

# Central Southern

Arkansas had a warmer and drier spring than usual, while Louisiana was cooler than usual. Passerine migration was slightly better in interior Mississippi than in the past two springs. The Duncans reported remarkable passerine fallouts from coastal Alabama and the western Florida panhandle on 2, 8, 12, and 26 April. Bob Duncan noted that "birds at Dauphin Island on 2 April were everywhere. Prothonotaries, Black-and-whites, and White-eyed Vireos were especially abundant. We logged 18 species of warblers that day. On a scale of 1 to 10, it was a 10."

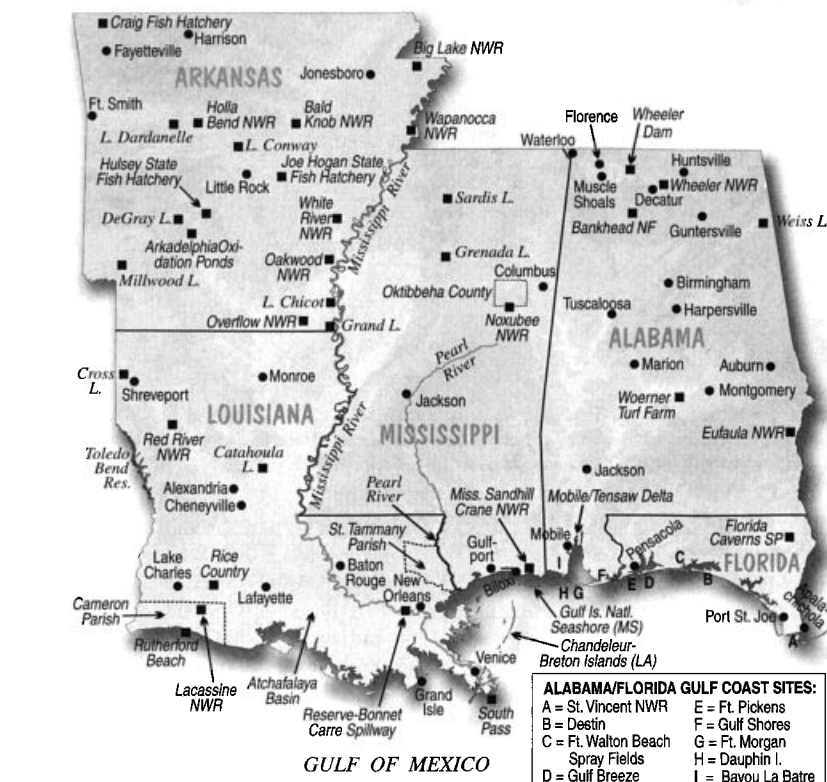
**Abbreviations:** FW.B.S.F. (Ft. Walton Beach Spray Fields, FL); L.S.U.M.N.S. (Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science).

## LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A single Red-throated Loon, rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley area of Alabama, was reported from Lawrence 10 Mar (DJS). Two Pacific Loons in basic plumage were at Pensacola Beach 6 Apr (RAD), and one in full alternate plumage was at the same location 6-7 May (PB, CB). Two Eared Grebes, rare in the w. panhandle of Florida and present since fall 2004, were last seen at FW.B.S.F. 2 Apr (RAD, m.ob.).

A Sooty Shearwater seen from shore at Ft. Morgan 1 Apr (MG) provided the 13th Alabama record. Another cooperative shearwater was an Audubon's, which landed on a boat 48 km s. of Pensacola Beach 4 Apr and was subsequently identified at a local wildlife sanctuary. Pelagic trips in Louisiana waters out of Venice 11 & 26 May turned up the following birds, among others: 3 Wilson's Storm-Petrels on the 11th and 19 on the 26th, one Leach's on the 11th, 2 Band-rumped on the 11th and 3 on the 26th, and 2 Masked Boobies on the 26th (DLD, CCS et al.). Northern Gannet numbers in Louisiana peaked at 300, all counted in an hour moving in an easterly direction at Grand I. 15 Apr (DLD, SWC); an imm. on the 11 May pelagic (DLD, CCS et al.) was late. New Harbor I. in the Chandeleur Sound, LA hosted 400 Magnificent Frigatebirds 3 May (SWC, DLD) roosting in mangroves. Although a large number for so early, there was no sign of breeding activity.

American Bittern, a species of concern, showed up in good numbers at Lacassine N.W.R., LA, with 13 on 23 Apr (JPK, JK) and at Eufaula N.W.R., AL, with 6 on 27 Apr (GEH, BM), the latter providing a new maximum for the state. An excellent count of 52 breeding Reddish Egrets was tallied at New Harbor I. 2-5 May (SWC, DLD). Craig Fish Hatchery, AR hosted 14 White-faced Ibis, a large number for the Ozarks, 8 May (ph. JN, MM, AG). A very early ad. Wood Stork was at the Atchafalaya Basin, LA 14 May (DLD, SWC).



Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued their expansion in the Region, highlighted by at least 50 birds at Kitchens Bayou in Lafayette, AR 2 May (K&LN, PL); the species was also noted as a likely breeder at Pawpaw L., Monroe, AR 5-21 May (J. Fitzpatrick et al.). Seventeen Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Pensacola 17 Mar (AF, DF) were unusual for the w. panhandle. As many as 18 Mottled Ducks were out of range in Desha, AR 1-3 Apr (K&LN et al.). A flock of 240 Greater Scaup provided an extraordinary number for New Orleans 12 Mar (DPM, PAW), where the species is normally far outnumbered by Lessers. The species was also late, with 9 reported from the Chandeleur Is., LA 2 May (DLD, SWC) and one from FW.B.S.F. 31 May (DW, RAD, m.ob.). Surf Scoters were represented by 4 at New Orleans 12 Mar (DPM, PAW) and one at Bald Knob Oxidation Ponds, AR 30 Apr (K&LN, JW, PL, MT). The only Black Scoter report was of a single bird in Cameron, LA 1 May (JVR, PhB, DB, JB). Hooded Mergansers with young were discovered in two unusual locations in Louisiana, Calcasieu 24 Apr (DLA, BJO) and Rapides 1 May (JH).

## OSPREY THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An Osprey soaring with 20 frigatebirds over

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the open Gulf 32 km s. of Southwest Pass, LA 26 May was an odd sight (DLD, CCS et al.). A pair of Swallow-tailed Kites at Eufaula N.W.R. 1 May (BM, WM, JBC) was suspected of nesting at what would be a new site for Alabama. Nesting by Swallow-taileds has been attempted for several years at White River N.W.R., AR and was confirmed in May, when birds were discovered incubating eggs. Unfortunately, 2 dead nestlings were found on the ground under the nest 1 Jun (*vide* J. Bednarz). An extremely early Mississippi Kite was in Iberville, LA 13 Mar (JVR). A pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks copulating in Washington, AR 30 Mar (KS) was unusual. There was an unusually large number of reports of Swainson's Hawks from Louisiana, with an early single bird in St. Bernard in the extreme se. corner of the state 18 Mar (GO, WP) and a high of 19 on 17 Apr (NM, JM et al.) from Caddo in the extreme nw. corner. There were five reports of



Arkansas finally got its first record of Cave Swallow when this juvenile was found and photographed 29 May 2005 at Millwood Lake. The bird was last seen there on 2 June. Photograph by Charles Mills.

Crested Caracara from s. Louisiana, including one from Erath, which is farther e. than usual, 13–15 Apr (RS). Far more unusual was a Crested Caracara in Jackson, MS 14 May (ph. CE, SE et al.) A Prairie Falcon seen briefly 24 Apr at Ft. Morgan (LD) was the 5th for Alabama and the first away from the Tennessee Valley. A ten-second look at a Black Rail in Red River, LA 7 May (PD) was par for the course for the species. A less typical, leisurely study of a Black Rail was at one of the more regular locations for the species at Dauphin I. 14 May (TSi).

A count of 3500 American Golden Plovers in Crittenden, AR 11 Apr (JW, MT) was excellent for the Region. The 2nd breeding record for Snowy Plover in Louisiana was confirmed at Rutherford Beach 24 Apr (DLD, SWC), when a female was found on a nest with three eggs. A count of 16 Piping Plovers on the Chandeleur Is. 2–4 May (SWC, DLD) was a good number for the date. There were three reports of inland Black-necked Stilts from Mississippi and one from the Ozarks in nw. Arkansas, the latter providing the 2nd record for the area 25 May (ph. JN). Willets were widely reported from inland locations in Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana, with a high of 35 birds in Scott, AR 2 May (JN). A good count of 72 Upland Sandpipers was in Baton Rouge 4 Apr (JB, DB). Arkansas had good numbers of Baird Sandpipers, with 65 in Crittenden 9 Apr (JW) and 64 in Prairie 19 Apr (KN). A drawn-down catfish pond in Lowndes, MS provided rare spring shorebird habitat in the area. The location yielded the earliest-ever Dunlin 18 Mar (SJD) and Stilt Sandpiper 29 Mar (TS) for the seven-county area. In Hancock, MS 1 Apr (NB), 210 Stilt Sandpipers provided a new spring maximum for the Mississippi coast. An alternate-plumaged

Curlew Sandpiper was a treat in Acadia, LA 8 May (vt. PC, JC). Amazingly, that sighting was followed a few minutes later by one of a Ruff by the same observers hoping to spot the Curlew again! Another Ruff, first located by researchers working on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker project, was documented in Prairie, AR 20 Mar (ph. K&LN). Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers put in their earliest area appearance on 19 Apr and 13 Mar, respectively, in Lowndes, MS (TS).

#### JAEGERS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

There were two reports of Parasitic Jaeger, rare in the Region, one each on the 11 & 26 May pelagics (DLD, CCS et al.; \*L.S.U.M.N.S.). There were four reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, two each from Louisiana and nw. Florida. What appeared to be a Western Gull or Western Gull × Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid was seen in Cameron, LA 30 Apr (DPM, RDP, BMM, PAW, PC, \*L.S.U.M.N.S.). Needless to say, either would be extraordinary in the Region! The 11 May pelagic out of Venice, LA tallied 1283 Black Terns, most of them along a sea-water front 16–24 km s. of Southwest Pass. Inca Dove continues to expand its range in Arkansas, with one reported e. of White River N.W.R. 26 Apr (NA, TB) and up to 2–3 just n. of Brinkley 14–15 Apr (BLS, ph. ESB). Burrowing Owls once again showed up on a survey of Eglin A.F.B., FL 12 Mar (LF). Two late Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were seen 40–56 km s. of South Pass on the 26 May pelagic (SWC, CCS et al.).

A calling Brown-crested Flycatcher was videotaped at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R., LA 6 Mar (PAW), likely the same bird that was in the area in winter. Western Kingbird was widely reported across the Region, with the easternmost sighting at F.W.B.S.F. 27 Apr

(LD, RAD, CBr). Louisiana had six reports ranging from the se. corner of the state to the sw. and nw. corners. Not to be outdone, Arkansas had four reports, ranging from one near Pine Bluff in the east 14 & 15 May (ph. DM) to 33 on the breeding grounds near Ft. Smith 28 May (B&TB). Gray Kingbirds returned to nest in New Orleans for the 3rd straight year, increasing their presence to at least two nests 7 May (EW, DPM et al.).

#### VIROES THROUGH TANAGERS

Rare breeders in the mts. of Alabama, Blue-headed Vireos nested in Cleburne 5 Apr (ECS, BS, KG) and Jackson 13 May (ECS). Thousands of Red-eyed Vireos were reported in a fallout at Pearl River W.M.A., LA 12 Apr (JOC, TDC). The only reports of Black-whiskered Vireo came from the extreme sw. corner of the Region in Cameron, LA 1 May (PhB) and from coastal Harrison, MS 4 May (SJD). Cave Swallows were reported from all five states in the Region. Grand I., LA had its first ever 16 Apr (DLD); Florida had one of one of the Caribbean subspecies at F.W.B.S.F. 25 Apr (RAD); Mississippi had 3 near Waveland 17 Mar (NB); Alabama had one at Ft. Morgan 1 May (RAD, LD); and finally, Arkansas had its first Cave Swallow, a well-documented juv. at Millwood L. 29 May+ (ph. CM, K&LN). There was a good movement of Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes 10 May in Starkville, MS (SJD), when 19 of the former and 230 of the latter were heard flying overhead at night. Twenty-five Swainson's on 6 May in Madison (GDJ, DGJ) provided a new maximum for Alabama's Tennessee Valley area.

There were two reports of Brewster's Warbler, one from Faulkner, AR 24 Apr (HR) and one from Baton Rouge 27 Apr (DL, JB, DB). Another Blue-winged × Golden-winged hybrid at Noxubee N.W.R., MS 5 Apr (TS) was more difficult to categorize. A Tennessee Warbler in Plaquemines, LA 19 Mar (SWC) was early. Three reports of Nashville Warblers e. of their normal spring route came from Mississippi and three from Alabama, including one at Dauphin I. on the coast (LM). An Audubon's Warbler was seen at Jonesboro, AR 15 Apr (LJ). Obviously overwintering was a female Black-throated Gray Warbler in Venice, LA 19 Mar (DPM, SWC, \*L.S.U.M.N.S.). Interestingly, the location is only a few km from where a male was found on the Venice C.B.C. There was a report of 3 Cerulean Warblers from Cameron 23 Apr (JPK, JK, m.ob.) and four reports of single migrants from Oktibbeha, MS 9–25 Apr (TS, MS). There were two reports of breeding Ceruleans from n. Alabama (ECS, SWM). Hundreds of Prothonotary Warblers at Dauphin I. 2 Apr (RAD, LD) were indicative of a good fallout. The Sargents and their colleagues tallied 48 Swainson's Warblers 2–17 Apr at Ft. Morgan, an excellent number dur-

ing migration. Schiefer reported 11 breeding locations for Swainson's in the seven-county area near Starkville, MS 9 Apr+. Muth reported that a Northern Waterthrush in *St. Charles*, LA 3 Mar was likely an overwintering bird, and Remsen had an early Louisiana Waterthrush in *Iberville*, LA 11 Mar. A rare bright orange variant Scarlet Tanager was videotaped at Grand I. 16 Apr (CCS, vt. PAW). There were two reports of Western Tanager in the Pensacola area and one each from Louisiana and Mississippi.

### SPARROWS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

As many as 8 Bachman's Sparrows, a species of concern, were seen at Noxubee N.W.R. 30 Mar+ (TS). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was reported from Magazine Mt., AR at a traditional site e. of its normal range 1 Apr (K&LN). A Harris's Sparrow in *Lauderdale*, AL 2 Mar (J&SAW) provided the 14th state record, and one from the winter season remained in *Attala*, MS, where casual, through 18 Apr (FH, m.ob.). A White-crowned Sparrow in *Walton*, FL 14 May (LMc) was very late, and a Dark-eyed Junco spotted the same day in *Niceville*, FL (BoM) was the latest by 12 days for the w. panhandle. *Yell*, AR was host to at least 125 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks 28 Apr (K&LN). A female Black-headed Grosbeak was at a feeder at *Gulf Breeze*, FL 26 Apr (LD, RAD et al.). A Yellow-headed

Blackbird in *Thibodaux*, LA 15–22 Apr (S&JB, LP) was farther e. than usual. The only reports of Shiny Cowbird in the Region came from the w. panhandle, with one at *Gulf Breeze* 28 Apr (RAD) and one in *Okaloosa* 14 May (DW). Both were males. Two Bronzed Cowbirds at *Dauphin I.* 17 Apr (PW&PJ, PvL) provided the 12th Alabama record. Seeing 250 Baltimore Orioles in *Yell*, AR 28 Apr (K&LN) must have been a real treat. A Bullock's Oriole in *Jefferson* 15 Apr (ph. D&CR) was Alabama's 18th. It was upstaged by the ad. male Scott's Oriole remaining from the winter season through 18 Apr in *Montgomery*, AR (ph. CM, H&MP). Up to 10 Red Crossbills were in *Saline*, AR 23 Apr+, with 3 juvs. being fed by ads.; the species has not been confirmed as nesting in the state. Alabama's 2nd record of White-winged Crossbill was verified in *Lauderdale* 7–21 Apr (ph. RAK, m.ob.). The state's first record was from the same county in spring 2002. A report of a Common Redpoll was received without documentation from Arkansas.

**Initialed observers** (subregional editors in boldface): David L. Anderson, Nick Anick, Peggy Baker, Bill & Toka Beall (B&TB), Phred Benham (PhB), Thomas Benson (TB), Steve & Janelle Bergeron, Devin Bosler, Justin Bosler, Ned Boyajian, Edward S. Brinkley, Cecil Brown (CBr), Cheryl Bunch, Steven

W. Cardiff, John B. Cole, John Conover, Paul Conover, Jennifer O. Coulson, Tom D. Coulson, Paul Dickson, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Donna L. Dittmann, Lucy Duncan, Robert A. Duncan (w. Florida), Claire English, Susan Epps, Lenny Fenimore, Ann Forster, Don Forster, Keith Gauldin, Adam Green, Mary Gustafson, Frances Henne, Geoff E. Hill, Jay Huner, Debra G. Jackson, Greg D. Jackson (Alabama), Lou Johnson, P.W. & Pauline Johnson, Joanne Kleiman, Joe P. Kleiman (Louisiana), Robin A. Kelso, Dan Lane, Paul Lehman, P. van der Luit (PvL), John McBride, Delos McCauley, Lee McDaniel (LMc), Steve W. McConnell, Lee McElvine, Bailey McKay, Bob McKenney (BoM), Windle McKenzie, Nancy Menasco, Charles Mills, Mike Mlodinow, David P. Muth, B. Mac. Myers, Joe Neal, Kenny & LaDonna Nichols, Brian J. O'Shea, Glen Ousset, Helen & Max Parker (Arkansas), Lisa Pitre, Warren Preble, R. Dan Purrington, Herschel Raney, J. Van Remsen, Marion Schiefer, Terence Schiefer (Mississippi), Robert Sherman, Tom Siegwald (TSi), Damien J. Simbeck, Kim Smith, Erik C. Soehren, Curt C. Sorrells, Brian L. Sullivan, Bill Summerour, Mike Todd, Ed Wallace, Phillip A. Wallace, Don Ware, Jim & Shirley A. Wayland, Jeff Wilson. I received more reports than I had room to include, and I would like to thank those observers I could not cite specifically. ☺

## ABA Amazon Riverboat EXPEDITION

17–26 FEBRUARY 2006

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