

Editors' Notebook

Balance

In striving to meet our goals of geographic, taxonomic, and methodological diversity in the journal, we present three articles in this issue whose subjects hail from southern Canada, from the Flint Hills of Kansas, and from Midway Island in the tropical Pacific Ocean—species of albatross, stilt, and prairie-chicken occupy the present issue.

The plight of the prairie-chicken in the very core and stronghold of its range should concern us all: the bird is in dire straits, another testimony to the need for rapid assessments of such species by scientists working in conservation and population ecology. In this case, the birds' habitat is threatened by a relatively recent form of cattle ranching in the area, as demonstrated by Mark Robbins, Miguel A. Ortega-Huerta, and A. Townsend Peterson. To underscore the urgency of the situation, the birds—and this team's research results—were featured in the *New York Times* on 28 May.

Also of conservation concern, but a bit brighter story, is the recent, rapid consolidation of Black-necked Stilt's breeding range into the prairie country of southern Canada, especially in Alberta. One might rightly wonder whether some connection to global warming is possible here. Cheri Gratto-Trevor and assistants were actually studying Willets and godwits when they came across these stilt nests, and we're delighted they've provided us with a paper on a species peripheral to their primary research!

Our lead article by Tristan McKee and Peter Pyle explores the little-known appearances of aberrant individuals and hybrids of two very numerous species, Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses. Though numbering in the hundreds of thousands, both albatrosses presently incur heavy losses in the long-lining fishery. In this case, it is possible for us to act decisively and quickly to stop this slaughter consult: <http://www.abcbirds.org/policy/seabirds.htm> to learn more about the problem and possible remedies.

Huitzil?

More and more readers are sending in bird records to our newest regional and subregional editors south of the border—for which, *thank you*. Fans of Mexico's great avifauna will want to check out a fine new Internet offering, the on-line journal called **Huitzil** (<http://www.huitzil.org>). Here one finds timely, scholarly articles on basic bird distribution in Mexico written by some of the most active birders and ornithologists in the country; all of the articles are downloadable in "pdf" form to facilitate their circulation.

Another marvelous milestone for Mexican birding has been the A.B.A.'s publication of *Birds of the Baja Peninsula: Status, Distribution, and Taxonomy* edited by Richard Erickson and Steve N. G. Howell (a regional editor and a longtime contributor of bird records and articles to this journal). The book, part of the *ABA Monographs in Field Ornithology* series edited by Kenneth P. Able (yet another longtime *North American Birds* editor and contributor!), brims with color photographs and sketches documenting many of the uncommon and rare birds observed recently in the states of Baja California and Baja California Sur, as well as summarizing the status of many species known to have occurred there historically. Birding the Baja is catching on rapidly among avid California birders, as well as among local birder-ornithologists, and this book will surely whet the appetite for a junct south of San Diego!



Trumpeter Swans have been showing up far to the south and east of typical winter range in recent winters; three in Tennessee this season were the first since Audubon's time. Of the two that made their way to Texas, one was in the Panhandle, while this Trumpeter was on the Upper Texas Coast in Brazoria County 2 January 2002. The Tennessee birds were neck-collared and known to come from a reintroduction program in Wisconsin. Neither Texas swan was so marked, and their provenance is unknown. *Photograph by Don Fry.*

Moltings

We offer our gratitude here to outgoing Regional Editors, to Theo Hoffman of Ontario and to Roy Jones of Arizona, who did thoughtful, diligent, and precise work during their time at the helm. They will be replaced by Matthew L. Holder (spring season) and Mark M. Stevenson (all seasons), respectively, both active birders with a keen eye for detail on the page, as well as in the field. Please do give them every assistance by sending in field notes and photographs promptly. Matt Holder is well known to Ontarians as a fine all-around field naturalist (with a great interest in dragonflies) and birder; his father Phil edits a regional report for *Birders Journal* as well! To contact Matt, write to him at Jacques Whitford Environment Limited, 1200 Denison Street, Markham, Ontario, Canada, L3R 8G6 (mholder@jacqueswhitford.com). Mark Stevenson is a likewise very active field naturalist in Arizona, with a strong foundation in avian distribution in the state. He will be covering the "non-passerines" beat, while Gary Rosenberg will continue to do the passerines. Contact Mark at 4201 East Monte Vista Drive #J207, Tucson, Arizona 85712-5554 (drbrdr@att.net).

In the Great Basin region, we have a different sort of news. Our tireless Regional Editor Ted Floyd will be taking on the editorship of *Birding* magazine at the A.B.A. Congratulations to Ted, who will be moving to Colorado very shortly to begin his tenure! In his stead at *North American Birds*, Steve Summers (summers@cedarcity.net) and Rick Fridell (rfridell@redrock.net) will serve as new Regional Editors of the Great Basin region. Rick and Steve are active birders in both Nevada and Utah—and have been very faithful contributors to the Great Basin regional report. Instructions for contributors to this report can be viewed on line, via links from both the Utah Birds <<http://www.utahbirds.org>> and Great Basin Bird Observatory <<http://www.gbbo.org>> web-sites.

