

# Mexico

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Mexico

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After a late onset of the rains this year in most of Mexico (see the Summer 2003 report), the rains were very strong and lasted until early November.

## NORTHERN MEXICO



Cold spells starting in November may have driven individuals of some species that are not regular altitudinal migrants downslope of their usual elevations along the Sierra Madre Oriental.

### LOONS THROUGH OWLS

A Red-throated Loon was at Puerto Peñasco 24 Nov (KK, RT). Both Western and Clark's Grebes were behind Presa Rodríguez Gómez in Hermosillo, Son. 8 Oct (DS, MS). Black Storm-Petrels were seen from shore at Huatabampito, Son. 7 Oct (DS, MS) and at Puerto Peñasco 11 Nov (JT). Three Brown Pelicans, 24 Neotropic Cormorants, and 3 Tricolored Herons were seen on the Francisco Zarco Dam upstream from Cañón de Fernández (SR). A Least Bittern was in marshes just s. of Culiacán, Sin. 28 Nov (MG). At least one ad. Boat-billed Heron was at the permanent roost on the Río Frío below Gómez Farías, Tamps. 12 Nov (JCA). A juv. Roseate Spoonbill was near the Río Frío 12 Nov (JCA). Eight Wood Storks were on the Río Yaqui n. of Ciudad Obregón,

Son. 8 Oct (DS, MS).

From 21 to 45 Wood Ducks were seen at six census spots at Cañón de Fernández, Dgo. Aug–Nov. A female with 10 ducklings was seen on the Nazas R. close to the Francisco Zarco Dam 6 Aug (SR). A Ross's

Goose was seen wading among Mexican Ducks on Puentes Cuates, downstream from Cañón de Fernández 23 Nov, a first record for the Torreón region. Five Canada Geese were around Puerto Peñasco, Son. 23 Nov (KK, RT). Several Muscovy Ducks—in pairs, singly, and in a group of 4—were seen in early and mid-Nov at marshes near the Río Sabinas highway bridge, at a marsh near Ciudad Mante, Tamps., and in Venustiano Carranza and Laguna La Soledad near Ocampo, Tamps. (JCA, HGdS). A female Surf Scoter was at Puerto Peñasco 11 Nov (JT).

An Osprey was seen by AVJ in the Cañón de Fernández 3 Aug, and one was at Francisco Zarco dam 6 Aug (SR). A Northern Goshawk was above Yécora, Son. 5 Oct (SG, LN). A Short-tailed Hawk was sighted along Highway 16 around 198 km e. of Hermosillo 5 Oct (SG, LN). Two Crane Hawks were displaying in flight near Ocampo 18 Nov (HGdS). AH reports that, as last year, the city of Monterrey, N.L. received an influx of raptors, particularly Red-tailed

Hawks, in late Nov. An ad. and up to 2 juv. Gray Hawks were present in Cañón de Fernández 10 Aug (AVJ, FVP, WB). Peregrine Falcons were noticed from early Sep+ hunting blackbirds and doves from the Canal 9 Antenna, Torreón (FVP). A Prairie Falcon was seen flying over Lerdo, Dgo. 23 Nov (FVP, WB). Fresh footprints of a flock of Wild Turkeys were seen near Ocampo 18 Nov (HGdS).

More than 50 Stilt Sandpipers were photographed at Yávaros, Son. 7 Oct, the first documented record and by far the largest number for Son. (DS, MS). A first-year Sabine's Gull was at the inland location of Presa Rodríguez Gómez 8 Oct (DS, MS). A first-year Thayer's Gull, 2 first-year Glaucous-winged Gulls, and an ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull were at the Puerto Peñasco sewage ponds 23 Nov. An ad. Western Gull was at Yávaros 7 Oct (SG, LN). There were many first-year Least Terns at both Yávaros and Estero Tobari 7-8 Oct (LN, SG).

Two Greater Roadrunners were near Ocampo 16 Nov (HGdS). Eurasian Collared-Doves were reportedly numerous along the highway n. of San Fernando, Tamps. 10 Nov but were not seen s. of there in the next few days (JCA). A flock of around 20 Green Parakeets 12 Nov at Rancho Cielito, Tamps., where formerly abundant, was the most seen there in recent years, while the only evidence that same morning of Red-crowned Parrots, also formerly abundant there, was a pair heard (JCA). A flock of at least 110 Green Parakeets was above Callejones near Ocampo 19 Nov (HGdS). A pair of Tamaulipas Pygmy-Owls that responded to whistled imitations at around 800 m on the road to Alta Cima 13 Nov (JCA) was at a low elevation.

### HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

A male Broad-billed Hummingbird at Alta Cima, Tamps. 15 Oct (HGdS) was e. of its normal range and unexpected in such a humid area. An Anna's Hummingbird was on the Mesa de Campanero above Yécora on the Son./Chih. border 7 Oct (SG, LN). One Amazon Kingfisher along an irrigation canal just s. of Ciudad Mante 14 Nov was the only report of a species that was formerly common n. to the Río Sabinas and Río Frío prior to a major flood in Aug 2000; the species is now rare in Tamps. (JCA). A Russet-crowned Motmot was along the Río Mayo near Alamos, Son. 6 Oct (SG, LN). Four Greater Pewees were as low as 280 m on the road between Gómez Farías and El Encino, Tamps. 16 Oct (HGdS). All Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds recorded around Ocampo in the 3rd week of Nov were Couch's (HGdS). At least 3 Hammond's Flycatchers at Venustiano Carranza 18 Nov

(HGdS) were at an unexpectedly low elevation for the Gulf slope.

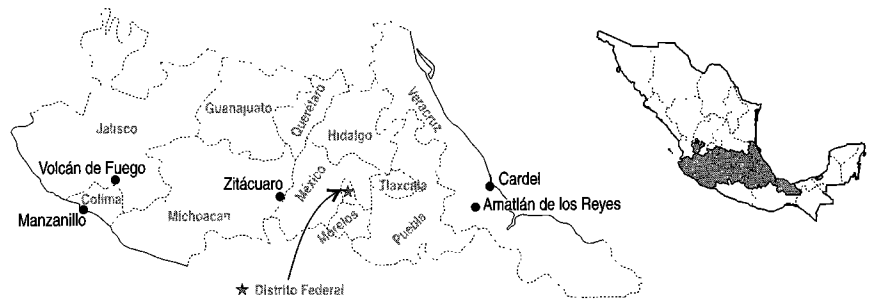
In s. Tamps., numbers of Chihuahuan Ravens and the formerly abundant Tamaulipas Crows have been down substantially in recent years (*vide* JCA). On afternoon drives between Ciudad Victoria, Tamps. and Gómez Farías no crows or ravens were seen 11 Oct, and only one raven was seen 15 Nov (HGdS); the same drive in the morning of 20 Nov produced 9 Tamaulipas Crows and 2 Chihuahuan Ravens. About a dozen Tamaulipas Crows were noted around Ciudad Mante 14 Nov (JCA), and similar numbers were noted at and around Ocampo 16–20 Nov, in addition to two encounters with flocks of 100–200 individuals (HGdS). A pair of **Common Ravens** (a species not clearly mapped in Tamps. by Howell and Webb [1995]) was at Alta Cima during early Jun and mid-Oct visits (HGdS). Spotted Wrens were seen near El Platanito above El Naranjo, S.L.P. 14 Nov and at the crest of the road w. of Ocampo 15 Nov (JCA). Two Russet Nightingale-Thrushes were found on the Mesa de Campanero 7 Oct (SG, LN). One White-throated Thrush was low at 420 m between Gómez Farías and El Encino 16 Oct (HGdS). Blue Mockingbirds were at several places between 400 and 525 m elevation near Ocampo 18–19 Nov (HGdS).

A Black-and-white Warbler was at km 198 along Hwy 16, Son. 4 Oct (SG, LN). A Northern Waterthrush was in mangroves along the bay at Yávaros, Son. 7 Oct (DS, MS, LN, SG). A Painted Redstart was low at 450 m at Callejones, near Ocampo 19 Nov (HGdS). Small numbers of Blue-gray and Yellow-winged Tanagers were at Ocampo in mid-Nov (HGdS). A pair of Scrub Euphonias was above the landfill at Alamos 6 Oct (DS, MS). An evening roost of 30 or more Scrub Euphonias was found in mango trees at Bocatoma along the upper Río Frio 12 Nov (JCA). White-winged Tanagers were heard between Gómez Farías and El Encino 16 Oct (HGdS). At least 5 Dickcissels were in the Alamos area 5 Oct (DS, MS). Several pairs of Rusty Sparrows were seen 14 Nov near El Platanito, where regular, and a pair was seen near the crest w. of Ocampo 15 Nov (JCA). Large mixed flocks of blackbirds started appearing in Torreón by mid-Oct. However, for the first time since records began in 1984, no roosts formed on Calzada Colón, a wide downtown avenue full of tall trees where large flocks of 1.5 to 2.5 million birds

used to gather to roost. This season, instead, blackbirds are roosting in city parks and leafy suburbs. A Black-headed Siskin was at Callejones 19 Nov.

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## CENTRAL MEXICO



September and October were very wet and warm (especially October). Some areas of Veracruz visited in October (e.g., Los Humeros and Las Minas) had experienced flooding or were under water. Localities are in Ver. unless otherwise stated.

### HERONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A Great Blue Heron was near San José Cacahuatpec, Gro. 3 Aug (HGdS). A juv. Tricolored Heron, 2 Least Bitterns, and 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons were at the Almoloya del Río marsh 13 Sep (HGdS,

migrating s. with a flock of Broad-winged Hawks 1 Oct (JM, GC; Hawk Mountain tour). This species is very rare in Mexico anywhere. Singing Quail were calling at Las Minas 24 Sep.

Four Piping Plovers were with several Collared Plovers at M.A.R. 1 Oct. A Killdeer was heard near Instituto de Ecología, UNAM in the evening of 11 Nov. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at Las Barrancas 29 Sep. At least 2 Marbled Godwits were in the mouth of La Antigua R. 28 Sep. Several White-rumped Sandpipers were seen along the Limón R. in the heart of the Alvarado wetlands 12 Sep. Two Black Terns

and 2 Laughing Gulls were at Almoloya del Río 13 Sep (DP, HGdS). One Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen along the cen. Veracruz coast by S.N.G. Howell early Oct (*vide* JM). A Barn Owl was heard in Coyoacán 16 Nov (MG).

Flocks of **Black Swifts** were seen 14 Sep near La Mancha and 4 Oct at Cafetal El Basurero. At least 4 Chestnut-collared Swifts were seen 14 Sep at Rancho El Mirador, and others were at Cafetal El Basurero 4 Oct. A **Great Swallow-tailed Swift** at Texolo waterfall 24 Sep appears to constitute only the 2nd Ver. record (another was in the same locality last year). Two Green-breasted Mangos near Tlacotalpan 12 Oct were rather late for this summer resident. Green Violet-ears were present and singing at Parque Nacional Desierto de Los Leones, D.F. from late Jul at least through Aug (SA). Single Green



This Canada Warbler was banded at Yagul, Oaxaca, Mexico 9 September 2003. This species is a regular transient through the eastern lowlands of Mexico but casual in western and central Mexico. The birdlife of the Oaxaca Valley features a mixture of species of western and central Mexico, with frequent "eastern" visitors as well. Photograph by Ramiro Aragón.

DP). A flock of around 15 Northern Pintails was at the marsh at Almoloya del Río, Méx. 13 Sep (DP, HGdS). Two pairs of Muscovy Ducks were seen flying over La Mancha 23 Sep and Playa Juan Angel 27 Sep, respectively. An Osprey was at Almoloya del Río 13 Sep (HGdS, DP). An ad. light-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** at La Mancha was

Violet-ears, rarely reported in Ver., were at Los Humeros 25 Sep and 4 Oct, as was a male **Lucifer Hummingbird**. A Blue-throated Hummingbird nest was found in the Parque Nacional Desierto de Los Leones 30 Aug (SA). Several Rufous Hummingbirds were at Los Humeros through most of the period.

**KINGFISHERS THROUGH FINCHES**

A **Pygmy Kingfisher** at La Mancha 23 Sep was n. of its normal range, while a calling **Cordilleran Flycatcher** at Rancho El Mirador 27 Sep was e. of normal range. **Yellow-olive Flycatchers** were n. of normal range at Rancho El Mirador 28 Sep and at Cafetal El Basurero 3 Oct. A **Buff-breasted Flycatcher** at La Joya (1700 m) on 4 Oct was e. of its mapped range. **Gray-breasted Martins** at La Mancha 1 Oct were late. A singing **Cassin's Vireo** was near Viveros de Coyoacán, D.F. 13 Nov (HGdS). Dozens of **Violet-green Swallows** were at Volcancillo (1800 m) and Las Minas in Sep and Oct, where regular in winter, though e. of mapped range. **Bewick's Wrens** at Los Humeros 25 Sep and 4 Oct were also e. of mapped range. A **Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush** was seen at P.M. 3 Oct, upslope and w. of its usual migration route.

Two **Tropical Mockingbirds** at La Piedra road 28 Sep were far n. of normal range (escaped cagebirds are conceivable here). Two to 3 **European Starlings** were encountered at a small park in Mexico City (Avenida Coyoacán and Viaducto) on several occasions from 29 Aug to 2 Nov (HGdS), 4 were seen at Metro Talismás, D.F. 2 Nov (HGdS), and 20 were seen at Temamatla, Méx. 2 Nov (HGdS, MPV). During a migrant fallout at Mocambo Hotel 30 Sep, a **Brewster's Warbler** accompanied 2 **Golden-winged Warblers**. A **Grace's Warbler**, rarely recorded in Ver., was at Los Humeros 4 Oct. A **Cerulean Warbler** at 1200 m in Rancho El Mirador 2 Oct was at a high elevation. A **Palm Warbler** was at El Salado 1 Nov. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was at Sierra de Guadalupe, D.F. 3 Sep (SA). A **Rufous-capped Brushfinch** was e. at Malpais (2300 m) 24 Sep.

A male **Cinamon-bellied Flowerpiercer** at P.M. 3 Oct was e. and downslope of normal. A **Cinamon-bellied Flowerpiercer** with nesting material was seen in the Parque Nacional Desierto de Los Leones 30 Aug (SA). One **Lark Bunting** in the grasslands at Playa Juan Ángel 26 Sep was a new record for Ver. A few **Vesper** and **Clay-colored Sparrows**, rare in Ver., were at Los Humeros 1 Nov. A few **Black-headed Siskins** were recorded at La Joya 4 Oct, e. and downslope of regular range. A **Scott's Oriole** was e. at Los Humeros 25 Sep and 1 Nov (JM). A **Black-vented Oriole** at Sierra de Guadalupe 3 Sep (SA) may represent the first D.F. record. **Pine Siskins** outnumbered **Lesser Goldfinches** in the weeds at Almoloya del Río 13 Sep (HGdS, DP).

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**SOUTHERN MEXICO**

**Abbreviations:** S.J.G. (Río Salado near San Juan Guelavía, about 20 km e. of Oaxaca City, approx 1550 m), T.S.P. (Tlacolula sewage ponds), Yag. (Yagul archeological site and environs), S.F.E.P. (San Felipe Ecological Park), L.A.B. (Las Animas Bridge, km 8 on the Panamerican Highway, near Tapanatepec). All localities listed are in Oaxaca.

**WOOD STORK THROUGH ORIOLES**

Six **Wood Storks** were seen flying over S.J.G. 12 Nov; this sighting constitutes the first record for the Oaxaca Valley (Ra, KW). A **Mexican Duck** was at Piedra Azul Dam, near Teotitlán del Valle 6 Nov, perhaps the 2nd there ever (JF). A **Long-tailed Wood-Partridge** was seen at La Cumbre 7 Nov (RAR). A **Hook-billed Kite** was seen soaring over the L.A.B. 19 Nov (RAR, KW, AT). A **Harris's Hawk** was at S.J.G. 9 Nov (RAR, KW). One **Zone-tailed Hawk** was at Llano Grande 13 Sep, and another was reported at San Mateo Cajonos 15 Nov (JF). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** were at T.S.P. 20 Sep (JF).

A **Whiskered Screech-Owl** was seen at Santa María Yavesia, Sierra Norte de Oaxaca 27 Nov (KW, RAR); the species (including the rufous morph) is widely distributed in the highlands of the state. At least 4 **Great Horned Owls** were heard at Yag. 9 Sep (RAR). A **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** was heard at L.A.B. 19 Nov (JF, KW, RAR). A **Berylline Hummingbird** was mist-netted at a high elevation at Llano Grande 16 Nov (KW), where an **Amethyst-throated Hummingbird** was mist-netted 7 Nov (RAR, KW). Two **Russet-crowned Motmots** were seen at Tot. 19 Nov (JF, RAR, KW, AT). A **Lineated Woodpecker** was seen at L.A.B. 19 Nov (JF, RAR, KW, JK, AT). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was seen near Llano Grande 13 Sep, while an **Alder Flycatcher** banded at Yag 16 Sep, representing the first record from the Oaxaca Valley, was identified with greater than 95% confidence according to criteria of Pyle et al. (1997),

particularly p10–p5 = 5 (RAR). A **Nutting's Flycatcher** was banded at Yag 19 Sep (RAR). A **Social Flycatcher** was seen at the Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario de Oaxaca 17 Oct, with a **Scissor-tailed** there the next day

(RAR, KW), and another **Social** was at km 15 e. of Oaxaca City on the Pan-American Highway 30 Oct (KW). **Social Flycatchers** are rather scarce in the Valley, though a pair is sometimes around the airport.

A **Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo** was seen at the productive El Jilguero arroyo above Teotitlán del Valle 6 Nov (JF). **Single Gray-breasted Wood-Wrens** were seen at El Jilguero Arroyo 6 Nov (KW) and at La Cumbre 10 Nov (KW). Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were seen at Llano Grande 13 Sep, a 3rd state record of what must be an irregular visitor. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was seen at S.M.V. 20 Sep, a record-early date for the subregion. An **American Robin** at S.J.G. 14 Nov was in disturbed tropical deciduous forest, an unusual habitat (KW). A **Northern Parula** was seen at the Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario 16 Oct, apparently the first record for the Oaxaca Valley (KW, RAR). Two **Yellow Warblers** were banded at Yag. 11 & 18 Sep (RAR), 2 were at S.J.G. 13 Sep, and one was seen at Tot. 19 Nov (JF, RAR, KW, AT). Most unusual, a group of 5–10 **Black-and-white Warblers** on a single tree along the creek of S.F.E.P. 18 Nov was singing and showing territorial behavior (RAR, KW, AT). An **American Redstart** was banded at Yag. 19 Sep. An **Ovenbird** was at S.F.E.P. 29 Oct (RAR). A **Canada Warbler** was banded at Yag. 9 Sep.

A **Botteri's Sparrow** was heard at Yag. 19 Sep (RAR). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was mist-netted at the Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario 18 Oct (RAR, KW). A **Rose-bellied Bunting** was seen 19 Nov in the foothills ne. of Tapanatepec at km 16 from the Pan-American Highway (JF, RAR, KW, JK, AT). A female **Painted Bunting** was banded at the Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario 25 Oct (RAR, KW), and a male was banded at S.J.G. 14 Nov (RAR, KW). At the Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario, one **Orchard** and several **Streak-backed Orioles** were seen 17 Oct (RAR).

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## YUCATÁN PENINSULA



Increased reporting from different points in the subregion has provided an increasingly refined understanding of birds' migratory routes through the peninsula, and improved communication permits comparison of local data with those from offshore oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as from farther north on the Gulf Coast. For instance, the migratory fallout composed mostly of American Redstarts and Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, and Blackburnian Warblers that appeared during foul weather in the coastal region of El Cuyo on 29 September was also experienced to our north, in the Gulf Coast states of Mississippi, Alabama, and western Florida (see the Central Southern regional report). Another wave of the same species—plus Tennessee Warbler, Northern Parula, Hooded Warbler, Least and Alder/Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and vireos—was noted on 4 October nearby in a forested area 10 km north of Izamal; the birds were traveling in a north-northeasterly direction under a light rain. These and past data suggest that many massive fall migration fronts make landfall in the area of Celestún, or directly on the north coast of the peninsula, and that the birds either fly in parallel migration routes in an easterly direction or occupy the entire northern portion of the peninsula before heading southward into Central and South America.

Banding by coastal and inland researchers working on habitat selection of migratory birds and West Nile disease are contributing to still more precise information, including recaptures of individual birds in the same locations as in previous years. In addition, local guide training and the annual Yucatán Bird Festival, held the third week of November each year, provide additional data through the end of the migration period.

**Abbreviations:** H.Tz. (Hacienda Tzalamcab); H.Ti. (Hacienda Ticuch); H.S.J.T. (Hacienda San José Tecoh; all three within 10 km of Izamal, Yuc.); R.C.B.R. (Ría Celestún Biosphere Reserve, Yuc.); R.L.B.R. (Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve); R.L. (town of Río Lagartos); R.S.M. (Rancho Santa María, n. Q. Roo); R.S.M. (Rancho

San Miguel, near Valladolid, Yuc.); S.F. (San Felipe, Yuc.); R.H. (Rancho Hobonil, s. Yuc.); S.K.B.R. (Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve); C.B.R. (Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, Camp.).

### HERONS THROUGH TERNS

Large waterbirds seen during the Yucatán Bird Festival 20 Nov included a Pinnated Bittern in R.C.B.R., where never before reported (DB), an American Bittern in R.L.B.R. (MM), the first specific report for Yuc., and one of the 2 Jabirus that have been reported in the last year in R.L.B.R. at Petén Tuchá and at the local cemetery (DN). An American Wigeon was observed at Celestún with 9 American Coots in Oct (AD). During a birdathon, 7 Northern Shovelers and a male scaup were observed in the R.C.B.R. 16 Nov (BM, DB).

A King Vulture reported repeatedly throughout the period 10 km e. of Celestún (AD) was probably the same as one reported 20 Nov 15 km w. of Celestún over savannah (PW); another was reported at R.S.M. in Oct (PW). A nice surprise at H.Tz. was an ad. Hook-billed Kite 22 Nov (BM, BiM). A female Snail Kite was seen at Celestún 16 Nov (BM), while on 20 Nov an ad. White-tailed Hawk was seen at Petén Tuchá and an imm. was observed 20 km s. of R.L. along with 2 Red-tailed Hawks (BM, BiM). Two Collared Forest-Falcons were perched near the bridge at Celestún 16 Aug (DB), and a male Peregrine Falcon was perched in the coastal area of Celestún 16 Nov (BM).

An Ocellated Turkey was seen sunning itself near Chunchucmil 5 Oct (JD). Three teams participating in the Bird Festival reported a Rufous-necked Wood-Rail at Celestún 20 & 21 Nov (AD, DB, LC), while an ad. Spotted Rail was reported at Cobá, Q. Roo 23 Sep (MC), where first recorded in

1985 (BM). An American Golden-Plover was seen on a sandbar in the R.L.B.R. estuary 20 Nov (BM, BiM). A Piping Plover was at Celestún 6 Oct (JD). American Avocets were reported in Celestún in Oct (number unspecified; AD) and 16 Nov (5 birds; BM, BiM), and one was photographed on the Cozumel golf course 12 Sep (MC, RC). Forty-four Greater Yellowlegs were feeding in the estuary behind Chicxulub 10 Aug, along with 11 Willets and a Spotted Sandpiper (BM). A Solitary Sandpiper was seen 15 km s. of R.L. 20 Nov (BM, BiM). The first Cozumel record of Upland Sandpiper was of one photographed at the Cozumel golf course 11–12 Sep (HO, MC, RC). Two Marbled Godwits were on a sandbar in the R.L.B.R. estuary 20 Nov (BM, BiM), while one was reported on the Cozumel golf course 11 Sep (MC). Four Least Sandpipers showed up in Chicxulub estuary 10 Aug (BM), 2 Dunlins were at the Celestún harbor 5 Oct (JD), and another was on a sandbar in the R.L.B.R. 20 Nov (BiM). Around 25 Stilt Sandpipers were reported in Celestún 5 Oct (JD), while one was there 16 Nov (BiM). Single Wilson's Snipe were observed 16 & 21 Nov in Celestún (AD), and another was on the road from S.F. to R.L. 20 Nov (BM).

A Parasitic Jaeger was reported in Celestún in Oct (VM). A Lesser Black-backed and a Kelp Gull, together, were close to the salt mines of Las Coloradas 16 Nov (JM, AM). A Ring-billed and a Kelp Gull were on a sandbar in the R.L.B.R. estuary 20 Nov (BM), and 2 ad. Sabine's Gulls were seen from the ferry crossing to Cozumel 13 Sep (JE, MC). Caspian Terns are found more and more frequently on the Yucatan coast, but 14 on the sandbar in R.L.B.R. estuary 20 Nov was a high count (BM).

### DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

A Eurasian Collared-Dove was photographed at R.S.M. this fall (PW); this species has yet to be reported in Yuc. and Camp. A Black-billed Cuckoo was seen at H.Ti. 7 Sep (BM), and 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoos were recorded at H.S.J.T. 6 Sep, with singles nearby at H.Ti. 7 Sep (BM) and Yaxuná, Yuc. 20 Sep (AE, BM). Six Smooth-billed Anis were reported in the Puerto Morelos area 24 Sep (MC), where they were first recorded in the late 1980s. A Vermiculated Screech-Owl was heard predawn at R.S.M. 21 Nov along with a Great Horned Owl (IC, BM), while another Vermiculated Screech-Owl was heard at H.Ti. 4 Oct (BM). A Mottled Owl was heard at Sayil 21 Nov (PW). Around 20 migrating Common Nighthawks were feeding over fields a few km n. of Izamal 7 Sep (BM). An unusual find during the Bird Festival was a Yucatán

Nightjar seen and heard at Uxmal 20 Nov (AD). Two juv. Green-breasted Mangos at Yaxuná 20 Sep provided data on breeding (AE, BM). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are common, but males are rarely reported; a male was seen 20 Nov at Celestun (PW), another was seen on same date on the road from S.F. to R.L. (BM), and an imm. male was seen at H.Tz. 22 Nov (BM, BiM).

A Tody Motmot delighted a group of birders in Calakmul 20 Sep (MC), while 2 Collared Aracaris were photographed in the forest behind El Cuyo, Yuc. 28 Sep (AC, JD). A report of a Greenish Elaenia at Sayil 21 Nov suggests that this species is not restricted to the forest on the e. side of the peninsula (PW). One of the few locations where such forest-dwelling birds are found in Yuc. is behind El Cuyo, on the border with Q. Roo, where a Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher was seen 1 Sep (JD, AC), another new species for the R.L.B.R. Around 20 Eastern Wood-Pewees were seen moving through the vegetation at H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM), while a single one was identified by song 20 Nov near Sayil. Ornithologists using nets in El Cuyo have been able to separate Alder and Willow Flycatchers and reported netting 3 imm. Willows 6 Sep, plus singles 11, 12, & 26 Sep and 17 Oct (JD, AC). Three Alder/Willow Flycatchers were seen migrating through woods at H.Ti. 4 Oct (BM), while a single imm. Alder was netted in coastal dune at El Cuyo 24 Oct (JD, AC), a new record for the R.L.B.R. Single Willow Flycatchers were identified on the S.F.-R.L. road 20 Nov (BM, BiM) and at H.Tz. 22 Nov (BiM). A Least Flycatcher was netted 8 Aug at Rancho Hobonil (LC); there were eight reports of one at H.S.J.T. 6 Sep, 6 at H.Ti. 4 Oct, and one at H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM).

One to 2 Eastern Phoebe were recorded 25+26 Oct at R.S.M., one seen and the other netted (PW). A Great Crested Flycatcher was netted in mangroves at El Cuyo 24 Oct (JD, AC), and a Great Kiskadee at the Cozumel golf course 12 Sep furnished a new record for the island (MC, RC). Eastern Kingbirds come through the peninsula by the thousands—at least along the east coast—but inland sightings of individuals provide important distributional information, such as one at H.S.J.T. 6 Sep and another at H.Ti. the next day (BM). Two were seen at 2 Yaxuná 20 Sep (AE, BM). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are not common on the peninsula, so all sightings are of interest. One was observed by several groups at the cenote along the Chunchucmil road s. of Celestun 20 Nov (AD, PW).

Among the migrants moving through H.Ti. 4 Oct was a Yellow-throated Vireo, while the less-common Philadelphia Vireo

was netted 17 Oct, an imm. at El Cuyo (JD, AC). A Red-eyed Vireo was at H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM), and an imm. Yucatan Vireo was netted at El Cuyo 17 Oct (JD, AC).

### MARTINS THROUGH ORIOLES

A total of 20 Purple Martins was observed at Yaxuná 20 Sep (BM, AE), while 2 imm. Bank Swallows were netted at El Cuyo 4 Sep, in mangroves and coastal dune, respectively (JD, AC). An alternate-plumaged male White-lored Gnatcatcher was at H.Tz. 7 Sep, and a single basic-plumaged male was there 4 Oct (BM). A male was seen at Hacienda Petac, s. of Mérida 20 Oct (AE, BM), while 2 were observed at H.Tz. 22 Nov (BM, BiM). An imm. Swainson's Thrush was netted in the coastal dune vegetation at El Cuyo 26 Sep, and another imm. was in button mangrove at El Cuyo 3 Oct (JD, AC). Yet another was seen at H.Ti. 4 Oct (BM). Black Catbird, reported at H.Ti. in summer, was recorded there on only one of three fall visits (4 Oct; BM). A Cozumel Thrasher was reported near the Cozumel golf course 12 Sep at 5:30 in the evening (RC); this would amount to the rediscovery of a species thought extinct since 1999, so confirmation and immediate attention by conservationists are highly recommended.

Warblers received much attention this season. An imm. male Blue-winged Warbler was netted at Rancho Hobonil 19 Aug (LC), suggesting that this species also migrates along the n. coast of the peninsula. An ad. and 2 juv. male Golden-winged Warblers were sighted at El Cuyo 3 Aug (JD, AC), while at least a single male was among warblers at H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM). An exhausted imm. Tennessee Warbler was found at El Cuyo 7 Sep (JD, AC); at least 6 were among migrants at H.Tz. 5 Oct; and another was sighted 20 km of R.L. 20 Nov (BM). An imm. Orange-crowned Warbler was netted in the coastal region of El Cuyo 24 Oct (JD, AC), and one was reported at Peten Tucha 20 Nov (BiM). The first reported Northern Parula was seen at El Cuyo 8 Aug (JD, AC); 2 males and a female were at H.Ti. 4 Oct and around 30 at H.Tz. next door 5 Oct (BM). Yellow Warbler was first seen 9 & 11 Aug at El Cuyo (JD, AC), while an imm. female was netted 20 Aug at Rancho Hobonil (LC). Chestnut-sided Warbler was recorded as early as 26 Aug at El Cuyo (JD, AC); 3 imms. were seen at H.Ti. 4 Oct, and around 100 were migrating through at adjoining H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM). A Magnolia Warbler was netted at El Cuyo 6 Sep (JD, AC); 4 were seen on the S.F.-R.L. road 20 Nov (BM). Two ad. male Black-throated Blue Warblers were netted in the coastal area of El Cuyo 3 Oct (JD, AC). A male Black-throated Green Warbler, a species reported less and less frequently, was

among migrants at H.Ti. 4 Oct (BM).

An imm. male Blackburnian Warbler was seen at El Cuyo on the early date of 3 Sep (JD, AC), while 2 were at H.Ti. 4 Oct and several were seen on the next day at adjoining H.Tz. (BM). A single Prairie Warbler netted at El Cuyo 8 Aug provides a slightly earlier date than previously recorded (JD, AC). The migration that passed through the coastal region of El Cuyo in early Oct brought a report of 7 Palm Warblers 4 Oct and of 11 on 6 Oct (JD, AC). An imm. Blackpoll Warbler was netted in the coastal area at El Cuyo 31 Oct (JD, AC), while one ad. male and 2 juv. Cerulean Warblers were netted there 4 Sep (JD, AC). Another early migrant was a Black-and-white Warbler netted at El Cuyo 9 Aug (JD, AC); 2 imm. females were netted 20 Aug at Rancho Hobonil (LC). The earliest sight record of American Redstart was one at El Cuyo 18 Aug; another was netted there 26 Aug (JD, AC). Two male Black-and-white Warblers were among migrants at H.Ti. 4 Oct, and a female was at H.Tz. 5 Oct (BM). An early Prothonotary Warbler was netted at El Cuyo 3 Aug (JD, AC), and 2 imm. males were at Hobonil 20 Aug (LC). A single Worm-eating Warbler was observed at El Cuyo 9 Aug (JD, AC) and a Swainson's Warbler in same area 4 Sep (JD, AC).

Northern Waterthrush was also reported early, with one seen 11 Aug and one netted 20 Aug at El Cuyo (JD, AC), while one imm. was netted 22 Aug at Rancho Hobonil (LC). On the road leading into H.S.J.T., 3 Northern were distinguished from 2 Louisiana Waterthrushes 6 Sep—and a total of 14 waterthrushes was seen on the 6-km return trip. A Louisiana Waterthrush was netted at Rancho Hobonil 22 (LC), and another was seen at El Cuyo 2 Sep (JD, AC). Kentucky Warbler is a regular but uncommon migrant to the peninsula and usually goes unnoticed; 7 were caught in nets in the El Cuyo area 12 Aug–12 Sep (JD, AC). Three imm. males were netted 19 Aug, along with an ad. male 20 Aug, at Rancho Hobonil (LC). Early reports for Hooded Warbler include 2 at Rancho Hobonil 19 Aug (LC), one at Yaxuná 20 Sep (AE, BM), and one at H.Ti., plus 6 heard there during the 4 Oct migration (BM). A female Gray-throated Chat was at Yaxuná 20 Sep (AE), and another was reported at Sayil 21 Nov (PW).

A male Rose-throated Tanager was seen at H.Tz. 22 Nov (BiM), while a male and 3 female Red-legged Honeycreepers were seen for the first time at El Cuyo 18 Aug (JD, AC). A Chipping and a Lark Sparrow showed up at R.S.M. this fall (no dates given; PW). An early Orchard Oriole was a female netted at Rancho Hobonil 5 Aug (LC). One male and 2 female Orchard Ori-

oles were at H.Ti. 7 Sep (BM), and an imm. male plus 8 others were at H.Ti. 4 Oct (BM). A Yellow-backed Oriole was observed feeding a juv. Bronzed Cowbird in a zapotilla tree at Majahual 30 Aug (BM). Two Tricolored Munias were seen at R.S.M. this fall (PW), while another was at the

savanna 12 km s. of Celestun 20 Nov (VM). The spread of this species, an agricultural pest in s. Asia, should be carefully watched in this country.

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For all we don't know about the resident avifauna of Central America, we know even less about seasonal patterns of occurrence. One index of how much accumulated knowledge we possess may be seen in the rate of diminishing returns. For example, as the number of species on a regional list increases, the number of new ones added each year should diminish proportionally as the list approaches (but never reaches) its maximum potential. It follows that the number of "country firsts" should diminish with each passing year, unless, of course, (1) the coverage increases accordingly (increasing numbers of birders afield), (2) the combined identification skills of the birders afield increases, or (3) there are so many potential new species to add that the "maximum potential" is still far off in the future. Looking back on the four fall migration seasons documented in this journal since 2000, we can pretty much rule out No. 1; No. 2 is always a factor; and it appears that No. 3 also holds true: for the "vagrant chaser" in all of us, there are still many, many rarities yet to be recorded in Central America.

Let's take a closer look. In fall 2000, 25 contributors recorded one country first. In fall 2001, 44 contributors recorded a remarkable seven country firsts; in fall 2002, 34 contributors recorded only one country first. But this past fall, 2003, one-third fewer contributors than in 2001 recorded no fewer than six country firsts (pending review): Great Frigatebird and Grayish Saltator in Panama, White-winged Scoter and Yellow-winged Cacique in Belize, Barred Parakeet in El Salvador, and Plain-breasted Ground-Dove in Honduras.

Country firsts do not mean much in the overall scheme of things; after all, they're the flukes. But they are an easy-to-define, and therefore easy-to-measure, indicator of the amount of new data (read: accumulating knowledge) flowing into the system, and indirectly, an indicator of how much more there still is to learn. So, for those who like to be on the cutting edge of discovery, Central America is still a great place to be.

### FRIGATEBIRDS THROUGH RAILS

A male and female Great Frigatebird associating with a feeding flock over Spotted and

# Central America



Spinner Dolphins at 5° 36.1' N, 82° 59.9' W (226 km ssw. of Isla Jicarón, Panama) on 12 Nov (ph. MF) represented the first photographic record from Central America and only the 4th documented American record away from the Islas Revillagigedos off Mexico, where the species breeds. It can be very difficult to differentiate the occasional Great Frigatebird from the abundant Magnificents in the field, and few people in North America are familiar with its distinguishing characteristics. To what extent may we be overlooking this wide-ranging species?

Rare in Panama were a Glossy Ibis 7 Sep (GA) and a male Cinnamon Teal 23 Sep (JT), both at Costa del Este near Panamá City. One and possibly 2 Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures closely observed at Barra de Santiago, *Ahuachapán* 22 Oct (ph. TJ) were unexpected, as this species is rare in El Salvador. Absolutely astounding, if confirmed, was a **White-winged Scoter** seen and well described in Ladyville, Belize 10-15 Nov (TR). Unfortunately, it was seen by a single observer and not photographed and thus may not constitute an acceptable record. This species is unrecorded in the Caribbean s. of the U. S. Gulf Coast states.

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Eighteen Snail Kites at L. Güija, *Santa Ana* 30 Nov (NH) was the largest concentration yet observed in El Salvador. An imm. Solitary Eagle soaring over Llano del Muerto at Perquín, *Morazán* 25 Oct (ph. TJ) was only the 5th for El Salvador and the first documented with a photograph. Also in El Salvador, a flock of 40 Short-tailed Hawks mixed in with migrating Turkey Vultures 2 km sw. of Suchitoto, *Cuscatlán* 14 Nov (NH) illustrated a rare example of migration in this species. Just two years ago, Swainson's