

THE SEASON, Spring

(March, April, May, 1972)

Curtis L. Kingsbery, editor Northwest Florida

It is hoped that this new addition to "The Season" will provide meaningful information on bird migration throughout Northwest Florida.

April 8 was a "Big Day" on the coast. Large numbers of shorebirds were observed in the A.M. Around noon the wind shifted and the afternoon produced large numbers of incoming migrants, principally Red-eyed Vireos, Orchard Orioles, and Indigo and Painted Buntings.

Migratory movements of individual species often occur at the same time. With sufficient observers reporting similar types of data, meaningful information might be garnered. Some examples of arrival or departure dates throughout the area are: Common Loon-May 5, Pensacola, 9th Ft. Walton Beach; Common Nighthawk-Apr. 4 Panama City, 14th Marianna, 15th N. Santa Rosa Co.; Eastern Kingbird-Apr. 2 Shalimar, 8th Destin, 11th Marianna, 15th N. Santa Rosa Co.; Great-crested Flycatcher-Apr. 5, Pensacola, 7th Marianna, 8th Destin, 15th N. Okaloosa Co., 16th Cantonment; Robin-May 1, Panama City, 5th Shalimar, 6th Pensacola; Red-eyed Vireo-Apr. 2, Shalimar, 3th Pensacola, 8th Destin; Hooded Warbler-Apr. 2, Shalimar, 8th Destin, 11th Marianna, 15th N. Santa Rosa Co.; Orchard Oriole-Apr. 2, Shalimar, 3rd Marianna, 6th Panama City, 8th Destin.

PELICANS, FRIGATE-BIRD--White Pelicans observed in westward migration with 80 at Destin on Apr. 8 (FMWASP), 75 at Pensacola Beach on May 6 (EEF,AF,VP), 53 over Gulf Breeze on May 20 (RLB). Brown Pelicans were observed on Apr. 13 & May 10 in the Destin area (H&AG), 5 in Choctawhatchee Bay on Apr. 23 (CLK) and 7 at Gulf Breeze on May 14 (RLB). An early Magnificent Frigate-bird was at St. Joseph Peninsula on Apr. 18 (SS).

HERONS--A Great White Heron, considered accidental in the area, was observed on Mar. 5 at T. H. Stone State Park in Port St. Joe (SS). Louisiana Heron, inexplicably rare in NW Florida, was sighted once, on Apr. 22 at Destin (H&AG). Yellow-crowned Night Herons are again nesting within the city limits of Pensacola.

DUCKS--Greater Scaup was recorded at Destin on Apr. 8 (FMWASP), by 3 days the latest record. Four Redheads were at Santa Rosa Island on May 6 (LIM, mob), the latest ever except for one record on May 23. Between Apr. 8 & 12 as many as 8 Surf Scoters were observed at the Tyndall Peninsula. It is quite unusual to see other than single birds (SS).

HAWKS--The earliest Broad-winged in NW Fla. by 6 days was sighted on Mar. 18 at Big Creek (CLK,mob). An Osprey unusual this far from a major waterway was sighted in Marianna on Apr. 22 (CLK,SS). Ospreys were also observed in Pensacola on May 6 (EEF) & May 13 (CLK,FMWASP) where they have become quite rare.

SHOREBIRDS--An Am. Woodcock in Marianna on Apr. 8 (MG) is only the second April record, although there are a few scattered summer records. The only observations of Upland Plover were on Tyndall Peninsula Apr. 6 & 7 (SS). An Am. Avocet was observed at Gulf Breeze on Apr. 9 (P&BT). Formerly considered accidental, this bird has now been sighted eight times in the last few years, once or twice only each month April through Nov. A Northern Phalarope was closely observed on May 13 (CLK,FMWASP), the second record for NW Fla. (details to appear in Florida Naturalist). The three records of the Tallahassee region, interestingly fall on dates quite close: May 14, 19-20 & 25.

ANI, GOATSUCKER--From Apr. 7-26 two ani sp. were in the Panama City area, but could not be identified as to species. Any ani in NW Fla. is noteworthy (RH,mob). A late Whip-poor-will was noted in Shalimar Apr. 8 (H&AG).

FLYCATCHER, SWALLOW--A very rare, locally, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was noted at Pensacola Beach on May 6 (EEF). An early Bank Swallow was noted in the Panama City area on Apr. 1 (SS).

NUTHATCH, VIREO--The last of only 4 sightings of Red-breasted Nuthatch was on Apr. 29 (RLB). Until 1970 there had been only two sightings of the Black-whiskered Vireo in NW Fla. In 1970 there were 3 sightings (probably only two birds). Now this year there have been two reports; 1 in Panama City on Apr. 15 (SS,NR) and 1 in Gulf Breeze on Apr. 29 (RLB).

WARBLERS--On Apr. 9 a carefully observed Lawrence's Warbler, first for NW Fla. was in Panama City (DPS). On Apr. 23 in Panama City a strange bird was sketched very well with the aid of binoculars. It can only be a Townsend's Warbler, a first for NW Fla. and probably the entire state (EP). A Black-throated Green in Gulf Breeze May 28,29 is by 10 days the latest for NW Fla. (R&LD).

OBSERVERS--Richard L. Ballman, Robert & Lucy Duncan, E. E. Furnans, Amy Furnans, Vance Furnans, Harold & Agnes Gaither, Lyman E. Goodnight, Mary Gray, Roy C. Hallman, Curtis E. Kingsbery, Mary Lou Mattis, Ed Pipkin, Nancy Roberts, Donald P. Scott, Henry M. Stevenson, Stephen Stedman, Phil & Betsy Tetlow, A. Fred Wicke, mob is many other birders, Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, Pensacola.

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WINTERING ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER IN TENNESSEE VALLEY

In January 1972, I made up some bird pudding consisting of bacon drippings, sugar, cornmeal, raisins and bird seeds as printed in Alabama Birds, and put it in a cup in the back part of the year. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was first seen coming to it, but soon another bird was noticed with it. It acted like the kinglet, but I couldn't see any definite markings due to the distance from the house. After a while I changed the food cup to a tree close to my kitchen window and then on a wire right outside the window. From here the bird was identified as an Orange-crowned Warbler.

The head was grayish with a hint of green in the back. Its breast was a buffy yellow with light grayish streaks that were hard to see unless the bird was close. His beak was very pointed and sharp, and it would flit his wings like that of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Identifiable color photographs were made.

According to Thomas A. Imhof's Alabama Birds, the Orange-crowned Warbler in winter "...is common on the Gulf Coast, fairly common in most of the Coastal Plain, and uncommon to rare as far north as Birmingham and occasionally Gadsden (449)." This record is the first in winter for the Tennessee Valley. The bird was last seen April 4.

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