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Southern Atlantic Coast Region

RICKY DAVIS

The weather this summer was definitely cooler and wetter than normal for most areas of the Region. The spells of normal hot weather never lasted more than a couple of days, and some areas were almost pleasant all summer! Tropical storm *Arthur* in mid-June was a non-factor, but hurricane *Bertha* in mid-July caused considerable damage in eastern North Carolina. The timing and track of *Bertha* meant that storm-associated birds were disappointingly few and far between in the state (not the case in Virginia to our north!). Some avian highlights this season included nesting Gray Kingbirds in North Carolina, numerous warblers in the Coastal Plain of both Carolinas, and a mild invasion of Dickcissels in all three states.

Abbreviations: C. Hatt. (*Cape Hatteras, NC*); E.L.H. (*E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA*); K. Mt. (*Kennesaw Mt. Park, GA*).

Petrels to Waterfowl

Off North Carolina, Black-capped Petrel counts averaged in the hundreds this sum-

mer, with the peak being an impressive 363 out of Hatteras July 28 (BP *et al.*). Pelagic birders off North Carolina really work hard for the Pterodromas, and the almost expected Cape Verde (Feae's) Petrel was found again, with one off Hatteras July 20 (BP *et al.*). This species complex is being found in our waters every year and hopefully the added documentation can settle the confusion over the exact forms found here. Shearwater numbers continued the spring pattern of being somewhat reduced. Of interest were three Sooties found dead on N. Topsail Beach, NC, in mid-June (GG), a late migrant Manx from C. Hatt., June 8 (AB, *vide* JF), and an unexplainable Manx off Hatteras June 19 (BP *et al.*). Storm-petrel numbers offshore were about average, with the best counts being 770 Wilson's off Hatteras July 22 (BP *et al.*) and 12 Leach's and 30 Band-rumped off Hatteras July 28 (BP *et al.*). Onshore Wilson's reports included one from Ft. Macon, NC June 4 (BM *et al.*); one flying upriver at the Ogeechee R. mouth, *Chatham-Bryan*, GA July 7 (BW); and four at Goldsboro, NC (ED), and one at L. Pinehurst, NC (DB) July 13 after hurricane *Bertha*. The only White-tailed Tropicbirds reported were singles off Oregon Inlet, NC June 1 (AH *et al.*) and off Hatteras June 5 (BP). The only Masked Booby was off Hatteras June 5 (BP). Providing a rare mid-summer report, a N. Gannet was off Hatteras July 27 (BP *et al.*). Anhingas continue to increase in some areas of the Region. An excellent count of 110 were at the Savannah Spoil Site, *Jasper*, SC July 17 (SC). Also, a first



local record was established inland at L. Wildwood, *Bibb*, GA July 22 (PJ). Magnificent Frigatebirds are annual in North Carolina, and June seems to be a peak time for their brief appearances. Singles were at C. Hatt., June 6 (WW, *fide* ML) & 16 (DA); one was n. of Duck June 12 (KK, *fide* HL); three were over Nags Head June 24 (LY); and one was at Southport July 16 (LW, DS, *fide* HL).

Always noteworthy, inland breeding season records of Least Bittern included one all summer s. of Fayetteville, NC (HB, JSt) and \leq three at a n. *Greene*, GA, marsh throughout the period (PS, MD, v.o.). A rarely documented inland Georgia nesting of Great Blue Heron occurred at E.L.H. early June (CL). Inland post-breeding dispersal of waders was about average, with some areas such as Fayetteville, NC, and Dyar's Pasture W.M.A., GA, having better-than-average congregations. Immature Reddish Egrets once again turned up at several coastal sites, with the best counts being three at Sunset Beach, NC July 19 (MM) and four in the Altamaha Estuary, GA July 11 (BW). More exciting was the ad. dark-morph Reddish found at Hatteras Inlet, NC July 20–21 (NB, MO). The best inland Yellow-crowned Night-Heron report involved a colony of 4 pairs nesting successfully at Winston-Salem, NC in June (RS). Inland White Ibis reports included \leq 24 at a n. *Greene*, GA, marsh June 29–July 16 (PS, JS, MD); 18 s. of Fayetteville, NC July 5 (HB, JSt); and five near Durham, NC July 7–23 (JPe, RG). A count of 50 Glossy Ibis at Huntington Beach S.P., SC July 29 (JP, PR) was impressive for summer. A Roseate Spoonbill provided South Carolina's 2nd inland record when it was present near Congaree Swamp N.M., *Richland*, July 21–22 (RDU, BDe, RC, CE, PB, JB). Also very rare inland was one in *Brooks*, GA June 4 (*fide* TM). The peak at the usual Jekyll I., GA, causeway area was nine June 10 (BW). Wandering Wood Storks made news, with highlights including 238 at the Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary, Jackson, SC July 7 (*fide* AW); 60 near Congaree Swamp N.M., SC July 21–22 (RDU, BDe, RC, CE); good numbers in *Greene*, GA, with 44 at L. Oconee (AW) and 28 at Dyar's Pasture W.M.A., July 19 (TJ); and five were unexpected flying over N. Topsail Beach, NC July 4 (GG).

There are now three Mute Swans at Pea Island N.W.R., NC (v.o.); does this spell trouble for the Outer Banks? Summering waterfowl included three Green-winged Teal near Rocky Mount, NC, all season (RD); ♂ N. Shovelers at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 15 (SC) and E.L.H.,

GA June 9 (JS, PBr); a ♂ Lesser Scaup in *Monroe*, GA July 6 (TJ); an imm. Hooded Merganser at E.L.H., GA June 9 (JS); a ♀ Com. Merganser at Jordan L., NC July 27 (RG); and four Ruddy Ducks each at Sneads Ferry, NC (NM), and Harris L., *Wake*, NC (JPe, *fide* WC).

Osprey to Terns

Ospreys nested inland at L. Greenwood, SC (SW), and 2 pairs spent the summer at Buckhorn Res., *Wilson*, NC (RD). Sixteen Swallow-tailed Kites must have been an impressive sight at the Santee Delta W.M.A., SC July 20 (RC, CE *et al.*). Even more impressive were the >100 Mississippi Kites over a field near Jackson, SC June 3 (DCo, *fide* AW)! The last several years, summer reports of Cooper's Hawks have increased. This year was no different, with \geq 10 reports from North Carolina and one from South Carolina. The best record was of two successful nestings in Winston-Salem, NC, in June (*fide* RS). Breeding Am. Kestrels were noted in the Mableton, GA, area June 29 (GB), where two adults and one young were seen. Also, 3 nests were found on the Savannah R. Site, SC, this summer (*fide* AW), and each fledged young successfully. The downtown Atlanta, GA, Peregrine Falcons fledged two young during June (DK, *fide* PH).

The marsh in n. *Greene*, GA, hosted rails all summer, with breeding highly likely, though no definite evidence was found. At least three Black Rails (PS, m.ob.), one King Rail (PS, MD, v.o.), and \leq five Virginia Rails were seen (PS, m.ob.). Breeding did occur at the K. Mt., GA, marsh, where one fully-feathered juvenile was seen June 27 (GB), providing about the 2nd or 3rd breeding record for the state. A pair of Com. Moorhens nested at L. Wildwood, *Bibb*, GA, with three chicks seen July 26–27 (PJ). This furnished a first breeding record for the county. American Coots also provided rare summer records with an impressive seven at L. Juliette, *Monroe*, GA July 6 (TJ); two at E.L.H., GA June 9 (JS); two at Sunset Beach, NC, all summer (MM); and two all summer near Rocky Mount, NC (RD).

Shorebird reports were predictably low. Some interesting records included 104 Black-necked Stilts at the Kings Bay Submarine Base, GA June 20 (PS); an out-of-place Am. Avocet along the Morehead City-Beaufort, NC, causeway July 21 (JM); four late Greater Yellowlegs in *Laurens*, GA June 16 (J&MA); one Willet at Jordan L., NC July 7 (RD); 10 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Goldsboro, NC June 3 (ED); one Stilt Sandpiper at Charlotte, NC July 14 (TP); and one–two Stilt

Sandpipers at E.L.H. in late July (CL, BHa, BB). The best Upland Sandpiper report came from the usual Orangeburg, SC, Sod Farm where eight were found July 20 (RC, CE). The only Curlew Sandpiper was at the Salt Flats, Pea Island N.W.R., NC July 26–29 (JF, BH *et al.*; KC). Wilson's Phalarope reports included one at the Savannah Spoil Site, *Jasper*, SC July 17 (SC) and three at the Salt Flats, Pea Island N.W.R., NC July 28 (JW *et al.*).

After tropical storm *Arthur*, three Pomarine Jaegers were seen from Atlantic Beach, NC June 19 (JF). The only Long-tailed Jaegers found offshore were two off Oregon Inlet, NC June 2 (AH *et al.*). A single South Polar Skua off Hatteras, NC June 22 (BP *et al.*) was also the only reported. Of interest were 2 inland Georgia records of Laughing Gull. One was at L. Wildwood, *Bibb*, June 9 (PJ) and another was at L. Juliette, *Monroe*, July 6 (TJ).

SA Hurricane *Bertha* slammed into the North Carolina coast

near Wilmington the evening of July 12. The track of the storm inland went N and then NE into Virginia. Bird sightings associated with the storm were limited due to the night landfall and the fact that the strongest winds were at the beaches and offshore. Since damage to coastal areas was extensive, birders could not survey the coast. The only significant reports involved coastal terns at inland lakes along the storm center's path. Highlights July 13 included 20 Royal, four Sandwich, and three Least terns at Goldsboro (ED); nine Royal, one Sandwich, one Gull-billed, and seven Least terns at the Pactolus Catfish Ponds, near Greenville (RD); and single Black Skimmers at L. Mattamuskeet (RD) and L. Phelps (RD). Also, Least Terns were found near Fayetteville July 14 (HB) and Rocky Mount July 13 (RD).

A rare and unexplainable inland occurrence of seven Royal Terns was reported near Jackson, SC July 21 (CZ, GR, *fide* AW). This location and date probably excluded influence from *Bertha*. Roseate Tern reports included a locally rare adult at Holden Beach, NC June 4 (HL) and four flying S past the Outer Banks Pier July 26 (NB, MO). Extremely rare was the ad. Arctic Tern photographed on the beach at Ft. Macon, NC June 4 (DSw, BM *et al.*). The only Sooty Tern reports involved one at Hatteras Inlet, NC June 24 (*fide* ML) and one just off the beach at Pawley's I., SC July 13 (RC, CE), probably



Adult Arctic Tern found on the beach at Fort Macon, North Carolina, June 4, 1996. A regular offshore migrant, this species is very rarely found on the coast. Photograph/Bob Machover.

related to the passage of *Bertha*. The best Black Tern count was of 80 flying S past the Outer Banks Pier July 26 (NB, MO).

Doves to Orioles

At least one of the Eur. Collared-Doves at N. Topsail Beach, NC survived *Bertha* when an individual was seen July 29 (RK). New populations were established in Americus and Fitzgerald, GA (v.o.). Will this species spread over the entire Region before the decade's end? At the edge of their range, 2 pairs of Com. Ground-Doves spent the summer near Jackson, SC (DCo, *fide* AW). Whip-poor-wills have been expanding eastward and southward for many years, but the count of seven in a mile or so in the Holly Shelter area, Pender, NC June 26 (NM) was impressive. In the weird department was the Belted Kingfisher 15 mi off Hatteras, NC July 28 (BP *et al.*). Georgia had 2 breeding season records of note for flycatchers: Two Willow Flycatchers at the n. *Greene* marsh were observed in June and July (PH, JS, JFI, CS, MD); and an E. Phoebe was s.w. of Macon, GA, near the *Macon/Sumter* line July 7 (D&PG), for a very rare local record. The **Gray Kingbird** pair at Ft. Caswell, NC, was present through June and was attending a nest (TP *et al.*, RD). This provided the first nesting in North Carolina since about 1960, when a pair was nearby at Southport. The rare but annual Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found twice. One was in the Foxfire Village area of the North Carolina Sandhills in June

(*fide* DB), and one was in *Douglas*, GA June 10 (JK, *fide* JS).

~ A White-breasted Nuthatch found on the *Dare*, NC, Bombing Range July 5 (JF) defies explanation. Was it a wandering individual from some nearby breeding area? There were no reports on the wrens and thrushes breeding in our area. One hopes no news is good news! Cedar Waxwings are known for irregular eastward movements during the breeding season. This year the farthest east were four at Stumpy Point, *Dare*, NC all summer (JF). Continued monitoring of Loggerhead Shrikes is important. The best count from the Region was 17 (adults and juveniles) in *Laurens*, GA June 16 (J&MA). One adult with three young in Wilmington, NC, in early July (SCo) was locally interesting. Of note was the five Solitary Vireos found breeding in *Jasper*, GA June 9 (J&MA), a good number that far south.

~ Observers in the Coastal Plain region of the Carolinas found good numbers of warblers. In *Horry*, SC, 13 species were found on territory in June (MW, JP, P&ST) including Black-and-white, Worm-eating, Ovenbird, and Kentucky. They also found a territorial Louisiana Waterthrush in *Georgetown*, SC, locally unusual. In *Dare*, NC, Fussell reported Black-throated Greens to be about the 4th most common warbler in certain areas, obviously making the area highly significant for the coastal plain population of the species. He also noted that Swainson's Warblers and Ovenbirds are doing well there. Some notable

early fall migrant warblers included a Black-throated Green at K. Mt., GA July 6 (GB, JFI, PH); a Blackburnian at K. Mt., GA July 14 (GB); a Blackburnian at Oriental, NC, late July (DF); and a peak of eight Ceruleans at K. Mt., GA July 26 (GB). Also, Black-and-white Warblers seem to be doing well on the e. edge of their range, with the best counts being five in *Warren*, NC June 2 (HL) and three in Hoffman Forest, *Jones/Onslow*, NC (NM).

— Two Scarlet Tanagers at Piedmont N.W.R., *Jasper*, GA June 15 (J&MA, NG *et al.*) continued the presence of this species far to the south of its normal range. In South Carolina a male was unusual in *Union* June 29 (LG), and in North Carolina one was on territory in s. *Duplin* June 24 (NM). Dickcissels staged a mild invasion into the Region. In Georgia one was along the *Walton/Morgan* line June 10 (JV, *fide* MOB); four were in *Henry* June 1–3 ((JS, CL, KDa); and 4 pairs were in *Spalding* June 11 (JG). In South Carolina, two males were in *Anderson* June 7 (SW) and in *Laurens* June 15 (LG). North Carolina birds included two at VOA-B, *Pitt* through June (JW, PW); two near *Aurora* June 12 (*fide* SCo); two near L. Phelps, *Tyrrell*, July 21 (HL); and two near *Shelby*, *Cleveland*, all summer (STh).

The highly important populations of Henslow's Sparrows at the VOA sites in North Carolina were again censused by Wright. The VOA-A site in *Beaufort* had 67 territorial males and the VOA-B site in *Pitt* had 31 males June 1–2. These totals are down from last year, but it is too early to tell if this is a downward trend or not. As in the past, the continued compatible site management of these areas is very important to this species. A Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow was found at the Salt Flats, *Pea Island N.W.R.*, NC July 28 (JL), the same place one was seen last year carrying a fecal sac! Late spring migrant Bobolinks included one n. of *Rocky Mount*, NC June 3 (RD) and five at the *Savannah Spoil Site*, *Jasper*, SC June 15 (SC). The only Yellow-headed Blackbird reported was a male at the Salt Flats, *Pea Island N.W.R.*, NC July 28 (JL, JW *et al.*). Georgia's 4th **Shiny Cowbird** was found at *Tybee I.*, June 1 (DJ, *fide* TM). It has been some time since the last report; maybe this species is not spreading as fast as was once feared. *Macon*, GA, once again had nesting Baltimore Orioles. Four birds and a nest were seen June 2 (J&MA). Another good nesting report for Baltimore Oriole involved a pair all summer near the *Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary*, *Jackson*, SC (*fide* AW).

Corrigenda

The report of a ♂ Cinnamon Teal at St. Marks N.W.R. (AFN 49:136) was in error and should be deleted. The observer credit for the 40–50 Broad-winged Hawks near Atlanta (AFN 49:136) should read (SE).

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Florida Region

RICHARD T. PAUL AND ANN F. SCHNAPP

Following a cool, moist spring, summer was typically hot but drier than normal, except in the north where rainfall was slightly above-average. Hurricane *Bertha* passed to the east with minimal effects; no other tropical weather systems threatened.

A wet summer in 1995 and dry winter in the Tampa area seemed to set the table for another excellent year for wading bird nesting, but springtime rains raised streamflows to 160% of normal (twice 1995 levels). Without the all-important dry-down to concentrate food resources, nesting numbers and productivity were reduced. Despite the winter drought, water levels in the Everglades were still too high for a large nesting effort there, although one observer reported excellent Reddish Egret nesting success in Florida Bay.

With some key observers out of the state, reports were scarcer than usual and coverage less complete. We thank Bill Pranty for sharing reports assembled for the *Florida Field Naturalist*.

Abbreviations: A.P. (*Aquatic Preserve*), A.P.A.F.R. (*Avon Park Air Force Range*), C.P. (*County Park*), G.F.C. (*Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission*), Jax (*Jacksonville*), R.S.R.S.R. (*Rock Springs Run State Reserve*), S.F. (*State Forest*), S.T.P. (*Sewage Treatment Plant*).

Loons to Pelicans

A Com. Loon in alternate plumage at Bird Keys, 2 mi. s. of the Crystal R. mouth, was late June 19 (RP, AS). Single Sooty Shearwaters were found off Turtle Mound, Canaveral National Seashore, June 1 (BR, TT), and on the beach at Archie Carr N.W.R., June 3 (SB). On July 3, an imm. brown-morph **Red-footed Booby** suddenly materialized overhead near Longboat Key and vanished into c. Sarasota Bay (RP, AS). A Leach's Storm-Petrel was

picked up on a *Duval* beach May 31 following days of easterly winds (PP; * to Florida Museum of Natural History). American White Pelicans appeared all summer at McKay Bay (*Hillsborough*), n. Jax (*Duval*), and Tomoka A.P. (*Volusia*) (m.ob.). Brown Pelican nesting success was poor at the Marco colonies (TB), but normal in Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor (RP, AS). Statewide, G.F.C. counted 9598 Brown Pelican nests (SN). A single Brown Pelican at L. Jackson June 30 provided the first *Leon* monthly record (GM).

Bitterns to Stork

Two Least Bitterns in L. McBride cattails June 2 represented rare *Leon* sightings (J&KM). Four colonies along the Indian R. Lagoon totaled >11,000 pairs of 8 wading bird species (CS). In the Central Everglades, nesting totaled 7233 pairs of waders, about 2000 more than 1993 or 1994, about 600 less than 1995, and considerably less than 1992's high of 22,097 pairs (PFR). Seven heron species at 5 Marco area colonies totaled 1300 pairs, a normal number. Nesting success was good for Great Egrets and Little Blues, but sub-par for Snowies, Tricoloreds, and Cattles (TB). Reddish Egrets have nested at Marco colonies since the mid-1970s, but still number just 6 pairs (TB). Reddish Egrets nested in June at 2 new (for this century) sites, Johns Pass, *Pinellas*, and Useppa Bird Key, *Lee* (AS, RP).

Despite wet spring conditions, 8100 pairs of White Ibis nested at Alafia Bank,

