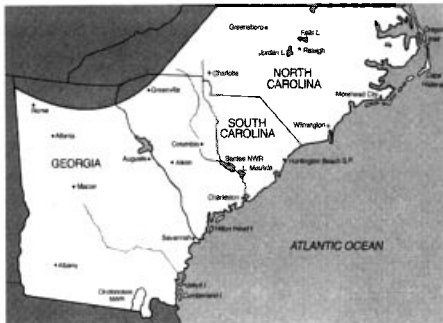


southern atlantic coast



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The weather this winter was noticeably mild, with temperatures averaging above normal for most areas. There was one major exception to this pattern though, when for about three weeks starting in mid-January, cold and frozen precipitation settled in. Most of central and eastern North Carolina and upstate South Carolina and Georgia had several intense snow and ice events. The biggest storm affected central North Carolina and upstate South Carolina 24–25 January, with record snowfall in many areas. The Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, airport reported a record 20-in. accumulation! This storm followed a series of small ice/snow storms the previous week and many areas had snow/ice on the ground for over a week—an unusual event for these areas. These storms obviously affected the birds in many ways and there was much discussion about the causes of noticeably reduced populations of several species following the storms. Most obviously hit were the kinglets, wrens, creepers, pipits, warblers, and sparrows. Elsewhere, precipitation was about normal region-wide, with the exception of some of the southern areas, which experienced rather dry conditions.

Abbreviations: B.R.C. (Bird Records Committee); C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, NC); CBC (Christmas Bird Count); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); L.M. (Lake Mattamuskeet, NC); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The only inland Red-throated Loons were two at West Point L., GA, 3 Feb (PR et al.).

Red-necked Grebe reports included singles on the Charleston, SC, CBC 28 Dec (*vide* EB), at Ft. Fisher, NC, 6 Jan (JB), and two at West Point L. dam, GA, 7 Jan (PH) until at least 6 Feb (MB). Eared Grebes were scattered throughout the Region as usual, with the best count being 17 at the S.S.S. 17 Dec (SC). A pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 5 Feb produced one of the best birds of the winter, a sub-ad. **Yellow-nosed Albatross** (BP et al.). Only about three miles off the beach, the bird was observed several times at close range in flight and sitting on the water. Photos were obtained, thus providing the first documented record for the Region (there are about three earlier unsubstantiated sight reports for North Carolina). Wintering Anhingas continue to increase in the Region. The farthest n. was one on the L.M. CBC 29 Dec (HL) and the best count was an impressive 17 on the Augusta, GA, CBC 27 Dec (*vide* AW). Long-legged waders also wintered in higher than normal numbers. An excellent total of 107 Great Egrets was had inland at the Macon, GA, brickyards 5 Dec (TI et al.). A Reddish Egret once again remained throughout December at H.B.S.P. (m.ob.), four Cattle Egrets were a surprise on the Augusta, GA, CBC 27 Dec (*vide* AW), Green Herons were found in all three states (up to seven reports), and a Black-crowned Night-Heron provided a first local winter record at Winston-Salem, NC, 28 Dec (*vide* RS). Another first local winter report was the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron near Beaufort, NC, 10 & 23 Dec (JF et al.). The Roseate Spoonbill at Hilton Head Is., SC, since the fall, was last reported on the CBC there 18 Dec (*vide* BL).

A complete surprise were three Greater White-fronted Geese on the beach (!) at St. Catherine's I., GA, 23 Jan (PS). Other reports of this species included up to 11 at Eufaula N.W.R., GA, 30 Dec (BZ et al.), and one on the Charleston, SC, CBC 28 Dec (*vide* EB). The always notable Ross's Goose was found three times in North Carolina, with singles at Beaufort 17–23 Dec (JF, v.o.), on the Pettigrew S.P. CBC 28 Dec (*vide* SH), and in Forsyth 27 Dec–11 Jan (*vide* RS, MM). Also of note was the discovery of an apparent *minima* Canada Goose at L.M. 12 Dec & 8 Jan (BC). This small form is rarely reported in the Region. Tundra Swan numbers seem to be getting larger each winter. There were more reports from Georgia than

usual and the count of 2000 at Bear I. W.M.A., SC, 19 & 26 Feb (RC et al.) was probably a record for that state. Eurasian Wigeons included two near Charlotte, NC, 6 Jan (TL), two at Wilmington, NC, all winter (SCo, GM, v.o.), and one at P.I., NC, all winter (m.ob.). Always a good find, two Eurasian Green-winged Teal were in North Carolina, at Pee Dee N.W.R. 11 Dec (BG), and on the L.M. CBC 29 Dec (DC, RD). The only Com. Eider reports involved one at the H.B.S.P. jetty 11–30 Dec (SS, KE, v.o.) and four on the Southport, NC CBC 2 Jan (RD). Inland Surf Scoters were found more than usual, with some in all three states. And finally, Long-tailed Ducks were found far to the s., with two at Jekyll I., GA, during Jan (GK, sev. ob.).

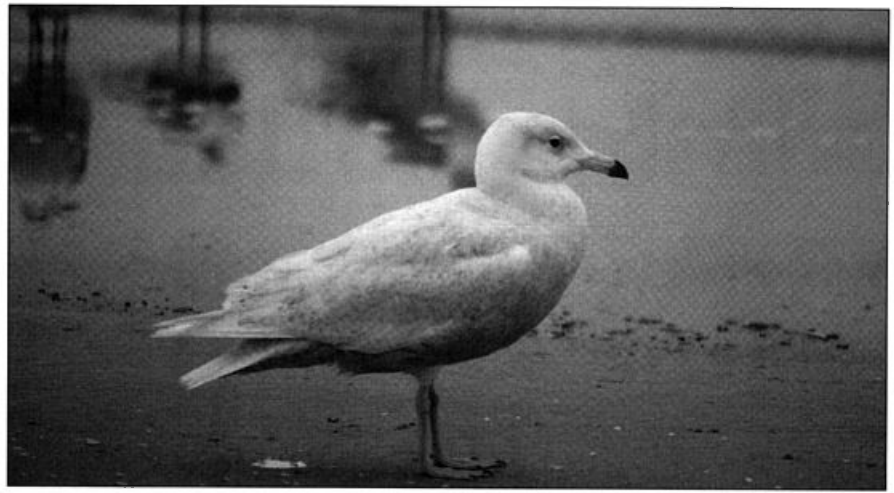
HAWKS THROUGH ALCIDS

Very unusual for the region, a Harlan's Hawk was reported from the S.S.S. 7 Feb (SC). The description of the bird seemed to rule out any potential melanism, which would be the more likely case for a hawk in our area. Rough-legged Hawks were found in North Carolina, with one at Coddle Cr. Res. near Charlotte 6–7 Jan (TL) and two different individuals at Alligator R. N.W.R. throughout the winter (ED, m.ob.). Rare Golden Eagles included one at South I., SC, 3 Dec (V. Atkins et al.), an imm. at Alligator R. N.W.R., NC, 16 Jan (J&PW), and a sub-ad. there 19 Feb (J&PW, JPi, MT et al.). Sandhill Cranes moved through their usual Georgia migration corridor this winter and the numbers were definitely up. Many observers reported northward migrating flocks, with the peak movement being mid-Feb. The best total reported was 8000 in one day in *Houston* 18 Feb (DG). Elsewhere, more unusual reports included one wintering at the Myrtle Beach, SC, airport (present from the fall) until at least late Jan (JP), ≤4 near Hemingway, SC, late Jan–early Feb (JP), and 10 over I-26 in *Dorchester*, SC, 7 Feb (DE et al.).

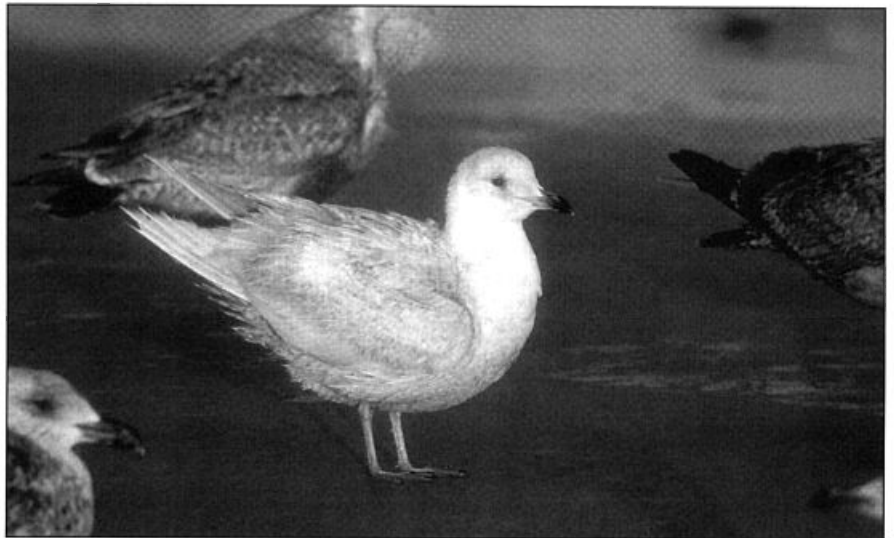
Wilson's Plovers wintered in the Region in higher than normal numbers. Some of the higher totals included 16 at Jekyll I., GA, 3 Feb (GB), 13 on Little Tybee I., GA, 15 Feb (BW), eight on the St. Catherine's I., GA, CBC 18 Dec (GB), and six on the Southport, NC, CBC 2 Jan (JF, BGa). Spotted Sandpipers also wintered more than normal, with an impressive 12+ reports from across the three states.

Numbers were also high, with amazing totals such as eleven on the St. Catherine's I., GA, CBC 18 Dec (*fide* EU), seven on the Glynn, GA CBC 1 Jan (*fide* MC), and five on the Harris Neck N.W.R., GA, CBC 17 Dec (*fide* SC). The only Long-billed Curlews reported were two on the St. Catherine's I., GA, CBC 18 Dec (*fide* BB) and one at nearby Ossabaw I., GA, 24 Jan (RT, EH). Some noteworthy sandpiper reports included an impressive inland total of 190 Least on the Augusta, GA, CBC 27 Dec (*fide* AW), a late Pectoral at the S.S.S. 9 Dec (SC), up to two wintering Dunlins at E.L.H. (m.ob.), and a peak of 27 wintering Stilt Sandpipers at the S.S.S. 19 Dec (SC). Eight Long-billed Dowitchers on the Macon, GA, CBC 18 Dec (MB et al.) provided a rare inland winter sighting. Finally, a Red Phalarope was a good find just off the beach at Masonboro Inlet on the Wilmington, NC, CBC 1 Jan (RD).

Great Skuas were once again in North Carolina waters, with four off Hatteras both 5 Feb and 20 Feb (BP et al.). Jaegers made news in coastal Georgia with unusual counts of three Pomarines off Cumberland I. 8 Jan (DT) and a peak of four Parasitics at St. Catherine's I. 17 Dec (GB). The only Franklin's Gull reported was a first-winter individual found on Jekyll I., GA, 3 Dec (LT et al.), providing a rare winter sighting for that state and the Region. The always noteworthy Black-headed Gull was found twice in North Carolina, with one at Morehead City 24 Jan–23 Feb (JF, v.o.) and another at C. Hatt. 6 Feb (HW et al.). California Gull has become annual in North Carolina. This winter, one adult and one first-winter were at C. Hatt. (BP, BC, v.o.), one adult was at Oregon Inlet 9 Jan (ED), and a second-winter bird was found offshore on the 20 Feb Hatteras pelagic (BP et al.). Thayer's Gull was found only once, a first-winter bird at C. Hatt. 9 Feb (BP). Some excellent gull reports from Georgia included different first-winter Icelands at Cumberland I. 10 Jan (DT), Jekyll I. 21–28 Jan (LT, v.o.), and the West Point L. area 30–31 Jan (GB et al., v.o.); an inland Lesser Black-backed at West Point L. 30 Jan (*fide* TM); and two Glaucous, with a first-winter at Jekyll I. 24 Jan (LT et al.) and a second-winter at Sapelo I. 24 Jan (PJ et al.). In South Carolina, an Iceland was at the *Horry* landfill 19 Feb (JP et al.) and again at nearby Myrtle Beach 25 Feb (BH). That state also had Glaucous Gulls, with singles at H.B.S.P. 6 Feb (MD) and at the *Horry* landfill 17 Feb (JP et al.). The most unusual gull sighting of the winter had to be the ad. **Black-legged Kittiwake**



Two northern gulls reached southern climes in the Southern Atlantic Region. This first-winter Glaucous Gull (above) was at South Beach, Jekyll Island, Georgia, 30 Jan 2000, whereas this first-winter Iceland Gull (below) reached Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 25 Feb 2000. Photographs by Pierre Howard and Bruce Hallett, respectively.



wake found inland at Augusta 28 Jan (PR). If accepted by the GA B.R.C. this bird would provide one of few inland records for the state and Region. The only Razorbill report of note was an excellent total of 540 off Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb (BP et al.). Finally, a **murrelet sp.** was located above Fishing Creek Dam on the Catawba R, near Great Falls, Chester, SC, 23 Dec (MTu). The bird was seen off and on until at least 15 Jan by several observers, but viewing conditions were never good enough to allow definite specific identity. The bird was almost certainly a Long-billed because the previous two reports for the Carolinas pertained to *perdix*.

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

Only one White-winged Dove report was received, of one at an Atlantic, Carteret, NC, feeder in early Dec (*fide* JF). The rare, secretive Long-eared Owl was found several times this winter. One was on the

Charleston, SC, CBC 28 Dec (*fide* EB), one was heard at Simpsonville, SC, 29 Dec (PWo), and one was found on the Greenville, NC, CBC 2 Jan (*fide* J&PW). Hummingbirds were again present in all three states this winter. The highlights (other than the usual Ruby-throateds and Rufous) included North Carolina's first documented-by-banding **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Hampstead 15 Jan–Feb (PB, m.ob.); South Carolina's first **Calliope Hummingbird**, an imm. male banded in Greer 4 Dec–29 Feb+ (J&CWe, m. ob.); and Georgia's second Calliope Hummingbird, that wintered in Fayette, although word of this individual did not reach birders until spring (*fide* JH).

Without question, the bird of the season was the **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** found near Jordan L., Chatham, NC, 15 Jan (HL, JPi, v.o.). Photos and voice recordings were made as the bird was seen by various

observers until at least 21 Jan. Obviously a "Western" type *Empidonax*, debate ensued as to the ability to definitely identify a wintering Western by winter calls and notes. This individual definitely favored voice playbacks of Pacific-slope over Cordilleran in its response times. Pending acceptance by the NC B.R.C., this bird would represent a state and Regional first. Always noteworthy any time in the Region, a female Vermilion Flycatcher was found at Lakeland, near Valdosta, GA, in early Feb by visiting birders and remained until at least 27 Feb (BB et al.). Following closely on the heels of the fall sighting at Bodie Pond, NC, another Ash-throated Flycatcher was found at the nearby n. P.I. area 12 Dec (J&PW et al., JL, KW), providing the 5th report for that state! Very rare winter sightings of Great Crested Flycatcher included one at Roanoke I., NC, 5 Dec (JL) and one on the McClellanville, SC, CBC 22 Dec (fide PN). Also of note in winter, W. Kingbirds were on the Okefenokee, GA, CBC 30 Dec (SW) and at Savannah, GA, 1 Jan (OAS).

Cave Swallows continued their influx this winter. One was at Troutman, Iredell, NC, 20 Dec (D&LM, D&ED'O), and one was picked up sick (and died the next day) at Ft. Macon, Carteret, NC, 2 Dec (fide JG). The specimen turned out to be of the southwestern race *pallida*, consistent with most of the other Cave Swallows identified north of Florida in the winter. Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were down somewhat from the promising fall migration period. Only scattered ones remained for the winter. Wren and kinglet numbers were about average, except in areas that received the snow/ice storms of mid-Jan. There, numbers dropped substantially, either from birds moving on to more hospitable areas, or more likely due to mortality during the lengthy period of harsh conditions. The weather also affected pipits, as evidenced by the report of 550 Am. Pipits flying along the beach at N. Topsail I., NC, 25 Jan (JC). South Carolina's 9th Sprague's Pipit report involved one well-seen with Am. Pipits on the Santee, SC, CBC 2 Jan (fide LG).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Lingering or wintering warblers were reported much more than usual this season. Some of the highlights included a Nashville on the Wilmington, NC, CBC 1 Jan (fide SCo), N. Parulas on the L.M. CBC 29 Dec (HL) and the Savannah River Site, SC, CBC 16 Dec (fide CE); a Yellow on the Spartanburg, SC, CBC 30 Dec (fide LC); a Cape May at Ft. Fisher, NC, 5 Jan (GM); Black-throated Greens on the Wayne, NC, CBC 18 Dec (JF) and the Southport, NC,

CBC 2 Jan (JB); and an Audubon's at L.M. 15 Jan (DS et al.). Also, the slightly-more-expected wintering warblers such as Yellow-throated (eight reports totaling 16 birds), Prairie (four totaling 7), Black-and-white (15 totaling 35), Ovenbird (three singles), Wilson's (eight singles), and Yellow-breasted Chat (three totaling four), were all found in higher than normal numbers.

Rare wintering Clay-colored Sparrows included one on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (RD) and one on the Greenville, NC, CBC 2 Jan (fide J&PW). Vesper Sparrows have been increasingly hard to find in the Region the last several years. Thus, the count of 102 on the Santee N.W.R., SC, CBC 2 Jan (fide LG) was impressive. Always noteworthy in the winter, a Lark Sparrow was a good find on the St. Catherine's I., GA, CBC 18 Dec (fide BB). Three Grasshopper Sparrows was a good total at Sandhills N.W.R., SC, 18 Dec (D&LM et al.). Henslow's Sparrows were found in good numbers in South Carolina and Georgia, with the best counts being 17 at Paulk's Pasture, Glynn, GA, 18 Jan (GB et al.), 11 in McIntosh, GA, 18 Jan (GB et al.), and six north of Walterboro, SC, 22 Dec (MTu). Le Conte's Sparrows were also present this winter in amazing numbers, including 36 on the Santee N.W.R., SC, CBC 2 Jan (fide LG), ten on the New Bern, NC, CBC 20 Dec (fide BHo), seven in Mecklenburg, NC, 19 Feb (ST et al.), and five on the Macon, GA, CBC 18 Dec (fide JA). Lincoln's Sparrow reports were about normal across the Region, typically with one-two individuals being found in scattered locations. The only Lapland Longspurs reported were a group of five at Ft. Bragg, Hoke, NC, 17 Dec (PC). The best Snow Bunting reports included a good count of 37 at C. Hatt, 20 Dec (JAL), 11 at Ft. Fisher, NC, 4 Dec (JB), and a rare inland bird at L. Wylie, SC, 18 Dec to at least mid-Jan (fide RC, m.ob.). Rare winter Dickcissels were found twice in South Carolina, with one at Myrtle Beach 30 Dec–2 Jan (P&STu) and another at Santee N.W.R. 6 Feb (TK).

In the complete surprise department was the Bobolink found at Bear I. W.M.A., SC, 28 Jan (PWo), surely a wintering bird. Rusty Blackbirds were present in higher-than-normal numbers, with some of the better counts being 400 in Lanier, GA, throughout the winter (fide BB), 350 on the Durham, NC, CBC 19 Dec (WC), and 258 on the Raven Rock S.P., NC, CBC 18 Dec (fide PHa). Brewer's Blackbirds were also found in good numbers, the best total being 108 near Gary, Newberry, SC, 19 Feb (LG). Red Crossbills were found in several places; the best reports

involved an impressive flock of 64 at the Pine Log Mt. W.M.A., GA, 12 Dec (GB et al.), 20 s. of Ebenezer Pt. Jordan L., NC, 2 Jan (WC et al.), and 16 along Big Woods Rd., Jordan L., NC, 9 Jan (fide WC); one along the coast was a complete surprise on the Southport, NC, CBC 2 Jan (GM). Reports of Com. Redpoll included one photographed at a feeder in Columbia, SC, 21 Feb (JGr), one in Clemmons, NC, 8 Jan (fide RS), and one in Durham, NC, 19–20 Feb (fide WC). As is often the case with redpolls in our area, none remained to be seen by other observers. The other winter finches (Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak) were present across the Region but in small numbers and were quite localized, thus giving the impression that the winter flight was rather poor once again.

CORRIGENDUM

The corrigendum pertaining to MacGillivray's Warbler in *N. Am. Birds* 53:376 was in error. It should read as follows: In *N. Am. Birds* 53:45, the MacGillivray's Warbler at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, furnished the third Regional report. The first definitive Regional record was of one banded at Jekyll I., GA, 2 Oct 1987 (D. Cohrs). The second was of one reported from the Atlanta, GA, area in the 1980s (Manns).

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