

THE SEASON, WINTER-SPRING

December, 1975, through May, 1976

Thomas A. Imhof

This report is a long, tough job, and, if it is to continue, we need the cooperation of all contributors. Please submit all unusual records on 3x5 cards such as those provided for the asking by Dr. Robert J. Newman, L.S.U. Museum of Zoology, Drawer MU, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803. Include on the card all information possible. After September 1 when the second edition of Alabama Birds is available, contributors will be better able to determine which of their records are noteworthy. Records for "Sight On, Sound Off" in Flicker Flashes or for observations sighted in M.B.C. News need not be put on cards unless the contributor wants them to be published in Alabama Birdlife or American Birds. The time spent in recent past transcribing records and getting them in AOU order and looking up their significance has reached the point where it makes a Season column prohibitive. All neighboring states submit all their records to American Birds on cards, and Alabama must follow suit. The present report contains at least 150 records of 117 species. This reporter simply does not have enough time to type up that many cards with all the evaluation and attention to detail it requires. I think we all want a Season column, so please help.

WEATHER: Dec. 15 - Feb. 9 was cold and, for Birmingham, included 10 days with temperature 20° or lower, and temperatures were 7° per day below normal. February was very dry with measurable rainfall on only 1 or 2 days. The last temperature 32° or below was a 30° on Feb. 23, and only 1 or 2 readings since then have been in the low 30's. March was warm and very rainy, Tuscaloosa received about four times its normal rainfall, Birmingham at least twice normal. Foliage developed at least two weeks early. April was a period of transition from a warm, wet March to a damp and record cold May.

COUNTS (in coastal Alabama unless otherwise noted):

- Mar. 13, M.B.C., 84 species.
- Apr. 3, M.O.S.-M.B.C., 130 species.
- Apr. 8, JVP, HME, GDJ, one party, 142 species.
- Apr. 9-10-11, A.O.S., 158 species.
- May 1, M.B.C. (13 observers), 109 species.
- May 1, Birmingham B.A.S., 163 party-hours, a record 155 species, 31 warblers.
- May 3, JVP, GDJ, one party, 150 species.
- May 16, Lookout Mtn, B.A.S., 44 party-hours, 108 species, 28 warblers.
- June 1, TAI, HHK, one party, 112 species, only 11 warblers.

MIGRATION PEAKS (Dauphin Island, fide MAG unless otherwise noted):

- Mar. 22, Parula, Gnatcatcher, Yellow-thr. Warbler, White-eyed Vireo.
- Mar. 27, Prothonotary, Palm Warblers, Orchard Oriole, vireos, Indigo Bunting.
- Mar. 29, Prothonotary, Parula, Indigo Bunting.
- Apr. 4-7, Ft. Morgan, JVP banded 200 including 103 on 7th with 73 White-eyed Vireos, 21 Hooded Warblers, 20 Wood Thrushes, 20 White-throated Sparrows, 10 Prothonotary Warblers.
- Apr. 5-9, Ft. Morgan, TAI banded 389 including 114 on 6th, 124 on 7th, 101 on 8th with 108 White-eyed Vireos, 50 Prothonotary Warblers, 43 Hooded Warblers, 40 Wood Thrushes, 31 Red-eyed Vireos, 19 Kentucky Warblers, 16 Worm-eating Warblers, 8 Swainson's Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrow.
- Apr. 6, Painted Bunting, Summer Tanager, Hooded Warbler.
- Apr. 22, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager.
- May 8, Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.
- May 14 (rain), REH banded 53 including 14 Acadian Flycatchers and 13 species of warblers.
- May 25, at least 9 species of migrant warblers still on Dauphin (REH, SBH).

On Dauphin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Veery and Scarlet Tanager predominant. Noteworthy records for period follow (TV-Tennessee Valley, Mtr-Mountain Region, UCP-Upper Coastal Plain, GC-Gulf Coast, CP-Coastal Plain, rec-record, mob-many other birders):

Arctic Loon: Dec. 27-31 (B.A.S. mob) 1st State rec. See ABL 23(3-4): 16.
Eared Grebe: Jan. 3, Gulf Shores (fide PFG); Fairhope Feb. 15, (A&MN).
White Pelican: mid-Nov. to Jan. 31, Wheeler Ref. (TZA, others), rare winter TV.
Brown Pelican: usual warm weather increase, max so far 100, May 25, Dauphin I., (LRT) shows about half immatures (LRT, TAI).
Masked Booby: off Dauphin I., 3 on Apr. 6 (RWH) and 4 on Apr. 8 (JVP, HME, GDJ); 6th year in a row for Ala. recorded mostly Jan. and Apr., but also July & Sept.
Magnificent Frigatebird: Dec. 16, Dauphin I. (DB, RWH), 3rd Dec. rec.
Cattle Egret: Mar. 4, Bullock Co. near Midway (JEK) & Mar. 7, Lakeland Farm (ALM) earliest inland recs, which seem to get earlier each year.
Reddish Egret: Jan. 18, Dauphin I. (LPA, LRT) 3rd winter rec, 1st Jan.
Louisiana Heron: Wheeler Ref., Apr. 20 thru May 29 (CDC, CAS, many), 3rd TV rec.
Black-crowned Night Heron: Wheeler Ref. 2 on Jan. 13 (ALM, CAS, JTG); Eufaula Ref. on Jan. 3 (BSP); Dauphin I. all winter and spring, max 14 on Mar. 29 (CSP, DLP, RWH).
Glossy Ibis: at Wheeler Ref, through Dec. 18 (RMB, CAS, ENW, WCD); Apr. 8 at Ft. Morgan (JVP, HME, GDJ) earliest on coast; 7 adults & 4 nests with young on May 26 on Cat I. (GG, PJ).
Canada Goose: hutchinsii bird last seen at Oak Mtn. Lake on May 1 (ALM, others).
Brant: Nov. 9 through at least May 1 at Hoover and East Lake (HHK photo, & many). 3rd Ala. rec.
Snow Goose (blue phase): B'ham, 3 birds present through May 1 on 3 lakes (B.A.S.).
White-fronted Goose: Eufaula Ref. 2 on Jan. 24 (JMi, BSP); Tuscaloosa, 4 on Mar. 20 & 21 (JCT, many), recorded annually now in Alabama.
Duck Flight: Little publicized is the regular and steady coastal flight of thousands of ducks and geese westward both in November and April each year. The birds, mostly Blue-winged Teal and Lesser Scaup but often large numbers of Gadwall, American Wigeon or Shoveler, go by all day long in flocks of 2-100. Apparently the fall birds are those headed for the Louisiana coast that have drifted too far eastward, the spring birds those that wintered in Florida and beyond and are headed for the Mississippi Valley. Most birds are a mile or more offshore and in bad light and so are often impossible to identify. For instance, on April 4 (a sunny Sunday with beaches crowded and wind SW) one observer (TAI) in 7 hours recorded offshore 55 Blue-winged Teal, 300 Lesser Scaup, 1 Red-breasted Merganser and 350 ducks sp.
Fulvous Tree Duck: Jan. 8, Wheeler Ref. (DV) 2 collected, 2nd TV rec.
Gadwall: Jan. 17, 60, LeGarde's Lake near Anniston (B.A.S.) Mtr max.
Green-winged Teal: May 1, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), latest for inland Ala.
Blue-winged Teal: May 26, Cat I., nest & 10 eggs (GG, PJ).
Common Goldeneye: Dec. 17, 41, Birmingham (ALM, others), max away from GC and TV.
Oldsquaw: Jan. 3-6, Tuscaloosa (JCT).
White-winged Scoter: Decatur, 3 on Feb. 16 (DCH), latest inland rec.
Surf Scoter: Feb. 3, Decatur (ALM, CAS, SFH); Feb. 7, spec. USNM (JLW), 2nd TV, 4th inland rec.
Ruddy Duck: May 31, Wheeler Ref., pair (CDC); June 1, Gulf Shores, male (TAI, HHK) both latest Ala.
Common Merganser: Jan. 3, Eufaula Ref. (FFL), rare south of TV.
Swallow-tailed Kite: Mar. 3, Dauphin I. (REH, RWH) early.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: Apr. 6, Dauphin I. (RWH); May 1, B'ham (IFS party); and May 3, Choctaw NWR (JVP, GDJ).
Broad-winged Hawk: Feb. 27, Fairhope (A&MN) wintering or early spring?
Swainson's Hawk: Feb. 3, Midway, Bullock Co. (JEK), 10th rec for Ala., 1st Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: Apr. 8, Gulf Shores (JVP, HME, GDJ) latest Ala.
Golden Eagle: late Nov. to mid-Jan. at Wheeler Ref. (fide TZA).

Bald Eagle: Wheeler Ref. an immature late Nov. to mid-Jan. & an adult Jan. 24 (WCD); Guntersville, an immature (the Wheeler bird?) Jan. 28 (HBT, others).

Northern Harrier (Marsh Hawk): May 1, Birmingham (WFC) ties latest McR.

Osprey: May 17, Marion (JVP); Jan. 23, Dauphin I. (REH, SBH); no others away from coast.

Peregrine Falcon: near Magnolia Springs, Jan. 4 (JVP); Dauphin I., Jan. 15 (REH, RWH), Mar. 13 (M.B.C.), & Apr. 8 (JVP, HME, GDJ).

Merlin: Apr. 22, downtown Birmingham, a male (RRR); Apr. 24, Mulga, just west of Birmingham, a female (TAI, IFS).

Sandhill Crane: change in land use and water level in area where 30 have wintered is probable reason why only 8 could be found this year (PFC).

Virginia Rail: Apr. 21, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest spring TV.

Sora: Apr. 3, two, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest spring TV; May 1, 3rd year in a row at Spain Lake, Birmingham (HHK).

Black Rail: Dec. 25, Alabama Port, dead on road (BS), 1st State winter rec; Apr. 7 & May 3 at Ft. Morgan (JVP, others); Apr. 8 on Dauphin (JVP, HME, GDJ); has been recorded in Alabama 6 years in a row, mostly in April.

Purple Gallinule: Jan. 3, Gulf Shores (GDJ, CBC), 1st winter rec Ala.; Mar. 22, Dauphin I. (CSp, DLP), early.

American Oystercatcher: Apr. 12, two pairs nesting on Cat & Little Dauphin Is. (GG).

Semipalmated Plover: Apr. 21, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest TV.

Black-bellied Plover: May 29, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), latest inland spring rec.

Common Snipe: May 29, lower Lamar County (JCT), latest rec for State (summered once Wheeler).

Long-billed Curlew: May 3, Battleship Pk, Mobile (JVP, GDJ), probably occurs annually.

Whimbrel: Mar. 28, Dauphin I. (JTW), 1st March rec Ala.

Upland Sandpiper: Mar. 31, two, Lakeland Farm, Marion (HHK, HBT, ALM), only report.

Spotted Sandpiper: Apr. 20, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest TV.

Solitary Sandpiper: Feb. 15 to at least Mar. 14, Magnolia Springs (HHK, PFC, EGR, RRR), 1st winter rec; May 30, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), latest Ala. except June 3, '74 Marion.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Dec. 18, 9, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), 3rd winter rec inland; Feb. 22, Cochrane Causeway (TAI, JTW, BHW, A&MN), 5th Feb. rec Ala.

A late February shorebird flight, which includes Golden Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper and quite possibly Spotted, Solitary, Least, Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Black-necked Stilt and Wilson's Phalarope, may prove to be very substantial.

White-rumped Sandpiper: May 17, Marion Hatchery, 100 (JVP), inland max.

Least Sandpiper: June 1, Blakely I., Mobile, 5 (TAI, HHK), latest rec State.

Dunlin: Dec. 20, Wheeler Ref., 30 (HME, ALM, RJC); Jan. 17, Marion (JCT); Feb. 3, Wheeler Ref., 50 (ALM, GAS, SFH), wintering regularly inland.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Apr. 21, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest TV.

Western Sandpiper: June 1, Blakely I., Mobile (HHK, TAI), latest coast.

Short-billed Dowitcher: May 18, Wheeler Ref. seen and heard (CDC), latest inland Ala.

Stilt Sandpiper: Apr. 22, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest inland Ala.

Hudsonian Godwit: Apr. 10, Cedar Pt. (JLD), 3rd rec Ala.

American Avocet: Dec. 12, Wheeler Ref., 3 (DCH), latest inland rec.

Black-necked Stilt: Mar. 27, Ft. Morgan, 13 (PFC), species now regular mid-Feb. to mid-Oct.

Wilson's Phalarope: Apr. 26 & 27, Courtland (JVP, WRM, many); May 18, Wheeler Ref. (ALM, SFH, ENP); 1st and 2nd inland spring recs for Ala.

Parasitic Jaeger: Dec. 20, Dauphin I. (REH).

Ring-billed Gull: Apr. 9, Alabama Pt. color-marked bird indicates it was banded near Rogers City, Presque Isle Co., Michigan in 1970 by Dr. Wm. Southern (MLB, CDC, RM).

Bonaparte's Gull: Mar. 16, Lakeland Farm, Marion (GDJ, ALM, JVP), 1st inland CP spring rec.

Gull-billed Tern: Dec. 17, Dauphin I. (RWH).

Forster's Tern: Apr. 26, Guntersville (JVP, WRM), earliest TV.

Common Tern: Mar. 12 & 13, Decatur (DCH), earliest inland rec Ala.
 Black Tern: Jan. 3, Alabama Point (HHK, RRR, EGR, others), 2nd winter rec Ala.
 White-winged Dove: Dec. 24, Huntsville, specimen (fide TZA), 1st rec north of CP, 4th inland; Apr. 29, Dauphin I (AGT), late.
 Ground Dove: Apr. 20, Mooresville (CDC).
 Ani sp: Dec. 20, Theodore, 2 (JTW, BHW), in good light no grooves noticed, but no high ridge noticed either. Only previous ani rec is a Groove-billed in nearby Mobile, Dec. 28, 1965. It would be stretching it to add a new species, Smooth-billed Ani, to the State list on the basis of a negative field mark--no grooves. Birds were probably immature Groove-billed.
 Screech Owl: Mar. 23, Dauphin I. (DLP); one June 5, 1975, on Breeding Bird Survey on or near Dauphin I. (JLD); this owl virtually unrecorded on Dauphin.
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Mar. 19, Birmingham (MAS), earliest Mtr.
 Rufous Hummingbird: Dec. 25 to Jan. 13, six, 5 on Dauphin I., 1 in Bayou La Batre (CSp, RWH, REH, LRT), max Ala.
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Jan. 5, Fairhope (LPA).
 Willow Flycatcher (fitz-bew): May 24, Ft. Morgan (PFC), 2nd spring rec Ala., 1st in CP.
 Olive-sided Flycatcher: May 5, Wheeler Ref. (ALM, CAS); May 12, Oak Mtn. (ALM, HHH, SFH); May 16, Lookout Mtn. (GDJ).
 Vermilion Flycatcher: Dec. 1 & 2, Pelham, Shelby Co. (RS), 1st rec north of CP; Jan. 21 to Feb. 28, Magnolia Springs (PFC, many).
 Tree Swallow: Feb. 22, Oak Mtn. (ALM, B&GS), 2nd Feb. rec Mtr.
 Bank Swallow: Mar. 27, Ft. Morgan (PFC), earliest Ala. by over a week.
 Barn Swallow: Mar. 17, Lake Purdy, B'ham (ALM), earliest Mtr; Mar. 13, Lake Lurleen (JCT), earliest UCP.
 Purple Martin: Jan. 13, Mobile (JLD), earliest Ala.; Jan. 25, Greenwood, Jefferson Co., 2 males (CWB), on warm front, earliest Mtr.
 House Wren: May 4, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), latest TV.
 Bewick's Wren: Mar. 28, Lake Purdy, 2; May 16, 2 mi. north of Ft. Payne, 2; June 6, Lisman, Choctaw Co., 3 (all by RRR, champion Bewick's Wren-finder assisted by EGR).
 Gray-cheeked Thrush: Mar. 21, Spring Hill, Mobile (MAG).
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet: In spite of heavy attraction to Screech Owl tapes, larger than ever winter population around Birmingham is shown by 5 on Sept. 20, earliest Mtr; 627 on Dec. 27 Christmas Count, state max; and 104 still present on May 1 (B.A.S.).
 White-eyed Vireo: Mar. 10, Ebenezer Swamp, Shelby Co. (ALM), earliest Mtr.
 Yellow-throated Vireo: Feb. 28, Magnolia Springs (PFC); Mar. 7, Dauphin I. (REH); early or wintering?
 Warbling Vireo: Mar. 28, Dauphin I. (JTW), 1st March rec Ala.; May 1, Hoover, B'ham (HHK); May 8, B'ham Zoo (JVP); May 24, Spring Hill (JLD, MAG), latest migrant Ala. (Philadelphia conversely was scarce, 1 known rec, Apr. 9, Dauphin.)
 Prothonotary Warbler: Mar. 7, Dauphin I. (REH), earliest State.
 Golden-winged Warbler: May 8, Dauphin I., 4 (RWH), latest State.
 Brewster's Warbler: Apr. 29, Birmingham (ALM), 3rd spring rec Ala.
 Blue-winged Warbler: Mar. 21, Mtn. Brook, B'ham (RRR), earliest inland Ala.
 Orange-crowned Warbler: Dec. 20, Wheeler Ref. (HHK), Feb. 14, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), possibly same bird, 2nd winter TV.
 Nashville Warbler: May 10 & 13, Decatur (MB), ties latest rec for State and TV.
 Cape May Warbler: Mar. 22, Dauphin I. (CSp, DLP), earliest State; May 11, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), latest TV; May 16, Lookout Mtn, 3 (3 B.A.S. parties), latest Mtr.
 Black-throated Blue Warbler: Apr. 26-27-28, Dauphin I., 3 banded (REH).
 Myrtle Warbler: May 16, Lookout Mtn (PLT, others), ties latest for Mtr & State.
 Yellow-throated Warbler: Mar. 10, Ebenezer Swamp, Shelby Co. (HHK, HBT, SFH), earliest Mtr.
 Chestnut-sided Warbler: Mar. 27, Dauphin I. (RWH), 1st March rec Ala.
 Palm Warbler: May 16, Lookout Mtn (RJD), latest Mtr.
 Northern Waterthrush: Jan. 15, Dauphin I. (DDN, LRT), 2nd winter rec Ala.
 Louisiana Waterthrush: Mar. 4, Lovick, Jefferson Co. (DJH), earliest inland Ala.

Connecticut Warbler: May 7, Dauphin I., banded (REH), 3rd spring rec GC, 10th Ala.
 Wilson's Warbler: Mar. 25-29, Birmingham (JWS, RRR), seen well & studied at leisure,
 a full month earlier than other Ala. recs, probably pertains to a western bird
 which often winters U.S. east to La.; eastern birds are notably late migrants.

Northern (Baltimore) Oriole: Feb. 28 to Mar. 8, Montgomery (JEK); Jan. 30, Birmingham
 (MLM).

Northern (Bullock's) Oriole: Jan. 3, Bon Secour (PFC, VDH).

Rusty Blackbird: Feb. 22, Fairhope, 100 (A&MN), unusual number for GC.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Mar. 28, Dauphin I. (JTW), 1st March rec Ala.; May 25, Dauphin
 I. (DDN), ties latest Ala.; 96 killed at building in Birmingham with bad
 reflections (JAT).

Black-headed Grosbeak: May 24, 9 mi. east of Ft. Morgan (PFC), an immature male,
 3 weeks later than any other Alabama rec.

Blue Grosbeak: Apr. 17, Grant, Marshall Co. (CDC), earliest TV.

Painted Bunting: Mar. 12, Gulf Shores, a male which died (WFR), earliest Ala. by 2
 weeks.

Evening Grosbeak: Mar. 13, Wind Creek Pk, 200 (BD); Mar. 14, Tuscaloosa, 300 max.(JCT);
 Montgomery, common in Mar. & Apr. (JEK); Birmingham, max. about 500 in Mar. &
 Apr. (B.A.S.); very few birds recorded farther south.

Pine Siskin: uncommon in mid-winter, but numbers built up again in March & April;
 last seen on coast, Apr. 18 at Fairhope (A&MN); 15 still in Birmingham May 1
 (JVP, TAI).

Green-tailed Towhee: Jan. 3 & 4, Magnolia Springs (PFC, many) seen well, 2nd Ala. rec.
 Dark-eyed Junco: May 1, Mtn Brook, Birmingham, could not fly (IFS party); May 5, East
 Lake, on Red Mt., Birmingham (RDB); very late.

White-crowned Sparrow: Mar. 28, 15 immature, 3 adults, Fairhope (A&MN), GC max.

White-throated Sparrow: May 13, last on coast, 3 on Dauphin I.(DB) and 1 Spring Hill
 (MWG); Birmingham, Mtn Brook, May 20 (RRR), Ensley, May 19, 21 & 27, last a
 banded bird, apparently banded by JMI May 8 (TAI).

Correction: It seems best, until further evidence is gathered, to withhold the records
 of House Finch and Mourning Warbler of fall, 1975.

Observers: Alabama Ornithological Society, Thomas Z. Atkeson, Lois P. Archer,
 Birmingham Audubon Society, Raymond D. Bates, Richard M. Bays, Michael L. Bierly,
 Don Bland, Charles W. Brasfield, Mark Brown (MB), P. Fairly Chandler, C. Dwight
 Cooley, Walter F. Coxe, C. Bruce Crider, Richard J. Crittenden, W. Cecil Davis,
 Bill Dimon, J. Lambert Dorn, S.J., Howard M. Einspahr, Harriett H. Findlay,
 Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard, Gary Gaston, Juanita T. Goodson, Ralph W.
 Havard, Richard E. (Tuck) Hayward, Sharon B. Hayward, Susan F. Holt, Verda D.
 Horne, David C. Hulse, Donald J. Husley, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D.
 Jackson, Paul Johnson, Helen H. Kittinger, James E. Keeler, Florence F. Lynn,
 Mobile Bird Club, Mississippi Ornithological Society, W. Roger Maner, Rocky
 Milburn, Ann L. Miller, James Miller, Mary Lou Miller, Dot D. Newburn, Albert &
 Mini Nonkes, B. Sam Pate, Dennis L. Patronas, James V. (Buzz) Peavy, Eugene N.
 Prestriedge, William F. Register, Elberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Ruth
 Schatz, Bob and Connie Shannon, Charlotte A. Shea (CAS), James W. Shepherd,
 Bob Simonson, Mary Alice Skelton, Idalene F. Snead, Charles Sprinkle (CSp),
 Alice G. Tait, Helen B. Thigpen, Percy L. Thigpen, J. C. Thompson, Lib R.
 Toenes, J. Arthur Tyson, David Vest, Emmet N. Waldrep, John T. Winn, Beverly H.
 Winn, Joe L. Wright.

1036 Pike Road
 Birmingham 35218