

# West Indies & Bermuda



an oiled, dead bird found in Little Harbour, Abaco 17 Apr 1989 had been banded on Bardsey I., Wales, U. K. 14 May 1986 (*fide* AK).

The imm. American White Pelican found during fall at Bermuda (DO) was present throughout the winter period; the bird had been banded as a nestling in Minnesota in 2002 (*fide* Mary Gustafson). A Brown Pelican was noted at Overyonder Cay, Exuma, Bahamas 27 Dec (JR). Masked Boobies have successfully nested at Frenchcap Cay, St. Thomas (FH) where FH found 5 ads. and 2 large chicks 24 Dec. A Red-footed Booby overwintered 27-28 Dec on the yacht *Just Ducky* (J&CD) from e. of Nassau, New Providence, Bahamas to Pipe Cr., Exumas. An imm. Brown Booby was seen near Hole-in-the-Wall, Abaco 22 Dec (RP). A Great White Heron was seen among 20 Great Blue Herons at Adventure Learning Center, New Providence, Bahamas 25 Jan (MK), with 30 Great and 30 Snowy Egrets (MK). Bermuda's first Reddish Egret was discovered 22 Dec at Somerset Long Bay and remained throughout the period (AD, DW). Two Black-crowned Night-Herons were found at Sugar Bay Resort, St. Thomas 8 Dec (FH) for one of the few records from that island. Greater Flamingos numbered 300 at Zapata Swamp, Cuba (MJG). At Trou Caiman Port-au-Spain, Haiti, JRC and others found 200 Greater Flamingos 21 Dec. A Roseate Spoonbill was found at Small Hope Bay Lodge, Andros 7 Feb (TW).

Among the 16 species of waterfowl reported from Bermuda during the period was the first **White-winged Scoter** since 1967 found in Harrington Sound 7 Feb (DBW), a **Black Scoter** at Somerset Long Bay 4 Jan (WF, DW), and an outstanding 2 **Common Mergansers** at Spanish Pt. 23 Jan+ (BL, JT). From St. Martin, Adam Brown reports several duck species, including a drake **Northern Shoveler** 13 Jan at Fresh Pond, 9 **Ring-necked Ducks** at Little Bay Pond 12 Jan, 3 **Lesser Scaup** on Fresh Pond 10 Jan, and a **Red-breasted Merganser** 13 Jan that provided the island's first record and perhaps only the 4th record e. of Puerto Rico. Red-breasted Mergansers were also noted at Great Inagua, Bahamas, where hunters took one in the first week of Jan (HN), at Brown's Pt., New Providence 20 Jan (JB, TW), and at Francis Bay, St. John, U.S.V.I. (FH) on 4 Dec, only the 2nd record for the U. S. Virgin Is., the first being 29 Nov at St. John (RF). The first record of American Black Duck at St. Thomas was photographed at Compass Pt. 27-28 Dec (FH).

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An important re-discovery of Scaly-breasted Thrasher on St. Eustatius during the winter season negates the long-held view that this species had been extirpated there. Biologists from the EPIC program (<[www.epicislands.org](http://www.epicislands.org)>) found a bird foraging near the rim of the Quill volcano. This program is also providing important data on migrant warblers on St. Martin and Anguilla. Another cooperative bird study program (GM) in Cuba complements other work there on endemics of Zapata Swamp.

## GREBS THROUGH TERNS

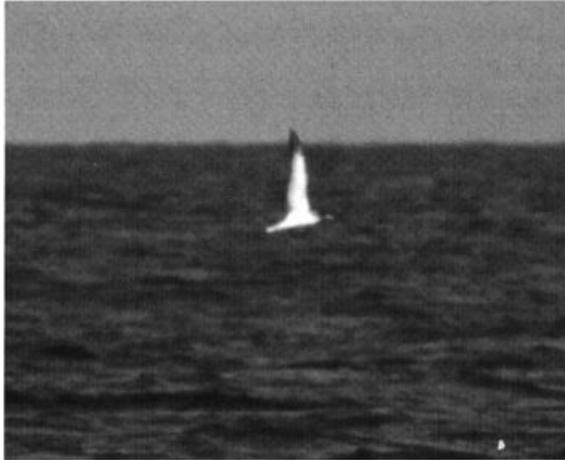
Breeding Least Grebes (with 2 chicks) were noted at Bordeaux, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (FH), and up to 10 individuals were noted on St. Thomas on 14 Feb. Off Dominica, 2 Cory's Shearwaters were noted 7 Dec and a Manx Shearwater 8 Dec (LK). Three Cory's and 3 Manx passed Elbow Beach, Bermuda 23 Feb (AD, SR). The Bahamas' first record of Manx Shearwater has just come to light:

A **Bald Eagle** was seen (MJG) at Las Terrazas, Cuba 9 Dec, the 2nd report for Cuba. Another **Bald Eagle** was at Treasure Cay, Abaco, Bahamas 5 Jan (CB et al.), not far from where one was recorded 13 Mar 2002. The **Western Marsh-Harrier** on Guadeloupe continued through the period (AL). A **Northern Harrier** seen 25 Jan at Wilson's Pond, New Providence, Bahamas (PD, LG, MK) was a first for this location. A young male **Peregrine Falcon** that overwintered at Bermuda was probably sustained by the many gulls, shorebirds, and feral pigeons there; no evidence of depredation of Bermuda Petrels was found this year (AD, m. ob.).

A **Virginia Rail** at Parson's Pond, Bermuda was seen 13 Jan+, while a **Purple Gallinule** found dead 22 Jan at Bermuda may be a first late-winter record (AD). The imm. **Northern Lapwing** remained at the Bermuda Airport until mid-Feb (DW). At Trou Caiman, Haiti, 8 **Snowy** and 80 **Black-bellied Plovers** were present 21 Dec (JRC). **Piping Plovers** numbered 12 at Bahama Palm Shores, Abaco (RP) 21 Jan. Three **Piping Plovers** were seen at a large gathering of shorebirds that included **Red Knots** (10), **Dunlin** (60), **Western Sandpiper** (30), **Short-billed Dowitchers** (120), and 2 **American Oystercatchers** at Green Turtle Cay tidal flats 3 Feb (WB). At Hatte Rocher, Gonaives, Haiti, 3 **Whimbrel** were present 23 Dec (JRC, IP). Three **Black-necked Stilts** at Harold and Wilson Ponds, New Providence, Bahamas 25 Jan (PD, LG, MK) were unusual for mid-winter. A crippled **Red Phalarope** found 23 Feb at Horseshoe Bay, Bermuda died in captivity (AD).

A high count of 20 **Pomarine Jaegers** was tallied off Dominica 7 Dec (LK). The variety of gulls at St. Martin 20 Feb should not be that surprising, as it is a winter cruise-ship destination: one **Ring-billed**, one **Herring**, and 7 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were noted; a **Great Black-backed Gull** 12 Jan provided a first island record (AB). An imm. **Great Black-backed Gull** was seen at Green Turtle Cay tidal flats 3 Feb (WB). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was seen at Treasure Cay, Abaco, Bahamas 22 Dec (RP), and 6 were located there 28 Feb (WB). Two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were noted 17 Dec at West End, Grand Bahama

(T&JG,TW), while a single **Lesser Black-backed** was found at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera 7 Jan (EC, DC, TW). At Trou Caiman, Haiti, JRC and IP found 2 **Caspian Terns** 25 Jan, and 30 **Caspian**



**Cory's Shearwater is a regular constituent of the pelagic avifauna off Dominica, Lesser Antilles (here 7 December 2002) but is rarely documented by photograph. Photograph by Lucy W. Keith.**



**This Red Phalarope was found injured 25 February 2003 at Horseshoe Bay, Bermuda, the first record here since 1971. Photograph by Andrew Dobson.**

**Terns** were there 15 Feb (JRC). A **Common** and 3 **Foster's Terns** lingered throughout the winter at Bermuda (AD). In the Bahamas, 2 **Forster's Terns** were seen at West End, Grand Bahama 17 Dec (T&JG,TW), a single **Forster's** was at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera 8 Jan (EC,TW), and 6 were at Treasure Cay, Abaco 28 Feb (WB).

## OWLS THROUGH GRASSQUITS

There were reports of **Burrowing Owls** from six islands in the Bahamas (including last fall's report from Grand Bahama), an encouraging sign that this resident species is hanging on in spite of loss of habitat. DC found 2 live owls and a road-killed bird on Eleuthera in Dec, and 2 were found on New Providence 15 Dec (PM, TH). Two more were noted on North Andros 5-7 Jan (JS), and one was seen at the s. end of Wardwick Wells, Exumas 1 Jan (LE), while another was found at Hole-in-the-Wall, Abaco 17 Jan (RP). Two **White-winged Doves** visited CW's feeder at Coral Harbour, New Providence 5-16 Dec. A **White-winged Dove** was seen at San Andros 7 Jan, for one of the few reports from that island (JS et al.). At Trou Caiman, a single **White-winged Dove** was noted 25 Jan (JRC). The first record of **Eurasian Collared-Dove** for the U.S. Virgin Islands was noted 26 Dec (FH) at St. John Bay, St. Thomas. Two **Chuck-will's-widows** were found 3 Jan at Lotterie Farm, St. Martin

(AB), one in the same location as in the previous year. On 20 Jan, a **Chuck-will's-widow** was resting on an open, green lawn at Lyford Cay, New Providence (ABA, JB, TW).

More than 100 **Tree Swallows** were seen feeding over a wetland near Barbary Beach, Grand Bahama 17 Dec (TW, EG, J&TG). On 18 Dec, there were 83 **Bahama Swallows** and 2 **Tree Swallows** (AB, LG) at the dump at Freeport, Grand Bahama. At 1500 m elevation at Ranch Montcel, s. of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Crouse noted 6-8 **Golden Swallows**, one of the most threatened species in the West Indies 8 Feb. A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** seen 1-2 Dec at Parson's Pond, Bermuda (AD, SR) provided a rare seasonal record, only one of 10 reports since the first species record in 1967. A very tardy **Bank Swallow** was also seen at Parson's

Pond 1 Dec, the latest date for this species by 25 days.

Up to 80 **Palm Crows** were noted at Ranch Montcel, Haiti 8 Feb (JRC) Three **Yellow-throated Vireos** were at La Guira N. P. 10 Dec (MJG). Three **White-eyed Vireos** were banded by MB at Small Hope Bay, Andros 14-15 Jan. Eight **American Robins** were noted 9 Feb at Clearwater,

Bermuda (KR), and 12 were seen at nearby Heydon Trust 15 Feb (DBW). Two Eastern Bluebirds were noted at Vinales, Cuba 11 Dec (OG). An unprecedented number of American Pipits was reported from the Region this winter. A flock of 16 was found 14 Dec at the Bermuda airport (AD, SR, PS), more than 70 were noted 25-26 Jan on Grand Bahama (RJ, EG, CM), 23 were at Treasure Cay, Abaco 28 Jan (WB), 50+ at Crossing Rocks, Abaco 31 Jan (RP), and 26 at Rock Sound Airport, Eleuthera 16 Feb (DC). The only report from the Greater Antilles came from Haiti at Trou Caiman 21 Dec, a single bird (JRC, PJ, RCE). Cedar Waxwings may be regular in winter in the s. United States, but they are quite irregular in the West Indies: 8 were found at West End, Grand Bahama 17 Dec (JG, TW), plus 27 more from four other locations during Grand Bahama's C.B.C. the next day. Later in the season, several were noted on Jamaica (see the spring report).

This past winter (Dec 2002 to Feb 2003), the Kirtland's Warbler Research and Training Project discovered 30 Kirtland's Warblers at 12 different sites in s. and cen. Eleuthera, Bahamas, not including the previously known Madeira Road site. The project personnel consisted of David Currie of the U.K. and Leon Davis and Zeko McKenzie, two recent graduates of the College of the Bahamas. The sightings included a color-ringed male believed to be at least seven years old (*vide* Bahamas National Trust). A mist-netting effort at Lotterrie Farm, St. Martin in Jan is providing a valuable record of new occurrences, potential winter resi-

dency, and range extensions for warblers and other species (AB et al.). First island records included Yellow-rumped Warblers (one banded, 17 observed) 29 Jan and 2 Kentucky Warblers 6 Jan. Other finds were a Magnolia Warbler 3-7 Feb, 3



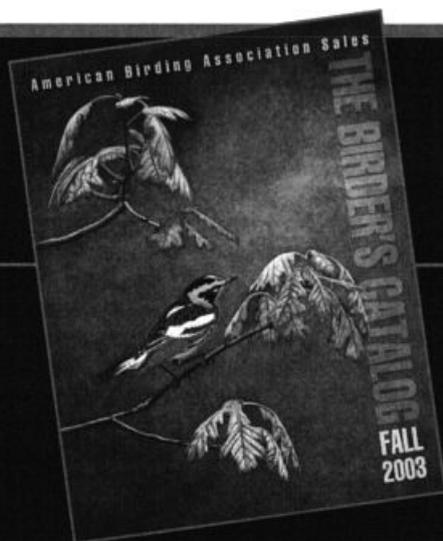
**This Manx Shearwater off Dominica was a rare sight 8 December 2002; though probably a regular spring and fall migrant off the Lesser Antilles, as well as a winter visitor, there are no previous confirmed records of this species for Dominica. Photograph by Josiah Sewell.**

Prothonotary Warblers 15-17 Jan, a Worm-eating Warbler 31 Jan, 6 Ovenbirds 4 Jan, and 10 Hooded Warblers banded 3 Jan. A Tennessee Warbler 12 Dec at Vinales, Cuba provided the first winter resident report for the species there (*vide* OG). A Tennessee Warbler was noted at New Providence 15 Dec (LG, TW). A Prothonotary Warbler at La Guira N. P. provided a first record for Cuba (MJG), and 2 overwintered at Riddell's Bay and Camden, Bermuda (AD). A Kentucky Warbler was seen 15 Dec (TH) at the old dump, New Providence.

A Summer Tanager found 23 Dec at Coney I., Bermuda was an unusual winter find there (RPo); one was banded by MB at Small Hope Bay, Andros, Bahamas 16 Jan. A

Swamp Sparrow was at Paget Marsh, Bermuda 12 Nov (SR, DE), and another apparently overwintered at Spittal Pond there (v. o.). An imm. male Painted Bunting found 19 Nov at the Biological Station, Bermuda remained through late Dec, a very remarkable find (PW). A Dickcissel found 16 Nov lingered into early Dec at Southside, Bermuda (SR). An Orchard Oriole found at the Biological Station, Bermuda 20 Dec (EA) was the first ever recorded in winter. New Providence has both native Black-faced Grassquits and apparently growing numbers of introduced Cuban Grassquits (TW). In 1994, nearly equal numbers of the two species were reported, but in 1998 Cuban Grassquit's numbers began to surge. By 2002, the ratio has shifted to 1.7:1 in favor of the introduced grassquit, although the Black-faced Grassquit's absolute numbers have not fallen markedly. The situation bears monitoring.

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