

NEWS AND NOTES: The end of another year in Maine. We are now sliding into full winter conditions. The Christmas bird count rush is over, many of our reporters are either headed south or relaxing. The weather during the reporting period started out looking wintry with a snowy Thanksgiving but then turned warm and dry which resulted in a number of lingering fall migrants being found for various bird counts in late Dec. It has since turned into a typical Maine winter with cold and snow. Almost identical to the winter of 2011-12 for those of you who keep track. Actually the cold isn't a fraction of what it could be. In Dec. 1977 and Jan. 1978 we had 21 days in a row with the high temperatures only in single numbers. In the winter of 1922-23 it was so cold that the ocean was frozen over all along the coast for a distance of 4-5 miles offshore.

Much life has gone dormant, hibernating, under leaf litter, underground, under the ice on ponds, or migrated south. Except for birds. Many of our year-round residents and northern species are showing up and making it more interesting out-of-doors activities.

As will be seen, there is another influx of Snowy Owls this winter. It was reported that they had a good breeding season with good survival in Arctic regions.

There are no "missing members" to report in this issue.

*****We are out of auto decals*****. It was hoped to have new ones before this issue but prices are a bit higher than expected. We are still looking at various vendors. Hopefully we can get a new one to all members before summer.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RENEWALS: If it is time to renew it will say so beside your name on the address label. Dues are for membership in the Sorrento Scientific Society of which the *Guillemot* is the official newsletter. Do not worry about membership obligations as we have not yet held a meeting, incorporated, elected officers, written by-laws or formed any committees. The *Guillemot* is defined as "an amateur, bimonthly newsletter concerning natural history in Maine."

We have two memberships, **Regular** which is \$5 per year and **Sustaining** which is any amount over the regular. It is the latter that allows us to have the newsletter printed and mailed as first class mail. Each issue costs about \$550 to produce and mail. We do not advertise the newsletter except by word-of-mouth, or via gift subscriptions. There have been occasional news articles about us that have also helped. A sample copy will be sent to anyone if you send along their name and address. The mailing list is never given out or used for any other purposes. Auto decals: see above!

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ASTRONOMY: **Mercury** will have passed in front of the sun by the time you read this. As it swings out around the right side it will appear as a dim morning "star" low in the east before sunrise through Feb. and into the first week of March.

Venus has finally appeared as an evening "star" in the west after sunset. It should be visible a bit higher in the sky each night as it follows the sun to the western horizon. It will be bright and visible until June. In July it will rapidly sink into the sunset and be gone by the warm summer nights in August.

Here on **Earth** we are speeding along at 66,900 miles per hour toward Spring Equinox on March 20th. We are also headed, along with the sun and all the other planets toward the constellation Hercules at 43,700 mph at the same time...in case you were wondering.

Mars is falling farther and farther behind us setting in the west at 8 p.m. right through April when it will start to be lost in the sunset and disappear in June.

Jupiter is directly outward from us and is the bright object in the east at sunset. It shines brightly high in the south at midnight all through February.

Saturn is quite a distance ahead of us in orbit but we are slowly catching up. It rises in the east at 2:20 a.m. on Feb. 1 and 12:20 a.m. on March 1.

We are pulling ahead of distant **Uranus** and it sets in the west about 10:30 p.m. on Feb. 1 and 8:30 on March 1 while **Neptune** is far behind us and sets in the west at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 1 and will be lost in the glare of sunset the first week of March. Both planets are visible but you would need optics to pick them out among the background stars.

Meteors. There are no major meteor showers from now through March. There are always sporadic fireballs and meteors every night so one should always keep looking. I was trying to photograph **Comet Lovejoy** on 1/9 and saw two bright meteors shoot past Orion. The comet is high overhead passing to the right of Orion but is a faint blue fuzzy spot that was difficult to see. It is rapidly pulling away from earth but will be back in the year 2550 A.D. On 12/29 a bright fireball made the news and was apparently seen over much of New England although no reports were received from eastern Maine.

Some dates: 1/25 the moon is only 0.59 deg. from Uranus this evening. (The width of your little finger held at arm's length is 1 degree). On 2/1 Venus is less than 1 deg. from Neptune at sunset. 2/3 is the full moon, 2/6 finds Jupiter highest in the sky all night, 2/14 is World Whale Day while 2/15 is World Hippopotamus Day, 2/19 the Moon is perigee (closest) to earth. On 2/21 the Moon, Venus, and Mars will be within a 2 deg. circle at sunset. The next night 2/22 Venus will be less than a degree from Mars in the evening sky. 2/23 is New Year's Day on the old Aztec calendar. On 3/8 we set our clocks forward 1 hour. 3/20 is the new Moon and a total eclipse of the sun if you are at the North Pole! Spring Equinox is at 6 p.m. tonight. 3/21 is the Hindi New Year and is their year 5115.

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WEATHER: The ground was covered with snow through Thanksgiving but that stretch of wintery weather moderated through Dec. just in time for the annual bird counts. As this is written the second week of January we are in a period of cold and a series of regular small snow storms more typical of a Maine winter. In the chart that follows the figure in parenthesis indicates how many degrees the 2014 temperature was above or below last years. All figures in degrees F. or inches

	Augusta	Bangor	Bar Harbor	Caribou	Portland	Frenchville	Kittery	Earth
Nov temp	36	34	36	30	39	27	39	
Dec temp	29	29	32	23	34	19	34	
Nov precip	2.34	3.07	3.66	3.32	3.96	1.40	3.01	
Dec precip	4.48	5.23	7.93	6.01	6.27	2.48	5.49	
Year 2014 temp	45 (-1)	45 (0)	45 (0)	41 (0)	47 (0)	38 (-1)	48 (-1)	(+1.4)
2014 precip	43.00	43.59	49.44	46.37	56.19	34.59	38.28	

One can see the difference between coastal and northern parts of the state. Frenchville is 194 miles due north of Bar Harbor as an example of an inland versus coastal climate. So many storms pass either along the coast or up the St. Lawrence Valley which produces some of the wide variation in rainfall between stations.

	Buoy 007 (12 mi. out of Portland)	Buoy 005 (79 mi SE of Portland)	Buoy 44034 (16 mi SW Schoodic Pt.)	Buoy 027 (15 mi S of Jonesport)	Buoy 024 (178 mi S of Schoodic Pt.)	Tide station ATGM1 Bar Harbor harbor
11/30/14	48	50	50	50	51	45
12/31/14	43	48	46	47	46	40

There is a camera on buoy 007 that can be viewed at: www.ndbc.noaa.gov/cams.shtml that takes pictures once an hour during daylight.

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INVERTEBRATES: There were a number of unidentified **moths** around lights the first two weeks of Nov. but after the snow and cold at Thanksgiving they disappeared. There were a few cold and nearly frozen **Garden Slugs** found under leaf litter right through Christmas and a careful search would undoubtedly find a number of winter adapted inert insects if one looked at any time in the winter. The snow cover acts to protect a number of wintering insects.

FISH: A number of gulls, eagles and cormorants were feeding on fish at the mouth of the Union river in Ellsworth 12/20. The fish were most likely **Tommy Cod** (*Microgadus tomcod*) which spawn in brackish water, often times under the ice, at this time of year.

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AMPHIBIANS: On 11/12 a **Red Eft** was found in Ellsworth (DR). On 12/14 an unidentified salamander was found in a rather

moribund state under some leaf litter in Bar Harbor.

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REPTILES: None reported.

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MAMMALS: A number of our resident mammals were generally reported. **Deer, Red Fox, and Coyote** were mentioned many times. **Raccoons** were raiding feeders through Nov. but they sort of “semi-hibernate” and reports dropped off with the onset of cold weather right after Christmas.

A few rodents were noted. A **Beaver** was active out on Long Island in Casco Bay on 11/30. **Porcupines** were seen at Calais, and on Penobscot Mt. in Acadia NP, the latter on 1/2 (CMu).

The latest **Chipmunk** to be noted was one at Owls Head on 11/16 (JW). A **Muskrat** was DOR (dead on road) at Ellsworth 1/3. **Gray Squirrels** were generally noted and an **Eastern Fox Squirrel** was seen at Sorrento 11/21 (CWC). **Red Squirrels** were out and about on the warmer days. A night-vision game camera has been watching a **Flying Squirrel** raiding the editor’s feeder in Bar Harbor. It particularly likes the suet feeder.

White-tailed Deer were very well reported from all across the state for the past two months.

Up to 20 **Harbor Seals** were being seen at Sorrento on 11/20 but only one was still there on 12/28 (CWC). A **Northern Gray Seal** was at Bath on 11/20. A trip to Seal Island NWR on 1/14 to set up the seal camera found 250 Gray Seal pups. A tagged seal from Sable Island in Nova Scotia was found on the island also. The camera should be on any day now and the web address is: <http://explore.org/live-cams/player/seal-pups-cam>

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BIRDS: There were a number of lingering species as will be seen with some of the Christmas Count results. A few western birds were found during the past couple of months. Varied Thrush, Townsend’s Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, and Western Grebe will be noted in the following accounts.

Only about half of the Christmas counts have been submitted as this is being written. High numbers and unusual species will be noted for the ones that we have so far.

It was interesting to get an email from Sanford requesting that the use of the term “Sanford Sewer

Ponds”, a well-known birding area, be changed to “Sanford lagoons”.

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS: A **Tundra Swan** was found off Stockton Springs on 11/12. It was seen again on 11/13 but subsequent searches after that day did not find it again.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen and photographed at Lyman on 11/8. On 11/14 others were found at North Yarmouth and Westbrook. The Yarmouth bird was seen until 11/23 and the Westbrook bird was still there on 1/3.

On 12/20 a **Pink-footed Goose** was at Damariscotta Mills and was still being found on 12/27.

Snow Geese were at Westbrook in Nov. and four stopped by Fryeburg on 12/2. **Canada Geese** were noted at many locations with some high numbers in Nov. On 11/20 an estimated 10,000 were at Arnold Brook in Presque Isle (BS). On 11/23 there were 841 counted at Yarmouth. Included in that group was a leucistic (semi-albino) individual.

A **Wood Duck** was listed on the York CBC 12/15 and another was seen at the dam in Skowhegan 1/2.

Green-winged Teal were at South Portland as late as 12/21 and a pair along with a single **Eurasian Teal** were in the Machias River 12/29 (NF).

Black Ducks, Mallards, and their hybrids were noted on almost all bird counts in Dec. There were 2070 **Mallards** tallied on the Portland CBC.

Some birders are using the term “winter of the Pintail” in their reports. **Pintails** were found from Portland east to Machias and numbered from 4 to 42 birds. They have been around all winter so far. It is usual to see only 1 or 2 birds at a couple of places at this time of year.

The only **Blue-winged Teal** was a bird at Deering Oaks in Portland on 11/15.

A pair of **Northern Shovelers** were at Portland 11/11-16, others at Rockport 12/2 and Grondin Pond in Scarborough 12/4. Grondin is an old used up gravel quarry operated by the Grondin Co. that was landscaped and filled with water some years ago.

Gadwall were in the Machias River 12/29, Grondin 1/1 and at Bass Harbor on MDI 1/2 (RM). Grondin Pond was also the site of a **Eurasian**

Wigeon 11/29 to at least 1/1. It was associating with **American Wigeon**. The latter were also seen at Machias and Bass Harbor. Two **Redheads** were at Sabattus Pond on 11/15.

A few **Ring-necked Ducks** are still being seen at several locations as of 1/2. **Greater Scaup** were fairly common on Nov. with 200 counted at Sabattus on 11/25. There were 100 **Lesser Scaup** at the same location at the same time. Five were at Portland on 1/7.

Common Eiders were noted all along the coast. Over 800 are in upper Frenchman Bay at Sorrento as of 1/7 (CWC). Three male **King Eiders** have been seen. One was at the Cliff House in Ogunquit on 12/12 and was still there as of 1/2. An immature male was off Pemaquid Pt. on 12/18 for that day only. On 12/19 another adult male was at Blue Hill Falls (TB) and was there through at least 12/21.

Harlequin Ducks were along the coast and most concentrated at Schoodic and south of Cape Elizabeth. A female was inland at Unity Pond 11/14. Forty-one were on the Portland CBC and 95 on the York County count.

Long-tailed Ducks were noted all along the coast the past two months. Numbers seem to be a bit lower than usual by a little bit.

Black Scoters were also quite common with some high numbers being 1704 on the Portland count and 643 on the York count. Smaller numbers of **Surf Scoters** were noted. There were 31 at Harpswell on 11/20 and 72 at Sorrento 12/16. **White-winged Scoter** numbers continue to decline. Reports came from opposite ends of the coast with 17 at West Quoddy SP on 12/13 (MAA) and 65 at the Isle of Shoals CBC on 1/3 with a few in the Schoodic Pt. to Mt. Desert area in between those dates.

Common Goldeneyes were noted widely in Nov. and Dec. while **Barrow's Goldeneyes** first appeared at Damariscotta on 11/13 and were around in small numbers on most coastal rivers with open water.

Buffleheads have been around since Oct. on both open fresh water ponds and coastal areas.

Small numbers of **Hooded Mergansers** remained on open water areas through Dec. Up to 385 **Common Mergansers** were on Sabattus Pond while it was open and on 1/1 there were 52 on the river at Warren. **Red-breasted Mergansers** were

in moderate numbers on most coastal Christmas counts.

Ruddy Ducks, sometimes numbering over 600 were at Sabattus, Chickawaukie Lake in Rockland, and Grondin Pond until freeze up.

GALLIFORMES: A **Chukar**, most likely a released bird was at Brunswick 12/4.

Spruce Grouse were seen at Sorrento (CWC) and Greenville. **Ruffed Grouse** were not as commonly reported but with snowless ground cover they blended in and were not as noticeable.

We don't usually list **Wild Turkey** but some of the Christmas counts tallied over 300 birds.

LOONS: **Red-throated Loons** were seen at many coastal spots. The Bath CBC on 12/20 counted 41. Single **Pacific Loons** were found. One at Biddeford Pool was there from 11/16 to 12/15. On 3/2 there were single birds seen at Kittery, Ogunquit, and Hadley Pt. in Bar Harbor.

Common Loons were...common. The Portland CBC noted 332 of them.

GREBES: The latest date for a **Pied-billed Grebe** was 11/16 for a bird at Chickawaukie Lake in Rockland.

Horned Grebes were all along the coast and two were on Lake Auburn 11/25-12/12. **Red-necked Grebes** were also commonly seen along coastal areas. A **Western Grebe** was off Harpswell on 12/26 and seen again just north of there on 12/29.

GANNETS: Sightings of less than 10 birds off Schoodic Pt. in Nov., Monhegan in Dec. and the Isles of Shoals CBC had three on 1/3.

CORMORANTS: There were a few **Great Cormorants** seen the length of the coast through Dec. with highest numbers in easternmost waters. Several people noted them sitting on Sail Rock off Quoddy Head which is the easternmost point of the continental U.S.

To see a **Double-crested Cormorant** in the winter 30 years ago would have met with great skepticism but now we have a few lingering birds right into late Dec. and several birds counts noted one or two.

HERONS: A single **American Bittern** at the Owls Head airport on 11/14 was the only one reported. **Great Blue Herons** were fairly common through the warm days until Christmas but numbers dropped rapidly as coastal streams started freezing over. A few single birds are hanging on here and there as of 1/2.

On 11/16 a **Cattle Egret** was seen at West Poland and on 11/17 one was photographed at Winslow some 53 miles farther northeast.

VULTURES: Rare in winter, a **Black Vulture** was spotted at Falmouth on 12/18. Lingered **Turkey Vultures** were at Milbridge 11/29 (CMu) and Tenants Harbor 1/7.

EAGLES, HAWKS: **Bald Eagles** were widely reported. Some count numbers were 30 on the Bath CBC and 24 on the Mount Desert I. count. There were 24 at the Gray Seal pupping grounds on Seal Island on 1/14 (fide ZK).

Late migrating **Harriers** were seen from Scarboro Marsh east to Mt. Desert and north to St. Agatha in Nov. and Dec.

Sharp-shinned Hawks were often seen hanging around bird feeders through Nov. and one was still up north on the Caribou bird count on 12/14. **Cooper's Hawks** were generally reported throughout the entire reporting period. **Goshawks** were in Sorrento on 11/7 (CWC) and New Sweden on 1/4.

Red-shouldered Hawks that are usually quite uncommon in winter were seen at Freeport on 11/11, York 12/15, Scarboro Marsh 12/20 and on the Biddeford count on 12/27.

Unusually late were seven **Broad-winged Hawks** reported from Scarboro Marsh on 11/23.

There were very high numbers of **Red-tailed Hawks** seen during the Christmas count period. Helped out by bare ground and visible prey there were 52 on the Portland count, 25 on the York, and 28 on the Biddeford count. From one to two **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen from Lubec to Ogunquit during the Nov. - Dec. reporting period.

On 12/1 a **Golden Eagle** was seen at Morse Mt. in Phippsburg.

The latest date for a **Kestrel** seems to be for one at Rockland on 12/5. **Merlin** were seen at Schoodic Pt. 11/13 (SB) and South Portland 11/30.

A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen flying in off the ocean at Schoodic Pt. carrying a Blue Jay and another with unidentified prey on 11/11 and 11/13. One was after crows on North Haven I. 11/15. Others were seen at Bangor, Lewiston, and Rockland with pigeons being the most common prey.

A gray **Gyr Falcon** was at the Lubec bar on 12/27 and on 13/13 a dark phased one was found at Kennebunk. Photos indicated that it may have been the same bird seen in Massachusetts a few days earlier.

COOTS: Lake Chickawaukie hosted 142 **American Coots** until it froze over in mid Dec. Others were seen at Sabattus Lake, one at Rockport Harbor, and 54 at Prouts Pond in Scarboro on 11/20.

CRANES: A migrating flock of 24 **Sandhill Cranes** were seen at Norridgewock on 11/27. The same flock was at Hampton, NH later that day, Newburyport, RI at 8 a.m. on 11/28 and had reached New Haven, CT at 2 p.m. the same day. On 11/29 they were seen flying over Philadelphia.

SHOREBIRDS: A few species lingered through the end of the year. **Semipalmated Plover** were at Harpswell and Popham Beach on 11/14-15. A late **Killdeer** was found at Ogunquit on 1/10.

Greater Yellowlegs were east at Trescott 11/13 (FH) and several were at Weskeag Marsh in S. Thomaston on 11/17. A single **Lesser Yellowlegs** remained at Scarboro Marsh until 11/11.

Ruddy Turnstones were still at Biddeford Pool until 11/19 and Sanderlings were found for the York bird count on 12/15.

The last **White-rumped Sandpipers** were down east at Harrington until 11/22 (MAA). Two **Pectoral Sandpipers** were seen at Scarboro Marsh on 11/11. Our winter resident **Purple Sandpipers** were increasing in numbers in mid Nov. and were noted on most coastal bird counts in Dec.

Dunlin were seen right through Dec. with 11 counted on the Brunswick CBC on 1/3. A lingering **Stilt Sandpiper** at Blue Hill 12/14-15 was unusually late (CMo).

Three **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Lake Cobboosecontee in Winthrop on 11/16 must have been the tail end of fall migration for this species. A **Wilson's Snipe** was at the same location the same day and another was seen on Monhegan I. on 1/3.

Also quite late was a single **Red Phalarope** at Bailey I. on 12/12.

GULLS: Two **Laughing Gulls** on the Mt. Desert CBC in 12/20 were unusually late. An adult **Little Gull** was at Eastport on 11/18. On the same day at Eastport there were 100s of **Bonaparte's Gulls**. A few "Bonies" were seen along the coast and on several of the bird counts.

On 11/19 a **Black-headed Gull** was feeding with Bonaparte's in the Old Sow whirlpool off Eastport.

Ring-billed Gulls were present almost everywhere with some eating apples along with robins and others seen after earthworms in fields. **Herring Gulls** were north at Caribou for their count on 12/14 (BS). A banded bird seen at the seawall

section of Acadia NP on 1/6 had been banded on Great Duck Island in 2009 (CW).

Iceland Gulls in almost all plumages were at Eastport, Portland, Owls Head, Bath, Caribou, Southwest Harbor, Prospect Harbor, Lewiston, and Bangor. No more than two birds at any one site.

A few **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were around with one at Cobscook Point on 11/16, another on Vinalhaven I. 12/6, Popham Beach 12/16, and one at the Unity compost site 12/21.

Glaucous Gulls were at Owls Head 11/30-12/5, and an immature at the Bath landfill on 1/2. A **Nelson's Gull** (Glaucous x Herring hybrid) was the Bath boat ramp 1/2.

Although there were 400 **Great Black-backed Gulls** at Cape Elizabeth 11/30 and 37 were tallied for the Caribou CBC 12/14 most bird count totals indicated that numbers are much lower than usual.

Kittiwakes were at Eastport on 11/18, seen from the North Haven ferry 12/31, and on the Isles of Shoals CBC 1/3.

ALCIDS: The first **Dovekies** were seen off Cape Neddick 12/20. As of 1/10 none have been reported north of Port Clyde.

On 12/23 a **Thick-billed Murre** was seen up in the ~~Skullings~~ River at Lamoine. A rare river sighting, the bird was probably after schools of spawning Tommy Cod (RM). **Razorbills** were much more common however ranging all along the coast with 40+ at Quoddy SP 12/13, off Monhegan, Phippsburg, North Haven, Ogunquit, and with 117 listed on the York CBC.

Black Guillemots were present up and down the length of the coast through Nov. and Dec.

DOVES: The Bangor CBC list 686 **Mourning Doves**.

OWLS: Five **Great Horned Owls** were seen on the Biddeford CBC. Great Horned start actively courting in Feb. so expect to start hearing them anytime now.

There seems to be a repeat of last year's **Snowy Owl** invasion. Not as many but there were 43 reports from Frenchville to Kittery. Birds were being seen regularly at some of the places they occurred last year, airports at Bangor, Portland, also at Biddeford and Acadia NP to name a few.

A few **Barred Owls** were here and there during Dec. They will also become more vocal in the coming months.

A **Short-eared Owl** was at Bath on 11/14. **Saw-whet Owls** were on the Biddeford and Brunswick bird counts. While night sky photos were being

taken on 1/9 one fluttered overhead at the Anemone Cave section of Acadia NP.

KINGFISHERS: With open flowing streams and tidal areas there a few more than usual lingering into Dec. Several bird counts recorded them. After the cold and freeze-up of early Jan. it remains to be seen how many survive until the next issue.

WOODPECKERS: The only **Red-headed Woodpecker** noted so far was the one on the Dover-Foxcroft CBC 12/30 (CMD). **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** are as widespread as ever with birds from Farmington, east to Trescott (FH) and many locations along the coast.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Saco on 12/22 and Evergreen Cemetery in Portland 1/7.

Both **Downy** and **Hairy Woodpeckers** were at feeders across the state. Territorial behavior was being noted the second week of Jan.

A **Black-backed Woodpecker** was observed at the Ingersoll Preserve in South Addison on 11/9 (MAA).

Flickers were seen at several locations in Nov. with one at Bremen on 12/1 being the last to be noted. **Pileated Woodpeckers** were seen at Trescott, Owls Head (JW), Sorrento, and Bar Harbor. Several were listed on Christmas Counts after 12/14.

FLYCATCHERS: It seems unusual to have this family listed in an early winter summary of birds but it is becoming more common each year.

A **Western Kingbird** was seen in with a flock of Robins at Seal Harbor on Mt. Desert I. 11/16 for that day only. **Eastern Phoebe**s were at Harpswell 11/14, Essex Woods in Bangor 11/15 and on the grounds of the Cliff House in Ogunquit 12/23.

SHRIKES: The first **Northern Shrikes** started being seen in Oct. but as the season progressed the numbers now appear to be lower than usual. A few were on the bird counts but there have been few individual reports as of 12/31. Remember that as this is being written (it is now 1/15) not all Christmas counts have been submitted to Audubon.

CORVIDS: Ten **Gray Jays** were seen during at birding trip at Seboomook (a wild land township formerly known as Northwest Carry, part of the Pittston Academy Grant in Somerset County) on 11/25. Three were counted on the Misery TWP bird count on 1/2.

Blue Jays were commonly reported feeder and Christmas count birds all through Nov. and Dec.

Crows were also commonly reported. On 11/13 there were 19 seen flying in off the ocean at

Schoodic Pt. (SB). The Waterville CBC recorded an amazing total of 9627 crows and the Bangor count reported 1240 of them.

Ravens were reported from across the state but with little comment or simply listed on the bird count totals.

LARKS: Bare ground favored some fairly large flocks of **Horned Larks** that were being seen in Nov. On 11/11 there were 102 at Gorham and 30 at Popham. Over 100 were at Dresden on 11/19 and another 100 or so at Gray on 11/23. Numbers dropped rapidly after that. Five at Fryeburg on 1/6 are the latest to date.

SWALLOWS: This is another family that only recently started being reported this late in the year. The first record I can come across is a single bird seen at Grand Manan I. in Nov. 2000. Sightings prior to that year were looked at with some skepticism. This year there were two **Tree Swallows** at Phippsburg on 11/16, one at Cape Elizabeth 12/1 and two were listed on the Biddeford CBC 12/27.

TITS: **Black-capped Chickadees**, being resident and common feeder birds were regularly mentioned in reports. Some of the bird counts had high numbers, 791 at Bangor, 153 at Biddeford, 733 at Waterville for example. **Boreal Chickadees** were at Morse Mt. in Phippsburg (considered rare at that location) on 12/1 and one was on the Machias CBC on 12/27.

There were some high counts of **Tufted Titmice** with 196 at Biddeford, 142 on the York count, 66 at Lewiston-Auburn (SD), and 65 north at New Sweden. Like the chickadees they were fairly common at feeders across the state.

NUTHATCHES: **White-breasted Nuthatches** have been increasing in numbers for several years now. Regularly reported as feeder birds they seem to be increasing mostly in urban settings. The York count had 158 and Portland had 130 for example.

Red-breasted Nuthatches are holding in numbers after a decrease eight years ago. Reports were spread across the state both as feeder and CBC birds.

CREEPERS: **Brown Creepers** seen to be overlooked quite often. Usually they are reported only generally as being seen on various birding trips. The 12/14 Portland CBC listed 13 which is a high number for any list.

WRENS: Only two species made it into this issue. **Carolina Wrens** were noted as feeder birds from Bar Harbor, Bangor, and Waterville (MG)

south to Kittery with most reports from the southern areas. The York count had 18 of them.

Single Winter Wrens were holding out at South Portland 11/14, Kittery 11/25, and Saco 12/22.

KINGLETS: The last of the **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were seen along the Saco river walk on 11/14, Rockland on 11/16. One was at a suet feeder in Rockport 11/30. In Dec. there was one at Mercy Pond in Portland on 12/12.

Golden-crowned Kinglets are residents with some moving south and a few remaining through the winter. They were widely reported all across the state right through the end of the year.

GNATCATCHER: A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** seen on the river walk at Saco on 11/20 was the latest date noted for this species.

THRUSHES: **Eastern Bluebirds** are regularly seen throughout the winter albeit in small numbers. How many remain depend somewhat on apples and other tree fruits that are still available. Small flocks of from 4 to 8 birds were seen at a number of locations through Nov. In Dec. there were bluebirds at Brunswick, Damariscotta (DKH), Dresden, Kennebunk. On 12/14 the Portland CBC listed 77 and the next day the York CBC had 131. There were no sightings east of the Penobscot River as near as can be determined.

On 11/16 a **Mountain Bluebird** was seen and photographed in the Penobscot Valley at Lincoln. This would be the second record of this western species in Maine (BS).

Another western bird that arrived in Maine was a **Townsend's Solitaire**. First seen on 11/22 at Florida Lake in Freeport it was seen by many birders and was there for exactly a month being last reported on 12/22.

Our only summer thrush that regularly attempts to winter over is the **Hermit Thrush**. Individuals were reported for 20 locations through Nov. and into Dec. Fifteen were tallied on the Portland CBC. Some were still surviving at Brunswick, Bangor, and out on Monhegan I. as of 1/8.

With the bare ground and abundant tree fruits there were many **Robins** present right into the new year. Some counts were 1537 on the York CBC. 100 at Falmouth on 12/21 and 75+ in crab apple trees on the AMHI (Augusta Mental Health Institute) grounds 1/7.

MIMICS: There are usually a few **Gray Catbirds** that linger into early winter; some occasionally winter over successfully. So far this winter we have catbirds seen at South Portland

11/14, Pemaquid Light 11/22, Saco 12/29 and Monhegan I. 1/3.

Mockingbirds are resident in small numbers in southernmost parts of the state. One was at Newcastle 12/14, and one on Star Island at the Isles of Shoals 3/3.

A **Brown Thrasher** at Portland was first reported on 12/14 and was still being seen on 1/3.

STARLINGS: Small flocks of wintering **Starlings** were reported from almost all parts of Maine through Nov. and Dec.

PIPITS: Most **American Pipits** dropped out of the state back in Oct. with some flocks of 75 or more seen at several locations the last day of that month. A single bird at Scarboro Marsh on 11/23 was the last date noted.

WAXWINGS: Very few **Bohemian Waxwings** had arrived as of the end of the year. Ten were seen at Jay 11/29 and another ten were listed on the Thomaston-Rockland CBC on 12/20.

Cedar Waxwings were here-and-there through late Nov. into Dec. There were not as many as expected considering the amount of food available. The largest flock was nearly 100 in the trees at AMHI in Augusta 1/7.

WARBLERS: The final stragglers of the fall migrants trickled out of Maine with some lingering just long enough to be listed on various Christmas counts.

A very late **Tennessee Warbler** was seen in Belfast on 12/4. **Orange-crowned Warblers**, one of the few that have wintered over in past years were at South Portland and Saco on 11/14 and one was hanging around the harbor at Rockland on 12/7.

Yellow-rumped Warblers regularly winter over in protected habitat especially in Bayberry thickets along the coast. Apparently they are able to feed on the small waxy berries with shelter from the wind and rain being a major factor in their survival. A small number were seen from Schoodic Pt. to Harpswell and the Isles of Shoals.

Pine Warblers were at Prospect Harbor 11/16 (RB), and Camden 11/20.

A late *western form* of the **Palm Warbler** was seen at Brunswick 11/13.

There were a couple of late **Blackpoll Warblers**; one at Saco 11/14 and another at Crescent Beach SP in Cape Elizabeth on 11/18 were the tail end of the migration.

An immature female **Redstart** that was found in Saco on 11/19 remained through the Biddeford CBC and was seen on 12/27.

The last two **Yellowthroats** were birds at Cape Elizabeth on 11/14 and another at Sorrento 11/16 (CWC). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was around the Pemaquid lighthouse 11/22-23. Another was seen at Waterville on 12/8. A bird at Lincolnville 12/25 was still there as of 1/2.

TANAGERS: Our summer resident tanagers, the **Scarlet**, usually leave quite early while the more western species are much more likely to appear in Maine in winter and very early spring. This year was no exception with a **Summer Tanager** seen and photographed at Kennebunk on 12/11. On 12/22 a **Western Tanager** was found, also in Kennebunk. Seen by many birders it remained through the Christmas count period and was still being seen on 1/3.

SPARROWS: This family had the most species to figure in reports the past two months.

A single **Eastern Towhee** at Newcastle on 12/24 was the only one reported.

Tree Sparrows started showing up the last week of Oct. and were widely reported regularly thereafter.

Chipping Sparrows, like so many others, tended to linger fairly late due to the open ground. They were quite common through Nov. but numbers did drop rapidly and reports ceased by mid Dec.

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at Seal Harbor on Mt. Desert I. 11/17. Another came to a feeder in Eastport 12/6 and one was found for the Rockland CBC on 12/20.

A **Field Sparrow** was on Peaks Island in Casco Bay on 12/2, the Portland CBC had one listed, and one at Cape Elizabeth was present for over a month 11/14-12/21.

A **Lark Sparrow** was located at Manset on the west side of Mt. Desert I. 11/15 (CK) and was there until 11/17. One at Cape Elizabeth was there for the bird count and was around from 12/14 to 12/21.

Savannah Sparrows are so common during the fall but rarely winter over. One was at Ellsworth 12/11 (CW) and three on the York CBC.

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was seen and photographed on Biddeford on 11/29.

Fox Sparrows moved through in fair numbers during most of Nov. One was at Bremen on 12/9 and a very late bird showed up at a feeder in Bar Harbor on 3/4 (WT).

Song Sparrows regularly winter over and quite a few are still around in the new year. The Portland CBC had 109 on 12/14 and the York count listed a

total of 103 on 12/15. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Harpswell on 12/4 was the only one noted so far.

Swamp Sparrows hung out at Kittery until 11/25, six were on the Portland CBC 12/14 and three were seen at Cape Elizabeth 12/21.

White-throated Sparrows, like the Song Sparrows are often wintering over birds. As of 1/10 there are many being seen at feeders all across the southern half of the state. Some Christmas counts tallied over 100 birds.

White-crowned Sparrows left by early Nov. but in keeping with the smattering of western birds that appeared, there was a *Gamble's form* of a White-crowned at Cape Elizabeth 11/14-12/21.

Dark-eyed Juncos had mixed comments. Some observers noted a lack of them while others reported them arriving in "waves" at their feeders. As of 1/15 they are being noted at feeders all over the state.

Lapland Longspurs numbered over 60 at Scarboro Marsh on 11/11. Two were at Prospect Harbor 11/16 (RB) and one was "out west" at Fryeburg on 1/6.

Snow Buntings started showing up back in Oct. and reports trickled in throughout all of Nov. and Dec. from places like, Lamoine (DR), Brunswick, Union, New Sweden, the old Columbia radar site (WT), Gray, Presque Isle (eating road grit -BS) and St. Agatha just to list a few locations.

CARDINALIDAE: Now fully established across the state **Cardinals** were well reported. The Waterville CBC had 73 while the Bangor count had 95 but both the Biddeford and York CBCs had over 150 each.

A pair of **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** on Bailey Island back on 11/11 were the only ones noted.

Dickcissels were scarce with a bird at a feeder in South Portland on 12/6 and another at Biddeford on 12/3.

BLACKBIRDS: Mixed flocks of **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Grackles** were common in Nov. but most were gone by the second week of Dec. A few were still scattered across the state and small numbers are listed on several Christmas counts.

Rusty Blackbirds were mixed in with grackles on North Haven Island 11/21, north at Mapleton on 11/29 and at a feeder in Chester (Aroostook County) 12/6.

An **Eastern Meadowlark** was on the York CBC list 12/15 and is still being seen as of 1/13.

There were a few **Baltimore Orioles** hanging around. In Nov. single birds, most of them immatures, at Bailey I., Rockport, North Haven,

Biddeford, and Kennebunk. In Dec. birds were at Camden, Nobleboro, South Harpswell, and in Jan. Winter Harbor.

FINCHES: This is certainly not a "finch winter" to the disappointment of many birders. They are around but not in any large numbers.

Pine Grosbeaks were first found on 11/20 in Quimby (T17R3 WELS) (BS). Others were seen at Sebomook 11/25, Caribou 12/6 and Orono 1/1.

Purple Finches were at feeders scattered from Sorrento to Lewiston (SD), Owls Head (JW), and Bar Harbor. **House Finches** were also regular feeder birds.

Red Crossbills were lacking in numbers with less than 10 birds seen at Caribou 12/29 and Waterboro 12/20. **White-winged Crossbills** were also scarce. Reports came from Freeport and Woodland (the Washington county one).

A few **Common Redpolls** started being seen on 11/28 at Richmond, Rockport, and Bar Harbor. They started "filling in" the areas in between during the first week of Dec. and by 1/1 were regular at feeders, albeit in quite small numbers.

Pine Siskins were being reported the second week of Nov. and as of 1/10 are being seen at feeders as they mingle with Goldfinches and Redpolls. **Goldfinches** are, as usual, one of the most common feeder birds across the state. Some of the Christmas counts recorded 800 to 900 of them.

Evening Grosbeaks are still increasing in number but very, very slowly. In Nov. they were at Eagle Lake, Howland, Dedham (ME) and in Dec. South Unity, Trescott (*fide* FH), Franklin (BG), and Viles arboretum in Augusta (NF).

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: With 20 of 30 counts reporting, a list of total species seen per count is: 104 Portland, 94 York County, 89 Biddeford, 85 Bath, 79 Thomaston-Rockland, 64 Mt. Desert, 61 Waterville, 58 Jonesport, 53 Augusta, 52 Bangor, 52 Machias, 51 Schoodic Pt., 49 Unity, 44 Lewiston-Auburn, 44 New Sweden, 40 Caribou, 35 Hartland, 30 Farmington, 24 Dover-Foxcroft, 14 Misery TWP.

One can see how location makes a difference. Southern vs northern, inland vs coastal, and urban vs open farming areas. Date also makes a difference with counts ranging from 12/14 to 1/3 and with a corresponding range of weather.

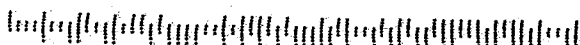
This sequence will change as the remaining counts are submitted and there are still three more weeks before the National Audubon deadline.

REPORTERS: Anyone may send in reports for the newsletter. Please understand that not all reports are cited individually but all of them are necessary for interpreting and understanding the natural history covered in each issue. Everyone is busy and the editor appreciates the time spent writing and sending the reports. Initials of reporters are not used all of the time due to space limitations and some have asked that their initials not be used. The following people made this issue possible: JA Joan Ashley, MAA Merle & Anne Archie, RB Roger Bowen, SB Seth Benz, TB Tom Bjorkman, CWC C.W. Comer, CMD Charles & Mary Dorchester, SD Stan deOrsey, ME Marcia Ellis, NF Norm Famous, EG Ed Grew, MG Margaret Getchell, MGo Mike Good, DKH Dede & Ken Heath, FH Fred Hartman, LH Lois Hatch, MPH Margot & Paul Haertel, SH Susan Highland, CK Craig Kesselheim, ZK Zack Klyver, LL Lawrence Libby, CMO Chip Moseley, CMu Carol Muth, PM Peg Myers, RM Rich MacDonald, SN Susan Nergaard, MO Mary Opdyke, DR Dartha Reid, BS Bill Sheehan, DS Doug Stewart, SS Shirley Smith, WT Bill Townsend, CW Chuck Whitney, DW Diane Walker, JW Jeanie Wilson. CBC Christmas Bird Count, MAS Maine Audubon Society, NAS National Audubon Society, NP National Park, SP State Park, in the unorganized lands such as T14R5 WELS means township 14 range 5 West of the Easterly Line of the State, TWP township.

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The next reporting period is January – February 2015. Reports are due by **March 10, 2015**. MAIL reports to 12 Spring St., Bar Harbor, ME 04609, **PHONE** them to 207-288-5654, or **eMAIL** them to wtownsend@roadrunner.com

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