

southern atlantic coast



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The Region experienced relatively average temperatures this spring. Rainfall over most of the Region was slightly below normal, but the southern and central areas of Georgia were in the midst of a worsening drought. Hopefully the dry conditions did not negatively affect the migrating birds, although migration was generally perceived to be a little slower than usual. But there were some interesting birds found this spring. The *Pterodroma* petrels off North Carolina made news, Ruffs were big spring surprises in two states, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers caused much excitement, and there were several first-documented state records for Georgia!

Abbreviations: BRC (Bird Records Committee); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); P.I. (Pea Island N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC); W.M.A. (Wildlife Management Area); W.T.P. (Wastewater Treatment Plant).

GREBES THROUGH SPOONBILL

Rare-in-spring Red-necked Grebes included

3 on L. Norman, NC, 10 Mar (TL), one at H.B.S.P. 25 Mar and 25 Apr (RC & CE et al., JP), and one near Garysburg, *Northampton*, NC, 30 Apr (RD, FE). The last reported wintering Eared Grebes were 3 at S.S.S. 5 Apr (SC). The pelagic waters off North Carolina's Outer Banks once again received thorough coverage during May. Seven Herald Petrels were found, including one off Hatteras 13 May (BVD) and the rest off both Hatteras and Manteo during late May (BP et al., MT et al.). Two Fea's Petrels were found, with singles off Hatteras 27 & 28 May (BP et al.). Three sightings of **Bermuda Petrel** were exceptional, with singles off Manteo 26 & 28 May (BP et al., MT et al.) and off Hatteras 27 May (BP et al.). Following a recent trend, this species can be expected to be almost annual in these waters. Black-capped Petrel numbers were average in North Carolina, but 5 off Georgetown, SC, 13 May (*fide* JP) provided the only report for that state. Shearwater numbers were about average this spring, except for Sooties, whose numbers were considerably down. The rare-but-regular Manx Shearwater was found off Hatteras, with one on 21 May, 2 on 28 May, and 4 on 29 May (BP et al.). The peak Leach's Storm-Petrel count was 45 off Hatteras 27 May (BP

et al.), and 3 were good finds off Georgetown, SC, 13 May (*fide* JP). The peak Band-rumped Storm-Petrel total was 51 off Hatteras 27 May (BP et al.).

Unusual American White Pelican reports included one inland at L. Norman, NC, late March (*fide* TP) and an impressive count of 23 at S.S.S. 19 May (SC). The first Magnificent Frigatebird of the year was a female near Bogue Inlet, NC, 10 May (RR). American Bitterns were more widely reported than usual in Georgia this spring; one on Bodie Island, NC, 30 May (JL) was quite late, possibly being a rare local breeder. Long-legged waders were found as usual at scattered inland locations, and coastal colonies seemed to be doing well. Reports of note included 3 ad. Little Blue Herons at Greenview pond, Wake, NC, 24 Apr (JA), one Reddish Egret at Little St. Simons I., GA, 18 May (SH), and a Glossy Ibis at Greenview pond, NC, 24 May (JA). And finally, a Roseate Spoonbill provided a rare occurrence at P.I. 25–31 May (AZ, v.o.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH TERMS

The *Madison*, GA, Ross's Goose has now been present for over a year (*fide* TM) and the wintering individual in *Forsyth*, NC, was last seen 1 May (RS et al.). The two male Eurasian Wigeons wintering at Greenfield L., Wilmington, NC, were gone by mid-March (*fide* GM); the male at P.I. was last seen 2 Apr (RD). Lingering waterfowl of note included a Lesser Scaup at S.S.S. 30 May (SC), a male Long-tailed Duck at Mt. Pleasant, SC, until 21 May (*fide* DF), and a Common Merganser at Jordan L., NC, 7 May (*fide* NB). Rare inland Surf Scoters included 3 at Sweetwater Creek S.P., GA, 11 Mar (CL et al.) and one at Roanoke Rapids L., NC, 30 Apr (RD). Always noteworthy in the Region, breeding Hooded Mergansers were found twice. Females with young were seen in *Jasper*, GA, 30 Apr (JFI) and *Irvin*, GA, 9 May (MH).

Swallow-tailed Kite reports from North Carolina totaled 4, with the earliest being one at Atlantic, *Carteret*, 23 Mar (*fide* JF). In North Carolina, more nesting locations of the increasing Mississippi Kite were found, including a new site at Howell Woods, *Johnston*, 5 May (*fide* MJ) and 2 new nests in the Laurinburg area during May (BG). Locally rare was the migrant Broad-winged Hawk at Roanoke I., NC, 10 May (JL). The Rough-legged Hawk that wintered at Alligator R. N.W.R., NC, was last seen 5 Mar (JW et al.). Unusual away from the mountains in Georgia, a Rough-legged was rare and extremely late at Rum Creek, *Monroe*, 1 May (*fide* TM). A Sandhill Crane flying n. at

Wassaw I., GA, 20 May (SC) was late and unusual for that area.

Rare in spring, single American Golden-Plovers were found at Super Sod, Peach, GA, 8–9 Apr. (BZ et al.) and S.S.S. 20–21 Apr (SC). An American Oystercatcher was a one-day visitor inland at Jordan L., NC, 15 Apr (DS, WC), adding to just a handful of inland records for that state. Upland Sandpiper reports were about average, with the best count being 18 in Macon, GA, 24 Apr (WCh). Unusual though were several late Uplands: one in n. Greene, GA, 6 May (PS, BB) and one at P.I. on the amazing date of 27 May (JL, KW). Georgia had the only Long-billed Curlews, with at least 4 at several coastal sites. Inland shorebirding was relatively uneventful this spring as far as peeps (Semipalmated, Western, Least, and White-rumped Sandpipers) were concerned. Only small numbers were found scattered in all three states. Other inland sandpiper reports of note included 3 Dunlins in Aiken, SC, 29 Apr (AW), single Stilt Sandpipers at Columbia, SC, 20 Apr (RC, CE) and in Franklin, NC, 17 May (RD), and at least 9 Long-billed Dowitchers still present from the winter at Macon, GA, 8 Apr (TI et al.). Calver had a count of 661 Stilt Sandpipers at S.S.S. 10 May, impressive even for that location. In what could be called an invasion(!), 3 **Ruffs** were found this spring, all males: at Bodie I. Lighthouse pond, NC, 1–5 Apr (G&KS, KW, v.o.), Santee Coastal Reserve, SC, 8–10 Apr (KA, v.o.), and S.S.S. 10 May (SC et al.). A Common Snipe was very late at P.I. 27 May (KW). The only Wilson's Phalaropes were 3 at South Pond, P.I., 31 May (P. Moore et al.). Red-necked Phalaropes made rare on-land appearances, with singles at South Pond, PI, 26 May (RD) and 30 May (JL, KW), and at S.S.S. 19 May (SC).

Noteworthy coastal jaegers included a Pomarine and an amazing count of 9–10 Parasitics just off Sapelo I., GA, 18 Mar (BBE), and another Pomarine near Jekyll I., GA, 31 Mar (BW). One Long-tailed Jaeger off Manteo, NC, 26 May (BP et al.) was the only reported from that state. In South Carolina, where there are only a couple of previous reports, one was off Murrell's Inlet 5 May (JP). The only Little Gull report received was of 2 at Atlantic Beach, NC, 14 Mar (JF). Rare spring white-winged gulls included an imm. Iceland at Manteo, NC, 30 Apr–2 May (LC, JL) and single imm. Glaucous Gulls continuing from the winter at the Horry, SC, landfill 4 Mar (fide TP) and Jekyll I., GA, 24 Apr (GB et al.). Roseate Terns are noteworthy at any time in the

Region and the Cape Hatteras area is often considered the best location to find one. The 7 adults found there 6 May (BP) was an excellent count even for that area! Rare onshore, a first-year Arctic Tern was a surprise on the beach at Cape Hatteras 6 May (BP). Offshore numbers of this species were down again, with most pelagic trips finding only 1–3 during late May (BP et al, MT et al.). Bridled Tern numbers were unimpressive off North Carolina, but two off Georgetown, SC, 13 May (fide JP) provided a good report for that state. Sooty Terns, on the other hand, were present in better-than-usual numbers for the spring off North Carolina, with the best total being 32 off Hatteras 28 May (BP et al.). Ten off Georgetown, SC, 13 May (fide JP) provided a good count for that state. The only onshore sighting was of one at Cedar I., NC, 10 May (JF et al.).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

White-winged Doves continued in be found in North Carolina. Apart from the usual Beaufort site, singles were at a feeder in Wilmington for several days in early May (KK, GM, v.o.) and near the Bodie I. Lighthouse 29 May (RD). Black-billed Cuckoo reports were about normal, with individuals at Gardendale, Lexington, SC, 28 Apr (RC), at Ft. Jackson, Richland, SC, 2 May (LG), near Scotland Neck, NC, 21 May (RD), and near Havelock, NC, 28 May (JF). Rarely found in the Region, a Long-eared Owl was picked up injured in Lincoln, NC, in late March and taken to the Carolina Raptor Center (fide TP). Georgia's 2nd **Calliope Hummingbird**, still present from the winter in Fayette, was last seen in mid-March (fide TM); South Carolina's first, also from the winter, remained in Greer until 15 Apr (fide SCb). The always noteworthy Olive-sided Flycatcher was found only twice, at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 14 May (WC) and the NC Zoo in Asheboro, 20 May (DSw). A wood-pewee was seen in Grady, GA, on the very early date of 26 Mar (JS, AS). The bird did not vocalize but was assumed to be an Eastern. Locally good *Empidonax* flycatcher reports included a Willow in Aiken, SC, 28 Apr (AW) and an Alder in Glynn, GA, 10 May (GK). Another species that staged a near-invasion was the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Singles were near Rome, GA, 11 Apr (fide SS), Salisbury, NC, 19 May (fide TP), and in Emanuel, GA, 29 May (fide JH). Of particular note though was the pair near McDonough, Henry, GA, 4 May, building a nest that was occupied by mid-month (TS et al., m.ob.)! Although not

the first nesting attempt by this species in the state, it is still quite rare and unusual.

Another bird that provided a first documented record for Georgia was the **Bell's Vireo** found singing in a willow thicket near Oxbow Meadows, Columbus, GA, 26–29 Apr (WCh, v.o.). There were a couple of previous undocumented sight reports for the state, and pending acceptance of the photos by the Georgia BRC, the species will be added to the official state list. Other vireo news included up to 3 Warblers present at a w. Orange, NC, farm 27 Apr+ (DS, v.o.), breeding this far e. would be quite unusual. The only Philadelphia Vireo reported was from Kennesaw Park marsh, GA, 6 May (GB et al.). A singing **Black-whiskered Vireo** was at Cape Lookout, NC, 20 May (JF et al.), not far from the location where one was found in 1994! This bird represented the state's 5th report, all spring coastal migrants. Unusual was the Common Raven found near Landrum, SC, 23 Apr (RC, CE) at the rather low elevation of 1500 feet. Also unusual were a lingering Red-breasted Nuthatch at Roanoke I., NC, 31 May (fide JL) and a late Brown Creeper at Chapel Hill, NC, 14 May (fide WC). Thrushes were once again reported in generally small numbers. Interesting was the banding of a Veery in Fernbank Forest, Decatur, GA, 25 May (GSc), in the same area where a female with a brood patch was banded several years ago. Other late thrushes included a Gray-checked and a Swainson's at Bodie I., NC, 31 May–1 Jun (JL).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The warbler migration seemed to be poorer than normal this spring, with just a few exceptions. Several interesting sightings included a Nashville (probably a wintering bird) in Baker, GA, 31 Mar (RT), a Nashville near Wilmington, NC, 13 May (GM), a Chestnut-sided at Cape Lookout, NC, 29 May (JF), an early Black-throated Green in Bibb, GA, 10 Mar (PJ), a Bay-breasted on Wassaw I., GA, 20 May (SC), a (lost!) singing Prothonotary along NC 12 across from Bodie I. Lighthouse, NC, 26 May (RD), a Mourning offshore of Hatteras in late May (BP et al.), and a late Canada at Bodie I., NC, 29 May (RD). The warbler of the season however was the male **Townsend's Warbler** found on Roanoke I., NC, 27 Apr (JL). Present for just one day, the bird provided about the 4th report for North Carolina. Another western bird, the Western Tanager, was found twice. A molting male was discovered in an Athens, GA, yard 8 Apr (ET), and a male in alternate

plumage was a surprise at Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Apr (BH, WF). Georgia had another state first when a **Spotted Towhee** was present in a Marietta yard 18–22 Apr (R&NCo, v.o.). Photos should add this species to the official state list, pending acceptance by the Georgia BRC.

Rare in spring, Clay-colored Sparrows were found twice on 30 Apr, at Cape Lookout, NC (ph. BC), and heard singing in Jasper, GA (JFI). Henslow's Sparrows of note included singles at Ft. Stewart, GA, 22 Mar (LCa), Santee N.W.R., SC, in mid-April (TK), and Stewart, GA, 3 Apr (NK). The large number of wintering Le Conte's Sparrows found in all three states continued into the spring. The latest departure dates reported included 3–4 in Mecklenburg, NC, 15 Apr (TP et al.) and 2 at Broad R. W.M.A., SC, 30 Apr (TK et al.). Other Le Conte's of note involved singles at Raven Rock S.P., NC, 24 Mar (PH) and along Mid-Pines Rd., Raleigh, NC, 17 Apr (JM). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow on St. Catherine's I., GA, 19 May (MHo, TSc) was possibly the latest ever for that state. Four Lincoln's Sparrows were reported in the Region, the latest in n. Greene, GA, 22 Apr (PS). The sparrow of the season had to be the ad. **Harris's Sparrow** at Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Apr (BH, WF), for the 4th or 5th report for that state.

Rare away from the immediate coast in North Carolina, an ad. male Painted Bunting was a surprise at a feeder near Falls L., Wake, NC, 29 May (fide MP). Dickcissels were found at several locations throughout the Region, indicating a better-than-average movement in the east. The best counts included up to 4 at the usual Henry, GA, site 7 May and 4 in Carroll, GA, 14 May (MB et al.). An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird at a Morehead City, NC, feeder 2–11 Apr (MW, JF et al.), provided the only report for the spring. Shiny Cowbird reports seem to be increasing each year now. Apart from several in Georgia and South Carolina, North Carolina sightings included 2 at N. Topsail I. 14 May (JC) and one near Bodie I. Lighthouse 26 & 29 May (JL, RD). Red Crossbills continued to be found at Pine Log W.M.A., Bartow, GA, with 4 there 24 Apr (GB et al.). This area hosted a rather large number of crossbills during the winter. And finally, the latest Evening Grosbeaks reported involved a flock of 9 on North Carolina's Outer Banks(!) at Salvo 29 Apr (SR).

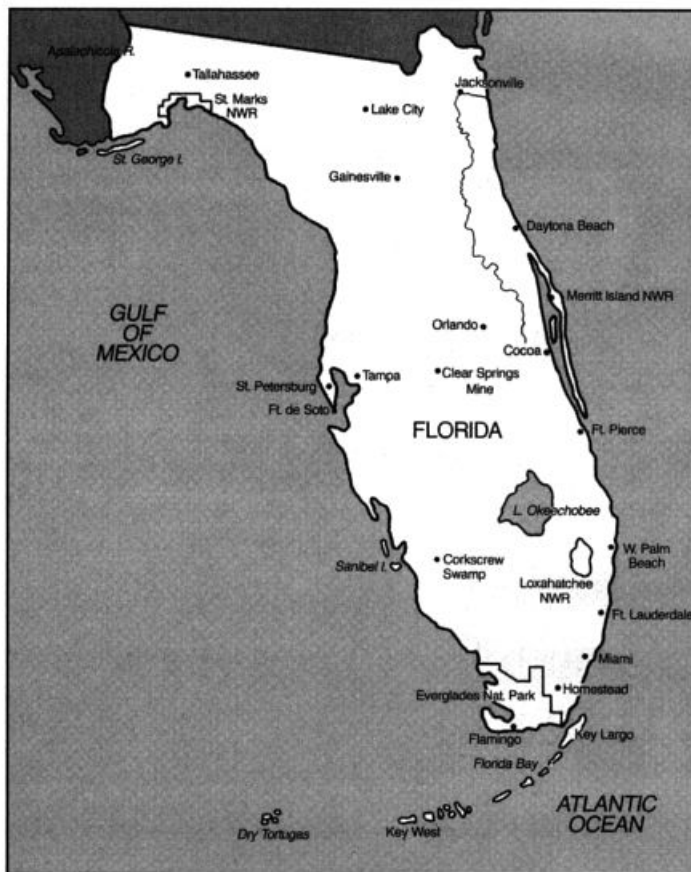
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florida



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Once again the Region was crippled by severe drought, the worst on record in some areas. Mean rainfall amounts for January through May compared with the first five months of 2000 (all measurements in inches) for selected cities follow: Tallahassee—25.03 and 8.44; Tampa—12.17 and 3.12; and Miami—15.51 and 10.74. The

effects of the drought were most severe in central Florida, where aquifers supply most of the water for human consumption and where many lakes are rainfall-fed. Consequently, hundreds or thousands of shallow wetlands dried up completely and lakes were much reduced. Decreased water levels attracted concentrations of wading birds and shorebirds, especially at Newnans L., which recorded its lowest water level in over 60 years. Other impressive shorebird counts came from L. Hollingsworth in Lakeland and L. Jackson at Tallahassee. Fortunately, rainfall in June and July broke