



Figure 1. The Magnificent Frigatebird occurs regularly in southern Florida, where it breeds on the Dry Tortugas and where this photograph was taken by Kevin T. Karlson. The species also occurs regularly along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, mainly as a post-breeding dispersant in summer and early fall. By contrast, small numbers occur inland in the Southeast, with most associated with storms. See Doug McNair's paper on p. 11 for a review and analysis of inland records and their relation to storms.

Despite living on a well-explored continent, frontiers abound in the ornithological world. In other words, although we know an enormous amount about the avifauna of North America, there remains an enormous amount to learn. Our continued education will come on several fronts, each with a different character.

We will learn much through reanalysis of what came before. Taxonomy changes with the more we learn about the biology and ecology of birds around the world and the more we understand evolutionary processes. Sometimes we learn that taxa previously considered species are best treated as subspecies, generally because interbreeding is found to be extensive or mechanisms thought to prohibit interbreeding (e.g., substantial song differences) are found wanting. Sometimes we learn the converse, that taxa previously considered subspecies are best treated as species. Sadly, the former often leads to waning interest and a cessation of reporting by most birders. Thankfully, the latter often leads to a cogent reinterpretation of prior records. I hope that someday soon all birders will report to the level of identifiable form, regardless of its taxonomic treatment.

We will learn much by putting effort into regions that have received little coverage, such as Paul Lehman and cohorts have done on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, in the past several falls (see p. 117). Many areas on this continent are "under-birded" or receive only heavily seasonal coverage.

We will learn much from compiling records and analyzing them with respect to seasonality, geography, weather, age/sex ratios, subspecies, etc. Such efforts are the bread and butter of biogeographers and ecologists, yet birders and field ornithologists have amassed more data than most could hope to obtain. Diligent, careful compilation of these data and thorough exploration of various hypotheses regarding patterns of occurrence will take us far (e.g., Figure 1 and see McLaren, et al., page 4).

Lastly, we will learn much by merely continuing to amass records from throughout this vast continent. How else could we learn that Cave Swallows staged an unprecedented "invasion" of the Northeast in fall 1999 (see the cover and various Regional Reports herein)? How else can we track the expansions of the *Plegadis ibis*, with the White-faced increasing in the East and the Glossy increasing in the West? How else can we track the sad decline of Wood Stork and Fulvous Whistling-Duck in the Southwest?

A "frontier" can mean many things, from a region previously unexplored to a thought previously unexplored, from novel ruminations about moments past to predictions of future events. We can each explore frontiers, at our own pace and in our own regions, and thus contribute to our knowledge of avian status and distribution.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

As with any journal publishing an enormous amount of data, a few errors or oversights manage to creep into the pages of *North American Birds* (NAB). The following list is by no means comprehensive, but instead serves to correct a few items that have appeared in these pages over the past year.

The scientific name, *Oceanodroma monorhis*, was inadvertently omitted from the paper documenting North America's first Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel (NAB 53:6–10). Credits for two photographs accompanying the paper documenting North America's first Gray-hooded Gull (NAB 53:337–339) were incorrect. They were taken by Thomas E. Lewis of Apalachicola, Florida. Similarly, the photographs of the Kentucky Warbler (NAB 53:314) and Wood Thrush (NAB 53:344) were taken by Laury Sager. The four Broad-tailed Hummingbirds reported at Flora, Oregon, 19 June 1999 (NAB 53:427) were seen by Trent Bray, not by Alan Contreras.

In the Florida report for spring 1999, NAB 53(3), the Red-throated Loon should be deleted (photographs show the bird to be a Common Loon). Likewise, the 5 May La Sagra's Flycatcher was apparently a pale Great Crested Flycatcher. Software conversion problems unfortunately converted symbols for photographs to an 'H' and some dashes to 'B'. For clarification, the Stripe-headed Tanager provided the first published report for the Gulf Coast of Florida. Also for clarification, the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck nest found in Florida in summer 1999 (NAB 53:355, 53:377) was indeed the first nest found in that state, but the first breeding was confirmed in 1990 when a brood of flightless young was photographed.

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FUND RAISING

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—MICHAEL A. PATTEN, EDITOR