

TWO INTERESTING AUGUST RECORDS FROM OXFORD, ALABAMA

William S. Clark

While birding near Oxford, Alabama on August 3, 1963, young Nicky Burrows of Oxford and I stirred up a most unusual sight. A peppery little Short-billed Marsh Wren started scolding us from a portion of a high-grass field near a swamp. Nicky, investigated one of the wren's stopping places in the tall grass and discovered a dummy nest. We searched for other nests, especially the real one, but to no avail.

Being out on another hike a week later, we again found the wren to be in a scolding mood. On this occasion we found another dummy nest, this one woven from live grass. Again we searched for the actual nest but found nothing. And all the time we were being admonished by our little friend's "Chap-chap-chap-brrrr". On subsequent visits to the area we didn't find our unusual visitor.

On August 10, 1963, we saw a Black-billed Cockoo near Oxford, Alabama. He was obliging enough to sit very still while we crept close enough for positive identification. Even after he flushed, he flew only as far as a nearby willow. His red eye-ring and lack of large white spots on his tail told us that we had indeed seen our rarer "Rain Crow".

2208 Bolton Drive
Atlanta, Georgia

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GROUND DOVES FROM THE TENNESSEE VALLEY REGION.

Thomas Z. Atkeson

Although the Tennessee Valley of Alabama is somewhat north of the normal range of the diminutive ground dove, these birds appeared on the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent parts of the valley with reasonable regularity during the 1940's and early 1950's. For example, there was a single record in 1942, another in 1947, two records in 1950, two in 1951, one in 1953, two in 1954 and two again in 1955. In the succeeding eight years there has not been a single occurrence recorded, even though a careful watch has been kept and these birds are readily identified. They are not insect feeders and it seems doubtful that the use of crop insecticides can be blamed on their disappearance. Trichomoniasis has made heavy inroads among the mourning doves of the Tennessee Valley region since 1951, and it is probable that ground doves have also been affected. We would like to see the disappearance of the ground dove from the Tennessee Valley region correlated with observation from other regions of Alabama and an effort made to determine just what has happened to this interesting species.

Wheeler Refuge
Decatur, Alabama

THE SWALLOW-TAILED KITE IN BALDWIN COUNTY, ALABAMA

Maurice F. Baker

On April 3, 1963, I was on the property of the Carney Timber Company in the northern part of Baldwin County, Alabama, when I observed a Swallow-tailed Kite. This bird soared in plain view for several minutes and I was able to study it closely with binoculars. Although I had never before seen one of these birds, its distinctive color pattern, shape and manner of flight left no doubt as to its identity. The location of this sighting was approximately 9 miles north and 6 miles west of the village of Perdido, Baldwin County, in Section 12 of Range 3, east, of Township 2 North, near the confluence of Seven Mile and Pine Log Creeks. Imhof (Alabama Birds, p. 167-168) lists this bird as uncommon to rare in Alabama, but indicates 4 other sight records in northern Baldwin County.

At the time of this sighting I was accompanied by Mr. Ralph Durette and Mr. Glen Morris of the Carney Timber Company. Neither of these knew the name of the bird but Mr. Morris recalled having seen this kind of bird the previous year. He reported having described it to several people who were unable to name it.

Dr. Mason Carter of the Department of Forestry, Auburn University, was also in the group who saw this bird. He reported to me later, that on the following day, April 4, 1963, he saw three Swallow-tailed Kites in the same vicinity.

Wildlife Research Unit
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NOTICE! NOTICE! NOTICE!

Especially to observers in the Gulf Coast Area.

If you see a green tern on your next field trip, do not turn in your binoculars, simply notify Lovett Williams, Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, P.O. Box 908, Lake City, Florida or R. W. Skinner, Department of Conservation, Montgomery, Alabama. Be sure to give the date, exact locality, and color. Royal and Sandwich Terns are being dyed as part of a life history and migration study on Petit Bois and the Chandeleur Islands.