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The spring 2006 season was one of highly variable weather conditions. While the northern portion of the Region experienced relatively normal rainfall, much of southern Kentucky and Tennessee were quite dry, especially during April. Overall, temperatures were warmer than normal, with an abnormally warm month of April bringing an early onset to spring. In contrast, much of the middle of May was cooler and wetter than normal. The early season warmth resulted in an early emergence of leaves, making for difficult passerine viewing conditions. The cool, wet period in mid-May was severe enough to cause some mortality and nesting failure in several species. Most remarkable was an apparently fairly widespread die-off of Purple Martins across central and western Kentucky. In part due to the lack of early-season flood waters to create habitat, shorebird migration was relatively unspectacular in most areas. Rarity highlights included a Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Gull-billed Tern, and Varied Thrush in Tennessee and a pair of Cinnamon Teal, Swainson's Hawk, and continuing Varied Thrush and Spotted Towhee in Kentucky.

Abbreviations: Barkley Dam (Barkley Dam, Livingston/Lyon, KY); Britton Ford (in Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Benton, TN); Ensley (Ensley Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, in sw. Shelby, TN); Kentucky Dam (at n. end of Kentucky L., Livingston/Marshall, KY); Kentucky Dam Village (Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, Marshall, KY); Pace Point (Pace Point, Big Sandy Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Henry, TN); Radnor (Radnor L. State Natural Area, Davidson, TN); Sauerheber (Sauerheber Unit Sloughs W.M.A., Henderson, KY); S. Holston L. (Sullivan, TN); Standifer Gap (Standifer Gap Marsh, Hamilton, TN).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Overall, waterfowl migration was modest. The only notable peak counts were for ca.

1000 Northern Pintails in w. Henderson, KY 1 Mar (CC) and 546 Ruddy Ducks—a new state high count—at L. Peewee, Hopkins, KY 26 Mar (AM). Rarities were limited to a Fulvous Whistling-Duck—a very rare vagrant to the Region—in Robertson, TN 19 Apr–19 May (MMu, m.ob.) and a pair of Cinnamon Teal at Sauerheber 8 Apr (ph. DR, KOS)—10 Apr (Day). Two reports of hybrids from Kentucky were of interest: an imm. goose that exhibited intermediate characters between Ross's and Snow in Warren, KY 21 Mar–Apr 20 (ph. DR) and a male teal possessing characters of both Green-winged and Blue-winged, in the company of ca. 6 of the latter at Sauerheber 18 May (BP).

The wintering flock of Tundra Swans at Sauerheber lingered into early Mar, with 7 last reported there 11 Mar (BP, CC). A second-year male Surf Scoter was at Cane Creek Park, Putnam, TN 23 May (SJS). A White-winged



This pair of Cinnamon Teal was present in Henderson County, Kentucky 8 (here) through 10 April 2006. Photograph by David Roemer.

Scoter was at S. Holston L. 13 Mar (WC, LaM, CP). The only scoters reported from Kentucky were single female/imm. Black Scoters on the Ohio R., one at Louisville 5 Mar (ph. BY, MY), and one near the Daviess/Hancock line 6 Mar (Day). Female Hooded Mergansers with broods in Boone (LeM, JC, KaC), Ohio (RDn), and Rowan (SJS, BSt et al.) all represented first county breeding records in Kentucky.

Tardy waterfowl included a male Gadwall at Kentucky Dam 25 May (DR); a pair of Northern Shovelers at Sauerheber through 19 May (DR); an injured male Northern Pintail at Kentucky Dam through 25 May (DR et al.); a female Ring-necked Duck in Rowan, KY 20 May (GR); a female Greater Scaup in w. Fulton, KY 5 May (ph. HC et al.); a Bufflehead in Hamilton, TN 23 May (KeC, DJ, KW); a female Common Merganser at Middlebrook L., Sullivan, TN 21 Mar (RK) and 5 above Barkley Dam 25 Mar (BP); and a female Red-

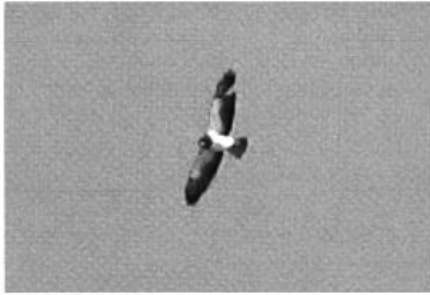
breasted Merganser on the Ohio R., Campbell, KY 20 May (FR).

A Red-necked Grebe and 2 Western Grebes were at Pace Point 5 Mar (CS, MWe), the Westerns lingered through at least 9 Mar (MT, MWe) and were likely the same 2 that were originally found at Britton Ford 23 Dec (JRW). One to 2 Red-necked Grebes were at Owensboro, Daviess, KY 26-29 Mar (ph. SA) one was above Kentucky Dam 29 Apr (ph. HC, KOS) through 7 May (JBr, BY, MY), where a Western Grebe was noted 6 May (†JBr). An Eared Grebe at S. Holston L. 30 Apr (RC) was late.

An early Anhinga was unusual away from the Mississippi R. in Fayette, TN 30 Mar (RDn). Numbers of northbound Double-crested Cormorants appeared to be reduced in Kentucky this spring. Approximately 600+ American White Pelicans were still on L. Barkley, Trigg, KY 3 Mar (KBr). American Bitterns were reported in above-average numbers, mostly from e. Tennessee, with 8 reported from six locations 5 Mar–23 Apr; a count of 5 at Sauerheber 8 Apr (DR, KOS) represented a new high count for Kentucky Least Bitterns arrived at Standifer Gap, where they breed in large numbers, 14 Apr (DPa); up to 2 were at Kyker Bottoms, Blount, TN, where they are unusual, 13 May+ (JeA et al.); and one to 3 were reported from three Kentucky locales in May (BP, DR). Single Tricolored Herons—always rare in the Region but especially in spring—were at Old Hickory L., Sumner, TN 1 May (†CG) and Chickasaw N.W.R., Lauderdale, TN 21 May (MTOS). A White Ibis was at Brainerd Levee, Hamilton, TN 27 May (KW)

There were two reports of Glossy Ibis in Tennessee: 6 at Standifer Gap 2 May (DAb, DPa) and 2 at Chickasaw N.W.R., Lauderdale 21 May (DPr, MTOS).

Nesting Ospreys continue to return to Kentucky earlier and earlier; this year, birds appeared on L. Barkley, Trigg 7 Mar (HC), a new record-early date. Single Mississippi Kites in Knox, TN 13 May (SH) and Monroe, TN 18 May (WJ) were unusual away from the Mississippi floodplain. An ad. Northern Goshawk, always rare in the Region, was reported from Blount, TN 1 Apr (CM et al.). A light-morph ad. Swainson's Hawk at Sauerheber 8 Apr (ph. DR et al.) will become a first confirmed record for Kentucky when accepted by its B.R.C. There were several reports of w. forms of Red-tailed Hawk in Kentucky, the most noteworthy of which were 2 ad. Harlan's Hawks in w. Hopkins 12 Mar (ph. BP) and an ad. dark-morph calurus over e. Jefferson 30 Mar (MMn). A juv. Golden Eagle was found



This light-morph adult Swainson's Hawk over western Henderson County 8 April 2006 provided a long-overdue first confirmed record of the species for Kentucky. Photograph by David Roemer.

electrocuted in Owen, KY in early Apr (BSn, *fide* BSm). Merlins were reported in much lower numbers than during the previous year in Tennessee, with only 2 reported 3 & 29 Apr; in Kentucky, 4 reported at three locales 1 Mar–7 May (m.ob.) was fairly typical. Peregrine Falcon numbers were average in Tennessee; in Kentucky, only 3 birds were observed in non-breeding areas 10 Apr–11 May (EM, GL, DR).

RAILS THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Kentucky's only King Rail was a bird heard at Sauerheber 8 Apr (DR, KOS). Virginia Rail numbers at Standifer Gap peaked 14 Apr with 5 (DPa). Seven pairs of Virginias were seen/heard at two Muhlenberg, KY sites during May, although the only evidence of nesting that could be found included defensive calling and an empty nest (BP); the species has not been confirmed breeding in the state. A Common Moorhen at Kyker Bottoms, Blount, TN 13–29 May (JW, JeA et al.) was uncommon for the Region; the only reports for Kentucky were at traditional breeding locales in Henderson (CC) and Union (BP). Sandhill Crane migration through the Region was essentially complete by the first week of Mar, the latest being 5 over Larue, KY 15 Apr (SB, BBC) and one in Daviess, KY 27 Apr (ph. BL).

Shorebird migration was nearly devoid of extremely interesting dates, peak counts, or vagrants. Overall, the migration of most species appeared to be delayed by about a week. Two Baird's Sandpipers at Ensley 31 Mar (MT, JRW) offered further evidence of a small, but apparently annual, early-season movement that occurs prior to a slightly larger peak in late Apr and early May. A Long-billed Dowitcher at Britton Ford 9 Mar (MT) was very early. A few peak counts of interest included 170+ Greater Yellowlegs in w. Fulton, KY 22 Apr (RDn); 113 Solitary Sandpipers, a new state high count, at Chaney L., Warren, KY 19 Apr (DR); ca. 500 Semipalmated Sandpipers in Muhlenberg, KY 29 May (DR, TD); and 234

Dunlins in w. Henderson, KY 19 May (DR).

Black-necked Stilts are rare vagrants away from the Mississippi R., so one in Cumberland, TN 29 Apr (J&AM) was noteworthy. Even more surprising, because of the possibility of breeding, was a pair at Duck River Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., Humphreys, TN 17 Apr and 24 May (ph. CFr). Willet migration was highlighted by a flock of 75 at Ft. Loudoun L., Loudoun, TN 30 Apr (KDE); 18 at Kentucky Dam Village 29 Apr (HC, KOS); and 11 at Reelfoot L., Lake/Obion, TN 8 May (RK). A flock of 20 Marbled Godwits in Muhlenberg 21 Apr (ph. RDn) represented a new high count for Kentucky. Two to 5 Western Sandpipers—generally rare and occurring across only the w. portion of the Region in spring—were reported on three occasions at two w. Kentucky locales 9 Apr–2 May (HC, CC, ph. BP). At least 2 Baird's Sandpipers at Brainerd Levee, Hamilton, TN 17–21 May (BWA, CFg, JJ, †KC et al.) were noteworthy not only for their presence so far e. but also for so late in the season. One to 2 Wilson's Phalaropes were reported at four Kentucky locales 22 Apr–27 May.

Two to 5 Franklin's Gulls were at Kentucky Dam Village 11–15 May. A Laughing Gull was at Mud L., Shelby, TN 11 Mar (JRW); one to 5 were at Kentucky Dam Village 30 Apr–25 May, with one and 3 at the Falls of the Ohio, Jefferson, KY 1 (BY, MY) & 24 May (ph. AG, BE), respectively. The season's last Thayer's Gull was a first-year bird at Barkley Dam 15 Mar



These Marbled Godwits were part of a flock of 20 in southeastern Muhlenberg County, Kentucky 21 April 2006—a new record high count for the state. Photograph by Roseanna Denton.

(DR), while the latest Lesser Black-backed Gull was an ad. above Kentucky Dam 25 Mar (BP). Two Caspian Terns on L. Barkley, Lyon 25 Mar (BY, MY, BP) established another new early record for Kentucky. An exceptional fall-out of medium-sized terns occurred in the vicinity of Kentucky Dam 11 May, with 800–1000 Forster's/Commons at Kentucky Dam Village marina 11 May (BY, MY) and peak species counts in the immediate vicinity that day of 400+ Forster's (DR) and 280 Com-

mons (BP), both representing new state high counts. Small numbers of Black Terns were noted at scattered Kentucky locales 30 Apr–25 May. An ad. Gull-billed Tern at Kingston Steam Plant, Roane, TN 26–27 May (†TW, JC) furnished the Region's 3rd record.

Three Black-billed Cuckoos were reported from three middle and w. Tennessee counties 3–17 May; in Kentucky, one to 2 were reported at 11 locales 28 Apr–26 May. Extraordinarily early was a flightless hatchling Eastern Screech-Owl turned in to a raptor rehabilitator 19 Mar (JH); the bird originated from Campbell, KY and likely hatched around 1 Mar (*fide* JH). A pair of Great Horned Owls successfully nested in a Great Blue Heron heronry in Kingsport, Sullivan, TN (MK, m.ob.); perhaps understandably, the herons did not occupy any nests within 15–20 m of the owl nest. A few Short-eared Owls lingered through 18 Mar in Bledsoe, TN (m.ob.) and 2 Apr in Greene, TN (BBR, m.ob.). Single Chuck-wills-widows in Hickman, TN (MD) and Jackson, TN (NSL) 14 Apr were unusually early.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported from e. Tennessee in above-average numbers; one to 2 were reported from four Kentucky locales 19–26 May (MWa, DR, RDv, BP). An Alder Flycatcher was at Shelby Bottoms, Nashville, TN 14 May (TW, JC); one to 5 were reported at eight locales 14–27 May in Kentucky. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers made their usual mid-May

push, with 3 reported from three locations across Tennessee 13–18 May; in Kentucky, one to 3 were reported at eight locales 14–27 May. A Western Kingbird was at Eagle Lake W.M.A., Shelby, TN 12–13 May (ViR, DPr). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers returned to now-annual nesting locations in Rutherford, TN 20 Apr (JC), Livingston, KY 29 Apr (HC, KOS), and Marion, TN 27 May (D&GH). Three were in Clifton, Wayne, TN 12 Apr (JM); singles were also reported in nw. Bourbon, KY 19 Apr



This adult Harris's Sparrow, one of four in the Tennessee & Kentucky region in spring 2006, was present in Bledsoe County, Tennessee 22 (here 27) April through 1 May 2006. Photograph by Bob Steffy.

(†MH, PK) and in Shelby, TN 11 May (JL).

A White-eyed Vireo in Hamilton, TN 6 Mar (KeC) likely represented a wintering bird. A Bell's Vireo returned to Black Bayou W.M.A., Lake, TN 7 May (RK); the species was first reported in Kentucky in Muhlenberg 26 Apr (DR). Eight Blue-headed Vireos in McCreary 13 Mar (RDn) represented yet another in a regular progression of new early arrival dates for the species in Kentucky over the past 40 years. A Philadelphia Vireo was extraordinarily early in Calloway, KY 18 Apr (KCo). Fish Crows continue to expand northward along the Tennessee R. in e. Tennessee, with reports coming from Knox, Blount, and Loudoun. A Common Raven carrying food in Hawkins, TN could represent a first county nesting record (RP); one in Polk, TN 15 Mar (LL) was a first county record since 1900.

The cool, rainy period in mid-May resulted in many reports of Purple Martin mortality in cen. and w. parts of Kentucky (*vide DW*). A Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Shelby Bottoms, Nashville 6 Mar (PC) and a Barn Swallow at Shelby Farms, Memphis 8 Mar (WRP) were record early for middle and w. Tennessee, respectively. Cliff Swallows at Barkley Dam 14 Mar (DR) were early for Kentucky. Several territorial Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed at or relatively near to the traditional Wolfe, KY breeding location in Apr (FR, VeR, BP); the latest bird in a non-breeding area was one in Madison, KY 7 May (SM, RB). A Bewick's Wren was in Rutherford, TN, which hosts a small population of this species, 13 May (TW); the species went unreported in Kentucky. Single Sedge Wrens in Ballard, KY 24 Mar (BP) and Muhlenberg, KY 26 Mar (BY, MY) were likely lingering winterers. Marsh Wrens were barely noted in Tennessee, but there were several reports from Kentucky, including 5 birds in Mar that were suggestive of lingering winterers. Thrush migration reached a very pronounced peak dur-

ing the first week of May, when an above-average fallout occurred across cen. and w. Kentucky. A single Hermit Thrush in Boone 20 May (LeM) was extraordinarily late for Kentucky. Louisville's female Varied Thrush was last seen 25 Mar (ph. D&CP); a male was in Weakley, TN 2 Apr (†DPI).

Warbler migration seemed unremarkable overall, perhaps at least in part a result of the early leaf-out. A Kentucky Warbler at Radnor 9 Apr (KBo) and a Yellow-breasted Chat in Putnam, TN 14 Apr (MO) were

both early. A Worm-eating Warbler in Lyon 5 Apr (JBe, PB et al.) and a Louisiana Waterthrush in Calloway 16 Mar (HC) both represented new early arrival dates for Kentucky. Golden-winged Warblers put in a better-than-average showing in Kentucky for the first time in several years. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Reelfoot L., Lake, TN 5 May (NM) was unusual for the far w. portion of the Region. Connecticut Warblers passed through in average numbers; Mourning Warblers were reported in numbers much higher than average from e. Tennessee. A Summer Tanager in Nashville, TN 7 Apr (JaA) tied the early date for the local area; a Scarlet Tanager



This male Painted Bunting in Cumberland County, Kentucky 26 May 2006 provided the state with only its second photographically documented record. Photograph from videotape by Gary Thompson.

in Linden, Perry, TN 1 Apr (AV) was also unusually early.

The male Spotted Towhee that wintered in ne. Hart, KY was last reported 24 Apr (MF, BBa). A Clay-colored Sparrow—still quite rare in the Region—was seen in Barren, KY 10 May (†DR). A Vesper Sparrow in w. Fulton, KY 26 May (BP) was extraordinarily late. Henslow's Sparrows are dramatically increasing as a breeding species in Tennessee; individuals in Maury 20 May (TE) and Washington 22 May (TM et al.) may represent the start of new colonies. A Henslow's in Jefferson 17

Mar (BP) represented a new early arrival date for Kentucky. A Le Conte's Sparrow reported at Chickasaw N.W.R., Lauderdale, TN 21 May (DPr, MTOS) would represent a record-late date for the state; the only one in Kentucky was a migrant in Jefferson 10-11 Apr (BP). Again this year, White-throated Sparrows lingered through the end of the period in Kentucky, with singles in Lee (BP) and Jefferson (BWo) 31 May. Four Harris's Sparrows were reported: singles in Bath, KY 5 Mar (CV), Bledsoe, TN 22 Apr-1 May (RS, m.ob.), Daviess, KY through 6 May (ph. BL); and Union, TN on the extraordinarily late date of 29 May (S&RS). The latest Lapland Longpurs were at least 3 in Henderson, KY 31 Mar (BP).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have been known to visit feeders in the Region for many years, but this year they visited yards in unprecedented numbers, mostly during early May. A male Painted Bunting visited a Cumberland, KY yard 26 May (vt. GT) and will represent Kentucky's 2nd fully documented record. Bobolink numbers appeared to be below average. The only Western Meadowlarks reported were one to 2 in w. Fulton, KY 14 & 26 Mar (DR & BY, MY). A Rusty Blackbird in Greenup 20 May (SF, EKBC) represented a new late departure date for Kentucky. A flock of 12-20 Brewer's Blackbirds in Greene, TN 11 Mar-9 Apr (DM et al.) was noteworthy for far e. Tennessee (the species is rare outside of the w. part of the Region). In Kentucky, 2-15 were reported from three locales 31 Mar-12 Apr (BP, DR). A Purple Finch with conjunctivitis lingered in Putnam, TN through at least 5 May (SJS); in some parts of Kentucky, late-winter numbers continued to build into Mar, with a peak count of 80+ in Hart 25 Mar (SK); the latest report was for one in se. Jefferson 16 May (AL, *vide BWo*). After a poor winter showing, a few migrant Pine Siskins were present in Apr, with one lingering in Elliott, KY through 2 May (EM).

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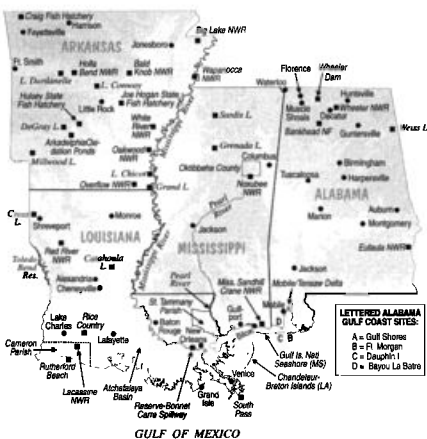
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Central Southern



Phillip A. Wallace

Greg Jackson reported that Alabama had a dry spring with few fronts, resulting in a slow season for birding. In Louisiana, by contrast, the fronts coincided with weekends, so birders viewed the spring migration along the coast as better than usual. One very late front in southwestern Louisiana 29 May provided Patton the opportunity to establish some late dates for migrants in that state. With no pelagic trips out of Louisiana because of the destruction of the ports by Hurricane Katrina (and western Florida reports now submitted to the Florida Region), there were no reports of true pelagic species for the first time in years.

WATERFOWL THROUGH GALLINULES

A count of 2500 Northern Shovelers, an excellent number, was tallied at Lacassine N.W.R., LA 4 Mar (JPK, JK, KF). Late water-

fowl included 2 Greater Scaup 16 May in Jefferson Davis, LA (JVR, REG, EJ) and a Surf Scoter 13 May Oktibbeha, MS (TS, MS). A single White-winged, rarest of the three scoter species in the Region, was seen 25 Mar at L. Dardenelle, AR (K&LN), which also hosted a Pacific Loon 3–17 Mar (ph. DS, DB, K&LN). Another Pacific Loon was in Tishomingo, MS 24 Mar (ph. WRP). American White Pelicans are rare in the mt. region of Alabama, so a report of 175 at L. Martin 12 May (ph. MMi) was noteworthy. Inland Brown Pelicans included an imm. at Millwood L., AR 15–22 Apr (ph. CM) and 6 at L. Logan Martin, AL 27 May (JHI, WR). A report of 6 Magnificent Frigatebirds at L. Pontchartrain, LA 30 Apr (REG, SCL, PB) was unusual in the absence of tropical weather. A Wood Stork was early at Noxubee N.W.R., MS 6 May (TS, MS); the species normally arrives in the area no earlier than mid-Jun.

There were two reports of White-tailed Kite, one from Baton Rouge 15 Apr (DL) and one from Monroe, AR 16 Mar (WHH). An early Mississippi Kite was at St. Gabriel, LA 11 Mar (DLD), and a late Northern Harrier was in Jackson, AR 15 May (DB, MA). Of three reports of Swainson's Hawk from Louisiana, the earliest was from Vermilion 25 Mar (REG, JVR, BJO, CL). A count of 54 Red-tailed Hawks in the rice fields of sw. Louisiana 4 Mar provided a good number (JPK, JK, KF). Another late raptor was a Peregrine Falcon 16 May in Calcasieu, LA (JVR, REG). A count of 70+ Purple Gallinules 3 May at Lacassine N.W.R. was noteworthy for Louisiana (JH, MJM).

SHOREBIRDS

Two ad. male Snowy Plovers behaving in a

territorial manner were found 21 Apr w. of Holly Beach, LA, near where a nest was found in 2005 (SWC, DLD, PEC), and an ad. male 28 Mar in Prairie, AR (KN, DB) provided the 4th state record. There were several reports of Hudsonian Godwit farther e. than usual in Arkansas, including a report of 20 in Prairie 17 May (DB, MA). In Louisiana, a Hudsonian on Grand I. 30 Apr (ph. DLD, SWC) was extremely unusual, and a count of 89 in Calcasieu 13 May (PEC, RDP, PAW, DPM) was noteworthy. White-rumped Sandpipers maxed out at 150 in sw. Louisiana 13 May (RDP, PEC, PAW, DPM) and 300 at Craig Fish Hatchery, AR 19 May (MM et al.). Farther e., 14 White-rumpeds 8 May (DJS) near Florence tied the maximum for the Tennessee Valley region of Alabama. A count of 275 Buff-breasted Sandpipers 1 Apr in Vermilion, LA (JB, DBo, JS) provided the 2nd highest count ever for the state, and one at Craig Fish Hatchery 27 May (JN, MM) provided the latest ever spring record for Arkansas. A report of a Ruff, rare in the Region, came from Jefferson Davis, LA 20 Apr (†JPK, JG). A significant grounding of shorebirds at Grand I., LA 30 Apr (SWC, DLD) included 2000 Short-billed Dowitchers. Not to be outdone, 2000 Long-billed Dowitchers showed up at Lacassine N.W.R., LA 4 Mar (JPK, JK, KF). A very early, or possibly wintering, Wilson's Phalarope was also at Lacassine N.W.R. 12 Mar (DLD, SWC, BMM et al.).

GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Franklin's Gulls were a little farther e. than usual, with two reports from e. Arkansas and one from Guntersville, AL 17 Apr (LBR). An imm. Great Black-backed Gull at Dauphin I.