

Four inland Pacific Loons were found on three counts: two at Folsom, and one each at San Jacinto Lake and Springville. Well-documented Red-necked Grebes were farther south than usual on the Santa Barbara and Morro Bay CBCs. A Horned Grebe was photographed on the Salton Sea (south) CBC. Twenty well-documented Pink-footed Shearwaters substantially increased Morro Bay's previous high count. A single Short-tailed Shearwater was also noted on the Thousand Oaks CBC.

Two Reddish Egrets were present on the Salton Sea (south) count. For the 17th consecutive year, the Wood Stork continued on Escondido's CBC. Two California Condors were found on the Pinnacles National Monument CBC; Morro Bay also recorded its first condor during the count week.

Five Swainson's Hawks were found on the Stockton, Rio Consumnes, and East Contra Costa County counts. A Zone-tailed Hawk returned to Santa Barbara for its 12th winter. A well-documented Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk returned to the San Jose CBC.

Rock Sandpipers were found on the Arcata, Centerville Beach to King Salmon, and Santa Cruz County CBCs. Four Wilson's Phalaropes were recorded on the Sacramento and Stockton CBCs; in the past 20 years this species has been recorded only twice on these counts. A Laughing Gull was photographed on the Palos Verdes Peninsula CBC, and another was reported during count week from San Francisco. Four well-documented Glaucous Gulls were recorded on as many counts, and two others were reported during count week. A Black-legged Kittiwake was present on the San Diego count. One Common Tern was found on the Santa Cruz County count. Nine Pigeon Guillemots were reported from four circles, with Thousand Oaks recording this species for only its second time.

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their expansion in the state, with 174 at Salton Sea (south) and a total of 209 among 15 other counts. Many of these counts had not recorded this species

before. Spotted Doves continue to be recorded in smaller numbers, with 26 being recorded on six counts. One count, Bakersfield, is responsible for half of those individuals. White-winged Dove continues to increase, with 258 being recorded on the Anza-Borrego count. Salton Sea (south) recorded 62 Inca Doves and Death Valley added seven. Ruddy Ground-Doves also continue to increase on the Salton Sea (south) CBC, with 15 being recorded this year.

Eighty-nine Vaux's Swifts were recorded during this past CBC season, with a remarkable 87 reasonably well described on the Red Rock CBC; two others were well documented on the Oceanside-Vista CBC.

A Gila Woodpecker was found on the Salton Sea (south) count. Eight Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were recorded on seven counts: Bakersfield, Bishop, Crystal Springs, Lancaster, Marin County South, Morro Bay, and Ventura. Santa Cruz County added another during the count week. A total of 38 Red-naped Sapsuckers were reported from 25 count circles; details came with eight of the counts. Nineteen Yellow-shafted Flickers were reported from 12 counts.

*Empidonax* flycatchers were well represented this year. A total of five Hammond's Flycatchers were reported with excellent details from Bishop, a relatively northern and interior locale. Orange County (coastal), which recorded two, and Orange County (northeastern) also turned in carefully documented birds. San Diego reported a Hammond's Flycatcher as well, however, the details were marginal. A Dusky Flycatcher was

again recorded on the Orange County (northeastern) CBC and is believed to be the same bird as was found last year in this location. Another individual was on the Santa Cruz County CBC. Five Pacific-slope Flycatchers on as many counts and four "Western" Flycatchers on as many counts, as well as two others recorded during the count week and two left as *Empidonax* species, round out this genus.

Six Eastern Phoebes were reported from five CBCs: Salton Sea (south) had two while Morro Bay, Rio Consumnes, San Fernando Valley, and Thousand Oaks each recorded one. Vermilion Flycatchers continue to stray afar, with 19 birds recorded on 13 counts. Moss Landing and Los Baños found the northern most strays, while Salton Sea (south) and Anza Borrego had the most with five and three, respectively. Eleven other counts claimed one apiece. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher reported on the Long Beach count is currently under review by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Ash-throated Flycatchers were reported on five different counts, but good details came only from the Long Beach count. Single Tropical Kingbirds were well described from Orange County (coastal), Santa Barbara, and San Diego.

Of 13 Northern Shrikes on eight counts, one made it as far south as the Mono Lake CBC. This year a lone Cassin's Vireo was reported at Santa Barbara; no other counts recorded this species, bringing us to a 20-year low. Six Plumbeous Vireos were reported on five counts, with much appreciated details shared from the Lancaster and Orange County (coastal) counts.

Though some counts had swallows in higher numbers than previous years, most counts did not see the kinds of numbers they had last year. Twenty-nine Northern Rough-winged Swallows were on 10 southern California counts. The Salton Sea (south) CBC had one well documented of each, Bank and Cliff swallow. Barn Swallows also made a smaller showing than last year, with the state totaling 383 birds on 31 CBCs. Of



**Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*), Point Reyes Peninsula, California.**  
Photo/Kevin G. Larson



**Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*),  
Santa Barbara, California.  
Photo/Jim Greaves and Lark Chadwick**

those, 218 were from the Salton Sea (south) CBC. Of 30 other counts reporting Barn Swallows, most did so with single digits.

Many compilers noted that American Robins were reported in very low numbers, with some counts finding them absent altogether. Overall, numbers of this species were the lowest in almost a decade compared with the all-time high numbers reported statewide three short years ago. Of anecdotal interest is that editor Kelli Levinson and former CBC editor Matthew T. Heindel found phenomenal numbers of American Robins in the northeastern corner of California, specifically in Surprise Valley and en route between Modoc National Wildlife Refuge and Klamath Falls National Wildlife Refuge, on a four-day trip that fell within the count period (26–29 December 2004), but not within a count circle. Both observers arrived independently at the same number for a single day count: 250,000! One could easily jump to a wrong conclusion by looking only at the CBC data, which indicates about 49,000 in the entire state. It was mentioned by at least one compiler that the juniper berry crop in this region was phenomenal this winter, which may (or may not) have had something to do with an atypical dispersion.

The 17 species of warblers reported during this CBC period is well below average. Thirty-one Nashville Warblers were recorded on 16 CBCs. Fifty-five Yellow Warblers is likely an inflated number due to an improbable report of

29 from the Oceanside-Vista Count. Twenty-six others are scattered across 14 counts, with Orange County (northeastern) contributing six and Salton Sea (south) managing to find five. Two Magnolia Warblers were photographed, one at Santa Barbara and another at San Francisco. Fifty-three Black-throated Gray Warblers were found on 26 CBCs. The Orange County (coastal) count reported a Black-throated Green Warbler for the second year in a row. Nine CBCs recorded a total of 17 Hermit Warblers. A single bright Pine Warbler was photographed in Long Beach and is under review with the CBRC. Eleven CBCs recorded a total of 35 Palm Warblers, with Centerville Beach to King Salmon reporting 13, Arcata reporting seven, and Del Norte reporting four. The remaining 11 were scattered across eight counts. Nine Black-and-white Warblers were seen on as many CBCs, with another count reporting one during count week. Three American Redstarts were on two different CBCs. A Worm-eating Warbler was photographed in Santa Barbara and is currently under CBRC review. Two Northern Waterthrush were reported, with good details for one of them from Palo Alto. Lastly, 48 Wilson's Warblers were found on 19 different CBCs.

Five Summer Tanagers were found on as many counts, with supporting details coming in from Orange County (coastal), Orange County (northeastern), and San Francisco. One Scarlet Tanager is currently under CBRC review from the Oceanside-Vista count. Eighty-eight Western Tanagers were found on 30 counts, including two during count week. Single Green-tailed Towhees were found on the Oakland, Salton Sea (south), and San Diego counts; another was seen during count week on the Orange County (coastal) count. Six American Tree Sparrows were found on three northern CBCs. Three large-billed Savannah Sparrows were reported from two counts: Salton Sea (south) and Los Angeles, while another was seen count week at Morro Bay. Orange County (northeastern) and Rio



**Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*),  
Long Beach-El Dorado, California.  
Photo/Karen S. Gilbert**

Consumnes each recorded single Grasshopper Sparrows, and Oakland turned in a photo of a (Red) Fox Sparrow. Thirteen Harris's Sparrows were scattered across the state, mostly in singles, with the exception of Bishop, which had two well-documented birds. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found during the count week period for both Morro Bay and Oakland. A hybrid Golden-crowned x White-throated Sparrow was supported with good details (including a sketch) from the San Francisco count. Sixteen CBCs reported a total of 36 Swamp Sparrows; most counts reported just one or two with the exception of Arcata and Del Norte, which reported 11 and eight, respectively. Additionally, 170 White-throated Sparrows were found on 46 CBCs.

Three McCown's Longspurs were supported with excellent details from the Salton Sea (south) count. Fifty-four Lapland Longspurs were reported across the state, with 17 found as far south as the Salton Sea (south), which also recorded three Chestnut-collared Longspurs. Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported from five different counts, but only the Palos Verdes Peninsula CBC sent in substantiating details. One Black-headed Grosbeak was well described from the Santa Barbara count.

A well-documented Bronzed Cowbird was a good find on the Big Bear count. Three Orchard Orioles were reported on as many counts, with good details supporting one each from the Santa Barbara and San Francisco counts.

Single Hooded Orioles were found in Lincoln and San Jose. Twenty-two Bullock's Orioles were seen on 13 CBCs, and six Scott's Orioles were seen on two CBCs. Finally, a well-described Common Redpoll seen on the Honey Lake CBC is currently under review with the CBRC.

It would be nice if we could detail exactly which species require documentation and at which levels, however, in a state as large and varied as California, that really becomes a regional decision that must be made by the compilers. We know that we probably harp more on details than many would like, and that probably has something to do with reading description after description. After all, that is what the regional editors do, and we hope that it's not lost on participants that the good calls always far outweigh the difficult calls.

In regards to the above-mentioned Eurasian Wigeon, fewer and fewer compilers consider this species as being rare (particularly in northern California). Indeed, this species has increased dramatically in overall numbers during the past 25 years. However, the number of reported Eurasian x American Wigeons has averaged less than one a year, despite regular reports of hybrids on the Internet during the late fall and winter. Our sense is that some of these reported "pure" birds may in fact pertain to hybrids, and compilers should caution their participants to be aware of the possibility of such individuals.

Greater Scaup are considered extremely rare inland in winter in California. So it is surprising, suspicious, and perhaps a little bit intriguing that three northeastern California CBCs with large bodies of water, all within 40 or so miles of one another (their count circles are almost tangential to one another) collectively reported a total of 107 Greater Scaup out of a total of 564 scaup! Two of the three CBCs identified every scaup to species, a feat remarkable unto itself, and none of the count compilers submitted any details or indicated that this species was unusual. So we will not know (at least

this year) if Greater Scaup patterns are dynamically changing or whether something is, perhaps, amiss.

We felt compelled to remove four birds from the database this year. The described call of a Western Wood-Pewee from a northern California CBC was intriguing, but it was also described as having a "buffy-olive breast." Additionally, the description contrasted the bird with Black Phoebe, but not Say's or Eastern phoebes, the latter being a likely candidate and cause for the confusion. In the end, the description was not sufficient to include what would be an unprecedented record into the CBC database. A Hammond's Flycatcher was removed from a southern California CBC as the submitted photograph showed a partially hidden bird that looked to be a non-empidonax. An Island Scrub-Jay was reported as briefly seen on the Santa Catalina Island CBC. This species has never been recorded away from Santa Cruz Island, and Western Scrub-Jay is unrecorded on any of the Channel Islands off of southern California. The rather casual writeup did not indicate observer knowledge of this and overall did not substantiate what would be an unprecedented record. A Snow Bunting was removed from a northern California CBC as it was not indicated as unusual and no details were submitted for this CBRC review species. Finally, 24 Lesser Yellowlegs were changed to Greater Yellowlegs on the Diamond Valley count and 92 Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flickers were changed to Northern (Red-shafted) Flickers on the Calaveras count. Neither count reported any of the more expected species.

We appreciate the effort that compilers put forth to make their individual CBCs, and thus the entire CBC database, better. The following CBCs were submitted with a written summary (always helpful) and written documentation for all of their reported rarities (in taxonomical order). A few of these counts have rare bird subcommittees, which pre-review the submitted reports and provide helpful comments about

the reports and the observers submitting them. Many times compilers actually remove birds that do not meet their own requirements for inclusion. Kudos to Benicia, Bishop, Calero-Morgan Hill, Clear Lake, the Caswell-Westly/LaGrange-Waterford/Los Baños trio, Morro Bay, Oakland, Orange County, Palo Alto, Palos Verdes Peninsula, Santa Barbara, Salton Sea (south), San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Stockton, Thousand Oaks, and Western Sonoma County. Many of the above mentioned CBCs are some of the larger ones in the state. They are run and compiled with great coordination and organization. There are many other counts in our big state that do admirable jobs as well. Know that your efforts do not go unnoticed. We are also appreciative of the many notes of encouragement, constructive criticism, and thanks from compilers. We learn from your feedback. Many thanks, and we look forward to next year!

---

## HAWAII/PACIFIC ISLANDS

### Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and Guam

*Thane K. Pratt*

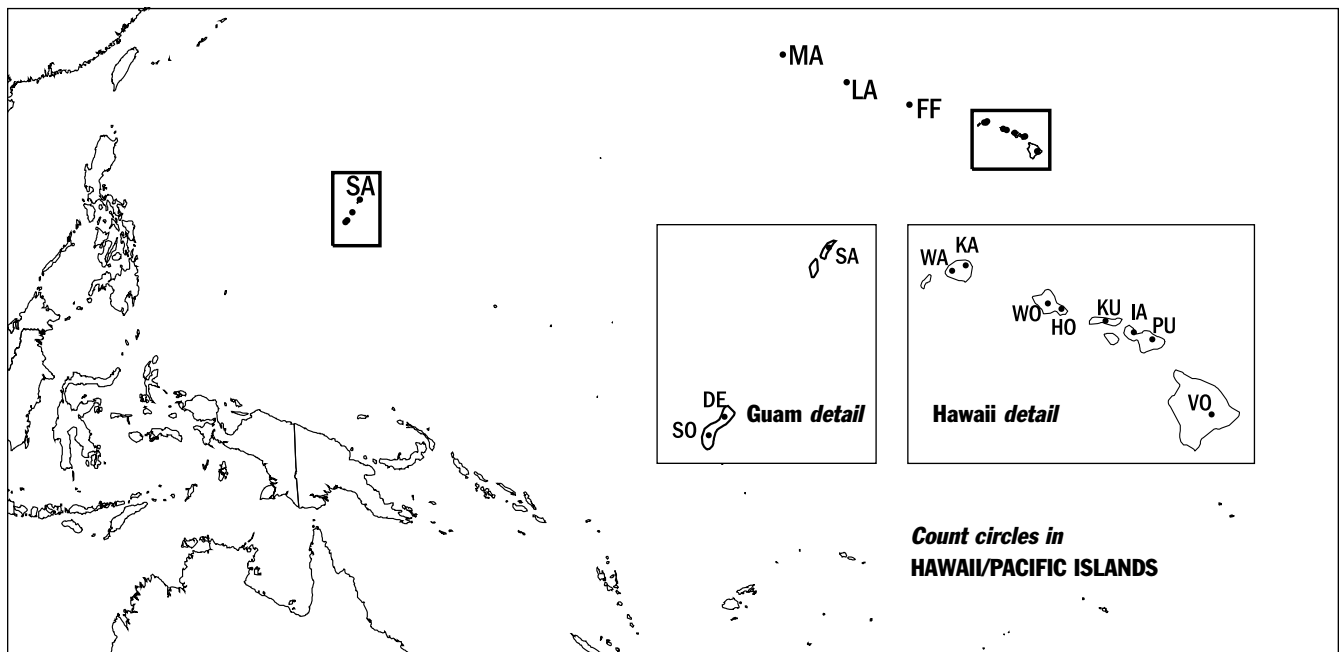
*SGS Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center  
P.O. Box 44*

*Hawaii National Park, HI 96718*

*thane\_pratt@usgs.gov*

The 105th Christmas Bird Count for Hawaii and the Mariana Islands in this region was held under moderate weather conditions compared with the extremely wet weather last season. The same 11 count circles in the Hawaiian Islands were covered as in the previous few years, but one circle, Rota (Marianas Islands), was omitted, for a total of four circles counted in those islands. Overall, participation was low and continues to decline in the Hawaii region. In some circles barely enough participants were on hand to initiate the count, and the coverage on more than one circle had to be reduced. Nevertheless, the 116 species counted in the Hawaiian Islands and 67 in the Mariana Islands were slightly higher than last year.

CBC counts of seabirds on the Midway, Laysan, and French Frigate



**Count circles in  
HAWAII/PACIFIC ISLANDS**

Shoals circles took advantage of the annual albatross counts held simultaneously by the Fish and Wildlife Service, giving volunteers a unique opportunity to experience these vast seabird colonies. Laysan and Black-footed albatross numbers remained within the range of previous years. Note that numbers of seabirds reported this year for Midway reflect the fact that only Sand Island was counted. (Eastern Island was inaccessible owing to rough seas).

Back on the main Hawaiian Islands, a count of 136 Laysans set a new record for the young colony protected at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. Counts of 55 White-tailed Tropicbirds and 101 Red-tailed Tropicbirds were very high numbers for Molokai. Vagrant seabirds included a Bonaparte's Gull on the Waimea, Kauai, circle, a Herring Gull on Midway, and single Caspian Terns at both Kaneohe Marine Corps Base, Oahu, and Kealia, Maui.

The star among waterfowl this year was the little Laysan Duck. A remarkably high count of 483 birds on its home island, Laysan, demonstrated the breeding success this year of the original wild population. The 105th CBC on Midway recorded another success: the introduction of Laysan Ducks to Midway. Counters spotted five ducks of the 19 present on the island. This is the first range expansion, albeit an assisted one,

since the Laysan Duck became marooned on Laysan ages ago. The fossil record tells that the duck once inhabited the main Hawaiian Islands and disappeared there, presumably as a result of human action. The Hawaiian Goose (Nene) also had a good year, on Kauai, where high counts of 128 and six were tallied on the Waimea and Kapaa circles, respectively. Following last year's lead, Kauai also reported excellent numbers of Hawaiian Duck. Hawaiian Stilts can be seen in big concentrations at Kealia refuge and neighboring wetlands on Maui, yet the count there of 531 birds was nevertheless a record.

Of the remarkable 11 vagrant White-faced Ibis reported last year from Kauai, five were counted this year at Hanalei. Singletons on Maui and Oahu may have been additional, recent arrivals, as at least the Oahu bird was in first-year plumage. The new Cattle Egret population on Midway continues to breed and grow rapidly: An astonishing 44 were reported, more than double the 18 last season. There were few noteworthy records among the other water birds. A vagrant Great Blue Heron was reported from Honolulu, Oahu, and a Red Phalarope was seen on Laysan. High counts of Sanderlings in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands stand out, with 19 on French Frigate Shoals and 27 on Laysan.

Migratory waterfowl numbers were unimpressive. Two hundred thirty-eight

Northern Shovelers were counted at Kealia, Maui, and high counts for Northern Pintails were 22 on Laysan and 36 on Molokai. Vagrants included a high count of five Eurasian Green-winged Teal on Midway, a Bufflehead on Laysan, five Eurasian Wigeons on the Waipio, Oahu, circle, and a Blue-winged Teal at Honolulu, Oahu.

Counters this year did not reach the best forests for native songbirds on Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii. On Kauai, where forests are more accessible, good numbers of Hawaiian honeycreepers were reported, including three Akikiki, a species of concern. Two Puaiohi, an endangered solitaire with its population in the low hundreds, were counted.

Two new CBC island records for non-native species were reported. Mourning Doves, first introduced to Hawaii Island, next showed up on Maui and then Oahu. The I'ao, Maui, circle tallied a record 65 doves this year, and for the first time five were reported from the national wildlife refuge at Honouliuli, Oahu. Two Saffron Finches on the lawn of the Kauai Veterans Memorial Hospital are the first of the species reported from that island. The origin of these Kauai birds could well be a neighborhood aviary.

The Mariana Islands again offered a good showing of migrants. Small numbers of Northern Shovelers, an unusual species, appeared on all circles except

Tinian, and two Gargany were reported from Southern Guam. An array of herons included high counts of Little Egrets for Southern Guam and Saipan circles, and amazingly three Grey Herons from Southern Guam and one on Saipan. Unusual shorebirds were a Common Ringed Plover from Saipan; small numbers of Black-winged Stilts from Dededo, Southern Guam, and Saipan, where 20 years ago the species would have been regarded an extreme rarity; and a Sanderling on Saipan. The star shorebird, and a first CBC record from the Southern Guam circle, was the Common Redshank, with two seen well at Sasa Bay Preserve. An all-time high count from Saipan was eight White-winged Terns; two Little Terns were new records from the Saipan circle. Counts of land birds were generally very low, except for the Saipan circle, which tallied high counts for most species and scored a very rare Micronesian Megapode.

**MEXICO/BELIZE**

*Claudia Macias Caballero*

*7a Sur Oriente 1446*

*Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas 29000 México*

*cmacias@itesm.mx*

We had the highest number of observers this year in the Mexico and Belize region

(356 birders!), as well as a higher number of circles: 24 out of the 27 currently registered in the CBC. Unfortunately, we missed one circle from Belize (Belmopan), as well as one circle from Sonora (Baviacora) and from Tamaulipas (Rancho Rincon de Anacahuítas).

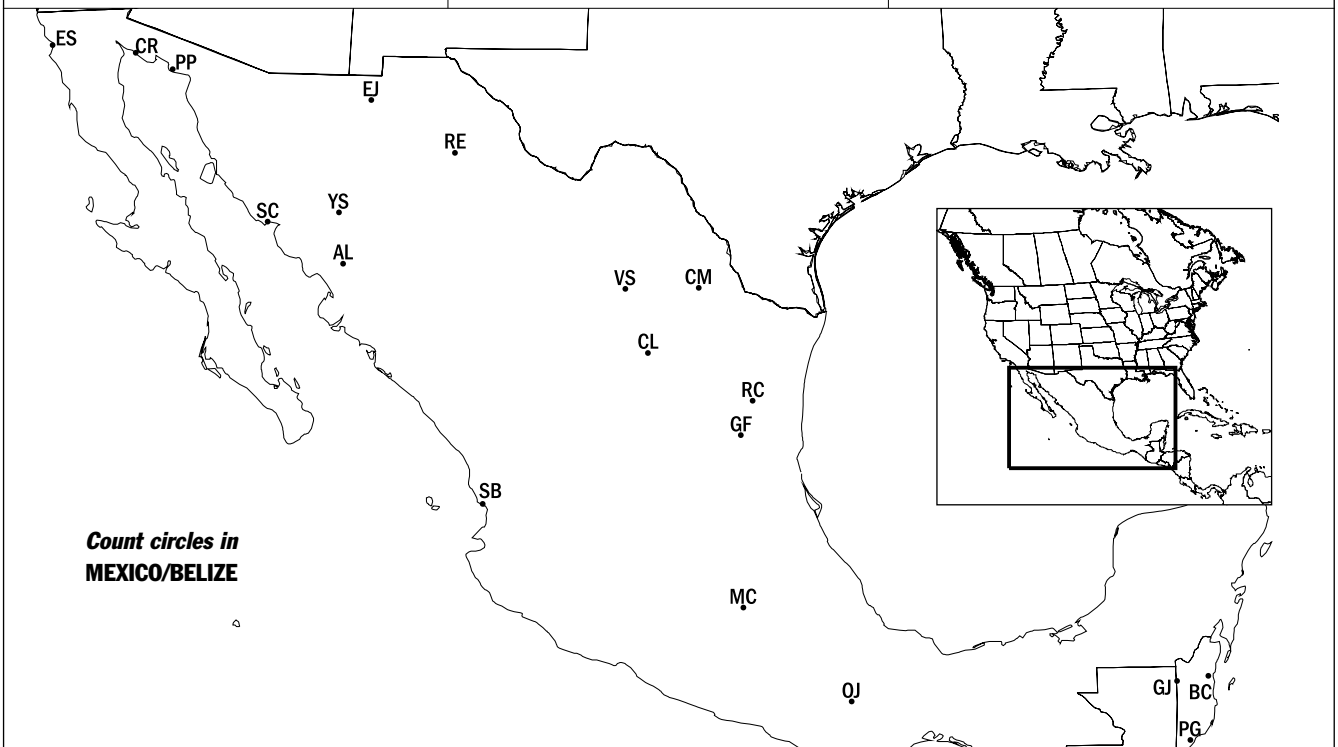
Happily, we had a great diversity of birds recorded: 173,207 individuals represented about 700 species—nearly 65 percent of the species that occur in this region. The circles with the highest diversity of bird species were Punta Gorda, Belize (264 species); Belize City, Belize (243); San Blas, Nayarit, (241); Oaxaca de Juarez, (207); Ensenada, Baja California (206); and Gallon Jug, Belize (205). Similar to last year, Ensenada stood out with the highest number of birds recorded (51,217), followed by Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, with 23,954 birds, and Ejido San Pedro, Chihuahua, with 13,058 birds recorded.

The main species seen in high numbers within the region were: Western Gull (16,393 individuals recorded in Ensenada), Lark Bunting (6254 individuals recorded in Rancho El Palomino), Black-vented Shearwater (4500 individuals recorded in Ensenada), and Pacific Loon (4110 individuals recorded in Puerto Peñasco). According to Steve

Ganley from the Puerto Peñasco count, the day before the count they had extreme winds, around 40–50 miles per hour, which made birding almost impossible. It did bring huge numbers of boobies into the coast, and there were thousands just off shore. On count day they were not as evident as they did not have the winds, but numbers were still above average.

Terry Brownell from the San Carlos, Sonora, count reported that the total number of individuals in this circle continues to decline. This year species representation was about average, but the days of thousands of cormorants, pelicans, loons, and grebes in the area around Guaymas appear to be over. Almost all species were low compared to past counts, including shorebirds and gulls, despite plenty of appropriate habitat and good weather.

There were a number of interesting “unusual species,” including the following: Mangrove Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, White-throated Flycatcher, Cape May Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler in Punta Gorda, Belize; Ross’s Goose, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Elegant Tern, MacGillivray’s Warbler, and Lark Bunting in Ensenada; Aplomado Falcon and Common



Pauraque in Gomez Farias; Bufflehead and Gray-breasted Woodpecker in Mexico City; Gray Hawk, Barred Owl (count week), Northern Saw-whet Owl (count week), Elegant Trogon, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-throated Warbler, Common Bush-Tanager, and Strong-billed Woodcreeper (count week) in Oaxaca; Snow Goose (white form), Harris's Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull (count week), Grey Catbird, Chipping Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora; Western Scrub-Jay and Harris's Sparrow in Yecora, Sonora; Tennessee Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, and White-winged Tanager in San Blas, Nayarit; and Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Bronzed Cowbird in San Carlos, Sonora.

Thank you very much to those compilers who devoted some time to include remarkable comments and interesting information on the "Special Aspects" form online or who sent rare bird documentation, sketches, and photos for unusual species. This information is extremely valuable and unique in the effort to better understand what is going on every year in the region.

Happily, interest and participation in the CBC continues to grow in the region. Two trial counts were run in Central Mexico this year; we hope they will be officially added to the next CBC.

Thanks to all 105 CBC participants—I wish all of you wonderful counting next year. Please keep up your meaningful efforts!

### CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Trinidad

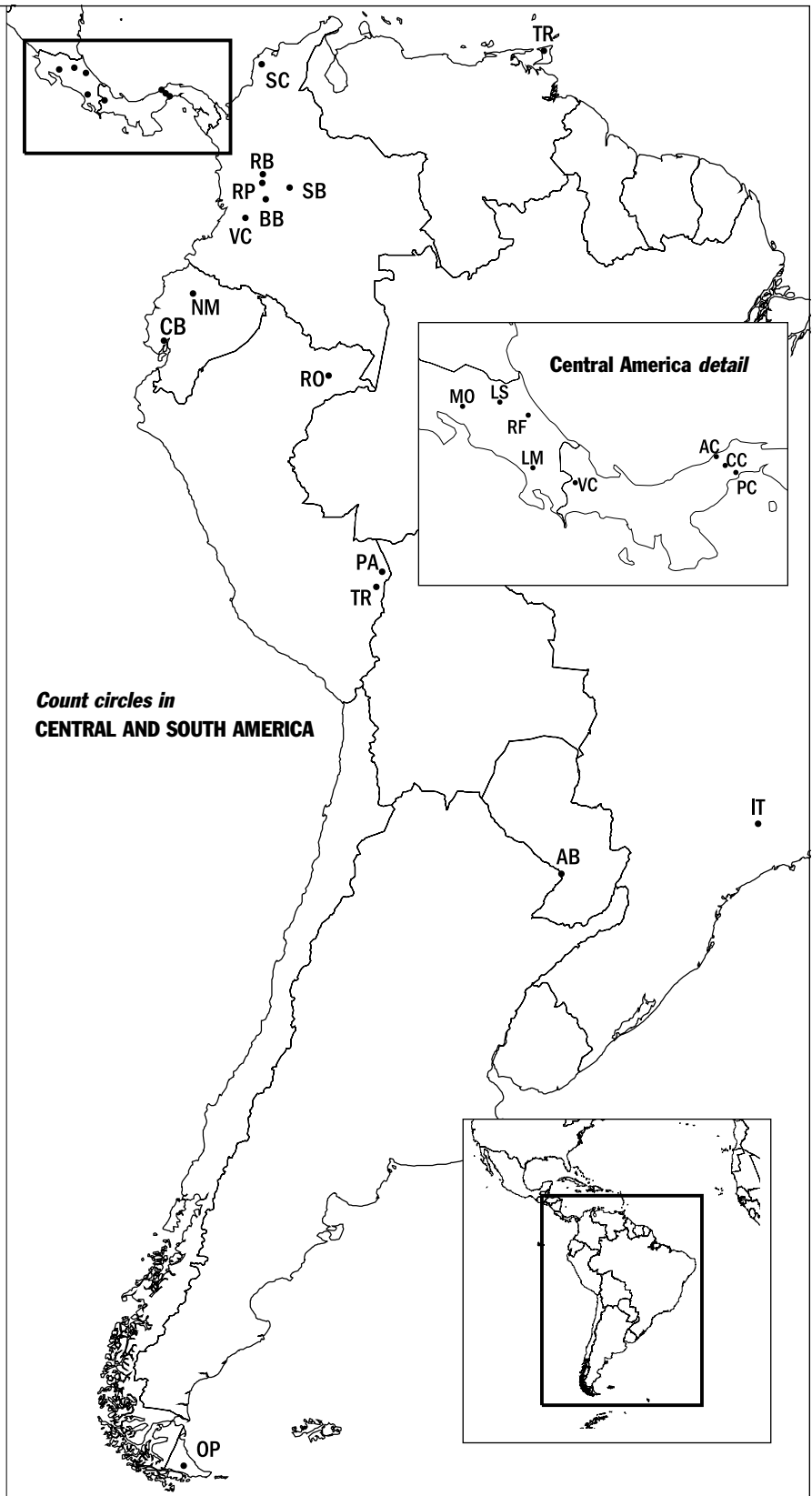
*Louis R. Bevier*

46 Back Road

Fairfield, ME 04937

lrbevier@colby.edu

The western Amazonian lowlands probably support the most species-rich areas in the world. What if a well-organized count were conducted in such an area where some localities have species lists of 500–550, and even exceed



600 in some places (e.g., Explorer's Inn and Tambopata, Peru)? What percentage of this total could realistically be detected in a single day? This year, a count was held in northeastern Ecuador near the Napo River and sponsored by some

famous ecotourist lodges there. The reported species total was a staggering 552 species. The number of species actually counted, however, may only be 471 (based on raw data submitted). Due to the challenges of Internet access in

South America and the lack of a definitive list of bird names or taxonomy for South America, the date entry system online reports yet another total, 459 species. Whichever number is correct, allowing for some differences in taxonomy from the CBC master list and normal observer error, which is understandably somewhat higher in this region because of the sheer number of species involved as well as complex vocalizations and plumages, this is now the highest Christmas Bird Count species total of all time. In Peru, the Tambopata area has a list of more than 600 species, and the potential exists for a count of more than 400, if well covered. The Posada Amazonas count from this region recorded only 140 species; rain in the morning effectively eliminated counting during the dawn chorus, which is so essential to any of these rain-forest counts. But observers there cannot feel too badly, having a Harpy Eagle during count week and reportedly adding Gray-bellied Goshawk (also count week) to the Tambopata area list. Mindo-Tandayapa, Ecuador, totaled 404 species and continues to improve. An identifiable photo of a juvenile Crested Eagle was a pleasure to see from this count.

The well-organized Central America counts continue as some of the best-run counts in Latin America. The Aerial Tram count in Costa Rica reported 341 species, and the Fila Costa count 392, the high for North America. The long-standing Panama counts, still expertly compiled, reported about 100 fewer species within each of the three canal zone circles.

In Colombia, Gary Stiles reported that the Bogota count had relatively few landbird migrants, with the numbers of Blackburnian Warblers being especially low. First count records in over a decade were registered for Great Blue Heron and Neotropic Cormorant, the latter also recorded as a rarity to Mindo, Ecuador. Numbers of wetland endemics also were down on the Bogota count, reflecting the deteriorating state of several wetlands. Spot-flanked Gallinules, however, are holding their own on small

farm ponds in rural areas. Bogota also reported rather low counts of Andean forest species, with some missed possibly due to foggy conditions in the higher mountain ridges of the count area early in the morning.

Despite the significant improvement over past seasons, some South American compilers faced a bewildering ordering of species on their checklists; Central America counts fared better. The flagged rarities on the CBC entry system are also not necessarily rarities in this region but instead may just indicate "expected" new additions to the checklist, as many compilers already know. Each compiler needs to assess this independently and make a judgment as to which species require written descriptions. Every count should record some summary perspective of highs and lows (as, for example, on the Bogota count, above) under "Special Aspects." These statements will remain with the count and are an important part of its historical record. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, the CBC master list for this region is increasingly growing out-of-date. There are plans to revise this, but that may not happen for two years.

---

#### **WEST INDIES/BERMUDA**

**Bahamas, Bermuda, Dominican Republic,  
Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands**

---

*Robert L. Norton*  
8960 NE Waldo Road  
Gainesville, FL 32609  
corvus0486@aol.com

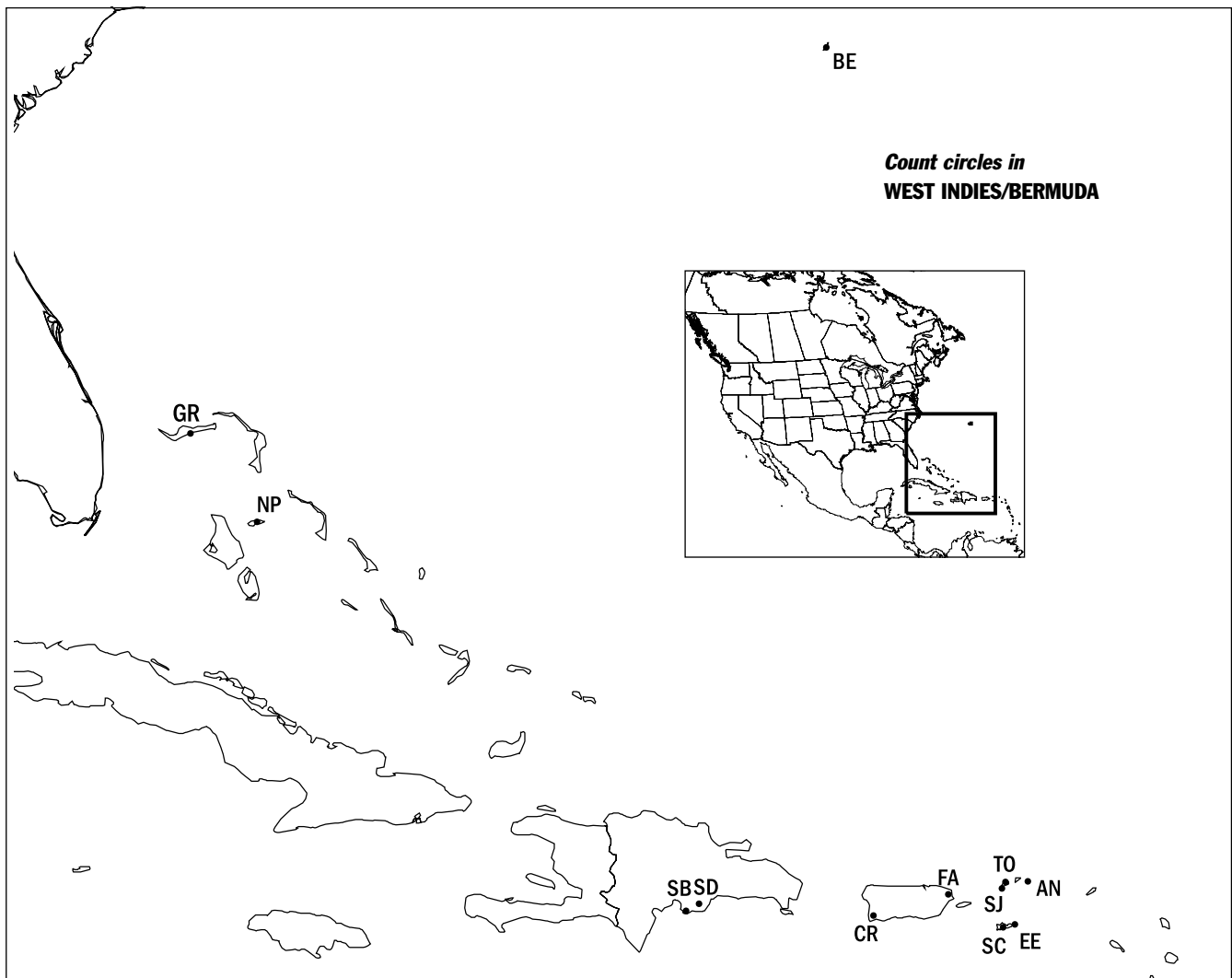
A horrific hurricane season with six named storms (Bonnie, Charley, Earl, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne) brought about 65 days of winds ranging from 45 to 165 miles per hour. Many birders feared the worst for some of the region's most vulnerable endemics, including some of the more common species. Northern portions of the Bahamas were hit repeatedly, following previous encounters in the past few years. Hispaniola received devastating rainfall from Jeanne. Haiti's lack of vegetative cover resulted in some of the worst loss of life and natural resource destruction in the region.

By the end of the fall season, migrant and resident land birds faced lowland and montane habitats with trees stripped bare from wind, sand, and salt-burn. While bird counters during the Christmas Bird Count period did not specifically report from hurricane-affected islands, the counts of resident birds in the Bahamas and of guilds such as frugivores and insectivores are somewhat encouraging. Remembering that many of the reports are from areas that had been previously hit by hurricanes, it is of interest that vulnerable species and groups of birds such as hummingbirds and other nectivores appear to have recovered in part from previous storm events. The compiler of the Fajardo, Puerto Rico, count indicated that this year was a good year for terrestrial migrants with high diversity. This may be a result of migrants passing over areas of diminished habitat in the Bahamas, and crowding habitats untouched by the recent storms.

Puerto Rico took the top three total species honors, with relative newcomer Arecibo tallying 123 species, followed by Fajardo with 117, and Cabo Rojo coming in at 111. Fajardo also took first place honors for participants, with 50, followed by Arecibo with 29.

Generally, the numbers of four species of culicids (Mangrove Cuckoo, Puerto Rican and Hispaniolan lizard-cuckoos, and Smooth-billed Ani) appear to remain strong. The average number of Mangrove Cuckoo (nine counts) was 5.2 per count, Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo (two counts) totaled 34, Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo (two counts) totaled 12, and Smooth-billed Ani (11 counts) averaged 70.5 per count.

Eight Greater Antillean hummingbirds were accounted for during the CBC period, with the widespread Antillean Mango (five counts) averaging 8.6. Green Mango (two counts) totaled four; Green-throated Mango (four counts) averaged 19.3; Antillean Crested Hummingbird (five counts) averaged 26.2; Puerto Rican Emerald (three counts) totaled 18; Cuban Emerald



totaled 20 in its singular count circle; Bahama Woodstar totaled 12 in a single count circle; and Vervain Hummingbird totaled 11 in a single count. The Fajardo count listed all five species for the island, and Anegada recorded a rare sighting of Antillean Mango, a species with its distribution interrupted by the heavily populated region from the Virgin Islands to Culebra.

Three species of tody were reported, with Puerto Rican Tody totaling 114 (three counts), and the Dominican Republic's two counts recording 24 Broad-billed, and one count reporting a single Narrow-billed. Another high energy endemic that relies principally on nectar is the Bananaquit. All 12 Antillean counts reported Bananaquits for a total of 1218, or just more than 100 per circle.

With high winds thrashing the region off and on for over two months, the flycatcher guild could also be considered at

risk from diminished food resources. Conversely, certain cavity-nesting flycatchers could benefit from holes in storm-damaged trees. Eight species were reported: Gray Kingbird (9 counts, 1983), Loggerhead Flycatcher (4 counts, 32), LaSagra's Flycatcher (2 counts, 45), Stolid Flycatcher (2 counts, 3), Puerto Rican Flycatcher (3 counts, 65), Cuban Pewee (3 counts, 22), Lesser Antillean Pewee (1 count, 19), and Caribbean Elaenia (6 counts, 91). Additionally, the analyses of CBC results from northeastern Puerto Rico indicate that the population of Adelaide's Warbler on eastern Puerto Rico seems to be increasing.

There were some remarkable sightings of other species in the Caribbean, including American Avocet at New Providence, Bahamas; Pomarine Jaeger at Tortola, British Virgin Islands; Blackburnian Warbler at St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands; both Lesser and Great Black-backed gulls

at Salinas-Bani, Dominican Republic; Green-tailed Warbler at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Cedar Waxing at Grand Bahama, Bahamas; and a Ruff at Arcibo, Puerto Rico.

Away from the Caribbean basin, among Bermuda's 92 species were three outstanding rarities for that island: a Townsend's Warbler during count week, a remarkable first ever Kirtland's Warbler, and a Dickcissel.

In closing, while bird populations in the West Indies-Bermuda region are resilient to natural disasters and typically recover over time, the incipient loss of habitat does not bode well for these species. Annual Christmas Bird Counts and other reports provide important benchmarks for trend analyses, and thus need to be conducted each season with vigor and accuracy for the very reason we enjoy doing CBCs—to help ensure the survival of birds.