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AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS SEEN AT THE
NATURE CAMP AT DeSOTO STATE PARK

JUNE 1 TO 9, 1956

By JULIAN L. DUSI

The Nature Camp is a meeting place where those interested in the many phases of natural history can get together for an enjoyable week of study and relaxation. Under the direction of Mrs. Blanche E. Dean, a varied program was planned so that beginners and experts alike could participate and profit from the experience.

A number of program leaders were present. Each explained his own field of specialization. For example: Dr. John A. Fincher, Howard College, led the group in studies of aquatic biology; Dr. W. E. Glenn, Birmingham Southern College, talked about astronomy and led the group on a star gazing trip; and Mr. George Huey, Soil Conservation Service, showed the camp the Denton farm, which is an excellent example of soil conservation planning and farming. Many other professional and amateur biologists were present and each had his opportunity to lead the group.

Those attending the camp varied in age from children to those who could talk of experiences they had during the preceding century; they varied in profession from students to teachers and to those in non-educational professions. The writer and his wife were present for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with that part of the state and to collect data for a research study of the birds and mammals of Alabama, which the writer is conducting through a Grant-in-aid research program at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute.

The birds of DeSoto State Park and the surrounding area were especially interesting to the writer. A number of birds were nesting there that are migrants only, in the Southern part of Alabama. Most of the birds were methodically identified by close observation with binoculars and the aid of the bird's song. Only the Black-throated Green Warbler and the Ovenbird were collected. Following is an annotated list of the birds positively recorded by the writer:

Wood Duck—One was seen flying along the river in the park.

Turkey Vulture—These were commonly seen soaring.

Sharp-shinned Hawk—One individual clearly seen soaring over the park lodge.

Cooper's Hawk—One individual reported.

Broad-winged Hawk—One individual studied as it soared closely over the group as they visited the Denton farm.

Bob-white—Fairly common on the farm lands, especially the Denton farm.

Eastern Turkey—One hen was heard calling by the writer.

Killdeer—Several were seen near the pond north of Fort Payne.

Mourning Dove—Fairly common. A total of 20 listed by the writer.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo—Fairly common.

Whip-poor-will—Heard singing in the park.

Chimney Swift—Frequently seen flying overhead.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird—Rarely seen. One nest was found near the park lodge.

Flicker—Rather uncommon. Only five individuals listed by the writer.

Pileated Woodpecker—Quite commonly seen and heard for this species.

Red-bellied Woodpecker—Only a few individuals seen.

Red-headed Woodpecker—Several were seen at the Denton farm.

Downy Woodpecker—One was seen at the Denton farm.

Eastern Kingbird—Commonly seen on farm lands especially.

Crested Flycatcher—Fairly common.

Phoebe—Quite common. Nests were seen.

Wood Pewee—Fairly common.

Rough-winged Swallow—Seen nesting in roadside banks and commonly seen flying along the gorge.

Barn Swallow—Two were seen flying over a pond north of Fort Payne.

Purple Martins—Commonly seen, especially at the farmhouses which had supplied nesting sites.

Blue Jays—Common.

Crow—Commonly seen in groups of ten or twelve.

Carolina Chickadee—A fairly common species.

Tufted Titmouse—Frequently seen and heard.

Brown-headed Nuthatch—Seen and heard in the pines near the gorge.

Carolina Wren—Only a few individuals were seen. One nest found at the Hassel's home.

Mockingbird—More restricted to farm land, in average abundance.

Brown Thrasher—Rather common. A nest found in the multiflora rose fence at the Denton farm.

Wood Thrush—Commonly heard singing.

Bluebird—Found rather commonly on the farms visited.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher—Fairly common. A nest with young was found at the Denton farm.

Loggerhead Shrike—A few were seen along the roads near farms.

Starling—Present at some of the farms we visited.

White-eyed Vireo—Frequently seen and heard in woodland areas.

Yellow-throated Vireo—Seen and heard infrequently. One was seen coming from a typical nest at the Denton farm.

Red-eyed Vireo—A fairly common bird. A nest was located near the lodge in the park.

Black and White Warbler—Common in the rhododendron habitat. They were seen feeding young on several occasions.

Parula Warbler—Commonly heard and seen.

Black-throated Green Warbler—A common breeding bird of the park.

Yellow-throated Warbler—Fairly common.

Pine Warbler—Commonly seen and heard in pine woods.

Prairie Warbler—Common in the brushy old field cut-over areas.

Ovenbird—Common in the woodlands. One nest was found by the writer.

Louisiana Water-Thrush—Several were seen along the river in the park.

Kentucky Warbler—Seen in rhododendron thickets.

Yellow-throat—Heard and seen on brushy hillsides.

Yellow-breasted Chat—Common on brushy hillsides.

Hooded Warbler—Fairly common in the rhododendron thickets.

English Sparrow—Present at the farms we visited.

Meadowlark—Common in the fields.

Red-winged Blackbird—Seen at the pond just north of Fort Payne.

Orchard Oriole—Fairly common near farm land.

Cowbird—A few seen at the Denton farm.

Scarlet Tanager—One or two seen.

Cardinal—A common resident.

Indigo Bunting—A common resident of the brushy uplands.

Goldfinch—A few individuals were seen and heard.

Towhee—Present in most woodland habitats.

Chipping Sparrow—Common residents often seen feeding young.

Field Sparrow—Seen and heard in brushy habitats.
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PIED-BILLED GREBE NESTING RECORDS FROM
THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

By THOMAS Z. ATKESON

Although the breeding range of the little Pied-billed Grebe is said to extend as far south as the Gulf of Mexico and this bird is common in all parts of Alabama during cold weather, Howell's "Birds of Alabama" fails to list it as a nester.

On the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, covering about a third of Wheeler Reservoir, in northern Alabama, Pied-billed Grebes are common, especially during fall and spring migration. Fall migrants begin arriving in late August and continue to move through the refuge until late October. Spring migration begins in March and continues through mid-May. The birds are less common, but are present in some numbers throughout the winter. In summer, they are not common but are present and have been recorded regularly throughout the late spring and summer months.

Except for their presence during the nesting season, there was no positive evidence of nesting until 1952. In May of that year, Buckeye Slough—a large, shallow body of water lying on the refuge in the extreme southeastern part of Limestone County—was being pumped dry by T.V.A. as a malarial control measure. On May 11, two eggs were found at the edge of this slough by David C. Hulse. One was sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and positively identified as that of a Pied-billed Grebe. By May 15 the water of the slough had been reduced to an acre or so in spring holes and ditches, concentrating water birds in this small area. On that date Henry H. Grammer, a refuge employee, noted six adult grebes and three broods of young, totaling 14 birds. On May 20, Hulse, Clyde W. Lee, and the writer visited the vicinity and collected one of the young to substantiate the breeding record. A study skin was prepared, submitted to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the identification confirmed.

The young bird collected was flightless and covered with down. Examination of the gullet disclosed a half-dozen crawfish and remains of others. No positive instances of nesting have been noted since, but the birds continue present each May and June and undoubtedly nest in this locality regularly. While this is the only verified nesting record known for the State, careful study will probably show that these birds are regular nesters in many parts of Alabama.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS

December 31, 1956, 7:00-4:00, Wind N. E., 5 mph, Temperature 28-48, clear, cold. Location, Lake Land Farm, Marion Fish Cultural Station, Judson College Campus.

No.	Species
3	Pied Billed Grebe
6	Great Blue Heron
2	American Egret
218	Mallard
5	Gadwall
25	Baldpate
27	Pintail
130	Green-winged Teal
3	Shoveler
4	Redhead
101	Ring-necked Duck
4	Ruddy Duck
32	Hooded Merganser
4	Turkey Vulture
16	Black Vulture
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk
1	Red-tailed Hawk
1	Red-shouldered Hawk
2	Marsh Hawk
2	Sparrow Hawk
1	Bob-white
1	Coot
100	Killdeer
22	Wilson's Snipe
32	Least Sandpipers
2	Belted Kingfisher
7	Flicker
4	Red-headed Woodpecker
1	Red-bellied Woodpecker
2	Hairy Woodpecker
3	Downy Woodpecker
25	Horned Lark
11	Blue Jay
13	American Crow

No.	Species
4	Carolina Chickadee
5	Tufted Titmouse
4	White-breasted Nuthatch
2	Brown-headed Nuthatch
2	House Wren
5	Carolina Wren
9	Mockingbird
3	Brown Thrasher
199	Robin
3	Hermit Thrush
5	Bluebird
11	Golden-crowned Kinglet
4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
7	Loggerhead Shrike
12	Starling
152	American Pipit
1	Solitary Vireo
35	Myrtle Warbler
1	Pine Warbler
1	Yellow-throat
16	English Sparrow
41	Meadowlark
250	Red-winged Blackbird
3	Rusty Blackbird
10	Purple Grackle
27	Cardinal
22	Goldfinch
12	Towhee
6	Savannah Sparrow
8	Pine-woods Sparrow
14	Slate-colored Junco
2	Field Sparrow
18	White-crowned Sparrow
64	White-throated Sparrow
3	Swamp Sparrow
10	Song Sparrow
Lois McCullough	
106	Early St.
Marion, Ala.	

FOX SPARROW DENSITY NEAR AUBURN

The density of the Fox Sparrow, *Passerella iliaca iliaca*, population near Auburn is usually very light. It is an uncommon winter resident and does not often appear on our census reports. You can imagine the excitement of the writer, when on January 7, 1956, he chanced upon a wintering population of more than 50 Fox Sparrows.

The Fox Sparrows were found about 16 miles south of Auburn, in a 15-acre weedy bottomland field which was isolated in the extensive forests of the Tuskegee Resettlement Area. They were associated with Towhees, White-throated Sparrows and Song Sparrows. Several of the Fox Sparrows were netted and banded. Unfortunately they usually flew above the net when driven and so the estimated density of more than 50 for the 15-acre field is as close to the real density as could be determined.

It is not known whether the Fox Sparrows spent more than a week at this locality. They were first seen on January 7 and last on January 13. The next trip to the area was April 3, and at that time there was no evidence of Fox Sparrows to be seen.

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