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ALABAMA BIRDLIFE
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ALABAMA BIRDLIFE STAFF

Production — Walter F. Coxe
P. O. Box 1448, Birmingham 35201

Season Editor — Thomas A. Imhof
1036 Pike Road, Birmingham 35218

Papers, Reviews Editor —
Dr. Dan C. Holliman, Biology Dept.
Birmingham—Southern College
Birmingham, 35204

Counts Editor — Robert R. Reid, Jr.
2616 Mountain Brook Parkway,
Birmingham, 35223

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THE SEASON, SUMMER (June—July—August) 1971

Compiler and Editor — Thomas A. Imhof

Most of the replacement of the losses of all four seasons must take place during this period. Usually it is difficult to estimate how well each species has accomplished this replacement; for some try repeatedly until a brood is produced; others try one time and if not successful the species remains in short numbers for another year. Thus far it appears that no severe failures occurred in spite of some adverse weather.

The long-term trend continues cool. July was especially wet, and although August was rather dry, water levels remained high and the Birmingham excess for the year is still over 6 inches. In the 6 weeks prior to 1 Aug, 20 rainy days produced over 14 inches of rain—almost an inch every other day! We have little idea so far of the effect of all this rain on young birds, but it is usually adverse. Possibly the really important consideration is the ability of each species to try again or to successfully complete their reproductive cycle before the rains.

Corrections — In the Alabama Bird List (Alabama Birdlife, 19: 7-14) please insert the following fall arrival dates: Whistling Swan, 1 Nov; Pintail, 2 Sept; Green-winged Teal, 1 Sept; Am Widgeon, 10 Sept. Other additions to this list will appear under capitalized species' names below; " & mob" below means "and many other birders."

Full-webbed Swimmers — About 50 Brown Pelicans summered in lower Mobile Bay mostly at Fort Morgan and Dauphin Island (LRT, WTS and mob); max 49 at Fort Morgan on 28 June (PFC). Most likely source or these birds—about half of them immature—is the Port St. Joe area of Florida, the nearest place where young were raised this year (CLK). On 24 Jan on Lake Shelby, Gulf State Park, a sick "Gannet" was captured with a cast net (CTT) and photographed (CTT, HHK, MH, HHW); later suspicions (CTT) led to sending several slides to Patuxent (CSR) and USNM (RCL) where the bird was identified as a changing BLUE-FACED BOOBY, really the first for Alabama and confirming April's record.

Hérons, Ibises — A Great White Heron, probably one bird involved, was first noted on Dauphin I. on 28 June, noted wounded on 8 Aug and still present on 3 Sept (LRT); first noted on the Alabama coast 9 years ago, this is the 5th summer of record for the species. The Cattle Egret explosion seems to have slowed down lately and the species seems to have disappeared from several areas, notably the Tennessee Valley and around Montgomery, as a breeder. The heronry near Faunsdale has increased to about 5000 birds this year with 8 Cattle Egrets to 1 of the other herons (Com Egret, Little Blue Heron). Two Am Bitterns were found this June, 1 on the 9th at Wheeler Refuge (RMB); and 1 at Alabama Point on the 22nd (AF & FE). More White Ibises than usual were reported (CLK, RRR, PFC); for instance 50 with young in nest in the Faunsdale colony on 13 June (RM & JVP).

Ducks, Rails — Unusual mid-summer coastal Blue-winged Teal were 1 at Cutoff on 30 June (G & JS) and 2 on 23 July on Dauphin (LRT). For the 8th consecutive summer Ring-necked Ducks summered in Birmingham (East Lake), this year 2 males (RRR & mob). At Marion, 3 Purple Gallinules on 20 June (EGR & RRR) are about as far inland as the species occurs regularly. The

Com Gallinule, rather scarce north of the Fall Line, was seen at Lake Purdy on 17 & 18 May (JVP, RRR, EGR). The Am Coot continues to occur widely and regularly in summer with little evidence of breeding at many well-watched places; but this year young were detected near Mobile on 3 June (WTS).

Shorebirds — Although heavy July rains left little shorebird habitat at big lakes like Lake Purdy, the rain pools in grassy areas such as at the west end of the Birmingham Airport harbored some interesting birds. A Semiplumbeated Plover at the Airport on 31 July (RRR) tied the earliest locally. A Long-billed Dowitcher there the same day (RRR & JVP) is only the second inland in fall in Alabama; dowitchers are not too scarce inland in this state, but positively and properly identified ones are. At Eufaula Refuge on 2 July, 5 AM AVOCETS (JM) were the first in summer in the state. Two unusual BLACK-NECKED STILTS were reported late; 1 at Marion on 7 May (Argyles) is only the second inland for the state and 1 on Cat I. on 21 May (JRB & others) latest spring by 10 days.

Gulls, Terns — On Lake Oliver, the Chattahoochee R. between Phenix City and Columbus, Ga., the Laughing Gull has proven to be quite regular in recent years, especially in spring when it rains or willow flies emerge. This year 2 on 11 Aug when willow flies were abundant (LAW) are the earliest for fall. Following the report of 19 Gull-billed Terns (12 pair) nesting on west Dauphin I. in late May comes that of 10 more pairs nesting on Mobile Causeway (JLD) indeed encouraging for this species. In Pensacola on 2 Aug, Least Terns were seen carrying food into the roof of the Municipal Auditorium located on a pier (PFC) exactly as seen about a decade ago when breeding there was proven (FMW). A high of 300 Sandwich Terns at Fort Morgan on 18 Aug (TAI) is the second highest ever counted in Alabama.

Flycatchers, Swallows — Although late arriving this spring, Gray Kingbirds appeared in normal numbers on Dauphin I (LRT) and Fort Morgan (TAI), 4 each place in Aug and another on 19 Aug at Mary Ann Beach near Fairhope (TAI, VDH, PFC). An Acadian Flycatcher banded at Fort Morgan on 17 Aug (TAI) indicated the rarely-noted beginning of fall migration for the species. Two Tree Swallows were seen in Mobile on 2 & 3 Aug (FEB) 8 days earlier than any other coastal plain records. Breeding Barn Swallows are increasing at old sites and occupying new ones. Two new sites were under Marengo County bridges with young in the air at one on 20 June (RRR); another was at Shades Creek & Red Mt. Expressway where 2 young were flying on 11 July (RRR); even the coastal population is expanding, last year they first bred under a Mobile Causeway bridge—Pineda Area—this year a pair was seen feeding young at a nest under the Perdido Pass Bridge at Alabama Point on 27 June (LH). The Leeds colony had 14 active nests on 8 June—past year 13—and banding operations provided 5 returns (RRR & mob).

Wren, Thrush, Warblers — A HOUSE WREN, heard singing on 4 July in Homewood, Birmingham (HHK & others) is the first summer record for the state. Most of the 13 Breeding Survey Routes I have seen this year show an increase in numbers of E. Bluebirds over last year. On 18 Aug at Fort Morgan, 3 Tennessee Warblers are, except for a 2 Aug '64 record, earliest for state by 11 days. Following a strong easterly storm, a male BLACKPOLL WARBLER on 12 Aug in spring plumage, and a female on 13 Aug both in Magnolia Springs (PFC) are the 3rd & 4th fall records south of Birmingham. Palm Warblers on Dauphin I, 1 on 8 Aug & 2 on the 12th (LRT, LPA, AM), are almost a month earlier than any other state records. A Northern Waterthrush

in Birmingham on 4 Aug (TAI) is exceeded in fall only by 2, 30 July records near the coast.

Finches — A female or immature PAINTED BUNTING in a tall ragweed in Birmingham 1 Sept (TAI) is the only fall record north of the coast, the only Sept record for the state, is the first for the county, and is the northernmost in Alabama. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Eufaula Refuge on 2 July (JM) is the first summer record for the Lower Coastal Plain although less than 50 miles east of where the species summers regularly. Two far-apart Whitethroats were noted this summer; 1 in Magnolia Springs on 15 June (PFC). 1st summer record south of Montgomery; 1 in Birmingham on 31 July (H & PLT).

Observers (reporters in capitals) — Lois P. Archer, THOMAS Z. ATKESON, Richard M. Bays, P. FAIRLY CHANDLER, Lucy Duncan, Fred Evenden, Amy Furnans, Leroy Healy, Mike Hopyak, Verda D. Horne, Thomas A. Imhof, John M. Imhof, CURTIS L. KINGSBERY, Helen H. Kittinger, Roxie C. Laybourne, James Miller, Alwilda Mitchell, James V. Peavy, Chandler S. Robbins, Elberta G. Reid, ROBERT R. REID, Helen & Percy Thigpen, Lib R. Toenes, C. Tim Traylor, Francis M. Weston, Harriett H. Wright, L. A. WELLS.

1036 Pike Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35218

VARIATION IN STAGES OF NESTING DEVELOPMENT AT SEVERAL HERON COLONIES IN 1971

Julian L. Dusi and Rosemary T. Dusi

The variation in stages of initial and early nest development seen in several Heron colonies showed that great variation exists between the onset of breeding.

The colonies referred to here are located as follows:

1. Ft. Gaines colony, 6 miles north of Ft. Gaines, Clay Co., Ga.
2. Pintlala colony, 1 mile west of Pintlala, Montgomery Co., Ala.
3. McLemore colony, 1 mile west of Mount Meigs, Montgomery Co., Ala.

From a latitudinal standpoint, the colonies are no more than 50 miles apart. The Ft. Gaines colony is southernmost, at latitude $31^{\circ} 40'$ and the McLemore colony northernmost, at latitude $32^{\circ} 23'$

Physiographically, they are all located in the Upper Coastal Plain. The Ft. Gaines colony is about one-half mile from the impounded Chattahoochee River at Lake Eufaula. The Pintlala colony about 15 miles southeast of the Alabama River. The McLemore colony is about 2 miles south of the Tallapoosa River. This locates all of the colonies within 30 miles of the upper edge (fall line) of the coastal plain and near large rivers, which are major migration routes.

Chronologically, the Ft. Gaines colony is at least 5 years old, the Pintlala colony 2 years old and the McLemore colony in its first year.

Using the nesting of the major species, the Little Blue Heron and the Cattle Egret, as indices of initial nesting stages, the following developmental observations made in 1971 are pertinent.