# American Birds SPRING SPRING GUIDE April-June 1994

Neotropical migrants flood into North America each spring. Their success here is a reflection of such varied factors as food availability, weather, habitat condition, and their own gene pool. Unfortunately, migratory birds are facing many pressures throughout both their wintering and breeding ranges, and many birders can attest to dramatic declines in numbers over several decades of birding. Some of this is due to natural cycles in a species' life. Some of it appears directly connected to habitat loss. There is much we do not know. American Birds urges every birder to keep field notes, to participate in breeding bird surveys, or to report findings to local bird clubs. Your birding can help put together the puzzle of birdlife on this continent.

Recommended location guides and further references are included at the end of each site.

#### 1. ILES DE LA MADELEINE Ouebec

Most easily reached by ferry from Prince Edward Island, this archipelago is a great birding area in late spring. Masses of shorebirds and waterfowl stop here in migration. Breeding birds around the coastlines include puffins, guillemots, and kittiwakes, while the forests hold Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Gray-cheeked (Bicknell's) Thrush, and many others. Also see: Bird-finding Guide to Canada, J. Cam Finlay, publ. 1984.

#### 2. CAPE TORMENTINE AREA New Brunswick

At the southeastern tip of the province, this area offers some of its best birding. The National Wildlife Area here has both fresh and salt marsh, attracting a wide variety of ducks and shorebirds im migration. Herons and other waders appear in warmer months, including rare wanderers from the south. Also see above.

#### 3. MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY Massachusetts

This old cemetery in Cambridge has been known for

over a century as a superb place to seek migrant songbirds. Especially after rain, the trees often host a fine variety of warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other transients. Strays from the west have turned up on occasion (for example, first state records of both Hermit and Townsend's warblers). Also see: *Birds of Massachusetts*, Richard R. Veit and Wayne R. Petersen, publ. 1993.

# 4. BELLEPLAIN STATE FOREST New Jersey

Not far from Cape May, this forested area supports a diversity of breeding birds, including Hooded and Prairie warblers, and Acadian Flycatcher. In May, many northbound migrant warblers stop over. Also see: *Bird-finding in New Jersey*, William J. Boyle, Jr., rev. 1989

### 5. CHESAPEAKE BAY— BRIDGE TUNNEL Virginia

At the rocky "islands" on this man-made crossing, landbird migrants often pause for easy views. Waterbirds of rocky coastlines spend the winter, and many linger late into the spring. This is a good place for Great Cormorants, scoters, and the occasional eider or Purple Sandpiper. Even jaegers are sometimes seen. Also see: Finding Birds in the National Capital Area, Claudia Wilds, rev. 1992.

# 6. CAESARS HEAD STATE PARK South Carolina

The best spring migration of landbirds in the Carolinas is generally inland, and this park on the edge of the Appalachians is one of the best spring birding spots in the state. Among the specialties are Ruffed Grouse, Whippoor-will, and Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided warblers. Also see: Finding Birds in South Carolina, Robin M.

Carter, publ. 1992.

#### 7. KEY WEST Florida

Although this island is heavily populated, many birds can be found in pockets of habitat. Herons and other wading birds (including Reddish Egrets) forage in the shallows offshore, northbound warblers concentrate in woodlots, and shorebirds are often numerous in ponds near the airport. Also see: Birder's Guide to Florida (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989; Birds of South Florida, Connie Toops & Willard E. Dilley, publ. 1986.

### 8. RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK Ontario

Less well-known (and less crowded) than nearby Point Pelee, Rondeau can be nearly as good for concentrations of migrants. By late spring it can be an even better birding spot because of its diversity of breeding species, including Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, and Prothonotary Warbler. Also see: Bird-finding Guide to Ontario, Clive E. Goodwin, publ. 1982.

# 9. McCORMICK'S CREEK STATE PARK Indiana

The woodlands here often hold good numbers of spring migrants. Birds that stay to nest include some with southern affinities, such as Summer Tanager and Worm-eating Warbler, as well as Scarlet Tanager, Redeyed and Yellow-throated vireos, and more. Also see: *The Birds of Indiana*, Russell E. Mumford & Charles E Keller, publ. 1984.

#### 10. DAUPHIN ISLAND Alabama

Easily reached by a causeway from the mainland, this rela-



tively small island is one of the most exciting areas on the Gulf Coast in springespecially after stormy weather over the Gulf. Then the trees may swarm with migrants. Even on "slow" days, there are plenty of birds to keep observers occupied. Also see: Birder's Guide to Alabama & Mississippi, Ray Vaughn, publ. 1994

### 11. CREX MEADOWS WILDLIFE AREA Wisconsin

This is often a good area in spring for migrant shorebirds, including Hudsonian Godwits. Nesting birds around the marshes include various ducks, rails, grebes, Black Terns, and often Le Conte's Sparrows. Sharptailed Sparrow is a migrant that has lingered through the summer. Also see: Wisconsin Birdlife, Samuel D. Robbins, Jr., publ. 1991; Wisconsin's

Favorite Bird Haunts, Daryl D. Tessen, rev. 1989.

# 12. TABERVILLE PRAIRIE Missouri

A fine remnant of tall-grass prairie, this area is notable for breeding Greater Prairie-Chickens and Henslow's Sparrows. Other birds on the prairie include Upland Sandpiper, Dickcissel, and Grasshopper Sparrow. Around hedgerows one may find Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, and Blue Grosbeak. Also see: Birds of Missouri, Mark B. Robbins & David A. Easterla, publ. 1992; A Guide to Bird Finding in Kansas and Western Missouri, John L. Zimmerman & Sebastian T. Patti, publ. 1988.

# 13. J. CLARK SALYER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE **North Dakota**

A fine array of habitats

makes this a prime birding location. The grasslands hold Upland Sandpipers, Baird's Sparrows, and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, while the marshes have nesting Franklin's Gulls, Wilson's Phalaropes, Sedge Wrens, and many others. Shorebirds and waterfowl are abundant in migration. Also see: Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges, Laura and William Riley, rev. 1993.

# 14. WICHITA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE **Oklahoma**

The hills here, mostly covered with dry oak woodland, support a distinctive mix of birds. Some species here are typical of the southwest, such as Canyon and Rock wrens, Greater Roadrunner, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Wild Turkeys are fairly common residents, while spring sees the arrival

of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Painted Buntings. Also see: Guide to Birding in Oklahoma, Tulsa Audubon Society, rev. 1986.

#### 15. JESSE H. JONES PARK Texas

Very close to Houston's International Airport, this park is a good place to find birds of swampy woodland. Migrants are often numerous in April. Pileated Woodpecker and Hooded Warbler are among the common nesting species, and Swainson's Warbler is a specialty of the park. Also see: Birder's Guide to Texas, Edward A. Kutac, rev. 1989.

# **16. WATERTON LAKES** NATIONAL PARK Alberta

At the edge of the Rockies, this beautiful park hosts a wide variety of birds in late spring and summer. Breeding species include Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Blue Grouse, Blackbacked and Three-toed woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, and Calliope Hummingbird. Also see: Birds of Canada, W. Earl Godfrey, rev. 1987

# 17. FONTENELLE DAM Wyoming

In recent years, Wyoming birders have discovered that the deciduous thickets in this area make an amazing magnet for lost migrants. As many as 17 warbler species have been recorded in a single spring season, some of these being outstanding rarities for the state. Also see: A Birder's Guide to Wyoming, Oliver K. Scott, publ. 1993

# 18. ARAPAHO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE Colorado

Located in a high intermountain valley, this area hosts a large population of Sage Grouse. The males can be seen strutting on their display grounds through early May. Lakes here also host breeding waterbirds, including Cinnamon Teal, Redhead, Sora, American Avocet, and Black and Forster's terns. See: Birder's Guide to Colorado (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt & James A. Lane, rev. 1988.

### 19. RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS **New Mexico**

The bird list for this small park is approaching 300 species, because so many birds stop here in migration. Practically any eastern migrant might turn up in May. Breeding birds include such diverse species as Cave Swallow, Crissal Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Orchard Oriole. Also see: New Mexico Bird-finding Guide, edited by Dale A. Zimmerman, Marian A. Zimmerman, & John N. Durrie, publ. 1992.

#### 20. GARDEN CANYON Arizona

This canyon is famous with naturalists of all sorts, from botanists to lepidopterists. Birders find it equally noteworthy. Elegant Trogon, Montezuma Quail, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Buffbreasted Flycatcher, and Red-faced Warbler are just a few of the enticements. Also see: Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989; Birds in Southeastern Arizona, William A. Davis & Stephen M. Russell, rev. 1990.

#### 21. HOMER SPIT Alaska

In late spring and summer, the waters around the Spit teem with scoters, puffins, loons, Pigeon Guillemots, Marbled and Kittlitz's murrelets, and many other birds. Bald Eagles are common in the area, and many shorebirds stop over on the nearby tidal flats in May. Also see: A Bird Finder's Guide to Homer and Kachemak Bay, George C. West, publ. 1991.

# 22. OCEAN SHORES Washington

This is one of the best birding areas on Washington's outer coast. Loons, grebes, scoters, gulls, and others are abundant offshore, while tidal flats inside the bay host thousands of shorebirds in migration. Snowy Plover reaches its northern breeding limit here. Also see: Guide to bird-finding in Washington, Terrence R. Wahl & Dennis R. Paulson, rev. 1991

### 23. HUMBOLDT BAY California

Much of the bayshore is easily viewed between Arcata and Eureka, and large numbers of waterbirds can be seen. The big flocks of ducks that winter here start to diminish by April, but the

# INVALUABLE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Although coverage and information varies from place to place, rare bird alert telephone services that use taped messages are a real boon for peregrinating birders. These detail current rare or unusual birds sighted and how to get to the place where last reported. Use this listing when visiting the places on our Winter birding map.

(205) 987-2730	(317) 259-0911
Alaska	Massachusetts
(907) 338-2473	(617) 259-8805

**Alberta** Missouri Calgary (403) 237-8821

Arizona Tucson (602) 798-1005

California Arcata (707) 826-7031

San Bernardino (909) 793-5599

Colorado (303) 279-3076

Florida Lower Keys (305) 294--3438 (314) 445-9115

Nevada (702) 649-1516

**New Brunswick** (506) 382-3825

**New Jersey** (609) 884-2626

**New Mexico** (505) 662-2101

**Oklahoma** (918) 669-6646

**Ontario** Windsor/Pt. Pelee (519) 252-2473 Quebec

(418) 660-9089 (in French)

South Carolina

(704) 332-2473

Texas Statewide

(713) 992-2757 Virginia

(804) 238-2713

Washington (206) 526-8266

Wisconsin (414) 352-3857

Wyoming (307) 265-2473

arrival of great flights of shorebirds will keep things exciting through the beginning of June. Also see: Birder's Guide to Northern California, LoLo Westrich & Jim Westrich, publ. 1991; Birding Northern California, Jean Richmond, publ. 1985.

# 24. CHARLESTON PEAK Nevada

An island of montane habitats surrounded by desert, this peak supports isolated breeding populations of many species, including Northern Goshawk, Broadtailed Hummingbird, Pygmy Nuthatch, Virginia's Warbler, and Lazuli Bunting. Also see: Southern Nevada Birds, a Seekers Guide, Carolyn

Kitchel Titus, publ. 1991.

#### 25. SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS California

In a gradient of habitats from chaparral to pines, observers can find such western specialties as Whiteheaded and Nuttall's woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Mountain Quail, Pinyon Jay, Wrentit, and sometimes Lawrence's Goldfinch. Nocturnal birds include Whip-poor-will (at its western limits) and Northern Saw-whet Owl. See: Birder's Guide to Southern California (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1990; Where Birders Go in Southern California, Henry E. Childs, Jr., publ. 1990.