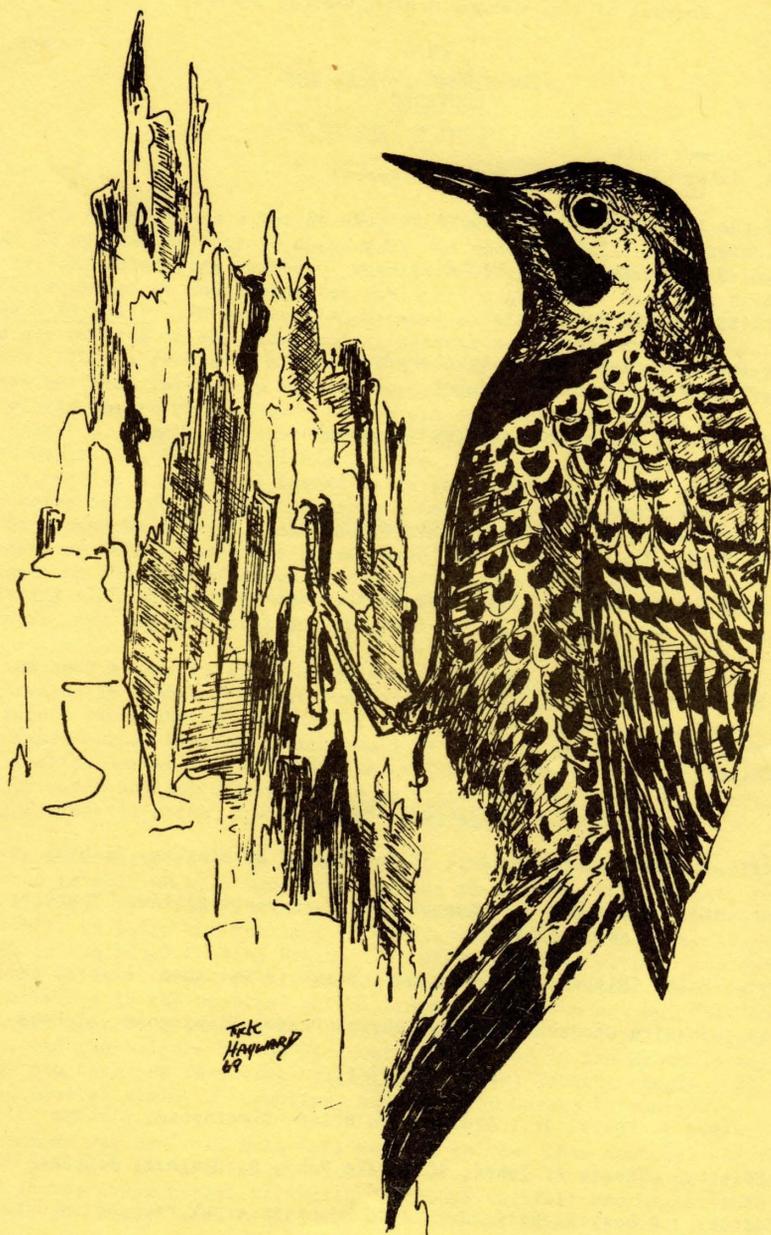


ALABAMA BIRDLIFE



ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society

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THE SEASON, SUMMER-FALL

June through November, 1976

Thomas A. Imhof

This report takes a lot of time to prepare--it contains records of at least 90 species by over 50 observers. We need the full cooperation of all persons submitting records. With rare exceptions, records not submitted on cards cannot be considered for publication in either American Birds or Alabama Birdlife. An observation becomes a record when all the pertinent data are written in one place and it becomes available for communicating to others. Thus a record on a card makes preparing a report much easier and it can be filed for future reference--permanently in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology. If you are not receiving cards, write to Dr. Robert J. Newman, Curator Emeritus, Museum of Zoology, L.S.U., Baton Rouge, La. 70893, tell him you are reporting bird records to me and ask to receive a supply of record cards and be placed on the observer list to receive notices of American Birds deadlines. These are March 1, June 1, August 1, and December 1. All records for the preceding period are due in my hands as soon as possible after these dates; thus I can begin to prepare a report on the 10th of those months and satisfy the people of American Birds and Alabama Birdlife who have other deadlines to meet. If you run out of cards, any 3x5 card will do, provided you include the same information.

We need a card on all records that supersede information in the "Occurrence in Alabama" paragraphs in Alabama Birds. We need details on any record you think may be doubted by anyone, for instance an August record of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet--which could be confused with an Empidonax or a fall warbler--or an October record of a Gannet--which could be confused with a booby. Age and sex often need to be stated when it makes a difference in ease of identification, for instance Black-headed Grosbeak.

In future reports, the Lower Coastal Plain and the Piedmont will be absorbed so that we will have four regions in Alabama. At present, reporting actual status is often misleading. For instance, at first it was thought worthwhile to point out the lack of spring records for the Gray-checked Thrush in the Lower Coastal Plain. But after 20 years with no improvement in local data, it would be misleading to point out the lack which is probably not reflected in the species' actual status. So, from now on, the Upper and Lower Coastal Plain and Lee County are combined to form the Inland Coastal Plain, and the balance of the Piedmont is absorbed in the Mountain Region. So, we now have the Tennessee Valley, 8 counties; Mountain Region, 22 counties; Inland Coastal Plain, 35 counties; and the Gulf Coast, 2 counties.

Summer was cool and this fall was the coldest this century, and the year ended, at least in Birmingham, with over 3⁰ colder in average daily temperature and 2 inches above normal rainfall. Although rainfall was higher than normal this did not always mean higher water levels--at Lake Purdy outside Birmingham,

water was 11 feet low because of increased water consumption; in Upper Mobile Bay in cold November, the northwest wind blew the water out into the Gulf and kept levels low enough to produce high number of waders, etc., which may have been there all the time, but had been difficult to count. The cold fall chased many insectivores out, and they were definitely scarce in November! This was forecast by the rash of early-arriving migrant and winter birds as early as August. Waterfowl were in about normal numbers and some northern finches--Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Junco, Fox Sparrow--were in good numbers, but no Evening Grosbeaks of Siskins showed.

In the following account of noteworthy records, abbreviations are: TV-Tennessee Valley, Mtr-Mountain Region, UCP-Upper Coastal Plain, LCP-Lower Coastal Plain, GC-Gulf Coast, rec-record, Ref-Refuge, mob-many other birders, max-maximum, exc-except.

Red-throated Loon: Nov. 18, Little Lagoon, Gulf Shores (HHK), earliest GC.
Eared Grebe: Nov. 5-8, Sewer Lagoon, Gulf Shores(A.O.S.) becoming annual
Pied-billed Grebe: Oct. 8, Oak Mtn. L., 303 (GDJ), state max.
Gannet: Nov. 6 onward, Gulf Shores (A.O.S.) earliest Ala. by two weeks.
Double-crested Cormorant: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 8 (JVP), earliest Mtr.
Little Blue Heron: Nov. 25, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile, 200 (WCW), winter max.
Black-crowned Night Heron: Oct. 27, Weiss L. (GDJ), latest Mtr.
Least Bittern: Nov. 8, Gulf Shores (TAI,JVP), latest Ala. exc winter recs.
Dark Ibis: Nov. 29, Magnolia Springs (PFC), 4th winter rec. Ala. (Wh-f or Glossy??)
White Ibis: Nov. 25, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile 150 (WCW), winter max.
White-fronted Goose: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 3 adults (JVP), earliest inland Ala., 2nd Mtr.
Snow Goose: Sep. 22, Wheeler Ref, 2 (WCD), earliest Ala.
Mottled Duck: Nov. 13, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile, 8 (JLD,TAI,M.B.C.); 2 still present there Nov. 20 (A&MN, others).
Pintail: Jul. 13-14, a male, and 3 through Aug. 23, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH); Aug. 24, Cochrane Causeway (JVP,GDJ); over 1000 there in November (TAI, others).
Green-winged Teal: Jul. 13-Aug. 5, 3; Aug. 10, 5, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH); Aug. 23, Gulf Shores (GDJ,JVP); now a total of 4 August recs for Ala.
American Wigeon: Sep. 8, Wheeler Ref., 3 (CDC), earliest Ala.
Greater Scaup: Oct. 10, a male, near Wheeler Dam (DH), earliest Ala.
Common Goldeneye: Nov. 5, Coleman L. near Bessemer, 3 (CWB), earliest Mtr.; Nov. 8, Gulf Shores Sewer Lagoon, a female (JVP,TAI), earliest GC; Nov. 10, Decatur (DCH), earliest TV.
Oldsquaw: Nov. 12, Fort Morgan, a male, 2 females (TAI,MLM); Nov. 20, Mobile (A&MN); Nov. 25, Grand Bay, 2 (BS).
Eider: Oct. 2, Fort Morgan, a female or immature(GDJ), 2nd Eider rec Ala.
Surf Scoter: Nov. 11, 1 male, 2 females, Fort Morgan (TAI,MN).
Black Scoter: Nov. 8, Fort Morgan, 2 males, 1 female (TAI,JVP); Nov. 11, Fort Morgan, 3 females (TAI,MN).
Ruddy Duck: Wheeler Ref., 2 summered (CDC,DMB); Gulf Shores, a male summered (TAI,HHK,JVP,GDJ).
Mississippi Kite: Hurricane, Baldwin Co., 30 + 3 young, Jun. 1 (TAI,HHK)
Choctaw Ref., 15 including immatures, Jun. 17 (JVP,TLW); Wheeler Ref., Jul. 9, 11, 24 (DCH), last seen Sep. 4, an adult (CDC,SG), latest rec north of CP.

Goshawk: Oct. 24, Fink's L., Calhoun Co. (CWS), 3rd Ala rec.

Swainson's Hawk: Oct. 1, Fort Morgan (MLM,SGa), warliest Ala. rec. 2nd for GC.

Golden Eagle: Nov. 18, Fairhope (A&MN), 2, 4th rec for GC, 3 of them in November

Bald Eagle: Dec. 1, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), only rec.

N. Harrier (Marsh Hawk): Aug. 8 Cooks Springs, St. Clair Co. (JVP), earliest Ala. exc summer recs for Wheeler over 30 years ago; Aug. 10, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH), earliest TV.

Osprey: Jul. 21, Choctaw Ref., 1 (JVP,RJR), indicates possible inland breeding; Oct. 25, Weiss L., 1 (JVP), ties latest Mtr.

Peregrine Falcon: 6 recs this fall--Wheeler Ref., Oct. 14, Nov. 26 & 27, Dec. 1 (TZA, CDC); Dauphin I., Oct. 23 (PS) & Oct. 28 (REH); Fort Morgan, Nov. 10 (TAI).

Sandhill Crane: Oct. 30 & 31, Douglas, Marshall Co. (RDS), 1 on ground and in flight, studied at leisure, red on head seen well, 3rd inland rec. 2nd Mtr, all in fall.

Sora: Aug. 24, Marion Hatchery (ALM), earliest UCP; Aug. 28, Wheeler Ref., 2 (CDC), earliest TV.

Oystercatcher: Dec. 3, Dauphin I., 13 (LRT), max. Ala.

Piping Plover: Aug. 26, Lakeland Farm, Marion (GDJ), 2nd rec UCP.

American Golden Plover: many recs TV, Mtr & GC; Nov. 18, Wheeler Ref., 8 (CDC) latest inland; nov. 29, Magnolia Springs (PFC), latest state.

Ruddy Turnstone: Aug. 7, L. Purdy (HHK,KTK), earliest inland; Aug. 24, Marion Hatchery (GDJ,JVP,ALM), earliest of 2 CP recs.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Oct. 17, Wheeler Ref., 3 (GDJ,JMH), latest TV.

Baird's Sandpiper: Sep. 19, Marion Hatchery (HHK, ML), 2nd rec CP.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Aug. 13-25, Wheeler Ref., 1-2 (DCH), 2nd earliest Ala.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Oct. 12-23, Limestone Bay, Wheeler Ref. (JMH,TAB, many photos. mob), 5th Ala. rec, 1st inland, 3rd in 1976, species now removed from hypothetical list.

American Avocet: Jun. 25, Blakely I., Mobile, 12 birds (HHK), 1st summer rec; Aug. 25, Wheeler Ref., 12 (ALM,DMB), earliest TV; Nov. 13, Blakely I., 267 birds (TAI, many) state max.

Black-necked Stilt: Blakely I., Mobile--Jun. 1, 17 adults & 4 young (TAI,HHK); Jun. 25, 42 adults (HHK), state max.; 3 occasions in summer, 40 adults (B&JW).

Wilson's Phalarope: Aug. 19, Marion Hatchery, (GDJ,HHK), 1st rec CP.

Herring Gull: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 2 (JVP), earliest Mtr.

Ring-billed Gull: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 35 (JVP), max. Mtr; Nov. 5, Alabama Point, 1 with a bright yellow tag on upper right wing (CDC, others).

Bonaparte's Gull: Nov. 13, Guntersville, 1 & Wheeler Ref., 4 (CDC), earliest TV.

Blact Tern: Oct. 10, Preston I., Guntersville (CDC), latest inland.

Short-eared Owl: Nov. 5, 8 & 22, Gulf Shores & Fort Morgan (CDC,TAI,JVP,PFC).

Chuck-wills-widow: Sep. 6, Tuscaloosa (JCT), latest UCP.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Sep. 22, Wheeler Ref, 1 (WCD), 12 inland rec, 6th north of Fall Line, 2nd for Wheeler & TV. (On coast only 2 recs this fall & only 1 of W. Kingbird.)

East.Wood Pewee: Nov. 5-11, Fort Morgan, 2 or 3 birds, 1 banded (TAI,JVP,CDC,MN) latest Ala.

Vermillion Flycatcher: Oct. 30 through November, Magnolia Springs, male & female (PFC,many); we are now seeing more than one at a time, they are lingering later in winter--apparently the species is increasing on Ala. GC.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Oct. 2, Fort Morgan (GDJ), earliest GC.
 Ash-throated Flycatcher: Sep. 22 & Oct. 1, Fort Morgan (MLM,SGa), 8th GC & state rec.
 Alder Flycatcher: Sep. 17, Ebenezer Swamp, Montevallo (GDJ), heard, 2nd fall rec MTR.
 Tree Swallow: Aug. 8, Magnolia Springs (PFC), earliest CP; Aug. 18, Marion, 16
 birds (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP; Oct. 8, Shelby County 22 L, 200 (GDJ), max. MTR.
 Bank Swallow: Aug. 18, Marion Hatchery, 20 (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP.
 Rough-winged Swallow: Oct. 30, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,TAB), latest inland.
 Barn Swallow: Oct. 30, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,TAB), latest Ala. N. of Fall line; last
 on GC this fall was Nov. 13 at Mobile.
 Cliff Swallow: New breeding colony under south span of I-65 bridge of Tenn. R. (CDC)
 is only one for 40 miles up or downstream; Aug. 18, Marion (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP.
 Red-breasted Nuthatch: moderate numbers all the way to Fort Morgan in proper habitat.
 House Wren: Sep. 10 & 11, Decatur, 3 in yards (DCH,ENP), earliest Ala. exc summer recs.
 Brown-headed Nuthatch: Nov. 22, Scottsboro, 2 (FH), 2nd rec north of Tenn. R.
 Long-billed Marsh Wren: Oct. 2, Tuscaloosa (JCT), earliest UCP.
 Veery: Nov. 9, Fort Morgan, 1 banded (TAI), in 1975 1 banded same place on Nov. 17
 by TAI--these are only 2 November recs for state.
 Cedar Waxwing: June 23, Wheeler Ref. (DMB), may indicate local breeding.
 Red-eyed Vireo: Nov. 6,7,9, Fort Morgan (JVP,TAI), latest Ala. exc for a Dec. rec.
 Philadelphia Vireo: Sep. 2, B'ham (JVP), earliest MTR; Sep. 11, Wheeler Ref. 3 (CDC),
 earliest TV; Sep. 25, B'ham, 12 (B.A.S.); Oct. 22, Fort Morgan, 2 (MLM), latest
 state.
 Brewster's Warbler Hybrid: Aug. 29 at bird bath, Fairhope (MN); Sep. 11, 25, 29 in
 B'ham, at least 4 birds (RRR,many).
 Nashville Warbler: Aug. 4, Spring Hill, at bird bath (MAG), earliest Ala.
 Black-throated Blue Warbler: Aug. 5, Spring Hill, at bird bath (MAG), earliest Ala.
 Ala. exc winter recs.
 Cerulean Warbler: Aug. 23, Open Pond, Covington Co. (JCP,GDJ), earliest LCP.
 Blackburnian Warbler: Aug. 19, Marion (GDJ,HHK), earliest Ala.; Aug. 24, Wheeler
 Ref., 2, (DMB,ALM), earliest TV.
 Chestnut-sided Warbler: Aug. 26, Decatur (DMB,ALM), earliest TV.
 Bay-breasted Warbler: Sep. 11, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest TV.
 Prairie Warbler: Nov. 8, Gulf Shores (JVP, TAI), latest Ala. exc for a winter rec.
 Palm Warbler: Sep. 29, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,KH), earliest TV.
 Connecticut Warbler: Sep. 25, B'ham Zoo (JVP,JAT,EGR), earliest MTR; indications
 are that the species occurs annually in fall and peaks the last week in Sept.
 Mourning Warbler: Sep. 18, L. Lurleen (JCT), 1st rec for CP, spring or fall!;
 Sep. 25, Dancy Bottoms, Wheeler Ref. (DMB); Sep. 25, B'ham (JAT,DP).
 Wilson's Warbler: Nov. 11, Fort Morgan, a male banded (TAI,RGH), latest Ala.
 Bobolink: Aug. 24, Swan Cr., 10 (ALM,DMB), earliest Ala. exc Piedmont.
 Yellow-headed Blackbird: Nov. 6, Magnolia Springs (VDH,TRF); nearly all state recs
 are in Sep. & Apr.--this is our first in November.
 Orchard Oriole: Oct. 31, Fort Morgan, an immature male (RAD,SS,BS), latest state
 exc winter recs.
 Painted Bunting: Blakely I., Mobile, all of Jun., Jul. & Aug., 3 males, 2 females
 (B&JW,TAI,HHK), no nest, eggs, or small young know from Alabama.
 Purple Finch: Nov. 8, Fort Morgan, 3 (TAI,JVP), earliest for CP.
 Savannah Sparrow: Sep. 11, Roberts Field, B'ham, 4 (TAI), earliest Ala.; Sep. 18,
 Fort Morgan (FW,MLM,KB), earliest CP; Sep. 25, Wheeler Ref., 3 (CDC), earliest
 TV.

Fox Sparrow: Sep. 25, Oct. 1 & 4, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), earliest Ala.

Swamp Sparrow: Sep. 3, Swan Cr. (DMB), earliest Ala.

Song Sparrow: May 2 & 8, Aug. 15, Stevenson Bridge, 1 (FH), new probable breeding site.

Deadlines require the temporary setting aside of some perfectly good records. If you have such, remember that it is never too late to amend the state list. So, if you have forgotten details on a record you feel is good, please write me about it. Even though it may be too late for American Birds or Alabama Birdlife, we never want to eliminate perfectly good Alabama Distributional or Migration Information. We are always considering the next edition or supplement of Alabama Birds.

Observers: Alabama Ornithological Society, Thomas Z. Atkeson, Birmingham Audubon Society, Kate Beck, Charlotte D. Blackshear, Charles W. Brasfield, D. Mark Brown, Thomas A. Brindley, P. Fairly Chandler, C. Dwight Cooley, W. Cecil Davis, J. L. Dorn, Robert A. Duncan, Sherlie Gade, Mary A. Gaillard, Scott Gravette, Don Hale, J. Milton Harris, Richard E. Hayward, Kenneth Hensley, Frank Hixon, Thomas R. Horne, Verda D. Horne, Ruth G. Howell, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D. Jackson, Kenneth T. Knapp, Helen H. Kittinger, Mildred Linder, Mobile Bird Club, Mary Lou Mattis, Ann L. Miller, Albert & Mini Nonkes, Dave Patick, James V. Peavy, Eugene N. Prestriedge, Elberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Rick J. Remy, Bob Simonson, Robert D. Sloman, Peggy Smith, C. William Summerour, Steve & Barbara Stedman, James C. Thompson, Lib R. Toenes, J. Arthur Tyson, Wayne C. Weber, Ted L. Weems, Fred Wicke, Beverly A. Winn, John T. Winn.

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NESTING OF THE EASTERN
PHOEBE AND BARN SWALLOW IN WESTERN ALABAMA

Jerome A. Jackson and Ray E. Weeks

The southern limit of the breeding range of the Eastern Phoebe (Sayornis phoebe) in Alabama has been reported to be roughly coincident with the Fall Line, though there are sight records of the species between May and August from several areas south of the Fall Line (Imhof, Alabama Birds, Univ. Alabama Press, University 1976). The Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica) is now known to breed in most parts of Alabama, but has only recently expanded its breeding range southward (Imhof 1976). We present here data documenting the breeding of phoebes south of the Fall Line in Marion, Lamar, and Pickens counties. We also include breeding records of Barn Swallows from these localities.

On 12 October 1973 Weeks discovered an old phoebe nest on a rock ledge under an overhang in the southwest corner of Marion County along Marion County

highway 35. The nest site was on the west side of a roadcut through sandstone. This nest is in the ornithological collection at Mississippi State University (MSU #816).

On 16 October 1975 we discovered an old phoebe nest under a bridge on Alabama highway 17 one mile north of Sulligent in Lamar County. This was the only bridge that we checked on that date.

On 12 June 1976 we searched for phoebe and swallow nests under ten bridges in Lamar and Pickens counties and discovered evidence of Eastern Phoebes nesting under nine and Barn Swallows under seven. The bridges ranged from 6.5 to 6.8 m wide and from 34 to 149 m long. All had some water under them, and the floor of each bridge was from 1.5 to 3 m above the water or ground. The location of these bridges and the status of the nests found are as follows:

Along Alabama highway 18, one mile east of the Mississippi-Alabama state line, we inspected a bridge supported by wooden pilings topped by concrete and spanned by four metal I-beams. Four young phoebes fledged from a nest on the ledge of a metal beam as we approached. There were also three old phoebe nests on other beams. One of these had an active Barn Swallow nest built over the top of it. We banded four nestling Barn Swallows in this and four in another nest that was also on a metal beam. Elderberries (Sambucus canadensis) were growing along the stream partially blocking the approach to the underside of the bridge.

A second bridge along Alabama highway 18 just west of Vernon was of similar construction. This bridge had three Barn Swallow nests of unknown status located over deep water (2 nests on I-beams, 1 attached to the nest of a pipe-organ wasp, Trypoxylon politum). We saw neither phoebes nor swallows at this locality.

Just south of the city limits of Vernon on Alabama highway 17 we inspected a bridge supported by wooden pilings and 11 longitudinal wooden beams. Here we found one active phoebe nest attached to a wood beam and observed two adult phoebes. The nest was inaccessible because of deep water. We also found one old phoebe nest attached to a large bolt and one old phoebe nest resting atop one of the pilings. Two Barn Swallow nests under this bridge were attached to the nests of pipe-organ wasps.

One mile south of Vernon on highway 17 we found one active phoebe nest and one active Barn Swallow nest under a similar bridge. The phoebe nest was attached to the nest of a black-and-yellow mud dauber (Sceliphron caementarium) and contained five young which we banded. The swallow nest was attached to a pipe-organ wasp nest and contained four eggs. The phoebe nest was located over dry concrete, the swallow nest over standing water. A wooded area was only 5-10 m from either side of the bridge.

About a tenth of a mile south, under another bridge (149 m long) supported by wooden beams, we found two active phoebe nests attached to the nests of pipe-organ wasps. One nest contained 5 eggs, the other contained five young which we banded. In addition to these we found four old phoebe nests: one on a pipe-organ wasp nest, one on a black-and-yellow mud dauber nest, one on a metal ledge, and one on a wooden ledge.

Under a similar bridge ten miles south of Vernon on highway 17 we found an active phoebe nest attached to an old Barn Swallow nest which was attached to the nest of a pipe-organ wasp. We banded four well-feathered phoebe nestlings and collected one infertile egg from this nest. There were also two old phoebe nests and one active (?) Barn Swallow nest under this bridge. Each nest was attached to a pipe-organ wasp nest. The habitat on both sides of this bridge was wooded and there was permanent water under the bridge.

Two miles south of the Lamar-Pickens county line we banded three nestling phoebes (near fledging) and found two infertile eggs in a nest attached to a black-and-yellow mud dauber nest. We also banded four Barn Swallow nestlings that were near fledging from a nest attached to a pipe-organ wasp nest. There were two additional Barn Swallow nests under the bridge, but they were inaccessible due to deep water and we could determine neither their status nor mode of attachment. Wooded areas were within 20 m of each side of the bridge. A permanent stream passed under the bridge, but both active nests were over a shallow pool of stagnant water.

We inspected three bridges along U.S. highway 82 just west of Reform, Alabama. These bridges were in a wooded bottomland area, were close together, and each had some water under it. Five phoebes fledged as we approached a nest on a pipe-organ wasp nest under one bridge. Under a second bridge we found seven old phoebe nests: three on pipe-organ wasp nests, three on bolts, and one on a black-and-yellow mud dauber nest. Under the third bridge we found an inaccessible active Barn Swallow nest attached to an old phoebe nest.

In summary, the Eastern Phoebe and Barn Swallow both seem to be well-established breeding birds in Lamar and Pickens counties, Alabama. These species frequently nest under the same bridges and occasionally will use one another's old nests. Both bird species rely extensively on the mud nests of the pipe-organ wasp and the black-and-yellow mud dauber as sites for attachment of their own mud nests.

Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762; and Huntington House, Apt. 5, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

* * * * *
!! NOTICE !!

WILSON MEETING
PLACE - NOXUBEE - STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI
DATE - MAY 19 - 22
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: JEROME JACKSON
Department of Zoology
Mississippi State University
P. O. Drawer Z
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* * * * *

A STUDY OF OVERWINTERING RAPTORS IN ALABAMA

David T. Rogers, Jr. and Mark Dauber

An absence of quantitative data on raptorial birds in Alabama led to this study of a 40-mile strip of the black belt. This coastal plain belt is an area of natural prairie consisting of plowed fields, pastures and scattered trees. The open nature of the area makes it an excellent area for certain raptors and allows good visibility for counting birds. The area chosen was selected for its representative nature and relative freedom from interference by traffic.

Methods

Counts of raptors were done by two people in a car being driven approximately 40 miles per hour (64 kmph), and was done in conjunction with trapping. No birds were counted if they appeared after the vehicle had stopped for trapping purposes. Thus, the counts approximate the equivalent of a continually moving car. Trapping was done by tossing a bal-chatri trap from the car at a speed of approximately 20 mph (32 kmph). Only the American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) was trapped.

Experimentation with trap designs and mouse colors was done. Weighing of kestrels was done on a spring-type Ohaus scale marked in 10 gm intervals. Estimates of weights were made to the nearest gram. Checking estimated weights against the analytical balance in the laboratory indicated good accuracy. The average error for weights of 10 objects checked against an analytical balance was 0.9 gm.

Results and Discussions

American Kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks (Buteo jamacensis), Marsh Hawks (Circus cyanea) and one Red-shouldered Hawk (Buteo lineatus) were counted on the census strip. Counts were begun on November 21, 1975, and discontinued on March 18, 1976, after which most raptors had left the study area. Table 1 represents data between the dates of November 21 and February 26. The latter date was chosen because most of the kestrels departed at that time. As indicated in Table 1, kestrels were numerically the dominant raptor on the census strip. This contrasts sharply with published data on strip censuses in Michigan (Craighead and Craighead 1975, Harrisburg, Pa. Hawks, Owls and Wildlife, The Stackpole Co., p. 43) where members of the genus Buteo were dominant. Total hawk counts (24.8 per trip) compared favorably with the best year in the Craighead study (33.3 per 40-mile strip).

Kestrels were trapped, banded and weighed using a variety of bal-chatri traps. The tendency of some kestrels to walk around a trap without getting in it led us to use a cage which was smaller than the floor. The effect was to provide a cage surrounded by a platform to which nooses were stapled.

Many kestrels were caught in the platform nooses. Black, white and agouti mice were used in the traps. No difference in effectiveness could be found between the black and agouti, but white mice were definitely inferior. It is interesting to note that although an average of only 13.8 kestrels was seen per trip, there were 30 kestrels banded on the census strip. Thus, assuming that we banded all the kestrels on our strip, we averaged seeing only 46% on an average day. Since we had no recaptures, we obviously had not banded all the birds.

Table 2 gives the weight data on kestrels, and indicates the characteristic weight gain of a migratory population. The average weight for female kestrels as reported in the literature is 119 gm. (Craighead and Craighead, *op. cit.*, p. 428, Beebe, 1974, Field Studies of the falconiformes of British Columbia, The British Columbia Provincial Museum, p. 103, Brown and Amadon, 1968, New York, Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World, McGraw-Hill, Vol 2, p. 771). If the 157 gm bird reported in Table 2 weight 119 gm normally, then this bird may have been carrying 38 gm of migratory fat. A larger sample over a longer period of time and recaptures would help to answer the fat storage question.

Table 3 gives the sex ratios for two groups of kestrels, one from the black belt and the other from different areas of the State of Alabama. Originally, trapping was done only in the black belt, but the preponderance of females led us to do some trapping in other areas.

The 38 to 5 ratio in the black belt does not seem to be shared by the other areas which were eight females to six males. Also it contrasts with the work of Enderson who found a ratio of 22 males to 18 females in an Illinois study (Enderson, 1960, *The Wilson Bulletin*, 72(3):224). At the present time, we have no explanation for the strange sex ratio of the black belt kestrels.

Table 1. Average Numbers and Standard Deviations of Raptors Seen on a 40-Mile Strip. (November 21 through February 26).

<u>Species</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>s.d.</u>
Red-tailed Hawk	7.3	+ 2.8
Marsh Hawk	1.1	+ 1.0
American Kestrel	13.8	+ 6.8

Table 2. Dates and Weights of Female Kestrels. Number per sample in parentheses.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Mean Wgt.</u>	<u>Max Wgt.</u>
1/15	122	123 (5)
1/29	132	140 (5)
2/8	139	150 (8)
2/19	135	157 (14)
2/29	122	146 (3)

Table 3. Sex Ratios of Kestrels Caught in the Black Belt and from Other Areas.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Black Belt	5	38
Other Areas	6	8

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NOTE ON INCREASE IN ROBINS
 DURING BREEDING SEASON IN SOUTH ALABAMA

Robert R. Reid, Jr.

The Am. Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) is no stranger as a year-round resident in North Alabama, but his not always been so. In addition, although large flocks are found during winter at various places throughout the state (see Imhof, Thomas A., Alabama Birds (1976), 2nd Ed.:303-4, and reports of the AOS Christmas Counts in previous issues of Alabama Birdlife), the Robin was until recently only a winter visitor to South Alabama.

When Arthur H. Howell wrote his Birds of Alabama in 1924 (with data through 1921), he described distribution of the Southern Robin (now the southern race) as occurring "not uncommonly as a migrant and winter resident and very rarely as a breeder in the northern part of the state," breeding season records being listed for localities across the Tennessee Valley and south to Anniston, Jasper and, in 1890, Montgomery (but not known to breed there again until 1921). However, by the time of Imhof's first edition of Alabama Birds (published in 1962 with data through August 1961), the Robin was described as an abundant permanent resident south to the prairie region (or Black Belt) and below there uncommon and local mostly around towns. Thus, it is only during this century that the Robin has expanded its range southward throughout Alabama. However, it is still difficult to find in the breeding season below the Mountain Region except in certain selected localities, usually cities and towns but not even uniformly in them.

Records from Imhot (1st Ed.) show first breeding records for the Robin in Greenville and Brewton in 1953, Mobile in 1958, Coffeerville (Clark County) in 1959, and Dauphin Island in 1960. On June 16, 1974, the bird was found in Brundidge after running of a breeding bird survey route of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that begins in that town, the writer and his wife having been alerted to presence of the bird by hearing it at the first stop before sunrise. Later, discussion with a local observer, Leon Long, confirmed that the bird had been present for a few prior years. (Incidentally, much of the data contained in this note is generated by or is connected with those breeding bird surveys, which is testimony to their value in compiling not only quantitative data but also distributional data on the changing ranges of species.)

In summer of 1976, several observations were noted in the Coastal Plain, which, with reports from previous years, indicate that the Robin may well be increasing its numbers breeding in South Alabama and is now occupying rural in addition to urban areas and also being found more frequently in the cities and towns.

On the Hale-Perry County Route, there had been three observations of single birds prior to 1976. However, in that year single Robins were recorded on the first three stops and, when later being confirmed by visual observation, eight were found in that rural area. On the Choctaw-Sumter County Route, a total of five birds were seen on stops in two very small towns, making the fifth of the last six years on which Robins had been observed on that route with a nest having been found at one stop. In addition, a pair was observed on June 13 in Monroeville, 20 miles south of Beatrice in Monroe County (starting point for the Monroe-Wilcox County Route).

Later, on July 10-11, two birds were observed at a farm just south of Union Springs in Bullock County, one in the small town of Midway also in Bullock County, and another in a roadside park in Montgomery County near the Montgomery-Pike County Line.

Statistics generated by the breeding bird survey program show that, except for blackbirds, Starlings and House Sparrows, the Am. Robin is by far the most numerous songbird in North America. This most attractive and beneficial bird adapts particularly well to the human environment, especially where there are lawns and shade trees. Thus, when it expands its range into an area, it is usually first found in the residential sections of towns and then spreads gradually into the countryside and cities. The number of observations noted above for 1976 indicates that such an expansion is probably now occurring in many parts of South Alabama. Therefore, observers should be on the lookout this coming summer for additional breeding records in that part of our state.

2616 Mountain Brook Parkway
Birmingham, Alabama 35223

Corrigendum and Addendum to 1975
Christmas Counts

The following corrections and additions to the report of the 1975 Christmas Counts contained in Vol. 24, Nos. 1-2, should be noted: Due to a mistake in transmission of data, the number of E. Bluebirds at Eufaula Wildlife Refuge was 19 instead of 69 and, thus, is not a high figure although it is by one, a high for that count. The Black-and-White Warbler there was the first Alabama inland winter record for that species as also was the Black-bellied Plover noted in the main article. The Bullock's Oriole at Magnolia Springs on the Gulf Shores Count was a male rather than a female, of that presently considered subspecies of the now called Northern Oriole.

Robert R. Reid, Jr.
Counts Editor

OCCURRENCE OF FOUR SPECIES OF IBIS NEAR
DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA

Gary R. Gaston

There are four species of true Ibis (Family: Threskiornithidae) which occur along the Alabama coastline: Glossy Ibis, White-faced Ibis, White Ibis, and Scarlet Ibis. All four have been sighted near Dauphin Island during the past year, but apparently only the Glossy Ibis nests in the area. The Wood Ibis is actually a member of the stork family (Ciconiidae), and should not be included with this group.

Glossy Ibis (Plegadis falcinellus (Linnaeus)) have been observed nesting at Cat Island, Alabama (near Dauphin Island) for several years. A study of the avifauna of Cat Island was undertaken in 1975, being concluded in September, 1976. Data from this study show that seven Glossy Ibis nests were identified on the island in 1976, and once hatched all of the young birds survived to fledgling status. The nests observed each contained 3 eggs, with one exception: on May 26 a nest was located with a clutch of 6 eggs. This nest was later abandoned and a second nest constructed within a few feet of the first. Photograph records of both young and adult birds were made.

The White-faced Ibis (Plegadis chihi (Vieillot)), though very similar to the Glossy Ibis, does not share Cat Island as nesting habitat. One adult specimen was photographed on the west end of Dauphin Island in September, 1975, but it was not in breeding plumage. The Alabama coastline is included within the nesting range of these birds, but thus far nesting records are not available.

The White Ibis (Eudocimus albus (Linnaeus)) is a permanent resident in Alabama, and extensive records have been kept on their breeding in our state. They are uncommon along the coastline, however, and only the immature birds have been observed at close hand over the past year. One immature White Ibis was observed during the breeding season on June 16, 1976, on Cat Island (personal observation), but it did not take up residence. During the week of June 20, 1976, a similar White Ibis fed daily along the ditches of the east end of Dauphin Island (personal observation). Apparently the same bird returned in September, being photographed in the area occupied by the bird.

The Scarlet Ibis (Eudocimus ruber (Linnaeus)) is rarely observed along the northern Gulf coast, and only one record is available for Alabama (May 9, 1964). This species breeds primarily in South America, principally in the countries bordering the Caribbean. On July 24, 1976, a Scarlet Ibis was observed flying with a pair of Glossy Ibis one mile north of the Dauphin Island bridge (Gary Gaston and Dr. M. Susan Ivester). The Scarlet Ibis appeared pink, but its coloration may have been due to light penetration of the primary and tail feathers, as occurs with the tail of the Red-tailed Hawk.

It is possible that this individual was the result of recent introduction of the Scarlet Ibis in rookeries near Miami (James Peavy, Jr., personal communication). Tom Imhof (personal communication) suggests it may have been a hybrid between the White and Scarlet Ibis, for which no description is available.

P. O. Box 386
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For further comment on the status of nesting herons on Cat Island, see American Birds Vol. 30, No. 5, p. 965. Ed.



Photo by Gary Gaston

Adult Glossy Ibis at Cat Island.

AOS DUES NOTICE FOR 1977

NEW RATES ARE:

ACTIVE -----	5.00
ASSOCIATE -----	4.00
FAMILY -----	8.00
SUSTAINING -----	10.00
STUDENT (high school of college undergraduate) -----	3.00
LIFE (may be paid within a two-year period) -----	100.00

For details see Vol. 23, 1975
No. 3/4 pg. 20

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAIL TO:

Juanita T. Goodson, Treasurer
Alabama Ornithological Society
609 Bonniebrook Drive
Birmingham, Alabama 35226

AOS FALL MEETING

Helen Thigpen

The Fall meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held November 5-7, 1976, at Gulf State Park. The membership meeting followed a seafood buffet at Gulf State Park Motel Resort Saturday evening, November 6, 1976, president Russell Bailey, Jr. presiding.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was: RESOLVED that the Amendment of Article I, Section 1 of the By-laws of the Society pertaining to dues and membership, as set forth in Volume 23, Nos. 3-4 of Alabama Birdlife, be approved effective January 1, 1977. That amendment, because of increases in publication, postage and other costs, increases annual dues for active members to \$5, for sustaining members to \$10, for students to \$3 and for life members to \$100, and includes a new category for family membership at \$8. Dues for associate (outside Alabama and Northwest Florida) members remain the same at \$4.

James V. Peavy, editor of Alabama Birdlife requested submission of papers suitable for publication in said journal. The spring meeting of Alabama Ornithological Society was announced for Dauphin Island.

George Bennett, warden of Audubon Sanctuary on Dauphin Island reported on problems and efforts to control them. He reported that the National Society had concluded negotiations leasing the sanctuary property from the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board for ten years.

Mrs. Verda Horne presented a statement regarding potential development at Fort Morgan and the need to preserve the natural resources of the area. Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was: RESOLVED that the statement presented by Verda T. Horne of Fairhope, Alabama, regarding the necessity of preservation of natural and ecologically sensitive areas at Fort Morgan and along the parkway leading to it be approved and that the President of the Society be authorized and directed to send copies of said statement, with such changes thereto as he may deem necessary or appropriate, to the Commissioner of Conservation of the State of Alabama, the Chairman of the Alabama Historical Commission, and such other public officials and bodies as may be deemed appropriate.

Door prizes of Living World of Audubon Mammals and The Shorebirds of North America by Matthieson were awarded to Neely Denton and Bryan Johnson respectively.

Dr. Jerome Jackson, Associate Professor of Zoology at Mississippi State University, member of Mississippi Ornithological Society, editor of Mississippi Kite, and editor of the Wilson Society Bulletin made an interesting presentation of "The Birds and Art of John James Audubon". Included were details of his life as well as exposition of the development of his art. Colored slides illustrated the evolution of his work.

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