

The Changing Seasons

Nesting Season 1983 offers many valuable contributions to our understanding of breeding distributions

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H EAT, INSECT PESTS, CHIGGERS, TICKS and the low probability of seeing a rarity all take their toll on the number of observers that get into the field during breeding season. With seemingly fewer observers in the field, fewer records reach the regional editors' desks and many questions about distributions of breeding birds go unanswered. In the last few years, however, a number of areas have begun to change this trend by initiating breeding bird atlas surveys and "summer Christmas counts." These summer projects, in addition to continuing latilong studies that are occurring primarily in western states, have been very productive and are making valuable contributions to our understanding of breeding bird distribution. The breeding season receives greater attention each year, a positive trend that hopefully will continue in the future.

WEATHER AND ITS EFFECTS

During 1983, early June was cool and wet, as were most preceding spring months, throughout a good portion of the continent. These cool, wet conditions reportedly had both good and bad effects on birdlife. On the positive side, a number of regions experienced good water conditions for rails and other freshwater marsh species. On the eastern Colorado plains, spring rains caused lush growth of grasses that was beneficial for grassland birds. On the negative side, many first nesting attempts failed, various habitats were flooded or altered, and aerial insectivores had problems finding sufficient food. In a few regions, the effects of the cool, wet spring and early summer were compounded by El Niño (see *AB* 37:275 for discussion of El Niño) and the melting of heavy winter snow accumulation.



Burrowing Owl, east of Decatur, Ill., Aug. 6, 1983. An extremely tame owl perched on a rock pile beside the road. Photo/ Joe Milosevich.

As June progressed and July rolled in, little further precipitation was experienced in most regions and temperatures started to climb, staying unseasonably high for the remainder of the period. There were few reports that these hot, dry conditions had any deleterious effects on breeding birds, and there were also no major weather events on the East or Gulf Coasts that disrupted the breeding season. Overall, most species of birds were

thought to have had a good nesting season.

NOTABLE STATE AND PROVINCIAL BREEDING RECORDS

E XCLUDING PART OF the Northeastern Maritime report, a total of 22 newly confirmed breeding species was added to state and provincial lists. In addition, eight reports could be classified as either possible or probable new breeding records. All these reports are presented below with reported breeding status within each area.

Snowy Egret (Ohio, confirmed), Little Blue Heron (Ohio, confirmed; South Dakota, possible), Yellow-crowned Night Heron (Colorado, confirmed), Cinnamon Teal (Ontario, confirmed), Blue-winged Teal (Georgia, probable), Masked Duck (Florida, possible), White-tailed Kite (Arizona, confirmed; Mississippi, confirmed), Willet (Colorado, confirmed 1982), Common Sandpiper (Alaska, confirmed, 1st North American record), Short-billed Dowitcher (Ontario, confirmed), Glaucous Gull (Ontario, possible), Great Black-backed Gull (Vermont, confirmed), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Alaska, confirmed), Least Flycatcher (California, possible), Cave Swallow (Arizona, confirmed), Black-and-white Warbler (Montana, confirmed), Black-throated Green Warbler (Indiana, confirmed), Palm Warbler (New York, confirmed), Great-tailed Grackle (Iowa, confirmed), Common Grackle (Idaho, confirmed), Brewer's Blackbird (New York, probable), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Wyoming, confirmed), Hepatic Tanager (Colorado, confirmed), House Finch (Missouri, confirmed), Lesser Goldfinch (Wyoming, probable), Savannah Sparrow (North Carolina, possible), Harris' Sparrow (Ontario, confirmed),

Clay-colored Sparrow (Illinois, confirmed). In addition, Brown Creeper was confirmed as breeding within the District of Columbia for the first time.

REGIONAL REPORTS ALSO CONTAINED numerous second and third nesting records, as well as some reoccurrences of breeding species that had been absent for many years. For example, Horned Grebes had not nested in Ontario in the last 45 years, so nesting this summer in northern Ontario was notable. Also, Yellow-throated Vireos were confirmed nesting in South Dakota for the first time since the early 1940s. Recorded second nestings included White Ibis in New Mexico, Bufflehead in Ontario, Cayenne Terns at St. Thomas, V.I., Caspian Tern in Montana, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker in Vermont, Cedar Waxwing in South Carolina, and Orchard Oriole in Vermont. Blue-winged Teal, the first migrant North American waterbird to nest in Hawaii, nested successfully for the second consecutive year, and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested in South Carolina for the second time, 100 feet from last year's nest site. Confirmed third nestings included Lesser Scaup in Iowa, Bufflehead in Minnesota, Solitary Sandpiper in Minnesota, and Bell's Vireo in North Dakota. Additionally, Ross's Gulls nested successfully at Churchill, Manitoba for the first time since discovery there in 1980.

NOTABLE STATE AND PROVINCIAL SIGHTINGS

SIIGHTINGS OF NONBREEDING birds added new species to 19 states and provinces during this breeding season. The majority of these were species associated with water, and, in some cases, reflected an increase in summer pelagic trips along the East Coast. Also, some areas, such as the Yukon, are now possibly getting better coverage during summer months than in previous years. Listed below are first state and provincial records, plus second and third records mentioned by the regional editors.

Yellow-nosed Albatross (Florida, first documented), Cook's Petrel (Alaska, second), Leach's Storm-Petrel (Georgia, first; Texas, third), Harcourt's Storm-Petrel (Georgia, first), White Pelican (Newfoundland, first), Blue-footed Booby (South Carolina, first; Georgia, second), Green Heron (Alaska, first), White-faced Ibis (New Jersey, third), Hobby (Alaska, first substantiated), Black-headed Gull

(Wisconsin, second), South Polar Skua (Georgia, first), Royal Tern (Newfoundland, first), Mongolian Plover (California, third), Long-billed Curlew (Ontario, second), Black-tailed Godwit (Quebec, second), Curlew Sandpiper (Manitoba, first), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (New York, second), Little Stint (New York, first), Willow Flycatcher (New Brunswick, second), Common House-Martin (Alaska, third), Brown-chested Martin (Massachusetts, 1st North American record), Winter Wren (Yukon, first), Brown Thrasher (Alaska, third), Yellow-green Vireo (New Mexico, first), White-eyed Vireo (Arizona, first documented), Red-eyed Vireo (Yukon, first, unverified), Golden-winged Warbler (Oregon, first), Cape May Warbler (Yukon, first), and Le Conte's Sparrow (Yukon, first).

A number of other sightings documented first summer occurrences of species in several regions. Four species were recorded as summering for the first time in southern California: King Eider, Thayer's Gull, White-tailed Kite, and Ovenbird. Mountain Bluebird and Lapland Longspur were new summer birds for Minnesota, a Wood Thrush summered in New Mexico, and a Franklin's Gull was seen during summer in Florida. The majority of reports did not find any first summer occurrences, or, at least, many sightings were not designated as such.

POPULATION DYNAMICS

Endangered, threatened and Blue-listed species

Although by no means complete, breeding season regional reports do contain valuable information on breeding success and population status of most North American endangered, threatened and Blue-listed bird species. Some have questioned the credibility and value of the Blue-list system, but it does work as a way of getting field observers to focus more attention on species that seem to be declining in various regions, as can be attested to by some of the following accounts.

FOUR SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSSES off the western Aleutian Islands constituted a good seasonal count for this endangered species. Brown Pelicans were wandering again this summer, with individuals traveling up both east and west coasts. In the East, the incursion seemed especially significant with record num-

bers as far north as Delaware Bay and Long Island. Along the Gulf, both South Texas and Central Southern regions reported good breeding success. In Florida, nesting pairs were down; however, aerial surveys may have missed peak nesting periods. Positive Least Bittern reports came from Western Great Lakes, Niagara-Champlain, Middle Pacific Coast, Florida, Central Southern, and Middlewestern Prairie regions. American Bittern received fewer comments and only the Western Great Lakes had high numbers. Southern Atlantic Coast had a new nesting location, but Middlewestern Prairie, Northern Rocky Mountain/Intermountain reported low numbers. Everglade Kite populations in Florida continued to climb, but Sharp-shinned Hawk breeding reports were few, especially in the East. Red-shouldered Hawk nesting records were also scanty with a few areas reporting stable or declining populations. In a Prairie Province district, a record 57 Swainson's Hawk nests were located and numbers were up in southeastern Idaho. A survey of eastern Washington found 50 nests and 4 nests were discovered in northern Illinois, good counts for both these areas. Marsh Hawk numbers were high in New York, Ontario, and southern New Jersey. Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon sightings and nestings continued to increase owing to releasing programs, and, for the first time in the East, offspring from released Peregrines were found raising their own brood. At Gray's Lake N.W.R., Idaho, 26 of 28 Whooping Crane eggs placed in Sandhill Crane nests hatched. The endangered Hawaiian Gallinule was found on Oahu for the first time since the late 1950s and Hawaiian Coots had a productive season.

Piping Plover reports were numerous and in some cases encouraging. In North Dakota, 725 adults were found in suitable habitat, while 125 were counted on the barrier islands of Virginia. Along the North Carolina coast, nesting individuals were 100 miles south of the usual breeding area and a nest was found in Iowa for the first time in 10 years. In Quebec, however, numbers continued to decline.

SNOWY PLOVER NUMBERS WERE DOWN on the Gulf Coast and there were only scattered reports from the Middle Pacific Coast Region. Upland Sandpiper may be declining in some eastern parts of its range, so a pair in Virginia and the 71 juvenals at J.F.K. Airport, in New York were promising news. Least Terns had a

good summer overall, with favorable comments from Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic Coast; Northern and Southern Great Plains, and South Texas. Nests were found along the Mississippi River, in Missouri and Illinois. Fair numbers of Black Tern offspring were produced in the Mountain West, but nesting in the Middlewestern Prairie was considered "bleak." Short-eared Owls had a "banner year" in northwestern Nebraska and southwestern South Dakota, but Prairie Provinces noted mixed reports. Various areas also had good counts in the Northeastern Maritimes. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were counted in record numbers on New York breeding bird surveys and the Appalachians had exceptional numbers in July. Middlewestern Prairie numbers remained low, however.

Willow Flycatcher populations in New Mexico remained stable despite habitat alteration. In southwestern Connecticut, it now is the most common *Empidonax*, and increases occurred in parts of the Middlewestern Prairie. In the east, Bewick's Wrens are rare, so 2 nests in the Appalachians were significant. Eastern Bluebird populations were up in Middlewestern Prairie, Western Great Lakes and Middle Atlantic Coast, signifying a continued recovery from low counts of the late 1970s. Although decline of Loggerhead Shrikes continued in many areas, Western Great Lakes had another optimistic season and shrikes were common in parts of Texas. Cowbird parasitism has taken its toll on Bell's Vireo in the West, so a cowbird control program was started in southern California and parasitism levels dropped this year. Also encouraging were singing birds along the Lower Colorado River in Arizona and three singing males in northern California, where the species has not bred for 25 years. Numbers also increased in Minnesota. Yellow Warblers appeared to be hanging on along the Lower Colorado River, with evidence coming from both Arizona and California. Few other regions reported this Blue-listed species.

In parts of the Southern Great Plains, Dickcissels were abundant, but in the Middlewestern Prairie, reports were mixed. In the East, scattered local reports occurred, with the most significant coming from the North Carolina coastal plain. Grasshopper Sparrows received numerous comments, the most notable being the great increase on the Colorado plains, where wet weather produced lush

green cover. South Texas, Middle and Southern Atlantic Coasts, Appalachian and Niagara-Champlain also reported good numbers. Only four Dusky Seaside Sparrow males remain in captivity and summer breeding attempts failed. On Hawaii, the endangered Nukupuu, which had been sighted only a few times in recent decades, was observed on Maui.

The rest of the species

BROADLY-SPEAKING, MOST SPECIES OF birds associated with fresh-water in western United States did well this breeding season, with ducks remaining farther south than usual, and productivity of ducks in the Prairie Provinces generally good. However, some detrimental reports of failure due to flooding were reported. Birds associated with marine environments on the West Coast was a different story, with the complete collapse of coastal seabirds' breeding due to El Niño. Habitat destruction continued to play a major factor in breeding success of some species. Of particular note was the continued loss of riparian habitat in northern California and along the Lower Colorado River, the latter of which may spell the end of Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Summer Tanager in Arizona. Habitat destruction in southern Texas also affected species dependent on scrubby secondary growth, such as Harris' Hawk, Ground Dove, and Cassin's Sparrow. Also, intense pressure upon New England forests for firewood in the last decade may finally be negatively impacting species, such as Red-headed Woodpecker, that rely on dead snags for breeding. Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism may be affecting several species' breeding success and range extensions, with Black-capped and Bell's vireos being singled out by several editors as species to watch in the future.

On the positive side, an unexpected benefit of "Reaganomics" was the generally increased sightings and number of breeders of species, particularly sparrows, associated with weedy fields habitat. This was due largely to the Payment-In-Kind (PIK) program, whereby farmers were paid to not cultivate their fields. These large expanses of fallow fields generally attracted many species of birds that are usually considered relatively rare. Also, as mentioned earlier, heavy spring rains in the West contributed to the general increase in grassland passerines.

Below we present a summary of the population dynamics that was gleaned

from the breeding season reports this year. Unlike some recent treatments, we have opted to present the data in a phylogenetic, rather than a geographic, manner so that readers can get a feel for the situation within taxonomic groups, instead of how groups of species are behaving in different parts of the continent.

Loons, grebes, pelagics, pelicans — Common Loons lingered in many regions, particularly in the West, but nest production was down in Vermont. Red-necked Grebes are now expected breeders in Quebec and Eared Grebes had good nesting success in California and the Mountain West, and were found in 2 new locations in New Mexico. Nesting success of Western Grebes was down in some Northern Rockies areas, but the large colony at Bear River N.W.R., in northern Utah, did well. Reports of Pied-billed Grebe were generally encouraging with numbers up along the east coast and Texas, and with scattered mention throughout the midwest. Large flocks of Sooty Shearwaters were not found off California due to El Niño and alcids and cormorants along that coast also had disastrous breeding success due to El Niño. Nesting seabird numbers were also down on Christmas Island. Manx Shearwaters appeared off the southern California coast earlier than usual. A total of 100,000 Greater Shearwaters was seen off the coast of Newfoundland, and the same number of Wilson's Storm-Petrels was observed in the lower Bay of Fundy. Great Cormorants nested in Maine after a long absence. Double-crested Cormorants again nested in Arizona, and did well in western, northern, and eastern parts of their range, expanding into northeastern regions. Anhingas moved into new areas, with high numbers in the Midsouth. Nonbreeding White Pelicans appeared in many regions, including almost all provinces in eastern Canada and northeastern United States and North Carolina and central Florida. Breeding birds did well in Texas and at usual breeding sites in western United States, with large numbers found in the Northern Rockies. Along the coast of Oregon, a Magnificent Frigatebird was seen for the fourth state record.

Hérons, egrets, swans, ducks, geese — Great Blue Herons had mixed reports with numbers down in the Mountain West and areas of Saskatchewan. Common Egret numbers were low in Missouri, Cattle Egrets declined in the Middle Atlantic Coast, and Snowy Egret num-

bers were down in the Mountain West Little Blue Herons wandered in western United States, nested at San Diego, and generally had excellent breeding success along the Mississippi River. Green Heron expanded its breeding in southern Texas and northern Ontario. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron wandered as far north as Quebec while Black-crowned Night Herons have all but disappeared from Indiana. Wood Storks had an average breeding year in Florida and 15 were seen along the Lower Colorado River in Arizona. White-faced Ibis had a normal year also in the Mountain West, but apparently had a poor year in parts of southern Texas. Roseate Spoonbill numbers also were down in Florida. Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were alarmingly scarce in southern California, and there were few reports of many successful breeding Trumpeter Swans, owing primarily to flooding in nesting areas. Ross's Goose appeared in Alaska for the fourth time, all during summer, and a Bean Goose appeared on the mainland in southern Alaska. Many regions, particularly those in the western United States, commented on late-lingering or summering ducks. Gadwalls did nest farther south than usual in Arizona, and Canvasbacks were found nesting in southern California for the first time. Blue-winged Teal numbers declined along the Middle Atlantic Coast and Barrow's Goldeneyes may have had a poor year near Yellowstone N.P.

Birds of prey — Turkey Vulture numbers were down in the Northern Rockies, but breeding moved northward in Pennsylvania. Good numbers were also reported from Ontario, but breeding success was mixed along the Middle Atlantic Coast. Black Vulture was almost unreported this season. Osprey breeding was generally good at all breeding locations along the Atlantic coast and at Salmon, Idaho. White-tailed Kites were poorly reported from Middle and Northern Pacific coasts but nests in the Central Southern Region were exciting finds. For the first summer in 7 years, no kites appeared in the Hudson-Delaware Region. Mississippi Kites did well along the Gulf and a flock of 36 birds was reported from North Carolina. They were also found breeding at 2 sites in New Mexico and in new areas in Arizona, and sighted in northern California. Swallow-tailed Kites were reported to be increasing along the Gulf Coast, and one strayed to Ontario, for the fourth provincial record. Two Golden Eagle nests were reported from Maine, signifying a breeding population still exists in

the Northeast. Accipiters were mentioned in only a handful of reports, and Harris' Hawk numbers were declining in Texas owing to habitat destruction. Falcons were also not mentioned very often. Merlins did breed in a new area in South Dakota and Prairie Falcons may be declining on the Pawnee Grasslands.

Grouse, cranes, rails, shorebirds, gulls, terns — Spruce Grouse continued to extend their breeding range in New York, but Greater Prairie Chicken numbers were down 24% in Illinois. Summering Whooping Cranes in the West, products of the Gray's Lake Project in Idaho, were two birds in Wyoming and two birds in Colorado. Sandhill Cranes in Oregon were reported to have had poor breeding success. The breeding range of the Common Gallinule continued to expand, particularly northward in the Mountain West. Many regions reported late-lingering northbound migrant shorebirds and also early returning southbound shorebirds. For example, 400 Wilson's Phalaropes, nearly all females, were seen June 19 in southern California. In July, a Ruddy Turnstone was spotted in Nevada, a Red Knot was seen in Colorado, and Marbled Godwits wandered to southern Alaska (breeding?), southern Arizona, and Alabama. A June Marbled Godwit was seen in Massachusetts for the third time in 4 years.

A total of 14 Ruffs and 12 Curlew Sandpipers was reported this summer. Significant new breeding records for shorebirds include: Surfbirds at a new location in the Yukon, Wilson's Phalarope at Merced, California, Greater Yellowlegs south of its reported range in Alberta, and Spotted Sandpiper at Tulsa, Oklahoma. American Oystercatchers increased in Florida, and American Avocets had an excellent year in the Middle Pacific Coast Region. Black-necked Stilts also had an excellent breeding year along the Middle Pacific Coast Region, and bred for the third time along the Lower Colorado River of Arizona and at a new site in North Carolina. One wonders where the 100 avocets seen in Florida in June bred. Most gull and tern species were reported as having good breeding years. California Gulls did well in the Mountain West, Ring-billed Gulls increased greatly in the Atlantic Provinces, and a Little Gull was seen in a new area of British Columbia. The 20,000 nesting pairs of Franklin's Gulls at Agassiz N.W.R., in Minnesota must have been impressive. Laughing Gulls were found scattered around the Great Lakes without

evidence of breeding and nonbreeding Great Black-backed Gulls moved westward to Indiana, and Oshkosh, Wisconsin, with 50 seen at Lake Erie. Heermann's Gulls came north along the California coast in good numbers due to El Niño, as did Elegant Terns.

Aleutian Terns bred in northern Alaska for the first time. Forster's Terns did well in the Mountain West Region, and nonbreeding Caspian Terns were also reported from that Region. Caspians did well in the Northern Rockies, breeding in eastern Montana, and summering in South Dakota and Alaska. A Royal Tern was seen in summer at Lake Ontario for the first time, Common Terns were on the increase on Long Island, and Roseate Terns did well in the Niagara-Champlain Region.

Doves, owls, goatsuckers, hummingbirds, woodpeckers — Mourning Dove numbers may have been down in the Mountain West, but the increasingly sighted White-winged Dove was reported from 2 areas in northeastern North America. Yellow-billed Cuckoos may be disappearing from the Lower Colorado River due to habitat destruction. Barn Owls moved northward, nesting at Kamloops, British Columbia, and sightings were up in the Middlewestern Prairie. A rare breeding of Screech Owl from interior British Columbia was reported. Barred Owls continued southward on the Pacific Coast into northern California, while only a total of seven Elf Owls were thought to be left in southern California. Great Gray Owl sightings were up around Jackson, Wyoming, and Burrowing Owls were more evident than usual in eastern Oregon and Saskatchewan and bred in Minnesota. A Buff-collared Nightjar appeared in Tucson for the third year, and Chuck-will's-widow was reported in Minnesota also for the third summer. Chuck-will's-widows were also heard calling in Ontario and numbers were up in Long Island. Whip-poor-wills were heard calling in northern New Mexico, and at least five were calling in the mountains of southern California, but several eastern areas stated that they were relatively scarce this summer. Common Nighthawks were down in numbers in the Mountain West but up in Northern Pacific Coast.

Black-chinned Hummingbirds were seen at scattered locations throughout the Northern Rockies, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds appeared to be moving eastward in New Mexico, and Rufous Hummingbirds were found in Minnesota and

Manitoba In Arizona, Violet-capped Hummingbirds nested farther north at Patagonia, and a Plain-capped Starthroat appeared for about the sixth time. Allen's Hummingbird nested in Orange County, California, the southern limit of its breeding range. Although apparently overlooked in the past, Pileated Woodpecker should now be considered resident in southeastern Yukon. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers continued to move farther south in southern California, while Williamson's Sapsucker numbers were down in the Mountain West. Red-headed Woodpecker populations were down markedly in New York and Vermont, with the possibility that nesting trees are disappearing owing to increased firewood collection. Numbers, however, were up in the Appalachian Region. The expansion of Red-bellied Woodpeckers into northern regions in the eastern United States has neither "slowed nor stopped," and one wonders what species the immature *Melanerpes* found in New Mexico was and where it came from.

Flycatchers, swallows, corvids, chickadees — Eastern Kingbirds wandered to the Arctic and California coasts and breeding continued westward in Texas, although populations were down in eastern Oregon and along the Southern Atlantic Coast. Western Kingbirds also moved into new breeding areas in Texas and eastern Oklahoma, but numbers were down in Missouri. It seems that shortly the "Arkansas" Kingbird may successfully nest in Arkansas. Cassin's Kingbirds possibly nested around Meade, Kansas, and Kiskadee Flycatchers moved northward into new breeding areas in southern Texas. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were not found in Colorado this summer, although individuals did stray to the California coast, Michigan and Kentucky. Olivaceous Flycatchers were found northeast of the normal breeding range in New Mexico. Least Flycatchers were heard singing near Shasta, California, which may signify that a major range extension is imminent since they also were found in parts of Oregon. Leasts were also up in the Appalachians, but numbers were down in Manitoba. Northern populations of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were also down. Acadian Flycatchers were generally up in all regions, particularly in the Northeast where birds were seen as far north as Quebec, while Alder Flycatchers continue to increase southward in Virginia. Horned Lark numbers were down in the eastern United States.

Violet-green Swallow breeding may be moving eastward in New Mexico, although numbers were generally down in the Rockies. Tree Swallow numbers were also low in the Rockies, but this swallow appears to be moving southward in the Middlewestern Prairies and numbers were also up along the Middle Atlantic Coast. Barn Swallows nested in extreme northwest California and in Everglades N.P. Cliff Swallows moved northward with one individual found on the arctic coast in Alaska. Populations were generally up in eastern regions. Purple Martins can now only be found in a few places in southern California and numbers were down in Minnesota. Common Ravens continued to move farther south in Michigan and numbers were up in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Fish Crows now breed within 25 miles of the Kansas border in northeastern Oklahoma and are moving slowly westward in North and South Carolina. Carolina Chickadee breeding range also continued to expand in northeastern Indiana.

Dippers, wrens, thrashers, thrushes — Several Regional Editors in the western United States wondered what kind of breeding season Dippers must have had since, in most areas, stream levels were unusually high due to snow melt. Winter Wrens appeared to be recovering in the Maritimes and the Appalachians and numbers may be increasing in the Sierra Cascades. Carolina Wrens increased in eastern United States, but populations are still not back to previous levels. Long-billed Marsh Wrens extended breeding into extreme northern Ontario, but populations may be in trouble at the southern end of the range in Florida. Short-billed Marsh Wrens were scarce in some regions, but nonbreeders (apparently) were present in North Carolina. Two Mockingbirds were found in southwestern Saskatchewan, and populations generally were on the increase in northern prairie and Maritime provinces. A Sage Thrasher was well north of the usual range at Kamloops, British Columbia. Brown Thrasher numbers were down in the Hudson-Delaware Region. The breeding range of American Robin continued to move southward in southern Texas, and Swainson's Thrushes were late migrants in some western areas, with 101 seen in Cheyenne, Wyoming June 11. Mountain Bluebird numbers were generally down in the Saskatoon area, but an individual was found east of the normal range in North Dakota.

Gnatcatcher, kinglets, Phainopepla, vireos — Blue-gray Gnatcatchers nested near Ottawa and one was heard singing in the Mono Basin, California. Golden-crowned Kinglet populations appeared to be recovering in Alaska, while they bred for the first time in southeastern Pennsylvania. Cedar Waxwings were common in the Maritimes, and an individual strayed to the north coast of Alaska. Phainopeplas had the first good breeding season since 1979. The advance of White-eyed Vireo northward in the Appalachians was reported as "stopped", although reports of Yellow-throated Vireo were up in that Region. Warbling Vireos were doing well in Ontario and Philadelphia Vireos were found in new western locations in New York. Black-capped Vireo populations are suffering from heavy cowbird parasitism in Oklahoma, but did well in Austin, Texas.

Warblers — Singing Black-and-white Warblers were found in South Dakota where breeding had occurred for the first time the previous year. Worm-eating Warblers bred in Rhode Island, and possibly New Hampshire, and appeared as far north as Wisconsin (again). Lucy's Warbler moved into new breeding areas in northern New Mexico. Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler moved southward as a breeding bird in Pennsylvania, and this form appeared in New Mexico for a first summer record. MacGillivray's Warblers were found farther south along the southern California coast. Hooded Warbler breeding range continued to move northward into central and northern Illinois and into Iowa, with individuals found as far north as Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Icterids, tanagers, grosbeaks, buntings, finches — Breeding (?) Bobolinks moved into new areas in Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, with birds present in summer in northern California and one individual being seen in northern Canada at Wood Buffalo N.P. Western Meadowlark numbers declined in Michigan, while Yellow-headed Blackbird numbers were up in northwestern Missouri, with breeding in western Illinois and Kansas, and summering birds in southeastern Missouri. Orchard Orioles were moving northward in several provinces as was Northern Oriole in Quebec Province. Common Grackles continued to spread northward in New Mexico, and Great-taileds in San Francisco were again unsuccessful breeders. A pair of Hepatic Tanagers was found at the site of the first

breeding record in California. Summer Tanager populations declined in south Texas, while the breeding range was moving northward in New Jersey. Breeding Scarlet Tanagers were also moving northward, breeding in Saskatchewan, as did Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, breeding in new northerly areas in Quebec.

Cardinals were declining in the Maritimes, although they continued to breed in new northerly areas in Michigan. Blue Grosbeak numbers were generally up in eastern regions, with a possible second nesting record for New York. Indigo Buntings were found in most eastern Canadian provinces, and the breeding range was moving northward in Saskatchewan. In the west, Indigo Buntings were common in New Mexico, on territories in southern California, and seen along the coast in northern California. Evening Grosbeaks bred in New Mexico. House Finches continued moving in all directions in eastern and midwestern parts of the continent, with major increases in Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, northwestern Nebraska, Michigan, and Quebec. This species bred on islands off Long Island for the first time, and an individual was seen in Iowa. Reports of Red Crossbills were scattered throughout the West with birds in Arizona and New Mexico and good reports in the Northern Pacific Coast. Lark Buntings returned to breed in Montana after an absence of 3 years.

Sparrows — Chipping Sparrow populations were generally down in Idaho, eastern Washington, and British Columbia. Savannah Sparrows moved farther south through Virginia. Swamp Sparrows were locally common breeders in the Yukon. Fox Sparrow populations were down in Montana, and Lincoln's Sparrows were up, but Clay-colored were down, in British Columbia. Black-chinned Sparrows were found far to the northeast of the normal range in New Mexico. Cassin's Sparrow declined in the Mountain West, presumably due to high grass. Populations also declined in South Texas, probably owing to habitat destruction. Henslow's Sparrow population levels were down throughout much of the western part of its range, but numbers were encouraging throughout most of the eastern part of the breeding range. In Hawaii, Java Sparrows continued to breed farther west on Oahu.

Hybrids — More so than in the other three seasons, the breeding season lends itself to the reporting of hybrids. There

are, of course, several reasons for this. Males tend to sing, giving some clue to their true identity; males and females spend more time in close association during this season, giving more opportunity to discover hybrid pairs; and, in many species, males and females share in feeding nestlings so that hybrid pairing can be more easily discovered. Also, as birdwatchers become more proficient at identifying birds, instances of subtle, but recognizable hybrids may come to light. The important question is, are these hybrid reports of notable interest? Certainly from a birdwatching perspective, it is important to keep abreast of the combinations that are possible, and some strange ones were reported this year. For example, a Cinnamon Teal x Northern Shoveler hybrid was reported in the Middle Pacific Coast Region and a Rufous-sided x Green-tailed Towhee was finally identified in Billings, Montana, after much debate and consultation with experts. A Rivoli's x Rufous Hummingbird mating reported from the Mountain West seems strange and the Bay-breasted x Blackburnian Warbler mating in the West Virginia mountains must have produced interesting looking birds.

Some reports of hybrids no doubt signify important hybrid zones that potentially are important to our understanding of avian taxonomy. Examples here may be the reported Black-capped x Mountain Chickadee hybrids in parts of New Mexico, the possible Carolina and Black-capped Chickadee pair around Powdermill N.R., Pennsylvania, or possibly the Indigo x Lazuli Bunting reported from Salem, Idaho. The report that all Golden-winged Warblers in the Niagara-Champlain were paired with Blue-winged Warblers is certainly ominous, and a back-crossed Blue-winged Warbler x Brewster's Warbler apparently bred successfully in Ontario. What did those offspring look like?

By and large, most hybrid reports, however, may have little real biological significance other than to show that closely related species occasionally will interbreed. For example, a Herring x California Gull pairing was reported from the Mountain West, as was a male Baltimore Oriole attending the nest of an Orchard Oriole. A Scaled x Gambel's Quail was reported from El Paso, a Glaucous x Herring Gull was reported from Newfoundland, and an American Redstart x who-knows-what was studied in great detail by many in New Brunswick.

Most birdwatchers would agree that a Cinnamon Teal displaying to a female Blue-winged Teal, that was accompanied by a male Blue-winged, in South Dakota would seem to be a reasonable mistake, and we wonder how the female offspring could be identified as hybrids. A Chipping Sparrow at Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center singing a perfect Clay-colored Sparrow song is strange and it is not clear that the nesting of a Little Blue Heron with a Snowy Egret establishes the heron as a breeding species in northern California. Does a hybrid pairing constitute breeding by a species?

FINAL NOTES

AS DURING MOST SEASONS, certain reported events fit nowhere else but in a section by themselves. For example, the appearance of deformed Herring Gulls and Double-crested Cormorants in Wisconsin, 300 dead and dying Laughing Gulls in Louisiana and large numbers of Least Terns dying off the Mississippi coast were alarming reports and reason for investigation and concern. The five pairs of nesting Mississippi Kites in El Paso, Texas, that consistently attacked golfers, finally paid for their belligerence by having their young removed and successfully raised in captivity. In Salt Lake City, Utah, a pair of Cooper's Hawks nested in a city park and fledged five young, and were reported to perch on picnic tables while people lunched. Did they feed on scraps? In Pembroke, Ontario, a Merlin had to work for its food but not very hard; swallows were picked off daily from a megaroost of 25,000 ± birds. Another interesting feeding strategy worthy of note was the midnight sighting of a Black-crowned Night Heron in Clemson, South Carolina, that fed on cockroaches as they ran along the sidewalk. And, finally, congratulations go out to Cynthia and Steve Gaulin, who, while searching for Williamson's Sapsuckers near Denver, rescued an abandoned, kidnapped 3-year-old girl.

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