

Florida



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It was a good season for vagrants, with 11 reviewable rarities reported, among them Florida's first Northern Fulmar and the state's (and continent's) sixth Red-legged Honeycreeper, all six records of which have come in the past 25 months. Fallouts of Neotropical migrants were noted on 24 and 27 April.

Abbreviations/definitions: C.A. (Conservation Area); F.O.S.R.C. (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee); N.S.R.A. (North Shore Recreation Area); UF (University of Florida at Gainesville [specimen collection]); report (any observation); record (only reports verifiable from photograph, videotape, or specimen evidence).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Good local counts of Common Loons were 12+ off Key Biscayne, *Miami-Dade* 7 Mar (RD) and 52 over Gainesville 4 Apr (AK); one in alternate plumage at Tallahassee 15–21 May (GM) was late. Providing the first record for Florida was the **Northern Fulmar** that beached at Satellite Beach, *Brevard* 19 Apr and died later (*UF 44664, *fide* TW). A good count of 100 Northern Gannets at St. George I., *Franklin* was made 5 May (JC). Brown Pelicans now are regular inland in the cen. peninsula, with 6 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 30 Apr–1 May (HR). A Magnificent Frigatebird was inland to Gainesville 18 Apr (BCa). Ten American Bitterns were counted at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 20 Mar (HR), while 2 at L. Jackson, *Leon* tarried through 8 May (MHi). Four Great White Herons were found out of range: 2 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 30 Mar (HR) and singles at Melbourne Beach, *Brevard* in late Apr (AB) and St. George I. 30 May (JaD). An aberrant Cattle Egret, nearly entirely buff-colored, was found near Polk City, *Polk* 19 Apr (PF et al., ph. LC). An

imm. White-faced Ibis enlivened St. Marks N.W.R. 9–12 Apr (BR et al.); sightings of this species have become annual in recent years. Providing the first breeding report for Florida—and probably the New World—was an active Sacred Ibis nest at Loxahatchee N.W.R., *Palm Beach* 23 May (GH). Twenty-eight Roseate Spoonbills were at Polk phosphate mines 6 May (PF), while 3 others (probably nonbreeding birds) visited a rookery at Emerald Marsh C.A., *Lake* for four weeks through 18 May (PM).

The most interesting Black-bellied Whistling-Duck report was of 150 at L. Istokpoga, *Highlands* 30 May (MMc). Single Greater White-fronted Geese lingered at Springhill Rd. W.T.P., *Leon* through 2 Mar (GM) and Gainesville through 25 May (PLa et al.). An active Canada Goose nest was found at Hudson, *Pasco* 31 Mar (KT), while a free-flying goose flew northward past Bill Baggs Cape Florida S.P., *Miami-Dade* 14 May (RD). A Northern Pintail lingered at Merritt Island N.W.R. through 29 May (TD), and the Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal at Gainesville remained through 9 Mar (PBu et al.). Photographed by a visiting birder and not reported until weeks afterward was a female **Masked Duck** at Viera Wetlands, *Brevard* 16 Mar, reportedly accompanied by a male (EH). There were 12,400 Ruddy Ducks on L. Apopka 20 Mar (HR).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Up to 6 Snail Kites frequented L. Tsala Apopka, *Citrus* 20 Apr–14 May (E&MS); a pair nested at L. Istokpoga 30 May (MMc). Perhaps representing a slight range extension, a pair of Mississippi Kites tended a nest at Apalachicola, *Franklin* 6 May (KM). Other Mississippi reports included 200+ over Tram Rd. W.T.P., *Leon* 6 May (EW), a migrant at Green Cay Wetlands, *Palm Beach* 7 May (BM), and 30 at the s. end of breeding range at Ocala 27 May+ (AL). Robinson tallied 165 Northern Harriers at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 13 Mar. Two Cooper's Hawks fledged from a nest at w. Kendall, *Miami-Dade* in May (JBo). Five reports of Short-tailed Hawk were received, one each in *Highlands*, *Lake*, *Pasco*, *Seminole*, and *Volusia*. Boyd saw the Great Black-Hawk at Key Biscayne 23 Apr; it appeared to be of the race *urubitinga*, found mostly in n. South America and on Trinidad. (JBo). A Crested Caracara at s. Merritt I. 27 Apr was extralimital (BPa). Quite rare in *Pinellas*, an American Kestrel pair nested unsuccessfully at an electrical substation 23 Apr–14 May, then attempted nesting in a wooden pole 27 May+ (JF).

A pair of Limpkins with 5 young at L. Munson, *Leon* 17 Apr (*fide* MHi) was unusual so far north. American Golden-Plovers were found in small numbers in the



Rarely photographed in the United States, this Short-tailed Hawk nest was found in Orange County, Florida 1 February 2005 (here) and successfully fledged two young. Photograph by Alison R. Styring.

cen. peninsula, with another at Crandon Beach, *Miami-Dade* 19 May (RD). Irregular on the Atlantic side of the state, a Snowy Plover graced Matanzas Inlet, *St. Johns* 14 May (N&TS). A high of 900 American Avocets was found at *Polk* mines 10 Apr (CGe, PT). A Solitary Sandpiper Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 24 Mar was early; 10 were there 26 Apr (HR). The most unusual Upland Sandpiper report was of one in mid-*Pinellas* 22 Apr (JF). Uncommon along the se. coast, 5 Whimbrels flew northward past MacArthur S.P., *Palm Beach* 7 May (DR, AV). Rare in Florida, a Long-billed Curlew appeared at Cedar Key 4–17 Mar (JHi). Florida's 4th verifiably documented Surfbird, at Smyrna Dunes Park, *Volusia* 10–11 Apr (DN, DR et al., ph. BR), was the first away from the Gulf coast. Irregular inland, 2 Sanderlings appeared at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 1 May (HR). High peep counts at *Polk* mines included 16,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers 6 May (PF) and 10,000 Least Sandpipers 10 Apr (PT, CGe) but only 20 Western Sandpipers 6 May (PF). Two White-rumped Sandpipers in cen. *Pasco* 29 Apr (KT) were a bit early, while good counts were 65 at Merritt Island N.W.R. 30 Apr (TD, AV), 9 at Springhill Rd. W.T.P. 12 May (GM), and 17 in the Everglades Agricultural Area, *Palm Beach* 22 May (BH, MB). Single Pectoral Sandpipers at Fernandina Beach, *Nassau* (PLe) and Ft. De Soto (LA), both 18 Mar, and 4 at Merritt Island N.W.R. 19 Mar (AV, TD) were somewhat early. A Purple Sandpiper lingered at Smyrna Dunes Park, *Volusia* through 10 Apr (AV et al.). Thirty-one Dunlin at *Polk* mines 29 Apr (PF) represented a high inland count. The remarkable count of 9700 Stilt Sandpipers at *Polk* mines 14 May (PT, CGe) established the Florida record count by 4000 individuals (set at the same site on 29 Apr 2004)! A female Ruff graced Merritt Island N.W.R. 15 May (TD et al., ph. AV). The 1280 Long-billed Dowitchers also at *Polk* mines 29 Apr made one of the state's highest counts (PF). Wilson's Phalaropes are irregular during spring, so one at St. Marks N.W.R. 19 Mar (JM) and up to 3 there 7–17 May (TC et

al.), along with another at Merritt Island N.W.R. 20–21 May (TD), were surprising. A Red Phalarope was salvaged at Dania, *Broward* 16 Dec (fide TW).

JAEGERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A light-morph ad. Pomarine Jaeger was spied from Ft. De Soto 6 Mar (PS), while a Parasitic Jaeger was salvaged at Cocoa Beach, *Brevard* 16 Dec (fide TW). Ft. De Soto's Heermann's Gull, semi-resident since Oct 2000, again displayed wanderlust, this time n. to St. George I. 27 May (JE et al.). Crandon Beach supported up to 28 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, including at least one of the subspecies *intermedius*, through 17 May (ph.), and 2 first-year Great Black-backed Gulls through 18 May (RD).

Unpredictable in occurrence, Gull-billed Terns appeared near Weeki Wachee, *Hernando* 18 Mar (MG), Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 27 Mar–22 May (2 birds; HR), Ft. De Soto 7 May (PF et al.), and *Polk* mines 14 May (10 birds; PT, CGe). Three Elegant Terns were one-day wonders at Flamingo, Everglades N.P. 17 Apr (JBo). A Sandwich Tern was inland to Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 6–10 Apr (HR). Five Roseate Terns again appeared to be roof-nesting at the Marathon Government Center, *Monroe* 14 May (JBo, NF). Single Common Terns were tallied at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 20 & 30 Apr (HR), with 20+ others at Bird Is., *Duval* 11 May (PLe). Early was the Least Tern at Altamonte Springs, *Seminole* 27 Mar (AV), with good-sized flocks of 101 at *Polk* mines 14 May (CGe, PT) and 110 at Progress Village, *Hillsborough* 17 May (EK). An imm. Brown Noddy 1 May established the first record for Ft. De Soto (PT et al.). As is usual, one Black Noddy was found at Dry Tortugas 23 Apr–1 May (MG, MB et al.); this year's bird was an ad., less often seen in the U.S. than second-year birds. A Black Skimmer inland at Gainesville 2 Apr (PLa, JuS) was unusual, while 350 at *Polk* mines 18 May (PF) were expected.

A Razorbill found on the Dunedin Causeway, *Pinellas* 13 Apr later succumbed (ph. SCR); it provided the 10th Florida record. A White-winged Dove pair attending a nest with one egg at Inverness 19 Mar furnished the first *Citrus* breeding report (KS), while single doves were found at Talbot Islands S.P., *Duval* 25 May and Fernandina Beach, *Nassau* 30 May (PLe), with 2 others at Bald Pt., *Franklin* 26 May (JaD).

Further evidence of a northward spread, 6 Black-hooded Parakeets were found at New Port Richey, *Pasco* 10 May (RS); likewise were 2 nest-building Monk Parakeets at Gainesville 15 Mar+ (WE et al.). The first verifiable evidence for Scaly-headed Parrot (*Pionus maximilliana*) was obtained when 3 were photographed at Matheson Hammock, Miami 30 Apr (JBo et al.).

Fifty-plus Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Dry Tortugas 27 Apr were part of the fallout (MG), while a Mangrove Cuckoo at Bald Pt. 3 May (JaD) established only the 2nd report for the Panhandle. Nearing extirpation in the United States but still popping up here and there, a Smooth-billed Ani was a surprise at Blue Cypress C.A., *Indian River* 5 Mar (BPa). Meanwhile, the Groove-billed Ani that wintered at Ft. Lauderdale Airport was last seen 18 Apr (MB et al.). A Short-eared Owl lingered at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. through 6 Apr (HR), while 2 of the Greater Antillean form were found at Dry Tortugas, where regular in spring, 1 May



This adult Mississippi Kite at Loggerhead Key 15 April 2005 was the first documented on the Dry Tortugas of Florida. Photograph from videotape by Rick Wiltraut.

(MB et al.). The taxonomy of West Indian Short-eared Owls is still in dire need of revision (see Hoffman, W., G. E. Woolfenden, and P. William Smith. 1999. Antillean Short-eared Owls invade southern Florida. *Wilson Bulletin* 111: 303–313). Increasingly reported of late, single Lesser Nighthawks were photographed at St. George I. 2 Apr (JC) and Dry Tortugas 8 Apr (BM). A wintering Buff-bellied Hummingbird at Gainesville lingered through 30 Mar (HB), and another found at Fairchild Tropical Gardens, *Miami-Dade* 29 Mar–6 Apr (LM et al., ph. JBo) established the southernmost record in Florida. A melanistic Red-headed Woodpecker was found at Goethe S.F., *Levy* 17 Mar; it was wholly dark except for a red head (JHi). Rare and local in the peninsula, single Hairy Woodpeckers were noteworthy near Orangedale, *St. Johns* 8 Apr (PP) and

in se. Leon 16 Apr (RL).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Irregular in Florida during spring, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was a notable find at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 20 Apr (HR). Vermilion Flycatchers were recorded in five spots, the latest through 19 Mar, including a male at Blue Cypress C.A. 5 Mar (BPa) and 2 at Flatwoods Ranch, Odessa, Pasco 12 Mar (CS). Three Ash-throated Flycatchers remained at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. through 30 Mar (HR), with another was at Largo Central Nature Park, Pinellas 20 Apr (PBI). Two Brown-crested Flycatchers were heard at Key Largo 5 Mar (PBi, RU), with another at Everglades N.P., Miami-Dade 13 Mar (RD) and 2 others at Frog Pond W.M.A., Miami-Dade 10 Apr (PBi). Single La Sagra's Flycatchers enlivened Dry Tortugas 26 May (MG et al.) and Birch S.P., Ft. Lauderdale 6–12 May (MB et al.). The high count of Western Kingbirds at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. was 17 on 16 Mar (HR). Early-arriving kingbirds were an Eastern at Avon Park A.F.R., Highlands 15 Mar (BPr, JBe) and single Grays at sw. Miami-Dade 16 Mar (RD) and Ft. De Soto 18–19 Mar (LA). In mid-Pinellas, where rare, an Eastern Kingbird pair attended a nest 23 May+ (JF). Good numbers of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were 10 at Cypress Isle, L. Istokpoga 8 Mar (MMc) and up to 7 in e. Polk through 12 Apr (JDu). A Thick-billed Vireo at Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood, Broward 4–15 May (JWr et al., BM, ph.) established the 3rd firm North American record. Vireos at Ft. De Soto included single Philadelphias 19 Apr, 2 May, and 6 May (LA, BAh) and a Black-whiskered 2 Apr (LA).

Swallows at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. included an early Northern Rough-winged 13 Mar, 4 Banks 3 Apr, one Cliff 18 Mar, one Mexican Cave (subspecies *pallida*) 22 May, and 390 Barns 17 Apr (HR). Cave Swallows were widespread elsewhere: one Mexican was at Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Palm Beach 12 Mar (JBo); 3 Mexicans were at Everglades N.P. 13 Mar (MB); 7–8 Mexicans were at St. Marks N.W.R. 17–18 Mar (JaD, JC, JHo) and another there 3 Apr (TC); 4 were at Springhill Rd. W.T.P. 18 Mar (GM); and singles made it to Ft. De Soto 20 Mar (LA), Ochlockonee R., Wakulla 1 Apr (JaD), and Bald Pt. 3 Apr (JM). A Carolina Chickadee in mid-Pinellas 9 Mar (JF) was a rarity there, while another at A.D. Barnes Park 2–3 Apr (AH et al.) provided the first for Miami-Dade. Likewise extralimital were Tufted Titmice at s. Miami 5 Mar (FG), Deerfield Island Park, Broward 5 Mar (GC), and up to 2 at Barnes Park all season (JBo et al.). Holdovers from the winter's irruption, Red-breasted Nuthatches lingered at Eastpoint, Franklin through 4 Apr (SK) and St.

Marks N.W.R. through 7 Apr (TC). House Wrens tarried at Alachua, Alachua 11 May (SHo) and Ocala 12 May (PO). At Lake Apopka N.S.R.A., 36 Marsh Wrens were counted 26 Apr, and one remained until 1 May (HR); another lingered at Paynes Prairie through 12 May (RR). Golden-crowned Kinglets were seen last at Tallahassee 6 Mar (2 birds; D&SJ, DHa) and Gainesville 20 Mar (one; MMA). Late American Robins were 2 at Newnans L., Alachua 24 Apr (BCa) and singles at Casselberry, Seminole 25 Apr (AV) and Bald Pt. 29 May (JM). Hundreds of Gray Catbirds inundated Dry Tortugas 27 Apr (MG). Leftovers from the winter irruption, 176 Cedar Waxwings were at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 15 May



The Dry Tortugas of Florida have visiting Black Noddies nearly every year, but adults are rarely seen. This adult Black (right) with a Brown Noddy was at Garden Key 13 April 2005. Photograph from videotape by Rick Wiltraut.

(HR); 2 others were at Alligator Pt. 26 May (SM), and 2 more remained in the Upper Keys through 30 May (AH).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Six Blue-winged Warblers were seen at Melbourne Beach, Brevard 13 Apr (AB); the sole Golden-winged visited Ft. De Soto 2 May (LA et al.). An Orange-crowned Warbler at Dry Tortugas N.P. 1 May (MB et al.) was late. Four Nashville Warblers were reported, all singles. There were 52 Northern Parulas at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 18 Mar (HR). A male Audubon's Warbler at Dry Tortugas 7–8 Apr (AP, SHe, ph.) furnished only the 3rd verifiable Florida record. Meanwhile, a Myrtle Warbler at Mead Gardens 14 May (BAn) was quite tardy. One of the highlights of the season was the female Kirtland's Warbler that was a one-day wonder at Ft. De Soto 10 May (JHi et al., ph. LA); it established only the 3rd verifiable Florida record. Forty Black-poll Warblers were found at Ft. De Soto 7 May (PF et al.), while another at Cedar Key 30 May (DHe) was on the late side. Rarely seen in spring, single Cerulean Warblers enlivened Gainesville 9 Apr (SR) and Maitland Community Park, Seminole the same day (AV). Mead Gardens, Orange hosted 25 Black-and-white Warblers 23 Apr (AV). A Worm-eating Warbler at St. George I. 28 Mar (JC) was early, while 5 at

Maitland Community Park 9 Apr (AV) was a good inland count. Fifteen reports of Swainson's Warbler were received 1 Mar and 21 Mar–25 Apr, all singles except 2 at Ft. De Soto 16 Apr (BPr et al.), "several" at A.D. Barnes Park 17 Apr (GP et al.), and 4 at Birch S.P., Ft. Lauderdale 28 Apr (JP, MB et al.). Good counts of waterthrushes were 15 Northern at Birch S.P. 7 May (AV) and 34 Louisianas at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 27 Mar (HR). Eleven reports of Connecticut Warbler, all singles or duos, spanned 5–26 May; specimens were salvaged at Ft. Lauderdale 22 May and Pompano Beach 26 May (*vide* TW). A male Mourning Warbler, irregular in spring, paused in mid-Pinellas 2 May (JF, ph.). Unpredictable, Wilson's Warblers made appearances at Barnes Park 25 Mar–9 Apr (PBi, RU) and 17 Apr (GP), Bald Pt. 2 Apr (JM), and Sawgrass Recreation Area, Broward 5 Apr (SHe, AP). Three territorial Yellow-breasted Chats were at Crystal River Preserve S.P., Citrus 7 May (A&BH), and 6 were at Emeraldia Marsh C.A. 18 May (PM).

A male Red-legged Honeycreeper in mostly alternate plumage at Key West 21–22 Apr (CGo et al., ph. CW) provided the 6th U.S. report and 4th verifiable record, all since Mar 2003. Part of the 24 Apr fallout were 40+ Scarlet Tanagers at Cedar Key (JHi) and 20 at Ft. De Soto (PF). A male Western Tanager showed up at a Valrico, Hillsborough feeder 7–9 Mar (SB), while one that wintered at Tallahassee remained through 27 Apr (FR). The green-backed (Cuban?) Western Spindalis at Key West was seen through 27 Apr (JHa, MHe et al.). Clay-colored Sparrows lingered at Key Largo 5 Mar (PBi, RU), Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 10 Apr (HR), and Tallahassee 18 Apr (DHo). Single Lark Sparrows graced Hague, Alachua 18 Mar (DL, PBu), n. Hillsborough 28 Mar (G&RK), and Franklin 26 Apr (JoD). Six Savannah Sparrows tarried at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. until 1 May (HR), and another was found at Lake Kissimmee S.P., Polk 7 May (TP). Three or 4 Lincoln's Sparrows were found: Paynes Prairie 6–12 Mar (JHi, SCo), Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 10 & 20 Apr (HR), and Hague 16 Apr (MMA). Eighty Swamp Sparrows remained at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. through 20 Apr, and 9 remained there until at least 30 Apr (HR).

Robinson tallied 307 Northern Cardinals at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 14 Apr. Associated with the 24 Apr fallout were 60+ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, 20 Blue Grosbeaks, and 20 Indigo Buntings at Cedar Key (JHi); 32 other Indigos visited a Palatka, Putnam feeder 28 Apr (PBo, JoS). Dickcissels were widely reported—42 were at Dry Tortugas 27 Apr (MG)—but the big news came from Lake Apopka N.S.R.A., where 134 singing males and 9 females were counted 22 May (HR)

and a nest with four eggs was discovered 19 May (AV, ph.). This nest furnished only the 2nd verifiable breeding record for Florida; the first came from the same site in 1999. An apparent Rose-breasted Grosbeak × Black-headed Grosbeak hybrid was photographed at Bald Pt. 28 Apr (JaD). Nice numbers of Bobolinks were 1735 at Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 26 Apr (HR) and 250 at Polk mines 6 May (PF). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were spied at Gainesville 8 Mar (BCh), Altamonte Springs 27 Mar (fide AV), Crystal River in late Mar (JWa), and Cedar Key 26 Mar–6 May (DHe et al.). There were six reports of Shiny Cowbird: single males at Cedar Key 15 Apr and 3 May (DHe), Bald Pt. 9 Apr and 21–22 May (JM, JaD), and Lake Apopka N.S.R.A. 1 May (HR), with 2 males at Ft. De Soto 28 May (LA).

House Finches continue to colonize the cen. peninsula, albeit slowly. This season, the female of a pair at Orlando was observed carrying Spanish Moss 27 Apr (GS), 2 juveniles were found at Sanford, *Seminole* 29 Apr (AV), and the first *Polk* nest fledged 3 at Winter Haven 2–4 May (J&TS). Another finch pair was at Sorrento, *Lake* 27 May (CP). Purple Finches tarried at

Gainesville 3 Mar (BCa) and at Tallahassee 23 Mar (FR); the latest Pine Siskin was at Tallahassee 25 Apr (JL). American Goldfinches numbered 75 at Eco Pond, Everglades N.P. 17 Apr (JBo); 3 were at Winter Park, *Seminole* through 7 May (BAn), and one remained at Tallahassee through 27 May (JL).

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The weather was unusually cool though the period, and the paucity of warm fronts was likely responsible for reports that migrants were in low numbers, particularly Neotropical migrant songbirds. Wintry conditions persisted through much of March, but a burst of record warmth late in the month and into April was responsible for a few early flights. This pattern may have been connected to the greater-than-average influx of southern species, especially wading birds, into the Region. How-

Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley

