

Records of Vermont Birds

Winter Season 1977-1978

1 DECEMBER 1977 - 28 FEBRUARY 1978
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The Winter Season began with snow followed by a series of ice storms. This coupled with the fair to poor natural food supplies did much to affect the foraging of many species and limit the number of usual winter lingerers. Large snowfalls in January and February and persistent sub-zero cold throughout February also took its toll.

Regardless of the severity of the weather, the birding scene was all but dismal. A scarcity of Purple Finch and Evening Grosbeak was overcome in part by good Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak flights along with above average numbers of Northern Shrike. While rarer winter visitants showed up in record numbers, particularly Bohemian Waxwings and Lapland Longspurs, feeders continued to attract the unexpected such as the Northern Oriole at Weathersfield and Varied Thrush at Northfield.

Finally, for many the Audubon Christmas Counts are the highlight of the winter season. It is both a chance to get together and a time to map ranges and census the populations of wintering species. This year ninety-seven species were recorded on count days with an additional nine species during count period (of these, 28 set record highs). A total 46,588 individual birds were tallied on the twelve counts with Burlington alone setting a new count record.

A graph showing the results of the 1977-1978 Christmas Bird Counts is included in these records.

LOONS AND GREBES

A Common Loon on the Otter Creek, in Wallingford, Dec. 9 remained through the 19th (DHD). Three were at Converse Bay, Charlotte, Dec. 19 with one still present on the 27th (JJA). The Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's reported 7 and 8 respectively Dec. 17 and 18. Numbers of Horned Grebe lingered on Champlain into Dec. with one at Converse Bay Dec. 15 (JJA), 7 on the Ferrisburg CC Dec. 17, and a seasonal high of 62 on the Burlington CC Dec. 18. A final bird was downed by an ice storm near Pico Peak, Sherburne on Jan. 10. A single Pied-Billed Grebe in Burlington Dec. 18 and 20 (BSE,ORE,WGE) was the only one reported for the season.

HERONS

The Great Blue Heron was again present for much of the season. Dec. 17 found one on the Battenkill in Manchester (WP via NS) and two on the Ferrisburg CC. A fourth was found in the Burlington area during the same period, and one was on the Bennington CC Dec. 26. A possible early migrant? was present at Danby for the greater part of January (BLR), and a single bird was reported to have overwintered in Shaftsbury (via NS). This is the second year in a row that birds have been recorded overwintering in this section of the state.

GEESE AND DUCKS

Two Canada Geese were on Marshfield Reservoir Dec. 4 (MFM). A seasonal high of 801 was tallied on the Ferrisburg CC Dec. 17. On 19 Dec. 750+ were found at Dead Creek, Addison, and six were on Button Bay (WS, AP,WB). A single Brant at the General Electric plant in Burlington, Feb. 9, (DH fide WGE) was the second Vermont winter record in three years. Snow Goose, recorded during the Ferrisburg CC period, was not heard from again until a single bird arrived at the General Electric plant, Burlington, Jan. 30 remaining through 12 Feb. (DH fide WGE). This may be Vermont's earliest arrival date for the species.

Mallards were present in average numbers in Dec. with 124 on five CC's, with a high of 43 at Ferrisburg Dec. 17 and a noteworthy 15 at Rutland Jan. 1. A few birds remained on the Winooski R., Burlington (WGE), for the remainder of the period and Wayne Scott found a substantial group of overwintering birds on Otter Creek, Weybridge (34 present Feb. 19). A male found in Marshfield, Feb. 27, (MFM) was probably an exceptionally early migrant. Black Ducks followed the same pattern as Mallards with 352 on CC's: a high of 169 at Ferrisburg and 48 at Rutland, Jan. 1. Up to 100+ (Jan. 20) wintered with the Mallards on Otter Creek (WS,AP) and a number remained on the Winooski R. after Champlain froze over (WGE). Walter Ellison reported that "lake levels were so high prior to freeze up that many were noted diving for food in late Jan.". Four lingering Pintail, rare here during the winter season, set a new state high for the Ferrisburg CC, Dec. 17, as did two equally tardy Blue-winged Teal. The Ferrisburg CC also tallied two Wood Duck (the only reported for the season) and 9 Redhead, which also became a CC high. Three Canvasback were on the 18 Dec. Burlington CC. The Wildlife Service's waterfowl survey of Champlain, Jan. 6, located 1600 birds with at least 240 of these observed at Converse Bay, Charlotte, by Jeffrey Allen. Eight present in Burlington, Jan. 24 (BSE,ORE,WGE) were the last of the season. Record numbers of Greater Scaup were tallied on the Ferrisburg CC (151) Dec. 17 and Burlington had four the following day. At least 5 (2 male, 3 female) remained in the area through Jan. 22 (WS,BSE,ORE). Ferrisburg continued to set record highs with 54 Lesser Scaup on its count while Burlington found three on the 18th of Dec. The Winter Waterfowl Survey, Jan. 6, recorded a total 1400 birds as Scaup sp. which would show a substantial number of birds present during this season. Five Common Goldeneye were on Marshfield Reservoir Dec. 4 (MFM). They appeared in average numbers on Champlain in Dec. with 758 being found on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC (313 & 445) the weekend of the 17th,18th. By the Jan. 6 Waterfowl Survey only 309 could be found. Sixteen birds on the Saxtons River CC, Dec. 31, were noteworthy. Three individuals were found on the Conn. R. in Hartford Jan. 12 (WGE) and a pair was found at the same locale Feb. 18 (DPK,SBL,ALG). The final report was a lone female at Weybridge Feb. 19 (WS). The Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's tallied 44 (24 & 20) Bufflehead on the weekend of Dec. 17-18, with two female lingering at Burlington through Jan. 22 (WS,BSE,ORE).

A female Oidsquaw on Converse Bay, Charlotte, Dec. 3 (JJA) was possibly the same observed at Button Bay Dec. 16 and 19 (WS,WB,AP). The Ferrisburg CC continued to set new highs with 9 White-winged Scoters on Dec. 17. A lone female was found shot on the ice of Converse Bay Feb. 3 (JJA). The Black Scoter, present on Champlain all Fall, was recorded Dec. 19 (2 females) on Button Bay (WS,WB,AP) and Jan. 2 (1 female) at Converse Bay (JJA). The only Hooded Merganser of the season was a lone female found on the Conn. R. in Bellows Falls (DC et al) during the Saxton's River CC. Common Mergansers overwintered on open water throughout the state with 605 being recorded on three Christmas counts in December. Ferrisburg set a new high of 497 birds and Saxtons R. had a noteworthy 41 on the Conn. R. Thirty at the N. Wilder Dam, Feb. 4, (LNM,MCH) seemed to be the start of a deluge of sightings, statewide, for the remainder of the month, which would tend to show an earlier than normal movement for the species. Twenty-six Red-breasted Mergansers were found on the Ferrisburg CC for the 2nd year in a row, while the Burlington count produced an additional two. A single bird was still present at Burlington on Jan. 24 (BSE,ORE,WGE).

HAWKS AND EAGLES

Eleven Goshawks (the same no. as last year) were reported during the winter season, five of which were found on Christmas counts. Like the Goshawk the thirteen Sharp-shinned Hawk sightings (interestingly enough the same no. recorded last year also) ranged from one end of the state to the other (12 locales). Most Sharpie activity concentrated around feeders, a hobby which seems to be holding more and more of the species within the state during the winter months. Nine Cooper's Hawks found during the period (3 on the Ferrisburg CC) was surprisingly the same number recorded for the previous Spring. This is unusual considering the bird's supposed rarity here during winter months. An immature observed chasing a bird, Dec. 2, in Wallingford allowed for a close study when it became entangled in a bush (BCW,NWW).

The Red-tailed Hawk population continues to expand with 86+ birds recorded. Seventy-five of these were found on CC's with Ferrisburg setting a new high of 25 on Dec. 17. Rough-legged Hawks were not as common this year. Although 66 were reported, they came from only ten locales. The thirty-one on Christmas Counts would probably be closer to the winter's population. All sightings concentrated in the Champlain Valley except for three on the Bennington CC and one at Plainfield in December (MFM).

At least two Bald Eagles (1 adult, 1 imm.) lingered along Champlain being recorded at Ferrisburg, Panton, Charlotte, Weybridge, and Bridport (WS,JJA et al) into Feb. There was also an unconfirmed report of an adult bird at Craftsbury during Jan. (via NBS). Single Marsh Hawks appeared on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's the weekend of Dec. 17,18.

A possible Gyr Falcon was observed stooping off Church Hill, Woodstock Jan. 9 (LNM). This species is extremely rare here - found only occasionally during the winter season. A Merlin, also rare here in winter, was seen during the Rutland CC period. Single birds were also found in Plainfield (MFM) and Brattleboro (fide LPM), during the period, the latter a window kill. Twenty-three American Kestrels were reported (17 on CC's) for the season, with the Bennington CC setting a new high (7) on Dec. 26.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

By now most are aware of the success of the introduced Turkey. The bird has continued to expand its range in explosive proportions to the point of overriding its historical boundaries. No less than 85 birds were reported during the season with 44, a new high, on the Rutland CC, Jan. 1. The only Spruce Grouse of the season was found at Island Pond during the count period.

Good numbers of Ruffed Grouse were observed statewide budding on Black Cherry, Barberry, Aspen, and Birch. Christmas counts totaled 83 birds with Ferrisburg setting a new high with 19. Single Ring-necked Pheasants appeared on the Ferrisburg, Bennington, and Saxtons River CC's. Single birds were also found at Woodstock (a female) Feb. 6 (CRP) and Duxbury (HBD) Feb. 25,28.

COOT AND SNIPE

A lone American Coot was found on the Burlington CC, Dec. 18. An unconfirmed report of Common Snipe at S. Woodstock "off and on" throughout the winter (GV), if correct, would be the first time this species has overwintered since the start of these "Records".

GULLS

Glaucous Gulls returned to Champlain for the fourth year in a row. Single birds were found on the Burlington and Ferrisburg CC's, the latter at Westport, N.Y. for a first Essex Co. record. The Burlington waterfront and landfill produced four on Jan.22 (WS,BSE,WGE) for a seasonal high. Two birds remained in the area until freeze-up. Up to two Iceland Gulls were present at Burlington through Jan. 24 (BSE,WGE,SBL,ALG et al). A large number of Great Black-backed Gulls were present in the Burlington area (averaging 5-15 a day - WGE) with a max. of 51 (a new high) on the Christmas count Dec. 18. On Jan. 22 fifty plus (20 adult, 30+ imm.) were found at the breakwater and landfill (WS,BSE) with a number remaining until freeze-up. Herring Gulls were in above average numbers at Burlington where 825 were tallied on the CC. Ferrisburg followed with 225. On Jan. 22 500+ were still present at Burlington (WS,BSE). The only other record was a single bird on the Conn. River at Bellows Falls Dec. 31 (DC,DPK,et al). Ring-billed Gulls were found on the Burlington (349), Ferrisburg (123), and Island Pond (2) CC's in Dec. Twelve birds in Charlotte Jan. 15 had grown to 55 by the 21st (JJA). Jan. 22 found 75 still present at Burlington (WGE,BSE) where their "numbers declined steadily until the lake froze over the end of January" (WGE).

DOVES

Rock Doves continue to flourish with 4054 on CC's and a new high of 1227 at Burlington. Overwintering Mourning Doves seemed stable with small flocks of 2-30 birds at feeders throughout the period.

OWLS

Screech Owl reports continue to increase in the Champlain Valley with five on the Burlington CC setting a new high. Brattleboro and Ferrisburg reported single birds during the count period. Wayne Scott found a bird in Brandon, Dec. 28, and a brown phase was observed in Middlebury on several occasions (WB fide WS). A grey phase was found sunning, in a hole of a maple, in Charlotte Jan. 5 (JID,MCD) and a red phase was in a N. Ferrisburg cow-barn Feb. 13 (JID,MCD). An injured bird (grey phase) found in Bridport Feb. 21 was the last recorded (SBL). Fourteen Great Horned Owls were observed during the winter season (roughly the same as last year). Eleanor Ellis, who found a dead bird (apparently starved) in Weathersfield, reported not hearing the species often during the period. Snowy Owls chose not to move south this season with only four being recorded in the state. One found in Addison on the Ferrisburg CC remained in the Bridport area the rest of the period. Birds were also noted at W. Windsor, Georgia and Richmond (MGO,RS,DMU). There were fifteen Barred Owls reported plus an additional eight on Christmas Counts. Rutland set a high with four on a single count. Eleanor Ellis was just a little concerned after finding two dead birds, in the Springfield area, with "no signs of injury, and no flesh on the bones". This coupled with the Great Horned mentioned earlier would tend to show that the deep snows had an adverse effect on foraging in the area. Short-eared Owls were found at Ferrisburg, during the "count

VERMONT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

1977-1978

	ISLAND POND (DEC. 17)	FERRISBURG (DEC. 17)	BRATTLEBORO (DEC. 18)	BURLINGTON (DEC. 18)	SPRINGFIELD (DEC. 18)	WINHALL (DEC. 21)	BENNINGTON (DEC. 26)	W. CROSTOCK (DEC. 27)	CRAFTSBURY GREENSBORO (DEC. 28)	SAXTONS RIVER (DEC. 31)	PLAINFIELD (DEC. 31)	RUTLAND (JAN. 1)	
COMMON LOON		7		8									15
HORNED GREBE		7		62									69
PIED-BILLED GREBE				1									1
GREAT BLUE HERON		2		CP			1						3
CANADA GOOSE		801											801
SNOW GOOSE		CP											CP
MALLARD		43		38			27			1	15		124
BLACK DUCK		169		126			8	1			48		352
PINTAIL		4*											4
BLUE-WINGED TEAL		2*											2
WOOD DUCK		2											2
RED HEAD		9*											9
CANVASBACK				3									3
GREATER SCAUP		151*		4									155
LESSER SCAUP		54*		3									57
SCALP Sp.		24											24
COMMON GOLDENEYE		313		445					16				774
RAFFLE HEAD		24		20									44
OLDSQUAW		CP											CP
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER		9*											9
BLACK SCOTER		CP											CP
HOODED MERGANSER									1				1
COMMON MERGANSER		497*		67					41				605
RED-BREASTED MERG.		26		2									28
MERGANSER Sp.		60											60
DUCK Sp.		20											20
GOSSAWK	2			1	1				1				5
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK			CP										CP
ACCIPITER sp.										2			2
COOPERS HAWK		3					1						4
RED-TAILED HAWK		25*	7	7			18	2		8	4		71
RGH-LEGGED HAWK		20		8			3						31
BUTEO Sp.		2											2
BALD EAGLE		2 (laying)											2
MARSH HAWK		1		1									2
MERLIN											CP		CP
AMERICAN KESTREL		6	2	1			7*			1			17
TURKEY			CP							13		44*	57
SPRUCE GROUSE	CP												CP
RUFFED GROUSE	18	19*	1	16		1	4	2	3	4	11	4	83
RING-NECK PHEASANT		1					1			1			3
AMERICAN COOT				1									1
GLAUCOUS GULL		1		1									2
ICELAND GULL				1									1
WHITE-WINGED GULL Sp.		1		1									2
GT. BLACK-BACKED GULL		3		51*									54
HERRING GULL		225		825					1				1051
RING-BILLED GULL	2	123		349									474
BONAPARTES GULL		11											11
GULL Sp.		370		5									375
ROCK DOVE	9	914	65	1227*	194	CP	350	208	53	621	76	317	4034
MOURNING DOVE		117	74	216	164		180	67	6	141	9	44	1018
SCREECH OWL		CP	CP	5*									5
GREAT-HORNED OWL		3		1								CP	4
SNOWY OWL		1											1
BARRED OWL	1									2	1	4*	8
SHORT-EARED OWL		CP											CP
BELTED KINGFISHER		2	CP	3			2	1		2		4*	8
COMMON FLICKER		CP											CP
PILEATED WOODP.	1	11	CP	15*		CP		2		6	5	2	42
HAIRY WOODPECKER	3	46	12	53	19	19	37	41	10	39	24	45	348
DOWNY WOODPECKER	5	85	21	74	25	9	21	29	5	44	34	48	400
N-3 TOED WOODPECKER	1												1
EASTERN PHOEBE											1		1
HORNED LARK		388*	50			20				65			523
GRAY JAY	10*												10
BLUE JAY	4	342	196	412	232	70	253	200	90	531	180	402	2912
COMMON RAVEN	21	2				42			3	10	5		83
COMMON CROW	5	253	58	454		6	127	33	5	320	74	288	1623
BLK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	68	767*	180	530	208	346	290	686	274	688	611	403	5051
REAL CHICKADEE	20					CP			8		2		30
TUFTED TITMOUSE			2	CP			1			2		1	6
WT-BREASTED NUTHATCH	1	119*	19	87	34	13	21	63	6	74	39	61	537
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	1	4	17	10	4	20	13	11	1	5	16	4	106
BROWN CREEPER	2	8	1	10				3	1	1	1		27
MOCKINGBIRD		3	4	5						6*		1	19
BROWN THRASHER								1					1

	ISLAND POND (DEC. 17)	FERRISBURG (DEC. 17)	BRATTLEBORO (DEC. 18)	BURLINGTON (DEC. 18)	SPRINGFIELD (DEC. 18)	WINHALL (DEC. 21)	BENNINGTON (DEC. 26)	WOODSTOCK (DEC. 27)	CRAFTSBURY- GREENSBORO (DEC. 28)	SAXTONS RIVER (DEC. 31)	PLAINFIELD (DEC. 31)	RUTLAND (JAN 1)	
AMERICAN ROBIN		18		20	5		2			1			46
GOLDEN-CRN KINGLET	4	11		3		CP		5	13		11		47
BOHEMIAN WAXWING		155*	CP	24		CP				37			216
CEDAR WAXWING		7		1									8
NORTHERN SHRIKE	1	4	CP	1			2	2	5	2	5	1	23
STARLING	11	1293	397	1276	116	35	990	141	64	1151	140	730	6215
HOUSE SPARROW	17	3750*	125	1561	177	25	522	240	381	920	315	944	8977
EASTERN MEADOWLARK		5											5
RED-WINGED BLK BIRD		2										1	3
NORTHERN ORIOLE					1			1					1
RUSTY BLACKBIRD								1					1
COMMON GRACKLE	1		4	3	9			1	1	1	11	11	42
BRN HEADED COWBIRD		19		31		CP		40	2	12	CP	6	110
CARDINAL		69	26	70	20		43	12	1	67	8	59	375
EVENING GROSBEAK		153	140	141	115	100	423	24	23	303	171	216	1809
PURPLE FINCH	1	1		2			6			6			16
PINE GROSBEAK	150	50	12	31		38		170	203	163	544*	39	1400
COMMON REDPOLL	50	380	CP	133		70	64	122	49	45	13	4	930
PINE SISKIN	68	11	62	13	35	4	21	5	3	107	19	104	452
AM. GOLDFINCH	4	175	54	334	53	10	139	9	9	198	67	250	1332
RED CROSSBILL	4		CP										4
WT. WINGED CROSSBILL			CP	4		16	75	21			12	2	130
DK-EYED JUNCO		36	41	26	19	1	23		1	21	3	23	194
TREE SPARROW	3	413	65	146	71	7	199	28	18	153	37	190	1330
FIELD SPARROW		CP											CP
WT. THROATED SPARROW		CP	5	5	1	1	16	2		5	1	1	37
SONG SPARROW		13*	3	5			4	2		5			32
LAPLAND LONGSPUR		43*								2			45
SNOW BUNTING		383*	18	8	2	1			1	1	44	5	463
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	488	13,093	1661	8987	1505	854	3694	2178	1247	5834	2492	4355	46,588
TOTAL SPECIES/COUNT	30	69	29	61	22	22	35	34	29	46	33	36	
PREVIOUS HIGH COUNT	38	74	41	56	—	32	41	36	31	48	35	41	

* RECORD HIGHS FOR VERMONT COUNTS
CP BIRDS RECORDED DURING COUNT PERIOD BUT NOT ON COUNT DAY

period", and at Springfield, Feb. 28 (EE). The latter was found dead, behind the Springfield dam and it was noted that this was the "first evidence of this owl in the area" (AIP, KP). Saw-whet Owls made a rather poor showing for the season with the only records coming from Barre (MFM) Jan. 1 and Bethel (MCP) Feb. 14, 24.

KINGFISHERS AND WOODPECKERS

Belted Kingfishers remained in good numbers through Dec. with fourteen showing up on six CC's. Rutland set a new state high with four on Jan. 1. A final bird was reported from S. Pomfret, Jan. 16 (LNM). A lone Common Flicker found during the Ferrisburg "count period" was down considerably from the nine "hardies" of the previous year. Pileated Woodpeckers seem to be doing well. There were sixteen reports with a high of three, "heard calling at once", at the Potter farm, Clarendon (LHP). Forty-two birds were tallied on CC's with a record high of fifteen at Burlington, Dec. 18, and eleven at Ferrisburg the previous day. The scarce Red-headed Woodpecker was recorded for the third winter season in a row. An immature bird found at E. Thetford Dec. 31 (JAM) was observed again on Feb. 27 (WGE). Hairy Woodpeckers appeared in excellent numbers with 348 on CC's during Dec. and averaging two at feeders statewide throughout the remainder of the period. Downy Woodpeckers followed much the same pattern as Hairys with 400 recorded on the twelve CC's. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers went unrecorded for the period (undoubtedly due to the absence of Frank Oatman) and only one Northern Three-toed Woodpecker could be found during the Island Pond CC.

FLYCATCHERS AND HORNED LARKS

A lingering Eastern Phoebe found on the Plainfield CC, Dec. 31, was only the fourth recorded in the history of state counts. Record numbers (523 as opposed to 80 in 1977) of Horned Larks present during the Christmas Count period all but disappeared for the remainder of the season. Ferrisburg set a new state record of 388 birds (a substantial increase over the previous high of

111 set in 1976) with Brattleboro, Winhall and Saxtons R. reporting 50, 20 and 65, respectively. The only other records were 40 at Cornwall Jan. 6, 15 at Weybridge Jan. 20, and 2 at New Haven Feb. 12 (WS).

JAYS THROUGH CREEPER

The boreal forests of Island Pond produced a CC high for Gray Jay with ten on Dec. 17 (6 in '76). The only other bird reported was also from Island Pond, Feb. 12 (WS). Blue Jay appeared in average numbers with birds reported down in some areas and above normal numbers in others. Christmas Counts showed an increase over the previous year with a high of 531 at Saxtons R. Dec. 31. Numbers tapered off at most feeders as the season progressed. Vermont's winter population of Common Raven continues to increase yearly. Eighty-three were tallied on CC's (61 in 1976) with a high of 42 at Winhall Dec. 21. Birds were also reported from Clarendon, Dec. 16 (LHP), Ferrisburg, Dec. 17, Woodstock CC Dec. 27, Randolph Jan. 7 (GFE, WGE) and Williamstown Jan. 17 (WGE). Courtship display was observed at Woodstock on Feb. 24 by Larry Metcalf. Common Crows were in average numbers for the season although they did show some decline on Dec. CC's (1623). Bill Norse had a number around Winhall all winter and one was found in Londonderry on Jan. 31 (WJN), an area where they do not normally winter. Numbers began to increase in Feb. with a high of 50+ at Weybridge on the 19th (WS). Black-capped Chickadees were back to normal after a decline last year. Five thousand fifty-one were observed on CC's (2841 last yr.) with Ferrisburg setting a new high of 767. A total of 30 Boreal Chickadees were recorded on the Island Pond (20), Craftsbury (8) and Plainfield (2) CC's. A bird which visited a Peru feeder Dec. 23 remained through end of the period (LW fide WJN). A final bird was found at Island Pond on Feb. 12 (WS). Of the six Tufted Titmice recorded on CC's, one was found at Rutland Jan. 1 and another was observed at Burlington during the "count period". A single bird was also present at a Cornwall feeder throughout the period (BBP, WS). The

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February Census found no less than 31 birds in the southern counties.

White-breasted Nuthatches bounced back in good numbers following a rather poor showing last year. Of the 537 CC birds, Ferrisburg set a high record with 119 of them. Red-breasted Nuthatches, on the other hand, were back to normal after exceptionally high numbers last year (double that of White-breasts). Although numbers seemed down somewhat in the Champlain Valley, most areas recorded at least one-a-day at feeders. Only small numbers of Brown Creeper were reported with 27 on eight CC's (high of 10 at Burlington) and single birds at Middlebury, Jan. 11, 13 (WS), Island Pond Feb. 12 (WS), Timmouth Feb. 14 (GTL) and Woodstock Feb. 16 (FKT).

MOCKERS

Winter Mockingbird numbers continue to increase as the birds establish themselves within the state. Of the nineteen birds tallied on CC's, Saxtons River set a high record with six. Nine additional reports showed eight to be in the Champlain Valley (N. Ferrisburg, Georgia, Burlington and Vergennes - JID, MCD, FCH, CY, WGE, AP) and one at Bennington (JAD). Eighteen birds were recorded during the Feb. census with the majority in Windham and Bennington Counties. A lone Brown Thrasher lingered long enough to be tallied on the Woodstock CC, Dec. 27.

THRUSHES

American Robins were well below normal with only forty-six recorded on CC's (there were 147 in 1976) and single birds in Woodstock Jan. 24 (RWT), N. Pomfret Jan. 26 (LNM) and Addison Feb. 19 (WS). A VARIED THRUSH, resident of the coniferous forests of the Pacific Northwest, found its way to a Northfield feeder on Nov. 27 (see Fall '78 Records) and remained through Dec. 1 (FHW). This is only the state's fourth record for the species. It is interesting to note that three birds have also been found in New Hampshire (Concord, Nashua, and Rye) and one in Boothbay, Maine during the same period.

KINGLET THROUGH ICTERIDS

Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce again this year. Only nineteen birds were reported for the entire season with a high of 10 at Island Pond Feb. 12 (WS). Birds went unrecorded in the southern counties except at Winhall where three observations was considered scarce (WJN). Christmas counts found 47 in Dec. with a high of 13 at Craftsbury. Bohemian Waxwings invaded the state in record numbers for the second time in three years. Six birds at Shelburne, Dec. 11 (BSE,ORE,WGE) were the first to be reported. Three CC's (Burlington, Saxtons River, Ferrisburg) totaled 216 with a record high of 155 at Ferrisburg Dec. 17. Four were found feeding on apples in Londonderry on the same day (SDA). Good flocks (35, 80,15) were observed at Cornwall on Jan. 19, 20 and Feb. 12 (BBP). Feb. 3 found eight birds in Putney (MFZ) and three were observed eating Buckthorn at Thetford Hill Feb. 12 (RSD). Cedar Waxwings were scarce for the entire period with only eight on two CC's (Ferrisburg & Burlington) and a flock of 30 at Shelburne on Dec. 13 (BSE,ORE,WGE). Doug Kibbe noted that although there were very few here, "they were present in reasonable numbers in the remainder of the (Niagara-Champlain) Region". Northern Shrikes staged a major invasion following an excellent Fall. There were over fifty-five birds reported statewide throughout the period with an additional 23 on 9 CC's. Starlings were in their regular high numbers (6215 on Christmas Counts) as were English Sparrows with 8977 on CC's. Five Eastern Meadowlark were found on the Ferrisburg CC, Dec. 17. A number of lingering Red-winged Blackbirds were at a Reading feeder Dec. 7 (JoJ). Two birds on the Ferrisburg CC and one on the Rutland count Jan. 1 were the only others reported. A NORTHERN ORIOLE showed up at a Weathersfield feeder Dec. 12 and remained for the rest of the period (fide EE). This may be only the fifth winter record for Vermont in some 30 years. A Rusty Blackbird showed up quite unex-

pectedly for the Woodstock CC. Large numbers of Common Grackle lingered into Dec. when 42 were tallied on CC's. Two birds were still present at a Bridgewater feeder on Feb. 19 (EH). Brown-headed Cowbird numbers were down considerably from previous years. Only 110 were tallied on six Vermont CC's.

FRINGILLIDS

Cardinals continue to flourish as they expand their range northward. Ten Christmas Counts produced 375 birds with one as far north as the Craftsbury Count. Close to a thousand individuals were recorded during the entire period. By mid-February birds were heard singing in Shelburne and Middlebury. Evening Grosbeaks, scarce for the period, probably moved farther to the south. Only 1809 birds were found on CC's and only a handful of feeders had flocks of 30+. Noteworthy were flocks of 40-80 at Bethel throughout the period (MCP) and flocks of 50 at Norwich during February (DLB). Purple Finch were few and far between this year with only 16 birds on 5 CC's and single birds reported from Randolph (EWC, MCC) and Bethel (MCP). The absence of finches was made up somewhat by the excellent Pine Grosbeak flight. The 1400 on CC's was a substantial increase over last year's 425. Plainfield was able to set a new high with 544 birds. The majority of the birds reported were observed feeding on maple buds, with the remainder found on Sumac, flowering crab, apples, Scotch pine and Aspen. House Finches which appeared in the "winter records" for the first time last year showed up at a Middlebury feeder Jan. 8 with a high of five (3 males, 2 females) by the 12th. The birds were last seen Feb. 26 (WS). Hoary Redpolls, very uncommon in Vermont, were observed singly at Chipman Hill, Middlebury (fide WS), Rippon (from the last of Feb. on - fide WS), and Ferrisburg, Feb. 7 (JID,MCD). Common Redpolls invaded the state with 930 birds being totaled on CC's alone. With flocks of 20 to 50 they became one of the commonest birds at feeders. Numbers increased as the period progressed with notable highs of 70 at Winhall, Dec. 21 (WJN), up to 100 at Plainfield (MFM), and flights of 100 and 200 birds in N. Ferrisburg, Jan. 12 (JID,MCD). Pine Siskins were present in good numbers throughout most of the state with feeder flocks averaging 30 birds. There were 452 birds tallied on the twelve CC's in Dec. Highs of 185 at Bennington (HT), 75+ at Weathersfield, Jan. 17 (EE) and 65 at Woodstock, Jan. 25 (LNM) were noteworthy. American Goldfinch numbers down from previous years continued to taper off as the season progressed. It was also noted that as Redpoll and Siskin numbers increased at feeders, Goldfinch numbers diminished. Christmas Counts totaled 1332 birds with highs at Burlington (334) and Rutland (280). Red Crossbills were scarce with four on the Island Pond CC being the seasonal high. The only others reported were single birds at Winhall Dec. 3 and Jan. 21 (WJN) and at Brattleboro the latter part of Dec. White-winged Crossbills made a fair showing with 130 on CC's (with a high of 75 at Bennington) and single birds at Woodstock Jan. 12 (LNM) and Burlington Jan. 30 (WGE). Bill Norse reported a fair flight in Winhall with nine sightings during the period with a maximum of 30 on Dec. 20. Dark-eyed Junco numbers were down with only five reports of single birds in Dec. in addition to the 194 on CC's. A high of six wintered at a Clarendon feeder (LHP) and three were at a Middlebury feeder, Jan. 10 (WS). Like many of the other species this year Tree Sparrow numbers were somewhat lower than average (6-12 birds in flocks). Dec. Christmas Counts recorded 1330. A high of 32 birds was reported from Weybridge Jan. 20 (WS) and Wallingford Jan. 25 (BCW). A Field Sparrow was in the Ferrisburg area during the count period and a White-crowned Sparrow was found at a Shelburne feeder on Feb. 11 (BSE,ORE,WGE,GFE). Thirty-seven White-throated Sparrows remained to be counted on 9 CC's with a high of 16 at Bennington on Dec. 26. Single birds were found at Montpelier Jan. 15 (MFM) and Middlebury Jan. 27 (HH fide WS) and a pair wintered over on the UVM

campus (WGE). A Fox Sparrow with "no apparent injuries and bright plumage", was at a Wallingford feeder Dec. 7 (DHD). Song Sparrow numbers were down somewhat from previous winters, with only thirty-two on CC's and the following handful of reports: single birds at Bethel Dec. 3-6 (MCP) and Burlington Feb. 11 (WGE, BSE). Birds were observed throughout the period at Wallingford (BCW) and a high of six wintered at Cornwall (fide WS). Record numbers of Lapland Longspurs showed up on CC's with Ferrisburg setting a new high of 43, (to beat the three set by Saxtons River in 1959), and Saxtons River finding the additional two. The only birds reported for the remainder of the period were three on Grand Isle Feb. 4 (BSE, WGE). Snow Bunting numbers were down somewhat this winter following last year's above normal numbers. There were 463 birds on CC's with a high of 383 at Ferrisburg. Birds were limited to scattered flocks (averaging 20 individuals) throughout the period with some 330 birds reported from Cornwall, Norwich, Whiting, Reading, Pomfret, Brownsville, Barnard, Williston, and Weybridge, with highs of 150 at Weybridge Jan. 20 (WS) and 65 at Williston Jan. 23 (CY). Walter Ellison called it a poor winter due to the lack of food caused by snow depth. Eight birds seen Dec. 31 were eating maple buds.

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- | | | | |
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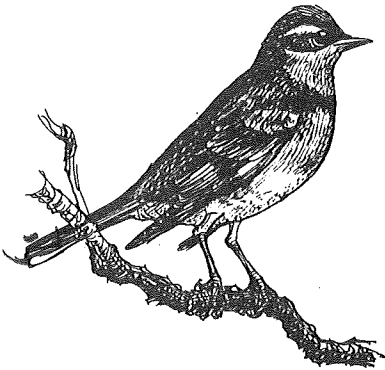
RECORDS OF VERMONT BIRDS is published quarterly by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science and is available only through membership in the Institute. VINS is a statewide natural history education and environmental research organization supported solely by memberships and private contributions.

\$8 - Individual, \$12 - Family, \$25 - Supporting
 CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

WINTER SEASON 1977-1978 (published March 1979)

Vermont Institute of Natural Science
 Woodstock, Vermont 05091

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VARIED THRUSH