

# THE BIRDS OF SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA

[Based on ABA Checklist of 11/11, which has been changed extensively by supplements 51-53 to the AOU Checklist]

FAMILY *Anatidae* SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) Locally common in winter, increasing breeder

The first record of this species in SE Louisiana was of one killed by a hunter in St. Charles Parish on Nov. 28, 1983 (fide RJS). It became increasingly common in southwestern Louisiana, where free-flying flocks from Rockefeller Refuge have been known for some time. Since about 1990 there had been repeated sightings of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks on or near the Mississippi R. upstream from New Orleans (PY, NLN, RDP), usually between the Huey Long and Hale Boggs Bridges, but at least as far downriver as Audubon Park. "Hundreds" were reported flying from Audubon Zoo across and upriver (fide RDP, CB) as early as 2004. Peak number on Audubon Park lagoon in winter 2005-6 was 1160 (RDPB30 Jan 2006), and on Feb. 4, 2008, 1350 were counted (RDP). Maximum numbers recorded are 9500 on 23 January 2012 (RDP).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were first noted nesting on Monsanto Chemical property on the West Bank of the river, they certainly nest on Bayou Sauvage NWR (including 4-5 broods on ...September 2004 (PW,DM,MM,RDP,et al)), and likely breed widely in SE Louisiana, and even in Audubon Park itself (summer 2007, fide Don Bradburn).

The species is clearly now well-established throughout southern Louisiana, dispersing during the breeding season and returning to favorite wintering spots such as Audubon Park in early September, or earlier, and most depart by mid-March.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) Casual winter visitor

Although the Fulvous Whistling Duck is a common summer resident of the rice fields of south-central and southwest Louisiana, it is rarely encountered this far east. Except for an undated December record of a bird shot near Labranche in the early 1970's (fide RJS), this species went unrecorded from 1934 until February 1978. An occasional individual of this species is encountered among the thousands of wintering Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Audubon Park.

The nine early records are Jan. 22, 1870, New Orleans (fide HCO); Oct. 1892, Lake Catherine (fide GEB in HCO); Jan. 1900, Rigolets (fide GEB in HCO); Nov. 2, 1934, in the delta (AD--captured); Feb. 12-14?, 1978 New Orleans (JW,m.ob.--45) and Mar. 12, 1978, White Kitchen (MM,NN,JR,RDP--45), almost certainly the same flock; ....at Venice. (NN,RDP, GC); Sep. 9, 1990 Bayou Sauvage? (JHa); Dec. 23, 1990 Orleans Parish (**DM--**

).....; Dec. 26, 1992, New Orleans (RH,JHa--13). But at least 3 were present among Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in New Orleans' Audubon Park in Dec-Jan 2005-6 (**LO'M**), and there was a similar record from 2007-8. Records from the winter of 2011-12 include Jan. 14 (Joelle Finley) and 7 Feb. 7 (DM).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) Uncommon to rare in winter

Although very common in southwest Louisiana, the White-fronted Goose is not often encountered in this area. No doubt it is more common than actual records indicate, since few winter trips are made to likely feeding areas--Delta NWR, for example. White-fronted Geese arrive as early as about Oct. 20 and depart in late March to early April; the earliest fall record is Oct. 13, 1959.

**SNOW GOOSE** (*Chen caerulescens*) Common to uncommon in winter in the delta.

Although significant numbers of geese--mostly Snow Geese--winter in southeast Louisiana, they are usually not accessible to the birder without the means to venture well into the marsh to favorite feeding locations. Hundreds, at least, will be seen on a boat trip to Delta NWR. Otherwise, records are simply opportunistic, of small flocks seen almost anywhere below U.S. 90, and especially in fall migration, which takes place from mid-October through November. One can hope to encounter Snow Geese in the Bonnet Carre Spillway or near Grand Isle. In southeast Louisiana the blue morph ("Blue Goose") is considerably more common than the white.

Observers should look for Ross's Geese, which are now being found regularly in southwest Louisiana. .

Expected dates of arrival and departure are October 15 and April 15; the earliest fall date is taken to be Oct. 12, 1986 at Grand Isle (JS), but there is an Aug. 8, 1974 record from Reserve (**28???**), and a report of a flock at Pass-a-Loutre on **Sept. ...., 1994 (fide DM)**.

**ROSS'S GOOSE** (*Chen rossii*) Rare to occasional in winter

Ross's Geese have become quite regular among the huge flocks of Snow Geese in the rice fields of Southwest Louisiana, the frequency of their sighting correlating with the population explosion of Snow Geese. Their scarcity in SE Louisiana is most likely a function of the smaller population of Snow Geese. For field marks, see the field guides, but Ross's Geese are distinctly small, short-necked, and have more rapid wing-beats, when seen in flight. They are not much larger than a Mallard, though they have longer wings. They also seem to have a predilection for turning up singly in odd situations, with mixed and even domestic waterfowl.

There are now at least 8 records of this diminutive goose from the area, the first

being of one which lingered on the London Ave. canal near UNO from ..... (PY, et al). The other records occurred during the winter of 1998-99: .....in Arabi,..... (DPM), and in City Park on Jan. 24, 1999 (DM,PY), apparently seen earlier by Lisa Pinter, which was still present into the late spring. The most recent records are of one in St. Tammany on Nov. 25 (24?), 2000 among Snow Geese (MM), two near Venice on Dec. ...., 2001 (MS,CL), and one at New Orleans on February 15, 2004 (CL,PW). One was in Lafreniere Park, Metairie, in March 2004 (JS, et al), and again in June of that year (JS). One or two wintered in Jefferson Par. near Chateau Estates in .....(CS).

### **BRANT** (*Branta hutchinsii*) Accidental

There is a single record, of a bird present in New Orleans' City Park Nov. 27-30, 1960 (WJG,SAG,MEL,m.ob.), which was almost certainly the one seen on the New Orleans lakefront in January 1961 (B.Ward). Motion pictures were taken of the City Park bird. There have been two or three records from the rice fields southwest of Lafayette--in company with White-fronted or Canada Geese. There have been at least two recent records from the rice fields of south-central Louisiana.

### **ACKLING GOOSE** (*Branta hutchinsii*) Occasional to uncommon locally in winter, perhaps regular in delta

Canada Goose has recently been split, on the basis of mitochondrial DNA studies, into a small tundra-breeding species, *Branta hutchinsii* and a larger, non-tundra-breeding species *Branta Canadensis*. The Cackling Goose consists of four subspecies. The "Canada Goose" likely to be seen in Louisiana is apparently *B. h. hutchinsii* which is known as "Richardson's Goose." Seven subspecies of Canada Goose are recognized (including the medium-sized *parvipes*) along with four of Cackling. Richardson's Cackling Goose (*B. h. hutchinsii*) probably at least occurs in Sw. Louisiana.

In general, it would be difficult, but not impossible, to tell Cackling from the Lesser Canada Goose (*B. c. parvipes*). Cackling Goose is generally white breasted (but so is *parvipes*), with a steeply sloping forehead (*parvipes* has a canvasback-like bill profile), and only slightly smaller. Hunter kills will have to decide the distribution questions.

While formerly numerous in the delta in winter, "Canada Geese" now reach Southeastern Louisiana in only small numbers, e.g., approximately 15 at Delta NWR during the winter of 1982-3 (fide Sam Henson). On the other hand, increasing numbers continent-wide and notably in Sw. Louisiana in winter suggest that they might be seen more frequently in the future. Of course domesticated or feral Canada Geese are everywhere, including New Orleans' City Park, and one may encounter free flying individuals or even flocks which may be non-migratory almost anywhere.

Perhaps typical of earlier numbers is the figure of 1578 recorded on the Delta NWR Christmas Count on Dec. 23, 1940. Audubon wrote that they were "one of the commonest of the geese in the New Orleans markets during the winter." They have reportedly been seen

near Madisonville in recent winters (fide Taylor Guste). Other “recent” records are: Oct. 12, 1958, Reserve (RFC); Dec. 24, 1960, Venice (fide SAG); Sep. 18, 1965, New Orleans (JK); Dec. 26, 1983, New Orleans (MM,RDP,et al); .....at New Orleans (NN,RDP,...), though New Orleans records are somewhat suspect, given the domesticated populations.

Aproximate expected dates are October 1 to April 15.

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta Canadensis*) distribution unknown

It is known (Olberholser) that the nominate subspecies, *Branta c. canadensis* has occurred in SE. Louisiana; little more can be said.

**TUNDRA SWAN** (*Cygnus columbianus*) Casual winter visitor

There are eight records of Tundra Swan (previously Whistling Swan) from Southeastern Louisiana. Although not all of the sight records can definitely be assigned to this species (rather than the next), it is more than reasonable to assume that they all are of *C. columbianus*. The known records are Jan. 15, 1933, Main Pass (WEN--3, 1\*); Dec. 18, 1960, Bosco (fide JLH); Jan. 30-31, ...., Rigolets (SAG); Dec. 31, 1977, New Orleans (JK, et al) and Jan. 14, 1978 (MH), presumably the same individual; Dec. 14, 1980, Gheens, an individual caught in a Nutrea trap and brought to Audubon Zoo, where it died; Nov. 22, 1984, Labranche (fide RJS) 12 birds of which one was shot, and the head delivered to Stein; Dec. 2, 1984 to at least Jan. 1, 1985, Madisonville (RDP,DM,MM,NN--3). Photographs of the latter bird (*American Birds....*) show it to have been a Tundra Swan. Subsequently, two Tundra Swans, assumed to be part of the earlier group, were present near Folsom into February (fide CS), and on April 16, 1999 two swans, assumed to be of this species and definitely not Mutes, were seen at Caminada Pass, Grand Isle (MG,JK).

**TRUMPETER SWAN** (*Cygnus buccinator*) FORMERLY

The evidence for the occurrence of this species in Southeastern Louisiana comes from the young swan which Audubon painted in New Orleans and which he claimed was shot near Barataria on Dec. 16, 1822 (*Ornithological Biography*, Vol IV, p. 541). The LOS Bird Records Committee has recently reaffirmed the status of the Trumpeter Swan on the Louisiana list, largely because of this record. In *Birds of America*, Vol. VI, Audubon wrote "At New Orleans, where I made the drawing of the young bird here given, the Trumpeters are frequently exposed for sale in the markets, being procured on the ponds of the interior, and in the great lakes leading to the waters of the Gulf of Mexico." Arthur gives another record for Louisiana, which probably deserves little credence.

Recent reintroductions have resulted in one or more records of Trumpeter Swan in Louisiana in the winter of 2009-10, but whether those will ultimately be accepted as legitimate remains to be seen.

**WOOD DUCK** (*Aix spons*) Common denizen of swamps and flooded woodlands

The Wood Duck is a common inhabitant of bottomland sloughs and swampy woodlands. Winter populations in Louisiana are greatly increased by the arrival of over half of the Wood Ducks which breed in the interior of the United States (Bellrose, 1976). The maximum concentration known to this writer is 200+ near Madisonville in December 1984.

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) Common winter resident

The Gadwall is one of the most common dabbling ducks in winter in Louisiana, and, as mentioned above, ranks with Green-winged Teal, Am. Wigeon, and Shoveler as the most common.

Expected dates are October 20 to about April 15, with extremes of Oct. 5, 1980 at New Orleans (RDP, et al) and Apr. 19, 1969 at Grand Isle.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Anas penelope*) Accidental in winter.

There are three records of this species, the only records of live birds ever seen in Louisiana (except over the sights of a shotgun), all of drakes. The first sighting, the first accepted Louisiana record, came from the eastern part of New Orleans ("Recovery I"), between Dec. 14, 1980 and Feb. 22, 1981 (RDP, NN, m.ob.--photos RDP). The second record is of a bird seen on Fourchon Rd, Lafourche Parish, between Jan. 9 and Feb. 4, 1990 (GC, m.ob.). Finally, one was seen on a New Orleans CBC on.....(MM, RDP).

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) Common to abundant in winter.

Although the wigeon or "baldpate" is one of the commoner wintering puddle ducks in Southeastern Louisiana, it may have been somewhat more common during the 1960's, as a result, according to Bellrose (1976), of hurricanes breaking up the coastal marsh.

Expected dates of occurrence are October 1 to April 25; extreme dates are Sept. 3, 1977 at Grand Isle and May 8, 1978 at New Orleans (NN, JR, MM).

**AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** (*Anas rubripes*) Rare to occasional winter visitor

The difficulty of distinguishing the Black Duck from the Mottled Duck makes the status of the former uncertain at best, and, along with the apparent rarity of Black Duck in Southeast Louisiana, has led to a paucity of records. There are no recent records that have come to the attention of the writer, but hunter kills probably still occur. Perhaps the only "reliable" field-mark, in addition to the subjective information given in the field guides, is the rather heavy streaking on the throat, head, and neck. The available records span the period November 5 (1926, at the Rigolets) to March 12 (1966, at Cubit's Gap).

There once was considerable support for lumping Mallard, Black Duck, and Mottled Duck (the Black Duck hybridizes freely with the Mallard), but the current inclination to split has made that less likely.

**MOTTLED DUCK** (*Anas fulvigula*) Common resident

The Mottled Duck is a conspicuous inhabitant of the coastal marsh at all seasons, and is usually seen in pairs or in very small groups. It is the only duck likely to be encountered, away from Wood Duck habitat, in mid-summer. The Mottled Duck nests mostly in *Spartina patens* meadows and marshes. Studies indicate that it is very sedentary.

There has been a significant increase in numbers recorded on New Orleans CBC's since the mid-1960's.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Uncommon to fairly common winter visitor

Although on the order of 400,000 Mallards winter in Louisiana (Bellrose, 1976), the center of concentration is in the west-central part of the state, it is usually less numerous in SE. Louisiana than most of the other puddle ducks. Depending on water conditions, it may be found with other puddle ducks on Bayou Sauvage NW. . Maximum number is 556, on the New Orleans CBC Dec. 26, 1992.

As is true elsewhere, domesticated "mallards" can be found on ponds and lagoons in local parks, in canals, and along the lakefront, where they interbreed with whatever happens along. **Expected dates are.....**

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) Abundant migrant and common winter visitor. Occasional in summer.

The Blue-winged Teal is often present in large numbers in spring and fall as birds pass through to the north or south. According to Bellrose (1976) there was a great increase in wintering of Blue-winged Teal in coastal Louisiana from the 1950's on, attributed to the effect of hurricanes in opening up the coastal marsh. On the other hand, Gosselink, et al (1979) remark that numbers have since reverted to something like pre-Hurricane Audrey (1957) numbers. Although summer records are not extraordinary, and breeding should be looked for, the Blue-winged Teal is the earliest of the migrant ducks to reach coastal Louisiana in fall.

Expected dates of occurrence are September 1 to April 15; extreme records are August 6, 1959, New Orleans (SAG) and May 20, 1979, Grand Gosier Island.

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Anas cyanoptera*) Occasional to accidental in winter.

Even in southwestern Louisiana this beautiful duck is quite rare, and in Southeast Louisiana it is rarer still, with fewer than a dozen records. Of these, only five have come from the last three decades and half of the records are more than 90 years old.. Stein reports that the Cinnamon Teal is in fact occasionally taken by hunters in the Laplace-Reserve-Labranche area, where it is known as "gingerbread duck." The known, dated records are: Dec. 1884, Point-a-la-Hache (fide HCO--2\*); Dec. 1884, Lake Pontchartrain (fide HCO\*);

Dec. 1893, Lake Catouache (A. Perilliat--2\*); Ec. 1896, Lake Catouache (fide HCO--2\*); Jan. 5, 1900, Lake Borgne (Rafael Robin\*); Jan. 15, 1911 in the delta (JD\*); Dec. 20, 1956, Plaquemines Parish\*; Dec. 28, 1986, New Orleans (SAG,BC,CL); Mar. 5, 1987, Fourchon Rd (*Lafourche*) (CK,PW). After nearly a decade with no records, an adult male was present in New Orleans East from Dec. 7, 1997 to Feb. 14, 1998 (GO), and the next two winters: Nov. 7, 1998-March 7, 1999 (GO) and Dec. 2, 1999-Feb. 13, 2000 (GO, et al). An apparent hybrid Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal was seen on Blind Lagoon in New Orleans East on ..... and .... 1995 (PW--ph.). (1996?PW?);

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) Common winter visitor

The Northern Shoveler is one of the more familiar and common puddle ducks wintering in the coastal marsh. Its numbers probably come after those of Gadwall and Green-winged Teal, and of course Blue-winged Teal, which are strongly migratory. It primarily inhabits fresh and brackish estuarine marshes and bays, and seems not to be one of the puddle ducks likely to be seen on the waters of the gulf.

Expected dates of occurrence are from October 10 to April 20 and extreme records are Sep. 15, 1979 ... (JR,MB) and May 29, 1967, New Orleans (RDP). There are also at least two summer records: Jun. 17, 1978 at Reserve (MW) and Jun. 16, 1982 at New Orleans (DM).

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) Uncommon to sometimes common winter visitor

Although formerly one of the most common and characteristic puddle ducks of the coastal marsh of Southeast Louisiana, the pintail has declined substantially in the past 20 years. It is, nonetheless, still fairly common, using being present in small numbers when there are large concentrations of puddle ducks. Its numbers also fluctuate considerably--it was quite common in the fall of 1988, for example, after very low numbers for several years. Bag limits continue to be low because of questions about reproductive success.

The only Asummer@ records at hand are of a bird at Labranche, St. Charles Parish, on June 23, 1973 (fide RJS), and a sighting on US 11 in the eastern part of the city on July 28, 1991 (NN). The latter is difficult to classify: was the bird summering, an early migrant, or a cripple?

The expected dates of occurrence are **September 1** to April 25; the extremes are Sep. 6, 1981 and April 16, 1917 at Chef Menteur Pass (AMB).

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas crecca*) Common winter visitor

About 600,000 Green-winged Teal (one-fifth of the total population) winter in Louisiana. According to Bellrose (1976), they tend to occur in larger flocks than other species, and this seems to be the case here. It is the smallest of North American ducks. Expected dates of occurrence are October 15 to April 5. Extreme dates are Sep. 13, 1975, Reserve (MW,RJS--6) and Apr. 23, 1978, Venice (RDP,NN,MM). Perhaps the largest concentration of Green-winged Teal on record is of 2500 on U.S. 11 on Dec. 10, 1989 (NN,RDP).

**CANVASBACK** (*Aythya valisineria*) Uncommon to rare in winter.

It is sad to write of the plight of the Canvasback, surely the best-loved of all the ducks. While only a few years ago one or several might be found in deep ponds in the eastern part of the city, urban sprawl and the decline in the Canvasback population have made this duck almost a thing of the past. It is not unusual for a winter to go by without a report of a Canvasback from Southeast Louisiana.

On the other hand 497 were counted flying upriver at dusk on the Dec. 30, 2005 Venice CBC (DM,PW,RS), casting some doubt on the comments above.

Expected dates are November 15 to March 20; while the earliest date of fall arrival is Oct. 29, 1978 (NN,RDP), and latest in spring is May 27, 1995 at Tiger Pass. There is one "summer" record, July 12, 1973 at Venice (RJN,RSK).

**REDHEAD** (*Aythya americana*) Quite uncommon in winter.

The fate of the Redhead is only slightly less depressing than that of its congener, the Canvasback. It will, however, be encountered occasionally in winter, usually on Fourchon Rd. in Lafourche Parish, but might be found on deep ponds almost anywhere, including near Ft. Jackson in Plaquemines Parish. Like the Canvasback, although a diving duck, it will often be seen feeding in shallow water in the manner of a puddle duck. Flocks are reported to occur in the Chandeleurs in winter (Smith, 1961); Bellrose gives 20,000 as a typical wintering population for Chandeleur Sound, but whether this continues to be the case is not known. Despite the ravages of Katrina, .... were seen flying upriver from Boothville on the 30 Dec. 2005 Venice CBC (PW,DM,RS).

Expected dates are November 10 to April 15; extreme dates are Oct. 25, 1969 at Grand Isle (RDP,RJN,DN) and May 4, 1969 at Ft. Jackson (WW). An eclipse-plumaged Redhead at Venice (Boothville) on Oct. 12, 2008 (PW,DM,RDP,Tiff) was either extremely early or perhaps a cripple.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) Common to uncommon winter visitor.

Often found on inland fresh-water lakes and ponds, this species also inhabits brackish



estuarine waters. Although it is hard to predict where it might be found, it is sometimes common on the ponds in New Orleans' City Park, and possibly on urban ponds in New Orleans East.

Expected dates are November 5 to April 1 and the earliest date of fall arrival is Sept. 24, 1956 (RF,BMM). There is one summer record, June 28, 1973 on Lake Pontchartrain (MW).

**GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*) Uncommon (to rare?) in winter.

Because of the difficulty of distinguishing the Greater Scaup from its more common cousin, less is known of the wintering population in this area than one would like. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the differences in relative numbers offshore vs. inshore. Gosselink (1979) quotes a figure of about 2% Greater Scaup in southern Louisiana, while Bellrose (1976) calculates a 6.6% figure for Louisiana. Taylor Guste says that Greater Scaup are not infrequently shot on his lands on the lakefront near Madisonville.

The identification problem is challenging but by no means hopeless. Adult male Greater Scaup are large, white-sided, heavy-billed, and have rounded-looking heads which are iridescent green when seen in good light. The wing stripe extends all across the primaries to the tip of the wing, and is quite dramatic and obvious. (beware of overlap). Female Greater Scaup often have a dusky auricular patch. Usually a combination of characters will be needed to clinch an identification. Brilliant, clean white sides are suggestive, but by no means are all white-sided scaup Greater. Maximum: 72 flying upriver at dusk from Boothville on the 30 Dec. 2005 Venice CBC (DM,PW,RS).

The available records span the period November 2 to March 23.

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) Very common to abundant in winter.

The Lesser Scaup are often abundant on Lake Pontchartrain, though sometimes few can be found from the south shore. It is certainly the dominant species of duck on the lake, and the only species to be found from the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain in numbers. It normally occurs in large numbers on the near-shore waters of the gulf as well, though, again, it is sometimes unaccountably rare. Approximately 50% of all Lesser Scaup winter in Louisiana; Bellrose (1976) reported something like 500,000 winter on Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain. Although Stanley C. Arthur claimed that an adult with young were found in Lake Borgne in 1915, his reports should always be approached with caution.

Expected dates of wintering are October 25 to May 15; extreme dates are Sep. 16, 1983 on Lake Pontchartrain (RDP) and May 28, 1967 at New Orleans (RDP). Summer records in the New Orleans area--especially City Park--are rare, but not unprecedented. They include the following: summer 1958 (SAG); June 29, 1959 (SAG); June 16, 1982 (DM).

**KING EIDER** (*Somateria spectabilis*) Accidental

The first record of this species, or of any eider, for Louisiana, was of a young male, apparently flightless (molting), present at the west end of Grand Terre Island. The bird first noted (but not identified) by John.... on April 9, 1994, was identified as an eider by Bob Russell a few days later, and as this species by many observers (DM,CS, et al; ph.) on April 14-17. It was present until at least May 18 (JVR,DLD,SWC). Quite amazingly, the second record was hardly over a month later: a female seen and photographed by O'Meallie on Curlew Island on June 11, 1994. Finally, a third King Eider was found, in this case a dead female on N. Breton I. on May 31, 2001 (Joyce Mazourek and Ed Creef—ph NAB 55(4):443) Three records in seven years!

**HARLEQUIN DUCK** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) Accidental.

There is one record of this beautiful duck, of a pair reported by Audubon on April 1, 1837 at Southwest Pass. Although this record has some sceptics (including the LOS Bird Records Committee?), there is also a recent sight report from the Florida panhandle.

**SURF SCOTER** (*Melanitta perspicillata*) Rare winter visitor.

Most of the scoters of this species, and of the others as well, have been in female/immature plumage, which suggests that they are birds of the year. Surf Scoters ordinarily winter on either coast and breed in northern Canada. There are over two dozen records of Surf Scoter from the period Nov. 17-Apr. 16 and it can now be regarded as regular in small numbers in most years. There is one summer record, **June 10, 1998, on Curlew Is. (SWC,DLD); it is not known to the writer whether this was a healthy individual. On the 2007 New Orleans CBC a total of 60 were counted on Lake Pontchartrain, perhaps exceeding the sum of all previous records.**

The records include: Mar. 20, 1890, New Orleans (fide HCO); Dec. 26, 1950, Grand Isle (JLC); Nov. 29, 1953, Lake Borgne; Dec. 1958 at Myrtle Grove (fide GHL); Nov. 28-..., 1977 in Metairie (JG, m.ob.--photos RDP); Nov. 13, 1981, New Orleans (MM); Nov. 21, 1982, Labranche (fide JRS--killed by hunters); Nov. 26, 1982, New Orleans (RDP,NN--2); Jan. 2, 1984, Fourchon Rd. (NN,RDP,DM); Nov. 22?, 1984, Mandeville (CS?); Dec. 27, 1987, New Orleans (RDP,MK, SH); winter **1988-89.....; winter 1989-90; ....., 1991 New Orleans (NN); Dec. 26, 1992 (...)..Fourchon beach 1998; 2002 New Orleans CBC, RDP, MM; Nov. 17, 2002 at Grand Isle (DM); Mar. 6-7, 2004 at New Orleans (DM,MM,PW,CS,RDPB5+); April 16, 2004 at Grand Isle (DLD,SWC), winter 2004-5 S. Point; 20 Feb. 2005 (PW,DMB7). Dec. 23, 2007, Lake Pontchartrain (RDP,MG,DM,PWB60).**

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (*Melanitta fusca*) Casual winter visitor.

The 11 records of this species make it the least common of the three in recent years; see however, the discussion in Lowery (1974). The dated records range between Nov. 5 and Mar. 27: Mar. 20, 1890, New Orleans (fide GHL); Mar. 27, 1965, Grand Isle (SAG); Dec. 1, 1973, Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS,MW); Nov. 27-28, 1975, Lake Pontchartrain (NN,m.ob.);

Nov. 23, 1982, New Orleans (MM); Nov. 19, 1989, Lake Catouatche (DM); **Nov. 29-...1989**, Lake Pontchartrain (DM, NN, RDP, GG); Dec. 21, 1991, L. Pontchartrain (RDP, NN, GG), Nov. 5, 1995 (PW, CK, **Bill Wayman?**); Nov. 25(24?), 2000, Mandeville (MM). [Dec. 23, 2007, Lake Pontchartrain (RDP, MGuidry).

**AMERICAN SCOTER** (*Melanitta americana*) Rare winter visitor.

Although none of the scoters are common, of the three, the Black and Surf Scoters are seen much more frequently than the White-winged. Most of the records are from about November 20 through the Christmas Count period. The fact that there are few late winter records may mostly reflect lack of coverage, since they are seen regularly in spring on the gulf off Cameron Parish.

In addition to the records quoted here, there is one undated record of Black Scoter from Lake Catherine by Gustav Kohn. In principle, good places to look for scoters would be off Grand Isle or from Fourchon Beach, and, in fact, the latest record of any scoter for Southeast Louisiana was of one seen on April 9, 1977 off Grand Isle, not identified as to species (but not white-winged). Most of the records of all three species have come from the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, mainly because coverage is much better there than along the coast.

There are now well over a dozen records spanning the period Oct. 25-Apr. 8: Nov. 11, 1941, St. Charles Par. (fide GHL); Nov. 29, 1952 on Lake Borgne (fide GHL); Oct. 25, 1969 on Lake Pontchartrain (RJN, RJS); Nov. 23, 1970 at the mouth of the Empire Canal (RJN, LO'M); Mar. 13, 1971, Lake Pontchartrain (HDP); Apr. 8, 1973, 25 miles off Grand Isle (RBH, RJN); Nov. 27-Dec. 16, 1977 on Lake Pontchartrain (JR, m.ob.--photos RDP); Nov. 13-Dec. 25, 1981 at New Orleans (JR, DM, et al); Nov. 23, 1981, Fontainebleau St. Pk. (NN, SF); Dec. 1-...., 1985 at New Orleans (RDP, m.ob.); New Orleans, Dec. 19, 1991 (NN--2); Nov. 26, 2004 (DM, MM, PW) on Lake Pontchartrain. Several were on L. Pontchartrain on Dec. 23, 2007 (DM, PW, RDP, MG), and a flock of 20 were seen on Jan. 20, 2008 on the lake (RDP).

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** (*Clangula hyemalis*) Uncommon to rare in winter.

There are about two dozen records of this somewhat erratic species, formerly (and perhaps preferably) known as the Oldsquaw, from November 24 to February 28. In recent years it has been most frequently recorded from either shore of Lake Pontchartrain, most likely the north shore, often as a result of Christmas Count coverage, but it might be seen on any of the larger bodies of water: the gulf, Chandeleur Sound, Lake Borgne, etc. It is reportedly regular offshore in Mississippi Sound. In some years none are seen at all and in others there may be several records. Few adult males are seen. Recent records include Dec. 11, 2004 at South Point (DM, MM, PW<sub>B2</sub>) and Dec. 30, 2005 at Boothville (DM, PW, RS). One was seen on the New Orleans CBC on Dec. 23, 2007 (RDP, MGuidry), and subsequently by DM. One was at the Bonnabel Boat Launch from Dec. 23, 2008 (Elliott)

Harold) into February 2009 (RDP,Boslers).

Extreme dates of occurrence are Nov. 15, 1986 at Fontainebleau St. Pk (MM,DM--3) and May 11, 1988 ...(NN,DM).

**BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) Regular winter resident, more common on north shore of Lake Pontchartrain

Buffleheads are increasingly seen from the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, usually in the extreme eastern part of the city (Hayne Blvd, Bayou Sauvage NWR). It is quite common and conspicuous on the north shore of the lake, as at Mandeville and Fontainebleau St. Park, where sometimes as many as 100 might be counted. For some reason, it is rarely seen from the coast in the vicinity of Grand Isle. Nonetheless it might be encountered almost anywhere where diving ducks might be expected. Buffleheads are usually present from early November until late March. **Extreme dates are.....**

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*) Uncommon to rare winter visitor.

Although this species is never common, often one or two can be found after patient searching on Lake Pontchartrain, on the deeper ponds in the eastern part of New Orleans (now disappearing), or occasionally on Bayou St. John. There have been several recent records from lower Plaquemines Parish, near Ft. Jackson, etc. Goldeneyes seem to depart rather early in spring, but there are two interesting late records from the area or near it: May 5, 1986, by Kopman, without specific location, and June 15, 1894 on Cat Island, MS, collected by Blakemore. Expected dates are November 15 to March 1 and extreme dates of occurrence are Nov. 3, 1991 on U.S. 11 (RDP) and Mar. 22, 1970 at New Orleans (RDP). Maximum number: 60 at New Orleans, Mar. 6, 2004.

**HOODED MERGANSER** (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) Uncommon winter visitor,

The Hooded Merganser is one of those species which are not actually rare in Southeast Louisiana but are nonetheless difficult to find. It is often seen on isolated wooded ponds and sloughs, but only rarely in the open water situations characteristic of its cousins, the Red-breasted and Common Mergansers. Although it is fairly regular in some spots, as on ponds in New Orleans East or on the ponds near Crescent Acres landfill in Arabi, an opportunistic or random sighting is the most likely, if one knows what a Hooded Merganser looks like in flight. High count is 170 on a residential lake in eastern New Orleans on the 1998 CBC (DPM).

The extreme dates of occurrence are October 21, 1965 on Lake Pontchartrain (BMM) and April 23, 1994 at Port Sulphur (NN,RDP).

**COMMON MERGANSER** (*Mergus merganser*) Casual winter visitor.

There are about 17 records of the Common Merganser, which is slightly more common inland and in north Louisiana than in Se. Louisiana. The dozen reports in the last four decades probably accurately reflect its true abundance in Southeast Louisiana. Although identification is not particularly difficult, for either sex, its rarity should engender caution.

The records span the period Nov. 11-Apr. 19, with an anomalous June 3, 1933 record.

The records are: Jan. 21, 1932, Point-a-la-Hache (HCO); Jan. 24, 1932, Myrtle Grove (HCO--2); June 3, 1933, Lake Borgne (HCO); April 19, 1936, Grand Isle (AD); Dec. 28, 1957, Grand Isle (SAG); Feb. 6, 1960, Slidell (SAG); Nov. 22, 1969, Mandeville (RJN); Dec. 8, 1977, Reserve (MW); Nov. 11, 1978, Laplace (RJS,MW); Nov. 18, 1978, Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS,MW); Jan. 8-Feb 2?, 1980, Metairie (...); Dec. 26, 1982, New Orleans (MW--5); Jan. 10-Mar. 3, 1985, Mandeville (PS,JH?); winter 1986-87, Mandeville (JH,m.ob.); Mar. 5, 1987, Fourchon Rd. (CK,PW); .....(NN,RDP); Dec. 23, 1990-Feb. 22,1991] New Orleans (AS,GS, et al).

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*) Common winter visitor.

This species can be found regularly on Lake Pontchartrain and throughout coastal Southeast Louisiana on deep lakes, ponds, and open water.

Expected dates of occurrence are November 20 to May 1; extreme dates are Oct. 25, 1928 at Main Pass of the Mississippi River (AMB) and May 22, 2012 in Plaquemines Par. (PY) [also May 20, 1967 at Grand Isle (SAG)]. There are at least two later records in spring or early summer: one at North Island in the Chandeleurs: June 11, 1971 (RDP,RJN,MM), and another on Fourchon Rd., June 1, 1997 (DM,RDP). **Maximum number,...winter 2011-12 on Hiway 1 in Lafourche Par. (DRP,PW,DM).**

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) Uncommon winter visitor.

The Ruddy Duck is most often found on deep ponds in residential areas of the eastern part of New Orleans. Otherwise, it may be found almost anywhere there are other diving ducks--occasionally on the lake, occasionally on Fourchon Road. Ruddy Ducks went essentially unrecorded on New Orleans Christmas Counts before 1973, and have evidently increased due to the availability of these newly-dug artificial lakes in New Orleans. Expected dates are November 5 to April 10; extreme dates are Sept. 2, 1986 at New Orleans (CL,DM) and May 22, 1977 at New Orleans (RDP,SP). Although there are no records of the very similar Masked Duck for this area, the possibility should be kept in mind.

FAMILY *Odontophoridae* New World Quail

**NORTHERN BOBWHITE** (*Colinus virginianus*) Common to uncommon resident.

The familiar Bobwhite quail is somewhat common in open, grassy areas with scrub or

brush for cover, and along woodland edges. The Bobwhite has declined significantly in numbers during the past twenty years, at least near New Orleans, where one would be hard pressed to find one. It is hard to know whether this only reflects habitat loss near the city, or a more general decline, due to pesticides, changed land-use practices, fire ants, or other unknown causes.

FAMILY *Phasianidae* QUAIL, PHEASANTS, GROUSE

**WILD TURKEY** (*Melagris gallopavo*) Common to resident of deciduous and pine flat woodlands with adjacent open areas.

The secretive habits of the turkey make estimates of its numbers difficult. They are not encountered south of Lake Pontchartrain, being most common in pinewoods north of the lake with adjacent fields into which they will venture to feed. Recently turkeys have been most often seen by birders near the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area and at the Mid-South Turf Farms on La. 36 between Abita Springs and St. Tammany. Occasionally, when the Pearl River is in flood, the Honey Island stretch of old U.S. 11 can be a good place to see turkeys. Most areas have been restocked with turkeys by the LWFC.

FAMILY *Gaviidae* LOONS

**COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*) Regular, and fairly common to uncommon, in winter

Common Loons can usually be found in small numbers along either shore of Lake Pontchartrain in winter from mid-November into April. Numbers vary considerably from one year to another, and some searching may be necessary to find a loon along the south shore of the lake. They are significantly more common on the north shore of the lake, for example at the Mandeville harbor or Fontainebleau St. Pk. Although most individuals are gone by mid-March, late April or early May records are not extraordinary and hardly a year goes by without a late spring or summer record. Large movements have occasionally been noted in early November. Common Loons are also encountered over or near the gulf, especially at Grand Isle, but frequently on the river or on large bays in the Buras-Venice area. Common Loons, usually in late spring or early summer, have been heard calling on several occasions in Southeast Louisiana, generally in late spring.

In basic plumage, Common and Pacific Loons are superficially similar, especially in size, and given the number of records from the Southeast Texas coast, it may be expected that careful scrutiny of loons in this area will eventually turn up a Pacific Loon. Recent "scars" demonstrate that identification problems are considerable, especially if one is not

familiar with Pacific Loon. On the other hand, there are records from both east and west of us along the gulf coast, some of which, at least, are valid. Good sources are Shulenburg (1989), McCaskie, et al (1990), and Zimmer (2000).

Records of "summering" loons, while interesting, and not extraordinary, are usually of birds in basic (winter) plumage. The earliest such records were: June 5, 1933 in Breton Sound (AMB--2); May 31, 1957 on Chandeleur Sound (RJN,AD--calling); June 12, 1971, Chandeleur Sound (RJN,MM,RDP); June 22, 1973, North Island (NN,RJN,m.ob.); Aug. 2, 1982, Lake Pontchartrain (MM); Aug. 14, 1987, New Orleans (NN); July 15, 1989, Lake Pontchartrain (RDP); June 30-July 2, 1991, Mandeville (RFC,P. Siegert). Another late record is June 19, 2011 at Elmer's Is. (Lutmerding). The August records are two of perhaps only three or so Louisiana records for that month.

Although Pacific Loon has not been recorded in Louisiana, it can be expected to occur, based on records from the Texas and Florida coasts. Observers should familiarize themselves with the somewhat subtle differences between this species and the Pacific Loon.

Expected dates of wintering are November 1 to May 1; extreme dates: Sept. 16, 1984 Mandeville (JH) and May 19, 1978 New Orleans (NN).

#### FAMILY *Podicipedidae* GREBES

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) Common in winter; uncommon to rare breeding bird

Although Pied-billed Grebes are not common in summer, their occurrence at this season is frequent enough to make accurate determination of arrival and departure dates for wintering individuals difficult. For example a Pied-billed Grebe summered on Bayou St. John in 1985 (AS) and have sometimes bred successfully in rather large numbers in the ponds on US 11 in the eastern part of the city. One of the more interesting records was of one on the open gulf some 40 miles south of South Pass on Sep. 16, 1995 (SWC,m.ob.).

Expected dates of wintering are September 10 to April 15.

**HORNED GREBE** (*Podiceps auritus*) Uncommon in winter

Careful scanning of Lake Pontchartrain at New Orleans, along Hayne Blvd. or near ASouth Point@ (Point aux Herbes) will frequently yield a Horned Grebe, but the species is much more common on the north shore of the lake, where often small flocks are seen. Very occasionally an individual is seen on Bayou St. John. Although this is the "common" *Podiceps* grebe in Southeast Louisiana, care should be taken in identification. Maximum concentrations: 500+ at Mandeville on March 12, 1995 (DPM, et al), ..... (PYaukey); 819. on

north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, Mandeville to Slidell, Mar 2, 2009 (JBosler)

Expected dates of wintering are November 15 to March 1?; extreme dates of occurrence: Oct. 11, 1980 New Orleans (MM,DM) and March 22?, 1997 (fide JB).

...1988 (MM)

**RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) Accidental in winter

The first record of this grebe, which in the North America primarily occurs in the Pacific Northwest, Western Canada, and Alaska, was of one seen on March 11, 1995 at Mandeville harbor (SWC,DLD). The only other report is of one on L. Pontchartrain on Mar. 6, 2004 (DM), not accepted by the LBRC. There are several reports for Sw. Louisiana, some of dubious reliability.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) Rare in winter

Southeastern Louisiana is near the extreme eastern edge of the Eared Grebe's wintering range, so while it is regular in other areas of the state, it is distinctly rare in southeast Louisiana. In New Orleans, most records have come from permanent ponds in residential New Orleans East (essentially annually), but occasionally one is seen on the lake. There are typically 1-3 records per year, which include the following: Mar. 10, 1961 New Orleans (SAG); Nov. 22, 1969 Mandeville (RJN); Sept. 11, 1976 Fourchon Pass, Lafourche Par. (RH,RJS); Oct. 5, 1976 Reserve (MW); Jan 11-15, 1978 New Orleans (JR); Oct. 8, 1980 Reserve (MW); Dec. 26-31 New Orleans (GS,DM, et al); Nov. 15, 1986 Mandeville (MM,DM); Dec. 28, 1986 New Orleans (RDP,PS); winter 1990-91 Fourchon Rd...; **Feb. 22?, 1991**, New Orleans (AS,GS,PL,SF); Dec. 26, 1992, **New Orleans (....--2)**; Dec. 23, 1995, New Orleans (DM,KVR)....**Dec. 29, 1997 (DM,JR)**; Dec. 27, 2003 (JC,TC,CR); Mar. 6, 2004 (CS,PW,DM...) on L. Pontchartrain. [2005 L. Pontchartrain (DM..)] Feb. 2007 on L. Pontchartrain (DM).

Extreme dates are Sept. 11, 1976, Fourchon Pass (RH,RJS) and Mar. 10, 1961 New Orleans (SAG).

**WESTERN GREBE** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) Accidental in winter

There are three records of Western Grebe for SE Louisiana. The first record of this species for Se. Louisiana was of one on the Mississippi River just upriver of the Mississippi River bridge at New Orleans, November 3-6, 1971 (MM,m.ob.), also the first record for Louisiana. The photographs (RDP; see *AFN* 26:74 (1972)) indicate that this was an individual of the dark morph now known as "Western Grebe," the more sedentary light form being "Clark's Grebe" (which has not been found in Louisiana). . The other records are of one on Fourchon Rd., Lafourche Par. On Oct. 19, 1997 (RDP,MMBphotos), and one at Mandeville Harbor on 17 November 2002 (MM). There are various good sources on separating the two, including Zimmer (2000),



## ORDER Procellariiformes

### FAMILY Procellariidae

For information on records of the tubenoses from the northern gulf, one should consult Duncan and Havard (1980), Lowery and Newman (1954), Oberholser's *The Bird Life of Texas*, and Clapp, et al (1982).

### **CORY'S SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus diomedea*) Offshore in summer; apparently regular

Recent pelagic trips sponsored by LOS and by LSU have made it clear that Cory's Shearwater is fairly regular in small numbers off the mouth of the Mississippi River. Until the 1980s it was thought that the common large shearwater off the mouth of the river was Great Shearwater, which has turned out not to be the case. The first evidence of the occurrence of Cory's Shearwater was of birds recorded on aerial transect studies over the northern Gulf of Mexico, 130-180 miles west to southwest of Grand Isle on Oct. 22, 23, and 25, 1980 (Wayne Hoffmann, pers. comm.), and Texas records in the early 1990s suggested that Cory's probably occurred off Louisiana as well. There were additional reports from transects of one kind or another (fide Dwight Peake, et al).

It seems likely that Cory's Shearwater will be split into three species: Cory's, Scopoli's, and Cape Verde Shearwater, as the BOU has already done. It is likely that both of the first two have been collected in Louisiana.

The first generally recognized record occurred on Sept. 13, 1997 when one was seen on a pelagic trip out of Venice, 35 mi S. of Southwest Pass (m.ob.). The bird was followed closely for several minutes and excellent photographs were obtained. A subsequent record was June 13, 1998, 58 mi SSE of South Pass (m.ob.). Following these records the species was added to the state list by the LBRC in 1998. Two were seen Oct. 13, 1998 about 24 mi S of South Pass (SWC, et al-2, 1 coll.), one on July 12, 2000 about 40 mi S of South Pass (PC,SWC,DLD, et al), and up to 30 seen by Myers from an oil platform in the northern Gulf of Mexico (29 21.651, 87 53.037) on Sept. 13, 2000, in about 300 ft of water. The location is about 75 mi ESE of the mouth of the Mississippi R.. One was seen June 29, 2001 33 mi SSE of South Pass (m.ob.); **May 2002** In the summer of 2003, one Cory's was recorded on 24 June (SWC,DLDB1\*) and two on July 9 (SWC,DLD, et al\*). Several of the records have taken place in rather turbid water. **In October....., Myers recorded as many as 80-100 at a time, ....., just in Alabama waters.** A recent pelagic trip out of Venice encountered one about 30 miles off SW Pass on Sept. 27, 2009 (m.ob.—photo RDP, DP, et al), and one was watched for several minutes resting on the water at distances as close as 20 feet on Sept. 25, 2012, 32 miles off SW Pass (JB, et al; photos, including RDP). A pelagic trip to Mississippi Canyon in August 2012 encountered at least a dozen Cory's Shearwaters.

“Cory's Shearwater” is likely to be split into three species, and in fact has been by the British Ornithologists Union.

### **GREAT SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus gravis*) Rare to occasional offshore in late summer

Although our understanding of the distribution of pelagic species off the Louisiana coast has grown slowly since the early 1970's, yet still relatively little is known about these species, owing to the fact that coverage is infrequent and irregular. Much work needs to be done on the temporal distribution and frequency of this and other pelagics, and on the question of probable distribution over the continental shelf and near-shelf waters off the Mississippi delta. Little is known of the effects of such canyons as Mississippi canyon, cold upwelling, etc.

Based on a very small number of records during the last decade, it seems clear that Great Shearwater is very scarce off the Louisiana coast in late summer. Although regular pelagic trips off the mouth of the river since the fall of 1995 have turned up only one, the TGM study during 1999-2000? did record a few. There are also relatively recent records off the northwest Florida and Alabama coasts (Duncan and Havard, 1980). As noted above, however, most recent records of large shearwaters in Louisiana waters have been Cory's rather than this species. Refer to Finch, et al (...) or to Harrison (1983) for identification details. Of 36 records of Great Shearwaters in Clapp, et al (1982) for the northern gulf, ten are from July and nine each from August and September.

Great Shearwaters breed in the southern Atlantic, mostly on Nightingale, Inaccessible, and Gough Islands, and "winter" in the north Atlantic. Their clockwise path carries them past Florida in the spring, so that one might expect them to be most common in the Gulf of Mexico in early summer, even though the records do not bear that out.

Although there are six records from southeastern Louisiana waters, there is some question whether the first four can be said to absolutely rule out Cory's, whose presence was not seriously suspected until recently. Newman (pers. comm.) was, however, very familiar with both species and has commented on the distinct caps of the birds he saw. The is one record of an unidentified large (Cory's/Greater type) shearwater 20 miles southeast of Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River, June 9, 1985 (MM). The records are Jul. 16, 1964 10 miles west of North Is. (LEW,MM,RWS); Sept. 4-5, 1970 35 miles off Southwest Pass (RJN); Aug. 11, 1971 35 miles off South Pass (RJN); May 3, 1972 20 miles off South Pass (RJN); Aug. 25, 1986. The "modern" records are: 62 miles south of Racoon Pt. (MM); **Oct. 13, 1998**, .....(SWC, et al--coll.), Mar. 16, 2000, on an oil platform 45 mi SSE of Grand Isle (KBardon-ph), etc.....

#### **MANX SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus puffinus*) Accidental (?) offshore

The sole record of this species for Louisiana is of one collected on Mar. 11, 1999, 52 mi SSW of Southwest Pass (SWC,DLD)..It was initially identified as belonging to the next species. Manx Shearwater is darker, with a darker face, longer wings, and white undertail coverts. It is a much heavier bird than Audubon's. The first Texas record, of a bird found dead on Padre I. In 1975, had been banded on its breeding grounds in Scotland

#### **AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus lherminiere*) Rare in summer offshore

This species is the "common" small shearwater off the Louisiana coast, encountered on at least one out of every two pelagic trips out of Venice. In the course of Bob Newman's trips offshore in 1970-72, up to 15 were seen on a single occasion, and on a Sep. 16, 1995 trip sponsored by the LOS which went 65 miles south from South/Southwest Pass, as many as 18 were recorded. Most of the latter were in 500 fathom water or deeper. Audubon's Shearwater has been recorded in the gulf in every month except December, and of 39 records totalling well over 290 individuals given in Clapp, et al (1982), 8 were from July and 11 from September. When two individuals were collected from a flock of 200 on Aug. 26, 1954, south of Mobile Bay (fide GHL), the nearest land was Southeast Pass of the Mississippi River, 64 miles to the west, making this the first record for Louisiana. Palmer (1962) was quite mistaken when he wrote, of this species, "not seen alive in the Gulf of Mexico since Audubon's time." It is, however, interesting to note that Mac Myers, in 86 days on the gulf between March 29 and Aug. 31, 1985, saw no Audubon's Shearwaters; nor had this writer, in six trips to the edge of the continental shelf prior to spring 1990, seen the species.

Although there have been records in water less than 1000 ft deep, it is likely that Audubon's Shearwater will be encountered only over very deep water, perhaps 1000 m or more. Observers are reminded that Manx Shearwater is a possibility in the gulf (see the above record), which should motivate one to carefully check any small shearwater for that possibility. Manx Shearwaters are larger, have a darker face, and white undertail coverts.

Easily the most remarkable record of Audubon's Shearwater is of one found dead at the corner of Calhoun and Magazine Streets in New Orleans, on July 25, 1981 (specimen to LSU-MZ)! One can surmise that the bird may have been caught in a shrimp net and ended up on a New Orleans street corner through some unknown misadventure. The historical records are: Aug. 27, 1954 33 miles off Southeast Pass (SS,HRB); July 3,4,9,15, 1970 30-40 miles off South Pass (RJN); one collected; July 9.; Sept. 3-4, 1970 18-30 miles off South Pass (RJN--12,15); May 3-4, 1972 8-20 miles off South Pass (RJN); July 10, 1977 20-25 miles south of Empire Jetty (MM); July 22, 1978 south of Grand Isle (Clapp, et al, 1982);.....

During the last 15 years the records have become more numerous, due in part to regular pelagic trips by the LOS and later by LSU. The study of utilization of oil platforms by trans-gulf migrants also yielded a number of records in 2000-01. A trip out of Grand Isle on Oct. ...., 1988 produced two small shearwaters, presumably of this species (**DM,NN,MM?,AS?**); one seen on **May28?...**, 1990 (SWC,DD,DM,RDP), off South Pass was also probably an Audubon's. LOS and LSU trips recorded Audubon Shearwaters on the following trips: [**Sep. 13, 1997, 48 mi S of South Pass (m.ob.)...**] Among recent records are one.....miles off South Pass on May 5, 2004 (DLD,SWC, et al); 6 June 2004 (DLD,SWC,et al); two Sept. 25, 2012 about 32 mi off SW Pass (JB, et al; photos).

#### FAMILY *Hydrobatidae* STORM-PETRELS

**WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanites oceanicus*) Regular in summer offshore

Wilson's Storm-Petrel is usually the most common storm-petrel off the Louisiana coast in summer, although recent experience indicates that Band-rumped may be nearly as

common over deeper water, 1000 m or more in early summer, and Leach's may rival Wilson's in late summer. Wilson's, which occurs very readily, would seem to be the most likely in shallower water, nearer shore, even though it will generally require blue-green to blue water and a depth of at least several hundred feet. Water clarity, however, may be the most important factor. While they are most often found near the grasslines which mark the "rips" or interfaces (ocean fronts) between differing water masses, usually between green and blue water, they are not infrequently found in water ranging from green to blue, some distance from a rip. Frequently a Wilson's Storm-petrel will be seen pattering along one of these rips. These rips or ocean fronts may sometimes be only 10 miles off South Pass of the Mississippi River, though often are much further out, and typically may be 70 or more miles off Grand Isle or the Empire Canal. Experience indicates that a day-long pelagic trip, especially one which goes as much as 50 miles off South Pass, will usually encounter a few of these birds.

The normal period of occurrence of this species seems to be May through at least early September, but numbers are usually highest in early summer; expected dates of summering are approximately April 15 to September 1. Given recent records of Band-rumped and Leach's Storm-petrels, one certainly cannot assume that a storm-petrel is of this species. It goes without saying that storm-petrels at sea can be very hard to distinguish--especially under the trying conditions of pelagic birding and by observers not fully familiar with the three species. Wilson's have a swallow-like flight, often patter with their toes while feeding, and have long legs which often results in the toes extending past the tail; on rare occasions the yellow webbing between the toes is visible. Wilson's have noticeably rounded wings and a very small bill, and are the smallest of the three expected species. Wilson's Storm-petrel, unlike the other two species, breeds in the southern oceans and thus is "wintering" in the gulf.

The maximum numbers recorded are 80 or more off South Pass on May 28, 2002, including at least 34 at one time (DLD, et al; photo--RDP)..

Of 315 northern gulf records in Clapp, *et al* (1982), 192 were from the month of July, although 19 of 42 Louisiana records were from June. Clapp, *et al* give 11 records of at least 40 individuals from southeast Louisiana. The records appear to span the period Apr. 3 (1973, 10-15 mi off Grand Isle (RJR?) to Sep. 2-3 (1970, 20 miles off South Pass), though there is a report of a storm waif, Sep. 9, 1965 at Reserve (RJS), associated with Hurricane Betsy. Other early records include the first sighting, by H.C. Oberholser, who recorded 13 off the mouth of the river on June 8, 1933. The first specimen was July 26, 1941 2 mi off SW Pass (EMorgan--LSUMZ). Further early records are May 3 and 19 out of South Pass in 1972 and 1971, respectively.

More recent records include June 10-11, 1985, 20 miles southeast of Southwest Pass (MM), 15-16 July 1985 (DLD,SWC), south and east of Caminada Pass, and May 28, 1989, 10 miles of South Pass (MM,DM,RDP). Almost every LOS or LSU pelagic trip out of South Pass since 1995 has recorded Wilson's Storm Petrel, including the first of those trips on May 27, 1995 40-50 mi SSE of South Pass (RB,CL,DP,DM,MM,RDP, et al when up to 12 were seen. See the reports of LBRC for more data.

**LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma leucorhos*) Apparently regular in small numbers over deep water off the continental shelf in summer

The earliest records are of one collected 41 miles southeast of South Pass on Dec. 5, 1956 (HRB), and another picked up alive on the beach at Grand Isle on Sept. 23, 1972 by Phillip L. Bruner and James Rogers. Prior to the advent of LOS/LSU pelagic trips, these were the only records for Louisiana. But in the last 7 years there have been at least two dozen additional records, several supported by specimens. A bird likely to be of this species was seen about 40-45 miles SSE of South Pass on May 27, 1995 (RB,CL,DP, et al); another **was seen...**; July 1, 1999 41-64 miles SSE of South Pass (SWC, et al); June 12, 2000 about 37 mi. SSE of South Pass (SWC, et al\*); July 12, 2000, 51 mi S of South Pass. One was photograph from an oil platform May 12, 2000 (KBardon). Also May 28, 2002 about.....(DLD, et al--2). On June 17/18, 2002.....(BMM, et al). Peak numbers at this point are 13 on August 27, 2000 (DLD, et al), all at least 47 miles off South Pass and in 5000ft of water. Although several more seasons of field work will be necessary to answer all questions, it appears that Leach's Storm-petrel is regular over deep water, 40 or more miles offshore, perhaps more commonly in late summer than early. It is generally the least common of the three storm-petrels. Leach's Storm-petrel breeds on both coasts, but whether local birds are post-breeders or non-breeders is not known.

For identification details, see Harrison (1983), or Naveen, but note the long, narrow, and angled wings, the nighthawk-like flight, a rump patch that appears "dirty" or has an indistinct line down its middle, as well as the distinctly larger size and larger bill compared to Wilson's Storm-petrel. The forked tail is often not obvious.

**BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma castro*) Regular offshore over very deep water

Until very recently there was only a single sight record of a Band-rumped Storm Petrel off Louisiana (SWC,DLD), rejected by the LOS Bird Records Committee as a first state record, but generally assumed to be valid. Dwight Peake encountered this species in the early 1990s while accompanying transect studies of marine mammals off the Louisiana coast, but there was no documentation of its occurrence. Thus stood the situation until May 27, 1995, when a pelagic trip off South Pass, guided by Peake, found up to 24, with 10-12+ actually identified, 45-60 miles SSE of South Pass, in water up to 1000 fathoms deep. It may or may not be true, as Dwight Peake has argued, that Band-rumped Storm-petrel is the most common storm-petrel in the deeper waters of the northern gulf in early summer, but it is, in any case, quite regular and can be expected on most early summer pelagic trips which reach deep water off South Pass. Contrary to what has been previously written, Band-rumped Storm-Petrels can be "chummed" just as can Wilson's. On June 12, 2000 perhaps 7-10 were found about 38 miles SSW of South Pass (fide DLD).. This record firmly established the presence of the species in Louisiana. Following this were records from June 29, 2001, 45 mi SSE of South Pass and July 21, 2001, 24 mi S. of South Pass. **At this point there are**

**records totaling over 100 individuals**, some supported by specimens, and one can expect to find this species, sometimes among “flocks” of Wilson’s Storm-petrels, well offshore in blue water.

Apparently Band-rumped Storm Petrel (also known as Madieran and Harcourt's) is a bird of very deep water, perhaps at least 500 fathoms. Distinguishing this from the other two species is challenging, but, under good conditions (which often do not prevail at sea), by no means impossible. Band-rumped Storm Petrels look large, have a large, squarish, "pillow-like" white rump patch, with a lot of black tail aft of it. Wilson’s have more white on the undertail coverts. The toes of Band-rumps do not extend beyond the tail as in Wilson's, and they seem to have a less prominent bar on the wing caused by the secondary coverts. They are significantly larger than Wilson’s, the wing shape is characteristically long, but not strongly angled like Leach’s. Wilson’s look small by comparison, with broad, round-tipped, wings which lack any angle at the wrist. The large bill size, relative to Wilson’s, is usually quite obvious. The flight is a distinctive accipiter (or shearwater)-like flight which is quite different from the swallow-like flight of the Wilson's, which also indulges in a characteristic pattering over the waves, and the erratic, nighthawk-like flight of Leach's, though the observer is cautioned that these Acharacteristic@ flight patterns depend heavily on what an individual is doing, whether it is flying into the wind, and so on. Band-rumped Storm-petrel breeds off the coast of Africa (as well as the Pacific), which makes it interesting that it is apparently most common in early summer.

Available records span the period May 28 to June 24 (2011), but much more field work is necessary to determine when this species is present along the northern Gulf coast.

#### FAMILY *Phaethontidae* TROPICBIRDS

**WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon lepturus*) Rare to accidental summer visitor offshore

A White-tailed Tropicbird was reported in a Fish and Wildlife Service aerial transect study 120 miles west of Grand Isle (29° 9.7' N, 92° 1.2' W) on Aug. 5, 1980 by Wayne Hoffman (pers. comm.), and a sub-adult was seen 80 miles south of South Pass on July 22, 1995 (CD). Though Stanley C. Arthur's claim that White-tailed Tropicbirds are regular offshore in summer was clearly confused, it could have been based on an actual record, and they in fact do breed rather nearby in Bermuda and the Caribbean. Furthermore, there was a record at Dauphin I., Ala. during the spring of 1989. On the other hand, recent records of the next species raise the possibility of misidentification. The only record supported by photographic evidence is of one seen from a sailboat about 150 miles SSE of South Pass on June 21, 2011? [27° 15' N/88° 45' W].....(Guy Norton, fide RDP).

**RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon aethereus*) Casual to Accidental offshore

The first record of the Red-billed Tropicbird for Louisiana waters was obtained on a Mississippi-sponsored pelagic trip on June 9, 1996, led by Dwight Peake, when up to 40 people saw an immature . (DPeake,MM, et al). Slightly less than one year later, an adult was seen 47 SSW of Southwest Pass on May 24, 1997, in about 3000 ft of water. Then on September 13 of the same year, one was seen 50 mi south of S. Pass. In the latter cases, the birds were watched for about 20 minutes and thoroughly photographed. Finally, one was collected on a pelagic trip out of Venice on 29 September 2004 (SWC,DLS, et al). There was an undocumented report from Lake Pontchartrain during Tropical Storm Lee on Sept. 3, 2011.

#### FAMILY *Ciconiidae* STORKS

##### **WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*) Casual post-breeding wanderer

The paucity of records of this species is a little surprising. Post-breeding dispersal takes it into wooded river valleys in East Texas through Arkansas. in late summer, and it is regular at that time of the year in southwest to central Louisiana, e.g., Cameron Parish, the Morganza Spillway, north along I-49 in Rapides Parish, etc., sometimes in large numbers. It may occur in the lower Pearl River drainage in late summer and early fall., but there are no data to substantiate that conjecture, and perhaps Southeast Louisiana represents a hiatus in its post-breeding dispersal. In any case, there are only about 15 records for southeastern Louisiana. G.E. Beyer, in the early part of the century, claimed to have found Wood Storks nesting in St. Tammany Parish, in two colonies of 40 birds each on the Bogue Chitto and Bedico rivers. While these may in fact have simply been post-breeding wanderers, one should read the description by Beyer, et al (1908) before making up his mind. The records are: Jan. 21, 1932, Point-a-la-Hache (HCO--15); Dec. 19, 1932, Main Pass (HCO); July 24, 1978, Labranche (FB); Nov. 21-Dec. 13, 1978, New Orleans (Jim Whelan,NN,et al); Aug. 18, 1980, near Honey Island Swamp (JR); and Oct. 5, 1985, Goose Point (AS,GS--9). Finally, four were seen over the New Orleans lakefront on Nov....., 1989 (AS,GS), and one was seen on Fourchon Rd..... More recently, ten were seen over New Orleans on July 19, 1992 (GS,AS) and there were at least three records in late summer 1993 over New Orleans and Metairie. **There were two New Orleans records in September 2004 (MP?). There is also a report from Port Louis on the north shore of L. Pontchartrain.**

#### FAMILY *Fregatidae* FRIGATEBIRDS

##### **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATE-BIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) Uncommon to locally common summer visitor (non-breeding).

Although this extraordinary bird is not known to breed in Louisiana, it is present from April to November along the coast, sometimes in large numbers. It is not a true pelagic bird, being always found near the coast, albeit not often on the coast proper and never inland except during tropical storms (when they are often seen on Lake Pontchartrain). As Hurricane Ivan approached New Orleans on Sept. 15, 2004, 1000-1600 were seen in the

eastern part of the city (DM,PW), and 1440 were counted moving west along the lakefront in Jefferson Par. (RDP). Historically, the largest concentrations have been in the vicinity of North Island in the Chandeleurs, near the site of the old Brown Pelican colony. The demise of the Brown Pelican and the killing of the black mangroves on which they roosted raises questions about their continued presence in such numbers, but occurrences after tropical storms would seem to allay those fears. Estimates of 3-10,000 near North Island were routine through the 1960's. Since Hurricane Camille in 1969, most visits by Louisiana observers have been from the south, i.e., from Hopedale or Venice, rather than from the north, as was the case when Gulf Islands (or Breton Island) NWR headquarters were in Ocean Springs, Miss. The result is that little current information is available on the size of the North Island "colony." On Aug. 1, 1969, this writer estimated a maximum of 1000 at North Island. It is, however, common to see Frigate-birds numbers in the tens to dozens over Breton and Chandeleur Sounds, and at the nearby marsh edge, during the summer.

Although the breeding of this species at Marquesas Keys, Fla. since 1970 at least raises the possibility of nesting in Louisiana, the report by Stanley C. Arthur (1918) that Colonel Theodore Roosevelt removed an egg belonging to this species from a nest on Grand Gosier Island in 1915 has no independent substantiation.

Expected dates are about April 1 until about November 1. Extreme dates are Mar. 3, 1992 at Grand Isle (JW) and Nov. 21, 1982 at Venice (MM,RDP). There are at least four mid-winter records: Grand Isle, **on** .....; Buras on Dec. 30, 2002 (RDP,GO,EW); Dec. 22, 2010 (....), Dec. 2, 2011 (SWC) at Grand Isle, and Dec. 21, 2011 (JB), also at Grand Isle.

#### FAMILY *Sulidae* BOOBIES AND GANNETS

##### **MASKED BOOBY** (*Sula dactylatra*) Uncommon to rare offshore in summer

This species is the "expected" sulid off the Louisiana coast in summer. Much is yet to be learned about its abundance and temporal distribution, but it is probably regular off the mouth of the Mississippi River, especially near the grasslines or "rips" which mark the interface between blue (very clear, highly saline) and green water. There are at least 20 records for Southeast Louisiana over the last 70 years: July 28, 1926, Grand Gosier I. (ESH--dead); June 4, 1958, 45 miles south of Grand Isle (BMM,MM); July 10, 1970, 38 miles off South Pass (RJN--dead); July 29, 1970, off South Pass (HBH--2); Sept. 3, 1970, off South Pass (Frank Durham, *fide* RDP); Aug. 26, 1971, 27 miles off South Pass (RJN--2 imm.); Oct. 15-16, 1971, 27 miles off South Pass (....); Aug. 18, 1980, 20 miles off South Pass; Aug. 20, 1983, 25 miles SE of South Pass (John Barber, *fide* RDP); July 7, Aug. 6, and Aug. 31, 1985, 62 miles S of Racoon Point (MM). On Oct. 22, 1987 a Masked Booby was brought to the Audubon Zoo Bird Rehabilitation Center, where it died. The most recent records are of one well offshore.....**on** March 11, 1992 (Gary Lester--1a,1i,RM?), an adult on L. Pontchartrain on Aug. 15, 1988 (RDP), after a tropical storm, two on May 27, 1995, 40 miles SSE of South Pass (m.ob.--ph.; 1a,1i), 5-6 40-60 miles south of South Pass on Sep. 16, 1995 (SWC,JS,RDPm.ob--photos); Sep. 13, 1997 50 mi S of Southwest Pass;; Oct. 13,



1998 , about 44 mi S. of South Pass (SWC, et al, coll.); 18 June 2003 (DLD,SWC, et al--1), 67 miles off South Pass, 24 June, 20 mi. off South Pass (2 imm\*); June 6, 2004....(DLD,SWC,et al). A recent record is July 2, 2011 .....(SWC, et al).

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*) Rare offshore in summer

The number of records of Brown Boobies, which total about 15, coupled with the poor coverage given the waters of the continental shelf (and further out) off southeastern Louisiana, suggests that the Brown or "White-bellied" Booby may be fairly regular in summer, especially near the Sargassum grasslines which line the transition zones between green and blue-green or blue-green and blue water. Although six LOS-sponsored pelagic trips through fall of 1998 encountered no Brown Boobies, a recent trip encountered one.....(late winter 1999).

There is one winter record, Jan. 15, 1901 at Red Pass (fide HCO). The Ahistorical@ summer records are: Apr. 1, 1926, Grand Isle (ESH); Apr. 1929, Grand Isle (ESH); Apr. 1929, Grand Isle (ESH\*). The 10 or so subsequent records are Sep. 8, 1951, 30 miles east of Pass a Loutre (HRB); Oct. 15-16, 1968, 30 miles off South Pass (...); July 18, 1973, Elmer's I. (RJN); May 29-June 8, 1985, 20 miles SE of Southwest Pass (MM). On Aug. 7, 1980, a Brown Booby was seen in an aerial transect study 130 miles WSW of Grand Isle (28 36' N, 92 14' W--Wayne Hoffmann). The most recent records are Mar. 11, 1992 at 28°59'22"N, 90°55'10"W (RM), a juv. Oct. 13, 1998, 24 mi S of South Pass (SWC, et al--coll.), Oct. 9, 1999 45 mi SSE of Grand Isle (KBardon—ph), and Mar. 16, 2000 in the same location (KB)—ph).

**Bosler.....2008**

**RED-FOOTED BOOBY** (*Sula sula*) Uncommon to common in winter offshore.

For nearly 70 years there was only a single accepted record of this species for Louisiana, of one collected at the mouth of Bayou Scofield on Nov. 1, 1940 (fide GHL; AOU Checklist). However, there are at least six additional sightings for the northern gulf, four from Texas, and one each from Alabama and Florida. Recently a bird thought to be of this species was seen on Baptiste Collette Bayou on **May...., 1995 (BR--ph)**, and in the spring of 1998, a booby identified as Red-footed was seen near an oil platform (Ewing Bank 826) during migration studies (Rick Knight, .....). **On April ...., 2008 one was collected on Rutherford Beach, Cameron Parish (SWC,DLD).**

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*) Uncommon to common in winter offshore; occasional in summer

Only in the past 30 years has it become clear that Gannets regularly winter off Louisiana, and in numbers, being most conspicuous in February and March. Whether this reflects a real change in distribution or abundance, or simply the increased patience in looking offshore that results from success, is anyone's guess. In any event, N. Gannets have

become sufficiently common in March that the careful observer might see dozens off the beach from Grand Isle and especially Fourchon Beach. The birds are usually a half-mile or more out to sea, although they may come nearer shore if the water is relatively clear.

Records span the period Sept. 1 (2002; see below) to May 5 (2004; see below), with a least two "summer records." The highest counts are 300 off Grand Isle on 15 (16?) April 2005 (SWC,DLD), 270 off Fourchon Beach on Feb. 26, 1989 (DM,LO'M,RDP), 235 there on Feb. 4, 1990 (RDP,NN,MM), 200-300 off Fourchon Beach on March 7, 2000 (PW), and 256 counted on.....2002 (RDP). Other high counts include 54 between Chandeleur Is., La. and Ship I., Miss. on Mar. 15, 1960 (JMV, JRW), and 50 off Fourchon Beach on Feb. 28, 1982 (DH,KH). A pelagic trip on April 17, 1999 off Fourchon Pass yielded about 20 Gannets between 10 and 33 miles from shore (DLD, m.ob.). Most Gannet records have been since 1978. A bird found dead on Apr. 26, 1970 ....had been banded on Sep. 7, 1968 at Balochrois, Canada. The first "summer" record is of a bird found dead on the beach at Grand Isle on July 16, 1995 (MP,GP). DPM? , but it should be noted that Gannets are not infrequently seen off the coast of the Florida panhandle in summer (fide DPM). On **July 9....** an imm. Gannet was collected just off the mouth of South Pass (SWC,DLD, et al). The only August record is of a first year bird found dead on Fourchon Beach on Sept. 1, 2002 (MM,RDP,PW), freshly dead.

Expected dates, somewhat uncertain, are December 1 into at least early May (May 5, 2004BSWC,DLD, et al).

#### FAMILY *Phalacrocoracidae* CORMORANTS

##### **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) Common in Winter.

The Double-crested Cormorant is a characteristic bird of coastal and near-coastal parts of the checklist area. It is common on Lake Pontchartrain, and numbers in the low hundreds are typical in the Fourchon-Grand Isle area in winter. Although Lowery (1974) reported no recent nesting in Louisiana, the Louisiana Breeding Bird Atlas program found **nesting..... ,and** local summer records are of increasing frequency. Historically, summer records include **August 24, 1970**, June 23, 1983 in Metairie (SP), June 22, 1985 on Fourchon Road (AS,GS,JS), summer 1985 at the western edge of the lake (MW,RJS), during the summer of 1988, and two records in the summer of 1992: July 6 in Jefferson Parish (GO) and July 31 in St. Charles Parish (RJS). (**Aug. 30, 1998 RDP,DPM**). **At least one pair of this species nested in Audubon Park in New Orleans in the summer of 2007 (fide RDP).**

Double-crested Cormorant numbers on New Orleans Christmas Counts have increased dramatically since the 1960s. While there were a total of 16 recorded on the 11

counts between 1960 and 1974, typical numbers in the mid-1980's were **200 or** more per count. Numbers continue to increase as the species recovers from the effects of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides which decimated the population in the 1950s and 60s. The largest concentration recorded appears to be approximately 600 at Grand Isle on March 3, 1985 (NN,MM,RDP). Increasing numbers and breeding in northern Louisiana and Mississippi has led to an increase in summer or very early fall migration records.

The Double-crested Cormorant begins to arrive in early September, with the bulk of wintering birds arriving in early October, and departs by mid-April (April 15). Extreme dates are made uncertain by the increase in *Asummer* records, but include September 3, 1985 at Lafitte National Park (DM) and May 24, 1981, in New Orleans (JR).

### **NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phacrocorax olivaceous*) Casual Vagrant

This cormorant, formerly *AOlivaceous Cormorant*, while common in Southwest Louisiana, has been recorded in Southeastern Louisiana on only six occasions: March 27 and April 14, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG), Aug. 9, 1986, (DM,RDP), Aug. 20, 1995 (RDP,GG), March 28, 1997 (MM,PW), the last three records being from Fourchon Rd. (*Lafourche*), and Sept. 11, 2004 (DPM) at New Orleans. [**PWBJan 2006; also GI...**] Oct. 14, 2012 at Elmer's Island (PW,DM,RDP—photos). According to Portnoy (1976), *Olivaceous Cormorants* were reported during the breeding season at Delta NWR during the 1960's; it is not known whether the identifications were correct. Any cormorant suspected to be of this species should be identified with great caution, even though it is abundant in Southwestern Louisiana, and has been expanding eastward into the Lafayette/Atchafalaya area.

The best field-mark is the dirty yellow gular pouch which has a sharply angular rather than rounded rear margin, but the dark, long-tailed look in flight is quite distinctive. The gular pouch is edged with white in breeding condition, but observers should be cautioned that Double-crested Cormorants often show a very thin fringe of white edging the gular pouch, even in winter. The supraloral area is yellow in Double-crested Cormorant and dark in this species. While an occasional Double-crested Cormorant can be found in summer near the coast, and perhaps on Lake Pontchartrain, it may be as likely that summering cormorants would be of this species....[Aud. bird rehab?]

### FAMILY *Anhingidae* DARATERS

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) Regular in breeding season, now regular in winter.

A denizen of the true swamp, the Anhinga is most often found north of U.S. 90 during the breeding season, particularly in cypress swamps on the east or west sides of Lake Pontchartrain, i.e., the Bonnet Carre Spillway, Manchac-Pontchatoula, and the Pearl River bottoms. It has, however, bred in the heronry—now abandoned-- in New Orleans' Audubon Park (fide RDP). During migration in late March and April, and in September and October, it may be seen anywhere, soaring singly, or in small numbers. While this species was once

quite rare in winter, winter records have become routine, so that it is now expected on a New Orleans Christmas Count; typical spots will be wet woods along canals, near Recovery I landfill, etc. Large numbers now winter in the Venice area. Given this fact, extreme dates of occurrence are somewhat arbitrary.

[Expected dates of occurrence are April 1 to November 1. Extreme dates are March 11, 1991 near des Allemandes (NN,MM,RDP) and Nov. 23, 1984 at New Orleans (DM).]

#### FAMILY *Pelicanidae* PELICANS

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchus*)** Common in Winter, non-breeders present in summer.

The White Pelican is a common, often abundant winter resident, mostly near the coast. It regularly lingers well into, or even through, the summer in near-coastal regions (near the mouth of the river, Fourchon Road) and there are records for every month. Although there has never been any suggestion of nesting in Louisiana, the fact that they do (have) bred on the Texas coast is worth keeping in the back of one's mind. The largest "summer" concentrations have been 1000 on La. 3090 ("Fourchon Road") on June 20, 1982 (RDP,DM,MM), at least 1500 at the same spot on June 17, 1989 (RDP,DM), and 1000 there on July 16, 1989 (GC,MM,NN,RDP).

Expected dates of occurrence: September 15 to April 15

**BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)** Local resident, increasing in numbers

The Brown Pelican is the state bird of Louisiana. It is again conspicuous along the coast of Se. Louisiana, especially in the vicinity of Grand Isle, where several hundred might be seen in a day. At New Orleans it will generally be encountered in winter anywhere on the south shore of the lake, especially at Seabrook Bridge, but also on the river. Over 30,000 birds now nest in Louisiana, which represents a tremendous change from the 1970s, when there were NO Brown Pelicans in Louisiana! Brown Pelicans now nest on Queen Bess Island in Barataria Bay, and the Chandeleur Islands, and elsewhere. .

The Brown Pelican declined precipitously during the late 1950's, and while that decline did not go unnoticed, it was mistakenly blamed on a variety of factors such as the occurrence of Hurricane Audrey, which devastated southwestern Louisiana in 1957. The last known nesting was on the Chandeleurs in 1961, and the last records of native birds were in the summer of 1967: June 28 on the Chandeleurs (SAG, RDP, et al) and June 30 on Lake Pontchartrain (Kenneth Hughes, fide JLD). The contemporaneous decline of Brown Pelicans on the California coast, and the documentation of the cause as being persistent chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides, made it immediately clear that a similar fate had befallen the Louisiana Brown Pelicans; this was pointed out by **Norman and Purrington in the LOS Newsletter .....**

In the 70s, Brown Pelicans were imported from Florida in an attempt to reestablish a

breeding population. After an initial failure, the reestablishment proved successful, and by 1973 the species had returned to the Chandeleurs, as indicated by records from Grand Gosier Island on June 8, 1973 and just to the north, in the Chandeleur Chain June 21-23, 1973. With breeding populations as high as 30-40,000 pairs in the late 90s to 2000, Brown Pelicans have returned to L. Pontchartrain since the late winter of 1988, and are now almost commonplace along the lakeshore after the breeding season.

Historically, as many as 75-80,000 individuals bred along the Louisiana coast. Important concentrations were on islands in Timbalier Bay and on the mud lumps at the mouth of Pass-a-Loutre, etc. An important colony was on North Island, near the north end of the Chandeleurs. They currently nest on the Chandeleurs, on Queen Bess I. in Barataria Bay, and elsewhere.

The failure of a late winter nesting on Queen Bess Island in 1990-91 was possibly due to exposure to heavy January rains. At least 60 dead nestlings were found on Feb. 2 and only two live fledglings (CF,BA,NN,RDP). Other winter kills, mostly of first year birds, were noted in 1996 and 1997. Estimates of the total Louisiana population reached 35,000 in 1997!

#### FAMILY *Ardeidae* HERONS AND BITTERNs

An invaluable source of information on coastal nesting of all heron species is Portnoy (1977).

#### **AMERICAN BITTERN** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) Uncommon to rare winter resident

Although American Bittern can be expected throughout the coastal marsh, its numbers have so declined markedly since the 1960s, that it can be considered almost rare. G.E. Beyer claimed that this species bred at Madisonville in 1891, but there has been no other hint of breeding in southeast Louisiana, nor any recent nesting records for Louisiana. Interestingly, there have been more records of Am. Bittern in the late 90s, than in the earlier decade or so; whether this represents a recovery or just more searching is hard to tell.

The expected dates of wintering are October 10 to April 15; the extreme dates of occurrence are Sept. 12, 2002 (DM) at Lafitte NP [Sept. 19, 1957 on Fourchon Rd. (SAG?) (PW,CS?)] and Apr. 25, 1976 at Venice (RH,MM,NN)

#### **LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) Uncommon summer resident

Least Bitterns are most numerous in fresh to brackish or intermediate marshes and seem to prefer cattail, bullrush, or roseau cane, although their numbers have also declined in the past two decades. Territories are on the order of 2 acres in extent. Expected dates of summering are April 15 to September 15, and extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 11, 1870 at the Rigolets (HWH) and Nov. 4, 1961 at Triumph (SAG). There are however at least four winter records: Dec. 20, 1958, New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 17, 1971, Venice (RJR, DN); Dec. 28, 1972, Venice (RDP, et al); Feb. 18, 1973, Venice (RDP, RJR); Dec. 29, 1991 at Venice (.....-2).....

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) Common resident

While the Great Blue Heron may be found wherever there is marsh or on the shore of lakes and even the gulf, it is primarily a fresh marsh and swamp nesting species, its colonies typically measuring 50-200 pairs. New Orleans Christmas Count data indicate an increase in numbers since the early 1970's. There are three records of the white morph, the "Great White Heron", which one day may again be considered a separate species: one at New Orleans' Lakefront Airport Oct. 31-Nov. 15, 1981 (DM, m.ob.), photographed by the author, but at considerable distance; Mar. 21, 1982 at Delta NWR (JS); and Feb. 25-...., 1987 at Grand Isle (AS,GS, Kenn Kaufman), photographed by Mac Myers and the author. A well-known and easily viewed nesting colony of the Great Blue Heron is at the Bald Eagle nest site near White Kitchen, St. Tammany Parish.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Casmerodius albus*) Common to abundant resident in coastal marsh and other wetland types.

The Great Egret nests in all wetland habitat types, including the barrier islands. Its nests are usually on the highest point of the woody vegetation or in the tree canopy. The largest breeding concentration found by Portnoy (1977) was a colony of nearly 4000 adults.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) Common to abundant resident

The Snowy Egret is one of the most characteristic birds of the coastal marsh. It nests abundantly in marsh and swamp habitat. In 1976 one colony on Delta NWR in *Phragmites* contained 12,000 adults. Numbers on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts have increased since the early 1970's. At least 1000 were seen on Fourchon Rd., Lafourche Par., on June 17, 1984, and nearly twice that number there on June 17?, 1989.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) Common to sometimes abundant resident

The Little Blue Heron nests most commonly in swamps and fresh-water marshes, often with Snowy Egrets. According to Lowery (1974), many leave Louisiana to winter in Central America. Since 1970, numbers on the New Orleans CBC have ranged from 7 in 1974, to 3247 in 1985, owing in part to their gregariousness. Usually one will see a few to several on a trip to the coast.

**TRI-COLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) Common resident

The preferred habitat of this species, which is better (more properly?) known locally by its former name, Louisiana Heron, is salt marsh, but it breeds in fresh and brackish areas as well. In 1976 two colonies in Barataria Bay totalled 33,000 adults (Portnoy, 1977). Typically the Louisiana Heron occupies the lowest of the available nesting sites. An increase in numbers since the early 1970's is indicated by the New Orleans CBC data.

**REDDISH EGRET** (*Egretta rufescens*) Uncommon resident

The Reddish Egret nests on the islands adjacent to the Mississippi delta, and especially in the Chandeleur chain (see Portnoy, 1977). It formerly nested in Black Mangrove thickets on Freemason Island, with Louisiana Herons, but several freezes since 1962 have caused Black Mangrove to retreat to about 29° latitude at its northernmost. In the summer of 1976, the largest colony found by Portnoy was on Lonesome I., where 210 breeding adults were counted. In recent years this island has been shrinking drastically because of the subsidence of the delta, and the rich heron colony there may soon be a thing of the past. At least a few Reddish Egrets breed in the heronry near the mouth of Belle Pass in Lafourche Par.

Although white-phase individuals are relatively rare in Louisiana, there are two dozen or more records for southeast Louisiana, and perhaps one or two are recorded annually, usually near Grand Isle (perhaps 1:25?). Of 41 adults seen on the Chandeleurs June 21-23, 1973 (RJN,RBH,AWP,HDP), 5 were white-phase. Away from their small nesting colonies, Reddish Egrets are most frequently seen in the Fourchon-Grand Isle area, and most commonly in fall. Outside the nesting areas, the largest number recorded is 15 in Lafourche Par. on Aug. 22, 1977.

There are over a dozen New Orleans records of this primarily coastal species, all or almost all associated with tropical storms. These include Sept. 4-Oct. 2, 1977 (RDP,MM), a product of tropical storms "Anita" and "Babe," fall 1981 in Metairie (FB--photographed), and Aug. 6-15, 1982 in New Orleans (DM,MM,RDP). While an Aug. 16, 1985 record was associated with Hurricane Danny, records on Sept. 5-7, 1986 on Highway 11 and Feb. 8, 1987 at Lafitte NP were unrelated to any storm activity. The latter record is the only non-coastal record after October. One in New Orleans on Aug. 26, 1992 (DM,PY) was a direct result of Hurricane Andrew, one there on Sep. 2, 1998 (DPM,PY) was a product of Hurricane Earl, and another, on Sep. 9?, 1998 at Irish Bayou (RDP) followed Tropical Storms Francis and Hermine. One on Sep. 29 (PY,DPM,BR) New Orleans--Georges. One seen in New Orleans on Sept. 11, 2004 (DM) was four days in advance of Hurricane Ivan. One was seen on Bayou Sauvage refuge on Sept. 14, 2008 (PW,DM,RDP) in the wake of Hurricane Ike (and Gustav).

On Sept. 30, 1978, a color-banded individual was observed at Grand Isle (MB) that had been banded during the summer of 1977 at Rockport, Texas.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) Common to abundant resident

Cattle Egrets first appeared in Louisiana in the fall and winter of 1955-56. They nest mainly in fresh water swamps and marshes, often in huge colonies, but will nest on marshy islands at the edge of the delta as well (e.g., Lonsome I.).

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides striatus*) Uncommon to common summer resident; rare, but regular in winter near the coast.

Small numbers of Green Herons (briefly Green-backed) are recorded in winter, mostly in the vicinity of Venice. Although they are primarily solitary nesters, colonies are

not extraordinary, e.g., 25+ nests in the oaks at Ft. Jackson, May 17, 1983 (Joe Neal). Expected dates are March 25 to October 25; extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 2, 1956 at Venice (JPG) [or Feb. 27, 2000 in the Venice area (MM,RDP,PW--3)] and Nov. 9, 1958 at New Orleans (SAG). Keep in mind, however, that winter records are rather common, with one to a few occurring on every Venice CBC, for example.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) Uncommon to common resident, mostly near the coast.

This species favors brackish or salt water and is less common in the immediate vicinity of New Orleans than in or near the coastal marsh. It nests commonly on the Chandeleurs, including Curlew and Breton Islands, has nested on marshy islands such as Lonesome I., and in large heronries with White Ibis and various herons on Delta NWR. It is also common in Barataria Bay, where colonies may contain up to 4000 adults.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax violacea*) Common summer resident, rare winter resident locally.

Although less frequent in the coastal marsh and on offshore islands than the previous species, the Yellow-crowned Night Heron is more widely distributed and more likely to be seen near inhabited areas and in bottomland hardwoods or cypress-tupelo swamp. Frequently its calls are heard overhead at night during migration. Although there over two dozen winter records, and while the Yellow-crowned Night Heron seems to be more regular in winter than previously, it should nonetheless be considered unexpected. Immatures, especially, should be identified with care. Note the brighter red eye color, if possible, and especially the rather grayish body plumage of this species, compared to the rather brown, buffy coloration of the young Black-crowned Night Heron. Night herons in flight are easy to distinguish, the Yellow-crowned having longer legs so that the toes extend well past the tail.

Expected dates are March 10 to October 10; extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 5, 2000[2004?] in New Orleans (GO&JB) and Nov. 26, 1978 at Reserve (MW).

#### FAMILY *Threskiornithidae* IBISES AND SPOONBILLS

**WHITE IBIS** (*Eudocimus albus*) Common to abundant resident

The White Ibis is common in or near the marshes and swamps of southeastern Louisiana. While it may be found anywhere, from hardwood bottoms to the coast (and even the barrier islands), it is most frequently seen along the west side of Lake Pontchartrain, from near the Bonnet Carre Spillway to Manchac, to Pontchatoula. The largest known White Ibis colony in Louisiana, near the north shore of Lake Manchac, contained 60,000 breeding adults in 1976 (Portnoy, 1977).

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) Uncommon resident near the coast

Southeast Louisiana is the only place where the two species of *plegadis* breed, so that



it is here that the identification is most immediate. Because of the similarity of the two species, it is difficult to be sure about relative abundance. Generally, it seems to be true that the Glossy Ibis is the more common of the two in Plaquemines Parish, in the vicinity of Venice, and that, as is true of the distribution on the large scale, the balance begins to shift to the north and west. Neither species is frequently seen near the coast in the vicinity of Grand Isle, although they breed together on islands in Barataria Bay. *Plegadis ibis* are often seen west of the city along the west side of Lake Pontchartrain and along U.S. 90. In the immediate vicinity of New Orleans, they are most likely seen along U.S. 11 in the eastern part of the city.

While identification of immatures should not generally be attempted, adults are not especially difficult to identify if seen well. The White-faced Ibis shows a white fringe of feathers around the "face", but only in breeding season. Nonetheless, the red eye and reddish facial skin are diagnostic of the White-faced Ibis, in contrast to the bluish-gray facial skin of the Glossy Ibis, and especially the bluish to almost gray-white lores. The eye is brown.

*Plegadis* colonies vary in size from less than 100 to more than 5000 breeding pairs.

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) Uncommon to common resident in marshy habitat

On the whole, the White-faced Ibis is the most likely of the two species to be encountered in southeast Louisiana, but not by a large margin. To the east, the opposite is true, and toward southwest Louisiana, the Glossy Ibis almost disappears altogether. A 1974 die-off of this species in Texas was attributed to high levels of DDE, dieldrin, and aldrin (all chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** (*Ajaia ajaia*) Formerly uncommon to rare post-breeding wanderer in summer and fall, now breeding and quite regular along the coast.

Although Southeastern Louisiana is much to the east of the main populations of this species, spoonbills are now regularly encountered near the coast, especially in the Fourchon-Grand Isle area, but also in the Mississippi River delta, especially near the mouth of the river.

They have been breeding at the lower end of Bayou Lafourse near the mouth of Belle Pass, beginning at least as early as April 1999, when a few score were found nesting with several species of herons and White Ibis. They also may nest, as they have in the past, on Isle Derniere (May 26, 1978, JMV) or neighboring islands in Terrebonne Parish. They evidently also nest in lower Plaquemines Parish, near Venice, where they are now regular. Nestlings were brought to New Orleans' Audubon Zoo from Terrebonne Bay in 1980 and 1982. Roseate Spoonbills are seen more frequently in and near Bayou Sauvage NWR as well. A Roseate Spoonbill was captured on the gulf 40 miles south of Grand Isle on Apr. 7, 1951 (J.N. Gowanloch, La. Conserv. **3**, 4, 24 (1951)).

There were, at most, two records for SE. Louisiana prior to 1959. Beginning with a record in September 1981 (Sept. 6, Grand Isle (RDP,NN,JR,SN)) sightings in coastal Southeast Louisiana have become almost routine, usually from Fourchon Rd., with records in every year except 1982. Also of historical interest are the records of 6 at Venice on Sep.

26, 1987 (NN,RDP), and another there on Oct. 3, 1993 (RDP); summer records have significantly increased in the Venice area (Tiger Pass) in recent years. There are now over 15 records for the immediate vicinity of New Orleans, mostly post-breeding wanderers: Aug. 10, 1968 (WW,LW,JK) and July 3-.**August 13, 1989 (...)** both on US 11 in New Orleans East, one at Slidell, .... 1989, July 5, 1992, Bayou Sauvage NWR (AS,GS--7) one on the 1992 New Orleans CBC, Dec. 26, 1992 (GS,RSe), etc. Recently there have been New Orleans records associated with Hurricanes/Tropical Storms Francis, Georges, and Isidore, the latter storm producing an Audubon Park record. Following Hurricane Lili, at least five were seen in City Park, on Oct. 3, 2002. DPM (11/04). ). Maximum number is 143, counted in a mitigation census near Port Fourchon on July 20, 2011 (SWC,DLD).

#### ORDER *Phoenicopteriformes*

##### FAMILY *Phoenicopteridae* FLAMINGOS

#### **AMERICAN FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus ruber*) ] HYPOTHETICAL

The initial record of this species is of one found dead in St. Bernard Par. on Jan. 9, 1962 (DWG,LO). Although the possibility that the bird was an escape certainly cannot be ruled out, the observers judged that it showed no signs of having been in captivity (*Aud. Field Notes* **16**, 337 (1962)). More recently, two were seen at Pass-a-Loutre in Plaquemines Par. On Oct. 24, 2011 by Trebor Victoriano. Again, there was no reason to suspect that they were escapes, but caution would seem to dictate that the species still be considered hypothetical because of uncertainty or origin. There are multiple records of one bird from Cameron Parish which seems to have wandered to and from coastal Texas

##### FAMILY *Cathartidae* NEW WORLD VULTURES

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) Uncommon to common resident and breeding bird.

While the Black Vulture is not uncommon south of New Orleans and north of Lake Pontchartrain, it is not especially common elsewhere and seems rarely to be found over the coastal marsh. Brown and Amadon (1968) remark that the Black Vulture is probably the most common of all western hemisphere birds of prey, largely because of large Mexican populations. Recent biochemical taxonomic research places the vultures in the stork family.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) Common resident and breeding bird.

The number of Turkey Vultures recorded on New Orleans Christmas Counts has risen

since the early 1970's, a fact which may simply reflect changing land use patterns. Turkey Vultures nest on the ground in brushy tangles and briar patches, or in hollow logs or stumps. They commonly sleep in roosts of significant size.

FAMILY *Pandionidae* OSPREY

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) Regular resident, perhaps more common in migration, but breeding in small numbers near the coast

Formerly mostly seen only in migration, this beautiful hawk can be found near the coast or shores of Lake Pontchartrain in winter, but is most common at that season in the vicinity of Venice. Winter records from the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain and near the south shore of the lake, formerly virtually unknown, have become much more frequent. Ospreys have been breeding in the Venice area (and perhaps elsewhere) since at least 1974, beginning with a nest that was used for at least seven years, noted first on March 30, 1974 (MM,m.ob.), plus two currently active nests below Venice. Donald Bradburn reports that he observed nesting near Lacombe in the 1930's, up through 1942. Among other early records suggestive of breeding, there are June 23, 1974 in St. Bernard Parish (RJN, et al), and on the Mississippi River below Venice on Aug. 9, 1985 (DM,RDP--2). As with other birds at the top of the aquatic food-chain, Ospreys have greatly benefited from the removal of chlorinated hydrocarbons (DDT, dieldrin, endrin) from the environment.

Despite the fact that Ospreys can be found throughout the winter along the coast, breeding numbers are still relatively small, with numbers building up in September, and decreasing markedly by May. Early winter records from the New Orleans area include Dec. 26, 1983 (FB,CK) at New Orleans, one on US 11, Feb. 4, 1984 (DM,NN), etc.

FAMILY *Accipitridae* HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES, HARRIERS

**AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** (*Elanoides forficatus*) Uncommon in summer

The Swallow-tailed Kite is one of the best-loved birds of Southeastern Louisiana; one of the high points of spring is the sight of the first migrating Swallow-tailed Kites in mid March. They breed in the Pearl River basin, and north and west of Lake Pontchartrain, and are often seen near pine upland edges of the hardwood bottoms. They can be found in Honey Island Swamp from April through at least late August, but are not often seen anywhere in fall migration. George Beyer wrote, in 1879, that "During the early part of September, it may be seen on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne, etc., in flocks of fifteen or twenty individuals."

In the absence of specific knowledge of a nest location, some of the best places to see a Swallow-tailed Kite are in the vicinity of old US 11 in the Honey Island Wildlife Management area, especially on the dirt roads which go south from it, and the stretch of

Interstate 59 between the Pearl River and the Mississippi line, which is much more open. The call is a short, sharp kleet!, kleet-kleet! (most often), or kleet-kleet-kleet! (RDP).

For over a decade, Jennifer Coulson has been studying Swallow-tailed Kite nests in the Pearl River basin and west to at least Mandeville,, banding juveniles and attaching radio transmitters to some individuals which have been tracked to South America. In the summer of 1999, Coulson counted over 150 individuals in an aerial survey of both the Louisiana and Mississippi sides of the Pearl River bottoms, and 149 were counted in 2000. In the summer of 2002, Coulson=s aerial surveys yielded 216 individuals, and 29 of 33 nests, mostly in the Pearl River bottoms, fledged at least one young.

Expected dates are March 1 (Feb. 20?) to about September 1, and though a few are seen before March 1, not many are seen before mid-March. Feb. 27, 1993 in Plaquemines Parish (JS) and Feb. 28, 1959 at Grand Isle (ART,EDL,MEC). A bird seen on February 15, 2003 was (MW) was just beyond the western edge of the checklist area. Latest ever is Aug. 31, 1972 at Pontchatoula (AWP,Ted Joanen), except that a radio tagged bird was still present in .....as late as 2002. ..[late? Sept. 2004 JC?] Apparent migrants have been seen as late as the end of May in lower Plaquemines Parish.

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) Rare vagrant or winter visitor

It is difficult to know exactly what the status of this kite (now White-tailed Kite again, after briefly being lumped with Black-shouldered Kite) is in Southeastern Louisiana; what is written today may be proved wrong tomorrow. Before 1983 there were but two records for this region, nearly a century apart: Oct. 11, 1890 at Kenner (GEB) and Nov. 27, 1977 near Raceland (NN,RDP). Up to that time, there was only one other record for Louisiana, which was of a nesting in north Louisiana. Then, in the fall and winter of 1982-83, two pairs wintered in Southwest Mississippi near US 90 and the Louisiana border, and apparently two separate pairs nested in St. Tammany Parish the following summer, including one north of La 36 near the St. Tammany townsite, discovered on June 5 (RDP). This pair apparently nested twice and fledged young in late August (JH,JFH,HP), with an adult seen as late as Sep. 5 (JH). Records during December 1983 and January 1984 near Abita Springs may have been of one or more of these birds. There was a sighting at White Kitchen in February 1985 (Krista Morgan) and there have been one, possibly two sightings at the "Turf Farm" south of La 36 between the intersection of La 1088 and Abita Springs. The large open fields north of the lake resulting from clear cutting offer excellent habitat for these birds.

More recently, single birds were seen near Alliance and near Myrtle Grove during the late fall of 1988 (Nov. 6, NN,RDP) and the spring of 1989, and then again in September and October (three occasions, Sep. 17-Oct. 7 NN,RDP,m.ob.), 5 -1/4 miles south of Lake Hermitage Road. This drained area, almost prairie-like, is again excellent habitat for Black-shouldered Kites; they may very well have nested there, since as many as four were seen in September 1989. There were additional records in the fall of 1993: Nov. 21 at Alliance (NN,RDP,GG) and Nov. 26 at Myrtle Grove (NN,DM,PY.--2). More recently, there was a

record from near Bohemia, on the east bank of the river, Jan. 16, 1999 (GO), and two records in the fall of 2000, both on Nov. 26: Crescent Acres dump (JC,TC) and below Myrtle Grove (DM,MM,RDP). The most recent New Orleans record is from the **fall of 2008**: ....at the Recovery I landfill (PW, et al), found again in December? 2009 (RDP). Another was on the Venice CBC on Dec. 29, 2009 (PW, et al).

In the past five years or so, records have again become scarce to nearly absent and there is no recent evidence for presence of kites near Alliance or Myrtle Grove. There also have been no recent records from the Florida parishes, but in the last 15 years, this species has become regular in Southwest Louisiana, especially from Lake Arthur west to Holly Beach, and nesting is documented there.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) Common summer resident.

The Mississippi Kite is a conspicuous summer resident of sizeable deciduous woodlands in Southeast Louisiana. It still nests within the city limits of New Orleans, especially on the west bank of the river and in the eastern part of the city. Good places to look for it are on the Mississippi River batture above New Orleans, along I10 in New Orleans East, near Paris Road, in the Bonnet Carre Spillway, and so on. There is some indication that numbers are declining locally, but it is difficult to sort out the effects of a true decline from the massive changes in habitat near the city, which makes them hard to find in areas where they were once common. In fall, Mississippi Kite migration becomes conspicuous after about August 1. The call is a drawn out, very thin whistled note, usually consisting of two parts, a sort of Awheet-sweeeee@ [or seet-wheee!]. The only likely confusion is with Broad-winged Hawk, which, however, is thinner still, and ordinarily consists of a single note.

Expected dates are April 5 to September 1, although an occasional individual will be seen well into September. Extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 4, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG) [Apr. 1, 2001 Metairie (R. Creef)][late March 2004, PW,DM] and Oct. 9, 1989 at Grand Isle (AS,GS).

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Rare breeding bird (September-March) and rare to casual winter visitor.

There are more than a dozen active Bald Eagle nests in Southeast Louisiana, representing a remarkable recovery from the days when pesticides had severely threated the species= survival. One of the best known nest and one of the most accessible to viewing is at White Kitchen, St. Tammany Par., just east of the intersection of US 90 and 190, on land now owned by the Nature Conservancy. Other nests are on Lake Salvador, near Jesuit Bend, north of Paradis, below Lafitte, and in the Good Hope oil field. Birds nesting near Paradis are sometimes seen flying over US 90 Des Allemandes or Paradis. At least 5 were recorded on the Dec. 27, 2003 New Orleans CBC.

Nesting birds arrive in late September and depart by about the first of April, as soon as young are fledged. Wintering individuals may be seen occasionally, almost anywhere, but

especially in the Bonnet Carre Spillway area. There are at least 150? pairs currently nesting in Louisiana. Typically, the birds nest in the transition zone between cypress swamp and fresh marsh (fide Rich Martin).

Some typical arrival dates are Sept. 16, 1973 in the Pearl River bottoms, Sept. 16, 1976 at Lafitte (FB), Oct. 2, 1977 at White Kitchen (PS), and Sept. 22, 1989 at Paradis. The latest record is May 13, 1984 near des Allemandes (RDP,DM). One of the few summer records for the area is of one in the **summer of 1991** at Bayou Sauvage NWR.

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus cyaneus*) Common winter visitor to the coastal marsh.

The Northern Harrier ("Marsh Hawk") is a familiar sight coursing low over marshes and fields in winter, easily identified by its somewhat "rocking" flight on dihedral wings, and white base of the tail. It should be noted that the much rarer Black-shouldered Kite often can be mistaken for a Marsh Hawk, although its greater inclination to hover often will give it away. New Orleans Christmas Count data indicate a decline in the mid-1960's, a slight recovery around 1970 followed by further decline into the early to mid 1970's, and finally a peak in the late 1970's.

Expected dates are October 10 to April 5; extreme dates of occurrence are Sept. 5, 1993 at Grand Isle (RDP) [previously Sept. 20, 1987 at Grand Isle (MM,AS,GS)] and Apr. 15, 1961 at Venice (SAG).

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) Uncommon winter resident.

This small woodland hawk used to be the commoner of the two regular accipiters in Southeast Louisiana. Alas, that is no longer the case. It is now clearly outnumbered in most winters by Cooper's Hawk. It is occasionally seen in numbers during fall migration, following a cold front around the end of September. On such occasions, perhaps dozens might be counted, although vastly greater numbers are sometimes noted in coastal Southwest Louisiana. The "sharpie" can usually be recognized by its combination of a long tail with sharp or square "corners" and a head which projects only modestly beyond the wing. The male is only about the size of a blue jay, but the female is considerably larger, making confusion with male Cooper's Hawk possible. In the last decade Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers in Southeast Louisiana have declined markedly.

Expected dates of wintering are October 5 to April 15; extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 21, 1960 in Lafourche Par. (RDP,MM,NN,SP) and May 17, 1976 (NN). Out of season reports include: Aug. 5, 1890 at Mandeville (GEB) and July 14, 1962 at Reserve (RJS). **Summer?**

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) uncommon winter visitor, erratic in breeding season, but apparently becoming more common.

As breeding populations in the northern and eastern United States declined, Cooper's Hawk became correspondingly scarce in this area in winter, to the point that every record was

noteworthy. In recent years, however, beginning in the 1980s, there has been a dramatic resurgence in numbers, so that Cooper's Hawk is now much the commoner of the two species. Summer records are now common and nesting is regular in the area, including in residential areas.

Because of the similarity in size of male Cooper's and female Sharp-shinned Hawks, this species should be identified with care. Cooper's Hawk has a head which projects well beyond the wing and its long tail is conspicuously rounded (although the tail on a Sharp-shinned Hawk can look rounded if it is spread). Cooper's Hawks have a wider white tip to the tail, straighter wings, and the adults have a strongly capped look (Zimmer, 2000). A female is more likely to be confused with a Broad-winged Hawk than a sharpy.

Cooper's Hawk breeds but increasingly, in the area, usually in fairly deep woods, though it is now nesting in urban neighborhoods and in City Park (PY,TC,JC, et al). Recently, a pair nested and raised 3 young in Fleur de Lis Park, New Orleans, during June 2000 (fide JS). It is not known whether breeding Cooper's Hawks are resident, or winter elsewhere, but Cooper's Hawks numbers increase markedly as northern birds migrate south beginning in October.

George Beyer claimed to have shot a female on Aug. 2, 1890 and a male on Aug. 11 of the same year, on "Pine Island," near Madisonville. Strong scepticism about that record which prevailed in the 1970s was likely unjustified. [A recent August record is Aug. 8, 1988 at Grand Isle (RDP,MM?). etc.]

**NORTHERN GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter gentilis*) Accidental in winter.

There is one record of this magnificent raptor from the edge of the checklist area. It is of a bird shot at Amite on November 30, 1972. The bird had been banded near Duluth, Minn. on Aug. 30 of the same year.

**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** (*Buteo lineatus*) Common resident.

The Red-shouldered Hawk is the standard breeding buteo of deep woods and swamp throughout the area. Its loud and distinctive cry carries a long distance, making it possible to hear one of these birds almost anywhere in Southeast Louisiana. There is even a record of one soaring over Curlew Island in the Chandeleurs. Red-shouldered Hawks are probably most common in cypress-tupelo swamp, where they commonly nest--as they do in other deep woodland areas, near the top of a large tree. The population declines which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s in the northern U.S. were not experienced in southern Louisiana, with numbers on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts remaining essentially constant since the 1950's at about 0.5 individuals per party hour. The essential field marks, often easier to see in flight than those given in the field guides, are the crescent-shaped "windows" near the wing tips (base of primaries). Red-shouldered Hawks are relatively long-winged and long-tailed, and of course one can often see the red shoulder or the tail stripes of the adult.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) Common migrant, regular (uncommon to common) local breeder, and casual winter visitor near the coast.

This small buteo is encountered in Southeast Louisiana mainly as a migrant, though rarely in the kinds of numbers that are typical of its favored migration routes (including southwest Louisiana, in fall). It does, however, breed regularly north of Lake Pontchartrain in mixed pine-deciduous woods, often near creek or river bottoms. In summer its thin whistled call will often be heard even when the bird cannot be found (take care, however, not to confuse it with the similar call of the Mississippi Kite). It continues to be found in the breeding season in small numbers south of the lake as well, as evidenced by records by Yaukey in June of 1995 from Jean Lafitte NP (June 6) and in Metairie near the Earhart Expressway (June 12 and 15). It is also common enough on the coast in winter so that it has virtually come to be expected at Venice. This should by no means lull one into careless identification of a Broad-wing in winter. In spite of upwards of over 40 well-documented winter records, including some calling birds, Broad-winged Hawks in winter should be assumed to be extraordinary and should be reported, with careful details. Many of the birds seen in the winter are immatures and can be identified by their small size, broad wings, brownish striped tail, prominent superciliary stripe, and the dark trailing edge of the wing (not a unique feature, but a very helpful one). These birds will have a tail with a chocolate color with narrow darker transverse bands; from below the tail is grayish, again with narrow dark bands. There are a number of excellent photographs of wintering Broad-wings from the lower delta (RDP,DM), where up to 17 have been found on a Venice CBC (Dec. 29, 2009, fide RDP).

Expected dates of migrants are April 1 to May 5 and August 10 to November 15; extreme dates of occurrence in spring are March 26, 1978 at Grand Isle (MM,NN,JR), and in fall, July 28, 1979 at New Orleans (JR--4) and Dec. 2, 1961 at Triumph (SAG), though the latter should be assumed to have been wintering.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) Casual fall migrant, casual to accidental winter visitor.

There are now records of this western raptor every year, which is seen much more frequently than in the past, and now winters sparingly in the lower delta in the vicinity of Venice. The total number of records exceeds 30. The most likely time to encounter a Swainson's Hawk in the area is in fall migration, from mid-October to late November, near the coast, but winter records are now becoming more common. Up to three individuals at a time have overwintered in the vicinity of Venice, as in winter 2007-8 when there were at least two present from December-February or longer, and 2009-10. There seem to be no records from spring migration.

A Swainson's Hawk, apparently captured in New Orleans East in 1980, was in the New Orleans Zoo through March 1983 (RDP, Bill Clark; photos AS).

Swainson's Hawk is readily identified by its negative underwing pattern, but its wing shape is also fairly distinctive: narrow, pointed, somewhat swept-forward looking. Most birds encountered are young, pale morph individuals.

The early records are: Jan. 5-7, 1969 at Reserve (RJS), Sep. 7, 1970 at Golden Meadow



(RJN,RJS), Sep. 11, 1978 at Leeville (RJS,RH); Nov. 26, 1978 at Ft. Jackson (JR,NN,RDP); Oct. 14, 1979 at Venice (RDP,MB,JR--5); Nov. 10, 1979 at Laplace (MW,RJS); Sep. 30, 1980 at Reserve (MW); Nov. 5, 1982 in Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS); Dec. 2, 1984 at Madisonville (MM,DM,NN,RDP); Nov. 16, 1986 at Venice (JW,GC); Feb. 7, 1987 at Venice (SWC,DLD,DM); Nov. 8, 1987 at New Orleans (RDP--2); Nov. 19, 1987 at Port Sulphur (...); Oct. 6, 1988 Port Sulphur to Venice (NN,RDP--7); Nov. ..., 1989 (RDP,NN); Dec. 23, 1990 (GC,NN,RDP--ph); Oct. 29, 1992 at New Orleans (KVR). **1998?** (PW--photo?). Venice 1999-2000 CBC, [2--SWC,DLD, JB, et al]. Nov. 17, 2002 at Grand Isle (DM). Nov. 5, 2003, Grand Isle (MM,CS); late March 2004, Chalmette (JC); Oct. 15, 2004 at Grand Isle (SWC,DLDB10), Dec. 11, 2004 New Orleans (DM,PW) (also Dec. 10, 2004 Bayou Sauvage (Richard Hale, et al). winter 2007-8, Triumph (RDP,PW,DM, et al), and late 2007 (Boslers). **Venice,....2008 (PW,DPM--5). Fall 2005, at least 5 (DM,RDP,PW), and winter 2009-10, at least 3, including two on the Venice CBC, and a road kill.**

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) Accidental

The single record of this species remains one of the most remarkable birds ever recorded on a New Orleans Christmas Count; it is of a female found on Dec. 23, 1985 by Tristan Davis and others and identified the next day (SAG,NN,RDP, PW, CK,CS,JH, JHSr,GO). It was captured later in the day (Dec. 24) by Davis and Nancy Newfield (et al), and was taken to New Orleans' Audubon Zoo Bird Rehabilitation Center. The bird, which was found to have been shot, eventually died while being exercised in anticipation of release. Excellent photographs were obtained in the field (RDP) and in the hand. This is the only record for Louisiana.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) Common winter visitor, breeding sparingly in the Florida Parishes

The Red-tailed Hawk is the common wintering *Buteo* of Louisiana. It can be found anywhere there are reasonably open fields for hunting. Especially large flights of Red-tails might be seen on the heels of cool fronts in middle to late October. Red-tailed Hawks evidently breed sparingly north of Lake Pontchartrain; certainly there have been recent summer records from that general area. Individuals vary from the very dark melanistic birds (including the rare race *harlani*, "Harlan's Hawk, which has been recorded on at least six occasions between Oct. 29 and Jan. 16) to the very light *krideri* ("Krider's Red-tail"). Two invariant characteristics are the blotched or patchy back and the dark leading edge of the wing. The distinct petagial marks help distinguish the Red-tail from some other *buteos*. The Red-tailed Hawk has held its own on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts since 1960 at about 0.6 birds per party hour. For details on plumage variation, see the Birding article by.....

The expected dates of occurrence are October 1 to April 1; extreme dates are Aug. 13, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG) and Apr. 25, 1976 at Venice (MM,NN,RH). The "summer" records include June 22, 1957 at Covington (SAG).

**FERRUGINOUS HAWK** (*Buteo regalis*) Casual to accidental winter visitor.

This large, light-plumaged buteo has suffered declines over much of its breeding range. It is casual in Louisiana with records coming primarily from the western or southwestern part of the state, in areas such as Gum Cove or the rice fields of south-central Louisiana. There is less appropriate habitat in SW. Louisiana, but fields north of Lake Pontchartrain and south of New Orleans near Myrtle Grove might attract this beautiful hawk. Because of the great variation in plumage of the Red-tailed Hawk, observers should be extremely cautious about identifying a buteo thought to be of this species. It is big-headed and short-necked, it has prominent wrist marks, and darkish-feathered tarsi. The white wing "patches" are distinctive, but are similar to those sometimes seen in light phase Red-tails.

Although there are four reports of Ferruginous Hawk from Southeast Louisiana, only the first is thoroughly documented. The records are Nov. 1, 1957 to Feb. 2, 1958 near Slidell (SAG,MEL,BM,BJD); Feb. 23, 1971 at the Rigolets (JK); Dec. 7, 1974 at Ft. Jackson (LS); and Nov. 19, 1978 at Venice (BC?).

**ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** (*Buteo lagopus*) Casual winter visitor.

There are at least nine records of the Rough-legged Hawk, which only rarely makes it into Southeast Louisiana--though none since 1984. Some questions have been raised about the validity of some of the identifications of this species, including the possibility of hybridization. Nonetheless, while care is essential in its identification, it is, nonetheless, a rather distinctive hawk. Long-winged, with a long tail which is white at the base but has a rather large dark terminal band, and characterized by a prominent dark band on its lower belly, the Rough-legged Hawk appears light headed when perched or flying (the Red-tail is usually dark-faced). Note, of course, that the Red-tail shows a white base to the tail. Rough-legs like to hover, but so do Red-tailed Hawks.

The records, which span the period October to March, but which concentrate in December and January are: Mar. 12, 1933 at Grand Isle (GH\*); Jan. 27, 1937 at Grand Isle (GLT); Dec. 14, 1968 at New Orleans (DS); Dec. 27, 1977 at Reserve (MW--2); Feb. 8, 1981 at New Orleans (NN, et al); Jan. 30-Feb. 14, 1982; Bayou Sauvage (DM,m.ob.); late Oct., 1982 in Tangipahoa Par. (fide NLN); Jan. 1984 on US 11 (DM, et al); Nov. 22, 1988 at Lacombe (AS,GS,CK); Dec. 26, 1988 on the New Orleans CBC (PMcKenzie, JS).

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Accidental in winter.

Although Oberholser (1938) reported Golden Eagles shot near Bogalusa and Maringouin prior to 1930, the only definitive recent record for SE. Louisiana is of one w shot in the Pearl River bottoms during November 1975. Since the Golden Eagle does wander widely and occurs annually in southwest and central Louisiana, it might be expected to occur here occasionally, and there are reports suggestive of that. One or more recent records await some substantiation.

FAMILY *Falconidae* CARACARA AND FALCONS

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) Casual visitor; one record

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) Common winter resident; uncommon to rare breeding bird mostly north of Lake Pontchartrain.

This small falcon is the commonest of the hawks of Louisiana, and will be seen hovering over prey or watching from a telephone wire or branch of a dead tree, almost anywhere away from the immediate crush of civilization. It is, in fact, the only hawk--except perhaps for migrating Mississippi Kites, that is likely to be seen in or near the typical residential neighborhood--along a drainage canal, or on a transmission tower. Kestrels do breed north of Lake Pontchartrain, but in numbers small enough to be rather inconspicuous; for the most part, they are winter visitors. Although the species has been known to breed in uptown New Orleans, that was surely unusual. The kestrel seems to have suffered a significant decline in recent years, perhaps continuing a trend since the 1950s. Christmas Count data accumulated since 1960 yield about 0.6 birds per party-hour. Based on the AOU Checklist, two subspecies occur, *F. s. sparverius* and *F. s. paulus*, the latter being the breeding form.

An interesting record is May 16, 1985 off Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River (MM). The expected dates of wintering are September 1 to April 5; extreme dates away from breeding areas are July 24, 1982 at Irish Bayou (MM) and May 31, 1978 at New Orleans (JR).

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) Uncommon winter visitor.

After a low in the 1960s, Merlin numbers have slowly increased. A day in the field in fall or winter, especially near the coast, will usually turn up one or more of these magnificent small falcons. Beginners often have trouble separating them from the smaller and narrower-winged Kestrel, but to those familiar with them, they are very different birds--very strong fliers and very aggressive birds of prey, with relatively broad wings and a distinctive flight. And, of course, they are heavily streaked below. During the 1970's and 1980's, a good place to find a Merlin was on the East Campus of UNO.

Expected dates of wintering are October 1 to April 15, while extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 5, 1984 at New Orleans (NN) and June 1, 1932 at Grand Isle (fide HCO).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) Uncommon winter visitor.

The Peregrine is unquestionably the most magnificent of the birds of prey which winter in Louisiana. Peregrines evidently establish wintering territories and can often be found on favorite perches and roosting locations: water towers, radio antennae, high-rise buildings, etc. In Southeast Louisiana, a good place to see this bird is in the vicinity of Fourchon Road, or the nearby beach, an especially on the watertower along the road. Sometimes the one will be found on a communications tower instead, or near the beach. Fortunately Peregrine populations have recovered significantly as a result of the protection

afforded by the Endangered Species Act and the removal of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides from the environment, so that seeing one is considerably easier than 20 years ago when any observation was exciting, and three in one day, as in the Fourchon area on Sep. 30, 1978 (MB, JR), was extraordinary.

With increased numbers, it is increasingly easy to see two or three in a day in the field, especially near the coast. One wintered in the New Orleans CBD for several years--and may still--beginning in the winter of 1981-82, and another has wintered near New Orleans' Audubon Park since 2007 (Woltmann), at least through 2011, often perching on the tower of Holy Name of Jesus Church.

An injured Peregrine found in lower Lafourche Parish in the winter of 1984-85 had been banded earlier in the year in the Brooks Range of northern Alaska.

Expected dates are October 1 (September 25) to April 15; extreme dates are Sep. 7, 1959 at Reserve (RFC, MW) and May 9, 1987 at Grand Isle (MM, DM).

#### ORDER *Gruiformes*

#### FAMILY *Rallidae* RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS

#### **YELLOW RAIL** (*Coturnicops novaboracensis*) Rare and secretive winter resident.

Although there are 13 records of this elusive rail from Southeast Louisiana, there are but three since 1928, certainly a tribute to the intrepid observers of a half-century ago. On the other hand, there may have been significant declines on the wet prairie nesting grounds of this rail which have affected its abundance here. The Yellow Rail is one of the most sought-after "regular" species of Southeast Louisiana--to little avail. In recent years there have been scattered opportunistic records from Southwest Louisiana, and Yellow Rails can often be found during rice mowing operations in southwest-central Louisiana, near Crowley and nearby towns. It is not really known whether the occurrence of Yellow Rails in inland tall grass fields is only a feature of migration, with winter taking place on the coast, or whether they perhaps winter somewhat inland as well. Should one encounter mowing operations from mid-October on, or perhaps marsh burning near the coast, he should stop and watch for the possibility of flushing of Yellow Rails. All of this applies, of course, to the Black Rail as well, which is more secretive yet. Of the Yellow Rail, Beyer wrote that "hunting dogs very frequently catch them alive." Specimens of several of the records listed below still survive in the Tulane collection.

The records of Yellow Rail span the period November 5 to April 8. There are no January records, perhaps only reflecting reduced field work during this month. The known records are: Nov. 19, 1865, New Orleans (fide HCO)\*; Apr. 4, 1874, New Orleans (fide HCO)\*; Mar. 14, 1891, New Orleans (fide HCO)\*; Nov. 5, 1892, New Orleans (fide HCO)\*; Dec. 26,

1893, Diamond (fide HCO); Dec. 15-25, 1901, Plaquemines Par. (HLB); Feb. 25, 1902, Plaquemines Par. (HLB); Mar. 26, 1926, Grand Isle (ESH)\*; Apr. 4, 1926, Grand Isle (ESH)\*; Apr. 8, 1926, Grand Isle (ESH)\*; Mar. 31, 1928, Grand Isle (ESH)\*; Dec. 31, 1977, New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 23, 1978, Laplace (RBH,BC); Nov. 8, 1982, New Orleans (TB).

**BLACK RAIL** (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) Rare and secretive winter resident.

There seem to exist very few verifiable records of the Black Rail in Southeast Louisiana, including an undated one mentioned by Lowery (1974), and an individual collected at Grand Isle on Apr. 1, 1937, reported by Oberholser (1938). The most interesting and most recent record is of a bird, evidently a migrant, captured by a falconer=s Harris= Hawk on the Crescent Acres Landfill in Arabi on Nov. 12, 1999 (JC,TC). There is also a recent sight record from the spring of 1995 at Grand Isle (**fide DW**). This paucity of records presumably can be attributed mainly to the near impossibility of flushing the Black Rail. There are several recent sight records from Southwest Louisiana, mostly opportunistic, and some from Dauphin Island, Al. There is an old report of nesting in Brazoria Co., TX, though some skepticism may be warranted.

Black Rails are probably most common in *Spartina patens* meadows, which unfortunately offer fabulous cover, or perhaps in saltgrass-*salicornia* salt marsh (Bent, 1926). Stewart and Robbins (1958) describe the habitat in Maryland as "a mixture of salt-meadow grass (*Spartina patens*) and spike grass [saltgrass, *Distichlis spicata*]." In the *salicornia*-saltgrass habitat, as on Grand Terre Island, for example, they would be much more easily flushed than in *S. patens*, if indeed they occur in that habitat. Recent evidence suggests they might be found at upland edges of saline marshes, on the theory that they Adon=t like to get their feet wet. They are known to sing at night during the breeding season, perhaps after 10 p.m., and are readily attracted to a recorded version of their "song." Audubon, in his *Ornithological Biography*, wrote "I have received a letter from my friend J. Trudeau, M.D., in which he says that his father shot a considerable number of these rails last winter (1836-37) in the vicinity of New Orleans." Trudeau must have had a good dog, but one wonders what Athe vicinity of New Orleans@ means, since there is little salt marsh near the city.

**CLAPPER RAIL** (*Rallus longirostris*) Common resident of mostly saline marsh.

Although especially common in salt marsh, where the King Rail rarely if ever occurs, this species will intrude into the coastal brackish marsh, where it may interbreed with its cousin. Because Louisiana Clapper Rails have a very rich coloration, one cannot distinguish these species on the basis of the supposed rich color of the King Rail. On the other hand, the Clapper Rail will always have a grayish face. Other characters, such as the less dramatically contrasting white and black of the flanks, are less useful. The calls are more similar than some think, although the King Rail does have a richer, fuller call, contrasting with the sharper kik-kik-kik of the Clapper Rail. Typical habitat is the *Spartina alterniflora* salt marsh which is so ubiquitous along the coast.

**KING RAIL** (*Rallus elegans*) Rather common resident of intermediate and brackish marsh, mostly near the coast.

There is some feeling that perhaps the King Rail has declined in numbers in recent years, at least by comparison with the Clapper Rail, but there are no data to support this conclusion. King Rails is more likely to found near New Orleans, where the marsh is less saline than nearer the coast, but of course there is extensive fresh and brackish marsh below New Orleans, including the bird-foot delta of the Mississippi. For information on the life histories of the King Rail and the previous species, consult the AOU Monograph by Meanley (1969), which is based in considerable measure on observations made in Louisiana.

**VIRGINIA RAIL** (*Rallus limicola*) Uncommon winter resident.

To some extent the Virginia Rail looks like a diminutive version of the King Rail, and often is found in the same brackish habitat. It is far more often heard than seen, and often its vocalizations go unrecognized. One of its called resembles a long, slow, drawn-out King Rail call; another is a harsh "rare-ick' ", and there are other assorted noises. There is a report of nesting, with young photographed, from below Leevile, on May 25, 1969 (JK,WW). This writer has not seen the photographs. Another report of a juvenal bird also suggested nesting (NLN). The maximum number recorded is 31 on Apr. 10, 1983, near the Pearl River at U.S. 90, during flood conditions. Virginia Rails not infrequently turn up in residential backyards during fall migration.

The expected dates of occurrence are October 1 to April 15; extreme dates are Sep. 4, 1981 at New Orleans (JR--dead) and Apr. 22, 1989 in St. Tammany and Lafourche Parishes (DM,NN,RDP).

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) Uncommon to fairly common winter visitor.

The Sora is found mostly in fresh to brackish marsh, where it can be quite common. There has been some decline in numbers during the past two decades, but there is disagreement on how great that decline has been. The only quantitative information is that numbers recorded on the New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts have dropped since the late 1960's and early 1970's. In evaluating these data, one has to take into account the destruction of wetlands near the city. Often a vigorous clap will cause Soras to begin calling. There is one "out-of-season" record, **June?** 28, 1992 at Bayou Sauvage Ref. (NN,RDP).

Expected dates of occurrence are September 10 to April 15, while extreme dates are Aug. 23, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG) and May 6, 1971.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyryla martinica*) Uncommon summer resident of mostly fresh marsh.

Although fairly common in the fresh water marshes of Southwestern Louisiana, the Purple Gallinule is often difficult to find in this part of the state. Most of the recent records have come from the Venice area, from the marsh just east of White Kitchen, and from along

Paris Rd. in eastern New Orleans. The latter habitat has largely been destroyed. Maximum number recorded is 20 on Paris Rd. on July 25, 1982 (RDP). The Purple Gallinule will only be found on ponds overgrown with aquatic vegetation (water lilies, water hyacinth, etc.). On Lacassine NWR in Southwest Louisiana, nests were mostly in maidencane, with densities of 0.5 individuals per acre.

Expected dates are April 15 to about September 15; extreme dates of occurrence are Apr. 6, 1936 at Grand Isle (AD\*) and Oct. 7, 1983 at Chalmette (fide CM).

**COMMON MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) Locally common resident.

The Common Moorhen ("Common Gallinule") primarily inhabits freshwater ponds and marshes, often with cattails, rushes (*Juncus, sp.*), and reeds. It seems to be comfortable with deeper water than the Purple Gallinule, which is not often seen swimming. It is also apparently more tolerant of salinity than its showier cousin. Good places to find this species are below Venice along the road to Tidewater and on US 11 in the eastern part of the city. Although relatively uncommon, moorhens might be found in the vicinity of Grand Isle, especially on Theriot Rd. at Port Fourchon.

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) Common to abundant winter resident, rare to uncommon summer resident.

The American Coot is present in large numbers from about September 1 to May 1. The frequency of summering makes more definite conclusions hazardous. Breeding should be looked for. American Coots have increased since the mid-1960's on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts. Upwards of one million coots winter in Louisiana, and as many as 20,000 have been counted in one pond near Des Allemandes (RDP).

FAMILY *Gruidae* CRANES

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Grus canadensis*) Rare to accidental winter visitor.

There are at least four records of the Sandhill Crane for Southeast Louisiana, all since 1957. It could be expected occasionally in open, wet fields, most likely north of Lake Pontchartrain. Sandhill Cranes winter regularly in small numbers in north-central Louisiana near Cheneyville, and near Holmwood in SW Louisiana. In view of this significant increase in reports from Southwest Louisiana in the late 1990s, one may expect occasional records here. There is no evidence that any birds stray from the resident Mississippi Sandhill Crane population.

The known records are: Oct. 19, 1957 at White Kitchen, St. Tammany Parish (SAG,RF), Nov. 12, 1977 at Reserve (MW), records at Covington, presumably of the same or related birds, beginning with **Feb. 3..., 1988 (JH,m.ob.), and ....Dec. 26, 1991 (JH--4); etc.....1992**. The most recent record is of 18-20 over Pearl River, LA on Dec. 7, 2011 (JC,TC).

## **WHOOPING CRANE** (*Grus americana*) FORMERLY

The only evidence of the occurrence of the Whooping Crane in Southeast Louisiana is based on two reports by Audubon: a specimen brought to him by his hunter Gilbert....? on Nov. 21, 1821, and nine that Audubon himself said he saw killing an alligator on April 16, 1822. The species is currently being reintroduced in SW Louisiana.

### ORDER *Charadriiformes*

#### Suborder *Charadrii*

Forty-three or forty-four species of "shorebirds" have been recorded in Southeast Louisiana, including the Eskimo Curlew which has not been seen in Louisiana in this century and is probably extinct. Of the 36 regularly occurring species, 12 are essentially migrants, two are resident (Killdeer and Willet), only two are summer residents (Wilson's Plover and Black-necked Stilt), and the remainder, about 20, are winter residents, though they may be considerably more common in migration than in mid-winter. The status of the American Oystercatcher is still somewhat uncertain, but it is presumably a permanent resident.

### FAMILY *Charadriidae* PLOVERS

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) Common to very common winter resident, mainly on the coast.

The Black-bellied Plover is one of the most characteristic birds of the gulf beach, ponds edges near the gulf, and short-grass fields near the coast. It is present only in winter, but that means year-round except for a two-month period centered on mid-July. There are, however, rather frequent records for that period as well. It is not infrequently found in the vicinity of New Orleans, in the Bonnet Carre Spillway, and in similar areas somewhat removed from the coast. Normally the species is present from mid-July to early June, but non-breeding birds are often found in the 5-week period when most birds are on the breeding grounds.

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** (*Pluvialis dominica*) Uncommon to sometimes common spring migrant; occasional fall migrant.

The golden plover will ordinarily only be found on short grass meadows or prairie, and almost exclusively in spring, when it is one of the very earliest of all northbound migrants. Because its fall migration route carries it far from this region, the golden plover is quite uncommon in fall. Very occasionally this species will be found on a mudflat or the gulf beach. In New Orleans the golden plover and other shorebirds which favor short grass habitat may be found on the East campus of the University of New Orleans or perhaps Lakefront Airport. The best coastal location is on the "Exxon Fields" near the east end of



Grand Isle. The modern high count is 600 in New Orleans on March 18, 1979, but Audubon in his journal for March 16, 1821 described a flock of "millions of golden plovers" near the lakefront and Bayou St. John. He also gave a lower and more specific figure of 144,000 and said that one hunter had taken 63 dozen from the flock. The conditions were a blow from the northeast following two or three days of warm weather. The birds were lean, having just completed the trans-gulf passage.

In principle, at least, the Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*.) could stray to the area, although its identification would be very problematical. Am. Golden Plovers are longer-winged and a whiter, more prominent supercilium, and grayer underwing. The tertials are very long, almost reaching the primary tips, and the white supercilium is brightest above the eye. In alternate plumage, the side-stripe is much more restricted, reaching down only to about the bend of the wing (Zimmer 2000).

Expected dates are March 10 to April 20 in spring, and Aug. 20 to November 10 in fall migration. Extreme dates of occurrence in spring are Feb. 27, 1966 (JK) and May 24, 1979 (JR), both at New Orleans; in fall the extremes are Aug. 6, 1978 (MB) and Nov. 28, 1960 at New Orleans (SAG).

**LESSER SAND-PLOVER** (*Charadrius mongolus*) Accidental vagrant

The lone record of the species, also known as Mongolian Plover, is of an individual seen and clearly photographed in color (*AB 31*, 140 (1977) at the Coast Guard station on the east end of Grand Isle on April 22, 1975 (CLittlefield,DDoubleday,EDoubleday), was the first record for the contiguous 48 states. There has since been one additional record from Cameron Parish. Although the Grand Isle individual was in alternate (breeding) plumage, it is more likely that future records, if there should be any, would be of immatures or basic-plumaged birds, as was the case in the Cameron record. In that case they would resemble Wilson's Plovers; see Hayman, et al (1986) for identification details. Most importantly, the legs are black, unlike Wilson's, whose legs are a dull flesh/pinkish to gray.

**SNOWY PLOVER** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) Uncommon to migrant and winter resident on sand flats and beaches on or near the gulf. Possibly breeding in small numbers.

The Snowy Plover is uncommon on the beaches of Southeast Louisiana, but now much commoner than 10-20 years ago, with several records in a given winter, usually at Elmer's Island, perhaps Fourchon Beach, and occasionally the beach at Grand Isle itself, though other locations are accessible by boat, including Grand Terre to the east and E. Timbalier to the west. Snowy Plovers are quite easy to find, in small numbers, at Rutherford and Holly Beaches in Cameron Parish, and have nested there recently.

Snowy Plover is noticeably heavier-billed than Piping Plover and has dark (gray, gray-green, to black) legs. Wilson's is 10-15% larger, is browner, has lighter legs, a very heavy black bill, usually a complete breast band

Records span the period Aug. 5 (1886) to Apr. 4 (2004, PW,MM,RDPB2). The

maximum is probably 5 seen on Fourchon Beach on Sept. 8, 2002 (DM,MM).

**WILSON'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius wilsonia*) Common summer resident of sand-strand habitat on beaches, beach ridges, and barrier islands. Uncommon to rare in winter.

This plover is a conspicuous feature of coastal beaches and sand-flats in summer and breeds wherever sufficient undisturbed sandy habitat is available along the coast, especially on the barrier islands. Its loud sharp call and staccato rattle immediately betray its presence. Efforts should be made to protect breeding habitat by human interference during the breeding season, especially in areas accessible to ATV's; the habitat is also used by Least Terns and Black Skimmers for breeding. High count is 47 on Fourchon Beach, March 24, 2001 (DM,RDP). There are three New Orleans records, the first associated with a tropical storm: Sept. 4, 1977 (RDP), and July 26, 1998 (DPM,PY) and Sept. 14, 2008 (J.Finlay—Ike). Winter records are rather numerous, but Wilson's Plover is far from regular at that season; peak numbers at that season are 20 on a Piping Plover survey, Jan. 2006 (fide SWC).

A census of the beaches of SE Louisiana in the late spring of 2005 yielded over 700 pairs of Wilson's Plovers (fide RDemay).

Expected dates of occurrence are about March 5 to October 5? (November 1?); extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 1, 1991 [2004 PW,MM,RDP] at Grand Isle (NN, RDP,AS,GS?) and Nov. 27, 1977 at Grand Isle (RDP,NN).[Muth 1991]. Two at Fourchon Beach on 8 February 2004 (MM,PW,RDP), raised the possibility that Wilson's Plovers may arrive in early to mid-February, but 12 at Elmer's Island on Jan. 23, 2010 (DM,RDP,PW) were almost certainly wintering, and there are now other winter records, so that the species must be considered to winter uncommonly.

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) Uncommon to common migrant, mostly on the coast, uncommon in winter.

The Semipalmated Plover is the commonest and most widespread of the small (*Charadrius*) plovers, except, of course, during the breeding season, when only Wilson's is expected. Like the others, it is almost always found near the gulf beach, although records along the shore of Lake Borgne would be expected and there are, in fact several New Orleans records. The call is a whistled chee-we', which is similar to that of the Black-bellied Plover.

The maximum count is 256 on Fourchon Rd. on Apr. 25, 2004 (RDP) [80 in the vicinity of Grand Isle (especially Fourchon Beach) on Sept. 4, 1994 (NN,MM). Recent "summer" records include June 19, 1983 (RDP,DM,JN), June 17, 1984 (RDP,DM), June 22, 1985 (RDP,NN--25!), and June 21, 1987 (6+), all on Fourchon Beach.....**3 on June 9 and 10 on June 11, 1998 Gosier/Breton (SWC,DLG)**

Although expected dates of occurrence are August 1 to June 1, migration periods are something like August 1 into early November and early March to about June 1. Extreme

dates, which may be meaningless in view of the "summer" records above, are July 8, 1958 at Grand Isle (ART) and June 10, 1930 on Grand Gosier I. (EVK).

**PIPING PLOVER** (*Charadrius melodus*) Uncommon, to sometimes common migrant near the gulf beach and uncommon to rare winter resident.

Although the Piping Plover is considered threatened, its numbers have not decreased noticeably along the coast of Southeast Louisiana. Recent Piping Plover surveys should be consulted to confirm that conclusion, but it seems to be shared by most observers who have birded the area for 10-20 years. Nonetheless, because of its status, numbers should always be recorded and submitted, preferably to LSU Museum of Zoology. Although the Piping Plover can usually be found at Fourchon Beach or on Grand Isle in winter, it is much more common during its migration passage, when sometimes as many as 20 will be seen along Fourchon Beach. Though it is almost never seen away from sand flats near the gulf beach, there are three New Orleans records, including Aug. 6, 1982 (DM) and Aug. 14, 1983 (DM). There are two "summer" record, June 27, 1976 on Curlew Island in the Chandeleur chain (RDP,LO'M,NN). And June 11 on Breton Island (SWC,DLD). The Piping Plover rarely vocalizes in Louisiana.

During the Piping Plover survey of early February 1991 (fide Rich Martin,LDWF), on the order of 750 were found on the Chandeleur Islands, the beaches of Grand Isle, Elmer's Island, the Timbaliers, etc. Other survey numbers include 420 in 1996 and 511 in 2001 (fide Richard Demay). More recent large numbers include 39 at Elmer's Island on Oct. 18, 2009 (PW,DM).

Expected dates of occurrence are August 5 to April 25; migration periods are from early March through April and early August through October. Extreme dates are July 28, 1991 on Fourchon Beach (RDP,GC--6) [and Aug. 1, 1982 at the same location (RDP,NN,DM--8)] and Apr. 26, 1969 at Grand Isle (RDP,DS).

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) Very common to sometimes abundant permanent resident.

This familiar plover may be found anywhere there are short grass fields, lawns, golf courses, and even mudflats. The Killdeer nests on the ground and may often be seen herding its atricial young around and showing mock-injury display to distract potential predators.

#### FAMILY *Haematopodidae* OYSTERCATCHERS

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus palliatus*) Local resident, breeding on barrier islands

The American Oystercatcher occurs primarily on the shell-rimmed barrier islands off the delta, especially in or near the Chandeleur Chain, where it nests in small numbers. It is assumed to be a permanent resident, but since its favored habitat is little visited in winter,

this remains an assumption. It has been found on the west shore of Lake Borgne, e.g., Shell Beach, on at least three occasions. There is one New Orleans record, which is one of the few actual winter records for southeast Louisiana, on January 21, 1983 at Lakefront Airport (DC), following unusually high tides in St. Bernard Parish, from whence come most of the records.

The only other inland record is from the east side of L. Pontchartrain, in St. Tammany Parish on Sep. 29+/- (Dan Lane), following Hurricane Georges. An early spring record for Southeast Louisiana is March 2, 1991 on Grand Terre Is. (RDP,NN,BA,CF).. There are several records from Grand Isle yearly, especially at the extreme east end and among recent records are May 30, 1992 (**Joe Kleiman, D. Roark**), ....(RDP,PW,DM), April 7, 2001 at Fourchon Beach (DM--2); 11 May 2003, Fourchon Beach (RDP--3), Oct. 14, 2012 (PW,DM,RDP—4). High count is 46 along the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, on..... (DM,RDP,BR).

Nests are known from Freemason Is. on May 16, 1913 (WMS) and Isle a Pitre, June 3, 1933 (HCO), and a flightless fledgling was photographed on Curlew Is. on June 26, 1976 (RDP,NN,LO'M).[**Larry, nest 1998**] Other nest records include.....July 2, 2000 (DM,RDP,PW--2 pairs with 2 young each). Audubon reported 15 on Isle Dernieres in April 1837 and as many as 21 have been counted on a single trip to the Chandeleurs in recent times. Trips to Grassy Island and Half Moon (or Grand) Island, both off the mouth of the Pear River, have always yielded a pair or two, and they were seen consistently on Lonesome Is. near the mouth of the Gulf Outlet, but as of 1985 that island was rapidly disappearing.

Expected dates are not well known, approximately April 1 to September 15(?). Extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 26, 1917 in Mississippi Sound (AMB) and Oct. 3, 1984 on North Island (JT, JD--3).

#### FAMILY *Recurvirostridae* AVOCETS AND STILTS

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Common to very common summer resident in suitable habitat.

The Black-necked Stilt is a common and conspicuous breeder in the coastal and near coastal marsh, wherever nesting and feeding habitat is available. Prior to 1974 (Jan. 10--MW) there was no winter record, but wintering is now quite common. The highest New Orleans winter count is 186 on US 11 on Dec. 27, 2008 (RDP,JSaucier). In 1938, Oberholser said of this species, admittedly on the basis of limited field work, "The Black-necked Stilt is a rare permanent resident in southern Louisiana of very much less frequent occurrence than in former years." A trip to Fourchon Rd. in Lafourche Parish in July could yield as many as several hundred.

Numbers swell during the breeding season, and expected dates of occurrence are March 25 to Sep 10.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) Uncommon to fairly common winter resident near the coast, in bays, open marshy habitat, and beaches.

Although the American Avocets are somewhat more common in coastal southwest Louisiana, they can be found in moderate numbers in coastal Southeast Louisiana in winter, primarily in the Port Fourchon area in Lafourche Par. Occasionally one or a few out of season individuals can be found in June or July. There are only a few New Orleans records, including July 23, 1979 (JR), Oct. 31-Dec. 26, 1982 (RDP, DN), Aug. 4, 1991 on US 11 (NN, RDP), and December ....., 1994 (RDP, GC--...) on US 11 in Bayou Sauvage NWR....Sep. 13, 1999 (DPM, PY); Oct. 3?, 2004 (RDP, DM).

Avocets may be expected between about August 15 and May 15. Mid to late June records represent lingering birds or perhaps southbound migrants. The extremes are July 17, 1977 at Grand Isle (MM, NN, RDP) and May 22, 1971 (DN) , also at Grand Isle (DN), and May 22, 2003 on Fourchon Beach (MM, RDP). June records include June 20, 1982 (RDP, JR, DM, MM), June 19, 1983 (DM, JN, RDP), June 1, 1997 (DM, RDP), all from Fourchon Rd. A group of 80 on Baptiste Collette Bayou, all in high alternate plumage on July 2, 2000 (DM, RDP, PW) were remarkable. Peak numbers are 700 on Fourchon Rd., 11/12/2000 (RDP). 2004....

#### FAMILY *Scolopacidae* SANDPIPERS

##### **SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularis*) Common winter visitor

The Spotted Sandpiper is characteristic of pond edges, seawalls, and stream banks--seemingly the more barren the shore the better--where it usually occurs singly. It is rarely seen on mudflats or with the large groups of resting or feeding shorebirds which are encountered on the coast. Even the beginner quickly learns its distinctive fluttering or staccato flight pattern caused by its short wing strokes; the sharp weet-weet! call is also diagnostic. The Spotted Sandpiper was reported as breeding in New Orleans by Beyer (fide Oberholser), but it is not clear on what evidence that claim was based. The fact that it is present into late May and that southbound migrants appear in July may have led to confusion on that point.

The expected dates of occurrence are July 25 to May 20, with extremes of July 6, 1978 at Delacroix(AS) and June 9, 1933 at Grand Isle (HCO).

##### **SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*) Uncommon migrant

The Solitary Sandpiper is typically found on the edge of a freshwater pond or in swale in a grassy field; it will rarely, if ever, be encountered on a mudflat or the gulf beach. The call is a loud and distinctive wheet-wheet-wheet! , which could be confused only with that of the Spotted Sandpiper.

Expected dates of spring and fall migration are March 20 to May 5 and August 10 to September 20. The extreme dates in spring are Mar. 1, 1992 at Grand Isle (AS, GS) [previously March 5, 1900 at New Orleans (AA)] and May 23, 1979 at New Orleans (JR, RDP); in fall the species has been recorded as early as July 26, 1991 (NN) and as late as Oct. 1, 1978 (JR), both from New Orleans. There are at least 7 winter records: Feb. 15, 1913, New Orleans (HHK), Nov. 27, 1964, Ft. Jackson (SAG), Dec. 28, 1965, Venice CBC,

Dec. 30, 1971, Ft. Jackson (SAG,RDP,RJN,DN), Dec. 10, 1974, New Orleans (JK), and Dec. 27, 1984, Venice (SAG--3). The most recent record is from St. John the Baptist Parish on Feb. 12, 1992 (MW,RJS), not strictly within the province of this list. Maximum number recorded is 152 on Apr. 4, 1992 near the Jefferson/St. Charles Parish line (PY).

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleucus*) Common winter resident; probably can be found in every month.

Although the Greater Yellowlegs (and the Lesser, as well) breeds in Alaska and Canada and winters south to Tierra Del Fuego, it is a regular winter resident and there is barely a two month period when it is not to be found in Louisiana coastal marshes. Indeed, it is not infrequently found, in small numbers, in mid to late June on mudflats near the coast. While ordinarily this species is considerably less common than its smaller cousin, this is sometimes not the case. The Greater Yellowlegs is essentially the size of a Willet and has a much longer bill than the Lesser. The two species are also easily separated by call, that of the Greater Yellowlegs being a three or four note "whistle," compared to the softer two-note call of the Lesser Yellowlegs.

Although the expected dates of occurrence are from about August 1 to May 10, arrival of apparent south-bound migrants has been noted as early as July 14 (1979, Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS,MW), and there are several mid-June records, including two from Fourchon Rd. in Lafourche Parish: June 20, 1982 (RDP,MM,JR,DM--100) and June 17, 1984 (DM,RDP--1). Also a July 2, 2000 record from Baptiste Collette Bayou (DM,PW,RDP), and June 23, 2003 Grand Terre I. (CW,SW).

**WILLET** (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) Common to Very Common resident, most on the coast.

The Willet is one of only two or three permanent residents among the shorebirds, but that applies only in the sense that there are willets present year round. The so-called "Eastern Willet" is the breeding subspecies, while wintering birds are almost all "Western Willets." Eastern Willets are smaller, have a straighter bill which is broad at the base, and will generally be found in the marsh, most likely in alternate plumage. Western Willets almost have a recurved bill, will be in basic plumage, and are most likely along or near the gulf beach. There is some possibility of a split into two species.

Willetts of either subspecies are quite uncommon away from the coast, although over two dozen records have accumulated over the years from Reserve, Metairie, and New Orleans. In the coastal marsh and on the gulf beach the Willet is conspicuous and noisy. It nests on raised areas--ridges,etc.--in the saline or brackish marsh. Recent records have come from the Recovery I area of Bayou Sauvage NWR in New Orleans East.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) Very common winter resident, especially on the coast, probably can be found in every month.

Although the Lesser Yellowlegs is common from July through May, its numbers are largest in migration, when counts may approach or exceed 1000 individuals. It is the most familiar medium-sized shorebird in the Louisiana marshes and while it is most common near the coast, it can be found on mudflats and marshy pond edges throughout the area. Expected dates of occurrence are July 25 to May 10, with extreme arrival and departure dates of June 27, 1970 (New Orleans, JK) and May 24, 1970 (Grand Isle, RDP). "Out of season" records include June 19, 1983 (RDP,JN,DM) and June 17, 1984 (RDP,DM--5), both in Lafourche Parish.

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** (*Bartramia longicauda*) Uncommon migrant found on short-grass fields.

While not as common as 30 years ago, the Upland Sandpiper may nonetheless be expected on short-grass fields, such as the UNO east campus, Lakefront Airport, and the Exxon Fields on Grand Isle, especially during March, and often in the company of Golden Plovers or Buff-breasted Sandpipers. Its tall stance and small head (giving it a "pin-head" look—for which appellation I thank the late Bob Newman) are distinctive. Its "whip-per-it!" call can often be heard at night during fall migration, especially in late July and early August. According to Beyer (1900) they were "eagerly hunted and highly praised in lower Louisiana as a game bird."

Expected dates of occurrence are March 20 to May 5 in spring, and August 1 to September 20 in fall; extreme dates for spring migrants are Mar. 12, **1978....** and May 26, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG); in fall they are June 29, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 11, 1977 at New Orleans (?) (JR). Beyer, et al (1908) gave a March 9 record. There is an anomalous winter record from the Shreveport area, documented by excellent photographs.

**ESKIMO CURLEW** (*Numenius americanus*) EXTINCT

Although the Eskimo Curlew has not been recorded in Louisiana, with certainty, since 1889, spring records from the Texas coast in the mid-1950's and one or two fall records from the Atlantic coast, have left open the faint possibility that one might again turn up on the coast of Southeast Louisiana in spring. In all likelihood, however the Eskimo Curlew is extinct. The known records are: Apr. 5-10, 1837, Baratavia Bay (JJA), Mar. 30 and Apr. 4, 1881 (fide HCO--collected), and Mar. 16, 1889 at New Orleans (fide HCO--collected).

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) Uncommon spring migrant, uncommon to rare migrant in fall, along the coast.

The Whimbrel is a regular, uncommon to sometimes common spring migrant near the coast, most often near Grand Isle, from Fourchon Rd. to the island itself. As a fall migrant, the Whimbrel is less common, but apparently becoming regular. There are also two winter records. The only known inland records are from Frenier on the west edge of the area, Apr.

30, 1959 (RJS--), and two New Orleans records, Mar. 27, 1974 (WAM) and Apr. 8, 1983 (fide MM). Fall records are now too numerous to list, but range from July 17, 1977, Lafourche Par (MM,RDP,NN--2), to Oct. 8-9, 1983 at Grand Isle (CS,AS,GS,CK). Seven were seen on Grand Isle on Aug. 4, 2002 (RDP). There is also unclassifiable July 1, 1999 (PW, PC) and June 30??, 2004 (RDP). The three winter records are Dec. 19, 1932 at Main Pass (HCO), Dec. 10, 1989 at Grand Isle (AS,GS,MM), and Dec. 23, 2008 at Grand Isle (JFinlay). Bristle-thighed Curlew has an unbarred rump and a very different voice.

The largest concentration has been 17 on May 6, 2001 at Fourchon (MM,PW).

Expected dates in spring are April 20 to May 20; fall records span the period July 17-Oct. 3, and Whimbrels might be "expected" from about Aug. 15 to Sep. 15. There is one out of season record, June 22, 2003 on Grand Terre Is. (Chris Witt, Satya Witt). Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 19, 1972 at Grand Terre Is (HDP,RJN,MM,RDP) and May 25, 1989 at Grand Isle (...). Another late record is May 22, 2012 in Lafourche Par. (PY).

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** (*Numenius americanus*) Occasional to accidental in winter, rare on the barrier islands in "summer".

The Long-billed Curlew is distinctly uncommon in Se. Louisiana, with not much more than 30 records, all but two of which have been from the vicinity of Grand Isle or the Chandeleur or other barrier islands. The two records away from the coast are winter records: Mandeville (Dec. 17, 1976) and New Orleans (Nov. 12, 1885). According to Oberholser, E.S. Hopkins "found reported it common at Grand Isle, April 8, 1925, April 22, 1926, and April 7, 1928." There is one March and three April records, six "summer" records spanning the period June 7-Aug. 25. There are four "winter" records from Nov. 12 to Dec. 17, including the two above. The others are a nineteenth-century record from Lake Borgne, Dec. 5, 1886, mentioned in Oberholser (1938), and a sighting on Nov. 19, 1978 on E. Timbalier Island (AS,RDP,NN,MM). Some of the "summer" records are: June 7, 1918, Chandeleurs (AMB); June 25, 1969, Isla-a-Pitre (RJN); July 31-Aug. 1, 1969, North Is., Stake Is. (RJN,KPA,RDP); June 25-27, 1976, Curlew Is. (LO'M,RDP,NN--3); July 9?, 1989, Curlew Is. (RDP); July 31, 1990, Curlew Is. (RM); July 14, 1998 (SWC); Curlew Is., July 2, 2000 on S. Gosier (1) and N. Breton Is. (2) (DM,RDP,PW); Grand Isle, Aug. 25, 2002 (MM,PW).

Recent records include Mar. 18, 1961 at Grand Isle (SAG), Aug. 20, 1967 at New Orleans (JK), Sep. 26, 1982 at Grand Isle (NLN,BC,SN), and **April...., 1998** at Grand Isle (RDP,MM,m.ob.)...Aug. 31, 2003 (PW,MM,RDP), Sept. 2004 (JF) Spring 1998 (RDP,MM), July 3, 1998 .....(CF) .....two records Jan 2006. Four were counted on Feb.6?, 2008 near Belle Pass (DM, et al).

**HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (*Limosa haemastica*) Occasional migrant.

In Southwest Louisiana the Hudsonian Godwit (known in southwest Louisiana as



"Ring-tailed Marlin") is uncommon to common in late April in short-grass marsh, especially in the rice fields south of Rayne, Jennings, and Crowley. It is almost unknown there in fall. In Southeast Louisiana, where it is much rarer at any season, the seasonal distribution is less clear; but the statistics are poor, there being only six records, which, somewhat surprisingly, are all inland. In short, one should probably expect to find the Hudsonian Godwit, if at all, in spring, despite the fact that half of the records are fall records. The records are (all but the last from New Orleans): Sep. 6, 1875 (GK--collected); Sep. 27, 1895 (GK--collected); Apr. 13, 1978 (JR); May 4, 1978 (NN--14); May 23, 1979 (JR,m.ob.); Oct. 1-9, 1983 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (MW,MA).

**MARBLED GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*) Common or uncommon migrant, uncommon in winter, casual in summer on barrier islands; strictly coastal.

The Marbled Godwit can be found near the coast (especially Fourchon Rd, and Fourchon Beach) almost anytime from mid-July through May, in numbers which range from one or two in mid-winter to 75-100 during migration periods, especially spring. Closer scrutiny of its temporal distribution seems to show that migrating Marbled Godwits begin arriving in late February (exemplified by a Feb. 26, 1961 record on North Is. (LEW,SGC--19) and 104 on Fourchon Rd. on Mar. 3, 1985 (RDP,MM,NN), even though in some years none are seen before April 1. Similarly, while fall migrants may pass through between mid-July and early October, godwits can often be found into November, and have been reported on the Grand Isle CBC (Jan. 2, 1984 --2; Dec. 30, 1984--17). [first fall 2002=9/8 fide MM]. There are at least 10 June records, the earliest being June 11, 1971 on North Is. (RDP,RJN,MM); on June 19-21, 1973 a total of 20 were seen on the Chandeleurs (RJN, et al). Records from Fourchon Rd. on June 20, 1982 (RDP,JR,MM,DM--8) and June 21, 1987 (RDP--10) are the only mainland "summer" records.....2004 (RDP,PW). Strongly coastal in its distribution, there are very few **New Orleans records**, most recently Oct. 16, 2004 (PW,DM).

With the caveats implied above, the expected dates of wintering are July to May. For migrants spring arrival is around March 1 with an expected departure of May 1; in fall, July 15-Oct. 1. Extreme spring dates are Feb. 26, 1961 (LEW,SGC) and May 31, 1950 (DRB), both from North Is., while the fall extremes are July 8, 1990 at Grand Isle (RDP,DM,GC--16) and Nov. 19, 1978 on E. Timbalier Is (NN,MM,AS,RDP--50) and Nov. 19, 1981 at New Orleans (DM--3).[ work on this]

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) Common winter resident on the gulf beach.

With the Sanderling, the Ruddy Turnstone is the typical shorebird of the immediate gulf beach. Inland occurrences are unusual, but there are records during migration from the Bonnet Carre Spillway and the Lake Pontchartrain seawall. Indeed Reinoehl found as many as 30 on the lakefront (May 18, 1979). Although the turnstone will not be found in numbers

on Southeast Louisiana beaches in June and July, records from that hiatus@ period are not rare. They include June 28, 1967 at North Is. (SAG,RDP, et al), June 20, 1982, (JR,MM,RDP,DM), June 17, 1984 (RDP,DM--10), June 23, 1991 (RDP--24), etc. all on Fourchon Beach, Lafourche Par.

Expected dates of occurrence are August 5 (?) to June 1, with extreme dates being July 31, 1969 on North Is. (RDP,RJN) and June 12, 1971 on Chandeleur Is. (RDP,RJN,MM).

**RED KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*) Uncommon to common migrant on the gulf beach; uncommon to scarce winter visitor.

Although the declining Red Knot is rarely seen away from the gulf beach, it will sometimes be found on mudflats near the beach at the height of migration. Winter occurrences are erratic, and it may take the coverage of a Christmas Count to turn up knots, but they should nonetheless be regarded as somewhat regular in winter. Their gregarious habits--they are almost invariably found in flocks, of 15-100 individuals--contribute to their "spotty" distribution. Red Knots are recognized by their plump appearance, the short to medium length bill, the wing stripe, and their flocking habits. Although they are usually gray, many will be molting into alternate plumage in late spring, and a few will have retained it as they move south. As is true with other species which may be present on the gulf beach during the breeding season, birds present in June will be in basic plumage. Maximum number: 530 at Grand Isle, May 1, 2004 (RDP,PW,DM).

There are at least seven records from mid to late June or early July, so that knots have been recorded in every month. Note that 105 were recorded in June 1987 and 120 in early July 2000. Ordinarily they can be expected from August through the end of May, but numbers are much greater in migration, with peaks occurring from mid or late March through May, and August through October. The "summer" records are: June 25-27, 1967 on Curlew Is. (SAG, RDP, et al); four records from Fourchon Beach: June 20, 1982 (MM,DM,JR,RDP), June 19, 1983 (RDP,DM,JN), June 27, 1985 (AS,GS), and June 21, 1987 (RDP--105); June 27, 2000, Curlew Is. (SWC,DLD--30); July 2, 2000, N. Breton Is. (DM,RDP,PW--120). Maximum numbers recorded are 530? on ...2004 (DM,RDp,PW).

The only inland records other than from the Bonnet Carre Spillway are from New Orleans: Oct. 31, 1979 (MB), and Nov. 17-24, 1991 at New Orleans (DM, et al).

Expected dates of occurrence (somewhat uncertain because of the June records listed above) are July 20 to June 1; extreme dates are July 17, 1977 in Lafourche Parish (RDP,MM,NN) and June 12, 1971 on the Chandeleur Is. (MM,RJN,RDP).

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) Very common winter resident on gulf beaches

The Sanderling is the typical shorebird of the gulf beach from August through at

least May, often feeding actively at the edge of the surf. Although in late April and May some individuals will be in alternate (breeding) plumage, most Sanderlings, at any season, will be in immature or basic plumages. In migration Sanderlings are sometimes found on the Lake Pontchartrain seawall, with a maximum of 8 on May 27, 1978 (JR). During 1977-80 Reinoehl found Sanderlings on the lakefront in the periods Apr. 25-May 29 and Aug. 11-Oct. 18, which gives one an idea of when they migrate.

The numerous June records make it difficult to be very definite about arrival and departure dates in fall and spring: June 27, 1976 on Curlew Is. (RDP,LO'm,NN--100), June 20, 1982, (JR,MM,DM,RDP), June 19, 1983 (JN,DM,RDP), June 17, 1984 (DM,RDP), and June 23, 1991 (RDP--156) all on Fourchon Beach, Lafourche Par, etc....July 2, 2000.... Approximate dates of occurrence are August 1 to June 1.

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) Regular spring and fall migrant, sometimes common

Since Allan Phillips pointed out that there is no specimen evidence of the occurrence of this species on the gulf coast in winter (*American Birds* **29**: 799 (1975), there have been no credible sight records between November and March. Clearly the Semipalmated Sandpiper is a regular migrant from August to October and March through May, though more information is needed to define the migration periods more precisely. On May 28, 1991 in the vicinity of Grand Isle, almost all peeps were Semipalmated. Occasional winter records may occur, and indeed there are credible records for Southeast Louisiana on Nov. 23 and 28, Dec. 20 and 28, and Feb. 4 and 7. Yet even these should be regarded with caution since at the time Semipalmated Sandpipers were considered regular throughout the winter. Any "peep" suspected of belonging to this species, between November and March, should be carefully scrutinized, and every attempt should be made to obtain definitive photographs or to induce the bird to call.

Oberholser reported the species as "abundant" in January and December 1932, including specific records from Main Pass on Dec. 19 (300) and Dec. 23 (1400). These records must now be regarded with skepticism..

The Semipalmated Sandpiper is slightly smaller and typically grayer than the Western, it has a "dark-eyed" look, its bill is straighter, more nearly of uniform thickness, and generally shorter than that of the Western, and its call is a "cherk" or "chrrup" or "kriip." (jert!BZimmer). It is less likely to be found on the front beach than Western Sandpiper. Both species have partially webbed toes. Semipalmated Sandpipers are deceptively difficult to identify, since bill length overlaps that of Western, and indeed can be quite substantial. The bill is, however, straight and somewhat peg-like, as opposed to the long, tapering, slightly drooping bill of the western. Furthermore, Semipalmated has a thinner-necked, less hunched-over look. See Crossley, et al, for details.

This species closely resembles Little Stint, which has not been recorded on the gulf coast, even to the extent of having a rather similar call, but see Viet and Jonsson (1984) or Colston and Burton (1988). In Louisiana, this species will generally be seen in alternate plumage in the spring, and in worn alternate or juvenal plumage in fall migration.

Expected dates of occurrence are April 10 to June 5 and July 25 to October 15, with some uncertainty. Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 5, 1961 (SAG) [Mar. 14, 2004 (RDP,MM,DMBvideo)] and June 13, 1935 (TDB--coll), both at New Orleans; the fall extremes are July 8, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG) and Oct. 28, 1935 at Grand Isle (GHL--coll.). Peak abundance of Semipalmated Sandpipers comes fairly late in spring migration, perhaps late April. A June 17, 1984 record from Fourchon Rd. (RDP,DM--12) is arbitrarily regarded as a "summer" or "out of season" occurrence, though the birds were probably late northbound migrants.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) Common to abundant winter resident

Western Sandpipers can usually be identified by their rather long black bill which sometimes perceptibly droops at the tip, and by the rusty crown, auriculars, and scapulars, with traces of the latter remaining in winter. There is, however, an overlap between short-billed male Western Sandpipers and long-billed female Semipalmated Sandpipers. A short bill, alone, is not sufficient to support an identification as Semipalmated; bill shape (slightly drooping, with a hint of a bulbous tip) is crucial, and vocalization is desirable. Long-billed Western Sandpipers, however, cause no problem, and more often than not the flocks are homogeneous, so that a suspected Semipalmated in a large flock of Westerns will often be found to be a short-billed Western when closely examined. Westerns have a "jeet" call which in no way resembles Semipalmated. An important article on the previous species, this one, and the Least Sandpiper, plus Rufous-necked, Little, and Temminck's Stints is Veit and Jonsson (1984). See also Colston and Burton (1988). Maximum number recorded is 1500 at Fourchon Beach on April 9, 1994 (MM,DM,RDP,JR).

Expected dates are July 20 to June 1, while extreme dates of occurrence are July 7, 1991 on Fourchon Beach (RSB,GW--7) [and Sep. 8, 1981 at Grand Isle (JR,MB)] and June 4, 1935 at New Orleans (TDB--coll). There are at least two out of season records: June 20, 1982 (MM,DM,JR,RDP) and June 19, 1983 (RDP,DM,JN), both on Fourchon Rd. in Lafourche Parish. July 2, 2000 N. Gosier Is. (DM,RDP,PW).

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) Very common winter resident, mostly coastwise

Although the Least Sandpiper is common on beaches and mudflats from July through early June, its numbers rarely equal the concentrations of Western Sandpipers (and sometimes Semipalmated as well) during their peak migrations. Although it is usually seen at or near the coast, that is primarily a reflection of the scarcity of shorebird accessible shorebird habitat away from the coast. It is sometimes seen on the Lake Pontchartrain

seawall in New Orleans during migration, on the campuses of UNO after rains, and on US 11 when water is low. To a much greater extent than the other "peeps", the Least Sandpiper shows a fondness for feeding on rock jetties and seawalls. The call, a distinct "kleep", is the most easily learned of the "peeps." This, along with yellow legs, brownish coloration of its upperparts, and heavy pectoral streaking, makes it easy to identify. A Temmink's Stint might well be written off as a Least, because of the yellow legs, but its cricket-like call is distinctive, and Long-toed Stint resembles Least Sandpiper very closely.

Expected dates for the Least Sandpiper are July 20 to approximately June 1; extreme dates of occurrence are July 9, 1979 at (FB) and June 7, 1933 (HCO--coll.), both at Grand Isle.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris fuscicolis*) Uncommon to quite common spring migrant, primarily in May. Absent in fall migration.

The White-rumped Sandpiper often is the most common small shorebird in mid to late May, but is absent otherwise. Its fall migration routes carry it way fromn the region. It, like the next species is quite long-winged. It will stand out on a mud-flat in late spring by virtue of being somewhat larger than the usual peeps, because of its gray plumage with very distinct chevron-like breast markings, and relatively heavy black bill. The call is a distinctive "squeaky tzeet", to adopt Johnsgaard's (1981) description. Maximum numbers: 400 at Grand Isle on May 18, 1981 (NN,DM).

Expected dates of occurrence are May 1 to June 1; extreme dates: Apr. 20, 1986 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP) and June 11, 1981 at New Orleans (JR). There are only two fall records, Aug. 13, 1968 (JK) and Sept. 2 and 6 (JR), all from New Orleans. There are also three "summer" records: June 20, 1982 on Fourchon Rd. (MM,JR,DM,RDP), July 9?, 1989 on Curlew Is. (RDP), and July 3, Plaquemines Par (CF).

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*) Rare migrant

Baird's Sandpiper, which migrates mostly to the west of the checklist area, is more common in SW. Louisiana. It may be found on damp short-grass fields or on mudflats, sometimes quite near the gulf beach. In part because it is less frequently encountered than the other peeps, Baird's is perhaps the most frequently mis-identified, and certainly poses a non-trivial identification problem. Baird's is *very long-winged* (wing tips extending beyond the tail), awareness of which fact can forestall most of these identification difficulties (leaving only White-rumped as a possibility, and they are not easily confused). It is buffy on the breast, like a Least Sandpiper--but larger, longer billed-- is dark-legged, has a pale face, and its back is scaly or blotchy. It has a rather horizontal carriage and a tail with very little white on the sides. The call resembles that of the Least, but is more nearly a "kriip." In a typical year there may be only one or two records from SE Louisiana.

Expected dates of occurrence are somewhat uncertain, but generally April 15 to May 20 in spring and mid-July through September. Extreme dates in fall are Mar. 20, 1983 (DM) and May 28, 1966 (JK--12), both at New Orleans, and in fall, July 10, 1970 at the Rigolets (JK,WW,LW) and Oct. 3, 1959 at Grand Isle (LCB,DGB,SLW,BLM).

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** (*Calidris melanotos*) Common spring and fall migrant

The Pectoral Sandpiper is most common on the same soggy short-grass fields which are favored by Baird's and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, but will not infrequently be found in shallow marshy situations as well. Although it is not readily confused with any common shorebird, both its close relative the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, which has not been recorded in Louisiana, and the reeve, or female Ruff, can resemble this species. The call of the Pectoral Sandpiper is a "prrrp" or "pritt," quite different from the two-note "krip-krip" call of the Sharp-tailed (Johnsgaard, 1981). The breast of the Sharp-tailed has no abrupt cutoff, forming a pectoral band, but fades into the lower breast. See *British Birds* **73**: 33-345, for identification details.

Expected dates of occurrence in spring are March 10 to May 10; in fall August 1 to November 1. Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 4, 1979 (JR) and May 23, 1979 (JR), both at New Orleans. Fall extremes are July 11, 1981 at New Orleans and Nov. 14, 1972. There are two winter records..... and one "summer" record: June 29, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG). [spring 2004?] Winter: Dec..... (RDP), 26 Feb. 2004 (DM)

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** (*Calidris maritima*) Accidental in Winter

The Purple Sandpiper is known for its predilection for rock jetties and "rip-rap" throughout its range. Although it is common on the eastern seaboard, and though there have been a number of records for coastal Mississippi (perhaps of the same individuals?), there are only two records of this species for Southeast Louisiana, of a bird found on April 3, 1994 (CL) at the west end of Grand Isle, and which remained until....[4/20], and one at Lakefront airport on the Dec....., 2001 New Orleans CBC (KR,DM). There are photographs of both birds. Purple Sandpipers have occurred on at least two previous occasions in Sw. Louisiana.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) Common to very common winter resident

On a typical mudflat in Southeast Louisiana, the Dunlin may outnumber all other shorebird species combined, although in recent years its numbers seem to have declined. Although it is distinctly larger than the three species of small peeps with which is often found, it may sometimes be confused with the Western Sandpiper if no size comparison is possible. It has a much longer bill than the Western and the bill droops quite clearly. Its call is also quite different, resembling that of the Least Sandpiper. Maximum number recorded is 2500 on Fourchon Beach and Grand Isle, April 9, 1994 (MM,DM,RDP,JR).

Expected dates of wintering are September 10 to May 25; extreme dates of occurrence are Aug. 10, 1980 at Grand Isle (MM,NN,DM) and June 11, 1971 on North Is. (RDP,MM,NN). There are at least two out-of-season records: June 28, 1967 on North Is. (SAG,RDP, et al) and July 10, 1970 at the Rigolets (JK,WW,LW)....**1992 at Grand Isle (AS,GS).....**

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) Accidental vagrant

There are around a dozen records for Louisiana of Curlew Sandpiper, including only three from Southeast Louisiana. The first was August 22, 1975 on Fourchon Road in Lafourche Parish (MM,NN), and the second, in alternate plumage, was seen on 4 May 2003 on Fourchon Beach (RDP). Most recent was one seen at Buras on.....(DM,PW). Although the Curlew Sandpiper is a close relative of the Dunlin, it is often described as more strongly resembling a Stilt Sandpiper. Compared to the Dunlin, it has a longer, slightly more decurved bill, and a white rump. In breeding plumage, of course, it is unmistakable, and in late spring an individual molting into basic plumage could be quite red below.

Records from the rice fields of south-central Louisiana suggests that the Curlew Sandpiper might be as regular in spring as fall, though quite rare in either.

**STILT SANDPIPER** (*Calidris himantopus*) Common to sometimes very common migrant, uncommon to rare in winter

The Stilt Sandpiper, which similar in size to, and superficially resembles both Lesser Yellowlegs and the dowitchers, is often abundant in migration; the maximum recorded is 1000+ on Fourchon Road on April 30, 1984 (DM). In spring the rusty head markings are distinctive, as are the barred underparts. The bill, which is considerably longer than that of a yellowlegs, is shorter than that of the Short-billed Dowitcher and usually has a pronounced droop. The Stilt Sandpiper has more of an eyeline than the Lesser Yellowlegs, and has greenish legs and a white rump. It often feeds "waist-deep" in water, and gives a "querp" call and a social chatter. Stilt Sandpipers do occur in winter, but are much less common than in migration. Most winter in South America.

Expected dates in spring are March 25 to May 10 and in fall, July 25 to about October 15. Extreme dates of spring occurrence are Mar. 7, 2000 (PW) at Port Fourchon [Mar. 18, 1984 on Fourchon Rd. (DM,RDP)] and May 22, 1971 at Grand Isle, and fall extremes are July 16, 1989 on Fourchon Rd (MM,NN,RDP) and Nov. 10, 1979 at Grand Isle. Although winter records, which include: Feb. 11, 1975 at Grand Isle (RJN,BC), Dec. 1, 1991 in Lafourche Parish (DM,GG,RDP--10), Dec. 29, 1991 at Venice (DM), Jan. 17, 1999 at Fourchon (DM,MM,PW--300), and 8 February 2004 (MM,RDP,PW) are not numerous, it is clear from recent records and studies in the rice fields of south-central Louisiana indicate that the Stilt Sandpiper is a rather regular wintering species (*J. La. Ornith.* **1**: 35 (1991)), which can sometimes be abundant, at least in south-central Louisiana.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** (*Tryngites subruficollis*) Uncommon migrant

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is found almost most often on the same short-grass fields often favored by Lesser Golden Plovers and Upland Sandpipers (which, do however, tolerate somewhat higher grass). In this area, this habitat can be found at Lakefront Airport, the Exxon fields on Grand Isle, etc. Not infrequently, however, Buff-breasted Sandpipers are seen on a coastal mudflat or beach. Although this species is rarely common, a maximum of 115 were seen at New Orleans on Sep. 20, 1980 (JR).

Expected dates in spring migration are April 5 to May 1; in fall they are August 10 to September 25. Extreme dates are spring: Mar. 14, 1978 (JR) and May 16, 1980 (JR); fall: July 24, 1982 (MM) and Oct. 25, 1970 (RDP)--all from New Orleans.

**RUFF** (*Philomachus pugnax*) Accidental

There are three records of Ruff from Southeast Louisiana, the first two from the same location, the main campus of the University of New Orleans: August 12-20, 1978 (MB, m.ob.), of which a photograph appeared in the Aug. 20 New Orleans Times-Picayune (ph-Fred Barry; also *AB* 32 (6) 1173), and August 12, 1980 (NN, et al). Both records have been ratified by the LOS Bird Records Committee. The 1978 record was the second report for Louisiana and the first documented occurrence. The most recent record is of one on Grand Isle on Aug. 5, 2001 (MM,RDP,PW; photos).

The Ruff is likely to occur only in basic (non-breeding) plumage. It is a rather distinctive medium-sized shorebird with an upright stance, a small head, thick neck, a bill which is pale at the base, and has white at the sides of the tail which is often seen as two "oval" patches. Often it has considerable black blotching below. The female ("Reeve") is about the size of a Lesser Yellowlegs, while the male is definitely larger. The Reeve could be confused with a Pectoral Sandpiper, although it lacks the pectoral band.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodramus griseus*) Abundant migrant, common winter resident, mostly on or near the coast.

Generally the Short-billed Dowitcher is the commoner of the two species of dowitchers in winter. It is generally more likely to be found in saline (beach) or estuarine situations than its congener. For that reason few Long-billed Dowitchers are encountered in the Grand Isle-Fourchon area, while in the fresh-water rice fields of south-central Louisiana Long-bills dominate. Identification by plumage is certainly possible (see, for example, Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* or Zimmer 2000). Short-bills have a noticeably flatter back profile by comparison with the "swallowed-a-grapefruit" profile of Long-bills, but by far the safest approach is to flush any bird in question and, in the case of this species, to listen for the distinct, somewhat mellow, "tu-tu-tu.." call. Frequently a flock will not call, whatever the provocation, and then one will have to rely on plumage characteristics, if a



close look is possible. As many as 1000 or more have been recorded at one time, for example April 9, 1994 (MM,DM,RDP,JR). An estimate of 8000 at Port Fourchon was made on Jan. 23, 2009 (DM,RDP,PW). Occasionally the two species will be found in the same flock.

According to Jack Reinoehl, the temporal distribution along the New Orleans lakefrton in migration during 1977-80 was April 3-May 19 and July 23-September 20. On the Atlantic and Pacific coasts this species arrives earlier than its cousin in fall by 10-14 days; in Southeast Louisiana, for example, all dowitchers recorded in fall migration in 1990 before July 22 were Short-billed. There are a number of mid to late June records of late spring migrants, early fall migrants, or non-breeding lingering dowitchers, including Lonesome Island on June 26, 1981 (RDP) and Grand Island (Half Moon Island), June 13, 1982 (MM,DM,LO'M,RDP). Other records from this intermediate period, specifically for this species, are July 8, 1981 at Grand Isle (JR,MB) and four June records from Fourchon Rd., Lafourche Par: June 20, 1982 (RDP,DM,JR,MM), June 19, 1983 (RDP,DM,JN), June 17, 1984 (RDP,DM--75), and June 27, 1985 (GS,AS).; July 2, 2000 on N. Breton Is. (DM,RDP,PW); June 23, 2003 on Grand Terre Is. (CW,SWB3).

Expected dates are August 1 to (May 25), with extreme dates of occurrence being June 11, in 1930 (North Is., fide HCO) and in 1984 (Grassy Is., RDP,.NN,DM, LO'M). The migration peaks are broadly mid-March to the end of May and late July into October. The June 11 dates are somewhat arbitrary, given the number of late June and early July records.

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodramus scolopaceus*) Common migrant, regular to common winter resident

Although definitive identification is best made by call--in this case the sharp "keek" call of the Long-billed Dowitcher, this species can usually be identified in breeding plumage by the fact that the red of the underparts extends well onto the lower belly, whereas the Short-billed Dowitcher has a white belly of greater or lesser extent. Other characteristics are mostly unreliable, except the tail pattern, which can be used in any plumage. The Short-billed Dowitcher *may* show a tail pattern consisting of widely spaced-thin bars, when seen at close range; the present species shows thick black bars separated by thin white bars (not all individuals are distinguishable). See Kaufman for details. Long-billed Dowitchers are the more common in fresh water situations, e.g., inland locations.

Expected dates are August 1 to June 5 and extreme dates of occurrence are July 11, 1975 and June 6, 1918 on the Chandeleur Islands (AMB).

**COMMON SNIPE** (*Gallinago gallinago*) Fairly common in winter.

The Common Snipe is typically found in wet fields, often in quite large numbers. Though certainly not as common as they once were Common Snipes have increased somewhat on recent New Orleans Christmas Counts, after a minimum in the early 1970's.

Expected dates of occurrence are September 20 to April 20, while extreme dates are Aug. 5, 1966 at (JK) and May 7, 1978 (JR), both at New Orleans.

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK** (*Philohela minor*) Uncommon winter resident.

Information on the nesting of the woodcock in Southeast Louisiana is quite sketchy, being based on a single record of early nesting activity on Jan. 29, 1890 at Covington (GEB)--Beyer's dog supposedly retrieved a young bird, and three summer records: Aug. 9, 1958 at Reserve (DW--coll.), June 12, 1977 in the Honey Island swamp (LO'M, RDP), and June 12, 1988 at Franklinton (NN). It is thus ordinarily encountered as a winter resident, typically in damp or swampy woodlands.

Expected date of arrival is somewhat difficult to specify, since although there are occasional late August records, the species is rarely encountered before about November 20. The expected departure date adopted here is March 1, which may not be realistic. Extreme dates are Aug. 25, 1969 at Grand Isle (RJR) and Sept. 7, 2003 at Grand Isle (RDP); and, in spring, April 17, 1929 at Grand Isle (*fide* HCO) and April 17, 1959 at Covington (JBK),

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) Uncommon migrant, significantly more common in fall than spring

This is the common phalarope in Louisiana, especially in fall when it may be common near or on the coast. In alternate plumage, the three species are unmistakable, especially the more colorful females. In basic plumage the differences are much more subtle, but Wilson's is easily distinguished from its relatives, the Red-necked and Red Phalaropes, by its white tail and strong wing stripe. Most birders know of the phalaropes' predilection to engage in a circular or spinning feeding behavior and of the fact that the females are more brightly colored than the males. Wilson's Phalaropes are much more common in Southwest Louisiana.

Although expected dates are somewhat uncertain, they can be taken to be approximately August 15 to September 25 in fall and **April 15** to May 15 in spring, although there are only about a dozen spring records. In fall, extreme early dates are July 9, 2003 at New Orleans (Mary Radford, David D=Aquin), July 17, 1988 at ....(MM), and July 23, 2011 at Ft. Jackson (JB,DB); extreme late date is Oct. 22, 1978 at Grand Isle (SAG,MEL); in spring the extremes are April 9, 1994 (MM,DM,RDP,JR) and May 18, 1981 (NN,DM), both on Fourchon Road in Lafourche Parish near Grand Isle. The single winter record was the first for Louisiana: Feb. 7, 1982 on Fourchon Road (MM,DM,LO'M,RDP,SN,JR).

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) Casual to accidental fall visitor

somewhat to strongly pelagic in winter, the other being the next species. Although

both *may* winter in the gulf off Louisiana-, there are few records to support this conjecture (see, however, records off Alabama). However, on Sept. 27, 2009, two or more were seen and photographed on a pelagic trip, 34 miles off SW Pass (m.ob.—photos RDP, DP, etc).

The five records of this species from land are all from Fourchon Road in Lafourche Parish, and seem to indicate that the most likely time to find Red-necked Phalaropes is in late September. These records are Sept. 18-25, 1976 (RH,RJS), May 22, 1977 (RJN), Sep. 20, 1981 (JK,LH), Sep. 12-18, 1982 (MM,NN,NLN,TD), and Sep. 3, 1989 (**RDP....**). The Red-necked Phalarope is one of the two species of phalaropes which are pelagic, and on Sept. 27, 2009 a pair of Red-necked Phalaropes were seen and photographed off.....(RDP—photos, m.ob., Boslers).

This species can be told from the next, once Wilson's is eliminated, by the long, fine, bill and streaked back and wing coverts; and a dark crown as well. On the other hand, Red Phalarope has a stocky bill and a gray back.

**RED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) Accidental in fall or winter; possibly wintering on open water of gulf

There are two records of this species for Southeast Louisiana, of one found on Fourchon Road during the fall of 1989, present from Oct.30-Nov. 15 (**CLyon,NN,RDP,PW,DPM,MM,GS--ph,JS**) and another on Oct. 10, 1998, in Metairie on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain (RDP). For the possibility of wintering on the gulf, see Duncan and Havard, and Clapp, et al.

#### FAMILY *Laridae* GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Larus atricilla*) Abundant resident

The Laughing Gull is common throughout the year and can always be found along the coast or on Lake Pontchartrain. It nests in large numbers on the barrier islands off the delta, especially in the Chandeleurs, and Curlew Island in particular. In 1976 Portnoy found 15 colonies in Southeast Louisiana containing 19,000 breeding adults, with a maximum size of 5400. As many as 11,000 breeding pairs have been counted on North Island. Numbers recorded on New Orleans Christmas Counts have undergone a large increase (factor of 5?) since about 1965.

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** (*Larus pipixcan*) Uncommon to rare migrant in fall, rare to casual in spring

Although this species is more or less regular in migration in Cameron Parish in Southwest Louisiana, it is not frequently encountered in Southeast Louisiana. Most recent records have been from the New Orleans lakefront, primarily because of the good coverage there. Identification in other than adult plumage requires some care, and mid-winter records

are always suspect. The photograph of the first winter bird in Farrand (1983) gives a good idea of what the non-breeding Franklin's Gull looks like, with a half-hood and prominent white eye crescents. Franklin's Gulls will usually be found in company with Laughing Gulls, where patient searching, noting their shorter-legs and plumage characteristics, will allow them to be ferreted out.

The paucity of spring records makes assigning expected dates impossible, and indeed there are only two records available to the author, April 12, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG) and April 16, 1980 near Golden Meadow (MM,JW). In fall the expected dates are October 15 to November 10, with extremes of Sept. 12-21, 1974 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS) and Nov. 16, 1991 at New Orleans (MM,DM). The winter records are January 26, 1932 at Larose (HCO--2), December 24, 1932 at Bayou des Allemandes (HCO), Dec. 3 (AS,GS) and Dec. 4, 1989-...(RDP,DM) at New Orleans--two different birds; **Dec. 26, 1993 (.....)**; Jan. 2006 Grand Isle (SWC,DLD). Oberholser listed six winter records for Louisiana, five of them representing his only observations of Franklin's Gulls in the state. Some scepticism seems appropriate in evaluating those records.

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** (*Larus philadelphia*) Uncommon to sometimes common winter resident

Bonaparte's Gulls can usually be found along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain in winter, often near Seabrook Bridge, and occasionally along canals or over ponds, including sewerage ponds. Otherwise they will be found near the coast, often in flocks of Laughing Gulls, frequently resting on the waters of the gulf. Adults flash white primaries from above, and immatures are almost unmistakable. The ratio of adults to immatures is rather high. By April some Bonaparte's Gulls will have gained the black hood. One is reminded that a good place to look for the rare Little Gull, which has not been recorded in SE Louisiana, is with flocks of Bonaparte's Gull.

The same can be said of Common Black-headed Gull, which is very much overdue for Louisiana.

It has been found in several occasions in neighboring states and should be looked for diligently here. It would be expected around small ponds, somewhat like this species.

Expected dates of occurrence are November 15 to April 5; extreme dates are Sep. 24, 1956 at New Orleans (BMM,CLE,HAJE) and May 29, 1988 (RDP). There are two "summer" records: June 6, 1933 on Breton Island (fide HCO) and ..... on Curlew Island (LO'M).

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) Abundant winter resident, uncommon to rare in summer

The Ring-billed Gull is common on Lake Pontchartrain and along the coast, and is abundant at sanitary landfills. Large aggregations of Ring-billed Gulls will often be found on

shopping center parking lots or on low, wet grassy areas, as, for example, in Lafreniere Park in Metairie. Indeed any such collection of gulls is guaranteed to be nearly 100% of this species; it is normally present from October into April. On New Orleans Christmas Counts, the maximum number is 98,211 in 1992. Both this and the next species have shown huge increases on CBC's since the early 1970's, perhaps because of better coverage of garbage dumps. In winter, the birds mainly spend the night on the lake (perhaps the river?) and feed in the dumps. A few Ring-billed Gulls can usually be found throughout the summer, mostly on the coast.

The similar Mew Gull (or Common Gull, the European race) might be expected to occur occasionally in Louisiana.

**CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*) Occasional to accidental winter vagrant

There are three records for Southeast Louisiana of this gull from the Great Plains, but none since the year 2000. The records are: one seen briefly at the BFI (Crescent Acres) dump in Arabi on Feb. 18, 1989 (CMarantz,SWC,DLD,DPM), another collected there on **Dec. 26, 1992 (SWC,DLD....)**, and one on the New Orleans CBC on Dec. 23, 2000 (MM,DM,GG). For identification details, see Harrison (1983), Grant (...), Olsen and Larsson (2005), or Dunne and Howell (2007). Briefly, however, the California Gull is intermediate in size between Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, has a rounded-looking head, and a relatively slight bill. In adult plumage, the mantle is distinctly darker than that of a Herring Gull, its legs are green to greenish-yellow, the eye is dark, and the bill usually has both black and red spots on the lower mandible. Primaries P9 and P10 have mirrors. There is not much of a window in the primaries. First year birds are more difficult, but have the same slight build as the adult, a pink bill with black tip (which Herring may show), pinkish legs, a wing pattern dominated by dark primaries and a dark secondary band, a dark tail with only slightly lighter coverts.

**HERRING GULL** (*Larus argentatus*) Abundant winter resident, recently breeding in the Chandeleurs

Like the Ring-billed Gull, the Herring Gull is abundant in winter at local garbage dumps, but can be found on the New Orleans lakefront in considerable numbers as well, especially near Seabrook Bridge.. The New Orleans Christmas Count maximum is 48,261 individuals, set in 1992. While all of the early writers report that the Herring Gull was most abundant on the Mississippi River at New Orleans, that is not now the case. The reason may be the presence of garbage dumps which they now so strongly favor and the lack of fishing vessels using the New Orleans port.

From October into April the Herring Gull is common to abundant near open water, and there are a few records every summer. Most birds, in winter or summer, are in immature

plumage, not surprising for a "four-year" gull, but in fact the majority are first-year birds.

Since about 1990, Herring Gulls have been found breeding on the Chandeleurs, notably Curlew Island, presumably within the species, but apparently with Kelp Gulls as well.

**THAYER'S GULL** (*Larus thayeri*) Rare winter resident

Because of the difficulty in identifying Thayer's Gull, it is not clear how regular is its occurrence in Southeast Louisiana. The fact that five or more were seen in New Orleans dumps in late winter of 1982, when they were first discovered, show that in some winters, at least, they are present in small numbers. On the other hand, the distribution of records, with three in 1982, two in 1984, and five between 1987 and 2001, in spite of considerable searching, indicates that their occurrence is apparently sporadic, though a contributing factor has been the closing of New Orleans landfills. All but two records (May, 1984 and Feb. 27-28, 1988) have been of first year birds. Adult birds, which will rarely be seen here given the local rarity of the species and the fact that it takes four years to reach maturity, have a dark eye, but one must be careful in using that character since Herring Gull can appear to have a dark eye if not seen well and some Thayer's have light eyes. Thayer's Gull has a noticeably rounded head and a relatively slender bill which in first winter plumage is all or mostly black. In first-year birds the the mantle and wings are often very checkered or frosty, and the wing tips in resting birds are brownish-black. Late winter birds may be very bleached, as will be the case with Herring Gulls. Seen from below, the primary feathers are fully translucent in contrast to the Herring Gull, in which the outermost primaries are not. The primaries have crescent-shaped barring on them and often there is a dark smudge around the eye. Good sources of information on identification are Gosselin and David (1975), Lehman (1980), and Kaufman (1990); Howell and Dunn (2007) see also the photograph in *American Birds* **39**: 183 (1985). In theory, confusion could result not only from a petit female first year Herring Gull, but from an Iceland Gull or Glaucous-winged Gull, neither of which have been recorded even near Louisiana.

[Recent work cast some doubt on one or more of the Louisiana records of Thayer's Gull, including one or more listed above. One simply will have to await the outcome of further studies.]

The ten records, which span the period December 23 to March 29 (or later?) are: February 14, 1982 at New Orleans (MM--photo,DM,NN); February 28, 1982 at New Orleans (SWC,MR,DM,MM,RDP--**3?**, one collected); March 14 [**LBRC 7**], 1982 at New Orleans (SWC,MR,VR,DM,MM,RDP--**2?**, one collected); Dec. 23, 1984 (DPM,JH); May 9-13, 1985 on Fourchon Beach (NLN,BCV,DM,RDP--photo; rejected by LBRC); December 29, 1985 (JH,DPM); February 26, 1987 (SWC,DLD,AS,GS) at Venice; March 29, 1987 at New Orleans (RDP); 27-28 February, 1988 (DLD,SWC,GS), Dec. 30, 1989 (SWC,DLD--ph) in Arabi; and February 22, 1991 at New Orleans (PL,SF,AS,GS,CMarantz).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus fuscus*)    Rare winter visitor

One of the more remarkable examples of changing distribution or abundance among the birds which occur in Southeast Louisiana is that of the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Not recorded until February 1982, there are now upwards of 50 records, from either New Orleans (lakefront or dumps), the Lafourche--Grand Isle vicinity, and Venice. There is now usually at least one record in every winter. Most of these records have been of adult birds, with several first winter records, and one or two second-winter record, and one thir-year sub-adult.

Although here are records for every month, this species is most likely to be found between October and April. Lesser Black-backed Gull is the most likely of the dark-backed gulls to be seen in Southeast Louisiana, and is characterized by its moderate size (size of Herring Gull or smaller), yellow legs, charcoal rather than black mantle, and red orbital ring. There is one mirror on P10. While first winter birds are reasonably distinctive, with a black bill, often double secondary bar, and a tail which is nearly white at the base, with a wide dark tail band. The reader is referred to Grant, Ohlsen and Larson, Howell and Dunn for details.

In the absence of active, accessible landfills in the New Orleans area, the best place to find this species is on the beach at Fourchon or Grand Isle. The high counts are six near the mouth of SW Pass on Sept. 27, 2009 (m.ob.), and five on Oct. 5, 2008 at the latter spot (RDP,PW,DM). The records span the period Sep. 11 to May 26, with a possible record from June 1988 which might have been a Kelp Gull.

There are upwards of 40 records, the first 20-25 of which include: Feb. 14-28, 1982 at New Orleans (DM,m.ob.--photos MM,RDP), the first record for Louisiana; Mar. 11-Apr. 22, 1984 at Fourchon Beach (DM,NN,m.ob.--photos RDP--see AB., a third winter bird; Feb. 6, 1987 at New Orleans (RDP,NN); Feb. 27, 1987 (DM,GS--same as previous?); March 22, 1987 at New Orleans (RDP); June 21, 1987 on Fourchon Beach (RDP); Jan. 9, 1988 at New Orleans...(second winter?); an adult Feb. 6, 1988 (NN,RDP); **June 5?, 1988** on Curlew Island (TP--second year); Sep. 11-29, 1988 at Fourchon Beach (DM,GR,MM,NN,RDP); Oct. 8, 1988 on Fourchon Beach (DM,RDP); Dec. 28, 1988 (DLD,SWC,GS,) in St. Bernard Par.; Feb. 18, 1989 in St. Bernard Par (CMarantz, SWC,DLD, DPM, MM,GS,AS,DBCridler); Grand Isle; July 8, 1990 on Fourchon Beach (DM,RDP,GC); **Sept. 1, 1990 (PW,JS); Nov. 11, 1990 ...(...--photo;2); ....CBC...**May 26, 1991 at Grand Isle (CS,PW,GC,DM,MM,RDP--first? summer); Feb. 22, 1990 in St. Bernard Par. (CMarantz, PLehman); May 26, 1991 at Grand Isle (PW—ph, CS); Nov. 16, 1991 at New Orleans (MM,DM--first year); St. Bernard Parish, on the New Orleans CBC on Dec. 21, 1991 (CM,DD,SWC--4); at the same dump on the 1992 New Orleans CBC on Dec. 26 (....--5) ; **Jan. 3, 1993 at Venice (.....); April 8, 1993 a Grand Isle (AS, et al); Dec. 26, 1994 at New Orleans (DLD,SWC—2); Mar. 9, 1995 at New Orleans (SWC,DLD—3); Oct. 14, 1995 on Fourchon Beach (PW,....).....? ...winter 99-2000 DM, KVR--NO; PW,DPM--Venice; Apr-May 2001 (MM, et al); Jan. 2002 at Mandeville (SWC,DLD). Venice CBC, Jan. 2, 2004 (RDP,EW, et al). Mar 6&, 2004, New Orleans (DM,PW). Feb. 24, 2008, Fourchon (RDP—ph). Pelagic trip, fall 2009 mouth of SW Pass (6). Apr. 17?, 2010**

**(SWC,DLD), Queen Bess I.**

**WESTERN GULL** (*Larus occidentalis*) Accidental

The only record of this species for Louisiana is of a bird collected on Fourchon Beach on October 27, 1996 (MM,RDP--LSUMZ). This record has recently been accepted by the LBRC on the basis of genetic information.

**KELP GULL** (*Larus dominicanus*) Sparse breeder on Curlew Island; hybridizing with Herring Gull

The discovery of Kelp Gulls along the Southeast Louisiana coast, primarily on Curlew Island, beginning in the summer of 1989 is one of the most remarkable of all Louisiana bird records. They were not known previously from the northern hemisphere. Two birds, first thought to be Lesser Black-backed Gulls, were seen and photographed July 7-8, 1989 (LO'M, RDP). The birds were strongly paired. The following summer two birds were again seen (LO'M--photos,JPG), and later that summer (July 31, 1990) a single adult thought to be of this species was seen in company with an adult Herring Gull and a juvenile gull (RM). From the behavior of the three birds, it was thought that the juvenile gull might have been the result of mating between the "Kelp" and Herring Gulls. In the summer of 1991, one Kelp Gull was seen, along with a first or second summer gull which may have been an immature Kelp Gull. Both the adult and the immature bird were well photographed (LO'M).

The original adult birds were robust, Herring Gull sized, with very black mantles, a very massive bill, yellow feet, and a light eye with a red orbital ring. The initial identification of *L. fuscus* is ruled out by the build of the birds, the massive bill, and the mantle color (except for *L. fuscs fuscus*). Yellow-footed Gull, the only other possibility, is ruled out by the orbital ring color (Guy McCaskie, pers. comm.).

During the summer of 1994, at least four adults were seen on Curlew I. on ..... (LO'M, SWC,DLD), along with several "intermediates", and a probably record came from Baptiste Collette Bayou on **Sept. ....**, 1994 (Bob Russell). **LOS pelagic trip...** A pelagic trip out of Fourchon Pass on April 17, 1999 encountered at least two adult Kelp-type gulls, at least one evidently not a hybrid (SWC,DLD; JSBphotos).

Dittmann and Cardiff have documented the interbreeding of Kelp and Herring Gulls on Curlew Island since 1994. During the past decade, Curlew has harbored one or more pure Kelp Gulls, perhaps several pure Herring Gulls, plus various hybrids, some with very dark backs, some very light mantled. Some are F1 hybrids, others are backcrosses resulting from hybrids mating with Kelps. In the late 1990s, observations by Cardiff and Dittmann (....) made it clear that there were 2-4 pure Kelp Gulls, plus several Herring X Kelp hybrids at any



one time. These hybrids began to show up along the Louisiana and Texas coasts. Mantle colors of the hybrids range from barely darker than that of a Herring Gull to nearly as black as a pure Kelp (DLD,SWC,DM,RDP, et al); orbital ring colors range from pink to yellow and leg color from greenish-yellow to gray or pinkish-gray.

In what is a conclusion to the Kelp Gull story almost as amazing as their discovery, is the present situation in which it appears that there are no longer any pure Kelp Gulls remaining in Louisiana, leaving only the hybrid so-called AChandeleur Gulls. (Dittmann and Cardiff). Trips to the islands in 2002 and 2003 have found up to 20 or more hybrids with a variety of combination of Kelp and Herring characteristics, but no Kelp Gulls. In late May 2003, 20-22 hybrids were seen on Curlew, Gosier, and Breton Islands (RDP,MM,DPM). Recent hurricanes have had a devastating effect on all the islands at the lower end of the Chandeleur chain, so that there is no current information on the status of the Kelp gulls or Kelp hybrids.

It is at least conceivable that a dark-backed gull seen by Ted Parker on Curlew Island (and also reported as *L. fuscus*) in 1988 ??? was in fact a Kelp, and Kelp Gulls have been found breeding in Yucatan, where they may have been present since 1987 (Howell and Webb.....). This could be the source of the Curlew Island birds (or vice versa), but hardly addresses their appearance in the northern hemisphere.

#### **GLAUCOUS GULL** (*Larus hyperboreus*) Casual winter visitor

Prior to the winter of 1981-82, the Glaucous Gull was the only species of rare vagrant gull which had been recorded in Southeast Louisiana. There are now at least 20 records, distributed more or less evenly over the period 1961 to the present, although there have been only **three** records since 1985 and seven of the records occurred in the period 1982-85. All records, save one, have been of first year birds. The records are: March 4, 1961 on Lake Pontchartrain Causeway (SAG,MEL); Jan. 10, 1971 at New Orleans (RJN,RDP,HDP,PS.); Feb. 12-20, 1972 at Mandeville (HDP,ANR); **Dec. 7-31** at New Orleans (JR,m.ob.); Jan. 23-Feb. 28, 1982 (SWC,VR,DM, RDP, m.ob.--coll); Feb.7, 1982 at Grand Isle (MM,DM,LO'M,RDP,SP,JR); Feb. 27[**28 LBRC**], 1982 at New Orleans (SWC,MM,DM,RDP,MR--**2?**, one collected LSUMZ 1033495); winter 1981-82 Grand Isle/Grand Terre?; April 17-21, 1984 on Fourchon Beach (VR, et al, DM,RDP); Dec. 1, 1984 at New Orleans (GO,m.ob.,RDP--photos **AB 39**: 177 (1985),PW,MM); **April 21, 1985 (PW—ph,AS,GS,CS,JS); ...Grand Isle (JH--photo); Dec. 20, 1989 in St. Bernard Par. (SWC,DLD); Dec. 8, 1991 at New Orleans (DM,NN--photos); Dec. 21, 1991 (2?) in St. Bernard Parish (CMarantz,DD,SWC—ph; adult); April 17, 1994 at Grand Isle (MM,NN, RDP,GG,PW,GS; photos).[GI CBC plus June 1998 DPM,MM,RDP Baptiste Collette] Spring 2008, Marty Guidry, Boslers, RDP (photo), mouth of Belle Pass. ....GI spring 2009? (....; photo RDP); Oct. 18, 2009 at Elmer's Island (DM,PW—ph.,vid). Apr. 17?, 2010, Queen Bess I. (SWC,DLD); Nov. 23, 2011 at Grand Isle (DB).**

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus marinus*) Rare winter visitor

There are at least 27 records of this large dark-backed gull, including the first three records for Louisiana, all since the winter of 1981-82, averaging not much over one record per year. All but two of the records have occurred between Sep. 20 and April 13, plus May 27 and June 18 records. At least 7 records have been of birds in first basic plumage. The records are: **Nov. 14[11 LBRC], 1981** [see 2<sup>nd</sup> LBRC] at New Orleans (DM,JR,NN,RDP--photos), the first record for Louisiana; Feb. 26[**28 LBRC**], 1982 at New Orleans (MR,SC,MM,DM,RDP--first year); March 28-29, 1982 at New Orleans (MM--photos *AB 36*: 862 (1982),RDP, DM,m.ob., first year); Jan. 5, 1985, Fourchon (RJS,DM); Aug.--Sep. 20, 1987 on Fourchon Beach (RDP,PW,GS,MM--photos RDP,MM,GS); Mar. 27, 1988 Fourchon (RDP, MM-photo); Oct. 8, 9 and 29, 1988 on Fourchon Beach (**DM,RDP—2; see LBRC 7?**); Feb. 26, 1989 (RDP,DPM, LO'M—ph *AB 43* (2): 326); **Mar. 26, 1989 at Fourchon Beach (RDP,DM,LO'M—photo—prev. record?)**; Nov. 19?, 1989 on Fourchon Beach (**JH--photo?**); **Jan. 13, 1991** (DM,MM,NN,RDP) at Fourchon Beach; Oct. 27, 1991, Fourchon (RDP,NN); Dec. 1-7, 1991 Fourchon (DM,RDP,GG,AS,GS); Dec. 21, 1991 in St. Bernard Parish (CM,DD,SWC--photo); Jan. 9, 1993 in St. Bernard Par. (DM,JDunn...); Jan. 30, 1994 on Fourchon Beach (NN,RDP...), a first year bird; May 27, 1994 at Grand Isle (NN,RDP), an adult (ph); a first year bird at Seabrook Bridge on L. Pontchartrain in July and **August...., 1994** (DM, m.ob.); an adult at Seabrook Bridge Dec. 4-?, 1994 (RDP, et al), and a first year bird on Fourchon Beach on March 4, 1995 (CS,PW--ph., vid.); March 9, 1997 at Port Fourchon (PW,MM...); June 21, 1998 Bapiste Collette (MM,RDP...); **Jan. 11, 1998 on Fourchon Beach (MM--ph, RDP)**; Jan. 17, 1999, Fourchon (RDP--video); Apr. 2--22, 1999 Fourchon Beach (PW,CK); Feb. 6, 2000 Fourchon Beach (PW,JS);February 4-10, 2001 Grand Isle (JS....); **Nov. ??, 2002** Fourchon Beach (MM,DM); 18 June 2003 (SWC, DLD, et al), Port Eads--first year bird; first year bird 27 Feb.... (DM,RDP,PW<sub>B</sub>ph,video) and ....**Mar, 2005** (RDP<sub>B</sub>ph, video) at mouth of Belle Pass; !3 April 2005 (MM), first basic, Grand Terre I. February 7, 2008, Timbalier Is. (MM—ph). The only recent record is of one at Elmer's Island ..... (**DM,RDP,PW**).

The Great Black-backed Gull is almost unmistakable in either plumage in which it is likely to be seen. The blackness of the mantle is rivaled in this area only by Kelp Gull, whose status is now very uncertain. The pink legs separate it from Kelp Gull and the smaller Lesser Black-backed gull. In first winter plumage, the very white head contrasting with a boldly checkered mantle plus the massive black bill are distinctive. See Harrison, Grant, or Olsen and Larsson. One should, of course, always keep in mind Slaty-backed, Western, Yellow-footed, and of course Kelp Gull when examining large dark-backed gulls.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa tridactyla*) Accidental

Although there are well over a dozen records of Black-legged Kittiwakes for

Louisiana, there are but two for Southeast Louisiana, all offshore. All records have been of immatures. The records are: Jan. 4, 1972, 20-30 miles off the Mississippi delta (RJN,HDP) and April 1, 1985, 5 miles south of Southwest Pass (MM).

**SABINE'S GULL** (*Xema sabini*) Accidental vagrant

There are five records of Sabine's Gull for southeastern Louisiana during approximately the last quarter-century. The first was of a bird seen at Barataria Pass, at the east end of Grand Isle, on September 11, 1976 (RHines,RJS), the first record for Louisiana. The second record was of one photographed on Curlew Island, on June 2, 1979 (LO'M--ph), which is the first fully documented record for Louisiana. The third record was of one briefly seen at South Shore Harbor, L. Pontchartrain, on Oct. 4, 1995 (PY), one was seen by Phillip Wallace on the Miss. R. near the Bonnet Carre spillway on Sep. 7, 1998, **and inally, one was seen on a Pelagic trip.....[?]** **There are at least two records for coastal Mississippi.**

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Sterna nilotica*) Uncommon resident, nesting on barrier islands

The Gull-billed Tern breeds primarily on the barrier islands off the Mississippi River delta, in rather small numbers. In 1976 Portnoy found only one colony in Southeast Louisiana, on Curlew Island, harboring 6 adults; two colonies in Atchafalaya Bay had 128 adults. This observer has seen a least a few colonies on Curlew on nearly every visit, with numbers typically totalling 20-25 birds. During the summers of 1981 and 1982 over 60 pairs nested on Grassy Island off the mouth of the Pearl River (LO'M,RDP,MM,DM). None were found there by Portnoy. Its nest is a scrape in the sand or shell detritus. There was previously only one nesting record away from the coast, on spoil at the Rigolets, but more recently Gull-billed Terns have been found breeding on roof-tops, specifically the UNO Assembly Center and Clearview Shopping Center in Metairie (Smalley, et al 1991). They bred regularly in the latter location for on the order of a decade, and could be seen feeding in the nearby drainage canals between May and August. **Since May, 1995, when 80-90 pairs were present (167 counted), the colony numbered around 120-150 adults....**On April 30, 2000 the number of adults peaked at 347 and on June 2 there were at least 121 fledglings (RDP). On May 29, 2001 approximately 300 adults were present. Yaukey observed about 100 nests on the UNO Assemby Center in late May 2001 as well, and they also appeared to be nesting at Lake Forest Shopping Center that summer (RDP). They have apparently nested on a rooftop at the Poland Ave. wharf, as well. As of 2012, it is not known whether there are any roof-top nesting Gull-billed Terns in SE Louisiana.

During the winter Gull-billed Terns can be found near the coast in small numbers. . In summer often one or two will be found at the ponds in Bayou Sauvage NWR on US 11 in New Orleans East.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Sterna caspia*) Common resident, nesting on sand strand habitat

Although the Caspian Tern can be found on Lake Pontchartrain, it is most often found along the gulf coast. Although it is common, its numbers rarely approach those of the Royal Tern. Caspian Terns nest in sand-strand habitat on the barrier islands, in colonies numbering from a few dozen to 100 or so adults. Two colonies were found in Southeast Louisiana by Portnoy in 1976, with a total of nearly 200 individuals.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Sterna maxima*) Very common to abundant resident, nesting on barrier islands

The Royal Tern breeds in colonies of several thousand birds on the barrier islands, mainly at the lower end of the Chandeleur chain. Traditional areas of concentration have been Stake Island (in 1990 part of Curlew Island). Estimates of numbers have varied widely from year to year, reflecting changes in the islands (Stake and Curlew were washed away by Hurricane Camille in 1969), the effects of summer storms on nesting success, and differences in technique and expertise of the observers. Highest recorded numbers are 10-15,000 young on Curlew in 1975 (JV) and 29,000 breeding adults on May 10, 1985 (RDP). Arthur (1931) estimated 27,000 breeding Royal and Sandwich Tern nests on Grand Gosier Island, based on his conclusion that the nest density was one nest per square foot. This writer has counted 10 nests per square meter, which agrees very well with Arthur's estimate. Portnoy found about 16,000 adults on the Chandeleurs in 1976.

In 2003, following Isidore and Iris in the fall of 2002, there were 25,000 or more nests of Sandwich and Royal Terns on S. Gosier Island (DM,MM,RDP), indicating perhaps twice that many breeding adults. The number of pairs of Royal Terns may have been as high as 8-10,000.

The Royal Tern can be found on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, especially east of Lakefront Airport anytime other than the height of the breeding season, and on the coast throughout the year.

**SANDWICH TERN** (*Sterna sandvicensis*) Abundant nester on barrier islands, uncommon to rare along the coast year round

The Sandwich Tern breeds in huge mixed (but stratified) colonies with the Royal Tern on the barrier islands, but principally in the lower Chandeleurs. Portnoy found about 47,000 adults in Southeast Louisiana, including 45,000 in two colonies on Curlew Island. Maximum estimates are 30-50,000 young in the summer of 1987 (JV) and 49,000+ breeding adults on May 10, 1985 (RDP), both on Curlew Island. This writer estimated less than 25,000 Sandwich Terns on Curlew on July 7-9, 1989, plus up to 20,000 young. For further details on these colonies, see Purrington (1989?). On 26 May 2003, there were perhaps 15,000 breeding pairs on S. Gosier Island, in the nesting season following Isidore and Iris.

Outside of the breeding season, or away from the islands, the Sandwich Tern is often difficult to find. Although winter records are relatively scarce Sandwich Terns are often very

common on the gulf beach (Fourchon, Grand Isle) after early July, and well into late summer. They arrive on the breeding grounds in early April, and can be found in small numbers along the coast at that time. The New Orleans records include Dec. 26, 1982 (BC,RJN), Aug. 16, 1985 (RDP), latter associated with Hurricane Danny, and Sept. 1, 2008 (RDP), after Hurricane Gustav.

**[ROSEATE TERN (*Sterna dougallii*) ] HYPOTHETICAL**

Through the mid-1980s, there were at least three reports of Roseate Tern from Southeast Louisiana and at least two sight records from southwest Louisiana. None of these records was considered adequate to add the species to this list or to the state list and the LBRC has recently removed Roseate Tern from the official list of Louisiana birds. The recent record of first or second summer bird at the mouth of Belle Pass, Lafourche Par. on ..... (DM,MM,RDP,PW) is about as definitive as a sight record can be, but no photographs were obtained and the record is not likely to be accepted the the LBRC.

Roseate Tern certainly ought to occur here occasionally and there are Texas records to support this conclusion. See Kaufman for extensive details on identification. Oberholser, in *The Birdlife of Louisiana* (1938) mentions a report by Stanley C. Arthur (Arthur, 1918) of one having been collected at Grand Chenier in February 1915, but a close reading of Arthur's publication must engender a great deal of scepticism about any record in it. The reports of this species for Southeast Louisiana are: Sep. 10-13, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG), in the wake of Hurricane Carla; Sep. 11, 1976 at Grand Isle (RH,RJS), this a bird heard giving its "chivvy" call; and Elmer's Island near Grand Isle on April 15, 1984 (fide VR). The most recent record is of one at the mouth of Belle Pass, Lafourche Par., on.....

**COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*)** Common late spring migrant, uncommon to rare winter visitor

Common Terns might be found along the coast at almost any time, although they only fairly common in May and June. They are, however, regular offshore in the summer and may breed sparingly. Although the species is very strongly coastal, there are occasional New Orleans records, usually associated with tropical storms. This tern is only common on the gulf beach, and only from late May through perhaps late July, with almost all individuals being in basic plumage, i.e., either young or non-breeding adults. The Common Tern is also present along the coast in winter in very small numbers, but often will be missed on a coastal trip in that season.

There is one breeding record, June 11, 1971 on Monkey Island at the lower end of Chandeleur Island (RJN,MM,RDP--photo), but adults in alternate plumage have been seen on the islands in summer. On June 21-23, 1973, three adults were seen along with several probable young on Curlew Island (RJN,AWP,RBH,HDP). Three were also seen June 19-20, 1975 in the Chandeleurs (fide JS), but this is during the period when non-breeding birds are still relatively common. According to Oberholser, Bent reported 25 pairs on Battledore

Island on June 21, 1910, but later withdrew the record. Recent New Orleans records include Sep. 24, 1977 (JR), Sep. 20, 1979 (JR), and Nov. 22, 1981 (RDP, et al). The maximum concentration has been 300, on May 9, 1982 (RDP,MM,NN,DM) and August 12, 1990 (RDP....). Late July numbers include 68 on Fourchon Beach on July 22, 1990 (RDP,NN), 75-100 there on July 28, 1991 (RDP,GC), and 94 at the same location on Aug. 26, 1990 (.....).

The most obvious distinguishing features are the dusky wing-tips (primary feathers) in flight, short tail (with outer web of outer feather dark), and a strong carpal bar, prominent in young and less so in adults. In young and non-breeding birds, the "winter" head pattern is distinctive (though see the Arctic Tern). There is not much difficulty in distinguishing this species from Forster's Tern, though inexperienced observers should be very careful since young Forster's Terns may have a short tail and dusky wing tips. Distinguishing Common from Arctic Tern is more difficult, but relevant only if one is trying to turn up the latter species, which has not yet been recorded in Southeast Louisiana. One should consult Kaufman (1990) for details. In breeding plumage note the short tail, the dusky primary feathers, and usually a reddish-orange rather than a yellow-orange bill. It appears that the most likely time to find Arctic Tern in Louisiana is June.

Generally speaking, Common Terns are common along the coast only from late May through July, although they may be expected into September. Most, but not all of the "summering" birds are in immature plumage, presumably mostly first summer birds. They are relatively uncommon throughout the winter, but always present.

**FORSTER'S TERN** (*Sterna forsteri*) Common resident

The Forster's Tern is the common small tern of Southeast Louisiana, easily found on Lake Pontchartrain, anywhere in the marsh, and even along residential canals in New Orleans East and Metairie. It breeds on marshy islands and on the periphery of the Mississippi delta (see Portnoy, 1977). Several thousand nest on Grassy Island, for example.

**LEAST TERN** (*Sterna antillarum*) Common to abundant summer resident

The Least Tern breeds wherever appropriate habitat is to be found--including shopping center rooftops! Rooftop nesting seems to be increasing as natural habitat near the city disappears or is subject to disturbance. In many cases these rooftop nesting birds feed in nearby drainage canals which carry residential and even industrial runoff, clearly a cause for concern. On the barrier islands, a typical colony will contain a few hundred breeding adults. Winter records are usually the result of misidentification.

Expected dates are April 1 to September 1, while extreme dates of occurrence are March 18, 1984 at Grand Isle (RDP,DM) and Sept. 20, 1979. There is one credible winter record, Jan. 22, 1932 at Octave Pass (HCO).

**BRIDLED TERN** (*Sterna anaethetus*) Rare, but regular offshore in summer

Bridled Terns are quite regular in summer in small numbers off coastal Southeast Louisiana, usually at least 30 miles offshore. Although the pelagic records span the period May 5 to September 29 (2004), Bridled Terns are most common in midsummer. Often they will be found at or near the "rips" or ocean fronts 10-50 miles offshore, where mats or rafts of sargassum occur, often resting on boards or pieces of styrofoam along these grasslines at the interfaces between blue and green water. Many of the Bridled Terns are young, which are not pictured well in many of the guides.

The records prior to the summer of 1992 were: July 24, 1977, 30 miles off Empire (NN); July 21, 1979, 70 mi SSE of Grand Isle (JK,RDP--photos,MM,NN,JS,MB,JR, et al--6+); **Sept. 2?**, 1983, 19 miles SSE of South Pass (RDP--photo); June 10, 1985, 20 miles SE of Southwest Pass (MM); Aug. 31, 1985 at 28°20'N, 90°50'W (MM); May 29(**28?**), 1989, 20 miles SSE of South Pass (RDP,MM,DM--6); and May 28, 1990, 17 miles SSW of South Pass (RDP,DM,SWC,DLD--30).

In August of 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck the Louisiana coast just west of the checklist area, producing records of Bridled Tern inland at Lafitte National Park on **Aug. 28 (DM)**. Tropical Storm Isidore yielded several records on Sept. 26, 2002 on the Mississippi R. and on L. Pontchartrain and Hurricane Lili, a week later, produced at least 3-4 more (MM,DM,NLN). One seen from an oil platform off Timbalier Is. On Jan 9, 1994 (DLD) is the first winter record for the state. Peak count is 59, 25-50 miles SSE of South Pass on May 27, 1995. (DPeake, et al). Bridled Terns are usually most common after the breeding season.

The earliest spring record is May 5, 2004 (SWC,DLD, et al) off the mouth of the Mississippi R. and the latest is from Hurricane Lili: Oct. 3?, 2002 at New Orleans.

Finally, there is an old record attributed to H.C. Oberholser some time after June 2, 1932 from Grand Gosier Island, and reported in the Eleventh Biennial Report of the Department of Conservation for 1932-33. Oberholser himself does not mention it in his *The Birdlife of Louisiana*

### **SOOTY TERN** (*Sterna fuscata*) Local breeder on the Chandeleurs

Until the 1960's there had been only one breeding record of the Sooty Tern in Louisiana, that on June 5, 1933 on Curlew Island (HCO). Then, in 1964 and 1967 nesting records were obtained on Curlew and Stake Islands, respectively (SAG,RJN,RDP,et al) and there is now a small, but stable colony of Sooty Terns breeding near the lower end of the Chandeleur Islands (Purrington, 1970). As many as 67 adults and at least 19 nests have been counted on a single census of the islands. After Hurricane Camille, which washed away Stake and Curlew Islands, the colony shifted to Monkey Island at the end of Chandeleur Island, along with the huge Royal-Sandwich Tern colonies. When Curlew re-established itself (it has now, as of 1991, grown to include the sites of Stake I. on the north end and Errol I. on the south), the colonies returned to Curlew.

In 1998 Hurricane Georges virtually washed Curlew Island away, but in the summer of 2000, terns were breeding on Curlew and there were two Sooty Tern colonies, totalling 36 adults.

Sooty Terns generally nest near the main tern colonies, often close to or mixed in with small Black Skimmer colonies, and almost invariably build a nest in or under the edge of some brushy or shrubby vegetation, although the nest is a scrape in the sand. Banding operations on Curlew I. in the late 1970's resulted in the banding of a number of nestlings and the netting of birds banded on the Dry Tortugas (HHJ,LO'M). One banded in the Tortugas on June 12, 1940 was found dead near Pontchatoula on Aug. 10, 1940 (fide JHL).

Occasionally the Sooty Tern is encountered on pelagic trips off the mouth of the river, as on May 28, 1989 (DM,MM,RDP) and on June 1?, 1990 (RDP,MM?,DM,SWC,DLD), about 20 miles off South Pass. There are several New Orleans records, all storm-related, including one 8-9 miles from the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, seen from the Causeway bridge on Aug. 30, 1977 (HP), and two at the east campus of UNO on July 11, 1979 (MB, m.ob.). Sooty Terns were found dead following Hurricane Andrew's landfall on **Aug. 26, 1992 at.....**As many as 150 were estimated in the wake of T.S. Isidore on Sept. 26, 2002 (Farnsworth, DM,PW,RDP) and 5-7 were seen after Lili, October 3, 2002 (MM,DM,RDP,PW). Tropical Storm Lee on Sept. 3-4, 2011 produced several records of this species from the south shore of L. Pontchartrain (DPM,PW,RDP), and even from L. Ramsey on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Tom Trenchard). (Only once has Sooty Tern been seen from land in Southeast Louisiana, except during storms: May 30, 1992 at Grand Isle (JK,DR). Extreme dates are May 3, 1972, 20 miles off South Pass (RJN) and September 16, 1961 at Leeville, found dead following Hurricane Carla.

**BLACK TERN** (*Clidonias niger*) Common migrant, abundant on the coast, and regular non-breeding summer resident on the coast

Although the Black Tern is nominally a migrant through Southeast Louisiana, it is actually the commonest bird out of sight of land on the gulf in the summer and numbers as high as 2500-3000 have been found resting on shore in late July (July 28, 1991 on Fourchon Beach--RDP,GC). Most, but by no means all, of these birds will be in immature or non-breeding plumage. In the wake of TS Lee, Wallace and Muth counted 225 along the shore of L. Pontchartrain on Sept. 3, 2011.

Expected dates of occurrence are May 5 to October 1; extreme dates are April 8, 1984 at Grand Isle (MM,DM,NN,RDP,ME?) and Nov. 8, 1985 at New Orleans (NN). There are four winter records: Jan. 23, 1932 at Pass-a-Loutre (HCO), Jan. 16, 1959 at Grand Isle (ART), Nov. 22 1970 on the Empire Canal (RJN,LO'M), and Feb. 6, 1971 at the same location (RJN,RJS).

**BROWN NODDY** (*Anous stolidus*) Accidental



There is one definite record of Brown Noddy for Southeast Louisiana, that of a bird found alive at a Norco, LA refinery on in September 1961, in the wake of Hurricane Carla (...) and beautifully photographed at close range; the record will be published in the *Journal of Louisiana Ornithology*. The other records of Noddy are of one seen in an aerial survey on Oct. 25, 1980, 220 km offshore (Wayne Hoffman, pers. comm.), and one or more that were recorded on the eastern edge of L. Pontchartrain in the wake of Tropical Storm Isidore on Sept. 26, 2002 (Jerry Carlisle). At this point, the record has not been acted upon by the L.O.S. Bird Records Committee and it is doubtful whether Black Noddy could be ruled out. Brown Noddies might stray into the northern gulf in the summer, but the most likely scenario would involve a tropical storm; indeed TS Lee produced one well-documented record on the Mississippi coast.

**BLACK SKIMMER** (*Rhyncops nigra*) Common resident along the coast

The Black Skimmer is largely coastal in its distribution, and breeds primarily on spoil areas, sand spits, and barrier islands. It is, however, sometimes seen inland near New Orleans and at the Bonnet Carre Spillway. Recently Black Skimmers have begun breeding in small numbers on shopping center rooftops, notably the Lake Forest and Clearview Shopping Centers. The first such nesting was noted in 1980 (MM). Well-known nesting sites are on Grassy I., several places in the Chandeleurs (especially Curlew and Grand Gosier Islands), and on Fourchon Beach, where human disturbance is extreme. Flocks containing up to 2000 individuals might be encountered on the sand spits bordering Barataria Pass in winter (including the east end of Grand Isle) or on Fourchon Beach.

Family *Stercorariidae* JAEGERS

**POMARINE JAEGER** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) Uncommon but perhaps regular pelagic migrant, strictly offshore. Probably present in winter as well.

There are over of 20 records that can be attributed to this skua, mostly off the mouth of the Mississippi River where the continental shelf is reached only a few miles from shore. The data presented in Williams (1965), which indicate that April and November have produced the greatest number of jaeger records along the northern gulf coast. There have been multiple records of this jaeger from oil platforms on the continental shelf near, or within the area of this checklist, during the study of use of these platforms by transgulf migrants during 1998-2000. Some of these have been in winter, and records at that season in coastal SW. Louisiana, e.g., the Sabine CBC, have become regular. In short, the Pomarine Jaeger is the most likely jaeger off Southeast Louisiana at any season. See Duncan and Havarad (1980) and Rowlett (1980) for additional information.

Most records of jaegers in Louisiana and the nearby gulf coast have been of immature birds, whose identification is much more difficult than is generally believed. The Pomarine is approximately the size of a Ring-billed Gull, bulky-looking, bull-chested, and with a somewhat labored flight, but these are mostly relative characters which can be appreciated

only if one knows all the jaegers well. The central tail feathers, when seen well, are diagnostic. The Pomarine Jaeger has the most extensive white in the primary feather shafts of the jaegers. Adults have a “helmeted” look due to the cap extending below the bill into the malar region, and a very dark breast band (Zimmer 2000). See Kaufman (1990) and Harrison (1983) for details on jaeger identification, and .....**Ohlson** for exhaustive information on all the skuas.

The records include: May 19, 1971 20 miles off South Pass (RJN), April 4, 1985, 20 miles SSE of Southwest Pass (MM--2), May 12, 1985, 20 miles SSE of Southwest Pass, Apr. 24, 1990 (DM—4), 12 mi S. of South Pass; May 28, 1990, 17 miles SSW of South Pass (SWC,DD,MM?,DM,RDP--coll.). Two Pomarine Jaegers were reported in Jefferson Parish on Aug. 27, 1992 (PY), in the wake of Hurricane Andrew and another was seen the next day (DM). A recent record is of a sub-adult seen and photographed on an LOS pelagic trip out of Venice on August 8, 1998,.....(RDP,DPM,MM,DP,m.ob.); Nov. 6, 1999, 44 mi SE of Port Forchon (m.ob.--ph, fide SWC, DLD).....Bosler....The only record for Lake Pontchartrain is of a jaeger thought to be of this species seen on Sept. 14, 2008 (PW,DPM), in the wake of Hurricane Ike.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) Uncommon to rare transient offshore, occasional to accidental in winter

This jaeger, known in Europe as Artic Skua, has generally been thought, until recently, to be the commonest of the jaegers on the northern gulf coast. This supposition may have resulted in hasty identification of some birds. Most individuals seen have been immatures (since the jaegers take up to four years to reach maturity) and pose a difficult identification problem. Even in the case of adults some care is necessary especially with respect to the tail feathers, the tips of which are frequently broken. See Finch, et al (1978), Harrison (1983), Kaufman (1990), or Zimmer (2000) for identification details, and especially...Ohlson...Adult Parasitics have a rather gray breast band. They also tend to have a lightish Anose@ above the bill (Zimmer 2000). The records are distributed as follows: January (1), February (1), March (1), May (2), June (2), July (2), and September (1), making it somewhat difficult to say when one would be most likely to find Parasitic Jaegers along the Louisiana coast, although spring and fall are generally considered to offer better chances. In spite of this fact, winter records are somewhat regular off Cameron, in southwest Louisiana, and there are summer records off the mouth of the Mississippi River.. One might examine the flocks of gulls and terns which follows shrimp and other fishing boats for an occasional jaeger. Although few of the records given below have been acted on by the Louisiana Bird Records Committee, the July 13, 1981 record has actually been rejected because of the problem of indentification of immature birds. Most of the records given below could be the object of at least some sceptism since generally speaking information on plumage is not available, and jaeger identification is notably difficult, especially between parasitic and long-tailed. Hurricane Andrew, which struck the Southeast Louisiana coast on Aug. 26, 1993 spawned several records of unidentified jaegers, some of which may have been of this

species.

The records of this species, all but one prior to Andrew, are as follows: March 1, 1948, off the mouth of the Mississippi River; June 4, 1958, 45 miles SSW of Grand Isle (MM,BMM); September 12, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG), in the wake of Hurricane Carla; February 6, 1971 off Empire (RJN); May 3, 1972, 25 miles off South Pass (RJN); July 13, 1981, 5 miles off South Pass (NN,RDP); July 20, 1981, 20 miles off South Pass (AS); May 6, 1985, 20 miles SSE of South Pass (MM), and January 4, 1986 at Fourchon Beach (DM,RDP,JR,PM). This latter record was the only one of a jaeger from shore in Southeast Louisiana prior to Hurricane Andrew, although there are several such records for Cameron Parish, including all three species. One was picked up alive on the New Orleans lakefront on Sept. 27, 1989 and subsequently died (fide DM); LOS pelagic trips **on.....and June 13, 1998...yielded** an immature jaeger thought to have been of this species, but the possibility that it may have been of the next species has not been ruled out. A Parasitic Jaeger thoroughly photographed on Sept. 28, 2011 ....miles off SW Pass (JB, et al; RDP--photos), has yet to be ratified by the LBRC.

**LONG-TAILED JAEGER** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) Accidental on the gulf; a single record

There are two certain records of this smallest of the jaegers. The first was of a bird collected approximately 17 miles SSW of South Pass on May 28, 1990 (DLD,SWC,DM,MM?,RDP). This record, the second for Louisiana, pointed up the need for cautious identification of immature jaegers, since all three may occur on the gulf anytime between spring and fall. The other record is of one .....2002. For identification details, see Ohlson.....

Family *Alcidae* ALCIDS

**ANCIENT MURRELET** (*Synthliboramphus antiquum*) Accidental

In one of the more remarkable of all records for this area, a moribund Ancient Murrelet was picked up from the waters of Lake Pontchartrain by fishermen on May 6, 1954 (Lowery 1974). This, it probably goes without saying, is the only record for Louisiana, indeed, the only confirmed record of an alcid.

[**MARbled MURRELET** (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) HYPOTHETICAL]

An individual of this species, or perhaps more likely its close relative the Long-billed Murrelet (*M. pernix*)--previously considered a subspecies of Marbled Murrelet-- was apparently salvaged on Grand Isle or on nearby Grand Terre I, based on photographs shown

to Mac Myers on 13 April 2005 by an employee of the LWFC.

Family Columbidae PIGEONS AND DOVES

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) Very common resident, breeding

The introduced Rock Dove, native to Eurasia, is a familiar resident of cities and farms.

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Columba fasciata*) Accidental

That there are three records of this pigeon of the western forests is rather remarkable. The Band-tailed Pigeon is slightly larger than the Rock Dove, and has a banded tail, a white stripe on the nape, and a dark-tipped yellow bill. The records are: Jan. 21, 1954 at Napoleonville (John Thibaut), Dec. 1, 1969--a bird found dead on the roadside on US 11 in eastern New Orleans, and one seen at Pilottown on Dec. 6[5 LBRC], 1981 (DM,JW).

**EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) Introduced; common and increasing

Although Eurasian Collared Dove was first found at Ft. Pike on .....(MM,NN), collared doves have become common to abundant all over the area (indeed, all the way to the Pacific coast) and are now a permanent part of our avian landscape, for better or worse. They first became common in the vicinity of Audubon Zoo, where they have been seen since about 1989? (**fide James Beck ...**), . Their presence in Louisiana may be due to the combination of range expansion from Florida and direct introduction, or perhaps only one of those explanations. The report that they have been present at Ft. Pike for as long as 22 years (fide RC; *Am. Birds* **47** (1993) 422), if true, suggests that they were introduced there, since the range expansion is a much more recent phenomenon. Observers should be careful not to confuse this species with the Ringed Turtle Dove or "Domestic Dove" (*S. "risoria"*) which has no wild population. See Smith, *American Birds* **41** (1987) 1370.

The call is a "coo, coo, cook!" but there is also a "growl" or "mew" call.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) Uncommon to rare in winter, mostly in the delta

The White-winged Dove is a fairly regular straggler to the area from the southwest, and is taken by dove hunters. It prefers open brushy habitat and is most frequently found near the coast and especially in the Boothville-Vencie area. The maximum is 290? on the Dec.

29, 2001 Venice Christmas Bird Count (RDP, et al), all essentially in one flock. New Orleans records have become more common in recent years including one in a Metairie backyard--SP,RDP)[**winter 1994, including Apr. 9-10, 1994, Metairie], up to 15 in uptown New Orleans (PWB2004)**, and for the Reserve area. There were regular summer records at Delta NWR at Pilottown during the late 1960's, and a confirmed nesting there in 1971. White-winged Doves had summered there in 1969, staying until Aug. 17 (when Hurricane Camille struck), were present until June the following year, and on June 19, 1971, definite proof of nesting was obtained. The other summer records are June 29, 1951 at Grand Isle (LGG) and a pair on Breton Island on June 13, 1967 (JMV). Individual at Grand Isle on May 22, 1993 (PW,CS) and May 27, 2001 (PW) were very late.

Expected dates are October 20 to April 1, while extreme dates of occurrence, except for the records listed above, are Aug. 26, 1967 at New Orleans (JMH) and May 2, 1980 in Metair (SP,RDP).

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaidura macroura*) Very common to abundant resident

This ubiquitous and familiar bird breeds commonly in both rural and residential areas and is often abundant on levees, in brushy fields, and waste areas.

**PASSENGER PIGEON** (*Ectopistes migratorius*) EXTINCT

Le Pae du Pratz reported the Passenger Pigeon abundant along the Mississippi in 1758 and Audubon found it abundant in Louisiana in 1826. Other records include Nov. 23 and Dec.5, 1874 at Covington (GEB), and another Covington record on Jan. 26, 1895. There were no Louisiana records after 1904.

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina Inca*) Rare, but expanding and established on Grand Isle

The initial record of this small dove from the southwest U.S. and Mexico is of one in St. John Parish on Oct. 26, 1992 (RJS). Recently, beginning in the late 1990s (PW), Inca Doves have become established on Grand Isle (PW, et al), where as many as a dozen have been seen at one time (Boby Santini). A few can often be found in the vicinity of the Grand Isle school, year round, and in the spring of 2004 4-5 were found at another location near the Grand Isle Cemetery. Inca Doves had established themselves in Southwest Louisiana in recent years, and seem to be expanding their range rapidly to the east. Evidence of nesting was found on May 6, 2001 when two recently fledged young were seen on Grand Isle (PW,MM). On April 17, 2004 a bird was sitting on a nest on Grand Isle (fide RDP).. On Sep.....2003 an Inca Dove was found on Bayou Sauvage NRW; Point-a-la-Hache, summer? 2008 (DM,PW); Sep. 28, 2008 in New Orleans East (PW,DM). New Orleans CBC, Dec. 27, 2008 (DPM,....).

**COMMON GROUND DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) Uncommon to rare in fall, rare winter visitor

Given the infrequency with which the Ground Dove is seen in Southeast Louisiana, statements about changes in abundance are hazardous. On the other hand, it is reported less frequently, even when habitat changes are taken into account. Ground doves may be found in fields or in brushy, waste habitat, and usually in the fall, recently in the vicinity of the Recovery I landfill. Mid-winter records are not common. There are a few summer records, possibly indicating nesting, including June 30, 1963 at Ft. Jackson (SAG) and a number of occasions in the Reserve area, where it has been found breeding (RJS,MW).

Expected dates for wintering birds are October 10 to April 20, with extremes of Sep. 24, 1977 (JR) and May 24, 1958 at Reserve (SAG).[9/19/04 DM,PW? South Point]

Family *Psittacidae* PARAKEETS

**MONK PARAKEET** (*Myiopsitta undulatus*) INTRODUCED

Rather than agonize over whether Monk Parakeet should be listed or not, we simply note that it has become established, in many locations in the New Orleans area, generally where there are palm trees. Examples are S. Claiborne Ave., Mirabeau and Paris Avenues, the Tulane campus, many areas in Metairie, and so on. The earliest known occurrence was in the late 1960s in Metairie Playground.

**CAROLINA PARAKEET** (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) EXTINCT

Ridgway (Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus. No. 50, Part VII, p. 148) mentions the occurrence of the Carolina Parakeet in New Orleans. For information on the historical status of this parakeet in Louisiana, see McKinley.....

Family *Cuculidae* CUCKOOS

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus americanus*) Common to sometimes abundant migrant

In migration the Yellow-billed Cuckoo is at times the most common bird in the coastal woods, sometimes numbering dozens to hundreds at Venice or Grand Isle, and especially in the more extensive coastal woodlands of southwest Louisiana. On the other hand, there are strong indications that it has declined greatly in numbers in Southeast Louisiana as a breeding bird, mirroring a general decline in North America. This occasionally parasitic cuckoo nests from low bushes (including black mangrove on the

barrier islands) to as high as 20 feet above the ground. It is especially fond of hairy caterpillars. Peak numbers in migration are 200+ at Grand Isle on May 7, 1983 (RDP,MM,NN). Large numbers have been seen in spring migration as late as May 21 (1995-NLN). There is some indication of a decline, based on numbers seen in migration.

Expected dates of occurrence are April 15 to November 5 and extreme dates are March 30?, 2001, Abita Springs, and Dec. 1, established in both 1973 (RJS) and 1974 (MW) at the Bonnet Carre Spillway. There are three out-of-season records: March 4, 1957 at Reserve (RJS,MW,RDC), either a bird which overwintered or an extraordinarily early migrant; .....[NO CBC--NLN?]; and Dec. 31, 1987 at Venice (....).

**MANGROVE CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus minor*) Accidental

The sole record of this species is of one found on the 2006 New Orleans CBC on **Dec. 23?** and recovered the next day, in Chalmette by Glenn Ousset. Excellent photographs were obtained. The bird was refound the next day.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) Uncommon to quite uncommon migrant

The Black-billed Cuckoo is never common in migration, and is perhaps less so in fall than spring. It is not uncommon for one to miss this species in a given season. Interestingly enough, it breeds as close to the region as the lower Appalachians and Oklahoma and, in fact, there is now a breeding record for Louisiana, in the Atchafalaya basin in the summer of 1991.

Expected dates of spring migrants are April 15 to May 20 and in fall approximately August 20 to October 20, though the dates are less certain.[4/17/94] The latest date of occurrence in spring prior to 2011 was on May 20, obtained in 1940 (TDB) and in 1980 (NN), both at New Orleans. However, a bird was photographed just west of Grand Isle on June 19, 2011 by Mikey Lutmerding. In fall the extremes are Aug. 11, 1964 (ET) and Nov. 14, 1965 (JK), again both at New Orleans.

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) **accidental**

The case of the Smooth-billed Ani is one of the more interesting in the annals of Southeast Louisiana birding. There are five records for Louisiana, all from Southeast Louisiana, but only one since the first decade of the twentieth century. There were two specimens taken, but until recently neither was thought to be extant, and it is not clear whether either was examined by a competent ornithologist. H.L. Ballowe, who obtained four of the records between Diamond (just north of Port Sulphur) and Buras, never recorded the Groove-billed Ani in the delta, where it is now regular in winter. For these reasons, it has seemed advisable to be cautious about accepting the records given below, and recently the LOS Bird Records Committee ratified the decision taken by Lowery in the last edition of his

*Louisiana Birds*, to remove the species from the state list. **Recently, however, a Louisiana specimen as been found in ....., and the species will again have a place on the Louisiana list.**

The Smooth-billed Ani breeds in south Florida and has wandered to the Florida panhandle and even as far north as New Jersey, so its appearance here would not be out of the question. Oberholser (1938) mentioned that the 1893 specimen was in the Tulane University Museum, but did not indicate whether he examined it or not. In any case, it is no longer in that collection. G.E. Beyer (Beyer, et al, 1908, p. 443) reported it as of occasional occurrence in St. Bernard Parish, without dates. The range of this species has contracted dramatically in Florida in recent years.

The supposed records are: July 18, 1893 at Diamond (HLB--coll.), Jan. 29, 1906 at Buras (HLB), Jan. 14, 1908 at Buras (HLB), Feb. 8, 1908 at Buras (HLB--4), and Jan. 30, 1952 at Delta NWR (CLF--dead).

**GROOVE-BILLED ANI** (*Crotphaga sulcirostris*) Uncommon to rare in winter, mostly near the coast\*; decreasing

Although the Groov-billed Ani is fairly regular in coastal brush and roseau cane (*Phragmites*) especially in the Venice area, it has clearly declined in numbers since the 1960s. It will occasionally be found in the New Orleans or Reserve areas, and as many as 25 have been recorded on a New Orleans Christmas Count. Groove-billed Anis are very gregarious, rarely being seen alone, and have a distinctive "chick-wee" call.

On July 4 and 5, 1971, adult anis of this species, with young out of the nest, were found in an orange grove at Triumph (RDP--photos, MEL, WB). Later that summer a nest was collected that was consistent with its being an Ani nest (fide RJN). The only other "summer" records, unless one considers Ballowe's July 18, 1893 record to have been of this species, was of one at Grand Isle on June 7, 1992 (MW, RJS) and June 14, 1992 (MM, RDP, GG), apparently different birds. Three at Grand Isle on Aug. 3, 1991 (PW) hint strongly of summering, if not nesting. Expected dates are October 10 to April 15 and extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 16, 1973 at Venice (DN) and April 29, 1980 at New Orleans (JR).

#### Family *Tytonidae* BARN OWLS

**COMMON BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) Uncommon resident

This familiar owl is usually encountered in small patches of woods which offer good feeding opportunities nearby, but may sometimes be flushed from a roadside ditch or be found searching for prey at dusk near a highway interchange or at the edge of a field. Sometimes one will be flushed from an abandoned house, barn, or boat house where it roosts, or perhaps is nesting. Often there are one or two in the woods at Grand Isle.



Family *Strigidae* OWLS**FLAMMULATED OWL** (*Otus flammeolus*) Accidental

There is one amazing record of this owl of the mountain west, of a bird photographed on an oil platform 78 mi SE of South Pass of the Mississippi R. on November 4, 2007 (BHorton—ph). There is an earlier record, again from an oil platform, 110 mi S. of Morgan City, and therefore outside the area covered by this list, on Oct. 11, 1999.

**EASTERN SCREECH OWL** (*Otus osio*) Common resident

The Screech Owl may be found wherever there are woods which offer adequate cover, but is not often found in conifers. Because of its secretive habits during the day, one is often not aware of its presence. It will, however, answer a decent imitation of its call, and while tapes should be used sparingly, it will readily respond to a taped call. Screech Owls are common in New Orleans' City Park but likely occur wherever there is a large stand of live oaks, and so are found in Lake Vista, in the woods along Bayou Sauvage (now much changed by Hurricane Katrina), and so on.

**GREAT HORNED OWL** (*Bubo virginianus*) Uncommon resident

The Great Horned Owl is likely to be found in two rather different situations: in deep, mature woods, and in the coastal marsh where there is an oak motte or hammock. It will not be found, however, in the bottomland or cypress-tupelo swamps where Barred Owls are so much at home. Put differently, the Great Horned Owl may occur anywhere there is adequate cover for such a large bird, often merely several large oaks--except the swamp habitat to which the Barred Owl is confined.

**SNOWY OWL** (*Nyctea scandiaca*) Accidental visitor (in winter)

According to Beyer (1900), and repeated by Oberholser (1938), an individual of this boreal species of owl was shot during the winter of 1878-79 at Bayou des Allemandes. Such a record would be almost totally incredible were it not for the fact that the Snowy Owl is a species renowned for its irruptive surges southward in response to changes in distribution of its prey, and had one not over-wintered at Shreveport in the winter of 1977-78, where it was seen by many and photographed. Oberholser also reports that Gustav Kohn knew of a specimen taken at Baton Rouge prior to 1900. Nonetheless, the injured Snowy Owl found in Chalmette on Nov. 21-22 and brought to Audubon Zoo on Nov. 24 (fide JC) is truly remarkable. Belatedly, we have learned of a Snowy Owl seen by Tom Coulson in Chalmette in the early 1970s, and Coulson reports that a friend of his had seen one in the 1960s. Four Louisiana records, including three in Se. Louisiana, in less than forty years provides a somewhat different picture of the chances of finding one than might have been argued a few years ago.

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) Rare in winter

Although this small owl can be considered a regular winter visitor to the area from the west, it is quite uncommon, even rare, and is surely less common than a quarter century ago. In recent winters there have been virtually no records at all **There are, however, two o recent records from Grand Isle, ..... (RDP,et al), and the 2011 Grand Isle CBC.** Burrowing Owls may be found roosting in culverts or in piles of trash or other debris, which offer cover and prey, usually at the edge of open grassy fields which are good for hunting. Although the east campus of UNO has traditionally been the best place to find Burrowing Owls in the area, much of the habitat is no longer suitable. Another place to look would be the Exxon fields near the west end of Grand Isle, but one might be encountered almost anywhere there is suitable cover and fields for hunting. It has frequently been found in the Buras-Venice area. Although they breed in Texas and Florida, they are found in Louisiana only in winter (though Lowery reported a nesting near Baton Rouge in April 1935).

Expected dates of occurrence are approximately November 1 to March 15, but Burrowing Owls have been seen between Oct. 9, 1978, at New Orleans (TC) and May 20, 1972 on Grand Terre (KO,RJN,DN).

**BARRED OWL** (*Strix varia*) Common resident of swampy woods

As indicated above, the Barred Owl is found almost exclusively in cypress-tupelo and bottomland hardwood swamps, and apparently does not coexist with the Great Horned Owl. It is frequently seen in the daytime and will almost invariably be heard calling if one visits its habitat. Good places to find Barred Owls are in the Honey Island swamp (and in similar river or creek bottom habitat in the Florida parishes), in the Sarpy Swamp-Bonnet Carre Spillway area, in fresh water swamp near Paradis, etc.

**LONG-EARED OWL** (*Asio otus*) Casual to accidental in winter

This elusive species has been recorded only twice: Dec. 22, 1931 at Paradis (fide HCO; *Bird Lore* **34**: 70 (1932)), and on Delta NWR near Pilottown on the Mississippi R. on Mar. 5, 1999 (APanjabi, DHarrington--ph). Although it may occasionally winter north of Lake Pontchartrain, that is nothing more than a guess. There have been two or three relatively recent records in southwest Louisiana.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** (*Asio flammeus*) Rare winter visitor

There are 14 records of the Short-eared Owl spanning the period October 26 to March 23; the records are distributed as follows: Oct. (1), Nov. (7), Dec. (3), Jan. (2), Mar. (2). Seven of the records date from before 1900. It should be looked for hunting low over the marsh near dusk or perched on a fence or in a low tree in the marsh. It is a very strongly

marked bird, so that even in the poor light of dusk or dawn it is easily identified. The records are: Nov. 19, 1874 at Mandeville (fide HCO--coll.); January, 1888 at Kenner (fide HCO); Nov. 10 and 23, 1891 at New Orleans (fide HCO--coll.); Nov. 6 and 11, 1893 at New Orleans (GEB); March 23, 1894 at New Orleans (GEB); March 4, 1931 at Buras (ESH--coll.); Nov. 3, 1968 at Grand Isle (KPA); Dec. 21, 1971 near Slidell (SAG); Nov. 26, 1977-Jan. 4, 1978 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (MW,RJS,m.ob.); Oct. 26, 1981 at New Orleans (JR,MB); Dec. 2, 1981 at New Orleans (DM); .....1985 at Venice (RDP....); May 13, 1992 in Barataria Bay (**Bill Vermillion, Rich Martin**); Nov. 14, 1993 at Bucktown (RDP, et al).

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** (*Aegolius acadicus*)      Accidental

There are two records of this secretive owl, nearly 90 years apart: one shot in December 1889 near Madisonville (fide GEB) and Dec. 9-16, 1975 at Reserve (RJS). Saw-whet Owls do winter near enough to the area to make it worth keeping in mind the possibility that one might occur, probably most likely in the pine flats north of Lake Pontchartrain, but, in fact, almost anywhere.

Family *Caprimulgidae* GOATSUCKERS

**LESSER NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)      Very rare to occasional vagrant

The Lesser Nighthawk has been recorded in Southeast Louisiana on at least ten occasions, all since 1957. The recorded dates span the period Oct. 2 to May 2, distributed as follows: Oct. (1), Dec. (3), Jan. (1), March (1), April (2), May (1). The absence of February records tempts one to suggest that they ordinarily do not successfully over-winter, but the data are clearly skimpy. In the field, the Lesser Nighthawk is smaller and buffier, with somewhat shorter wings than its relative, the Common Nighthawk, and white bars very near the wingtip. The flight is also different, but this requires experience with the species.

The records are: April 7, 1957 at Grand Isle (MM--dead); May 2, 1957 at Grand Isle (RJN--coll.); Dec. 4, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 18 at New Orleans (SAG); Oct. 2, 1965 at New Orleans (JK); Jan. 9, 1971 at Labranche (RJN,RJS); April 9, 1982 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP,DM,NN); Dec. 11, 1988 at Ft. Jackson (RDP,NN,DM,GC); March 30, 1991 at Grand Isle (DM,RDP,,,,). Most recent, Dec. 29, 2001 at Venice (KR,DM). **Spring, 2008 (DPM)**

**COMMON NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordiles minor*)      Common summer resident

The Common Nighthawk is a familiar bird over almost the entire area in summer, from the New Orleans CBD to the barrier islands. It nests on rooftops and on the ground in waste areas, spoil, near the beach, and on barrier islands. Changes in rooftop practices seem to have substantially reduced its numbers in urban New Orleans. The Common Nighthawk occasionally overwinters, primarily in New Orleans' CBD, but there are few recent records. E.S. Hopkins reported that this species arrived during "April 12-14 every year." Expected

dates are April 15 to November 1, with extremes of Mar. 31, 1925 at Grand Isle (ESH) and Nov. 27, 1964 (SAG). During the southward movement in fall, large migrating flocks are sometimes seen.

**ANTILLEAN NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordiles gunlachii*) Accidental

The sole record of this newly recognized species is from the vicinity of the UNO campus May 27-Aug. 17, 1977 (JR,m.ob.). Several definitive recordings were made of the call. The bird may have briefly returned the following May, being present from May 24 to the end of the month (fide JR). This record has been ratified by the LOS Bird Records Committee.

A possible second record was obtained on June 22, 2000 when a nighthawk with a two-note call was found adjacent to Audubon Park in New Orleans (PW), later seen by many, recorded and video-taped. The record will be examined the the LOS Bird Records Committee.

**CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW** (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) Uncommon spring and fall migrant, regular summer resident north of Lake Pontchartrain

This goatsucker breeds north of Lake Pontchartrain, mostly in dry oak woodlands, and in places may be quite common. Listen for its chuk-wills-widow'! call. It is also a regular, but somewhat sparse migrant in spring in fall. Much more interestingly, the Chuck-will's-Widow winters in the lower delta in small numbers, i.e., near Venice, and at Grand Isle. There are upwards of 50 winter records, and in fact this species is hardly less common in migration than in winter in those coastal areas. Inland winter records are very much less common. Audubon said that he "saw many Chuck-will's-Widows about the streets [of New Orleans] and some Night Hawks" on March 15, 1821, which is early for either species, and especially the latter.

Chuck-will=s Widow is evidently a circumgulf migrant, which explains its relative scarceness in migration, but it has not infrequently been found on oil platforms near the Louisiana coast. Whether this reflects movement parallel to the coast or Aover-shooting@ is anyone=s guess. The regular wintering makes assigning expected and extreme dates hazardous, but it may be expected from March 25 or April 1 to about May 1 as a spring migrant, and from August 25 to October 20 in fall, though there is usually only a slight increase in probability of seeing the species during the migration period, except on the breeding grounds. The latest date for obvious migrants in spring is May 21, 1981 at Boothville (RDP,NN), while the extreme fall dates are Aug. 7, 1982 at New Orleans (DM) and Nov. 13, 1983 at Grand Isle (DM,RDP,NN).

**EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL** (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) Uncommon to rare migrant; rare winter visitor in the delta

The Whip-poor-will breeds as close to the region as Arkansas and N. Mississippi, but

as a circum-gulf migrant, it is not often encountered from New Orleans toward the coast in migration. There are, however, at least **a dozen** winter records, including one at New Orleans on ....., on a Christmas Bird Count, though most of the winter records are from Venice or Grand Isle. Expected dates in spring are April 1 to about May 1, and in fall, approximately Aug. 20 to Oct. 20, although these dates are quite uncertain.

Family *Apodidae* SWIFTS

**CHIMNEY SWIFT** (*Chaetura pelagica*) Very common summer resident

Although Chimney Swifts generally nest in chimneys, some nest in hollow trees as they did before the advent of man. Any swift seen after about November 1 should be carefully checked since there are no known wintering records. Expected dates of occurrence are March 20 (perhaps the 17th) to October 20, with extremes of March 10, 1958 (DJM,RFC) and Nov. 17, 1972 (RJS), both at Reserve. There is one very early spring record, of 10 presumed Chimney Swifts at New Orleans on Feb. 28, 1987 (CK), which is so early that it is here considered "out of season."

**VAUX'S SWIFT** (*Chaetura vauxi*) Casual in winter, primarily in the Reserve- Laplace area

Any swift seen in midwinter should be suspected of being of this species, since there are no records of wintering Chimney Swifts. On the other hand, identification is very difficult, especially of fast-moving, poorly marked like these two species of swifts (and some of their cousins from the south). With but one exception, all of the Southeast Louisiana records are from the Reserve-Laplace area, perhaps because of the patient coverage given by Stein and Weber. Vaux's Swifts are small, pale underneath, with a buffy rump. Given the fact that they breed on the west coast of the U.S., it should not be considered out of the question that wintering swifts in south Louisiana might be of a central or South American species. The result is that while all of the records below are probably of Vaux's Swifts, and almost certainly not Chimney Swifts, they cannot be considered definitively identified. So the Vaux's Swift is included in this list on the basis of probability (coupled with Lowery's banding records at Baton Rouge and a recent record based on calling birds), rather than certainty, an approach which is not taken elsewhere in this work. As many as 20 were present for several weeks in Baton Rouge in February 2004, and there have been regular winter records since.

Although records span the period October 21 to March 10, the dated records available to this writer are: Dec. 23-March 10, 1975 at Laplace (RJS,MW); Nov. 10 and 16, and Dec. 17, 1975 at Laplace (RJS,MW) [different birds?]; Dec. 29, 1982 at Ft. Jackson (BC,RJN,MS,MM,DM,RDP); winter **1988....**

Family *Trochilidae* HUMMINGBIRDS

Ten species of hummingbirds are known to have occurred in Southeast Louisiana (11 for Louisiana), an area in which only one species, the Ruby-throat, breeds. The other eight species are vagrants, mostly in winter, some more common than others, of course. Although many observers have contributed to our knowledge of these vagrants, none has had the impact on local hummingbird studies than Nancy Newfield. Most have occurred at her Metairie feeders, including the first state record for Broad-billed Hummingbird and the second state records for Broad-tailed and Allen's. Indeed Newfield almost single-handedly introduced serious hummingbird feeding to the entire gulf coast and, arguably, to the southeastern U.S. Before her work, knowledge of these vagrant western hummingbirds was mostly confined to the New Orleans area. Others who ought to be mentioned in this regard are Ron Stein and Melvin Weber at Reserve and David Muth in New Orleans. In the 1960's, Thelma von Gohren and **Ken McGee** obtained the first local records of Buff-bellied and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. As recently as 1970 only Rufous Hummingbird could be expected in winter, Black-chinned Hummingbirds were considered extremely rare, and no others were known to occur. Most of the records below, except for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, are of birds at feeders. See Newfield (...).

**The records given below are not up-to-date.**

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cyanthus latirostris*)      Accidental

The first remarkable record of this western hummingbird from Louisiana was of one at Nancy Newfield's feeders from Nov. 2, 1990 to Jan. 5, 1991. The bird was seen by dozens of observers and photographed. One might have expected many years to elapse before another record. Rather amazingly, however, another male Broad-billed Hummingbird was seen at Newfield's Oct. 12-13, 1992 (NLN)! ; Dec. 1992-Jan. 18, 1993 in River Ridge (NLN, et al). Another was at Gwen Smalley's feeders from Jan. 7 to Feb. 4, 1995 (GS, m.ob.—ph,banded NLN), the fifth record for Louisiana, and there was one at the Louisiana Nature Center December 11-26, 1999 (GO); **and January 2000? (GO,....)**; Dec. 28, 2000 to Jan. 6, 2001, Thibodeaux (JConover, et al); **muth, winter 2001-2** There are now ....records for SE Louisiana.

**BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia yucatanensis*)      Rare in winter, usually at feeders

Although the first record of Buff-bellied Hummingbird was obtained in New Orleans in 1965, there have now been at least 50 records, spanning the period Oct. 11 to March 22. All but the first of these records have been obtained since 1974, with 10 or more records occurring in some winters. During the winter of 1982-3, Newfield banded eight Buff-bellied Hummingbirds in Southeast Louisiana. The total absence of records during the winter of 1984-5 might be attributable to the effects of the January 1984 freeze, which not only affected Louisiana, but south Texas and northern Mexico as well.

Expected dates are approximately October 20 to March 15, with extreme dates of Oct. 11, 1975 (BR) and Apr. 18, 1979 (BR), both at New Orleans. The records through 1980 (at New Orleans unless otherwise indicated) were: Nov. 23-Dec. 30, 1965 (TVG--photo to LSUMZ); Oct. 26, 1974-March 20, 1975 (BR,m.ob.--photos); Oct. 11, 1975-Feb. 24, 1976 (BR,m.ob.); Jan. 8, 1977 in Metairie (NLN); March 22, 1978 (KMagee,MM,RDP, et al), present from March to May; Dec. 2, 1978-Jan. 14, 1979 (BR); Dec. 13, 1978-Apr. 18, 1979 (BR); March 20, 1979 (BMcK); Dec. 24, 1979 (ELeB); Oct. 24, 1980 at Metairie (NLN).

**BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) Accidental

The sole record for Louisiana of this hummingbird from the mountains of Mexico and the Southwest was of one at a Slidell feeder from March 7-April 25, 1995 (Peggy Siegert, NLN, m.ob.--ph.,vid.), banded by Newfield.

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) Accidental

The only record of this large western hummingbird for Louisiana is of one which appeared at a feeder in Slidell on Nov. 10, 2004 (fide LB, NN), and remained until at least Nov. 19.

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) Common summer resident, casual winter visitor

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is, of course, the only breeding hummingbird in the eastern United States. Unlike the western vagrants, which are so few in number that one usually sees them only at points of concentration like feeders, the Ruby-throat is regularly encountered in the breeding season, in open woods or woodland edges, almost anywhere away from the coastal marsh. It became clear in the 1970's, especially through the banding efforts of Newfield, that the typical female or immature *Archilochus* hummingbird at feeders in Southeast Louisiana in winter is much more likely to be Black-chinned, than this species. There are, however, many winter records of this species, and indeed, a few will be found wintering in the area each winter. In the winter of 1991-2, up to nine were recorded in Louisiana.

The expected dates of occurrence are March 5 to October 15, and extreme dates are March 3, 1958 [2004; 2008 HPatten] (SAG) and Nov. 1, 1895 (fide HCO), both at New Orleans. Migrants on the coast may be seen as late as late May and as early as....

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) Rare winter visitor, sometimes not uncommon at feeders

As recently as 1970, this species was considered a very rare vagrant in winter, occurring at only one set of feeders in uptown New Orleans (**Ken McGee**). This situation

seems to have changed less through increased numbers than through the efforts of observers like Nancy Newfield and Ron Stein, and now many others, to attract hummingbirds and to learn to identify them, especially in female or immature plumage. Especially important, in the early stages, was Newfield's banding. So it is that in any given year, there may be upwards of a dozen Black-chinned Hummingbirds at area feeders, a few of which may be adult males, but the bulk being young males or females. Females present a serious identification problem, but can be told with a high degree of probability by their noticeably longer bill and rather dingy underparts. When hovering, they usually pump their tails forward and backward. For details, one should consult Newfield's *Louisiana Hummingbirds*, or the usual field guides.

Black-chinned Hummingbirds can be expected between about October 20 and ....., **with extremes of.....**

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte anna*)      Occasional to accidental in winter

There are at least three records for Southeast Louisiana of this hummingbird, which breeds mostly along the Pacific coast, both from 1992: a female Nov. 18 in St. John Parish (RJS,MW,NLN) and a male Nov. 20-Dec. 4 in St. James Parish (Tom Sylvest,JS,NLN—photos, banded). Another was in St. Charles Par. Nov. 25-Dec. 2, 1995 (RJS, e al). There are several records from Southwest Louisiana and Baton Rouge as well.

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (*Stellula calliope*)      Occasional to accidental in winter

There are now over two dozen records of Calliope Hummingbird for the SE Louisiana, scattered over the area, but mostly in the Reserve-Laplace-Norco area, all since 1982. [on the order of 20 in the winter of 1998-99. The 8<sup>th</sup> LBRC report contains a lot of information about Calliopes in Louisiana through 2001, including returning banded birds]. One may speculate that they had been overlooked up to that point, but that raises a larger question concerning the rapid increase in number of species and individuals at feeders, which has occurred since the 1970s. Is this due to the concentrating effect of plantings designed to attract hummingbirds, and the much more extensive feeder now going on, or do more individuals now winter or attempt to winter along the gulf coast?

The first two records for Louisiana were obtained at the same set of residential feeders (Ron Stein's) almost exactly one year apart (the first bird was collected). The Calliope is quite small and short-tailed, giving it a long-winged appearance. The initial records were records: Dec. 6-8, 1982 (RJS,NLN, et al), collected by Cardiff, and Nov. 24-27, 1983 (RJS,NLN,m.ob.), both at Reserve; Nov. 12-18, 1986 at Reserve (RJS,KVR, NLN, et al); Nov. 1987-Mar. 25, 1988 in Norco (NLN, et al); Jan. 21-Apr. 9, 1988 in Laplace (RJS, NLN); Nov. 24-Dec. 26, 1995 in Abita Springs (OClifton, et al). Many records since....



**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus platyceras*) Rare vagrant in winter

There are now at well over two dozen records of this hummingbird of the Rocky Mountains for Southeast Louisiana. As usual, most individuals would be expected to be immatures, and thus to be identifiable by their large size and buffy wash on the sides of the breast. The earliest records were: Dec. 5-20, 1978 (NLN,m.ob.--including RJN,BC,RDP,RJS,MM,NN,MB,etc),. Feb. 23, 1988 in New Orleans (RRaither). Other recent records include Dec. 13, 1992 at Reserve (RJS), Feb. 27-Apr. 9, 1993 at Reserve (RJS), and another in Reserve from mid-November to early December, 1993 (RJS); Dec. 2, 1995 to late February, 1996 (RJS,NLN—banded); ...**Ricketts, Nelkin, Muth.....; .. 1995 Slidell**

**RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus rufus*) Uncommon vagrant in winter, mostly at feeders

The Rufous Hummingbird, which is regular in winter at feeders in throughout the area, is also not infrequently found where there are extensive plantings of turk=s cap (.....), for example, at Venice and on Grand Isle.. Dedicated feeding, especially if favored winter-flowering plants are present (*Salvia*, bottlebrush, sultan's turban, fire-spike, *Abutilon*, *Cuphea*, turk's cap, etc.) will very likely meet with success. Newfield banded 29 Rufous Hummingbirds during the winter of 1980-81.

Rufous Hummingbirds arrive at Louisiana feeders as early as late August, but those early arrivals are probably mostly returning birds which had wintered in the same yard or area in the previous year. Peak numbers may be reached in early October, but on this and other questions, the reader is referred to Newfield=s book. Most birds depart by mid-March . Extreme dates are Aug. 2, 1983 and March 22, 1980 (RDP,SP), both in Metairie.

**ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus sasin*) Rare winter vagrant at feeders

The fact that there are now more than a **dozen** (?) records of Allen's Hummingbirds from Southeast Louisiana, and others from Baton Rouge, means that care should be taken in identifying any *Selasphorus* hummingbird in winter. Although the Rufous Hummingbird is much the commoner of the two species, the presence of this species means than many immatures or females may have to be recorded as *Selasphorus sp.* or as Rufous-Allen's, the latter being preferable, assuming Broad-tailed has been ruled out.

The first record of Allen's Hummingbird for Louisiana was of a bird present from Oct. 8, 1975 to March 6, 1976 in Reserve (RJS), which was eventually collected (LSUMZ #81486, identified by Allan Phillips). Another record was of a dying bird collected on March 22, 1978 which had been present for some time at a New Orleans feeder (MM,NN,RDP,KMagee,m.ob.--LSUMZ #86998, identified by J.V. Remsen), one netted at

the Newfield's feeders on Jan. 6, 1979 (NLN,MB--coll./LSUMZ #89623), another at the Newfield's feeders in January 1987, Feb. 6- Mar. 26, 1988 at Norco (NLN, et al); Dec. 11-12, 1990 and Dec. 24, 1990-Feb. 24, 1991 in Metairie (NLN); ; Nov. 23, 1992 in Jefferson Parish (NLN). For information on some of these records (through 1983) and the possibility of Rufous x Allen's hybrids, see Newfield (1983).

Family *Alcedinidae* KINGFISHERS

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Ceryle alcyon*) Common resident

The familiar Belted Kingfisher is common along bayous, canals, and at the edge of the marsh, throughout the area. During the breeding season, however, the Belted Kingfisher retreats from the immediate vicinity of the coast, because of the lack of bank nesting sites.

ORDER *Picidae* WOODPECKERS

**RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) Common resident  
north of Lake Pontchartrain

The Red-headed Woodpecker is a familiar resident of the mixed pine-deciduous woodlands north and east of Lake Pontchartrain. Although there is little hard data on the stability of numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers, in the face of occupation of its nesting habitat by Starlings, there is at least reason for concern. An easy place to find this species is at Fontainebleau St. Pk. Red-headed Woodpeckers nest sparingly on the New Orleans lakefront, especially in Lake Vista (AS,GS,NN), but are difficult to impossible to find at any other time, though Reinoehl found Red-headed Woodpeckers to be uncommon migrants along the lakefront between April 22 and May 1 in spring, and Sept. 16 to Oct. 26 in fall. There are occasional records all the way to the coast, as at Grand Isle, for example (including April 2005, fide Tommy Bradberry).

In recent years, Red-headed Woodpeckers have been present in and near Lake Vista, during at least the early part of the nesting season (fide NN, DPM, et al).

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes carolinus*) Common resident

Although both anecdotal evidence and New Orleans Christmas Count records suggest a slow decline in numbers since the 1960's, the Red-bellied Woodpecker is still a common and typical resident of all wooded habitats, from parks to deep woods.

**YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) Common winter resident

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is the only definitively migratory species of woodpecker occurring in Southeast Louisiana (see, however, the discussion of Northern

Flicker), breeding in the northern United States and the Rocky Mountains and wintering all across the southern U.S. The sapsucker is a common winter resident of woodlands all over the area, including residential areas. Its mewing call is distinctive. Close attention to the plumage details of wintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers may occasionally yield a Red-naped Sapsucker (see below).

While Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are expected between October 10 and April 15, extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 28, 2008 (PW,DM) at New Orleans [Oct. 2 in 1960 (SAG) and in 1976, both at New Orleans], and May 7, 1966 at Venice (SAG).

**RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (*Syrphicus nuchalis*) Occasional or accidental in winter

There are two records of Red-naped Sapsucker for Southeast Louisiana, and perhaps for the state. The first was of a young male at Grand Isle **Oct. 27-31 (CS,GS,AS—ph)** and extensively photographed (RDP,GS). Another bird, thought to have been of this species, also photographed, was seen in New Orleans in the winters of 1989-90 and 1990-91 (NN,m.ob.), but has since been judged to have been a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Paul Lehman, et al). The most recent record is also from Grand Isle, Oct. 10, 1998 (CS,PW). For identification details, see Kaufman's Advanced Birding Guide, but note in particular the two longitudinal light stripes on the back of this species.

**DOWNY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides pubescens*) Common resident

Although the Downy Woodpecker declined in the early 1970's to a minimum of only nine on the 1975 New Orleans Christmas Bird Count, the 1980's showed a three-fold increase. Those beginners who are troubled by the problem of judging the size difference between this and the next species should learn the calls, which are quite distinctive. The call of the Downy Woodpecker is, by comparison with the Hairy, a softer "pik"!, along with a "whinny" or "rattle" which is unlike any vocalization of its larger relative. The Downy is, however, considerably smaller than the Hairy Woodpecker, with a *relatively* smaller bill.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) Uncommon to common resident

As measured by New Orleans CBC's, the winter ratio of Hairy to Downy Woodpeckers is about 1:4. The call of the Hairy Woodpecker is a very strong and sharp "piik"!

**RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides borealis*) Uncommon (to rare) resident in the Florida parishes

The endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker breeds rather sparingly in mature pine woods, nesting in dying trees infected by "red heart" disease. Nest holes are readily recognized by the long streaks of sap which surround them. Although this species is

threatened by present-day forestry practices, the endangered status of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker means that efforts are being made by the USFWS and others to preserve breeding habitat all across the southeastern United States. The total population is estimated to be on the order of 1000 individuals. Rich Martin quotes an estimate of 10,000 contiguous acres necessary for a healthy Red-cockaded colony; such acreage does not exist in this area. The Red-cockaded Woodpecker can be recognized by its distinctive nasal, almost starling-like call. The best-known locality at the moment is at Big Branch NWR near Lacombe. Details might be obtained from local birders, the Guide to Bird-Finding in the New Orleans Area, or from the refuge itself.

**NORTHERN FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*) Common to very common in winter, summering mainly north of Lake Pontchartrain

Three sub-species of "yellow-shafted" flickers are known to occur in Southeastern Louisiana, *C. a. b. orealis* and *C. a. luteus* in winter, and *C. a. auratus* as a permanent resident, mainly north of the lake. Thus while a Northern Flicker may occasionally be seen in New Orleans, or nearer the coast, in summer, that is rather unusual. The "red-shafted" form *C. a. collaris* has been recorded on fewer than five occasions. Flickers begin to appear south of the lake in early September.

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) Uncommon resident

The Pileated Woodpecker occurs wherever there are deep and extensive woods, and has even been seen at Venice and Grand Isle, on the coast. Good places to look for Pileated Woodpeckers are Honey Island, Fontainebleau St. Pk, the Bonnet Carre Spillway/Sarpy Swamp, and perhaps Bayou Sauvage ridge. A recent Venice record is Oct. 12, 2008 (DM,PW,RDP,Tiff).

**IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus principalis*) EXTINCT

Although the Ivory-billed Woodpecker once occurred in Southeast Louisiana, in virgin bottomland hardwood forests, it has not been seen in many decades one can confidently say that it will not be seen again. The species is probably extinct in the United States, but if not, it will surely be so soon. Reports from the Atchafalaya basin in the early 1970's should be greeted with caution, if not scepticism, and reports of individuals in the Pear River bottoms below Bogalusa since the 1960's (fide JK) can probably be rejected outright. While a report from the Honey Island WMA in April 1999 was intriguing, it probably has no substance, though has been taken seriously by many, and considerable effort has been made to substantiate it. The supposed location was between old US11 and Interstate 59 near the firing range. The putative rediscovery of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in Arkansas, which should be treated with an abundance of caution (and now seems likely to have been in error), might raise the possibility that the species might be found in Louisiana, but the chances are extremely slim.

FAMILY *Tyrannidae* Tyrant Flycatchers**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus borealis*) Uncommon fall migrant

The Olive-sided Flycatcher breeds in the northern forests of the U.S. and Canada and in the Rocky Mountains south to the Arizona-Mexico border. It is a regular fall migrant through Southeast Louisiana on the way to its wintering grounds in South America, albeit in quite small numbers, but there are only four spring records, all in May. A possible explanation is that the Olive-sided Flycatcher is strictly a circum-gulf migrant in spring and less so in the fall. Rarely does one see more than one or two in a fall, and often it is simply missed. Identification is only a little bit subtle, for although it looks something like a pewee, it is larger, has a big-headed look, and indeed is a sort of cross between a pewee and an Eastern Kingbird. It also has a strong "vested" look, caused by dark sides to the breast. The white tufts on the side are often not visible. The song, which is rarely, if ever, heard in Louisiana, is a very clear "hip, three beers!" and the distinctive "pip-pip-pip" call note is also not heard. Spring records are rare, though much more common in the western part of the state, suggesting that they are primarily circum-gulf migrants at that season.

As a fall migrant, the expected dates are August 25 to October 1, with rather a strong peak in mid September. Extremes are Aug. 14, 1983 at Grand Isle (MM,NN,RDP) and Nov. 4, 1961 at Venice (SAG). The spring records, all from New Orleans, are: May 6, 1901 (AA), May 2, 1961 (SAG), May 4, 1980 (JR), and May 15, 1981 (NN). Maximum number: 8 at Grand Isle on Aug. 22, 1977.

**WESTERN WOOD PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*) Accidental

There is one record of this western flycatcher for Southeast Louisiana, of one seen and heard singing in New Orleans' Lake Vista subdivision on....., 1989 (DM; MM,NN,RDP...). The bird gave a full song, which was taped, several times, and was heard by several observers, including this writer. Although there are a number of fall records (several collected) from southwestern Louisiana, and another New Orleans record likely to have been of this species (**MM**), observers should not expect to be able to definitively identify a pewee as being of this species, in the field. While a photograph might just suffice, netting or collecting are the only sure ways, barring the unlikely circumstance of a singing bird, as in the record above. For the purposes of *probable* or *possible* identification, the Western Wood Pewee is darker below, has a vested look, and will probably have a dark lower mandible.

**EASTERN WOOD PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) Common to very common migrant, uncommon nesting bird in pine flats

Most pewees are seen in migration, when they are often very common (10-15 or more

in a day), but they do breed north of Lake Pontchartrain in second-growth pine flat habitat, in modest numbers. The distinctive "pee-a--wee!" song makes locating them, in migration or on the breeding ground, not very difficult. The soft call-note is also easily learned. There are two records from New Orleans proper which are late enough to be candidates for breeding: .....(JN) and May 29, 1992 (DM).

Expected dates of occurrence are April 15 to May 20 in spring, and August 10 to October 20 in fall, while extreme dates are, in spring March 23, 1992 at New Orleans (DM) [previously March 25, 1969 (RDP)] and May 27, 1978 (JR), both at New Orleans, and in fall July 17, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 17, 1985 at New Orleans (RDP) and at Lafitte NP (DM). There are four winter records, all considered reliable: Feb. 26, 1967 at Buras (JK); Dec. 21, 1968 at the Rigolets (JK); Dec. 26, 1976 at Reserve (RJS); and Dec. 4, 1983 at Boothville (DM,JVR,TP--coll).

**EMPIDONAX FLYCATCHERS** *Empidonax sp* Uncommon to common migrants, especially near the coast, and depending on species

Five species of *empidonax* flycatchers regularly occur in Southeast Louisiana, four as migrants and one, the Acadian Flycatcher, as a summer resident. To qualify this a little, however, there are few records of Willow Flycatcher at any season. Both species of the "Western Flycatcher" complex, Cordilleran and Pacific-slope have also been recorded. Two other species have been recorded in Louisiana, Hammond's Flycatcher, of which there are two winter records, and Gray Flycatcher (two records). Only Dusky and Buff-breasted, of the North American *empidonax* flycatchers, have not been recorded in the state. Since field identification is difficult, and since no netting is nor being carried out in Southeast Louisiana, it is difficult to generalize very confidently about the relative abundance of the several species, and when they are present. The best information which is available is based on birds which have been collected in spring and fall in Southwest Louisiana, and from vocalizing birds. Where such information is available to the author, it is given in the species accounts.

The identification problem, is, of course, very difficult, though with care, most birds can be identified with high probability. The best sources of information are a series of articles in *Birding* and Kaufman (1990). If one insists on identifying every *empidonax* he sees, he may be wrong as often as he is right. On the other hand several species can be identified with high probability, depending on season, and identification by call is often quite definitive, the problem being that not only do these flycatchers rarely sing on migration, they often do not call either. Briefly, however, the Willow and Least Flycatcher give a "whit!" call, and these two species are usually distinguishable from each other by plumage (especially the eye-ring). Of course the Gray and Dusky Flycatchers also give a "whit" call, the Gray Flycatcher is the only *empidonax* that flicks its tail *downward*. Dusky is also large compared to a Least Flycatcher and is very long-tailed. The calls of Acadian, Yellow-bellied, and Alder Flycatcher are distinctive, once learned.

The problem is that despite the characters that make an ID very probable, or virtually certain, they are rarely definitive. Most identifications will be correct, but not all. In the

absence of vocalization, note bill size and shape, color of lower mandible, throat color, primary extension, eye-ring (whether prominent or not, and shape), and tail length. Then consult Kaufman. Perhaps the most difficult problem (aside from the "Traill's problem") is distinguishing Acadian and Yellow-bellied, both of whom may have yellow underparts (as may other species), but throat color is often decisive and primary extension, if seen well or photographed, will be.

Briefly, Least Flycatcher is distinctive, small, gray, small bill, strong eye-ring, and short primary extension. Acadian has a very long primary extension and heavy bill. It may have yellow underneath, but ordinarily its throat will be white. Yellow-bellied will have a yellow throat, yellow tinge to the eye-ring and wing bars, but a bill slighter than Acadian and a short primary extension. Willow will have white throat, very little eye-ring, bill smaller than either Acadian or Yellow-bellied, fairly short primary extension. Alder is very similar to Willow but a stronger eye-ring.

Western empids are another matter. There are two records of Hammond's and two of Gray Flycatcher for Louisiana, and a possible Dusky record. See Kaufmann for details. Four of the empids give whit! Calls: Least, Dusky, Willow, and Gray.

The expected dates for the flycatchers of this genus are April 10 to May and August 15 to October 15. Extreme dates are, in spring, Apr. 4, 1971 (RDP) and May 20, 1990 (RDP,...), both at Grand Isle, and in fall, July 17, 1957(SAG) and Nov. 19, 1966 (RDP), both at New Orleans. There are at least nine, probably more, winter records of unidentified *empids*: Nov. 30, 1952 at New Orleans (HBC); Dec. 1, 1957 at Venice (JPG,SAG); Dec.8, 1957 at Venice (JPG,SAG); Dec. 21, 1957 at New Orleans (CLE,HAJE); Dec. 28, 1965 at Venice (fide SAG); Dec. 28, 1972 at Venice (SAG,et al); Dec. 29, 1972 at Reserve (RJS,MW); Dec. 29, 1973 at Reserve (fide RJS); Dec. 13, 1975 at Mandeville (RDP)....

**YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax flaviventris*) Uncommon spring and fall migrant

The Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is a very active, *empidonax*, with a somewhat pewee-like call. Compared to the Acadian Flycatcher, it is smaller and has a rather short primary extension (see Kaufman, 1990). Its bill is smaller, but fairly robust, nonetheless. Generally it is greenish on the back and has yellow underparts and yellow throat, but neither of these features are constant or distinctive. According to Kaufman it is a late spring migrant and favors the interiors of woods, and I can second the last comment. Yellow-bellied seems to be quite regular, especially in fall. With the exception of Acadian, none of the empids are very common in SE Louisiana in spring, but this species is probably the next most common.

Expected dates are approximately April 15 to May 15, and August 20 to October 20, with a lot of uncertainty. Some definite records are: May 8, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG), a bird which was singing; Sept. 14, 1950 at New Orleans (SAG--coll); Oct. 12, 1968 at Venice (JK), a bird which was banded; Oct. 6-7, 1986 at Lafitte NP (DM); **Sept....., 1994** at New Orleans (NN--singing). Other highly probable records include May 29, 1992 at New Orleans (DM), Oct 1, 2000 (DM,RDP), etc.....(DM) fall 2004 (DM...)

**ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax virescens*) Common summer resident

The Acadian Flycatcher breeds commonly in bottomland hardwood swamp habitat and is easily detected by its explosive "wick-ee-up!" song which it utters constantly. On migration it never sings, but gives a distinctive, complex "*empidonax*-type" call which is hard to render. The "weece!" given in the National Geographic Field Guide is much better than Kaufman's "peek". Perhaps "weep" is better, but that is a matter of personal perception. The Acadian Flycatcher is very large-billed for an *empidonax* and has a large primary extension, which is easier to see on this species because it is relatively placid or inactive. It usually has considerably more eye-ring than the "Traill's"-types and is much larger and bigger-billed than a Least. Because it may have considerable yellow on the underparts, especially, but not only, in fall, it may be easily confused with the previous species.

Expected dates are April 5 to October 10, with extreme dates of occurrence of March 27, 1965 at Grand Isle (SAG) and Nov. 3, 1985 at Lafitte NP (DM,CL).

**[TRAILL'S FLYCATCHER]** Presumed uncommon spring and fall migrant

With the splitting of Traill's Flycatcher into the two song types, what little information which existed on these two flycatchers became considerably less useful, since the records of singing individuals were often not recorded as to song type. While there are only three definite records of Willow Flycatcher and none of Alder, "Traill's"-type flycatchers are considered to be regular in migration, in modest numbers. Lacking substantiation of this assumption, and without any knowledge of the relative frequency of the two types, every effort should be made to secure additional information. "Traill's" Flycatchers are large and relatively big-billed and can have a very faint eye-ring, though Alder has much more of an eye-ring than Willow. Traill's-type empids are somewhat brownish in coloration, with long primary extension, a fairly heavy bill, and generally a whitish throat. Both species breed across the northern U.S. and southern Canada, but the Willow Flycatcher breeds down through the Rocky Mountains into New Mexico and has apparently nested in north Louisiana, near Monroe. In addition to the Willow Flycatcher records given below the records of Willow/Alder Flycatchers are: Sep. 9, 1924 at Harvey (ESH--coll); and Sep. 5, 1957, Sep. 6, 1957, and May 1, 1960, all at New Orleans and all singing (SAG); Sept. 4, 1994 at Grand Isle (RDP). Basically, Traill's-type flycatchers may be expected from mid-April to mid-May, and, more commonly, mid-August to mid-October; most, if not all will be Alder.

**ALDER FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax alnorum*) presumed regular migrant

Records from Southwest Louisiana suggest that Alder Flycatcher may be a regular migrant through the area, especially in fall, although there are large enough differences between the avifauna of SE and SW Louisiana to encourage one to be very cautious. It is



hoped that banding may eventually decide this question definitively, but observers should, of course, be alert for the possibility of a calling Alder. There are some spring records that are quite probable. Occasionally Alders will be heard calling, such records include one from Reserve on..... (RJS, et al), another Oct. 4, 1998 at Grand Isle (DL,DPM,RDP). . They typically have a somewhat weak eye-ring, but much stronger than Willow. The calls are quite different, Alder giving a fairly sharp “keep” or “kep” rather than the Willow’s “whit.” See Kaufman for details.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax trailli*) Possibly an uncommon spring and fall migrant

Short of netting or collecting, the only sure way to identify a Willow Flycatcher is by song ("fitz-bew!")—which it probably never gives in migration, or by its "whit!" call In the latter case, identification may still only be probable, since three other empids give a "whit" call (though in the Southeast the likely confusion is with Least which is usually distinguishable in the field). See the discussion above and Kaufman (1990). Willow and Alder (*Empidonax alnorum*) can be distinguished from each other by song or call, the Alder's Song being a buzzy "fee-be-o!" and its call a rather sharp "peek!". Definitely has more of an eye-ring than Willow, which usually has virtually none.

All specimens of Willow Flycatcher for Se. Louisiana are from the fall, as are the other probable records: Sep. 16, 1935 (TDB--coll), Sept. 20, 1935 (TDB--coll), and Nov. 3, 1985 (AS), all at New Orleans, and Oct. 20, 1991 at Triumph (RDP--calling). That they occur in at least small numbers in fall migration seems clear, but their occurrence in spring is an open question. **A recent record is of .....singing near Sorrento? On .....2008 (SWC,DL D).**

**LEAST FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax minimum*) Rare spring migrant; uncommon fall migrant

The Least Flycatcher is one of the most distinctive of the empids, being small, small-billed, and having a prominent eye-ring and short primary extension. See Kaufman (1990) for other details. The call is a "whit!" (see discussions above). Most, if not all, of the winter records of empids (see above) are of this species, as revealed by their "whit!" call notes (the other empids giving a “whit” note are Willow, Dusky, and Gray Flycatchers).

Least Flycatcher is the only empid known with certainty to have occurred in the area in winter, and records are not terribly rare. During the winter of 1993-4, there were at least four present near Ft. Jackson with one lingering as late as Mar. 6 (RDP). Recent winter records include Dec. 30, 2008 at Ironton, Plaquemines Par. (PW,DM), Jan. 3, 2009 at Ft. Jackson (CRiehl, PW), recovered Feb. 8, 2009 (PW), etc. There are two winter records of Hammond's Flycatcher for Louisiana, whose call note reminds this observer of the call note of "Audubon's" Warbler--but slightly sharper, for Louisiana.

In the fall, Least Flycatchers might be found from something like mid-August well into October. The *definitive* records of Least Flycatchers in Southeast Louisiana include : Jan. 1, 1957 (coll), Sep. 14, 1960 (SAG--singing), and Aug. 26, 1961 (SAG--singing), all at New Orleans; Mar. 19, 2005 Venice (SWC,DLD\*). Other records of calling birds include Feb. 23, 1993 in Plaquemines Par. (DM--call), Sept. 26, 1993 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP), and Nov. 26, 1993 at Ft. Jackson (DM,NN,PY). [9/4 GI (RDP), 9/15/94 NO (PY)], 10/4/98 GI (DL,DPM,RDP) **etc.**

**[DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) HYPOTHETICAL]**

An empidonax flycatcher seen and photographed at Grand Isle on .....(DM....) was thought to have been of this species. Expert opinion has been just about equally divided between those who regard the bird as as being of this species and those who take it to be *minimum*, which makes it worth mentioning here. The Dusky has a "whit" call note, like Willow and Least (and Gray), has a substantial eye-ring, a "vested" look, and a long tail. See Kaufman (1990). Another candidate (PW) was collected at the Recovery I landfill in the winter of 2011-12, but has not been identified with certainty.

**[PACIFIC SLOPE FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax difficilis*) Accidental vagrant]**

**CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) Accidental vagrant**

There is one record of this complex, "Western" Flycatcher, which has been split into two sibling species, the Pacific Slope (*E. difficilis*) and Cordilleran Flycatchers (*E. occidentalis*) based primarily on their very different songs. There are three or more Louisiana records of "Western Flycatcher", all specimens, consisting of birds collected in Cameron Parish and near Crowley, both Pacific Slope, and one obtained at Ft. Jackson in Plaquemines Parish on Jan. 26, 1994 (SWC,DLD), belonging to this species.

**EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) Common winter resident**

The Eastern Phoebe is the only normally wintering flycatcher in Louisiana. It is a familiar bird of open, waste habitat, stands of willows, and even denser woodlands. It has a distinctive call and its song, which gives it its name, a wheezy "fee-bee" is distinctive. The Phoebe has bred in north Louisiana.

Expected dates are October 10 to March 25, with extreme dates of occurrence being Sep. 25, 1897 (fide HCO [Sep. 26, 2004 DM,MM,PW; Sep. 28, 2008 DM,PW] and May 5, 1936 at Grand Isle (AD).

**SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) Casual vagrant**

Although there are only four records of this flycatcher from the southeast, there are many more records from Baton Rouge into the rice fields of central to southwest Louisiana. It should be considered a real possibility in fall or winter, especially near the coast, as at Venice. Although the Say's Phoebe is strongly marked, one should be careful not to confuse it with a female or young male Vermilion Flycatcher. The first two records were from the same fall: Sep. 29, 1957 at Reserve (DJW,RFC,RJS--coll) and Nov. 23, 1957-Feb. 16, 1958 at Howze Beach (now "Treasure Island") in St. Tammany Parish (SAG, et al). One was found on the Venice CBC on.....(MM,PW,CS; video-RDP), and another was seen at Alliance, Plaquemines Par., Feb. 18-24, 2008 (DPatton, MM, RDP, m.ob.--ph).

**VERMILLION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) Rare fall migrant and winter vagrant

Over 60 individuals of this species have been recorded in Southeast Louisiana, all since 1944. Some have shown such a strong attachment to their wintering territories that they have returned year after year. One was seen in City Park from the winter of 1956-57 through 1961-62; another was at Ft. Jackson from 1968-69 to 1972-73. Since the 1970's records have been somewhat scarce, for no easily discernable reason. Fifty-four records compiled prior to 1970 were distributed as follows: Sep. (1), Oct. (1), Nov. (12), Dec. (19), Jan (9), Feb. (8), and March (4). These data clearly show that Vermilion Flycatchers often overwinter. There is one anomalous summer record, of a female? at the Bonnet Carre Spillway on July 17, 1976 (MW).

Expected dates are October 15 to approximately March 5, with extremes of Sep. 22, 1979 (MB,BMcK) and March 8, 1961 (SAG), both at New Orleans.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) Rare winter vagrant

Three species of *myiarchus* flycatchers occur in Louisiana: Ash-throated and Brown-crested (formerly Wied's), and Great-crested, which breeds. The first two only occur in fall and winter, generally after Great-crested have departed, and there are no winter records of the latter. The Ash-throated Flycatcher is much the smallest of the three--typically being about phoebe-sized, and has quite pale underparts by comparison with the other two. The surest way to identify these flycatchers is to observe the tail pattern, from below. In this species, the tail feather is dark on the outer side of the shaft *and* on the tip; in Great-crested and Brown-crested the outer side of the shaft is dark all the way to the tip. The Ash-throated usually has an all-dark bill, which is usually quite small-looking. The only problem is that robust individuals can look much more like Brown-crested. The key, if the bird does not vocalize, and Ash-throateds usually do not (the call, however, is a wheezy "ker-weir", or "ka-brek", or sometimes only a single "wheet", but can become a repeated, strident jumble of similar notes), is to use the entire ensemble of characteristics. With care, identification is easier than these cautions suggest. It should be noted, however, that the distant possibility exists that another species of *myiarchus* might occur, including Dusky-

capped (*M. tuberculifer*), Yucatan (*M. yucantanensis*), Swainson's ... or, especially, Nutting's Flycatcher (*M. nuttingi*), which has occurred in Alabama?. As of this writing, the author has seen 9 Ash-throated Flycatchers in Se. Louisiana, and 8 Brown-crested Flycatchers, consistent with the overall totals of about 30 and nearly 20, respectively. Most records are of single birds, but Phillip Wallace had a "flock" of 5 in New Orleans on Nov. 27, 2009.

There are over 30 records of Ash-throated Flycatcher for Southeast Louisiana. The species has been recorded between September 12 (1970--DN) and **March 12 (1959)**, in addition to a bird which wintered in New Orleans from the CBC until April 2?, 2004 [**Mar. 28?**](PW,CS,EW,et al), and a rather remarkable May 1 (1960--DGB,SLW) sighting; there are no records between Sep. 12 and Nov. 11. Most, but by no means all, of the records are from the Venice area. Eighteen dated records at hand are distributed as follows: Sep. (1), Nov. (5), Dec. (5), Jan. (4), Feb. (3), March (2), and May (1). Recent records include: Dec. 26, 1983 at New Orleans (MW); Dec. 29, 1983 at Venice; Jan. 8, 1985 at New Orleans (JR,DM,MM,RDP,NLN,PN--coll); Dec. 27, 1987-Jan. 1, 1988 to Jan. 1 (DM,JH; RDP) at New Orleans; Dec. 29, 1991 at Venice (**DM,NN?--2; ph**); **Jan. 3-16, 1993 at Venice (RDP,DM,SC,DD,PY....)**; Mar. 12, 1993 in New Orleans' Lake Vista (AS,GS), Jan. 2, 1994 at Ft. Jackson (RDP,ASt); Jan. 15, 1994 at Ft. Jackson (PW,JK,MS--5?); Jan. 2?, 1995, Ft. Jackson (DMP,RDP); Jan. 20-Feb. 4, 1996 on Bayou Sauvage NWR (PW—ph). An early record at New Orleans on Dec. 27, 1981 (MW) is likely to have been of this species.

#### **GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) Common summer resident

The Great-crested Flycatcher is one of three breeding species of flycatchers in Southeast Louisiana. Nesting in woodlands all over the area, including, apparently, on Grand Isle, it is easily located by its strong, distinctive "reep!" call. Of the three species of *myiararchus* which have occurred in Louisiana, only the Great-crested Flycatcher has not be recorded in winter. The Great-crested Flycatcher is generally much larger than the Ash-throated and much brighter yellow on the breast, and its bill is usually (but not always) horn colored. Compared to the Brown-crested Flycatcher, the Great-crested has a much better defined boundary between the yellow belly and the gray throat and upper breast than in its western cousin, in which the boundary is very washed-out. The Great-crested also shows very prominent white edgings to the secondary converts or tertials which create very prominent "v's" on its back.

The expected dates of occurrence of the Great-crested Flycatcher are March 25 to October 1, with extreme dates of March 12, 1894 (GEB) [March 20, 2010 RDP] and Oct. 6, 1968 at New Orleans (RDP). There are no winter records.

#### **BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) Rare to casual winter vagrant

There are nearly 30 Southeast Louisiana records, totalling well over 40 individuals,

of this flycatcher which breeds from southern Texas and Arizona south into Mexico, spanning the period Nov. 24 to March 25. All but a handful of the records are from the Buras--Venice area near the mouth of the Mississippi River. The individuals which reach Louisiana in winter are probably mostly young birds, perhaps moving laterally along to the gulf coast. There are few records after the end of January, a fact which may mean that not many successfully overwinter, or may simply reflect the poor coverage of the Venice area after the Christmas Count period. The records listed here should not be allowed to obscure the difficulty of identification, even under the best of conditions and even when the observer is familiar with all three species (and more) of *myiarchus*. The identification details have been enumerated above, but generally, the Brown-crested Flycatcher is large, with a large, generally black bill, is usually fairly bright yellow below, with a gray throat which blends smoothly into the yellow, with tail feathers whose outer webs are dark rufous (like the Great-crested), with no bleeding onto the inner web as in Ash-throated. Thus the undertail pattern is a prerequisite to a certain identification. Although examination of a series of specimens of the three species will quickly disabuse anyone of the notion that identification is easy, attention to all field marks can yield reliable results. In the case of the two vagrant *myiarchus* flycatchers, it is not merely desirable to ascertain the tail pattern, but almost essential.

Until recently, all Louisiana specimens were of the small-billed race *cooperi*, though there have been several sight records of very large-billed individuals, presumably *M. c. magister*, from the Southwestern U.S. and western Mexico. The only records known to this writer of Brown-crested Flycatchers vocalizing in Louisiana occurred when three or more were present at Ft. Jackson on Nov. 26, 1993 (DM,NN,PY), and when one at Ft. Jackson on January 30, 1999 (DM,RDP,PW) responded to taped calls/songs. Most recently 2-3 were found in the same brushy area (canopy of chinese tallow, understory of elderberry, bacharis, dew/blackberry, etc.) on Feb. 20 (PW,DM--2) and 27 (MM,RDP,PW--2, ph., video). It must be added that most of the good habitat in the Ft. Jackson area was a casualty of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

The records are: Nov. 24, 1961 at Venice (BJD--coll); Dec. 1, 1961 at Venice (BJD); Nov. 28, 1966 at Venice (MW--coll); Dec. 7, 1969 at Reserve (RJS,RJN); Dec. 31, 1970 at Venice (SAG,RDP,DN,JHe--2); Dec. 23, 1973 at Venice (RJS, et al--3); Jan. 27, 1974 at Venice (RJN,RDP,DN); Dec. 31, 1974 at Venice (SAG,RJN); March 25, 1979 at Venice (MM,NN); **..fall 1987** at Grand Isle (**CS,....;DM,RDP,MM**); Jan. 3, 1993 at Venice (DM,RDP), Jan. 3 (DM,RDP) and 16, 1993 (DM,DLD,SWC,PY--3\*), Nov. 26, 1993 Ft. Jackson (DM,NN,PY--3); Jan. 15, 1994, Ft. Jackson (PW,JK,MS); Jan. 26, 1994 near Ft. Jackson (SWC,DLD--4\*). Two of the latter birds were of the subspecies *magnitser*. Another Jan. 28, 1995 near Ft. Jackson (SWC\*); Feb. 22, 1995 at Ft. Jackson (SWC,DLD); Feb. 20-27, 2000 at Ft. Jackson (MM,PW,RDP—photos,et al); Nov. 7, 2000 at Venice (JHolmes—ph); Dec. 30, 2000 at Ft. Jackson (MM, et al); Venice CBC 2004 (2); early March 2004 (PW).....; Dec. 30, 2008 (DM,PW—vid, a bird that was still present Jan. 31, 2009 (DM,PW). There are two or three recent New Orleans records from the Recovery I area: 24 January 2004 (PW),.....2005 (PW,DM). Two records from the winter of 2008-9 from Plaquemines Parish: .....(PW,DM), present until at least Feb.....2009 (Boslers); , and

Feb. 14, 2009 (DM) in lower Belle Chasse. Records in the winter of 2009-10 include the apparent return of the bird at Diamond (Jan. 17, 2010—DM,PW,RDP), one near Ft. Jackson (Jan. 31, 2010—DM,RDP,PW), and one at Braithwaite (Feb. 28, 2010—DM,PW,GO,RDP). The latest records are one on the 2011 Venice CBC (PW,CR) and another at Diamond on Feb. 4, 2012 (PW).

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) Accidental

What was apparently a single individual of this species wintered on Paris Road in New Orleans from the winter of 1975-76 until 1978-9. The bird was first recorded on the Dec. 20, 1975 New Orleans CBC (MM,NN, surely one of the most spectacular records for a New Orleans Christmas Count (equalled probably only by the Zone-tailed Hawk on the 1984 count). The bird (apparently the same individual) was again seen nearly two years later, at the same spot (within 150 yards), on Oct. 8, 1977 (PS), and was present until at least March 21, 1978. During the 1978-79 winter, the bird was seen from Oct. 10 (FB) to at least Jan. 3. In fact, the assumption that the bird was present only in the winters of 1975-9 is just that, an assumption. The second record for SE Louisiana was of a bird seen and photographed on April 17, 1999 below Venice (Elisabeth Jeanclos) and present until at least Aug. 5. The bird built and attended a nest in a power pole during that entire period. It was recovered again on the Venice CBC (DM,KR, et al), and once more on June 12 (PW,CS), and 25, 2000 (MM,DM,RDP), and again on Sept. 2, 2000 (SWC,DLD). The 8<sup>th</sup> LBRC report gives dates of Nov. 7, 2000 to July 28, 2001 for that winter. The bird was last seen in the summer of 2002, after having been present for at least four years. The most record, and the second for New Orleans, is of one in New Orleans East from Dec. ...., 2003 until.....[Another was apparently heard in New Orleans on April 3, 2004 (DM,PW).]

**SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) Accidental

As remarkable as the occurrence of the above species, was a record of the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at Grand Isle on Sep. 30, 1956 (RJN,EOW). The sighting was within a week of Hurricane Flossy, which may or may not be relevant. After a hiatus of over 50 years, there have been two recent records: spring 2010 at Grand Isle ....), and fall 2012 in New Orleans' City Park. If a flycatcher thought to be of this species is found, it should be carefully described or photographed, since the Streaked Flycatcher (*M. maculatus*) is almost identical, differing mainly in having nearly white, streaked, underparts, [malar stripe] and has occurred in the U.S.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) Accidental

There are five records of Tropical Kingbird for SE Louisiana, all but one from the Fourchon-Grand Isle area, the initial one being the first record for Louisiana, that of a bird collected on Chenier Caminada just west of Grand Isle (Jefferson Parish) on May 12, 1984 (BC,RJN,NLN). This has been identified as belonging to the middle American subspecies.

The record occurred shortly after the "Tropical" Kingbird was split into two species, the Tropical Kingbird, which breeds from southern Arizona south along the western coast of Mexico and Couch's Kingbird, which breeds in south Texas and northeastern Mexico as well as Yucatan. Another individual was seen and photographed on Fourchon Rd, Lafourche Par. on April....2000.... (RDP), and was heard giving its characteristic call. The other records are from Grand Isle [DM &...Hiway 1, Lafourche] There are several other recent records of Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds in SE. Louisiana, including one at the end of on Fourchon Rd., June 14, 1999 (NLN,PW), and another on the Chandeleurs.....(2000). There was a record from Pass-a-Loutre Oct. 11, 2011 (JB).

Far and away the most interest record of this species has been the presence for at least two winters at Braithwaite. The first record was Feb. 20, 2010 (GO), followed by Feb. 28, 2010 (GO,DM,PW,RDP,CS). At least two have been present both winters and there has even been a hint of pairing (RDP). There has also been a hybrid bird present, probably a western-tropical mix. Tropical Kingbirds have been seen at Braithwaite as late as Mar. 11, 2012 (Marybeth Lima, et al).

The only reliable way to tell these two species apart is by call, since the Tropical Kingbird gives a rapid twittering call which is very different from either the "queer!" or "pip-pip!" calls of Couch's. Either species is distinguished by a forked tail (stronger in this species), a black ear-patch or "mask" (darker in the Tropical Kingbird), yellow which goes well up onto the lower throat, and a somewhat heavier bill than Western or Cassin's Kingbird.

Although a yellow-bellied kingbird with forked tail at New Orleans on .....(SAG,MM;MB) was thought to have belonged to this complex, it has been suggested that it may have been a White-throated (**Snowy-throated?**) Kingbird (*Tyrannus...*).

#### **COUCH'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus couchii*) Accidental

The lone record of this species is one found near Paradis on January 27 (Bill Ayers, CF--photos) and identified on February 10 (RDP,NN,GC--photos). The bird several times gave the distinctive "pip-pip" call which definitively marks it as *couchii*. There are at least two previous records of this species from southwest Louisiana.

#### **WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) Rare to very uncommon most fall vagrant

There are upwards of 100 records of the Western Kingbird for Southeast Louisiana from every month but June. Approximately 74 dated records were distributed as follows: July (1), Aug. (4), Sep. (25), Oct. (16), Nov. (10), Dec. (5), Jan. (1), Feb. (3), March (2), April (6), and May (3). Thus, W. Kingbird is most common in fall migration, but does overwinter, notably near the coast (Venice).. It goes without saying that any kingbird with yellow underparts should be carefully studied. Not only is there the possibility of Tropical/Couch's type kingbird, but Cassin's might occur, as it has in southwestern

Louisiana. Western Kingbird, of course, has conspicuous white outer tail feathers (white outer web), but since these are sometimes obscure or missing, one should exercise caution.

Small concentrations of up to a dozen or more birds, as well as single individuals may be found in winter in Plaquemines Parish, as at Point-a-la-Hache and Diamond.

Expected dates are September 20 to April 10, with extremes of Aug. 9, 1965 in New Orleans (JK) and May 30, 1965 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (OBM), but as mentioned above, winter records are sparse. The "out-of-season" records are June 9, 1988 on Breton Island (DM,RDP) and July.....

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) Common to very common summer resident

Known locally as the "bee-martin", the Eastern Kingbird is the most familiar of the flycatchers of the area, breeding as close to human habitation in the city as the lakefront. In migration, flocks of 100 or more are not uncommon. There are no winter records. The only species with which it might be confused is Gray Kingbird, which is very rare in Louisiana.

Expected dates of occurrence are March 20 to October 15, with extremes of Mar. 14, 2004 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP,DM) and Nov. 25, 1965 at New Orleans (JK).

**GRAY KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) Occasional vagrant in spring, recently breeding

The Gray Kingbird, which normally breeds from Dauphin Island to the east along the coast of Florida, is much grayer than the Eastern Kingbird, with a dark "mask" or ear-patch, and a very large bill (so large that one is reminded of Thick-billed Kingbird or even Loggerheaded Kingbird).

Prior to the spring of 2003, there were 13 records of Gray Kingbird, all but two of which were from the spring. A summer record in 1988 had raised the possibility of nesting and indeed adults with juveniles were found in the summer of 2003 (DM) on the New Orleans lakefront. A nest was watched during May and June of 2004, with....being fledged (EW,DM,et al). There were two nests in the summer of 2005 (fide DM).

Perhaps the most interesting record was the first: May 11, 1948, 32 miles off the mouth of the Miss. R. (GHL), but this record was "repeated" May 30, 1985, when a bird briefly perched on the rigging of a boat 20 miles off the mouth of the Mississippi River.

The 12 spring records with no suggestion of breeding fall between March 28 and May 30, although April 12 is the second earliest record. There are only two fall records of Gray Kingbird: Nov. 7 at Venice (NN,RDP,GG) and recovered on Dec. 5 (BC, JK1...-ph), and Sep. 2, 1998 at New Orleans (PY—ph, DM).

The spring records are: May 11, 1948, 32 miles off the mouth of the Miss. R. (GHL); May 3, 1954 at Grand Isle (GHL,RJN); Apr. 18, 1976 at Grand Isle (MM,NN); April 30, 1984 on Grand Terre Is. (NLN); May 9-13, 1984 near Grand Isle (NLN,BC,RJN,DM,RDP--



photos); May 28, 1984 at Ft. Jackson (NLN,DM); May 30, 1985 20 miles off Southwest Pas (MM); Apr. 12, 1986 (PW,CS, et al); ...summer 1988 on Grand Terre Is. (TP); May 5, 1990 in St. Bernard (DSpears—ph); May 26, 1991 at Grand Isle (CS,PW; GC,DM,MM,NN,RDP); **spring 1994 (NLN)(JVR,DLD,SWC)**; May 3, 1995 at Grand Isle (RDP); Mar. 28, 1998 on Grand Isle (PW, MM-ph, et al) ; Apr. 30, 1999 56 mi S. of Port Fourchon (JKing); Apr. 25, 2004 at Port Fourchon (RDP). The most recent records are from Grand Isle Apr. 19, 2008 (SWC,DD, et al—photos DBosler), and April 27, 2008 (DPM,RDP—photo), possibly the same bird.. spring 2009 Apr. 25?, 2012 at Grand Isle (SWC)???

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) Uncommon to rare vagrant, mostly in fall, rare winter resident

There are perhaps 100 records of this beautiful flycatcher, mostly from October and November, although occasionally one or more may successfully overwinter. Of 64 records through 1970, 36 were from Oct.-Nov. and only 10 from December through February. Sometimes flocks of 20 or more individuals are found, usually near the coast, e.g., 15-17 S. of W. Pointe a la Hache on Feb. 20 and 27 (DM,PW,MM,RDP). The earliest known record was of 10 at Kenner on Oct. 6, 1900, mentioned by Beyer (1900). A trip to Venice in fall will frequently yield one or more Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, and they have occurred on New Orleans and Venice Christmas Counts. There is at least one nesting record near the checklist area, **in Tangipahoa Parish near Holton in June 1988 (Chris Brantley)**. The only bird with which this might be confused (except for tail-less individuals, which are usually only seen on the breeding grounds) is the Fork-tailed Flycatcher, which has been seen in Louisiana on one occasion. Up to 60 were seen in Plaquemines Parish between Myrtle Grove and Ponte-a-la Hache in March 2004.

Expected dates are October 15 to April 1, with extreme dates of occurrence of Aug. 18, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG) and May 31, 1958 at Reserve (RJS,KS). An unusual record was of one on the east bank of the river below Belle Chasse on June 16, 2011 (Mikey Lutmerding).

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savanna*) Accidental

The sole record of this spectacular tropical flycatcher was of an apparent female with a kingbird roost at Alliance in upper Plaquemines Parish on Feb. 17-**29**, 2008 (DM,PW, m.ob.; ph, vid). There is one other state record from the rice fields of south-central Louisiana.

Family *Laniidae* SHRIKES

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) Common resident

Although Loggerhead Shrikes have declined dramatically in numbers in the northeastern U.S., their numbers have shown no such decline here, and in fact have held

constant since the 1960s on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts. This is the familiar "butcher-bird" of rural, levee, and open park-like habitat. It has a variety of distinctive vocalizations which are difficult to describe.

#### Family *Vireonidae* VIREOS

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo griseus*) Common summer resident, uncommon winter resident

The White-eyed Vireo breeds commonly in extensive woodland and bottomland habitat. Because of the frequency of wintering, it is unprofitable to try to give arrival dates for the summering population, but they may be expected to arrive around March 10 and depart in mid November. Most White-eyed Vireos winter in central America, south to Honduras, so that the winter population is considerably reduced, but the bird is by no means rare.

**BELL'S VIREO** (*Vireo belli*) Occasional in winter

There are at least 15 records of this small, mostly western vireo, which continues to breed sparingly in northwest Louisiana (and Arkansas, etc.) Bell's Vireo is not a well-marked bird and confusion is possible with Ruby-crowned Kinglet and possibly even White-eyed Vireo. Its spectacles mark it as a vireo, and its bill is a typical vireo bill, though somewhat diminutive in this small bird. The birds from the interior of the U.S. are usually brighter and yellower than those from the west. Bell's Vireo has a vireo-like scolding call and its song is a series of wiry, ascending notes. The records are: Jan. 17, 1959 at Reserve (RFC--coll); Nov. 15, 1969 at Reserve (RJS); Dec. 30, 1981 at Venice (SAG,NN,NLN); Dec. 27, 1987-Jan. 1, 1988 at New Orleans (BC;DM,RDP;MM); Jan. 3-27, 1993 at Venice (KVR, et al). Recent records include a bird near Recovery I in New Orleans East in Nov. 18, 2007 (PW; DM), relocated on Mar. 8, 2008 (PW,DM, et al), and one was found on Grand Isle on Apr. 19, 2008 (DBosler-ph); two record from the winter of 2008-0: Dec. 30, 2008 at Ironton (PW,DM) and Feb. 14, 2009 at Belle Chasse (DM). Three at different locations the New Orleans area in November 2009 (Purrington[11/15], Oussett, Muth, Wallace) was unusual.

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) Fairly common summer resident north of Lake Pontchartrain

Although there is at least one record of a singing male Yellow-throated Vireo south of the lake in breeding season [June 11, 1982 at Laffite NP (RDP,JR,DM,NN)], it should be

regarded strictly as a migrant south of the lake and a summer resident of the pine flats of the Florida parishes. The distinctive song has been characterized as being like a Red-eyed Vireo with a "southern drawl," a description which works, this species having a somewhat "wheezier" or "buzzier", and perhaps slightly slower, song than the Red-eye. The Yellow-throated Vireo is one of the very earliest spring migrants, often arriving in the first week of March.

The expected dates are March 15 to May 10 and September 10 to October 1, as a migrant. The extremes are, in spring, March 2, 1870 at the Rigolets (HHK--coll) and May 29, 1913 at New Orleans (HHK), while in fall the earliest record is Aug. 4, 1937 (TDB) and the latest Nov. 4, 1984 (PW), both at New Orleans. Winter records of birds thought to be of this species usually turn out to be Pine Warblers.

**[PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) HYPOTHETICAL]**

The only "likely" record of this species from the Rocky Mountain west is of one seen at Grand Isle on .....(RDP). There is at least one confirmed record from SW Louisiana. There is also a specimen record from SW Louisiana of Cassin's Vireo from 2009.

**BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*)** Uncommon to common winter visitor

Blue-headed Vireos (previously the Solitary Vireo) are a frequent presence in the winter foraging flocks which roam Se. Louisiana woodlands.. This species has a distinctive scolding call which is worth learning, and very occasionally sings in winter. Its song resembles that of the Red-eyed Vireo, but is somewhat thinner, or sweeter. Those who welcome a challenge should look for the Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*), the rocky mountain form, newly raised to a species, as well as Cassin's, found mostly, but not entirely, along the west coast, in the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada mountains. Although no real attempt will be made to describe it here, Plumbeous and Cassin's both show less contrast between cap and back. Plumbeous has very little yellow on its sides, indeed the yellow is replaced by a gray or olive wash. Its song is noticeably different, as well, being much more like that of Yellow-throated Vireo, but it is unlikely to be heard singing in Louisiana. Cassin's shows very little contrast between the side of the face and the throat, and its song is more like Blue-headed. There is one specimen record of Plumbeous for Louisiana.

The expected dates of occurrence are November 1 to April 15, with extremes of Aug. 1, 1893 (GEB) and May 2, 1985 (NN), both at New Orleans. The 1893 record is clearly "many standard deviations" from the expected date and perhaps should simply be considered as anomalous.

**WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*)** Very uncommon to almost rare migrant

Although Warbling Vireo is never common, it is probably most likely to be seen in early October, when both it and the next species are migrating. In spring, it is mostly like to be seen in late April to mid May. Young Warbling Vireos in fall may have considerable yellow below (except the throat) so that care should be exercised in distinguishing this from the Philadelphia Vireo. The key to identification is in the generally whitish underparts and the rather different face pattern, with the Philadelphia having dark lores, giving it a very strong black line through the eye (see, for example, Kaufman 1990, p. 226). Kopman recorded the Warbling Vireo as a summer resident, but did not publish any supporting data.

Expected dates for spring migrants are April 10 to May 5 and fall migrants are expected between September 25 and November 1. In spring Warbling Vireos have been seen between March 27, 1897 at New Orleans (fide HCO) and May 23, 1976 at Ft. Pike. In fall the extremes are Sep. 14, 1960 at New Orleans and Nov. 24, 1961 at Venice, both SAG.

There is one remarkable winter record, of a bird collected at Ft. Jackson on **Feb.....**, 1994 (DLD,SWC), probably the only winter specimen for the U.S.

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) Uncommon migrant,

The Philadelphia Vireo can usually be recognized by its combination of yellow underparts (including throat) and black lores. It is usually seen in late spring, when it often is heard singing, and in early October. Its song very much resembles that of the Red-eyed Vireo, but is thinner. Given that the Philadelphia Vireo now breeds no nearer than the Great Lakes, it is quite odd that Kopman (1904) reported it in late July 1893 at Convent, and abundant there on August 2, and that Beyer (1900) records Philadelphia Vireo as have been seen at Hester, in St. James Parish, on Aug. 2 (HLB). Those records are certainly suspect. There also seems to be an Aug. 2, 1893 record from Covington (HHK), though the frequency of Aug. 2 in these records suggests some commonality. It seems likely that there is some confusion involved. Wintering in southern Central America, it is not to be expected in winter.

Expected dates are April 20 to May 10? and September 25 to October 25. Extreme dates are, in spring, ....to May 12, 1974 at New Orleans (MM,NN), and in fall, Sep. 13, 1964 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 12, 1968 at Venice (KPA).

**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) Very common summer resident, often ~~abundant~~ migrant

The Red-eyed Vireo is a common breeder in deep woods over the area, especially in bottomland habitat. It will rarely be found south of Lake Pontchartrain in breeding season. It is one of the more common spring and fall migrants, with numbers easily reaching 100+ under "fall-out" conditions; it often dominates migration from late March to late May. There is one winter record, Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (MM). The Red-eyed Vireo winters from Columbia and Venezuela south, including the Amazon basin.

Expected dates are March 25 to October 10, with extremes of March 16, 1985 at Grand Isle (RDP,NN) and Nov. 3, 1985 at New Orleans (AS). Migrants may be seen as late

as late May and as early as.....

**BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO** (*Vireo altiloquus*) Casual migrant, possibly occasionally nesting

Although the Black-whiskered Vireo was not recorded before 1959, there are now over 26 records spanning the period March 18 to May 22 in spring and Aug. 17 to Nov. 6 in fall. In addition, there have been at least 7 examples of individuals lingering into late May or early June, or actually summering. Almost all records have been on or near the coast. Of the records at hand, 13 have been in spring migration, 4 in fall migration, and the remainder in summer, so that this species is considerably more likely in spring than fall.

Although traditionally the Black-whiskered Vireo does not breed much nearer Southeast Louisiana than peninsular Florida, there are records from the summer of 1971 at Delta NWR and from 1985, **1988?, 1990?, ... 1992, 1999....2008** on Grand Isle, which are suggestive of nesting. In the summer of 1971, on June 19 and July 4, singing Black-whiskered Vireos were seen at Delta refuge. In 1985, a singing male, and possibly a pair, were found at Grand Isle on June 22 (AS,GS,JS, also RDP) and June 23 (RDP), while in 1990, Black-whiskered Vireos were first seen on ...(AS,GS), and July 8-22 (DM,GC,RDP) and Aug. 12 (DM,RDP), in the latter case two were seen behaving as though young were being fed. There was another Grand Isle record the same summer on a different part of the island (TP). Other summer records are July 14 (MM,RDP,GG) and July 26 (NN,RDP,GG), 1992. at Grand Isle, what seemed to be a pair, including a territorial male, was found at Grand Isle on May 30, 1999 (DM,RDP), with at least the male present through June 14 (NLN). The 8<sup>th</sup> LBRC report gives May 30-Sept 4, 1999. A July 2 report involved three birds (LBRC—8<sup>th</sup>). **In the summer of 199....Peter Yaukey apparently had two separate birds (a pair?), at least one singing, in a woodlot in Jefferson Parish, which stayed for at least.....** In the summer of 2008, Wallace and Muth found a pair with one bird singing at Grand Isle on .....[...] Finally, Mikey Lutmerding had a singing bird on the Betair BBS route on the east bank of the river, 2.5 mi below Belle Chasse on June 16, 2011.

The point has finally been reached, it seems, where it is no longer possible to list all records of Black-whiskered Vireo. The earliest records, not including the “summer “ records above, however, were: Aug. 29, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG,MEL); Nov. 6, 1960 at New Orleans (SAG); March 18, 1961 at Grand Isle (SAG--coll); April. 27, 1963 at Grand Isle (SAG--coll); and Aug. 17, 1963 at New Orleans (SAG,AWP). There are at least 17 records since 1963, including, recently, May 18, 1988 at Grand Isle (DM,NN), and Aug. 17, 1988 at Grand Isle (DM,AS,GS); Apr. 8, 1989 at Grand Isle (MM,JS,CS,AS,GS); May 14, 1990 at Grand Isle (AS,GS); May 8, 1991 at Grand Isle (CS, et al); May 25, 1992, Grand Isle (DM); June 14, 1992 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP,GG); separate individuals Apr. 18 and 19, 1998 at Grand Isle (PW,MM, et al--photos); . A recent New Orleans record is Sep. 4, 2000 in New Orleans (DM). [5/6/01 GI (MM,PW)] Two records in the spring of 2004: May 1 (PW,DMBphotos,RDP), May 3 (RDP). Apr. 5, 2008, Grand Isle (DM,DNorman) and

another Apr. 19-20, 2008 at Grand Isle (SWC,DLD, et al). **June 2008 (DPM,PW—2; singing).**

Family *Corviidae* JAYS AND CROWS

**BLUE JAY** (*Cyanocitta cristata*) Common resident

Although to most observers the Blue Jay is a sedentary species, it is in fact quite migratory, moving from the northern part of its range southward for winter, and even "overshooting" and moving out over the gulf. The result is that one may sometimes see large numbers of Blue Jays moving along the coast, and even flying toward shore from over the gulf. The permanent resident subspecies is *C. c. cristata*, and *C. c. bromia* is the wintering form. The influx of northern birds is apparently quite variable, witness the almost erratic character of the numbers recorded on New Orleans CBCs, which range from less than 1 to 7-8 birds per party-hour. Nesting begins in February, with young often fledged by late March.

**AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) Common to abundant resident

While Fish Crow numbers have increased by a factor of 10 on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts since 1960, the American or "Common" Crow has remained essentially unchanged in its numbers. While this crow is considerably larger than its cousin, the Fish Crow, identification should generally be based on call.

**FISH CROW** (*Corvus ossifragus*) Common to abundant resident

The Fish Crow is often found in huge concentrations on garbage dumps in winter, with a high of 19,510 recorded on a single New Orleans CBC (1980). By the 1980s, Christmas Count totals had undergone a ten-fold increase since the early 1960's. Although resident in Southeast Louisiana, the Fish Crow withdraws from the coastal part of the area, and even largely from New Orleans, to breed in summer.

Family *Alaudidae* LARKS

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) Occasional in winter

As the records below show, prior to 1982 there had been only three records of Horned Larks during a period of over 100 years and, indeed, none between 1895 and 1951. The 1982 records at New Orleans and Laplace came during a period of extensive snow cover (75%) in the middle U.S., which reached as far south as central Louisiana. The records of the following year came on the heels of an intense cold front which brought 14° temperatures to New Orleans. In general, one cannot expect to encounter Horned Larks except under such circumstances, i.e., heavy snow cover from north Louisiana into

Arkansas. On the north shore of the lake, Horned Larks may be more nearly regular, but that remains to be seen. The last record given below is a dramatic exception to the pattern just described, which simply shows that with birds, anything can happen.

The records are: Jan. 6, 1879 at Mandeville (GEB--coll); Feb. 22, 1895 at Pearl River (HHP?--coll); Feb. 2, 1951 at Covington (CR); Jan. 14, 1982 at New Orleans (JR--2); Jan. 16, 1982 at Laplace (RJS,NLN--5); Jan. 17, 1982 at Laplace (MB,DM,RDP,JR--150); Dec. 25-26, 1983 at New Orleans (MM,NN); Jan. 1, 1984 at New Orleans (RDP); and .....at Grand Isle (MM,RDP,GC).

#### Family *Hirundinidae* SWALLOWS

**PURPLE MARTIN** (*Porgne subis*) Common to very common or abundant summer resident

The Purple Martin is arguably the best-loved bird of Louisiana, perhaps sharing honors with what some feel ought to be the state bird, the mockingbird (the Brown Pelican, which *is* the state bird, has the great virtue that its demise due to environmental pollution makes it an important symbol). Be that as it may, the Purple Martin is the earliest of all spring migrants, arriving in numbers by late February. By July martins are beginning to collect in large roosts. The most spectacular manifestation of this is huge roost at the foot of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, which has been there for perhaps two decades. Current estimates of peak numbers range from 20,000 to 200,000. It is billed, somewhat hyperbolically, perhaps, as "the largest Purple Martin roost in the world". It may, indeed, be that, and in any case the publicity it has gotten has undoubtedly been felicitous. Almost every neighborhood has its martin houses, and anyone who has had an active martin house knows what pleasant neighbors they are. If one erects a martin house which has the correct properties (there are many sources of information) in February or March, he is likely to have martins nesting in his yard.

Purple Martins are expected between about February 15 and October 20, with extremes of Jan. 26, 1963 (SAG) and Nov. 30, 1936 (TDB--coll), both at New Orleans. A recent early record was Feb. 4, 1995 at des Allemandes (PW), but in the late winter of 2000, there were several early arrivale dates around January 10-15 in Louisiana. There are two winter records: Dec. 26, 1954 (JLD,TJH) and Dec. 27, 1956...., both at New Orleans, the latter being on the New Orleans CBC of that date. In general, winter records should be greeted with a great deal of skepticism.

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) Common to abundant winter resident

The Tree Swallow is normally the only swallow to be seen in Southeast Louisiana in winter (but see Rough-winged Swallow), and its numbers are sometimes staggering, *viz* the estimate of one million on the 1978 Reserve Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 23, 1978. On New Orleans CBC's, numbers have ranged from zero (1968) to 11,276 (1960). There is some

tendency in mid-winter for Tree Swallows to gather in huge aggregations, especially when feeding on seeds or berries (wax myrtle, for example) rather than insects. Beyer (1900) reported that Tree Swallows were sold abundantly in the markets of New Orleans.

Expected dates are August 1 to May 10, with extreme dates of July 8, 1893 (GEB) and May 27, 1938 (TDB), both at New Orleans. There are two "out-of-season" records, June 17, 1958 at Reserve (RJS) and June 8, 1963 (RJS) at the Bonnet Carre Spillway.

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) Common to uncommon migrant, uncommon breeder north of Lake Pontchartrain, rare winter visitor

The Rough-winged Swallow is one of four species which breed regularly in Southeast Louisiana and although no nest sites have been found, it is quite regular north of the lake, especially around gravel pits and other bodies of water, near where stream bank nesting is likely. Reports of summering Rough-winged Swallows in the vicinity of bluffs with what appear to be nest holes abound, and there is an April 1985 report of Rough-winged Swallows going in and out of such holes on the Tangipahoa River two miles above Amite (Merle Mizelle). Other breeding season records include June 12, 2011 at Larose in Lafourche Par. (DB,JB). Rough-winged Swallows excavate burrows, but they also rodent holes, kingfisher burrows, and even nest under bridges (Ehrlich, et al, 1988). There are, in addition, well over a dozen winter records of this species, especially from the Bonnet Carre Spillway, but including a record of 200 on the New Orleans CBC on Dec. 27, 1956.

Expected dates of migrants are April 1 to May 10 in spring, and August 1 to November 10 in fall. Extreme dates of occurrence are, in spring, Mar. 8, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG) and May 28, 1863 in Plaquemines Parish (fide HCO), and in fall, July 18, 1866 (GEB--coll) and Nov. 22, 1958 (SAG), both in New Orleans.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) Common to uncommon migrant, rare in winter

Three species of swallows are seen primarily as migrants, this one, the Rough-winged, and the Cliff Swallows. The last two breed, at least sparingly, and so the Bank Swallow is the only exclusively migrant swallow in Southeast Louisiana. Although not usually as common as the previous species in migration, it can, nonetheless, be quite abundant at times. There are two out-of-season records, July 6, 1886 at New Orleans (fide HCO--collected), which Oberholser (1938) took as evidence of nesting, and July 5, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG).

Expected dates are March 25 to May 15 and August 10 to October 15; the extreme dates of occurrence are, in spring, March 20, 1985 at New Orleans (fide HCO) and June 9, 1973 in St. Bernard Parish (MM--2); in fall they are Aug. 7, 1935 at New Orleans (TDB--coll) and Nov. 3, 1963 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS).

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*) Rare to uncommon migrant, local nester

Although the Cliff Swallow is a regular migrant, its numbers are usually quite small



and so it is not often encountered in a given spring or fall. It is probably most likely to be seen in early fall, and the largest number recorded is 600 near Irish Bayou on Sep. 8, 1974 (MM,NN). The Cliff Swallow has nested under four bridges over the Middle Pearl and East Pearl River on U.S. highway 90 since at least the spring of 1981, when they were first located by Toby Bradshaw. This was the second known Louisiana nesting. A survey of bridges over the Middle Pearl that year yielded 41 nests and 81 individuals (RDP,DM,NN,MM). For additional historical details, see Purrington (1988). Although it is often difficult to ascertain how many nests are active, the maximum number recorded is 130, with 2-3 times that many adults. Currently Cliff Swallows also nest at the U.S. 90 bridge over Chef Menteur Pass (e.g., 150+ individuals on June 28, 1992 (NN,RDP)). Cliff Swallows are known to engage in brood parasitism (see Ehrlich, et al 1988).

The expected dates for migrants are approximately March 25 to May 15 and August 15 to October 10; the average date of arrival at the U.S. 90 sites is March 25. Earliest arrival date is March 4, 2005 (MP) [ March 13, 2004 (DM,MM,RDP)]. Before nesting was confirmed, the latest ever date in spring was June 12, 1886 at Madisonville (GEB--coll) and the extreme fall dates are Aug. 2, 1935 at New Orleans (TDB--coll), when nesting was not known, and Nov. 24, 1961 at Triumph (SAG).

**CAVE SWALLOW** (*Hirundo fulva*) Accidental; occasionally nesting, expanding in Sw. Louisiana

Although it occurred in the context of a Cave Swallow range expansion in south Texas and records of vagrant Cave Swallows in the southeast U.S., the discovery of a Cave Swallow at the East Middle Pearl River bridge on U.S. 90 in St. Tammany Parish on Apr. 24, 1988 (MM,NN) was electrifying. At least as interesting as this first state record was the subsequent discovery, on May 8 of that same spring (RDP,GG,JH) that a *pair* of Cave Swallows were present, and, furthermore, that one was using a nest under the bridge. Two birds were observed flying together showing courtship-like behavior, and one bird was satisfactorily photographed (RDP). Finally, a young bird was seen and photographed which *may* have been a juvenile Cave Swallow (MM). The bird(s) were present until May 19.

The expansion of the species up the Texas coast has resulted in a number of extralimital records, and it now nests annually on the Louisiana side of the bridge over Sabine Pass on Highway 82 and now at several locations in SW Louisiana. For a while one or two birds were seen at the Chef Menteur Pass bridge on US 90 in New Orleans (fide MPontiff, et al), and there was a nesting record from the spring of 2001 for SW Mississippi. The most recent records are: one on Grand Isle, 15 (16?) April 2005 (SWC,DLD); one Feb 17, 2007 at Port Louis (JBosler, DBosler, CBrantley) and Mar 2 at Fontainebleau St. Pk (JB—2). Pearl River turnaround June/July 2009; other GI records. Cave Swallows are now fairly regular in SW Louisiana and increasingly likely to turn up in SE Louisiana as well.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) Common summer resident

The Barn Swallow nests throughout the area, primarily under bridges and overpasses. Examples include the US 90 bridges over Chef Menteur Pass and the Middle and East Pearl Rivers, the I-10 bridge over the East Pearl, and many small bridges in St. Tammany, Washington, and probably other of the Florida Parishes. The Barn Swallow is also a very common migrant almost anywhere, especially on the coast, and, after the Purple Martin, is the most familiar swallow. There are three or four winter records. Two seen at Lake Hermitage on Feb. 27 (MM,PW, RDP) were probably early migrants, and if so, two weeks earlier than the date given below.

While expected dates of occurrence are March 10 to November 10, [extreme dates are March 13 in 1983 (GS)] the earliest birds sometimes arrive by March 1, and the earliest ever is .....**2008** . and Dec. 1, 1974 at Reserve. The winter records, which might also include the Dec. 1, 1974 record just mentioned, are : Dec. 23, 1962 (fide SAG); Feb. 25-26 (SAG); Dec. 20, 1969 (SAG), all in New Orleans.

#### Family *Paridae* CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

##### **CAROLINA CHICKADEE** (*Parus carolinensis*) Common resident

The Carolina Chickadee occurs, and breeds, wherever there are moderate-sized woodlands, from cypress swamp to bottomland to parks, e.g., City Park. The numbers of chickadees on New Orleans CBCs declined during the 1960's, reaching a minimum in the early 1970s (conceivably because of the 1962 freeze?), but have increased since about 1972.

Both this and the Tufted Titmouse, below, are hole-nesting birds. Chickadees remain paired throughout the year. In fall and winter it is often useful to listen for and try to attract by squeaking or "pishing" any chickadees within hearing, since they are one of the most vocal members of mixed-species foraging flocks which may contain migrating warblers in fall, and wintering warblers, etc. in that season.

##### **TUFTED TITMOUSE** (*Parus bicolor*) Uncommon to locally common resident

The distribution of the Tufted Titmouse is somewhat spotty and irregular, for reasons that seem elusive. In some places, such as in the Sarpy Swamp and at the Tulane Riverside/Coast Guard area at English Turn, they are as common as Carolina Chickadees, and they are often more common in bottomland habitat than their congener. But in many other more nearly residential areas, such as City Park, for example, or in New Orleans East, they are almost absent. City Park records are not extraordinary, but certainly are infrequent, and records for Audubon Park or uptown New Orleans are rare. Titmouse numbers reached a deep minimum in about 1973 on the New Orleans CBC, but have increased since the late 1970's. The song is a whistled "peter-peter-peter".

Family *Sittidae* NUTHATCHES

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) Erratic and irruptive winter visitor

Very erratic and irregular in its occurrence, this species is quite common (or no worse than uncommon) in some winters and absent in others. Apparently its periodic invasions result from failure of the cone seed crop in the boreal forests. Although Red-breasted Nuthatches may be found anywhere in an invasion year, the pines near the lakefront and on Scout Island in City Park are perhaps the best place to look for them. Their "typical" nuthatch "yank" makes them relatively easy to find.

Expected dates are October 5 to April 5, and extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 19, 1981 at New Orleans (JR) and April 30, 1978 in Metairie (SP).

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta carolinensis*) Rare resident, mostly north of the area

Surprisingly little is known of the occurrence of the White-breasted Nuthatch in the Florida Parishes, at the northern edge of the checklist area. This writer has found it on one occasion near Fluker in northwest Tangipahoa Parish and it has been found near Hackley in Washington Parish. Clearly much needs to be done to clarify its status in this area. **Recently there have been one or two records from Mandeville.** There is one remarkable and documented record from south of Lake Pontchartrain (see below). Before the recent increase in birding activity in the Florida parishes, there were no records from the near north shore for a century, those being July 10 and 23, 1888 at Covington (fide HCO); Aug. 21, 1890 on Bedico Cr. (fide HCO); in 1891 at Madisonville (GEB--breeding); and Oct. 18, 1903 at Covington (HHK). The recent records on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain included April 19, 2008 at Covington (Steve Locke, fide NLN), and one on a St. Tammany CBC by Jim Holmes?..In late winter 2010, one was coming to a feeder in Harahan (.....), the only record from south of Lake Pontchartrain... **Just as surprising was one found in the Pearl River WMA on ....February 2008 (PB,....) in basically bottomland hardwood habitat.**

**BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pusilla*) Common resident in pine flats

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is a common and conspicuously gregarious resident of open pine woods north of Lake Pontchartrain, southeast to the White Kitchen area of St. Tammany Parish.

Family *Certhiidae* CREEPERS

**BROWN CREEPER** (*Certhia americana*) Uncommon (to rare) winter resident

Although the Brown Creeper is, in principle, one of the birds which make up the winter foraging flocks, it has declined in numbers during the past 25 years and is now encountered at best a few times in a winter season. The Brown Creeper does fluctuate significantly in numbers, so that in some years it is not difficult to find and, indeed, it sometimes seen in sizeable numbers when the first birds arrive in early to mid October. A good ear can recognize its high pitched call, which resembles that of the Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Expected dates are October 10 to March 25, with extremes of Sep. 19, 1983 at New Orleans and Apr. 4, 1970.....

#### Family *Troglodytidae* WRENS

**CAROLINA WREN** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) Common to very common resident

Although few birds are more characteristic of the south than the Carolina Wren, the casual observer will rarely see it because of its secretive habits. Far more frequently, its "tea-kettle, tea-kettle" song will be heard, disembodied. It is a common resident anywhere there is adequate cover and is not uncommon in residential neighborhoods, especially near the periphery of the city. The Carolina Wren is one of two resident species of wren, along with the far less familiar Marsh Wren. Three species regularly winter: the House, Winter, and Sedge Wrens, while Bewick's Wren is an occasional visitor. The numbers of Carolina Wrens on New Orleans CBCs have been stable since 1960.

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) Occasional in winter

Anyone who travels to the southwestern United States is familiar with this noisy and conspicuous wren, but it breeds, uncommonly, in the east-central part of the country as well. Although the assumption is that Bewick's Wrens in Louisiana are western vagrants, especially since they breed in east Texas, there are no data to back up that conclusion. If from the northern and eastern populations, they would be expected to reflected the declines which have been experienced there, but the numbers are so small that no statistically significant conclusions can be made. In spite of the resemblance to the Carolina Wren, identification poses no problem. Basically Bewick's Wren lacks the rich tones of the Carolina wren, being drab brown on the back and dirty white on the breast, and having a long "floppy" black-striped tail. The call is distinctive but not easily described, and the song is never heard.

There are at least 17 records spanning the period Oct. 17 to Feb. 24, plus a very "early" August record, but none in the last two decades. The records are: Jan. 6-8, 1894 in New Orleans (HHK); Aug. 28, 1894 at New Orleans (HHK); Oct. 28, 1908 at Slidell (AHH); Dec. 23, 1917 at New Orleans (HHK); Feb. 24, 1918 at Lacombe (HHK); Nov. 23-24, 1956 at Dalcour (SAG); Nov. 25, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG); Nov. 9-11 and 23, 1957 at Ft. Pike (SAG); Oct. 19-21, 1968 at New Orleans (DS,RDP); Jan. 12, 1969 at New Orleans (RDP); Nov. 27, 1976 at Laplace (RJS,MW); Oct. 24, 1978-Jan. 3, 1979 at New

Orleans (JR, et al); Oct. 17, 1982 at New Orleans (NN); Dec. 26, 1982 at New Orleans; ; Dec. 26, 1982 at New Orleans (BC); Oct. 13, 1983 at New Orleans (NN); and Dec. 26, 1983 at New Orleans (NN). To this writer's knowledge, there were no records in the 1990s and the only recent record is of one in City Park on Nov. 23, 2011 (DN).

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) Common winter resident

In winter the House Wren can be found in any brushy area, or spot with brushy understory. It has a variety of vocalizations which may confuse the novice. It sometimes sings in winter, a gurgling song which sounds something like a tape being rewound (similar to the song of the Marsh Wren). It has a standard wren chatter or "chur" which resembles the Carolina Wren, and it has a nasal, almost mewling sound which could be confused with a Catbird. As measured by New Orleans CBCs, House Wren populations declined during the early 1960s to mid 1970s, but have since increased.

Expected dates are October 5 to April 20, while extreme dates are Sep. 12, 1964 and Apr. 23 in 1923 (HHK) and 1936 at New Orleans (TDB).

**WINTER WREN** (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) Uncommon winter resident

The Winter Wren, now separated from the western species, Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*), is often overlooked by those unfamiliar with its distinctive call note (much like that of a Song Sparrow, but doubled or trebled), but can, in fact, be quite common; it is far more often heard than seen. Somewhat surprisingly, it seems most common in and near palmetto thickets in cypress-tupelo swamp habitat. The maximum number recorded is 21, in the Sarpy Swamp on Dec. 23, 1978 (RDP).

Expected dates of occurrence are October 25 to March 25, while extreme dates are Oct. 13, 1977 (JR) and Apr. 7, 1894 (GEB), both at New Orleans.

**SEDGE WREN** (*Cisothorus platensis*) Common winter resident in short grass marsh

Unlike its relative the Marsh Wren, which prefers cattail marshes or brackish marsh vegetation, the Sedge Wren (formerly the Short-billed Marsh Wren) is a denizen of damp fields, especially broom-sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*) fields and short-grass marsh. It is often flushed in the same fields which produce Henslow's or Leconte's Sparrows. The call is a distinctive, soft, "chup" and occasionally, in late spring, the Sedge Wren may sometimes be heard giving its staccato song.

Expected dates are approximately October 15 to April 15, and extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 19, 1981 at New Orleans (JR) and Apr. 22, 1984 at Grand Isle (NN,DM,MM).

**MARSH WREN** (*Cisothorus palustris*) Common to uncommon resident

The Marsh Wren (formerly called the Long-billed Marsh Wren) is a relatively

common breeding bird of reed, cattails, and dense shrubby marsh vegetation (such as black mangrove) in the coastal marsh, though it probably can be found anywhere around the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. It is quite conspicuous if one knows its song, which sounds somewhat like a tape being re-wound. Its call is a strong "tick!", often repeated, quite different from the rich, soft chip of the Sedge Wren. A good place to find it is along the lower end of Fourchon Rd. (La 3090) in Lafourche Parish. The species is not entirely sedentary and according to Oberholser (1938), *C. p. marianae* and *C. p. thryophilus* are the resident subspecies, while *C. p. iliacus* is a winter visitor. Winter residents are present from mid or late October through late April.

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) Accidental

The first record of the Rock Wren for Louisiana and the only one for Southeast Louisiana was of one present at Seabrook Bridge on Lakeshore Drive in New Orleans from Dec. 19, 1983 (MM), to Feb. 4, 1984, when it was collected (specimen to LSUMNS). It was seen by dozens of observers and photographed (RDP, among others; *Amer. Birds..*). There are now at least two other records for Louisiana.

Family *Poliopiidae* GNATCATCHERS

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliopitila caerulea*) Uncommon resident and common migrant throughout

Although the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is present in the area throughout the year, it should not be thought of as merely a permanent resident. It breeds rather uncommonly in fairly deep woods, and woodland edges, including bottomland, it is a standard, if again uncommon, winter visitor, generally in brushy, waste, habitat. It is a fairly common migrant as well. It appears, however, to be mostly a circum-gulf migrant, so while it may be common in coastal woods during migration, it is never truly abundant under fall-out conditions. Whether there is really a resident population, is a matter of controversy. The argument would be that the size of this population is indicated by the number of breeding birds, and winter numbers are swelled by gnatcatchers which move into the area from the north. This is a common phenomenon, but because the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is a bit uncommon, the pattern seems somewhat more irregular than normal; that is, there seem to be periods when few, or no, gnatcatchers are present. Migration takes place mainly from mid-March to late April and in mid-August through October.

Family *Regulidae* KINGLETS

**GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus satrapa*) Uncommon, somewhat erratic winter resident

The Golden-crowned Kinglet is somewhat erratic in its occurrence, being quite common in some years and rare in others. Recently it has been somewhat more regular, and less erratic, compared to the long-term trends, which showed broad peaks 8-11 years apart (1954, 1959-62, 1969-70, 1979-81, 1986-87, etc. The Golden-crowned Kinglet is considerably less obvious than its relative, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and is usually located by its distinctive and thin high-pitched call which is easily learned.

Expected dates are October 20 to March 25, with extreme dates of occurrence of Oct. 7, 1953 at New Orleans (HBC) and April 1, 1980 at Venice (NN).

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) Very common winter resident

Few birds are more characteristic of the winter landscape in south Louisiana than the this diminutive bird. George Lowery's use of the term "ubiquitous" is well-chosen, for it may be found virtually anywhere in the area in large numbers, excepting mainly open marsh. Its repeated chatter or "tit-tit-tit..." call is one of the first calls learned by novice birders and occasionally it is heard singing, more often in spring, but actually anytime.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet can be expected between October 10 and April 15, but has occurred as early as Sep. 17, 1956 (SAG) and as late as May 9, 1980 (NN, JR), both at New Orleans.

Family *Turdidae* THRUSHES

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) Accidental

There are three records of this species, each in a different century! Prior to the fall of 1991 there was one record of the Northern Wheatear for Louisiana, of an individual collected at New Orleans on Sep. 12, 1888 (GEB). The wheatear occurs only in the arctic (Alaska, Greenland, etc.) and might not be expected ever to recur, although there is a recent record from Dauphin Island, Alabama. Thus it was a complete surprise when one was discovered at New Orleans on Oct. 23, 1991 by Jennifer Coulson. The bird was present for three days (GS, AS), was seen by dozens of observers, and was thoroughly photographed. Finally, one was seen and photographed near Grand Isle (Chenier Caminada) on 14 October 2001 (DPM, MM).

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia sialis*) Fairly common resident north of Lake Pontchartrain, locally regular south of the lake

Although Eastern Bluebirds do occur south of the lake, especially in winter, in Southeast Louisiana they are found mostly in the mixed pine-deciduous habitat in the Florida parishes. The description in the National Geographic *Birds of North America* is hard to improve on: "Call note is a musical, rising, chur-lee, extended in song to chur-chur-lee-chur-lee." The call is often given in flight. Bluebirds like to sit on wires, where they are

easily recognized by their plump, thrush-like silhouette. Outside the breeding season, bluebirds have been seen at Chalmette, Venice, and Golden Meadow, among other places. Patient coverage on New Orleans Christmas Counts usually yields one or more, often several. It is perhaps worth adding that Mountain and Western Bluebird have occurred in southwestern Louisiana. [PY 2012]

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*) Accidental fall or winter visitor

The first record of this species in the checklist area is from the Crescent Acres Landfill on Oct. 9, 1995, found by David Muth, later seen by the writer. The only other record is of one found on the 2010? Grand Isle CBC by Joelle Finley (and SWC). The bird remained until at least.....There are several records from central and Southwest Louisiana.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) Accidental vagrant

The lone record of this western species is of one photographed by Tony Barnes on April 19, 2012 on a Grand Isle Bird Festival weekend, , and seen by only that observer.

**VEERY** (*Catharus fuscescens*) Common to uncommon spring and fall migrant

The Veery is generally less common in migration than either of the other migrant *Catharus* thrushes, the Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, but that is not always the case, and in any event, it is relatively common. It is also relatively easy to identify, because of the rufous coloration of its upperparts and its almost unspotted breast, though the western form might be confused with the Gray-cheeked Thrush. The Veery is often heard overhead at night in spring and fall migration.

The expected dates are April 20 to May 20 in spring, and September 15 to October 15 in fall. In spring Veerys have been recorded between Apr. 3, 1960 at Grand Isle (SAG) and May 26, 1979... (RDP), while in fall the extremes are Aug. 31, 1962 (SAG) and Oct. 19, 1912 (HHK), both at New Orleans.

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Catharus minimus*) Common migrant in spring and fall

The migrant *Catharus* thrushes are sometimes prodigiously abundant in migration and yet in some seasons are nearly absent. The difference is probably the weather patterns which ground spring and fall migrants. Usually the Gray-cheeked Thrush is second in abundance to Swainson's Thrush, but on occasion it out-numbers all others put together. The Gray-cheeked Thrush can usually be distinguished from Swainson's by the lack of a



buffy face (lores) and eyering. Ordinarily, the Gray-cheeked is a less warm color on the upperparts and has less buffy coloration on the upper breast.

Bicknell's Thrush, which migrates through Florida, is a warmer-toned Gray-cheek. Identification away from the breeding grounds is almost impossible, though it may occasionally sing in migration as the other migrant *catharus* thrushes do.

Expected dates are, in spring, April 15 to May 15, and in fall, September 20 to October 15. Spring extremes are March 27, 1897 at New Orleans (fide HCO) and May 26 in 1979 at New Orleans (JR) and in 1985 at Grand Isle (RDP). Extreme dates of occurrence in fall are Sep. 17, 1982 (SAG) and Nov. 1, 1980 (JR), both at New Orleans.

### **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) Common to abundant migrant

Generally this species is the most common of the migrant thrushes; it is also the one most likely to be heard singing during spring migration. The song is a set of rising, flute-like notes, usually given *soto voce* during migration. On occasion, these thrushes are present by the hundreds in the coastal woods. There are three startling winter records, both on Venice Christmas Counts, and in each case great care was taken to make sure that the bird was not a Hermit Thrush: Dec. 20, 1971 (RDP), Dec. 31, 1986 (DM), and Jan. 2, 1994 (Ast,RDP).

The expected dates for spring migrants are April 10 to at least May 20 and fall migrants are expected between September 15 and October 15. The extremes in spring migration are Apr. 2 in 1895 at New Orleans (fide HCO) and in 1989 in Jefferson Parish (AA--coll), and May 29, 1988 at Grand Isle (RDP). In fall they are Sep. 8, 2002 (DM, et al). [Sep. 11, 1983 at Grand Isle (DM,NN,MM)] and Nov. 16, 1935 at New Orleans (TDB). The latter record is so late as to suggest wintering.

### **HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) Uncommon winter resident

Although the Hermit Thrush is generally an uncommon visitor in the winter, it varies in numbers substantially from one year to the next, and is sometimes rather common, as during the winter of 1990-91. Although it is easily "squeaked up" and as a result should not be terribly hard to find, one will record many more if he knows its characteristic call note, which is a soft Red-wing-like "chuck." There is also an infrequently heard whistle, or piping call, which is perhaps related to its song or its nocturnal flight call. This writer has never heard a Hermit Thrush sing in Louisiana, even in early spring. Numbers on the New Orleans Christmas Counts have declined since the early 1970s compared to a peak in the 1960s. Normally Hermit Thrushes barely overlap the migrant *Catharus* thrushes, if at all, as can be seen by looking at the expected dates, but should there be any doubt, the reddish tail of the Hermit Thrush is definitive.

Expected dates of occurrence are October 15 to April 10; extreme dates are Sep. 25,

1894 (AA) and May 15, 1915 (HHK), both at New Orleans.

**WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylochichla mustelina*) Fairly common summer resident, mostly north of Lake Pontchartrain

Although the Wood Thrush has very occasionally been heard singing south of the lake during the breeding season, it is a typically breeding bird of the creek and river bottomland hardwood habitat which abounds in the Florida parishes. Its beautiful, flute-like song carries well, and it is far more often heard in summer than seen. On migration, however, it is sometimes the commonest thrush, and up to 25 or 50 might be seen in the coastal woods at Grand Isle under optimum conditions. Beyer (1900) says they were "shot in large numbers for the New Orleans markets." Calls include a very distinctive "popping" sort of noise, usually given singly.

As a migrant, which is what the Wood Thrush is below the lake, the expected dates in spring are April 1 to May 10 and in fall October 10 to November 15. The latter means that the Wood Thrush hardly overlaps the migrant *Catharus* thrushes in fall. The previous early arrival in spring was March 25 in 1900 at New Orleans (AA), and in 1980 at Venice (NN), and June 4, 1966 at New Orleans. but one was recorded at Grand Isle on Mar. 21, 2010 (DM,PW). The extremes for fall migration are Sep. 18, 1981 (NN) and Nov. 29, 1968 (WW), both at New Orleans. Again, the latter record is suggestive of wintering. There are a minimum of eight winter records: Feb. 14, 1961 ....(CLE); Dec. 24, 1969 at Triumph (RDP,SAG); Jan. 28, 1971 at New Orleans (RDP); Dec. 29, 1973 at Reserve (fide RJS); Dec. 14, 1980 at New Orleans (JR); Jan. 1, 1988 at **Grand Isle (...);.....**; Nov. 28, 1992 at New Orleans (DM).

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) Abundant winter resident, breeding locally

The winter population, which is mostly *T. m. migratorius*, but including *T. m. nigrideus* as well, begins arriving in small numbers at the end of September or in early October, but usually is not common until November, and is gone by about May 1. The resident subspecies is *T. m. achrusterus*. The robin breeds fairly commonly in New Orleans parks and similar situations (the Tulane campus, for example). Numbers recorded on New Orleans Christmas Counts are surprisingly variable, ranging from 1 up to 20-100 birds per party-hour.

**VARIED THRUSH** (*Ixoreus naevius*) Accidental vagrant

The three records of this western thrush, all from Grand Isle, are as follows: one seen briefly on the unusual date of Apr. 5, 1992 (NN,DM), another there on 19 Oct. 1996 (Judy Fall,....?CS,PS, MM, PStouffer,... et al), and one seen by **Glenn Ousset on a huge thrush day on the island on.....**

Family *Mimidae* MIMIC THRUSHES

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) Common to abundant migrant, uncommon winter visitor, occasional and local breeder

The Gray Catbirds inhabits dense understory, thickets, etc, in winter as well as on migration. In the latter situation, it is often the most common migrant. Indeed, the total number of catbirds which move through the coastal woods in migration is enormous. In winter, many more are heard than seen, the clue to their presence being the distinctive, somewhat mewling-like call which gives them their name. Prior to the summer of 1985, the only evidence of breeding was a June 27, 1933 record by Oberholser from Honey Island. On July 21, 1985, however, a newly fledged catbird was seen at Grand Isle (RDP,NN), with one or more adults. This followed several sightings of apparently territorial catbirds (up to four?) from June 22 (AS,GS,JS) on. The next summer, two adults were seen there on June 21 (RDP) and on August 2, two adults and one recently fledged young were observed (RDP,DM). Since then, catbirds have been seen in the same woods on Grand Isle in every summer, the evidence suggesting at least two pairs. There was some evidence of nesting during the summer of 1994, based on sightings in late August (28th--RDP) and early September (PY). Maximum number is **243** on Oct. ...., 1998 at New Orleans (PY). **The recent Summer Bird Atlas found.....**

As a migrant expected dates are September 20 to May 15, with extremes of Sep. 1, 1985 (CL) and May 21, 1986 (AKF), both at New Orleans.

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus ployglottos*) Very common resident

There is little to be said about this familiar bird, loved by all, except perhaps on those spring and summer nights when it sings all night long, that has not already been written. Although there is some evidence of a decline in numbers of mockingbirds on New Orleans CBCs, the data are still too sparse to permit a definite conclusion. During spring and summer, mockingbirds feed largely on insects, including beetles, ants, wasps, and grasshoppers, while in fall and winter much of the diet is plant material, including hackberry, virginian creeper, greenbriar, etc. (Martin, et al, 1951).

**SAGE THRASHER** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) Occasional vagrant

There are three records of this small western thrasher, which breeds no closer than New Mexico. The first was Dec. 1, 1957 at Venice (SAG,JPG), and the second was found in the Chandeleur Islands on the improbable date of June 26, 1963(LEW,MM--LSUMZ). The most recent record was of a bird seen by at least a dozen observers on UNO's east campus on Oct. 27-28, 1979 (JR,m.ob., photos--RDP). A photograph appeared in *American Birds* **34** (1980) 172.

**BROWN THRASHER** (*Toxostoma rufum*) Common winter resident especially north of Lake Pontchartrain, breeds locally and sparingly south of the lake, more common in

breeding season in Florida Parishes

Although the Brown Thrasher breeds regularly in City Park and similar places, and probably on occasion all the way to the coast, it is primarily a winter resident south of the lake, but a permanent resident north of it. Wintering birds arrive in mid to late September and by mid May only the nesting birds remain. There has been a steady decline from the early 1960s to the late 1970s on New Orleans CBCs, although a recent recovery is possible. The song resembles that of the mockingbird, but is somewhat "wiry-er" and much less diverse.

It might be added that the Curve-billed Thrasher, which breeds as near the region as west Texas, has occurred in southwest Louisiana on several...occasions.

Family *Sturnidae* STARLINGS

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) Abundant resident

Only rarely does one take the liberty of wishing that a particular bird did not occur on the list of the birds of Southeast Louisiana, or the state, but this is one of them. Although starlings do consume large quantities of (presumably) undesirable insects, it is a serious nuisance to urban dwellers and fruit and vegetable growers, and threatens populations of woodpeckers, bluebirds, purple martins, and other hole-nesters. This introduced species from Europe--introduced in New York in 1890-91--was first recorded in the areas around 1907, and the first specimen was taken Jan. 31, 1926 in Jefferson Parish.

Family *Motacillidae* PIPITS

**WATER PIPIT** (*Anthus spinoletta*) Uncommon to sometimes common winter resident

Based on anecdotal evidence, the Water Pipit seems to be much less common than a decade or two ago, although habitat changes may account, in part, for that impression. They are partial to short grass fields and levees, and are frequently noted simply as they fly by in small, oscillating flocks, giving their obvious "pip-it" call. Garbage dumps turn out to be excellent places to find them.

Expected dates of occurrence for Water Pipits are October 20 to April 15, but they have been recorded between Sep. 29, 1998 (RDP) [Oct. 4, 1957 (SAG)] and May 14, 1959 (JK), both at New Orleans. There is also a June 10, 1895 record of a bird collected in New Orleans (HHK).

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT** (*Anthus spragueii*) Rare winter visitor

Probably the only place where Sprague's Pipit can be found regularly in winter is in

the Bonnet Carre Spillway, mostly near the river end, although careful searching elsewhere, in proper habit (short to angle-deep, weedy grass--not the extremely short grass habitat of the Water Pipit) will occasionally meet with success. The Crescent Acres landfill in Arabi has been a fairly good place for Sprague's Pipit in recent years. There are a few records from the east campus of UNO, and a record from the lower coast of Algiers. The most recent record from the New Orleans area is of one on the Recovery I landfill, Bayou Sauvage NWR, on Nov. 21, 1999 (DM,PY). The call is a loud and very distinctive "kleep!", which a bird will give when flushed, and may continue to give as it climbs.

Expected dates are November 1 to about April 1, and extreme dates of occurrence are Oct. 22, 1961 (SAG) and April 11, 1894 (AA), both at New Orleans.

#### Family *Bombycillidae* WAXWINGS

#### **CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) Common winter resident

The familiar Cedar Waxwing is often hard to find even as late as Christmas, but by late February and March is usually very conspicuous, as it feeds on *pyrocantha*, hackberry, and cherry laurel berries. It flies about in flocks of 15-30 or so birds, advertising itself by its high-pitched whistles; it is especially conspicuous in late February and March, when they are sometimes quite numerous. This late-winter abundance may be due to an influx of birds from the north, but more likely a function of changing food supplies. The Cedar Waxwing is the very latest of the wintering passerine species to depart, often lingering until after May 20.

Expected dates are November 20 to May 10, with extremes of Oct. 8, 1966 at New Orleans (RDP) and June 11, 1958 at Reserve (RJS). There was a report from New Orleans on Sept. 9, 2008. Beyer (1900) found it as late as June 3 at Madisonville.

#### Family *Calcariidae* LONGSPURS

#### **MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR** (*Calcarijus mccownii*) Accidental

There is but one record of this longspur, the first for Louisiana: Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1979 at New Orleans (JR,NN,m.ob.—coll MBraun). Photographs, by the author, of this bird appeared in *Amer. Birds* **34**: 172 (1980). Longspurs can be anticipated in Southeast Louisiana only in severe winter weather, generally when north Louisiana and perhaps the Great Plains and Arkansas experience substantial snow cover. In general they are found in plowed to short-grass fields. Identification of the longspurs is difficult, although they often provide opportunities for leisurely examination or repeated flushing. McCown's tail pattern closely resembles that of the Chestnut-collared, but the calls are distinct, with McCown's giving a rattle which is very similar to that of Smith's and Lapland Longspurs. McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs have the most extensive white in the tail, so much that it looks like a white tail with black terminal band. Note, of course, that the longspurs will not be seen in breeding plumage, although both males and females may show some trace of

such feathering.

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR** (*Calcarius lapponicus*) Rare, usually in severe winter conditions

Except for the single records of McCown's and Smith's, all records of longspurs in Southeast Louisiana have been of this species, which, as indicated above, can be expected only when there is extensive snow cover or severe low temperatures to the north of us. All evidence is that the birds move back northward quite quickly; at the very least, they quickly disperse. The call is the standard "longspur" rattle, which, however, is not the standard call of Chestnut-collared, which Farrand (1983) describes as a "cheedlup" (and which this writer has not heard). Lapland Longspurs, as do Smith's, have only the two outermost tail feathers white. Most records of Lapland Longspur have been from the east campus of UNO; they span the period Oct. 6 to Jan. 22. The 14 records are: Dec. 20, 1936 at New Orleans (AD-coll); Oct. 6 and 30, 1974 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS,MW); Jan. 15-22, 1978 at New Orleans (JR,m.o.b--100+); Jan. 1978 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS--1); Nov. 29, 1979 at New Orleans (JR,NN); Jan. 12, 1981 at New Orleans (NN,DM); Jan. 14?, 1982 at New Orleans (JR,MM,DM,m.ob.); Jan. 16, 1982 at Laplace (RJS,NLN--500); Jan. 17, 1982 at Laplace (MB,DM,RDP,JR--2000); Jan. 1, 1983 at New Orleans (RDP--3); Dec. 16, 1983 at New Orleans (AS--1); Dec. 25-26, 1983 at New Orleans (MM,NN)....Crescent Acres landfill (DM,RDP); Nov. 26, 2004 at New Orleans (DM,MM,PW).

**SMITH'S LONGSPUR** (*Calcarius pictus*) Accidental

The only record of Smith's Longspur for Southeast Louisiana was a product of severely cold weather which penetrated deep into the south, and heavy snow cover to the north. At the same locality in Laplace, now mostly a subdivision, were 150 Horned Larks and 2000 Lapland Longspurs: Jan. 17, 1982 (MB,DM,JR,RDP--2). The bird in question was a winter male, with a white shoulder patch.

Family *Parulidae* Note that the taxonomy of this family has recently been completely revised by the AOU. In particular, the genus *Dendroica* has been replaced by *Setophaga*, which includes Am. Redstart and Hooded Warbler. Mourning, MacGillivray's and Kentucky Warblers have been placed in *Geothlypis* with Com. Yellowthroat. *Wilson's and Canada Warblers have been placed in Carellina.*

Family *Parulidae* WOOD-WARBLERS

**BACHMAN'S WARBLER** (*Vermivora bachmanii*) (PROBABLY EXTINCT)

It is nearly certain that Bachman's Warbler (pronounced "back-man", after the Rev.

John Bachman of Charleston, SC), is now extinct, although occasional sightings are still reported. Although there is no evidence that Bachman's Warbler ever bred in Southeast Louisiana, there is much excellent swamp habitat in which it might have, and certainly many moved through the area in spring as late as the 1890s (see below). Remsen has recently suggested (as had Meanley earlier) that Bachman's Warbler may have been a "bamboo specialist", and has vanished as the formerly extensive canebrakes have disappeared.

Gailbraith, who was from Hoboken, N.J., was collecting birds for the millinery trade when he obtained the records below, which themselves were the first U.S. records for over half a century. A useful article on plumage variation in specimens of Bachman's Warblers is Hamel and Gauthreaux (1982). It is interesting that Audubon's plate of Bachman's Warbler also includes a specimen of the plant *Franklinia alatamaha*; neither species, the bird or the plant, certainly exists in the wild. No certain record exists for Louisiana since 1925. The records span the period Feb. 27 to May 4, making it one of the earliest migrants, basically arriving at the same time as the Parula Warbler.

As an aside, it would be very interesting to be sure of the validity of Galbraith's records, both as to identification and to numbers, but no additional information is likely to be forthcoming at this remove.

The records are: spring 1886 on the edge of Lake Pontchartrain (C.S. Galbraith, *vide* G.N. Lawrence, *Auk*, Jan. 1887); March 29, 1887 at Mandeville (Galbraith, *vide* Lawrence); March 2-20 1888 at Mandeville (Galbraith, *vide* HCO--31 collected, all males!); Feb. 27, March 6,9,12,13,14, 1981 at Mandeville (Galbraith--coll); May 9, 1903 at Lobdell (AA); April 4, 1925 at Grand Isle (ESH--2 males, coll).

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) Uncommon to sometimes common migrant

The Blue-winged Warbler, which is easily distinguished by the black line through the eye, is sometimes quite common in the first week of April or so; at that season it occasionally gives its buzzy song. There is a Nov. 29, 1963 record of a bird collected at Boothville (SAG) which may or may not have been of a wintering bird. Blue-winged Warblers breed as near to the region as the Ozarks and the Appalachians and winter from southern Mexico to Panama.

Expected dates for spring migrants are April 5 to May 1, while in fall expected dates are August 20 to about October 5. Extremes for spring are Mar. 22, 1989 (AA,HHK) and May 11, 1981 (NN), both at New Orleans; in fall they are [24 July 2004 CB, Lewisburg] [July 30, **1988?** (GO)] July 31, 1981 at New Orleans (JR) and Nov. 17, 1985 in St. Tammany Par. (JH).

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) Uncommon migrant

Of the 32 species of warblers which are "regular" in Southeast Louisiana, the beautiful Golden-winged is one of the least common, and yet one or more can usually be

found, with sufficient time in the field, during a spring or fall migration. There are at least three records of "Brewster's Warbler", the more common hybrid between the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers, and one record of the "Lawrence's" hybrid. Anyone interested in these hybrids should see the paper by....Short, .... Although the situation is really very much more complex, basically "Brewster's" hybrid is like a Blue-winged, but with little or no yellow below and perhaps yellow wing-bars, while "Lawrence's" hybrid is like a Golden-winged but with yellow underparts. The records of "Brewster's Warbler" are spring 1891 (fide Frank Chapman, *Auk* 9:318); Apr. 14, 1953 at Grand Isle (BMM); and Apr. 14-15, 1969 at Grand Isle (KPA). The single record of "Lawrence's Warbler" is Sep. 13, 1935 at New Orleans (TDB--coll).

In spring migration, expected dates are April 15 to about May 5, and in fall migration Golden-winged Warblers can be expected between August 20 and October 5. Extreme dates are, in spring, Apr. 5, 1968 at Grand Isle (JHe) and May 9, 1982 at New Orleans (JR), while the fall extremes are July 23, 1898 (fide HCO) and Nov. 3, 1985 (GS), both at New Orleans.

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) Common migrant, less common in recent years

In spring (and fall as well, except during the peak of Yellow Warbler migration) the Tennessee is usually the most common purely transient warbler, although its numbers may have declined somewhat in recent years. Its staccato song, which is poorly described in the National Geographic guide, is often heard in residential neighborhoods in spring, and its high, thin, "tsit!" or "seet" call note is often heard everywhere in fall. Although there are two winter records since 1981, extreme care should be taken not to confuse this species with others, especially the next. Indeed, a Tennessee Warbler in winter should be looked at with the idea that it might be a Lucy's or Virginia's Warbler, both of which have occurred in Louisiana in winter. Note that the earliest record for fall, Aug. 29, 1986, was of 20! The next earliest record is Sep. 12.

Expected dates of spring migrants are March 25 to May 10, and of fall migrants, are September 15 to November 5. The extreme dates of occurrence are, for spring, Mar. 12, 1900 (HHK) and June 8, 1981 (JR--singing) both at New Orleans; for fall, the dates are Aug. 25, 2002 at Grand Isle (MM,PW,CS) [Aug. 29, 19.. at Grand Isle (AS,GS--20) and Nov. 23, 1977]. The "winter" records are Dec. 30, 1981 (DM,RDP) and Dec. 4, 1984 (JVR,TP,DM--2), both from Venice. It is a bit arbitrary to call the latter record a "winter" record.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) Common winter resident

The Orange-crowned is one of the two species of warblers that are regular winter visitors, the other being the considerably more common Yellow-rumped, or Myrtle Warbler. This rather drab warbler can be found almost anywhere, but is especially common in brushy situations such as wax myrtle or *baccharis* thickets at the edge of a marsh. It is a regular



component of the winter foraging flocks which also contain chickadees, kinglets, gnatcatchers, downy woodpeckers, etc. Its call note is a quite distinctive "tseet!" or "tsit!", not really the "chip" given in the National Geographic guide. Once learned, the call will reveal the presence of many more Orange-crowned Warblers than one will see. Orange-crowned Warblers occasionally sing in late spring, i.e., the first two weeks of April.

Expected dates are October 20 to April 15, with extreme dates of occurrence of Oct. 7, 1956 (SAG) and May 2, 1961 (MEL), both at New Orleans.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) Rare to uncommon fall migrant, very occasional spring migrant, occasionally wintering

The Nashville Warbler is a circum-gulf migrant which moves through east Texas in large numbers in both spring and fall, and is a considerably more common migrant in southwest Louisiana. It is normally absent here, but on occasion, probably because of strong westerly flow, it occurs in fall, usually the first week in October. There are at least 20-25 records, all since 1956 (presumably a meaningless fact), and it is clear that it may be expected in very small numbers from late September to late October. There are only three spring records, perhaps because sustained west winds are less common in spring. The 18 records prior to 1981 were distributed as follows: Sep. (2), Oct. (10), Nov. (3), Dec. (3), Mar. (1), Apr. (1), May (1). It might be noted that there were no records between 1968 (JK) and 1977. During the fall of 1981 Reinoehl had 10 records. Winter records for Louisiana are sparse in spite of the fact that Nashville Warbler winters in east and southern Mexico, and Yucatan.

Expected dates are October 1 to October 20, and extreme dates in fall are Aug. 31, 1960 (SAG) and Nov. 19, 1968 (JK--banded), both at New Orleans. The spring records are Apr. 4, 1958 at New Orleans (SAG), May 2, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG,MEL), Mar. 30, 1991 at Grand Isle (RDP,DM), and Apr. 9, 1992 (DM) at Lafitte NP. The winter records are Dec. ..., 1977 at New Orleans (MB), Dec. 28, 1978 at Venice (BC,RJN), and Nov. 30, 1985 at Grand Isle (CL,NLN); Grand Isle...

**LUCY'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis luciae*) Accidental winter vagrant

A bird collected at Triumph on Dec. 30, 1959 (SAG,MEL) provided the first Louisiana record of this warbler from the southwestern U.S. There is now at least one other record, from Cameron Parish. Lucy's Warbler is small and gray, with off-white underparts, both an eye-ring and eye-line, and with a chestnut-colored rump. The note is a typical *Vermivora* call, though sharper or stronger than Tennessee's. Should be looked for in brushy fields and other waste areas near the coast (Venice, Grand Isle).

**NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) Very common migrant and summer resident

The parula warbler is one of the most common and typical breeding birds of the southern bottomland hardwood or cypress-tupelo swamp. Its ascending, high-pitched buzzy, almost insect-like song is easily learned. It is also one of the most common spring and fall migrants, in these situations often located by its liquid "chip" call which is similar to that of the Yellow Warbler or American Redstart. The Northern Parula is usually the earliest passerine spring migrant, after the Purple Martin, and in addition to the earliest record given below, there are the following late February records: Feb. 26, 1982 and Feb. 23?, 1991, both at Lafitte NP (DM). The unusual number of February records--five--might cause one to suspect that some of these were *very* early spring migrants, though none were singing. An interesting late record is of 8 at Venice on Nov. 10, 1985 (RDP,NN). There are two records of Tropical Parula (*P. pitayumi*) from Cameron Parish.

Expected dates are March 1 to October 20, with extremes of Feb. 22, 1906 (*vide* Beyer, et al) [2/19 or 15? DPM?] and Nov. 24, 1961 at Triump (SAG); in spring, migrants are present at least through the first week in May. There are many winter records, including Feb. 13, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG); Feb. 7, 1959 at Reserve (RJS,DW); Dec. 24, 1960 at Buras (SAG); Jan. 7, 1968 at Venice (DS); Feb. 4, 1968 at Venice (LCB); Dec. 16, 1968 at Venice (RDP); Dec. 26, 1981 at Grand Isle (NLN, DN); Feb. 7, 1982 at Grand Isle (JR, et al; likely the same bird as previous); Dec. 30, 1982 at Venice (...); Feb. 8, 1986 at Lafitte NP (AS,GS,JS); Nov. 14, 1991 (DM) at New Orleans?.....[2/10/08 PW,RDP Empire]

[Remark: the next 18 species of warblers all belong to the genus *Dendroica*, which contains most of the brightly colored New World Warblers.]

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petchia*) Uncommon to common spring migrant, very common to sometimes abundant fall migrant

Except for the Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler at its most common, the Yellow Warbler, in mid-August, is the most common of all the warblers in Southeast Louisiana. Beginning in late July and continuing through August, migrating Yellow Warblers abound, especially in weedy habitats, but in fact almost anywhere. Their presence is made more conspicuous by their habit of migrating by day and calling as they move. The note given in flight is a distinctive buzzy note that closely resembles the call of the Indigo Bunting (they do not, however, overlap by very much in fall migration). The other common call note is a liquid "chip" similar to that of the parula warbler and American Redstart. Yellow Warblers are often common in late spring, and are among the few migrants which can be expected after May 20; they often will be heard singing their sweet, jumbling, rising song. The Yellow Warbler is one of the earliest fall migrants, often *the* earliest; the bulk are gone by late September. There are at least nine winter records.

Expected dates as spring migrants are April 10 to May 20 or later, and for fall migrants July 20 to October 10. Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 30, 1904 (AA) and May 31, 1979 (BMcK), both at New Orleans, while fall extremes are July 2, 1962 at New Orleans (LEW) and Nov. 3, 1985 in Metairie (SP). The winter records are: Feb. 2, 1957 at New Orleans (HBC); Dec. 24, 1957 at Reserve (RJS), Dec. 28, 1961 at New Orleans (*vide*

SAG--2); Dec. 23, 1962 at New Orleans (RF,DKH); Dec. 4, 1983 at Venice (TP,JVR,DM); Dec. 31, 1985 at Venice (**DM,RDP,PS...--2**); ....., 1986 at Venice (DM,RDP--2); Dec. 31, 1987 at Venice (....); ....Venice (NN,SAG,NLN); Dec. 29, 1991 at Venice (DM,NN,JMcB); Jan. 3, 1993 at Venice (PW). [Jan. 2006 PW]; Feb. 5 (6?) at Phoenix (GO).

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) Uncommon spring and fall migrant

This warbler, one of the most beautiful of the *Dendroica*s, is certainly less common than it once was, and could even be missed in an average spring migration. Chestnut-sided Warblers are usually less common in fall than spring, although that may result from the fact that they are far less conspicuous in fall. The drab fall birds are distinguished by the fact that they are a uniform white to light gray on the underparts and have no face pattern except for an eyering and faintly yellowish wing-bars. In that plumage, they would be most likely to be confused with a fall female or immature Cerulean Warbler which, however, has a distinct eyeline (superciliary stripe). There are no winter records.

The expected dates of spring migrants are April 15 to May 10; and in fall migration, September 20 to October 15. Extreme dates are, in spring, Mar. 21, 1894 at New Orleans (GEB) and May 12 in 1960 at New Orleans (SAG) and in 1974 at ... (MM,NN); in fall the extremes are Sep. 4, 1871 at Lewisburg (*fide* HCO--coll) and Nov. 18, 1985 at New Orleans (NN).

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER** (*Setophaga magnolia*) Common migrant

The Magnolia Warbler is a regular spring and fall migrant, sometimes encountered in large numbers, usually in "fall-out" conditions of bad weather in spring and fall. The only identification problem posed by this species is that immatures and females in fall look very different from spring males, or even spring females. The fall birds may have almost no streaking below, and little in the way of face markings except for a fairly prominent eyering.

Thus they present an appearance of being yellow below, gray above, and with an eyering. Magnolia Warblers, whose song is something like a distant or *soto voce* Hooded Warbler, mainly because of the rising inflection at the end, sing sparingly during spring migration, but do give their rather unusual call, which is a drawn-out, nasal, almost "mewing" note. There are at least 8 winter records.

Spring migrants are expected between April 25 and May 10 (15?) and fall migrants between September 15 and November 1. Extremes are, in spring, Apr. 12, 1969 at Grand Isle (JMH,RF) and June 5, 2009 at Grand Isle (PW) [May 25, 1975 at New Orleans (JR)]; in fall, Sep. 5, 1981 (JR) and Nov. 17, 1985 (RDP), both at New Orleans. The winter records are: Dec. 30, 1959 at Buras (SAG,MEL,MW); Dec. 27, 1962 at New Orleans (MEL,SAG); Nov. 29, 1964 at Venice (SAG); Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (SAG--coll); Dec. 24, 1969 at Triumph (RDP); Dec. 16-29, 1973 at Reserve (MW); Dec. 29, 1975 at Triumph (RDP,NN,NLN). Nov. 30, 2011 at Recovery I landfill (PY).

**CAPE MAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga tigrina*) Rare spring migrant

The Cape May Warbler normally migrates down the east coast, presumably through Cuba, to its wintering grounds in the West Indies. As a result, it is not often found in Southeast Louisiana, unless weather conditions, presumably sustained eastern flow, diverts part of the flight in our direction. On occasion, however, they can be relatively common, even as far west as southwest Louisiana, and there are now at least 30 records for Southeast Louisiana. The maximum number encountered on a single trip in Southeast Louisiana in spring is 18 at Grand Isle on Apr. 20, 1963 (MD,EAT), and as many as 5 have been seen on at least two occasions (including May 1, 2004 (PW,DM,RDP) photos). On the other hand, often a spring passes with no records, and there are but two known (3?) fall records (fall birds, especially females and immatures are not at all distinctive and confusion can easily result). One of the most interesting individual record is that of a male Cape May Warbler which landed on a boat off Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River on May 6, 1985 (MM). There is one winter record, of a fall male at Grand Isle on Jan. 20, 2008 (DM,PW). A male overwintered on Grand Isle.....

New Orleans records are quite rare, recent one being May...., 2004 (DM,PW).

While male Cape May Warblers are spectacular and unmistakable, immature females are quite nondescript, closely resembling Yellow-rumped Warblers, though without a yellow rump.

Expected dates are approximately April 15 to May 1, with extremes of March 28, 2009 (Devin Bosler?) ....[Apr. 5, 1969 at Myrtle Grove (DS)] and May 18, 1981 at Grand Isle (NN,DM). The fall record(s) are: Nov. 13, 1983 at Grand Isle (DM,RDP,NN) [**and RDP...City Park...**]; Oct. 17, 1993 at Grand Isle (MM,RDP).

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** (*Setophaga caerulescens*) Rare migrant

The Black-throated Blue Warbler breed from the norther U.S. and Canada south into the Smokies. Its migration routes normally take it to the east of us, through Florida and (perhaps) transgulf from as far west as Alabama. As with the Cape May Warbler, however, strong easterly flow, especially in spring, may divert an occasional Black-throated Blue into this area. There are, in fact probably 40 records, only two of which came between 1967 and 1978; the maximum numbers recorded are four (two collected), on May 18, 1952 at Pilottown (CFL) and A breeding plumage male was singing in migration at Grand Isle on May 6, 2001 (MM,PW). There are **four winter records**, the most interesting being of one which over-wintered on Grand Isle in 2001-2 (PW,DM,MM,RDP). The winter records are:.....

It should be apparent from a glance at a field guide that females are not well marked, yet at

the same time, they are quite distinctive. Note especially the white superciliary stripe and the slightly buffy underparts, and, of course, the white patch on the leading edge of the wing. In recent years 4-5 have been found each spring at Grand Isle.

Black-throated Blue Warblers have been seen, in spring between Mar. 22, 1894 at New Orleans (GEB) and May 22, 1988 at Grand Isle (...)[1989 DM?]; and in fall, between Sep. 8, 1956 at New Orleans (BMM,MM,CLE,HAJE) and Nov. 3, 1957 at Grand Isle (DLC,EOW). {Oct. 17, 1992 GI MM,RDP}. [late fall 2008 GI...]

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) Very common to abundant winter resident

[MYRTLE WARBLER]

[AUDUBON'S WARBLER]

This is the common wintering warbler (to many, too common!) of woodland, marshy edges with willows and wax myrtles, and residential gardens. By April, many "Myrtle" Warblers will be heard singing. The western form, formerly "Audubon's" Warbler, which has a noticeably different call note, has been recorded on at least 20 occasions, between Oct. 9 and May 7.

Expected dates of wintering are October 20 to April 25, with extreme dates of occurrence of Oct. 6, 1991 at Diamond (MM,NN,RDP) and May 5 in 1951 (HBC) at Grand Isle and 1956 (SAG) in New Orleans.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) Casual in winter

There are at least 23 records of this western warbler of the Rocky Mountains, Cascades, and Sierra Nevada, all since 1955, so that one might be expected in any winter. All records are since 1955, and most of them from near the coast. The records are distributed as follows: Oct. (3), Nov. (4), Dec. (5), Jan. (4), Feb. (2), Mar. (1). The late Mar. 25, 1980 record was of a bird which overwintered at Triumph. The call of the Black-throated Gray is somewhere between that of the "Myrtle" Warbler, and of the Black-throated Green Warbler. There were records on consecutive Venice CBCs, on Dec. ...., 1992 and on Jan. 2, 1994. Recent records include March 2004 in New Orleans= City Park (EW, et al); Mar. 19, 2005 Venice (DM, et al\*). One was photographed near Ft. Jackson on Nov. ...., 2007 (RDP—collected Jan. 13, 2008) and three (including the previous record) were found by a single party on the 2007 Venice CBC on Dec. 30, (RDP,CREihl,PW--ph).

**There are only two or three records for New Orleans, one on a CBC.... (RDP, JR), and another in City Park....(EWallace).**

The extreme dates of occurrence are Oct. 8, 1977 at Grand Isle (RJS,MW) and Mar. 25, 1980 at Triumph (NN).

**HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) Accidental

The only record of the Hermit Warbler, which breeds mountain forests of the Pacific Coast, and the first for Louisiana, is of an individual studied carefully at Grand Isle on Jan. 12, 1972 (RDP,TV). There are two other records for Louisiana, a bird collected in spring at **Cameron (MM), and.....(SAG).**

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) Common migrant

The Black-throated Green Warbler is one of the commoner spring and fall migrant warblers. It is frequently heard in spring giving its "zee-zee-zoo-zee" song, and its somewhat stoney "chip" note should be learned by all. This is so not only because it helps locate *this* species, but because its cousins, the Hermit, Townsend's, and Golden-cheeked Warblers, give a similar, but not identical, call. There are at least 25 winter records between Nov. 23 and Mar. 3. Of these, at least 12 are from December, 3 from January, and 5 from February. The maximum number recorded is 90 at Grand Isle on Apr. 22, 1984 (MM,DM,NN).

Expected dates in spring are April 15 to May 10, and in fall are September 10 to November 1. The extreme dates are, in spring, Mar. 14, 1965 (JMH) and May. 26, 1979 (RDP), both at New Orleans; in fall Black-throated Green Warblers have been seen between Aug. 5, 1991 at Lafitte NP (DM) and Nov. 20, 1991 at New Orleans (NN).

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) Uncommon to common migrant

While spectacular and unmistakable in spring, fall Blackburnian Warblers, especially females and immatures, can be quite confusing. The key, in the case of a poorly marked fall bird, aside from the pale yellow throat and upper breast, is the face pattern. Probably the only likely confusion is with Pine Warbler, but that should be only momentary, if one looks at the face. The Blackburnian Warbler winters from Costa Rica south to Peru and Bolivia so that wintering is quite rare.

Expected dates in spring are April 10 to May 15 and September 5 to October 20. Extreme dates are, in spring, Mar. 22, 1959 [Mar. 14, 2000 French Settlement.....] to June 2, 1976 at New Orleans (JR); in fall they are Aug. 22, 1959 and Nov. 7, 1985 at New Orleans (NN). There are four "winter" records, including one from the Bonnet Carre Spillway on Dec. 8, year unknown: Nov. 30, 1956 at Mandeville (SLW), Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (*fide* SAG), and Dec. 4, 1983 at Venice (JVR,TP,DM--coll). Perhaps only the January record is unequivocally "wintering" (if that means anything).

**CERULEAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga caerulea*) Uncommon migrant

This beautiful warbler is never common in migration, and seems to be less numerous now than 25 years ago. Although it was reported by Beyer to have bred in Madisonville (*fide* HCO), there has been no other indication of nesting, and in fact its status as a breeding

bird in Louisiana is very uncertain. As the Cerulean Warbler winters from Colombia south, it is not surprising that there are no winter records. Fall birds, and especially immatures in fall, are not strongly marked. Note, however, the superciliary stripe, which rules out immature Chestnut-sided.

Expected dates for spring migrants are April 5 to April 25, and for fall migrants, August 20 to September 15. In spring Cerulean Warblers have been seen between Mar. 27 in 1926 (*fide* HCO--coll) and in 1965 (SAG--4), both at Grand Isle, and May 6, 1968 at Grand Isle. Fall migrants have been recorded between Jul. 30, 1981 (JR) at New Orleans and Oct. 18, 1998 (RDP) at Grand Isle.

**PALM WARBLER** (*Setophaga palmarum*) Common winter resident, more common near the coast

In proper habitat, typically wet wax myrtle and willow thickets, this species can be quite common. It is almost always recorded on local Christmas Counts and yet it can be surprising hard to find when one is looking for it. One landed on a boat off Southwest Pass on May 6, 1985 (MM). The Palm Warbler is readily recognized by the heavily streaked underparts, the habit of "bobbing" or wagging its tail (as does the Prairie Warbler), and the rusty crown in alternate plumage. Its call note is a complex chip which has some similarity to the much thinner "tsick" of the Pine Warbler. Both the Yellow Palm Warbler and the Western Palm Warbler, which is much paler, are present in winter. Maximum: 140? at Venice, Oct. 17, 1998 (DPM,PW).

Expected dates are October 1 to April 15, and extreme dates of occurrence are Aug. 4, 1896 at New Orleans (*fide* HCO--coll) and May 6, 1975 at ....(NN).

*Dendroica palmarum*) Fairly common winter resident, more common near the coast

In proper habitat, typically wet wax myrtle and willow thickets, this species can be quite common. It is almost always recorded on local Christmas Counts and yet it can be surprising hard to find when one is looking for it. One landed on a boat off Southwest Pass on May 6, 1985 (MM). The Palm Warbler is readily recognized by the heavily streaked underparts, the habit of "bobbing" or wagging its tail (as does the Prairie Warbler), and the rusty crown in alternate plumage. Its call note is a complex chip which has some similarity to the much thinner "tsick" of the Pine Warbler. Both the Yellow Palm Warbler and the Western Palm Warbler, which is much paler, are present in winter. Maximum: 140? at Venice, Oct. 17, 1998 (DPM,PW).

Expected dates are October 1 to April 15, and extreme dates of occurrence are Aug. 4, 1896 at New Orleans (*fide* HCO--coll) and May 6, 1975 at ....(NN).

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Setophaga dominica*) Common summer resident

The Yellow-throated Warbler is one of the earliest of the spring migrants and can often be found on its breeding grounds early in the first week of March. While not a rare migrant by any means, it is probably much more easily found, during migration, on territory in breeding habitat. It is a common breeding bird of cypress-tupelo swamp, where it nests in spanish moss in treetops, typically in baldcypress, but it nests in pine trees which grow on the upland edges of such habitat as well. A personal rendition of its song, which is slightly variable, is "choo-ey, choo-ey, choo-choo-choo-wee!" There are over 30 winter records, making it one of the most regular of the wintering warblers, being challenged only by Black-and-white and perhaps Prairie Warblers.

Expected dates are, as summer resident, March 1 to October 10, and the Yellow-throated Warbler has been seen between **Feb. 25, 1991** in the Sarpy Swamp (RDP)[Feb. 23, 19... (NN,RDP) White Kitchen] to Nov. 10, 1985 at Venice (DM,MM,NN,RDP). It is clearly a bit arbitrary to draw the line at Nov. 10, and to call Nov. 21 "wintering," but at least there are no records for that 11 day period.

**PINE WARBLER** (*Setophaga pinus*) Common to very common resident of pine flats, regular in winter south of Lake Pontchartrain, occasionally breeding there

The Pine Warbler is a typical and common resident of the pine worlds north of Lake Pontchartrain. During the breeding season, it will not usually be found on the south shore of the lake (but see below), but after breeding, from October to March, it is a relatively common winter resident, usually where there are pine trees. During period of migratory movement, when Pine Warblers are retreating from the northern U.S. to the gulf coast on down to northern Mexico, they may be found anywhere, so it should not be assumed that Pine Warblers will not occur in the coastal cheniers, for example, because they often do. In New Orleans good places to look are in the pines along the lakefront or on Marconi Drive, and on Scout Island in City Park.

On May 8 and 15, 1985 a singing Pine Warbler was found in the pines on the New Orleans lakefront (AS,GS), raising the possibility of nesting south of the lake, and on June 8, 1992 Nelkin found fledged young in Lake Vista, near the New Orleans lakefront. The song is a distinct metallic trill which lasts no more than about two seconds, and which can be confused only with Chipping Sparrow (and perhaps Worm-eating Warbler), and the chip is a thin, but emphatic "tsik!". Immature Pine Warblers in fall can be very poorly marked, showing a distinct eyering, and hence are reminiscent of immature fall Chestnut-sided Warblers.

Expected dates (south of the lake) are October 10 to March 15 and extreme dates of occurrence are Sep. 19, 1981 at New Orleans (NN) and Apr. 15, 1937 at Grand Isle (TDB--coll). Singing territorial males have been found on several occasions in Lake Vista, near Lake Pontchartrain, and on at least one occasion fledged young have been observed: June 8, 1992 (NN).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** (*Setophaga discolor*) Uncommon to nearly common summer resident in cut-over pine tracts, regular fall migrant, uncommon spring migrant, rare



winter visitor

The Prairie Warbler presents an interesting problem, for it is a regular breeding bird north of Lake Pontchartrain in cut-over pine flats (trees about 8-20' high), but is uncommon as a transient, and rare in spring. It clearly a circum-gulf migrant, at least in spring. So while fall records are not unusual, all spring records are worth reporting. It is also one of the commoner wintering warblers, after Yellow-throated, Black-and-white, and perhaps Black-throated Green or Northern Parula. The song is a rather weak but very distinctive rising buzzy trill. There are upwards of 20 winter records, making it one of the most frequent of the wintering warblers. The Prairie Warbler is easy to identify, if a good look is gotten, by its face pattern, with the yellow strip above the eye and a small patch below giving it a very distinctive look.

Expected dates in spring migration are March 5 to April 15, and in fall August 15 to November 15. Extreme dates are, in spring, Mar. 18, 1990 (**RDP...?.DM?**) and May 21, 1981 at Boothville (RDP,NN), and in fall, July 17, 1977 at Grand Isle (MM,NN,RDP) and Nov. 24, 1961 at Buras (SAG), though this could have been an overwintering bird. Among the winter records are: Dec. 21, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 5, 1960 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 27, 1964 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (*fide* SAG); Dec. 24, 1965 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 23, 1973 at Venice (RDP,RSK); Jan. 5, 1975 at Grand Isle (MM,NN); Dec. 18, 1980 at Bucktown (NN); Dec. 18, 1981 at Covington (DM,JVR); Dec. 29, 1982 at Triumph (BC, et al); Jan. 2, 1982 at Reserve (*fide* RJS); Dec. 29, 1983 at Venice (SAG,MW,MA); Dec. 4, 1991 at New Orleans (NN); Dec. 21, 1991 on US 11 (NN,RDP,GG); Dec. 29, 1991 at Venice (DM,NN,JMcb). In the last two decades Prairie Warbler has become one of the most frequent of the wintering warblers, with 2-3 records each winter.

**BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** (*Setophaga castanea*) Common late spring migrant, uncommon to occasionally common fall migrant

The Bay-breasted Warbler can often be the most common migrant warbler in the coastal woods in May. At that time its plumage is unmistakable (especially in the case of the males) and many will be heard singing, giving their very high-pitched "see-see". Fall is another matter, especially with females and immatures, the latter having little or no buff (bay) on the sides of the breast, thus resembling the immature fall blackpoll. Both have nearly unstreaked underparts and a faint superciliary line. The Bay-breasted Warbler, however, has dark legs. The color of the upperparts and the undertail coverts will *usually* distinguish one species from another but in the former case the color differences, yellow-green vs. green, are subtle, at least to this observer, and in the latter, the distinction is not invariable. See Kaufman's (1990) discussion of "the blackpoll trio" in which he includes Pine Warbler. Although there are 7 winter records, any bird suspected of being this species in winter should be examined with great care, since it will probably be an immature, and because the Bay-breasted Warbler winters quite far south, from Panama to Venezuela. Only occasionally is the Bay-breasted Warbler common in fall migration.

Expected dates are, in spring, April 25 to May 15, and in fall, October 1 to November 1. In spring, Bay-breasted Warblers have been seen between Apr 10, 1983 at Grand Isle (RDP,LO'M,NN) and May 28, 19... at New Orleans (DM--3), while in fall the extreme dates of occurrence have been Sep. 2, 1986 at Grand Isle (RDP,NN) and Nov. 6, 1985 at New Orleans (NN). Winter records are: Dec. 3, 1961 at New Orleans (ART); Dec. 30, 1967 at New Orleans (SAG); Nov. 23, 1969 at Empire (RJN,KPA,RDP); Nov. 28, 1968 at New Orleans (DS); Nov. 28, 1970 at New Orleans (DN,RDP); Dec. 20, 1975 at New Orleans (RDP); Dec. 4, 1983 at Venice (JVR,TP,DM--coll).

**BLACKPOLL WARBLER** (*Setophaga striata*) Uncommon to common spring migrant

Although the Blackpoll is a common transient in the coastal woods in spring, it is quite rare in fall. Moreover, as described above, great care must be exercised in distinguishing Blackpolls (especially immatures) in fall. There are but seven fall records. Blackpolls are occasionally seen away from the coast--at New Orleans, for example, but only infrequently. Blackpolls have been seen on Grand Gosier and Curlew Islands in the last week in May. There is one remarkable out of season record, of a definitive alternate (breeding plumage) male on July 19, 1981 at Grand Isle (RDP,NN,SN)! A more recent late spring record is June 19, 2011 at Grand Isle (Lutmerding—ph).

Expected dates of spring migrants are April 20 to May 10, with extremes of Apr. 7, 1994 (MM, **et al**) and June 4, 1933 (*fide* HCO--coll), both from Grand Isle. The fall records are: Sep. 21, 1897 at New Orleans (HHK--coll); Oct. 15, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG--2); Nov. 28, 1959 at Grand Isle (LCB); Sep. 27, 1968 at Grand Isle (DS); Sep. 18, 1976 at Grand Isle (RH,RJS); Oct. 9-10, 1979 at New Orleans (JR,NN); Oct. 14, 1980 at New Orleans (JR); Sep. 27-28, 1991 at New Orleans (NN); Oct. 11, 1998 at New Orleans (DPM).

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) Common migrant, uncommon local summer resident

Although the American Redstart is best known as a spring and fall migrant, it also breeds in the area, especially in the Pearl River basin, where it is fairly common. In bottomland habitat (now cleared) in Livingston Parish it was found to be quite abundant (DN,RDP). It is interesting that the redstart was not known to breed in the area until 1970; whether it was overlooked, or has increased in numbers, is not known. However, in 1933, Oberholser recorded it on June 10 on Little Baratavia Bayou, on June 23 in Westwego, and on June 27 in the Pearl River, suggesting that redstarts have been present for many years. American Redstarts were also considered summer residents at Diamond, where they are now simply migrants, by Ballowe in the first decade of the century. Beyer (1900) considered the American Redstart only a migrant in Louisiana. Note that the latest record in spring, June 8, 1985, is of a bird seen 20 miles off the mouth of the river! There are over 17 winter records between Nov. 23 and Feb. 8. A recent census on US 11 in the Honey Island Swamp yielded 17 singing males on May 26, 1995 (RDP).

Expected dates, as a migrant, are April 5 to May 20 in spring, and August 1 to

November 1 in fall. Extreme dates for spring migrants are Mar. 9, 1980 at New Orleans (SP,RDP) and June 8, 1985 20 miles SE of Southwest Pass (MM); in fall the extremes are July 22, in 1888 on Bedico River (*fide* HCO) and in 1942 at New Orleans (TDB) and Nov. 16, 1985 at Lafitte NP (CL?) and Grand Isle (AS,GS). Winter records are: Dec. 27, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG,BJD); Jan. 30, 1960 at Buras (MEL--2); Dec. 24, 1960 at Venice (LEW--2); Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (*fide* SAG--3); Dec. 28, 1965 at Venice (*fide* SAG--5); Nov. 23-Dec. 6, 1968 at New Orleans (RDP,DS); Nov. 29, 1968 at Venice (DS); Dec. 5, 1977 at Venice (MM,NN,RDP); Dec. 6, 1981 at Venice (MM,RDP); Dec. 30, 1981 at Venice (RDP,DM); Dec. 31, 1982 at Venice; Feb. 8, 1987 at Lafitte NP (AS....).....**including an adult male on Feb. 27, 2000 at Ft. Jackson (MM,PW,RDP), conceivably an early migrant.**

**HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) Common summer resident of bottomland habitat

The Hooded Warbler breeds commonly in bottomland hardwoods, its "wheeta-wheeta-whee-tee-too" song being one of the more characteristic sounds of that habitat. It is quite widespread in the nesting season, but to find it one could do no better than to visit old U.S. 11 in the Honey Island swamp (Pearl River Wildlife Management Area). In migration the Hooded Warbler is often quite abundant, and there it is identified primarily by its distinctive "tsik!" call note, which the National Geographic guide renders as a "metallic chink", not a very good description. It is easily learned, however, but only by seeing a Hooded Warbler give the call. Occasionally it almost sounds like a waterthrush, but a second hearing will disabuse the listener of that impression.

Expected dates are March 25 to October 15 and extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 7, 1991 (NN) and Nov. 10, 1985 (MM), both at New Orleans. There is one winter record, Jan. 18, 1969 at Braithwaite (KPA).

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) Common spring and fall migrant; rare in winter

The Black-and-white Warbler is one of the commoner and more familiar of the migrant warblers, in part because its migration periods are among the longest in both spring and fall. It breeds, or has bred, at the periphery of the checklist area, just northeast of Lake Maurepas in Livingston Parish (DN,RDP), and perhaps elsewhere. G.E. Beyer reported this warbler breeding at Madisonville in 1891 (Beyer 1900). The Black-and-white Warbler also winters frequently, and is almost expected on any Southeast Louisiana Christmas Count. This warbler is the most common of the so-called Awintering warblers@ which are not ordinarily expected in winter. The numerous winter records (including 6 on the 1994-5 Venice CBC) make accurate determination of departure dates in fall impossible.

Expected dates are, in spring, March 15 to May 20, and in fall, August 5 to October

25. Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 1 in 1966 at New Orleans (DKH) and in 1970 at Empire (RDP,RJN) to May 25, 1991 at Grand Isle (MM,NN,RDP,GC). In fall, Black-and-white Warblers have been recorded between Jul. 8, 1990 at Grand Isle (RDP,DM) and Nov. 20, 1985 at Venice (RDP,NN). A total of at least 12 at Grand Isle on the early date of Aug. 4, 2002 (RDP) were noteworthy.

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotarius citrini*) Common summer resident in bottomland and cypress-tupelo swamp

The Prothonotary Warbler typifies the cypress-tupel swamp habitat, in which it breeds commonly, and is numerous in poorly drained bottomland hardwoods as well. Good places to find it are in the Honey Island swamp on old U.S. highway 11, in the Sarpy Swamp below the Bonnet Carre Spillway, and so on. The only record of overwintering for this species, which winters from southern Mexico south, is of a female which wintered at Grand Isle in 1983-4, having been recorded on the Grand Isle Christmas Count on Jan. 2, 1984 (JW), and was seen several times into the early spring. A Nov. 29, 1970 record at New Orleans (RDP) was the first "winter" season record for Louisiana of this warbler. In addition to the March 8-10 records given below is a Mar. 12, 1988 record from Lafitte NP (AS,GS). Until recently, it was rare to find a Prothonotary Warbler much before the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. Records in the vicinity of Mar. 10 or even earlier are seemingly becoming more common, perhaps reflecting climate change.

Expected dates are March 15 to September 20, with extremes of Mar. 8, 2008 at New Orleans (Justin Eby-Bosler) [Mar. 9, 1992 at ... (DM)[2004?] [previously Mar. 10 in 1904 and in 1905, both at South Pass (*fide* HCO)], and Nov. 2, 1980 at Venice (SP). [Oct. 8, 2000 Grand Isle (MM,RDP)]

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) Uncommon migrant, rare or uncommon breeder near the area

Although the Worm-eating Warbler is a regular spring and fall migrant, it had been known only to breed near the checklist area, in the vicinity of Livingston (RDP,DN; DPM), where it was found on brushy upland edges of bottomland forests (RDP). More recently it has been located in dense, second-growth, overgrown mixed pine--deciduous woods near streamsides (DPM). Although usually seen in ones or twos, it is sometimes abundant near the coast in early April, given the right weather conditions. There are two winter records (of three for the state): Dec. 30, 1971 at Boothville (RDP) and Jan. 2, 1995 at Triumph (RDP).

Expected dates in migration are, in spring, April 1 to May 1 and in fall, August 25 to October 10. The extremes in spring are Mar. 9, 2000 (RM) and May 6, 1969; in fall, Worm-eating Warblers have been seen between Aug. 6, 1967 at New Orleans (RDP) and Nov. 10, 1985 at Venice (RDP).

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) Uncommon summer resident of

bottomland habitat

In spite of its reputation as a rare species, which is unfounded, and its renown for its secretiveness, which is well deserved, the Swainson's Warbler is in fact not uncommon in the proper habitat. Typically it is found in bottomland thickets, especially with greenbrier (*Smilax*) and grape vine undergrowth or canebrakes; a good place to find it is in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area along old U.S. 11 in the Honey Island swamp. Donata Rhooome Henry found 13 nests in the summer of 1999 in this area. In the summer of 2012 she banded 58 individuals. Its song, with apologies, is a "whee, whee, whee, church is free...", quite similar to that of the Louisiana Waterthrush, which breeds in rather similar habitat, but has a very different ending. The song is loud and sweet and carries well, but it also seems to be ventriloquial. Apparently some people have difficulty distinguishing the song of Swainson's Warbler from the "wheeta-wheeta-whee-tee-too" of the Hooded Warbler, but this writer finds only a modest similarity. The song does bear a rather close resemblance to that of the Louisiana Waterthrush, which breeds sparingly in much the same habitat in the northern section of the area. The primary difference is that the song of the Louisiana Waterthrush ends in a jumble, rather than a sweet whistle. Occasionally Swainson's Warbler is seen in migration in the coastal woods, or even in City Park, but fall records are quite rare. Swainson's Warbler also occurs in pine flat habitat, as evidenced by recent observations by Donata Roome, and Phil Stouffer and students.

Few birds are harder to actually see once they have located by song. Indeed, Rev. John Bachman wrote, of his experience with the bird near Charleston, South Carolina during the spring of 1832 that "I was first attracted by the novelty of its notes, four or five in number... These notes were loud, clear, and more like a whistle than a song. They resembled the sounds of some extraordinary ventriloquist in such a degree that I supposed the bird much farther from me than it really was." Galbraith collected "about three dozen" near Lake Pontchartrain in the spring of 1886. Although Swainson's Warblers are encountered in on the coast in small numbers in the spring, they are never common. There is one remarkable winter record,.....(PY).

In the last decade, beginning with her doctoral research, Donata Henry has greatly expanded our knowledge of the occurrence and nesting behavior of this species. She has located over 100 nests and has banded on the order of 50-60 individuals per summer in a MAPS program in the last few years.

Expected dates are April 1 to September 10, with extremes of Mar. 20, 2010 (DRoome) [Mar. 22, 2003 HI] in the Honey Island Swamp, and Oct. 1, 1958 at New Orleans (SAG).

**OVENBIRD** (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) Common spring and fall migrant

The Ovenbird is a common and familiar migrant which is present essentially throughout the peak periods of spring and fall migration. It is one of those low-feeding species (including the waterthrushes, Hooded Warbler, the *Oporornis* warblers, etc.) which are usually found on or near the ground. All three species of *Seiurus* winter throughout Mexico, and are thus not infrequently found lingering or overwintering in Southeast

Louisiana. There are well over two dozen wintering records. [including Dec. 27, 1998 on the New Orleans CBC (DPM) and Jan. 30, 1999 at Venice (DPM), etc..]  
Lowery (1974) mentions a reported nesting near Bogalusa on Apr. 13, 1963.

Expected dates are, in spring, April 1 or 5 to May 10 (15?), and in fall, September 10 to October 25. The extreme dates of occurrence are, in spring, Mar. 22, 1992 at New Orleans (NN) and May 27, 200 at Grand Isle (MM,PW,RDP) (May 22, 1988.....**May 21, 1995 Grand Isle (NLN)**). in fall the extremes are Aug. 9, 1870 at the Rigolets (HWH) and Nov. 11, 1962 in the delta (SAG).

#### **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia novaboracensis*)** Common migrant

Waterthrushes of both species advertise their presence by their loud, distinctive "chink!" call. In fact the call of this species is slightly stonger and has fewer overtones, so that, at least some of the time, it is possible to distinguish the waterthrushes by call. Occasionally Northern Waterthrush may be heard singing in spring, although it does not breed in the southern U.S. at all. The Northern Waterthrush, which is considerably more common than the next species, is characterized by its small bill, a fully streaked throat, and a rather buffy eyeline which makes a convex curve over the eye. The Louisiana has a large bill, tends to be whiter below except on the lower flanks, which are buffy, has an eyeline which is more nearly straight and even seems to flare up (actually, doesn't narrow like that of the Northern) at the rear, and it tends to have a clear throat. During the winter of 2009-10 Muth and Wallace found upwards of 10 individuals in SE Louisiana, during the Louisiana Winter Bird Atlas.

The expected dates are, in spring, April 5 to May 10, and in fall, from August 5 to October 15. Northern Waterthushes have been seen, in spring, between Mar. 19, 1972 at Grand Isle and May 23?, 2001 (MM,DM?) ( May 22, 1988 at Grand Isle (.....); in fall, between July 13, 1969 at New Orleans (JK,LW,WW) to Nov. 10, 1985 at Venice (NN,RDP). There are over 27 winter records between Nov. 23 and Mar. 1.

#### **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*)** Uncommon migrant, local summer resident north of Lake Pontchartrain

Although the Louisiana Waterthrush is usually seen as a migrant, it is a quite uncommon breeding bird of creek bottomland (generally near clear, upland streams) in the northern part of the checklist area. Recent summer records include north of Bonfuca on June 15, 1984 (RDP) and east of Franklinton on July 3, 1983 (JN,RDP,DN) and in the summer of 1990. There is one definite breeding record, from Goodbee in St. Tammany Parish, on June 15, 1962 (MM). The individual at Laffite NP on July 7, 1992 (DM) is assumed to be an early southbound migrant. As discussed above, its call note is every so slightly different--thinner or more complex than that of the Northern Waterthrush (and see

above for identification details). The song, which is only heard on the breeding grounds, resembles that of Swainson's Warbler (which see), but ends in a jumble after the whistled "whee-whee-whee..."

The expected dates for migrants are March 25 to May 1, in spring, and August 10 to Oct 1 in fall. The extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 12, 1960[3/18/01 RDP Fourchon] at Point-a-la-Hace (SAG) and May 9, 1967 at Grand Isle (DM,MM) in spring, and in fall, July 7, 1992 in Barataria (DM) [previously July 20, 1935 (TDB)] and Oct. 30, 1985 (NN), both at New Orleans. There is only one reliable winter record, [Dec. 26, 1955 at New Orleans (TVG)] Dec. 31, 1970 at Triumph (NN). A record at Grand Isle on May (**21 or 22?**) (**JVR,DLD,SWC**) is the latest known date for a migrating Louisiana Waterthrush.

### **CONNECTICUT WARBLER** (*Oporornis agilis*) Occasional spring migrant

Although the Connecticut Warbler is here included on the Southeast Louisiana list (rather than being given the "hypothetical" status), the only local record has been rejected by the LOS Bird Record Committee. That decision, in which the author participated, is no doubt the best approach, given the small number of remotely convincing records (five in number, including one singing) and lack of a specimen, but it seems unnecessary to be quite that cautious here. The lone record, of one seen on May 14, 1980 by the late Norton Nelkin in New Orleans' Lake Vista, leaves little to be desired in terms of a description, and spring birds are distinctive (in general, Connecticut Warbler has a bright, complete eyering which cannot even be confused with that of a female Mourning Warbler, and it has very long undertail coverts, nearly extending to the end of the tail--see the field guides). It is very likely to be seen on the ground, as was this individual. The late spring date is also quite consistent with what is to be expected.

### **MOURNING WARBLER** (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) Rare fall migrant

There are more than two dozen records of this rather secretive *Oporornis* (now *Geothlypis*) warbler which, because it seems to be a circumgulf migrant, is much more common in east Texas and southwest Louisiana, in fall migration, than it is here. There is a single spring record for SE Louisiana, in contrast to the southwest part of the state (Cameron Parish). The problem is telling this species from the rarer McGillivray's Warbler. Adult males are essentially unmistakable, lacking any kind of eyering. Females and immatures of both species will unusually have a broken eyering (some female Mournings having a complete eyering), and though the Mourning Warbler usually will not show the strong eye crescents of the MacGillivray's the latter are variable. Immatures in fall are very hard to distinguish (see Roberson 1980), but female Mournings look somewhat like a yellowthroat, and may lack any hint of hood. Young male Mourning Warblers are more likely to have a yellowish wash on the throat, surrounded by a faint hood, but some immature female MacGillivray's will also although the throat is generally whitish or grayish

in immatures of both species. The immature male Mourning will also have a white throat. Mourning Warbler is also shorter-tailed. If it has strong eye-crescents, it is a MacGillivray's; if it has a yellow wash on the throat is it more likely, but not certainly, a Mourning. The call notes are different, but unless the observer is very familiar with one or both, that is little help, for they are both fairly typical *Oporornis (Geothlypis)* notes. In the case of this species, it is a somewhat buzzy "chek!". A mourning-type warbler in mid-winter should be strongly suspected to be MacGillivray's.

Although the dozen or so fall records span the period between August 9 and November 19, the species should not be expected much after the end of September (nor much before the first of September); thus expected dates are approximately September 5 to October 1. Early records are: Oct. 7, 1896 at New Orleans (AA); Aug. 5, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG,KC); Sep. 13, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG); Aug. 9, 1959 at New Orleans (MEL); Sep. 13, 1964 at New Orleans (SAG); Oct. 14, 1980 at New Orleans (JR); Nov. 21, 1982 at Triumph (RDP,MM); Sep. 4, 1983 at Venice (NN,DM); Sep. 9, 1983 at New Orleans (NN); Sep. 22, 1983 at New Orleans (NN); **Sep..... 1987** at Lafitte NP (DM); Aug. 29, 1992 at New Orleans (DM--photo). Note the distribution: Aug. (2), Sept. (6), Oct. (2), Nov. (1). There is a single spring record ?, **April 12, 1979 at.....**

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Geothlypis tolmiei*)** Occasional in fall or winter

There are six records of this western species from Southeast Louisiana.. The initial record, by Sid Gauthreaux, was the only record for Louisiana for over 25 years: Nov. 15, 1959 near Buras. The second record was of one found at Venice on Dec. 26, **19.....** (DN), relocated on Dec. 30 (DM,RDP), and collected **on.....**. The most recent records are of a male in Plaquemines Parish on Feb. 23, 1993 (PY,DM), another in New Orleans on Mar. 6, 2004 (DM), one in Venice on.....2008 (DM), **and one at Triumph on .....**, See the discussion of Mourning Warbler for identification details. According to Sibley and Monroe, "often considered conspecific with *O. philadelphia*."

**KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Geothlypis formosus*)** Uncommon to common migrant, regular summer resident in bottomland habitat

The Kentucky Warbler is regular in summer in the same bottomland habitat where Hooded Warblers, Red-eyed Vireos, and Acadian Flycatchers breed. Thus it may be found in creek bottom habitat north of the lake, to the Honey Island swamp, and even, sparingly, in the Poydras--English Turn area. Its song is a "turtle-turtle-turtle" which could be thought to resemble the Carolina Wren, but is simpler, less variable, and less musical. The call note is a somewhat liquid "chuck", "chup", or "chirp" that is distinctive when learned, resembling that of the Overbird.

While expected dates are April 1 to October 1, extreme dates of occurrence are Mar. 20, 2010 at Honey Island (RDP) [Mar. 25, 1980 at Venice (NN)], and Oct. 19, 1895 at New Orleans (AA). The lone winter record is from New Orleans, on Jan. 2, 1967 (RJS,JC). It is unusual to see them in migration after May 1



**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) Common to abundant resident

Although the Common Yellowthroat is a permanent resident--the only permanent resident warbler south of Lake Pontchartrain, there are important migratory movements which are quite evident in the field. The Common Yellowthroat breeds over much of the U.S. but winters only in the southern United States, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. On occasion, in migration, there are yellowthroats everywhere, with daily counts in the hundreds. The yellowthroat inhabits a variety of marshy and brushy habitats. Lowery (1974) merged the general *Oporornis* and *Geothlypis*. Sibley and Monroe (1990) have not followed Lowery.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) Quite uncommon winter visitor, occasionally more common in migration

Wilson's Warbler is recorded quite frequently in winter, although it is much more common in some winters than others. Fluctuations like this, in species which are present in rather small numbers, may be little more than statistical artifacts, or they may reflect breeding success, effects of weather, etc. The key to finding Wilson's Warbler (as with so many other species) is to learn its insistent, rather petulant call, which is a bit like that of a Winter Wren, but given only singly. By calling it a "sharp chip" the Geographic guide misses the point altogether. The song, which is a chattering, somewhat wren-like song, is rarely heard in this area. Wilson's Warbler in winter inhabits low, brushy habitat. The male, with its black cap, is unmistakable, and indeed in early New Orleans CBCs what reported as Black-capped Warbler. The female bears a resemblance to the female Hooded Warbler, which, however, has a great deal of white in the tail, has a different call note, and has the look of a Hooded Warbler in that it has a kind of outline of the male hood, with a dark top of the head and nape.

Expected dates of occurrence of Wilson's Warbler are October 1 to March 25. Extreme dates are Sep. 14, 1957 (SAG) and Apr. 10, 1978 (JR), both at New Orleans.

**CANADA WARBLER** (*Cardellina canadensis*) Uncommon fall migrant, rare spring migrant

Because the Canada Warbler is apparently a circumgulf migrant in spring, it is quite rare in spring in Southeast Louisiana. In fall, on the other hand, especially in late August or early September, it is relatively common, mostly in late August and September.

Expected dates of migrants are, in spring, May 1 to May 10, and in fall, August 25 to October 1. Canada Warblers have been seen in spring between Apr. 3, 1952 at Grand Isle (HBC) and May 17, 1980 at New Orleans (JR), and in fall, between Aug. 11, 1985 at Lafitte NP (DM) and Oct. 29, 1987 at New Orleans (NN). **Fall 2012---(DM,PW,RDP)/**

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Setophaga picta*) Accidental

Until 1994 what was the only record of the Painted Redstart for Louisiana, was almost too good to be true. It was of a bird seen, supposedly independently, by two observers, between Nov. 17 and Dec. 7, 1962 (TVG,HBC), in New Orleans' City Park! As remarkable as this record is, given that this species breeds from Arizona into Sonora and Chihuahua, and winters further south, it is made slightly less inconceivable by the fact that one has now been recorded in coastal Mississippi, which surely passed through Southeast Louisiana on its way to the Waveland Sewage Ponds, and now, by a record from Sw. Louisiana. The second record for Southeast Louisiana was established on At Grand Isle (RDP). There has seen been a record for SW Mississippi.

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) Fairly common summer resident in appropriate habitat, uncommon to rare migrant

The Yellow-breasted Chat is one of those species which is rather common on its breeding grounds, but almost rare in migration in SE Louisiana. This is largely due to the fact that it is a circumgulf migrant, hence not often seen on the coast. Be that as it may, it can be found in brushy thickets around the city, in modest numbers, but quite commonly in cutover pine flats, with young pines only 6-20 ft high and considerable understory. Its elaborate vocalizations defy description, but once learned are never forgotten. They consist of whistles, chatters, and mewing sounds.

Expected dates are April 5 to about September 15, with extremes of Mar. 26, 1960 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 29, 1963 at Boothville (SAG). The latter record possibly represents wintering, in which case the only October record might be considered the latest in fall: Oct. 18, 1970 (WW). There are 16 winter records: Dec. 24, 1957 at Reserve (RJS); Jan. 22, 1961 at Grand Isle (SAG); Dec. 24, 1960 at Delta NWE (LEW,JLD?); Jan. 2, 1967 at New Orleans (*fide* SAG); Jan. 29, 1967 at New Orleans (BMM); Feb. 1, 1967 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 8, 1968 at New Orleans (TVG); Dec. 20, 1969 at New Orleans (RFC); Dec. 23, 1973 at Venice (SAG,RJS--2); Jan. 2, 1979 at Laplace (MW); Dec. 30, 1981 at Venice (SAG); Dec. 30, 1982 at Venice (SAG); Dec. 28, 1987 on north shore of Lake Pontchartrain (....); Dec. 31, 1987 at Venice (AS,GS),....Venice (DPM); Jan. 2, 1999, Venice (DPM.....).

Family *Emberizidae* TOWHEES, SPARROWS, JUNCOS**GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

One of the most remarkable stories in Louisiana ornithology occurred in the winter of 2011-12, when the state was inundated by probably dozens (possibly hundreds) of Green-tailed Towhees. Previously there were a handful of records for the state, and none for SE Louisiana, while in the winter of 2011-12 there were 20 or more. The occurrences in the

checklist area were at Triumph, [ebird]..... until at least Mar. 7 (Tom Trenchard) (PW, et al—photos RDP), and March 4, 2012 in St. Tammany Par. (Mary Mehafy).

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) Casual or accidental in winter

The initial record of this western towhee, formerly lumped as Rufous-sided Towhee, which is rare in southwest Louisiana as well, was of one seen at Ft. Jackson on.....**2007 (RDP), and found later on the Venice CBC (DPM)**. There were three records from the winter of 2011-12, the first on Dec. 2, 2011 in City Park (GO), followed by another in the park on Mar. 18 (Rosalie Overby), which could have been the same individual. Another had been seen in Abita Springs 10 days earlier (Warren Preble).

**EASTERN TOWHEE** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) Common resident

The Eastern Towhee is a common resident anywhere there is shrubby, brushy habitat or undergrowth for cover, but is especially common north of Lake Pontchartrain. Its distinctive drawn-out "wink!" or "to-whee" call, which is elaborated into a song in the breeding season by adding a trill at the end. Lowery (1974) points out that Audubon failed to find the Rufous-sided Towhee breeding in the vicinity of New Orleans in the 1820s. At least two races are present, *P. e. erythrophthalmus*, which is apparently only a winter resident, and *P. e. canaster*, which is resident (AOU Checklist, 5th ed.). According to the New Orleans Christmas Count data, this species declined from about 1960 to 1972, and has stabilized since. The recent splitting of *P. erythrophthalmus* into Eastern and Spotted Towhees raises the possibility of occurrence of the latter here, though there are no known records.

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea aestivalis*) Uncommon resident north of Lake Pontchartrain

This species, formerly known as the "Pinewoods Sparrow", is found in moderate numbers in the pine flat habitat in the Florida parishes, usually in open growths of young pine trees with scattered to fairly dense brushy or shrubby understory. It can be found rather easily during the breeding season because of its beautiful, whistled song, which carries well.

The song consists of a slurred whistle followed by a trill. In winter it is usually not too hard to find, though some tramping around through the wet broomsedge habitat will probably be necessary, since they spend a lot of time on or near the ground. For a species so strongly confined to pine wood habitat, it is surprising that there are three New Orleans records, two during migratory periods, when perhaps birds moving to or from breeding ground further north "over-shot" the pine flats and ended up on the south shore of the lake. The New Orleans records are: May 13, 1935 (TDB); Oct. 17, 1953 (JLD); and Dec. 23, 1984 (RJS,NLN,TD,MA). A slight caveat is perhaps in order, given the lack of distinctive field marks, but in the case of the New Orleans CBC record of Dec. 23, 1984, careful consideration was given by the observers to the possibility of Botteri's Sparrow.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) Common winter resident, uncommon summer resident north of Lake Pontchartrain

The Chipping Sparrow is known in Southeast Louisiana primarily as a winter visitor; at that season it is seen commonly in small flocks and is often first located by its thin "spizella" call. It is more common in or near pine trees, and especially north of the lake, but can be found almost anywhere--at field or woodland edges, etc. It also breeds sparingly in the pine flats of the Florida parishes. It will be heard singing only in the nesting season, at which time it gives a dry trill which sounds very much like the song of the Pine Warbler, but lasts considerably longer--about three seconds.

Expected dates are October 20 to about April 1. Extreme dates are Sep. 18, 1979 (JR) and Apr. 17, 1988 (NN), both at New Orleans. Summer records include July 1, 1940 at Lacombe (TDB), July 2, 1961 at Covington (SAG), and .....1990 at Sheridan (DM,GC,RDP).

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*) Rare fall migrant

The Clay-colored Sparrow is a fairly regular but infrequent fall migrant or vagrant, breeding in the northern Great Plains and winter from Mexico southward. Prior to 1977 there were four records of this sparrow, all between 1957 and 1967. Since 1977, and in the early years primarily through the efforts of Jack Reinoehl, there have been over 40 records, and it has become clear that this species is regular in coastal Louisiana in early October. The Clay-colored Sparrow presents a significant identification problem, especially in distinguishing it from the immature Chipping Sparrow. The key is the face pattern, which in the Clay-colored Sparrow shows a light brown auricular patch with a dark brown border on the front and top (due to the eye line). With the white superciliary stripe and a white malar stripe (defined by a dark malar line), the Clay-colored has a clean-cut, well-marked look. The Clay-colored Sparrow also has a gray nape, which forms a sort of collar (though the Chipping Sparrow shows something of a collar as well). The Chipping Sparrow is much grayer, lacks the clean-cut look and the dark stripe at the front edge of the face patch, and has a contrasting gray rump. The winter adult retains the reddish cap, but it is streaked. Brewer's Sparrow is a remote possibility which ought to be kept in mind. The call is a thin "spizella" "tzee" note.

Expected dates October 1 to October 25. Extreme dates are Sep. 11, 1979 (JR) and Nov. 26, 1957 (SAG), both at New Orleans. There are at least 4 winter records: Dec. 29, 1983 (JR,DM,MH) and Dec. 31, 1987 (DM,RDP), both at Venice, and....**(Beth Wiggins), JC, et al 2008 (2/23).**

**FIELD SPARROW** (*Spizella pusilla*) Uncommon winter resident

The Field Sparrow is recognized by its pink bill, eye ring, rusty cap, and rusty scapulars, giving it an overall rusty-faced look. Its call note is also a thin spizella "tsee",

but a thin "tsit" like an orange-crowned warbler is also given. Although the Field Sparrow may breed in the Florida parishes, there is no evidence to substantiate this conjecture.

Expected dates are November 1 to April 10, with extreme dates of Oct. 9, 1956 (SAG) and Apr. 17, 1958 (SAG), both at New Orleans.

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) Uncommon winter resident

Being rather rural in its habits, with a preference for pastures and roadsides, the Vesper Sparrow is not common near New Orleans proper. The Bonnet Carre Spillway is one of the better areas, but some can be found in the eastern extremes of the city. The Vesper Sparrow resembles the Savannah Sparrow, but lacks the white superciliary stripe, has a distinct eyering, and has white outer tail feathers. The call note is also quite different.

Expected dates are November 1 to April 1, with extremes of Oct. 1 in 1967 (JK) and in 1980 (MM), both in New Orleans, and Apr. 29, 1980 (JR), also at New Orleans.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) Uncommon to rare winter resident

Although the Lark Sparrow is occasionally found in mid-winter, and is not extraordinary on Christmas Counts, especially at Venice, it is most often seen in fall, from mid August into September. New Orleans records are unusual but not extraordinary.

Expected dates are August 25 to about April 1, with extremes of July 20, 1902 at Diamond (HLB) and Apr. 24, 1983 at Venice (NN).

**LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) Accidental

There are five records of this inhabitant of the Great Plains. Most likely a Lark Bunting in this area will be an immature, or an adult in basic plumage, unless a changing male was seen in early fall or late winter; it is very unlikely that a male would be seen in anything approaching breeding (alternate) plumage. The winter male does have a black throat and in fall or spring could have much more patchy black; the wing-patch is white. A female is heavily streaked below, with buffy wing patches, an eye ring, and a distinctive flat-headed look. The bill is quite heavy. The call is a distinctive two-note whistled "choo-ee". The records are: Sep. 4, 1952 at Grand Isle (*fide* GHL--coll); Dec. 23, 1973 at Triumph (SAG,RJN--coll); Sep. 22, 1979 on Elmer's Island, Jefferson Parish (BC,NLN,PN); Sep. 21, 1991 at Fourchon Beach (MM,CS); Nov. 25-Dec. 14, 1997 at Bucktown, Jefferson Par. (PY—ph[8<sup>th</sup> LBRC], m.ob.).

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) Common winter resident

The Savannah Sparrow is one of the most common wintering sparrows; it also is the

earliest to arrive in fall and usually the latest to depart in spring. Its favorite habitats are plowed fields, sandy short-grass fields, higher grass which is favored by the "grass sparrows", and other waste areas. The call most often heard is a distinctive thin "tsit" or "tseet", but Savannah Sparrows occasionally also give a "pit" which can be very confusing. In addition to the June record given below, there is a June 15 record from Covington by Allison (*fide* HCO), without year, and a Jun.1, 1975 record from New Orleans (NN).

While expected dates are October 1 to May 1, Savannah Sparrows have been recorded between Sep. 23, 1895 and Jun. 5, 1886 at Madisonville (GEB--coll).

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Uncommon winter resident

Although the Grasshopper is regular and widely distributed in winter, the frequency with which it is encountered is surprisingly low. To a considerable extent this may be because the extensive grass fields north of Lake Pontchartrain are not seriously canvassed on a regular basis. Most recent records seem to be what one might call "opportunistic," that is, simply random occurrences without any pattern--on roadsides, etc; their habitat requirements seem somewhat less specific than those of Leconte's Sparrow, and especially Henslow's. It is true, however, that they do not occur in the fairly heavily-worked (by birders) broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*) fields in which Henslow's Sparrows are located north of the lake. This writer's impression is that they favor habitat more like that which is popular with Leconte's Sparrows, light, thin, calf-high grass, old fields, etc., perhaps not particularly wet. The Grasshopper Sparrow has apparently been declining in many areas, perhaps because of effects of mowing destroying nests and cover (Ehrlich 1988). Although the Grasshopper Sparrow was reported by Allison as breeding near New Orleans, and by Kopman as breen in Audubon Park (now much changed), there have been no hints of nesting since these early years of the century.

Exepected dates are **November 1?** to April 25, with extremes of Oct. 2, 1981 at New Orleans (DM) [Sep. 15, 1998 Hammond { Phillip C. Stouffer } ] and May 7, 1972 at Venice (DN).

**HENSLOW'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus henslowii*) Uncommon winter resident of broomsedge fields north of Lake Pontchatrain; casual elsewhere

The Henslow's Sparrow is the most sought-after sparrow of Southeast Louisiana in winter, due to the fact that it usually can only be found in its very specific wintering habitat, and then only with great effort. In some years, at least, it proves to be rather common in this habitat, which consists of fields with a high fraction of broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*) , but with scattered bushes and usually with a canopy of second-growth pines (loblolly, slash). According to Rich Martin, Henslow=s Sparrows feed primarily on the seeds of Atoothache grass.@ There is a great deal of good habitat north of Lake Pontchartrain and Henlow's Sparrows have traditionally been found in such fields south and east of Covington and east of Abita Springs. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Henlow's Sparrows could be found at the old Crescent Acres landfill in St. Bernard Parish, so that

they are certainly not confined to broofsedge habitat.

Unfortunately, these birds are so hard to see even when one knows they are there, that observers have tended to find a good field and then to always return to it. Consequently one can only assume that given the right habitat there will be Henslow's Sparrows. The only way to see them is to repeatedly flush them from the ground in this habitat, finally getting enough of a view in flight to identify them, or to succeed in getting one to perch after being flushed several times. It requires considerable stamina, and not a little speed to succeed in this endeavor, since it is essential to reach the spot where a bird lands very quickly, lest it run away on the ground and escape. The fields are usually wet and the footing is always uncertain. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that a *sine qua non* is a sizeable group of chaseers, 5-10 in number. When flushed, Henslow's Sparrows can usually be identified by their dark faces which can eventually be seen in the brief periods of time the birds are in flight.

Both Leconte's and Grasshopper Sparrows, which are short-tailed grass sparrows and which behave similarly to Henslow's, that is, they flight a short distance and then plunge into the grass (especially Leconte's), give a very much paler impression in flight, and Leconte's has a "pinkish" nape which adds to this impression. Bachman's Sparrow, which inhabits the same fields, is large and long tailed, and often will fly up to a tree. Savannah Sparrow is also large and long-tailed, often looks gray, and frequently will fly a long way before diving back into the grass. Swamp Sparrow is large and very dark reddish-brown, behaves differently, and often gives its loud call. Sedge Wrens are superficially of a similar coloration, but they will usually reveal their identity quickly by habits or by giving their soft "tchu" call as they land.

There are some recent records in winter from the Crescent Acres landfill in Arabi, some of birds caught by falconer=s hawks (fide JC,TC), others netted, so that apparently the habitat requirements stated above are not a rigid requirement.

Expected dates are somewhat uncertain because the fields where Henslow's Sparrows occur and usually only birded in January and February, but they arrive in late October and depart by the end of March, if not sooner. They have been seen between Oct. 15, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG) and Apr. 7, 1990 in St. Tammany Parish (AS,GS, et al). [Phil Stouffer=s student, early May 2004] **Banding.....**

**LECONTE'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus leconteii*) Uncommon winter resident

Much of what was said above about the difficulty of flushing and identifying Henslow's Sparrow applies to this species as well. The main difference is that Leconte's is not confined to the broomsedge habitat, and, indeed, is rather rare in it, and is much more frequently encountered on a levee or in an old field on migration, especially in October. The best habitat seems to be rather fine grass up to several inches high which in winter has a very pale, light straw color, often with scattered broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*). Unlike Henslow's Sparrow, which is rare south of Lake Pontchartrain, Leconte's can be

found all the way to the coast wherever there is decent habitat. The east campus of UNO used to be a good spot, but that habitat is gone or transient. Protection levees in the eastern part of the city have often yielded Leconte's Sparrows, though rarely in midwinter. The Crescent Acres landfill has proved to be a good area for this species in recent winters, so that up to 20 been flushed in a half-day's effort. There is a substantial amount of habitat, broomsedge and otherwise, in the pine flats north of the lake, though that habitat is somewhat ephemeral, as development proceeds apace. On at least one occasion, several have been observed at dusk on the tops of grass stems calling to each other.

When flushed, LeConte's Sparrows appear much lighter than the other sparrows which might occur in the same habitat, especially Savannah and Swamp, and the common Sedge Wren. They are much paler on the back, head, and underparts than Henslow's, but one has to be careful because Grasshopper Sparrows have very much the same look. Grasshopper Sparrows are slightly more likely to cooperate and perch on a bush, etc., after only a little chasing.

As with the previous species, it is difficult to assign expected dates, other than to say that arrival is in late October and most birds depart by the end of March. The extreme dates reflect the legendary difficulties of finding these birds, and their cousins above, but also birding patterns; they are Nov. 12, 1967 at New Orleans (JK) and .....1989 (RDP?)...(CS...).

**NELSON'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) Common winter resident of salt marsh habitat, especially *spartina alterniflora*

Nelson's Sparrow, formerly Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow and prior to that just "Sharp-tailed Sparrow," is a denizen of coastal saline marsh, usually dominated by "oystergoass" ("salt-marsh cordgrass"; *Spartina alterniflora*). It would be nearly impossible to see were it not for the fact that it can be "squeaked-up" rather easily. It also responds vigorously to its taped song. It closely resembles the Leconte's Sparrow, from which it may be distinguished by its dark nape (and also by a gray rather than white crown stripe, though this is often hard to see). The thin buzzy call note will often reveal their presence before one is seen. Although Seaside Sparrow is usually the only other sparrow in this habitat (perhaps Swamp Sparrow), Leconte's are occasionally seen in such marshy situations, so one should be careful.

The recent splitting of Nelson's from Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow ( *A. Caudacutus*) raises the question of occurrence of the latter in Louisiana. Its normal range is no closer than the lower Atlantic coast, but it has recently been recorded in coastal Alabama (winter 2005-6).

Expected dates are October 15 or 20 to April 15, with extremes of Sep. 19, 1976 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RH) and May 14, 1931 at Grand Isle (*fide* HCO). A more recent late record is May 9, 1992 at Grand Isle (MM,DM) There is one remarkable "out of season" record, June 7, 1919 on Freemason Island (ERK--coll).



**SEASIDE SPARROW** (*Ammodramus maritima*) Common to very common resident

As its name implies, the Seaside Sparrow is found only at or near the coast, in brackish or salt marsh, where it is quite common and conspicuous. Because it occurs on the edge of Lake Borgne and Lake Catherine, it may be found up Bayou Bienvenue toward Paris Raod and on the Intercoastal Waterway across from Michoud, in the eastern end of the city.

The best place to find it is in the extensive marsh below Golden Meadow toward Grand Isle, along Fourchon Road, etc. The favored salt marsh habitat will include oystergrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) and perhaps black rush (*Juncus roemerianus*). Two subspecies are resident *A. m. howelli* and *A. m. fisheri*, originally based on a specimen collected at Grand Isle on June 9, 1886. The Seaside Sparrow is an unmistakable bird, being very dark, having a yellow patch in front of the eye, a white throat and dark malar stripe. Although it is quite sedentary, it might cause momentary confusion if seen away from its usual habitat. The rendition of the song given in Farrand (1983), "tup-tup-zhee", is plausible.

**FOX SPARROW** (*Passerella iliaca*) Uncommon to rare winter resident

The Fox Sparrow breeds in coniferous forests across the norther U.S. and Canada and down into the Rocky Mountains. Although it winters across the southern U.S., it is distinctly rare and irregular in winter in Southeast Louisiana, being absent in most winters. They are common in winter in east Texas and in Alabama, "south to the black belt" (Imhof,...), and are more common in north Louisiana than in the southern part of the state. Occasionally, whether because of the wild food crop or because of weather conditions, Fox Sparrows are common all the way to the coast. The Fox Sparrow superficially resembles the Song Sparrow, but has an unstreaked head, rusty streaking on the breast, and a reddish tail/rump. The Fox Sparrow has been recorded between Nov. 3, 1968 at New Orleans (JK) and Apr. 6, 1894 (GEB).

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) Common winter resident

Although Song Sparrows vary somewhat in numbers, they are always at least fairly common in brushy habitat. Occasionally a Song Sparrow will give its elaborate song in winter, but more often it advertises its presence through its distinctive call, which has the character of a single note from a House Sparrow call.

Expected dates are October 25 to March 25, with extremes of Oct. 6, 1888 at New Orleans (*fide* HCO--coll) and Apr. 30, 1915 at New Orleans (HHK).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) Uncommon to rare winter resident

Although Lincoln's Sparrows are present throughout the winter, they are thinly scattered and difficult to find. This sparrow is quite common in Sw. Louisiana, but is generally rare here, being more common in early fall and late spring. Their thin buzzy

"tzuk" call is a bit difficult to learn, but distinctive, somewhat resembling that of the Kentucky Warbler. Lincoln's Sparrow bears a slight resemblance to the Song Sparrow, but is easily distinguished by the buffy-yellow wash, with thin streaks, on its upper breast. It tends to forage nearer the ground and in thicker brush than the Song Sparrow and will rarely be seen perched in the open, as Song Sparrows are wont to do. Expected dates are October 25 to April 20, with extremes of Oct. 13, 1991 at Grand Isle (DM,MM) [Oct. 9, 2000 Kenner (...)] and Apr. 25, 1961 (JR) at New Orleans.

**SWAMP SPARROW** (*Melospiza georgiana*) Very common to abundant winter resident

The Swamp Sparrow will be found anywhere there are wet fields or damp brushy habitat; it is arguably the most common of all the 15 species of primarily wintering "sparrows". Its sharp, somewhat metallic "chink", which is somewhat similar to that of the White-throated Sparrow (not, as the National Geographic guide says, similar to the call of the Eastern Phoebe) reveals its abundance in its marshy/swampy habitat. Another call note faintly resembles that of the Indigo Bunting. When flushed it can be identified in flight by its reddish back and wings.

Expected dates are October 15 to April 20, with extreme dates of occurrence being Sep. 25, 1975 at Reserve (MW) and May 3, 1898 at New Orleans (AA)[May 1, 2004BDM,PW,RDP]

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) Common winter resident

The White-throated Sparrow is the one sparrow which the average city dweller is likely to see in winter in his residential backyard, along with cardinals, blue jays, mockingbirds, etc. It is, of course, fairly common wherever there is adequate brushy understory, and its whistled "old sam peabody,peabody,peabody" song, which it frequently gives in winter, is one of the first learned. There are two call notes, one a thin "seet" or "sweet", the other a sharp "chink" which resembles, but is weaker than, that of the Swamp Sparrow. There are indications of a steady decline in numbers on recent New Orleans Christmas Counts.

Expected dates for the White-throated Sparrow are October 25 to April 25. It has been seen as early in fall as Oct. 4, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG) and as late as May 11, 1981 at New Orleans (DM) and May 30, 1986 at Madisonville (AKF--coll). There is, in addition, a summer record, July 30-31 at New Orleans (JR).

**HARRIS'S SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia querlua*) Casual winter visitor

There are five records of this sparrow which normally winters as near to Southeast Louisiana as east Texas. It would most likely be found in the company of White-crowned Sparrows. The records are Nov. 23, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG); Mar. 24, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 12, ....at Reserve (RJS--coll); Oct. 14, 1980 at New Orleans (JR); Dec. 27, 2003BJan.....2004 (DM, et al, ph, vid).

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) Uncommon winter resident

White-crowned Sparrows are usually found in rather open brushy habitat. They are often heard singing in winter, though certainly not as frequently as White-throated Sparrow, even taking into account their smaller numbers. The song is a buzzy version of that of the White-throat.

Expected dates are October 20 to April 25 and extremes are Oct. 2, 1979 at New Orleans (JR) [Oct. 4, 1998 GI] and May 5, 1977 at Reserve (RJS).

**GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) Accidental

There is one unquestionable record of this species which normally winters on the west coast, from Grand Isle on April 20, 1936 (AD--coll). There is also a somewhat dubious sight record from the same locality, Oct. 26, 1957 (ART,EDL,EDJ). Most recently there is are two records from Cameron Parish, Dec. 19, 1993 (MM), later collected, and Dec...., 1999 (PY,DPM,KVR); in both cases the individuals were with flocks of White-crowned Sparrows.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis*) Uncommon winter resident, more common north of L. Pontchartrain  
[Slate-colored Junco]  
[Oregon Junco]

Five species or subspecies of juncos with dark eyes were merged to form this species, the Slate-colored, White-winged, Oregon, "pink-sided", and Gray-headed. In Southeast Louisiana almost all juncos are "Slate-colored" (*J. h. hyemalis* in winter here), but there are five records of birds identified as "Oregon" Juncos (*J. h. oregonus*), from the far west. "Slate-colored" Juncos are erratic, ranging from nearly absent in some years to fairly common in others. Their rattling "tic-tic-tic" call often advertises their presence before they are seen. The song is a trill somewhat like that of the Chipping Sparrow, but it is not heard in Louisiana.

Expected dates are November 5 to March 25, with extremes of Oct. 5, 1961 (WGJ) and Apr. 9, 1983 (NN), both at New Orleans. The five records of "Oregon" Junco are: Nov. 9, 1957 at Ft. Pike (SAG,MEL); Nov. 4, 1967 in New Orleans ((DS,RDP); Mar. 22, 1969 at New Orleans (JK); Nov. 15, 1970.... (DN); and Oct. 15, 1972 at Ft. Jackson (RDP).

Family *Cardinalidae* Cardinal, tanagers, dickcissels, grosbeaks, buntings

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) Common migrant and summer resident

The Summer Tanager breeds rather commonly north of Lake Pontchartrain and in the Pearl River bottoms. It is a common to sometimes very common spring and fall migrant elsewhere, and there are two or three summer records south of the lake, including June 11, 1982 at Lafitte NP (JR,RDP,NN,DM). The most interest such record is of one at Ft. Jackson on July 26, 1986 (DLD), which could have been of an early southbound migrant. The song is a warbling one which is somewhat like a very hurried Red-eyed Vireo running his songs together. North of the lake, it is likely to be confused only with the song of the Blue Grosbeak, which, however, while a warbler, tends more toward the Indigo/Painted Bunting kind of song. The tone quality is much like that of a robin. The call is a "tuck-it!" or "die-kert!". In Southeast Louisiana, it is important to familiarize ones self with the differences between female Summer and Scarlet Tanagers. Basically, the Summer Tanager is rusty in its overall coloration, while the Scarlet Tanager is mostly greenish, with dark wings. The color of the latter is similar to that of a female/young male Painted Bunting.

As a migrant, the expected dates of Summer Tanagers are, in spring, April 1 to May 10, and in fall, August 25 to October 20. Extreme dates in spring are Mar. 29, 1974 ... (NN) and May 21, 1981 at Triumph (NN,RDP); in fall the extremes are Aug. 9, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 10, 1986 at Venice (RDP,NN--5). There are 19 winter records, which will not be enumerated here, between Dec. 14, 1977 in Metairie (MM,NN) and Jan. 31, 1971 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RDP), but none since 1980.

#### **SCARLET TANAGER** (*Piranga olivacea*) Fairly common migrant

The Scarlet Tanager is a regular migrant, more conspicuous in spring because of the incomparable plumage of the males, which, however, molt into basic plumage, which resembles that of the adult female, before they migrate south. The result is that one does not see breeding (alternate) plumage males in fall, although some may still be molting. As indicated above, females in spring, and all Scarlet Tanagers in fall, are yellow-green with darker wings (see Farrand, 1983, for details). The song of the Scarlet Tanager bears approximately the same relation to that of the Summer Tanager, as the Yellow-throated Vireo does to the Red-eye; that is, it is noticeably "wheezier" (MM); it is not heard often.

Expected dates in spring are April 5 to May 10, and in fall, September 25 to October 25. Extreme dates of occurrence are, in spring migration, Mar. 27, 1970 to May 25, 1991 at Grand Isle (RDP), and in fall, Aug. 30, 1959 at New Orleans (SAG) and Nov. 13, 1983 at Grand Isle (DM). Winter records are: Dec. 28, 1965 at Venice (JPG), Dec. 30, 1982 at Venice (NLN), and Jan. 2, 1984 at Grand Isle..., and the 2007 Venice CBC (RDP,PW,CReihl—photos, video).

#### **WESTERN TANAGER** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) Rare vagrant in fall and winter

There are over 30 winter records of the Western Tanager for Southeast Louisiana, This is one of the typical western vagrants, which reach this area, depending on one's prediliction, by migrating south to the gulf coast and then laterally, or by mirror-image

migration. Western Tanagers have been seen between September and May, the very first area record being of a bird collected near New Orleans on Mar. 19, 1898 (AA). One wintered in Abita Springs during three consecutive winters 2003-5 (Olga Clifton). The most recent records are of one at Lafitte NP on Apr. 10, 1992 (DM), another at Grand Isle on Apr. 24, **1992....**, at one at Ft. Jackson on Jan. 15, 1994 (PW,JK,MS), seen again a week later (SWC,DLD—coll.); Jan. 29, 1995, Ft. Jackson (**CL?**); Oct. 7, 1995 at Grand Isle (**MM**); Apr. 10, 1998 at Grand Isle (MM, PW, et al); Jan 21, 1999 in Metairie (NLN); Feb. 7 to Mar. 4, 1999 in Reserve (RJS, et al); Mar. 14, 2000 (Harvey Patten, Honey I.); Dec. 31, 2000—Mar. 12, 2001 in Slidell (PSiegert, MSwan—ph, et al); **Dec...., 2002 (RS, et al; NO CBC), RDP City Park...; 2008: HPatten, NLN,...; Dec. 29 (30?), 2008** in New Orleans (GO). Two records at GI fall-winter 2009; Feb. 13, 2009 at Destrehan (EJRaynor).

Expected dates are November 15 to March 20, and Western Tanagers have been recorded between Sep. 16, 1960 at New Orleans (SAG) and May 11, 1933 at Grand Isle (WEN).

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) Very common resident

If any species needs no further elaboration, it is the cardinal, or "redbird", common in residential backyards and nearly everywhere else, excepting mainly coastal marsh. Its "pretty-pretty-retty" song is one of the first learned. On New Orleans Christmas Counts, the cardinal underwent a steady decline (to one-fourth the numbers of the early 1960's) until 1974; it has seemingly increased somewhat since.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) Fairly common migrant

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak can be one of the more common migrants in late spring and in early to mid October. The spectacular black-and white plumage of the male, with an intensely red breast, make it one of the more conspicuous spring migrants. The song, which is heard occasionally in spring, is reminiscent of that of the American Robin. The call note, like chalk on a blackboard is very distinctive, except that the Black-headed Grosbeak gives a similar call. See the discussion under Black-headed Grosbeak, for the difficulty of distinguishing immatures and females of the two species.

In spring, migrants are expected from April 15 to May 10, and in fall they are usually seen between October 5 and November 10. Extreme dates are, in spring, Mar. 23, 1957 and May 27, **199...** (DM) and May 27, 2009 (NLN), both in New Orleans; in fall, extreme dates are Sep. 12, 1983 at New Orleans (SN) and Nov. 17, 1985 at Grand Isle (AS,GS). There are at least 7 winter records, Dec. 19, 1957 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 27, 1962 at Mandeville (JH.); Dec. 23, 1965 at New Orleans (SAG); Nov. 28, 1971 at Grand Isle (RDP--2); Dec. 20, 1975 at New Orleans (WW); Dec. 23, 1980 at New Orleans (NN), and Dec. 4, 2004 at New Orleans (DM,MM,PW). There is also a Mar. 16, 1986 record of a female from Grand Isle (NN) which may have overwintered. A young male was found at Ft. Jackson on Jan.

31, 2010 (PW,DM,RDP—video). Most recent: Jan. 26, 2012 at Diamond (Joelle Finley).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) Rare vagrant

Though a rare vagrant, there have been at least 27 records of this western counterpart of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak (the two are considered conspecific by some), spanning the period Oct. 5, 1980 (DS) to Apr. 7, 1980 (AH), though recent records have been much less frequent than in the 1960s and 70s. Many of these records have been at feeders. Most individuals recorded in Southeast Louisiana are immatures and must be distinguished with great care from the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Females are not especially hard to distinguish, because they have rather buffy breasts and thin streaks confined to the sides of the breast, and the head stripe *may* be buffy, in contrast to the Rose-breasted, which has a heavily streaked white breast. Immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks will be buffy on the breast and throat, but will have very fine breast streaking to none at all, and, of course, will have pinkish-red wing linings (see Zimmer, 1985). **The bi-colored bill is distinctive.** The calls are slightly different, with that of the Black-headed Grosbeak being a bit lower. Dated records are distributed as follows: Oct. (6), Nov. (2), Dec. (2), Jan. (8), Feb. (4), Mar. (2), Apr. (2). **Some recent records include Mar. 28-Apr. 1, 1980 at New Orleans (FB, et al); Nov. 13, 1983....Jim Holmes, Nov. 2000 Venice, Dec. 23, 2000 at New Orleans (JB,DM), and January 2004 and Feb. 1, 2004 (separate individuals) at New Orleans (DM,PW).** October 18?, 2009 at Grand Isle (PW,DM), DM,PW near Cocodrie, Jan. 2010 at Ft. Jackson (PW,DM,RDP). Late winter 2010 in Harahan.....; Jan. 4, 2012 (Claire Thomas).... And Jan. 26, 2012 in Harahan (Lizette Wooten).

**BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Guiraca caerulea*) Fairly common summer resident north of Lake Pontchartrain, common to very common or abundant migrant, rare to very uncommon winter vagrant

The Blue Grosbeak nests fairly commonly in second-growth pine flat habitat north of the lake. The key to finding it in breeding season is to learn its song, which it does not give in migration, so one must first learn it on the breeding grounds. A summer trip to St. Tammany or Washington Parishes will yield several individuals of this species. The song is a rapid, headlong warbler, that becomes obvious once one eliminates Indigo and Painted Buntings, and Summer Tanager. The call is a loud metallic "chink!". In migration the Blue Grosbeak is often very common, and it is one of the regular winter "vagrants" near the coast. Although not usually seen in the large flocks characterized by Indigo Buntings, they are sometimes abundant in spring migration, as at Grand Isle on April 17, 1994, when over 50 were seen. Peter Yaukey has recorded movements of a few hundred per hour at South Point on the edge of L. Pontchartrain (Sept. 2004).

Expected dates as migrants, are, in spring, April 10 to May 10, and in fall, September 5 to November 1. Extreme dates are, in spring, Apr. 1, 1961 (SAG) to May 28, 1991

(NN,MM,RDP,GC), both at Grand Isle. In fall the extremes are Aug. 26, 1981 (SAG) and Nov. 22, 1958 (SAG), both at New Orleans. There are **more than 10** winter records, the earliest of which were: Jan. 8, 1956 at New Orleans (CLE,SAG); Jan. 5, 1961 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 2, 1961 30 in the delta (BLM); Dec. 29, 1966 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 28, 1968 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 17-18, 1972 at Reserve (RJS,MW); Dec. 29, 1982 at Venice (RDP); Dec. 31, 1986 at Venice (DM,**RDP....**).

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*)                      Accidental (fall) vagrant

There are two or three records of this species, the western counterpart of the Indigo Bunting. The first was of a bird seen by Jack Reihoehl and David Muth on ....., but rejected by the L.O.S. Bird Record Committee. The second was of a bird video-taped at Pilottown on Nov. 3, 2000 by Muth. Both were females or immature males. More recently, one or more have wintered at a Luling residence, during the past several years, including Feb. 3-5, 2001 (Matt Touchard), January-February 2004 (specifically, Feb. 2004), and January 2005 (Matt Touchard).

**INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*)    Common to abundant migrant, locally an uncommon to common summer resident

The Indigo Bunting is one of the most common and familiar transgulf migrants in both spring and fall, when up to 100 or more might be flushed from grassy fields, especially near the coast. Its buzzy call, often given in flight, is easily learned and might be confused only with that of the Yellow Warbler. The Indigo Bunting also gives a sharp, but not especially loud "pit" call less frequently. Its song, which is sometimes heard in migration, is a strident, "jumbly" call, with a distinct rhythm. The only song to be heard in Southeast Louisiana which resembles it is that of the Yellow-throated Warbler. The rendering in Farrand (1983) is not bad: "swee-swee-zreet-zreet-zwee-zwee-zay-zay-seeit-seeit." Indigo Bunting nests over much of the area, from south of New Orleans to the Florida parishes, where there is brushy, cut-over habitat, but is rather thinly scattering. The best way to locate it in the breeding season is to learn the song. There are about 30 winter records from Nov. 29 to Mar. 2, and although all of the records are since 1957, a Christmas Count at Venice is almost expected to yield one or more individuals. Most overwintering birds are in female/imm. male plumage, but full adult male birds are not unknown. This regular wintering makes extreme dates in spring and fall almost meaningless.

Expected dates are March 20 to November 5, with nominal extreme dates of Mar. 6, 1975 and Nov. 19, 1977 at New Orleans (JR). **Migrants are common from March 15 to May 1 and Sept. 15 to Nov. 5**

**PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*)    Common summer resident

The Painted Bunting is a fairly common summer resident of brushy, shrubby fields

and associated wood margins. It seems to occupy a slightly different niche from its relative the Indigo Bunting since they are rarely found together. The song is a bright, musical warbler, which is quite distinctive, though not everyone is able to learn it. The call note is a "chink", not as strong as that of the Blue Grosbeak. Although the adult male is unmistakable, it takes more effort to become familiar with young males or females, which are greenish above and greenish-yellow below. Singing young males will sometimes surprise the observer, who expects to see the resplendent male. Painted Buntings are one of the most common winter "vagrants," perhaps now outstripping indigos. Winter records span at least the period Dec. 18 to Feb. 3.

Painted Buntings are expected between April 5 to October 20, but have been recorded between Mar. 11, 1917 (AMB) and Nov. 17, 1959 (SAG), both at New Orleans.

**DICKCISSEL** (*Spiza americana*) Uncommon migrant, casual winter visitor

Although the Dickcissel bred in eastern New Orleans in the 1960's, there are at best scattered hints of recent records of nesting anywhere in Southeast Louisiana (most recently in summer 1995 near Reserve and summer 2003 in the Bonnet Carre Spillway (RJS). In migration, the Dickcissel is regular, if sporadic, especially in coastal areas such as Grand Isle. Sometime numbers are quite considerable, in other years it is quite rare. Fall concentrations are quite unusual. Recent summer records include.....2011 during the Summer Atlas program (DM).

In principle it could be found breeding wherever there is mixed brushy and overgrown field habitat, such as south of New Orleans toward Venice, and at the west end of Grand Isle. The Dickcissel has a very loud "bziert!" call which it gives while migrating at night and in the day as well. Its song, of course, is a "dick-siss-el!". Dickcissels occasionally occur in winter, often at feeders, and there at least eight such winter records: Dec. 1932? at New Orleans (HCO--coll); Dec. 1, 1957 at Port Sulphur (JPG,SAG); Jan. 13, 1961 at Reserve (JC--dead); Dec. 30, 1966-Feb. 8, 1967 at New Orleans (SAG); Nov. 23, 1968 at New Orleans (RDP,DS); Dec. 14, 1968-Feb. 16, 1969 at New Orleans (WW); Mar. 8, 1970 at Grand Isle (RJN); Feb. 26-Mar. 5, 1976 at New Orleans (NN); Jan. 3, 1993 at **Venice (....)**.

Although there are too few fall records to permit assigning expected dates with a high degree of confidence, the period Oct. 1 to Nov. 1 is reasonable (Yaukey, Sept. 6? 2004); in spring, arrival is about April 15. The extreme dates in spring are Mar. 26, 1970 to **...1991** (RDP,NN) and in fall, **Sept. 19, 1994?..[9/18?2004 PY]..** to Nov. 9 1959 at New Orleans (SAG). Recent summer records include one in St. Charles Parish on June 6, 1992 (PY), and July 19 at Grand Isle (Devin Bosler).

Family *Icteridae* Blackbirds and allies

**BOBOLINK** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) Uncommon to sometimes common spring migrant, rare in fall



This gregarious species is usually found in sizable flocks in the spring, which are made conspicuous by the rather gaudy plumage of the males and the distinctive gurgling, metallic song. Although Bobolinks are rather scarce in fall, they have been found with some regularity in the Bonnet Carre Spillway, on Fourchon Road near Grand Isle, and near the west end of Grand Isle itself. Maximum: 400-500 on Grand Isle, May 1, 2004 (DM,PW,RDP).

Expected dates in spring are April 25 to 15, and in fall September 15 to 30. The extremes are, in spring, Apr. 1, 1933 (*fde* HCO) [also Apr. 11, 1992 at Grand Isle (JS)] and Jun 16, 1933 (AD), both at Grand Isle; in fall, Bobolinks have been recorded between Sep. 2, 1986 at Grand Isle (NN,RDP) and Oct. 7, 1978 at the Bonnet Carre Spillway (.JR,MB). [Sept. 2004, PW,DM). Any fall record is of interest.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) Abundant resident

Few birds are as familiar, and perhaps none are as common, as the Red-winged Blackbird. As many as 15,415 have been recorded on a New Orleans Christmas Bird Count (1980). Novices should note that the female Red-wing looks very different from the male, with here somewhat golden, heavily streaked underparts. Young males can be confusing because often the red epaulets are obscure.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) Common resident

In spite of extensive habitat changes near the city, and despite some feelings to the contrary, the numbers of Eastern Meadowlarks on New Orleans Christmas Counts remained essentially unchanged until Hurricane Katrina. Since then they seem to have declined in numbers, and are nearly absent near the coast. They can be found wherever there are old fields, meadows, and levees. The slurred two-whistled song is diagnostic, as is the ratter which this species often gives.

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella neglecta*) Casual in winter

Although there are 16 records of the Western Meadowlark, 10 of these were from the winter of 1960-61. There have been only three clearly independent records since the mid-1960s: Dec. 23, 1984 on the New Orleans CBC (SAG, *et al*), recorded again Jan. 8, 1985 (JR,DM,MM,RDP,NLN,PN); and .....(NN; RDP)[Dec. 6, 1988, US 11 (RDP?)]. Nov. 10, 2000 at Crescent Acres Landfill in Arabi (MM,DM). The records span the period Oct. 9, 1960 to Apr. 13, 1961, both at New Orleans (SAG). An especially interesting record is Jan. 29, 1963 at Pilottown (SAG). For identification details, see Lowery (1974), but Western Meadowlarks are generally paler, grayer than Easterns, and the bars on the tail feathers tend to be separated from each other rather than merging together. The best single field mark is the cheek patch, which is clear (gray,white,cream) in the Eastern and brown and streaked in the Western, and the yellow of the throat tends to merge up into the face

more in the latter. The song, which is a beautiful rapid warble (and can be heard in almost all Hollywood movies) is very different from the clear whistle of the Eastern, and the call is a "whit" or "chip".

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) Casual to rare vagrant, mostly in fall

There are over 40 records of Yellow-headed Blackbirds between Aug. 30 and Apr. 20, but most are seen during their fall migration, especially in October. Yellow-headed Blackbirds can thus be expected mainly in fall, often just after a cool front brings in a westerly airflow, and they are more likely near the coast, although half of the records are from New Orleans. In recent years, a few have usually been found in mid to late October along Fourchon Rd., and especially Estay Rd. which leads west from it. In general, the species might be expected in small numbers from mid to late September through October, with occasional wintering. The recent winter records have come from Plaquemines Parish, from Belle Chasse to Buras, usually in large cowbird flocks, including 11 in a cowbird flock at Ironton on Dec. 4, 2011 (RDP, DN, DM, PW). Spring records are rather sparse.

The earlier records are: Nov. 22, 1932 at Octave Pass (HCO); Mar. 11-13, 1958 at New Orleans (RF); Apr. 16, 1958 at New Orleans (SAG); Dec. 27, 1973 at Venice (SAG); Dec. 31, 1974 at Venice (DN); Sep. 11, 1976 at Leeville (RH, RJS); Feb. 6, 1977 in Metairie (DM); Sep. 4, 1977 at New Orleans (JR, MB); Sep. 8-14, 1978 at New Orleans (JR, NN); Sep. 22, 1979 near Grand Isle (BC, PNB, NLN); Sep. 18-20, 1980 (JR, NN--5...?); Oct. 2, 1980 at New Orleans (JR--2); Apr. 18-20, 1981 at Grand Isle (*fide* GS--100+); Aug. 30, 1983 at New Orleans (NN); Apr. 11...on Fourchon Rd. (JS)...**1993**

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus carolinus*) Uncommon to perhaps becoming rare winter resident

The favored habitat of the Rusty Blackbirds is swamp, poorly-drained woodlands, lake edges etc., where it can be common in winter. Of course it is gregarious, so that its distribution is spotty, with a flock here and one there. Rusty Blackbirds give a high-pitched whistle, when flocking, that can be easily recognized. In winter Rusty Blackbirds are quite rusty and barred, and both sexes have yellow eyes. Precipitous declines locally and nationwide have resulted in serious attempts to document and understand their decline.

Expected dates are November 20 to April 10, while extreme dates, both from the last century, are Nov. 17, 1899 at Covington (HHK) and May 10, 1899 at New Orleans (AA).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) Uncommon winter resident

Although still barely "regular" in winter, Brewer's Blackbird is probably considerably less common than it once was, though much of that decline may be due to the fact that the area once had a more rural character, with widespread cattle pens and corrals on the

outskirts of town. Now it is possible to go through a winter without seeing one, though the advice for finding Brewer's Blackbird is the same as always, namely, to look in and around corrals, where Brown-headed Cowbirds and perhaps other blackbirds will be found. While the male is all black with a white eye (and is still largely black in fall and winter), the female is gray-brown with a dark eye.

Expected dates of occurrence are November 20 to April 10, with extremes of Oct. 29, 1976 (JR) and Apr. 9, 1968 (RDP), both at New Orleans.

**[GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)** Hypothetical; status unknown, range probably expanding]

There are three or four probable records of this close relative of the Boat-tailed Grackle, which is common in Texas and Mexico, consisting of a sight record on June 27, 1992 at Gheens (AS,GS), one .....brought to the Audubon Zoo bird rehabilitation center on....., having been obtained....., and at least two reports from Matt Pontiff..... Whether any of these records should be considered beyond doubt is another question.

**BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*)** Common to very common resident

The Boat-tailed Grackle is the largest of the blackbirds in Southeast Louisiana, and is distinguished by its long keel-shaped tail. The male is black, the female a rich golden brown, especially on the underparts. Male Boat-tails can often be seen in spring and early summer, displaying on telephone wires. Unlike the Great-tailed Grackle, which is found from southwest Louisiana west to Arizona and into Mexico, and which has never occurred in Southeast Louisiana, the Boat-tail is confined to coastal regions, which in Southeast Louisiana means mostly south of Lake Pontchartrain and around the shores of the lake. The Great-tailed Grackle has a prominent light eye and very different vocalizations, one of which is a goldfinch-like "zwee" and another a "machine-gun" like rattle.

**COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscla*)** Very common to abundant resident

The Common Grackle is the smaller grackle with the iridescent head and neck; males and females are similar. They are very gregarious, often occurring in large, noisy flocks, which dominate a patch of woods and make it impossible to hear anything else. Farrand (1983) renders the main vocalization as a rising "tssh-skleet!", which is close, if not perfect, and the call note is a loud "chuck!". Both species of grackles will often be seen feeding on the ground.

**SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*)** Accidental

It is with little enthusiasm (and even a sense of dread) that one reports the addition of the Shiny Cowbird to the list of the birds of Southeast Louisiana. It may not be fair, nor biologically defensible, to say that no cowbird is a good cowbird, but aided by the

disturbances of man, the two species already present in the U.S. have done a great deal of harm. Without knowing what its host species might be in the U.S., and, for that matter, even without this species to worry about, it is difficult to feel hopeful about the survival of especially those species of migrants which breed in the U.S. and are declining because of habitat loss on their wintering grounds in Central America. Cowbird parasitism can only hasten their decline and a new species is unwelcome. Shiny Cowbirds had become almost regular on Grand Isle, in the late 1990s, especially in spring, and an apparent territorial male was in full song on Grand Isle in the spring of 1999 (RDP) and possibly nesting.

The male Shiny Cowbird solid glossy blue-black, with a bill more like the Bronzed Cowbird than Brown-headed. The eye is dark and there is no hint of a ruff. There is a good chance that this species, which has expanded its range from the West Indies and South America into Florida, will eventually become a regular part of the avifauna of this area.

As of this writing, there are 2-3 records of Shiny Cowbird a year, mostly in lower Plaquemines Parish, but also at Grand Isle. The first two decades of records include: May 20-21, 1989 on Fourchon Road (**CS,PW,JS,CK**); May 14, 1990 at Grand Isle (AS,GS—ph AB 44(3):444); June 2-3, 1990 at Reserve (RJS,MW); Jul. 22, 1990 at Chef Menteur Pass (MM); **...at Howze Beach (DM,GGomez)**; (MM);...Apr. 20-25, 1992 at Grand Isle (DM,MM,AS,NLN—2?); June 6, 1992 in Lafourche Parish (RJS, MW); Apr. 14-May 8, 1995 at Grand Isle (PW,CK?,CS;RDP); May 26- July 20, 1996 at Grammercy (TSylvest, RJS); May 3-25, 1998 at Grand Isle (MM, et al—ph); Aug. 15, 1999 at Grand Isle (PW—ph); Oct. 9, 1999 Port Fourchon (PW—ph, et al; 2); Mar. 19, 2000 at Grand Isle (Pw—ph, et al). : Fourchon Rd., Lafourche Par., on 12 May 2003 (DM,MM) and May 1, 2004 at Grand Isle (DM,RDP,PW).[**Apr. 19, 2008**, Grand Isle (D&JBosler).] [ Aug. 19, 2011 at Boothville (Devin and Justin Bosler)]

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) Uncommon to common summer resident, uncommon in winter

Although the Bronzed Cowbird was recorded for the first time in Southeast Louisiana in 1971, when one was at a feeder from April 12 to June 25 (*fide* Cucullu; WW,LW,RDP), it has become common enough that between April and August, 10-30 can be found on any occasion, simply by looking in the areas where they are known to occur. Up to about mid-August Bronzed Cowbirds are readily found along the Metairie lakefront between Causeway Blvd. and Elmwood Canal, in Lake Vista, and on the edges of City Park. They are probably regular during that four month period in other places in the area as well. In the past they have been regular on the westbank, where small numbers also regularly visited feeders in winter (FB), and in St. Bernard Parish, and they are regular in the Reserve area as well (RJS). Nesting was initially inferred from observation in Reserve (RJS) and New Orleans (JK),

and on Aug. 11, 1978 a nestling was collected in Plaquemines Parish near Belle Chase and deposited at LSUMNS. Typical appearance of nesting individuals in April include Apr. 1, 1979 (JR), Apr. 9, 1981 (JR), and April 2, 1994 (RDP).. By mid-August most or all birds have left the breeding areas and they often congregate in large flocks, often with other blackbirds or with starlings. The largest numbers recorded are 100 near Gretna in September 1985 (FB) and 240 in Metairie on Sept. 13, 1993 (RDP), but congregations of 100-200 are routine in August near W. Esplanade and Transcontinental in Metairie, in a roost that is active into the late fall at least. Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, seems to have affected the population of this species adversely.

The song of the Bronzed Cowbird is a very thin, somewhat rising, buzzy whistle, which may be nearly inaudible to some with high-frequency hearing loss. The black, glossy males are easily recognized by their bulky shape which is exaggerated with they erect their ruff. The eye of the male is red, which is the source of their old name "Red-eyed Cowbird" and they have a rather sharp icterid bill. The females are a dull black, quite a bit darker than the brownish female Brown-headed Cowbirds.

The maximum numbers recorded are 240+ in Metairie on Sept. 13, 1993 (RDP) and 100+ in the same locality on Aug. 30, 1994 (RDP).

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) Common resident

Although the Brown-headed Cowbird is common, and if during breeding season its course, grating whistled call seems everywhere, it is not really numerous and winter flocks are not huge. In fact numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds recorded on New Orleans Christmas Counts have declined significantly since the 1960s. Whether this reflects only habitat changes is unknown. It was assumed that Brown-headed Cowbirds played an important part in the decline of the Orchard Oriole in the New Orleans area, since it is apparently a favorite host species for the cowbird, though the expansion of Bronzed Cowbird may have been a greater factor..

**ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) Fairly common summer resident, common migrant

Although the Orchard Oriole has declined greatly in the metropolitan New Orleans area, and is reported in a general decline, it continues to be fairly common away from the city. Although it nests in residential neighborhoods, in willows along canals, etc., it favors brushy habitat in migration. Once one of the most common of all migrants, especially in early fall, its numbers can still be impressive, with most individuals in immature/female plumage (many birds of the year). Young males in their first spring will sing and breed in the female-like yellow plumage with a black face and throat. Ehrich, et al (1986) report that 114 nests were found on a 7-acre tract in Louisiana. The song is a brilliant, strident series of rising and falling notes unlike any other breeding bird in the area (except, slightly, the

Painted Bunting).

Expected dates are April 1 to October 1, with extreme dates of Mar. 12, 1960 at Pont-a-la-Hache (SAG) and Nov. 11, 1962 at Venice (A Nov. 1, 1987 record from New Orleans (DM) is the only other November record). Although there are at least winter records from Dec. 10 to Feb. 23 plus some undated ones from the Reserve area (*fide* RJS), it is perhaps the *least* expected oriole in winter (other than Scott's). The early records are: Feb. 14, 1896 at New Orleans (HHK); Dec. 10, 1956 at New Orleans (SAG); Jan. 1, 1964 at Reserve (RJS--3; coll); Dec. 19, 1964 at Reserve (RJS); Jan. 3, 1965 at Venice (BLM--coll); Feb. 2, 1965 at Reserve (RJS); Jan. 1-2, 1967 in Gretna (SAG); Dec. 19, 1970 at Reserve (RJS); Dec. 26, 1972 at Venice (SAG,RJN); Jan. 17, 1999 at Grand Isle (DM). Among records since was one at Alliance on Feb. 23, 2008 (PC, et al). Also Sept. 23, 2007, etc. in Metairie (BWiggins—ph)

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) Uncommon migrant, uncommon to rare in winter

Once again the "Baltimore" Oriole, this species is a regular migrant in spring and fall, when it is sometimes common. It is also a fairly frequent winter vagrant, often at feeders. Because a high percentage of wintering birds are in immature or female plumage, it is important to learn to distinguish the two species, Baltimore and Bullock's. The female Bullock's has a (more extensive) white belly, a hint of a dark eyeline, and the suggestion of a superciliary stripe. Females Baltimore Orioles have a strongly streaked back. Females of both forms are larger and oranger than the female Orchard Oriole and distinct, sweet calls, in addition to the oriole chatter, which are very different from the Orchard's "chuck" (and a nasal whine). There are over 30 winter records of "Baltimore" Oriole from Nov. 25 to early March, most of them at feeders.

Expected dates, in spring, April 1 to May 10, and in fall, September 10 to October 10. In spring this form has been seen between Mar. 9, 1967 in Metairie (RDP) and May 24, 1968 at Reserve (SAG), while in fall the extremes are Aug. 19, 1957 (SAG) and Nov. 9, 1963 (SAG--5), both at New Orleans.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*.) Uncommon winter vagrant

Bullock's Oriole seems to be less common in winter in Se. Louisiana than formerly, and, indeed, has been added to the LOS Bird Record Committee's Review List because of that fact and the difficulty of correctly identifying females of this and the previous species. Many of the records are from the vicinity of Venice, but most recent records have been at feeders in New Orleans and other SE Louisiana locations.

In general, a female Bullock's Oriole has a white belly in contrast to the more uniformly colored underparts of Baltimore Oriole, but this field mark has to be used with caution. There are at least 30 records of this western oriole for Se. Louisiana.

Expected dates are September 15 to April 5, with extremes of Sep. 6, 1957 at New Orleans

(CLE,RF) and May 3, 1969 at Grand Isle (KPA,JHe)

**HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) Accidental in winter

The record of this species for Southeast Louisiana is of an imm. Female in Grammercy Feb. 4-7, 2001 (TSylvest\*-LSUMZ). This represents the first specimen for Louisiana.

**SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) Casual vagrant in winter

There are two records of this oriole of western desert scrub habitat from New Orleans., the first of an adult male; Jan .29, 1967 at New Orleans (BMM,KM). Fully documented was one Oct. 24-25, 1984 at New Orleans (NN,m.ob.--photo MM). There is another from Norco, Oct. 12-17, 1990 (HCambre—ph). An additional record record, May 6, 1962 at Thibodaux (ART), is somewhat suspect. Since there are several more records for the rest of Louisiana, this species is well worth watching for, in the field or at feeders.

Family *Fringillidae* FINCHES

**PURPLE FINCH** (*Carpodacus purpureus*) Very uncommon and erratic winter resident

The Purple Finch is highly erratic in its occurrence in Southeast Louisiana, being present in sizeable numbers in some years--even swamping feeders, and being absent or nearly so in others. These irruptions appear to be tied to cone seed production in the norther forests (see Ehrlich, et al 1986), and seem to occur at something like four-year intervals. In any case, Purple Finch is much less common than 30 years ago. Reportedly, the Purple Finch has been retreating somewhat in the eastern U.S. in its competition with the expanding House Finch. The females of the Purple, House, and Cassin's Finch=s are more distinctive than the males, with the Purple Finch having a bold face pattern (the exception being female Purple and Cassinn's Finches, which is not likely to be a problem here). The male Purple finch has very little streaking on its underparts and red on its crown, while the House Finch has extensive fine streaking, a brown cap, and less extensive red on the underparts. The song is a musical jumble somewhat like that of the Painted Bunting, and the call is a sharp "pink" which has the character of the individual notes of the song.

While expected dates are November 25 to April 1, Purple Finches have been recorded between Nov. 7, 1961 at New Orleans (BJD) and May 19, 1879 at Mandeville (*fide* HCO--coll).

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) Rapidly expanding into region; fairly common breeder

Since the late 1980s, the House finch has begun to become a regular part of the avifauna of Southeast Louisiana. Interestingly, the expansion has come from the northeast,

where the species had been introduced in the 1940s. The first area records were from Tickfaw, just at the edge of the checklist area, in February 1988, followed by two records on the ....., 1990 Venice CBC (male, RDP; flight call, KR). The first New Orleans record was May 29, 1992 (DM) and during the spring of 1994, House Finches were heard singing in the New Orleans CBD (DM). The House Finch is in the midst of an invasion of the gulf south, and is becoming fairly conspicuous, especially in spring and early summer when its attractive song can be widely heard, even in New Orleans= CBD. They have been breeding in the Slidell area since about 1991 (fide RC).

Female House Finches are quite distinctive, lacking the face pattern (ear patch, eyeline) of the Purple Finch and being marked below with dense, fairly fine streaks. The male has a red "bib", considerable streaking below and a brown cap. The song and call note are similar to those of the Purple Finch, but distinguishable; see Farrand (1983) for some help.

**RED CROSSBILL** (*Loxia curvirostra*) Accidental

The only record of this highly irruptive boreal species, and the first for Louisiana, is over a century old: March 27, 1888 at Mandeville (CSG--coll). There is a recent record from north Louisiana.

**PINE SISKIN** (*Carduelis pinus*) Uncommon and erratic winter visitor

Like the Purple Finch, the Pine Siskin varies enormously in its abundance in Southeast Louisiana in winter, sometimes common in invasion years, often absent. It was abundant during the winter of 1987-88 at feeders, for example. The winter of 2008-9 was another very good year. The surest way to find one in winter, aside from watching flocks of goldfinches at feeders, is to listen for the buzzy "scree" or "szree" note which Pine Siskins give both in flight and perched. Pine Siskins are often found in flocks of goldfinches.

Expected dates are November 15 (to December 1) to about April 1, with extremes of Oct. 22, 1992 (PY) and Oct. 26, 1980 (JR) at New Orleans and May 9, 1988 .....(DM).

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Carduelis psaltria*) Accidental

The record of this species, which breeds in the Rocky Mountains and winters in Mexico, is of one at a Gretna feeder from Jan. 19 to Feb. 20, 1985 (FB--photo). A photograph appeared in *Amer. Birds* **39**: 178 (1985). This was the second record for Louisiana.

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** (*Cardulis tristis*) Common to abundant winter resident

The American Goldfinch is also somewhat irruptive, but not to the same extent as the Pine Siskin or Purple Finch. Peaks in abundance tend to come 2-4 years apart. It feeds primarily on weed seeds, including ragweed, but also favors elm and maple buds in spring.



Expected dates are November 15 to April 10, and extremes of occurrence are Oct. 23, 1878 in Mandeville (*fide* HCO--coll) and Apr. 26 in 1956 at New Orleans (SAG) and in 1969 at Venice (WW,LW,JK). There is, in addition, a very late "spring" record of June 14, 1933 at New Orleans (HCO--coll).

**EVENING GROSBEAK** (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) Casual and erratic

This highly irruptive species has invaded Southeast Louisiana on four occasions since 1962, before which there were no records, in the winters of 1968-69, 1972-73, 1978-79, and 1985-86. There have been no recent irruptions. Some of the specific dates records are: Mar. 25, 1962 at Grammercy (BLM); Nov. 29, 1968-Apr. 13, 1969 at Covington, Slidell, and Reserve; May 4, 1969 at Venice (JK, JMcD); winter 1972-73 at Harahan (Waguespack; RDP); Dec. 29, 1973 at Reserve (*fide* RJS); Feb. 21-Apr. 23, 1979 ? at Mandeville (PS, JS, m.ob.); Feb. 28, 1978 at Covington; spring 1986 at Covington (JH).

Family *Passeridae* OLD WORLD SPARROWS

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) Common to abundant resident

The House Sparrow, which is largely confined to settled areas, was first recorded in Southeast Louisiana in 1874, according to Oberholser (1938). Maximum numbers were probably reached before automobiles substantially replaced horses for transportation. Numbers on New Orleans Christmas Bird Counts declined from the 1950's until about 1970. According to Ehrlich, et al (1986) geographical populations have begun to differentiate genetically.

**430 species**

HYPOTHETICAL LIST

[**PACIFIC LOON** (*Gavia.....*) HYPOTHETICAL]

A single individual, conceivably of this species, was seen at Port Fourchon, Lafourche Parish, ..... **Photographs** were equivocal and observers disagreed over the identification. In any case, given the frequency of records from coastal Texas, observers should be on the look-out for this species, especially in small, clear, coastal bays and lagoons. As may be gathered from the above discussion, identification is not trivial.

[**RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*) HYPOTHETICAL (Accidental in Winter)]

The only record of this species is the report of one on Lake Pontchartrain on March

12, 1966 (JK). No details are available on this record and there are but a handful of other records for Louisiana. While it should be looked for on Lake Pontchartrain, great care should be taken in its identification. Of the vagrant loons which might turn up here (including, especially, the Arctic/Pacific Loon) Red-throated would be the easiest to identify; however, Pacific Loon is probably the most likely in coastal or near-coastal waters.

**[SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Puffinus griseus*) ] HYPOTHETICAL**

Although there is no accepted record of Sooty Shearwater for Louisiana, Duncan and Havard (1980) give a report of one 100 km offshore, "along a grassline." Sooty Shearwaters have been recorded in the northern gulf on five occasions since 1976, and there are five earlier records (Duncan and Havard; Clapp, et al). There was a record from the Mississippi coast in 1985 associated with Hurricane Juan. In short, Sooty Shearwater is a bird to be looked for on pelagic trips or under tropical storm conditions.

**[GREAT CORMORANT](*Phalacrocorax carbo*) HYPOTHETICAL]**

There have been six reports of Great Cormorants from the vicinity of Grand Isle, all of immature birds, all in flight. Acceptance of the species awaits further substantiation, based at the very least on a perched bird, preferably photographed. There are a number of records for the gulf coast to the east of Louisiana, including Mississippi. Vagrants to this area would likely be immatures.

**[BAIKAL TEAL (*Anas formosa*) HYPOTHETICAL]**

The sole record of this Eurasian species, of a bird shot by a hunter on Nov. 17, 1974 near the mouth of the Pearl River, must be looked upon with some skepticism. Although there is no direct evidence that the bird was an escape, it is thought that the species has been kept in captivity in the area. This record has been rejected by the LOS Bird Records Committee on the grounds of uncertain origin of the bird.

**[MASKED DUCK (*Oxyura dominica*)] HYPOTHETICAL**

There is one report of this congener of the Ruddy Duck from the western edge of of the checklist area: Jan. 19, 1992 near Thibodeaux? (GW). Recent population increases in Texas make it worthwhile to look for this species, which is easily identified by the striped face, especially in Southwest Louisiana, but in this area as well.

**[PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) HYPOTHETICAL]**

The only record of this falcon for Se. Louisiana, and perhaps for the state, is of one

seen in downtown New Orleans, as close as 40-45', on Sep. 28, 1995 (MM). This record has yet to be examined by the LOS Bird Records Committee, which will have to consider the likelihood of an escape.

**[WOOD SANDPIPER] (*Tringa glareola*) HYPOTHETICAL**

A carefully studied bird thought to have been of this species was reported from Fourchon Rd, Lafourche Parish, on Sep. 22, 1976 (RJN,RSK). A description of the sighting was published in *American Birds* [33:139 (1977)]. This record was rejected by the L.O.S. Bird Records Committee, primarily because it was a sight record of a Eurasian species which could be confused with several other species.

**[SKUA (*Catharacta* sp.)] HYPOTHETICAL**

A bird identified as a skua was seen near North Island in the Chandeleurs on June 7, 1968 by Jake Valentine and Marshall Eyster.

**[COMMON CHAFFINCH (*Fingilla coelebs*) ] HYPOTHETICAL**

The record of this species is of one seen below Venice on Dec. 27, 1978 (SAG,NN,RDP,DN). The bird was seen well and heard calling. The question of the bird's origin is, of course, unanswerable. It may very well have been transported by ship to the Venice area, near the mouth of the Mississippi River. There has been one North American record since, which if accepted, might induce one to claim the present record as the first for the continent.

**[SNOW BUNTING (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) ] HYPOTHETICAL**

The single record of this species for Louisiana is of a bird supposedly collected at Covington around 1900. See Lowery (1974). This record has recently (1985) been reviewed and rejected by the LOS Bird Records Committee.