

# EDITORS' NOTEBOOK

## Themed issues

Great material has been streaming in from contributors over the past year, and we find ourselves, like our colleagues at *Birding*, overwhelmed both with gratitude and with work! Manuscripts from ornithologists and birders have been part of the deluge, and one happy result of this abundance has been that, as at *Birding*, we are now able to assemble issues with a focus or theme. The current issue has something of a Florida focus. Gray Kingbird, a species most North Americans associate with Florida, is considered in wide context but specifically in its capacity to stray, while two vagrants to Florida, Elegant Tern and Short-tailed Shearwater, are documented here in very different contexts, the former as a nester with a Sandwich Tern (the first such North American record away from the Pacific), the latter as a cryptic stray from another ocean basin, meticulously documented with morphometrics, likewise the first of its kind in North America to be confirmed away from the Pacific. The methodological approaches in these articles are heterogeneous, but the records they summarize or document have broad applications and relevance well beyond Florida or the southeastern United States: no longer can we assume that every dark *Puffinus* shearwater in the Atlantic is a Sooty, and we must consider carefully

the possibility of hybrid Sandwich x Elegant Terns when reporting a Cayenne Tern or an Elegant Tern out of range. Future themed issues will present material on waterfowl, shorebirds, and on records from the Caribbean basin.

## Moving pictures

We had the pleasure of seeing the extraordinary film *Winged Migration* recently, a film that treats the annual migration of dozens of diurnal migrants—mostly waterfowl, cranes, storks, and terns—on all continents. The project involved 14 cinematographers in five crews, 17 pilots, and a crew of many hundreds working for three years in forty countries. To obtain unimaginably close footage of flying birds at all altitudes, cinematographers and engineers used traditional gliders, planes, and helicopters, remote-controlled model planes and helicopters, the delta plane ("delta wing"), specially-designed ultra-lights and balloons, and more. Voice-overs were limited, and the images of the birds were allowed to speak for themselves. Though some birds were trained for filming, the results are tremendous from technical and logistical points of view.

What struck us most about this film were our own reactions to it and the reactions of fellow filmgoers. We were speechless; many viewers sobbed qui-

etly, as flocks of Red-breasted Geese, viewed from eye-level, moved through the industrial wastelands of eastern Europe; as flocks of Bar-headed Geese attempted to crest the Himalayas; as Common Cranes approached an elderly woman in the remote farm fields of the Aubrac. No amount of land-bound birding allows us to see birds from this vantage, and the immediacy of the images—as Greylag Geese pass along the Seine, with the Eiffel Tower in the background, and Canada Geese move through Monument Valley or down the East River, with the Twin Towers to their west—all give the viewer the sense of moving as part of a migrating flock, a fantasy perhaps so deeply rooted in the minds of birders as to be unintimated. With cinematography so unerring, and modern musical accompaniment so close to the rhythms of migration, perhaps it should not have been surprising to see an entire theatre so undone by the film. It occurred to us, as it has to others, that bird conservation has reached, at long last, a new niveau of engagement and recruitment, one in which birds function not so much as aesthetic objects or objects of entertainment—but as subjects in their own right. The film's message is unmistakable: migration is perilous, and our shared environment is fragile beyond words, but not frail. Birds emerge as a nearly perfect wedding of beauty and

Thanks to everyone who has generously donated to the "Friends of North American Birds" fund over the past three months! Collectively, you have contributed nearly twelve thousand dollars to the fund, which will allow for significant improvements to the journal. We hope that even more Friends will step forward, and we will acknowledge our donors in the first issue of each volume. To Contribute on line, go to <<http://americanbirding.org/publications/nabfriends.htm>>.

In the meanwhile, we were again delighted to receive corporate support for the journal from the Environmental Unit of **Chevron Texaco Energy Research and Technology Company**. With all this support, we're already able to move forward to fund several much-needed improvements: first, the wrapper in which your journal arrived (hopefully not spindled, folded, or otherwise mutilated), and second, the extra signature (16 pages) to accommodate the abundance of good material submitted by authors, regional editors, and our many thousands of contributors. Enjoy!

tenacity in this film. But most importantly, birds emerge distinctly as individuals with a range of behaviors and reactions startlingly like our own. It is difficult to imagine or hope for the success of bird conservation without conceiving of a sea-change in how "the public" values birds and birdlife.

The still photographs we present in these pages would seem to have little to do with the moving images in *Winged Migration*. But as in the motion picture, there is an invisibility of the photographer in almost all images we publish here. While we batten on some of the marvelous images taken around the continent, which serve to "confirm" reports of unusual species or plumages, or species out of range or season, we must be mindful that the photographic moment does involve a photographer, whose relationship with his or her "subject" (the camera's "object") should follow the rules of ethical practice laid out by our Publisher and by the American Birding Association. We should acknowledge and reiterate here that this means not only refraining from disturbing the bird but also refraining from trespass or other illegal activity that would imperil the warm welcome of birders by landowners and refuge managers. Our excitement in the photographic moment as artistic creation, our fresh understanding of the power of the image to benefit birds and their conservation, and our appreciation for the intimacy that photography provides with birds for us as photographers should not lead us to stray from settled, sensible ethical practices, however extenuating the circumstances might seem. We refer readers unfamiliar with it to the ABA's *Code of Birding Ethics* at <http://www.americanbirding.org/abaethics.htm>, which governs all publications of the organization. We ask that those submitting photographic material ensure that all images of birds sent in be in accordance with this Code.

We should reiterate, too, that this journal publishes all manner of amateur photographs, and that no one should hesitate to send in an image of a bird that documents an interesting record or that illustrates an unusual plumage, etc. We have about three-dozen faithful photographers who send us material on a regular basis; their names will be familiar ones. We encourage everyone to send photographs to the appropriate

regional editors, who will screen them and pass them on to the Photo Editor. We also welcome all photographers to send material for potential Photo Salons directly to Matt Sharp ([sharp@acnatsci.org](mailto:sharp@acnatsci.org)) for consideration.

### Moving on and moving in

Don Roberson, Tom Ryan, and Alan Contreras will be taking a break from regional editorships in the Middle Pacific Coast and the Oregon & Washington regions. Their hard work and insight have been invaluable, and we look forward to their future contributions, of any sort. Coming on board in the future will be Ross Silcock in the Southern Great Plains region, David Irons in Oregon, and Luke Cole in the Middle Pacific Coast region; welcome, David, Luke, and Ross! Also new to our team is Louis Bevier, familiar to many as one of the coordinators and editors of the *Birds of North America* series. Louis will be working as an Associate Editor on the journal, and he has already done a terrific amount of work on the present issue.

### Errata

The perils of trying to edit things at the last minute by telephone! We managed, in the last Notebook, to spell our own Associate Editor's name—Steve Dinsmore—wrong, and worse still, to misspell a generous donor to the "Friends of *North American Birds*" fund incorrectly: Darrin O'Brien is the correct spelling! We must have been bewitched to get that one wrong. We thank all recent donors to this fund, and we'll acknowledge everyone in a coming issue. To add to our list of errors in Vol. 57, No. 1: the dates of 29-30 August 2003 for Virginia's Heermann's Gull (p. 19) were half-wrong (these should be 30-31 August); on the final page of the Pictorial Highlights (p. 144), the date for the Siberian Accentor should be 8 or 9 September, not December; and a final reference in the "Changing Seasons" essay was truncated: Vinicombe, K. and D. M. Cottridge. 1997. *Rare birds of Britain and Ireland*. Collins, London. We'll endeavor for future issues not to read our proofs by midnight oil.

—Edward S. Brinkley (Editor)

—Matthew F. Sharp (Photo Editor)

—Paul E. Lehman (Associate Editor)

## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

### Abbreviations used in place names

In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Other abbreviations:

A.F.B.	Air Force Base
B.B.S.	Breeding Bird Survey
C.B.C.	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I.	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mi	mile (s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
Ref.	Refuge
Res.	Reservoir (not Reservation)
S.P.	State Park
Twp.	Township
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area
W.T.P.	(Waste) Water Treatment Pond(s) or Plant

### Other abbreviations and symbols referring to birds:

ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature (s)
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile; juvenile(s)
ph.	photographed
sp. (spp.)	species (plural)
subad. (subads.)	subadult(s)
tape	audio tape-recorded
vt.	videotaped
†	written details were submitted for a sighting
*	a specimen was collected