

American Birds

SPRING GUIDE

April-June 1994

Neotropical migrants flood into North America each spring. Their success here is a reflection of such varied factors as food availability, weather, habitat condition, and their own gene pool. Unfortunately, migratory birds are facing many pressures throughout both their wintering and breeding ranges, and many birders can attest to dramatic declines in numbers over several decades of birding. Some of this is due to natural cycles in a species' life. Some of it appears directly connected to habitat loss. There is much we do not know.

American Birds urges every birder to keep field notes, to participate in breeding bird surveys, or to report findings to local bird clubs. Your birding can help put together the puzzle of birdlife on this continent.

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

1. ILES DE LA MADELEINE

Quebec

Most easily reached by ferry from Prince Edward Island, this archipelago is a great birding area in late spring. Masses of shorebirds and waterfowl stop here in migration. Breeding birds around the coastlines include puffins, guillemots, and kittiwakes, while the forests hold Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Gray-cheeked (Bicknell's) Thrush, and many others. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to Canada*, J. Cam Finlay, publ. 1984.

2. CAPE TORMENTINE AREA

New Brunswick

At the southeastern tip of the province, this area offers some of its best birding. The National Wildlife Area here has both fresh and salt marsh, attracting a wide variety of ducks and shorebirds in migration. Herons and other waders appear in warmer months, including rare wanderers from the south. Also see above.

3. MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

Massachusetts

This old cemetery in Cambridge has been known for

over a century as a superb place to seek migrant songbirds. Especially after rain, the trees often host a fine variety of warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other transients. Strays from the west have turned up on occasion (for example, first state records of both Hermit and Townsend's warblers). Also see: *Birds of Massachusetts*, Richard R. Veit and Wayne R. Petersen, publ. 1993.

4. BELLEPLAIN STATE FOREST

New Jersey

Not far from Cape May, this forested area supports a diversity of breeding birds, including Hooded and Prairie warblers, and Acadian Flycatcher. In May, many northbound migrant warblers stop over. Also see: *Bird-finding in New Jersey*, William J. Boyle, Jr., rev. 1989

5. CHESAPEAKE BAY—

BRIDGE TUNNEL

Virginia

At the rocky "islands" on this man-made crossing, landbird migrants often pause for easy views. Waterbirds of rocky coastlines spend the winter, and many linger late into the spring. This is a good place for Great Cormorants, scoters, and the occasional eider or Purple Sandpiper. Even jaegers are sometimes seen. Also see: *Finding Birds in the National Capital Area*, Claudia Wilds, rev. 1992.

6. CAESARS HEAD STATE PARK

South Carolina

The best spring migration of landbirds in the Carolinas is generally inland, and this park on the edge of the Appalachians is one of the best spring birding spots in the state. Among the specialties are Ruffed Grouse, Whip-poor-will, and Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided warblers. Also see: *Finding Birds in South Carolina*, Robin M.

Carter, publ. 1992.

7. KEY WEST

Florida

Although this island is heavily populated, many birds can be found in pockets of habitat. Herons and other wading birds (including Reddish Egrets) forage in the shallows offshore, northbound warblers concentrate in woodlots, and shorebirds are often numerous in ponds near the airport. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Florida* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989; *Birds of South Florida*, Connie Toops & Willard E. Dilley, publ. 1986.

8. RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

Ontario

Less well-known (and less crowded) than nearby Point Pelee, Rondeau can be nearly as good for concentrations of migrants. By late spring it can be an even better birding spot because of its diversity of breeding species, including Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, and Prothonotary Warbler. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to Ontario*, Clive E. Goodwin, publ. 1982.

9. McCORMICK'S CREEK STATE PARK

Indiana

The woodlands here often hold good numbers of spring migrants. Birds that stay to nest include some with southern affinities, such as Summer Tanager and Worm-eating Warbler, as well as Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated vireos, and more. Also see: *The Birds of Indiana*, Russell E. Mumford & Charles E. Keller, publ. 1984.

10. DAUPHIN ISLAND

Alabama

Easily reached by a causeway from the mainland, this rela-

ing species include Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Blue Grouse, Black-backed and Three-toed woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, and Calliope Hummingbird. Also see: *Birds of Canada*, W. Earl Godfrey, rev. 1987

17. FONTENELLE DAM
Wyoming

In recent years, Wyoming birders have discovered that the deciduous thickets in this area make an amazing magnet for lost migrants. As many as 17 warbler species have been recorded in a single spring season, some of these being outstanding rarities for the state. Also see: *A Birder's Guide to Wyoming*, Oliver K. Scott, publ. 1993

18. ARAPAHO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Colorado

Located in a high intermountain valley, this area hosts a large population of Sage Grouse. The males can be seen strutting on their display grounds through early May. Lakes here also host breeding waterbirds, including Cinnamon Teal, Redhead, Sora, American Avocet, and Black and Forster's terns. See: *Birder's Guide to Colorado* (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt & James A. Lane, rev. 1988.

19. RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS
New Mexico

The bird list for this small park is approaching 300 species, because so many birds stop here in migration. Practically any eastern migrant might turn up in May. Breeding birds include such diverse species as Cave Swallow, Crissal Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Orchard Oriole. Also see: *New Mexico Bird-finding Guide*, edited by Dale A. Zimmerman, Marian A. Zimmerman, & John N. Durrie, publ. 1992.

20. GARDEN CANYON
Arizona

This canyon is famous with naturalists of all sorts, from botanists to lepidopterists. Birders find it equally noteworthy. Elegant Trogon, Montezuma Quail, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, and Red-faced Warbler are just a few of the enticements. Also see: *Birder's Guide to South-eastern Arizona* (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989; *Birds in Southeastern Arizona*, William A. Davis & Stephen M. Russell, rev. 1990.

21. HOMER SPIT
Alaska

In late spring and summer, the waters around the Spit teem with scoters, puffins, loons, Pigeon Guillemots, Marbled and Kittlitz's murrelets, and many other birds. Bald Eagles are common in the area, and many shorebirds stop over on the nearby tidal flats in May. Also see: *A Bird Finder's Guide to Homer and Kachemak Bay*, George C. West, publ. 1991.

22. OCEAN SHORES
Washington

This is one of the best birding areas on Washington's outer coast. Loons, grebes, scoters, gulls, and others are abundant offshore, while tidal flats inside the bay host thousands of shorebirds in migration. Snowy Plover reaches its northern breeding limit here. Also see: *Guide to bird-finding in Washington*, Terrence R. Wahl & Dennis R. Paulson, rev. 1991

23. HUMBOLDT BAY
California

Much of the bayshore is easily viewed between Arcata and Eureka, and large numbers of waterbirds can be seen. The big flocks of ducks that winter here start to diminish by April, but the



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 Winter birding map.

Alabama (205) 987-2730	Indiana (317) 259-0911	Quebec (418) 660-9089 (in French)
Alaska (907) 338-2473	Massachusetts (617) 259-8805	South Carolina (704) 332-2473
Alberta Calgary (403) 237-8821	Missouri (314) 445-9115	Texas Statewide (713) 992-2757
Arizona Tucson (602) 798-1005	Nevada (702) 649-1516	Virginia (804) 238-2713
California Arcata (707) 826-7031	New Brunswick (506) 382-3825	Washington (206) 526-8266
San Bernardino (909) 793-5599	New Jersey (609) 884-2626	Wisconsin (414) 352-3857
Colorado (303) 279-3076	New Mexico (505) 662-2101	Wyoming (307) 265-2473
Florida Lower Keys (305) 294-3438	Oklahoma (918) 669-6646	
	Ontario Windsor/Pt. Pelee (519) 252-2473	

arrival of great flights of shorebirds will keep things exciting through the beginning of June. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Northern California*, LoLo Westrich & Jim Westrich, publ. 1991; *Birding Northern California*, Jean Richmond, publ. 1985.

24. CHARLESTON PEAK
Nevada

An island of montane habitats surrounded by desert, this peak supports isolated breeding populations of many species, including Northern Goshawk, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Pygmy Nuthatch, Virginia's Warbler, and Lazuli Bunting. Also see: *Southern Nevada Birds*, a Seekers Guide, Carolyn

Kitchel Titus, publ. 1991.

25. SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS
California

In a gradient of habitats from chaparral to pines, observers can find such western specialties as White-headed and Nuttall's woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Mountain Quail, Pinyon Jay, Wrentit, and sometimes Lawrence's Goldfinch. Nocturnal birds include Whip-poor-will (at its western limits) and Northern Saw-whet Owl. See: *Birder's Guide to Southern California* (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1990; *Where Birders Go in Southern California*, Henry E. Childs, Jr., publ. 1990.