

Latest Rumors

September-October 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*.

Two hurricanes made headlines in the East, but the avian fallout from these storms seems to have included no unexpected species, although "David" left more than 250 Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* scattered through the Northeast. More exciting finds concerned visitors from across the continent or across the Atlantic. Noteworthy entries in the first category were a Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis* at the migrant raptor showcase of Cape May, and a California Gull *Larus californicus* at an inland lake in New York. Transatlantic highlights included a **Eurasian Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* at (naturally) Cape May, a **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* at Philadelphia, and a **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* at New Jersey's Brigantine refuge. — For the most part, tropical strays failed to appear in our southern regions. **Streak-backed Orioles** *Icterus pustulatus* provided an exception, with two or perhaps three visiting a Tucson feeder; but local observers were more excited by the Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis agilis* which arrived in mid-September for a first Arizona record. — The obliging **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* remained staked-out on the central California coast into late September. Much less cooperative (only one brief sighting) but much rarer if genuine was a possible Yellow Wagtail *M. flava* at Bodega Bay in mid-September. Rounding out the state's Motacillid tally were a single Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii* on the Farallones and a few Red-throated Pipits *A. cervinus* in southern California in October. The famous probable **Common Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* that caused so much consternation at Point Reyes last winter reappeared in late October, but evidently did not stay long. — The outer Aleutians have received little coverage in autumn, so the observers who visited Attu for two weeks in September expected some surprises . . . and found some. Their most exciting individual was a **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*, only the second or third ever recorded in North America; but perhaps more significant was the discovery that **Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope* and **Middendorff's Grasshopper-Warbler** *Locustella ochotensis* (both exceptionally rare in spring) were present in numbers, with minimums of ten rubythroats and seven grasshopper-warblers recorded.