

**Observers (area compilers in boldface):**

Robert L. Anderson, George L. Armistead, Henry T. Armistead, John B. Bazuin, Mary Jo Betts, Eirik Blom, D. & D. Bone, Jon Boone, Dave Brinker (DBr), Ned Brinkley, Carol & Don Broderick, Don Burggraf, D. Bussey (DBu), Danny Bystrak (DBy), D. Callahan (DCa), Kathy Calvert, Jamie Cameron, Tom Cameron (TCa), Tony Castillo, **Wallace Coffey** (Valley Birds internet group), Barry Cooper, **Patty Craig** (Saint Mary's, P.O. Box 84, Lexington Park, MD 20653), Lee Curry, Dave Czaplak, Lynn M. Davidson, Fenton Day, Todd Day, Bill Dobbins, Paul G. DuMont, Samuel H. Dyke, Darius Ecker, **Ethel Engle** (Caroline, MD, 20789 Dover Bridge Rd., Preston, MD 21655), G.D. Eversole, Leslie Fisher, Dave Fox, **Sam Freiberg** (Montgomery, 8733 Susanna Lane, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-4713), Chris French, Carol Garza, Kurt Gaskill, Stan Gray, Gary Griffith, Jim Gruber, Mary Gustafson, Norman Haddaway, Clive Harris, Nannette Herrick, Wilbur Hershberger, Andy Higgs, **Jane Hill** (Voice of the Naturalist), Rob Hilton, Mark Hoffman, Sue Hopkins, Marshall Howe (MHo), David Hughes, Alec Humann (AHu), Ottavio Janni, George M. Jett, Brian Johnson, Fran & John Juriga, Julie Kacmarcik, Greg Kearns, Elliot Kirschbaum, Dick Kleen, Ellen Lawler, Ryan Lesh, Reese Lukei (RLu), Larry Lynch, Lucy MacClintock, Nancy MacClintock, Gail MacKiernan, Brian Monk, Harvey & Marion Mudd, Marianna Nuttle, Michael O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott, Brian Patteson, Paul Pisano, **Elizabeth Pitney** (Wicomico, 7218 Walston Switch Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849), Danny Poet, Jack Powers, Mary Suzanne Probst, Mary G. Pulley, Kyle Rambo, Jan Reese, Robert F. Ringler, Steve Sanford (SSa), Fran Saunders, **Norm Saunders** (MDOsprey internet group), Eugene J. Scarpulla, Don Schwab, L.T. Short, Bob Solem, **Jo Solem** (Howard, 10617 Graeloch Rd., Laurel, MD 20723), Sigrid Stiles (SSt), Mike Stinson, Chuck Studeholme, Sherman Suter, Brian Taber, Jerry Tangren, Mary Ann Todd, Robin Todd, Charlie & Gail Vaughn, Marcia Watson-Whitmyre (MWW), Dave Webb, Hal L. Wierenga, Bill Williams, **Les Willis** (Virginia Birdline), Mike Wilson

**Marshall J. Iliff**; please send reports to James L. Stasz, P.O. Box 71, North Beach, MD 20714 (e-mail: jlstasz@aol.com)



# southern atlantic coast region

## RICKY DAVIS

The fall season, the most protracted of any, always provides excitement in some way. This year there were three hurricanes moving some birds inland, a smattering of cold fronts bringing good migration counts, and mild temperatures in Nov. producing several reports of lingering birds. Some of the highlights involved state firsts such as **Bulwer's Petrel**, **Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel**, **Anna's Hummingbird**, and **MacGillivray's Warbler** in North Carolina; and **Calliope Hummingbird** and **Northern Wheatear** in Georgia. There were also what could be called regional invasions by some birds normally found farther to the west such as Greater White-fronted Geese, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and Franklin's Gulls.

**Abbreviations:** C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, NC); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); K. Mt. (Kennesaw Mt. National Battlefield Park, GA); L.M. (Lake Mattamuskeet, NC); O.S.F. (Orangeburg, SC Sod Farm); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co., SC); W.T.P. (Wastewater Treatment Plant).

## LOOKS THROUGH STORKS

This season's only reported inland Red-throated Loon was at L. Wateree, SC, Nov. 14 (LG). Also, as usual, the Region's only Pacific Loon was found at Figure Eight I., NC Nov. 27 (DC, ML). Good grebe reports included a very early Horned at H.B.S.P. Aug. 29 (LG, ST et al.); an inland Red-necked at L. Wateree, SC Nov. 14 (LG); and good counts of Eareds such as 15 at the Goldsboro, NC W.T.P. Oct. 18 (ED), nine at L. Lanier, GA Nov. 15 (JS, CL, EH), and eight at the S.S.S. Nov. 1 (TK). On the pelagic front, North Carolina had an exceptional season. The now expected Herald (Trinidad) Petrel was found off Hatteras Aug. 8 (BP et al.). Also on Aug. 8, the Region's 2nd but first photographed **Bulwer's Petrel** was located (HL, MG, PG et al.) out of Oregon Inlet. Amazingly, this closely followed the well-documented West Coast **Bulwer's** off Monterey in late July! Rare in



fall was the Manx Shearwater off Oregon Inlet Aug. 15 (BP et al.), and the peak count of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was an impressive 156 off Hatteras Aug. 8 (BP et al.). Another Regional 2nd but first photographed was the **Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** found off Hatteras Aug. 8 (MO, BP, GLA, GP et al.). The details on these birds are published in the present issue. The only tropicbirds reported were imm. White-taileds off Morehead City Aug. 7 (PC) and off Hatteras Aug. 8 (BP et al.). In Georgia, three Cory's Shearwaters found off Savannah Nov. 30 (JFI et al.) provided a new late date by 20 days! And in South Carolina, an ad. Masked Booby was seen from shore, along with Gannets following a shrimp boat, on the late date of Nov. 21 (B&BM).

Hurricane *Bonnie* moved slowly through the coastal regions of North Carolina Aug. 26-28 and brought relatively few tubenoses. The farthest inland report was of two Cory's Shearwaters in the New Bern area (BH). Also of note were a Cory's, one small *Puffinus* shearwater (possibly Manx), two Black-capped Petrels, a dark-morph gadfly petrel (most likely a Herald Petrel), and two Band-rumped Storm-Petrels in Croatan Sound Aug. 27 (NB, BP). During the week after *Bonnie*, small numbers of shearwaters and storm-petrels lingered in Roanoke Sound, North Carolina, with at least three Cory's and two Greater shearwaters studied from the Baum and Daniels bridges Sep. 4 (P. Cook, R. Crossley, NB, BP; v. o.). Large numbers of dead Cory's Shearwaters were found from Hatteras southward on beaches.

White Pelicans made a better showing this fall than in recent years, with five North

Carolina reports including one far inland at L. Norman, *Catawba*, Nov. 16 (*vide* KW). Also an imm. Brown Pelican showed up inland at Falls L., NC and remained throughout the fall period Aug. 23–Nov. 29 (v. o.). Interestingly, an immature was present at this lake last fall also. Magnificent Frigatebird made a good showing, with one very late at C. Hatt. Nov. 21 (AWh), one at Ft. Fisher, NC, Oct. 18 (SE), one at Murrell's Inlet, SC, Oct. 6 (*vide* JP), one at L. Eufaula, GA, Sep. 30 (*vide* TM), and a record one-day total of three at Jekyll I., GA, Sep. 26 (DL, et al.). Long-legged waders wandered inland in normal fashion. Some exceptions included 14 Snowy Egrets at E.L.H. Aug. 14 (JS, CL), a late Tricolored Heron at L. Seminole, GA, Nov. 15 (GB et al.), and 30 late Cattle Egrets in *Clay*, GA, Nov. 22 (MB, AS). The best Reddish Egret reports involved four in the Gould's Inlet, GA area during Aug. and Sep. (m. ob.) and a rarely reported white-morph immature at S.S.S. Aug. 22 (LG et al.). Glossy Ibis was found several times, with the farthest inland being one at Augusta, GA, Oct. 9 (SW). The peak count of Roseate Spoonbill at the usual Brunswick, GA area was 18 on Aug. 2 (GB et al.). Much more unusual was one inland at Hard Labor Creek St. Pk., *Morgan*, GA, Sep. 5 (*vide* TM). And finally Wood Storks wandered in all three states, the farthest inland being three at Townville, SC, Sep. 20 (SW et al.).

#### WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were way up this fall. There were at least 8 reports from the Region, with the best counts being seven at Eufaula N.W.R., GA, Nov. 28 (GB), five near North, *Orangeburg*, SC, Nov. 29 (MT), and four at L. M. Nov. 15 (KW). Smaller numbers were found elsewhere in all 3 states, indicating a major easterly shift in their migration. Snow Goose numbers were also way up, and Georgia had many more reports than usual, the best total being the 67 at Rum Creek W.M.A. Nov. 14 (TJ). One or two Ross's Geese were at L. M. Nov. 15–22 (HW, JHy et al.). The now annual Cinnamon Teal was found at S.S.S. Sep. 27–Nov. 15 (*vide* TP). Some of the more interesting inland waterfowl included a Black Scoter at Rum Creek W.M.A., GA, Nov. 7 (GB et al.), eight Surf Scoters at Walter F. George L. Dam, GA, Nov. 28 (GB), two White-winged Scoters at the Jacksonville, NC, W.T.P. Oct. 26 (NM), and one Oldsquaw at L. Wateree, SC, Nov. 14 (LG). Also of note was the huge assemblage of scoters (6000+) that remained in the Jekyll I., GA area during Nov. (JS, CL, m.

ob.); accompanying them were up to two Oldsquaws Nov. 26–29 (JS, CL, MB), rare anywhere in that state.

Rarely found in the Region, a dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk was at H.B.S.P. Oct. 31 (JP et al.). A Rough-legged Hawk put in a brief showing at P.I. Nov. 6 (J&PW et al.). Golden Eagles produced multiple reports from all 3 states. The farthest south was an adult at Rum Creek W.M.A., GA, Oct. 11 (*vide* TM). The best migrating falcon totals came from Tibwin Plantation, *Charleston*, SC, where on Oct. 9 an amazing 30 Merlins and 59 Peregrines were counted (CW). Rarely seen rails included a Yellow at Falls L., NC, Sep. 5 (WC) and a Black at the S.S.S. Oct. 4 (TK). The peak Black Rail count at the usual n. *Greene*, GA site was five Aug. 22–Sep. 6 (PS). A **Limpkin** was heard at close range along Roan I., in the Cape Fear R., *Pender*, NC, Aug. 13 (SCo, CMu) for a most intriguing report. This follows closely on the heels of the Limpkin found in Jul. near New Bern, NC! Sandhill Cranes moved through Georgia in slightly below-average numbers this year, although the timing seemed normal. Interestingly, none were reported from the other two states.

#### PLOVERS THROUGH SKIMMERS

Inland shorebirding was good this season. Some of the more interesting reports included single Piping Plovers at O.S.F. Aug. 8–16 (SS, JWa et al.) and Jordan L., NC, Aug. 30 (MP et al.), a very rare inland Black-necked Stilt at Augusta, GA, Oct. 10–11 (SW), five Am. Avocets at Jordan L., NC, Oct. 3 (WC et al.), four Willets at O.S.F. Sep. 5 (RC, CE et al.), and two Red-necked Phalaropes at O.S.F. Sep. 4 (BM, LG). One of the most impressive migrations of "grass-pipers" ever observed in the Region took place this fall. There were at least 25 reported locations for Am. Golden-Plover, 15 for Upland Sandpiper, five for Baird's Sandpiper, and 22 for Buff-breasted Sandpiper. The peak counts for these included five Golden-Plovers at O.S.F. Sep. 19 (RC, CE) and C. Hatt. Aug. 29 (DA); over 20 Uplands at the Greenville, NC Airport Aug. 28 (LG); three Baird's at Falls L., NC, Sep. 13 (LT et al.); and amazing Buff-breasted totals of 36 at the *Peach*, GA Sod Farm Sep. 5 (MB) and 35 in *Sumter*, GA, Sep. 24 (TJ). Reports of Buff-breasteds were too numerous to list completely, an unprecedented event in this Region! The always exciting Ruff was found 3 times in North Carolina with singles at P.I. Aug. 10 (MPa), the Sneads Ferry W.T.P. Aug. 19 (NM et al.), and at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, Sep. 12 (BH et al., RB). The peak Wilson's

Phalarope count was once again at the S.S.S., where up to 20, were seen Sep. 10–12 (CW, SC). Some impressive offshore totals of phalaropes included 192 Red-neckeds off Oregon Inlet Sep. 6 (BP et al.) and an astounding 992 Reds off Savannah, GA, Nov. 30 (JFI et al.). And finally Hurricane *Bonnie* displaced some shorebirds in North Carolina. Some of the more noteworthy reports involved one Black-necked Stilt at New Bern Aug. 28 (WF), one Long-billed Curlew at New Bern Aug. 27 (BH, WF), 16 Hudsonian Godwits onshore at C. Hatt. Aug. 29 (BC), one Marbled Godwit near Greenville Aug. 27 (JW), and two Red-necked Phalaropes at the Sneads Ferry, NC W.T.P. Aug. 27 (CB, NM et al.).

North Carolina's first truly inland **Long-tailed Jaeger** made a brief appearance at L. Norman Sep. 9 (D&MW). The bird was an adult observed up close from a boat and was last seen to spiral up and head s. out of sight! Another species which came into the Region in unprecedented numbers was **Franklin's Gull**. Each state had at least 2 reports, and the highlights were record totals of 10 at L. Robinson, SC, Nov. 25 (LG) and 11 at L. Walter F. George, GA, Oct 31 (JFI). The Nov. birds were part of a major storm-related push into the e. half of the continent this fall. The season's only Black-headed Gull was a complete surprise away from the immediate coast at L. M. Nov. 13 (JF). Other rare, unexpected gulls included an early imm. Glaucous at Cumberland I., GA Sep.

**SA** One bird causing much excitement was the **South Polar Skua** found on the beach at Jekyll I., GA, Oct. 16 (SH et al., DL). Georgia's 4th, the skua was a dark- or dark intermediate-morph bird in heavy molt and stayed in the area until at least Nov. 5 (AS). Many people were able to get good photographs to document this unusual occurrence. Two more S. Polar Skuas were onshore not too far away at Fort Clinch and Smyrna Dunes Park, Florida, during October and November. What brought these birds in to land is unknown, but they may have been birds exhausted by the late-season hurricanes. Eastern North America has very, very few records of South Polar Skua from its beaches, though Cape Point, near Buxton, NC, can be a good place to observe flybys on spring migration, during periods of easterly winds.

20 (SEh) and an imm. Sabine's at Figure Eight I., NC Nov. 8 (DC). Some of the more interesting tern reports due to Hurricane *Bonnie* included a Gull-billed at the Sneads Ferry, NC W.T.P. Aug. 27 (NM), two Sandwichee, two Least, and a Bridled tern at Goldsboro, NC, Aug. 27 (ED), three Sooties at Jordan L., NC, Aug. 27 (JHy), and 18 Forster's, two Royals, and four Blacks at L. Phelps, NC, Aug. 28 (NB, BP). Possibly storm-related were 60 Blacks at O.S.F. Sep. 4 (LG). A rare-in-fall Arctic Tern was off Oregon Inlet Sep. 5 (BP et al.) Inland reports of note included a Royal Tern at Callaway Gardens, GA, Aug. 2 (PJ), not apparently related to any storm activity. Inland Black Skimmers were found in *Thomas*, GA, Sep. 11, after Hurricane *Earl* (*fide* JS) and at L. Eufaula, GA, Sep. 30, after Hurricane *Georges* (*fide* TM).

### CUCKOOS THROUGH THRUSHES

Black-billed Cuckoos were reported region-wide in their usual small numbers, with only one to two individuals being found at one time. N. Saw-whet Owls staged a poor late-fall migration this year, with Enders banding one Nov. 4 in *Halifax*, NC. Hummingbirds once again made news, with *Archilochus* and *Selasphorus* numbers higher than ever! Georgia's first **Calliope Hummingbird** was an imm. male at a feeder in Lilburn Nov. 1-10 (KT et al.). Bob and Martha Sargent banded and documented the bird. Not to be outdone, North Carolina got its first **Anna's Hummingbird** when an imm. male showed up at a feeder in Charlotte Nov. 29 (JWa, ph. m. ob.). Another Anna's, a female, was banded by the Sargents in Smyrna, *Cobb*, GA Nov. 26-28 (*fide* TM), providing that state's 2nd record! Reports on the flycatcher migration seemed a little above average, with five Olive-sideds, 11 Yellow-bellieds, four Willows, seven Leasts, five Western Kingbirds, two Gray Kingbirds, and three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. The best were five Yellow-bellieds at Macon, GA, Sep. 13 (GB et al.), an Eastern Kingbird off Oregon Inlet Sep. 6 (BP et al.), a peak of five Gray Kingbirds at the usual Jekyll I., GA site Aug. 8 (*fide* TM), and a late Scissor-tailed in *Brooks*, GA, Nov. 6-8 (*fide* BB). The vireo migration was much better than average, with no fewer than nine Warbling and 20 Philadelphia reports received! All of the Warblings were found during Sep., and reports were from all 3 states. The Philadelphia sightings from across the Region spanned the period from Sep. 2-Oct. 8. Another state first was provided by the **Northern Wheatear** at Jekyll I.,



**Wait—come back! A Northern Wheatear at Jekyll Island, Georgia, furnished a first record for the state October 11. Like all too many migrant wheatears, this one was a one-hour wonder. Photograph/Jan Pitman**

GA, Oct. 11 (LTh, JG, DL, NG et al.). Luckily photos were secured before the bird disappeared within an hour after its discovery! And once again, the thrush migration brought mixed reviews. As is always the case with secretive birds, the number of birds seen is rarely indicative of the actual abundance. This year, predawn counts of overhead migrants gave some insight into the numbers still migrating over our area. The peak counts at K. Mt. Sep. 23 were 57 Veeries, 84 Gray-cheekeds, 444 Swainson's, and 91 Woods (GB et al.).

### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Many observers focus on the warblers each migratory period, and this year was no different, with at least 37 species being reported from across the Region. Numbers seemed down in most areas, with only a few reports of exceptional concentrations of migrants. Some interesting totals included two Golden-wingeds at Laurinburg, NC, Sep. 15 (BG), 25 Chestnut-sideds at K. Mt. Sep. 10 (BD), 19 Blackburnians at K. Mt. Sep. 22 (KDa), and three Canadas at Falls L., NC, Sep. 13 (RE). The Region's first **MacGillivray's Warbler** was a road-killed specimen found at L. M. Nov. 5 (KDv). Hopefully the next MacGillivray's found in the Region will not meet a similar fate. Connecticut Warblers were recorded only 3 times this fall, a little below average. Mourning Warblers on the other hand, were found at least 6 times, considerably more than normal. Wilson's Warblers were also more frequently seen, with up to 10 reports received.

Sparrows staged a better-than-average migration this fall. Some high counts of selected species included an impressive *nine* Clay-colored at P.I. Oct. 11 (RD, JL), eight Henslow's at Paulk's Pasture, *Glynn*, GA, Nov. 28 (JS et al.), and three Lincoln's in n.e. *Edgecombe*, NC, Oct. 4 (RD). Lark Sparrows

were reported up to eight times, about average. The rare LeConte's Sparrow was found once, at Eufaula N.W.R., GA, Oct. 30 (GB et al.). Lincoln's Sparrows were found at least 18 times across the Region, much better than average. The best Lapland Longspur count was of three at H.B.S.P. Nov. 27 (TK), and the best Snow Bunting total was at least nine at C. Hatt. Nov. 6-8 (ED, m. ob.). Migrant Dickcissels included one in Thomaston, GA, Sep. 19 (*fide* TM), one in *Durham*, NC, Oct. 3 (TKr), and one at the P. I. feeder Oct. 31 to Nov. 21 (ED, J&PW et al., m. obs.). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found twice: an imm. male was on St. Simons I., GA, Sep. 15-17 (LTh), and an ad. male was at L. M. Nov. 14-15 (ED, BC). Only one Shiny Cowbird was seen this period, a female at the S.S.S. Aug. 3 (PS). Winter finches put on a poor showing this fall, with only a handful of Purple Finches, although one was early at P. I. Oct. 11 (RD). Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were practically nonexistent, with about one report each.

**Contributors:** Diane Andre, Clancy Ballenger, Giff Beaton, Michael Bell, Brad Bergstrom, Rich Boyd, Ned Brinkley, Steve Calver, Brad Carlson, Derb Carter, Robin Carter, Will Cook, Sam Cooper (SCo), Phil Crutchfield, Kevin Danchisen (KDa), Kelly Davis (KDv), Ricky Davis, Eric Dean, Bruce Dralle, Caroline Eastman, Steve Ehly (SEh), Randy Emmitt, Steve Emslie, Frank Enders, Jim Flynn (JFl), Wade Fuller, John Fussell, Barbara Gearhart, Lex Glover, Nancy Gobris, Joe Greenberg, Paul Guris, Mary Gustafson, Bob Holmes, Steve Holzman, Earl Horn, Jeremy Hyman (JHy), Paul Johnson, Terry Johnson, Tim Kalbach, Thomas Krakauer (TKr), Carol Lambert, Darrell Lee, Harry LeGrand, Jeff Lewis, Merrill Lynch, Bob & Barbara Maxwell (B&BM), Nell Moore, Terry Moore, Cheryl Mullen (CMu), Michael Patten (MPa), Brian Patteson, Jack Peachey, Grayson Pearce, Magnus Persmark, Taylor Piephoff, Todd Plummer, Aubrey Scott, Jeff Sewell, Steve Shultz, Paul Sykes, Karen Theodorou, Lydia Thompson (LTh), Simon Thompson, Les Todd, Mike Turner, Steve Wagner, Judy Walker (JWa), Craig Watson, Keith Watson, Audrey Whitlock (AWH), Haven Wiley, David & Marcia Wright (D&MW), John & Paula Wright (J&PW).

**Ricky Davis**, 608 Smallwood Drive, Rocky Mount, NC 27804 (e-mail: RJDNC@aol.com)

