

Central Southern



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Abbreviations: FW.B.S.F. (Fort Walton Beach Spray Facility, FL), N.N.W.R. (Noxubee NWR, MS), W.N.W.R. (Wheeler NWR, AL), W.T.F. (wastewater treatment facility).

LOONS THROUGH SPOONBILL

Sorting through thousands of loons in the Region does have its rewards. Single Red-throated Loons were reported in Alabama on the Dauphin I. C.B.C. 21 Dec (CDC); in Arkansas on L. Dardanelle, Yell 1-8 Feb (RD, KN, LDN, CMi, LM); in Mississippi on Bay Springs L., Tishomingo 23 Feb (SJD); and in nw. Florida on the Choctawhatchee Bay C.B.C., Okaloosa 18 Dec (RAD, LD), at Destin 18 Jan (AK, DR), and at Gulf Breeze 19 Jan (TB). Single Pacific Loons were recorded in Alabama from Perdido Pass, Baldwin 4-19 Jan (RRR, LFG) and Guntersville 11 Jan (SWM); in Arkansas on Beaver L., Benton 29 Dec—1 Mar (RD et al.); in nw. Florida at Gulf Breeze 14 Dec (LD) and 19 Jan (TB) and on Pensacola Bay, Escambia 1 Feb (AF, DF); and in Mississippi on Bay

Springs L. 26 Jan—23 Feb (SJD, GB). Cross L., Caddo was the “in” place for unusual grebes in Louisiana. The 3rd Red-necked Grebe record for Louisiana was of 2 birds—a winter ad. and an imm.—19 Jan (CLY, CM, LR, LG; p. a.), and these same observers found the 3rd nw. Louisiana Western Grebe there on the same date! Eight Eared Grebes were at the Boyd Point W.T.F. near Pine Bluff, AR 21 Dec. (RD, LA), and one at FW.B.S.F., Walton 7-22 Dec (RAD, LD) had been present there since Nov.

American White Pelicans continued their fall showing, particularly inland. In Alabama, one was at W.N.W.R. 2 Dec—4 Feb (SWM, CDC, m. ob.), 11 were found on the Waterloo C.B.C. 14 Dec (DJS, FM, GM), and 100 were in Dallas 25 Jan (BG). One was near Fayetteville, AR 12 Dec (JN). In Mississippi, up to 20 were on Columbus L., Lowndes/Clay 4 Dec—20 Feb; up to 3 were at N.N.W.R., Noxubee 3-16 Dec (TS, m. ob.); and an impressive 900 were seen on L. Washington, Washington 25 Jan (SJD, GB, GK, SK). An imm. Brown Pelican on Lay L., Shelby/Coosa 15 Dec (RR, BC) was the first record for the Alabama mountain region. Neotropical Cormorants continued their expansion inland. The northernmost breeding location in Louisiana at L. Martin, St. Martin contained at least 20 individuals 7 Jan (JHu). An ad. was near Cold L., Humphreys 28 Feb+ (GK, SK, m. ob.), for one of few Mississippi records.

Two American Bitterns were in Tunica 8 Dec (SJD, GK, SK), while singles were in Oktibbeha 9 Dec (RK), N.N.W.R., Winston 14 Dec (TS, MSc), and Grenada L., Yalobusha 18 Dec (GK, SK), all in Mississippi. Cattle Egrets are rare inland visitors in the Region. In Mississippi, one was at Grenada Dam, Grenada 18 Dec (GK, SK, RB, JRW); up to 13 were in Humphreys 30 Dec—25 Jan (SJD, PBa, KB, GB); 6 were in Leflore 29 Jan (SJD, KB, AH); 2 were in Coahoma 1 Jan (CBu, DPt, WRP); and one was near Marks, Quitman 9 Jan (GK, SK). Black-crowned Night-Herons put in a showing in Humphreys, MS, where up to 134 were seen 18-25 Jan (SJD, KB, GB, GK, SK). The fall's Roseate Spoonbill movement into Mississippi spilled over in winter, with 2 imms. in Humphreys 2 Dec (SJD).

WATERFOWL

Waterfowl numbers continued a three-year trend toward low numbers early in the season, but rebounded to near-normal numbers by Jan. Greater White-fronted Geese were rarely reported away from their usual haunts at W.N.W.R., where 16-

SA Swans occur only sporadically within the Region and are so always cause for careful scrutiny; the difficulties in differentiating between Trumpeter and Tundra Swans pose even greater stumbling blocks in a Region where swans are so rare. An ad. swan first reported near Starkville, MS 12 Jan and seen again 11 Feb at N.N.W.R. was identified and confirmed as a **Trumpeter Swan** (SJD, GK, SK, m. ob.; p.a.), as were 4 near Niceville, FL 5 Dec—28 Feb+ (DSi, JV, m. ob.; p.a.). While the Florida birds were unbanded, they were tame and came to food placed out for them. If accepted, the Florida record would be a state first, while the Mississippi record would be that state's 3rd. An ad. Tundra Swan was reported from L. Beaverfork, *Faulkner*, AR 11 Jan—23 Feb (HR, YB, AM, DeP).

The identification of several other swans is still unresolved, including individual ad. birds near W.N.W.R. 14 Dec—3 Feb (SS, HD, DB, m. ob.) and *Oktibbeha/Noxubee*, MS 29 Nov—Feb 28+ (JMc, TS, JBe, m. ob.). The Alabama bird was initially identified as a Trumpeter, but subsequent observations pointed to Tundra. In both cases, the birds had all-black bills with a somewhat Trumpeter-like profile, feathering at the base of the bill angled like a Tundra, a Tundra-like back contour, and what appeared to be neck length intermediate between Tundra and Trumpeter. Both birds were photographed on numerous occasions. Feathers from the Mississippi bird were retrieved, and hopefully genetic analysis can be conducted.

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Single White-tailed Kites in Louisiana were near Gueydan, *Vermilion* and Watkins, *Jefferson Davis* 24 Jan (JKI, JK), where range expansion continues. Since the ban on use of organochlorine pesticides, Bald Eagles have once again become regular in the Region. Forty were near Maysville, *Benton*, AR 1 Jan (JN, MM). In the lower Mississippi R. delta of Louisiana, an imm. was seen eating an American Coot near Venice 17 Dec (SWC, DLD). The pair at the Heiberger, *Perry*, AL nest 4 Dec (HHW) was unusual, as nesting activity usually starts in Feb. Small numbers of Broad-winged Hawks continue to winter in the lower Mississippi R. delta of Louisiana, where an imm. was seen 17 Dec (SWC, DLD). A Swainson's Hawk was in *Acadia*, LA 11 Dec (JKI), where they are rare.

Three Crested Caracaras were on the Lacassine-Thornwell C.B.C., *Jefferson Davis*, LA 16 Dec (CS, GS, DPu). Another was in the area 31 Dec (GP). In Alabama, single Merlins were seen 4 Dec—20 Jan near Marion (HHW, DH) and on the W.N.W.R. C.B.C. 14 Dec. An individual of the prairie race was near Maysville, AR 1 Jan (JN, MM). In Mississippi, one was e. of Greenwood 17 Jan, and a male was at the Greenville Airport 1 Feb (SJD). Peregrine Falcons put in a decent showing. In Alabama, individuals were seen 4 Jan on the Montgomery C.B.C. and at W.N.W.R. 11 Jan (HD, m. ob.). Arkansas hosted singles at Witt Springs, *Searcy* 18 Dec (CF), Pine Bluff on 21 Dec (RD, LA), and Russellville 7 Jan (TM). One was near Bangs I., Grand Bay N.E.E.R., *Jackson*, MS 15 Jan (MSW, DRu), and another was in

24 were found Dec 2-15 Feb (CDC, SWM). Elsewhere in Alabama, one was on Dauphin I. 28 Dec (BG), 15 were on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 4 Jan (RAD, LD, MSV, BT) and in *Lauderdale*, 3-20 were recorded 4-13 Feb (DJS). In nw. Florida, up to 8 were at F.W.B.S.F. 13 Dec—7 Jan (DW, AK), and 13 were in *Walton* 2-8 Jan (VL et al.). At the Seaman Road S.T.F. in *Hancock*, MS, up to 114 were found 2-24 Jan (SJD, PBa, KB, CBr, GB). The largest concentration of Snow Geese reported was of 38,500 in *Tunica*, MS 8 Dec (SJD, GK, SK). Ross's Geese were reported from 14 locations, with a maximum of 300+ in *Tunica*, MS 8 Dec (SJD, GK, SK).

A male Cinnamon Teal on the Lonoke C.B.C., *Lonoke*, AR 15 Dec (KN, LDN) undoubtedly enlivened the compilation and afforded the only report for the Region this season. In Mississippi, a female Surf Scoter was on the Oxford Sewage Lagoon, *Lafayette* 12 Dec (GK, SK), where they are rare; single imms.

were at Biloxi 24 Jan (SJD, GB) and on L. Washington 28 Feb (SJD). In Louisiana, a female White-winged Scoter was on Bayou Biloxi W.M.A., *St. Bernard* 29 Dec (PH, AD, QK). Five Black Scoters were on the Ft. Morgan C.B.C., *Baldwin*, AL 28 Dec, while an imm. was on L. Dardanelle, AR 25 Jan—16 Feb (KN et al.), where they are not expected. Long-tailed Ducks put in a respectable showing. In Alabama, an ad. female was on Blakeley I., *Mobile* 10 Jan+ (RAD, JB et al.), and 2 were at Gunterville S. P. 25 Jan (RAR, LBR); in Arkansas, single first-winter males were on the Arkadelphia Oxidation Ponds (DHa) and near Batesville (MB), both on 4 Jan; and, one was along the Mandeville Lakefront, *St. Tammany*, LA 25 Jan (BMM, DPM, PAW). Almost one year to the day after the first state record in the same location, Arkansas's 2nd **Barrow's Goldeneye**, an ad. male, was found in the large goldeneye flock on L. Dardanelle 31 Dec—8 Feb (RD, KN, LDN).

Table 1. Maximum numbers of Sandhill Cranes recorded in the Central Southern region, by site, in winter season 2002-2003.

LOCATION	STATE	NUMBER	DATE	OBSERVER(S)
<i>Calcasieu</i>	LA	452	26 Jan	GJP
W.N.W.R.	AL	400	29 Jan	CDC
<i>Tunica</i>	MS	140	9 Jan	GK, SK
<i>Tichnor, Arkansas</i>	AR	30	24 Feb	AVH
<i>Washington</i>	MS	14	1 Feb	SJD
<i>Crittenden</i>	AR	11	5 Jan	JRW
<i>Faulkner</i>	AR	9	18 Jan	KN et al.
<i>Oktibbeha</i>	MS	8	5 Jan	PBa
<i>Opelika, Lee</i>	AL	6	4 Dec	PM
<i>Heiberger</i>	AL	2	4 Dec	HHW
<i>Santa Rosa</i>	FL	1	1 Dec	MQ
<i>Tallahatchie</i>	MS	1	1 Feb	SJD

Table 2. Hummingbird records from the Central Southern region, winter season 2002-2003. All numbers approximate.

SPECIES	INDIVIDUALS	BANDED	RECORD LOCATIONS
Broad-billed	2	1	AL(1), LA(1)
Buff-bellied	55	22	AL(1), LA(47), MS(7)
Ruby-throated	212	165	AL(32), AR(1), FL(36), LA(135), MS(8)
Black-chinned	88	75	AL(15), FL(10), LA (59), MS (4)
Anna's	1	0	LA
Calliope	49	40	AL(7), FL(2), LA(35), MS(5)
Broad-tailed	13	9	AL(1), AR(1), LA(11)
Rufous	628	492	AL(94), AR(4), FL(61), LA(417), MS(52)
Allen's	28	21	AL(1), FL(1), LA(26)
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	89	—	LA (numbers from other states were not tracked)

Humphreys 25 Jan (GK, SK, SJD, GB). *Prairie Falcon* put in another showing in Arkansas, where they are becoming regular. One was near Siloam Springs Airport, *Benton* 17 Jan (JN, IC).

A *Yellow Rail* was briefly seen at Sabine N.W.R., LA 14 Dec (CS), and a *Black Rail* was at FW.B.S.F 18 Jan (AK, DR). The 5th area winter record of King Rail was of one at N.N.W.R., MS 28 Dec—1 Feb (TS). Sandhill Crane numbers continue to increase as additional locations they frequent are documented (Table 1).

This winter brought a spate of Solitary Sandpiper records in Louisiana, where 10 were recorded: one in *Jefferson Davis* 16 Dec (BF, PH, JM), 3 at the Crowley W.T.F 2 Jan (BF), one near Covington 4 Jan (NLN), and 5 on the L.S.U. Dairy Farm, *E. Baton Rouge* 5 Jan (JWe, DL). In what may be a first winter record for the continent, an *Upland Sandpiper* was found 11 Dec at the FW.B.S.F (BL, RAD, LD, m. ob.). A *Pectoral Sandpiper* at the A. & D. Turf Farm, *Lafayette* 22 Feb (GK, SK) established the earliest spring arrival date for Mississippi. Eight *Stilt Sandpipers* were in *Humphreys*, MS 2 Dec, and 14 were found there 18 Jan (SJD, KB). Unprecedented on a C.B.C. in North America, a *Buff-breasted Sandpiper* was found on the Creole C.B.C., *Cameron*, LA 15 Dec (BMM, DPM, GS; p.a.). Alabama's 3rd Feb record for *Wilson's Phalarope* was of one at Blakeley I. 22 Feb (RAR, HEH, m. ob.).

JAEGERS THROUGH VIREOS

Six Pomarine Jaegers were 34-68 km off *Plaquemines*, LA 16 Dec (DLD, SWC). The recent trend of inland Laughing Gull records continued. An ad. was at L. Dardanelle, AR 7 Dec—28 Feb+ (KN, LDN). Another ad. was at Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, AL 25 Jan+ (SWM, DJS, m. ob.). The only Franklin's Gull reported

was an ad. in near-alternate plumage on L. Dardanelle, AR 24 Dec (KN, LDN). One of a few records for the Region, a basic ad. *Little Gull* was at L. Washington, MS 28 Feb (SJD; p. a.). An imm. gull, either Thayer's or Kumlien's Iceland, was found near Perdido Pass, AL on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 4 Jan (BCM, DMW, PB; p. a.). There are two previous state records for Thayer's Gull and only four for the complex of *thayeri/kumlieni*. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from four locations. In Alabama, a second-year bird was at Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence* 28 Dec—28 Jan (SWM, DJS) and an ad. was at Wilson Dam 25 Jan+ (SWM, m. ob.), where rare but regular. In Louisiana, an ad. was at East Jetty Beach, *Cameron* 10 Dec (PL), and a third-winter bird was on Cross L. 15-29 Jan (CLy). The first Alabama record of Great Black-backed Gull from the inland coastal plain was of an imm. at Lake Point S. P., *Barbour* 8 Feb (GEH).

White-winged Doves continue to winter in numbers in the Region. A flock of 40 was seen on Dauphin I., AL 9 Dec (MW), 85 were near Scott, *Lafayette*, LA 21 Dec (JD, DS), and 23 were in Pascagoula, MS 24 Jan (SJD). Inca Doves continue to expand their range in Louisiana. Four were on the Thibodaux C.B.C. 15 Dec (BM, MBo), one was on the Reserve-Bonnet Carre Spillway C.B.C. 21 Dec (NLN, SL), and one was in *E. Baton Rouge* 5-11 Jan (CB, MA, JBa, MD). A Greater Roadrunner was in Jonesboro, AR 18 Feb (NL, CL). In nw. Florida, 2 Groove-billed Anis were heard calling at the Bayou Marcus S.T.P., *Escambia* 3 Dec, while one was seen at Ft. Pickens, 26 Nov—18 Dec (RAD). Another was in *Jefferson Davis*, LA 16 Dec (GJR, MW).

Lingering Common Nighthawks were at Cross L., AR, where up to 7 were seen 1 Dec—1 Jan (CLy, TD, JI), and Greenwood,

LA, where one was seen 14 Dec (VAL). The 7th record of Lesser Nighthawk for nw. Florida was of one on the Perdido Bay C.B.C. 21 Dec (SDu). Up to 6 *Vaux's Swifts* were seen in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA 18-20 Feb (BO, DL, GN), while 4 *Chaetura* swifts at Blakeley I., AL 18 Jan (BG, et al.) were thought to be Vaux's (p. a.). Continuing the trend of past years, hummingbirds wintered throughout the Region (Table 2). Alabama's 2nd Broad-billed Hummingbird (p.a.), an ad. female, frequented a feeder in Ozark 1-23 Jan (GG, AG, FB) and was banded.

A calling Least Flycatcher was in *Jefferson Davis*, LA 16 Dec (DL, CW). Vermilion Flycatchers were widely reported. Single ad. males were near Lillian, *Baldwin*, AL 21 Dec (RAD, LD, CeB), FW.B.S.F 14 Dec—13 Feb (DW, RAD, LD, m. ob.), *Orleans*, LA 21-22 Jan (MTP), and in *Hancock*, MS 2 Jan (SJD, PBa, KB, CBr). A male and female were near Lacassine Pool, *Cameron*, LA 23 Jan (JKI, JK). An imm. male was at L. Jackson, *Washington*, MS 25 Jan (SJD et al.). Single Ash-throated Flycatchers were seen on the Dauphin I. C.B.C., AL 21 Dec (HEH, CDC, m. ob.) and in Louisiana at the Crowley W.T.F (BF) and in *Vermillion*, (JWh), both 2 Jan. A Brown-crested Flycatcher was near Ft. Jackson, *Plaquemines*, LA 1 Dec (BMM, PAW, DPu).

Western Kingbird numbers in coastal locations were impressive! Maximum numbers reported include: Alabama: 12 on the Dauphin I. C.B.C. on 21 Dec, 6 on the Ft. Morgan C.B.C. 28 Dec, and 4 near Blakeley I. 20 Jan (BS); nw. Florida: up to 7 at four locations 1-27 Dec (RAD, LD, BT, DW, m. ob.); Louisiana: 5 in *Orleans* 23 Dec (JOC, TDC, CR); and Mississippi: one at the Waveland Lagoon, *Hancock* 1 Jan (SJD, m. ob.). Scissor-tailed Flycatcher numbers were almost as impressive. In

Alabama, 4 were on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 4 Jan, and one was on the Dauphin I. C.B.C. 21 Dec. In Louisiana, 17 were in *Plaquemines* 17 Dec (DLD, SWC)! Alabama's first winter record of **Bell's Vireo** was of one on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. 4 Jan (ALM).

SWALLOWS THROUGH FINCHES

Amazingly, **Cave Swallows** were found in three locations, probably leftovers from the late-autumn flight. One was at FWB.S.F 13 Dec (DW, LDA). Alabama's first and 2nd winter records were of single birds on the Gulf Shores C.B.C. near Foley 3-5 Jan (SWM, m. ob.) and at Justus Bay along the Mobile Causeway 19 Jan (LFG). Louisiana's 4th **Rock Wren** record was of one bird in *St. Martin* 27-30 Dec+ (GSt, JS, m. ob.), and another was near Russellville, AR 7 Dec—16 Feb (KN, LDN, m. ob.). In Arkansas, a **Bewick's Wren** wintered near Fayetteville 18 Dec—17 Feb (JN), while singles were in Louisiana near *Dixie, Caddo* 14 Dec (PD) and *Rutherford Beach* 15 Dec (RCD, PC).

Very rare in winter, a **Tennessee Warbler** was on the Venice C.B.C., LA 30 Dec (KR, DPM, RS, CR). A **Nashville Warbler** was on the Creole C.B.C., LA at *Rutherford Beach* 15 Dec (DPM, BMM, GS, RCD, PC), while 2 were near *Destin* 16 Dec (LD, RAD, BCM), representing the first Dec records for nw. Florida. A **Magnolia Warbler** was in *Orleans*, LA 28 Dec (CS, PAW). In Louisiana, single **Black-throated Green Warblers** were on the *Reserve-Bonnet Carre Spillway* C.B.C. 21 Dec (RSt) and on *Grand I.* 26 Dec (RS, VAL). Rarely found in the Region, a female-type **Townsend's Warbler** was near Venice, LA 1 Dec (BMM, DPu, PAW).

Wintering tanagers seemed to prefer nw. Florida: an ad. female **Western** was in *Gulf Breeze* 20 Dec (RAD), an ad. female **Summer** visited a *Pensacola feeder* 5 Dec—21 Feb (BT), and a **Scarlet** was in *Walton* 30 Nov—13 Dec (MT, JG). The only **American Tree Sparrow** reported was one at *Wapanocca N.W.R.*, *Crittenden*, AR 22 Jan (VR, CBu, WRP, BW). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at the *Dauphin I. Airport*, AL 26 Dec (RAR). **Lark Sparrows** were found 28 Dec on the *Ft. Morgan C.B.C.*, AL; 29 Dec near *DeQueen*, AR (DA); 28 Dec in *Orleans*, LA (JOC, CR, LP); and, in Mississippi, 2 were near *West Point* 24 Feb (KL). The highest number of **Henslow's Sparrows** reported was 18 at *Mississippi Sandhill Crane N.W.R.* on 16 Dec (MSW, BR), while 4 were at *Red Creek W.M.A.*, *Desoto N. F.*, *Harrison*, MS 31 Jan (MSW). Two **Le Conte's Sparrows**

were near *Allsboro, Colbert*, AL 25 Jan (SWM et al.). In Arkansas, up to 5 were near *Fayetteville* 5 Dec—12 Feb (MM) and 2 in *Benton* 21 Dec (MM, JN). In Mississippi, one was at the *Old Ft. Bayou Mitigation Area, Jackson* 16 Dec (MSW, BR). **Harris's Sparrows** were reported from Alabama, where an ad. was in w. *Lauderdale* 8 Feb (*fide* BRO), and Arkansas, where 3-4 ads. were near *Conway* 7 Dec—16 Feb (KN, LDN), 3 on the *Arkadelphia C.B.C.* 14 Dec (MC, JH), and 10 near *Siloam Springs* 21 Dec (JN).

The highest number of **Lapland Longspurs** reported was of 677 in *Tunica*, MS 8 Dec (SJD, GK, SK). Eleven **Smith's Longspurs** were at the *Shreveport Greater Metro Airport*, LA 14 Dec (TD, NM, JeB). **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** lingered near *Guin, Marion*, AL, where a male was seen 8 Dec (DWO); in *Gulf Breeze*, FL, where a female visited a *feeder* 1-6 Dec (LD, RAD); and in *St. Martin*, LA., where one was found 10 Dec (JD). **Black-headed Grosbeaks** wintered in Mississippi at *Gulfport* 23 Nov+ (MMc, AHe, m. ob.) and in Louisiana near *Mandeville* 17 Dec (CGB) and in *Caddo* 26 Jan—6 Feb (JTr, JT, AAs, EA). A male **Lazuli Bunting** was in *Luling, St. Charles*, LA 26 Jan (CLy, MTo).

A singing **Western Meadowlark** was at the *Greenville Airport*, MS 1 Feb (SJD). The only **Yellow-headed Blackbird** reported was an ad. male at *Yazoo N.W.R.*, MS 18 Jan (SJD, KB). A **Bronzed Cowbird** was in *Okaloosa*, FL 16 Dec (PBe, LDA). **Baltimore Orioles** wintered widely in the Region, as is often the case. **Bullock's Orioles** were found on the Venice C.B.C., LA 30 Dec (KR, RS); in *Pensacola*, FL 24-27 Feb (JPo); and in *Poplarville*, MS 21 Nov—25 Jan (JR, LRe). Six **Red Crossbills** were at *Talladega N.F.*, *Cleburne*, AL 17 Dec (SH, DH, m. ob.).

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