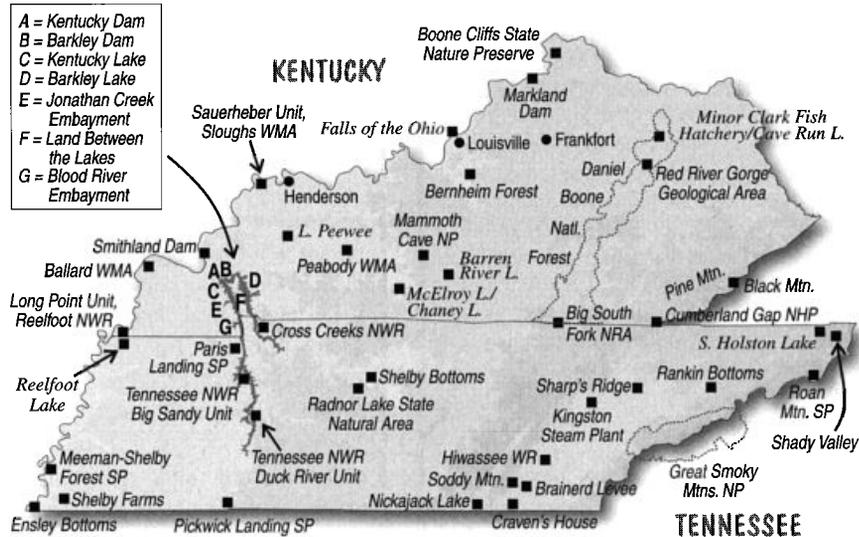


# Tennessee & Kentucky



## Chris Sloan

224 Hicks Road

Nashville, Tennessee 37221

(chris.sloan@comcast.net)

## Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.

Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission

801 Schenkel Lane

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

(brainard.palmer-ball@ky.gov)

The spring 2005 season was relatively mild overall, primarily the result of several extended periods of cooler-than-normal temperatures. The most significant of these cool spells occurred during the last week of April and first week of May, thus corresponding to the normal peak of passerine migration. Precipitation was slightly below average throughout the period, making shorebird habitat relatively scarce. The sea-

son was devoid of significant snow and severe storm events. Highlight rarities of the season included Brant and Mottled Duck in both states (the latter a potential state-first for Kentucky if accepted), a state-first Inca Dove in Tennessee, a state-second Common Ground-Dove in Kentucky, and continuing Bullock's Oriole in Kentucky. Waterbird migration was unremarkable, although shorebirds put in a decent showing thanks to the presence of suitable habitat in a few localized areas. Songbird migration was a bit late primarily due to cool late-April weather, with a peak in diversity occurring nearly a week later than normal, during the latter portion of the second week of May.

Abbreviations: Brainerd (Brainerd Levee, Hamilton, TN); Ensley (Ensley Bottoms, including the EARTH Complex, in sw. Shelby, TN); Radnor (Radnor Lake State Natural Area, Nashville, TN); Sauerheber (Sauerheber Unit Sloughs W.M.A., Henderson, KY); Shelby Bottoms (Nashville, TN); Shelby Farms (Shelby, TN); Standifer Gap Marsh (Hamilton, TN).

## LOONS THROUGH IBISES

The season's only rare loon was a Pacific Loon at Center Hill L., DeKalb, TN 9 Mar (SJS, BHS). Common Loon migration was

unspectacular, although, as is becoming the norm, a few lingered well into May. Eight Eared Grebes remained at their annual winter site at S. Holston L., TN/VA through 25 Mar (RCr). A count of 165 Horned Grebes on the Ohio R. at Meldahl Dam, Bracken 5 Mar (FR) was noteworthy for ne. Kentucky. A Western Grebe was present on L. Barkley, Lyon, KY 1-8 May (ph. BP).

Peak count for American White Pelicans was 1500 on Kentucky L., Calloway, KY 29 Mar (JTE, *fide* HC); the only reports away from the w. portion of the Region were 8 over the Ohio R., Breckinridge, KY 23 Mar (EN, *fide* SV) and 8 on S. Holston L., TN 25 Mar (RCr). Breeding Double-crested Cormorants are increasing in the Region; at least 12 were on nests at a newly discovered rookery along the Clinch R. near Kingston Steam Plant, Roane, TN 20 Apr (WJ). The maximum count of migrant cormorants was 2000 on L. Barkley, Trigg, KY 1 Apr (BLi). Great Blue Herons are also expanding as breeders, and new rookeries were discovered in Greene, Hawkins, and Sullivan, TN, as well as several sites in Kentucky. Seven American Bitterns were reported from four Tennessee counties 19 Apr-2 May; one at Ensley 29 Apr was eating a Common Grackle (JRW, PL, MT). The only report from Kentucky was of 3 at Sauerheber 16 Apr (DR et al.). Least Bitterns were reported from two locales in Kentucky and at Standifer Gap Marsh, where they breed (DPa). At least one pair of Great Egrets was present in a rookery on Old Hickory L., Sumner, TN 7 May (CS, KO). A Snowy Egret in w. Fulton 25 Mar (MT, DMA) represented a new early arrival date for Kentucky by about a week. A White-faced Ibis, the rarest of the three ibis species in the Region, was at Eagle L. W.M.A., Shelby, TN 30 Apr (†JHa, BWe, CH).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

The last of the winter's Mute Swans were 2 in Fayette, KY 26 Mar (BM). Single *hrota* Brant in White, TN 7 May (ph. SJS, DD, JMS) and Pulaski, KY 14-28 May (ph. LK, ph. RDn et al.) added to the dozen or so records for the Region. Five Greater White-fronted Geese in Carter, KY 6 Mar (RM, JB, *fide* SF) represents the farthest e. the species has ever been reported in Kentucky. A pair of Mottled Ducks at Ensley 27 Apr (ph. JRW) furnished the Region's 3rd record, while one in w. Henderson, KY 20 May (ph. BP) will constitute the first fully documented record for Kentucky if accepted by its B.R.C. A Blue-winged Teal × Cinnamon Teal hybrid was present in s. Warren, KY 9-27 Apr (ph. DR). Single Surf Scoters were at Bristol, TN 22 Mar (KE, WC, m.ob.) and Austin Springs, Washington, TN 5 Apr (WC, CO, RK, m.ob.); in Kentucky, one to 13 were reported on three occasions 27 Mar-1 May, with one in w. Henderson

23–28 May (ph. BP et al.). Two Long-tailed Ducks at Cordell Hull Res., *Smith*, TN 20 Mar (SJS, WW) were a county first; the only report from Kentucky was one on L. Barkley, *Lyon* 5 Mar (HC et al.). Nesting Hooded Mergansers continue to increase in Kentucky, with reports of broods in *Ballard*, *Henderson*, *Jefferson*, and *Union*, KY; two broods in *White*, TN (DD) were also noteworthy.

A Mississippi Kite in *Greene*, TN 12 May (DH) was a rare find away from the Mississippi floodplain. A dark *calurus* Red-tailed Hawk in *Harlan*, KY 15 May (†MW, BY) was record-late for that w. subspecies; a juv. Kridler's Hawk, the pale morph of *borealis* breeding in the n. Great Plains, was similarly tardy 25 Apr in *Ohio*, KY (ph. DR). Single Golden Eagles were reported in *Marshall*, TN 10 Mar (JS) and *Lake*, TN 10 Apr (NM); the latter was likely the same imm. discovered on the Reelfoot Lake C.B.C.

Single Merlins were reported in *Putnam*, TN 2 Mar (BHS), *Jefferson*, KY 16 & 28 Mar (BWo), *Warren*, KY 23 Mar (DR), *Dyer*, TN 3 Apr (JRW), *Morgan*, TN 25 Apr (BHS), *Fulton*, KY 27 Apr (PL), and *Hamilton*, TN 14 May (DG). A pair of Peregrine Falcons again nested on the railroad trestle below Chickamauga Dam in Chattanooga, TN (*fide* KC). Five nests were again initiated this year on the Ohio R., KY from *Jefferson* to *Greenup* (SV, ASm).

## RAILS THROUGH OWLS

Four Virginia Rail nests were discovered at Standifer Gap Marsh (DPa), the earliest on 17 Apr. A King Rail heard at Sauerheber 10 May (DR) was the only one reported for Kentucky. One to 4 Common Moorhens were reported at three Kentucky locales in May. A Purple Gallinule at Standifer Gap Marsh 10 Apr (KC, CBl et al.) was only the 3rd for se. Tennessee. Exceptionally late Sandhill Cranes included a pair in w. *Hardin*, KY 11–15 May (CCu) and one at Ensley 14 May (JRW).

Baird's Sandpipers in *Lake*, TN 26 Mar (MT, DMA) and *Warren*, KY 31 Mar and 4 Apr (different individuals) (ph. DR) added to the growing number of early-season records in the Region. Baird's reported during their more typical period of occurrence included birds at Ensley 19 Apr (5), 27 Apr (2), and 2 May (2) (JRW), as well as one in w. *Fulton*, KY 7 May (BP, MM). A Long-billed Dowitcher in w. *Fulton* 6 Mar (JRW) represented a new early arrival date for Kentucky by three weeks. Also early were 7 Long-billed Dowitchers in *Lauderdale*, TN 6 Mar (JRW) and a Stilt Sandpiper at Brainerd 20 Mar (KC).

Noteworthy shorebird counts from w. *Henderson*, KY included 2000 Pectoral Sandpipers 16 Apr (DR); 300 Semipalmated Plovers and 200 Dunlin 5 May (TE, *fide*



This *hrota* Brant accompanied a flock of Canada Geese to various locales in Pulaski County, Kentucky 14–28 (here 20) May 2005. Photograph by Roseanna Denton.

NR); 50 Short-billed Dowitchers 13 May (BY, MW); and 17 Black-bellied Plovers 23 May (BP, RDv). The only Piping Plover was one in *Muhlenberg*, KY 6 May (MM, ph. BP). Several Whimbrels were reported: one at Chickasaw N.W.R., *Lauderdale*, TN 20 May (MS, *fide* JRW); one in *Dyer*, TN 28 May (KL, GC, BLe); and 2 in *Shelby*, TN 28 May, with one the next day (JRW). There were five reports of Upland Sandpipers: 2 in *Tipton*, TN 27 Mar (JRW), 3 at Shelby Farms 28 Mar (JRW), one at Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery, *Anderson*, TN 21 Apr (RH, DMy), and singles in *Warren*, KY 12 Apr (DR) and *Hender-*

Kentucky sites 20–29 May; the only ones reported in Tennessee were 3 in *Lauderdale* 25 May (JRW, MS). The highlight of the shorebird season was the appearance of 3 female Ruffs at Ensley 2–5 May (ph. JRW, m.ob.). One to 3 Wilson's Phalaropes were found at three Kentucky locales 30 Apr–10 May, and one to 7 were observed at Ensley 27 Apr–12 May (JRW et al.).

Single Laughing Gulls were reported from *Hamilton*, TN 19 Apr (KC), Percy Priest L., TN 29 Apr (TW), and the Falls of the Ohio, *Jefferson*, KY 19 May (LP, BP). Of the late-winter assemblage of rare gulls in *Lake*, TN, an imm. Iceland, an imm. Thayer's, and an imm. Lesser Black-backed were still present 6 Mar (JRW). An ad. Thayer's and 2 ad. Lesser Black-backed on L. Barkley, *Lyon* 5 Mar (HC et al.) were the last reported in Kentucky.

An Inca Dove at Ensley 21–22 May (ph. JRW) was a long-expected state first. Kentucky's 2nd Common Ground-Dove wintered in a rural *Jessamine* yard through 11 Apr (EB, ph. MM). Single Black-billed Cuckoos were reported in three Tennessee counties 1–14 May and at three Kentucky locales 21 Apr–14 May. There were three early-season reports of nesting Barn Owls in *Butler*, KY (AST), *Nelson*, KY (C&CL), and *Putnam*, TN (SJS). Four Short-eared Owls were in *Obion*, TN 5 Mar (JRW), and 2 were still in



This Inca Dove in Shelby County, Tennessee 21–22 May (here 22 May) 2005 provided a long-expected state first. Photograph by Jeff R. Wilson.

*son*, KY 16 Apr (DR). A flock of 23 Willets at Brainerd 3 May (KC) was an unusually high count, and the highest ever for se. Tennessee; one to 41 were reported at five Kentucky locales 22 Apr–1 May. A single Marbled Godwit was reported at Ensley 1 May (*fide* WRP).

Between one and 8 Ruddy Turnstones were reported on five occasions at three

*Ohio*, KY 13 Mar (BY, MW); also, 4+ were reported in *Nelson*, KY 15 Mar (DPe, MH). The only Long-eared Owl was found in *Muhlenberg*, KY 13 Mar (BY, MW).

## WOODPECKERS THROUGH PIPITS

Following their unusual scarcity through the winter season, Red-headed Woodpeckers returned to normal breeding haunts in w. Ken-

tucky by 16 Mar (BP) and 9 Apr (BLi). Reports of Olive-sided Flycatchers were limited to Jefferson, KY 14 May (C&AT); Obion, TN 16 May (MG); Lyon, KY 17 May (BLi); and Shelby, TN 21 May (JRW). Alder Flycatcher, a largely overlooked transient, was reported in Trigg, KY 17 May (BLi); at Shelby Farms 18 May (WRP, CBu, BWi); at Shelby Bottoms 19 May (PC); in w. Henderson, KY (4 birds) 20 May (BP); and at Cane Creek Park, Putnam, TN 20 & 23 May (SJS). A Least Flycatcher at Cane Creek Park, Putnam, TN 23 May (SJS) was very late. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported in Lake, TN 14 May (JRW) and at Radnor 23 May (FF), as well as three Kentucky locales 12–25 May.

A Western Kingbird in Loudoun, TN 1 May (JMc) was a rarity for e. Tennessee; a pair was again found nesting at Ensley 14 May (JRW). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers returned to last year's nest sites in s. Livingston, KY 26 Apr (HC) and on President's I., Shelby, TN 22 May (JRW). Singles were also reported in Murfreesboro, Rutherford, TN 29 Apr (BE), and at two sites in sw. Christian, KY 20 & 28 May (DMo, HC; ME).

Two to three pairs of Loggerhead Shrikes in Washington, TN (RK) were likely breeders, an encouraging sign for this declining species. A Yellow-throated Vireo in Bullitt 3 Apr (BY, MW) represented a new early arrival date for Kentucky by four days. A singing Bell's Vireo returned to Black Bayou W.M.A., Lake, TN 7 May (NM). A Red-eyed Vireo at Radnor 25 Mar (JMn, RLa) furnished a new early date for the Nashville area. Fish Crows are being reported with increasing frequency along the Tennessee R. in se. Tennessee; this season, single birds were reported 18 Apr (KC) and 14 May (RJH, DJ). A Barn Swallow in Nashville 14 Mar (AP) was early.

A few Red-breasted Nuthatches lingered into early May in Kentucky, while birds at the traditional Wolfe, KY breeding locale were noted 20 May (FR). Two to 3 Bewick's Wrens were at Volunteer State Community College, Sumner, TN, where they have bred for the last few years, on 6 Mar (JHi); it was disappointing that none were reported in Kentucky. Single Marsh Wrens were at Standifer Gap Marsh 25 Mar and 4 & 10 Apr (DPa); Heritage Marsh, White, TN 19 Apr (SJS, DD); at Brainerd 20 Apr (KC); and in Union, KY 4 May (BP). Two Sedge Wrens were at Heritage Marsh, White, TN 19 Apr (SJS, DD), and one was at Standifer Gap Marsh 29 Apr (DPa).

Later migrant thrushes included a Hermit in Boone, KY 6 May (JR); single Swainson's in Hamilton, TN 29 May (KC) and Jefferson, KY 30 May (BWo); and a Gray-cheeked in Jefferson, KY 30–31 May (BWo). Sprague's Pipits are accidental in the Re-

gion, so 2 in Gibson, TN 29 Mar (MG) were noteworthy.

### WARBLERS THROUGH SISKINS

Golden-winged Warblers were relatively well represented in Kentucky, with seven reports 22 Apr–12 May. Brewster's Warblers were reported at Shelby Bottoms 25 Apr (PC), in Lyon, KY 2 May (SR), and in McCreary, KY 31 May (RDn). Orange-crowned Warblers at Shelby Bottoms 4 Mar (PC) and in Hickman, KY 16 Mar (BP) likely wintered; one was extremely late in Lyon, KY 17 May (BLi). A Black-throated Green Warbler at Radnor 25 Mar (JMn, RLa) and a Cerulean Warbler at Narrows of the Harpeth S.P., Cheatham, TN 4 Apr (PC) were unusually early. A Blackburnian Warbler in Bradley, TN 2 Jun (LL) was exceptionally late. Black-throated Blue War-



As is true in most places east or west of the Great Plains in spring, Baird's Sandpiper is a rare spring transient in the Tennessee & Kentucky region; this individual was present in Warren County, Kentucky on the early date of 31 March 2005. Photograph by David Roemer.

blers are relatively rare outside of their breeding territories in the Region's e. mountains, so singles at Brainerd 7 May (KC), in Nashville 7 May (PC, MZ), and as far w. as Lyon, KY 12 May (BY, MW) were noteworthy. Swainson's Warblers are even rarer away from their limited breeding ranges in the Mississippi floodplain and in the mountains of e. Tennessee, so one singing at Shelby Bottoms 7–11 May (PC et al.) was noteworthy. It was an average year for Connecticut Warblers, with 5 reported from three Tennessee counties 10–16 May and singles at five Kentucky locales 16–23 May.

A Scarlet Tanager in Nashville 4 Apr (JA) furnished a new early date for the local area. A Henslow's Sparrow at Ensley 28 May (ph. JRW) was a rare transient; probable nesting birds were again located in Coffee, TN 28–29 May (RLu et al., RCo). The latest Le Conte's Sparrows were found in Dyer, TN (3 birds) and at Black Bayou W.M.A., Lake, TN (2), both 6 Mar (JRW); the only report for Kentucky was one in w. McCracken 30 Mar (BP). Again this year, small numbers of Bachman's and Lark Sparrows were monitored on the Ft. Campbell Military Base, Trigg, KY & Stewart/Montgomery, TN (DMo). A Harris's Sparrow, a vagrant to the Region, was at the

Shelby Farms 18 Mar–17 Apr (VH, †WRP, m.ob.). A White-throated Sparrow lingered at a yard in Jefferson, KY 31 May+ for the 2nd year in a row (BWo).

Two Bobolinks were on territory in Washington, TN 29 May (DH). Up to 11 Western Meadowlarks were in Lake, TN through the first week of May (JRW, m.ob.). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Shelby Farms 30 Apr–3 May (D&LM, †WRP, m.ob.). Kentucky's wintering Bullock's Oriole lingered in a yard outside Lawrenceburg, Anderson through 8 Apr (AR). A few Purple Finches and Pine Siskins lingered well into spring. Purple Finches lingered through 3 May in Jefferson, KY (E&JH) and 5 May in Putnam, TN (SJS, BHS). A Pine Siskin in DeKalb, TN 24 May (T&VC) was exceptionally late.

**Corrigendum:** The 2004 fall report incorrectly listed the location of the 4 Nov Ruddy Turnstone as Austin Springs, instead of Rankin Bottoms, Cocke, TN.

**Cited contributors** (subregional editors in boldface): Jan Alexander, Clyde Blum (CBI), Earl Boggs, Carolyn Bullock (CBu), Josh Burton, Kevin Calhoun (se. Tennessee), Phillip Casteel (middle Tennessee), Hap Chambers, Wallace Coffey (e. Tennessee), Richard Conners (RCo), Glen Criswell, Rack Cross (RCr), Cathy Cunningham, Tommy & Virginia Curtis, Roseanna Denton (RDn), Robert Dever (RDv), Douglas Downs (DD), Melissa Easley, Kevin Elam, Bob English, Joe Tom Erwin, Troy Evans, Frank Fekel, Scott Freidhof, Danny Gaddy, Mark Greene, Jim Hamlington (JHa), Mike Hardin, Van Harris, R. John Henderson, Jim Hiatt (JHi), Ron Hoff, Don Holt, Eddie & Jennifer Huber, Chris Hunter, Wes James, Daniel Jacobson, Laura Kamperman, Rick Knight (e. Tennessee), Rob Lane (RLa), Betty Leggett (BLe), Ken Leggett, Paul Lehman, Cindy & Charles Lemons, Laura Lewis, Bill Lisowsky (BLi), Ruth Luckado (RLu), Jon Mann (JMn), Don Manning (DMn), Joseph Mast (JMs), Rick Mauro, Janet McKnight (JMc), Mark Monroe, Dan & Laurie Mooney, Nancy Moore, Bob Morris, Daniel Moss (DMo), Dollyann Myers (DMy), Earl Newby, Chris O'Bryan, Ken Oeser, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr., David Patterson (DPa), Danny Peake (DPe), Larry Peavler, W. Robert Peoples (w. Tennessee), Amy Potter, Nicole Ranalli, Scott Record, Frank Renfrow, Annette Riddle, David Roemer, Jennifer Rycenga, John Sanders, Chris Sloan, Adam Smith (ASm), Andy Stahl (ASt), Barbara H. Stedman, Stephen J. Stedman, Michael Stroeh, Mike Todd, Andre & Carol Trevathan, Shawchyi Vorisek, Winston Walden, Mary Walter, Brandon Weir (BWe), Barbara Wilson (BWi), Jeff R. Wilson, Terry Witt, Barbara Woerner (BWo), Ben Yandell, Mary Zimmerman. 🐦