

AUGUST TO MID-SEPTEMBER 2007

BY RICK WRIGHT, WITH THANKS TO JON DUNN AND PAUL LEHMAN

Southeast

The 4 Black-capped Petrels seen on a late-Aug pelagic trip off GA furnished a new state high count for the species. An astonishing Jabiru photographed in Sunflower, MS, in late Aug will be a first for that state and one of only about 10 records for the ABA Area. An adult Curlew Sandpiper was in coastal NC in mid-Aug. A Say's Phoebe visited Montgomery, MD, in early Sep.

Northeast

NY's Western Reef-Heron reappeared on Staten Island in late Aug. A Little Egret was in NS in late Aug. Single immature White Ibis flew over Cape May in mid-Aug and mid-Sep; single immatures were in RI and in Dauphin, PA, in early Sep. The Roseate Spoonbill continued into mid-Sep at NJ's Brigantine NWR. A mid-Aug Swallow-tailed Kite was the first ever for PA's Hawk Mountain, while another visited Portland, ME, at month's end. A Macaronesian (Little) Shearwater *Puffinus [assimilis] baroli* extensively photographed 60 miles off Nantucket in late Aug will be the first New England record for this taxon if accepted. A Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was photographed on a pelagic trip off DE in late Aug. A moribund Purple Gallinule was on Nantucket in mid-Aug. An American Avocet strayed north to NS in mid-Aug. A Curlew Sandpiper was on Cape Cod in mid-Aug. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were widely reported; the Halifax, NS, airport hosted a flock of 50 in early Sep. Single Sandwich Terns were north to RI and MA in Aug. An adult Long-tailed Jaeger on the Ottawa River in mid-Aug was said to be the first for the area in 30 years. Mid-Aug found a state-first Green Violet-ear at a Mt. Desert Island, ME, feeder.

Single Say's Phoebes were at MA's Plum Island and in Cape May in early Sep. An adult Violet-Green Swallow was on NS's Prospect Peninsula in late Aug. Single Lark Buntings visited Ocean, NJ, and NY's Cayuga Lake in early Sep.

Mid-continent

A female Magnificent Frigatebird, potentially IA's 6th, was in Dickinson in early Sep. A Brown Booby was near South Padre Island, TX, in late Aug. An adult Neotropic Cormorant was in Buchanan, MO, in early Sep. An immature Roseate Spoonbill visited Pemiscot, MO, in late Aug. A Swallow-tailed Kite joined a flock of Mississippi Kites in Tulsa, OK, in late Aug. McHenry, IL, hosted a Prairie Falcon and a Ruff in late Aug. A Snowy Plover visited St. Charles, MO, in early Sep, while a Wilson's Plover lingered briefly in Boone, MO. A 2nd-winter Laughing Gull was in Dickinson, IA, in mid-Aug; the same county's perennial Black-headed Gull was last seen at the same time. A Royal Tern photographed in Platte, NE, in early Sep died and was salvaged. A Long-tailed Jaeger at IA's Saylorville Reser-

voir in mid-Sep will be a 3rd state record if accepted; another near Grand Forks, ND, was that state's first in 30 years. Burrowing Owls produced 2 young in Pipestone, MN. A *gnoma* Northern Pygmy-Owl (Mountain Pygmy-Owl) photographed in Big Bend NP, TX, will be a 3rd state record if accepted. A Green Violet-ear was visiting a feeder in Osage, OK, in late Aug.

A male Kentucky Warbler near Calgary in early Sep will be a second record for AB if accepted. A Fan-tailed Warbler, the ABA Area's 7th, was in Big Bend NP, TX, in Aug and early Sep.

Southwest

A Magnificent Frigatebird soared over AZ's Colorado River in early Sep. Single Reddish Egrets were in Cochise and Pima, AZ. An immature Roseate Spoonbill was in Yuma, AZ, in late Aug. A Broad-winged Hawk was notable in Pima, AZ, in mid-Sep. Two Aplomado Falcons from the recent reintroduction appeared at NM's Bosque del Apache in mid-Sep. Bosque del Apache hosted a Red Knot and a Red Phalarope in early Sep. An Upland Sandpiper recorded over Santa Cruz, AZ, in late Aug was the 4th modern record for the state, while 3 Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Pima and Maricopa in early Sep doubled the state's total records. A Ruddy Turnstone visited Yuma, AZ, in late Aug. A male Ruddy Ground-Dove was in Tucson in early Sep. An adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird visited a Boulder, CO, feeder in late Aug. A Berylline Hummingbird arrived in Madera Canyon, AZ, in mid-Sep.

Probably the same Couch's Kingbird discovered in Jan 2007 returned to Yuma, AZ, in early Sep, while an Eastern Kingbird visited Pima in late Aug. A White-eyed Vireo visited Santa Cruz, AZ, in mid-Aug. A Blue-headed Vireo photographed in UT in late Aug is a potential 3rd state record. A Crescent-chested Warbler spent a single mid-Sep day in AZ's Madera Canyon. A Mourning Warbler was in Maricopa, AZ, in early Sep.

West Coast

A late-Aug trip out of OR's Coos Bay produced a probable Great-winged Petrel. A Murphy's Petrel was reported off CA's Santa Cruz Island in early Sep, while the multi-day Searcher trip found single Cook's Petrels off Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. A Cory's Shearwater was seen off San Diego in early Sep. A light-morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater was photographed off CA's Bodega Bay in early Sep. The California Bird Records Committee seeks documentation for this season's sightings of Brown Booby at La Jolla and elsewhere. A Blue-footed Booby was off San Diego in early Sep. Two Reddish Egrets were in Ventura, CA, in late Aug. An adult Glossy Ibis visited Yolo, CA, in late Aug. Single Crested Caracaras continued in Del Norte and San Diego, CA, in Aug. A Black Rail was at OR's Tillamook Bay in late Aug. A Wilson's Plover spent an Aug day in Portland, OR. A Long-toed Stint was in OR's Tillamook Bay in early Sep. Good numbers of Buff-



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Arizona. Photo © Dave Stejskal.

breasted Sandpipers were detected, including 1 on BC's Vancouver Island; 2 in *Tillamook* and up to 15 in *Coos*, OR; 5 in *Pacific*, WA; 6 in *Marin*, CA; as many as 5 in *San Diego*, CA; and additional birds reported in *Orange*, *Los Angeles*, *Ventura*, *Del Norte*, *San Francisco*, *Mendocino*, and *Santa Cruz*, CA. A Bar-tailed Godwit was in *San Mateo*, CA, in late Aug; another at that state's Mad River estuary was determined to be of the subspecies *lapponica*, a potential 2nd state record. 2 Hudsonian Godwits were found in coastal OR. A female Ruff visited AB in mid-Aug. A **Bridled Tern**, potentially the second for the state, was photographed at Camp Pendleton, *San Diego*, CA, in mid-Aug. A Thick-billed Murre was off Point Reyes, CA, in late Aug. AB's third **Ancient Murrelet** spent most of Aug in Banff NP. A juvenile female Ruby-throated Hummingbird joined a Calliope Hummingbird at a *Marin*, CA, feeder in late Aug.

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher strayed to *Zzyzx*, CA, in early Sep. An Eastern Yellow Wagtail was reported from CA's Bodega Bay in early Sep. Two **Arctic Warblers** were photographed in eastern *Kern*, CA, in early Sep. A male Painted Bunting visited a southeast BC feeder in mid-Aug.

Alaska

A Baikal Teal was on Shemya Island in early Sep. A Eurasian Hobby was photographed on Shemya in mid-Aug. A mid-Sep Merlin,



Brown Hawk-Owl, Alaska.
Photo © Jake Mohlmann.

described as a typical North American individual, at Gambell was a first fall record for that site. A juvenile Common Ringed Plover joined up to 5 juvenile Lesser Sand-Plovers on Gambell in late Aug. 2 Marsh Sandpipers visited Adak in early Sep. 3 Little Stints were recorded on St. Paul Island and 1 on Adak. A **Brown Hawk-Owl** *Ninox scutulata* photographed on St. Paul Island in late Aug and early Sep will be a first ABA-area record if accepted. A Fork-tailed Swift was photographed over Shemya Island in mid-Aug.

2 "Western" Flycatchers at Gambell in late Aug were the 3rd and 4th for the Bering Sea region. An

adult **Brown Shrike** was at Gambell in late Aug. A Pechora Pipit in late Aug was the 10th autumn bird for Gambell since 2003. A Swainson's Thrush on St. Paul Island in early Sep was the second ever for the Pribilofs. A Red-flanked Bluetail was on St. Paul Island in mid-Sep. Gambell produced 3 Dusky Warblers in late Aug and the ABA Area's 2nd, 3rd, and 4th **Willow Warblers** in Aug and Sep. A Siberian Accentor visited Gambell's Boneyard in early Sep. An American Redstart at Gambell in early Sep was the 3rd for the Bering Sea region. No fewer than 3 Little Buntings visited Gambell during the period. A female-plumaged **Bullock's Oriole** at Gambell in mid-Sep was the first ever photographed in the state. A female-plumaged Purple Finch at Gambell in late Aug furnished the Bering Sea region's 2nd autumn record. A juvenile Oriental Greenfinch was on Adak in early Sep.

Pocket Parrots: The Latest in Bird Pod Technology

BY RONNIE BLACKWELL

You've probably seen them by now: birders standing beside the road holding iPods and speakers. The era of the mp3 birder is upon us. I'm not about to argue the ethics and etiquette of electronic bird calling. I just want to say that I thought of it first.

Instead of a tangle of electronics, my bird-caller is a Qito, a sleek five-inch package weighing about one ounce with built-in speaker and feathers. Qito is a Pacific Parrotlet, *Forpus coelestis*, and he is an authority on the *Peterson Field Guides Eastern/Central Bird Songs CD, 3rd Edition*.

Pacific Parrotlets are plentiful in the dry scrub forests of Ecuador and Peru. They are known as "the smallest Amazons" because of their assertive personalities. They live as long as thirty years, and make great companions.

Qito sports an array of greens, from olive to bright green, and has cobalt blue on his rump, his primaries, and stripes behind each eye. Yes, he talks, but only when he wants to, in a high-pitched, robotic voice.

Qito's great love is singing bird songs, a talent that he owes to my tin ear. I am unreliable at birding by ear. And I mean *really* unreliable. "What's that?"

"That's a Carolina Wren.... Again."

I'm also stubborn; I listen to Peterson's at least once a day. During one session, Qito was exploring my shoulder when a small, deep voice said, "Prothonotary Warbler," right into my ear—just before the narrator said it. Qito sat quiet during the bird's song and then

announced, "Black-and-white Warbler." Soon he was singing the songs, always right on pitch and in perfect unison with the CD. I started fantasizing about taking Qito birding. I pictured myself on Dauphin Island's Shell Mound, with Qito calling in a Blue-winged Warbler from my shirt pocket. And the Black Rail that's been evading me for twenty years couldn't resist Qito's perfect imitation.

But getting him to sing on cue seemed impossible. One day I said to Qito, "Yellow Warbler," and he sang, *Sweet-sweet-sweet-a-little-bit-sweet*. I was so excited I almost threw the bird into the air. I said, "Northern Parula," and Qito sang, *Whee whee whee whip-poor-will*. And I remembered that Swainson's Warbler follows Yellow Warbler on the CD. Undaunted I said, "Northern Parula," and the parrotlet said in perfect English, "Worm-eating Warbler," the bird that follows the Swainson's Warbler on the recording. The bird was playing with me, and my dreams of a feathered bird caller collapsed.

Qito still listens to bird songs with me and inserts his favorites into daily singing sessions. But he's also begun to sing counterpoint to the recorded songs, or sing a similar song on top of the one being played. I'm proud of this pocket jazz singer, but my bird-call ID skills are slipping even more. Maybe I need an iPod and some speakers, after all. Be sure to wave as you pass by.

Ronnie Blackwell is a birder and freelance writer who lives in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. You can find more of his work at his website, RonnieBlackwell.com.