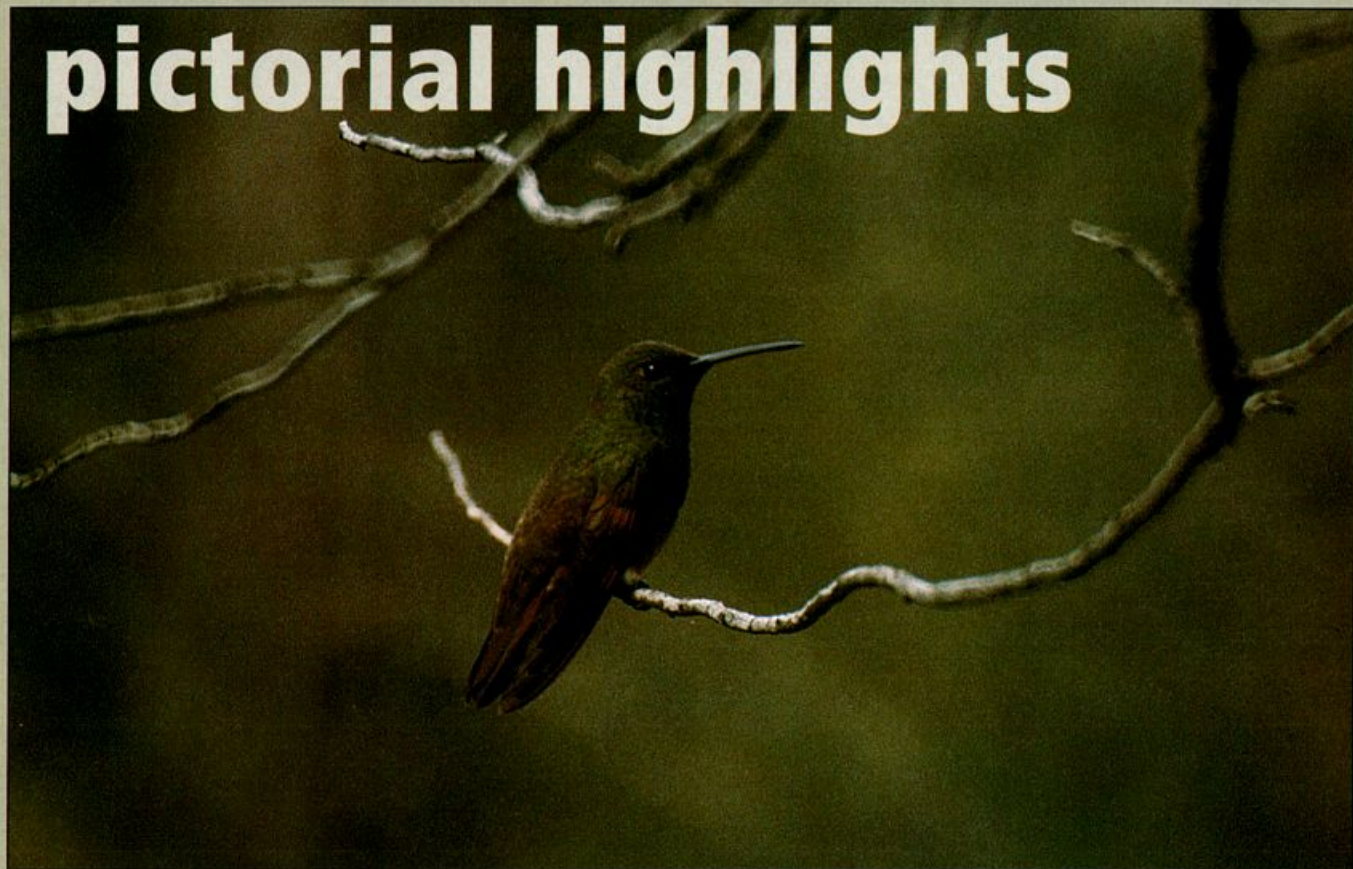


# pictorial highlights



At the same feeders as the White-eared Hummingbird (right) and sometimes visible at the same time, this Berylline Hummingbird (above) in the Davis Mountains on August 17, 1997, provided a first confirmed record for Texas.

Photograph/Kelly B. Bryan



In late summer 1997, the Davis Mountains of western Texas rivalled some better-known Arizona localities as a hot spot for hummingbirds. This male White-eared Hummingbird, attending feeders there on August 18, 1997, established the ninth Texas record.

Photograph/Greg W. Lasley



**Proof that sparrows can be gorgeous: this Le Conte's Sparrow, a rare visitor on the Atlantic Coast, thrilled observers at Cape May, New Jersey, on October 25, 1997. Photograph/Kevin T. Karlson**



**Yellow Rail may be a regular winter resident in Florida, but it is rarely detected there and even more rarely photographed. This one was captured and released during surveys at Avon Park Air Force Range, Highlands County, on November 25, 1997. Photograph/Bill Pranty**



**In the aftermath of Hurricane Nora, which tracked inland along the California–Arizona border, hundreds of storm-petrels (Least and Black) were found on Lake Havasu, near where the eye of the hurricane had broken up. This Least Storm-Petrel was picked up dead on the shore of the lake in Mojave County, Arizona, on September 29, 1997. For more details, see the accounts in the Arizona and Southern Pacific Coast regional reports, and in the Changing Seasons column. Photograph/Troy Corman**



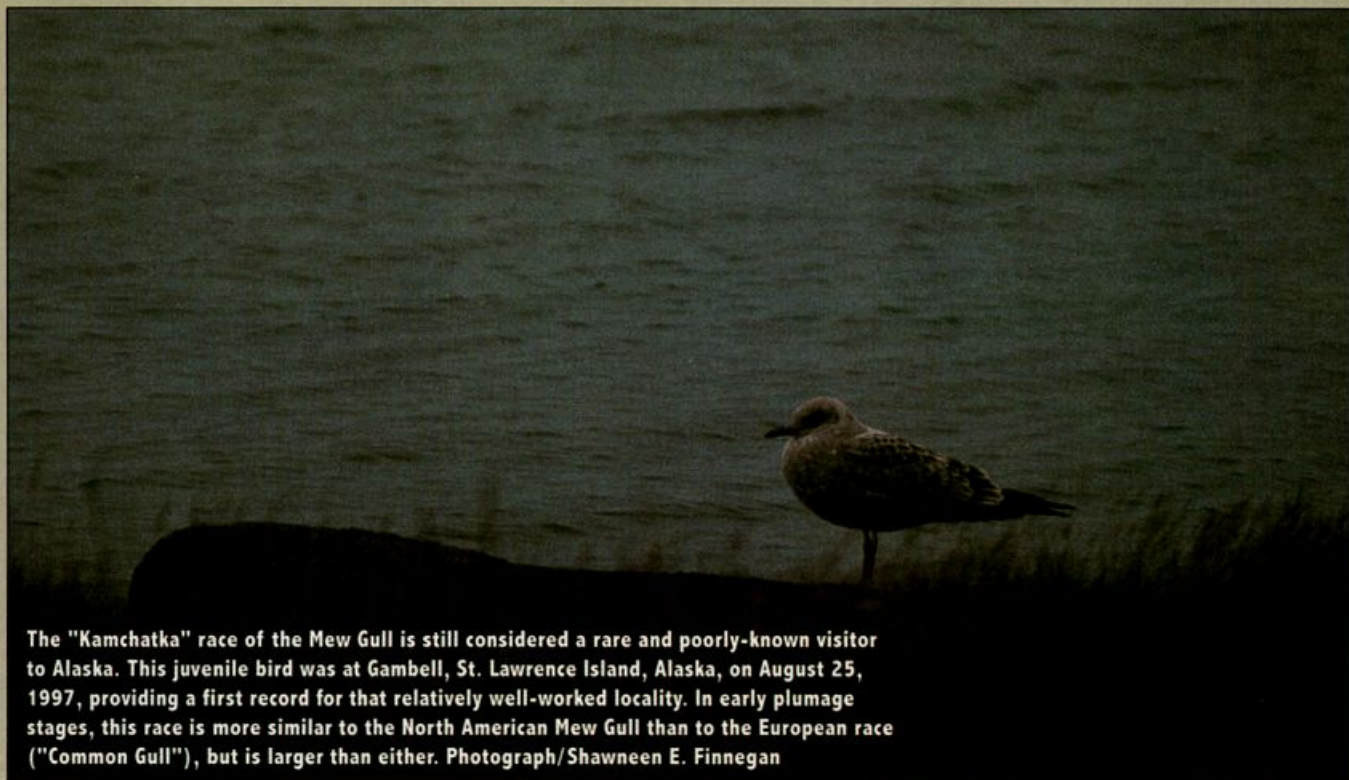
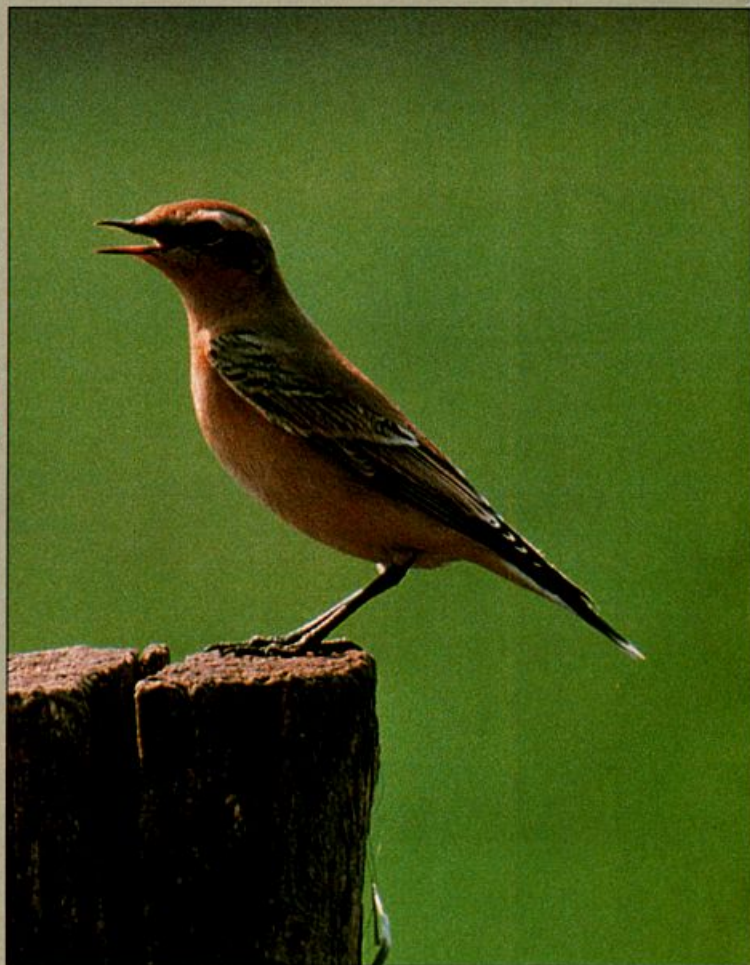
**North America had only about a dozen previous records, but this fall at least five more Dusky Warblers were found, two in Alaska and at least three in California. This bird, at Cantil in the desert regions of eastern Kern County, California, on October 4, 1997, was the first such vagrant to be found inland. Photograph/John C. Wilson**



Most Fork-tailed Flycatchers reaching North America are believed to be of the migratory South American race, but it is usually difficult or impossible to prove this in the field. When Maryland's second record showed up, near Mechanicsville in September 1997, astute observers attempted to photograph the bird in a posture with its wings spread—and one succeeded. This shot of the stretching bird shows the deep emargination (or "notched" effect) on the three outermost primaries, establishing that this was an adult male of the southern race *T.s. savana*. Photograph/James L. Stasz

Although a few Northern Wheatears occur near the coast in northeastern North America every fall, they are much more unusual inland. Two were found in central Pennsylvania this season, including this bird in Juniata County on October 7, 1997.

Photograph/  
Nick Pulcinella



The "Kamchatka" race of the Mew Gull is still considered a rare and poorly-known visitor to Alaska. This juvenile bird was at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, on August 25, 1997, providing a first record for that relatively well-worked locality. In early plumage stages, this race is more similar to the North American Mew Gull than to the European race ("Common Gull"), but is larger than either. Photograph/Shawneen E. Finnegan

## pictorial highlights



Always among the rarer eastern warblers to occur as vagrants in the west, this Canada Warbler was captured at the banding operation at Barr Lake, Colorado, on August 31, 1997. This individual shows how subtle the markings can be on a first-autumn female. Photograph/Tony Leukering



A remarkable number of rare birds graced Cape May, New Jersey, in early November 1997 (see cover and page 4 of this issue, as well as Hudson-Delaware regional report). This MacGillivray's Warbler, a first for New Jersey, was found November 12 but remained into mid-winter. Photograph/Kevin T. Karlson



Providing a remarkable combination for California, these two juvenile godwits—one Bar-tailed (left) and one Hudsonian (right)—were at the Eel River Wildlife Area, Humboldt County, on September 9, 1997. Hudsonian Godwit, the North American species, is actually more of a rarity in California than the Eurasian-Alaskan breeding Bar-tailed Godwit. Among other differences shown in this photo, notice the prominent dark streaks on the wing coverts and the more obvious barring on the tertials of the Bar-tailed. Photograph/Sean McAllister

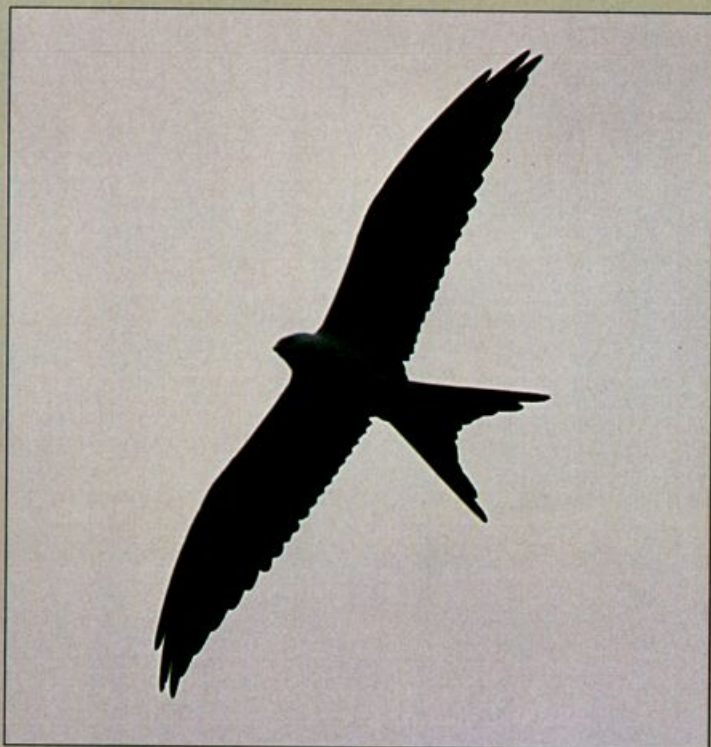


It had been long assumed that Black Swifts probably nested in Idaho, but the first actual proof was obtained this season when four nests were found in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains, Shoshone County. This photo (taken September 5, 1997) shows a juvenile exercising on the edge of one of the nests. Head pattern is hard to see here, but this posture shows off the white tips on body and wing feathers, characteristic of juvenal plumage. Photograph/James F. Acton



Unknown in the western United States prior to the 1960s, Black Skimmers are now nesting in several areas of California. No doubt reflecting this increase, Nevada had its first record with two birds (including this one) at the Henderson Ponds, Clark County, on August 18, 1997. Photograph/Marian Cressman

One of the most exciting, and distinctive, bird silhouettes that one could hope to see in the midwestern sky, this Swallow-tailed Kite was at Lawrenceburg, southeastern Indiana, on August 16, 1997. During August and September, other sightings were reported in Ohio, Wisconsin, and southwestern Indiana. Photograph/Michael Ray Brown



The arrival of vagrant warblers from the south and west in the Maritime Provinces of Canada is now a well-established fall phenomenon. This female Hooded Warbler was at Cape Spear, Newfoundland, on August 31, 1997. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish

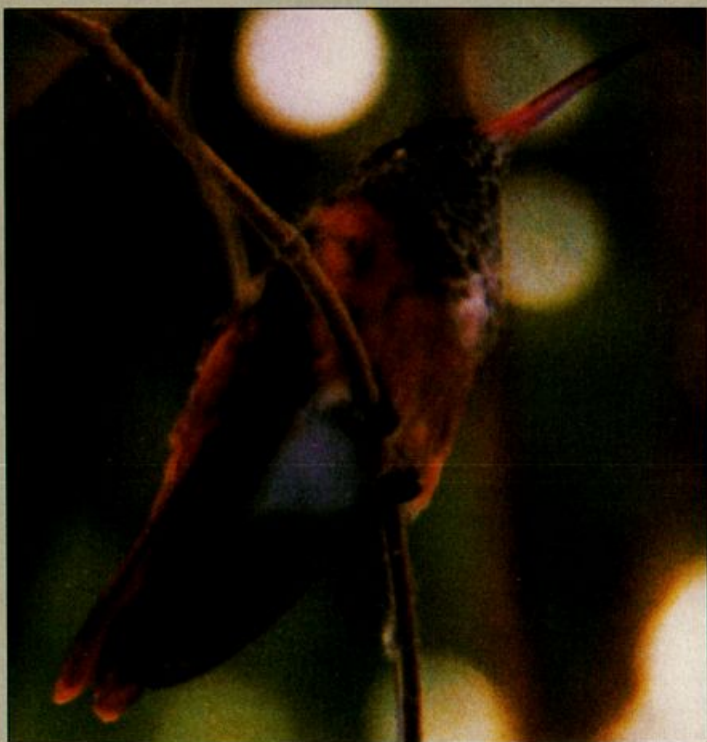
## pictorial highlights



The effects of El Niño on ocean temperatures seemed to have a clear influence on distribution of some seabirds along our Pacific Coast. For example, at least four Brown Boobies, moving up from tropical waters, were found off California. This immature was between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands, in southern California's Channel Islands, on October 19, 1997. Photograph/Don Desjardin



One of the unexplained, but widespread, phenomena of the season was the occurrence of unusual numbers of Red-necked Grebes and Red-throated and Pacific loons in many areas in the interior of the continent. This Red-necked Grebe was on Lake Monroe, southern Indiana, on November 21, 1997. Photograph/Don Whitehead



This "mystery" hummingbird was photographed the only time it was seen, on September 1, 1997, in Madera Canyon, Arizona. Put up on the Internet for discussion, the photo sparked much debate, with most arguments leaning toward either a very brightly colored Berylline Hummingbird or a hybrid. Discussion dwindled after Louis Bevier pointed out that characters visible in the photo made a fairly good match with *Amazilia* Hummingbird, a South American species. As Michael Patten points out in the Changing Seasons column in this issue, *Amazilia* Hummingbird may be the most common hummer species in captivity. So—was the Madera Canyon bird a zoo escapee? Photograph/Earle A. Robinson



Only the fifth for California, this Smith's Longspur was present for a week in October 1997 at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley National Park. In this exceptional portrait of the spread wing and tail, the buffy edges on the median coverts indicate a female, and the shapes of the outer tail feathers (tapered rather than broadly truncated) suggest a first-autumn bird. Photograph/Larry Sansone