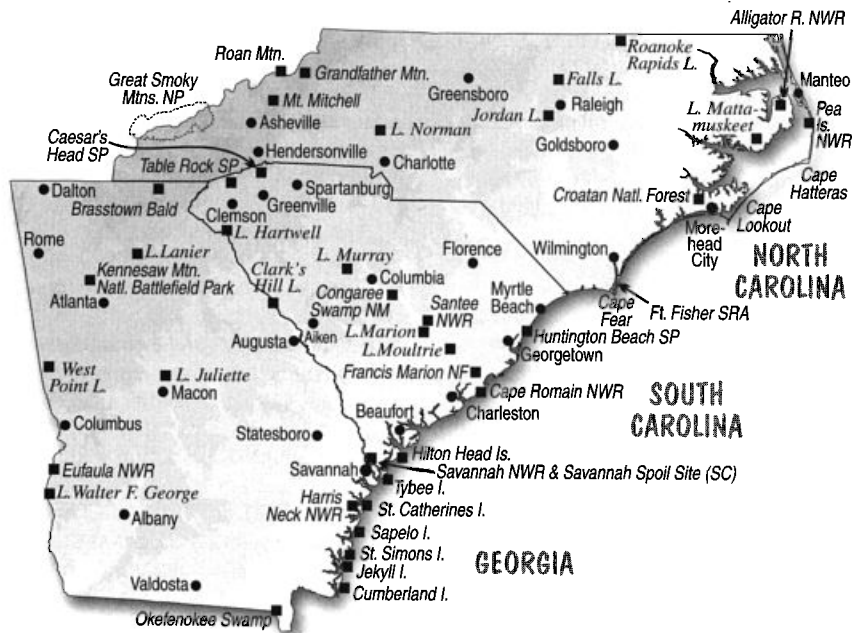


# Southern Atlantic



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This spring's weather was characterized by generally below-average precipitation (Georgia experienced one of its driest springs on record) and slightly above-average temperatures. This weather pattern produced few notable fronts, so the migration flowed through the season with no noteworthy events. Groundings due to weather systems were almost nonexistent. Predictably, then, most observers called the migration very poor, although for the birds, it was probably quite successful! As usual, there were a few rarities, most notably a first for the western North Atlantic Ocean on one of the North Carolina pelagic trips.

**Abbreviations:** C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, NC); E.L.H. (E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach S.P., SC); Hoop. (Hooper Lane, Henderson, NC); K. Mt. (Kennesaw Mt. National Battlefield Park, GA); L. Matt. (L. Mattamuskeet N.W.R., NC); P.I. (Pea Is-

land N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

## LOONS THROUGH ROSEATE SPOONBILL

Loons lingering from the winter season included the Red-throated Loon at L. Julian, NC until 27 Apr (TJ) and the Yellow-billed Loon at L. Horton, GA until 3 Apr (MI). Also of note for the spring was the Red-necked Grebe at Shallotte Inlet, Brunswick, NC 9-11 Apr (TP). A complete surprise was the Yellow-nosed Albatross observed at Cape Pt., Buxton, NC point for over 20 minutes as it flew offshore toward Diamond Shoals 11 Apr (KM). Photographs should provide the 2nd documented record for North Carolina, though there are several sight reports of albatross for the state. The usual complement of late May pelagic trips off North Carolina's Outer Banks was run again with much success (BP). Gadfly petrels were highlighted by at least 4 Fea's and 10 Herald (Trinidad) Petrels 21-31 May (off Oregon and Hatteras Inlets). Shearwater numbers were about average, though 9 Manx during the period was evidence of the increasing effort to locate this species (which is often seen in cooler inshore waters) on the pelagic tours. Storm-petrel numbers were about normal for spring, with the peak counts including 32 Leach's and 19 Band-rumpeds 30 May off Hat-

teras. The highlight of the spring, however, was the Black-bellied Storm-Petrel found off Oregon Inlet 31 May (P. A. Guris, M. D. Overton, M. R. Tove, R. Wiltraut, G. Wheaton, J. Gallup et al.). The bird was associating with a mixed storm-petrel flock in a cool eddy of the Gulf Stream in 800 fathoms of water. It was immediately identified as a *Fregetta* storm-petrel; photographic documentation indicated Black-bellied rather than White-bellied. If accepted, this would represent the first record for North America! Other highlights of the season included 3 Red-billed Tropicbirds (now almost annual) during May (BP) and a Masked Booby near shore out of Hatteras 22 May (S. Howell). An imm. Brown Booby was photographed on a channel marker near Harkers I., Carteret, NC 15 Apr (JC), providing a very rare sighting for that state. In South Carolina, rare pelagic species included a Manx Shearwater off Charleston 10 Apr and 5-6 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels off Charleston 30 May (ND et al.).

American White Pelicans continued to be found Regionwide, with the most unusual sightings being 45 at L. Matt 7 Mar (fide WC), 6 at Jordan L., NC 19-20 May (fide WC), 15 at L. Burton, Rabun, GA 11 Apr (fide TM), and 15 at L. Julian, NC 11 Apr (TL). Also rare inland was the Brown Pelican at L. Townsend, Guilford, NC 10-20 Apr (ET). There were more Magnificent Frigatebird reports this spring than usual, with birds being noted at Cumberland I., GA 2 May (BW et al.), at Cedar I., NC 16 May (JF, JFe et al.), at Wrightsville Beach, NC and later that day at Ft. Fisher, NC 26 May (A&CR, OA), and at Folly Beach, SC 27 May (CW). Reddish Egrets included the usual bird at Gould's Inlet, GA during Mar and Apr (JFI, EH, PS, GB), a white morph at Donnelley W.M.A., SC 17 May (KA), and one on Little St. Simons I., GA 23 May (BN). Noteworthy inland were the 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons at L. Junaluska, Haywood, NC 14 Apr (DH, BO) and the Glossy Ibis at Santee N.W.R., SC 17 Apr (MT). Roseate Spoonbills provided rare sightings for the Carolinas, with singles at Folly Beach, SC late Apr-early May (fide DF), at S. Tibwin, Charleston, SC 14 May (CW), and at Bodie I., NC lighthouse pond 19 May+ (RD, ESB, GLA, ph. Bob Salomon, m.ob.). The latter bird, about the 12th for the state, was apparently present for several days earlier and later in the nearby P.I. area (v.o.).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued their presence at Donnelley W.M.A., SC, with up to 12 seen 27 May (LM), and 5 were seen briefly in a flooded field in Tyrrell, NC 17 May (fide JL). It is generally believed that these birds are of wild provenance, potentially from the Florida

population. There were several lingering waterfowl of note this spring. Up to 2 Snow Geese were very late at E.L.H. 14–15 May (CL, JS et al.). A subad. male Common Eider was found near Harkers I., NC 15 May (R&PT), and up to 2 Long-tailed Ducks remained in the Ft. Macon, NC area until at least 10–11 May (RN, JF). Scoters lingered at several sites this spring, with the latest being one Surf and 3 Blacks at Caswell Beach, NC 30 May (JP). Two Common Mergansers were very late at Falls L., NC 2 May (BB), and a Red-breasted Merganser was very late along the Altamaha R., GA 31 May (*fide* DC). The Cinnamon Teal found at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA during late Feb, was last seen 3 Mar (RW, GB, BH). The best inland scoter report was of 8 Surfs at L. Julian, NC 18 Mar (TJ et al.).

There was the usual scattering of Swallow-tailed Kite reports from all three states this spring. One moving northward at the Altamaha R., Long, GA 3 Mar (GB, BH) was easily one of the earliest ever for that state. Another very early one was n. of Georgetown, SC 7 Mar (TK). Somewhat out of range were singles at Oxbow Meadows, GA 4 Apr (WCh) and McAlpine Greenway, Charlotte, NC 24 Apr (JW et al.). The biggest flock of Mississippi Kites reported was the 79 near Wedgefield, Sumter, SC 5 May (LM), while the most out of range were the 2 at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC 9 May (RS). An ad. Swainson's Hawk seen in flight near Santee N.W.R., SC 3 Apr (LM), if accepted, would be only the 3rd from that state. Rare in the spring season after mid-Mar, a Rough-legged Hawk was a good find near Roper, Washington, NC 3 Apr (*fide* TP). A Clapper Rail was found dead in downtown Charlotte, NC 26 Apr (TP) for a rare but not unprecedented inland occurrence. Much more unusual and totally out of place was the Purple Gallinule seen walking from a road toward the beach on Ocracoke I., NC

24 Apr (TPe et al.). Causing much excitement was the appearance of 8 Whooping Cranes from the Florida reintroduction program on their way north. First seen in Lowndes, GA 29 Mar (NK), they were again seen somewhat e. of the expected migration path near Franklin, NC 1–3 Apr (v.o.). Sandhill Crane reports included 2 at K. Mt. 10 Apr (*fide* GB), 2 near Townville, SC 18 May (SP et al.), and 2 at Bear Island W.M.A., SC 24 Apr (ND) and 21 May (SW).

### PLOVERS THROUGH ALCIDS

Only one American Golden-Plover was found this spring, that being one in basic plumage at Oxbow Meadows, GA 3–4 Apr (WCh). Very rare inland Black-necked Stilts were found at Oxbow Meadows, GA 14–16 May (WCh) and at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, GA 29–30 May (LS). American Avocets were noteworthy inland, with one at Falls L., NC 2 May (BB) and 17 in Bartow, GA 5 May (BZ). Other very rare inland shorebirds included a Willet at L. Junaluska, NC 26 Apr (DH, BO, WF), a Baird's Sandpiper in Marshallville, Macon, GA 17 Apr (*fide* TM), and another Baird's at Hoop. 15–17 Apr (WF, BO). The latter bird, if accepted, would be only the 3rd spring report for that state. Upland Sandpiper reports were down again this spring, with Georgia being the only state that reported birds. Georgia also had the only Long-billed Curlews, with one at Little St. Simons I. most of the spring (BN) and 3 on Sapelo I. 12–14 Mar (MF). One Curlew Sandpiper was reported, that being one photographed at the S.S.S. 31 May (SC). Another rare shorebird was the female Ruff (Reeve) found at Bear Island W.M.A., SC 20 Apr (DF). There is only a handful of spring reports for that state. Only two reports of Wilson's Phalarope were received, single birds at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA 29 Apr and 3 May (BD, TKe, DHd) and at the S.S.S. 28 May (SC). Rare onshore Red-necked Phalarope reports included 5 at the S.S.S. 19 May (SC) and one at the Long Beach, NC airport 30 May (JP). A pelagic trip out of Charleston, SC 10



Furnishing only about the fifteenth record for North Carolina, this elusive immature Roseate Spoonbill haunted several impoundments on the state's northern Outer Banks 19–31 May 2004 (here 24 May at Bodie Island lighthouse pond). *Digiscoped photograph by Bob Salomon.*

Apr had excellent numbers of phalaropes, with 450 Red-neckeds and 350 Reds (ND et al.).

This spring's Outer Banks pelagic trips yielded lowest-ever numbers of jaegers but did produce as many as 5 South Polar Skuas 21–30 May (BP), though the identification of one of the birds on 25 May was much discussed: photographs of the bird may be published in the British journal *Birding World* as a first-summer Great Skua, a plumage essentially undescribed in the literature. Inland Laughing Gulls included 2 at Falls L., NC 2 May (BB) and 2 at L. Walter F. George, GA 30 May (J&MA). Very rare in spring, a Franklin's Gull was a good find at the West Point L., GA dam area 22 Mar (WCh). Even more unexpected was the ad. Black-headed Gull found for one day at the s. end of Jekyll I., GA 21 Mar (BW et al.). If accepted, this would be that state's 2nd. Rare spring Glaucous Gulls included first-winter birds at Beaufort, NC 24 Apr (JF et al.) and on Wasaw I., GA 27 Apr (PR). As expected, all North Carolina Arctic Terns were found off the Outer Banks. Found on four trips, the peak count was the 6 off Oregon Inlet 21 May (BP). In South Carolina, where much rarer, one was off Murrell's Inlet 14 May (JPe), and 4 were off Charleston 19 May (ND). Noteworthy inland terns included 7 Forster's Terns at Garden Lakes, Rome, GA 27 Apr (MD) and a Least Tern near State-



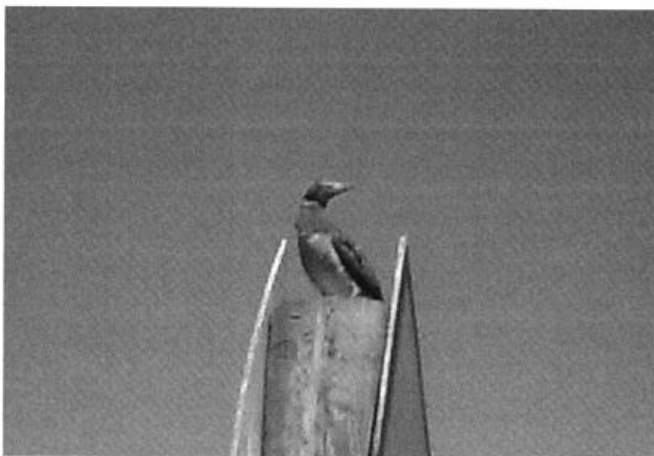
A species recorded with certainty only once previously in North Carolina, this adult Yellow-nosed Albatross spent twenty minutes flying around Cape Point, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Buxton on 11 April 2004. *Photograph by Kevin Metcalf.*

burg, Sumter, SC 17 May (MT). Bridled Tern numbers were down, with the best North Carolina count being 5 off Oregon Inlet 30 May (BP). South Carolina had 2 off Charleston 10 Apr (ND et al.) for an early sighting. Sooty Tern sightings were one off Charleston, SC 10 Apr and 2 off Charleston 19 May (ND et al.), 2 off Oregon Inlet, NC 21 May (BP), and one on-shore in the Cape Fear R. near Southport, NC 17 Apr (MH et al.). Only one inland Black Tern was reported, that being at the E.L.H. 31 May (EH). The winter's influx of alcids in North Carolina continued into Mar. A sick Dovekie (which later died) was found on the beach at Atlantic Beach 4 Mar (fide JF), and another dead one was found there 5 Mar (JF). Also an injured Thick-billed Murre was found on Ocracoke 19 Mar and taken to a local rehabilitator (EHa). Razorbill reports involved dead ones off C. Lookout 3 Mar (fide JF) and at Ft. Macon 5 Mar (RN). Live ones included 3 flying past Atlantic Beach 17 Mar (JF, JFe, BHo), one at Ft. Macon 23 Mar (RN), and one off Cape Lookout 24 Mar (JFe).

#### DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Only one White-winged Dove was reported, that being at a feeder in Shelby, NC 15 Apr (fide TP). Black-billed Cuckoo sightings were about average, coming from the w. portions of the Region. A Short-eared Owl at Little St. Simons I., GA 16 Mar was a good find for that coastal locality in spring (BN). Unusual was the Common Nighthawk found far offshore of Hatteras, NC 22 May (BP). A Whip-poor-will was very early in s. Moore, NC 5 Mar (JB). Woodpeckers made news this spring with several high counts. A one-day total of 23 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at K. Mt. 22 Mar (GB et al.) was quite remarkable for this generally scarce species. A flight of 77 Northern Flickers in one hour in n. Greene, GA 21 Mar (PS) was very notable, and a count of 50 Pileated Woodpeckers on the Milltail Creek B.B.S., Dare, NC 30 May was very impressive (ML).

Only one Olive-sided Flycatcher was mentioned this spring, that being at Callaway Gardens, GA 9 May (D&PM). There were several noteworthy *Empidonax* sightings this spring: a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at K. Mt. 2 May (only the 3rd spring record there; fide GB), an Alder Flycatcher at Hoop, 16 May (WF, BO), and a Least Flycatcher at



This immature Brown Booby was photographed on a channel marker near Harkers Island, North Carolina 15 April 2004. There are over ten reports of this sulid for that state, most of them recent. Photograph by Jeff Cordes.

Eno River S.P., Durham, NC 5 May (HL). South Carolina's 3rd inland Vermilion Flycatcher was an ad. male near Lexington 29–30 May (DS, MS, BF). Rare spring sightings of Western Kingbird involved singles at James I., SC 17 Apr (CH et al.) and Jekyll I., GA 1 May (IS). Also of note was the Gray Kingbird at Edisto Beach, SC 18 Apr (SG et al.), this being away from the usual sites in coastal s. Georgia. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers once again were present in the Region. One bird returned to the Monroe, NC site 19 Apr but did not stay this year (AO). One was seen not too far from there 11 May (GM), probably the same bird. At the McDonough,



A rare species in South Carolina, this Curlew Sandpiper was present at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County 31 May 2004. Photograph by Steve Calver.

GA site, birds returned 16 May (BZ et al.). Other sightings included one n. of Perry, GA 4 May (D&PM) and one near Brattonville, York, SC 28–30 May (BF, BM, JH).

Some of the rarer vireo reports included an early Yellow-throated at Lilburn, GA 14 Mar (TR), a Warbling at K. Mt. 28 Apr (RH, PH et al.), a Philadelphia at the E.L.H. 23 Apr (CL), 2 Philadelphia's at Bethabara Park, Winston-

Salem, NC 1 May (fide RSn), and an early Red-eyed at Paulk's Pasture, Glynn, GA 21 Mar (GK). The thrush migration was considered to be very poor this spring. Numbers of birds were way down, and many observers did not mention them at all. Extremely early were a Gray-cheeked Thrush near Winnabow, Brunswick, NC 11 Apr (GM) and a Wood Thrush at Howell Woods, Johnston, NC 23 Mar (DW). A Bicknell's Thrush was banded and photographed at Howell Woods, NC 5 May (BS et al., fide HL). If accepted, this would provide only the 3rd documented Bicknell's for the state. Even if this taxon is "lumped" again with Gray-cheeked, as is being considered by the A.O.U., records of subspecies continue to be of interest, and observers are encouraged to document such birds as thoroughly as possible.

#### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The warbler migration, like the thrush migration, was generally described as poor. Some early arrivals included 2 Black-throated Greens in the Croatan N.F., NC 19 Mar (JF), where *waynei* usually arrives a week later, and a Prairie at Black Mountain, NC 3 Mar (SGi). Out of place were several offshore warblers off the Outer Banks of North Carolina. A Magnolia Warbler was off Oregon Inlet 21 May, and a Prothonotary Warbler was off Hatteras 29 May (BP). The latter bird was extremely late for a migrant (most spring migrants peak in early to mid-Apr); it was captured and released in habitat at Frisco. Cerulean Warblers staged one of their better spring migrations at K. Mt. this year, as evidenced by the excellent count of 12 there 12 Apr (GB et al.). Rare for the mts. was the Prothonotary Warbler in the French Broad R. valley, Henderson, NC 27 Apr (WF, MW). Another good count for K. Mt. was the 14 Worm-eating Warblers there 12 Apr (GB et al.), which set a high single-day total for the park. There were two reports each of the rare *Oporornis* species this spring. Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC had one Connecticut Warbler 14 May (WF, RS), 2 Connecticut on 17 May (RS), and a Mourning on 6–7 May (WF, RS). Another Mourning Warbler was at K. Mt. 20 May (GB, BZ), providing only the 2nd spring report there.

Western Tanager has become an annual visitor in recent years. This spring's sightings involved a female at a feeder in Albe-

marle, Stanly, NC 7–11 Mar (MM), a male at a feeder in Winston, Douglas, GA 26 Apr–1 May (*vide JS*), and a young male singing at the Roanoke River N.W.R., NC 23 Apr (R&SB). The Clay-colored Sparrows that wintered in numbers at North R., Carteret, NC remained until 25 Apr, when 2 were still present (JF). Elsewhere, rare spring Clay-colored were at James I., SC 17 Apr (CH et al.), at the S.S.S. 21 Apr (SC et al.), and at Table Rock S.P., SC 4 May (JCa, SS). Very rare and unexpected in spring was the Henslow's Sparrow found at the N.C.S.U. farm s. of

Raleigh, NC 8 May (JM et al.). There were more Lincoln's Sparrow reports than usual this spring. Singles were found at Riverbend Park, Catawba, NC 11 Apr (DM), at Little St. Simons I., GA 16 Apr (JSi, *vide BN*), at Griffin, GA 24 Apr (EB), at Athens, GA 25–28 Apr (JF1, CS), at Durham, NC 25 Apr (WC), and at Mills R., Henderson, NC 29 Apr (WF). Of interest were the 2 White-throated Sparrows that remained through the period in south-coastal Georgia at Darien (DC). Completely unexpected was the Harris's Sparrow that showed up at a feeder in Winnabow, Brunswick, NC 20–25 Apr (EC, m.ob.). This bird provided about the 6th record for North Carolina. Even rarer was the ad. Gray-headed Junco (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) photographed at a feeder in Charlotte, NC 25–27 May (JSh, TP). Obviously the first for the Region, this individual represents certainly the easternmost record; there is a handful of extralimital records from the Southern Great Plains and one from Ohio. North Carolina also had its 4th Smith's Longspur: one was photographed with Laplands at Hoop. 26 Mar (WF, RS). Snow Buntings, very rare in the Region in spring, provided some excitement this year. A male in high plumage was a complete surprise in a yard in Zebulon, Wake, NC 10–11 Apr (DO) and provided only the 5th Apr report for the state. This bird was outdone however by the female, also in high plumage, found at the jetty at Oregon Inlet, NC 6–9 May (HT, JL, JK), providing the first May report for the state.

In North Carolina, Painted Buntings wandered inland more than usual this spring. The



This Smith's Longspur accompanied several Lapland Longspurs at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, North Carolina 26 March 2004, providing the fourth or fifth record for that state. Photograph by Wayne Forsythe.

most amazing was the ad. male photographed at a feeder in Asheville 11–12 Mar (MW, ST, JMa), which provided the first documented mountain record for the state. Others included a female at Fayetteville 2 May (BWa) and a female at Greensboro 7–8 May (D&CA). Dickcissel reports were about average, with the best counts being 5 in Bartow, GA during May (BZ, PH) and 4 at the Harris Farm, e. Franklin, NC 11 May+ (RD). An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird was a surprise in a yard n. of Mt. Pleasant, SC 4–5 May (BC, EBl). A locally good count of 31 Brewer's Blackbirds was had at the usual Open



This adult Harris's Sparrow was present at Winnabow, Brunswick County, North Carolina 20 through (here) 25 April 2004, about the sixth record of the species for that state. Photograph by Will Cook.

Ground, Carteret, NC area 5 Mar (JF, JFe). Only one Shiny Cowbird was reported this spring, that being a second-year male at Blackbeard Island N.W.R., GA 20 May (PS). A pair of Baltimore Orioles nested just e. of Greenville, NC; the male was seen carrying food to a nest 30 May (JWr). As amazing as

this seems, nesting by this species was attempted in Greenville during the late 1980s and early 1990s as well. And finally, a Common Redpoll put in an appearance at a feeder in Charleston, SC 5–7 Mar (ND, m.ob.)—most likely a part of the earlier winter influx into the Carolinas.

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