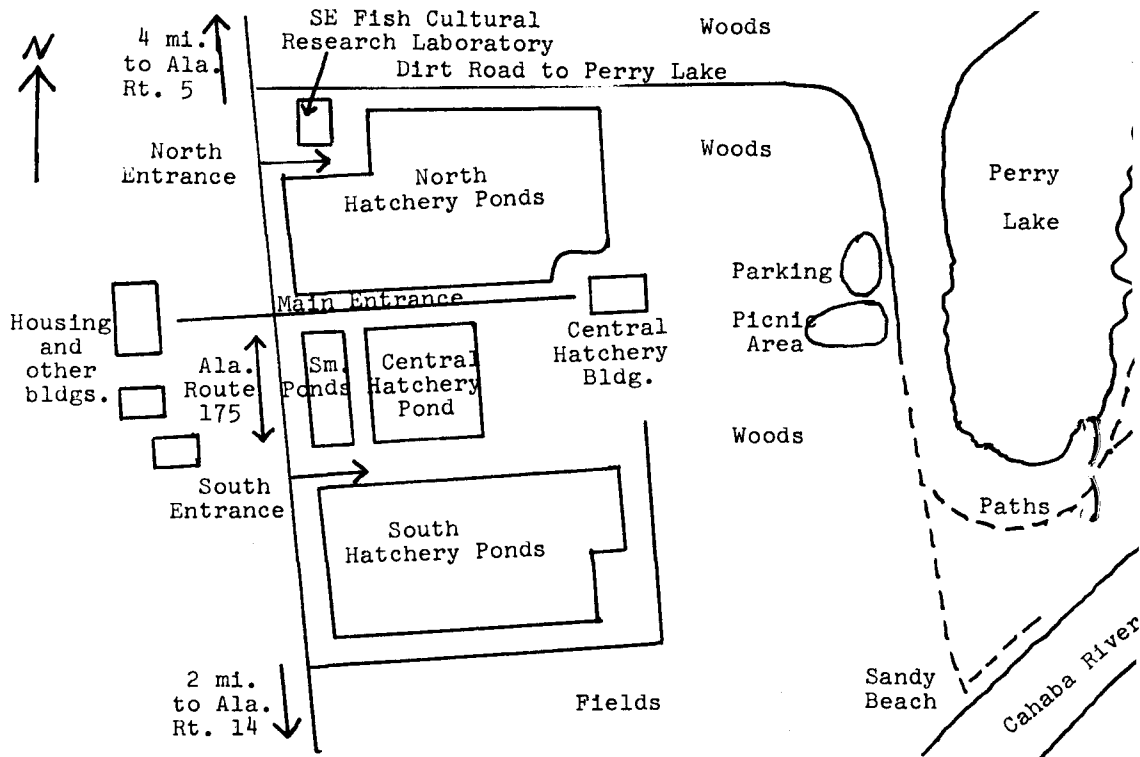


and Song and a few Swamp Sparrows may usually be seen then. Water Pipits are also present on the dikes and mudflats at those times, and a Sprague's Pipit from the western plains was found in March '72.

Others - Fish Crows, which inhabit river valleys as far north as the coastal plain, may almost always be heard or seen during spring and summer at Perry Lake or the hatchery; this is probably the closest place these coastal birds come to the mountain region. There is also a large roost of Black Vultures nearby, which, when they flock around a fish pond, give it an appearance of the African veldt. Several miles north on Alabama Route 5 a Swainson's Hawk was seen in April '71, and a Turkey was spotted in the clearing west of Perry Lake in that same month. Not at the hatchery but in the City of Marion are noteworthy reports of two finches--Evening Grosbeaks (in Jan. '62 and Feb. '72) and a Painted Bunting (in Mar. '70).

The area is not only known for its birdlife but in spring presents an excellent array of wildflowers, including the brilliant Yellow Jessamine, which usually blooms the last of March.

For those who wish to picnic, there are cement picnic tables and water fountains at Perry Lake. The Steak House is a good restaurant at the junction of Alabama Routes 5 and 14, only a few miles distant, and there is also a Dairy Queen at that intersection. Further south on Alabama 5 toward Marion is the College Inn with restaurant and overnight accommodations.



MARION FISH HATCHERY AND PERRY LAKE

Robert R. Reid, Jr., 2616 Mountain Brook Parkway, Birmingham 35223.

THE SEASON, Summer

June, July, August, 1972

Thomas A. Imhof, editor

The weather this summer showed a deficiency in temperature and precipitation - a long-term trend. It appears though that our land is drying out and the effects of this shortage of precipitation are far worse than the weather data show. Fewer woodlands and swamps, more silt in the watercourses and reservoirs, more paving, more sunny instead of shady places, all add up to poor capacity to store water. Nowadays it takes only a small shortage of rainfall to be apparent in vegetation, even in crop failures; and conversely when it does rain hard, as with Hurricane Agnes, everything is flooded.

September is, as usual, too early to determine the effectiveness of the year's breeding activities. The Breeding Bird Survey, which measures the breeding stock not the results, is also hard put to provide any statistics this early. So, any indications of abundance or lack of it, are tentative.

County Bird Survey - This year, a few of us took part in the Tennessee Ornithological Societies Breeding Bird Foray in Lawrence County, Tennessee in which TOS attempts on Decoration Day weekend to find out as much as possible about its county of interest. We liked it so well that we decided Alabama needed something similar. So, in looking over a list of counties with no Breeding Bird Survey mileage, we found two adjoining ones in northwest Alabama, Colbert and Franklin. These were immediately chosen for a 2-3 year survey. It was further decided to make at least one trip per season into each county. The end result will be a revised county list with breeding birds notes.

PIED-BILLED GREBE--Many more of these birds summer in Alabama, seldom in the same place twice, yet few are known positively to breed. A new summering locality is L. Wehopka, Shelby Co. where seen June 17 (HHK).

HERON, IBIS, BITTERN--A Great Blue Heron at L. Purdy on July 9 (JVP) may mean that these birds breed closer to B'ham than we think. White Ibis reached a new peak of 1000 birds on June 4 in Faunsdale-Uniontown colony (RRR, EGR); 1-3 birds were at L. Purdy on Aug. 18, 19 (ALM, mob). A nest of a Least Bittern with 1 nestling was found July 25 at Eufaula Refuge (Julian Dusi).

DUCKS--A Mottled Duck was seen at Gulf Shores on July 31 (JVP). Blue-winged Teal, known positively to breed in all regions of the state but the Piedmont, bred again this year in the Tennessee Valley (see Spring Report). It occurs so regularly in June and July in the Mountain Region that no departure for spring or arrival for fall can be ascertained without being arbitrary. For instance, this year 2 were at L. Purdy on July 4 (HHK). First ones for fall

at Dufaula Refuge were 4 on Aug. 27 (Jimmie Tisdale). A male Am. Widgeon, present at East L., B'ham throughout the period (BAS) is the first summer record for the state. A Shoveler in eclipse plumage at L. Purdy on Sept. 3 (RRR, JRB) is earliest state by 8 days. Two male Ring-necked Ducks at East L. make the 9th consecutive summer there for the species (RRR, mob).

HAWKS--A good indication of the relative abundance of hawks were the figures obtained in Colbert and Franklin Counties this June and July (JVP): Turkey Vulture, 77; Black Vulture, 8; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed H., 3; Red-shouldered H., 3; Broad-winged H., 11. A Swallow-tailed Kite at Waverly, Lee Co. on May 20 (EPH) is the first record for the Piedmont. At Claiborne Bridge, Clarke Co. on July 27 five of these kites were seen with 3 Mississippi (JRB). Ad. and Im. Mississippi Kites at Wheeler Refuge on June 3 (MLB) are the 5th for Tenn. Valley, all between May 3 and Aug. 2. The only Ospreys reported were 3 at Fish R., Baldwin Co. on July 30 (JVR). The only June-July Sparrow Hawks were 4, probably a family, among downtown B'ham buildings (RRR) most of period and 1 in Bessemer on June 11 (JMI, TAI).

RAILS--At Cochrane Causeway on July 30, 5 downy young Common Gallinules were noted (JVP). The Am. Coot nested at East L., B'ham: nest noted on July 29 (RRR), photo July 31 (HHK); 2 young first noted Aug. 12 (IRS, TSS), photo (HHK). This is the 9th consecutive summer there for the species at East L., but the first instance of breeding in the Mtn. Region, 5th for state; the species summers annually in many places throughout the state and very likely breeds or attempts to breed every year in several places.

SHOREBIRDS--Am. Oystercatchers are proving to be regular at Alabama Pt., our 2nd locality on the Alabama coast, with a max. there of 3 on several dates in June (RH). A White-rumped Sandpiper on Aug. 30 and Sept. 2 at L. Purdy (HHK, TAI) is the 3rd in fall in Mtn. Region. Nine Short-billed Dowitchers on Sept. 2, 3 at L. Purdy (TAI, mob) are the largest number for this Region. At L. Purdy a Stilt Sandpiper on Aug. 12 (ALM, RRR, mob), earliest fall Mtn. Region, was followed by 3 on Sept. 2 (TAI, HHK) and 8 on Sept. 3 (RRR, JRB). On Sept. 2 at L. Purdy, 100 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 10 Western Sandpipers are the most seen in the Region (TAI, HHK, JRB).

GULL, TERNS--One ad. and 2 im. Herring Gulls at L. Oliver, Phenix City on June 27 (LAW) are the first in summer in the Piedmont; 2 im. Ring-bills with them (LAW) are the 3rd June or July record. An ad. Franklin's Gull at Horseshore Bend Dam on Bear Cr., Franklin Co. on rainy July 4 (JVP, LP) is the 4th record for Alabama, 3rd for Tenn. Valley, and 2nd in summer. Two terns were recorded halfway between spring departure and fall arrival dates for inland Alabama; the first a Common Tern on L. Oliver on June 20, Hurricane Agnes (LAW) and a Least Tern at L. Purdy on July 9 (JVP), 5th Mtn. Region record.

GOATSUCKERS, WOODPECKER--Breeding season Whip-poor-wills have been heard in Bibb and Shelby Cos., but 1 near L. Purdy on July 2

(RRR, EGR) is the first breeding season indication for Jefferson Co. Whips outnumbered Chucks 32 to 16 in preliminary information from Colbert & Franklin Cos. (JVI, mob). A small family of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers on the Ft. Morgan peninsula, 6 miles w. of Gulf Shores in early June (VDH) sounds like a displacement from destroyed terrain.

GRAY KINGBIRD--Best available information indicates that 6 pairs of Gray Kingbirds breed in Alabama; 3 in Mobile Co. all on Dauphin I. & 3 in Baldwin Co., 2 at Ft. Morgan and 1 at Alabama Pt. (LRT, MWG, VDH, LFC, MLM). Possible others are 1 more on Dauphin and 1 in the dunes between the west end of Little Lagoon and Ft. Morgan.

SWALLOWS--The count of 200 Bank Swallows near Town Cr., Colbert Co. on July 5 (IHK, WRM, ALM) indicates a nearby breeding colony for a species with rather poor past breeding evidence for the state. Barn Swallows continue to spread--at present very few suitable areas north of B'ham are unoccupied. South of B'ham, new nestings or indications of nesting have been noted in Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, Perry, both ends of Choctaw, and Butler Cos. (RRR, JVP, TAI); and nearly all former sites have been checked and found thriving. Cliff Swallows appear to be increasing all across the Tenn. Valley with at least 3 colonies in Colbert Co., the largest with 200 nests--not all occupied--on the Natchez Trace Bridge (RRR, EGR).

WREN, BLUEBIRD--After more than 7 years with no breeding season report of Bewick's Wren, it is indeed encouraging to note 11 this year, including a family of 5 at 6 locations in Colbert, Franklin, and Lawrence Cos. (JVP, WRM, TAI). In late June and July, 1972. Bluebirds, many of them young of the year, were counted in Colbert and Franklin Cos. (JVP, mob).

BLACKBIRD, FINCH--Breeding season records of Baltimore Oriole outside of the western tier of counties are noteworthy--thus 5 at 2 locations in Butler Co. on June 16 (JVP, WRM). A singing male Painted Bunting, same place and time (JVP, WRM) is a real surprise because it is the first inland breeding season record for the state.

OBSERVERS--Birmingham Audubon Society, J. Russell Bailey, Michael L. Biserly, P. Fairly Chandler, M. Wilson Gaillard, Edward P. Hill, Richard Horne, Verda D. Horne, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Helen H. Kittinger, Ann L. Miller, Mary Lou Mattis, W. Roger Baner, James V. Peavy, Lee Peavy, Elberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Tennessee Ornithological Society, Idalene F. Snead, Thomas S. Snead, Lib R. Toenes, L. A. Wells; mob--many other birders.

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