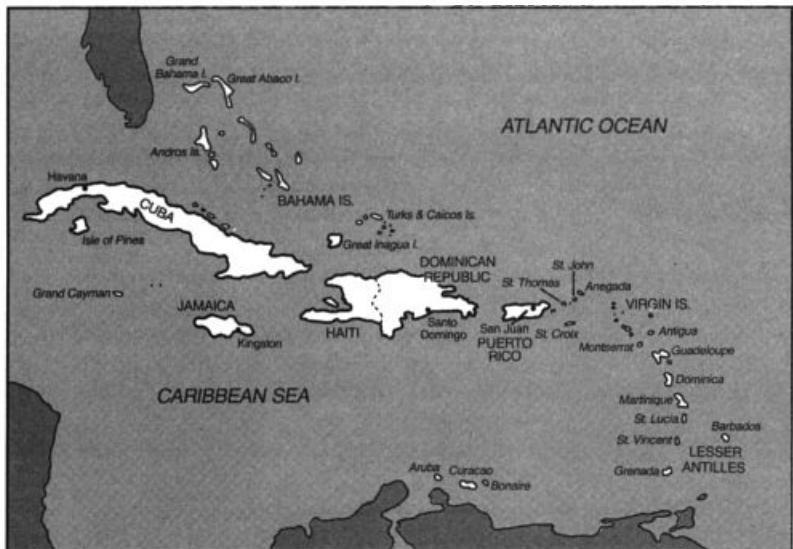


# West Indies



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**F**or the first time in the years of recording observation from this Region, reports from Cuba are now challenging the space formerly allotted to expanded coverage of the other Greater Antillean islands—Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. Four reports were received covering late November, 2-16 December, 7-16 February, and 21 February—2 March, the latter two during expeditions or bird surveys sponsored by the American Birding Association.

Tony White's original impression of the annual Christmas Bird Count at New Providence, Bahamas was that migrant songbirds were reduced in number from the previous year, and this was blamed in part on hurricane *Michelle* (5 November 2001). While there were some surprisingly low counts, e.g., one vs. 18 Black-throated Blue Warblers, White notes that the trend was not uniform. Nectivorous birds are usually the hardest hit by hurricanes, but nectivores such as Bahama Woodstar (31 vs. 45) and Bananaquit (54 vs. 38) did not show sharp declines.

Frugivores such as Western Spindalis (15 vs. 15) and Greater Antillean Bullfinch (4 vs. 6) also held their own.

There is little doubt as to the vagrant-of-the-season award. Andrew Dobson writes that pride of place goes to the flock of five **Bohemian Waxwings**, a new Bermuda record. Just consider how difficult it is to find them in the East south of the Great Lakes!

We are saddened to report the passing of Gibbon McKenzie, the resident birder on South Andros, who led many birders to the only nesting site of Cave Swallows in the Bahamas. His death is a severe blow to ornithology and birding in the Bahamas, and he will be missed.

**Abbreviation:** B.N.T. (Bahamas National Trust).

## GREBE THROUGH TERNS

A pair of Pied-billed Grebes (DW) was feeding 3 chicks 12 Feb, reported to be a very early date, at Somerset's Long Bay Nature Reserve, Bermuda. Dobson reports a record-high 65 breeding pairs of Bermuda Petrel (Cahow) are established with the first hatching occurred on 21 Feb (JM). This is one of the major conservation successes of the island and the Region. A Cory's Shearwater (RP), a species rarely recorded in winter, was noted off North Shore, Bermuda 14 Dec. A Manx Shearwater seen off Elbow Beach, Bermuda 16 Feb was the first of the year (SR). Bracey reported that fishermen saw thousands of Audubon's Shearwaters and a possible Cory's Shearwater off Great Guana Cay, Abaco, Bahamas 23 Jan.

An ad. Red-billed Tropicbird was seen about 19 km w. of Grenada (ML) in late Feb, and 2 or 3 were seen on 14 Jan just off Port Elizabeth, Bequia, St. Vincent, en route to Mustique (SE). About 50 imm. Red-footed Boobies were noted

some 256 km s. of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (ML) in late Feb, and a group of about 50, all dark-morph ads. and imm., was seen on 14 Jan actively fishing in the open sea between Bequia and Mustique, St Vincent (SE). Am imm Brown Pelican was first noted at Burgess Point, Bermuda 8 Jan, where it remained for a month. On 9 Feb, PD, LH, MW, and AB counted 29 Neotropic Cormorants at Cable Beach Golf Course ponds, New Providence, Bahamas.

During the island-wide count on Barbados 30 Dec, a single **Gray Heron** at Muddy Waters was a good find, though the species appears annually here now. The island-wide count on Barbados also produced 17 Little Egrets, including two nests (one with three eggs and one with chicks), and a total of 26 Snowy Egrets (with one nest). Might those numbers some day be reversed? A Great Egret was at the Grand Beach Resort, St George's, Grenada (where uncommon) 10-12 Jan (SE). A nesting colony of 10-15 Wood Storks was noted at Las Salinas, Zapata peninsula, Cuba 23 Feb (JC).

A wild, free-flying Snow Goose has been present year-round on Hog Cay, Long Island, Bahamas since Oct 1999. The local landowner puts out 200 pounds of grain each day for the West Indian Whistling-Ducks, with which the Snow Goose consorts. Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks apparently lingered here for three months as well (GG, *fide* TW). On 9 Feb, PD, LH, MW, and AB counted 32 White-cheeked Pintails at Cable Beach Golf Course ponds. The high count of White-cheeked Pintails on Culebra, Puerto Rico in Jan was 19 on the 30th (ESB, SWH). On 2 Feb, B.N.T. members counted 589 ducks of seven species on New Providence. High counts were 243 White-cheeked Pintails and 186 Blue-winged Teal, mostly on Maillis's ponds in Adelaide. A count of 11 Green-winged Teal was also on the high side for this island. A **Common Teal** found at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 16 Dec remained into late Jan (AD). At Lyford Cay, New Providence, Bahamas, Hallett noted a Ruddy Duck 16-24 Jan.

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** (*fide* AD) seen over Paget, Bermuda 27 Feb was one of the earliest ever records there. An ad. **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen well perched and in flight near Old Bahama Bay resort grounds, Grand Bahama 16 Jan (BH); there is no previous report of this species from the Bahamas. A **Northern Goshawk** seen over Abbot's Cliff, Bermuda 18 Jan was the first since 1985 and one of few records off the continent (WE, DBW). The resident race of American Kestrels in North Andros, Bahamas continues to expand northward (CC, *fide* TW) in the Bahamas. Eccles noted 3 Peregrine Falcons in the Lesser Antilles in winter: one coming to roost on the Port at St. George's, Grenada 12 Jan, one

on the cliffs at Chatham Bay, Union I. 13 Jan, and another still on 15 Jan over the fort at St. Lucia N P, Rodney Bay, St Lucia.

Soras were relatively frequently reported, with 10 an unusually high number at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 16 Dec (AD). A Piping Plover was found at Nassau, Bahamas 23-24 Jan (PD). An American Golden-Plover was studied carefully at Daniel's Head, Bermuda 8 Dec (AD, SR); the species is considered uncommon here in Dec. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2 American Oystercatchers (2nd record for St. Vincent and the Grenadines) were noted at Monkey Point, Mayreau I., 27 Dec (*vide* FH). Another 2 were at Culebra, Puerto Rico 31 Jan (SWH, ESB). A **Curlew Sandpiper** at Congo Road, Barbados 30 Dec was a great addition to the C.B.C. (EM). Six Least Sandpipers and 2 Short-billed Dowitchers were on the mud-flats around the lagoon on Mustique, St. Vincent 14 Jan, both are decidedly uncommon here (SE).

During a cruise through the n. Caribbean Sea, ML also noted 2 Pomarine Jaegers in a flock of boobies 256 km s. of the Dominican Republic in late Feb. On 27 Feb, a moribund subad. light-morph Parasitic Jaeger was found by PK on the 13th hole of the Lyford Cay Golf Course, New Providence, Bahamas. The bird died that night and has been preserved (AB). On 25 Feb, DF saw 2 first-winter Herring Gulls off Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman Island. According to Patricia Bradley (2000. *The Birds of Cayman Islands*. British Ornithologists' Union Checklist #18), the species is a very uncommon and irregular winter visitor in the Caymans. Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become ever more common in Bermuda in recent years, so a record 21 birds at the Dockyard 26 Feb was not entirely unexpected (SR). An apparent **Great Black-backed Gull** was seen for extended periods on 30 Nov at Gibara, Holguin, Cuba (DS, m. ob.); observers should beware of the identification pitfalls posed by the similar Kelp Gull, an increasingly frequent visitor to the lower Caribbean basin. A group of 4 Ring-billed Gulls in the port area of Basseterre, St Kitts 18-21 Jan was unusual here (SE). Black-legged Kittiwakes were present at Bermuda early Dec—Jan, with a maximum day count of 4 along South Shore (DW; SR, AD). A Forster's Tern wintered this year in Castle Harbour, Bermuda and was seen regularly along the Causeway Nov—Feb (m. ob.). A Forster's Tern was noted at Nassau on 23-24 Jan (PD). At Guadeloupe, an ad Caspian Tern was found 27 Dec at Anse du Canal, together with a first-winter Forster's Tern (the latter a first documented record for Guadeloupe; AL). Seven Sandwich Terns among a group of about 40 Royal Terns, were off the beach south of the "port" on Mustique, St. Vincent (SE).

## DOVES THROUGH SPARROWS

On North Andros, Bahamas, 3 Key West Quail-Doves were found feeding under almond trees at Owens Town 19 Jan (MB, JW, DW, MA). At Soplillar, Cuba, Markus and Anita Lagerqvist were treated to the shy Blue-headed Quail-Dove 11 Dec. Hepburn and Schaller saw a Barn Owl at the Botanic Gardens in Nassau, Bahamas on New Year's Day. A pair of **Ashy-faced Owls** (formerly Barn Owl; now *Tyto glaucops*, race *insularis*) was seen and heard 10-11 Jan at the Grand Beach Resort, St. George's, Grenada (SE). The male was seen well (carrying prey to the nest), and one wonders whether a fresh investigation of species limits might not be in order here, given the striking distinctions from Ashy-faced Owls on Dominica (race *nigrescens*) and Hispaniola (nominate *glaucops*).

The Lagerqvists report that Bee Hummingbird has not been reliably or consistently seen since hurricane *Irene*. Fernandina's Woodpecker and Zapata Sparrow, also Cuban endemics, have likewise become more difficult to find. Judith O'Neale visited Cuba in Feb and did not find Bee Hummingbird. However, the A.B.A. survey managed to find one 22 Feb in the hurricane-devastated area of Zapata (JC). Two or 3 birds believed to be Gray-rumped Swifts (listed by Raffaele et al. as "possibly a year-round resident, but probably only seasonal") were at the port of St. George's, Grenada 12 Jan (SE). A small group of Barn Swallows over a lake in the Grand Etaing N.P. on Grenada was unusual for the date—11 Jan (SE). On 14 Dec near Parque Nacional La Belen, the Lagerqvists found a Giant Kingbird, whose range is now restricted to Cuba (no longer on Great Inagua or Caicos islands). Most of the birding tour groups have been finding this species in this area or nearby, but it is clearly rare and endangered throughout Cuba and the Isla de Pinos.

Paul Dean reports that he does not know of any reports of Great Lizard-Cuckoo on New Providence, Bahamas in the past two years. This bird may be in serious trouble on this island. After 19 years of survey at Vieques, DG reports that Puerto Rican Woodpecker populations are at their zenith, with eight pairs and 20 individuals. Three Eastern Phoebes overwintered at Port Royal Golf Course, Spittal Pond, and Kindley Field airport, Bermuda (AD). Two very late or wintering Black-whiskered Vireos were found at Turners Hall Woods, Barbados 30 Dec (EM). Two singing **House Wrens** were discovered at St. George's Cemetery, Bermuda 4 Nov; these birds, very rare on Bermuda at any time, overwintered here (IF, m. ob.). A Golden-crowned Kinglet was at Ireland Island Cemetery, Bermuda 16 Dec (DW), with another at Compston's Pond 24 Feb (SR). A Hermit Thrush was noted at Port Royal Golf Course, Bermuda 9 Feb (SR). The 15

European Starlings 11 Nov at Diamond Farms, New Providence (PD) were outnumbered there during the C.B.C. 16 Dec (TW), which counted 62. A flock of 19 American Pipits (AD) wintered at Kindley Field airport, Bermuda, where they were first noted 5 Jan. One was present at Diamond Farms, New Providence 1 Dec (PD, m. ob.). A remarkable flock of 3 **Bohemian Waxwings** at Dock Hill, Bermuda 2 Dec boggles the mind; the eventual flock of 5 birds, last seen 6 Jan, provided a new record for the archipelago and one of very few (if any?) at this latitude anywhere (JG, m. ob.).

An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen on the C.B.C. 19 Dec at Princess Ruby Golf Course at Freeport, Grand Bahama (TW, LG), and another was noted at the chicken farms of Marsh Harbour, Abaco 21 Jan (BH, WB). A Yellow Warbler at Port Royal Golf Course, Bermuda 26 Jan provided a rare wintering record (SR). A Kentucky Warbler (JM) in the Smiths Hills, Bermuda 29 Nov—Dec was likewise rare in winter there. The Vieques island population of Adelaide's Warbler seems to be increasing according to DG's 19-year study. They appear to exploit all habitats on the island. Are they poised to jump to the Virgin Islands or to Culebra? On 23 Feb, MA and JT of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team found a Kirtland's Warbler on North Andros n. of the Fresh Cr. Bridge. On 20 Feb, AS saw 5 Yellow-throated Warblers in one tree at Ardastra Gardens, Nassau, Bahamas. A Hooded Warbler was at Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas 13 Jan, further evidence that this species winters in the Bahamas (RP). At Barbados, a male Kentucky Warbler at Turners Hall Woods provided the 3rd record for the island. Three Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen well on St. Kitts 19-20 Jan, 2 along the Wingfield Trails in the ram forest, another near a small lagoon ne of Basseterre (SE). A Yellow-breasted Chat at Abbot's Cliff, Bermuda 19 Jan was noteworthy in winter (PW).

At Treasure Cay, Grand Bahama, Bracey found a female Summer Tanager 12 Jan; another in Bermuda's Botanical Gardens 21 Jan was exceptional (DW). A Blue Grosbeak discovered wintering on Cooper's Island, Bermuda in Feb was most unusual (DBW). A **Dickcissel** was on Nonsuch Island, Bermuda 17 Feb (DBW et al.), while one at Prospect Fields 12 Dec was one of 3 in Dec (SR). Red-winged Blackbirds were recorded during the annual C.B.C. at Spittal Pond, Bermuda 16 Dec (AD, PH). An **Evening Grosbeak** was present in Botanical Gardens, Bermuda 31 Dec—5 Jan (GP). In the US Virgin Islands, House Sparrows were widely distributed in w. St. Croix. At Staniard Creek, North Andros, Black-cowled Orioles were seen

daily during a week-long survey (MA, MB, DE, JW), but only one oriole of the 15 counted was not an adult. This suggests that the Shiny Cowbird may already be affecting breeding success.

**Observers** (subregional editors in boldface): Matt Anderson, Aileen Bainton, Mike Baltz, Chuck and Nancy Bell, Woody Bracey, Edward S. Brinkley, Sandra Buckner, Chuck Cable, Julie Craves, Paul Dean, **Andrew Dobson**, Stephen

Eccles, Dave Ewert, Ian Fisher, David Freeland, Wendy Frith, **Martin Frost**, Lynn Gape, Daphne Gemmill, Greg Graham, Jennifer Gray, Steven W. Hairfield, Bruce Hallett, Floyd Hayes, Tony Hepburn, Peter Holmes, Linda Huber, Peter Kemp, Chuck Knapp, Anthony Levesque, Mark Lockwood, Markus (MKL) and Anita Lagerqvist, Jeremy Madeiros, Gary Markowski, Angel Martinez, **Eddie Massiah**, Neil McKinney, Judith O'Neale, Ron Pagliaro, George Peterich, Pedro Regalado, Steve Rodwell, Freddie Schaller, Al

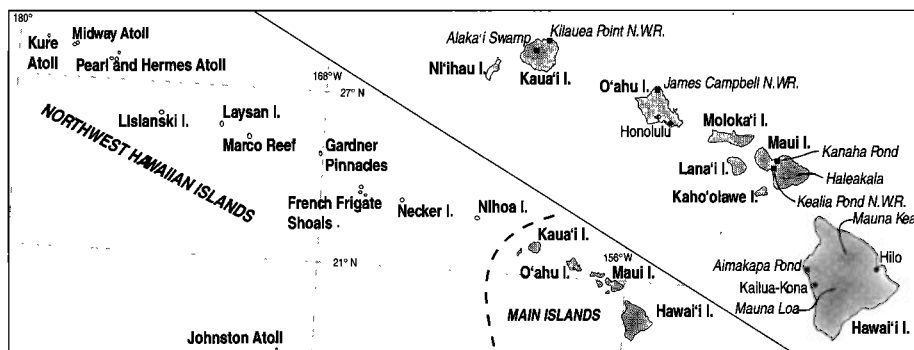
Schirmacher, Don Shanahan, Jasmine Turner, Paul Watson, David Wallace (DW), Michael Wakelin, **Tony White**, David Wingate (DBW), Joseph Wunderle, Jr.

### Corrigenda

I have been incorrectly attributing some observations from Guadeloupe to Martin Frost (MF) when they should be attributed to Anthony Levesque (AL). My apologies to both observers who graciously informed me of my error.



# Hawaiian Islands



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**H**heavy rains, which started in November, continued through January. This was a return to typical wet winter weather after four dry winters. Drier weather returned in February. We had pretty good observer coverage. Reports from tours on Hawai'i Island provided regular observations of some very rare native species. Seabird reports were also better than usual with a handful of boat trips and a survey of Lehua Island.

**Abbreviations:** E. (Endangered Species); H. (Hawai'i Island); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., Hawai'i Island); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kaua'i Island); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu Island); K. (Kaua'i Island); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui Island); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui Island); Kii (Ki'i Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu Island); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kaua'i Island); M. (Maui Island); O. (O'ahu Island); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu Island); T. (Threatened Species).

### ALBATROSS THROUGH EGRETS

At least 2 Short-tailed Albatross (E.), remained on Midway Dec+, one on Sand Island and one on Eastern Island. (MM, BP). A visiting birder on a boat trip west of Kaua'i 26 Dec observed 2 Tristram's Storm-Petrels (MH, *fide* DK). Tristram's Storm-Petrels are rarely reported near the main islands.

**SA** Lehua is a small, rocky island about 8 km north of Ni'ihau. The island, a state seabird sanctuary, is uninhabited and infrequently visited. There has been little information about birdlife on Lehua. Eric VanderWerf spent three days surveying birds on the island 19-21 Feb. Highlights of the survey were 31 adult Black-footed Albatross and 8 nests with chicks and 50 adult Laysan Albatross and 9 nests with chicks. Eric counted 2352 Red-footed Boobies, but birds were still returning at dusk when it became too dark to count. The survey turned up two unusual migrants, a Peregrine Falcon and a first-year Glaucous-winged Gull.

Two Cattle Egrets were seen on Midway Dec-29 Jan (BP, MM). Cattle Egrets are abundant in the main Hawaiian Islands but rare on the NW Hawaiian Islands.

**SA** Chandler Robbins replaced the band on a Laysan Albatross tending a chick on Midway in February. The bird's band had been replaced several times so it took a bit of digging to find out when it had been first banded. It was discovered that Chandler Robbins himself had first banded the bird in 1956. The bird was incubating an egg at the time. Since Laysan Albatrosses don't breed till they are at least 4 years old (NH), this bird must be at least 50 years old and is probably older. This is a new longevity record for a U.S.-banded bird. Long may it soar!