Smith, Maggie L. Smith, Bj Stacy, Justyn Stahl (San Clemente Island), Trent R. Stanley, Susan L. Steele, Michael A. Stensvold, Brian L. Sullivan, Steven D. Summers, Ed Thomas (ETh), Eric Tipton (ETi), Jennifer Tobin, Michelle Tobin, David Vander Pluym, Pat Walker (PWa), Bobbie Walsh, Kenneth Weaver, Peter Wendelken (PWc), Douglas R. Willick (Orange), John C. Wilson, Roger H. Zachary, Jim Zimmer. An additional 235 observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports; 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

This report is dominated by Mexico's first Wood Sandpiper, a bird that overwintered near La Paz. Other notable rarities included two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Blue-headed Vireo, Clark's Nutcracker, and Hepatic Tanager in the north, and an apparently lingering Wood Stork, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Streak-backed Oriole in the south. The Region's endemic Xantus's Hummingbird was confirmed nesting in Baja California, and seasonal rarities included the Region's first Black Tern and state-significant Solitary Sandpiper and Cliff Swallow in the north. Endemic subspecies of Crissal Thrasher and Song Sparrow also made news.

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

A few Greater White-fronted Geese were seen in both states in Oct, but 3 at Estero San José 14 Jan (JM)S were the only ones seen thereafter. The only Snow Goose and Cackling Goose (an Auletian) reported were at Bahía de San Quintín 1 Dec (AM, JM) and Nopolo 22 Oct–14 Nov (TH), respectively. Canada Geese were more numerous, with 29 found at three locations in the n. quarter of Baja California. Uncommon duck sightings included a Eurasian Wigeon at the Rio Guadalupe estuary 29 Nov (AM, JM); 2 Greater Scaup at La Ribera 5 Mar (SGM); at least 3 Hooded Mergansers in the Ensenada area 30–31 Dec (PAG, MJB et al.); and Common Mergansers on the Maneadero Plain (one from late Dec through 27 Feb; ph. SB), on the Rio Hardy C.B.C. 16 Dec (6; OJ et al.), and at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 28 Feb (one; ESM). In Baja California Sur, Northern Fulmars were seen off the Pacific coast nearly to the tip of the peninsula (DWP, JP), and rare observations on protected waters were made at theGuerrero Negro saltworks 25 Nov and Laguna Ojo de Liebre 6 Dec (VA et al.).

What may have been a single Wood Stork lingering from the fall season was seen in the Cape District at Cabo San Lucas 25 Dec (WSH), La Ribera 8 Jan (JSp), and Estero San José 2–4 Feb (ME, MDC et al.). Fifteen Little Blue Herons at Bahía de San Quintín 9 Jan (MJB, MS, RMA) established a high count there; the species is very rare in the Region n. of there. An imm. Bald Eagle on the Maneadero Plain 31 Dec (OJ) was the 2nd to be found on the Ensenada C.B.C. in five years, but the species has otherwise been unrecorded on the n. coast since 1994. In the Cape District, a Broad-winged Hawk was on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 5 Feb (MDC), and up to 3 Swainson's Hawks were in the San José del Cabo area 3 Feb–3 Mar (MDC, ph. SGM et al.). Ten Zone-tailed Hawks seen in Baja California were more than expected and included n. birds at Tecate (up to 2, 12 Nov–6 Feb; ph. JS), Valle la Trinidad 4 Feb (AM, JM), Ejido Nuevo León, Mexicali Valley 28 Feb (ph. ESM), and the first for the Ensenada C.B.C. on 31 Dec (ph. MJB et al.). Another Harlan's Hawk was seen in the Mexicali Valley (ca. 3 km nw. of Campo Mosqueda, 16 Dec; MB), but the subspecies remains undocumented by a photograph in Baja California, in contrast to Baja California Sur. By contrast, Golden Eagle records from the s. state are all sight records. The latest was an imm. at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 24 Nov (VA, HO, EPA).

A Solitary Sandpiper in the Cape District at Santiago 4 Mar (ph. SGM) was where most winter records have come from, but one in the Sierra Juárez at Laguna Hanson 10 Dec (TAD) was most unexpected. Re-sightings of Mexico's first Wood Sandpiper, wintering near La Paz since Aug 2010, actually were expected. The bird was seen on 6 Feb (AL, MDC, ph. m.ob.) and 10 Mar (ph. SGM) but could not be found on 22 Apr (PAG). The Guerrero Negro saltworks may be developing as a regular wintering site for Stilt Sandpipers. Six were there on 5 Dec (VA, HO). An ad. Black-legged Kittiwake at Roca Consag 27 Mar (MJB, ph. MS et al.) established the first Regional report from the n. Gulf of California, although there are at least two Sonora records (Russell and Monson, The Birds of Sonora, 1998). Ten were at the nw. corner of the Region, n. of Islas Coronado 5–6 Mar. Another first, within the Region, was the mountain Mew Gull at Laguna Hanson 10 Dec (TAD). Lesser Black-backed Gull had not been seen in the Region since 5 were found in the winter of 2006–2007. Two were seen at San Felipe this winter; an ad. on 4 Dec and 9 Feb (ph. AM, JM) and a first-cycle bird on 27 Mar (ph. MS et al.). Christmas Bird Counts turned up 2 Gull-billed Terns in

The first ever recorded in Mexico, this Wood Sandpiper remained near La Paz, Baja California Sur from at least 18 August 2010 through 10 March (here 6 February) 2011. Photograph by Andrew Duff.
first Regional winter record. Other winter tern reports included a Common Tern at sea off of Bahía Magdalena 13 Jan (ph. JP) and Elegant Terns at Bahía de San Quintín (6 on 1 Dec, AM, JM), Loreto (unknown number on 4 Dec and 24 Jan, TH), and La Paz (3 on the C.B.C. 18 Dec, fide DGE). Common Murre made another strong showing with 30 reported s to Islas Todos Santos/Punta Bandá 13 Nov–1 Jan.

**SWIFTS THROUGH FINCHES**

At relatively well-covered Estero San José, 3 Vaux’s Swifts 2 Mar (ph. SGM) and an ad male Broad-billed Hummingbird 3 Feb (MDC) followed 8 of the former there in Nov and what was presumably the same individual hummer there in Oct. A Black-chinned Hummingbird was also there on 3 Mar (ph. SGM). Meanwhile, in poorly-covered se Baja California, a female Xantus’s Hummingbird on a nest at Santa Gertrudis 20 Jan (ph. GR-C) established the first confirmed nesting record for the state. The Ensenada C.B.C. enjoyed its best hummingbird showing ever, with one each of Black-chinned (MJB, ph. MS et al.), Costa’s, and Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbirds 31 Dec–1 Jan (fide MJB) complementing the usual Anna’s Hummingbirds. The first and last were seen again on 10 Jan (MJB, MS, RMA).

A Pacific-slope Flycatcher at the Mexicali zoo 30 Jan (ph. MJB, WSH) was the 2nd to be reported from the Mexicali Valley in winter. Four Western Kingbirds in the Cape District 4–6 Mar (ph. SGM) were expected, but none seen in the California District: one on the Maneadero Plain 30 Dec (TRL, WF), the other at Bahía de San Quintín 9 Jan (MJB, ph. MS, RMA). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at Cabo San Lucas 26 Dec (ph. WSH). There are few winter records of Gray Vireo in Baja California, but only 2 of Valle la Trinidad 3 Dec (AM, JM) were noteworthy. A Blue-headed Vireo was photographed on the Maneadero Plain 31 Dec (ph., TPP). There are two Oct records from n. Baja California Sur and two previous records for n. Baja California (16 Jan 1998, 8–12 Mar 2006). A Clark’s Nutcracker at Laguna Hanson 10 Dec (YAD) was only the 2nd to be seen in the Región this century. Swallows were present in comparatively high numbers in the north but only in modest numbers in the south. Most notable among them were a Bank Swallow at Estero San José 2 Mar (SGM) and Baja California’s first winter Cliff Swallow at Laguna El Ciprés 31 Dec–1 Jan (ph. MJB, TPP et al.). Another first for the Ensenada C.B.C. 31 Dec was the Red-breasted Nuthatch at Punta Banda (ph. MJB et al.). The only Sage Thrasher reported was at Santa Gertrudis 20 Jan (GR-C) Valle la Trinidad was the site of interesting thrasher observations this season. Two Crissal Thrashers there 3 Dec and one on 6 Feb (AM, ph. JM) were initially thought to represent the first reports since the 1920s within the range of what has been recognized as the endemic subspecies T. c. trinitatis. Indeed, given the conversion of the valley to agriculture, we suspected the subspecies was extinct. However, subsequent correspondence revealed the observation of a singing Crissal Thrasher at Valle la Trinidad on 22 Apr 2002, along with a California Thrasher at the edge of its range (MAP, BDSP). Also at the edge of their range in the same area were 2 Gray Thrashers on 3 Dec (AM, JM).

One Tennessee and 5 Nashville Warblers on the Maneadero Plain 30–31 Dec were found thanks to the Ensenada C.B.C. (fide MJB). Another Nashville Warbler was at El Rosario 8–9 Jan (MS, MJB, RMA), and 3 were in the Cape District 2–4 Mar (SGM). Also in the Cape District, a Lucy’s Warbler was at Cahuatuto 3 Mar (SGM). Extending the end of the species’ productive fall season was a Northern Parula at San Telmo on 2 Dec (AM, JM). The 14 Yellow Warblers found on the Ensenada C.B.C. more than doubled the previous high count (fide MJB). Chestnut-sided Warblers in the Cape District were on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 3 Nov–6 Mar (ph. SGM, GG) and at Estero San José 2 Mar (SGM). A Townsend’s Warbler was at the estero the same day. Although the species winters commonly in the Cape District mts., this was the first one seen by Mlodinow during his extensive coverage of the adjacent lowlands over the past ten years. In Baja California this winter, 2 Palm Warblers and 2 American Redstarts were found, but no Black-and-white Warblers or Northern Waterthrushes.

The last three species winter regularly in Baja California Sur, albeit in low numbers, a single Palm Warbler was found there. The warbler of the season was the Louisiana Waterthrush on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 6 Mar (ph., fSGM). At least 6 Yellow-breasted Chats were seen in the Cape District (VA, LM, SGM).

Along with hummingbirds, the Ensenada C.B.C. 31 Dec was notable for sparrows. A
Black-chinned Sparrow (TRL, ph PAG, WF) and a Black-throated Sparrow (ph +PP) were count firsts, and a Clay-colored Sparrow (ph. +PP) and Swamp Sparrow (SRT, ph RTG et al.) were also found. The Clay-colored was seen again on 10 Jan (MB, RMA, ph MS), this after the species went unrecorded in the state in the fall of 2010, and few were reported from Baja California Sur this winter. Another northerly Black-chinned Sparrow was at San Telmo 2 Dec (AM, JM), and additional Swamp Sparrows at El Rosario and Catavina 9-8 Jan (ph MS, RMA, MBJ) established a record showing for that species in the Region. Song Sparrows in the vicinity of Las Animas in the Sierra El Mechudo 14-13 Jan (ph VA, LM) established a new limit for the endemic subspecies regularis. Two White-throated Sparrows were found in the north at Tecate 14 Nov-23 Apr (ph JS) and at El Rosario 9 Jan (MBJ, ph MS, RMA).

The Hepatic Tanager found at Tecate on 20 Nov remained through 10 Apr, during which time Sweeney was able to share the colorful bird with many of his students. Fifteen Summer Tanagers were about evenly split between the California District and the Cape District. Up to 3 Bronzed Cowbirds on the Maneadero Plain 30 Dec-10 Jan (ph MS, ph. +PP et al.) was remarkable, given the species' continuing rarity in sw California. Single Orchard Orioles were on the Maneadero Plain 31 Dec (TMB) and at Lagunas de Chantelita 10 Mar (SGM), and 2 were at Estero San Jose 2 Mar (SGM) Hooded Oriole is less frequently found in Baja California in winter, so one at Cantamary 30 Dec (PAG, ph TRL, WF) was noteworthy. A Streak-backed Oriole was reported from the vicinity of Las Animas in the Sierra El Mechudo 13 Jan (LM, JC). It was said to be an adult male with streaks on the upper back and an orange head. In n. Baja California, 3 Scott's Orioles were found on the Ensenada C.B.C. 31 Dec-1 Jan (fide MJB), and up to 2 were at Tecate in Jan and Feb (JS). Fifteen American Goldfinches on the Rio Hardy C.B.C. 16 Dec (OJ et al) and one at El Rosario 9 Jan (MS, MJB, RMA) were at the edges of the species' normal range.

Exotic Monk Parakeets were reported again from Ensenada (EDZH) and Loreto (TH), and 5 White-fronted Parrots were found on the La Paz C.B.C. 18 Dec (fide DGE).

Contributors: Ryan M. Abe, "El Palle" Amador, Nallely Arce, Victor Ayala, Siegmund Bentham, Mark J. Billings, Matt Brady, Michael D. Carmody, Roberto Carmona, Joel Coronado, Adrian Dorst (AD), Andrew Duff (AD), Morgan Edwards, Richard A. Erickson, George Flicker, Mary Flicker, Wes Fritz, Peter A. Gaede, Daniel Galindo Espinoza, John Geeon, Judy Geeon, George Gerdes, Richard T. Golightry, Salvador González-Guzmán, Tom Haglund, W Scott Hampton, Oscar Johnson, Ann Lawson, Tony R. Leukering, Amy McAndrews, Luis Mendoza, Steven G. Mlodinow, Jorge Montejo (JM), Jason Multerer (JM), Jean Myers (JMy), Hugo Ortiz, Michael A. Patten, Jim Fex, David W. Povey, Peter Pyle, Gergonio Ruiz-Campos, Matt Sadowski, Brenda D. Smith-Fatten, Eduardo Soto Montoya, John Spencer (JSp), Brooke Stevens, Joe Sweeney (JS), Scott B. Terrill, Linda S. Terrill, Enrique D. Zamora-Hernández. As usual, records submitted to and accessed from eBird/VeriAves were essential in the compilation of this report.

Richard A. Erickson, LSA Associates
20 Executive Park, Suite 200, Irvine, California 92614
(richard.erickson@lsa-assoc.com)

Roberto Carmona
Departamento de Biología Marina
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur
Apartado Postal 19-8, La Paz, Baja California Sur, México
(beauty@uabc.mx)

Gergonio Ruiz-Campos, Facultad de Ciencias
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Apartado Postal 233
Ensenada, Baja California, 22800, México
U.S. mailing address:
PMB 064, P.O. Box 189003
Coronado, California 92117-9003
(gruz@uabc.mx)
Son. 13 Feb (DS). Below normal elevation, a Slate-throated Redstart was in Rosario, Son. 13 Feb (MC et al.). Another possible escapee, a Blue-gray Tanager was in urban Monterrey, Nuevo León 22 Feb (JG); the species has been recorded in recent years as nearby as Hualahuises and Allende, Nuevo León. A Hepatic Tanager was in Los Alamos, Son. 12 Feb (MC et al.). A Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow was recorded on the Rancho Ecológico Monte Mojino C.B.C., Son. 5 Jan (DM, MB et al.). Contributors (area compiler in boldface): Matt Brooks, Michael Carmody, Ruben Dechamps, Ernesto Enkerlin, Marco Gonzalez Bernal, Mario Guerrero, Julio Guzman, Maria del Refugio Loya Loya, David Mackay, Alda Madero, Eunice Murrua, Jorge Ortiz, Alfredo Ramirez, Ignacio Rodriguez, Amorita Ivonne Salas Westphal, David Salas, Mark Stackhouse, Francisco Valdés Peresgasga, René Valdes, Diana Zorrilla.

Central Mexico

Ducks through Hummingbirds

Two Red-breasted mergansers were at Laguna Atotonilco, Jal. 28 Nov (ph. CCT). A subadult Broad-winged Hawk was at Trabajo Social, Ciudad Universitaria, D.F. 14 Dec (HGdS, A0I). A Lateralis crake was heard in the edge of an overgrown field at Amatlán, Ver. 12 Feb (HGdS). Two African/Eurasian Collared-Doves were in La Guadalupe, Ver. 13 Feb (HGdS), and 3 Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Aculxingo, Ver. 25 Feb (HGdS). An imm. male Calliope hummingbird was at Temascaltepec, Méx. 17 Feb (MPV, RC, HGdS, OH). A female Beautiful Hummingbird was in Zapotitlán de las Salinas, Pue. 26 Feb (HGdS). Two Acorn Woodpeckers were at Fuentes Brotantes, D.F. 14 Dec (HGdS, A0I). A Spot-crowned Woodcreeper was in a hilly pasture with scattered trees near Trinchera, Ver. 12 Feb (HGdS, MPV, RC). Furnishing the only recent record of Scaled Antipitta in the D.F. was one at La Cima 14 Dec (HGdS, A0I).

Northern Mexico

Ducks through Sparrows

High counts of 12 Snail Kites, 2 Swainson’s Hawks, 2 King Rails, and 23 Limpkins were recorded on the San Blas C.B.C., Nayarit 2 Jan (MS et al.). Two Anna’s Hummingbirds continued along the Charcas–Santo Domingo rd. 5 km se. of San Francisco, San Luis Potosí 7–8 Dec (ph. RV). A Broad-tailed Hummingbird was noted on the Alamos C.B.C. at the upper Aduna Wash, Sonora 2 Jan (DM et al.). High counts of 30 Elegant Trogons and 6 male Eared Quetzals were found on the Rancho Ecológico Monte Mojino C.B.C., Sonora 5 Jan (DM, MB et al.). Another male Eared Quetzal was seen 5 km above El Palmito, Durango 15 Feb (MC et al.). Not encountered at this site since 1999, a Green Kingfisher was in Cañón de Fernández S.P. on the Nazas R., Dgo. 16 Jan (MRL, A1SW, FVP). A Western Wood-Pewee was at the Tufted Jay Preserve near El Palmito, Sonora 5 Jan (MGB, MG, EG, EM); this species is a common summer resident in the area, but the date suggests this individual may have overwintered; farther downslope, an apparent Western Wood-Pewee was seen but not heard at El Batel 27 Feb 2006 (E.S. Brinkley et al.). Well out of its usual range and habitat, a Buff-breasted Flycatcher was in desert shrub vegetation 3 km sw. of San Francisco, San Luis Potosí 14 Jan and 14 Feb (ph. RV). A Bright-rumped Attila was near Santa Barbara on the Rancho Ecológico Monte Mojino C.B.C., Sonora 5 Jan (DM, MB et al.). Two Social Flycatchers were along the road to La Estanzuela Park in se. Monterrey, Nuevo León 18 Dec (ph. RV, ph. RD, ph. IR, JO, EE, AM) and were heard there 29 Jan (RV). In Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, a Tropical Kingbird was seen 12 Dec (ph. AR) and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 21 Dec (ph. AR). A Black-throated Magpie-Jay was discovered 18 Feb in Monterrey, Nuevo León (RV), and a San Blas Jay was photographed there 20 Feb (ph. DZ); both of these are known to be escaped cage birds. A Hermits Thrush was at Obregon Reservoir, Sonora 11 Feb (MC et al.). A Swainson’s Thrush, a rare visitor to the subregion, was in Cañón de Fernández S.P., Dgo. 16 Jan, and a Gray Catbird was also seen that day (MRL, A1SW, FVP), the latter a first local record. A Northern Parula was in Los Alamos, Sonora 13 Feb (DM) and a male American Redstart was in
Confirmed at the same location three years prior, a Pileated Flycatcher was photographed at Barranca el Choncho, Jal 15 Jan (ph. CB, MEC, ph. JM et al.). A Social Flycatcher was heard in Temascaltepec, Mèx. 17 Feb (HGdS). A Buff-breasted Flycatcher was near Trincheras, Ver. 12 Feb (HGdS, MPV, RC). A White-throated Flycatcher was the Lema marshes, Mèx. 19 Feb (HGdS). A Gray Flycatcher was in Parque Ecológico Cucutluco, D.F. 14 Dec (HGdS, AOI). A pair of Gray-breasted Martins were in Jitupec, Mor. 22 Feb (HGdS). At least 5 Cave Swallows and 10 Bank Swallows were on the Playa del Oro rd., Col. 17 Jan (MEC, JM). Two European Starlings were in Parres, D.F. 14 Dec (HGdS, AOI), 5 were in Viaducto and Avenida Coyocacán, D.F. 15 Feb (MPV, HGdS), at least 25 were in San Martín Texmelucan, Mèx. 12 Feb (HGdS), and 5 were in Zitácuaro, Mich. (HGdS). Up to 20 American Pipits were recorded near Minatitlán, Ver from 8 Jan through 9 Feb (ph. MG, AMO). A Yellow-throated Warbler and a male Black-throated Green Warbler were in San José Purúa, Mich. 20 Feb (HGdS). Single Palm Warblers were observed near Minatitlán, Ver. 16 Dec and 2, 19, & 28 Feb (ph. MG, ph. AMO) and also near Manzanillo, Col. 18 Jan (JM, MEC, CB et al.). An American Redstart was at Parque Ecológico Xochimilco, D.F. 22 Jan (ph. MG). A male Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer was in an Erythrina tree at Romero de Terreros, D.F. 2 Feb (HGdS, MPV). North of the species’ typical range, a Buff-throated Saltator was at Parque el Haya in Xalapa, Ver 17 Jan (AM). A male Varied Bunting was in Parque Ecológico Cucutluco, D.F 14 Dec (HGdS, AOI). Six Varied Buntings were in Temascaltepec, Mèx. 17 Feb (MPV, RC, OZ, HGdS). A female Blue-black Grosbeak was at Amatitlán, Ver. 12 Feb (HGdS, MPV, RC, ph. OH). A flock of 8 Sierra Madre Sparrows was at La Cima, D.F. 14 Dec (HGdS, AOI).


SOUTHERN MEXICO

**Ducks Through Finches**

Two Cinnamon Teal were at the La Ventosa lagoon, Oax. 6 Jan, and at least 6 were there 17 Feb (ph. AM, JM). Two Gray-breasted Crakes were heard on 17 Jan (MC et al.) and at least 3 were heard 14 Feb (RH et al.), all at km 305.5 on the Carretera Fronteriza, Chis., the same area that produced the Region’s first records in 2010. Two Pacific Golden-Plovers and 6 Surfbirds were at Santa María Xadani, Oax. 17 Feb (ph. JM, AM). Ten Dunlins were found at Ixtapa, Gue. 24 Jan (TP). A first record for Oaxaca, an imm Bonaparte’s Gull was at Santa María Xadani 8 Jan (AM, ph. JM); an imm. Franklin’s Gull was also there 8 Jan (AM, ph. JM). Several Elegant Terns were in Ixtapa, Gue. 22 Jan (TP). A dozen White-throated Swifts were at Yagul, Oax. 23 Dec (HGdS, MPV). In e. Chiapas, 4 Scaly-breasted Hummingbirds were seen along the Rio Tzondales 1+ Feb, and singles were seen near Las Guacamayas 15 Feb and at Yaxchilán 17 Feb (RH et al.). A Rufous Sabrewing was at Finca Prusia, Chis. 21 Feb (AM, KrK). Single Great Potoos were encountered at Las Guacamayas, Chis. 13-15 Feb (RH et al.).

An Eastern Phoebe and a Couch’s Kingbird were w. of La Ventosa, Oax. 8 Jan (AM). A Fork-tailed Flycatcher was in s. Jaltengo, Chis. 24 Feb (AM, JM). A Say’s Phoebe was reported from Santa María Xadani, Oax. 12 Dec (MG). A Bank Swallow was in Ixtapa, Gue. 22 Jan (TP). Twelve Cave Swallows were w. of La Ventosa, Oax. 9 Jan (ph. JM, AM).

YUCATAN PENINSULA
Prepared by Barbara MacKinnon

GESE THROUGH TERNs
A new species for the Yucatán Peninsula was a Ross’s Goose observed and photographed by two different birding groups on the road to Palizada, Camp. about one km w. of its intersection with Hwy. 186. On 5 Jan, the bird was seen feeding among hundreds of Black-bellied and several Fulvous Whistling-Ducks (AM, ph. JM); the goose was seen again 7-8 Jan, and a Ruddy Duck was in the same area (MC et al.). An Eared Grebe continued at Las Coloradas, Yuc. through 1 Dec (ph. SH, BM). An ad. Jäbiru flew over the hwy. just s. of Champotón, Camp. 29 Dec (AM, JM, JJS), and another was seen at the nest at Petén Tikúch, Rica Lagartos Biosphere Reserve, Yuc. 22 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). The 230 American White Pelicans seen at Chuburná harbor, Yuc. 22 Jan made a typical count for this increasing winter resident in the subregion (AD, MK, BM). An uncommon white-morph Reddish Egret was seen 2 km s. of Chuburná 22 Feb (AD, MK, BM). A pair of King Vultures shared a perch with a Wood Stork and Black Vultures in the forest community of Noh Duc, Q. Roo 3 Feb (AA). Another King Vulture was seen along the Viga Chica rd., Q. Roo 17 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW), and an ad. and a juv. were at Calakmul, Camp. 18 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). Also at Calakmul was a Black Hawk-Eagle 18 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW), and one was seen not far away in the village of Tesoro, Q. Roo 26 Jan (DB). A Crested Caracara, an uncommon bird in Quintana Roo, was photographed at a quarry 30 km n. of Cancin 15 Dec (ph. AP). A female Merlin was seen 7 km e. of Espita, Yuc. 19 Jan (BM, JP).

DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS
Eurasian Collared-Doves seem to be everywhere now: 2 were at Celestún, Yuc. 28 Dec; 2 at Champotón, Camp. 29 Dec; 1 at Tizimin, Yuc. 2 Jan; and one at Rio Lagartos, Yuc. 2 Jan (all AM, JM, JJS). A well-described Spectacled Owl was reported as perched on a branch 3.5 m off the ground 21 Jan at the Jardín Botánico at Puerto Morelos, Q. Roo, where it was observed for 20 minutes (TB); the only confirmed sighting of this species for the subregion is of one at Calakmul (Joffe Javier Salgado). If confirmed with a photograph or recording, this would be a first record for Quintana Roo. Twelve Chimney Swifts were reported seen and heard near Puerto Morelos, Q. Roo 23 Dec among a small flock of Ridgeway’s Rough-winged Swallows (CW). Good news from Cozumel was a report that Yucatan Woodpeckers were “fairly common,” with 5-6 seen 4 Dec (SH). A rare Chestnut-colored Woodpecker was seen along the Viga Chica rd., Q. Roo 17 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW), while a pair of Pale-billed Woodpeckers, uncommon in Yucatán, was observed at Ek Balam 19 Jan (AD, MK). An uncommon male Gray-collared Becard was seen feeding on the fruits of a X’ikanan bush (Hamelia patens) on the grounds of Centro de Investigaciones Científicos de Yucatán in Mérida, Yuc. 18 Jan (WS). A rare Blue-headed Vireo was reported from the Jardín Botánico at Puerto Morelos, Q. Roo 23 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW), and 3 Swainson’s Thrushes were at Coba, Q. Roo 1 Jan (ph. AM, ph. JM, JJS). An incredible count of 40 Wood Thrushes was made at Calakmul, Q. Roo both 18 & 19 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). At Celestún, Yuc., an American Pipit was photographed 11 Dec (ph. DB).

The 2nd confirmed report of a Pine Warbler in the subregion, and the first for Yucatán, was an imm. female photographed at Celestún, Yuc. 5 Dec (DB, ph. PB); the identification was confirmed by Héctor Gómez de Silva and Steve N. G. Howell. An apparent imm. Orange-crowned Warbler was found on Cozumel 4 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). A Worm-eating Warbler was heard at Calakmul 18 Dec, and 3 were noted there the next day; 2 Swainson’s Warblers and 25-30 Ovenbirds were also there 18-19 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). Uncommon in winter, a Louisiana Waterthrush was on a trail at Cobi, Q. Roo 1 Jan (ph. JM, ph. AM, JJS); another was at the Jardín Botánico at Puerto Morelos, Q. Roo 23 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW). At least 4 Kentucky Warblers were reported from Calakmul 18-19 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW).

SPARROWS THROUGH MUNIAs
Two Savannah Sparrows were at Rio Lagartos, Yuc. 21 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW), and 6 were in the grassy area across from the cemetery at Rio Lagartos 21 Jan (AD, MK); the species has declined in the subregion in recent years. A Grasshopper Sparrow was seen on Cozumel 4 Dec (SH), and a Lincoln’s Sparrow was on the edge of the lake at Cobi 2 Jan (ph. AM, JJS). Twenty Indigo Buntings were noted feeding on insects on the nectar in a Coba tree at Hacienda Santa Maria Homuch near Espita, Yuc. 19 Jan (BM, JP). Three Painted Buntings (ad. male, imm. male, and female) were seen feeding on seeds of Tajonal (Touleleaf Goldeneye, Viguiera dentata) and grass seeds the village at Cobi 20 Jan, along with Yellow-faced Grassquits, Indigo Buntings, and White-collared Seedeaters (AD, MK); 2 Paintedcs were at Hacienda Santa Maria Homuch, Yuc. 19 Jan (BM, JP). About 200 Orchard Orioles and 30 Baltimore Orioles were noted roosting in bushes along Hwy. 186 at Xbonil, Camp. 19 Dec (AH, PJ, RS, CW); no more
than 3-6 Baltimore Orioles have ever been reported roosting together in the subregion. A male Baltimore Oriole was at Eke Balam, Yuc. 10 Jan (AD, MK). Tricolored Munia continues to spread throughout the subregion: 14 were counted 8 Jan at three locations along the Palizada rd., Camp., a location where they have often been seen in recent years (MC et al.).

Contributors (area compiler in boldface): Alfonsino Arguelles, David Bacah, Tad Blank, Peter Burke, Michael Carmody, Alexander Dzib, Alex Harper, Steve N.G. Howell, Patrick James, Maggie Ker, Barbara Mackinnon, Amy McAndrews, Rodrigo Migoya, Jorge Montejto, Alejandro Pacheco, Jose Patron, Juan Ignacio Sada, Waldemar Santamaria, Ryan Steiner, Charlie Wright.

H. Lee Jones
Oliver Komar

With this report, we welcome Nicaragua back into the fold with a word of gratitude to Liliana Chavarria, who has agreed to take on the responsibility of country coordinator. Of the nine new country records reported this season, four are from Nicaragua: American Bittern, American Avocet, Unicolored Jay, and Cave Swallow. Others are Redhead, new to Honduras; Aplomado Falcon, new to Guatemala; Ruteline Tiger-Heron and Hermit Thrush, new to Belize; and Cave Swallow, new to Costa Rica. In addition to country firsts, seven duck species made news around the Region, as did three warbler species that are typically scarce on the mainland: Cape May, Black-throated Blue, and Palm. Over the past decade, we have noted that Cedar Waxwings invade Central America like clockwork every other winter. In keeping with this pattern, this winter was not a Cedar Waxwing year, with no reports reaching the compilers.

Abbreviations: BFREE (Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education); Machaca Hill (Machaca Hill Rainforest Canopy Lodge, Toledo District, Belize), M.P.R. (Mountain Pine Ridge, Cayo District, Belize).

DUCKS THROUGH CORMORANTS

Ducks made a splash in the Region this fall, with no fewer than eight species worthy of comment. Cinnamon Teal is seldom seen in Central America, so one found 17 Dec in Guatemala at Finca Cataluna, 18 km e. of Ocós, Retalhuleu (JB) was noteworthy. Rarely occurring as far s. as Panama were 2 Northern Shovelers seen 14 Jan on a pond near the Las Olas Resort, Chiriquí (SC). The number of Green-winged Teal reported this winter in the Region was unprecedented. Twenty, by far the largest number ever recorded in El Salvador, were counted at Cerro Grande Res., Chalatenango 6 Jan (ph. NH, LS, JH); there are just eight previous records for the country. In Costa Rica, a female-plumaged Green-winged was at Lagunas Catfish Farm, Guanacaste 14 Dec (Jad JDV); on 11 Feb, only a male was present there (ph. JZ), potentially the same bird having attained breeding plumage. Two male Redheads observed at L. Yojoa, Cortes 21 Jan (ph. RG, MaG et al.) provided the first record for Honduras. In Guatemala, 9 Ring-necked Ducks recorded on the L. Atitalán (Solola) C.B.C. 15 Dec (RS) were noteworthy. Farther s., in Panama, 2 males and 3 females seen with a flock of Lesser Scaup at Las Macanas Marsh 3 Jan (AR) provided the first records for Herrera. Some of these birds were still present 19 Jan (ph. EC, LR). In Costa Rica, 200 Lesser Scaup at Caño Negro, Alajuela 8 Dec (JC) was an especially large concentration in an area where the species is considered a rare winter visitor. Providing a first for w. Panama was a female Masked Duck on a pond near Gorgona 24 Jan (AR). In Guatemala, an impressive 21 Ruddy Ducks were seen in San Cristóbal Verapaz, Alta Verapaz 11 Feb (JPC), and in Honduras where quite rare, 4 were at the sewage treatment ponds at El Progreso, Yoro 23 Jan (ph. RG et al.). In Costa Rica, where the species was not confirmed until Nov 2010, up to 9 Ruddy Ducks were seen on

Very rare in Central America, Green-winged Teal were widely reported there in winter 2010-2011. This male was one of an unprecedented 20 reported at Cerro Grande Reservoir in El Salvador during the season (here 6 January). Photograph by Héctor Herrera.

Two Green-winged Teal were at the Lagunas Catfish Farm in Costa Rica's Guanacaste Province in winter 2010-2011, this male on 11 February and a female-plumaged bird 14 December. Photograph by Jim Zoob.

Héctor Gómez de Silva, Xola 314-E
03100 México, D.F., Mexico
(hector.gomezdesilva@gmail.com)
Amy E. McAndrews
Jorge Montejto, Cond. El Haya Ed. 2 Depto. 6
Xalapa, Veracruz 91070, Mexico
(aemcandrews@yahoo.ca)
(jorgemontejtodiaz@yahoo.com.mx)
La Angostura Res. near Las Suizas de Turrialba, Cartago from 16 Dec (JFa) through 8 Jan (JFa, ErC, ph. SE, MS, JS et al.), with 9 present on 4 Jan and 8 on 8 Jan.

A Crested Guan on the road to Pt. San Lorenzo, Colón 13 Dec (ph. VW, CG, MG) provides evidence that this hunted species still persists in this area of Panama. In Guatemala, 2 rarely reported Ocellated Quail were heard on the e. slope of Tacana volcano, San Marcos 17 Jan (KE, CA). Providing only the 3rd record for El Salvador were 3 Least Storm-Petrels seen in the Los Cobanos marine reserve, Sonsonate 19 Dec (ph. NH, JH, LS). In Costa Rica, Red-footed Booby is rarely reported from the Caribbean coast. An ad. dark-morph Red-footed was seen flying southward past Tortuguero, Limón 1 Dec (RH), and another in similar plumage was seen perched in the top of a tall tree 300 m back from the beach, also at Tortuguero, 3 Feb (ph. NS). Double-crested Cormorant is common on the Belize cayes and along the coast s. to Stann Creek, but an imm. was seen at Punta Gorda 31 Dec (ph. Lj) furnished only the 2nd record for mainland Toledo.

**PELICANS THROUGH FALCONS**

Inland records of Brown Pelicans, especially in the s. part of the Region, are worth noting; thus, 2 seen flying high to the n. over Bajos del Toro, Majigua (elev. 1500 m) on 19 Feb (NM) were presumably migrating from the Pacific to the Atlantic. In Guatemala, 15 in

the Laguna del Tigre N.P., Petén 28 Dec (RC, JT, TC, RuC) was an especially high number well away from the coast. Providing only the 3rd record for Panama, 2 American White Pelicans discovered on a pond near Punta Chame, Panama 27 Jan (ph. EC, LR) were still present at the end of the period. Finnated Bittern, recorded for the first time in El Tucán Uno, Petén 7 Nov, was again seen there 23 (ph. KE, CA) & 27 Dec (JPC). American Bittern was recorded for the first time in Nicaragua when one was found on the 2nd annual El Jaguar, Jinotega C.B.C. 19 Dec along a canal at the w. end of Lago Apanás (JHr, SG, RB, GH, BGr). An ad. Rufescent Tiger-Heron was distantly photographed and well described at Laguna Seca, Orange Walk 3 Dec (7SL), the first recorded in Belize. A white-morph imm. Reddish Egret was in Panama at Aguadulce, Códe from 28 Jan (ph. JAC, EC, OQ) through at least 1 Feb (GA), but unexpected was a dark-morph ad. well inland at Coronado in Costa Rica’s upper Central Valley, San José at 1450 m from early Dec through at least 9 Feb (LAr, VA, m.o)b. Providing a first record for Cerrón Grande Res. in El Salvador were 2 Glossy Ibis seen 6 Jan (ph. NH, IV, JS, JH).

At an unexpectedly high elevation was a Pearl Kite at 1300 m just above Volcán, Chiriquí 19 Dec (KA, LS). Totally out of context was a juv. Double-toothed Kite found perched on a power line in downtown Punta Gorda 24 Feb (ph. Lj), several km from the nearest rainforest where this uncommon species is known to occur in Belize. The bird did not flush, despite both pedestrian and vehicular traffic passing directly beneath it. Six Snail Kites (ads. of both sexes and imms.) were seen at 700 m elevation around La Angostura Res. near Las Suizas de Turrialba, Cartago 4-8 Jan (ErC, ph. SE, MS, JS et al.), an unprecedented record for the Central Valley.

Although somewhat regular on the Pacific side of Guatemala and in El Salvador, Ruddy Ducks are rarely reported elsewhere in Central America. Not only were they present in larger numbers than usual in Guatemala in winter 2010-2011, as many as nine were observed as far south as La Angostura Reservoir in Costa Rica, including this one photographed on 8 January 2011. The species was unrecorded in Costa Rica prior to November 2010. Photograph by Steven Easley.

In winter 2010-2011, Guatemala recorded its first Apalone Falcon and Costa Rica its fourth. This juvenile, the third reported in Costa Rica in the past five months, was photographed in Punta Cocolo on 10 December. Photograph by Hainer Layan.

In Nicaragua recorded its first American Avocet on 31 October 2010 at Salinas Grandes. What was likely the same individual was seen again on 14 November and 15 January 2011 (here). Photograph by Manfred Bienert.

In Guatemala, a Plumeous Kite seen at Finca Catalina 17 Dec (JF) provided one of the very few Dec records for Central America. In El Salvador, an exceptionally late migration of 40 Broad-winged Hawks passed over Walter Thilo Deininger N.P., La Libertad 19 Dec (ph. JVD, CF, NH, RJ, OK et al.). The discovery of a nesting pair of Harpy Eagles in a remote
Providing the first record for the Caribbean side of Costa Rica was this Forster’s Tern at Boca Moin in Limón Province. Photograph by Jim Zook.

Although the species is fairly common on the mainland, this female Rose-throated Becard photographed 27 December 2010 on Caye Caulker provided the first truly offshore record for Belize. Ambergis Caye, a 45-kilometer-long virtual peninsula whose southern tip lies just 9 kilometers north of Caye Caulker, is the likely origin of most of Caye Caulker’s mainland strays and perhaps of this bird, although Rose-throated Becard is rare on Ambergis Caye. Photograph by Jim Beveridge.

area of the Bladen Branch Nature Reserve, Toledo, Belize last Nov was the result of more than two years’ effort by the staff of BFREE. The pair continued to raise its one nestling through the winter, monitored by a remote-control camera. Rare in the lowlands of Panama, a juv Ornate Hawk-Eagle was seen on Plantation Rd., Panama 19 Dec (ph. CP, JPR). A Bare-crowned Forest-Falcon at Finca El Pilar, Samburiquéz 24-25 Feb (AM) established a new site record for the Guatemalan Pacific slope mountains. With the opening up of previously forested areas for agriculture and livestock, Crested Caracaras continue to expand into new areas. In s Belize, 2, possibly a mated pair, were seen together at The Dump, Toledo 19 Dec (ph. LJ), while a few dozen km to the w in Guatemala’s Petén, one was seen near Sayaxché 29 Dec (JPC, RC, PAC). An Aplomado Falcon seen on the w shore of L. Petén Itzá 27 Dec (JPC, RC, BM) provided the first record for Guatemala. Costa Rica got its 3rd record of Aplomado Falcon in five months (and 4th altogether) when an imm turned up in Punta Cocos, Limón 10 Dec (KM, ph. HL). The previous two records, both from the Pacific slope, were in Puntarenas last Sep and Guanacaste last Jul.

RAILS THROUGH TERNs

The status of Spotted Rail in Belize is poorly known. Most of the few documented records are from the n. part of the country, where one was photographed near Tres Leguas in nw Orange Walk 1 Jan (GS, ph. JG, J&HS, SS); it is not known if the species breeds in Belize. An ad and a juv Paint-billed Crake were seen together 25 Jan in rice fields near Isla Damas just up the coast from Quepos in Puntarenas (OH, ph. DA), well n of areas where previously recorded in Costa Rica near the s limit of its winter range, where quite rare, 10 American Coots seen 24 Jan on a pond near Gorgona were exceptional (AR). In Guatemala, 2 American Oystercatchers were at Las Lisas 11 Dec (JPC). Although resident populations occur to the n. in Mexico and to the s. in El Salvador, it is a relatively rare and local winter visitor in Guatemala.

The status of Collared Plover in the Petén region is not yet clear. Noteworthy, therefore, were 2 seen in El Remate on L. Petén Itzá 21 Dec and one in Yaxhá, Petén 29 Jan (GT). Snowy Plover is a rare visitor to Costa Rica, with most records from spring and fall. One in the Río Tarcoles estuary, Puntarenas 28 Dec (KR et al.) provided one of the few winter records for the country. In Guatemala, 2 Killdeer e. of La Capellanía, Huchuetenango 25 Feb (AV, KE, CA) were at the unusually high elevation of 3100 m. In Panama, 14 at the Sherman airstrip in Colón 2 Jan (VW, OQ, RL) was a high count. Also impressive were 500 Killdeer and 4000 Black-necked Stilts in El Salvador at Cerrón Grande Res 6 Jan (ph. NH, JH, FP, LS, EF). Providing the first confirmed record for Nicaragua, an American Avocet found 31 Oct at Salinas Grandes, León, and again 14 Nov, was still present 15 Jan (ph. MB).

Providing the first record for Cerrón Grande Res and one of the few winter records for El Salvador were 4 Solitary Sandpipers on 6 Jan (ph. NH, LS, JH) and 2 others in a dif-
Laughing was 353 Red-fronted Large-billed. Although seen at Boca Gátun near Gamboa, Colón 19 Jan (BG). Of note in Belize where it is a rare winter visitor, especially in the south, a Forster’s Tern was seen with other terns in Punta Gorda 31 Dec (LJ). In Costa Rica, where all previous reports have been from the Pacific, a Forster’s was at Boca Moin, Limón 8-11 Dec (JS, ph. JZ et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Although now documented from several Belize cays as an occasional stray, Ruddy Quail-Dove had not been recorded on heavily birded Caye Caulker until 27 Dec (ph. JIB). At an unusually high elevation for the species, approximately 6 Red-fronted Parrotlets were seen near the summit of Volcán Barú, Chiriquí at about 2500 m on 17 Dec (KA). The status of Mangrove Cuckoo in Central America is complex and poorly understood. Despite earlier reports of breeding in n. Central America, few documented cases have come to light; it is considered a rare visitor or migrant in most areas. In Panama, where it is infrequently reported, several were reported this winter: 2 were seen possibly engaging in courtship on 30 Dec (AG), one was seen 7 Jan (AG), and one was photographed 13 Jan (FT), all at Culebra Pt. on the Amador Causeway in Panama City; about 6 were seen at Charco Azul, s. of Puerto Armuelles, Chiriquí 15 Jan (EC, RL); and one was seen at Las Macanas Marsh, Herrera 28 Feb (JAC, EC, OQ).

A Crested Owl at Finca Cataluña, heard 17 Dec (JB), provided the only recent record from the Guatemalan Pacific slope. In Belize, a Spectacled Owl heard before dawn 26 Feb less than one km upriver from Machaca Hill was at a new locality just a few km from the coast (ph. WM, LJ, EmC et al.). Single Chuck-will’s-widows in Monte Cristo N.P., Santa Ana 13 & 23 Dec (ph. JVD, RJ) and in Walter Thilo Deinginer N.P. 18 Dec (LA, NH, JVD, OK, IV, VG et al.) provided the first winter-season records for El Salvador. Great Po-

too was not documented in Belize until Sep 2009. The country’s 2nd record was obtained when one was photographed 8 Feb on the grounds of BFREE in Toledo (ph. WG). Thus, it was quite a surprise when at least 3 were found 1.5–2 km upriver from Machaca Hill 24 Feb+. One was spotted in a distant tree by an astute non-birder on the morning of 24 Feb and confirmed later in the day (WM, LJ, JF et al.). Before dawn on 26 Feb, at least 3 were heard calling in the same area (WM, LJ, JF).

Two White-necked Jacobins were seen near Cerros 19-20 Dec (ph. GP et al.) providing the first records for Corozal and the northernmost for Belize. A female Ruby-throated Hummingbird nectaring on flowers at Ft. San Lorenzo 13 Dec (VW, CG, MG) established the first record for Colon of this rare winter visitor and the easternmost record from Panama. In Honduras, a female Wine-throated Hummingbird observed and a male heard nearby in Santa Barbara N.P., Santa Barbara 11 Feb (RG) was a first for the park. In Costa Rica, a juv. male Resplendent Quetzal at the La Selva Biological Station, Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí 13 Dec (WU, ph. RMo) was at an exceptionally low elevation in the Caribbean lowlands. Seldom seen in the lowlands of Belize were at least 2 Emerald Toucans coming to fruiting trees at Machaca Hill throughout the period (WM, LJ et al.). Rare as far s. as Panama, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen on Pipeline Rd. in Soberania N.P., Colon 25 Feb (JML). A pair of Crimson-bellied Woodpeckers at Altos del Maria 24 Feb (ph. AR, EC, LR, RF) were the first of this rare species to be reported from w. Panama.

WOODCREEPERS THROUGH MIMIDS

In Panama, a Ruddy Woodcreepers were seen near Alto Chiquero ranger station (1600 m) above Boquete, Chiriquí was at a higher elevation than usual. An Ochre-breasted Antpitta, rare in Panama, was seen on a trail off the Continental Divide Rd. in the Palo Seco Protection Forest, Ngöbe Buglé 18-19 Feb (GA, WA, ML, DW). A Gray Elaenia seen and heard on Achiote Rd., Colon 18 Jan (KA) may be a first for this locality, although it is well known from the nearby Pipeline Rd. area. Two Eye-

Sedge Wren has a spotty distribution throughout its range, including in Central America. Although previously reported from three localities in Guatemala, this territorial bird found 5 kilometers north of San Francisco El Alto (2800 m elevation) on 24 February 2011 was at a locality where previously unrecorded. Photograph by Knut Eiseermann.

Long anticipated to turn up in Belize, this Hermit Thrush seen at Coema Cain Lookout 12 (here) and 18 December 2010 was the first to be recorded in the country. Photograph by Roni Martinez.

The immensely popular Tikal National Park in Guatemala recorded its first Savannah Sparrow on 13 December 2010. Photograph by Kevin Easley.
HB, was Nueva as Jan was well, being ringed 354 Caye to border Is seen photographed in the w. Central Valley, Alajuela 29 Dec (RIG). Providing a first for Nicaragua were an estimated 75 Cave Swallows in a mixed-species swallow flock at the n. end of Juan Venado Island N. 6 Feb (ph. MB). A close examination of the photographs reveal that these birds appear to belong to the widespread and migratory subspecies pallida from the sw. United States and n. Mexico rather than one of the Caribbean subspecies. A Cave Swallow, apparently also pallida, was at Colorado de Abangares on the mainland side of the Gulf of Nicoya, Guanacaste 3 Feb (ph. SM), providing the first documented record for Costa Rica following several unconfirmed sight records from the same general area over the last few years. A territorial Sedge Wren at 2800 m elevation, 5 km n. of San Francisco El Alto, Turdus carolinus on 24 Feb (AV, ph. KE, CA), was in a locality in Guatemala where the species had not been previously recorded.

An American Dipper at La Liberacion, Ticuantepe W.R., Ometepe 22 Feb (DG, ph. NA) provided the first verifiable record for the nation. Belize recorded its first Hermit Thrush this winter when one turned up in the M.P.R. at 950-m Cooma Cairn Lookout 12 & 18 Dec (ph. RM, RP). A White-throated Thrush, rare in the Panamanian lowlands, was observed at an ant swarm on Pipeline Rd. in Soberania N. P. 26 Dec (VW, OQ, RL, JAC). Noteworthy anywhere on the mainland more than a few km inland, a Black Catbird was seen in Tikal, Peten 14 Dec (ph. KEa, CD, DC, DE, HB, JHo), and another one was seen nearby on the 22 Dec C.B.C. (JM, MM, VXP, AS). In w. Orange Walk, Belize, at least 2 were present in the Gallon Jug area, including one near Laguna Seca around mid-Dec and again 8 Feb (ph. fide SSm), and another at Chan Chich in early Jan (MR). Also noteworthy were 3 Tropical Mockingbirds seen in Laguna del Tigre N. P. 28 Dec (MM, PAC, JA), an area well removed from the nearest known breeding population.

**WARBLERS**

Three Blue-winged Warblers were seen along the Guatemalan Pacific slope, where uncommon: at Finca El Pilar 17 Dec (JPC); on the Los Tarrazu, SUCHITEPEQUE C.B.C. 15 Dec (CA, EB); and at the Takalik Abaj archaeological site, Retalihue 26 Dec (JF). In Panama, single Blue-winged Warblers were seen 26 Feb on Pipeline Rd. (JAC, ph. OQ) and 28 Feb near the entrance to Pipeline Rd. (JFi, GA). A Northern Parula was in Panama at Sherman 2 Jan (VW, OQ, RL), and another was in Costa Rica at Palo Verde N. P., Guanacaste 7 Feb (JZ). This was an exceptional winter for Cape May Warblers in the Region (other than on the cays, where the species is regular in winter). In Guatemala, a female was seen in the Quetzaltenango central park, Quetzaltenango 15 Dec (JF), and in Costa Rica, lone females were found at Puerto Viejo, Limón 26 Dec and at 1400 m at San Pedro de Montes de Oca (upper Central Valley), San José 9 Jan (both TL). An unprecedented 5 Cape Mays were reported from Panama: a male at Nusagandi, Kuna Yala 7 Dec (JD, ph. AL); a male 8-28 Feb (OJ, JPR et al.) and a female 10 Feb at the Panama Audubon Society office in Llanos de Curundú in Panama City (AA et al.); a male at Los Naranjos, Boquete, Chiriquí 9 Feb (CB); and a male in Gamboa, Colon 16 & 22 Feb (ph. JML).

We received four reports of Black-throated Blue Warbler on the mainland this winter: a female at 1400 m at San Pedro de Montes de Oca in Costa Rica's upper Central Valley; San José 25 Dec (TL); a male at Los Ranchitos, Baja Verapaz 9 Jan (JPC); a female in Altos de Cerro Azul, Panama 16 Jan (WA); and an imm. female captured in pine-oak forest at Montecristo N. P., El Salvador 18 Feb (ph. RJ, JVD, LS). In Panama, a high count of 10 Yellow-rumped Warblers was obtained 2 Jan at Sherman (VW, OQ, RL). Golden-cheeked Warbler has been reported several times in M.P.R. but without confirming details—until now. A male carefully studied on the Slate Creek Lookout Trail near Old Mai Gate 9 & 16 Jan (RM) provided only the 3rd convic-
ing record for Belize. Winter records of Golden-cheeked Warbler in cloud forest in Guatemala are noteworthy; an ad. male was seen in the Los Ranchitos private reserve neighboring the Biotope of the Quetzal, Baja Verapaz 12 Dec (HB, CA, CD, DC, DE, JHo, KE, KEa), and a male was at Hotel Posada del Quetzal, Baja Verapaz 8 Jan (JPC). An ad. male in Finca El Recuerdo, 12 km n. of Chichén, Quiché 5 Feb (KE) established a new site record. Rare in Panama, a Townsend's Warbler was seen along the summit road at Volcán Barú 17 Dec (KA). Also rare in Panama, 3 Yellow-throated Warblers were seen at Sherman 2 Jan (VW, OQ, RL); one was at Altos de Cerro Azul 9 Jan; and one was on Isla Colón, Bocas del Toro 25-27 Jan (PW).

In Panama, a stray Prairie Warbler was well observed at Volcán L., Chiriquí 12 Dec (KA). Palm Warblers were reported across the Region in areas where they are seldom seen. In Belize, one was found in Punta Gorda 2 Jan (VB et al), and in Guatemala, one was in Cobán, Alta Verapaz 24 Dec (JPC, RC, AS) and 15 Jan (JPC). In Costa Rica, singles were at Arenal Observatory Lodge, Alajuela 8 Jan (CM), at La Guineia de Filadelfia in the upper Temisque River basin, Guanacaste 13 Feb (4th year in a row there; JZ), and at CARTIE Turrialba, Cartago 27 Dec (ERC, EV); 3 were together at Bombas just s. of Limón in the coastal lowlands 3-8 Dec (DT, JZ). In Panama, 5 Palm Warblers were at Sherman 2 Jan (VW, OQ, RL). Providing the first record for w. Panama was an imm. Blackpoll Warbler at Altos del Marla 12 Feb (ph. JAC, AR, OQ, RL, RF). In Panama, a Common Yellowthroat was at Sherman 2 Jan (VW, OQ, RL), and a male Hooded Warbler was in Gamboa 26 Jan (AA).

TANAGERS THROUGH MUNIAS

In Costa Rica a female Black-and-yellow Tanager at Naranjo, Alajuela 12 Dec (JZ) was unexpected on the Pacific slope. Yellow-winged Tanager was first recorded in Costa Rica last winter, when 2 were reported at separate localities in the Caribbean lowlands. This winter, one was recorded at 800 m in the Caribbean foothills at El Píon Biological Station in Volcán Tenorio N.P., Guanacaste 20 Dec (ph. EM). Providing the first record from w. Chiriquí, a Blue-and-gold Tanager was seen on the Culebra Trail at 1600 m near Boquete 25 Nov (JL, ph. MP, TVN) and seen again 8 Dec at nearby Bajo Mono (TVN). Providing the westernmost record for Panama and the first for Colón was a Gray-and-gold Tanager seen at 400 m on Sierra Llorona 29 Dec (VW). A Slaty Finch, rarely encountered in Honduras, was observed at 1800 m in Cerro Negro 27 Feb (RG), the first record for Copán.

Green-backed Sparrow about 1.5 km s. of the Copán Ruins 26 Jan (AA) was also a first for Copán. At an unusually high elevation of 2500 m it was vocalizing Black-striped Sparrow along the Volcán Barú summit road 17 Dec (KA). A Chipping Sparrow at 1400 m in San Isidro, Heredia 29 Dec (DR) provided only the 6th record for Costa Rica and the 2nd record in five weeks. Half of the records, including this one, are from the upper Central Valley. These are most likely North American migrants and not wanderers from resident populations in n. Nicaragua or elsewhere in the Region.

In Guatemala, Tikal logged its first Savannah Sparrow 13 Dec (JH, ph. KEA, CD, DC, DE, HB). At least 6 Grasshopper Sparrows, including 3 singing males, were found in fallow, weedy melon fields at Filadelfia in the upper Temisque R. basin 12-14 Feb (JZ). Another Grasshopper Sparrow was seen along the entrance road to Palo Verde N.P. 10 Jan (MGa). These birds were at lower elevations than expected for the species in Costa Rica. A Lincoln’s Sparrow, seldom seen as far s. as Costa Rica, was found in low scrub next to a marshy pond at Madre Selva (km 62, Cerro de la Muerte), San José 9 Jan (INS), and another was observed on the border of rice fields n. Isla Damas (near Quepos), Puntarenas 8-9 Dec (ph. DA) and 3 Jan (ph. OH). There have been few if any reliable reports of this species in Costa Rica in the past decade. In Honduras, 4 Lincoln’s Sparrows were observed in Santa Barbara N.P. 11 Feb (RG et al.) at a small clearing within cloud forest. Small numbers of Dickcissels have been recorded in s. Belize at The Dump in Dec most years since at least 2005, and such was the case again this year, when several were heard and seen 19 & 22 Dec (LJ, SC).

Several new site records of Eastern Meadowlark document its expansion in Guatemala: 13 at Finca Cataluña 17 Dec (JB); 7 at Finca La Francia near Morales, Izabal 10 Dec (AS); one at Finca Los Pajaritos, 10 km sw. of Chisec, Alta Verapaz, 5 Dec (JPC, PAC, RC); 8 at Las Ruinas, Alta Verapaz, 4 km nw. of Chisec, 5 Dec (JPC, PAC, RC); and 5 in the Laguna del Tigre N.P. 28 Dec (MM, PAC, JA).

A remarkable 4 female Bullock’s Orioles, a casual winter visitor anywhere s. of Guatemala, were mist-netted and studied extensively in the hand at aloe vera fields near Liberia, Guanacaste 3-7 Feb 2011. Along with another female reported from La Guinéa de Filadelfia on 13 February, Costa Rica had a remarkable total of four Bullock’s Orioles this season. Photograph by Juan Diego Vargas.

Contributors (country coordinators in boldface): Victor Acosta, William Adsett, Ariel Aguierre, Juan Albeño, Ken Allaire, Alex Al-
varado (AA), Nimer Alvarado, Lety Andino, George Angehr (Panama), Leandro Arias (LAr), Diego Ararú, Claudia Avendaño, Harry Barnard, Rob Batchelder, Craig Bennett, Jason Berry, Carlos Bethancourt (CaB), Jim Beveridge (JB), Manfred Bienert, Victor Bonilla, Anders Bringskog, Matt Brown (MBr), Everilda Bucún, John Paul Cahill, Peter A. Cahill, Rob Cahill, Ruth Cahill, Tara Cahill (RuC), Euclides Campos, Vernon Campos, Ernesto Carman (ErC), Emanuel Chan (EmC), Liliana Chavarría (Nicaragua), Steven Choco, John Cook, Dick Coyle, Sandra Cripe (ScR), Jan Axel Cubilla, Christine Daley, John Deluca, Kevin Esley (KeA), Steven Esley, Dylan Edwards, Knut Eisenmä (Guatemala), Jesse Fagan (JF), Jerome Fischer (JF), John Fitzpatrick, Dirk Francisco, Carlos Funes, Robert Furrer, Vicky Galán, Robert Gallardo (Honduras), William García, Mark Garland (MGA), Richard Garrigues (RiG), Daniel Germer, Christian Gernez, Michael Gernez, Sally Gladstone, Bill Glanz, Malcolm Glasgow (MaG), Jorge Gómez, Álvaro González, Rachel Greenwood (RG), Hugo Herrera, Jorge Herrera, Nestor Herrera, Oscar Herrera, Bill Hilton, Jason Horn (JH), Grace Hrasko, Jack Hrasko (JH), Rich Hoyer, Ovidio Jaramillo, Roselyn Jáurez (El Salvador), Lee Jones (Belize), Oliver Komar, Joe Lanenga, Steve Larson, Heiner Layan, Amy Leist, Tim Lenz, Mark Letzer, José Manuel Luciani, Rafael Luck, Samuel Maas, Julio Madrid, Nancy Madrigal, Romi Martínez, Keswar Mayorga, Amy McDonald, Brian McNab, Roan McNab (Rmc), Enrique Méndez, Robert Moore (RMo), Marvin Morales, Francisco Muñoz, Christopher Murray, Wilfred Mutrie, Celeste Paiva, Francisco Perla, Michael Peters, Osvaldo Quintero, Alfred Raab, Marvin Ramírez, Laura Reyes, Juan Pablo Rios, Ken Rosenberg, Jamie Rosenberg, Alejandro Sagone, Lya Samayoa, Graham Sampson, Jorge and Hugo Sánchez, Julio Sánchez, Magda Sánchez, Ito Santamaría, Alfredo Scott (Asc), Sheila Shemling, Raquel Siguenza, Steve Smith (Ssm), Lennart Steen (LsI), Noah Styrck, Daniel Torres, Francis Torres, Guiller San, Jovoni Tut, William Ureña, Andrew Valley, John van Dort, Terry van Nickerk, Juan Diego Vargas, Isilda Vega, Elaida Villanueva, Dan Wade, Pat Wade, David Uit de Weerd, Venicio Wilson, Victor Xi Poot, Jim Zook (Costa Rica).

H. Lee Jones, 901 East Washington Street, Apt. 126
Colton, California 92324 (lee@jones@att.net)
Oliver Komar
Department of Environment and Development
Zamorano University, P.O. Box 93
Tegucigalpa, Honduras (okomar@zamorano.edu)

West Indies & Bermuda

This winter was big for geese, ducks, and gulls in the region. Cold winter weather in Europe and North America resulted in a large influx of waterfowl into the Lesser Antilles, including higher-than-average numbers of commoner and irregular species but also unusual species, as expected in Barbados. In Bermuda, highlights included the first record of Black-tailed Gull, third of White-winged Dove, and the first winter records of Franklin's Gull and Briddled Tern. Three Pine Siskins, the first for the West Indies, were the highlight of the Bahamas' winter, and Black-headed Gull, Ross's Goose, and Bald Eagle were also found in the Bahamas. Fall storm events in the Virgin Islands, some with heavy rains, left more water available in a variety of ponds through the winter, providing habitat for many waterfowl, including breeding Masked Duck.

In a recent paper, Carol Bocetti (2011). Cruise ships as a source of avian mortality during fall migration. Wilson Journal of Ornithology 123: 176-178) identifies the threat posed to migrating birds from brightly lit cruise ships. Among other events, Bocetti describes a large kill of Common Yellowthroats in fall 2003. Birders present on such vessels during migration are urged to report their observations to the regional editors—even of commoner species seen aboard ship, some of which may travel for long distances.

WATERFOWL THROUGH SKIMMER

Single Snow Goose were present in Bermuda at Belmont G.C. 26 Dec+ (AD) and Lukes Farm 22 Jan+ (AD). In the Bahamas, an imm. Snow Goose arrived at Treasure Cay G.C., Abaco 6 Dec+ and was joined by another 7 Jan+ and by a Ross's Goose 4 Feb+ (EB, m.ob.), the latter furnishing the 2nd for the Bahamas and the West Indies. Another Snow Goose wintered at Harrold and Wilson Ponds N.P., New Providence 19 Dec+ (PD, C.B.C.), and an imm. made it to La Desirade, the 2nd ever for Guadeloupe, 31 Jan-13 Feb (AL). A Canada Goose was a rarity at Ocean Reef G.C., Paradise I., Bahamas 19 Dec-15 Jan (LG, C.B.C., TH). Providing a 2nd record for Puerto Rico, 3 Tundra Swans were noted near the Copamarina Hotel in the Guanica S.F 16 Dec (SS et al), these were presumably the same birds that had been seen flying past Rincon 1 Nov (SAC). There are only three other reports of the species from the West Indies.

A Wood Duck was photographed at St. Kitts 5 Jan (PHa, SAc, JAC et al). An American Wigeon was seen at Manning Bay, St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands 9 Dec (LY), where 2 were noted 19 Dec (Smr). Three Eurasian Wigeons were present at Chancery Lane, Barbados all winter (EM). Up to 5 Gadwalls wintered at Harrold and Wilson Ponds N.P. (PD, TH, WP, m.ob.). Bermuda had 17 species of waterfowl over the winter, including 7 Gadwalls 16 Jan+ (AD), an Eurasian Wigeon 16 Jan+ (DG), a Long-tailed Duck at Spittal Pond 16-29 Dec (NM), a Common Goldeneye at Mangrove L. 1 Dec-16 Jan (AD) and another at Port Royal G.C. 31 Dec-4 Jan (AD), and a Ruddy Duck was at Ship's Hill Pond 12 Nov+ (DW). A first for the West Indies, 4 Common Pochards, a male and 3 females, were discovered in early Feb at Walker's sandpit, Barbados by Romell Yearwood. The birds were subsequently identified and photographed 7 Feb (pH, RR, EM, WB, MF). In Antigua, 23 Lesser Scap at McKinnon's Salt Pond 30 Dec, plus 5 at Collins' Dam 31 Dec (Smr), established a record count for the island. A female Bufflehead, the 3rd record for the Bahamas, was shot at the Marls, Abaco 4 Dec (ph. MR). A female
Hooded Mergansers were photographed at Great Pond, St. Croix 28 Dec (LY). Almost unprecedented were reports of Hooded Mergansers from several of the Lesser Antillean islands: one at Anse-Bertrand, Guadeloupe 26 Dec (fide AL); one at Collins Dam, Antigua 31 Dec–1 Jan (SB), a first record there; one at Chancery Lane, Barbados 21 Jan (EM); and one at Alaska, Barbados 5 Feb (RR), these last two furnishing 2nd and 3rd records for Barbados. A male Masked Duck was seen in a small pasture pond on Estate Longford, St. Croix 3 Dec (LY). From 3 Feb+, 4 ad. Masked Ducks (3 males, one female) were seen there with 3 downy young (LY, CCB), providing the first breeding record for the Virgin Islands. A Rudy Duck, rare on Grand Bahama, was found at Ruby G.C. on the Christmas count 5 Jan (EB, EG).

A lingering Great Shearwater was reported off the “côte sous le vent” (leeward coast) of Guadeloupe 17 Dec (AL); locally, this expression indicates the area off the w. coast of the island of Basse-Terre. A late Magnificent Frigatebird was in Hamilton Harbour, Bermuda 8-10 Feb (PB). Twenty-four Masked Boobies at Brook’s Rock, Mustique 5 Feb (MPa) had 3 large chicks, the highest number for this colony, the only one known in the Grenadines. At least 2 imm. Northern Gannets were at Bermuda mid-Dec (WF), mostly seen in Great Sound. A juv. Double-crested Cormorant was photographed at the Catano Pier, San Juan, Puerto Rico 12 Dec (AC, JAS); another was reported earlier in the year at pond in Camuy locally called “yeguada” (stud) 10 Oct (SAC). Four were noted at Caño de Tiburonos on the Arecibo C.B.C. 18 Dec, and one was at the mouth of the Grande de Atasco R. 1 Jan (SAC). A Little Egret at Los Amadores Pond, Camuy 17 Jan (ph. SC) was Puerto Rico’s first ever. One hundred Rosate Spoonbills made a good count at Monte Cristi, Dominican Republic 21 Jan (KW). A juv. flamingo near Mustique Airport 6-9 Dec (AA, DW, fide MPa) was tentatively identified as an American, but photographs do not rule out Greater Flamingo (PER EM).

Two Turkey Vultures were over w. New Providence 6-8 Feb (TW, TH, PD, WP). A Bald Eagle at Turtle Lagoon, George Town, Exumas 13-17 Feb (ph. R&S) furnished one of very few records for the West Indies, most of these from the Bahamas. Two Ridgway’s Hawks were seen at Los Limones, Los Haitises N.P., Dominican Republic 31 Dec (RN). Two Red-tailed Hawks remained in Bermuda through the period. A Virginia Rail was at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 9 Dec (NM), and another found injured in Paget 14 Dec was taken to the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum, and Zoo, where it later died. An ad. Purple Gallinule was at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 5 Jan–9 Feb (TW, EG, C.W.C., BP).

Two Piping Plovers were at the mouth of the Grande de Atasco R., Puerto Rico 25 Dec (GL) and 1 Jan (AM). Alcides Morales counted 27 Snowy Plovers at Cabo Rojo N.W.R. 31 Jan. A record number of Killdeer wintered in Bermuda, with 504 recorded on 2 Jan (AD et al.). A Black-necked Stilt was on Mustique 26 Jan–9 Feb (MP), where rare. The American Avocet at Cabo Rojo N.W.R. was last noted 13 Feb (AM) and 3 Apr (GLA); it may have been one of the 2 seen there 1 Jul (SAC, JS). A Eurasian Whimbrel was seen at Mustique 3-4 Feb (MPa), a first for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A Red Knot was at Port Royal G.C., Bermuda 9-12 Dec (AD), and one was along the coast at Pinones, Puerto Rico 12 Dec and 16 Jan, where wintering knots have
dropped from about 20 in the early 2000s to one (JAS). A Dunlin was at Spittal Pond 2 Jan (AD), and 2 were at Bermuda Airport 5-15 Jan (DBW). On the Christmas count at Abaco, Bahama, a Long-billed Dowitcher was a rare find at Malvisi Development, near Crossing Rocks 18 Dec (EB, ph. UN); another was on the New Providence C.B.C. 19 Dec (PD). A Red Phalarope was seen from a cruise ship 21 km off the ne. coast of Cuba 28 Dec (SF). A Red-necked Phalarope lingered 28 Nov (MJJ) and 1 Dec (JC) at Cabo Rojo N.W.R., Puerto Rico, where a Wilson’s Phalarope was also later seen (3R). A Franklin’s Gull photographed at Yorkshire 16 Jan (RR) was the 2nd for Barbados, whereas one at Port Royal G.C. 1-11 Dec (DBW) provided the first winter record for Bermuda. At least 3 Black-headed Gulls were in Bermuda through the winter (AD). At New Providence, a first-cycle Black-headed spent 7 Feb at Montague Foreshore (PD, m.o.b.), and an ad. hung around at the Cataño pier in San Juan Bay 28–Nov 11 Dec (JAS), a typical setting for the species in Puerto Rico. Two Black-headed Gulls accompanied a Bonaparte’s Gull at McKinnon’s Pond, Antigua 28 Dec–2 Jan (SBu), and 2-3 wintered in Guadeloupe (PD, ED, AL). Bonaparte’s Gull, considered a rarity in Puerto Rico, was photographed at the mouth of the Grande de Añasco R. 1 Jan (AM). Singles were at Treasure Cay, Abaco 26 Dec and 8 Jan (EB, SW) and at West End, Grand Bahama 4 Jan (BP, BH, TW). A Ring-billed Gull with a patagial tag in Hamilton Harbour, Bermuda 16 Dec (AD) had been marked in Massachusetts. An imm. Ring-billed Gull at the Frederiksted pier, St. Croix 4 Dec (ph. FG) was followed by 4 there 18 Dec (LY) and one at West End Salt Pond 19 Dec (CL) and 26 Jan (LY). At Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands, a Ring-billed seen 22 Dec (RN) was the first for that island. Bermuda’s first Black-tailed Gull—also a first for the West Indies—was an ad. present in the Great Sound/Mangrove Bay area 8 Jan (PH, m.o.b.). A Great Black-backed Gull that wintered at San Juan Bay was first seen 12 Dec (AC) and last reported 6 Feb (JAS). A first-cycle Iceland Gull was at Dockyard, Bermuda 11-13 Jan (AD). At the Grand Bahama Dump, 82 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted 5 Jan (BH) on the Christmas count.

A Bridled Tern found exhausted at Port Royal G.C. 14 Dec was taken to the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum, and Zoo, where it later died; there are no previous winter reports for Bermuda. Along with 2 Forster’s Terns, a Common Tern frequent Harrington Sound, Bermuda through about 9 Jan (AD, DW), and one Common was at Monte Cristi/Malecon, Dominican Republic 29 Jan (KW). A Forster’s Tern and a Parasitic Jaeger were observed at the mouth of the Grande de Añasco R., Puerto Rico 12 Dec (LM). In the Bahamas, 2 Black Skimmers were seen at West End, Grand Bahama 4 Jan (BH, BP, TW), and 2 were along the Western Esplanade, Nassau 21 Jan–19 Feb (WP, ph. TH).

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

A White-winged Dove, only the 3rd for Bermuda, was seen at Smith’s Hill 2 Jan (JM). A late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Ferry Point Park, Bermuda 26 Dec–2 Jan (PW); one at Cape Eleuthera, Eleuthera 28 Feb (DE) was apparently wintering. A Short-eared Owl was at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 28-30 Dec (AD). Antillean Nighthawks generally vacate the West Indies in winter; however, one was identified by its call at the Mayagüez Mall in w. Puerto Rico 24 Dec (JC). A wintering Ruby-throated Hummingbird was still present in a Smith’s Parish garden, Bermuda through the end of the period (KR). A female Ruby-throated was noted feeding at Taino Beach, Grand Bahama 23 Feb (BP).

An Eastern Wood-Pewee in s. Abaco 18 Dec (DK) made a very late record; all late wood-pewees should be checked for Western, if possible. A Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird, photographed at West End, Grand Bahama 4 Jan (ph. BH, BP, TW) provided the island’s 4th record of this difficult species pair. Also in the Bahamas, single Western Kingbirds were at Ardastra Gardens, Nassau 11 Dec (JT), the egg farm on Grand Bahama, Grand Bahama 5 Jan (BP), and Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 29 Jan (EG, C.W.C.). A Tropical Kingbird was reported at Mt. Hartman, Grenada 9 Jan (SAC, JC et al.). An ad. White-eyed Vireo was found along the shoreline of the Cabezas de San Juan reserve, near Fajardo, Puerto Rico 1 Jan (RD). In Guadeloupe, White-eyed Vireos were recorded at Petite-Terre Nature Reserve 10 Dec (AL) and at Port-Louis 23 Dec (RQ) again 3 Jan–11 Feb (FD, ED); remarkably, there are only two previous records of White-eyes for the Lesser Antilles. A Yellow-throated Vireo at Sage Mt., Tortola, British Virgin Islands 21 Dec (RN) provided a first record for Tortola. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was at Port Louis, Guadeloupe 13 Jan (FD). A Brown Creeper discovered in Nov at Ferry Point Park, Bermuda was still present 13 Feb (NM). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were at Morgan’s Pt., Bermuda 2-15 Jan (AD, DW); and the ruby-crowned Kinglet present at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama since late Nov remained through Feb (m.o.b.). Two American Pipits in the West End 27 Dec (PH) were the first of an impressive 112 noted in Bermuda through the winter. Five American Pipits were at Treasure Cay, Abaco 15 & 30 Jan (EB, BB), and one was at Albany G.C., New Providence 18 Jan (PD, TH, WP, TW).

Of the 21 warbler species recorded in Bermuda during the winter, the most unusual was a Kentucky Warbler at Mid-Ocean G.C. 15 Jan (DW). A few unusual warblers were reported from the Bahamas this winter, among them a Swainson’s Warbler at Rock Pt., Treasure Cay, Abaco 23 Feb (MP), a Kentucky

**SA**

A Dark-eyed Junco was discovered on the grounds of Grand Bahama Nature Tours at Lucaya, Grand Bahama 18 Jan (EG, m.o.b.) and remained through the period, the 3rd for the Bahamas and 6th for the West Indies. The other Bahama records are from Nassau 18 Nov 1959 (PD) and Freeport, Grand Bahama 8 Nov 1969 (PD). In the Greater Antilles, records of single Dark-eyed Juncos come from Puerto Rico 18 Oct 1963 (Fde H.) and Hardwar Gaj, Jamaica Jan–Apr 1971 (Ide JB).

In addition to these, there is a record of a junco at St. Thomas—a bird that arrived by ship but was not actually seen to disembark there. Ernest G. Holt, on a Danish tramp bound from New York to the Virgin Islands, observed about 24 Dark-eyed Juncos take refuge on the ship 230 km e. of Cape Charles, Virginia on 5 Nov 1928 (1929. A Junco Junket. Auk 49:99–100). Also observed on the deck were one Chipping, one White-throated, and 2 Song Sparrows, an American Goldfinch, 2 Golden-crowned Kinglets, an apparent Dickcissel, and later a grasshopper Sparrow. Holt fed these birds during the voyage southward.

At least one of the juncos stayed on board through 12 Nov, after the ship had called at St. Thomas and was bound for St. Croix. Based on Holt’s account, James Bond opined (1972. Seventeenth Supplement to the Checklist of Birds of the West Indies) that some of the other West Indian records of junco could also be of birds that had arrived by ship. If this is correct, then the hiatus in junco records may relate to the fact that most cruise ships from the United States mainland to the Bahamas and Caribbean islands now depart from Florida (where juncos are scarce), rather than from more northerly states. According to Dobson, however, juncos are annual visitors to Bermuda in the late fall and winter, when cruise ships are not active there. Bruce Anderson and Andrew Bankert, the regional editors from Florida, write: “Numbers of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos have declined over the past three decades, but reports totaling 40 came from n. Florida [in winter 2010–2011], and singles were reported in Florida well s. of typical range in the state as well.” This provides at least some context for the Grand Bahama bird this season. Although certainly many migrants clearly do take refuge aboard large ships, and remain with them for long periods, in most instances, we cannot know whether an individual bird has done so.
Warbler near Treasure Cay 28 Jan (RM), and a Wilson's Warbler at West End, Grand Bahamas 4 Jan (BP, BH, TW). Blue-winged Warblers, rare e. of Cuba, showed up at St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands 19 Dec (RN) and near Buyé, Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico 2 Feb (ph. AM). In Guadeloupe, 10 warbler species were seen 17 Feb at Port-Louis, including 9 Northern Waterthrushes, 4 American Redstarts, 6 Northern Parulas, 2 Ovenbirds, 3 Black-and-white Warblers, 6 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 3 Cape May Warblers, one Prothonotary Warbler, and one Hooded Warbler (AL). A leucistic Cuban Grassquit was seen along Shirley Street, Nassau 6-13 Feb (CW, BG&MTL, TH). According to Ernesto Reyes of Cuba, leucistic Cuban Grassquits are not uncommon in Cuba, and some people breed them deliberately (fide CW). Grassquits are seldom seen as pets in the Bahamas, and it is believed the Nassau bird is a wild bird from the long-established population there.

A Summer Tanager noted at Naranjo, Dominican Republic 29 Dec (SBN, RN et al.) furnished only the 2nd report from Hispaniola. Single Dickcissels were at Treasure Cay Dump 6 Jan (ph. BH, EB) and at Cooperstown, Abaco 16 Jan (EB, SB). A Brown-headed Cowbird was discovered at Westover Farm, Bermuda 2-4 Jan (PH). A White-winged Crossbill was at Cooper's Island N.R., Bermuda 16 Jan (NM). Three Pine Siskins found in pines near the entrance of Fortune Hill G.C., Grand Bahamas 5 Jan (ph. BH) were the first ever in the West Indies. In Bermuda, 3 Common Redpolls were seen at Paget Marsh 1 Jan (AD), 3 were at Ferry Pt. 16 Jan (AD, DW), and 10 were at Spittal Pond 27 Feb (PW).

Addenda: Received too late for the fall 2010 report were the following excellent records from Puerto Rico: a juvenile Northern Gannet observed resting on rocky stack off the Hacienda Esperanza Nature Reserve, Manati 30 Oct, likely a first for Puerto Rico (JAS, MR); a Striated Heron, a first record for Puerto Rico, at Laguna Cartagena N.W.R. 22 May (JAS) through at least 3 Sep (AM). A Tropical Mockingbird at Oualie Bay, Nevis 8-13 Aug (AML) was probably a legitimate vagrant there.

Observers: (subregional editors in boldface) Bermuda Aquarium Museum and Zoo (RAMZ), Alistair Alexander, George L. Armitage, James Bond, Betsy Bracey, Elwood Bracey, Steve Brauning (SBN), Paul Bren, Simon Buckingham (SBs), Sam Buttrick, Wayne Burke, Alfredo Colon, Jose Colon, Sergio A. Colon, Carol Cramer-Burke, Javlesia Crespo, Caribbean Waterbirds Census (CWC.), Paul Dean, Eric Delcroix, Andrew Dobson, Robert Doster, Franz Duizent, David Ewert, Steven Feldstein, Paul Fluck, Wendy Frith, Martin Frost, Sheelagh Fromer (SFr), Lynn Gape, Eric Gates, Franabelle Gerard, Derek Gibbons, Bruce Hallett, Percival Hanley (Phia), Tony Hepburn, Peter Hopkin, David Knowles, Anthony Levesque, Claudia Lombard, Gabriel Lugo, Mark Michael Ludlow, Jeremy Madeiros, Rick Miller, Alcides Morales, Michael J. Morel, Neal Morris, Luis Muñoz, Robert Norton, Uli Nowlin, William Pinder, Michael Paice (MPa), M. Pressley, Bruce Purdy, Ruppert Quinell, Herb Raffaele, Maria L. Rivera (MRi), Richard Roach, Rafael Rodriguez (RRo), Myles Roberts, Keith Rossiter, Ron & Karen Sabon, Julio Salgado, José A. Salguero, Shari Sexner, Charles Smith, John Thompson, Bill & Mary Lou Truscott, David Wallace (DW), Kate Wallace, Carolyn Wardle, Paul Watson, Samantha Whitcraft, Tony White, Dianne Wilson (DW), David Wingate (DBW), Lisa Yntema.

Robert L. Norton (Greater Antilles)
8960 NE Waldo Road, Gainesville, Florida 32609
(corvus0486@aol.com)
Anthony White (Bahamas Archipelago)
P.O. Box 2531, Jackson, Wyoming 83001
(spindalis@aol.com)
Andrew Dobson (Bermuda)
Warwick Academy
117 Middle Road Warwick PG 01 Bermuda
(ADobson@warwick.acad.bm)
Eddie Massiah (Lesser Antilles)
Johnson Road, Flits Village, St. James, Barbados
(embmassiah@hotmail.com)

Hawaiian Islands

The ongoing La Niña event continued to have effects on the Region's weather during winter. Strong winds and huge surf slammed the northwestern islands, destroying many seabird nests. Weather over most areas of the main islands was typically wet, but Hawaii Island remained drier than normal, with drought conditions worsening over some districts. Observer coverage was pretty good. Although there were fewer rare migrants than last winter, uncommon waterfowl and shorebirds kept the birding interesting.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH EGRETS**

Fewer migrant geese were reported compared to the unusually large numbers of the previous winter. Only one Greater White-fronted Goose was reported, at the Honolulu Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R. Dec+ (m.ob.), possibly the same bird that wintered at Honolulu the previous season. A Snow Goose was seen on Kauai at the Hanalei N.W.R. and nearby Kilauea Point N.W.R. Dec+ (KC, CM, RL). Greater White-fronteds are rare and Snows are very rare in the Region, but both species have been reported more regularly during the past several years. A Black Brant was observed at the Kii Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., Oahu 1. 2 Dec (PL, MO, KP), one was seen at Hanalei N.W.R. 7 Dec (CM) and 2 & 4 Jan (NA, PA), and another was at Kaneohe Marine Corp Base, Oahu 1. 20 Jan (LT). Cackling Geese, usually the most common migrant geese in the Region, were unusually scarce. Six were seen at Waiakea Pond, Hilo, Hawaii 1. 22 (WR, BL) & 23 Feb (RL, DE, EA, TK). The only other Cacklings reported were single birds at the Kona W.T.P. 18 (DD) & 22 Feb (WDR) and at Kilauea Point N.W.R. 23 Feb (RL). Single Gadwalls were seen at the Kau-nakakai Wastewater Recovery Facility, Molokai 1. 11 Dec (ADY), at Honolulu...
N.W.R. 31 Jan (KP), 5 (KP, LT) & 18 Feb (PD, RM), and at Lokowaka Pond, Hawaii I. 16 Feb (DR). As usual, numerous Mallards were reported; most were likely feral birds, but one at remote Laysan I. 5 Jan (PT, JW) was likely a wild migrant. Single Canvasbacks were observed at the Kona W.T.P., Hawaii I. 18 Feb (DD) and 22 & 27 Feb (WDR), and at Warakea Pond 22 (BL) & 23 Feb (EA, TK, DR). A male Tufted Duck was found at the Kuliilima W.T.P., Oahu I. 21 Jan (MO), and a male and a female were seen there 22 Jan+ (m.ob.). A female Hooded Merganser was found at Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I. 8 Dec (ADY, MN). These duck species are all uncommon to rare in the Region.

A nest with two eggs tended by 2 female Short-tailed Albatrosses on Laysan I. failed to produce any chicks (CV). A pair of Short-tailed Albatrosses at Midway Atoll N.W.R. did produce a chick (JK), the first of the species known to have hatched in the United States. The chick was washed out of the nest by huge surf 11 Feb but was rescued and returned to its nest (JK). Thousands of Laysan and Black-footed Albatross chicks, plus many ads., were killed by the large waves and falling trees. Many Bonin Petrels are also believed to have been killed, but numbers are uncertain, as Bonins nest in burrows. A Cascadia Research Collective (C.R.C.) crew worked off the (Kona) coast of Hawaii I. found fewer unusual species than in previous years. C.R.C. photos from 11 Dec show a gadfly petrel in heavy moat, probably a dark-morph Kermadeck Petrel. Other tubenoses photographed off Kona include a White-necked Petrel 15 Dec, a Black-winged Petrel 8 Dec, Short-tailed Shearwaters 8 & 12 Dec, and one to 2 Leach’s Storm-Petrels per day 5-12 Dec (C.R.C.). Kermaedeces are uncommon in the Region. Blacked-winged and Short-tailed Shearwaters are regular fall and possibly spring migrants in the Region but are infrequently reported; the Dec dates may be unusually late for Short-tailed in the Region.

The Great Egret first reported in the fall was seen at Hanalei 7 (CM) & 14 Dec (EV) and at Huleia N.W.R. 15 Dec (KL) and sporadically later, into Mar (jule DK). One to 2 White-faced Ibis were seen on Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii I. Dec+ (m.ob.).

**FALCONS THROUGH SKUAS**

Migrant raptors were sparingly reported this winter. A Peregrine Falcon was seen at Pohala Marsh State Waterbird Sanctuary, Oahu I. 17 Dec (MW), and 2 were seen at Waipuee Refuge, Maui I. 6 Feb (SG). Single Black-bellied Plovers were observed on Maui I. at Kealia 7 Dec (DL) and 27 Jan (EA) and at Kanaha Pond 24 Feb (JP) and on Oahu I. in Konohe 19 Jan (LT et. al.), Pearl Harbor 19 Jan (PD, PK), and Kaneohe 20 Jan (LT). A Killdeer was found at Kealia 7 Dec (DL). Black-bellieds are uncommon but regular, and Killdeer are rare in the Region. A Gray-tailed Tattler was seen at Kaena Pt., Oahu I. 21 Dec (EV), 22 Dec, and 23 Feb (ph. MW). Gray-taileds are rarely reported in the Region and can be difficult to distinguish from Wandering Tattlers. This individual was well photographed and heard calling. A probable Common Sandpiper remained in Naalehu, Hawaii I. Dec+ (RD, EP, TP) but continued to be elusive and difficult to study. If confirmed, this would be the first record for the Region. A Spotted Sandpiper was observed on Molokai I. 18 Dec (ADY).

Single Whimbrels at Kohuku, Oahu I. Dec+ (m.ob.) and on Molokai I. Dec+ (ADY) were likely the same individuals that wintered in the same areas the previous year; both usually associated with Bristle-thighed Curlews. A Whimbrel of the e. Asian subspecies variagata was observed on Kure Atoll (JJ). Peak counts of Bristle-thighed Curlews in the main islands have remained fairly steady over the past several years. The peak count this winter was of 45 birds at Kii 3 Feb (KP, LT). The only peeps reported over the winter were a Western Sandpiper at the Waiau Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R. 26 Dec, a Least Sandpiper on Oahu Dec+, and up to 3 Least on Maui Dec+ (m.ob.). Western and Least Sandpipers are regular but uncommon in the Region. A Curlew Sandpiper, rare in the Region, was observed at Waiau 26 Dec (PD). A Pectoral Sandpiper and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper lingered at Kii Dec+ (m.ob.). Pectoral and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are regular migrants in the Region but uncommon winterers. A Ruff was observed on Laysan I. Jan-28 Feb (AK, JW), and one was at Honouliuli 31 Jan (KP, 2 Feb (PD), and 5 Feb (KP, LT). Ten Red-necked Phalaropes were observed on Laysan I. 2 Jan-5 Feb (EC, AK, PT, ph. JW), the largest count ever in the Region. The Cascadia Research Collective photographed a Red Phalarope off the Kona coast 10 Dec, and one was seen on Kure Atoll 13 Jan (JJ). Red Phalaropes are uncommon in the Region.

Gulls were scarce again this winter. The only gulls reported in the main islands were up to 2 Laughing Gulls at several locations Dec+ (m.ob.) and a Ring-billed Gull at Kealoh 20 Dec (SS). Several first-cycle large gulls were seen on French Frigate Shoals 2 Nov-9 Dec, 11 Jan, and 30 Jan-4 Feb, but were not readily identifiable. A Caspian Tern at Kanohe, Oahu I. 19 Jan (LT et. al.) and 20 & 23 Jan (LT) may have been the same bird seen in the same spot the previous winter. A single Gray-backed Tern was seen off sw. Oahu I Dec (PD, MW). Gray-backed breed near Oahu but have been reported very rarely in Dec. A Blue-gray Noddy found w. of Hawaii I. 3 Feb (ph. C.R.C.) was observed about 500 km farther se. than any other record in Hawaiian waters. A South Polar Skua w. of Hawaii I. 15 Dec made the Region’s first Dec record (ph. C.R.C.).

**PASSEERINES**

I received more reports than usual of endemic forest birds. On Maui I., 2 Maui Parrotbills (Endangered) were found in Waikamoi Preserve 22 Dec (CP) and 17 Feb (CR), and singles were seen there 18 Jan (GP), 14 Jan (GS), and 15 Feb (CR). Reports of Maui Alauahio included high counts of 20 in Waikamoi 22 Dec (CP) and 37 in Hanawi Natural Area Reserve 25 Feb (CR). A good number of reports of Akohekohe included an unusually high count of 20 in Waikamoi 28 Feb (CP). In the forests of Kauai I., Anianiau were reported more frequently than usual, but the high count was of only 4 birds in Kokee S.P. 6 Feb (DK, DT). Two Akeake (Endangered) were seen in Kokee 6 Feb (DKi, DK), and 3 were seen 21 Feb (DK, RL). From Hawaii I., I received the first reports of Pallia (Endangered) since the best habitat for the bird was closed due to high fire danger. Six birds were found 22 Jan and 4 on 27 Jan (BR). Akipapau, Hawaii Creeper, and Akepa (all Endangered) were reported regularly on Hawaii I. Dec+ (H.F.T., BR et al.), mostly only a few individuals of each, but with counts of 10 Hawaii Creepers 1 Feb and 8 on 3 Feb in Hakalau N.W.R. (H.F.T.).


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First record of Comb Duck (Sarkidiornis melanotos) for Costa Rica

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE - TYLER M. HARMS - DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT, 339 SCIENCE II
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, AMES, IOWA 50011 - (EMAIL: COOTJR@IASTATE.EDU) - (EMAIL: TYHARMES@GMAIL.COM)

Abstract
The authors, in company with Rafael Ramirez and a group of Iowa State University students, observed, photographed, and documented a male Comb Duck of the South American subspecies (Sarkidiornis melanotos sylvicola) at the large drying wetland in Palo Verde National Park, Costa Rica on 18 March 2010. The bird was present the following day and last reported 25 March 2010. The record is supported by photographs and becomes the first for Costa Rica and northernmost in the Western Hemisphere.

Field encounter and identification
On the morning of 18 March 2010, the authors, along with park naturalist Rafael Ramirez and a group of Iowa State University students, took a morning hike to the last remaining depression of water near the north-central part of the Palo Verde lagoon in Palo Verde National Park, Costa Rica. Mid-March is near the end of the local dry season, although this wetland was drier than it had been in mid-March of 2006 or 2008 (pers. obs.).

We reached the edge of the water at approximately 0635 local time. Many waterbirds were circling the wetland, and we began sifting through the hundreds of herons and waterfowl present. At 0645, we were watching a small flock of Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) when a large, dark duck caught our eye. The bird made several sweeping passes overhead at a distance of less than 50 m before landing out of sight in a distant wetland opening.

The duck was quite large, dwarfing the teal and appearing slightly larger than several nearby Muscovy Ducks (Cairina moschata). The wings, mantle, and rectrices were black, and upon closer inspection, we noted that the upperwing coverts were iridescent green in good light. The sides and flanks were also black with considerable white mottling around the sides but not the flanks. The head was white with faint black mottling, especially on the crown and nape. The breast, belly, and vent were white and lacked noticeable darker mottling. The bill was dark gray with a distinct, rounded plate rising vertically from the base of the bill to near its tip to a height equal to the top of the crown. The legs were also dark gray. None of us had any prior field experience with this species, but we recognized it in the field as a Comb Duck and later confirmed the identification from online resources. The presence of the distinctive “comb” on the bill, for which the species is named, its large size, and the iridescent green sheen in the upperwing coverts indicate the bird was an adult male (Todd 1997). The more solidly black flanks, lacking any iridescent color, indicated that it was of the expected South America subspecies sylvicola. Some authorities have suggested that the South American subspecies and nominate subspecies of Comb Duck are best considered two distinct species (Livezey 1997, Callaghan 2005).

During the period of observation, through 0755, we obtained several photographs of the bird in flight (Figures 1-3). We returned on 19 March and re-found the bird from 0605 through 0625. It was last reported on 25 March 2010 (Jones and Komar 2010).

Vagrancy in Comb Ducks
The provenance of any extralimital waterfowl species can be debated because many are kept in captivity, occasionally escape, and subsequently consort with other waterfowl and assume a “wild” appearance. Although we cannot know for certain, we believe this bird was
most likely a genuine vagrant for two reasons. First, we saw no obvious signs of a captive history during our observations of the bird; it was not wearing bands or other obvious marks, it seemed as wild and wary as any of the other waterfowl present, and it occurred on a date and at a location consistent with a wild bird that might have wandered to Central America. The timing of the sighting in March, near the end of the dry season, is consistent with this species’ habit of dispersal to areas of water during dry periods (Todd 1997). Second, the timing of the record was consistent with an emerging pattern of northward vagrancy in this species. Neighboring Panama has two records, both from March: up to 5 were present (and one collected) from late March through 21 May 1949 at La Jagua in the eastern part of Panamá Province (Wetmore 1965), and one was collected on 27 March 1959 at the mouth of Río Tiquesa in Darién Province (Ridgely and Gwynne 1989).

Long-distance dispersal in excess of 3000 kilometers has been documented for this species in Africa, but the South American subspecies is believed to be more sedentary (Todd 1997). For Comb Ducks, the breeding season is triggered by spring rains, breeding occurs during and immediately after the wet season, and post-breeding dispersal is driven by the amount and distribution of wetlands during the dry season (Todd 1997). The closest core breeding areas for Comb Ducks are in Colombia and Venezuela (estimated at 40,000 birds in the 1990s; Todd 1997), where the timing of the wet season (roughly May to November) could explain winter-season dispersal toward an area like the Palo Verde lagoon.

This represents the first record of Comb Duck for Costa Rica and the northernmost record in the Americas.

Acknowledgments
We thank Rafael Ramirez and the staff of the Organization for Tropical Studies for facilitating access to Palo Verde National Park. George Angehr kindly provided information on vagrant Comb Ducks in Panama, and W. Ross Silcock helped us locate references for this species in South America.

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Notes on petrels of the Dark-rumped Petrel complex (*Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis*) in Hawaiian waters

PETER PYLE - THE INSTITUTE FOR BIRD POPULATIONS - P. O. BOX 1346, POINT REYES STATION, CALIFORNIA 94956 - (PPYLE@BIRDPOP.ORG)
DANIEL L. WEBSTER - ROBIN W. BAIRD - CASCADIA RESEARCH COLLECTIVE - 218 1/2 WEST 4TH AVENUE, OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98501

Abstract

This paper documents petrels of the Dark-rumped Petrel complex (*Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis*) off the Hawaiian Islands in 2007–2011, including typical individuals of the endemic nesting species, Hawaiian Petrel (*P. sandwichensis*), and two individuals that could be variants of that species or perhaps Galapagos Petrels (*P. phaeopygia*). We summarize and discuss criteria for the at-sea identification of these two similar taxa.

Background

In 2002, the American Ornithologists' Union split Dark-rumped Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) into two species: Hawaiian Petrel (*P. sandwichensis*), which nests in the Hawaiian Islands, and Galapagos Petrel (*P. phaeopygia*), nesting in the Galapagos Islands (A.O.U. 2002). Although the distinction of these petrels appears to be well supported by molecular evidence (Welch et al. 2011), their morphology is very similar, and at-sea identification of these petrels (hereafter termed "Dark-rumped Petrels" when referring to the complex) has been considered problematic (Pyle 2006). Further field study has led to the proposal of new field criteria for separation of Galapagos and Hawaiian Petrels, primarily involving differences in head and neck plumage, the extent of the underwing’s dark trailing edge, apparent bulk, bill size, and flight manner (Force et al. 2007; see also Loomis 1918, Tomkins and Milne 1991), and...
during October through February, with records sparsely distributed throughout the winter period; this status accords with what is known of the breeding phenology of Hawaiian Petrel and with other at-sea observations of Dark-rumped Petrels off the Hawaiian Islands (King 1970, Pyle and Pyle 2009).

Of the 92 Dark-rumped Petrels photographed by the Cascadia Research Collective, 83 showed characteristics consistent with Hawaiian Petrel (Figures 1, 2), and seven were not clearly documented to identify to species. On 10 April and again 20 April 2010, off the west coast of Hawai’i Island, Webster obtained images of two birds that stood apart from all other individuals in showing characteristics associated more with Galapagos Petrel (Figures 3, 4).

**Identification criteria for Galapagos and Hawaiian Petrels**

In the captions for Figures 1-4, we discuss variation in the plumage of presumed Hawaiian Petrels and consider identification of the two individuals that may be Galapagos Petrels or may represent extreme or rare variations of Hawaiian Petrels (see Figure 3). If the two birds were indeed Hawaiian Petrels, these images suggest that at-sea identification of Hawaiian and Galapagos Petrels may be more challenging than indicated by Force et al. (2007). However, Pyle’s examination of petrel photographs taken off of the Galapagos, along with field study of many Hawaiian Petrels, suggests that the identification criteria outlined by Force et al. (2007) are valid for most Hawaiian Petrels.

Differences in molt patterns may, in some cases, be helpful in distinguishing cryptic species of tubenoses at sea (cf. Howell et al. 2010). However, because colonies of Galapagos Petrels breed on different schedules, with breeding in the species occurring through most of the year (Tomkins and Milne 1991), molt patterns may not be helpful for identification of that species at sea. Hawaiian Petrels are more seasonal in their nesting, which peaks April–September (Simons and Hodges 1998); molting birds have been documented around the Hawaiian Islands in September–January (Cascadia Research Collective images), during the non-breeding season, as would be typical of tropical seabirds (Pyle 2008). Thus, Hawaiian Petrels should appear fresh in January–May and worn in July–October, which accords with most of the birds photographed in these months in waters of the Hawaiian Islands.

**At-sea distribution of Galapagos and Hawaiian Petrels**

In 2010, Pyle evaluated records of Dark-rumped Petrel in California waters and concluded, based on criteria suggested by Force et al. (2007), that nine photographic records and two sight records (by Force) between 1997 and 2009 were referable to Hawaiian Petrel. The California Bird Records Committee subsequently accepted these and subsequent records, and the species was admitted to the California checklist (Pyle and Tietz, in press). Further evidence of Hawaiian Petrels in the eastern Pacific Ocean comes from individuals satellite-tagged at the Hawaiian breeding colonies, some of which have reached waters as near as 370 kilometers from the coasts of Oregon and California (J. Adams, D. Ainley, pers. comm.).

As of spring 2011, there were no reports of potential Galapagos Petrels from North American or Hawaiian waters. Data analysis by Spear et al. (1995) and Bartle et al. (unpublished ms.) suggest that there may be a gap in at-sea distributions of Dark-rumped Petrels in the eastern tropical Pacific, roughly between...
120° and 130° W longitude. However, other Pacific Pterodroma such as Juan Fernandez Petrel (P. petrel) and White-necked Petrel (P. cervicalis) show very broad distributions at sea, there are several records of Dark-rumped Petrel in the supposed hiatal area (Pitman 1986), and given the possibility of sampling biases in this area, it is conceivable that Galapagos Petrels could occur in Hawaiian waters (see also Spear et al. 1995, Force et al. 2007). Furthermore, there are records of Dark-rumped Petrel off the Baja California peninsula, which could include the foraging range of either species, so observers should not assume that all Dark-rumped Petrels in North American waters are Hawaiian Petrels; indeed, Pyle considered the majority of sight records and one photographic record of Dark-rumped Petrels, from California waters to be unidentifiable to species. Additional study of structure and plumage through digital imagery should help clarify questions about variation among these birds and help document the at-sea ranges of both species.

Acknowledgments
Field research conducted by Cascadia Research Collective in Hawaiian waters was funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Navy. We thank Josh Adams, David Ainley, Sandy Bartle, Michael Force, Steve N. G. Howell, Alvaro Jaramillo, Bob Pitman, Hadoram Shirihai, Sophie Webb, P. A. Buckley, Andreea Welch, and Anne Wiley for help with the manuscript and for other information. This paper is Contribution Number 398 of the Institute for Bird Populations.

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NOTES ON PETRELS OF THE DARK-RUMPED PETREL COMPLEX IN HAWAIIAN WATERS

Figure 4. Dark-rumped Petrel, 10.2 km west-northwest of Milolii, Hawai‘i Island, 20 April 2010. This individual is far more heavily marked ventrally than any of the 83 presumed Hawaiian Petrels photographed by Cascadia Research Collective personnel. Although at least 10 of these 83 petrels showed slight dusky mottling to the flanks, none had nearly the extent of mottling shown by this bird. Other features suggesting Galapagos Petrel include a hooded appearance, lack of white notch behind the eye, and broad dark trailing edge to the wing (Force et al. 2007), although the overall structure and bill do not appear particularly heavy. Although parsimony would favor identification as Hawaiian Petrel (perhaps an atypically dark bird from Hawai‘i Island; see Figure 3), the plumage and relatively small bill could conceivably point to juvenile Galapagos Petrel. Photographs by Daniel L. Webster.


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The "sharp-tailed sparrow" group has a rich and complex taxonomic history. Many of the differences in plumages and breeding systems between the taxa were described decades ago (Dwight 1896, Bishop 1901, Montagna 1942), but interest in this group subsided in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since the split of the sharp-tailed sparrows in 1993, field guides have depicted the important distinctions between Saltmarsh Sparrow and Nelson's Sparrow with reasonable accuracy. What most field guides have not depicted, understandably, are subtle distinctions within the subspecies. This Photo Essay is an effort to depict variation in the plumages of these subspecies, based on ongoing research on both breeding and wintering grounds of all five taxa. The purpose is to assist birders and researchers in learning which taxa winter in their areas.

Although many birders have learned to distinguish Saltmarsh from Nelson's in the past decade or so, there has been relatively little published on the appearance of the various subspecies (Sibley 1996, Howell and Sibley 1998, Sibley 2005). Several more recent technical articles, however, have advanced our understanding of the winter distribution and variation among the subspecies of sharp-tailed sparrows. Jon Greenlaw and Glen Woolfenden's 2007 article, titled "Winter distributions and migration of Saltmarsh and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows," begins to define not just where the five subspecies winter and how they migrate but also how to identify them in the hand.

Since 2006, the Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) of the College of William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University has banded marsh sparrows, including Nelson's, Saltmarsh, Le Conte's, and Seaside Sparrows, in three dozen locations in the marshes of the Virginia Coast Reserve and the Chesapeake Bay, mostly in the nonbreeding season, in an attempt to understand the ecology of the taxa that occur in this important biophere reserve and nearby marshes. Although the project is ongoing, and researchers are still in the process of interpreting data gathered on more than 1400 captures, it is clear that all five taxa in this group are regular migrants and wintering birds in the Virginia portion of the Delmarva Peninsula, with about half of the birds captured there being Nelson's Sparrows.

Based on specimens taken in winter (December to March), Saltmarsh Sparrow outnumber Nelson's in Virginia (8 to 1 based on only 9 specimens; Greenlaw and Woolfenden 2007). Conversely, birders who participate in Atlantic coastal Christmas Bird Counts have had the opposite impression in many areas—that Nelson's Sparrows greatly outnumber Saltmarsh in most mid-Atlantic marshes. The reason for this impression, however, may be that Nelson's Sparrows tend to occupy the higher, drier parts of marsh, whereas Saltmarsh Sparrows, like Seaside Sparrows, appear to forage most regularly in the outer fringes of marshes—places where most people wisely hesitate to walk because of the deep, unstable mud that is adjacent open water. A recent study of carbon and nitrogen isotopes in wintering marsh sparrows (Cristol et al. 2011) confirmed segregation by habitat type, though further investigations are needed.

In light of the fascinating preliminary results in Virginia, we have compiled this Photo Essay in hopes that others will attempt to distinguish the five taxa of sharp-tailed sparrows, especially along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, where conservation concern for these sparrows is increasing rapidly. Rising sea levels jeopardize the breeding grounds of both Saltmarsh and Acadian Nelson's Sparrows as well as the wintering grounds for all sharp-tailed sparrow taxa (Bayard and Elphick 2011).

Our assessment of Virginia birds is based on an identification key to all sharp-tailed sparrow taxa (Greenlaw and Woolfenden 2007), the characters presented by Pyle (2008), and other sources. We repeat here a caution stated by Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007): "...we recognize that A. c. caudacutus and A. n. nelsoni are especially variable in some plumage characters, and that differentiation of A. c. caudacutus versus A. c. diversus and A. n. nelsoni versus A. n. alurus is particularly problematic. As a conservative practice, an investigator should accept only clear-cut examples of A. c. diversus or A. n. alurus in making racial assignments."

A preliminary finding in the Virginia study is that more than 90% of the Saltmarsh Sparrows may be assigned either to the nominate caudacutus or to diversus; birds with intermediate characters are relatively few. As our field season progresses from fall, when birds are in fresh plumage, into winter, when birds become worn, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish these subspecies by plumage, as noted by Peters (1942), and no measurements distinguish them. A few birds combine plumage features of both subspecies or are too worn to assess by plumage, though because of frequent recapture of individuals over the years of the project, we have been able to document changes in their appearances over weeks, months, and years in some cases.

Nelson's Sparrow subspecies differ as well, but individual variation makes some assignments problematic. The Acadian subspecies, subvirgatus, is usually straightforward to identify, at least with birds in relatively fresh plumage. Helpfully, Acadians are generally longer billed than the two interior subspecies of Nelson's, appearing more like Saltmarsh in that respect; some individuals, however, may be of different plumage, too.

The Virginia studies, we have been able to distinguish nominate nelsoni from the usually duller alurus only when individuals are well marked and "typical," but about 35% of interoceanic Nelson's we have captured do not clearly fit criteria for one taxon, and such birds are thus listed as "alurus/nelsoni" in our database. Of the individuals captured in fresh plumage, we suspect that many of these indeterminate individuals are alurus whose plumages are brighter than those described in the published literature; indeed, alurus captured on the breeding grounds in James Bay show more variation in plumage than has hitherto been documented (Virginia L. Winder, pers. comm.).

In Virginia, we have caught a very few birds that we suspect could be hybrids between nominate Saltmarsh Sparrow and Acadian Nelson's Sparrow. The breeding ranges of these taxa overlap, from marshes along the Parker River in Massachusetts north to those...
This page depicts all five taxa of the sharp-tailed sparrow complex, two of Saltmarsh Sparrow and three of Nelson’s Sparrow, all on the breeding grounds. At upper left is a Saltmarsh Sparrow of subspecies diversus photographed near Wallops Island, Virginia 1 June 2011 by Cory Gregory. In fresh and worn plumages, this subspecies is darker overall than the nominate subspecies, caudatus, depicted to its right, a bird in York County, Maine photographed by Brian E. Small in June 2006 (courtesy of WIRED). In contrast to the three taxa of Nelson’s Sparrow (below), Saltmarsh Sparrows have yellow-ochre color in the “facial triangle” but little of this color in the breast and sides; thus, Saltmarsh shows some contrast between the ground color of the underparts and strongly marked face. In Saltmarsh, the center of the breast shows well-defined streaks—not usually the case in Nelson’s. Saltmarsh Sparrows have longer bills, on average, than the two taxa of Nelson’s that nest in the continent’s interior, the nominate nelsoni and alterus.

Compared to Saltmarsh Sparrows, Nelson’s Sparrows show more continuity between the colors of the face and the breast/sides. Nelson’s also have more pure-toned facial triangles, lacking the dusky tones within this area, especially in the rear of the supercilium, shown by Saltmarsh. The nominate subspecies nelsoni (lower left), here photographed at Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota by Jim Burns 30 May 2000, is the most brightly colored of the three taxa, with vivid rufous wing coverts and bright yellowish tones in the face, breast, sides, and undertail coverts. These colors are often distinctly segregated from the white of the belly, unlike in Saltmarsh Sparrow. Although nominate nelsoni can have streaking below (like Saltmarsh), sometimes even in the center of the breast, its bright coloration quickly distinguishes it from Saltmarsh. The other subspecies of Nelson’s Sparrow that nests in the continent’s interior, alterus (lower middle), here photographed at Longridge Point, James Bay, Ontario on 26 July 2009 by Jean Iron, resembles the nominate in pattern but has colors, contrasts, and streaking that are subtler. In both interior subspecies of Nelson’s Sparrow, the supercilium is clean, without the dark markings or dusky tones typically present in Saltmarsh. Finally, the subspecies of Nelson’s that nests coastally, subvirgatus (lower right), here photographed at Scarborough Marsh, Maine 12 June 2006 by Bryan Holiday, shows even paler, less contrasting plumage tones than alterus, although the yellow of the face does typically join that of the breast, unlike in Saltmarsh Sparrow. This subspecies, sometimes called Acadian Sparrow, is distinctive by virtue of its overall pallor and rather long bill, close in size to that of Saltmarsh.
The two subspecies of Saltmarsh Sparrows, *diversus* and nominate *caudacutus*, are best distinguished by differences in the upperparts. Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007) describe the back of Saltmarsh Sparrows of the nominate subspecies, which nests from central New Jersey to Maine, as “raw umber, without strong dusky tone (browner)” (Figures 1, 2). They describe the upperpart pattern as “weakly contrasty (scapular centers raw umber), with black restricted as submarginal bar bordering dingy white or grayish fringes.” Of course, individuals in relatively fresh plumage (Figure 3) show this pattern most distinctly.

As Louis B. Bishop noted on collecting the type specimen of *diversus* at Wanchese, Roanoke Island, North Carolina 10 May 1901, this southern subspecies has more strongly contrasting upperparts than the nominate subspecies, with “the centers of the scapulars black (not umber) and broad black borders to buffy white fringes” of scapulars and back feathers (Figures 4, 5). Worn individuals look more uniformly dark brown above (Figure 6).

In the hand, the nominate subspecies shows a striking difference from southern *diversus* in the tertial pattern—a black submarginal stripe that contrasts strongly with an olive brown center (Figures 7, 8). Thus the tertials of *diversus* show almost no internal contrast, looking essentially blackish, though some may show faint contrast between the black submarginal stripe and blackish center. The more blackish tertial pattern thus contributes to the overall darker dorsal appearance of *diversus*. In excellent photographs of birds in the field, it is possible to see this distinction.
In addition to the back, the crown pattern differs between typical individuals of both diversus and nominate caudacutus of Saltmarsh Sparrow. In nominate caudacutus, the crown shows "black streaks more or less restricted to lateral stripes" and an "olive-grayish median stripe usually distinctly demarcated from brown lateral stripes," according to Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007) (Figures 9, 10). By contrast, subspecies diversus has the crown strongly streaked and stippled throughout with black, resulting in a darker and "messier" appearance than in the nominate—and also contributing to the appearance of a darker sparrow above (Figure 11). The stippling typically intrudes into the yellowish supercilium, making the facial triangle appear messy as well—very different from Nelson's Sparrow and especially Le Conte's Sparrow.

Of the wintering Saltmarsh Sparrows captured in the Virginia study, 8% (n=30) combine plumage characteristics of both subspecies as described by Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007), and such birds (Figure 12) are recorded as "diversus or caudacutus." Even in worn plumages, the darker dorsum of diversus stands out, a product of dark-centered scapulars and mantle feathers, solidly dark interiors of tertials, and typically a darker crown (Figures 13, 14). Figure 13 depicts a dorsally dark bird, thus almost certainly diversus, but the tertial pattern is a match for nominate caudacutus.
Figure 15. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia, 20 December 2008. Photograph by Bryan D. Watts/CCB.

Figure 16. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), near Grand Forks, North Dakota, June 2009. Photograph by Virginia L. Winder.

Figure 17. Adult Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), Tom's Cove, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia, 18 February 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.

Figure 18. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge near Upham, North Dakota, June 2010. Photograph by Virginia L. Winder.

Figure 19. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia, 20 December 2008. Photograph by Bryan D. Watts/CCB.

Figure 20. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), Bull's Landing, Virginia, 21 November 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.

Figure 21. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies nelsoni), near Grand Forks, North Dakota, June 2009. Photograph by Virginia L. Winder.

Of the three subspecies of Nelson's Sparrow, nominate nelsoni is the mostly brightly colored and shows the strongest contrasts in plumage. The facial triangle is bright yellow ochre, as in most aterus but not in duller subvirgatus. The area interior to this triangle, the auricular patch, is seldom a pure, distinctly gray patch in nominate nelsoni, as it is in the two other subspecies, instead being suffused or stippled with ochre from the surrounding facial triangle (Figures 15, 16, 17, 19, 20).

Nominate nelsoni normally shows a clean white belly bounded by buffy yellow sides and upper breast (Figures 15, 20, 21) and in fresh plumage shows distinct, rich brown flank streaking (Figures 15, 21), though this becomes less distinct with wear (Figure 17). Strong flank streaking sets them apart from subvirgatus, which show grayish, blurry streaking in the flanks, and from most aterus as well. Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007) indicate that the upperparts of nominate nelsoni are "moderately to strongly patterned, typically with extensive development of black centers in scapulars, strongly contrasting with white or buffy fringes" (Figures 15-21). Even worn birds show stronger dorsal contrasts than subvirgatus and most aterus, although some aterus and nelsoni are very similar dorsally.

Finally, nominate Nelson's usually have crowns strongly patterned with black streaking in the lateral stripes, giving them a rather narrow grayish median stripe (Figures 15-19). Unlike the other subspecies, many nominate nelsoni also have so much black in the crown that grayish median stripe is obscured (Figure 17), recalling the pepper-crowned appearance of divers Saltmarsh Sparrow.
The subspecies *alterus* of Nelson's Sparrow is intermediate in plumage between the nominate subspecies, which nests to the west, and *subvirgatus*, which nests coastally in the Northeast. Distinguishing *nelsoni* that are on the dull end of the spectrum from *alterus* that are more brightly plumaged than average is problematic, but many typical individuals can be identified in the hand and perhaps in the field, under optimal conditions (and with excellent photographs).

The subspecies *alterus* differs from nominate *nelsoni* in having a broader gray median crown stripe (Figures 22, 23, 26, 27), with blackish streaking mostly limited to the brown lateral crown stripes, rather than within the gray of the median. The gray auricular patch also tends to be more pure-toned and more distinctly set off from the facial triangle than in the nominate (Figures 22, 26, 27), even in worn plumage (Figure 24). In general, *alterus* shows warm umber tones above, contrasting with pale scapular edges, like the nominate, but this pattern is more muted than in most nominate birds, and indeed some in very fresh plumage show broad gray edges to scapulars (Figures 26, 27), whereas fresh nominate birds have more black-and-white tones above. Flank streaking tends to be gray and somewhat blurry in *alterus* (Figures 10-14), whereas nominate birds show more crisp, rufous-brown flank streaks.
In the coastal Virginia project, nearly a third of the Nelson's Sparrows of the interior subspecies (alterus and nelsoni) exhibit characteristics of both taxa and are therefore recorded as "alterus or nelsoni." In our correspondence with biologists working with breeding Nelson's of all three taxa, we have learned that individual alterus approach nelsoni in several aspects of plumage—in some cases more closely than the published literature suggests.

For instance, flank streaks can be dark and distinct in some alterus (Figure 28), although in most cases, just one or two streaks can be called "distinct." Some individuals in relatively fresh plumage that appear to be alterus in most aspects of plumage show strong flank streaking (Figure 29); in the Virginia project, such birds are recorded as "alterus or nelsoni." With wear, flank streaks in alterus tend to blur and fade quickly (Figure 30), whereas nelsoni streaks remain distinct even in faking, worn plumages (Figures 21, 31). Crown streaking in alterus is also more variable than is widely known, and some breeding birds show dark stippling in the interior of the gray median stripe, though this is mostly limited to the posterior half (Figure 32). Some nelsoni do show fairly pure-toned, broad gray median crowns (Figure 34). Even worn nelsoni in midwinter and late winter, however, usually retain their typical plumage characteristics, including strong contrasts in the dorsum, stippled median crowns, and strong flank streaking (Figures 35–37).

In the coastal Virginia project, birds that appear to have most traits of alterus but that show one or more feature more typical of nelsoni, such as mottled median crown (Figure 33) or moderately streaked flanks (Figure 29), are recorded as "alterus or nelsoni." We suspect that many such birds are alterus. Analysis of isotopic and genetic origin in feather and blood samples may shed more light on the provenance of such individuals and thus refine our understanding of the plumages of the interior subspecies.
Most Nelsons' Sparrows of the Acadian subspecies, *alterus*, are rather distinctive, though some more brightly and distinctly marked individuals approach *nelsoni* in appearance. Their bills average longer than those of interior-nesting Nelson's, and this lends them an appearance in profile that is often closer to Saltmarsh Sparrow (whose bill is only marginally longer, and with which Acadian is known to hybridize) than to interior-nesting Nelson's. However, this difference is reliably used only with birds in the hand.

In the field, most *subvirgatus* show very little dark streaking in the brownish lateral crown stripes, mostly posteriorly, and most lack dark streaks entirely. By contrast, nominate *nelsoni* show heavy, extensive dark streaking, and most *alterus* have moderate stippling usually limited to lateral crown stripes. In *subvirgatus*, the clean, rather wide gray median stripe of the crown shows less contrast with the brownish lateral stripes than in the interior-nesting taxa. The gray auricular patch is fairly distinct and pure-tined in *subvirgatus*, unlike in the nominate. Streaking on the sides appears blurry in *subvirgatus*, very unlike in the nominate and some *alterus*, and the back is dull gray or olive-gray, less patterned and striking than in the interior-nesting subspecies, which show more strongly contrasting pale scapular edges. Overall, the appearance is of a grayer, more pallid bird than *alterus* and especially nominate *nelsoni*.

On the left side of this page (Figures 38, 40, 42) are breeding Acadian Nelson's, from top to bottom: an adult in relatively fresh plumage (in June), an adult with plumage slightly more worn (19 July), and an adult photographed very late in the breeding season (17 September). On the right side are three Acadian Nelson's banded in Virginia: a relatively fresh bird banded 21 November (Figures 39, 41; top two images), followed by worn birds from 2 February and 28 February (Figures 43, 44, respectively). All of the birds depicted are more pallid and less distinctively marked than most *alterus*, regardless of wear. When seen poorly, some very worn Acadian Nelson's (cf. Figure 44) have even been mistaken not just for Saltmarsh Sparrow but even for the similarly large-billed Seaside Sparrow.


Figure 39. Adult Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Bull's Landing, Virginia, 21 November 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.

Figure 40. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Lubec, Maine, 19 July 2004. Photograph by Garth McElroy/VIREO.

Figure 41. Adult Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Bull's Landing, Virginia, 21 November 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.

Figure 42. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Lubec, Maine, 17 September 2003. Photograph by Garth McElroy/VIREO.

Figure 43. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Bull's Landing, Virginia, 2 February 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.

Figure 44. Nelson's Sparrow (subspecies *subvirgatus*), Parramore Island, Virginia, 28 February 2010. Photograph by Fletcher M. Smith/CCB.
Just as there are individual Nelson’s Sparrows that appear intermediate between alterus and nominate nelsoni, based on current understanding of those taxa, so there are some individuals that show characteristics associated with both alterus and subvirgatus.

In subvirgatus, freshly plumaged birds show the brightest plumage tones and sharpest contrasts, but even such birds (Figure 45) are very weakly marked below and show less contrast in the dorsum than alterus in similar plumage state. However, some individuals with relatively long bills (suggesting subvirgatus) show especially rich plumage tones and contrasts (Figure 46), more typical of alterus. Figure 47 shows a typical fresh subvirgatus on left, a bird recorded as subvirgatus/alterus on the right. In the Virginia banding project, only six birds have been recorded as subvirgatus/alterus. Because much of our understanding of subvirgatus comes from studies in Atlantic coastal marshes of New England, the plumages of subvirgatus nesting in the western parts of the range, such as along the Saint Lawrence River (Figure 48), are probably under-represented in samples and under-appreciated in the literature. It is conceivable that such birds are more richly colored than New England nesting birds, which may carry more genetic material from Saltmarsh Sparrows (of the paler nominate subspecies), whose range they share and with which they occasionally hybridize.

Saltmarsh Sparrow × Nelson’s Sparrow hybrids are not rare but are little known in the field, and photographs of such birds are few. Figure 49, believed to be such a hybrid, would certainly be identified as an Ammodramus sparrow, probably as a sharp-tailed sparrow, based on the head pattern; however, the bold brown- and straw-colored streaking on the back is not a pattern one would expect from either putative parental taxon, nominate Saltmarsh or subvirgatus Nelsoni. The head pattern, too, is unusually bold and well defined for either taxa. Of course, phenotypes of many hybrids do not simply appear intermediate between the parents. Figure 50 depicts a Saltmarsh Sparrow (of the nominate subspecies; right) with a known Nelson’s × Saltmarsh hybrid (left). In this field, the hybrid would surely be a source of confusion: the crown appears intermediate between these taxa, but the underparts show extensive motting—perhaps the resulting combination of strongly streaked central breast (from Saltmarsh) with tendency for very diffuse ventral markings (from Acadian Nelsoni). Figure 51-53 represent birds photographed at Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, Maine, where ongoing genetic studies have revealed that most nesting sharp-tailed sparrows are hybrids of Saltmarsh and Nelson’s Sparrows. Although results of DNA analysis of the depicted birds have not yet been assessed, their plumages combine aspects of both species. Most hybrids are long-billed, as their parental taxa are. Some show the more richly colored, pure-toned facial triangle of Nelsoni, with some of the ochre also present on the sides, breast, and/ or undertail coverts, but with a contrasting white belly and heavy breast/flank streaking typical of Saltmarsh (Figures 51, 52; cf. Figure 51). Others, especially worn birds (Figure 53), show extensive diffuse streaking below (cf. Figure 50). There is at least one specimen of a Le Conte’s Sparrow × Nelson’s Sparrow hybrid from James Bay in Canada, so caution is always advisable in the identification of odd-looking individual Ammodramus.
Continued from page 368

along the Weskeag River in Maine, and hybrids are known (Hodgman et al. 2002, Shriver et al. 2005, Walsh et al. 2011). In addition, we have caught individual sparrows that exhibit plumage traits of alterus Nelson’s but that had longer bills than noted by Greenlaw and Woolfenden (2007). Again, research on the breeding grounds indicates that some alterus do occasionally have longer bills (Virginia L. Winder, pers. comm.).

In the photographs presented here, we attempt to convey some of the useful features, and pitfalls, in assignment of Saltmarsh and Nelson’s sparrows to subspecies—illustrating some of the subtle, little-known features described by Greenlaw and Woolfenden along with several interesting aspects of plumage noted during the Center for Conservation Biology project. Some of these plumage features will not be visible with a quick look, but with advances in digital photography, it may be possible to study images in great detail and from there refine our understanding of sharp-tailed sparrow distribution during the nonbreeding season. It is our hope that analyses of isotopes and genetic material contained in blood and feathers collected during the Center for Conservation Biology project may provide further insight into differences between alterus and nominate Nelson’s, for instance, as well as shedding further light on the status of migrant and wintering marsh sparrows in this region.

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Literature cited


1 - This Mountain Bluebird was a great find offshore at Neka Bay, near Hoonah, Chichagof Island, Alaska 18 December 2010. Most Alaskan records of this rare annual fall migrant come from the mainland. Photograph by Nick R. Hajdukovich.

2 - Several Swamp Sparrows that arrived in autumn in Alaska's Southeast lingered into winter, such as this Ketchikan bird, here 26 December 2010. Photograph by Jim H. Lewis.

3 - Due to overlap in their plumage characters, Peter Pyle (Identification Guide to North American Birds) considered distinguishing Eastern and Western Meadowlarks "one of the most difficult in-hand species identification problems." The extensively yellowish malar area and very limited amount of white in the outer three rectrices of this individual at Ketchikan, Alaska 29 December 2010 make the identification of this Western Meadowlark relatively straightforward. Photograph by Steven C. Heinl.

4 - This Yellow Rail was one of two banded 18 January 2011 in a wet pine savannah near Bayou La Batre, Mobile County, Alabama. Photograph by Eric C. Soehren.

5 - Maryland's second Anna's Hummingbird visited the yard of Karen and Don Serra in early (here 9) December 2010 in Middletown, Frederick County. The bird was banded and confirmed to be a young male. Photograph by Bill Hubick.

6 - One of an amazing seven in Louisiana reported during fall and winter 2010-2011, this handsome male Broad-billed Hummingbird resided near Milton, Lafayette Parish 25 (here 29) December through 20 February. Photograph by Erik J. Johnson.
1. At Tors Cove, Newfoundland, this snipe was discovered 18 February 2011 (here). Its pale yellowish upperparts made the finder suspect that it could be a Common Snipe, a species that nests as near as Iceland. Eventually, the bird stretched its wings, showing the starkly white underwing coverts. Wilson's Snipe are more heavily barred in this area. Photograph by Dave Brown.

2. The pattern of the outer rectrices can help distinguish Common from Wilson's Snipe. Common Snipe have very little distinct barring in these feathers (as shown here), whereas Wilson's has a narrower outer rectrix that shows several distinct bars. This Common Snipe at Tors Cove 18 February 2011 provided a first record for Newfoundland; Labrador has a specimen record from 1927. Photograph by Paul Linegar.

3. Although Yellow-shafted Flickers and hybrid flickers are fairly regular in the West in fall and winter, Red-shafteds are extremely rare in the East, and those that are reported are seldom well documented. This apparent female Red-shafted Flicker was an excellent find near Maysville, Benton County, Arkansas 10 December 2010. Photograph by Joaque Brown.

4. This wayward immature male Scott's Oriole, Arkansas's second, was present at Benton, Saline County 4-11 February 2011 and seemed particularly out of place in this snowscape on 5 February. Photograph by Peggy Roberson.

5. Possibly representing vagrants of the Pacific Coast subspecies californicus (or possibly individual variation in the nominate subspecies), small numbers of red-pouched Brown Pelicans continued to be reported along the Louisiana coast in winter 2010-2011; this individual was near Cameron, Cameron Parish 6 January. Photograph by Dave Patton.
1 - This immature male Baikal Teal visited Gilbert Water Ranch 2-10 (here 4) December 2010, providing a first Arizona record. Photograph by James Jerome.

2 - This Song Sparrow of the pale endemic Baja California Sur subspecies rivularis was one of five birds in the vicinity of Las Animas in the Sierra El Mechudo 14-15 (here 14) January 2011 that established a new southerly limit for the subspecies. Photograph by Víctor Ayala.

3 & 4 - These images illustrate two large-billed subspecies of Savannah Sparrow: darker, slimmer-billed magdalenae (right) and paler, thicker-billed rostratus (left), both at Todos Santos, Baja California Sur 9 March 2011. The former breeds approximately 150 kilometers to the northwest and is primarily sedentary. The latter nests around the northern Gulf of California and has a well-established pattern of dispersal to the Pacific coast from southern California to southern Baja California Sur. Photographs by Steven G. Mlodinow.

5 - This male Bullock's Oriole was present at Douglas Township, Pennsylvania 31 December through the end of the season. It was often seen feeding on apples and provided a first for Montgomery County. Photograph by Tom Johnson.
1. Great Potoo has been occasionally reported in Belize but was not photographically documented there until 2009. Photographs of this bird at the Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education in the northern part of Toledo District 8 February 2011 provided only the second confirmed record for the country. A scant two weeks later, several were reported along a short stretch of the Rio Grande in the southern part of Toledo District, including a pair at a potential nest site in early March. Photograph by William Garcia.

2. Resplendent Quetzal is a cloud forest species that moves downslope seasonally; in Costa Rica, quetzals are seen well into the foothills on the Caribbean slope. But this immature male found at the La Selva Biological Station near sea level on 13 December 2010 was quite unexpected. Photograph by Robert Moore.

3. Colorado's third Tufted Duck rewarded birders who sought it on 17 January 2011 (here), the day of its discovery at Longmont, Boulder County. The pond it occupied froze over that night, and the bird was not subsequently relocated, despite extensive searching of other area lakes with available open water. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

4. This Red Fox Sparrow turned up on the Boulder Christmas Bird Count 19 December 2010 and lingered at a feeder into spring (here 11 January 2011). Photograph by John Barr.

5. This male Harlequin Duck was found by Stephen Kloiber on the Delaware River near Riverton, Pennsylvania 28 (here 31) December 2010 and remained until 20 February 2011, providing a first record for Northampton County. Photograph by Rick Wiltaut.

6. A first for Florida and the United States, this Greater Ani at Crandon Park Gardens, Key Biscayne, Miami-Dade County was photographed 16 December 2010 while apparently eating a lizard. It was not seen subsequently. This mainly South American species has recently been found in several countries to the north. Photograph by Alex Wang.
1 • Red-breasted Sapsuckers are regular winter residents in eastern Nevada but are very rare visitors to Utah, where there are only eight accepted records. This Red-breasted Sapsucker, apparently of the nominate subspecies, lingered at Zion National Park, Washington County from 11 (here 15) December 2010 through 16 January 2011. Photograph by Rick Friddle.

2 • The first for Delaware in over 50 years, and only the state's second, this Northern Wheatear was found by Colin Campbell at Fox Point State Park, New Castle County 22 December 2010. It was almost continuously present through 27 (here 24) December, to the delight of hundreds who came to look for it. Photograph by Howard B. Eskin.

3 • This first-winter Golden-crowned Sparrow provided an overdue first record for Maryland at Chesapeake Farms, Kent County. Found on 19 (here 20) December 2010, the sparrow stayed in this same hedgerow until mid-February 2011. Photograph by Bill Hubick.

4 • This first-fall female Hermit Warbler was present at Sunken Meadow State Park, Long Island, New York 4-8 (here 7) December 2010, the first state record. Photograph by Rick Wiltrout.

5 • In what may have been the strongest flight of the species on record in the states and provinces around the eastern Great Lakes, this Hoary Redpoll was a much-watched visitor at Beaver Lake Nature Center, Baldwinsville, Onondaga County, New York 8 February 2011. Photograph by Jay McGowan.

6 • This cooperative adult Golden-crowned Sparrow spent most of the winter (here 9 January 2011) at Linn, Osage County, Missouri. Photograph by Joshua P. Uffman.
1 - Virginia's second, this adult female Mountain Bluebird was discovered near the village of Oyster, Northampton County on 30 December 2010 (here); it was seen regularly for a week, then sporadically through 29 January 2011. The state's other record is from a farm only a few miles to the south, 27-28 November 2004. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

2 - Furnishing a first confirmed record for Jalisco, this Pileated Flycatcher was located at Barranca el Choncho on 15 January 2011. Photograph by Jorge Montejo.

3 - One of four Townsend's Solitaries in New England (and one of two in New Hampshire) in winter 2010-2011, Jason Pietrzak found this bird at Bow 1 January. It was last reported 17 January, although there are third-hand reports of sightings in March. Photograph by Jason Pietrzak.

4 - Previously unknown in the United States away from Arizona, this Rufous-winged Sparrow was one of at least three present in Guadalupe Canyon, Hidalgo County, New Mexico 3 (here 8) January into March 2011. Photograph by Jerry R. Oldenettel.

5 - Unprecedented in December in Ontario, this Wilson's Phalarope lingered until 5 (here 1) December 2010 at Blenheim Sewage Lagoon. Photograph by Alan Wormington.

6 - Setting a record-late date for Point Pelee, Ontario, this male Scarlet Tanager appeared 8 December 2010. Photograph by Alan Wormington.
1 • A Mountain Plover, Washington's sixth ever, enlivened Ocean City, Grays Harbor County 9-19 (here 16) January 2011; all but a May 1968 record from eastern Washington have occurred from late October through February on the outer coast. Photograph by Gregg Thompson.

2 • This Cassin's Vireo was one of two found in Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon in January 2011 (here 8 January). Another was found in Portland in February, making the Oregon and Washington region's winter high count for this species. Photograph by W. Douglas Robinson.

3 • This Fieldfare, the third for the Gaspe Peninsula of Quebec, fed on crabapples at a residence at l'Anse-au-Griffon 10 (here 20) January–10 March 2011. Most of Quebec's ten records are from the eastern part of the province; the westernmost record and also the first was from Rigaud, west of Montreal, in 1976. Photograph by Albini Couture.

4 • A very rare winter visitor to the South Atlantic region, this Sprague's Pipit was sharply photographed in Macon County, Georgia on 5 December 2010. Photograph by Luke Theodorou.

5 • Banded near Mobile, Alabama in September 2010, this adult male Buff-bellied Hummingbird appeared on Jekyll Island, Georgia 25 October 2010 and was identified 17 December. The bird was last seen 23 March (here 25 January) 2011. Georgia has two prior records of the species. Photograph by Roy Brown.
1 • Though a few Rufous Hummingbirds winter at feeders in Oklahoma, most spend only part of the season, as was true of this bird at Collinsville, Tulsa County, last noted 26 (here 22) December 2010. Rufous Hummingbirds in the Midwest, Northeast, and parts of the Southeast are also often highly mobile in the winter season. Photograph by Steve Metz.

2 • Empidonax flycatchers are challenging to identify, especially when silent and seen out of range or out of season. In Texas, vagrants sometimes spend the winter, permitting close study, as did this Hammond’s Flycatcher at Rose Hill Cemetery in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, present from 16 (here 17) January through the end of February 2011. Photograph by Willie Sekula.

3 • A White-throated Thrush was discovered at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas 29 December 2010 and stayed through the winter (here 11 February). It was the longest-staying White-throated of any of the dozen recorded in Texas. Photograph by Robert Epstein.

4 • Completely unexpected was this male Yellow-faced Grassquit that frequented the campgrounds of Goose Island State Park, Aransas County, Texas 30 January (here 16 February) through 20 March 2011. The bird furnished the fourth record for Texas and the first away from the Rio Grande corridor. Photograph by Robert Epstein.

5 • This young Broad-winged Hawk in Encino, Los Angeles County, California 28 November 2010 through 20 February 2011 (here 8 December) provides one of a very few recent records of wintering in California. Photograph by Douglas W. Aquillard.
1 & 2 - Michigan's first and second Ross's Gulls were found on 14 December 2010 on the Keweenaw Bay Christmas Bird Count by Jeff Lanfois, Will Lewis, and Joe Youngman. The birds were out over Keweenaw Bay between L'Anse and Baraga. Fewer than 40 Ross's Gulls have been documented in the Lower 48 United States, and these birds mark the first time that multiple Ross's have been seen anywhere south of Canada. Photographs by J. D. Phillips.

3 & 4 - These Common Pochards were among four found 6 (here 7) February 2011 at a flooded sandpit on the east coast of Barbados, a first for the West Indies. Although pochards are reported annually in Iceland, the only confirmed record from eastern North America is of a male at Saint-Barthélemy, Quebec 2 May 2008. Photographs by Richard Roach.

5 - Three Pine Siskins found on the Grand Bahama Christmas Count 5 January 2011 were the first ever recorded in the Bahamas and the West Indies. They could not be located the next day. Photograph by Bruce Hallett.
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