

# Records of Vermont Birds

## WINTER SEASON 1980-81

1 DECEMBER 1980 - 28 FEBRUARY 1981  
DONALD B. CLARK, SEASONAL EDITOR

The Winter Season for the second year in a row was marked by abnormal weather conditions. December began normally enough but by mid month temperatures were well below normal coupled with a lack of snow. January went on record as the fifth coldest and tied with 1917 for the driest ever in Vermont. Snowfall totaled 8.7 inches, well below the average of 19.1 and even less than the 11.4 recorded last January. February, on the other hand, found temperatures soaring by mid-month and went down in the books as one of the warmest and wettest on record. These warming temperatures were instrumental in the early return of the waterfowl and Icterids.

Although weather conditions were far from perfect, numbers of species lingered including a BLACK GUILLEMOT and a GREAT CORMORANT\*. A VARIED THRUSH was present for the second consecutive year and a TURKEY VULTURE in January became only the third winter record for that species.

Food supplies were fair to good over most of the state with the exception of the N.E. Kingdom's poor cone crop which adversely affected the "wintering finch" numbers in that area. Common Redpolls were the "finch" of the season bringing with them numbers of the rarer Hoary. Good numbers of Snow Buntings and sparrows were reported during the period as well as a record number of Lapland Longspurs in the Champlain Valley.

\*Occurrence not in Vermont, therefore not voted on by Vermont Records Committee.

### LOON THROUGH HERON

The only Common Loons reported for the season were an unspecified number on Lake Champlain during the Ferrisburg and Burlington Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CC) periods. Good numbers of Horned Grebe remained on Champlain through December with a total of 110 on CC's. A Great Cormorant at Hanover Center, NH for the Hanover-Norwich CC was certainly out of its range (fide WGE). There were three records of tardy Great Blue Heron; a bird observed walking through the snow in Pomfret on Dec. 20 (AC fide CRP) followed by one on the Burlington CC Dec. 21, and one reported during count period in the Bennington area. One reported in Windsor on February 23 (KRH) was presumably a very early migrant (some three weeks earlier than any previous record).

### GEESE AND DUCKS

Near normal numbers of Canada Geese were on Champlain during December with 850 being tallied on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's Dec. 20 & 21 and a high of 930+ at Dead Creek WMA on the 28th (WRB, PMB). A flock of c. 30 was observed at Addison Jan. 3 (SBL, JDL). Numbers were seen in Dorset (NS) and Woodstock (JTP) on Jan. 12 & 17 respectively, while flocks were heard at Rutland Airport and West Rutland on Jan. 24 (FSA). One can only guess that they were fleeing the advancing ice on Champlain. First spring arrivals were reported on the Lemon Fair, Cornwall (50-60) Feb. 20 (JSA) and at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham, (14) on

Feb. 28 (DC). There were no Snow Geese recorded for the season. Two Mallards were found lingering on Lake Morey Dec. 6 (WGE). There were 442 birds tallied on five CC's with a high of 301 at Burlington. A single at Woodstock on the 29th was a first for that count. Eight remained at White River Jct. from Dec. 30 through February 21 (NLM, WGE, et al). Although the Winter Waterfowl Survey of Champlain on Jan. 8 failed to turn up a single Mallard, sharp-eyed observers were able to locate one at Charlotte Jan. 10 (NLM, WGE). There were no other reports until Feb. 7 with two at W. Rutland (NLM, WGE) followed by a drake at Weybridge on the 8th (JSA). By Feb. 14 up to 250 had found their way to cornfields at Dead Creek WMA (MJM, WRB) and small flocks were being observed elsewhere in the Champlain Valley. First birds at Herrick's Cove arrived at the end of the month (DC). Black Ducks followed much the same pattern as Mallards with 20 at Lake Morey on 6 Dec. (WGE) and 277 on five CC's with a high of 139 at Burlington. Three at Woodstock on the 29th was high for that count. Eight observed in Center Rutland's Otter Creek Jan. 24 had increased to 27 by the 31st (CJF). Two arrivals at White River Jct. Feb. 1 remained through the 19th (NLM, WGE, et al). As usual a number of birds wintered on the Battenkill below Dorset (NS). By February 14, 250+ had collected at Dead Creek, Addison (MJM, WRB). First arrivals at Herrick's Cove were at the end of the month (DC). Four tardy Gadwall at Burlington Dec. 16 (WGE, MBD) had dwindled to three by the 21st, while the two male and one female Pintail at Blodgett's Beach Dec. 10 (WRB, PMB) had shrunk to a single male by the 21st. Five early arrivals were on the Lemon Fair by Feb. 20 with numbers rising to 40 by the end of the month (JSA). Three males were at Dead Creek WMA on the 21st (WRB, PMB) and a very early male arrived at Herrick's Cove on Feb. 28 (DC). A Green-winged Teal found on the Burlington CC Dec. 21 was presumably the same bird found in the area Jan. 10 (NLM, WGE, et al). A Wood Duck on the Burlington CC, Dec. 21 was the last of the season. A pair of Redhead, rare in Vermont, were observed at Blodgett's Beach on Dec. 10 (WRB, PMB). Numbers of Canvasback were recorded along Champlain during the season including five at Burlington and one in Charlotte Dec. 16 (MBD, WGE); ten total on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's on Dec. 20-21; six at Charlotte Jan. 10 (NLM, WGE) and two drakes on the Lemon Fair, Cornwall Feb. 28 (JSA). The only birds recorded out of the Champlain Valley were four early arrivals at Herrick's Cove Feb. 28 (DC). Single Greater Scaup were found on the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's showing a decline in the species here over the last two years. A raft of 120+ Lesser Scaup was at Charlotte Jan. 10 (NLM, WGE, et al). There were good numbers of Common Goldeneye on Champlain during the season with 992 on Dec. CC's and 223 on the January 8 Waterfowl Survey. In addition, one was at Norwich Dec. 2 (WGE). An average of 15 a day were at White River Jct. throughout the season with a high of 50 on Feb. 6 (WGE, MBD, JCh). One was found on the Ottauquechee Feb. 18 (KRT) while eighteen were at Herrick's Cove (DC), and one at Weybridge (JSA) on the 28th. Not surprisingly, all Bufflehead reports came from Champlain with eight at Blodgett's Beach Dec. 10 (WRB, PMB), thirteen at Burlington and seven at Charlotte Dec. 16 (WGE, MBD), and a total of 46 on the Ferrisburg and

Burlington counts Dec. 20-21. A male Oldsquaw on Lake Morey Dec. 6 (WGE) was a good bird for the Conn. River Valley. Also recorded were two at Ferrisburg Dec. 19 (MCD, JID) and eight on Champlain CC's. Fifteen White-winged Scoters on the Ferrisburg CC were the only birds recorded. Hooded Mergansers showed up on both sides of the state with nine at Norwich and Hartford Dec. 2 (WGE), a female at Blodgett's Dec. 9 (WRB, PMB), five on Champlain CC's and two on the Conn. River for the Saxtons River CC. One bird was still present below the power dam at Bellows Falls on Jan. 24 (NLM, WGE). Above average numbers of Common Merganser were on Champlain in December with the Ferrisburg CC setting a new state high of 2544 on Dec. 20 and Burlington tallying 369 the following day. Also 85 individuals were recorded on five additional CC's. Numbers wintered wherever open water could be found with an influx of the species beginning in mid to late February. The more elusive Red-breasted Merganser showed up on three Christmas Counts including one each at Ferrisburg and Burlington and a surprisingly high eight at Plainfield Dec. 27.

#### VULTURE THROUGH KESTREL

An exceptionally early TURKEY VULTURE observed in Addison on Jan. 29 soaring over cornfields and feeding on the carcass of a White-tailed Deer (LNM, MFM, MVE) became the third winter record for the species. Goshawks were recorded on four CC's (Hanover, Craftsbury, Rutland, Springfield). In addition, birds were reported from Ferrisburg, Plainfield, Woodstock, Mt. Holly, Hartford, Bethel, Hartland, Hinesburg and Shoreham. Of the six Sharp-shinned Hawks on CC's, three were at Ferrisburg for a new state high. Seven more were at feeders in Rutland (CJF, JPM), Fayston (ADH), Bridport (JSA), Woodstock (WGE, NLM, JMN). The Cooper's Hawk was observed on four CC's (two at Rutland). Other reports were from Woodstock, Jan. 3 (JMN), Addison, Jan. 10 (NLM, WGE), Addison, Jan. 31 (RWP, BLR, DHD), and Middlebury, Feb. 12 (JSA). Eighty-four Red-tailed Hawks were counted on ten CC's with a high of 30 at Ferrisburg. Good numbers wintered in the Champlain Valley, where reports of seven to sixteen birds a day was not uncommon in January. The unusual sighting of a Red-shouldered Hawk on the Burlington CC Dec. 21 beat the previous late departure date by more than two weeks. A Rough-legged Hawk (intermediate phase) found at the VINS Preserve in Woodstock on Dec. 4 (WGE), and five birds found on the Bennington CC were the only reports of the species outside of the Champlain Valley. There, a record eighty-one were tallied on the Ferrisburg CC Dec. 20 with three on the Burlington Count the following day. Nine additional reports from the area, through January, showed light phase birds running roughly (no pun intended) eight to one over dark phase. There were eight Bald Eagle sightings, the highest number ever recorded in these Winter Records. Single adults were found in the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's. An imm. taking pheasants at a Tinmouth game farm Dec. 26 was still in the area on Feb. 7 (SBa fide, NLM, ALG, WGE). An adult was at Chimney Pt. Jan. 10 (PM fide, MAA); an imm. was on the Conn. River in North Hartland for a week in mid-January (TL), while an imm. was observed on the White River at Royalton Feb. 24 (ML fide WGE, NLM). In addition, two probable sightings came from Poultney RaH fide JDS) Dec. 2 and the Conn. River at McIndoes Falls Dec. 23 (SBe). A Marsh Hawk was reported on the Lemon Fair, Weybridge Dec. 17 (JSA) followed by one on the Ferrisburg CC the 20th. The species was not reported again until a pair were observed at the Dead Creek WMA on February 14 (WJM, WRB). A possible Gyr Falcon at Victory Bog on Feb. 27 (AmL, PO) will have to remain hypothetical (no Bird Verification Report submitted). A Peregrine Falcon was reported from Wolcott on Feb. 16 (DS). There were thirty American

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Kestrels produced on CC's with a record 22 at Ferrisburg. At least two wintered over in Addison being recorded on numerous occasions (NLM, WGE, MFM, JID, MCD). Other reports included one at Woodstock through December (EH, JWN); one female at White River Jct. Feb. 14 (NLM, WGE); and one at New Haven Feb. 22, 23 (JRA).

#### GROUSE THROUGH SNIPE

The elusive Spruce Grouse went unrecorded for the season. On the other hand, Ruffed Grouse were found in good numbers with 101 on CC's (the high of 16 at Island Pond) and some 21 additional reports statewide. A single Bobwhite survived the season on Hartland Road, Brownsville (JEH, BMH). A total of six Ring-necked Pheasants showed up on CC's with five at Woodstock and one at Rutland. There were 39 Wild Turkeys found on the Ferrisburg (5), Bennington (17) and Rutland (17) CC's. Other reports came from Ferrisburg, E. Clarendon, and Castleton (MCD, JID, FSA, NLM, WGE). Out of the record number of three Common Snipe on the Burlington CC, two remained through January 10 (NLM, WGE, et al). A bird found on the Springfield CC January 4 was still present on the 9th (EE).

#### GULLS THROUGH GUILLEMOT

Two Glaucous Gulls on the Burlington CC December 21 set a new CC high. Five at Charlotte on January 10 broke the seasonal high of 4 set in January of 1978 (NLM, WGE, et al). A lone Iceland Gull on the Burlington count was the only bird for the season. A Great Black-backed Gull was at Blodgett's December 9 (WRB, PMB) while the Ferrisburg and Burlington CC's recorded 12 and 33 respectively later in the month. Five at Charlotte on January 10 were the last reported (NLM, WGE, et al). There were 753 Herring Gulls on Champlain during December CC's with 100+ remaining throughout the season. Two were found on the Bennington CC. Twenty-six were recorded at Hartford on December 5 (WGE). Thirty-four sightings were made in the lower Connecticut River Valley between December 2 and 13. A single bird was found at Bellows Falls on January 24 (WGE). February 28 found five at White River Jct. (WGE) and ten at Herrick's Cove (DC) as the species moved north with open water. Good numbers of Ring-billed Gulls were on Champlain during December (1222 on CC's). Six on the Mad River, Waitsfield, February 23 (ADH) were the only others reported for the season. Five Bonaparte's Gull were recorded on the Ferrisburg CC, December 20. A BLACK GUILLEMOT observed on Button Bay during the December 20 Ferrisburg CC became only the third state record for the species with the previous sightings at Burlington in November 1955 and December 1978 (WS, CWS, PFZ, TeH).

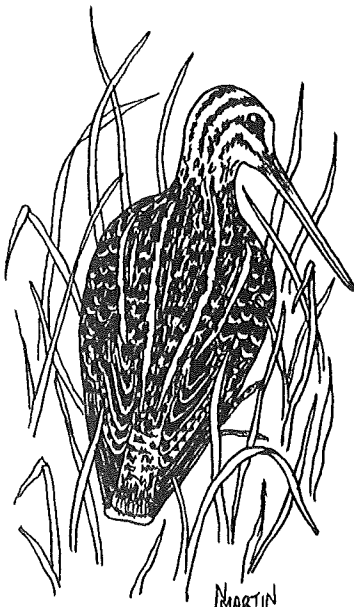
#### DOVES

The prolific Rock Dove increased to 6167 on Vermont CC's with Saxtons River setting a new state high with 1359 (a distinction it could do without). Excellent numbers of Mourning Doves (2695) were tallied on CC's, with a record high of 633 at Ferrisburg, and good numbers were reported at feeders, statewide, throughout the period.

#### OWLS

Six Screech Owls were located on the Ferrisburg (5) and Burlington (1) CC's in December. A gray phase was found dead in the road in Weybridge on December 20 (JSA), as was one in Pomfret December 28 (TCR, MHR). In January single birds were observed at Shoreham on the 3rd (SBL, JDL) and North Ferrisburg on the 6th-20th (MCD, JID). There were thirteen (13) Great Horned Owls recorded on CC's with singles at Winhall, Woodstock, Craftsbury, and Springfield, 2 at Bennington, and a state high of 7 at Ferrisburg. Additional reports came from Granville Gulf December 8 (ADH), N. Hartland (KRH)

**CHRISTMAS  
COUNTS  
1980 - 81**



COMMON SNIPE

WINTER 1980-1981	SAXTONS RIVER DEC. 20	BENNINGTON DEC. 20	FERRISBURG DEC. 20	BURLINGTON DEC. 21	WINHALL DEC. 22	BRATTLEBORO DEC. 27	PLAINFIELD DEC. 27	HANOVER- MORRIS DEC. 28	WOODSTOCK DEC. 29	CRAFTSBURY JAN. 1	ISLAND POND JAN. 3	RUTLAND JAN. 4	SPRINGFIELD JAN. 4	
COMMON LOON			CP	CP										CP
HORNED GREBE			17	93										110
BLACK GUILLEMOT +														1
GREAT CORMORANT +								(NH)						1
GREAT BLUE HERON		CP		1										1
CANADA GOOSE			811	39										850
MALLARD		15	110	301				CP	1			15		442
BLACK DUCK		4	119	139					3			12		277
GADWALL +				3										3
PINTAIL				1										1
GREEN-WINGED TEAL			CP	1										1
WOOD DUCK				1										1
CANVASBACK			7	3										10
GREATER SCAUP			1	1										2
COMMON GOLDENEYE	4		433	529				25				1		992
BUFFLEHEAD			10	36										46
OLDSQUAW			2	6										8
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER			15	6										15
HOODED MERGANSER	2		3	2										7
COMMON MERGANSER	41		254*	369				26		4		6	8	278
RED-BREASTED MERS.			1	1			8							10
DUCK SP.			200											200
GOSHAWK								1		1		1	1	4
SHARP-SH. HAWK	CP		3*	2					1			CP		6
COOPER'S HAWK			1	1				1				2		5
ACCIPITER SP.			1											1
RED-TAILED HAWK	6	26	30	7	1	5			2		1	5	1	84
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK			1	1										1
RGH.-LEGGED HAWK		5	81*	3										89
BUTEO SP.			2	1										3
BALD EAGLE			1a	1a										2
MARSH HAWK			1											1
AM. KESTREL	1	1	22*	3		1		CP				2		30
TURKEY		17	5			CP(8)						17		39
RUFFED GROUSE	1	1	13	15		3	11	3	5	9	16	15	9	101
R-N PHEASANT	CP	CP							5			1		6
COMMON SNIPE				3*									1	4
GLAUCOUS GULL				2*										2
ICELAND GULL				1										1
GT. BLACK-B. GULL			12	33										45
HERRING GULL	CP	2	77	676										755
RING-BILLED GULL			843	379										1222
BONAPARTES GULL			5											5
GULL SP.			1025	69				2						1096
ROCK DOVE	1359*	617	998	954	44	468	54	402	214	262	35	606	154	6167
MOORNING DOVE	539	369	633*	158	2	140	37	175	156	39	1	224	222	2695
SCREECH OWL			5	1										6
GT HORNED OWL		2	7*		1				1	1			1	13
BARRED OWL	2		1						2			CP		5
LONG-EARED OWL				1										1
SHORT-EARED OWL			3											3
OWL SP.			1											1
BELTED KINGFISHER		CP		CP				1	4	1		3	1	10
COMMON FLICKER		CP	5	1										6
PILEATED WOODP.	2	3	13	9	CP	1	5	2	4	9		CP	3	51
HAIRY WOODP.	23	12	66	44	18	14	39	39	43	31	17	42	76	404
DOWNY WOODP.	45	28	131*	69	15	23	26	44	48	32	11	74	108	654
B-B-T. TOED WOODP.							1			4	1			6
NORTH. 3-T WOODP.											1			1

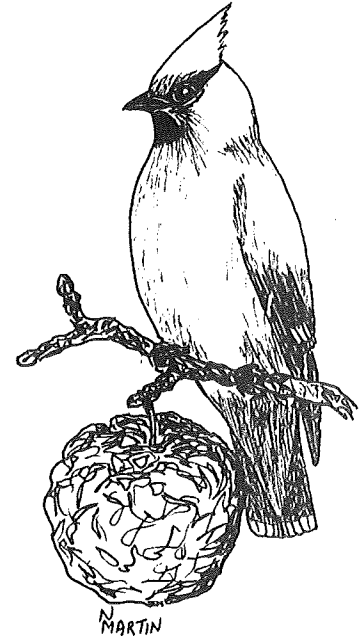
Florence January 24 (VH) and Shoreham February 7 (along with many pellets - ELW). Although Snowy Owls avoided CC's they did not go unrecorded for the season. Reports came from Williston December 16 (via JMN), New Haven January 2 (RB) (Bird was later found with a broken wing and taken to the Discovery Museum and then to VINS for long-term convalescence, January 26 - ALG), and Putney January 11 (DMe). Good numbers of Barred Owls were recorded for the season. Five were tallied on three CC's with Saxton's River and Woodstock having two apiece and Ferrisburg with one. Other reports were from North Pomfret (TCR), Marshfield (2-MFM), Moose Bog, Island Pond (CWS), Starksboro (2-WRB, PMB), Clarendon and Rutland (CJF). There were two Long-eared Owls this winter; one on the Burlington CC December 21 and one at dusk at a North Ferrisburg

feeding station February 20 (MCD, JID). Up to eight Short-eared Owls were observed in Addison (either at Jersey St. or Dead Creek WMA Headquarters) through January, by numerous observers who were able to watch them hunting, preening, and sunning. The only report of the elusive Saw-whet Owl was one found under a window in White River Jct. in early December (HSR).

**KINGFISHER AND WOODPECKERS**

Ten Belted Kingfishers were tallied on CC's with singles at Hanover, Craftsbury and Springfield, with highs of four at Woodstock and three at Rutland. At least two of the Rutland birds remained through the end of January (CJF) and one through February 7 (NLM, WGE). A number of Common Flickers were observed during the winter. Two were Tinging at Wilder on

WINTER 1980-1981	SAXTONS RIVER	BENNINGTON	FERRISBURG	BURLINGTON	WINHALL	BRATTLEBORO	PLAINFIELD	HANOVER- NORWICH	WOODSTOCK	CRAFTSBURY	ISLAND POND	RUTLAND	SPRINGFIELD	
HORNED LARK	165	200	669*									50	13	1097
GRAY JAY	1										9			10
BLUE JAY	476	297	391	262	383	215	265	495	530	474	92	533	867*	5180
COMMON RAVEN			1	1	2		23	4	4	24	23	6	1	89
COMMON CROW	317	186	247	681	16	69	56	166	121	44		436	218	2557
BLK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	664	341	971	663	598	293	774	1020	1427	746	292	657	1659*	10105
BOREAL CHICKADEE			1				3		2	37	26			69
TUFTED TITMOUSE	4	6	10	2		9	1	2	5				13	52
W-B NUTHATCH	52	27	95	66	24	39	60	109	29	5	60	111		699
R-B NUTHATCH	7	3	6	2	33	13	33	14	21	40	14	3	16	205
BROWN CREEPER	3		13	10	3	2	8	8	8	7	2	CP	4	68
CAROLINA WREN				1										1
MOCKING BIRD	8	5	9	11*		3		4				4	1	45
BROWN THRASHER									1					1
AMERICAN ROBIN	13	2	13	23	1		CP(I)	1	3	1		1	CP	58
EASTERN BLUEBIRD		7												7
Ø-CROWNED KINGLET	2		1		16		12	4	13	12	12	1	2	75
BOHEMIAN WAXWING			6			CP(II)	21	48	11				50	136
CEDAR WAXWING		25	92	154				2						273
WAXWING SP.			23											23
NORTHERN SHRIKE			1	1			3	2		3		CP		10
STARLING	908	1072	849	1128	53	329	58	240	141	71		294	430	5573
HOUSE SPARROW	797	806	2451	1534	122	211	330	480	410	671	7	1218	1095	10132
E. MEADOW LARK	1		2											3
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD		1	26	1		7	CP(I)					CP	1	36
RUSTY BLACKBIRD			1											1
COMMON GRACKLE		1	2				3		6			3	8	23
B-H. COWBIRD	50	30	18	9	41	2	2	2	84	5		8	21	272
CARDINAL	30	80	111	135*	1	30	7	42	40	2		87	62	627
EVENING GROSBEAK	524	529	911	920	187	194	737	940	468	734	23	829	1063	8059
PURPLE FINCH	5	12	51				6	4				13	13	104
PINE GROSBEAK	35	37	72	113	91	9	105	68	227	110	20	152	116	1155
HOUSE FINCH		17	7	2		15	3	10	6			9		69
HOARY REDPOLL									2	1				3
COM REDPOLL	82	8	1021	760	1		23	250	171	680	203	219	60	3478
PINE SISKIN	4	1	10	64		16	42			15		19		171
AM GOLDFINCH	11	79	287	224		21		31	1			66	63	783
RED CROSSBILL				4										15
WT-W CROSSBILL												4		4
R-SIDED TOWHEE													CP	CP
SAVANNAH SPARROW			1											1
DK-EYED JUNCO	62	142	30	27	4	55	3	20	8	2		18	89	460
TREE SPARROW	174	202	620*	247	8	47	31	162	35	153	1	179	187	2046
CHIPPING SPARROW									1					1
FIELD SPARROW				2		2								4
WT-CROWNED SP.			1											1
WT-THROATED SP.	9	16	2	4	2	16		4	4	4		4	17	82
FOX SPARROW							1							1
SONG SPARROW	25	10	7	21	1	12	1	2	2	2		CP	20	103
SPARROW SP.				7										7
LAPLAND LONGSPUR			46*											46
SNOW BUNTING	32	15	265	317			260	103		209	69	380	24	1674
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	6486	5259	17599	11356	1568	2247	3025	4912	4354	4480	885	6275	6809	75255
TOTAL SPECIES	40	43	76	70	26	31	35	42	44	37	24	42	40	102
CP BIRDS SEEN DURING COUNT PERIOD														
* RECORD HIGH FOR VERMONT CHRISTMAS COUNT														
+ FIRST TIME RECORDED ON VERMONT COUNT														



BOHEMIAN WAXWING

J.L.P.

December 6 (WGE). Two found at Ferrisburg December 7 were still present on January 24 (MCD, JID). A total of six were found on CC's, all in the Champlain Valley. One in Burlington February 1 (PFZ) probably wintered over. An early arrival was heard calling at the Har-riman Reservoir in Wilmington on February 22 (KMC). There were good numbers of Pileated Woodpeckers with 51 on CC's (high of 13 at Ferrisburg) and fourteen additional reports. Hairy Woodpecker numbers remained stable with 464 on CC's and a high of 76 at Springfield January 4. Downy Woodpeckers, on the other hand, appeared in above average numbers. Of the 654 tallied on CC's, 131 were at Ferrisburg for a new record high. There were six Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers on Vermont CC's with four at Craftsbury and one apiece at Plainfield and Island Pond. The only other report was

of a male working over a spruce along "3-Toed Road", Island Pond on January 18 (CWS). A lone NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER (rare in Vermont) was found by sharp-eyed observers on the Island Pond CC.

LARK THROUGH CREEPER

Horned Larks were first recorded on December 17 when 50 were seen in a field in Orwell (FSA). There were 1097 tallied on CC's with a record high of 669 at Ferrisburg December 20. In addition, 90+ were at New Haven, 20+ at Addison, and 9 at Weybridge January 10 (NLM, WGE, et al). On January 18 96+ were found at Addison (MJM, WRB) with numbers reaching 200+ by February 10 (MCD, JID). Eleven at Woodstock February 28 were the last of the season (NLM, WGE). Ten Gray Jays

were found on CC's with nine at Island Pond and the 10th at Saxton's River (fide DPK) south of its normal winter range. Three at Moose Bog (Island Pond) January 18 (CWS et al) were the only other birds reported. Blue Jay numbers were back to normal after a big drop last year. A total 5180 were on CC's with Springfield setting a record high of 867. Eighty-nine Common Ravens were present for CC's down somewhat from last year (128). High counts came from Craftsbury (24), Plainfield (23) and Island Pond (23) as one might expect. Other December sightings came from Sand Bar Refuge, Milton (two harassing a Red-tail - MJM, SAM), Lincoln (JRA), Mt. Mansfield Nose (2-CWS), White River Jct. (5-WGE), Mt. Holly (4 all winter - AEB), Danville (2-MFM), Woodstock (1-2, JMN) and Grafton (2 all winter - DC). January found birds at Shrewsbury (1-CJF) and Pomfret (1-RHA) with reports of two at Dead Creek, Addison (MJM, WRB) and one off the southern cliffs of Snake Mt., Bridport (JSA) in mid February. There were 2557 Common Crows on twelve CC's (high 681 at Burlington). The small flocks of December began to build as early as late January (100+ in a field in Clarendon January 24 - CJF). By February large flocks were on the move, i.e., 156 at Hartland February 6 (WGE, JCH, MBD), 70 at Lincoln February 27 (JRA), 156 at Woodstock and Hartford (NLM, WGE) February 27, 20 at Plainfield (MFM) and 250 at Ferrisburg (migration one week early - JID, MCD) both February 27. Black-capped Chickadees were in record numbers (10,105 on CC's and a state high of 1659 at Springfield January 4). Courtship song was first heard in Woodstock (3 m.) on December 19 (JMN) and in Bridport January 25 (JSA). This winter CC's tallied 69 Boreal Chickadees with a high of 37 at Craftsbury January 1. The species seemed to show up everywhere this season with reports from Fayston ("three all winter" - ADH), Cambridge (one on December 4, "Our first" - RYG, JGG), Starksboro (one from December 7 through the end of the season - WRB, PMB) and one at a peanut butter feeder in E. Arlington the first week in January, well south of its normal winter range (NBu fide NS). In addition ten were found on a day's birding in Island Pond January 18 ("Although warmer, birds seemed more quiet and reserved" - CWS), one was at Woodstock February 7 ("First we've had here in ten years" - SBL), two were at Post Mills from end of January to mid February (VHo, TL, JDo) and two remained at Bethel from February 20 through the end of the season (PBr). The Tufted Titmouse showed up on nine of the thirteen CC's for a total of 52. Springfield took the honors with a high of 13. Compiling what records we have available for the February Titmouse Census we find 72 statewide. Other reports for the season came from Clarendon (1-FSA), Randolph (2-EWC, MCC), Reading (2-MLE), Springfield (pr.-ELW), White River Jct. (1-WGE, ALG), Westminster (1-WGE, NLM) and Berlin (4-MFM). The White-breasted Nuthatch population remains stable with 699 on CC's (one more than last year) and 2-4 at feeders statewide. High counts were 111 at Springfield January 4 and 109 at Woodstock December 29. Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were down considerably on CC's with only 205 recorded compared to 774 last year. Only 40 were found at Craftsbury CC day, a far cry from the 329 of last year. In addition, there were reports of feeder birds at Fayston (ADH), Bridport (JSA), Grafton (DC), South Strafford (HR), White River Jct. (WGE), Starksboro (WRB, PMB), Randolph (EWC, MCC), Clarendon (FSA), and Brownsville (JEH, BMH). There were 68 Brown Creepers on CC's with the high of 13 at Ferrisburg. Other reports came from Plainfield, Lincoln and Grafton (MFM, JRA, DC). One notable high was the sighting of seven at one time in the upper branches of a dead tree in Sunderland (KRH).

#### WREN AND MOCKERS

A Carolina Wren, an irregular visitor to Vermont,

was found on the Burlington CC December 21. Forty-five Mockingbirds were tallied on eight CC's with the high of eleven at Burlington. There were three pair regularly in N. Ferrisburg feeding on apples, Barberry, and Cotoneaster (MCD, JID). Birds were also reported from Rutland (DMS, CJF, LHP), Bridport (via JSA), Wilder (2) and White River Jct. (WGE, NLM) and West Woodstock (EH). Only 2 were reported in Vermont on the February census. Woodstock had the only Brown Thrasher on CC's. One hardy bird spent the winter in W. Bridgewater where it fed on mixed seed (LM). Less fortunate was a weakened bird brought into VINS in December which later succumbed (GHS).

#### THRUSHES

The American Robin continues to show up on Vermont CC's in excellent numbers with 58 being recorded this year. Numbers wintered over with reports from no less than twelve towns. For the second year in a row a VARIED THRUSH was found in southern Vermont. This year's bird showed in early January at Westminster West just over the mountain from last year's locale (FHo fide CDK). Could this possibly be the same bird? Two Hermit Thrush eating berries in a Euonymus bush December 23 were later found dead where they were feeding (JHa). A very agitated Veery was observed in Lilac bushes at a Randolph home during a snow storm December 16 (EWC, MCC). This species has not been observed in Vermont during the winter season since 1976 (the 1976 bird being only the second recorded in the Niagra-Champlain region). Seven late Eastern Bluebirds showed up on the Bennington CC (December 20) and pairs in East Dorset and West Arlington the week of February 15 (via NS) were some three weeks earlier than the norm.

#### KINGLET THROUGH ICTERIDS

Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers were back to average (75 on CC's) after a banner year in 1979-80. Winhall claimed the high count with 16. The only others reported were one in Woodstock December 4 (WGE), four in Thetford and Hartford December 6 (WGE), four in Pomfret and Hartford February 4 (NLM, WGE), and two at Starksboro February 28 (WRB, PMB). There were good numbers (136) of Bohemian Waxwings on Christmas counts with a high of 50 at Springfield January 4. Twenty-five were observed at Barre December 28 and again on January 17 (MFM). Flocks were observed in East Barnard (12) December 10 (LDL) and Woodstock (8) December 30 (ALG, SBL). January sightings were from Fayston (18-20) on the 22nd (ADH), Plainfield (30-50) on the 23rd (MFM), S. Woodstock (60-NLM) and Dorset (50-NS) on the 29th, Cornwall (28-BBP) on January 30 and Plainfield (29-MFM) on the 31st. The only report for February was a flock of 45-100 birds north of Middlebury on February 21 (WRB, PMB). Reasonable numbers of Cedar Waxwings were present for the season although down somewhat from the previous year. Four counts (Burlington - 154, Ferrisburg - 92, Bennington - 25, Hanover - 2) recorded the species for a total of 273 individuals. In addition, one was at Norwich Dec. 2 (WGE). A flock at Hartford from December 31 through the end of February reached a high of 110 on February 28. Walter Ellison noted "a couple of birds had bright orange, not yellow, bands on their tails and another had an orange 'blush' on the sides of its belly" (WGE, NLM). Seventy-five were at Charlotte January 18 (MJM, WRB) with 6-8 in January and 15-20 in February at Bridport (JSA). Twenty birds at Ferrisburg February 28 (JID, MCD) were the last of the season. Northern Shrikes continue to be reported in good numbers. Ten were found on five CC's with Craftsbury and Plainfield sharing top honors with three apiece. Other reports came from Randolph (JDS), Westminster West (CDK), Norwich (NLM, WGE, GFE), Castleton (WGE, NLM), Mt. Holly (AEB), Grafton (DC) and Vershire (TG). In Waitsfield

3-4 were found during the season (ADH) while Jen Brettell, for the second year in a row, was fortunate to hear one giving a "beautiful burbly, trill song" from the top of a tree in East Barnard February 22. Starling numbers were down somewhat from last year with only 5573 on CC's. A single Yellow-rumped Warbler lingered at East Calais through December 19 (MFM) unlike the numbers the previous year. House Sparrow numbers continue to soar with 10,132 tallied on CC's. Three tardy Eastern Meadowlarks were present for Saxton's River (1) and Ferrisburg (2) CC's in December with three being reported from Ferrisburg on February 10 (JID, MCD). A number of Red-winged Blackbirds lingered into January including 36 on CC's. Small numbers were reported to have wintered over at Proctorsville (TR) as well as the Champlain Valley. An immature wintering at a Marlboro feeder carried a plastic wing marker believed to be used by a research project in Canada. First arrivals had shown up at Shaftsbury (3 - EdS) by February 17, followed by fifteen at Grafton (MHB) and numbers at Grand Isle and Woodstock (RL, DL - EH) by February 19. By the 20th birds were being reported statewide. Notable highs were 150-200 at Shoreham February 17 (ELW), 200+ at Woodstock February 20 (NLM, WGE), and 380-400 at Dead Creek WMA February 21 (WRB, PMB). A Rusty Blackbird on the Ferrisburg CC was followed by one at E. Montpelier January 6 (MFM), an immature male at Addison, January 10 (NLM, WGE) and two at Mt. Holly through January 25 (AEB). There were 23 tardy Common Grackle at CC time with 8 at Springfield January 4. In addition, five were at Mt. Holly on December 1 (AEB). First reports of spring arrivals came from Rutland (5-CJF) and Woodstock (5-WGE) February 21 with 25+ at Mt. Holly (AEB) and one at Jamaica (KMC) the following day. By February 24, twenty-one had reached Woodstock (EH) and three were in Ira on the 28th (CJF). Only 272 Brown-headed Cowbirds were tallied on twelve CC's with the highs of 84 at Woodstock and 50 in Saxton's River. Mrs. Barton of Mt. Holly who had 10-15 birds on December 1 was left with only six by February 26, finding several frozen on January 11. Small numbers wintered at Fayston, Clarendon and Addison. Birds were returning by February 14 when 30+ were observed at West Hartford (NLM, WGE), followed by 50-60 at Clarendon February 19 (FSA) and Plainfield (1 male) February 25 (MFM).

#### FINCHES AND SPARROWS

Twelve CC's totaled 627 Cardinals with a record high of 135 at Burlington December 21. Island Pond was the only count missing this species which has now been observed in all but the extreme northeast corner of the state. Only 573 individuals were reported in Vermont on the February Cardinal-Titmouse Census. Birds were first heard singing at Burlington (CWS), North Pomfret (MHR) and Rutland (CJF) on February 19. Noteworthy was a group of ten feeding on weed seeds at Ferrisburg 21 February (JID, MCD). Christmas Counts found Evening Grosbeak numbers slightly higher than last year. Island Pond was the only count showing a marked decline (the poor cone crop in the N.E. Kingdom this year was certainly to blame for the lower counts of many of the "winter finches"). Some of the notable highs were 300 at Fayston (ADH), 100 at Plainfield January 25 (MFM), 100+ at Hartford February 6, and 100+ at Woodstock February 8 (WGE). A partial albino, with yellow on the back of the neck and a patch of brown on the fore-edge of the wing was seen at Fayston (ADH) during the period. The number of Purple Finches visiting the state this year was small. Only 104 were found on seven of the thirteen CC's with the high of 51 at Ferrisburg and none reported by Island Pond and Craftsbury where record numbers occurred last year. The only other reports were 14 at Starksboro December 6 (WRB, PMB), one at Woodstock December 14 (NLM, WGE)

and again on December 29 (male - JMN), one at Hartford January 8 (WGE) and a wintering female at a Mt. Holly feeder (AEB). House Finch numbers increase yearly, with the species now nesting in the state. Of the 69 on the CC's (8), 15 were at Brattleboro and 10 at Hanover. Small numbers were at Clarendon, Burlington, Wilder, Bradford and Bellows Falls in early winter. By February numbers increased as birds returned. Noteworthy were three pairs at Clarendon February 2 which had increased to four by the 14th (FSA). Also eighteen were at White River Jct. on the 14th (WGE, NLM), five were at Vergennes on the 20th (JID, MCD) and two were at Springfield February 23 (ELW). Pine Grosbeaks were down somewhat in the N.E. Kingdom (after a banner year last year) but up statewide. Some 1155 were tallied on the thirteen Christmas Counts with 227 at Woodstock. Flocks of 3-50 were reported throughout the season.

The Hoary Redpoll, an uncommon winter visitor here in Vermont was found in above average numbers, undoubtedly due to the fact that their traveling companions, the Common Redpoll, were present in large numbers. Two were found on the Woodstock CC\*\* and one at Hardwick\*\* during the Craftsbury count. The seasonal high was three, found in a flock of c. 200 Commons, at Addison\*\* January 3 (SBL). The 3478 Common Redpolls collected on twelve CC's was a substantial increase over the two reported for last year. Good sized flocks were seen throughout the season with well over 2000 birds logged from 24 locales. Notable highs were 300 at East Montpelier December 28 (MFM), 207+ at South Burlington February 16 (WRB, PMB), 250+ at Ferrisburg December 20 (JID, MCD), 82 at Hartford-Woodstock December 18 (NLM, WGE) and 300 at Plainfield February 28 (LNM). There were only 171 Pine Siskins tallied on eight CC's with the high honors going to Burlington at 64. Four to five were visiting a Mt. Holly feeder December 1 (AEB), one was at Fayston January 23 (ADH) and nine were at Plainfield January 27 (MFM). The majority of reports came in February with small numbers observed at Plainfield, Randolph, South Burlington, Clarendon, Hartford and South Strafford. High counts were 35 at Burlington February 19 (CWS) and 50 at East Peacham February 27 (TWh). American Goldfinch numbers were down for the season with only nine scattered reports from feeders and 783 on nine CC's, the majority of these (511) from the Champlain Valley.

Four Red Crossbills on the Burlington CC and eleven on the Craftsbury count were the only birds recorded this season. White-winged Crossbills were also scarce with 4 on the Island Pond CC. An unusually tardy Rufous-sided Towhee was observed during the count period of Rutland's CC. An equally late Savannah Sparrow was on the Ferrisburg CC December 20. Small numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos spent much of the winter at feeders in Randolph, Bridport, Clarendon, Mt. Holly, and Woodstock. Six were at Wilder February 28 (WGE). In addition, CC's showed 460 with highs of 142 at Bennington, 89 at Springfield, and 62 at Saxton's River. The winter population of Tree Sparrows was down for the second year in a row. Only 2046 were on 13 CC's, although Ferrisburg set a record high with 620. There were eight other reports with a high of 40+ at Addison January 10 (WGE, NLM et al). A late Chipping Sparrow was found at Woodstock December 29, a first for that count. Both Burlington (2) and Brattleboro (2) located tardy Field Sparrows on their counts. White-crowned Sparrows showed up at a number of feeders including an immature with Tree Sparrows at Westford December 13 - January 22 (MJM), and singles on the Ferrisburg CC December 20 and at Clarendon January 28 through the end of the period (LHP). There were 82 White-throated Sparrows on eleven CC's. Also reported were two at Clarendon December 4 (3 by 2/1 - FSA) through the end of the season, two at Lake



Morey in Fairlee December 6 (WGE) and one at Montpelier December 26 (MFM). A Fox Sparrow under a South Strafford feeder during November was last seen December 11 (HR). One on the Plainfield CC, December 27 was the last of the season. One hundred and three Song Sparrows was the total for eleven CC's (high 25 at Saxton's River). Small numbers were recorded at Burlington, Addison, Hartland, Hartford, Tinmouth, Woodstock, Weathersfield, Rutland and Mt. Holly. A record high of forty-six Lapland Longspurs was set by Ferrisburg on December 20. A January 10 field trip to the Champlain Valley turned up 28 at Addison and one at New Haven (NLM, WGE et al). Four birds were observed in Addison January 18 (MJM, WRB), while twelve were found in the same township February 10 (JID, MCD). Rutland had 380 of the 1674 Snow Buntings recorded on ten CC's. There were eighteen other reported sightings of the species during the period with a high of 500+ at E. Burke December 25 (ECS). A flock of 35 "mixed with the snowflakes on top of the Mt. Mansfield Nose" (CWS) must have felt right at home.

\*\*Decision by Bird Verification Committee Pending

Contributors are reminded to send in rare and unusual bird sightings at once (or to call the Vermont Bird Alert) and to submit seasonal summaries promptly at the end of each season. This publication is only as complete as you make it. If you need sighting cards, write VINS, Woodstock, Vt. 05091. Or call us at 457-2779.

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