

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