

lared Longspur was one near Lakeview 21 Dec (CMcG).

The male N. Cardinal near Tecopa, *Inyo*, since last summer was still present 12 Feb (MCM). Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in Santa Maria 27 Dec–10 Mar (JEL), Goleta 10 Nov–2 Jan (JEL), Santa Barbara 8 Dec–12 Mar (JEL) and Carpinteria 27 Dec–10 Feb (RWH), and single Black-headed Grosbeaks were in downtown Los Angeles 19 Jan (RBA) and San Marino, *Los Angeles*, 20 Dec (KSG). A Blue Grosbeak photographed near Santa Ynez, *Santa Barbara*, 29 Dec–9 Jan (CP) is one of a few found in California in winter. A Painted Bunting in Long Beach 13 Feb–12 Mar (KSG) and two near Imperial Beach 30 Dec–8 Jan (DWA, GMcC) were most likely escapees.

Two Rusty Blackbirds were reported: one on Santa Cruz I. 22 Jan (DC) and the other in Goleta 31 Jan–13 Mar (GBW). Unprecedented were ≤5 Com. Grackles in Long Beach 3–13 Jan (TEW, KSG); however, this species is spreading westward and more can be expected. The only Orchard Orioles this winter were two together in Santa Barbara 20 Jan–3 Mar (G&JH), one in Mission Viejo, *Orange*, 19 Dec (JEP), and another in Costa Mesa, *Orange*, 31 Jan–18 Mar (BAA). Five Hooded Orioles in Santa Barbara during Jan–Feb (JEL) was a high number for winter, with one in Costa Mesa 13–31 Jan (JEP) being the only other one reported. Six Baltimore Orioles along the coast were about average, most associated with wintering Bullock's Orioles attracted to flowering eucalyptus. Small numbers of Scott's Orioles regularly winter at selected "oases" along the w. edge of the desert in San Diego but are unusual elsewhere at this time of the year; as such, single birds near Santa Barbara 6 Oct–22 Mar (JEL), in Ventura 30 Dec–2 Jan (JT), Pomona 4–5 Dec (LS), Morongo Valley 24 Feb (RAH), and Calipatria 21 Dec–9 Jan (A&VH) were more than expected, as were at least 12 at scattered locations in the mountains and on the coastal slope of San Diego in Jan–Feb (PU).

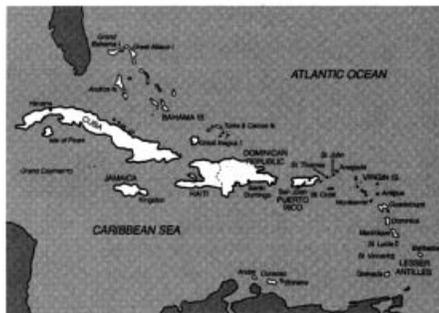
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west indies



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This report is dedicated to Dr. Bill Robertson, who passed away on 28 January. His research and influence in the West Indies is largely responsible for the existence of the West Indies Regional Report, initiated in 1979. Dr. Bill's "Observations on the birds of St. John, Virgin Islands" (*Auk* 79:44–76, 1962) was the "agar" for this report, antecedent Christmas Birds Counts, and myriad related works.

Reports this season arrived from the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Haiti, Martinique, and Puerto Rico. There appears to have been an unprecedented invasion of large four-year gulls in the southern Caribbean that precipitated some international discussion from three corners: Barbados, Canada, and Finland. At issue were four purported immature (of course) Yellow-legged and Herring Gulls (see Table 1).

Photos shuttled across the length and breadth of the Atlantic via the Internet, greatly facilitating a limited discussion. No consensus is advanced on positive identification, but Martin Frost proffers that they belong to the Azores race *Larus cachinnans atlantis*. This wave of larids is somewhat mirrored by the remarkable invasion of far northern finches and a Northern Shrike. Another e-image elicited a request for the original, and I think you'll agree that the Woody Bracey photo of a Kirtland's Warbler is as much art as it is documentation. This may seem strongly phrased, but any photo of this species peering back on the wintering grounds is worth more than a thousand words.

Abbreviations: Ba (*Bahamas*); Bd (*Barbados*); Be (*Bermuda*); Ma (*Martinique*).

PETRELS THROUGH TERNS

A leap-year Black-capped Petrel presented itself to WB while he was deep-sea fishing on 29 Feb, perhaps 10 miles into the Atlantic from Abaco, Ba; the location may not seem strange, but the date gives one pause. White (1998) reported a pair of petrels off Crossing Rock, Abaco, 29 Apr 1989 (DS), and RLN noted one off Great Inagua 16 Apr 1985. Hatchlings arrive in late Feb–early Mar and after a day or two may be left alone for days while parents forage afar. This bird is likely from Sierra Maestra, e. Cuba, wandering a bit along the 100-fathom line. The only known Audubon's Shearwater colony at Bd was censused 8 Jan, with 114 birds (A,J&MG, MF, E&HM, DP). A Red-billed Tropicbird was exploring seaside cliffs at Culebrita Is, PR, 24

Dec (MO), and three White-tailed Tropicbirds were noted at Fort del Morro, Old San Juan (SM), in early Feb. A Brown Pelican was seen at Great Sound, Be, 29 Dec into Feb (MW), a rare occurrence. Three Neotropic Cormorants were noted at Grog Pond, Exuma, 20 Jan (PD, DE). A Double-crested Cormorant was at Culebra Harbor (MO) 24 Dec and another was photographed near Aguadilla, PR, 29 Dec (JCD, *vide* MO). A juv. and sub-adult Grey Heron wintered through 14 Feb at Graeme Hall Swamp, Bd (MF). Little Egrets began nesting activity at Graeme Hall Swamp 14 Feb (MF).

Five W. Indian Whistling-Ducks were noted near Moriah Cay, Exuma, 19 Jan (PD, DE) at one of the historical sites for this species (indicating its perseverance). An outstanding find at Lyford Cay, New Providence, Ba, 17 Dec were two Snow Geese that lingered to 12 Jan (TH, TW et al.). J. R. Crouse reported upwards of 1,000 N. Shovelers at a lake in the Savanne Desolee near Gonaives, Haiti, 3 Dec. Other waterfowl numbered 20+ Am. Wigeons and 70 White-cheeked Pintails. Cuban-race Am. Kestrels were noted at Bowe's eatery and Hartswell 19–20 Jan (PD, DE). Indicators of the Peregrine Falcon's recovery were the **five** counted 19 Dec: four on the Cabo Rojo, PR, CBC (JCI et al.) and one at Fajardo, PR (JW et al.); three were recorded from Bd 2 Jan (MF).

On 7 Feb SM heard four Yellow-breasted Crakes, rarely reported from the Region, calling at Boqueron Refuge, PR. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was reported (MF) from Bd as a "cage bird," the 2nd such record from Bd. Regrettably, Frost reports that no date or place of capture is known. A Piping Plover remained throughout the period at Brown's Point, New Providence (AB, TW), and 17

(unbanded) Piping Plovers were noted at Green Turtle Cay, Abaco (WB), 31 Jan. Six Red Knots were noted on the San Juan, PR, CBC 17 Dec (LJR-H et al.). During the Salinas-Bani CBC, DR, 18 Dec, one of the first **Wilson's Phalaropes** in many winters was reported (KW et al.).

Four imm. Yellow-legged Gulls (*Larus cachinnans atlantis*) or imm. Lesser Black-backed Gulls festooned harbor bollards at Pile Bay, St. Michaels, Bd, 15 Jan–Feb, testing the skills and sanity of local observers and evoking gestures of good luck and apologies from others. Without immediate access to comparative material, the final vote may remain split on which bird was what. The problem was no less acute along the w. coast of Trinidad, where three-four species of larids excited local birders (FH; Table 1). A pair of Sandwich Terns were noted at Sandy Point, Abaco, 7 Dec (SH, WB). A small flock of Com. Terns was noted at Rio Anasco 27 Feb (MO).

PARROTS THROUGH FINCHES

About 30 Cuban Parrots were heard at Hole-in-the-Wall, S. Abaco (WB, TW), 17 Jan, indicating a good colony size. Not often reported from the Region are resident Burrowing Owls, but four were noted on the Santo Domingo CBC 19 Dec (KW et al.). For the first time during this season, two reports of **Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus portoricensis*) were received from the San Juan CBC, where two were found (LJR-H et al.), and from the Tortola, BVI, CBC, where one was found 27 Dec (RR et al.). It appears that there some regional population expansion has occurred during the last few years since the species was found at St. Thomas and Guana I., BVI. A continental Short-eared Owl found its way to Be, where SD and DW found one

at Cooper's Point 30 Jan. Near the entrance to Guanica Forest, PR, SM heard 8–10 Puerto Rican Nightjars calling 7 Feb. The area seems to be a locus for this endangered species.

Tony White reports that observers on Abaco had problems finding hummingbirds after hurricane *Floyd* passed through. But Gawn, birding Martinique 18–21 Dec, was dealt the island's hummingbird quartet: Purple-throated and Green-throated Caribs, Antillean Crested, and the endemic Blue-headed Hummingbird. Mlodinow recorded all five of Puerto Rico's hummingbird species; Antillean Mango, Green Mango, Green-throated Carib,

Antillean Crested Hummingbird and endemic Puerto Rican Emerald, in early Feb.

An E. Phoebe found 16 Feb at Cable Beach, New Providence, provided the first island record (PD, AB). Another outstanding flycatcher find was an E. Kingbird 19 Dec on the New Providence CBC (TH et al.). A N. Shrike, rarely reported from this Region, was found at Cooper's Point, Be, 30 Jan (SD, DW), and rather sets the tone for the rest of Bermuda's winter passerine report. An unusual winter sighting of a Yellow-throated Vireo occurred at Ocean View golf course, Be, 5 Jan (WF) and a **Philadelphia Vireo** was seen 19 Dec near Cabo Rojo, PR (MB, SE), one of few reports from the Region. Cave Swallows (70) were noted (SM) along the sea cliffs at Guajataca, PR, 12 Feb, where they are likely prospecting for nesting sites. Crouse reports a small flock of swallows at Furcy, Haiti, at about 5000-ft elevation, where the habitat is likely for Golden Swallow. A concerted effort should be made to census this area, for it may be one of only a few such habitats in the Region. A House Wren present since Sep 1998 was heard singing in early Feb at Fontabelle, St. Michael, Bd (EM). Two Hermit Thrushes were noted on the Bermuda CBC 30 Dec (EA et al.). Both N. and Bahama Mockingbirds were found at Exuma (PD, DE); the former is associated with settlements and the latter is found in more natural coppice and old-field habitats. Four White-breasted Thrashers were coaxed

SA The Lesser Antillean Bullfinch is apparently resident at St. Croix, USVI, where a single bird was found during the 2 Jan. CBC (SF et al.). A set of abandoned eggs was collected on St. Croix (WK) in the mid-1980s. This species is common on St. John, yet not known from St. Thomas. Whether it became established at St. John as a result of natural invasion or was brought in as a cage bird has been debated. The origin of the St. Croix sighting is not known, but the count circle includes a port, Fredricksted, where ship-assisted arrival is possible. Alternatively, given the number of hurricanes that have raked the island in recent decades, it is possible its occurrence is from a natural invasion. No reports have come from the British Virgin Islands, where there are similar habitats and knowledgeable observers. More information would be useful on the possible origin of the St. Croix population.

Table 1. Larid observations in the West Indies from December 1999 to February 2000.

Species	Location	Date	Observers
Laughing Gull	Abaco, Bahamas	31 Jan	WB
	Gonaives Bay, Haiti	9 Feb	JRC
	Waterloo, Trinidad	19 Feb	FH
Bonaparte's Gull	New Providence, Ba	5 Dec	SH, TW
	Mayaguez, Puerto Rico	3 Feb	MO
Black-headed Gull	Waterloo, Trinidad	19 Feb	FH
Ring-billed Gull	Abaco, Bahamas	7 Dec	WB, SH
	Abaco, Bahamas	31 Jan	WB
	New Providence, Ba	5 Dec	SH, TW
	Gonaives Bay, Haiti	19 Feb	RC
Herring Gull	Abaco, Bahamas	7 Dec	WB, SH
	Abaco, Bahamas	31 Jan	WB
	New Providence, Ba	5 Dec	SH, TW
	Barbados	20 Feb	EM, MF, MG
Yellow-legged Gull	Barbados	15 Jan	EM, MF, MG
Lesser Black-backed Gull	West End, Be	30 Dec–13 Feb	EA, PW, IF
	New Providence, Ba	5–19 Dec	SH, TH, TW
	Mayaguez, Puerto Rico	26 Jan–3 Feb	MO
	Waterloo, Trinidad	19, 22 Feb	FH
Great Black-backed Gull	Bermuda	30 Dec	EA
	New Providence, Ba	5–19 Dec	SH, TH, TW
	Abaco, Ba	7 Dec	WB, SH

out in the afternoon heat 19 Dec (MG) at Presqu'île de la Caravelle, Ma, the only other site on the planet besides the Atlantic coast of St. Lucia where this critically endangered, monotypic thrasher is found. A Pearly-eyed Thrasher was photographed 16 Dec at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama, for the first record there (BS, WB, PS). Dry Tortugas to Key Biscayne, here it comes.

Golden Warblers with red heads (*Dendroica petechia ruficapilla*), an interesting convergent type nearly identical with Mangrove (Yellow) Warbler of Baja California and the Caribbean coast of Central America (Curson et al. 1994), were common at Martinique 18–21 Dec (MG). The Kirtland's Warbler found 28 Oct (EC, PD) was seen again 9 Jan (WB, HP). It or another less brightly colored bird was photographed by WB about an hour later and 300 yards from the first sighting at Hole-in-the-Wall, S. Abaco, strongly suggesting a wintering bird and potentially a repeat occurrence. Two endemic Elfin Woods Warblers were counted 19 Dec on the Fajardo, PR, CBC (JW). On 19 Dec, two Green-tailed Warblers, endemic to Hispaniola, were noted on the Santo Domingo, DR, CBC (KW et al.). A **Summer Tanager** at Bermuda's Arboretum 14–18 Feb furnished an unusual record (PW, IF).

Grasshopper Sparrows were noted at two locations on Exuma (PD, DE), one 18 Jan near Mt. Thompson and possibly two at Williams Town 19–20 Jan. On 7 Dec at Clearwater, Be, 103 Snow Buntings were counted (SD). Does this count portend a good year for birding in the Region? A **Blue Grosbeak** was noted on the Cabo Rojo, PR, CBC 19 Dec (JCI et al.) for the first Regional report of the season. A Pine

Grosbeak was present Dec–Jan in Somerset, Be (*fide* AD) for another remarkable winter record from Bermuda. A female Painted Bunting was also found 20 Jan at Williams Town, Exuma (PD, DE). The quest for Martinique Oriole proved a little more difficult than expected for MG, but he managed to find a pair at Le Diamant, Ma, 21 Dec. A flock of 15 Com. Redpolls was present throughout Jan at Be (DW). A profitable trip (JRC) to Furcy, Haiti, elevation 5000 ft., 15 Jan produced 6–10 Antillean Siskins, an endemic species infrequently reported from the Region.

Corrigendum/Addendum

Male and female Pine Siskins reported in *NAB* 53(4):437 should read Antillean Siskins. At Gordon Cay, off Abaco, Ba, a W. Kingbird was noted 27 Nov (BH et al.).

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