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**ROBERT W. DICKERMAN:
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

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**GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN WINTERING
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE**

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ABSTRACT: There is relatively little variation in size, expressed mainly in bill dimensions, between or among most wintering populations of the Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*). In the British Isles, slightly larger and darker birds, from the Greenland breeding population, winter in Ireland and Scotland and associated islands, while smaller birds winter in England. Winter birds in continental Europe are the same size as those in England. Asian winter birds average slightly larger than those of Europe; the population is more variable and includes some larger individuals. In western North America, some birds in the Sacramento Valley of northern California, the famed Tule Goose (*A. a. elgasi*), are the largest of the species. There is a great range of variation in smaller birds of the Sacramento Valley and elsewhere in the west coast states. Birds in the midcontinent states, east of the Rocky Mountains, average about the same as smaller California birds but vary widely.

ALASKA RECORDS OF THE ASIAN WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

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ABSTRACT: The three widely recognized taxa of “white-winged” scoters *Melanitta*—*fusca*, *deglandi*, and *stejnegeri*—are discussed variously in the literature as one, two, or three species. Adult males of the east Asian *stejnegeri* are distinguished from the American *deglandi* primarily by their black rather than brown flanks, yellow rather than black lamellae in the bill, and usually more hooked knob on the bill. Since 2002, there have been four well-supported records of *stejnegeri* in Alaska, two at St. Lawrence Island and two near Nome. Although we saw up to four adult males of *stejnegeri* at St. Lawrence Island in 2009, *deglandi* appears to predominate there. More study is needed for the status of *stejnegeri* as species or subspecies to be settled.

A VAUX’S SWIFT SPECIMEN FROM NEW MEXICO WITH A REVIEW OF *CHAETURA* RECORDS FROM THE REGION

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ABSTRACT: Vaux’s Swift has finally been documented in New Mexico on the basis of two observational records supported by photographs and a specimen. Here I report on the circumstances of collection of the specimen and review the status of Vaux’s and Chimney Swifts in the region. In New Mexico, Vaux’s Swift appears to be a rare but regular migrant in the fall and perhaps the spring, with most records from the southwestern part of the state. The Chimney Swift is established as an annual summer resident on the eastern plains of New Mexico with a tendency to wander farther west. More data from Chihuahua are needed.

DIFFERENTIAL MIGRATION BY SEX IN NORTH AMERICAN SHORT-EARED OWLS

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ABSTRACT: Differential migration of the sexes is known in over 60 bird species and may be the predominant pattern in migratory birds. Identifying the causes of differential migration has been difficult, in part because sex-specific migratory patterns have yet to be described for a majority of species. We used the Internet specimen-data portal Ornis to compile sex-specific data on the seasonal distribution of the Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), a species that cannot be reliably sexed by external characteristics. We found 1188 specimen records from North America with data on sex, locality, and date of collection. Although the winter distributions of males and females overlapped almost entirely, the mean latitude of females was significantly lower than that of males for the months of November to March. The magnitude of the difference averaged 3.1° between December and February but increased to a peak of 6.0° in March, reflecting earlier onset of spring migration in males. The pattern of differential migration in the Short-eared Owl is compatible with the widely accepted hypothesis that males winter closer to breeding areas because they gain a reproductive advantage from early arrival and establishment of breeding territories (arrival-time hypothesis). Female specimens predominate during late fall and winter and male specimens predominate during the nesting season, suggesting differential seasonal mortality by sex. The skewed sex ratio suggests that differential migration may be caused in part by intrinsic sex differences in foraging efficiency, cold tolerance, or dominance. Comparisons with other raptors reveal that patterns of differential migration are highly species-specific. We conclude, conservatively, that the longer distance female Short-eared Owls migrate is the result of each sex optimizing its migration strategy in light of the higher likelihood of fall and winter mortality of females and the reproductive benefits to males of early arrival on breeding territories.

ON TWO FRONTS: OCCURRENCE OF THE HOUSE SPARROW IN ALASKA

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ABSTRACT: The first Alaska records of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), comprising birds reaching southeastern (132° W) and far western (171° W) localities in the state, probably reflect short-distance dispersals from adjacent Canada (British Columbia) and from the adjacent Russian Far East (Chukotka), respectively. Both source populations are the results of human introductions.

NOTES

THE WRETCHED RIDDLE OF REDUCED RECTRICES IN WRENS

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FIRST NORTH AMERICAN RECORD OF THE COMMON MOORHEN (*GALLINULA CHLOROPUS*) CONFIRMED BY MOLECULAR ANALYSIS

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CLASSIFICATION OF THE HOUSE FINCH OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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BOOK REVIEW

The Feathery Tribe: Robert Ridgway and the Modern Study of Birds, by Daniel Lewis. 2012. Yale University Press, New Haven. 346 pages including approximately 20 black and white photographs and illustrations. Hardback, \$45. ISBN 978-0-300-17552-3.

FEATURED PHOTO

FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF A COMMON RINGED PLOVER (*CHARADRIUS HIATICULA*) FOR CALIFORNIA

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