

THE HURRICANE season of 1992 included three major storms that won prominent mention in these pages. Birders sometimes regard hurricanes as cause for celebration, because of the rare seabirds that often turn up afterward, but there was little celebrating this season. Of the Procellariiformes, the true deep-water pelagics, the only outstanding records were in Arizona and

New Mexico, courtesy of tropical storm *Lester*. Hurricane *Iniki* blasted Hawaii, with effects that were entirely negative. Hurricane *Andrew*, one of the most powerful ever to strike the United States, caused literally billions of dollars' worth of human property damage in Florida and Louisiana, became an item in election-year politics, and caused inestimable damage to natural habitats.

Lester and Least

In late August, hurricane *Lester* caused major damage in western Mexico. But by the time it crossed the border, angling north and east across Arizona and New Mexico, the storm was reduced to locally heavy winds and rain. Some of us checked the local ponds, but there were no signs of displaced birds—until word came in of single Least Storm-Petrels in southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. The latter bird was found in moribund condition on the streets of Silver City, hundreds of miles from the coast. We can only wonder how many others might have been lost in the vastness of the surrounding dry country. Least Storm-Petrel was also the main transportee of hurricane *Kathleen* fifteen years earlier. This tiny tubenose may be ill-equipped to

THE CHANGING SEASONS

Autumn 1992

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battle the strongest winds, and it is perhaps fortunate that most hurricanes in its range dissipate at sea rather than turning inland.

Andrew and Iniki

Hurricane *Andrew* was that proverbial improbability, an ill wind that really didn't blow much good for anyone. Bird records generated by the storm were remarkably few. After the hurricane steamrolled across southern Florida, the only associated bird records were of a few Bridled Terns onshore; Florida birders were preoccupied with things like staying alive and watching the destruction of their homes.

Veering across the Gulf, *Andrew* came ashore again in Louisiana, curving northeast across Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, diminishing and playing itself out northward. Again, relatively few birds could be attributed to the storm. Astute scientist-birder Van Remsen put himself in position to intercept a Long-tailed Jaeger, a Bridled Tern, and other notables inland in Louisiana, but most observers did not do so well. The fallout from the storm included numbers of frigatebirds, terns, Brown Pelicans, Black Skimmers, and Laughing Gulls, most no farther in-

land than central Mississippi. Two Laughing Gulls in Tennessee were apparently storm waifs, and a Whimbrel was knocked down in upstate New York with the remnants of *Andrew*. Conspicuously lacking from the fallout were any tubenoses, such as storm-petrels or *Pterodroma* petrels.

In Hawaii, hurricane *Iniki* scored a direct hit on the island of Kauai. Veteran weatherman and ornithologist Bob Pyle describes its effects in detail, and his essay is required reading for anyone interested in bird conservation. After you finish that, turn to the Florida column and read what Noel Wamer and Richard West have to say about the consequences of *Andrew*. In both cases, bird populations are sure to be seriously affected (with extinction possible for some Hawaiian species). And in both cases, the impacts of the storms on these vulnerable birds are magnified because of prior human damage to local ecosystems.

Impressions of the migration

Regional Editors almost always hear conflicting comments about the "quality" of a migration season. Ground-based impressions for most land birds are contradictory from the start: the weather that brings us a "good" fall-out of migrants is actually bad for the birds, while excellent flying conditions will cause us to witness a "bad migration." Impressions will vary markedly from place to place, depending on local weather.

This season there were the usual kinds of contradictions. Mourning Warbler was specifically mentioned as scarce in New England, but in good numbers on the Middle Atlantic Coast and at Chicago. Wilson's Warbler was up in Chicago, down in New England and at Cleveland. We have good evidence that some neotropical migrants are declining, but it remains important to make our counts species by species and site by site.

Many regions, from the northern plains to the Atlantic, agreed that fall migration was affected by the cold,

wet breeding season there and farther north. Some species had demonstrably poor breeding success, such as the Greater Snow Geese censused in Quebec. Among northern forest birds, nesting failure early in the season could have altered fall migration in various ways. Failed breeders that did not attempt renesting may have moved south even earlier than usual (perhaps reflected in the Hudson-Delaware region). Birds that did renest might have migrated south later than usual (a possibility mentioned in Ontario). Any of these phenomena on the breeding grounds could have altered our impressions of the migration.

Waiting for dove season

When the Pilgrims landed, a high proportion of all the land birds on this continent belonged to the family Columbidae. The same is true today. While this might seem like no net change, the situation has changed radically. The Passenger Pigeon, once numbering at least in the hundreds of millions, is extinct; and other pigeons and doves, with increasing ranges and populations, seem destined to fill in the columbid gap.

Recently, the northward straying of Ruddy Ground-Doves in autumn has become an expected event. This season, Arizona counted at least 17. Nevada had its third record. Southern California had at least 14, including ten together at Furnace Creek Ranch. (Texas reported none, strengthening the impression that these invasions come mainly from western Mexico.) It seems only a matter of time before Ruddy Ground-Doves begin nesting in the United States.

This pattern of expansion was pioneered by the Inca Dove, once probably absent altogether from the region that is now the United States. In its northward spread, the first scouts in a new area usually appeared in fall, often remained to winter, then nested in subsequent summers. The Inca Dove continues to spread in the same fashion. This season, several were

north of the current breeding range in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Colorado got its first, with six birds at three locations. The Texas population is now entrenched all the way north to Amarillo, and up to nine spent the fall around a feeder in western Kansas. One in *North Dakota* was an outlandish extension of the pattern...but not the northernmost of the season.

When I heard that Canada's first Inca Dove had appeared in Ontario, I thought of extreme southern Ontario, someplace like Point Pelee. Wrong: It was hundreds of miles farther north, in the boreal forest region of Atikokan. I doubt the species will establish a beachhead at Atikokan, but nesting in Kansas and Colorado seems entirely possible.

Range expansion by the White-winged Dove continues, with record numbers north to Waco, Texas, and northerly records in New Mexico. Fall strays, like the second for Quebec and tenth for Nova Scotia this fall, will probably continue to increase.

Eurasian Collared-Dove is still spreading in Florida. Orlando's first nest was documented in August. Up Florida's west coast in Taylor County, growing numbers had the locals looking forward to dove hunting season. Up to 20 in Montgomery were the first for inland Alabama. Given the recent success of the collared-dove throughout Europe, there seems no obvious reason why this exotic should not eventually occupy much of North America—adding to the natural invaders, burgeoning Mourning Doves, and city Rock Doves, paltry chaff filling in the gap left by the disappearance of the great Passenger Pigeon.

From the hummingbird capital

What is the hummingbird capital of North America? Various Arizona canyons want that title; but in terms of sheer human effort, it would have to be Louisiana. An extraordinary amount of work goes into attracting hummers there in fall and winter.

Some of my Louisiana friends are true maniacs (and I mean that as a compliment); they have every imaginable hummingbird flower in their yards, and they are not joking when they talk about painting their houses red to catch the eye of a passing hummer. Directed effort does make a difference. The Central Southern Region tallied 10 hummingbird species this fall! Most bizarre of the bunch was Louisiana's first Blue-throated Hummingbird, but that state's second and third Broad-billeds were not far behind. Other Gulf states are getting into the act, as evidenced by first Mississippi records of Allen's and Calliope hummingbirds, and Alabama's first Anna's Hummingbird. Elsewhere east of the plains, Wisconsin had its second Anna's, and Rufous Hummingbirds are being documented more carefully (i.e., ruling out Allen's) everywhere. Eastern birders are learning not to take anything for granted about hummingbirds in fall

Invaders and strays

Can you really talk about a bird "invasion" when only a few individuals are involved? I believe sometimes you can. Consider this fall's movement of Groove-billed Anis. They apparently had a great nesting season in Texas and points south; during the fall, they wandered. Only one was found as far north as Kansas, but they were all across the southern states, from California to Florida. California had found only four anis in all of history, so four more this fall indicated a real invasion.

But if four birds can make an invasion, how many low-density invasions occurred last fall? Black-throated Sparrows around the Great Lakes? Black-throated Gray Warblers in the Maritimes? Read on, and find your own examples. ➤