

mer saw the mature bird at close range in the same locality.

The last and most recent of the swan records came on November 3, 1957, when Refuge Manager Charles Parker, Grammer, and Homer Blackwood came upon a lone mature Whistler in the White Springs unit. This bird was seen almost daily through the remainder of that year and until March 3, 1958. So many individuals saw it that they are too numerous to mention. School and Sunday School classes, and other visiting groups were guided around the White Springs dike throughout the fall and winter of 1957-58 and were usually rewarded by a look at this bird. In addition to those already mentioned, it was seen by all refuge employees, including T. P. Sandlin, Gordon Bishop, and Emmett Waldrep, Jr. Other good observers include Dr. Ralph Chermock, of the University of Alabama's Biology Department, Professor Allen Bales, also of the University, Bryan, Paul Robinson, W. M. Depreast, Game Management Agent Leo M. Martin, and State Conservation Officer J. B. Tanner. The bird was usually seen in company with a flock of Canada geese and was often observed feeding on millet in the flooded White Springs unit or grazing in a nearby wheat field. It was carefully checked against various references and all possibility of its having been either a Mute or a Trumpeter Swan was ruled out.

Other than the four cited above, no recent swan records are known for northern Alabama. These four occurred wholly on the refuge in the southern edge of Limestone County and the northern edge of Morgan County. Due to the singular appearance of these birds, to the number of good observers, and to a natural reluctance to eliminate one of these stately and unusual visitors, no attempt was made to collect a specimen.

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Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge  
Decatur, Alabama  
March 26, 1958

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE IN ALABAMA

(*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

ROBERT W. SKINNER

Two years of field work, habitat studying, and general informational reading on the two species of kites in Alabama produced a specimen on May 7, 1958, in Baldwin County.

On the morning of that date the author was on the Alabama River in Baldwin County adjacent to the mouth of Holly Creek with the purpose in mind of collecting a Mississippi kite, of which there is no specimen for Alabama.

The A. M. proved fruitless, as no kites of either species were sighted. As noted on previous field trips the kites seem to be more active during the noon hour. Shortly after noon the first Mississippi kite was sighted—a single flying at high elevation over the tall timber on the river bottom. This was a thrilling sight to watch as the kite went through its aerial maneuvers; although it seemed to have no intention of dropping to a lower elevation.

No more kites were seen until about 2:30 P. M., at which time we rounded a bend in the river and came upon a drove of six, working their way up the river.

One of the birds was finally collected—an adult male. This was due to some very good boat maneuvering by Weber Walters, a district Conservation Officer who was obliging enough to act as guide.

During the course of the day a minimum of 15 Mississippi kites were sighted. This is far above the number usually seen on previous trips. Although no Swallow-Tail Kites were seen on that date, they are usually more numerous than the Mississippi kites.

About one week later on May 13 Reynolds Thrasher, a biologist, explained that he had seen a bird with which he was not familiar near Montgomery. The bird was described as pearl gray, pointed wings, etc. The area in which he had seen the bird was No. 4 Prison Camp in the bend of the river in North Montgomery County. The No. 4 Camp area is planted in several hundred acres of wheat.

Ten minutes after the author's arrival a Mississippi kite suddenly appeared overhead at a very low elevation. It was feeding on a grasshopper, which, with the use of field glasses, was very distinguishable. In

a matter of minutes seven kites were in view. All the birds at one time or another were observed diving into the wheat, then rising for elevation and feeding.

It is gratifying to know that so beneficial and picturesque a bird has not been reduced in numbers beyond a possible comeback. However, full protection is needed for both species if they are to continue to survive.

As yet no nest has been found in Alabama; although ornithologists are sure that they breed here.

Recent records show that the Mississippi kite is to be found in the southwest counties of Alabama, with one or two in the north-central section of the State.

The specimen collected in Baldwin County is to be placed in the Department of Conservation collection.

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Department of Conservation  
Montgomery, Alabama

## SPRING MEETING BIRD COUNT

A composite bird list was contributed by members of the Alabama Ornithological Society who attended the spring meeting at Auburn, Alabama, April 19 and 20, 1958. The weather was clear and mild. A total of 109 species was recorded. "C"—common and "A"—abundant. Great Blue Heron, 1; Little Blue Heron, 1; Green Heron, 3; Blue-winged Teal, 6; Wood Duck, 1; Ring-necked Duck, 3; Lesser Scaup, 2; Ruddy Duck, 1; Turkey Vulture, 2; Black Vulture, 6; Cooper's Hawk, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 5; Broad-winged Hawk, 1; Bobwhite, 6; American Coot, 1; Wilson's Plover, 4; Killdeer, 4; Spotted Sandpiper, 1; Solitary Sandpiper, 4; Mourning Dove, 20; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 4; Barred Owl, 3; Chuck-will's widow, 2; Whip-poor-will, 1; Common nighthawk, 5; Chimney Swift, C; Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 15; Belted Kingfisher, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 10; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Redbellied Woodpecker, 10; Red-headed Woodpecker, 7; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 5; Hairy Woodpecker, 10; Downy Woodpecker, C; Eastern Kingbird, C; Great Crested Flycatcher, C; Least Flycatcher, 1; Eastern Wood Pewee, 7; Rough-winged Swallow, C; Barn Swallow, 4; Purple Martin, 14; Bluejay, C; Common Crow, C; Carolina Chickadee, C; Tufted Titmouse, C; Brownheaded Nuthatch, C; Carolina Wren, C; Mockingbird, C; Brown Thrasher, 10; Robin, 10; Wood Thrush, C; Hermit Thrush, 1; Gray-cheeked Thrush, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 15; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, C; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 3; Cedar Waxwing, 18; Loggerhead Shrike, 10; Starling, C; White-eyed Vireo, C; Yellow-throated Vireo, C; Red-eyed Vireo, C; Warbling Vireo, 1; Black and White Warbler, 15; Prothonotary Warbler, 4; Worm-eating Warbler, 1; Blue-winged Warbler, 2; Tennessee Warbler, 1; Parula Warbler, 1; Myrtle Warbler, C; Cape May Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, C; Black-throated Green Warbler, 2; Cerulean Warbler, 5; Blackburnian Warbler, 1; Yellow-throated Warbler, C; Pine Warb-