

Pictorial Highlights



This Western Spindalis, first reported on 25 October 2004 at Indigenous Park, Key West, Florida, remained into the spring (here 28 December). It appears to be of the Cuban race *pretrei* rather than of the Bahamian races *zena* or *townsendi*. The brighter coloration overall (particularly on the rump, mantle, breast) and the broader golden-orange nape better fit the Cuban race as does the black, well defined malar stripe, that does not expand into a dark necklace across the upper breast. This represents potentially the first record of this subspecies for the United States. Photograph by Jeff Bouton/Leica Sport Optics.



Connecticut's first (New England's second) Snowy Plover spent 1 October to 16 November 2004 undergoing a month-late prebasic molt at Sandy Point, West Haven. Photograph by Julian Hough.



An atypical juvenile golden-plover frequented the beach in Cape May Point, New Jersey for several days in October 2004 (here 23 October). The bird showed the golden tones, especially on face and crown, of a Pacific, but in structure—including leg length, relative length of the tertials and tail, wing length, proportions (with thick neck and blocky head)—it appeared far closer to American. It gave calls resembling both Pacific and American. Opinion is divided between a hybrid and an odd American Golden-Plover. Photograph by Richard Crossley/www.crossleybirds.com.



This Ash-throated Flycatcher at Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Northampton County, Virginia was found 6 November 2004 during a "rarity round-up," one of three found in the state that month. Photograph by Steve Thornhill.



Western hummingbirds continue to astonish easterners in late autumn. At the Dowdells' feeders and gardens in Villas, Cape May County, New Jersey, a Calliope Hummingbird 16 (here) to 23 October 2004 and a young male Allen's Hummingbird 3 (here) through 23 November 2004 were firsts for the yard and thirds for the state. Photographs by Richard Crossley/www.crossleybirds.com.



The second Black-chinned Hummingbird for Virginia, a hatch-year male, was confirmed at Cape Charles town 29 November 2004, though it may already have been present there for a week; it remained until 19 December. Photograph by Larry R. Lynch.



The first Ash-throated Flycatcher for Québec was present at Bois-de-Liesse, here on 26 November 2004. The presence of a worn juvenal rusty-edged secondary (presumably s5) suggests that it is a first-winter bird. Photograph by Pierre Bannon.



A stellar find in south Florida this fall, this Thick-billed Vireo at Boot Key, Monroe County was found on the last day of the Keys Birding Festival 3 October 2004—furnishing one of the few well-documented records for the United States. Photograph by Jeff Bouton/Leica Sport Optics.



Without doubt the highlight of Michigan's fall season was this Inca Dove, present at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, Michigan 7–11 (here 9) October 2004—not only a first state record, but a first for the Western Great Lakes Region. *Photograph by Steve Pike.*



Louisiana's first Magnificent Hummingbird appeared in Slidell 10–29 (here 26) November 2004, raising the total hummingbird species documented in the state to 12. *Photograph by Joe Turner.*



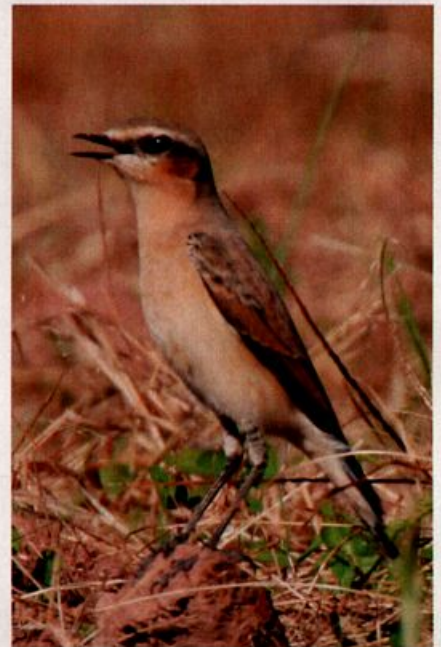
Providing a second documented record for Georgia, this MacGillivray's Warbler was located at Duluth 28 (here 29) September 2004. *Photograph by Earl Horn.*



This cooperative Golden-crowned Sparrow, the tenth for Ontario, frequented feeders near the Cranberry Marsh hawkwatch in Whitby (here 11 November 2004). During its prolonged stay, an estimated 2000 birders saw this sparrow. *Photograph by Mike McEvoy.*



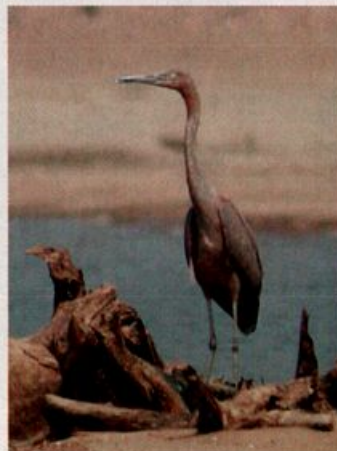
Virginia's first Mountain Bluebird, apparently a second-year male, was found just north of the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge 27 November 2004 by the photographer. *Photograph by Jon Little.*



This Northern Wheatear foraged in a farm field and gravel road near a construction site in northern Bucks County, Pennsylvania for a few hours 7 October 2004. Fortunately, one of the carpenters on the job was one of the state's most active birders! *Photograph by Gerry Dewaghe.*



This juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger, which furnished a long-awaited first for Kentucky, was found on Kentucky Lake above Kentucky Dam 29 August 2004. It remained through 11 (here 2) September and allowed close approach by boat. *Photograph by David Roemer.*



This juvenile Reddish Egret was photographed 12 September 2004 along the Mississippi River in Carlisle County, Kentucky—a second record (first photographed) in Kentucky and only the third for the Tennessee & Kentucky Region. *Photograph by David Roemer.*



Among many photographs of Missouri's first Tropical Kingbird was this one taken by the finder at Sunshine Lake, Ray County 30 October 2004. Voice recordings confirmed the identification on 9 November, and it was last observed the following day. *Photograph by Kristi Mayo.*



This female hatch-year Rufous Hummingbird remained faithful to a feeder at Niagara Falls, Ontario from 2 September 2004 (here 21 November) into December. The identification was confirmed when the bird was captured, measured, and banded. *Photograph by Brandon Holden.*



This photogenic male Vermilion Flycatcher, present in Afton Forest Preserve, DeKalb County, Illinois 17 (here) through 30 October 2004 was enjoyed by scores of observers. *Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.*



This Philadelphia Vireo, banded 23 August 2004 at Albert Creek, Yukon Territory—some 280 km west of the species' nearest Yukon breeding station—was part of a remarkable surge of extralimital songbirds observed across the territory in summer and fall of 2004. *Photograph by Ben Schonewille.*



Certainly a highlight of the season in Texas was this intermediate-morph South Polar Skua found off South Padre Island, Cameron County 1 October 2004 (here with Royal Tern). This represents the first record for the state as well as for the Gulf of Mexico. *Photograph by Andy Garcia.*



The low-impact practice of "roping" for rails at Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain County, Oklahoma produced this marvelous image of a Yellow Rail in flight 21 October 2004. On flying birds, the white secondaries show up well, but the banded underwing pattern is very difficult to see except in the hand. *Photograph by Matt White.*



This immature male Costa's Hummingbird in Meridian, Idaho was the state's first. Noted first on 14 October 2004, it was identified when captured by Stacy Peterson on 8 November and remained into the winter season. *Photograph by Stacy Peterson.*



White-faced Ibis has increased tremendously in the southern-central Canadian provinces in recent years and now occurs annually in numbers in the Prairie Provinces Region. Up to eight were at Whitewater Lake, Manitoba in summer and autumn 2004 (here 3 October), and breeding was suspected. *Photograph by Christian Artuso.*



The event of the fall season in Texas was the influx of Crimson-collared Grosbeaks in the Lower Rio Grande Valley: up to five birds were present at a single location in Weslaco, Hidalgo County starting 2 November 2004. Two adult males were noted 28 November (here); an adult female and two first-winter birds were also found in November. *Photograph David W. Nelson.*



The first Kansas record of Broad-billed Hummingbird was furnished by this bird in Garden City, Finney County (here 29 October 2004). *Photograph by Marie Osterbuhr.*



This Little Gull graced The Pinery, Douglas County, Colorado, 15 (here) through 17 November 2004. The pale wing linings are potentially a sign that this bird did not quite achieve definitive plumage in its third pre/basic molt; a "dilute plumage" is also a possibility. Photograph by Tony Leukering.



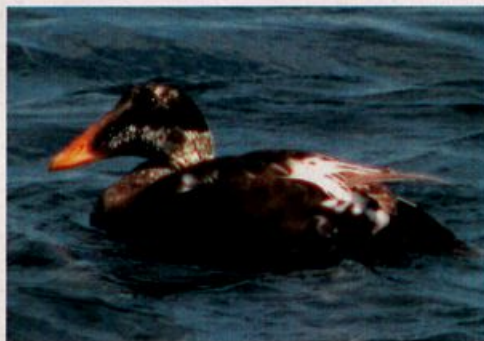
Utah's first White Ibis was found with a flock of White-faced Ibis in a field north of Spanish Fork, Utah County 11 (here) through 14 September 2004. Photograph by Jack Binch.



Part of a sight that must have been nearly incomprehensible, this male Willow Ptarmigan resting on the gunwale of a research vessel, was one of 125 that Alaska Science Center's researchers came across while working on Kuskokwim Bay in south-central Alaska 30 August 2003. Some of the birds were swimming. Photograph by Christian Zimmerman.



This female Lucifer Hummingbird on a nest found at Coronado National Memorial 4 August 2004 may be only the third nest ever found for this species in Arizona. Photograph by Sherry Mann.



Utterly unexpected, this Common Eider was at Port Angeles Harbor, Washington 3–13 (here 5) August 2004. The few western North American vagrants of this species have been recorded October–December, so it was surprising that another Common Eider was found in northern California in July 2004. Photograph by Keith Brady.



This adult Green Violet-ear was present at Richard Ellenberg's Upper Canyon Road feeder in Santa Fe 16–18 (here 17) November 2004; it brought to 17 the number of hummingbird species verified for New Mexico. Photograph by Jerry R. Oldenettel.



This Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, photographed 1 October 2004, provided a first record for Southeast Farallon Island, San Francisco County, California and just the seventh record for the Middle Pacific Coast Region. Photograph by Adam Brown.



This Black-tailed Gull was found at North Cove, Pacific County, Washington 3 August 2004 (here 2 October) and observed off and on for three months, mostly with Heermann's Gulls, with which it appeared to depart at the end of October. Photograph by Warren Terrell.



This all-dark tubenose, as yet not conclusively identified, was observed on a pelagic trip off Bodega Bay, Sonoma County, California 11 October 2004. Many features suggested Parkinson's Petrel, such as the short, bicolored bill, dark plumage, and apparent lack of pink legs. The pinkish-blue color of the bill base is typical of juvenile Parkinson's. Structurally, the bird appeared to differ from Flesh-footed Shearwater (also observed that day) in its short, "bull" neck, shorter "hand," and different tail shape and length. In the field, it was fairly distinctive—and certainly not typical of any seabird regularly observed off California. Photographs by David W. Nelson.



British Columbia's second (but first photographically documented) Gray Wagtail was a one-day wonder at Carmanah Point, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, 26 October 2004. Photograph by Jerry Etkorn.



A most surprising bird of the fall season was this Pine Grosbeak at Galileo Hill Park, Kern County, California, 3 to 7 November 2004 (photographed here on 7 November).
Photograph by Larry Sansone.



This warbler near Oxnard, Ventura County, California on 3 and (here) 4 October 2004 generated much discussion. The relatively long tail, bold white wingbars, and extensive dark auricular patch lacking chestnut color were suggestive of Townsend's Warbler, but in other respects—the extensive ventral streaking, the greenish yellow rump—it matched Cape May Warbler.
Photograph by Kathi Ellsworth.



Certain rare shorebirds remain relatively underrepresented on the Baja California Peninsula. This juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper, the Region's first, was present 19 (here) through 26 September 2004 at the Rio Guadalupe estuary, Baja California, where it joined a long-staying Hudsonian Godwit.
Photograph by Matt Sadowski.



This Southern Lapwing has been continuously present at Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize since March 2004 (here 18 December 2004). Given the recent range expansion in this species northward into Costa Rica and the Lesser Antilles, this bird is thought to be of wild provenance. *Photograph by Jim Beveridge.*



Though both species had been recorded previously in the neighboring state of Baja California Sur, this *albiflora* Yellow-throated Warbler (upper) at Punta Banda 29 September 2004 and Grace's Warbler (lower) at Ejido Morelos 19 (here) through 21 October 2004 brought the warbler list for Baja California to 44 species. *Photographs by Marshall J. Iiff (upper) and Steven G. Mlodinow (lower).*



Furnishing a fourth record of the species for Guadalupe, this Ruff was photographed at the productive Pointe des Châteaux area 10 September 2004.
Photograph by Anthony Levesque.



Good images of gadfly petrels are hard to get. This Black-winged Petrel was photographed 4 November 2004 off the Kona coast of the Big Island of Hawai'i during a cetacean survey. The dorsal pattern is quite similar to other petrels, but the ventral view clearly shows the distinctive broad black band along the leading edge of the wing that helps separate this species. *Photographs by Robin Baird.*



This Elegant Tern (with Royal Tern at right) was one of two found 6 November 2004 at the Rio Nacaome estuary off Puerto Grande, just west of Coyolito, Honduras. These birds provided the first documented evidence of this Pacific species' occurrence in Honduras. *Photographs by Tom Jenner.*



This young Clay-colored Sparrow was banded by the Kirtland's Warbler Training and Recovery Project at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera Island, Bahamas 28 October 2004, a first for the country. *Photograph by Dave Currie.*