

THE SEASON, Winter-Spring

December 1973 through May 1974

Thomas A. Imhof, Editor

Winter weather was warm, especially January 13 to February 3 and about February 22 to March 5. Mobile reports its warmest January in 100 years; Birmingham the warmest in 24. Winter survival of small land birds, especially the half-hardy ones, was excellent! So many of them were noted in late February and March that it was often difficult to decide which were successful winterers and which early spring migrants. It must be remembered though that the warm weather of the Southeastern U. S. is not affecting the biological clocks of our summer and transient birds when still in Central America or beyond. Thus, the February Indigo Buntings near the coast are most likely successful wintering birds, but the March 16 Indigo in Birmingham could have been a spring migrant that made exceptional progress from the coast where the earliest arrival date is March 6. In short, this warm weather can move birds inland from the coast, but not from Central America to our coast.

Birds and vegetation were about a week or so early until about April 1, when they became about normal. Many cold fronts, including some that produced killer tornadoes, swept north Alabama. But, as often happens in spring near the coast, the warm, wet, maritime air slowed them down, twisted them into a north-south line, or stalled them altogether. This produced cloudy weather with frequent, occasionally heavy rains that averaged out our temperature as just below normal and precipitation as somewhat above normal. Water levels inland at end of period were high.

This spring, good birding in north and central Alabama was usually associated with rain and warm fronts. On the coast a few good birding days, March 22 to April 13, were followed after Easter (April 14) by unsettled weather, southeasterly winds, generally poor birding with a few bright spots such as May 26, and little birding effort.

MIGRATION PEAKS--On Dauphin about as follows: Mar. 22, Parula and Gnatcatcher; 26 & 27 (148 banded by REH & MEM), White-eyed Vireo, Parula, Prothonotary, Hooded, Indigo & Pine Siskin; Apr. 6, Orchard & Baltimore Orioles; Apr. 9, (61 banded by MEM), Wood & Swainson's Thrushes, Tanagers; Apr. 10, Wood Thrush; Apr. 13, Orchard Oriole & Eastern Kingbird; Apr. 23, Blackpoll & Cape May. On her 6-week visit to Dauphin in 1973, AGI got 200 species, this year 45 less! At Ft. Morgan Apr. 15-19 & Gulf Shores Apr. 15-16, JVP, HME, TAI & RDG banded 377 birds (average only 38 birds per bander per day); top species in order were White-eyed Vireo, Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush & Indigo Bunting.

COUNTS--On Dauphin, Apr. 13, 102 species, 22 observers (MBC).
 On Dauphin, Apr. 19-21, 131 species (AOS), about 40 species short.
 On Dauphin, May 4, 103 species, 13 warblers (MBC).
 Birmingham, 10th Annual (BAS), Apr. 27, 48 observers, 151 party-hours, 140 species, 32 warblers; top birds, Blue Jay 1628, Mourning Dove 1101, Starling 1022, Cardinal 834, Mockingbird 635, Myrtle Warbler 553, Sora new (HHK).
 Bankhead Forest, 4th Annual (BAS), May 11, 34 observers, 44 party-hours, 94 species, 27 warblers. The northern aspect of the forest is clearly shown by the following counts of Upper Austral (first) & Lower Austral species: Whip-poor-will, 80 & Chuck-will's-widow, 17; Black-throated Green Warbler, 16 & Yellow-throated Warbler, 17; Ovenbird, 22 & Kentucky Warbler, 72; Scarlet Tanager, 72 & Summer Tanager, 48.

Noteworthy records for the period follow (TV-Tennessee Valley, Mtr-Mountain Region, Pied-Piedmont, UCP-Upper Coastal Plain, LCP-Lower Coastal Plain, GC-Gulf Coast, CP-Coastal Plain (last 3 regions combined), rec-record):

Common Loon: May 29, Muscle Shoals (HHK, HBT, ALM), latest TV.
 Wilson's Storm-Petrel: May 2, in Gulf (REH), 2nd rec Ala.
 Brown Pelican: Max. 60, May 18, Sand I. (AB, RB, DN, GN).
 Double-crested Cormorant: Apr. 23, L. Oliver, 2 (LAW), another inland rec.
 Magnificent Frigate-bird: Dec. 31, Gulf Shores (JVP, LNP), 3rd winter rec.
 Green Heron: Dec. 29, B'ham (MHP), 2nd winter rec north of CP.
 Green Heron & Cattle Egret are now established as regular in winter on coast.
 Cattle Egret: Mar. 12, Marion (JRB), earliest UCP.
 Reddish Egret: At least 3 (2 Dauphin, 1 Gulf Shores) thru late Dec. (LRT, PFC mob).
 Black-crowned Night Heron: Mar. 17, 6; Apr. 3, 1; Apr. 30, 4; Eufaula Ref. (JM).
 Least Bittern: Dec. 31, Ala. Point (CLK mob), 4th winter rec Ala.; Apr. 27, Eufaula (WG, WM).
 American Bittern: Apr. 30, Eufaula Ref. (JM), latest spring LCP.
 White Ibis: May 11, Double Springs (TAI, JMI), 1st spring rec Mtr.

Whistling Swan: about Jan. 1, Wheeler, 2 immatures (Ferguson), occurring annually.
 Fulvous Tree-Duck: about Dec. 1, Eufaula Ref. (fide LAW); Feb. 26 near Scottsboro, 3, 1 now specimen Dept. Cons. Coll. (JH); 1st winter recs Ala., 2nd & 3rd inland recs.
 Gadwall: May 29, a pair, Muscle Shoals (HHK, HBT, ALM), ties latest Ala.
 Pintail: May 20, female, Wheeler Ref. (DCH, JLW), latest Ala.
 Green-winged Teal: Apr. 5, 4 & 19, 2 Wheeler Ref. (DCH), latest Ala. except GC.
 Blue-winged Teal: May 29, 2 males, Muscle Shoals (HHK, HBT, ALM), latest TV except summer recs.
 Shoveler: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), latest LCP.
 Ring-necked Duck: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), latest LCP.
 Ring-necked Duck: May 29, a female, Muscle Shoals (HHK, HBT, ALM), ties latest Ala. rec except sum.
 Canvasback: Mar. 31, East L., B'ham (RRR), latest Mtr.
 Greater Scaup: Apr. 18, St. Andrew's Bay near Ft. Morgan, male (JVP, many), latest Ala.
 Bufflehead: May 2, a pair, Wheeler Ref. (DCH, JHG), only 1 later rec Ala.
 Oldsquaw: First wk. Jan. 3 at Wheeler (CD) & max. of 4 Jan. 7 near B'ham (ALM, mob); Feb. 27, 3 at L. Lurleen (HHK, HBT); Mar. 18 to Apr. 1, 3 at Lee Co. Public L. (TF, RM), latest Pied; Apr. 17, Wheeler (HJ); none reported GC.
 Black Scoter: Dec. 31, Alabama Point (GDJ mob); Mar. 29, Gulf Shores, 3 (PFC).
 Red-breasted Merganser: May 28, Wheeler Ref. (DCH); latest Ala. except summer recs.

Hawks: 3 counts below in natural prairie of Central Alabama are a good indication of relative abundance, and, except for Black Vulture roost at Marion, about the same in birds per mile (compiler Marion--JVP, Montgomery routes in 5 counties by JEK).

	Date	Miles	TV	BV	SS	CP	RT	RS	RL	Marsh	Merlin	Kestrel	TOTAL
Montgomery vic.	1-23	119	8	2		1	33	1		1		8	72
Montgomery vic.	1-31	119	13	10			31	3		3	1?	11	54
Marion Chmas Count	12-23	207	30	171	2	2	22	4	1	8		21	262
Swallow-tailed Kite:	Mar. 4,	Dog R.,	Mobile,	chased by	F. Crows	(AG),	early.						
Mississippi Kite:	Apr. 25,	19 birds,	Mobile	(HG);	Apr. 29,	5 near	Dothan	(SP).					
Broad-winged Hawk:	Jan. 31	and Feb. 4,	Wheeler	Ref. (DCH),	1st winter	rec TV.							
Rough-legged Hawk:	Dec. 23,	Marion	(HHK);	Feb. 16,	B'ham	Airport	(GC);	Apr. 2,	Boligee	(RDB),	latest	Ala.,	total now 25 recs, species established as regular in winter in Ala.

Bald Eagle: Early Jan., adult & immature, Wheeler (CD); Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP).
Osprey: Feb. 19, Bon Secour, 4 birds, 2 at nest (TAI).
Peregrine Falcon: Feb. 2, 3, 5, Decatur (DCH); Apr. 16, Ft. Morgan (TAI, RDG); Apr. 20, Dauphin (AOS).
Merlin: Feb. 10, Hatchechubee, Russell Co. (JM); Feb. 20, Gulf State Park, caught Myrtle Warbler in mid-air (TAI, PFC, others); June 2, B'ham downtown (RRR, JVP).
Ruffed Grouse: 6 dates (Feb., Apr., Aug., Nov., Dec.), Skyline Mgmt. Area, Jackson Co., the only place in Ala. where species persists (except perhaps intro. birds in Bankhead) (WMan).
King Rail: May 15 & 22, Montevallo (RJK, JLS, mob), rare north of Fall Line.
Virginia Rail: Apr. 21 (4--MF, SP) & 28 (WG, WMat), Eufaula Ref., latest LCP; Apr. 30 - May 16, Wheeler Ref. (WCD, DCH).
Black Rail: Feb. 19 (TAI), Mar. 29 (PFC) & Apr. 14 (TAI & RDG) 2 places, Gulf State Park; species now recorded on GC Feb. to June, Sept. & Oct., probably permanent resident.
Purple Gallinule: Mar. 17, Eufaula Ref. (JM), earliest LCP; May 22, Montevallo (HHK, others).
American Coot: May 20, 2 adults, 6 young, Huntsville (photo--DCH, others).
American Oystercatcher: Apr. 16, Gulf State Park (TAI, RDG); probably resident in Baldwin Co.
Semipalmated Plover: Apr. 23, 2, Phenix City (JM), earliest UCP.
Piping Plover: Apr. 28, Eufaula Ref. (WG, WMat), 2nd inland spring rec.
American Golden Plover: Feb. 19, 7 including flock of 5, Gulf Shores (TAI), earliest Ala.
Black-bellied Plover: Mar. 28, 2, Apr. 12 & May 2, 2, Wheeler Ref. (DCH & JHG), earliest inland rec; Apr. 27, Eufaula Ref. (WG, WMat), 1st spring rec. except TV & GC.
Common Snipe: Apr. 30, 2, Eufaula Ref. (JM), latest LCP.
Solitary Sandpiper: Jun. 3, Marion (RRR, JVP), only Jun. rec Ala.; Max. 60, Apr. 24, Phenix City, Bussey's L. (JM); Mar. 22, Wheeler Ref., 2 (DCH, JLW), earliest TV.
Pectoral Sandpiper: Jan. 10, 4, Weiss L., Cherokee Co. (WJC); Feb. 17, Eufaula Ref. (WG, SP), 3rd & 4th winter recs; June 3, Marion (RRR, JVP), latest Ala.; recs all 12 mos.
Dunlin: Apr. 30, 14 birds, Eufaula Ref. (JM), latest LCP, 7th rec inland Ala. in spring.
Short-billed Dowitcher: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), 1st spring rec LCP.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: Feb. 28, 8, Swan Creek, Limestone Co. (DGH), 1st winter rec TV or earliest spring rec; May 26, 85, B'ham Airport (RRR), spring max. Mtr; June 2, B'ham Airport (RRR, JVP), latest Mtr.
Western Sandpiper: Feb. 19, Gulf Shores, 700 in closely-packed flock (TAI), state max.; Apr. 24, 2, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), earliest TV; June 1, B'ham Airport (TAI), latest Mtr.
Marbled Godwit: May 17, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), 5th inland rec, all spring, 3rd & latest TV.
Glaucous Gull: Apr. 5-7, Dauphin I. (CM, TD, mob), 3rd spring GC.
Ring-billed Gull: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), latest LCP.
Laughing Gull: Apr. 20, L. Oliver (JM) 11 birds, regular spring Chattahoochee Valley.
Bonaparte's Gull: Feb. 19, Gulf Shores & vic., 2750 (TAI), state max.
Gull-billed Tern: Feb. 18, St. Andrew's Bay, near Ft. Morgan, 13 (TAI, PFC), winter max.
Black-billed Cuckoo: May 25, Maud, Colbert Co. (TAI, HME), latest TV.
Barn Owl: Apr. 24, Eufaula Ref., 2 (MF, SP).

Long-eared Owl: Feb. 17, Ft. Morgan (TAI, JVP, WRMa, TLW), 3rd & latest GC.
Short-eared Owl: Nov. 20 - Dec. 15, Dauphin (REH, SBH), 4th & latest GC; Dec. 23, Marion, found dead (TAI, JMI).
Chuck-will's-widow: Dec. 29, Mobile (JLDo); Feb. 17, 2 netted briefly, Ft. Morgan (JVP), 6th & 7th winter recs Ala.; Mar. 5, Dauphin (DB), ties earliest GC.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Dec. 18, Mobile (FEB), 5th winter rec Ala.; Mar. 30, Lovick, B'ham (RRH, CL), early.
Unidentified hummingbirds: Feb. 16 & Mar. 11, Dauphin (CMe, & LRT).
Rufous Hummingbird: Jan. 27 to Feb. 28, Magnolia Springs (photo--PFC); Apr. 16-17, Ft. Morgan (TAI, JVP, HME), 4th & 5th recs Ala.

Eastern Kingbird: Apr. 5, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), earliest TV.
Gray Kingbird: Apr. 13, Dauphin (MBC), earliest is Apr. 12.
Western Kingbird: Mar. 30 (LRT) & Apr. 25 (DDN) Dauphin; Apr. 16 (TAI, others) Ft. Morgan.
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: May 15, Dauphin (JMa), latest GC.
Great Crested Flycatcher: Mar. 7, Spring Hill, Mobile (MAG), earliest Ala.
Eastern Phoebe: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), latest LCP.
Least Flycatcher: May 4, B'ham (JRB).
Rough-winged Swallow: Mar. 9, Magnolia Springs (PFC), earliest GC.
Barn Swallow: new breeding sites almost annually in almost every county north of Montgomery, especially Breeding Survey routes and Interstate bridges.
Cliff Swallow: one or more new colonies each year, old ones getting bigger, but still confined to TV.
Purple Martin: Feb. 9, a pair, Auburn (TF), early.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: Dec. 16, 10 mi. north of Jasper (TF); Mar. 18, B'ham (PLT, HBT); occurs annually in Mtr even in off years such as this one.
Long-billed Marsh Wren: Apr. 28, Eufaula Ref. (WG, WMat), latest LCP.
Sprague's Pipit: May 29, Muscle Shoals (HHK, HBT, ALM), seen at very close range walking on ground, only known May rec outside the breeding range!
White-eyed Vireo: Mar. 13, L. Purdy (ALM), earliest Mtr; 154, Apr. 27 (BAS), Ala. max.
Solitary Vireo: at least 20 instances singing in Jan. & Feb. throughout state except TV.
Prothonotary Warbler: Mar. 23, Choctaw Ref. (CLK, PFC, mob), earliest rec inland Ala.
Swainson's Warbler: Apr. 8, 4, Turner, Shelby Co. (TAI, JVP), earliest Mtr.
Worm-eating Warbler: May 10, Bankhead Forest, nest 4 eggs (HHK), 3rd egg rec Ala.
Tennessee Warbler: Mar. 27, Dauphin, 2 (LRT), earliest Ala.; Apr. 4, Ensley, B'ham (TAI), earliest Mtr; Apr. 6, Newburg, Franklin Co. (GDJ), earliest TV.
Orange-crowned Warbler: Apr. 21, netted, Phenix City (RAP, TAI), latest CP; May 11, Bankhead Forest (TAI, JMI), ties latest rec Ala.
Nashville Warbler: May 11, Bankhead Forest (TAI, JMI), latest Ala. except TV.
Parula Warbler: Mar. 3, Mobile (MWG), early.
Yellow Warbler: Apr. 5, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), earliest TV; May 31, Dauphin (LRT), latest GC.
Magnolia Warbler: May 26, Dauphin (SBH, REH), latest CP.
Cape May Warbler: Mar. 27, Dauphin (REH), earliest Ala; Apr. 27, 22, B'ham (BAS), max. Mtr.
Blackburnian Warbler: May 26, Dauphin (REH, SBH), latest CP.
Yellow-throated Warbler: Feb. 16, Cropwell, St. Clair Co. (MLM), 2nd winter rec Mtr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: Apr. 9, Dauphin (HGS, AGT), earliest GC.
Blackpoll Warbler: May 26, Dauphin (SBH, REH), latest CP.
Louisiana Waterthrush: Mar. 9, Lovick, B'ham (DJH), earliest Mtr.
Yellow-breasted Chat: Dec. 22, 2, Ft. Morgan (PFC, others), 3rd winter rec GC; Mar. 23 Choctaw Ref. (PFC, MRM), ties earliest Ala.
Wilson's Warbler: Apr. 26, SUNA, B'ham (ALM), earliest Mtr.
American Redstart: Mar. 26, Dauphin, banded (REH), earliest Ala. except UCP.

Blackbirds continue to increase; this year's features seem to be a relative increase in Rusties and in city flocks especially Birmingham, possibly due to excessive garbage.

Baltimore Oriole: continue regular at more and more feeders each winter all over Ala.

Western Tanager: Feb. 17, Ft. Morgan, banded & photo (JVP, others), 2nd winter rec Ala.

Scarlet Tanager: Apr. 6, Newburg, Franklin Co. (GDJ), ties earliest TV.

Summer Tanager: Dec. 9, Bellingrath Gardens (BW, JW), 2nd winter rec Ala.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Apr. 1, Magnolia Springs (PFC), earliest Ala.; May 25, Riverton, 2 (TAI, HME), latest Ala.

Black-headed Grosbeak: Feb. 23-24, Magnolia Springs (PFC), annual occurrence established.

Indigo Bunting: Dec. 23, Bellingrath Gardens (BW, JW); Feb. 2, Mobile (JTR, N); Feb. 19, Ft. Morgan (JVP, WRM, TLW); Feb. 28, Fairhope (AN, MN); Feb. 23-25, Magnolia Springs (PFC); Mar. 16, B'ham (RR), 2nd earliest inland rec.

Dickcissel: Dec. 24, Fairhope (LPA).

Evening Grosbeak: a few mostly near B'ham and Anniston.

Purple Finch: Feb. 3, Collirene, Lowndes Co., 5000, 382 banded (TAI, JVP, TLW), max. Ala.

Pine Siskin: 138, Apr. 27, B'ham (BAS); 50, Feb. 3, Collirene (TAI, others); 50, Feb. 16, Evergreen (TAI).

American Goldfinch: 1000, Feb. 16, Evergreen (TAI).

Red Crossbill: common in M&R, Nov. 18, Little River Canyon (NGB, MKP) to May 11, Bankhead Forest (TAI, JMI); max. 75, Jan. 3, B'ham (JRB); 9 banded in B'ham all small races possibly from Pacific Northwest (TAI, HBT, FLT, photo-HHK); Opelika, Feb. 6, 8 (JLDu) 1st rec Pied; Phenix City, 7 miles west, Mar. 3, 12 on Pinus glabra (JM), 3rd CP rec.

Savannah Sparrow: Apr. 27, 8-10, Choctaw Ref. (CLK, mob), latest LCP.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Apr. 21, Eufaula Ref. (MF, SP), latest LCP.

Henslow's Sparrow: Apr. 20, Phenix City, Bussey's L. (GOS), always noteworthy.

Bachman's Sparrow: May 25, 3, Thomas Wildlife Ref., Colbert Co. (TAI, HME), rare in TV.

Dark-eyed Junco: Apr. 27, Bluff Park, B'ham (TAI), latest M&R.

Fox Sparrow: Apr. 12, 3 & Apr. 25, Wheeler Ref. (DGH), all latest ever Ala.

Song Sparrow: May 21, Weiss L., Cherokee Co. (CWS), nest & eggs, photo, 1st egg rec Ala.

Lapland Longspur: Mar. 30-31, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile, male (JLD, mob) 2nd rec GC.

AOS SPRING MEETING

James V. Peavy, Jr.

This spring the AOS met at Dauphin Island. As usual this favorite place for Alabama birders attracted a good turnout of our membership, with over 100 persons registering for the meeting. The meeting was highlighted by the excellent seafood buffet served by the Dauphin Island Business Men's Association and the program presented by Dr. Ken Marion.

The beautiful weather we enjoyed during the meeting unfortunately did not contribute to the birding; even so, a good variety of spring migrants was observed, and most birders were treated to very good views of such favorites as Painted Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Prothonotary Warbler. One very successful field trip was the one led by Curtis Kingsbery to look at shore birds on the Island's west end. Almost everyone saw Seaside Sparrows, Dowitchers, Black Skimmer, Ruddy Turnstone, Gray Kingbird and others. In all, about 150 species were recorded for the meeting weekend.

While most members were out enjoying the fine weather and good birding, a few were closeted away in the marine resources lab. These were the members who make up the AOS slide collection committee. They were able to select several more slides to add to the Society's ever-growing and improving slide collection.

As usual, the spring meeting was the time for the changing of the AOS officers. At the Saturday night banquet, President Tuck Hayward turned the meeting over to Vice-President James Peavy, who is President for 1974-75. New officers elected were: Dr. Howard Einspahr - Vice-President; Helen Thigpen - Secretary; and Alwilda Bennett - Treasurer. Unfortunately, Mrs. Bennett will not be able to serve, so Roger Maner has been appointed Treasurer.

! ! ! AOS FALL MEETING ! ! !

Place:	Dauphin Island
Date:	October 11-13, 1974
Registration:	Friday evening and Saturday morning Marine Resources Lab

OBSERVERS--Alabama Ornithological Society, Lois P. Archer, Thomas Z. Atkeson, Birmingham Audubon Society, J. Russell Bailey, Naomi G. Banks, Raymond D. Bates, Don Bland, Fred E. Bowers, Ann & Robert Bucher, Wm. J. Calvert, Greg Carlisle, P. Fairly Chandler, Hetty Cunningham, Cecil Davis, W. C. Davis, J. L. Dorn, Temple Douglas, J. L. Dusi, Howard M. Einspahr, Mike Fuller, Tom French, Georgia Ornithological Society, Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard, Arthur Garrett, J. H. Garrett, Rosemary Gaymer, Wm. Gibbs, R. E. & S. B. Hayward, John Heflin, Ruth R. Horsley, David C. Hulse, Donald J. Hulsey, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D. Jackson, Harold Johnson, James E. Keeler, Curtis L. Kingsbery, Helen H. Kittinger, Ricky J. Kittinger, Christine Leake, Mobile Bird Club, Wade Manning, Wm. Matheny, Jimmy May, C. Mayhew, Mary Ruth McCracken, Ron McKittrick, W. Roger Maner, Cornelia Messer, Wm. R. Middleton, Ann L. Miller, James Miller, Margaret E. Miller, Mary Lou Miller, Dot D. & George Newburn, Albert & Mini Nonkes, Norris, Richard A. Parks, Sam Pate, James V. & Lee N. Peavy, Morton H. Perry, Margaret K. Persons, Elberta G. & Robert R. Reid, Rick Remy, Helen G. Schiel, C. Wm. Summerour, Jo L. Susenbach, Alice G. Tait, Helen B. & Percy L. Thigpen, Lib R. Toenes, Ted L. Weems, L. A. Wells, Beverly & John Winn, Joe L. Wright.