

Pictorial Highlights



This apparent Buff-breasted Sandpiper x White-rumped Sandpiper hybrid was studied carefully at Bear Cove, Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland on 8 November 2003. The bird's yellow legs, buffy underparts, small-headed appearance, and general structure strongly suggested Buff-breasted Sandpiper, whereas the streaking extending across the breast and down to the upper flanks and small white patch in center of lower rump suggest White-rumped. *Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.*



This apparent hybrid Couch's Kingbird x Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—a combination never before documented—was found in the Town of Leicester, Livingston County, New York 9 November 2003 (here 27 November), where it remained for close study through 2 December. Individuals such as this one underscore the need for extreme caution when identifying extralimital birds. *Photograph by Willie D'Anna.*



This Henslow's Sparrow provided the first confirmed New Mexico record. It was found east of Conchas Dam along the Canadian River on the Clabber Hill Ranch, San Miguel County, where present 10-22 October 2003 (here 10 October). *Photograph by Jerry R. Oldenettel.*



This *Zonotrichia* banded at Chino Farms, Queen Anne's County, Maryland 9 November 2003 (here) appears to be a White-crowned Sparrow x White-throated Sparrow hybrid. Intermediate characteristics shown include the pink bill, traces of black in the head stripes, and grayish breast of White-crowned; and the rich back, brown in head stripes, and trace of a white throat patch of White-throated. *Photograph by Jared Parks.*



Discovered by Gavin Bieber at the Avra Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant west of Tucson on 7 October 2003 (here) and remaining until the next day, this Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow provided a first Arizona record. New Mexico's first record of the species was a specimen taken at Albuquerque 22 September 2003. *Photograph by Chris D. Benesh.*



This vireo, banded on 20 September 2003 (here) at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory in southwestern Essex County, Ontario was thought to be a Philadelphia Vireo x Red-eyed Vireo hybrid. *Photograph by Allen Chartier.*



This Yellow-green Vireo, probably a "reverse migrant," was banded 10 October 2003 (here) by Duane Berger of the Hummer/Bird Study Group at Fort Morgan, Alabama, one of several firsts for Alabama this season. *Photograph by David Dortch.*



The fourth Cassin's Vireo for Québec appeared at Cap Tourmente 1 October 2003 and was copiously documented—and nicely rendered in this painting.
Painting by Jean-Marc Giroux.



Baja California's first acceptable Blue-headed Vireo record came from Guerrero Negro 1 October 2003. Note here the bright white throat and breast, fairly clean division between throat and auricular, yellowish-green sides and flanks, greenish-yellow wash across the vent, deeply gray head, olive-green upperparts, and broad, white wingbars. Cassin's Vireos resident in the Cape District mountains (subspecies *lucasanus*) can approach this bird's appearance, but the date and location here strongly favor identification as Blue-headed. *Photograph by James E. Pike.*



The first Clapper Rail ever seen in the province of Québec took up residence in a marsh at Maria, Gaspésie 11 to 25 October 2003. This image was taken 13 October as the bird was walking on a pile of logs near a house adjacent its marsh. *Photograph by Christianne Pitre.*



This adult Red-necked Stint spent 14-19 August 2003 (here 18 August) at North Monomoy and South Beach, Chatham, Massachusetts. As this species has been seen there in four of the last five autumns, one wonders if the same bird has been making annual visits. *Photograph by Blair Nikula.*



Rye, New Hampshire hosted the state's first Cave Swallows 26 (here) to 27 November 2003. Four birds, part of the third Cave Swallow incursion into New England for the month of November, fed along the beach near Concord Point and roosted on nearby rocks and houses. Their relatively pale throats, auriculars, and rumps indicated origin from southwestern rather than Caribbean populations. *Photograph by Phil Brown.*



New Hampshire's first Little Stint proved cooperative for visitors from across the New England region for four days after its discovery near Odiome Point in Rye 7 August 2003 (here). The bird was an adult molting into basic plumage (note the single gray lower scapular) and confined its activities to a fairly short stretch of beach. *Photograph by Phil Brown.*



A first state record, this Western Wood-Pewee was banded 12 October 2003 (here) at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This species is almost unknown in the East as a vagrant, probably because silent birds usually cannot be distinguished from Eastern Wood-Pewees in the field. Photograph by Rob and Ann Simpson.



The fall of 2003 was tremendous for the passage of jaegers in the continent's eastern interior, perhaps the best year since 1996, and the Great Lakes in particular saw record counts of Parasitic Jaeger at several sites. This juvenile Parasitic was beautifully photographed at Van Wagners Beach, Ontario on 3 September. Photograph by Eric Holden.



This Grace's Warbler was found in the Chicago lakefront's famous Magic Hedge at Montrose, Illinois 8 September 2003 (here) by Clara Coen and John Purcell and enjoyed by other local birders that day. Previously known only as a short-distance vagrant to coastal California, northern Colorado, and western Texas, this species has apparently never before been recorded east of the Mississippi River. Digiscoped photograph by Kanae Hirabayashi.



Two second state records for two states found just three days apart, these juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers delighted birders in Indiana and Illinois. The bird at right was found by Dan Stoltzfus 25 September 2003 at the Wakarusa Sewage Ponds, Elkhart County, Indiana, where a half-dozen other birders studied it before departed. The bird at left was discovered by Scott Cohrs 28 September at Blackhawk Forest Preserve, Kane County, Illinois, where it lingered through 6 October (here 2 October). Digiscoped photographs by Travis Mahan (right) and John K. Cassidy (left).



This Sage Thrasher discovered by Susan Hoyle in Knoxville on 8 November 2003 (here 10 November) was an unexpected first for Tennessee, much to the delight of hundreds of birders throughout the state. It appeared to be content to feed on privet berries and spent the winter at this location. Photograph by Ron Hoff.



Thanks to Jan Shaw's keen eyes, hundreds of birders enjoyed this male MacGillivray's Warbler, a Tennessee first, at Radnor Lake State Natural Area in Nashville. Discovered 25 October 2003 (here 27 October), it remained through 19 November, generally staying within 60 m or so of the bush in which it was first found. Photograph by Michael O'Malley.



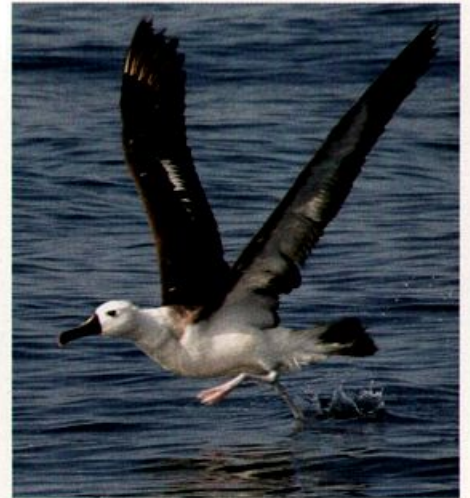
Only the second record ever for the fall season in North Dakota, this Summer Tanager was in Grand Forks 9 November 2003, perhaps associated with the southwesterly winds preceding the passage of a strong cold front. Digital photograph by Bob Freeberg.



Providing unequivocal documentation of a westward-straying Eastern Screech-Owl, this vocal rufous-morph individual at Portales, New Mexico 18 November 2003 provided a striking first for the state. It remained in the area into at least February. *Photograph by Julian D. Avery.*



Buff-bellied Hummingbirds on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico have almost become expected winter visitors. This male photographed 24 November 2003 at Fairhope in Baldwin County, Alabama was one of three that appeared in the Central Southern Region before the end of the period. *Photograph by David Dortch.*



Without question the bird of the season in Texas was an adult or nearly adult (Atlantic) Yellow-nosed Albatross found about 90 km east of Port Isabel, Cameron County on 26 September 2003 (here), the fourth documented state record for the species. *Photograph by Brad McKinney.*



The discovery of Montana's first Siberian Accentor in the Paradise Valley 22 November 2003 (here 5 December) was cause for celebration. Found by Sue Williams at her feeders and confirmed by Eric Henderson, the bird was visited by scores of birders. Away from Alaska, other North American records come from British Columbia, Washington, and Idaho. *Photograph by Michael Hamilton.*



Colorado was the site of the season's most remarkable gull record: this Kelp Gull, first found at Jackson Reservoir 17 September 2003, remained there 10 days and was later refound at Donah Reservoir in Larimer County 19 (here 26) October, where it remained until at least 2 November. The species is known otherwise in the United States only from several Gulf Coast states, Maryland, and Indiana. *Photograph by Bill Maynard.*



This Chestnut-collared Longspur 26 October 2003 was one of many vagrants observed during the fall at Miller's Rest Stop along Highway 95/6, in Esmeralda County, Nevada, a well-known "trap" for migrants in the state. *Photograph by Martin Meyers.*



Certainly unexpected in northern New Mexico, this state-first Royal Tern was present for a single day at Cochiti Lake, Sandoval County on 12 October 2003 (here). *Photograph by Jerry R. Oldenettel.*



New Mexico's second Piratic Flycatcher attracted many birders to Bosque Redondo near Fort Sumner, DeBaca County 12-16 September 2003 (here 14 September).
Photograph by Gary K. Froehlich.



This Eurasian Wryneck was found by Paul Lehman and Jim Zamos at Gambell, Alaska 2 (here) through 5 September 2003. Its favored perch, a decaying whale carcass, provided a feast of flies and larvae. This is the first record of a living wryneck in North America; a dead bird found on the edge of the Bering Strait in Wales, Alaska on 8 September 1945 constitutes the only other New World record. *Photograph by Phil Davis.*



This Middendorff's Grasshopper-Warbler frequented one of the boneyards at Gambell, Alaska on 5 September 2003, the second or third fall record there. This species breeds no farther north than Kamchatka and has now occurred eight times in western Alaska, with a majority of the birds having been found in autumn. *Photograph from videotape by Paul E. Lehman.*



This Red-flanked Bluetail, probably an immature male, furnished the second fall record for St. Paul Island, Alaska 5 October 2003. *Photograph by Derek Lovitch.*



A second-year Crested Auklet at Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Victoria, British Columbia was present 5 September (here 23 September) through 3 October 2003. This bird furnished both a second provincial record and a second for Canada overall: the first was in 1832! *Photograph by Jukka Jantunen.*



This Cory's Shearwater near Cordell Bank 9 August 2003 represented the first documented California and Pacific Ocean record. Remarkably, this occurrence was followed by a second observation of the species to the south at Monterey Bay 22-23 August. *Photograph by Debra L. Shearwater.*



California's first documented Magnificent Hummingbird frequented a park in Pacific Beach, San Diego County. This photograph, taken 14 October 2003, shows that the bird was in primary molt. *Photograph by Matt Sadowski.*



The fall of 2003 saw a major passage of Red-throated Pipits in the Southern Pacific Coast region. This bird at Irvine, Orange County 3 November 2003 was one of minimally 44 in southern California between 27 September and 25 November. *Photograph by Larry Sansone.*



This first-fall male Broad-billed Hummingbird, found at the Río Guadalupe estuary, Baja California on 29 September 2003, furnished the first photographic (and second overall) state record. *Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.*



A first for Guadeloupe, this Curlew Sandpiper at Pointe des Chateaux 2 September 2003 provided one of few records from the West Indies. *Photograph by Anthony Levesque.*



This gadfly petrel that landed on a cruise ship off Maui 29 (here 30) September 2003 provided a second Hawaiian Islands record of Stejneger's Petrel; after examination, it was released in apparently good condition. *Digital photograph by Fern Duvall, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawaii.*



Le Conte's Sparrow has been long anticipated on Bermuda. This bird, found by Margaret Bain, Ned Brinkley, and party at Pembroke Marsh 17 November 2003, proved elusive but stayed to be counted on the island's C.B.C. in December! *Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.*