

includes a useful summary of historical breeding status in the county for each species. This attractive volume offers good value for its price.

FEEDERWATCH NEWS

Excerpt from Annual Report
by Diane L. Tessaglia

Letters accompanying some of the 44,490 completed Project FeederWatch data forms suggested the possibility that the "Blizzard of '93", a severe Eastern March storm, had caused shifts in the use pattern of birds at feeders. This intrigued Diane L. Tessaglia and she analyzed the data provided to see if the impressions were supported by the observations. She calculated the mean number of birds per week for "Blizzard Areas" - the 30 states and provinces that experienced the blizzard and "Non-Blizzard Areas". In Blizzard Areas, the number of birds per feeder per week increased steadily throughout the winter; then we documented a sharp and fairly large increase in bird numbers from March 13 - 19, the week immediately following the blizzard. The data for Non-Blizzard Areas shows no such increase for that week. So it seems that the Blizzard of '93 did bring birds to feeders in the East.

True to form, this analysis raised as many questions as it answered. Although the Non-Blizzard Areas showed no increase in bird numbers during March 13 - 19, the number of birds per feeder rose dramatically during the week of January 1 - 9 and again from February 20 - 26. We're curious about what caused these increases - perhaps severe weather also attracted more birds to feeders in these weeks. So we plan to incorporate more FeederWatch weather data into our analysis in the future, to help answer questions like these.

FEEDERWATCH NORTH

Excerpt from an 1992-93
Results by Erica Dunn

The winter before this one, 1991- 92, was characterized by two events: an eruption of Common Redpolls throughout the country, and a massive concentration of Purple Finches (and lesser numbers of some other finches) in the Maritimes. In 1992-93 these events were reversed, as would be expected in these finches with irregular movements. British Columbia had 3 times more redpolls than last year, but not enough to prevent a precipitous decline in the Canadian average overall.....

A few species have been overwintering more and more in Canada over a longer period. Mourning Dove number in Ontario have grown steadily for 30 years, and now the trend seems to be taking hold further east as well. The remarkable jump in New Brunswick may be a fluke, and it will be interesting to see if the overall trend continues.

House Finch is also becoming more common in winter, in parallel with expansion of its breeding range. These birds were first recorded at Ontario feeders by the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey in the early 1980s and have increased ever since. Meanwhile, this species has begun a march into Quebec. So far numbers in the Maritimes are negligible -- but perhaps it is only a matter of time before House Finches become established there as well.

...Lastly, House Sparrows and blackbirds (redwings, grackles, and cowbirds) all seemed to be a bit lower this year. Sparrows are undergoing long-term decline in breeding populations. The changes in blackbirds however, probably only reflect annual differences in timing of spring migration.