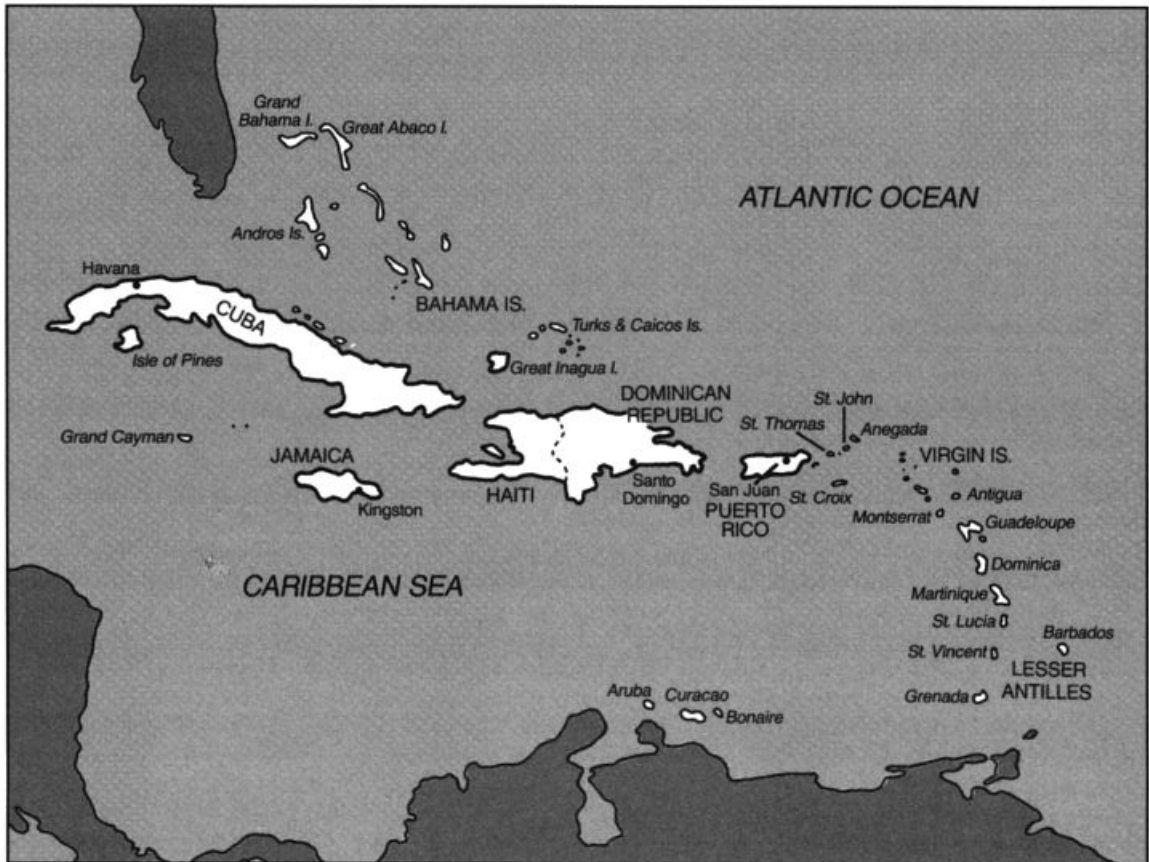


West Indies



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The summer period through the West Indies was without incident regarding tropical storms and hurricanes. The report from Hispaniola (JRC) indicated that the lowlands were suffering from continued drought conditions. Trou Caiman, a large shallow lake near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was the lowest JRC had seen in his several years' experience there. Newly exposed mudflats there attracted early shorebird migrants, a

benefit to birders in an otherwise ravaged countryside. Dry conditions in the Bahamas fueled wildfires near Rand Nature Center, Grand Bahama, and may have concentrated nesting of certain species within the protected reserve. Drought at Great Inagua caused nest abandonment by thousands of flamingos.

Seabird surveys were conducted in many areas of the Bahamas this year. Exceptional in an otherwise quiet season in the Bahamas was the rediscovery of West Indian Woodpeckers nesting at Grand Bahama. More details are to be published elsewhere.

It is with great sadness that we report the tragic loss of Jamaican ornithologist Robert Sutton, co-author of *Birds of Jamaica* (1999), who was killed at his home in Mandeville in July. Thousands upon thousands of people, birders and otherwise, were touched by Robert's quiet passion for birds and his constant willingness to share his great knowledge with others, both fellow Jamaicans as well as naturalists from all corners of the world. With sadness, too, we report the passing in January 2002 of the eminent Dutch ornithologist, K. H. Voous, author of *Birds of the*

Netherlands Antilles (1983) and many other scholarly texts on birds of the Region.

GREBE THROUGH TERNS

At Bermuda, Pied-billed Grebes pairs bred at Somerset Long Bay and Pitman's Pond, while another overwintered at Spittal Pond, with another seen at Paget Marsh 12 Jul (AD).

Audubon's Shearwaters were noted at several locations throughout the n. Bahamas, including 100 at Exuma Sound 1 Jun (NM), over 100 pairs nesting on Channel Cay, Exumas 1 Jun (WM); and 25 individuals off James Point, Eleuthera 2 Jun (NM). Again this summer, iguana researchers found scores of dead Audubon's Shearwaters on Allen's Cay, and it is thought that Barn Owls have been preying upon the birds here (II).

A Least Bittern at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 18 Jul (AD) provided a rare seasonal record. **Green Heron** nesting has been suspected at Bermuda in previous years and particularly earlier in 2002, when 4 ads. were noted; thus 30 Jul proved a red-letter day, when 4 ads with 3 juvs. were seen at Mangrove L. (DBW), a first breeding record for the archipelago.

The presence of a pair of White Ibis with 2

juvs. at Fresh Cr., Andros in Jun (CC) strongly suggests this species in nesting in the Bahamas. At Trou Caiman, Haiti, JRC noted 13 Glossy Ibis and up to 500 Greater Flamingo 27 Jul. The colony on Great Inagua contained 1500-2000 nests, which were abandoned in Jun because wet mud for nest-building and repair was no longer available (HN, *vide* LG). On the Dutch side of St. Maarten, HF noted a dozen Ruddy Ducks at Fresh Pond, w. of Great Salt Pond, Philipsburg 14-26 Jul. Ruddy Duck seem to be expanding in the Region or making a comeback over the last decade, for this is the first report from this location (Voous 1983). White-cheeked Pintails numbered 32 at this pond as well (HF). A long-staying yet elusive Red-tailed Hawk was seen again 19 Jun (PW) on Paget I., Bermuda.

A Piping Plover 27 Jul at Brown's Point, New Providence was considered early (CW) in the mid-Bahamas. A flock of 7 Willets was off Shelly Bay, Bermuda 26 Jul (JM), while a pair 21 Jul at Orient Beach, St. Maarten could be resident breeders (HF). An outstanding find at Darrell's I., Bermuda was a **Eurasian Whimbrel** on 10 Jun (SR, DBW), the first in about 10 years. This form was coincidentally also seen this spring in North Carolina, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Nova Scotia. On 27 Jul, JRC noted 3 Greater and 2 Lesser Yellowlegs as well as a mixed flock of 140+ Least, Semipalmated, and probable Western Sandpipers at the mudflats of Trou Caiman, Haiti. A single Red Knot was noted in the company of a Black-bellied Plover on Nonsuch I., Bermuda on 8 Jun (JM).

On 12 Jun, JK and PK counted gull and tern nests at Petit Cays, near Great Harbour Cay, Berry Is., Bahamas; their surveys turned up 400 Laughing Gull nests, as well 15 Roseate Tern, 6 Least Tern, 48 Bridled Tern, and 6 Brown Noddy nests. On 2 Jun at Tilloo Cay and Pelican Cays N.P., Abaco, Bahamas, RP counted and confirmed nesting of 20 Least, 10 Roseate, and 24 Sooty Terns. On a small cay off Little Whale Cay, Berry Is., PD reported a colony of 150 Roseate Terns 22 Jun. Six pairs of Least Terns raised 7 chicks on a gravel roof of a condominium at Lucaya Beach, Grand Bahama Is. (EMG). At Bermuda, a Gull-billed Tern was seen in St. George's Harbour (EA) 17 Jun, while a Royal Tern was noted off Elbow Beach on 2 Jun (AD), seen in various locations until at least 22 Jun. A Sandwich Tern was seen at Spanish Pt., Bermuda 20 Jun (PW), with perhaps the same bird at Dockyard 20 Jul (DBW). On Rose Is., off New Providence, Bahamas, NM counted 23 Sandwich Terns 27 Jul.

SA West Nile Virus has been sweeping across the continental United States this year, but there appear to be no published or confirmed reports of the arbovirus from Mexico or the West Indies at the time of press. The spread of the virus to the Western Hemisphere—initially in the New York City area in 1999 by ornithophilic mosquitoes—has been reported by Rappole et al. (2000) as the result of Old World migratory bird species, possibly those engaged in trans-Atlantic transit, whether assisted by ship, storm, or other means. (A fascinating paper by Enno B. Ebels, "Transatlantic vagrancy of Palearctic species to the Caribbean region," appears in the latest *Dutch Birding* 24: 202-209.) Rappole et al. (<www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no4/rappole.htm>) warn of the potential that Neotropical migrant birds, and other migrants, may cause the spread of the virus to the tropics.

Although corvids, generally intra-continental migrants, seem to be the primary vector, or amplifying host, for this virus in North America, several trans-Gulf and oceanic migrants have tested positive for this encephalitis-type disease. There has been one recent report of West Nile Virus in a bird from the Yucatan Peninsula this year (DW, pers. comm.). If Old World migrants, probably large-mass species such as gulls, terns, and shorebirds, can survive long enough to transfer the virus to birds in the New World, it seems possible that birds infected in Florida would survive long enough to bring the virus to insular, host-amplifying populations of the West Indies through the Bahamas and Cuba. Indeed, from what we know of records of Palearctic birds in the West Indies, particularly in the Lesser Antilles, it is not unlikely that the virus is already be present in birds feeding or roosting in wetlands and human-settled lowlands. If this scenario is manifested, then endemic corvids (and surely other species) may be further threatened with a force of extirpation and extinction for which we have little or no means of protection in the wild.

NIGHTJARS THROUGH FINCHES

At Rand Nature Centre, Grand Bahama, an ad. and a just-fledged Chuck-will's-widow were noted 13-14 Jun (MA). It was speculated that nearby forest fires forced this ground-nester into protected areas of and near the park. Another Chuck-will's-widow was heard calling on 26 Jun (CW) at Coral Harbour N.P., which

may indicate nesting there well s. of the Grand Bahama breeding site.

A remarkable observation of 2 **Barn Owls** at Marigot, French St. Martin (HF) on 21 Jul and another at Grand Case on 26 Jul provides strong evidence the species is resident on the island. This raises the question, however, from which Caribbean population did they emigrate? Dominica (to the south) would seem the most likely source, yet the distance involved would be nearly the same as from another potential source, Hispaniola to the west. Eight Antillean Nighthawks were noted at Tilloo and Pelican Cays N.P., Abaco, Bahamas 2 Jun (RP) Ron Pagliaro observed an early Belted Kingfisher on Angel Cays, off Abaco, Bahamas 25 Jul.

The discovery on 4 Jun of **West Indian Woodpeckers** breeding at Grand Bahama is indeed exciting news (IL). It means that a very small population, possibly only a few pairs, of an endemic subspecies (*M. s. nyeanus* or *bahamensis*) has persisted over the past 20 years—or that there has been a recolonization by *M. s. blakei* from Abaco. Prairie Warblers were noted at The Retreat, Nassau, New Providence 27 Jul for the earliest date there (CW). A Black-and-white Warbler 23 Jul at New Providence was considered very early (CW). A Louisiana Waterthrush made a somewhat early appearance at New Providence 22 Jul (JR); this is one of the earliest Neotropical migrants in e. North America. A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** 10 Jun on Nonsuch I. provided the first summer record on Bermuda (JM).

ADDENDUM

A White-winged Dove at Gros Islet, St. Lucia 27-28 May (AL, David Parmeter) was the first reported from this location.

Observers: Mike Albury, Eric Amos, Chuck Cable, Eric Carey, J. R. Crouse, Paul Dean, Andrew Dobson, Harvey Farber, Lynn Gape, John Iverson, Jim Kushlan, Philip Kushlan, Anthony Levesque, Irby Lovette, Will Macklin, Jeremy Madeiros, Neil McKinney, Erika Moultrie-Gates, Henry Nixon, Ron Pagliaro, Jim Redmon, Steve Rodwell, Gary Sprangler, Sigrid Styles, Carolyn Wardle, Doug Wassmer, Paul Watson, Tony White, David B. Wingate

