

southern atlantic coast region

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Weather this summer was generally hot and dry. Some areas in the western portions of the Region experienced extreme drought. Drought conditions lessened toward the coast, although many coastal plain areas were also considerably drier than normal. Most areas also recorded very hot temperatures for long stretches at a time. Thus conditions this summer were often unbearable for field observers and probably restricted birder activity—as evidenced by the reduced number of reports submitted. The birds, on the other hand, probably were not too bothered by the hot conditions. Several wet, cold spells in late spring, however, seem to have caused trouble for many coastal colonial waterbirds and some passerines, thereby disrupting summer breeding patterns.

Abbreviations: C. Hatt. (*Cape Hatteras, NC*); E.L.H. (*E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA*); H.B.S.P. (*Huntington Beach S.P., SC*); S.S.S. (*Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co., SC*).

PETRELS THROUGH SPOONBILL

North Carolina trips once again dominated the pelagic scene. Herald (Trinidad) Petrels have now reached expected status, and this summer off Hatteras two were reported 6 Jun and one 17 Jul (BP et al.). Out of Oregon Inlet, the quite rare Fea's Petrel was found twice, with singles noted 19 Jul (BP et al.) and 1 Aug (PG et al.). Some selected peak counts off Hatteras included 372 Black-capped Petrels 24 Jul, 310 Greater and 1035 Audubon's shearwaters 17 Jul, 62 Leach's Storm-Petrels 6 Jun, and 71 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels 24 Jul (BP et al.). Quite unexpected during summer, a Sooty Shearwater was a good find off Hatteras 24 Jul (BP et al.). The only Manx Shearwater was off Hatteras 6 Jun (BP et al.). One of the most hoped-for pelagic species, the White-faced Storm-Petrel, was found off Oregon Inlet 31 Jul (PG et al.), providing one of the few reports in recent years. White-tailed Tropicbirds made a good showing with singles off Hatteras 5 & 25 Jun, two off Hatteras 17 Jul, and one off Oregon Inlet 19 Jul (BP

et al.). In South Carolina, a rarely reported Black-capped Petrel was off Murrell's Inlet 26 Jun (JP et al.). A **Leach's Storm-Petrel**, found dead on the beach at Charleston, SC, 10 Jun (*vide* WP) provided that state's 3rd specimen. South Carolina also got its 2nd documented state record of **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** when one was found alive on the beach (but later died) on Fripp I., *Beaufort*, 2 Jun (*vide* WP). A Brown Pelican found at the Stevens Cr. Dam, Savannah R., *Edgefield*, SC, 31 Jul (MT) was unusual inland. This summer's Magnificent Frigatebird reports included singles at Buxton, NC, 2 Jun (DD), at Avon, NC, 15 Jun (ML), at Litchfield Beach, SC, 5 Jul (*vide* TP), and at Jekyll I., GA, 7 Jun (GB, JFI, EH).

Long-legged waders dispersed inland earlier than usual this summer, perhaps due to limited nesting success from the wet late-spring weather. A count of 52 Great Egrets at Jordan L., NC, 12 Jun (JPI) was very high for that early in the summer. Also of note was the presence of two–three Little Blue Herons far inland at L. Buchanan, *Haralson*, GA, throughout June and July (MB). Dispersing Reddish Egrets included two near Cape Lookout, NC, 31 Jul (JE, SA, RB et al.), one at Sunset Beach, NC, 31 Jul (WC), one at H.B.S.P. 17 Jul (JP et al.), and two on Cumberland I., GA, 10 Jul (GB). The peak count of Roseate Spoonbills in the Brunswick, GA, area was 12 on 7 Jun (GB, JFI, EH), and an imm. Spoonbill provided a rare South Carolina report at Kiawah I. in early July (*vide* DF).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Amazingly, the Ross's Goose present from the previous winter in *Madison*, GA, remained throughout the summer (JFI). Other lingerers found in the Region included a N. Pintail at E.L.H. all summer (PR, PB, TM, m.ob.), a Lesser Scaup at St. Simon's I., GA, 7 Jun (GB et al.), a Lesser Scaup at Augusta, GA, 26 Jun (AW et al.), a Black Scoter at Sullivan's I., SC, 6 Jun (SCO), and a Ruddy Duck on L. Hickory, NC, 24 Jul (D&LM).

New reports of nesting Mississippi Kites in North Carolina included another site near Laurinburg where five kites were observed around a partially-built nest (later

abandoned) on 26 Jul (BG). A nest in Roanoke Rapids yielded one young during the summer (*vide* FE). Always noteworthy, reports of breeding accipiters in the Region included two Sharp-shinned Hawks seen carrying food to a nest near S. Pines, NC, 11 Jul (SH) and two Cooper's Hawks which fledged from a nest in Raleigh, NC, 22 Jun (JC). A Broad-winged Hawk was definitely outside its normal summer range at Ridgeville, *McIntosh*, GA, 23 Jun (PS), providing an unusual coastal sighting. Although no nest was found, a pair of Am. Kestrels near Red Bank, *Lexington*, SC, were out of range 15–26 Jun (IP).

Three Black Rails heard at the Altamaha W.M.A. near Darien, GA, 7 Jun (GB et al.) provided a good count for this local species. A Sandhill Crane was a surprise along the Coosaw R., ACE Basin, SC, 14 Jul (*vide* JH). The 12 Sandhills reported from *Carteret*, NC, during the spring were discovered to have been raised by the Patuxent Wildlife Center and apparently were not able to migrate back north. These birds were present until Center personnel captured and returned most of the cranes 20–21 Jul (*vide* JF).

PLOVERS THROUGH TERNS

Nesting success throughout the Region for Piping Plover seemed about normal, in spite of the wet spring weather (sev. ob.). Some of the more interesting shorebird sightings included an Am. Avocet at the H.B.S.P. jetty pond 13 Jul (JP); inland Willets at Hooper Lane, NC, 18–19 Jul (WF et al.) and Silver Bluff Sanctuary, SC, 19–22 Jul (*vide* AW); a Willet off of Hatteras, NC, 24 Jul (BP et al.); a very early alternate-plumaged Dunlin at H.B.S.P. 4 Jul (JP et al.); and a Red-necked Phalarope at the S.S.S. 11 Jun (SC). The only Long-billed Curlew reported was at Shackleford Banks, *Carteret*, NC, in early July (NM). A Hudsonian Godwit was a good find at S.S.S. 27 Jul (SC). Also on 27 Jul at the S.S.S., Calver counted 898 Stilt Sandpipers, providing a record one-day total for this species in the Region. Good inland sandpiper reports included a calling ad. Long-billed Dowitcher at the Winslow Sod Farm, Scotland Neck, NC, 25 Jul (RD) and an extremely early



Com. Snipe at Hooper Lane, NC, 14 Jul (WF et al.). Wilson's Phalaropes were found only at the S.S.S. with two on 1 Jul and five on 27 Jul (SC).

This was one of the better summers for S. Polar Skuas with two–three off Hatteras, NC, 6 Jun (BP et al.), one off Hatteras 25 Jun (BP et al.), and one off Murrell's Inlet, SC, 26 Jun (JP et al.). The South Carolina skua sighting is only about the 5th or 6th report for that state. An ad. Franklin's Gull was a surprise at the Hatteras Inlet Ferry Terminal on Ocracoke I., NC, 3 Jul (JWe), providing a very rare summer report for the Region. A Roseate Tern seen off Oregon Inlet, NC, 4 Jun (BP et al.) was very rare offshore. Also very rare was an inland Least Tern at E.L.H., GA, 17 Jul (JS,PB), providing about the 6th Atlanta area record.

DOVES THROUGH KINGLETS

The Beaufort, NC, population of Eur. Collared-Doves continues to thrive (JF), like most other groups of this species throughout the Region. Will anything halt its expansion? Several White-winged Doves in Beaufort seem not to have had as much success: present for over a year with nesting last year, they had not been found after this spring. Are they extirpated, or have they just moved to another location? The Com. Ground-Dove made news this summer. Locally unusual reports included two s. of Plymouth, NC, 7 Jun (JP,PRo) and two near Ward, Saluda, SC, 31 Jul (MT). An amazing count of 28 at City Park, Macon, GA, 2 Jul (EB) provided one of the highest totals ever for that state and the Region. Rare summer Black-billed Cuckoos included singles near Dahlonga, GA, 15–16 Jul (PWo) and near Orrum, Robeson, NC, 27 Jul (*vide* SCa). The only Rufous Hummingbird report received was of an ad. male at Chapel Hill, NC, 7–9 Jul (*vide* TP). Totally unexpected was the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found in Whispering Pines, Moore, NC, during the first week of July (*vide* SCa). Was this a late spring bird, an early fall bird, or just a far-ranging wanderer?

Apart from the usual Jekyll I., GA, birds, other regional Gray Kingbirds were found at Caswell Beach, NC, 5 Jun (BC, DDe) and at C. Hatt. 25 Jun (J&PW). Once again Scissor-tailed Flycatchers appeared in the Region: one was at C. Hatt. 15 Jun (PM et al.), another (the same individual?) was at Ocracoke, NC, 8 Jul (*vide* KW), and a 3rd was at E.L.H. 25–26 Jul (TM et al., m.ob.). The presence of five pairs of Loggerhead Shrikes at DeBordieu Beach, SC, all summer was noteworthy since the species is

increasingly hard to find as one nears the coast. Three of the pairs successfully raised young (SD), but away from the coast, nesting success of Loggerheads was not as good. Irvin reported that in the Sandhills area of North Carolina, the wet spells of the spring caused considerable nest failures among some known shrike pairs. Apparently the birds were not able to recover, even during the months of June and July. Swallows also experienced some mortality at several areas during the spring but apparently were able to regroup and raise at least one brood successfully; however, they began migrating S in numbers a little earlier than usual. Good counts of Cliff Swallows included 150 in s. Troup, GA, 17 Jun (PR) and 216 going S in n. Greene, GA, 26 Jul (PS). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet found dead in Raleigh, NC, on the weird date of 29 Jul (*vide* Sca) was another bird found totally out-of-season. Was this an absurdly early fall migrant?

WARBLERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

Several warblers were found at the edge of known breeding ranges this summer. A Black-and-white Warbler was on territory in n. Moore, NC, 6 Jun (JPi), an Am. Redstart pair was observed feeding a fledgling in Elbert, GA, 13 Jun (JFl), three Worm-eating Warblers were singing at Morrow Mountain S.P., NC (MK), and a singing Louisiana Waterthrush was at H.B.S.P. 3 Jun (JP et al.). The Milltail Cr. BBS, Dare, NC, consistently produces high numbers of certain warblers. This year on 6 Jun, high counts included 88 Prairie, 78 Prothonotary, 8 Worm-eating warblers, and 77 Com. Yellowthroats (MLy). It is obvious that this site needs continued monitoring as an important nesting area in this section of the coastal region.

Other areas demanding monitoring, this time for Henslow's Sparrow, are the VOA sites in Beaufort and Pitt, NC. This year's censuses of singing males produced 76 at VOA-A 5 Jun and 50 at VOA-B 6 Jun (J&PW). A singing Song Sparrow in Southern Pines, NC, 3–7 Jun (SCa) was locally unusual and also outside of the normal breeding season range in that state. Lingering White-throated Sparrows were reported twice with singles in Fulton, GA, 2 Jun (*vide* TM) and at Raleigh, NC, 16 Jun (ET). Dickcissel reports were down relative to the past several years. Males were at Cedar Island N.W.R., NC, 2 Jun (JR) and at Pettigrew S.P., NC, 19 Jun (SH et al.), and a nesting pair was found in the Martin Quad, GA, 12 Jun (GB et al.). Three locally unusual Bobolinks at Hooper Lane, NC, 17 Jul (WF et al.) probably represented nearby nesters

Shiny Cowbirds have apparently started to invade the Region rapidly. In North Carolina, single Shynys were at Cedar I in early June (NM) and at the Ocracoke Ferry Terminal 7 Jun (WI). In Georgia, one near Stockbridge, Henry, 26 Jun (PR) provided a first area record; another was on Jekyll I 18 Jun (LT). In South Carolina, one was at Sullivan's I. 13 Jun (WH), but 18 Shiny Cowbirds found at the S.S.S. 1–2 Jul (PS, SC) represented an invasion and possibly the highest number ever found outside of Florida. To ameliorate a potential negative impact, at least 13 of these were captured, but the remainder moved on to unknown locales. Probably a very late migrant, an ad male Baltimore Oriole was out-of-place in Orange, NC, 12 Jun (WC). Finally, a female Red Crossbill at a feeder in Dunwoody, GA, 8–9 Jun (*vide* JS) furnished an out-of-season and very rare Atlanta area report.

CORRIGENDA

In NAB 53: 45, the MacGillivray's Warbler at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, furnished the 2nd Regional record. The first was found in the Atlanta, GA, area in the 1980s (Manns) In NAB 53: 159, the Black-throated Green Warbler at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, represented the 2nd winter sighting for that state. The first was on the C. Hatt., NC, CBC on 27 Dec 1983 (LeGrand).

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