





This Trumpeter Swan (at left, with Tundra Swan) was part of a family group of four birds present at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina during late (here 25) February 2004. Most recent records of Trumpeter Swan in the East are attributable to the introduction programs in Canada, the Midwest, and several eastern Great Lakes sites. Photograph by Joy Greenwood.

Pickens, SC 24 Jan (*vide* SS).

Quite rare in winter, Least Bitterns were good finds at L. Matt. 29 Dec (*vide* AB) and at the Santee Coastal Res., SC 4 Feb (JP et al.). The Great White Heron found at Bear I. W.M.A., SC during the fall season remained at least until late Feb (MM). As usual, there were several Reddish Egrets in the Region this winter, with at least 3 in Georgia and one in South Carolina. Reports of lingering/wintering long-legged waders included at least 6 Cattle Egrets and 8 Green Herons, about normal for the season. Definitely not normal, however, was the Wood Stork found at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes N.W.R., NC 24–25 Feb (*vide* HP), apparently a first for that state for Feb.

## WATERFOWL

Although waterfowl numbers were relatively average this winter, there was no short supply of interesting occurrences. A Fulvous Whistling-Duck was at Bulls I., SC 4 Jan (ND et al.), the only whistling-duck reported. Geese, on the other hand, were widespread and present in good numbers. Greater White-fronted Geese, present in all three states, were especially numerous in Georgia (7+ locations) and South Carolina (4+ locations). The South Carolina reports of 20 at Bear I. W.M.A. 29 Jan (G&JH) and 22 at the S.S.S. 3 Jan–20 Feb (SC, v.o.) provided record counts for that state. Snow Geese were found in all three states, as were Ross's Geese. The best Ross's counts were 8 on the L. Matt. C.B.C. 29 Dec (*vide* AB) and 7 at L. Horton, Fayette, GA 16 Dec (EB). Other L. Matt. geese of note on 29 Dec included 3 Richardson's Canada Geese, a Greater White-fronted Goose of the Greenland race *flavirostris*, and the Barnacle Goose, which continued from the fall season

(RD, DT). The presence of the Greenland White-fronted would seem to support the case for wild provenance for the Barnacle Goose. Swans also made news this winter, with Tundras being found in all three states again. Their numbers continue to increase, especially in the e. North Carolina wintering areas. Generating much excitement was the trapping of 3 Trumpeter Swans in North Carolina during Tundra Swan banding at the Pungo Unit of

Pocosin Lakes N.W.R. 25 Feb; the Trumpeters were trapped, photographed, and released unbanded (WS et al.). Then on 28 Feb, 4 (a family group) were observed in the same area (DC, RD, JW et al.). There are historically a few vague references stating that this species wintered to the Southeast, but the literature for the Southern Atlantic Coast (south of Chesapeake Bay) is inconclusive. The suspicion, of course, is that these Trumpeters came from successful introduction programs in the Midwest and East, but their provenance cannot be traced in the case of unbanded individuals. In North Carolina, the statuses of Barnacle Goose and Trumpeter Swan are under review by the state records committee.

Eurasian Wigeons were well reported, with at least 8 in North Carolina and 2 in South Carolina. This season's Cinnamon Teal was a male at the Altamaha W.M.A., GA 28 Feb+ (PH, JS, IS, v.o.). Unusual diving duck numbers included impressive counts of Redheads, with 204 at Garden Lakes, Rome, GA 12 Feb (MD) and 100 on L. Julian, NC 22 Feb (TJ). The King Eider is quite rare in the Region; thus of note was a female found at the Garden City, SC pier 8–10 Jan (BM, RL, v.o.), providing about the 7th sighting for that state. Common Eider reports totaled 7 North Carolina individuals and 2 South Carolina birds. Inland water-

fowl of note included a female Surf Scoter on L. Chatuge, NC 7 Dec (RT, AK), a White-winged Scoter in Henderson, NC 27 Jan (WF et al.), 4–5 Long-tailed Ducks at the Merry Brickyards, Augusta, GA 9–14 Jan (LS, AW, MDa), and 4 Common Mergansers at Greenville, NC 16 Dec–4 Jan (VP, HV).

## KITES THROUGH ALCIDS

Of great interest was a report of a White-tailed Kite for one day near Denton, Davidson, NC 27 Feb (MZ, *vide* KB). This individual was observed closely and if accepted, would provide about the 5th for that state. There were two reports of the very rare Northern Goshawk from North Carolina this winter. An ad. was observed several times during Dec at Cedar Park, Chapel Hill (TD, *vide* WCo), and another ad. was along the L. Matt. causeway 15 Feb (KC). Rare Krider's Red-tailed Hawks included single birds near Americus, GA 31 Jan (PH) and at the S.S.S. 31 Jan (ST et al.). There are only about four or five previous reports of this form for each state. The only definite Rough-legged Hawks this winter were at Alligator River N.W.R., NC 6 Dec–16 Feb (BS, SBa) and in Walton, GA 16 Jan (*vide* MB). Golden Eagles were well represented this winter, with birds in all three states. The best total was of 3 at Bakers Mt., Catawba, NC 12 Dec (JSu et al.). Only one Yellow Rail report was received, that being of one flushed at North R. marsh, Carteret, NC 13 Dec (R&PTY et al.). Apart from the usual Georgia migration reports of Sandhill Crane, of interest were the 3 returning to winter in the



This Gull-billed Tern at the Altamaha Wildlife Management Area, Georgia was photographed 24 January 2004, only the fifth documented in winter for the state. This bird overwintered, which is most unusual. Photograph by Earl Horn.

North R., Carteret, NC area (JF, v.o.), 11 on the Santee N.W.R., SC C.B.C. 27 Dec (*vide* LG), and an impressive flock of up to 4000 apparently overwintering in w. Floyd, GA (MD).

Interesting plover reports included a very

late American Golden-Plover in *Carteret*, NC 12 Dec (JL), a peak of 44 Wilson's at Jekyll I., GA 19 Jan (JS), and South Carolina's 3rd Snowy Plover, last seen 11 Feb (SM et al.). Long-billed Curlews were found at the usual places, with the best total being the 4 on Little St. Simons I., GA 26 Jan (BN et al.). Winter Stilt Sandpipers included 19 at the S.S.S. 14 Jan (SC), one at Altamaha W.M.A., GA 22 Feb (JS et al.), and one on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*vide* ED), providing only the 2nd winter report for that state. Coastal jaeger sightings were highlighted by the one Pomarine and 5 Parasitics at Jekyll I., GA 23 Dec (GB et al.). The peak Little Gull count came from North Carolina's Outer Banks, with 4 on the Hatteras pelagic trip 14 Feb (BP et al.). Much more unexpected was the ad. Little Gull found inland at Jordan L., NC 21 Feb (RD, SSh). This was the 2nd inland report for that state, the first being at the same lake in Mar 1994! Black-headed Gulls made news this winter. North Carolina sightings included an ad. along the L. Matt. causeway 5 Dec (BS, HS), an imm. at C. Hatt. 27 Dec (BSu) and 18 Jan (WCo et al.), and an ad. and imm. at the Jacksonville, NC W.T.P. 24–28 Feb (JO, BG). In South Carolina, where decidedly rarer, a first-winter bird was at the Conway W.T.P. 7–26 Jan (RL, v.o.), and an ad. and second-winter bird were at the Georgetown W.T.P. 22 Jan–23 Feb (RL, v.o.). As usual, California Gulls turned up on the Outer Banks, with singles at C. Hatt. 18 Jan (JPi et al.) and 1 Feb (R&SB). The only Thayer's Gull report was of an ad. off Hatteras, NC 14 Feb (BP et al.). Iceland Gulls were found in all three states this winter, with single first-winter birds at Tybee I., GA 18–20 Jan (EH, GK), at the Conway, SC landfill 13–23 Feb (CH, RL), and at Ocracoke, NC 24 Feb (S&KW). Glaucous Gulls of note included inland first-winter birds at L. Townsend, NC 20 Dec (HLi) and L. Busbee, Conway, SC 31 Dec (ND), an ad. inland at Jordan L., NC 15–18 Feb (HW et al., JPi, v.o.) and an ad. at Hatteras Inlet, NC 27 Dec (RD). Adult Glaucous Gulls are rarely seen in the Region. The only Black-legged Kittiwake report involved 2 on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (*vide* PM).

Georgia had its 5th winter record of Gull-billed Tern 15 Dec (DCo) until at least 24 Jan (EH, BZ) at the Altamaha W.M.A. Dovekie sightings included a weak individual found on a road (later released back into the water) near Masonboro Inlet, NC 23 Dec (JPa), 3 off Hatteras, NC on the 14 Feb pelagic trip (BP et al.), and 4 moving with Razorbills at C. Hatt. 15 Feb (RD).

### DOVES THROUGH MIMIDS

Georgia had the only White-winged Dove report, that being of one in *Bartow* 5–15 Dec (TE, BD). The Common Ground-Dove

found in *Carteret*, NC during the previous season was last seen 7 Jan (JF et al.), providing a most unusual report for a species that has almost completely disappeared from that state. The only Northern Saw-whet Owl reported was on the C. Hatt. C.B.C. 27 Dec (JF et al.), in the same spot as one on the previous year's count. A Common Nighthawk was seen and heard in Wilmington, NC 29 Nov–3 Jan (DD, GM, SCo, v. o.). There is only a handful of definite winter records of this species in the Region. Also unusual was the Whip-poor-will heard in sw. *Randolph*, NC 2 Jan (JnL). This species is normally a rare winter resident along the immediate coast and completely absent from the Piedmont! Hummingbirds continued to increase as part of our wintering avifauna. The number of Rufous Hummingbirds in all three states was higher than ever, and Ruby-throateds, Black-chinneds (6 from all three states), and Calliopes (8 from three states) were higher as well. A Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker was found at Birdsong Nature Center, *Grady*, GA 31 Jan (MBI et al.), almost assuredly the same individual that was there during Jan 2001!

Tying the Yellow-billed Loon for bird-of-the-season honors was the Gray Flycatcher found near Jordan L., *Chatham*, NC 28 Dec–22 Jan (JR et al., DC, v.o.). Video footage and photographs were obtained as the bird fed in low weedy areas of a cow pasture. The pale color, longish bill, complete eye-ring, long tail with phoebe-like habit of tail wagging pointed to the identification as a Gray. Of interest was the presence of another Gray Flycatcher in the East at the same time, in Ontario. A Say's Phoebe near Townville, SC 21 Dec (JE et al.) was another excellent flycatcher find for the Region. The bird, although a one-day wonder, provided about the 4th for that state. Georgia had 2 Vermilion Flycatchers this winter, with singles at Youman's Pond, *Liberty* 17 Jan (*vide* JS) and in *Sumter* 17 Jan–22 Feb (PHa, DF, CRa). The Ash-throated Flycatcher found in

*Carteret*, NC during the previous season was last reported 13 Dec (JF). Other flycatchers of note included a Western Kingbird at the S.S.S. 3 Jan (SC et al.) and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher sw. of L. Oconee, *Putnam*, GA 29 Feb (EW, *vide* GB).

Common Ravens continue to be found in some Piedmont areas of the Carolinas. In North Carolina, one was s. of Hillsborough, *Orange* 13 Dec (GT) and again near that area 20–22 Dec (DC). In South Carolina, one was observed at Glassy Mt. Heritage Preserve, *Pickens* 1 Jan (RC). Very late swallows included a Northern Rough-winged near Moultrie, GA 25 Dec (WC), another on the Wayne County, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*vide* ED), a Cave/Cliff Swallow at the Yawkey Wildlife Center, SC 18 Dec (LG et al.), and a Barn at Augusta, GA 20 Dec (AW, LS). Very early were Northern Rough-winged in *Cobb*, GA 10 Feb (TE et al.) and n. *Greene*, GA 29 Feb (PS). Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were way down this winter, not surprising when one considers the slow fall season for the species. Numbers of wintering Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were up, as evidenced by the excellent total of 25 at Santee N.W.R., SC 27 Dec (*vide* LG). Of interest was the belated report of a male Mountain Bluebird present for several days at Celso, *Yancey*, NC in Jan (*vide* Sca). This report will be under review by the state records committee, as it would be the 2nd sighting for that state; the first was from the mts. as well. Another extreme rarity was the Swainson's Thrush photographed on St. Catherine's I., GA 13 Dec (PH, GB). The bird, apparently present for several weeks from the fall season, provided the first fully documented Dec record for the species in the state. Gray Catbirds were found wintering inland more than usual, with individuals in all three states. The farthest inland were at Atlanta, GA all winter (PH) and in *Lumpkin*, GA 29 Dec (GB, JFI).

### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Georgia once again had single Tennessee

**SA** Razorbills were found in all three states this winter. In Georgia, several were in offshore waters off of Savannah 14–23 Feb (*vide* RW), and in South Carolina, one was at H.B.S.P. 15 Feb+ (CR, v. o.). In North Carolina, away from the Outer Banks, small numbers were found in several areas such as Ft. Macon and Ft. Fisher.

Along the Banks, however, there were unprecedented numbers. The pelagic trip out of Hatteras 14 Feb produced 350+ (BP et al.), but the next day at Cape Point, Buxton, a staggering count of 8875 southbound Razorbills was made in only 2.5 hours of observation (RD, GA, DC, JPi et al.). Along with some northbound birds and birds sitting close to shore, a conservative 9000+ were estimated—probably representing a substantial portion of the Atlantic population! Past winter counts from shore have topped only 1184 on 14 Feb 1994 (*N.A.S. Field Notes* 48: 198): to put this in context, prior counts in the state pertained mostly to single individuals. In the late winter of 1993–1994, fishermen reported up to 3000 Razorbills just offshore, but these numbers were thought exaggerated and remained unconfirmed. It seems clear that this species has the capacity to invade at least the n. portion of the Region in substantial numbers; however, it is also likely that this is a relatively recent phenomenon, perhaps driven by prey scarcity farther n., as the irruptive nature of the phenomenon suggests. This dynamic area of the Region cries out for a standardized seawatching effort, such as has been established at Avalon, New Jersey and recently at Smith I., Virginia.

Warblers, in Atlanta 11 Dec (SBw) and at Oxbow Meadows 4 Jan–9 Feb (JFI, EH, WC). Other noteworthy winter warblers included a Nashville in Apex, NC 27 Dec (SSh), a Yellow at Donnelley W.M.A., SC 29 Jan (G&JH), a Yellow at Savannah N.W.R., SC 31 Jan (ST et al.), a Yellow at L. Matt. 29 Dec (JL), a Black-throated Blue at Oxbow Meadows, GA 7 Dec–4 Jan (WC, JFI, EH), a Black-throated Blue and 2 Black-throated Greens on the Kitty Hawk, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (*vide* JL), and an American Redstart at Savannah N.W.R., SC 31 Jan (ST et al.). Ovenbirds are known to winter at a few extreme coastal locations; thus very unexpected were singles inland at Raven Rock S.P., NC 30 Dec (GL) and Amicalola Falls S.P., GA 29 Dec (GB, JFI). Northern Waterthrushes were found in all three states, with the most interesting count being 2 at the S.S.S. 3 Dec (SC). One of the latter remained through the winter. There were at least 3 Wilson's Warblers found in both North Carolina and Georgia this winter, about normal for the season. Very rare and unusual during winter, Summer Tanagers were reported multiple times. A female was at a feeder near Savannah, GA during Jan (*vide* RW), and an ad. male was at a feeder in Thomasville, GA 17 Jan (EH, JFI). In North Carolina, a female was at a feeder in Winston-Salem late Dec+ (*vide* RS). This season's Western Tanagers included an ad. male in Charlotte, NC early–20 Jan (*vide* TP, v. o.) and another in Summerville, SC in Jan (*vide* TP, v. o.).

The best count of the secretive Bachman's Sparrow was 7 at Ichauway Plantation, Baker, GA 16 Feb (MBI). Reports of American Tree Sparrow are always noteworthy in the Region. This year, 5 were in the dunes at Kitty Hawk, NC 20 Dec (*vide* JL), one was at Piney Creek, Alleghany, NC 28 Jan–5 Feb (JC), and one was in Hertford, Perquimans, NC 15 Feb (*vide* JR). Clay-colored Sparrows were found wintering at several sites, with the best report involving a record number—up to 9 birds—near North R., Carteret, NC early Dec+ (JF et al.). Elsewhere, 3 at Smith's Landing, L. Seminole, GA 23 Jan (EB, MB) were good finds. Also of note was the count of 42 Vesper Sparrows in n. Greene, GA 10 Jan (PS, MB), an excellent count for this localized, uncommon sparrow. South Carolina had the only Lark Sparrows, with up to 2 at the Myrtle Beach High School 11–30 Jan (KF v.o.). Peak grassland sparrow totals involved 2 Grasshopper Sparrows in Carteret, NC 26 Dec–17 Jan (JF et al.), 4 Henslow's Sparrows at Birdsong Nature Center, Grady, GA 20 Dec–31 Jan (MBI et al.), and 2 Le Conte's Sparrows on the Santee N.W.R. C.B.C. 27 Dec (*vide* LG). Lincoln's Sparrow reports were about average, with the most interesting being 2 on the

**SA** This winter saw a major invasion of **Common Redpolls** into North Carolina, surely the greatest on record. The first one was inland at a feeder at Bakers Mt., *Catawba* 5 Dec (JSu), followed by 1–2 at Frisco 10–13 Dec (BP, v.o.). Many veteran observers in the state had the opportunity to see the species for the first time in Frisco.

What happened in late Dec, however, was totally without precedent in the Region and the Southeast. During the early morning of 28 Dec, a major fallout of Common Redpolls occurred along the Outer Banks. Flocks were seen coming in off the ocean during most of the morning, and small numbers were found at most areas checked. During the Bodie–Pea I. C.B.C. that day, all parties reported the species. The total for the count was a whopping **167** (*vide* PS)—three times the previous maximum count for North Carolina! And following that day, redpolls were found all along the Banks, with small groups being noted at Mackay Island N.W.R., Manteo, Frisco, and Ocracoke. The Ocracoke birds remained until at least mid-Feb (J. Hanrahan). Other sightings included one at Roanoke I. 5 Jan (JL) and one at a feeder in Greenville, NC 20–28 Feb (*vide* JW). Elsewhere, one was a very good find at a feeder in Tucker, GA 29 Jan–4 Feb (JJ), a very rare report for that state and the southernmost report in the fall flight in e. North America.

Rocky Mount, NC C.B.C. 20 Dec (RD), one on the Southern L. Norman, NC C.B.C. 21 Dec (*vide* TP), and one at the Newman Wetlands Center, Clayton, GA 16 Feb (CL). Lapland Longspurs were scattered across the Region this winter, with mostly 1–2 birds being found. The one major exception was the flock at Hoop. that wintered in that area: the highest count for North Carolina, ever, was provided by the 100 there 6 Dec (HL, JPi, WCo), with at least 75 there as late as 27 Jan (WF). The only Snow Bunting sightings were of 14 at Bulls I., SC 4 Jan (DH, BMo), one at H.B.S.P. 8 Dec (*vide* DS), and one near Oregon Inlet, NC 6 Dec (JW et al.). Rare winter Rose-breasted Grosbeaks included 4 different individuals in Georgia in early Dec (*vide* JFI) and a female at a feeder in Brevard, NC in late Dec (*vide* NS). Much rarer in winter was the trio of Blue Grosbeaks in North Carolina, with individuals on the Durham C.B.C. 14 Dec (NB, DK), at Carolina Beach S.P. 22 Jan (BS), and at a feeder in Clayton 28 Jan (DW). Rare in winter, several Indigo Buntings were good finds: a male was in Lawrenceville, GA 8 Dec (KT), while 2 were at a feeder in Winston-Salem, NC all season (RH, RSn, v.o.). Painted Buntings are known to winter in small numbers along the immediate coast; thus of interest inland were one on the Durham, NC C.B.C. 14 Dec (JPi, JSo) and up to 2 at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, GA 20 Dec–21 Feb (AW et al.).

North Carolina had all the Yellow-headed Blackbirds this winter, with singles s. of Goldsboro during Dec (ED, GH), at L. Matt. 29 Dec (JL), and at Twin Lakes, Sunset Beach during Dec (*vide* MM). Brewer's Blackbirds were found in all three states, the best counts being of 30 in Carteret, NC 12 Dec (JL et al.), 200 in Murray, GA 16 Jan (*vide* TM), and 200 at Oxbow Meadows, GA 18 Jan (WC). The only Red Crossbill report of note was of 3 present in the Asheville, NC area 30 Dec–late Feb (ST). Only a handful of Evening Grosbeak reports were submitted, with 6 at a feeder on Skidaway I., GA 2 Dec (*vide* RW), one at L. Acworth, Cobb, GA 21

Jan (SP), and one at a feeder in Simpsonville, SC 19 Feb (PW) most noteworthy.

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