

SIGHTINGS

E A R L Y M A R C H T O E A R L Y A P R I L 2 0 0 8

"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. Italicized place names denote counties or parishes. Readers should note that none of these records has yet been vetted by a records committee. All birders are urged to submit documentation of significant sightings to the appropriate state or provincial committees. For full analysis of these and other important bird records, subscribe to *North American Birds*, the richly illustrated journal of ornithological record published by the ABA <aba.org/pubs/nab>.

Compiled by Michael L. P. Retter
with thanks to Paul Lehman,
Sheridan Coffey, Douglas Chapman,
and Nicholas Block

Summary

This was overall a slow period for rarities, but we've been pretty spoiled this winter. Still, **Common Crane**, **Loggerhead Kingbird** (a possible 2nd ever for the ABA Area), **Redwing**, and **White-throated Robin** were found between early March and early April. Winter didn't seem to want to loosen its icy grip over the northern half of the continent, and consequently, many birds, rare or not, lingered into the spring. Winter irruptives like Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, and Hoary Redpoll were still being seen in decent numbers over a good chunk of the continent. The same was true of the Atlantic Seaboard's Barnacle Geese. An impressive flight of White-winged Scoters continued across the lower Great Lakes and upper Ohio River valley.

Southeast. NC's second **Common Murre** was picked up on a beach in *Carteret* on 2 Apr. There was a Calliope Hummingbird in *Gwinnett*, GA, until at least 4 Apr. A **Loggerhead Kingbird**, FL's and the U.S.'s second (pending acceptance), was discovered on 14 Mar on Dry Tortugas and present through the last part of Mar. *Hendry*, FL, held a Cassin's Kingbird through at least 29 Mar. On 5 Apr a Say's Phoebe was observed in *Fulton*, KY. A Black-whiskered Vireo was discovered on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, AL, on 2 Apr. There was a Western Tanager in *Horry*, SC, through at least 17 Mar. A Lazuli

Bunting was being seen in *Manatee*, FL, through the end of the month.

Mid-Atlantic. At least one of the Long Island, NY, **Pink-footed Geese** persisted into late Mar. A Barnacle Goose was still present in *Cape May*, NJ, until mid-Mar. Another Barnacle Goose was discovered on 16 Mar in *Rockbridge*, VA, and yet another was in *Snyder*, PA. A White-winged Scoter far inland in WV seemed to be linked to the larger phenomenon farther north and west. A Western Grebe discovered off Staten Island, NY, was thought to be the same as the Sandy Hook, NJ, bird and lingered until at least 30 Mar. A White-faced Ibis was found by intrepid birders in *Worcester*, MD, on 5 Apr. *Cumberland*, PA, still had a **Prairie Falcon** through mid-Mar. Most of this winter's Slaty-backed Gulls seem to have cleared out of eastern North America, but *Tompkins*, NY, still had one lingering through mid-Mar. The *Monmouth*, NJ, Townsend's Solitaire was still present as of 16 Mar. The *New York*, NY, **Scott's Oriole** continued to be seen sporadically through the first part of Apr, as did a Western Tanager there. A Hoary Redpoll was in *Susquehanna*, PA, through 27 Mar, and there was a flock of four Evening Grosbeaks in *Monmouth*, NJ, through the end of Mar.

Northeast. *Strafford*, NH, was home to a Ross's Goose through the beginning of Apr. Barnacle Geese appear to be increasing in the Northeast, and at least three were in MA. The Tufted Duck in *Grand Isle*, VT, was still present through the end of Mar. *Essex*, MA, still held a Slaty-backed Gull on 15

Mar. A White-winged Dove was reported in NL on 4 Apr. A **Redwing** showed up during an ice storm at St. John's, NL, on 9 Mar. A rather confusing bird, thought to be a Bullock's Oriole, was discovered on 25 Mar in *Litchfield*, CT. Pine Grosbeaks continued in good numbers across the region, with reports from VT, MA, ME, NH, and CT. Hoary Redpolls were noted in MA, RI, ME, NL, and NB.

South-central. Masked Ducks continued to be seen on the King Ranch in TX. A Long-billed Curlew in *Benton*, AR, on 10 Apr will be a seventh state record if accepted. Keen birders picked a **Common Crane** out of a flock of flying Sandhills in *Stafford*, KS, on 23 Mar. Texas was visited by two different Fork-tailed Flycatchers: one at Sabine Pass, *Jefferson*, 16–18 Mar and another in *Cameron* 16–30 Mar. A Violet-green Swallow at High Island, *Galveston*, TX, 5 Apr was quite out of range. Found shortly after Alabama's bird, a Black-whiskered Vireo was on Grand Isle, *Jefferson*, LA, on 5 Apr. Tamaulipas Crows are maintaining their tenuous existence as summer residents in *Cameron*, TX, but a seemingly precipitous decline in the species' numbers in the core of its Mexican range could spell trouble for these birds. The famous Allen Williams residence in Pharr, *Hidalgo*, TX, attracted a **White-throated Robin** on 18 Mar; it was still present at press time. A male **Blue Bunting** was reported from Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo*, TX, on 6 Apr.

North-central. An at-times-frustrating drake Eurasian Wigeon was a third



St. John's, Newfoundland; 9 March 2008. © Bruce Mactavish.



Pharr, Texas; 19 March 2008. © David Seibel.

Two vagrants in the genus *Turdus* encountered rather different conditions when they arrived in the ABA Area in March 2008. A **Redwing** (left) had to contend with an ice storm in Atlantic Canada, but a **White-throated Robin** (right) enjoyed the sun-dappled woods of the lower Rio Grande valley.

county record in *McLean*, IL, 2–3 Apr. Another was at Spikerush WMA in NE. Grand Forks, ND, played host to a Red-shouldered Hawk 31 Mar. Birders reported another out-of-range hawk, a Ferruginous Hawk, on 17 Mar in *Plymouth*, IA. An amazing 10 Long-billed Curlews were discovered in *Dade*, MO, on 4 Apr. A **Common Crane** was present in Lincoln, NE, 2–5 Apr; there was speculation that it may have been the same bird discovered in KS a couple of weeks earlier. (It should be noted that Common Cranes have appeared in North America with hybrid offspring in tow, so any potential Common Crane should be scrutinized for hybrid features.) A “Red-shafted” Flicker was in *Woodbury*, IA, 11 Mar. The White-winged Scoter flight continued well into late Mar and early Apr, with large numbers being seen across the region from Lake Michigan east to Lake Erie and south to the Ohio and Tennessee River valleys. A small flock of Bohemian Waxwings was still wintering in *Porter*, IN. The species remained widespread in MI, even into southern counties of the lower peninsula. A flock of seven Pine Grosbeaks was seen in *Portage*, WI, on 16 Mar. A Hoary Redpoll was observed on Chicago's south

side, *Cook*, IL, 15–20 Mar. WI had at least two Hoary Redpolls, with one in *Bayfield* from 22–28 Mar and one in *Langlade* on 30 Mar. Another was in *Holmes*, OH, in mid-Mar.

Southwest. A Eurasian Wigeon was in *Cache*, UT, on 5 Apr. A Yellow-billed Loon continued on Lake Havasu in *Mohave*, AZ, as well as in nearby CA, through early Apr. An immature Short-tailed Hawk was still cruising over downtown Tucson, *Pima*, AZ, at press time. There was an Aplomado Falcon at Bosque del Apache NWR, NM, on 22 Mar, but due to recent releases of birds in TX and NM, the origin of southwestern Aplomados is and will be murky at best. The Sweetwater Wetlands in *Pima*, AZ, attracted a Heermann's Gull on 28 Mar. The *Pinal*, AZ, **Northern Jacana** was still present at press time, and a Ruff was a one-day wonder in *Nye*, NV, on 9 Apr. In *Sierra*, NM, the Rufous-backed Robin was still being seen into early Apr. The male Black-throated Blue Warbler continued though the period in *Pima*, AZ. There was a Yellow-throated Warbler in *Sierra*, NM, on 23 Mar. A Flame-colored Tanager has returned to Madera Canyon, *Santa Cruz*, AZ; it was first seen on 29 Mar. Also in southeast-

ern AZ was a Purple Finch of the nominate (eastern) subspecies; it was discovered on 28 Mar in the Santa Rita Mountains. The species was seen in much larger numbers than normal in CO and AZ this winter.

West Coast & Northwest. A group of three Whooper Swans was observed on Shemya Island, AK, on 9 Feb; by 28 Mar their numbers had been reduced to a lone bird. Another stray Siberian swan, a “Bewick's” **Tundra Swan**, was found in Cascade, MT, on 5 Apr. Fern Ridge Reservoir in *Lane*, OR, was graced by a Tufted Duck on 20 Mar. There was another in *Vernon*, BC, on 23 Mar. *Marin*, CA, birders must have been quite surprised when they found a **Common Black-Hawk** on 2 Apr. A seemingly pure adult Western Gull was found in Sitka, AK, on 14 Mar. There were still two Slaty-backed Gulls in WA as of 19 Mar, and one in *Del Norte*, CA, lingered into early Apr. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher continued in *Los Angeles*, CA, through the beginning of Apr. A female Northern Cardinal stopped by a feeder off and on in Lakeview, AB, 29 Mar–2 Apr. Belcarra, BC, was an exciting place 10–16 Mar, when a **Brambling** visited.