

Alaka'i region of Kaua'i to monitor native landbird populations and particularly the remaining Endangered species. During a survey trip the 3rd week of June, biologists found perhaps 5 separate pairs of Puaiuhi (Endangered), some with accompanying juveniles. Good news indeed. The critically Endangered Kaua'i Nukupuu was sighted possibly 3 times during May and June surveys, but none of the other Endangered Kaua'i species have yet been encountered (*vide*TS).

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West Indies Region

ROBERT L. NORTON

Now that drought in the West African Sahel region has abated and the influence of the last El Niño is professed dead (see Gray, Colorado State University), precipitation in the Eastern Caribbean should return to normal from the devastating dry period that lasted nearly a year.

— Tropical storm *Erin* opened the hurricane season in the West Indies, bringing heavy rains to the northern Bahamas in late July. Rainfall measured at St. John, United States Virgin Islands (approximately mid-point of the Puerto Rican marine platform) was average for the season (+2%); June was down 32% and July up 28% (100-year POR).

— A very serious situation, however, is occurring on Montserrat, where tremblers and emission from its sleepy volcanic peak, Soufriere, in the southeast part of the island have terrorized residents since July 18.

— Evacuation plans for the capitol city, Plymouth, in the southwest to Old Fort Point in the north have been put into motion for all residents. Ash, deadly gases, and debris could cause mortality of birds and loss of habitat for

regional endemics, the Forest Thrush and Monserrat Oriole, already close to extinction.

Abbreviations: Andros (*Andros I., Bahamas*); BA (*Bahamas*); ENSO (*El Niño Southern Oscillation*); GB (*Grand Bahama*); StL (*St. Lucia*).

Grebes to Terns

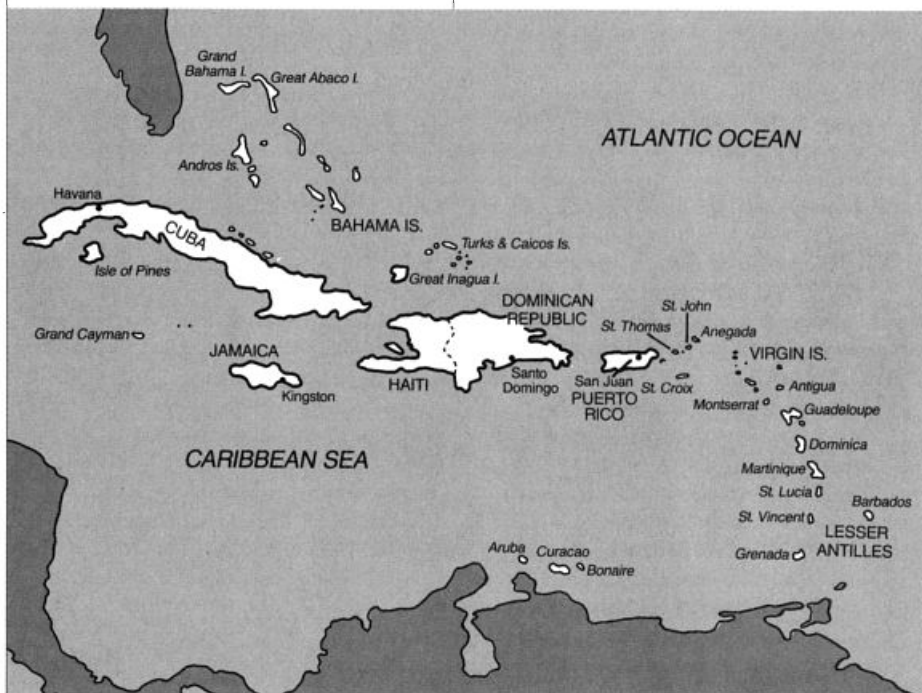
Least Grebes were at Andros, where Baltz found four immatures with an adult at Small Hope pond July 30.

— A Brown Pelican was seen at Goulding Cay, New Providence, BA July 1 (AB), and Baltz observed a Brown Pelican in breeding plumage at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 27. The status of Brown Pelican in the n. Bahamas is curious and breeding should be carefully noted. They formerly nested at the Biminis.

— A Great Egret was seen at Eau Piquant pond near Vieux Fort, StL June 1, and a pair of breeding plumaged Little Egrets were also noted at Eau Piquant Pond (PW&SAS). It's quite possible these birds are nesting at St. Lucia, since breeding has been confirmed at Barbados (*AFN*49 (2): 203) to the east.

— An imm. White Ibis was noted at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 31 (MB), and three Roseate Spoonbills, including one immature, were seen foraging together for several hours at Staniard Cr. Five Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were reported (PM, *vide*AB) at a residence pond the last two weeks of June at New Providence, BA.

— Among the over-summering shorebirds seen at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 27 were five Black-bellied Plovers, four Semipalmated Plovers, three Ruddy Turnstones, and ten peeps, including one W. Sandpiper (MB). A Willet in breeding plumage was



noted at Ravine St. Urban near Vieux Fort, StL June 1 (PW&SAS).

Nesting Sooty Terns at Goulding Cay, New Providence, BA mobbed a Burrowing Owl from their midst July 1 (AB). Only two checks were seen on what seemed like a late date (AB).

The majority of terns, including Bridled and Brown Noddy, apparently were on eggs, which suggests the owl had been predated chicks regularly there for weeks.

Parrots to Cowbirds

Several St. Lucia Parrots were heard and seen at Quillease Forest Res., June 1 (PW&SAS), where the endemic national bird is fairly well established.

Two White-crowned Pigeon nests with eggs, probably 2nd or 3rd attempts, were found July 27 at Andros (MB). Eared Doves were fairly common (PW&SAS) at Vieux Fort, StL June 1 but were not encountered elsewhere on the island this time of year.

At least four Chuck-will's-widows were heard calling repeatedly at GB June 10 (J&AP), strongly suggesting breeding birds in the n. Bahamas.

A Yellow-throated Warbler seen at Andros July 29 (MB) was very early if not the Bahamian race. An ad. Olive-capped Warbler was seen feeding a recently fledged juvenile among pine branches at GB June 10 (J&AP).

A single St. Lucia Black Finch was noted at Quillease Forest Reserve June 1 (SA&PWS). A pair of Red-winged Blackbirds, male and female, were observed on territory at a small pond at an abandoned golf course near Garden Groves, GB June 10 (J&AP).

Baltz recorded Shiny Cowbirds daily near several settlement on n. Andros from July 27-31. This does not bode well for indigenous or endemic songbirds of the Bahamas.

Addendum

Received too late for the spring report were observations of imm. N. Gannet off NE Providence Channel, New Providence, BA May 7; two Cory's Shearwaters, as well as two N. Gannets, in NW Channel off Berry Is., BA May 8 (TW).

Also received were photographs of breeding Red-footed Booby at a small cay off San Salvador, BA. A pair of white-morph adults with a chick were found April 28, 1995 for the first documented record for the Bahamas this century (AB, BM).

Tony White relates that the Red-footed Boobies were in the area since 1986, but breeding could not be confirmed (*vide AS*). Details expected elsewhere. Bent (1922), however, reported a rumored single nesting on Atwood's (or Samana) Cay, BA.

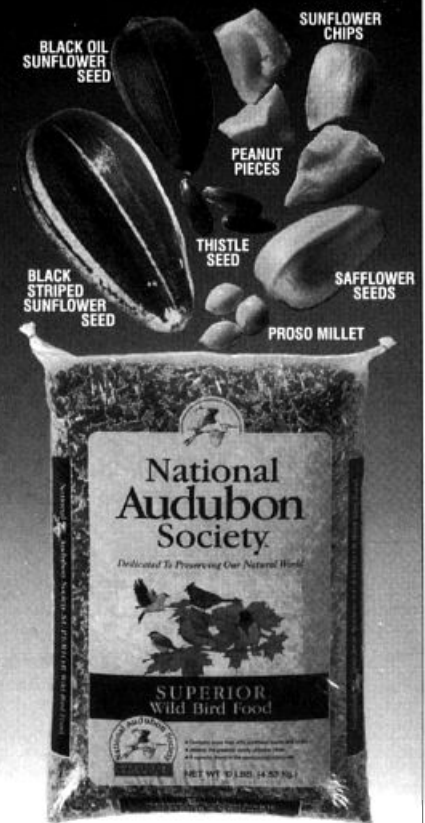
SA After years of speculation comes confirmation of the most northerly nesting in the West Indies (or tropical w. Atlantic) of Red-footed Booby. Although Chapman (1906) reasoned that Audubon's (1832) impugned Florida Keys Brown Booby breeding colony was a Red-footed colony, this theory has not been recognized (AOU 1983). And how long have they been nesting in the Bahamas anyway? Bent's (1922) report of a nesting on Atwood's Cay (Samana Cay), or its satellites, could date to 1891, when professional collector and naturalist D.P. Ingraham was working in the region (Buden 1987). Allen (1905) reports an imm. specimen was taken at Andros in 1905. Yet, more intriguing in the present case is the close attendance of a sub-ad. Red-footed which suggests nesting occurred there some years earlier. As with the local expansion of Red-footeds in the Virgin Is. and Masked Booby at Sombrero I. off Anguilla (RLN), they were apparently drawn to an established Brown Booby colony. And, like Frenchcap Cay, St. Thomas (pers. observ.), sub-adults return to natal colonies prospecting for nesting opportunities. Single case or intermittent nestings of Red-footed among remote, "breed" cays of the Bahamas could be occurring more often than we know. Could these changing nesting patterns suggest subtle shifts in pelagic fish populations or marine conditions? Inasmuch as Masked and Red-footed boobies are generally pelagic feeders, they are susceptible to the vagaries of ENSO. Fish populations are greatly affected by these events and force their predators (large fish and birds) to wander poleward seeking food. Remember the world-famous 1982-1983 ENSO? While the tropics have been released from the most recent event, Red-footed nesting in the Bahamas is probably the result of food resources at a higher latitude, appropriate nesting habitat, and breeding congeners. Notwithstanding, the San Salvador booby colony warrants monitoring and protection.

Other late observations from the Bahamas (AB, BH, TW) include three Lesser Scaup at San Salvador April 29, Peregrine Falcon at San Salvador April 27, two Herring Gull at New Providence April 25, and three Chimney Swifts at San Salvador April 28 (BH).

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