

middlewestern prairie region



KENNETH J. BROCK

There was general consensus across the Region that spring 1999 brought an average, or somewhat better than average, migration, and there was unanimous agreement that the flight was better than spring 1998. One Regionwide trend was the overflight of several southern species. Especially notable were Purple Gallinule, Hooded Warbler, and Summer Tanager. Many correspondents believed that passerines arrived a bit early this year, and virtually everyone deemed the flight interesting in terms of diversity and rarities; however, several expressed concern about low songbird numbers. In Chicago, Paul Clyne suggested that the spring provided “an interesting passage from the birder’s standpoint, but a mediocre spring for the birds themselves.”

Following the warm winter, much of the waterfowl flight occurred in February; however, geese and ducks were still plentiful during the season. Heavy precipitation in April eliminated shorebird habitat in the western states, but contributed to one of the better flights in recent years for the central states. If measured solely in terms of rarities spring 1999 was surely a good season. The hefty list, which included Brown Pelican, Garganey, Whooping Crane, Royal Tern, White-winged Dove, Western Tanager, and Painted Bunting, was highlighted by the Region’s first Gray Kingbird.

Abbreviations: H.B.S.P. (*Headlands Beach S.P., OH*); L. Cal. (*Lake Calumet, Chicago*); Jax.P. (*Jackson Park on the Chicago lakefront*);

P.R.N.A. (*Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Jasper Co., IL*); R.E.D.A. (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO*); S.C.R. (*Squaw Creek N.W.R., MO*); Spfld. (*Springfield, IL*).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

The Region enjoyed a superb loon flight. Red-throated Loon numbers were up with 13 birds reported across the 4 n. states. The peak count occurred on L. Michigan, where a flight of seven was seen off Beverly Shores, IN, 10 Apr (KB). A basic-plumed Pacific Loon was at Hallett’s Quarry, Story, IA, 8–17 May (HZ, JDi, MO, MP, TK). In addition to the normal scattering of Com. Loons, a state record tally of 1030 was counted along Indiana’s L. Michigan shoreline 2 Apr (JMc, C&EP). The season’s only Red-necked Grebes were in Iowa, where singletons were found at 5 locations 16–27 Apr (CFh, TK, JWt, RT, m.ob.). Eared Grebes were plentiful in the w. states; the peak count was 28 at S.C.R. 8 May (DE et al.). East of the Mississippi R., W. Grebes were reported at Jax.P., 23 & 27 Mar (KC, PC) and at East Fork S.P., OH, through 26 Apr (*fide NK*). A closely studied Clark’s Grebe, at Blue L., Monona, IA, 21–25 May (†P&RA, †TK, †JFu) provided that state’s 4th May record.

Once again Am. White Pelicans were widespread with reports from every state

except Ohio. An aerial survey along the Illinois R. from Chillicothe to Spring Valley yielded an Illinois record count of 2193 (JR, *fide CMc*). Even more spectacular was Kentucky’s first **Brown Pelican**, which appeared briefly at Kentucky Dam 30 May (†B&RD). A Neotropical Cormorant, believed to be a sub-adult, was at Crabtree L., Cook, IL, from 11 May through the period (†CW, †CFd, AA, m.ob.). The flood of Double-crested Cormorants continued this spring with a peak count of 2429 at Chautauqua N.W.R., IL, 8 Apr (R&SB), 2300 at Donnelley State W.M.A., IL, 22 Apr (JHm), and 1867 at Riverdale quarry, Cook, IL, 18 Apr (WM, KW). Farther east, a record state count of 750 was logged along the Indiana lakefront 24 Apr (JCd, LH, KB).

For the 2nd consecutive year, Am. Bitterns were reported in abundance, with more than 54 counted across the Region. At least 2 correspondents suggested that Least Bittern numbers were down this spring. A nesting Great Egret was found in a Gary, IN, Great Blue Heron colony 22 Apr (JCs); this species is a casual breeder in the state. An over-anxious Tricolored Heron at Montrose Harbor, Chicago, 7 Apr (†RHu, JPu) provided an all-time early arrival date for Illinois. Additional Tricoloreds were reported in *Pemiscot*, MO, 1 May (†JWi) and in E. Cape Girardeau, IL, 29 May (†MD, DKB,



A male Garganey, the right-hand bird following a pair of Blue-winged Teal, photographed at Forney Lake 3 April 1999, furnished Iowa’s 2nd record and was one of two in the Region this spring. Photograph/Thomas H. Kent

AS). Excellent Cattle Egret numbers were reported with an impressive 500 in *Pemiscot*, MO, 1 May (†JWi) and 190 in *St. Clair*, IL, 29 Apr (KMc). Noteworthy Black-crowned Night-Heron reports included 808 dispersing from the L.Cal. roost 22 Apr (WM), 110 at Falls of the Ohio, KY, 23 Apr (FR), and 72 nests on the L. Michigan lake-front, *Lake*, IN, 17 May (JCs). White-faced Ibis were unusually plentiful in the w. states, with 10 in Iowa and 15 Missouri reports including 44 at S.C.R. 7 May (DE, KG, JHi). Two White-faced Ibises wandered E into Illinois, where a flyby was seen 22 Apr (†RMn) and an adult was s. of Rochester 27 Apr (†PW). The only Glossy Ibis was at S.C.R. 7 May (†DE, KG).

WATERFOWL

The identification of a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, said to have been present from early April–5 May in *Louisa*, IA (TA), was confirmed by videotape (BO, TK). Continuing the pattern of recent springs, migrant geese were widespread and plentiful. In addition to the peak of 1000 Greater White-fronted Geese at Clinton L., IL, 19 Mar (RCh, GL), three other Illinois counts exceeded 100 birds. A flock of 50 wandered E to Greene, IN, where they were observed Mar. 7 (J&SH). Ross's Geese were reported in every state except Ohio; easternmost records included singletons at Kankakee W.M.A., IN, 20 Mar (JcD, JDu, m.ob.) and at Basil Griffin Park, *Warren*, KY, 3 Apr (FR).

Rare teal highlighted a reasonably strong dabbling migration. Cinnamon Teal reports included three in Iowa, three in Illinois, and one in Indiana. Most remarkable, however, was the occurrence of two male **Garganey**, the first at Forney L. 2–12 Apr (†RSc, P&RA, †TK, ph. †m.ob.), providing Iowa's 2nd record, and the other, and Illinois' 2nd, at Garden Prairie 10–15 May (†DWm, †DBm, ph.). Bay duck numbers were comparable to those of recent spring flights. Harlequin Ducks remained in Illinois until 16 & 24 Apr at Waukegan (DJ, SH) and 16 Apr at Jax.P (PC). As is typical, small numbers of Surf Scoters were scattered across the Region. Atypically, two females lingered at Willow Slough W.M.A., IN, until 15 May (EH, m.ob.), another was in Gary, IN, 17 May (SP et al.), and a female was at Busch W.M.A., MO, 8 May (†PB). White-winged and Black scoters were scarce. The peak White-winged count consisted of two at Meldahl Dam, KY, throughout March (FR), with one remaining until 10 Apr (LMc). Black Scoters appeared only in Indiana; a flock of up to 10

was on L. Michigan off Beverly shores through early April (JMc, WM, m.ob.), and a female was at Willow Slough W.M.A. 15 May (EH, m.ob.). Long-tailed Ducks were also hard to find with reports restricted to one–three birds in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio. Breeding Hooded Mergansers were found in Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio.

HAWKS THROUGH CRANES

A fine count of 10 Osprey was made in *Bureau*, IL, 26 Apr (DSh). In addition, Osprey on breeding territories were reported 2 Apr at Bergman Slough, IL (CT), and at Indiana's traditional Brookville Res. site 1 May (JCs). It was a fine spring for Mississippi Kites, with birds returning to traditional summering areas in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri; within the s.e. Illinois nesting area an impressive 30, including one flock of 23, were seen 29 May (KMc, DKb et al.). An extralimital adult was in n. Porter, IN, 11 May (†KB). The dozen N. Goshawks reported is typical for a non-invasion year. The Region's spring hawk flights were quite modest. The most productive site was Conneaut, OH, where peak daily counts included 24 Cooper's Hawks 17 Mar (LY), 149 Red-shouldered Hawks 17 Mar (LY), 408 Broad-winged Hawks 17 May (ES), 202

SA Purple Gallinules, normally casual or accidental visitors to most states in the Region, usually occur as occasional spring overshoots. This spring, however, an unprecedented incursion provided a colorful highlight Regionwide. The first, and by far most cooperative, wandered lawns at Montrose Harbor, IL, 7–10 May (†JL, KMo, Tbi, m.ob., ph.). Other singletons were 8 May+ near W. Lafayette, IN (BD, Haw, m.ob.), 11–25 May at Rockford (TG, †BWi et al.), 12–13 May at Wilkinson at Renwick Marsh, IL, (†DSh, RF), 22–31 May in Miami-Whitewater, OH (NK, m.ob.), and 26 May in Barrington, IL (†CFd). The only multiple report consisted of two 15–18 May at Carlyle L., IL (†MD, †DKb et al.). The above eight birds apparently represent only a fraction of the total flight, as reports of many birds were not submitted. According to Johnson, as many as 13 may have occurred in Illinois alone. At least two additional birds were also found in Indiana. Thus, the "unofficial" total for the spring 1999 flight might have reached 17 gallinules.



This Northern Saw-whet Owl at Crane Creek, Ohio, 17 May 1999, was photographed as it took a brief respite from its spring migration. Photograph/Tom Heindel

Red-tailed Hawks 17 Mar (LY), and 63 Am. Kestrels 21 Apr (ES). Golden Eagles were scarce, with only 6 reports including one at Conneaut 21 Apr (ES). The 24 Merlins tallied this season matched that of recent spring flights. Rarely differentiated from nesting birds, apparent *tundrius* Peregrines were identified in *Union*, IL, 24 Apr and *Bureau*, IL, 8 May (DSt).

Single Yellow Rails were at Clinton L., IL, 27 Mar (RCh), Kidd L., IL, 10 May (DKb), and Zirbel Slough, IA, 14 & 17 May (R. Widner, *fide* TK, RG). More King Rails than normal were detected this spring, including five in Illinois, two in Iowa, plus singles at the Mallard Club, OH, 9 May (RH, SW), and at the Ayrshire strip mine, *Warrick*, IN, 10 May (J&SH et al.). Virginia Rails were also plentiful, with reports from every state except Kentucky. The peak count was 18 at Springville Marsh, OH, 18 Apr (TBa).

Common Moorhen numbers remained low across the Region, with counts of one–five from the 4 n. states. Sandhill Cranes were reported in every state; peak counts away from the Indiana staging area included 4650 migrants in Westchester, *Cook*, IL, 20 Mar (DSt), and 1000 in *Greene*, IN, 7 Mar (J&SH). Perhaps the spring's biggest surprise was the simultaneous appearance

of 2 groups of **Whooping Cranes** in w. Iowa. A remarkable 3 pairs lingered in agricultural fields near De Soto N.W.R. 9–12 Apr (†JDi, †JFu, †TK, ph. †CE). On these same days two adults and an immature were in also seen n.w. *Page*, near Essex (MT, †CE). According to Kent, along with last fall's reports, these birds double the number of Iowa records for the 20th Century.

SHOREBIRDS

Excellent Semipalmated Plover tallies were recorded in central portions of the Region; peak counts included 61 at Big Pine Wetland, *Benton*, IN, 30 Apr (BD), 60 at St. Mary's Fish Hatchery, OH, 22 May (DD), 51 in *Parke*, IN, 8 May (AB), and 22 in Boone, IL, 13 May (WS). Piping Plovers were reported only at traditional nesting sites in Iowa, with five at Port Neal 18 Apr (BH), and seven in *Pottawattamie* 13 May (TK). Typical numbers of Black-necked Stilts returned to established breeding areas in Illinois and Kentucky; in Missouri, an impressive 42 birds (and nests) were found in *Dunklin* 26 May (MRo, BBb, JZ). An extralimital pair of stilts appeared at Harrier Marsh, *Boone*, IA, 4–6 May (†JDi, †MO, †JFu, †TK, †MPPr). American Avocets were scarce; the maximum of 11, at Swan Lake N.W.R., MO, 18 Apr (SK, JBa), more than doubled the next highest count. The Region enjoyed an above-average Willet flight, with reports from every state. Unusually large concentrations included 69 in s. *Clinton*, IL, 27 Apr (KMc), 39 in *Greene*, MO, 4 May (BBl), and 29 in *Union* and *Pulaski*, IL, 26 Apr (KMc). Upland Sandpiper reports were fairly typical; the largest count was 10 at Mansfield Lahm Airport, OH, 30 May (KMe). There were only 3 Whimbrel reports, with five at Jax.P. 24 May (KC), two in *Boone*, MO, 24 May (SA), and one at Smithland Dam, KY, 28 May (JWm). Godwits were scarce e. of the Mississippi R., where the most noteworthy was a single Marbled Godwit at Kentucky Dam, KY, 10 May (DR).

Ruddy Turnstone reports from every state, plus double-digit counts from 3, attests to a fine season for this handsome shorebird. The Region's only Red Knot was in Gary, IN, 29 May (DP, JCd, SB et al.). An excellent spring count of 65 Sanderlings was made at Waukegan, IL, 31 May (EW). White-rumped Sandpipers were unusually plentiful; the most remarkable single count consisted of 200 at Hickman Bottoms, KY, 10–11 May (DR), which more than doubled the previous maximum Kentucky count. Rarely found e. of the Mississippi R. in the

spring, the Baird's Sandpiper at L. Shelbyville, IL, 1 May (RCh) was noteworthy. Outstanding among several fine Stilt Sandpiper counts was a tally of 150 in *Boone*, MO, 12 May (TC). East of the Mississippi R., Long-billed Dowitchers reports included six in Gary, IN, 7 May (KB), four in *Union*, IL, 10 Apr (KMc), and one at Buck Creek S.P., OH, 4 Apr (DO). Common Snipe concentrations were unusually plentiful this spring, with 5 triple-digit counts, the peak being 350+ at Swan Lake N.W.R., MO, 29 Mar (PMc). An extraordinary count of 43 Am. Woodcocks was recorded at P.R.N.A. 12 Mar (JWk). Wilson's Phalarope numbers have rebounded nicely from the nadir of only a few years ago. This spring 189 Wilson's Phalaropes were reported from the Region's 6 states, compared to only 11 in 1994. However, the lion's share of this impressive total is attributed to a single count of 150 in *Boone*, MO, 12 May (TC). Red-necked Phalaropes remained scarce. The Region's entire report consisted of one–two at Errington Marsh, IA, 9 & 25 May (JDi, P&RA), a female in *LaSalle*, IL, one in *Lyon*, IA, 28 May (JV), and one in *Boone*, MO, 26 May (TC).

GULLS, TERNS

Eighteen Laughing Gulls were scattered across every state except Ohio; records w. of the Mississippi R. included an early arrival at Saylorville Res., IA, 16 Apr (†DT), one at R.E.D.A. 14–17 May (CMA), and two adults at Saylorville Res. 22 May (†BE). The Region's only Little Gulls were in Ohio, where 13 were seen at Fairport Harbor 2 Mar (LRo, RHn) and a first-summer bird was found at H.B.S.P. 22 Apr (LRo, RHn). The normal spring Bonaparte's Gull build-up on L. Erie apparently shifted to L. Michigan. In Ohio, Rosche deemed the Bonaparte's flight "poor"; in contrast, 10,000+ were counted at Waukegan, IL, 17 Apr (SH et al.), among the highest counts ever in Illinois.

For the 2nd consecutive spring the Region's large gull flight was poor. Season totals included six Thayer's, seven Iceland, 11 Lesser Black-backed, and five Glaucous. These totals, especially for Thayer's, Iceland, and Glaucous, are very small compared to spring counts in the early 1990s. Interestingly, one of the Glaucous Gulls was seen at R.E.D.A. 8 & 14 May (BWe, FH) and another was at L. Shelbyville, IL, 1 May (RCh).

Migrant tern counts were not impressive. Peak tallies included 171 Caspian Terns at Michigan City Harbor, IN, 24 Apr

(JCd, LH, KB), 300+ Com. Terns at Jax.P 18 May (KC), 54 Forster's Terns at Evanston, IL, 8 May (EW et al.), and 65 Black Terns at Saylorville Res., IA, 30 May (DT). A distinct tern highlight was the appearance of Indiana's 2nd **Royal Tern** at Michigan City Harbor. The bird was discovered 22 May (JMc, S&CD) and was seen periodically through the end of the season (†m.ob.)

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Continuing their Regional invasion, Eur. Collared-Doves appeared at 3 locations in Illinois, three in Missouri, one in Iowa, and at least one in Kentucky. According to local residents, the six Kentucky birds in *Hickman*, *Fulton*, 30 May had been present for 2–3 years (†BPB, m.ob.). Perhaps even more surprising than the collared-dove incursion is the invasion of **White-winged Doves**. Prior to 1996 this southern species was virtually unknown in the Region. Between 1996 and 1999 at least seven birds appeared, with spring 1999 adding five (all singletons) to the list. These records were Indiana's 2nd most of April in an Evansville backyard (P Bennett, ph. †m.ob.), in *Buchanan*, MO, 4–6 Apr (LL), near Foley, MO, 10–12 Apr (†BE), Illinois' 2nd at Montrose Harbor, Chicago, 26 Apr (†RHu, JPu, KH), and in Waukegan, IA, 20–21 May (†R. Schlaefer). Twenty Monk Parakeets, a species recently added to the Illinois State checklist, were in Jax.P. 8 May (PC).

The "eared" owl flight was fairly typical, peak counts included seven Long-eareds at West Beach, IN (JMc, C&EP), and 15 Short-eareds at P.R.N.A. (JWk, EK). There were few comments about Com. Nighthawks except in Ohio, where Rosche deemed the flight "very poor." Early Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrived in *Jackson*, IL, 9 Apr (KMc), *Boyle*, KY, 15 Apr (N&V Eklund), and *Porter*, IN, 24 Apr (KB). Several correspondents noted that Red-headed Woodpeckers were present in "poor numbers" Breeding Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports included two in *Spencer*, IA (LS), and three in *Ashtabula*, OH (TL). A record Illinois N. Flicker count was logged 25 Apr, when 238 were counted at Jax.P. and Washington Park, Chicago (PC).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

It was a good season for flycatchers. An impressive 93 Least Flycatchers were counted in Chicago's Grant Park 8 May (DWd et al.) Without doubt the "bird of the season" was the Region's first **Gray Kingbird**, discovered at Carlyle L., Clinton, IL, 15 May (†DKb, MS, ph.) In Missouri, Korotev concluded

that Scissor-tailed Flycatcher numbers were up, and that the species was expanding eastward. That analysis is consistent with observations elsewhere in the Region, as there were three reported in Illinois and one in Iowa. Tardy N. Shrikes lingered into March in Illinois, Iowa, and Ohio, with the latest in *Winneshiek*, IA, 26 Mar (FL). A remarkable 34 territorial Loggerhead Shrikes were found at P.R.N.A. 8 Apr (JWk).

In Iowa, over-migrant White-eyed Vireos were seen 2 May at Muskrat Slough (CE) and n. of Iowa City 4 May (JFu, TK). Two calling Fish Crows were identified in *Boone*, MO, 8 May (PMc, BJ), suggesting expansion of this species into c. Missouri. An early Purple Martin was at Illinois Beach S.P. 21 Mar (†CFd). The largest swallow concentrations consisted of "thousands" of Tree Swallows at Chautauqua N.W.R., IL, 6 May (R&SB) and 1500 Bank Swallows at Horseshoe L., IL, 7 May (KMc). A record-early Cliff Swallow appeared at Iowa City, IA, 14 Apr (R. Hollis, TK).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were virtually absent from the Region. A pair of Bewick's Wrens successfully nested in Diane Porter's yard in Fairfield, IA; this innovative pair built their nest in a dryer vent and fledged two young on 2 Jun. Singing Winter Wrens were in w. *Grundy*, IL, 31 May (CMc et al.), and in Indiana Dunes S.P. 15 May (Haw et al.). A tardy Ruby-crowned Kinglet was still in Columbia, MO, 15 May (PMc, JBe). Although the overall thrush flight was weak, a respectable 17 migrant Veerys were in Chicago's Grant Park 17 May (DSt). A 23 Apr Gray-cheeked Thrush in *Tuscarawrus*, OH (ES), and an 11 Apr Swainson's Thrush in Urbana, IL (RCh), provided early local records. The 8 May total of 161 Gray Catbirds in Grant Park, Chicago (Dwd et al.), is mind boggling. American Pipits were unusually plentiful and widespread, with counts exceeding 40 birds in every state, plus tallies above 100 in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio; the maximum was 375 at Conneaut, OH, 17 May (ES).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The consensus was that the warbler flight was clearly better than 1998, but perhaps average overall. Some excellent Tennessee Warbler counts were logged, as evidenced by the 200+ in Urbana, IL, 19 May (RCh) and 60 in St. Louis 3 May (JZ). Other noteworthy tallies included 60 Nashvilles in Grant Park,

Chicago, 8 May (DW et al.), 30 Chestnut-sideds at Wilkinson Renwick Marsh, IL, 12 May (DSh), 43 Magnolias at Fox I. Park, IN, 12 May (Haw), 40 Black-throated Greens in the Indiana Dunes 8 May (LH), and 12 Mourning and 109 Com. Yellowthroats in Grant Park 17 May (DSt). In Iowa, a Cape May Warbler at Lacey Keosauqua S.P. 28 Apr (JFu) provided a record-early arrival for the state. Rarely seen in the Region, a Yellow Palm Warbler was at Magee Marsh, OH, 14 Apr (RHa, SW). Hooded Warblers arrived early in several states and appeared at many unusual locations. Summer Tanagers were unusually widespread and pressed farther north than normal. Peak counts included 14 in *Johnson*, MO, 13 May (LMo), and nine in *Union*, IL, 24 Apr (DSt). Male **Western Tanagers** were found in both w. states, the first near Meservey, IA, 10 May (B. Lemke), and the 2nd in Columbia, MO, 18 May (†DW).

The only Spotted Towhee reported e. of the Mississippi R. was in Urbana, IL, 31 Mar (RCh). American Tree Sparrows lingered in the Region later than normal with a "ragged-looking bird" at Springville Marsh, OH, 29 May (TBa), and another at Cowles Bog, IN, 13 May (DG). Rarely found in Kentucky, a Lark Sparrow in *Fulton* 11 Apr (MB), was noteworthy. Sparrows were well represented in the spring flight, with an excellent showing by several species. Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from every state except Kentucky; noteworthy observations included nine in Chicago's Grant Park 8 May (Dwd et al.) and one at Miami-Whitewater, OH, 3 May (*fide* NK). A signif-



Numerous longspurs poured through the Region this spring, among them this worn but cooperative male Smith's Longspur in Newton County, Indiana, 17 April 1999. Photograph/Jim Haw

icant Savannah Sparrow movement occurred 13 May when 80 were counted in a Gary, IN, wetland (JMc, SP). Reports of both Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrows were up this spring. The 1350 White-crowned Sparrows found in Grant Park, Chicago, 6 May (DSt) constitutes an all-time high count for Illinois. Longspurs abounded this spring; peak counts included 8000+ Laplands in *Buchanan*, MO, 9 Mar (MRO) and "1000s" of Smith's at P.R.N.A. 16 Apr (JWk).

The northward movement of Blue Grosbeaks was advanced by the discovery of a pair with nesting material in *Winnebago*, IL, 26 May (RMs). A very early Indigo Bunting appeared in Bloomington, IN, 26 Mar (DW). For the 4th consecutive year an early May Lazuli Bunting appeared at the Evonne & Wilbur Wright feeders in Fairfax, MO, this year from 7-12 May (†EW). Illinois' 3rd **Painted Bunting**, a male, was in Bloomington 19-22 May (†AL, †RCh, †DJ, †MRE, †m.ob.). An Illinois record count of 500 Brewer's Blackbirds was logged at Carlyle L., IL, 27 Mar (DKb). The eastward march of Great-tailed Grackles has been unusually well documented in *Boone*, MO. This species was first recorded at the Columbia City wetland in 1995, with breeding noted the following year; this spring 376 birds were present (PMc). Winter finches were conspicuously absent this spring, as only small numbers of Purple Finches were reported and the maximum Pine Siskin count was nine.

Contributors cited (subregional editors in boldface): The following 124 individuals are cited in this report. Many other observers contributed information to the various state lists, but could not be personally acknowledged. Pam & Reid Allen (P&RA), Ted Allen, Alan Anderson, Steve Anderson, Jim Bar (JBa), Susan Bagby, Bob Ball (BBI), Brian Barber (BBb), Tom Bartlett (TBa), Paul Bauer, Mark Bennett, John Besser (JBe), Tadas Birutis (TBi), David Bohlen (DBo), Denis Bohm (DBm), Richard & Sigurd Bjorklund (R&SB), Ken Brock, **Alan Bruner (ABu; Indiana)**, Charles Burwick, **Fred Busroe (Kentucky)**, John Cassady (JCd), Karen Cassel, John Castrale (JCs), Robert Chapel (RCh), Dave Easterla, **Paul Clyne (Illinois)**, Tom Curtis, Myrna Deaton, Bonnie & Robert Dever (B&RD), James Dinsmore (JDi), David Dister, Jon Dunn (JDu),

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 251.

central southern region



STEVEN W. CARDIFF

Climatically this season was a rerun of 1998. Another mild winter provoked an early spring that was relatively cool, with drought conditions prevailing over much of the southern portion of the Region. Fronts making it to the coast were few, far-between, and weak, but noticeable minor to major "fall-outs" were reported for 30–31 Mar (western Florida, *Orleans*), 10 Apr (Grand Isle), 15–18 Apr (coastwide), 28 Apr (Alabama), and 30 Apr–1 May (*Cameron*). Although "migrant-friendly" southerly flow was generally in control, allowing the majority of trans-Gulf transients to bypass offshore platforms and the coast, things were kept interesting by a better-than-average assortment of lingering winterers, early migrants, and vagrants.

Abbreviations: EB-826 (*Ewing Bank 826 oil platform, 61 mi s. of E. Timbalier I.*); e.o.p. (*to end of period*); GB-189 (*Garden Banks 189 oil platform, 138 mi S Cameron*); GC-18 (*Green Canyon 18 oil platform, about 70 mi s. Racoon Pt.*); LSUMNS (*Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science*); MOGP (*Migrants Over the Gulf Project*); SMI-147 (*South Marsh I. 147 oil platform, 93 mi s. of w. tip Marsh I.*); VE-265 (*Vermilion 265 oil platform, 77 mi s. Pecan I.*). County/parish names are *italicized*, and states are indicated only for the initial mention of counties/parishes, except to avoid confusion. For records of "review list" species, documentation has been received and records have either been accepted by, or acceptance is pending by, respective state bird records committees.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS

Red-throated Loons were reported in *Santa Rosa*, FL, 8 Mar (D&J Ballman) and *Marshall*, AL, 8 Apr (LBR, RAR). In Florida, Pacific Loons (now >20 records) were reported in *Escambia* 12 (RAD) & 22 Mar (PT), and in *Santa Rosa* 29 Apr (LD, RAD) and 11 May (AF). An Eared Grebe in *Oktibbeha*, MS, 27 Mar (TS, MS) provided the first 7-county-area spring record; Alabama sightings in *Marshall* 24 Mar–8 Apr (RAR, LBR) and *Colbert* 28 Mar–8 Apr (SWM, D. J. Simbeck) were rare e. interior finds. A **Western Grebe** in *Shelby* 2 May (J. Levy, H. Dinkelspiel, B. Tucker) was Tennessee's 6th. Somewhat surprising was a rash of early spring Audubon's Shearwaters, with two during a pelagic survey out of *Lafourche*, LA, 12 Mar (SWC, *LSUMNS, DLD, DPM), and a combined seven MOGP sightings 18 Mar–13 Apr at GB-189 (SJP), SMI-147 (RLK), and EB-826 (JRK). Masked Boobies were once again recorded regularly at some MOGP sites: 13 sightings involving 14 individuals 30 Mar–8 May, mainly at EB-826 and GC-18 (JRK, BPG, SJP, RLK). Much more interesting was an imm. **Brown Booby** at EB-826 14 Apr (JRK). Six pairs of nesting Double-crested Cormorants in *Washington* 22 May–e.o.p. (M. Stevens, J. Litton) represented only the 3rd Mississippi breeding record, all in 1998–1999.

CICONIIFORMES

Peak counts of the declining Am. Bittern included 29 in *Cameron*, LA, 3 Apr (JPK), and 13 in *Desha*, AR, 2 May (JC); one at VE-265 28 Mar (BMM) was an interesting trans-Gulf migrant, and one in *Putnam*, TN, 11 Apr (RWS) furnished the first spring area record. A Tricolored Heron in *Noxubee* 28 Apr–21 May (TS, MC) provided only the 2nd *Oktibbeha*-area record. Some of up to 34 White Ibis, rare in the *Oktibbeha* area, arrived early 4 Apr and remained through e.o.p.; breeding could not be confirmed (TS, MS, MC). A White-faced Ibis in *White* 8–9 May (K&LN) and a *Plegadis* sp. in *Ouachita* 31 May (JC) were rare inland strays for Arkansas. Roseate Spoonbills