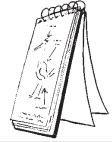


Short Communications



American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* and other vagrants in Jamaica

On 28 November 2012, at 16h30, we observed four American Avocets *Recurvirostra americana* (Fig. 1) in winter plumage at Parottee Pond, c.5 km south-east of Black River in south-west Jamaica. The observation was made with the sun behind us at a distance of c.15 m. They were in shallow, saline water with other waders including Short-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus griseus*, Willets *Tringa semipalmata*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* and Black-bellied Plovers *Pluvialis squatarola*. A vagrant to Jamaica, *R. americana* was reported just once in 1984–2009⁵. More recently, seven were at Parottee Pond on 18 April 2012 (R. Miller²). Prior to 1984, records exist for 1982, 1978, 1977 (January and June), and 1976 (October and December) (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). Considered a very rare, non-breeding resident in the Bahamas, where *R. americana* has been observed primarily in July–January and April⁴, it has also occurred on Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in 1989 and Tobago and Barbados in 1977¹. In Cuba *R. americana* was formerly rare, but has recently been discovered wintering in large numbers and even breeding³.

In addition, we also observed two Wilson's Phalaropes *Phalaropus tricolor* in the same area, one of which was spinning in circles in the water and the other was wading in the water, its yellow legs visible. Both were in winter plumage, with white neck and underparts, grey upperparts and wings, and mid-length needle-like bills. Also considered a vagrant, *P. tricolor* has been reported just twice since 2000 (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). One was seen at Small Pedro Pond on 26 September 2010 by R. Miller². Prior to 2000 there were five records, three of them in eastern Jamaica, at Yallahs Pond (1991), Kingston Harbour (1971) and in the Port Henderson area (1963) (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). It is a rare migrant and non-breeding resident in Hispaniola, Barbados, Puerto Rico, the Virgin and Cayman Islands⁴.

Earlier on the afternoon of 28 November, we observed a male Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* in breeding plumage at Great Pedro Pond, near Treasure Beach, c.18 km south-east of Black River in south-west Jamaica. It was with hundreds of Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* as well as a few Ring-necked Ducks *Aythya collaris* and Lesser Scaups *A. affinis*, and was observed at a distance of

150–200 m using binoculars and a telescope. Larger than *A. discors*, it had a white stripe on the side of its long neck and a long, pointed tail (Fig. 2). Considered a vagrant or very rare winter visitor in Jamaica⁴, *A. acuta* is a common, non-breeding resident in Cuba⁴. More recently, it was observed near Little London, Jamaica, on 10 February 2010 by R. Miller² and at the west end of the island in February 2012 (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). Previous records are from November 1995, January 1994 and January 1965 (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). Subsequently, two males were seen at Great Pedro Pond on 9 February 2013 by R. Swift and G. MacDonald² and a female in the same place on 21 February 2013 by R. Hoyer (pers. comm.).

On 27 November 2012, in the early afternoon, we saw a Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus* near Elim Pools, in the Black River Upper Morass, c.18 km north-east of Black River. It was flying low over the fields and identified as a female with brown upperparts and wings, a white rump and long, barred tail. Considered a vagrant or rare passage migrant in Jamaica⁴, *C. cyaneus* is an uncommon winter visitor to the Bahamas, Cuba, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, and a rare to uncommon migrant in



Figure 1. American Avocets *Recurvirostra americana*, Parottee Pond, Elizabeth, Jamaica, November 2012 (Kit Larsen)



Figure 2. Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, Great Pedro Pond, Elizabeth, Jamaica, November 2012 (Kit Larsen)

the Virgin Islands, Lesser Antilles and Caymans⁴. Previous records of *C. cyaneus* include singles at Osborne Store, 25 November 2004 (R. Miller), Elim Pools, 15 April 2010 (R. Hoyer & B. Hay) and Black River Lower Morass, 22 February 2012 (A. Kneidel), with two at Elim Pools, 2 March 2012 (C. Grooms & K. Hennige) and one there, 24 March 2012 (S. Kurtzman)², in addition to records in October 1997, November 1992 and January and December 1964, all in eastern Jamaica (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013). Subsequently, a juvenile was observed by C. & V. Turland in the same general area in February 2013 (C. Levy *in litt.* 2013).

Acknowledgements

Rich Hoyer and Ricardo Miller supplied current and historical data. Larry McQueen helped us to prepare the initial draft, and Catherine Levy and James W. Wiley offered valuable critiques and additional information in review.

References

1. Ackerman, J., Hartman, A., Herzog, M., Robinson, J. A., Oring, L. W., Skorupa, J. P. & Boettcher, R. (2013) American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*). In: Poole, A. (ed.) The birds of North America online. <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/275doi:10.2173/bna.27>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
2. eBird (2013) eBird: an online database of bird distribution and abundance. www.ebird.org (accessed 17 February 2013).
3. Labrada, O. & Blanco, P. (2011) Permanencia invernal y primer registro de nidificación de la avoceta (*Recurvirostra americana*) en Cuba. *J. Carib. Orn.* 24: 71–73.
4. Raffaele, H., Wiley, J., Garrido, O., Keith, A. & Raffaele, J. (2003) *Birds of the West Indies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
5. Sutton-Haynes, A., Downer, A. & Sutton, R. (2009) *A photographic guide to the birds of Jamaica*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Roger Robb

2507 Walnut Ridge Drive,
Springfield, Oregon, USA. E-mail:
brrobb@comcast.net.

Dennis Arendt

2024 Friendly Street, Eugene,
Oregon, USA. E-mail: dbarendt@
comcast.net.

Brandon Hay

Lionel Town, Jamaica. E-mail:
brandonhay@cwjamaica.com.

Kit Larsen

2162 Kincaid, Eugene, Oregon,
USA. E-mail: kit@uoregon.edu.

Jim Regali

1499 Regency, Eugene, Oregon,
USA. E-mail: jjregali@comcast.net.

Received 1 March 2013; final
revision accepted 17 January 2014