

Western and a Least Sandpiper were observed in R.L. 15 May (BM, MT), while 18 Least Sandpipers were reported for Celestún 30 Apr (AD). Two White-rumped Sandpipers were seen 30 May in Celestún (DB), and a Stilt Sandpiper was there 9 Apr (DB). Two Stilt Sandpipers were in a salt pond in R.L. 1 May (BM), while a Wilson's Phalarope was observed 8 Apr in Celestún (DB). A single Least Tern showed up in Celestún, where known to nest, 10 Apr, perhaps a week earlier than usual (DB). One Ring-billed and an imm. Herring Gull were in Celestún 9 Apr (DB). Three Herring Gulls were at Celestún 30 May (DB). Single **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were reported from Cancún, Q. Roo in Jan (PW) and 6-8 km s. of San Miguel, Cozumel 10 Mar (CB). Four Spot-tailed Nightjars were heard and seen in Tab. from the 2nd bridge n. of La Libertad, Chis. 13 & 18 Mar (RH, D&CF, SM).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A Great Crested Flycatcher was in Celestún 9 Apr (DB). Seven exhausted Eastern Kingbirds were observed two km inland from the coastline at Xcalak 4 May, probably having just completed their northbound crossing of the Bay of Honduras. Two vocal **Mangrove Vireos** were in Tab. n. of La Libertad, Chis. 19 Apr (HGdS). Spring Purple Martin migration is rather thin over the Y.P. compared to the fall, and a few observations were reported for this period. One was recorded 9 Apr in Celestún, moving along with Barn Swallows. A total of 20 was reported 21 Apr in Celestún (AD), while 2-3 males were feeding and moving amidst hundreds of Barn Swallows over R.L. 1 & 13 May. Among the swallows flowing through Celestún 21 Apr were 2 Bank and 5 Cliff Swallows (AD). A few Barn Swallows were seen as early as 27 Feb in Celestún, and a few were in S.F. 8-9 May (BM). Another new species for the S.K.B.R. was a Gray-cheeked Thrush netted and photographed 22 Apr (BM). Only one Gray Catbird was observed 9 Apr in Celestún.

Single male Golden-winged Warblers were reported in Celestún 8-10 Apr (DB, BM). A female Northern Parula was seen in S.F. mangroves 6 May, when most migrant warblers had left. The latest Yellow Warblers were one ad. and one first-year male in R.L. 14-15 May (BM, MT). A Palm Warbler was netted at S.R. 22 Apr. Another new record for the S.K.B.R. was a male **Blackpoll Warbler** in alternate plumage 20 Apr at Sac. A female American Redstart was in S.F. 6 May (BM). A male Prothonotary Warbler was in Celestún 10 Apr. A Northern Waterthrush at Sac. 21 Apr (BM) was the only migrant found during a week that should have been the middle of the spring migration. The winds, however, were east-northeast, which would not have favored birds crossing the Bay of Honduras. Only one Northern Waterthrush was detected in R.L. 5 May, and another was in S.F. 14

May (BM, MT). One female Common Yellowthroat was at S.F. mangroves 9 May (BM), while a first-year male was in R.L. 14 May (BM, MT).

TANAGERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A female **Rose-throated Tanager** was one of 25 species in Isla Pobre 19 Apr (BM). Of special note for the same location and date was one juv. male Red-legged Honeycreeper being fed by an ad., with 4 others nearby. Inland from El Cuyo in a forested area, 3 male and a female Red-legged Honeycreeper were feeding on annona fruit 19 May (JA & MTP). Another new record for the S.K.B.R. was a **White-crowned Sparrow** netted at Sac. 21 Apr. Of interest were 2 male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Xcalak feeding on seeds of the dune plant *Trema micrantha* 4 May. This locality is important as a refueling and rest stop for northbound migrants that cross the Bay of Honduras. Two male Bobolinks in transitional plumage were at Sac. 21 Apr (BM). A Brown-headed Cowbird was observed at Celestún in the same area as during fall 2001, but this one was on 27 Feb, earlier than expected for a transient (BM). Single male Orchard Orioles at S.F. 8 May (MT)

and at nearby R.L. 14 May (BM, MT) were late.

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Central America



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The number of observers submitting records this spring was down substantially from the

winter season; nevertheless, the number of first and second country records continues to increase unabated. Two long overdue *documented* country firsts were Upland Sandpiper in El Salvador and Orange-crowned Warbler in Belize. Other not-so-surprising firsts were Ring-necked Duck in El Salvador and Rufous-necked Wood-Rail in Guatemala. Six additional species were recorded for only the second time in either Belize, El Salvador, or

Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama, with their more complete ornithological record, had no first or second records to report; however, two storm-petrels, thought to be Leach's, on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica may have been the most exciting finds of the season.

Abbreviations: Cockscomb Basin (Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Stann Creek District, Belize); Tikal (Tikal National Park, Petén District, Guatemala). Hunting, Lime, and Nicholas Cayes are in the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve off s. Belize.

SA Ducks were the big news in El Salvador this spring, thanks to the continuing efforts of RIP and WR, whose countrywide Ducks Unlimited waterfowl surveys have already added a new chapter to our understanding of this largely ignored family in C.A. On 15 Apr, on Laguna El Jocotal, San Miguel they discovered El Salvador's sixth Cinnamon Teal and the first recorded in spring. An impressive 546 Lesser Scaup were on Lake Guija, Santa Ana 13 Mar, and 200 were on Laguna de Olomega, San Miguel 26 Mar. But the real surprise came late in the season when RIP found a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** on Lake Guija 22 May. This was not only a first country record but an exceptionally late date as well. A flock of 43 Ruddy Ducks, first observed 3 Mar at Laguna Olomega, were still present 15 May, suggesting that there may be a breeding population at this site. Received late, but equally significant, is a report of a remarkable 21 Muscovy Ducks, an endangered species in El Salvador, on Laguna El Jocotal 5 Feb (RIP, WR).

EGRETS THROUGH HAWKS

A Reddish Egret was present at Gatun Spillway, Panama Canal Dec—9 Mar (WA). There are fewer than 10 records for this species in Panama. An ad. **Glossy Ibis** at Laguna de Olomega, San Miguel 15 May (RIP, WR) was only the 2nd record for El Salvador and the Pacific slope of n. C.A. This species continues to expand its range throughout much of the New World.

Although the Short-tailed Hawk is resident in El Salvador, the first nest was not discovered until late Feb, when TJ found a pair (light-morph female, dark-morph male) building a nest in pine forest near Perquín, Morazán. On 7 Apr, the female was incubating a single egg. An impressive flock of 2000 migrating Swainson's Hawks was seen over the

Quetzaltenango (Guatemala) National Hospital 16 Apr (JB). Noteworthy, also, was a **Crested Eagle** at Tikal 29 Apr (JB). This rare forest species is seldom seen in n. C.A. Equally noteworthy was an ad. **Harpy Eagle** observed feeding on a Tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*) 15 Apr (MA, SY) in what little was left of the Hurricane Iris-ravaged forest near Golden Stream, Toledo. This is the latest in a series of reports of this species in s. Belize in the past four years. A late Merlin was observed migrating past Hunting Caye, Belize 1 May (LJ).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

A **Rufous-necked Wood-Rail** observed near Tilapa, San Marcos 10 Apr (JB) may be the first ever documented in Guatemala. The status of this elusive species along much of the Pacific coast of s. Mexico and n. C.A. is unclear. In contrast, its presence on the Caribbean side is well documented. For example, J & DB routinely see as many as a dozen in sight at one time seasonally in their yard on Caye Caulker, Belize (they live on the edge of a mangrove swamp). In Mar, they had up to 13 daily, but by May their numbers had dwindled, and the last one was recorded 31 May. This species is not seen on the caye between Jun and mid-Sep, suggesting it either disperses off the caye or moves to the uninhabited and largely inaccessible n. half of the caye during the breeding season. Two Soras at Laguna El Jocotal, San Miguel 24 Apr (RIP, WR) were late migrants. A Snowy Plover at Corozal Town 3 Mar (TS) was only the 3rd confirmed record for Belize; however, this species is likely to occur more frequently than these few records suggest—if only more people paid attention to the wealth of shorebirds in the country! An impressive flock of 87 American Oystercatchers was at Isla Martin Pérez in the Gulf of Fonseca 23 Apr (ph. NH). The previous high count for El Salvador was 22 in Bahía de Jiquilisco, where they nest. Long overdue were El Salvador's first confirmed **Upland Sandpipers**. Two were seen near Comalapa, La Paz 14 Apr (TJ). Three **Dunlin** near Tilapa, San Marcos 7 Apr (JB) may represent only the 2nd documented record for Guatemala.

Jaegers are not often reported in Caribbean C.A., and the seasonality and relative abundance of the two species in this Region are still poorly known. For this reason, all jaeger sightings should be reported, along with the date, locality, plumage, and (with appropriate caution) species. In Belize, a Pomarine Jaeger was seen e. of Caye Caulker 20 Mar (J&DB & m. ob.), and a very worn jaeger sp. still in juv. plumage was seen in flight at Barranco, Toledo 11 May (LJ).

CUCKOOS THROUGH VIREOS

Two Black-billed Cuckoos were on Lime Caye, Belize 2 May (LJ, CW). Although considerably more plentiful than Black-billed, 20+ Yellow-billed Cuckoos on tiny Lime Caye, with several more on other, nearby cayes 29 Apr (LJ, CW) was an impressive concentration. A Mangrove Cuckoo was seen near David, Chiriquí 19 Mar (JR, JC, Field Guides tour). This species is rare in Panama, and its status as a rare resident or migrant remains unresolved.

A **Vermiculated Screech-Owl** at Finca Patrocinio, Retalhuleu 14 Mar (JB) was unexpected, as this species had not been previously reported from the Pacific slope of Guatemala. The Brown Violet-ear is seldom reported in the lowlands of Belize, so one at lower elevations in the e. Cockscomb Basin 18 Mar (J&DB) was unexpected. A Black-crested Coquette, uncommon on the Pacific slope of Guatemala, was at Finca Patrocinio, Retalhuleu 14 Mar (JB). A group from Quebec was surprised to find an ad. female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Metropolitan Nature Park, Panamá City on 14 Mar (DM, LRo).

The Vermilion Flycatcher is a casual migrant in Panama, so a male and 2 females at Finca Batipa, Chiriquí 31 Mar were a treat for LR, JJ, and LS. Two **Western Kingbirds** were at Duplooy's Jungle Lodge near San Ignacio, Cayo 27 Feb (TW), and another was at the Quirigua Ruins, Izabal 24 Apr (JB) in the Caribbean lowlands of Guatemala just s. of Belize. This species was first documented in Belize only last fall, however, it may be overlooked to some extent because of its similarity to the abundant Tropical and Couch's Kingbirds. The Yellow-green Vireo is strictly a migrant on the Belize cayes. Thus, one on Nicholas Caye 1 May (LJ, CW) was either an exceedingly late spring migrant or a wandering individual, as this species is well into its breeding season on the mainland by May. Two **Black-whiskered Vireos**, a rare visitor anywhere in C.A., were reported this spring. One seen 11 Apr along Semaphore Hill Road near Panama City (JT, LP, ECo) was an unexpected treat, but one on s. Ambergris Caye 13-18 May (SL et al.) was only the 2nd ever recorded in Belize.

JAYS THROUGH PIPITS

The Black-chested Jay was first recorded on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica in Dec 2000. This spring, 2 seen near Gutiérrez-Braun 30 Mar (JRZ) at 1100 m elevation in the upper Coto Brus Valley (at the same elevation and about 15 km from the previously reported site) represent only the 2nd Pacific slope record. Like the Yellow-green Vireo, the Gray-breasted Martin is strictly a migrant on the Belize cayes. On the

mainland, it arrives in Jan and is well into its breeding season by Apr. The earliest south-bound migrants do not start massing along the coast until the end of Jun, so a group of 5 seen migrating n. over and past Hunting Caye 35 km offshore 30 Apr defies explanation. The Tree Swallow is an "irregularly rare to locally common migrant" in Costa Rica (Stiles and Skutch 1989). In most years, it is certainly the former, with few reports at all in the past decade or more. JRZ's first encounter with the species in Costa Rica came 12 Apr, when he observed a compact flock of 15-20 migrating above the La Selva entrance road. Mid-Apr is also a bit late for this species, which is the first Neotropical migrant to vacate C.A. for its n. breeding grounds in spring.

An **American Robin**, only the 2nd ever reliably recorded in Belize, was with Clay-colored Robins in Crooked Tree Village on 23 Mar (SS). Five or more American Pipits near Tilapa, San Marcos 7 Apr (JB) were unexpected. This species is still considered a vagrant in Guatemala and the rest of n. C.A., but better coverage of the area by people familiar with the species will undoubtedly prove it to be more frequent.

WARBLERS THROUGH SPARROWS

Two or 3 Northern Parulas at Tilapa, San Marcos 7 May, and a Chestnut-sided Warbler at Finca Patrocinio, Retalhuleu 15 Mar were noteworthy (both JB). These species are considered to be vagrants on the Pacific slope of Guatemala, but with more coverage they may well prove to be more frequent. Two male Blackpoll Warblers were in the same tree on Northeast Sapodilla Caye, Belize 28 Apr (LJ, CW). This species is proving to be a regular, but rare, spring migrant on the cayes, with records now almost every spring. A migrant Western Palm Warbler was seen in the Sarapiquí area of Costa Rica 21 Apr (JRZ). A lingering Kentucky Warbler at Tikal 29 Apr (JB) was a bit later than normal. A male Canada Warbler on Hunting Caye 2 May (LJ) established only the 2nd documented spring record for Belize. The rare **Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager** was first recorded in Panama in 1982 in cen. Bocas del Toro, and there are still fewer than a dozen records, all from that area. Thus, 3-4 seen along Fortuna Road 20 Mar (JR, JC) were noteworthy. Several male and female Slaty Finches seen near Cerro Punta, Chiriquí 20-22 Mar (GA et al.) were also noteworthy, as this species is a rare and poorly known resident in Panama.

BLACKBIRDS

Three open-country blackbird species are expanding their breeding range in Costa Rica,

no doubt in response to the ever-expanding acreage of available habitat. On 22 May, BY and JRZ found a Red-winged Blackbird nest with 2 young and many singing males in a wet pasture about 3 km se. of Puerto Viejo/La Selva. This record marks a 40-km eastward extension of the species's known breeding range on the Caribbean side. On the Pacific side, JRZ observed several males and females around Playa Hermosa on 6 Mar., s. of known breeding sites in Guanacaste. Expanding in the opposite direction is the Red-breasted Blackbird. On 21 Apr, JRZ and EC encountered this species in several locations between La Selva and the Nicaraguan border, as far as 70 km n. of known breeding localities on the Caribbean side. This species was unrecorded in Costa Rica until 1974, having expanded westward from Panama. These recent sightings suggest that it may have already reached Nicaragua. In the 25 months since the Crested Oropendola was first recorded in Costa Rica, it has become an established resident in the se. corner of the country. A number of breeding colonies were found in this area of the Pacific lowlands on 2 Apr (JRZ). The westernmost colony was 6.5 km e. of Rio Claro, and the largest colony, containing 10 nests, was in an oil palm plantation near Caiman. There is even an unconfirmed report now from the Caribbean lowlands.

UNDOCUMENTED RARITIES

The washed up remains of a bird identified as Leach's Storm-Petrel (white rump, notched tail, wing chord of 155 mm) was found on the beach at Tortuguero 10 May (MG). A similar storm-petrel was found alive earlier, on 3 May, in the gardens of one of the Tortuguero lodges and supposedly photographed. Neither of these birds has been independently verified, and the possibility of one or both being some other species, perhaps Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, has not been ruled out. Regardless of species identification, the records are extraordinary.

ADDENDA

Two interesting records were received too late for inclusion in the appropriate seasonal reports. An ad. **Sooty Tern** was found and photographed at close range on Laguna Olomega, San Miguel approximately 10 km inland from the Pacific coast 10 Oct 2001 (ph. RIP, WR). This represents the 2nd record for El Salvador and the first inland. Belize's first documented **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a female, was mist-netted along the Sibun R. 7.5 km w. of Gracie Bank 16 Dec 2001 (OF). This species is reported in Belize almost annually but without supporting details. Several photographs of pre-

sumed Orange-crowned Warblers in the past have variously proven to be imm. female Mangrove Warblers, Tennessee Warblers, or inconclusive.

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