

Rarely seen or reported, 3 Forest Thrushes were found at the Emerald Pool, Dominica 12-13 Dec (*vide* FH). A White-breasted Thrasher was noted in dry forest along the Fox Grove Inn trail, St Lucia 6 Dec (JC). Three American Pipits were at Big Bird Poultry Farm, Treasure Cay, Abaco (WB).

As AD points out, the neotropical migrant warblers that could not normally survive winters on the mainland at Bermuda's latitude do so on Bermuda as a result of the milder climate afforded by the Gulf Stream. Therefore, Prothonotary (AD,BM), Orange-crowned (AD,BM), and Kentucky Warblers (JM) were among the 24 species of warblers recorded this winter. As many as 8 Cape May Warblers were noted at Guadeloupe 31 Dec-3 Jan (AL). Mlodinow recorded 14 species of migrant warblers in the Bahamas during his visit to Andros and Grand Bahama 21 Jan-3 Feb, including Blue-winged, Orange-crowned, and Nashville (2), and a Swainson's on North Andros. As many as 7 Wilson's Warblers were studied at several locations on Grand Bahama, and 4 at New Providence were unprecedented (CG et al.). A Louisiana Waterthrush was noted at Fermanthe, Haiti, at 4500-ft elevation 16 Dec (JRC). On St. Vincent, the Coopers found 6 Whistling Warblers on the V.F.R. trail 9 Dec. A single bird of the Cuban endemic Yellow-headed Warbler was noted during the 2nd week of Feb on the Isle of Youth (SN). Female and male American Redstarts were noted at Cabrits swamp, Dominica 17 (EM) & 19 (MF) Feb, respectively. A Yellow-breasted Chat was at Nicholls Town, Andros 24 Jan (SM). Summer Tanagers were seen at New Providence 17 Dec (BH et al.), Garden of Groves, Grand Bahama 26 Jan, and 2 at Taino Beach, and West End, Grand Bahama 3 Feb (TW). On the V.F.R. trail, St. Vincent, FH counted 3 Lesser Antillean Tanagers 9 Dec. Among the highlights of the Dominica visit was a single Antillean Euphonia seen feeding in mistletoe at Syndicate Estate 11 Dec (JFC).

The "Patagonia Picnic Table Effect" was in force 3 Dec at Bermuda's airport, where birders gathered to admire the Ash-throated flycatcher found one Vesper and one Grasshopper Sparrow (both rare on the island) among small numbers of Savannah Sparrows—as well as a nearby flock of 17 Snow Buntings (AD, DBW, ESB, MW, Field Guides, Inc. tour et al.)! Three other remarkable sparrow records at Be. were single Swamp Sparrows at the Biological Station 2 Dec (ESB et al.) and at Bartram's Pond 1 Jan (AD), a Lincoln's Sparrow at Warwick Pond 4 Jan (AD), and a Fox Sparrow (AD, BM) at Port Royal Golf Course 14 Feb. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was seen near Owens

Town, Andros (SM) as was as a Grasshopper Sparrow. A Lincoln's Sparrow was noted at Fresh Creek Township dump, Andros, 21 Jan, with 2 at the dairy near Dover Sound Park, Grand Bahama 1 Feb (SM). Ten Cuban Eastern Meadowlarks were noted during the week at the Isle of Youth 6-12 Feb (SN). To round out a remarkable two weeks in the Bahamas, SM found and described in fine detail a female **Bullock's Oriole** at West End, Grand Bahama 2 Feb. This would represent the first report from the Bahamas and a new West Indian record.

Addenda

The Cuban Solitaires reported from Pinares de Mayari on 10 Apr should read Playa Pesquero 9 Apr (*NAB* 54: 332).

Corrigenda

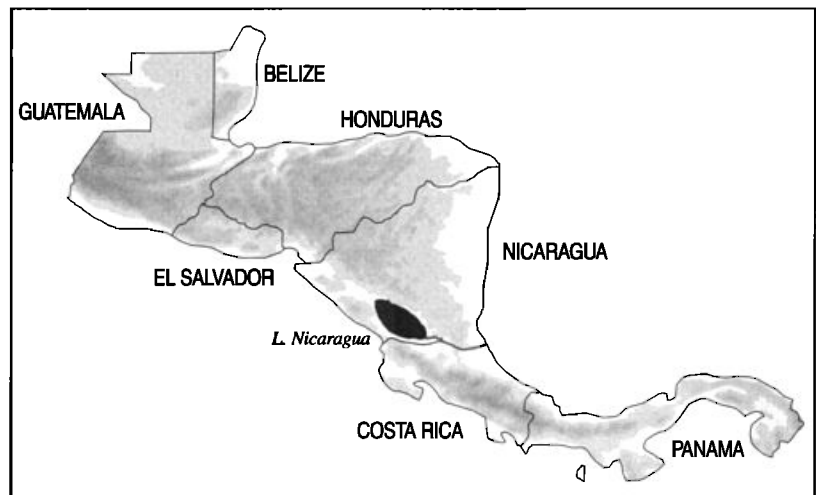
A report of Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel (*NAB* 54: 329) should read "a possible Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel." Double-crested Cormorant and Red-billed Tropicbird reported in *NAB* 54: 223-224 on 24 Dec were actually noted 24 Feb 2000. SC

observed Little Egret at Puerto Rico, not Western Reef-Heron, as reported in *NAB* 54: 110.

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Central America



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The winter season produced perhaps as many as five first, two second, and three third country records, yet one cannot help but wonder if 20 years from now someone will read this column and pronounce the 2000-2001 winter season rather uneventful. If Central America had the birding coverage of New York or California, for instance, many of these records

would no longer even qualify for review by a Bird Records Committee. But, for now, Central America is a new frontier with every bit the sense of discovery and excitement as New York in Ludlow Griscom's day or California in the 1960s. We have come a long way since the days of Wetmore (Panamá), Skutch (Costa Rica), Land (Guatemala), and Russell (Belize), but there is still an encyclopedia of knowledge on avian distribution and seasonality in Central America awaiting those who seek to write it.

The 2000–2001 winter season produced no clear pattern of records, but perhaps that is because we do not yet know enough to recognize them. This *may* have been a better than average winter for gulls, terns, and waterfowl wandering south of their normal winter ranges. Or is the increase in numbers an artifact of more observers paying more attention to North American migrants? Time should tell.

Abbreviations: Aguacaliente (Aguacaliente LuHa National Park, Belize); Finca C.A.F.R.O.S.A. (in the Zona Protectora Las Tablas, Costa Rica); N.S.F. (Nova Shrimp Farm, Belize); O.T.S. (Organization for Tropical Studies, La Selva, Costa Rica); P.E.N.J. (Parque Ecologico Nuévo Juventud, Petén District, Guatemala); Petén (Petén District, Guatemala); Tikal (Tikal National Park, Petén District, Guatemala).

Grebes Through Storks

A **Pied-billed Grebe** with 3 recent hatchlings at Aguacaliente 14 Dec (LJ) established not only the first breeding record for southern Belize but perhaps one of the earliest for the species in N.A. and C.A. RB was quite surprised to see an ad. **Masked Booby**, only the 4th ever recorded in Belize, as it passed by his boat 6 km w. of Glovers Reef 19 Dec. The four records have all been of adults, suggesting that more-likely-to-occur but more-difficult-to-identify immatures are being overlooked in Belizean waters. Reflecting the dramatic increase in numbers of American White Pelicans in Belize in the past 20 years, 86 recorded at N.S.F. on the 17 Dec Belize City C.B.C. (LJ et al.) was 70 more than the previous high count obtained last year. The one to 2 Brown Pelicans at Lago Petén Itzá in Feb (JT, RAH) was apparently typical for this coastal species at that inland locality.

An American Bittern at Aguacaliente 14 Dec (LJ) was unexpected, as this species is rarely seen in Belize. Likewise, a Least Bittern heard in the marshes at Lago Petén Itzá near Santa Elena was also unexpected. Its seasonal status in the Petén and adjacent Belize is still unclear; it may breed locally, but this has yet to

be confirmed. The Rufescent Tiger-Heron has always been considered a resident in Costa Rica, but proof did not come until 1 Dec, when BF found a nest with 2 young at Caño Palma. The Fasciated Tiger-Heron in Costa Rica is a resident of the Caribbean slope, but an ad. at Finca C.A.F.R.O.S.A. 6 Jan (JRZ) and a juv. at Rio Jaba near San Vito 28 Feb (JRZ, GL) were on the Pacific slope where there are very few records, all recent. On 3 Feb, JRZ counted 33 Jabiru, an exceptionally high number, feeding with about 2000 Wood Storks on the drying Laguna Varillal in Palo Verde N.P., Costa Rica. One on Ambergris Caye 5 and 6 Dec (AJ) was at a Belizean locality where it had not been previously reported.

Vultures Through Waterfowl

A flock of 60 Turkey Vultures moving south near Panamá City on 7 Dec (DE) were considered to be late migrants. In the tropics most people don't think of the Turkey Vulture as migratory; however, large numbers move south through C.A. every fall. It is only in areas where the numbers of migrating birds are large enough to overwhelm the local resident populations that this becomes evident. DE, LE, and K&RK had an impressive array of waterfowl at Las Macañas Marsh, Herrera Prov., Panamá, on 19 Dec. While 5+ Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were probably the same ones that have been there since July 2000, a female **Green-winged Teal**, only the second ever recorded in Panamá, and a female-plumaged Ring-necked Duck were certainly not expected; nor were the 250–300 Lesser Scaup—an impressive number this far south. A juv. male Ring-necked Duck on the San Pedro sewage ponds, Ambergris Caye 4 Dec (AJ) was at a locality in Belize where it had not been reported before. Totally unexpected were Belize's first 3 **Red-breasted Mergansers**. First was a female-plumaged bird seen in flight about 3 km n. of Belize City on 1 Dec (†TD). Unaware of the first record, LJ (†) found 2 female-plumaged birds at N.S.F. 17 Dec and was able to re-find one of them for a group of about ten birders who showed up later in the day.

Raptors

Spring migration begins early in C.A. for some species, so 2 Swallow-tailed Kites at Fila Las Cruces, Costa Rica 15 Dec (JRZ) were more likely exceptionally early "spring" arrivals than overwintering birds. Single Pearl Kites were reported on four occasions between 5 Dec and 17 Feb n. and ne. of San Vito (JRZ, DR, PK). The Pearl Kite has only recently colonized Costa Rica from Panamá, and this area is probably the corridor of the original invasion, at least for those birds that wound up in the General Valley.

A **Long-winged Harrier** (*Circus buffoni*), well seen at the El Real airstrip, Darién Prov., 1 Jan (†ACh, NC) was only the 2nd for Panamá and N.A. While not as rare, an ad. Cooper's Hawk near Pijije, 15 km se. of Liberia, Guanacaste Prov. 8 Feb (JRZ) was noteworthy but not entirely unexpected, as most of the lowland records of this species in Costa Rica have come from this area. In with the migrating Turkey Vultures near Panamá City 7 Dec was a Swainson's Hawk (DE), most likely a late fall migrant and not an overwintering bird. Although the **Crested Caracara** has been reported in Belize on several occasions in the past, it was not adequately documented until 17 Dec (†J&AC), when one was well studied while feeding with Black Vultures in a field between San Felipe and Blue Creek, Orange Walk District.

Shorebirds Through Hummingbirds

The American Avocet is a rare winter visitor in Belize, so 2 at N.S.F. on the 17 Dec Belize City C.B.C. (LJ et al.) were noteworthy. Similarly noteworthy was a Long-billed Curlew near Panamá City 7 Dec (DE), as there are fewer than 10 records of this species from Panamá. Even more unexpected was a **Dunlin** at N.S.F. 17 Dec (LJ)—only the 3rd ever recorded in Belize. Suggestive of a "mini-invasion" of Larids, both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were reported with greater-than-normal frequency this winter in Belize, but the real surprise was a Bonaparte's Gull that wintered in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye (MM). It was first seen 26 Feb and was still present 23 Mar. Lago Petén Itzá had more than its usual share of terns this winter, with as many as 5 Royal, a Sandwich, and a Forster's. The Sandwich Tern, seen 29 Dec (JE) and 26 Jan (RAH), was apparently only the 2nd for the Petén, whereas the **Forster's Tern**, also seen 29 Dec (JE), was a first for the Petén. A Forster's Tern at N.S.F. 17 Dec (LJ) was also noteworthy, but one in Punta Gorda 31 Dec (LJ) was the southernmost ever recorded in Belize.

Also an apparent first for the Petén was a **Mangrove Cuckoo** at Ixcalab 18 Feb (JT). A male Black-crested Coquette on the Rio Grande near P.G. 14 Dec (MMu) was near the northern end of its range in southern Belize where it is seldom seen. Two male White-crested Coquettes observed together 22 Dec and 6 Jan at 1250 m in Las Alturas de Coton were at the highest part of their elevational range. The seasonal movements of this near Costa Rican endemic are still poorly known. Also at Las Alturas de Coton, which is near the Panamá border, was a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird on 22 Dec (JRZ), a species that rarely reaches as far south as Panamá.

Antbirds Through Becards

A Western Slaty-Antshrike in a patch of evergreen forest along the entrance road to Santa Rosa N.P. 13 Feb (JRZ) was far from the Caribbean lowlands where it is normally found, but this bird has been present at this Pacific coast locality for some time and seems to have found a home. The Bare-crowned Antbird is among the rarest of Belize's resident birds, so one near Santa Anna, Toledo District 11 and 14 Dec (LJ, WRM) was a welcome find. A **Mouse-colored Tyrannulet** observed along the Rio Salto near Agua Buena 22 Feb (JRZ) and 2 Mar (DR) was the first one recorded in Costa Rica outside a mist net. This species, a recent colonist from Panamá, was first recorded in Costa Rica in Nov 1995 (JRZ). The Greenish Elaenia is a common resident on the mainland in Belize, but one on Ambergris Caye 6 Dec (AJ) was only the 2nd record for that virtual island location (Ambergris is actually a long, narrow peninsula). An Olive-sided Flycatcher 15 km e. of San Vito 23 Dec (JRZ) was a rare winter visitor, but an Eastern Wood-Pewee carefully identified by call and plumage in Punta Gorda 14 Dec (PB) was a fall migrant. There are no Belize records in Jan or Feb for this abundant migrant. On the other hand, a Piratic Flycatcher heard at Playa Guapil, 5 km n. of Dominical, Costa Rica, 19 Jan (JRZ) was an early spring arrival. A Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Tortuguero 1 Dec (BF) was one of the few records from the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica and may have been an austral migrant rather than a stray from the resident population on the Pacific slope. A male Gray-collared Becard at El Remate, Petén 10-11 Feb (JT) was an unexpected treat, as this species is seldom encountered in this part of its range.

Vireos Through Warblers

Belize's first confirmed **Blue-headed Vireo** was found in Belmopan 25 Dec (†LJ, PB, MC) and was seen again on the C.B.C. the following day. Now that the A.O.U. has recognized this and the resident Plumbeous Vireo as separate species, we can anticipate additional reports of this "expected" vagrant as more people become aware of the distinctive differences in these two taxa. On a par with Belize's first Blue-headed Vireo was the Petén's first **Warbling Vireo**, which was found in San Andrés 17 Jan (RAH). Like Blue-headed, this species is rarely seen in the Caribbean lowlands of C.A.

Five Black-chested Jays at Finca Loma Linda near Cañas Gordas were the first ever recorded on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica and may be moving in from Panamá following the ever-expanding tracts of second-growth forest in the Region. The Tree Swallow is a rare and irregular winter visitor in Costa Rica, so 2 at the Rio

Tárcoles bridge in Carara 4 Feb (DR, PK) were noteworthy. Swainson's Thrushes at Punta Gorda 24 Dec (LJ) and El Remate, Guatemala 11 Feb (JT) were at the northern limit of their winter range. In the other direction, 3 Cedar Waxwings at O.T.S., La Selva, Costa Rica 18 Jan (AD, EC), the first seen in a couple of years, were at the southern end of their normal winter range.

A Cape May Warbler at Finca C.A.F.R.O.S.A. 11 Feb (DR, PK) and in Belmopan all winter (PB et al.) were outside their normal Caribbean winter range, as were Black-throated Blue Warblers in Guatemala at Baja Verapaz, El Ranchito del Quetzal, 3-4 Feb (JT), and near San Andrés 1 Feb (RAH). The latter was only the 2nd record for the Petén. A male **Hermit Warbler** at Hidden Valley Falls in the Mountain Pine Ridge 20 Feb (GC) was in the same locality as one seen last winter and probably the same individual. Prior to last year, this species had been reported only once in Belize. A Yellow-throated Warbler at Flor del Roble, 15 km ne. of San Vito, 10 Dec (JRZ) was at the southern terminus of its winter range. Likewise, a Prairie Warbler at Hacienda Los Reyes, Guacimo de Alajuela, Costa Rica 23 Jan (WO) was outside its typical Caribbean winter range. A bird thought to be a **Yellow Palm Warbler** was on Ambergris Caye 8 Dec (ph. AJ). This subspecies has been reported in Belize before but never adequately documented. Rarely seen in Panamá was a Blackpoll Warbler in Soberanía N.P. 25 Dec (ACh). Swainson's Warblers were recorded in two localities in the Petén where the species is rarely seen: one 18 Jan at P.E.N.J. (RAH) and one 26 Feb at Tikal (JT).

Tanagers Through Mannikins

Four Ashy-throated Bush-Tanagers 2 Feb at Bocas del Toro, Rancho Ecologico (WA) was the 7th report from Panamá, all in this area. A male **Rosy Thrush-Tanager** at Valle Azul near Cañas Gordas from 21 Feb-9 Mar was the first reported in Costa Rica in many years (JRZ, DR). A female **Blue Seedeater** at Baja Verapaz, Biotopo del Quetzal 3 Feb (JT) may be the first confirmed record for Guatemala, and a **Lark Sparrow** in s. Guanacaste Prov. 6 Nov (RH et al.) was only the 3rd record for Costa Rica. Puzzling was a Northern Cardinal on Caye Caulker, Belize 4 Jan (J&DB). Several principally resident species on Ambergris Caye, 10 km to the north, occasionally to regularly turn up on Caye Caulker, but the cardinal is not found on Ambergris Caye, suggesting that this individual was more likely an escaped cage bird.

A female Giant Cowbird at Gutierrez-Braun 2 and 20 Dec was in an area of Costa Rica where

this species is rare, but it may be moving in following the recent colonization of Crested Oropendola. Less than one year after Costa Rica's first record, JRZ found Crested Oropendolas nesting in four places in late Feb, all in the general vicinity of San Vito where it was originally found: one nest and up to 5 birds in Copal; 5 birds and 6 nests (2 still under construction) at San Bosco site A; 2 birds and 2 nests at San Bosco site B, ca. 600 m from site A; and 8 birds and 7 nests at Las Brisas.

A small population of Chestnut Mannikins has recently become established in La Guinea along the Rio Tempisque 10 km e. of Filadelfia in Guanacaste Prov. The population has expanded from 3 adults in May 1999 to a maximum of 12 adults and one juv. in Oct 2000. Only 4 adults and one juv. were recorded 10 Feb 2001 (JRZ), but exceptionally strong winds prevented a more accurate count. This is an area of high intensity agriculture, especially sugar cane fields (the spot they favor is about 200 m from a big cane processing plant). Of concern, however, is a large rice producing area nearby. This species is reported to be a serious rice pest in its native s. Asia. For this reason, there has been some discussion of collecting the entire population while it is still small, before it gets out of hand.

Undocumented Rarities

Quite unexpected, but unfortunately not independently confirmed, was a report of a male Black-headed Grosbeak along the road to Never Delay ne. of Belmopan on the 26 Dec C.B.C. (TR). The bird was described as similar to a male Orchard Oriole but Rose-breasted Grosbeak size and shape with a thick-set bill, black and white body, and rusty orange underparts.

Cited observers (country coordinators in boldface): William Adsett, **George Angehr** (Panamá), Philip Balderamos, Jim & Dorothy Beveridge, Rudi Burgos, Eric Castro, John & Agnes Caulfield, Allen Chartier (ACh), Nancy Chartier, Mick Craig, Glenn Crawford, Thomas Donegan, Adolfo Downs, Josh Engel, Dodge Engleman, Lorna Engleman, Bob Frey, Robb A. Hamilton, Rich Hoyer, Alvaro Jaramillo, **Lee Jones** (Belize), Peter Kaestner, Karl & Rosabel Kaufmann, Gary Luck, Martin Meadows, Mario Muschamp (MMu), Winefred Orcutt, Wilfred Requena-Mutrie, Toni Rodriguez, Dennis Rogers, Jim Tietz, **James R. Zook** (Costa Rica).

