

SIGHTINGS

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"Sightings" appears monthly, alternating between *Winging 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.

Compiled by Michael L. P. Retter
with thanks to Paul Lehman
and Rick Wright

Summary: Snow wasn't the only white stuff that altered birders' travel plans this period. An impressive push of Ivory Gulls in the Maritime provinces and New England drew in scores of (mostly) happy twitchers. North America's 2nd **Gray Gull** continued along the west coast of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, while a **Ross's Gull** frustrated birders in Kansas. Southeast Arizona and south Texas were good places to be, too. The former held a **Blue Mockingbird** and the long-staying **Sinaloa Wren**, while the latter was still hosting wintering **Blue Buntings** and a **Crimson-collared Grosbeak**. **Masked Ducks** were present in Florida and Texas. White-winged Crossbills, Snowy Owls, and redpolls continued to delight birders across the Midwest and the Northeast. A **Eurasian Siskin** of unknown origin turned up in Maine.

Southeast: A Eurasian Wigeon was seen 1/18 at Robco Lake in Memphis, TN. A female **Masked Duck** was discovered at Alligator Lake Recreation Area, *Columbia*, FL 1/15. The **Great Cormorant** discovered last November at the W. F. George Dam was still present and still traveling back and forth between AL and GA. Potentially a 2nd for WV, an **Eared Grebe** was seen in *Pleasants* 1/15. A "Common" [Mew] Gull was at Cape Hatteras, NC 1/24. There are fewer than 5 accepted records of Lesser Black-backed, Great Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls for WV, but that's likely to change with sightings of 1, 3, and 3 individuals of each species, respectively. A 1st-cycle "Kumlien's" **Iceland Gull** in *Mason*, WV 1/29 would be the state's 1st record. An im-

mature Snowy Owl continued in Spring Hill, *Maury*, TN. An adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird, AL's 5th, was discovered on 1/23 in *Baldwin*. Single Lark and Lincoln's Sparrows were attending feeders in *Berkeley*, WV 1/27+. A Harris's Sparrow continued at Paynes Prairie SP, *Alachua*, FL.



Hooded Oriole. *Baldwin County, Alabama; 29 January 2009.* © Kathy Hicks.

Two **Hooded Orioles** turned up in AL, which previously had no accepted records. The 1st, an immature male, was discovered 1/21 in *Baldwin*; an adult male was discovered in the same county 1/28. Brewer's Blackbird is casual in WV, so a report of 80 in *Mason*, WV 1/1 was noteworthy. White-winged Crossbills appeared at 4 widely distributed locations across KY.

Mid-Atlantic: The *Sussex*, DE Black-bellied Whistling-Duck continued. A "Black" Brant was located in *Monmouth*, NJ 1/25. A Barnacle Goose was present in *Hunterdon*, NJ with 2 Barnacle × Canada hybrids. MD had its 3rd record of Tufted Duck in *Dorchester* and its 4th and 5th records of Barrow's Goldeneye in *Dorchester* and *Calvert*, respectively. A basic-plumaged Pacific Loon was photographed 2/9 off Deal, *Monmouth*,

NJ. Eared Grebes were widespread in NJ, while Western Grebes were reported from *Ocean* and *Monmouth*. A 1st-cycle Thayer's Gull was found in *Bucks*, PA 1/9. A Thick-billed Murre was spotted 1/19 at Monmouth Beach, *Monmouth*, NJ. Snowy Owls were noted as far south as *Sussex*, DE and *Cape May*, NJ. Sandy Hook, *Monmouth*, NJ hosted a Bohemian Waxwing 2/2. An "Audubon's" [Yellow-rumped] Warbler lingered in *Lehigh*, PA through at least 2/2. A Western Tanager was on Fishers Island, *Suffolk*, NY. The *Camden*, NJ **Green-tailed Towhee** continued at a backyard feeder through early Feb. A Le Conte's Sparrow was seen in *Delaware*, PA 1/25–2/3. A Lark Bunting had been at a feeder in *Carroll*, MD since early Jan. White-winged Crossbills were widespread, with double-digit flocks not uncommon across PA, NJ, and MD; ~100 birds 1/25 at Conestoga Pines Park, *Lancaster*, PA were the highest count. Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls were also widespread; reports of Purple Finch and Red Crossbill, however, were scarce.

Northeast: A **Pink-footed Goose** was photographed in *Barnstable*, MA 1/15. A drake Tufted Duck was present in Westbrook, ME. An adult "Common" [Mew] Gull was photographed at Dartmouth, NS 1/18 and 2/2. In CT, a 1st-cycle Thayer's Gull was noted 2/7 at the Windsor Landfill in *Hartford*, where the state's 2nd Slaty-backed Gull was photographed 2 days later. Another Slaty-backed Gull was photographed at St. John's, NL 2/3. **Ivory Gulls** were widespread, occurring in good numbers in NL; they were fewer in number and more sporadic south through NS all the way down to MA, where individuals were noted (and celebrated) in Gloucester and Plymouth. Five Varied Thrushes were present in ME, mak-



Ivory Gull. *Plymouth, Massachusetts; 30 January 2009.*
© Mark S. Szantyr.

ing for a remarkable 7–8 individuals in the state thus far this winter. The Black-headed Grosbeak continued in *Knox*, ME. A male **Eurasian Siskin** reported 1/31 in *Sagadahoc*, ME was a 1-day wonder.

South-Central: An impressive 7 Long-tailed Ducks were found 2/4 at Lake Tawakoni, TX. Two female-plumaged Masked Ducks continued at different locations in *Willacy*, TX. A Red-throated Loon photographed in *Jackson* 1/24–31 was a long overdue 1st well-documented record for LA, and a coincidental adult Little Gull there was a nice bonus. A Purple Sandpiper was still based on the jetty at South Padre Island, TX. A 1st-cycle Black-legged Kittiwake was at McNary Reservoir, TX 1/31. At least 1 Dusky-capped Flycatcher was being seen at Sabal Palm Grove, *Cameron*, TX. Estero Llano Grande SP, TX continued to host a Rose-throated Becard. A Swainson's Thrush, apparently of the eastern "olive-backed" group, was photographed 1/15 in Port Aransas, TX. **Blue Buntings** were reported in south TX from Bentsen SP, Estero Llano Grande SP, Laguna Atascosa NWR, and Frontera Audubon Thicket. The last location also held a female **Crimson-colored Grosbeak**.

North-Central: A beautiful adult **Ross's Gull** put in a brief appearance 1/14 at Tuttle Creek Reservoir, KS. A Slaty-backed Gull was present at Niagra Falls, ON. An apparent 1st-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull was being seen in *Hughes*, SD and was a potential 1st record for the state. Only casual in "inland" MO, 1 "Kumlien's" and 2 Glaucous Gulls were photographed in *Macon*. A

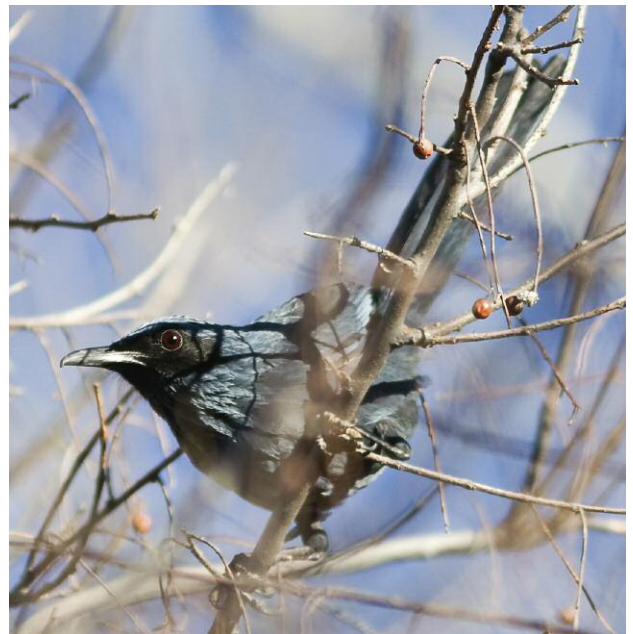
dark-morph Gyrfalcon was found in *Fernadale*, ON 2/4; another was seen 1/11–21 in *Marquette*, MI, where a very confused Barn Swallow was observed 2/9. Varied Thrushes were present in *Dickinson* and *Keweenaw*, MI; others were noted in IN and MN. *Wyandot*, OH hosted a Lark Sparrow 1/14–26. White-winged Crossbills continued to push south and increase in number; a 1/18 tally of 280 birds at Chain O'Lakes SP, *Noble*,

IN was unprecedented. **Hoary Redpolls** appeared in the northern parts of IL and IN, but a 1st record for *McLean*, IL was notably farther south on 1/25.

Southwest: A "Common" [Green-winged] Teal was in *Maricopa*, AZ 9–12 Jan. An injured White-winged Scoter was in *Navajo*, AZ 1/11, while an apparently healthy bird spent 1/10 in *Pinal*. Two Reddish Egrets were seen in *Maricopa*, AZ. Tucson, AZ's wintering Short-tailed Hawk continued to show well through the end of the period. A Red-throated Loon was photographed 1/19 in *Gila*, AZ. Single 1st-cycle Glaucous-winged and "Kumlien's" [Iceland] Gulls were in *Pueblo*, CO 1/29. A 2nd-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull posed for a photograph in *Sierra*, NM 1/23. Ruddy Ground-Doves were in *Cochise* and *Maricopa*, AZ. Often elusive, a Least Flycatcher was still wintering in *Yuma*, AZ. The *Cocconino*, AZ Northern Shrike was seen again 2/3. The ABA Area's 1st **Sinaloa Wren** was still present in Patagonia, *Santa Cruz*, AZ. There were at least 2 pairs of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** in Guadalupe Canyon, NM throughout the period. Single apparent "Eastern" Winter Wrens

were photographed in Jan. in *Maricopa* and *Santa Cruz*, AZ. A **Blue Mockingbird** discovered 2/4 in *Cochise* would provide a 3rd AZ record. A Worm-eating Warbler was a good find in Phoenix, AZ 1/31–2/6, while urban Tucson hosted a Pine Warbler 1/20–23. Tucson's Blackburnian Warbler lingered into at least mid-Jan., as did Pine Warblers in *Larimer* and *Boulder*, CO. A Palm Warbler was being seen at Percha Dam SP, *Sierra*, NM. That state's 1st **Rufous-capped Warbler** was still present in Guadalupe Canyon. Multiple Le Conte's Sparrows were in *Bent*, Colorado 1/31–2/6. *Fremont*, CO was still hosting an adult Golden-crowned Sparrow, while Tucson, AZ was still home to a female Orchard Oriole. A female Eastern Towhee was in *Bent*, CO 1/21–2/6.

West Coast and Northwest: An Emperor Goose, discovered in Dec., was still present in *Coos*, OR. A stunning drake **Baikal Teal** was photographed at WA's Ridgefield NWR 1/31. Single Yellow-billed Loons were in *Marin* and *Sonoma*, CA. A Brown Booby was reported from Año Nuevo State Beach, *San Mateo*, CA in early Feb. OR's 6th Little



Blue Mockingbird. *Cochise County, Arizona; 6 February 2009.*
© Oliver Niehuis.

Blue Heron was wintering at Siletz Bay, *Lincoln*. A **Black Vulture** continued to be seen in Kincolith, BC near the AK border. An adult **White-tailed Eagle** was pho-

tographed 1/29 in the Buskin River drainage of Kodiak Island, AK. A “Harlan’s” Hawk was photographed near Ukiah, Mendocino, CA and seen infrequently through the period. An “Eastern” Red-shouldered Hawk, perhaps just the 2nd record for CA, was at Sacramento NWR, Glenn 1/31. A Broad-winged Hawk was seen infrequently through the period in Santa Barbara, CA. A Gyrfalcon was reported in Smith River, Del Norte, CA. Single Slaty-backed Gulls were seen throughout Jan. in Abbotsford, BC and 1/30+ in Portland, OR. Reports of possible “Kumlien’s” [Iceland] Gulls in CA came from Lake, Yolo (multiples), Santa Cruz, and San Mateo. At least 3 Parakeet Auklets were seen on 2 different pelagic trips off San Luis Obispo, CA mid-late Jan. A Northern Hawk Owl was being seen daily since 1/24 in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, BC. A hybrid Say’s × Black Phoebe was found on the Centerville, Humboldt, CA CBC and continued through Jan. A Cave Swallow

was found 1/31 at Sonny Bono NWR, Imperial; it continued through the end of the period and was CA’s 5th overall and 1st winter record. An “Eastern” Winter Wren continued in Montecito, Santa Barbara, CA through mid-Jan. An adult male “Mangrove” [Yellow] Warbler, CA’s 2nd, was present in San Diego. Yellow-throated, Worm-eating, and Grace’s Warblers continued at scattered locations across CA. Imperial Beach, San Diego, CA continued to host a male Hepatic Tanager for its 3rd winter. A male Scarlet Tanager at the San Diego Zoo confirmed itself as the 3rd winter record for CA, and only the 5th or so for North America. Single Rusty Blackbirds were in Del Norte and San Diego, CA.

Mexico: An adult male Ruff, likely the same bird noted in 2007 and 2008, was at Lagunas de Chametla 1/12 and then at Marina Sur, Baja California Sur (BCS) on 1/13. North America’s 2nd Gray Gull continued in Celestún, Yucatán. A Solitary Eagle was reported from Barranca Rancho Liebre,



Gray Gull. Celestún, Yucatán; 17 January 2009. © Amy McAndrews.

Sinaloa 2/3–4. An **Eared Quetzal** was noted near San Sebastian del Oeste, Jalisco in mid-Jan. Quetzals seem to be getting easier to find in Sinaloa, as well, with increasing reports now coming from Barranca Rancho



Eared Quetzal. *Barranca Rancho Liebre, Sinaloa; 26 January 2009.*
© Michael L. P. Retter.

Liebre where a subadult male was noted 1/26; this location hosted a flock of ~150 Thick-billed Parrots 1/29. Two male Yucatán (Yellow-lored) Parrots were noted at the Sayil ruins, Yucatán; the species has been increasingly hard to find on the mainland. Always an exciting find, as many as 15 Great Swallow-tailed Swifts were photographed near Boca de Tomatlán, Jalisco in mid-Jan. An adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird was found near San José del Cabo, BCS 1/8. A Dusky Flycatcher 1/9 in Miraflores, was BCS's 4th record. A territorial Flamulated Flycatcher surprised birders visiting the relatively moist environs of La Bajada, Nayarit 2/1. A male Lovely Cotinga

was feeding in a fruiting fig tree at Chiapas's Palenque ruins 1/30; there have been few if any recent reports of the species from this location. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was photographed at La Estanzuela Park, Monterrey, Nuevo León 1/4. Three *japonicus* American Pipits and a Red-throated Pipit were discovered 1/12 in a pasture adjacent to Lagunas de Chametla; the former constituted a 1st state record for BCS. Another **Red-throated Pipit** was photographed near La Venta, Oaxaca 11/2–4/08; not surprisingly, it constitutes a 1st record for the state. A Northern Parula was discovered at Singayta, Nayarit mid-Jan. A Blackpoll Warbler along the Río San José, BCS 1/8 was unprecedented; there is 1 winter record for Oaxaca, several for Puerto Rico, and 1 for Bermuda. Well out of range was a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** 1/23 at the Tufted Jay Preserve in Sinaloa. Two female Hooded Warblers were found near El Tuito, Jalisco 1/13 and 1/22; another was located near Álamos, Sonora 1/29.