

juveniles were in Dade Co. from 27 April through the end of the period (Ken and Becky Pennington), and a pair was in Big Canoe on 15 May (Theresa Hartz). PINE SISKIN - Several seen at feeders deep in the Coastal Plain in Hinesville on 5 March (ph. Nicole Janke) and in Glennville on 15 March (Gene Wilkinson et al.) seemed odd for a non-irruptive year, but birds from previous invasions may return to reliable food sources (fide Matt Young).

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FROM THE FIELD

JUNE 2010 - JULY 2010

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.

Temperatures soared this summer because of a high pressure system that remained anchored over eastern and southern states throughout the period. Despite a few localized severe storms that dropped large amounts of rain in small areas, precipitation was well below average. By the end of period, areas of abnormally dry conditions began to appear on the United States drought monitor, particularly in western Georgia. The breeding season brought good news for several species of conservation concern, with Wood Storks, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Wilson's Plovers all recorded in record numbers. Because severe weather thwarted a planned release of rehabilitated Brown Pelicans in Texas, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources received and successfully released large numbers of the birds that had been oiled in the Deep Water Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AIC - Andrews Island Causeway, Glynn Co.; AP - American Proteins settling ponds, Forsyth Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh 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.; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; CSU - Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; GADNR - Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame Program; HP - Henderson Park, DeKalb Co.; JIBS - Jekyll Island Banding Station, Glynn Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn 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.; MWS (Mid-winter Waterbird Survey of the Georgia coast, 6 February); *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 Rd, Gordon Co.; ph. - "photographed by," indicating that a photo is on file with GOS; PSNP - Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, Richmond Co.; Region - when capitalized, refers to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina; SCI - St. Catherine's Island, Liberty Co.; SP - State Park; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; v. ob. - various observers; WMA - Wildlife Management Area

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 - As many as 15 were present throughout the summer at PSNP (Lois Stacey, m. ob.), with a pair apparently using a nest cavity.

SNOW GOOSE - A resident blue morph was reported from Walton Co. on 5 June (Jeff Sewell).

CANVASBACK - A male was photographed on Lake Horton, Fayette Co., on 26 June, an unusual summer record (Steve Mitchell).

RING-NECKED DUCK - A lingering male had apparently departed ELHLAF by mid-June (Carol Lambert).

HOODED MERGANSER - A female was in Henry Co. on 10 July (Jeff Sewell, Patrick Brisse).

NORTHERN BOBWHITE - Two birds were recorded in the Atlanta suburbs at the Georgia International Horse Park, Rockdale Co., on 7 June, an encouraging report considering the species' declining numbers (Nathan Farnau).

GREAT SHEARWATER – Multiple records of this species included one at Ossabaw Island on 14 June, one at SCI on 16 June, a dead bird and 2 captured for rehabilitation on Blackbeard Island on 7 July, and another dead individual on Ossabaw Island on 8 July (all Tim Keyes). All of these sightings occurred in the context of a widespread die-off of Great Shearwaters in the southwestern Atlantic Ocean this summer, a semi-annual phenomenon that is not fully understood.

WOOD STORK - This species nested in record numbers in Georgia this season, with more than 2500 nests counted during aerial surveys (Tim Keyes). The phenomenon was attributed at least in part to high nest failure rates in Florida due to severe weather, with birds moving north to re-nest. At least 2 such occurrences were verified via satellite-tracked individuals (Tim Keyes).

NORTHERN GANNET - An immature bird was seen offshore from Jekyll Island on 17 June (Terry Moore).

ANHINGA - One seen at the International Horse Park, Rockdale Co., on 31 July (Nathan Farnau) was north of the typical range of the species in the state.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - One was at ELHLAF on 1 June (Steve Mitchell), while a count of 100 was noteworthy on the dredge spoil island near Brunswick on 11 June (Tim Keyes).

BROWN PELICAN - Quite unexpected were 2 inland at Lake Oconee on 8 June (Chris Morehouse). Georgia biologists released 140+ in Brunswick on 29 June and 6 July (Tim Keyes), after the birds were rehabilitated from being oiled during the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Observations of birds marked with color-coded bands indicated that they had successfully dispersed over a wide area north to Sapelo Island and south to Little Cumberland Island by the end of the period (Tim Keyes, m. ob.). The species nested for the first time on the dredge spoil island near Brunswick, with as many as 40 pairs documented (Tim Keyes). This is only the third breeding site recorded in the state.



Brown Pelicans, Brunswick, GA, 29 June, courtesy of Georgia DNR

LEAST BITTERN - This species again summered in Bartow Co., with adults delivering food to an unseen nest on 12 June (Ken Blankenship, Dan Smith).

LITTLE BLUE HERON - Post-breeding dispersal was widespread, with a high count of 54 at Dyar Pasture, Greene Co., on 25 July (Joel McNeal).

TRICOLORED HERON - One was far inland at the Arrowhead Environmental Education Center, Floyd Co., on 26 July (Stephen Stewart).

REDDISH EGRET - There were relatively few reports of this species this summer. One was seen on Little Egg Island Bar on 16 July (Brad Winn), another one was on LSSI on 22 July (Lydia Thompson), and 2 were on Wolf Island on 27 July (Tim Keyes, Patrick Leary).

CATTLE EGRET - An estimated 6000, including young in nests, were counted at a colonial nesting site at Cypress Lake Plantation IBA on 13 July (Charlie Muise).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Another impressive example of wader inland post-breeding dispersal was one in Murray Co. on 26 July (Joshua Spence).

WHITE IBIS - A very impressive 2500 (with young) were estimated at Cypress Lake Plantation Important Bird Area on 13 July (Charlie Muise).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - In contrast to the unprecedented high number recorded the previous summer, sightings were below average. The highest count was 27 at LSSI on 22 July (Lydia Thompson), and no inland reports were received.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - A second year of multi-state aerial surveys of colonial roosts provided much data for this species of conservation concern. On 28 July, a record 496 were detected along the Savannah, Altamaha, and Satilla Rivers. The species was not observed roosting with Mississippi Kites (as in other states), but was often found with White Ibis. Interestingly, the high numbers in Georgia were in marked contrast with a 60% decrease at Florida's largest roost from the previous year (Tim Keyes).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK - One was seen over Waycross on 11 June, a rare occurrence in the Lower Coastal Plain during the breeding season (Sheila Willis).

PEREGRINE FALCON - One was seen in Dillard, Rabun Co., on 18 June (Patty McLean et al.). Nesting is suspected in the area of nearby Rabun Bald, but has not been confirmed.

BLACK RAIL - Up to 4 were present throughout the period at the annual nesting site in Greene Co. (Paul W. Sykes, Jr.).

COMMON MOORHEN - This species continues to nest far inland at ELHLAF, with 2 adults and a juvenile observed on 6 July (Carol Lambert).

WILSON'S PLOVER - Biologists conducted a systematic survey that spanned

the entire coastline of the state (19 barrier islands total). As many as 350 nesting pairs were documented, many with chicks, which is triple the number recorded during the last concerted effort in 2000. The highest concentrations were found on CINS (106 pairs), SCI (49 pairs), and Ossabaw Island (45 pairs) (Tim Keyes). WHIMBREL - A male that was satellite-tagged the previous winter in Georgia was on Coats Island in Hudson Bay, Canada, on 31 July (GADNR).

EARLY ARRIVING SHOREBIRDS

Southern movements of some shorebird species were unusually early, as indicated by data gathered from surveys at the globally-significant staging area centered at the mouth of the Altamaha River. Two Whimbrel, 3 Long-billed Curlews, 20 Marbled Godwits, and 500 Short-billed Dowitchers were recorded there on 8 July (Tim Keyes), and 120 Semipalmated Sandpipers were present on 16 July (Brad Winn, Tim Keyes). All of these records either tie or are earlier than any published fall arrival dates, with the exception of the Semipalmated Sandpipers (short by only 5 days).

SANDERLING - One made a rare inland appearance at ELHLAF from 23-25 July (Jeff Sewell, m. ob.).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - Four were at AP on 3 June (Jim Flynn).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - One was at AP on 21 July (Jim Flynn).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - One was a good find on PCR on 21 July (Joshua Spence).

CASPIAN TERN - Three transients were spotted at CLRL on 20 June (Max Medley).

ROYAL TERNS - Biologists reported that over 1,000 chicks successfully fledged on the spoil island near Brunswick on or about 1 July (Tim Keyes).

BLACK SKIMMER - Approximately 100 were observed on the dredge spoil island near Brunswick in mid-June, with chicks observed on 1 July (Tim Keyes).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - One was in Seminole Co. on 28 July (David Hedeem).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - One was heard calling in Greene Co. on 27 June, which is well to the north of its known breeding range (Paul W. Sykes, Jr.).

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW - A count of 16 was notable in Douglas Co. on 27 June (Jeff Sewell).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - One seen in Clarke Co. on 20 June (Richard Hall) was almost certainly a wayward bird and not on breeding

grounds. There is at least one historic nesting record, but that was recorded in the high-elevation ridges near Tray Mountain (Beaton et al. 2003).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - One at ELHLAF from 30 May – 15 June (Kathy Miller, Lloyd Snyder, m. ob.) was far south of its typical breeding range in the state. A high count of 8 was notable at the annual breeding site in Blairsville on 6 June (Ken Blankenship, Joel McNeal).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - This species again summered on Hale Ridge Rd, with 4 present on 19 June (Richard Hall, Krista Gridley).

EASTERN PHOEBE - One in a yard in Chatham Co. on 15 June (Sandra Beasley) was far south of the species' typical breeding range, while 2 in Dodge Co. on 13 July (Charlie Muise) were closer to that range.

COMMON RAVEN - Six were observed from Tray Mountain in White Co. on 10 July (John McClatchey).

CLIFF SWALLOW - Impressive for single sites were 350 in northern Greene Co. on 11 July (Paul Sykes) and 325 at PSNP on 18 July (Jim Flynn).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Three were found along Hale Ridge Rd on 18 June (Patty McLean et al.) in eastern Rabun Co., an area known to host the highest density of this uncommon breeding species.

HOUSE WREN - One in Macon on 1 June (Ty Ivey) represented the southern frontier of its breeding range expansion.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - Six were seen on Hale Ridge Rd on 18 June (Patty McLean et al.), a possible indication of successful nesting since nest-building was observed at the same site in spring.

VEERY - An excellent count of 16 was recorded at Brasstown Bald on 1 June (Ken Blankenship, Joel McNeal).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - A high count of 31 was noteworthy on Monument Rd, Pickens Co., on 7 June (Theresa Hartz).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – Observations of a juvenile at KMT on 24 July (Ken Blankenship, Rachel Cass) and an adult with a recently fledged juvenile there on 27 July (Giff Beaton) were noteworthy, because nesting by the species has never been confirmed at that location.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - A count of 10 was reported from Monument Rd in Pickens Co. on 12 June (James Fleullan et al.). Listed as a “probable” breeding site for this species (Schneider et al. 2010), such high numbers in the midst of breeding season strongly support confirmation of nesting. This ridgeline likely hosts the southernmost breeding population of the species in North America, though there is a “possible” nesting site just a few km to the south, also in Pickens Co. (Schneider et al. 2010).

CERULEAN WARBLER - A female was observed in Rabun Co. on 18 June (Patty McLean et al.) in an undocumented but possible breeding area.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - A male at only 580 m elevation in Fannin Co. on 14 July (Tom Striker) was quite unusual, though the species nests in small numbers (at high elevations) in the adjacent Cohutta Wilderness.

PAINTED BUNTING - A male from spring was still present in Buford, Gwinnett Co., on 18 July (Karen and Luke Theodorou), and had been joined by a female. This location is much farther inland than previously recorded breeding sites for the species.



Painted Bunting, Gwinnett County, 18 July, by Luke Theodorou

DICKCISSEL - This species nested at many sites in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, with the highest count being 8 (including juveniles) at the large breeding colony on PCR and adjacent Moss Rd on

26 July (Joshua Spence).

RED CROSSBILL - One flew over Brasstown Bald on 7 June (Ken Blankenship, Joel McNeal), and 2 were at a private residence in Fannin Co. on 12 June (Brooke Nations).

PINE SISKIN - A pair of adults was at the only known regular nesting area in Georgia, on Hale Ridge Rd on 19 June (Richard Hall, Krista Gridley). Two recently-fledged juveniles were present in the same spot on 27 June (Bill Lotz et al.).

Literature Cited

- Beaton, G., P.W. Sykes, Jr., and J.W. Parrish, Jr. 2003. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publ. No. 14.
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