

AN ALBINO ROBIN NEAR MOBILE

Kathleen Yerger Johnstone

Hearing of a strange bird which had been seen on Mon Louis Island, south of Mobile, four of us went in search of it on the afternoon of March 22, 1965. After crossing Fowl River, we stopped at a small store on the west side of Dauphin Island Parkway, to ask the whereabouts of the bird, which according to report, many of the local residents had seen and tried to catch with cast nets. Our informant said to go to a small, plowed field with a gate just beyond the third house from his store on the "black top"; adding that the bird had been in or around the field for about a week.

Just past the third house we found a driveway blocked by a sagging gate, beyond which was the plowed field. About fifty feet across the field there was a large fallen tree, and perched on top, as if awaiting inspection, was the much-talked-of bird. It was about 8½ - 10½ inches long, white from head to tail except for a buffy tinge on the head, wing tips, and tail and a "brick-red" breast. The legs were black and rather long; the bill yellow. Without a doubt it was an albino Robin.

The bird was closely observed on the fallen tree, in flight to a nearby tree where it perched in full view; in flight again to another plowed field where it fed for five minutes before flying to a group of trees some distance away. No other Robins were around and none had been observed on the way from my residence near the mouth of Dog River to the field. A week before a "white Robin", in a flock of ordinary Robins, had been reported at Spring Hill, but the observers were not known to be experienced birders.

The report of the "white Robin" on Mon Louis Island came from Dr. Leslie Taylor, who lives nearby on Fowl River. The three observers who accompanied the writer were: Harry Inge Johnstone of Mobile, Lt. and Mrs. Yerger Johnstone of New River, North Carolina.

2209 River Forest Drive
Mobile, Alabama

NOTES

Notes from Marengo County, Alabama. On January 29, 1965, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks were observed constructing a nest in a Tupelo Gum. Upon closer observation it was determined to be last years nest being repaired. This seemed rather early for nest construction.

A pair of Red-tailed Hawks were seen in mating flight and territory established the first week in February.

We have had two immature Golden Eagles in the area most of the winter. One was approached to within 40 yards before taking flight. I have only one record of the Bald Eagle there this winter. Robert W. Skinner, State Conservation Department, Game & Fish Division, Montgomery.

Notes from The Tennessee Valley. The winter period was a wet one, but there were only 2 light snows and only a few days when the reservoir was ice-locked. Throughout the fall and winter of 1964-65, Wheeler Refuge's duck numbers were approximately equal to those of the previous season, peaking at 56,000. Canada Goose numbers, on the other hand, showed a sharp drop of over 20 percent and reached a peak of 46,000 in early December. There was a definite movement of these birds from this locality that began during the last week of December and continued through January. Blue and Snow Goose numbers were unchanged.

The public waterfowl hunt, held on a portion of the refuge, proved successful. There was no slaughter, but hunters did bag 1,011 Canada Geese and 404 ducks and made the manufacturers of small arms ammunition considerably richer.

As for unusual bird notes, there were almost none. David Hulse spotted an adult White-winged Scoter on January 23. This was the first adult male noted here. All previous records have been females or immature birds. Bald Eagles reappeared on Wheeler Refuge after a 2 year absence. The first was noted in late November and the birds remained until mid-February. At least two, an adult and an immature, were seen regularly and there may have been others. Thomas Z. Atkinson, Jr., Decatur, Alabama.

Unusual Junco from Jacksonville. On January 20, 1965, the author collected a specimen of junco in Jacksonville, Alabama, which had characteristics similar to Junco o. oregonus. The skin was sent to the National Museum in Washington and identified by Lester L. Short, Jr., Chief, Bird Section, as Junco hyemalis montanus x hyemalis. Mr. Short recently spent four months re-working the junco collection in the National Museum and was in a position to readily identify the specimen. He regards the dark-eyed junco populations as comprising one species, J. hyemalis, as interbreeding between "hyemalis" and "oreganus" populations is massive and its effects far reaching. He does not recognize "cismontanus" (J. o. oregonus x J. h. hyemalis) for it is a hybrid population and notoriously unstable. The author's specimen would formerly have been classified as Junco oregonus montanus x hyemalis but is now