BIRD ALERT: UNSEEN VISITORS

A recent paper on at-sea distribution of the endangered Bermuda Petrel (Madeiros, Flood, and Zufelt. 2014. Conservation and at-sea range of the Bermuda Petrel (Pterodroma cahow), North American Birds 67(4):546-547) included a map showing location returns from data-loggers mounted on the petrels. Some locations were in Bahama waters, and several were quite close to Abaco and Grand Bahama. Madeiros is preparing an in-depth study of the petrel’s at-sea distribution. In the mean time, birders in the Bahamas and TCI should look for this species.

BAHAMA AND TURKS AND CAICOS BIRD REPORT FALL 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Bahama Archipelago had another quiet fall with no hurricane. Several locally rare species punctuated the season’s birding – Bufflehead, Trindade Petrel, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, and New Providence’s first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in recent memory.

WATERFOWL TO SKIMMER

Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks of uncertain provenance found at Cable Beach, New Providence 29 Jul remained until 15 Aug (PD, m.ob.). A f. Wood Duck at Ardastra Gardens & Zoo, Nassau 30 Nov+ (MG) was not
part of the zoo’s collection. White-cheeked Pintails at the Cruise Ship Terminal on Grand Turk 4 Nov were unusual (JN). Seven Green-winged Teal at Sandy Pt., Abaco 20 Sep were early and at an unusual location (EB). A f. **Bufflehead** was on a pond at Emerald G. C., Grand Bahama 18-30 Nov+ (EG, DN ph.). American Flamingos did not breed on Great Inagua this year due to drought and low water on Lake Rosa (HN). However, 60 were at Chancery Pond, Clarence Town, Long I. 2 Aug (AS), 133 were at the Salinas Pond, South Caicos 27 Oct (EH), and 800 were seen along the N. Dam Rd., Great Inagua 14 Nov (RCB). On an 11 Nov sea-watch from Stargazer, Providenciales, Farnsworth saw 2 **Trindade Petrels** (the first report for Turks & Caicos and second for the Bahama Archipelago), 4 Black-capped Petrels, and 29 Audubon Shearwaters. An imm. Brown Booby begged for food at a restaurant on Man-O’-War Cay, Abaco 17 Aug (SG ph.); others were seen on Great Guana Cay, Abaco 29 Aug (AC) and 16 Nov (EB). On 5 Nov Neves saw a Brown Booby e of Cat I. at 10:50 AM and 3 e of northern Eleuthera at 3:30 PM. Single Neotropic Cormorants were outside their normal range at Reef G.C., Grand Bahama 4 Sep (EG) and Half Moon Cay (Little San Salvador) 18 Oct (RN). Over 100 cormorants (probably Neotropic) gathered at Great Inagua in Nov (HN, LG).
Single American Bitterns were at Wilson Pond, New Providence 18 Oct (PD, LL, WP) and the former citrus farm, Abaco 28 Oct (EB, BM). Roseate Spoonbills are only occasional on Abaco so one west of Cooperstown 2 Aug (OM) and another flying over Sandy Point 26 Aug (CW) were noteworthy. A Northern Harrier was at the former citrus farm, Abaco 25 Oct and 27 Nov (EB, BM). An American Avocet was at the Cemetery Salinas, South Caicos 22 Oct (EH, WW). Two American Golden-Plovers were photographed at the Freeport Dump, 27 Sep (EG ph., DK, JC). A team surveying Great Inagua on 23 Sep found 16 Snowy Plovers, 400 Black-necked Stilts, 171 Lesser Yellowlegs, 11 White-rumped Sandpipers, and 1200 Western/Semipalmated Sandpipers (MJ, WG, SS, PM, RCB). An Upland Sandpiper was at Blue Shark G.C., New Providence 17 Aug (TW, AS). Single Whimbrels were seen at Matthew Town, Great Inagua 3 Nov (RCB) and Long Beach, South Caicos 7 Nov (EH). Eight Pectoral Sandpipers on the BahaMar G. C., New Providence 6 Aug was a good count (PD, LL). Bracey found a White-rumped Sandpiper at the Treasure Cay dump, Abaco 10 and 18 Nov. Five Herring Gulls at Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park, Bahamas 13 Sep were early (DM). An immature Lesser Black-backed Gull at the Western Esplanade, Nassau 11 and 25 Oct (WP); and an adult was there 18 Oct (WP, LL, PD). A Gull-billed Tern was feeding 2
juveniles on Southwest Ridge 6 Aug (PD LL). On Abaco 2 Common Terns were at Green Turtle Cay 29 Aug (EB), and one was at Sandy Pt. 15 Nov (RP). Topping saw single Black Skimmers while bonefishing west of Cooperstown, Abaco 27 Sep and west of Little Abaco 28 Sep.

**CUCKOOS TO ORIOLES**

Single Yellow-billed Cuckoos were seen repeatedly on New Providence 2-26 Aug (BCNP, LH ph., WP, PD); 2 were at Lucaya National Park, Grand Bahama 16 Sep (EG), one at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 25 Sep (EG), and one at Matthew Town, Great Inagua, 23-30 Oct (RCB). A flock of 60+ Antillean Nighthawks was observed flying south past Marsh Harbour, Abaco 15 Aug (OP). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 12 Nov (CF). There were nine reports of Peregrine Falcons in the Bahamas Archipelago this fall: 17 Oct at Adelaide, New Providence (JB), 28 Oct at Great Inagua (RCB), one seen from a cruise ship off the Berry Is. 1 Nov (TL), South Caicos 7 Nov (EH), and the Treasure Cay area of Abaco 1, 6, 8, 9 and 25 Nov (EB KK). Eastern Wood-Pewees were found at Great Cistern, Abaco 25 Sep (EB), The Retreat, Nassau 16 Oct (JB), Blue Holes National Park, Andros 18 Oct (BV), and Grand Turk 4 Nov (JN). An Acadian Flycatcher at Sandy Point, Abaco 20 Sep was a good find (EB); so was an Eastern Phoebe at Lighthouse Point, Andros 18 Oct
Gates found 5 Eastern Kingbirds at Reef G. C., Grand Bahama 24 Sep. A Gray Kingbird feeding a juvenile 17 Sep at Queen’s College, Nassau (PD ph) was a late breeder or possibly had a second brood. The flycatcher of the season, though, was a Fork-tailed Flycatcher (the Bahamas’ third) at a backyard in Great Cistern, Abaco 24 Sep (SC ph.). This bird was a one day wonder, and Cartwright, a non-birder, deserves accolades for identifying it and taking a confirmation photos.

Between 16 Oct and the end of Nov there were 9 reports of White-eyed Vireos in the Bahamas Archipelago. The increased number of reports is probably due to better skills in distinguishing this species from the common and similar Thick-billed Vireo. A Blue-headed Vireo was at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 12 Nov (CF). Burrows found four immature martins with 45 Barn Swallows at Matthew Town, Great Inagua 19 Nov. The late date (a month later than previous 2014 reports of Purple Martins) and proximity to Cuba and Hispaniola raise the possibility that these birds were Cuban or Caribbean Martins. A House Wren was at the North Dump, Little Abaco 25 Oct (EB, BM). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is a former resident on New Providence (BB 1975) that was extirpated over 50 years ago, so one photographed at Coral Harbour 1 Nov (BCNP, LH ph.) was an exciting find. A Gray-cheeked Thrush at the Abaco Nursery 28 Oct (EB) and a Hermit
Thrush in Gates’ Garden on Grand Bahama 23 Sep -7 Oct (EG) were the only Catharus thrushes reported in the Bahamas this fall. A Brown Thrasher present at the abandoned restaurant north of Treasure Cay, Abaco 25-30 Nov+ (EB ph., BM) provided the first record for Abaco and the third record for the Bahamas where it has not been seen since Oct 1996.

Thirty-two species of warbler were reported in the Bahamas this fall. Highlights included 2 Swainson’s Warblers at the abandoned restaurant near Treasure Cay 25-30 Nov (EB, BM ph.), single Hooded Warblers at Waterloo Rd., Nassau 15 Sep (PD), The Retreat, Nassau 15 Oct (IG), and on Abaco 14 Oct and 1 and 6 Nov (EB), a Kirtland’s Warbler at the abandoned restaurant 25 Nov (EB), a Bay-breasted Warbler at Treasure Cay 23 Oct (EB), a Blackburnian Warbler at Garden of the Groves 12 Nov (CF), and a Wilson’s Warbler at Great Cistern, Abaco 25 Nov (EB). A Clay-colored Sparrow was seen at Angelfish Point, Abaco 25 Oct (EB, BM). Two White-crowned Sparrows were at the North Dump, Little Abaco 25 Oct (EB BM); another was at Castaway Cay, Abaco 2 Nov (TL). A Scarlet Tanager was at Shannon Pond, Grand Bahama 18 Oct (EG). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at The Retreat, Nassau 17 Oct (JB, JF, SK), a Blue Grosbeak at Crown Haven, Abaco 25 Oct (EB, BM) and 2 Blue Grosbeaks at South Beach, Grand Turk 4 Nov (JN) were all good finds. The high count for Boblinks this fall was
only 36 on 18 Sep near Sunset Ridge, Abaco (EB). A Boat-tailed Grackle was at the Ocean Club G.C., Paradise I. 16 Oct (JF, FC), and a Shiny Cowbird was at the Gladstone Rd. Agriculture Centre 12 Aug (WP PD).

Baltimore Orioles were seen at Sandy Pt. 20 Sep and Great Cistern 25 Sep, both Abaco (both EB), and Little Stirrup Cay (Coco Cay), Berry Is. 15 Oct (JT).