



H. Lee Jones • Oliver Komar

The increase in number and severity of tropical storms and hurricanes in the Caribbean may be having a huge but largely unnoticed impact on migrating songbirds. Paul Salaman of the American Bird Conservancy reported an unprecedented fallout of migrants on San Andrés Island, 220 km east of Nicaragua, during and following Hurricanes *Wilma* and *Beta*. He, ten instructors, and 60 trainee banders visited San Andrés to conduct an advanced banding course sponsored by Fundación ProAves and others. They were present from the period immediately following the passage of Hurricane *Wilma* (19 Oct), which started just east of San Andrés and tracked northwestward, through the full impact of Hurricane *Beta* a week later. In Dr. Salaman's words: "The fallout of migrants was unprecedented, particularly in the aftermath of each hurricane. For example, on the 19th an estimated 5+ million migrants arrived, primarily Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, and Tennessee Warblers, Gray Catbirds, Ovenbirds, tanagers, and thrushes. In subsequent days, waves of other species hit the island, particularly Indigo Bunting, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and other warblers such as Golden-winged. Sadly, the muscle and fat conditions for a large proportion of hurricane fallout migrants was horrendous. We are concerned that the impact of both hurricanes (as well as the many previous hurricanes) could be significant on Neotropical migrant species populations. The true extent of these impacts may not be known until next breeding season." And these are only the birds that made landfall on this one island. Think of the millions that may have reached other islands in an exhausted or emaciated state—or never reached land. The toll from these two hurricanes alone must have been enormous indeed. In fact, migrants trying to make their way to Central America from eastern North America would have been plagued by severe storms during an unusually large percentage of autumn days in 2005. The enormous hurricanes *Katrina* and *Rita* of August and September could have been disastrous for some of the earlier migrants. An analysis of winter bird

monitoring station results from across the region may provide some interesting results.

As if hurricanes were not enough, Mother Nature dealt more bad luck on 1 October. El Salvador's largest volcano, Santa Ana, erupted with a moderate explosion that day, covering the upper slopes with nearly a meter of ash, and flattening parts of its cloud forest. The explosion was followed by a week of heavy rain as Hurricane *Stan* crossed southern Mexico, causing nearly a meter of rainfall in some parts of northern Central America and leading to hundreds of landslides. The bird banding station in the volcano's cloud forest (2 km from the crater) was abandoned, but at press time, monthly bird monitoring had begun once again. At the volcano, significant declines in resident bird populations are expected, as well as in migrants affected by the various hurricanes.

This season's report includes the first country records for Aplomado Falcon in El Salvador, Yellow-headed Caracara in Honduras (possibly a storm-driven vagrant from the north coast of Colombia?), a possible Virginia's Warbler in Costa Rica, and Slate-colored Seedeater in Guatemala.

**Abbreviations:** C.A. (Central America); MUHNES (Museum of Natural History of El Salvador); T.E.C. (Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica).

## DUCKS THROUGH IBISES

In Guatemala, 5 ad. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks 28 Aug, one with 7 very young juvs., established a first nesting record for Rubelsanto, *Alta Verapaz* (ph. KE). In El Salvador, 6 ad. Muscovy Ducks at Laguna de Colima, *Cuscatlán* 5 Aug (NeH) were breeding in adjoining forest according to local wardens; the species is rare in this department. Five Blue-winged Teal, including a male in alternate plumage, were at Las Cónovas, *Cartago* 31 Jul (DM). If migrants, they were exceptionally early. If not migrants, they may represent the first summer record for Costa Rica. Also noteworthy in Costa Rica were a female Northern Pintail at Bagatzí ricefields n. of Palo Verde 15 Nov and a flock of 56 Lesser Scaup at Pelón de La Bajura ricefields nw. of Palo Verde four days later (both JRZ).

An exhausted Audubon's Shearwater was closely observed about 0.5 km off s. Ambergris Caye 5 Aug (†SL). Belize's two previous occurrences were of a recently dead and a dying individual, both found washed ashore in late Jul/early Aug, suggesting a pattern of summer occurrence and perhaps a relatively

large population at sea beyond the reef at this season, at least in some years, from which an unhealthy few are carried inside the reef to shore. On 13 Aug, W. Lala observed an ad. White-tailed Tropicbird at close range 200 m off s. Ambergris Caye while fishing. While there have been several anecdotal reports of this species in Belize in recent years, this was the first adequately documented since 1976.

In Guatemala, at least 100 American White Pelicans were present in Monterrico, *Santa Rosa* on the early date of 8 Oct (ACh), and a Magnificent Frigatebird was seen flying low overhead well inland at Rocjá Pomtilá, *Alta Verapaz* 15 Oct (EC). Two Least Bitterns were at Rubelsanto 10 Oct (KE). In Panama, a Least Bittern, the first for *Chiriquí*, was at a small marsh near Las Lajas beach 27 Oct (AC, DH, DMO). An imm. Fasciated Tiger-Heron at Cabeceras (w. of Santa Elena de Monteverde) 11 Nov (ph. RH, WINGS) at about 1400 m el-



This juvenile female Aplomado Falcon flew into a jet during take-off at El Salvador's international airport on 26 September 2005, establishing the country's first record for the species.

Photograph by Ricardo Ibarra Portillo.

evation on the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica (but very near the continental divide) was the first report for the Monteverde area and was unusual in that the bird was perched in forest at the edge of a pasture, nowhere near its preferred habitat of rushing water. This species has appeared in many new areas in Costa Rica in recent years, especially along the s. Pacific slope, perhaps aided by the rise in the popularity of trout and tilapia cultivation. Two Glossy Ibis in a field near Las Lajas beach 27 Oct (AC, DH, DMO) were the first recorded in *Chiriquí*.

## DIURNAL RAPTORS

The first effort to monitor fall hawk migration systematically in n. C.A., organized by RP at Suchitoto, *Cuscatlán* in El Salvador's central valley, produced a count of 327,000 raptors 1 Sep–15 Nov and several interesting results. The majority of the birds passing were, as ex-

pected, Turkey Vultures (204,000), Swainson's Hawks (97,000), and Broad-winged Hawks (18,000), but over 5000 were Black Vultures, a species whose migrations in the area are poorly known. Some partial season results for migrating raptors were also reported from Guatemala's Pacific flyway. From 23 Oct–3 Nov, NH of the PROEVAL RAXMU Bird Monitoring Program counted 209,000+ migrating raptors in the cities of Chiquimulilla and Taxisco, *Santa Rosa*; 98 per cent (205,225) were Turkey Vultures, and most of the rest (3761) were Swainson's Hawks.

Impressive kite migrations were observed at Suchitoto by RP, GG, JR and others: a total of 27 Hook-billed Kites was tallied 14 Oct–15 Nov, and during Sep, 10 Swallow-tailed Kites (2–7 Sep), a remarkable 1729 Mississippi Kites (1156 on 4 Sep), and 29 Plumbeous Kites (1–3 Sep only) were documented. The Mississippi Kite flight subsided in early Oct, with 41 counted in that month and the last seen on 14 Oct. Single male Northern Harriers migrating at Suchitoto 28–29 Sep were early. Also surprising were unexpectedly high numbers of several other hawk species observed: for instance, 11 Oct–9 Nov, 37 Cooper's Hawks here approached the number of Sharp-shinned Hawks counted (48), which suggests that Cooper's may be a more common winter visitor to n. C.A. than some have supposed. A Cooper's Hawk at Montecristo N.P., *Santa Ana* 15 Oct (OK) was a new species for the park.

Two Plumbeous Hawks (one seen well, one calling in the distance) 2 Aug at 1000 m elevation on Altos de Maria, *Panamá* (MH) were the first recorded on the Pacific slope w. of the Canal Area. Solitary Eagles, always noteworthy in this Region, were reported in Belize and Costa Rica. An ad. was found 2 km n. of Río On in the Mountain Pine Ridge 25 Nov (ph. CB), very near where one was photographed by the same observer a year ago. In Costa Rica, an ad. was observed at 1600 m at Bosque de Paz about 10 km wnw. of Volcán Poás on the edge of Juan Castro Blanco N.P. 28 Aug (NU, PW). The fall hawkwatch at Suchitoto detected just 2 White-tailed Hawks, apparently migrating, on 15 Oct, but impressive migrations were noted for Zone-tailed Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk: a remarkable 116 Zone-taileds (23 in Sep, 93 in Oct) and 41 Red-taileds (3 Sep–7 Nov) provided the strongest evidence so far that lowland records of both species in winter in C.A. may represent long-distance migrants. A Red-tailed Hawk seen from Canopy Tower Hotel (near Summit, Canal Area) 27 Sep (DMo, JTe) was noteworthy, as this species is a very rare migrant in Panama.

In Costa Rica, a subad. light-morph Crested Eagle was at the entrance to Caño Harold, Tortuguero 18 Aug (ph. MC et al.). While a small population may be resident in the area, the bird may instead have been a visitor from the extensive areas of protected forest just over the border in Nicaragua. A Crested Caracara 11 Sep at T.E.C. in *Cartago* eating carrion with vultures (DM, JS, CS) was only the 2nd recorded on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica's Central Valley. The species has been spreading e. and s. throughout deforested areas of the Caribbean lowlands; however, it remains very rare in Costa Rica e. of Alajuela in the Central Valley and is seldom seen this high in elevation (1500 m). A Yellow-headed Caracara flying w. along the beach at Jutiapa, *Atlántida* 22 Nov (LA, RC, OK) was a first for Honduras. Although the species has been expanding in recent years in s. C.A., it is perhaps more plausible that this individual was blown across the Caribbean from n. Colombia by one of the season's hurricanes or tropical storms. Displacement of raptors by tropical storms, however, has only rarely been documented.

A juv. female **Aplomado Falcon** was observed to collide with an airplane during take-off at the El Salvador international airport in Comalapa, *La Paz*, on 26 Sep. The specimen, recovered by airport authorities (ph. RIP), now represents the first record for the country (\*MUHNES). The possibility that a small population exists on El Salvador's coastal plain should be considered in this case. An ad. Aplomado Falcon at El Chiru, *Coclé* 6 Aug (MH, DR) was noteworthy, as this species is rarely reported this far e. in Panama.

## RAILS THROUGH DOVES

On Caye Caulker, Belize, the first Rufous-necked Wood-Rail of the fall was observed 11 Sep (J&DB). Purple Gallinule was previously assumed to be nesting in Rubelsanto by the presence of ads. during the breeding season in 2003 and nearly ad.-sized juvs. in 2004. This year, on 28 Aug, an ad. was seen with a small chick (ph. KE), providing the first firm breeding evidence for this Guatemalan site. Although possibly of regular occurrence, American Golden-Plover is seldom reported in Costa Rica. Therefore, one seen 14 Sep at shrimp ponds in Chomes (WA, GF) is noteworthy. Perhaps more impressive were 2 Snowy Plovers, one at the shrimp ponds at Chomes 14 Sep (WA, GF) and another at the mouth of Hone Creek just n. of Puerto Viejo

de Limón 10 Oct (DM, PP). On the shore of L. Yaxhá, *Petén*, at least one Collared Plover was observed with Semipalmated Plovers and Killdeer 3 Dec (KE). Also noteworthy were 2 American Oystercatchers along the n. coast of Honduras at Jutiapa 21–25 Nov (DMe, DS et al., *fide* OK).

In El Salvador, a Wandering Tattler was



This leucistic Green Violet-ear was on the Caribbean slope of Cordillera Central near Vara Blanca, Costa Rica 8 August–9 October 2005 (here 11 August) 2005  
Photograph by Yeudi Hernández.

found at the mouth of R. Jiboa, *La Paz* 15 Oct (ph. TJ). El Salvador's 2nd fall Long-billed Curlew was at Bahía de Jiquilisco, *Usulután* 15 Oct (ph. TJ). Another Long-billed Curlew was observed in muddy fallow ricefields at Pelón de La Bajura, 15 km s. of Liberia, *Guanacaste* 19 Nov (JRZ). There are few records for Costa Rica, and these are almost exclusively from the coast. In Belize, a Long-billed Curlew was on Caye Caulker 21 Oct (J&DB) immediately following passage of Hurricane *Wilma*. A Marbled Godwit, perhaps the same individual returning for at least its 3rd winter, arrived on Caye Caulker 25 Aug (J&DB); one noted 6 Sep in the R. Tortuguero across from Tortuguero town (DL, IT) furnished the first record for the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Playa Azul just s. of the mouth of R. Tarcoles 25 Aug (AK) may have provided the first Costa Rican record from the coast and one of very few away from the Central Valley. Reports of this species in Costa Rica are becoming increasingly rare, as its preferred short-grass habitat in the Central Valley has all but disappeared.

Royal Tern is rarely recorded inland, so one observed 9 Oct flying along the shoreline of Laguna Lachuá, *Alta Verapaz* (ph. KE, CA) was unexpected. The bird spent the night on a rock on the shore. A **White Tern** closely observed flying over R. Tarcoles estuary 27 Nov before heading out to sea (†RO, LC) established only the 3rd documented record for mainland Costa Rica. In Honduras, a White-crowned Pigeon 25–26 Nov at Jutiapa (OK, JM), along the mainland beach opposite the

Cayos Cochinos, was presumably a storm-driven vagrant from the Cayos. During the course of raptor counts in Taxisco and Chiquimulilla, at least 1660 migrating White-winged Doves were counted 23 Oct–3 Nov (NH). In Costa Rica, 2 White-winged Doves were gathering grit on the airstrip at Tortuguero 21 Aug (AS), and single Mourning Doves were at Tortuguero 22 Aug (AS) and La Selva 29 Oct (JRZ). These two species are seldom reported on the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica. The Oct Mourning Dove was most likely a migrant, but the origin of the Aug bird is intriguing, as this species typically does not arrive in the area before Oct.

### PARROTS THROUGH ANTIBIRDS

Normally rather uncommon on the long, narrow peninsula that is Ambergris Caye, a group of 11 Olive-throated Parakeets appeared in early Oct, and numbers had increased to 150–200 by the last week of Nov (SL). Two Barred Parakeets seen and heard at Montecristo N.P. 15 Oct, and 4 the next day (OK), represented the 2nd and 3rd records for El Salvador. The first was at the same place the previous Oct. A Black-billed Cuckoo was at Palo Verde 13 Nov (JRZ). A rare migrant in Costa Rica, it is even rarer on the Pacific slope. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Jutiapa 26 Nov (OK, JM) was possibly a late fall record for this species in Honduras. Breeding of Lesser Ground-Cuckoo was finally confirmed in El Salvador with a nest and eggs found at Colima, *Cuscatlán* 5 Aug (ph. NeH). A Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo, rare in Panama, was heard 3 Aug at 900 m in Altos de María (MH, CB, JP).

A Black Swift, very rare anywhere in Panama, was seen from the Canopy Tower Hotel near Summit 28 Sep (DMo, JTe, CB), providing the first record for the Canal Area. Farther w., at El Valle, *Coclé*, MH and DR observed a flock of 20 Chestnut-collared Swifts feeding at dusk on 5 Aug. A male and female Violet Sabrewing at 1000 m, and 2 White-tailed Emeralds at 1050 m elevation, in Altos de María 1 and 15 Aug, respectively (MH, JP), established the first records for *Panamá* province and the easternmost record for both species. In Costa Rica, a leucistic Green Violet-ear was observed coming to feeders at 1200 m elevation in Mirador San Fernando on the Caribbean slope of Cordillera Central (near Vara Blanca ne. of Volcán Poás) 8 Aug–9

Oct (ph. Yeudi Hernández, m.ob.).

Between 11 and 14 Oct, three hummingbird species were recorded at an atypically high elevation at Savegre Lodge, which is at 2000 m on the Pacific slope of Cerro de la Muerte in Costa Rica. Approximately 5 Violet-headed Hummingbirds were observed 11–14 Oct (MS, PM); a Charming Hummingbird was seen 14 Oct (MS); and a Snowy-bellied Hummingbird was present 11–12 Oct (PM). In Costa Rica, a Blue-throated Golden-tail was seen coming to *Inga* flowers at the



This male Shiny Cowbird was one of three at Hone Creek 7 October 2005 that furnished Costa Rica's second record of the species; the country's first record was from the same location in April 2004. Photograph by Daniel Martínez.

Kéköldi tower, located near Bribri on the Caribbean coast near Panama 8 Oct (RM, JT). These same flowers hosted a Magenta-throated Woodstar the following day (DMo, RM, JT). Two Orange-bellied Trogons at Altos de María 4 Aug (MH, CB, DR) provided the first record for that locality. In El Salvador, a Blue-throated Motmot observed at Cantón Las Pilas, San Ignacio 16 Oct (AM) was the first reported from *Chalatenango* in more than 60 years.

Two ad. and 2 fledgling Pale-breasted Spinetails at T.E.C., Cartago 11 Sep (JS, DM, CS) furnished the first record for Costa Rica n. of the s. Pacific slope and the first for the Caribbean side. A single Rufous-breasted Spinetail at Talcualuya, *La Libertad* 22 Nov (RIP) represented a new locality for this rare species in El Salvador. A Bare-crowned Antbird at 1200 m in Dúrika de Buenos Aires, about 15 km ne. of Buenos Aires on the s. Pacific slope of the Cordillera Talamanca mid-Nov+ (EA, RD), was at a new location and an exceptionally high elevation. On Costa Rica's Pacific slope, this species is thought to be restricted to the s. interior valleys but is seldom reported even there.

### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

A Sepia-capped Flycatcher, rare on the s. Pacific slope of Costa Rica, was seen and heard singing at 1100 m at R. Negro de Coto Brus near the Panama border 13 Sep (JRZ, MO). In Panama, 2 Eye-ringed Flatbills were seen at 650 m at El Valle 14 Aug (MH, JP), providing the first record for e. *Coclé*. Because Yellow-margined Flycatcher in Costa Rica is thought to be restricted to the Pacific lowlands very near the Panama border, one seen and heard (and responding to playback) 6 Nov at Uvita (NU, CU, PW) was noteworthy in that it was a considerable distance up-coast to the northwest. Two Western Wood-Pewees mist-netted in an Izalco coffee plantation, *Sonsonate* 18 Aug (ph. LA, LG), represented an early fall migration record for El Salvador. At Rocjá Pomtilá, a Least Flycatcher 19 Aug (EC, JC, RC) was an early migrant. Two Black Phoeebes seen feeding near a bridge at Altos de María 4 Aug (MH, DR) were the first recorded between *Chiriquí* and e. *Panamá* province.

A Rusty-margined Flycatcher 15 Nov at La Gamba in the Golfo Dulce lowlands 7 km nw. of Golfito (CG et al.) was the 3rd recorded from this locality since it was first reported in Costa Rica in 2004. The species has also been seen once se. of Golfito. Single Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers 8 Oct at Las Lajas Forest, Izalco, *Sonsonate* and at San Miguelito, San Francisco Menéndez, *Ahuachapán* (both OK) are the latest on record for El Salvador. In Belize, a Piratic Flycatcher in Mayflower–Bocawina N.P., *Stann Creek* 15 Sep (LJ) was a late fall migrant. In Guatemala, at least 1174 migrating Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were counted in Taxisco and Chiquimulilla 23 Oct–3 Nov (NH). A pair of Lovely Cotingas, a seldom-recorded species in n. C.A., was observed in the forest canopy at Yaxhá, *Petén* 1 Dec (KE).

In Honduras, 40 Three-wattled Bellbirds at R. Chiquito and R. Babylonia, Gualaco, *Olancho* 6–7 Nov (OK et al.) may have been staging for a local migration. Red-eyed Vireo is a transient rarely reported in El Salvador, with most fall reports in Sep. One observed at El Imposible N.P., *Ahuachapán* 16 Oct (JF) is the latest recorded for the country. A Yellow-green Vireo mist-netted and 6 others observed at El Imposible N.P. 16 Oct (LA, JF) represent the latest fall records for that species in El Salvador. A migrant Yellow-green Vireo was on Caye Caulker 9 Sep (J&DB). Although a long-distance migrant, it is not often reported from the cayes.

A Tree Swallow, an extremely rare migrant in Costa Rica, was observed in with 100 Barn Swallows in the Bagatzí ricefields near the entrance to Palo Verde N.P. 12 Nov (JRZ). Three Blue-and-white Swallows at Chomes 29 Aug (JRZ) were thought to be South American migrants based on the date and lowland location. The resident Costa Rica population is restricted to middle and high elevations. Three Cave Swallows 17 Nov with a dozen Barn Swallows over sugar cane fields 2 km w. of La Guinea along the R. Tempisque e. of Filadelfia (JRZ) provided the 3rd record for Costa Rica. All three records have been from the n. Pacific lowlands around the Golfo de Nicoya between Nov and Feb. A Brown Creeper was observed in pine forest at Finca San José, Chiquimula, on the Guatemalan side of Cerro Montecristo 10 Aug (KE, CA). There are only two records from the El Salvadoran part of this mt. range. A Gray-cheeked Thrush was mist-netted at San Vito in se. Costa Rica 7 Nov (ph. AO). This species is considered to be a very rare migrant on the Pacific slope, although it may be largely overlooked. Gray Catbirds at Hotel Talari, Rivas de Pérez Zeledón, 5 km ne. of San Isidro de El General, 24 & 27 Nov (PW) and at San Antonio de Belén, Heredia (a few km e. of the international airport in Alajuela) 26–27 Nov (RG) were on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica, where catbirds are rarely seen.

## WARBLERS

At Los Cusingos (Dr. Skutch's farm) in San Isidro de El General, a Blue-winged Warbler 28 Sep (JRZ) may have been the same individual seen there last Mar. Blue-winged Warblers are rare winter visitors in Costa Rica. El Salvador's first fall records of Golden-winged Warbler were established at Montecristo N.P. in pine-oak forest. Ad. males were seen 15–16 Oct (OK), and possibly the same individuals were then captured in mist nets 27 Oct and 15 Nov (ph. LA). These provided only the 7th and 8th records of this declining migratory visitor for El Salvador. In Panama, where it is a very rare migrant, 2 male Northern Parulas were seen on the Cayos Zapatillos (e. of I. Bastimentos) in the Bocas del Toro Archipelago 22 Oct (JAC). In Guatemala, one was at Cobán 16 Oct (CA).

A Magnolia Warbler on Caye Caulker 6 Sep (J&DB) was more than a week earlier than previously reported in Belize in fall. A Yellow-rumped Warbler at La Ensenada Lodge, Guanacaste 17 Nov (CG et al.) and 4 at Laguna de Olomega, San Miguel 25 Nov (RIP) were noteworthy, as the species is seldom reported from the Pacific lowlands. A male Golden-cheeked Warbler at 1850 m at Cerro Silencio,

Tuis de Turrialba 22 Oct (PE, HV) provided the 5th record in Costa Rica in the past four years since it was first reliably reported in fall 2002. An imm. male Black-throated Green Warbler at Palo Verde 13 Nov (JRZ) was in the Guanacaste lowlands, where the species is seldom seen, and a Blackburnian Warbler at Cantón Las Pilas, San Ignacio, Chalaténango 16 Oct (AM) was a new department record for this rarely reported species in El Salvador. A female Prairie Warbler at a highway pull-off at 2800 m about 4 km n. of Olintipeque, Quetzaltenango 12–16 Nov (JB) was exceptional both with respect to elevation and distance inland from the Caribbean coast. The only previous record for Guatemala was of a fall migrant that came aboard a boat 190 km at sea off the Pacific coast. Single Blackburnian and Prairie Warblers on Caye Caulker 22 Aug (J&DB) were early migrants.

A Yellow-throated Warbler and a Cerulean Warbler, both rare migrants in Costa Rica, were seen in the National Museum gardens in downtown San José 9 Sep (JS). Even more unexpected was a female Cerulean Warbler at La Ensenada Lodge 17 Nov (CG et al.). Like Black-throated Green, this species is unusual on the Pacific slope, and especially in the Pacific lowlands. Ten Cerulean Warblers were reported from Caye Caulker this fall (J&DB), a higher count than usual. One on 2 Aug established the earliest fall arrival date for the Region. Likewise, a Swainson's Warbler on Caye Caulker 23 Aug (J&DB) provided the earliest fall date yet for that species. A Canada Warbler mist-netted at Los Volcanes N.P., Santa Ana 24 Aug (LG) was an early fall occurrence for El Salvador. Only El Salvador's 3rd fall report, 3 Red-faced Warblers were at Montecristo N.P. 16 Oct (OK). In Costa Rica, Yellow-breasted Chats were seen at La Argentina de Grecia on the Pacific slope of the w. Central Valley on 23 Sep (RaC) and about 15 km se. of San Isidro de El General on 2 Oct (JRZ).

## TANAGERS THROUGH EUPHONIAS

At least 6 Rosy Thrush-Tanagers were heard singing 29 Sep (JRZ), and a pair was observed mid-Nov+ (EA, RD), at 1200 m elevation in Dúrika de Buenos Aires on the s. Pacific slope of Cordillera Talamanca about 15 km ne. of Buenos Aires. These observations suggest that a viable population of this very rare and extremely local species persists in this small valley. Apparently, the type of agriculture practiced by the indigenous people living there creates brushy second-growth areas that this species prefers. The only other recent record for Costa Rica is of a lone male that is still residing in a small patch of scrub about one km from the Panama border near

San Vito. The species is much more common in Panama. A Summer Tanager at Concepción de San Rafael, Heredia 17 Aug (AV) was an exceptionally early fall migrant; a male Western Tanager on Caye Caulker 2 Oct (J&DB) was one of few that have been reliably reported in Belize.

Slate-colored Seedeaters were reported in Guatemala and Costa Rica this fall. The first record from Guatemala came in May in Rocjá Pomtilá (Eisermann and Avendaño 2006). Periodic bird counts May–Oct established the species' continued presence at the site through the summer. On 8 Oct at least one ad. male, one female, and 2 imm. males were seen, and the song was tape-recorded (KE, EC, JC). The species was assumed by the observers to have nested in the area, although concrete evidence was not obtained. In Costa Rica, at least 2 singing males were heard (one seen was in female-type plumage) 10 Oct at 1200 m on Cerro Espiritu Santo, Naranjo de Alajuela (JRZ). They were coming to seeding *Chusquia* sp. in a patch of forest. Despite many subsequent visits to the area, the birds were not seen or heard again, although the *Chusquia* was still seeding through the end of the period. These birds were the first ever recorded in the Central Valley, were farther n. on the Pacific slope in Costa Rica than previously reported, and were at the highest elevation yet recorded in the country.

Quite unexpected was a Black-faced Grosbeak that appeared on Caye Caulker 25 Oct (J&DB) following the offshore passage of Hurricane Wilma, which generated w. winds of 40–50 kts at the caye. This record was not only the first for the Belize cayes; the species is unrecorded from much of the adjacent mainland, being primarily a bird of the interior foothills. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Getsemani de Heredia, Costa Rica 12 Aug (LS) was exceptionally early. This species seldom appears before the 3rd week of Sep. A second-year male Black-headed Grosbeak 4 Nov (PM) at nearby Barva at 1900 m on the n. rim of the Central Valley provided one of the few records of this species s. of Mexico.

An Indigo Bunting at Rocjá Pomtilá 9 Sep (EC, JC, RC) was about three weeks earlier than expected and established the earliest fall date for the Region. Three male Shiny Cowbirds at Hone Creek 7 Oct (ph. DM, PP) provided the 2nd record for Costa Rica. The first record, that of a lone female in Apr 2004, was at the same location: A Black-cowled Oriole was at Naranjo de Alajuela 6 Nov (JRZ). It is still rare on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica but has spread in recent years from the Central Valley s. to around San Isidro de El General. Exceptionally early were Baltimore Orioles at

Rocjá Pomtilá (EC, JC, RC) and near Costa de Pájaros on the n. shore of the Gulf of Nicoya (LS) 17 Aug. Three Elegant Euphonias at the Kéköldi tower near Bribri 28 Oct (RM, JT) were near sea level, a very low elevation for this species.

## UNDOCUMENTED RARITIES

A report of an Orange-crowned Warbler, in with a small flock of Tennessee Warblers, at T.E.C., Cartago 27 Oct lacked sufficient details. A first-year male Virginia's Warbler at 1500 m in Las Alturas de Cotón 13 Nov was closely observed by multiple observers, and its appearance was described in reasonable detail; however, none of the observers noted this species' almost incessant tail pumping. If correctly identified, this would be the first recorded in Central America s. of Belize and n. Guatemala, where it is a vagrant.

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## West Indies & Bermuda



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**I**n the Bahamas, good weather and plentiful rain helped make this year's fall migration a strong one. Only one hurricane, *Wilma*, hit the Bahamas, and its damage was largely limited to western Grand Bahama. Some less common migrants such as Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Hooded Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, and Baltimore Oriole were reported in numbers too large to be detailed here.

Volunteer bird banders from North America visited Isla San Andres 20 October–2 Nov-

ember 2005 to train Colombian banders in the latest techniques. In that last week of October, the southwestern Caribbean was traversed by Hurricane *Beta*, which swept over Isla Providencia and narrowly passed San Andres 30 October, with torrential rains and storm surges up to 2 m, before it moved toward Nicaragua the next day. The milder effects of Hurricane *Beta* at San Andres as opposed to Providencia (both Colombian protectorates) allowed banders greater freedom of movement on the former island; they were thus able document a truly amazing avian fallout (see the Central America regional report and also <<http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek051022.html>>). Eight new migrant species were registered for San Andres Island, which are mentioned below; the effect of high winds and surges on coastal mangrove habitats has yet to be determined.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH TERNS

A rare West Indian Whistling-Duck was observed 10 Nov near Island School, Cape Eleuthera, Bahamas (DE). A Gadwall banded at San Andres in the period 20 Oct–2 Nov furnished a first record for that location (BH). Two Eurasian Wigeons arrived at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 20 Oct (DBW). Heavy rains in Great Exuma in Oct filled the ponds, and large numbers of American Wigeons and Ruddy Ducks showed up in Nov (J&BM). Three American

Wigeons were first seen at Maillis Ponds, Adelaide, New Providence 29 Oct, and a female Northern Shoveler was there the next day (PM). A basic-plumaged *Garganey*, Bermuda's 2nd, was at Spittal Pond 10 Oct–12 Nov (PW, m.ob., ph.). The first returning Bermuda Petrels were noted 19 Oct (JM). In 13.5 hrs of seawatching in Nov at Guadeloupe, Levesque recorded a single Black-capped Petrel and 6 Cory's Shearwaters. A Cory's with no obvious injury was found on a roadside on Grand Bahama 21 Nov (EG). A Leach's Storm-Petrel was seen off Bermuda 28 Oct (PW).

On 9 Nov, an injured imm. Northern Gannet was found at Our Lucaya Beach, Grand Bahama (EG). An imm. *Masked Booby* died in captivity at Bermuda Aquarium Museum & Zoo 4 Aug (JG); another was photographed off West Whale Bay, Bermuda in early Sep (*vide* AD). A *Magnificent Frigatebird* was over Castle Harbour, Bermuda 4 Sep (KD, AD, JM), where an unprecedented influx of at least 70 followed Hurricane *Wilma* (there had only been sightings of single birds previously!) 4 Nov and later, with singles seen as late as 12 Nov. *Magnificent Frigatebirds* were present at New Providence, Bahamas in unusual numbers, with 3 at Clifton 28 Oct (MD), 5 flying over Montagu Foreshore and Potter's Cay 5 & 6 Nov (NMc, CW), and multiple singles over the island in late Oct and early Nov. Over 30 distant, unidentified cor-