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WINTER SEASON 1984-85

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The winter season of 1984-85 got off to a flying start, thanks to favorable weather conditions and the usual surge of birdwatcher energy associated with the Christmas Bird Count. Ferrisburg chalked up new records for a single count with 83 species and 18,421 individuals, while CBC totals for the state as a whole were also at new highs: 120 species (with an additional four "count period" birds) and 82,365 individuals. By season's end an astonishing 137 species had been recorded (not including three species from out of state reported by the Ferrisburg, Hanover-Norwich and Saxtons River CBC's). All the records set just one year earlier had fallen by the wayside amidst a flurry of rarities, some merely surprising, others truly astonishing. It was a memorable year.

Certainly some of the season's excitement was attributable to the weather. December, for example, was the second warmest in three decades, with 18 days after the 8th significantly warmer than usual. Small wonder that half-hardy species among the sparrows, mimics and Muscicapidae were so well represented on CBC tallies. More surprising was the outstanding performance of the ducks, as 26 species were reported during the season, including such major rarities as KING EIDER, HARLEQUIN DUCK and BARROW'S GOLDENEYE.

A second readily-identified influence on our winter birds was the abundance of wild food, including an unusually heavy cone crop. Such conditions explain the extraordinary numbers of species like the American Robin, Cedar Waxwing and Dark-eyed Junco as well as significant invasions by such northern species as Purple Finch, White-winged Crossbill and Pine Siskin. By the same token, generous wild-food supplies were undoubtedly the reason for the relatively small numbers of common winter residents reported by feeder watchers.

Still, when all is said and done, the success of a season seems generally to be measured by rarities, which often defy easy or deft elucidation. At best one searches for very specific causes: a storm, a broken wing, a microclimate created by unusual circumstances. Such possibilities may account for such spectacular finds as NORTHERN GANNET, OVENBIRD and SORA, while other species like EARED GREBE, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, VARIED THRUSH and DICKCISSEL seem, for whatever reason, to stray now and then to faraway places. As for the BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER on the Ferrisburg CBC, one can only conclude that this was the winter of the Muscicapidae!

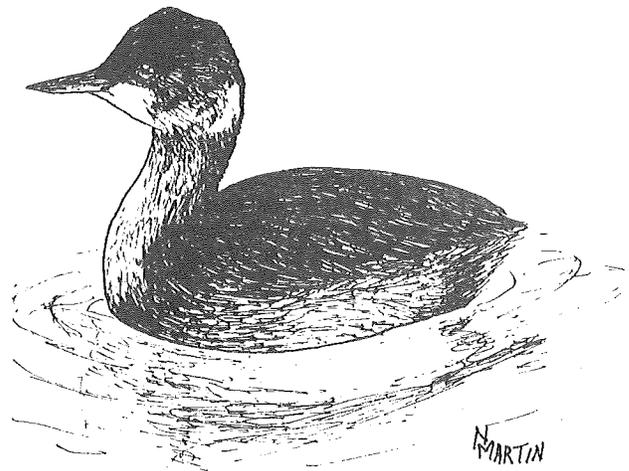
Some random but strongly-felt sentiments in conclusion: to those of you fortunate enough to spot rarities or birds out of season and who sent in supporting details, many thanks and continued success in your birding efforts; to those of you similarly fortunate but less meticulous, please regard the sending in of details not as an imposition but as an opportunity to add to ornithological knowledge and to contribute to the reliability of these Records. Finally, I am sure all readers of these reports share my pleasure over the beautifully-contrived charts of the CBC's. They are the result of the typing skills, persistence

and fortitude of my wife Chris, whose contributions to the winter Records are just as substantial as my own.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

Once again the Red-throated Loon proved one of Vermont's more elusive winter birds with just one report, an individual on the Connecticut River near McIndoe Falls on 1/3 (CS). The Common Loon was far better represented with 16 birds spotted on 3 Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter called CBCs), a tally about in line with those of recent years. The Pied-billed Grebe, however, eluded all observers for the second year running, while Horned Grebe numbers fell by nearly 50 per cent to a CBC total of 145. Other reports included 13 at Long Point on 12/23 (MCD, JID) and 7 that same day at Shelburne Beach and on Shelburne Bay (WAM). The last of the season were noted on 1/13 with a single bird at Burlington (JDM) and 2 at Blodgett's Beach (WAM). Certainly the grebe of the year - and one of the highlights of the season - was the EARED GREBE discovered on 12/14 at Button Bay (WS) and seen the following day on the Ferrisburg CBC (WS, DCD, DLC).

EARED GREBE



This small western grebe is occasional at best in the east and quite challenging to identify in winter plumage; happily, excellent details were submitted by an observer well acquainted with the species. This was only the second state record for Vermont - the only other record is an undated specimen from Wells, VT in the Pember Museum in Granville, NY. Also noteworthy was the excellent total of 4 CBC Red-necked Grebes, including 3 at Ferrisburg, and one at Burlington. Another 3 were at Tri-town Water District on 12/1 (WGE, NLM). A lingering DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT was located at Spaulding Bay in Panton on 1/2 (WGE). Far more astonishing, a NORTHERN GANNET was picked up in a Woodstock back yard on 12/20 following a snow-storm (NLM, CCF, SBL et al.). The lucky individual remained in good VINS hands until its release on the coast. Meanwhile, a rather modest 3 Great Blue Herons

CHRISTMAS COUNTS 1984-85

	BENNINGTON Dec. 15	BRATTLEBORO Dec. 15	FERRISBURG Dec. 15	BURLINGTON Dec. 16	MAQUAM Dec. 16	SAXTONS RIVER Dec. 16	ISLAND POND Dec. 17	WINHALL Dec. 19	CRAFTSBURY- GREENSBORO Dec. 22	HANOVER- NORWICH Dec. 23	WOODSTOCK Dec. 27	PLAINFIELD Dec. 29	RUTLAND Dec. 30	SPRINGFIELD Dec. 30	TOTALS
Common Loon			13	2	CP		1								16
Horned Grebe			124	21	CP										145
Red-necked Grebe			3	1											4
Eared Grebe			1												1
Great Blue Heron			1	1	1									CP	3
Snow Goose			1			1									2
Canada Goose			2211	817	65	23									3116
Wood Duck				2											2
American Black Duck	1		308	142	36	72			16				66		641
Am. Black Duck X Mallard				1											1
Mallard			56	366	15	70					1		68		576
Northern Pintail			CP	1											1
Northern Shoveler			4												4
Gadwall			2	3									1		6
Canvasback			3	1	CP				1						5
Redhead				1											1
Ring-necked Duck									2						2
Greater Scaup				200											200
Lesser Scaup			1		2	7									10
King Eider				1											1
Oldsquaw					1										1
Black Scoter					110										110
Surf Scoter					65										65
White-winged Scoter						CP				1					1
Common Goldeneye		3	532	465	514	46	22		5	9					1596
Barrow's Goldeneye					1										1
Bufflehead			36	59	6										101
Hooded Merganser			3	1	1	4									9
Common Merganser			196	129	306	33	2		18	7	3			3	697
Red-breasted Merganser			1	2											3
Merganser (sp.)				4	1										5
Ruddy Duck					1										1
Duck (sp.)			3		109										112
Bald Eagle			2												2
Northern Harrier			2		1										3
Sharp-shinned Hawk			2	1			1		3					1	8
Cooper's Hawk			2										1		3
Northern Goshawk			2		2					1		1		1	7
Accipiter (sp.)				1										1	2
Red-shouldered Hawk													1		1
Red-tailed Hawk	8	3	38	13	14	9		1	1	4	2	6	4		103
Rough-legged Hawk			18	4	9			CP							31
Buteo (sp.)			3		1							1			5
American Kestrel			10	5	4								3		22
Peregrine Falcon				CP											
Gyr Falcon			1												1
Falcon (sp.)				1			1								2
Hawk (sp.)				4											4
Gray Partridge					CP										
Ring-necked Pheasant			2		1									1	4
Ruffed Grouse	1	2	20	12	2	CP	18	2	8		14	1	10	CP	90
Wild Turkey			10												14
Sandpiper (sp.)						1									1
Bonaparte's Gull			4		132	1									137
Ring-billed Gull		20	252	1052	164	5			5					15	1513
Herring Gull		171	111	609	264	47	1		1	45				22	1271
Iceland Gull				1											1
Glaucous Gull				CP											
Gr. Black-backed Gull		1	35	74	33	5						1			149
Gull (sp.)				90								2			92
Rock Dove	151	196	899	675		783	151	43	260	492	165	224	256	386	4681
Mourning Dove	34	107	511	221	101	356	41	2	42	155	200	177	275	297	2519
Eastern Screech Owl			1	1											2
Great Horned Owl			6		4			1					CP		11
Snowy Owl			1												1
Barred Owl	1			1		2		1			1			CP	6
Long-eared Owl				1											1
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	2	1		3	1				2		2	1	16

	BENNINGTON Dec. 15	BRATTLEBORO Dec. 15	FERRISBURG Dec. 15	BURLINGTON Dec. 16	MAQUAM Dec. 16	SAXTONS RIVER Dec. 16	ISLAND POND Dec. 17	WINHALL Dec. 19	CRAFTSBURY-- GREENSBORO Dec. 22	HANOVER-- NORRICH Dec. 23	WOODSTOCK Dec. 27	PLAINFIELD Dec. 29	RUTLAND Dec. 30	SPRINGFIELD Dec. 30	TOTALS
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker	1														1
Downy Woodpecker	13	21	77	40	14	28	6	2	9	26	43	14	35	31	359
Hairy Woodpecker	7	26	31	9	4	16	10	2	18	21	60	18	17	36	275
Three-toed Woodpecker							1								1
Black-backed Woodpecker							1								1
Northern Flicker			11	3	1	2							1		18
Pileated Woodpecker			15	7	2	4	1	1	5		6	2	4	2	49
Horned Lark			778		329	79								16	1202
Gray Jay					1		12								13
Blue Jay	90	174	395	165	62	205	218	75	274	278	566	345	232	420	3499
American Crow	104	265	334	1620	147	137	14	27	85	316	160	217	352	217	3995
Common Raven		1	3			4	63	31	24	3	11	15	9	3	167
Black-capped Chickadee	81	132	729	411	124	237	424	245	418	388	552	450	536	599	5326
Boreal Chickadee							64		26						90
Tufted Titmouse	2	2	5	2		2				7	CP				20
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	5	2	2		1	117	21	51	8	15	24	22		271
White-br. Nuthatch	13	29	116	41	16	22	CP	5	6	38	74	7	75	70	512
Brown Creeper			18	6	4		13	5	5	2	4	5	12	5	79
Carolina Wren						1									1
Winter Wren			2								1			1	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet		2	16		1	2	92	23	41	1	40	27	20	13	278
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			1												1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			1												1
Eastern Bluebird	7		2											6	15
Hermit Thrush										1					1
American Robin			915	8	13		3		1		CP	1	3	8	952
Varied Thrush							1								1
Gray Catbird				1											1
Northern Mockingbird	1	2	3	9	1	4				1		1	1	3	26
Brown Thrasher														1	1
Bohemian Waxwing			8												8
Cedar Waxwing	1		2247	188	28					1			28	40	2533
Northern Shrike							1		1			3			5
European Starling	890	854	3414	1840	1147	780	40	130	139	482	313	200	1051	901	12,181
Nashville Warbler						1									1
Yellow-rumped Warbler			12												12
Northern Cardinal	5	34	69	68	8	36	CP	3	2	28	35	9	22	29	348
Dickcissel					1										1
American Tree Sparrow	29	71	328	78	42	244	18	7	53	71	87	73	63	167	1331
Chipping Sparrow				6		1									7
Field Sparrow				4											4
Vesper Sparrow				10											10
Fox Sparrow												4			4
Song Sparrow	1	9	21	6		48				2	3	2		15	107
Swamp Sparrow			2												2
White-throated Sparrow	2	39	5	5		12		4		4	4		6	10	91
White-crowned Sparrow			2							1					3
Dark-eyed Junco	21	293	157	20	4	475	7	67	24	179	267	54	185	476	2229
Lapland Longspur			6												6
Snow Bunting		1	71	41	56	47	1					16			233
Red-winged Blackbird		2	16	1	17		3							1	40
Brewer's Blackbird			CP												
Common Grackle	1	1	2		1		3		2	3	3	9	1	3	29
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	12	4		21	77	49	1	4	1		1	2	3	176
Pine Grosbeak				3			1	2	CP		2		20		28
Purple Finch		8	256	64	16	42	856	90	461	32	44	493	21	65	2448
House Finch	23	227	427	112	34	63		31		237	55	45	263	112	1629
Red Crossbill							1		10		37				48
White-winged Crossbill							1233		490	4	36	129	68		1960
Common Redpoll			22	5				1					14		42
Pine Siskin		39	14	10	4	43	412	360	564	415	1244	655	71	256	4087
American Goldfinch	8	113	165	196	29	363	183	39	200	455	236	56	217	796	3056
Evening Grosbeak	165	16	34	71	54	25	1231	241	1016	501	412	877	209	890	5742
House Sparrow	128	254	2252	1082	730	891	162	97	384	409	302	242	847	882	8662
Total Individuals	1794	3138	18,421	11,121	4877	5360	5480	1559	4656	4646	5003	4403	5098	6809	82,365
Total Species	31	36	83	68	58	49	42	30	36	41	37	36	43	43	120

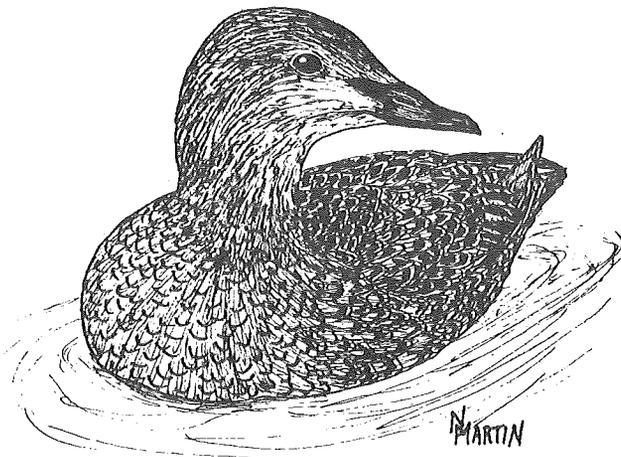
were tallied on the Ferrisburg, Burlington and Maquam CBC's with a fourth count period bird at Springfield. Only two other reports were received: a pair at Shelburne Bay on 12/24 (WAM) and a single along the Battenkill in West Arlington on 1/17.

WATERFOWL

A splendid flock of 20 Snow Geese was observed in flight near Bartonville during the first week of December (TEJ), but late reports were rather scarce: single birds on Ferrisburg and Saxtons River CBC's, individuals at Orwell on 12/22 (SSH) and a lingerer at Dead Creek on 12/30 (MBN). Canada Geese were in excellent numbers in mid-December with a near-record tally of 2211 on the Ferrisburg CBC supplemented by another 817 at Burlington, as well as lesser numbers at Maquam and Saxtons River. Numbers declined rapidly, however, with only 75 noted at Dead Creek on 1/10 (MBN) and but 85 spotted on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's (hereafter VFWD) midwinter Aerial Waterfowl Census of Lake Champlain, which was conducted this year on 1/30 (NEK). Additionally, a flock of 35 was observed on the ice at Bourn Pond near Stratton on 1/23 (JK). About 250 returning Canadas were in Vernon on 2/18 (JJC) but, surprisingly, few other early spring arrivals were noted. For the sixth consecutive year, Wood Ducks appeared on the CBC tally with 2 individuals at Burlington. They were apparent holdovers from a group of 4 spotted at Shelburne Bay on 12/8 (WAM), one of which lingered until the day before Christmas. The only Green-winged Teals of the season were one on Lake Bomoseen on 12/1 (CJF) and 2 at Arnold Bay on 12/8 (WGE,NLM). American Black Ducks and Mallards were present in about average numbers without either species appearing to hold an edge in their presumed ongoing competition. Although Mallards held about a 3-2 advantage at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge throughout December (JBG), most other reports seemed to favor Blacks. CBC totals, for example, favored Blacks for the first time since 1981 and a large mixed flock of about 400 birds at Vernon on 12/14 showed Blacks with about a 4-1 margin (JJC). Overwintering flocks of the two species were too small and scattered to allow any meaningful conjecture about relative population trends. The Northern Pintail, never common in winter, provided CBC excitement for the fifth year in a row with one at Burlington and a count period bird for Ferrisburg. Late indeed was the individual at Blodgett's Beach on New Year's Day (WAM). More exciting still were 4 Northern Shovelers discovered on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain on the Ferrisburg CBC, not only a first for the Ferrisburg count but the first winter report to appear in these Records. Another scarce winter duck, the Gadwall, was tallied on three separate CBC's for a record-setting total of 6 individuals; 3 continued at Blodgett's Beach until 12/29 and 2 were still present on 1/1 (WAM). Even more surprising was the discovery of a pair of American Wigeon at West Rutland on 1/12 (RWP). Rare enough in December, the wigeon has been reported to the Records in January on only one prior occasion. The 5 Canvasback tallied on 3 CBC's were not unusual, but the single bird on the Hanover-Norwich count seems worthy of special note. Sizeable winter rafts of these handsome ducks clearly are not uncommon on the open waters of Lake Champlain, as demonstrated by the flotilla of 2000 off Robinson Point near South Hero on 12/10 and 12/14 (RBL). Two hundred fifty were still present for the VFWD Aerial Survey on 1/30 (NEK), but other shoreline observations were limited to just two reports; a raft of about 400 canvasback and scaup (sp.) at Shelburne Beach on 1/12 (WAM) and 3 drakes off Charlotte Town Beach on 2/16 (WAM). For just the third time in eight years, the rather uncommon Redhead put in a CBC appearance with a single

bird counted at Burlington. The only other reports were a single drake at Shelburne Town Beach on 1/13 (WGE,NLM) and two off Charlotte Town Beach on 2/16 (WAM). Two Ring-necked Ducks at Hanover-Norwich were the only CBC birds as well as the latest of the season. Good numbers were present at Missisquoi earlier in the month with a maximum of 25 on 12/1 (JBG). Another late record was of two individuals at Herrick's Cove on 12/17 (WJN). Only two records of Greater Scaup were received: 200 on the Burlington CBC and 125 at Charlotte Town Beach on 2/10 (MBN). An additional 100 scaup (sp.) at Shelburne Beach on 1/6 (WAM) were probably Greaters as well. Lesser Scaup showed up on 3 CBC's including 7 at Saxtons River, but no other reports were received, as even the VFWD Aerial Survey failed to locate any of the well-known "blue-bills." Unquestionably, the outstanding bird of the year's Anatidae was a well-described hen KING EIDER located during the Burlington CBC near Oak Ledge Park (WGE,NLM). This represents the first CBC record and the fifth state record for a duck almost exclusively associated with the coastal waters of the north and

KING EIDER



far north. Nearly as unexpected were 3 HARLEQUIN DUCKS off Charlotte Town Beach on 1/13 and 1/14 (DLC, WAM;WGE,TEJ;MBN,AB). The drake and two hens, all adults, were independently identified by two separate parties of observers, in one case at very close range. Interestingly, this is the second Harlequin record in two years but only the sixth state record overall. The more common Oldsquaw was reported three times: a single bird spotted on the Maquam CBC, a drake at Ferrisburg on 1/2 (WGE,DaC) and a drake at Burlington on 1/17 (WGE,DaC). By contrast, the Black Scoter turned in a sparkling performance with 110 present for the Maquam CBC, a figure totally eclipsing the previous record of 9 individuals established by Ferrisburg in 1981. Another nice raft of 35 birds was noted off Button Bay on 12/30 (JRA). Not to be outdone, the Surf Scoter provided Maquam with equal excitement as 65 birds were tallied, once again easily surpassing the previous record. Interestingly, the more regular White-winged Scoter eluded Christmas Counters entirely except for the single located by Hanover-Norwich. Earlier in the month 4 White-wings were spotted near Chimney Point on 12/10 (PSA) and 2 others in the Connecticut River at Bellows Falls on 12/12 (JJC). A late bird was at Burlington on 1/13 (WGE,NLM et al.). The Common Goldeneye had an exceptional winter with the 1596 CBC birds outnumbering last year's counter-

parts by 50 per cent. Other reports featured 400 at North Hero on 12/14 (RBL), 26 on Lake Bomoseen on 12/16 (CJF), 16 at Herrick's Cove on 12/17 (WJN) and 130 in the Burlington-Shelburne area on 12/30 (JDM). The VFWA Aerial Survey located 815 birds, or about one-third last winter's total, attributable no doubt to the much later date of this year's census. Yet another rarity was the drake BARROW'S GOLDENEYE discovered on 12/14 in South Alburg just south of Isle LaMotte Bridge (RBL,DKL) and seen again at the same location on 12/16 (KLS) during the Maquam CBC. Bufflehead numbers were also impressive as Burlington topped its old record of 54, set in 1979, by 5 birds. In addition, the total CBC figure of 101 was nearly three times that reported last year. Late sightings include 20 at Shelburne Bay on 12/23 (WAM) and 10 at Burlington on 1/17 (WGE, DaC). The Hooded Merganser joined in the fun as 4 CBC's combined to produce a handsome total of 9 individuals. High counts of 15 birds each came from Missisquoi NWR on 12/3 (JBG) and from Lake Bomoseen on 12/16 (CJF). Additional reports included 3 at Herrick's Cove on 12/17 (WJN) and 7 at Wells River/Ryegate on 2/3 (WGE, NLM). The Common Merganser, however, settled for a rather indifferent showing, the CBC tally only just surpassing last year's unexciting total. Other reports came from Woodstock, Herrick's Cove, Vernon, Lake Bomoseen and Stockbridge in addition to Lake Champlain locations. High counts were 165 at Burlington on 1/13 (JDM), 68 at Long Point on 1/23 (MCD, JID) and 682 on the VFWA Aerial Survey, the low total no doubt the result of extensive ice cover. Only 4 Red-breasted Mergansers were observed this season: 2 CBC birds at Burlington and 1 at Ferrisburg and a female at Panton on 1/2 (WGE, DaC). Last, but certainly not least, among the Anatidae was Maquam's RUDDY DUCK, the second report of this winter rarity in two years. The bird, spotted near Popasquash Island in Lake Champlain, had been present for one week prior to the count on 12/16 (WRB, RAE).

HAWKS AND FALCONS

Two Bald Eagles were a feature of the Ferrisburg CBC tally, but other reports were relatively scarce: 2 at Arnold Bay on 2/5 (via BPG), 1 adult in flight near Shelburne Beach on 1/12 (WAM) and the apparent winter resident at Wilder Dam (WGE et al.). The Northern Harrier also came back to earth after an extraordinary showing in 1983, as just 3 CBC birds were found. Also spotted were singles at Bellows Falls on 12/8 (TEJ), at Lake Carmi on 12/13 (PJM), at Missisquoi on 1/2 (JBG), at Dead Creek (a male) on 1/12 (MBN) and at Dead Creek (a female) on 1/24 (SSH). All three accipiters were noticeably less in evidence this winter, presumably because prey was not as concentrated at feeders because of the outstanding wild food crop. Although 8 Sharp-shinned Hawks was a rather typical CBC showing, other reports numbered only 7 as opposed to 13 a year ago. Only one contributor noted the raptor's diet: an unlucky Evening Grosbeak in Sheffield (PFW). In like manner, the Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk were found in average numbers by Christmas Counters, 3 and 7 respectively, but eluded most observers during the remainder of the winter. Cooper's Hawks were noted only at Shrewsbury on 1/14 (LPS), at Plainfield on 1/15 (MFM), at Waltham on 1/21 (JRA), at Button Bay on 1/2 (WGE, DaC) and at Orwell on 1/11 (WGE, NLM). The more common goshawk was observed in just five locations: in December at Woodstock (JMN), and Panton (WGE, NLM), throughout the season in Ferrisburg including 2 on 1/10 (MCD, JID), in January at Shrewsbury (LPS) and in February at Albany (TP). For the second year in a row a CBC Red-shouldered Hawk was found, this time on Vermont soil in the Rutland circle. The Red-tailed Hawk had an excellent season as 103 CBC individuals were reported, just shy of the record 111 set back in 1979. Needless to say, numbers

-5- dropped off dramatically as winter progressed, with maximums of 5 at Ferrisburg on 1/3 (MCD, JID) and 10 at Dead Creek on 1/2 and 1/27 (WGE et al.). However, overwintering outside the Champlain Valley apparently is becoming either more widespread or better observed. Single birds were noted in East Montpelier on 1/17 (MFM) and in Grafton on 2/9 (TEJ), while contributors report overwintering in Vernon (JJC), West Brattleboro (JJC), Brownsville (BMH), Bartonsville (TEJ) and Woodstock (JMN). The Rough-legged Hawk continues quite widespread in the Champlain Valley but uncommon elsewhere. The CBC total of 31 birds was perhaps a bit below average, but observations throughout the winter were numerous with high counts of 7 at Dead Creek on 1/12 (MBN) and 16 at Dead Creek on 1/27 (WGE, NLM). Only two reports from outside the Champlain Valley were received, singles at Shrewsbury on 12/8 (CJF) and at Morrisville on 1/3 (FAP, RRI). Our third most common winter raptor, the American Kestrel, also settled for average results this year as 22 CBC birds were tallied. Other reports were quite numerous in the Champlain Valley with 2 birds each noted at Ferrisburg on 1/5 (MCD, JID), at Addison on 1/22 (MBN) and at Charlotte on 2/24 (WAM). Outside the area were singles at Vernon on 2/18 (JJC) and at Albany on 2/19 (TP), the latter individual being chased by a gang of small birds. The only Peregrine Falcon of the season was a count-period bird on the Burlington CBC. Finally, a gray phase GYRFALCON, first observed at the Farrell Access at Dead Creek on 11/25 (TAR) was seen again at the same location on 12/1 (TAR, PAT). An excellent photograph puts the identification of this spectacular falcon beyond doubt. Doubtless, this was the same bird reported on the Ferrisburg CBC and observed again on 1/27 (WGE, NLM et al.).

GRAY PARTRIDGE THROUGH SNIPE

No doubt the Gray Partridge on Grand Isle continue to prosper, although the season's only record was of 16 count period birds seen the day before the Maquam CBC. Four Ring-necked Pheasants matched last year's CBC total, although the Ferrisburg pair was once again from neighboring New York. On the Maquam count, an adult female was found strutting along a hedgerow near Missisquoi (DLC, DCD). Sadly, there were no reports of Spruce Grouse, the first total miss for this elusive and endangered species in three years. The Ruffed Grouse, on the other hand, was present in comfortable numbers judging from the 90 CBC birds, a fairly representative showing. About a dozen other reports were received, including 4 each in Albany on 12/2 (TP) and Weybridge on 1/29 (MBN). Noteworthy was the male gray-phased individual in West Brattleboro (JJC). A Chukar Partridge on 1/12 in Ferrisburg was "obviously a released bird" (MCD, JID). The CBC total of just 14 Wild Turkeys was the lowest in a decade, the third year in a row numbers have declined from the preceding year. Other reports were also down but not alarmingly, as 16 were noted regularly in West Brattleboro (JJC), 11 in Woodstock on 1/6 (BH), 8 in New Haven on 1/14 (MBN) and 5 in Reading on 1/5 (FMH, GEH). Perhaps the outstanding bird of the winter was the SORA, first discovered in Burlington on 1/6 (BSE, ORE) and present until at least 2/9 (WGE, NLM, JDM et al.). Frequenting a channel and a culvert near the General Electric plant on the waterfront, the Sora provided a rare photo opportunity (sic) as well as ample occasion for protracted observation. No other rail, except the American Coot, has ever been reported to the Winter Records. For the second year in a row, early Killdeer were reported with 1 at Weathersfield on 2/24 (EE) and 2 at Caledonia Airport in Lyndonville on 2/25 (PFW). A sandpiper (sp.) on the Saxtons River CBC escaped exact identification, but not so a very late Dunlin near Blodgett's Beach on 12/1-2 (BLR, DLC, JDM). Surprisingly (to your editor, at least) this is the first winter

sighting of this common coastal sandpiper to appear in these Records. Keeping company with the Sora at the GE drainage ditch was the winter's only Common Snipe. First seen on 1/12 and photographed the following day, the snipe was still in residence on 2/9 (JDM,WGE,NLM).

GULLS

The flashy Bonaparte's Gull had its best CBC showing since 1979, thanks in great measure to the 132 posted by Maquam. A nice discovery was the single bird at Saxtons River, a first for that particular count. Both the Ring-billed Gull and Herring Gull continue to do well with CBC totals well over one thousand for both species. Landfills as well as waterfront locations hold obvious appeal, with maximum counts of 175 Herrings at the Brattleboro dump on 12/15 (JJC) and another 250 at the South Burlington landfill on 2/9 (WGE). The only Iceland Gulls of the season were one on the Burlington CBC and 2 in Burlington on 1/13 (WGE,NLM,JDM). The larger Glaucous Gull was nearly as scarce: a count period bird for the Burlington CBC, a single at Blodgett's on 1/12-13 (JDM,WAM), 3 at Burlington on 1/17 (WGE,DaC), and two at the South Burlington landfill on 2/9 (WGE). The Great Blackbacked Gull, however, edged up in numbers as it once again established a record CBC tally, with 149 individuals reported from six different counts. Other high counts included 30 at Blodgett's Beach on 1/13 (WAM), 40 at the landfill in South Burlington on 2/9 (WGE) and 50 on the Connecticut River near Vernon on 2/25 (JJC).

DOVES

The CBC total for the Rock Dove was at its lowest level since 1978 and showed a 33 per cent decline from 1983. The Mourning Dove showed no similar decline with a CBC tally of 2519 not far off last year's figure. Overwintering continues widespread and includes places well removed from the Champlain Valley, such as Randolph, Bartonville, Plainfield and Duxbury.

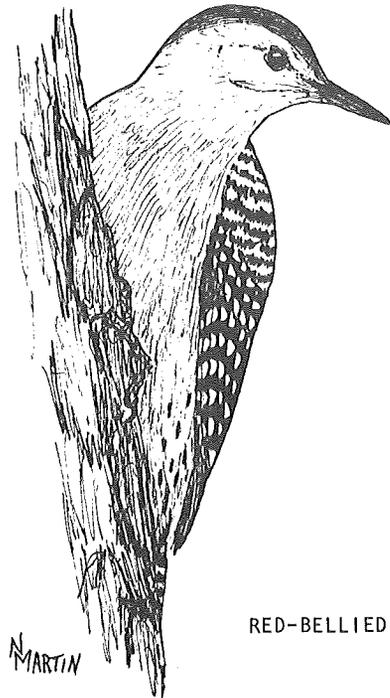
OWLS

The diminutive Eastern Screech-Owl was located only three times this season, with single birds reported by the Burlington and Ferrisburg CBC's and one at Weybridge on 12/1 (WGE,NLM). The Great Horned Owl showed no such reticence, however, as Christmas Counters tallied 11 individuals for the fourth consecutive year. Others were noted in Albany (TP), Lincoln (JRA), Shoreham (SSH), Hubbardton (PB), Bartonville (TEJ), Woodstock (MG) and Winhall (WJN). A multitude of observers were treated to splendid views of an adult male Snowy Owl, throughout the winter, as it kept watch "in regal majesty on Jersey Street" and nearby Dead Creek (MBN,MCD,JID,DCD et al.). This was the same bird discovered on the Ferrisburg CBC. Another individual was reported in Randolph Center on 2/1 "flying over open fields at 200-300 feet elevation" (IAT,JMT). Barred Owls were present in about average numbers with 6 CBC individuals and a count period bird at Springfield. Additional reports came from Woodstock (JMN), Winhall (WJN), Lincoln (CJF), Reading (FMH,GEH) and West Brattleboro (JJC). A single Long-eared Owl was reported from the Burlington CBC, unfortunately without supporting details sent to the Records. The only Short-eared Owl of the season was found at Addison on 7/2 (WGE,DaC). Last among the Strigidae, the Northern Saw-whet Owl eluded all Christmas counters; later, calling birds were heard in Albany (TP), Bartonville (TEJ) and Winhall (WJN). A Saw-whet in Manchester was injured when its roost tree was cut on 1/24; fortunately, the injured bird was brought to VINS and recovered.

KINGFISHERS AND WOODPECKERS

Sixteen Belted Kingfishers on 9 CBC's are ample

-6- evidence that this species is likely to linger wherever open water is available. With February reports from East Barnard on the 9th (EHH), Waitsfield on the 13th (FAP), Groton on the 20th (WK), Fair Haven on the 24th (EPA), Vernon on the 24th (JJC) and Woodstock on the 27th (CRP), successful overwintering of some individuals seems more than probable. For the third year in a row Red-headed Woodpeckers found winter in Vermont to their liking. One was present throughout the season in Cornwall (AP), while a second was observed on several occasions in Addison (MBN,RHH,BLR,DCD). Possibly a third individual was the bird, also in Addison, that apparently stayed on for nesting



RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER

(BPG,CRW). The extremely rare RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER made its first winter appearance in Vermont since the winter of 1979-80, visiting a feeder in Shoreham for two weeks during early February (BBD,SB). Fortunately the bird was photographed, confirming the fifth state record for the species. Yet another exceptional find was the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker recorded on the Bennington CBC (BCD). This is the first winter record for the sapsucker since 1976-77 when 2 individuals were discovered. It was not a good year for the Downy Woodpecker, however, as the CBC tally of 359 was the lowest since 1978. A number of observers agreed that numbers seemed down. The same was true of the Hairy Woodpecker with contributors again wondering about diminished numbers. Little comfort could be provided by a CBC total of 275, lower than any year since 1976. A Three-toed Woodpecker was located on the Island Pond CBC. Its more common relative, the Black-backed Woodpecker seemed scarcer than usual, with the single CBC Bird at Island Pond the only individual reported for the season. The Northern Flicker, however, enjoyed a banner year with CBC totals at record levels. The 11 individuals at Ferrisburg easily outdistanced the old high of 7 set back in 1982. Overwintering also appears likely with February reports received from Randolph (EWC,MCC), Shelburne (WAM), Plainfield (MFM), Bennington (BCD) and Orwell (MBN). The splendid Pileated Woodpecker turned in another steady performance, with a CBC tally of 49 very much in line with those of previous years. Individual reports included 3 at Shelburne on 12/16 (WAM) and 3 at Colchester on 1/16 (WDB).

HORNED LARK THROUGH CREEPER

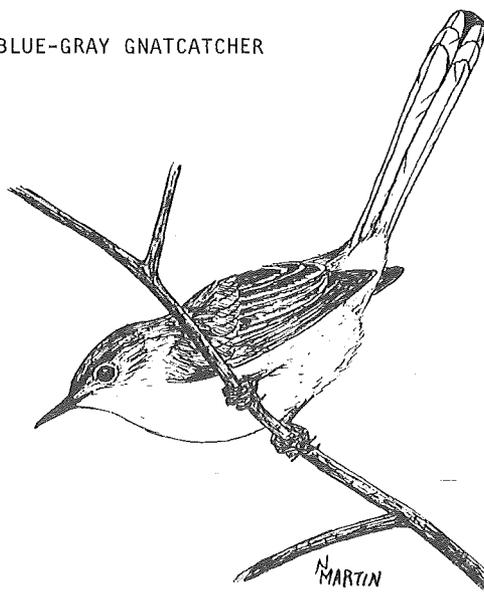
Horned Larks pulled few surprises with a strong but not unusual CBC showing and with almost all reports coming from the Champlain Valley. Best individual counts were in Addison, topped by 108 on 12/23 (FAP) and 160 on 1/27 (WGE,NLM et al.) and 87 on 2/2 (MBN). Somewhat off the beaten track were 16 Springfield CBC birds and 10 at Mount Holly on 1/10 (WJN). The Gray Jay rebounded nicely from an off year in 1983-84 as 13 CBC individuals were counted, 12 at Island Pond and an unexpected single at Maquam. Blue Jay surprised all by declining quite significantly, although feeder forays still numbered 20 individuals in many locations. The CBC total of 3499 was down about a third from the prior year. On the other hand, the American Crow numbers rose to unprecedented levels. Burlington's CBC figure of 1620 easily outdistanced the old record of 998 and the overall count of 3995 speaks for itself. Numbers declined somewhat during midwinter, perhaps, though a mob of 300-400 at South Burlington on 2/2 (JDM) suggests otherwise. Returning birds roared through on 2/25 with 100 at Weybridge (MBN), 60 at Lincoln (JRA), 400 at Fairfax (PAT), 470 at Ferrisburg (MCD,JID) and a formidable 2100 at Orwell (SSH). Common Ravens settled for a more typical performance, as 167 CBC birds fell just 2 short of last year's figure. Thirty-three at Woodstock on 2/7 (JMN) and 9 at Groton on 1/30 (WK), the last feeding on carrion, were the high counts from individual contributors. Black-capped Chickadee numbers declined even more precipitously than the Blue Jay. Feeder flocks rarely reached as many as 15 birds, while the CBC tally of 5326 was down more than 45 per cent from 1983-84. Still, it is unlikely the drop is anything more serious than the abundant wild food supply. The Boreal Chickadee's numbers shot up to 90 CBC birds, the highest total since 1979. Not surprisingly, all were recorded in the Island Pond and Craftsbury/Greensboro circles. The only other reports were 2 throughout the season in Albany (TP), 2 in Bear Swamp, Wolcott, on 1/3 (FAP,RR) 1 at Victory Bog on 2/3 (WGE,NLM) and 4 near Lyndonville on 2/6 (PEW). Somewhat worrisome was the poor showing of the Tufted Titmouse. The 20 CBC birds was the lowest figure since 1977 and the February census totaled only 22 birds. Other reports were few and far between; 3 at Ferrisburg on 1/17 (MCD,JID), 3 at Colchester on 12/1 (JDM), 2 throughout the season at West Brattleboro (JJC), 2 at Hartford (WGE), 2 at Norwich on 2/19 (WGE, DaC), and 1 at Herrick's Cove on 2/26 (WJN). Happily, the everpopular Red-breasted Nuthatch bounced back from a poor year with a solid CBC tally of 271 and with many feeder flocks of 3-4 birds. High counts from individual observers were 5 at Reading on 12/1 (EMH,GEH), and 6 in Bear Swamp on 1/3 (FAP,RR). The White-breasted Nuthatch, on the other hand, settled for a rather mediocre performance as its CBC total of 512 was the lowest since 1978. However, a half hour's walk in Woodstock on 2/28 uncovered 8 individuals (JMN), hardly a sign of a species in crisis. Another of our winter regulars, the Brown Creeper, was present in average numbers, judging from the 79 birds tallied on 11 CBC's. Other reports included 4 at Reading on 1/24 (WGE), 3 at Bartonsville on 2/26 (TEJ), plus singles from Lincoln (CJF), Plainfield (MEM), Lincoln again, (JRA), Shrewsbury (LPS), Woodstock (JMN), Chester (JLB), Reading (EMH,GEH) and West Brattleboro (JJC).

CAROLINA WREN THROUGH STARLING

A Carolina Wren at Saxtons River (DC party) was the first CBC record since 1980 for this occasional visitor to Vermont. Only slightly more regular during winter months, the Winter Wren appeared on the CBC list for the third year in a row, with 2 individuals at Ferrisburg and singles at Woodstock and Spring-

-7- field. More surprising was the individual discovered in a brush pile in Castleton on 1/11 (PSA). The last January record for this perky little fellow was in Norwich back in 1977. Another delightful and diminutive species, the Golden-crowned Kinglet, had its best year since 1979. Numbers were at near-record levels at Island Pond and for the CBC overall, while individual observers also chipped in with several good reports. Highest midwinter counts were 14 at Reading on 1/24 (WGE) and 6 at Shrewsbury on 1/9 (LPS). A bonus for the Ferrisburg CBC was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, the second in three winters but only the third in the past eight. Yet the real excitement at Ferrisburg was over the discovery of a BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER near Kellogg's Bay (AP,JyW), possibly the most spectacular find of the entire season. Beautiful details of a beautiful bird made beautiful reading for an envious winter editor! Another unexpected dividend was the

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER



Eastern Bluebird, present for the CBC season for the first time since 1980. Bennington equaled its old record of 7 individuals while Springfield followed close behind with 6. The total CBC tally of 15 individuals was surely a new record, as were the numbers lingering into January: 2 at Orwell on the 9th and 12th (fide VINS), 6 at Benson on the 11th (WGE,NLM), 6 at Sudbury on the 14th (PWI) and a "flock seen daily" at Bennington through the 24th (BCD). Early spring migrants were also noted: 4 at Orwell on 2/21 (MBN), 2 at West Haven on 2/23 (WGE,NLM,JPM), and 4 at Clarendon and environs on 2/24 (CJF). The first Hermit Thrush in wintertime since 1980 was a CBC bird at Hanover-Norwich lurking, alas, on the New Hampshire side. As for the American Robin, it found weather and food supply along the shores of Lake Champlain so much to its liking that it stayed on for the Ferrisburg CBC in startling abundance: 915 individuals compared to a former high of 74, set back in 1976. Numbers dropped off quickly, however, since January reports were generally unremarkable, except for 90 at Shelburne on 1/13 (WGE,NLM et al.). February records, on the other hand, showed indications of an early spring influx, for example 50 at Ferrisburg on 2/19 (MCD,JID), 20 at Shelburne on 2/14 (MBN) and 5 at Herrick's Cove on 2/26 (WJN). Rounding off an astonishing season for the Muscicapidae was a VARIED THRUSH on the Island Pond CBC (CWS). This lovely western species has now visited Vermont during five of the last six years, although this marks its first appearance on a CBC. Not to be outdone, a Gray Catbird joined the CBC fun at Burlington, while a second individual was at White



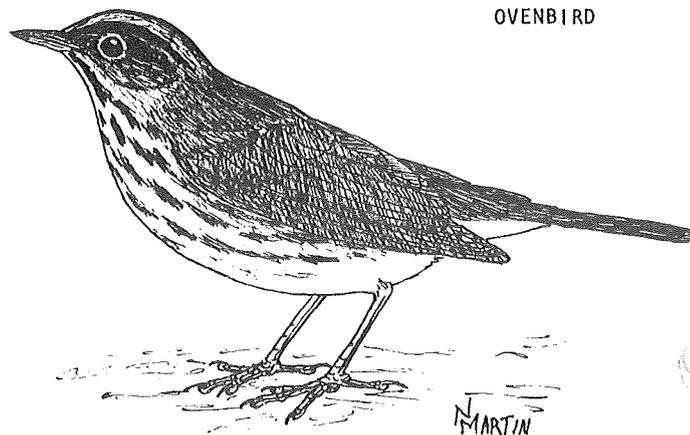
VARIED
THRUSH

River Junction on 1/3 (RAQ). Twenty-six Northern Mockingbirds on ten CBC's was about average but other reports were sparse, being limited to singles in Colchester (JDM), Highgate Springs (JCC), Vergennes (MCD, JID), Missisquoi Headquarters, Waitsfield (FAP), Addison (MBN), Springfield (WGE, NLM) and Bennington (BCD). Only 3 were reported during the February census. Always a difficult bird in winter, the Brown Thrasher was limited to a single record, a surprise appearance on the Springfield CBC. A Water Pipit in East Charlotte on 12/5 (DCD) is noteworthy as the first report for pipit to have appeared in the winter Records. The handsome Bohemian Waxwing favored the Champlain Valley with 28 of its number on 12/8 at Ferrisburg (MCD, JID) and another 6 at Grand Isle on 2/10 (DJH). Eight individuals were also present to adorn the impressive Ferrisburg CBC tally. Meanwhile, the Cedar Waxwing swarmed through the area in extraordinary abundance: Ferrisburg's count of 2247 not only dwarfed its previous high of 627, but may well remain unsurpassed during our lifetimes. Other flocks exceeding 100 individuals were noted in Addison on 12/18 (WGE), in Charlotte on 12/23 (FAP), in Woodstock on 2/13 (NLM) and in Shelburne on 2/24 (WAM). In contrast, the Northern Shrike had its poorest record in years with only 5 CBC birds. Less than 10 other reports were received as singles were noted in Randolph (EWC, MCC), Brownsville (BMH, FF), Plainfield (FAP), Castleton (PSA), Newbury (DaC), Sharon (DaC), West Glover (RVC) and Lyndonville (PFW). Finally, on a somber note, duty compels recognition of the European Starling's rise to a new CBC high of 12,181 individuals. Perhaps it is only just that the Ferrisburg circle led its closest challenger in this department by a margin of nearly 2 to 1.

WARBLERS THROUGH SPARROWS

An unprecedented Nashville Warbler on the Saxtons River CBC certainly deserves mention, even though the bird was found on the New Hampshire side. Twelve Yellow-rumped Warblers on the Ferrisburg CBC were another surprise, a number just shy of Ferrisburg's old record of 14 established in 1976. Four individuals were seen in Benson, Orwell and Shoreham on 1/11 (WGE, NLM). Truly astonishing was an OVENBIRD near a feeder at White River Junction on 1/6 and again on 1/12 (DaC, WGE, NLM). Apparently suffering from a minor wing injury, the bird allowed close observation and was described in meticulous detail. This is the first confirmed winter record for Ovenbird for Records of Vermont Birds, although a "count period" bird (without

-8- supporting details) was reported in Burlington in 1979. The Northern Cardinal had its poorest showing since 1979 with a CBC total down nearly 45 per cent from last year, and only 155 reported on the February census. Feeder reports weren't much cheerier with maxima of 6 at Ferrisburg on 1/17 (MCD, JID) and 3 each at Bartonsville (TEJ), Orwell (SSH) and Plainfield (MFM). A new species for these Winter Records was DICKSISSEL, first discovered in a Swanton backyard on 11/15 (JCC). The bird lingered through mid-December and was spotted on 12/18 (SG), much to the delight of the Maquam CBC. Disappointing was the absence of the Rufous-sided Towhee, its first failure since the winter of 1977-78. After a record performance in 1983, the American Tree Sparrow settled for average numbers, with 1331 CBC birds and many feeder flocks in the 10-20 range. One hundred ten individuals were noted in a single flock at Addison on 1/2 (WGE, DaC). Far from average, however, were the numbers for some of our rarer winter sparrows. The Chipping Sparrow, for example, graced both the Burlington and Saxtons River CBC's, with Burlington's 6 not far off the record 9 reported by Rutland in 1979. Three individuals were still at Button Bay on 12/30 (JRA), while singles were in Lincoln on 12/15 (JRA) and in White River as late as 2/16 (WGE, NLM). The latter bird apparently fared more successfully in its attempt at overwintering than did the Ovenbird with whom it had been associating. Four Field Sparrows on the Burlington CBC were also noteworthy, although they fell just short of the record 5 found at Brattleboro in 1976. A single at Ferrisburg on 1/11 (MCD, JID) was the season's last. More impressive still were the 10 Vesper Sparrows, reported, unfortunately without details, from the Burlington CBC. This number easily surpassed the old record of 4 set by Burlington back in 1974. Further, this is the first winter report of the Vesper since 1979, when a single bird was found in the New York portion of the Ferrisburg circle. Yet another elusive species, the Fox Sparrow, once again found "the pickings" in Plainfield to its liking. This year's 4 CBC birds compare favorably with the record high of 6 set by Saxtons River in 1976 and matched by Plainfield in 1981. Excellent numbers of Song Sparrows showed up for the CBC's but, as would be expected, most had disappeared by January. However, a few overwintered near Vernon Dam (JJC), 3 were at Benson on 1/11 (WGE, NLM), 1 was at Addison on 1/24 (SSH), another at Rutland on 2/4 (CJF) and one eager individual was singing in Bartonsville on 2/13 (TEJ). Two Swamp Sparrows on the Ferrisburg CBC were the only ones reported, a bit surprising perhaps in view of the numbers of other spar-



OVENBIRD

rows present. White-throated Sparrows had their best year since 1976 with a strong CBC total and many late-winter reports. Five were at Vernon Dam on 2/18 (JJC), 4 in Bartonville on 2/26 (TEJ) and overwintering evidently also occurred in such relatively unlikely locations as Albany (TP) and Duxbury (FAP). For the third year running the White-crowned Sparrow was reported with CBC birds at both Ferrisburg and Woodstock. Interestingly, the last CBC appearance for this handsome sparrow was back in 1980. As for the Dark-eyed Junco, it put on a show worthy of the Cedar Waxwing: numbers were at astonishing levels, with both the Springfield and Saxtons River counts easily surpassing the old high of 425 set twenty years ago. The CBC total of 2229 individuals was more than 5 times last year's figure - and meant that the junco was outnumbering the Snow Bunting about 10 to 1! Numbers held up very well throughout the winter with flocks of 20-30 reported from Randolph (EWC,MCC), Fairfax (PAT), Shrewsbury (LPS), Woodstock (JMN), Fayston (FAP) and Duxbury (FAP). High counts were 40 at Bartonville on 2/5 (TEJ), 50 at Reading on 1/9 (FMH, GEH), 50 at Hartland on 1/3 (WGE), and 100 at West Brattleboro on 1/26 (JJC). The ever elusive Lapland Longspur made a good appearance with a flock of 150 at Addison on 1/2 (WGE, DaC). Other reports, however, were sparse: a single at Dead Creek on 12/10 (PSA), 6 on the Ferrisburg CBC, and 5 at Addison on 1/27 (WGE, NLM et al.). The Snow Bunting struggled a bit, judging from its less than impressive CBC total, but small flocks were nonetheless quite common and widespread. Better numbers reported included 200 at Ferrisburg on 2/7 (MCD, JID), 160 at Bridport on 1/11 (NLM, WGE), 100+ at Timmouth (PB), 60 at Addison on 1/13 (SSH), 60 at Reading on 2/3 (SBL), 35 at Missisquoi on 1/2 (JBG), 30 at Albany on 12/13 (TP), and 30 at East Montpelier on 12/4 (MFM).

ICTERIDS

The Red-winged Blackbird stayed with tradition as 40 CBC birds were noted along with a sprinkling of other December laggards. One individual was still at Weybridge on 1/10 (MBN) and another was visiting a feeder at Norwich through 2/8 (DJG). The spring influx began very early with 100 at Vergennes on 2/16 (TP). More typical were 200 at Vernon on 2/23 (JJC), 1 at Shoreham on 2/23 (NLM, WGE, JPM), 1 at Middlebury (MBN) and 3 at Winhall (WJN) on 2/24. An Eastern Meadowlark at Shelburne on 12/1 (DLC, BLR) was late while one at Shoreham on 1/24 (SSH) was perhaps more hardy than wise. A count period Brewer's Blackbird was perhaps Ferrisburg's only disappointment this year. Apparently well pleased with the rations at a feeder in Whallonsburg, New York, the unlucky fellow hit a window the day before the counting began. The Common Grackle was present in its usual small numbers for the CBC season before deserting the state altogether, except for an injured female in Rutland on 1/11 (WGE, NLM). Predictably, early spring migrants appeared in late February, beginning with 2 at Vernon on 2/23 (JJC). Others were spotted on 2/24 in Clarendon (CJF) and Middlebury (MBN) and on 2/25 in Rutland (JPM), Chester (TEJ) and Lyndonville (PFW). Finally, among the icterids, the Brown-headed Cowbird obliged with its poorest CBC showing since 1977. A late flock of 20 was noted at a Plainfield feeder on 1/3 (FAP, RRi) while one at South Londonderry on 2/14 (WJN) had presumably overwintered. The first spring arrivals were 8 in Chester on 2/25 (TEJ).

TRINGILLIDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

The Pine Grosbeak showed its poorest numbers in at least a decade as 20 birds at Rutland averted an almost total lack on the Christmas census. Only three other reports were received: 20 at Shrewsbury on 12/7 (LPS), a single at Lyndonville on 12/13 (PFW) and 3 at

-9- Ripton on 1/13 (DBu). The Purple Finch, however, staged its best flight since 1979. CBC totals were generally impressive and flocks of 20 or more were found at many locations throughout the season. High counts were 40 at Lyndonville on 1/12 (PFW), 75 at Weybridge on 2/18 (MBN) and 30 at Ferrisburg on 2/26 (MCD, JID). Of far greater significance was the newest high set by the House Finch. If the geometric growth of this species over the past six years isn't halted, it may well join the Starling and House Sparrow among our most numerous and least loved species. Much more to our liking were the best numbers of crossbills in many a season. The less common Red Crossbill, always rather scarce even in a flight year, produced 48 CBC birds including a surprising 37 at Woodstock. Other reports were limited to 9 at Reading on 1/24 (WGE), 3 at Marlboro on 1/26 (JJC) and a single at Winhall on 2/27 (WJN). The White-winged Crossbill, on the other hand, invaded in force as Island Pond alone recorded 1233 birds, five times greater than the old high of 245 set back in 1979. With an additional 490 birds at Craftsbury-Greensboro, it is small wonder that reports of flocks large and small came in from all over the state. High counts included 54 at Reading on 1/24 (WGE), 40 at Lyndonville on 2/14 (PFW), 24 at Marlboro on 2/10 (JJC), 22 at Albany on 2/5 (TP) and 15 at Bear Swamp, Wolcott, on 1/3 (FAP, RRi). Of great interest, too, is the breeding of this species in Reading, where a female was observed gathering nesting material as a male kept close watch on 2/9 (FMH, GEH), adults were observed feeding young there on 3/2, for the second confirmed Vermont nesting in many years. Common Redpolls failed to join the invasion as only 42 CBC birds were reported, the lowest total since 1979. Twenty in Ferrisburg on 12/5 (MCD, JID) were conceivably the same as were tallied on the Ferrisburg count ten days later. Other reports were rather sparse: 8 in Albany on 2/21 (TP), 2 in Lincoln on 2/118 (CJF) and singles in Barnard (JNF) and Winhall (WJN). A massive flock of 1000 was observed in the tops of yellow birches in Groton State Forest on 2/14 (WK), but by the next day all but one had disappeared. Pine Siskins were very much in evidence as the Craftsbury-Greensboro, Plainfield and Woodstock CBC's all topped the previous record of 523, found at Island Pond back in 1974. Woodstock alone topped the old mark by more than 2 to 1. Wild food was so abundant that feeders were generally spared the brunt of the invasion, although a contributor in Timmouth was delighted on 2/28 when one daring individual joined some chickadees in being fed from the hand (PB). Less intimate were flocks of 150 at Woodstock on 2/28 (JMN), 80 in Wolcott on 1/3 (FAP, RR), and 60 in Bartonville on 2/5 (TEJ). Numbers for the American Goldfinch were also at record levels as 796 on the Springfield CBC exceeded the old high by a wide margin. However, once again feeder flocks were small, the finches apparently preferring natural foods to the store-bought variety. Eighty birds at Reading on 2/16 (FMH, GEH) and 60 at Woodstock on 2/28 (JMN) were the best late-season reports. Fortunately, the Evening Grosbeak was content to appear in just average numbers, down markedly from the two preceding years. To be sure, Island Pond and Craftsbury-Greensboro each topped the 1000 mark, but neither even approached Springfield's tally of 3060 last year. Expectedly, numbers dropped off in January only to rise again as the season progressed. High counts from individual observers were 75 at Bartonville on 2/12 (TEJ), 125 at Wolcott on 1/3 (FAP, RR), and 170 at Lyndonville on 2/22 (PFW), and 450 (in two flocks) at Brownsville and Cavendish on 1/27 (WGE, NLM). Also noted were albinistic individuals at Lyndonville on 1/5 (PFW) and at South Duxbury on 2/14 (FAP). To conclude on a happy note, the House Sparrow has backed off from its assault on the 1981 high of 11,101; this year's CBC total of 8662 birds was the lowest in five years.

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 BSE Barbara Eastman
 ORE Oliver Eastman
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 IAT Irwin Trask
 JMT Jean Trask
 VFWD Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept.
 VINS Vermont Institute of Natural Science
 Rehabilitation Program
 PFW Paul Wagner
 CRW Mr. & Mrs. Charles Walker
 MW Mary Westbrook
 JFW John Wiggin
 EWI Peter Wimmer
 JyW Jay Wisner
 VW Virginia Witcomb
 RJG Robert Worthen
 RAZ Robert Zelly
 Special thanks to all who contributed to the
 Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Mockingbird Count.

ABBREVIATIONS USED:

CBC - Christmas Bird Count
 NWR - National Wildlife Refuge
 VFWD - Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept.

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