

# pictorial highlights

## Spring Migration



Adding to the growing number of Black-tailed Gull records in eastern North America, this one provided a first for Newfoundland at St. John's May 19, 1998. Nearing adult plumage, this bird still showed some brown in the coverts and tertials. Black-tailed has been considered a three-year gull (reaching adult plumage in its third winter), which would make this individual a second-summer bird, but there is some evidence suggesting it is a four-year gull, in which case this bird would be probably in third-summer plumage.

Photograph/ Bruce Mactavish

At Headlands Beach State Park, Ohio, the two Pomarine Jaegers that had been found in February remained into the spring. This one was photographed on March 28, 1998. Photograph/ Larry Rosche



When Geoff Dennis found an unfamiliar warbler on Monhegan Island, off the coast of Maine, May 21, 1998, he had the presence of mind to photograph it extensively. The photos documented it as a Virginia's Warbler—a western species recorded only once before in the eastern United States (but several times in eastern Canada).

Note the gray appearance, white eye-ring, and yellow on chest and on undertail coverts. Photographs/ Geoffrey Dennis

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As evidence of the continuing northward expansion of Great-tailed Grackle, this male at Grovers Lake Wildlife Management Area, Minnesota, April 19, 1998, was actually part of a small colony. This site is on the Iowa-Minnesota border, and nests were found on the Iowa side of the line. Photograph/ Peder Svingen



Astonishingly far out of range was this White Wagtail at Huntington Beach State Park, South Carolina, April 16, 1998. The normal range of this species comes no closer than Greenland or western Alaska; head pattern of this individual suggested the Alaskan race, *ocularis*. Photographs/ Phil Turner



At Silver Islet Village, Manitoulin County, Ontario, on May 10, 1998, this female *Pheucticus* grosbeak (seen here with Evening Grosbeaks) sparked a debate: was it Rose-breasted, Black-headed, or a hybrid? In some lights it showed considerable buff on the chest, and the streaks on its underparts seemed a bit thin and sparse for a typical Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Photograph/ Linda Roy



Among the many significant birds banded this spring at the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, Thunder Bay, Ontario, was this male Painted Bunting on May 15, 1998. It provided the second record for northern Ontario. Photograph/ Graeme Gibson



The British birders who found this flycatcher at Big Bend National Park on April 4, 1998, took pains to document it, because the only similar bird in their field guides—Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher—is rare in Texas. However, these shots (taken from the original videotape) prove that the bird was an even better find: a Piratic Flycatcher, a first for Texas and only the third ever for the United States. Perhaps appropriately for a bird called "Piratic," this species has been initially identified as another species each time it has been found north of the Mexican border. Photographs/ Alec Cockle



In one of the most notable monitoring efforts of the season, the Migration Over the Gulf Project had observers placed on five oil platforms off the Louisiana coast for two months this spring. Preliminary highlights, discussed in the Central Southern Region report in this issue, involved both notable numbers and unexpected species. Out in the Gulf of Mexico in spring, few species could have been more surprising than this American Tree Sparrow, found on one of the platforms on April 22, 1998. Photograph/ Jon R. King



For those who were there, the spring fallout of Asian species on the Alaskan islands this season was unprecedented and unforgettable, with new high records set for numbers of individuals of many species. The biggest counts, predictably, were on Attu Island, which is geographically more like a part of Asia anyway; but the Pribilofs also had excellent numbers of strays, such as this Common Greenshank—one of four present on St. Paul Island on May 18, 1998. Photograph/ Ram Papish



When this kingbird showed up on the Gila River in southwestern New Mexico in late February 1998, it was initially considered to be the state's long-awaited first Tropical Kingbird (a species that breeds next door in southeastern Arizona). A closer study (and careful listening) revealed that it was actually New Mexico's second Couch's Kingbird—helping to emphasize that silent kingbirds out of range cannot be identified by assumptions about probability. Photograph/ Dale and Marian Zimmerman

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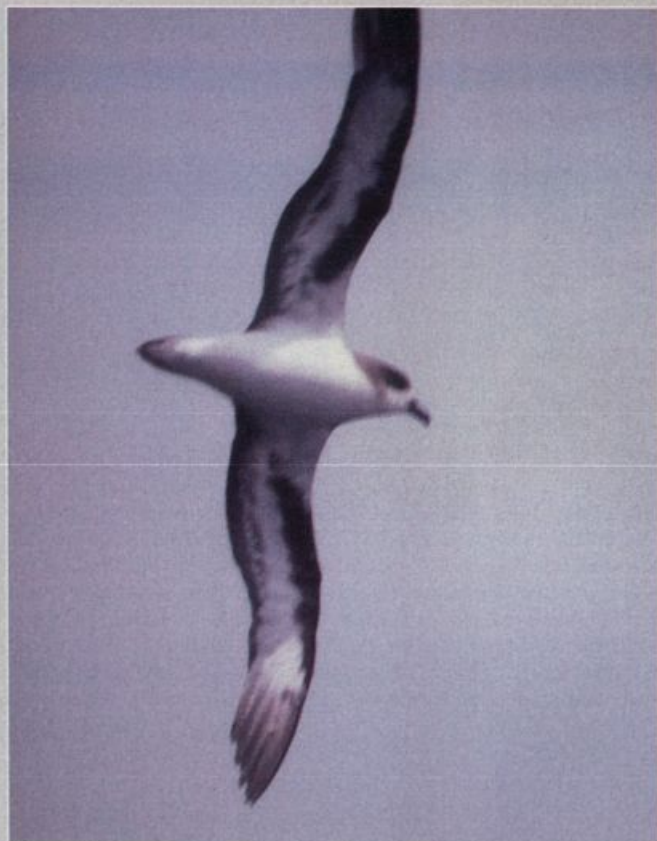


Most unexpected in the mountains of Colorado was this Le Conte's Sparrow at Estes Park in late April 1998. Photograph/ Dick Coe

Another view of the Black Noddy at Bolivar Flats on May 1, 1998.

The very pale wing coverts show the effects of wear on the plumage, and the flight feathers were also somewhat worn. Black Noddy occurs in very small numbers around the edges of the Caribbean region; this one was the second for Texas.

Photograph/  
Tony Leukering



Bermuda Petrel off Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, May 29, 1998. Pelagic expert Ned Brinkley writes: "This molting bird, probably an adult, is the third documented in these waters . . . Note the narrow wings, heavy black 'ulnar' bar that lies flush along the leading edge of the wing for most of its length, the carpal 'thumbprint' marks, dark spotting in greater undersecondary coverts, gray 'cowl' around head, and very petite bill (compared to Black-capped Petrel)." Photograph/ Edward S. Brinkley



Several teams participating in the Great Texas Birding Classic encountered this tern at Bolivar Flats on May 1, 1998. It was clearly a noddy, a very rare find in Texas, but opinion was divided at first as to which species it was. This portrait shows the very narrow, long bill typical of Black Noddy. Photograph/ Edward S. Brinkley