



Volume 48 No. 2 December 2002

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society



ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Published by the Alabama Ornithological Society to Record and
Further the Study of Birds in Alabama and Northwest Florida

Vol. 48

No. 2

2002

Editor: Tom Haggerty, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632-0001

Assistant Editors: Paul Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL, and Jeff Garner, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, P.O. Box 366, Decatur, AL 35602

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 May 1952

OFFICERS

<i>President:</i>	Allen Tubbs, 1303 Diane Court, Mobile, AL 36118
<i>Immediate Past President:</i>	Lawrence F. Gardella, 3549 Audubon Road, Montgomery, AL 36111
<i>Secretary:</i>	Sarah Whitfield, 400 Pine Court, Mobile, AL 36608
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Karen Wilson, 10760 Wanda Road, Wilmer, AL 36587
<i>Newsletter Editor:</i>	Bob Reed, 88838 Tallasse Hwy., Tallasse, AL 36078

A.O.S. MEMBERSHIPS

Alabama Birdlife is a publication of the Alabama Ornithological Society.
Membership in the society includes a subscription to *Alabama Birdlife*.

Active	\$15.00
Student	\$5.00
Family	\$20.00
Sustaining	\$20.00
Life Individual	\$200.00
Life Family	\$300.00

Dues are payable on 1 January of each year and should be mailed to the treasurer.

Typeset by Tom Haggerty

Cover: Clark's Nutcracker, Cheaha State Park, Clay Co., AL; 29 April 2002; photograph by
Dean and Raelene Cutten

FIRST CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (*NUFRAGA COLUMBIANA*) FOR ALABAMA

Ann Miller

On 19 April 2002, while camping at Cheaha State Park, Clay Co., Alabama, Roger and Gretchen Johnson from Wisconsin discovered a Clark's Nutcracker (*Nufraga columbiana*). They realized this was a highly unlikely bird to see in Alabama. They had no idea whom they could notify and were unable to locate a contact source until they returned to Wisconsin. Fortunately, Gretchen logged on to her computer and found Alabama's Rare Bird Alert number and consequently reached Steve McConnell. Her description was so credible that McConnell immediately got the good news out to as many birders as he could contact.

The following day, 26 April, my husband Al Miller, Harriett Wright, and I arrived at Cheaha State Park at about 11 a.m. Enduring inclement weather, we searched intensely for about three hours in the general area of the campsite where the bird had first been seen by the Johnsons. We decided to check that spot one more time and then give up. Eureka! The last time was a charm because out walked the nutcracker from behind a garbage can not more than 20 feet (6 m) from where we were standing.

Clark's Nutcracker is a sturdy medium gray bird about the size of a Northern Flicker (Figure 1, See Cover). White patches on the secondaries stand out against the bird's glossy black wings. These patches and the white tail with black central feathers are very noticeable when the bird flies. The long, heavy, pointed bill and legs are black.

This noisy, gregarious bird occurs mainly in the mountains of southern Canada and western United States. The nutcracker does have a propensity to wander and is considered casual or accidental east to Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, western Ontario, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas (*Check-list of North American Birds*, 7th edition, 1998). To the best of my knowledge, however, there are no records for the southeastern states east of the Mississippi River.

In spite of miserable weather at times, most of the birders who traveled to Cheaha State Park, were rewarded for their persistence. The nutcracker was very cooperative and was faithful to the area where it was first found. It was observed eating broken hickory nuts, new growth on deciduous trees, insects, and pine seeds (said to be a favorite). Also, peanuts furnished by many birders

were readily accepted. After all, this bird is accustomed to stealing scraps of food from campers. At times it disappeared for a period of time, possibly to other camping areas. Also, it perched quietly in nearby trees, but in the end, patience usually paid off.

It seems so appropriate that this bird of the high mountains of the West found the highest point of Alabama, beautiful Cheaha State Park. This exciting vagrant was last seen 8 May 2002. To quote Steve McConnell, “Even if the nutcracker has ended its Alabama sojourn, birders owe the Johnsons—and the lofty Mount Cheaha habitat—a debt of gratitude.”



FIGURE 1. Clark's Nutcracker at Cheaha State Park, Clay Co., Alabama, 26 April 2002 (photograph by Ann Miller).

Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35209

OBSERVATIONS OF HERON AND EGRET COLONIES IN ALABAMA 1952-2001

Julian L. Dusi and Rosemary D. Dusi

Over the past fifty years we have observed at least 42 heron colonies in 21 counties in Alabama, two in adjacent Florida, and three in adjacent Georgia. From research done at these colonies, we have noted changes in the ecology, status, and distribution of some heron and egret species, especially on the Coastal Plain where most of the colonies have been situated. These research projects have resulted in 31 research papers and reports by the writers, two doctoral dissertations, and five master's theses by Auburn University students. In this report we provide an overview of some of the population changes and their causes.

The Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) usually nests in small colonies in Coastal Plain swamps and on river banks, but is fairly common throughout Alabama (Dusi and Dusi 1987, 1988, Jackson 2001). With the advent of aquaculture in Alabama, Great Blue Heron populations have increased near the facilities (Parnell et al. 1988).

Great Egrets (*Egretta albus*) usually nest in mixed-species colonies with Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Tri-colored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), Green Heron (*Butorides striatus*), White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), and Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*). Great Egrets have declined in numbers along with a decline in colony numbers, but have increased in areas with aquaculture ponds (pers. obs.).

The Cattle Egret entered Alabama in the late 1950s. The first nest was found in 1963, in a Little Blue Heron-White Ibis colony near Opp, Covington Co., Alabama by Bill Summerour (Dusi and Dusi 1963) and quickly spread northward to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Limestone Co., Alabama (Dusi et al. 1971). Cattle Egrets moved into many mixed-species colonies and often pirated Little Blue Heron nests, becoming the most abundant heron species in Alabama by the late 1960s (Dusi 1968). During this time we found that the Cattle Egret and White Ibis, which were present in some of the mixed colonies, responded with increased nesting during periods of greater rainfall. For example, during the summer of 1965, while we were studying a mixed colony near Pansey, Houston Co., Alabama, drought conditions were present from late April until early June (Dusi and Dusi 1968). The White Ibis roosted at the colony site but

did not nest. A small group of Little Blue Heron nested and about 45 Cattle Egret nests were present. Cattle Egret nests were gradually deserted. In mid-July the rainfall increased and Cattle Egret nesting resumed. Drought conditions returned before the end of July and by July 30, all Cattle Egret nests were empty and unsuccessful. Of the 117 Little Blue Heron nests in the colony, only 14.5% were successful. We believe that drought-affected pasture vegetation did not support a sufficient insect population to feed the Cattle Egret adults and young. Studies by Ward et al. (1958) showed that sandy soils of the Coastal Plain have little potential for water retention and that at least four cm of rain should fall every five to ten days to prevent agricultural drought conditions.

Again, from 1985 to 1988, severe drought conditions were present and the number of observed colonies was reduced to two (Dusi and Dusi 1987, 1988). The current drought period has resulted in few colonies except on the coast. A small, mixed colony has appeared on an island in the Chattahoochee River, in the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge and some Cattle Egrets were present and may have nested (fide Milton Hubbard). When adequate rainfall returns, the Cattle Egret may again become abundant.

The Little Blue Heron has decreased in abundance with the Cattle Egret entering the mixed species colonies. Much of this is caused by the Cattle Egret pirating Little Blue Heron nests (Dusi 1968, Dusi et al. 1971). A typical pattern occurs when the Little Blue Heron establishes a colony (swamp or upland), builds nests, and starts incubation. The Cattle Egret arrives at the colony site and proceeds to occupy any unguarded nests. If young Little Blue Herons are in the nests, they are pecked and driven out. If only eggs are present, Cattle Egrets sometimes add their own eggs to the nest and incubate all eggs and rear all chicks (Dusi 1968).

The Green Heron, Snowy Egret, Tri-colored Heron, White Ibis and Anhinga all have occurred in small numbers in some of the mixed colonies. The Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), was abundant in the colony at the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (Dusi et al. 1971).

Hopefully, a return to more normal rainfall will produce the conditions where herons will again be abundant in Alabama.

LITERATURE CITED

- DUSI, J. L. 1968. The competition between Cattle Egrets and Little Blue Herons. *Alabama Birdlife* 16: 4-6.
- DUSI, J. L. AND R. T. DUSI 1963. Some observations of the nest of the Cattle

Egret. *Alabama Birdlife* 11: 25-26.

DUSI, J. L. AND R. D. DUSI 1987. A thirty-four-year summary of the status of heron colony sites in the coastal plain of Alabama. *Colonial Waterbirds* 10: 27-37.

DUSI, J. L. AND R. D. DUSI 1988. Thirty-five-year summary of the status of heron colony sites in Alabama. *Alabama Birdlife* 35: 1-11.

DUSI, J. L., R. T. DUSI, D. L. BATEMAN, C. A. McDONALD, J. J. STUART AND J. F. DISMUKES. 1971. Ecologic impacts of wading birds on the aquatic environment. *Water Resources Research Institute of Auburn University, Bulletin* 5, 117 pp.

JACKSON, G. D. 2001. Distribution and frequency of occurrence charts. *In A Birder's Guide to Alabama* (J. F. Porter, Ed.). The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL.

PARNELL, J. F., D. G. AINLEY, H. BLOKPOEL, B. CAIN, T. W. CARTER, J. L. DUSI, S. KRESS, J. A. KUSHLAN, W. E. SOUTHERN AND B. C. THOMPSON. 1988. Colonial waterbird management in North America. *Colonial Waterbirds* 11: 129-345.

WARD, H. S., C. H. M. VAN BAVEL, J. T. COPE, L. M. WARE AND HERMAN BOUWER. 1959. Agricultural drought in Alabama. *Agr. Exp. Sta. of Auburn Univ. Bulletin* 316.

Julian L. Dusi, Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, Auburn University, AL 36849 and **Rosemary D. Dusi**, 560 Sherwood Dr., Auburn, AL 36830.

**CONFIRMED, PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE BREEDING OF
PAINTED BUNTINGS (*PASSERINA CIRIS*) IN INLAND
ALABAMA**

Larry F. Gardella and Shawn Reed

Imhof (1976) noted two breeding records for Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) in Alabama, both in Mobile Co. Jackson (2001) considered the species a "local breeder" on the Gulf Coast, primarily in the northwest corner of Mobile Bay, but also locally in extreme southwest Alabama with summer records and possible breeding near Jackson. At Gulf State Park, there are records of a territorial male in 1986 and 1987 at the same site (Jackson pers. comm.). Nevertheless, most literature indicates that Painted Buntings do not regularly breed in Alabama. Further, the eastern population of Painted Buntings along the coasts of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina is well separated from the western population that extends only as far east as the western half of Mississippi (Lowther et al. 1999). Regional bird books for Mississippi and Georgia show a similar gap between the eastern and western populations (Burleigh 1958, Turcotte and Watts 1999). However, data collected during Georgia's recent Breeding Bird Atlas project, include records from Thomas and Cook counties in southwestern Georgia and a pair in Randolph Co. near the Alabama border (Schneider pers. comm.).

The breeding range appears to cover even more of Alabama than Jackson (2001) suggested. In this report we document breeding by one pair of Painted Buntings, and several other recent records of probable and possible breeding.

On 12 May 2001, Reed located two singing male Painted Buntings atop trees in hedgerows on Rabbit Road in western Montgomery Co. During the next eighteen days, one male Painted Bunting was observed on several occasions. On 30 May 2001, Gardella saw a female Painted Bunting fly across the road and perch on a small branch approximately 46 cm (18 in) off the ground. She preened for five minutes, flew up a little higher, surveyed her surroundings for approximately three minutes, and then flew up into the tree. A minute later, a male Painted Bunting flew from the same tree. On 3 and 4 June 2001, Pat Johnson saw the male and female Painted Buntings together, although she saw no evidence of breeding (pers. comm.). On 23 June, 2001, Gardella heard the male Painted Bunting sing a few short songs from the undergrowth along Rabbit Road and then saw it fly up and burst into song on the bare tree top where Reed had originally made his sightings. On 30 June 2001, Glenda McNair and John

Patterson (pers. comm.) watched a male Painted Bunting for 40 minutes, singing vigorously. A female was also seen in a nearby tree. On 29 July 2001, Gardella confirmed the breeding of Painted Buntings at the site by observing three fledglings begging for food. Two were quite brown, and one had considerable yellow. On 7 August 2001, he saw the male Painted Bunting chase an Indigo Bunting away from a tree in which at least two of the young Painted Buntings were perched.

While this record was the only confirmation of breeding, there were several other encounters with singing male Painted Buntings in 2001. While conducting survey work for the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project, Don Ware found evidence of probable breeding by observing singing male Painted Buntings in the Bradley central east block on 23 May, 1 June, and 20 June (Rick West pers. comm). On 10 June, Gardella saw one singing male Painted Bunting and heard two others in the central east block of the PineApple Quadrangle just south of the border between Wilcox and Monroe counties.

In 2002, Gardella found only one Painted Bunting at Rabbit Road, a singing second year male. Reed found a pair of Painted Buntings in southeastern Dallas Co. on CR 122 just east of Orrville on 7 June. He first noticed the male sitting quietly in a lone large tree located on the edge of an extensive clear cut. The clear cut was separated from a large cotton field by CR 122. The male flew into the cotton field and was joined by a female. Together they flew back into thick underbrush of the clear cut. After a few minutes, the male landed on CR122 crouching down so that the long axis of his body was parallel to the road. He then began to flutter his wings and move around erratically. The female flew down in front of him, held her body parallel to the ground, and lifted her tail upward about 45°. The pair copulated and the female flew back to the clear cut. The male flew into the cotton field and returned to the clear cut with a large grasshopper in his beak.

On 29 May, Ware saw a pair of Painted Buntings in southern Covington Co. in tall pines at the edge of a clear cut. On 17 June, Ware and Judy Self observed a single male Painted Bunting perched on top of a cedar tree in the Gallion Northwest Block located in Marengo Co. On 19 June, Ware saw another pair at the edge of a clear cut in southern Crenshaw Co. On the same day, he heard a singing male near a dirt road in the Conecuh National Forest in Covington Co.

Two years of records do not document regularity of breeding. In light of this evidence of breeding in several locations in inland Alabama, however, it appears likely that Painted Bunting is a localized breeder. Since Painted Buntings can be amazingly inconspicuous, and their songs confused with either that of an

Indigo Bunting or a Blue Grosbeak, the reported records may represent but a small portion of the breeding population in the state. Birders in south central and western Alabama should be alert to the possibility of hearing or seeing this species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Greg Jackson for his help with this manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- BURLEIGH, T. D. 1958. Georgia Birds, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- IMHOF, T. A. 1976. Alabama Birds. 2nd ed., University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- LOWTHER, P. E., S. M. LANYON AND C. W. THOMPSON. 1999. Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) In The Birds of North America, No. 398 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds.), The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- JACKSON, G. D. 2001. Distribution and frequency of occurrence charts. In A Birder's Guide to Alabama (J. F. Porter, Ed.). The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- TURCOTTE, W. H. AND D. L. WATTS. 1999. Birds of Mississippi, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.

Lawrence F. Gardella, 3547 Audubon Road, Montgomery, AL 36111. **Shawn Reed**, 823 Heather Dr., Prattville, AL 36066.

WILD TURKEY POULT MORTALITY IN NORTHEAST ALABAMA AS A RESULT OF SWIMMING

Eric C. Soehren and Steven J. Threlkeld

Identifying specific causes of mortality in Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) poults is important in understanding the dynamics of Wild Turkey populations, knowledge of which is critical for their successful management (Peoples et al. 1995). Although numerous studies have focused on poult mortality rates throughout the range of the Wild Turkey (Glidden and Austin 1975, Hon et al. 1978, Everett et al. 1980, Sisson et al. 1991), few have identified specific causes of poult mortality (Speake et al. 1985, Peoples et al. 1995). In those studies, Speake et al. (1985) and Peoples et al. (1995) reported predation, exposure, starvation, disease, flooding, and hatch defects as specific causes of mortality. Here, we report the first incidence of poult mortality caused by a combination of extreme exhaustion and prolonged exposure to water as a result of swimming.

On 14 June 2001 while running a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) river route, four wild turkey poults were observed swimming across the Coosa River between St. Clair and Talladega counties, Alabama (33° 40' 17.9" N, 86° 09' 16.1" W). The poults were first observed swimming in a straight line from the north bank in St. Clair County to the south bank in Talladega County, a distance estimated to be approximately 250 m. Despite a strong cross-current, the poults were quite buoyant in the water and able to swim well enough to maintain a straight bearing. They swam by rapidly propelling their legs behind them with their wings closed, similar to the description made by Audubon (1831). While swimming they continually emitted high peeps. The poults were covered with natal down, except for partially developed remiges, and were estimated to be approximately two weeks old.

While we were studying the poults, a hen flew from the north bank directly over the poults and lit on an exposed limb on the south bank, about 4.5 m above ground level. After alighting on the limb, the hen began to call. The poults responded by peeping more rapidly and swimming directly toward the calling hen. As they reached the south side of the river, they immediately tried to climb the steep bank to reach level ground. However, the embankment was a 1.2 m vertical wall of slick mud which made climbing impossible. Unable to climb or fly from the water, the poults became noticeably exhausted. They

Indigo Bunting or a Blue Grosbeak, the reported records may represent but a small portion of the breeding population in the state. Birders in south central and western Alabama should be alert to the possibility of hearing or seeing this species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Greg Jackson for his help with this manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- BURLEIGH, T. D. 1958. Georgia Birds, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- IMHOF, T. A. 1976. Alabama Birds. 2nd ed., University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- LOWTHER, P. E., S. M. LANYON AND C. W. THOMPSON. 1999. Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) In The Birds of North America, No. 398 (A. Poole and F. Gill, Eds.), The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- JACKSON, G. D. 2001. Distribution and frequency of occurrence charts. In A Birder's Guide to Alabama (J. F. Porter, Ed.). The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- TURCOTTE, W. H. AND D. L. WATTS. 1999. Birds of Mississippi, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.

Lawrence F. Gardella, 3547 Audubon Road, Montgomery, AL 36111. **Shawn Reed**, 823 Heather Dr., Prattville, AL 36066.

WILD TURKEY POULT MORTALITY IN NORTHEAST ALABAMA AS A RESULT OF SWIMMING

Eric C. Soehren and Steven J. Threlkeld

Identifying specific causes of mortality in Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) poults is important in understanding the dynamics of Wild Turkey populations, knowledge of which is critical for their successful management (Peoples et al. 1995). Although numerous studies have focused on poult mortality rates throughout the range of the Wild Turkey (Glidden and Austin 1975, Hon et al. 1978, Everett et al. 1980, Sisson et al. 1991), few have identified specific causes of poult mortality (Speake et al. 1985, Peoples et al. 1995). In those studies, Speake et al. (1985) and Peoples et al. (1995) reported predation, exposure, starvation, disease, flooding, and hatch defects as specific causes of mortality. Here, we report the first incidence of poult mortality caused by a combination of extreme exhaustion and prolonged exposure to water as a result of swimming.

On 14 June 2001 while running a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) river route, four wild turkey poults were observed swimming across the Coosa River between St. Clair and Talladega counties, Alabama (33° 40' 17.9" N, 86° 09' 16.1" W). The poults were first observed swimming in a straight line from the north bank in St. Clair County to the south bank in Talladega County, a distance estimated to be approximately 250 m. Despite a strong cross-current, the poults were quite buoyant in the water and able to swim well enough to maintain a straight bearing. They swam by rapidly propelling their legs behind them with their wings closed, similar to the description made by Audubon (1831). While swimming they continually emitted high peeps. The poults were covered with natal down, except for partially developed remiges, and were estimated to be approximately two weeks old.

While we were studying the poults, a hen flew from the north bank directly over the poults and lit on an exposed limb on the south bank, about 4.5 m above ground level. After alighting on the limb, the hen began to call. The poults responded by peeping more rapidly and swimming directly toward the calling hen. As they reached the south side of the river, they immediately tried to climb the steep bank to reach level ground. However, the embankment was a 1.2 m vertical wall of slick mud which made climbing impossible. Unable to climb or fly from the water, the poults became noticeably exhausted. They

ceased climbing efforts and floated nearly motionless on the water. At this point, we intervened and assisted the poults individually onto level ground. The first two poults were easily captured. When held, both felt cold and put forth little effort to escape. Once released, they slowly moved towards the calling hen despite their exhaustion. The third poult became entangled in large roots dangling from the embankment and had to be pulled out with a paddle. Like the first two, the third poult was cold and easily captured. We placed it on level ground where it immediately collapsed. It was so exhausted that it could not stand or fold its wings. The fourth poult was found dead, and had apparently drowned as a result of extreme exhaustion from swimming, attempted climbing, and prolonged exposure to the water. Throughout the course of the rescue, the hen remained on the tree limb and continued to call to the poults. The first two rescued poults slowly disappeared into the brush while the third remained where we had placed it, unable to move. The elapsed time from our initial observation to when the poults were removed from the river was approximately 25 minutes.

The sequence of events, which led to the poults attempting to cross the river, is unknown. To our knowledge, only two observations of Wild Turkey poults swimming have been reported (Martin and Atkeson 1954, Taber 1955). There was no mention of mortality as a result of swimming in these accounts and only Taber (1955) cited exhaustion following swimming.

Prior to the attainment of flight, young poults are susceptible to rapid chilling when they become wet, and often perish following prolonged exposure to rain (Lewis 1967, Eaton 1992, Yarrow and Yarrow 1999). In addition, when poults are unable to keep up with the hen they often perish as a result of starvation and exposure (Speake et al. 1985). Therefore, it is conceivable that the surviving three poults eventually perished as a result of prolonged exposure to water. Our observation is also consistent with the evidence that most poult mortality occurs within the first two weeks following hatching (Everett et al. 1980, Speake et al. 1985, Peoples et al. 1995). Although unusual, our observation of a poult death as a result of swimming contributes to the list of known causes of mortality in Wild Turkey poults.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank W. D. Robinson, D. W. Speake, and B. Summerour for helpful comments on the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- AUDUBON, J. J. 1831. Wild Turkey. Pp. 1—18 in *Ornithological Biography; or, An account of the habits of the birds of the United States of America; accompanied by descriptions of the objects represented in the work entitled *The Birds of America*, and interspersed with delineations of American scenery and manner. Vol. 1., Edinburgh: (Adam Black).*
- EATON, S. W. 1992. Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 22 (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, Eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington D.C.
- EVERETT, D. D., D. W. SPEAKE, AND W. K. MADDOX. 1980. Natalty and mortality of a north Alabama wild turkey population. *Proceedings of the National Wild Turkey Symposium* 4:117-126.
- GLIDDEN, J. W. AND D. E. AUSTIN. 1975. Natalty and mortality of wild turkey poults in southwestern New York. *Proceedings of the National Wild Turkey Symposium* 3:48-54.
- HON, T., D. BELCHER, B. MULLIS, AND J. MONROE. 1978. Nesting, brood range, and reproductive success of an insular turkey population. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association Fish and Wildlife Agencies* 32:137-149.
- LEWIS, J. C. 1967. Physical Characteristics and Physiology. Pp. 45—72 In *The Wild Turkey and its Management* (O. H. Hewitt, Ed.). The Wildlife Society, Washington, D.C.
- MARTIN, L. M. AND T. Z. ATKESON. 1954. Swimming by Wild Turkey poults. *Wilson Bulletin* 66:271.
- PEOPLES, J. C., D. C. SISSON, AND D. W. SPEAKE. 1995. Mortality of Wild Turkey poults in coastal plain pine forests. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies* 49:448-453.
- SISSON, D. C., D. W. SPEAKE, AND J. L. LANDERS. 1991. Wild turkey brood habitat use in fire-type pine forests. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies* 45:49-57.
- SPEAKE, D. W., R. E. METZLER, AND J. A. MCGLINCY. 1985. Mortality of Wild Turkey poults in north Alabama. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 49:472-474.
- TABER, W. 1955. Notes on behavior of the Wild Turkey. *Wilson Bulletin* 67:213.
- YARROW, G. K. AND D. T. YARROW. 1999. *Managing Wildlife*. The Alabama Wildlife Federation, Montgomery, Alabama. Sweetwater Press, Birmingham, Alabama.

Eric C. Soehren (esoehren@dnr.state.al.us) and **Steven J. Threlkeld**, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Natural Heritage Section, 64 North Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130.

SPRING SIGHTINGS (MARCH - MAY 2002)

Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan

This report covers the period from March through May 2002 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, except for the Florida counties of *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton*, are in Alabama. “@” = subject to review by appropriate records committee; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Ft. Walton Beach Sewerage Facility; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NF” = National Forest; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton* counties); “WTF” = Woerner Turf Farm.

RED-THROATED LOON – A late individual of this rare but regular species was on Little Lagoon, Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 11 April (Larry Gardella, Shawn Reed, G. Beaton, Steve McConnell).

PACIFIC LOON – Rare but regular along the Gulf Coast, one was seen at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, on the late date of 18 May (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan), and a single was on Little Lagoon, Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 11 April (Larry Gardella).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is a rare and irregular breeder in Alabama, so the six nests found on one sinkhole pond near Leighton, *Colbert*, 4 May (Paul Kittle *et al.*) was an outstanding number. Another breeding record came from Murphy Hill Reservation, *Marshall*, 25 May with the report of an adult with 4-6 young (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds).

- CORY'S SHEARWATER** - Accidental in northwest Florida, 2+ birds were reported from Sandestin, *Walton*, 8 April (Jack Carusos).
- GREATER SHEARWATER** – Casual in northwest Florida, 3-4 birds were reported from Sandestin, *Walton*, 8 April (Jack Carusos).
- SOOTY SHEARWATER** – The 10th record for the WP was established by the sighting of a single at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, 9 April (Lucy Duncan, Lydia Daugherty).
- BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL** – On 27 May a bird landed on a fishing boat 25 mi S of Pensacola Pass, *Escambia*, and was taken to Wildlife Sanctuary (*vide* Dorothy Kaufmann). This species is casual in the WP, and most specimens have been secured from fishermen bringing them to Wildlife Sanctuary.
- MASKED BOOBY** – The first April record for northwest Florida was set by a single at Sandestin, *Walton*, 8 April (Jack Carusos).
- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** – This species is rare inland, so the sighting of a single at Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, 29-30 April (Damien Simbeck) was noteworthy.
- BROWN PELICAN** – Two were seen on the Coosa River south of Lake Jordan, *Elmore*, 27 April (N. Butler) (casual inland).
- AMERICAN BITTERN** – Because this species is rarely detected inland, the following records of singles are noteworthy: Tuskegee NF, *Macon*, 1 April (Barry Fleming) and Oakland Marsh, *Lauderdale*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Moez Ali).
- LITTLE BLUE HERON** – Locally rare in spring in northwest Alabama, one adult was seen at Marion County Lake, *Marion*, 10 May (Jud Johnston).
- REDDISH EGRET** – The white morph is rare in Alabama, but one was spotted on Little Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 19 April (John Dindo) and 21 April (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson).
- WHITE-FACED IBIS** – One observed at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 19-20 March (W. Chambers, m.ob.; ph.) was the third inland record for Alabama and the 13th record for the state (@ ABRC).
- ROSS'S GOOSE** – Still rare but increasing in Alabama, singles were noted at Bon Secour, *Baldwin*, 3 March (Howard Horne, Keith Kamper, Ben Garmon) (eighth Gulf Coast record) and Snowdown, *Montgomery*, 23 April (Larry Gardella) (ninth Inland Coastal Plain record).
- MOTTLED DUCK** – Successful breeding of this coastal species was documented with the observation of three adults with six downy young at the airport marsh on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 21 April (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson).

- SURF SCOTER** – One female-type bird was late on the Dauphin Island Causeway north of Cedar Point, *Mobile*, 18 April (Steve McConnell).
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** – Uncommon on the Inland Coastal Plain, two were spotted in the Mexia quad, *Monroe*, 25 May (latest departure date for this region) (Carolyn Snow, L. Bailey).
- RUDDY DUCK** – An alternate-plumaged male was observed at Speigner, *Elmore* (the same site where one summered in 2001), on the late date of 26 May (Larry Gardella),
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – This species is rare in the Tennessee Valley, but a single was noted at Madison, *Madison*, 14 May (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten, Dwight Cooley).
- BALD EAGLE** – As a breeder in Alabama, this species is rare but increasing. Continued nesting at two sites was documented: two young were in a nest at Heiberger, *Perry*, 16 March (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton), and a pair and one young were seen at a nest on Short Creek Embayment of Lake Guntersville, *Marshall*, 24-28 March (D. Dodd). A pair and one young were at a new nest on Second Creek Embayment of Pickwick Reservoir, Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 26 March (Keith Hudson, Paul Kittle, Donna Kittle). Possible nesting was indicated by sightings of single adults at the Marion Fish Hatchery, *Perry*, 16 March (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) and along the Cahaba River at Mountain Brook, *Jefferson*, 23 and 28 May (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, B. Allen).
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** – A late record for the Gulf Coast was set by a bird seen 26 May at Chickasaw, *Mobile* (Keith Kamper).
- GOLDEN EAGLE** – Linda Reynolds saw an immature at Wyeth Mountain near Guntersville, *Marshall*, 15 March (rare in Alabama).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** – A rare but increasing breeder in central Alabama, fledglings were found in downtown Birmingham, *Jefferson*, and at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, *Tuscaloosa*. They were returned to the wild on 22 May (Anne G. Miller *et al.*).
- MERLIN** – One seen 22 May at Meridianville, *Madison* (Moez Ali) was very late.
- BLACK RAIL** – This secretive species is rare but regular in spring at the airport marsh on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, where one was noted 2 April (C. Parkel).
- VIRGINIA RAIL** – Uncommon in the Tennessee Valley, a single was spotted at Oakland Marsh, *Lauderdale*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Moez Ali).

- PURPLE GALLINULE** – Occasional in the Mountain Region, an injured bird found in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 16 May was sent to a rehabilitation center (*vide* Anne G. Miller).
- COMMON MOORHEN** – Larry Gardella recorded this species at Trickem, *Montgomery*, 7 April where it is locally rare.
- SNOWY PLOVER** – Now a rare breeder on the mainland coast of Alabama, a pair and one downy young were seen at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 11 May (Eric Soehren).
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** – Merilu Rose and Rufus Rose had one at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 18 April where it is casual. J. Lloyd *et al.* saw two at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 23 March where the species is uncommon.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** – A new maximum count for inland Alabama was made 1 March at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, where David George recorded 96.
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** – Two presumably wintering birds were spotted at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 1 March (David George) (rare in winter in Tennessee Valley).
- WILLET** – A rare species inland, one was found at Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, 29 April (Damien Simbeck).
- RED KNOT** – Four late individuals of this uncommon species were noted 19 May on Pelican Island, *Mobile* (Howard Horne, Keith Kamper).
- SANDERLING** – Rare inland in spring, a single was noted near Leighton, *Colbert*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck).
- BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** – This species is rare in spring in Alabama. Two records were received, a single on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 20 April (Larry Gardella) and the excellent number of six near Leighton, *Colbert*, 20 May (Damien Simbeck).
- RUFF** – The fifth record for Alabama was established by a single bird seen at WTF, *Lowndes*, 17 March (Larry Gardella; @ABRC).
- WILSON'S PHALAROPE** – One sighted at Bayou LaBatre, *Mobile*, 27 May (Keith Kamper) set a new late departure record for Alabama.
- JAEGER SP.** – Steve McConnell sighted one bird (a probable Pomarine) from the Dauphin Island-Ft. Morgan ferry, *Baldwin*, 19 April.
- LAUGHING GULL** – This species is now regular but rare in the Tennessee Valley. At Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, one was present 29 April while two were there 4 May (Damien Simbeck).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** – Still rare in Alabama, one was spotted

from the Dauphin Island-Ft. Morgan Ferry, *Baldwin*, 18 April (Will Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

COMMON TERN – Uncommon-rare for inland Alabama, two were found at Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, 29 April (Damien Simbeck).

LEAST TERN – Two at Guin, *Marion*, 25 April established an early arrival date for inland Alabama (Jud Johnston). This species is rare in the Mountain Region.

SOOTY TERN – Rare onshore in Alabama (and possibly increasing), this species was recorded from Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 19 May (one bird) and 27 May (three birds) (Howard Horne, Keith Kamper).

BLACK TERN – One at Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, 29 April (Damien Simbeck) set a new early spring arrival date for the Tennessee Valley.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE – The following records help to document the continued expansion of this species in Alabama: a pair building a nest near Florence, *Lauderdale*, 10 April (Donna Kittle, Paul Kittle); two at Pelham, *Shelby*, 4 May (Ann L. Miller) (rare near Birmingham); two calling at a known site in Huntsville, *Madison*, 8 May (Tom Brindley); and one at Kirk's Grove, *Cherokee*, 31 May (Marion Dobbs).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO – This species is rarely detected inland, but one was recorded from Bankhead NF, *Lawrence*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Moez Ali).

WHIP-POOR-WILL – Larry Gardella heard one at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 11 May, to establish a late departure date for the non-breeding area of the Inland Coastal Plain.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – Rare in spring, one was observed at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 7 May (Tom Haggerty).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER – One singing at Florence, *Lauderdale*, 28-29 April was the fifth Alabama record (Damien Simbeck *et al.*; @ABRC).

LEAST FLYCATCHER – Rare in spring in northwest Alabama, one was seen at Mt. Hope, *Lawrence*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Moez Ali).

GRAY KINGBIRD – This species is now rare on the Gulf Coast. Records of singles came from Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 19 April (Steve McConnell), and Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 29 April (D. Kisiel, S. Kisiel) and 11 May (J. Lloyd, P. Blevins).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – This species appears to be increasing as a breeder, and these records were of birds that returned to known breeding sites and were probably nesting: three, Meridianville, *Madison*, 27 April+ (K. Ward *et al.*); Priceville, *Morgan*, one 28 April and two 22 May

(C. Lamont); and a pair, Madison, *Madison*, 1 May (Dean Cutten). Two records came from sites new for the species: one possibly nesting at Lafayette, *Chambers*, 4-11 May (N. Blanton *et al.*; ph.), and one at Forkland, *Greene*, 8 May (R. DeWitt, P. Trull; ph.). An odd record of a juvenile that arrived with trans-Gulf migrants at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 2 May was reported by Bob Duncan. Four birds seen at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 24 March (L. West) were early and a new maximum spring high for the Gulf Coast.

WARBLING VIREO – A single at Madison, *Madison*, 1 May (Dean Cutten) was a rare migrant, while three singing at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 4 May (Paul Kittle, *et al.*) had returned to a known nesting site.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO – One at Madison, *Madison*, 20 May (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten) set a late departure record for the Tennessee Valley.

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO – Rare but regular on the Gulf Coast, two were banded between 8-22 April at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*).

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER – This western species was a real surprise at Cheaha SP, *Cleburne*, 19 April – 5 May (G. Johnson, R. Johnson, m.ob.; ph.; @ABRC). This was the first record of the species for Alabama. (See article in this issue of *Alabama Birdlife*)

FISH CROW – Two were heard calling repeatedly at Riverchase, *Shelby*, 25 March (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson), where the species is uncommon.

TREE SWALLOW – A rare breeder in Alabama that appears to be increasing. Four nests were documented at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 2 May+ (Paul Kittle). One pair was at Henson Springs, *Lamar*, 25 May (Jud Johnston), a site where it is known to nest. A pair seen east of Scottsboro, *Jackson*, 20 May (Rick West) indicates probable breeding at that site.

CLIFF SWALLOW – This is another swallow that continues to increase as a breeder in Alabama, with documented nesting at two new sites. Two pairs were nesting at Germany Ferry on the Tallapoosa River, *Tallapoosa*, 27 April (Rick West), and one pair was nesting at the U.S. 31 bridge over the Alabama River, *Montgomery/Autauga*, 26 May (Larry Gardella).

CAVE SWALLOW – At Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, Will Duncan and Bob Duncan studied an individual at close range 15 March to set the fourth record for the area. At Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, Lucy Duncan observed one at leisure for over 30 minutes 14 April to set the fifth area record. One seen 14 -17 April at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* (Jane Hinman, Phil Berry, Lucy Duncan, Betsy Tetlow *et al.*) was the 16th Alabama record (@ ABRC).

- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – Two that lingered at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 5 May (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten) tied the latest departure date for the Tennessee Valley.
- HERMIT THRUSH** – A late bird was spotted at Byrne Lake, *Baldwin*, 13 April (Steve McConnell).
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** – At Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, a single on 23 March was early (J. Lloyd *et al.*).
- NASHVILLE WARBLER** – Rare but regular in spring in the Tennessee Valley, singles were noted at *Madison*, *Madison*, 1 May (female) and 3 May (singing male), and at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 5 May (singing male) (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).
- NORTHERN PARULA** – Two early birds were reported. A singing male was along South Sandy Creek in the Oakmulgee Unit of Talladega NF, *Tuscaloosa/Hale*, 10 March (David George), and at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 15 March (Larry Gardella).
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** – David Dortch found a male at Montrose, *Baldwin*, 1 April, the earliest this species is known to have arrived in Alabama.
- BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** – An uncommon migrant in the Mountain Region, one was spotted at Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 2 May (Alice Christenson).
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** – One seen at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 28 March (Paul Kittle, Donna Kittle) was an early local migrant.
- PRAIRIE WARBLER** – One heard at Grove Hill, *Clarke*, 17 March (L. Bailey) was the earliest for inland Alabama, while another singing male in the Oakmulgee Unit of Talladega NF, *Bibb*, 23 March (David George) was also early.
- PALM WARBLER** – Barry Fleming established a new maximum count for inland Alabama when he tallied 250+ at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 12 April.
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER** – An early male appeared at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 17 April (Larry Gardella).
- CERULEAN WARBLER** – The first possible breeding in decades for this species in northeast Alabama was indicated by three singing males near Estill Fork, *Jackson*, 31 May (Dwight Cooley, Scott Gravette).
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** – John Porter had an early single at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14 March, while Stan and Dana Hamilton had three early birds at Perry Lake near Marion, *Perry*, 16 March.

- SWAINSON'S WARBLER** – The Sargents *et al.* banded a good total of 19 at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 8 - 22 April. One was found at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 20 May (Damien Simbeck, Tom Haggerty) (rare breeder in Tennessee Valley).
- CONNECTICUT WARBLER** – Always a rare migrant in Alabama, one male was found at a regular site in Madison, *Madison*, 19 May (Moez Ali).
- MOURNING WARBLER** – Rare but regular during spring migration in the Tennessee Valley, one was recorded at a regular site in Madison, *Madison*, 19 May (Moez Ali).
- HOODED WARBLER** – An early male was seen in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 28 March (K. White, P. White).
- LARK SPARROW** – Expanding as a breeder in Alabama, a pair of adults and a fledgling were noted at a new site at Old Kingston, *Autauga*, 26 May (Shawn Reed).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** – The two or more individuals noted at Speigner, *Elmore*, 26 May (Larry Gardella) were uncommon for this location.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW** – This species is rare in spring in Alabama, so one near Florence, *Lauderdale*, 1 May (Paul Kittle) was notable.
- WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** – One was late departing Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 31 May-2 June (Larry Gardella).
- HARRIS'S SPARROW** – A single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 10 April (Don Ware, Lydia Daugherty, Jack Carusos) established the fifth area record.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** – The two or more individuals noted at Speigner, *Elmore*, 5 May (Tommy Pratt) were late for this location.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** – The earliest arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain was established by a single at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 9 April (Larry Gardella, Andrea Menyhert).
- PAINTED BUNTING** – A male and female at a feeder east of Mooresville, *Limestone*, 22 April (Dan Fitzjarrald, Ruth Swann) set the first record for this species in the Tennessee Valley.
- YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** – A male at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 4-7 April (D. Sellers; ph.) may have been returning to this site since a male was photographed here in April 2001. The species is very rare for inland Alabama.
- PURPLE FINCH** – One at Clay, *Jefferson*, 15 May (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) established the latest departure date for the Mountain Region.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - One female-type at a feeder in Killen, *Lauderdale*, 26 April and 5-20 May (Shirley Wayland, Jim Wayland, m.ob.; ph., Fig. 1) was possibly the first for Alabama (see following record; @ABRC).

CROSSBILL SP. - A juvenile that was “wing-barred” visited a feeder in Clay, *Jefferson*, 12 March (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) and was listed as a White-winged (@ABRC).

COMMON REDPOLL - One noted at Tuscaloosa, *Tuscaloosa*, 17 March (J. Thompson) was the 11th record for Alabama (@ABRC).



FIGURE 1. Female-type White-winged Crossbill at a feeder in Killen, Lauderdale Co., AL, 26 April and 5-20 May (photograph by Raelene and Dean Cutten , 7 May 2002).

Paul D. Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632 (Email: pdkittle@una.edu). **Greg D. Jackson** [Alabama compiler], 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244 (Email: greg-debi.jackson@prodigy.net). **Robert A. Duncan** [NW Florida compiler], 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (Email: duncan44@juno.com).

SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2002)

Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan

This report covers the period from June through July 2002 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, except for the Florida counties of *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton*, are in Alabama. “@” = subject to review by appropriate records committee; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “CW” = central western; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NF” = National Forest; “ph.” = photographed; “v.” = videotaped’ “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, *Okaloosa*, and *Walton* counties); “WTF” = Woerner Turf Farm.

COMMON LOON – Singles in basic and alternate plumage were seen 23 and 25 June, respectively, at Guntersville, *Marshall* (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds) (rare in summer).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is an erratic breeder in Alabama. Two broods were observed near Leighton, *Colbert*, 5 June (Damien Simbeck).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Occasional for inland Alabama and rare in the Mountain Region, an exceptional 100+ were seen on Lay Lake, *Shelby*, 28 June (Archie Trimm, Charlotte Trimm; v.). Twenty-three that may have been part of the previous group were seen at Riverside, *St. Clair*, 30 June – 2 July (Edward Tracy *et al.*). Uncommon – rare in the Tennessee Valley, one was spotted at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, 21 July (Damien Simbeck).

- BROWN PELICAN** – One immature was seen at Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 24 June and 20 July (Walt Chambers). This species is rare but regular at this inland site.
- SNOWY EGRET** – Dean Cutten and Raelene Cutten sighted one of these waders, uncommon in the Tennessee Valley, at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 14 July.
- WHITE IBIS** – One immature was noted at Murphy Hill Reservoir, *Marshall*, 8 June (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds) (rare in the Tennessee Valley). This wader is unexpected in June in the Mountain Region, but one adult was seen flying west over the main mountain ridge in the CW block of the Hollis Crossroads quad, Talladega NF, *Cleburne*, 9 June (Greg Jackson, Debi Jackson). An immature at Alexander City, *Tallapoosa*, 30 June (Linda Baker) was rare and early for the Mountain Region.
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** – The 20th record for Alabama was set 26 June by the sighting of a single along AL 106 west of Brantley, *Crenshaw*, 26 June (R. White, M. Cox; @ABRC). Another single was observed on Little Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14-17 July (John Dindo, Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds, John Porter; ph.) to establish the 21st record for Alabama (@ABRC).
- SNOW GOOSE** – Occasional in summer in Alabama, one was seen on Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, 1 June (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL** – An adult with 10 young near Leighton, *Colbert*, 5 June (Damien Simbeck) documented a rare breeding of this species in Alabama. An injured bird was at Sardis, *Dallas*, 8 June (Shawn Reed).
- RING-NECKED DUCK** – Occasional in summer in Alabama, the 20 seen at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 8 June (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds) set a new summer maximum for the state.
- HOODED MERGANSER** – This duck is a rare breeder in Alabama, so the following records are noteworthy: one at Sardis, *Dallas*, 6 June (Shawn Reed) and three at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 24 June (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).
- RUDDY DUCK** – A male in alternate plumage at Hoover, *Jefferson*, 25 June furnished a rare summer record (*fide* Rick West).
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** – Sixteen was a good number for this species at the northern locale of Prattville, *Autauga*, 13 July (Shawn Reed). Four seen at Springville, *St. Clair*, 31 July – 14 August (M. Walker, m.ob.) established the fifth record for the Mountain Region.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – A report of “several” came from Springville, *St. Clair*,

31 July – 28 August (Mary Jane Wells, m.ob.) (rare in Mountain Region).

GOLDEN EAGLE – An adult was photographed in the Indian Mountain quad, *Cherokee*, 2 June (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) (second June record for Alabama). Could this sighting be the result of the Georgia hacking program?

AMERICAN COOT – Seven at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 24 June (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten) was a good number for this species that is rare in summer in Alabama.

SNOWY PLOVER – A total of 18 nests was found in surveys on the barrier islands in the three westernmost WP counties (*vide* Don Ware, Lenny Fenimore, Mark Nicholas).

AMERICAN AVOCET – A single on Sand Island, *Mobile*, 1 June (Sarah Whitfield) was late.

WILLET – Two were noted at Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 20 July (Walt Chambers) (rare inland).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – A single in alternate plumage was very late at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 9 June (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds).

WHIMBREL – Seen only occasionally in inland Alabama, the individual found at the WTF, *Lowndes*, 14 July (Larry Gardella) established the third record for the Inland Coastal Plain.

RED KNOT – Twelve counted on Sand Island, *Mobile*, 1 June (Howard Horne *et al.*) were late.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – Damien Simbeck recorded one near Leighton, *Colbert*, 5 June. This set a new late departure date for the Tennessee Valley and is the latest for Alabama except for one June 18 record.

COMMON SNIPE – Larry Gardella found one at the WTF, *Lowndes*, 21 July to establish a new early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – One at Bayou La Batre, *Mobile*, 15 July (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds) was an early migrant.

LEAST TERN – A survey 1 June by Gulf Islands National Seashore personnel found 135 nests on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*. Nests were abandoned by 17 June, probably due to human disturbance. Least Terns resumed nesting on roofs in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, after 17 June (*vide* Bob Duncan).

SOOTY TERN – This species is rare onshore in Alabama, but there are records from the Dauphin Island area for the past two summers. Sightings this summer include one on the east end of Dauphin Island, 1 June (Paul Miliotis) and one on Pelican Island, 8 July (Keith Kamper), both *Mobile*.

- BLACK SKIMMER** – A survey 1 June by Bob Duncan revealed about 25 nests on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, but nests were abandoned by 17 June, probably due to human disturbance.
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – Two seen near Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, 1 June (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) were at a new site, representative of continued expansion by the species in Alabama.
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – This species is occasional in Alabama, but has occurred at a site in Foley, *Baldwin*, for the past two years. Two adults with a fledgling on 16 May and a maximum of six on 14 July document the first nesting of the species in Alabama (*vide* Howard Horne).
- COMMON GROUND-DOVE** – Two seen at Fruithurst, *Cleburne*, 14 June (Jim Flynn) were unexpected this far north.
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER** – One singing at Forney, *Cherokee*, 2 June (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) indicated possible nesting (voice recorded; ph.; @ABRC). There are no prior nesting records for Alabama, and this species is rarely identified by voice in Alabama.
- GRAY KINGBIRD** – This species was reported from five different locations in the westernmost three counties of the WP in May and June (m.ob., *vide* Bob Duncan).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, a pair was seen at a new site at Melton, *Hale*, 22 June (Shawn Reed).
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – The first summer record for the Inland Coastal Plain was set by a single seen 19 June at Leon, *Crenshaw* (Don Ware).
- WARBLING VIREO** – Johnny Parks found a singing bird at Long Island Cove, *Jackson*, 1 June. This is the first summer record in decades for northeast Alabama. A single and a pair were noted (and singing) at Brantley, *Crenshaw*, 19 June (Don Ware) to establish the first summer record for south Alabama. In Alabama, the species has been known as a rare breeder only in the Tennessee Valley.
- TREE SWALLOW** – A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, the following records document its spread: at Gurley, *Madison*, a pair with eggs in a nest 4 June was later seen feeding five young (Jerry Carter, Jim Williams) (nested at this site in 1996); an adult was feeding fledglings at Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, 7 June (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) (nested at this site in 1989); adults were feeding fledglings near Black Pond, *Winston*, 23 June+ (Jud Johnston *et al.*) (new site); and three adults and four juveniles at Ballplay, *Etowah*, 26 June (Marion Dobbs) indicated probable nesting at a new site.

- CLIFF SWALLOW** – Still expanding its breeding range in Alabama, this species was observed nesting at a new site on Little Creek, *Russell*, 26-27 June (Don Ware, Carol Ware). Impressive counts came from Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, 1 June (two colonies of 300 and 500 birds) (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn), and from Harpersville, *Shelby*, 16 July (500 birds) (Helen Kittinger).
- HOUSE WREN** – Four records, all *Jefferson*, were received for this rare breeder in Alabama: a previously banded pair at Center Point, in June (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent), a site where it has nested for the past 16 years; a pair with young at Mountain Brook, during June (Jim Shepherd, Katherine Shepherd); one singing in Birmingham, 14 June (Helen Kittinger, Mary Hines); and one singing at Mountain Brook, 4 July (Pelham Rowan).
- GRAY CATBIRD** – A pair nested at a site in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, for the third consecutive year (Bob Duncan).
- CEDAR WAXWING** – One was seen along the Tennessee River at the Natchez Trace Parkway, *Lauderdale*, 26 June (Paul Kittle) (rare breeder in Alabama).
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** – A single at Clay, *Jefferson*, 28 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) was an early migrant.
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** – This species is an occasional breeder in Alabama. A singing male was in the CW block of the Jamestown quad, *DeKalb*, 25 June (Barbara Stedman).
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW** – A new maximum for Alabama was set by Scott Gravette on 30 June when he counted 18 in Conecuh NF, *Covington/Escambia*.
- LARK SPARROW** – This sparrow is rare but increasing in Alabama. A drive through rural western *Lauderdale*, 28 June produced a count of 34, a new maximum for Alabama (Paul Kittle). One immature was spotted at Demopolis, *Marengo*, 21 July (Judy Self, Don Self).
- WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** – One lingered at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 31 May-2 June (Larry Gardella, Andrea Menyhert) (occasional in summer for Inland Coastal Plain). Another was singing at Woodland, *Lauderdale*, 28 June (Paul Kittle) (first summer record for Tennessee Valley).
- PAINTED BUNTING** – Possibly increasing as a breeder in Alabama, several reports of birds from three new inland areas were unusual. A pair was seen copulating at Orrville, *Dallas*, 7 June (Shawn Reed). At Demopolis,

(Jim Flynn), a new site that is 10 miles southeast of the only currently known breeding area.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH – The third June record for the WP was established by a female at a feeder in Milton, *Santa Rosa*, 2 June (Mike Scheller).

Paul D. Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632 (Email: pdkittle@una.edu). **Greg D. Jackson** [Alabama compiler], 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244 (Email: greg-debi.jackson@prodigy.net). **Robert A. Duncan** [NW Florida compiler], 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (Email: duncan44@juno.com).

(Jim Flynn), a new site that is 10 miles southeast of the only currently known breeding area.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH – The third June record for the WP was established by a female at a feeder in Milton, *Santa Rosa*, 2 June (Mike Scheller).

Paul D. Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632 (Email: pdkittle@una.edu). **Greg D. Jackson** [Alabama compiler], 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244 (Email: greg-debi.jackson@prodigy.net). **Robert A. Duncan** [NW Florida compiler], 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (Email: duncan44@juno.com).

the species has occurred. Because the distances between the normal wintering grounds and southeastern wintering grounds are similar, a genetic error in orientation behavior may explain the observed vagrancies. In recent times, these vagrants may have survived because of changes in habitat (e.g., conversion of forests into yards and gardens, presence of hummingbird feeders). The survivors and their offspring then pass on their southeastern fall migration genes to future generations. Genetic and migration studies of the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) in Europe, which has recently shown a similar, basic orientation change in its wintering distribution, offer support for this second hypothesis. The third hypothesis poses that the resources of the traditional wintering grounds (i.e., Mexico) are inadequate to support all members of the population and, therefore, individuals leave these traditional areas and move north and east to find food. Support for this hypothesis comes from the six to eight week time gap between when individuals are last seen on their breeding grounds in western United States (early September) and the dates of their occurrence in the Southeast (November and December). This gap would allow for enough time to migrate to traditional areas and then to move north and east in response to resource shortages. But, paradoxically, there do appear to be enough resources for aberrant movement to the Southeast. The authors conclude that additional banding and recovery data are needed to test these hypotheses, as well as genetic studies similar to those conducted on the Blackcap. Finally, they predict a continued increase in the number of sightings of Rufous Hummingbirds until habitat saturation is reached. [Geoffrey E. Hill, Department of Biological Sciences, 331 Funchess Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849, Robert R. Sargent and Martha B. Sargent, The Hummer/Bird Study Group, P.O. Box 250, Clay, Alabama 35048.] — TMH.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Manuscripts submitted for publication in *Alabama Birdlife* should conform to the guidelines listed below. Articles should include some facet of bird ecology, natural history, behavior, management/conservation, identification or other related topics. Refer to this issue or to recent past issues for examples. *Alabama Birdlife* is published twice a year. If you have access to an IBM compatible or Macintosh computer, it saves time and money if you submit your manuscript on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk along with a hard copy (Word or WordPerfect preferred). A manuscript may also be submitted over the Internet as a file attached to an e-mail addressed to: tmhaggerty@una.edu.

Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced. A 8 1/2 x 11 inch page format should be used.

Digital images submitted over the Internet, black and white prints, color prints, and slides are acceptable.

The title should be in CAPS. If the name of a species is used in the title, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. CONNECTICUT WARBLER (*OPORORNIS AGILIS*).

The author's full name should be in lower case and centered under the title.

If the article is coauthored by a married couple bearing the same last name, the names should be kept separate, e.g. John B. Brown and Sarah D. Brown.

Whenever a species name is used for the first time in the body of an article, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*).

When using dates, the day should be placed before the month, e.g. 13 April 1992.

Spell out numbers ten and under and use numerals for numbers 11 and above.

Distances should be expressed in English units followed by the metric equivalent in parentheses, e.g. 6.2 miles (10 km). Use only the metric system for scientific measurements, e.g. wing 10.3 cm; tail 15.6 cm.

Table titles should be in CAPS and placed above the tables.

Figure legends should be in lower case and placed beneath the figure.

Refer to the Literature Cited in past issues for the correct format.

Three or fewer references should be incorporated into the text of the article rather than listed separately at the end, e.g. Imhof (1976, *Alabama Birds*).

The author's name and full address should be line typed at the end of the article. The name used should match the name given under the title.

Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society

Volume 48

No. 2

2002

CONTENTS

FIRST CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (<i>NUFRAGA COLUMBIANA</i>) FOR ALABAMA <i>Ann Miller</i>	33
OBSERVATIONS OF HERON AND EGRET COLONIES IN ALABAMA 1952-2001 <i>Julian L. Dusi and Rosemary D. Dusi</i>	35
CONFIRMED, PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE BREEDING OF PAINTED BUNTINGS (<i>PASSERINA CIRIS</i>) IN INLAND ALABAMA <i>Larry F. Gardella and Shawn Reed</i>	38
WILD TURKEY POULT MORTALITY IN NORTHEAST ALABAMA AS A RESULT OF SWIMMING <i>Eric C. Soehren and Steven J. Threlkeld</i>	41
SPRING SIGHTINGS (MARCH – MAY 2002) <i>Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan</i>	44
SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE – JULY 2002) <i>Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan</i>	53
ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE	59

Tom Haggerty, Editor
Alabama Birdlife
Department of Biology
University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama 35632-0001

PRSR STD U.S. Postage PAID PERMIT #043 FLORENCE AL
--