

March 3

Dear Vern:

This is, by virtue of the time lag between IBL and AB, a bit mussy. Most of the items are nevertheless pretty easy to assess.

Gladys Black reported late, and continues to be a bit of a problem. See the passages underlined in green in her 2/28 letter: they make no sense, since the only way her "constituents" could be offended is if you questioned their observations by naming them! She seems to be getting a bit senile, but is still a good source of info on her own area, being an excellent binder. The trouble is, she likes to get data from all over the state, and neither she nor I can vouch for the reliability of all of her informants. Some of them are undoubtedly OK. Maybe more.

As to individual species, here is as best I can assess them.

all Snowy Owls seen (7) are from unknowns file 9B. I received a report from Woody Brown about 2 alleged Snowy Owls that turned out to be very light Red-tailed Hawks. If I were a Las Vegas bookie, I would give equally low odds on 0/7 and 7/7. It might be best to mention that only a few Snowy Owls were reported (file 9B), certainly true compared with last year's inflation.

The Bohemian Waxwings, 3rd hand from GB, are probably OK, if indeed seen by a feeder-watcher and with Cedars. This was, I hear from Wyoming, not a flight year, but I did see 2 myself, so I know they made it to Iowa.

The Pine Grosbeaks were probably more numerous than ever. Forty-four (including Dorothy Bruner's, she is past president of IOU) are hard-core, and it seems safe to say that over 50 of them were seen in the state this winter, with Des Moines and Iowa City the southernmost points. These are not hard to identify, and most were reported by good people.

The White-winged Crossbills were still predominant in November; some of the 21 added for the winter are no doubt right (Jim Sewell sent a photo [2]). ~~Ward Wankel~~ Instead of playing the numbers game, I would reiterate that the trend was a decline of sightings after early Dec. Incidentally, Jim Sewell, who photographed the X-bill, also reported one of the Snowy Owls. He seems OK.

The single Red Crossbill is again file GB, 3rd hand, but seen by someone along with a White-winged, so a comparison could be made. What is striking is not the presence of a Red X-bill but the presence of one only, with all the White-winged. The same pattern was true up in Duluth too, so I am sure this is valid.

Sincerely
Rick