

## Latest Rumors

July-August 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*.

We received a friendly note from Paul DeBenedictis, the well-known Syracuse ornithologist, in which he suggested that we should keep this column as tentative in tone as possible. Once an incorrect record has been put in print, he said, it may take an extraordinary effort to get it thoroughly retracted. We fully agree (having met this problem in dealing with old distributional records for Arizona and Mexico), so we hasten to emphasize that this is a *rumors* column; any one item mentioned here may prove to be a false alarm. We sincerely hope that we'll never see any "records" quoted from this column. — An example of our fallibility is provided by the supposed Gray-headed Chickadee *Parus cinctus* in Alberta, which we confidently reported in the February "Latest Rumors;" the bird has since been re-identified as an abnormal Black-capped Chickadee *P. atricapillus* (to the enlightenment and/or consternation of those who traveled great distances to see it).

Offshore this summer: Cory's Shearwaters *Puffinus diomedea* moved north into the Gulf of Maine (between Maine and Nova Scotia) in unprecedented numbers during late summer . . . Farther south at Cox's Ledge ("disputed territory," claimed by pelagic birders from both New York and Rhode Island), a **Yellow-nosed Albatross** *Diomedea chlororhynchos* was the center of excitement. But the pelagic prize would have to go to the **Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda* which reportedly circled about Southeast Farallon Island, California, in July. If accepted this would be the first North American record, although the species breeds in Hawaii and has been reported far off western Mexico. — Onshore in California, a **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* showed up in early August (a surprisingly early date) and remained through the month near the north end of Monterey Bay, being seen by hundreds of observers. Another early motacillid was an adult **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* which appeared at summer's end on San Juan Island, providing the first record for Washington state. — On the Mexican border the summer was quiet. The only **Berylline Hummingbird** *Amazilia beryllina* found in Arizona was "in the wild," not at feeders — at Penstemon patches at the top of Carr Canyon — and it was seen only one day. An **Eared Trogon** *Euptilotis neoxenus* (or perhaps two?) put in a mid-August appearance in the accessible reaches of Cave Creek Canyon, but after two days it (they?) disappeared: probably just moving back to more remote areas of the Chiricahua Mountains. — There was much dispute about a supposed Corn Crake *Crex crex* in Ohio, but evidently no such doubts tainted the three **Curlew Sandpipers** *Calidris ferruginea* that visited the Chicago area in mid-summer. — The New York City area also received Curlew Sandpipers, but perhaps more significant was the belated discovery that there were two, not one, **White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi* frequenting the same area on western Long Island; observers speculated on the possibility that the species might nest in the local colony of Glossy Ibis *P. falcinellus*.