

Southern Atlantic

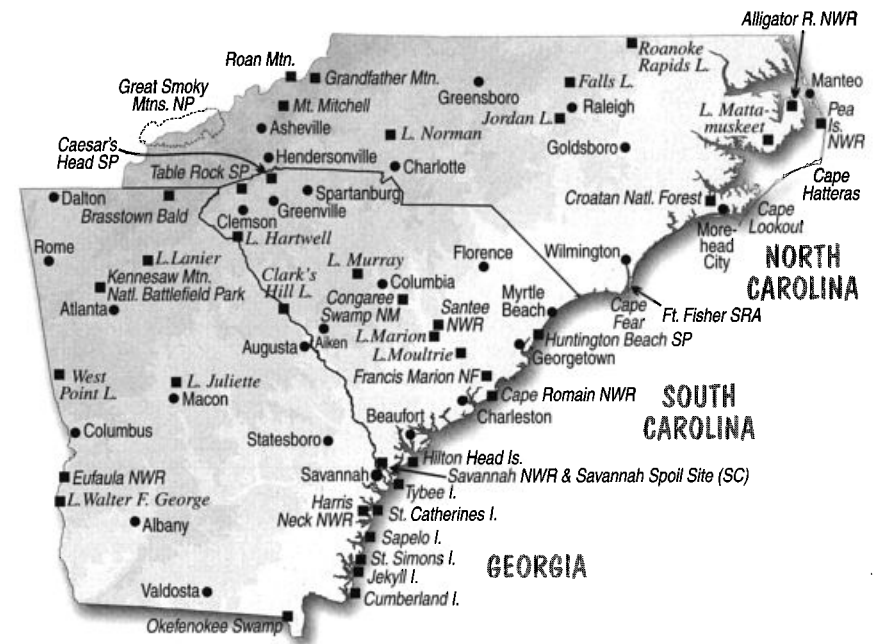
This summer's weather was vastly different from last year's. While 2002 saw a drought over much of the Region, this year there was ample rainfall in most areas, making the drought only a memory. Temperatures were mostly average, with only a few days of really hot weather. What this meant to the nesting successes of the birds varied, depending on where and how much rain fell. There were no reports of any major nesting failures. Some highlights this summer were an influx of summering loons along North Carolina's Outer Banks, the continued presence of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, and summering Swallow-tailed Kites in southeastern North Carolina.

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

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Unexpected in summer was the Pacific Loon in mostly basic plumage present along North Carolina's Outer Banks. First seen at P.I. 3 Jul (MS), the bird was later observed at S. Nags Head 15 (JL, SM) & 19 Jul (BC). This bird was part of the higher-than-usual number of loons found summering in that area, probably due to the presence of cold Labrador Current water lingering longer than normal in Jun and an upwelling of cold water later in the season. Common Loons were observed throughout the summer, with a peak count of 18 from Nags Head to P.I. 20 Jul (RD). Pelagic trip highlights from North Carolina's Outer Banks included a dark-morph Herald Petrel off Hatteras 7 Jun (BP et al.), a Fea's Petrel only 43 km se. of Hatteras 14 Jun (BP), a White-tailed Tropicbird off Manteo 26 Jul (BP et al.), single Red-billed Tropicbirds off Hatteras 7 (BP et al.), 14, & 30 Jun (BP), and a Masked Booby off Manteo 26 Jul (BP et al.). Elsewhere a subad. Masked Booby was a surprise onshore at Beacon I., Ocracoke Inlet, NC 18 Jul (JW et al.). Northern Gannets also lingered more than usual this summer, with the best reports being one at Litchfield Beach, SC 26 Jun (fide WC), 3 imm. at S. Nags Head, NC 20 Jul (RD), and 2 ads. and 3 imm. at S. Nags Head 19-20 Jun (PB).

The peak American White Pelican count once again came from the S.S.S., with 101 there 27 Jul (SC). Inland Brown Pelicans, always noteworthy, included



one at L. Junaluska, Haywood, NC in early Jun (fide WF), one at L. Wylie, Mecklenburg, NC 28 Jun-1 Jul (fide TP), and 2 at Hammock L., Lowndes, GA 18 Jul (fide BPM). This summer's Magnificent Frigatebird reports involved singles in the Blackbeard I./Little St. Simons I., GA area 10-11 Jun (BB), C. Hatt. 29 Jun (fide RT), and S. Nags Head, NC 11 Jul (fide RD). Georgia had 2 Great White Herons: one on the Floyd College campus, Rome 30 Jul (fide SS) and one at L. Sinclair, Baldwin 27 Jul (JFI, EH). Inland wandering of long-legged waders was rather uneventful this year, possibly due to high water levels over most of the Region. Of note, though, was the report of 2 imm. Tricolored Herons 22 Jul+ in Henderson, NC (WF), a species rarely reported from the mountains. Reddish Egret reports were about normal, with the best counts being 3 near Tybee I., GA 5 Jul (DB), 3 on Shackleford Banks, Carteret, NC 20 Jul (SB, EE), and 2 at H.B.S.P. 21 Jul (ST). Roseate Spoonbills wandered widely this summer. Reports away from the usual s. coastal Georgia area included 9 at Little St. Simons I., GA 21 Jul (fide BN), 3 at Harris Neck N.W.R., GA 13 Jun (MR), one at Sunset Lakes, Sunset Beach, NC 30 Jul (DH), and a small flock at the S.S.S. from late

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Jun through the end of the period, with a peak of 8 on 6 Jul (SC).

Several Wood Storks wandered far inland, with one in Snellville, Gwinnett, GA 5 Jul (fide JS), one at the E.L.H. 13 Jul (JS et al.), one at Howell Woods, Johnston, NC 24 Jun (SCb et al.), and one w. of Elizabethtown, Bladen, NC 14 Jun (BG). The influx of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, first noted in the spring, continued with 15 at a pond in Tibwin, Charleston, SC 5 Jun (RL), 9 at the S.S.S. 27 Jun (SCo), a "flock" at Savannah N.W.R., SC 13 Jun (fide DCh), 1-2 at Donnelley W.M.A., Colleton, SC 28-29 Jul (ND et al., MM), and 2 at Sneads Ferry, Onslow, NC 10 Jun (fide JF). These birds most certainly represent naturally wandering individuals, again most likely from the Florida population. Lingering or summering waterfowl of note included an American Wigeon and

a Ring-necked Duck at the S.S.S. 1 Jun (SC), a Greater Scaup at the S.S.S. from the spring until 27 Jun (SC), 2 Lesser Scaup at L Marion, SC 26 Jun (LM), a Surf Scoter at Ft. Macon, NC throughout the period (RN), and 3 Red-breasted Mergansers at the Savannah R. Lock & Dam Park, Richmond, GA 12 Jul (BL, DV). The latter birds, a male and 2 females, provided the first inland Jul record for that state. Two broods (8 young and 2 young) of Blue-winged Teal at the S.S.S. this summer 8 & 27 Jun (SC) provided rare nesting reports for South Carolina.

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Swallow-tailed Kites made news in se. North Carolina this summer. Birds first noted during the spring along the Cape Fear R. near the *Bladen-Columbus* line continued throughout the summer. Kites were seen over the river and over nearby fields, with the peak count being 10 on 19 Jul (SMr et al.). With the presence of at least 4–6 Swallow-taileds for the entire period, nesting probably took place locally. This species has not been confirmed as a nester in the state. Elsewhere Swallow-tailed Kites were good finds at Rodanthe, NC 27 Jun (*vide* SCo) and near Chapel Hill, NC 8 Jul (*vide* CF). Peak counts from more typical areas included 34 s. of Allendale, SC 26 Jul (RC, CE) and 20–25 in Long, GA 19 Jul (*vide* TM). Mississippi Kite nesting reports came from the usual localities in North Carolina again this summer. Only one or two summer Sharp-shinned Hawk reports were received, all from the mountains. Cooper's Hawk reports were highlighted by the four known nesting pairs in the Winston-Salem, NC area, each raising 3–4 young (RS et al.). Two imm. Golden Eagles were seen in the Bakers Mt. Park area of *Catawba*, NC 22 Jun (DM). They have apparently been in the area since the spring.

Inland-nesting Black Rails are extremely hard to find in the Region, thus noteworthy were 2 at the usual n. *Greene*, GA site 16 Jul (PS, SH). Very rare as a breeder in Georgia, especially along the coast, a Virginia Rail at Harris Neck N.W.R. 9 Jun (DBb) was interesting. American Coots nesting at the S.S.S. (SC) included an ad. with 10 young 6 Jul and an ad. on a nest 27 Jul—South Carolina's first known nestings since 1990.

Excellent counts of Wilson's Plover included 59 at Deveaux Bank, SC 31 Jul (WP) and 60 at Shackleford Bank, NC 27 Jul (JF et al.). Black-necked Stilt numbers peaked at 813 at the S.S.S. 27 Jun (SC), and 2 were good finds at Eufaula N.W.R.,

GA 6 Jun (WCh). Noteworthy inland were 2 Willets at L. Sinclair, Baldwin, GA 27 Jul (JF1, EH). Upland Sandpipers were scarce, with just singles at the Orangeburg, SC Sod farm 27 Jul (SCt) and at Hoop. 29 Jul (WF). Long-billed Curlews noted included one at Oregon Inlet, NC 11 Jun (MLy), Ocracoke, NC flats 26 Jun (JW et al.), and 1–2 at Shackleford Banks, NC 20 (SB, EE) & 27 Jul (JF et al.). Late were 2 Dunlin at the S.S.S. 13 Jun (SC). Only one Curlew Sandpiper was found, that being an ad. in alternate plumage at Oregon Inlet, NC 5–6 Jul (H&JWi, MS). The only inland Short-billed Dowitcher reported was in *Henderson*, NC 26 Jul (WF), while a Long-billed Dowitcher at the S.S.S. 13 Jun (SC) provided the first summer record for that locality. Wilson's Phalaropes were found at P.I., with one on 1 Jul (MS) and 6 on 12 Jul (JL). The Red-necked Phalaropes found at the S.S.S. during May continued, with 3 still present 4 Jun (SC). Gull news involved inland Laughings at Falls L., NC 9 Jun (BBo) and L. Norman, NC 2 Jul (TP) and a very rare-in-summer Bonaparte's at Bogue Inlet, NC 30 Jun (SCo). Inland tern highlights included 2 Caspians at L. Junaluska, NC 18 Jun (BO) and one Least and 20 Blacks at West Point L., GA 23 Jul (MB). Two Roseate Terns at P.I. 5 Jul (MS) were the only ones reported. A Bridled Tern at Grays Reef, 30 km off Sapelo I., GA 11 Jun (RW et al.) was considered to be somewhat closer to shore than normally found off that state. The peak Sooty Tern count offshore in North Carolina was of 69 off Hatteras 19 Jul (BP et al.). Onshore, where much more noteworthy, 2 Sooties were found near Harkers I., NC 22 Jun (JF et al.). The birds were hanging around an island where nesting could possibly occur. The best count of Black Terns along the coast was of 500 at Little St. Simons I., GA 21 Jul (BN).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Three reports were received this summer of White-winged Dove. One was at Bear I. W.M.A., *Colleton*, SC 19 Jul (RC). In North Carolina, one was at a Buxton feeder 1 Jun (KD), and one was heard well near Roxboro L., *Person* 8 Jun (JP). A Black-billed Cuckoo near Trenton, NC 2 Jun (CB) was most likely a migrant, although this species has been known to summer in Coastal Plain pocosin habitats. Two Chimney Swifts were seen flying behind a waterfall at Chimney Rock Park, NC 29 Jun (STs), a behavior not normally seen in this species of swift. An ad. male Rufous Hummingbird near Chapel Hill, NC 6–8 Jun (GT) provided

only the 2nd Jun report for this species in the state. An Olive-sided Flycatcher along Ivy Log Gap Rd., GA 1 Jun (*vide* SH) was obviously a late migrant. Another migrant, and locally rare, was the Alder Flycatcher found at Bodie I., NC 4 Jun (EP, NB). Willow Flycatchers made news with nesting for the 2nd year in a row at Macon, GA (TI). Elsewhere, even farther away from normal breeding range, a pair nested (producing 2 young) at Caw Caw Park, Ravenel, SC in Jun (PN et al.). The birds arrived in May and were present until early Jul! Amazingly, this species has been at this coastal location several times previously in the last decade. Only one Gray Kingbird was found n. of the usual coastal Georgia areas, that being at Edisto Beach, SC 27 Jul (PC). Georgia had the only Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, with the nesting pair at McDonough having 2 young 23 Jul (*vide* TM), and another pair (no nest found) at Trenton, *Dade* 8 Jun (JSt).

A Warbling Vireo was still present along Dairyland Rd., *Orange*, NC 28 Jul (HW), the easternmost breeding locality in the Region for the last several years. Another new nesting location for Tree Swallow was provided by the pair that fledged 4 young at Huntersville, *Mecklenburg*, NC 1 Jul (MMc). Of interest was the pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches at an apparent nest hole (no young seen) at the Walhalla Fish Hatchery, *Oconee*, SC 2 Jun (FR). Nesting behavior in this species has been observed at this location before, but evidence of nesting is still lacking for the state. A Winter Wren on territory on Three Top Mt., *Ashe*, NC 18 Jun (ML) was notable for the low nesting elevation (1140 m) by this species. Also of note from Walhalla Fish Hatchery, SC, a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets was observed feeding young 2–4 Jun (FR). Confirmed breeding evidence for that state is still very rarely obtained.

A Gray Catbird that had just fledged was seen at the S.S.S. 19 Jul (PS, WP), providing the first documented proof of nesting in the extreme s. coastal part of South Carolina. Cedar Waxwings once again were found in e. North Carolina during the breeding season. A pair at a nest was a good find in *Jones*, NC 6 Jun (Wfu, RB), as were 4 in mainland *Dare*, NC 21 Jun and 2 on Roanoke I., *Dare*, NC throughout the period (JL). Nesting s. of normal range involved 3 young fledging successfully in Big Lazar W.M.A., *Talbot*, GA 7 Jul (*vide* TM).

WARBLERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

Magnolia Warblers found in the North

Carolina mountains this summer included singing males at Potato Knob, Yancey 25 Jun (MSi) and Roan Mt. 2 Jun–14 Jul (RK); breeding evidence in that state is rather scant. Very late and out of place was the Blackpoll Warbler that landed on a boat off the Georgia coast 17 Jun (RW et al.), providing a new late date for that state. The Cerulean Warbler migration started in Jul, as usual, and the peak count was of 11 at K. Mt. 31 Jul (BZ). An early fall migrant at K. Mt. was the Worm-eating Warbler found 14 Jul (BZ), providing a new early date for that locale. A rare breeding report for sw. Piedmont Georgia of Worm-eating Warbler came from Meriwether, where a pair with 2 young was observed 9 Jul (*fide* TM). Another early migrant was the Louisiana Waterthrush found at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC 22 Jun (STs); the species does not breed locally. Lingering or late spring migrant sparrows included a White-throated on Roanoke I., NC 5 Jun (JL), a White-throated near Greensboro, NC 17–25 Jun (ET), and a White-crowned at Myrtle Beach, SC 1 Jun (P&STu).

Dickcissel reports were down from past summers, but did include a pair

carrying nesting material at the Cherry Hospital area, Wayne, NC 1 Jun (RD) and singing males in Gaston, NC 6 Jun (STs), Orange, NC 28 Jul (HW), and Bartow, GA 27 Jul (BZ). South Carolina had the only Shiny Cowbirds, with a male at a feeder in Mt. Pleasant 8 Jul (DC) and a flock of 7 at the S.S.S. 18–19 Jul (PS, WP). A new local nesting record was provided by the pair of Orchard Orioles at Table Rock S. P., SC during Jun (SSg). This summer's Red Crossbill reports involved 5+ at Roan Mt., NC 25 Jun+ (RK), 3 at Cataloochee Ranch, Haywood, NC 4 Jul (WF), and 4 in Yancey, NC 21–25 Jun (MSi).

ADDENDUM

A Cayenne Tern, the *eurygnatha* race of Sandwich Tern, was photographed at Ft. Fisher, NC 5 Apr 2003 (Pru Williams and Cindy Grimes). The photograph was verified by S. Campbell and provided the 5th documented record out of now eight reports for that state.

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