

Seabirds in the Bahamian Archipelago and Adjacent Waters: Transient, Wintering, and Rare Nesting Species

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ABSTRACT

The status of most nonbreeding seabirds in the Bahamian Archipelago and its adjacent waters is poorly understood. Much of the available information is based on sight reports unsupported by specimens or photographic evidence. This paper reviews published and unpublished reports in order to assess the status and distribution in the Bahama Islands of 37 seabird species from families Diomedidae, Procellariidae, Hydrobatidae, Phaethontidae, Sulidae, Pelecanidae, Fregatidae, Laridae, and Alcidae, as well as Scolopacidae for the subfamily Phalaropodinae.

INTRODUCTION

The Bahamian Archipelago (map right) lies partially off the Atlantic coast of Florida at 27° N, about the latitude of Lake Okechobee, and stretches southeast to 21° N off central Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic) in the Greater Antilles. Politically, the islands include the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and the British Overseas Territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands. "Adjacent waters" are defined herein as the boundaries of the Bahamas Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), that is, waters within 200 nautical miles (374 km) of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas or halfway to the nearest country, whichever is shorter (Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission 2002). The boundary between the U.S. and Bahamian Exclusive Economic Zones is shown on H. O. [Hydrographic Office] Chart 27005 "Key West to San Juan" (1985). In the present paper, the same geographic construction has been applied to the waters of the

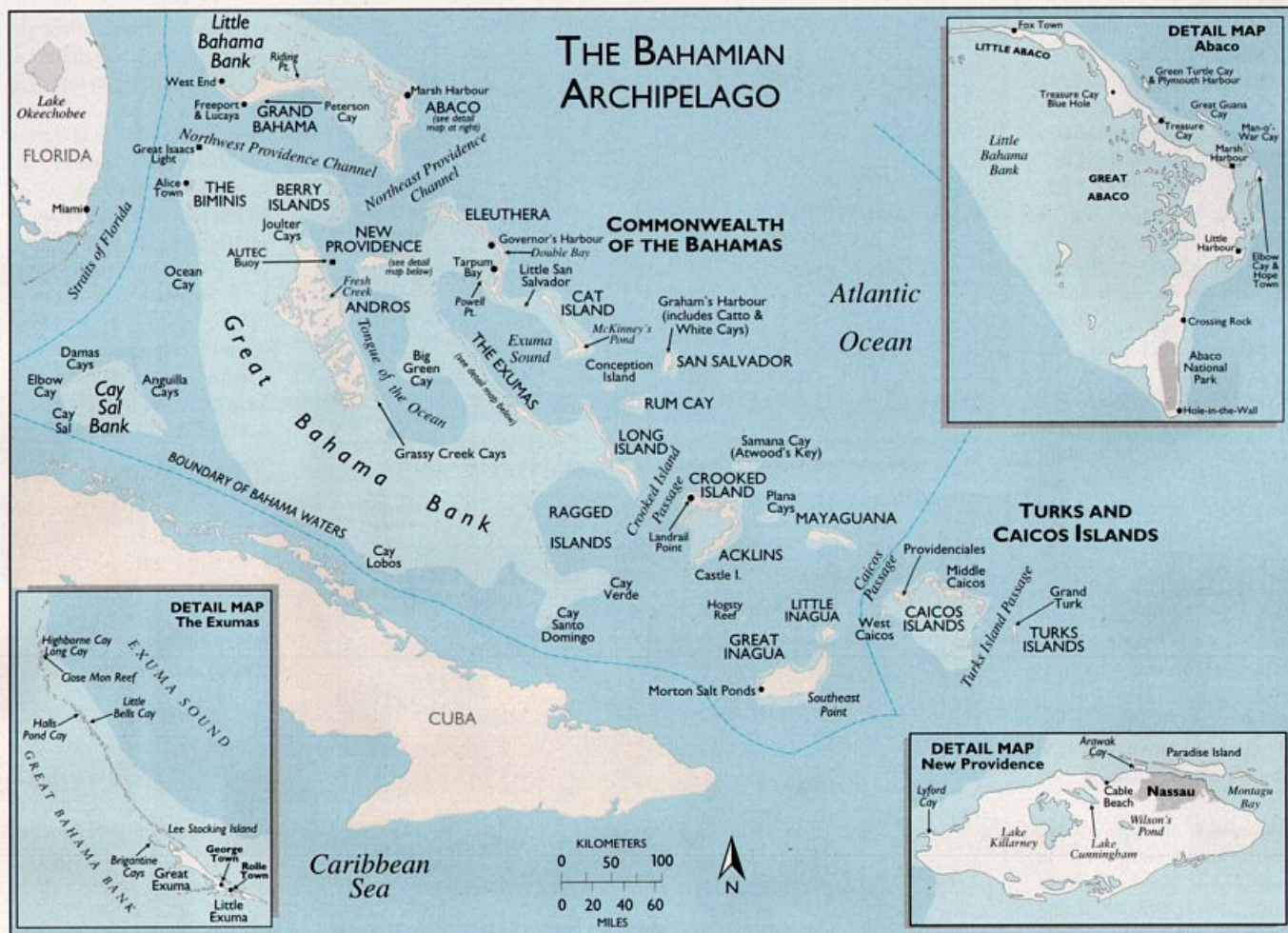
Turks and Caicos Islands. The Bahama Islands lie as close as 92 km (50 nautical miles) to the Florida coast, and so, as a practical matter, all records ca. 46 km or more east of Florida between Palm Beach and Miami are considered to be in Bahamian waters. To preserve the relative accuracy of the reports, distances are cited as given in sources, rather than converted into metric units.

The birdlife of the Bahama Islands has been studied sporadically. Landbirds have received the most attention recently, owing to increased interest in wintering Neotropical migrants. Breeding seabirds have also been fairly well documented. Sprunt (1984) provides a comprehensive report of breeding seabirds; Lee and Clark (1994) cover seabirds nesting in the Exumas; White and Lee (2000) summarize current nesting colonies; and Schreiber and Lee (2000) report on nesting seabirds throughout the West Indies. Some seabird data are contained in studies of the birds of individual islands or groups of islands, e.g., Con-

nor and Loftin (1985) and Buden (1987). The status of nonbreeding seabirds, on the other hand, has never been reported comprehensively and is sometimes described in general terms such as "reported and to be expected occasionally" (Brudenell-Bruce 1975) or "at sea among the Bahamas" (Bond 1993). The present paper compiles published and unpublished reports of transient and wintering seabirds in the region in order to provide a better understanding of their status; several rare breeding species are included herein as well. Many reports are found in relatively obscure publications or in personal archives, which has meant that even modern-day observers lack contextual information on seabirds they see in the region. Although some sight reports may be erroneous, there are so few records substantiated by physical evidence from this region that listing only those would offer an inaccurate picture of the birds' status. Reference is made to the status of several species in Florida and the West Indies in order to place



The Red-footed Booby is a very rare nester in the Bahamas. This white-morph bird was photographed nesting among Brown Boobies at White Cay, San Salvador, Bahamas 28 April 1995; the species has been present in this area from 1988 to the present but was apparently an abundant nester in the Bahamas a thousand years ago. Photograph by Aileen Bainton.



the Bahamian reports in the context of the western subtropical North Atlantic avifauna.

A clear distinction is maintained in the paper between substantiated and unsubstantiated observations; those for which specimen or photographic evidence is extant from the Bahamas or Turks and Caicos are so noted. Observations substantiated by specimen or photograph are referred to as "records," while observations without substantiation are referred to as "reports." Records and reports are summarized in table form when more than 10 credible reports and/or records are known. Sources commonly referenced are abbreviated as follows: *American Birds* (A.B.), *Audubon Field Notes* (A.F.N.), Christmas Bird Count data (C.B.C. data on-line at <<http://www.audubon.org/cbc.htm>>; year indicated is the year in which the count-period ends, as per practice at National Audubon Society), *Field Notes* (F.N.), Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee archive (F.O.S.R.C.), *North American Birds* (N.A.B.), and *Sea Swallow* (S.S.). For ease of reference, sight reports and confirmed records digested therein are indexed within the body of the paper using volume and page number only.

Seabirds that nest in the Bahama Islands and two gull species that are known to winter there regularly are not included here:

Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*), White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*), Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), Neotropic Cormorant (*P. brasilianus*), Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*), Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*), Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*), Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*), Royal Tern (*S. maxima*), Roseate Tern (*S. dougallii*), Sandwich Tern (*S. sandvicensis*), Least Tern (*S. antillarum*), Bridled Tern (*S. anaethetus*), Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*), and Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*). Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) and Red-footed Booby (*S. sula*) have nested in the Bahamas but are included because such nesting is currently restricted to a very few sites.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

albatross (Diomedidae), species undetermined
UNSUBSTANTIATED. TWO REPORTS.

There is no substantiated record of any albatross species from the Bahamas. All reports: 1 unidentified albatross, Conception Island 25 December 1997 (F.N. 52: 507–508); 1 uniden-

tified albatross, near Cave Cay, Exumas 8 June 1998 (F.N. 52: 507–508). Although neither report was sufficiently detailed to determine the species involved, the most likely would seem to be a mollymawk (*Thalassarche*) species, either Black-browed (*T. melanophris*) or Yellow-nosed Albatross (*T. chlororhynchus*), which together account for all accepted western North Atlantic Ocean records and reports of albatross species, although there are four reports of Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) from European waters (Mlodinow 1999). Florida has one report of the former and six reports, plus three records, of the latter (B. Pranty, in litt.).

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)
UNSUBSTANTIATED. ONE REPORT.

One reported from Lake Cunningham, New Providence 13 February 1988 (A.B. 42: 327–328). This report would be the southernmost in the Atlantic Ocean. There are no reports from Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Bermuda Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*)
PROBABLE BREEDER IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES.

Bones of the Bermuda Petrel were found in a

pre-Columbian midden on Crooked Island, Bahamas (Olson and Hilgartner 1982), suggesting that it bred in the Bahamas prior to discovery of the New World by Europeans (Olson 1982). On Bermuda, this petrel was an abundant nester prior to European settlement there in the early 1600s, but from the 1630s through the nineteenth century, it was thought to be extinct (Wingate et al. 1998). Two specimens were recovered in the early twentieth century, and in 1951, a few pairs were discovered breeding in the islands of Castle Roads (Murphy and Mowbray 1951). The species is now extremely rare, with 70 breeding pairs in 2003 on Bermuda (N.A.B. 57: 419–422), and is listed as Endangered (Stattersfield and Capper 2000). Its range at sea is unknown, and field identification has only recently been elucidated (Wingate et al. 1998). It has been found annually in waters off North Carolina since 1996 (Davis 2002), but there is no report from Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994; F.O.S.R.C.

archive; B. Pranty, *in litt.*). The species' current rarity would seem to make it an unlikely candidate for (re)appearance in Bahamian waters, but recent prospecting by a Bermuda Petrel in the Azorean Archipelago (N.A.B. 57: 142), which is not known to be a historical nesting area, provides some hope that similar behavior could be seen in the Bahamas.

Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)

MOST REPORTS IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY OR APRIL/MAY. PROBABLE BREEDER IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES.

Bones of what appear to be this species (but conceivably of the next species) have been found in a pre-Columbian midden on Crooked Island (Olson and Hilgartner 1982). Given the probable primitive hunting techniques of the aborigines, the presence of these bones in a midden may indicate that this species once bred in the Bahamas (Olson 1982).

The species has been described as a probable regular transient through waters north and east of the Bahamas (Haney 1987), which seems likely in light of its abundance in the nonbreeding season in the pelagic



Figure 1. This Greater Shearwater is the only individual documented by photograph in the Bahamas and vicinity; it was present near Highborne Cay 9 July 2003. Photograph by Ron McCaslin.



Figure 2. The only documented record of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel for the Bahamas was provided by this bird, which came aboard a merchant marine ship in late March 2000. Photograph by Melissa Maura.

zone east of North Carolina, which lies almost due north of nesting areas on Hispaniola (Lee 1995); direct transit between nesting areas and primary foraging areas would

recorded other than on Jamaica, where the last report is from 1879, though two were reportedly killed there in 1891 (Douglas 2000). Given the recent documentation of

take these birds through southeastern Bahamian waters and straight through the Turks and Caicos Islands. Florida had some 21 observations totaling at least 70 birds through 1992, all but two from the Atlantic side (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), and there have been minimally five observations totaling nine birds since that time, most off the Atlantic coast (F.O.S.R.C. archive; B. Pranty, *in litt.*).

From the Bahamas, there are 13 reports totaling 20 birds from 1913 to 2002, roughly evenly divided between winter and spring, with one from August (Table 1).

Jamaican Petrel
(*Pterodroma caribbaea*)
UNSUBSTANTIATED.
ONE TENTATIVE REPORT.

Bond (1936) reports seeing a "dark-phase" Black-capped Petrel west of Bimini, but no date is provided. This petrel, once thought to be a dark morph or a subspecies of Black-capped Petrel (Imber 1991, Stattersfield and Capper 2000), has never been

Table 1. Reports of Black-capped Petrel in Bahamian waters, 1913–2002.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	28° 35' N, 74° 35' W	2 Feb 1913	Nichols 1913
1	25° N, 73° W	16 Jan 1965	S.S. 18: 55–59, 19: 59
1	offshore of Fresh Creek, Andros	4 Feb 1968	A. Paterson, <i>in litt.</i>
1	ca. 60 km s. of Great Inagua	16 Apr 1985	A.B. 39: 353–354
1	within sight of Great Inagua	16 Apr 1985	A.B. 39: 353–354
3	between Conception I. and Plana Cays	11 Feb 1988	D. B. Wingate, <i>in litt.</i>
1	near Castle Island	15 Feb 1988	D. B. Wingate, <i>in litt.</i>
5	26.2° N, 76.3° W	19 Aug 1988	S.S. 38: 12
2	e. of Crossing Rocks, Abaco	29 Apr 1989	D. A. Sibley, <i>in litt.</i>
1	10 miles e. of Abaco	29 Feb 2000	N.A.B. 54: 223–225
1	8 miles e. of Elbow Cay, Abaco	21 Apr 2001	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1	near Tabletop Seamount (20 miles ne. of Abaco)	11 May 2001	N.A.B. 55: 370–371, Bracey 2001
1	8–32 km e. of Hope Town, Abaco	16 May 2002	N.A.B. 56: 372–374

numerous (>100) records of dark-morph Herald Petrel (*P. arminjoniana*) from the pelagic Atlantic waters of North America (Brinkley and Patteson 1998a), as well as a possibly prospecting individual observed at Culebra, Puerto Rico (Gochfeld et al. 1988), any sight report of *P. caribbaea* must be regarded critically.

Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*)

FAIRLY COMMON VISITOR FROM LATE SPRING THROUGH FALL, MOSTLY MAY THROUGH OCTOBER, WITH TWO WINTER REPORTS.

The relative abundance of this species in the region has been known to fishermen and seagoing naturalists for some time—as intimated in published comments such as "...[i]nquiry reveals that regular, but unreported observations have occurred in the past" (Abramson 1961)—and indeed, Florida fisherman looking for schools of tuna often search for flocks of Cory's Shearwaters, which regularly forage above the feeding fish. The species is large enough to show up on sophisticated new boat-radar systems, so that commercial- and sport-fishermen can now search out tuna by looking for the shearwaters' radar signatures (J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.). Aerial surveys of a study area east of Merritt Island, Florida that overlaps the northern end of the Bahamian EEZ found 145 Cory's Shearwaters 7–17 October 1980, some of which were in the area of overlap (Fritts et al. 1983). Stevenson and Anderson (1994) list several late-summer and autumn reports of hundreds of this species off Florida's Atlantic coast, but no distances from shore are listed. Beyond these, there are only 13 reports of 20+ birds from the Bahamas (Table 2), but there are many unpublished sightings of this species from whale researchers east of Abaco between Hope Town and Hole-in-the-Wall in February/March and July/August (T. Pusser, pers. comm.).

Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*)

ONE RECORD AND FIVE REPORTS. OCCASIONAL SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER VISITOR, MARCH THROUGH JULY.

Cory (1890) wrote: "I have never taken this Shearwater in the Bahamas, but on several occasions saw what I believed to be this species while cruising among the islands." Greater Shearwater should be relatively common in late spring east of the Bahamas, as there is heavy annual passage of the species past Bermuda and through the Gulf Stream at the lat-

Table 2. Reports of Cory's Shearwater in Bahamian waters, other than those detected by aerial survey, 1964–2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	25 mi. e. of Miami Beach	25 May 1961	A.F.N. 15: 402–405
?	off Grand Bahama	2 Jun 1964	Bond 1965
1	24° N, 80.25° W	31 Jul 1967	S.S. 22: 41
3	between Florida and Bimini	19–20 Sep 1988	P. W. Smith, <i>in litt.</i>
2	Northwest Providence Channel	8 May 1995	F.N. 49: 985–986
2	25° 35' N, 75° 36' W	12 Jun 1994	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Rompidas Reef, Cay Sal Bank	Jul 1994	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
3	3 mi. e. of Cave Cay, Exumas	22 Jun 1997	F.N. 51: 1058–1059
1	between Little and Great Inagua	9 May 1999	N.A.B. 53: 333–335
?	e. of Abaco	20 May 2000	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
2	e. of Abaco	22 Dec 2000	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
3 (ph.)	2 mi. off Guana Cay, Abaco	winter 2000/2001	N.A.B. 55: 236–238
1	Exuma Sound	17–18 May 2003	N.A.B. 57: 419–422

itude of the Carolinas between late May and June (Brinkley and Patteson 1998b, Dobson 2002), but Bahamian records are surprisingly few, with large counts being unreported in print. Allen (1905) noted many on a voyage from New York to Nassau in June 1904, but only one was seen on the last day of that voyage, 27 June, a bird presumably in Bahamian waters. This is a possible source of Riley's (1905a) listing of this species at New Providence, but Bond (1966) later considered this report "unsatisfactory."

All observations: 1, 6 mi. s. of Samana Cay 13 May 1979 (A. Sprunt, *in litt.*); 2, between Little San Salvador and the s. end of Eleuthera 26 May 1991 (A. Sprunt, *in litt.*); 1, near Close Mon Reef (off s. end of Long Cay), Exumas 10 April 1996 (Bithorn 1996);

1, 5 miles e. of Great Guana Cay, Abaco 2 March 2001 (N.A.B. 55: 370–372); 1, e. of Hope Town, Abaco 16 May 2002 (N.A.B. 56: 372–374); 1 (ph.), near Highborne Cay 9 July 2003 (Figure 1), the last the only confirmed record.

Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED. POSSIBLE RARE EARLY-WINTER VISITOR AND SPRING TRANSIENT.

As for Greater Shearwater, this species should be encountered regularly east of the Bahama Islands during northward migration in spring, but there are only circa 60 reports from Florida through 1992 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994) and from the Bahamas only three reports: 2, 10–25 miles e. of Miami 4 December 1952 (Castenholz 1954); 1, Exuma Sound, undated (Bond 1993); 2, 5 miles s. of Grand Bahama in early April 1997 (D. Porter, *in litt.*). This species is probably less likely to be seen in Bahamian waters in autumn, as the southbound migration apparently takes place largely in the eastern North Atlantic (Harrison 1985). Most Caribbean Sea records come from the period late May through July (Raffaele et al. 1998), as is true in the Gulf Stream off the Carolinas (J. B. Patteson, pers. comm.).

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

ONE RECORD AND ONE REPORT.

A Manx Shearwater banded at Bardsey I., Wales 14 May 1986 was found oiled and dead near Little



Figure 3. This second-calendar-year Northern Gannet was brought in to the Rand Nature Center, Grand Bahama in October 1999. Photograph by Bruce Hallett.

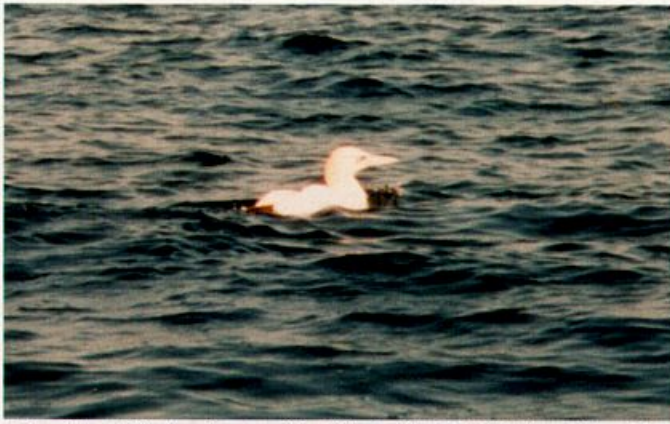


Figure 4. An adult Northern Gannet near Man-o'-War Cay, Abaco 12 April 1996 is one of few adults recorded in the Bahamas; most reports are of subadult birds. Photograph by Marianne Albury.

Harbour, Abaco 17 April 1989 (N.A.B. 57: 272–274). The only report in our region is of 22 probable Manx Shearwaters mixed in flocks with 85 Audubon's Shearwaters between Conception Island and Samana Cay 11 February 1988 (D. B. Wingate, *in litt.*). A report of subfossil remains of this species on Crooked I. was in error (Wetmore 1938, Olson and Hilgartner 1982). As is the case with Greater and Sooty Shearwaters, this species apparently passes northward mostly to the east of the Bahamas in spring migration (Amos 1991, Lee and Haney 1996) and

should be observed during the period from late February through March and again in May and early June in pelagic waters of the Bahamas; transients moving from the North Atlantic to wintering areas off southern South America are also likely to be seen in the vicinity of the Bahamas. Through 1992, Florida had circa 20 reports and five specimens (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).



Figure 5. This Pomarine Jaeger was found at Elbow Cay, Abaco in April 1996. The species is relatively common at sea in the late fall and winter in the region. Photograph by Anthony White.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*)
FAIRLY COMMON SPRING TRANSIENT, LESS
COMMON SUMMER RESIDENT.

Records and reports of this species in Bahamian waters extend well back to the middle nineteenth century. In May 1859, Bryant (1859) saw Wilson's Storm-Petrels about 60 miles north of Abaco, and by the next day (heading northward), the species had become very numerous. He caught about 20, some of them presumably in Bahamian waters (Bryant 1859). A female collected at Highborne Cay, Exumas 15 May 1879 is now at the Field Museum, Chicago (Bond 1956, Buden 1992). Cory (1890) noted that "[t]he Wilson's Petrel becomes abundant a short distance off the coast, but I have never observed it very near the land. While cruising among the islands, numbers of these Petrels followed in the wake of the vessel, only leaving us upon our near approach to shore."

In the early twentieth century, Riley (1905b) wrote that "small black petrels followed the vessel in some numbers from the time we passed out of Chesapeake Bay 1 June 1903 until after we sighted the Nassau light 17 June and on the return voyage, but in smaller numbers, soon after we left Abaco 23 July until we sighted the [Virginia] Capes." In the same year, Allen (1905) wrote: "After entering upon the Gulf Stream and the warmer waters to the south, only one or two single [Wilson's Storm-Petrels] were seen, the last being in the lat 28 deg. N. Cory, while cruising among the Bahamas at an earlier time of the year, found petrels abundant at a short distance off the coast, which might indicate that the birds were at that time passing through the latitude of the Bahamas and

Table 3. Reports and records of Wilson's Storm-Petrel in Bahamian waters, 1964–2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
?	off Grand Bahama	2 Jun 1964	Bond 1965
1	central Exumas	late Apr 1966	Andreae 1966
3	at sea s. of Acklins	10 Mar 1976	Buden 1987
"a number"	near Little San Salvador	22 April 1979	Attrill 1979, Norton 1993
1	20 mi. e. of Long I.	5 May 1981	A.B. 35: 981
1	Exuma Sound, 10 mi. w. of Cat I.	10 May 1984	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
"flock"	23° N, 74.5° W	9–11 May 1986	S.S. 36: 32–35
15–25	from 4 or 5 miles e. of Highborne Cay to Powell Pt., Eleuthera	12 May 1986	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1 (ph.)	w. side of Little San Salvador	15 May 1986	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Exuma Sound	16 May 1986	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Exuma Sound	17 May 1986	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1	near Great Isaac Light (n. of Bimini)	28 Apr 1987	A.B. 41: 493–494
90+	off Crossing Rocks, Abaco	29 Apr 1989	D. A. Sibley, <i>in litt.</i>
30	25° 35' N, 79° 33' W	12 Jun 1994	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
1	AUTEC Buoy, Tongue of the Ocean	19 May 1998	A. Bainton, <i>in litt.</i>
1	off Treasure Cay, Abaco	10 May 1999	N.A.B. 53: 333–335
6	off Elbow Cay, Abaco	21 Apr 2001	N.A.B. 55: 370–371
1	Tabletops Seamount	9 May 2001	N.A.B. 55: 370–371
1 (ph.)	off Little Exuma	9 May 2001	N.A.B. 55: 370–371
1	near Highborne Cay, Exumas	19 May 2001	N.A.B. 55: 370–371
3	e. of Hope Town, Abaco	16 May 2002	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>

by July, when we made our trip, the main flight had passed still further northward."

Almost a half-century later, Moore (1951) summarized bird observations from the Woods Hole vessel *Atlantis* logged during brief visits over an unspecified number of years (presumably 1940 through 1950). The data are presented in five-degree squares, including two squares covering the Bahamas and Turks & Caicos (defined by the ranges 25° to 30° N, 75° to 80° W and 20° to 25° N, 70° to 75° W). There was only one sighting January through March, 19 in April, and 155 in May. Even allowing for the greater number of observation days in April and May (eight in January, 12 in February, one in March, 22 in April, and 20 in May), these data show an increase in the number of Wilson's Storm-Petrels in Bahama waters in April and May. Bond (1956) gave 9 May–1 July as the range of dates that the species was found around New Providence.

Reports and records from the past 50 years (Table 3: 21 reports of ≥ 163 birds) confirm earlier observers' impressions of this species as a very common spring and less-common summer visitor to Bahamian waters, and this impression is further supported by observations of whale researchers in the vicinity of the Abacos, who see the species uncommonly in summer (T. Pusser, pers. comm.).

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED. SIX SPRING REPORTS.

All Bahamian reports of Leach's Storm-Petrels have been made between mid-March and mid-May, a time when many species of tubenose are moving northward into the North Atlantic. Many of Florida's circa 50 reports through 1992 also come from this spring period off the Atlantic coast (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but as Lee (1995) points out, the numbers recorded there and off North Carolina "are too small to account for the large western North Atlantic population of this species," and he suspects a migration route "well to the east" of the western wall of the Gulf Stream, "possibly in the mid-Atlantic." Raffaele et al. (1998) indicate that most Caribbean reports are from "November to June," but no seasonal breakdown is provided.

All reports: 2, off Freeport, Grand Bahama



Figure 6. The Bahamas' only documented record of Parasitic Jaeger was provided by this specimen at Lyford Cay, New Providence 27 February 2003. Past reports of this species in the region do not always rule out the similar Long-tailed Jaeger. Photograph by Lynn Gape.

28 April 1966 (Bond 1967); 3, at sea near Great Inagua 12 March 1976 (Buden 1987); 3+, moving n. 100 yards offshore of Crossing Rocks, Abaco 29 April 1989 (D. A. Sibley, *in litt.*); 1, off Musha Cay, Exumas 21 April 2001 (N.A.B. 55: 370–371); 1, near Tabletops Seamount 11 May 2001 (Bracey 2001; N.A.B. 55: 370–371); 1, e. of Hope Town, Abaco 16 May 2002 (N.A.B. 56: 372–374).

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

TWO SPRING REPORTS AND ONE RECORD.

This species has been photographed once in March and sighted twice in May in Bahamian waters. To the north, where it is relatively well studied, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel arrives in Gulf Stream waters off North Carolina in May and June and is very rarely

detected after August (Lee 1995, Brinkley and Patteson 1998b) outside the context of tropical storms. Florida's circa 15 published reports of the species through 1992 fall mostly into this window, with a few earlier (April) and a few later (October) (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). There are a few reports for Cuba and Antigua in the Caribbean (Raffaele et al. 1998). It seems likely, based on data from adjacent areas, that future Bahamian observations would be made in the warmer months.

All observations: 10–15, north Exuma Sound 12 May 1986 (A. Sprunt, *in litt.*); 1, on board container vessel sailing from Florida to Nassau late March 2000 (Figure 2; M. Maura, *in litt.*); 1, near Tabletops Seamount 11 May 2001 (N.A.B. 55: 370–371). It is uncertain whether the bird found on the container vessel in March 2000 came on board the ship in Bahamian or U. S. waters.

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED.
SEVERAL REPORTS.

One reported at 26° 30' N, 74° 46' W 25 June 1979 (S.S. 30: 58) is considered valid; however, a report of three off Abaco 27 March 1937 (Holmes 1939) was questioned by Bond (1956), as Holmes did not mention White-tailed Tropicbird in the area or from waters around Bermuda. The comment that Red-billed Tropicbird is "reliably reported ranging north to the Bahamas, at least to latitude 23° N in the nonbreeding season" (Lee et al. 1981) suggests other unpublished reports as well. Florida had circa 10 observations of the



Figure 7. This first-winter Black-headed Gull was found at Cable Beach, New Providence 20 January 1999. Photograph by Brandi Mansfield.

Table 4. Reports and records of Northern Gannet in Bahamian waters, 1969–2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1 (banded)	Grand Bahama	Apr 1969	Buden 1991
1 juv.	Little Stirrup Cay, Berry Islands	5–6 Jan 1984	A.B. 38: 361–362
2 subads.	e. of Hall's Pond Cay, Exumas	7 May 1988	Buden and Sprunt 1993
1 imm.	Northeast Providence Channel	7 May 1995	F.N. 49: 985–986
2	Northwest Providence Channel	8 May 1995	F.N. 49: 985–986
1	New Providence	30 Dec 1995	C.B.C.
1 ad. (ph.)	off Man-o'-War Cay, Abaco	12 Apr 1996	M. Albury, <i>in litt.</i> , fide C. Wardle (Fig. 4)
1 subad. (ph.)	Grand Bahama	Oct 1999	B. Hallett, <i>in litt.</i> (Fig. 3)
1 (ph.)	Rose Island off New Providence	14 May 2000	M. Maura, <i>in litt.</i>
1	West End, Grand Bahama	14 Dec 2000	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Grand Bahama	21 Mar 2003	N.A.B. 57: 419–422
1	Little Bell I., Exumas	29 Apr 2003	N.A.B. 57: 419–422

species, including at least three specimens, through 1992 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), and there have been six additional records and reports since that time, three of them on the state's Atlantic coast (E.O.S.R.C. archive; B. Pranty, *in litt.*).

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*)

FORMER BREEDER IN THE SOUTHERN BAHAMA ISLANDS, COMMON IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES. NOW A RARE VISITOR.

Bones of this species were found in a pre-Columbian midden on Grand Turk (Carlson 1999). In the nineteenth century, some 20 pairs of this species nested on Cay Santo Domingo south of the Ragged Islands, documented there 10 April 1859 (Bryant 1859), and three specimens were collected there (Bangs and Penard 1930). There was no sign of any on Cay Santo Domingo on 22 June 1998 (White et al. 1999), and the species is described as a "vagrant" to both Turks Islands and Caicos Islands (Bradley 1995).

In modern times, only five reports of 9–10 individuals are known for the Bahamian Archipelago. All reports: 1, 9 miles e. of Cay Verde 1 & 2 May 1979 (A. Sprunt, *in litt.*); 5, off Peterson Cay, Grand Bahama 28 April 1987 (A.B. 41: 493–494); 1, at sea, e. of Turks Islands December 1978 (Buden 1987); 1, White Cay, San Salvador 31 May 1995, and 2 adults noted displaying there 12 June 1998 (F.N. 52: 507–508).

Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*)

COMMON IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES, NOW A RARE BREEDER (ONE OR TWO PAIRS) ON CAYS IN GRAHAM'S HARBOUR, SAN SALVADOR.

This species was apparently much more

numerous in the Bahamas in centuries past. It was found in a midden on Grand Turk dated approximately 750 AD to 1170 AD (Keegan 1997), along with bones of the preceding species, but there was no bone from Brown Booby, which has replaced them as the most common booby in the region (Carlson 1999).

In modern times, there are several reports and records of breeding birds. In the early twentieth century, the species was noted to have nested once on "Atwood's Key" (Samana Cay) (Bent 1922). In more recent times, all other nesting activity has been documented on cays in Graham's Harbour, San Salvador: a pair was observed on White Cay, with nesting suspected in May 1988 (White et al. 1996); 2 adults, 1 subadult, and 1 chick were photographed on White Cay 28 April 1995 (Frontispiece photograph; F.N. 49: 985–986; White et al. 1996); a pair nested at White Cay from January through May 1997

(F.N. 51: 809–810, 932–933); two nesting pairs were photographed on White Cay 12 June 1998 (F.N. 52: 507–508); and a pair comprised of a dark morph and a light morph nested on Catto Cay, Graham's Harbour 26–30 April 2002 (N.A.B. 56: 372–374).

There is only one at-sea report of the species: one rode a yacht overnight 27–28 December 2002 from near New Providence to Pipe Creek, Exumas (N.A.B. 57: 272–274).

Northern Gannet (*Sula bassanus*)

UNCOMMON WINTER AND SPRING VISITOR, DECEMBER THROUGH MAY, PRIMARILY IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL BAHAMAS.

This species is confirmed by both photograph and banding return in the northern Bahamas but is unconfirmed elsewhere, including as a "vagrant" to Providenciales (Bradley 1995). In all, there are 12 observations of 14 individuals, four of which are substantiated (Table 4). In Florida, Northern Gannet is sometimes abundant off the Atlantic coast in the northern part of the state, but the species is "generally rare to uncommon" off the state's southern coasts (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

American White Pelican

(*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED. THREE SIGHT REPORTS.

Though quite numerous in Florida, chiefly in the nonbreeding season (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), this species is rather rare in the Caribbean Basin, known mostly from Cuba and Puerto Rico (Raffaele et al. 1998). None of the three Bahamian reports of the species is satisfactory, although all three are likely correct.

All reports: 1, Bimini 4–8 March 1947 (? year uncertain) (Friedman 1948); 1 (or



Figure 8. A first-winter Bonaparte's Gull (here) at Marsh Harbour, Abaco was accompanied by two adults 28 December 1983. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

more?), Joulter's Cay (n. of Andros) 11 June (year not given) (Brudenell-Bruce 1975); 2, Great Inagua 26 June 1980 (Bond 1982).

Red-necked Phalarope
(*Phalaropus lobatus*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED. RARE TRANSIENT,
WITH FIVE REPORTS.

As with many species of seabird that are well documented as transients through the waters of the Southern Atlantic Bight and Florida but not in the Bahamas, Red-necked Phalarope has been detected only rarely off the Bahamas and is not yet confirmed in the region. In Florida, the species is considered a "very rare migrant and winter resident [...] sometimes seen in numbers offshore," and

the same is probably true of the Bahamian status.

All reports: 1, New Providence 11–12 October 1959 (Brudenell-Bruce 1975); 4, beyond the coastal shelf between Florida and Bimini 19–20 September 1988 (P. W. Smith, *in litt.*); 10+, Ocean Bight, Great Exuma November 1995 (B. Minns, *in litt.*); 20, Rolle Town, Great Exuma January 1997 (B. Smith, *in litt.*). It is unclear whether a report from Little Exuma 3 April (year unpublished) refers to this species or to Wilson's Phalarope, *P. tricolor* (Brudenell-Bruce 1975). A report of 350 "far offshore" from Cocoa Beach, Florida in mid-October 1955 (Cruikshank 1980) lacks data on location as well as documentation that would distin-

guish this species from the next.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

VERY RARE TRANSIENT. ONE RECORD
AND ONE REPORT.

This species is scarcely known in Bahamian waters, in stark contrast to Florida's 80+ published reports through 1992, some with counts in the high hundreds (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). More surveys of northern and northwestern Bahamian waters in fall and winter would probably clarify the species' status in the region.

All observations: 1 (adult; ph.), Morton Salt Ponds, Great Inagua 4–7 March 1999 (ph. K. Karlson; Karlson, *in litt.*); 1, Andros 17 May 1968 (year uncertain), considered "questionable" by Bond (1969).

Pomarine Jaeger

(*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

FAIRLY COMMON WINTER AND SPRING
VISITOR, WITH TWO FALL REPORTS.

As is the case off Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), this species is the most common (or commonly identified) jaeger in pelagic waters. In addition to a specimen record and the 25 reports of up to 48 individuals presented in Table 5, Woods Hole personnel on the *Atlantis* observed three Pomarine Jaegers in January, 18 in February, 19 in April, and four in May in the five degree squares delimited by the coordinates 25° to 30° N, 75° to 80° W and 20° to 25° N, 70° to 75° W, all presumably between 1940 and 1950 (Moore 1951). There are also tentative reports or reports lacking basic documentation: a probable dark-morph Pomarine was noted in company with five Parasitic Jaegers 35–40 miles east of Miami, within sight of the Biminis 24 April 1953 (Castenholz 1954), and Bond (1976) reports seeing "several" in the Gulf Stream north of Cuba and west of the Bahamas (Bond 1976), date unspecified. More attention to pelagic waters would probably produce many more records of this species, particularly in the late autumn (late October and November).

Parasitic Jaeger

(*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

UNCOMMON WINTER AND SPRING
VISITOR, WITH ONE FALL REPORT.

As for the previous species, the presence of Parasitic Jaeger in the Bahamas is confirmed by specimen evidence, but no photographic documentation is known. Although Bond (1993) gave the status of Parasitic Jaeger as "not uncommon in the Gulf Stream north of western Cuba and west of the Bahamas," fewer reports of this species are known than for Pomarine (as is

Table 5. All reports and records of Pomarine Jaegers in Bahamian waters, 1945–2002.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1 light	150 miles e. of Abaco	25 Mar 1945	Starrett and Dixon 1947
1 light	18 miles e. of San Salvador	26 Mar 1945	Starrett and Dixon 1947
4*	10–25 miles e. of Miami	4 Dec 1952	Castenholz 1954
1	S. of Southeast Pt., Great Inagua	29 Feb 1964	S.S. 18: 29
1	25° N, 73° W	16 Jan 1965	S.S. 18: 55–59
1 light	28° N, 73° W	4 Mar 1965	S.S. 18: 55–59
1 light	25° N, 76° W	5 Mar 1965	S.S. 18: 55–59
1	off Freeport, Grand Bahama	28 Apr 1966	Bond 1967
1 dark	off Crooked I.	27 Oct 1981	A.B. 36: 223–224
2	between Port Everglades and Grand Bahama	1 Mar 1982	A.B. 36: 843–846
1	26° 35' N, 74° 34' W	19 Apr 1982	S.S. 33: 62
1	between Ft. Lauderdale and Little Stirrup Cay	22 Dec 1983	A.B. 38: 361–362
1	between Ft. Lauderdale and Little Stirrup Cay	5 Jan 1984	A.B. 38: 361–362
1	Little San Salvador	12 Feb 1984	G. Oliver, <i>in litt.</i>
2 light	25 miles sw. of Grand Bahama	2 May 1987	A.B. 41: 493–494
5	between Florida and Bimini	19–20 Sep 1988	P. W. Smith, <i>in litt.</i>
1 dark	s. of Little Bell I., Exumas	31 May 1991	Lee and Clark 1994
2 ad.	3 miles se. of Porgy's Rock, e. of New Providence	9 May 1992	A. Sprunt, <i>in litt.</i>
8	Ft. Lauderdale to Freeport	7 Mar 1993	A.B. 47: 457
1	"one hour out" of Freeport	5 May 1993	A.B. 47: 457
1 light	Elbow Cay, Abaco [specimen now at Florida Museum of Natural History]	Apr 1996	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i> (Fig. 5)
1	Sandy Cay, Exumas	4 Nov 2000	W. Hayes, <i>in litt.</i>
3	off Guana Cay, Abaco	23 Feb 2001	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1 light	Abaco	23 Apr & 1 May 2002	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
3	Abaco	17 Mar 2003	N.A.B. 57: 419–422
3	17 km. w. of Great Inagua	30 Apr 2003	N.A.B. 57: 419–422

*2 imm., 2 light ad., 1 dark ad.; some of these were possibly in Florida waters

Table 6. All reports and records of Bonaparte's Gull from the Bahamas, 1876-2002.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	Long I.	8 Oct 1876	Moore 1877, Cory 1890
1	Grand Bahama	late Dec 1962	Gantz 1963
1	Andros	22 Nov 1973	Bond 1974
?	New Providence	7-20 Mar 1962	Brudnell-Bruce 1975, Bond 1963
2	San Salvador	2 Dec 1973	Miller 1978, Bond 1976, 1980
2+	Double Bay, Eleuthera	22 Jan-7 Feb 1977	Connor and Loftin 1985
3* (ph.)	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	28 Dec 1983	A.B. 38: 361-362 (Fig. 8)
1 ad. (ph.)	Hope Town, Abaco	1 Jan 1984	A.B. 38: 361-362
1	Great Guana Cay, Abaco	Jan 1996	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i>
1	San Salvador	21-22 Jan 1997	F.N. 51: 809-810
1 (dead, ph.)	Landrail Pt., Crooked I.	3 May 1997	N.A.B. 51: 932-933
1	Treasure Cay, Abaco	18 Jan 1999	N.A.B. 53: 214-215
1	Nassau	5 Dec 2000	N.A.B. 54: 223-224
1	Treasure Cay, Abaco	22 Dec 2002	N.A.B. 57: 272-274
6	Treasure Cay, Abaco	28 Feb 2003	N.A.B. 57: 272-274

* = 2 ads., 1 imm.

Table 7. All reports and records of Lesser Black-backed Gull from the Bahamas, 1985-2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	Green Turtle Cay, Abaco	6 Feb 1985	A.B. 39: 214-215
1-2	Plymouth Harbour, Green Turtle Cay, Abaco	19 Feb 1994	F.N. 48: 253-254
1	Arawak Cay, New Providence	19 Oct 1994	A. W. White
3	New Providence	29 Dec 1994	C.B.C.
1	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	27 Feb 1996	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	28 Nov 1996	R. Odear, <i>in litt.</i>
2	Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera	3-4 Dec 1997	A. W. White
3	New Providence	27 Dec 1997	C.B.C.
1-3	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	16-21 Jan 1999	N.A.B. 53: 214-215
1	West End, Grand Bahama	15 Feb 1999	N.A.B. 53: 214-215
1-2	North Bimini	24-28 Apr 1999	White et al. 2000
1-2	Nassau	5-19 Dec 1999	N.A.B. 54: 223-224
40	Freeport dump, Grand Bahama	13 Dec 2000	N.A.B. 55: 236-238
1+	Nassau	18 Dec 2000	N.A.B. 55: 236-238
14 (vt.)	Freeport dump, Grand Bahama	26 Jan 2001	S. Mlodinow, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Treasure Cay, Abaco	3 Feb 2001	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Chub Cay, Berry I.	Mar 2001	S. Stiles, <i>in litt.</i>
8	New Providence	16 Dec 2001	C.B.C.
50	Freeport dump, Grand Bahama	19 Dec 2001	C.B.C.
3	New Providence	15 Dec 2002	C.B.C.
2	West End, Grand Bahama	17 Dec 2002	N.A.B. 57: 272-274
1	Freeport, Grand Bahama	18 Dec 2002	N.A.B. 57: 272-274
1	Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera	7 Jan 2003	N.A.B. 57: 272-274

the case in Florida [Stevenson and Anderson 1994]), but there are several counts higher than the highest count for that species. Shipboard surveys by Woods Hole personnel detected fewer Parasitics than Pomarines in the five-degree squares delimited by the coordinates 25° to 30° N, 75° to 80° W and 20° to 25° N, 70° to 75° W: three Parasitic Jaegers were noted in January, two in February, and one in April, presumably between 1940 and 1950 (Moore 1951). There is one contemporaneous mention of a probable Parasitic Jaeger by Castenholz (1954), a bird seen 23 April 1953 some 35-40 miles east of Miami. As with other *Stercorarius*, identification of many individuals is problematic, and observers often qualify identifications with "probable" or "possible" in the case of the jaegers.

All reports and records: 5 (2 light-morph adults, three immatures), within sight of the Biminis 24 April 1953 (Castenholz 1954); 2 (one dark, one light) off Fox Town, Little Abaco 17 June 1972 (A. Paterson, *in litt.*); 12-14, between Port Everglades and Grand Bahama 1 March 1982 (A.B. 36: 843-846); 9, between Fort Lauderdale and Little Stirrup Cay 22 December 1983 (A.B. 38: 361-362); one (light adult), 25 miles southwest of Grand Bahama 2 May 1987 (A.B. 41: 493-494); 1, near Brigantine Cays, Exumas February 1988 (Buden 1992); 1, beyond the coastal shelf between Florida and Bimini 19-20 September 1988 (P. W. Smith, *in litt.*); 1, Fresh Creek, Andros 25 October 1998 (N.A.B. 53: 110-111); 1 (moribund light-morph subadult), Lyford Cay, New Providence 27 February 2002 (N.A.B. 56: 235-237). This last bird was prepared as a specimen and is now in the collection of the Bahamas National Trust (Figure 6).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

UNSUBSTANTIATED. REPORTED APRIL, MAY, AND POSSIBLY DECEMBER.

The migration of this species between nesting areas and wintering grounds in the Falkland Current off South America should make it a regular, if uncommon, species in both autumn and spring, although passage through the latitude of the Bahamas may be rapid. Some 38 reports from Florida through 1992 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), plus nine records and reports (totaling 13 birds) since that time (F.O.S.R.C. archive, B. Pranty, *in litt.*), indicate that this is that state's rarest jaeger, as appears to be the case in Bahamian waters, where four reports, none confirmed, are known.

There are also several other reports of "probable" Long-tailed Jaegers, included here for the sake of completeness.

The only Bahamian reports thus far include three birds noted in April and one in May between 1940 and 1950, in the five-degree squares defined by the coordinates 25° to 30°N, 75° to 80° W and 20° to 25°N, 70° to 75° W (Moore 1951). In addition, there is an undated sight record of the species considered tentative off Providenciales (Sanderson 1982), and Castenholz (1954) reported an adult light morph 10–25 miles e. of Miami 4 December 1952 (possibly in Florida waters), as well as 2 probable Long-tailed Jaegers 9 December 1952, 25 miles e. of Miami, thus near the boundary of U. S. waters.

Winter reports of this species from the western North Atlantic are very few, all of single birds: West Palm Beach C.B.C. 24 December 1932 (C.B.C. archive); Continental Shelf C.B.C. 20 December 1984 [off North Carolina at 35° 15' N, 74° 40' W] (Lee 1987); Point Judith, Washington County, Rhode Island 15 January 2001 (Hunt 2001). None of these reports is documented with specimen or photograph. The status of this species north of the equator is not well known for the colder months (Lee 1987).

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

RARE WINTER VISITOR, WITH THREE RECORDS AND ONE REPORT.

The rarity of this species in the Bahamas is in keeping with its status in the northern Caribbean (e.g., Cuba [Garrido and Kirkconnell 2000]) and Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), although the species is said to be regular in San Juan harbor, Puerto Rico (Raffaele 1989).

All observations: 1 (adult, ph.), Grand Turk 30 December 1985 through at least 8 March 1986 (1986 C.B.C.; G. H. Rosenberg, *in litt.*); 1 (first-basic), Marsh Harbour, Abaco 17 February 1988 (W. Petersen, *in litt.*, *vide* B. Hallett); 1 (first-basic, ph.), Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera 14–18 November 1996 (White 1997; N.A.B. 51: 128–130); 1 (first-basic, ph.), Cable Beach, New Providence 20–21 January 1999 (N.A.B. 53: 214–215; Figure 7).

Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*)

UNCOMMON FALL AND WINTER VISITOR, OCTOBER THROUGH MARCH.

In addition to the 12 reports of 19 individuals and three records involving five individuals detailed in Table 6, the species is reported from Pine Cay, Caicos Islands (Sanderson 1982, Bradley 1995), and there is mention by Bond (1971) of February and/or March reports of the species from New Providence.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

UNCOMMON TO LOCALLY COMMON FALL, WINTER, AND SPRING VISITOR (OCTOBER TO APRIL) IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL BAHAMAS.

Through the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth, this species was unknown in the Bahamas, first being recorded only in 1985 (Table 7). Since that

time, a steady increase in records has been documented throughout much of North America (Post and Lewis 1995a, 1995b), and records from the Bahamas have kept pace with continental records, so that there are now more than 20 records and reports for the region (Table 7). The vast majority of the circa 143 individuals (duplication likely) reported thus far has been from the landfill at Freeport, Grand

Table 8. All reports and records of Great Black-backed Gull from the Bahamian Archipelago, 1981–2002.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1 (dead)	San Salvador	Jan 1981	Bond 1982
1	Lee Stocking I.	9–20 Feb 1989	Dunham et al. 1990
2	Green Turtle Cay, Abaco	6 Feb 1985	A.B. 39: 214–215
2	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	19 Nov 1990	A.B. 45: 500
2	Baker's Bay, Abaco	Dec 1994	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Abaco	8 Oct 1995	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Parrot Cay, Abaco area	1–3 Jan 1996	R. Patterson, <i>in litt.</i>
1 (ph.)	West End, Grand Bahama	13 Feb 1997	F.N. 51: 809–810
1	Grand Bahama	5 Nov 1997	F.N. 52: 132–133
1	Nassau	2 Mar 1999	N.A.B. 53: 214–215
1	Nassau	5–19 Dec 1999	N.A.B. 54: 223–224
1	Abaco	7 Dec 1999	N.A.B. 54: 223–224
2	New Providence	17 Dec 2000	C.B.C.
1 (vt.)	West End, Grand Bahama	2 Feb & 21 Mar 2001	N.A.B. 55: 236–238, N.A.B. 55: 370–371
1	Paradise I.	6 Oct 2001	N.A.B. 56: 119
1	New Providence	16 Dec 2001	C.B.C.
1	Abaco	10 Apr 2002	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Nassau	3 Oct 2002	N.A.B. 57: 131–133

Table 9. All reports and records of Caspian Tern from the Bahamas and Turks & Caicos, 1961–2002.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	Great Inagua	10 Apr 1961	Brudnell-Bruce 1975, Buden 1987
3	North Andros	6–8 Apr 1968	A.F.N. 22: 516–520, Bond 1969
3	Grand Turk	20 Apr 1982	Sanderson 1982, A.B. 36: 897–898
1	Grand Turk	28 Dec 1982	A.B. 37: 342–344, Buden 1987
2	Grand Turk	16 May 1984	A.B. 38: 968–970, Buden 1987
1	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	16 Nov 1990	P.W. Sykes, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Man-o'-War Cay, Abaco	Jan 1996	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Elbow Cay, Abaco	Mar 1996	J. Vidmar, <i>in litt.</i>
1 (ph.)	West End, Grand Bahama	13 Oct 1996	N.A.B. 51: 128–130
1	Riding Pt., Grand Bahama	18 Feb 1997	N.A.B. 51: 809–810
2–3	Pine Cay, Caicos Islands	16 Dec 1997	Walsh-McGehee et al. 1998
2 (ph.)	Wilson's Pond, New Providence	2 Nov 2002	N.A.B. 57: 131–133



Figure 9. This first-winter Great Black-backed Gull at West End, Grand Bahama afforded one of few documented records for the archipelago. Photograph by Bruce Hallett.

Bahama, in early winter and in connection with the Christmas Bird Count.

Great Black-backed Gull
(*Larus marinus*)

UNCOMMON FALL AND WINTER VISITOR TO THE NORTHERN AND CENTRAL BAHAMAS.

This species, first reported in the region only in 1981 (as specimen), would appear to be increasing in recent years, as indicated by some 18 observations of 22 or so individuals, most of which are from the 1990s, two of which were photographed (Table 8; Figure 9).

Black-legged Kittiwake
(*Rissa tridactyla*)

RARE WINTER VISITOR.

Most observations of this species (12 of 13 individuals reported) came during the harsh winter of 1983–1984, in which many cold fronts pushed into southern Florida and the central Bahamas (Norton 1984; Figure 10).

All reports and records: 1 (first-basic), found exhausted on beach at Fresh Creek, Andros 3 February 1968 (Paterson 1968, Bond 1968); 1 (first-basic), Hope Town, Elbow Cay, Abaco 1 January 1984 (A.B. 38: 361–362); 4 (first-basic, ph.), Little Stirrup Cay, Berry Islands 5 January 1984 (A.B. 38: 361–362); 2, Eleuthera 11 February 1984, 2, Cat Island 14 February 1984, 1 (first-basic), Conception Island 15 February 1984, 1 (first-basic), Long Island 17 February, and 1 (first-basic), Great Inagua 22 February 1984 (all A.B. 38: 968–970).

Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)

OCCASIONAL WINTER VISITOR AND MIGRANT, OCTOBER THROUGH MAY.

Several species of terns that feed primarily in coastal waters are less common in the Bahamas than one might expect, based on

their relative abundance in Florida. In Florida, Caspian Tern is locally common as a nester and not uncommon as a winter visitor (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In contrast, there are only 12 reports of 18 individuals and two photographic records of three birds for the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (Table 9; Figure 11), and most observations are relatively recent. The species is also listed for Providenciales (Bradley 1995).

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

COMMON MIGRANT AND UNCOMMON WINTER VISITOR, REPORTED IN EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST. REPORTS OF NESTING IN BAHAMAS NEED CONFIRMATION.

Historical records of Common Tern are few for the Bahamas, as is true of other non-pelagic tern species. One was collected at Acklins in May 1879 (Cory 1890), but the location of this specimen is not known. More recently, another collected at Mayaguana in October 1978 (Buden 1987) is located at the Louisiana State University Museum.

The species is also confirmed as a visitor to the Bahamas by four banding returns, all of Massachusetts-banded individuals, one in May, one in October, and two in December

Table 10. All reports of Common Tern from the Bahamas and Turks & Caicos, 1982–2001.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
1	Providenciales	6 Mar 1982	A.B. 36: 897–898
2	Grand Turk	24 Apr 1983	A.B. 37: 916–917
3	Providenciales	26 Apr 1984	A.B. 38: 968–970
4–5 daily	Mayaguana	4–18 Oct 1978	Buden 1987
40+	between Fort Lauderdale and Little Stirrup Cay	22 Dec 1983	A.B. 38: 361–362
90	Little Stirrup Cay	5 Jan 1984	A.B. 38: 361–362
1	Abaco	6 Feb 1985	A.B. 39: 214–215
5	off Great Inagua	16 Apr 1985	A.B. 39: 353–354
2	Grand Turk	19 Jul 1987	A.B. 41: 1491–1492
1	West Caicos	28 Sep 1987	A.B. 42: 143–144, Norton and Clarke 1989
1	New Providence	19–23 Jan 1988	D. Wingate, <i>in litt.</i>
1	between Florida and Bimini	19–20 Sep 1988	P. W. Smith, <i>in litt.</i>
1	San Salvador	16 Nov 1995	W. Hayes, <i>in litt.</i>
1	North Creek, Grand Turk	18 Jun 1996	F.N. 50: 1000, 1002
4 (ph.)	Pine Cay, Caicos Islands	23 Jun 1996	F.N. 50: 1000, 1002
1	Grand Bahama	13 Oct 1996	F.N. 50: 128–130
4	Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera	15 Nov 1996	F.N. 50: 128–130
1	L. Cunningham, New Providence	25 Oct 1997	F.N. 52: 132–133
1–5 (ph.)	Mayaguana	25–28 Oct 1997	F.N. 52: 132–133
1	Mangrove Cay, Caicos Islands	12 Nov 1997	F.N. 52: 132–133
1	Conception Island	3 May 1999	B. Hallett, <i>in litt.</i>
1	Treasure Cay, Abaco	4 Feb 2001	N.A.B. 55: 236–238

Table 11. All reports of Forster's Tern from the Bahamas, 1954-2003.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
2	Great Exuma	21 Nov 1954	Bond 1962
12	Fresh Creek, Andros	14 Aug 1968	A. Paterson, <i>in litt.</i>
1-4	Eleuthera	22 Jan-5 Feb & 19 Sep 1977	Connor and Loftin 1985
3	Abaco	25 Dec 1983	A.B. 38: 361-362
2	Abaco	5 Feb 1985	A.B. 39: 214-215
2	near Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera	17 Dec 1985	A.B. 40: 338-339
1	between Little San Salvador and Cat I.	30 Jan 1988	D. B. Wingate, <i>in litt.</i>
2	Great Inagua	30 Oct 1997	F.N. 52: 132-133
1 (ph.)	West End, Grand Bahama	5 Nov 1997	F.N. 52: 132-133
1	New Providence	27 Dec 1997	C.B.C.
2	Wilson's Pond, New Providence	19-24 Jan 1998	F.N. 52: 395-396
6	Great Stirrup Cay, Berry Islands	31 Jan 1998	M. Lockwood, <i>in litt.</i>
2 (vt.)	West End, Grand Bahama	14 Dec 2000- 3 Feb 2001	N.A.B. 55: 236-238
1	Nassau	23-24 Jan 2002	N.A.B. 56: 235-237
2	West End, Grand Bahama	17 Dec 2002	N.A.B. 57: 272-274
6	Treasure Cay, Abaco	28 Feb 2003	N.A.B. 57: 272-274

(Bird Banding Laboratory, *in litt.*). Although the species has possibly bred in the archipelago, details are scant on past nestings. Bond (1978) recommends verification of reported nesting on Stocking Cay off Great Exuma. More recently, Sprunt (1984) does not include Common Tern among the seabird species nesting in the Bahamas. However, the files of the Bird Banding Laboratory (*in litt.*) include data on 18 Common Tern nestlings banded near North Bight, Andros in July 1969 and 1970. There are several scattered breeding reports from Florida, of which one is documented (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

The 22 Bahamian reports totaling well over 200 individuals give some indication of the relative abundance of the species in the region (Table 10). The highest single-site count (90 birds) was of a single foraging flock observed during a strong northeasterly gale while the observers' sailboat was at anchor (R. P. Moore, E. S. Brinkley, *in litt.*).

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)
RARE TRANSIENT. TWO REPORTS,
ONE RECORD.

The only record for the Bahamas is of one found injured along the highway one mile north of Crossing



Figure 10. This first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake at Little Stirrup Cay, Berry Islands, Bahamas 5 January 1984 was one of four noted in the area on that date and one of a dozen reported that winter in the Bahamas. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.



Figure 11. Caspian Tern records are notoriously scarce from the Bahamas; this adult at Wilson's Pond, New Providence 2 November 2002 is one of few photographed in the region. Photograph by Paul Dean.

Rocks, Abaco 7 May 2003, which was kept as a specimen at the Bahamas National Trust (N.A.B. 57: 419-422; E. Bracey, *in litt.*; Figure 12). There are two sight reports of single birds, one "well seen" near Big Green Cay off Andros 2 July 1977 (A.B. 31: 1128-1130) and another off Little San Salvador 17 May 1986 (A. Sprunt, *in litt.*).

As is the case for Sooty Shearwater, this species might be expected in the region chiefly in spring migration, as the autumn migration involves movements primarily toward western Europe and northwest Africa into the eastern Atlantic and away from North America (Bourne and Casement 1996, Hatch 2002); the species is also rare in the southeastern United States at this season (Lee and Cardiff 1993). Florida had 18 reports and three or four specimens through 1992 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), and since that time, 15 reports totaling some 42-43 birds have accrued, mostly from the Atlantic coast (E.O.S.R.C. archive, B. Pranty, *in litt.*).

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*)

UNCOMMON FALL MIGRANT AND WINTER
VISITOR, SEPTEMBER THROUGH
FEBRUARY.

As for Common and Caspian Terns, the scarcity of Forster's Tern in the Bahamas is somewhat surprising given its status on the Atlantic coast of Florida, where it is relatively common, especially off northern coasts (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Only 16 reports of over 45 individuals are known from the Bahamas (Table 11; Figure 13), and there is an additional report of a probable Forster's Tern from Cat Island 30 January 1988 (D. B. Wingate, *in litt.*).

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)

SPRING VAGRANT; ONE
RECORD AND ONE REPORT.

One White-winged Tern was photographed with three Black Terns at Great Inagua 26 June 1980 (Bond 1982, Buden 1987; Figure 14), and one was reported by multiple observers at McKinney Pond, Cat Island 22 May 1999 (N.A.B. 53: 334). This Eurasian species is an almost-annual visitor to the eastern United States and Canada, mostly from May to September (Mlodinow and

O'Brien 1996), with other nearby records from St. Croix and Barbados (Raffaele et al. 1998) but none from Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994; F.O.S.R.C. archive, B. Pranty, *in litt.*).

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*)
VAGRANT. ONE RECORD.

One Whiskered Tern was observed and photographed on Great Inagua 1–2 May 2003 (N.A.B. 57: 419–422; Figure 15), only the fourth record in the New World, the others coming from New Jersey and Delaware in the United States in 1993 (A.O.U. 1998), Barbados in 1994 (A.O.U. 1998), and again New Jersey in 1998 (ph., N.A.B. 53: 5).

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)
RARE SPRING AND UNCOMMON
EARLY-FALL MIGRANT, REPORTED
APRIL AND JUNE THROUGH OCTOBER.

Black Tern apparently occurs regularly in the Bahamas, and some authors give only a range or sample dates and do not report individual sightings. For example, Brudenell-Bruce (1975) cites 19 August to 13 September as the period when this tern has been found on New Providence, and he gives 11 April and 25 July on Great Inagua as sample dates from the out islands. Connor, who spent six years on Eleuthera, reports seeing Black Terns between 22 July and 16 September, with a high one-day count of 18 birds (Connor and Loftin 1985). Bradley (1995) reports that this species is a rare passage migrant in both the Turks Islands and the Caicos Islands. Most large counts in Florida are from the West Coast (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), which suggests that the main migration occurs well west of the Bahamas.

Additional reports of specific sightings: 1,

Table 12. Reports and records of Black Skimmer from the Bahamas and Turks & Caicos, 1947–2001.

NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE	SOURCE
2	Bimini	4–8 Mar 1947?	Friedman 1948, Vaurie 1953
1	Great Inagua	undated	Bond 1956, Buden 1987
1 (dead)	New Providence	9 Feb 1958	Bond 1959
1	North Bimini	7 Apr 1958	Bond 1959
1	Grand Bahama	late Dec 1962	Gantz 1963
1	off Providenciales	no date	Sanderson 1982, Bradley 1995
1	Marsh Harbour, Abaco	29 Dec 1983	A.B. 38: 361–362
1 (ph.)	Alice Town, North Bimini	6 Dec 1994	F.N. 49: 203–204
1	Alice Town, North Bimini	6–11 Dec 1996	R. Elston, <i>in litt.</i>
1	New Providence	28 Dec 1996	C.B.C.
1	Sandy Pt., Abaco	1 Sep 1997	F.N. 52: 132–133
5	Middle Caicos	13 Dec 1997	Walsh-McGehee et al. 1998
1 (ph.)	West End, Grand Bahama	14 Dec 2000	E. Bracey, <i>in litt.</i> (Fig. 16)
2	Sandy Pt., Abaco	2 Jan 2001	N.A.B. 55: 236–238
1 (vt.)	Our Lucaya, Grand Bahama	29 Jan–1 Feb 2001	S. Mlodinow, <i>in litt.</i>

Bimini 5 August 1951 (Vaurie 1953); 1, Eleuthera 17 October 1956 (Bond 1957); 2, Andros 3 August (no year given) (Bond 1972); 3, Great Inagua 26 June 1980 (Bond 1982, Buden 1987).

Black Noddy (*Anous tenuirostris*)
UNSUBSTANTIATED. ONE REPORT.

Two were reported on Providenciales 24 May 1984 (N.A.B. 38: 968–970), the only report for the Bahamas. Florida has only one report away from Dry Tortugas National Park, where exceptionally up to seven individuals have been counted (Pranty 1997; Pranty, *in press*). It is considered a vagrant in the West

Indies (Raffaele et al. 1998).

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)
RARE WINTER AND SPRING VISITOR,
SEPTEMBER THROUGH APRIL.

In contrast to the species' abundance in southern Florida, where winter tallies in the low thousands have been made (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), only three confirmed records of this species are known for the Bahamas. In addition to four specimen and photographic records (Table 12), a Black Skimmer banded in New York in July 1984 was recovered on Andros in January 1985 (Buden 1991). Otherwise, there are some 17 reports of 11 indi-



Figure 12. This Arctic Tern was located near Crossing Rocks, Abaco, on the highway 7 May 2003; it was injured and has been retained as a specimen, the only one for the Bahamas. Photograph by Hagen Peters.



Figure 13. This adult Forster's Tern was photographed at West End, Grand Bahama 5 November 1997. Photograph by Bruce Hallett.



Figure 14. This adult White-winged Tern in alternate plumage graced Big Mangrove Pond, Great Inagua, Bahamas 16 June 1980. Other Caribbean records of the species come from St. Croix and from Barbados. Photograph by Alexander Sprunt IV.

viduals known from the Bahamas, all from the nonbreeding season (Table 10). The species is reported by Bradley (1995) as a "vagrant" to Grand Turk.

Dovekie (*Alle alle*)

VAGRANT, ONE RECORD
BUT SPECIMEN LOST.

An oiled bird was found at Grand Bahama 7 December 1962; the specimen, retained by R. Hanlon, is apparently now lost (Brudenell-Bruce 1975, Bond 1993; P. Dean, *in litt.*). The species has been reported in at least 18 winters through 1992 in Florida, sometimes in the thousands (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but only one report exists for Cuba, and the species is otherwise unknown in the West Indies (Raffaele et al. 1998).

Discussion

This paper lists all the credible reports of transient and wintering seabirds known to the author. The fact that they can all be listed in such a brief paper is indicative of the scarcity of information on these birds in the Bahamian Archipelago. Reports of near-shore birds such as gulls and certain terns have become more frequent in recent years, especially on the more-populated islands such as New Providence, Grand Bahama, and Abaco. However, pelagic species, such as shearwaters and storm-petrels, are still reported infrequently.

The open waters of the Bahamas have not received sufficient coverage by scientific surveys to provide an accurate portrait of the seabird distribution there, nor have there been repeated forays by birdwatchers that would provide complementary data, despite the presence of numerous recreational boaters and fishermen well-positioned to document the pelagic avifauna. Only one pelagic birdwatching trip has been run from

the Bahamas (Bracey 2001).

It is hoped that the present paper will stimulate interest in the photographic documentation of seabirds in the region, so that a clearer picture of their spatial and temporal distribution will emerge. A few sorties from shore could change radically our assessment of the status and distribution of many of the species considered herein. In the extensive research for the paper, it is inevitable that some reports have been overlooked; corrigenda would be gratefully received by the author. The Bahamas Avian Records Committee was formed in 2001 under the aegis of the Bahamas National Trust. The committee is preparing an official list of Bahamian birds. In the process, it will be reviewing many of the records listed in this paper. The committee is also creating an archive of confirmatory photographs for rare and unusual species in the Bahamas and a central list of museum specimens of unusual species. Please send any additional reports or photographs of the species listed in this paper, or other unusual species in the Bahamas, to the author, who is also chair of the committee, or to the secretary, Ms. Lynn



Figure 15. The Bahamas' only observation of Whiskered Tern—and one of only four in the New World—was provided by this adult in alternate plumage at Lake Windsor, Great Inagua 1 May 2003. Photograph by Elwood Bracey.



Figure 16. Black Skimmers are rare visitors to Grand Turk and the Bahamas in the nonbreeding season; this adult was photographed at West End, Grand Bahama 14 December 2000. Photograph by Bruce Hallett.

Gape, c/o Bahamas National Trust, P.O. Box N4105, Nassau, Bahamas.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to those who contributed personal reports cited herein; to Stan Howe, who computerized all the sighting reports from *Sea Swallow*; and especially to Robert L. Norton, who has compiled records from the Bahamas for this journal for 20 years. Louis R. Bevier, Alvaro Jaramillo, and Bill Pranty read several versions of the manuscript and offered many useful suggestions for improvements; they have my thanks as well.

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