Florida



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ecember was wetter than normal throughout the Region, whereas January and February were dry and rainfall amounts nearer to normal. Days averaged colder than in recent years. In the Orlando area, temperatures touched the freezing mark at least twice before 23 January, when the mercury dipped into the mid-twenties Fahrenheit there, and freezing temperatures extended south to Lake Okeechobee. Several passerines species were reported in greater numbers than normal, such as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Hermit Thrushes, Cedar Waxwings, American Goldfinches, and warbler species such as Yellow-throated, Pine, and Black-and-white. Two new species were reported: a long-awaited Mountain Bluebird and an unexpected Eurasian Kestrel.

Abbreviations/definitions: C.P. (County Park); E.N.P. (Everglades N.P.); L.A.R.A. (L. Apopka Restoration Area, Orange); Lucky Hammock (a part of Frog Pond W.M.A., Miami-Dade); report (any observation); record (only those reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Fifty-two Red-throated Loons was a high count for Alligator Pt., Franklin (DSi, PB), where they are annual. Along the Atlantic coast, 2 were s. to Merritt I., Brevard 16 Dec (C.B.C.). One or 2 Pacific Loons were in Franklin off Alligator Pt. and Ochlockonee Bay 29 Dec-5 Feb (JD, KAn), and one was identified off Green Key, Pasco 2 Jan+ (DP, BAh et al.). Absent from the Region except in Polk where they are annual were up to 7 Eared Grebes at phosphate mines 1 Jan-25 Feb and one at L. Ariana 16 Jan (PF et al.). Florida's 4th documented Western/Clark's Grebe was found off Ft. Myers Beach, Lee 13-19 Jan (AW et al.), where one was photographed in Jan 2001. A Brown Booby was recorded off Stuart,

Martin 4 Jan (C.B.C.). A Great Cormorant was at Huguenot Memorial Park, Duval 28 Dec (BRi). Far n. on the same date were 2 Reddish Egrets in Jacksonville, Duval (C.B.C.). Up to 29 American Flamingos wintered at Snake Bight, E.N.P., Monroe (C.B.C., v. o.).

Eight Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were at Gainesville 15 Dec (AK), and 42 were at Alachua 5 Jan (ES et al.). Four Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were in DeLand, Volusia 20 Jan (MG). Three Greater White-fronted Geese were at L. Jackson, Leon 11 Jan-2 Feb (EW, JCa). Snow Geese were in low numbers. At St. Marks N.W.R., only 2 were reported (JD). One of 2 present since fall at Merritt I. N.W.R. remained to 16 Dec, while another at Ft. De Soto C.P., Pinellas remained to 13 Dec (LA). At L.A.R.A., 2 were present 2-8 Dec (HR), while in Pasco one was found 23 Dec (CBl, KT). Mute Swans, neither banded nor marked, appeared Gulf-side at Cedar Key, Levy 9-10 Jan (JHi, BW) and Crystal River (2) 8 Dec (C.B.C.). A Eurasian Wigeon at Merritt I. N.W.R. remained from fall through 11 Dec (TR), and up to 2 were photographed at Naples, Collier 19 Dec+ (DSu, CE, v. o.), Port Canaveral, Brevard, a favorite haunt of Common Eiders, was home to a first-year male 14 Dec+ (v. o.). All three scoter species appeared in normal numbers off Alligator Pt. Elsewhere, Surf Scoters wintered at L. Worth, Palm Beach (2; BH et al.), Lee 25 Nov+ (CE), Collier 28 Jan (5; TD), and Naples, (one; v. o.). Up to 3 White-wingeds ventured s. to Pinellas 6-19 Dec (JFi), and 5 were at Jacksonville 28 Dec (C.B.C.). Single Black Scoters were s. to Pinellas 11-12 Dec (IFi) and Stuart 4 Jan (C.B.C.), while flocks of 3 and 5 were in Collier 3-22 Jan (LLB, TB et al.). Up to 2 Long-tailed Ducks remained at St. Marks N.W.R. (JD et al.). Elsewhere Gulf-side, 2 were in Citrus 29 Dec (TH) and one in Pinellas 7 Dec (IFi). On the Atlantic, one was in Nassau 31 Dec+ (PL et al.), and 3 were photographed in Brevard 4 Jan (C.B.C.). One Common Goldeneye was found in the interior of the peninsula at L.A.R.A. 30 Dec (HR).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

On 22 Feb, early Swallow-tailed Kites glided over Polk mines (PTi, CGe) and Brandon, Hillsborough (EK). White-tailed Kites were reported from their usual nesting sites in Pembroke Pines, Broward (v. o.) and at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P., Okeechobee (B&LC). One was seen at E.N.P. 26 Dec (BPr et al.), and another was in Highlands 27 Dec (C.B.C.). An imm. Golden Eagle was found in Leon 15 Dec (GM). A Harris's Hawk with "remnants of [a] tether on at least one leg" was seen at Bonita Springs, Lee 18 Jan (LLB); all reports from the state are presumed to represent escapees. Rare in winter n. of L. Okeechobee, a Broad-winged Hawk wintered at Ft. De Soto C.P. (LA). Other reports n. of the Lake include one in Jacksonville 28

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Dec (C.B.C.), 2 in Brevard 4 Jan (C.B.C.), and one in Volusia 21 Dec (C.B.C.). North of their usual winter range, 2 Short-tailed Hawks were near L. Wales, Polk 4 Jan (C.B.C.). An early migrant was noted in Orange 15 Feb (LoM). Also n. of its usual winter range was a Swainson's Hawk near Kissimmee, Osceola 4 Jan (C.B.C.). A first for the state, a female Eurasian Kestrel was identified at L.A.R.A. 26 Feb+ (HR, LS, ph., v. o.), one of very few confirmed records for the continent.

Winter breeding of Common Moorhen was again reported: a downy chick was observed in Pinellas 19 Dec (JFi). Two Southern Lapwings, presumed escapees (though certainly spreading northward in Central America), were a surprise at Hague, Alachua 14 Feb (GK). Single American Golden-Plovers at Titusville, Brevard 7-11 Dec (JD, JCa et al.), Crandon Park, Miami-Dade 17 Dec (RD), and L.A.R.A. 19 Jan (HR) were late. Rare on Florida's Atlantic coast, 2 Snowy Plovers were at Jacksonville 28 Dec (C.B.C.). A Blacknecked Stilt at L.A.R.A. 26 Feb (HR) was early. An American Avocet at Apalachicola, Franklin 21 Dec (JD, JM) was late. Solitary Sandpipers were in Polk 14 Dec (PF et al.). Leon 15 Jan-1 Feb (2; GM), Pinellas 21 Feb (JG), Palm Beach 25 Jan, and Wakulla 17 Feb

(BM). Single Long-billed Curlews wintered in Brevard (KAe), Lee (BPo), Palm Beach (BH), and Pinellas (S&MT). Four were in Hillsborough 15 Dec (C.B.C.) and 2 at Cedar Key 27 Dec (C.B.C.). Purple Sandpipers wintered on their usual jetties at Ft. Clinch pier, Nassau and Smyrna Dunes S.P., Volusia (v. o.). Casual on the Gulf, one appeared at Alligator Pt. 29 Nov-1 Dec (TR, JD et al.). Mulrooney heard a Semipalmated Sandpiper on Elliot Key, Miami-Dade 7 Feb utter its "short, husky churt call," and photographed 2 of "dozens" at Calusa Key, Monroe 30 lan. The winter status of this species in North America is poorly known. A Pectoral Sandpiper was early at L.A.R.A. 26 Feb (HR). A Curlew Sandpiper was found on the beach with

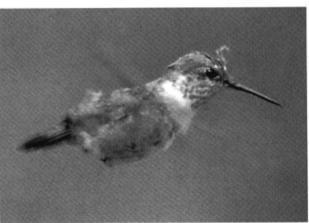
Dunlin near Northwest Cape, E.N.P., Monroe 1 Jan (†DWh et al.).

GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Florida's Heermann's Gull, first reported in Oct 2000, was at Coquina Beach, Manatee 22 Jan (HN, fide DB). Now in fourth-alternate plumage, it visited Ft. De Soto C.P. 6 Feb+ (LA, v. o.). A Black-headed Gull was in Kendall, Miami–Dade 21 Dec+ (C.B.C.). A first–basic Iceland Gull was photographed at Ft. Clinch, Nassau 31 Dec (BRi), and single Glaucous Gulls were at Huguenot Memorial Park 17 & 22 Jan (BRi, ph.), where the species is almost annual. Florida's first Slaty-backed

Gull remained at Key West through most of the period (JO et al.). Rare inland, a Lesser Black-backed Gull remained at L.A.R.A. 30 Dec—11 Jan (HR). In recent years, Gull-billed Terns have been found in winter in *Hernando*; up to 3 were at Pine I. 18-26 Jan (A&BH, MG, JG).

Two migrant White-winged Doves lingered at Alligator Pt. 5-19 Dec (JD, JM). A roost of up to 40 was discovered in e. Pasco in Dec (DP, BAh), while others were found farther n. still. Seven were at Gainesville 15 Dec, while 150+ were nearby at Archer 2-25 Jan (JT). Rare in winter, lone Mangrove Cuckoos were at Long Pine Key, E.N.P., Miami-Dade 18 Dec (C.B.C.) and on two small mangrove keys in Florida Bay, Monroe 12 Dec and 27 Jan (BM). Increasingly scarce, Smooth-billed Anis were at Darling N.W.R., Lee 7 Dec+ (fide BAh), Loxahatchee N.W.R., Palm Beach, and at the Ft. Lauderdale airport Broward (v. o.). For the 2nd consecutive year, there were no reports of Groove-billed Anis in the Region. A Shorteared Owl of the continental form was seen on the main road near the entrance to E.N.P., Miami-Dade 23 Dec (KAn), where any form of this species is rare. Other singles were seen at Merritt I. N.W.R. 16 Dec (C.B.C.) and at St. Marks N.W.R. 11 Jan-13 Feb (v. o.), and up to 2 wintered at L.A.R.A. (HR). Wintering Lesser



A Calliope Hummingbird photographed 9 February 2003 at Alligator Point, Florida provided only the Region's fourth documented record. Photograph by Jim Cavanagh.

Nighthawks were in *Monroe* (v. o.), *Palm Beach* (BH), and *Collier* (TD, v. o.); and a late migrant passed through *Franklin* 26 Dec (JD, JM). An unidentified nighthawk at Tallahassee 16 Jan was a surprise (RL).

Wintering hummingbirds again made news in the Region, greatly aided by Bassett's banding efforts. In the Tallahassee area, newlybanded hummingbirds were 21 Rubythroated, 2 Black-chinned, 25 Rufous, and 2 Calliope Hummingbirds. In the Gainesville area, the total of 33 hummingbirds was composed of 4 Ruby-throated, 3 Black-chinned, an Archilochus, 4 Rufous, 14 Selasphorus, and 7 not determined to genus. Other Black-

chinned reports included singles at Riverview, Hillsborough (EK), Kissimmee, Osceola (C.B.C.), and Stuart (C.B.C.). Another Calliope Hummingbird was photographed at Alligator Pt. 9 Feb (JD, JM, JCa).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

Reports of Least Flycatchers came from Alachua (JHi, ES), Orange (HR), Pinellas (JFi), Palm Beach (C.B.C.), Broward (C.B.C.), and Miami-Dade (LaM, PB). Two Vermilion Flycatchers were in Alachua (fide RR), and singles returned to Palm Beach and Hendry for a 2nd year (v. o.). Another Vermilion remained at St. Marks N.W.R. 10 Dec-26 Jan (v. o.), and a female was at Harney Pond Canal Recreation Area, Glades 7 Feb (PC). Ash-throated Flycatchers were in Leon (C.B.C.), Alachua (4; ES et al.), and L.A.R.A. (2; HR). Northerly reports of Great Crested Flycatchers included 2 in Seminole (fide LoM) and singles at Merritt I. N.W.R. (C.B.C.) and Withlacoochee R. C.P., Pasco 11 Jan (R&AS). Brown-crested Flycatchers were at L.A.R.A. 12 Feb (HR) and in Miami-Dade: one at Lucky Hammock (LA et al.) and 2 at Long Pine Key, E.N.P. (RD, WG et al.). A very late Eastern Kingbird stopped at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Collier 14 Dec (C.B.C.), while 2 in Highlands 23 Feb (MM) were very early. A Tropical Kingbird spent its

2nd winter at St. Marks N.W.R. (TC et al.). In recent years Cassin's Kingbird has been annual; singles were found in Orange (HR) and Miami-Dade (PB). The established Western Kingbird roost at L.A.R.A. peaked at 35 on 21 Dec (BHA). At L. Poinsett, Brevard, where Westerns have wintered for the past four years, a total of 11 was counted 14 Jan (KAe). The kingbird roost in Florida City, Miami-Dade hosted up to 23 (LaM et al.), and up to 5 kingbirds spent the season at Ft. De Soto C.P., a first in winter at that location (LA). A Gray Kingbird was photographed at Everglades City, Collier 12 Dec (DSu). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were reported n. to Brevard (C.B.C.), where the species is

only casual, Pasco (C.B.C., v. o.), and Orange, with up to 3 at L.A.R.A. (HR).

A Bell's Vireo stopped at L.A.R.A 16 Dec (HR), and one was at the Flamingo Road E.S.L. Site, Broward 2-16 Feb (BRo). Representing rare verifiable winter records were the Yellow-throated Vireos photographed at Collier-Seminole S.P., Collier 26 Jan (TD, DSu, v. o.) and Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve, Lee 27 Feb (TZ). Rare in any season, a Warbling Vireo was identified at Castellow Hammock Park, Miami-Dade 19 Jan (JHB). Two Purple Martins were seen at L.A.R.A. 2 Jan (HR). Cave Swallows are resident in the s. tip of the peninsula; elsewhere, 6 were at Tallahassee 2

Dec, with another there 10 Dec (GM), 5 were in Ft. Lauderdale 15 Dec (C.B.C.), while on 14 Dec, 2 were at L. Poinsett (DSi), and one was at St. Marks N.W.R. (C.B.C.). Barn Swallows that tarried at Tallahassee 2 Dec (GM), St. Marks N.W.R. 14 Dec (C.B.C.), and Merritt I. N.W.R. 16 Dec may have been migrants, while 8 at Coot Bay, E.N.P., Monroe 28 Dec (C.B.C.) may have wintered. One at Alligator Pt. 27 Feb ([Co) was early.

At least one Brown Creeper found its way s. to Gainesville and was seen 14 Dec and 1 Feb (LD, RR, Bob Holt). In higher numbers than usual, Golden-crowned Kinglets penetrated the peninsula s. to Sarasota (C.B.C.), Pinellas (JFi), Marion (JP), Orange, and Seminole (LoM). A Winter Wren at L.A.R.A. 19 Jan (HR) was far south. Rare on intercoastal islands, up to 4 Eastern Bluebirds remained at Ft. De Soto C.P. from fall through 7 Dec (LA), and 3 were found at Merritt 1. N.W.R. 15 Dec (TR). A first for Florida was a female Mountain Bluebird at E.N.P., Miami-Dade 18-24 Dec (RD, WG, et al., ph. LaM). A Wood Thrush was discovered at Gainesville 28 Jan (DL). Presumably pushed by the strong cold front on 23 Jan, Hailman estimated about 22,000 American Robins flying s. over the Loxahatchee R. Up to 2 Sprague's Pipits wintered at the Apalachicola airport, Franklin, a rather reliable location for this rare species (DWa, LS).

WARBLERS THROUGH MUNIAS

A Blue-winged Warbler was seen at Jonathan Dickinson S.P., Martin 29 Dec (C.B.C.). A Tennessee Warbler lingered until 8 Dec in Orange (LoM). A Nashville Warbler at Ft. De Soto C.P. 3 Dec (LA) was a migrant, whereas singles in Pasco (KT et al.), Broward (WG, MB, v. o.), and Miami-Dade (BRo) remained throughout the season. Another Nashville was found at L.A.R.A. 2 & 11 Jan (HR). Northern Parulas were found n. to Alachua (RR) and Hamilton (C.B.C.), and early migrants included 4 singing in Polk 19 Feb (PF). A high count of Yellow Warblers, 43, was made on the Key Largo-Plantation Key C.B.C., while at least one wintered n. to Seminole (B&LC, MG). Incredible counts of 8360 Yellowrumped Warblers and 3120 Palm Warblers came from L.A.R.A. 26 Feb (HR). One Blackthroated Blue Warbler was n. in Highlands (C.B.C.). Black-throated Green Warblers were in greater numbers than usual (v. o.), while a late Blackpoll Warbler lingered at Bill Baggs/Cape Florida S.P., Miami-Dade to 11 Dec (RD). Six Northern Waterthrushes wintered at L.A.R.A. (HR). A Louisiana Waterthrush at E.N.P., Monroe 28 Dec (C.B.C.) was wintering, but one at Paynes Prairie, Alachua 22 Feb probably was an early migrant (IS). Lone male Hooded Warblers were at Bonner Park, Pinellas 27 Dec (JFi), Starkey Park, Pasco 2 Jan (DP, BAh), and Key

Largo, Monroe 19 Jan (BM). At least 5 Wilson's Warblers wintered in Leon (fide GM). Eight reports of Yellow-breasted Chats were received Regionwide (v. o.).

Summer Tanagers were widespread this season, with 18 individuals reported from Franklin to Monroe (C.B.C.). Single Western Tanagers visited Bill Baggs/Cape Florida S.P. 28 Dec (RD) and Gainesville 3 Feb (WD). Florida's 2nd verified Green-tailed Towhee was at Honeymoon I. S.R.A., Pinellas and entertained dozens of birders 5 Feb+ (JFo, EH et al., ph. LS). Clay-colored Sparrows were scarce; reports were from Leon (RL), Polk (CGe et al.), Orange (BHA et al.), and Miami-Dade (LA et al.). Lone Lark Sparrows were in Sarasota 14 Dec and at St. Marks N.W.R. 15 Dec (TC), while up to 5 wintered at Homestead, Miami-Dade (fide IHB). Henslow's Sparrows are more widespread in the Peninsula than previously thought; several were banded this winter at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P., Okeechobee (PS). Le Conte's Sparrows were reported from Liberty (LaM), Wakulla (LaM, SM), and Alachua (BC et al.). More common along the Atlantic coast, single Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows were identified on Gulf-side C.B.C.s at Apalachicola Bay-St. Vincent N.W.R., Franklin, Cedar Key, and St. Marks N.W.R. (C.B.C.), while 2 were found at the s. tip of the mainland at Coot Bay, E.N.P. (C.B.C.). Always rare, Fox Sparrows were in Leon (4), Hamilton, Alachua, and at L.A.R.A. 5 & 9 Jan (HR). Lincoln's Sparrows were widespread in small numbers (v. o.). An ad. Harris's Sparrow was found at a fish camp on the St. Johns R., Seminole 28 Dec+ (CP et al., ph. BPr). One Lapland Longspur remained at Huguenot Memorial Park 26 Dec-26 Feb (fide PP).

Rare in winter, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at L.A.R.A. 21 Dec (JB et al.). Up to 3 Blue Grosbeaks wintered at w. Kendall, Miami-Dade (JHB), with 5 others at L.A.R.A. (HR). A late Indigo Bunting remained at a Franklin feeder through 22 Dec (JM). Lone Dickcissels were found at five sites (v. o.). A late Bobolink was at Lucky Hammock 7 Dec (BRo, JHB), while another at Honeymoon 1. S.R.A. 21 Feb (WY) may have wintered. Reports of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were of one at Lucky Hammock 27 Dec (BAh et al.) and 4 in Osceola 4 Jan (C.B.C.). Single Rusty Blackbirds were detected as far s. as Alachua (RR), Hillsborough (KAn), and Seminole (BHA). Reports of Brewer's Blackbirds included singles on C.B.C.s in Hamilton and w. Pasco (KT), 2 in Alachua (fide RR), and 65 at Black Swamp, Leon 28 Feb (GM). Bronzed Cowbirds wintered at the usual location in Lakeland, Polk (v. o.), and up to 12 wintered at Naples (fide CE). One was at L.A.R.A. 21 Dec (HR) and 3 in Tampa 26 Jan (DWa, LS). The only Bullock's Oriole reported was one at L.A.R.A. 22 Jan (HR).

House Finches continue to colonize the cen. peninsula. The 2nd reported in Orange remained in Winter Park until 17 Jan (BHA), while another 2 were in different areas of Orlando 1 Dec (JCl), with another found singing downtown 7 Feb (GB). Elsewhere, 7 were reported in n. Lake (C.B.C.), 3 in Volusia (C.B.C.), 4 in Pasco (C.B.C.), up to 10 in Hernando (A&BH), one in Pinellas (PTr), and 4 in Hillsborough (C.B.C.). The species continues to increase in Polk, with 11 at L. Wales 8 Dec (CGe, PTi) and 3 at Lakeland 12 Jan (CBo). Single Pine Siskins were in St. Johns (JHo), Orange (LoM), Brevard (RP), Hillsborough (BAh), St. Lucie (C.B.C.), and in Collier at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, where one wintered last year. Up to 3 visited feeders in Valrico, Hillsborough (SB, SG). Up to 5 Tricolored Munias were at Eco Pond, E.N.P. 1-8 Dec (DSi, BRo).

Corrigendum: Eleven is the correct number of Gull-billed Terms at *Polk* mines in winter 2001-2002.

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