

Editors' Notebook

The Photo Salon

After receiving numerous requests for its return to these pages, we are pleased to offer the first in a series of varied and stimulating Photo Salons. For this issue, we wanted to kick off its return with a set of highlights from the spring season, and Brian Patteson, a longtime contributor to the journal, was kind enough, on very short notice, to send in ample material from North Carolina's 2002 spring migration offshore. Brian's photographs were taken with Canon EOS-3 camera bodies, Canon EF lenses—a 500mm f/4.5 lens and a 70-200 mm f/2.8 lens (with 1.4x teleconverter)—and with Fujichrome film, either Provia 100 (pushed one stop to 200) or Sensia.

The Salon is open to amateur and professional bird photographers alike, and we welcome submissions on topics and themes that will interest the readership. The only requirement is that the images be of uniformly high quality and depict their subjects in an interesting manner or context. The Pictorial Highlights section will continue to feature outstanding records in more singular context.

Imaging

The rise of digiscoping has been so swift that it has taken many of us by surprise. For a few hundred dollars, your spotting scope is now a very suitable telephoto lens, capable of documenting many records with startling clarity. In recent issues, we've featured several genuinely high-quality images captured in this manner, and though some such images turn out to be blurry, grainy, or strongly vignetted, there are enough excellent combinations of scope and camera that we welcome submissions of images taken in this way and will print as many as space permits. *Birding* magazine continues to keep readers apprised of the latest in camera—scope combinations for this method. Consult the October issue of *Birding* for more on the subject.

We appear to be moving rapidly toward the moment in history in which digital photography will supplant traditional methods almost entirely: our cover photograph of the Swallow-tailed Kite is the first of its kind, taken solely through digital equipment, to have been used on the cover of this journal.

As we've mentioned in the past, however, digital images transmitted as email attachments too often do not include clear information on the species, date, location, and photographer. This compounds the already persistent problem of our receipt of unlabeled slides and photographs. **We ask that photographers and regional editors give file names to such images that include as much relevant information as possible.** If, for example, a tiff or jpeg file is to be sent of a Spoon-billed Sandpiper by I. M. Pei at Crane Creek from 22 May 2002, an appropriate label would be SBSA020522CraneCreekOH/IMPei.jpg. In some cases, file names must be shorter, but at least in this case, your editors are less likely to mislabel this image in print.

An ongoing problem for any journal that receives images from hundreds of sources, and in perhaps two-dozen formats, is color fidelity and resolution. Problems can arise in every stage of the process: from the recording of the image in the field; to the copying of the image; to the image's transmission; and finally in the layout (in Quark Xpress) and the printing process. Balance of color bedevils us on occasion. To investigate the question, we used several images taken by the editor (*N.A.B.* 56: 140 & 255) with a Canon EOS-3 system and a Canon EF 100-400mm lens (f/4.5-5.6). One image was printed in black and white, the other in color. In both cases, the original slide was scanned in-house, and in both cases, the fidelity of the images held well, both for resolution and color, even though both images were heavily enlarged and cropped. Problems persist, however, for color fidelity and resolution in images that are taken from digital video and traditional magnetic-tape video, and we request that such images be sent at the highest level of resolution possible, up to 300 dpi (if file sizes exceed 3MB, submission by CD or ZipDisk would be alternatives to emailing). Please consult the Photo Editor, Matt Sharp (sharp@acnatsci.org), with any questions on this evolving subject.

Corrections

We offer apologies to Alan Wormington, a longtime contributor of records and photographs to this journal, whose excellent photograph of the Texas Gyrfalcon (*N. A. B.* 56: 252) was mislabeled.

—Edward S. (Ned) Brinkley
—Matthew F. Sharp



Dry conditions through the West in spring 2002 appeared to concentrate migrants in wet areas of many sorts, including landscaped environments, and large concentrations of *Empidonax* were observed in several states. This uncommon Alder Flycatcher was banded at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, Colorado 18 May 2002. *Photograph by Larry Semo.*

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Potential new splits

There are plenty of so-called "Holarctic" species that are found, generally at higher latitudes, on both the North American and Eurasian landmasses. More than a few birders and ornithologists have wondered whether the forms, currently classed as subspecies, on either side of the Bering Strait belong to the same or to different species. A few years ago, work began using mitochondrial DNA, a shorter-length and more quickly changing type of DNA found in the mitochondria of cells, to address this question (Zink, R.M., S.Rohwer, A.V. Andreev, and D.L. Dittman. 1995. Trans-Beringia comparisons of mitochondrial DNA differentiation in birds. *Condor* 97: 639-649). In the paper, the authors looked at the DNA differentiation in Pelagic Cormorant, Green-winged Teal, Common Snipe, Whimbrel, Mew Gull, Common Tern, Marbled Murrelet, Three-toed Woodpecker, Barn Swallow, Black-billed Magpie, American Pipit, Lapland Longspur, and Rosy Finch. They found that the Whimbrel, gull, murrelet, woodpecker, magpie, pipit, and Rosy Finch showed substantial genetic differentiation, meaning that the forms on either side of the Bering Strait have been separate for long periods of time and perhaps should be considered different species. Since the sample sizes were small, more work was needed to make clearer determinations on these relationships. When considered alongside other features, such as differences in vocalizations and behavior, as well as additional genetic data, three of these forms have been elevated to the level of species since publication of this paper. These are the Long-billed Murrelet, which has been split from the Marbled Murrelet; the Black-billed Magpie which has been split from the Eurasian Magpie; and the Rosy Finch complex, which has been re-split within North America (Gray-crowned, Brown-capped and Black), as well as split from their Old World counterpart, Asian Rosy-Finch.

The work continues, now focusing on the Three-toed Woodpecker (Zink, R.M., S. Rohwer, S. Drovetski, R.C. Blackwell-Rago, and S. L. Farrell 2002. Holarctic phylogeography and species limits of Three-toed Woodpeckers. *Condor* 104: 167-170). This paper summarizes studies of mitochondrial DNA patterns of samples from various sites throughout Russia, Finland as well as Alaska, Washington, and Québec. Even though there are a many plumage differences between populations within each continent, mainly in the amount of white on the back and face, the authors found that there was little genetic difference between samples within a continent. On the other hand, there was nearly a 4% difference in the DNA between the continents, a difference that indicates a substantial time period since the two populations began to diverge. Thus, different populations of Three-toed Woodpeckers within the Old World are more closely related to each other than they are to the set of populations in North America, which in turn are most closely related to each other. This is consistent with the idea that the woodpeckers on either side of the Bering Strait comprise separate gene pools, each on its own independent evolutionary path. In other words, by some definitions, they are separate species. Furthermore, the authors note that the genetic data suggest that the North American birds may have colonized the Old World, giving rise to that population, but they reserve judgment on that hypothesis until they can sample more related woodpecker taxa.

Now, if we are still determining the correct relationships of North American birds—where huge numbers of birders and a superb population of ornithologists live—one can imagine how relatively poorly know the birds of Central and South America still are, where a relatively tiny number of birders and ornithologists are at work. Nevertheless, Neotropical ornithologists are tirelessly unraveling the details of the deep

biological diversity in the New World. The latest paper to shed some light on this situation is one on the complex that we now call the Emerald Toucanet (Navarro, A.G., A.T. Peterson, E. López-Medrano, and H Benítez-Díaz. 2001. Species limits in Mesoamerican *Aulacorhynchus* toucanets. *Wilson Bulletin* 113: 363-494). The subject is a gorgeous grass-green toucanet that shows bewildering geographic variation, mainly in bill and face color. Not all current taxonomic problems are tackled with DNA analysis: this work analyzed morphology, bill colors, and facial colors to determine geographic patterns and potential regions of intergradation between types. In Central America, the Emerald Toucanet can be divided into four forms: *wagleri* in western Mexico; *prasinus* in eastern Mexico and the rest of the range south to southern Nicaragua; *caerogularis* in Costa Rica and western Panama, and *cognatus* in eastern Panama. Furthermore, three types exist in South America: *lautus* in the Santa Marta mountains of Colombia; *albivitta* in the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador; and *atrogularis* in Peru and northwestern Bolivia. While it is difficult to test whether these are biological species under the Biological Species Concept (as the forms do not overlap in range anywhere), the authors suggest that because bill colors are important in pair formation, these different forms may deserve to be considered separate biological species.

—Alvaro Jaramillo

2003 Workshops for Birders

ABA's IFO workshops are for anyone interested in learning more about birds in their natural environment. Scheduled workshops include:

Birds of the Lower Rio Grande Valley with World Birding Center staff including Tim Brush and Brad McKinney
• 12–16 May, Mission, Texas.

Sparrows with James Rising and David Beadle
• 16–20 June, Minot, North Dakota.

Bird Field Study Research Methods and Citizen Science Projects with Bird Studies Canada staff including Jon McCracken and Keith Larsen
• 10–15 June, Long Point region in Ontario, Canada.

Popular workshops sell out quickly. Please contact Arlene Hall at ifo@aba.org or 719/578-9703 x235 to be placed on a priority list for a workshop. Check out our website for more workshops. *Dates and information provided here may change.



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