

West Indies Region

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The Region was threatened by fierce storms from mid-August through the end of November: tropical storm *Dolly* and hurricanes *Edouard* (Category 4); *Fran* (1); *Hortense* (4); *Lili* (3) and *Marco* (1). Montserrat's human population and ecology were threatened as never before in September from volcanic ash and caustic gases. Insular and endemic birds, such as the Montserrat Oriole, face an uncertain future in the south of the island. October and November reports from the Bahamas reflected the unstable weather conditions, particularly from hurricane *Lili*, which passed west to east over much of Cuba and through the central Bahamas from October 17–19. Storm conditions lingered in the western Caribbean, threatening the Caymans and Jamaica, from Nov. 18–26. In addition, a strong cold front passing through the Bahamas at the end of the first week of November brought unseasonably poor weathers; however, these conditions may have contributed to high diversity and numbers of migrants reported from Great Abaco, Grand Bahama, New Providence, and Eleuthera.

Great Abaco, where WINGS recently toured, lies at approximately the same latitude as West Palm Beach, Florida. Late season tropical storms originating in the western Caribbean and passing over Cuba and the northern Bahamas could be espe-

cially bountiful for birding. Watch for fall-out along the Florida coast and Bahamas in October and November or even at Christmas Bird Counts. While birders would expect to find many neotropical migrants off-shore in the northern Bahamas, it shouldn't be surprising to find some wayward West Indian species in the Florida Keys north to West Palm Beach, or farther north. (See *AFN* 50(3):270–272 and 50(4):90.) The potential for 25 West Indian species as vagrants to Florida is documented (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). There could be an additional non-waterbird, conspecifics, and subspecies going unnoticed on the mainland; *i.e.* American Kestrel, Zenaida Dove, Mourning Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Short-eared Owl, Antillean Nighthawk, Gray Kingbird, Cave Swallow, Northern Mockingbird, Black-whiskered Vireo, Yellow "Golden" Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, and Eastern Meadowlark.

Abbreviations: Be (*Bermuda*); GB (*Grand Bahama*); NP (*New Providence, Bahamas*); El. (*Eleuthera, Bahamas*); GA (*Great Abaco*); DR (*Dominican Republic*).

Grebes to Terns

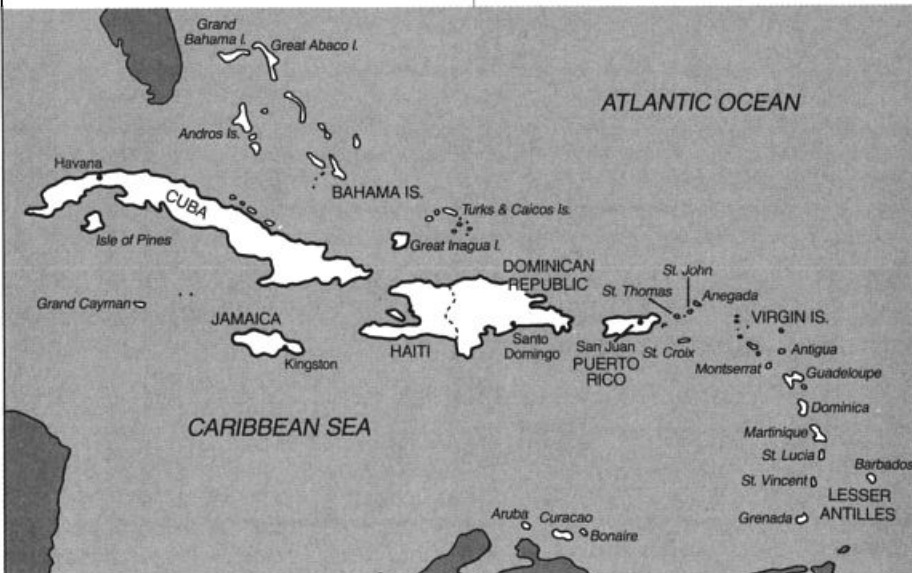
Twelve Least Grebes included a nesting adult at NP Nov. 10 (JD). One "Cahow" Bermuda Petrel seen at Paget Sound, Be Oct. 7, equalled the earliest return date to this Endangered species nesting site.

SA A contingent threat to the Bermuda Petrel's nearly pelagic existence comes not only from intense competition from neighboring, aggressive White-tailed Tropicbirds, but from the sea itself. Massive swells from hurricane Felix in

1995 rolled onto and over off-shore islets and flooded nesting burrows, displacing both species in Paget Sound. However, David Wingate's Cahow conservation program crew was able to restore nesting sites in time to prevent greater loss of chicks than otherwise expected. Fledgling production in 1996, from a record 52 breeding pairs, was 26 fledglings. It remains to be seen what the impact of reduced production of tropicbirds will have on the protected *Pterodroma cahow*, one of the rarest seabirds in the world.

Twelve Neotropical Cormorants were seen at NP Nov. 10. Twenty Double-crested Cormorants seen at Great Oyster Pond, El., Nov. 15 (TW, AB) may be the recently described, smaller San Salvador race, *Phalacrocorax auritus heuretus*. Connor and Loftin (1985) have suggested that cormorants breed at Eleuthera. If breeding is confirmed, it represents an n.w. expansion of this local race by >100 nautical miles. A Least Bittern was noted at Marsh Harbour, GA Nov. 5 (JD), and three were noted at NP Nov. 10 (JD). A white-morph Reddish Egret was carefully noted at Treasure Cay, GA Nov. 7 (JD *et al.*). Of particular note at Devonshire Marsh, Be., Oct. 7 was the report of five White Ibis, where only singletons had been recorded previously (AD). A Black Scoter at Bermuda was an early arrival in October (AD). Three White-cheeked Pintail were noted near Casuarina Pt., GA Nov. 6, and 15 were seen on NP Nov. 10 (JD *et al.*).

Both North American (*sparverius*) and Cuban (*sparveroides*) races of Am. Kestrel were noted at Treasure Cay, GA Nov. 7 (JD). Three Peregrines were recorded at GB Oct. 13 (BH). Dobson writes that by mid-October \leq Peregrine Falcons had been reported at Bermuda. Ten years ago two in a season would have been news. Two Peregrines were seen at NP Nov. 10 (JD). At least three Virginia Rails responded to calls at Lucaya N.P., GB Oct. 13 (TW, BH, CW), where they probably winter in small numbers. Two Piping Plovers at Brown's Point, NP Oct. 10 provided a good find (TW, BH), as were two near Kemp's Pond, El., Nov. 15 (AB). An ad. Am. Oystercatcher was seen at Arawak Cay, NP Nov. 10 (TW) for one of few records from that location. A Wilson's Phalarope was noted at Salinas, Bahia de Las Calderas, Bani, DR Sept. 7 (FR). A single White-rumped Sandpiper at GB Oct. 11 provided a first for that location (TW *et al.*). Two imm. Ring-billed Gulls noted at Tarpum Bay, El. (TW, AB), represented new records at that location; and a first-winter Black-





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Photo by Neal Brown

headed Gull seen Nov. 14–18 (ph., TW, KW&AB) at Governor's Harbour, El., provided a first record for the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. More details are expected elsewhere. On Aug. 31–Sept. 7, a flock of 20 Black Terns was noted at Salinas, DR; it apparently represented a new record for the Dominican Republic (FR). A single Common Tern Oct. 13 was also new for GB (BH, TW), as were four Com. Terns at Tarpum Bay, El., Nov. 15 (TW, AB). A Caspian Tern, carefully noted at West End, GB Oct. 13 (BH, TW&BB), is perhaps the first from the Bahamas and certainly a first for GB.

Doves to Orioles

One of the most elusive *columbids* in the Region is Key West Quail-Dove. Singletons were noted at GB Oct. 14 (BH *et al.*) and skulking in coppice woodlands at the S. Ocean Golf Course, NP Nov. 10 (JD *et al.*). Fifty Cuban Parrots were seen at the s.e. end of Grand Abaco (near the lighthouse at Hole-in-the-Wall) Nov. 6, and 14 Nov. 8 at Casaurina Pt. (JD *et al.*), which, according to Dunn's experience, was rather far north on that island. An Antillean Nighthawk called repeatedly for Hallett and White Oct. 15 at GB, a late date for this summer resident. A swift (tentatively regarded as a *Cypseloides* sp.) seen at Ft. Scaur, Be, was undoubtedly the product of tropical storm or hurricane. But from where did it originate, Cuba? Hurricane *Lili* passed s. of Bermuda Oct. 20. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was seen at Oct. 7 (*fide* AD) at Paget Sound, Be. A Western Kingbird was seen at GB Oct. 13 (BH) for a first record there, and two Gray Kingbirds were noted at Bermuda in October (AD). The numbers of Bahama Swallows (3) were down considerably at Marsh Harbour dump, GA, in November, where 100s were counted the previous year (JD). A N. Rough-winged Swallow made a rare visit to Marsh Harbour dump, GA Nov. 7 & 9 (JD). A Cedar Waxwing was noted briefly at Governor's Harbour, El., Nov. 15 (TW) representing a first record for that island. A White-eyed Vireo was heard singing at NP Nov. 10 (JD). Another rare visitor to the Bahamas was Philadelphia Vireo, reported for the first time at GB Oct. 12 (BH *et al.*), and another was carefully noted and described at Bahama Palm Shores, GA Nov. 9 (JD).

Twenty-four species of migrant warblers were observed at Grand Bahama during the week of the F.O.S. conference. Among the more remarkable were one-two Nashvilles Oct. 12 & 17 (BH *et al.*), Chestnut-sided, and Swainson's warblers, all first records. Likewise, a Blue-winged

Nov. 6 (and one at Eleuthera Nov. 19) (TW), a Magnolia Nov. 9, a Kentucky Nov. 8, and a Hooded Warbler Nov. 9 at Abaco were all record occurrences at GA (JD *et al.*). Resident warblers of GB—Olive-capped, Pine, Yellow-throated and Bahama Yellowthroat—were noted in good numbers during the week (F.O.S.). A Lark Sparrow seen at Paget Sound Oct. 7 provided only the 3rd record (AD) for Bermuda. A Clay-colored Sparrow at Bermuda in October, although exciting, did not make history; but a Clay-colored Sparrow did at Treasure Cay, GA Nov. 7 (ph., JD), a first for that island and only the 2nd for the Bahamas (*fide* TW). A Savannah Sparrow seen at Eleuthera Nov. 16 (TW, AB) provided a record occurrence. Five Baltimore Orioles were seen Oct. 13 at GB (BH *et al.*), and one was at Bahama Palm Shores, GA Nov. 9 (JD).

Exotics

Tony White reports that Rock Doves and Eur. Collared-Doves are now seen at Eleuthera, but Monk Parakeets are no longer extant there, possibly as a result of hurricane *Andrew* in 1992. House Sparrows were noted daily at GB and NP.

Addendum

Received too late for inclusion last fall were interesting records from a recently formed birding club in the Dominican Republic (FR). On Nov. 29, 1995, and subsequent visits to the Salinas, Bahia de Las Calderas, Bani, a Red-necked Phalarope was studied while it fed in the company of yellowlegs and dowitchers. Also noted there Nov. 29 were an imm. Great Black-backed Gull, Peregrine Falcon, and nine Whimbrels. Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers were also reported in November 1995.

Corrigendum

Due to an editing error, a portion of the spring 1996 West Indies report was dropped. The following section was missing or incomplete:

A Fork-tailed Flycatcher carefully studied near Vieux Ft., St. Lucia, April 2 (ARK) provided a first record for that island and perhaps only the 3rd record n. of Barbados, Grenada, and the Grenadines, where this species is a more or less expected overshoot migrant to Trinidad from higher latitudes in South America.

Both Northern and Bahama mockingbirds are common, established residents in south Andros, yet each appears to occupy slightly different habitats there: the former near open scrub settlements and the latter mostly in thick, brushy areas (AB, TW). Both Brown and Gray Tremblers were

seen at St. Lucia March 31 and April 2, respectively (ARK). Two White-breasted Thrashers, perhaps the most critically threatened of the Region's endemic birds, were seen at Martinique April 6 (ARK) Gray-cheeked Thrush (Bicknell's) was present at Port Royal, Be, from December–March (AD). The ever secretive Forest Thrush didn't escape Keith's notice at Guadeloupe April 6 nor at Montserrat April 9.

Overwintering migrant warblers such as Magnolia (two), Prairie (three), Black-and-white, American Redstart (two), and Com. Yellowthroat were still present April 17 at s. Andros (AB, TW). Endemic Bahama Yellowthroats were singing or on territory at New Providence, Bahamas, Mar. 9 & 12 (PD, AB, CW, TW), and again at the National Botanic Gardens, New Providence March 13 (TW). A N. Waterthrush was present at St. Lucia April 1 (ARK). A Hooded Warbler was seen at Guadeloupe April 26 (GJ, MA *et al.*) for one of few reports from that island. Banton and White made searches for Shiny Cowbirds at s. Andros and failed to locate any; but they did find the Black-cowled Oriole population—the cowbird's regular host on N. Andros—to be fairly common, a positive report from a negative result. Of the landbird species recorded from Montserrat April 8–10, perhaps the most crucial report was of a pair, male and female, of Montserrat Orioles (ARK).

Addendum: Received too late to be included in the winter report are the following: American Avocet seen at Wilson Pond, New Providence, Bahamas, Jan 24 through the period (PD *et al.*) provided the first record there; a single ad ♂ Orchard Oriole seen Feb. 20 at Montague Heights, New Providence, Bahamas (PD) represented the first record there and only the 2nd for the Bahamas. Species introduced to the region are spreading; e.g. Rock Dove at south Andros Apr. 16–18 (AB, TW), Guadeloupe Apr. 6–7, Martinique Apr. 5–6, and St. Lucia Mar 31–Apr. 4; Eur. Collared Dove on Guadeloupe Apr. 8; House Sparrow on Guadeloupe Apr. 6, Martinique Apr. 5, and St. Lucia Apr. 4 (all ARK).

Also, missing from the report was one contributor name: M. Anselme.

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