

FROM THE FIELD

JUNE-JULY 2011

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.

Mean temperatures in June were 4-6 °F higher than normal throughout the period, with a record 46 consecutive days of temperatures exceeding 90 °F in Savannah (20 May - 4 July). Below average rainfall and record low groundwater levels were recorded across middle and southern Georgia, resulting in several wildfires and drought conditions, which may have influenced the earlier-than-usual post-breeding inland dispersal of White Ibis and Wood Stork. Notable ornithological events included the appearance of a Brown Booby in a Brown Pelican colony on Little Egg Island Bar, and the first confirmed breeding record of Roseate Spoonbill in the state.

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; 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.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton 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>

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK - At the coast, up to 50 birds were reported throughout the period from AWMA (m. ob.), and 2 were seen flying over JI to Raccoon Key on 10 June (Lydia Thompson). Inland, 3 were at PSNP on 4 June (Lois Stacey, Anne Waters), 2 were in southern Lowndes Co. on 13 July (Marvin Smith, Karen Seward), and 3 were along Lily Pond Road, Dougherty Co., on 30 July (Larry Gridley).

SNOW GOOSE - The blue-phase bird continued to be seen in Morgan Co. and Walton Co. throughout the period (m. ob.).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - A pair was reported from ELHLAF on 17 June (Carol Lambert) and 2 were at the Macon Cherokee Brickyards, Bibb Co., on 4 and 25 June (m. ob.). Three early returning individuals were noted in Greene Co. on 31 July (Paul Sykes).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - A drake was at Lake Tobesofkee, Bibb Co., on 4 June, representing a new late date for the Coastal Plain (Paul Johnson).

RING-NECKED DUCK - One was at a small pond in Dillard, Rabun Co., on 18 June (Patty McLean) and again on 26 June (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

BUFFLEHEAD - A male was seen on Hightower Creek, Towns Co., on 27 June (Marion Dobbs).

HOODED MERGANSER - A juvenile was in HP on 6 June (Jeff Sewell).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - A summering bird was seen from GI on 5 June (Nathan Farnau).

RUDDY DUCK - At least 2 males persisted at ELHLAF on 10 June (Carol Lambert).

CORY'S SHEARWATER - Two were seen in Chatham Co. offshore waters during a NOAA cruise on 22 July (Tom Johnson).

WOOD STORK - Statewide, a total of 2160 nests were recorded (Tim Keyes, Georgia DNR). An early report of a dispersing juvenile in the Piedmont Region came from Reeve's Wetland, Henry Co., on 11 June (Paul Raney). The northernmost record was of 3 birds from Dyar Pasture, Greene Co., on 3 July (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

BROWN BOOBY - A first-year bird was found in the Brown Pelican colony on Little Egg Island Bar, McIntosh Co., on 14 July (Andy Day, Tim Keyes; GCRC 2011-24).

ANHINGA - Two separate flocks with a combined total of 150 birds were seen kettling over AWMA on 30 July, setting a new high count for the state (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - The only report received was of 20 birds seen from TI on 19 July (Sandy Beasley, Brenda Brannen).

BROWN PELICAN - Nesting was recorded from Satilla Marsh Island (130), Brunswick Dredge Island (18), and Little Egg Island Bar (1744) (Tim Keyes, Georgia DNR). Inland, one seen at Lake Tobesofkee on 19 June was the first Bibb Co. record (ph., Donn Rodenroth).

LEAST BITTERN - Away from the coast, this species was reported from the Macon Cherokee Brickyards, Bibb Co., on 4 June and 2 July (Jerry Amerson), and a maximum of 3 birds were seen from Euharlee Marsh, Bartow Co., throughout the period (m. ob.).

REDDISH EGRET - Singles were reported from LSSI on 13 June (Camp TALON participants), Skidaway Island, Chatham Co., on 26 June (Don Powell), and LTI on 13 July (Diana Churchill, Marshall Weber). Two were at GI on 29 July (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

CATTLE EGRET - One was present in Morgan Co. on 25 June (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller), and 31 were counted there on 23 July (Mark McShane).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON - In the Piedmont Region, multiple reports were received from the Atlanta area, and one was in Redlands WMA, Greene Co., on 4 June (Vanessa Lane).

WHITE IBIS - Seventy birds, mostly second-year birds, seen in Richmond Co. on 4 June were unusually early (Lois Stacey). Always scarce in the Mountain Region, 3 were in Catoosa Co. on 20 July (David Hollie).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - The first successful nesting of this species in the state was confirmed when 3 chicks were photographed in a wading bird colony near St Marys, Camden Co., on 28 June (Tim Keyes; see the full report in this issue).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - In the Piedmont Region, singles were reported from Oconee Co. on 18 July (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett), Newton Co. on 21 July (Ed Hunt), Walton Co. on 23 and 24 July (Mark McShane, m. ob.), and Cherokee Co. on 26 July (Stuart Barrow). The high count in the Coastal Plain was of 50 birds seen at the traditional Long Co. site on 19 July (Gene Wilkinson).

NORTHERN HARRIER - An early bird was in Greene Co. on 24 July (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

AMERICAN KESTREL - One was seen throughout July in Oconee Co. (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

PEREGRINE FALCON - At least 3 birds were still in the Buckhead area of Atlanta on 23 June (Jim Gibson).

PURPLE GALLINULE - The maximum counts were 3 at AWMA on 12 June (Camp TALON participants) and 2 from Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co., on 26 July (David Willard). Inland, 3 were in Lee Co. on 21 July (Melvin Dees).

AMERICAN COOT - One was at Cardinal Lake, Gwinnett Co., on 7 June (Rebecca Deitsch). This species once again bred at ELHLAF (Carol Lambert).

KING RAIL - A single bird was in Greene Co. on 24 July (Paul Sykes).

WILSON'S PLOVER - The highest count was 10 birds seen on Sapelo Island, McIntosh Co., on 15 June (Adam Popour). Thanks to the efforts of Operation Plover Patrol, the species again bred successfully on JI south beach (Lydia Thompson).

AMERICAN AVOCET - Five were seen from AIC on 9 July (James Fleullan). Inland, one was in Daugherty Co. on 16 July (Wayne Schaffner).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - Eleven birds were reported from Sims Sod Farm, Catoosa Co., on 26 July (Johnny Parks).

MARbled GODWIT - One was on LTI on 13 July (Diana Churchill, Marshall Weber).

RED KNOT - One seen on JI south beach on 4 June had an orange flag, indicating that the bird was freshly arrived from Argentina (Lydia Thompson).

WESTERN SANDPIPER - One was at Astondale Road pond, Oconee Co., on 18 July (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - Two were seen on the BCL on the late date of 12 June (ph., Jim Healy).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - Two were seen on the BCL on the late date of 14 June (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Jeff Sewell).

STILT SANDPIPER - An excellent count of 40 was made from AWMA on 29 July (Mark Freeman).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - One was on LSSI on the unseasonal date of 16 June (Stacia Hendricks).

NESTING LARIDS - Tim Keyes of the Georgia DNR reported the following numbers of nests from the coast:

	Brunswick Dredge Island	Pelican Spit
Laughing Gull	331	14
Least Tern		200
Gull-billed Tern		63
Royal Tern	4642	50
Black Skimmer		313

Additionally, approximately 80 Least Tern nests were found on supermarket rooftops (*fide* Tim Keyes).

SOOTY TERN - One was reported from Chatham Co. waters during a NOAA survey on 22 July (Tom Johnson).

BLACK TERN - One was on LTI on 13 July (Diana Churchill); three were at AIC on 17 July (Gene Keferl), and 2 were on TI on 19 July (Brenda Brannen, Sandy Beasley). In the Mountain Region, one was seen at Lake Blue Ridge, Fannin Co., on 23 July (Tom Striker).

MONK PARAKEET - Two birds visited a feeder in Snellville, Gwinnett Co., on 28 May (*fide* Steve Holzman), and 2 birds were also seen in Elbert Co. in mid-July (*fide* Ed Maioriello).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - In the Piedmont Region, one was banded at Panola Mountain SP, Rockdale Co., on 4 June (Charlie Muise), and up to 3 were recorded along Ward Road, Greene Co., throughout the period (m. ob.).



Willow Flycatcher, Rockdale Co., 4 June, by Charlie Muise

LEAST FLYCATCHER- Away from the regular nesting areas, one was in Cooper's Creek WMA, Union Co., on 5 June (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Jeff Sewell).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - A bird was seen briefly in Piedmont Park, Fulton Co., on 24 June (David Hedeem, Meg Walker). Another was reported from Oconee Co. on 3

July (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

PURPLE MARTIN - A post-breeding roost of 2500 birds was recorded at Lake Blue Ridge, Fannin Co., on 18 July (Tom Striker).

TREE SWALLOW - A pair occupying a nest box at Panola Mountain SP, Rockdale Co., produced 5 nestlings (Charlie Muise).

CLIFF SWALLOW - This species continues to colonize new nesting sites in the Rome area. A large nesting colony of 400 birds was detected in Grizzard Park, Floyd Co., on 16 June (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Jeff Sewell). Post-breeding, 225 birds were observed in Greene Co. on 10 July (Jim Hanna, Paul Sykes).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Two were on Cooper's Creek Road, Union Co., on 5 June (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Jeff Sewell), 2 were at Hale Ridge Road cemetery, Rabun Co., on 17 June (Joel McNeal) and 8 were recorded along Overflow Creek Road, Rabun Co., on 26-27 June (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - An excellent single site count of 22 was recorded at HP on 3 June (Jeff Sewell).

BROWN CREEPER - Seven were noted along Overflow Creek Road, Rabun Co., on 26-27 June (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

WOOD THRUSH - Unusual for the southernmost part of the state, 3 were singing in Valdosta on 6 June (John and Kate Swiderski).

OVENBIRD - A female with chicks was seen at Sprewell Bluff SP, Upson Co., on 6 June (Nathan Klaus).

WORM-EATING WARBLER - Summering birds in the Piedmont Region were recorded from the SBG on 11 and 28 June (Richard Hall, Ed Maioriello), KMT on 12 June (Gene Koziara), and Murphy Candler Lake, DeKalb Co., on 25 June (Jerry Brunner).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - An excellent count of 8 birds was made along Overflow Creek Road, Rabun Co., on 26-27 June (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

CERULEAN WARBLER - Migrant birds were reported from Clarke Co. on 22 July (Bill and Karla O'Grady) and KMT on 31 July (Nathan Farnau, Joel McNeal).

SWAMP SPARROW - A very late bird was banded at Panola Mountain SP, Rockdale Co., on 4 June (Charlie Muise).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - Late birds were reported from Clarke Co. on 6 June (Bill and Karla O'Grady) and Catoosa Co. on 11 June (David Hollie).

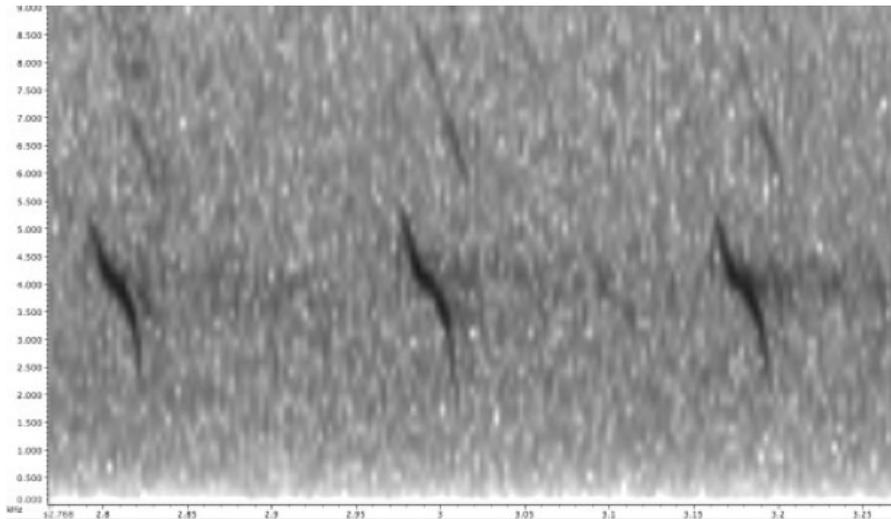
SCARLET TANAGER - Several records from the Piedmont Region were suggestive of breeding, including 3 from Piedmont NWR on 11 June (m. ob.), and multiple singing males in Whitehall Forest, Clarke Co., on 7 and 20 June (Richard Hall, Vanessa Lane, James Neves).

DICKCISSEL - In the Coastal Plain, single birds were recorded on a BBS route through Houston Co. and Dooly Co. on 9 June (Charlie Muise). In general, numbers seemed to be above average statewide.

BOBOLINK - A late bird was still in southern Harris Co. on 2 June (Walt Chambers).

ORCHARD ORIOLE - A good count of 20 birds came from Greene Co. on 17 July (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd, Paul Sykes).

RED CROSSBILL - One flew over Mineral Bluff, Fannin Co., on 4 June (Joe LaFleur). Two were seen at the Hale Ridge Road cemetery, Rabun Co., on 17 and 27 June (Ken Blankenship, Joel McNeal). On the latter date, audio recordings were acquired (Ken Blankenship) and turned into spectrograms by Matt Young of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. These confirmed that the birds were Type 1 Red Crossbills, giving the most common call type heard in the southern Appalachians (Blankenship et al. 2009). Additionally, 2 were reported from Union Co. on 17 July (Steve and Bonnie Maxson).



Spectrogram of Type 1 Red Crossbill call, Rabun Co., 27 June, by Ken Blankenship and Matt Young

PINE SISKIN - A single report was received of 2 birds present in breeding habitat in Rabun Co. on 26 June (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd).

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH - One observed at a feeder in Clarkston, DeKalb Co., in mid-July was almost certainly an escape (Steve Palenske).

Literature Cited

Blankenship, K., M.A. Young, and S. Holzman. 2009. Red Crossbills: breeding records and call types in Georgia and the southeastern United States. *Oriole* 74 (1-4):1-14.

Richard Hall, *Odum School of Ecology, 140 E. Green Street, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602*
rjhall@uga.edu

FROM THE FIELD

AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2011

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.

August was another hot, dry month with precipitation 50% lower than average across the state, and the warmest on record for Columbus and Savannah. Hurricane Irene swept by Georgia without incident on the 27th, but was likely responsible for an onshore sighting of a Sooty Tern on Cumberland Island. In contrast, the passage of Tropical Storm Lee in early September caused tornadoes and heavy rainfall in northwestern areas of the state, and unseasonably cool temperatures the following week. This storm system brought inland reports of Laughing Gulls, Sooty Terns, and a Magnificent Frigatebird, as well as a fallout of 20 shorebird species and 3 tern species in Bartow Co. on 6-7 September. October and November brought average temperatures, and rainfall was unevenly divided, with the northwest recording above-average precipitation while two-thirds of the state remained in extreme drought. The highlights of the season were 5 Brown Boobies in Chatham Co. pelagic waters on 13 August, the sixth state record of Curlew Sandpiper, on St Catherines Island the next day, and the discovery of a Cinnamon Teal in Clayton Co. on 1 November. Rare banded birds included 2 Northern Saw-whet Owls and a Calliope Hummingbird. The passerine highlight for many was a crowd-pleasing Mourning Warbler that spent several days in the urban hotspot of Centennial Olympic Park.