

FROM THE FIELD

JUNE - JULY 2012

Note: The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification or acceptance of a record. Observations of Review Species need to be documented and a rare bird report submitted to the Georgia Checklist and Records Committee (GCRC) for consideration.

Summer 2012 was notable for a series of heat waves, with Athens recording a record high temperature of 42.7 °C at the end of June, while Atlanta sweltered in a new monthly record temperature of 40 °C in July. Below-average precipitation in June was countered by Tropical Storm Debby at the end of the month, which dropped up to 25 cm of rain in southeast Georgia. Associated with this weather system were onshore records of a Leach's Storm-Petrel, Great Shearwaters and Sooty Terns, and a Magnificent Frigatebird sighting well inland in Bibb Co.; it also caused widespread nest failure of American Oystercatchers due to nest inundation. July precipitation was above average in the northern half of the state due to much thunderstorm activity, but 25-75% below average in the southern half. The highlight of the period was the discovery of the first state record of Inca Dove in Worth Co., along with rarities including Brown Booby, Shiny Cowbird and Pomarine Jaeger at the coast. Notable nesting records included the first recent successful nesting of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Bartow Co., and 3 nesting pairs of Peregrine Falcon in Atlanta.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AIC - Andrews Island Causeway and spoil site, Glynn Co.; AP - American Proteins settling ponds, Forsyth Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; BCL - Bartow Co. Loop, a cluster of sod farms and cattle ponds on Brandon Farm Road and Taff Road, west of Cartersville, Bartow Co.; BUENWR - Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CCWA - Clayton Co. Water Authority, Clayton Co.; CINS - Cumberland Island National Seashore, Camden Co.; CLRL - Carter's Lake Re-regulation Lake area, Murray Co.; COP - Centennial Olympic Park, Fulton Co.; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; CSU - Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co.; GI - Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; HP - Henderson Park, DeKalb Co.; JI - Jekyll Island, Glynn Co.; JIBS - Jekyll Island Banding Station, Glynn Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield

Park, Cobb Co.; LCI - Little Cumberland Island, Camden Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; LTI - Little Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; LWFG - Lake Walter F. George, Clay Co.; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds, Richmond Co.; m. ob. - multiple observers; MSS - Marshallville Super Sod Farm, Macon Co.; MWSS (Mid-winter Shorebird Survey of the Georgia coast); *NAB* - *North American Birds* (journal of the American Birding Association); NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; OM - Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, Muscogee Co.; PCR - Pine Chapel Road, Gordon Co.; ph. - photographed; PSNP - Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, Richmond Co.; Region - when capitalized, refers to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina; SBG - State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Clarke Co.; SCI - St. Catherines Island, Liberty Co.; SF - sod farm; SP - State Park; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; TI - Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; WPD - West Point Dam, Harris Co. and Troup Co.

Note: Species that appear in a **bold-faced font** represent those that were considered “review” species by the GCRC during the year of the sighting. This list changes from year to year. The current review list may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/checklists/reportables.html> GCRC activity, including the status of reports listed as “pending” as of press time, may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/checklists/gcrc-activity.html>

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK - Inland, a maximum of 3 were seen at PSNP on 24 June (Drew Grainger), a maximum of 8 were seen on Lagg Road, Lee Co., on 24 July (Wayne Schaffner), and 1 was at Blackwater Pond, Brooks Co., on 28 July (Karen Seward). At the coast, the maximum count was 20 at AWMA on 10 June (m. ob.).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - A bird continued to be seen in Cooper Creek Park, Muscogee Co., until at least 11 June (m. ob.).

SNOW GOOSE - One was at Elton Pond, Dougherty Co., on 5 June (Tod Lanier).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - A pair at AWMA on 1 June showed signs of nesting (Joel McNeal). One was at the pond on Fagala Road, Murray Co., on 7 June (Joshua Spence). At CCWA, 3 were at Huie Ponds on 2 June, and a male was at Lake Blalock on 30 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). Single birds were seen at Owen and Williams Fish Farm, Baker Co., on 6 June and 30 July (Wayne Schaffner).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - An injured bird was present at the pond on Fagala Road, Murray Co., throughout the period (Joshua Spence).

RING-NECKED DUCK - One was present on Kelly's Creek Road, Rabun Co., on 15 and 30 June (Ken Blankenship, Patty McLean).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - One was seen from Sapelo Island, McIntosh Co., on 13 June (Bob Sattelmeyer).

COMMON LOON - An unusually large number of summer records were reported from the interior. Single birds were recorded at AIC on 1 June (Joel McNeal), Lake Chapman, Clarke Co., on 5 June (Richard Hall), Columbus Riverwalk, Muscogee Co., on 13 June (Kyle Fritz), Americus, Sumter Co., on 17-26 June (Phil Hardy), and the dam on Richard B. Russell Lake, Elbert Co., on 1 July (Jim Flynn). Two were on Lake Blue Ridge, Fannin Co., on 27 June and 20 July (Tom Striker, Stewart Keen).

HORNED GREBE - Rare in the summer, 3 were seen from the dam on Richard B. Russell Lake, Elbert Co., on 1 July (Jim Flynn).

GREAT SHEARWATER - Following Tropical Storm Debby, at least 26 were found distressed or dead in Glynn Co. and Camden Co. (*vide* Tim Keyes).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL - One was seen flying over the beach on CINS on 20 June (ph., Lauren Deaner; pending, GCRC 2013-51)



Leach's Storm-Petrel, Camden Co., 20 June, by Lauren Deaner

WOOD STORK - The highest counts of post-breeding dispersers in north Georgia were an impressive 47 at Broad River WMA, Elbert Co., on 1 July (Jim Flynn) and 29 at Dyar Pasture, Greene

Co., on 7 July (Vanessa Lane).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - One was seen soaring high over Ocmulgee National Monument, Bibb Co., on 19 June (James Fleullan).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Only reported from the coast, the maximum count was 34 birds recorded at AIC on 10 June (Gene Keferl).

BROWN PELICAN - Of 790 total nests found, the largest colonies were 538 on Little Egg Island Bar, Glynn Co., and 228 on Pompey Island Rake, Camden Co. (Tim Keyes).

BROWN BOOBY - One was found on a shell rake behind Little Cumberland Island, Camden Co., on 6 July (Mark Miller, Abby Sterling; pending, GCRC 2013-24).

LEAST BITTERN - Outside of the Coastal Plain, 2 birds were observed at a regular breeding site on Hardin Bridge Road, Bartow Co., on 8 and 15 July (m. ob.).

GREAT EGRET - Two birds were seen apparently nest-building on PCR on 29 June, which is highly unusual for north Georgia (Joshua Spence).

SNOWY EGRET - The northernmost records were single birds at the Athens Landfill, Clarke Co., on 5 June (Richard Hall, James Neves), Dyar Pasture, Greene Co., on 7 July (Vanessa Lane), and Georgia International Horse Park, Rockdale Co., on 31 July (Nathan Farnau). An apparent hybrid between this species and Tricolored Heron was photographed at MBBP on 22 July (Lois Stacey).



Putative Snowy Egret x Tricolored Heron, Richmond Co., 22 July, by Lois Stacey

TRICOLORED HERON - Inland, individuals were seen at Eight Mile Road Pond, Dougherty Co., on 17 June (Melissa Martin) and PSNP on 29 July (Justin Neal).

REDDISH EGRET - A white morph was observed at GI on 1 June (Joel McNeal), and the maximum count was 4 observed on Wolf Island, McIntosh Co., on 24 July (Theresa Hartz, Georgann Schmalz).

CATTLE EGRET - The only report north of the Fall Line was a bird at PCR on 29-30 June (Joshua Spence).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Above the Fall Line, single birds were at the pond on Fagala Road, Murray Co., between 7 June and 12 July (Joshua Spence), and in northern Greene Co. on 16 June (Jim Hanna, Paul Sykes).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - The northernmost records were 4 at Arrowhead Lakes, Floyd Co., on 16 June (Richard White), and a juvenile on private property in Murray Co. on 28 June (Max Medley, Joshua Spence).

WHITE IBIS - Two were at the pond on Fagala Road, Murray Co., on 5 July, and 4 were at PCR on 20 July (Joshua Spence).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - Three inland records were received. One bird was at Eight Mile Road Pond, Dougherty Co., on 16-25 June (Alan Ashley, m. ob.) and was joined by a second bird on 13-22 July. Two were at Green Island Golf Course, Muscogee Co., on 16 July (Otis Gilliam). Rare in the Piedmont, 1 was at Powder Springs, Cobb Co., on 20 July (Lisa Poole). The species nested for the second consecutive year near St. Marys, Camden Co. (Tim Keyes).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - North of the Fall Line, the highest counts were 6 in Gordon Co. on 19 July (Joshua Spence) and 6 in Whitfield Co. on 26 July (Mark Barb), with smaller numbers reported in Murray, Oconee, Walton, and Forsyth counties. In the Coastal Plain, the maximum counts were 68 in Brantley Co. on 23 July (Gene Keferl), and 60 in Long Co. on 25 July (Dan Vickers).

BLACK RAIL - For the second consecutive year, this species was absent from its only known breeding site in the state in northern Greene Co. (Paul Sykes).

KING RAIL - Reports were received of single birds from northern Greene Co. on 3 June (Jim Hanna, Paul Sykes) and PSNP on 7 July (Justin Neal).

VIRGINIA RAIL - Three were calling in the Treatment Wetlands, CCWA, on 10 July (Carol Lambert).

PURPLE GALLINULE - An adult with chicks was seen at the prison farm pond in Lee Co. on 14 June (Tod Lanier), and 6 were seen at BUENWR on 29 July (Wayne Schaffner).

COMMON GALLINULE - Fifteen were recorded at CCWA on 3 July, including several juveniles (Carol Lambert).

AMERICAN COOT - Four were seen on private property in Murray Co. on 7 June (Joshua Spence).

WILSON'S PLOVER - The largest colony (90 pairs) on the north end of CINS only raised 5 hatchlings due to extreme levels of nest predation; the birds at the south end fared better (Tim Keyes). Notably, 3 pairs on JI successfully fledged 6 chicks, thanks to the roping off of nest areas and the tireless efforts of Operation Plover Patrol (Lydia Thompson).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - Inland, 2 were at the pond at Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, Dougherty Co., on 15-16 July (m. ob.). Discounting records of occasional summering birds at the coast, this represents a new early arrival date for fall.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER - There were 107 territory-defending pairs this season, but overall productivity was down compared to last year. The lessened productivity was primarily due to flooding associated with Tropical Storms Beryl and Debby, as well as nest depredation. A total of 17 chicks were banded on SCI and at 2 sites on LSSI, which was lower than last year's 23 fledged chicks across 7 active sites (Tim Keyes).

WILLET - One observed in Sumter Co. on 9 July was an unusual inland record (Wayne Schaffner).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS - One was at Lake Blalock in the Henry Co. section of CCWA on 30 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - The first returning migrant was seen at Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, Dougherty Co., on 16 July (Wayne Schaffner).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW - Two were on Wolf Island, McIntosh Co., on 24 July (Theresa Hartz, Georgann Schmalz).

WESTERN SANDPIPER - One seen at a pond near Statesboro, Bulloch Co., on 27 July was a first county record (Cameron Cox, Lauren Deaner).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - The latest northbound migrant was a single bird at Bostwick SF, Morgan Co., on 11 June (Richard Hall). A new inland high count of 48 was recorded at Owen and Williams Fish Farm, Baker Co., on 6 June; the same site hosted the first returning fall migrant in the state on 27 July (Tod Lanier, Wayne Schaffner).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - One was at AP on 29 July (Jim Flynn).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - A good inland count of 200 was recorded at Wright Turf Farm, Dougherty Co., on 28 July (Frances and Roy Brown).

STILT SANDPIPER - Two were at AIC on 27 July (Gene Keferl, Patty McLean, Kathy Miller) and 1 was on the BCL on 28 July (Jim and Allison Healy).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER - One was at Wright Turf Farm, Dougherty Co., on 28 July (Roy Brown, m. ob.), and 2 were at MSS the same day (Larry Gridley).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - Inland, 1 was on the BCL on 20 July (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Four were seen at NG Turf Farm, Gordon Co., on 14 July (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - Three were at AIC on 27 July (Gene Keferl, Patty McLean, Kathy Miller).

LAUGHING GULL - Sixty-five nests were recorded on Brunswick Dredge Island, Glynn Co. (Tim Keyes).

SOOTY TERN - Following Tropical Storm Debby in late June, single birds were found wrecked in a Camden Co. yard and at AWMA (*vide* Tim Keyes).

LEAST TERN - The largest colony found (268 nests) was at AIC spoil site; while electric fencing kept terrestrial predators at bay, a Great Horned Owl plagued the colony and only 20 chicks fledged. Four rooftops in Camden Co. served as substrates for 159 nests, compared with only 79 nests at natural sites on barrier islands, many of which were over-washed (*vide* Tim Keyes).

GULL-BILLED TERN - The largest colony (65 nests) was on SCI Bar (Tim Keyes).

CASPIAN TERN - Two seen at Lake Tobesofkee, Bibb Co., on 21 July (Paul Johnson) represented a new early arrival date for fall in inland Georgia.

ROYAL TERN - Biologists recorded 4674 nests on Brunswick Dredge Island, Glynn Co. (Tim Keyes).

SANDWICH TERN - Biologists recorded 93 nests on Brunswick Dredge Island, Glynn Co. (Tim Keyes).

BLACK SKIMMER - Of 553 total nests found, 230 were located on SCI Bar (Tim Keyes).

POMARINE JAEGER - A bird with an injured left eye was found on TI north beach on 10 July (Bob Howdeshell). The bird was captured and taken into care on 23 July.



Pomarine Jaeger, Chatham Co., 10 July, by Bob Howdeshell

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - A bird was reported from Brunswick on 3 June (Chris Cobbold).

INCA DOVE - The first state record was found at Plant Crisp Public Boat Ramp, Worth Co., on 19 June (Tod Lanier, Wayne Schaffner; pending, GCRC 2012-23), and remained there until at least 9 July. The bird was heard singing frequently, suggesting it was a male.

Inca Dove, Worth Co., 20 June, by Roy Brown

AMERICAN KESTREL - Three pairs were confirmed nesting in Murray Co. (Joshua Spence).

PEREGRINE FALCON - The Atlanta area peregrines had a mixed breeding season. The pair in Dunwoody fledged 2 young, but 1 was later found dead and the other was taken into care as a result of underfeeding. The SunTrust Tower pair fledged 3 young, and the Four Seasons nest fledged 2. A territorial pair remained in Buckhead throughout the period, but no nest was detected (*vide* Jim Ozier).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - Away from the regular breeding sites in Rabun Co. and Union Co., 2 birds were seen on 3 June in northern Greene Co. (Jim Hanna, Paul Sykes) and 1 was at AP on 29 July (Jim Flynn).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - This species was only reported from the regular breeding site of Hale Ridge Road, Rabun Co. (m. ob.).

GRAY KINGBIRD - Individuals were noted in Brunswick on 1 June (Joel McNeal) and TI on 4 June (Brenda Brannen, Sandy Beasley). A pair was seen feeding a juvenile on SSI on 24 June (Pierre Howard).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - First reported near Rydal, Bartow Co., on 14 June (*per* RBA), a pair successfully nested in a loblolly pine, fledging 4



young; the state's first documented nesting pair in Bartow Co. in 1988 also used a loblolly pine. A bird found at Sam Smith Park, Bartow Co., on 4 July (Chuck Saleeby) was accompanied by a second bird on 15-31 July (m. ob.). Another individual was seen on PCR on 20 July (Joshua and Theresa Spence).



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Bartow Co., 2 July, by Roy Brown

PURPLE MARTIN - A large flock of 500 birds was seen at Huie Ponds, CCWA, on 7 July (Carol Lambert).

TREE SWALLOW - Several mid-summer records from the Coastal Plain may indicate further expansion of the breeding range in the state. A pair successfully fledged 4 chicks at Birdsong Nature Center, Grady Co. (Kathleen Brady).

BANK SWALLOW - The first reports of returning birds (14 July) came from NG Turf Farm, Gordon Co. (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller) and Eight Mile Road Pond, Dougherty Co. (Bill Lotz).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Two pairs were found on Brasstown Bald (1 in Union Co., 1 in Towns Co.) on 9 June (Bill Lotz, Dan Vickers). One was at Lake Conasauga, Murray Co., on 28 July (Jim Flynn).

CEDAR WAXWING - Twelve birds were still at the Macon Brickyards, Bibb Co., on 2 June (Jerry Amerson), and a single bird was seen at Panola Mountain SP on 17 June (m. ob.). A family group of 2 adults and 4 young juveniles was seen in Little Mulberry Park, Gwinnett Co., on 5 July, suggesting local nesting (Brandon Best).

OVENBIRD - An adult was seen feeding a fledgling in the McIntosh Reserve, Carroll Co., on 15 June, a rare confirmation of breeding in this part of the state (Giff Beaton).

WORM-EATING WARBLER - An excellent count of 15 was recorded at Glassy Mountain, Rabun Co., on 2 June (Jane Seward).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - A female was reported feeding a young bird on Mashburn Road, Murray Co., a rare confirmation of nesting in this part of the state (Joshua Spence).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - At least 3 birds were present in Fannin Co., the only known breeding site in the state, throughout the period (m. ob.).

CERULEAN WARBLER - The first fall migrant at KMT was noted on 21 July (Gene Koziara).

CHIPPING SPARROW - An uncommon breeder south of the Fall Line, 2 fledglings were observed at Kolomoki Mounds SP, Early Co., on 29 July (Wayne Schaffner).

LARK SPARROW - One was found at Biello Park, Cherokee Co., on 29 July (ph., Vicki DeLoach).

DICKCISSEL - At least 15 were singing on PCR on 24 June (Joshua Spence). Away from the northwest corner of the state, up to 7 territorial males were present in northern Greene Co. throughout the period (Paul Sykes), and single birds were observed in Monroe Co. on 2 June (Jeff Sewell) and Bostwick SF, Morgan Co., on 11 June (Richard Hall).

BOBOLINK - Late-lingering individuals were seen at Huie Ponds, CCWA, on 2 June (Jeff Sewell) and on the BCL on 4 June (Nathan Farnau, Joel McNeal).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - Two were at Prison Farm Pond, Lee Co., on 23 June (Jim Flynn).

SHINY COWBIRD - A female was seen at Blackbeard Island NWR, McIntosh Co., on 6 June (Paul and Joan Sykes; pending, GCRC 2013-20).

RED CROSSBILL - Two were seen in the Coosawattee WMA in Murray Co. on 15 June and on 2 July (Joshua Spence). At least 10 birds were at Lake Conasauga, Murray Co., on 27 July (Derrick Ingle).

PINE SISKIN - One was visiting a feeder on Tray Mountain Road, White Co., on 9 June (John McClatchey, Sr.) and 6 were seen in Sky Valley, Rabun Co., on 30 June (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - At least 6 birds over-summered in Chickasawhatchee WMA, Dougherty Co., south of their regular breeding range (m. ob.).

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