

Records of Vermont Birds

WINTER SEASON 1978-79

1 DECEMBER 1978 - 28 FEBRUARY 1979
DONALD B. CLARK, SEASONAL EDITOR

The season which began with average December weather soon changed for the worse with a heavy snowfall in January and one of the coldest (to -30°) Februaries in history.

The scarcity or total lack of many of our regular wintering species was able to be overlooked, somewhat, with the influx of rarities such as the LITTLE GULL, BLACK GUILLEMOT and HAWK OWL to name a few. It was also some consolation to find that a total of seventeen new species highs were set by Audubon Christmas Counts in December. The reader will find a summary of Christmas Counts is now included with the winter records.

As a seasonal editor, I find it necessary, once again, to remind all that details are the most important part of the evaluation of unusual species and make the difference whether a record is accepted or rejected. If a rare species is found, please contact VINS immediately, and jot down your detailed observations at once.

LOONS AND GREBES

A single Common Loon was off Thompson's Point, Charlotte, December 7 (JJA). The seasonal high of seventeen was recorded the weekend of December 16, 17 by the Ferrisburg (13) and Burlington (4) Audubon Christmas Counts (CC's). Two were observed from the Shelburne Bay Fishing Access December 19, 20 and 22 and a lone bird was off Long Point, North Ferrisburg December 20 and 24 (MJM, SAM). One on Converse Bay, January 4 was the last of the season (JJA). A single Red-necked Grebe (rare in Vermont at any season) was found by the Ferrisburg CC December 16. Above average numbers of Horned Grebe lingered on Champlain into December with the Ferrisburg CC setting a record high of 131 and Burlington adding another 21 the following day. Seventeen were at Allen's Point, Shelburne, December 20 (MJM) with the final bird at Blodgett's Beach, Burlington, January 24 (WGE).

HERONS

Great Blue Herons continue to linger into the winter season with singles reported from Plainfield December 1 (MFM), Charlotte December 6 (JJA), Burlington December 17, and North Springfield December 28 - January 4 (EE, JPe, REP). The Dorset area reported a wintering bird for the third year in a row (BKl fide NS) - a demanding feat for the species considering the severity of the last few winters.

GEESE AND DUCKS

Good numbers of Canada Geese were on Champlain in December with 4,790 on the Fish and Game Department's Aerial Census (via TRM) the 7th. Some 583 remained for the mid-winter inventory January 10. A flock was found on Converse Bay for all but three weeks of the season with highs of 750+ December 31, 450+ January

12, and 150+ February 2-22 (JJA). Six remained behind the Burlington Electric Co. through January 24 (WGE). The only Snow Goose reported was found on the Champlain Waterfowl Census December 7.

The 435 Mallards on the December 7 Census had dwindled to 26 by January 10. Three (2 male, 1 female) were observed on open water in South Newfare December 11 (BBo). A mixed raft of 164 Mallards and Blacks was on Converse Bay January 16 with about 100 still present January 27 - February 1 (JJA). A single bird lingered at the Burlington Electric Co. through January 24 (WGE). Three birds at White River Junction January 30 and again February 8 were the last of the season (WGE). Black Ducks followed the same pattern as Mallards with 584 on the December Census dropping to 246 by January 10. The Ferrisburg CC set a new high of 259 December 16. Those birds in the raft at Converse Bay remained most of the season (JJA) while a single lingered at the Burlington Electric Co. through January 24 (WGE). Six at White River Junction January 30 were the last recorded (WGE). The rare winter sighting of a pair of Gadwall at Oakledge, Burlington, January 3 (BSE,ORE) was the first recorded in these "Winter Records." A pair of tardy Pintail, uncommon in Vermont during this season, was found at Thompson's Point, Charlotte, December 2 (JJA). Sixty Redheads were tallied on the Champlain Waterfowl Census, December 7, and a lone Ring-necked Duck was at Burlington January 24 (WGE). Canvasback appeared on Champlain in above average numbers with 3,600 on the December 7 Census and 604 on the January inventory. Some 2,000 birds were observed passing Appletree Point, Burlington, January 23 (fide BSE, ORE) and up to five (4 male) were found along the Burlington waterfront through February 24 (BSE, ORE, HGW). Eight Greater Scaup were found on the Ferrisburg CC December 16. January found seventeen at the Burlington Electric Co. the 24th (WGE) while in February, two were at Converse Bay on the first (JJA) and a single male was at the Burlington waterfront (ALG, DPK, BSE, ORE) February 18, 24. The December 7 aerial survey found 3,857 Scaup species on Champlain with 500 on the January census. A Lesser Scaup was found at the Burlington Electric Co. January 24 (WGE).

Excellent numbers of Common Goldeneye were on Champlain with 9,075 on December 7 and 1,175 January 10. Burlington produced 143 on January 24 (BSE, ORE, WGE) while Converse Bay had 200+ on February 1 (JJA). Twenty-three on the Saxtons River CC December 16, 5 at White River Junction January 17 (WGE) and nine at Wells River January 20 (WGE) were noteworthy. Eight Bufflehead were found on the Ferrisburg CC December 16 while Burlington set a new high of 35 the following day. A pair of Oldsquaws was off Long Point, Ferrisburg December 19 (MJM) with singles at Allen's Point, Shelburne December 20 (MJM) and Burlington January 24 (WGE). Four White-winged Scoters were in the area of the Ferrisburg CC December 16 with one present at Converse Bay January 5 (JJA). Surf Scoters were found on both the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's with 3 and 1 respectively. Two widespread Hooded Merganser reports came from the Ferrisburg CC (2) December 16 and Woodville (7) along the Connecticut River January 19 (WGE). Common Mergansers were found on open water,

throughout the state, during the season. Noteworthy were 1,556 and 593 found on the December 7, January 10 Champlain Surveys. An influx of this species had begun by February 1, with highs of 100+ at Converse Bay February 1 (JJA) and 58 at White River Junction February 15 (WGE). Both the Ferrisburg (9) and Burlington (1) CC's recorded Red-breasted Mergansers with a single bird at Oakledge, Burlington (BSE, ORE) January 22 the only other reported.

HAWKS AND EAGLES

There were fourteen Goshawks reported for the season with seven of these found on December CC's. Of the fourteen Sharp-shinned Hawks reported, over half were found in the vicinity of feeders. The Winhall CC set a new high with two on a single count. Cooper's Hawks were found on the Saxtons River and Bennington CC's December 16 while a third was at Burlington for a number of days in early February (BSE, ORE). The only other report was a possible Cooper's at Timmouth on January 4 (GTL).

Red-tailed Hawk numbers were down for the season, particularly in the Champlain Valley where there was a reported low in the Microtus. Of the 57 birds reported 40 were observed in the southern half of the state. Rough-legged Hawks were equally scarce with only ten reported. With the exception of single birds at West Rupert December 3 (DWS) and the Bennington CC December 16, all sightings were from the Champlain Valley.

At least one adult Bald Eagle was on Champlain during December being observed once in the Burlington area and on December 20, 22 and 24 at Long Point, Ferrisburg (MJM). A GYRFALCON was observed leaving an East Craftsbury feeder December 31 (FO, JW) and studied for a time in a nearby tree. Unfortunately, a second possible sighting of this exceptionally rare species in East Plainfield December 22 and 26 lacked sufficient details. On December 19 a possible Merlin was observed flying fast and low over a road and pasture in Timmouth (GTL) and one was observed in Plainfield during the count period in December. Twelve American Kestrels were found on CC's in December and single birds were observed at Shelburne December 24 (MJM), Bridport January 7 (SBL, JDL, HWS), Pittsford February 3 (NLM) and Brattleboro February 25 (MFM).

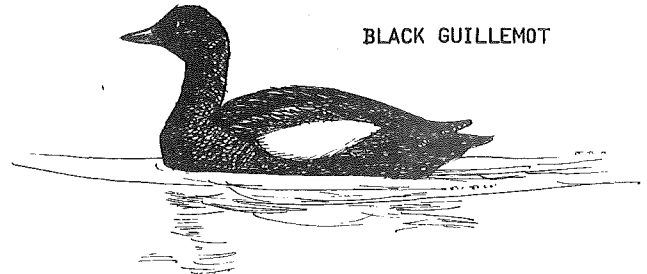
TURKEY THROUGH PHEASANT

By now the Turkey explosion is old hat to most but it is still interesting to see how rapidly this is occurring. Last year 85 birds were reported during the winter season. This year's final tally stands at over 270 individuals. A single Spruce Grouse on the Island Pond CC December 23 was the only bird for the period. Although Ruffed Grouse were considered less common than during the previous year by many, the Grafton Wildlife Project showed the species to be up. Ring-necked Pheasants were reported from Guilford, Woodstock (JWe), Plainfield, Rutland, Burlington (JJA) and Converse Bay, Ferrisburg (JJA) where the latter was observed running between islands with the temperature at -10°.

COOT THROUGH GULLS

A single American Coot was found on the Burlington CC for the second year in a row. Three Glaucous Gulls and two Iceland Gulls were at the Burlington waterfront January 24 (WGE, GPG, WS, AP). Both of these species are becoming regular winter visitors to this locale. Great Black-backed Gulls were in good numbers on Champlain through January with 18 and 21 on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's and a high of 50 at the Burlington breakwater January 24 (WGE, GPG). Herring Gulls were in average numbers along the lake with 788 on the Ferrisburg and Burlington counts with a high of 700+ at Burlington January 24 (WGE). Four birds on the Connecticut River at Bellows Falls December 16 (DC, DPK, SBL et.al.) were the only others reported. There were 1,402 Ring-billed Gulls on the

Champlain CC's with 113 still present at Burlington January 24 (WGE). Three birds were found at East Montpelier on December 4 (MFM) and one was in Plainfield January 20 (MFM). Sixty-two Bonaparte's Gulls on the Ferrisburg CC were the only birds reported for the season. A LITTLE GULL found on the Ferrisburg CC became the state's first winter record for the species. A BLACK GUILLEMOT appeared on Champlain for the second consecutive winter but this time appeared on the Vermont side at Oakledge, Burlington, December 22 (BSE, ORE, WGE, NE, BF), to become the state's first winter record and second state record.



BLACK GUILLEMOT

DOVES

ROCK DOVES totaled 3,765 on Christmas Counts as they continue to flourish. Good numbers of Mourning Doves were present at feeders throughout the season with an even 1,000 recorded on CC's in December.

OWLS

A BARN OWL seen flying over a field near the Middlebury-Cornwall town line (BBP) became the state's second winter record. Nine Screech Owls were found on the Ferrisburg CC December 16 for a new state count record. Burlington was able to add another bird the following day. One was found at St. Albans January 20 (WRB, MJM) and on February 5 the Addison County Humane Society was called to "rescue" a bird from the Middlebury Episcopal Church. Single Great Horned Owls were recorded on the Saxtons River, Bennington, Burlington, Island Pond and Springfield CC's with a new high of 6 at the Ferrisburg count December 16. One was calling at Woodstock December 29 and January 1 (JMN) and a pair were heard at Rupert December 20 (DWS). A nesting pair was present at Thompson's Point, Charlotte, throughout the period (JJA). Single Snowy Owls were recorded from Burlington (via FCH) January 6, Barre (MCH et.al.) January 23-29, and East Montpelier January 29 (MFM). Vermont was fortunate to have a rare visit from a HAWK OWL at Westford from December 24 through the end of the period (remaining until March 22) (MJM, SAM m.ob.). The bird remained in a fixed area, usually observed perched at the top of trees



HAWK OWL

photo by J. David Laughlin

CHRISTMAS COUNTS 1978-79

WINTER, 1978-1979	SAXTONS RIVER DEC. 16	BENNINGTON DEC. 16	FERRISBURG DEC. 16	BURLINGTON DEC. 17	WINHALL DEC. 18	ISLAND POND DEC. 25	WOODSTOCK DEC. 27	BRATTLEBORO DEC. 30	PLAINFIELD DEC. 30	RUTLAND DEC. 31	SPRINGFIELD DEC. 31	CRAFTSBURY- GREENSBORO JAN. 1	
COMMON LOON			13	4									17
RED-NECKED GREBE			1										1
HORNED GREBE			131*	21									152
GREAT BLUE HERON				1							CP		1
CANADA GOOSE			1257	208									1465
MALLARD		13	70	102						70			255
BLACK DUCK		87	259*	120						49			515
CANVAS BACK			4	19									23
GREATER SCAUP			8										8
COMMON GOLDENEYE	23		417	251									691
BUFFLE HEAD			8	35*									43
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER			4										4
SURF SCOTER			3	1									4
HOODED MERGANSER			2										2
COMMON MERGANSER	14		715*	87							5		821
RED-BREASTED MERG.			9	1									10
MERGANSER SP.				5									5
DUCK SP.			19										19
GOSHAWK			3			1	1		1		CP	1	7
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK				1	2*		1				CP		4
COOPERS HAWK	1	1											2
RED-TAILED HAWK	6	15	10	4	2			CP		2	2		41
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK			1										1
RED-LEGGED HAWK		1	5	2									8
BUTEO SP.			1				1						2
BALD EAGLE				CP									0
GYR FALCON												CP	0
MERLIN									CP				0
AMERICAN KESTREL	1	2	7	2						CP			12
HAWK SP.						1							1
TURKEY	1	1			1					24			27
SPRUCE GROUSE						1							1
QUEELED GROUSE	7	3	12	11	6	5	3	1	4	5	2	2	61
RING-NECKED PHEASANT										1	1		2
AMERICAN COOT				1									1
GT-BLK-BACKED GULL			18	21									39
HERRING GULL	4		187	601									792
RING-BILLED GULL			635	767									1402
RONAPARTES GULL			62										62
LITTLE GULL			1*										1
GULL SP.			120	17									137
ROCK DOVE	253	526	764	718	8	70	134	348	231	248	355	110	5769
MOURNING DOVE	111	65	142	169	3		167	73	45	137	67	21	1000
SCREECH OWL			9*	1									10
GT. HORNED OWL	1	1	6*	1			1				1		11
BARRIED OWL	2		1				2		1		3	1	10
SAW-WHET OWL			1										1
OWL SP.							1						1
BELTED KINGFISHER		4	2	1				1		4	1		13
COMMON FLICKER			2										2

44
46
90

from which it fed on mice in the surrounding area. The bird seemed unafraid of humans, allowing for numerous pictures by spectators. A second bird reported from Benson January 24 unfortunately lacked the details required for confirmation. The most recent record of the species in Vermont was a specimen taken in Milton the winter of 1962.

No less than eighteen Barred Owls were reported for the season including ten on December CC's. The winter 1978-79 will be noted for the greatest invasion of GREAT GRAY OWLS to date with well over 100 birds being recorded throughout New England. At least two birds were observed in Vermont, these at Waitsfield January 20, 21 and 30 (via HGW) and Enosburg Falls January 20 (CL via FCH). The last influx recorded was 4-6 in Colchester, Mallets Bay in 1956 (R. Spear). Previous to that 5 were found in 1907. A Boreal Owl, although not found in Vermont, located just across the river in Monroe, New Hampshire, on January 16, was worthy of note. The tiny Saw-whet Owl was found on the Ferrisburg CC December 16. Other birds were reported from Ascutney February 16 (via EE) and West Brattleboro (via LPM).

KINGFISHER AND WOODPECKERS

Thirteen Belted Kingfishers were tallied on six CC's with highs of 4 apiece at Bennington and Rutland. Single birds were also observed at Plainfield December 17 (LNM), Bridgewater Corners December 21 (IAR), South Pomfret January 17 (JLB) and Woodstock January 20 (SBL, JDL). Hardy Common Flickers continue to winter in the Champlain Valley. Two were found on the Ferrisburg CC December 16 and one remained in North Ferrisburg throughout the season feeding on Sumac and Red Cedar (JID, MCD). Three birds overwintered at Cornwall (BBP); a lone bird visited feeders in North Pomfret December 3 and 4 (RHA) and two were at a feeder in Pomfret for the week of December 29 (CK). Pileated Woodpeckers seem to be doing well with 49 being reported statewide, 35 of which were found on the December CC's. A RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER which showed up at a Stratton feeder at Christmas and remained throughout the period (AJD) was only Vermont's second record (the first record in the winter of 1971 was also from the southeast corner of the state). Hairy Woodpeckers remain in good numbers with 318 on December CC's and two the average at most

WINTER, 1978-1979	SAXTONS RIVER DEC. 16	BENNINGTON DEC. 16	FERRISBURG DEC. 16	BURLINGTON DEC. 17	WINHALL DEC. 18	ISLAND POND DEC. 23	WOODS STOCK DEC. 27	BRATTLEBORO DEC. 30	PLAINFIELD DEC. 30	RUTLAND DEC. 31	SPRINGFIELD DEC. 31	RAFTSBURY- GREENSBORO JAN. 1	
PILEATED WOODPECKER	1		11	4	CP	3	2	1	5	2	4	2	35
HAIKY WOODPECKER	20	13	30	23	18	7	29	30	52	38	44	14	318
DOWNY WOODPECKER	24	16	60	44	18	4	38	23	36	40	41	10	354
HORNED LARK		50	2					11					63
GRAY JAY						11*							11
BLUE JAY	457	126	223	132	391	272	667	396	715	614	776*	526	5295
COMMON RAVEN					16	18	9		29	CP		28	100
COMMON CROW	228	202	241	624	27		66	27	122	227	65	4	1833
BLK. CAPPED CHICK	472	183	604	549	350	158	533	139	829*	535	595	498	5445
BOREAL CHICKADEE						12						32	45
TUFTED TITMOUSE	3	1	1	1	2		5	33*	1	6	13		66
LOT-BREASTED NUTHATCH	33	26	87	60	14	4	29	30	43	62	37	18	443
RED-BREAST NUTHATCH	8	1	7	5	9	7	4	10	34	1	6	35	127
BROWN CREEPER	3		19	10	2	3	1			5		1	44
MOCKINGBIRD	2	1	3	5				1					13
BROWN THRASHER											1		2
AMERICAN ROBIN	2		28	2							CP		32
EASTERN BLUEBIRD								CP					0
GOLDEN-CRN. KINGLET		1			2	17	8		11		3	100*	142
BOHEMIAN WAXWING				1									1
CEDAR WAXWING			208	61							1		270
NORTHERN SHRIKE	3 imm.		9*	3		1	1	1	4	1		6	29
STARLING	739	897	1088	976	26	12	40	907	205	799	308	78	6075
YELLOW-RUMPED WOODPECKER								1					1
HOUSE SPARROW	536	485	1346	925	22	143	143	78	250	1057	407	313	5705
EASTERN MEADOWLARK	4												4
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD		1		26			2						29
RUSTY BLACKBIRD						4							4
COMMON GRACKLE		30	1	1		1	2	2		2	6	1	46
BRN-HEADED COWBIRD	8	4	7	30	26				15	9	70	28	197
CARDINAL	19	22	23	51	3		20	34	5	58	23		258
EVENING GROSBEAK	545	200	473	38	355	201	751	406	1583*	629	835	313	6329
PURPLE FINCH	7	2	33	4				8	5	13	2		74
PINE GROSBEAK	57		10		128	6	213	136	386	49	94	5	1084
HOUSE FINCH		10*	1	CP				2					13
COMMON REDPOLL	5			54	CP	1				CP			60
PINE SISKIN							1		4	4	40		49
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	54	72	531*	237	14		22	66	150	186	39	1	1372
DARK-EYED JUNCO	1	5		8			4	14	1	18	7		58
TREE SPARROW	54	50	109	139			29	28	13	107	60	15	604
CHIPPING SPARROW	1												1
FIELD SPARROW			1										1
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	3	7	1		1		3	5		4	2		26
SWAMP SPARROW				1									1
SONG SPARROW	6			11			1	13		5	1	1	38
SPARROW SP.				37									37
SNOW BUNTING		19	1	94					60			40	214
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	3718	3143	10067	7328	1446	966	2931	2825	4842	5011	3918	2204	18399
TOTAL SPECIES	40	37	63	56	25	26	33	30	31	34	36	28	96
* RECORD HIGHS				CP	-	COUNT PERIOD	BIRDS						86 Total

feeders throughout the season. Downy Woodpeckers were also present in average numbers at feeders with 354 showing up on Christmas Counts. The only Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker of the season was found on a camping trip in Lewis January 9 (CN, PSh).

LARK THROUGH CREEPER

Horned Larks appeared in only small scattered flocks for the second year in a row. Twelve were found in Burlington on December 1 (WGE) and only 63 were totaled on the Bennington, Ferrisburg and Brattleboro CC's in mid December. Flocks were found in February at West Pawlet and Poultney (fide NS) with a high of 45 at New Haven February 18 (ALG, DPK). The Island Pond CC set a new high for Gray Jay (11) for the second year in a row. Two birds were found in Lewis January 10, 11 (PSh, CN) and a single bird was seen at West Haven January 14 (FSA). Singles also moved as far south as Arlington, January 25 (MB), Springfield, February 8 (EHa) and Shaftsbury, February 11 (NS). Blue Jay numbers were way up this year with 5,295 on Christmas Counts and Springfield setting a new high of 776. The unusual sight of a Jay killing chickadees was observed on a number of occasions in Plymouth (FHe) and at a South Newfane feeder one was observed feeding on an E. Grosbeak which had been killed by a

Sharp-shinned Hawk (BBo). The Common Raven continues its range expansion with numbers increasing yearly. This year an even hundred birds were found on five CC's with highs of 29 and 28 at Plainfield and Crafts-bury-Greensboro respectively. Birds were also reported from Berlin (BBu), Bethel (WGE), West Castleton (JVF), Westford (MJM), South Strafford (HR), Woods-ville (WGE), South Newfane - high 4 - (BBo), Tinmouth (GTL), Winhall (WJN) and finally Dorset (RUS), where seven were observed doing aerial acrobatics over Green Peak. Common Crows were in average numbers throughout the state. There were 1,833 on CC's in December and a high of 253 was found on a day of birding in the upper Connecticut Valley January 20 (WGE).

Black-capped Chickadee numbers were high this winter with some 5,445 being tallied on Christmas Counts alone and Plainfield setting a new high of 829 on a single count. A partially albino bird was observed frequently throughout the season in Burke Hollow (DHM). Forty-five Boreal Chickadees were found on the Island Pond (12), Plainfield (1) and Craftsbury (32) CC's while singles were found at Cabot December 1 (LNM), Plainfield January 13 (MFM), Jericho January 27 (FBI), and Warren February 15 (BK). There is no doubt that the Tufted Titmouse is here to stay with 65 individuals showing up on ten of the twelve CC's

(Craftsbury and Island Pond found them absent) in December and 92 being tallied on the February Census. The Brattleboro CC set a new state record with 33 on December 30. Birds have now moved as far north as Plainfield (singles December 1 and February 28 - MFM), in the central part of the state, with sightings north to Barnard, in the Connecticut River Valley and Burlington, along Champlain. White-breasted Nuthatches appeared in average numbers (443 on CC's) with 1-2 a day at feeders the norm. A high of 6 was found at a South Newfane feeder throughout the period (BBo). Red-breasted Nuthatches, on the other hand, showed a slight decline following two very good years. Only 127 birds were found on CC's with highs of 34 and 35 at Plainfield and Craftsbury respectively. The retiring Brown Creeper showed up in good numbers for the season with 44 on CC's (19 at Ferrisburg) and an additional thirteen reported from Woodstock, Lyndon Center, Pomfret, Bethel, South Newfane, Newbury, Hartford, Marshfield and Plainfield (NLM, JMN, DHM, RoS, JHA, BBo, WGE, LNM, MFM).

MOCKERS

Following the pattern set by Cardinals and Titmice, Mockingbirds are rapidly establishing themselves in the state. Thirteen were found on six CC's and eleven were still around for the Census in February. The present front for the species appears to be Rutland with a few birds continuing north along the Champlain Valley. Single Brown Thrashers lingered for the Plainfield and Springfield CC's December 30 and 31.

THRUSHES

Although American Robin numbers were down considerably on CC's (32) a single bird at Craftsbury February 14 (DWB, fide MFM), 16 at Charlotte February 6 (JJA) and a flock of up to 40 late migrants which remained at North Ferrisburg (feeding on Red Cedar, apples and Sumac) throughout the period (MCD, JID) were noteworthy. A pair of hardy Eastern Bluebirds were found hunting for insects on the clapboards of a house in Brattleboro on January 1 (fide LPM).

KINGLET THROUGH WARBLER

Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers, which have been way down for a number of years, were given a shot in the arm when 100 birds (three times the previous state high) was tallied on the Craftsbury-Greensboro CC January 1. An additional 42 were found on the Bennington (1), Winhall (2), Island Pond (17), Woodstock (8), Plainfield (11), and Springfield (3) CC's, with the only other report two individuals at Lyndon Center February 16 (DHM). A lone Bohemian Waxwing was found on the Burlington CC December 17. A high of 40 birds were observed feeding in a Cabot apple tree January 5 (BBC) and for the fourth year in a row up to 38 (after the period the number rose to 80) birds returned to the same Cornwall locale (BBP). A maximum of 170+ Cedar Waxwings was found in Burlington December 6 (WGE) and flocks were seen in the Charlotte (JJA), North Ferrisburg (JID, MCD) area throughout the period (with a high of 140+ in Charlotte February 6). Springfield was the only other locale reporting the species with a single bird on its December 31 CC. The Northern Shrike made a good showing following last year's exceptional numbers (75+). Twenty-nine were recorded on CC's (Ferrisburg had a record high of 9) and an additional 15 were recorded from that many locales. As usual the Starling continues to proliferate with 6,075 on CC's and a Yellow-rumped Warbler lingered in the Brattleboro area long enough to be counted December 30.

HOUSE SPARROW THROUGH ICTERIDS

Like the Starling the House Sparrow continues to flourish (5,705 on CC's). Four Eastern Meadowlark

found in Walpole, New Hampshire on the Saxtons River CC were the only birds recorded. A number of lingering Red-winged Blackbirds showed up on the Bennington (1), Burlington (26) and Woodstock (2) CC's while a handful of others were present at feeders in Wells, Westford and Plainfield (NS, MJM, SAM, MFM) through December. Four Rusty Blackbirds at Island Pond December 23 became the first for that Christmas Count and the only birds of the season. Above average numbers of Common Grackles (46) appeared on Christmas Counts in December with a high of 30 at Bennington on the 16th. Brown-headed Cowbird numbers remain low undoubtedly due to the closing of many farms. Only 197 were tallied on nine CC's (Hanover CC added an additional 12) and only a handful of birds were reported from Mt. Holly (AEB), South Newfane (BBo), Plainfield (MFM) and Winhall (WJN).

FRINGILLIDS

Excellent numbers of Cardinals wintered in the state with 258 on CC's in December and 530+ on the February Census. A bird was heard singing at Woodstock on February 12 (JMN). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was an unexpected visitor at a South Royalton feeder (JMC, EES). Evening Grosbeaks were in average numbers for the season with flocks of 25-50 birds not uncommon. There were 6,329 individuals on CC's with Plainfield setting a new high of 1,583. A South Newfane feeder was invaded by a flock of 100+ birds December 10 which fortunately for the owners soon dropped back to 25-50 (BBo) and an albino bird was a visitor at a Castleton feeder a number of times in late February (ETA). Only a handful (74) of Purple Finch could be found on CC's. With few exceptions most arrived at feeders in late January - early February where they were present sporadically for the remainder of the season. Pine Grosbeaks staged an invasion for the first time in many years with 1,084 on CC's and flocks of 100+ common. On January 31 a trip between Woodstock and Barnard produced 400+ individuals with one flock of around 200 (SBL, ALG). House Finches are becoming more common in Vermont and the winter is no exception. The Bennington CC set a new high of 10 while Ferrisburg and Brattleboro produced one and two respectively. A single Hoary Redpoll was recorded at Plainfield on January 4 (LNM), while only a few scattered reports of Common Redpolls (1-5 from South Woodstock, Plainfield, Woodstock, Burlington, Winhall and White River Junction - IMS, LNM, MFM, JMN, WGE, WJN, JJ) came in. Of the 60 birds recorded on three CC's in December, Burlington produced 54. Pine Siskins were few and far between with only sporadic visits to feeders (60 birds for the entire season) and only 49 on CC's (40 of which came from Springfield). Highs of 40 at Plainfield (MFM) and 30+ at Burlington (BSE, ORE) in February were noteworthy. While American Goldfinch were present in respectable numbers (flocks of 20-50) in most areas, they seem to have staged a mini-invasion into the Champlain Valley, where a flock of 105+ at Charlotte December 17 (JJA) and one of 1,000-1,500 at Cornwall in January (BBP) were recorded. Also some 768 birds (Ferrisburg set a new high of 531) of the total 1,372 on CC's were recorded here. A flock of 13 (3 male, 10 female) White-winged Crossbills at Bethel January 15 (CM) was the only crossbill report of the season.

A tardy Rufous-sided Towhee made a couple of visits to a Brownsville Center feeder the latter part of December (DoB). A handful of Dark-eyed Juncos (58) were present for December CC's with the first spring arrivals at West Arlington February 11 (LSR, DGR) and Tinmouth February 13 (GTL). Tree Sparrows continue to decline with only 604 showing up for CC's and only a scattering of reports. Once again the Saxtons River CC produced a Chipping Sparrow, unusual here in winter. A Field Sparrow lingered for the

December 16 Ferrisburg CC and two overzealous migrants were found in Ludlow February 16 (AEB). Twenty-six White-throated Sparrows were found on eight CC's and an additional pair visited a South Newfane feeder in December (BBo). February found a scattering of reports from Burlington (BSE, ORE), Bridgewater Corners (GHB), West Arlington (NS) and Fair Haven (MGr). Fox Sparrows were found lingering at Rochester December 9-14 (HB) and Plainfield December 11 (MFH), and an unexpected Swamp Sparrow was found on the Burlington CC December 17. Thirty-eight Song Sparrows were found on 7 CC's and at least one bird (a single bird at Bethel for its fifth year - JHa) overwintered. The only Lapland Longspur reported for the season were two, with a flock of Horned Larks, in the Weybridge area February 18 (ALG, DPK). Modest numbers of Snow Buntings were found throughout the period with highs of 700-1,000 in Ferrisburg December 28 (MCD, JID) and 300+ in the same area on January 3 (MJM).

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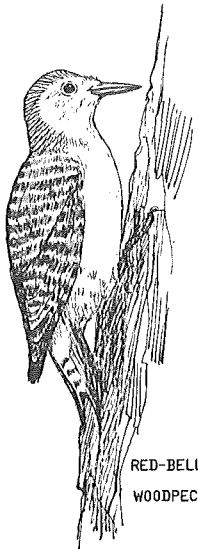
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