



# Records of Vermont Birds

## WINTER SEASON 1 DECEMBER 1975 - 31 MARCH 1976

The 1975-76 Winter Season could best be described as three seasons in one. With mild spring and fall, birds lingered late and arrived early bringing numerous species into the winter records which would normally be absent. Perhaps the most noticeable aspect of the season was the absence of finches which were replaced, in part, by large numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, Boreal Chickadees and Common Redpolls.

DON CLARK  
EDITOR

### GAVIIDAE: LOONS

COMMON LOON A single bird on Kellogg's Bay, Ferrisburg, December 15 (WS,WGE,BPG) was down considerably from the 10 reported for last December. A bird was in Burlington Harbor (BSE, ORE,CSP) January 4 and March 25 was the final report of the season with a bird at the Brattleboro Retreat Meadows, which remained the rest of the month (LMP).

RED-THROATED LOON An injured bird was found in Wallingford on December 13 (PDU) and later released.

### PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES

RED-NECKED GREBE, an irregular migrant, showed up December 17 on Lake Champlain in Panton (AP) followed by an unexpected sighting on the White River in West Hartford on the December 27 Hanover Christmas Bird Count (WGE,GFE).

HORNED GREBE numbers were down markedly on Lake Champlain with only 9 birds turning up on Christmas Counts in December and a final report of a single bird on Button Bay on January 2 (WS, BPG).

PIED-BILLED GREBE showed up unusually early with sightings in West Salisbury on March 27 (SF) and Springfield on March 28 (PMB).

### ARDEIDAE: HERONS

GREAT BLUE HERON showed up first on Kreuger's slough, Ferrisburg on March 17 (BPG), followed a week later by 2 birds in Marshfield on March 25 (CAM) and one in East Montpelier on March 31 (MFM).

### ANATIDAE: WATERFOWL

WHISTLING SWAN There was a possible sighting of this bird on February 18 on "open water in marshes" in North Dorset (PMB). No other details were given and this is an exceptionally early movement for this irregular visitor.

CANADA GOOSE A few birds lingered into December due to the mild weather; one drooping into a Bellows Falls gas station on December 15 (DC) and 4 were observed on the December 20 Ferrisburg Christmas Count. The first spring movement was noted on February 25 in Berlin with a flock of 35 flying north (PMB), followed by 7 in Wallingford on February 26 (PDU). March brought the main influx of first sightings with buildups of 300 in Burlington on March 25 (WGE,

B&ORE,CSP) and 700 in Whiting on March 27 (WS, SF).

BRANT were present at Button Bay on Lake Champlain in exceptionally high numbers (16) on December 23 (D&AP,B&TCG). As Doug Kibbe noted, "This is an extraordinary total for a species which has not been recorded on a Vermont Christmas Count in the past thirty years."

SNOW GOOSE movement was first observed on March 17 with 35 birds on the Connecticut River in Wilder (PMB), followed by a sighting in Bradford on March 20 (MEH). Only three other flocks were reported: Ferrisburg (45) on March 25 (B&TCG), South Hero (18) (JV) and Whiting (65) (WS,SF), both on March 27.

MALLARD Small numbers wintered over, particularly in the Champlain area with the Ferrisburg, Burlington and Bennington Christmas Counts turning up 3, 35 and 6 respectively. The main influx began in late March with buildups of 2-20 birds on the Retreat Meadows on March 25 (LPM), 32+ pairs on the Springfield Meadows (DC) and 50 near Middlebury on March 27 (SF).

BLACK DUCK, like the Mallard, remained late in most areas, showing up on four Christmas Counts (Saxton's River 6, Rutland 10, Burlington 91, and Ferrisburg 163), and wintering over in a few locales. A buildup came in late March with highs of 45+ in Springfield on March 26 (EE), 200 near Middlebury on March 27 (SF), and 80 on March 29 in Burlington (WGE).

PINTAIL There was an exceptionally early record of 2 birds in an open stretch of Otter Creek on February 12 (WS) which may have wintered over. The main movement came between March 26-29 when 7 reports were received, the high being 80 in Burlington on March 29 (WGE,B&ORE).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL The Ferrisburg Christmas Count had the last bird of the year. March 21 a single male was behind the North Springfield Dam in Weathersfield (EE). Burlington had 6 on March 25 (B&ORE,WGE), Springfield Meadows 8 by March 28 (DC) and Herrick's Cove 2 on March 27 (DC).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL Early arrivals of this species came during the warm spell in late March with single birds from Weathersfield and White River Jct. and 4 from Burlington (EE,PMB, WGE et al).

AMERICAN WIDGEON A good but early movement began on March 21 when 2 were observed at the South Hero railroad trestle (JV). Movement continued throughout the month totaling 26 birds in 8 reports with a high of 12 in Weybridge on March 28 (WS, DaB).

NORTHERN SHOVELER A single bird showed up in Burlington at the early date of March 28 (WGE, JAM), the only report for the season.

WOOD DUCK A bird remained in Shelburne on December 3 (WS) and 2 early males were observed on Otter Creek in South Wallingford on February 24 (PMB). An average migration began the end of March with a high of 20+ pairs by March 26 at the Springfield Meadows (DC).

REDHEAD, a rare visitor to our state was recorded on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count in December. RING-NECKED DUCK were in above average numbers for the winter season with birds still at Newport (2), Herrick's Cove (pair) and Ferrisburg

Redhead Ferrisburg CC

(Christmas Count 5) by mid December. The first Spring sighting was in Springfield (4) on March 21 (DC) followed by reports from Burlington, Rockingham, Addison and Ferrisburg.

CANVASBACK had a good season in southern Vermont with a single male remaining at Herrick's Cove through December 21 and 11 birds returning on March 26 building to 22 by March 28 (DC et al). Lake Champlain was down considerably from last year with just a little over half of last year's total of 4000+ on the January Waterfowl Survey. 9 were observed in Shelburne in early February (WS,WGE et al) and a high of 350-400 were seen at South Hero on March 13 (JV).

GREATER SCAUP, observed in small numbers in the Champlain valley throughout the period, were felt to be "scarcer than usual". The high count of 22 came from Burlington on December 12 (WGE).

LESSER SCAUP remained at Herrick's Cove (4-6) through December 17 (DC). March 30 brought the first (4-6) returning birds to Brattleboro (LPM). Small numbers were on Champlain most of the winter with a high of 740 on the January Waterfowl Survey.

COMMON GOLDENEYE were present in the Champlain valley in good numbers throughout the period with highs of 200 in Ferrisburg on December 17 (D&AP,B&TCG) and 1,697 on the Waterfowl Survey in January. Numbers seemed to be down in the southern half for the season.

BUFFLEHEAD remained late in December on Champlain with a maximum of 16 in Burlington on December 13 (WGE,B&ORE) and showed up again in their regular low numbers the end of March.

OLDSQUAW, an occasional visitor during migration showed up at two locales in December. Newport had its first record there on December 14 (FO, JW) and one turned up on the Connecticut River at White River Jct. on December 27 (WGE,GFE et al).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER There was one a piece for the Ferrisburg and Burlington Christmas Counts in December with the only other report being a high of 4 on Lake Champlain on January 2 (WS, BPG,JW).

SURF SCOTER The only 2 reported were at Colchester Point on the Burlington Christmas Count on December 21 (FO,CSP).

RUDDY DUCK A late bird remaining at Herrick's Cove through December 17 (DC) became that area's first record.

HOODED MERGANSER Present in average numbers starting in January with one in White River Jct. on January 22 (WGE,GFE). The end of March brought the greatest number of reports with 1-4 birds in Weathersfield (EE), Gale Meadows, Winhall (WJN), West Salisbury (SF,WS) and Craftsbury (FO,CSP).

COMMON MERGANSER were in good numbers in areas of open water building in March with highs of 110 in Burlington on March 13 (WGE et al), 15 in White River Jct. on March 14 (EH) and 43 at Herrick's Cove on March 26 (DC).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER At least 2 birds wintered in the Burlington-Ferrisburg area with a high of 14 on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count in December.

## CATHARTIDAE: VULTURES

TURKEY VULTURE There were a number of exceptionally early reports for this species starting with a single bird in Addison on March 13 (RM). This was followed by the main movement a week later with birds in Bristol, Salisbury, Charlotte, Vergennes, Rockingham, Rutland, Bomoseen and Hartland (WS, PDU,TCG,DC,PMB,EH). This species is definitely on the increase with the most noticeable change in the Champlain Valley, particularly around Addison.

## ACCIPITRIDAE: HAWKS AND EAGLES

GOSHAWK There were 15 reported individuals for the winter season with birds turning up on six of the Christmas Counts.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK This accipiter was more common this winter than in previous years with over a dozen reported for the period. Most were seen while visiting feeders, which probably had a lot to do with it. Reports were pretty evenly spaced throughout the state.

COOPER'S HAWK was reported from four locales. Wallingford had an immature on December 10 (B&NWW) followed by one in Rutland on February 22 (WS), one in Woodstock on March 11 (PMB) and one in Craftsbury on March 29 (FO,JW et al).

RED-TAILED HAWK This species wintered well with 29 showing up on eight Christmas Counts alone. The total reports for the season brought sightings well over 60 birds.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK A bird observed in Burlington on December 2 (WGE) finished the year. Birds began to return early at Clarendon on February 15 (LHP), Winhall on February 25 (WJN) and Shelburne on February 28 (WGE,B&ORE). The other three sightings in Hubbardton, East Craftsbury, and Roxbury (FHM,FO,EH) the latter part of March brought the total for the season to 7+.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK A bird missing several primary feathers was recorded in Shelburne on March 20 (WGE et al) and one was found in Ferrisburg on March 25 (B&TCG). These are exceptionally early records for the state.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK showed up on the Burlington (3), Ferrisburg (11) and Bennington (1) Christmas Counts and one was present in Wilmington on December 1 (WN). Numbers totaled about 10 birds for the period with the last observation in Windsor on March 28 when 2 were observed (PMB).

BALD EAGLE was reported from three locales for the period. Immatures were observed in Braintree on December 13 (PMB) and Woodstock on March 27 (PMB) and an adult was in Ferrisburg in late March (BPG).

MARSH HAWK, observed in its regular small winter numbers, was found on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count in December and 2 were observed in "a wet field" in Bridport on March 28 (PMB,EH).

## FALCONIDAE: FALCONS

GYRFALCON A possible gray phase of this species was observed briefly on Appletree Point, Burlington, on February 25 (AP).

PEREGRINE FALCON There was a report of this species, the first for a number of winters, on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count, December 20 (WGE,BPG,WS).

MERLIN were reported near feeders four times during the season: Norwich, December 25 and March 17 (HSR), Wallingford, January 20, 26 (BCW) and Reading on January 25 (MPR).

AMERICAN KESTREL 12 birds showed up on six Christmas Counts and small numbers trickled in through January. Birds returned in average numbers by mid February with reports of mating by the end of March in Burlington and Wallingford (WGE,B&NWW).

## PHASIANIDAE: TURKEY AND GROUSE

TURKEY This introduced species has proliferated with the Rutland and Saxton's River Christmas Count totaling 14 and 10 respectively. Norwich and Ferrisburg each had 1 in March (HSR LBi).

RUFFED GROUSE were reported in average numbers when recorded but found they were overlooked in most areas.

## RALLIDAE: COOTS

AMERICAN COOT was found on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count in December and observed at Appletree Point in Burlington on February 29 and March 3 (B&ORE,WGE,CSP).

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## CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS

KILLDEER began an early, but slow, movement with 1 in Ferrisburg on February 26 (BPG, BSE et al) and 8 in Rawsonville on February 29 (AM). The high counts came in March with 25+ in Brattleboro on March 20 (LPM), 13 in Craftsbury and 17 in Newport on March 27 (FO, CSP). Birds were reported paired on the nesting area in Clarendon by March 29 (LHP).

## SCOLOPACIDAE: WOODCOCK, SNIPE, SANDPIPERS

AMERICAN WOODCOCK There were exceptionally early reports in Chester (1) on March 4 and Grafton (2) on March 5 (PS, DC). Singing began the end of the month with 5 birds on March 25 in Grafton (DC) and March 30 in Winhall (WJN).  
COMMON SNIPE showed up very early this year with a bird in Burlington on February 12-17 (BSE, WGE) and 2 at Craftsbury on March 27 (FO).  
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER There was a possible sighting of this species "skimming over a humpy pasture overgrown with alders" in Danby on March 30. A good description of the bird was given but it is an "improbable place, improbable time".

## LARIDAE: GULLS

GLAUCOUS GULL This is the second year this species has shown up in the Burlington area where it was reported from March 18-29 (WGE et al).  
ICELAND GULL This species, as uncommon in Vermont as is the Glaucous, was found at the Interval Burlington Dump from December 16 - March 20 with a high of 3 (B&ORE, WGE et al).  
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL Present in small numbers in the Champlain Valley through most of the winter, with the Burlington and Ferrisburg Christmas Count finding highs of 17 and 8 respectively.  
HERRING GULL By far the season's most common gull was reported usually in numbers under 50 a day until late March when large numbers began to appear; maximum 600 on March 17 in Burlington (WGE et al).  
RING-BILLED GULL A small population was present on Champlain throughout the period reaching highs of 1000+ through March 26-28. Birds were observed at Brattleboro and Herrick's Cove in small numbers during March and 2 were observed in Craftsbury on March 31 where they are considered unusual (FO).  
BONAPARTE'S GULL Small numbers (5 on Ferrisburg Christmas Count) were on Lake Champlain until it froze over. They were reported again in Burlington (4) on February 28 (WGE, CSP) where large numbers were reported in late March.

## COLUMBIDAE: DOVES

ROCK DOVE were found in large numbers as usual.  
MOURNING DOVE wintered through most of the state, visiting feeders regularly. The Bennington and Burlington Christmas Counts brought in over three fourths of the total for the state with 207 and 175 respectively.

## STRIGIDAE: OWLS

SCREECH OWL Reports came from North Ferrisburg (where it visited a feeder from December 11 - February 10, fide BPG), Woodstock (2) on March 11 (PMB) and Burlington (1) on March 24 (WGE).  
GREAT HORNED OWL showed up in good numbers with 14 birds from 11 locales. The Ferrisburg Christmas Count got the high of 3 birds in December and 2 were in Wallingford on January 18 (NWW). Other reports, statewide, trickled in throughout the season.  
SNOWY OWL This was not a good Snowy year with only a few scattered reports from Charlotte (KSm), Ferrisburg (BPG), Burlington (WGE), Londonderry (PMB), Quechee (RMB) and Taftsville (GAR).  
BARRED OWL topped all others with no less than 22 reports statewide. A bird was observed in Weathersfield in mid January when it killed a Wood Duck in the Ellis' waterfowl collection and returned a number of times to feed.

LONG-EARED OWL A single bird was observed on the Eastman property in Burlington from March 20-25 (B&ORE et al). There were also two possible reports of the species in Woodstock during the period.

SAW-WHET OWL had an average year with birds turning up in Bolton (HBD), Reading (DA), Bethel (chasing mice on front porch-LP), Hartland (PMB) and Bridgewater (PMB).

## ALCEDINIDAE: KINGFISHER

BELTED KINGFISHER A large number lingered with overwintering birds in Burlington, Brattleboro and White River Jct. The first return was on March 18 in Woodstock (MCH) and first reports continued regularly throughout the month.

## PICIDAE: WOODPECKER

COMMON FLICKER A bird on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count was the last of the season. Birds returned early in most areas with the first in Winhall on March 25 (WJN).

PILEATED WOODPECKER, on the increase, showed up on five Christmas Counts and was reported regularly statewide throughout the period with 3 drumming in Clarendon on March 27 (LHP).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER showed up in Ferrisburg on December 23 (LB) and at Sudbury from December 30-31 (AP).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER A rare winter holdover, female, remained in the West Brattleboro area from mid December - March where it visited a suet feeder regularly (ASW). The only other report was a "very, very early" bird in Winhall on March 29 (WJN).

HAIRY WOODPECKER showed up in regular numbers throughout the season except for the Northeast Kingdom where they have "declined over the last two years". (FO) Bea Guyett made note of an influx on December 13 of what seemed to her to be a bigger and more white possible subspecies which remained the rest of the winter.

DOWNY WOODPECKER Average numbers statewide except for the Northeast Kingdom. A decline in Middlebury was noted in February.

BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER Three on the Island Pond Christmas Count was considered an average number for this rather uncommon species. A single male was reported on December 14 at a feeder in Braintree (PMB).

NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER A single bird, rare at all seasons in Vermont, was observed in Clarendon on January 6 (LHP).

## TYRANNIDAE: FLYCATCHERS

EASTERN PHOEBE The main influx began on March 21 when it was reported from Wallingford (BCW), Marlboro (WN) and Clarendon (where they were considered common-LHP), and continued in good numbers throughout the month.

## ALAUDIDAE: LARKS

HORNED LARKS showed up on five Christmas Counts (195 individuals) and continued in average numbers until the end of February when buildups were noted along Champlain with 250 in Shelburne on March 4 (WGE, B&ORE).

## HIRUNDINIDAE: SWALLOWS

TREE SWALLOWS returned very early with the first 2 in Ferrisburg on March 25. 50+ were in West Rutland Marsh on March 26 (PMB, LHP) and 40+ were at Herrick's Cove on March 28 (DC, PMB). 1 at Gale Meadows on March 30 was considered very early (WJN).

## CORVIDAE: JAYS, CROWS, RAVENS

GRAY JAY A small population was present in the Northeast Kingdom with 6 showing up on the Island Pond Christmas Count. A few birds were also reported for Brattleboro, Bridgewater Corners, St. Albans and Pomfret (LPM, PMB, FCH, RWL) bringing the season total to some 21 birds.

BLUE JAYS appeared to be down statewide except for a few exceptions and Frank Oatman noted many diseased birds in Craftsbury.

COMMON RAVEN seemed to be a well established winter resident with 61 birds reported on Christmas Counts alone. A high of 18 birds was in Marshfield on January 29 (MBE). Bill Norse had a pair courting on territory in Winhall February 28.

COMMON CROW This species reached highs in December with 200 in Burlington on December 7 and 300 in Shelburne on December 29 (B&ORE,WGE). Numbers dropped to average until buildups again in March.

## PARIDAE: CHICKADEES, TITMICE

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE Average numbers were noted throughout the state except for a slight drop noticed on the Northeast Kingdom Christmas Counts.

BOREAL CHICKADEE showed up in fairly good numbers December - February with 28 on Christmas Counts (with the high of 22 at Island Pond). December had them in Braintree, Guilford, Burlington, Fairlee and Vergennes, and also found in Woodstock, Vershire and Windsor in February.

TUFTED TITMOUSE This new winter visitant showed up on the Ferrisburg (1) and Bennington (2) Christmas Counts. Brattleboro had seasonal birds December - March and Woodstock had the remainder of the reports in December and February (PMB).

## SITTIDAE: NUTHATCHES

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH Although lower numbers were found in the Craftsbury area, average numbers were found elsewhere. Christmas Counts totaled 336 opposed to 388 last year.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES appeared way down with Brattleboro the exception. 63 were on the Christmas Counts and a bird in Norwich on March 19 was the first there for the season (HSR). Winhall had a buildup in late March (WJN).

## CERTHIIDAE: CREEPERS

BROWN CREEPER Although this year's Christmas Count total was double that of last year, the bird was reported in its average small numbers throughout the season. Birds were heard singing in Burlington (WGE) and Winhall (WJN) in late December.

## TROGLODYTIDAE: WRENS

WINTER WREN continues to show up in small numbers. Birds were observed in Ferrisburg December 17 (B&TCG,D&AP), Woodstock on January 8 (FHM) and Stockbridge on March 30 (EH).

CAROLINA WREN is another bird that is becoming a regular winter visitor. This year it was reported in Ferrisburg in December (BPG,AW), Burlington (2) December 1-16 and January 2 (WGE,FH) and in Middlebury on January 19 where 2 were observed regularly at a feeder and found nest-building on March 31 (fide WS).

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN A single bird, possibly the state's first winter record, which was observed in Burlington from December 1-10, was presumed dead on the 10 (B&ORE,WGE,CSP).

## MIMIDAE: MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS

MOCKINGBIRD, becoming well established winter residents showed up in Burlington (3), Saxton's River, Rutland, Woodstock, Brattleboro (2), Vergennes (3), Salisbury, Middlebury and Ferrisburg for a total of 15 birds.

BROWN THRASHER Lingering birds in Woodstock December 5-27 (FKT) and Brownsville the first week in February (RoS) perished during cold snaps.

## TURDIDAE: THRUSHES AND BLUEBIRDS

AMERICAN ROBIN was present in small numbers through January (with flocks of 5 in Barre and 7 in Waltham (WGE,AW). 2 early returning birds

were in Hardwick on March 9 (BL). The big influx came March 18-27 with flocks of 50 common. Saxton's River reached a high of 200+ on March 25 (DC).

HERMIT THRUSH A late departer was found in West Woodstock December 1 (FHM). A very early migrant in Burlington on March 18 was believed to have moved north during the warm weather (WGE).  
SWAINSON'S THRUSH This bird was found on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count, December 20, in Essex, New York (JP,DA,PT).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD The first report from Bethel on March 5 (CM) was very early considering the next birds were not observed until March 21 in Clarendon, Winhall (5) and five towns in the Brattleboro area (LHP, WJN, LPM). Reports came in at two a day the remainder of the period with a report of nesting at VINS, Woodstock on March 29 (PMB).

## SYLVIIDAE: KINGLETS

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET Scarce during the winter with only 7 reported on three Christmas Counts. First reports came on March 25 in Norwich (2 - PMB) and Winhall (WJN) with birds in Clarendon and Woodstock on March 26 (LHP,EH).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET One report of returning birds (2) at Sherburne on March 27 (J&E0).

## MOTACILLIDAE: PIPITS

WATER PIPIT Early returning birds were reported: March 6 (5-6) in Vernon (LPM), March 27 (5+) in Woodstock (PMB) and March 28 (11+) in Addison (PMB,EH).

## BOMBYCILLIDAE: WAXWINGS

BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS This species swept into the state in large numbers with 75 reported on the Burlington Christmas Count and 150 in Shelburne February 5 (WS). Other reports came from Londonderry (3), Essex Center, Montpelier (8-29), Barre (12), Brattleboro (2) and Grafton (6-8) (SDA, FH, VC, MM, DVW, PS).

CEDAR WAXWING 50 birds were observed in Burlington December 1 (WGE) and 80 were in Vergennes on December 17 (BPG). The final report came from Burlington on January 4 when 40 were found at Colchester Point. (B&ORE,CSP). It was not a good year.

## LANIIDAE: SHRIKES

NORTHERN SHRIKE showed up in good numbers in 29 localities with 10-15 birds reported in the Brattleboro area alone (LPM). 9 birds were recorded on Christmas Counts and 1 was caught and banded in Cabot (BBC).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE A single adult was in Burlington on March 27 (BSE,CS,WGE).

## STURNIDAE: STARLING were present in average number.

## PARULIDAE: WOOD WARBLERS

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER A bird on the Burlington Christmas Count was the last of the year. The first, an exceptionally early bird, was feeding on suet and working an apple tree in East Montpelier on March 29 (JC).

## PLOCEIDAE: WEAVER FINCHES

HOUSE SPARROW Average numbers statewide with a large roost of 400 birds on the University of Vermont campus in Burlington (WGE).

## ICTERIDAE: MEADOWLARKS, BLACKBIRDS

EASTERN MEADOWLARK Birds remained into December where they were recorded at Brattleboro (LPM), Rutland and Addison (BPG) and 1 was found in Bridport on January 7 (BS). Birds first showed up at Norwich on March 19 (HSR) and were recorded in twelve towns by the end of the month.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD remained in small numbers through December with only 22 on Christmas Counts. 6 were at West Rutland Marsh December 19 (LHP) and the last were seen in Pittsford on December 30 (HB). The first early returns were on February 18 in Brattleboro (LPM) followed by birds in Norwich on February 20 (HSR). A high of some 2000 birds was observed in Clarendon on February 29 (EH).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD 1 bird was on the Bennington Christmas Count. Winhall had the first returning bird on March 21 (WJN) and 40+ were reported from fourteen towns through the end of the month.

COMMON GRACKLE 24 birds were totaled on the Christmas Counts. A bird was at a Vergennes feeder on December 16 (BPG) and one wintered over in Brattleboro (LPM). Birds returned early with 3 in Wallingford March 3 (PDU), 1 in White River Jct. on March 5 (EH) and 1 in Grafton on March 7 (DC). Scattered sighting continued, peaking by the end of the month.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD was down this winter with 308 birds on Christmas Counts compared to last year's 1037. There were a few scattered reports of overwintering birds with average numbers of returning birds from March 1 on.

CARDINAL This bird continues to increase its winter population with this year's Christmas Counts more than doubling last year's. The February census showed a drop but Canaan got its first winter record for the species. A feeder high in Westminster had 15 birds (fide LPM). Betty Weeks noted the hardiness of these birds with the return of a four-year-old crestless bird at her feeder.

FRINGILLIDAE:

EVENING GROSBEAK seemed to be in average numbers in the southeastern section with flocks of 30-50 common. Elsewhere they were way down, being non-existent in the Northeast Kingdom. Christmas Counts totaled half of last year's. An albino was in Londonderry on February 10 (SDA).

PURPLE FINCH A crash in the cone crop was believed to have been the reason for the decline of reports in very small numbers (11 birds from six towns).

PINE GROSBEAK Found in average numbers generally through February with the exception of the Northeast Kingdom which found them way down after last year's bonus numbers.

HOARY REDPOLL Reports in Plainfield and Craftsbury January 13 and March 1-23 respectively were the only reports for this uncommon species.

COMMON REDPOLL Generally a good year with flocks of 10-50 birds throughout. Of some 30+ reports received, highs were reached in Hubbardton (ALG) from February 26 - March 4 with 100-130 birds and Shelburne with 250 on February 1 (WGE, B&ORE).

PINE SISKIN This species, also affected by the seed crop, was down drastically. Not more than a dozen reports were received with no birds in the Northeast Kingdom (529 reported last year). The high was 50 birds in Middlebury on January 18 (WS).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH Down over last year, it occurred only in small flocks leaving the Northeast Kingdom in mid winter.

RED CROSSBILL occurred at four locales: Barre (7) (FM) and Winhall (WJN) on December 4; Morgan (3) on December 23 (GA) and Canaan (6-8) on January 16 (GA).

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL Uncommon as usual with reports from: Wallingford (5) January 11 (B&NWW), Plymouth (10+) January 28 (JWH), Brattleboro (25) late Jan. (LPM), Woodstock (11) February 16 (PMB), Craftsbury (2) February 21, March 8 (TCW, CSP), and Thetford (8) March 13 (JM).

RUFOSIDED TOWHEE 2 birds were picked up on the Ferrisburg Christmas Count, 1 wintered over at a Sudbury Feeder (AP) and an exceptionally early returning bird heard on March 27 in Randolph (EWC).

SAVANNAH SPARROW The first returning birds (12+) were observed feeding at Herrick's Cove on March 28 (DC, PMB) No other reports for the season.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW A single bird found at a feeder on the Saxton's River Christmas Count (DPK et al) became Vermont's first winter record. It was in rough shape when observed and could not be found the next day.

VESPER SPARROW Early reports at Woodstock (2) on March 25 (PMB) and Bethel on March 29.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (slate-colored) Scattered small flocks (for the most part) were around through the period with buildups beginning in March.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (Oregon) 1 was reported on the Burlington Christmas Count and 2 others were reported without details.

TREE SPARROW wintered in average numbers, building in March.

CHIPPING SPARROW returned early with one at a Grafton feeder on March 21 (DC) (2 on March 25). 4 were at Herrick's Cove on March 28 (DC, PMB).

FIELD SPARROW Lingering birds were found in the Rutland-Clarendon area through December. Birds returned early to Burlington (2) (WGE), Brattleboro (LPM) and Cabot (BBC) from March 25-29.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW A few birds were present near feeders throughout the winter with the first returning bird at Berlin on March 20 (BTB).

FOX SPARROW found on the Saxton's River (2) and Winhall Christmas Counts with the first returning bird recorded March 19 in Rockingham (PMB).

SWAMP SPARROW A lingering bird was found at a Londonderry Feeder (DPK) on the Winhall Christmas Count.

SONG SPARROW 37 birds were tallied on Christmas Counts and a few birds remained through the period. The main influx began around March 20 and continued throughout the month.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR reports came from Fair Haven February 2-8 (FSA), Ferrisburg (1) on February 22 (WGE), and Pomfret (2) on March 5 (RWL).

SNOW BUNTING showed up in good numbers this winter with flocks of 50 quite common. The high of 180 was reached in Shelburne on February 3 (WGE, B&ORE).

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RECORDS OF VERMONT BIRDS

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802-457-2779  
 5:00pm-8:00am Monday-Friday  
 24 hours Saturday and Sunday  
 CALL IN YOUR RARE BIRD  
 SIGHTINGS!

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Contributors are reminded to send in rare and unusual bird sightings at once (or to call the Vermont Bird Alert) and to submit your seasonal cards promptly at the end of each season! This publication is only as complete as you make it!

SPRING - April-May  
 SUMMER - June-July  
 FALL - August-November  
 WINTER - December-March

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