

# West Indies & Bermuda

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Grenada was devastated by Hurricane Ivan last fall. Based on previous experience on the island from 2003, Alvaro Jaramillo and Jay VanderGaast said they were lucky to see and hear the specialty species such as Hook-billed Kite and Grenada Dove at all there in 2005. Both species clearly suffered losses there. The upland "rain forests" of Grenada were leveled, as Jaramillo describes it. Lesser Antillean Tanager was not observed at all, and Scaly-naped Pigeon was seen only in lowland scrub-thorn forest, rather than in the highlands. The obligate frugivores and species dependent upon upland food sources were most affected by the storm.

**Abbreviations:** E.C.L.S.P. (Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park, Bahamas); H.W.P.N.P. (Harrold & Wilson Ponds N.P., Bahamas); P.T.N.R. (Petit-Terre N.R., Guadeloupe).

## GREBES THROUGH VULTURES

Pied-billed Grebes with young were at Parson's Road Pond, Bermuda 27 Mar (AD); 2 wintering Horned Grebes were still in Castle Harbour, Bermuda 24 Mar (JM). Sooty Shearwaters peaked at 40/hour 21 May past Cooper's Pt., Bermuda (AD), where the first Manx Shearwaters (40) were seen passing 29 Mar (PW); Manx maxed at 120/hour 9 Apr at Devonshire Bay, Bermuda (AD). At P.T.N.R., Levesque recorded 120 and 199 Audubon's Shearwaters 26 & 27 Mar, respectively. Fishing

over the Little Abaco Canyon, Bahamas 15–25 km e. of Hope Town, B. Wallace found 9 Black-capped Petrels, 100+ Audubon's Shearwaters, and a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel 28–29 Apr. A Wilson's Storm-Petrel was observed off Desecheo I., Puerto Rico 8 Apr (MC). Four Black-capped Petrels 30 Apr and one 2 May were seen from Crossing Rocks, Abaco, Bahamas (BP, MG). On 2 Apr 40–50 Greater Shearwaters, a few Sooty Shearwaters, and a Wilson's Storm-Petrel were seen 3 km e. of Elbow Cay, Abaco, Bahamas (BWo). On 24 Apr, MC counted about 200 Audubon's Shearwaters off Desecheo I., Puerto Rico.

Since the warden's dogs were removed from Warderick Wells, Exuma, Bahamas last winter (see N.A.B. 58: 449), the number of White-tailed Tropicbirds nesting on the cay has risen from five to 13 pairs. Elsewhere in E.C.L.S.P., 27 pairs nested on Shroud Cay and nearby islets, two pairs on Hog Cay, and several pairs on a small cay s. of Hawksbill Cay (WM, MR). One in n. Exuma Sound 5 Mar was early (JG). A colony of White-tailed Tropicbirds inspected

2 Apr at Puerto Hermina, Quebradillas, Puerto Rico (AM) included a few nests with dead chicks. Six Red-billed Tropicbirds, including a nestling at one site, were noted 22 Apr (AJ et al.) at Barbuda. The Braceys found a second-year Northern Gannet near Sunrise Cay, Abaco, Bahamas 19 May, a very late date (EB, BB). A newly reported Brown Pelican breeding site at Crab Cay, Berry Is., Bahamas (VS) may be the source of pelicans seen around New Providence, including 3 at Rose I. 30 Mar (MD), one there 1 May (NMc), and one at Lyford Cay 9 May (AB, TWh). A Brown Pelican at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera, Bahamas 29 Mar (DC) could have come from either the s. or the n. Bahamas. One hundred Brown Pelicans seen 22 Apr at Antigua should be investigated for signs of nesting (AJ et al.).

The long-staying Little Egret was relocated at Paget I., Bermuda 30 Mar (PW), and 2 were photographed on Antigua 22 Apr (AJ, KL, JV). Sixty White Ibis on South Bimini and 10 on North Bimini, Bahamas 14 May constituted an unusually high count there (PD, TH, FS). A

**SA** Greater Flamingos were the subject of study across the the Bahamas this season, but their numbers on Great Inagua, in the core of their range, are uncertain. Up to 40 were at Long Cay off Crooked I. 5 Mar (BH); 150 were seen on the w. side of Andros, n. of North Bight 10 Apr (BPY). Eleven were seen on 21 Apr s. of Gordons, Long I., where they had not been seen for eight years (B&JS). Baltz's aerial survey of North Andros 8 May found 2100–2400 (MB), while Clum's aerial survey of the s. Bahamas 10 May found small flocks on Acklins I. and East Plana Cay and several hundred birds on Mayaguana (NC, MH, RB, TWh). Approximately 5000 were seen on Great Inagua on 10 Mar (FG, LG, HN); Clum's survey of Inagua 10 May had to be cut short due to the long flight back to Nassau, but fewer than 2000 were counted.

Glossy Ibis was seen carrying nesting material 18 May on the w. edge of Caño Tiburones Puerto Rico (SC), possibly the first evidence of nesting in Puerto Rico. A Glossy Ibis was at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 3 Apr–13 May (AD). Up to 5 Roseate Spoonbills were at Cable Beach G.C., New Providence, Bahamas during the first two weeks of Mar (TH, CW, PD). Four Black Vultures noted at Percerverance dump 10 Apr at Grenada were most unusual there (AJ et al.).

### GEESE THROUGH ALCIDS

A Canada Goose was on St. George's G.C., Bermuda 12 May (PP). A late Greater Scaup was on Parson's Road Pond, Bermuda 17 May (EA). Migrant waterfowl noted at Costa de Oro, Caño Tiburones, Puerto Rico 2 Mar included a Northern Shoveler, 5 American Wigeons, and several Blue-winged Teal (SC, LM). A male Wood Duck 30 Mar on the Treasure Cay G.C., Abaco, Bahamas was unusual (EB). Two Red-breasted Mergansers that wintered off Treasure Cay, Abaco were last seen 2 Mar (EB). A flock of 32 Ruddy Ducks was at La Tembladera Lagoon, Arecibo, Puerto Rico 22 Mar; some were dark-headed, a trait of some s. populations (SC). A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was at North Pond, Bermuda in Mar (PW), one of 3 wintering individuals that remained at Bermuda through 5 May.

This spring, Swallow-tailed Kites were reported 13 Mar at Gray's, Long I., Bahamas (DL); 18 Mar over Island Palms Hotel, Grand Bahama (SH, SR, EG); 20 Mar at Lyford Cay G.C., New Providence (CG); 18 Apr over the Grand Bahama Highway (EG); and 3 May at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama (EG). A Swallow-tailed Kite was over Camp Hill, Bermuda 13 Mar–17 Apr (RP), with 2 at Riddell's Bay G.C., Bermuda 17 Apr (*vide* DW). A Hook-billed Kite at Grand Etang, Grenada 10 Apr was a good sign for this endangered taxon (AJ et al.). Two Northern Harriers were over the Bermuda Airport perimeter 18 Mar (AD), with one lingering into May. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen over Nonsuch I., Bermuda 4 Apr (DBW) and another at Abbott's Cliff 16 Apr (PW). The 2 long-staying Red-tailed Hawks were over Morgan's Pt., Bermuda 29 Apr (DW). One of the 2 wintering Rough-legged Hawks was still present at the Bermuda Airport 3 Mar (AD). American Kestrels (resident race) raised 2 young in early Apr at a lower school in Freeport, Grand Bahama (ph. EG). Kestrels have now been confirmed breeding on all the major islands in the Bahamas. Dean, Hepburn, and Schaller found feral Wild Turkeys and Common Peafowl on S. Bimini 13–14 May.

A Virginia Rail was at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 3–6 Apr (AD). Single Purple Gallinules were seen at South Ocean G.C., New Providence 17 Mar (TH), Four Seasons G.C., Great Exuma 18 Apr (RS), and Crossing Rocks,

Abaco 30 Apr (BP, MG). Three were at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 6 May (EG). A Snowy Plover was noted at Papayo salt flats, Lajas, Puerto Rico (MC), where nesting is likely. Snowy Plovers were nesting at Williams Town, Little Exuma 18 Apr (RS). This is near the n. limit of their range in the Bahamas. A pair of American Oystercatchers was noted 28 Mar at Desecheo I., Puerto Rico (MC). An American Avocet that wintered at H.W.P.N.P. was last seen 22 Mar (PD). On 25 & 29 Apr single Upland Sandpipers were at Lyford Cay G.C., New Providence (TWh, TH). A Eurasian Whimbrel reported last fall was still present at P.T.N.R. through 5 Apr (AL). Two Whimbrels flew past Crossing Rocks, Abaco 29 Apr (BP, MG). A Hudsonian Godwit was noted 1 Apr at Candelaria Lagoon, Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, one of few records of the species for that island (HL). Single Red Knots were seen on South Bimini 14 May (PD, TH, FS) and Westridge Estates, New Providence 15



This immature male American Kestrel, rescued from a school yard at Freeport, Grand Bahama, confirmed that this species now nests on all the major islands in the Bahamas. The resident Bahamian birds are apparently a mix of *sparveroides* from Cuba and *dominicensis* from Hispaniola. Photograph by Erika Gates.

May (PD, ph. LL). Two Red Knots were at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 29 May (DBW). Thirty-six Sanderlings at South Andros 1–2 Apr made a good count (OG). A Ruff was at North Pond, Bermuda 25 Apr–11 May (DW). On 14 May a Wilson's Phalarope was photographed near the dump on South Bimini (PD, TH, FS). A Wilson's Phalarope was at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 31 May (DW).

A Great Skua passed by Cooper's Pt., Bermuda 21 May (AD, PW)—a remarkable record for a species thought to be mostly a winter visitor to these latitudes. South Polar Skua has been the skua species expected in spring, but at least one recent article questions that assumption (see Howell, S. N. G. 2005. Large skuas off North Carolina. *Birding World* 18: 290–296; and for issues of identification, the same author's 2004 "South Polar Skuas in California" [*Birding World* 17: 288–297] is of interest). A Black-headed Gull was seen 20–22 Apr at Antigua (AJ et al.). A Herring Gull, 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and 2 first-winter Great Black-backed Gulls were at Tarpum Bay, Bahamas in early Mar (DC, TS); the first Gull-billed Terns of the year in the Bahamas were reported on 21 Apr there (DC).

A Gull-billed Tern was noted at San Juan Bay 29 May (JS). A Cayenne Tern (or intergrade) was seen 22 Apr in the company of 30 Sandwich Terns at Antigua (AJ et al.). A group of 20 Roseate Terns seen 22 Apr at Barbuda was likely nesting nearby (AJ et al.); one was in Castle Harbour, Bermuda 11 & 30 May (DBW, PW). A beautifully photographed Arctic Tern was seen 3 km e. of La Desirade I., Guadeloupe 1 May (AL), for one of the few records in spring in the Lesser Antilles. Twenty Least Terns at Discovery Bay Beach, Grand Bahama 6 May made a good count (EG). Least Terns and Sooty Terns were very early 9 Mar near Matthew Town, Great Inagua, Bahamas (FG, LG, HN). Bridled Terns nested on Highborne Cay, Exumas in late May (MR). A report of 10 Black Noddies off Desecheo I., Puerto Rico 24 Apr (MC) is most intriguing. At least 11 dead Atlantic Puffins were found at various locations around Bermuda. The main die-off came 9–19 Mar, with a further decomposed corpse found 13 Apr. There have only been four previous records (also tideline corpses). The cause of death may well have been an intense low-pressure system that forced birds southward into poor feeding areas.

### PIGEONS THROUGH THRASHERS

A hat-trick of *Patagioenas* pigeons at Las Curias Res., San Juan Bay, Puerto Rico 29 May (JS, CR) included the common Scalynaped Pigeon, a single White-crowned Pigeon, and the endangered Plain Pigeon, unusual at this location. Another White-crowned was noted at San Juan Bay 11 May (JS). A Eurasian Collared-Dove at Warderick Wells, E.C.L.S.P. in late Apr (JE) was the first for the Exumas and the park. Four White-winged Doves on Mangrove Cay, Andros 3 Apr were unusual there (OG); 4 on Barbuda appear to represent a new species there (AJ et al.). Jaramillo, VanderGaast, and crew found 2–3 Grenada Doves at Mt. Hartman and Perserverence, Grenada 10 Apr. Key West Quail-Dove is another species on Abaco that was devastated by the 2004 hurricanes; Wolck reports that through Apr none had been seen or heard on Elbow Cay, where they were formerly common. Only one has been seen on Great Abaco, although 2 others have heard (EB, AK). A single was noted in the Palmas area, ne. Caño Tiburones, Puerto Rico (SC, LM). Forty Red-necked and 10 Imperial Parrots were noted on Dominica 18–19 Apr (AJ et al.). Jaramillo reports that Barn Owls heard on Grenada 11 Apr give vocalizations much more like Ashy-faced Owl than Barn Owl (see also N.A.B. 56: 236). A Puerto Rican Nightjar heard 23 May near El Madrigal, Ponce (Julio M. Santiago) was in an area under heavy pressure from development. The first report of an Antillean Nighthawk in Bahamas was from Coral Harbour, New Providence on 22 Apr (CW).

A Black Swift was noted 6 Mar over the Tanamá River and Arecibo Radio Telescope, Arecibo, Puerto Rico (SC, LM). A Short-tailed Swift was photographed at P.T.N.R. 12 & 18 May (AL), for the 2nd record from Guadeloupe. Three Chimney Swifts were at Wemyss Bight, Eleuthera, Bahamas 14 Apr (JW, DC), 2 at Abaco N.P., Bahamas 2 May (BP MG), and 4 at South Bimini 14 May (PD, TH, FS). The first Chimney Swift of the season at Bermuda was noted over Jenningsland 18 Apr (JM), with a maximum of 7 at St. Georges G.C. 25 May (PW). An Eastern Kingbird was at Clearwater, Bermuda 30 Mar–6 Apr (AD), with another at Wreck Hill 4 May (WF); one was at Crossing Rocks, Abaco, Bahamas 19 Mar (EB, HP). The earliest reports of Gray Kingbirds in Bahamas were 10 Mar at Vandaxville, Great Inagua (FG, LG, HN) and 17 Mar at Tarpum Bay (WN). A Yellow-throated Vireo was seen at Stokes Pt. Reserve, Bermuda 17 Apr (DBW) and another (with a Red-eyed) at Fort Scaur, Bermuda 24 Apr (WF, DW). The first Black-whiskered Vireo of the year in the Bahamas was in s. Eleuthera 2 Mar (ph. DC). Two Tree Swallows at the Bermuda Airport 10 Mar led swallow migration there; Spittal Pond, nearby, hosted 2 Northern Rough-winged Swallows 26 Apr (DW), a Bank Swallow 30 May+ (DW), and a Cliff Swallow 24 Mar (AD). On 4 May, at least 4 Cave Swallows were at Nine Tasks L., S. Andros, their only known nesting site in the Bahamas (LP, TWh).

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Warderick Wells, E.C.L.S.P. 2 May (HN). A Veery was observed at Bahama Palm Shores, Abaco, and another was heard at Abaco N.P. 29 Apr (BP MG). A Swainson's Thrush was seen at Bartram's Pond 2 May (EA). On 29 Apr, Peterjohn heard a Bicknell's Thrush calling repeatedly at Abaco N.P. The bird was described as giving a three-note call typical of Bicknell's (unlike the two-note calls of Gray-cheeked Thrush), with a rising inflection between the first and middle notes, followed by a lower note. Two Swainson's Thrushes were at Richmond Hill, Great Exuma 26 Apr (RS), and one was at Waterloo, Nassau 28 Apr (PD). Two American Robins were at Treasure Cay, Abaco 1 Mar (TH, DM), and one was at The Retreat, Nassau 14 Mar (GW, KW, TWh). An American Robin at Aguadilla, Puerto Rico 10 Apr (ALs) may represent a first record for Puerto Rico (*vide* JS). A Brown Thrasher was almost certainly a ship-assisted arrival in the City of Hamilton, Bermuda 2 May (GG).

## WAXWINGS THROUGH FINCHES

Up to 10 Cedar Waxwings were at Marsh Harbour, Abaco 31 Mar–4 Apr (SJD, JD, GGB, GB, PF); on Bermuda, large flocks were noted at Spittal Pond 23 Apr (35 birds; AD) and at Wreck Hill 4 May (50; WF). A Blue-winged Warbler was noted 21 Mar at Rock Sound, Eleuthera (DE). A Golden-winged Warbler provided a rare spring record at Fort Scaur, Bermuda 10 Apr (WF). A Tennessee Warbler was seen at the GlaxoSmithKline facilities 30 Mar in the municipality of Cidra, Puerto Rico (AP); there is a single record from the U.S. Virgin Islands (RLN), but we know of no confirmed records of the species from Puerto Rico. Two Chestnut-sided Warblers were found on 6 May at Taino Beach, Grand Bahama (EG). A Magnolia Warbler was at Fort Scaur, Bermuda 1 May (AD). A male Black-throated Green Warbler was seen 13 Mar at Cerro Maravilla, Jayuya, Puerto Rico (SC), and a female was at Syndicate, Dominica 18 Apr (AJ et al.), where rare. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was noted 13 Mar at Cerro Jayuya, Jayuya (SC). The wintering Townsend's Warbler was last seen along Orange Valley Rd., Bermuda 3 Mar (BL). A Bay-breasted Warbler was at Fort Scaur, Bermuda 24 Apr (WF); another was at Tiamo Resort, South Andros, Bahamas 1–3 May (PH, TWh); and another was at Barbuda 22 Apr (AJ et al.). Blackpoll Warblers arrived early in the Bahamas around 22 Apr in large numbers, but many were still around after the first week in May. One was seen 23 May at the Boquerón Wildlife Reserve, Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico (HL), unusually late. A female Prothonotary Warbler was in s. Eleuthera 16 Apr (DC, JW). Single Swainson's Warblers were netted at Rock Sound 19 & 20 Mar (JW, IM, SW, DE); one found 27 Mar s. of the Rio Abajo S.E., Utuado, Puerto Rico (JMN) was a rare find, but this species may be an uncommon visitor to the higher karst mountains in the n.-cen. and nw. parts of the island. A Louisiana Waterthrush was at North Pond, Bermuda 2 Apr (EA). A Kentucky Warbler was seen at Hungry Bay, Bermuda 5 Apr (GH). On 12–14 May, Dean, Hepburn, and Schaller found hundreds of American Redstarts, Northern Waterthrushes, and Common Yellowthroats (mostly males) feeding on the ground on N. Bimini, Bahamas; strangely, there were no such flocks on nearby S. Bimini.

A Summer Tanager was found near Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 18 Mar (SH, SR, EG); 2 were at Marsh Harbour, Bahamas

1 May (BP, MG). A Scarlet Tanager was at Fort Scaur, Bermuda 24 Apr–4 May (WF); another was in Barbuda 22 Apr (AJ et al.). A Greater Antillean Bullfinch May 28–29 May at Highborne Cay, Exumas (MR) was an unusual find for such a small island. A Savannah Sparrow at Vandaxville, Great Inagua 10 Mar (FG, LG, HN) may constitute a first for that island. A well-described Lincoln's Sparrow was found at Bahama Palm Shores, Abaco 1 Apr (SJD et al.). A Swamp Sparrow was at Somerset Long Bay N.R., Bermuda 26 Mar (AD). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen 1 Mar at Camperdown, Nassau, Bahamas (TH), 17 Mar at Rock Sound, Eleuthera (DC), 15 Apr in Lucaya, Grand Bahama (GK), and again at Camperdown 22 Apr (CW). A Lapland Longspur at Astwood Park 16 Mar (TW) furnished Bermuda's first spring record. A Blue Grosbeak was found at Lakeview Ponds, Paradise Island, Bahamas on 7 Apr (CW), and on 29 Apr one was at Waterloo, Nassau (PD).

A male Blue Grosbeak was seen in Paget, Bermuda 20 Apr (AD). The Bahamas high count for Bobolinks this spring was 58 at Lyford Cay G.C. 25 Apr (TWh). Single Shiny Cowbirds were at Diamond Farm, New Providence 27 Apr (PD, TWh) and at Bahama Palm Shores, Abaco 29–30 Apr (BP, MG).

**Observers:** Eric Amos, Aileen Bainton, Mike Baltz, Robin Bjork, Elwood Bracey, Betsy Bracey, G. Gordon Brown (GGB), George Brown, Sandy Buckner, Nancy Clum, Sergio Colón, Manuel Cruz, David Currie, Paul Dean, James J. Dinsmore, Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Andrew Dobson, Monty Doyle, Judy Estep, David Ewert, Peter Frechtel, Wendy Frith, Lynn Gape, Erika Gates, Joe Gherardi, Gertrude Gierlinger, Chris Goodwin, Frank Graham, Mary Gustafson, Petagay Hartman, Gene Harvey, Susan Heath, Tony Hepburn, Bill Hezlep, Mark Hofling, Alvaro Jaramillo, Anita Knowles, Geana Knowles, Kent Lannert, Anthony Levesque, Lionel Levine, Allen Lewis (ALs), David Lincoln, Heriberto López, Bruce Lorhan, Will Mackin, Jeremy Madeiros, Neil McKinney (NMc), Ingeria Miller, Denny Moore, Alcides Morales, Luis Muñoz, José Miguel Nazario, Walter Nealy, Henry Nixon, Robert L. Norton, Bahamas National Trust Ornithology Group (OG), Ana Pazos, Bruce Peterjohn, Hagen Peters, Lewis Phillips, Pat Pocklington, Ron Porter, Bruce Purdy (BPY), Macgregor Robertson, Carina Roig, Shamie Rolle, José Salguero, Julio M. Santiago (JMS), Freddie Schaller, Vernal Smith, Tom Southerland, Ron Spencer, Barbara & Jim Sweeney, Jay VanderGaast, Sarah Wagner, Bob Wallace, David Wallace (DW), Carolyn Wardle, Paul Watson, Tim Wershler, Kaye White, Tony White (TWh), Gerald Winegrad, David Wingate (DBW), Bruce Wolk (BWo), Joe Wunderle. 🌐

**SA** The House Wren complex in the Lesser Antilles is not well understood. AJ conducted informal playback experiments with singing House Wrens on Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Dominica. The results were not typical for conspecific taxa: birds generally took little note of wren songs recorded on other islands but responded vigorously to songs recorded on their own islands. Plumage differences, especially in the intensity of rufous coloration, as well as structural differences (e.g., bill length) were apparent among these taxa as well. Formal field work on this complex would be very worthwhile, particularly because some taxa appear to be declining, if not already extinct, e.g., on Martinique and possibly Guadeloupe.