

**Yellow-bellied Tyrannulets** were heard at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS); Howell & Webb (1995) do not map this species for the state of Camp. Two Caribbean Elaenias were at Xel-ha 7 Jan (HGdS, PE). Five Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were at Champotón, Camp. 12 Jan (HGdS). A female-plumaged **Rose-throated Becard** was seen 6 km s. of San Miguel, Cozumel 10 Jan (KMB, LN). A Thrush-like Schiffornis was found at the J.B. 22 Jan (KMB, LN). Two Cave Swallows were reported in the area of Isla Holbox 6-7 Dec (JG); the species is a very local resident on the peninsula. A flock of 25 Tree Swallows was at Celestún 4 Jan, and a flock of 400 was at Xel-ha 7 Jan (HGdS, PE). Yucatan Wrens were singing at Celestún 4 Jan (HGdS, PE), while Cozumel Wrens were skulking at San Gervacio ruins, Cozumel, Q. Roo 8 Jan (HGdS, PE). A Tropical Gnatcatcher, not uncommon in forested areas of Q. Roo, was reported at Cobá 12-13 Jan (KMB, LN).

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, normally a late-autumn transient, was close on the heels of a Wood Thrush at Cobá 6 Jan (HGdS, PE). A late **Swainson's Thrush** was at El Dedral, Cozumel 6 Dec (SNGH). Two thrushes that appeared to be very richly-colored Swainson's Thrushes were at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS). A Black Catbird was seen few km from Felipe Carrillo Puerto in the S.K.B.R. 9 Jan (HGdS). A Palm Warbler was at km 15 on the Vigía Chico road near F.C.P. 4 Dec and 21 Jan (SNGH). A male Black-throated Blue and a Wilson's Warbler were seen at Puerto Morelos 1 Dec, and a Wilson's Warbler was at El Cedral, Cozumel 6 Dec (SNGH). A large number of euphonias, mainly Yellow-throated, were on the ground feeding on fallen *Ficus* fruits in the cen. plaza of Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS, PE, GC). A Blue-gray Tanager was at Campeche, Camp. 12 Jan (HGdS). A male **Western Tanager** was at Calakmul 10 Jan (HGdS, PE, GC). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was observed in Celestún 15 Feb, while a **Lark Sparrow** was also there 25 Feb (DB). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was reported near L.C. in the R.L.B.R. 18 Jan (KMB, LN). Eight Savannah Sparrows were at Celestún 4 Jan (HGdS, PE).

A single **Brown-headed Cowbird** was observed on a cable near a stable in the town of Celestún on 27 Feb (BM, DB). This is the first winter record of this species, and interestingly, it was located within a block of where 3 were reported last year during spring migration. A male **Baltimore Oriole** was found nearby on the same day (BM, DB) and may have been the same bird reported 15-17 Jan (KMB, LN). This species was mapped as a transient in the nw. Y. P by Howell & Webb (1995).

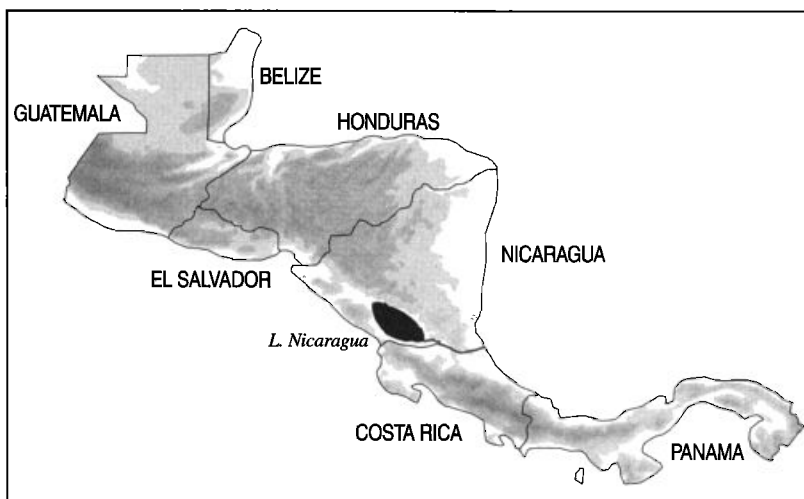
**Undocumented reports:** Ten **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported on Isla Holbox 29-30 Nov (JG).

**Contributors** (area compiler in boldface): David Bacab, Kenneth M. Burton, Gerardo

Ceballos, Paul Ehrlich, Eduardo Galicia, Jesus Garcia Barrón, Héctor Gómez de Silva, Steve N.G. Howell, **Barbara MacKinnon**, Ismael Navarro, Laurie Ness and Gabriel Willow.



# Central America



## H. Lee Jones

P.O. Box 158  
Punta Gorda, Belize  
(U.S. address:  
6108 Wildwood Road  
Lake Isabella, California 93240)  
(buteo@attglobal.net)

**T**he event of the winter season was not a bird but birders. For the first time, Central America surpassed the 50 mark, with 60 initialed observers contributing to this season's report. This is more than twice the number that contributed to the first report only five seasons ago and a testament to both the increased awareness by birders of the inclusion of Central America in the *North American Birds* seasonal reports and the increasing numbers of active birders in Central America. Hats off to all, and especially to those who contribute their observations on a regular basis!

It is perhaps too early yet, with so little historical data, to begin detecting yearly population

fluctuations or long-term changes in bird populations, but clearly, the numbers of Cave Swallows in Central America have increased dramatically in the past decade. Kelp Gulls are on the move and are likely to begin showing up in other areas besides Panama before long. This *may* have been a better than normal year for Pomarine Jaegers offshore and for Emerald Toucanets in the Belize lowlands, but with such a meager historical record, one can only speculate.

First country records keep coming in, but with "only" two country firsts—Cave Swallow in Costa Rica and Townsend's Warbler in Belize, and two potential firsts, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird in Belize and Hoffmann's Woodpecker in El Salvador—this would have to be considered a rather normal winter season.

**Abbreviations:** B.B.R.C. (Belize Bird Records Committee); K.U.N.H.M. (Kansas University Natural History Museum); N.S.F. (Nova Shrimp Farm, Belize); Tikal (Tikal National Park, Peten District, Guatemala).

## BOOBIES THROUGH HAWKS

Remarkable was a Masked Booby well inland over La Selva, Costa Rica 4 Feb (JW, JT, JA). Perhaps equally remarkable was a report of a melanistic Great Egret foraging in a roadside canal near Belize City 6 Feb (B&CM). The bird was described as completely black, including legs and bill, except for a pale gray and slightly yellowish bill tip. A juv. Reddish Egret at the Panama Canal's Gatún Spillway 26 Dec (DM, GH, GP) represented the latest of fewer than 10 Panama records. A Green Ibis seen along the Rio Liberia just s. of the town of Liberia 2 Feb (EC, CG) may have been the first ever recorded on the Pacific side of Costa Rica. It most likely came through a low pass in the Cordillera de Guanacaste, where they have been seen as high as 1000 m on the Caribbean slope. A waterfowl survey in El Salvador funded by Ducks Unlimited and conducted by WR, NH, and REIP produced an impressive 16,047 Black-bellied and 16,174 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on 9 Dec, and 20,564 Blue-winged Teal, one **Cinnamon Teal** (a male), and 7072 Northern Shovelers on 30 Jan, all on Cerrón Grande Res., Chalatenango. NH found 2 male Cinnamon Teal at this site three dates later. There were only two previous records for El Salvador. Elsewhere, WR and REIP found a flock of 21 white-morph **Snow Geese** at Laguna San Juan del Gozo, Usulután on 29 Jan, and WR counted 1300 Lesser Scaup at Laguna de Olomega, San Miguel 6 Feb. Only one previous record of Snow Goose exists for the country.

A Hook-billed Kite at Izalco, Sonsonate, 1 Feb (OK, BJO) was only the 6th for El Salvador. The Pearl Kite continues to expand in Costa Rica. One near Liberia 8 Feb (EC, CG) and another 4 km s. of Bagaces 10 Feb (JRZ), both in Guanacaste, represent the northernmost records to date. A Cooper's Hawk, rare in El Salvador, was at Izalco 3 Feb (OK). A Plumbeous Hawk, rare in Panama, was observed 2 Dec along Plantation Road in Soberania NP (JT, SA). In Belize, 3 White-tailed Hawks, s. of their normal range, were seen in different localities in s. Toledo 19 & 20 Dec (RE, MMa, LJ). Infrequently seen in Belize were single Zone-tailed Hawks at San Marcos (LJ) and along the Rio Grande (MM), both s. Toledo, on 1 & 19 Dec, respectively. The Red-tailed Hawk in Belize is normally restricted to the Mountain Pine Ridge, so one well to the n. in Gallon Jug, Orange Walk 25 Jan (HGdS, RK) was unexpected. A subad. **Harpy Eagle**, probably in its third year, was photographed at the Marengo Biological Station, Pen. de Osa, date unknown (*vide* JS). This is the first documented report of the species in Costa Rica in more than a decade, although there have been undocumented reports from near Carate on the other side of the Corcovado N.P. and from Peñas Blancas Valley in Monteverde. A

Black Hawk-Eagle at Las Fuentes Georginas, Zunil, Quetzaltenango 23 Feb (JB) was on the Pacific slope, where locally distributed.

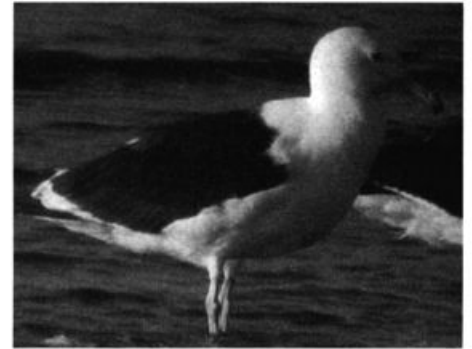
## RAILS THROUGH TERNS

A Spotted Rail heard in the Dump ricefields near Big Falls, Toledo 19 Dec (LJ) was only the 2nd or 3rd record for s. Belize. Following on the heels of 6 **Southern Lapwings** seen along the Río Pacuare last Nov were 2 found on the Pacific side of Costa Rica at Playa Hermosa 17 Dec (RC), with one remaining until 28 Feb (JRZ), and up to 4 along the Rio Tarcoles in early Mar (FM). An **American Avocet** at the mouth of Río Matina, Costa Rica 31 Jan (RR) was most unusual. This species is very rare in Costa Rica, especially on the Caribbean side. A Dunlin at Chomes 18 Feb (EA, RD) represents one of few records for Costa Rica. Stilt Sandpipers are not often seen in Belize in winter, but they are regular at Nova S.F., Belize District, where 2 were seen 2 Dec, with one still present 16 Dec (m. ob.).

Pomarine Jaegers are proving to be regular in the Bahía Amatique, Guatemala where 5 Pomarine Jaegers and one unidentified jaeger were seen 2 & 4 Jan (TM). Unexpected, however, was a Pomarine flying close to shore at Punta Gorda, Belize, only 25 km to the nw., also on 4 Jan (TM). Surprisingly, this was the first report of any jaeger species in Belize s. of Stann Creek. A flock of 6 Pomarine Jaegers was seen from shore 16 Jan (JTe, GB) at the port of Cristóbal near Colón, Panama. At least 2 Ring-billed Gulls, 2+ Herring Gulls, and a juv. Sabine's Gull were at Costa del Este, Panama City 2 Dec (DM, DeM, RKa, KK, GB, BA, LS). The first two are regular but rare in Panama, and the 3rd is rarely seen from shore. Of the 5 **Kelp Gulls** reported last fall on the outskirts of Panama City (DM, KW, SH), one remained until 5 Dec. At least 10 Elegant Terns, a rare and irregularly seen species in Panama, were at Costa del Este 3 Dec (GA).

## DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Caribbean Dove heard near Nova S.F. 16 Dec (LJ) was the first documented from mainland Belize. They are rumored to be in n. Corozal District, an area that is seldom birded, but no specific records have surfaced. Two Mourning Doves were near Big Falls, Toledo 19 Dec (LJ). This species is an uncommon fall migrant but rare in winter in s. Belize. The Common Ground-Dove is also a rare fall and winter stray in s. Belize, so 6 in separate areas on the Punta Gorda C.B.C. 19 Dec (m. ob.) were quite unexpected. A female **Maroon-chested Ground-Dove** at Cerro el Pital, Chalatenango 27 Dec (GMGD \*K.U.N.H.M.) was only the 2nd reported from El Salvador; however, it is found just across the border in Honduras and was expected to occur at this site. Two Yellow-headed Parrots along the



This adult Kelp Gull was one of five found 28 September 2001 at Costa del Este, on the outskirts of Panama City; one of them remained until at least 5 December. These birds were the first of this species ever reported in Central America, but its appearance was anticipated, given the rash of recent records from the northern and southern Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. (If only more tropical travelers would check the local gulls!)  
Photograph by Darien Montanez.

Moho R., Toledo 19 Dec (RE) were s. of Punta Gorda, where this species was reported last fall after Hurricane *Iris*, thus establishing a new southernmost locality for this globally endangered species in Belize. Two Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts at Parque Deininger, La Libertad 12 Jan (TJ, JF) confirm that this species is found in the lowlands of El Salvador, where it had previously been reported only above 600 m elevation.

An individual of the rare *pacifica* subspecies of White-bellied Emerald was reported from the Abaj Takalik Maya Ruins, Retalhuleu, Guatemala 24 Feb (JB). Totally unexpected was the report of a male **Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird** near Tres Leguas, Orange Walk 23 Feb (BF et al.). The bird was well described and would be the first record for Belize if accepted by the B.B.R.C. An American Pygmy Kingfisher on Caye Caulker 30 Dec (I&DB) may have been the individual seen in the same location more than a year and half previously (29 Mar—28 Apr 2000). This nonmigratory species is otherwise unrecorded from the Belize cays. Emerald Toucanets were reported with greater frequency in the lowlands of Belize this winter than normally. Two apparently pure **Hoffmann's Woodpeckers**, respectively at San Felipe and Pasaquina, La Union 26-27 Dec (NH) would be the first for El Salvador if correctly identified. Only last summer, Hoffmann's x Golden-fronted hybrids had been photographed and collected for the first time in El Salvador in the same general area.

## WOODCREEPERS THROUGH PIPITS

The first Northern Barred-Woodcreepers in five years were reported in El Salvador by OK this winter: one at El Imposible N.P., Ahuachapán 20

Dec (\*K.U.N.H.M.), and another 20 km to the e at San Pedro Puxtla, Ahuachapán 18 Jan. A Mountain Elaenia 1 km e. of Santa María de Jesus, Quetzaltenango 6 Feb (JB) was in an area of Guatemala where it was previously unrecorded. In Belize, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, rare in the lowlands in winter, was seen 19 Dec (MM) along the lower Río Grande, Toledo; the last Eastern Wood-Pewee of the fall was recorded at Canton Farm near Altun Ha, Belize District 15 Dec (LJ); and for the 2nd winter in a row, a female Vermilion Flycatcher was found at Gallon Jug, Orange Walk 23 Jan (HGdS, RK), where it is considered a stray. Two Western Kingbirds at DuPlooy's Jungle Lodge s. of San Ignacio 27 Feb (TW et al.) represented only the 2nd and 3rd records from Belize. Two **Blue-headed Vireos** were reported from the Caribbean lowlands this winter, one at Tikal, Guatemala 21 Jan (HGdS, RK) and one at Hidden Valley Inn, Mountain Pine Ridge 5 Mar (MEC, Field Guides, Inc.). The latter was only the 2nd ever reported in Belize; however, it is likely that this newly recognized species has been overlooked in the past.

A Violet-green Swallow at Ensenada Lodge e. of the mouth of the Temisque, Guanacaste in the last week of Jan. (IA, JZ, AD, EC, JBl) was unusual, especially in the Costa Rican lowlands. Large roosts of Cave Swallows of the migratory pale-rumped *pallida* group can now be found along El Salvador's coastal plain in Dec and Jan. This year it was last recorded 18 Feb at El Imposible NP (OK). Farther s., **Cave Swallows** were recorded in Costa Rica, apparently for the first time. On 31 Jan, JRZ, AD, EC, and JBl observed 5-8 *pallida* types in a mixed-species swallow flock at Ensenada Lodge, and on 18 Feb, one was seen with a large group of Barn Swallows along the entrance road to Chomes (EA, RD). Three Cliff Swallows at Izalco 1 Feb (OK, BJO) were the first of the spring in El Salvador. A Gray Catbird at Lago de Coatepeque, Sonsonate 25 Jan (OK) represented only the 4th record for El Salvador, and an **American Pipit** at Colima, Cuscatlán, on the shoreline of Cerrón Grande Res. 2 Jan (NH, REIP) was only the 3rd reported in *El Salvador*.

## WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

A Blue-winged Warbler was at Izalco, El Salvador 1 Feb (BJO), where it is relatively scarce. A Golden-winged Warbler at Finca Patrocinio, 35 km n. of Retalhuleu on the Pacific slope of Guatemala 13 Jan (JB) was also unexpected. In El Salvador, Nashville Warblers were recorded in three separate localities on 27 Dec, 9 & 13 Jan (DRE, OK, JF). With more than two dozen records now, this species is more frequent in winter in El Salvador than is reflected in the

literature. A Chestnut-sided Warbler at El Palmar Viejo, Quetzaltenango 12 Dec (JB) was on the Pacific slope of Guatemala. A male **Townsend's Warbler** reported by JS on the Punta Gorda C.B.C. 19 Dec from the hills behind San Felipe was refound by LJ 21 Dec, thus establishing the first record of this species in Belize. A Kentucky Warbler at San Pedro Puxtla, Ahuachapán 18 Jan (OK, CH \*K.U.N.H.M.) became the 3rd specimen and 6th record for El Salvador. A Hooded Warbler at El Palmar Viejo 12 Dec (JB) and another at San Pedro Puxtla 13 Jan (OK, GMGD \*K.U.N.H.M.) were on the Pacific slope where the species is scarce.

A Rose-throated Tanager near Salt Creek Estate 16 Dec was at the s. limit of its range and the first ever for the Belize City C.B.C., begun in 1969. A Scrub Euphonia seen on Caye Caulker 17 Jan (J&DB) was the first ever reported from the Belize Cayes. It is a casual visitor to Ambergris Caye, which is in fact a long thin peninsula 10 km n. of Caye Caulker. A pair of Elegant Euphonias was at Chan Chich Lodge near Gallon Jug, Orange Walk in mid-Jan (JM, HGdS, RK). Scarce anywhere in Belize, these were the first reported n. of the Maya Mts. Perhaps the most interesting find of the winter in El Salvador was a small population of **Blue Seedeaters** at El Imposible N.P., 3 males and 2 females at scattered locations, 9 Jan—18 Feb (ph. OK, CH, BJO, and CZ). Only two previous records exist for the country, both from other areas. At least 6 Stripe-headed Sparrows 2 km e. of Tilapa, San Marcos 27 Jan (JB) were at a previously unknown locality in sw. Guatemala. Relatively scarce in winter in Belize was a female Painted Bunting at Laguna Village, Toledo 12 & 19 Dec (LJ). Rare in cen. Panama was a pair of Orange-crowned Orioles near Gamboa 24 Jan (LP). Four Yellow-winged Caciques at Ocos, San Marcos 3 Feb (JB) were on the Guatemalan side of the border with Mexico. The species is known to occur on the Mexican side but had not been reported previously on the Guatemalan side. Two Chestnut-headed Oropendolas in the Biotopo Mario Dary 19 Feb (CB, JVG, Field Guides, Inc.) were on the Pacific slope of Guatemala where unexpected.

## Undocumented reports

Three American Robins reported by a visiting N.A. birder in early Feb on a golf course at Santa Ana in the Central Valley of Costa Rica, if correctly identified, would represent the first confirmed record for Costa Rica.

**Cited observers** (country coordinators in bold-face): Bill Adsett, Joel Alvarado, Eduardo Amengual, Seth Ames, **George Angehr**

(Panama), Ingrid Ayub, Chris Benesh, Guido Berguido, Jason Berry, Jim and Dorothy Beveridge, Jim Black (JBl), Ernesto Carmen, Eric Castro, Robert Dean, Gabriela Margarita Garcia Derás, Adolfo Downs, Roberto Echeverria, Megan Edwards Crewe, Douglas R Escobar D., Jesse Fagan, Field Guides Inc., Bert Frenz, Cameron Gilles, Cullen Hanks, Néstor Herrera, Gonzalo Horna, Steve Huggins, Tom Jenner, **Lee Jones** (Belize), Rafael Campos, Karl Kaufmann, Rosabel Kaufmann (RKa), Richard Knapton, **Oliver Komar** (El Salvador), Mark MacReynolds (MMA), Francisco Madrigal, Tristan McKee, Bruce and Carolyn Miller, José Moh, Darién Montañez, Delicia Montañez (DeM), Mario Muschamp, B. J. O'Shea, Luis Paz, Guy Poisson, Ricardo Enrique Ibarra Portillo, Rafa Robles, Wilfredo Rodríguez, Julio Sánchez (JSa), Loyda Sánchez, Juan Sho, Héctor Gómez de Silva, José Tejada (JTe), Julie Tilden, Jamie Trejos, Jay VanderGaast, Jim Watt, Tom Wheeler, Ken Wysocki, Carlos Zaldaña, **James R. Zook** (Costa Rica).



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