

Pictorial Highlights



This adult Slaty-backed Gull was found 26 December 2003 (here 4 January 2004) at Glace Bay harbor, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, where it remained into early February. There are no confirmed records of the species closer than southern Ontario or western New York and just a handful for the East anywhere. *Photograph by Cathy and Allan Murrant.*



Most unexpected in the Southern Atlantic region, a first-winter Yellow-billed Loon was found on Lake Horton, south of Atlanta, Georgia in late December (here 1 January 2004). This bird remained here into the spring season, one of four of its kind east of the Mississippi River this winter, the others in Tennessee and Kentucky. *Photograph by Bob Zaremba.*



With Rufous Hummingbirds now expected every year in the East in fall and winter, identifying the much scarcer and nearly identical Allen's Hummingbird has become an annual challenge. This Allen's, New Jersey's second, was a long-staying bird at Cape May (here 11 January 2004) banded in November 2003 and measured to confirm the identification. *Photograph by Scott Elowitz.*



Swainson's Thrush is extremely rare in North America in the winter, and winter-season reports north of southern Florida are not documented by photograph. This bird was on St. Catherine's Island, Georgia 13 December 2003. *Photograph by Giff Beaton.*



Part of a major incursion of Bohemian Waxwings that stretched from Newfoundland to Maryland (and even Bermuda), this bird at Sandy Hook 14 February 2004 was one of at least eight found in New Jersey—where occurrence of more than a single individual in a winter is almost unprecedented. *Photograph by Mike Fahay.*



This Black-throated Gray Warbler at Blandly Experimental Farm, Clarke County, Virginia on 27 (here 28) December 2003 was found by Doug Poffenbarger, the first in the state in almost three decades. A cooperative bird that foraged in evergreens in this lovely arboretum, it remained through at least 13 January 2004, seen by many scores of birders during its stay. *Digital photograph by Larry R. Lynch.*



This Harris's Sparrow at Stone Church, Northampton County, Pennsylvania (here 31 January 2004) was one of two in the state this winter. Over the past decade, the species has clearly increased as a visitor to the East. *Photograph by Rick Wiltraut.*



A Gray Flycatcher was an exceptional find on the Christmas Bird Count at Jordan Lake, Chatham County, North Carolina on 28 (here 31) December 2003. The bird was present until at least 22 January 2004 but could not be located after a severe winter storm in the third week of January. *Photograph by Will Cook.*



This Gray Flycatcher discovered 14 (here 22) December 2003 on the Fisherville Christmas Bird Count near Cayuga, Ontario provided the third record for the province, the first in winter, and the first record for a Canadian C.B.C. This bird fed on tiny insects even in very cold weather and was last seen on 7 January 2004. *Digital photograph by Jean Iron.*



Indiana's second Green-tailed Towhee thrilled Hoosier birders by lingering accommodatingly at Gary Dorman's New Albany, Floyd County feeders from 10 (here 13) December 2003 through 5 February 2004. *Photograph by John K. Cassady.*



This confiding adult Purple Sandpiper in the Chicago area at Waukegon, Illinois 18 and (here) 23 December 2003—in beautiful light—provided a genuinely rare opportunity to study the purple highlights in mantle feathers, scapulars, and tertials. *Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.*



This immature male Vermilion Flycatcher was photographed at Reelfoot Lake, Lake County, Tennessee on New Year's Eve day 2003, one of two found in western Tennessee during the season. *Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.*



Brightening a Midwestern winter, this quartet of warblers from Indiana added a splash of color and several first winter records for the state. A Yellow-throated Warbler (top left) was present for most of January in Marion County (here 11 January 2004), a first in winter. A Yellow Palm Warbler (top right) photographed 13 December 2003 at Patoka Lake afforded rare documentation of the *hypochrysea* subspecies for the state. A bright male Cape May Warbler was captured on film 5 January 2004 during its three-week stay at a feeding station in Montgomery County (lower right), while a young male Northern Parula provided a first winter record on Christmas Day during its month-long stay at a Monroe County feeding station. *Photographs by Kathy Feldman (top left), Jeffrey J. McCoy (top right), Clint C. Murray (lower right), and Susan Hengeveld (lower left).*



This dove, almost certainly a Eurasian Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove hybrid, was photographed in Memphis, Tennessee 31 January 2004, apparently the first documented instance of hybridization between these two species. *Photograph by Jeff R. Wilson.*



Photographed 28 February 2004 at the Seaman Road sewage lagoons in Jackson County, Mississippi, this Cave Swallow represents the first photographic record for Mississippi of this expanding species. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.



This Mountain Plover was one of 19 near Dougherty, Floyd, County, Texas on 24 January 2004. The declining species is a very rare winter visitor to the South and High Plains of the state. Photograph by Jo-Szu Tsai.



This returning Thick-billed Kingbird at Selkirk Island, Matagorda County, Texas was first discovered on the local Christmas Bird Count in December 2002 and found again a year later, almost to the day, on 15 (here 20) December 2003. This essentially Mexican species is extremely rare in Texas, where nesting is known only from the Big Bend area. Photograph by Brush Freeman.



Very unexpected at any season in northern Texas, but particularly so in the winter, this Great Kiskadee tarried in Amarillo 29 December 2003 (here) through 9 February 2004, a first record for the Panhandle. Photograph by Barrett Pierce.



This Ancient Murrelet, Wyoming's third, was found by high school students in an Afton High School parking lot, Lincoln County on 30 October 2003. Photograph by Susan Patla.



A first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was discovered in Boise, Idaho on 13 December 2003 by Cliff and Lisa Weisse—a stunning first record for Idaho and only the third record of the species west of the Continental Divide (Alaska and British Columbia have records). During its three-week stay at Boise's landfill, it was the dominant bird in a large gull flock that contained a record nine species and as many as 5000 individual gulls. The bird was last seen 2 January 2004 (here). Photograph by Mark Collier.



This second-winter Great Black-backed Gull was found by Eugene Hunn at Renton, King County, Washington 15 (here 18) January 2004, providing Washington's first state record. The large amount of pink on the bill prompted some discussion, but experts from Europe and eastern North America concurred on this bird's identification. Great Black-backed Gull numbers are increasing in the Great Lakes, and additional records from far western North America are to be expected. Photograph by Denny Granstrand.



This Baird's Sandpiper at Moses Lake, Washington 31 January through (here) 1 February 2004 was completely unexpected. Baird's Sandpipers normally winter in southern South America, and mid-winter records from North America are heretofore unknown. Temperatures in mid-January at Moses Lake dropped to -10° F. Photograph by Doug Schonewald.



Another utterly unexpected shorebird in the Pacific Northwest during winter, a Solitary Sandpiper made a one-day appearance near Stayton, Marion County, Oregon 18 January 2004 (here). This species overwinters in the United States only in very small numbers in southernmost Florida and Texas. Photograph by Rich Hoyer.



This glorious male McKay's Bunting was found by a very lucky visiting birder at Depoe Bay, Lincoln County, Oregon on 3 January 2004, furnishing Oregon's second record and the fifth for the Oregon & Washington region. Photograph by Ken Mahouski.



With fewer than six winter records of Broad-tailed Hummingbird in southern California, this male in Claremont, Los Angeles County was a genuine rarity (here 18 December 2003). Photograph by Dan Guthrie.



This Grace's Warbler was found in a row of *Casuarina* trees in Ciudad Constitución, Baja California Sur 10 February 2004, furnishing a long-awaited first record for this species on the Baja California Peninsula. Photograph by James E. Pike.



Photographed in February 2004, this Brown-throated Parakeet was one of a small flock that, according to local residents, frequented this site in the Golfo Dulce region of southwestern Costa Rica. A highly variable species with fourteen named subspecies, this race—*Aratinga pertinax ocularis*, the only representative found in North America, where endemic to the Pacific slope of Panama—is sometimes considered a separate species, Veraguas Parakeet. This constitutes the first record of the species from Costa Rica. Photograph by Jon Hunter.



This male Western Tanager at the famed Canopy Tower in Panama Province, Panama on 7 February 2004—photographed here with a Palm Tanager—represents potentially the southernmost record ever for the species and the first for central Panama. Digiscoped photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.