

# southern atlantic coast



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Temperatures this summer were about average, compared to the last several years, with no extended periods of really hot weather. But precipitation exceeded normal levels for much of the region. The drought conditions present from middle Georgia south were still present but lessening after much-needed rain in July. Other areas saw one of the wettest summers in recent memory. Wet weather can be detrimental to nesting success, but luckily no widespread instances of breeding failure were reported. The number of rarities reported was down, but nevertheless some interesting highlights included more Bermuda Petrels off North Carolina, a lingering Roseate Spoonbill in that state, Georgia's first documented Curlew Sandpiper, and nesting Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at several locations.

**Abbreviations:** BRC (Bird Records Committee); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

## LOONS THROUGH WOOD STORK

Rare summer reports of Common Loon included one on L. Hickory, NC, 7 Jun (D&LM) and two at L. Water F. George, GA, 22 Jul (MB). North Carolina pelagic trips once again produced some of the rare gadfly petrels: one Herald Petrel off Hatteras 4 Jun (BP et al.) and two off Oregon Inlet 4 Jun (F.O.N.T.). One Fea's Petrel was found off Hatteras 15 Jul (BP et al.) for the only report. **Bermuda Petrel** again made news, with singles off Oregon Inlet 2 Jun (BP et al.) and 3 Jun (F.O.N.T.). These, coupled with the previous week's three, brought the year's count to an unprecedented five sightings. Numbers of Black-capped Petrels and the expected shearwater and storm-petrel species were about average. The very rare-in-summer Manx Shearwater was found off Hatteras on three different dates, with singles 4 Jun, 16 Jul, and 29 Jul (BP et al.). The always exciting White-faced Storm-Petrel was found once out of Oregon Inlet in mid-Jul (AF *fide* BP). White-tailed Tropicbirds were once again hard to find, but two were seen off Hatteras 15 Jul and one was found there 29 Jul (BP et al.). Locally rare in summer, 12 American White Pelicans were at the S.S.S. from late Jun through Jul (SC). Unusual inland, Brown Pelicans were found at L. Walter F. George Dam, GA, 22

July (MB) and Falls Lake, NC, 26 Jul (*fide* BB). The rare-but-regular Magnificent Frigatebird was found twice, with high-flying singles at Hilton Head I., SC, 3 Jun (SCo, MD) and at Cape Hatteras, NC, 6 Jun (WI).

Long-legged waders wandered inland from coastal sites in about average numbers, the lone exception being White Ibis, which was reported considerably more than normal throughout the region. Of interest was the American Bittern found at Grand Bay W.M.A., GA, 12 Jun (*fide* BBe), a species which is at best casual in that state in summer. Reddish Egret numbers were about normal, with the best count being 3 at Little Tybee I., GA, 8-9 Jul (DB et al., MB et al.). Roseate Spoonbills away from the usual s. Georgia coastal sites were one at Harris Neck N.W.R., GA, 22 Jul (DC) and the P.I. bird present from the spring, which remained through the period (m.ob.). In North Carolina Wood Storks normally move to the Sunset Beach, Brunswick, area in summer, thus one at Falls Lake, 29 Jun (*fide* BB) was out of place.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH TERNS

Lingering waterfowl of note included a Snow Goose at L. Walter F. George, GA, 4 Jun (JS), a Tundra Swan at P.I. all summer (BC), several Ring-necked Ducks from all three states, and a Lesser Scaup at the Jacksonville W.T.P., NC, in early Jul (NM, JO). Noteworthy breeding records involved a female Blue-winged Teal with 6 juveniles at the S.S.S. 26 Jun (SC), a female Hooded Merganser with 3 young along the Chattahoochee R., Atlanta, GA, 11 Jun (ET), and a female Ruddy Duck with 7 chicks at the S.S.S. 9 Jun (SC).

A Swallow-tailed Kite was a surprise far inland in DeKalb, GA, 22 Jul (*fide* TM). A Mississippi Kite nest found near Newport, NC, 12 Jul (JFe, JF) not only added to the growing number of nesting locations for that state, but was the first to be located in the outer coastal plain. A Northern Harrier at the S.S.S. 31 July was extremely early if it was a fall migrant (SC). Sandhill Cranes provided unusual summer reports, with one over Decatur, GA, and two in Douglas, GA, both 24 Jul (*fide* TM).

The southbound shorebird migration started as usual in late June-early July. Some of the more unusual inland sightings

involved 2 American Avocets at Falls Lake, NC, 13 Jul (KF) and a Whimbrel at L. Crabtree, Wake, NC, 15 Jul (RP). Georgia had the only Long-billed Curlews, with one at Little Tybee I. 12 Jul (DB) and 2 on Little St. Simons I. 22 Jul (EK). Little Tybee I. also hosted Georgia's first documented **Curlew Sandpiper**, present 5–10 Jul (DB, m.ob.); photos should put the species on the state list. The only Wilson's Phalarope reported was at Onslow I., GA, 29 Jul (BZ).

Only 3 South Polar Skuas were found off North Carolina this summer, one off Hatteras 4 Jun and 2 there 29 Jul (BP et al.). Jaeger numbers were about average, although 19 Pomarines off Hatteras 29 Jul was a good one-day total (BP et al.). Two Long-tailed Jaegers off Murrell's Inlet, SC, 17 Jun (JP, DBa) provided a very rare report; there are only a handful of sightings and one specimen from that state. Unusual gull sightings included 2 Laughings at Walter F.

George Lake, GA, 11 Jun (MB et al.) and a rare-in-summer Bonaparte's at the S.S.S. 9 & 26 Jun (SC). Some terns were found offshore in good numbers this summer: the Arctic Tern peak was 33 off Hatteras 3 Jun (BP et al.); 10 Bridleds off C. Lookout, NC, 23 Jul (BCa); and 86 Sooties off Hatteras 29 Jul (BP et al.), that species' peak.

#### DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to spread in the region, with birds being found on the n. Outer Banks and inland as far as the western Piedmont of North Carolina. The Beaufort, NC, White-winged Dove was still present at least until early Jun (JE, ST et al.), having been present there for one–two years. Black-billed Cuckoos were once again found in e. North Carolina, with up to 3 in Croatan N.F. 1 June (JF), one at L. Phelps 3 Jun (ML), and 2 at Alligator R. N.W.R. 13 Jul (JL). It was

not determined if any of these were late migrants. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** provided an extremely rare and unusual summer report away from the mountains in s. *Forsyth*, NC, 25 Jun and 9 Jul (RS, RB); summer reports are practically unheard of in the region. Several noteworthy late migrant flycatchers included a Willow at P.I. 2 Jun (GA et al.), another Willow at Ft. Bragg, NC, in early Jun (AS), and a Least at Ossabaw I., GA, 4 Jun (ME). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers continued to make news in the region. The nesting pair first noted in the spring in McDonough, GA, fledged young around 24 Jun (*vide* TM). In North Carolina a pair near Monroe, *Union*, first seen in early Jun (EO, A&BO), nested and successfully fledged young by 15 Jul (sev. ob.). Other Scissor-taileds found in Georgia included singles in *Emanuel* 4 Jun, at Piedmont N.W.R. 6 Jun, and in *Pickens* 10 Jun (*vide* TM). North Carolina singles



An enigmatic, striking species, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher has now bred "Coast to coast" in North America. To a breeding record for California in the late 1970s and early 1980s we can add breeding records from Georgia and North Carolina. In the latter state, this adult (right) and fledgling (left) photographed 15 Jul 2000 were part of a successful nest near Monroe, *Union*, providing a first nesting record for the state. *Photograph by Mary Welty.*

were near Scotland Neck 11 Jun (JL, JW) and near Raleigh 10 Jul (*vide* RD). Warbling Vireos were found at several locations. Two were on territory in *Cleveland*, NC, in early Jun (ST, JM) and 2 were still singing at a farm in *Orange*, NC, 4 Jul (WC). The latter birds, present there since spring, probably nested. Two Cedar Waxwings found in *s. Forsyth*, GA, 30 Jun (JFI) were quite rare, and if they nested, would provide that state's southernmost breeding report.

### WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

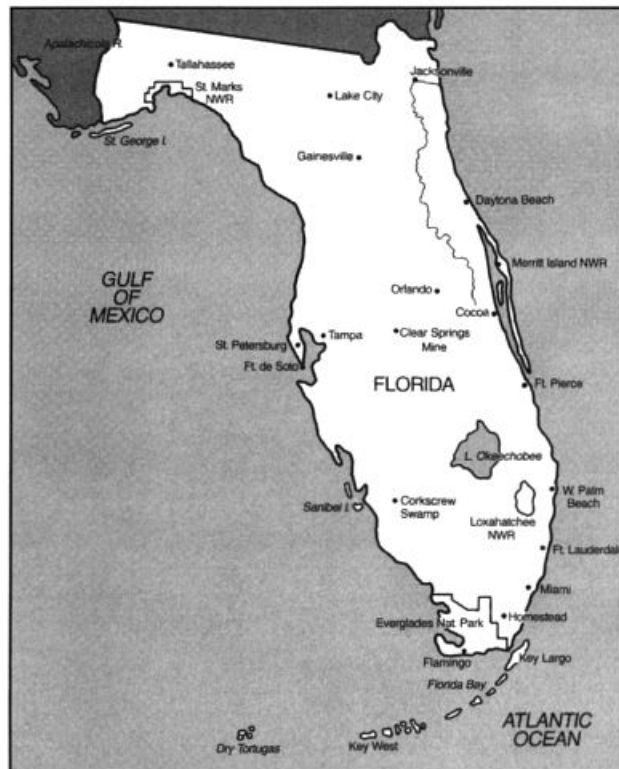
Several lingering warblers were found this summer. Three singing Black-throated Blues were in the Ft. Bragg, NC, area in early Jun (SCa); Yellow-rumpeds were at Ocracoke, NC, 17 Jun (PV), at York, SC, 19 Jun (BH), and in *Barnwell*, SC, 24 Jun (PC); a Blackpoll was at C. Lookout, NC, 7 Jun (JF); and a Northern Waterthrush was in Athens, GA, 5 Jun (BD). A Lark Sparrow was a surprise near Tallapoosa, *Haralson*, GA, 25 Jul (MB), a most unexpected sighting for the summer. In North Carolina, breeding of this species has historically occurred in the Sandhills region. This year several were at Ft. Bragg in early Jun (AS), and 3 adults with 5 fledged young were found in *Scotland*, 21–28 Jun (BG). The Henslow's Sparrow surveys at the two VOA sites in e. North Carolina near Greenville, turned up 140 singing males 3–4 Jun (JW). The numbers are slightly down from previous years, but the species is apparently still in good shape at the two areas. A female Painted Bunting was rather late at P.I. 8 Jun (JL); the species does not nest on the Outer Banks. Noteworthy Dickcissel reports included several in *Bartow*, GA, (CL), up to 3 in *Cleveland*, NC, 7 Jun (ST, JM), one at Pettigrew St. Pk, NC, 25 Jun (HL, JPi), and 3 near Margaret, *Franklin*, NC, 25 Jun (RD). Of the latter, one was a female carrying food, very suggestive of breeding. Late migrant Bobolinks included a male along the Chattahoochee R., Atlanta, GA, 12 Jun (ET) and a pair near Margaret, NC, 1 Jun (RD). Shiny Cowbirds continue to invade the region. This season's sightings involved a female on Blackbeard I., GA, 7 Jul (PS), a male at Darien, GA, 21 Jul (EB), and a male at Ft. Macon, NC, in early Jul (*vide* JF). In North Carolina, Baltimore Orioles were found far to the east, with one at Ft. Bragg in early Jun (AS), and a female feeding a juvenile 9 Jul in Raleigh (*vide* HL). Although no nest was found, the evidence is very strong that breeding occurred there, very unusual that far east.

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 352.

# florida



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**B**elow-normal rains during June and July, the first half of the Florida "rainy season," did little to replenish parched lakes and wetlands. The unusually dry conditions caused a birding bonanza, with unprecedented numbers of wading birds and shorebirds exploiting mudflats and