

central southern



American Woodcocks are often seen but rarely captured on film as well as this road warrior at Pace Point, Henry, Tennessee, 14 Nov 1999. Photograph/Jeff R. Wilson

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In a fine autumn, the Region hosted good numbers and a wide spectrum of birds. Hardy offshore volunteers, manning the Gulf platforms, recorded impressive totals of transients and seabirds. Land-based observers were treated to exciting vagrants at both inland and coastal sites. Rainfall decreased this fall, though October saw a mild rebound; temperatures were slightly higher than normal in many areas. Coastal migrant concentrations were more frequent in September than October, though good numbers were found after the fronts of 10 and 14 October. Reports of significant rarities not accompanied by convincing documentation have been excluded, excepting processed specimens.

Abbreviations: b. (*banded*); C.P. (*Cameron Parish, sw. LA*); Ewing Bank (*platform 79 mi sw. of Southwest Pass, Plaquemines Parish, LA*); F.W.B.S.F. (*Fort Walton Beach spray field, Okaloosa County, FL*); Green Canyon (*platform 76 mi s. of Terrebonne Parish, LA*); M.L. (*Millwood Lake, sv. AR*); N.N.W.R. (*Noxubee N.W.R., e.-cen. MS*); Petronius (*VK 786 plat-*

form 71 mi s. of Gulf Shores, Baldwin County, AL); S.M.I. (*South Marsh Island 147 platform 80 mi sw. of St. Mary Parish, LA*); S.P. (*South Pass 89B platform 15 mi s. of Southwest Pass, Plaquemines Parish, LA*); T.N.W.R. (*Tallahatchie N.W.R., nw. MS*); W.P. (*Western Panhandle [westernmost three counties], FL*); * (*specimen to Louisiana State University*). States are usually identified only with the initial use of a place name.

LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Both rare for n. MS, Red-throated and **Pacific Loons** were at Sardis L., *Panola*, 18 Nov and 27–28 Nov, respectively (WMD). The fifth AR occurrence of the latter was documented 13 Nov in *Cleburne* (KN, LN, BV, ph.). Good numbers of Com. Loons were present inland in Nov, particularly at Pace Pt., *Henry*, TN, where 517 were counted 6 Nov (JRW, m.ob.); more than 300 Horned Grebes were impressive there 20 Nov (MAG et al.). An early Horned was spotted 3 Oct at Cross L., *Caddo*, LA (CL, KL). Far ahead of schedule was the Eared Grebe beginning 6 Aug at F.W.B.S.F. (RAD, EC et al.); other notable reports included an early individual 8 Sep in *Baldwin*, AL (RAD, LRD), another in *Oktibbeha*, MS, 22 Sep



(TLS), and nine in *Caddo* 14 Nov (CL et al.). Two rare Western Grebes were in *Yell*, AR, 21–26 Nov (KN, LN).

With only seven prior AL records, at least 10 documented **Cory's Shearwaters** on seven dates 19 Aug–6 Oct were impressive (SJP, some v.t.); Louisiana offshore sightings were of two 30 Aug and one 5 Oct at Green Canyon (MJI) and one 3 Sep at Ewing Bank (BMM). It was also a good season for Greater Shearwaters: at least 10 were documented on as many days 18 Aug–13 Oct at Petronius (SJP, some v.t.), raising the number of AL records by more than 50%. Lone Greaters appeared on four days 15 Aug–30 Oct at S.P. (KB), with another 25 Sep at Green Canyon (MJI). Unidentified small shearwaters were at Petronius 19 and 25 Sep, and two were seen 1 Nov (SJP); another videotaped there 31 Oct (SJP) can be identified as an **Audubon's Shearwater**, representing the seventh AL record. Louisiana pelagic trips s. and sw. of the Mississippi R. mouth found one–two Audubon's-type shearwaters 12 Oct and an Audubon's 6 Nov (all DPM, DLD, SWC et al.); an unidentified small shearwater was seen 4 Sep at Ewing Bank (BMM). Shore-based observations are rare, so three Audubon's 13 Oct at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, and two there 20 Oct (both RAD), were surprising; there were only two prior W.P. records. An unidentified storm-petrel was late 4 Oct at Petronius (SJP).

For a first AL record, a spectacular ad. **Red-billed Tropicbird** was discovered 30 Aug at Petronius (SJP, ph.). Masked Boobies are rare but regular in the n. Gulf; this fall pelagic observers recorded at least 40 birds 16 Aug–26 Nov off LA and AL. More unusual was the Brown Booby 9 Oct at S.P. (KB). Excellent numbers of migrating Am. White Pelicans were reported in n. MS, with peak counts of 2,225 in *Lafayette* 6 Nov and 2,100 in *Tate* 9 Nov (WMD); nearby in Memphis, 480 were tallied 2 Oct (JRW, MAG). Rare inland in AL, a maximum of 34 birds was

noted 31 Oct–26 Nov in *Limestone* (TAB, DB, HD, SWM et al.). Extremely unusual was a Brown Pelican 15 Oct–27 Nov at various locations along the Tennessee R. in n. AL (SW, TMH, TAB, SWM et al., ph.), furnishing the seventh inland state record.

The eighth for AR, a **Neotropic Cormorant** was discovered in *Lafayette* 11 Sep (KN, LN, CM); the careful tally (!) of 2,688 Neotropics in C.P. 21 Oct (KB) set a new LA high. Good numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were again noted inland, with a peak count of 3,000 in *Lafayette*, MS, 6 Nov (WMD). Notable concentrations of Great Egrets were reported in MS and LA, especially the 3,000 Greats, mixed with 6,000 Snowies, in C.P. 14 Sep (KB). Lingering at M.L., a Snowy Egret and three Little Blue Herons were noted 22 Nov (CM). White-faced Ibis is scarce in the Region outside LA; singles were identified 28 Aug in *Desha*, AR (KN, LN), 9 Sep in *Jackson*, MS (CD, AD, MP et al.), 29 Sep in *White*, AR (KN, LN), and in *Washington*, MS, 28 Aug (GC&SK).

Continuing a recent trend, Roseate Spoonbills put on a good show outside the s LA stronghold, with eight records of 18 birds through 30 Sep in n. LA, MS, and AR. The annual Wood Stork invasion was only moderate in intensity, though 400 were seen 14 Aug in *Chicot* and *Desha*, AR (KN, LN). Occurrences where the species is rare included three in *Shelby*, TN, 19 Aug (JRW) and eight in n. *Baldwin* 26 Sep (BS).

WATERFOWL THROUGH LIMPKIN

The usual hodgepodge of probable summering waterfowl was noted in Aug, particularly in LA; species included Snow, Ross's, and Canada Geese, Gadwall, Mallard, N. Shoveler, N. Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck. Rare in AR, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck reports included a pair with young 20 Aug (SS&ELL) and 23 adults 29 Aug (DA), both near Spirit L., *Lafayette*. The flock of 134 Gr. White-fronted Geese in *Dyer*, TN, 26 Nov (JRW) was noteworthy. A major flight of Snow Geese occurred with a cold front 14 Nov in the ne. portion of the Region; in a band extending from Pace Pt., TN, to Birmingham, AL, roughly 10,000 were noted that day (JRW, DJS, PDK, SWM et al.). A peppering of Ross's Geese is now expected in most parts of our area; the highest count submitted was of 22 birds in *Tunica*, MS, 25 Nov (JRW). An imm. Tundra Swan was a nice find 26 Nov at Reelfoot L., TN (JRW).

Returning this fall, the rare **Eurasian Wigeon** appeared at Wheeler N.W.R.,

Morgan, AL, 24 Nov–2 Dec (GEH, WDR, m.ob.). Another repeat performance was staged by the rare Cinnamon Teal at New Orleans 6 Nov+ (GO). Locally early was a N. Pintail at N.N.W.R. 25 Aug (TLS). Also ahead of schedule, and not thought to have summered, were a Canvasback 22 Sep, Redhead 21 Aug, and Ring-necked Duck 30 Sep, all in *Caddo* (CL et al.). Rare inland, a Black Scoter was present 18 Nov–3 Dec in *Oktibbeha* (TLS). The count of 296 Buffleheads 26 Nov in *Caddo* (CL, JT, KT) was unusual, as were over 1,000 Hooded Mergansers 20 Nov in *Madison*, MS (SA). Rare and early was a Com. Merganser 10 Oct in *Garland*, AR (SC, AD). A new AR maximum was provided by 175 Red-breasted Mergansers 20 Nov in *Yell* (KN, LN).

An aerial tally of 167 Swallow-tailed Kites in *George* and *Jackson*, MS, 11 Aug (JB, MW, JM) was impressive. More than 75 Mississippi Kites in *Autauga* 13 Aug (RRS) set a new AL high. An early N. Harrier was detected at T.N.W.R. 22 Aug (FB, JRW). Rare so far east, a Swainson's Hawk was studied at New Orleans 29 Nov (PHY). Returning 27 Nov to a favored spot in *Jefferson Davis*, LA (BF, PC) was the rare White-tailed Hawk. The only Rough-legged Hawk reported this autumn was from *Madison*, TN, 23 Nov (MAG). A rare and early Golden Eagle was found 24 Oct in *Crittenden*, AR (JRW); at least two were in a more regular site in *Henry* 14 Nov+ (JRW).

Yellow Rails are rarely detected beyond the rice fields of LA; two were flushed 25 Sep in *Lake*, TN (JRW, KM), another was seen 16 Oct in *Henry* (MAG), and two were spotted 23 Oct in *St. Francis*, AR (KN, LN, LA). Similarly hard to find, especially in fall, one or more Black Rails were observed 8–10 Oct at Dauphin I., AL (TAP, GLH, PK, m.ob.); a freshly-killed bird was found 16 Nov in New Orleans (JOC, TDC, MM). Three Soras at F.W.B.S.F. 14 Aug (DMW, AK) were early. Over 40,000 Am. Coots in *Caddo* 6 Nov (CL et al.) were unusually abundant for nw. LA. Providing a second record for TN and a first for the w. portion, a **Limpkin** was an exotic thrill 27 Jul–18 Sep in Hatchie N.W.R., *Haywood* (AW, RPF, m.ob., ph. JRW).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Tardy Am. Golden-Plovers 21 Nov in both *Lowndes*, AL (LFG) and *Oktibbeha* (TLS) provided local departure records; another was found 24 Nov in *Iberville*, LA (DLD, SWC). Rare in the W.P., two Am. Oystercatchers were at Ft. Pickens 7 Sep (RAD). High counts of Black-necked Stilts along the Mississippi R. included 200+ birds 14 Aug in

Adams, MS (MS, WP). Of many far-inland reports of Am. Avocet, most notable were 11 in *Boone*, AR, 24 Aug (J&ER), 26 birds 27 Oct in *Caddo* (CL), and eight in *Natchitoches*, LA, 31 Oct (CL). Difficult to find inland, single Willets were reported on 14 Aug. from w. TN (two; JRW, MAG et al.), n. LA (CL, JT), and e. AR (KN, LN, m.ob.), two other sightings took place through 8 Sept. in these locales. A concentration of 13 Upland Sandpipers in *Lowndes* 13 Aug (GDJ, GSA) furnished a fall inland maximum for AL. Rare away from the coast, and only the second for Alabama's Mountain Region, a Whimbrel was a surprise in *Shelby* 12 Sep (GJH, HHK, m.ob.). Scarce non-coastal Marbled Godwit sightings included up to three beginning 2 Aug at T.N.W.R. (FB et al.) and one near Shreveport, LA, 21 Aug (CL).

Ruddy Turnstones are unusual away from salt water; four were at T.N.W.R. 24 Aug (FB) and single birds were in *Shelby*, AL, 29 Aug (SWM) and at T.N.W.R. 10–16 Sep (FB). Of several inland reports of Sanderlings, most noteworthy were 15 individuals at M.L. 5 Sep (CM) and another, setting a new TN departure date, at Pace Pt 20–21 Nov (MAG, JRW, m.ob.). Also tardy was a Semipalmated Sandpiper studied 30 Oct in *Dyer* (JRW). I received six reports of seven White-rumped Sandpipers, rare in fall; most unusual was one in *Baldwin* 28 Oct (GEH et al.), providing a late date for AL. Tarrying Baird's Sandpipers were in *Shelby*, TN, 2 Oct (JRW, MAG) and *Mobile*, AL, 7 Oct (SWM). Noteworthy reports of the uncommon Buff-breasted Sandpiper included two early arrivals 1 Aug in *Harrison*, MS (SJP), 19 birds 22 Aug at T.N.W.R. (FB, GC&SK), and a significantly late individual 21 Oct in *Baldwin* (BS). Always exciting, a **Ruff** was discovered 15 Oct at T.N.W.R. (FB, JRW, ph.) for one of the few MS records. Rare Red-necked Phalaropes were noted 10 Sep at T.N.W.R. (FB, ph.), 20–22 Sep in *White* (KN), and 10 Oct at S.M.I. (RLK, *).

Offshore observers tallied extraordinary numbers of Pomarine Jaegers this fall, particularly in Nov off LA. High counts were 72 birds 16 Nov at S.M.I. (RLK), 70 at Green Canyon 24 Nov (AWO), and an amazing 125 (!) at the latter location 25 Nov (AWO) Inland the species is rare, so two–three birds at Cross L. 3–21 Nov (CL, m.ob., ph.) were great finds, as was the Parasitic there 13–14 Nov (CL, m.ob., ph.). Another rare inland **Parasitic Jaeger** provided the seventh record for AR 5 Sep at M.L. (KN, LN, CM, MD, DA, ph.). The only offshore Parasitic



Only the species' third appearance in the Florida Panhandle, this White-crowned Pigeon was a shock 14 Aug 1999 in Walton. Photograph/Alan Knothe

noted was 4 Sep at S.P. (KB). A first for the W.P., a **Long-tailed Jaeger** was a shocker 9 Aug at Ft. Pickens (RAD).

Ahead of schedule, 28 Franklin's Gulls were at Cross L. 4 Oct, and an impressive 115 were there 3 Nov (both CL). Of several other Franklin's reports, most notable were five on the Mobile Causeway, AL, 5 Nov (SWM). Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become almost "ho-hum" in C.P., with a peak this fall of five birds 30 Oct (PW, CS). More unusual was an adult 21 Nov at Pace Pt. (JRW, m.ob.); at the same location, a rare Great Black-backed Gull was discovered 7 Nov (JRW). An ad. Kelp Gull was seen at the usual Chandeleur Is., LA, location 7 Sep (DLD, SWC); potential identification nightmares away from this site, a dozen birds thought to be Kelp ~ Herring hybrids were noted that day. An alternate-plumaged ad. **Sabine's Gull** was a thrill 4 Sep at S.M.I. (RLK); fewer than nine records have been accepted in LA. Alabama's 13th Black-legged Kittiwake was spotted 14 Nov in w. *Colbert* (GNP, MA); another was seen 16 Nov at S.M.I. (RLK). Expected small numbers of Bridled Terns were noted far offshore AL and LA; one at Petronius 1 Nov (SJP) furnished a new AL late date.

PIGEONS THROUGH NUTHATCHES

For a third Regional and W.P. record, a **White-crowned Pigeon** was a prize 14 Aug in *Walton* (GB, DMW, AK, PB, ph.). Illustrating consolidation of forces, record counts of Eur. Collared-Doves were submitted: 200+ were seen 20 Oct in *Baldwin* (ALM, ADM) and 510 were at one site in *Jefferson*, LA, 30 Oct (PHY, JZ). Good numbers of White-winged Doves were again reported this fall, including many far offshore

LA and AL. One 22 Nov in *Butler* (AM) was only the seventh for inland AL; two **White-winged Doves** beginning 26 Nov in Little River (DA, MMi, CM et al., v.t.) represented one of few AR records.

SA "I am that merry wanderer of the night" (W. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Ever contemplate a pelagic owling trip? Maybe you should reconsider. Platform-based observers were amazed by vagrant owls this autumn. The lead bird, by all measures, was a Flammulated Owl 11 Oct at Green Canyon (MJI, ph.). This mite caused a frenzy as it tantalizingly flew past and disappeared; it was relocated after a long and exasperating search (and posting of a reward to workers on the platform!). The only accepted record for LA is from 1949. Though not in the same league, a Burrowing Owl was nevertheless a bizarre sight 120 mi offshore at Garden Banks, LA, 23 Oct (JRK). Perching on a beam, a cooperative Long-eared Owl caused a shock at Petronius 16 Oct (SJP, v.t.). The photogenic vagrant provided the first AL record since 1977. So off to sea we go in search of, uh, owls?

A Long-eared Owl, chased from a roost by crows, was a surprise 28 Nov in *Obion*, TN (JRW). An unexpected, and exhausted, visitor to Green Canyon 26-28 Nov was a Lesser Nighthawk (MJI, in-hand ph.). The first for MS, a **Green Violet-ear** was enjoyed 3-5 Oct in *De Soto* (RP, BB, CHB, m.ob., ph.). A rare Broad-billed Hummingbird appeared in *Iberville* 4-15 Nov (AG, MDy, LCB). Scarce, non-LA, Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were noted beginning 15 Sep in

Escambia (BK), *Baldwin* (RRS, MBS, b.), *Jackson* (CD, JP, LE), and *Oktibbeha* (MC, TLS, RRS, m.ob., b., ph.), the last a first inland occurrence for MS. Arkansas' first **Calliope Hummingbird** was documented 19-21 Oct in *Sevier* (DA, PF, m.ob., b., ph.); others were located in *Lowndes*, MS, 31 Oct (J&DP), *Iberville* 11-22 Nov (SWC, DLD, MAS, ph.), and *Marshall*, AL, 29 Nov (RRS, MBS et al., b., ph.). Rare Broad-tailed Hummingbirds occurred in *Iberville* 13 Nov+ (DLD, SWC et al., ph.) and near Baton Rouge 21 Nov (LCB). Rufous Hummingbirds are scarce in TN; individuals were banded 31 Aug in *Wilson* (CAS, PM) and 24 Oct in *Tipton* (KBi, CAS, m.ob.). A rare Allen's Hummingbird was in Montgomery, AL, 7 Nov (RRS, MBS, RC, b., ph.).

SA startling first Regional occurrence, a male Ringed Kingfisher dominated the scene at Cross L. 20-28 Nov (C&SM, TD, JMC, m.ob., ph., v.t.). Raining gold on El Dorado, a male Tropical Parula was at the same site 27-28 Nov (C&SM, CL et al., ph.), providing a sixth record for LA. It seems likely these disparate species, probably with a similar point of origin in s. TX or e. Mexico, arrived under common circumstances. Perhaps conditions in s. areas played a role, but monthly climatic data from Brownsville, TX, are not revealing. It is tempting to link vagrancy to weather events; one problem with such correlations is uncertainty of arrival dates, as both birds could have been present for some time before detection. A low pressure system moved from e. TX to n. LA 31 Oct-1 Nov, with concomitant strong upper-level winds from the south and southwest; subsequent patterns were not as remarkable. Like so many extralimital occurrences, the basis is elusive.

Rare but regular in early fall, seven Olive-sided Flycatchers were noted 22 Aug-8 Sep in AL, se. LA, and w. TN. It was an excellent year for Yellow-bellied Flycatchers at Ft. Morgan, with a surprising 17 banded 3 Sep-2 Oct (DC et al.); singles were spotted 4 Sep and 2 Oct in *Shelby*, TN (JRW et al.). A female Vermilion Flycatcher, rare in the W.P., was discovered 30 Sep at F.W.B.S.F. (RAD, LRD). The scarce Ash-throated Flycatcher appeared 23-24 Oct in C.P. (DPM, RDP, RLK, v.t.) and 14 Nov+ at F.W.B.S.F. (NG, KJ, m.ob., ph.). For a sixth LA occurrence, an ad. **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** was a gem in C.P. 29 Sep (MeP, DLD, SWC, *). Rare in the Region, single

Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds were found 17 Sep at S.P. (KB) and 18 Sep in C.P. (SWC, DLD, *). A W. Kingbird was unusual in *White* 24 Aug (KN, LN). Noteworthy Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reports included an early bird 28 Aug in *Santa Rosa*, FL (RAD) and one in *Bolivar*, MS, 27 Sep (N&JCH).

Rare in AL, Bell's Vireos were banded at Ft. Morgan 12 and 26 Sep (DC, MDs et al., ph.); another unusual occurrence was in *Shelby*, TN, 24 Sep (JRW). A Blue-headed Vireo 30 Nov in *Lauderdale*, AL (TMH) was behind schedule. The Warbling Vireo is difficult to find in the se. part of the Region. Five were surprising 31 Aug–6 Oct at Ft. Morgan (DC, ALM, RRS et al., four b.); singles were rare 14 Sep in *Iberville* (SWC) and 26 Sep in *Marion*, AL (JJ). A tardy Philadelphia Vireo was in *Madison*, MS, 12 Nov (SA). Over 100 Horned Larks in *Lowndes* 6 Nov (TAP) represented a recent maximum for Alabama's coastal plain. In C.P. a massive passage of N. Rough-winged Swallows was witnessed 11 Oct, with estimates of 150,000–300,000 birds (JPK, KF); a similar, but lesser, movement of Barn Swallows was recorded there 30 Sep (JPK, KF), with numbers estimated at 20,000–60,000. A late Barn was at Cross L. 24 Nov (CL, MH). The Red-breasted Nuthatch 13 Aug in *Putnam*, TN (RWS) was early.

WRENS THROUGH FINCHES

Rare away from the w. edge of the Region, Bewick's Wrens were good finds 2 Oct in *Colbert* (MA, GNP) and 17 Oct at Memphis (JRW). An early Sedge Wren was at F.W.B.S.F. 18 Sep (DMW, VS). Excellent numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets were reported, with early birds 13 Oct at Ft. Morgan (DC et al., b.) and 17 Oct in *Harrison* (SJP). Setting new local arrival records, a Veery was banded at Ft. Morgan 30 Aug (DC et al.) and a Swainson's Thrush appeared 6 Sep in *Oktibbeha* (TLS, MHS). Rare in most of our territory, a Sprague's Pipit was in New Orleans 21 Nov (PHY, DPM, JZ) and three were discovered 27 Nov in *Prairie*, AR (GL).

A Blue-winged Warbler 28 Oct in *St. Tammany*, LA (GO, DaC) and a Golden-winged 12 Oct at Ft. Morgan (DC et al., b.) were late. Decidedly rare, the recessive-hybrid Lawrence's Warbler was in *Iberville* 21–26 Sep (SWC, *). Earlier than usual, a Tennessee Warbler was at N.N.W.R. 27 Aug (TLS). Nashville Warblers at both ends of the usual schedule were noted at N.N.W.R. 9 Sep (TLS) and in New Orleans 21–24 Nov (DPM). Rare in autumn, Cape May Warblers were observed in *Lauderdale*, TN,

12 Sep (JRW) and at Petronius 25 Sep and 30 Sep–2 Oct (SJP, one ph.). A Black-throated Blue Warbler, uncommon in fall, arrived early 27 Aug in *St. Tammany* (WC, ph.). Extremely rare for AL, an Audubon's Warbler appeared 12 Oct at Petronius (SJP). A Blackburnian Warbler 31 Oct in *Iberville* (DLD) was tardy.

Providing a new TN departure date, a Prairie Warbler was at Nashville 7 Nov (CAS, PhC, KC); another lingering Prairie was noted in *Jefferson Davis* 26 Nov (BF, PC). The Palm Warbler 22 Aug in *Red River*, LA (CL, RJB) was exceptionally early, and a Bay-breasted Warbler at N.N.W.R. 9 Sep (TLS) also was ahead of the pack. A Blackpoll Warbler, rare in autumn, was at Dauphin I. 9 Oct (JKS, v.t.); at Ewing Bank, two appeared 12 Oct and another 27 Oct (BMM). Seven Cerulean Warblers at Petronius 31 Aug (SJP) set a new AL coastal maximum for fall. A lingering Ovenbird was spotted 20 Nov in *Prairie* (TS). Good numbers of the skulking Mourning Warbler were reported. Ten banded birds were exceptional at Ft. Morgan 31 Aug–30 Sep (DC et al., ph.); one arrived at Petronius 28 Aug (SJP) and another was rare at F.W.B.S.F. 7 Sep (DMW). Seven were spotted in LA through 9 Oct, including four at Grand Isle 29 Aug (DPM). A **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Green Canyon 5 Sep (RLW) furnished Louisiana's ninth record. Early Wilson's Warblers included birds 4 Sep in *Madison*, AL (DR&RC) and 7 Sep in the Chandeleur Is. (DLD, SWC).

Two rare W. Tanagers were observed in the W.P., at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 15 Aug (RAD, LRD) and in *Okaloosa* 1 Sep (CP). Spotted Towhees are tough to find in the Region, so one in C.P. 27 Nov (PHY et al.) was significant. Clay-colored Sparrows are expected in low numbers each fall along the coast, where there were 12 reports of 14 birds beginning as early as 7 Sep in the Chandeleur Is. (SWC). More unusual, a Clay-colored was in *Oktibbeha* 6–12 Oct. (TLS, m.ob.) for a 3rd inland MS record, and single birds were spotted 9 Oct. in *Cleburne*, AR (KN, LN) and 10 Oct at M.L. (DA, CM, ph.). An early Vesper Sparrow was seen 18 Sep in *Okaloosa* (LF, IW). Eight Lark Sparrows in New Orleans 10 Sep (PHY) represented an unusually high tally; an immature 30 Sep–2 Oct in *Lee*, AL (GEH) was locally rare and tardy. A Henslow's Sparrow 12 Oct at Dauphin I. (DR&RC) provided a new AL arrival date, while a rare n. AL sighting occurred 21 Nov in *Marion* (JJ). Three Le Conte's Sparrows were unprecedented as early as 7 Oct on the

Mobile Causeway (RA&LBR). Tallies of 12 Le Conte's 20 Nov in *Henry* (MAG, m.ob.) and six beginning 21 Nov in *Lauderdale*, AL (PDK et al.) were impressive for the ne. part of the Region. A good find inland, two Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were in *Lake* 25 Sep (JRW).

At least 12 Lapland Longspurs 21 Nov in *Lowndes* (LFG, CTS, P&RJ) supplied a new early record for Alabama's inland coastal plain and the first in decades. A **Chestnut-colored Longspur** caused a tizzy at Ft Pickens 31 Oct–2 Nov (DH, PB, m.ob., ph.), furnishing a first W.P. and third FL record. The **Snow Bunting** studied at close range in *Dallas* 17 Nov (SER) represented a first for AL. Rare in the W.P., an imm. male Black-headed Grosbeak was a treat at Gulf Breeze 17 Sep (LRD, RAD). Over 700 Indigo Buntings in one field set a new AL maximum 11 Nov in *Covington* (CTS, PS). A Painted Bunting lingered as late as 22 Nov in *Iberville* (SWC, DLD). Bobolinks, uncommon in fall, were noted to 7 Nov at S.P. (KB) and 11 Nov in *Covington* (CTS, PS), the latter establishing an inland AL departure date. Of several reports of the rare Yellow-headed Blackbird, most notable were males 11 Sep at T.N.W.R. (GC&SK), 12 Oct at Dauphin I (JKS, v.t.), and 27 Nov in *Lauderdale*, TN (MAG). An early Rusty Blackbird was observed 20 Oct in *Iberville* (SWC). Unusual for fall, two–three Shiny Cowbirds were present 15–26 Aug at Grand Isle, LA (DPM, PW et al.) and three were nearby in *Lafourche* 16 Oct (PW, CS). Late orioles included an Orchard in C.P. 22 Oct (RLK) and a Baltimore near Baton Rouge 18 Nov (KF, SG). With only 10 previous LA records, the Scott's Oriole 13 Nov in *Iberville* was an unexpected treat (SWC, DLD, *). An early Purple Finch was spotted 26 Sep in *Putnam*, TN (RWS).

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The Region experienced seasonable conditions in August and September, but October and November were unusually mild and dry. Only northern regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan received normal precipitation; Alberta had to deal with forest and range fires in October! By the end of the period much open water remained in the south and the ground was essentially snow-free. Numerous waterfowl, raptors, and shorebirds lingered, while passerines departed generally on schedule. However, those that did remain often survived beyond expectation.

Abbreviations: B.N.H.S. (*Brandon Nat. Hist. Soc., Brandon, MB*); I.B.S. (*Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary, AB*); L.M.L. (*Last Mountain L., SK*); Mt. L. (*Mt. Lorette, AB*); O.H.M. (*Oak Hammock Marsh, Manitoba*); S.R.V. (*Sheep River Valley, AB*).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Alberta reported four Red-throated Loons between 12 Sep and 10 Nov; more unexpected was one at Victoria Beach, MB, 9 Oct (RKO). Four Pacific Loons were on Barrier L., AB, 3 Oct (J&MM); singles were at Mt. L. 25 Oct (PSh) and at Seebe Dam, AB, 11 Nov (J&MM). Rarest of the loons was a Yellow-billed at Morley, AB, 11 Nov (J&MM). A Great Egret at Innisfail, AB, 1–21 Aug was undocumented (m.ob.). Four Great Egrets at Whitewater L., MB, 22 Aug (CCt, B.N.H.S.) increased to 11 by 30 Aug (AW et al.), with three lingering until 26 Sep

(B.N.H.S.). At Langruth, MB, another 12 were found 2 Sep (L&RJ). Cattle Egrets also congregated at Whitewater L., peaking 6 Sep at 47 (G&SG et al.); about 40 “small egrets” near Langruth 1 Sep were likely the same species (*fide* HdH). A late Cattle Egret was at O.H.M. 18 Oct (PG). Rounding out the wader bonanza at Whitewater L., up to five White-faced Ibises were seen 22–30 Aug (CCt, B.N.H.S., m. obs.). Botulism claimed a sixth bird 23 Aug (*fide* CCt).

About 60 Gr. White-fronted Geese at O.H.M. 11 Nov were late (RKO), as was one at Calgary 18 Nov (MH). Concentrations of 100,000 to 200,000 Snow Geese at various locations in sw. MB and s. SK between late Sep and early Nov reflect how successful the species is (CCt, T&RWi, WH, PSa, DV). The best count of Ross’s Geese was 3,200 at L.M.L. 7 Oct (WH) and rare blue-morph birds were noted 10 Oct at Radisson L., SK (BK) and 14 Oct at Buck L., SK (FL). A juv. **Mute Swan** at Stony Mountain 23 Oct was about the fifth for Manitoba (GH, CCs). Trumpeter Swans peaked at 300+ at Taylorville, AB, 25 Oct–7 Nov (T&DD).

Concentrations of ducks included 10,000 Gadwall and 10,000 Green-winged Teal at Whitewater L. 20 Sep (AW) and 900 juv. Ring-necked Ducks near Irricana, AB, in August (TK). In contrast, observers in Saskatchewan (BL) and sw. Manitoba (CCt) commented on the steady decline in numbers of staging L. Scaup. A Harlequin Duck was a good find at Pine Falls, MB, 7 Nov (RZ). From 26 Sep–30 Oct at least 45 Surf Scoters were noted in Alberta, including 26 at Chain Lakes 2 Oct (TK). Eight were found in Saskatchewan (BL et al.) and two in Manitoba (GH, CCs et al.). Only two Black Scoters were reported, at Cold L., AB,



10 Nov (FW) and L.M.L. 11 Nov (BL). November Long-tailed Duck sightings came from Calgary and Taber, AB (LB), and Pine Falls (ACs et al.) and St. Ambrose, MB (AW). At least two Barrow’s Goldeneyes were at L.M.L. 31 Oct–6 Nov (BL, DV).

An Osprey near Minnedosa, MB, 18 Nov was spectacularly late (CCt). There were numerous November reports of N. Harriers in Alberta and at O.H.M.; a female at the latter was captured by a Bald Eagle 19 Nov (BCa). Migrating Sharp-shinned Hawks peaked at 107 at S.R.V. 9 Oct (RD, WS) and at 120 at Whytewold, MB, 10 Oct (MQ). A Broad-winged Hawk at Mt. L. 7 Nov was very late (*fide* PSh), as were Ferruginous Hawks at Govenlock, SK, 7 Nov and between Swift Current and Rosetown, SK, 22 Nov (WH). The latter were attracted by late above-ground Richardson’s Ground Squirrel activity. Early single Rough-legged Hawks arrived at Shepard, AB, 29 Aug (MH) and Calgary 8 Sep (MBr); 146 passed S.R.V. 12 Oct (WS) and dozens stayed into Dec at O.H.M. (m.ob.). The Sep–Nov Golden Eagle tally at Mt. L. was 3,466, the second-lowest fall count there since detailed surveys began in 1992 (PSh et al.).

COOTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Three thousand Am. Coots crowded a slough near Chestermere L., AB, 20 Sep (TK). Most noteworthy of a stunning number of lingering shorebirds were an Am.