



Steven W. Cardiff

It was a relatively quiet summer, with no tropical weather systems impacting the Region and no pelagic trips attempted. The inaugural Louisiana Breeding Bird Atlas project took place 1 June through 15 July. I would like to offer belated thanks to my Regional Editor predecessors Phillip A. Wallace (Spring Migration) and R. D. Purrington (Nesting Season), and to Louisiana Subregional Editor Joseph A. Kleiman, for their years of service on behalf of the former Central Southern Region. And extra special thanks go to long-time Arkansas Audubon Society Curators and Arkansas Subregional Editors Max and Helen Parker who have retired as of October 2007. Joe Neal has graciously offered to assume the role of AAS Curator and *North American Birds* Subregional Editor effective beginning with the 2007 fall migration season.

Abbreviations: C.F.H. (Craig Fish Hatchery); counties/parishes are indicated only for the initial mention of a specific locality, and states are indicated only for the initial mention of counties/parishes, except to avoid confusion. For records of “review list” species, documentation has been received and records have either been accepted by, or acceptance is pending by, the respective state bird records committee. Significance for Arkansas records is based on James and Neal (1986), plus the Arkansas Audubon Society online bird record database, and, for Louisiana, on the bird record card file database and the Louisiana

Bird Records Committee archives at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science, as well as the most recent draft of the forthcoming *Birds of Louisiana* (Remsen, Cardiff, Dittmann, and Dickson).

WATERFOWL THROUGH WADERS

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks appear to be increasingly well established across Louisiana and s. Arkansas; some of the more noteworthy reports (breeding, or from areas with few prior records) included 2 in the Alexandria area, *Rapides*, LA 4 Jun (Pat McKay, *vide* JVH), 2 others there 15 Jul (JVH), one at Big Lake N.W.R., *Mississippi* in extreme ne. Arkansas 5 Jun (Jeremy Bennett), a pair investigating nest boxes in s. *Morehouse*, LA 21 Jun (Robert Rickett), and a pair with 6-7 chicks at Audubon Park in New Orleans in late Jun (ph. Don Bradburn). A male Ring-necked Duck near Sorrento, *Ascension*, LA 13 Jul (JVH) was most likely a crippled bird from the preceding hunting season.

About 150 American White Pelicans at Wapanocca N.W.R., *Crittenden* 27 Jun (JW, JG) may have been summering in the area and represented one of the highest-ever summer counts for Arkansas. Late or, more likely, summering imm. Northern Gannets along the Louisiana coast included one at Rutherford Beach, *Cameron* 6 Jun (SWC, ph. DLD, BMM,

Breton I. at the s. end of the *Chandeleur* Is arc, *Plaquemines* (*vide* Breton N.W.R. website), apparently the only suitable site in this area, which sustained heavy erosion from Hurricane *Katrina*; there was no information on breeding status of other seabird species on these islands. Ten Double-crested Cormorants (age?) in *Lee* 25 Jun (DS, WS) were noteworthy, as there are few recent summer records from e. Arkansas. At *Grassy L.*, an important waterbird breeding site in *Hempstead*, sw Arkansas, high counts of Anhingas were 90 ads. on 6 May and 50 ads. plus young on 22 Jun (DS et al.); a female at *Wapanocca N.W.R.* 27 Jun (JW, JG) was also of interest.

Numbers (combined ads. and young) of breeding or presumed breeding waders at *Grassy L.* 22 Jun included 2 Least Bitterns, 13 Snowy Egrets, 40 Little Blue Herons, 6 Tricolored Herons (5 ads., one young, two nests with eggs; first documented breeding at this site), an astounding 10,500 Cattle Egrets, 24 Green Herons, 16 Black-crowned Night-Herons, and 320 White Ibis (DS et al.). Along with the human population, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons are rebounding in suburban New Orleans, where 46 ads. and young were associated with a colony of 31 active nests located 17 Jun in surviving live oaks in a previously *Katrina*-flooded neighborhood (DPM) A *Plegadis* ibis near Sorrento 12 Jun, 6 there



Although just a stone's throw from the Audubon Park Zoo, this family of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Audubon Park in New Orleans, Louisiana in late June 2007 (date unknown) was considered wild and part of the ongoing range expansion in the Southeast. Photograph by Don Bradburn.

PEC), 2 moribund individuals at Grand Isle, *Jefferson* 13 Jun (GR et al.), and additional sick birds there on 23 Jun (GR) and 13 Jul (Jodie Singer). Surveys of the Isles Dernieres region of *Terrebonne* on the cen. Louisiana coast 29 Jun (DP) produced estimates of 16,000 Brown Pelicans (about 50% of these large chicks) at colonies on Raccoon and Wine Islands. About 2000 Brown Pelican nests were reported at

13 Jul, and 6 near Alexandria 15 Jul (all JVH) were well inland from coastal breeding areas Nine Roseate Spoonbills at the Sorrento site 12 Jun (JVH) hinted at breeding location in this slightly inland area of se. Louisiana; 5 imm. at Bald Knob N.W.R., *White*, AR 30 Jul (NA) were post-breeding dispersers. Two imm. Wood Storks near Fordyce, *Dallas*, AR 18 Jun (WS, Gary R. Graves) were relatively



Representing only the fourth documented breeding record for the state, this Snowy Plover chick accompanied by the male parent was one of two family groups encountered at Rutherford Beach, Cameron Parish, Louisiana on 6 June 2007. Photograph by Donna L. Dittmann.

early and represented one of few Jun records for the state.

RAPTORS THROUGH COOT

A pair of Ospreys with 3 nestlings at L. Monticello 23 Jul (ph. NA) confirmed breeding in Drew, AR. Swallow-tailed Kites were again present in Arkansas, AR, with apparent pairs there 2 (DS et al.) & 9 Jun (KH). Formerly absent as breeders in w.-cen. Arkansas, but adding to recent reports of Mississippi Kites breeding or potentially breeding there, were 15 w. of Potter, Polk 4 Jun (Rhonda Huston, *fide* JN) and at least three nests in Ft. Smith, Sebastian through the season (B&TB); also noteworthy was a pair with a nest and young at De Valls Bluff, near the White R., Prairie 10 Jul (Paul Osborne, Terry & Ruth Singletery). An impressive 75 pairs of Bald Eagles nested in Arkansas during spring and summer of 2007 (*fide* Allan Mueller); also considered noteworthy was an ad. in Lee 25 Jun (DS, WS). Eight reports of Cooper's Hawks in n. Arkansas included an observation of 5 fledglings at Batesville, Independence 27 Jun (Marcus Board); a Cooper's near Abbeville, Vermilion 8 Jun (JVH) was near the w. Louisiana coast, where there are few summer records. At least six reports of Swainson's Hawks in Louisiana's sw. prairie region 6-8 Jun (SWC, DLD, Bill Vermillion) provided ongoing testimony for a presumed modest breeding presence, although direct nesting evidence is still weakly documented; on 6-7 Jun, there was no activity at a site near Bell City, Calcasieu, where a completed nest had been observed in late Apr (SWC). Although Swainson's Hawk is a scarce summer bird in Arkansas, there are at least 25 summer records for Benton since 1986, including an ad. this summer near Maysville 7 Jul (MAM). A pair of Crested Caracaras near Bell City 6-7 Jun (SWC, DLD, BMM, PEC) were at the same location where 2-3 individuals were observed in late Apr and

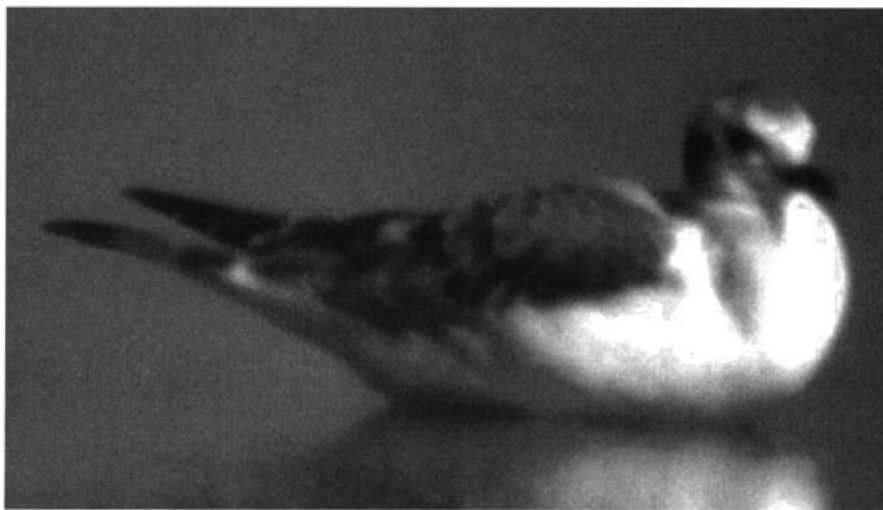
presumably nested in the vicinity. A female American Kestrel in New Orleans 26 Jun (DPM) could have been either a wandering post-breeder or a rare local breeder.

In addition to 9 Purple Gallinules (3 ads., 6 young), the 22 Jun Grassy L. survey tallied a remarkable 320 Common Moorhens (DS et al.). Five American Coots near Sorrento 12 Jun, 2 still there 13 Jul, and 2 near Alexandria 15 Jul (JVH) were obviously summering, although no direct breeding evidence was obtained.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH SKIMMER

A breeding plumaged Black-bellied Plover at C.F.H., Benton 1 Jun (MAM) was apparently the latest-ever spring record for Arkansas. Three pairs of Snowy Plovers found along Rutherford Beach 6 Jun included two pairs guarding at least one downy chick each (SWC, ph. DLD, PEC, BMM); there are only three previous confirmed breeding records for Louisiana, also from w. Cameron in 1994 and 2005. Along with the Snowy Plovers on 6 Jun, an 8-km stretch of Rutherford Beach produced 60 Wilson's Plovers

mering individual; fall migrants typically do not arrive until late Jul. Three alternate-plumaged American Avocets at Little Chenier, Cameron, LA 7 Jun (SWC, DLD) were probably late migrants (along with 6 Greater Yellowlegs, 20 Semipalmated Sandpipers, and 15 White-rumped Sandpipers), but a flock of 44 in alternate plumage at Port Fourchon 24 Jun (RDP) were possibly summering. Noteworthy Lesser Yellowlegs at C.F.H. included a presumed late spring migrant 1 Jun and 13 presumed early fall migrants 27 Jun (MAM). A Willet at Merisach L. Park, Arkansas 19 Jun (Bruce Tedford) was also likely a very early fall migrant; a roosting flock of about 400 on Whiskey I., Isles Dernieres 29 Jun (DP) probably represented staging post-breeders. Three Ruddy Turnstones and 25 Red Knots at Port Fourchon 24 Jun (RDP), as well as a flock of 25 turnstones on Grand Isle 28 Jun (SWC, DLD), were thought to be summering, based on the date and their basic to partial alternate plumages. However, a Semipalmated Sandpiper and 2 Least Sandpipers in Desha, AR 14 Jun (DB) could have been late spring migrants. Almost certainly summering Semipalmated Sandpipers in mostly basic plumage included 61 at Port Fourchon 24 Jun (RDP) and 10 on Grand Isle 28 Jun (SWC, DLD). Very late was a Baird's Sandpiper at C.F.H. 1 Jun (MAM). Two Dunlins at Port



This juvenal-plumaged Bonaparte's Gull at Treadway Fish Farm, Prairie County, Arkansas on 29-30 (here 29) July 2007 provided the first well documented July record for the Louisiana & Arkansas Region. Photograph by Kenny Nichols.

(at least 10 small to large chicks), a nice recent breeding concentration for the area. A Semipalmated Plover at C.F.H. 1 Jun (MAM) represents only about the 3rd Jun record for Arkansas; 6 at Port Fourchon, Lafourche, LA 24 Jun (RDP) and up to 22 at nearby Grand Isle 27-28 Jun (SWC, DLD) were most likely summering. A Piping Plover at Port Fourchon 24 Jun (RDP) marked only about the 4th Jun record for Louisiana and may have been a sum-

mering birds rather than late spring migrants; this is one of our rarer summering species, and fall migrants typically do not arrive until late Sep-Oct. Summering Short-billed Dowitchers in the Grand Isle area included 5 at Port Fourchon 24 Jun (RDP) and 140 on Grand Isle 28 Jun (SWC, DLD); most of the latter birds were in wing molt. A male Wilson's Phalarope at C.F.H. 8 Jun (MAM) was ap-

parently record-late for Arkansas.

Breeding Laughing Gulls at the Isles Dernieres colonies 29 Jun were estimated at 13,000 (DP); one near Alexandria 15 Jul (JVH) was unexpectedly far inland. A residual pulse of migrant Franklin's Gulls, not surprisingly mostly imm., included singles near Camp, *Fulton*, AR 4 Jun (DB, EM) and near Cameron 6 Jun (SWC, DLD), and a flock of 12 at C.F.H. 8 Jun (MAM). One of the better birds of the summer was a juv. Bonaparte's Gull, perplexingly early at Treadway Fish Farm, *Prairie*, AR 29-30 Jul (ph. K&LN, DBr); the species is at best casual in the Region before late Oct. A minimum (visibility restricted) of 77 Gull-billed Terns were present at the Clearview Shopping Center Sears rooftop colony in Metairie, *Jefferson*, LA 18 May (RDP). Two Caspian Terns in *West Baton Rouge*, LA 18 Jul and a Forster's Tern near Alexandria 15 Jul (JVH) were fairly unusual inland in summer and otherwise difficult to categorize. During the 29 Jun Isles Dernieres census, Patton estimated breeding tern numbers at 11,000 Royals and 7500 Sandwich (about 50% were chicks in crèches). Up to 250 Least Terns were present at the Clearview Sears rooftop colony in mid-May (RDP); 7 about 10 km w. of Alexandria 15 Jul and 2 at False River, *Pointe Coupee*, LA 18 Jul (JVH) were presumed post-breeders of the interior subspecies. Four Black Terns near Alexandria 15 Jul (JVH) were almost record-early for fall migrants inland in Louisiana. An unusual sight along the beaches of w. *Cameron* was a pair of Black Skimmers at a nest with eggs at Rutherford Beach 6 Jun (ph. DLD, SWC); 2500 were counted at the Isles Dernieres colonies 29 Jun (DP).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Although on the increase in s. Louisiana, a juv. White-winged Dove at a feeder near St. Gabriel 8 Jul (ph. DLD, SWC) was a good summer record in *Iberville*. Common Ground-Doves, on the other hand, have become rare in summer, so one in *St. Bernard*, LA for the 2nd consecutive summer 8 Jun (Glenn Ousset) was encouraging. At *Ouachita N.E., Scott*, AR, final census results for the 2007 Red-cockaded Woodpecker breeding season indicated continued growth of the population, with 88 ads. on 39 active territories, 37 nest attempts, and an estimated 66 young fledged (*vide* JN). A Northern Flicker at New Orleans 17 & 24 Jun (DPM) was outside known breeding areas and may have been a wandering post-breeder. Early interior fall migrant Least Flycatchers were detected near Heart, *Fulton*, AR 4 Jul (DB, EM), along the Red R. near Shreveport, *Caddo/Bossier*, LA 18

& 22 Jul (TD), and in *Washington*, AR 21 Jul (MAM). Continuing from the late spring, up to three pairs of breeding Willow Flycatchers were monitored in thickets along the Red R. near Shreveport through the summer, with at least 2 birds present through 1 Aug; a nest containing a suspected Brown-headed Cowbird egg was located 2 Jun but was found damaged and empty when re-checked 3 Jun (TD). Twelve Western Kingbirds in n. *Caddo* 3 Jun (TD) and a minimum of about 50 (36 ads., about 19 nests, most with nestlings) in the Ft. Smith-Van Buren area, *Sebastian/Crawford* 23-24 Jun (B&TB) reaffirmed an expanding presence in the Region's two breeding strongholds. Nesting pairs at Back Gate and Dumas (plus single ads. at two other locations) provided confirmation of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers breeding in *Desha* (DB).

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES

Two pairs of Bell's Vireos (one pair nesting) at *Wapanocca N.W.R.* 27 Jun (JW, JG) and 4 singing individuals in the Maysville area 7 Jul (JN, MAM) apparently represented the first breeding activity in those areas, at least in recent times. Tree Swallows nested at Black Bayou Lake N.W.R. near *Monroe, Ouachita*, LA, where at least 4 ads. plus an imm. were present 16 Jun, including an ad. entering a nest hole with food and leaving with a fecal sack (Steve Pagans, Joan Brown); one at *Cotile L., Rapides*, LA 15 Jul (JVH) was in an area where nesting occurred the previous two years and breeding was again suspected during late spring 2007. A White-breasted Nuthatch at *Cotile L.* from mid-Jun-28 Jul (JVH) was suggestive of local breeding farther s. than currently recognized in cen. Louisiana. A House Wren at Ft. Smith 19 Jun (Sandy Berger) provided another hint at possible breeding in w. cen. Arkansas. Whether the result of range expansion or previously inadequate coverage, 5 Marsh Wrens in the Isles Dernieres area 29 Jun (DP) would appear to be the first breeding season record for the salt marshes of the cen. Louisiana coast. Rare breeders in Arkansas, a nesting pair of Cedar Waxwings was observed through the period near *Ozone, Johnson* (David Arbour).

More circumstantial evidence for Blue-winged Warblers breeding s. of the known breeding range in Arkansas included 2 males in *Saline* 20 Jun and another male at a different location there 30 Jun (DS et al.). More shocking was a female Blue-winged with a brood patch captured at a MAPS station at Sherburne W.M.A. in the *Atchafalaya Basin, St. Martin*, LA 22 Jun (Jill Gautreaux, ph. Michael Seymour); station records also indicate that another individual was captured at a

different site in the W.M.A. on 20 Jun 2005! Late migrant Yellow Warblers were encountered at C.F.H. 1 Jun (MAM) and in *Bossier* 3 Jun (TD); one was relatively early in *Washington* 29 Jul (MAM). Suggestive of local breeding was a male Pine Warbler at *Kelso, Desha* 13 Jun (DB). A Yellow-throated Warbler in suburban New Orleans 24 Jun (DPM) was considered an early migrant or wandering post-breeder. Always of interest during the breeding season, a male Cerulean Warbler was located at *Sylamore Cr., Stone*, AR 19 Jun (KH); a female at *Mt. Sequoyah, Washington*, AR 22 Jul (MAM) was thought to be an early migrant. Also relatively early was a Black-and-white Warbler near *St. Gabriel* 12-13 Jul and an imm. male American Redstart there 20 Jul (SWC, DLD). Puzzling was a Worm-eating Warbler away from breeding areas at *L. Fayetteville* 17 Jun (David Chapman). Relatively early Louisiana Waterthrushes were noted at *Sherburne W.M.A., St. Martin* 30 Jun (Danny Dobbs) and near *St. Gabriel* 6 Jul (DLD); up to 3 per day were noted at a site near Shreveport 21-30 Jul (TD). Record late for Louisiana was a male Wilson's Warbler at Shreveport 1 Jun (Ron & Susan Martin).

Two Lark Sparrows nw. of Arkansas City, *Desha* 12 Jul (D&SB) were probably early migrants rather than local breeders; a Savannah Sparrow there 22 Jun (ph. DB) furnished the first Arkansas summer record since 1940! A total of 22 Painted Buntings in an 8-km² area of *Desha* 17 Jun (DB) may be a record single-day count for Arkansas. Dickcissels are seldom detected as a breeder on the immediate coast, so about 10 territorial males in the *Rutherford Beach-Grand Chenier* area, *Cameron* 6-7 Jun were noteworthy (SWC, DLD). Adding to the circumstantial evidence for breeding in Louisiana was a pair of American Goldfinches at a feeder in *Lafayette, Lafayette*, LA 21 Jun (Sheila & Mark Abshire)

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Nick Anich, Dick Baxter, Sarah Baxter, Bill Beall, Toka Beall, Dennis Braddy (DBr), Steven W. Cardiff (Louisiana), Paul E Conover, Terry Davis, Donna L. Dittmann, Joe Guinn, Karen Holliday, Jay V. Huner, Erin Macchia, Michael A. Mlodinow, David P Muth, B. Mac Myers, Joe Neal (Arkansas), Kenny Nichols, LaDonna Nichols, Max & Helen Parker (Arkansas), Dave Patton, R. D Purrington, George Ritchey, Dan Scheiman, William Shepherd, Jeff Wilson. 🐦

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