

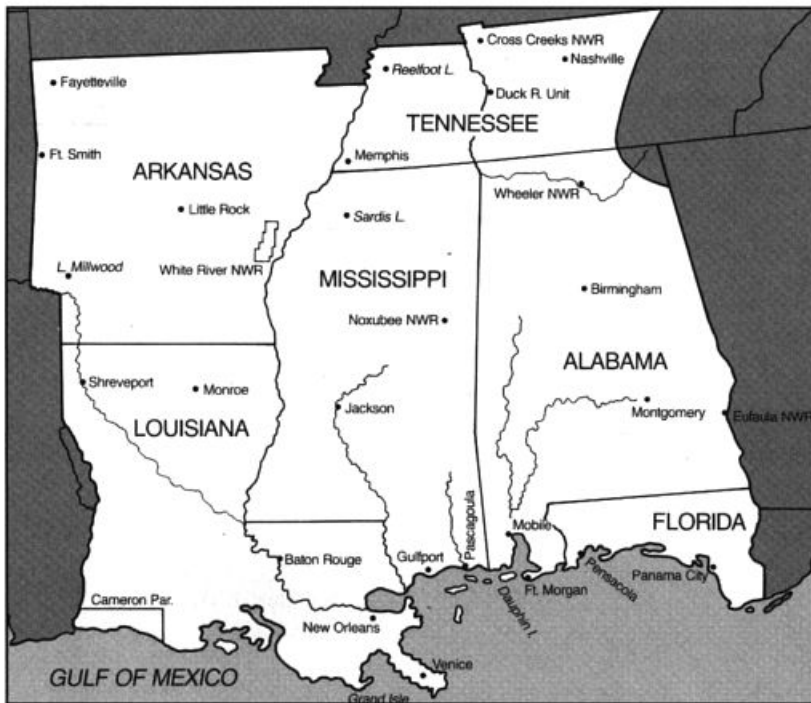
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Central Southern



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The June-July report, which incorporates late spring and early fall migration as well as the nesting season, is often memorable for climatic factors, from drought to excessive rainfall to tropical weather. This season, none of these phenomena seems to have prevailed. While June was hot, July moderated some-

what, and if subnormal rainfall continued over much of the Region, July was near normal. There was no tropical weather at all, though next season's report will tell another tale.

Nonetheless, if lacking in dramatic forces or trends, the season was by no means without interest, and of course there were the inevitable early and late migrants, individuals out of season or out of range, and some evidence of range expansion. Breeding Bird Survey routes continue to add to our knowledge, and now Alabama has begun its own

breeding bird atlas program. We await the results from that diverse and interesting state. The only reports of pelagic efforts were from Louisiana.

Our Region will be changed a bit, beginning with next season's issue. Western and central Tennessee will now be part of a new Region, "Tennessee & Kentucky," whose editors will be Chris Sloan for Tennessee (chris.sloan@comcast.net) and Brainard Palmer-Ball for Kentucky (Brainard.Palmer-Ball@mail.state.ky.us). We welcome, on the other hand, our Region's inclusion of north-easternmost Alabama, previously a part of the Appalachian Region. Welcome, Alabama mountains and foothills!

Abbreviations: A.A.S. (Arkansas Audubon Society), L.O.S.B.R.C. (Louisiana Ornithological Society Bird Records Committee).

LOONS THROUGH ANHINGA

A Common Loon in a flooded field in *Lake*, TN 2 Jun (JRW) must have felt very much out of place, and one in *Marshall*, AL (RAR, LBR) 23-25 Jun was also very late. The only pelagic trip into the Gulf was an overnight venture out of Venice, LA 17-18 Jul. On that trip, a Cory's Shearwater, about the 6th record for the state (not including sight records), was seen 72 km off the S. Pass of the Mississippi R. 18 Jul (SWC, DLD, MM, CS, PC, JC), and over the two days, a minimum of 28 Wilson's, 6 Band-rumped, and 8 **Leach's Storm-Petrels** were counted. Recent trips seem to have established that Leach's Storm-Petrel is regular well offshore in mid-summer, and it has been shown that Band-rumped Storm-Petrel is regular over deep water in early to mid-summer. It is interesting to see, sometimes in the same flock, one

storm-petrel (Wilson's) that is "wintering" on the Gulf of Mexico, another (Leach's) that breeds in the North Atlantic, and another (Band-rumped) that breeds on islands off western Africa.

As is always the case in late summer, a number of species strayed far inland, usually following nesting. These included a Brown Pelican in *Benton*, MS 29 May—13 Jun (ph. JW), spectacularly far inland, while single Neotropic Cormorants in *Miller*, AR 4 Jul (CM, EB, LDN, KN) and in *Rapides*, LA the following day (JaH) were also well inland, though not unprecedented. As many as 5 Anhingas at Noxubee N.W.R. Apr—Jul+ (TS, MS, SJD) likely nested. One was also in *Shelby*, TN 13 Jul (JRW).

HERONS THROUGH HAWKS

Late or summering American Bitterns, the subject of recent concern because of declining numbers, raised the spectre of nesting: one 10 Jun in *Sharkey*, MS (SS), another in *Vermilion*, LA 30 Jun (JK, CF, KF); 2 (ad., juv) in *Miller*, AR 22 Jun (CM, m. ob.) provided the first evidence of nesting there. Another was in *Cameron*, LA 27 Jul (JK, HPu), an unprecedented date. Tricolored Herons, which tend to hug the coast, wandered 27 Jul to Noxubee N.W.R., MS (SJD, JD) and *Lonoke*, AR (KN, LDN), as well as to *Ashley*, AR 28 & 30 Jul (JC; LL). A massive Cattle Egret colony in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA contained 3000 birds 28 Jul (DC), while three seen 144 km offshore 9 Jun (DNP) were presumably migrating across the Gulf, over which they are a common sight later in the year. Mostly small numbers of White Ibis were reported from n. Mississippi, but over 70 were present at Noxubee N.W.R., MS in Jun (TS, DR, SJD), though apparently only a few bred. Ten in *White*, AR 21 Jun+, seen carrying nest material (KN, LDN), represented the first nesting outside of the sw. part of the state. Thirteen Glossy Ibis were seen 21 Jul in *Sharkey*, MS (SJD), and post-breeding Roseate Spoonbills were noted in *Noxubee*, MS 26-31 Jul (DR, SJD) and *Ashley*, in se. Arkansas 28 & 30 Jul (JC; LL). Wood Storks were at Noxubee N.W.R. 10 Jun—31 Jul (DR, TS, SJD), peaking at 184 on the latter date, 4-5 were reported 29 Jun—9 Jul from *Lowndes*, MS (JP, DP, SJD, PB), and 3 were found in *Miller*, AR 11 Jul (CM); the largest concentration reported was easily the 540 in *Iberville*, LA 28 Jul (JK, HP, MG, AG).

The continuing expansion of Black-bellied Whistling Duck to the e. and n. was documented by 5 in *Shelby*, TN 8 Jun (JRW) and 2 on 16 & 24 Jun in *Raceland*, LA (LR); sight-

ings have become almost commonplace in the vicinity of nearby Luling, LA. There were 2 reports of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in w. Tennessee: *Lake* 2 Jun (JRW) and in *Desha*, AR 20 Jul (KN, LDN). Among interesting records of ducks that clearly were not cripples were the following: 3 Gadwall in *Desha*, AR 22 Jul (KN, LDN); a pair of Mallards in *Clay*, AR 14 Jun (GH); and paired Mottled Ducks in *Miller*, AR 14 Jul (CM) and *Desha*, AR 20 Jul (KN, LDN). Blue-winged Teal bred widely: 15, including at least 4 young, were in *Dyer*, *Lake*, and *Shelby*, TN over the period (JRW, WGC, KL, BL), a female with 8 young 1 Jun was in *Miller*, AR (CM), an ad. with 10 young was seen 8 Jun in *Colbert*, AL (DJS), and two pairs with 8 young were in *Desha*, AR 22 Jun (KN, LDN). There were 12 Northern Pintails in *White*, AR 15 Jun (KN, LDN), 10 very late Redheads in *White*, AR 15 Jun (KN, LDN), and 2 more 22 Jun in *Prairie*, AR. Also unexpected were the 20 Ring-necked Ducks 8 Jun in *Marshall*, AL (RAR, LBR), nesting Hooded Mergansers in *Dyer*, *Lake*, and *Shelby*, all in w. Tennessee (JRW, WGC, KL, BL, MAG), as well as in *Dallas* (SER) and *Limestone* (DRC, RC), AL in Jun. Finally, several reports of summering Ruddy Ducks were of interest, including 150 on a minnow farm in *Prairie*, AR 22 Jun (KN, LDN), 74 in *Lake*, TN 5 Jun (WGC, KL, MCT et al.), four pairs in *Desha* on the same day (KN, LDN), one in *Caddo*, LA 30 Jun (JfT, JnT), a pair in *Miller*, AR 15 Jun—7 Jul (CM, m. ob.), and 2 males in *Vermilion* 27 Jul (JK, HP).

Records of Swallow-tailed Kites from the edges of range included sightings in *Rapides*, LA 4 (JaH) & 29 Jun (JuH), and two reports from ne. Mississippi: 5 in *Marion* 23 Jul (TS) and one in *Clay* three days later (LB). Mississippi Kites were also at the periphery of their nesting range in the Starkville area of Mississippi in Jun and Jul, including 2 in *Noxubee* (TS), 22 in *Neshoba* (JMcG, JM), and 4 in *Clay* (TS). Two in *Malvern*, AR through the period were the first pair observed there in the breeding season in 28 years (MP, HP). The reports of summering Bald Eagles included single birds in *Oktibbeha* (juv.) and *Noxubee* (ad.), MS (TS, SJD, DR), and *Rapides*, LA, plus a nesting pair that fledged 2 young in *Ashley*, AR in Jul (LL). Four were in as many separate locations in *Dyer* and *Lake*, TN (WGC, WPP, WRP, KL, BL). A Northern Harrier in *Shelby*, TN 8 Jun (JRW) was very late for a species that is only a winter resident there. Leif Anderson found 9 Sharp-shinned Hawks in five nw. Arkansas locations in *Fulton*, *Pope*, and *Crawford*, with three probable nestings involved. In addition, a single bird was seen 6 Jul in *Newton*,

AR (MMI). According to the new A.A.S. field list, such occurrences are "very rare." Two reports of Cooper's Hawks were received from Arkansas: 13 Jun in *Washington* (JN, MMI) and 27 Jul in *Benton* (MMI, RD, JN), elsewhere in the Region, numbers were near normal. There were two records of Swainson's Hawks, which are very uncommon in nw. Arkansas in the breeding season 11 (MMI, JH) & 27 Jul (MMI, RD, JN: 3 ads) in *Benton*. An ad. Golden Eagle 2 Jun in *Cherokee*, AL (JFF, EH) established the 2nd Jun record for the state. A Merlin was remarkably early in *Gibson*, TN 31 Jul (MAG), and the same can be said of a Peregrine Falcon 19 Jul in *Memphis* (MGW).

GALLINULES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Purple Gallinules nested for the 4th year in a row at Noxubee N. W. R., MS, where 2 ads produced a single young (TS, MS, SJD). A Common Moorhen, a 5th local record, was observed building a nest in the same location (TS, MS, LW, RW). Another 6 were seen 22 Jun in *Desha*, AR (KN, LDN), and there were 12 American Coots, including 2 on nests, at the same spot.

Of shorebird records submitted, representing mostly late spring or early fall migrants, only the highlights can be summarized here. American Golden-Plovers, uncommon fall migrants in the Region, were seen at *Ensley Bottoms*, *Shelby*, TN on three occasions 29 Jun—26 Jul (JWR), and there was a Piping Plover on nearby *Dacus Bar*, presumably southbound, 28 Jul (JWR), while another was in *Lake*, TN the same day (KC, BJ, JuN). A total of 6 was seen in *Prairie*, AR 27-31 Jul (KN, LDN). In the rice fields of *Acadia* and *Vermilion*, LA a 30 Jun census turned up 535 Black-necked Stilts (JK, CF, KF), and in w. Tennessee, Wilson had 171 ads. with 134 young and 35 nests still active 14 Jul; there were several other significant w. Tennessee records. Sightings of at least two pairs in *Sharkey*, MS in early Jun (SS, DT) were suggestive of nesting, and there were 6 in *Ashley*, AR 28 Jul (JC). A Whimbrel in *Lake*, TN 6 Jul (JRW, NM, KL) was an early southbound migrant, and another 14 Jul in *Lowndes*, AL (LFG) was unusual for this inland locale. The Nichols submitted five records each of migrating Ruddy Turnstones and Sanderlings 27-31 Jul from *Lonoke*, *Prairie*, and *White*, AR. A Least Sandpiper in *Oktibbeha*, MS 29 Jun (SJD) was the earliest ever there by a week, and 8 in *Acadia*, LA the next day (JK, CF, KF) were similarly early; numbers had exceeded 1500 by 31 Jul in *Shelby*, TN (JRW). Records

of northbound White-rumped Sandpipers included 2 in *Oktibbeha* 12 Jun (TS), by nine days the latest ever for Schiefer's seven-county area around Starkville, and an impressive 3200 Pectoral Sandpipers were counted in Ensley Bottoms, *Shelby*, TN 31 Jul (JRW). A single Dunlin on the very early date of 29 Jun in *White*, AR (KN) was noteworthy. Perhaps the most interesting shore-bird of the season was a **Ruff** (Reeve) in *Shelby*, TN 20 Jul (JRW). Other records of note included the earliest-ever Short-billed Dowitcher for the Starkville area, 8 Jul in *Oktibbeha* (TS) and an ad. Red-necked Phalarope in *Shelby*, TN 20 Jul (JRW). Two Wilson's Snipe 16 Jun in *Lake*, TN (WGC, KL, BL) were late, but individuals seen 21 Jul in *Lowndes*, AL (LRG) and 30 Jul in *Lonoke*, AR (KN, LDN) were at least a month early.

GULLS THROUGH CUCKOO

A Ring-billed Gull on Columbus L., *Clay*, MS 22 Jun (SJD) was the latest ever by 25 days and the first "summer" record, and there were 2 records from w. Tennessee: *Lake* 7 Jul and *Shelby* 20 Jul (JRW). Although the Metairie, LA roof-top Gull-billed Tern colony contained 100-200 pairs this season, it is not known how much construction may have affected reproductive success there (RDP). Up to 5 Caspian Terns reached w. Tennessee (JRW), and there was one in *Miller*, AR 22 Jun (CM). Also unusual for w. Tennessee was a Common Tern 2 Jun in *Lake* (JRW). There were two records of Sooty Tern, normally not seen from shore, in *Mobile*, AL 1 Jun (PM) and 8 Jul (KK).

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to turn up in new places, with one in *Cleburne*, AR 29 Jul (BV), at least one in *Weakley*, TN (MCT), and another in *DeSoto*, MS 3 Jul (WRP, CHB). **White-winged Doves**, in what would be the first breeding record for Alabama, apparently nested at Foley in Jul (*fide* HEH), and there were breeding-season records in *St Mary*, LA 23 Jun (RSB) and in *Pope*, AR in early to late Jul (TM, LA). Two Common Ground-Doves 14 Jun in *Cleburne*, AL (JFF) were unusual for the location and the season, and one in *Lowndes*, MS 5 Jul (PB) established the first summer record and only the 6th ever for that area. Apparently territorial Black-billed Cuckoos were seen and heard in Arkansas in *Logan* 2 Jun and *Fulton* 23 & 29 Jun (LA). There was another 2 Jun record from Arkansas, in this case in *Poinsett* (KN, LDN), and one was in *Lake*, TN 8 Jun (JRW).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Several records of apparently nesting Willow Flycatchers, always noteworthy, were received, three from w. Tennessee (*Dyer, Lake, Shelby*) 2 & 29 Jun (JRW), one from *Cherokee*, AL 2 Jun (JFF, EH)—there is no confirmed breeding record for that state—and four from Arkansas: *Boone* and *Izard* 7, 21, & 23 Jun, and 10 Jul, involving at least a dozen birds (JS, PS, MP, HP, DJ, LA, BH). The last record, from *Boone*, was of a nest containing four eggs (BH). There were three Western Kingbird nests that produced 8 young within 300 m of each other in *Shelby*, TN (JRW), and an unprecedented 13 nesting pairs were found at Fort Smith, AR (BB, TB, SB) within a km of the Oklahoma border. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested in *Noxubee*, MS in Jun (RW et al.), establishing the 2nd area breeding record, and nesting pairs was seen 2 Jun in *Poinsett*, AR (KN, LDN), at a new site in *Hale*, AL 22 Jun (SER), and near Wynnburg, TN (NM, KL, BL, MCT) throughout the period. Single birds 1 Jun and 2 Jul in *Rapides* (JaH) and 3 Jul in Stuttgart, AR (KR) may also have been breeding.

Of Bell's Vireos there were two Arkansas records: 7 Jun and 10 Jul in *Boone* (JS, PS, MP, HP), a nest with three young, and 22 Jun in *Fulton* (LA), a nest in a bluebird box. A Blue-headed Vireo in *Crenshaw* 19 Jun (DMW) represented the first summer occurrence for the Interior Coastal Plain of Alabama; likewise, two Alabama records of Warbling Vireo were quite notable: a singing male in *Jackson* 11 Jun (JTP), plus a pair and another territorial male in *Crenshaw* 19 Jun (DMW, PB). Multiple Tree Swallows nested in at least four Alabama locations: 4 Jun in *Limestone* (JCa, JW), 7 Jun in *Cherokee* (JFF, EH), 23 Jun in *Winston* (JJ), and 26 Jun in *Etowah* (MD). Three Bank Swallows colonies numbering about 300 birds were found 15 Jul in *Desha*, AR, where they have nested for at least the last three years (TA), and Cliff Swallows continue to breed at new sites in Alabama and to increase in numbers. This season, two colonies in *Cherokee* (JTE, EH) totalled 800 birds, and 500 were at a colony in *Shelby* (HHK).

A Brown Creeper seen in *Lowndes* 1 Jul (SJD), far from normal nesting range, established the first summer record for Mississippi. House Wrens nested in at least four locations in the vicinity of Birmingham, AL, where it is a rare in the breeding season (RRS, MBS, JS, KS, HHK, MH, PAB). Eight records of Cedar Waxwings were submitted, all but one from

n. Arkansas. No certain evidence of local nesting was obtained, but scattered pairs are regularly seen in summer in the Fayetteville area (JN).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

While a Golden-winged Warbler 28 Jul in *Jefferson* (RRS, MBS) was earliest ever in fall for Alabama, a Tennessee Warbler on the L.S.U. campus 13 Jun (CW) was extremely late. A Yellow Warbler 8 Jun in *Newton*, AR was found at a stop on the Compton B B S route where it has been located every year, otherwise it is local and uncommon. Of Chestnut-sided Warblers, which breed locally and sparingly in n. and nw. Arkansas, there were eight reports submitted, six by Anderson, and all of single birds except for 6 singing males and 3 young found in the Sassafras Knob area of Ozark N.F. in *Newton*, AR (DR). The other records consisted of 6 single birds found by Anderson in *Izard, Pope, Newton, Fulton*, and *Baxter*, all but one a singing male, and one ad. male on five dates in Jun in *Newton* (MMI). A male Blackburnian Warbler 1 Jun in Fayetteville, AR (MMI) was surely a late migrant. The Schiefers submitted four reports of summering Swainson's Warblers in *Oktibbeha* (3) and *Winston*, MS (1), and Donata Roome found the remarkable total of 60 Swainson's nests in se. Louisiana as part of her Ph.D. research.

Reports of Bachman's Sparrow came from two locations in *McNairy*, TN 15 Jun (JRW), as well as from *Benton*, MS 12 Jul (WRP, VBR et al.). Eighteen singing males in *Covington* and *Escambia*, AL 30 Jun (MSG) established an all-time maximum for the state. Five reports of Lark Sparrow came from n. Mississippi and involved at least 29 individuals, including 8 ads. and one juv in *Lowndes* 22 Jun (SJD, PB, KB), and 13 in *Monroe* on 13 Jul (WP, MG). A young bird was seen 28 Jul in *Washington*, AR (MMI), and there were two w. Tennessee records, from *Hardeman* 2 Jun (VBR, CHB) and *Weakley* 5 Jun (MCT, DM). Jackson reported that nesting was expanding in Alabama as well, and a state maximum of 34 was recorded 28 Jun in *Dale* (PDK). Several Grasshopper Sparrows nested in *Clay*, MS from May+ (TS, PB, KB, SJD). On 22 Jun, 11 ads. were noted at this site, plus a nest with 5 young, probably the first ever found in Mississippi. At least 3 singing male Henslow's Sparrows were on territories near Fayetteville, AR during the period (JN), birds had been present here since 19 Apr. A single Dark-eyed Junco 20 Jul in Grenada, MS (DW, JR) was far out of range, and a White-

throated Sparrow that gave its song some 15 times in *Lauderdale*, AL 28 Jun (PDK) established the first summer record for the Tennessee Valley.

A dozen reports of Painting Bunting, all from the periphery of its range in Mississippi, Alabama, and w. Tennessee, were received. Of the Mississippi records, one, of 2 birds, came from *Tunica*, MS in the extreme nw. corner (WRP, CHB), four were from *Sharkey*, *Issaquena*, and *Yazoo* (SS), in the w.-cen. (Delta) part of the state (two nests located), and the remaining were from *Noxubee* and *Lowndes* in the Starkville area. A pair was in *Dallas*, AL 7 Jun (SER), and singles were seen in *Marengo* 17 Jun and 1 Jul (JS, DS). Another several were in *Crenshaw* (DMW, PB). Tennessee records came 2 Jun in *Hardeman* (VBR, CHB) and throughout the period in *Shelby* (WRP, VBR et al.).

Single ad. male Baltimore Orioles were found 13 Jun in *Oktibbeha* and 2 Jul in *Noxubee* (RW, LW); the species is a rare nester in the Starkville area. Near the only known breeding area in Alabama was a pair of Red Crossbills 14 Jun in *Cleburne*, n. Alabama (JFF) While 2 American Goldfinches 9-10 Jun in *Vermilion*, LA were only very late stragglers, up to 19 coming to feeders in *Montgomery*, MS 23 Jun—19 Jul (DW) clearly were breeding locally. There were five nesting pairs counted 30 Jun and 14 Jul in *Yazoo*, MS (DJo, PM, HSG, BG).

ADDENDA

At least two important records from Louisiana failed to reach the editors in time for inclusion in the spring report: a **Yellow-green Vireo** photographed 24 Apr 2000 in *Cameron*, LA (JO, ph. SW) and a **Varied Bunting**, 9 Apr 2002 in *Cameron* (ph. JM). The latter is the first record for Louisiana, and both have been accepted by the L.O.S.B.R.C. There was also a **Common Redpoll** 17 Mar 2002 in *Tuscaloosa*, AL (JCT), approximately the 11th record for Alabama.

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2003 BIRDING TOURS

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|---|---|
| <p>CHINA #1 Beidaihe Migration 3-19 May</p> <p>CHINA #2 Manchuria Inner Mongolia 20 May-14 June</p> | <p>MALAYSIA Malaya Borneo (Mt. Kinabalu) 4-27 July</p> <p>NORTH BURMA EXPEDITION SE Himalayas 1-30 November</p> |
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2004 BIRDING TOURS

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|---|---|
| <p>VIETNAM North, South 2-25 January</p> <p>THAILAND Northwest, Central, Peninsular 3-25 January</p> <p>PHILIPPINES Luzon, Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan, Bohol, Negros 30 January-1 March</p> <p>WEST BURMA Mt. Victoria, Pagan 5-28 March</p> <p>BHUTAN 2-25 April</p> | <p>NW CHINA Xinjiang Province 21 May-13 June</p> <p>TIBET TRAVERSE 12 June-13 July</p> <p>MALAYSIA 3-25 July</p> <p>SOUTH SUMATRA 30 July-22 August</p> |
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