

Records of Vermont Birds

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

WINTER 1994–1995

1 December to 28 February

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In reflecting on the winter of 1994-95, two conclusions appear inescapable: the weather was unusually mild and birds unusually numerous. These are hardly earth-shaking conclusions, but then the obvious is generally far closer to the truth than the obscure.

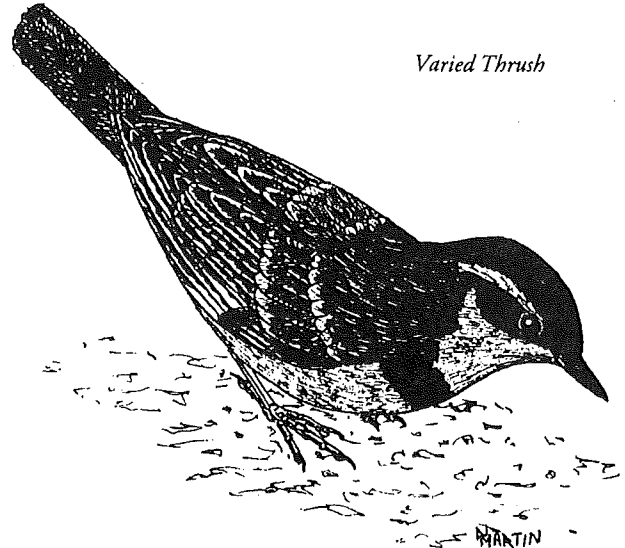
In any event, it was the warmest winter any of us can remember. December in Burlington was 5.7° warmer than normal, meaning that only 13 Decembers in the past 100 were milder. As for January, it was 11.6° warmer than usual. The average temperature on January 15 was 62°, a mere 46° above the norm! During the ten-day stretch January 12-21, the average daily temperatures (not the highs) were 31, 48, 52, 62, 49, 34, 37, 43, 45, and 40. Is it any wonder that American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds cavorted in the spirit of early spring?

Nor is it surprising that bird numbers were also at record or near-record levels. For the season as a whole, total species reported came to 135, just 2 short of the high mark set back in 1984. Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) results were equally impressive. A total of 116 species were found, surpassed only by the 120 uncovered in 1984, while the total of 121,503 individuals comfortably outdistanced the old high established in 1991. Further, it is interesting to note that in 1984 the total of individuals was only 82,365 - only two-thirds of the figure ten years later. Increased coverage works wonders, whatever the weather.

In the meantime, some highlights of the season deserve comment. It was a grand year for ducks with 22 species recorded, including the 6th Vermont record of KING EIDER. Also observed were a number of the rarer lingering species such as Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, and American Wigeon. Not surprisingly, late or overwintering sparrows were another specialty of the season, featuring such birds as Chipping Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. Outstanding among the seedeaters was a male ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK, found near winter's end at a feeder in South Lincoln.

Other highlights included a male VARIED THRUSH, 2 American Pipits on the Burlington CBC, an Eastern Phoebe in early January, and the tenacious SAY'S PHOEBE at the former Brandon Training School. What other winter editor in the Northeast will have 2 species of phoebe to highlight?

Yet for many the most memorable species of the winter will be none other than the American Robin. Often seen as the first messenger of spring, the robin chose a new role as it remained throughout the winter to bring us cheer and optimism. On CBC's 2607 robins outnumbered



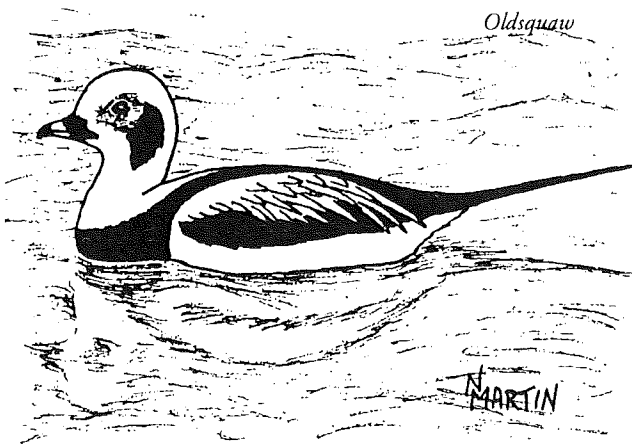
Varied Thrush

Evening Grosbeaks 3 to 1, outnumbered Snow Buntings by nearly 3 to 1, outnumbered Ring-billed Gulls by more than 2 to 1, and even outnumbered Cedar Waxwings in a year of major waxwing influx. It was an astonishing, remarkable performance and wins first prize for the outstanding event of the season.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The Red-throated Loon was absent for the second winter in a row, but Common Loon compensated with an excellent year. A CBC total of 43 birds was a new high, while the 26 at the Champlain Islands matched the record set by Ferrisburgh in 1991. Other reports included 3 at Newport 12/3 (REG,OAG), 3 off Grand Isle 12/4 (DJH), and 4 in Addison 12/6 (JAP). One bird was still off Grand Isle 1/21 (DJH) and another 3 were at Charlotte Town Beach, also 1/21 (TGM). This trio may have lingered even longer as 3 birds were at Charlotte and Meach Cove, Shelburne on the unusual date of 2/20 (SWM,TGM). A Pied-billed Grebe at Lake Willoughby 1/6 (REG,OAG) was exceptional; however there was certainly no shortage of Horned Grebes. A CBC total of 86 individuals was merely average, but other reports showed good numbers into late January with 3 at Thompson's Point 1/21 (CJF), 11 in Ferrisburgh 1/30 (JAP,SSW) and a startling 117 at Meach Cove and Charlotte Town Beach 1/26 (TGM). Thirty-two were still at Meach Cove 2/3, while 2 birds hung on there until 2/20 (TGM). Red-necked Grebe also fared well, with a handsome total of 3 at Button Bay 12/10 (TGM). Other reports were of a single at Shelburne Bay 12/16 (TGM) and of CBC birds at Ferrisburgh and Burlington. The Double-crested Cormorant continues to thrive in Vermont, now even into the winter. A first-year bird was at Young Island

until at least 12/25 (DJH), a second individual was at Bridport 12/7 (JAP) and a third was lingering off Thompson's Point 1/15 (CJF). The Great Blue Heron was again prominent during December as 17 CBC birds were found, supplementing 10 reports from other contributors. The latest was a single in North Hero 1/2 (DFP).



WATERFOWL

Mute Swans raised eyebrows with birds reported from several locations, including a notable Z on the Burlington CBC and another at Saxtons River. Other reports, surely involving some duplication, were of a single at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 12/17 (REG,OAG), 4 at Swanton 12/4 (SWM), 6 on Maquam Bay, Swanton 12/4 (TGM) and 5 on Converse Bay 1/13 (JAP). The throngs of Snow Geese at Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA), Addison, headed south during the first week of December, as 5000 were observed on 12/4 (MBN), 1000 on 12/6 and 800 on 12/7 (JAP). Somewhat off the beaten track was a single at Sharon 12/6 (MLW). Late reports were sparse with 4 birds each for the Ferrisburgh and Burlington CBC's, 3 at Meach Cove 12/22 (FAP) and 1 at Shelburne Bay 1/16 (TGM). Canada Geese were conspicuous for most of the winter with flocks of 1500 at Pantan 1/4 (JAP), 700 at Ferrisburgh 1/8 (JDA), 500 at Meach Cove 12/22 (FAP) and 425 at Shelburne Bay 1/2 (TGM). Later reports featured 350 at Pantan 1/29 (JDA), 200 at Shelburne 2/17 (JDA) and 150 at Pantan 2/20 (JAP). Wood Ducks graced the CBC roster for the 16th year in succession, with singles at Bennington and Rutland, the latter an injured bird (CJF). Also noteworthy were 2 CBC Green-winged Teal, 1 at Ferrisburgh and the other in the northern wilds of Island Pond. American Black Ducks were present in normal numbers with 719 tallied on the various CBC's and 214 counted on the mid-winter waterfowl survey on 1/10. From contributors came reports of 17 on the Metowee River, Pawlet 12/14 (GRB), 55 at Weybridge 1/18 (JAP), 70 at Grand Isle 1/31 (DJH) and 100 on Button Bay 1/29 (TGM). February featured a flock of 200 on the Winooski River, Williston 2/19 (TGM). Mallards produced a healthy CBC tally of 2853 individuals, although the mid-winter waterfowl survey uncovered only 46. Other observers noted flocks in the 150-250 range at Shelburne Bay 1/16 (TGM), at Salisbury 1/17 (JAP), at the Grand Isle fish hatchery in February (DJH), and in Williston 2/19 (TGM). Northern Pintail fared well with a CBC bird at the Champlain Islands, another single at Button Bay 12/10 (TGM), a pair at Shelburne Bay 1/26 (TGM) and 2 in Weybridge 1/17-18 (JAP). Quite scarce in winter, a male Northern Shoveler in sub-eclipse plumage was discovered at Shelburne Bay 1/14 (TGM) and again on 1/16 (JDA). Up to 3 Gadwall were present at Shelburne Bay (v.o.), with all still there as

late as 1/26 (TGM). The same location provided a haven for yet another uncommon winter dabbler, the American Wigeon. A total of 6 were counted there 12/10 (TGM), but most observers settled for 3 individuals, 2 drakes and 1 hen. The trio was last reported from Shelburne Bay 1/20 (TGM). The Canvasback eluded all observers, but the equally splendid Redhead was represented by 3 drakes at Shelburne Bay 1/8-9 (TGM,SWM). In addition, a possible female Redhead was spotted off the DAR State Park, Addison 12/22 (TGM). The only Ring-necked Ducks of the season were 2 off the DAR Park 12/31 (SWM) and 2 birds at Pantan 1/29 (JDA), presumably the same individuals reported from Potash Bay 1/30 (JAP,SSW). Scaup of both species were represented by just 1 individual on the aerial survey 1/10; but other observers fared far better. Greater Scaup in the neighborhood of the Champlain Bridge, Addison, included 35 at Chimney Point 12/25 (FAP,EBP) and 31 off the DAR Park 12/31 (SWM). More impressive were the numbers at Meach Cove where 500 (perhaps a mixed flock) were seen 1/12 and 200 on 1/29 (TGM). Other reports included 40 in Addison 1/25 (JAP) and 5 at McNeil Cove, Charlotte 2/26 (TGM). Less likely in winter and easily overlooked, the Lesser Scaup settled for a maximum count of 18 near Chimney Point, Addison 12/26 (SSW). The last reported was a single at Meach Cove 1/29 (TGM). Perhaps the outstanding bird of the winter was a first-winter male KING EIDER discovered and carefully studied near the Champlain Bridge, Addison 12/23 (GEH,SWM,RR). A second bird in the same location on 12/24 was described with some detail as a "probable" female King Eider, but difficult viewing conditions made the identification tentative (TGM). Four Oldsquaw off the DAR Park 12/22 were a good find (TGM), as were singles at Chimney Point 12/25 (FAP,EBP) and at Meach Cove 1/21 (TGM). The only Surf Scoter of the season was a single bird near Chimney Point 12/22 (TGM) and again on 12/25 (FAP,EBP). White-winged Scoters were also scarce with just 3 records: a single at Shelburne Bay 12/11 (TGC,TGM), 2 at Button Bay 1/29 (TGM) and 3 in Bridport 1/25 (JAP). Common Goldeneye were again abundant with 1670 individuals on the Champlain Islands CBC alone, with 1113 on the mid-winter waterfowl survey, and with a number of reports from observers in the 200-500 range. Late sightings included 20 off Grand Isle 1/31 (DJH), 20 at Potash Bay 1/30 (JAP) and 40 at Fort Cassin, Ferrisburgh 2/11 (CJF). The rare but increasingly regular Barrow's Goldeneye was well represented by 2 CBC birds at Burlington and singles off Grand Isle 12/3-10 (DJH), at Bridport 12/6-7 (JAP), at Hartland on the Connecticut River 12/19 (DHC), and at Burlington 1/20 (TGM). An "odd" goldeneye seen at Grand Isle 12/17 was thought to be a possible hybrid (DJH). Bufflehead were present in record CBC numbers with 75 at Ferrisburgh alone. Also noteworthy were 23 in Ferrisburgh and Charlotte 1/1 (SWM), 23 at Converse Bay 1/15 (TGM) and 4 in Shelburne 2/20 (SWM). Hooded Mergansers enjoyed another big year with a good CBC total of 49 individuals backed up by several other sightings: 6 on L. Parker 12/1 (REG,OAG), 7 at Bridport 12/6 (JAP), 4 on L. Bomoseen 12/26 (CJF) and 20 off DAR Park 12/31 (SWM). January sightings included 1 at Burlington 1/23 (EMA,RDB), 2 in Reedsboro 1/13 (CHD) and 9 at Potash Bay 1/28-30 (WGE,NLM;JAP,SSW). Common Mergansers established a new CBC high with 4165 individuals including 3531 at the Champlain Islands. Reports from individuals were topped by 500 birds at Button Bay 1/29 and 820 at Shelburne Bay 1/8 (TGM). Red-breasted Mergansers were also surprisingly numerous, even with a mediocre CBC tally of just 4 individuals. Two were off Grand Isle as late as 12/31 (DJH), 10 were at Bridport 1/25 (JAP), and 22-24 were at Chimney Point, Addison 12/6 (JAP) and 12/10 (TGM). Late indeed were 4 birds including 1 drake at Charlotte Town Beach 2/20 (SWM,TGM).



Sharp-shinned Hawk

HAWKS AND FALCONS

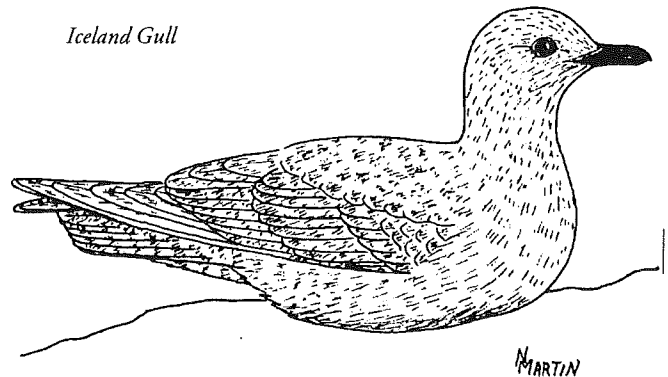
Very late and certainly deserving of some commentary from the observers were 2 Osprey on the Bennington CBC. CBC participants and compilers are again reminded that some details are requested for any species observed a month or more outside of its expected dates. Wintering Bald Eagles continued at the elevated heights of recent years, again occupying favored locations in the Champlain and Connecticut River valleys. A conservative analysis of the mid-winter eagle survey suggests that a minimum of 12 eagles (10 adult, 2 immature) were present in Vermont during January. Northern Harriers enjoyed the mild weather in record numbers as 36 CBC birds were found, including a remarkable 23 at Ferrisburgh. A number overwintered, judging from reports of 3 in Bridport 1/27 (JAP), 2 in Ferrisburgh 1/29 (JRA), 2 at DCWMA 2/18 (FAP,EBP) and 2/25 (SWM), and 2 in Bridport 2/22 (TGM). Also of interest were singles at the Caledonia Airport in Lyndon 1/15 (PFW,SAW), at Brandon 2/13 (SSW) and in Pawlet 2/24 (GRB). Sharp-shinned Hawks continued to terrorize Vermont feeder populations, as a near-record 28 CBC birds were tallied. Contributors reported at least 20 additional sightings from all over the state. Cooper's Hawks also fared well, topping last year's CBC record by 3 birds. Mourning dove was a favorite meal, judging by reports from Grand Isle (DJH) and Ferrisburgh (MCD,JID). Six Northern Goshawks produced only an average CBC tally, but reports from observers suggest no drop-off in numbers of our largest accipiter. Red-tailed Hawks retreated only slightly from their extraordinary advance of last year, as well over 200 CBC birds were counted. This raptor continues to overwinter in good numbers, especially in the Champlain Valley. Rough-legged Hawks were also conspicuous, with 8 CBC circles discovering a total of 72 individuals. From readers came reports of 9 birds in Addison County 12/22 (FAP), 5 in Orwell 1/28 (WGE,NLM), 3 at Basin Harbor, Ferrisburgh 2/11 (CJF) and 7 at DCWMA 2/26 (SSW). Twenty-one American Kestrels was a strong showing for this small falcon. Late reports were limited to singles in Pittsford 1/9 (SSW), in Brandon 1/17 (EMA,RDB), in Grand Isle 2/18 (TGM) and in Bridport on several dates (JAP). There were two records of the fast-flying Merlin: a well-described bird on the Woodstock CBC and a second individual in Bridport 12/28 (JAP). Once again the formidable Peregrine Falcon made its presence felt. In addition to CBC birds at Ferrisburgh and Rutland, individuals were observed in Weybridge 12/6 (JAP), in Sudbury 12/14 (SSW), in Winooski 12/30 (WDH) and in Orwell 1/28 (NLM,WGE). The Winooski bird may well have been the one observed throughout the season at the UVM water tower. Completing an impressive winter for raptors, the rare GYRFALCON was reported 3

times with varying degrees of certainty: a "possible" in Hyde Park 12/1 (NMM), a "probable" dark morph individual working assorted ducks along the ice shelf near the DAR Park 12/31 (TGM,SWM), and a nicely-described bird in North Sheldon 1/22 (BD).

GRAY PARTRIDGE THROUGH SNIPE

Nine Gray Partridge on the Champlain Islands CBC was the only sighting of this elusive species. Another introduced species difficult to find, the Ring-necked Pheasant managed to grace the Saxtons River, Bennington and Ferrisburgh CBC rosters, albeit twice as a count week entry. Additionally, a single male was spotted at a feeder on the Bethel/Royalton line 1/5 (CEB). Gratifying indeed was a report of 4 Spruce Grouse near Moose Bog 1/20, especially since this species was missed on the Island Pond CBC. Also at Moose Bog 1/28 was a single female (SWM,TGM). Reports of Ruffed Grouse were widespread with maximum counts of 7 in Brandon 12/4 (SSW) and 5 in Reading 1/16 (FMH,EJH). The CBC total of 147 birds was well up from last year's poor showing. By contrast, the Wild Turkey could only produce 123 CBC birds, the lowest total since 1988. Still, contributors managed to find several flocks headed by 35 in Pawlet (GRB), 28 on Grand Isle (DJH) and 25 in Felchville (FMH,EJH). Twelve Northern Bobwhite on the Ferrisburgh CBC were easily a new high, but somewhat muting the celebration was the compiler's understandable concern over the birds' origin. An American Coot in Burlington lingered until the remarkably late date of 1/27 (SSW), but 11 birds near Chimney Point, Addison 12/22 (TGM) was perhaps even more surprising. Finally, the only shorebird of the season was a single Common Snipe on the Saxtons River CBC.

Iceland Gull



GULLS

Thirty-two Bonaparte's Gulls on the Champlain Islands kept intact an uninterrupted CBC streak dating back to 1975. Other reports were limited to 36 at Grand Isle 12/4 (DJH), 1 at Shelburne Bay 12/10 (TGM) and 2 off Grand Isle 12/11 (DJH). Ring-billed Gulls rebounded from an off year as 1115 individuals were counted, including 533 at Burlington. Herring Gulls were also present in good numbers with 1548 CBC birds and an unruly crowd of 450 at Shelburne Bay 1/2 (TGM). Iceland Gulls, the smaller of our two white-winged gulls, produced only 4 sightings, including a count week bird at Hanover/Norwich, a CBC bird at Brattleboro, a first-year bird on the Winooski River 12/31 (TGM), and an adult at Perkins Pier, Burlington 2/25 (SWM). Glaucous Gulls were

about as scarce, being limited to 3 CBC birds along with a count week entry from Hanover/Norwich. This latter circle also recorded a Herring x Glaucous Gull hybrid, no doubt an interesting bird to identify as well as to observe! Finally, the Great Black-backed Gull produced its second best year on record with 697 CBC birds, including a remarkable 190 at Hanover/Norwich.

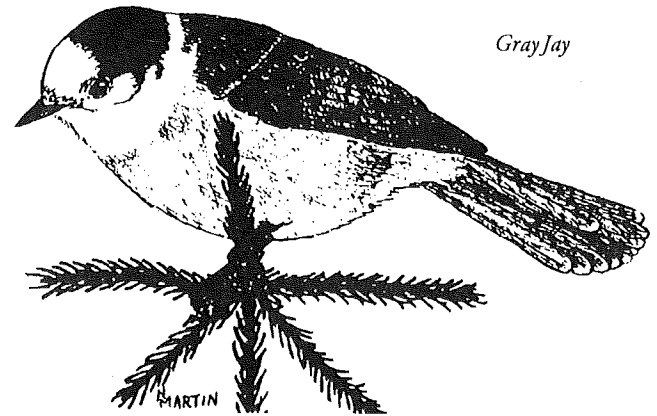
DOVES THROUGH OWLS

Rock Doves surged back above the 9000 mark on the CBC tally, a reminder that not all Vermont farmland has been converted to housing lots. Mourning Doves were also abundant with a number of readers reporting flocks of 30 or more. Eighteen Eastern Screech-Owls on the Champlain Islands CBC was exactly twice Ferrisburgh's old record, testimony no doubt to the energy of some parties as well as the quality of their tapes. Great Horned Owls were also well represented, as a good CBC showing was supplemented by several reports from contributors. Noteworthy were 4 birds calling in North Ferrisburgh 2/3 (JDA), while one was found dead of a broken neck at Brandon 12/26 (SSW). Just 2 Snowy Owls were reported, 1 in Bridport 12/21 (ER,JAP), the other in New Haven 2/1 (MH). Fourteen Barred Owls in 8 CBC circles were about average. Others were heard auditioning, generally in February, in such locations as Woodstock (JMN), Pawlet (GRB), West Bolton (MC), the Merck Forest (WME), Springfield (WME) and Reading (FMH,EJH). Long-eared Owls on the Ferrisburgh and Middlebury CBC's were certainly memorable, as were 9 Short-eared Owls at Ferrisburgh along with singles at Middlebury and the Champlain Islands. Short-eareds were also reported by readers with as many as 6 along West Road in Panton 12/21 (FAP,TGM,GEH) and 12/26 (SWM), and another (or perhaps the same) 6 near Button Bay 1/13 (TGM). Happily the Northern Saw-whet Owl also prospered as it exactly matched the record CBC total of last year. Also reported were singles at Snake Mountain, Addison 12/31 (SWM), in Bartonsville 1/18 (TEJ) and in Manchester Center 1/19 (BWP).

KINGFISHER AND WOODPECKERS

Notwithstanding the mild winter, few Belted Kingfishers lingered into early winter as only 8 CBC birds were found along with count week entries from Ferrisburgh and Bennington. Late reports were very few: 1 in Arlington 12/26 (JDA) and a stalwart in East Dorset 2/11 (RWP). Among the Picidae, 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers apparently overwintered at their haven in Bridport (JAP), although only one made it onto the CBC roster. The scarce Red-bellied Woodpecker appeared at a feeder in Manchester during January (EB), making it 7 years in a row for this difficult species. Downy Woodpeckers enjoyed the Vermont winter in good numbers, with many feeders hosting at least 2 pairs. Hairy Woodpeckers managed a respectable CBC showing despite a poor count in some circles, especially Ferrisburgh. Feeder reports seemed typical with most stations settling for a pair or so. The elusive Black-backed Woodpecker was reported from at least 3 different locations: 1 in the Yellow Bog area 12/30 (JAP,GEH), 1 at Victory Bog 1/28 (BD) and a male working the trees along Rt. 105 in Brunswick 2/12 (FAP). Two individuals were tallied on the Island Pond CBC on 12/17. Numbers of Northern Flickers easily eclipsed old records with a CBC total of 44 individuals, including 21 at Ferrisburgh. Late reports from readers included 1 in Middlebury 1/21 and again on 2/27 (JAP), 1 in Benson 1/28 (NLM,WGE), 1 at Mt. Independence, Orwell

1/29 (FAP,EBP) and 1 in Castleton 2/23 (SSW). Finally the Pileated Woodpecker continued to impress as 111 CBC birds were recorded, just 2 down from last year's record tally.



Gray Jay

EASTERN PHOEBE THROUGH CREEPER

Extremely rare in winter, an Eastern Phoebe was watched for several minutes by a startled observer in North Ferrisburgh 1/2 (JDA). The bird made several forays "in an elliptical pattern" from its perch on a small tree next to a wetland area with water moving through a culvert. Even more astonishing, the SAY'S PHOEBE first discovered in Brandon in late October was still on location as late as 12/26 (DLC). The bird later reappeared and was observed by several persons including this editor during April. Returning to the mundane, Horned Larks were again widespread as 3142 CBC birds were found, including 2088 at Ferrisburgh. Flocks of 100 or more were observed in Addison 1/4 and again on several occasions in February (JAP;CJF;SSW). Six Gray Jays on the Island Pond CBC represented a nice rebound from last year, while 2 birds were spotted near Victory Bog 1/28 (CHD,WHB,JMN). Far removed from its usual haunts was an individual in S. Londonderry 12/16 (WJN). Meanwhile Blue Jays produced another big CBC count, while readers struggled to keep up with hungry feeder flocks often in the 20-25 range. American Crows were equally conspicuous, not only during the CBC season but also throughout the winter. One hundred fifty were at Prouty Beach, Newport 1/15 (PFW,SAW), 150 were in Wells 2/26 (CJF), 80 were at Weybridge 1/20 (MBN) and only slightly smaller flocks were noted in such places as Burlington (EMA,RDB), Manchester Center (BWP) and Rutland (SSW). Common Ravens improved on their record CBC performance of a year ago, with 87 in Craftsbury/Greensboro alone. From readers came reports of 16 in Benson 1/28 (WGE,NLM) and 65 in Fairlee, also 1/28 (CHD). Black-capped Chickadees were slightly down in numbers, although reduced feeder activity presumably reflected less severe conditions in the hinterlands. Boreal Chickadees too were less obvious than in some years, although 20 were at Moose Bog 12/30 (JAP,GEH) and 16 in the same area 1/20. Other reports included 3 in Sheffield 1/16 (PFW,SAW) and 1 at Victory Bog 2/2 (MCA) and again 2/25 (CHD). Numbers of Tufted Titmouse increased slightly as 314 individuals were found in 14 CBC circles. Four were spotted in Red Rocks Park, South Burlington 1/30 (TGM). The Red-breasted Nuthatch advanced to a new CBC high of 859 individuals with all 16 circles represented. Most seem to have been in the wild, however, as feeders reported little increase in activity. The less erratic White-breasted Nuthatch dipped below the 1000 mark on the CBC tally with a total of 998, about the average for the past 6 years. As for the ever-

Christmas Counts 1994-1995

	Bennington 12-17	Brattleboro 12-17	Ferrisburg 12-17	Hinesburg 12-17	Island Pond 12-17	Saxtons River 12-17	Burlington 12-18	Champlain Islands 12-18	Middlebury 12-18	Winhall 12-20	Hanover-Norwich 12-26	Woodstock 12-27	Craftsbury-Greensboro 12-31	Plainfield 12-31	Rutland 1-1	Springfield 1-2	
Common Loon			9		1		7	26									43
Horned Grebe			9				25	52									86
Red-necked Grebe			1				1										2
D.-Crested Cormorant								1									1
Great Blue Heron	5		5	1			2	2	2					CW			17
Mute Swan						1	7										8
Snow Goose			4				4										8
Canada Goose	239	25	183			113	146	623	195		1						1525
Wood Duck	1														1		2
Green-winged Teal			1		1												2
American Black Duck	33	9	172	30		114	123	176	36		2	8			16		719
Mallard	235	1	212	2	18	193	742	805	430		17	2			184	12	2853
Northern Pintail								1									1
Gadwall							2										2
American Widgeon							3										3
Greater Scaup								CW									CW
Lesser Scaup			1					5									6
Common Goldeneye			269			20	636	1670			CW						2595
Barrow's Goldeneye							2										2
Bufflehead			75				29										104
Hooded Merganser			3			4	1	28			13						49
Common Merganser	19	7	432	6		19	114	3531	7		20	8			1	1	4165
Red-breasted Merganser			1					3	CW								4
Duck (sp.)								78									78
Osprey	2																2
Bald Eagle			3			CW					2						5
Northern Harrier	2		23				1		10								36
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		7	3		3	1	6	2					2	1	2	28
Cooper's Hawk	3		1			2	1	2	3		1	1	1		2	2	19
Northern Goshawk	1				2											3	6
Accipiter (sp.)		1	2														3
Red-tailed Hawk	34	4	48	8		19	15	24	43	3	11	7		CW	11	10	237
Rough-legged Hawk	4		39	2		1	2	8	15				1				72
Buteo (sp.)			1														1
American Kestrel	1	1	6				1	4	4						3		21
Merlin												1					1
Peregrine Falcon			1												1		2
Falcon (sp.)			1														1
Gray Partridge								9									9
Ring-necked Pheasant	CW		CW			2											2
Ruffed Grouse	9		15	13	11	5	9	16	26	1	5	7	CW	11	8	5	147
Wild Turkey	5	37	37				15	12			CW	13		17			123
Northern Bobwhite			12														12
American Coot							1										1
Common Snipe						1											1
Bonaparte's Gull								32									32
Ring-billed Gull	2	11	104	10		50	533	273	108		2			22			1115
Herring Gull	14	484	348	7		7	236	193	67		150	3		CW		39	1548
Iceland Gull		1									CW						1
Glaucous Gull		1							2		CW						3

Herring x Glaucous Gull											1						1	
Gr. Black-backed Gull		157	119			1	90	76	41		190						23	697
Gull (sp.)				8				14						10				32
Rock Dove	480	194	627	103	21	771	1209	1676	926	285	490	410	264	395	404	890	9145	
Mourning Dove	119	202	405	141	27	747	150	632	853	34	246	355	45	253	489	740	5438	
Eastern Screech-Owl			2	1			2	18	3								26	
Great Horned Owl	1	4	1			4	2	10							1		23	
Snowy Owl								CW									CW	
Barred Owl	1	1				3			2		1	2			1	3	14	
Long-eared Owl			1						1								2	
Short-eared Owl			9					1	1								11	
Northern Saw-whet Owl								2	2		2						6	
Belted Kingfisher	CW		CW	1				1		1	1	1			1	2	8	
Red-headed Woodpecker									1								1	

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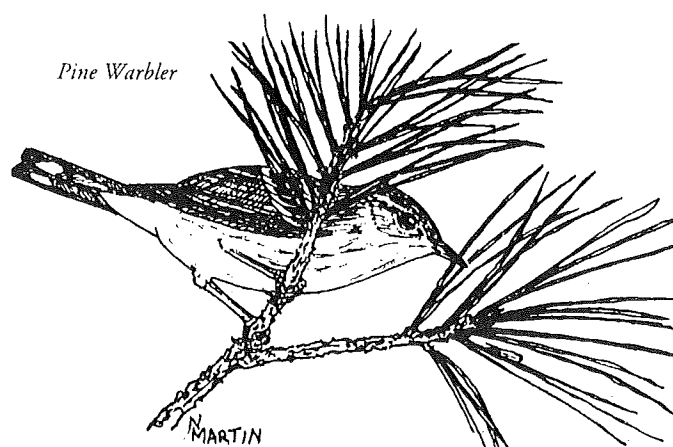
	Bennington 12-17	Brattleboro 12-17	Ferrisburg 12-17	Hinesburg 12-17	Island Pond 12-17	Saxtons River 12-17	Burlington 12-18	Champlain Islands 12-18	Middlebury 12-18	Winhall 12-20	Hanover-Norwich 12-26	Woodstock 12-27	Craftsbury-Greensboro 12-31	Plainfield 12-31	Rutland 1-1	Springfield 1-2	
Dowry Woodpecker	29	22	59	29	10	39	52	95	112	16	38	56	12	54	48	53	724
Hairy Woodpecker	13	12	12	6	6	19	22	26	30	7	21	43	15	44	19	39	334
Black-backed Woodpecker					2												2
Northern Flicker			21	2		2	6	2	9		1				1		44
Pileated Woodpecker	2	3	8	3	3	4	14	21	19	4	2	4	4	12	2	6	111
Homed Lark	375	20	2088	110		187		23	212		25				2	100	3142
Gray Jay					6												6
Blue Jay	163	159	280	184	61	333	224	290	414	228	371	282	262	452	482	980	5165
American Crow	655	252	419	174	20	459	834	553	259	51	675	139	80	374	661	629	6234
Common Raven	9	1	8	13	51	3	2	3	5	7	13	11	87	53	5	17	288
Black-capped Chickadee	327	312	989	585	447	430	633	952	547	444	1025	978	583	1224	1085	2002	12,573
Boreal Chickadee					15								4				19
Tufted Titmouse	23	22	9	7		45	31	8	19	4	25	5		5	43	68	314
Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	30	22	8	104	6	33	3	15	51	65	69	72	114	61	200	859
White-breasted Nuthatch	36	23	86	39	4	60	74	107	142	15	79	74	3	44	79	133	998
Brown Creeper	1	1	18	4	2	3	14	20	7	4	11	11	2	25	10	3	136
Carolina Wren		CW	1														1
Winter Wren									1		1			CW	1		3
Golden-crowned Kinglet	18	2	21	8	87	38	6	4	6	43	43	107	45	61	21		510
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1													1		2
Eastern Bluebird	22		44			1	1		43						10		121
Hermit Thrush		1															1
American Robin	6	1	1575	50	18	4	139	116	666	CW	1	1	5	9	15	1	2607
Gray Catbird											1						1
Northern Mockingbird	4	6	2			9			7		4	1			2	6	41
American Pipit							2										2
Bohemian Waxwing			2		3												5
Cedar Waxwing	147	265	629	46		337	65	274	180	88	25	308	2	21		1	2388
Northern Shrike				1	3			1		1		1	2	3	1		13
European Starling	1544	232	3813	473	156	1042	855	2985	4129	91	174	351	590	394	1226	582	18,637
Pine Warbler															1		1
Yellow-rumped Warbler			8						2								10
Common Yellowthroat				1			1										2
Northern Cardinal	37	22	93	13	4	91	62	55	56	5	48	32	3	23	88	80	712
American Tree Sparrow	102	111	562	176	61	284	69	269	621	11	55	31	111	125	167	113	2868
Chipping Sparrow	1																1
Savannah Sparrow									1								1
Fox Sparrow														1	2		3
Song Sparrow	3	8	18	3		34	4	16	27	1	5				5	5	129
Swamp Sparrow						1					1				1		3
White-throated Sparrow	7	13	4	1		22	3		2	3	1		6		10	3	75
White-crowned Sparrow							1		1								2
Dark-eyed Junco	202	408	172	117	23	478	16	21	169	164	268	196	141	361	548	58	3342
Lapland Longspur			10														10
Snow Bunting		47	545			55		25	128					6		75	881
Red-winged Blackbird	CW		10					2	1		2				11		26
Rusty Blackbird						1									1		2
Common Grackle	CW		1					2	1								4
Brown-headed Cowbird	225		29	1				83	13				112		27		490

Northern Oriole				1														1	
Pine Grosbeak				1														78	79
Purple Finch	4			78		212			2		63	101	10	36	325	451	8		1290
House Finch	507	125	611	290			317	585	843	606	134	339	100	18	332	896	601		6304
Red Crossbill	25	CW				42				3	CW	4			15				89
White-winged Crossbill						510								12	106	115			761
Common Redpoll																13	4	224	241
Pine Siskin				8	105	1918					77	84	38	72	1034	731	4	42	4113
American Goldfinch	70	102	283	95	72	160	42	570	263	189	772	306	285	1153	203	333			4898
Finch (sp.)						110													110
Evening Grosbeak		CW	1		123	15				2	10	1	40	247	134	23	133		729
House Sparrow	252	180	1048	241	5	461	388	1361	1217	79	488	198	115	279	860	766			7938
TOTAL SPECIES	51	45	74	45	35	51	61	62	64	31	52	39	32	36	54	42			121,503
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	6025	3518	16,780	3123	4159	7016	8294	18,750	12,865	2159	5798	4275	4582	7338	7758	9063			121,503

busy little Brown Creeper, it nearly doubled its CBC total of the previous year as 136 were found. Observers added a number of other sightings, including a high of 3 in Williams Woods, Charlotte 1/16 (TGM).

WRENS THROUGH STARLING

After the very severe winter of 1993-94 it was no surprise that the Carolina Wren went virtually unreported. Preventing a total shutout were 2 CBC individuals, a count period bird for Brattleboro and a single at Ferrisburgh. The less vulnerable Winter Wren actually had quite a good year, with 3 CBC birds as well as a count period entry from Plainfield. In addition 1 was in Brandon 12/4 (SSW) and another in Bartonsville 2/22 (TEJ). Another popular species, the Golden-crowned Kinglet rebounded from an off year to shatter old records with a new CBC high, including 107 in Woodstock. Reports from contributors featured 12 at Moose Bog 1/28 (SWM,TGM) and 4 in Rutland on New Year's Day (SSW). Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the Brattleboro and Rutland CBC's were not unprecedented in a mild winter, but 1 at the Tri-town Water Plant, Addison 1/28 (WGE,NLM) was certainly testing the limits of this bird's endurance. One hundred twenty-one Eastern Bluebirds in 6 CBC circles fell just short of a new record, but overwintering birds may well have been at a new high. Mid-winter reports included 8 in Dorset 1/18 (EFG), 8 in Whiting 1/24 (JAP), 5 in Manchester Center 1/19 (BWP), 4 in Pawlet 1/15 (GRB) and 4 in Ferrisburgh 2/9 (MCD,JID). There were a number of later reports as well, including 7 in Brandon 2/20 (SSW), but numbers may well have been swelled by returning migrants. A single Hermit Thrush on the Brattleboro CBC was a good find and another indication of a mild winter. So also was the astounding performance of the American Robin. Old CBC records were decimated as 2607 individuals were found, including 1575 in Ferrisburgh alone. The number that actually overwintered is conjecture, but many surely did. Reports from readers include 30-40 each in Brandon 1/8 (SSW), at Shelburne Bay 1/8 (TGM), in Benson 1/28 (WGE,NLM) and on Grand Isle 2/14 (DJH). Perhaps most remarkable of all was a flock of 15 at an elevation of 2300 feet on Mt. Hunger 2/11 (CCR,PRW). Also noteworthy was a flock of 87 in a low-grass meadow in Dorset 2/20 (EFG). Topping off a very big year for the Muscicapidae was a splendid male VARIED THRUSH in East Peacham 2/25-26 and again on 3/2 (CCB,DMM). This marks the second year in a row for this lovely vagrant from the northwest. Always scarce in winter, the Gray Catbird returned to the CBC roster for the second year running, thanks to a hardy individual at Hanover/Norwich. On the other hand, the Northern Mockingbird turned in its worst CBC showing since 1986. Readers managed little better with just 7 sightings, all single birds. Certainly of note were 2 American Pipits at Shelburne Bay, the first appearance ever for this tail-wagging species on a Vermont CBC. Bohemian Waxwings reversed directions after their huge year in 1993-94. The season's entire count was just 5 CBC birds divided between Ferrisburgh and Island Pond. Cedar Waxwings, however, moved smartly into the vacuum, as 2388 CBC birds were discovered in 14 different circles. Readers produced a multitude of reports including 58 in S. Duxbury 12/15 (FAP), 125 in Middlebury 1/21 (JAP), 65 in Benson 1/28 (WGE,NLM) and 80 in Dorset 2/11 (EFG). Northern Shrikes were again uncommon, although certainly more numerous than in the recent past. Christmas counters came up with 13 individuals, while contributors added another 10. Finally, it must unfortunately be reported that the European Starling rose to a new CBC high as 18,637 individuals were duly tallied.

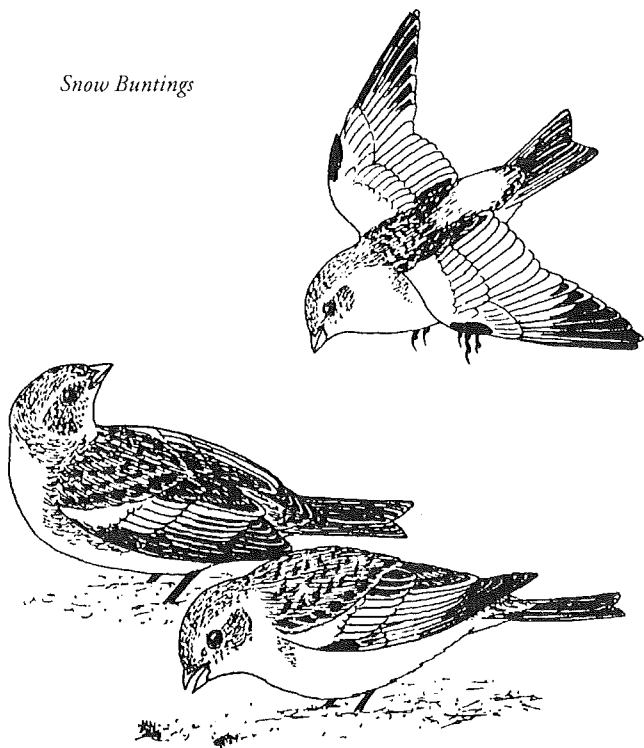


WARBLERS THROUGH JUNCO

Yellow-rumped Warblers lingered into the CBC season, as 8 were found in Ferrisburgh and 2 in Middlebury. Another was at Button Bay, Ferrisburgh 12/22 (SSW). A Pine Warbler at Rutland was a very rare CBC entry, although interestingly the second in the past 2 winters. Although uncommon in winter, the Common Yellowthroat showed up on both Hinesburg and Burlington CBC's. This represents a new high for this sturdy little warbler. Northern Cardinals were only moderately abundant, as a CBC score of 712 fell far short of those in big years. Maximum feeder flocks were 7 in Brownsville (BMH) and 10 in Middlebury (JAP), while 11 birds were observed in Rockingham 12/17 (REG,OAG). A ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK in S. Lincoln 2/12 (HFV) was a notable find and just the second of its species to appear in these Winter Records since your present editor came on board in 1982. The bird was well observed at a feeder as it dined on sunflower seeds. American Tree Sparrows were widespread and abundant, especially early in the season. 2868 individuals were just enough to top the CBC record set back in 1989, while readers noted flocks of 80 in Enosburg Falls 12/31 (BD) and 80 in Bridport 2/18 (JAP). The only Chipping Sparrow of the winter was a single bird on the Bennington CBC on 12/17. Also unique was a Vesper Sparrow carefully observed along Town Line Road, Addison 12/24 (TGM). Yet another excellent find was a Savannah Sparrow discovered on the Middlebury CBC. The bird was still present in Bridport 12/20 (JAP). Fox Sparrows were also present on CBC's with 2 birds in Rutland and another in Plainfield. An overwintering bird in Middlebury was well studied during the period 2/1-8 (MBN). The mild winter brought on a flurry of Song Sparrow reports along with an excellent CBC tally. Almost certainly overwintering were 2 birds at Potash Bay, Addison 1/28 (WGE,NLM) as well as singles in Dorset 1/20 (EFG), Middlebury 2/8 (MBN), Quechee 2/12 (KRT), Bridport 2/17 (JAP) and Pantown 2/18 (FAP,EBP). Late Swamp Sparrows were noted in Saxtons River, Hanover/Norwich and Rutland, keeping alive a CBC tradition dating back, with 1 interruption, to 1981. White-throated Sparrows produced a fine CBC tally of 75 individuals, but overwintering seems to have been restrained. One was at a Sheffield feeder throughout the season (PFW,SAW), while singles were seen in Brandon 1/14 (SSW), Bethel 2/5 (DP), Middlebury 2/1-8 (MBN), and Springfield 2/18 (WME). White-crowned Sparrows also showed their mettle with 1 bird overwintering at a Burlington feeder (SWM) and an immature found singing in Bridport 2/17-18 (JAP). Rounding out a very big sparrow year, the Dark-eyed Junco

emphatically toppled old records. A CBC total of 3342 individuals was 50 percent higher than the previous mark set in 1984, while Rutland and Saxtons River both topped the old high for a single circle. Late-winter feeder flocks of 15-20 were not uncommon with maximum counts of 31 in Woodstock (JMN) and 40 in Sheffield (PFW,SAW).

Snow Buntings



LAPLAND LONGSPUR THROUGH ICTERIDS

Lapland Longspurs were in typical scarcity with just a scattering of reports: 10 on the Ferrisburgh CBC, 2 in Panton 1/4 (JAP), 15 in Addison 2/8 and 4 there 2/20 (JAP) and 4 at DCWMA 2/10 (SSW). Snow Buntings were hardly scarce, however, producing their best CBC performance since the boom year of 1989. As usual the major concentrations were in the Champlain Valley with high counts 1100 in Panton 1/4 (JAP) and 600 in New Haven 1/3 (JAP). Of interest were 40 in Sheffield 1/10 (PFW,SAW) and 200 at the Berlin Airport 1/14 (TSA). Numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds were no more than average during the CBC season, while January reports were limited to 2 birds in Addison 1/17 (JAP) and 3 in Brandon 1/19 (SSW). An Eastern Meadowlark in Bridport 12/1 (JAP) was a month late in departing; none were found on Christmas Counts. Late Rusty Blackbirds graced the Saxtons River and Rutland CBC's, with other lingerers in Coventry 12/3 (REG,OAG) and in Dorset 12/3 and 12/19 (EFG). An early spring migrant was spotted in S. Duxbury 2/19 (FAP). Common Grackles were surprisingly scarce, as just 4 CBC birds were found. In addition one individual was present in W. Glover 12/10-15 (REG,OAG), a second held on in Brandon until 1/19 (SSW) and a third was in S. Londonderry 1/15 (WJN). The little-loved Brown-headed Cowbird mustered up a strong CBC showing, paced by 225 in Bennington. A single bird was at a Grand Isle feeder in mid-February (DJH) while 5 were in Middlebury 2/17 (JAP). Much more popular but considerably rarer in winter, a Northern (presumably Baltimore) Oriole was a welcome entry on the Hinesburg CBC.

FRINGILLIDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

It was a quiet year for Pine Grosbeaks, notwithstanding the 78 on the Springfield CBC. The only reports from readers were a single in Grand Isle 12/1 (DJH) and 4 birds in W. Glover 12/28 (REG,OAG). However, Purple Finches had their best year since 1991 with an excellent CBC tally of 1290 individuals. Other reports featured 50 at Victory Bog 1/28 (WHB,JMN) and 25 at Yellow Bogs 12/30 (JAP,GEH). Feeder flocks were generally rather small with a maximum of 20 in Sheffield (PFW,SAW). House Finches were again on the rise, as they established a new CBC record of 6304 individuals. From observers came such reports as 80 at Mt. Independence 12/21 (FAP,TGM), 100 in N. Ferrisburgh 2/3 (JDA) and 122 in Middlebury 2/12 (JAP). Red Crossbills appear to have set a new CBC high with 89 birds tallied in 5 circles. The Island Pond area was not unexpectedly the center of activity, but 1 bird was at S. Londonderry 12/18 (WJN) and 6 were in S. Barnard 2/13-20 (MS). The far more common White-winged Crossbill chalked up its biggest CBC year since 1984 with 510 birds in Island Pond alone. Good numbers were also found by contributors, including 35 in Yellow Bogs 12/30 (JAP,GEH), 75 at Victory Bog 1/28 (WHB,JMN) and 15 in Sheffield 2/21 (PFW,SAW). Evidence of nesting came from 2 locations: in Bear Swamp where 2 females were observed with nesting material and 1 was seen nest building 1/4 (GPL), and in Caanan where a nest with 2 young was found 2/22 (CHW). Common Redpolls were discovered on 3 CBC's including 224 at Springfield, but thereafter none was reported. Pine Siskins were also conspicuous early in the season, with a record 1918 being found on the Island Pond CBC. Later reports were mostly from the Northeast Kingdom featuring 200 birds at Moose Bog 1/20 and 30 at Victory Bog 2/2 (MCA). The only exceptions were 5 at a Brownsville feeder throughout the season (BMH). There was no ambiguity about the performance of the American Goldfinch. The species easily established a new CBC record, then went on to occupy every feeding station in the state. A sampling of mid-winter reports would include 100 in Cavendish 1/11 (TTR), 100 in W. Bolton 1/28 (MC), 100 in Proctor 2/20 (RWP) and 200 in Berkshire 1/25 (BD). The Evening Grosbeak settled for just a minor incursion, producing its lowest CBC total since 1975. Virtually absent during January, a few reappeared in February including 16 in Reading 2/17 (EJH,FMH) and 22 in W. Bolton 2/27 (MC). Albinistic individuals were observed in N. Wolcott 2/22 (RM) and in S. Woodstock 2/28 (PD). Finally, House Sparrows about matched last year's CBC total, still well below the highs of the 1980's.

List of contributors

TSA Ted Allen*	CEB Charlene Bostrom
EMA Elizabeth Alton	BTB Bill Brown
JSA Jim Andrews*	CCB Charles Browne
JDA JoAnn Appleton	DLC Dwight Cargill
JRA Jean Arrowsmith	MCA Mike Carlo
DB David Bailey*	MAC Melissa Carson
WHB William Barnard	MC Mike Cassara
RDB Raymond Barnes	TGC Terry Checchini
RJB Robert Benson	EWC Elizabeth Clapp
NB Norbert Blaskowski	MCC Mary Clapp
GB Greg Borah	DC Don Clark*
SB Sally Borden	BC William Crenshaw
EB Ed Bort	DHC Dan Crook

CHD Chip Darmstadt	PDM Penny March
LD Lucy Davis	NLM Nancy Martin*
SD Scott Davison	RM Rita McCarty
AMD Allison Deen	KPM Kent McFarland
PD Peggy Dion	NMM Nita Moccia
BD Bill Donlon	SWM Scott Morrical
SJD Sarah Jane Dudley	TGM Ted Murin
BCD Bonita Dundas*	TRM Tom Myers
CRD Cathy & Randy Durand	JN Janet Nelson
JID John Dye	MBN Marjorie Nelson
MCD Margaret Dye	WDN Whitney Nichols*
EEa Evan Eastman	JMN Julie Nicholson
EE Eleanor Ellis*	WJN William Norse
WGE Walter Ellison*	FO Frank Oatman*
WME Wally Elton	MP Michele Patenaude*
SDF Steve Faccio	DFP Debra Perkins
RF Russell Farley	DP David Peterson
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ELG Ted Gaine	AP Alan Pistorius*
EFG Betty Gilbert	CRP Carol Powell
DJG David Goodrich	BWP Barbara Powers
OAG Olive Griffin	HSP Hugh Putnam*
REG Ray Griffin	AQ Alan Quackenbush
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GEH George (Terry) Hall	TTR Theresa Raymond
AMH Ann Hanson	RR Ruth Reames
BMH Beryl Hinton	MS Michael Sacca
KRH Kristine Hitchcock	SS Susan Sawyer
MH Martine Hitchcock	KRT Kevin Taft
DJH David Hoag	EHT Enoch Tompkins
WDH Bill House	HVD Harold VanDusen
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BRJ Betty Rist Jillson	V Vesper party
TEJ Tait Johansson	PFW Paul Wagner
TJ Tim Johnson	SAW Shirley Wagner
EJJ Edna Jones	KFW Kenneth Ward
EKL Elizabeth Kellogg Lackey	SSW Susanne Wetmore
SBL Sally Laughlin*	PRW Paul Wiczoreck*
GPL George Lisi*	MLW Peg Willard
JL John Lloyd	CHW Charles Willey
DMM David & Marilyn Magnus	PW Peter Williams
LM Louis Marcessault	HFW Harry Wiseman

Special thanks to all who participated in the Christmas Counts and Eagle Survey.

* Indicates Christmas Count compiler.

Memorandum Regarding Rare Species Documentation

The Vermont Bird Records Committee (VBRC) emphasizes the importance of descriptive and detailed documentation for all rarities, rare nesting species and out-of-season species.

The committee is anxious to involve all Vermont birders in the process of producing as accurate a Vermont state list as possible. This list and all documentation must be credible to future ornithologists who will use the material for research. Suggestions for improving the reporting/voting process will be gratefully received by the committee.

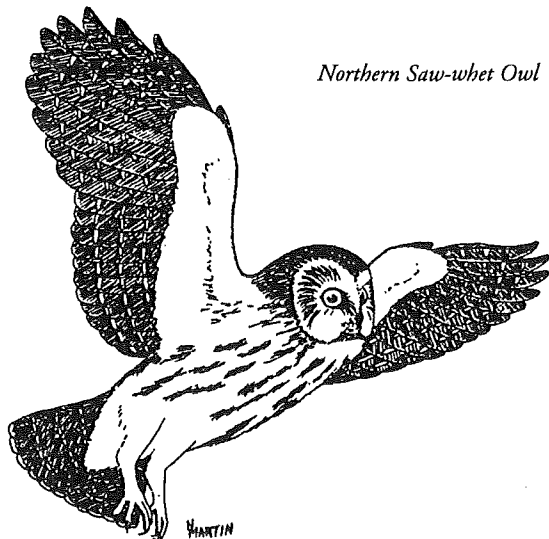
It is frustrating for both the observer and the committee to have a tantalizing sighting of a rare species not listed due to insufficient details.

Writing down the salient points of identification, talking into a tape recorder, making a quick sketch or taking a photograph at the time of observation are ways to help with accurate recounting later.

The Rare Species Documentation (RSD) form is both for filing the reports and is intended as a guide for the information needed. After completing the first page, reporters may prefer to write the description of the bird on a separate sheet of paper but checking the form for details requested.

Again the VRBC expresses its thanks to all observers who have contributed valuable information to the Vermont state list thus far.





Northern Saw-whet Owl

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