

ice from mid-December to mid-January, rather than the 1-2 weeks of ice in late December or early January that is normal there. Except for the Rockies, where winter was severe throughout, the remainder of the winter was anticyclimatic, with more reasonable temperatures. Moisture accumulation was far above average in the central Rockies but diminished as one went west. The Sierra Nevada had less moisture than usual (65 percent) and the situation in eastern Oregon was almost catastrophic. The Steens Mountains, the watershed for Malheur Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon, had only 25 percent of their normal snow cover. Unless there is considerable late rain, which is unlikely, this year will go down as one of the worst droughts on record in the area. Over the years Malheur Refuge and the adjoining Harney Lakes vary between severe drought and relatively abundant moisture when the alkaline lakes are filled.

Again, numbers of observers complained that there were fewer birds this winter; we can offer no explanation except the cold, early winter.

Loon—An injured Com. Loon was found on the streets of Delta, Colo. on Jan. 10 (TC). This is a very unusual bird for the western slope of the Rockies.

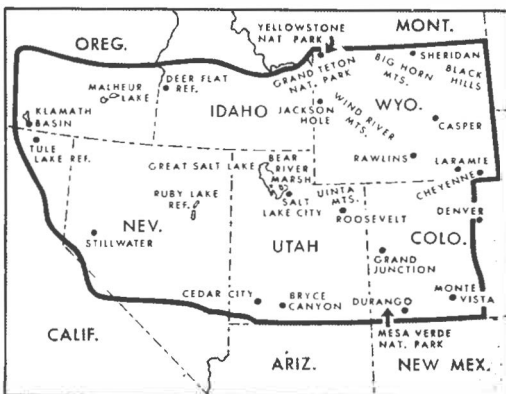
Ibis—A White-faced Ibis at a warm spring near Salt Lake, Jan. 20 (GK), was an unusual winter record. Equally unusual were the 11 that wintered in a drainage ditch at Stillwater Refuge (LDN).

Swans—The peak of the spring migration of Whistling Swans at Malheur Refuge was about normal with 10,000 on Feb. 18-24 (ELMcL). As usual, Bear River Marshes at the upper end of the Great Salt Lake had the most swans, 13,767 on March 21 (PF). The only other Whistling Swan concentration reported was 3500 at Stillwater Refuge in early December (LDN). What becomes of the Trumpeter Swans produced in the Great Basin? Both the colony at Malheur Refuge (45 birds) and the colony at Ruby Lake Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in north-eastern Nevada (22 birds) have not grown much larger in the last few years, but they are quite successful in rearing young. Are losses after the young are fledged higher than is known? Are new breeding areas going undetected? Are the swans moving back to their original range in Montana and British Columbia?

Geese—The wintering population of Canada Geese at Monte Vista Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in southern Colorado has grown to 750 (CRB). The peak in the spring migration of Snow Geese at Stillwater Refuge occurred early in March with 20,000-25,000 birds (LDN), and the peak at Malheur Refuge was marked by a good flight of 124,000 on March 7 (ELMcL).

Ducks—At Deer Flat Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in western Idaho, the peak of the fall concentration of ducks occurred on Dec. 29 with 503,700 ducks present, of which 480,700 were Mallards (RVP). Although the numbers were normal, the peak was later than usual, which is quite remarkable since the lake froze on Dec. 14 and remained frozen until early February, much longer than usual. At the Klamath

GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.—The Rockies experienced a fierce, early winter. In a number of areas, such as central



Wyoming and southern Utah, it was the wettest winter and the coldest December on record. Stillwater Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in western Nevada had heavy

Basin in southern Oregon, the number of waterfowl was comparable to that of last year, but owing to the early cold weather there was much less waterfowl use of the area (*EJO'N*). At Monte Vista Refuge there was more snow in December than in at least 15 years, but by continual blading of food crops the refuge staff brought their waterfowl through the winter; in late March there were 31,600 ducks present, close to a new high for the refuge (*CRB*). Bear River Marshes were frozen in January and February, reflecting the severe winter, but by March there was open water again. Ducks were about as numerous as last year, with a count of 58,529 Pintail on March 21 the highest concentration (*PF*). At Stillwater Refuge the early spring migration of ducks peaked on March 24-30 with about 75,000, mostly Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Canvasback (*LDN*). At Malheur Refuge the flight peaked on March 9 with 112,700 ducks present, 85,000 of which were Pintail. The duck migration was up about 20 percent over last year's figures (*ELMcL*). A Wood Duck was shot on the Little Bear River in northern Utah on Dec. 30 (*DMF*); this is a rare bird in that section. At the close of the period a pair of Wood Ducks was preparing to nest in a box set out for them at Deer Flat Refuge (*RVP*).

Hawks, Eagles—As was documented by the Christmas Counts, the northern part of the Region experienced a heavier-than-usual Rough-legged Hawk flight this winter. Eagles frequent the great wildlife refuges where sick and crippled ducks provide a food supply. In early January, 6 Golden and 83 Bald Eagles were present in the Klamath Basin refuges (*EJO'N*); there were 10 Golden and 4 Bald Eagles at Deer Flat Refuge on Jan. 15 (*RVP*); and 7 Golden and 28 Bald Eagles were noted at Monte Vista Refuge during the period (*CRB*). Malheur Refuge had 3 active Golden Eagle nests and 12 Bald Eagles on March 31 (*ELMcL*).

Sage Grouse—A strutting ground used by 15 Sage Grouse was found near Honey Lake in northeastern California on Feb. 22 (*JW*). This bird is much more common in the eastern part of the Region where strutting grounds in Wyoming often contain up to 300 birds.

Owls—There was an "invasion" of Snowy Owls in Wyoming this winter. One was seen at Sheridan in northern Wyoming on Feb. 28 (*TK*); another was spotted atop the flagpole of the Lander Post Office; and a third was seen at Big Horn Flat near Dubois on Feb. 24 (*MB*). The latter two observations were from central Wyoming. This many records of the Snowy Owl is unprecedented for this part of the country but may simply be indicative of more and better observers. The Burrowing Owl, on the other hand, seems to be much less common than heretofore. On March 22 one was seen near Cedar City, Utah (*SM*), where the species has been scarce recently.

Flicker, Chickadees, Nuthatches—A Yellow-shafted Flicker, a rarity in Utah, was seen in Salt Lake City on Jan. 14 (*GK*). This one was not a hybrid. Chickadees and nuthatches were way down in numbers everywhere in the Region but particularly so in western Nevada (*JMD*) and at Logan Can-

yon in northeastern Utah (*DMF*).

Thrushes, Waxwings—A Robin wintered at Craters of the Moon Nat'l Monument in central southern Idaho (*DLC*). This is far north of the normal wintering range, although the species is a common winter resident in juniper forests throughout the Region. Unusually large numbers of Robins wintered in Reno, Nev., with flocks of up to 300 birds noted (*JMD*). A heavy migration of Robins was observed at Grand Junction in western Colorado in late February (*LFE*), and an estimated 2500+ seen south of Durango in southwestern Colorado on March 9 were the largest number ever seen in that area by a veteran observer (*OR*). Townsend's Solitaires were reported to be numerous in Reno and in the Humboldt Range to the northeast of Reno (*JMD*). More than usual were present this winter in central Wyoming (*OKS*) where their occurrence could be correlated with the excellent moisture conditions of last summer and the resulting better-than-usual juniper berry crop. This correlation also helps to account for the increased population of wintering Robins discussed above. One could go on to speculate that there would be great numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, as they also feed on juniper berries, but there were almost no reports of this species during much of the winter. There were only a few early reports, including 70 at Craters of the Moon Nat'l Monument on Dec. 26 (*DLC*). No Bohemian Waxwings were reported at Salt Lake City, although 50 Cedar Waxwings appeared on March 24 (*GK*). Central Wyoming could boast of no waxwings at all until February and March, when mixed flocks appeared; one flock of 75 Bohemian and 15 Cedar Waxwings was observed in Casper on March 18 (*OKS*). As usual, no Bohemian Waxwings were observed in the mountains of Colorado (*WWB*), although large numbers were present, in company with Cedar Waxwings, at Nampa in western Idaho (*HES*).

Fringillids—There was a surprising paucity of Evening Grosbeaks, with no reasonable explanation for their absence. None were observed at Evergreen, west of Denver (*WWB*) or at Durango, Colo. where they are usually abundant (*OR*). An invasion of Rufous-sided Towhees was reported in the vicinity of Zion Nat'l Park in southern Utah (*BAL*); the birds were perhaps concentrated by the cold, snowy December in that area. White-winged Juncos were very scarce west of Denver where they usually winter in numbers (*HK*). Juncos of other species were also scarce elsewhere in the Region, e.g. at Hotchkiss, Colo. on the western slope of the Rockies (*TC*). An unusual record for western Nevada was a Harris' Sparrow present at a feeder in Reno during January and February (*JMD*). Another was seen south of Mendon in northern Utah (*DMF*), and two were observed at Grand Junction on March 17 (*LFE*); none, however, were recorded in central Wyoming where the species has been considered a regular winter visitor (*OKS*).

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