

southern atlantic coast



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The fall was generally dry, with many areas experiencing near-drought conditions. A major exception was in eastern North Carolina, hit with two major storms: Hurricane-Tropical Storm *Dennis* (30 Aug–5 Sep) and Hurricane *Floyd* (15–16 Sep). *Dennis* caused considerable coastal damage, mostly in the southern areas, whereas *Floyd* brought record rainfall, causing unprecedented flooding in much of the coastal plain. Birdlife seemed not to suffer too much, but several of the area's observers did. In August, temperatures were hotter than normal, but the rest of the period was mostly average. October and November ended up being considerably mild; thus, there was no shortage of lingering birds in the Region.

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 S.P., SC*); L.M. (*Lake Mattamuskeet, NC*); P.I. (*Pea I. N.W.R., NC*); S.S.S. (*Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co., SC*); W.M.A. (*Wildlife Management Area*); W.T.P. (*wastewater treatment plant*).

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

The only inland Red-throated Loon was in *Carroll, GA*, 28 Nov (BZ). The peak inland Com. Loon count was 200 on L. Norman, NC, 7 Nov (TL). The rare Red-necked Grebe was found several times, with one on L. Hartwell, *Hart, GA*, 31 Oct–1 Nov (JF, EH, BZ), one at L.M. 14 Nov (HW et al.), and two in *Carroll, GA*, 28 Nov (BZ). Eared Grebes were found in normal numbers, with maxima being seven at S.S.S. 13 Oct (SC) and seven on L. Lanier, *GA*, 6 Nov

(EH). South Carolina got its fourth **Western Grebe**, on L. Wallace near Bennettsville 13 Aug–22 Oct (BG, m.ob.).

The month of August saw a busy pelagic birding schedule, but September storms brought activity to a screeching halt. N. Carolina *Pterodroma* petrels included Heralds off Oregon Inlet 7 Aug (PG et al.) and Wilmington 3 Aug (WI); Fea's off Hatteras 8 Aug (BP et al.), and another **Bermuda Petrel** off Hatteras 14 Aug (BP et al.). Representing about the fifth N. Carolina report, this species is probably annual in the state's offshore waters. Some high counts included 6,219 Cory's and 210 Greater Shearwaters off Oregon Inlet 7 Aug (BP et al.) and 150 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels off Oregon Inlet 16 Aug (BP et al.). Always rare in summer, Sooty Shearwaters found were two off Hatteras 7 Aug (BP et al.) and one off Oregon Inlet 8 Aug (PG et al.). The always exciting White-faced Storm-Petrel was located several times, with singles off Oregon Inlet 7 Aug (PG et al.) and 29 Aug (BP et al.) and three off Wilmington, NC, 1–8 Aug (WI). White-tailed Tropicbird reports were low this year, with singles off Hatteras 8 Aug and off Oregon Inlet 16 Aug (BP et al.) the only offshore sightings. One was found dead on the beach at Ocracoke, NC, 9 Sep following Hurricane *Dennis* (ML). Other *Dennis*-related sightings included single Black-capped Petrels on Roanoke Sound 31 Aug (JL) and Ocracoke I. 4 Sep (EHa), 196 Cory's and 81 Audubon's Shearwaters dead on the beach at Ocracoke I. 9 Sep (ML), and 25 Wilson's Storm-Petrels in Roanoke Sound 31 Aug (KW, JL).

Am. White Pelicans made news in the ACE Basin, SC, area, with a flock of 27 at Donnelley W.M.A. 30 Aug (SH) and 17–20 at Bear I. W.M.A. late Aug–late Oct (RC, CE, LG, TMu, v.o.). The only Magnificent Frigatebird report was of one at Paris I., SC, 24–27 Sep (*vide* V. Atkins). Reddish Egrets continue to be regular in the Region. The best counts were five at C. Romain N.W.R., SC, 27 Aug (PS) and three at Little St. Simon's I., GA, 3 Oct (MC et al.). Of note was one at H.B.S.P. that remained through the fall (JP, DF, v.o.). A Roseate Spoonbill was locally rare at Hilton Head I., SC, 28 Sep until at least 23 Oct (NL, DC, v.o.). The usual Brunswick-Jekyll I., GA, flock reached record numbers when 34 were counted there 29 Aug (DL).

Waterfowl numbers seemed down, probably due to the mild conditions. Nevertheless, some interesting sightings were had. The rare Gr. White-fronted Goose was found twice, at L. Hartwell, *GA*, 14 Nov (*vide* TM) and Alligator R. N.W.R., *NC*, 16 Nov (RD). An imm. male Com. Eider was found sick at H.B.S.P. on the early date of 8 Oct (*vide* JP); it was picked up 13 Oct and died at a shelter (JP). Excellent inland scoter totals were up to 14 Surfs on L. Hickory, *NC*, 25 Oct–30 Nov (D&LM) and an amazing count of 10 White-wingeds at the Hemingway W.T.P., *SC*, 24 Oct (MT). Also of note were two Blacks early at H.B.S.P. 5 Sep (JP, GP). Georgia had several Long-tailed Ducks, with singles at L. Walter F. George 8 Nov (MB) and Plant Scherer, *Monroe*, 13–20 Nov (GB et al., MB et al.).

Out-of-range Swallow-tailed Kites were at Fountain Inn, *Greenville, SC*, 26 Aug (PSh, PW) and near Boomer, *Wilkes, NC*, 23 Aug (BR). Rare Golden Eagle sightings involved imms. over Tucker, *GA*, 30 Oct (JS) and at Surf City, *NC*, 6 Nov (*vide* TP) for a rare coastal report. Peregrines continue to do well; the best count received was 17 near Darien, *GA*, 9 Oct (*vide* TM). Always a surprise, a Yellow Rail was flushed at Jekyll I. 1 Oct (BB), the only sighting of this elusive but regular species. Locally rare Sandhill Cranes were near Shelby, *NC*, 25 Aug–late Sep (JM, v.o.) and at the N. Myrtle Beach airport, *SC*, 22 Nov (*vide* JP). At the Donnelley W.M.A., *SC*, three adults (released there in 1998) were joined by two wild youngsters in Oct (LG, TMu, DB). The peak count from the Georgia migration corridor was 7,200 over *Cobb* 30 Nov (CS).

PLOVERS THROUGH TERMS

Am. Golden-Plovers once again made an excellent showing in the Region. Better totals included 45 from the Cherry Hospital fields, *Wayne, NC*, 23 Sep (ED, GH) after Hurricane *Floyd*, 26 at the Wright Bros. Memorial, Kill Devil Hills, *NC*, 5 Sep (J&PW, JL), and seven at the Orangeburg Sod Farm, *SC*, 29 Aug (RC et al.). Rare inland Am. Avocets were two at Jordan L., *NC*, 3 Aug (*vide* WC), one at Santee N.W.R., *SC*, 17 Oct (RC, CE), one at L. Murray, *SC*, 31 Oct (LG, DD), and two at L. Brown, *Barnwell, SC*, 31 Oct (MT). Upland Sandpiper numbers were down; maxima were 13 at the Orangeburg Sod Farm 23 Aug (TK et

al) and 10 near Plymouth, NC, 27 Aug (RD). Long-billed Curlews included two inland in Jones, NC, 5 Sep (CB) following Hurricane Dennis, one on Edisto Beach, SC, 26 Nov (SG et al.), and one each at St. Simon's I. and Little St. Simon's I., GA, 3 Oct (*vide* TM). N. Carolina's third **Black-tailed Godwit** was at the Cherry Hospital fields 23 Sep (ED), following Hurricane Floyd. The bird was observed at close range but in flight only as it circled the field several times, then departed. It circled over a Hudsonian Godwit present at the same time! N. Carolina had other inland godwits, with a Hudsonian at Falls L. 21–23 Aug (CEL, LT, v.o.) and a Marbled at Jordan L. 28 Aug–4 Sep (WC et al., CEL, LT). Baird's Sandpipers were well represented, with at least nine reports, some related to Hurricane Dennis. The most interesting sightings were two on a sandbar in the Saluda R., SC, 4 Sep (TK) and one at L. Buchanan, Haralson, GA, 10 Sep (MB). Continuing a recent trend, only one report of Curlew Sandpiper was received, of two at P.I. 7 Aug (JB). Buff-breasted Sandpipers continued to be widespread. Once again all states reported them, with the best counts being six at the Georgia Sod Farm, Floyd, GA, 5 Sep (MB et al.), six at Sod Atlanta, Bartow, GA, 19 Sep (*vide* JH), and three at the Orangeburg Sod Farm 23 Aug (TK et al.). The peak count of Wilson's Phalarope at S.S.S. was 10 on 3 Aug (SC); one at E.L.H. 5 Aug (PR) was locally rare. The Red-necked Phalarope made news this season. Locally rare were singles at E.L.H. 5–7 Aug (EB, JS, v.o.), Jordan L. 11 Aug (DS), L. Paul Wallace, Bennettsville, SC, 23–26 Sep (SCa, v.o.), L. Tillery, NC, 24 Oct–early Nov (GG), and Jekyll I. 23 Sep–3 Oct (NL, LTh, m.ob.). Hurricane Dennis grounded some in e. N. Carolina also, with the best count being 12 at Falls L. 6 Sep (RD, CEL). Dennis also produced a Red Phalarope at Falls L. 6 Sep (RD). Finally, unrelated to any storm was one at L. Hickory, NC, 7 Oct (D&LM), a rare local sighting.

South Polar Skuas were found several times off N. Carolina. The best totals were a record one-day count of seven off Hatteras 7 Aug (BP et al.) and three off Wilmington 1–8 Aug (WI). The always noteworthy Long-tailed Jaeger was found off Hatteras, NC, 8 Aug and off Oregon Inlet, NC, 29 Aug (BP et al.) and inland at New Bern, NC, 30 Aug (BH) during Hurricane Dennis. Rare gulls included a Little at Kill Devil Hills, NC, 13 Nov (*vide* HW), a Black-headed at C. Hatt. 3 Nov (TP et al.), a Thayer's at Oregon Inlet, NC, 6 Nov (DH et al.), and a

Glaucous at Ft. Fisher, NC, 27–28 Nov (MG). A **Sabine's Gull** at S.S.S. 13 Sep (SC) was only the third or fourth report for that state. Inland terns in N. Carolina due to hurricanes included two Sandwiches at Falls L. 6 Sep (RD), 150 Com. at Lookout Shoals L. 15 Sep (D&LM), 50 Forster's at Jordan L. 16 Sep (WC et al.), 20 Bridleds at New Bern 16 Sep (BH, WF), and eight Sooties at New Bern 30 Aug (BH). Pelagic trips out of Hatteras recorded excellent numbers of tropical terns, with record one-day totals of 154 Sooties 7 Aug and 111 Bridleds 8 Aug (BP et al.). The Black Tern migration was uneventful, with peak counts being 26 at L. Paul Wallace, Bennettsville, SC, 20 Aug (DBu) and 21 at L. Hickory, NC, 24 Aug (D&LM).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase in the Region. Along the coast the most northerly colony at Beaufort, NC, had 12+ birds 26 Nov (GH). The group of White-winged Doves at Beaufort seems to have disappeared but the species was still found five times in N. Carolina. Singles were at Ft. Fisher 3 Sep and 27 Nov (JB), Morehead City 19–22 Nov (JFu), Atlantic, Carteret, late Nov (*vide* JFu), Frisco 8–14 Nov (*vide* KW & PM), and Bodie I. Lighthouse 29 Nov (KW). Short-eared Owls made a good showing, with high counts of five in Sumter, GA, 20 Nov (GB et al.) and four at Bodie I., NC, 6 Nov (TP et al.) and an early one at Orangeburg Sod Farms 21 Sep (PW). N. Saw-whet Owls were encountered more often, with highlights being four banded at York, SC, late Nov (BHi); two banded near Halifax, NC, late Nov (FE); one found injured at Charleston, SC, 30 Nov (*vide* WP), which later died; one seen in Columbia, SC, 15 Nov (RC, CE et al.); and up to two along the Mashoes Rd., Dare, NC, in Nov (JL et al.). Hummingbirds seemed to be reported less frequently, although one male Black-chinned was at Richmond Hill, GA, 25 Oct (SC) and ad. male Rufous were at Hall, GA, early Oct (*vide* JH) and Hampstead, NC, 7 Oct (SCa).

There were three Olive-sided Flycatchers found, all in the Atlanta, GA, area (*vide* TM). *Empidonax* flycatchers were reported about normally, with maybe a few more Yellow-bellieds than usual. The best report from this group was the Alder at Kennesaw Mt., GA, 28–30 Aug (GB, JS et al., v.o.), providing one of the few documented sightings for that state. Always exciting anywhere in the southeast, an ad. female **Vermilion**

Flycatcher was at Jekyll I. 2 Oct (BB et al.), just one of a handful for that state. Also rare was the **Ash-throated Flycatcher** found near the Bodie I., NC, lighthouse 7 Nov (TG, DH et al.), a one-day wonder providing about the fourth report for that state. And this season's Scissor-tailed Flycatcher sighting was of one over Roswell, GA, 3 Sep (PMo). The Philadelphia Vireo migration was as strong as ever, with reports too numerous to mention. Warbling Vireos were also well-represented, with singles at Kennesaw Mt. 8–9 Sep (BZ et al.), Chattahoochee R. N.R.A., GA, 20–22 Sep, and, amazingly, three different ones on Roanoke I., NC, 12 Sep, 1 Oct, and 6 Oct (JL). A bird fitting the description of a **Cassin's Vireo** was found in n. Greene, GA, 24 Oct (PS); details of this potential Regional first were sent to the GA BRC. The swallow migration was dominated by an influx of **Cave Swallows** into the east. Our Region's sightings were of two at S S S 1 Nov (SC), five–six at Sunset Beach, NC, 10 Nov (MO), and one–two Cliff/Cave types at H.B.S.P. 27 Nov (JP, GP, KB). None were identified to subspecies. Golden-crowned Kinglets were widespread and some areas reported unusually high numbers, especially in Georgia. Red-breasted Nuthatches also staged a similar migration into the Region. The thrush migration, on the other hand, was uneventful and reports seemed to reflect continued diminishing numbers. An exception was the flock of 10 Gray-cheeked Thrushes in Fairfield, SC, 11 Sep (DB), an excellent count for that species.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The warbler migration seemed to be about normal in most areas of the region. Due to the mild conditions, late warblers included a Tennessee at P.I. 7 Nov (JFu, v.o.), Magnolia at L.M. 25 Nov (GF), Blackpoll in Wayne, NC, 19 Nov (GH), Am. Redstart at L.M. 25 Nov (GF), Wilson's at L.M. 25 Nov (GF) and Macon, GA, 28 Nov (JA), and Yellow-breasted Chat at L.M. 20–25 Nov (JL, GF). Orange-crowned Warblers were reported more than normal and Nashville Warblers were downright widespread, the peak one-day count being four on N. Carolina's Outer Banks 11 Sep (JL). Connecticut Warbler reports were about normal, with singles at Jordan L. 18 Sep (DS), at P.I. 2 Oct (KW et al.), near Townville, SC, 14 Oct (B&BM), and at Clemson, SC, 1 and 15 Oct (AF). Mourning Warblers were found at Charlotte, NC, 3–6 Sep (WCo, JW), Peachtree Nature Center,

Atlanta, GA, 13 Sep (EB), and Chattahoochee R. N.R.A. 22–25 Sep (EB, JC et al.). A W. Tanager was found in the Belleville area, GA, 25 Oct (*fide* JF), no doubt returning for the second year in a row.

Rare anywhere in N. Carolina, two different Am. Tree Sparrows were at P.I., at S. Pond 5–7 Nov (ST et al., m.ob.) and at N. Pond 7–8 Nov (DH et al., v.o.). Clay-colored Sparrows were found in normal numbers, the best count being four at P.I. 24 Oct (JL). Lark Sparrows were similar in occurrence; once again P.I. had the best total, with three 24 Aug (JL). Henslow's Sparrow highlights included four at Paulk's Pasture, Glynn, GA, 28 Nov (EB) and two at Austell Marsh, Cobb, GA, 11 Oct (GB et al.). Le Conte's Sparrows were reported much more than usual in all three states. The best counts were four at Santee N.W.R., SC, 25 Nov (TK) and an astounding total of 51 at the Bradley Unit of Eufaula N.W.R., GA, 21 Nov (GB et al.), a record tally for the Region of this elusive species. Lincoln's Sparrows were widespread, with reports too numerous to mention. Snow Buntings were found in small numbers, the best reports being four at C. Hatt. 13 Nov (ED et al.) and three at Oregon Inlet 5 Nov (JFu et al.). Dickcissels included three in Bartow, GA, 28 Aug (BZ) and singles at P.I. 11 Sep, 14 and 23 Oct (PM et al., JL), Morehead City 1 Oct (JFu), Onslow I., GA, 1 Oct (GB et al.), and Clemson 6 Oct (AF). Yellow-headed Blackbirds are now annual in the Region; this year there were many sightings. The best count was three on Jekyll I. on 11 Sep followed by a fourth in another area there on the 12th (DL)! Shiny Cowbirds continued their invasion of the Region, with two on St. Simon's I., GA, 26–31 Aug (LTh), two at Brunswick, GA, 13 Nov (B&BD), one near Darien, GA, 1 Aug (EB), and two at C. Romain N.W.R., SC, 27–28 Aug (PS).

Finches finally staged a modest movement into the Region, with Purple Finches and Pine Siskins noted in small numbers. Three Purple Finches were early in Orange, NC, 17 Sep (*fide* WC), as was one in Calhoun, SC, 21 Sep (MT). One of the most-hoped-for finches, the Com. Redpoll, was found at Alligator R. N.W.R., NC, 14 Nov (BH et al.), providing one of few reports in the last couple of years. And finally, Evening Grosbeaks appeared in small numbers, mostly in N. Carolina. The best count was 12 at Jordan L. 14 Nov (RD); one at Roanoke I. on 19 Sep (JL) provided a probable record-early arrival date.

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florida

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Three hurricanes grazed the Region this fall, raising concern for its ever-increasing human population but causing little damage beyond localized flooding. *Dennis* passed by the Atlantic coast 29–30 August, as did *Floyd* on 14–15 September. *Irene* crossed the peninsula the night of 15–16 October, producing an incredible fallout two mornings later in *Volusia* and pushing Magnificent Frigatebirds, Sooty and Bridled Terns, and other species inland at several sites. A good selection of Caribbean species was found this fall, including Cuban Pewee, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Bananaquit, and Stripe-headed Tanager. But the best bird unquestionably was the Elegant Tern found at Honeymoon Island, a first for the Region and only the second east of the Mississippi River.

Abbreviations: F.D.C.P. (*Fort DeSoto County Park, Pinellas Co.*); H.P.M. (*Hamilton Co. phosphate mines*); H.T.B.S.R.A. (*Hugh Taylor Birch State Recreation Area, Broward Co.*); L.A.R.A. (*Lake Apopka Restoration Area, Orange Co.—the former Zellwood muck farms*); P.P.M. (*Polk Co. phosphate mines*); P.P.S.P. (*Paynes Prairie State Preserve, Alachua Co.*); S.T.F. (*sewage treatment facility*).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Eared Grebes were reported from Springhill Road S.T.F., *Leon*, 18 Sep–19 Oct (GM et



al.), L.A.R.A. 19 Oct–12 Nov (HR et al.), Sarasota 14–15 Nov (JKo, CS), P.P.M. 27 Nov (PT, CG), with three at H.P.M. 21 Nov (RR et al.). Two Leach's Storm-Petrels seen from shore at St. Augustine 16 Oct (DG) probably were due to *Irene*; an Am. White Pelican at Curry Hammocks in the Middle Keys 10 Oct (DL et al.) was unusual. A Great Cormorant flew by Guana R. 16 Nov (NW) and 300 Anhingas were at P.P.S.P. 2 Nov (AK). *Irene*-driven Magnificent Frigatebirds were over *Highlands* 16 Oct, with 11 at Sebring (RB, CW) and five at Lorida (L&PG). An Am. Bittern at L.A.R.A. 31 Aug (HR) was early or summering. Concentrations of wading birds at P.P.S.P. in Oct were 219 Great Egrets, 125 Snowy Egrets, 150 Little Blue Herons, 400 White Ibises, and 666 Wood Storks (AK et al.), while L. Jackson, *Leon*, had 700 Great Egrets 8 Oct and 350 Wood Storks 5 Sep (GM et al.). A Great White Heron was near Fellsmere, *Indian River*, 10 Sep (SR) and a Jacksonville