



American Avocet nest. Drawing by Joan Poole.

The Changing Seasons

*A thorough and thoughtful summary of the recent
Nesting Season, 1979, in the United States and Canada*

Paul Lehman and Brad Schram

IT WAS A NEW EXPERIENCE for us to be faced with the mass of data in the following regional reports, with the responsibility of pulling it together in a concise, meaningful manner. As one would expect, we now have a new appreciation of the efforts of those who have accomplished this so effectively in the past, as well as those of the regional editors who must produce similar analyses four times a year.

The regional reports published in *American Birds* serve not only as a forum for documenting the changing bird distribution in North America, but also as an excellent source of knowledge for birders and data for ornithologists. Regions are not isolated entities, and much can be learned about the birdlife of one's own area by reading other regional reports. Readers of *American Birds* are encouraged to peruse as many of the regional reports as is possible in each issue. The regional editors can greatly assist this reading by including *reasons* for their choice of records published. This, alas, is subject to space

restrictions, but is of significance nonetheless.

SELECTED THOUGHTS

JULY HAS BEEN THE BEST month for Ruff in a large portion of North America. This summer continued the tradition with records coming from Newfoundland, Massachusetts (two), Rhode Island, Long Island (at least three), Virginia, Québec, Ontario, upstate New York, Illinois, and Minnesota. The tendency to occur early during the fall migration period is apparent in every corner of the continent except the Southwest. This is an interesting anomaly when one considers that the coastal areas of California are attended by a large number of shorebird enthusiasts during the summer months. If Ruff occurred there in July, as elsewhere, it certainly would have been detected by now, yet this fairly regular California visitor has not appeared any earlier than the beginning of September. At first, one may be inclined merely to dismiss this as a function of California's more

southerly location. There are, however, several recent records in July and early August in areas that are even more southerly than California (*e.g.*, Florida, Louisiana). One probable explanation is that the July records solely involve adults, while later occurrences (September onwards) are largely of juvenals. This would conform to the general timing of migrant shorebirds in the "fall," in which adults often *precede* the first juvenals by as much as a month. Why there are virtually no records of adults from California is not known.

OVER THE YEARS, Wilson's Phalarope appearances in June away from breeding locales, and especially in areas where the species is rare, have caused much speculation. In June and July 1979, reports came from Virginia, Florida, and Mississippi. Most of these records can be explained.

After laying their eggs and leaving the brooding and rearing responsibilities to the male, female Wilson's may promptly leave the nesting grounds. Individuals with nest failures may do the same. In

Southern California, *fall* migrant Wilson's Phalaropes regularly arrive as early as the second week of June; a large percentage of these birds are females. The authors have observed probable late spring migrant shorebirds side by side with fall migrant Wilson's on several occasions. Large numbers of presumed post-breeding phalaropes already had congregated in Idaho this year by late June. Early summer records in the East may also largely be a result of this quick dispersal. (Then again, see the Northeastern Maritime Region's report for details of a remarkable breeding record!)

The same general pattern may also occur in Northern Phalaropes. While northbound Northern Phalaropes occur in early June, birds seen toward the latter part of the month (predominantly females) may be headed south.

THE RECENT RASH of June records inland for the Arctic Tern continued this year with reports from Québec, southern Ontario, Wisconsin, and southern California (see spring season report). This recent increase may be a result of better coverage in this month; perhaps this species is a very rare but regular spring migrant overland. Arctic Terns are typically late migrants, even at sea, at least along the Pacific Coast. These late spring inland records probably involve individuals that nest in the high Arctic, since the Atlantic and Pacific coastal breeding populations would have already arrived on their nesting grounds.

Arctic Terns have been recorded three out of the past four Junes at the Salton Sea. These birds must have been "trapped" in the Gulf of California as they moved northward and then proceeded overland to the sea. The same phenomenon may also have been responsible for California's two other inland records, both from the period late May/early June and from along the eastern edge of the state. One seen this June in Montana may have been an extension of this Gulf of California origin.

The Great Lakes comprise another area with recent multiple Arctic Tern records. Like the Salton Sea, these large bodies of water probably are very attractive to an overland-migrating Arctic Tern. The path taken by these birds (North from the Gulf of Mexico?) is not as clear as with those turning up in the desert Southwest.

In reference to a sudden increase in the number of Florida records, including

one on the state's *Gulf Coast* this July, John Ogden has an appropriate comment: "I don't know where they're coming from."

Then there are those species whose occurrence in many areas lacks any sort of logical pattern. One example is the Franklin's Gull. In Alabama it "continues to be an enigma to serious students of distribution and migration. It has been recorded ten times but only two of those records are during the migration." Two were seen there in late July. The same tendency for it to occur at almost any time exists in several other states. For example, an adult in Southern California June 21 "defies categorizing."

ENDANGERED/BLUE-LISTED SPECIES

Endangered Species

THERE WERE NO REPORTS of California Condor fledglings from the 1979 nesting season. Although it is possible that one has gone unseen, the outlook for this species continues to be bleak. Contrasting with the continuing decline of the California Condor is the unqualified success enjoyed by Bald Eagle populations this year. Every region alluding to this raptor noted that it was a highly productive nesting season. Its apparent comeback is consistent with that of other fish-eating birds (notably Double-crested Cormorant and Osprey) whose populations were decimated by the use of persistent pesticides in the United States.

Many Peregrine Falcons, however, spend their winters exposed to these substances in Latin America. A few individuals were noted, but nesting success went largely unreported — perhaps in an effort to protect those eyries remaining. Along with its report of birds fledging from hacking stations, the Middle Atlantic Coast Region reports two returning birds, one released in the area in 1977, the other in 1978. The 1977 bird laid three infertile eggs outside the thirty-fourth floor of a Baltimore office building. Nevertheless, this bird fledged four young supplied by Cornell in place of its own clutch while, one assumes, making life exciting for the local Rock Doves.

The endangered Kirtland's Warbler showed an increase in singing males over last year of from 193 to 210 birds in Michigan, with one or two out-of-range birds seen in Wisconsin as well.

Blue-Listed Species

WHITE PELICANS had mixed success this season. The Northern Great Plains Region reports good results, as does the Northern Rocky Mountain - Intermountain Region, but the only colony noted in the Mountain West Region did poorly, as did its waterfowl generally. Double-crested Cormorant enjoyed excellent breeding success throughout its range this season, causing one to hope it will extricate itself from Blue List status in the near future. Heron reports across the continent also showed mixed success. Florida reports a bad season for nesting herons due to extremes in water availability — drought followed by flood conditions. The Mountain West Region reports the Bear River Refuge heronry down by an estimated 10-20%, but other regions report average to good success at their heronries. Both Reddish Egret and Black-crowned Night Heron reports give cause for cautious optimism. The Central Southern Region lists the Reddish Egret as increasing in Mississippi, and Alabama had its first state nesting record of the species. Black-crowned Night Heron breeding success in the Middlewestern Prairie Region has been an item of concern, but the bird did not show signs of decline there this season, while its breeding population continues to grow in Oregon. Wood Storks did badly in the Central Southern Region. The birds enjoyed an unusually successful hatch, but subsequent rains significantly lowered the number of birds fledged. It was apparently a good season for White-faced Ibis as well, including the second South Dakota nesting record, and generally favorable results in the Mountain West Region. The report on this species from California's Central Valley was also encouraging, and its reported nesting in San Diego County of the Southern Pacific Coast Region would represent the first such record for coastal California since 1901. Osprey was reported to be doing well throughout its nesting range.

Blue-listed hawks with mixed success this season include: Sharp-shinned, down in Appalachia, but having a good year in the Middlewestern Prairie Region; Cooper's, up in Appalachia with cautious optimism expressed in the Middlewestern Prairie report; and Red-shouldered, mixed report from the Hudson-Delaware Region, "holding its own" in the Appalachia, and possibly up in the Middlewestern Prairie Region.

The Piping Plover was reported doing well in North Dakota and the Western

Great Lakes Region, but is losing out to dune buggies in New Jersey. Snowy Plovers are unfortunately still doing poorly on the Pacific Coast generally, but the report of excellent breeding success this season in Colorado is encouraging for that population.

Although the Gull-billed Tern apparently had a good nesting season in Alabama, events elsewhere show this species, unhappily, is still deserving of its Blue List status. The species' Virginia barrier island colonies are reportedly continuing to decline, a Florida colony was wiped out by a June storm, and a Texas colony on an island off Rockport was devastated by a "deodorized skunk," the latter event being a classic example of "Murphy's Law" in operation.

Least Terns have been the cause for concern almost everywhere, especially in the Midwest and West. A colony of 1500 birds on a spoil island off the Mississippi coast had a good fledge, as did the Texas coast colonies, but late broods in the Central Southern Region were wiped out by hurricanes *Bob* and *Claudette*. The Florida population is reportedly difficult to assess owing to the movement of colonies with changes in its traditional habitat. The bird continues to be in serious trouble in the West, however, with little success reported in the Southern Great Plains and Mountain West regions, and almost total failure in the Middle Pacific Coast Region.

Both Yellow- and Black-billed cuckoos were noted to have occurred in unusually high numbers in many regions east of the Rockies, giving further credence to the deletion of the eastern race of the Yellow-billed from the Blue List last year. A calling Yellow-billed Cuckoo in western Washington in late July was of undetermined race, but since there has not been a nesting record in the area in forty years, it was a noteworthy event. Purple Martins were not often spoken of in this season's reports, but when they were the news was not particularly encouraging. The bird reportedly did poorly in the Hudson-Delaware Region, is still having problems in Washington, and the Southern Pacific Coast Region reports negatively on its abundance. Apart from its range in the West, the Bewick's Wren continues to be in real trouble. It is reportedly "disappearing" in the Central Southern Region, had a bad session in Appalachia, and is still down in the Midwest, Southern Great Plains, and in Texas. Eastern Bluebird reports vary from region to region. The

Appalachians, North Dakota, and Kansas report good nesting success while the bird had a poor year in the Western Great Lakes and Middlewestern Prairie regions. The Western Bluebird continues to disappear from some former nesting areas of the Northern Pacific Coast Region, while remaining stable in nearby locations. Although a slight increase was noted in the Middlewestern Prairie Region, Loggerhead Shrike populations are down in the Western Great Lakes, Central Southern, and Southern Great Plains regions, and it continues to be virtually nonexistent in the Northeast.

The Middlewestern Prairie Region's Bell's Vireo population is apparently holding on, but it is virtually extirpated from south Texas and its future as a breeding species in California is in doubt.

Although reported to be down in numbers in the Hudson-Delaware Region, the Grasshopper Sparrow did not decline in the Southern Great Plains Region, showed an increase in Tennessee, Alabama, and the Middlewestern Prairie Region, and is reported to be expanding into newly cleared areas of South Texas.

Finally, the report of twenty-six singing male Bachman's Sparrows on one Mississippi Breeding Bird Survey route shows that the bird is apparently doing well somewhere.

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT(S)

CERTAINLY ONE of the more significant contributions made by the annual nesting season report is its inclusion of those data which document the way nesting success is affected by continuing habitat change in the various regions. Although one expects a doleful listing of ecological boondoggles and outright disasters when approaching this issue, happily such is not always the case. If numbers of fledglings produced is a legitimate criterion for determining favorable habitat, the following notes are cause for some encouragement. The Florida report contains a thoughtful discussion of the positive effect of artificial impoundments in that state's interior to the breeding success of water birds. The importance of these impoundments, however, points to the other factor in the equation, the degradation of Florida's natural waterways. A negative effect of dependence on man-made habitat was realized in the Central Southern Region,

reporting that the Blue-listed Wood Stork produced no young in Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge because the spring storms washed out the dams on which the birds depend for foraging. The Spotted Owl's future appears a little brighter in Washington's Natural Forests owing to policy changes regarding snags and timber sales. South Texas' Cave Swallows continue to expand their nesting range by utilizing highway culverts for nesting colonies, and the few notes of cautious hope for Eastern Bluebirds and Purple Martins include reference to the assistance provided by nest boxes.

Unfortunately, the regional reports also include the type of information one dreads, but has come to expect. The Northern Great Plains report suggests that the cutting of diseased trees to control Dutch Elm Disease may adversely impact cavity nesters in that region. The Southern Pacific Coast Region reports that the Elf Owl is almost extirpated as a breeding species in California, only four to six pairs are estimated to remain in the state. The primary culprit here, as with the rapidly diminishing state population of Least Bell's Vireo, is destruction of nesting habitat. The disastrous breeding season for California Gulls at Mono Lake (Middle Pacific Coast Region) was to be expected. Predators caused the gulls to abandon their nesting island, made accessible by the lowering water level resulting from diversion of inflowing stream water to the city of Los Angeles. The Northern Rocky Mountain — Intermountain Region reports that a unique nesting area for the Blue-listed Upland Sandpiper and Grasshopper Sparrow near Spokane, Washington may be lost to development.

BREEDING RANGE EXTENSIONS

GIVEN THE SEVERITY of the last several winters through central, eastern and southeastern North America, one expects the kind of reports which follow regarding populations of birds already stressed by preceding winters. Winter, Bewick's and Carolina wrens remain drastically depleted, with only a few small, localized pockets reporting an increase. The outlook for Eastern Bluebird recovery is still most tentative, and Ontario reports its nesting population of Ruby- and Golden-crowned kinglets to be notably smaller.

The continued widespread expansion of many species northward (particularly passerines) was most apparent in many areas this summer. This phenomenon was particularly well documented in the Northeastern Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, Ontario, Western Great Lakes, and Middlewestern Prairie regions. Top honors would have to go to the Red-bellied Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher (now nesting north to Massachusetts), Mockingbird, Great-tailed Grackle, and Blue Grosbeak. The Mockingbird is expanding its northern border across virtually the entire continent with reports of increased numbers from Québec, Ontario, North Dakota, and Oregon. Blue Grosbeaks were up from the Northern Great Plains. One particularly intrepid individual made it all the way north to Duluth.

The Mississippi Kite continues to expand in many areas. It had a "great" season in Colorado, and North Carolina reports higher numbers together with another suggestion of nesting. More northern sightings of wanderers (?) continued to be made, this year's coming from New York City (two birds), southern New Jersey, and Illinois. The species was also noted nesting farther south than previously in Florida.

Not all of the range increases are pleasing the observers and local residents, however! There is an "explosion" in the Great-tailed Grackle population in the Southern Great Plains where the "residents throughout the Plains are complaining." The species nested this year as far north as Nebraska. Great-taileds are also increasing rapidly in southeastern California accounting for a recent upsurge in the number of vagrant sightings from along the state's coast. The population is also increasing in Colorado, but at a slower rate. Boat-tailed Grackles along the Atlantic Coast are also up, with an increase in the New Jersey population and the possibility that it nested in New York this summer for the first time.

Other species which showed definite northward expansion in the East and/or Midwest include the Common Raven (moving north up the Appalachians), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (including a first nesting for Maine), White-eyed Vireo, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole. Cattle Egrets are still increasing almost everywhere. Significant nesting records include one

for North Dakota and the first (two locales) for coastal California. Hook-billed Kites were reported from several places in south Texas between Santa Ana Refuge and Falcon Dam. Nesting was suggested to be probable at two of these. American Oystercatchers continue to increase along the more northern portions of their Atlantic Coast range. In New Jersey they were even found nesting in salt marshes!

Willow Flycatchers have been virtually extirpated from a large portion of California. (As an aside: Willow Flycatchers in the West lack eye-rings, facilitating their identification. In the East they seem to have more of an eye-ring; yet, a report of nesting Willows in Virginia included a description of "no eye-ring." It would be most interesting for observers throughout the East to study Willow Flycatcher eye-rings.)

Several of the regional editors commented that a number of range expansions may be in response to local declines in other related species or is at the expense of them. A decrease in the population of Least Flycatchers in New Jersey may be a result of the recent increase in Acadians; similarly, Blue-winged Warblers moving north in Appalachia may be forcing the local retreat of the Golden-winged, or swamping it genetically. In the same vein, the southward expansion of the House Wren in Arkansas may be a result of a lack of competition from Carolina Wrens, recently decimated by several cold winters.

Lastly, if anyone thought he could go to the high Arctic to escape Starlings, forget it. Two were seen this summer in northern Alaska! It seems as though the southeastern corner of that state is the only area that can still boast no records of this species.

Northern Birds South

ALTHOUGH THE NORTHWARD push of "southern" species has perhaps taken the spotlight, the southward expansion of more typically "northern" species continues to be documented in a number of areas. The presumably tongue-in-cheek comments of the Appalachian Region's editor serve to illustrate the present trend of northern resident species extending their range southward: "Perhaps the Appalachian Region will once again be reporting Spruce Grouse and Gray Jays as it would have had *American Birds* been

published in the late Pleistocene." Examples of this southward push can be found in many of the season's reports, although they are particularly evident in reading the Florida, Western Great Lakes, Middlewestern Prairie and especially the Appalachian Region's accounts. Several regions (e.g., Appalachians, Western Great Lakes, Middlewestern Prairie) are simultaneously experiencing a southward extension of these typically more northern species and a northward extension of more southern ones.

Some of the more notable examples of this southward spread are given here, but for a more thorough account the reader is referred to the regional reports themselves.

Nesting Gadwall is increasing and moving southward on both coasts while Common Merganser is noted summering in eastern Pennsylvania, and its first nesting record for New Jersey was documented in the northwestern corner of the state. Several of the larger gulls continued their southward (and inland) march, with Herring nesting along the Atlantic Coast as far south as North Carolina. Its nesting population was up in New Jersey together with that of Great Black-backed Gull. Inland, the Great Black-backed now breeds along the St. Lawrence River in Québec, and three in Michigan this summer perhaps portend future nesting there. Numbers of nesting Herring Gulls in Illinois increased as well. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers nested in the Hudson-Delaware Region, while a pair on Mt. Rogers, Virginia, represents a major southern extension of its breeding range. Tree Swallows continue to spread southward, with first state nesting records for North Carolina and Oklahoma and an increase in numbers in eastern Colorado. Barn Swallow is also moving its breeding range farther south in Florida, as are American Robin and Brown-headed Cowbird. A Dark-eyed Junco nest in South Carolina was a first for that state.

The Clay-colored Sparrow provides this season's only report of a "western" species expanding in any direction on a large scale. Eleven were seen in the Churchill, Manitoba, area during June. It is increasing in Ontario, and nesting was indicated again in Québec.

Eastern Birds West

THE EXPANSION OF several "eastern" species' breeding ranges in the West continued this summer.

In the Southwest, Chimney Swifts were found summering once again in the Tucson and Los Angeles areas. Indigo Buntings were found breeding in west Texas and the number of summer records mounted in southern California where breeding seems imminent. Indigos were also on the increase in the Mountain West Region.

Three Blue Jays were recorded this June in Montana, and one was seen in eastern Washington, further documenting its westward expansion. The western extreme of several species' ranges was well delineated in this summer's report from the Northern Rocky Mountain — Intermountain Region. Gray Catbirds were found to northeast Oregon and south-central Washington; Veeries were in central Oregon; several singing Ovenbirds were near Bozeman, Montana; and Northern Waterthrush continued to occupy its outpost on the east side of the Cascades in Oregon. The "eastern" House Finch population is spreading in almost every direction. A westward pioneer House Finch was recorded this year in Michigan.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

SIGNIFICANT NESTING RECORDS not associated with larger-scale range expansions include (first state nesting records are denoted by an asterisk): Double-crested Cormorant in Connecticut (*), Little Blue Heron in New Mexico and California (*), Reddish Egret in Alabama (*), Least Bittern in Colorado, Cinnamon Teal in North Dakota (*, paired with a Blue-winged), Blue-winged Teal in Mississippi and northern Alaska (pair only), Broad-winged Hawk in Nebraska, Zone-tailed Hawk in California (*), Willet in Massachusetts (first in this century), Common Snipe in Arizona (probable only), Short-billed Dowitcher in Yukon, Laughing Gull in New York (possibly first successful nest since 1880s), Boreal Owl in Minnesota, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Iowa (*), Purple Martin in Colorado (*), Red-breasted Nuthatch in Indiana (*), Fish Crow in upstate New York, Wood Thrush in North Dakota, Solitary Vireo in Illinois (*, raised only a cowbird), Townsend's Warbler in Saskatchewan (*), Bobolink in Arizona, Hepatic Tanager in Colorado (possible only), Dickcissel in New Mexico (possible only), Lesser Goldfinch in Washington (possible only), and Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*A. c. nelsoni*) in Ontario.

In addition, a single Western Wood Pewee returned to last year's isolated Minnesota nest site but no nesting activity was noted. The nesting colony of Arctic Terns in Washington was active again this summer with five pairs present, but this island may soon become unstable.

Two species of shorebirds made spectacular breeding range extensions in Massachusetts this summer: a Wilson's Phalarope nest was found on Plum Island, the first for the East Coast, and a dead downy Least Sandpiper chick found on Monomoy Island was evidence of its first nesting record south of Nova Scotia.

A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher made two bizarre nesting attempts in southeast California; it was paired with a Western Kingbird.

The female blue phase and male white phase Snow Geese which nested in North Dakota for a first state record were in a class by themselves. One possible explanation is that at least one of the birds was crippled, forcing it to remain south. Such circumstances have resulted in extralimital waterfowl nesting records in the past.

ACCIDENTALS AND OTHER NOTABLE RECORDS

IT WAS A LATE or extended spring migration in many areas of the East, with large numbers of migrants still moving through some regions in early June and many late records for individual migrants reported.

The many records of species south of their normal summer range were, however, probably not associated with this phenomenon. Some of the more interesting records include: 30 White-fronted Geese in Idaho July 20; single European Wigeon in Québec July 10-14 and northern California July 8-24; Common Eider in North Carolina June 11; Gyrfalcon in New Brunswick June 13; Merlin in Vermont June 16 and Alabama June 22; Black Rail in northwest Florida July 10; Semipalmated Sandpiper in northern California (where casual) all summer; Purple Sandpiper in Chicago (!) June 30; Dovekie off New Brunswick July 11; Varied Thrush in southern California July 20; and single Bobolinks in Florida June 29 and July 29.

Records of eastern vagrants in the West continue to pour in. Unlike several years ago when almost all such records came from California, this year's total

was fairly well distributed with notable increases in vagrant reports from the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest.

Some of the more significant records include Least Flycatcher and Veery on Vancouver Island, Yellow-throated Vireos in Colorado and New Mexico, Yellow-throated Warbler and "Yellow" Palm Warbler in northern California, and a Common Grackle in southern California.

Although a large percentage of these spring stragglers occur from mid-May to mid-June, a significant number are still being recorded into early or mid-July when several species of western migrants (*Selasphorus* hummingbirds, "Bullock's" Oriole) are already heading south. What was a Red-eyed Vireo doing in Arizona in mid-July? A Black-throated Blue Warbler in Oregon for three weeks was particularly noteworthy since there are only two spring records for heavily birded California. *Eight* mid-summer Hooded Warblers in Arizona, including two pairs, were amazing! The Southwest regional editor's comment that "Bizarre as it seems, we suspect it is only a matter of time until this species is found breeding in Arizona" does indeed seem incredible, yet eastern vagrants have nested in the far west before (e.g., Northern Parula in California).

There are several factors in the East contributing to the relative scarcity of vagrants there in comparison to the West; rarely is there an "oasis" effect as in the more arid West, and the total population of "western" species from which to draw is smaller. However, a pattern similar to that in the West seemingly occurs. Spring vagrants tend to appear in late May and June, especially at various coastal localities (see the Northeastern Maritime Region's reports for the past several years, for example). Perhaps fuller coverage of such localities during this period would result in a significant increase in vagrant records.

This summer there was a small, but interesting, assortment of western species recorded eastward, including a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Massachusetts, Western Wood Pewee in Iowa (first state record), Sprague's Pipit continuing in Michigan, an amazing territorial Black-throated Gray Warbler in Rhode Island, and a Yellow-headed Blackbird in upstate New York.

A "mini-invasion" of Western Kingbirds to the east of its normal range was most interesting. June records came from Ontario, Virginia, North Car-

olina, and Iowa, followed by July reports from Maryland, Wisconsin and Louisiana.

Records of western waterbirds include an Eared Grebe in upstate New York, and single White Pelicans in Québec (first provincial specimen) and Maryland. First state record for the White-faced Ibis in Virginia, and first New York record since 1908 (where as many as three were seen) raise the question of how many are actually occurring well to the northeast of their "normal" range. This summer also produced an unusual number and assortment of "western" shorebirds in June.

A most interesting development is noted in the results of pelagic trips far off the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and from the Central Southern Region into the Gulf of Mexico. The former region's narrative of a trip 160-240 miles offshore is provocative, including observations of 173 Audubon's Shearwaters, 54 Leach's Storm-Petrels, a Harcourt's Storm-Petrel and a Black-capped Petrel! Contemplating the rationale by which one could add birds seen 200 miles offshore to one's "Maryland List" is nearly as fascinating. One suspects that continuance of such expeditions in these regions will add substantially to our knowledge of these largely unexplored waters.

Magnificent Frigatebirds invaded the Southwest in unprecedented numbers this summer. Typically, virtually all of the birds seen were immatures, a large majority of the records coming from coastal southern California and the Salton Sea. Small groups were seen on a number of occasions, while a flock of twenty-two at the Salton Sea's north end must have been very impressive! The species also occurred in larger-than-normal numbers in northern California (including one inland over the Sacramento Valley) and Arizona, where the previous high number of individuals recorded was more than doubled. One report involved a flock of nine over Phoenix!

A LIST OF THIS summer's more spectacular accidentals not mentioned previously includes the following:

A Yellow-nosed Albatross was off Newfoundland. Cory's Shearwaters occurred well north of their normal range off northern New England and the Maritimes; warm surface ocean temperatures may have been responsible. A Red-tailed Tropicbird at the Farallon

Islands off San Francisco July 3 was a first for California and the Pacific Coast within the 100 mile offshore "limit." Louisiana Herons wandered northward to Indiana and, intrepidly to Manitoba. A Roseate Spoonbill moved north to Maryland, as did two Fulvous Whistling Ducks to North Dakota.

A Garganey at Iona Island, British Columbia, June 8-12, adds another record to the unfolding pattern for this species; its appearance seems to coincide with and following the arrival of the migratory North American teal. It may be that this Eurasian species will occur predominantly from mid-March through April in the southern states and from late April through mid-June at more northern latitudes.

Maine logged its first American Oystercatcher. A Wilson's Plover was in Connecticut and another lingered in southern California through late June. New Mexico had a Short-billed Dowitcher July 28; this species is still undocumented for the state. The Midwest had a touch of Europe during July with three Curlew Sandpipers in Illinois and a Black-headed Gull and White-winged Black Tern in Indiana. An adult Long-tailed Jaeger in North Dakota July 27-29 was only a few miles from the site of last year's first state record! A probable "Yellow-legged" Western Gull in southwest Arizona would be the first record of this form (species?) for the state. Nova Scotia had its first confirmed Gull-billed Tern, as well as a Royal, and Hawaii's first Caspian remained through the summer on Oahu. A Noddy Tern found dead in Mississippi provided a second state specimen. Truly amazing was a Crested Auklet observed just offshore July 16, and found dead the following day at Bolinas, California; obviously the first record for the state. A White-winged Dove in Montana was also a first, while Florida's "enigmatic" Key West Quail Dove continued to "haunt its few square yards" in the Everglades. A report suggestive of an Eared Trogon in southwest New Mexico is very intriguing; a Rose-throated Becard there is preceded by only one hypothetical state record. Bahama Swallow continues to be seen in summer on the Florida Keys. A Wood Thrush (pair?) was in Manitoba.

Lastly, a Harcourt's Storm-Petrel was seen 220 miles east of Delaware; it would be useful to see notes on the identification of this species published. The same is true for one (identified as a second-year bird) of the five Lesser Black-

backed Gulls seen on the East Coast this summer. Will this species be breeding here in the future?

How's That Again?

THE QUEST FOR the rare bird ranks high among those stimuli impelling birders into the field regardless of severe weather conditions, family obligations, or televised football games. For this reason we feel that certain observations in the regional reports should not go unnoticed, and they are therefore set forth here for your consideration and analysis.

Both the Hudson-Delaware and Western Great Lakes regional editors noted that this nesting season saw an entirely new habitat open up to birders — that area often overlooked, which is within walking distance of home. Birds also make "abnormal" adaptations when circumstances dictate, possibly explaining the report of roadside Great Egrets preying on rats in the New Orleans area, and the Ontario Saw-whet Owls which apparently raised their young on an earthworm diet — with deleterious effect. Chumming for pelagics is a time-tested strategy; an Audubon Shearwater's response to the canny Rowlett's trailing suntan lotion slick is therefore provocative, suggesting further experimentation. Florida's regional editor notes that appetite may also determine the fate of the Canada Goose which summered inexplicably at Fort Jefferson on the Dry Tortugas.

Birds outside of normal altitudinal limits are usually worthy of note, but the Arkansas Lark Sparrow nest forty-eight feet up in a pine tree leaves the authors without a plausible explanation. The Canada Geese which fledged their young eighty feet high in a commandeered Osprey nest (Montana), and the Common Merganser perching atop a chimney and from which scolded a Breeding Bird Surveyor (New Jersey) were similarly unique. Finally, the Leach's Storm-Petrel dodging Mangrove roots in Florida and the pelagic Clapper Rail swimming in the Gulf off Louisiana exemplify extremes of the "pioneer effect" in the exploitation of new habitat, frequently spoken of in Changing Seasons reports.

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