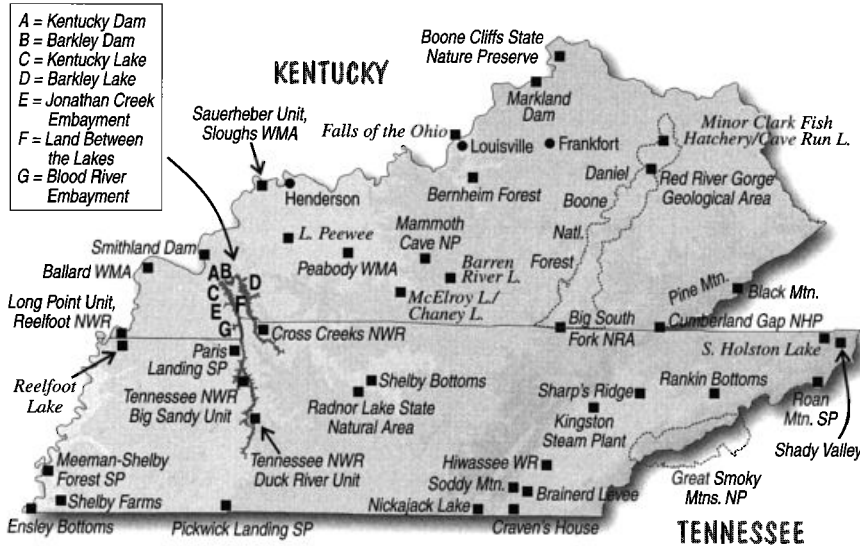


Tennessee & Kentucky



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The season was slightly cooler than normal and had above-average precipitation—both greatly welcomed after the hot, dry summer of 2002. High, late-spring river levels resulted in disrupted breeding for many lowland species, including Least Terns on the Mississippi River and lower Ohio River. On the other hand, some observers noted that the cool, wet weather

resulted in a good breeding season for songbirds. Highlights included at least two state-first nesting records—Gadwall and Ruddy Duck in Kentucky—and continued nesting of some rare (Northern Harrier, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher) and declining (Bachman's Sparrow) species, along with a number of reports of very rare to rare visitant species.

Abbreviations: Black Bayou (Black Bayou W.M.A., Lake, TN), Ennsley (Ennsley Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, in sw. Shelby, TN).

LOONS THROUGH IBIS

A road-killed Pacific Loon in *Lauderdale*, TN 29 Jun (JRW) furnished an exceptionally rare summer record for the Region. Three Common Loons (2 in basic plumage and one in alternate) were present during mid-Jul on Kentucky L., *Marshall*, KY and likely summered (BP, MM et al.); single birds at *Tellico L.* (plumage not reported), *Loudoun*, TN 23 Jun (WJ) and *Nickajack L.* (basic plumage), *Marion*, TN 24 Jun (KC) also likely summered. Pied-billed Grebes were confirmed nesting in *Fulton* (BP) and *Warren* (ph. DR), KY.

Up to 250 American White Pelicans summered in *Lake* and *Dyer*, TN (m. ob.),

and a small group was in adjacent *Fulton*, KY 25 Jun (KL, NM); 2 at *Cherokee L.*, *Grainger*, TN 22 Jun (DT) represented an unusual summer record for e. Tennessee. As is becoming the norm, small numbers of Double-crested Cormorants lingered through the summer at several locations in the Region. An ad. male Anhinga at *White L.*, *Dyer*, TN 4 Jun (JRW et al.) was the only one reported for the season.

A late American Bittern at *Standifer Gap Marsh*, *Hamilton*, TN 7 Jun (DP) raised suspicion, but breeding could not be confirmed; however, Least Bitterns did breed there, with 2 downy fledglings discovered 13 Jun (DP). Least Bitterns also nested in *Union*, KY (BP). Great Blue Herons continue to increase in n.-cen. and ne. Kentucky, with at least three new nesting colonies reported during the season (CG, RP, WM). Single Tricolored Herons were found in *Dyer*, TN 8 Jun and *Lauderdale*, TN 27 Jun (JRW).

All three ibis species appeared in w. Tennessee during the season. White Ibis appeared at three locations: 5 at *Ennsley* 11 Jul (AW), 2 at *Black Bayou* 14 Jul (NM), and 16 at *Mud L.*, *Shelby* 26 Jul (JRW). A single Glossy Ibis was found in *Dyer*, TN 1 Jun (JRW), while a single White-faced Ibis in *Dyer*, TN 4 Jun (JRW et al.) was followed by 14 there on 5 Jun (RH, DMy).

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

A number of duck species made unusual summer appearances. Three to 5 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in *Lake*, TN 7–10 Jun (JRW et al.) were undoubtedly holdovers from late May's unprecedented numbers. A pair of Gadwall with 2 downy young in *Union*, KY in mid-Jun provided a state-first nesting record (ph. BP); 2 were also present at *White Lake W.M.A.*, *Dyer*, TN 27 Jun–13 Jul (WGC, KL, BL). An American Black Duck was observed in *Union*, KY 18 & 20 Jun (BP, KB, JC), and up to 2 were present in *Dyer*, TN 8–15 Jun (JRW, WGC, KL, BL). A few Blue-winged Teal lingered into summer across the Region, with confirmed breeding in *Union*, KY (BP) and *Jessamine*, KY (JL). Up to 2 Northern Shovelers also lingered at *White Lake W.M.A.*, *Dyer*, TN 4–9 Jun (JRW et al.). A Green-winged Teal at *Ennsley* 19–31 Jul+ (JRW) furnished one of only a handful of summer records for the Region.

A male Ring-necked Duck at *Ennsley* 20 Jul was likely injured (JRW, MT). Juvenile Hooded Mergansers in *Kenton* (FR) and *Boone* (LM), KY during Jun represented the first confirmed breeding records for the n.-cen. part of the state. At least 6 Ruddy Ducks lingered in *Union*, KY into mid-Jun, and a female with 4 downy young in mid-Jul provided a state-first nesting record (ph. BP).

The L. Barkley, *Lyon/Trigg*, KY Osprey nesting population has increased from 26 pairs in 1999 to 43+ pairs in 2003 (ER). A continuing study of nesting Northern Harriers at Peabody W.M.A., *Muhlenberg/Ohio*, KY yielded reports of an additional 19 nests in 2003 (MV). A Peregrine Falcon in *Dyer*, TN 6 Jul (KL, NM) may have been an early fall migrant.

RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A King Rail at Black Bayou 8 Jun (NM) and a Virginia Rail at Standifer Gap Marsh, *Hamilton*, TN 13 Jun–31 Jul+ (DP) were likely breeding. A calling Virginia Rail that lingered through 13 Jun in *Pulaski* (RD) was unusual for Kentucky and also raised suspicions of nesting. At least one pair of Common Moorhens and several pairs of American Coots, both rare breeders in the Region, nested in *Union*, KY (BP).

Several species of shorebird were observed in Jun, typically the "lull" month for shorebirds in the Region. Reports of late spring migrants included a Dunlin 5 Jun in *Christian*, KY (BP) and single Semipalmated Sandpipers in *Dyer*, TN 13 Jun (WGC) and w. *Fulton*, KY 17 Jun (BP, KB, JC). Also observed were a number of birds whose movements were ambiguous (northbound, southbound, or lingering?). These included several American Golden-Plovers in Jun, most notably one in full alternate plumage in w. *Fulton*, KY 17 Jun (BP, KB, JC) and 2 at Black Bayou 19 Jun (WGC); 3 Lesser Yellowlegs 15 Jun, 40 White-rumped Sandpipers 13 Jun, and a Stilt Sandpiper 15 Jun, all in *Dyer*, TN (WGC, KL, BL); and 2 Spotted Sandpipers in *Dyer*, TN 5 Jun (WGC, KL, BL).

Again this year, there were several reports of extralimital Black-necked Stilts in Kentucky, although given the unprecedented numbers nesting this season in *Dyer* and *Lake* in nw. Tennessee—high count of 182 on 1 Jun (JRW)—such reports may become the norm in future years. This species appears to be in the midst of a steady range expansion northward along the Mississippi R.

The fall shorebird migration typically commences in Jul, and this year was exceptional, with at least 19 species reported, a number of which represented unusually early records. Among the early fall migrants were a Western Sandpiper at Ensley 21 Jun (JRW), a Willet along the Mississippi R. in *Lake*, TN 5 Jul (JRW), a Semipalmated Plover and a White-rumped Sandpiper at Ensley 12 Jul (JRW), a molting ad. Sanderling at Ensley 13 Jul (JRW), a molting ad. female Wilson's Phalarope at Ensley 13 Jul (JRW, AW), an ad. Black-bellied Plover at Ensley 16 Jul (JRW), and an ad. female American Avocet at Ensley 20–28 Jul (JRW,

MT). Twelve Western Sandpipers at the Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery in *Anderson*, TN 31 Jul (NeM) represented an unusually high count for e. Tennessee.

GULLS THROUGH CUCKOOS

Quite unusual for midsummer was a first-summer Franklin's Gull in *Muhlenberg*, KY 17 Jun (BP, KB, ph. JC). A heavily molting first-summer Laughing Gull was above Kentucky Dam, *Marshall*, KY 24 Jul (MM, BP). As in some past summers, a few Caspian Terns appeared to summer, as indicated by observations of one in *Muhlenberg*, KY 14 Jun (MV) and 3–5 on L. Barkley, *Livingston/Lyon*, KY 18 Jun (BP, KB, JC); 2 in *Lake*, TN 15 Jul (JRW) were likely early fall migrants. Two Arctic Terns, an ad. and a probable first-summer bird, on Reelfoot L., *Lake*, TN 14–15 Jun (JRW, WGC) will represent the 2nd record for Tennessee, if accepted. Least Terns on the lower Ohio R. had a rough time of it again in 2003, with a mid-Jul rise in the river level inundating all nests on natural substrates. A new, apparently successful site was discovered on an industrial pond along the lower Tennessee R. in *Marshall*, KY (EC et al.). Birds apparently fared a bit better on the Mississippi R., where sandbars were not completely inundated by rising water.

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to increase in the Region, with about a dozen reports of birds in new areas, including first reports for *Williamson* and *Putnam*, TN, and *Ohio* (DR) and *Wayne* (CBk), KY. A White-winged Dove in *Madison*, KY 1–2 Jun (ph. A&TR et al.) represented the 4th Kentucky record, all within the last two years. The only Regional reports for Black-billed Cuckoo were singles in e. *Fayette*, KY 2 Jun (SM) and *Dyer*, TN 8 Jun (JRW et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A lingering Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Lexington, KY 7 Jun (SM) represented a new late departure date for the state. Western Kingbirds nested at Ensley for the 4th (3rd consecutive) year; three nests were found, one of which fledged 4 young (JRW). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested in s. *Livingston*, KY (MM, BP) and in *Rutherford* (TW), *Dyer* (JRW), *Sequatchie* (CB), and *Marion* (JI), TN, although the pair in *Dyer* failed after two attempts.

At least one pair of Bell's Vireos nested at Black Bayou starting in mid-May (ph. MT); this is one of only a handful of confirmed breeding records for Tennessee, despite a significant breeding population in w. Kentucky. A Red-breasted Nuthatch nest with young at Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, *Scott*, TN 7 Jun (FR) provided the first nest record for the Tennessee portion of the Cumberland Plateau. Sedge

Wrens began showing up in late Jul, with nesting suspected in *Jefferson*, KY (BP). Unusual for the Region in summer was a Marsh Wren in *Union*, KY 6 Jul (BP). At least 7 Veeries at higher elevations at Cumberland Gap N.P., KY 17 Jun (MM) indicated an increase in the local nesting population since the late 1980s. A Gray-cheeked Thrush at Lexington, KY 1 Jun was rather late (SM, RB), as was a Swainson's Thrush at Ft. Campbell, *Montgomery*, TN 2 Jun (DM). At least 3 Hermit Thrushes sang throughout the summer on Roan Mt., *Carter*, TN, where they have been regular in recent years (RK). Above-average numbers of Cedar Waxwings lingered into summer in the Region, with numerous reports of confirmed breeding.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A few transient warblers trickled over into Jun. A Magnolia Warbler was on Black Mt., *Harlan*, KY 1 Jun (DT, AT), and another was banded at the Warner Parks Nature Center, Nashville, TN 2 Jun (SB). Three Mourning Warblers at two locations in Nashville 2 Jun (PC, FF, LK) were late. A Golden-winged Warbler atlas project sponsored by the Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources and Cornell Lab of Ornithology continued into Jun and had a final tally of 16 presumed territorial males detected in *Bell*, *Harlan*, *Pike*, *McCreary*, and *Whitley* (LP et al.). Also as part of this project, there were five reports of Brewster's Warbler and Lawrence's Warbler hybrids from *Bell*, *Harlan*, *Knox*, and *Pike* (LP, SF).

As in other recent years, at least 6 singing male Magnolia Warblers were observed on Unaka Mt., *Unicoi*, TN (KE) in Jun, although breeding has yet to be confirmed here. Quite significant for Kentucky was the observation of 5+ male Blackburnian Warblers at high elevations in Cumberland Gap N.P. 17–18 Jun (MM). This species had previously been unreported in summer in Kentucky away from Black Mt. Probable breeding Swainson's Warblers were heard at eight locations in Kentucky during the period.

Again this year, a few Bachman's Sparrows were seen/heard on Fort Campbell, *Trigg*, KY and *Montgomery/Stewart*, TN (DM, JG) and in *McNairy*, TN (JRW) during Jun. At least three Lark Sparrow nests were found on Fort Campbell, *Trigg*, KY/*Stewart*, TN during Jun (DM et al.). A White-throated Sparrow in *Rutherford*, TN 17 Jul (SS, BS) was an unusual summer find. Quite significant for Kentucky was the discovery of small numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos at high elevations in Cumberland Gap N.P. 18 Jun (MM).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were detected at several locations in Cumberland Gap

N.P. 17–19 Jun (MM); also of interest was the capture of 6 different juvs. at two MAPS stations in Rowan, KY 14 Jul–6 Aug (ARb). In Fulton, KY, the state's first Painted Bunting (a male that remained on territory courting female Indigo Buntings well into summer) was last reported 23 Jul (BP, MM). Small numbers of Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills were reported throughout the season, and probably bred, at Roan Mt., Carter, TN (RK et al.) and at Newfound Gap in the Great Smoky Mountains N.P. (RH et al.), probably the result of a

good cone crop in the spruce-fir forests at those locations.

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Central Southern



Louisiana coast on 30 Jun. Onshore winds and the highest tides, predicted to be 1–1.5 m above normal e. of landfall area, resulted in a number of interesting bird records, both on the coast and inland, but may have devastated the tern colonies on Louisiana's Chandeleur Islands.

Abbreviations: L.O.S. (Louisiana Ornithological Society), O.A.S. (Oktibbeha Audubon Society).

LOONS THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS

Lingering or summering Common Loons were noted in two Alabama locations: inland in Auburn 8 Jun (SDu) and at Dauphin I. 9 Jul (ECS). Pied-billed Grebes, which breed erratically in the Tennessee Valley, produced two broods in Colbert, AL in Jul (DJS). Unquestionably the most remarkable reports of the season were of not one but 2 albatrosses from nw. Florida. The "expected" albatross in the Gulf is Yellow-nosed, and indeed both sightings appear to have been of Yellow-nosed Albatross. The records were nearly a month apart, with the first coming 6 Jun about 15 km s. of the Alabam/Florida line "in Florida waters" (JPF), to quote Bob Duncan. This was reportedly a "leisurely" observation at close range. The 2nd record, in the wake of Tropical Storm Bill, was of a bird over land at the head of Blackwater Bay, FL 2 Jul (MW). The description was consistent with the bird's being a Yellow-nosed Albatross (race uncertain). Although neither report was accompanied by full documentation, and the records have not been acted upon by the Florida Bird Records Committee, the evidence at hand seems to justify putting them in print here.

Cory's Shearwaters, regular over the nearshore waters of the Gulf in summer, were twice encountered off South Pass of the Mississippi R. in Louisiana waters. One was 68 km se. of South Pass 24 Jun (SWC, DLD, JS, GS, PC, RDP), and 2 were

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For a change, the season was very wet over much of the Region, with New Orleans receiving a record 46 cm of moisture in June. One can do no more than surmise that the effects of this rainfall were mainly beneficial, since most of it was not in the form of tropical downpours. There was, however, some cyclonic weather, provided by Tropical Storm Bill, which made landfall on the central