

# 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](http://www.aba.org/pubs/nab)). (Italicized place names denote counties or parishes.)

COMPILED BY MICHAEL RETTER

## MID-AUGUST TO 12 SEPTEMBER 2008

Three potential firsts for the ABA Area come from AK, AZ, and NY: a probable **Solitary Snipe** photographed on St. Paul Is., a well-studied **Sinaloa Wren** near the Patagonia Rest Stop, and a “**Yellow Wagtail**” photographed in Brooklyn. A **Variiegated Flycatcher** in WA was quite unexpected. Whether on CNN or in *Winging It*, tropical cyclones are in the news. Fay, Gustav, and Hanna displaced many interesting species, including OK’s 1st Cory’s Shearwater and CO’s 1st Sooty Tern. The movement of White-winged Crossbills into the Northeast continues. A smattering of Swallow-tailed Kites appeared in the Midwest. Predictably, Orange-crowned Warblers are being reported in the East and Midwest, well ahead of schedule. While a handful of these undocumented observations may be valid, most are undoubtedly misidentified Tennessee and Yellow Warblers, so be vigilant and thorough in your documentation!



Swallow-tailed Kite, Jackson County, IL,  
24 Aug 08. © Travis Mahan

**Southeast:** Potentially KY’s 3rd, a Mottled Duck was photographed over its 8/4–5 stay in *Fulton*. A Tricolored Heron was observed in *Lyon*, KY 8/30–31. A Swallow-tailed Kite observed in *Carlisle*, KY on 9/5 was the same individual the frequented the MO side of the Mississippi. A female Ruff was photographed 8/8–9 in *Lake*, TN. A Red-necked Phalarope was in *Fulton*, KY on 8/31. **Tropical Storm Fay** brought pelagic species to inland and northern FL; these include Audubon’s, Greater, and Sooty Shearwaters, Bridled and Sooty Terns, Brown Noddy, Masked Booby, and Red Phalarope. **Hurricane Gustav** pushed a small number of American Flamingos onto the Gulf Coast in FL and MS.

**Mid-Atlantic:** On 8/31, a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was banded in *Crawford*, PA. Two White-faced and four Leach’s Storm-Petrels were noted on a pelagic in MD and DE waters on 8/22. A Red-necked Stint was present in Cape May, NJ on 8/30. A **Terek Sandpiper** was photographed at Craney Is., Portsmouth, VA on 8/9. A Black-headed Gull and a probable hybrid of that species and Ring-billed were present in *Prince George’s*, MD 8/11. A Franklin’s Gull summered on Hart-Miller Island, *Baltimore*, MD. A Western Kingbird was noted in *Cecil*, MD on 8/24. A bird of the “Yellow Wagtail” complex photographed 9/7 in *Kings*, NY is thus far of unknown species; if from Europe, it would be a new species for the ABA Area, Yellow Wagtail. (This is the species from which Eastern Yellow Wagtail was split.) Lark Sparrows were found in *Nassau*, NY on 8/22; *Queens*, NY on 9/7; and *Cape May*, NJ 8/26. A Western Tanager was reported from *Bergen*, NJ on



Sooty Tern, Lake Meredith, Crowley  
County, CO, 12 Sep 08. © Glenn Walbek

8/26. MD’s 2nd Western Meadowlark was filmed in *Dorchester* on 8/31. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was in *Worcester*, MD on 8/29. Birds arriving with then-Tropical Storm Hanna 9/6–7 included Sooty Tern (DC, DE, MD, NY, NJ, VA, NC), Bridled Tern (MD, NY, NJ, NC), Magnificent Frigatebird (NY, VA, NJ), and Long-tailed Jaeger (MD, VA, PA). Red and Red-necked Phalaropes and Parasitic Jaegers were also observed.

**Northeast:** An American White Pelican was found in *York*, ME on 9/1. A pond in Norwalk, *Farfield*, CT hosted a young White Ibis 8/13. An immature Yellow-nosed Albatross was photographed 8/25 off of Seal/Matinicus Is., ME. A Sandwich Tern was spotted at Bergeronnes, QC on 8/22. CT’s first **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was a one-day-wonder on 8/13 in *Oakdale*, *New London*. Another **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was banded on Cape Cod, in *Barnstable*, MA on 8/24. Yamaska, QC hosted a Northern Wheatear on 9/1; another was at Plum Point, NL on 9/5. Good numbers of White-winged Crossbills continue to be seen in ME, especially in *Aroostook* and the Downeast and Mid-Coast regions; however, flock sizes have been decreasing over the past month. Two

small flocks of White-winged Crossbills in *Ashford*, *Windham*, CT on 9/8 were almost certainly tied to the same phenomenon.

**South-Central:** **Hurricane Gustav** brought a large number of seabirds inland into the region 9/1–7. Highlights include Sooty Tern (19 in AR, 10 in OK, 5 in LA, 1 in CO), Magnificent Frigatebird (2 in LA, 4 in AR, 6 in OK, 1 in TX), Royal Tern (2 in OK, 3 in AR), Bridled Tern (singles in OK, LA, OK; 2 in TX), Black Skimmer (3 in LA, 2 in AR), and OK’s 1st **Cory’s Shearwater** at *McCurtain’s* Red Slough WMA. A Reddish Egret was discovered at *Quivira* NWR, KS on 8/21. *Willacy*, TX was home to a well-photographed **Jabiru** in mid-late Aug. A Ruff was noted in *Galveston*, TX on 8/31. *Alfalfa*, OK hosted an adult Red Phalarope on 8/22. A juvenile Sabine’s Gull was photographed on *Rita Blanca* Lake in *Hartley*, TX on 9/1. There was a Fork-tailed Flycatcher near TX’s *Lake Balmorhea* 8/28–29. A juvenile Rose-throated Becard was observed at *Frontera* Audubon in *Weslaco*, *Hidalgo*, TX on 8/13. A Cave Swallow was in *Hempstead/Little River*, AR on 9/2. In TX, *Guadalupe* Mountains NP was graced by an Olive Warbler on 8/10.

**North-Central:** A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was reported from *Putnam*, IL on 8/19. A **Hurricane Gustav**-related Magnificent Frigatebird was reported from *Vermilion*, IL on 9/4. American White Pelicans continue to increase in number and expand to the east; 3 birds were noted in eastern ON, and flocks of 1000s were noted in central IL. A Tricolored Heron was in *Erie*, OH 8/24–9/2. A juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was in *Grimbsy*, ON on 8/25. An immature White Ibis was near East

Cape Girardeau, *Alexander*, IL on 9/6. Only IL's 2nd record, a flock of 4 Roseate Spoonbills was discovered in *Union* on 9/5. A pair of juvenile Wood Storks was discovered in *Coshocton*, OH on 8/25, only to be joined by a 3rd on 8/27; they remained through 9/10. A pair of Swallow-tailed Kites was photographed in *Jackson*, IL 8/23–24. Additional singletons were noted in *Mississippi*, MO on 9/5; *Van Buren*, OH on 8/21; and *Wantonwon*, MN 8/22–28. An early Black-legged Kittiwake was in Ottawa, ON 8/5–13. A Ruff was present 8/19–21 at Point Mouillee State Game Area, *Monroe*, MI. A still-colorful Curlew Sandpiper was discovered in *DuPage*, IL 8/23. *Chippewa*, MI's famous Whitefish Point is already turning up vagrants: a Western Kingbird was found there on 8/26. A Cave Swallow appeared at Saylorville Lake, *Polk*, IA on 9/4. A feeder in Copper Harbor, *Keweenaw*, MN was visited by an early Harris's Sparrow on 9/3. Now accidental away from the Mississippi River in that state, a Bewick's Wren appeared in a *McLean*, IL backyard on 8/24. A male Bullock's Oriole began attending a feeder in *Story*, IA on 9/8. *Kimball*, NE held a flock of 6 Lesser Goldfinches on 8/25.



Variegated Flycatcher, Windust Park, Franklin County, WA, 8 Sep 08. © Steve Mlodinow

**Southwest:** A Brant of unknown subspecies was reported from Farmington Bay WMA, *Davis*, UT on 8/31. An immature Purple Gallinule was at Tucson, AZ's Sweetwater Wetlands 8/27–9/5. NM's 1st **Black-tailed Gull**, an adult, was discovered at Brantley Lake, *Eddy* on 8/19. A **Sooty Tern**, CO's 1st, was found on 9/12 in *Otero*, and later relocated in *Crowley*. Discovered 8/25, a **Sinaloa Wren** has been photographed and recorded at AZ's Patagonia Sonoita Creek Preserve; this bird will provide a long-awaited first record for the ABA Area if accepted. In a fine example of the phenomenon named for the nearby rest stop/picnic table, birders looking for the wren found a Yellow-throated Vireo on 8/25. A Red-faced Warbler in AZ along the Grand Canyon's S Rim on 8/15 was said to be only the 3rd



Sinaloa Wren, Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, AZ, 29 Aug 08. © Chris Benesh

record there in a quarter century. Potentially a first for Nevada, a **Baird's Sparrow** was photographed on 9/6 in Tonopah, Nye.

**West Coast and Northwest:** A Blue-footed Booby was seen in *San Diego*, CA waters on 8/23. A Red-tailed Tropicbird was noted 155 nautical mi. WSW of Point Conception, CA on 8/17. A Monterey Bay pelagic turned up a Wedge-tailed Shearwater on 8/23. A Little Blue Heron was found on 9/1 in Portland, OR. A Terek Sandpiper was photographed on St. Paul Is., AK on 8/22. A Gray-tailed Tattler photographed 8/25 on SE Farallon Is., CA would be a second state record. *San Diego*, CA's Red-necked Stint continued through 8/27. Photos of what is probably a **Solitary Snipe** were taken on St. Paul Is., AK on 9/10. An adult Little Gull in basic plumage was observed at Tachick Lake in north-central BC on 9/1. A "Mexican" Whip-poor-will was at Willow Creek, *Humboldt*, CA 8/15. OR's 2nd Ruby-throated Hummingbird was in Keno, *Klamath* on 9/1. A far-flung **Variegated Flycatcher** was in *Franklin*, WA on 9/6–7; needless to say, it would be WA's first. WA's 2nd Bell's Vireo was found at Washtucna, *Adams* on 9/6. An Eastern Yellow Wagtail, OR's 4th, was at Seaside, *Clatsop* on 8/26. Another in *Santa Barbara*, CA 9/1–2 was a first county record. An adult male Prothonotary Warbler caught at the Vaseaux Lake Bird Observatory, South Okanagan, BC on 8/28 would be a 6th provincial record. A Lesser Goldfinch first discovered 6/11 persisted near Abbotsford, BC. Noteworthy vagrants found at Gambell, AK since 8/26 included Willow Warbler, Brown Shrike, Little Bunting, "Siberian" Stonechat, and Willow Flycatcher.

**Mexico:** A pair of Great Curassows and an adult **Agami Heron** (a 2nd state record) were found near Ciudad Victoria in Peregrina Canyon, Tamaulipas on 7/28. A White-tailed Hawk was found 139km N of Mazatlán, Sinaloa on 8/23.

## El Salvador: Support the 2008 SalvaNATURA Bird-A-Thon!

JESSE FAGAN, 2008 SALVANATURA BIRD-A-THON COORDINATOR

SalvaNATURA, the BirdLife affiliate in El Salvador, is the largest and most active non-profit NGO in that country working on bird science and conservation. The science program, directed by ornithologist Oliver Komar, runs five full-time bird monitoring stations in western El Salvador. They are located within a variety of habitats including cloud-forest (Montecristo and Los Volcanes National Parks), pine-oak (Montecristo N.P.), semi deciduous dry forest (El Imposible N.P.), and a coffee *finca* (Nuevos Horizontes). The award-winning monitoring program has been active since 2003, banding 12,883 individual birds of 197 species in over 81,000 net-hours! In addition, there have been over 3,500 recaptures helping us to further understand migration, health, and site-fidelity of Neotropical migrants/winter-visitors and resident birds in El Salvador. Lastly, these mist-nets have recorded five species new for the country including White-eyed Vireo in March 2008. Much of the program's funding comes from supporters of the annual SalvaNATURA bird-a-thon.

This year's 6th annual bird-a-thon will take place on October 25th and 26th, 2008. Teams will spread out over the entire country to tally as many bird species as possible. These teams will be mainly made up of Salvadoran biologists, but anyone is encouraged to participate (in past years we have had observers from Germany and the United States). Last year, nine teams (16 observers) tallied 262 species with rain hampering our chances at the record of 296 set in 2004. Regardless, the event is always great fun and the birdwatching and cause highly rewarding. We greatly need your support as one hundred percent of all donated funds are used to support the banding operations, which include mist-net purchases and food for the biologists and volunteers who spend 15 days a month at the monitoring sites.

Bird science, bird conservation, and birdwatching—make a difference by being a part of this important event. Please visit the blog site, <http://birdathonES.blogspot.com/>, for more information on how to make a donation, participate in the bird-a-thon, and to receive regular updates on the teams and results. Jesse can be contacted at [heliomaster76@yahoo.com](mailto:heliomaster76@yahoo.com).