

FROM THE FIELD

MARCH–MAY 2006

Note: The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification of acceptance of a record. Records need to be documented and submitted to the Checklist and Records Committee for consideration.

The passage of winter into spring brought with it a few interesting new sightings and some lingering winter rarities. Several of the winter's water birds remained in the area, including the state's first record of Cackling Goose. The Common Merganser found during the winter in north Georgia was present at the same location in March. Many observers noted the increasing numbers of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks along the coast, perhaps signaling an expansion of the species' breeding range. Another species whose numbers seem to be increasing throughout the state is American White Pelican. Several observers reported finding a larger than normal number of these birds, a trend which has been continuing for several years. The overall passage of neotropical migrants appeared to be somewhat down compared to previous years, perhaps due to the lack of rain, and possibly because the high pressure systems in place over much of the state during April provided excellent flying conditions for migrants, speeding their passage northward. One of the most exciting discoveries this spring was the Roseate Tern seen on the coast by a visiting birder. Unfortunately, local birders could not relocate the bird, but it is still a great record for the state.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, Giff et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AWEC - Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area in McIntosh Co.; CRC - Checklist and Records Committee; CRNRA - the Cochran Shoals Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton Co.; ENWR - the Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Stewart Co.; GIHP - Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers; JI - Jekyll Island; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Cobb Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island; m.ob. - many observers; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park; v.ob. - various observers; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK - Bob Cheek reported finding 20 birds at the AWMA on 28 May, and five birds at the same location on 30 May. Many birders photographed these birds. This species seems to be expanding its range in the coastal areas, so these sighting may signal an increased population in the Southeast.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - The two birds found on a small farm

pond in Bartow Co. in the winter remained in the same location through at least 2 April (Ken Blankenship).

SNOW GOOSE - Jim Flynn found two birds on a small pond in Forsyth Co. on 3 March. Three birds were a good find at ELHLAF on 1 April (Joshua Spence). Eric Beohm and Paul Sanders observed two birds in Spaulding Co., the first on 2 April, and the second on 22 April. Cindy Tobin observed a single bird in Floyd Co. on 8 April. Joshua Spence also saw a late departing bird over Whitfield Co. on 5 May.

CAKCLING GOOSE - The five birds discovered this past winter in Twiggs Co. by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn were still present at least until 26 March (m.ob.). CRC record 2006-07.

GADWALL - Earl Horn and Jim Flynn had a high count of more than 200 birds on a pond in Coweta Co. on 5 March. Eight birds observed at Carter's Lake on 22 April were a new late date for that region (Joshua Spence).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - Eric Beohm had a good count of 30 birds at AWMA on 12 March.

MOTTLED DUCK - Eric Beohm found nine birds at AWMA on 12 March.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - A high count of 97 birds seen in Gordon Co. on Pine Chapel Rd. on 23 March was a good report (Joshua Spence).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - A single bird seen at Carter's Lake on 11 May was a new late date for the region (Joshua Spence).

NORTHERN PINTAIL - Joshua Spence had a good count of 28 birds in Gordon Co. on 1 March. Eric Beohm tallied another good count of 26 birds at West Point Lake on 6 March. One bird was still present at ELHLAF on 18 May (Eric Beohm).

GREATER SCAUP - Joshua Spence had a high count of 64 birds on Carter's Lake on 21 March.

SURF SCOTER - Eric Beohm saw two birds at JI on 12 March.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - Eric Beohm saw a single bird at JI on 12 March.

COMMON GOLDENEYE - Eric and Michael Beohm observed 10 birds at West Point Lake on 6 March.

COMMON MERGANSER - The bird found at Carter's Lake by Joshua Spence and Max Medley during the winter was still present at least until 7 March. This bird was photographed by observers, though documentation has not been submitted to the CRC.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - Eric and Michael Beohm recorded the high count at West Point Lake on 6 March when more than 30 birds were counted. Chris Loudermilk had a good count of 12 birds at SCSP on 28 March. Joshua Spence reported finding a bird still on Carter's Lake on 1 May, which is a new late date for the region.

RUFFED GROUSE - Two birds were observed at Flat Top Mountain in Fanin Co. on 12 April (Joshua Spence).

COMMON LOON - Joshua Spence reported a very good count of 51 birds at Carter's Lake in Gilmer Co. on 21 March, and an additional 13 birds on the re-regulation lake in Murray Co. on the same day.

HORNED GREBE - Joshua Spence tallied a high count of 11 birds at Carter's Lake

on 15 March, but the highest count reported was 19 birds at SCSP on 28 March (Chris Loudermilk).

EARED GREBE - Three birds seen at ELHLAF on 11 March were a good find (Steve Slayton, Carol Lambert), and at least two birds remained on the ponds until 5 April (fide Carol Lambert).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - The six birds seen at ENWR on 5 March were a good find (Pete Followill). The number of sightings near the coast has been increasing. Doris Cohrs had a good report of five birds seen from the Sapelo Island ferry in Doboy Sound on 11 March, and Brad Bergstrom and Margaret Harper had a high count of 55 birds at Andrew's Island on 27 April.

ANHINGA - Joshua Spence reported a good count of 54 birds from AWMA on 6 April.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - David Chartier had an excellent sighting of a juvenile bird off the south beach at JI on 24 May.

AMERICAN BITTERN - Jerry Brunner found a single bird at the Clyde Sheppard Nature Preserve in DeKalb Co. on 11 March, which remained in that location until 30 March.

GREAT BLUE HERON - Joshua Spence reported finding at least 20 active nests in Whitfield Co. on 10 March, and Paige Harvey discovered another nesting site in Habersham Co. on 15 March. Chuck Saleeby found eight active nests in a rookery in Cobb Co. on 23 April.

GREAT EGRET - Two birds were a good find at Salacoa Creek Park in northern Gordon Co. on 25 May (Joshua Spence).

CATTLE EGRET - This species is continuing its expansion northward, as evidenced by three birds found in Cherokee Co. (Vickie DeLoach) and one bird found in Bartow Co. (Patrick Brisse), all on 22 April.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell, and Steve Barlow observed an adult bird at ELHLAF on 9 April, which was unusual for that location.

GLOSSY IBIS - The highest count reported was from AWMA, where Eric Beohm observed 50 birds on 12 March, and Joshua Spence observed 46 birds on 6 April. A bird seen in Bartow Co. by Dan Vickers on 28 April was far away from its normal range.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - Eric Beohm saw a single bird at Andrew's Island causeway on 12 March, and Nick Van Lanen reported that the first bird returned to LSSI on 9 May.

MISSISSIPPI KITE - This species can sometimes be found in good numbers in spring, as evidenced by John McMahan's report of 32 birds seen in Columbus on 28 April.

NORTHERN HARRIER - A bird observed by Eric Beohm in Spaulding Co. on 15 May was a good late date for that region.

RED-TAILED HAWK - Joshua Spence and Max Medley observed a dark morph western adult in Gordon Co. on 1 March.

PEREGRINE FALCON - Ben Moore saw a bird north of Macon on 17 April for a



good report for that region.

BLACK RAIL - Paul Sykes reported finding one bird in a northern Greene Co. marsh on 16 April, and a high count of three birds during the month of May.

KING RAIL - Two birds were a good find at ELHLAF on 9 April (Carol Lambert).

VIRGINIA RAIL - Paul Sykes had a good count of 10 birds in a northern Greene Co. marsh on 12 March, and again on 9 April. Eric Beohm found a single bird at the GIHP on 8 May for an interesting sighting from that location.

SORA - Carol Lambert had a good count of eight birds at ELHLAF on 2 and 27 April.

PURPLE GALLINULE - Max Medley and Joshua Spence found a bird at Spring Creek Preserve in Whitfield Co. on 24 April, which was very rare for that part of the state.

COMMON MOORHEN - Five birds were a nice find at ELHLAF on 9 April (Carol Lambert).

SANDHILL CRANE - The highest count was 200 birds observed in Ringgold on 5 March (David Hollie).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER - Joshua Spence's report of a bird at Bouckaerts Sod Farm in Murray Co. on 11 May was noteworthy, as inland reports of this species are uncommon.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - Carol Lambert observed a single bird at ELHLAF on 22 March, and Ken Blankenship found five birds in Bartow Co. on 26 March. Ken found another bird in Bartow Co. on 8 April.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - Chris Loudermilk had a good count of 20 birds at SCSP on 21 May.

AMERICAN AVOCET - Ken Blankenship had a good count of 105 birds at Andrew's Island on 3 April.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - A report of 16 birds at SCSP on 20 April was a good high count for that location (Chris Loudermilk).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Paul Sykes had a good count of 20 birds on St. Catherine's Island on 16 May.

UPLAND SANDPIPER - There are very few reports in the spring, so the bird seen near Glennville on 3 April was a very good find (Gene Wilkinson). Another bird was seen in Murray Co. on 22 April (Joshua Spence).

MARbled GODWIT - Nine birds were a good count at JI on 12 March (Eric Beohm).

LEAST SANDPIPER - Chris Loudermilk had a high count of 158 birds at SCSP on 14 May.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - Four birds at SCSP on 19 May were a very good find (Chris Loudermilk).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - Chris Loudermilk found a single bird at SCSP on 27 May, for a rare spring record for this species.

STILT SANDPIPER - Joshua Spence had a good report of a single bird in Murray Co. on 21 April.





SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - The only inland report was a single bird in Bartow Co. on 26 April (Ken Blankenship).

AMERICAN WOODCOCK - Joshua Spence reported finding one adult and three fledgling birds at Little Bald Mountain in Murray Co. on 28 April, for a very rare report of breeding birds in that region of the state.

BONAPARTE'S GULL - Carol Lambert found seven birds at the ELHLAF ponds on 21 March, which was an unusual sighting for that location. A flock of more than 50 birds on Carter's Lake was a good find on 29 March (Joshua Spence). Tim Miller found a late migrating bird in Effingham Co. on 19 May, for a good late date for that region.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - This species is being seen regularly on the coast, but is rare inland, so Eric and Michael Beohm's report of a bird found at West Point Dam on 6 March was unusual.

CASPIAN TERN - Chris Loudermilk found six birds at SCSP on 20 April for an unusual sighting at that location. Two birds seen at MBBP on 30 April were another unusual occurrence (Lois Stacy).

ROSEATE TERN - A very interesting report of this rarely seen tern was accepted by the CRC. Alan Knue observed the bird on JI on 10 May. This was only the second record of this species in the state (CRC record 2006-11).

LEAST TERN - Bobby Crawford reported that at least 15 terns were nesting in Thomasville on 12 May, for an excellent inland nesting report for this species.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Tom Striker's report of a bird in Blue Ridge on 27 April was a very rare sighting for the northern part of the state. In Monroe Co., a bird was visiting a feeder on 5 and 6 May (fide Giff Beaton).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - This species is not normally reported in large numbers, so a count of 21 birds in Upson Co. by Michael Beohm on 4 March was very good.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - It was a good season for this sometimes difficult to find migrant, as numerous sightings were reported. Lydia Thompson's discovery of a bird on St Simons Island on 22 April was a very unusual coastal report. A bird heard calling at Lake Seed in Rabun Co. by Ken Blankenship on 5 May was also a good find. A bird was present at Cochran Shoals in Cobb Co. from 15-22 May (Steve Holzman). Finally, Eric and Jessica Beohm found a bird in their Griffin yard on 17 May.

BARN OWL - Although this is a common species in the state, we rarely see reports. Joshua Spence found a bird on Fite Bend Road in Gordon Co. on 6 March, and two birds in Murray Co. along Fagala Road on 14 May.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW - Travis Barlow reported a very early returning bird in Pooler on 16 March, and Joshua Spence had a high count of 26 birds at Coosawattee WMA in Murray Co. on 14 May.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - A bird was found at Cochran Shoals in Cobb Co. by Pierre Howard on 16 and 17 May. Kevin Calhoun discovered a bird at the Chickamauga Battlefield Park in Walker Co. on 22 May, which was a very good report from that part of the state.



WILLOW FLYCATCHER - Eric Beohm found a bird at the GIHP on 8 May, and again on 15 May.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER - The bird wintering at ENWR was last seen on 5 March by Pete Followill.

GRAY KINGBIRD - The earliest report of the birds at the convention center on JI was on 13 April, when Lydia Thompson reported finding one bird.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - Joan Thompson discovered a bird near Cornelia on 25 April (fide Jeff Sewell). The pair that has successfully nested in the recent past in McDonough returned for the fifth season, and was first observed on 27 April by Larry Russell. Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert observed a bird in south Quitman Co. on 28 May, and a pair was seen noted in Habersham Co. on 26 May by Bruce Hallett.

BELL'S VIREO - Eric Beohm photographed this very rare species at the GIHP on 6 May, though documentation has not been submitted to the CRC.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO - The highest count reported was 32 birds from the Cohutta Wilderness Area on 12 April (Joshua Spence).

WARBLING VIREO - Joshua Spence had a good find of a bird on the Hidden Pond Trail at Carter's Lake on 24 April. This species is rarely found in the spring, so four reports from different parts of the state in May were unusual. David Heeden found two birds in Cedartown, Polk Co., on 3 May. Two days later, Trey McCuen found a bird in Freedom Park in Macon, Bibb Co. Continuing the string of sightings that week, Leslie Curan, Jackie Heyda, and Jane Shero found a bird at the East Georgia Turf Farm near Statesboro on 6 May. The following week, Eric Beohm found a bird at the GIHP on 13 May.

RED-EYED VIREO - The highest count reported this season was 24 birds at KMT on 13 May (fide Giff Beaton).

COMMON RAVEN - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn reported finding three birds in Towns Co. on 9 April.

PURPLE MARTIN - A bird seen on Pine Chapel Road in Gordon Co. by Joshua Spence on 1 March was a new early date for the region.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - The earliest report was a single bird seen along the Chattahoochee River in Cobb Co. on 2 March (David Heeden).

BANK SWALLOW - Two birds in Gordon Co. were a good find on 12 May (Joshua Spence), and a high count of 20 birds in Spalding Co. on 19 May was very good (Eric Beohm).

CLIFF SWALLOW - The earliest report was on 15 March when Joshua Spence had a bird in Murray Co., for a new early date for the region. Josh also reported a very high count of 200 birds on 11 May in the same area.

BARN SWALLOW - Joshua Spence had an early returning bird in Gordon Co. on 1 March, for a new early date for the region.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Two birds were seen sporadically at KMT in March (fide Giff Beaton). Teresa Hartz found a single bird at Dawson Forest on 18 March.

SEDGE WREN - A single bird in Murray Co. on 1 May was a good find (Joshua

Spence). Eric Beohm found as many as two birds at the GIHP as late as 17 May. MARSH WREN - Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell had a good count of six birds at ELHLAF on 2 April, and Eric Beohm found a single bird at the GIHP on 10 May. BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - Joshua Spence had an excellent count of eight male birds, seemingly on territories, at Coosawattee WMA on 19 April. He also reported finding 13 individual male birds on territories at this location throughout the period.

NASHVILLE WARBLER - A bird found in Columbia Co. on 17 March by Earl Horn and Rusty Trump was probably wintering at that location.

YELLOW WARBLER - Joshua Spence had a good count of eight birds at Carter's Lake in Murray Co. on 11 May.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - The highest count reported was 18 birds on 27 April from KMT (fide Giff Beaton).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER - The highest count reported was 11 birds at KMT on 14 May (fide Giff Beaton).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - Joshua Spence had a high count of 48 birds in the Cohutta Wilderness on 12 April.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - Deb Zaremba reported the first bird from KMT on 6 April.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER - The first report was from KMT on 21 April (Deb Zaremba, Walt Chambers, Ken Blankenship).

CERULEAN WARBLER - The earliest arriving bird was at KMT on 11 April (fide Giff Beaton).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Chris Loudermilk reported finding a bird at SCSP in Douglas Co. on 28 April, for a rare sighting of this species for that location. Eric Beohm had a very good count of seven birds at Indian Springs State Park on 3 May.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn found a single bird in Atkinson Co. on 12 March. It is very possible that this bird was wintering in that location.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - This species was practically non-existent this season, so a bird seen in Walker Co. on 22 May by Kevin Calhoun was an excellent find for the area (fide Jim Eager).

MOURNING WARBLER - Joshua Spence found a singing male bird at Carter's Lake on 11 May, and again on 13 May.

WILSON'S WARBLER - Eric Beohm found a bird at the GIHP on 6 May and at Indian Springs State Park on 21 May. Eric's sighting of a bird in his Spalding Co. yard on 24 May was very good for that location.

CANADA WARBLER - The first bird of the season was reported from KMT on 15 April (fide Deb Zaremba).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - A bird found on Skidaway Island on 7 March was a rare wintering bird for that location (Beth Roth), and a single bird found at the Clyde Sheppard Nature Preserve in DeKalb Co. on 18 March may also have been a wintering bird (Lisa Hurt). The highest count reported was 18 in Greene Co. on



14 May (Paul Sykes).

SCARLET TANAGER - The highest count reported was 26 on 22 April at KMT (fide Giff Beaton).

WESTERN TANAGER - The male bird frequenting a Powder Springs feeder in Cobb Co. was last seen on 4 March (Steve Slayton).

BACHMAN'S SPARROW - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn reported at least nine birds singing in Berrien Co. on 12 March.

VESPER SPARROW - A flock of more than 25 birds in the Glennville area was a very good find by Gene Wilkinson on 5 April.

LARK SPARROW - A bird found at Sweetwater Creek State Park on 8 April was unusual for that location (Chris Loudermilk).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - The earliest reported birds, which were away from their wintering locations on the coast, were two discovered in Cobb Co. on 1 April (David Hedeem).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - Eric Beohm found a single bird in Spalding County on 24 April for a rare spring record in his yard, and another bird at the GIHP on 30 April.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - Paul Sykes reported finding a late departing bird in Greene Co. on 23 April.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - The highest counts were from KMT, where 27 birds were observed on 21 April (fide Giff Beaton).

PAINTED BUNTING - A female bird joined the male that had been wintering at a backyard in Glennville on 8 March (Gene Wilkinson).

DICKCISSEL - Carol Lambert found a single bird at the ELHLAF on 6 May, unusual for that location. Joshua Spence located a new breeding area along Fagala Road in Murray Co. with six birds on territories on 8 May.

BOBOLINK - Carol Lambert had a good count of 19 birds at the ponds at the EHLAF on 8 May, and another 30 birds on the wetlands treatment area on 12 May.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - A male bird seen in Spalding County on 22 March was very unusual for the area (fide Eric Beohm).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - Joshua Spence had a good report of a flock of 200 birds in Murray Co. on 6 March.

PURPLE FINCH - A bird seen on 25 April at Annette Bittaker's feeder in Coffee Co. was very late for that region.

RED CROSSBILL - Joshua Spence had a single bird at Carter's Lake on 21 March, and two birds were observed in White Co. on 17 April (Eugene Kelley). Brian and Lisa Finnicum found four birds in Fannin Co. on 27 April.

PINE SISKIN - The highest count was from Fannin Co., where Tom Striker saw 35 birds on 17 April.

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