

in *Inyo* and e. *Kern* between 18 and 31 May were fewer than expected. A Kentucky Warbler was at G.H.P. 30 May (DSt). Five Hooded Warblers were reported in the e. portion of the Region between 9 and 28 May (KSG, CMcG, MSanM), including *Imperial's* first at In-ko-pah 28 May (MAP).

The Clay-colored Sparrow that wintered in Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara*, remained through 9 Apr (JMC), one was in the Saline Valley 16–18 May (REM) and one near Niland 11 May (PAG, GMcC) was only the 3rd to be found in *Imperial*. A Swamp Sparrow in Santa Maria to 9 Apr (JMC) was the latest remaining wintering bird, since single individuals in California City, *Kern*, 1–15 Apr (KSG) and in Bishop 30 Apr (JMF) were believed to be migrants. A Harris's Sparrow in Ridgecrest 29 Mar–24 Apr (PW) was the only one reported. The latest of the wintering White-throated Sparrows were one on Point Loma in San Diego to 19 Apr (REW) and another in Thousand Oaks, *Ventura* to 26 Apr (CB). A Grasshopper Sparrow in the Saline Valley 19 May (REM) was at an unexpected locality.

Fifteen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks 9–30 May was about average. Indigo Buntings continue colonizing some areas in s. California, as indicated by the presence of at least 6 territorial males scattered throughout the Region in May. A male Painted Bunting at F.C.R. 26–27 May (MSanM) is best considered a spring vagrant, but one in Santee, *San Diego*, 15 Apr (BMu) had more likely escaped from captivity. Dickcissels, rare in spring, were at F.C.R. 26–27 May (AME) and the Saline Valley 28–29 May (REM). A male Bobolink inland at Independence, *Inyo*, 21 May (RHu), a male at F.C.R. 27 May (MSanM), a female there 28 May (MSanM), and a male along the coast near the Santa Ynez R. mouth, *Santa Barbara*, 20 May (BKH) was about average. A female Bronzed Cowbird in the Saline Valley 29 May (REM) was about as far n. as the species has been recorded in California. A Common Grackle in Long Beach 10 Mar (KSG) was the latest of ≤ 5 present in Jan. A wintering Baltimore Oriole remained in Long Beach through 12 Mar (KSG) and another was found in Highland Park, *Los Angeles*, 15 Mar (DSC), but a male on Pt. Vicente, *Los Angeles*, 16 Apr (KL) was believed to be a migrant. An adult male **Black-backed Oriole** (*Icterus abeillei*) near Imperial Beach 9 Apr–6 Jun (GH) was the first to be reported in the U.S. Whether this partly migratory oriole from central Mexico was a genuine vagrant or an escapee will be debated by the CBRC and others. However, based on distances other orioles have wan-

dered from their normal ranges, this species might have the potential to reach the U.S.

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west indies



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It was a remarkable season for rare birds, with records expanding national and Regional lists. Reports span the length and breadth of the Region: Bermuda in the north, Aruba in the south, the Cayman Islands in the west, and Barbados in the east. Reports from the Bahamas, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands south to St. Lucia provide an avian smorgasbord from pelagics to endemics. The new frontier in West Indian ornithogeography is a renewed interest in pelagic birds, particularly out of

Bermuda and Barbados. I say "renewed" because colleague Ruud van Halewijn probably initiated the "big bang" of expanded discovery during his voyages in the southeastern Caribbean in 1970–1972 (van Halewijn and Norton 1982). Look for the newly released review of Caribbean seabird ecology and distribution (D. S. Lee and B. A. Schreiber, eds.), largely an outcome of Ruud's work in the 1970s.

In the aftermath of hurricane *Lenny*, residents of St. Croix, St. Kitts, and Nevis remarked on the dearth of hummingbirds (C&KM). Despite the return of flowering plants, hummers were not in evidence. On the other hand, many small ponds benefitted from heavy rains associated with these tropical disturbances. Resident duck and shorebird populations respond to renewed

blooms of invertebrates and tend to delay migration, especially those not in breeding condition. The ephemeral nature of the ponds and localized rain patterns control where resident species will breed, resulting in inter- and intra-island movements, often between national boundaries. A coordinated effort to monitor resident anatids such as whistling-ducks and White-cheeked Pintail is desirable. Ponds on Vieques, Puerto Rico, were dry in late winter into March (DG). WB reports that fires on Abaco need to be monitored, especially in the area of the national park.

Abbreviations: Ba. (Bahamas); Bd. (Barbados); Be (Bermuda), St Croix (St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands).

SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS

Andrew Dobson reports on a "good passage" of pelagic species during mid-March, including Manx Shearwaters estimated at 40/hr, with an occasional Cory's Shearwater. A pelagic trip 10 miles out off Barbados 29 Apr produced Audubon's Shearwater (2), Wilson's Storm-Petrel (11), and a **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** carefully noted to be a dark-rumped Leach's-type Storm-Petrel (MF, MG et al.) The week before on a cruise returning from Aruba, MG recorded a Leach's Storm-Petrel and 2-3 **Band-rumped Petrels** in deeper waters off Bd. in late Apr. During a 22 Apr whale-watching trip off Challenger Bank, 11 mi sw. of Bermuda, a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was noted (AD). Gawn also reported a petrel with "jizz" like a Bulwer's Petrel.

A Neotropic Cormorant seen 18 May at El Dorado (TW et al.) was the first reported from S. Andros. On the s. side of St. Croix., C&KM found a Black-crowned Night-Heron 8 May near a small farm pond. This species is almost exclusively a freshwater species in the Virgin Islands, whereas Yellow-crowned is found along the coast and feeding on nestling seabirds, among other sea life, on offshore cays (RLN). West Indian Whistling-Duck, a Regionally-threatened species, is reported to be occasional (GM, *fide* TW) at El Dorado, S. Andros. Sightings from e. Cuba (4 at Playa Guardalavaca; 2 adults and 8 young at Parc Nacional Bahía de Naranjo), the Cayman Islands, and the cen. Bahamas are encouraging and offer some hope that conservation of this endemic *Dendrocygna* is possible. A female Eurasian Wigeon was last seen at Be. 14 Apr (MA). A male Tufted Duck remained until 29 Apr (EA) after moving from Spittal Pond, Be., to new accommodations at Warwick Pond.

An Osprey, undoubtedly *carolinensis*, lingered at Christiansted, St Croix, 7 May

(C&KM). Ponds and lagoons in spring on the e. Puerto Rican bank tend to attract non-breeding migrants, although a rudimentary osprey nest was found at Krause Lagoon, St. Croix, in the late 1980s (FS, JY). Two Snail Kites were seen at Cauto Christo, Cuba, 4 Apr (BM). Northern Harriers were at Casaurina Point, Abaco, 27 Mar (TW) and at San Salvador, Bahamas, 2-9 Apr (J & TG). Rarely observed or reported is Gundlach's Hawk. One was seen (RL, RS, JW) near El Salton, Cuba, 4 Apr (*fide* BM). A Crested Saracara was seen 1 Apr at Playa Guardalavaca, Cuba (BM). A **Black Rail** was heard at Owens Town, Andros, 30-31 Mar (TW), providing only the 3rd report from the Bahamas. A tape was played to entice the bird into view, but it simply replied and stayed hidden (*fide* TW). An unexpected find in the Pignon, Central Plateau, Haiti, was a Limpkin 9 Mar (JRC, JB) and again in Apr (JB). Two were noted at Herrera, Cuba, 2 Apr (BM).

A Semipalmated Plover noted 3 May at Altoona Lagoon, St. Croix (C&KM) was a bit tardy, as was a Least Sandpiper. Ten Semipalmated Plovers and 30 Least Sandpipers were found at Great Salt Pond, St. Kitts, 10 May (C&KM), indicating a late movement from the Lesser Antilles. J&TG found a single American Avocet at San Salvador 2-9 Apr among a flock of 90 Black-necked Stilts. One of the most remarkable finds this season was a **Terek Sandpiper** photographed 1 May at Congo Rd, Christchurch, Bd., (MF), a first for the West Indies. More details are expected elsewhere. On a cruise returning to Bd. from Aruba, Mark Gawn recorded an intermediate ad. **South Polar Skua** 24 Apr. An ad. Parasitic Jaeger was noted in the harbor at Aruba 24 Apr. At Salt River, w. of Christiansted, St. Croix., there were an estimated 100 Least Terns nesting 9 May (C&KM). Continued disturbance by dogs and people have probably limited any expansion of the population.

DOVES THROUGH SPARROWS

A Key West Quail-Dove was at South Andros 19 May (WB, BH). Maybank reported that both Gray-headed and Blue-headed Quail-Doves were present (AMV) in a small 576-ha tract that includes some virgin forest at Salto del Guayabo, Cuba—but there is strong pressure from poachers. White managed to observe two races of Cuban Parrots, one at Grand Cayman 3 Mar and 4 Bahamas-race parrots at Hole-in-the-wall, 25 Mar. An unidentified exotic parrot was noted flying with Puerto Rican Parrots 7 Apr (JS); will these critically endangered parrots be further troubled by cross-breeding? A Burrowing

Owl was noted 18 May at S. Andros (TW), where GM reports that they are common near The Bluff Settlement. The Short-eared Owl seen at Cooper's Island, Be. (DB), was last seen 8 Mar. A pair of White-collared Swifts were noted along El Yunque Road near Guardalavaca, Cuba, 3 Apr (BM), where a pair of Cuban Trogons was also reported (BM). Ten Cave Swallows were noted at Playa Guardalavaca, Cuba, 10 Apr (BM). On S. Andros, five pairs were likely nesting in a cave 18-19 May (TW et al.). Originally reported in 1986 (RP), breeding could not be confirmed by Bainton, Hallet, and White during a search in early May 1997. However in 1999 McKenzie videotaped a group at another location, Swimming Hole, S. Andros, where they were also likely nesters. Three Cuban Solitaires were noted at Playa Pesquero 9 Apr (BM). Both Scaly-breasted and Pearly-eyed Thrashers were noted at Charlestown, Nevis, 15 May (C&KM). From whence did flocks of Cedar Waxwings arrive, as they were noted from several localities during April in Be. (AD)?

Many neotropical migrant warblers species can be found throughout Cuba at all seasons. In fact, Maybank reported that competent local guides contend that three summering species, including Black-throated Blue, Cape May, and American Redstart, breed; a similar claim has been proffered in Jamaica. Although this phenomenon may not occur annually, further investigation is warranted. MO reports singing Chestnut-sided Warbler and American Redstart from Rio Espiritu Santo, Puerto Rico, 10 Apr and 7 Apr, respectively. A Scarlet Tanager was noted at St. Lucia 18 Apr, one of few reported from the Windward Islands (JG). A singing Dickcissel 2 Apr in Paget was a good spring find (PS). A Horned Lark and 5 Snow Buntings were still present at the Civil Air Terminal, Be., until 9 & 22 Mar, respectively (PW).

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