

Latest Rumors

March-April 1979

This is a brief recounting of some of the exciting bird occurrences that have come to our attention recently. We make no claims for the completeness of this summary. Although we believe that all of the records cited here are probably correct, we have not been able to check most of them out personally; readers desiring further information should consult the appropriate regional publications, or the regional reports in *American Birds*.

This was evidently a quiet season, with much of the attention continuing to focus on birds found during the winter. — The **Key West Quail-Dove** *Geotrygon chrysis* in Everglades National Park continued its placid existence there, but perhaps the same could not be said for the **Great Gray Owl** *Strix nebulosa* on Long Island: after a brief disappearance, it (or another) was found dead nearby in March. — The **White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis* in southern Texas continued to play hide-and-seek with birders; so did another duck, a drake **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* which turned up in late March inland in southern California; less elusive waterfowl were the three immature **Whooper Swans** *Olor cygnus* on Lake Ontario near Toronto, discovered in December and present at least into March. Despite the ever-present possibility of escapes from captivity, all three of these species were theorized to be genuine wild strays (at least by those birders who saw them!). — Gulls caused excitement in the West. In a coincidence unprecedented on the Pacific seaboard, a **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* and a **Little Gull** *L. minutus* were present simultaneously at the same ponds in Stockton, northern California. Several Mew Gulls *L. canus* at Davis Dam established a first record for Arizona, while a Laughing Gull *L. atricilla* present at the same time and place was perhaps a first for Nevada!

From our tropical fringes: we heard that a **Stygian Owl** *Asio stygius* was found dead on Cozumel Island, off the east coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. This would be some distance from the localities of any Mexican records, perhaps closer to Cuba, where there is a resident race of Stygian.

Back in Florida, things began to liven up in late April. A **Bahama Mockingbird** *Mimus gundlachii* put in a brief appearance on a small key off Miami; there were tantalizingly vague rumors about a Cuban or Melodius Grassquit *Tiaris canora* on Big Pine Key; and persistent reports of a possible **Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* at the Dry Tortugas presaged some exciting times there in early May.

