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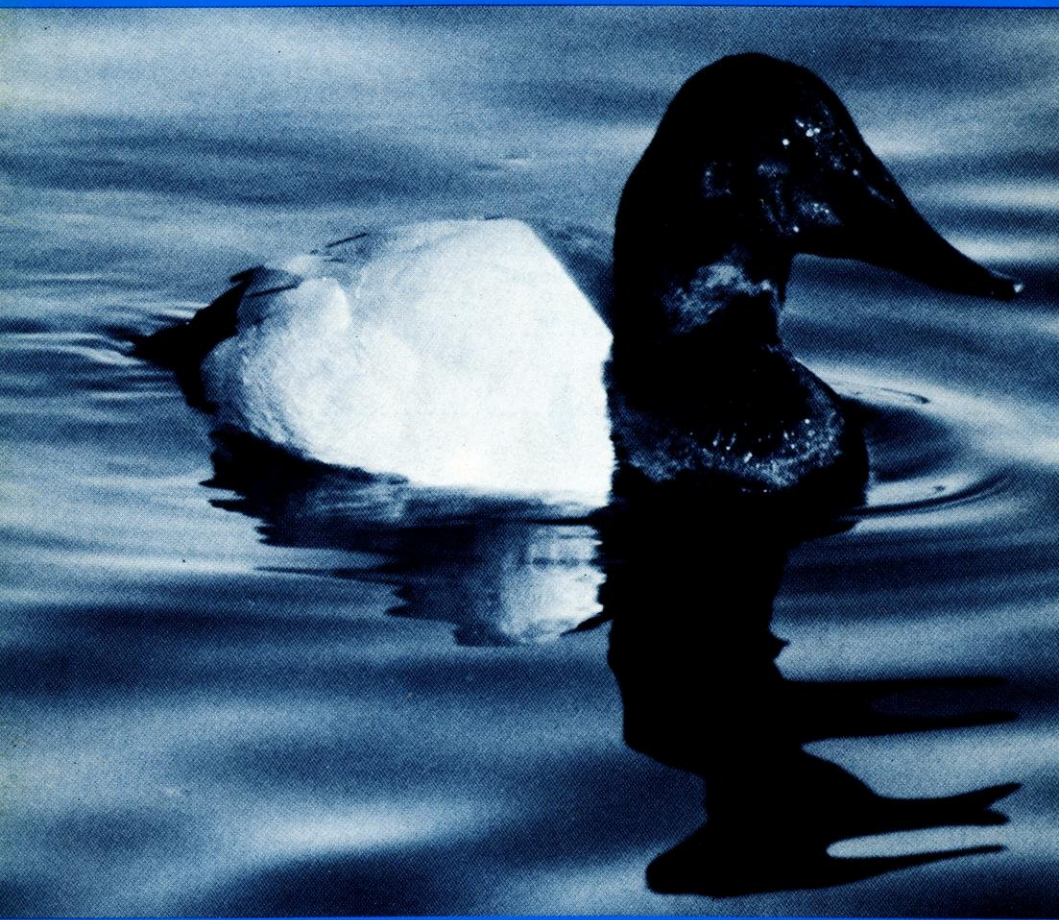
The Passenger Pigeon



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Front Cover: Canvasback by Paul Blanchard

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Some Relationships Between Common Grackles and Yellow-headed Blackbirds Nesting in the Same Marsh

By Michael E. Minock

Breeding season relationships between Red-winged Blackbirds **(Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus)** have been reported by various workers (e.g., Orians and Willson 1964, Miller 1968). Wiens (1965) studied behavioral interactions between Red-wings and Common Grackles **(Quiscalus quiscula).** However, I am not aware of detailed reports of Yellowheads and Grackles nesting in close proximity, and present the following observations, measurements, and comments regarding such a situation. The study areas were at Collins Marsh, Manitowoc County, WI. Except where noted, all observations refer to spring or summer 1980.

I conducted intensive nest searches in two separate areas. Grackles were nesting close to Yellowhead nests in both. There were 3 active Grackle nests and 6 concurrently active Yellowheads in both. There were 3 active Grackle nests and 6 concurrently active Yellowhead nests in one area, and 2 and 11, respectively, in the other (Fig. 1). I visited known nests approximately twice a week until they were no longer active. Grackles were ahead of Yellowheads in their nesting cycle in both areas. Grackles fledged in one area by 23 May and in the other by 6 June. Yellowheads fledged in both areas by 8 June.

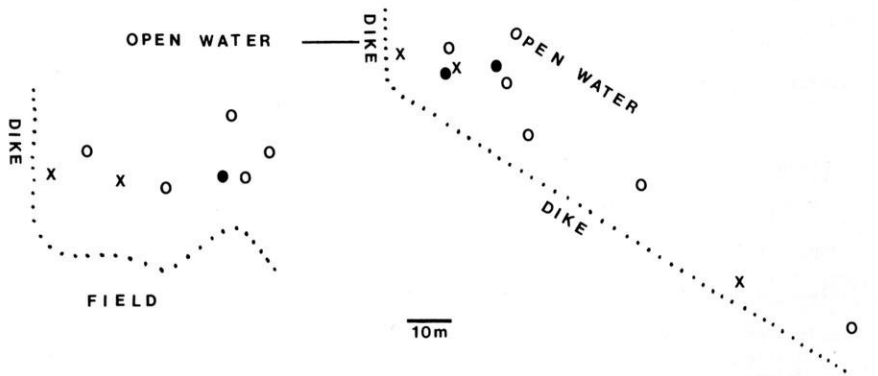

FIGURE 1: Relative positions of Grackle nests and the nearest Yellowhead nests in two study areas. X = Grackle nest; circle = Yellowhead nest with active period overlapping that of Grackle nests (One not shown to lower right of upper diagram and 6 not shown to right of lower diagram.); dot = later Yellowhead nest; dotted line = shoreward cattail edge.

Young (maximum total = 7) fledged from 2 Grackle nests and possibly 2 more fledged from a third. Two nests were deserted with young at least two thirds of the way to fledging age. Young (maximum total = 18) fledged from 5 Yellowhead nests, and as many as 17 more may have fledged from 8 others. Four nests definitely failed. The three Yellowhead nests closest (•10 m) to active Grackle nests produced 10 nestlings. Some, if not all, fledged from each of these Yellowhead nests.

In one instance 2 late Yellowhead nests (not included above) were started near a Grackle nest (4.1 m and 7.9 m) around the time it was vacated (Fig. 1). One was empty at least 3 days after the Grackles probably fledged. It later had nestlings. I found the second, containing 4 eggs, 4 days after the first. These nests were located on adjacent Yellowhead territories already containing active nests (2 of 3 mentioned above ◄10 m from a Grackle nest). At most, 1 fledgling left the 2 late nests. There was also a second Grackle nest 12.9 m from the first and it too was vacated around the time of the Yellowhead nest starts. Young fledged from it the same day the first Grackle nest was found vacant.

There were similarities, as well as statistically significant differences, between nest sites used by the two species (Table 1). However, even where the differences are significant, there is overlap in the qualities measured. There are some portions of the marsh where Yellowheads nest and apparently Grackles do not. These were not closely studied, but in general were further from shore, and over deeper water (mean = 50 cm for 5 nests), than the areas I concentrated on.

	Water Depth beneath nest (cm)	Height of nest rim above water (cm)	Distance to Marsh edge[b] (m)	Nest support vegetation
Yellowheads (N[a] = 20)				*Typha* sp. in all cases
Mean	34	63	15.4	
Range	16-76	47-98	5.1-29.3	
Grackles (N = 5)				*Typha* sp. in all cases
Mean	30	52	8.1	
Range	18-57	43-60	3.2-16.3	
p[c]	NS	<.05	<.10	

[a]Includes 3 late nests not active concurrently with Grackle nests.

[b]Nest center to shoreward edge of cattail stand.

[c]Mann-Whitney Test, two-tailed (Siegel, 1956).

TABLE 1: Nest site characteristics in two areas where Yellowhead and Grackle nests both occurred.

Yellowhead males sometimes flew at Grackles carrying food to nestlings. Grackles sometimes perched at a distance before flying to their nests. This might have been due to my presence, however it could have been due to Yellowheads. Wiens (1965) observed somewhat similar behavior by Grackles in Redwing territories and thought it was due to the Red-wing presence. Based on limited observations, including some in 1979, I suspect that Grackles may defend areas immediately around their nests from Yellowheads. Wiens (1965) reported displays near their nests by Grackles toward Red-wings. A clump of cattails **(Typha sp.)** containing a Grackle

nest was more frequently perched in by a territorial Yellowhead male and two female Yellowheads after the Grackles had fledged and left the area. I did not attempt to precisely locate boundaries, but it seemed apparent that all Grackle nests were either in or adjacent to Yellowhead territories.

The possible role of interspecific aggressive interactions (chase, supplant, flying at or over) in relations to nest site and territory acquisition, and to interference with nesting, require further study. However, I observed male Yellowheads dominant to male Grackles 7 times, to female Grackles 5 times, and to unsexed Grackles 6 times. Male Grackles were dominant to male Yellowheads 3 times. Once a female Yellowhead was dominant to an unsexed Grackle. These interactions occurred in a variety of contexts, and some of the data are from 1979. No attempt was made to analyze interspecific agonistic display, but it does occur.

These observations show that some marsh habitat is suitable for nesting to both Grackles and Yellowheads. Although there is some interspecific aggresive interaction, they will nest in close proximity, and both species successfully fledge young near the other. The data are few, but late Yellowhead nest starts near vacated Grackle nests suggest the presence of Grackles may limit the number of Yellowhead nests nearby. A potential for nest site competition exists. If it does occur, apparently neither species is always dominant. However, it is possible that the tendency of Grackles to be nearer the edge of the marsh (Table 1) and on the periphery of groups of Yellowhead nests (Fig. 1) is a reflection of behavorial interactions. Wiens (1965) found Grackle nests oriented to the periphery of Red-wing territories. It does not seem likely that the significant difference in nest heights has any relationship to possible site competition. Some habitat might be suitable to both species, although it is used exclusively by one (i.e., Yellowhead nesting areas relatively far from shore over deeper water), but my data are insufficient to substantiate this point.

Feeding habits were not closely observed, but Grackles here, as commonly observed in general, sometimes carried food long distances from undetermined foraging areas. I also saw them forage in areas not on Yellowhead territories. Willson (1966) observed that territories provided a substantial fraction of the food for nestling Yellowheads. Use of different foraging areas may alleviate competition for food during nesting. Grackle fledglings did not stay near nests long and at least some left the cattails within a few days. Wiens (1965) observed the same thing. This and the difference in timing of nesting cycles may also be factors reducing competition for food.

Thanks to John Watson for telling me about Collins Marsh, to Daniel Olson of the Wisconsin DNR for cooperation with respect to use of the marsh, to Ron Barrett and James Hauxhurst for assistance in the field, and to Ron Barrett for criticism of the original manuscript.

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Hooded Warblers Nesting in the Baraboo Hills, Sauk County, Wisconsin

By Margaret C. Brittingham and Stanley A. Temple

Southern Wisconsin is at the northern extreme of the breeding range of the Hooded Warbler **(Wilsonia citrina)**. Prior to the summer of 1980, only two nests of this species had apparently been discovered in Wisconsin. During the fall of 1975, an inactive Hooded Warbler nest was found in Manitowoc County (Brouchard 1976), and in the summer of 1977, a pair of Hooded Warblers were found nesting in Waukesha County (Roberts and Roberts 1977). During the summer of 1980, I located four active Hooded Warbler nests in the Baraboo Hills (Sauk County), and I observed a fifth pair feeding young (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: A male Hooded Warbler feeding cowbird nestlings in Baraboo Hills in 1980. Photo by Peter Urbanski.

I located nests by first finding singing, territorial-male Hooded Warblers. When I was in the male's territory, I looked for dense patches of saplings and walked slowly through them, watching for the female as she left the nest and waiting for her to reveal the location of the nest by her defensive behavior.

In the Baraboo Hills, Hooded Warbler nests occured in small openings which ranged in size from 0.01-0.03 hectares. These openings were created by selective logging 5-20 years ago. They contained primarily sugar maple saplings, but hop hornbeam, green ash, red oak, maple-leaf viburnum, and

other plants were also present. The density of saplings was extremely high (200-420 stems per 0.01 hectares). The height of the saplings ranged from 0.3-1.8m.

All four nests were in saplings which ranged in height from 0.4-1.7 m. Two nests were in sugar maple saplings; one was in a green ash sapling; and one was in a maple-leaf viburnum sapling. Nests were 0.3-1.5 m above ground. In each case the exterior of the small cup-shaped nest was covered with a layer of dead leaves.

Only one of the four nests fledged Hooded Warbler young. Nest failures were due to predation and by Brown-headed Cowbirds **(Molothrus ater).** Two nests were empty and intact when I returned to check them (Table 1). Since there was no evidence of direct damage to the nests, it appeared that the contents of the nests were destroyed by a snake, avian predator, or small mammal. All four nests contained cowbird eggs, and the detrimental effects of cowbird parasitism appeared to increase as the number of cowbird eggs in the nest increased (Table 1). Each of the two nests containing one cowbird egg also held three Hooded Warbler eggs. The nest which had two cowbird eggs had two Hooded Warbler eggs, and the nest with three cowbird eggs contained only one warbler egg. The nest with one cowbird nestling fledged

Nest and Date	No. of Eggs		No. of Young in Nest	
	Warbler	Cowbird	Warbler	Cowbird
Nest 1				
6 June	1	1	-	-
10 June	3	1	-	-
13 June[1]	3	1	-	-
21 June[1]	0	0	0	0
Nest 2				
8 June	3	0	0	1
16 June	-	-	3	1
Nest 3				
14 June	2	2	-	-
17 June[1]	0	0	0	0
Nest 4				
21 June	1	1	0	2
24 June	-	-	0	3
25 June	-	-	0	3
27 June	-	-	0	2

1 Nest empty but intact

TABLE 1: Nest records for Hooded Warblers in the Baraboo Hills in 1980.

three warblers and one cowbird, but the nest which contained three cowbird nestlings fledged only cowbirds.

On 20 June, I observed a fifth pair of Hooded Warblers defending fledglings. As I approached, the female hopped from a branch, walked along the ground, and gave a "chip" call. The male was also in the area, but he only chipped softly. The chipping of the female became louder and more frequent as I approached the fledglings. As I moved closer, a fledgling warbler flew; the female came within 6 m of me and began chipping loudly and beating her wings against the ground. The male continued to chip but remained approximately 20 m away. The primary defense of the fledglings seems to be by the female.

These 1980 nesting records suggest that Hooded Warblers may be more abundant locally than previous records suggest. However, the forests of the Baraboo Hills are among the most extensive in southern Wisconsin; and as others have noted (Robbins 1979, Whitcomb et al. 1981), such extensive tracts of forest may be essential for species like the Hooded Warbler.

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Fostering a Loon Chick

By Ronald G. Eckstein

The rearing of young birds by a foster pair of adults is a proven technique for raptors and various species of waterfowl (Beard 1964, Postupalsky and Hold 1975, Lunsden 1980, and Olendorff 1980). This technique, called fostering, involves placing eggs or young, provided they are at about the same stage of incubation or growth, into the nests of another pair of birds of the same species.

On June 19, 1980, a Common Loon **(Gravia immer)** chick was brought to the **Aqualand** animal park in Vilas County, Wisconsin. The chick was reported to have been picked up on a nearby highway. However, the young loon was probably obtained from adult loons on some nearby lake and then dropped off at **Aqualand** after the abductors realized they could not properly care for the chick.

The chick was approximately ten days old. It was six inches long and in dark gray down with no wing or body feathers apparent. The chick was fed numerous minnows by Bruce Wilsie of **Aqualand** and appeared strong and healthy.

The only chance for the loon chick's survival was to foster it to a pair of adult loons with a young of similar age. A pair of loons with a small downy chick was located on Big Muskellunge Lake in Vilas County. I used a motorboat to approach the loon family. When the boat was within 100 feet of the loon family, one of the adults immediately began alternately performing the penquin dance (McIntyre 1975), calling, and diving to within ten feet of the boat. The other adult loon and chick swam toward the shore.

I tossed the orphaned loon chick into the water close to the dancing adult. The orphaned chick immediately swam back toward the boat. I threw the chick back toward the adult two more times before the chick finally spotted the adult loon. The chick then swam toward the adult. The adult stopped the penquin sequence, swam next to the chick, and began escorting the

Loon chick, Vilas County, June 19, 1980, just previous to being released on Big Muskellunge Lake.

chick away from the boat and toward the shore. Within a minute the chick was riding on the adult loon's back. The two adult loons and two chicks met and swam along the shoreline. I observed the loons for 45 minutes. The orphaned chick seemed to be fully accepted.

I observed the loons again on July 6, 1980. Both chicks had doubled in size and were in the brown downy plummage. One chicked appeared slightly larger than the other and both appeared strong and healthy. The adults were diving and feeding small minnows to the chicks.

Fostering loon chicks may prove to be an effective management technique in areas where loon productivity is low and where augmenting the population may maintain loons in desirable habitat.

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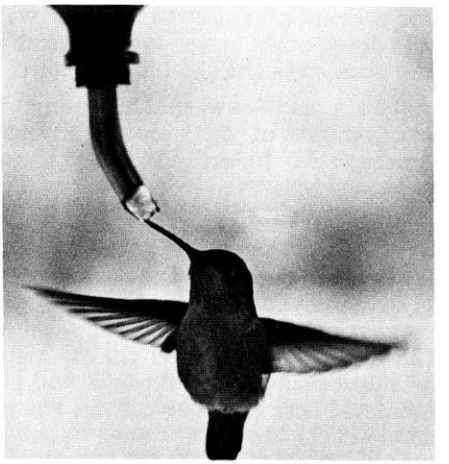
Nature-Wise

By Roy Lukes



The other night about thirty of us birdwatchers met to review and finalize plans for the annual Northern Door County Christmas Bird Count. I began the evening get-together by posing this question: "Which bird, of all the birds you see, admire, and perhaps feed during the summer months, would you least expect to see during this first week of December?" Within a few seconds I had the correct answer to my "loaded" question--Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

This astounding episode dates back to about early November when I had a phone call from Io Erskine Nelson in Jacksonport, located along the east shore of central Door County. She reported a hummingbird still coming daily to her sugar water feeder and, like any normal red-blooded birdwatcher, Io was deeply concerned about the little bird's fate.

Numerous questions entered our telephone conversations during the following weeks, such as, "should I continue feeding the bird, will it migrate safely if I stop putting out food, do you think we should try to capture it and get it to perhaps the Milwaukee Zoo Aviary, or, how do you suppose the tiny sprite remains warm at night?"

It soon became apparent that it was a "two-family" bird, that Io's next door neighbors, Alice and Delor Olson, were also feeding the bird and equally concerned with the hummer's survival.

After consulting with various people, I came to the conclusion that the proper thing to do would be, as the old saying goes, to let Nature take its course. Needless to say, this is easier said than done. Put yourself into Alice's or Delor's or Io's shoes, feeding this animated gemstone day after day, and I think you will understand their feelings.

Nearly every winter a very small number of several species of birds in this state have for one reason or another not migrated to the south as they normally would do. It is difficult to say exactly what triggers this phenomenon. Some ornithologists think that eye cataracts may influence them to stay. Autopsies performed on some wintering cowbirds near Minneapolis one year revealed that they were afflicted with encephalitis, inflammation of the brain, also called brain fever.

Could it possibly be related to old age or perhaps an injury? One famous ornithologist even went so far as to say that he considered that, just as with people, there are smart birds and dumb birds, and there is a chance that this factor may interfere with their natural instinct to migrate. Can you imagine a dumb hummingbird? I most surely can't.

Charlotte and I dropped in for a visit with Io Nelson on Wednesday, December 3. Her little poodle, Sammy, tail-wagging welcoming committee of one, made us feel very much at home, and soon the hummingbird arrived for a drink of red-colored sugar water. Over and over she came, totally oblivious to our presence or especially to Sammy who frequently sits within one foot of where the hummingbird feeds.

As soon as I saw the hummingbird I knew I just had to get some photographs of this rare occurrance. Unfortunately we had to go into Sturgeon Bay for errands and by the time we returned to Jacksonport it was snowing. Mrs. Nelson assured us that the hummingbird had come during the snowstorm within the past week or so, and that settled the matter. Back home I went for the camera.

By the time I returned to Jacksonport there was a minor blizzard in progress. Surely the hummingbird could not withstand a storm like this. Well, I was wrong again, for soon she was hovering in the dim late afternoon light, filling up on sugar water for the night. How patient she was as I took one after another picture, through two panes of window glass, from within 12 inches of her, superlative flyer, wings beating perhaps 50 to 60 times a second.

The National Geographic Book, **Song and Garden Birds of North America**, says that "sometimes late frosts take a heavy toll of northing birds (hummingbirds)". Arthur Cleveland Bent's book, **Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds and Their Allies**, gives latest departure dates of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds from various cities, such as Minneapolis, Spetember 24, Madison, Wis., September 20, Chicago, October 13, Philadelphia, October 12 and Keokuk, Iowa, October 23.

Scientists have determined that hummingbirds living at high altitudes in the Andes Mountains of South America have nighttime body temperatures of about 57 degrees F. The researchers felt that those birds, having an extremely high metabolic rate, could not survive the cold nights otherwise except by remaining in a warm nest as do the incubating females.

Mrs. Nelson has named the inspiring little female hummingbird Io Bravado (pronounced EE-o bra-VAH-do). The longer into December we see this valiant little creature the more we realize that hummingbird history is being made for northeastern Wisconsin. (The bird was still there on the day of this writing, December 8.) It has survived two rather severe snowstorms and night temperatures as low as 11 degrees F. How it stays warm at night is the burning question.

This is perhaps the only time in our lives those of us keeping track of this astounding event will ever see a real live angel during the Christmas season, the one-tenth of one ounce Angel at Jacksonport, Wisconsin!

Box 152,
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

(Note: Several species of hummingbirds have demonstrated the ability to become torpid in order to survive cold nights. Heat and respiration rates and body temperature are dramatically reduced. It is difficult to imagine any other explanation for this Ruby-throat's survival, unless it had discovered a secret entrance to a warm building. - L.S.)

FIELD NOTES

By John Bielefeldt

The Winter Season **December 1, 1979 to February 29, 1980**

In metaphor, winter's often said to "descend" as if it were an unaccountably huge Hudson's Bay blanket of cold and snow suddenly enfolding the northland for long months. However, the Wisconsin winter of 1979-80 did not descend; it sputtered. Snow fell seldom and melted quickly. Only for a few weeks in late January and February was there a consistent statewide ground cover and the average biweekly snow depth across the state, at 3-1/2 inches just one-third the norm, was probably the least since record-keeping began in 1961. Fog, drizzle, and rain were more frequent than snow in the first half of the season, and some rivers in southwestern counties were at flood point in mid-January. Temperatures seemed unusually mild (50° plus in the southeast at midnight on January 10-11) in contrast to the long cold spells of the three preceding winters, but really in the three month average was approximately normal for the longer run of winters. Small lakes iced over on schedule in November but the bigger inland waters of the south, like Lake Mendota at Madison, after a near-freeze on December 17, re-opened and held large patches of water for two or four weeks longer. Rivers ran wholly or partly free, even in the north, for a good share of the winter.

Some harsher weather did come in spurts. Sleet or gentle snows turned to wind-driven snow with sub-zero air masses close behind on December 16-17, January 6-9 (-30°F in northern Wisconsin), and January 11-12. Temperatures moderated abruptly in the wake of those fronts yet even a few days of cold windy weather can be enough, in the right combination, to starve out many birds (see Golden-crowned Kinglet). Protracted cold (and snow cover) finally arrived in the last week of January. Rather monotonous winter weather--many sunny days, no major storms, low but not frigid temperatures--than continued until February 18-24, when days in the 30s and rains melted all snow south of Green Bay and LaCrosse but went unaccompanied by springlike warm fronts that might have prompted early migration. Cold (-23° at Eagle River) returned at the end of February to close out the winter reporting period.

These major trends in the season's weather (a few details will be added later) seem to correlate with some obvious patterns among wintering birds and winter birdwatching in 1979-80. First, many birds lingering north of their species' usual wintering grounds not only stayed in Wisconsin but also survived through much or all of the winter. Blackbirds in general seemed

relatively common. White-throated Sparrows could be found in the "wild" (versus feeders) in February. Other sparrows (Vesper, Field, Fox and Swamp) overwintered successfully, and single Yellow-rumped Warblers were still alive in Sauk and Marinette (!) counties in mid-January and early February, respectively. Some laggards are seen every year, of course, and four midwinter Brown Thrashers in 1980 instead of the two or three of other recent years are not nearly enough, in themselves, to suggest a real difference in thrasher survival this winter. However, such other species as sapsuckers, towhees, and Hermit Thrushes also exceeded the recent quota of midwinter reports (often no reports in these particular cases) by one, two, or three birds. Still more species (e.g., Ruby-crowned Kinglet) were exceptionally numerous on Christmas counts although not in midwinter. In this last category, as well, were the amazing White-eyed Vireo on Madison's Christmas count, three count period yellowthroats, and an Orange-crowned Warbler on December 1 (see **By the Wayside).**

Not only Wisconsin observers, but also birders in most of the eastern US and southern Canada reported the presence of many lingering birds north of their usual winter ranges. In Wisconsin, the less spectacular lingerers were mainly ground-feeding species like white-throats, thrashers, towhees, and some others already mentioned. The absence of a persistent snow cover in much of the state for much of the winter, and the shallow snows of the rest of the season, probably helped many of these birds stay alive. Moderate temperatures in the earlier half of the winter might have contributed in the same way--by making food supplies accessible in suitable habitat--to the survival of some water birds: a very surprising Green Heron in late December, the record number of Great Blue Herons on Christmas counts (although there's been, a little curiously, no midwinter report since 1977), and a group of Virginia Rails into February (when at least one died as the last open water froze within its chosen ditch).

Some strong fliers certainly have the bodily reserves and the mobility to stay in the north so long as food supplies are adequate and to relocate quickly southward if need be. To the extent that weather controls the amount of food or its accessibility (in several possible ways including a bird's capacity to hunt for food) and the need for food (against greater heat losses in colder weather, for instance), mild and snowless winter weather could allow or even induce some birds of some migratory species to linger past their usual departure dates. Canada Geese, Bald Eagles, and Rough-legged Hawks (and maybe Great Blue Herons?) seemed to demonstrate this kind of correlation between weather and winter birds in parts of Wisconsin in the mild half of the '79-80 season. In many other species, however, wintertime lingerers seem likely to be physiologically or genetically abnormal birds that "can't" or "won't" migrate. It is easy to see that a vireo or warbler except, very rarely, the Yellow-rumped, meets no conceivable advantages in lingering in Wisconsin; its chances of surviving an entire winter or "renewing" migration in the face of sudden storm and cold are nil. It's perhaps not simple to speculate about other less obvious cases of lingering migrants' fates, but consider that in southern Illinois a month of "exceptionally severe" weather--average January temperatures of 19°F and snows as deep as 10 inches--probably killed, directly or indirectly, 80-100 percent of the wintering thrashers, kinglets, towhees, bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, and Field Sparrows in forest and residential habitats (Graber and Graber, **Wilson**

Bulletin 91:88-103, 1979). Prospects for survival for birds of those same species in a Wisconsin winter, where such temperatures and snow depths are not exceptional, look bleak in most years. It seems quite possible, in short, that late-lingering migrants were no more than normally common in Wisconsin at the **beginning** of this winter; instead, in most cases, it might merely be a bigger than normal share of lingerers lived long enough to be discovered by birdwatchers.

Other interesting cases of weather and survival involve permanent resident and partly migratory species rather than stragglers of migrant species. The Cardinal ought to make a fine example in Wisconsin. It is a non-migratory bird, much less numerous here than in southern states. Severe weather can affect cardinals: an unusually cold and snowy January apparently decimated three-quarters of the December population in forest habitats in the Grabers' previously-cited studies in southern Illinois (although local movement to urban habitat, where declines over the month were minimal, could have meant that immediate mortality in forests was overestimated). In Wisconsin, the Cardinal has been well-established at the northern edge of its range for fewer than 50 years. The effects of winter weather might well constitute one critical limit on its distribution and abundance, especially during a sequence of harsh winters like the three of 1976-77 through 1978-79. Indeed, statewide totals of Cardinals on 1977 through 1979 Christmas counts (in December, when effects of the preceding winter but not yet the coming one might be felt) were down 24 percent from 1974 through 1976 average, following easier winters. Calculations of Cardinals per party-hour on 31 southern and central counts, with the number of feeder-watchers virtually identical in earlier and later years, show the same reduction in the 1977-79 period. (There are indications that such an "average" decline involved greater losses of about 40-70 percent along the northern periphery of the Cardinal's range from Green Bay to Eau Claire, as might be expected, and much smaller losses of 15 percent or less in southern counties.) Moreover, unadjusted totals of about 1900 Cardinals on the 1979 and 1977 counts were the lowest since 1700 were recorded in 1967, when party-hours were only about half of what they are now.

These figures make a superficial case for noticeably smaller Cardinal counts after difficult winters, but even with the variables of field and feeder effort controlled, other factors confuse the issue of population changes. Hendrick noted some years ago (**Passenger Pigeon** 24:3-8, 1962) that Christmas counts of Cardinals can tend to move up and down in fairly regular fashion at any one locality; one or two higher years are followed by one or two lower years. Recent counts at Sauk City, for example, have listed 2.2, 1.2, 3.7, 1.6, 2.8, and 1.5 Cardinals per party-hour in 1974-79. These rises and falls seem to be quite local phenomena, as Hendrick also noted. Counts taken within a few dozen miles of each other often display contracting trends, one clearly up, another clearly down, in the same year. Should several of these local trends happen to come into a chance alignment, particularly on big counts that furnish a large share of the state's counting effort and Cardinal tally, the appearance of a widespread population decline could result. Nearly half of Wisconsin's Christmas counts are too small or too far north to contribute any substantial part of the Cardinal total. If local trends on the remaining half (about 40 counts) were entirely out of synchrony, roughly 20 counts important to the Cardinal tally should be up

and 20 down in the "average" year. Ten or a dozen counts moving in unison in the "wrong" direction would make it very hard to distinguish between the sheer coincidence of normal change on local levels and an abnormal decline induced by weather or some other factor operating on a regional or statewide level.

There must of course be reasons for local ups and downs, in or out of synchrony, and factors at work on Cardinal populations in the breeding season may outweigh (or interact with) factors at work in the fall and winter seasons of mortality. Unknowns of the breeding season are interposed between successive Christmas counts that are, after all, only snapshots of early winter numbers and not guides to end-of-winter population levels. It is difficult enough to be sure from one year to the next that Cardinal numbers are truly down (or up) on anything beyond a local and normal basis. Severe winter weather as a possible cause of decline is an attractive idea but one that can't be confirmed with present data.

Similar assumptions about the effects of adverse weather on partly migratory species might be prompted by the relatively poor counts and/or few midwinter observations of kingfishers, meadowlarks, and Mourning Doves in the "mild" winter of 1979-80. If it's assumed that wintering populations of these species form behaviorally distinct parts of the total populations--the same non-migrant individuals (or their progeny) trying to winter in Wisconsin year after year--then a series of icebound or snowbound winters could cut repeatedly and deeply into survival and into the available pool of potentially wintering birds in the next year or two, even when that next year's winter is milder. (Payoffs for birds that do survive are conceivable in these cases; early access to prime breeding territories in the spring, for example, and some kingfishers or doves clearly demonstrate an ability to live through northern winters. A distinct wintering population might arise from these successful individuals.) These possibilities are intriguing but even the determination of changes in winter numbers, muddy enough for the Cardinal, is very difficult. Kingfisher counts depend heavily on the unknown amounts of effort that observers devote to a rather specific kind of habitat, and the numbers of doves and meadowlarks seen are certainly influenced by the presence and depth of snow cover, although just how greatly they're influenced by what depths is not at all clear.

A few paragraphs back, trends in winter weather "seemed" to correlate with some "obvious" patterns among wintering birds on a fairly broad seasonal and regional level. In fact, however, it's hard to prove any seasonal generalizations. Maybe the best generalizations link winter weather to birdwatching, not the birds themselves. Warmer winters with little snow will surely see more observers spending more time afield in a greater (or subtler) variety of habitats than a cold snowy winter will. At first glance the results of extra fieldwork in milder winters like 1979-80 seem simple: more birds of more species might be seen and reported. But skies, winds, temperatures, and snow depths also affect the behavior of the birds being sought, making them more conspicuos or less conspicuous where they're present, concentrating or dispersing their numbers in available habitat, closing certain parts of habitat to their use for an hour, a day, a week, or a season, and so on. Uncertainties multiply, and synthesizing the observations of several dozen reporters scattered unevenly about the state may not balance out all local vagaries. Implications of change in a species' abundance are not necessarily

reliable or even detectable, and need to be treated with great caution. Still, there is no reason to dismiss all these field notes' signs of changing abundance as untrustworthy; experience with the ebbs and influxes of winter finches and other invaders has shown observers' ability to track major shifts in the numbers of some birds. Many changes in numbers are temporary and normal fluctuations in population; but serious long-term declines in abundance in previously secure species can also be expected as human impact in their environment continues to expand. Giving warning of the latter kind of decline is perhaps the most important job the field notes could do. To do it most effectively, however, the influence of external factors, weather for one, has got to be at least partly separable from the role of observational factors. It may be time to focus a bigger share of Wisconsin fieldwork on a smaller number of species, and observers might need to be willing to discipline and standardize their watching and reporting methods somewhat.

Rarities

Besides the array of late-lingering migrants, most of which are common birds in Wisconsin at other times of the year, the winter of '79-80 had several exceptional strays from other parts of the country: the state's sixth Green-tailed Towhee, in Iron County; the seventh record of the Mountain Bluebird, at Superior; one more in the long series of infrequent sightings of the Townsend's Solitaire, at Devil's Lake; and Wisconsin's first adequately documented Sage Thrasher, at Madison well into midwinter after it first turned up on the Christmas count. Such rarities from western North America are quite typically discovered here in the winter. It's supposed that they wander eastward, or southeastward from Canada, during fall migration; many or most of these vagrants may be misdirected young of the year, as the towhee apparently was. All these species, except perhaps the thrasher, do make occasional fall and winter incursions into Great Plains' states, with a few penetrating farther east. Autumn reports of the solitaire and bluebird had been made in Minnesota this year, and a general prevalence of western strays was much noted in both fall and winter in most states east of the Mississippi.

In this winter, too, Wisconsin got another record of the Greater Black-backed Gull, at Racine. Counts in the hundreds are sometimes made on Lake Erie, and a few are regularly seen at Chicago; more can be expected here along Lake Michigan. Documentation of sightings of all the preceding species, as well as the Green Heron and Orange-crowned Warbler mentioned earlier, have been reviewed and accepted by the Wisconsin Records Committee; accounts of several of the observations are presented in **By The Wayside.** Also spectacular was a Gyrfalcon in December in Burnett County.

Invaders

Everybody, it's assumed, likes to see Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls and hopes someday to see a Great Gray or Hawk Owl, but almost nobody speaks of "winter raptors". To most observers the generic prescription for a satisfying season is instead "winter finches," and feeder watchers in particular were disappointed at finches' second consecutive failure to appear in Wisconsin in great abundance or variety. Pine Grosbeaks, siskins, and especially Redpolls were almost absent, White-winged Crossbills were unreported except for isolated individuals on two Christmas counts, and Evening Grosbeaks in modest numbers were confined to northern counties. Wisconsin (and Minnesota) nevertheless had local concentrations of other

species, which is a good deal more than most of the U.S. could say. A medium-sized irruption of Red Crossbills probably brought them briefly to all parts of the state but they stayed put, as usual, only where cones were available; by the end of February breeding activities were underway in some northwestern counties and in Waukesha County, at least. Goldfinches and to a lesser extent Purple Finches were unusually numerous in the northern- and northwesternmost areas of Wisconsin.

Winter summaries of the past two years had stressed the notion that southward invasions of winter finches and other boreally-nesting seedeaters tend to appear to alternate years, in synchrony with supposed failures of seed production in the north. Poor finch flights to Wisconsin and the U.S. for two winters running, this year and last, obviously contradict an alternate-year pattern, but of course there's little reason to expect biological events--boreal trees' seed yields or boreal birds' irruptions--to occur with perfect regularity. The last general exception to the every-other-year model of invastions came in the winters of 1966-67 and 1967-68, when a lack of irruptive finches in the south did seem to correlate with some reports of two straight years of good-to-abundant seed crops in the north (Bock and Lepthien, **American Naturalist** 110:559-571, 1976). Observers may be cheered to note that those consecutive off-years were immediately followed by consecutive invasions in 1968-69 and 1969-70, the latter a "superflight" of unusually great size and scope. On the other not-so-optimistic hand, there was apparently a five-year breakdown in the pattern, with "unsatisfactory" finch flights, all through the early 1950s. (Some observers dispute this every-other year model for winter finches, which in general may have been valid for the last decade, as unestablished for the long run. It does seem consistent in the case of redpolls. - C.K.)

At any rate, Wisconsin is far enough north to get at least a few boreal invaders even in the slowest of years. Besides the several finches already noted, the state had approximately average numbers of Snowy Owls in the 1979-80 winter. Although incursions by Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes were light and Bohemian Waxwings went entirely unreported after December, Red-breasted Nuthatches were present statewide if common only in limited spots.

Weather Details

The broad outlines of winter weather in 1979-80 and the chief storms of the season were described earlier. November had introduced winter with normal or slightly milder than normal temperatures and little snowfall. Except on Lake Superior's edge, Wisconsin was largely free of snow cover until 2-6 inches fell north and northwest of Wausau on December 7; the same area kept an even shallower cover the rest of the month as infrequent light falls failed to compensate completely for melt, while the rest of the state continued to show bare ground until January 6, when 1-3 inches in the south and 4-14 inches in the north accumulated with the first snow-laden storm of the winter. Warmer temperatures on January 10 again bared all ground southeast of LaCrosse and Green Bay but left 5 inches of remaining cover at midstate and as much as 11 inches in the northwest. New snow was locally abundant in the north on the 16th (11 inches at Park Falls) but most areas added only 1-3 inches then another 1-2 inches on January 21-22; the south got its first lasting cover of 4 inches on January 23-24. Lake effect snows of more than a foot near the Superior and southern Lake Michigan shores at the end of the month produced the only local deviations from a depth pattern that would persist from late January until the late February thaw: 2-5 inches of cover in southern and central parts of Wisconsin (about three-quarters of the state), roughly 7 inches in north-central areas (Florence and

Forest to Polk and St. Croix counties), and 12-13 inches in northwestern counties. Minor falls in early and mid February did not change that distribution substantially, but snows again disappeared in the southern half of the state by February 22 after four days of thaw; northern areas simultaneously lost up to half of their earlier depths. Light snows and colder weather returned a shallow cover of 1-3 inches in the south at winter's end and maintained 6-12 inch depths in the state's northern third into March.

Temperatures' rises and falls during the season can be roughly judged by the accumulations and retreats of snow cover. In the first half of the winter, sub-seasonal readings near or below zero statewide were felt on only six nights, especially January 6-9, when daytime highs did not move above single digits. Later, many nights between January 22 and February 10 would reach 0° to -10°F in southern counties and —10° to -25° in northern counties, with correspondingly cold days in the teens to low 20s, but there were none of the extremely low temperatures of midwinter a year and two years ago. Many river runs that had frozen completely in those years stayed open in 1979-80, even in the heart of the coldest weather in early February.

As usual, this seasonal summary emphasizes "midwinter" reports from January and February. Hilsenhoff has already tabulated Christmas count and count period observations for December 1979 (**Passenger Pigeon** 42:9-21, 1980) and only those other December reports of special interest will be included here. This division of wintertime responsibilities makes it helpful to the midwinter editor if contributors omit Christmas count sightings from their seasonal report forms. "Peak" or "maximum" counts for the season are likewise more useful in this summary if they avoid repetition of Christmas count tallies and instead refer to early December or mid-to-late winter numbers.

Forty-seven contributors (those listed at the end of the species accounts) in 32 counties sent extensive reports on their January-February observations in the 1979-80 winter. Incidental sightings in an additional 28 counties were provided by these contributors and by other reporters (those whose full names are given in the text). Also, the Ned Hollister Bird Club of Beloit again sent its interesting report of the February rerun of its local Christmas count. All these efforts, except for a minor jump in the breadth of "incidental" coverage, are once more at the same level as efforts of the last four winters. However, midwinter fieldwork in far western and southwestern counties has been particularly scant over the last two seasons; more reports from Douglas, Washburn, Polk, St. Croix, Pierce, Dunn, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempeleau, LaCrosse, Richland, Crawford, Grant, Iowa and LaFayette Counties are needed to make these summaries more comprehensive. Scattered northern counties--especially Florence, Oconto, Lincoln, Vilas, and Sawyer--also get little or no observational attention. Resident contributors from all these areas would be welcomed.

This review of the 1979-80 season is my last as winter editor and it's appropriate to thank each of the observers who furnish the raw materials for these summaries. Although it is sometimes not possible in a limited amount of space to give all due credit to every reporter, every one does contribute important sightings that fill in the unglorious but essential background of a season. Without the diligent efforts of contributors working their home grounds year after year, there could be little scope or continuity in the field notes, and my appreciation goes to each reporter during my several years as editor.

I also know that field reporters are sometimes irritated by an editor's opinions and reservations. My own treatment of the accipitrine hawks--Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, and Goshawk-- is a case in point. Opinion, however, so long as it's not capricious, must sometimes be part of the job. The aim is never to disparage observers' efforts but rather to try to provide the best service to our knowledge of birds' numbers and distribution in Wisconsin. It seems possible that the commonly used field guides have underplayed some of the problems of identifying **Accipiters** in the field, especially under less-than-optimal conditions of observation. Similar problems for a few other species may loom: the two redpolls and particularly the Iceland and Thayer's (and sometimes Glaucous) Gulls, for winter examples.

A final opinion, in support of the virtues of winter in Wisconsin: maybe it's only possessiveness about "my" season but I can never agree, no matter what birds are seen or not seen, with those who can rate a winter dull or disappointing. A little precision in language might resolve the matter (it is really the birdwatching, not the winter itself, that is said to be dull) but perhaps we in Wisconsin ought to find some pure delight in the season itself. I have been waiting these several years for the perfect opportunity to quote Ursula K. LeGuin, who writes as incredibly well about winter as she does about everything. The perfect chance hasn't come but nonetheless:

> *As we approached the end of the pass the rainclouds were thinning and rending. A cold north wind dispersed them utterly, laying bare the peaks above the ridges to our right and left, basalt and snow, piebald and patchwork of black and white brilliant under the sudden sun in a dazzling sky...*
>
> *It had not rained, here on these north-facing slopes. Snow-fields stretched down from the pass into the valleys of moraine. We stowed the wheels, uncapped the sledge-runners, put on our skis, and took off-down, north, onward, into that silent vastness... The sledge pulled like a feather, and we laughed with joy.*
>
> **(The Left Hand of Darkness,** Ace Books, 1969:208-209)

SEASONAL SUMMARY

Pied-billed Grebe: In midwinter, one seen Dane Co. Dec. 30-Feb. 2 (deBoor, Erickson, Smith Thiessen) and one seen Milwaukee Co. Feb. 24 (Epstein) were the only reports.

Green Heron: Although there appears to have been a prior winter record during the Christmas count period in 1974, a bird at Petenwell Dam, Juneau-Adams Cos., on Dec. 29 (apparently not Dec. 20 as reported in **American Birds** 34:274, 1980) was truly exceptional (Don Follen, Sr., Steve Rennhack, Pat Webb, Tony Voss).

Black-crowned Night Heron: Appleton's two Christmas count birds dwindled to one by Jan. 1 and were not seen thereafter (Tessen). One was in Milwaukee Co. Dec. 1 only (Epstein).

Mute Swan: Two birds of the Christmas count period lingered into early January in Waukesha Co. (Harold Graser), one was in Manitowoc Co. Jan. 3 (Tessen), one appeared in Milwaukee Co. Feb. 2 (Casper, John Idzikowski), and several wintered as usual in Bayfield-Ashland Cos. (Verch). Observers should probably double-check all out-of-season swans, at least in eastern counties where wintering (or summering) Mutes now seem more frequent than wintertime **Whistling Swans,** of which there were no January or February reports for the state this year.

Canada Goose: Many of Horicon's fall birds did not depart until Jan. 6-9, when hundreds were moving over Waukesha and Milwaukee Cos. In Walworth Co. 350 remained Jan. 19 but only 8 were discovered Jan. 26 after 4 inches of snow--the season's first persistent cover in southern Wisconsin--on the 23rd and 24th; isolated flocks of 100-150 in Columbia and

Jefferson Cos. on Jan. 27-28 might also be linked to this snowfall. Geese overwintered in Racine, Milwaukee, Dodge, Jefferson (50-70). Dane, Marquette, and Brown (1200) Cos., at least, and 60 were seen in Eau Claire Co. Feb. 15.

Snow Goose: One wintered Racine Co. (DeBoer) and one was seen at Horicon Jan. 18 (Drieslein).

Dabbling Ducks: The abbreviated format adopted last year for wintering ducks is here continued. The eleven contributors in eight counties who gave peak midwinter counts for both species totalled about 3500 **Mallards** and 505 **American Black Ducks** but the ratio is 2150 to 70 (in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane, Manitowoc, and Eau Claire Cos.) when big flocks in Winnebago and especially Brown Cos. are excluded. About 168 wintering **Gadwalls** in Rock, Waukesha, Winnebago, and Dane (163) Cos. outnumbered 7 **Common Pintails,** 1 **Green-winged Teal** (at Milwaukee), 6 **American Wigeons** and 98 **Northern Shovelers** (all but one at Madison) seen in 1-4 southern counties, respectively. About 7 wintering **Wood Ducks** in as many counties included a mid-state male in Eau Claire Co.

Diving Ducks: Unusual northern and inland reports for midwinter included a **Canvasback** in Eau Claire Co. Jan. 4 (Polk), two **Buffleheads** in Walworth Co. Jan. 19 (Tessen) and another in Sauk Co. Feb. 17 (Lange), and six **Ruddy Ducks** in Walworth co. Jan. 19 (Tessen--the first definite midwinter birds since 1976).

Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk: About 25 midwinter observations of **Accipiters** were reported from 15 counties. Only Tessen's record of an adult Goshawk in Outagamie Co. on Jan. 1 included any corroborating evidence of the kind deemed necessary in last winter's summary.

Red-tailed Hawk: Aside from two in Douglas Co. Feb. 26, probably migrants, the northernmost midwinter birds were listed from Shawano, Wood, and Barron Cos. The raw total on Wisconsin Christmas counts was the lowest in 12 years but numbers on the basis of birds per 10 party-hours of counting effort (see Table 1) were not really so low as the unadjusted total would imply. Comparison with a similar table in last year's summary will show that southeastern and southwestern regions did have their poorest Red-tail counts of the 1974-79 period, but that other regions had approximately average counts and that the statewide average was no worse than it was in 1975. Factoring out the effects of very foggy or stormy weather on a few counts had little influence on any of the figures in Table 1. However, the total lack of snow cover on nearly all southern and central counts might have made hawks hard to detect.

TABLE 1--Hawks and Shrikes Per 10 Party-Hours, Wisconsin Christmas Counts, 1979

	Rough-legged Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	American Kestrel	Northern Shrike
Northwest	1.6	0.3	zero	0.3
Northeast	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.3
East-Central	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.3
West-Central	0.4	2.2	0.8	0.8
Southwest	0.2	4.1	0.9	0.1
Southeast	0.4	1.6	1.0	0.1
Statewide Average	0.6	1.5	0.6	0.3

Red-shouldered Hawk: Two wintered Waukesha Co. (Bielefeldt). Single birds were seen Jan. 14 Dane Co. (Thiessen) and Feb. 14 Eau Claire Co. (Polk).

Rough-legged Hawk: Christmas counts (see Table 1) found good but not outstanding numbers in northern counties and uniformly poor numbers in the rest of the state, by the standards of the last six years. Overall these early winter counts were unimpressive, as in most of the US, yet not the lowest in recent years (compare 1976). Distribution changed in midwinter. Steffen noticed southbound movements in Manitowoc Co. on Jan. 7 and again on Jan. 29; Rough-leg sightings by resident observers farther north ended in Taylor Co. on Jan. 4 (Robbins) and in Marathon Co. on Jan. 27 (Luepkes); the peak tally at Horicon was 21 on Jan. 28 (Drieslein). These dates are neatly aligned into two clumps, the earlier one pretty obviously bracketing the season's first major storm on Jan. 6, with 4-14 inches of new snow in northern Wisconsin. The second clump may be coincidental but it followed frequent Jan. 16-23 snowfalls (locally heavy in the north) that re-covered bare ground in southern and central counties. Rough-legs apparently retreated south before accumulating snows in the first half of February—none were reported north of a V-shaped range limit in Door (probably), Outagamie, Waushara, Juneau (where rather common), Eau Claire, and Barron Cos. This mid-state valley in distribution is not unusual among wintering hawks. Later records in more northern counties--Feb. 22 Langlade and Feb. 23 Price--probably involved migrants moving in the wake of widespread snowmelt.

Golden Eagle: Ziebell reports a bird, also identified by Jack Kaspar, found dead in a coyote trap in Oconto Co. on Feb. 17. Another was seen at close range in Adams Co. in late December (Don Follen, Sr., et al.)

Bald Eagle: Mild weather early in the season provided enough open water for late-lingering, wintering, and widely-distributed eagles. On the Chippewa-Flambeau Rivers, one stayed in Rusk Co. until Jan. 4 (Robbins), one in Chippewa Co. Jan. 17 (Polk), and 1-2 in Eau Claire Co. Jan. 25-27 (Polk). Up to three (on Feb. 8) wintered on the Peshtigo in Marinette Co. (Lindberg) and as many as three (on Dec. 14) were found at Horicon until Feb. 3 (Drieslein). Others were seen in Brown Co. Jan. 19 (Cleary & Columban), in Portage Co. Jan. 20 (Luepkes), in Marquette Co. (Williamson), in Waupaca Co. Feb. 21 (Anderson), and the far north on Feb. 13, a bit early for migrants, in Vilas Co. (Polk), and in the usual spots on the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers.

Northern Harrier: A mere 39 birds on Christmas counts was nevertheless among the highest totals of the past 10 years, and midwinter reports from 13 counties doubled or tripled the usual number in that category. Overwintered at Horicon (Drieslein) and probably in Vernon (Weber) and Marquette (Williamson) Cos. Single birds were seen Jan. 3-27 in Kenosha (Tessen, Peterson), Manitowoc (Steffen), Monroe (Epstein), Portage (Thiessen), and Chippewa (Polk) Cos., with other singles Feb. 2-17 in Rock (Hollister recount), Green (Shea), Dane (Shea), Ozaukee (Epstein), Green Lake (Mary Donald), and Barron (Humphrey) Cos.

Gyrfalcon: Polk describes a Dec. 13 bird in Burnett Co. in **(By the Wayside).**

American Kestrel: The 1979 Christmas counts' raw total was the lowest in six years but adjustment for counting effort (see Table 1) belies any scarcity, at least in comparison to 1975-78 counts, which also averaged 0.6 kestrels per 10 party-hours statewide. The northernmost midwinter reports came this year from Shawano (Peterson), Langlade (Pickering), Marathon (Luepkes), and Taylor (Robbins) Cos.

Spruce Grouse: Present in Ashland and/or Bayfield Cos. (Verch).

Gray Partridge: Christmas counts were down and contributors listed mid-winter birds only from Milwaukee, Dodge, Outagamie, Brown, and Marinette Cos. The deep and persistent snows of two preceding winters had probably cut into partridge populations but these are hard birds to find in relatively snowless winters like 1979-80 and conclusions about declining numbers should rest on better data. The same can be said of pheasants and of the **Common Bobwhite,** which was reported in midwinter only from Marquette Co.

Virginia Rail: As many as four tried to winter along a single springfed ditch in Waukesha Co. (Spencer Stehno, Mary Donald, Linda Safir, et al.) but none could be rediscovered after a dead bird was found Feb. 15.

American Coot: Despite the coot's proclivity for delaying on the big lakes 'til freeze-up and the amount of open water available into January of 1980, not many midwinter reports were received: wintered in Dane, Waukesha (16), and Eau Claire (2) Cos., seen Jan. 19-26 (25-90) in Walworth Co., and present until Jan. 19 (1) and Jan. 1 (1) in Milwaukee and Winnebago Cos., respectively.

Common Snipe: Wintered Dane Co. (at least 1--Hoffman, Thiessen, Shea), seen Green Co. Feb. 2 (Peterson), and present until at least Jan. 25 Waukesha Co. (3--Bielefeldt).

Glaucous Gull: At least five--an adult, a first winter bird, and (simultaneously) three second-winter birds--were noted in Milwaukee Co. Jan. 11-Feb. 24 (Epstein, DeBoer, Tessen, Hanbury, deBoor, Peterson). Inland birds may turn out to be less unusual than they have seemed; careful search among Herrings revealed a second-winter Glaucous at Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., Jan. 19 (Tessen) and an adult plus a second-winter immature at the Madison Lakes, Dane Co., Dec. 18-Jan. 6 (Shea, Thiessen), where the Christmas count had also recorded one.

Greater Black-backed Gull: One in third-year plumage on the Racine Co. lakeshore Jan. 14-26 was located by DeBoer and also seen by Tessen (see **By the Wayside).**

Bonaparte's Gull: Three very late individuals were reported Jan. 23 in Milwaukee Co. (Woodmansee), where frequent sightings until Dec. 28 had followed exceptionally high early December estimates of 250-500 birds.

Mourning Dove: The Christmas count total fell to a 12-year "low" of 2688 (vs. 6090 in 1978) but lack of snow cover probably held down feeder tallies and the effects of counting effort are uncertain. Door, Marinette, Langlade, Clark, Chippewa, and probably Ashland Cos. yielded the northernmost midwinter reports.

Common Screech Owl: Post-Christmas count reports were received from Racine, Dane, Dodge, Marquette, Winnebago, Outagamie, Langlade, and Clark Cos.

Snowy Owl: On balance, 1979-80 was yet another in a series of six "average" winters for Snowies in Wisconsin. Only four were recorded on Christmas counts, all from Lakes Michigan and Winnebago, but numbers and distribution seemed to increase in midwinter, and neighboring observers in Duluth and Michigan did find them fairly common this year; the flight was "poor to mediocre" almost everywhere else in the northern US. This pattern, if it's real, is virtually identical to the one that prevailed two winters ago in 1977-78. January and February sightings for 1980 were reported from Milwaukee (at least 2), Dane (1), Vernon (1), Dodge (2), Manitowoc (2), Winnebago (2), Brown, Wood (1), Clark (1), Marathon (1), Forest, Oneida, Price (1), Ashland, Bayfield, and Douglas (1) Cos.

Long-eared Owl: Only four areas had Christmas count or count period birds--all singles--and just three other records were received, from Dane Co. Feb. 7 (Hoffman), Rock Co. Feb. 17 (1--Hollister recount), and Dodge Co. Dec. 21 (where not listed in the Christmas count--Drieslein). Although it's difficult to impute much accuracy to owl counts, this apparent scarcity of Long-ear sightings does contrast with the many reports of the 1977-78 winter, two years back.

Short-eared Owl: Several observers reported at least 3-5 at Horicon through February and counts of 5-21 in Kenosha Co. Jan. 25-Feb. 10. The only other observations submitted were in Dane Co. Jan. 19 (Hoffman) and Jan. 22 (1--Thiessen).

Saw-whet Owl: The only report involved a road-kill found in Milwaukee Co. Feb. 29 (Epstein)

Belted Kingfisher: Wintered in Dane (at least 2) and Waukesha (3) Cos.; seen Jan. 1 in Outagamie and Monroe Cos. and Jan. 26 in Milwaukee Co. This is a short list of midwinter reports in view of weather that kept many southern Wisconsin rivers free of ice until February. Also, the Christmas count total of 42 kingfishers was well below the 1974-78 average of 61.

Common Flicker: Christmas counts produced the biggest total in 10 years and midwinter reports from 16 counties easily exceeded the usual 5-8 counties. Most contributors south of Brown (Cleary & Columban), Marquette (Williamson), Juneau (Tessen), Monroe (Epstein), and Jackson (Barnett) Cos. found midwinter flickers, sometimes 3 or 4 in a day.

Pileated Woodpecker: A midwinter bird in northern Waukesha Co. (Carl Hayssen) was the only out-of-range report to follow the second straight year of record-setting Christmas counts.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: One all winter in Price Co. (Hardy) was slightly beyond others pressing northern range limits in Door, Marinette, Marathon, Rusk and Barron Cos.

Red-headed Woodpecker: On the whole, Christmas counts averaged a normal number but just five counts in the southwest quarter of the state had 60% of that total. Eastern and southeastern counts, in contrast, continued very low for a third consecutive winter, and there were no midwinter reports east of Rock (Mahlum) and Waushara (Ziebell) Cos. In western Wisconsin a few ranged north to Chippewa and Barron Cos. into February.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: One wintered in Columbia Co. (Thiessen), one was seen Jan. 30 in Eau Claire Co. (Polk), and was present until at least Jan. 30 in Waukesha Co. (Bielefeldt).

Horned Lark: Mid and late January reports came from counties as far north as Door, Marathon, and Chippewa.

Gray Jay: Midwinter listings from Price, Forest, Oneida, and Ashland Cos. were within normal range.

Northern Raven: Midwinter birds south to Door, Langlade, Taylor and Eau Claire Cos. stayed within their usual range.

Boreal Chickadee: Oneida Co. sent the only midwinter reports (Vanderschaegen, Polk)..

Tufted Titmouse: Rock, Dane, Jefferson, Waukesha, and Eau Claire Cos. furnished midwinter reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: With the majority of their birds concentrated in one or two tiers of northernmost counties, the 1979 Christmas counts showed the smallest total since 1973. However, that total was off only 25% from 1978 or 1976 and Wisconsin had at least a few midwinter Red-breasts statewide (e.g., Green and Rock Cos.) in a year when all states below New England and the Great Lakes found them "scarce" to "practically nonexistent". As usual, pockets of greater numbers in Wisconsin--Price Co. east through Rhinelander to Menominee Co. and western Oconto Co. (mostly Christmas counts) and pine plantations in Waukesha Co. (easily 10-15 in a midwinter morning--highlighted the effects of locally abundant cone crops.)

Marsh (Long-billed M.) Wren: One observed in Dane County on Jan. 19 by Shea. See **By the Wayside.**

Brown Creeper: All parts of the state contributed above normal numbers to a Christmas count of 369 birds, a total that doubled last year's count and obliterated the old high of 205 in 1974 (the Madison census, for instance, found creepers commoner than the much more conspicuous Hairy Woodpecker). This abundance lasted all winter, at least in southern Wisconsin, and extended to all wooded habitats--tamaracks, pines, deciduous forests, roadsides, and yards. Minnesota, and probably the Dakotas and Ontario, also called them unusually numerous.

Northern Mockingbird: A Brown Co. bird first seen Jan. 21 stayed into March (Joe Brue, John Jacobs, Ty & Ida Baumann). Another in Waukesha Co. in February was confirmed, on the 14th-16th, by Peterson, Tessen, and Hanbury.

Brown Thrasher: Single birds wintered in Milwaukee (Peterson, Epstein, Hanbury, Tessen), Dane (Erickson, deBoor), and Brown (Cleary & Columban) Cos. One was present until Jan. 20 in Jefferson Co. (Hale).

Sage Thrasher: This wanderer discovered on the Madison Christmas count by Fitzpatrick and Willard (see **Pass. Pigeon** 42:44-45, 1980) was later seen and documented by many other observers and constitutes the first valid record for Wisconsin (there was one hypothetical sighting). Smith and Thiessen, and Erickson, respectively, furnished reports for Jan. 1 and Jan. 20, and the bird is said to have been present into early February at least.

American Robin: The Christmas count total was a record-breaker but a third of all birds were tallied at Madison and another third on the combined lists of three other southern counts. Nevertheless, several southeastern areas reported midwinter flocks of 20-45 robins and called them unusually common. Other midwinter reports ranged north to Door (at least 1--Lukes), Brown (max. 10--Cleary & Columban, Wierzbicki), Langlade (max. 3--Pickering), Taylor (Robbins), and Chippewa (1--Polk) Cos.

Varied Thrush: One appearing Nov. 28 in Rusk Co. stayed until Feb. 8 (Rudy & Clara Hon, Robbins); one discovered Feb. 7 in Brown Co. (Joe Brue) persisted into March. Others Feb. 9 Oneida Co. (Tessen, Peterson, Mary Donald) and Feb. 16 Waukesha Co. (Hanbury) had been present for longer but uncertain periods. Charles Kemper photographed three different birds - two in Eau Claire Co. and one in Chippewa Co. on the same day, Feb. 6.

Hermit Thrush: One, apparently the bird of the Christmas count period, wintered in Milwaukee Co. (Epstein et al.)

Mountain Bluebird: Arthur Clarke relates a Jan. 19 observation from Douglas Co. in **By the Wayside.**

Townsend's Solitaire: On Feb. 20 Lange found a Sauk Co. bird that stayed into March, when others saw it.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: From a 1975-78 average of 78 birds, the Christmas count leaped to 392 in 1979 and far surpassed the old record of 227 in 1974. All sectors of the state contributed to an abundance that apparently collapsed after the first week in January. Blizzard-strength winds and temperatures falling to a seasonal minimum on Jan. 6-9 probably combined to starve many kinglets unable to forage (in twigs and branches) fast enough or efficiently enough to offset suddenly higher energy demands. Exposure and physical instability of its micro-habitat during cold windy weather might, in contrast, be much less of a problem for the trunk-foraging creeper. Late January and February records for golden-crowns nonetheless came from at least 12 counties as widespread as Milwaukee (Frank), Manitowoc (Sontag), Door (Lukes), Price (Hardy), Bayfield (Verch, Tessen), Jackson (Gilbertson) and Rock (Hollister recount).

Cedar Waxwing: Last year's 1400 on Christmas counts tripled or quadrupled "normal" totals and set a short-lived record that was demolished by the 2600 waxwings on 1979 counts, although nearly half of this year's total came from a clump of three northwestern counts (Grantsburg, New Richmond, Hudson) which averaged more than 10 waxwings per party-hour. Three southeastern counts contributed another quarter of the total but averaged fewer than 2 per party-hour. Even with these 1800 birds discounted, however, the 1979 total was well above recent norms. Dated mid and late January records--unambiguous signs of attempted overwintering--were reported only from Milwaukee, Waukesha, Dane, Manitowoc, and Brown Cos.

Northern Shrike: By recent standards it was a poor winter for shrikes in Wisconsin (and other northern states too). The 1979 Christmas counts (see Table 1) did not reach 1974-78 averages in any region and dropped about 50%, on comparison to those years, on a statewide basis. Midwinter reports from 18 counties more or less statewide (e.g. Rock, Marinette, Price, Monroe) contrast with those from 24 counties during last year's bigger flight.

Nashville Warbler: One carefully watched at leisure in Dane County by Shea on Dec. 2. See **By the Wayside.**

Orange-crowned Warbler: Smith sent a carefully-detailed sighting of one Dec. 1 in Dane Co. See **By the Wayside.**

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Single birds were still alive in Sauk Co. Jan. 20 (Thiessen) and well into northern Wisconsin in Marinette Co. on Feb. 6-8 (banded on the latter date by Lindberg).

Meadowlark spp?: The minimal total of 4 birds on Christmas counts, all at Cooksville, may be attributed to lack of snow cover needed to drive meadowlarks to roadsides, feedlots, etc. The only recent December with a comparable lack of snow cover was 1967, when 4 birds--at 4 areas--were also tallied. However, counting effort has roughly doubled since 1967, no Christmas census in at least 25 years has come as close as the 1979 count to missing meadowlarks entirely, and count totals have shown a sharp drop in harsh snowy winters of the last few years (287, 155, 98, 15, and 40, respectively, on 1974-78 counts). Only one mid-winter sighting, on Feb. 8-9 in Marathon Co. (Luepkes), was reported in this 1979-80 season. (Kemper suggests that meadowlark populations were adversely affected by 1979 spring storms, accompanied by severe harsh winds and icing conditions.)

Red-winged Blackbird: Wintered north to Brown Co. at least (Max. 30--Cleary & Columban) and seen Jan. 4 Forest Co. (1--Tessen). Farther south, midwinter flocks of 45-150 birds were reported from Dodge and Dane Cos., with lesser numbers elsewhere.

Rusty Blackbird: Midwinter reports from Dane Co. Jan. 19 (1--Tessen) and Kenosha Co. Feb. 2 (7--Casper).

Brewer's Blackbird: Two Jan. 19 in Dane Co. (Tessen).

Common Grackle: Wintering birds were more commonly reported this year than last (13 vs 7 counties) in much the same range (south and east of Brown, Outagamie, Sauk and Green Cos.) but there were also one wintering Door Co. (Lukes) and one Feb. 9 Iron Co. (Tessen, Peterson, Mary Donald) in more northern areas. At Horicon, about 150 were counted Feb. 8.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Midwinter birds were not widely distributed but numbers in reporting counties--Rock (8), Dane (10), Dodge (5), Fond du Lac (1), and Outagamie (15+)--seem a little stronger than usual.

Northern Cardinal: See the introduction. Midwinter reports ranged north to Langlade, Taylor, and Barron Cos.

Evening Grosbeak: Except for up to 40 birds in Juneau Co. in February, there were no mid-winter reports south of the limits defined by Christmas counts--Door, Shawano, Portage, Wood, Clark, Chippewa-Rusk, and Burnett Cos. The count total was the second lowest since 1970 but still considerably better than that of 1976, thanks primarily to flocks in the northernmost counties, where sightings of 100-200 were also made in midwinter (Bayfield, Price, and Menominee Cos., among others).

Purple Finch: In 1979 as in 1972, a low year followed a record-setting year on Wisconsin Christmas counts; perhaps it was the consistency of "normal" counts in the intervening years of 1973-77 that was unusual. December's statewide distribution persisted throughout the season, but only barely: field and feeder observers in several southeastern counties had just 1 or 2 sightings involving 1 or 2 birds in all of January and February. In fact, in a reversal of a frequent pattern, Purple Finches seemed more reliably present in some far northern counties (Bayfield, Iron and Oneida, for example) in midwinter.

Pine Grosbeak: Two in Iron Co. on Jan. 20 and perhaps other dates (Butterbrodt) provided the sole midwinter report. The only early winter report was duplicated by the very few Christmas count sightings was in Taylor Co. on Dec. 3 (Robbins).

Common Redpoll: The total of 71 Redpolls on the 1979 Christmas count was the least since none at all were seen on the 1956 count, when only 268 observers (vs. 971 excluding feeder watchers in 1979) went afield on 37 counts, mostly southern and central (vs. 76 counts including many northern areas in 1979). Just four additional observations (vs. three in 1956-57) were reported in the rest of the 1979-80 winter--mid-December in Price Co., where unlisted on the Christmas count (Hardy), Jan. 12 and later dates in Brown Co. (Cleary & Columban), Feb. 26 in Bayfield and/or Ashland Cos. (Verch), and Feb. 28 in Iron Co. (1--Butterbrodt).

Pine Siskin: Although marginally better than that of the 1970 count, the siskin total on 1979 Christmas censuses was very low and only four additional sightings were contributed--Price Co. Jan. 1 (Hardy), Brown Co. Jan. 5 and following dates (Cleary & Columban), Door Co. until Feb. 19 (Lukes), and Bayfield (Roy) and/or Ashland (Verch) Cos. Jan. 1-Feb. 26 (max. 45).

American Goldfinch: The Christmas count total was the third highest of the decade and roughly doubled the lesser counts of the mid 1970s. Even the northwesternmost part of the state, in contrast to usual circumstances, showed good counts in Douglas, Bayfield, and

Ashland Cos., where a continuing midwinter abundance also drew comment. Iron and Forest Cos., too, had wintering goldfinches. Exceptional numbers extended into and apparently through northern Minnesota (where "usually absent") to Manitoba (where "very rare" in most winters).

Red Crossbill: A modest invasion--Christmas counts greater than 1976-78, comparable to 1975, and less than 1973-74--did reach a few areas in southern Wisconsin, contrary to statements in **American Birds** 34:276 (1980); some even passed onward into Illinois. In the southeast, at least 60 wintered in extensive pine plantations in Waukesha Co. In the south-southwest, they wintered in Juneau, Sauk, and probably Dane (max. 8) Cos. and were seen on single dates, Jan. 5-Feb. 23, in Iowa, Monroe and Columbia Cos. In the northeast, flocks of 20-30 were encountered all winter in Menominee and Langlade Cos. In the north and northwest, where commonest on Christmas counts, Reds wintered in Oneida, Ashland-Bayfield, and Douglas Cos. and were seen Dec. 31 in Price Co., where not reported on Christmas counts. No further midwinter reports were received.

Green-tailed Towhee: One at the Harvey Beach feeder in Iron Co., full-plumaged or nearly so when Tessen, Peterson, and Mary Donald saw it Feb. 9, had apparently been in immature plumage when it first appeared in late November. It becomes Wisconsin's sixth record of the species; others date back to 1952 and most were winter birds. It may not be coincidental that this towhee appeared in unusual winter numbers at the fringe of its range in west Texas, with vagrants to east Texas, Louisiana (in fall), and three Nebraska feeders.

Rufous-sided Towhee: Single birds overwintered in Brown, Green, and Milwaukee Cos.

Vesper Sparrow: One identified Feb. 16 in Waukesha Co. (Tessen) had been present for some time (Spencer Stehno).

Field Sparrow: At least one, sometimes two, in Waukesha Co. through Feb. 24 (Tessen, Peterson, Spencer Stehno) and another elsewhere in the same county Jan. 19 (Bielefeldt).

White-crowned Sparrow: At least some of the birds on Madison's Christmas count were still present Feb. 9 (Thiessen) and a Kenosha Co. feeder had its usual birds--4 this year--when visited Jan. 25 (Tessen).

White-throated Sparrow: Wintered in Milwaukee (at least 17 in late January), Waukesha (4), Dane, Outagamie (1), and Jackson (1) Cos., and seen in Brown Co. until Feb. 7 (1). Farther north, one survived the winter in Marinette Co. and another was present Feb. 9 in Iron Co.

Fox Sparrow: One wintered in Waukesha Co. (Spencer Stehno et al.); another in Milwaukee Co. was not seen after Jan. 9 (Epstein).

Swamp Sparrow: At least one in Dane Co. all winter (Shea, Erickson, Tessen); at least six in Waukesha Co. during midwinter (Bielefeldt).

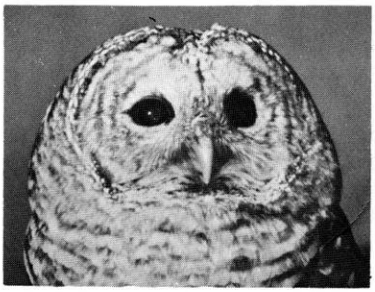
Song Sparrow: Despite mild weather in the first half of the season, only six counties (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Dane, Rock) reported midwinter birds. Two of those reports, however, involved counts of 9 or 10 individuals.

Lapland Longspur: It is not surprising that all reports except a flock of about 150 in Chippewa Co. Jan. 12 (Polk) come from early and mid February when a statewide snow cover prevailed--Feb. 3 (Hoffman) to Feb. 17 (60--Thiessen) in Columbia Co., Feb. 9-10 (450--Thiessen) in Dane Co., Feb. 16 (a few--Tessen, Hanbury) in Waukesha Co., and Feb. 17 (200--Hollister recount) in Rock Co.

Snow Bunting: Probably the general absence of snow cover accounted for a relatively poor Christmas count but later sightings under snowier conditions were also unspectacular, with only four midwinter counts of as many as 100-250 birds reported (Forest, Chippewa, Clark, and Marquette Cos.). Other midwinter observations in 23 more counties extended north to the state line in Douglas (70 on Jan. 11), Ashland (18 on Feb. 9), Vilas (35 on Jan. 4), and Marinette Cos.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Anderson, Ruth Barnett, John Bielefeldt, Mary Butterbrodt, Gary Casper, Ed Cleary & Brother Columban, Gerald DeBoer, Tom deBoor, Bob Drieslein, Eric Epstein, Laura Erickson, Jim Frank, Bonnie Gilbertson, Karen Etter Hale, Don Hanbury, Maybelle Hardy, Dorothy Harmer, Judy Haseleu, Randy Hoffman, Janelle Humphrey, Kenneth Lange, Harold Lindberg, Ken & Janice Luepke, Roy & Charlotte Lukes, Mrs. Joseph Mahlum, Mark Peterson, Bernard Pickering, Janine Polk, Sam Robbins, Albert Roy, Allen K. Shea, Martin Smith, Charles Sontag, Jim Steffen, Elmer Strehlow, Daryl Tessen, Steve Thiessen, P. Vanderschaegen, Dick Verch, Viratine Weber, Melvin Wierzbicki, Richard Williamson, Winnie Woodmansee, Thomas Ziebell.



By the Wayside...

Late Nashville Warbler in Dane County

On Dec. 2, 1979 at approximately 10:45 a.m. I was traveling north along Pheasant Branch Road when I noticed a small watercourse alongside the road. Almost immediately after stopping I noticed some small bird activity in the clump of vegetation near the watercourse. One bird in particular caught my eye. The bird was approximately 12 feet away, directly across the road from my car window, perched in some low marsh grass. I caught a glimpse of a green back and yellow underparts as it flitted in and out of the grass. As I stepped out of the car the bird flew up into a small willow approximately 15 feet away and remained there for roughly 2 minutes. The bird's head was totally gray except for a bright yellow throat and conspicuous white eye-ring. The back, wings and tail were green but there was no trace of wing-bars on the wings. The entire underparts, including the undertail coverts, were bright lemon yellow.

I could hardly believe my eyes as I realized I was observing a Nashville Warbler on the 2nd of December! Within the next 8 to 10 minutes I got several more good views of the bird, some at extremely close range.

Allen Shea,
Madison, WI

Late Long-billed Marsh Wren in Dane County

After tramping about the Brooklyn Wildlife Area for quite some time, I was working my way back to my car through a tussock sedge meadow when I noticed a bird moving about in the base of a small dogwood. A bit of spishing brought the bird up into a clear view. It was a Long-billed Marsh Wren on January 19!

The following field marks were noted: wren with white throat and underparts, brown flanks, prominent white eye-line and conspicuously striped upper back (black upper back striped with white). I observed the bird for approximately 3 minutes, as it was very reluctant to leave the dogwood.

Allen Shea,
Madison, WI

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers in Forest County

After hearing reports of "strange woodpeckers" in the Pine River Campground (Nicolet National Forest) by U.S. Forest Service personnel, I decided to investigate. On January 24, 1980 I approached the small campground from the west on Forest Road 2181. As I stopped my car at the entrance (there was 16-24 inches of snow on the campground) four birds flew across

the road in typical woodpecker fashion. Three flew off in the woods but one flew to a 12 foot-high rotted balsam fir stump that was 25 feet from my car. I moved to the passenger seat, rolled down the window and observed the bird through my 8x binoculars.

The bird was about 6 feet high on the stump with its back to me. The black back was immediately obvious as were the white tail coverts. The bird remained still for 90 seconds but then proceeded to move around the stump in a spiral manner. As it came around the stump its yellow cap and thin white eyeline came into clear sight.

The bird stopped at one point and pulled off some patches of bark. After watching the BBTT for 10 minutes, I got out of the car and approached the stump. I was within 6 feet of the stump before he stopped moving. He was still for 20-30 seconds and then flew back across the road and landed 5 feet from the top of a 40 foot black spruce. The spruce had been killed by the spruce budworm. As he flew he gave one short squeak as a vocalization. He was answered by 2 or 3 other squeaks from the surrounding woods. I watched him in two adjacent spruces for 5 minutes.

After that I decided to walk back in the woods to try to find his cohorts. As I walked through the budworm infested woods, I found 10-15 balsam and spruce trees with 3-6 inch diameter patches of bark missing. Sometimes the bark was in a pile on the snow, other times it was not noticeable. I walked for 10 minutes without seeing or hearing other BBTT. When I returned to the car the original BBTT was still in the spruce. I watched for 5 more minutes and left.

Susan Haig,
Madison, WI 53703

(Associate Editor's Note: These woodpeckers were sighted intermittently until early April. Upon Ms. Haig's notification of her sightings to the WSO additional observations by other WSO birders occurred from mid-July until at least September. The best area was bordered by Forest Roads 2182, 2183 and 2174. This area might continue productive for the following year or more.)

Book Review

Birding Areas of Iowa, Peter Peterson, editor, The Monticello Express, Mrs. Pat Layton, 1560 Linmar Dr., Cedar Rapids, IA 52404, 1979, 151 pp., $4.50 + 75¢ postage. This represents another book in the rapidly growing series that aid the birder in finding the best birding spots and specific species within a state. Iowa's contribution proves to be of above average quality. The book offers adequate coverage of the entire state, with accompanying maps for each area. Most of the maps are readable. An interesting addition to the book is the listing of Iowa's top ten birding spots. The one problem with the book is the varying quality of the articles. Some articles are less readable and detailed than others. For example, some authors do not name the species to be found in their area. Fourtunately this occurs in only a small minority of the articles. With the current inflation rate and gasoline prices, anyone considering birding in Iowa would do well to purchase a copy of this book.

Daryl Tessen

Bald Eagle-Osprey Survey Report
U.S. Forest Service, Eastern Region
1980

By Donald C. Hagar, Wildlife Biologist

This report summarizes the 1980 Bald Eagle and Osprey nesting surveys on National Forests in the Lake States of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. This is the 18th consecutive, annual survey for most forests. Surveys are accomplished with airplanes and consist of four separate flying missions. Eagle nests are observed in early April to determine nest occupancy and again in late June to early July to observe nesting success. Osprey nests are checked in May and late July.

This year 282 eagle territories were surveyed. Adult eagles were present at 192 (68%) of these at the time of the first airplane flight. Successful nests and young birds raised to fledgling stage are 136 and 235 respectively. The number of young is the greatest we have experienced to date. Success rates have remained close to a healthy 70 percent in four out of the last five years. Other statistics have changed little in recent years.

Two hundred and twenty-four osprey territories were occupied out of 308 observed. Nesting success has recovered from the 1978 slump. This parameter, along with occupied nests, number of young, and young per active nest, shows spectacular increases. Productivity rates for osprey remain lower than they should be, however.

Our Eagle-Osprey survey program has been threatened for the past three years by increasingly rigorous air operations safety requirements within the Forest Service. More stringent application of restrictions involving low-level flying resulted in a narrowing of opportunity and options for continuing the survey in 1981 and beyond. We hope for a satisfactory solution before the 1981 season.

BALD EAGLE NESTING STATUS

U.S. FOREST SERVICE, EASTERN REGION — Year 1980

FOREST AND STATE	VERIFIED NESTS 1979	VERIFIED NESTS 1980	TERRITORIES OBSERVED	OCCUPIED NESTS	SUCCESSFUL NESTS	YOUNG PRODUCED
Ottawa	71	72	44	30	21	32
Hiawatha	19	17	14	4	3	4
Huron-Manistee	13	15	10	10	5	8
MICHIGAN	103	104	68	44	29	44
Chequamegon	23	29	21	17	11	20
Nicolet	37	40	24	20	10	20
WISCONSIN	60	69	45	37	21	40
Superior	68	74	57	34	24	39
Chippewa	201	209	112	77	62	112
MINNESOTA	269	283	169	111	86	151
REGION NINE TOTALS:	432	456	282	192	136	235

OSPREY NESTING STATUS

U.S. FOREST SERVICE, EASTERN REGION

Year 1980

FOREST AND STATE	VERIFIED NESTS 1979	VERIFIED NESTS 1980	TERRITORIES OBSERVED	OCCUPIED NESTS	SUCCESSFUL NESTS	YOUNG PRODUCED
Ottawa	13	14	13	10	2	5
Hiawatha	23	24	20	11	6	10
Huron-Manistee	-	-	-	-	-	-
MICHIGAN	36	38	33	21	8	15
Chequamegon	4	3	5	3	3	6
Nicolet	24	26	27	22	8	14
WISCONSIN	28	29	32	25	11	20
Superior	38	50	55	36	30	52
Chippewa	201	188	188	142	87	175
MINNESOTA	239	238	243	178	117	227
REGION NINE TOTALS:	303	305	308	224	136	262

BALD EAGLE NESTING TRENDS

U.S. FOREST SERVICE, EASTERN REGION

YEAR	VERIFIED NESTS	TERRITORIES OBSERVED	OCCUPIED NESTS		SUCCESSFUL NESTS		YOUNG		
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Successful Nest	Per Occupied Nest
1968	323		119		66	55	98	1.9	.82
1969	344	166	129	78	72	56	109	1.5	.85
1970	294	189	124	66	64	52	107	1.7	.86
1971	327	188	128	68	77	56	115	1.5	.83
1972	356	238	167	70	97	58	155	1.6	.93
1973	382	264	171	65	99	58	163	1.6	.95
1974	381	257	170	66	89	52	119	1.3	.70
1975	398	285	176	62	117	67	192	1.6	1.09
1976	414	260	178	68	126	71	187	1.5	1.05
1977	421	265	197	75	138	70	212	1.5	1.08
1978	435	264	192	73	127	66	202	1.6	1.05
1979	432	269	188	70	132	70	222	1.7	1.18
1980	456	282	192	68	136	71	235	1.7	1.22

OSPREY NESTING TRENDS

U.S. FOREST SERVICE, EASTERN REGION

YEAR	VERIFIED NESTS	TERRITORIES OBSERVED	OCCUPIED NESTS		SUCCESSFUL NESTS		YOUNG		
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	Per Successful Nest	Per Occupied Nest
1968	152		73		21	29	27	1.3	.37
1969	183		72		28	39	55	2.0	.76
1970	157	93	84	90	42	50	74	1.8	.88
1971	140		66		34	52	55	1.6	.83
1972	205	130	111	85	59	53	97	1.6	.87
1973	226	154	127	82	21	38*	36	1.7	.65*
1974	252	140	140	100	73	52	118	1.6	.84
1975	238	157	115	73	59	51	102	1.7	.97
1976	249	154	117	76	70	60	120	1.7	1.03
1977	254	197	159	81	89	56	147	1.7	.92
1978	316	193	144	75	63	44	84	1.3	.58
1979	303	304	194	64	104	54	176	1.7	.91
1980	305	308	224	73	136	61	262	1.9	1.17

* Chippewa NF incomplete data excluded from calculations.

FOREST SERVICE - EASTERN REGION

BALD EAGLE NESTING SURVEY

PAIR TERRITORIES - 5 YEAR AVERAGE

1976 - 1980

NATIONAL FOREST	5 YEAR AVERAGE	RANGE
SUPERIOR	52	50 - 57
CHIPPEWA	105	94 - 112
CHEQUAMEGON	18	15 - 21
NICOLET	23	20 - 24
OTTAWA	43	42 - 44
HIAWATHA	16	23 - 11
HURON-MANISTEE	12	12 - 10
EASTERN REGION	268	260 - 282

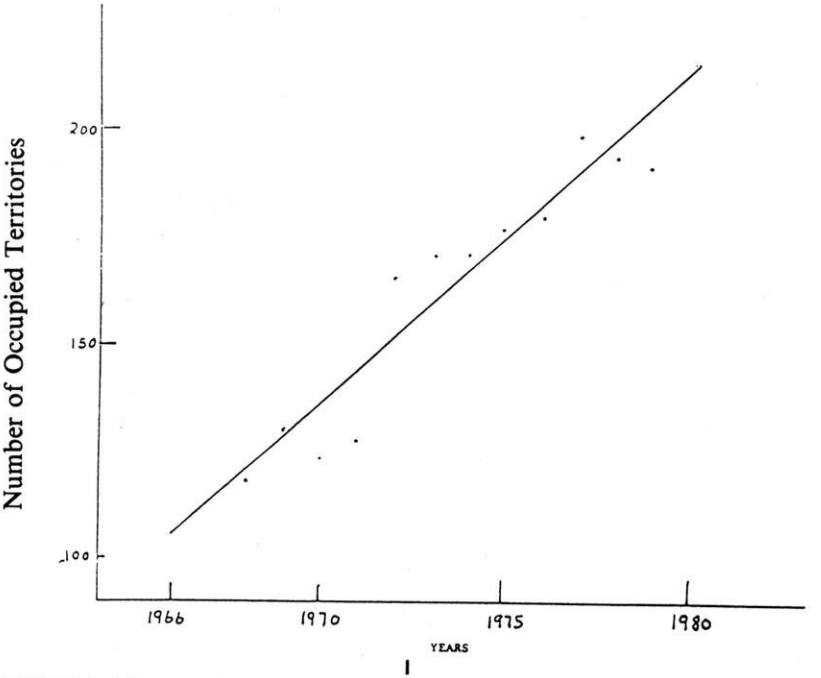
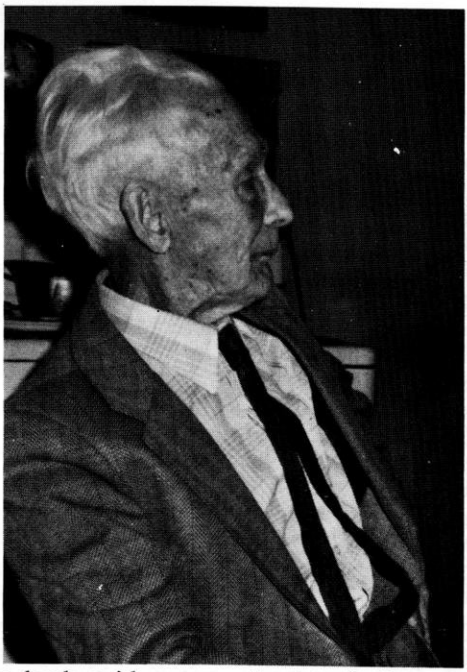


FIGURE 1: The number of known Bald Eagle territories on Lake States National Forest has increased since the early 1960's. Only some of this increase reflects true population growth. The more important cause was the discovery of "new" territories in previously unsurveyed areas.

IN MEMORIAM
Alvin Peterson



Alvin M. Peterson of Onalaska, a member of W.S.O. since 1941, died November 4, 1980 at the age of 95. The W.S.O. has lost a distinguished naturalist and conservationist.

Mr. Peterson had 10 publications in the **Passenger Pigeon** from 1943 to 1956. Some members will also remember him as a trip leader during the LaCrosse campout.

Born in Blanchardville, he retired from teaching in 1923, and moved his family to Onalaska, at the age of 38.

There, he and Mrs. Peterson supported the family as free-lance nature writers. They were both avid conservationists (before environmentalism became the word). Alvin Peterson was a prolific writer, with several books and more than 2000 articles on birds, plants and trees.

He was not only a top notch field ornithologist, but studied nature in general. His second outdoor love was plants, and as his hearing started to fail in his early seventies, he concentrated more on botany, remaining active in the field into his nineties.

In 1976 he donated his plant collection of about 1800 specimens to U.W.-LaCrosse, where it is a valuable and treasured portion of the herbarium.

Mr. Peterson is survived by his wife, Mae, a son, Robert in Citrus Heights, California; and a daughter, Mrs. Margaret Loving of Bend, Oregon.

Here at U.W.-LaCrosse we often take students on field trips to the Midway Prairie Scientific Area, which Peterson was instrumental in getting preserved. The pasque flowers and blazing stars growing there are a fitting tribute to his memory.

Howard Young

IN MEMORIAM
Ralph N. Buckstaff

Ralph N. Buckstaff died on November 12, 1980 at the age of 93. During about 60 years of that time he was a member of WASAL, having joined in 1922. In 1954 he became a Patron member, and he also was elected President for the year 1954-55. He served on the Council many years and was an Honorary Life member almost two decades.

Although he was a businessman (retired President of the Buckstaff Furniture Co. of Oshkosh) his primary avocation was in scientific research, astronomy, meteorology and entomology. In his message to Academy members in the summer of 1954, he pointed out the organization's traditional history of support for scientific inquiry in Wisconsin. He kept the official daily weather records for Oshkosh 56 years and received special honors from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce on his 40 and 50 year anniversaries of service to the Weather Bureau. About 60 years ago he began building a private astronomical observatory in Oshkosh which recently has been placed on the National Register of Historic Sites. In 1965 he deeded this property to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and they eventually named their new planetarium building in his honor.

Over the years Buckstaff collected 278 meteorites and more than 4,000 insects which he gave to the Oshkosh Public Museum. He served over 50 years on their Board of Directors. He was a charter member of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science for over 50 years. In addition, he was a veteran member and leader of several groups, the Milwaukee Astronomical Society, National Astronomical League and American Association of Variable Star Observers. When President, he contributed two important articles to the **Wisconsin Academy Review,** "A Snowstorm on Mars," and "A Businessman Looks at Nature," which was the subject of his Presidential Address at WASAL's 85th Annual Meeting. He also wrote an article on "Meteorites" for an issue of the **Wisconsin Academy Review** in 1962.

Ralph Noyes Buckstaff was the epitome of a scientific citizen and worked to communicate his interests to students of all ages--giving generously of his time and talents. His wife, Annie Laurie, has been a member of the Academy for about thirty years.

Walter Scott

Letters to the Editor

Dear Dr. Kemper:
I am an August Derleth collector. Besides his books, I also collect newspaper and magazine articles about and by him. Last week in going through material at the Historical Society in Madison, I found that Derleth had written a "column" for the **Passenger Pigeon** from October 1945 to the Fall of 1953. This was a new discovery for me. How I am anxious to get either copies of the magazine for that period or obtain copies of his articles.

Do you suppose there might be any current members of the Society who might be willing to sell me their 1945-1953 copies or if not that loan them to me so that I can make photo-copies? Could you suggest any way that I might publicize my interest and "need". I certainly would appreciate any help or suggestion you might give me.

By the way, my wife and I do enjoy the **Passenger Pigeon**. We are rank amateurs in bird identification, but we are learning.

Bill Dutch
R.R. 1, Lyndon Station, WI 53944

Dear Dr. Kemper,

I don't wish to add unnecessarily to the task confronting the already overburdened seasonal editors, but in the interest of keeping the record reasonably straight and credible, must comment on several items. The following sightings attributed to me in the Autumn Field Notes section of the Fall 1980 issue of the **Passenger Pigeon** were incorrect.

1) **Coopers Hawk** — **Passenger Pigeon** stated reported high of 13 birds in Monroe Co. Oct. 12. Correct high for Coopers was of 5 birds Sept. 21.

2) **Black Tern** — Nov. 25(!) no such record in my notes. I seldom see BT's after early Sept. By Nov., I don't even fantasize about them. (Typo. error?)

3) **Field Sparrow** — Nov. 25 - Not by me.

Other material exceerpted from my fall report was correct as printed.

Eric Epstein

Dear Dr. Kemper:

I am trying to find the unpublished journals and notes belonging to Philo Romayne Hoy, a prominent 19th century Wisconsin naturalist. In a 1940's article in the **Passenger Pigeon** by A.W. Schorger, it was stated that some of these journals were in the Milwaukee Public Museum, but I cannot locate them there. Could you please put an information wanted notice in a future issue of the **Passenger Pigeon** for this information. Thank you for your help.

Donald Mikulic
Illinois State Geological Survey
Natural Resources Building
Champaign, IL 61820

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