

Latest Rumors . . .

. . . Wherein we mention some of the notable bird records that have come to our attention recently. The column's title is chosen intentionally; we cannot claim that this summary is complete — nor, perhaps, even completely accurate, since we have not checked out most of these reports personally. We sincerely hope that we'll never see this column quoted as a source of information. For more carefully-screened reports, see the appropriate regional publications, or the regional reports in *American Birds*.

In late spring/early summer, two nesting species attracted much attention. — We were all waiting to see whether last year's breeding **Ross' Gulls** *Rhodostethia rosea* would return to Churchill, Manitoba. They did; up to nine adults were present by mid-June, and at least three pairs established nest sites. — At the far extreme in climatic setting, and in a locality that was perhaps more remote, southern Arizona's Chino Canyon hosted a pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** *Poliophtila nigriceps*. At the time of their discovery in late May they were already feeding four nestlings; the young fledged promptly, and the enterprising adults had a second nest going by the end of June. This poorly-known west Mexican species had been recorded only about three times previously in the U.S., one of those records (the first, in 1971 at Patagonia) also involving a nesting pair.

Speaking of poorly-known species, the status of *Pterodroma* petrels off California continues to surprise us. As recently as the mid-1970's no species had been recorded there (except for records hundreds of miles offshore), but since then Scaled Petrels *P. inexpectata* have washed up on several beaches, and Cook's Petrel *P. cookii* and Stejneger's Petrel *P. longirostris* have been seen offshore. This spring, a number of birds identified as **Solander's Petrels** *P. solandri* were seen off northern California. What other pelagic surprises does the Pacific have to offer? — A Massachusetts occurrence that was equally notable, although it did not constitute a first North American record, was a cuckoo of the Old World genus *Cuculus* — evidently **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* — on Martha's Vineyard in early May. This species had been verified previously in Alaska, and in the Caribbean at Barbados, so an eventual East Coast record was perhaps to be expected.