

SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2006)

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This report covers the period from June through July 2006 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (west of the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this article does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. All submissions of birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, must be accompanied by adequate details of the observation. The extent of this documentation depends on the rarity of the species and the difficulty of identification. For guidance, observers are encouraged to consult the Alabama Ornithological Society checklist. Reports should note conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

Abbreviations and italics: County names are in italics and, except for the Florida counties of *Bay*, *Escambia*, *Gulf*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton*, are in Alabama. “@” = under review by; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “BBA” = Breeding Bird Atlas; “BBS” = Breeding Bird Survey; “CE” = central east; “CW” = central west; “FOSRC” = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Fort Walton Beach Spray Fields; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NE” = northeast; “NW” = northwest; “SE” = southeast; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “SW” = southwest; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

SNOW GOOSE – Three were north of Auburn, *Lee*, 16 June (*vide* Barry Fleming) (occasional in summer).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Two records of this species, a rare and erratic breeder in Alabama, were received: a female with five large juveniles in the Echo NE BBA block, *Dale*, 4 July (Don Ware), and two males west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self).

NORTHERN SHOVELER – A male in alternate plumage was noted west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self) (occasional in summer).

HORNED GREBE – One lingered at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 2 June (Ron Smith) (very rare in June in the WP).

CORY’S SHEARWATER – The third record for the WP was marked by one spotted at Destin, *Okaloosa*, 31 July (Ben Garmon).

ANHINGA – Two were recorded from Opelika, *Lee*, in mid-July (Rodney McCollum) where the species is locally rare.

AMERICAN BITTERN – Rick West *et al.* found one in the Brundidge CE BBA block, *Pike*, 2 June (occasional in summer).

GREAT BLUE HERON – A white morph individual, very rare in the WP, visited

- Okaloosa*, 19 June – 14 July (Linda Dougherty, Phil Goodyear).
- WHITE IBIS** – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, four immatures were found along AL Highway 117 south of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 25 June (Steve McConnell).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** – A single was northwest of Madrid, *Houston*, 11+ July (Wayne Eidson *et al.*), and this species was also found at Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, 15 July (a single; Shawn Reed) and 19 July (two; Larry Gardella) (rare in Alabama).
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** – Tommy Pratt had the second highest daily count for Alabama with the 50+ he counted along County Road 21, *Autauga*, 30 July.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – Thirty-three was a good number at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21 July (Don Ware). One-two were noted at separate locations at Winfield, *Marion*, 23 June and 4 July (Jud Johnston) (rare this far north).
- KING RAIL** – One was calling at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 8 June (Steve McConnell) (rare breeder in the Tennessee Valley).
- LEAST SANDPIPER** – Two set an early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama at Linden, *Marengo*, 7 July (Don Self, Judy Self).
- LEAST TERN** – This species had a high degree of nesting success at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, with over 100 nests producing young and many juveniles present in July (*fide* Bob Duncan).
- BLACK TERN** – An adult in alternate plumage was seen west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self) (uncommon on the Inland Coastal Plain).
- ARCTIC TERN** – One was reported from Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 July (Kip Miller) to establish the first record (hypothetical) for Alabama (@ABRC).
- BLACK SKIMMER** – A good breeding season was experienced by this species at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, where there were about 30 nests (*fide* Bob Duncan).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – Paul Franklin heard one calling at Riverchase, *Shelby*, 3 June (new site).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – Rare but increasing in summer on the Gulf Coast, one was at Silverhill, *Baldwin*, 29 June (Bill Summerour).
- MONK PARAKEET** – The first report of this non-native escapee for the WP came from Panama City, *Bay*, 4-10 July (Richard Ingram).
- WHIP-POOR-WILL** – Several records helped establish a new southern distribution limit for this species in Alabama: three in the Bleeker SW BBA block, *Lee*, 18 June (Lorna West); one in the Oakmulgee SE BBA block, *Perry*, 18 June (Rick West); one in the Parkers Crossroads CE BBA block, *Lee*, 19 June (Lorna West); and one in the Phipps CE BBA block, *Hale*, 24 July (Rick West).
- GRAY KINGBIRD** – Pairs bred in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa, and downtown Pensacola, *Escambia*, this summer (*fide* Bob Duncan). This species was eliminated as a breeder from Alabama by Hurricane Danny in 1997, but first bred again in 2005 and is now a rare breeder. Two Alabama records were received, a pair with a nest at Lake Shelby in Gulf SP, *Baldwin*, late May (Walter Holman *et al.*) and 8 June (Jan Lloyd *et al.*) (ph. Bill Summerour), and a pair at the golf course on

- Dauphin Island, Mobile, from May to 1 July (Mark VanHoose) (probably nesting).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – A pair, probably nesting, was at a new site along US Highway 72 in the Bridgeport NW BBA block, *Jackson*, 8-11 June (Hill Henry; ph.). Another pair was found at a new site in the Leighton NW BBA block, *Colbert*, 9 July (Jimmy Wells, John Phillips) (rare but increasing breeder in Alabama).
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – This species is a rare breeder away from the Talladega Mountains, and records were received from two new localities: four (including a nesting pair) in the Leesburg CE BBA block, *Cherokee*, 1-2 July (Steve McConnell), and a single in the Hyatt Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 8 July (Pelham Rowan).
- FISH CROW** – Occasional in the Tennessee Valley, a pair was calling at Decatur, *Morgan*, 30 June (Craig Brown), and a single was noted at the northern edge of the species' range in Alabama, a new site in the Leesburg CE BBA block, *Cherokee*, 1 July (Steve McConnell).
- TREE SWALLOW** – The third July WP record was marked by one at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 25 July (Bob Duncan). Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, the following records document its spread: four adults and one+ juveniles at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*); several at two sites (feeding young at one site) in the Cox Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 17 June (Greg Harber, Pelham Rowan, Jessica Germany); and an adult feeding young in the Helena NE BBA block, *Shelby*, 27 June (Helen Kittinger).
- CLIFF SWALLOW** – A single was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 25 July (Bob Duncan) (very rare in July in the WP).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – A juvenile was noted at Opelika, *Lee*, 20 June (Lorna West) (rare this far south).
- HOUSE WREN** – One was singing in the Irondale NW BBA block, *Jefferson*, 27 June (Helen Kittinger) (rare breeder in Alabama).
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD** – The bluebird trail established by Phil Berry in Tiger Point, *Santa Rosa*, produced about 200 young this summer.
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH** – One lingered at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 10 June (Howard Horne) (third June record for Alabama).
- CEDAR WAXWING** – Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, five were counted on a BBS in *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*).
- YELLOW WARBLER** – A rare breeder in Alabama, one was noted on a BBS in *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*).
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** – An adult male was at Hullets Chapel, *St. Clair*, 29 June (Bob Sargent) (occasional breeder in Alabama).
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** – One-two early birds arrived at Clay, *Jefferson*, 27-29 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent).
- CERULEAN WARBLER** – One was singing at a new site in the Pleasant Site CW BBA block, *Franklin*, 20 June (Shirley Wayland, Phyllis Nofzinger) (rare breeder

in Alabama).

WORM-EATING WARBLER – Records of singles were received from three locations in south Alabama, where the species is a rare breeder: Opp West NE BBA block, *Covington*, 5 June (Don Ware); Leon CE BBA block, *Crenshaw*, 10 June (Don Ware); and north of Hurstboro, *Russell*, 22 June (Lorna West).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER – Greg Harber *et al.* found one in the Hyatt Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 8 July (locally rare breeder).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH – A 28 July window casualty in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, was identified (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan), with the specimen being sent to Pensacola Junior College (third July record for the WP).

CANADA WARBLER – Two were early arrivals at Clay, *Jefferson*, 29 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent).

LARK SPARROW – Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, one was recorded in the Deatsville NE BBA block, *Elmore/Autauga*, 11 June (Larry Gardella). One carrying food was seen at Moontown, *Madison*, 19 June (Neill Cowles).

SONG SPARROW – Several were observed and nesting was documented in the Leeds CE BBA block, *Jefferson/St. Clair*, 9 July (Jessica Germany, Harriet Wright, Lee Brewer, Greg Harber). This species is slowly expanding as a breeder in Alabama.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – A rare summering bird was documented in Cullman, *Cullman*, 24 and 26 July (Caila Lamont; ph.).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – The second June record for the WP was marked by a male and a female at a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 4 June (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan).

PAINTED BUNTING – This species is rare but increasing as a breeder for inland Alabama. An immature male was noted 26-30 July along County Road 21, *Autauga* (Tommy Pratt), while another immature was found in the Forester SW BBA block, *Autauga*, 29 July (Greg Harber, m.ob.).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – A first year male was reported from Niceville, *Okaloosa*, 14 July (Phil Goodyear) (@FOSRC) and would mark the first July record for Florida if accepted.

NUTMEG MANNIKIN – Mary Miller reported this exotic from east Pensacola, *Escambia*, 29 July, an area from which it was first reported in 2001. The species has since spread throughout the metropolitan area.

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