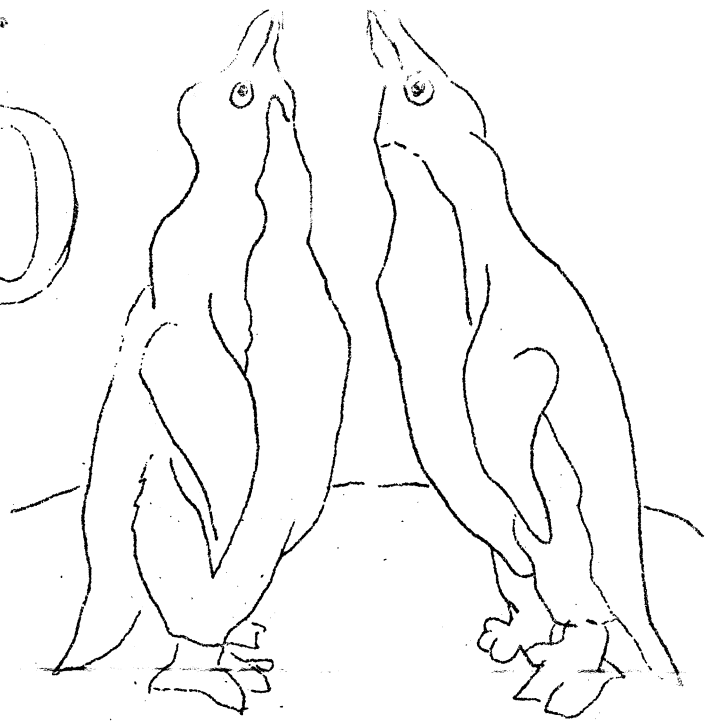


# HOWARD

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## WINTER BIRDS KEEP LISTENERS BUSY

Last winter Ross' Gull put in a rare appearance in continental United States to excite birders for hundreds of miles. This winter an Ivory Gull turned up on the same area of Newburyport, Mass. Like Ross' the Ivory Gull is rarely seen outside the arctic. David Holmes, who made the trip to see the bird, noted that it was quite tame; in fact, the bird rested on an ice floe 40' from him and he says that virtually everyone who has seen it has had a closer view than he did. Although it did not fly while he was observing it it did stand up several times so that he was able to see its black legs and feet. Since the morning had started out at 46 degrees F, he didn't stay longer than necessary. His party also saw a Black-headed Gull, Lapland Longspurs on Plum Island and a cooperative Merlin on the way back to Newburyport.

The trip to New England for the Ivory Gull was only half the reason for going; major news to birders was the first East Coast sighting of a Snow which normally breeds in the northern reaches of Europe and Asia and winters on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Europe all the way to China and Japan. This sighting at Newport, R. I. made front page news in numerous newspapers (along with the usual feature articles about nutty birders). This merganser relative is a black, gray, and white patterned bird who obtains his diet of small fish, crustaceans and what-have-you by repeated diving. This is a wary bird and most observations are from some distance. David was most impressed with the almost mother-of-pearl color on the rear portion of the bird but couldn't get any pictures—distance and poor light through the snowfall made that impossible. He summed up his trip for two new life birds as "exhausting but neat."

COMING EVENTS Meeting place - Swansfield Elementary School

February 12 7:45 pm Steven Simon from Catonsville Community College, "Shorebirds".

February 14, 15, 16 7:30 am Chincoteague Weekend. Areas will be explored both down and back. Larry Hood will lead the birders; Bob Herndon the photographers. For reservations call Larry at 730-9251. Bring lunch. Goal-100+ species.

February 28 8am Local walk to Lake Elkorn, followed by coffee at Krishnamoorthy's.

March 6 1:15-5:15 pm Raptor Workshop. See details elsewhere in letter.

March 11 7:45 pm Kay Kepler will give a slide lecture on South Pacific Birds.

March 14 7:30am Roacher's Run and Dyke March for wintering ducks and waterfowl.

From Bent, Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers, The Yellow Rumped Warbler  
Birders have officially returned to the older name of this familiar warbler, the yellow rumped warbler, from its previously acknowledged name, the myrtle warbler. Both names are descriptive, however, it is not the only warbler with a yellow rump, and although in the South it shows a marked preference for waxmyrtle, *Myrica cerifera*, in this area its winter food is frequently poison ivy berries and red cedar berries which occur in abundance. Since the bird only digests the outer coverings of these berries it is largely responsible for the dissemination of these seeds.

In the fall and early winter this warbler flutters about nooks and crannies of houses catching insects, and undoubtedly consuming eggs and larvae. Although it prefers insects the yellow rumped warbler is unusual in that it can subsist for long periods of time on berries and seeds such as sunflower, goldenrod, grass and miscellaneous weeds. It will also check out fresh sapsucker holes to drink the sweet sap and devour insects attracted by the sap. Apparently in Florida it drinks the juice of fallen oranges. It is no wonder with such a wide variety of tastes these birds can winter over a range that stretches north to Rochester, N. Y., Portland, Maine, along the coast to Massachusetts at Cape Ann. The southern extent of the range reaches northern Colombia, including countries of Central America, and the resort islands such as the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and St. Croix.

In spring it is one of the first warblers to move northward. Males precede those of the females. Soon most have passed to their summer homes in the Canadian coniferous forests, arriving while there is still snow in the northern woods. Once located high in the mountains or up in the Canadian reaches most choose evergreens, white pine, spruce, red cedar, in which to build their nests. Occasional nests are also found in hawthorns, maples, apples, or birches. Four or five eggs are laid; the incubation and brooding is done by the female, with both parents attending to the feeding and nest cleaning. Except particularly in the Middle West, and in Ontario and Alberta, this species is free from cowbird intruders in the nest. Where the cowbird and yellow rumped warbler ranges overlap and where the cowbird does lay its egg in the host's nest the warbler may attempt to embed it in the nest, building over the egg. However often more than one egg is laid and this parasite must interfere seriously in the normal increase in population as few warblers can survive in competition with young cowbirds.

The yellow rumped warbler is one of the latest warblers to set southward and it takes its time migrating during September, October, and some of November. Cape May, N.J. must be an experience to remember during a peak flight day as thousands flit about in the trees, grass and thickets and the air seems alive with them.

Because the yellow rumped warbler is quite large, not particularly shy, and found almost anywhere it is one of the first warblers recognized by novices. In spring the vivid patches of yellow on the rump, sides and crown contrast with its blue-gray, black and white plumage, and with its black cheeks and sides. The female is less bright and lacks the black cheeks. Locally in winter the yellow rump as the bird flies away is the observer's commonest field mark. Its series of short rapid notes averaging 12 in number with a sweetmusical but unobtrusive quality and its lead-call note "tchick" are additional aids to identity.

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THIRD ANNUAL WORKSHOP  
BIRDS OF PREY

Sponsored by the Howard and Latuxent Chapters of IOS

MARCH 6 from 1 to 5:15 pm  
Cleneig Country School

Sights and Sounds  
Seminars

Birders, friends, and children accompanied by an adult are invited to this event.

BICENTENNIAL BIRD JOURNAL

Many North American birds have the colors red, white, or blue as part of their common name. Below is a list of 50 made up by Jo Solem. See how many you can identify correctly by putting an R (Red), W (White), or B (Blue) in each blank. In a few cases two choices could be correct. Answers are below.

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ Pelican              | 26. _____ - crowned Sparrow      |
| 2. _____ - gray Tanager       | 27. _____ - gray Gnatcatcher     |
| 3. _____ - tailed Kite        | 28. _____ - faced Booby          |
| 4. _____ - bellied Woodpecker | 29. Little _____ Heron           |
| 5. Great _____ Heron          | 30. _____ - winged Dove          |
| 6. _____ - faced Cormorant    | 31. _____ - collared Seedeater   |
| 7. _____ - tailed Hawk        | 32. _____ - eyed Vireo           |
| 8. _____ Crossbill            | 33. _____ - tailed Ptarmigan     |
| 9. _____ Jay                  | 34. _____ - billed Tropicbird    |
| 10. _____ - crowned Pigeon    | 35. _____ - cockaded Woodpecker  |
| 11. _____ - necked Raven      | 36. _____ - bird                 |
| 12. _____ Phalarope           | 37. _____ - tailed Tropicbird    |
| 13. _____ - faced Ibis        | 38. _____ - fronted Dove         |
| 14. _____ - breasted Nuthatch | 39. _____ - winged Teal          |
| 15. _____ - throated Sparrow  | 40. _____ - Grouse               |
| 16. _____ - winged Warbler    | 41. _____ - winged Crossbill     |
| 17. _____ - eared Hummingbird | 42. _____ - breasted Merganser   |
| 18. _____ Grosbeak            | 43. _____ - winged Blackbird     |
| 19. _____ - footed Booby      | 44. _____ - Ibis                 |
| 20. _____ - rumped Sandpiper  | 45. _____ - legged Kittiwake     |
| 21. _____ - throated Loon     | 46. _____ - throated Hummingbird |
| 22. _____ - fronted Goose     | 47. _____ Wagtail                |
| 23. _____ - headed Woodpecker | 48. _____ - whiskered Bulbul     |
| 24. _____ - billed Pigeon     | 49. _____ - throated Swift       |
| 25. _____ - faced Warbler     | 50. _____ - shouldered Hawk      |

ANSWERS

- |           |            |            |            |       |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------|
| 1. W      | 11. W      | 21. R      | 31. W      | 41. W |
| 2. B      | 12. R      | 22. W      | 32. R or W | 42. R |
| 3. W      | 13. W      | 23. R or W | 33. W      | 43. R |
| 4. R      | 14. R or W | 24. R      | 34. R      | 44. W |
| 5. B      | 15. W      | 25. R      | 35. R      | 45. B |
| 6. R      | 16. B      | 26. W      | 36. B      | 46. B |
| 7. R or W | 17. W      | 27. B      | 37. W      | 47. W |
| 8. R      | 18. B      | 28. B      | 38. W      | 48. R |
| 9. B      | 19. B      | 29. B      | 39. B      | 49. W |
| 10. W     | 20. W      | 30. W      | 40. B      | 50. R |

SIGHTINGS

Rosamund Munro had 7 robins on Jan. 16 only to be outdone by the 13 she found the next day. Jo Solem had a black capped chickadee until Jan. 10, purple finches all month, and occasional visits from the evening grosbeaks. In Glenelg a ruby crowned kinglet was recovered from a cat. Wilde Lake had Goldeneyes, Gadwalls, and Canvasbacks at 30° on the Jan. 24th Feeder Trip.