

Woffinden, N. J. and J. R. Murphy. 1977. A roadside raptor census in the eastern Great Basin. Raptor Research 11: 62-65.

1 Fernow Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853

2 P.O. Box 1927
University, Alabama 35486

NOTES ON BIRDS IN AND NEAR THE EUFAULA NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE

Henry M. Stevenson

As part of a long-term study of fall-migration routes, I made two trips to the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge and environs in September 1983. Jim Stevenson accompanied me on 10-11 September, and we worked separately most of the time. I was alone on 20-21 September. On both trips most of the time was spent looking for woodland migrants. The total field time for the two trips was 25 party hours, all but 1 hour and 40 minutes in Alabama. Data were taken at this time because 20 August-20 September represented a gap in the study of birds in that region by Ortego et al. (1979. Birds of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, 1967-79. Oriole 44: 61-87). For that reason many species that we found had not previously been recorded there in September.

The first three field days in 1983 were hot, humid, and almost windless. On 21 September, however, rain began falling before dawn and continued until about 1015 hours, followed by cloudy skies and an increasingly strong NW wind until I left at about 1500 hours.

Possibly because of the weather conditions, we found a general dearth of migratory woodland birds,

including both transient and summering species. For example, there were no Yellow-billed Cuckoos (Coccyzus americanus), Yellow-throated Warblers (Dendrocia dominica), Prairie Warblers (D. discolor), Common Yellowthroats (Geothlypis trichas), or Yellow-breasted Chats (Icteria virens), and only two Yellow Warblers and one Summer Tanager. However, because some records extend the previous known date limits (Ortego et al. 1979), those records are listed here. All records listed in their paper except those on Christmas Bird Counts were obtained on the refuge, but some of ours were as much as one mile outside the refuge.

Snowy Egret (Egretta thula). Both of us saw 6 feeding with immature Little Blue Herons (E. caerulea) at a refuge pond, 11 September. Latest previous 10 August.

Northern Shoveler (Anas clypeata). Two associating with Blue-winged Teal (A. discors) in a large pond between the state park and the refuge were early on 11 September (HMS).

Broad-winged Hawk (Buteo platypterus). An adult perched above a bridge on U. S. Highway 431 at the north edge of Eufaula, 10 September (HMS), was the first record for September.

Northern Harrier (Circus cyaneus). One just west of the U. S. Highway 431 causeway on 11 September (HMS) one day early.

Common Nighthawk (Chordeiles minor). Ortego et al. gave no record later than 4 August, but JMS had 3 on 10 September and I had one on the 21st.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris). JMS saw one on 11 September; previous latest 15 August.

Red-headed Woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus). Apparently scarce on the refuge.

My only record was in the early morning of 11 September when a loose flock of 5 circled and undulated just west of the 431 causeway. During the time they were in sight they progressed irregularly northward. John Edscorn (pers. comm.) has seen such northward movements in fall in central Florida, and I have two other such records in north Florida.

Gray Kingbird (Tyrannus dominicensis). Shortly after the rain stopped on 21 September I saw an apparent Gray Kingbird perched on wires about 80 yards from me and less than a mile south of the refuge entrance. As I watched with 10X, 50 field glasses, it flew directly toward my position and attempted to light on wires there, only to be pursued by several Rough-winged Swallows (Steligidopteryx serripennis). It departed southward and I never relocated it. Although I could see no yellow underneath, I withheld a final decision until I could study museum specimens of its congeners. Both the Western Kingbird (T. verticalis) and the Thick-billed Kingbird (T. crassirostris), which have yellow underparts, were definitely ruled out on size and shape of bill. That of T. verticalis is much too short, and that of T. crassirostris is very deep, with a convex culmen. I noted in the field the long bill and flat culmen (except at the tip) of this bird. The Eastern Kingbird (T. tyrannus) was easily eliminated in the field by its smaller size, darker gray back, white tail tip, and smaller bill. There are a few inland occurrences of Gray Kingbirds in central and northern Florida, but the Eufaula bird may be the farthest inland occurrence in North America.

Great Crested Flycatcher (Myiarchus crinitus). Near the site of the Gray Kingbird I saw this flycatcher on 11 September. Previous latest 19 August.

"Traill's" Flycatcher (Empidonax sp.). On 11 September both of us saw one at the south end of the 431 causeway. After we separated, I heard it calling, the note closely resembling notes of E. traillii (Willow Flycatcher) I have heard in western North Carolina and Virginia. I do not know whether this one-syllabled chip can be distinguished from that of E. alnorum, the Alder Flycatcher. Ortego et al. gave no record of E. traillii and no fall records of E. alnorum.

Purple Martin (Progne subis). Two in the state park on 21 September (HMS) were the first recorded in September.

Swainson's Thrush (Catharus ustulata). JMS saw one in a creek bottom near U. S. 431 just north of the state park entrance, 11 September; first September record.

Yellow-throated Vireo (Vireo flavifrons). Ortego et al. gave no fall records, but we had singing birds just off the refuge on 11 September (JMS) and 20 September (HMS).

Blue-winged Warbler (Vermivora pinus). I saw one in Mud Creek City Park on 10 September. Ortego et al. cited only a spring record.

Yellow Warbler (Dendroica petechia). JMS saw 2 near the refuge headquarters, 11 September. One previous September record (Ortego, in litt.).

Northern Waterthrush (Seiurus noveboracensis). Only one fall record (Ortego et al.). JMS saw one in the creek bottom at the refuge entrance, 11 September, and I had one at the south end of the 431 causeway on 20 September.

Hooded Warbler (Wilsonia citrina). Although it was not previously accredited to September, we saw a total of 6 on the 10th, 11th, and 20th.

American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla). Two by JMS on 11 September (at least 1 on refuge) and one by HMS near the refuge. No previous fall records.

Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra). No fall records on the refuge (Ortego et al.). I saw and heard a male within a mile of the boundary on 20 September.

I am grateful to Brent Ortego for reading this manuscript and suggesting improvements.

Tall Timbers Research Station
Route 1, Box 160
Tallahassee, FL 32312