

Florida Region

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Above-normal warm weather in March continued through April, with below-average rainfall in many locations allowing migrants generally to move northward without stopping. The lower southeast and southwest coasts, northcentral Florida, and the Tallahassee region reported a poor migration (especially thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers), whereas the central gulf coast reported two excellent fallouts in April, but nothing in May.

Two bouts of strong east winds in southeastern Florida during April may have been the cause of the unusual number and variety of Caribbean strays: two LaSagra's Flycatchers, three Bahama Mockingbirds, one Bananaquit, one Yellow-faced Grassquit, and two Stripe-headed Tanagers.

Abbreviations: D.T. (*Dry Tortugas N.P.*); F.O.S.R.C. (*Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee*); Lloyd S.P. (*John U. Lloyd S.P., Ft. Lauderdale*); P.P.M. (*Polk Co. phosphate mines*).

Loons to Pelicans

A dead Red-throated Loon, an excellent find far south, was recovered Apr. 10 in *Pinellas* (BW, BobW, PMB, *U.C.F.). A late Horned Grebe rested on a lake in W. Palm Beach Apr. 21–28 (PD, EDB). A wintering Eared Grebe, an irregular visitor, tarried at *Hamilton* until Apr. 15 (JTK). On the F.O.S. pelagic trip Apr. 23 (PD, BHH, m.ob., † to F.O.S.R.C.), a Black-capped Petrel, 3rd *Palm Beach* sighting, thrilled observers. On the bay side of *Honeymoon I.*, *Pinellas*, a rare Sooty Shearwater was reported May 28 (DNG). Audubon Shearwaters were exceptionally common this spring, with a high of 200 Apr. 19 (MO *et al.*) s. of Key West; even eight were in D.T. shallow waters for a first ever there May 3 (BH, HPL, m.ob.). At D.T., only two White-tailed Tropicbirds were seen: one April 26 (BH *et al.*) and another May 10 (HR *et al.*). But a third bird visited a high office building covered with reflective glass every few days in N. Palm Beach one-half mi from the coast May 15–31 (PQ). Eight Band-rumped Storm-Petrels were an outstanding number for this seldom reported species s.e. of Key West May 12 (†HR, m.ob.). Unusual in the Tampa area, an ad. Masked Booby fished among Brown Pelicans Mar. 19 (†RA). There

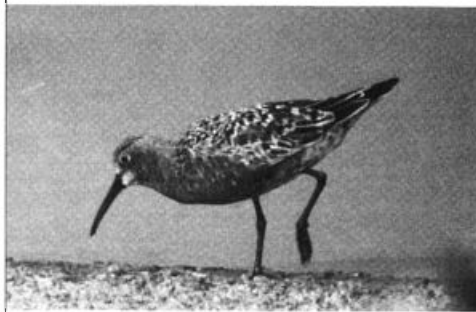
was no obvious nesting this spring at D.T. In early April, 8 mi s. of D.T., a white-phase Red-footed Booby, considered very rare, fished one evening beside the *Yankee Caps* and perched for 2 hours to allow careful study (†PW *et al.*). Because of its plumage, the bird was thought to be the same one that visited D.T. last spring. Three Am. White Pelicans Apr. 8 (BPM, LKF) furnished a 2nd sighting for *Alachua*, and 17 in *Leon* was a very high number Apr. 6 (GM).

Bitterns to Shorebirds

Pretending to be a reed in a *Casurina* was chancy behavior for a seldom seen Am. Bittern at raptor-crowded Loggerhead Key, D.T., May 1 (JP). The North America Spring Migration Count, *Palm Beach* May 14 failed to find a single Snowy Egret, yet 240 were reported at P.P.M. (PJF). Eighteen Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Lakeland Apr. 16 (MS, m.ob.) provided *Polk's* first "confirmed" record and indicated that this species is now wandering N in numbers. Observers at P.P.M., May 7 (CLG, PT) noted 25 instances of Mottled Duck hybridization with tame Mallards. A ♂ Cinnamon Teal, first in *Leon* since 1893 and 1906, was feeding with two ♀ teal Mar. 18 (GM, JAC). A ♂ N. Shelduck at P.P.M., Mar. 13 (PT, PJF) was surely an escapee. Surf Scoters were tardy in *Duval* Apr. 10 (RKR), in W. Palm Beach Apr. 16 (PD, EDB), and *Pinellas* May 20–31 (HMF, REB, ph. KC). The excellent number of 525 Ruddy Ducks Mar. 12 (PT, PJF) at P.P.M. pleased observers. More than 50 Swallow-tailed Kites in *Leon* Apr. 22 (GM) were the highest count ever there and a great increase over past decades.

The only White-tailed Kite reported was in w. Broward May 29 (JLB, RLP); this species has been doing well in s. Florida, but only one report is disturbing. A Com. Black Hawk, *Buteogallus* sp?, report from Dixie Apr. 25 (†JTK) awaits F.O.S.R.C. evaluation and again opens speculation as to the origin of black hawk sp. in Florida.

Good for spring were two Am. Golden-Plovers, providing a first for *Polk* Apr. 10 (CLG, PT) and one Apr. 17 (PJF, CLG). At Cedar Key Mar. 17 (BC, LC, PJF), 100 Am. Oystercatchers made the day exciting. The P.P.M. produced excellent numbers of waterbirds: 200 Black-necked Stilts May 7 (CLG,



Curlew Sandpiper at Fort Myers Beach, Florida, May 7, 1994. Photograph/Vivian Keerd.

PT), 254 Am. Avocet Mar. 13 (PJF, PT), 4600 Stilt Sandpipers May 7 (CLG, PT), and 300 Black Skimmers Mar. 13 (PT, PJF). A Whimbrel, now very rare in *Palm Beach*, found a spot to alight on the beach without perching on people Apr. 25 (CW). The rare Hudsonian Godwit was reported at St. Marks N.W.R., Apr. 7 (JS, ES). Merritt I. had its own high shorebird count with 205 White-rumped Sandpipers May 27 (HR). Very rare, a breeding plumaged Curlew Sandpiper fed energetically at Ft. Myers Beach May 1–15 (VK, WB, m.ob., ph. EDB, KL, VK, video BHA), but may have wintered there (*vide* LSA). Purple Sandpipers were late with four in *Nassau* Apr. 2 (LC, ELC) and one in *Brevard* Apr. 8 (JLB, RLP). A Wilson's Phalarope, uncommon in *Polk*, stayed at P.P.M., Mar. 13 (PT, PJF) to May 14; another was spotted at Winter Haven Mar. 17 (MH, EC) and may have joined the P.P.M. bird Apr. 17.



Gulls to Murrelets

Rare to D.T., a Bonaparte's Gull was seen Apr. 9 (DG, EP). A Eur. race of the Herring Gull at D.T., photographed by Lunea and Karlson and reported in *AB* 47:1 by D. Sibley, was confirmed by European experts, including Paul Holt; which of the 2 Eur. races they would not say (*fide* D. Sibley). A late Glaucous Gull, rather regular along the n.e. coast, turned up at Ft. Clinch S.P., Nassau May 5 (JTK, † to F.O.S.R.C.). Fishing with a flock of Forster's Terns, one ad. Arctic Tern, very rare in the Gulf, was studied carefully for 2 minutes May 23 near Tampa (†RTP, AFS, JKP, JMS). The bird of the season was the first sighting for Florida of a live Marbled Murrelet, which entertained many observers at Cedar Key Mar. 16–28 (BPM, RKR, DCH, m.ob., ph. BD, LC, video BHA). Two moribund birds found recently in Florida were of the Asiatic race, as one would expect from other records in the east. Because of D. Sibley's comparative drawings of the Pacific and Asiatic races in *Birder's Journal* Vol. 2, No. 6: 276–277, observers determined that this bird was also of the Asiatic race.



Marbled Murrelet of the Asiatic race (B. m. perdix) at Cedar Key, Florida, March 17, 1994. This long-distance vagrant now has been recorded widely in North America, and this individual represented a third record for Florida. Photograph/Linda Cooper.

Pigeons to Catbird

A White-crowned Pigeon at Ft. Lauderdale May 14 (WG *et al.*) seemed late for an overshoot. Yellow-billed Cuckoos were scarce except for 20 at Delray Beach May 22 (BHH); an early bird turned up at Avon Park Mar. 28 (DL). Baker reported that Smooth-billed Anis are no longer commonly found in *Broward*, which appears to be the status of this species throughout s. Florida. Staying with a small flock of Smooth-billed Anis, a wintering Groove-billed Ani was still in w. Delray Beach May 14 (BHH *et al.*) and furnished Palm Beach with its 2nd sighting, although both first (1992) and 2nd sightings were at the same location, so they could possibly be the same bird. A Long-eared Owl, only the 3rd record since 1920, was found roosting at Archbold Biological Station, Highlands

Mar. 20 (KT *et al.*, video BHA, ph. RB). An influx of Short-eared Owls, believed to be an Antillean race, were spotted: As many as three were seen at D.T. (WB) and two at Key West (JAO). Surely 200 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds on D.T. Apr. 8–9 (BP) stretched one's counting abilities. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was late in *Taylor* May 15 (DTD).



Now a very rare visitor to Florida, this Long-eared Owl was discovered roosting at the Archbold Biological Station March 20, 1994. Photograph/Reed Bowman.

The first wintering record of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in Florida was documented by tape and was last heard and seen in Delray Beach Apr. 11 (BHH *et al.*); a migrant on D.T., Apr. 8 (BP, GW *et al.*, † to F.O.S.R.C.) was a good find. The 15th and 16th Florida sightings of LaSagra's Flycatchers were of two birds both seen Apr. 20–21; one was at Lloyd S.P. (JLB, EHR, JD, † to F.O.S.R.C.) and a calling bird was seen at Delray Beach (BHH). A wintering Couch's Kingbird, the 4th in Florida identified by call, tarried in w. Delray Beach until Mar. 28 (BB *et al.*). This spring at Dog I., *Franklin* (DSE, LRM) only 12 thrushes were banded, compared to 46 last year. The Key West Bahama Mockingbird was spotted Feb. 20 (JAO), indicating that it probably wintered there; it was seen regularly to the end of the season (m.ob.). This bird even helped feed young at the nest of a pair of N. Mockingbirds (JAO). Another was persistently singing on Hypoluxe I., *Palm Beach* Apr. 23–30 (FB, m.ob., audio tape CP, video BHA), and a third bird was seen at Lloyd S.P., *Broward*, Apr. 27 (JLB, JD *et al.*, † to F.O.S.R.C.). A very late Gray Catbird, seen in excellent numbers this spring, straggled through Key West May 25 (JAO).

Vireos to Warblers

A dark-eyed vireo with a broken eye ring and light post-ocular ring seen on D.T., Apr. 11–12 was determined to be a White-eyed Vireo by C. Wilds, comparing photos (BES, WL, KTK, SM) with skins at the National Museum in Washington, D.C. Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen daily, but no Black-whiskered Vireos were found in the Tampa Bay-Sarasota Bay mangrove areas, emphasizing this species' problems in Florida

(RTP). Way n. and w. of its range, three Black-whiskered Vireos were banded on Dog I., *Franklin* Apr. 14, 15, & 21 (DSE, LRM, ph.).

Only two Golden-winged Warblers were reported: singles at *Pinellas* Apr. 10 (DNG) and *Collier* Apr. 29 (LCD). Good numbers of Blue-winged Warblers were counted: 11 at Ft. de Soto, *Pinellas* Apr. 7 (MSW); nine at Largo Apr. 8 (LSA); and seven at D.T., Apr. 8. The 6th sighting on D.T. and 9th in Florida of the "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler was reported Apr. 11 (MC). A surprising seven Cerulean Warblers, some singing, were counted in *Pinellas* Apr. 7–10 (LSA *et al.*). At St. Petersburg, a wintering ♂ Townsend's Warbler was last seen Mar. 19 (LSA, video BHA). Apparently cowbirds haven't found Honeymoon I., *Pinellas* yet, as 19 Prairie Warblers were singing there May 14 (DNG); in the Tampa Bay-Sarasota Bay region, Paul reports this species as widespread although the "density seems low." Observers strongly suspected nesting of Swainson's Warblers at Steinhatchee Springs W.M.A., *Lafayette* because of three singing males May 17 (JTK) and singing birds last summer (BPM); this would extend its breeding range south. A late ♀ Connecticut Warbler, rare inland, straggled through rural *Alachua* May 28 (RDR), but two were on schedule and banded in s. *Sarasota* May 13 & 20 (AS), one banded in *Franklin* May 8 (DSE, LRM), and two May 14 (DJ) at St. George I. Thirty Kentucky Warblers Apr. 8 (BP) was a very good number for D.T. An excellent fall-out of dozens of Hooded Warblers Mar. 30–31 (DCH) at Cedar Key was completely overshadowed by the phenomenal show Apr. 7: 800 on Honeymoon I., *Pinellas* (*fide* LSA) and 35 at Ft. de Soto, *Pinellas* (HR). There were 200 on D.T., Apr. 8. (HR, m.ob.).

Grassquits to Finches

The Dry Tortugas are 70 mi from Key West, far away from caged birds, thus an imm. Yellow-faced Grassquit there Apr. 20–25 (BN, m.ob., †MO, †PWS, ph. KTK) may allow



Undoubtedly a natural vagrant was this Yellow-faced Grassquit on the Dry Tortugas, Florida, in late April 1994. Previous single records for Florida and Texas had been questioned by some as possible escapes from captivity. Photograph/Kevin T. Karlson.

checklist committees to accept this species as a valid North American vagrant. A casual visitor from the Bahamas, a Bananaquit made viewing difficult because of obscure plumage and shyness at Boca Raton Apr. 21–May 3 (BHH, m.ob.). On Dog I., *Franklin* this spring no Scarlet Tanagers were banded or seen (DSE, LRM), whereas last year 14 were banded and over 100 seen. At Boca Raton, Stripe-headed Tanagers, rare visitors from the Bahamas, were found: a female Apr. 16–20 (BHH, m.ob.) and a male Apr. 18–20 (MG, BHH, m.ob.). A flock of 12 Dickcissels was an outstanding number at D.T., Apr. 25 (KTK, m.ob.). The high number of Bachman's Sparrows totaled 89 at a preserve in e. Orange Apr. 16 (LW), and this species was considered "very numerous" at Starkey Wilderness Park, *Pasco* Mar. 24 (RWS). Three Henslow's Sparrows, seldom found this far s., were seen in Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary, *Okeechobee* Mar. 6 (HPL, GSH, EDB, SH). Seven White-crowned Sparrows were a good number for *Duval* Apr. 7 (MKD), but one at a St. Petersburg feeder was very late May 2–7 (BET, VSM). Twenty-five Shiny Cowbirds provided a high count this season at Key West May 12 (JAO). Over 60 Orchard Orioles were counted throughout *Pinellas* Apr. 7–10 (MSW, LSA, DNG, m.ob.), and 50 stopped at D.T., Apr. 8 (BP). A pair of House Finches were sighted at Cross City Apr. 9 (BW, BobW, LAN, RWS) and may have been as far s. as a pair has been seen.

Corrigenda

The LaSagra's Flycatchers reported in *AB* 47:407 at McArthur S.P. was Apr. 9, not 10; and the one at D.T. was found May 2 by B. Zimmer (m.ob., ph. KTK).

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Ontario Region

RON RIDOUT

Spring across the province was topsy-turvy. While March behaved as it should, April was May, with many record-high temperatures in mid month, and May was April, setting some record-low marks though remaining relatively dry.

An incredible 107 record-early dates for 82 species were set across the province, many a result of April's heat wave. Eleven of these dates were all-time marks for the province! At the same time, many waterfowl tarried in the south, a result of late ice breakup and cool water temperatures well into May.

The aforementioned "dog days" of April and their accompanying southerly breezes pushed several raptor species past the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch in record numbers. Other species groups moved through in numbers closer to normal. Both full-time observatories experienced a good but not exceptional spring. Rarities included Brown Pelican, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck,

