

PIED-BILLED GREBE NESTING RECORDS FROM
THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

By THOMAS Z. ATKESON

Although the breeding range of the little Pied-billed Grebe is said to extend as far south as the Gulf of Mexico and this bird is common in all parts of Alabama during cold weather, Howell's "Birds of Alabama" fails to list it as a nester.

On the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, covering about a third of Wheeler Reservoir, in northern Alabama, Pied-billed Grebes are common, especially during fall and spring migration. Fall migrants begin arriving in late August and continue to move through the refuge until late October. Spring migration begins in March and continues through mid-May. The birds are less common, but are present in some numbers throughout the winter. In summer, they are not common but are present and have been recorded regularly throughout the late spring and summer months.

Except for their presence during the nesting season, there was no positive evidence of nesting until 1952. In May of that year, Buckeye Slough—a large, shallow body of water lying on the refuge in the extreme southeastern part of Limestone County—was being pumped dry by T.V.A. as a malarial control measure. On May 11, two eggs were found at the edge of this slough by David C. Hulse. One was sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and positively identified as that of a Pied-billed Grebe. By May 15 the water of the slough had been reduced to an acre or so in spring holes and ditches, concentrating water birds in this small area. On that date Henry H. Grammer, a refuge employee, noted six adult grebes and three broods of young, totaling 14 birds. On May 20, Hulse, Clyde W. Lee, and the writer visited the vicinity and collected one of the young to substantiate the breeding record. A study skin was prepared, submitted to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the identification confirmed.

The young bird collected was flightless and covered with down. Examination of the gullet disclosed a half-dozen crawfish and remains of others. No positive instances of nesting have been noted since, but the birds continue present each May and June and undoubtedly nest in this locality regularly. While this is the only verified nesting record known for the State, careful study will probably show that these birds are regular nesters in many parts of Alabama.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS

December 31, 1956, 7:00-4:00, Wind N. E., 5 mph, Temperature 28-48, clear, cold. Location, Lake Land Farm, Marion Fish Cultural Station, Judson College Campus.

No.	Species
3	Pied Billed Grebe
6	Great Blue Heron
2	American Egret
218	Mallard
5	Gadwall
25	Baldpate
27	Pintail
130	Green-winged Teal
3	Shoveler
4	Redhead
101	Ring-necked Duck
4	Ruddy Duck
32	Hooded Merganser
4	Turkey Vulture
16	Black Vulture
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk
1	Red-tailed Hawk
1	Red-shouldered Hawk
2	Marsh Hawk
2	Sparrow Hawk
1	Bob-white
1	Coot
100	Killdeer
22	Wilson's Snipe
32	Least Sandpipers
2	Belted Kingfisher
7	Flicker
4	Red-headed Woodpecker
1	Red-bellied Woodpecker
2	Hairy Woodpecker
3	Downy Woodpecker
25	Horned Lark
11	Blue Jay
13	American Crow

No.	Species
4	Carolina Chickadee
5	Tufted Titmouse
4	White-breasted Nuthatch
2	Brown-headed Nuthatch
2	House Wren
5	Carolina Wren
9	Mockingbird
3	Brown Thrasher
199	Robin
3	Hermit Thrush
5	Bluebird
11	Golden-crowned Kinglet
4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
7	Loggerhead Shrike
12	Starling
152	American Pipit
1	Solitary Vireo
35	Myrtle Warbler
1	Pine Warbler
1	Yellow-throat
16	English Sparrow
41	Meadowlark
250	Red-winged Blackbird
3	Rusty Blackbird
10	Purple Grackle
27	Cardinal
22	Goldfinch
12	Towhee
6	Savannah Sparrow
8	Pine-woods Sparrow
14	Slate-colored Junco
2	Field Sparrow
18	White-crowned Sparrow
64	White-throated Sparrow
3	Swamp Sparrow
10	Song Sparrow
Lois McCullough	
106	Early St.
	Marion, Ala.

FOX SPARROW DENSITY NEAR AUBURN

The density of the Fox Sparrow, *Passerella iliaca iliaca*, population near Auburn is usually very light. It is an uncommon winter resident and does not often appear on our census reports. You can imagine the excitement of the writer, when on January 7, 1956, he chanced upon a wintering population of more than 50 Fox Sparrows.

The Fox Sparrows were found about 16 miles south of Auburn, in a 15-acre weedy bottomland field which was isolated in the extensive forests of the Tuskegee Resettlement Area. They were associated with Towhees, White-throated Sparrows and Song Sparrows. Several of the Fox Sparrows were netted and banded. Unfortunately they usually flew above the net when driven and so the estimated density of more than 50 for the 15-acre field is as close to the real density as could be determined.

It is not known whether the Fox Sparrows spent more than a week at this locality. They were first seen on January 7 and last on January 13. The next trip to the area was April 3, and at that time there was no evidence of Fox Sparrows to be seen.

Julian L. Dusi
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