

THE BARN SWALLOW BREEDING IN DEKALB COUNTY

The northeast-southwest running valleys between Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain in northeast Alabama seem to be migration highways for swallows. So, the presence of a few Barn Swallows the first week of June 1950-1958, 5 miles north of Fort Payne was not taken as a certainty that the species bred nearby. However, this region was closely watched with the result that in June, 1958, I discovered a newly-fledged brood of Barn Swallows along U. S. Highway No. 11, 5 miles north of Fort Payne. This was the first instance of the breeding of the Barn Swallow in Alabama away from the Gulf Coast and the Tennessee Valley.

In the following two years, Barn Swallows have been discovered at 4 more localities north along U. S. 11 to the Georgia line. Small groups, probably one to three pairs, occupy barns located in extensive pastures. The birds are seen to enter the barns frequently, but it could never be determined whether or not they were carrying food or nesting material, nor was there time to get permission to investigate the barns for nests.

The isolated Gulf Coastal Barn Swallow colonies provide an interesting example of a disjunct breeding range. Will we in our day witness a linking of the main population with its Gulf Coastal outliers? In the last 40-odd years, the American Robin and then the Brown-headed Cowbird entered Alabama from the north as breeding birds, and the Robin reached Dauphin Island this year as a breeder, while the Cowbird reached the coast as a breeder in 1954.

This is just another example of why birds with their dynamic capabilities make to many the most fascinating subjects in all natural history.

—THOMAS A. IMHOF

EVENING GROSBEAKS

From various parts of the state we find increasing reports of Evening Grosbeaks. As reported in Alabama Birdlife, Vol. 7, Nos. 3-4, they were seen in the Monie Sano State Park area by the Robinsons and the Gadsden area in the early winter of 1959-60. Reports from Edith Clark in Gadsden had provided many of our birders with an opportunity of seeing them more or less regularly at her feeders the previous winter.

Jenkins Jackson of Livingston reports them in 1958 as follows:

"About 15 or more of these birds divided between mature males and females or immatures appeared on my farm 1 mile west of Livingston, on April 10th, 1958. They were loudly chattering as they ate the staminate flowers of a White Ash tree. They paid little attention to me as I stood under the tree observing them with binoculars for about 45 minutes. They left in a northeasterly direction. As far as I know, this establishes the southernmost and southwesternmost point for them east of the Mississippi River."

Harriet Wright sends reports from the Birmingham area for the 1959-60 winter season. Two flocks of Evening Grosbeaks, 14 and 20, were seen in Bessemer from February 13th to April at the feeders of Mrs. Rex Davis and Clustie McTyeire. This is the first time a flock has ever been observed for so long a period of time in this area. On February 24, 1960, Elizabeth Eddy saw an Evening Grosbeak; November 21, 1959, Pat Riley had one Evening Grosbeak visit her feeder.

Besides the winter reports for Gadsden, Edith Clark reports that Bill Bates had a female Evening Grosbeak in their backyard on July 11th this year. The Bates' feeder was the gathering place for one of the flocks this winter.

This seems to be one of the birds that is extending its range. Records from other parts of the state would be welcome.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome as new members:

Mrs. Martha Bradley, 4929 Avenue I, Birmingham 8, Ala.

Mrs. E. R. (Pearl) Henson 1045 Grant Street, Decatur, Ala.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notice your treasurer's new address.

Mr. and Mrs. James C. Robinson, R.F.D., Brownsboro, Ala.

Also moved:

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. West, 5511 Dayton Blvd., Chattanooga, Tenn.