

THE CHANGING SEASONS

Paul Lehman

BEGINNING THE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE AVIAN happenings in North America during the summer of 1986 with a brief discussion of the season's weather might not appear to be the most novel approach to such an undertaking, but it is important nonetheless. Certainly no one would argue that the weather does not play a significant role in determining the timing and magnitude of migration, nesting success, mortality, and the occurrence of vagrant birds. Besides, I am one of those weather freaks for whom the only parts of the morning paper read before the weather section are the front-page headlines.

The record-setting spring drought in much of the Southeast from eastern Maryland to northern Georgia and Alabama continued well into the summer and was accompanied by intense heat. This condition was caused by a westward extension of the Bermuda High, which is normally located further east, offshore. This resulted in the usual warm, moist, rain-producing northward flow of air occurring farther west. (While it was believed that most landbirds regionally fared well this summer, there was concern the drought may result in low seed and fruit production by

many plants and, thus, present problems in the food supply of a number of bird species this winter.) Ample or excessive rains fell from Louisiana and Texas north through the Great Plains and west to New Mexico and southern Arizona. Most of Florida escaped the drought and was characterized by the normally-occurring summer thunderstorms, some of which were the usual "frog-chokers." Rainfall in parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi was augmented by the arrival of Hurricane *Bonnie* on the upper Texas and southwestern Louisiana coasts June 26; landfall occurred between Sabine Pass and High Island, Texas. However, this storm, with maximum wind speeds of only about 85 m.p.h., was believed to have had minimal impacts on birds except for probably pushing a number of coastal waterbird species inland to Arkansas.

While good rainfall in the Northern Great Plains helped wetland and grassland habitats suffering from drought over the past several years, excessive moisture fell from the Western Great Lakes, through Ontario and Quebec, to northern New England. Water levels on the Great Lakes have been at record levels in recent history, and are expected to continue for some time, with certain impacts to some nesting species and transient shorebirds. The wet weather in eastern Canada and northern New England was also accompanied by cool temperatures. Several regional

(The Northeastern Maritime Region report was not received in time for the writing of this Changing Seasons report.)

editors commented that, for a number of insectivores, mortality of nestlings and young at the critical post-fledgling stage may have been high. Even some adults may have suffered.

In sections of the Pacific Northwest, somewhat drier than normal conditions prevailed for the fifth out of the last six summers. The regional editors pointed out that this may be facilitating an increase and spread in the populations of such regionally local species as Rock Wren, Lazuli Bunting, and Brewer's Sparrow.

Some good news, some bad news

Many of the trends noted over the past years continued. For example, in Appalachian-breeding warblers "the trend for southern species to move northward and upslope while northern and high-elevation species move south and downslope continues."

On the bright side, all three species of bluebirds appeared to be responding well to nestbox programs in many regions of the continent. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued to increase in South Texas and southern Arizona, and Broad-winged Hawks possibly nested in a number of localities south of its normal breeding range between Texas and Florida. The Texas nesting range of Cave Swallow has doubled in size since 1983! This increase, however, may be having negative impacts on the local populations of Barn and Cliff swallows. The latter, however, was generally doing well in the East, with new colonies appearing in many regions. Veery was doing well in many areas of the East, an interesting contrast to the decline in the population of Wood Thrushes noted in a number of the same regions. Forest-interior species such as Wood Thrush, as well as Kentucky and Hooded warblers, may be particularly susceptible to habitat alteration both here and in the tropics. Encouraging reports of increased numbers of Loggerhead Shrikes were received from Saskatchewan, the Northern Great Plains Region, and Iowa. Harry LeGrand made some interesting comments on the "clinal" decline of this species in the East.

On a more negative note, Black-capped Vireos in the Southern Great Plains were "still raising more cowbirds than vireos," while those in south Texas were having some problems with Scrub Jay nest predation. Common Nighthawks and Whip-poor-wills continued their downward slide in many areas. Pied-billed Grebes continued to be scarce in the Northeast. Several regional editors also voiced concern over the status of American Bittern. In fact, significantly more Least Bitterns than American Bitterns are being reported from some areas of the Northeast. However, one wonders if observers are reporting only their sightings of the former.

Brown-headed Cowbird continued to increase in number, and several southern regions commented on its effects on vulnerable species such as orioles. Its recent southward spread as a breeder into South Florida may soon have a significant impact on that Region's avifauna. Also in Florida, several more Shiny Cowbirds were seen this summer. In the West Indies Region, this species "has made an explosive expansion of its range recently," and Robert Norton wrote that eradicating all individuals in new locales "should be contemplated as the species expands its range into areas where certain species are vulnerable to nest parasitism such as Tawny-shouldered Blackbird and other endemics of Cuba and the Bahamas." In South Texas, where Bronzed Cowbirds number in the "millions" around Kingsville and Falfurrias alone, a number of Texas "spe-

cialties" are likely being significantly impacted. Some type of cowbird control program would appear to be in order.

Noteworthy breeding records

First state/provincial nesting records established this summer included: Gray Flycatcher in British Columbia, Snowy Plover in Saskatchewan, Snowy Egret in North Dakota (probable only), Tricolored Heron in South Dakota, Little Gull in Minnesota, Red Crossbill in Iowa, Snowy Egret in Ontario, and Northern Pintail in New Jersey (in 1985). "Overdue" first breeding records included Ruby-throated Hummingbird in South Dakota and, incredibly, Evening Grosbeak in Utah.

The exponential growth in the population of House Finches continued in many areas, and first state breeding records were established this year in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Mississippi. Likely related to the continued good numbers of Orchard Orioles on the northern and central Great Plains, one or two pairs were found breeding in southeastern Wyoming, a first for that state. Southward-expanding Tree Swallows nested for the first time in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region. Until this summer, Delaware had somehow been skipped over by the recent southward breeding range expansion of the Great Black-backed Gull along the Atlantic Coast (now nesting south to North Carolina). A fledgling Northern Saw-whet Owl along the North Dakota/Minnesota line would have established a first-nesting record if it had been raised on the North Dakota side. A Mountain Bluebird paired with an Eastern in Minnesota established "half" a first-state nesting record. Two summer sightings of Bohemian Waxwings in Quebec included an individual seen carrying nesting material; the species has yet to be fully documented as a breeder in that province.

A single adult Laughing Gull remained in an Ohio Ring-billed Gullery for its third consecutive summer. Bruce Peterjohn wrote that "although this bird has built nests and laid eggs in previous years, it never had a definite mate nor were its eggs known to have hatched. However, an adult Laughing x Ring-billed hybrid also appeared at the colony this year, raising suspicions about the previous nesting efforts of the female Laughing Gull and causing potential identification problems for gull watchers in the Great Lakes area." Given the recent significant increase in the number of sightings of this species on the Great Lakes, especially Lake Erie, successful nesting in this region in the near future is a distinct possibility.

While lingering (e.g., crippled) waterfowl species are found to occasionally breed well south of their normal ranges, a report of a pair of nesting Black Scoters from coastal North Carolina was still staggering. A Heermann's Gull pair attempted unsuccessfully to nest on the southern California coast. Also north of its usual range, Black-necked Stilts bred in Montana, Calliope Hummingbirds were noted in northeastern British Columbia, and two pairs of Northern Mockingbirds bred in Idaho. In California, nesting Zone-tailed Hawks near San Diego were significant but outclassed by a pair of Black Skimmers with chicks in the state's Central Valley! This latter nesting was not only well north of the species' established nesting range in western North America but was also from a series of freshwater ponds at a location where it would be strictly accidental at any season.

Marbled Murrelets were seen and heard 30 miles inland on the eastern slope of the Coast Range in Oregon regularly between April and June.

Rarities

I did not attempt to list all of the outstanding rarities of the season since a quick perusal of the boldfaced species in the regional reports will accomplish that. However, a partial list would include: Garganey and returning White-winged Tern in Quebec; a late June Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco in New Jersey; two Rufous-necked Stints in Delaware; Red-footed Booby in South Carolina; Gray Kingbird and Black-throated Gray Warbler in Ontario; single Royal Terns in Arkansas and Wisconsin (same bird as last year?); Mountain Plovers in Minnesota and Iowa; Roseate Spoonbill in Missouri; Little Blue Heron, continuing Western Gull, and Gray Vireo in Idaho; Broad-billed Hummingbird in northeastern Utah; Least Tern in Nevada; likely Allen's Hummingbird in New Mexico; single Mongolian Plovers in Oregon and southern California; Red-headed Woodpecker and territorial Sedge Wren in northern California; probable Common Swift in Alaska; and a caprimulgid sp. in Hawaii.

Almost in a class by itself was the Sandwich Tern at Duluth, Minnesota. Coming on the heels of single Wilson's Plovers there in July 1981 and May 1982, really causes one to wonder. While it would be foolhardy to overspeculate on their origins, are these birds moving north from the Gulf of Mexico up the Mississippi River drainage? A Magnificent Frigatebird occurred this season along the Mississippi River in Illinois. A Brown Pelican in northeastern Nevada was a shocker and possibly moved north via the Colorado River drainage; the species has occurred previously along the Colorado River as far north as southern Utah. Another Brown Pelican was near Amarillo, Texas. An adult male Hepatic Tanager was on the Edward's Plateau, Texas, in mid-June; breeding was a faint possibility in this area as appropriate habitat may exist locally.

A white-vented "Manx-type" shearwater was sighted off the coast of Alaska in mid-June. There have now been almost ten reports along the West Coast of such white-vented birds which are likely referable to either Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) of the Atlantic Ocean or Townsend's Shearwater (*P. auricularis*) of the Pacific. [The Townsend's Shearwater is composed of two races, formerly considered separate species, nominate *auricularis* of western Mexico and *newelli* ("Newell's" Shearwater) of the Hawaiian Islands region.] Manx is believed to be the more migratory of the two, occurring regularly in the South Atlantic south to Argentina and having been found as a vagrant to South Africa and, even to the Pacific Ocean, in Australia. Observers' descriptions from several of the North American Pacific Coast sightings suggested Manx. However, almost ten records of a species entirely in the "wrong" ocean would still be very surprising. Further detailed sightings and other documentation are needed to help determine the species involved with any certainty.

Rufous Hummingbirds were noted well east of their normal range in mid-June in Wisconsin and in mid- or late July in Iowa, at Churchill, and in Ontario. Many individuals of this species (as well as Allen's Hummingbird), especially adult males, migrate south quite early, regularly appearing in the Southwest in early July. Southbound transients already arrived this season by late June (as early as June 20) in northern California, Utah, and Colorado. The three July vagrant records this year fit into this pattern, while the Wisconsin record (June 13-14) was early even by western standards.

One "birding maxim" is that vagrants should NOT be assumed to originate from the populations closest to the site of observation. *Plegadis* ibis is a case in point. Given

that a good number of the individual dark ibises seen are difficult to identify in the field, one might be tempted to label such an ibis in Quebec or along the eastern Great Lakes as a Glossy and one in the Western Great Lakes region or on the Canadian Prairies as a White-faced based on range or 'likelihood.' This would likely result in a number of inaccurate records. This season there was an astounding report of at least two breeding-plumaged Glossy Ibises from Saskatchewan(!), along with three or more White-faced and several unidentified *Plegadis*. Five unspecified *Plegadis* ibises were in Minnesota. A likely adult Glossy was seen at San Antonio, Texas, in June; according to the South Texas regional editors this species "is still of uncertain status in the state, [and] there is still some controversy over the status of all previous records of this species in the state." Certainly a careful review of all extralimital *Plegadis* ibis records in North America and further discussion of the identification of the two species in all plumages would make a wonderful—not to mention useful—publication.

The repeated sightings this spring and early summer of dark *Pterodroma* petrels in the Cordell Bank area off the coast of northern California resulted in much excitement and frustration. Those who did not get seasick just thinking about Cordell boat trips or those who were foresighted enough to show up for the boat (a somewhat regular feature of these waters is that boats often never leave the harbor due to nasty sea conditions) were rewarded with views of Murphy's and/or Solander's petrels, or at least dark *Pterodroma* species. Due to "identification difficulties often including poor viewing conditions" most birds could only be called "large dark *Pterodroma*, probably Solander's or Murphy's;" however, a total of three Murphy's and four to five Solander's (as well as 15 *Pterodroma* species) were believed to have been seen on the five boat trips during June and July. Debate over these sightings continues. It also remains to be seen if these species are somewhat regular in this area at this season or if they are associated with an oceanographic anomaly which may last up to only a few years. These trips also produced several additional surprises as well as valuable information on the status of several more regularly-occurring West Coast pelagic species in these deeper waters during the mid-summer season, a period for which only limited data exist.

Those June and July landbird migrants

The appearance of Tennessee Warblers in mid-summer in several regions caused more than a little puzzlement and consternation among observers and regional editors alike. Last year, Craig Faanes wrote (AB 39(5):930) that "without doubt, determining [the] status of Tennessee Warblers in North Dakota in summer is extremely frustrating. Do they or do they not nest? In most years, Tennessees can be found consistently through late May and then again, almost like clockwork, on July 4. Most confusing is the fact that these birds are present during the 'proper' season, but are not located during subsequent searches." This year a singing bird, believed to be northbound, was in Arkansas June 13, two separate individuals were in North Dakota June 26, and southbound migrants were in southern Ontario beginning July 6.

Let's use the above example as a springboard into a discussion of landbird migration during the mid-summer months. It is usually quite easy to assign many early or mid-June records of migrants as late spring transients. Species such as Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided flycatchers, Swainson's Thrush, and Mourning Warbler regularly occur as migrants into mid-June. Other migrant species that are found somewhat regularly into the second week of June include: Western Wood-Pewee, Alder and Willow flycatchers, Blue Jay, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, Warbling Vireo (in the West only), Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, and Bobolink. Records of "spring" vagrants are regularly made well into June, and even occasionally into early July at a time when several other species of migrants are already heading south. However, many records cannot be so easily categorized. Several not-so-typical dates for late northbound migrants, I presume, included: a Swainson's Thrush June 2 in Florida, a Yellow-rumped Warbler June 15 in North Dakota, and a Bay-breasted Warbler June 19 in Arkansas. It is not certain whether a Snowy Owl that lingered in Wisconsin through June 22 ever went very far north at all this season.

Southbound transients of several species are regularly noted beginning in late June or during July (e.g., Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds and Northern (Bullock's) Orioles in the West; Northern and, especially, Louisiana waterthrushes and Orchard Orioles in the East). This season five Orchard Orioles were seen heading south off Point Pelee, Ontario, on July 6, and the species was in south Florida by late in the month. A Northern Parula, one of the earlier "fall" migrants in south Florida, was noted there June 26 and believed to be southbound. Single migrant Yellow and Black-and-white warblers were in Florida by July 7, and sixteen of the latter were in coastal Louisiana by July 19-20. Perhaps more surprising, the Ontario regional editor reported a small but regular southbound movement of Swainson's Thrushes in the southern section of that province by mid-July; one was also seen this year during the same period in western Pennsylvania. Gray Catbirds were in Florida beginning in mid-July, and southbound migrant Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were noted in southern Ontario July 15 and in western Pennsylvania July 24. Sixteen Least Flycatchers were in coastal Louisiana July 19-20, and several individuals arrived in south Texas by late that month. Even more unusual was a Yellow-rumped Warbler at Point Pelee on July 27 and a Black-throated Green Warbler in coastal Louisiana July 19.

A Bobolink in Florida June 10 was thought to be northbound, while "presumably southbound" birds were already heard overhead at Cape May, New Jersey, by June 30, and in southern Ontario by early July.

Louisiana Waterthrushes were in south Florida beginning in early July and two were in southeastern Arizona (where casual) by late that month. But what was one doing in southwestern Oklahoma on June 3? In addition, a Northern Waterthrush was reported in southern California August 7, however, the regional editor pointed out that Louisiana Waterthrush, for which there are only two state records, are from the same period. This may well be the more likely waterthrush in that region in early August.

Other species not mentioned earlier which occurred at least somewhat regularly as southbound migrants by late July included: many hummingbirds, most flycatchers, most swallows, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers, most "southern" warblers, several "northern" warblers which also breed down the Appalachians (e.g., Blackburnian and Canada), Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and House Finch.

More thoughts on summer shorebirds

Our understanding of shorebird migration in North America has appreciably advanced in the last decade. Improved observer skills in identifying and aging waders has resulted from the relatively recent appearance of a number of fine books and articles dealing with shorebird identification and migration. Still, in 1982, a Changing Seasons editor wrote that in reading many of the regional reports there was "a clear picture of utter confusion about the status of shorebirds in June and July," and that "most of North America is left with a vague feeling of indecision." In 1986, with four more years of "shorebirding mania" behind us, I think the overall picture is somewhat more clear. Most shorebirds seen in summer are now being properly categorized as spring migrants, fall migrants, or non-breeders. But there is still some confusion, and there will always be a significant number of sightings annually which will remain partly or wholly enigmatic.

Since the plumage a shorebird is wearing in June and July is often the best clue to its status, observers are encouraged to include this information whenever possible in their summer reports, so that regional editors can mention it especially when the record is open to any sort of "debate." The regional editors from northern California wrote that "shorebird observers are encouraged to report age/sex/plumage data as an essential part of understanding the migration, timing, and nesting success as well as vagrancy patterns of these birds. For this purpose shorebirders are encouraged to use the recently published *Shorebirds, an Identification Guide* by Hayman, Marchant, and Prater." In general, late spring and early fall migrants are in breeding plumage, while non-breeding summerers are typically in basic or partial breeding plumage. However, some birds in basic plumage migrate anyway, and a few individuals in breeding plumage rarely summer south of the breeding grounds. Also, a number of individuals seen in June or early July in southern Canada and the Lower 48 States may be sexually immature birds in partial breeding plumage that have migrated only part way to their breeding grounds and then ceased farther northward movement; even these birds may continue to move about on a more local scale or wander randomly, perhaps even as a flock. William B. Robertson wrote on these pages, in 1980 (AB 34:869) that "it seems reasonable to imagine that there may be a substantial movement of shorebirds south of the breeding range in summer," and that "partial migration, delayed spring migration, and premature fall migration all seem to be likely possibilities." Single Red Knots and Semipalmated Sandpipers lingering in Wisconsin through June 29 may have been examples of such non-breeders having only partially migrated.

Most of the more southerly (e.g., prairie and boreal forest) breeding shorebirds occur regularly as southbound migrants beginning in late June. Good numbers of Willets, Long-billed Curlews, and Marbled Godwits are often back on the coast of California by the end of that month; some Willets and curlews may even return by mid-month. Such early dates might well be expected from time to time in the East. This year, single Willets, likely southbound, were in Kentucky June 22, and at Presque Isle, Pennsylvania, June 23. Other somewhat regular mid or late June returnees include Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper (except in the far West), Spotted, Upland, and Least sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitcher. In spite of the above comments, what was a Solitary Sandpiper doing in Delaware on June 16? Or an American Woodcock in coastal North Carolina June 30? Was the Least Sandpiper in breed-

ing plumage on the Louisiana coast, June 22, an early fall migrant? (Yes, I believe it was.) What about the ten Least (plumage unknown) in New Mexico June 18?

Interesting arrival dates and counts for a number of wader species are given in the West Indies regional report. In Saskatchewan, spectacular numbers of southbound shorebirds have been censused the past several years on several large lakes, most notably Big Quill Lake, showing the importance of these localities as major staging areas.

Some additional comments:

Lesser Golden-Plover: Early southbound individuals were noted in the East beginning in early July, while two separate, enigmatic individuals were in Minnesota in mid-June. On the West Coast, where both races (soon-to-be-split into separate species?), *dominica* and *fulva*, occur, it would be interesting to see if there is any significant difference between the two in the timing and occurrence of late spring and early fall migrants. The regional editors from northern California wrote: "As *dominica* Lesser Golden-Plovers sometimes reach Argentina by late August and start nesting slightly earlier and closer to California than the mostly coastal migrant *fulva*, we might find our July and early August records to be of *dominica*. Note though that *fulva* has been known to show up on its western Pacific migration routes and even Hawaii by the end of July." However, early records this summer of individuals identified to race were of *fulva*: one in southern California, July 15-19; and two "probables" in northern California during mid-July.

Red Knot: In the East, northbound migrants are regularly noted in numbers into early June. This year, 30 in breeding plumage were on the Texas coast June 14, and a total of 300 in breeding plumage was on the Virginia shore, June 13-16. Since one of the sites in Virginia supported knots in ever-increasing numbers, with no gaps in the sightings, beginning in late May, and all the birds were gone soon thereafter, they appear to have been unusually late spring transients.

White-rumped Sandpiper: This is a notoriously late spring migrant. Peak counts regularly occur well into June in the Lower 48 States and southern Canada. This year, 30 were in Maryland on June 15, and the peak counts did not occur in southern Ontario until June 13. Small numbers of northbound White-rumped may be encountered well south of the breeding grounds until virtually the end of June or possibly even the beginning of July. Southbound migrants are not typically encountered in numbers in the East until early or mid-August. The relatively few individuals seen before late July are either very early or possibly summering non-breeders. This year, one in at least partial breeding plumage was at Chincoteague, Virginia, July 3-4; whether this was an exceptionally late spring migrant or a non-breeder that migrated only this far north remains unknown. (The typical fall arrival date for White-rumped Sandpiper at Chincoteague centers around the second week of August.) In Saskatchewan, a report of 1000 at Big Quill Lake July 10 was remarkable given the exceptionally early date and the fact that this species is quite rare on the Great Plains in fall. The observers noted that this was a very unusual sighting and theorized that this concentration represented early southbound migrants as a result of large-scale breeding failure this season in the central arctic.

Long-billed Dowitcher: To date, there are fewer than ten records for this species for southern Canada and the Lower 48 States during the middle two weeks of June. This season, such individuals were seen in eastern Washington, western Texas, and Colorado (two). While there is no reason this species should not summer here on a somewhat regular

basis, records of Short-billed Dowitchers at this season are far more numerous. Observers are urged to carefully study all dowitchers south of the breeding grounds between June 10 and 25 (see: Wilds, Claudia, and Mike Newlon. 1983. The identification of dowitchers. *Birding* 15(4/5):151-165).

Wilson's Phalarope: June sightings of this species away from breeding locales, especially where the species is rare, continued to elicit comments of possible local breeding. This species has bred at such eastern localities as Quebec, Ottawa, Ontario; and, exceptionally, Plum Island, Massachusetts; and while such nestings will certainly occur again, most of the June records likely involve *typical* fall migrants. This is virtually the earliest southbound shorebird migrant in the West, with fall transients (predominantly females) occurring already during the second week of the month (some males are not far behind). Therefore, a female Wilson's Phalarope in the East in mid-June may be an individual that has already laid her eggs and left the brooding and rearing responsibilities to the male somewhere well to the west.

Potpourri

Plomado Falcons are being released on the King Ranch and at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in south Texas. (At least two of the four released young this year were killed by Great Horned Owls.) Observers in the South Texas Region should be aware of the presence of these hacked individuals.

A Pacific-type loon seen at Churchill, Manitoba, in mid-June showed a green sheen to the throat more characteristic of Arctic Loon. However, according to some authorities, Pacific Loon may show some green to the throat. (Also, throat color differences may not be reliable between Pacific Loon and the European population of Arctic Loons which also have black throats with purple gloss.) Therefore, observers are urged to use extreme caution when trying to separate Pacific and Arctic Loons in breeding-plumage, especially extralimital individuals, on the basis of throat color. Three Pacific Loons were reported this season from Quebec; however, the regional editors pointed out that Arctic Loon was not eliminated in any of the sightings, that the Saint Lawrence estuary may be one of the more likely areas in the East in which to encounter a vagrant Arctic Loon, and that only nape and hindneck paleness (a tough field character to note with accuracy) may be reliable in separating the two species. (To my knowledge there are no fully documented records of nominate *arctica* to date for North America.) Observer confidence in separating these recently-split species also took somewhat of a beating early this summer when an obviously mated pair near Nome, Alaska, was composed of one purple-throated and one green-throated individual (*pers. comm.* Jon Dunn—not in Alaska regional report).

Not often seen in active migration, 26 House Finches were seen heading out over Lake Erie from the tip of Point Pelee July 6.

Judging from the literature, the successful nesting of two "Brewster's" Warblers in western Pennsylvania was the first thoroughly documented mating between two hybrids of this type.

A large-scale reproductive failure of an entire landbird community, not previously reported anywhere, was documented in Marin County, California, beginning in May

Recent information indicates that this unprecedented failure extended to the western slope of the Sierra Nevada for at least Mountain Chickadees, Warbling Vireos, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

A count of 684+ American Swallow-tailed Kites reported from Moore Haven, Florida, July 26, was incredible! While this is a probable staging area for fall migrants of this species, this count equals the total number of American Swallow-tailed Kites this writer would have thought existed in all of the United States!

Summer fieldwork near Hyder, Alaska, the easternmost community in the state, produced a number of interesting records, including those of Willow and Least flycatchers, American Crow, Solitary Vireo (*V. s. cassinii*), and Magnolia Warbler.

As a result of an exposed smuggling operation, more confusion exists over the origin of south Texas parrots.

Single vagrant Mountain Bluebirds were paired with Eastern Bluebirds in Minnesota and Ontario. It would be interesting (and sobering) to see descriptions/photographs of the young.

There was a relative paucity of vagrants from Mexico into southern Arizona this summer despite the presence of a veritable army of observers. Was this due merely to chance or, as the regional editor wondered, possibly to conditions in Mexico that might influence northward wanderings in such species?

A helpful hint from Jerome Jackson of the Central Southern Region: "When sending in records, birders should always avoid writing dates as 6/7/86. Such notations lead to errors. Was the bird seen June 7 or July 6? Please write out or abbreviate the month."

Conifer plantations around reservoirs in the Northeast continued to attract several nesting species that were south of their "normal" range. Observers there have documented the spread of such species as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Magnolia Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Interesting comments concerning the possible species involved with summer martin records in the West Indies are found in that region's report.

Very impressive numbers of waterbirds were found during the season at Duda Farms, Florida.

Breeding Bird Atlas work continued to show that several grassland sparrows are generally more common in many areas than was previously thought.

Jaegers present some of the most challenging identification problems. An excellent example of this came from the Texas coast this summer where an individual jaeger remained over an extended period and was identified as all three species by various observers. At present, the "consensus" is evenly split between Parasitic and Pomarine.

Lastly, a vagrant Burrowing Owl was found in a laundry room in Michigan! Perhaps that state's records committee will now be obligated to deal with the question of assisted passage as it might be argued that the bird was transported there in a load of dirty clothes by tourists from Nevada.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Larry Ballard, Rick Blom, Jon Dunn, Brad Schram, Claudia Wilds, and Alan Wormington for making a number of helpful comments on and suggestions to this Changing Seasons.

—P.O. Box 1061,
Goleta, CA 93116

Abbreviations Frequently Used in Regional Reports

ad adult, Am.: American, c.: central, C: Celsius, CBC: Christmas Bird Count, Cr.: Creek, Com.: Common, Co.: County, Cos.: Counties, *et al.*: and others, E.: Eastern (bird name), Eur.: European, Eurasian, F: Fahrenheit, *fide*: reported by, F.&W.S.: Fish & Wildlife Service, Ft.: Fort, imm.: immature, I.: Island, Is.: Islands, Isles, Jct.: Junction, juv.: juvenile, L.: Lake, m.ob.: many observers, Mt.: Mountain, Mts.: Mountains, N.F.: National Forest, N.M.: National Monument, N.P.: National Park, N.W.R.: Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, N.: Northern (bird name), Par.: Parish, Pen.: Peninsula, P P Provincial Park, Pt.: Point, not Port, Ref.: Refuge, Res.:

Reservoir, not Reservation, R.: River, S.P.: State Park, sp.: species, spp.: species plural, ssp.: subspecies, Twp.: Township, W.: Western (bird name), W.M.A.: Wildlife Management Area, v.o.: various observers, N,S,W,E,: direction of motion, n., s., w., e.: direction of location, >: more than, <: fewer than, ±: approximately, or estimated number, ♂: male, ♀: female, ♂: imm. or female, *: specimen, ph.: photographed, †: documented, ft: feet, mi: miles, m: meters, km kilometers, date with a + (*e.g.*, Mar. 4 +): recorded beyond that date. Editors may also abbreviate often-cited locations or organizations.