

Sightings



“Sightings” appears monthly, alternating between *Winging It* and *Birding*, with the latest news, reports, and rumors from the ABA Area. Sightings are compiled from online discussion groups and RBAs, with valuable contributions from a growing network of informants continent-wide. Readers should note, however, that none of these records has yet been vetted by a records committee. All birders are urged to submit documentation of rare sightings to the appropriate state or provincial committees. For full analysis of these and other bird records, subscribe to *North American Birds*, the richly illustrated journal of ornithological record published by the ABA (www.aba.org/pubs/nab). (Italicized place names denote counties or parishes.)

COMPILED BY MICHAEL RETTER, WITH THANKS TO PAUL LEHMAN, JEN BRUMFIELD, AND RICK WRIGHT

MID-JUNE TO 8 JULY 2008

Perhaps not surprisingly, this breeding season was dominated by the news of species expanding their breeding ranges northward. It is, of course, impossible to say whether this is related to global warming yet, but the link is both probable and troubling. The massive invasion of Black-necked Stilts into the Midwest and East was easily the most impressive and widespread single-species phenomenon this period. Lucy's Warbler, Cassin's Sparrow, Mississippi Kite, Eye-ringed Flatbill, and Black Hawk-Eagle are just a few of the other species noted breeding well north of their normal ranges. Rarity highlights include a **Green Violet-ear** in Michigan, a “**Great White Egret**” in Virginia, **Tufted Flycatcher** and **Crescent-chested Warbler** in Arizona, and an **Oriental Turtle-Dove** in the Yukon.

SOUTHEAST: A **Bahama Mockingbird** and a **Yellow-green Vireo** were present on Key Largo, FL on 6/18. Thirty-four Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Homestead constituted new a high count for *Miami-Dade*, FL on 6/22. A *melanurus* Black-necked Stilt nested with a “regular” *mexicanus* individual in *Shelby*, TN. There was a female-type **Western Spindalis** at Fort Zachary Taylor SP in Key West, FL on 6/20.

MID-ATLANTIC: A “**Great White Egret**”, one of the black-billed Old World subspecies of Great Egret, has been present at Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*, VA since late May. Staying with the theme of Old World egrets, DE's Little Egret was present at Bombay Hook NWR the entire period. An adult White Ibis discovered on the 4th of July near Salisbury, MD was still present mid-month. eastern Kingbird was discovered in Milton, PA on 7/1. A Henslow's Sparrow was on territory in *Montgomery*, MD at least 6/15–30.

NORTHEAST: Usually, birders in New England are lucky to merely have a glimpse of a flyby Mississippi Kite, so the region's first nesting of the species in Newmarket, NH has attracted much attention. Echo-

ing the massive population explosion further west, a Black-necked Stilt was in Old Saybrook, CT 6/17–19. Single Sandwich Terns were photographed in Middletown, RI on 7/5, on a boat 300km E of Cape Race, NL on 6/27, and on Milford Point, CT on 7/9. At least one breeding-plumaged male Ruff was observed at Plum Island, MA in early July. Very rare in spring and less than annual overall, a Black-billed Cuckoo

was found in St. John's, NL on 6/19. A sub-adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was reported from Schoodic Point, ME on 6/14. Another Scissor-tail was photographed in East Granby, CT on 6/10. Even Golden-winged Warblers are rare in ME, so a male “Lawrence's” Warbler on territory in *York*, was quite exciting for local birders.

SOUTH-CENTRAL: A Brown Noddy was photographed at Padre Island National Seashore, TX on 6/18. A Glaucous Gull and a Pomarine Jaeger continued to summer on the Isles Derniers of LA's central coast and were joined by a Brown Booby on the 4th of July. A Mangrove Cuckoo was found in a South Padre Island, *Cameron*, TX backyard on 6/13. Black-whiskered Vireos were suspected of breeding on Grand Isle, LA on 7/6. Hikers at Big Bend NP, TX enjoyed a female **Flame-colored Tanager** in mid-June. Masked Ducks continue to be found well into Texas, with one photographed near Dallas in *Kaufman*, 6/14.

NORTH-CENTRAL: Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks made an unprecedented push into Illinois: 4 were in *Union*, 8 were in *Monroe*, and 8 more were in *DeWitt*. Another was present through the period at Goose Pond in *Greene*, IN where it was joined by a White Ibis 7/8. At least three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were photographed in *St. Louis*, MO on 6/16. Two Eurasian Wigeon were noted in Ontario: one on 6/28 at Holiday Beach and one in Ottawa 6/25–7/2. A Wood Stork was reported on 6/25 in *Whiteside*, IL. Black Vultures were in Ontario: one at Sarnia on 6/15 and another at Tobermory on 6/22. A pair of Mississippi Kites was seen in *Morgan*, OH on 6/21, while a single bird was in *Logan*, OH 6/21–24. There was still at least one **Black Rail** in *Pickaway*, OH on



Mississippi Kite, New Market, New Hampshire, 25 June '08. © Mark Szantyr

6/23. Black-necked Stilts orchestrated an impressive takeover of the region, with double-digit flocks and breeding pairs found well into northern Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. Outliers included a probable nesting pair in *Monroe*, MI and two nesting pairs in *Seneca*, OH. A molting male Ruff was discovered near Pierre, SD on 7/5. There were single Black-headed Gulls in Ontario at Hillman Marsh on 6/10 and Pelee Island on 6/25. A Least Tern discovered on 7/4 in *Wayne*, OH probably came from the bumper crop of birds this season in Illinois and Indiana. A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was found in Superior, WI on 6/16. Missouri's first **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, an adult male, was banded and photographed during its 6/13–16 stay in *St. Francois*. A Chuck-will's-widow is spending its third consecutive summer in *Berrien*, MI. Ohio's third confirmed Burrowing Owl occurred in mid-June in *Darke*. Just a month after hosting a Northern Wheatear, *Alger*, MI was visited by a **Green Violet-ear** in early July. A **Kirtland's Warbler** was discovered on territory in *Bayfield*, WI on 7/2; the first recent confirmed nesting of the species in WI occurred in *Adams* last summer. A male **MacGillivray's Warbler** was in *DuPage*, IL as we went to press. Seemingly reclaiming their former range, two male **Swainson's Warblers** were observed on territory in *Alexander*, IL 7/6–7. Multiple Cassin's Sparrows were on territory in both *Pennington* and *Fall River*, SD.

SOUTHWEST: As often happens, ABA's annual convention turned up some goodies. Field trips radiating from Snowbird, UT found a Brant in *Box Elder*, a White Ibis in *Utah*, and a Hooded Oriole in *Salt Lake*. Three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were photographed in *Maricopa*, AZ 6/11. A Least Bittern was reported in *Weld*, CO on 6/26. *Larimer*, CO hosted a Black Vulture 6/4–7. White-tailed Kites were nesting in *Lincoln*, a second ever for NM. A Western Gull undergoing definitive pre-basic molt was found in *Box Elder*, UT 7/9; it would be a 3rd state record. At least one Buff-collared Nightjar continued to keep a territory at Oro Blanco Mine in *Santa Cruz*, AZ. Surprisingly, UT's first "**Mexican**" **Whip-poor-will** was first detected in the far North of the state (*Cache*) on 6/19. Both Berylline and White-eared Hummingbirds staged



Green Violet-ear approaching the Hust's feeder in Michigan's UP, 5 July '08. © Kirk Zufelt

discovered building a nest. Madera Canyon, AZ's male Flame-colored Tanager continued, while a Flame-colored × Western Tanager hybrid returned to the Chiricahuas (AZ) for at least his sixth summer. *Boulder*, CO's famous Scarlet Tanager returned for an additional summer. Another male Scarlet Tanager was photographed in *Pinal*, AZ on 6/7. A female **Yellow Grosbeak** was seen 6/13 in *Cochise*, AZ while a male visited a Portal yard 7/3–6. A Baltimore Oriole was presumably on territory for second half of June at Tubac, *Santa Cruz*, AZ.

WEST COAST and NORTHWEST: A Buff-breasted Sandpiper (OR's second-ever adult and earliest overall for the species) was near Bandon on 6/27. Astonishingly, CA's 3rd **Bridled Tern** was discovered at the Salton Sea on 6/8. A turtle-dove photographed in Whitehorse, YT on 6/30 has since been identified as an **Oriental Turtle-Dove**. OR's 3rd Red-headed Woodpecker was at Malheur NWR on 7/6. Single White-eyed Vireos were in *Mono* and *Inyo*, CA in mid-June. An adult Least Tern was a one-day wonder at Tualatin NWR, OR on 6/25. Juneau, AK hosted a Cassin's Vireo on 6/14 and a Lazuli Bunting on 6/21. No doubt related to their presence in nearby SD, Cassin's Sparrows were discovered in *Weston* and *Goshen*, WY. A Clay-colored Sparrow was on territory in *Twin Falls*, ID 6/14–16.

MEXICO: A Willet at Laguna Fierro on 5/22 May appears to have been a first record for Chihuahua. A pair of Mississippi Kites, along the Río Casas Grandes in Chihuahua on 5/23, were suspected of nesting. Always a pleasant find, Black Hawk-Eagles appear to have expanded northward along the Pacific slope and established themselves in Nayarit, with territorial individuals being reported around and just south of San Blas. An Eye-ringed Flatbill was observed in early July near Tlanchinol, Hidalgo; flatbills have been reported from here in recent years, establishing this cloud-forest location as a northern outpost for yet another species. "Western" Flycatchers were found in surprisingly high numbers in lowland riparian woodlands in N Chihuahua in late May.



"Great White Egret", possible black-billed Old World subspecies of Great Egret, Chincoteague NWR, VA, 26 June '08. © Susan Hengeveld