

WINTER SEASON

December 1, 1984 - February 28, 1985

Here in New Hampshire, the month of December was the third warmest in 30 years, with statewide temperatures nearly 6 degrees above the long-term norm. The mild weather, which continued in central and southern New Hampshire through the final half of December, left open water plentiful during the weeks of the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). And, although lakes did freeze in northern areas, running water was mostly open even on the far northern counts. Twenty-four species of waterfowl were reported for December!

January brought persistent cold and dry weather to our state. Temperatures rose above freezing on only 2 to 4 days. Extreme cold was rare, but blustery winds combined with sub-zero readings to create bitter wind chills. This was the fifth driest January in New Hampshire in 90 years. January's cold continued into the first half of February, but milder weather arrived mid-month. Unseasonably warm weather during the last week in February brought with it the first migrants (Bluebirds and blackbirds).

This season's highlights include: Arctic Loon, King Eider, Varied Thrush, Nashville Warbler, and Dickcissel. Unexplained low numbers of Red-throated Loons, Horned Grebes, Common Eiders, Black-capped Chickadees, and Red-breasted Nuthatches were recorded. Yet several species were evident in very high numbers.

Bald Eagle activity increased during the winter of 1984-85, with the number of immature Bald Eagles significantly higher than last year. Remarkable were the multitude of American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Dark-eyed Juncos (which broke

records on 6 CBCs), most likely as a result of the mild December weather and the excellent wild food crop. The superabundant cone crop was probably responsible for the hundreds of crossbills which occurred in our state this winter.

Nine out of 12 Christmas counts were able to add new birds to their species lists for a total of 25 (!) new species overall. Seven of those new species were ducks, no doubt attributable to the fact that open water was plentiful during the count period. The Isles of Shoals CBC did not take place this year.

Andrea and George Robbins

LOONS AND GREBES

A low of 2 Red-throated Loons were seen on the Coastal Christmas Bird Count Dec. 15 (RWS). The only other report submitted was a single bird Feb. 9 off the N.H. coast (RWS). An ARCTIC LOON, believed to be a first winter bird of the race pacifica, was found Jan. 6, one half mile south of Odiorne Point, Rye (DJA, SDA). The Coastal CBC had 21 Common Loons; 3 were seen on the Keene CBC Dec. 16 (DH); and SAG found 10 at the Winnisquam Bridge during the Laconia CBC count week Dec. 29 (JD). One bird spent December on Lake Winnepesaukee, Alton (EGL). On Jan. 11 Gary Beuerstock (fide MC) found a "land-locked" Common Loon near the Ashuelot River in Keene; it was released into Great Bay.

The Coastal CBC had a low total of 7 Horned Grebes. Four were seen at the coast Feb. 12 (AER, GCR). During a storm Feb. 6, one landed in a Henniker parking lot; it was taken to ASNH and later released at the coast (RAQ, CFS). Another grounded grebe was discovered Feb. 24 on Don Meeves' front yard in Stratham. DJA examined and photographed the bird, which appeared well except for a cut foot, then released it at Adam's Point. He believed it may have become disoriented during the previous day's fog. The Coastal CBC had 27 Red-necked Grebes (low). Eight were seen Jan. 6 near Odiorne Point (DJA, SDA). In Rye, 15 were seen Feb. 9 (RWS), and 30 Feb. 12 (AER, GCR).

CORMORANTS AND HERONS



Fifteen Great Cormorants were observed on the Coastal CBC. One found on Little Bay by EW and LP was a new species for the Lee-Durham CBC Dec. 22 (SM). An immature was on the Merrimack River, Hooksett, on Dec. 21 (RAQ). Later season reports include: 20, N.H. coast Feb. 9 (RWS); 2, Laconia Feb. 17 (KCE); 1, Weirs Beach and 1, Lakeport Feb. 19 (SAG, WWF); and 2, Bow Feb. 25 (BJ). Four Double-crested Cormorants, seen along the Merrimack River, Hooksett, Feb. 22 (KD, JG, RC), were the only ones reported (and were unusual for the time and place - ed.). Single Great Blue Herons were seen on Lake Winnepesaukee, Alton, Dec. 14 (EGL); fishing along the Tioga River, Belmont, Dec. 16 (J. Lanier fide CFS); and flying south along the coast Jan. 6 (DJA, SDA). Eleven others were seen on 3 southern CBCs.

WATERFOWL

A Snow Goose was found in the Walpole, N.H. portion of the Saxton's River, VT, CBC count circle Dec. 16 (DC, TJ). A single Snow Goose was with a flock of Canadas in Kensington Jan. 13 (GWG), and two others were on Webster Lake Franklin, Jan. 12 and 13 (Herb Whiting fide CFS). More than 2,500 Canada Geese were reported from the coast to Haverhill.

On Dec. 2 GWG saw a pair of Wood Ducks in Kensington. Also, single Woodies were sighted Massabesic Lake, Auburn, Dec. 2 (CJ); on the Laconia CBC; and in Manchester Jan. 23 (MTM). The Coastal CBC had one Green-winged Teal. American Black Ducks and Mallards wintered in average numbers coastally and along most major rivers. The most northerly reports came from the Pittsburg CBC where 7 Blacks and 6 Mallards were seen Dec. 30 (DJA). Single Northern Pintails were found on the Coastal CBC; during the Nashua CBC count week Dec. 29 (RA); and at Huggins Farm, Dover (a male) Feb. 1 (RAQ). No details accompanied the report of 3 Northern Shovelers (1 male, 2 females) seen on the Contoocook River, Henniker, Jan. 17 (CJ, DS). Reports of species such as this, which are rare during the winter months, should include verifying notes. A single GADWALL was a new species for the Nashua CBC. The Coastal CBC had 7 American Wigeon. The Laconia CBC had a Wigeon also, which was most likely the same male seen in Lakeport Feb. 19 "thriving on french fries with the 'Burger King' Mallards" (SAG, WWF).

A Canvasback was a new species for the Hanover-Norwich CBC Dec. 23 (WGE). RB had the only other sighting: a male on the Conn. River, North Haverhill Feb. 28. Noteworthy were several sightings of Ring-necked Ducks. These included 1 Massabesic Lake, Manchester, Dec. 2 (CJ); 7--a new species--Concord CBC Dec. 15 (RAQ); 2 hens--a new species--Hanover-Norwich CBC; and a pair, Silver Lake, Tilton, Feb. 19 (KCE, SAG). The Coastal CBC had 571 Greater Scaup for the day, and RWS saw 1 on the Piscataqua River Feb. 2. A male Lesser Scaup, found during the Laconia CBC count week, was also seen Dec. 30 by SAG and WWF. They later observed a female on Silver Lake, Lochmere, Feb. 19. Common Eider numbers were way down; the Coastal CBC had the only 2 reported. An immature male KING EIDER was observed Jan. 16, one half mile south of Odiorne Point (DJA, SDA). Oldsquaw numbers were low as well. The Coastal CBC had 22, and 3 were in Rye Feb. 12 (AER, GCR). Black Scoters were present in better than average numbers: the Coastal CBC had 63, and 10 were in Rye Feb. 9 (RWS). Since the winter of 1978 when none were observed, wintering Surf Scoters have remained actively scarce, with less than 20 seen yearly on the Coastal CBC and very few others reported. This year was similar; the Coastal CBC had only 4, and 12 were seen in Rye Feb. 12 (GCR). However, good numbers of White-winged Scoters wintered off our coast.



And a hatch-year hen, at Wilder Dam in Lebanon, was the third new species of waterfowl for the Hanover-Norwich CBC.

Common Goldeneyes were abundant on open water this season, and were noted as far north as the Errol-Umbagog CBC, which had 11 Dec. 29 (DJA). RWS couldn't recall a better year for them coastally, where he had 1,500 Feb. 9. A pair of BARROW'S GOLDENEYES were on the Merrimack River in Hooksett Feb. 21-22 (KD, et al). A male wintered there in 1982. Ninety-three Buffleheads were tallied on the Coastal CBC, while the Lee-Durham CBC had 4. Other reports include: 2, Sutton Dec. 1 (KCE); 5, Bellamy River, Dover, Feb. 1 (RAQ); and 6, Newcastle Feb. 12 (AER, GCR).

All three merganser species were well reported. Hooded Mergansers were noted in the far north on the Pittsburg CBC, and in late January on Webster Lake, Franklin (Ray Boulanger fide ASNH). Common Mergansers were observed wherever large rivers were open, and were sighted as far north as Errol in January (SAG, WWF). It is interesting, though, that this species was missed on the Coastal CBC. Average numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers spent the winter along our coastline.



HAWKS AND FALCONS

It is believed that there could have been as many as THIRTY-TWO Bald Eagles using wintering areas in the state this season. This total includes 15 adults and 17 immatures (DS, CFS). Although this represents a decrease in adults from last year, more than twice the number of immatures were observed (perhaps a tribute to successful restoration efforts). An adult Bald Eagle that wintered on the Connecticut River was joined for a short time by an immature. In the Lakes Region several sightings were made of an adult that wintered, as well as two immatures, one of them color-marked. Sightings by the public and the Audubon staff suggest that as many as 6 adults and 7 immatures utilized the Merrimack River this season. Bald Eagle was a new species for the Nashua CBC. And in the Great Bay estuary area, where up to six individuals were present at once on a number of days, the winter eagle population totaled 14 (7 adults and 7 immatures) (DS, CFS).

A male Northern Harrier was hunting over marshland west of Odiorne Point Jan. 12 (DJA, SDA), perhaps 1 of 3 seen on the Coastal CBC. Sixteen Sharp-shinned Hawks were observed in the state; the most northerly report came from Monroe. A Cooper's Hawk was found by Betty Phinney for the Laconia CBC. Single Northern Goshawks were reported from: Kensington, the Nashua and Hanover-Norwich CBCs, the Baker Valley CBC Dec. 15 (GNK), Concord, Pittsfield, Monroe, Keene, and Canterbury.

The Coastal CBC had the only Red-shouldered Hawk reported. Meanwhile, as many as 55 Red-tailed Hawks wintered in New Hampshire. Major areas of concentration were the Merrimack River Valley (20) and the Connecticut River Valley (15). Both the Nashua and Concord CBCs had a Rough-legged Hawk during their count weeks. Other sightings occurred in Amherst Dec. 27 (WMG); Portsmouth Feb. 2 (RWS); and Hooksett Feb. 21 (RAQ et al). More than 15 American Kestrels were reported from the coast to Woodsville.



GROUSE THROUGH ALCIDS

TR found Spruce Grouse tracks on Mt. Wildcat Feb. 28. More than 60 Ruffed Grouse were seen throughout the state. The Nashua CBC had 11 Ring-necked Pheasants; and the Coastal, Peterborough, and Lee-Durham (count week) CBC's each had one. Wild Turkeys (2) were new for the Hanover-Norwich CBC. The Peterborough CBC Dec. 15 (MC) had their second ever, and the Lee-Durham CBC had a high of 22. This species seems to be establishing itself quite well in southeastern New Hampshire (with a little help from the Fish and Game Dept. - ed.).

One Little Gull was seen on the Coastal CBC; and SAG and WWF saw 2 in Seabrook Jan. 4. A COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL was found in Portsmouth Harbor by Coastal CBC participants. An immature was noted in Rye Harbor Jan. 4 (SAG, WWF), and again Feb. 3 (SM). An immature Bonaparte's Gull was feeding with the Common Black-headed Gull in Rye Harbor Feb. 3 (SM). Earlier in the season, Bonaparte's Gulls were tallied on two Christmas Counts: Coastal (73) and Lee-Durham (56--a new species). Ring-billed Gull was a new species for the Nashua CBC, which had 3. In Littleton the wintering Herring Gull population, which numbered 230 in December, had fallen to 16 by Feb. 15 (RB). Eight Christmas Counts had a

combined total of over 8,000 Herring gulls. The highest concentrations were seen in the areas of the Coastal, Nashua, and Concord CBCs, which had approximately 2,500 birds each. More than 1,000 Great Black-backed Gulls were tallied on five Christmas Counts in the southern half of the state; a flock of nine in Littleton Dec. 23 had dwindled to two birds by Feb. 14 (RB). Iceland Gulls were seen on the Concord CBC (1); the Coastal CBC (3); at the Portsmouth Fish Pier (3) Jan. 17 (RWS); and along the Merrimack River, Manchester (3) Dec.-Feb. (MTM). The Coastal CBC had 2 Glaucous Gulls for the day, and Kay Dymont found one for the Concord CBC. Two second winter birds were observed along the Merrimack River, in Concord Dec. 17 (RAQ). Three wintered along the Merrimack River in Manchester (DL, RL), and one adult spent the winter near the Portsmouth Fish Pier (SM). An immature was seen in Berlin Jan. 9 (fide ASNH). A high of 12 Black-legged Kittiwakes were discovered off the N.H. coast on Coastal CBC count day. Three were seen near Odiorne Point Jan. 12 (DJA, SDA, SP); and RAQ and MAQ saw 4 off Little Boars Head, N. Hampton Jan. 27.

On Jan. 12 DJA and SDA saw a single Dovekie "flying back and forth several times" off coast south of Odiorne Point. A large alcid, thought to be a Razorbill, was seen at the seacoast by several of the people taking part in this year's annual Loon Census Feb. 9, (fide ASNH).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eight Mourning Doves, at a feeder in Errol, were a new species for that CBC as well as being our most northerly report. Forty-seven doves were reported from Coos County during the Feb. 9 & 10 Cardinal/Tufted Titmouse/Mourning Dove Survey. According to the CTTM results, Hillsboro and Rockingham counties had the largest populations of wintering doves: 1,786 and 1,364 respectively. Curiously, only 183 were reported from Cheshire County, although on Dec. 16 the Keene CBC had a high of 253.

For a 7th count record, an Eastern Screech Owl was found on the Coastal CBC. Single Great Horned Owl reports were received from the Coastal, Laconia, and Lee-Durham (a new species) CBCs; Kensington; Mont Vernon; Plymouth; Littleton; and Webster. Also, 2 Great Horned Owls were heard in the vicinity of the Contocook Great Blue Heron rookery Feb. 16 (KD, SG). No Snowy Owl visited our

Capital City this winter (after as many as _____ve last year) and sightings did not occur _____ywhere in the state until January. Richard Morton (fide B. Swift) had the first sighting Jan. 7 in Manchester. On Jan. 30 EAE saw an all white Snowy Owl flying across a field in North Haverhill, which may have been the same white bird seen Feb. 1 in Bath (Ed LaLeme fide RB). On Feb. 4 this very white owl was joined by a second, darker bird. Single Snowys were later observed in Litchfield Feb. 7 (Mrs. Buonopane fide DS), and Seabrook Feb. 10 (Connie Casas fide RWS).

Ten Barred Owls were reported from southern N.H. to Errol. Tom Wyman found one of these, suffering from a broken wing, in a wooded area in Troy Jan. 29. He attempted to carry out the injured owl, but was unable to do so. JHW returned to the site the next day, travelling more than three miles over snowy terrain, and located the owl's tracks following those of a varying hare. Unfortunately, he was unable to catch up with the owl, which was intent upon following its prey through blow downs, etc. It is not known how long, or even if, an owl in this condition could sustain itself. Three northern Saw-whet Owls were reported, one for each month. A Saw-whet was a new species for the Baker Valley CBC Dec. 15 (GNK); one was heard calling in Hillsboro Jan. 29 (E. Czajkowski fide CFS); and on Feb. 26 EAE heard one in Bath.

Belted Kingfishers were seen on five N.H. Christmas Counts: Coastal (3); Peterborough (1--a third record); Lee-Durham (3); Nashua (3); and Laconia (1). Single birds were also sighted in Rye and Manchester during January. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers in Rumney were an exciting find as well as a new species for the Baker Valley CBC. A single Red-headed was also seen on the Coastal CBC. One needed to journey to the northern and mountainous areas of the state in order to find Black-backed Woodpeckers. While traveling the Kancamagus Highway, DJA and SDA sighted a male Feb. 6. Also, 2 females, tapping on a downed spruce, were located by hardy observers on the Pittsburg CBC.

Fourteen Northern Flickers were tallied by _____ve Christmas Counts: Coastal (7); Concord _____--count week); Saxton's River, VT (1); Lee-Durham (4--second count and first in over 10 years). Also, 2 were in Hooksett Jan. 10 (CFS). The Peterborough CBC had a record high of 4 Pileated Woodpeckers. Other Pileated reports include: (1) Nashua CBC; (5) Laconia

CBC; (1) Hillsboro Jan. 9 (RAS); (2) Littleton Jan. 29 (Shirley Campbell fide RB); (2) Surry Feb. 23 (JHW); and (4) Dec.-Feb. Monroe (LC).

HORNED LARK THROUGH SHRIKE



The Coastal CBC tallied a high of 332 Horned Larks, and the Baker Valley CBC had one (a new species for them). Twenty were in Keene Jan. 19 (JHW); 42 were in Seabrook Feb. 5 and 9 (RWS); and several (early migrants?) were at Concord airport Feb. 10 (Hazel Miller fide RAQ).

Gray Jay reports came from the northern third of the state and include: 3 at Ethan Pond, Bethlehem, Dec. 5 (CFS, HN); 2 on the Errol-Umbagog CBC; and 2 in Pittsburg Feb. 24 (Donna Aguain fide RB). New record highs for American Crow were recorded by the Hanover-Norwich (316), Laconia (90), Errol-Umbagog (15), and Pittsburg (10) CBCs; and the Nashua CBC had their second highest total ever (702). Also of note were the more than 350 crows seen moving north during a 20-minute period Feb. 24 in Dover (PEK). More than 85 Northern Ravens were observed from Pittsburg to as far south as the Peterborough CBC (2). One found in Pawtuckaway by SDA and DJA was a new species for the Lee-Durham CBC.

Low or very low numbers of Black-capped Chickadees were tallied by the Baker Valley (230--very low), Coastal (483), Peterborough (863), and Hanover-Norwich (388) CBCs. However, the Nashua CBC had a new record high of 722. A Boreal Chickadee was seen near Ethan Pond, Bethlehem, Dec. 5 (CFS, HN); the Pittsburg CBC had 13; four were in the Errol area Jan. 26 (SAG, WWF); and TR saw 3 in the Mt. Wildcat area Feb. 28. Wintering Tufted Titmice slightly outnumbered Cardinals (1,097 vs. 903) according to February's CTTM survey. And the Tufted Titmouse winter population tends to be concentrated in the Hillsborough (471) and Rockingham (420) counties rather than being more equally distributed throughout the state, as in the case of the Cardinal. No titmice were reported from Coos County, and only 4 from Grafton County. Early season reports also show a lack of wintering Titmice in Coos County. The most northerly sightings were from the Baker Valley CBC (2) and West Sandwich (4) Dec.-Jan. (BSR).

The Coastal CBC had a low of only 3

Red-breasted Nuthatches, quite a contrast to last year's record high of 140. In fact, the majority of the CBC's showed below average numbers for this species. Exceptions were the two northern counts where totals were more typical, and the Nashua CBC which tied its record high (18). Reports from the public indicated a normal number of wintering White-breasted Nuthatches. Their numbers were about average for the CBCs as well, except for the Pittsburg count where this species was missed. More than 70 Brown Creepers were observed this winter, with sightings as far north as Pittsburg. Amazingly, 25 were seen on the Nashua count alone (a new record high there)!

One Carolina Wren was discovered in the state this winter, at a suet feeder in Dover Jan. 20 (PEK). Sixty-four Golden-crowned Kinglets were tallied by 11 CBCs (missed on Saxtons' River, VT), a total slightly higher than last year's and representing a more equal dispersal throughout the state. Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets, found near Cedar Point, were a second record for the Lee-Durham CBC. The Nashua CBC also had 2, a fifth record for them. And a single Ruby-crowned was at a feeder in Exeter Feb. 15 (RWS).

Spectacular numbers of thrushes were observed in New Hampshire during all three months. Warm weather in late February brought the first spring migrant Eastern Bluebird into the state. It was seen in Northwood Feb. 28 by Mrs. M. Wentworth (fide MJM). December's warm temperatures encouraged several Hermit Thrushes to remain in New Hampshire beyond their usual November departure dates.

Sightings include one in Plymouth Dec. 9 (SAG, WWF); one along the Oyster River on the Lee-Durham CBC (a third count record); one found by SAG for the Laconia CBC; and one near Occom Pond on the Hanover-Norwich CBC (their first since 1968). Another Hermit Thrush was discovered in East Kingston Jan. 27 (DWF, DJA, SDA), an unusually late occurrence.

Phenomenal numbers of American Robins were reported from as far north as Jefferson (fide RB). More than 85 were reported for December, more than 30 for January, and over 45 for February. Of special note were those robins seen at high elevations during the second half of the winter: 3 on the top of Cannon Mt. in Fraconia Jan. 25 (OJ) and 2 on Mt. Washington (!) Feb. 26 (TR, BDR). This was the eighth consecutive year for VARIED THRUSH in New Hampshire. We had two sightings this year, both confirmed. The first arrived in



Canterbury Dec. 27 and remained there into the spring season (Polly Curtis fide VH). The second, eating cracked corn, was in Fremont Jan. 10, 11, and 14 (Ellen and Bob Horsburg).

A single Gray Catbird, a new species for the Peterborough CBC, was unique this season. Although the Keene, Pittsburg, and Errol-Umbagog CBCs missed Northern Mockingbirds, the remaining nine counts had a total of 144. These findings were very similar to the results of the February CTTM survey for which a total of 177 Mockingbirds were reported, the majority of which were in Rockingham (81), Hillsborough (51), Strafford (24), and Merrimack (14) Counties. CTTM results also showed that Mockingbirds were missed in Coos County as they had been during the northern CBCs in December; however, we did receive a report of a single Mocker in Berlin Feb. 10 and 27 (ME). Brown Thrashers were unreported.

Although Cedar Waxwings were reported in unusually high numbers, only 2 Bohemian Waxwings were found. They were initially seen in Gorham Feb. 20 with a flock of Cedars, eating apples from a tree (PG). Only one was there the following day; it was well described by the observers (ME, PG). As for Cedar Waxwing reports, we received dozens. More than 500 Cedars were tallied by eight CBCs. They were a new species for the Peterborough count; a fourth record for the Nashua, Hanover-Norwich, and Concord CBCs; and seen in record high numbers on the Lee-Durham CBC (406--previous high 1!). Over 100 others were also seen in December, nearly 200 in January, and over 600 during February. Plentiful food sources included apples, crabapples, and various ornamental and wild berry crops.

Single Northern Shrikes were reported from the Coastal, Laconia, Errol-Umbagog, and Pittsburg CBCs; as well as Errol, Center Sandwich, Columbia, and the Whitefield Airport. Another shrike, seen 3 times during the winter in Wilton, was reported as a Loggerhead. However, the details supplied were not sufficient to convince us that it was this species. Loggerhead Shrikes are virtually unknown in this state during the winter; therefore we feel that it was most likely an immature Northern Shrike.

WARBLERS THROUGH SNOW BUNTING

Lee Johansson found a NASHVILLE WARBLER (1--ed.) for the Saxton's River, VT, CBC. The only other warbler reports come from the Coastal CBC which had 67 Yellow-rumped Warblers and one Palm Warbler.

As mentioned earlier, 903 Northern Cardinals were reported to the CTTM survey. Highest concentrations were in Hillsborough (298) and Rockingham (319) counties, but as many as 20 were noted in Coos County. Cardinals were seen on all CBCs except Pittsburg (the most northern). Cardinal was a new species for the Errol-Umbagog CBC (1); and found in record high numbers on the Baker Valley (18), Peterborough (38), and Nashua (73) CBCs, indications that this species is extending its range as well as increasing in numbers. An immature DICKCISSEL was discovered by participants of the Lee-Durham CBC (TA, Lynn Harper, Cloe Mifsud). The bird was feeding with House Sparrows at a feeder in Epping, and was still present in the area as of Jan. 4 (MJM).

The Coastal CBC had the only Rufous-sided Wrens (2) reported. All 12 counts had American Tree Sparrows in average or better than average numbers; Peterborough had a record high of 93. A single Chipping Sparrow was a new species for the Nashua CBC, and the only report this season. Field Sparrows were observed on the Coastal (2), Lee-Durham (1), and Nashua (1) CBCs. The Coastal CBC also had the only Savannah Sparrows (14) reported. Fox Sparrow sightings included 1 in Pawtuckaway Jan. 19 (RWS); 1 in Mont Vernon Feb. 7-15 (MS, BS); and 2--male was singing!--in Kensington Feb. 9-28 (GWG). Two Song Sparrows seen on the Hanover-Norwich CBC and a single bird which wintered in Plymouth (SAG, WWF) were the most northerly of sightings for this species. Swamp Sparrows were found on the following Christmas Counts: Coastal (1), Peterborough (1--a new species), Lee-Durham (1), and Nashua (1--a third record). White-throated Sparrows were evident in average numbers and were noted as far north as Lancaster (4) Dec. 18 (David Haas fide ASNH).

What an incredible year for Dark-eyed Juncos! Sampling of some of the record-breaking totals recorded during our N.H. Christmas Counts includes the following: Nashua (628--a new record high), Hanover-Norwich (179--highest in last 16 years), Keene (312--twice the previous high), Concord

(449--new high and only the 6th count over 100), Lee-Durham (855--previous high 121), and Peterborough (with an astounding 1,052 which demolished the old record of 164)! And with so many Dark-eyed Juncos around, it wasn't surprising that some of the western forms should turn up. An "Oregon Junco" was observed during the week of Feb. 15 in Barrington (fide ASNH); and a Pink-sided race of the "Oregon Junco" frequented the Robbins' feeder in Pittsfield Feb. 6-15. The "Oregon" types winter mainly in the west and are casual during winter in the east.

Lapland Longspurs were seen on the Coastal CBC (2) and in Seabrook (1) Feb. 5 (RWS). The Coastal CBC had 40 Snow Buntings; the Lee-Durham CBC had one; and 10 were in North Haverhill Jan. 12 (RB).

ICTERIDS AND CARDUELINE FINCHES

Three CBCs had Red-winged Blackbirds: Coastal (1), Peterborough (4--high), and Lee-Durham (2). There were no other reports until Red-wings began returning to the state in late February. They were first noted in Nashua (2 males) Feb. 23 (BH, MH); and on the 24th in Stratham, Pittsfield, and North Haverhill. Six Eastern Meadowlarks were observed by Coastal CBC participants. And the Suomalas found one among a Starling flock in Amherst Jan. 6, a very rare sighting for this time of year. The Coastal CBC had the only Rusty Blackbird of the season. December Common Grackle reports include Coastal CBC (3), Lee-Durham CBC (4), Hanover-Norwich CBC (3), and 1 in Manchester Dec. 2 (CJ). A single grackle spent January and February at a feeder in Littleton (RB); and early migrant grackles were first noted in Milford (1) Feb. 9 (AEA), Nashua (6) Feb. 19 (BH, MH), and several southern locations on the 24th.

As usual, Brown-headed Cowbirds were the most numerous winter icterid. Nearly 300 were tallied by nine CBCs, 48 of which were seen on the Errol-Umbagog count. It's always surprising how many are seen up north in mid-winter, such as 50 in Monroe Dec.-Feb. (Priscilla Powers), 25 in Pike Jan. 3 (SAG, WWF), and 20+ in Errol Jan. 26 (SAG, WWF). The first migrant cowbirds were noted in Stratham Feb. 24 (DJA, SDA).

Pine Grosbeaks were virtually absent from the state, with the only reports from the following Christmas Counts: Laconia (6), Pittsburg (4), and Baker Valley (34). Two years ago Purple Finches occurred in very good numbers, but last year fewer than 55 were found. This year their numbers were again substantial: they were seen on all 12 counts, with a total of over 525 observed, and were noted as "fairly common" in northern parts of the state during January and February (TR). Christmas count results indicate that the House Finch is continuing to extend its range northward as well as increasing in numbers. Sightings on the Coastal CBC suggest that the wintering population of this species may have leveled off in that area. However, record highs were recorded by the following CBCs: Peterborough (25), Nashua (188--a steady increase since 1978), Hanover-Norwich (237--a steady increase since 1977), Keene (124--increasing since 1980), and Lee-Durham (142--twice the previous high).

Because of the plentiful cone crop, HUNDREDS of crossbills were seen throughout the state. Reports of White-winged Crossbill sightings are too numerous to list individually. More than 340 were seen on 6 Christmas Counts, the second year ever for the Lee-Durham count and the first time in the last 16 years on the Hanover-Norwich count. Over 150 others were reported, the majority of which were seen in the northern half of the state during January. The southernmost sighting occurred in Hancock,

where MC (et al) heard one male singing Feb. 9. Surprisingly, Red Crossbills were missed on the Christmas Counts. And although far fewer Red than White-winged Crossbills were seen in the state this season (about 65 total), it was exciting to learn that Red Crossbills were found nesting in Hancock in early February (MC et al), and seen gathering nesting materials as far south as Rindge in late February (David Rowell fide ASNH).

Common Redpolls were located by observers on the Peterborough (13), Keene (2), and Baker Valley (1) CBCs. SAG and WWF saw 10 in Randolph Jan. 26. Other sightings occurred during February and include: 7, Kancamagus Highway Feb. 6 (DJA, SDA); 5, Columbia Feb. 27 (DK); a few, Colebrook Feb. 27 (DK); and 250+, Whitefield Feb. 26 (TR, BDR). Pine Siskins were abundant; and, although they were missed on the Coastal and Lee-Durham counts, the Baker Valley (221), Peterborough (276), and Hanover-Norwich (415) CBCs established new record high totals for this species. Tom Arter saw more than a thousand along the Kancamagus Highway Jan. 29. American Goldfinches were plentiful this winter as well. They were tallied on all CBCs, and recorded in record high numbers by the Hanover-Norwich (455) and Lee-Durham (686--twice the previous high) CBCs. Evening Grosbeaks wintered in good numbers, but weren't as numerous in southern parts of the state as they have been in recent years.

Contributors:

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ASNH = Audubon Society of New Hampshire, CBC = Christmas Bird Count, CTM = Cardinal/Tufted Titmouse/Mockingbird (Survey), *= "and others".