



the estuary at Celestún 20 Jul, means either that many did not successfully nest at their traditional sites within the Ría Lagartos Reserve this year—or possibly that the size of the population has grown so much that there are more non-reproducing individuals from the colony (AD). Celestún often harbors non-breeders over the summer.

A Purple Gallinule, which may have been a resident bird rather than a migrant, was in the roadside wetland se. of Peto 24 Jun, along with at least 2 American Coots (BM); and another 10 coots were at Celestún 10 Jun (AD), which may indicate they chose to spend the summer in the subregion. Two Snowy Plovers, local residents, were on the sandbar at Celestún 25 Jun (AD), along with a single Forster's Tern, which is a very unusual date for this species here (AD). Twelve Least Terns were also at the same sandbar at Celestún 28 Jul, where it is assumed they nested (AD).

A pair of Yellow-lored Parrots accompanied a young fledgling high in the canopy at Laguna Ocom, Q.R. 13 Jun (BM, WS), and Yellow-billed Cuckoos were back nesting at San Antonio Chel near Mérida this year, although not re-

ported until Jul (AM). A report of a Caribbean Short-eared Owl, accompanied by an excellent photograph of it preying upon crabs on the rocky shore of Isla Contoy, was received 6 Jun. The exact date of the occurrence is still unknown, as is the name of the photographer, who was visiting the island as a volunteer for the reserve. However, since a few such owls show up once in a while in Florida, it may be expected as well on the Yucatan Peninsula. There are two other records of Short-eared Owl for the peninsula, but the subspecies or form has not yet been determined in each case.

Three Yucatan Poorwills were heard calling at a ranch on the V.C. road predawn 12 Jun, and one was seen the next evening in same location (MG, BM, WS). Vaux's Swift is little known in the s. part of the peninsula; one was seen flying over La Ceiba, L.C., near Bacalar 25 Jun (BM). A single Ringed Kingfisher was seen at the freshwater hole in the estuary at Celestún 20 Jul (AD). The species is known to reside in very low numbers in the n. of the peninsula, where habitat is adequate. A Belted Kingfisher was seen 28 Jul on the Gulf coast at Celestún (AD).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH OROPENDOLAS

Eye-ringed Flatbills appear to be late nesters, as one was just starting to build its nest over the V.C. road 12 Jun (MG, BM, WS), and a female Royal Flycatcher was one third through constructing her nest in same area on same day, with the male looking on (MG, BM, WS). A Vermilion Flycatcher was in the right habitat 10 km n. of La Ceiba, L.C., w. of Bacalar 26 Jun (BM). The distribution of the species in the s. part of the peninsula is not well documented.

Early migrants included 4 Northern Parulas at Río Lagartos 30 Jul (IN). Potentially a new species for the peninsula, a pair of Flame-colored Tanagers was reported from Central Vallarta in Q.R. 24 Jun, observed while they fed on the fruits of poisonwood (HD, LK). Actually, the first observation was of a male in Dec 2006 in the Jardín Botánico, Presa Malpaso, and on two other occasions females were seen at Central Vallarta a few km to the west (LK). Unfortunately, no photograph of the birds was taken, so it will join the list of hypotheticals for the region. A single ad. Montezuma Oropendola was still calling while guarding young in nest at the otherwise abandoned colony located on grounds of INIFAB, just n. of Bacalar 27 Jun (BM, AS).

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Central America



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Summer is supposed to be the "slow" season for birds, but is it really? There are fewer observers afield because migration is at its lowest ebb. No one will dispute that summer is the season to find that occasional austral migrant wandering a little farther northward than expected. And these certainly include the wealth of seabirds that breed in the southern oceans. Perhaps early summer is also an ideal time to look for birds dispersing northward from nearby "resident"

populations in northern South America. If this summer was any indication of such phenomena, then we have truly been missing out on great opportunities! No fewer than three species new to North America and one new to Central America were found in the Region in June. Two of the four breed in the southern oceans, and the other two were from populations in nearby Colombia. Clearly, the most spectacular was the exhausted Magellanic Penguin found on a beach in El Salvador. The occurrence of the other three, though, could have been predicted. The moribund Greater Shearwater that was

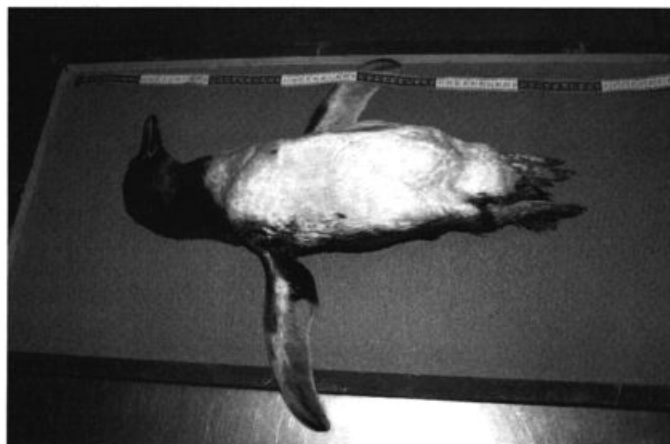
SA A juv. **Magellanic Penguin** was picked up on El Zaité beach, *Ahuachapán* 7 Jun (AP, JP). It was clearly distressed and was placed in a tank of water with ice to cool it down. Despite efforts to save it, it later died. It made all the newspapers and prompted many jokes about the irony of a penguin traveling all the way to El Salvador from Antarctica in search of warmer waters, only to be frozen to death when it arrived. The reality is that it was probably on its last legs already. The specimen was passed on to *SalvaNatura*, where it was later identified (OK). The likelihood of any penguin reaching the Northern Hemisphere unaided by man may always be questioned, but an exhausted juv. washed ashore on a beach—especially of a migratory pelagic species that has turned up as far afield as Australia, ne. Brazil, and Peru—stands as good a chance as any of reaching El Salvador on its own. Furthermore, the record coincides with La Niña climatic event, in which the cold Humboldt current extended northward at least as far as the Galapagos islands.

This record represents the first for North America, but Humboldt Penguin has also been recorded in Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington (see *North American Birds* 56: 402-408), where records have been presumed to be of escaped former captives (see also *Wilson Bulletin* 119: 284-288).

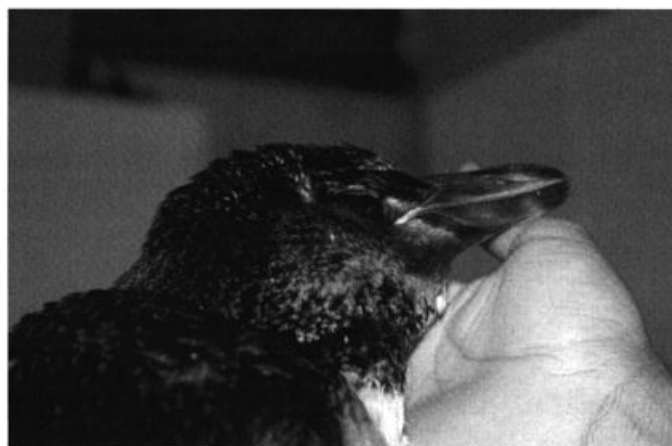
picked up on a beach in Costa Rica is of a species common in summer in the North Atlantic, albeit one rarely seen in the Caribbean, and the small group of Large-billed Seed-Finches and Yellow-hooded Black-birds found in eastern Panama were only a few dozen kilometers from known populations in Colombia and may be from a previously undetected local breeding population. Intriguing also was a June American Kestrel in the same Panama location that was likely a subspecies (perhaps *Falco sparverius aequatorialis*) from nearby resident populations in Colombia. This species was documented breeding in Panama last year. Finally, and not to be ignored among the austral visitors, were a Wilson's Storm-Petrel in Belize and a Large-billed Tern in Costa Rica, only the second ever recorded in that country and the third recorded in Central America north of Panama. So, whoever said summer is the season of the doldrums (avifaunally speaking) should consider exploring the margins of Central America in June and July—that is, eastern Panama and the shorelines and nearshore waters of the western Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

PENGUINS THROUGH BOOBIES

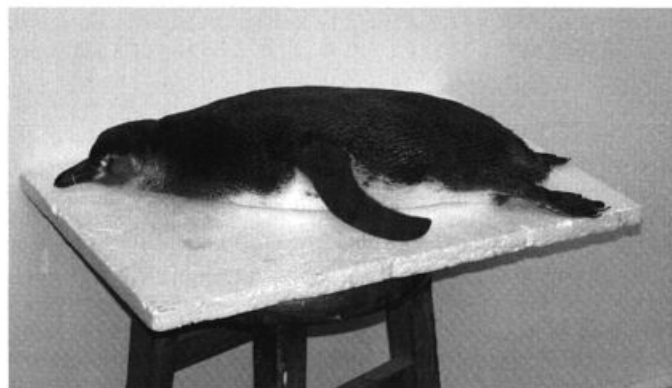
The count of at least 30 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at El Real Airport, *Darién* 15-18 Jun (GA, RD) exemplifies the species' increase throughout Panama in recent years. Providing the first record for Cocos Is., 520 km sw. of mainland Costa Rica, was a male American Wigeon seen 15 Jun (ph. FL). In Guatemala, an Ocellated Quail was heard 5 km e. of San Pedro Carchá, *Alta Verapaz* 29 Jul, the same site as a pair found in Apr, and another was heard 3 km farther e. the same day (both KE). Although probably common in the Pacific Ocean off n. Central America, Pink-footed Shearwater had never been confirmed for Guatemala until this summer, when one was photographed off *Suchitepéquez* 7 Jun (ph. PV, VD). On the other hand, a Greater Shearwater found in moribund condition on the beach at Tortuguero, *Limón* 29 Jun (DL) may be the first documented in Central America. After living two days in captivity, it died and was deposited in the collection at University of Costa Rica. Although a relatively common migrant in the n. Atlantic Ocean, it is rarely reported in the Caribbean. Many years ago, a skeleton identified as this species washed up on the beach at Tortuguero, but the remains were not preserved, and even if correctly identified, it cannot be known if it reached Central America waters alive. Another first for Belize was established 4 Jul in Belize when JU closely observed a **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** "dancing" at the surface of the water just beyond the surf at Placencia, *Stann Creek*. As with the Greater Shearwater, this species is rarely reported in the Caribbean. Much less rare but nevertheless



This starving juvenile Magellanic Penguin found on the beach in *Ahuachapán* department, El Salvador, 7 June 2007, died of exhaustion later that day. It was hatched just four months or so earlier in southern Chile. Did it move northward on La Niña currents, or did it arrive by ship in El Salvador? We may never know, but other swimming species such as sea lions regularly make the trip from the Galápagos to El Salvador. *Photograph by Rocío Juárez.*



The El Salvador penguin's bill structure, and the light gray band across both maxilla and mandible, confirmed its identification as Magellanic Penguin. *Photograph by Rocío Juárez.*



The pale gray throat and cheek, narrowly bordered in white, are features diagnostic of juvenile Magellanic Penguin. These features were not clearly evident on the emaciated bird until it was prepared as a study skin (shown here). *Photograph by Vladlen Henriquez.*

noteworthy was a Nazca Booby seen in Guatemala about 54 km off the coast of *Suchitepéquez* 7 Jun (PV, ph. VD). This species has been reported in Guatemala on several oc-



Although a widespread species on the North American continent, this American Wigeon photographed on 15 June 2007 provided the first documented for Cocos Island in the Pacific Ocean, 520 kilometers southwest of mainland Costa Rica. Photograph by Felipe López.

casions previously and may occur more frequently than the few records indicate.

PELICANS THROUGH TERNS

In our continuing effort to report all inland occurrences of Brown Pelican in the Region in order to ascertain a seasonal pattern, if any, we note that 13 were seen flying over Rocjá Pomtilá, 8 km se. of Laguna Lachuá, *Alta Verapaz*, on 21 Jul (EC), and 2 juvs. were seen at L. Atitlán, *Sololá* 30 Jun (JFH). The species is only occasionally seen at these locations in Guatemala. In e. Panama, a Least Bittern at El Real Airport 18 Jun (GA, RD) provided the first record for *Darién*; in Guatemala, a Black-crowned Night-Heron at Los Tarrales Reserve, *Suchitepéquez* 28 Jun (EG, ph. JLL) provided the first record for the reserve; and approximately 6 Boat-billed Herons on Isla de Coiba 23 Jun (D&LE, JO et al.) provided the first record for this large island off the Pacific coast of Panama.

An imm. and 7 ad. King Vultures observed 25 km n. of Uaxactún 1 Jun (MC, JM) was a higher than expected number for this uncommon species in Guatemala's *Petén*; a Hook-billed Kite at El Imposible N.P., *Ahuachapán* 7 Jun (CF) was noteworthy for this rarely reported species in El Salvador. Two fledgling White-breasted Hawks seen perched near their nest in Sanimtacá, *Alta Verapaz* 28 Jun (EPC) provided the first nesting record for this Sharp-shinned Hawk "semispecies" in the Sacranix Mts. of Guatemala. A juv. Barred Forest-Falcon seen 13 Jul in Los Tarrales Reserve (ph. JLL) provided the first record for the reserve, the 2nd for Atitlán Volcano (the first was recorded last Apr), and the first suggestion of nesting on the Guatemalan Pacific slope. In Panama, another first for Isla de Coiba was a rufous-morph ad. Collared Forest-Falcon seen 23 Jun

(D&LE, JO et al.).

Of interest was a male American Kestrel seen at El Real, *Darién* 16-18 Jun (GA, RD, KEa, DJ, RH, HAM). Evidence exists for American Kestrel breeding in Panama since at least 1995, and in 2006, a nest was found. This individual, and others that have been seen well, had an unspotted breast and lacked the brown crown spot of northern migrants, consistent with that of the resident subspecies from Colombia, *aequatorialis*. Also providing an out-of-season record for the Region was a Peregrine Falcon at El Imposible N.P. 4 Jun (OK). This species was reportedly exhibiting possible breeding behavior at this site in May (see spring re-

port), but later searches through the summer period were unsuccessful and could not confirm breeding. Apparently summering in n. Belize were 4 Black-bellied Plovers 30 Jun and 2 and 8 Greater Yellowlegs on 10 & 30 Jun, respectively, on mudflats in the ne. corner of Shipstern Lagoon, *Corozal* (NB, CG). The much rarer Long-billed Curlew also occasionally summers in the Region. One seen 3 Jul at the mouth of the Río Lempa, *Usulután* (ph. RIP) established El Salvador's first Jul record.

A Large-billed Tern, the 2nd recorded in Costa Rica and one of the few ever recorded in Central America, was at Boca Río Matina, between Limón and Tortuguero, 13 Jun (DW). The first was recorded at Tortuguero in Mar 2003. In El Salvador, Gull-billed Terns were present in larger numbers than usual this summer: 6 were at La Unión 30 Jun (RMa), one was at Río Jiboa, *La Paz* 29 Jun, and another was at the same site 30 Jul (both TJ). Unusual in mid-summer in Belize were single Black Terns in the ne. corner of Shipstern Lagoon 19 & 26 Jun (NB, CG). Occasional summering Elegant Terns have been reported in El Salvador, but a group estimated at between 30 and 40 at Playa El Maculis, *La Unión* 22 Jun (AM) was an unusually high number for a species that is usually only present in large numbers during fall migration.

SKIMMERS THROUGH MONKLET

Very rare in summer in Costa Rica, especially on the Caribbean coast, 2 Black Skimmers

were noted 13 Jun at Boca Río Matina, *Limón* (DW). Black Skimmers found in summer in s. Central America could be one of the subspecies from South America, rather than migrants from the north. Corroborating the recently documented range extension of Red-billed Pigeon on the Caribbean slope of Guatemala, 2 were in the Río Chixoy Valley 4 km s. of San Cristóbal Verapaz, *Alta Verapaz* 10 Jul (KE, CA). Also in a location where the species had not been recorded previously, a pair of Plain-breasted Ground-Doves, one of many open-country species that have benefited from deforestation in the Region, was at Chiquibul, *Alta Verapaz* 8 Jul (KE). In Costa Rica, well-birded Arenal Observatory in *Alajuela* recorded its first Violaceous Quail-Dove 22 Jul (LC). This is typical for this species in the Caribbean lowlands and foothills where it simply appears for a while at a location and then disappears.

In El Salvador, a Pacific Parakeet paired with a Red-throated Parakeet were at a breeding site at San Felipe La Joya, *San Vicente* 1 Jun (ph. RIP). The taxonomic status of these two forms has been debated for many years (they are currently considered to be separate species by the American Ornithologists' Union, with the red-throated form treated as a subspecies of Green Parakeet). An Oilbird seen at Cerro Jefe, Chagres N.P., *Panamá* 27 Jul (AG, CAG, EuC) was the 2nd reported from the area and one of only a few from Panama. Providing the first confirmed evi-

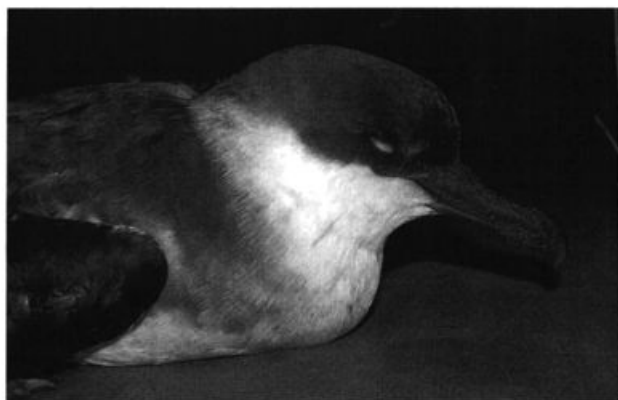


The status of many pelagic seabirds, even common species, is still poorly documented in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The globally threatened Pink-footed Shearwater, probably a regular non-breeding visitor along the Pacific coast of Central America in the austral winter, was finally confirmed for Guatemala by this photograph, taken 7 June 2007 off Suchitepéquez department. Individuals were also observed 6 June off Escuintla department, 7 June off Retalhuleu, and 25 June off Santa Rosa department. Photograph by Pilar Veldsquez.

dence of breeding in El Salvador, five White-collared Swift nests were discovered behind a waterfall at Municipio de Santo Domingo de Guzmán, *Sonsonate* 17 Jul (ph. CF, JF, IV, JJ, ST). At the same site, several groups of 2-5 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts were seen daily by the same observers 17-19 Jul. This species is rarely reported in El Salvador. Rarely reported in Guatemala, a Great Swallow-tailed

Swift was seen flying over the Río Chixoy Valley 4 km s. of San Cristóbal Verapaz 10 Jul (ph. KE, CA).

A Wedge-tailed Sabrewing at The Lodge at Big Falls, Toledo 10 Jun (LJ) was at a lowland locality in s. Belize where it had not been recorded previously. And in Guatemala, Ele-



Very rare in the Caribbean was this Greater Shearwater, found moribund at Tortuguero National Park, Costa Rica, on 29 June 2007. This is the first documented record of the species for Costa Rica, although the species was reported once previously at the same site. Photograph Daryl Loth.

gant Trogon was recorded for the first time in the Río Chixoy Valley this summer when a female was seen on 10 Jul (ar. KE, CA). Thirteen days later, a male was seen and 2 more individuals were heard calling in the same fragment of pine-oak forest. These records suggest a small local population 50 km nw. of the nearest known population in the arid Motagua Valley. In Costa Rica, a Turquoise-browed Motmot at Manuel Antonio (the town next to Quepos but not the N.P.) on 2 Jul (AA) was very far south. This species is seldom seen s. of Carara. Two Lanceolated Monkllets were at Río Mulabá, above Santa Fe, Veraguas 17 Jul (RM). Although there have been several reports from Panama in the past few years, it is nevertheless considered to be quite rare.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A male Golden-green Woodpecker, rare in Panama, was seen in the Bayano area, Panamá 29 Jul (OM). Elsewhere in Panama, a male

Yellow-billed Cotinga seen in mangroves 12 km se. of Pedregal (s. of David), Chiriqui 26 Jul (GB) was the first reported from the area since 1901. A Barn Swallow in Punta Gorda, Belize on 11 Jun (LJ) was completely out of season. Exceptionally early but not out of season was a Yellow-throated Warbler seen 2 km se. of Sarteneja 30 Jun (NB, CG). Although this species, consistently the earliest arriving fall migrant warbler in the Region, typically appears in the 2nd week of Jul, this Jun record precedes the previous earliest record for Belize by eight days. Another early fall warbler was a male Black-and-white Warbler, still in breeding plumage, seen in San José, Costa Rica 15 Jul (CW). The species typically arrives in the region the latter part of Jul.

Three singing male Slaty Finches at Monteverde 25 Jul (CS) now join Peg-billed Finch as the 2nd bamboo nomad to arrive this year in this popular Costa Rican destination to take advantage of an extensive bamboo fruiting episode. At only 400 m above sea level, a Rusty Sparrow at Hun Nal Ye Reserve, Alta Verapaz 15 Jul (KE, CA) was at a lower elevation than expected for this part of Guatemala. Spot-breasted Orioles were seen at two new locations in Alta Verapaz this summer: 2 in the Río Chixoy Valley 24 Jul and one at Sataña, 14 km n. of Cobán, 28 Jul (both KE, CA). Also new to the Río Chixoy Valley were 2 Altamira Orioles seen 10 Jul (KE, CA).

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The presence of several singing males of the Large-billed Seed-Finch in Darién, Panama—the first for the country—suggests that this species is probably resident in North America. These birds were first found on 15 (here 16) June 2007, at a site just 100 km from the nearest known range in Colombia. Photograph by Kevin Easley.

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SA North America's first Large-billed Seed-Finches (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*) were recorded in Panama, with 3+ males 15-18 Jun (one on the 15th, 3+ on the 16th, and one or more on the 18th) at El Real Airport, Darién (ar. GA, RD, ph. KEa, DJ, RH, HAM). They exhibited the very large white bill and prominent small white speculum in the wing characteristic of this species. Hilty and Brown (1986. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*) show its range as coming within 50 km of Panama and 100 km from El Real. The similar Great-billed Seed-Finch (*O. maximiliani*) is found no nearer to Panama than sw. Colombia, where it is scarce. Populations of this species w. of the Andes (perhaps only a subspecies of *crassirostris*) have a yellowish-white bill and little or no white in the wing, which is at the base of the primaries. While the determination of these birds as Large-billed Seed-Finches has not been established unequivocally, Large-billed is far more likely than Great-billed based on range, and the observed field marks support Large-billed. Perhaps the audio recordings will prove definitive.

A day after finding North America's first Large-billed Seed-Finches at El Real Airport, the same team of observers were surprised to find at least 3 male Yellow-hooded Blackbirds (*Agelaius icterocephalus*) in the same location—another first for North America (v.r. GA, ph. KEa). At least 3 males and 2 females were present two days later on the 18th. One pair was being followed on the latter date by a begging juv. Shiny Cowbird. This species apparently ranges right up to the Panama border w. of the Gulf of Uraba in Colombia, so its occurrence a short distance away in Panama was expected.