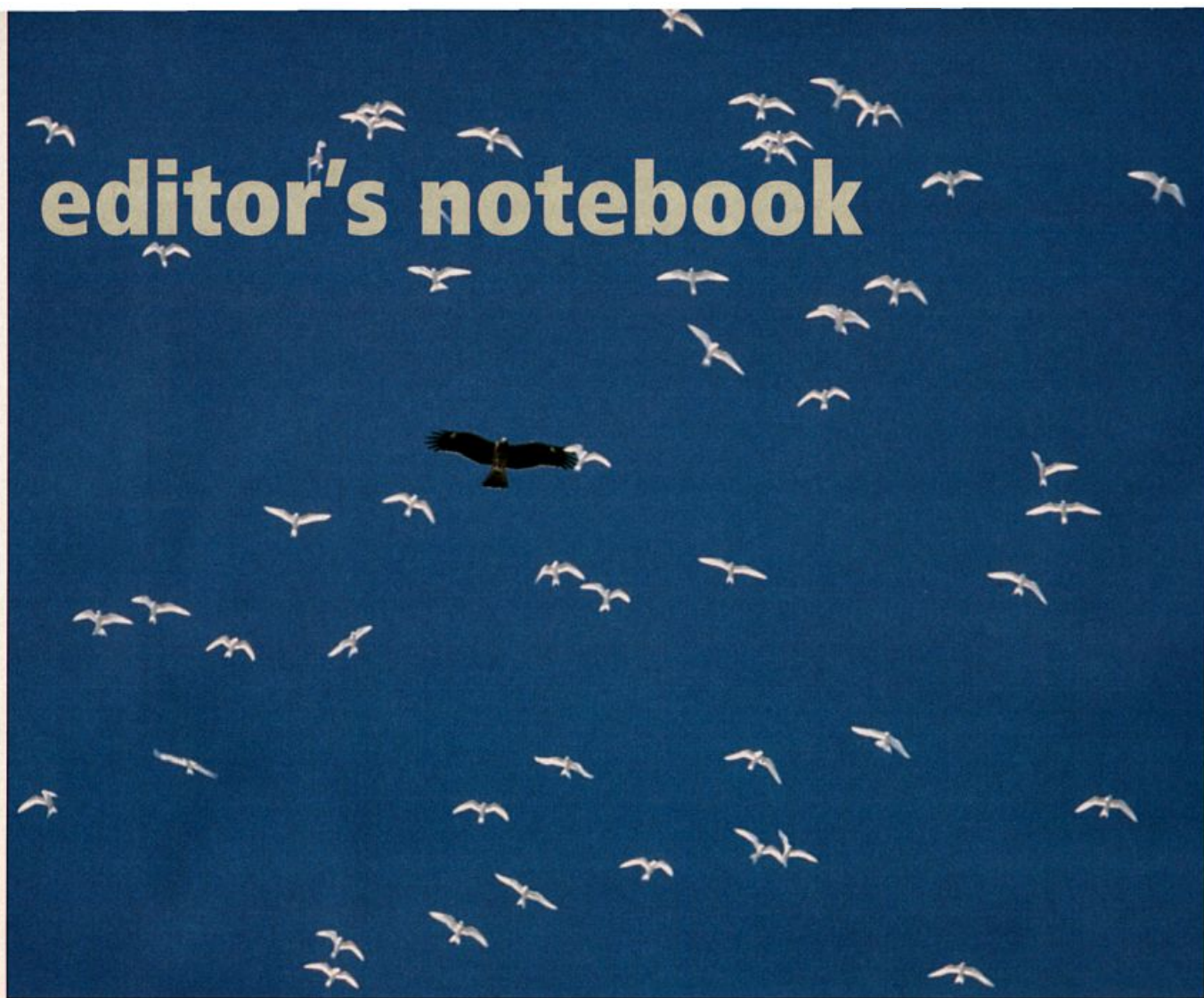


# editor's notebook



**A study in contrasts: a Black Kite, a vagrant from Asia, surrounded by a blizzard of White Terns on Sand Island, Midway, Hawaii, on February 22, 1998. The winter of 1997 to 1998 was a season of contrasts also. The mighty force of El Niño was felt in Hawaii and all across North America; some of its effects on birdlife were obvious, but other results were not so black and white.**

**Photograph/ Peter Pyle (HRBP # 1158)**

**Q**uestion: When you think of Bristle-thighed Curlew, which of the fifty states of the U.S. comes to mind first? If you said "Alaska," you get some points, but that's not the best answer.

It's true that Bristle-thigheds are known to nest only in Alaska. But they are on the breeding grounds for less than one-third of the year, and they spend the rest of their time on Pacific islands—including Hawaii. Most one-year-old individuals apparently do not migrate at all, so some Bristle-thighed Curlews can be found on the islands at all seasons. Thus, Hawaii is the state where this species occurs most consistently.

In spring 1998, Bristle-thighed Curlews hit the coasts of three other states—Washington, Oregon, and California—as detailed by Mike Patterson in this issue. The reason for the unprecedented influx, as he explains, is undoubtedly related to El Niño. This huge phenomenon of climate tied all regions of North America together during the winter and spring just past, affecting weather and birdlife from Hawaii and Alaska to the Caribbean. It was a powerful reminder that all things in nature are interconnected.

All things in birding and field ornithology are potentially connected, also. So while we are proud to be publishing Patterson's account of the curlew invasion, we should point out that another treatment of this same event is due to appear in the fine regional

journal *Western Birds*, published by the Western Field Ornithologists. The paper in *Western Birds* is being co-authored by Bill Tweit, a long-time regional editor for *Field Notes*, with Steve Mlodinow and Steven Feldstein. Any readers who are particularly interested in the curlews are urged to consult both publications for different perspectives on this flight.

Another example of connection in bird publications: on page 149 of this issue is a color photograph of the Po'ouli, one of the rarest of Hawaii's birds. As this issue was going to press, we learned that this same photo was to appear in *The Wilson Bulletin*, published by the Wilson Ornithological Society. Although there is undoubtedly some overlap in readership between that journal and *Field Notes*, we concluded that it was well worth publishing the photo anyway; it helps to highlight the excellent conservation work being done by the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, of the Hawaii Forestry and Wildlife Division. As natural habitats on the mainland of North America become more fragmented, the bird conservation methods developed on the islands may become more applicable on the continent as well—giving us yet another Hawaiian example to affirm that, when it comes to birds, all things are interconnected.

—KENN KAUFMAN  
Editor