

FALL SIGHTINGS (AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2001)

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This report covers the period from August through November 2001 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (west of the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this article does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. All submissions of birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, must be accompanied by adequate details of the observation. The extent of this documentation depends on the rarity of the species and the difficulty of identification. For guidance, observers are encouraged to consult the Alabama Ornithological Society checklist. Reports should note conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

Abbreviations and italics: County names are in italics and all counties are in Alabama except for the Florida counties of *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa*. "ABRC" = Alabama Bird Records Committee; "FOSRC" = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; "FWBSF" = Ft. Walton Beach Spray Fields; "m.ob." = many observers; "NWR" = National Wildlife Refuge; "WP" = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Bay*, *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties); "WTF" = Woerner Turf Farm.

COMMON LOON – A single of this species, rare in Alabama in summer, was seen on Lake Guntersville, *Marshall* 17 August (Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds).

EARED GREBE – Rare but regular in the WP, singles were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 1-9 October (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan) and 27-29 November (Wes Biggs, Dave Godwin, Don Ware, Bob Duncan, m.ob.).

CORY'S SHEARWATER – Only the third occurrence in area Florida waters, an estimated 60 birds were seen 22 September 30-60 miles SE of Perdido Pass (Steve Pagliughi).

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER – Only the sixth occurrence in area Florida waters, an estimate of over 100 birds was made 22 September 30-60 miles SE of Perdido Pass (Steve Pagliughi).

- WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** – Two were seen 18 August 60 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin* (Keith Kamper, Greg Jackson, m.ob.) for the 19th Alabama record (@ABRC).
- BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL** – Two were seen 18 August 63 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin* (Greg Jackson, Larry Gardella, m.ob.) for the sixth date of occurrence in Alabama (@ABRC).
- RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD** – The second Alabama record was set by a single immature seen 18 August 45 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin* (Greg Jackson, Larry Gardella, m.ob.; @ABRC).
- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** – A maximum one-day count for the WP≠ came from *Santa Rosa* and *Okaloosa* 12 October when an estimated 1000 were counted (Lucy Duncan *et al.*). This species is locally rare in inland Alabama, so the following records were notable: two on Cedar Creek Reservoir, *Franklin* 1-14 November (*fide* Damien Simbeck); 19 in *Cherokee* 7 November (Winston Baker, Linda Baker); 150 (a maximum for inland Alabama) at Pickensville, *Pickens* 12 November (*fide* Tommy Pratt); and several records from Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, where this species is rare but regular (15 observed by Bob Reid 17 November; 12 observed by Dean Cutten 22 November; 18 observed by Barry Fleming 23 November).
- ANHINGA** – This species is rare in the Mountain Region; two were seen north of Waverly, *Chambers* 11 November (Bob Mount).
- SNOWY EGRET** – One was seen at Guntersville, *Marshall* 15 August (Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds); this species is rare in the Tennessee Valley, especially in the eastern portion.
- TRICOLORED HERON** – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, two were noted at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan* 11 August (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).
- REDDISH EGRET** – An immature was at the WTF, *Lowndes* 2-3 September (Fred Bassett, Peggy Baker, J. Crittenden *et al.*), establishing the third inland Alabama record.
- CATTLE EGRET** – A new maximum (365) for the Mountain Region was counted 6 August at Harpersville, *Shelby* (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson).
- WHITE IBIS** – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, two immatures were observed at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan* 11 August (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten), and one immature was seen west of Florence, *Lauderdale* 15 September (Kenley Austin). Rare but regular in the Mountain Region, one immature was seen at Harpersville, *Shelby* 7 September (Ann Miller).
- WHITE-FACED IBIS** – The 12th Alabama record was established by one seen on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile* 11-12 October (Steve McConnell;

@ABRC).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – Steve McConnell *et al.* saw three on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 21 September (19th Alabama record; @ABRC).

WOOD STORK – Large numbers were seen at two sites: 194 at Sledge, *Hale* 11 August (Steve McConnell *et al.*) and 350+ north of Uniontown, *Perry* 13 August (Bob Sargent). Four were late at Sledge, *Hale* 12 October (Jud Johnston).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Singles of this locally rare goose were noted at three sites in the WP: FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 29 October – 28 November (Don Ware, Bob Duncan *et al.*); Niceville, *Okaloosa*, 31 October (Don Ware); and Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 November (Merilu Rose, Rufus Rose). The latter bird died 2 November, and the specimen was sent to the Florida State Museum. Rare in the Mountain Region of Alabama, one was at East Lake, Birmingham, *Jefferson* 3 November (Greg Harber *et al.*). Seven were at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone* 3 November (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow), where this species is uncommon but regular.

SNOW GOOSE – One adult and three immatures were noted at Frank Jackson Lake, *Covington* 29 October (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow); this species is uncommon to rare in much of the Inland Coastal Plain.

ROSS'S GOOSE – A single was seen at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone* 17 November (Bob Reid); the species is rare but expected at this site.

BALD EAGLE – An adult was spotted at Lee County Public Lake, *Lee* 4 November (Geoff Hill), in an area of Alabama where the species is locally rare.

SWAINSON'S HAWK – The 10th WP record was established by a single light morph seen 6-16 November at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* (Will Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lenny Fenimore, Charley Parkel).

MERLIN – Casual in summer in Alabama, one was spotted at Colbert Ferry Park, *Colbert* 5 August (Ned Piper, Moez Ali).

SANDHILL CRANE – Terrie Howard saw one at Navarre, *Santa Rosa*, 1 October to mark the second October WP record. This species was also recorded from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 11 November (Phil Tetlow, Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan) and 28 November (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan *et al.*) (casual in fall in the WP). The 91 counted at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan* 22 November (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten) represented a good number.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER – The six seen north of Uniontown, *Perry* 13 August (Bob Sargent) tied the maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain, where

the species is uncommon. One was at the WTF, *Lowndes* 2 September (Larry Gardella).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER – Early singles were at Foley, *Baldwin* 11 August (Bill Summerour, Howard Horne, m.ob.) and Harpersville, *Shelby* 24 August (Steve McConnell).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – The first October record for the WP was marked by a single 30 October at the mouth of Bayou Grande, Pensacola, *Escambia* (Lucy Duncan *et al.*).

WILLET – Rare for inland Alabama, one was spotted at Harpersville, *Shelby* 31 August – 1 September (Ann Miller, Al Miller).

UPLAND SANDPIPER – Early birds were in the Tennessee Valley 5 August: one at Leighton, *Colbert* (Moez Ali, Ned Piper) and 10 at Guntersville, *Marshall* (Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds; good number for this site). Bob Sargent recorded 16 at Lake Land Farms, *Perry* 13 August, a good number for the Inland Coastal Plain.

MARbled GODWIT – An early single was on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile* 8 August (Keith Kamper).

SANDERLING – This shorebird is uncommon for inland Alabama. Two were at Muscle Shoals 8 August and one at Leighton 15 August, both *Colbert* (Damien Simbeck).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Rarely seen in fall, one was noted at Leighton, *Colbert* 15 August (Damien Simbeck).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – One was noted at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert* 8 August (rare but expected in this area; Damien Simbeck). Another was seen at Harpersville, *Shelby* 14 August – 16 September (rare in the Mountain Region; Ann Miller, Al Miller, Steve McConnell, Bob Reid). Rare for the Inland Coast Plain, one juvenile was seen at the WTF, *Lowndes* 2 September, and two were at the same site 8 September (R. Moore, James Tucker). Two were noted at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin* 3 September (Keith Kamper), where the species is rare but expected. An individual of this species, casual in the WP, was studied at close range at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 6 October (Phil Tetlow, Bob Duncan, Morris Clark *et al.*) for the third local October record.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – Large numbers were counted at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*: 300 on 8 August and 446 on 10 August, the latter a maximum count for Alabama (Damien Simbeck).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – An estimated 60 were in three flocks at Lake Land Farms, *Perry* 13 August (Bob Sargent), a maximum for inland Alabama.

- WILSON'S PHALAROPE** – A single, rare for inland Alabama, was spotted at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert* 10 August (Damien Simbeck). Rare in the WP, two birds were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 27 September (David Simpson).
- JAEGER SP.** – Rare but regular offshore, a probable Pomarine was noted 13.5 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin* 18 August (Greg Jackson, m.ob.).
- LAUGHING GULL** – At Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, this species is rare but regular. Twenty-two (21 immatures) were noted 12 August (Moez Ali, Ned Piper), and a single was seen 3 September (Damien Simbeck, Dwight Cooley *et al.*). Another single was seen at Guntersville, *Marshall* 29 October (Scott Gravette), another site where the species is rare but regular.
- FRANKLIN'S GULL** – The species is very rare in October in the WP. One was seen at Destin, *Okaloosa* 27 October (Don Ware). A first winter bird, compared to nearby Laughing Gulls, was recorded at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 30 October (Bob Duncan, David Simpson, Ed Case).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** – Rare but increasing in the state, one adult was recorded from Guntersville, *Marshall* 29 October (Scott Gravette *et al.*).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** – Still rare in Alabama, first-year birds were early on the coast: a single was on the Dauphin Island Causeway, *Mobile* 14 October (Larry Gardella) and 25 October (Howard Horne), and another single on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile* 19 October (Keith Kamper). Still another first-year individual was recorded from Guntersville, *Marshall* 30 November (Steve McConnell).
- ARCTIC TERN** – The first WP area record was set 3 August when Ed Case, Bob Duncan, and Barry Martin observed a first year bird at leisure at Navarre Flats, *Santa Rosa*.
- BRIDLED TERN** – Uncommon offshore in Alabama, two were recorded 66 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin* 18 August (Greg Jackson, m.ob.). One was seen 22 September in Florida waters 45 miles SE of Perdido Pass (Steve Pagliughi) (accidental in the WP).
- SOOTY TERN** – Casual in the WP, and rare when not associated with tropical storms, one adult was seen loafing with Black Terns and Black Skimmers 12 August at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* (Rosann McLeod, Powers McLeod).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – Annabelle Markle spotted a single at Greenville, *Butler* 6 August to establish the ninth record for inland Alabama.
- GROOVE-BILLED ANI** – Birders at the Alabama Ornithological Society fall meeting found and photographed a calling single on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 14 October (rare in Alabama). Also rare in the WP, one was seen in *Bay* 20

October (Powers McLeod).

FLAMMULATED OWL – A second state record was found on the balcony of a high-rise condominium at Navarre Beach, *Santa Rosa* 9 November (Nicole Wirth). It was taken to Wildlife Sanctuary, identified by the staff, Lucy Duncan, and Bob Duncan, photographed by Lucy Duncan and Ed Case, and then released in central *Escambia* 12 November (@ FOSRC).

COMMON NIGHTHAWK – An estimated 300 were counted during the last week of August at Cullman, *Cullman* (Jimmy Wells).

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD – One was banded by Fred Bassett at the home of James Pfeiffer, Pensacola, *Escambia* 19 September.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – A rare but regular fall migrant at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, one was noted 15 August (Bob Reid). Also rare but regular in fall at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, a single was seen 3 September (Keith Kamper) and 9 September (Bill Summerour).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER – This *Empidonax* is uncommon-rare but regular on the Gulf Coast and rare but regular in the Mountain Region. The following reports were received: Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, total of eight banded between 15 September and 15 October (J. Farrington *et al.*); singles on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 16 September (Howard Horne) and 13-14 October (Steve McConnell, m.ob.); and two observations from the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, a single 16 September and two calling birds 6 October (both Steve McConnell).

ALDER FLYCATCHER – A calling *Empidonax* at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 24 August was reported as this species (David Simpson).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER – A calling individual at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, established the 14th Alabama record (Steve McConnell; @ABRC).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – The first September record for the WP was marked by a male seen 10 September at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* (Don Ware, Lydia Daugherty). An adult male was at the same site 9 October (Bob Duncan) and 10 October (Don Ware), while a first year male was there 6 November (Will Duncan, Bob Duncan). Always rare in Alabama, one immature male was seen on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile* 17 October (L. Glover).

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER – Rare in Alabama, two different birds were observed on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14 October (Dwight Cooley, Eric Soehren, m.ob.). One was observed at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 10 November (Lenny Fenimore *et al.*) and again 11 November (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow). This species has been rare but

regular at this site since 1991.

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER – One bird was banded and photographed at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 15 September, to establish the third Alabama record (J. Farrington, C. Varian, G. Bieber; @ABRC).

MYIODYNASTES SP. – A probable Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, a second WP area record was established by a bird at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* 10 September (Bob Duncan).

TROPICAL/COUCH'S KINGBIRD – A single was noted on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 22-25 September (Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow, m.ob.; @ABRC). This is the fifth Alabama record for the complex.

WESTERN KINGBIRD – A single spotted north of Uniontown, *Perry* 13 August (Bob Sargent) and 19 August (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) was early and rare for inland Alabama.

EASTERN KINGBIRD – An estimated 250 birds at Lake Land Farms, *Perry* 13 August (Bob Sargent) was a good number for this species.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – An adult and an immature were seen on Rabbit Road, Montgomery, *Montgomery* 4 August (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) at a new site for this increasingly common breeder in Alabama. Rare in the WP, singles were seen at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* 7 October (Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow), 15 October (Bob Duncan), and 27 November (Bob Duncan, Will Duncan), with another record coming from Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* 8 October (Merilu Rose).

BELL'S VIREO – Two were banded at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 15 October (J. Farrington *et al.*), where the species is rare but regular.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – A locally early bird was at Cahaba Heights, *Jefferson* 1 September (Harriet Wright).

WARBLING VIREO – Rare in Alabama, one was noted on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 11 September (Howard Horne), and two were banded at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 14 and 15 October (J. Farrington *et al.*).

FISH CROW – One was heard calling repeatedly at Hoover, *Jefferson* 27 October (Greg Jackson) where the species is rare and at the northern edge of its range in Alabama.

BEWICK'S WREN – David Simpson, Lucy Duncan, and Bob Duncan reported an individual of this species, rare in the WP, from Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* 29 October.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET – Locally early, 3-4 were seen at Hoover, *Jefferson* 7 October (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson).

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT – First spotted 11 November and seen until 9 February, a

single established the 18th Alabama record (and the first documented record since 1988). This bird was found near Foley, *Baldwin* (Bill Summerour, m.ob.; photographed; @ABRC).

TENNESSEE WARBLER – One at Birmingham, *Jefferson* 7 November (Greg Harber) was locally late.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – One at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson* 16 September (Steve McConnell) was early.

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Uncommon-rare but regular during fall migration in Alabama, the following records were received: one tied the early Tennessee Valley record at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert* 3 September (Damien Simbeck, Dwight Cooley); singles were seen at Montgomery, *Montgomery* 14 and 24 September (Larry Gardella); one was at Hoover, *Jefferson* 7 October (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson); a single was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 14 October (Greg Jackson, m.ob.); and a late individual was at the same site 4 November (Howard Horne).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – A late male was at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 28 October (Howard Horne).

CERULEAN WARBLER – Uncommon on the Inland Coastal Plain, Larry Gardella and Carolyn Snow had one at Montgomery, *Montgomery* 8 September.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER – A single seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 7 October (R. Moore) tied the late date for the Gulf Coast.

MOURNING WARBLER – Rare but regular during fall migration at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, one was banded 7 September (J. Farrington *et al.*).

WILSON'S WARBLER – Early migrants were noted at Auburn, *Lee* 3 September (Shelly Ducharme) and Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 5-6 September (Howard Horne, Keith Kamper). The 13 banded at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 26 September – 16 October (J. Farrington *et al.*) was a moderate number for the season.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – This sparrow is only casual in the WP in fall, so reports of singles from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 6 September (Don Ware) and Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, 3 October (Lucy Duncan, Pam Beasley *et al.*) were noteworthy. The sixth inland Alabama record was established when Damien Simbeck had a single near Moulton, *Lawrence* 20 September. Another single was spotted on Dauphin Island, *Mobile* 14 October (Don Ware, m.ob.) where the species is uncommon-rare but expected.

LARK SPARROW – Casual in the WP, singles were noted at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* 30 August (Bob Duncan) and 21 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy

Duncan), and at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* 13 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

SAVANNAH SPARROW – One was early at Harpersville, *Shelby* 16 September (Steve McConnell).

HENSLOW'S SPARROW – An early record for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama was established by a single at the WTF, *Lowndes* 27 October (Barry Fleming).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW – One at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* 6 October (R. Moore) was early. Another bird at the WTF, *Lowndes* 27 October (Barry Fleming) set an early fall date for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR – Up to nine birds were seen near Foley, *Baldwin* 28 October – 27 January (Bill Summerour, m.ob.), with the earliest birds establishing a record early date for Alabama.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR – The first Alabama record was established by a single bird observed, photographed, and videotaped near Foley, *Baldwin* 16-18 November (Steve McConnell, Bill Summerour, m.ob.; @ABRC).

DICKCISSEL – Very rare in August in the WP, two birds were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 23 August (David Simpson).

BOBOLINK – Also very rare in August in the WP, three birds were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 22 August (David Simpson, Alan Knothe).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – The earliest fall record (by nine days) for the WP was set by an adult female at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* 1 August (Bob Duncan). Other singles were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* 27 September (Bob Duncan, David Simpson) and Pensacola, *Escambia* 25 October (Danny Harmon).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD – Good details were submitted for two birds seen 16 August at Guntersville, *Marshall* (Linda Reynolds). This is an early record by two months for Alabama.

BRONZED COWBIRD – An adult male at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* 5 and 7 November (Stephen Dinsmore and Bob Duncan, respectively), and a male and female at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* 18 November (David Simpson, Alan Knothe), established the fifth and sixth WP records.

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