

Latest Rumors

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*.

Since this column has been out of commission a while, we can't resist reaching back into early autumn 1980 for the most bizarre record of the year . . . for those who haven't heard. On Southeast Farallon Island, that famous hunk of rock off northern California, an obscure passerine mist-netted proved eventually to be a **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* from Asia! Unlike some Asiatics which occur frequently in the outer Aleutians, the Dusky Warbler is accidental even in Alaska, where it never was recorded prior to 1977. — In further manifestations of the Asian Connection, California also recorded its first **Mongolian Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*, and had repeat appearances by the preceding year's **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* near Monterey Bay and **Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* on Pt. Reyes. Incidentally, since the initial confusion over the latter bird was so widely publicized, we should point out that the problem has been resolved: the bird has been shown (thanks mostly to the scholarly efforts of Joe Morlan) to be definitely a Common Skylark of one of the northeast Asian races.

Late fall — early winter: Although some individuals caused local excitement (e.g., Curve-billed Thrasher in Iowa and Townsend's Solitaire in New Jersey), the season was more notable for general movements of northern birds. In the East, Pine Siskins bombed south early and *en masse*; Pine Grosbeaks and redpolls made no such concerted exodus, but they shifted around considerably in the Northeast. Snowy Owls made a good showing, along with large numbers of Rough-legged Hawks, and King Eiders were well represented at their southern limits on the Atlantic seaboard. Perhaps the culmination of this boreal invasion was the appearance of **Ivory Gulls** *Pagophila eburnea* in New York state, with one in the Niagara Falls area and *two* on the Hudson River.