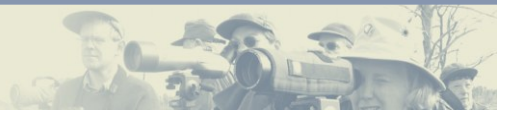


# Sightings



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

COMPILED BY NICHOLAS BLOCK WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO PAUL LEHMAN

## MID-FEBRUARY TO EARLY MARCH 2009

**Southeast:** On 2/14, a Eurasian Wigeon in *Hendry*, FL joined the state's continuing drake in *Brevard*. Two drake Cinnamon Teal were reported in *McIntosh*, GA on 2/24. The **Masked Duck** continued through mid-Feb in *Columbia*, FL. A Least Grebe continued in *Palm Beach*, FL. Quite a surprise was an adult **Red-billed Tropicbird** on a seaside pond in *Dare*, NC on 3/10. SC hosted 2 Snowy Plovers, with individuals in *Charleston* and *Georgetown*. A female Ruff was in *Colleton*, SC in late Feb. Rare gulls abounded in *Volusia*, FL with California, Thayer's, Iceland, and Glaucous Gulls reported, along with first-cycle individuals showing characteristics of “**Vega**” and “**European**” **Herring Gulls**. Inland rare gulls were highlighted by KY's Iceland and Great Black-backed Gulls in *Marshall* and *Livingston*, respectively. A Snowy Owl lingered through at least 2/15 in *Maury*, TN. The *Polk*, FL Allen's Hummingbird continued through late Feb. The Say's Phoebe in *Lake*, FL continued through at least 2/22. A La Sagra's Flycatcher was reported from *Monroe*, FL on 2/22. Tropical Kingbirds were in *Miami-Dade*, FL and *Georgetown*, SC. The 4th state record of Northern Shrike was enjoyed by several observers in *Jefferson*, KY. A female Black-throated Gray Warbler was in *Miami-Dade*, FL on 3/7. A probable Bananaquit was reported from *Palm Beach*, FL on 2/25. Just before going to press, a male **Western Spindalis** appeared in *Broward*, FL on 3/12. A male Spotted Towhee was reported in *Jasper*, SC 2/24–27. The *Alachua*, FL Harris's Sparrow continued through at least 2/14. Last, but certainly not least, a male black-backed **Lesser Goldfinch** was found coming to feeders in *Carteret*, NC in early Mar. This would represent a first state record, if accepted.

**Mid-Atlantic:** The *Sussex*, DE Black-bellied Whistling-Duck continued through 2/26. A “Black” Brant was in *Mid-lex*, NJ on 3/1. Barnacle Geese continued through late Feb in *Hunterdon* and *Union*, NJ. A drake Barrow's Golden-eye continued through 3/3 in *Calvert*, MD, as did 2 hens of that species in *Monmouth*, NJ. *Monmouth*, NJ also hosted a Pacific Loon for most of Feb. Barely annual in WV, 5 Red-necked Grebes were reported there during the period. Eared Grebes were in *Monmouth* and *Hunterdon*, NJ through early Mar. Representing the first well-documented state record, a **Western Grebe**



Adult Red-billed Tropicbird at seaside pond in Dare County, North Carolina, 10 March '09. © Brian Pattenon

was in *Cumberland*, PA 2/14–21. Another Western Grebe was off *Monmouth*, NJ through 2/26 Feb. The *Wicomico*, MD Thayer's Gull continued through 3/7. An Atlantic Puffin was in *Ocean*, NJ on 2/14. Snowy Owls continued to increase in the region, with new arrivals in Baltimore and *Harford*, MD to go along with the continuing birds in *Talbot*, MD and *Cape May*, NJ. The *Monmouth*, NJ Bohemian Waxwing continued through 2/28. Joining the continuing *Lehigh*, PA bird, an “**Audubon's**” **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was in *St. Mary's*, MD on 3/2. The **Green-tailed Towhee** in *Camden*, NJ continued through at least 2/20. A Clay-colored Sparrow was in *Sussex*, DE on 2/28, while the Le Conte's Sparrow continued in *Delaware*, PA through 2/28. Very rare in winter, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a feeder

in *Prince George's*, MD on 2/9. An adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird was in *Salem*, NJ on 2/14. Brewer's Blackbirds were found in *Worcester*, MD and *Kent*, DE. Six Pine Grosbeaks were in *Lebanon*, PA on 2/22. White-winged Crossbills continue in impressive numbers across the region, although they have not expanded into new areas much since early Feb. A relatively high number these days, 36 Evening Grosbeaks were seen in *New Castle*, DE on 3/2.

**Northeast:** One of the period's top highlights, a wild-type **Graylag Goose** of the nominate subspecies was found on 2/23 in *New Haven*, CT and has been enjoyed and documented by many eager birders. This would represent the ABA Area's second record and a first for the U.S., if accepted. It is present at a well-known goose migration stop with Canada Geese banded in Greenland. More rare geese were in CT, in the form of 5 “Greenland” Greater White-fronted Geese in *Windham*.



Graylag Goose, first U.S. record if accepted, New Haven County, CT, 25 Feb. '09. © Mark Szantyr

Newfoundland's Yellow-legged Gull continued through 3/7 in *St. John's*. CT's second record of Slaty-backed Gull continued through 2/13 in *Hartford* before moving to *Franklin*, MA for 2/19–24. These same two counties hosted first-cycle Thayer's Gulls as well. Northern Hawk-Owls continued in *York* and *Lincoln*, ME. The province's fifth Red-bellied Woodpecker continued at feeders in *Bishop's Falls*, NL. Varied Thrushes continued in good numbers across the region, with individuals in *Launching*, PEI; *Hants*, NS; *York*, ME; and *Straf-ford*, NH. The Black-headed Grosbeak continued in *Knox*, ME through early Feb. White-winged Crossbills continued throughout the region,

although numbers began to thin during the period.

**South-Central:** Two well-photographed first-cycle swans in *Erath*, TX 2/14–20 were the subject of informative identification discussion, with most Texas birders settling on the Trumpeter side of the fence. The *Cameron*, TX Purple Sandpiper continued through the period, and another was in *Nueces*, TX on 2/22. A **Curlew Sandpiper** in *Plaquemines*, LA on 2/15 would represent one of very few wintering records for the U.S. The *Tom Green*, TX Ruddy Ground-Dove continued through mid-Feb. A Hermit Warbler was in *Cameron*, TX on 20 Feb. A male **Scarlet Tanager** joined a Western Tanager at a feeder in New Orleans, LA in early Mar. The Scarlet Tanager represents the second well-documented North American late winter record, following this winter's San Diego, CA bird. An apparent first record for the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a "Red" Fox Sparrow was in *Hidalgo*, TX starting on 2/19. At least 6 Blue Buntings continued in *Hidalgo* and *Cameron*, TX. Unusual in winter, a Varied Bunting was in *Starr*, TX in mid-Feb. Last, but certainly not least, a male **Black-headed Siskin** was photographed on 3/4 on South Padre Island, TX. Although this species can be a popular cage bird, this individual lacked any apparent wear that accompanies cage life. It would represent a first record for the ABA Area, if accepted.

**North-Central:** A female Barrow's Goldeneye traveled between *Lake* and *Cook*, IL during late Feb, while a drake was in *Cook* on 3/8. A Western Grebe was in Toronto, ON on 2/17. A first winter record for the state, a Brown Pelican was found in *Camden*, MO on 2/18 and continued into Mar. A first-cycle California Gull was in *Cuyahoga*, OH in early Feb. An inland Great Black-backed Gull was in *McLean*, IL on 2/13. A bird showing characteristics of a first-cycle Slaty-backed Gull was found on 2/16 in *Clinton*, IL. On 2/18, a Ferruginous Hawk was found in *Cooper*, MO. A Pileated Woodpecker was reported in *Ward*, ND on 2/25. An immature Cape May Warbler was reported at a feeder in *Champaign*, IL on 2/21. Spotted Towhees continued in ON, IL, and IN. The Golden-crowned Sparrow continued in a *St. Louis*, MN backyard. A Pine Grosbeak was reported in *Boone*, IL on 2/14. White-winged Crossbills continued at several locations within the region, as did Hoary Redpolls.

**Interior West:** A Tundra Swan was in *Apache*, AZ on 2/20, while 4 lingered in *Cochise* through at least 3/3. A Whooper Swan continued in *Gooding*, ID through at least 2/21. The "Common" Green-winged Teal was seen again in *Maricopa*, AZ on 2/22. A **Red-throated Loon** was reported on the Colorado River in AZ on 2/26. NV's third Lesser Black-backed Gull was in *Clark* in early Mar. The wintering Short-tailed Hawk continued through at least 3/2 in *Pima*, AZ. A Ruff was a good find in *Maricopa*, AZ 2/19. An adult Heermann's Gull visited *Cochise*, AZ on 2/22. The ABA Area's first **Sinaloa Wren** was growing slightly more vocal by the end of the period in *Santa Cruz*, AZ. Black-capped Gnatcatchers continued in various locations in AZ and NM.



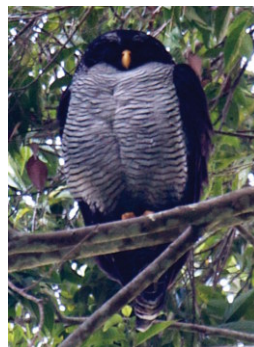
Western Grebe, 1st PA state record, Conodiguinet Creek, Cumberland County, PA, 17 Feb '09. © Dustin Welch

found in *Elko*, NV on 2/21 and continued into Mar. A Hoary Redpoll was at feeders in *Crook*, WY in late Feb.

**West Coast and Northwest:** At least 2 Bewick's Swans were in *Modoc*, CA 2/17–19. An adult Blue-footed Booby was seen on a pelagic trip off *San Diego*, CA on 3/5. CA hosted a number of rare gulls during the period. A Little Gull was in *Riverside* late Feb through early Mar. Birds showing traits of "Kumlien's" Iceland Gulls were reported in *Santa Barbara*, *Del Norte*, and *Yolo*. Lesser Black-backed Gulls abounded, with birds in *Imperial*, *Riverside*, *Yolo*, and *Los Angeles*. Multiple Slaty-backed Gulls were also present, with individuals in *Monterey*, *San Mateo*, *Yolo*, and *Humboldt*. Following the 3 from the previous reporting period, 2 Parakeet Auklets were seen offshore in *Santa Barbara*, CA on 3/1. CA's second record of "Mangrove" Yellow Warbler continued through the period in *San Diego*. Yellow-throated, Grace's, and Worm-eating Warblers continued at various locations across CA. As mentioned above, North America's first well-documented over-wintering Scarlet Tanager continued in *San Diego*, CA. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at a feeder in *Stevens*, WA in late Feb. Rusty Blackbirds continued in *Del Norte* and *San Diego*, CA. Alaska's fifth record of Cassin's Finch was photographed at feeders in *Seward* in late Feb.



Black-headed Siskin, first record for ABA Area if accepted, South Padre Island, 1 Mar. '09. © Ted Sears



Black-and-white Owl, possible first Pacific Slope of Mexico record. La Bajada, Nayarit, MX, 27 Feb. '09. © Mark Stackhouse

**Mexico:** A Brant was in *Aticama*, Nayarit (NAY) on 2/26. A Black Hawk-Eagle was seen just south of *La Bajada*, NAY at *Tecuitata* on 2/28. Several lucky observers saw a Solitary Eagle in southern Oaxaca on 2/27. At least 6 Black-legged Kittiwakes were just east of *San José del Cabo*, Baja California Sur (BCS) in late Feb, and another in *Aticama*, NAY on 2/27. North America's 2nd Gray Gull continues in *Celestún*, *Campeche*. Although field notes have not been reviewed yet, a reported **Belcher's Gull** offshore near *Bahía Magdalena*, BCS on 2/12 would constitute a first Mexico record. A Glaucous Gull was at the *Mexicali dump* in *Baja California Norte* on 2/8. A **Black-and-white Owl** was photographed 2/26–27 at *La Bajada*, NAY. This represents a first state record and likely a first for the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Finally, an early Spot-tailed Nightjar was found singing at *Minatitlan*, *Veracruz* on 2/20.