

AN ALBINO ROBIN NEAR MOBILE

Kathleen Yerger Johnstone

Hearing of a strange bird which had been seen on Mon Louis Island, south of Mobile, four of us went in search of it on the afternoon of March 22, 1965. After crossing Fowl River, we stopped at a small store on the west side of Dauphin Island Parkway, to ask the whereabouts of the bird, which according to report, many of the local residents had seen and tried to catch with cast nets. Our informant said to go to a small, plowed field with a gate just beyond the third house from his store on the "black top"; adding that the bird had been in or around the field for about a week.

Just past the third house we found a driveway blocked by a sagging gate, beyond which was the plowed field. About fifty feet across the field there was a large fallen tree, and perched on top, as if awaiting inspection, was the much-talked-of bird. It was about 8½ - 10½ inches long, white from head to tail except for a buffy tinge on the head, wing tips, and tail and a "brick-red" breast. The legs were black and rather long; the bill yellow. Without a doubt it was an albino Robin.

The bird was closely observed on the fallen tree, in flight to a nearby tree where it perched in full view; in flight again to another plowed field where it fed for five minutes before flying to a group of trees some distance away. No other Robins were around and none had been observed on the way from my residence near the mouth of Dog River to the field. A week before a "white Robin", in a flock of ordinary Robins, had been reported at Spring Hill, but the observers were not known to be experienced birders.

The report of the "white Robin" on Mon Louis Island came from Dr. Leslie Taylor, who lives nearby on Fowl River. The three observers who accompanied the writer were: Harry Inge Johnstone of Mobile, Lt. and Mrs. Yerger Johnstone of New River, North Carolina.

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NOTES

Notes from Marengo County, Alabama. On January 29, 1965, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks were observed constructing a nest in a Tupelo Gum. Upon closer observation it was determined to be last years nest being repaired. This seemed rather early for nest construction.

A pair of Red-tailed Hawks were seen in mating flight and territory established the first week in February.

We have had two immature Golden Eagles in the area most of the winter. One was approached to within 40 yards before taking flight. I have only one record of the Bald Eagle there this winter. Robert W. Skinner, State Conservation Department, Game & Fish Division, Montgomery.

Notes from The Tennessee Valley. The winter period was a wet one, but there were only 2 light snows and only a few days when the reservoir was ice-locked. Throughout the fall and winter of 1964-65, Wheeler Refuge's duck numbers were approximately equal to those of the previous season, peaking at 56,000. Canada Goose numbers, on the other hand, showed a sharp drop of over 20 percent and reached a peak of 46,000 in early December. There was a definite movement of these birds from this locality that began during the last week of December and continued through January. Blue and Snow Goose numbers were unchanged.

The public waterfowl hunt, held on a portion of the refuge, proved successful. There was no slaughter, but hunters did bag 1,011 Canada Geese and 404 ducks and made the manufacturers of small arms ammunition considerably richer.

As for unusual bird notes, there were almost none. David Hulse spotted an adult White-winged Scoter on January 23. This was the first adult male noted here. All previous records have been females or immature birds. Bald Eagles reappeared on Wheeler Refuge after a 2 year absence. The first was noted in late November and the birds remained until mid-February. At least two, an adult and an immature, were seen regularly and there may have been others. Thomas Z. Atkinson, Jr., Decatur, Alabama.

Unusual Junco from Jacksonville. On January 20, 1965, the author collected a specimen of junco in Jacksonville, Alabama, which had characteristics similar to Junco o. oregonus. The skin was sent to the National Museum in Washington and identified by Lester L. Short, Jr., Chief, Bird Section, as Junco hyemalis montanus x hyemalis. Mr. Short recently spent four months re-working the junco collection in the National Museum and was in a position to readily identify the specimen. He regards the dark-eyed junco populations as comprising one species, J. hyemalis, as interbreeding between "hyemalis" and "oreganus" populations is massive and its effects far reaching. He does not recognize "cismontanus" (J. o. oregonus x J. h. hyemalis) for it is a hybrid population and notoriously unstable. The author's specimen would formerly have been classified as Junco oregonus montanus x hyemalis but is now

written Junco hyemalis montanus x hyemalis. It was Mr. Short's guess that the Jacksonville bird was hatched in southwestern or west central Alberta. He had one other specimen very much like it in the national collection which was collected in December at Lawrence, Kansas. Both birds were subadults. Charles W. Summerour, Jacksonville, Alabama.

MINUTES OF FALL MEETING
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OCTOBER 9-11, 1964

The regular fall meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held in Birmingham, Alabama, on October 9-11, 1964. Headquarters motel was the St. Francis Hotel Courts located on U.S. Highway 31 in Homewood. Thirty-two members and 10 guests attended the meeting.

The program began on Friday evening, October 9, with a planetarium show at Birmingham-Southern College, narrated by Dr. W.E. Glenn, Director of the Birmingham-Southern College Planetarium. Saturday morning, after an early field trip led by Harriett Wright to the home of Dr. Hathaway on the Cahaba River and a trip to the banding site set up by Tom Imhof, registration was held at 8:00 A.M. at the Shades Cahaba School in Homewood. Afterwards, field trips were made available to Lake Purdy, the Cahaba River Valley and Oak Mountain, led by F. Bozeman Daniel, Walter Coxe and Raymond Bates, respectively. In addition, Mr. Imhof, Julian and Rosemary Dusi and Jim and Margaret Robinson set up netting and banding stations, which could be visited by the members and guests.

A business meeting of the membership was called to order by the President at 2:15 P.M., October 10. Twenty-six members were present. The minutes of the spring business meeting held on April 25, 1964, were read and approved. The Treasurer reported that the membership of the society was 148 and its bank balance was \$132.48.

The President reported on the summer bird counts that had been inaugurated this year, stating that they had been held in Birmingham and Auburn and that they had produced informative data on our summering bird populations. He urged that the counts be expanded in the future to cover additional areas.

The President commended Mr. Jerome B. Couch and Mr. J.W. Johnson for their excellent publication of the society's newsletter. He also announced that the Calhoun County Bird Club had been organized and desired to affiliate with the AOS and that the executive council had approved its affiliation. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the affiliation of the Calhoun County Bird Club with the Alabama Ornithological Society be approved.

The President then urged the submission of articles for publication in the Newsletter and in Alabama Birdlife.

Mr. Tom Imhof then reported on banding activity, noting particularly the banding of 6 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, 3 Yellow-breasted Chats, a Yellow Warbler (which was a late record for the Birmingham area) and 32

White-eyed Vireos. At 2:45 P.M., upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the business meeting was adjourned.

Following field trips to the same areas as in the morning, a banquet was held in a private dining room at the King's Inn in Homewood. Several handsome door prizes were awarded. Mr. Thomas Z. Atkinson, Director of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, reported on the problem of waterfowl mortality from lead poisoning as a result of eating lead shot. He pointed out that it had been estimated that 3 million waterfowl died each year from lead poisoning contracted in that manner and that legislation was in the process of being introduced to forbid the use of lead shot and, thus, in effect to require that steel shot be used in the manufacture of shot-gun shells.

The principal speaker of the evening was Mr. M.L. (Jack) Miles of Selma. His very entertaining and inspiring talk centered about his trips to Central and South America, principally under the sponsorship of Louisiana State University, observing and collecting bird species of those areas.

The President expressed the appreciation of the AOS to the Birmingham Audubon Society, which had acted as host for the meeting, and particularly to its president, Mr. Raymond Bates.

On Sunday after a morning of field trips followed by light refreshments at the ford below the Lake Purdy Dam, Mr. Robert Waters conducted a compilation of the birds observed. A total of 101 species was recorded.

MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY 30, 1965

A meeting of the Executive Council of the Alabama Ornithological Society was called to order by the President at 1:00 P.M. on January 30, 1965, at the Holiday Inn in Oxford, Alabama. The meeting was held in conjunction with the regular mid-winter meeting of the society. Those present were:

Dr. Dan C. Holliman	President
Mr. Robert E. Waters	Vice-President
Mr. Robert R. Reid, Jr.	Secretary
Mrs. Rosemary T. Dusi	Immediate Past President
Dr. Maurice F. Baker	Editor, <u>Alabama Birdlife</u>
Mr. Jerome B. Couch	Co-Editor, Newsletter
Mr. J.W. Johnson	Co-Editor, Newsletter
Dr. Julian L. Dusi	Director and Librarian
Mrs. Harriett Wright	Director
Mr. James E. Keeler	Director

The minutes of the executive council meeting of October 10, 1964, were read and approved.