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Winter Report: December 1996-february 1997

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FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Florida Field Nat. 25(3):111-116, 1997.

Winter Report: December 1996-February 1997.—The observations listed here are based on rare or unusual species or significant numbers of birds reported to the Florida Ornithological Society (FOS) Field Observations Committee (FOC). These reports have not been reviewed formally, and, thus, should be considered tentative.

Significant reports are welcomed for inclusion in future issues of this section. Reports should include the following information: species, number of individuals, age and sex of the bird(s), color morph if applicable, location (including county), date, observer(s), and significance of the report. Reporting periods are winter (December-February), spring (March-May), summer (June-July), and fall (August-November). Submit reports to regional compilers within 2 weeks after the close of each period, or to the state compiler within 1 month. Reports may be e-mailed to the state compiler at blp414@aol.com.

Following the examples set by *Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List* (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, FOS Spec. Publ. No. 6) and *The Birdlife of Florida* (Stevenson and Anderson 1994, Univ. Press of Florida), sight-only observations are considered "reports," while only those supported by verifiable evidence (photographs, video or audio tapes, or specimens) are called "records."

The FOS Records Committee (FOSRC) revised the list of birds for which they require documentation, in FFN 24(4):132-133, 1996. These species are marked in this report with an asterisk (*) to alert the observers of their need to supply the FOSRC with details of their sightings. (Some reports that lack documentation may have been omitted from this report).

A county designation (in italics) accompanies the first-time listing of each site in this report; further listings of the same site lack the county name. Abbreviations used are as follows: ABS=Archbold Biological Station (*Highlands*), CBC=Christmas Bird Count, CP=county park, NWR=national wildlife refuge, PPM=*Polk* phosphate mines, R&W 1992=Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, S&A 1994=Stevenson and Anderson 1994, SP=state park, SRA=state recreation area, STF=sewage treatment facility, WMA=wildlife management area, and N, S, E, W, etc. for compass directions. Bold-faced species, if any, denote birds newly reported or verified in Florida.

We thank Rick West, the winter editor of *National Audubon Society Field Notes* for sharing information with us, and Bruce Anderson for supplying information on reports submitted to the FOSRC. R&W 1992 and S&A 1994 were used to determine the regional and seasonal status of many species. Todd Engstrom assisted with the manuscript.

With this report, we welcome 2 new members to the FOC, Rex Rowan of Gainesville and Ron Smith of St. Petersburg. Each has been compiling excellent regional reports for the FOC the past few years, so it is fitting that they officially join the Committee.

SUMMARY OF THE WINTER SEASON

North of Florida, winter 1996-1997 will be remembered as one of the coldest on record. Not surprisingly, the extremely cold temperatures and heavy amounts of snow caused large numbers of berry-eating birds to move southward into the state. In particular, American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were noted in higher than normal numbers statewide. Bob Duncan wrote that robins were present "in overwhelming numbers . . . everywhere" in the western Panhandle, and Dot Freeman wrote that the robins in the Orlando area were the most seen there "in many years." Many other observers agreed with these opinions. Possibly also related to the weather were many reports of Gadwalls, including an extremely high count in Polk County.

FOSRC rarities reported this season were single Ross' Geese in Brevard and Duval counties, a Northern Saw-whet Owl in Polk County, and an Allen's Hummingbird at Gainesville. Other interesting observations included a Common Eider near Miami, an extremely large number of White-winged Doves near Pensacola, a large flock of Black-hooded Parakeets in St. Petersburg, the first verified winter nighthawk record in Broward County (a Lesser Nighthawk), 2 Lapland Longspurs in Volusia County, and a Snow Bunting at Canaveral National Seashore.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- PACIFIC LOON: 2 (1 with a throat-strap, 1 without) at Pensacola (*Escambia*) 5 Dec-27 Feb, both birds together 27 Feb (B. and W. Duncan, J. Pfeiffer, P. Tetlow, E. Case et al.).
- EARED GREBE: 1 on the Choctawhatchee Bay CBC (*Okaloosa*) 23 Dec (B. Duncan, V. Spisak).
- CORY'S SHEARWATER: 1 from shore at New Smyrna Beach (*Volusia*) 12 Jan (J. Morlan).
- MASKED BOOBY: 1 adult off Playalinda Beach, Canaveral National Seashore (*Brevard*) 30 Jan (D. Freeman, M. Gurney).
- BROWN PELICAN: "numerous" inland at Lake George (*Volusia*) 14 Dec (B. Siculo); singles at "several" *Polk* sites Jan-Feb (fide L. Cooper).
- AMERICAN BITTERN: 7 on 8 Feb (A. and R. Smith, B. Hoffman) in the same small *Pinellas* marsh mentioned in the Spring 1996 report, which R. Smith calls a "real honey-hole for this species."
- LEAST BITTERN: 1 at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) 2 Jan-4 Feb (J. and M. Salvetti et al.).
- TRICOLORED HERON: 1 that wintered at the Monsanto plant (*Escambia*) (C. Davis) was the region's first Dec and second Jan report (fide B. Duncan); 1 at Air Products Sanctuary, Pace (*Santa Rosa*) 12 Jan (B. Milmore).
- TUNDRA SWAN: 1 immature at Bayou Grande, Pensacola 9 Dec (A. and D. Forster).
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 3 in *Okaloosa* 3-4 Dec (B. Duncan et al.); 2 at Merritt Island NWR (*Brevard*) through at least 4 Jan (A. and B. Hansen et al.).
- SNOW GOOSE: 2 (1 blue and 1 white) at PPM 1 Dec (C. Geanangel, P. Timmer); 3 in *W Duval* 23 Dec-12 Jan (I. Cornelius).
- *ROSS' GOOSE: the 1 at Merritt Island NWR reportedly was found dead ca. 22 Dec (fide D. Stuckey; no mention of deposition of the specimen); 1 in *W Duval* 23 Dec-12 Jan (I. Cornelius, photos to FOSRC).
- GADWALL: 35 at Orlando Wetlands Park (*Orange*) 8-22 Feb (D. Freeman et al.); at PPM, 82 on 12 Dec increased to 730 by 9 Jan, then dropped to 200 on 11 Jan, and 23 by 12 Feb (P. Fellers et al.). This is the highest inland count by far (S&A 1994:119-120).
- EURASIAN WIGEON: 1 male at St. Marks NWR 27 Jan-6 Feb (D. and K. MacVicar et al.).
- AMERICAN WIGEON: 1100 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw).
- CANVASBACK: 72 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw).
- COMMON EIDER: 1 imm. male at Convoy Point, Biscayne National Park 17-25 Jan (D. Pharo, B. Dusek [photos to FOSA] et al.) was the first *Dade* report (S&A 1994:130).
- HARLEQUIN DUCK: 1 male at Alligator Point (*Franklin*) 10-15 Jan (N. Wamer, J. Cavanagh et al., photos) was the first county report (S&A 1994:131).
- OLDSQUAW: 1 female at East Bay (*Bay*) 5 Dec (A. and R. Ingram); 1 female at Fort Walton Beach STF (*Okaloosa*) 19-26 Feb (B. Duncan, D. Ware, L. Fennimore); 1 male at Hurricane Lake (*Santa Rosa*) 19 Feb (P. Tetlow et al.).
- SURF SCOTER: 2 at Rookery Bay Nat. Est. Res. Reserve (*Collier*) 13 Dec (T. Below).
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: 1 at Honeymoon Island SRA (*Pinellas*) 22 Dec-8 Jan (W. Yusek et al.); 1 at Tierra Verde (*Pinellas*) 21-22 Dec (L. Atherton et al.).
- SNOW-TAILED KITE: 1 in *Walton* 15 Feb (B. Bremser) was the earliest regional report (fide B. Duncan).

- SNAIL KITE: 1 at Lake Wales (*Polk*) 25 Jan (T. Palmer).
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK: 2 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw); 1 on the South Brevard CBC (*Brevard* or *Indian River*) 4 Jan (B. Wetmore, M. Jones, B. O'Connor).
- SHORT-TAILED HAWK: 1 light morph over Saddle Creek CP (*Polk*) 17 Feb (L. Lane, M. Chakan).
- SWAINSON'S HAWK: 1 immature S of Palm Bay (*Brevard*) 4 Jan (B. Wetmore et al.).
- RED-TAILED HAWK: 1 "Harlan's Hawk" at Lake Jessup Conservation Area (*Seminole*) 14 Dec (*vide* L. Malo).
- GOLDEN EAGLE: 1 at St. Marks NWR 23 Dec (D. Gluckman).
- BLACK RAIL: 1 at Air Products Sanctuary 4 Jan (P. Baker, E. Case, B. Milmore et al.).
- PURPLE GALLINULE: 1 at Fort Walton Beach STF 23 Dec-23 Jan (D. Ware, P. Tetlow) was the region's first Jan report (*vide* B. Duncan); 10 at Lake Jessup Conservation Area 18 Jan (*vide* L. Malo).
- AMERICAN COOT: 40,000 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw); 15,000 at Lake Hatchineha (*Osceola*) 25 Jan (T. Palmer).
- PIPING PLOVER: 5 at Big Sabine (*Escambia*) 16 Dec (B. Duncan, P. Tetlow).
- BLACK-NECKED STILT: 1 at Jacksonville 28 Dec (M. Dolan); 84 at PPM 9 Jan (P. Fellers) was the highest winter count (S&A 1994:222).
- AMERICAN AVOCET: 172 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw); 1 at Lanark Reef (*Franklin*) 3-27 Feb (G. Sprandel, C. Gunnels).
- SOLITARY SANDPIPER: 1 at Sawgrass Lake CP (*Pinellas*) 21 Dec (G. Stoccardo, B. Pranty [photos] et al.) was 1 of few verified winter records (S&A 1994:228); 2 on the Lake Placid CBC (*Highlands*) 27 Dec (G. Woolfenden, G. Stoccardo, B. Pranty); 2 at Lake Pasadena (*Pasco*) 2 Jan (B. Pranty, P. Young, R. Grant).
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW: 1 at Lanark Reef 6 Dec-26 Feb (G. Sprandel et al.).
- SANDERLING: 2 at PPM 15 Dec (C. Geanangel, P. Timmer) were rare inland in winter.
- WESTERN SANDPIPER: 1 at Wekiwa Springs SP (*Orange*) 8 Feb (*vide* P. Small).
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: 8 at Jacksonville 1-29 Dec (R. Clark); 3 birds 16 km N of Okeechobee (*Okeechobee*) 9 Feb (A. and R. Smith) was the first report for the county (S&A 1994:258).
- RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: 1 in the Indian River Lagoon (*Indian River*) 4 Jan (N. Sekera, J. Taylor, R. Howard).
- JAEGER SPECIES: 1 at Fort McRae (*Escambia*) 24 Feb (P. Tetlow et al.).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 2 at Ponce Inlet (*Volusia*) 4 Dec (C. Lahy).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: 2 first-year birds wintered at Fort Pickens (*Escambia*) (B. and W. Duncan, P. Tetlow et al.).
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 1 at Naples (*Collier*) 18 Dec-10 Jan (G. McSwain, G. Erbe, T. Below [photo to FOC] et al.) was the first for the county (S&A 1994:286).
- GULL-BILLED TERN: 1 at Pine Island CP (*Hernando*) 15 Jan (A. and B. Hansen) was the first county report (S&A 1994:288); 6 at PPM 2 Feb (P. Timmer, C. Geanangel); 1 at Merritt Island NWR (*Brevard*) 9 Feb (A. and R. Smith).
- CASPIAN TERN: 210 at PPM 12 Dec (P. Fellers, M. Hartsaw).
- ROYAL TERN: 6 inland at Lake George 14 Dec (B. Siculo).
- SOOTY TERN: 1 found dead at Marco Island (*Collier*) 31 Jan (T. and V. Below) was the first for the county (S&A 1994:305).
- BLACK SKIMMER: 253 at PPM 12 Feb (B. and L. Cooper, P. Fellers, I. Fryer).
- WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON: 1 juvenile ("charcoal gray all over, no hint of white crown") at Key West 1 Jan (J. Ondrejko).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE: 1 at St. Marks NWR 13 Dec (A. and B. Hansen); 1 at Tierra Verde (*Pinellas*) 21 Dec (L. Atherton); 21 at Gulf Breeze 21 Dec (B. and W. Duncan, D. Michael). Coupled with 5 other regional reports during the season, the species is increasing in the W Panhandle (*vide* B. Duncan); 2 at Destin 23 Dec (E. Case) and 26 there 10 Jan (*vide* D. Ware); 65 at a roost in Orlando (*Orange*) 26 Dec-6 Feb (D. Free-

- man); 2 at Baypoint (*Bay*) 28 Dec (T. Menart); 14 at Key West (*Monroe*) 22 Jan (J. Ondrejko).
- WHITE COCKATOO: 1 at Key West 5 Jan and 9 Feb was "presumed to be the one that hatched in the wild" (J. Ondrejko).
- BLACK-HOODED PARAKEET: **95** in 1 tree at Gulfport 21 Dec (*Pinellas*) (A. and R. Smith, B. Hoffman et al.) indicates the species continues to increase in St. Petersburg.
- BLUE-CROWNED PARAKEET: 25 in St. Petersburg 10 Jan (B. and J. Gericke).
- SHORT-EARED OWL: 1 at Lanark Reef 14 Jan-13 Feb (G. Sprandel); 1 at Shell Key (*Pinellas*) 24 Feb, and 2 there 2 Mar (P. Blair, W. Yusek et al.).
- *NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL: 1 adult that repeatedly called "TOO, TOO, TOO" observed at night E of Lake Wales 19 Feb (C. and M. Hansrote, B. and R. Underwood, details to FOSRC) was the first *Polk* report (S&A 1994:370).
- NIGHTHAWK SPECIES: 1 at Palm Harbor (*Pinellas*) 22 Dec (H. Nagy et al.).
- LESSER NIGHTHAWK: 1 female found alive at Pembroke Pines (*Broward*) 22 Jan (*vide* W. George, specimen to UCF) was the first county report (S&A 1994:371), and the first winter *Chordeiles* specimen (*vide* B. Anderson).
- CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW: 1 at Key West 17 Dec (J. Ondrejko); 1 singing at Gulf Breeze 26 Dec (J. Pfeiffer); 1 singing at Lakeland (*Polk*) 15 Feb (B. and L. Cooper); 1 singing in *Hernando* 21 Feb (A. and Hansen).
- BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD: 3 singles at Pensacola 19 Sep-29 Jan (B. Kenney et al.), 19 Oct-7 Dec (R. Asthey et al.), and 9 Nov-27 Feb (J. Pfeiffer et al.).
- RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD: 1 adult male at Jacksonville Dec-17 Feb (P. Powell).
- BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD: 6 singles in the W Panhandle variously this winter (*vide* B. Duncan); singles at Tallahassee (*Leon*) 3 Oct-29 Dec (W. Loquasto) and 2 Jan (M. Friedmann, J. Cox, N. Wamer).
- SELASPHORUS* SPECIES: 5 singles in *Leon* 24 Sep through the season (*vide* G. Menk).
- RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: 10 in the W Panhandle variously this winter (*vide* B. Duncan); 1 male in *Leon* 2 Dec ff (L. Short et al.); 1 first-year male at Lakeland through 20 Dec (G. and G. Lucas et al., photos by L. Cooper).
- *ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD: 1 second-year male that wintered at Kanapaha Gardens, Gainesville (*Alachua*) (B. Roberts et al., banded by B. Sargent 30 Jan, color photo in *Gainesville Sun*, 31 Jan) is the 3rd "first" Florida record, pending FOSRC acceptance.
- LEAST FLYCATCHER: 1 at Fort Pickens 27 Nov-14 Jan (B. and L. Duncan et al.).
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER: 1 adult male remained in *E Pasco* through late Feb (B. Pranty et al.).
- ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER: 1 at Fort Walton Beach STF 9 Dec-27 Feb (B. Duncan et al.).
- GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER: 1 at Oviedo (*Seminole*) 28 Dec (B. Anderson, specimen to UCF) was the northernmost winter specimen in the state (*vide* B. Anderson)
- BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER: 1 W of Delray Beach (*Palm Beach*) 1 Jan (B. Hope).
- WESTERN KINGBIRD: 1 at St. Petersburg for a few hours 5 Dec (A. and R. Smith); 1 at Air Products Sanctuary 30 Jan-11 Feb (B. Milmore et al.).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: 1 adult male on SR-70 at Bright Hour Ranch (*DeSoto*) 28 Dec (B. Pranty [photo], E. Haney).
- PURPLE MARTIN: 1 at Tall Timbers Research Station (*Leon*) 4 Feb (T. Engstrom); 1 male at Key West 9 Feb (J. Ondrejko).
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW: 1400 at Belle Glade Marina (*Palm Beach*) 23 Feb (L. Atherton, M. Wilkinson et al.).
- AMERICAN CROW: 1 with a "droopy wing" at Key West 9 Feb was thought to be a release from a rehabilitation center (J. Ondrejko).
- FISH CROW: 14 at Key West through the season (J. Ondrejko).
- WOOD THRUSH: 1 at Fort Pickens 18 Feb (P. Tetlow et al.).
- CEDAR WAXWING: 500 at Winter Haven (*Polk*) 7 Feb (P. Fellers).

- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO: 1 near San Antonio (*Pasco*) 2 Jan (D. Woodard, D. Robinson, S. Raymond-LaPlante); 1 at ABS 13 Jan (D. Willard); 1 singing at Jacksonville 26 Feb (J. Cocke).
- NORTHERN PARULA: 1 female at Key West fed at a hummingbird feeder through the season (J. Ondrejko); 1 male singing at Orlando 18 Feb (D. Freeman).
- CAPE MAY WARBLER: 1 on the Naples CBC 4 Jan (*vide* T. Below).
- AMERICAN REDSTART: 1 at Winter Park (*Orange*) 17 Feb (B. Siculo).
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: 1 at Brooker Creek Preserve (*Pinellas*) 15 Dec (A. and R. Smith); 1 at Orlando Wetlands Park (*Orange*) 8 Feb (B. Siculo).
- HOODED WARBLER: 1 female in mangroves on Jungle Trail (*Indian River*) 4 Jan (D. Click, J. Dryja).
- SUMMER TANAGER: 1 adult male at Sawgrass Lake CP 21 Dec (B. Pranty, C. Pierce); 1 in *W Palm Beach* 11 Jan (C. Weber).
- WESTERN TANAGER: singles in *Broward* 15 Dec (W. George, B. Hope et al.) and 22 Dec (W. George et al.).
- BLUE GROSBEAK: 2 females at Cocoa (*Brevard*) 20 Dec at same location for the past 5 years (D. Stuckey, W. Frost).
- INDIGO BUNTING: 1 in *Leon* 25 Jan-1 Feb (P. Homann).
- PAINTED BUNTING: ca. 20 from various sites in *Polk* this winter (*vide* L. Cooper, P. Fellers).
- DICKCISSEL: 1 in *Palm Beach* 7 Jan (D. Brindle).
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 2 near Lake Wales 15 Dec (P. Timmer, C. Geanangel).
- VESPER SPARROW: 1 at Big Cypress National Preserve Visitor Center (*Collier*) 19 Jan (A. and R. Smith et al.).
- LARK SPARROW: 1 at Fort DeSoto CP (*Pinellas*) 31 Dec through the season was "buddy/buddy" with a Northern Mockingbird, "if you couldn't find the sparrow, just look for the more conspicuous mockingbird—the sparrow was sure to be nearby" (R. Smith et al.); 1 at Baypoint 4 Jan (T. Menart, J. Richardson); 2 (1 male and 1 female) N of Auburndale (*Polk*) 9 Feb through the season (P. Timmer, C. Geanangel).
- NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW: 5 at a site at Gulfport (*Pinellas*) replanted with sea grasses and mangroves 2 years ago (A. and R. Smith, L. Atherton et al.).
- FOX SPARROW: 1 at Jacksonville 28 Dec (R. Clark).
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: 5 (4 adults) E of Dade City (*Pasco*) 2 Jan (A. and R. Smith); 13 at 2 *Polk* sites 15 Dec (P. Timmer, C. Geanangel).
- DARK-EYED JUNCO: 1 "Pink-sided" Junco in *Leon* 25 Dec-20 Jan (*vide* G. Menk).
- LAPLAND LONGSPUR: 2 at Smyrna Dunes CP (*Volusia*) through at least 4 Dec (A. and B. Hansen et al.).
- SNOW BUNTING: 1 at Merritt Island NWR 4 Jan (A. and B. Hansen).
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD: 30 at Joe Budd WMA (*Gadsden*) 9 Feb (G. Sprandel) was the first county report (S&A 1994:672).
- BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE: 1 juvenile at Key West 5 Jan (J. Ondrejko).
- ORCHARD ORIOLE: 8 (2 males and 6 females) at Belle Glade Marina 23 Feb (L. Atherton, M. Wilkinson).
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE: 2 males at Belle Glade Marina 23 Feb (L. Atherton, M. Wilkinson).
- BULLOCK'S ORIOLE: 1 male at Tampa (*Hillsborough*) 4 Feb (L. Saul) was the first county report (S&A 1994:687); 3 (1 adult male, 1 female, and 1 first-year male) at Key West 6 Feb (J. Ondrejko).
- HOUSE FINCH: 1 at Winter Haven 7 Feb (E. and K. Roberts) was the second *Polk* report.

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Correction to the Winter 1994-1995 Report (FFN 23:84,86): In the Blue-winged Warbler account and the list of Contributors, the name of Carol Lahy was misspelled.

Spring 1995 reports not published previously: Northern Gannet: 2 at Anhinga Trail, Everglades National Park (*Dade*) 29 Apr (Steve Mlodinow); Stripe-headed Tanager: 1 at Hugh Birch SRA (*Broward*) 5 May (S. Mlodinow).

Winter 1995-1996 report not published previously: Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 immature found injured on the Sunshine Skyway causeway (*Pinellas*) 14 Jan (*vide* R. Smith, specimen to ABS) occurred 4 months earlier than the "first" county report published in the Spring 1996 report.

Spring 1996 reports not published previously: American White Pelican: 31 at Lake Kissimmee (*Osceola*) 18 May (Bob Sicolo); Gray Kingbird: 1 on Joe Overstreet Road (*Osceola*) 6 Apr (Bob Sicolo [photo to FOSRC], Joe Sicolo).

Summer 1996 reports not published previously: *Red-billed Tropicbird: 1 immature at Biscayne National Park (*Dade*) 29 Jun (Bob Dusek, details to FOSRC); Gadwall: 1 summered at Merritt Island NWR (*Brevard*) (Bob Sicolo).

Correction to the Summer 1996 Report (FFN 25:30): The Pin-tailed Whydah reported as occurring on Boca Chica Key (*Monroe*) actually was reported from Boca Chita Key in Biscayne National Park (*Dade*).

Fall 1996 reports not published previously: Purple Gallinule: 1 at Air Products Sanctuary (*Santa Rosa*) 20-25 Nov (Bill Milmore, Phil Tetlow) was the region's first Nov report (*vide* Bob Duncan); *Northern Wheatear: 1 at Big Pine Key (*Monroe*) 13 Oct (Mark Burney, details to FOSRC).

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