

Southern Atlantic Coast



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The spring migration through the Region was generally uneventful, with mostly fair weather keeping birds on the move. Temperatures were slightly above normal and precipitation continued below average, thereby adding to the drought conditions over much of the Region. This spring, gadfly petrels caused excitement off North Carolina's Outer Banks, Georgia had its first White-faced Ibis, and landbird migrants once again disappointed observers in most of the Region.

Abbreviations: B.R.C. (Bird Records Committee); C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, Dare, NC); E.L.H. (E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach State Park, SC); K.Mt. (Kennesaw Mt. National Battlefield Park, GA); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., Dare, NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The best inland loon total was of 152 Commons in *Hart*, GA 13 Apr (EH). The most interesting grebe counts were 49 Horneds in *Carroll*, GA 4 Apr (EB) and 4 Eareds at the S.S.S. 1 Apr (SC). The usual round of pelagic trips out of North Carolina's Outer Banks (BP et al.) were rather eventful, especially for the rare *Pterodroma* petrels. Seven trips found Herald Petrels, with the best count being 3 off

Hatteras 26 May. Two **Fea's Petrels** were off Hatteras 27 May, while singles were off Manteo 27 & 31 May. The much sought-after **Bermuda Petrel** was also found: 2 off Hatteras 27 May (BP et al.). This species has been recorded in these waters in seven out of the past nine years, with the first firm record coming in 1993. This is the first record of multiple birds anywhere away from Bermuda, and both birds (a worn ad. and a striking, freshly-plumaged juv.) were sitting together, in a flock of 3 Black-capped Petrels (ph. BP)! They represent the 13th and 14th Regional and state records.

Shearwater and storm-petrel numbers this spring were about average, with some notable exceptions being 133 Sooty Shearwaters off Manteo 24 May, 66 Manx Shearwaters off Hatteras 9 Mar, and 40 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels off Hatteras 27 May. From shore, flights of shearwaters included a few dozen Sooty Shearwaters seen between Whalebone Jct. and Avon 20 May (ESB et al.), and reports from Whalebone of a few Cory's and Manx the same day during strong onshore winds. Tropicbirds included a White-tailed and a **Red-billed Tropicbird** off Manteo 31 May (BP et al.). It is a definite red-letter day when both species are found on the same trip.

At L. Mattamuskeet, NC, 18 American White Pelicans were found 9 Mar (AB), where the species had been present since late fall. At Florence Marina, along the river n. of Eufaula N.W.R., GA, an imm. Brown Pelican was seen 4 May (WC), continuing from the winter. Great Blue Herons continued to spread inland as nesters, with the biggest colony being one of

63 nests at Cub Creek, Jordan L., NC during the spring (AJ). Very rare in the Region were single Great White Herons at Kiawah I., SC 13 Mar (*fide* WP) and Gould's Inlet, St. Simons I., GA 17 May (EB). Also very rare in spring, a Reddish Egret seen circling northward at Harker's I., Carteret, NC 27 May was quite unusual (JF et al.). Somewhat overdue, an imm. **White-faced Ibis** found at Eufaula N.W.R., GA (WC, m. ob.) provided that state's first documented record. Initially found 19 Mar, the bird was present until at least 20 Apr and was conveniently near several Glossy Ibis for comparison.

The only Fulvous Whistling-Ducks reported involved an impressive flock of 40+ in flight along I-95, *McIntosh*, GA 12 Mar (WC). Only one Great White-fronted Goose was found, that being in s. *Douglas*, GA 7-9 Apr (CLO, JFI) Also in Georgia, an apparent Ross's x Snow Goose hybrid caused some confusion at Sweetwater Creek S. P., *Douglas* 13-14 Mar (BD et al.). Ducks were relatively scarce, no surprise after the winter, which saw reduced numbers Of interest, though, were a female Common Eider at Atlantic Beach, NC 8 Apr & 26 May (*fide* JF), a Surf Scoter inland at Plant Wansley, *Carroll*, GA 11 Mar & 4 Apr (EB), 4 Common Mergansers at Salem L., *Forsyth*, NC 23 Mar (RS et al.), and an impressive inland count of 147 Red-breasted Mergansers at Roanoke Rapids L., NC 24 Mar (RD).

KITES THROUGH TERNS

A Swallow-tailed Kite at St. Simons I., GA 1 Mar (EB) provided a record-early arrival date for this species in that state. Interesting was a report of 2 Broad-winged Hawks at Alligator River N.W.R., NC in early Mar (*fide* JL), where one was found earlier in the winter on the Christmas Bird Count. In South Carolina, a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk was a good find at Murphey I., *Charleston* 15 Mar (WP). This provided about the 4th report of this w. form for that state. The 2 wintering Rough-legged Hawks at Alligator River N.W.R. were last observed 19 Mar (JL). Very rare Golden Eagles included singles at Okefenokee Swamp, GA in early Mar (*fide* JH) and in *Monroe*, GA 11 May (*fide* TJ). Locally very rare and unusual was the Purple Gallinule found on the beach near Avon, NC in early May (EHa). The bird was rescued from attacking gulls and is recovering in rehab! Sandhill Crane reports included one found injured in a ditch near Rocky Mount, NC in early May (JV), a bird that later died; one near New Bern, NC for a couple of weeks in late Apr (WF, v. o.); and one at Riverbend Park, *Catawba*, NC 25 Mar (DM et al.).

The shorebird migration caused some excitement this spring. Rare inland in spring was the flock of 11 Willets at Jordan L., NC 5 May (PC et al.). The best Upland Sandpiper count reported was of 4 at the Cherry Hospital grounds, Wayne, NC 6 Apr (ED). Very rare were the 11 Whimbrels at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 28 Apr (WC), providing about the 5th inland record for that state. Also of note, a **Eurasian Whimbrel** was at C. Lookout, NC 27 May (JF et al.), the first state report in many years. Long-billed Curlews were found sparingly, with the best count being an impressive one-day total of 8 on Sapelo I., GA 15 Mar (EB et al.). Georgia had its first inland spring Marbled Godwit when one was in *Bartow* 5 May (BZ et al.). Another very rare shorebird was the **Baird's Sandpiper** found in ne. *Forsyth*, GA 18 May (JP, JC). There are close to 10 previous reports for the state during the spring migration. A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was reported from the S S S. 13 Apr (SC), and if accepted by the S C B R C., it would be only the 2nd spring Buff-breasted for the state. Another female Ruff was at the S.S.S. 13 Apr (SC), the best location in the Region for this species. Much rarer was the female Ruff at the Ocean Isle, NC W.T.P. 4-5 May (TP et al.). Other noteworthy shorebird reports included 15 Western Sandpipers at the E.L.H. 11 May (*vide* CL), 14 Dunlin in *Bartow*, GA 4 May (BD), a Long-billed Dowitcher at the E.L.H. 5 May (JFI), a Wilson's Phalarope in ne. *Forsyth*, GA 19 May (JFI et al.), and Red-necked Phalaropes on land at P.I. 8 & 10 May (SM, CE).

From one to 2 South Polar Skuas were found off North Carolina's Outer Banks on at least five trips this spring. Much more unusual was one seen from shore at C. Hatt. 28 May (*vide* BP), though the species was seen there among migrants in four years during the mid-1990s. The jaeger migration was one of the best in many years. Impressive counts included 78 Pomarines off Manteo, NC 24 May (BP et al.), 26 Parasitics from C. Hatt. 28 Apr (MS), and 4 Long-tailed off Manteo 24 May (BP et al.). Also of note were 10 Parasitics seen from shore at Jekyll I., GA 7 Mar (EB), and a Long-tailed off Murrell's Inlet, SC 11 May (MH), a species rarely found in that state.

An ad. Franklin's Gull was found at Bald Head I., NC 14 Mar (GM). The bird, on the beach with several Laughing Gulls for comparison, was the first for the state in several years. Very rare in the Region, Sabine's Gull was reported twice. One was near shore at C. Hatt 20 May (*vide* JL), and one was seen well at C. Fear, Bald Head I., NC 31 May (SCo). The Black-legged Kittiwake that wintered on West

Point L., GA was last seen 27 Mar (BL). Always noteworthy, single Roseate Terns were at C. Lookout, NC 5 May (MP et al.) and at C. Hatt. 28 May (*vide* BP). An Arctic Tern was extremely unusual onshore at Holden Beach, NC 28 May (SCo). The bird was an ad. seen at close range. Only 2 were reported from the late May pelagic trips this season. Very rare inland Least Terns included one at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, GA 5 May (CZ) and 2 near Vidalia, *Toombs*, GA 19 May (JFI, EH). And tropical terns were very reduced in number, with only one Bridled off Manteo, NC 26 May (BP et al.) and one Sooty on the beach near Salvo, NC 11 May (KM).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

White-winged Doves continue to be present, with one in Hinesville, *Liberty*, GA 24 & 28 Mar (*vide* DC), in Pickens, SC 24 Apr (SP), and Decatur, GA 11 May (SMA); the Beaufort, NC bird was seen several times in May (JF, ESB et al.). Good Black-billed Cuckoo reports involved singles at Tucker, GA 29 Apr (JS, CL), in Morgan, GA 12 May (EB), and in the Croatan N. F., NC 25 May (JF). The last dates for some wintering hummingbirds included 21 Apr for the Winston-Salem, NC **Calliope Hummingbird** (CW), mid-Apr for the Gibsonville, NC **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** (SCa), and 18 Mar for the Columbus, GA **Allen's Hummingbird**. Also another Black-chinned was banded near Lexington, SC in early Mar (BH).

Only one Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported this spring, at S. Peachtree Creek Nature Preserve, Decatur, GA 26-28 Apr (JB, BD). Other rare flycatchers included an imm. male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at Athens, GA 23 Mar (GS, LH) and a Western Kingbird at Thomasville, GA 6 Mar (JD). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was seen and heard on the Charleston Naval Station, *Berkeley*, SC 1 Mar (DF et al.), providing about the 2nd report for that state. The Region's two known Scissor-tailed Flycatcher nesting pairs returned for the 3rd year in a row, with the Monroe, NC birds returning 22 Apr (AO) and the McDonough, GA birds back as of 10 May (BZ).

Noteworthy migrant vireos included a Warbling on Roanoke I., NC 8 May (JL) and a Philadelphia on the Winston-Salem, NC Spring Count 5 May (*vide* DD). Thrushes came through normally—that is, mostly unnoticed. Of the few that were seen this spring, a Gray-cheeked at K.Mt. 24 May (GB) provided a new late date for Georgia. There was one report from each state of Bicknell's Thrush. In all cases, observers mentioned getting good looks at and hearing the song of these individuals; the latter is especially important.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The warbler migration was considered to be rather poor in most areas, a common complaint in the past several years. Of interest were early Cape Mays in *Camden*, GA 23 Mar (MB) and Lansford Canal St. Pk., *Chester*, SC 28 Mar (JBU). A Black-throated Blue at Surfside Beach, SC 3 Mar (JG et al.) was most certainly a wintering individual, as was a Prairie at Simpsonville, SC 7-8 Mar (PW). Other early warblers of note were a Prothonotary at Jekyll I., GA 22 Mar (LT), a Swainson's at Athens, GA 29 Mar (*vide* TM), a Louisiana Waterthrush in *Ben Hill*, GA 3 Mar (GB, TE), and a Hooded near Harleyville, SC 17 Mar (AS). Connecticut Warblers made a great showing, with one at Indian Springs S. P., GA 3 May (EB); 2 at S Peachtree Creek Nature Preserve, GA 12-16 May (JS; JFI); 2 at Cochran Shoals, Atlanta, GA 16-20 May (PH; MD); one at Sweetwater Creek S. P., GA 25 May (JS), and one at the Savannah River Site, SC 15 May (PC). The rare Mourning Warbler was also found, with singles in *Aiken*, SC 7 May (PC) and at K.Mt. 23 May (TE et al.), the latter providing a first spring record for that locality.

A Scarlet Tanager was quite early at Eufaula N.W.R., GA 25 Mar (EB et al.). The **Green-tailed Towhee** found at Southport, NC during the winter was last observed 24 Apr (GM). Noteworthy, especially in spring, a Clay-colored Sparrow was near Fishing Creek, *Halifax*, NC 3 Mar (RD). One Lark Sparrow was located, that being at H.B.S.P. in the first week of Apr (KB). Henslow's Sparrow reports involved 2 at Ichauway Plantation, *Baker*, GA 15 Mar (MB), one near Hasty, *Scotland*, NC 9 Mar (JBe et al.), and one at the Congaree Swamp Nat Mon., *Richland*, SC 13 Apr (TK et al.). Noteworthy spring Lincoln's Sparrows included singles at the S.S.S. 13 Apr (SC), in *DeKalb*, GA 29 Apr (PH), and in *Upson*, GA 5 May (MBe). Dickcissels once again were found at several sites. In North Carolina, singles were at Anilorac Farm, *Orange*, 28 Apr (SPh) and in e *Franklin* 23 May (RD). Of the eight+ reports from Georgia, the best count was of 18 along Race Track Rd., *Upson* 11 May (EB). Excellent numbers of Bobolinks moved through Georgia this spring as evidenced by the counts of 1,000+ at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta (AW) and the 6,700+ in one area of w. *Monroe* 5 May (JFI). Up to 6 Boat-tailed Grackles of the Gulf Coast subspecies were slightly to the n. of their normal range at Reed Bingham St Pk., *Colquitt*, GA 17 Mar (JFI, EH). Of interest, a female was seen carrying nesting material there 27 Apr (MB et al.). A female Boat-tailed was also far inland in South Carolina at Santee N.W.R. 6 Apr (MT), considerably farther

upstream from known locations at L. Moultrie. Three Shiny Cowbirds were reported: one at the S.S.S. 1 Apr (SC), one at Jekyll I., GA 15 Apr (AL), and one photographed at a feeder in *Early*, GA 26 May, providing the first inland documentation of the species for the state (*fide* TJ). Finches continued their sparse presence in the Region from the winter with Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks being reported just a handful of times.

CORRIGENDUM

The hummingbird that wintered at Gibsonville, NC was named incorrectly. The bird, first found during the preceding fall

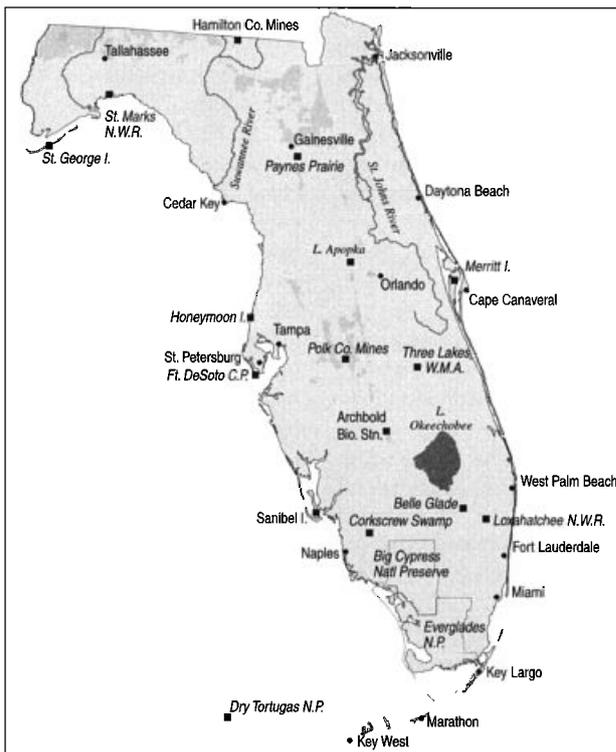
season, was North Carolina's first **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, not Broad-billed Hummingbird as printed in *N.A.B.* 56: 167.

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Florida



Abbreviations/definitions: F.O.S.R.C. (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; information provided by Reed Bowman, Secretary); L.A.R.A. (L. Apopka Restoration Area; *Orange*); report (any observation); and record (only reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Hamilton phosphate mines hosted a Red-throated Loon and an Eared Grebe 20–27 Apr (BBe), while 16 other Eared Grebes were at *Polk* phosphate mines 18 Mar (PF). Over 120 Audubon's Shearwaters were encountered en route to Dry Tortugas N.P. 3 May, where an imm. White-tailed Tropicbird was seen the following day (DG, GSt et al.). Sulids at the Tortugas included 32 Masked Boobies, including one large chick, in Apr (PL et al.), and 65 Brown Boobies 22 Apr (MG). Largest counts of American White Pelicans were 1220 at L.A.R.A. 3 Apr (HR), 350+ at L. Jessup, *Seminole* 15 May (RG et al.), and 328 at L. Monroe, *Seminole* and *Volusia* 11 May (RG) Brown Pelicans seem to be increasing inland This season 2 were at Lakeland 8 Mar (TP), one at L.A.R.A. 10 Mar (HR), 3 at Newnans L, Gainesville 15 Apr (MMe), one at L. Istokpoga, *Highlands* 8 May (MMc), and 2 at L. Jackson, *Leon* 27 May (GSp).

The 1250 Anhingas at *Hamilton* mines 11 May (JK) must have been an amazing sight Rare in the Keys, a Glossy Ibis was at Boca Chica Key 18 Apr (PL et al.), while a **White-faced Ibis** at L. Hollingsworth, Lakeland 28

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Sustained east winds for much of the season resulted in a dearth of migrants throughout the Region. Some comments received were: "the slowest migration I have ever experienced" ... "migration was almost invisible" ...

"the worst migration we have ever had" ... and "an almost birdless migration." However, despite the weather—or perhaps because of it—the spring was excellent for Caribbean strays, with a Zenaida Dove, Key West Quail-Dove, four La Sagra's Flycatchers, one Bananaquit, five Western Spindalises, and a Yellow-faced Grassquit. Two "first" successful breeding records added further interest to the season.