

Table II. Weather Data for Count Periods

Date	6/3	6/6	6/13	6/11	6/12	6/5	6/3
Temp	57-72	69-85	60-79	73-82	63-76	67-87	50-89
Wind Speed	0-1	0-2	0-2	0-1	0-1	1-5	2-2
Sky Code	0-1	0-0	0-1	2-1	2-1	0-1	0-1

Note: Temperature is in degrees fahrenheit. Wind Speed utilizes the Beaufort number system. Sky codes are as follows: 0 - Clear, 1 - Partly cloudy, 2 - Cloudy or overcast.

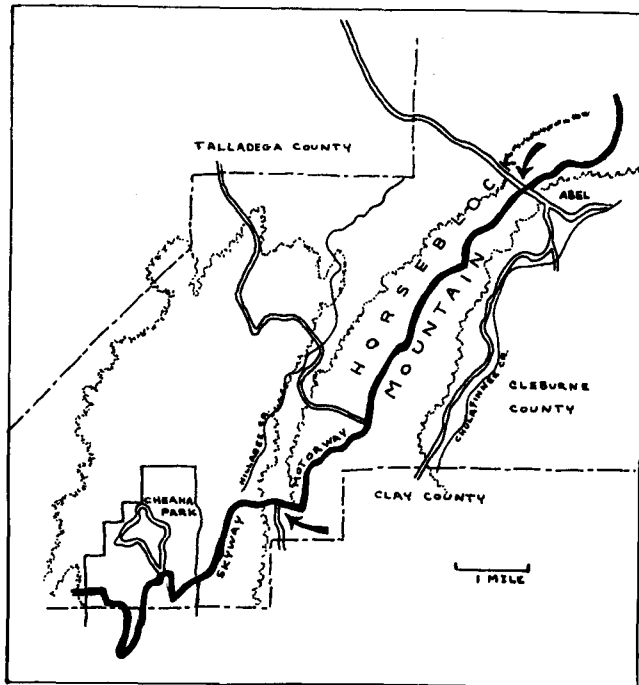


Figure 1. Location of part of the Skyway Motorway north of Cheaha State Park. Six miles of the parkway discussed in this are included between the arrows.

FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF COOTS IN MOUNTAIN REGION

The first positive breeding record of the American Coot in the Mountain Region of Alabama was recorded in late summer, 1972, at East Lake approximately four miles from downtown Birmingham. The nest, constructed of water plants, was located beyond the end of one of the fishing spits that extend into the lake and was first noted by this reporter on July 29 when one bird of a pair was found on the nest. The nest was photographed two days later, and one of the birds was then observed presenting a water plant to the other, who, while sitting on the nest, tucked the plant into it.

Young chicks, black with bright orange heads and bills, were first observed on August 12 swimming behind the two adults and being fed algae. It is thought the young were probably four to six days old at that time, although the hatching date is not known. The young were photographed on August 17 and 19, and, by the latter date, had doubled in size, developed downy fluff and retained orange only on the bills.

Around ten days later, when observed on August 31, the young were approximately half-grown, having acquired black bills and light gray throats and underparts. At this time they were not only being fed by the adults but also feeding themselves. Then, by September 15, approximately a month after having first been observed, they were almost the size of the parents and all gray in color, having changed their plumage from the black of the chicks to a gray shade. The beginning of the white tail patches was then noted, and the young were probably being weaned because they were giving "squeaking" calls without receiving any attention from the adults.

On October 1, the two young were still gray and larger than before, being only slightly smaller than the adults and with their heads becoming darker and bills lighter, much as shown in the picture by Arthur Singer in the field guide, *Birds of North America*. Two weeks later on October 14, they had apparently acquired full adult plumage and could not be distinguished from the wintering flock of coots, then numbering approximately 85, that had arrived at East Lake.

It is interesting that prior to observing the nest, only one adult bird had been noted on the lake when it was checked once in May and again in early July. This was the ninth consecutive year one or more coots have summered on East Lake but is the first time any nesting evidence has been noted. In addition to the coots, two Ring-necked Ducks and one male American Widgeon also summered on the lake, and a male Wood Duck in eclipse plumage was found there from the latter part of August until the middle of September.

For this account, we are indebted to Idalene F. and Thomas S. Sneed, who first spotted the young on August 12, to Helen H. Kittinger for establishing photographic evidence of the nest and young, and to other observers, including Russell Bailey, Jr., and his daughter Laura, John F. Harsh, Ruth Horsley and many others who came out to the lake just to see the young chicks.

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