

West Indies & Bermuda

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Summer in this Region usually means fewer reports; breeding by most species usually takes place in April or May but often later in the year in response to wet conditions. Nesting was confirmed for White Ibis in the Bahamas and suspected there for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, while West Indian Woodpecker, Brown Pelican, and Cave Swallow may be recovering or expanding in the Bahamas as well. The news continues to be good for nesting Cahows (Bermuda Petrels), but the long-term forecasts for rising sea levels and increasingly frequent (and stronger) tropical storms continue to bode ill for most of the Region's already vulnerable avifauna.

PETRELS THROUGH TERNS

Another good year for Bermuda Petrels after the setback caused by Hurricane *Fabian* of 2003: a record-high 71 pairs produced 35 chicks, of which 21 were successfully translocated and fledged from Nonsuch I. (JM; <<http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2005/09/cahow.html>>). Greater Shearwater passage off Bermuda occurred on 3-4 Jun; counts past Cooper's Point reached 1000/hr on 4 Jun, one of the best counts ever (AD, JM, LM). On 28 Jul, a Cory's Shearwater, 50 Audubon's Shearwaters, 50 Roseate Terns, 25 Brown Noddies, 18 Bridled Terns, and 8 Sooty Terns fed over an area known as "the tuna hole" about 3 km off Guana Cay, Abaco, Bahamas (RP). Over 20 pairs of White-tailed

Tropicbirds nested on the n. shore of San Salvador this summer (WH, m. ob.). Brown Pelicans have returned to the n. Bahamas as a nesting species: 12 pairs nested on Brush Cay (26° 31.39' N, 77° 48.95' W) between Grand Bahama and Abaco (JK), and five pairs nested on Crab Cay off Chub Cay, Berry Is. (VS). It is not known whether these birds are of the West Indian nominate subspecies or of the e. North American *carolinensis*. A Magnificent Frigatebird, uncommon on New Providence, was seen over Fort Montagu, Nassau, Bahamas 8 Jul (PD, TW). Twelve pairs of White Ibis nesting on Sandy Cay in the lagoon at North Bimini 26 Jun provided the first documented nesting record for the Bahamas (ph. JK, PK). At Guadeloupe, Levesque found a pair of Least Bitterns at Port Louis swamp on 9 Jul.

A Green-winged Teal and a Blue-winged Teal were found at Harrold and Wilson Ponds N.P., Bahamas 7 Jul (PD, LH, KHL, LL). Single Ospreys were present throughout the period at the East End and in the Castle Harbour area, Bermuda. A Merlin over Tee Street, Bermuda 3 Jul provided the first summer record (AD, PJH). Two Piping Plovers were at Grape Bay, Bermuda 29 Jul (DW). A small flock of shorebirds, all in basic plumage, on San Salvador, Bahamas 26 Jun included 3 Black-bellied Plovers, 8 Semipalmated Plovers, 4 Ruddy Turnstones, and a Sanderling (EB, TE, JH, TW). The first re-

turning shorebirds in Bermuda were at least a week later than usual, with Lesser Yellowlegs at Warwick Pond and Least Sandpiper at Spittal Pond 15 Jul (AD). Five Western Sandpipers at Green Turtle Cay, Abaco 1 Jul were early arrivals (EB). A Bonaparte's Gull seen through much of Jun provided the first summer record for this species in Bermuda (PW). A Gull-billed Tern flew over Bartram's Pond, Bermuda 20 Jun (EA); 6 flew over Cable Beach G.C., Bahamas 5 Jun (PD); and 5 fed daily over Lyford Cay G.C., Bahamas June-early Jul (TW). Approximately 25 pairs of Roseate Terns nested on Salt Cay (Blue Lagoon Cay) off Nassau, Bahamas this summer (PD). Pagliaro reported a mixed colony of 30 pairs of Roseate Terns, 20 of Bridled Terns, and five of Sooty Terns on Foote's Cay, 1.6 km w. of Guana Cay, Abaco. An ad. Bridled Tern was seen of the East End, Bermuda 12 Jun (PW), the island's 4th record. At Barbados, a very early Black Tern was seen in the Oilfields on 3 Jul (MF, EM), marking the beginning of fall migration for this species in the Region.

DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS

About 5 White-winged Doves were noted on San Salvador, Bahamas at Cockburntown and near the Gerace Research Center 23-27 Jun (EB, TE, JH, TW). A Zenaida Dove on the grounds of the Radisson Hotel, Cable Beach, New Providence, Bahamas 24 Jun (DC) was

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Birders' Exchange



SA Hurricanes *Frances* and *Jeanne* struck the northern Bahamas in September 2004. Fortunately two studies were conducted just before the hurricanes that provided baseline data to measure the hurricanes' impact on birdlife: W. Hayes had been studying birds in the pine forests of Grand Bahama, and C. Stahala was studying Bahama Parrots on Abaco. Preliminary findings from post-hurricane studies are now available, although much work remains to be done. The population of birds in Grand Bahama's pine forests declined from summer 2004 to summer 2005 by a shocking 58.3%. Among the hardest hit species were Cuban Emerald (-86%), Hairy Woodpecker (-72%), Thick-billed Vireo (-73%), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (-88%), Red-legged Thrush (-69%), and Western Spindalis (-72%). Stahala's parrots fared better. There was a decline in nesting success (54% to 44%) during the year of the hurricanes, but the success rate returned to its 2003 level in 2005. Lest we be too optimistic, it is important to note here that these levels are not high enough for the parrot population to persist. We thank Hayes and Stahala for permitting us to publish their preliminary data.

unusual. Four Cuban (Bahama) Parrots have been seen in New Providence, Bahamas since at least 21 May; photographs indicate that they are probably from Great Inagua. No Bahama Parrots are missing from the collection at Ardastra Gardens (PD, RH), so these free-flying birds were probably introduced illegally. West Indian Woodpecker sightings are gradually increasing on Abaco. The Knowles saw or heard at least 6 at Bahama Palm Shores 1 Jun, and near Crossing Rocks, 5 were seen 20 Jun and 12 on 30 Jun (EB, WH, PH); one was along Jake Jones Rd., San Salvador 27 Jun (WH, EB). A pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoos was heard calling at Nicholls Town, North Andros, Bahamas 28 Jun (DC). They have been noted calling on different islands over the past few summers, raising speculation that the species may nest in the Bahamas.

Levesque saw a Purple-throated Carib at Petit-Terre N.R., Guadeloupe 25 Jul; primarily a Lesser Antillean species, this striking hummer has been found as far nw. as St. John, U.S. Virgin Is., and as far se. as Barbados. There were several reports of a summering Belted Kingfisher in Jun at Bermuda (*vide* AD). On Guadeloupe, an ad. Caribbean Elaenia fed a fledgling Gray Kingbird at Ste. Anne 10-11 Jul (AL), an unexpected sight. San Salvador's first Black-whiskered Vireo was found at Gerace Research Center 27 Jun (EB, WH). The presence of 2 Bahama Swallows over the road between Coral Harbour and Nassau Airport, Bahamas 22 Jun (CW) suggests that a few still nest on New Providence. A Barn Swallow flew over the beach at Graham's Harbour, San Salvador 24 Jun (TW). A possible Cave Swallow was at Fresh Creek, North Andros, Bahamas 28 Jun (DC), potentially the first Bahamian report away from the nesting area on South Andros. A Bank Swallow was noted 1-2 Jun at Spittal Pond, Bermuda (DW). A Northern Waterthrush 1 Jun (latest spring date) at Somerset Long Bay N.R., Bermuda (DW) provided a very rare Jun record. Fall migrant warblers in Bermuda were right on time; they included a Black-

and-white Warbler 29 Jul at Riddell's Bay (DW) and a Louisiana Waterthrush 27 Jul at Spittal Pond (EA).

Addenda to Spring 2005: Spring sightings (PM, KM) from St. Lucia of interest included 6 Common Terns at Soufriere 18 May; 2 St. Lucia Parrots at En Bas Saut Falls trail Edmund Forest 12 May and 6 at Des Cartiers Forest Reserve 21 May; and 3 Black Swifts at En Bas Saut Falls trail 14 May. PM reports



Twelve nests of White Ibis on Sandy Cay, North Bimini Lagoon provided the first confirmed nesting record of the species in the Bahamas. Photograph by Jim Kushlan.

that approximately 138 pairs (22% of the world's population) of White-breasted Thrasher, a critically endangered endemic, are threatened by a large hotel and residential development project associated with the coming Cricket World Cup planned for St. Lucia. A single bird was noted at Praslin Bay 14 May. Two St. Lucia Black Finches were noted at en Bas Saut Fall trail, Edmund Forest 14 May.

Observers: Eric Amos, Elwood Bracey, Dan Cooper, Paul Dean, Andrew Dobson, Ted Fleming, Martin Frost, Lee Hanna, Keva Hanna-Lawrence (KHL), Joshua Hapner, Pat Hayes, William Hayes, Peter Holmes (PJH), Robin Howard, Anita Knowles, James Kushlan, Philip Kushlan, Anthony Levesque, Lionel Levine, Jeremy Madeiros, Leila Madeiros, Eddie Massiah, Peter Metropulis, Kathleen Metropulis, Ron Pagliaro, Vernal Smith, Caroline Stahala, David Wallace Carolyn Wardle, Paul Watson, Tony White. 🐦