

**SA** Arguably, the event of the spring in Belize was the appearance of **Lesser Goldfinches** in n. Orange Walk District. Other than a female tentatively identified as this by LJ on 1 Sep 1998 at August Pine Ridge, these represent the first records for Belize. JU and DH first reported a group of 3 (ad. male, imm. male, and female) at the Tower Hill Toll Bridge, New R. 22 Apr. Then WM (*vide* OF) reported seeing as many as 4 in Trinidad Village as far back as Feb, with at least 3 present through May. August Pine Ridge, Trinidad, and the Tower Hill Bridge are all within 18 km of each other.

Lesser Goldfinches may be on the move elsewhere as well. Although a common bird throughout much of El Salvador, it may have only recently colonized San Miguel Volcano. OK found it to be a common resident at the volcano when he visited the site in late May. It had not previously been reported from the area.

A Blue Seedeater seen 22 Apr at Hill Bank, Orange Walk District (JB et al.) was at a new locality in Belize. A pair of Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercers and 3 pairs of White-naped Brush-Finches on San Miguel Volcano 23–24 May (OK) established first records for Dept. San Miguel. A pair of Rusty Sparrows in heavily disturbed open scrubland near Jalacte Village on the Guatemala border 19 Apr (LJ) was a surprise, as this species is thought to occur in Belize only in pine woodlands. Jalacte is 45 km sw. of the nearest pines and of the nearest previous Belize record of the species. There are, however, at least three records from similar scrub habitat near Poptun, Guatemala, 25 km w. of Jalacte. “Thousands“ of Dickcissels flushed from a marsh near the junction of Dawson Cr. and New R. Lagoon 26 Apr (MM) may be unprecedented for Belize, where the species is locally common in spring but seldom abundant.

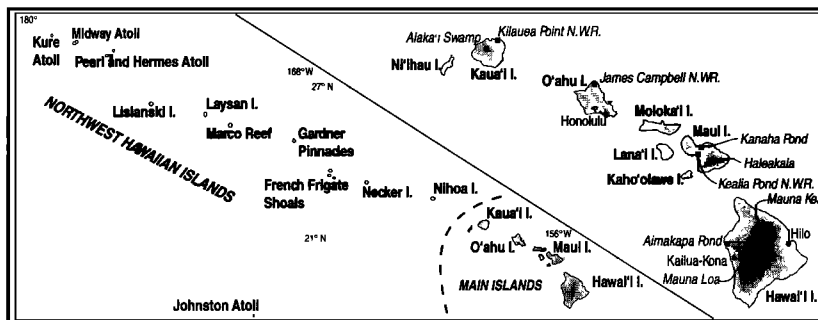
The Bobolink is one of the least common of Belize’s expected migrants, so one each on Caye Caulker 15 Apr (J&DB) and Ambergris Caye 28 Apr (MM) are worth reporting. An ad. and imm. Black-vented Oriole on San Miguel Volcano 24 May (OK) were the first ever

recorded in Dept. San Miguel. Quite unexpected was a Black-headed Siskin drinking at a water puddle in Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary 28 Feb (MH). This was the first recorded in Belize away from the Mt. Pine Ridge.

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# Hawaiian Islands



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There were fewer pelagic trips and sea-watches than last spring, but coverage was still pretty good. Records of birds at sea are especially valuable, as our knowledge of seabirds in Hawaiian waters remains poor. We were also happy to get reports on some of the rare native forest birds—even if the news was sometimes discouraging.

**Abbreviations:** E. (Endangered Species); H (Hawai’i I.); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kaua’i I.); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O’ahu I.); K. (Kaua’i Island); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui Island); Ku (Ki’i Unit of Jas. Campbell N.W.R., O’ahu I.); K.P. (Kilauea Point N.W.R., Kaua’i I.); M (Maui I.); O. (O’ahu I.); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O’ahu Island); T (Threatened Species).

**ALBATROSSES THROUGH STORM-PETRELS**

Three Short-tailed Albatrosses (E.) observed on Midway during the winter left in mid-Apr (GS, NH et. al.), typical for nonbreeding birds. Large numbers of breeding Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses remained through Mar+. Winter counts on Midway recorded over 18,000 breeding pairs of Black-footeds and over 284,000 breeding pairs of Laysans. Despite these impressive numbers, there is cause for concern. The Laysan Albatross count was a big drop from the nearly 389,000 breeding pairs counted in 1996 (U.S.F.W.S.). A lone Laysan Albatross was seen on Johnston Atoll 13–22 Mar (EA, OB, DO, LY), an unusual location.

A large, dark petrel with pale primary shafts was observed soaring over K.P. 20 May (†LN). Its identity remains a mystery. One or 2 unidentified large petrels were seen off w. Maui 22 Mar (RB, AL). One to 4 Hawaiian (Dark-rumped) Petrels (E.) were seen off Kaua'i 1 Apr (DK, CM), 3 Apr (CM), and 12 May (LB). Five or 6 Mottled Petrels and several unidentified *Pterodroma* were seen on a pelagic trip off Kaua'i 1 Apr. The only Bulwer's Petrel report was of 2 off Kaua'i 12 May (LB). Throughout Mar, 100–300 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were seen daily at K.P. (CM). About 5000 Wedge-taileds flew past Nawiliwili Lighthouse, K. 3 Apr (CM). Unlike last spring, only small numbers of Sooty Shearwaters were reported—all off Kaua'i. Ten were seen on a pelagic trip 1 Apr (DK, CM) and 4 were seen from shore 3 Apr (CM), 3 on 9 May and one on 12 May (LB). Two Christmas Shearwaters were observed off Po'ipu, K. and one off Nawiliwili, K. 9 May (LB). The first Newell's Shearwaters (T.) were heard calling 1 Apr at Hanalei (CM). Three Newell's were seen off Nawiliwili, K. 3 Apr (CM). On 9 May 200 Newell's were observed off Po'ipu, K., and another 200 were observed off Nawiliwili, K. (LB). Birds believed to be Band-rumped Storm-Petrels were first heard calling on Kaua'i 31 May (DK).

**GEESE THROUGH FALCONS**

Hawaiian Geese (Nene) (E.) have been doing well in lowland areas of Kaua'i, the only main island free of mongooses. A flock 18 Nene remained at Hanalei through at least 25 Mar. One pair was seen with a newly hatched gosling 3 Mar (CM).

As usual, migrant waterfowl began leaving in Mar, and most were gone by mid-Apr, earlier than usual. Bay ducks left first. The last seen was one Ring-necked Duck at Kii 25 Mar (PD). The last Northern Pintails were reported 17 Apr at Kii (KH) and Kealia (MN). The last Northern Shovelers were seen 19 Apr at Kii

(KH) and Kealia (MN). We received few reports of uncommon or rare waterfowl. One Brant lingered at Kealia 17 Apr+ (MN). One male Cinnamon Teal in breeding plumage was seen 3 Mar at 'Aimakapa Pond, H. (RD). A pair of Eurasian Wigeon was at Hanalei 11 Mar (CM), and a female Canvasback was at 'Aimakapa Pond 8 (RD) and 19 Mar (DL).

An Osprey observed regularly at Hanalei, K. since late Jan remained to 16 Mar (CM). Single Ospreys were seen at Kealia 16 Apr (MN) and Waiawa 10 May (MS). Peregrine Falcons, rare fall through spring visitors, were last reported from the main islands 6 Mar. On that date, single birds were seen on three different islands, Kaua'i (CM), O'ahu (MR), and Kaho'olawe (LT). These were almost certainly 3 different individuals. One male Peregrine was observed on Johnston Atoll 1–5 May (DO).

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS**

The first Hawaiian (Black-necked) Stilt (E.) nests were discovered 20 Mar at both Kii and Honouliuli—a bit earlier than usual (MS). At the Chevron Refinery, O. the first stilt nest was found 24 Apr, later than usual. One pond at the refinery was dredged and another partly filled with the dredged-up material. That may have affected the nesting behavior (LG)

Most migrant shorebirds departed on schedule from late Apr through mid-May. A few unusual species were reported. One Black-bellied Plover was at Kealia 20 Mar (MN). A brown-backed Whimbrel of the North American race that overwintered at Kii was last seen 19 Apr (MS). One Bristle-thighed Curlew was found dead at Kii 17 Apr (KH). Seven Bristle-thighed stilts at Kii 24 May (MS) and 2 on Midway 29 May (LT) may have been over-summering. A **Black-tailed Godwit** (the only one recorded in Hawai'i) that moved from Maui to O'ahu in late Dec remained at Kii Mar+ except for a brief visit to Honouliuli 22 May (MS). A black-legged peep, possibly a Rufous-necked Stint, was observed at the Chevron Refinery 3 May (†PD). Single Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were at Kii Mar–7 May (PD, GF) and at Kanaha Pond, M. 13–17 May (v.t. LB). One Red Phalarope was seen at the Cyanotech ponds, H. 12 Apr (KU, SW)

Gulls remained scarce. Single imm. Laughing Gulls were reported on Kaua'i 1–10 Apr (CM, DK) and at Kealia 14 Apr–21 May. Single imm. Ring-billed Gulls were reported on Kaua'i 1–19 Apr (CM, RD) and at the Chevron Refinery, O. 28 Mar+ (PD, LG). A 2nd imm. gull seen at the Chevron Refinery, O. Mar+ has not been identified (LG). Most gulls in Hawai'i are imm. birds seen in winter. Franklin's Gulls are the exception, with most

records referring to late-spring birds in alternate plumage. Two Franklin's Gulls were observed this year 7 & 8 May at Kealia (MN). A Caspian Tern that moved from Kaua'i to O'ahu and then to Maui last winter was back on O'ahu at Nu'upia Ponds 7 Mar (MR). One Least or Little Tern was seen on Midway 27 May, and 2 were seen there 29 May (LT).

**DOVES THROUGH PASSERINES**

**SA** Only 3 Po'ouli (E.) are known to survive. One female was seen early Mar, and one male early Apr. A different female was last seen early Sep (JG). These individuals are in separate territories in the remote rainforest of e. Maui and probably never meet. Plans have been made to translocate one of the females into the male's territory in the hope that breeding will follow (EV).

Small numbers of Mourning Doves continue to be found on Maui. One was heard in Pa'ia 21 May (JJ, TP, EV), and at least 2 were heard in Makawao (FD, *fide* TP). One or 2 O'ahu 'Elepaio (E.) were reported along 'Aiea Trail, O 3 Mar+ (MW, RM). 'Elepaio were regularly seen along the trail in the past but have been scarce there in recent years. It is possible that the recent drought has helped control avian pox, allowing 'Elepaio to reoccupy the area (EV). A White-rumped Shama was seen in se Moloka'i 30 May (†RC). Only a few Shammas have ever been reported on Moloka'i. Three Puaiohi (E.), including a pair at a nest, were observed in the Alaka'i Swamp, K. 11 May Three 'Akikiki and 4 'Akeke'e were also seen that day (v.t. LB, DK). Ten 'Akeke'e were seen along the Alaka'i Swamp trail 4 Apr (CM). A pair of 'Akeke'e was observed building a nest 24 May (DK). A pair of Palila (E.) with young, and a 3rd adult were seen at Pu'u La'au, H. 18 & 21 May (v.t. LB, RD, RP). The very rare 'Akiapola'au (E.) is seen regularly in only a few locations. Two birds seen off the Saddle Road, H. 9 Mar were unexpected (JJ). One juv 'Akiapola'au and 20 Hawai'i Creepers (E.) were seen at Pu'u 'O'o Ranch, H. 18 May (v.t. LB, RP). Three 'Akohehohe (E.) were observed in Waikamoi Preserve, M. 16 May (v.t. LB) and 26 May (LT et al.).

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# West Indies

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## Corrigendum

The caption for the Black-tailed Godwit photographs (*N.A.B.* 55: 234) should have read that the bird moved from Maui to O'ahu



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aimed at sorting out affinities and emerging speciation among landbirds and of warblers in particular. Her gentle passion and enthusiasm will be desperately missed. A scholarship fund has been established to honor and remember her.

## SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS

The "ice was broken" on the pelagic front when EB reported the first migrant Greater Shearwater on 2 Mar some five mi off Guana Cay, off Abaco, Bahamas. This was followed by Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Audubon Shearwaters, and a Black-capped Petrel eight mi off Elbow Cay 21 Apr. Thereafter, shearwaters and storm-petrels were seen on 11 May about 20 mi ne. of Abaco, Bahamas near Tabletops seamount, including Audubon Shearwaters, a Black-capped Petrel, Wilson's and Leach's Storm-Petrels, and one **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (EB, BB, PD, LL). Audubon's Shearwaters were noted near Highbourne Cay, Bahamas on 19 May; 24 were near Spanish Wells, Eleuthera, Bahamas on 21 May (NM). R. and N. Lindquist reported a Leach's Storm-Petrel off Musha Cay, Exumas 21 Apr and Wilson's Storm-Petrel (ph.) off Little Exuma 9 May. Another Wilson's was seen on 19 May near Highbourne Cay, Bahamas (NM). At Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe, remarkable numbers and species of seabirds were noted (MF) during a 3-hour seawatch 25 May that produced a **Manx Shearwater** as well as multiple Sooty,



A Palm Warbler, an island first, was photographed in May at Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe. Photograph by Anthony Levesque/VIREO.

Nearly all the highland frontiers in the Antilles have begun to be explored for the lost endemic Caribbean seabird taxa, i.e., Jamaican Petrel on Jamaica and Black-capped Petrel on Dominica. One of the new frontiers for finding unrecorded or rare seabirds is offshore, in the realm of the 100-fathom contour or greater depths and around sea mounts or other areas of upwelling. From the Bahamas to Barbados, observers are venturing out when benevolent sea conditions and migration coincide and are finding the formerly elusive storm-petrels, shearwaters, and perhaps the biggest catch, albatrosses (cf. *Field Notes* 52: 507).

Another frontier lies in the genetic code of each insular bird population may have that distinguishes itself from its closest relatives. This column is humbly dedicated to the memory of one of the most dedicated researchers in this field, Dr. Nedra Klein, whose work on the genetics of insular birds in the Region was