

TWO SIGNIFICANT SPECIMENS OF THE SWALLOW-TAILED KITE

FROM ALABAMA

ROBERT W. SKINNER

The wing and tail measurements of two Swallow-tailed Kites collected in Alabama conform with those of Elanoides forficatus yetapa (Vieillot), the South American Swallow-tailed Kite, rather than with the prescribed race, Elanoides forficatus forficatus (Linnaeus), the North American Swallow-tailed Kite.

The following measurements are given by Friedmann (The Birds of Middle and North America, Part XI. U.S.N.M. Bull. 50: 84 and 90). For Elanoides f. forficatus, adult female, wing 436-445, tail 343-370; Elanoides f. yetapa, adult female, wing 390-427, tail 275-326. As can be seen the measurements do not overlap in the two races.

The measurements for the two Alabama specimens are as follows: Monroe County, Alabama, April 17, 1964, adult female, wing 412, tail 319; Montgomery County, Alabama, July 26, 1961, adult female, wing 400, tail 299.

The above measurements place the two Alabama specimens of kites well within the range of measurements given for the South American race.

The range of the South American Kite is given by Friedmann (op. cit.: 90) as South America north of Argentina, north to Campeche, Mexico, being known from Central America only as a summer visitor, probably absent in winter.

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NOTES

Additional Magnolia Springs Records. The following additions of interest may be made to my list in the last issue of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE: Mallard - one late female at Corte Pond, June 11, 1964; Dickcissel - April 28, 1964, 1 female at Gulf Shores, May 1, 1964, 6 singing birds at Foley; Pine Siskin - May 3, 1964, 6 birds in a flock of Goldfinches at Magnolia Springs. Fairly Chandler, Magnolia Springs, Alabama.

A banding trip to the Gulf Island Refuges. Lovett Williams, Mac Myers, and I made the trip in mid-July. Over 3,000 Royal and Sandwich Terns were banded, a few adult birds were dyed red and the juveniles blue. The Petit Bois colony has moved to one of the spoil banks (Walnut Island) approximately 5 miles south of Pascagoula. The spoil banks are not included in the refuge, and therefore, do not come under the protection of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On July 14 we saw a Sabine's Gull about 3 miles west of the Ship Island lighthouse. July 16 we saw an adult Brown Booby, a Greater Shearwater, and another Shearwater, probably a Greater. These birds were seen in Chandeleur sound about 10 miles west of the North Islands. The same date two Pomarine Jaegers were seen mid-way between the Ship Island lighthouse and Biloxi. A Sooty Tern was seen on several occasions July 14 and 15 on Curlew Island, one of the Chandeleurs. The refuge manager obtained a good picture of the Sooty Tern, nest and egg at this location in June. July 11th, 12th and 13th as many as 19 Brown Pelicans were noted on the spoil banks south of Pascagoula. A pair of adult Common Terns with nest and two eggs was found on a spoil bank 3 miles south of Pascagoula.

Reports of any dyed terns seen on the gulf coast would be appreciated.

I have not been in the Montgomery area enough this summer to obtain much field data. However, the Cattle Egret seems to be on the increase and can be seen quite frequently. Robert W. Skinner, Alabama Department of Conservation, Montgomery, Alabama.

Sick Mourning Doves at feeding station. A greater number of Mourning Doves was observed at this feeding station during the summer of 1964 than during any summer of the ten years residence at this address. From June through August nine sick doves were observed, eight of which were trapped and destroyed. The last five were examined for possible evidence of disease. Four of these five had caseous of cheese like growths in the throat region. Each of the nine doves was observed to have difficulty in picking up and swallowing food. In each dove the breast was found to be thin. These Mourning Doves would seem to be victims of Trichomonas gallinae. An outbreak of trichomoniasis among Mourning Doves in Alabama was reported in 1950 (Mourning Dove Newsletter 1960, Fish and Wildlife Service). Harriett Wright, 2749 Millbrook Rd., Birmingham, Ala.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Cherokee County. On August 22nd, Dr. W. J. Calvert, Mr. Jerome B. Couch, Mr. John C. Hall and I made a trip to Weiss Lake up in Cherokee County. When within a mile or so from the lake, John Hall and I sighted this bird on the telephone wire along the road. We stopped and sounded our horn for Calvert and Couch who were in the car ahead, but they didn't hear us. As we got out of the car, the bird flew over into a grove of willows. Upon the return of Calvert and Couch, we all walked over into the willows where John Hall sighted the scissor-tail again, but the willows were so thick, the bird eluded us and we finally gave up the search. According to Imhof (1962:346) this would be the eastern most sight record of this species in Alabama. Julian W. Johnson, Regar Memorial Museum, Anniston, Alabama.

Cattle Egrets and Broad-winged Hawks at Livingston. On that cold, blustery, almost freezing Monday after Easter, March 30, 1964, while walking in a creek bottom pasture on my farm, I noticed in the distance a white bird I took to be an immature Little Blue Heron. It was not on water but near some grazing cattle, motionless in a humped-over posture, giving the appearance of a sick or half frozen bird. As I approached with binoculars I soon spied the tell-tale yellow bill and yellow-green legs. I made an attempt to get closer to the bird under an embankment but the bird disappeared in the meantime.

On April 21, 1964 I spotted two Cattle Egrets in a pasture right at the south corporate limits of Livingston walking around with a group of cattle in the manner of cowbirds. I approached these at close range with binoculars and observed them for a long time, noting all details as yellow bill, yellow-green legs, buffy streaks, and jowls which set them aside from other egrets and herons. Posture and movements appeared different also. I noticed as I approached too close that they ran with head up with somewhat of a comical appearance, and finally took to the air flying in a northerly direction. As I have not seen any Cattle Egrets since, it is my belief that these three were merely migrating through.

On April 29, 1964, I was attracted by an unusual hawk cry and upon looking up saw my first Broad-winged Hawk. The bird made a circle toward the south then returned flying in a northerly direction with another Broad-winged Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk evidently in migration.

On July 5, 1964, I ran into another Broad-winged Hawk with a snake in its talons and being harrassed by a kingbird. The hawk kept spiraling higher and higher until the kingbird came back to earth and the hawk flew in a southerly direction. Carrying food at this time of year would seem to indicate that the hawk may be nesting not too far away. Jenkins Jackson, Livingston, Alabama.

THE FIRST SUMMER BIRD COUNT

Compiled by the Editor

In 1963, Mr. Thomas Z. Atkeson proposed that the Society should undertake an annual summer bird count. Following several discussions in meetings of the Society it was decided that such a count would be undertaken in the summer of 1964, any time during the month of June. Any local group that wanted to make such a count would procede with it, using the same area and methods employed in the Christmas Count. Only 2 summer counts were made, but the results were of sufficient interest that it can be hoped that more counts will be made in the future.

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA. (column B of table). Same circle of 15 miles diameter used for the Christmas Count for the past 28 years, centering in New Merkle and including areas between East Lake, Oak Mountain, Elmwood Cemetery and Lake Purdy. Date, June 27, 1964; time, 4 A. M. to 7:30 P. M.; weather, warm and cloudy A. M., fair and hot P. M.; 85 party hours; 23 observers; 279 party miles, 233 miles in car, 43 miles on foot, 3 miles by boat; nests found 31, nests identified, 27; total species identified 87; approximate total of individuals seen, 27,059; description of habitat, 28% residential, 16% woodland border, 14% lakes and ponds, 25% oak-pine woods, 15% pastures, 1% tall grass, 0.5% creeks and rivers, 0.5% cemetery.

Participants (names capitalized are of party leaders) M. F. PRATHER; MORTON H. PERRY; BLANCHE CHAPMAN, Harriett Wright, Mildred Ferris; DAN C. HOLLIMAN (compiler), Bob Reid, Elberta Reid, Ron Eason; TOM IMHOF, John Imhof; HELEN KITTINGER, Steve Dirksen, Georgette Cantebury, Josephine Wood; F. BOZEMAN DANIEL, Raymond Bates; CLUSTIE MCTEIRE, Margarette Persons; WALTER COXE, Bob Hard, Jimmy Hard.

AUBURN, ALABAMA. (column A of table). Same circle of 15 miles diameter as used in the Christmas Count, centering at the Auburn post office, including Whatley's lake and the North Auburn Ponds. Date, June 23, 1964; time, 4 A. M. to 9 A. M., weather clear and warm; 9 party hours, 8 observers, 43 party miles, 40 miles in car, 3 miles on foot; total species identified, 66; total individuals seen, 837; description of habitat, 50% mixed woods, 20% water and mud flats 30% pastures and open fields.

Participants (names capitalized are of party leaders). M. F. BAKER, Chester McConnell; JULIAN DUSI, Rosemary Dusi, Bill Goslin, George Folkert, Kenneth Landers, Charles Patrick.

LIST OF BIRDS SEEN.

Species	A	B	Species	A	B
Common Loon		1	Blue-winged Teal		20
Pied-billed Grebe		2	Shoveller		1
Great Blue Heron	1		Ring-necked Duck		2
Green Heron	15	16	Turkey Vulture		7
Little Blue Heron	5	6	Black Vulture	1	4