

SIGHTINGS

M I D - M A R C H T O E A R L Y A P R I L 2 0 0 9

"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 special thanks to Paul Lehman,
Rick Wright, and Peter Donaldson

Summary: A probable Cuban Black-Hawk in GA was certainly the "cosmic mind-blower" of the month, but a Loggerhead Kingbird in FL also created much excitement. Noteworthy lingerers from previous months included Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Blue Bunting, and Masked Ducks in TX and Sinaloa Wren and Blue Mockingbird in AZ. Echoes of the Pine Siskin and White-winged Crossbill irruptions were heard in Texas and the northeast quarter of the continent, respectively. News of the ABA Area's 1st Crowned Slaty-Flycatcher (a South American species) is just now coming to light, after being photographed and collected in Cameron, LA 10 months ago, on 6/3/08; for more on this sighting, please see the article in the current issue of *North American Birds* (62:638–639).

Southeast: Quite unusual was a Common Merganser discovered in Pasco, FL 4/3. The state's Least Grebe continued in Palm Beach. A probable subadult Cuban Black-Hawk was photographed near Pine Mountain, GA 4/10; an astonishing find if confirmed, it would constitute a 1st ABA Area record. FL's 1st White-throated Swift was found on a beach in Escambia and taken to a wildlife rehabilitator 4/9. A La Sagra's Flycatcher

was reported in Everglades National Park, Monroe, FL 4/2; a Brown-crested Flycatcher was in Matheson Hammock SP, Miami-Dade, FL 3/31. Fort Zachary Taylor SP in Key West, FL once again played host to a Loggerhead Kingbird, photographed on 4/12.

Mid-Atlantic: Interestingly, the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck is now a seemingly permanent fixture at Silver Lake, Rehoboth, DE. Multiple Little Gulls were noted in PA and NJ. Hidden Lake, Bucks, PA hosted a "Common" Teal 4/8. Two Snowy Owls were found in Cape May, NJ in mid-Mar. The Sandy

Northeast: A "Black" Brant was discovered 4/10 at Stratford, Fairfield, providing CT with its 1st record. Ross's Geese continue to surge in number and expand their range to the east; 2 were in ME, 1 was in MA, and another was in PE. The last bird gave the province its 2nd record of the species, at North Tryon Marsh 3/21–22. A remarkable total of 43 Little Gulls was tallied at Fort Niagara State Park, NY 4/11. A "Common" [Mew] Gull was photographed 3/20 at West Haven, New Haven, CT. This is the state's 2nd record of Mew Gull; the 1st was not identified to subspecies. A Thayer's Gull was seen on Cape Cod, MA 4/12. Birders continued to be delighted by a Great Gray Owl in southern NH. A lingering male Varied Thrush (also PE's 2nd) was captured on film 3/20.

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 1st winter record for the state, a Eurasian Wigeon was reported from Wabash, MN 3/29. A pair of Barrow's Goldeneye was found 4/2 in Brookings,

SD. Toronto, ON continued to host a Western Grebe through late Mar. A gorgeous white-morph Gyrfalcon was seen at Amherst Island, ON 4/4. Garden, NE hosted a Common Crane 3/18–21. A Black-headed Gull appeared at Niagara Falls, ON 4/5. A Laughing Gull was seen at Wheatley,



Cuban Black-Hawk. Callaway Gardens, Georgia; 10 April 2009.
© Kelly and Jason Floress.

Hook, NJ Bohemian Waxwing continued through the period. The Green-tailed Towhee continued at a backyard feeder in Camden, NJ. A quartet of Brewer's Blackbirds was present in Salem, NJ. Good numbers of White-winged Crossbills were still being reported in PA through early Apr.



“Common” [Mew] Gull. West New Haven, Connecticut; 20 March 2009. © Mark Szantyr.

ON 3/24–26, and a 2nd-cycle Little Gull was at Rice Lake, *Fulton*, IL 4/12. A Loggerhead Shrike was located in Ottawa, ON 4/6. OH’s 2nd Mountain Bluebird, an immature male, was discovered 4/5 in *Lucas*. Duluth, MN’s **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was still present, and OH had its 1st record of the species in Hancock 4/7. While locally common in the state in spring migration, a tally of 1,000+ Smith’s Longspurs in *Mason*, IL 4/5 was exceptional; large tallies of 100+ birds were also found at the eastern edge of their migration corridor in *Montgomery*, *Benton*, and *White*, IN.

South-Central: A **Ruddy Ground-Dove** continued near San Angelo, TX. **Masked Ducks** were found at 2 locations in TX’s Lower Rio Grande Valley: Laguna Atascosa NWR and Estero Llano Grande SP, and the immature male Rose-throated Becard continued to be seen sporadically at the latter location. An early Black-whiskered Vireo was found at Grand Isle, *Jefferson*, LA 3/28. A belated report of a nicely photographed Green-tailed Towhee 2/16 at Mandalay NWR in *Terrebonne* would

constitute about the 10th LA record. TX hosted **Blue Buntings** at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* and *Frontera* Audubon Thicket in Weslaco, *Hidalgo*, and a female **Crimson-collared Grosbeak** continued at the latter location, where a Black-capped Vireo was discovered 4/11. One or 2 adult male Bullock’s Orioles were seen at Johnson’s

Bayou, *Cameron*, LA 4/4–7. A pair of Pine Siskins was noted building a nest in Fayetteville, *Washington*, AR 4/5; this constitutes only the 2nd breeding attempt for the state. A reminder of the late fall movement through the area and into Mexico, Pine Siskins were noted in *Cameron* and *Hidalgo*, TX in early Apr.

Mexico: A **Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge** was at Talquián, Chiapas 3/11. Three Black-legged Kittiwakes were found at Xcaret, Quintana Roo. A Common Murre was photographed in northern Baja California waters off Tijuana 3/8. **Rufous Sabrewings** were found above and within the village of Unión Juárez, Chiapas 3/12. A Willow Flycatcher (probably one of the western subspecies), a Dusky-capped Flycatcher, and 2 “San Lucas” American Robins were found at El Rosario, Baja California Sur (BCS); the robins were at what is an unusually low elevation for the taxon. A **Townsend’s Solitaire** was discovered along the road to San Antonio de la Sierra, BCS 3/23. A



Varied Thrush. Cardigan North, Prince Edward Island; 20 March 2009. © Dwaine Oakley.



Blue Bunting. *Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Texas; 24 March 2009.* © Nolan A. Lameka.

Northern Nightingale-Wren was noted at the extreme western edge of the species' range at El Ocote, Chiapas 3/18. A Virginia's Warbler was found 3/26 at Mulegé, BCS. La Venta, Oaxaca hosted a "Western" Palm Warbler 4/9 and a Prothonotary Warbler 4/7. An apparent Northern Cardinal × *Pyrrhuloxia* hybrid was photographed 3/20 at San José del Cabo, BCS. Not often seen in the Valley of Oaxaca, a "Dickey's" Audubon's Oriole was seen just north of Oaxaca City 3/19.

Interior West: Holoman Lakes, Otero, NM hosted an Anhinga 3/31. Tucson's urban Short-tailed Hawk was last reported 3/24. Rare in spring, a Baird's Sandpiper was in Tucson 3/24. A Ruddy Ground-Dove was at Percha Dam SP, Sierra, NM 3/26. A male Vermilion Flycatcher was photographed 3/25 in Adams, CO and would constitute a 1st county record. A Rufous-backed Robin and an Eastern Phoebe were noted at AZ's Muleshoe Ranch 3/20. The lingering Sinaloa Wren was still present (and still reclusive) in Santa Cruz, AZ. Cochise, AZ's Blue Mockingbird continued through the end of the period. A Tennessee Warbler was photographed in Maricopa, AZ, April

2. A Yellow-throated Warbler was photographed on AZ's upper Santa Cruz River 3/30–4/2, while another was in Cochise 3/27. Probably present since at least late Jan., a Black-throated Green Warbler was in Cochise, AZ, 3/24. A Palm Warbler was present 3/18–4/4 at Percha Dam State Park, NM. NV's 1st White-winged Crossbills seemed to have set up shop and were suspected of breeding in Elko. Florida Canyon in AZ's Santa Rita Mountains continued to host a pair of Rufous-capped Warblers. A Painted Redstart was in Clark, NV 4/6; 2 Common Grackles overwintered at the same location. A Purple Finch was found at a rest stop 40 miles east of Roswell, Chaves, NM 3/27.

Pacific Coast: A Red-breasted Goose of unknown origin was most recently seen with a flock of Cackling Geese 4/11 in Benton, OR. A Bewick's Swan was at Lake Almanor, Plumas, CA on 3/12, while a Trumpeter Swan was at Modoc NWR, Modoc, CA 3/20. A male Garganey in nearly full alternate plumage was seen at Aimakapa Pond, Hawaii, HI 3/30–31. A Laysan Albatross was seen from shore at Point Pinos, Monterey 3/22, while the Arena

Cove, Mendocino, CA bird continued for its 16th year. Two Manx Shearwaters were seen on a pelagic trip off San Diego 3/7, and another was seen flying by Pigeon Point, San Mateo, CA 4/4. Two Yellow-billed Loons were at Tomales Bay, Marin, CA 3/11–28. Single Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued at Lake Perris, Riverside through 4/7 and Piute Ponds, Los Angeles, CA through 4/5. An adult Little Gull continued at Lake Perris, Riverside, CA though late Mar. A putative Iceland Gull continued in Lompoc, Santa Barbara, CA. A basic-plumaged Black Tern present at Kaelepu Pond, Oahu, HI on 3/23+ may have been the same bird seen in the Kahuku area of Oahu in Dec. Initially located 2/17, a female Belted Kingfisher was relocated and photographed in Kapalua, Maui, HI 3/11. A Thick-billed Kingbird continued in Los Angeles, CA through 3/25. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher continued in La Mirada, Los Angeles, CA through 4/6. Three Brown Thrashers were in CA: 1 at Coyote Hills Regional Park, Santa Clara 3/8–14, 1 at Wiest Lake County Park, Imperial 4/1–7, and 1 at Bodega Bay, Sonoma 3/31–4/5. CA's 2nd "Mangrove" [Yellow] Warbler was last seen in San Diego mid-March. Single Pine Warblers continued in Costa Mesa, Orange, and Chula Vista, San Diego, CA. A Grace's Warbler continued in Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA. A Common Redpoll was in Fresno, Fresno, CA on 3/12; it would be the southernmost record for the state. Two Cassin's Finches were present in Sitka, AK. A Puaiohi (Small Kaua'i Thrush) was seen in the Alakai Swamp, Kaua'i 3/19, and 1 Maui Parrotbill and 1 'Ākohekohe were seen in Waikamoi Preserve, Maui 4/5; since the arrival of avian malaria to the Hawaiian Islands, these 3 species are all very rare and endangered and can be seen only in remote, high-elevation forests.