

# Florida



## Bill Pranty

Avian Ecology Lab  
Archbold Biological Station  
123 Main Drive  
Venus, Florida 33960  
(billpranty@hotmail.com)

Rainfall in the Region was somewhat below normal, and temperatures were at or above normal. Several minor fallouts were noted in April, especially at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park near Miami. Caribbean vagrants were few, but two exotic species were newly verified and another was reported for the first time.

### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Migrant loons observed inland were a Red-throated over Gainesville, *Alachua* 31 Mar (AK) and a Common over Osceola N.F., *Baker* 28 Mar (JHi, RR et al.). Lingering Commons in

alternate plumage were at Longboat Key, *Sarasota* 20 May (JGi) and Tallahassee, *Leon* 23 May (GM). In partial alternate plumage was a Horned Grebe at Spring Hill, *Hernando* 23–27 May (A&BH). Two Red-footed Boobies spent the season at Dry Tortugas N.P., *Monroe* (LMA et al.). Increasing inland, 2 Brown Pelicans visited Lake Apopka R.A., *Orange* 4 Apr (HR). Also at Lake Apopka R.A. were 60 American Bitterns 24 Mar (HR), while one in *Dixie* 29 May (LA) was apparently summering. Sixteen Least Bitterns at L. Jackson 22 Apr (MH) probably furnished the high count for the Tallahassee area. Great White Herons strayed inland to Kissimmee Prairie Preserve S.P., *Okeechobee* in mid-Apr (PM) and Lake Apopka R.A. 30 May (HR). Two white-morph Reddish Egrets were quite rare n. to Nassau Sound, *Duval* 18 May (PL). Casual but reported increasingly in the Region were 5 White-faced Ibis at St. Marks N.W.R., *Wakulla* 22 Apr (†AW).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were numerous (v.o.), with 57 at Lake Apopka R.A. 7 Apr (HR), 145 at Paynes Prairie Preserve S.P., *Alachua* 22 Apr (HA), and 44 at McIntosh, *Marion* 18 May (RR). Six Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Paynes Prairie 7 Apr (BC, BE) and

singles at St. Marks N.W.R. 19 Mar (TC) and 15 Apr (AW) were out of core areas. A Greater White-fronted Goose at Lake City, *Columbia* 19–20 Mar (JHi et al.) was the only report of the species. Canada Geese were widespread s. to the cen. peninsula (v.o.), and some of these may have represented wild birds; the Canada Goose at Stock I., *Monroe* 17 Apr–6 May (LMA, JPu, MG et al.) was likely feral. Undoubtedly feral was the Mute Swan at Jacksonville 28 Apr+ (PP et al.). Two Blue-winged Teal in *Sarasota* 30 May (JPa, JDu) and 3 Ring-necked Ducks at Emeralda Marsh, *Lake* 16 May (JPu) were late or summering. Three Black Scoters at Ft. Myers Beach, *Lee* remained until 19 Mar (BPi), with a female lingering through 27 Mar (CE).

### RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Bowman observed single White-tailed Kites s. of Lake Placid, *Highlands* 27 Feb–3 Mar and e. of L. Manatee, *Manatee* 4 Mar. Mississippi Kites at Tallahassee 5 Apr (GM) and Gainesville 7 Apr (RN) were early, while one at Belleview, *Marion* 30 May (AL) was s. of the known breeding range. Another Mississippi provided the first for Lake Apopka R.A. 5 May (HR), while 200 at Tram Road S.T.P., Tallahassee 6 (EWo, EWe) & 20 May (GM et al.) must have been awesome. Perhaps equally inspiring were the 49 Bald Eagles at Circle B Bar Reserve, *Polk* 20 Mar (*vide* CG). Cooper's Hawks nests were found at Lakeland, *Polk* 21 Mar (BS) and Cape Coral, *Lee* 20 (JGr) & 25 May (WW). A Broad-winged Hawk at Talbot Islands S.P., *Duval* 4 Apr (PL) was early and outside its known breeding range. The most interesting of six Short-tailed Hawk reports was a mixed-morph pair at New Port Richey, *Pasco* for the 8th year (KT), a light morph at Jena, *Dixie* 19 Apr (JK), and a dark morph at Redlands, *Miami-Dade* 22 May (JB). Unusual and late was the dark-morph Swainson's Hawk in e. *Polk* 23 Apr (B&LC). A Peregrine Falcon was northbound over Lake Wales Ridge S.E., *Polk* 15 Apr (BPr), while 4 were at Dry Tortugas 4–6 May (MG et al.). Continued surveys at Salt Springs S.P., Bayonet Pt., *Pasco* indicate a widespread population of Black Rails (KT et al.). A Purple Gallinule was unusual at Cedar Key 14–17 Apr (DH, JHi), and 97 at Lake Apopka R.A. 25 Apr (HR) represented the high count from that site.

American Golden-Plovers were detected at Lake Apopka R.A. 28 Mar (3; HR), Crandon Beach, *Miami-Dade* 13 Apr (2; RD), and Merritt I. N.W.R., *Brevard* 25 Apr (one; JPu et al.). Thirty-eight Piping Plovers around Nassau Sound 14 Mar included 7 that had been color-banded at sites around the Great Lakes (PL). Meanwhile, 25 American Oystercatchers at Little Estero Lagoon, *Lee* 10 May included birds banded as chicks in North Carolina and Massachusetts (CE). Perhaps increasing as breeders in the n. peninsula, Black-necked Stilts numbered 20+ at Hamilton phosphate mines 20 Mar (RR, JHi) and 21 (5 of these fledglings) at Paynes Prairie Preserve 2 Apr+ (AK et al.). Twenty-nine Solitary Sandpipers were at Circle

B Bar Reserve 18–19 Apr (*fide* CG). A Willet at Polk mines 9 May was quite rare there (PT, PF). Three Whimbrels lingered at Little Estero Lagoon to 26 May, while a Long-billed Curlew remained into summer (CE). Alternate-plumaged Hudsonian Godwits graced Alafia Bank, Hillsborough 12–28 Mar (a male; MK, BA et al., ph.) and 2–10 Apr (a female; RP, MK et al.) and Hickory Mound Impoundment, Taylor 16 Apr (JK). Irregular inland but almost expected at Lake Apopka R.A., a Marbled Godwit paused 21 Apr, and 2 Sanderlings were found there 20 May (HR).

Of the 1500 Red Knots near Nassau Sound this season were 54 color-banded birds—40 from the e. U.S., 9 from Argentina, 3 from Chile, and 2 from Brazil, including one knot banded in 1983 (PL). Multiple White-rumped Sandpipers were found at Eagle Lakes Park, Naples, Collier 27 Apr–4 May (3; DS, CE et al.), Lake Apopka R.A. 16 May (6; HR), and Merritt I. N.W.R. 19 May (10; JPu). Rare in the Region, 5 Baird's Sandpipers were notable at Springhill Road S.T.P., Tallahassee 12 Apr (GM et al.). Up to 3 Ruffs were observed at Stormwater Treatment Area 5, Hendry 3–13 Apr (RU et al., ph.) until the area was determined to be off-limits to visitors. Paynes Prairie Preserve hosted 3 Long-billed Dowitchers 23 Apr (JHi) and 70 Wilson's Snipe 29 Mar (AK). Not usually observed in the Region during spring, single Wilson's Phalaropes were surprises at St. Petersburg 1 Apr (BA) and St. Marks N.W.R. 18 Apr (MH et al.), with duos at Circle B Bar Reserve 19 Apr (B&LC, SRi) and Springhill Road S.T.P. 20 Apr (GM, JC).

### JAEGERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Two Pomarine Jaegers were 15 km off Marco I., Collier 18 May (DS). Laughing Gulls inland included one at Ocean Pond, Osceola N.F. 28 Mar (RR, JHi et al.) and several at L. Eustis, Lake 3–19 Apr (JPu). Lesser Black-backed Gulls are now too numerous to list even a majority of the reports—among 19 at Crandon Beach 19 Apr was an apparent *intermedius* (RD). Another Lesser Black-backed at Stock I. 6 May (MG) was rare in the Keys. A **Glaucous Gull** at L. Okeechobee, *Okeechobee* late Mar–4 Apr (*fide* GW et al.\*) provided only the 2nd inland record, while another at Ochlockonee Bay, Wakulla 2–10 May (JM et al.) was casual in the Panhandle. Three Great Black-backed Gulls lingered at Crandon Beach to 26 May (RD). Gull-billed Terns were surprisingly widespread, with one at Cedar Key 17 Mar (JHi), up to 2 at Lake Apopka R.A. 2–20 May (HR), and singles at Pelican Island N.W.R., *Indian River* 8 May (BW), Jupiter Inlet Colony 12 May (JHa),

and Merritt Island N.W.R. 25 Apr–19 May (JPu). An apparently "pure" Elegant Tern was observed copulating with a Sandwich Tern at Ft. De Soto Park, Pinellas 27 Apr–early May (LA et al., ph. LA, AM). Terns at Lake Apopka R.A. included a Sandwich 18 Apr, 6 Commons 10 May, and 514 Forster's 31 Mar (HR). Other notable Commons were singles at Dry Tortugas 5 May (MG) and Jupiter Inlet Colony 12 May (JHa) and 5 at Nassau Sound 27 May (PL). Five Least Terns were at Tigertail Beach, Marco I., Collier on the early date of 21 Mar (BRo). Two Black Noddies spent the season at Dry Tortugas (LMa).

A singing White-crowned Pigeon was at Ten Thousand Islands N.W.R. 25 May (TD), outside the known breeding range. Two White-winged Doves at Alligator Pt., Franklin 2 Apr (JM) were west-bound migrants, but several variously at Ocala N.F. 21 Apr+ (JPu) and at Lutz, Hillsborough in mid-May (TM) were breeders. Doyle tallied 26 Mangrove Cuckoos during point counts at Ten Thousand Islands N.W.R. 9–27 May (TD). Dry Tortugas hosted a Barn Owl 6 May and a Caribbean Short-eared Owl 5 May (MG et al.).

Migrant Chuck-will's-widows at Ft. Myers Beach, Lee 27 Mar (CE) and Sanibel Lighthouse 28 Mar (VM, WW) roosted under carports after crossing the beaches! A Chimney Swift arrived at Eustis, Lake 30 Mar (JPu), and 360 were tallied at Lake Apopka R.A. 4 Apr (HR). Seven swifts at a chimney roost at New Port Richey 7 Apr increased to 166 the next day, and numbered 378 individuals 10 Apr (KT). A female Ruby-throated Hummingbird was incubating eggs at Collier–Seminole S.P., Collier on the early date of 8 Mar (TD, DS). A *Selasphorus* remained at Alachua, *Alachua* to 31 Mar (PBu). Becoming rare in the ne. peninsula, a male Hairy Woodpecker enlivened Orangedale, St. Johns 7 Mar (PP).

### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Final dates for wintering tyrannids at Lake Apopka R.A. were Least Flycatcher 23 Apr, Ash-throated Flycatcher 7 Apr, **Tropical Kingbird** 28 Apr, **Cassin's Kingbird** 28 Mar, Western Kingbird 2 May, and Scissor-tailed Fly-

catcher 31 Mar (HR). The Vermilion Flycatcher that wintered at Frog Pond W.M.A., Miami–Dade remained through 7 Mar (JB), while the one that graced Piney Z L., Leon 1–7 Mar (FG et al.) may have been overlooked previously. An Ash-throated Flycatcher tarried at Tallahassee until 3 May (GM), while single Brown-crested Flycatchers were spotted at Matheson Hammock 4 Apr (PBi, JB et al.) and Royal Palm, Everglades N.P., Miami–Dade 15 Apr (BRa). Now annual in the Region, a La Sagra's Flycatcher was a good find at No Name Key, *Monroe* 3 May (MG). Other Western Kingbirds were at Dry Tortugas 15 Apr (JPu et al.), Rosewood, *Levy* 24 Apr (2; RR, SC et al.), and Alligator Pt. 17 May (JM). A Gray Kingbird



The spring migration of 2004 was a good one for vagrant Western Tanagers, some of which—like this bird near the south end of Lake Jackson, Leon County, Florida (here 25 February)—surely overwintered in atypical locations. Photograph by Jim Cavanaugh.

strayed to Lake Apopka R.A. 23 Apr (HR), where birds are seen annually, the only regular inland site n. of L. Okeechobee. The latest of nine Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reports (v.o.) was one at Alligator Pt. 8 May (SM).

Typically an early spring migrant into the Region, a Yellow-throated Vireo was found along the Ichetucknee R., *Columbia* 4 Mar (ES), 4 others were at San Felasco Hammock Preserve S.P., *Alachua* 7 Mar (JHi, MM), and a pair had built a nest at Lakeland by 21 Mar (BS). Quite rare during spring was the Philadelphia Vireo at Ft. De Soto 3–4 May (JPu et al.). Forty-three Black-whiskered Vireos were tallied during point counts at Ten Thousand Islands N.W.R. 9–27 May; numbers have declined annually since the survey began in 2000 (TD). Black-whiskered at Lori Wilson Park, Cocoa Beach 1–10 May (BPa et al.) and Cedar Key 26 May (DH) were apparently overshooting birds. A singing Horned Lark at Hague, *Alachua* 22–23 Apr (MM et al.) provided one of few inland reports in Florida.

Tree Swallows often remain into May. This year, 472 tarried at Polk mines 9 May (PT, PF), 15 remained at Lake Apopka R.A. to 14 May (HR), and one was at L. Rousseau, *Citrus* 15 May (RR, SC et al.). The other swallows at Lake Apopka R.A. included a Northern Rough-winged 10 Mar, 5 Banks 5 May, and 5 Cliffs and

**SA** Bizarre was the report of a **Common Myna** that may have bred with a European Starling (!) at Neptune Beach, *Duval* in early May (SRo, PP et al.). The myna was first observed entering a cavity in a supermarket sign 1 May, then was seen to feed a juv. starling 8 May. It was not seen afterward. If the myna was not a local escapee, then it represented (by far) the northernmost dispersal to date. Neptune Beach is about 170 km n. of Sanford, *Seminole*, previously the n. limit of myna occurrence in the state, and only 30 km from the Georgia border.

2 Caves 14 Apr (HR). Other Bank Swallow reports came from the *Charlotte/Lee* border 19 Mar (WD, WW) and Polk mines 9 May (3; PT, PF). A Barn Swallow at Brooker, Bradford 7 Mar (RR, BC, BE) was early. Two Marsh Wrens lingered at Lake Apopka R.A. through 10 May (HR). Scarce migrants, Wood Thrushes enlivened Garden Key, Dry Tortugas 15–17 Apr (JPu) and Guana R. S.P., *St. Johns* 1 May (JHo).

Extremely scarce in the Region this past winter, Cedar Waxwings arrived at Ocala N.E. 22 Mar (14; JPu) and Lake Apopka R.A. 25 Apr (2; HR). Twenty waxwings lingered at Salt Springs S.P. through 12 May (JPu), with 28 at Lake Apopka R.A. until 14 May (HR).

### WARBLERS THROUGH SISKIN

Single Blue-winged Warblers graced Gainesville 14 Apr (AK), Largo 17 Apr (KN), and Paynes Prairie Preserve 27 Apr (JHi). Fall-outs of Northern Parulas were 60 at Dunedin Hammock, *Pinellas* 14 Mar (KN), 30 at Bonner Park, Largo 16 Mar (KN), and 25+ at Bill Bagg's Cape Florida S.P., *Miami-Dade* 5 Apr (RD). A Magnolia Warbler at Brooker, *Bradford* 7 Mar (BC, BE) was so early that it may have wintered locally. Cape May Warblers are rare inland during spring, so one at Lake Wales Ridge S.F. 21 Apr (BPr) and 3 at Lake Apopka R.A. 25 Apr (HR) were notable. Also at Lake Apopka were 5 Black-throated Blue Warblers 28 Apr (HR). Other warbler fallouts at Cape Florida S.P. were 100 Black-throated Blues 28 Apr (BRa); 125 Prairies 3 Apr (RD); 300 Palms 1 Apr (RD); and 100 Palms, 100 American Redstarts, and 100 Common Yellowthroats 28 Apr (BRa). A male Audubon's Warbler photographed at Dry Tortugas 15 Apr (BM et al.) represented perhaps only the 3rd Florida record. Thirty-one singing male Prairie Warblers tallied at Ten Thousand Islands N.W.R. 9–27 May represented the lowest number detected during annual surveys since 2000 (TD). Rarely observed in the Region during spring, 3 Bay-breasted Warblers at Largo 3 May (KN) and 2 at Ft. De Soto 4 May (JPu et al.) were surprises. Rarely found inland in numbers, 20 Blackpoll Warblers were counted at Lake Apopka R.A. 28 Apr (HR). An American Redstart at Ocala, *Marion* 30 May (BRo) was late, while a Prothonotary Warbler at Lake Apopka R.A. 24–28 Mar (HR) was early. Swainson's Warblers were surprisingly widespread 4–19 Apr, with reports from *Brevard*, *Broward*, *Lee*, *Levy*, *Miami-Dade*, *Palm Beach*, and *Pinellas* (v.o.). Good numbers of waterthrushes at Lake Apopka R.A. were 20 Northern 28 Apr and 7 Louisianans 19 Mar (HR). Another Northern lingered at Newnans L. through 23 May (RR). As is typical, Connecticut Warbler reports fell within a narrow window in May. Largo supported singles 8–10 & 13 May, and 2 on 17 May (KN), with another at Bonita Springs, *Lee* 11 May (DS et al.). Early were the Hooded Warblers at Largo 15 Mar (KN) and Lake Apopka R.A. 22 Mar (HR). Forty other Hoodeds swarmed Ft. De Soto 5

Apr (RS), while a singing male along the Ocklawaha R., Ocala N.E., *Putnam* 9 May+ may have been a local breeder (JPu). Quite scarce during spring, Canada Warblers graced Alachua 22 Apr (MW) and Paynes Prairie Preserve 24 Apr (LH). Forty-one Yellow-breasted Chats at Lake Apopka R.A. 23 May (HR) were at the s. edge of their breeding range, and 2 other chats remained all season at Cape Florida S.P. (RD).

A male Red-legged Honeycreeper was a one-day wonder at Grassy Key, *Monroe* 16 Apr (LMc, LMo, LMi). This furnished the 5th Florida report, all of single males within the previous 13 months, but provenance will surely be an issue. The male Western Tanager that wintered at Tallahassee remained to 10 Apr (FR et al.). Reported annually in recent years, a black-backed male Western Spindalis from the n. Bahamas was discovered at Key Largo, *Monroe* 23 Apr (EC, JDe, ph.). Another Caribbean vagrant, a Black-faced Grassquit, spent a week at Jupiter Ridge Natural Area, *Palm Beach* 21–27 Mar (PC, SS et al.).

Lingering sparrows included 2 Chippings at Ocala N.E. 2 May (JPu), a Savannah at Lake Apopka R.A. 30 May (HR), and a Le Conte's at Crystal River Preserve S.P., *Citrus* 1 May (A&BH et al.). Two Clay-colored Sparrows enlivened Lake Apopka R.A. 25 Apr (HR), with another at Honeymoon Island S.P., *Pinellas* 1 May (EK). A Lark Sparrow moved through Cedar Key 14 Apr (JHi). One hundred Seaside Sparrows were estimated along the s. part of County Road 361, *Dixie* 5 May (JHi et al.). Single Lincoln's Sparrows appeared at Lake Apopka R.A. 19 Mar and 18 Apr (HR), Eco Pond, Everglades N.P. 10 Apr (BRo), *Talquin* S.F., *Leon* 19 Apr (JM, GM), and *St. George I.*, *Franklin* 28 Apr (JC). A Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow may have been the first for Dry Tortugas 4–5 May (MG et al.). Emberizids at Lake Apopka R.A. included 44 Blue Grosbeaks (breeding) 2 May, 12 Painted Buntings (breeding) 26 May, 5 Dickcissels (3 males and 2 females; probably breeding) 18 Apr+, and 2590 Bobolinks 28 Apr (HR). Other Dickcissels were at *St. Marks* N.W.R. 29 Mar (TC) and *St. George I.* 4 May (JC, GM), while 170 Bobolinks graced Circle B Bar Reserve 22 May (*vide* CG). An imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird tarried at Cedar Key 21–24 May (DH, NT). Two male Shiny Cowbirds were spotted at *St. George I.* 4 May (JC, GM), with another at Lake Apopka R.A. 20 May (HR). Bronzed Cowbirds continue to increase in the Region, with 42 at Eagle Lakes Park 2 Mar, with 7 displaying males and one female there to 27 Apr (DS et al.). Another Bronzed was photographed at *St. Cloud*, *Osceola* 20 May (ph. KT). Tracey found 4 Baltimore Orioles and 6 Orchard Orioles at New Port Richey 18 Apr. Three male House Finches were counter-singing at Orlando, *Orange* in early Apr (GB). Pine Siskins were found at Tallahassee 11–25 Mar (2; FR), Alachua 21 Mar (JM), and Gainesville 18 Apr (MD).

### EXOTICS

A Woolly-necked Stork seen at Homestead, *Miami-Dade* 15 Apr (BRa) presumably was the bird that escaped from Miami MetroZoo in 1992 and that has been observed on a few occasions since then. A Diamond Dove was photographed at Plantation, *Broward* 1 Apr (BD). Four Black-hooded Parakeets at Johnson 10 Mar+ (CH) were new for *Putnam*. A Peach-fronted Parakeet photographed at St. Petersburg 14 May (LS) furnished the first verifiable Florida record. Other rare psittacids were a Red-breasted Parakeet at Miami 27 Mar (JB et al., ph.) and 3 Scaly-headed Parrots nearby at Matheson Hammock 17 Apr & 1 May (JB et al.). Native to Africa, 2 Southern Ground-Hornbills (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*) at McIntosh, *Marion* 15 May+ that had escaped from a collection nearby (RH, RR, MJ, ph.) furnished a new Florida exotic. Another new species was the Black-chested Jay (*Cyanocorax affinis*) observed at College Park, Orlando 21 Mar (GB, TR et al.) and reportedly photographed several months earlier by the discoverer. The species is native from Costa Rica south to Colombia and Venezuela.

Cited contributors (members of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee in boldface): Bruce Ackerman, Bruce H. Anderson, Howard Adams, Lyn Atherton, Paul Bithorn (PBi), Reed Bowman, John Boyd, Greg Bretz, Pat Burns (PBu), Bob Carroll, Jim Cavanagh, Buck and Linda Cooper, Ed Clark, Pinya Cohen, Steve Collins, Tom Curtis, Judy Dearborn (JDe), Barbara DeWitt, Robin Diaz, Wes Dirks, Terry Doyle, Michael Drummond, Jeanne Dubi (JDu), Becky Enneis, Charlie Ewell, Paul Fellers, Murray Gardler, Chuck Geanangel, John Ginaven (JGi), Frank Goodheart, Jon Greenlaw (JGr), Jack Hailman (JHa), Al and Bev Hansen, Roxanne Hart, Dale Henderson, Candy Hendry, Linda Hensley, Michael Hill, John Hintermister (JHi), Jackie Holstein (JHo), Mike James, Marianne Korosy, Andy Kratter, Jerry Krummrich, Ed Kwater, Patrick Leary, Angela Luzader, Mike Manetz, Larry Manfredi (LMa), Tim Mann, Linda McCandless (LMc), Sean McCool, Vince McGrath, Gail Menk, Leo Miller (LMi), Paul Miller, Arthur Morris, Linda Most (LMO), Brennan Mulrooney, John Murphy, Kris Nelson, Robert Norton, Jeff Palmer (JPa), Rich Paul, Bob Paxson (BPa), Bob Pittell (BPi), David Powell, Peggy Powell, Bill Pranty (BPr), John Puschock (JPu), Brian Rapoza (BRa), Sue Riffe (SRi), Ted Robinson, Bryant Roberts (BRo), Harry Robinson, Sandy Rogers (SRo), Rex Rowan, Fran Rutkovsky, Earl Scales, Stefan Schlick, Ron Smith, Bob Snow, Lee Snyder, Doug Sutor, Paul W. Sykes, Jr., Nancy Taylor, Pete Timmer, Ken Tracey, Raul Urgelles, Billi Wagner, Martha Walsh-McGehee, Elizabeth Wells (EWe), Walt Winton, Ed Woodruff (EWO), Glen Woolfenden, Andy Wraithmell. 🐣