

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/nab). (Italicized place names denote counties or parishes.)

COMPILED BY MICHAEL RETTER WITH THANKS TO PAUL LEHMAN

MID-OCTOBER TO EARLY NOVEMBER 2008

Summary: Widespread phenomena highlighted the period. Snowy Owls seem poised to put on a show this winter; reports are already coming in from as far south as IL, OH, and MD. White-winged Crossbills, Snow Buntings, Northern Shrikes, and Pine Siskins showed widespread movements, with the last appearing as far south as northeast Mexico and south Texas. Barnacle Goose sightings have started coming in from the East and the Midwest. West winds associated with strong low pressure systems brought flights of Cave Swallows and Franklin's Gulls into the East and Midwest in early-mid-Nov. Large numbers of Red-throated Pipits were found in California and Baja California. A **White Wagtail** in FL and a **Jack Snipe** in OR were among the rarity highlights.



Anna's Hummingbird, Rapid City, SD, 24 Oct. © Bob and Cathy Druckrey

Southeast: An imm. Great Cormorant was found on Dauphin Is., AL 10/26. An impressive 182 Franklin's Gulls were noted 11/8 at Wheeler NWR, AL. An adult California Gull in *Marshall* provided AL with its 7th record 10/25. An imm. male Calliope Hummingbird, TN's 6th, first appeared at a Johnson City feeder in late Oct. A remarkable 8 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in *Clay*, AL 10/30–11/6. A **Dusky Flycatcher**, AL's 2nd, was banded at Ft. Morgan 10/14. A Tropical Kingbird was in *Miami-Dade*, FL 11/2. A **White Wagtail** was photographed at the Marathon Airport in the FL Keys 10/28. An “Audubon's Warbler” was found in Knoxville, TN 10/27. An imm. Bronzed Cowbird was found at Ft. Morgan, AL 11/9.

Mid-Atlantic: Barnacle Geese were reported from Long Island, NY and *Gloucester*, VA. Claytor Lake SP in *Pulaski*, VA hosted a **Brown Booby** 10/4–28 and a “Great White Heron” 10/11; the former record, at an inland Appalachian lake, is unprecedented for the genus. Calliope Hummingbirds were observed in both *Calvert* and *Carroll*, MD in early Oct. A **Northern Wheatear** appeared in *Lewis*, NY 10/15. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was reported from *Anne Arundel*, MD 10/13. An “Audubon's Warbler” was found in *Worcester*, MD 11/9. A **Brewer's Sparrow** was photographed at Prime Hook NWR, *Sussex*, DE 11/9. A Lark Bunting was in *Rock-*

ingham, NH 10/11. An adult **Harris's Sparrow** was at Brandywine Creek SP, *New Castle*, DE 10/11–26. A female-plumaged Painted Bunting was seen in *Cape May*, NJ 10/26.

Northeast: Barnacle Geese were present in RI, CT, and ME. A juv. Upland Sandpiper was at Cape Race, NL 11/4. A **Black-tailed Gull** was discovered in Provincetown, MA 11/3. Two Yellow-legged Gulls were found in St. John's; while now annual in NL, the species remains incredibly rare elsewhere in North America. QC's 1st **Green Violetear** was photographed in a Saint-Hyacinthe backyard 10/11. Cape Cod, MA's **Broad-billed Hummingbird** persisted. A **Calliope Hummingbird** appeared in *Hancock*, ME 10/23. Cave Swallows were noted right on schedule in QC, CT, and ME. A **Northern Wheatear** was found at Nicolet, QC 11/14. A Varied Thrush was discovered in Essex, MA. A female Summer Tanager provided NL with one of only a handful of records 10/19–20. NI's 2nd **Black-headed Grosbeak**, an imm. male, was first seen in St. John's 11/4. White-winged Crossbills continue to be seen from ME into upstate NY.

South-Central: A **Black-headed Gull**, potentially LA's 1st, was reported from Shreveport, *Caddo* 10/30. A Mew Gull found in KS at Perry Lake, *Jefferson* 11/5–7 was relocated at Clinton Lake, *Douglas* 11/8. A Great Kiskadee was in *Cameron*, LA 11/4–8. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher appeared at Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary, *Cameron*, TX 11/5. An imm. male Rose-throated Becard was at Estero Llano Grande SP, *Hidalgo*, TX 11/6. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was observed 10/23–25 in *Tarrant*, TX. A Chestnut-collared Longspur was photographed at Millwood Lake, AR 10/19–20. Small numbers of Pine Siskins appeared in TX's Lower Rio Grande Valley in early-mid-Nov.



Iceland “Kumlien's” Gull, Logan, Utah, 5 Nov. © Jason Pietrzak

North-Central: At least 15 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were in *Mason*, IL 11/9; another was observed in *Greene*, IN 10/23. A **Barnacle Goose** arrived with a small group of “Richardson's” Cackling Geese in *Paulding*, OH 11/1; it's worth noting that “Richardson's Geese” have been documented nesting in Greenland. Single “Atlantic” Brant showed up in *Wood*, OH and *Cook*, IL. A **Manx Shearwater** was found in Hamilton, ON 11/1. While numbers of Franklin's Gulls predictably ap-

pear on the back side of strong autumn low pressure systems, the count of **598** at Miller Beach, *Lake*, IN 11/8 was unprecedented; 22 appeared at Point Pelee, ON the same day. A **Black-headed Gull** was found in *Allegan*, MI 10/20 and relocated in *Muskegon* 10/25. A California Gull was reported from *Lake*, IL 11/8. A **Long-billed Murrelet** was photographed in Duluth, MN 11/4. A **Green Violetear** was present in *Kent*, MI 10/18–28. SD's first **Anna's Hummingbird** attended a feeder in Rapid City, *Pennington* 8/19–10/29. Numbers of hungry Snowy Owls are already appearing in IN, IL, MI, and OH. Astonished birders witnessed a Burrowing Owl being eaten by a Cooper's Hawk 10/29 at Montrose Point, Chicago, IL; the same location hosted a Townsend's Solitaire the next day. As is too often the case, a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** at Point Pelee, ON 10/22 was a one-day-wonder. Single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were in *Brookings*, SD 10/15–20 and at Blackstrap Reservoir, SK 11/2. Multiple Cave Swallows appeared in ON, IN, and IL. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was discovered 10/16 in *Cass*, MN, providing a 5th state record. Only the 2nd SD record in 10 years, a McCown's Longspur was found in *Perkins* 10/14.

Southwest: A first cycle "**Kumlien's Gull**", potentially UT's 1st, was photographed in *Cache* 11/4. The *Pinal*, AZ **Northern Jacana** returned for at least a 2nd winter 11/8. An adult male **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** continued in *Santa Cruz*, AZ through 10/16. A Least Flycatcher was in *Yuma*, AZ 11/3–11. The ABA Area's first **Sinaloa Wren** continued in *Santa Cruz*, AZ through 11/2. A **Carolina Wren** was found singing 11/3–5 in *Doña Ana*, NM. A Wood Thrush was in *Pima*, AZ 11/4. A Rufous-backed Robin appeared in *Yuma*, AZ 10/30. Eastern warblers in AZ included widespread Tennessees, a Prairie Warbler in *Apache* 11/2, a Yellow-throated in *Pinal* 11/8–11, and a Worm-eating in *Maricopa*, 11/9. A Five-striped Sparrow was observed 11/3 in *Santa Cruz*, AZ away from known sites.

West Coast and Northwest: "Bewick's Swans" appeared in OR and WA. Two Red-billed Tropicbirds were found offshore in *Ventura*, CA waters 11/2. A **Brown Booby** was found dead on a beach in *Coos*, OR 10/26, providing the state with its 2nd record. A Streaked Shearwater was found in CA's Monterey Bay 10/12. An imm. gray morph Gyrfalcon was banded at Lucky Peak, *Ada*, ID on the record early date of 10/11. A **Black Vulture** was first seen in Kincolith, BC near the AK border 10/10; it is the province's 5th record. OR's 3rd **Jack Snipe** was seen well in *Clatsop* 10/18. ID's 1st **Heermann's Gull**, a 3rd cycle bird, was seen 11/7 on the Snake River, *Power*. A Broad-billed Hummingbird was discovered 10/31 in *San Luis Obispo*, CA. The occurrence of two **Anna's Hummingbirds** in MT coincided with that of the SD bird. *Orange*, CA hosted a Black-billed Cuckoo 10/14. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was



White Wagtail, Marathon Airport, Monroe County, FL, 28 Oct. © Rachel Smith

photographed on Vancouver Is., BC 10/25. Northern Hawk-Owls continue to put in a good showing in WA. A Tropical Kingbird was discovered in Delta, mainland BC 10/31. Yellow-green Vireos were discovered in *Monterey* and *Santa Barbara*, CA. A Sedge Wren was reported from *Benton*, OR 11/4. No fewer than 33 Red-throated Pipits were reported across CA, including an inland *Inyo* record; three Sprague's Pipits were also noted in CA. A Brown Thrasher was discovered 11/7 at *American Falls*, *Power*, ID. A **Dusky Warbler** was found in *Contra Costa*, CA 10/9; another was in *Santa Cruz*, CA a week later. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found in *Medicine Hat*, AB 11/7. A Grasshopper Sparrow visited a feeder in *Victoria*, BC 11/6–8. *Orange*, CA's 2nd American Tree Sparrow appeared 10/26. A **Smith's Longspur** was found in *Coos*, OR 10/30, providing the state with its 3rd record. OR's 1st **Pyrrhuloxia** delighted birders in *Linn* 11/12. A Dickcissel stopped by *Grays Harbor*, WA 10/31. A Hepatic Tanager returned for its 3rd winter in *San Diego*, CA.

Mexico: A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was banded in Oaxaca City, providing the dry interior valley with its 1st record. Villa Jesús María, Baja California (BC) was hosting a large flock of **Red-throated Pipits**, with up to 15–20 birds being reported; a Lapland Longspur and a **Sprague's Pipit** were there 10/22; the **Northern Wheatear** persisted through at least 10/24. An "Eastern" American Robin was found at *Cataviña*, BC 10/25. A **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was photographed at *Punta San Carlos*, BC 10/14. **Bay-breasted Warblers** were found in Baja California Sur (BCS) at *Bahía Asunción* 10/21 and *Bahía Tortugas* 10/22; they represent the state's only records. Birders continue to fail to locate both the endemic *cozumelae* race of Rose-throated Tanager and Cozumel Thrasher on Cozumel Is. since the devastating hurricanes of the past few years.



Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Point Pelee, ON, 22 Oct. © Stephen T. Pike

A Canada Warbler was at *Santa Teresita*, BCS 10/22. A "**Red-backed**" **Junco** (*caniceps*), the taxon that breeds in the south-central Rockies, was found at *Bahía Asunción*, BCS 10/27. Pine Siskins were noted in lowland and Mexican plateau regions of Tamaulipas.

ABA Birdfinding Guide to the Rio Grande Valley

Now available from ABA Sales, a revision of the popular ABA Birdfinding Guide to the Rio Grande Valley by Mark W. Lockwood, William B. McKinney, James N. Paton, and Barry R. Zimmer. Paul Lehman is the copy editor, with maps and layout by Virginia Maynard. An excerpt to four new birding sites in the McAllen area, including the mandatory sewage treatment pond, will be featured in the April issue of *Winging It*. Price is \$25.95 and member price is \$20.76.