

ditional specimens have been collected by the writer and the specimen taken by these Barn Owls is the fifth record for the state.

The group of mammals that these owls ate confirm the classical habitat preference of Barn Owls, the old field. Around Auburn these mammals are easiest found and found in greatest numbers in old fields, or fields that have been left out of cultivation for several years. These old fields are vegetated by various grasses and annual and perennial woody plants. Usually pine trees are widely scattered through them, making the habitat desirable for pine mice. Fields of this sort occur within a mile of the Barn Owl roost, so a feeding area was easily available for them.

Owl food habits are of interest to ornithologists in their studies of these birds and they are also quite helpful to mammalogists because they do a thorough job of sampling the mammal populations where they feed.

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Department of Zoology-Entomology  
A.P.I. Auburn, Alabama  
Received February 20, 1957

## IBIS RECORDS FROM THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

By THOMAS Z. ATKESON, Biologist

The increase of ibises in Alabama is typical of the responses that many nongame birds have made to the protection afforded by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1915. Howell's *BIRDS OF ALABAMA*, most of the material for which was collected prior to 1922, states that White Ibis is only an accidental visitor to the State, cites only two old records for Wood Ibis and gives no actual records for Glossy Ibis. A review of the present status of these birds indicates a dramatic increase.

In the southern half of the State, wherever suitable habitat occurs, White Ibis are now fairly common during the warm-weather months. The discovery in 1956, by James Keeler and others, of a large nesting colony on a small island in Southfield Lake, Baldwin County, firmly establishes them as Alabama nesters. Even in the Tennessee Valley of northern Alabama, where these birds would seem least likely to occur, they are classed as irregular visitors.

While Wheeler Reservoir was impounded in the fall of 1936, and the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1938, no ibises were noted until 1948. During both 1948 and 1949, large birds were tentatively identified as ibises, but specific identification was not possible. The first accurate record came on July 11, 1950, when four immature White Ibis were noted feeding in a shallow borrow pit. There were no further records for that year, but in 1951 these birds became fairly common with numerous small flocks, usually numbering from 5 to 7 individuals and the majority of which were immature birds, noted regularly from April 17 through September 18. There was only a single record for 1952, an immature bird seen on August 5, and none appeared in 1953. The only record in 1954 was a couple of immature birds noted on July 14 and none reappeared in 1955. In 1956, a small flock of immature White Ibis were seen on September 2 and a small flock of mature birds on September 4. The above records were supplied by Dr. F. J. Buchmann, H. H. Grammer, E. A. Byford, Eugene Cypert, James Keeler, Wayne Colin, David Hulse, Paul Bryan, and J. L. Heflin.

Wood ibis are now regular residents during the warm-weather months in the southern tier of counties and are occasional visitors further inland. Even in the

Tennessee Valley, these ibis can be considered irregular visitors. The first Wood Ibis record for Wheeler Refuge came in 1951, when from 1 to 3 mature birds were noted regularly from August 1 through October 15. There were no further records until 1955 when a flock, sometimes numbering 32 individuals, was seen regularly from June 27 through September 10. Wood ibis sight records for the Valley can be credited to Charles M. Parker, Grammer, Byford, Cypert, Hulse, Bryan, and Heflin.

All the above Tennessee Valley records for both White and Wood Ibises have come from Wheeler Refuge and the backwater area immediately west of it, i. e., the southern edge of Limestone County and the northern edge of Morgan County, although Bryan, on July 18, 1955, picked up a dead Wood Ibis along a roadside in Lawrence County, a few miles west of Mallard Creek. There is no indication that either species nested in the Valley. Since the singular appearance of these birds makes a mistaken identification unlikely and since the number of qualified observers was large, no collection was considered necessary.

While there are now several Glossy Ibis records for Alabama and these birds have appeared as far north as the Tuscaloosa vicinity, none have been reported from the Tennessee Valley.

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge  
Decatur, Alabama  
Received March 16, 1957

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, ALABAMA, 1956

Compiled by THOMAS A. IMHOF

**BIRMINGHAM:** 21st annual count, 16 observers in 5 parties, 46 party-hours. December 22, .66 inches of rain all day, temp. 58 to 68, wind SSE 0-18 mph; warm, wet December made up for a cold, dry November so that the year is just about average for temperature and precipitation. Several species missed on account of rain.

**MOBILE:** 3rd annual count and the first time Fr. Dorn has had some help, 9 observers in 3 parties, 30 party-hours. Dec. 28, clear, windy, temp. 45 to 55, wind SW 5-25 mph; steady, strong wind hampered observation of small birds in cover.

**DAUPHIN ISLAND:** 1st count in this area except for an old count at Coden, which was strictly land birds, taken in 1913; 9 observers in 4 parties, 37 party-hours. Dec. 29, clear and windy, temp. 40 to 55, wind NW 3-18 mph; boat trip cancelled, small craft warning up; due to NW wind, water in bays very low, shorebirds scattered and far out, small birds hard to flush. On both coastal counts, Miss Rosemary D. Gaymer of Toronto, Ontario, (vacationing in Fairhope with friends) gave a good account of herself and the birds she saw. In addition, she supplied us with a record of the Rufous Hummingbird from Fairhope, Dec. 26, a first record for the state, and the 2nd hummingbird known to have wintered in Fairhope.

| SPECIES                          | BIRMINGHAM | MOBILE  | DAUPHIN |
|----------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Common Loon .....                | 1          | 1       | 1       |
| Horned Grebe .....               | 4          | 42      | 40      |
| Pied-billed Grebe .....          | 113        | 37      | 10      |
| White Pelican .....              | .....      | 41      | 13      |
| Brown Pelican .....              | .....      | 16      | 126     |
| Double-crested Cormorant .....   | .....      | 151     | 101     |
| Great Blue Heron .....           | 2          | 3       | 20      |
| American Egret .....             | .....      | 28      | .....   |
| Snowy Egret .....                | .....      | 95      | .....   |
| Louisiana Heron .....            | .....      | 3       | .....   |
| Little Blue Heron .....          | .....      | 1 (JLD) | .....   |
| Black-crowned Night Heron .....  | .....      | 2       | .....   |
| Yellow-crowned Night Heron ..... | .....      | 1       | 1       |
| American Bittern .....           | .....      | .....   | 1       |
| Mallard .....                    | 4          | 2       | 1       |
| Black Duck .....                 | .....      | 2       | 3       |
| Gadwall .....                    | .....      | 4600    | 260     |
| Am. Widgeon (Baldpate) .....     | 4          | 12      | 2       |
| Pintail .....                    | .....      | 600     | .....   |