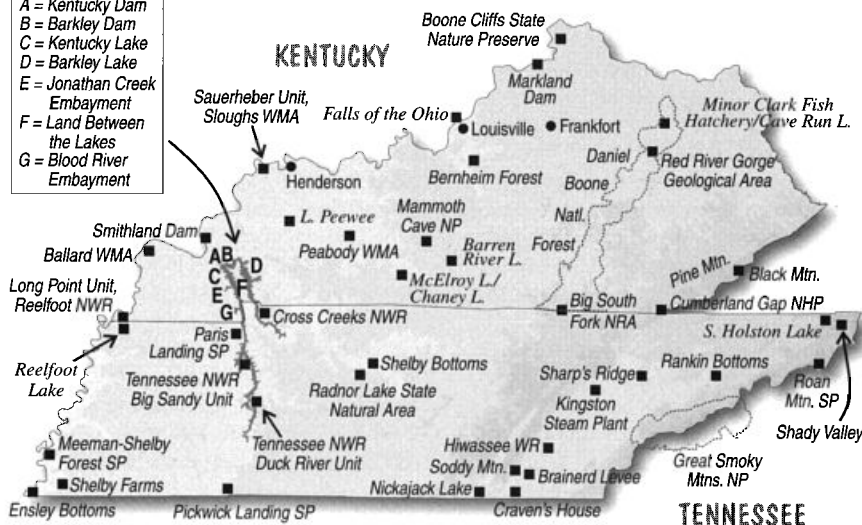


Tennessee & Kentucky

- A = Kentucky Dam
- B = Barkley Dam
- C = Kentucky Lake
- D = Barkley Lake
- E = Jonathan Creek Embayment
- F = Land Between the Lakes
- G = Blood River Embayment



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The 2002 fall migration offered a potpourri of rarities, from hurricane-blown pelagic terns to a spectacular Asian vagrant, but a dearth of northern forest birds such as Red-breasted Nuthatches and northern finches balanced the scales. One of the driest late summers on record for parts of the east-central United States transitioned abruptly into one of the wetter fall seasons on record, making for greatly contrasting conditions for passerine and non-passerine migrants.

Abbreviations: Barren (Barren River L., *Barren/Allen*, KY), Big-Sandy (Big Sandy Unit of the Tennessee N.W.R., *Henry*, TN), Black Bayou (Black Bayou W.M.A., *Lake*, TN), Ensley (Ensley Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, in sw. *Shelby*, TN), Island 13 (I. 13, *Lake*, TN), Radnor (Radnor Lake State Natural Area, Nashville, TN).

LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Single Red-throated Loons were at Big Sandy 2 Nov (†JRW) and in *Hopkins*, KY 18 Nov (PN). Pacific Loons appeared at traditional late fall locations on Kentucky L., with 2 at Big Sandy 2–10 Nov (†JRW et al.), 3 from Port Rd., *Henry*, TN 16 Nov (†JRW), and one in *Marshall*, KY 24 Nov (BY). The Common Loon flight peaked dramatically 16 Nov, with counts of 880+ on Barren (DR) and 719+ on Kentucky L., *Henry*, TN (JRW).

Peak flights of Horned Grebes included 210+ on Barren 16 Nov (DR) and 850+ at Big Sandy 25 Nov (JRW). Of the rarer grebes, single Red-neckeds were reported from *Mercer*, KY 3 Nov (ph. B&MC), Kentucky L., *Marshall*, KY 13 Nov (ph. DR), and S. Holston L., TN 16–17 Nov (WC, m. ob.). The baffling winter population of Eared Grebes on S. Holston L., TN returned for the 9th consecutive year; up to 7 were present 29 Aug+ (LM, RK). Single birds also occurred in *Scott*, TN 28 Sep (NeM) and at Big Sandy 10 Nov (DM, MT). Two Western Grebes were reported, one at Norris L., *Grainger*, TN 22 Aug–15 Sep (T. Pruitt, m. ob.) and one at L. Cumberland, *Pulaski*, KY 6–30 Nov (ph. RD et al.).

Seven hundred thirty American White Pelicans, the season's high count, were in *Dyer and Lake*, TN 14 Oct (JRW). Because this species is uncommon away from the extreme w. portion of the Region, four reports of from one to 31 birds elsewhere in the Region were also noteworthy. A Great White Heron, one of only a handful ever reported in the Region, was at S. Holston L., TN 7–29 Aug (WC, m. ob.); this is possibly the same individual present there in 1990, 1991, and 1994. Amazingly, another appeared along the Caney Fork R., *Putnam*, TN 21 Sep–11 Nov (ph. SS, m. ob.). An ad. Little Blue Heron in *Benton*, TN 2 Nov (JRW) was very late.

The lone reported Tricolored Heron was at Black Bayou 7–11 Aug (NM et al.). Other post-breeding goodies included 2 imm. White Ibis at Rankin Bottoms, *Cocke*, TN 10–20 Aug (DE, DMi), another at Cacklebur L. in sw. *Shelby*, TN 27 Aug (MT), single *Plegadis* ibis at Lauderdale Waterfowl Ref., *Lauderdale*, TN 8 Nov (JRW et al.) and Black Bayou 10 Nov (KL, NM), and 40–50 Wood Storks at Cacklebur L. in sw. *Shelby*, TN 24–27 Aug (JRW, MT, m. ob.). However, with only three previous state records, *Roseate Spoonbills* provided the exclamation point at both ends of Tennessee: 3 imms. were at Cacklebur L./Mud L. in sw. *Shelby*, TN 24–27 Aug (JRW et al.), while a lone bird in *Greene*, TN 7–16 Oct (DMi, m. ob.), later relocated at Upper Douglas L. 20–22 Oct (J. Brooks), furnished the first record for Tennessee e. of Nashville.

WATERFOWL

Mild conditions resulted in a generally lackluster season for waterfowl. Single Ross's Geese were relatively early at Bristol, TN 29 Oct–30 Nov+ (RK, m. ob.) and at *Shelby Farms*, Memphis, TN 7 Nov (ph. JRW), and groups of 3 were observed with flocks of Snow Geese at Lauderdale Waterfowl Ref., *Lauderdale*, TN 14 Nov (MT) and in *Fulton*, KY 24 Nov (DR et al.).

Dabbler numbers were relatively unspectacular, at least in part because no major period of cold weather had arrived by the end of the period. This season's scoter flight, how-

SA As apparently occurred in other eastern regions, West Nile virus roared through the Tennessee and Ohio Valleys during late summer and through early fall 2002, apparently ravaging the populations of at least several species or groups of resident birds. Raptor rehabilitators were overwhelmed with sick birds, mostly Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls, most of which subsequently died. By late August, animal and human health professionals were turning away donations of dead bird carcasses. In Kentucky alone, testing by Dr. John Roberts at the University of Kentucky confirmed the virus in no fewer than 40 species of birds. Infection rates were highest in corvids (ca. 86% of more than 100 American Crows and ca. 80% of more than two hundred Blue Jays tested); however, the diversity of species infected (ca. 40 of 70 tested) and the high infection rates in what were widely considered non-susceptible species (e.g., 85% of Eastern Bluebirds, 58% of Northern Cardinals, and 43% of American Goldfinches tested) are especially troubling. The full extent of the devastation may never be known, but it is certain that the populations of some species must have been affected greatly, at least in the short term.

ever, was impressive, both in terms of the numbers of birds and the geographic breadth of the sightings. One to 9 Surfs were at nine different Kentucky localities 29 Oct—27 Nov and five Tennessee locations 20 Oct—27 Nov. Single White-winged were at three Kentucky locations 29 Oct—19 Nov (DR, RL), and one to 5 were observed 20–27 Oct at Eagle Creek, Henry, TN (†JRW, HC). One to 4 Black Scoters (most in company of Surfs) were at five Kentucky localities 31 Oct—17 Nov (BPB, DR, DA) and four Tennessee locations 14 Oct–6 Nov (MT, JRW, SS). The lone reported Long-tailed Duck was on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 24 Nov (BY).

OSPREY THROUGH RAILS

Raptor migration passed through the Region without much fanfare. Observers noted an excellent year for Ospreys, as reflected by the new season high of 27 recorded 1 Sep—14 Oct at the Soddy Mt. hawkwatch in Hamilton, TN (WH). Always a rare and unpredictable vagrant, a Swallow-tailed Kite was seen along the Tennessee R. near Dayton, TN 11 Aug (fide JS). Mississippi Kites are rare in the Region away from the Mississippi R.; thus, an imm. at the Brainerd Levee, Hamilton, TN 19 Aug (K. Wagner) furnished only the 3rd se. Tennessee record in 10 years. Likewise, 2 in e. Jefferson, KY 18 Aug (JB, PB) were the last of a record number of late spring-late summer extralimital records in Kentucky.

Bald Eagle sightings across e. Tennessee continue to increase; 7 at the Soddy Mt. hawkwatch 23 Sep (WH) represented a new high count for that location. Two Northern Goshawks, rare in this Region, were reported at Roan Mt., Carter, TN: one ad. 7 Sep (F. Alsop, G. Wallace et al.) and one imm. 25 Nov (LM). The Soddy Mt. hawkwatch reported 5071 Broad-winged Hawks, a new season high, including a new one-day high of 1733 on 23 Sep (WH).

An above-average number of Merlins reported in Kentucky included 10 sightings of single birds 25 Aug—24 Nov. Peregrine Falcons were well represented, with 16 reports of one to 2 birds from 11 locations across Tennessee 7 Sep—29 Nov and more than a dozen reports of one to 2 birds from 7

locations in Kentucky 25 Sep—30 Nov.

In recent years, observing rice harvests in w. Tennessee and e. Arkansas has become a fairly reliable way to find both Yellow and Black Rails; this year was no exception: near Black Bayou, a Black Rail was seen 14 Oct (†JRW) and a Yellow Rail was observed 18 Oct (†JRW). More surprising was a Yellow Rail on top of Roan Mt. in Carter, TN 4 Oct (R. Hoffman, fide J. McGuinness).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH OWLS

Shorebird migration was considered below average by most observers, perhaps due to an overall lack of consistently good habitat away from Ensley. Except for Black-bellied Plovers, transient plover numbers were generally down. Ten Black-bellied Plovers at Ensley 16 Aug (JRW) represents an unusually high count for the Region. Three American Golden-Plovers at the Duck River Unit of Tennessee N.W.R., Benton, TN 11 Nov (CS, JD), one in Sullivan, TN 18 Nov (R. Cross), and one in Warren, KY 21 Nov (DR) were late. Piping Plovers, rare migrants across the Region, were noted from three locations across the Region: 16–18 Aug. Six at Island 13 on 18 Aug (JRW, NM) is likely an all-time high count for the Region.

Following perhaps the most successful nesting season ever at Ensley, 137 ad. and imm. Black-necked Stilts were still present 10 Aug (JRW), and subsequent to an unprecedented number of extralimital sightings of the species in Kentucky in spring and early summer, it was not surprising to receive five reports of apparent fall migrants, numbering up to 19 birds, from five localities across Kentucky 5 Aug—2 Sep.

Single Willets, rare in the Region, were at Ensley 16, 22, & 25 Aug (JRW), L. Barkley,

Trigg, KY 30 Aug (DR), and at Island 13 on 7 Sep (JRW). Whimbrels are very rare in the Region, so single birds at Ensley 4 Aug (ph. JRW) and S. Holston L., TN 16 Oct (HL, BS) were noteworthy. A juv. Hudsonian Godwit at the Falls of the Ohio, KY 31 Oct represented only the 2nd fall record for Kentucky (vt. DR). There was one report of Marbled Godwit from each state: 2 at Ensley 16 Aug (ph. JRW) and 2 in Livingston, KY 17 Sep (JE, vt. DR). Reports of Red Knots, always rare in the Region, included 2 at Tiptonville Bar, Lake, TN 10 Aug (MG et al.), 4 at Mud I. in Shelby, TN 10 Sep (JRW), and one at Ensley 10 Sep (JRW); the species was not found in Kentucky for the 2nd year in a row.

Ensley hosted 100+ Western Sandpipers 25 Aug (JRW), an impressive concentration for the Region. Nineteen Baird's Sandpipers at Ensley 8 Sep (JRW) furnished a high count for that location and the 2nd highest ever for Tennessee. Douglas L., TN hosted 800+ Dunlin 1 Nov (RK et al.), a new state high count and representative of a strong showing in e. Tennessee this fall. A juv. Ruff at Rankin Bottoms, Cocke, TN 18 Aug (DE) was e. Tennessee's 4th and the 2nd consecutive year at that location; an ad. was seen briefly at Ensley 31 Aug (JD, CS). Both an imm. Red-necked Phalarope and a Red Phalarope were found at Ensley 21 Sep (ph. JRW). Single Red-neckeds were also found at Ensley 8 Sep (ph. JRW) and in Warren, KY 14 Oct (vt. DR).

JAEGERS THROUGH DOVES

An unidentified jaeger was present at Big Sandy 4-5 Oct (JRW, MT). A modest movement of Franklin's Gulls was indicated by reports of one to 15 birds at one Tennessee and seven Kentucky locations 25 Sep—11 Nov. Away from Kentucky L., where Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become regular in small numbers, an ad. at Douglas L., TN 15 Oct (RK) furnished the 3rd record for e. Tennessee. A good showing of Sabine's Gulls included one to 2 juvs. at Kentucky L., Marshall, TN 11 Sep—4 Oct (vt. DR et al.) and another juv. on the Mississippi R. at Memphis 17 Sep (†JRW). Impres-

sive peak counts of terns included 200 Caspians on L. Barkley, Lyon, KY 11 Sep (DR), 49 Commons at S. Holston L., TN 14 Sep (WC et al.), 90 Commons at Boone L., TN 15 Sep (RK), 80 Commons at Nickajack L., TN 28 Sep (D. Jacobson, C. Blum; likely grounded by the remnants of Isidore), 135 Forster's at



This Long-billed Murrelet surprised and delighted Kentucky birders on the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky 29 to (here) 30 October 2002, a first for the Tennessee & Kentucky Region. Photograph by Chelsey Olson.

Paris Landing S.P., TN 5 Oct (JRW, MT, MG), and ca. 300 Forster's on Kentucky L., Marshall, KY 26 Oct (HC, DR). A Least Tern at Cross Creeks N.W.R., TN 17 Aug (JD, T.O.S.) was an unusual middle Tennessee find.

The rarity of the season was a Region-first **Long-billed Murrelet** on the Ohio R. at Louisville, KY 29-30 Oct (vt. DR, m. ob.). Kentucky's first confirmed **Common Ground-Dove** was found in w. *Fulton* 23-30 Nov (HC, ph. RD, m. ob.).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WRENS

Late Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were widely noted across the Region in early Nov. An ad. male Black-chinned Hummingbird was present for at least two weeks in late Oct in *Loudoun*, TN (*fide* T. Ettel). Tennessee's first **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** was an imm. banded in Nashville 6 Nov (ph. CS, PM) but last seen the next morning (CS, m. ob.). Continuing a recent trend, banders confirmed 14 Rufous Hummingbirds 21 Sep—29 Nov (3 in Kentucky and 10 in Tennessee; CS, PM) this fall; an ad. female in *Warren*, KY 15-30 Nov (ph. JE, CS) had been previously banded in Grayson, GA in Jan 2001. At least 3 additional Rufous went untrapped (*fide* CS, RK), and 9 other late hummingbirds, at least 6 of which were clearly *Selasphorus*, remained unidentified.

An Acadian Flycatcher on a nest at *Enslley* 31 Aug (JRW, MT) represents a very late nesting record for the species. A Western Kingbird was near *Hickman*, *Fulton*, KY 21 Oct (†LA). Young from Kentucky's 2nd Scissor-tailed Flycatcher nest below *Barkley Dam*, *Lyon*, KY fledged in early Aug (HC), and 2 were still in the area 11 Oct (DR, RDv). Single Bell's Vireos at *Black Bayou* 27 Aug—10 Sep (MT, m. ob.) and in *Millington*, TN 15 Sep (†VH) were very rare finds away from the Region's only breeding population in w. Kentucky. A Philadelphia Vireo at *Shelby Park* in Nashville 30 Oct (M. Bierly) equaled Tennessee's latest ever. For the first fall in recent memory, no Red-breasted Nuthatches moved through the Region, and none were found outside of breeding

SA It takes a strong tropical storm to push coastal and pelagic birds into the Region, but two such storms, Hurricanes *Isidore* and *Lili*, arrived less than a week apart and provided one of the season's highlights, multiple sightings of **Sooty Terns!** There were only two previous records for the Region, both found dead, both in Tennessee, and none since 1934! *Isidore* deposited one at *Nickajack L.*, TN 28 Sep (D. Jacobson, m. ob.); another was found dead in *Blount*, TN 29 Sep (S. Adair). One week later, the remnants of *Lili* deposited no fewer than 4 onto Kentucky L., at least 2 at *Kentucky Dam*, *Marshall*, KY 4 Oct (vt. DR), and at least 2 at *Big Sandy* (†JRW), while another was found on the Ohio R. at *Joppa*, IL, and subsequently seen flying upstream over Kentucky waters towards *Paducah* (†FB).



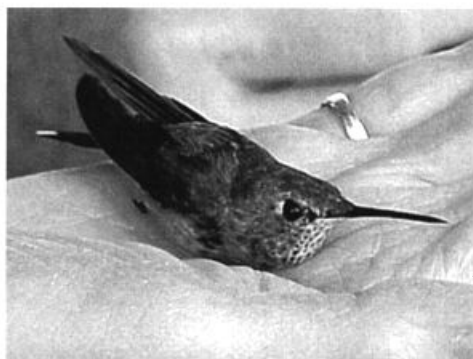
This Sooty Tern (videotaped near *Kentucky Dam*) was one of at least five individuals observed in west Kentucky and west Tennessee on 4 October 2002 during the passage of the remnants of Hurricane *Lili*. A week earlier, the remnants of Hurricane *Isidore* had deposited two in east Tennessee. Photograph from video by David Roemer.

locations in e. Tennessee and e. Kentucky.

Single Bewick's Wrens in *Jefferson*, KY 12–20 Sep (BW) and at *Everett L.*, *Dyer*, TN 28 Oct (MT) were very rare finds in the Region away from the few localized breeders in middle Tennessee and cen. Kentucky. Fledgling Sedge Wrens found in e. *Jefferson*, KY in mid-Sep (BPB et al.) furnished one of a handful of Regional breeding records.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The fall warbler flight was not particularly noteworthy. A count of 5-6 Golden-winged in w. *Jefferson*, KY 12 Sep was representative of an above-average flight in some parts of the Region, although they were notably low in se. Tennessee. Early arrival dates for migrant warblers included a Canada 5 Aug and a Northern Waterthrush 7 Aug, both in *Jefferson*, KY (JB, PB), and a Magnolia at *Shelby Forest*, *Shelby*, TN 7 Aug (DP). Late departure dates included a Yellow-breasted Chat in *Menifee*, KY 29 Sep (SM), 2 Yellowthroateds in *Cheatham*, TN 5 Oct (J. Stone), 2 Yellows in *Simpson*, KY 9 Oct (JE), a Northern Parula at *Radnor* 18 Oct (FF), single Hoodeds at *Cookeville*, TN 18 Oct (SS) and *Shelby Forest*, *Shelby*, TN 26 Oct (RP), and a Black-throated Green at *Radnor* 9 Nov (L. Welch).



This immature Broad-tailed Hummingbird banded on 6 November 2002 in Nashville, Tennessee furnished a first record for the Region. Photograph by Chris Sloan.

Clay-colored Sparrows were reported twice: 2 at *Standifer Gap Marsh*, *Hamilton*, TN 1 Oct (LW, J. Chadwell, m. ob.) and one in *Muhlenberg*, KY 7 Oct (DR). Single

Henslow's Sparrows, rare migrants away from localized breeding colonies, were in *Blount*, TN 12 Oct (T.O.S.) and at *Shelby Bottoms*,

Nashville, TN 23 Nov (PC, MZ); also rare, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows made a strong showing: one was at the *Kingston Steam Plant*, *Roane*, TN 5 Oct (R. Hoff, D. Myers, F. Bills), another at *Shady Valley*, *Johnson*, TN 9 Oct (RK), up to 2 at *Britton Ford*, *Henry*, 5–14 Oct (JRW, m. ob.), 2 in *Ohio*, KY 7 Oct (DR), 3 in *Henderson*, KY 20 Oct (DR et al.), and 2 at *Black Bayou* 5 Oct (JRW).

Anomalous in light of the lack of harsh weather conditions to the north was a concentration of 550+ Lapland Longspurs in s. *Warren*, KY 25

Nov (DR). A Snow Bunting at *S. Holston L.* 18–28 Nov (R. Cross, WC) was a first for ne. Tennessee away from high-elevation balds.

One or 2 male Yellow-headed Blackbirds were observed at a blackbird roost in *Union*, KY 27 Oct (BPB, BY, MS), where one to 2 individuals wintered 2001-2002. A female was at *Rankin Bottoms*, *Cocke*, TN 14 Aug (WC, T. Horsch). An ad. male Great-tailed Grackle at *Island 13* on 18 Aug (†JRW) would constitute the first or 2nd Regional record, if accepted; a previously published report of a pair just s. of this location at the *Lake-Dyer* county line 3 Jul 2000 (JRW) has not yet been submitted for review.

Northern finches were conspicuously absent. Two Red Crossbills at *Cove Lake S.P.*, TN 22 Nov (NeM) were unusual away from the e. mountains. There were only two Kentucky reports of Pine Siskins in *Pike* (JC) and *Barren* (DR) and none in Tennessee away from possible breeding areas on *Roan Mt.* The only reported Evening Grosbeak was an extraordinarily early female 22 Sep in *Morgan*, KY (ME).

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