



Records of Vermont Birds

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

WINTER SEASON 1991–1992

1 December to 29 February

Frederick A. Pratt, Seasonal Editor

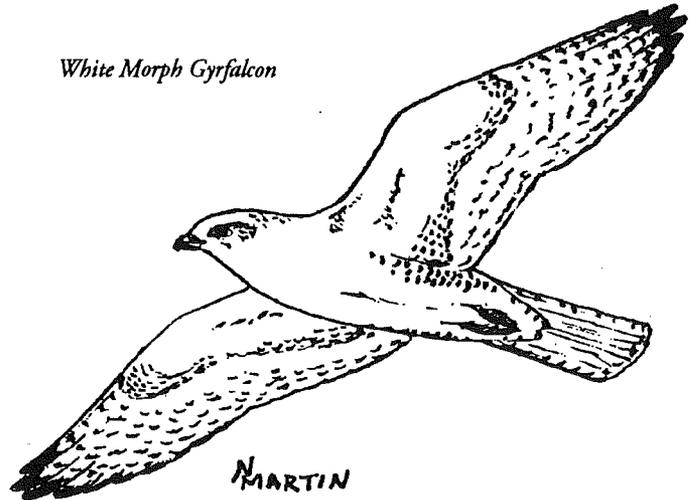
In terms of the weather, the winter of 1991-92 was unremarkable. Temperatures and precipitation were both below normal - but only by insignificant amounts. It was only in the timing of the inevitable cold snaps and warm spells that the weather patterns were of consequence to bird movements. Most important in this regard were the mild temperatures, aside from two brief periods in early and mid-December, that prevailed through the first half of January. As a result, snowfall during this period was light and often gave way to rain. Such conditions, while an anathema for the ski industry, were predictably favorable for the birdwatcher in search of lingering waterfowl (e.g., Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser) or half-hardies among the flycatchers, thrushes, warblers and sparrows. Notable in this latter category were remarkable numbers of Eastern Bluebirds, good numbers of American Robins, nice surprises such as 2 Eastern Phoebes, 6 Swamp Sparrows, and 4 Chipping Sparrows, and such unexpected goodies as Palm Warbler and Varied Thrush.

However, the real excitement of any winter season in Vermont is rarely attributable to our local weather. Northern invaders appear for their own reasons, related almost assuredly to conditions on the tundra and taiga and to resultant population pressures. Whatever the specific causes, Vermont has never experienced such a year for northern raptors, in particular Snowy Owl, Gyr Falcon, GREAT GRAY OWL and NORTHERN HAWK OWL. To be sure, the peregrinations of these species were by no means confined to our little state. Nonetheless, Vermont birdwatchers were treated to a stunning spectacle: at least 15-20 Snowy Owls, at least 5 Gyr Falcons of 3 different morphs and 5 of the most cooperative hawk owls imaginable. Numbers like these will not soon be matched! The Great Gray appeared briefly in Derby in late February, but disappeared after being photographed.

On other fronts, more typical northern species carried on in their typically unpredictable manner. Purple Finch, Pine Siskin and Northern Shrike were all present in excellent numbers, while Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay and Boreal Chickadee all seemed on the rebound after poor showings a year ago. Wintering Bald Eagles were also conspicuous, but other seasonal specialties were less numerous than usual, especially Pine Grosbeak and the two crossbills.

Waterfowl of note were our eighth record of HARLEQUIN DUCK and a number of Barrow's Goldeneyes, the latter species fast assuming the status of regular winter visitor. The Laridae had an especially fine year, headed up by a second state record for COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL. This species is locally regular in favored locations of

White Morph Gyr Falcon



coastal New England but very rare inland - notwithstanding its status in Europe, where it is widespread in a variety of habitats. Other Laridae of interest were at least 3 Little Gulls, a multitude of Bonaparte's Gulls and representative sightings of both Iceland and Glaucous Gull.

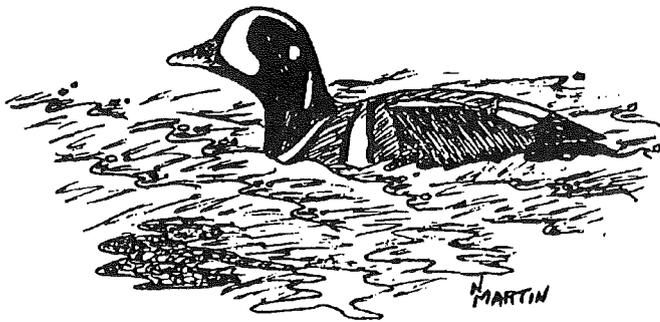
To conclude on yet another happy note, your editor for the last ten winters continues to be grateful to all contributors for the timeliness of their reports and their increasing care in documenting unusual sightings. Your efforts are producing ever more interesting and reliable winter Records.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The elusive Red-throated Loon again went unreported, continuing a trend that has stretched over the last six winters. By contrast, the Common Loon had a memorable year, as a record 26 individuals were recorded on the Ferrisburgh CBC - along with 6 each at Burlington and the Champlain Islands. Late reports featured 4 birds at Pantton 12/29 (MBN), 3 at Burlington 1/1 (NLM,WGE), and 2 at Button Bay 1/3 (SSW). Unusual indeed were 3 reports of Pied-billed Grebe, including CBC birds at Ferrisburgh and the Champlain Islands as well as a very late individual at Vernon Dam 1/5 (TM). Horned Grebes produced few surprises with a respectable but unremarkable CBC tally of 129 individuals. A flotilla of 40 was observed 12/5 at Potash Bay (JAP), 32 birds were counted in Shelburne and Charlotte 1/1 (WGE,NLM) and 2 lingerers were spotted off Long Point in Ferrisburgh 1/22 (MCD,JID). The only Red-necked Grebes of the season were a single at the Retreat Meadows 1/4 (WDN) and 3 individuals on the Ferrisburgh CBC. Of more than passing interest was a "count week" report of Double-crested Cormorant

from the Burlington CBC; although increasingly common on Lake Champlain in season, this species remains a rarity in winter. Not so the Great Blue Heron, which continues to persevere into late December in surprising numbers. Six CBC circles produced 11 individuals, while other late reports come from Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR) 12/20 (LMc), Dummerston 12/21 (AMD), South Hero 12/27 (DJH) and N. Ferrisburgh 12/27 (JDA). Two individuals were noted in Charlotte 1/10 (JAP), while the single observed in Dorset 2/7 (EFG) was clearly attempting to overwinter.

Harlequin Duck

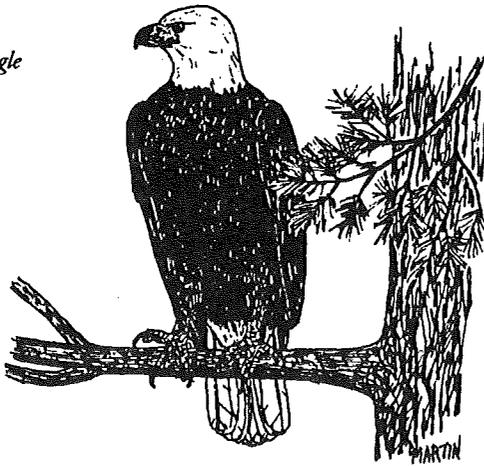


WATERFOWL

For the second year in a row Snow Geese lingered into December in remarkable numbers. The Dead Creek staging area produced estimates of 2000 birds 12/1 (MBN) and 1000 12/4 (FO). The latter throng was seen taking off near sunset for the south, leaving only stragglers for CBC enthusiasts. Nonetheless, 18 individuals were reported from 7 circles, including 6 at Vernon and 4 at Middlebury. Two snows were at Panton 12/28 (MBN), while a blue morph individual at Potash Bay held on until at least 1/11 (JAP, WGE, NLM, SJS). Canada Geese had another big year, although the CBC tally fell far short of the record set just one year ago. Among the large flocks reported were 1080 at Panton 12/28 (MBN), 850 at Shelburne 1/1 (NLM, WGE), 850 in Addison-Panton 1/11 (NLM, WGE, SJS), 800 at the Stone Bridge Access, Panton 2/1 (FAP) and 500 at Vernon 2/28 (REG). Among the multitude at Shelburne Bay 1/1 was one individual of the small Richardson's race (NLM, WGE). Wood Duck surprised with a record 12 CBC birds, including remarkable totals of 5 each at Bennington and Vernon. Other reports were limited to singles at Tinmouth 12/1 (CJF) and at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 12/12 (REG). The American Black Duck continues to prosper as a near-record 1515 CBC birds were tallied. Also of note were 500 at Blodgett's 1/8 (FAP), 200 on the Winooski River in South Burlington 2/18 (PCR), 266 at Vernon 2/9 (WGE, NLM) and 175 at Newbury 1/19 (DHC, NLM, WGE). Numbers of Mallards were even more impressive: nearly 2900 CBC birds, 600 on the Winooski River in South Burlington 2/18 (PCR), 550 at Burlington 1/1 (WGE, NLM) and 264 at Vernon 2/9 (NLM, WGE). The stately Northern Pintail continued its winning ways with several sightings reported, most notably 3 CBC birds at Bennington and another 3 at Weybridge 2/28 (JAP). Singles were at Burlington 1/1 (WGE, NLM), at Williston 2/2 (WGE, NLM, SJS) and at Weybridge 2/24 (JAP). The only report of Gadwall was for 2 birds at Grand Isle 12/15 (DJH), one of which appeared on the Champlain Islands CBC. Canvas-

back were nearly as scarce with just 9 CBC birds, evenly divided between Vernon, Middlebury and the Champlain Islands; the only other report was for one individual at the Tri-Town Water Plant, Addison 12/23 (JAP). The Ring-necked Duck was anything but scarce, judging from the astonishing 90 birds on the Champlain Islands CBC, a total easily eclipsing the old record of 16 set back in 1965 by Ferrisburgh. Reports from contributors featured flotillas of 17 at Lake Bomoseen, Hubbardton 12/24 (RWP), 10 at Charlotte 2/17 (JAP) and 11 at Charlotte 2/23 (WGE, NLM, DHC). Greater Scaup presumably predominated in the scaup total of 312 observed during the Aerial Waterfowl Census 1/7 (WJC) and also in the mixed flock of 200 noted off Shelburne 1/10 (JAP). Lesser Scaup, though easily overlooked, are typically present in significantly smaller numbers, as suggested once again by this year's CBC results. Lessers identified by individual observers included 8 at Rockingham 12/13 (REG), 4 in Addison 12/23 (JAP), and 4 at Charlotte 2/23 (PCR, WGE, NLM, DHC). Certainly the highlight of the season's Anatidae was a well-described male HARLEQUIN DUCK seen on the Winooski River in Montpelier 12/10 (ELG). This is just the eighth state record for this splendid little duck, the first since February 1986. Another handsome sea duck, the Oldsquaw provided its usual scattering of reports: 2 CBC birds at Burlington, 3 off Grand Isle for the aerial survey 1/7 (WJC), a single bird by the Tri-Town Water Plant, Addison 12/20 (JAP), and another at an unspecified location on Lake Champlain 1/3 (SSW). Scoters, too, were in short supply with the only reports being for Black Scoter, with 6 in Ferrisburgh 12/4 (FO) and a lone CBC bird at Burlington. Common Goldeneye enjoyed an excellent winter as more than 2400 were reported by CBC's and 1565 were found during the survey of 1/7 (WJC). Smaller numbers were also observed away from Lake Champlain, notably 93 in Vernon 2/9 (NLM, WGE), 19 in Newbury 1/19 (DHC, WGE, NLM), 5 on Seymour Lake, Morgan 12/11 (WGE, NLM, FO) and 4 at Lake Morey 12/8 (WGE, NLM). Barrow's Goldeneye were again reported from favored locations with a record-breaking 4 CBC birds including a drake and hen at Vernon. Two adult drakes were in Burlington on New Year's Day (WGE, NLM), quite possibly the same two that were there 2/5 (JAP). Less exotic but equally handsome, Bufflehead were present in good numbers as 77 CBC birds represented their best showing since 1984. Other reports included 5 in Burlington 1/8 (FAP), 6 in Charlotte 1/10 (JAP) and 16 at Charlotte 2/23 (WGE, NLM, DHC). Hooded Mergansers seemed everywhere, with a CBC total of 59 individuals and a Ferrisburgh tally of 31, both establishing new records. More than a dozen other reports were received, headed up by 12 in Newbury 1/19 (WGE, NLM, DHC), 8 at Herrick's Cove 12/13 (REG), 7 at Potash Bay, Addison 1/11 (NLM, WGE, SJS) and 5 at McNeil Cove 2/23 and 2/27 (WGE, NLM, DHC, PCR). Common Mergansers rebounded from their poor showing of a year ago, as several large concentrations were reported. A raft of 1000 was off Grand Isle as late as 1/12 (DJH), 800 were at McCuen Slang in early December (JAP), 300 were off Long Point 1/22 (MCD, JID), and a total of 320 were counted in Burlington and Charlotte 2/23 (NLM, WGE, DHC). Not surprising were the totals of 2108 and 1223 reported by the CBC's and the aerial survey respectively. Meanwhile, Red-breasted Mergansers checked in with 12 CBC birds, about average, a single hen at Burlington on 1/1 (WGE, NLM) and a surprising 3 birds somewhere on Lake Champlain on the very late date of 2/14 (SSW).

Bald Eagle



VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

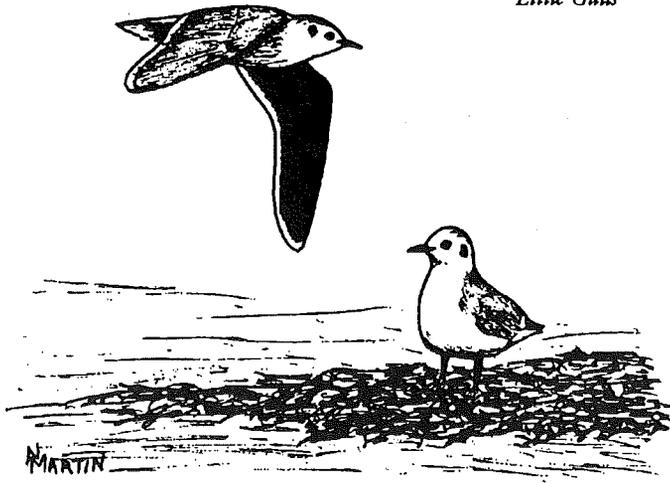
The season's only report of Turkey Vulture came from the South Burlington landfill on the rather early date of 2/23 (NLM,DHC,WGE). Reassuring indeed was the continued resurgence of the mighty Bald Eagle. Five CBC circles produced 10 individuals, while the midwinter survey reported a record 13 birds, 11 adults and 2 immatures. Numerous reports were also received from contributors, almost all these sightings from locations in the Champlain and Connecticut River valleys. Eagles seen in Thetford Center (RDw), Springfield (GHW,DS), Randolph (CP), Warren (TR), at Herrick's Cove (REG) and over the Worcester Range (MF), all during mid-December, were presumably birds enroute to winter feeding areas. Of particular interest was an eagle with wing tag '12' observed near the Charlotte Ferry dock, circa 2/17-27 (via FCH). This individual had been banded in New Jersey in 1989 but no record of its subsequent whereabouts had been forthcoming until now. Meanwhile, the Northern Harrier produced another excellent CBC showing, including a surprising 18 individuals at Middlebury. Midwinter records were another matter, with single birds reported from N. Dorset (SAC), DCWMA (DHC), Middlebury (DAM), Williston (ERF), Addison (JJA) and Bridport (JAP). Numbers improved in late February with 2 seen at DCWMA 2/17 (SSW) and 5 counted in West Haven and Benson 2/16 (NLM,WGE). Sharp-shinned Hawks were widespread, as 14 CBC circles reported a record tally of 33 individuals. One female of questionable repute wintered at a Hartland feeder, where she enjoyed a mixed fare of Mourning Dove and European Starling. Fifteen Cooper's Hawks established a new high for Christmas Counters but other reports were sparse. An adult male at Island Pond 12/11 (FO,WGE,NLM) was unexpected, given that the species is scarce in that location even in summer. Also of interest was an adult female in Waitsfield 1/26 (FAP), while other reports came from New Haven (JRA), Weybridge (MBN), Grand Isle (DJH), Brandon (SSW), Colchester (NLM) and Westminster (REG). The Northern Goshawk had a good year with a respectable 5 CBC birds and a surprising 14 other reports from individual contributors. An adult male found in Hartland 1/13 was an apparent window-kill (BM). The first winter record of Red-shouldered Hawk in four years was an adult bird in Norwich 12/8 (NLM,WGE). As for the Red-tailed Hawk, it soared to a new record as a remarkable 211 CBC birds were counted, including 46 at Middlebury, 41 at Ferrisburgh and 37 at Bennington. Winter numbers were more typical, however, with a high of 14 noted in Addison and Bridport 1/22 (JAP). Rough-legged Hawks were also numerous as they chalked up their best CBC tally since 1980. Eleven were

patrolling DCWMA 1/12 (DAM) while 9 were spotted in the West Haven-Benson area 2/16 (WGE,NLM). Among the falcons the American Kestrel came up with its best year since 1983. Eight CBC circles produced 28 individuals, a number of which stayed on to overwinter. Birds in Windsor 2/25 (SJS), Salisbury 2/26 (CJF,JAP) and Westminster 2/27 (REG) may well have been early spring migrants. The Peregrine Falcon gave indications anew of its gradual recovery. Middlebury and Ferrisburgh located 5 CBC individuals, while contributors added three other reports: one in Rutland 1/28 (BRJ), one in Burlington 2/8 seen "mobbing" an immature Snowy Owl on the ice off the King Street dock (PCR), and one observed feeding along a roadside in Charlotte 2/24 (SM). The rare and formidable Gyr Falcon was the unquestioned star of the winter's hawks and falcons, as at least 5 different individuals were observed: a gray morph bird frequenting the Weybridge-Addison area (first seen during November); a white morph bird seen in the same field as the above individual on the Middlebury CBC (WS,BBr,JC); a black morph bird first seen in N. Ferrisburgh 12/16 (JDA) and again at the South Burlington landfill 1/1 (WGE,NLM); a gray morph bird in Rockingham reported on the Saxtons River CBC (DPK); and yet another gray morph individual near the old railroad causeway in Colchester 12/29 (CCF,KB). A gray Gyr Falcon seen on the Burlington waterfront on 2/5 (JAP,GEHa) may have been the Colchester bird or even a sixth individual, while a gray morph in Whiting 2/17 (JAP) was probably the bird wintering in Weybridge and Addison. Whatever the count, it was an extraordinary year for Gyr Falcon!

GRAY PARTRIDGE THROUGH SNIPE

For the second year in a row the local and elusive Gray Partridge went unreported. Nearly as scarce were Ring-neck Pheasants with reports limited to a single on the Bennington CBC and a male bird (or birds) observed on and off during the winter in Grand Isle (DJH). It is likely that this bird had been released from a local game farm. Unhappily, the endangered Spruce Grouse was also once again missed, a further sign that habitat protection remains essential for this species of the northern forest. Ruffed Grouse, on the other hand, were hardly scarce as 122 CBC birds were counted, continuing the strong trend of the past four winters. High counts from contributors were 10 at the East Creek Natural Area (hereafter NA), Orwell 2/10 (WGE,NLM), 6 at Braintree 12/6 (AFK), and 5 each at Brownsville 1/10 (BMH), at Wenlock Wildlife Management Area (hereafter WMA) 1/26 (WGE,NLM,DHC) and at Brandon 2/5 (SSW). Four opportunistic individuals "wintered near chicken coop with steady food supply" in Marlboro (JPN). Numbers of Wild Turkeys remained strong, notwithstanding a rather mediocre CBC total of 127 birds. By contrast, individuals contributed numerous reports, spearheaded by 60 in Tinmouth 12/14 (CJF), 45 in Brattleboro 2/3 (FA) and 20 or more on various dates in Barnard (AWP), Chester (CEAd), Middlebury (SSW), Reading (FMH,GEH) and Pittsford (SSW). A Northern Bobwhite at Saxtons River was the second CBC report in two years - but only the third in the last ten. Also pleasing were two records of American Coot: a single at Lake Morey 12/8 (WGE,NLM) and 2 birds in the company of Ring-necked Ducks at Lake Bomoseen on 12/24 (RWP). Finally, the Common Snipe kept intact a remarkable CBC streak, as a single bird was discovered at Saxtons River. Since 1979 Christmas Counters have managed to find just one snipe on 8 occasions - but have missed the species altogether only in 1984. Also of interest was an individual in Tinmouth that overwintered "in a wet ditch that feeds into a brook" (PMB).

Little Gulls



GULLS

The well-named Little Gull returned to the winter Records after a lapse of three years, as 2 adults and an immature were spotted at Button Bay and Town Farm Bay, Ferrisburgh, 12/2 (WGE,DHC). The single on the Ferrisburgh CBC, also found at Button Bay, may well have been one of the above-mentioned individuals. Even more noteworthy was an immature COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL first discovered on the Burlington waterfront 1/19 (GEHa). The bird, in first basic plumage, was again seen in Burlington 2/2 (WGE,NLM,SJS), 2/6 at Blodgett's (GEHa) and later still at the South Burlington landfill 2/15 (CSP) and 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC). Not to be overshadowed, Bonaparte's Gulls appeared in excellent numbers, as 314 individuals were tallied on the Ferrisburgh and Champlain Islands CBC's. Earlier, 130 had been present at Button Bay and another 380 at Town Farm Bay 12/2 (WGE,DHC), while the last reported were 5 at Button Bay 12/22 (WGE,NLM,SJS) and 15 on Lake Champlain, also 12/22 (SSW). Among the less exotic Laridae, Ring-billed Gulls were again plentiful at their expected locations, including the East Montpelier landfill, where at least 100 were observed 12/14 (TSA). Interestingly, numbers were way down in February as only 16 were found in Burlington 2/2 and just 13 on 2/23 (WGE). Meanwhile, Herring Gulls were abundant with the highest CBC total in at least 15 years. 1200 were still patrolling the Burlington waterfront as late as 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC). Not surprisingly, white-winged gulls were quite scarce, as the only CBC finds came from Hanover-Norwich. Otherwise, the only report of Iceland Gull was of 2 birds at the South Burlington landfill 2/2 (WGE,NLM,SJS), with a single still present on 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC). Also at the South Burlington landfill 2/2 was a single Glaucous Gull (WGE,NLM,SJS), probably the same individual later observed on the Burlington waterfront 2/23 (DHC,WGE,NLM). The only other report was of a 2nd-winter bird at Retreat Meadows 2/3 (WDN). Last but not least among the Laridae, the Great Black-backed Gull easily eclipsed its old CBC high as 531 individuals were found in 9 different circles. From contributors came such reports as 250 in Brattleboro 2/18 (WDN) and 340 at Burlington 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC). Even the landfill in Moretown produced 75 on 2/12 (TSA).

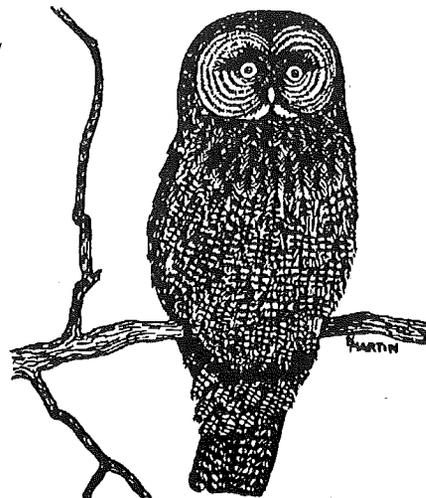
DOVES

Unhappily, melancholy news was again forthcoming from the Columbidae, as Rock Doves surpassed last year's record CBC total by nearly 1500 birds. Less troubling, perhaps, was a more moderate increase in the numbers of Mourning Doves. A pair observed copulating in Saxtons River 2/7 (REG) provides a partial explanation for the bird's recent rise in population. Other evidence included 80 individuals in Dorset 12/11 (EFG) and 90 in Middlebury 2/16 (JAP).

OWLS

Eastern Screech-Owls produced their best CBC tally in years with 11 birds found including 5 at Ferrisburgh. Four other reports were received: singles at Grand Isle (RBL) and Dorset (BW), a bird at its roost hole in a birch in Burlington 2/2 (WGE,NLM,SJS), and a gray morph individual "heard calling and spotted with a flashlight" 1/10 in Dorset (SAC). Great Horned Owls were also well reported as readers supplemented an excellent CBC total with a dozen additional reports. Two birds were in Manchester Center 2/3 (BWP), another 2 were in Richford 2/25 (RBL), one individual "flew up from beside the road" in Quechee 1/26 (BRJ,EJ) and a pair was in residence in N. Ferrisburgh providing views from such diverse perches as a treetop, the roof of the house and cedar posts along the drive (JDA). As for the Snowy Owl, reports of this magnificent raptor were so numerous, and often from locations of such close proximity, that an exact reckoning of the number of individuals seen is well beyond the capability of this editor. Suffice it to say, the number of birds was at least 15 and probably more like 20. To give readers a taste: 3 birds were photographed perched in dead snags in fields near Morristown 12/20 (NMM); 5 individuals were found 1/3 including 2 on the Burlington breakwater, 2 in Addison and an adult male in Panton (DHC); 4 individuals were found in Burlington 12/9 (JAP); reports of up to 3 birds were commonplace at the DCWMA in Addison; one snowy circled over a bird feeder in N. Ferrisburgh Station 12/5, then landed in a nearby field to survey the situation for one half-hour (JDA); one "mostly white" individual was seen 12/15 along a Bromley Mountain trailside, where it remained sitting on the ground for about 40 minutes (TDH); one bird was in Bradford 1/28, where it was "seen flying across the golf course being chased by crows (WDa); and one very white adult was seen perched sedately atop a telephone pole in Charlotte 2/23 (PCR). In short, it was

Great Gray Owl



an incredible year for Snowy Owls. Yet even more astonishing was the mini-invasion staged by the rare but much-loved NORTHERN HAWK OWL. The first to arrive was found in Charlotte 11/12 (DCD) and remained unseen in the vicinity until at least Christmas Day, when it was observed about two miles north of the original sighting (DB). Next to arrive was the Westford bird, which was discovered 11/23 (KH, DH) and which remained on location throughout the winter. Equally cooperative was a bird in South Hero, first seen around 12/1 (RO) and present until at least 2/24. Yet another cooperative individual was the Craftsbury-Greensboro CBC bird, originally uncovered 11/26 (FO) and "seen weekly throughout the season" until at least 3/6 (LK). Present for much of this same period was a fifth owl, this one discovered in early February in Irasburg at the foot of Lowell Mountain and also last observed 3/6 (LK). With birds as reliable and as indulgent of birdwatcher scrutiny as these, who needs 142 hawk owls, as were apparently present in Minnesota? The first GREAT GRAY OWL reported to RVB since 1984 was spotted by Brian Tweed in N. Derby 2/23. This remarkable bird originally reported to "American Birds" as a March sighting, disappeared after one day. Turning to less remarkable phenomena, Barred Owls had one of their better years as 13 CBC birds were found in 9 separate circles. Other reports came from Tinmouth (CJF), Chester (CEAd), Marlboro (JPN), Reading (FMH, GEH), Weybridge (MBN) and Hartland (WGE, NLM). The only Long-eared Owl of the season was a bird heard calling at Ladd Point on Grand Isle 12/13 and again 1/4 (RBL). Short-eared Owls were also scarce with Christmas Counters able to locate just two at Middlebury and one at Ferrisburgh. Another bird was reported from Grand Isle on 2/27 (DJH). Rounding out the Strigidae, the Northern Saw-whet Owl brought delight to the Middlebury, Winhall and Woodstock CBC's, its best showing in at least 15 years. From contributors came the usual mix of reports, some harrowing, some sad, some with happy endings. One bird hit a window in Arlington about 9 p.m. but eventually recovered and flew away (via NS). Another was found on 1/9 along I-91 in Bradford being harassed by corvids (DR) and was then brought to the Vermont Raptor Center, where it was found to have no serious injuries. Less fortunate was the saw-whet found dead in Springfield 1/9, still holding the hind quarters of a vole in its talons (RS). More conventional reports included a bird in a yard in W. Arlington in mid-December (via NS), another at Snake Mountain 12/31 and 1/3 (JAP) and one that flew across the road in front of a car in Manchester 1/12 (PMc).

KINGFISHER THROUGH PHOEBE

Belted Kingfishers surged to new CBC records, as 2 birds were tallied in Vernon and 29 overall. However, individuals attempting to overwinter were relatively scarce: presumably those observed in Grand Isle 12/19-27 (DJH), at Meach Cove, Shelburne 1/1 (WGE, NLM) and at Salisbury 1/15 (JAP); almost certainly those at Pomfret 2/11 (JRL), at Barnard Brook 2/16 (MJC) and at South Burlington 2/18 (PCR). A female Red-bellied Woodpecker at Pittsford 12/30 (SSW) was a nice find and a happy albeit "count week" addition for the Rutland CBC. Downy Woodpeckers were well represented by 649 CBC birds but generally not very prominent at feeders. Maximum counts were 4 at Randolph (EWC, MCC) and 6 at Brandon (SSW), while 10 were counted in Benson and Hubbardton 1/6 (WGE, NLM, DHC). Hairy Woodpeckers exactly matched last year's rather modest CBC tally of 316 and again seemed almost scarce at feeders. However, a surprising 7 birds were at

Hartland 2/28 (WGE). Four Black-backed Woodpeckers from 3 CBC's were encouraging - but these were the season's only reports for one of Vermont's more elusive specialties. Meanwhile, Northern Flickers capitalized on the mild December to chalk up their best CBC total ever (23 birds), although Ferrisburgh fell just shy of equaling the high for a single circle. Late reports were limited to singles at Benson 1/6 (WGE, NLM, DHC), at Charlotte 1/10 (JAP), at Middlebury 1/20 and 1/22 (JAP) and at Cornwall 2/18 (JAP). There was no shortage of Pileated Woodpeckers, as more than 30 reports came in from contributors. More significantly, the species established yet another CBC high, as it rose past the century mark for the first time ever. Noteworthy indeed were two reports of Eastern Phoebe, the first since 1985: a CBC bird at Middlebury and a single at S. Pomfret 12/1 (CRP). Interestingly, this species was also conspicuous in southern New England with several CBC sightings in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.



Gray Jay

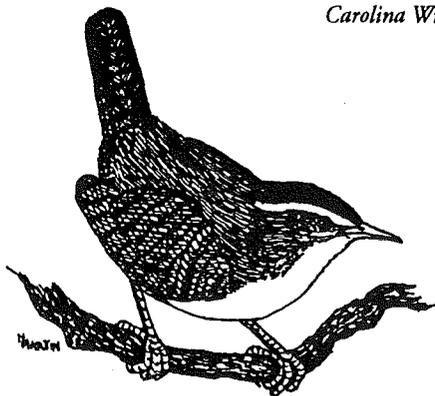
HORNED LARK THROUGH CREEPER

Horned Larks produced a typically impressive CBC total, thanks in good measure to a surprising 625 birds at Bennington. A large flock of 150 was still present in South Hero 2/9 (EMA, RDB) but other late-winter reports were more subdued: 75 in Addison 2/9 (MBN), 62 in Charlotte 2/23 (WGE, NLM, DHC) and 50 in New Haven 2/14 (JAP). Gray Jays rebounded from two poor winters in a row, as Island Pond recorded 7 CBC birds. Other sightings included 2 individuals in Ferdinand 12/11 (WGE, NLM, FO), a single at Holland Pond on New Year's Day (LLA), 3 at Yellow Bogs and Wenlock WMA 2/15 (WGE, NLM, SJS) and one stray in Royalton 12/19-21, helping itself to food put out for rabbits (JS). Blue Jays were numerous and noisy as always, with the maximum feeder flock of 41 birds in Sheffield (PFW, SAW). Diligence uncovered 49 jays in Hubbardton and Castleton 1/6 (WGE, NLM, DHC) and another 46 in Barnet and Ryegate 1/19 (WGE, NLM, DHC). Also conspicuous were American Crows, which produced a new CBC record of 5650 as well as flocks of 200 or more in Newbury 1/19 (DHC, NLM, WGE), White River Junction 2/1 (NLM, WGE), New Haven 2/25 (JAP) and Pittsford 2/29 (CJF). One hundred eighty-four Common Ravens was a new CBC high, but sightings by individuals were rather ordinary with maximum counts of 16 at Reading 12/27 (FMH, GEH) and 9 at Chester 1/10 (CEAd). For the fourth year in a row, Black-capped Chickadee topped the 14,000 mark on the CBC roster, while feeders hosted flocks generally in the 10-20 range. Unusual indeed was an albinistic chickadee in Bridgewater 2/26 (ME). Meanwhile, Boreal Chickadee recovered from a dismal 1990-1991, as a

VERMONT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1991-1992	Brattleboro 12/14	Ferrisburg 12/14	Island Pond 12/14	Saxtons River 12/14	Vernon 12/14	Burlington 12/15	Champlain Islands- St. Albans 12/15	Middlebury 12/15	Winhall 12/19	Hanover- Norwich 12/21	Hinesburg 12/21	Woodstock 12/27	Bennington 12/28	Craftsbury- Greensboro 12/28	Painfield 12/28	Rutland 12/29	Springfield 12/29	
Common Loon		26				6	6											38
Pied-billed Grebe		1					1											2
Horned Grebe		99				21	9											129
Red-necked Grebe		3																3
D-Crested Cormorant						CW												
Great Blue Heron		3		2			3				1		1			1		11
Snow Goose		3		1	6	1	1	4					2					18
Canada Goose		974		11	976	758	234	216	1				120					3,290
Wood Duck				CW	5		1				1		5					12
Am. Black Duck	10	120	7	40	259	165	86	141			40	6	591		1	49		1,515
Mallard	11	186	101	20	147	496	152	334		16	11		1,279			117	3	2,873
Northern Pintail		1											3					4
Gadwall							1											1
Canvasback					3		3	3										9
Ring-necked Duck		6				CW	90	1										97
Greater Scaup		1					65											66
Lesser Scaup				1			5											6
Scaup (sp.)							3											3
Oldsquaw						2												2
Black Scoter						1												1
Common Goldeneye	3	278	2	6	207	443	1,447	33		5								2,424
Barrow's Goldeneye					2	1	1											4
Bufflehead		31			1	35	10											77
Hooded Merganser	9	31		CW	3	2	12	CW		2								59
Common Merganser	9	156		3	44	33	1,600	171		33	11	4	37				7	2,108
Red-br. Merganser		2					8	2										12
Duck (sp.)		6				4	1											11
Bald Eagle		4		1	2		2	CW		1								10
Northern Harrier		6				5	2	18										31
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	4	1	1	1	2	3	3	4	3				2	1	5	2	33
Cooper's Hawk		1	CW	1	1	1	1	2		2		1	1			2	2	15
Northern Goshawk		1							1				1		1	1		5
Red-tailed Hawk	1	41		13	15	9	16	46	4	4	4	3	37		2	12	4	211
Rough-legged Hawk		26			1	4	13	29			1	1	3		1	1		80
Buteo (sp.)		1																1
American Kestrel		6		1	3	2	5	6					4		1			28
Merlin								1										1
Peregrine Falcon		3						2										5
Gyrfalcon		CW		1				2										3
Ring-n. Pheasant													1					1
Ruffed Grouse	10	10	12	6	1	4	9	10	1	2	5	15	9	3	10	7	8	122
Wild Turkey	CW	15		1		4		30	19			4	45		CW	CW	9	127
Northern Bobwhite				1														1
Common Snipe				1														1
Little Gull		1																1
Bonaparte's Gull		210					104											314
Ring-billed Gull	18	150		50	8	865	132	90			2				9		1	1,325
Herring Gull	450	59		53	154	1,137	351	8		77	8		7				34	2,338
Iceland Gull										2								2
Glaucous Gull										1								1
Gr. Black-b. Gull	70	46		CW	168	106	72	7		40	4		CW				18	531
Gull (sp.)					108	22	47											177
Rock Dove	496	689	70	1,031	421	687	857	674	47	756	275	215	801	241	370	684	856	9,170
Mourning Dove	196	573	43	386	176	224	411	670	70	588	181	402	499	69	210	683	728	6,109
Eastern Screech-Owl		5				2	2	2										11
Great Horned Owl		13					4	3	1			1	2			1	CW	25
Snowy Owl		3				3	CW	1										7
Northern Hawk-Owl														1				1
Barred Owl	2	1		3			1	2		1	1	1	1					13
Short-eared Owl		1						2										3
N. Saw-whet Owl								1	1			1						3

VERMONT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1991-1992	Brattleboro 12/14	Ferrisburg 12/14	Island Pond 12/14	Saxtons River 12/14	Vernon 12/14	Burlington 12/15	Champlain Islands- St. Albans 12/15	Middlebury 12/15	Winhall 12/19	Hanover- Norwich 12/21	Hinesburg 12/21	Woodstock 12/27	Bennington 12/28	Craftsbury- Greensboro 12/28	Plainfield 12/28	Rutland 12/29	Springfield 12/29	
Owl (sp.)			1															1
Belted Kingfisher	1	4		3	9		1			4		1	4				2	29
R.-bellied Woodpkr.																CW		
Downy Woodpecker	23	70	3	26	36	35	60	66	19	22	33	60	42	24	33	43	54	649
Hairy Woodpecker	14	22	14	8	5	15	12	23	9	22	19	32	12	27	23	21	38	316
Bl.-backed Woodpkr.			2											1	1			4
Northern Flicker		10		1	3	1		3					5					23
Pileated Woodpkr.	2	18	2	6	6	7	5	16	1	2	4	7	3	4	12	4	7	106
Eastern Phoebe								1										1
Horned Lark		581			5	36	133	124		8			625			3	2	1,517
Gray Jay			7															7
Blue Jay	135	334	86	178	236	107	96	224	196	310	185	798	371	307	242	410	743	4,958
American Crow	147	275	11	204	229	448	356	581	34	606	173	357	432	105	533	778	381	5,650
Common Raven	2	3	17	3		1	1	10	4	14	9	24	3	40	47	2	4	184
Black-c. Chickadee	268	1,141	467	490	271	588	744	509	874	926	776	1,994	537	1,489	1,136	843	1,410	14,463
Boreal Chickadee			17											12				29
Tufted Titmouse	64	19		37	32	29	1	19	16	22	9	6	30			10	32	326
Red-b. Nuthatch	6	40	106	2	8	23	3	4	102	9	12	53	9	232	93	13	13	728
White-b. Nuthatch	31	117	14	56	34	48	57	78	23	42	40	92	58	26	35	57	86	894
Brown Creeper	1	40	2	3	4	15	10	3	9	4	1	32	3	9	7	3	7	153
Carolina Wren	1	4		1	3	CW		3		2		3				1	CW	18
Winter Wren		2						1										3
Golden-cr. Kinglet	39	22	64	24	10	2	1	4	32	6	9	72	3	59	60	8	28	443
Eastern Bluebird	5	16		12	5			13					69			6	1	127
American Robin	5	42	1	6	2	9	2	17		8	1	2	111		1	4	67	278
Varied Thrush																		1
N. Mockingbird	18	5		9	17	1		3		8	1	CW	16			1	5	84
Bohemian Waxwing						4		2				2		38				46
Cedar Waxwing	209	545		204	181	603	285	174		126		50	137		2	144	357	3,017
Northern Shrike		3					9	3	2	1	3	2	1	5	2			31
European Starling	321	2,913	90	3,068	897	1,279	1,479	1,798	52	632	1,220	321	2,150	617	379	741	560	18,517
Yellow-r. Warbler	CW	1		1	1			2					3					9
Warbler (sp.)				1														1
Northern Cardinal	42	149	1	23	48	79	57	86	20	39	33	44	79		6	76	127	909
Rufous-s. Towhee									1			1	CW					2
Tree Sparrow	92	331	7	45	150	30	162	145	11	80	98	42	107	31	44	205	231	1,811
Chipping Sparrow				1					1	1								3
Field Sparrow					1	1												2
Song Sparrow	25	23		23	37	3	1	9	2	CW	1	2	8			3	9	146
Swamp Sparrow		4			1													5
White-th. Sparrow	6				6			5		3	1	2	17			2	4	46
Dark-eyed Junco	193	19		70	146	54	36	29	44	20	7	50	114	1	2	91	328	1,204
Lapland Longspur		24					3											27
Snow Bunting							72	CW	10				10	21		CW		113
Red-w. Blackbird	1			1	2	3	3	1	1					1				13
Common Grackle		1						1	1			1		3				7
Brown-h. Cowbird		33				9	89	26		6		4		12		1	15	195
Northern Oriole						1												1
Pine Grosbeak			CW	50					1				27					78
Purple Finch	14	16	389	1		2	2	CW	31	6		41	1	646	377	11	64	1,601
House Finch	187	376		163	99	414	284	584	92	538	9	348	213	20	26	366	680	4,399
Red Crossbill																	1	1
White-w. Crossbill			17													2		19
Common Redpoll			45				45		29		12	29	6	18	17	CW		201
Pine Siskin	45		975	20	26	15	3		596	17		239	35	866	1,428	35	631	4,931
American Goldfinch	125	240	25	235	347	95	277	330	50	271	197	230	86	215	263	364	654	4,004
Evening Grosbeak	20	35	1,991	93	40	8	31	28	261	462	265	362	66	753	535	97	845	5,892
House Sparrow	198	1,335	12	370	304	912	1,076	1,157	210	280	527	100	535	113	255	582	864	8,830
TOTAL SPECIES	45	77	33	57	57	61	70	68	41	48	41	45	57	34	38	43	45	111
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	3,527	12,608	4,602	7,072	5,913	9,922	11,167	8,596	2,883	6,030	4,192	6,055	9,377	6,011	6,168	6,488	9,923	120,534

thoroughly respectable 29 CBC individuals were counted in Island Pond and Craftsbury-Greensboro. Eleven birds were in Ferdinand, Newark and Morgan 1/26 (DHC,WGE,NLM), while 7 were located in Yellow Bogs and Wenlock WMA 2/15 (WGE,NLM,SJS). Unprecedented numbers of Tufted Titmouse were reported as CBC records fell for the third successive year, highlighted by a remarkable 64 birds in Brattleboro. Even in mid-February a census in the Arlington area came up with 41 individuals (via NS). Red-breasted Nuthatch also joined in the CBC fun, as a tally of 728 approached the old record of 774 established in 1979. Feeder reports were another matter, as 3-4 was the most anyone could muster. The more predictable White-breasted Nuthatch produced few surprises with a good CBC showing and the usual feeder flocks of 2-4 birds. More noteworthy was the excellent performance of the Brown Creeper which rose to new CBC prominence with 153 individuals overall, including 40 at Ferrisburgh and another 32 at Woodstock.



Carolina Wren

CAROLINA WREN THROUGH STARLING

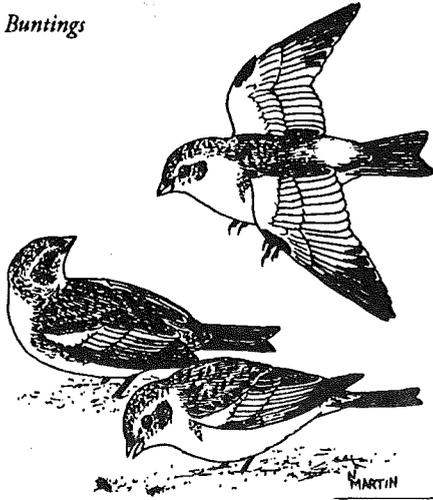
The resurgence of the Carolina Wren accelerated as a CBC tally of 18 birds more than doubled last year's record. Feeder reports, too numerous to list, included 2 individuals each in Woodstock 12/5 (PH), Vernon 12/12 (WDN), Putney during January (RGH), and on several occasions each in S. Royalton (DMP) and Brandon (SSW). Two Winter Wrens at Ferrisburgh and another at Middlebury was a solid CBC showing - but there were no reports from contributors. The handsome little Golden-crowned Kinglet enjoyed a record season as 443 CBC birds were found, exactly 160 more than the previous high set back in 1979. Other reports featured 12 in Tinmouth 12/8 (PMB), 12 in Island Pond 12/11 (WGE,NLM,FO) and 6 in East Montpelier 12/13 (TSA). An astonishing 69 Eastern Bluebirds at Bennington propelled our most exquisite thrush to yet another CBC record, nearly triple last year's mark. Other reports gave evidence of extensive overwintering: a flock of up to 12 in S. Shaftsbury "observed daily" from mid-December into January (KW,MY), 9 birds in W. Brattleboro 1/26 and again 2/26 (WDN), 11 in New Haven 2/14 (JAP), and at least a dozen in Shoreham 2/16 (SW), to list just some of the more exciting sightings. In the search for winter quarters, up to 44 of Bennington's CBC birds turned to a building at Southern Vermont College "apparently entering the attic through vent openings" (JMT,HWT). American Robins were also widespread, producing their best CBC mark since 1984 and giving rise to a flock of reports from contributors. Noteworthy sightings included 90 birds in Cornwall 12/2 (JAP), 30 in S. Shaftsbury sometime in January (via NS), 20 in Bennington

2/13 (FW), 23 in Grand Isle 2/17 (DJH), 40 in Charlotte 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC) and an astounding 360 at East Creek NA, Orwell 2/16 (NLM,WGE). A male Varied Thrush at Springfield was just the second CBC record for this lovely vagrant from the distant northwest. Northern Mockingbirds continued their strong showing of recent years, at least as measured by CBC reports. Brattleboro, Vernon and Bennington all surpassed the old high of 14 birds for a single circle, while the grand total of 84 was likewise a new record. Even the February census in Arlington, generally disappointing in recent years, produced a handsome total of 12 birds (via NS). A small flock of 6 American Pipits at Tinmouth 12/8 (PMB) was noteworthy as just the second winter sighting of the species to appear in these Records. The pipit, it might be added, has earned a measure of renown by its appearance on your editor's Vermont license plate. Bohemian Waxwings moved down from the north in rather modest numbers, with just a scattering of reports in addition to a CBC tally of 46 individuals. Sightings included flocks of 29 in Brandon 12/29 (SSW), 6 in E. Craftsbury 1/2 (FO) and 50 in Shelburne Village 2/27 (JDA), along with single birds in Bridport (JAP), S. Londonderry (WJN) and Woodstock (WGE,NLM,DHC). By contrast there was nothing modest about the number of Cedar Waxwings reported, 3017 CBC birds established a new record, exceeding even the total back in 1984 when Ferrisburgh alone counted 2247. Readers provided several notable records such as an overwintering flock of up to 80 in Middlebury (JAP), 95 in Dorset 2/7 (EFG), 91 in Benson 1/6 (WGE,NLM,DHC), 130 in Orwell 2/16 (NLM,WGE) and 300 in Woodstock 1/31 (WGE,NLM,SJS). Northern Shrikes were also widespread and comparatively numerous, the second big year in a row for this formidable species. Supplementing a record 31 CBC birds were another 50 or so observed by contributors. One shrike was observed in N. Ferrisburgh on 1/25 as it devoured an impaled-upon-a-branch mouse (JDA). Cause for dismay was the rise of the European Starling to the pinnacle of the CBC roster. Some 18,517 individuals were tallied, 5,000 more than last year's short-lived record. Let us hope these figures reflect increased CBC diligence (and coverage) rather than an exploding population for an already too-numerous species.

WARBLERS THROUGH SNOW BUNTING

A total of 9 Yellow-rumped Warblers was located in six CBC circles, easily their best showing since 1984. Additionally, a single bird was in Brattleboro 12/9 (WDN), 3 were at Benson Landing 1/6 (DHC,WGE,NLM) and 8 were at East Creek NA in Orwell 2/16 (WGE,NLM). This last report makes it clear that our most hardy warbler is quite capable of overwintering in Vermont - in suitable habitat with a sufficient food supply. Surprising was the first winter occurrence of Palm Warbler to appear in these Records: a bird surviving on dead flies in a greenhouse in Cabot, where it held on from 12/16 - 12/23 (GK,KE,MR). Numbers of CBC Northern Cardinals dipped below the 1,000 mark for the first time in four years - but 909 individuals are hardly cause for concern. An unruly crowd of 45 birds stormed their favorite Ferrisburgh locale on 1/20 (JID,MCD). Rufous-sided Towhees at Winhall and Woodstock were the first CBC representatives of the species since 1983 - somewhat surprising, perhaps, in view of this large sparrow's regularity during winter in southern New England. The Woodstock bird was still present near a friendly feeder into March (LKH), while a third individual was observed near a ground feeder in Bennington 12/23 (BCD). Meanwhile, American Tree Sparrows were present in typical numbers for the CBC and during the late winter as well. Eighty-four birds were in Ryegate

Snow Buntings



1/19 (WGE,NLM,DHC), 36 were in South Burlington 2/2 (SJS,WGE) and another 36 were in South Hero 2/15 (DJH). Single Chipping Sparrows at Saxtons River, Winhall and Hanover-Norwich added up to the species' strongest CBC performance in several years. A fourth chippy was in Vershire 12/6 (DAM), while the Winhall CBC bird remained at its S. Londonderry feeder until 1/13 (WJN). Also gracing the CBC roster were single Field Sparrows at Vernon and Burlington, the only records of the season for this lovely little Spizella. Song Sparrows had an outstanding year as they established a new CBC high and also provided observers with ample evidence of overwintering. Five birds were in a cattail marsh in South Hero 2/15 (DJH), 4 were in Shoreham 2/17 (JAP) and 2 at MNWR 2/14 (LMc). Additionally, feeder-related overwintering of 1-2 birds each was noted in Jericho (CCD), Middlebury (JAP) and Norwich (GFE). Swamp Sparrows provided yet another CBC record as 4 were found in Ferrisburgh along with a single bird in Vernon. One adult lingered into January near Lake Hortonia, where it was observed 1/6 (WGE,NLM,DHC). White-throated Sparrows settled for just an average showing on the CBC, though somewhat improved over a year ago. Late reports were limited to an overwintering bird at Bragdon Nature Preserve, Woodstock (hereafter BNP) (CCR,WGE), and 2 birds each at Dorset 1/5 (EFG), at the East Creek NA, Orwell 2/16 (WGE,NLM) and at Cornwall 2/21 (JAP). Of interest was one "brown morph" individual spotted in Norwich on 12/8 (GFE). Dark-eyed Juncos were quite numerous, especially in the south, as the CBC tally swelled to 1204 individuals, more than twice the total of the prior year. Reports from observers featured 20 birds in Westminster West 12/26 (AMD), 13 in Thetford and Ryegate 1/19 (DHC,WGE,NLM), 11 in Addison 1/11 (WGE,NLM,SJS), 11 in Marlboro 2/29 (JPN) and 10 in Manchester Center 1/25 (BWP). Lapland Longspurs provided their usual scattering of sightings: 27 CBC birds (including 24 at Ferrisburgh), 10 at Addison 12/6 (JAP), 2 in New Haven 2/14 (JAP) and 3 in Addison 2/9 (MBN) and again on 2/23 (WGE,NLM,DHC). It was quite another matter with Snow Buntings, notwithstanding a paltry CBC reckoning of 113 birds, the lowest count in more than fifteen years. Individual contributors did far better, with such reports as 1,000 in Ferrisburgh 2/4 (JID,MCD), 400 in Weybridge 12/27 (JAP), 300 in Addison in early December (DHC), 250 in South Hero 2/9 (EMA,RDB) and 240 in Highgate 12/26 (TSA).

ICTERIDS

Red-winged Blackbirds were evidently unimpressed by the mild weather of early December, as only 13 CBC birds were located, the smallest number in 5 years. However, a flock of 81 was observed in Brandon 12/19 (SSW), and there were 3 later sightings as well, presumably of overwintering birds: singles in W. Swanton 1/15 (DJH) and in S. Londonderry 1/28 (WJN), and a twosome in Alburg on 1/13 and again on 2/18-19 (DJH). Late February brought the usual influx of early migrants, beginning on 2/23 with 2 in Brownsville (via BMH), 2 in Ferrisburgh (WGE,NLM,DHC) and 1 in Dorset (EFG). Later reports featured 12 in Norwich 2/26 (GFE), 9 in Weston 2/28 (REG) and 25 in Brownsville 2/29 (BMH). The lone Rusty Blackbird of the season was found lingering in S. Londonderry 12/12 (WJN). Common Grackles were also relatively scarce with but 7 CBC birds tallied and only a handful of other reports, including a single in Middlebury during the first week of December (JAP), a male in Fairlee 12/8 (NLM,WGE) and a surprising 15 in Rockingham on New Year's Day (AMD). One bird in Sheffield was "at neighbor's feeder all winter; seems to have an injured leg" (PFW,SAW). Brown-headed Cowbirds were still numerous during the CBC season, but thereafter were either scarce or overlooked. Still, 13 birds were in Essex 1/1 (NLM,WGE), 2 were at McIndoe Falls 1/19 (WGE,NLM,DHC) and 22 were in Benson 2/16 (WGE,NLM). These last two were probably early spring arrivals, as were 2 in Dorset 2/23 (via EFG). Rounding out the icterids was an adult male Northern (Baltimore) Oriole on the Burlington CBC, the first winter record of this popular species in four years.

White Winged Crossbills



FRINGILLIDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

Pine Grosbeaks were again uncommon, confining themselves almost exclusively to the southern third of the state. Seventy-eight CBC birds were reported from the Bennington, Saxtons River and Winhall circles, while contributors could muster only 4 additional sightings: 2 in Ferdinand 12/11 (FO,WGE,NLM), singles in Manchester 1/13 (SAC) and in Waterbury 1/22 (TSA) and a "large flock" feeding on cedar berries in Castleton 2/24 (BW). Purple Finches, on the other hand, had their

biggest year since 1984 as excellent CBC totals were reported in Craftsbury-Greensboro, Island Pond and Plainfield. High counts from individuals were 190 in the Island Pond area 1/26 (DHC,WGE,NLM), 100 in Wolcott 12/11 (FAP) and 45 throughout the season in Sheffield (PFW,SAW). Feeder flocks in the 10-40 range were widely reported, especially in late February. House Finches set another CBC record as 4399 individuals were tallied - but seemed almost scarce as the winter wore on. One leucistic bird described as "smudgy brown, unstreaked, dark eyes" was observed in Vernon 12/12 (WDN). A Red Crossbill on the Plainfield CBC was unique for the season, but White-winged Crossbills were present throughout the winter in the Northeast Kingdom, where 54 were noted in Ferdinand and Lewis 2/15 (SJS,WGE,NLM). Nesting probably occurred, judging from a report of many birds in pairs engaged in "courtship feeding and much songflight" 1/26 (WGE). Common Redpolls, though certainly not nesting, were quite widespread, as 201 CBC birds were found in 8 different circles. Most reports from contributors were for 1-5 individuals; however, 21 were in Hartland 1/1 (DAG), 35 in Vershire 12/1 (DAM), 39 in Colchester 2/12 (EMA), 50 in Middlebury 2/22 (JAP) and 200 in Ferrisburgh 2/26 (MCD,JID). Meanwhile, Pine Siskins stormed into the state in their greatest numbers since the extraordinary invasion of 1987-88. Among the more breathtaking reports were a record-breaking 1428 on the Plainfield CBC, a mere 1000 in the Victory Bog area 2/24 (SBL), and such minor concentrations as 200 at a Randolph feeding station (EWC,MCC), 200 in Lincoln 2/8 (CJF) and 170 at Ferdinand 1/26 (WGE,NLM,DHC). Not to be outdone, the American Goldfinch also invaded in force, establishing a new CBC record by nearly 1000 individuals. Feeding stations generally had to contend with flocks of 30-50 birds, while high counts were 60 in Westminster West 1/23 (AMD), 70 in Weston 2/28 (REG) and 100 in Barnard 1/14 (BGa). Also numerous were the ever-hungry Evening Grosbeaks, though scarcely in the abundance of such years as 1982, 1983 and 1986. Largest numbers were in the Northeast Kingdom, where the Island Pond CBC produced an impressive count of 1991 individuals. Feeder flocks were relatively subdued with a maximum of 70 in Sheffield (PFW,SAW). Turning at last to the little-loved House Sparrow, readers will be happy to learn that the CBC total of 8830 was the lowest since 1987. Let us all hope the trend continues.

Contributors

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JJA	Jeffrey Allen	NB	Nancy Berry
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EMA	Elizabeth Alton	FJB	Frank Boyle
FA	Francis Anderson	BaB	Barbara Bragg
JSA	Jim Andrews *	BBr	Barbara Brosnan
LLA	Linda Lee Andrews	AAB	Ada Brown
JDA	JoAnn Appleton	ALB	Amy Buckley
JRA	Jean Arrowsmith	GB	Gail Bumgardner
PMB	Phillip Ballou	MJC	Michael Caduto
RDB	Raymond Barnes	SAC	Scott Cairns
KB	Kate Barnhart	MC	Mike Cassara
EAB	Betty Allen Barnouw	JC	John Chamberlain
APB	Alma Beals	EWC	Elizabeth Clapp
MTB	Theresa Beron	MCC	Mary Clapp
WRB	Will Beecher	DC	Don Clark *

AC	Alan Coulter	LK	Leland Kinsey
DHC	Dan Crook	CKn	Cliff Knisley
WDa	Bill Daley	JK	Joan Kraft
CED	Catherine Dame	AFK	Arline Kribstock
DCD	Deb Davis	CK	Carol Krieg
AMD	Allison Deen	JDL	David Laughlin
MD	Mary Dennison	SBL	Sally Laughlin *
CCD	Charlotte Diedrich	RBL	Richard Lavallee *
BED	Bruce Douglas	LL	Laura Lemire
SJD	Sarah Jane Dudley	REL	Rondi Lightmark
BCD	Bonita Dundas *	JRL	Jenepher Lingelbach
RDw	Ruth Dwyer	GPL	George Lisi
JID	John Dye	BLi	Bob Littlejohn
MCD	Margaret Dye	BM	Bruce McKenzie
ME	Mary Earl	BMa	Bill Maggi
KE	Ken Elmer	TM	Tom Maloney
GFE	George Ellison	MRM	Molly Martin
WGE	Walter Ellison *	NLM	Nancy Martin *
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JNF	Jean Fleming	SM	Sarah McGarghan
CJF	C.J. Frankiewicz	DAM	Dave Merker
MBF	Mary & Bob Fraser	MMe	Mary Metcalf
JF	James Frazier	JM	Joyce Miller
ELG	Ted Gaine	NMM	Nita Moccia
HG	Hester Gardner	ShM	Sharon Moore
BGa	Brenda Garsh	JPN	John Nevins
EFG	Betty Gilbert	MBN	Marge Nelson
DAG	Dean Greenberg	CN	Craig Newman
REG	Ray Griffin	WDN	Whitney Nichols *
GEHa	George (Terry) Hall	JMN	Julia Nicholson
LKH	Laura Hathorn	WJN	William Norse *
TDH	Troy Hermanski	FO	Frank Oatman *
PH	Pat Hesterberg	FOB	Francis O'Brien
RGH	Bob Hindmarsh	FOR	Frankie O'Rear
KH	Kevin Hinshaw	RO	Rodney Olsen
DH	Doug Hinshaw	CP	Charles Pains
BMH	Beryl Hinton	DMP	David Peterson
BH	Betty Hopkins	JAP	Judith Peterson
DJH	David Hoag	AWP	Alvin Peck
RHH	Rhoda Horne	BMP	Bryan Pfeiffer
FCH	Fran Howe	MPh	Mary Phinney
FMH	Fred Hunt	RWP	Roy Pilcher *
GEH	Gloria Hunt	AP	Alan Pistorius *
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EJ	Ernie Jillson	CRP	Carol Powell
JJo	Joan Johnson	BWP	Barbara Powers
NJJ	Nancy Johnson	FAP	Frederick Pratt
TJ	Tim Johnson	RP	Ray Prendergast
GK	Gary Katz	CSP	Craig Provost
KK	Kevin Kearns	HSP	Hugh Putnam *
SK	Sue Kearns	MR	Marl Rahill
DPK	Doug Kibbe	ER	Emma Raymond
WBK	Warren King	TRe	Tom Read

TR	Timothy Rewinski	KRT	Kevin Taft
PCR	Peter Riley	TTT	Tim Taylor
CCR	Chris Rimmer	HWT	Helene Toolan
LLR	Leslie Rimmer	JMT	James Toolan
ER	Eric Ritter	TT	Tony Tur
TAR	Tom Rivest	VFWD	Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
LHR	Larry Roberts	VRC	Vermont Raptor Center,
DR	Dave Rubin	VINS	
SJS	Jean Sangdahl	PFW	Paul Wagner
DS	Dave Santore	SAW	Shirley Wagner
RiS	Rick Schluntz	BW	Bridget Wamboldt
WS	Wayne Scott	GHW	George Welsh
DSh	Doug Shane	KW	Ken Welch
NS	Nancy Simson	FW	Frederick West
JS	Jeffrey Slack	SSW	Susan Wetmore
OS	Owen Smith	PRW	Paul Wiczoreck *
RSm	Richard Smith	CW	Charles Willey
AS	Anna Staniszewski	SW	Shirley Witteman
JSt	John Starhura	CMW	Carol Wood
MS	Michael Sweatman	MY	Mark Youngstrom
DSw	Donald Sweig	JZ	John Zurit
PAT	Patricia Taber		

Special thanks to all who participated in Christmas Bird Counts and Bald Eagle Surveys.

*Indicates Christmas Bird Count (CBC) compiler.

Abbreviations Used in the Text

BNP	Braddon Nature Preserve (VINS), Woodstock
ChV	Champlain Valley
CR	Connecticut River
DCWMA	Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Addison and Panton
HC	Herrick's Cove, Rockingham
LC	Lake Champlain
MNWR	Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton
SWMA	Sandbar Wildlife Management Area, Milton
WRM	West Rutland Marsh
WRJ	White River Junction
WRDP	Winooski River Delta Park, Colchester

ad.	adult(s)
ctr.	center
f.	female(s)
imm.	immature(s)
HL	hawk lookout
juv.	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
pr.	pair(s)
R.	River
sp.	species
VHW	Vermont Hawk Watches
yg.	young

Memorandum Regarding Rare Species Documentation

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

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

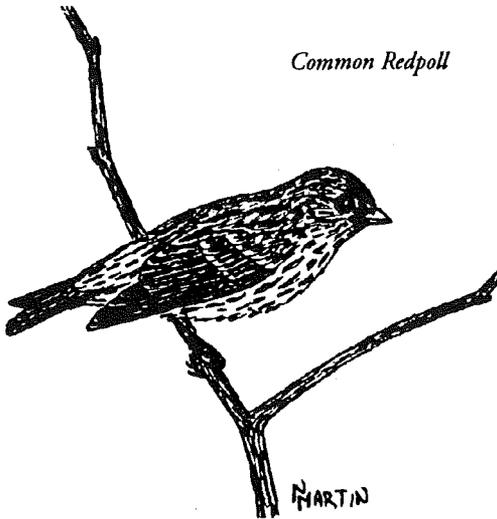
It is frustrating for both the observer and the committee to have a tantalizing sighting of a rare species not listed due to insufficient details.

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

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

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

Common Redpoll



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