

American Birds

SUMMER

GUIDE

July–October 1992

The heat of the summer sun is beating down upon us. What better time to enjoy the sun, the shade and the shore while bird-watching? Throughout the summer, it is likely you will find shorebirds, wading birds and terns. But then late in the summer look for early migrants like herons, egrets, hawks and warblers.

If you aren't quite sure what to expect in your area, or if you want to take a weekend trip and don't know just where to go, read on. Below we've listed 25 terrific summer birding spots as well as possible species you might see. So find your sun-hat and get outside where the birds are!

Recommended location guides and further references are included at the end of each site.

1. BRIER ISLAND, NOVA SCOTIA

One of the finest birding spots in the Maritimes, Brier Island often swarms with migrant warblers and other songbirds in late summer and early fall. It is also a magnet for birds that have gone off-course; a number of provincial "firsts" have been found here. Also see: *Birding Nova Scotia*, Charles R. K. Allen & Phyllis R. Dobson, rev. 1984; *Birding in Atlantic Canada: Nova Scotia*, Roger Burrows, publ. 1988.

2. DEAD CREEK WILDLIFE REFUGE, VERMONT

Although the birding varies from year to year with water conditions, this is often one of the best inland shore-

birding spots in New England. Late summer and early fall are generally the most productive seasons. When the water is too high for most shorebirds, there are likely to be other waterbirds of interest.

3. LIGHTHOUSE POINT PARK, CONNECTICUT

On the outskirts of New Haven, and strategically located on the coast, Lighthouse Point is an excellent place to observe migrants from late summer through fall. Especially in northwest winds, big flights of hawks may be recorded here, and songbirds often concentrate at the point under the same conditions.

Also see: *Connecticut Birds*, Joseph D. Zeranski & Thomas R. Baptist, publ. 1990.

4. TINICUM NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, PENNSYLVANIA

A remarkable oasis in the middle of south Philadelphia, Tinicum has a variety of habitats along good walking trails. The impoundments attract herons, egrets, and shorebirds in late summer, while the areas of trees and brush often hold migrating warblers and other songbirds by early fall. Also see: *Where to Find Birds in Western Pennsylvania*, David B. Freeland, ed., publ. 1975; *Birding the Delaware Valley Region*, John J. Harding & Justin J. Harding, publ. 1980; *Birds of the Central Susquehanna Valley*, Allen R. Schweisenberg, publ. 1988; *Birds of the Lehigh Valley Area*, Bernard L. Morris *et al*, publ. 1984.

5. SANDY POINT STATE PARK, MARYLAND

Although it is far up Chesapeake Bay and its habitat seems unimpressive, Sandy Point has a long history of turning up unusual birds. The gulls on the beach are always worth checking, even in midsummer, and the thickets may hold unexpected migrant landbirds in early fall. Also see: *Finding Birds in the National Capital Area*, Claudia Wilds, publ. 1983.

6. TYBEE ISLAND, GEORGIA

Reached by a good highway, Tybee Island is one of the most accessible points on the outer coast of Georgia. Wading birds, shorebirds, and terns are all numerous in the area in late summer. This is also a good launching point for adventurous birders who want to explore offshore waters. Also see: *A Birder's Guide to Georgia, 3rd edition*, Terry Chesser, ed., rev. 1988.

7. MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK, FLORIDA

Stately groves of live oak and large areas of freshwater marsh make this a good area for seeing a wide variety of birds in attractive surroundings. Wild Turkeys, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Florida Scrub Jays are among the breeding species. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Florida* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989.; *Florida's Birds; A Handbook and Reference*, Herbert W. Kale II & David S. Maehr, publ. 1990; *Birds of South Florida*, Connie Toops & Willard E. Dille, publ. 1986.

8. BUCKEYE LAKE, OHIO

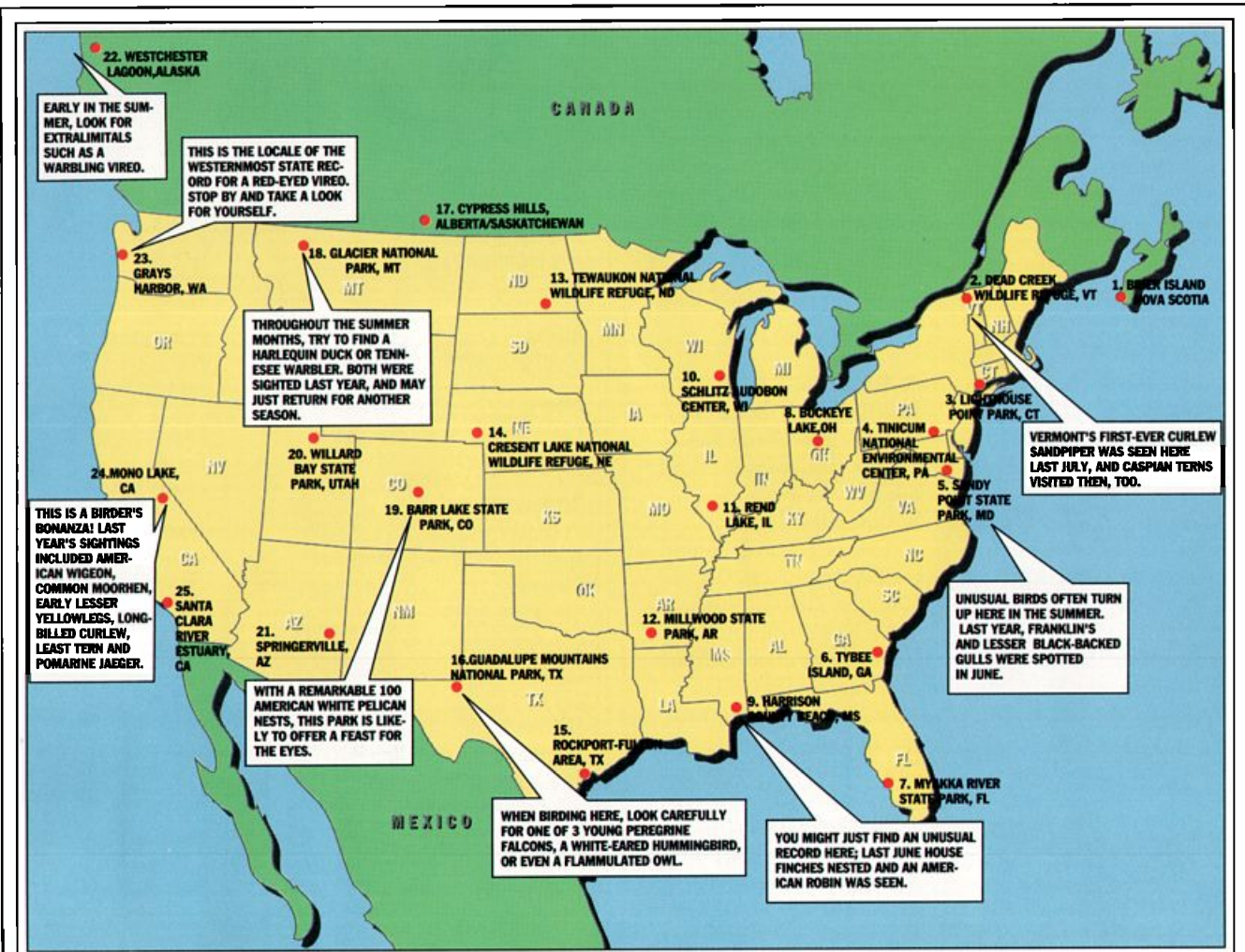
A long tradition of bird study at this central Ohio lake has made it one of the better-known ornithological sites in the upper Midwest. Many woodland birds nest in the remnant patches of forest around the lake, and interesting waterbirds may turn up at any season. Also see: *The Birds of Ohio*, Bruce G. Peterjohn, publ. 1989; *Birds of Dayton*, Dayton Audubon Society, publ. 1984.

9. HARRISON COUNTY BEACH, MISSISSIPPI

This 26-mile beach, all easily accessible by road, plays host to large numbers of nesting Least Terns and Black Skimmers. By late summer they are joined by flocks of other tern species, as well as shorebirds, Brown Pelicans, and Reddish Egrets. Surprising rarities have appeared here on many occasions. Also see: *Birds & Birding on the Mississippi Coast*, Judith A. Toups & Jerome A. Jackson, publ. 1987.

10. SCHLITZ AUDUBON CENTER, WISCONSIN

This Audubon Center on the shoreline of Lake Michigan has a good interpretive program, and it also has good trails through wooded areas where migrant songbirds may



be numerous in early fall. Gulls and shorebirds are often present, and sometimes there are major hawk flights along the lakeshore in fall. Also see: *Wisconsin Birdlife*, Samuel D Robbins, Jr., publ. 1991; *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*, Daryl D. Tessen, rev. 1989.

11. REND LAKE, ILLINOIS

This large lake in extreme southern Illinois often hosts appropriately large concentrations of waterbirds. Herons, egrets, and terns may be common in late summer, while gulls and waterfowl appear later in the fall. Also see: *The Birds of Illinois*, H. David Bohlen, publ. 1989; *Bird-finding in Illinois*, Elton Fawks & Paul H. Lobik, publ. 1975; *Birding Handbook for East-Central Illinois*, John H. Behrens, ed., publ. 1976.

12. MILLWOOD STATE PARK, ARKANSAS

Lake Millwood has established a track record as one of the best places in Arkansas to look for unusual birds, especially waterbirds out of range, and late summer is one of the most promising seasons there. Even if no oddities show up, the combination of woods, fields, and shoreline habitat is sure to produce a pleasing variety of birds. Also see: *Arkansas Audubon Society Field List*, Arkansas Audubon Society, rev. 1990.

13. TEWAUKON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, NORTH DAKOTA

As with other waterbird spots on the prairies, Tewaupon varies in quality according to water supply. At its best, however, this is an outstanding area for shorebirds in late summer and fall. A

wide variety of ducks, grebes, hawks, and smaller landbirds add to the interest of birding here. Also see: *Hettinger, North Dakota*, Dave Griffiths, & Carolyn Griffiths, publ. 1991.

14. CRESCENT LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, NEBRASKA

This refuge in the Sandhills region is a good place to see typical prairie breeders like Sharp-tailed Grouse, Long-billed Curlew, and Wilson's Phalarope. By late summer, numbers of birds are augmented by arriving shorebirds, terns, and others.

15. ROCKPORT - FULTON AREA, TEXAS

This area of the Texas coastal bend is best known for its wintering Whooping Cranes, but it's a great place for waterbirds all year, and migrant landbirds are often numerous as well. A big

annual Hummingbird Festival takes place here each September, with field trips and many speakers.

16. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS

The best little mountain range in Texas, the Guadalupe range is home to a number of strictly western birds that are rare or unknown elsewhere in the state. A hike up McKittrick Canyon provides a superb cross-section of southwestern birds and habitats, from Crissal Thrashers in the desert to Hepatic Tanagers up in the pines. Also see: *Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1988; *Birder's Guide to Rio Grande Valley* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1988; *Field Guide to Birds of the Big Bend*, Roland H.

Wauer, rev. 1985; *Birder's Guide to Texas*, Edward A. Kutac, rev. 1989; *Birder's Guide to Rockport-Fulton*, Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce & Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi, publ. 1989.

17. CYPRESS HILLS, ALBERTA/SASKATCHEWAN

Isolated far out on the prairies, the Cypress Hills region adds unique elements to both of the provinces that it touches. This is an outpost for many birds that breed mainly farther west or farther north, such as Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Dusky Flycatcher. Surroundings prairies have Baird's Sparrows, Sprague's Pipits, and others. Also see: *Birding Jasper National Park*, Kevin Van Tighem, publ. 1988.

18. GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

Magnificent scenery may draw most visitors, but Glacier also has fine birding. Late summer is the time to search above treeline for White-tailed Ptarmigan and Rosy Finch. Forests and lakes at lower elevations have Varied Thrushes, American Dippers, and Barrow's Goldeneyes, among other birds. Also see: *Birds of West-Central Montana*, Richard L. Hutto, ed., publ. 1986.

19. BARR LAKE STATE PARK, COLORADO

One of the best lowland birding sites near Denver, Barr Lake has nesting herons and grebes, and may attract many shorebirds in late summer if the water is not too high. Groves of cottonwoods around the lake are good for nesting landbirds in summer and often excellent for migrants in fall. Also see: *Birds of the Lower Colorado River Valley*, K. V. Rosenberg *et al.*, publ. 1991.

20. WILLARD BAY STATE PARK, UTAH

On the edge of the Great Salt Lake, the thickets here often hold big concentrations of migrating western songbirds in early fall. On the edge of the lake there are often good numbers of grebes, gulls, phalaropes, and other aquatic species. Also see: *Utah Birds*, William H. Behle & Michael L. Perry, publ. 1975.

21. SPRINGVILLE, ARIZONA

Springville is the gateway to the White Mountains, a cool retreat from Arizona's hot summer lowlands. Birdlife reflects the north and east: Gray Jays, Three-toed Woodpeckers, Gray Catbirds, Pine Grosbeaks, and others can be found, only a few hours away from the haunts of the usual "Arizona specialties." Also see: *Birds in Southeastern Arizona*, William A. Davis & Stephen M. Russell, rev. 1990; *Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona* (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989.

22. WESTCHESTER LAGOON, ALASKA

Urban birding at its best is offered by this wetland in the heart of Anchorage. Red-necked Grebes, Arctic Terns, and many ducks nest here; the mudflats on adjacent Knik Arm host great concentrations of shorebirds in late summer. Walking and biking trails provide easy access. Also see: *Guide to the Birds of Alaska*, Robert H. Armstrong, rev. 1990; *Field Guide to Birding in Anchorage*, Robert L. (Buzz) Scher, publ. 1989.

23. GRAYS HARBOR, WASHINGTON

Considered by many to be the best birding area in Washington state, Grays Harbor is productive all year. Huge flocks of shorebirds stage here in late summer and fall, while migrant shearwaters, loons, and sea ducks can be seen passing just offshore later in the season. Also see: *Guide to*

INVALUABLE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Although coverage and information varies from place to place, rare bird alert telephone services that use taped messages are a real boon for peregrinating birders. These detail current rare or unusual birds sighted and how to get to the place where last reported. Use this listing when visiting the places on our summer birding map.

Alaska (907) 248-2473	Georgia (404) 509-0204	Pennsylvania Philadelphia (215) 567-2473
Alberta Calgary (403) 237-8821	Illinois Central (217) 785-1083 Chicago (708) 671-1522	Saskatchewan Regina (306) 761-2094
Arizona Phoenix (602) 832-8745 Tucson (602) 798-1005	Maryland (301) 652-1088	Texas Statewide (713) 992-2757
Arkansas (501) 753-5853	Mississippi (601) 467-9500	Utah (801) 538-4630
California Northern (415) 528-0288	Montana (406) 721-2935	Vermont (802) 457-2779
Colorado (303) 973-7207	Nebraska (402) 292-5325	Washington (206) 526-8266
Connecticut (203) 254-3665	Nova Scotia (902) 852-2428	Wisconsin Statewide (414) 352-3857 Madison (608) 255-2476 <i>except 9am-3pm weekdays.</i>
Florida Statewide (813) 984-4444	Ohio Columbus (614) 221-9736	

bird-finding in Washington, Terrence R. Wahl & Dennis R. Paulson, rev. 1991; *Birding in Seattle and King County*, Eugene S. Hunn, publ. 1982; *Birding in the San Juan Islands*, Mark G. Lewis & Fred A. Sharpe, publ. 1987.

24. MONO LAKE, CALIFORNIA

The drive to save Mono Lake from destruction was spearheaded by birdwatchers, and joined by thousands of others who cared about the outdoors. Thanks to these efforts, the lake is still worth visiting. A spectacular setting with great numbers of migrant phalaropes and other birds on the lake, and typical high desert birds in the surrounding country.

25. SANTA CLARA RIVER ESTUARY, CALIFORNIA

Reached from the Ventura Harbor or from McGrath State Beach, the estuary is a year-round hot spot for birding. Shorebirds, terns, gulls, and others are present by the thousands in late summer, with turnover and new arrivals every day. Many outstanding rarities have been found here. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Northern California*, LoLo Westrich & Jim Westrich, publ. 1991; *Birding Northern California*, Jean Richmond, publ. 1985; *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay*, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, rev. 1990.



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STAMPS WORTH SAVING



Short-tailed Albatross (right) with Black-footed Albatross

RARE ALBATROSS RE-VISITS MIDWAY

There are only about 250 Short-tailed Albatrosses (*Diomedea albatrus*), making it one of the rarest seabirds on earth. These albatrosses were hunted nearly to extinction by plume hunters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Only about ten pairs remained in the 1950s, but the population has been slowly increasing since then. All Short-taileds breed in one or two colonies in Japan. Incredibly, for nearly ten years one Short-tailed Albatross has been spending its non-breeding season at the large Laysan and Black-footed albatross colony on Sand Island, Midway — in the far northwestern chain of the Hawaiian Islands. This individual, now approaching adulthood, apparently seeks solace in the company of thousands of its cousins in the absence of conspecifics. There have been a few sightings of this species in Alaskan waters and off the North American west coast, but this particular individual is perhaps the easiest Short-tailed Albatross to locate, short of making the arduous trek to the nesting island off Japan.

BEYOND THE LAW

Developers in central Florida are defying Federal law by bulldozing the habitat of the threatened Florida Scrub Jay to make way for more citrus groves and housing projects, reports *International Wildlife*.

Fewer than 5,000 pairs now exist in Florida, and they are supposedly protected under the Endangered Species Act.



Scrub Jay

“The plight of the Scrub Jay is just a symptom of the disease of rampant habitat destruction,” says Robert Irvin of the National Wildlife Federation’s Fisheries and Wildlife division. “The Endangered Species Act must be strengthened so that entire ecosystems can be protected.”

STAYIN’ ALIVE

For the first time ever, taxonomists have relied on DNA analysis to classify a new species—the Bulu Burti Boubou (*Laniarius liberatus*), a type of shrike discovered in Somalia.

The new method of identification allows a bird to survive; a specimen is captured, studied, and released. Traditionally, a “type” bird has been killed, the skeleton and skin preserved for later study. In the case of the Bulu Burti Boubou, the bird was later released into a protected riverside woodland. It’s release re-ignited an intense debate among biologists and scientists—to kill or not to kill the first known individual of a species for science.

Preservation-minded biologists have praised the release of the boubou. “It was totally and absolutely the right thing to do,” stated Nigel Collar, research fellow at the International Council for Bird Preservation in Cambridge, England. “We cannot possibly, as con-

servationists, advocate the collection and killing of a species right at the edge of extinction.”

Other scientists fiercely believe in collecting a specimen. “There’s no way you can know today what you’ll need to know about an animal a hundred years from now,” asserts Scott

Lanyon, head of the division of birds at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION SAVES EAGLE

By performing what is believed to be the first blood transfusion involving a Bald



Bald Eagle

Eagle, veterinarians at the Wildlife Center of Virginia saved the life of a starving, six-month-old female bird.

The procedure sustained the eagle while the staff administered additional fluids and nutrients. The technique used, injecting blood directly into the bone marrow cavity, was actually developed for premature human babies whose veins are too small for conventional transfusions. Previously, the Center had successfully used the rare procedure on other birds including hawks and owls.

UNFRIENDLY SKIES

At least 72 species of birds are known to nest in the area surrounding Lake Calumet, Illinois which lies just five miles west of Lake Michigan and is the proposed site for a new airport. Thousands of birds, including 2000-4000 Black-crowned Night-Herons, will be displaced if the plan succeeds.