

out the month of May. Others of the species visited the area.

**Worm-eating Warbler**—1 family and 1 individual adult were on the area from May 7 through the end of the study, May 27. On May 7 one bird was heard singing in a location where on May 26 a family of two adults and two young were observed. Also on May 26, another adult, apparently not belonging to the family, was seen several times throughout the morning. 2 immature specimens were collected June 4.

**Parula Warbler**—3 pairs apparently bred on the area. One nest was observed being built on May 25. Another nest was found on May 26.

**Louisiana Waterthrush**—1 pair was seen and heard repeatedly. May 26 two adults and a young bird were seen in that location.

**Kentucky Warbler**—2 pairs apparently bred on the area. One pair with a fledgling were seen May 26 and 27.

**Hooded Warbler**—1 pair was seen and heard in the same location throughout the study period.

**Redstart**—2 pairs were seen and heard in the same restricted locality through the month of May. Other individuals of the species visited the area.

#### Visitors

**Turkey Vulture**—seen flying over the area several times during the study.

**Pileated Woodpecker**—occurred in the area 4 times.

**Wood Pewee**—occurred in the area several times, but apparently not breeding.

**Blue Jay**—seen in the area 3 times.

**Cowbird**—seen in the area 4 times.

**Summer Tanager**—seen in the area 6 times.

**Cardinal**—seen visiting the area several times but not nesting there.

Auburn, Alabama  
August 13, 1958

## WHISTLING SWAN RECORDS FROM WHEELER REFUGE

THOMAS Z. ATKESON

That Whistling Swans must have visited northern Alabama rather frequently in earlier days is witnessed by the number of water areas that bear their name. As examples, there is a Swan Pond in Madison County, a Swan Creek and a Swan Lake in Limestone County. In more modern times, swans occur in this end of the State only as rare and irregular visitors. In the 20-year history of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Whistlers have been recorded in refuge bird records on only four occasions.

The first swan record for the refuge came on November 16, 1942, when Henry H. Grammer, long-time refuge employee, found a single immature Whistler on Lakeside slough. This is an arm of the Flint Creek embayment, paralleling State Highway 67. Grammer remembers that the bird remained for a week or longer and attracted considerable public attention, but it is recorded in the refuge bird records only on November 16 and 17. C. R. Markley, then Wheeler Manager and now Manager of the Red Rocks Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, Monida, Montana, exposed a considerable footage of 16 mm moving picture film at this bird. In a letter to the writer dated August 3, 1955, he stated that this film, in good condition, was still in his possession.

Whistling swans were not seen on the refuge again until March 25, 1950, when Dr. Clarence Cottam, then Assistant Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and now Director of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, Sinton, Texas, and Stephen Welline, a pilot-biologist, making an aerial inspection of the refuge, found four adult Whistlers in the flooded White Springs area. An effort was made, both from the ground and from the air, to relocate these birds the following day, but without success. However, Dr. Cottam's impeccable reputation as an ornithologist and his familiarity with the species leaves little room to doubt the validity of this record.

The third swan record came on November 8, 1953, when Paul Bryan, of T.V.A.'s Fish and Game Division, found one mature and one immature Whistler on the western end of Garth slough. On November 17, Gram-

mer saw the mature bird at close range in the same locality.

The last and most recent of the swan records came on November 3, 1957, when Refuge Manager Charles Parker, Grammer, and Homer Blackwood came upon a lone mature Whistler in the White Springs unit. This bird was seen almost daily through the remainder of that year and until March 3, 1958. So many individuals saw it that they are too numerous to mention. School and Sunday School classes, and other visiting groups were guided around the White Springs dike throughout the fall and winter of 1957-58 and were usually rewarded by a look at this bird. In addition to those already mentioned, it was seen by all refuge employees, including T. P. Sandlin, Gordon Bishop, and Emmett Waldrep, Jr. Other good observers include Dr. Ralph Chermock, of the University of Alabama's Biology Department, Professor Allen Bales, also of the University, Bryan, Paul Robinson, W. M. Depreast, Game Management Agent Leo M. Martin, and State Conservation Officer J. B. Tanner. The bird was usually seen in company with a flock of Canada geese and was often observed feeding on millet in the flooded White Springs unit or grazing in a nearby wheat field. It was carefully checked against various references and all possibility of its having been either a Mute or a Trumpeter Swan was ruled out.

Other than the four cited above, no recent swan records are known for northern Alabama. These four occurred wholly on the refuge in the southern edge of Limestone County and the northern edge of Morgan County. Due to the singular appearance of these birds, to the number of good observers, and to a natural reluctance to eliminate one of these stately and unusual visitors, no attempt was made to collect a specimen.

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Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge  
Decatur, Alabama  
March 26, 1958

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE IN ALABAMA

(*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

ROBERT W. SKINNER

Two years of field work, habitat studying, and general informational reading on the two species of kites in Alabama produced a specimen on May 7, 1958, in Baldwin County.

On the morning of that date the author was on the Alabama River in Baldwin County adjacent to the mouth of Holly Creek with the purpose in mind of collecting a Mississippi kite, of which there is no specimen for Alabama.

The A. M. proved fruitless, as no kites of either species were sighted. As noted on previous field trips the kites seem to be more active during the noon hour. Shortly after noon the first Mississippi kite was sighted—a single flying at high elevation over the tall timber on the river bottom. This was a thrilling sight to watch as the kite went through its aerial maneuvers; although it seemed to have no intention of dropping to a lower elevation.

No more kites were seen until about 2:30 P. M., at which time we rounded a bend in the river and came upon a drove of six, working their way up the river.

One of the birds was finally collected—an adult male. This was due to some very good boat maneuvering by Weber Walters, a district Conservation Officer who was obliging enough to act as guide.

During the course of the day a minimum of 15 Mississippi kites were sighted. This is far above the number usually seen on previous trips. Although no Swallow-Tail Kites were seen on that date, they are usually more numerous than the Mississippi kites.

About one week later on May 13 Reynolds Thrasher, a biologist, explained that he had seen a bird with which he was not familiar near Montgomery. The bird was described as pearl gray, pointed wings, etc. The area in which he had seen the bird was No. 4 Prison Camp in the bend of the river in North Montgomery County. The No. 4 Camp area is planted in several hundred acres of wheat.

Ten minutes after the author's arrival a Mississippi kite suddenly appeared overhead at a very low elevation. It was feeding on a grasshopper, which, with the use of field glasses, was very distinguishable. In