

southern atlantic coast region



RICKY DAVIS

Weather this spring was quite variable. March was cooler than normal, April was warmer than normal, and May was cool early and warm late! The main weather event of the Region was the intense low pressure system which developed off the Carolina coast during the period 30 April to 2 May. Temperatures were in the 50s F, some areas received four to five inches rain and experienced 30–40 mph wind gusts. This storm had a definite negative impact on several early nesting birds such as long-legged waders. Swallows were severely affected, with many reports of weak or dead Purple Martins and Barn Swallows.

It was a slow spring season for rarities, but several interesting events occurred, including lingering Ross's Geese in Georgia, wandering Purple Gallinules, some rare inland shorebirds, and increasing reports of White-winged Doves.

Abbreviations: B.R.C. (*Bird Records Committee*); C. Hatt. (*Cape Hatteras, NC*); E.L.H. (*E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA*); H.B.S.P. (*Huntington Beach State Park, SC*); K. Mt. (*Kennesaw Mt. National Battlefield Park, GA*); S.S.S. (*the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co., SC*); W.M.A. (*Wildlife Management Area*); W.T.P. (*Wastewater Treatment Plant*).

LOONS THROUGH WOOD STORK

Migrating loons over K. Mt. included two very rare Red-throats 12 Apr (GB et al.) and 17 Commons 24 Mar (KD). A flock of 104 Commons at Sweetwater Creek S.P., GA, 31 Mar (*vide* TM) provided an impres-

sive count for that location. Grebes left the Region on time but the last Eared was found at the Goldsboro, NC, W.T.P. 1 May (ED), and a Horned was late at S.S.S. 7 May (SC). The annual late May pelagic trips into North Carolina waters produced the usual species in average numbers. The rare Fea's Petrel was found out of Oregon Inlet 28 May and one–two were off Hatteras 31 May (BP et al.). The Pattenon pelagic trips also had success with the less rare Herald (Trinidad) Petrel. Off Oregon Inlet, dark-morph birds included one–two on 22 May and one 23 May; off Hatteras one intermediate was seen 29 May and one dark- and one light-morph were found 31 May. The peak Black-capped Petrel count was 289 off Hatteras 29 May, and shearwater numbers were average to below average for the spring (BP et al.). One Manx Shearwater was found off Hatteras 31 May (BP et al.), for the only report. On 31 May Leach's Storm-Petrels were in good supply with 44 off Oregon Inlet (PG, HL et al.) and 41 off Hatteras (BP et al.). The only tropicbird was a White-tailed out of Oregon Inlet 28 May (BP et al.). Elsewhere single rare Black-capped Petrels were off Murrell's Inlet, SC, 23 May (JP) and off Savannah, GA, 30 May (JFI, GB et al.).

The only Am. White Pelicans reported were two near Oriental, NC, 8–9 Mar (*vide* Sca) and three over H.B.S.P. 17 Apr (JP, GP). Anhingas were reported more than usual inland with the best counts being up to 12 along the Neuse R. near Smithfield, NC, 3 May (*vide* Sca), eight at Cottonade L., Cumberland, NC, 11 Apr (PC), and six along the Neuse R., Wayne, NC, 7 May (ED). Long-legged waders appeared inland in above-average numbers with Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, and Cattle Egrets reported widely. Coastal Reddish Egrets were at Ft. Fisher, NC, 3 Apr (CE, GBr), a rarely-reported white-morph at Litchfield Beach, SC, 9–11 May (B&BM, JP et al.), and at C. Hatt. 29 May (RD) seen flying in off the ocean! Quite rare inland were a Black-crowned Night-Heron heard over K. Mt. 24 Apr (BZ et al.), and two Glossy Ibis at Little Ocmulgee S.P., GA, 2 May (JFI). Of interest was the discovery of a new Wood Stork colony of 200–300 nests in

the *Emanuel/Jenkins, GA*, area 5–6 Apr (BHu).

WATERFOWL

THROUGH SANDHILL CRANE

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks included two (perched in a tree!) near Loris, SC, 3 Apr (L&ES) and one at S.S.S. 7–25 May (SC). Greater White-fronted Geese from the winter season remained at several sites, with one at Pee Dee N.W.R., NC, 5 Mar (*vide* TP) and singles at E.L.H. 27 Mar (*vide* JH) and 1 May (MB). Amazingly, and without precedent in the Region, multiple Ross's Geese from the winter season lingered into spring. Four near Pontiac, SC, remained into March (*vide* TP). Two in *Madison, GA*, were present into March with one lingering until late May (*vide* JH), singles in *Walker, GA*, and *Houston, GA*, left in early March (J&MA), and one found in *Wheeler, GA*, 16 May (J&MA) rounded out an amazing number of Georgia reports. The number of lingering ducks seemed down this spring, but interesting sightings included a Lesser Scaup at E.L.H. 22 May (JS), five Black Scoters at Tybee I., GA, 29 May (CL, JS), and two Long-tailed Ducks at Ft. Fisher, NC, 3 Apr (CE, GBr). Also the now-regular Com. Merganser at Jordan L., NC, was seen 9 May (DS et al.).

Kites continued to make news in the Region. A Swallow-tailed Kite nest was located along the Pee Dee R., *Horry, SC*, 12 May (LG, JC), providing probably the northernmost known nest of this species. Mississippi Kites continued to increase in numbers with some amazing counts being recorded such as 100+ near Jackson, SC, 20 May (SW), 40 near Columbia, SC, 29 May (DD, PB), and 30+ near Enfield, *Halifax, NC*, 27 May (GH). Always noteworthy in the Region, especially in spring, was a light-morph Rough-legged Hawk found near the Raleigh–Durham, NC, airport 5–17 Mar (DC, JB, Sca). Another or the same bird was found 7 mi away at Raleigh 17 Mar (SM)! Quite inexplicable was the imm. Golden Eagle circling over Avon, NC, 27 May (*vide* KW), providing an unprecedented late date for a coastal locality.

In the *wow* department were the 10+

Black Rails heard at the usual Wanchese, NC, marsh area 27 May (PG). Purple Gallinules made news with many out-of-place birds. Single adults were found in a marsh in n. Henderson, NC, 14–17 May (ST et al., WF), dead on a road at Bodie I., NC, 14 May (KW), on the beach at Core Banks, NC, 10 May (*vide* JF), at a golf course pond at Caswell Beach, NC, 30 May (JPI, et al.), at the Arrowhead Fish Hatchery, Floyd, GA, 8 May (*vide* TM), at the Ocmulgee W.M.A., Bleckley, GA, 28 May (JFI), and two at Reed Bingham S.P., Colquitt, GA, 2 May (JFI et al.) One wonders what caused so many to be found outside of their normal areas. Finally, noteworthy spring Sandhill Crane reports included two at Sapelo I., GA, 15 May (*vide* DCo) and 12 in e. Carteret, NC, 11 & 19 May (*vide* JF, MH et al.).

PLOVERS THROUGH RAZORBILL

Rare in the Region in spring, Am. Golden-Plovers included up to eight at Hooper Lane, Henderson, NC, 21–27 Mar (WF et al.), and singles at Woodlake, Moore, NC, 8 May (BG) and at S.S.S. 30 Mar (PS, SCa) and 29 Apr (SCa). Rare inland shorebirds included the Atlanta area's first Piping Plover at E.L.H. 15–16 Apr (BH, CL), the Atlanta area's 2nd Am. Avocet at Sweetwater Creek S.P. 9 May (*vide* TM), and three Whimbrel in e. Franklin, NC, 19 May (RD), only one of a couple of spring inland records for that state. The Upland Sandpiper migration produced good numbers in Georgia again with the best count being 29 near Dublin, Laurens, 10 Apr (*vide* TM). The other 2 states had the usual sprinkling of reports with the best count being eight at the Orangeburg, SC, sod farm 17 Apr (TK). Several sites in coastal Georgia continue to be important staging areas for migrating Whimbrels. Winn had 2000+ at St. Catherine's I. 15 May and 1480 at Gould's Inlet 14 May. Are there other sites that hold large numbers of Whimbrels of which we do not know?

Other inland shorebird highlights included 30+ Semipalmated Sandpipers at Hooper Lane, NC, 6 May (WF et al.), nine W Sandpipers in Cumberland, NC, 18 Mar (PC), 11 White-rumped Sandpipers in e. Franklin, NC, 25 May (RD), three Dunlin at Hooper Lane, NC, 6 May (WF et al.), and seven Short-billed Dowitchers at Macon, GA 27 Mar (TI, PJ). Three Purple Sandpipers at H.B.S.P. were late there 12 May (JP, PR) and one remained until 29 May (*vide* JP) providing a record-late date for the Region. Phalarope reports included one Wilson's at Jekyll I., GA, 21 May (*vide* TM),

two Wilson's at S.S.S. 25 May (SCa), and a Red at C. Hatt. 27 Mar (BP) providing a rare onshore sighting.

Only one S. Polar Skua was found this spring, an individual off Hatteras, NC, 31 May (BP et al.). Numbers of jaegers off North Carolina seemed down and the best report was of a Parasitic onshore at Gould's Inlet, GA, 14 May (BW). The only Long-taileds were two off Hatteras, NC, 31 May (BP et al.). The most intriguing gull reports included inland Laughings in all 3 states, only one Little at C. Hatt. 13 Mar (MLy), 10 Bonaparte's at S.S.S. 25 May (SCa), a Glaucous at C. Hatt until 6 May (MLy), and a Black-legged Kittiwake at Oregon Inlet, NC, 22 May (J&PW). Arctic Terns offshore were down somewhat with the best one-day count being four off Hatteras, NC, 30 May (PG, HL et al.). A Razorbill found dead on the beach at Ft. Macon, NC, 6 Apr (*vide* JF) was somewhat surprising since few alcids were in our waters during winter.

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase, especially coastally. New inland reports included one in Conover, NC, 21 Apr (D&LM) and one in Rome, GA, 22 May (MBe). The number of reports of White-winged Dove continues to increase throughout the Region. Two were on Sapelo I., GA, 12 Mar (*vide* JH), one was at Elko, Houston, GA, 26–28 May (JFI), one was at Rodanthe, NC, 8 May (CE, GBr), one was at Buxton, NC, 28 May (*vide* TP), and a pair was still present in the Beaufort, NC, area throughout the period (SA, JF, v.o.). The most out-of-place dove was the Com. Ground-Dove found for one day at Falls Lake, NC, 3 May (TH, *vide* WC), providing only the 2nd local area sighting. Black-billed Cuckoo reports were down, but the best count was of three at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 19 May (WF et al.). Whip-poor-wills have increased toward the coast as breeders for years, but the 54 heard along 15 mi of road in the Croatan N.F., NC, 4 May (JF) was incredible. The most amazing report of the spring probably involved the ad. male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** performing its aerial courtship flight before a female of unknown species at Merchants Millpond S.P., NC, 26 Apr (CW, BC). The observers saw the purple and black throat well in good light. The report, pending acceptance by the NC B.R.C., would represent only the 2nd state record.

The always exciting Olive-sided Flycatcher was found 3 times with singles on Table Rock Mt., SC, 4 May (SS), at Mason

Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 9 May (HW), and at Winston-Salem, NC, 24 May (*vide* RS). Much rarer was the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher heard calling at Mason Farm, NC, 16 May (HW), being easily the best *Empidonax* report received as other species were under-reported. North Carolina Gray Kingbirds totaled two with one at the Cedar I ferry terminal 29 May (JF et al.) and one at the C. Hatt. campground 20 May (KB et al.) Once again Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were found, with adults in Greenville, SC, 24 Apr (PWo) and near Townville, SC, 4 May (RSm). A Yellow-throated Vireo was early at K. Mt. 20 Mar (KD et al.), missing the earliest record by 5 days. Away from the interior hills Warbling Vireos are rare spring migrants. This year excellent finds included one singing in w. Orange, NC, 29 Apr (DS) and one in Georgetown, SC, 8 May (JP, PR). The even rarer Philadelphia Vireo was found twice with singles at Mason Farm, NC, 2 May (*vide* HW) and at Saluda Shoals S.P., SC, 9 May (RC, CEa). Thrush reports were down across the board, and the number of thrushes reported was also down. The most interesting reports involved a locally rare Veery at Darien, GA, 28 Apr (DCo) and one-two Gray-cheeked Thrushes on Roanoke I., NC, 10–21 May (JL).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The warbler migration seemed rather poor in the e. sections, but average to above-average farther west. There were 2 reports of Brewster's Warblers with singles near Chapel Hill, NC, 2 May (KF) and Reedy Cr Park, Mecklenburg, NC, 3 May (TP). Reports of locally rare warblers included a Tennessee near Laurinburg, NC, 9 May (BG), a Nashville on Roanoke I., NC, 6 May (JL), a Prothonotary on K. Mt., the park's first, 17–18 Apr (JS), a Wilson's in the Green Swamp, Brunswick, NC, 8 May (GM), and a Canada on Roanoke I. 20 May (JL). Some selected peak counts for K. Mt. included four Nashvilles 24 Apr, 14 Blackburnians 8 May, and 10 Ceruleans 21 Apr (*vide* TM). A Nashville Warbler at Myrtle Beach, SC, 19 Mar (P&STu) was probably a wintering bird as was an early Cape May at E.L.H. 31 Mar (CL). Of concern is the report that the Roanoke R., NC, population of Cerulean Warbler seems to have experienced a drastic decline from the 1970s and 1980s. This spring Lynch had only seven singing males in one area, with other historical locations being devoid of the birds. This situation bears close monitoring the next several years. The always exciting Connecticut Warbler was found

twice with singles at Jackson Park, NC, 8 May (WF et al.) and at K. Mt. 8–10 May (JS, KD). The equally exciting Mourning Warbler was found several times with a female at Columbia, SC, 13 May (MN), two different males at Jackson Park, NC, 14 & 17 May (HN, WF et al.), and a male at Mason Farm, NC, 21 May (HW).

Extremely rare in the Region in spring were a Clay-colored Sparrow in Henderson, NC, 27 Apr (WF) and a Le Conte's Sparrow in n. Greene, GA, 24 Apr (PS). Also of note was the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Charleston, SC, 31 May (WP), providing a new late date for the species in that state. Lincoln's Sparrows were reported well with the latest one being found in a Raleigh, NC yard 9 May (H&GLa). The Harris's Sparrow found at the Chattahoochee Center, Roswell, GA, during the winter was last seen 19 Mar (EK). Lapland Longspurs were reported twice, with one near Scotland Neck, NC, 13 Mar (RD) and four at Hooper Lane, NC, 21 Mar (MW, *fide* WF). Dickcissels continue to be found scattered throughout the Region. The best counts included three at Hooper Lane, NC, 28–29 Apr (WF), three near Townville, SC, 4–10 May (RSm, J&DHu), and two at E.L.H. 2 May (JS). The only Yellow-headed Blackbird reported was an imm. male on Harbor I., SC, 8–9 May (JHa). There were three Shiny Cowbird sightings with singles at Fayetteville, NC, 8 May (*fide* PC), Darien, GA, 21 May (*fide* JH), and Harbor I., SC for one day in late May (JHa). After many years of only a few reports, is this invading species starting to accelerate its push into the Region?

A pair of Red Crossbills found in the Pinelog Mountain W.M.A., GA, 12 May (KD et al.) caused quite a stir by remaining in the area through the period (v.o.). Other winter finches were scarce, as can be expected during the spring following a non-invasion winter. Of note then was an Evening Grosbeak found at the Chattahoochee R. National Recreation Area, GA, 23–25 Apr (EH).

Contributors: Jerry & Marie Amerson (J&MA), Susan Arrington, Giff Beaton, Michael Bell (MBe), Michael Beohm, Keith Blackmore, Jim Bloor, Gordon Brown (GBr), Pam Burke, Steve Calver, Susan Campbell (SCa), Derb Carter, Robin Carter, John Cely, Doris Cohrs (DCo), Will Cook, Ben Copeland, Phil Crutchfield, Kevin Danchisen, Ricky Davis, Eric Dean, Doug DeNeve, Caroline Eastman (CEa), Chris Eley, Kent Fiala, Jim Flynn (JFI), Wayne Forsythe, John Fussell, Barbara Gearhart,

Lex Glover, Paul Guris, Judy Haller (JHa), Bruce Hallett (BHa), Joel Hitt, Malcolm Hodges, Earl Horn, Tom Howard, Gene Howe, Jack & Dorothy Hudson (J&DHu), Bob Humphries (BHu), Ty Ivey, Paul Johnson, Tim Kalbach, Eugene Keferl, Carol Lambert, Herman & Gail Lankford (H&GLa), Harry LeGrand, Jeff Lewis, Marcia Lyons (MLy), Merrill Lynch, Dwayne & Lori Martin (D&LM), Greg Massey, Bob & Barbara Maxwell (B&BM), Steve McManus, Terry Moore, Harvey Neal, Merle Nisly, Brian Pattenon, Jack Peachey, Gary Phillips, Taylor Piephoff, Jeff Pippen

(JPi), Will Post, Paul Rogers, Jeff Sewell, Doug Shadwick, Lois & Ernest Snavely (L&ES), Ramona Snavely, Roger Smith (RSm), Scott Stegenga, Paul Sykes, Simon Thompson, Phil & Sharon Turner (P&STu), Steve Wagner, Anne Waters, Keith Watson, Marilyn Westphal, Clark White, Brad Winn, Haven Wiley, Pete Worthington (PWo), John & Paula Wright (J&PW), Bob Zarembo.

Ricky Davis, 608 Smallwood Drive, Rocky Mount, NC 27804 (RJDNC@aol.com)



florida region

BILL PRANTY

Rainfall in the Region was below average, and temperatures were at or above normal. A prolonged drought was avoided, however, by extensive showers beginning in late June. Frontal activity was minimal, and few fallouts were reported in the Region; exceptions were at Fort DeSoto County Park 15 March and 16 April and Jacksonville 1 May. A better-than-average number of Caribbean species was reported in the Region, including three Key West Quail-Doves, at least one West Indian Short-eared Owl, two La Sagra's Flycatchers, one Bahama Mockingbird, six Stripe-headed Tanagers, and 38 Shiny Cowbirds. Other noteworthy rarities were the Red-footed Booby at Dry Tortugas National Park, Ross's Goose at Crystal River, and Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds at St. George Island and Talbot Island.

Abbreviations: D.T.N.P. (*Dry Tortugas N.P., Monroe Co.*); E.N.P. (*Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade and Monroe cos.*); F.D.C.P. (*Ft. DeSoto County Park, Pinellas Co.*); H.I.S.R.A. (*Honeymoon I. S.R.A., Pinellas Co.*); O.W.P. (*Orlando Wetlands Park, Orange Co.*); P.P.M. (*Polk Co. phosphate mines*); P.P.S.P. (*Paynes Prairie State Preserve, Alachua Co.*); S.G.I. (*St. George I., Franklin Co.*); S.M.N.W.R. (*St. Marks N.W.R., Wakulla Co.*); S.R.A. (*State Recreation Area*); S.R.S.T.F. (*Springhill Rd. Sewage Treatment Facility, Leon Co.*); H.T.B.S.R.A. (*Hugh Taylor Birch S.R.A., Broward Co.*); W.M.A. (*Wildlife Management Area*).



LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon was far south at Bradenton Beach 26 Apr (HKT et al.). St. George I. hosted a Pacific Loon 10 Apr–10 May (D&SJ, JDo et al.) and an Eared Grebe 21 Mar (PC). A Sooty Shearwater was seen at Canaveral Natl. Seashore 30 May (CPa, CPi). Between D.T.N.P. and Key West were 80+ Audubon's Shearwaters 4 May (DG, WB et al.), and a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel and an ad. **Red-footed Booby** 27 Apr (PaL, SF et al.). At Hospital Key, D.T.N.P., "several" Masked Booby chicks were seen in April (PaL, SF et al.). Three-thousand Am. White Pelicans were estimated at P.P.M. 13 Mar (PF et al.), and 437 were still there 30 May (PT, CG); six others were at L. Jackson,