

THE CHANGING SEASONS: Displacements

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Honestly: I tried my best to goad some hapless soul into writing the spring season essay. "What? And write about Mississippi Kites and White-winged Doves out of range? Couldn't I write the fall report instead?" came the most enthusiastic response. Have we become that predictable here? Or have the birds' patterns in springtime become predictable (like so many wintering hummingbirds out of range), so much so as to fail the test of "newsworthiness"?

In a compromise with those who find the kites' and doves' expansions tedious, I have flagged those sections clearly below, so that they may be more easily avoided. Perhaps the real news would be if the kites' and doves' ranges began to contract, or if they ceased to "overshoot" in spring. Nevertheless, three kites and four doves made

the cuts this time around. (I suspect that no one really finds them uninteresting, at least not in the field.) When the first Mississippi Kite makes it to Churchill, Manitoba, wheeling above Belugas and chattering Ross's Gulls on the Hudson Bay, we'll probably relax our focus on kites. Until then, yes, we're obliged to chronicle their northern appearances in some fashion.

There were several surprises in the spring season, incursions of birds that produced odd pond-fellows: the last individuals of an enormous influx of Red-necked Grebes in the eastern interior had yet to depart before the first arrivals in a wide-spread flight of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks had appeared. Such extensive irruptions of both had not been seen in roughly a decade. It's probably not often that Red-necked Grebes and whistling-ducks get to see one another; birders, at least, don't see them juxtaposed too often. And while the spring season saw little in the way of northern visitors other than the grebes, it was—despite being a cool, wet season through the eastern third or so of the continent—another solid year for southern species found well north of usual range: ibises,

herons, egrets, as expected, but also Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Painted Buntings, Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kites, to a lesser degree Brown Pelicans, Purple Gallinules, Anhingas, and a few exceptional individuals of Mottled Duck, Roseate Spoonbill, Red-billed Tropicbird, and Limpkin.

And while we think nothing, or almost nothing, of one of the Gulf Coast species making a 2000-km flight to the north, we (or should I say "I" here?) unconsciously draw an imaginary line at the southern boundaries of the United States: when a Central American or Caribbean species turns up in the United States, its provenance is immediately suspect. There are good grounds for such skepticism, but with the warming of climate, should we really be so surprised by such birds? Wouldn't it be more surprising if subtropical and tropical species to our south—especially species known to be highly mobile—failed to turn up in the southern parts of the United States? The pace of avian *depayments* (that perfect French word: displacement, dislocation, literally, "de-countrification" in the sense of getting placed out of country or context) seemed brisk this spring, but we lacked ironclad certainty as to *how* many of the season's birds came to be where they were: thus the Thick-billed Parrot on this issue's cover.

With the addition of Mexico and Central America to our family of regional reports, we do begin to see some patterns of northward expansion (whether dispersal, overshooting, exploration, colonization, or "escape flight" following habitat destruction) in species not traditionally regarded as part of the U. S. and Canadian avifauna; some of those species are considered below. As breeding ranges of some Arctic species contract and retreat northward—Semipalmated Sandpiper, Ivory Gull, and Lapland Longspur are three examples of many—we see more and more "southern" species in the north country. Perhaps we should be terrified by these developments; they could be early portents of unimaginable ecological disasters (see Krajick 2003). We dearly hope not. For background, consult <<http://www.abcbirds.org/climatechange/statepage.htm>>.

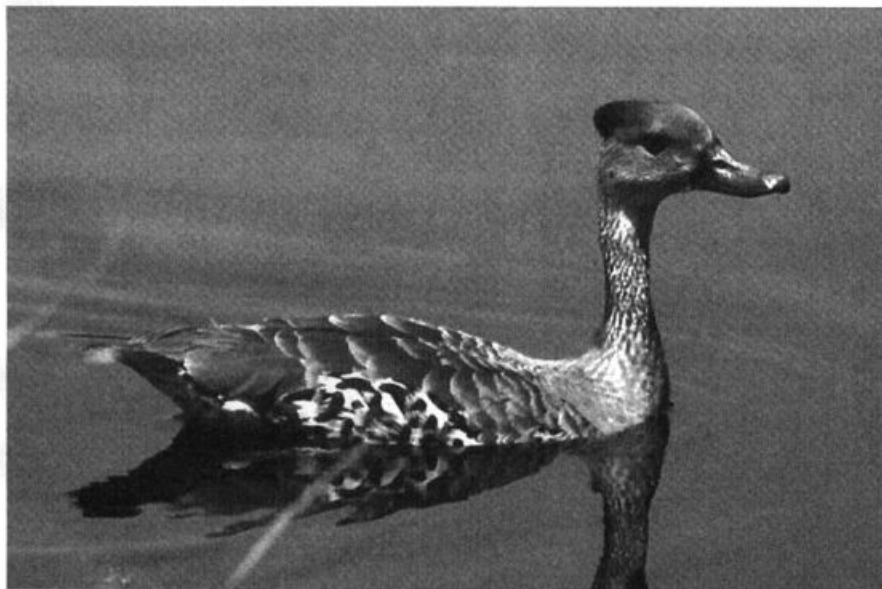


Figure 1. Amid a flurry of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and a modest exodus of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks out of range this spring—as far north as Québec and Alberta by July—this West Indian Whistling-Duck at the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia appeared 29 April 2003. With only a few reports from Florida, Bermuda, and Texas, the species is essentially unknown away from its Caribbean range, where it appears to be recovering and expanding in some locations. Was it a wild wanderer? Photograph by Mark Suomala.

THE WEATHER

• East of the Plains

The impressions of spring weather in the East, north of Florida, were consistent: “cool” and “wet.” The jet stream showed a southward buckle east of or through the Great Plains, with a pronounced turn northward roughly along the Atlantic coast. This La Niña pattern kept storm tracks approximately coastal (northern Québec and the Western Great Lakes reported below-average precipitation) and also kept cooler Canadian air flowing southward over much of the East and eastern Midwest (through at least eastern Ontario) through much of May. March saw a continuation of winter-like conditions north of the Mason–Dixon line, with frozen lakes and bays common through the third week of the month, while April continued cool but seasonable in some areas. May was mostly cooler than average, with a few major warm fronts. For those keeping score at home, a mostly cool, wet Eastern spring is familiar from 1956, 1966, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1982, 1985, 1989, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2000. Most (but not all) of these spring seasons were influenced by either weak or strong La Niña events, which apparently show most pronounced effects on migration in the eastern third of the continent.

Simon Perkins provides a pithy explanation of the effects of the spring weather pattern on birds in New England: “This pattern set up a dichotomous (and for the less hardy species, unfortunate) situation in which a deep, southerly, upper-level flow extending most of the length of the Atlantic Seaboard brought migrants northward, but also spawned the lows that, in turn, produced the cold, wet weather pattern with mostly easterly and northeasterly winds in New England.” This held true well to the south, at least to northern Georgia, and well west into Appalachia, and early nesters were surely discouraged or delayed by the cold temperatures. Some areas reported moderate mortality among early-arriving swallows and other species.

The progress of passerine migration was called “desultory, delayed, and dull” in the Western Great Lakes, and this characterization was echoed across the board in states and provinces to the east, both interior and coastal, with few exceptions. Most commentators felt the migration in the north country to be delayed by one week to ten days, as compared to average dates. Easterlies frustrated Midwestern birders, according to Ken Brock, as the prevailing winds foiled anticipated fallouts of warblers and other migrants, and Ricky Davis writes that “most observers, those especially along the immediate coast, considered this to be one

of the poorest migrations in years” in the Southern Atlantic region.

In most of the Midwest and East, “migration occurred in spurts, with some migrants showing up early in the warmer spells, while others lingered during the cooler spells,” as Jim Granlund describes the situation in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Northern and easterly winds blew through much of the peak migration period in Ontario, concentrating migrants on a few days but generally disappointing birders, even at traditionally productive sites. Here and there across the central interior—in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Iowa, for instance—fallouts of migrants were noted, but traditional sites for observing migrants to the south were less productive. In Louisiana, only 9 and 25 April produced groundings of Gulf Coast migrants, with a major fallout noted in coastal Texas 28–29 March; in Florida, a lack of cool fronts produced a “lackluster” migration, according to Bill Pranty. The bottom line is that the spring was probably no better for migrant birds than for birders hoping to see them in abundance.

The frequent northeasterlies had clear effects on bird movements across a wide area, and there were a few discrete events probably connected to this pattern. From the Hudson-Delaware to the Southern Atlantic region, several flights of Red-necked Phalaropes (with a few Reds) on the coast and well into the Piedmont were unusual, and pelagic trips posted high spring counts of Sooty, Bridled, and Arctic Terns, some of the best in a decade or more. Possibly related was the major flight of Red-billed Tropicbirds seen in May and June in North Carolina waters, with one as far north as Massachusetts. In Mexico, migrating Gray Kingbirds were apparently pushed southwestward to the state of Quintana Roo, where they have been thought very rare (see the Yucatán Peninsula subregion’s “S.A.” box on the subject); migrant Black-whiskered Vireos also turned up on the eastern part of the peninsula in numbers, as well as in Belize and Costa Rica.

• Great Plains westward

Western weather was more heterogeneous, with the relatively mild winter giving way to a mostly mild spring, though precipitation levels differed widely among and within reporting regions. Even on the West’s “eastern” edge in Manitoba (which had been bitterly cold in winter 2002–2003, like most of the East), Rudolf Koes and Peter Taylor report that late March onward saw relatively warm temperatures and a leaf-out of deciduous trees four weeks ahead of spring 2002—quite in contrast to eastern Canada, where leaf-out was delayed several weeks by cool weather. The Northern Great Plains

also saw leaf-out a month earlier than in 2002, according to Ron Martin.

Texas through the Southern Great Plains remained mostly dry, whereas to the west, Alberta, most of Montana and Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado received average to above-average precipitation. Nevertheless, long-term drought conditions still persist in southern Idaho and over much of the central Rockies, despite snowstorms in March and April rains. Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah also got some rain early in the season, but drought conditions returned by late May there as well.

The prevailing weather pattern that brought storms to the Atlantic coast also mixed moist Gulf of Mexico air with cool, dry air over the continent’s center, spawning tornado after tornado in the heartland. The confirmation of no fewer than 571 tornado touchdowns in May 2003 (plus dozens unconfirmed) was without precedent; meteorologists mark that month as the “most unstable May” on record. Surely the twisters also kill birds, both migrants and local nesters, but there is no mention of tornado-caused mortality in the regional reports.

On the Pacific coast, weather was rather mild in the north after March, with Alaska reporting scores of early-arrival records and few cold fronts. The Yukon and most of British Columbia were mild and relatively storm-free after early April. Don Cecile writes that Vancouver Island was cooler than average, but Washington and Oregon warmed nicely in April and saw plenty of rain in March and April, although May was atypically dry in the Pacific Northwest. The inverse was true in northern California: March was dry, but April and May saw heavy coastal and montane rains and cool weather. In Southern California, by contrast, it was the late winter and early spring that brought rains.

From West Texas and the Rockies westward, migration’s progress was considered unexceptional and its “eastern” component minimal. At least part of that impression could be owing to widespread early rainfall, which in some areas meant that migrants were less concentrated into oases (“traps”) than in very dry spring seasons, especially in southern areas. On the other hand, the drier areas, such as the Trans-Pecos of Texas and the “springs” in New Mexico, produced relatively few eastern migrants, so it seems likely that conditions were not ideal for their westward dispersal. For what it’s worth, the weather mechanism discussed in this column for spring 2001 (Brinkley 2001)—a spring that saw a huge influx of eastern migrants into the West—was negligible or absent this season. Instead of having a jet stream with a

northward bulge in the continent's center, bringing early warm weather across vast areas, we commonly had a deep southward dip in the jet stream. Likewise, the north Mexican low-pressure and Southeastern high-pressure areas did not establish themselves as they did in 2001.

GREBES' RETURN

The massive flight of Red-necked Grebes recorded in February and March of winter 2003 was similar in extent and timing to the flight recorded in February and March 1994 (Kaufman 1994; Table 1). In these pages a decade ago (*National Audubon Society Field Notes* 48: 186), I opined that the freezing of the Great Lakes was linked to the influx of Red-necked Grebes in the Hudson-Delaware region. It appeared to many observers, at that time, that because the intensity of grebe fallout seemed to begin in the Niagara frontier and southern Great Lakes vicinity—with numbers of Horned and Red-necked Grebes found on roads, their feet caked with ice—these birds must be fleeing the rapidly-freezing Great Lakes. The assumption brought comments from Midwestern editors to the effect that such large numbers of grebes are not known to spend the winter on the southern Great Lakes but that the "Great Grebe Fallout" must have had the lakes as its source (Granlund 1994). No major papers were published on this flight, but there were a few local summaries (Lantz 1994).

From the more recent flight, we have a greater set of data, with individual counts from the Finger Lakes region of New York south to the interior of Virginia that run much higher than the counts of 1994. The Internet allowed for almost immediate communication between birders on the locations of grebes and made compilation of these numbers easier, if by no means easy. From editors in the Hudson-Delaware and the Middle Atlantic regions (see their "S.A." items), we also have a new conceptualization of how the grebes, which are usually considered very uncommon at most inland sites, even downright rarities at most, might have come to be so numerous and widespread. The thinking here is that these birds were grounded while attempting to move from Atlantic wintering areas to staging grounds in the Great Lakes region; finding the Great Lakes frozen, the birds flew southward and southeastward toward the unfrozen upstate New York lakes, the major rivers and lakes of downstate New York and New Jersey, the lower Midwest, Appalachia, and the rivers and lakes of the Chesapeake Bay region.

In the frozen north, south to southern New England, there were few grebes: none after 8 February on the New Hampshire

coast, average numbers from Maine's coast, with none reported inland from New Hampshire or Vermont, and essentially none east or north of the three in Albany in northeastern New York. Rather, birds were found in greatest concentrations in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Connecticut, New Jersey, and most especially in western and downstate New York—states between 36° and 42° N latitude. Progressively smaller numbers were reported as far south as South Carolina and Tennessee (Table 2). In Canada, Québec reported only three birds, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick took no special notice of the species (the same was true for Maine), and the entire count from St. Pierre et Miquelon was a "low" 250.

As with so many species of birds, there was great difficulty in estimating actual numbers of individual grebes by region or state, and only West Virginia, New York, and Connecticut observers made an effort to analyze their data with an eye to probable duplication. As Steve Kelling noted in upstate New York, the grebes this year moved around a great deal, "far more than in the flight of 1994." The same appeared to be the case as far south as the Virginias, the southern extent of double-digit tallies of the species at single sites. Figure 2 shows summary counts of grebes as nearly as we can represent them. It is not possible to adjust numbers to reflect grebes-per-hour or -mile. That New York state had more coverage than interior Pennsylvania, for example, goes without saying, but we lack the specifics to countenance such differences in coverage. We will never know the actual extent of this enormous flight, but we can estimate,

based on available counts, the approximate magnitude of the flight by region.

If these birds were indeed returning from wintering areas to stage on the Great Lakes,

Table 1. Selected high local and regional counts for Red-necked Grebes, February—March 2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATES
266	Cayuga L., NY	1 Mar
206	Dunkirk Harbor, <i>Chautauqua</i> , L. Erie, NY	1 Mar
116	Potomac R., <i>Montgomery</i> , MD	6 Mar
78	near Bordertown (along Delaware R.), NJ/PA	early Mar
65	Cheat L., <i>Monongalia</i> , WV	27 Feb
61	Eastlake Point Park, e. of Cleveland, OH	13 Mar
59	Moriches and Shinnecock Bays, Long I., NY	15 Mar
50	Croton Point to Peekskill (Hudson R.), NY	3 Mar
45	Union L., Millville, NJ	3 Mar
34	Shenandoah R., <i>Jefferson</i> , WV	15 Mar
30	Manasquan Inlet, NJ	1 Mar
29	Burke L., <i>Fairfax</i> , VA	22 Mar
25+	Provincetown, MA	1 Mar
25	Black Hills Regional Park, <i>Montgomery</i> , MD	2 Mar
23	Hains Pt., D.C.	13 Mar
13	Delanco to Palmyra (Lower Delaware R.), NJ	7–8 Mar
11	Niantic Bay, East Lyme, CT	16 Mar
10	Gill, MA (inland)	10 Apr
7	Connecticut R., Middletown, CT (inland)	15 Mar

Table 2. Estimates of total numbers of Red-necked Grebes reported by state, province, or region.

NUMBER	LOCATION
2000+	New York (includes 100+ on Long I.; over 3012 reported total)
911	Pennsylvania (56 counties)
721	Maryland, D.C., & Virginia (72 municipalities and counties)
400+	West Virginia (15 counties; 692 birds reported)
290+	New Jersey
200	Ohio (40 counties)
113	Massachusetts (includes many regular winterers)
70+	Maine (typical number)
60	Connecticut (29+ locations)
40+	Delaware (80 reported)
24+	New Hampshire (<i>none</i> after 8 February)
20+	Rhode Island
14	North Carolina
7	Indiana
5	South Carolina
4	Illinois
1	Tennessee
1	Georgia
0	Vermont
0	Kentucky

then from what area(s) were they returning? Veit and Petersen (1993) suggest that spring birds seen in Massachusetts “apparently move north to coastal Massachusetts during March and April from wintering grounds farther south on the Atlantic Coast. Local coastal flocks gradually increase in size prior to making an overland migration to interior North America” [p. 52; emphasis added].

A search of Christmas Bird Count records—made rapid and easy by the outstanding new search tools on National Audubon Society’s fine website (<<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>>)—fails to find significant wintering grounds south of Massachusetts; only the Montauk, New York count regularly records any numbers, and even there a count of a dozen is exceptional. And the well-scoured coasts of southern Long Island through North Carolina—for which plenty of winter pelagic bird data are also available—harbor only a very few Red-necked Grebes, as far as anyone knows, with about 0.01 grebes per party-hour the norm in New Jersey, for instance. Farther south, observers see far fewer.

Christmas Bird Count data from Nova Scotia, Maine, and New Brunswick (Root 1988; see also on-line C.B.C. data) indicate that these grebes appear to spend at least the early winter chiefly in waters between northern New England and the southern Maritimes (and the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon). Thus the early-spring aggregations seen off Massachusetts (most large counts come in early April) could well be of birds wintering not largely to the south of Massachusetts but to the north. Even if the species is less gregarious on the Atlantic wintering grounds than loons, for instance, it is difficult to believe that many hundreds of Red-neckeds would be overlooked south of Massachusetts. Counts of up to 2000 Red-neckeds in Cape Cod Bay (4 April 1979, a good average date for this kind of number) might then represent staging birds coming mostly from the Gulf of Maine, the Bay of Fundy, and adjacent waters; the only similar counts of spring migrants known to us come from Great Lakes sites, such as along the north shore of Lake Ontario in recent years. The nearness of the southern New England

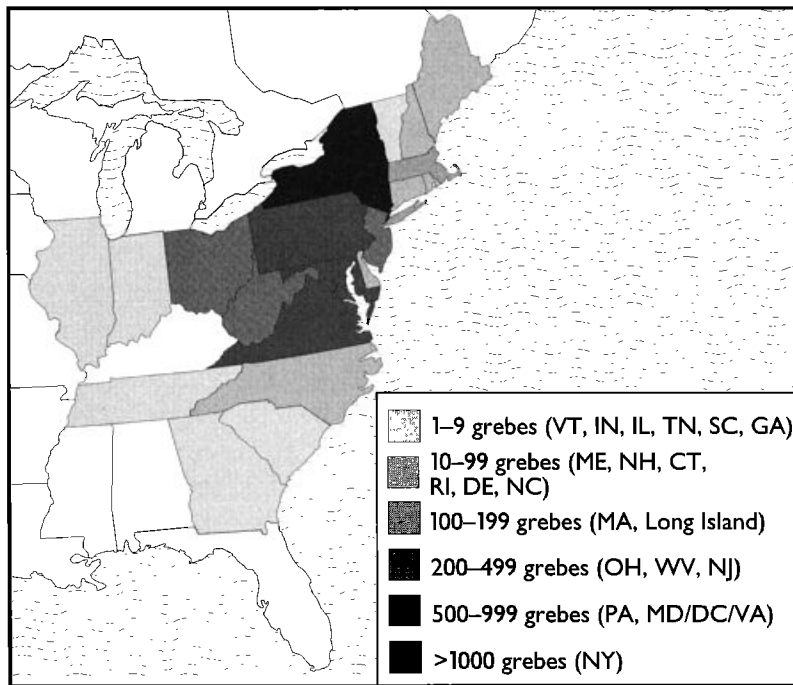


Figure 2. Rough distribution of Red-necked Grebes between February and early April 2003, by state or region. Map by Virginia Maynard.

Atlantic coastline to the eastern edge of Lake Ontario makes that the shortest overland corridor for passage to a large interior lake, a logical route.

My experience while resident in the Finger Lakes region of New York, however, was that Red-necked Grebe overland spring flights tended to occur in late March to early or mid-April (Levine 1998). In polling observers from across the Northeast, I gathered that this is a common impression. From Steve Mirick in New Hampshire, for example, came consonant comments: “I have never heard of Red-necked Grebes moving west as early as late February. Our records indicate that most birds move later than that. I have always thought that they staged off the New England coast in late March and early April and migrated west in April. We typically don’t get more than a few dozen along the coast in the winter through February. Some of our largest concentrations ever are in late March and April: a fallout of 450 on Squam Lake on 26 April 1992, 245 staging along the coast on 4 April 1994, a fallout of 196 along the Connecticut River on 23 April 2002, and 157 staging along coast on 23 March 2001. Essentially all of our spring inland records (i. e., migrating birds) are from April through early May, indicating that this is the main migration period for birds heading west through New Hampshire.” These remarks were seconded by other New Englanders, and the (apparent) 2003 spring migration of the species was in keeping with this schedule, such as 726 and 976 in Monroe and Orleans Counties on Lake Ontario in New York, 11

and 14 April, respectively—although certainly some of these birds had taken part in the late-winter invasion.

Where then were these thousands of Red-necked Grebes—and there were probably at least 5000 birds observed in March, many of them away from typical passage areas—coming from? It is still uncertain to what extent Red-necked Grebes overwinter on the Great Lakes. At least one source suggests that significant numbers may remain all winter on Lake Ontario (Stout 1995). If migrating in from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes, why would grebes turn to the south, southeast, and even west-southwest, rather than reverse course and fly to the east? Perhaps their

energy resources were limited, and the grebes sought the nearest open water for foraging (flying south for open water would make sense), and thus the greatest numbers—probably over two-thirds of the grebes documented—ended up within 300 km of the southern shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie. But why make such an early (late-February) exodus from Atlantic areas over frozen rivers and lakes toward the Great Lakes, especially during such a bitter winter? Was a crash in prey resources responsible for this?

The data available could be construed to support the theory of “deflection” of the late-winter overland staging flight as laid out by Iliff, Burgiel, and colleagues, but I continue to be intrigued by the possibility that several thousand Red-necked Grebes make the Great Lakes their home in winter, possibly the deep water of Lakes Ontario and Erie, but Morgante (2003) suspects Lakes Huron and Superior, which were freezing up just before the appearance of the grebes. The heavy concentration of grebes in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and especially Ohio in this flight would seem more suggestive of flight from some place in the Great Lakes than of a deflection from an Atlantic-to-Great-Lakes flight. Most remarkable in all this: we don’t really know where they came from.

OVERMIGRANTS AND IRRUPTORS: SOUTHERN BIRDS NORTH

• Kites

Kites north of normal were plentiful but not

overwhelmingly so this spring: in contrast to several springs past, Massachusetts had no Mississippi Kites in May this year. Swallow-tailed Kites are known to nest regularly only as far north as central South Carolina, but in summer 2003, pairs lingered in eastern North Carolina and around the York River in Virginia, perhaps birds that overshoot breeding range in the spring. Eleven spring singles were widespread, as were about 16 single Mississippi Kites (Table 3), and a White-tailed Kite made it north to Fort Campbell, Montgomery County, Tennessee in early April, the only one reported well to the north of Gulf Coast states.

This haul of kites is in fact not very remarkable when compared to several recent springs, which have seen many more Mississippis in the East. What made the spring remarkable for kites, at least on the Eastern Seaboard and eastern Midwest, was that so many showed up *despite* the cool and rainy weather, very poor weather for a foraging kite (a Mississippi at Marydel, Delaware was picked up emaciated, in fact, and a dead Swallow-tailed was later found in Lambertville, Hunterdon County, New Jersey). Out West, where Swallow-tailed Kite is a top-shelf vagrant, one in Colorado was stunning—but far more amazing was the estimate of at least 300 Mississippi Kites on 16 May near Lamar, Colorado; a single at Palisade, Mesa County two days later furnished a first record west of the Continental Divide for that state.

Looking carefully at continental records of Swallow-tailed Kites, one sees a nice cluster of dates or date-ranges (24 March; 19 April; 2–3 May; 11–14 May) that dovetails neatly with the passages of warm fronts in the eastern part of the continent. Eastern Mississippi Kites' dates in 2003 were typical of recent springs, most (88%) clustering around the middle of May (10–18 May), their usual window of arrival in the northern portions of breeding range and also a period that overlapped with or followed warm fronts' passage. In the West, Mississippi Kites often arrive a few days later than "peak" in the East (much as warblers and other vagrant passerines do in spring), and this season, singles were in California at Furnace Creek Ranch 23 May and Los Angeles County 26 May and in Nevada at Tonopah 17 May and Corn Creek 21 May. Should the spring of 2004 have plenty of southerly and southwesterly winds, kites could well be overwhelming again.

• Doves

White-winged Doves well north of range tend to show up on days (southerly winds) and dates (mostly May) that are similar to those of the kites: White-wingeds were seen in Kentucky and New Jersey both 6–7 May,

North Dakota 7–10 May (the state's second), Wyoming 9–11 May, Manitoba 9–12 May (only the province's third at Ashern—not yet Churchill), Virginia 11–12 May, Illinois 13 May, South Dakota 25 May (the state's fourth), and Monhegan Island, Maine 30–31 May. An Indiana White-winged Dove was unusually early on 2 April, more in keeping with dates from Nebraska and Kansas, although another Wyoming bird arrived as early as 23 April. White-winged Doves north of range in Utah and New Mexico were also late-April birds.

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue their expansion northward: Manitoba's first confirmed bird was at Holland about 5–12 May, and one was at Medicine Hat, Alberta 1 May (three more overwintered in that province). There were three Saskatchewan reports and two from Idaho, providing fifth and sixth state records. It was again interesting that the species occasioned almost no comment from the Eastern Seaboard, where it nests only north to the Delmarva Peninsula. To the south, singles and pairs of collared-doves were found throughout towns in northern Chihuahua state this season. Inca Doves in Harrison and Bolivar Counties, Mississippi were both found 6 April, and a few persisted in Colorado; the species seems much less prone to long-distance movements than the larger species. The fall/winter Ruddy Ground-Dove invasion into southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico continued well into spring, with reports of eight from Arizona between April and June, nine in New Mexico (including a juvenile—a likely sign of local breeding) as late as 17 May, and five in California, two of which lingered through late May. *And we're done with the doves.*

• Whistling-ducks

Messier to treat in this essay are the appearances of whistling-ducks far from home. Unlike the kites' and doves', whistling-ducks' appearances do not show association with the passage of warm fronts. Unlike

Table 3. Records of Swallow-tailed Kites and Mississippi Kites away from nesting areas, Spring 2003.

LOCATION	DATES	COMMENTS
SWALLOW-TAILED KITE		
Bermuda (various locations)	4–11 Mar	4 birds; very rare transients
Ft. Smallwood, <i>Anne Arundel</i> , MD	24 Mar	earliest ever for state
Clarksville, <i>Allegany</i> , NY	19 Apr	first local record
Ft. Smallwood, <i>Anne Arundel</i> , MD	2 May	
Berrien, MI	2–16 May	first in spring
Ivy Cr. Natural Area, <i>Albemarle</i> , VA	2 May	first local record
Derby Hill, Mexico, NY	3 May	
Bull Mountain, <i>Buchanan</i> , VA	11 May	
Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R., VA	11 May	
Cape May, NJ	14 May	
Marydel, <i>Carroll</i> , MD	14 May	
Brighton, CO	16 May	first in 10 years for CO
MISSISSIPPI KITE		
Ottawa, ON	1 May	first for e. Ontario
Pt. Pelee, ON	6 May	ad.
Sandy Hook, NJ	10 May	
Hyland Lake Park Reserve, <i>Hennepin</i> , MN	10 May	
Sandy Hook, NJ	12 May	
Rondeau P.P., <i>Kent</i> , ON	13 May	ad.
Pt. Pelee, ON	13 May	imm.
Providence, RI	14 May	only one in New England 2003
Grimby, <i>Niagara</i> , ON	14 May	second local record
Cape May, NJ	14–15 May	3+ birds
<i>Davison</i> , SD	18 May	third state record
Marydel, DE	18 May	
Rondeau P.P., <i>Kent</i> , ON	25 May	subad.
Ripley, <i>Chautauqua</i> , NY	30 May	

kites, and most doves, whistling-ducks are rather common in captivity and are sometimes regarded with bemusement when they appear out of range: wild Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in both Florida and Texas, after all, can be ridiculously tame (nesting on bustling hotel grounds, allowing very close approach at state parks, etc.), which is no help to a state or provincial committee attempting to establish the provenance of a flock 1000 km or more out of range. Moreover, as noted about Ruddy Shelducks in this essay (Sharp 2003), these ducks just seem too colorful to take seriously as potential vagrants. Whistling-ducks are also inconvenient in that they begin spring invasions in late April and make very uneven movements through May, June, and even July, months that straddle two issues of this jour-

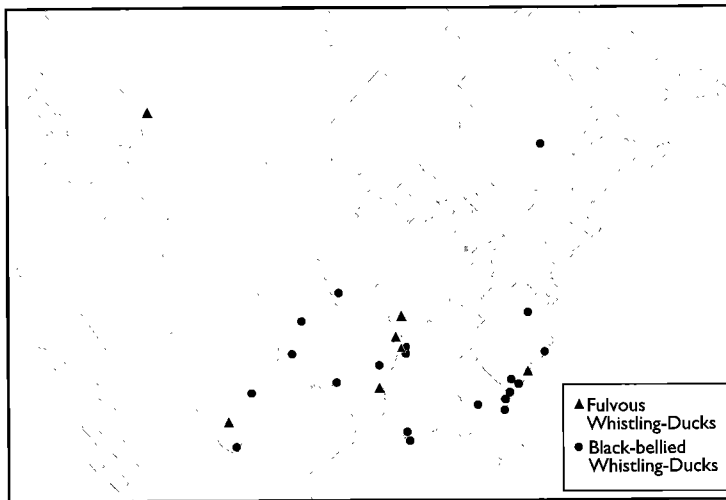


Figure 3. Records of extralimital Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, April through July 2003. Map by Virginia Maynard.

nal. Flights of some species, especially Fulvous, often occur in the post-nesting season, especially the late autumn (November).

The eight "tree duck" species (*Dendrocygna*) are known throughout the world as inveterate vagabonds, but irruptions of Black-bellieds as far north as Canada are a relatively recent phenomenon in much of North America; the most recent large-scale flight far to the north occurred in 1993, with records in that spring and summer as far north as Québec and Ontario (Kaufman 1993). Since then, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck has shown strong gains in Florida and Texas (with wanderers to the north), while the decline in Fulvous Whistling-Duck's numbers has meant very few flights of that species since November 1993 (and nothing like the flights of the middle twentieth century); the species is also believed to be gone as a breeder from California, according to this season's report by Guy McCaskie and Kimball Garrett. Nevertheless, there are occasional indications of nesting in new areas, such as at Paynes Prairie, near Gainesville, Florida, where two were seen several times beginning 1 June.

For whatever reason, both Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks irrupted in spring 2003 (Table 4, Figure 3), with the peak of the movement between early May and early June and the last of the stragglers reaching Québec on 4 July. As we'll read in the next issue's Québec regional report (q. v.), observers there were able to infer wild provenance for their flock of five. The context of a flight year suggests that many, perhaps even most records of the species represent wild birds, which have not been accepted for most mid-Atlantic states in the past, at least in the case of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks.

More difficult to divine are this spring's U. S. records of the two other *Dendrocygna* from

the western hemisphere: an unmarked White-faced Whistling-Duck was with a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at Davie, Broward County, Florida 3 March, and an unmarked West Indian Whistling-Duck was found at Great Dismal Swamp N.W.R. on the North Carolina/Virginia border 29 April (Figure 1). Both species have been reported in southeastern North America in the past, always with the assumption that aviculturalists' or zoos' birds were involved. Before dismissing these reports out of hand, we should recall that White-faced Whistling-Duck has reached Puerto Rico and that West Indian Whistling-Duck has made it to Bermuda. Both are old records, but both likely represent wild birds.

Another southerner far from home, a Mottled Duck visited Kelly's Slough N.W.R., Grand Forks County, North Dakota 16–21 March. This species, with an isolated population in South Carolina, has been reported previously as far north as New York in the East and Nebraska and Colorado in the middle of the continent; unlike most whistling-ducks, it would probably be overlooked at many waterfowl refuges. Such a report reminds us to look through over the local Mallards and American Black Ducks with a critical eye—every time we watch waterfowl.

Table 4. Records of Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks from the regional reports.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATES
Fulvous Whistling-Duck		
8	Huntington Beach S.P., SC	30 April–3 May
1	Calgary, AB	25 May+
9	Dyer, TN	25–31 May+
1	Balmorehea L., TX	3 June
6	Canalou, Stoddard, MO	29 June
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck		
10*	Tallahassee, FL	21 March
42*	near Fort Pierce, St. Lucie, FL	24 March
3	Pearl River W.M.A., Madison, MS	8 April
7	Red Slough, OK	24 April
2	Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO	26 April & 30 July
1*	Jacksonville, FL	3–14 May
1	Rio Grande Village, Brewster, TX	7 May
1	Savannah Spoil Site, GA	10–11 May
11	Lake, TN	11 May–10 June
1	Lubbock, TX	15 May
12*	Viera Wetlands, Brevard, FL	17 May
116*	Gainesville, FL	21 May
23	Tifton, GA	23 May
12*	East of Zephyrhills, Pasco, FL	23 May
4*	Orlando Wetlands Park, Orange, FL	28–30 May
2	Great River Road, Dyer, TN	31 May
5	Andrews I., GA	31 May
6	L. Braxton, Chesterfield, VA	2–3 June
15	South Tibwin, Charleston, SC	5 June
2	Sneads Ferry, NC	10 June
flock	Savannah N.W.R., SC	13 June
9	Savannah Spoil Site, GA [same as above?]	27 June
1–2	Donnelley W.M.A., Colleton, SC	28 July–22 August
5	St.-Félicien Zool. Gardens, Lac Saint-Jean, PQ	4–31 July+

* = these numbers are of birds "in range," but the counts in newly-colonized northern Florida are higher every year, and it is thought that this rapidly expanding Florida population is at least in part responsible for recent appearances of the species in the East

WADING BIRDS & WATERBIRDS

There are always a few "zootie" (as they say in the Southern Great Plains) herons and allies far from range in the spring. This spring's award-winners are the adult Tricolored Heron at Douglas, Converse County, Wyoming 4 May (a state first), the adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron that remained at Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A. Manitoba 22

May and later, and the Great Egret at Juneau, Alaska 7–11 May. The spring and summer have been more remarkable and consistent, however, for wandering ibises: Glossy, White, and White-faced alike have been turning up well out of range since late April. The tale of the expanding dark *Plegadis* species has been told for almost a decade in this journal; more unusual is the more recent irruption of White Ibis, another May wanderer. Manitoba's second at Delta (9–10 May) was the showpiece in a birding festival there, while Massachusetts had one 27 April, Rhode Island one 9 May, and Connecticut had as many as three 12, 18, and 21–23 May. Just to the south, four were scattered between New Jersey, Delaware, eastern Long Island, and at the Pea Patch Island heronry on upper Delaware Bay, where nesting is conceivable (the northernmost nesters are on Virginia's Eastern Shore). Exceptional long-legged waders out of range elsewhere included a Limpkin in South Carolina 11 May (the seventh since 2001: see Cely et al. 2003) and a Roseate Spoonbill in Tennessee 31 May and later. Enigmatic were Brown Pelicans in Tennessee 20–25 May and in Alaska at Clarence Strait 23 May and north of Ketchikan the next day (the latter bird remained for four more days)! These are the first documented **Brown Pelicans** for Alaska. (This journal would make a good home for a paper on the vagrancy of Brown Pelican, which is surely in part a result of population growth but is difficult to characterize geographically.)

Anhingas, possibly one of the more over-reported (that is, misidentified: confused with cormorants) of southern wanderers, were scattered across eastern half of the continent this spring. A lovely flight took place 27 April well north of range: single birds were seen over Cumberland County, New Jersey and in Pennsylvania in Northumberland County and at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Berks County, with one at Reading the next day. An Anhinga a few days later, 3 May, was found on the Missouri River in Leavenworth County, northern Kansas. The last extralimital report for the East came 10 May from Shelby Forest, Tennessee. A report of Anhinga from Barr Lake, Colorado that same day was tempered by re-examination of one state specimen, which turned out to be an Australasian Darter, *Anhinga novahollandiae*. How many of us have routinely ruled out all other darter taxa when reporting flyover Anhingas? A carefully-studied Anhinga at Ramer Lake, Imperial County, California 5 April was only that state's fourth—and, confusingly, in an area frequented by an escaped African Darter (*A. rufa*)!

PASSERINES & PARTS SOUTH

May passerines pushing their northern lim-

its were fewer than in warm springs (e.g., Brinkley 2001), and warblers made only a modest showing. One exception this season was the spate of Painted Buntings north: in eastern Ontario 12–13 May, at Sheboygan, Wisconsin 13 May, at Long Point, Ontario 18 May, at L'Anse, Michigan 19 May, and at Bruno, Minnesota 29 May. A male Hooded Oriole 25 May in Iowa and a male Bronzed Cowbird at Cimarron, Oklahoma the same day coincided with the passage of a warm front. This is a relatively small but noteworthy haul.

Florida provided, as always, much food for thought. Two **Red-legged Honeycreepers**—never before recorded in the United States—turned up on offshore island refuges in Florida this spring. These would seem very unlikely to have been escapees (especially in context with Florida's other Caribbean-basin vagrants this spring, such as White-tipped Dove), but the state's bird records committee has not voted to include them on the state's official list. The two color-banded Southern Lapwings in Florida are believed to be escapees from a collection, but this species has shown increase through Middle America (increasing in Costa Rica) and has the capacity to stray to border states. Like the whistling-ducks, these birds are conspicuous, vocal, and rather gaudy. This season's record of **nesting Double-striped Thick-knees** at Great Inagua in the Bahamas—a species known only from fossil remains here—should give us pause: this is only a day's flight from the Florida mainland (West Indian Whistling-Ducks, of course, are much closer still to Florida). As we attempt to distinguish human-assisted from natural vagrants from tropical America, we should keep an eye on records from beyond the Bahamas as well: single **Large-billed Terns** on the Caribbean coasts of Honduras and Costa Rica, where previously unknown, would be welcome visitors to any sandbar, lacustrine or estuarine, north of range.

SPECIES DECLINING AND SCARCE

Spring isn't the time to assess nesting populations of most species, but we have a few data that bode well or ill for several species. A banded Piping Plover, thought to be Ontario's last breeder, was alone at Lake-of-the-Woods 31 May, and none returned again to Minnesota, but 23 were counted in the eastern Arkansas River Valley, Colorado 5 May, for a state high count—hopefully a positive sign for that Endangered species in the interior. The summer reports will carry more complete news on this beautiful shorebird; most Atlantic reports document widespread nesting failure as a result of unusually high tides made worse by easterly winds in May and June.

Of particular concern among shorebirds are those that stage around Delaware Bay in spring and re-fuel on the eggs of Horseshoe Crab before continuing on to Arctic nesting grounds. The fishery for these crabs continues in the state of Delaware, despite the opposition of conservation groups, and the consequence would seem to be clear: counts of Red Knot dropped by 70% compared to the same time in 2002, Ruddy Turnstone by 58%, Semipalmated Sandpipers by 75%, and Dunlin by 67%. To what extent habitat loss, climate changes, and/or changes in prey resources on Arctic nesting grounds play a role in these declines we do not know.

Shorebird counts can be difficult to conduct in a consistent manner, and complicating the situation this year was an especially late egg-laying of the crabs, both in Delaware Bay and Chesapeake Bay. Next year's counts should provide a better sense of how extensive these declines are, but we note that this year's numbers were only about half of those of 1997—and a quarter of those in 1986, when surveys began. Counts of actual crab eggs on Delaware Bay beaches suggest a greater than 90% reduction of this resource over the past two decades or so, and so the question of changes in the nesting grounds do not need to be answered before we take action to avert the ecological collapse of vital stopover sites.

Grassland birds, whose populations are precarious in many places, were not the subject of much attention in the spring reports. Loggerhead Shrike, where mentioned, was noted to be increasingly scarce (Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, southern California, Oregon/Washington, Maryland, Baja California). The declining Greater Prairie-Chicken continued to do so at Prairie State Park, Missouri, where Roger McNeill notes that construction disturbance appears to have reduced spring displaying by two-thirds; but the reintroduced population of in Grand Forks County, North Dakota "continues to flourish," according to Ron Martin.

The population of Kirtland's Warbler is increasing, with the highest count of singing males in Michigan in 2003—1202 birds!—ever recorded since counts began in 1951. In spring, lone migrants were found at Indiana, Pennsylvania 18 May, at Long Point, Ontario 15 May, at Point Pelee, Ontario 17 May, and at Indiana Dunes State Park 10 May, a neat and typical week-long window of passage in the spring. We received no such encouraging words on Golden-winged Warbler; the latter is now seen less frequently as a migrant or nester in some regions than the dominant hybrid form called Brewster's Warbler, and the only extralimital report came from near

Cheyenne, Wyoming 17 May. Single migrant Golden-cheeked Warblers, also declining and listed as Endangered federally, were reported on the somewhat late date of 4 April in both Costa Rica and northern Mexico.

Whooping Cranes made news in several unlikely places, owing to the breeding program at Necedah N.W.R. in Wisconsin: several entered Iowa airspace on 22 May, and in mid-April one was in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Because some 36 birds now move between Wisconsin and Florida, almost any state between those two could see a Whooping Crane overhead during migration—look twice at any flyover “Wood Stork.” Although guided by ultralight aircraft on their first southbound migration to Chassahowitzka N.W.R. in Florida, the cranes are unassisted on the northbound return to Wisconsin. The other (nonmigratory, introduced) Florida population is estimated to be at 87 birds, and about 195 Whooping Cranes make up the core population, which nests in Canada and winters on the Texas coast.

LOST LARIDS

The New England coast boasts excellent “gulling,” and the coast of Massachusetts in particular is prime territory for Mew Gulls in the East. Most (all?) of these birds have been assumed to be, or have been identified conclusively as, the nominate form of Mew Gull (Common Gull) from Europe, which was again noted at Newburyport this year in early March and which is also found regularly in Newfoundland (one was at St. John’s in March and April this year). From New Brunswick, however, comes a report of a probable *brachyrhynchus* Mew Gull 9–10 May, and observers should be keen, as Simon Perkins writes, to photograph the primary pattern of all Common/Mew Gulls extensively, so that subspecific identity can be determined.

There are some individuals, however, whose primary patterns are atypical (Moskoff and Bevier 2003). For illustrations of such birds, see the new *Gulls of North America, Europe, and Asia* (by Klaus Malling Olsen and Hans Larsson. 2003. Princeton University Press), but beware the many errors in captions and map legends in this first printing of that text (we sympathize!). Of course, it’s important to take into account Mew Gull’s two other taxa, *kamtschatschensis* and *heinei*, both possible visitors anywhere in North America.

On a side note, our unbelievably diligent Associate Editor Louis Bevier points out that “Mew Gull” was first associated with *canus*, while the name “Short-billed Gull” belongs to *brachyrhynchus* properly. The name “Common Gull” was a later British

name intended to conjoin the two as a species, as was “Mew Gull” on this side of the pond! Perhaps we should return to these more appropriate, older, and more descriptive names, *contra* current popular use? See the extensive discussion in the new *Birds of North America* account of this species (Moskoff and Bevier 2003).

Rarer gulls in the continent’s interior were so widely reported that we can touch only on the most interesting. Glaucous-winged and Western Gulls are species for which there exists little firm evidence of vagrancy far into the interior. Saskatchewan again reported two Glaucous-winged Gulls in late April (its fifth and sixth), while an “apparent” ad. Western Gull was photographed in that province in early April. If found farther east, Glaucous-winged might be passed off as (and might be) a hybrid, whereas Western Gull is likely to go undetected among other dark-backed four-year gulls and sundry presumed hybrids. Western Gull has been detected away from marine habitats in Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and California, so interior birders should keep an eye (and mind) open for this species: there is a Chicago specimen.

Roseate Tern was reported with unusually high frequency on the coasts of New Jersey and nearby in the spring; one was even found 27 April near Rochester, New York, where the species is very rare (as is true anywhere in the continent’s interior). In spring, their appearances here, as well off the coast of North Carolina, were attributed to persistent easterly and northeasterly winds (the “best” since 1992), but the high numbers in summer were a puzzle.

The answer to the puzzle comes possibly from the New England column this season. An offshore oil spill off Rhode Island and Massachusetts 27 April put almost 100,000 gallons of fuel oil into the water and onto nearby shorelines. Common and Red-throated Loons were found oiled in some numbers. But concern ran higher for the Roseate Tern colony on Ram Island, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, and so noise-makers were set up there to discourage nesting, which might otherwise have resulted in many oiled terns. One wonders if the nonbreeding birds then wandered southward. Northeasterly winds explain a few displacements, but most birds moved by weather reorient quickly, especially terns. The numbers of Roseates hanging around beaches south of breeding range in summer are far more likely to have been non-breeders from Massachusetts, which holds most of the continent’s breeding Roseate Terns.

More difficult to account for was the “flight,” for so it was, of Least Terns in the southwestern part of the United States.

Twelve Least Terns in Arizona, almost a fifth of all reports for that state, were seen 15 April–29 May, while four in Utah spanned 15 May–1 June, and two in Nevada were noted 18 & 30 May. One wonders whether these birds were coming from western Mexico or southern California; three Elegant Terns together at Arivaca Lake, Arizona surely must have. But what of the Sandwich Tern in New Mexico at Lake Avalon 13 May?

LONGITUDINAL DISPLACEMENTS

• Birds west

We tend to think of the West receiving far more vagrants from the East than vice-versa in the spring, and, by and large, this holds true. The East has more long-distance migrants, mostly Neotropical migrants, than does the West, so the potential pool of vagrants is probably greater for the West in the first place. Because the West is so vast, however, patterns can be difficult to detect, particularly east of California, where excellent coverage and optimal “cover” in desert traps conspire to produce a plethora of vagrant records. Birds that congregate in such oases or on mudflats tend to be especially well studied and documented; this season, for instance, a small push of White-rumped Sandpipers, rare out West, made it to Arizona at Willcox 15–26 May, to Utah at Blanding Sewage Ponds 27 May, and to California at Crowley Lake 26 May and Point Reyes National Seashore 31 May and later. These were peak dates for high numbers of the species out East as well.

Essentially all other eastern birds west were passerines. There were some four Yellow-throated Vireos in southern California and four in New Mexico. Oregon had its eighth Blue-headed Vireo and first Sedge Wren, a marvelous find. An Eastern Meadowlark in Colorado in late April was the first in almost a decade there, while a female Orchard Oriole at Corn Creek, Nevada in mid-May added to the growing roster of western appearances.

“Eastern” warblers are eagerly awaited spring vagrants from the Plains westward, but this season was not an especially productive one by most accounts. Single Louisiana Waterthrushes were at Lytle, Utah 5 May and Monterey County, California 30 May; this early migrant is especially rare in the Far West. Swainson’s Warblers, easily as rare in most localities, were detected 10 and 13 May in Colorado but nowhere else to the west, as is usual. Single Worm-eating Warblers were rare in New Mexico 4 May, Wyoming 17 May, and the venerable Butter-bred Spring, California on the same day. Similarly skulky, *Oporornis* warblers out of range were scarce. Kentucky Warblers

numbered two each in Arizona (9 & 25 May), Colorado (15 & 20 May), New Mexico (25 & 26 May), and California (one wintering; 26 May), while Mourning Warblers were found in Idaho 22 May (first for the state), Oregon 18 May (seventh), and southern California 26 May, with two in Colorado (21 & 27 May). Other extralimital gems included a Yellow-throated Warbler in Nevada 18–20 May, a Prairie Warbler in Montana 21–25 April, the state's third, Oregon's ninth Black-throated Green Warbler 24 May, British Columbia's fourth Northern Parula 17 May, and single Blackburnian Warblers in New Mexico, on Southeast Farallon Island, California, and at Butterbreed Spring, all 26 May. Enough of the West Coast's eastern vagrants in spring turn up in June that the full story will be told in the next issue.

• Birds east

It does seem to be the case that eastern birds are detecting western vagrants with greater frequency (see, for instance, the lead article in this issue). The Clark's Grebe in coastal North Carolina was yet another exemplar of a western rarity unthinkable a few years ago. Another Texas Surf-bird (its eighth!) was the only western shorebird reported out of range.

Western vagrant passerines in the East seldom show patterns of occurrence in spring. Two reports of Brewer's Sparrow—one on Kent Island, New Brunswick 4 May, the other banded at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, Ontario 27 May—were among the top finds in this department this season, though reports of Baird's Sparrow from Wisconsin (6 & 8 May) and Louisiana (27 April) were outstanding as well, especially given the retiring habits of this species outside the breeding season. Lazuli Buntings have shown a weak increase in records east of range in recent years: one was in Michigan 19 May, another in Minnesota 31 May, while South Carolina had one 30 March and later. Single Vermilion Flycatchers made it to South Carolina and Ontario, while Say's Phoebes were in Ontario, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, where a Western Meadowlark was also reported. Spotted Towhees were reported from Ontario and Virginia. Monhegan Island, Maine outdid itself this spring, with the "jewel in the crown" there an Eastern Bell's Vireo 20–21 May. Ontario had the lion's share of western warblers: a Virginia's at Port Lambton 14 May, a Townsend's at Nolalu 21 May, and single Hermit Warblers 7 and 13 May.

Old World species east of range were restricted mostly to Alaska, with the startling exceptions of single Black-backed Wagtails 10 May at Inyo County, California and 21–25 April in British Columbia, which

also had a Red-necked Stint. Manitoba's first Brambling 16 March was probably left over from a late-fall or winter flight. Alaska, without Aleutian coverage in most of spring, did well by most standards, netting two each of Stonechat, Great Knot, and Common Greenshank, with a Black-winged Stilt to St. George Island and a Naumann's (Dusky) Thrush on St. Paul Island being the pearls of the season. The stilt, only the second ever recorded on this continent, was identified as of the nominate subspecies, which ranges no closer to Alaska than Korea and central China, although there are a few nesting records for several central prefectures of Honshu, Japan. Two more Black-winged Stilts were found at Shemya Island in the Aleutians 1–9 June.

NEW MEMBERS OF OUR AVIFAUNA

Florida now has nesting House Crows. This comes as no surprise to those who have followed the species' spread through the Old World: these clever birds use ocean-going vessels in their diaspora. It will be interesting to see how Florida wildlife officials deal with this latest addition to their avifauna (the fate of Canada's colonizing Eurasian Jackdaws—extermination—has not gone over well with most bird enthusiasts).

Another species likely to breed in Florida soon, Tricolored Munia (Tricolored Mannikin) may be colonizing the state from burgeoning Caribbean populations, such as appears to be the case in Honduras and Belize: see the summer's Central America regional report for details. One wonders, in light of the spread of so many exotics in North America recently, how far to the north these species could range if they do manage a toehold in Florida.

Birds' dynamic capacities to adapt to the changing environment never cease to astound. But in quiet moments, birders who have been in it for decades confide: these seem strange times. Reintroductions and introductions of bird species proceed, intentionally and otherwise, at a rate to rival that of the nineteenth century, and our best efforts to chronicle the changes in "natural" bird distribution are complicated and confounded—obliquely, *a priori*—by the traffic in tropical and temperate species alike. The juxtaposition of whistling-ducks and Red-necked Grebes only hints at the fascinating but unsettling avian biogeography of the present, the mélange of released, reintroduced, escaped, and displaced birds at so many crossroads on the continent. Trumpeter Swans, California Condors, and Whooping Cranes appear in absurd places; many of us have backyard Monk Parakeets or Eurasian Collared-Doves; Florida hosts two dozen psittacids, while the likes of

Brown Pelicans and Black-winged Stilts roam Alaska simultaneously; and we might travel great distances to connect with such sublime species as Thick-billed Parrot, Red-legged Honeycreeper, or Whooper Swan, but then drive home with the nagging wonder about these birds' provenance. Little wonder that we sometimes feel as disoriented as some of these extralimital birds appear to be. *Depaysment* might be described as the uprooting of an ordinary fact or incident from its expected context, with the effect of liberating its quality of mystery or poetic force: I imagine our own *depaysment* as I look into the Sphinx-like golden eyes of that Thick-billed Parrot.

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