

individuals oversummer in the Region. Black-throated Bobwhites were calling constantly from the vegetation bordering the salt ponds n. of Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM). Early records of migrant shorebirds in Celestún, where there is continuous monitoring, are of one Black-bellied Plover 20 Jul, 3 Snowy and 9 Semipalmated Plovers 29 Jul (DB, BM), one Greater Yellowlegs 27 Jul, at least 6 Lesser Yellowlegs 29 Jul (DB, BM), 5 Ruddy Turnstones 20 Jul, and 3 Sanderlings with 16 Least Sandpipers 29 Jul (DB, BM). Only 5 Willets were seen at Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM), whereas 80 Willets were seen 17 Jul (together with the possibly oversummering American White Pelicans). Willets are extremely plentiful on the w. and n. coasts of the peninsula, particularly during migration, but they usually arrive in late Jul. The Spotted Sandpiper is an early arrival on the peninsula, so it was no surprise to find 4 together at Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM). A small number of nonbreeding individuals of this species oversummer each year. A basic-plumaged ad. Caspian Tern was observed in the estuary at Sisal, Yuc. on 8 Jul (BM). Nonbreeding individuals are known to oversummer in the Region. A single Forster's and a molting Black Tern were observed in Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM).

### CUCKOOS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen in Celestún's coastal vegetation 29 Jul (DB, BM). It is not known to nest there and so was assumed to be a migrant. A Belted Kingfisher was studied in Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM). Prior to this record, this species had been recorded on the peninsula only as early as 31 Jul near Escárcega, Camp. (in 1983; BM). A Rufous-breasted Spinetail was found in Jul building its enormous stick nest a short distance into the woods from the road leading to Laguna Muyil, near Chunyaxché, Q. Roo (IC). Three South American migrants—Piratic and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers and Yellow-green Vireos—made themselves at home in the archeological zone of Muyil, Q. Roo through the spring and summer. The Piratic Flycatcher appears to favor the nests of the Social Flycatcher and Rose-throated Becard; stealing of the nest of the White-eyed Flycatcher, as occurs in Costa Rica, was not noted, although White-eyed Flycatcher is also common in Muyil (IC). A single **Piratic Flycatcher** was recorded in Celestún 28 Jun (JSO), this being the first record for n. Yucatan.

### SWALLOWS THROUGH HONEYCREEPERS

Approximately 30 Purple Martins were observed feeding over the coast of Celestún 29 Jul, along with a few Barn Swallows (DB, BM). The call of Yucatan Wren could be heard fre-

quently in Celestún through the summer. Between 31 Jul and 3 Aug, a Tropical Mockingbird was observed at Celestún feeding a Bronzed Cowbird chick, indicating that its nest had been parasitized, as has been observed before. The only migrant warblers reported during Jun and Jul were 2 female Yellow Warblers in Celestún 29 Jul (DB, BM—this is the earliest date noted for this species on the peninsula, the previous early dates being one 4 Aug 1982 and 4 on 10 Aug 1983, per BM) and a Louisiana Waterthrush at Chunyaxché 30 Jul–4 Aug. A pair of Red-legged Honeycreepers had young in the nest in Chunyaxché 4 Aug.

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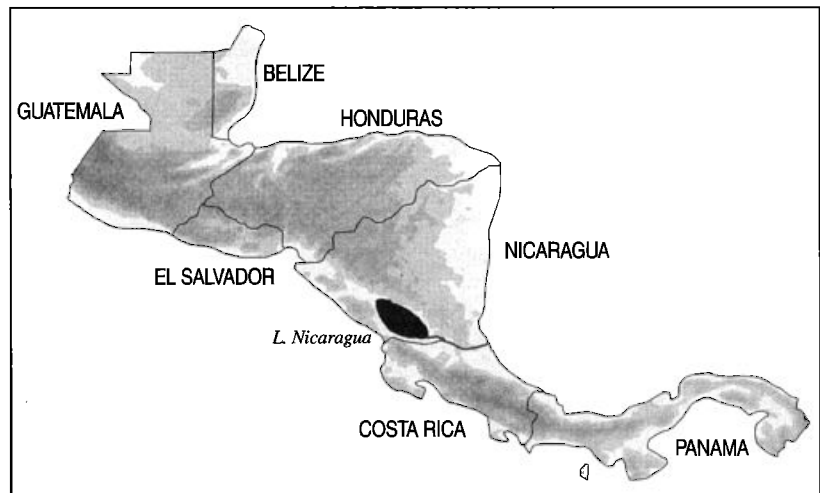
Ortiz (JSO). Uncredited observations are by David Bacab.

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# Central America



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**O**liver Komar continues to rewrite the chapter on bird distribution in El Salvador. Relatively little avian field research has been undertaken in this small country in the past, and Oliver continues to demonstrate how much we still have to learn. In just two months, June and July, he and his field associates found heretofore-unknown resident or likely resident popu-

lations of four species each in Dept. Morazán (Green Violet-ear, Brown-backed Solitaire, White-throated Robin, Slate-throated Redstart) and Dept. Chalatenango (King Vulture, Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, Wine-throated Hummingbird, Bar-winged Oriole) and found evidence of breeding for three other species (Zone-tailed Hawk, Red-throated Green Parakeet, Common Nighthawk) previously not known to nest in El Salvador. By way of contrast, reports of species found only a few km beyond their known distributional limits in heavily birded Costa Rica are noteworthy. But if someone wants to be a twenty-first-century trailblazer in Central American ornithology, may I suggest Nicaragua? Other than Thomas Howell's

**SA** Quite exciting was the discovery of a sizable Agami Heron nesting colony in mangroves near the mouth of the Moho R. just seven km s. of Punta Gorda, Belize 4 Aug (WRM). This may be the first documented nesting colony for Belize. The colony, estimated at 60 ads., still had occupied nests with eggs and young when last visited on 15 Aug (WRM, LJ). This species is rarely seen in s. Belize, yet it is practically common at Crooked Tree in n. Belize during the dry season (Jan–May), a locality where it appears to be seasonal and does not nest. Not unlike other, more familiar herons, it apparently nests in widely scattered colonies along the coast and outside the breeding season disperses inland to forest-lined lagoons, streams, and swamps.



The discovery a large colony of Agami Herons south of Punta Gorda—involving some 60 adults and photographed here 15 August—was one of the many highlights in Belize this season. *Photograph by H Lee Jones.*

work, primarily in the 1960s, few ornithologists have spent any length of time in the country, and Nicaragua has not exactly been a mecca for birders. The end of the protracted civil war in the late 1980s has made birding exploration feasible once again. *In addition to Nicaragua, we still need contributors and compilers from Guatemala and Honduras in order to have more balanced reporting for the Region.* Any volunteers?

**Abbreviations:** Crooked Tree (Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary); Lamanai (Lamanai Outpost Lodge, Belize); La Selva (La Selva Biological Station, Costa Rica); Monteverde (Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica); S F. (shrimp farm); U.K.N.H.M. (University of Kansas Natural History Museum).

## HERONS THROUGH SANDPIPERS

The status of Least Bittern is still unclear in Belize. It appears to be an uncommon and elusive resident in the n. half of the country, but it occasionally turns up on some of the small cayes, so probable migrants do occur. One at Dawson Cr., a small tributary of the New R. near Lamanai 18 Jul (MM), was at a locality where it is seen regularly and probably breeds; however, one bird two days later at the San Pedro (Ambergris Caye) sewage ponds (MM) was most likely a post-breeding wanderer or migrant.

Ad. King Vultures flying over La Montañona 25 & 27 Jul, respectively (OK), established the first records for Dept. Chalatenango, El Salvador. The breeding status of Zone-tailed Hawk in much of Mexico and Central America is unclear. Although nesting has been suspected

in a number of areas where the species has a year-round presence (especially parts of Costa Rica and Panama), there are very few documented nesting records between cen. Mexico and South America. In El Salvador, it is thought to be a winter visitor only; however, records of an ad. e. of Cerro Las Nubes in nw. Dept. Chalatenango 25 Jun (OK) and a juv. repeatedly vocalizing from a pine tree at Cerro La Montañona in e. Dept. Chalatenango 26 Jul (ph. OK) suggest that the species may breed locally in montane pine-oak forest near the Honduras border.

One Greater and one Lesser Yellowlegs at Aqua Mar S.F., along with a Willet at Punta Gorda and 2 more at Aqua Mar S.F., all on 21 Jul (LJ), established the earliest fall migrant records to date for each of these three species in Belize. A Least Sandpiper in Punta Gorda 13 Jul (LJ) established the earliest record for that species in Belize. These species undoubtedly occur earlier, at least in some years, but shorebirding is not yet a popular pastime in Central America, and much is still to be learned about their seasonality and abundance through the year.

## PARROTS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Evidence is mounting that the Red-throated subspecies of Green Parakeet (considered by many to be a full species) nests in El Salvador. In summer 2000, OK found circumstantial evidence of breeding in Dept. Morazán. This summer, he again had frequent sightings of pairs and flocks (up to 14 birds) in the pine forests of n.

Dept. Morazán in early Jun and mid-Jul, where local residents claimed to have seen nests. Common Nighthawk may also be a local summer resident in El Salvador. OK heard and saw one bird at Perquín, Dept. Morazán 19 Jul, where locals say that it is present all summer.

Both Great and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift are rarely reported in El Salvador. Typically, Great occurs at higher elevations, but the two have also been seen in mixed flocks. Although the Great is now reported regularly throughout much of the country, it was not documented until 8 Jun, when OK obtained photographs of several birds in a flock of 6 at Perquín. Three Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts at La Montañona 27 Jul (OK) established the first records for Dept. Chalatenango. They were seen with the larger Great Swallow-tailed Swift for comparison.

A Green Violet-ear at Perquín 18 Jul (ph. OK, \*U.K.N.H.M.) provided the first record for Dept. Morazán. Violet-crowned Woodnymph reaches its n. distributional limit in extreme s. Belize, where it is seldom reported. Thus, a female seen near San Pedro Columbia, Toledo Dist. 2 Jun (LJ) is noteworthy. The Blue-tailed Hummingbird is rarely seen in Costa Rica but in recent years has been reported occasionally from the Monteverde area. One seen between San Luis and Monteverde 21 Jul (RD, LG) continues this trend. A bit s. of its normal range in Costa Rica was a Cinnamon Hummingbird coming to a feeder in Escaleras, 6 km se. of Dominical, 12 Jun–25 Jul (BN). In El Salvador, a female Wine-throated Hummingbird well studied at Cerro El

Pital 26 Jun (OK, KZ, EG-T) was the first ever reported in Dept. Chalatenango.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH JAYS**

The taxonomy of the *Centurus* subgenus of woodpeckers is complex, with ill-defined species limits, extensive geographical variation, and, not surprisingly, frequent hybridization between some forms in their zones of overlap. The Golden-fronted and Hoffmann's Woodpeckers are two such species (or are they subspecies?). They are known to hybridize only in one small area of s. Honduras where their ranges overlap along one river drainage. In Dept. Morazán, El Salvador, 50 km to the nw., OK obtained photographs, a specimen, and written descriptions of several presumed hybrids on 6 Jun and 19 Jul. Hoffmann's has yet to be recorded in El Salvador. A Western Wood-Pewee at Perquín, Dept. Morazán 17 Jul (OK) was probably an early fall migrant or wanderer, as it was in an area where the species is not known to breed. A Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Punta Gorda 13 Jul (LJ) was in an area of Belize where it does not breed and is rarely seen. The population in Belize is not known to be migratory, but a migrant from farther n. in Mexico or from South America (nominate *savanna* is a long-distance austral migrant) cannot be ruled out.

The Lovely Cotinga was recorded on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica for the first time when one was found at Los Llanos, 3 km sw. of Santa Elena (near Monteverde) on 31 Jul (CG). A Bare-necked Umbrellabird at La Selva 28 Jul (EC) was the first reported from the lowlands this season. In Costa Rica, an isolated population of White-throated Magpie-Jays has been established around Dominical for about 10 years. There are no reports from Quepos, Savegre, Damas and other frequently birded areas between Dominical and the nw. (Nicoya Pen., Guanacaste), where they are common. In Jun, small groups of birds were seen in several locations down the coast from Dominical as far as Bahía Ballena N.P. (BN), suggesting that the population may have expanded in that direction, but interestingly, not in the other direction to cover the existing population gap.

**SWALLOWS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS**

The Purple Martin is the earliest fall migrant in much of Central America. One in Belize City on 19 Jun (PC) was quite early, even for this species, but still not the earliest date on record. The first Purple Martin was not recorded in Costa Rica until nearly a month later—17 Jul (JA, IA, EC) near La Selva. The Barn Swallow is also one of the earliest fall migrants, but one at Puente Colima, El Salvador 25 Jun (OK, KZ) may have been summering, or lost. The first southbound

migrants (6) in Belize were seen 19 Jul (MM), and they were being seen frequently a week later. The earliest fall date on record for Belize is 9 Jul. Two more firsts for Dept. Morazán were 11 singing male Brown-backed Solitaires found 5 km ne. of Perquín 6–7 Jun (OK) and 3 White-throated Robins at Cerro Cacahuatique 11 Jul (KZ, JdL).

A Yellow-throated Warbler at La Montañona, Dept. Chalatenango 27 Jul (OK) was only the 4th ever recorded in *El Salvador*. Several species of warblers begin arriving in Jul. Four this year matched or established the earliest arrival dates on record for Belize: Black-and-white Warbler, 23 Jul (PB); Prothonotary Warbler, 28 Jul (PH); Worm-eating Warbler, 29 Jul (MMA); and Louisiana Waterthrush, 14 Jul (MM). A Louisiana Waterthrush on 24 Jul (OK) was the earliest yet for El Salvador. Two singing male Slate-throated Redstarts 7 Jun (OK) 5 km ne. of Perquín established the first records of this species from Dept. Morazán. Four Elegant Euphonias at Cerro Cacahuatique, Dept. Morazán 13 Jul (OK) were a pleasant surprise, as

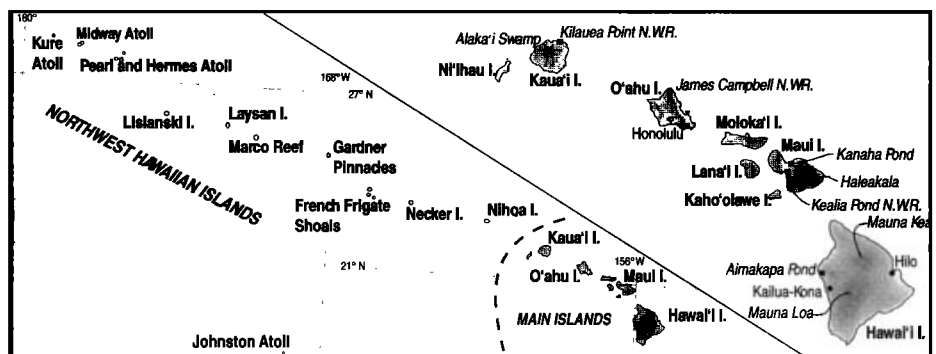
this species is rarely reported in El Salvador.

In Costa Rica, the Melodious Blackbird has been expanding its range southward for several decades, presumably in response to deforestation and human settlement. First recorded in the mid-1980s, it is now common in nw. Costa Rica. One was at Escaleras at the extreme s. edge of the species's range on 16 Jun (BN). Several male Bar-winged Orioles were found at La Montañona 23–27 Jul (OK), establishing the first records for Dept. Chalatenango. The first 2 Orchard Orioles of the season were at Playa Guapil near Dominical on 26 Jul (JRZ).

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# Hawaiian Islands



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It has been a quiet summer in the Hawaiian Islands. A long drought continues. Most areas of Kauai and Oahu received above normal rainfall in June, and the east side of the Big Island received above-normal rainfall in July, but rainfall for the year remains well below normal. There were few reports of rare species or unusual numbers. Reintroduced Hawaiian Geese seem to be doing well, but the plight of