

SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2007)

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This report covers the period from June through July 2007 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 *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton*, are in Alabama. “m.ob.” = many observers; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

EGYPTIAN GOOSE – This escaped exotic is now breeding in the WP, as evidence by 12 birds seen in *Okaloosa*, 22 June (Don Ware, Sharon Weaver).

SURF SCOTER – In the Isle aux Herbes area, *Mobile*, Roger Clay found one on 17 May (ph.), and three on 13 July, the latter birds providing a late record and the first for summer in Alabama.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER – At Isle aux Herbes, *Mobile*, Roger Clay found one on 17 May and 13 July to mark the third summer record for Alabama.

BLACK SCOTER – One was noted south of Cat Island, *Mobile*, 17 May, and what was probably the same female was seen 13 July at the north end of Isle aux Herbes (Roger Clay) to mark the third summer record for Alabama.

HOODED MERGANSER – This duck is a rare and erratic breeder in Alabama, so one found at White Hall, *Lowndes*, 16 June (Larry Gardella) was notable.

PACIFIC LOON – The first July record for the WP was marked by one that was captured in *Walton*, 5 July (Patrick Gault; ph.), taken to the Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge, and released 8 July. There have been several late spring and early summer records in recent years.

COMMON LOON – Rare but a regular lingerer in summer in the WP and on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, six birds were in the Gulf of Mexico south of Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, 6 July (Bob Duncan); a single was on Bayou Heron, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 30 May and 12 June (John Porter, Mary Porter); and a lone bird

was on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, all month to 30 June (Joan Siegwald, Tom Siegwald; ph.).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is an uncommon breeder in Alabama, so two found at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 7 July (Steve McConnell) were noteworthy.

HORNED GREBE – A rare summering bird was on Bayou Heron, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 16 June and 7 July (John Porter, Mary Porter).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Rare inland in summer in Alabama, 24 were seen at Sledge, *Hale*, 15 July (Greg Harber).

LEAST BITTERN – Ben Garmon counted eight at the Chickasaw Ponds, *Mobile*, 10 June, a good number for a single site in summer.

REDDISH EGRET – Rare in the WP in summer, two dark morphs and one white morph were on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, 21 June (Bob Duncan).

WHITE IBIS – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, an immature was spotted at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 7 July (Steve McConnell).

WOOD STORK – Reports came from several sites, with the June records being uncommon this early in the season: 16 along the Alabama River west of White Hall, *Lowndes*, 1 June (Winston Baker, Linda Baker); six along the Alabama River, *Monroe/Clark*, 6 June (Eric Soehren, John Trent); one at White Hall, *Lowndes*, 16 June (Larry Gardella); 14 (maximum) at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 22+ June (Damien Simbeck, m.ob.; ph.) (occasional in the Tennessee Valley); and 975+ (second highest daily count for Alabama) in multiple groups, *Hale/Perry*, 15 July (Greg Harber).



Wood Stork, 29 June 2007, Muscle Shoals, AL; J.D. Green.

MISSISSIPPI KITE – The 56 counted by Don Ware in *Okaloosa* 21 June was a good number. Rare in the Mountain Region, records came from two sites where the species has been regular in recent years: a single at Winfield, *Marion*, 20 June (Jud Johnston), and six (adults and young) at Montevallo, *Shelby*, 10 July (Mac Braid).

AMERICAN COOT – A rare to uncommon summer lingerer in Alabama, one was on Lafitte Bay, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 31 July (Joan Siegwald, Tom Siegwald, Allen Tubbs, Priscilla Tubbs).

SNOWY PLOVER – Public inaccessibility to Santa Rosa Island, Gulf Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*, in combination with extensive suitable nesting habitat created by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, allowed this species to nest in record numbers. Further, drought conditions and lack of storms contributed to a high degree of fledgling success. At least 45 nests were counted by Jennifer Waddell on the Fort Pickens section alone. Bob Duncan found impressive numbers on other portions of the island.

WILSON'S PLOVER – Jennifer Waddell counted four nests with fledged young on Santa Rosa Island, Gulf Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – Rare in the WP, two were along the downtown waterfront, Pensacola, *Escambia*, 3 June (James Pfeiffer).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – One along the Alabama River, *Monroe/Clark*, 6 June (Eric Soehren, John Trent) was probably a late migrant.

UPLAND SANDPIPER – A single at Foley, *Baldwin*, 12 July (David Dortch) marked an early arrival record for the Gulf Coast.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW – The first July record for the WP was furnished by what was probably the same bird seen on Santa Rosa Island, Eglin Air Force Base, *Okaloosa*, 11 July (Joe Kern), and on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, 12 July (Jennifer Waddell).

MARbled GODWIT – A single was on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, 24 July (Bob Duncan) (casual in summer in the WP).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – Four birds were on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*, 30 July (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), to mark what is possibly the all time early date of arrival for Florida. Six at Foley, *Baldwin*, 19 July (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch) marked an early arrival record for the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK – Rare in summer in the WP, one was noted at Fort Walton Beach, *Okaloosa*, 10 July (Don Ware).

LEAST TERN – The circumstances described under the Snowy Plover account also contributed to nesting success for this species on Santa Rosa Island, *Escambia*. Jennifer Waddell counted about 200 chicks during the summer, with excellent fledgling success and some young still present in July.

GULL-BILLED TERN – Two at the Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 6 July (Walt Chambers; ph.) marked the sixth record for inland Alabama.

BARN OWL – One found freshly killed on Ala. Hwy 24 near Russellville, *Franklin*, 7 July (Craig Brown) provided an uncommon summer record.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – This species is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama. One record of a short-tailed (possible juvenile) individual came from just east of Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 14 June (Steve Seibert). Four+ at the Alabama A&M Farm, Hazel Green, *Madison*, 21 July (Neill Cowles, Beth Wood) were at a site that has supported nesting in the past.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – A single at Montgomery, Montgomery, 9 July (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) marked an early fall arrival record for the Inland Coastal Plain and was probably an early disperser from breeders just to the north.

TREE SWALLOW – Increasing as a breeder in Alabama but still rare, a single adult at White Hall, *Lowndes*, 16 June, and a pair and one immature at the same site 23 June (Larry Gardella) indicated probable nesting (farthest south in Alabama). One was at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 23 June (Paul Kittle, Donna Kittle), and three were along Ala. Hwy. 171 near the Tuscaloosa County line, *Fayette*, 20 July (Jud Johnston).

CLIFF SWALLOW – Thirty+ at the Robert Henry Dam, Alabama River,

Lowndes/Autauga, 16 June (Larry Gardella) were at a new site and document the continued expansion of this species in Alabama.

AMERICAN ROBIN – A rare local breeder in the WP, reports from north Pensacola, *Escambia*, included one on 1 July (Glenda Bowman), and parents feeding young 8 July (Laura Catterton).

GRAY CATBIRD – Rare in summer on the Gulf Coast, one was seen north of Georgetown, *Mobile*, 8 and 15 June (Claire Krusko).

CEDAR WAXWING – Rare but increasing as a breeder, one was south of Oneonta, *Blount*, 17 June (Greg Harber), and two were found at Linden, *Marengo*, 29-30 July (Judy Self, Don Self) (far southern record).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – One immature observed at Shorter, *Macon*, 24 July (Eric Soehren) marked an early arrival record for the Inland Coastal Plain and the second earliest for Alabama.

LARK SPARROW – One found at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 22 July (Bob Duncan) set the earliest fall arrival date for Florida. A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, Larry Gardella saw three birds at sites east of Ala. Hwy. 143, *Elmore*, 3 June where the species had been previously noted.

SONG SPARROW – The southernmost nesting in Alabama was documented at Opelika, *Lee*, with observations ranging from nest building to feeding young between 11 June and 8+ August (Geoff Hill, Lorna West; ph.).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – The first June record for the WP and the latest departure date for Florida were marked by a male at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 13 June (Bob Duncan).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH – An immature reported from Freeport, *Walton*, 10 and 17 July (Dave Streeter) marked a very rare summer record for Florida.

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