

# SIGHTINGS

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"Sightings" appears monthly, alternating between *Winging It* and *Birding*, with the latest news, reports, and rumors from around North America. 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 reports 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 observations, subscribe to *North American Birds*, the richly illustrated journal of ornithological record published by the ABA <aba.org/pubs/nab>. Italicized place names denote counties or parishes.

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with thanks to Paul Lehman  
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## Summary

What could be the first unequivocal North American records of **Rufous-tailed Robin** and **Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** are undoubtedly the highlights this period. An invasion of **Northern Wheatears** across the northeastern quarter of the continent was also big news. The appearance of a ship-assisted **House Crow** in Louisiana should alert coastal birders to be watchful for this destructive, adaptable stowaway. A Blue-gray Tanager found not far south of Brownsville, Texas highlighted the steady northward march of this species. Birders should be on the lookout for both it and the Yellow-winged Tanager in urban areas of South Texas.

**Southeast:** Fittingly, a flock of 6 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks on 1 June near Mobile provided Alabama with a potential 6th state record. The undoubted highlight of a pelagic trip off *Dare*, NC on 18 May was a **European Storm-Petrel**. A **Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** was photographed off Cape Hatteras, NC on 2 June. A Red-billed Tropicbird was found 23 May in deep water off Key Biscayne, FL. A Red-footed Booby was still being seen at Dry Tortugas, FL in mid-May. A Roseate Tern discovered 4 June near Pensacola, *Escambia*, FL was the first local record in 60+ years. On 19 May, a White-winged Dove (potentially Tennessee's 4th) was photographed in *Carroll*.

**Mid-Atlantic:** A Western Grebe at Sandy Hook NWR, NJ was still present on 31 May, and a Swallow-tailed Kite was seen cruising over *Monmouth*, NJ the same day. A Wilson's Plover spent 11–13 May on eastern Long Island, NY. Delaware's famous **Wood Sandpiper** continued through 14 May. A Magnificent Frigatebird flew over Prime Hook SWA, DE on 30 May. A Yellow Rail was found in *Crawford*, PA on 28 May. 2 Franklin's Gulls were discovered in Pennsylvania, with 1 on 16 May in *Erie*, and the other present 30–31 May



**Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel.** Off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina; 2 June 2008. © Gareth Knass / Aluco Ecology Limited.

in *Somerset*. A Lark Bunting was discovered in *Cape May*, NJ on 2 Jun.

**Northeast:** A flock of 9 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks made a brief appearance in Nova Scotia on 1 June, only to be relocated 5 days later in *Essex*, MA. A Garganey spent 28 Apr–3 May at Sainte-Anne-de-Sorel, QC. A pair of **Common Pochards** continued at Saint-Barthélemy, QC until at least 10 May. A Red-billed Tropicbird returned to remote Matinicus Rock, *Knox*, ME for yet

another summer, while a 2nd was photographed on 30 May much closer to shore in *Newport*, RI. 9 **European Golden-Plover** and as many as 3 "Eurasian" Whimbrels were noted in NL over the period. A Black-tailed Godwit was found 29 May in *Gambo*, NL. First discovered 31 May, a Black-necked Stilt continued into mid-June in *St. Shott's*, NL. Yet another was in *New London*, CT on 6 Jun. An Upland Sandpiper turned up at *Cape Race*, NL on 25 May. Pairs of Gull-billed Terns were noted in Massachusetts and Connecticut in early June. At least 23 **Northern Wheatears** were noted in the region, with 20 in Newfoundland, 2 in Maine, and 1 in New Brunswick. As a testament to their increasing numbers, a **Kirtland's Warbler** photographed in *York* on 2 June provided a first state record for Maine. *New Haven* hosted both CT's 3rd Lark Bunting and its 2nd Eurasian Collared-Dove in late May. A male **Painted Bunting** at *Stephenville Crossing*, NL provided a first provincial record on 31 May.

**South-Central:** An immature Brown Booby was found in *Cameron*, LA on 1 Jun. An interesting *Sterna* photographed 10 May in *Bexar*, TX turned out to be an Arctic Tern. On 14 May, birders found and photographed a Gray Kingbird in *Calhoun*, TX. A **House Crow**, almost certainly ship-assisted, was discovered in *Cameron*, LA 18 May. There was still at least 1 Black Rail in *Cameron*, LA in mid-May. Louisiana's first **Cassin's Sparrow** was well-photographed during its 10–14 May stay in *Bossier*.

**North-Central:** Canada's first **Mottled Duck** continued near Point Pelee, ON through 6 Jun. A drake Tufted Duck was observed 8–15 May near Sault Ste. Marie, ON. A **Neotropic Cormorant** in *Ottawa*, MI 5–17 May was a first state record. *Carrol*, IA hosted a Wood Stork 2 May. Minnesota's 2nd White-tailed Kite was in *Mower* on 4 May. Black Rails were discovered in *Pickaway*, OH on 1 Jun. Long Point Provincial Park hosted Ontario's 7th Snowy Plover on 16 May. Ontario's 5th Vermilion Flycatcher turned up at Thunder Bay on 26 May. Indiana's first Fork-tailed Flycatcher (of the expected austral migrant subspecies, *savana*) was discov-



**Cassin's Sparrow.** *Bossier Parish, Louisiana; 10 May 2008.* © Justin Eby-Bosler.

ered in *Owen* on 31 May. Fish Crows continue their northward march into the Great Lakes: a pair was noted at Point Pelee, ON 7–8 May; another pair flew by Montrose Point, *Cook*, IL on 12 May; and a 5th bird was at Long Point Provincial Park, ON on 19 May. A **Northern Wheatear** was a shocking addition to a lucky birder's yard list in Grand Marais, *Alger*, MI on 6 June. Western Tanagers continued their irruption into the region, with reports from Illinois (1), Michigan (1), and Ontario (3). The last reminders of a phenomenal winter, both a White-

winged and a Red Crossbill were still in *Lucas*, OH on 24 May. A Eurasian Tree Sparrow was first discovered at Whitefish Point, *Chippewa*, MI on 7 May.

**Southwest:** 2 cooperative Yellow-billed Loons thrilled twitchers in the region: 1 was present 19–20 May in *Wasatch*, UT, while an immature stayed 20–24 May in *Maricopa*, AZ. A Swallow-tailed Kite was reported from *Pima*, AZ on 5 May. A rare springtime White-rumped Sandpiper pleased visitors to *Willcox, Cochise*, AZ 20–24 May. At least 1 Buff-collared Nightjar returned to the El Oro Mine in Santa Cruz, AZ. The now-famous Tufted Flycatcher was still in *Cochise*, AZ though the end of May. A female Aztec Thrush in *Cochise*, AZ on 29 May was a 3rd spring record for the state. The Madera Canyon, AZ Flame-colored Tanager continued through the period. Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and Painted Bunting were the highlights in what was an exceptional spring for eastern vagrants in Utah.

**West Coast and Northwest:** There was still a Tundra Bean-Goose on Adak Is., AK as of 21 May. A drake Baikal Teal (a potential 3rd state record) teased Washington birders with a 1-day stay at Columbia NWR on 30 May. A Smew lingered near Mountain View, AB. Oregon's first Red-billed Tropicbird was found off *Lane* on 10 May. Murphy's Petrels are proving to be regular in eastern Pacific waters this time of year: a NOAA boat noted 8 off Oregon and ~120 off California, and observers aboard a cruise ship observed 6 more off OR on 11 May. Glossy Ibis showed up in Idaho (17 May) and Montana (24 May). A Jack Snipe was pho-



**Hawfinch.** *Shemya Island, Alaska; 18 May 2008.* © Bob Trotter.

tographed on 4 June in Gambell, AK. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was photographed in *Sheridan*, MT on 23 May. An Eastern Yellow Wagtail was in Tillamook, OR 16 May. A Rufous-tailed Robin was discovered 8 Jun on St. Paul Is., AK. A Philadelphia Vireo reported 31 May in *Adams*, WA, was a potential 3rd state record. Both a Golden-winged and a Canada Warbler were in *Kern*, CA on 31 May. A Canada Warbler well-documented 31 May at Camas NWR was Idaho's first record of the species. An Eastern Towhee photographed 1 June at Malheur NWR would be Oregon's 2nd or 3rd. A Hawfinch was photographed on Shemya Is., AK on 18 May.

**Mexico:** Lucky birders visiting the Gulf Coast town of La Pesca, Tamaulipas on 28 Apr found themselves in the middle of a fallout; they discovered a Connecticut Warbler (potentially Mexico's 2nd) and a Black-whiskered Vireo (potentially Mexico's 3rd). A Blue-gray Tanager was found there the next day. A Greater Pewee was discovered in the Sierra San Pedro Martir, Baja California Norte on 2 Jun. A California Condor was seen nearby, a reminder of the recent reintroduction successes.