“Sightings” appears monthly, alternating between Wingin’ It and Birding, with the latest news, reports, and rumors from the ABA Area and Mexico. 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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Summary: Late May and early June are usually good for vagrants, as spring migrants, many of them heading back north for the very first time, inevitably wander off-course or overshoot their intended destinations. The January 2009 Birding photo quiz seems oddly prescient and timely in light of the appearance of the U.S.'s 1st Gray-collared Becard, a 1-day wonder photographed in southeast AZ. A Greater Sand-Plover—in stunning alternate plumage—delighted birders for an extended period in northern FL. European and Swinhoe’s Storm-Petrels were photographed in the Gulf Stream. The original AZ Sinaloa Wren continues. Can it be much longer before its more-richly-colored and less-vocally-accomplished cousin, the Happy Wren, is found in the U.S.? State/provincial firsts included Mottled Duck (MO), Pacific Loon (SC), Bermuda Petrel (GA), Roseate Spoonbill (IN), Glossy Ibis (NV), Snail Kite (NC), Acadian Flycatcher (CO), Black-capped Vireo (QC), and Fan-tailed Warbler (NM).

Southeast: A pair of Pacific Loons, SC’s 1st documented record, remained on Lake Russell (also in GA) through late May. An immature Red-billed Tropicbird flew across the GA-SC state line on a 5/30 pelagic trip; it would constitute SCs 3rd and GAs 2nd record. That same trip produced GA’s 1st Bermuda Petrel, pending acceptance. Bermuda Petrels were also observed off Cape Hatteras, NC; 3 were observed 5/29, when a European Storm-Petrel was also noted. A later pelagic produced a Swinhoe’s Storm-Petrel 6/6. Late to press but still noteworthy is word of NC’s 1st Snail Kite, salvaged in Columbus, NC 4/10. An alternate-plumaged Greater Sand-Plover, North America’s and the western hemisphere’s 2nd, was well photographed during its 5/14–27 stay at Huguenot Memorial Park near Jacksonville, FL. A Zenaida Dove was discovered on Key Largo, Monroe, FL 6/4. As is all too often the case, an immature Fork-tailed Flycatcher (ALs 4th) at Mobile’s Blakely Is. was a 1-day wonder (3 hours, actually) 5/21. An exhausted Sprague’s Pipit landed on a ship 40 miles off the NC coast 6/2. A male Western Spindalis was observed 5/19 at Boynton Beach, FL, and a male Shiny Cowbird was photographed 5/24 in St. Petersburg, FL.

Mid-Atlantic: A Yellow-nosed Albatross was reported over Assateague Is., Worcester, MD 6/6. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher delighted many on 5/26 when it visited Eastern Neck NWR, Kent, MD; another appeared in Union, NJ 6/1. Swainson’s Warblers were discovered in Mercer and Monmouth, NJ in late May. Dozens of White-winged Crossbills were still being seen well into June in PA, and Pine Siskins were confirmed nesting across the region.

Northeast: A drake Garganey was photographed during its 5/15–17 stay in St. John’s; it is the 3rd record for NL. An Eared Grebe was noted in Sanford, York, ME 5/26+. A frigatebird flew by Île Verte, QC 6/2. A Little Egret was photographed at Codroy Estuary, NL 5/29–30. A Reddish Egret was reported from Brooklyn, NS 5/27. A pair of Mississippi Kites flew over a Cumberland, ME backyard 5/31. Three European Golden-Plovers continued at Bonavista, NL until 5/13. Essex, MA hosted a photogenic Chuck-will’s-widow 5/16. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow found at Codroy Estuary 6/1 provided 1 of only a handful of records for NL. A male Black-capped Vireo was photographed at Pointe-aux-Outardes, QC 5/24. Two different Sedge Wrens...
were found at Digby Neck, NS in late May. A male Lark Bunting turned up in Kennebunk, ME 6/10. A Boat-tailed Grackle was reported from Freeport, NS 6/3–4. Common Chaffinches were noted in 3 different QC towns in late May; though probably escapees, the simultaneous appearance of the species in MI is interesting.

North-Central: Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are currently breeding as close as TN, so reports of 2 in Pope, IL, 1 in Madison, IL, and 2 in Boone, MO were not too surprising. MO’s 1st well-documented Mottled Duck was seen at Otter Slough Cons. Area, Stoddard 6/2+; a pair of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks was also present. Brown Pelicans staged a noteworthy movement into IL, MO, and SD. Up to 9 Anhingas were reported from Pulaski, IL; another turned up in Oregon, MO 5/25. IN’s 1st Roseate Spoonbill, an immature, first appeared at Goose Pond, Greene, IN 6/2; it was later joined by a pair of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. A Swallow-tailed Kite flew over Schuyler, IL 5/17. A Purple Gallinule was photographed 6/8 in Walworth, WI. A Snowy Plover was found at Dorion, ON 5/22–23. A Flammulated Owl was seen 5/27 in Pennington, SD; the status of this species in the Black Hills remains an enigma. Quite remarkable were ON observations of single Black Swifts flying over Long Point 5/12–13 and Point Pelee 5/17–18. Fish Crows seem to be gaining a foothold along Lake Michigan, with a flock of 6 splitting its time between Berrien, MI and LaPorte, IN. A Bell’s Vireo was at Point Pelee, ON 5/15. A Northern Wheatear appeared at Temiskaming, ON 6/2. Lowden-Miller State Forest in Ogle, IL hosted a male Black-throated Gray Warbler 5/23–24. A Yellow-throated Warbler was found in Hiddenwood SP Walworth, SD 5/16. A Worm-eating Warbler was in extreme western SD (Harding) 5/23–24, and a Green-tailed Towhee was found nearby a day earlier. A Chestnut-collared Longspur was found 5/30 at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory near Thunder Bay, ON, where a Lazuli Bunting turned up the next day. The presence of 8 Common Chaffinches at Whitefish Point, MI, another in DuPage, IL, a Linnet at Tawas Point, MI, and multiple “Gray-headed” [Eurasian] Goldfinches in the Chicago area were reminders that birders in the Great Lakes region have to contend with jail-breaking Old World finches turning up at any time.

South-Central: Masked Ducks were still being seen at Laguna Atascosa NWR, Cameron, TX through the end of May. The famous Greater–American Flamingo pair (the latter a bird wild) remained in Cameron, LA through 5/14, shortly after which the latter appeared in Brazoria, TX. Green Violetears appeared in 3 TX counties: Hidalgo, Gillespie, and Kerr. A Yellow-green Vireo was found at Johnsons Bayou, Cameron, LA 5/16–18, and a 2nd bird was found nearby 5/17–18. At least 3 turned up at coastal TX migrant traps, and another returned to a residential area in Brownsville, TX for its 6th consecutive summer. AR’s 3rd Lark Bunting, an adult male, was a 1-day wonder in Boone 6/4 June. A Shiny Cowbird was found in Cameron, LA 6/6.
Mexico: Interesting reports from Ensenada, Baja California 5/14–15 include a Brant, a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, a Surf Scoter, and a Franklin’s Gull.

Interior West: Overall, it was an exceptional month for eastern passersines. A Baikal Teal was found northeast of Calgary, AB 4/30. An alternate-plumaged Yellow-billed Loon was observed 5/17–18 at Rockport SP, Summit, UT. NV’s 1st Glossy Ibis was at Pahrangagat NWR in late May. A King/Clapper Rail appeared at Bosque del Apache NWR, Socorro, NM 5/9; it would be the state’s 2nd record if a King and its 1st if a Clapper. An impressive number of White-rumped Sandpipers were photographed at Willcox, AZ, where totals ranged up to 13 birds on 6/4; the state had only 8 prior records—all of individual birds. A Little Gull was noted 5/13 at Sandpoint, Bonner, ID. CA’s Salton Sea was again the site of a nesting attempt by a pair of Heermann’s Gulls. A small invasion of Elegant Terns into AZ in early June coincided with major nest abandonment caused by warm water in the Gulf of California. An Eared Quetzal was reported from Chiricahua National Monument, AZ 5/31. CO birders carefully documented the state’s 1st Acadian Flycatcher in Bent 5/12. The biggest news of the month was the appearance of a female-type Gray-collared Becard in Portal, AZ’s famous South Fork–Cave Creek 6/5. A Black-capped Vireo first detected on territory in Carlsbad Caverns NP, Eddy, NM 5/20 remained well into June. The Patagonia, AZ Sinaloa Wren constructed a nest. A Crescent-chested Warbler was present in Pinery Canyon in AZ’s Chiricahua Mts. 5/13–16. A Northern Parula was at Camas NWR, Jefferson, ID 5/24; a Magnolia Warbler was found at the same location 6/5. Two Hermit Warblers were in ID on 5/8: 1 in Elmore and the other in Owyhee. NV experienced a noteworthy incursion of Kentucky Warblers. A Fan-tailed Warbler was nicely photographed at the 5/17–18, providing a 1st documented record for northern CA. A Horned Puffin was near San Miguel Is., CA 5/16; 1 turned up a week later near Santa Cruz Is. A Broad-billed Hummingbird was seen in Borrego Springs, San Diego, CA 6/3. CA’s 1st springtime Great Crested Flycatcher was found at Pt. Loma, San Diego 5/20. At least 6 Yellow-throated and 5 White-eyed Vireos were noted across CA. The appearance of 4 Red-eyed Vireos in San Diego, CA alone was unprecedented. Visitors to HI’s Alakai Swamp found a Puauiohi (Small Kaua’i Thrush) nest 5/31. Harney, OR oases produced a nice assortment of vagrants, including Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, and Palm Warblers. A singing Yellow-throated Warbler was near Netarts, Tillamook 6/2; it would be OR’s 6th. Cape May Warblers appeared at Pt. Reyes, CA 5/30 and Oasis, Mono, CA 6/4. A singing Hooded Warbler was in the Coast Range within Coos, OR 5/29. Nicely lining up with observations in NV, Kentucky Warblers were noted in Kern (2 individuals) and San Bernardino, CA. A Dickcissel, only OR’s 2nd spring record, was photographed at Grants Pass, Josephine 5/27. A tardy Snow Bunting was observed in Pacific Grove, Monterey, CA 5/23–26; 1 was in coastal Douglas, OR 6/6. A Hawfinch was photographed 6/4 at Nome, AK. Eurasian visitors noted on AK’s Aleutians and Bering Sea islands included Taiga Bean-Goose, Falcated Duck, Smew, Wood Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Gull, Taiga Flycatcher, Eyebrowed Thrush, Dusky Thrush, Rustic Bunting, and Brambling. At least 2 ‘Akeke’e were found in the Alakai Swamp, Kaua’i 5/31.