

West Indies & Bermuda



Robert L. Norton

8960 NE Waldo Road
Gainesville, Florida 32609
(corvus0486@aol.com)

Anthony White

6540 Walkhonding Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20816
(spindalis@verizon.com)

Andrew Dobson

Warwick Academy
117 Middle Road
Warwick PG 01
Bermuda
(info@audubon.bm)

The 2003 season of tropical storms was relatively active, although observations of birds in this context were few. Hurricane *Fabian*, the worst to strike Bermuda in nearly a century, did tremendous damage to property and to wildlife sanctuaries during its direct hit on the island 5 September but produced little in the way of noteworthy birds. *Isabel* later in the month blocked arrivals of migrants to Bermuda, as high pressure that developed for most of September resulted in easterly winds there. Tropical Storm *Mindy* formed north of the Dominican Republic 10–11 October and moved north through the Turks and Caicos, producing interesting sightings at Trou Caiman, a shallow lake northeast of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Other weather systems' effects were less pronounced, although on Bermuda, a rain-bearing front that arrived in early October produced one of the best fallouts of migrants in recent years. The variety of warbler species was noteworthy, with at least 33 species recorded in the first

five days of the month. By contrast, the Bahamas had a storm-free season, and warbler migration was late and sparse, except on the northern islands. The Bahamas' first documented Long-billed Dowitcher was the outstanding rarity of the season, and the fifth new species for the country in 2003; a Sandhill Crane on Andros in November was the sixth. From Cuba, we received confir-

mation that the critically Endangered Cuban Kite continues to be observed in a forested region of Santiago in the eastern part of the island, the first confirmed observations known to us in several years.

SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS

Two Cory's Shearwaters landed on a Bermuda-bound cruise ship 27 Aug and were released (JM). Neotropic Cormorants numbered 54 at Paradise I. Golf Course and Lakeview Ponds, New Providence, Bahamas 6 Oct (SB, LG, DM, TW). One was reported from Trou Caiman, Haiti 11 Oct, the first record from that location (JRC). An American Bittern was at Pembroke Marsh, Bermuda 4 Nov (SR), while the first of the season's Least Bitterns was at the same location 8 Nov (AD). A downy Little Egret chick was photographed at Graeme Hall Swamp, Barbados 23 Oct, a rather late date (RH). A juv. Reddish Egret was noted at Reef Golf Course, Grand Bahama 28 Sep (BH). At Trou Caiman, Haiti, 80+



This Little Egret nestling was photographed at Graeme Hall Swamp Sanctuary, Barbados 23 November 2003. The New World status of this species is documented in a recent article in *Birding magazine* (36: 52-62). Photograph by Rachel Hopper.

Glossy Ibis were noted 28 Sep (JRC). A Glossy Ibis at Saint François Aerodrome, Guadeloupe 17 Oct–2 Nov (AL) was the island's 2nd. Thirty-five White Ibis counted at Cable Beach Golf Course, New Providence, Bahamas 1 Sep (CW) included 20 imm.

At Fosters, St. Lucy, Barbados, 2 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were seen 16 Oct (EM, MF). West Indian Whistling-Ducks numbered 70+ at Codrington, Barbuda 19 Aug (RSBP). To add to the island's long-staying ad., 6 Snow Geese arrived at Bermuda 16 Nov (AD, PW, ESB, m. ob.). An imm. Tundra Swan 16–30 Nov at Cloverdale Pond (AD) was only the 4th recorded in Bermuda. Some 25 American Wigeon flew over Spittal Pond, Bermuda 11 Nov, a record-high count (DBW). At Trou Caiman, White-cheeked Pintail numbered about 20 on 28 Sep (JRC); at Grog Pond, Great Exuma, Bahamas, 20 were counted 29 Oct (LG, BM), where some 80–100 Blue-winged Teal had been noted 6 Sep (BM). At Parham Bay, Antigua, RSPB members counted 50+ White-cheeked Pintail 21 Aug. At Boqueron refuge, Puerto Rico, 450 Blue-winged Teal were tallied 29 Oct (RR). Three Northern Shovelers were also seen at Grog Pond, GE 12 Nov (BM), while one was at Lakeview Ponds, New Providence, Bahamas 6 Oct (SB, LG, DM). Thirty Ruddy Ducks counted 29 Oct at Grog Pond (LG, BM) was a high count: are Ruddies staging a comeback in the area?

A Northern Harrier flew over Heydon Trust, Bermuda 16 Oct (R&KL), and one was at Grog Pond 16 Nov (BM). At Walker's Cay, Bahamas, 2 Peregrine Falcons were seen 1–4 Oct (TW); 3 were together over Port Royal Golf Course, Bermuda 24 Oct (DW, PH et al.); and singles were seen 17 Nov at La Pointe des Chateaux, Guadeloupe (AL) and at Trou Caiman, Haiti in Oct (JRC).

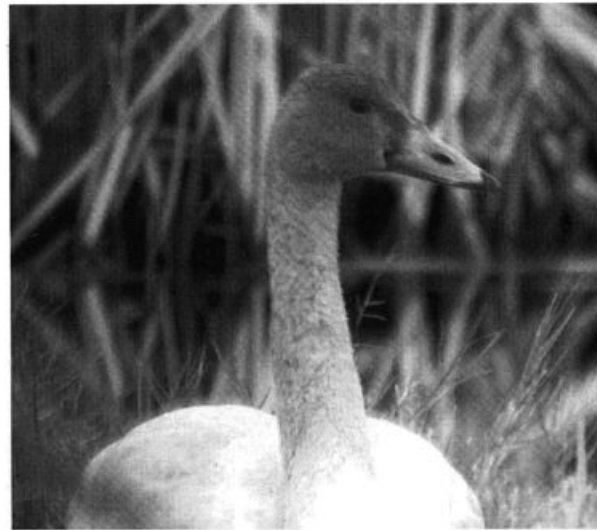
For the first time, multiple Corn Crakes were reported in the Region. One was seen and photographed very well at the Nature Reserve at Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe from 28 Sep–2 Oct (AL), a first for that island and for the Lesser Antilles. A dead Corn Crake found at Bermuda Airport 5 Oct (DH) provided the 7th record for that island. An imm. Purple Gallinule was at Parsons Road Pond, Bermuda 4–17 Nov (SR, PW, ESB). At

Ranch Monctel, Haiti (elev. 1567 m), JRC noted the locally Threatened Limpkin 2–3 Aug. A Sandhill Crane was reported from a Mennonite farm on Andros in Nov, representing a new record for the Bahamas (KSS).



A Glossy Ibis at Saint-François Aerodrome, Guadeloupe 13–19 October (here 17 October) 2003 provided that island's second record; the species is very scarce in the Lesser Antilles. Photograph by Anthony Levesque.

Tropical Storm Mindy apparently grounded shorebirds at Haiti, where JRC counted 37 American Golden-Plovers 11 Oct, with one remaining there until 1 Nov along with 15–20 Black-bellied Plovers. A probable Pacific Golden-Plover was at the Bermuda Airport 26–27 Aug (PW); photographs and descriptions are under review. The island has but one previous record. Two



Bermuda's fourth record of Tundra Swan was furnished by this immature 16 (here) through 30 November 2003 at Cloverdale Pond and vicinity. Photograph by Andrew Dobson.

Snowy Plovers were noted at La Pointe des Chateaux, Guadeloupe 4 Sep (AL). A Piping Plover remained at Nature Reserve of Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe from 7–30 Aug (AL); another was at Cooper's I., Bermuda 25 Sep (JM), where the species is increasingly rare.

Numbers in the Bahamas are consistently higher, e.g., 8 from High Rock to Pelican Pt., Grand Bahama 28 Sep (BH), 8 at Green Turtle Cay flats, Abaco 27 Oct (RP), and 7 at Winding Bay, Eleuthera 12 Oct (DC). An unusually high number of American Oystercatchers (12) was noted at Rolle Town, Bahamas 4 Oct (BM); 2 were seen 16 Nov at Clifton Bay, New Providence (NS).

A Common Greenshank seen 1 Nov at Hannays, St. Lucy Parish, Barbados constituted the 5th island record; a single Hudsonian Godwit there 1–2 Nov was also a fine find (EM, MF). At Green Turtle Cay, Abaco, Bahamas, RP counted 15 Red Knots 27 Oct. A Semipalmated Sandpiper seen 25 Oct at Wilson's Pond, New Providence, Bahamas (BH, EH) was considered late. From Montserrat comes a report of Little Stint seen 17 Aug at Belham River Mouth and carefully compared to Semipalmated Sandpipers by RSBP members (ph. EM; <<http://www.wow.net/ttfn/SCBA/2003-27.html>>). A juv. White-rumped Sandpiper was noted 22–24 Oct at Ruby Golf Course, Grand Bahama (BH, EH). A Baird's Sandpiper, rare on Bermuda, was at the National Sports Stadium 27 Aug (AD, PH), and a Dunlin was found at East End Dairy, Bermuda 4 Oct (AD). Guadeloupe's first Curlew Sandpiper was reported there 2–14 Sep (AL); other records for the Antilles come from Antigua and Barbados. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at the Bermuda Airport 21 Sep (AD), and another was reported from Trou Caiman, Haiti after the passage of

Mindy 11 Oct (JRC). The first confirmed Bahamian record of Long-billed Dowitcher was photographed and sound-recorded 25 Oct at Wilson's Pond, New Providence, Bahamas (BH, EH). A Wilson's Phalarope arrived at Jubilee Road, Bermuda 21 Sep (SR). A Red-necked Phalarope, a first for Guadeloupe and for the Lesser Antilles, was found at La Pointe des Chateaux 21–24 Sep and joined by 2 Wilson's Phalaropes on the first day of its visit (AL). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported at Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Is. 6 Aug (*vide* FH). A Black Tern was noted at Ruby Golf

Course, Grand Bahama 20–22 Sep, and 3 were at Emerald Golf Course 22–27 Sep (EG, ph. BH).

CUCKOOS THROUGH WAXBILL

A Black-billed Cuckoo at Hog Bay Park,

Bermuda 18 Oct (AD, SR et al.) was the only one of the season. Yellow-billed Cuckoos staged a moderate invasion in the Lesser Antilles, with 11 counted at Nature Reserve at Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe 20 Oct (AL), 13 total on Barbados 18–26 Oct (MF, EM), and a single reported from Grenada 25 Oct (AJ); 2 were at Walker's Cay, Bahamas 1 Oct (TW). Burrowing Owls were seen at four different locations on Eleuthera from Oct and Nov (JW, DC, ZM, IM), with singles seen on New Providence at the Retreat 3 Oct (ph. SB) and Lyford Cay 25 Oct (BH, EH). A Short-eared Owl on Cooper's I. 16 Nov (AD) was the first of at least three fall and winter records.

An Antillean Nighthawk seen at Belle-Plaine on 15 Oct was considered late at Guadeloupe (AL). A Chuck-will's-widow was heard calling, somewhat unusual for fall, 6 & 10 Sep and 1 Oct at Coral Harbour, New Providence, Bahamas (CW). JRC witnessed a "huge" flight of 70–80 White-collared Swifts near Port-au-Prince, Haiti 23 Aug. About 12 Chimney Swifts were seen in Somerset, Bermuda as *Fabian* strengthened about mid-day 5 Sep (WF). An unidentified hummingbird was reported in St. David's, Bermuda 5 Oct (*vide* EA). A Northern Flicker was seen at the A.B. Smith Reserve, Bermuda 5 Oct (EA); another was at Port Royal Golf Course for much of Nov (AD et al.).

Two Eastern Wood-Pewees were noted at Dover Sound, Grand Bahama 28 Sep (BH), and another was seen at Walker's Cay 3–4 Oct (TW). (Perhaps, to be conservative, most silent wood-pewees should be left unidentified, especially the late birds.) The latest-ever *Epidonax* recorded from Bermuda was an apparent Alder/Willow Flycatcher at Heydon Trust 23 Nov (DBW). Two apparently different Acadian Flycatchers were noted at Walker's Cay, Bahamas 2 & 4 Oct (TW). A Great Crested Flycatcher was at East End Dairy, Bermuda 8 Sep (PH). At the Treasure Cay dump, Abaco, RP found a very late Great Crested Flycatcher 23 Oct. An above-average number of Eastern Kingbirds arrived after *Fabian*, including a flock of 5 at Mid-Ocean Golf Course, Bermuda 10 Sep

Table 1. Warbler migration in the northern Bahama Islands, fall 2003.

SPECIES	GRAND BAHAMA 26-29 Sep (BH)	WALKER'S CAY 1-4 Oct (TW)	GRAND BAHAMA 22-24 Oct (BH, EH)	GRAND BAHAMA 27-29 Oct (BH, EH)
Tennessee Warbler	2-1		5-2	1-1
Nashville Warbler				1-1
Northern Parula	3-3	3-4	6-3	15-3
Yellow Warbler	2-1	1-3		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1-1			
Magnolia Warbler	4-4	4-4	2-3	5-2
Cape May Warbler	15-4	10-4	15-3	10-3
Black-throated Blue Warbler	10-4	80-4	7-3	4-3
Black-throated Green Warbler			1-1	4-2
Blackburnian Warbler	1-1			
Yellow-throated Warbler	2-1	1-4	6-3	15-3
Prairie Warbler	10-4	4-4	10-3	25-3
Palm Warbler	15-3	30-4	50-3	75-3
Bay-breasted Warbler			1-1	
Blackpoll Warbler			1-1	
Black-and-white Warbler	5-4	30-4	4-3	40-3
American Redstart	25-4	50-4	20-3	25-3
Prothonotary Warbler	1-2	1-2	1-1	
Worm-eating Warbler	4-3	1-1	1-1	8-1
Swainson's Warbler				2-1
Ovenbird	20-4	40-4	12-3	25-3
Northern Waterthrush	8-4	7-4	4-3	12-2
Louisiana Waterthrush		1-2		
Kentucky Warbler	1-1		2-1	
Mourning Warbler	1-1			
Common Yellowthroat	6-4	20-4	10-3	35-3
Hooded Warbler	5-1	2-4	4-2	1-1

N.B.: The first number represents the highest daily count; the second indicates the number of days on which the species was seen.

(AD); some 20 were recorded a little more than a week later at Reef Golf Course, Grand Bahama 20 Sep (EG), with 6 there 22 Sep (EG, BH) and 2 at Walker's Cay 1–4 Oct (TW). A Gray Kingbird was on St. George's Golf Course, Bermuda 4–11 Oct (AD). The first Scissor-tailed Flycatcher for Bermuda was discovered at Port Royal Golf Course 24 Oct (PH, DW).

Warbling and Philadelphia Vireos were found at both ends of Bermuda in Oct (m. ob.). Single Red-eyed Vireos were noted at Barbados on 5, 11, & 26 Oct (MF, EM). Hispaniolan Palm Crows (25+) outnumbered

White-necked Crow (one) 2–3 Aug at Ranch Monctel, Haiti (JRC). Some 30 or 40 Bahama Swallows noted 7 & 9 Sep over Eastern Road, New Providence, Bahamas (LR, SB) seemed a high number for that island's population and may have included migrants (TW). Three Northern Rough-winged Swallows were noted at Reef Golf Course, Grand Bahama 11 Sep (EG). A House Wren and 3 Winter Wrens were amongst eight species of migrant passerines on board a cruise ship when it arrived in Hamilton, Bermuda 14 Oct (GLA). A Gray-cheeked Thrush was noted at Walker's Cay 4 Oct, along with a Swainson's Thrush 3–4 Oct (TW); a Swainson's was at Old Bahama Bay Club, Grand Bahama 28 Oct (BH, EH). A Hermit Thrush was netted and photographed 27 Nov at s. Eleuthera (DC, IM, ZM). Brown Thrasher is rarely reported in the Bahamas, but BH found one 28 Oct at Old Bahama Bay Club, Grand Bahama.

Thirty-six species of warblers were recorded this fall at Bermuda, with highlights being single Golden-winged Warblers in Salt Kettle 1 Oct (WF) and Wreck Road 2 Oct (WF), a Brewster's Warbler at Hog Bay Park 5 Oct (EA), and a Cerulean Warbler at Tudor Hill 5 Oct (EA). Twenty-seven migrant warbler species were seen in the extreme n. Bahamas during the last week of Sep and throughout Oct (Table 1). Researchers with the Kirtland's Warbler Training and Research Project, funded by the U. S. Forest Service (<<http://birdlife.org/news/features/2004/01/kirtlands.html>>), have seen at least 30 birds (70% of

which are color-banded) across seven monitoring sites in s. Eleuthera. The project members are exploring other sites recently discovered and expect to band more warblers in winter 2003–2004 (*vide* DC). A Magnolia and 2 Prothonotary Warblers were found at Westerhall Pt., Grenada 24 Oct (AJ), representing some of the southernmost observations for these species in the Lesser Antilles. An Audubon's Warbler was seen at St. Georges Golf Course, Bermuda 26 Oct (SR). Twenty-four Blackpoll Warblers fell out at Petite-Terre, Guadeloupe 20 Oct (AL); 4 were seen 1



This Eurasian Whimbrel at Petit-Terre Reserve on Guadeloupe 15 November 2003 was one of several observed in the New World this autumn, including single birds in Connecticut, North Carolina, and Virginia, plus two in Nova Scotia. Photograph by Anthony Levesque.

Nov at Barbados (EM); and 3 were netted at s. Eleuthera 5 Nov (DC, IM, ZM), where a Tennessee Warbler 21 Nov and single Magnolia Warblers 28 Oct (JW, DC) and 21 Nov (DC, IM, ZM) were other banding highlights. A Kentucky Warbler first seen 22 Nov at Elbow Cay, Abaco remained through the period (BW).

At Harrison Pt., St. Lucy, Barbados the 4th island record of Summer Tanager was noted 18–26 Oct (MF, EM). A Scarlet and 3 Summer Tanagers were seen at Walker's Cay 2–3 Oct (TW); another Scarlet Tanager was noted at Dover Sound, Grand Bahama 23 Oct (BH). Black-crowned Palm-Tanagers (4–6) were noted on the highest ridge s. of Port-au-Prince at Ranch Monctel, Haïti 23 Aug (JRC). Both Rose-breasted (2) and Blue Grosbeaks (4) were at Walker's Cay 1–4 Oct, along with a Chipping Sparrow 2 Oct and 8 Clay-colored Sparrows 4 Oct (TW). Clay-colored Sparrows are very uncommon at Bermuda, but there were reports this season from Lagoon Park (PH), St. Georges (PW), and Wreck Road 1 Nov (2 birds; WF). Bermuda's first Le Conte's Sparrow was at Pembroke Marsh 17–30 Nov+ (ph. ESB, MJCB, vt. EA, DBW, AD, m. ob.). An imm. White-crowned Sparrow was on Paget I., Bermuda 3 Oct (AD). The first Snow Bunting was reported from Boaz I., Bermuda 9 Nov (PJH). A Dickcissel 28 Sep (BH) was good find at Pelican Pt., Grand Bahama. A Bobolink near Clearwater, Bermuda 27 Aug constituted one of the earliest fall records ever (AD, PS).

Bobolinks were numerous in the nw. Bahamas, with about 50 seen 21 Sep at the Government Experimental Farm, New Providence (NM), another 30 at Reef and Shannon Golf Courses, Grand Bahama 28 Sep (BH), and 16 at Walker's Cay 3 Oct

(TW). At the blackbird roost near the Holiday Inn, Freeport, Grand Bahama, 4 Shiny Cowbirds were seen 23 Oct (BH, EH). Censuses of the Montserrat Oriole found upwards of 30 orioles per day in Centre Hills in early Aug. The range of this Threatened endemic is now considered to be only a few square kilometers. An Orchard Oriole was on St. George's Golf Course, Bermuda 1 Oct (PW), and a Purple Finch was there 17 Oct (PW). At Ranch Monctel, Haïti, JRC found Antillean Siskins to be common 2–3 Aug. Two Common Waxbills were seen at Paget Marsh, Bermuda 1 Sep (AD, PH); the species has become quite scarce on Bermuda over the past decade.

Addendum: Received too late to be included in the previous issue was a report of ca. 50 West Indian Whistling-Ducks at Richmond Hill, Great Exuma, Bahamas 20 Jul (BM).

Observers: Eric Amos, George L. Armistead, Margaret J. C. Bain, Giff Beaton, Edward S. Brinkley, Sandra Buckner, Wayne Burke, David Currie, J. R. Crouse, Andrew Dobson, Wendy Frith, Martin Frost, Lynn Gape, Erika Gates, Bruce Hallett, Ed Harper, Floyd Hayes, Dale Hines, Peter Hopkin, Rachel Hopper, Anthony Jeremiah, Ray and Kay Latter, Anthony Levesque, Jeremy Madeiros, Eddie Massiah, Zeko McKenzie, Ingeria Miller, Basil Minns, Doreen Moss, Ron Pagliaro, Larry Roberts, Rafy Rodriguez, Steve Rodwell, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Neil Sealy, Penny Soares, Kathleen Sullivan-Sealey (KSS), David Wallace (DW), Carolyn Wardle, Paul Watson, Tony White, David Wingate (DBW), Bruce Wolck, Joe Wunderle. ☺



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