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## Summer Report: June-july 1992

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## FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Fla. Field Nat. 21(1):23-28, 1993.

**Summer Report: June-July 1992.**—The observations listed here are based on rare or unusual species, or significant numbers of birds, as reported to the Florida Ornithological Society (FOS) Field Observations Committee. As these reports are not formally reviewed prior to publication, they should be considered tentative, pending formal review. Observers should send details of extremely rare species to the FOS Records Committee (c/o Jocelyn Lee Baker, Secretary, 851 Surf Road, #302, Hollywood, Florida 33019). Observers are also encouraged to prepare formal notes to describe their unusual sightings more fully.

To conserve space, common names of species are used almost exclusively. County names are listed in italics. Abbreviations that are used in the accounts are: CP = county park; FGFWFC = Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission; NWR = national wildlife refuge; SPK = state park; SPR = state preserve; SR = state road; SRA = state recreation area; STP = sewage treatment pond; and N, S, E, W, etc. for compass headings.

The FOS Field Observations Committee thanks all who contributed to this report. The deadline for the submission of reports to regional compilers (names and addresses are located at the end of this report) is two weeks after the close of each period. Observers living in areas without a regional compiler (western Panhandle and southern Florida) may send their reports directly to the State Compiler within one month after the close of the period. It is requested that lengthy reports be submitted on computer disk in WordPerfect or ASCII format. Reporting periods are winter (December-February), spring (March-May), summer (June-July), and fall (August-November).

With this report, Bill Pranty becomes the new State Compiler of the FOS Field Observations Committee. Jim Cox compiled the first 10 reports, and he deserves our thanks for his dedication to the project. This report was prepared with the gracious assistance of Rich Paul, the Summer Editor for *American Birds*. Information provided by Bruce Anderson, and *Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List* (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992) was most helpful in determining the status of selected species. Peter Merritt and Glen Woolfenden proofread the manuscript, and contributed helpful advice. Fred Lohrer supplied the weather data from the National Climatic Data Center.

Much has been written and said about duplication of reports in the *Florida Field Naturalist* and *American Birds*, a topic discussed at length by the FOS Board of Directors at the Fall 1992 meeting in Lakeland. The Board urged that closer communication with the *American Birds* Seasonal Editors be maintained. The Board also suggested that observers send their reports to both journals, rather than to one or the other, as has frequently occurred in the past. The Board agreed that the reports are not competitive, as they are written and compiled differently, and little overlap in readership exists between the two journals.

Some of the suggestions made by the FOS Board have resulted in changes to this report. The major change is the inclusion of only June and July observations in the Summer Report. Observations from August will now be included in the Fall Report. This change was made primarily to facilitate exchange of information with *American Birds*, which includes August in its Fall seasonal report.

Reports of rare or unusual species, or significant numbers of birds, are welcomed for inclusion in future issues of this section. Reports should include the following information: species name; the number of individuals; the age and sex of the bird if determined (too often, this information is lacking in species that can easily be aged and/or sexed); the color morph (not "phase") if applicable; the date and location (including county); the observer(s); and the significance of the report, if not obvious. Observers sending details of extremely rare species to the FOS Records Committee should also send a copy to the State Compiler.

Regional Editors for the FOS Field Observations Committee are needed for the western Panhandle and southern Florida. Knowledge of local birds and observers, access to a word processor, and the ability to meet deadlines are required. Please contact the State Compiler if you are interested.

## SUMMARY OF THE SUMMER SEASON

Above average rainfall for both June and July may be signaling an end to the drought conditions that have prevailed in the state for the past few years. Temperatures were also above normal statewide, with the southern mainland recording its fifth highest-ever mean temperature for July.

The increase in rainfall appears to have had a positive effect on wading bird breeding success, with over 22000 pairs nesting in the Everglades. Wood Storks had their best season at Corkscrew Swamp and in the Everglades in over a decade, but results farther north were mixed. In Tampa Bay, both Reddish Egrets and Roseate Spoonbills had excellent nesting success, and spoonbills nested inland for the first time since 1950.

In addition to a few seasonal rarities, a La Sagra's Flycatcher was reported from the Keys, and presumably the same male Bahama Mockingbird returned to Key West and again built a nest. Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase their range throughout the state, and Chimney Swifts again summered (and may have bred) in Dade County. Pioneering Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings were again found in southern Florida, and a male Painted Bunting summered in the eastern Panhandle. The only Shiny Cowbirds reported were in southern Florida, but House Finches appeared in three new locations, including two areas in the Peninsula.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: 1 off Tavernier (*Monroe*) 5 July (*vide* R. Sawicki) was the only report.
- WILSON'S STORM-PETREL: at least 3 birds were seen on a pelagic trip out of Sebastian (*Brevard or Indian River*) 30 June (R. Clark).
- NORTHERN GANNET: 1 sick or injured immature was seen on the beach near Eastpoint (*Franklin*) 18 July (B. Neville and D. Emkalns).
- BROWN PELICAN: the breeding colony reported at Lake Okeechobee (*Glades*) last summer increased to 14 pairs this year (J. Smith and C. Goguen, *Fla. Field Nat.* 21: in press, 1992).
- MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: 1 bird was over Avon Park Air Force Range (*Polk*) 26 June following the passage of a low pressure system (S. Van Hook). Three others (1 male, 1 female, and 1 immature) on a pelagic trip out of Carrabelle (*Franklin*) 11 July were uncommon on the upper Gulf coast (B. Neville et al.).
- GREAT WHITE HERON: 1 at Fort DeSoto CP (*Pinellas*) 27 June was rare for the county (P. Blair).
- REDDISH EGRET: 1 immature on St. George Island (*Franklin*) 2 July was rare there (D. Evered and L. Messick).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL: 999 pairs bred in the state this year: 880 in Florida Bay (*Monroe*); 75 at Alafia Banks (*Hillsborough*); 28 at Merritt Island NWR (*Brevard*); 8 inland at Andytown (*Broward*); 3 inland at Loxahatchee NWR (*Palm Beach*); 2 on Tarpon Key (*Pinellas*); 2 on Terra Ceia Key (*Manatee*); and 1 pair at Rookery Branch (*Monroe*) (*vide* R. Paul). Non-breeding reports include 1 sub-adult at Paynes Prairie SPR (*Alachua*) 8 June, and 2 there 12-21 June (J. Weimer and W. H. Adams), and 2 first-year birds on Sheppard Road (*Highlands*) 4 July (B. Pranty and K. Brautcheck).
- WOOD STORK: about 500 pairs nested in the Everglades south of Tamiami Trail, the highest number since the mid-1980s. About two-thirds of the nests fledged young; the others failed due to heavy June rains (J. Ogdén). The colony at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary (*Collier*) had its best breeding season since 1976, with 1792 active nests that produced about 2750 fledglings (T. Below).
- MALLARD: 1 drake of unknown status was accompanying 2 Mottled Ducks in rural *Highlands* 18 June, an area devoid of feral waterfowl (B. Pranty and K. Brautcheck).

- BLUE-WINGED TEAL: 8 at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) 25 July (J. Reinman) were the first fall migrants reported.
- RING-NECKED DUCK: 2 pairs were observed on Lake Jackson (*Leon*) 21 June and 12 July (G. Menk), but confirmation of breeding was not reported.
- LESSER SCAUP: 1 at Eau Gallie (*Brevard*) 18 July was apparently summering (L. and B. Atherton).
- COMMON EIDER: 1 seen in the Intracoastal Waterway at Eau Gallie (*Brevard*) 7 July (M. Cooper) was videotaped 18 July (L. and B. Atherton).
- SURF SCOTER: 1 hen videotaped along the Sunshine Skyway (*Manatee*) 2-7 June was very late (L. and B. Atherton et al.).
- SNAIL KITE: 2 males and 1 female spent the summer at Orlando Wilderness Park (*Orange*), but breeding was not confirmed (*vide* D. Freeman).
- BALD EAGLE: 652 active territories in the state produced 729 young in the 1991-92 winter breeding season (S. Nesbitt).
- COOPER'S HAWK: the number of nests reported this year by FGFWFC personnel and falconers indicates the species is far more common and widespread than is generally believed. Ten nests were found near Dunnellon (*Marion*) (R. Howell), 4 in *Suwannee*, 2 in *Duval*, 2 on Merritt Island (*Brevard*) (S. Wise), 1 in *Gadsden*, and 1 in *Madison* (*vide* B. Millsap). The birds nest along the edges of small, second-growth oak woodlots, and are most easily located when they are establishing their breeding territories in late March or early April. They respond aggressively to Red-shouldered Hawk calls. B. Millsap states the birds are more numerous than Red-tailed Hawks, at least in northern Florida!
- SHORT-TAILED HAWK: a new breeding territory was discovered by FGFWFC this summer in *Citrus*; a mixed pair (light morph male and dark morph female) on Buzzard Island just W of Crystal River that was apparently unsuccessful. Another possible territory in the county was indicated by the sighting of a light morph adult in Homosassa Springs (B. Millsap). Another bird was seen N of Steinhatchee (*Dixie*) in mid-June (D. Evered), and there were three *Polk* reports: 1 dark morph E of Poinciana 28 June (M. Bunn); 2 dark morphs in Saddle Creek CP 25 July (P. Fellers), at least 1 of which was seen throughout the season; and a mixed pair observed near Avon Park Air Force Range 25 July (C. and D. Ford).
- BLACK RAIL: only 2 pairs were found S of Steinhatchee (*Dixie*) throughout the period; the drought was blamed. FGFWFC personnel radio-tagged one pair, and found a nest in mid-July (*vide* N. Wamer).
- SARUS CRANE (*Grus antigone*): the individual present in central *Pasco* since the mid-1980s continues to be observed (G. Eliason), but the bird apparently did not cross-breed with a Florida Sandhill Crane this year. (See also *Florida Scientist* 55:56-57, 1992.).
- SNOWY PLOVER: 22 birds, including 3 chicks, were on St. George Island (*Franklin*) 2 July (D. Evered and L. Messick), while 10 at Fort DeSoto CP (*Pinellas*) 5 July was a high number locally (P. Blair). In the Panhandle, Snowy Plovers had their best breeding season in 5 years, with over half of the 85 pairs studied producing young (C. Chase).
- WILSON'S PLOVER: 1 female with 3 chicks was observed on the Key West golf course (*Monroe*) 5 June (J. Ondrejko).
- PIPING PLOVER: 4 on Dog Island (*Franklin*) 25 July (D. Evered and L. Messick) were the first fall migrants reported.
- BLACK-NECKED STILT: 25 adults and 36 fledglings at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) in July (J. Reinman) represent the first local breeding since 1989.
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER: 3 at the Tallahassee STP (*Leon*) 3 June were presumably late spring migrants (G. Menk).
- POMARINE JAEGER: 3 were observed on a pelagic trip out of Carrabelle (*Franklin*) 11 July, along with another jaeger not identified to species (B. Neville et al.).

- LAUGHING GULL: about 200 nests at Wards Bank (*Duval*) is a tremendous increase from only 2 nests in 1990 (L. Bremer), but the 20-30000 pairs in Tampa Bay represent only about half the number that bred there in the 1980s (R. Paul). Five birds at Newnans Lake (*Alachua*) 8 June (R. Rowan) were rare for the county (*vide* B. Muschlitz).
- GULL-BILLED TERN: 1 on Honeymoon Island SRA 16 July was a rarity for *Pinellas* (P. Blair).
- CASPIAN TERN: 68 nests with eggs were located on Island 3D (*Hillsborough*) 26 May, the only breeding location in the state (R. Paul).
- ROYAL TERN: 2360 pairs nested on Passage Key (*Manatee*), and 34 pairs on Island 3D (*Hillsborough*) (R. Paul).
- SANDWICH TERN: 205 pairs nested on Passage Key (*Manatee*), and 19 pairs on Island 3D (*Hillsborough*) (R. Paul). 400 birds were roosting on Dog Island (*Franklin*) 26 July (D. Evered and L. Messick).
- COMMON TERN: 200 birds, mostly juveniles, were roosting on Dog Island (*Franklin*) 26 July (D. Evered and L. Messick).
- LEAST TERN: "complete failure" of breeding colonies at Wards Bank (*Duval*), Amelia Island SPK (*Nassau*), Fort Clinch SPK (*Nassau*), and Anastasia SRA (*St. Johns*), but other colonies in the area successfully produced young (*vide* P. Powell).
- BRIDLED TERN: 150 were seen off Tavernier (*Monroe*) 5 July (*vide* R. Sawicki).
- BLACK TERN: 4 at Tierra Verde (*Pinellas*) 27-28 June were associated with the passage of a tropical depression (P. Blair).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: 2 birds about 3 miles N of Lakeland 2 July represent a new *Polk* location (T. Palmer). Birds continue to be reported from St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) (M. Hill) but breeding has not been confirmed there.
- RINGED TURTLE-DOVE: 2 pairs seen near Bay Point (*Bay*) 6-15 June (R. Myers and T. Menart) were carefully identified (*vide* J. Cox).
- EASTERN SCREECH-OWL: A pair nesting in Kendall (*Dade*) fledged 3 young in mid-July from a "stick and leaf" nest built in a mango tree (B. and R. Mayer, *vide* M. Cooper). Nesting outside of a cavity may not have been previously reported for this species.
- BARRED OWL: 1 hit by a car on U.S. 1 on Summerland Key (*Monroe*) in late June was brought to a Key West wildlife rehabilitator (*vide* J. Ondrejko) - only 1 other report (and 1 specimen from the Dry Tortugas) exist for the Lower Keys. All three sightings occurred in June (*vide* B. Anderson).
- CHIMNEY SWIFT: birds were present in South Miami (*Dade*) the entire summer, and fledglings may have been seen, as this species continues to expand its breeding range southward (R. Kelley).
- HAIRY WOODPECKER: 3 nests at Archbold Biological Station (*Highlands*) fledged 3, 2, and 3 young 11 May, 24 May, and 5 June, respectively. As part of an on-going study, the young were color-banded (B. Pranty).
- RED-CKOADED WOODPECKER: 6 young fledged from nests at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*), raising the refuge population to 16, the most since 1980 (J. Reinman).
- LA SAGRA'S FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus sagrae*): 1 was reported on Sugarloaf Key (*Monroe*) 27 June (R. and L. Gambill), but this identification has been questioned by others.
- FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER: 1 was observed at Loxahatchee NWR (*Palm Beach*) 13-14 July (G. Hunter et al., details to Records Committee by K. Gersher).
- TREE SWALLOW: 1 was reported at Conch Key (*Monroe*) 10 June (*vide* R. Sawicki).
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW: 2 in *Pinellas* 19 and 23 June were a seasonal rarity there (K. Nelson and J. Dozier).
- BLUE JAY: adults feeding young at the Ocean Reef Club on Key Largo (*Monroe*) 3 June established one of the few breeding reports for the Keys (J. Ogden).
- AMERICAN ROBIN: 1 adult in Homestead (*Dade*) 12 July may have been a wandering bird (J. Ogden and M. Biggar).

- BAHAMA MOCKINGBIRD: 1 male at Key West (*Monroe*), presumably the same bird that built a nest there in 1991, was first observed this year 1 May, and was seen through the end of summer. He again built a nest, but it disappeared early in the season (J. Ondrejko).
- BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO: 1 at Gulf Breeze (*Santa Rosa*) 2 June (R. Duncan), was rare for the area and very rare for the season.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: the first fall migrant reported was at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) 19 July (N. Wamer).
- HOODED WARBLER: 2 migrants were on Dog Island (*Franklin*) 26 July (D. Evered and L. Messick).
- NORTHERN CARDINAL: the first breeding report in many years was established for Key West (*Monroe*) 16 July (J. Ondrejko).
- BLUE GROSBEAK: 1 adult male on S.R. 721 in *Glades* 13 July (B. Pranty and R. Yosef) was likely a pioneer male attempting to breed locally, in light of other recent summer observations in south central Florida (see *Am. Birds* 45:94, 1991 and *Fla. Field Nat.* 19:30, 1991).
- INDIGO BUNTING: 1 pair in central *Collier* 14 June (J. and L. Douglas) indicates a continued spread southward of the species' probable breeding range.
- PAINTED BUNTING: 1 adult male at St. Marks NWR (*Wakulla*) throughout the summer (N. Wamer, D. and S. Jue et al.) suggests a continuation of attempted breeding in the Panhandle.
- SHINY COWBIRD: 2 males and 1 female were at Florida City (*Dade*) 27 June (*vide* D. Canterbury), and 1 male was at Key West (*Monroe*) 28 July (J. Ondrejko).
- HOUSE FINCH: during a break-in at the Denver Wildlife Research Center in Gainesville (*Alachua*) in March, 3 banded birds (2 orange-plumaged males and 1 female) escaped (*vide* K. Brugger, see *Fla. Field Nat.* 20:119, 1992). From 23 April to at least 10 June, an unbanded, red male visited a feeder adjacent to Oaks Mall, about 7 miles from the release site (J. Morris). A red male and 3 "brown" House Finches were seen at Oaks Mall in mid-June (S. and T. Massey). It was not determined if any of these birds were banded (*vide* B. Muschlitz). A singing male in Homestead (*Dade*) 23 June to 2 July was the first local record (J. Ogden, M. Biggar, and P. W. and S. Smith). Its origin was not known. In the Panhandle, a new breeding location was established in DeFuniak Springs (*Walton*), when a nest was found 20 July (G. Oakman).

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Spring 1992 sightings of note (not published in the previous *Fla. Field Nat.* report) — Wilson's Storm-Petrel: 1000 off Tavernier (*Monroe*) 31 May (*vide* R. Sawicki); Pomarine Jaeger: 1 off Tavernier (*Monroe*) 31 May (*vide* R. Sawicki).

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