

THE SEASON, SUMMER-FALL

June through November, 1976

Thomas A. Imhof

This report takes a lot of time to prepare--it contains records of at least 90 species by over 50 observers. We need the full cooperation of all persons submitting records. With rare exceptions, records not submitted on cards cannot be considered for publication in either American Birds or Alabama Birdlife. An observation becomes a record when all the pertinent data are written in one place and it becomes available for communicating to others. Thus a record on a card makes preparing a report much easier and it can be filed for future reference--permanently in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology. If you are not receiving cards, write to Dr. Robert J. Newman, Curator Emeritus, Museum of Zoology, L.S.U., Baton Rouge, La. 70893, tell him you are reporting bird records to me and ask to receive a supply of record cards and be placed on the observer list to receive notices of American Birds deadlines. These are March 1, June 1, August 1, and December 1. All records for the preceding period are due in my hands as soon as possible after these dates; thus I can begin to prepare a report on the 10th of those months and satisfy the people of American Birds and Alabama Birdlife who have other deadlines to meet. If you run out of cards, any 3x5 card will do, provided you include the same information.

We need a card on all records that supersede information in the "Occurrence in Alabama" paragraphs in Alabama Birds. We need details on any record you think may be doubted by anyone, for instance an August record of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet--which could be confused with an Empidonax or a fall warbler--or an October record of a Gannet--which could be confused with a booby. Age and sex often need to be stated when it makes a difference in ease of identification, for instance Black-headed Grosbeak.

In future reports, the Lower Coastal Plain and the Piedmont will be absorbed so that we will have four regions in Alabama. At present, reporting actual status is often misleading. For instance, at first it was thought worthwhile to point out the lack of spring records for the Gray-checked Thrush in the Lower Coastal Plain. But after 20 years with no improvement in local data, it would be misleading to point out the lack which is probably not reflected in the species' actual status. So, from now on, the Upper and Lower Coastal Plain and Lee County are combined to form the Inland Coastal Plain, and the balance of the Piedmont is absorbed in the Mountain Region. So, we now have the Tennessee Valley, 8 counties; Mountain Region, 22 counties; Inland Coastal Plain, 35 counties; and the Gulf Coast, 2 counties.

Summer was cool and this fall was the coldest this century, and the year ended, at least in Birmingham, with over 3⁰ colder in average daily temperature and 2 inches above normal rainfall. Although rainfall was higher than normal this did not always mean higher water levels--at Lake Purdy outside Birmingham,

water was 11 feet low because of increased water consumption; in Upper Mobile Bay in cold November, the northwest wind blew the water out into the Gulf and kept levels low enough to produce high number of waders, etc., which may have been there all the time, but had been difficult to count. The cold fall chased many insectivores out, and they were definitely scarce in November! This was forecast by the rash of early-arriving migrant and winter birds as early as August. Waterfowl were in about normal numbers and some northern finches--Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Junco, Fox Sparrow--were in good numbers, but no Evening Grosbeaks of Siskins showed.

In the following account of noteworthy records, abbreviations are: TV-Tennessee Valley, Mtr-Mountain Region, UCP-Upper Coastal Plain, LCP-Lower Coastal Plain, GC-Gulf Coast, rec-record, Ref-Refuge, mob-many other birders, max-maximum, exc-except.

Red-throated Loon: Nov. 18, Little Lagoon, Gulf Shores (HHK), earliest GC.
Eared Grebe: Nov. 5-8, Sewer Lagoon, Gulf Shores(A.O.S.) becoming annual
Pied-billed Grebe: Oct. 8, Oak Mtn. L., 303 (GDJ), state max.
Gannet: Nov. 6 onward, Gulf Shores (A.O.S.) earliest Ala. by two weeks.
Double-crested Cormorant: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 8 (JVP), earliest Mtr.
Little Blue Heron: Nov. 25, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile, 200 (WCW), winter max.
Black-crowned Night Heron: Oct. 27, Weiss L. (GDJ), latest Mtr.
Least Bittern: Nov. 8, Gulf Shores (TAI,JVP), latest Ala. exc winter recs.
Dark Ibis: Nov. 29, Magnolia Springs (PFC), 4th winter rec. Ala. (Wh-f or Glossy??)
White Ibis: Nov. 25, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile 150 (WCW), winter max.
White-fronted Goose: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 3 adults (JVP), earliest inland Ala., 2nd Mtr.
Snow Goose: Sep. 22, Wheeler Ref., 2 (WCD), earliest Ala.
Mottled Duck: Nov. 13, Cochrane Causeway, Mobile, 8 (JLD,TAI,M.B.C.); 2 still present there Nov. 20 (A&MN, others).
Pintail: Jul. 13-14, a male, and 3 through Aug. 23, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH); Aug. 24, Cochrane Causeway (JVP,GDJ); over 1000 there in November (TAI, others).
Green-winged Teal: Jul. 13-Aug. 5, 3; Aug. 10, 5, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH); Aug. 23, Gulf Shores (GDJ,JVP); now a total of 4 August recs for Ala.
American Wigeon: Sep. 8, Wheeler Ref., 3 (CDC), earliest Ala.
Greater Scaup: Oct. 10, a male, near Wheeler Dam (DH), earliest Ala.
Common Goldeneye: Nov. 5, Coleman L. near Bessemer, 3 (CWB), earliest Mtr.; Nov. 8, Gulf Shores Sewer Lagoon, a female (JVP,TAI), earliest GC; Nov. 10, Decatur (DCH), earliest TV.
Oldsquaw: Nov. 12, Fort Morgan, a male, 2 females (TAI,MLM); Nov. 20, Mobile (A&MN); Nov. 25, Grand Bay, 2 (BS).
Eider: Oct. 2, Fort Morgan, a female or immature(GDJ), 2nd Eider rec Ala.
Surf Scoter: Nov. 11, 1 male, 2 females, Fort Morgan (TAI,MN).
Black Scoter: Nov. 8, Fort Morgan, 2 males, 1 female (TAI,JVP); Nov. 11, Fort Morgan, 3 females (TAI,MN).
Ruddy Duck: Wheeler Ref., 2 summered (CDC,DMB); Gulf Shores, a male summered (TAI,HHK,JVP,GDJ).
Mississippi Kite: Hurricane, Baldwin Co., 30 + 3 young, Jun. 1 (TAI,HHK)
Choctaw Ref., 15 including immatures, Jun. 17 (JVP,TLW); Wheeler Ref., Jul. 9, 11, 24 (DCH), last seen Sep. 4, an adult (CDC,SG), latest rec north of CP.

Goshawk: Oct. 24, Fink's L., Calhoun Co. (CWS), 3rd Ala rec.

Swainson's Hawk: Oct. 1, Fort Morgan (MLM,SGa), warliest Ala. rec. 2nd for GC.

Golden Eagle: Nov. 18, Fairhope (A&MN), 2, 4th rec for GC, 3 of them in November

Bald Eagle: Dec. 1, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), only rec.

N. Harrier (Marsh Hawk): Aug. 8 Cooks Springs, St. Clair Co. (JVP), earliest Ala. exc summer recs for Wheeler over 30 years ago; Aug. 10, Swan Cr. Mgmt. Area (DCH), earliest TV.

Osprey: Jul. 21, Choctaw Ref., 1 (JVP,RJR), indicates possible inland breeding; Oct. 25, Weiss L., 1 (JVP), ties latest Mtr.

Peregrine Falcon: 6 recs this fall--Wheeler Ref., Oct. 14, Nov. 26 & 27, Dec. 1 (TZA, CDC); Dauphin I., Oct. 23 (PS) & Oct. 28 (REH); Fort Morgan, Nov. 10 (TAI).

Sandhill Crane: Oct. 30 & 31, Douglas, Marshall Co. (RDS), 1 on ground and in flight, studied at leisure, red on head seen well, 3rd inland rec. 2nd Mtr, all in fall.

Sora: Aug. 24, Marion Hatchery (ALM), earliest UCP; Aug. 28, Wheeler Ref., 2 (CDC), earliest TV.

Oystercatcher: Dec. 3, Dauphin I., 13 (LRT), max. Ala.

Piping Plover: Aug. 26, Lakeland Farm, Marion (GDJ), 2nd rec UCP.

American Golden Plover: many recs TV, Mtr & GC; Nov. 18, Wheeler Ref., 8 (CDC) latest inland; nov. 29, Magnolia Springs (PFC), latest state.

Ruddy Turnstone: Aug. 7, L. Purdy (HHK,KTK), earliest inland; Aug. 24, Marion Hatchery (GDJ,JVP,ALM), earliest of 2 CP recs.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Oct. 17, Wheeler Ref., 3 (GDJ,JMH), latest TV.

Baird's Sandpiper: Sep. 19, Marion Hatchery (HHK, ML), 2nd rec CP.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Aug. 13-25, Wheeler Ref., 1-2 (DCH), 2nd earliest Ala.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Oct. 12-23, Limestone Bay, Wheeler Ref. (JMH,TAB, many photos. mob), 5th Ala. rec, 1st inland, 3rd in 1976, species now removed from hypothetical list.

American Avocet: Jun. 25, Blakely I., Mobile, 12 birds (HHK), 1st summer rec; Aug. 25, Wheeler Ref., 12 (ALM,DMB), earliest TV; Nov. 13, Blakely I., 267 birds (TAI, many) state max.

Black-necked Stilt: Blakely I., Mobile--Jun. 1, 17 adults & 4 young (TAI,HHK); Jun. 25, 42 adults (HHK), state max.; 3 occasions in summer, 40 adults (B&JW).

Wilson's Phalarope: Aug. 19, Marion Hatchery, (GDJ,HHK), 1st rec CP.

Herring Gull: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 2 (JVP), earliest Mtr.

Ring-billed Gull: Oct. 25, Weiss L., 35 (JVP), max. Mtr; Nov. 5, Alabama Point, 1 with a bright yellow tag on upper right wing (CDC, others).

Bonaparte's Gull: Nov. 13, Guntersville, 1 & Wheeler Ref., 4 (CDC), earliest TV.

Black Tern: Oct. 10, Preston I., Guntersville (CDC), latest inland.

Short-eared Owl: Nov. 5, 8 & 22, Gulf Shores & Fort Morgan (CDC,TAI,JVP,PFC).

Chuck-wills-widow: Sep. 6, Tuscaloosa (JCT), latest UCP.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Sep. 22, Wheeler Ref, 1 (WCD), 12 inland rec, 6th north of Fall Line, 2nd for Wheeler & TV. (On coast only 2 recs this fall & only 1 of W. Kingbird.)

East.Wood Pewee: Nov. 5-11, Fort Morgan, 2 or 3 birds, 1 banded (TAI,JVP,CDC,MN) latest Ala.

Vermillion Flycatcher: Oct. 30 through November, Magnolia Springs, male & female (PFC,many); we are now seeing more than one at a time, they are lingering later in winter--apparently the species is increasing on Ala. GC.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Oct. 2, Fort Morgan (GDJ), earliest GC.
 Ash-throated Flycatcher: Sep. 22 & Oct. 1, Fort Morgan (MLM,SGa), 8th GC & state rec.
 Alder Flycatcher: Sep. 17, Ebenezer Swamp, Montevallo (GDJ), heard, 2nd fall rec MTR.
 Tree Swallow: Aug. 8, Magnolia Springs (PFC), earliest CP; Aug. 18, Marion, 16
 birds (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP; Oct. 8, Shelby County 22 L, 200 (GDJ), max. MTR.
 Bank Swallow: Aug. 18, Marion Hatchery, 20 (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP.
 Rough-winged Swallow: Oct. 30, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,TAB), latest inland.
 Barn Swallow: Oct. 30, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,TAB), latest Ala. N. of Fall line; last
 on GC this fall was Nov. 13 at Mobile.
 Cliff Swallow: New breeding colony under south span of I-65 bridge of Tenn. R. (CDC)
 is only one for 40 miles up or downstream; Aug. 18, Marion (GDJ,HHK), earliest UCP.
 Red-breasted Nuthatch: moderate numbers all the way to Fort Morgan in proper habitat.
 House Wren: Sep. 10 & 11, Decatur, 3 in yards (DCH,ENP), earliest Ala. exc summer recs.
 Brown-headed Nuthatch: Nov. 22, Scottsboro, 2 (FH), 2nd rec north of Tenn. R.
 Long-billed Marsh Wren: Oct. 2, Tuscaloosa (JCT), earliest UCP.
 Veery: Nov. 9, Fort Morgan, 1 banded (TAI), in 1975 1 banded same place on Nov. 17
 by TAI--these are only 2 November recs for state.
 Cedar Waxwing: June 23, Wheeler Ref. (DMB), may indicate local breeding.
 Red-eyed Vireo: Nov. 6,7,9, Fort Morgan (JVP,TAI), latest Ala. exc for a Dec. rec.
 Philadelphia Vireo: Sep. 2, B'ham (JVP), earliest MTR; Sep. 11, Wheeler Ref. 3 (CDC),
 earliest TV; Sep. 25, B'ham, 12 (B.A.S.); Oct. 22, Fort Morgan, 2 (MLM), latest
 state.
 Brewster's Warbler Hybrid: Aug. 29 at bird bath, Fairhope (MN); Sep. 11, 25, 29 in
 B'ham, at least 4 birds (RRR,many).
 Nashville Warbler: Aug. 4, Spring Hill, at bird bath (MAG), earliest Ala.
 Black-throated Blue Warbler: Aug. 5, Spring Hill, at bird bath (MAG), earliest Ala.
 Ala. exc winter recs.
 Cerulean Warbler: Aug. 23, Open Pond, Covington Co. (JCP,GDJ), earliest LCP.
 Blackburnian Warbler: Aug. 19, Marion (GDJ,HHK), earliest Ala.; Aug. 24, Wheeler
 Ref., 2, (DMB,ALM), earliest TV.
 Chestnut-sided Warbler: Aug. 26, Decatur (DMB,ALM), earliest TV.
 Bay-breasted Warbler: Sep. 11, Wheeler Ref. (CDC), earliest TV.
 Prairie Warbler: Nov. 8, Gulf Shores (JVP, TAI), latest Ala. exc for a winter rec.
 Palm Warbler: Sep. 29, Wheeler Ref. (CDC,KH), earliest TV.
 Connecticut Warbler: Sep. 25, B'ham Zoo (JVP,JAT,EGR), earliest MTR; indications
 are that the species occurs annually in fall and peaks the last week in Sept.
 Mourning Warbler: Sep. 18, L. Lurleen (JCT), 1st rec for CP, spring or fall!;
 Sep. 25, Dancy Bottoms, Wheeler Ref. (DMB); Sep. 25, B'ham (JAT,DP).
 Wilson's Warbler: Nov. 11, Fort Morgan, a male banded (TAI,RGH), latest Ala.
 Bobolink: Aug. 24, Swan Cr., 10 (ALM,DMB), earliest Ala. exc Piedmont.
 Yellow-headed Blackbird: Nov. 6, Magnolia Springs (VDH,TRF); nearly all state recs
 are in Sep. & Apr.--this is our first in November.
 Orchard Oriole: Oct. 31, Fort Morgan, an immature male (RAD,SS,BS), latest state
 exc winter recs.
 Painted Bunting: Blakely I., Mobile, all of Jun., Jul. & Aug., 3 males, 2 females
 (B&JW,TAI,HHK), no nest, eggs, or small young know from Alabama.
 Purple Finch: Nov. 8, Fort Morgan, 3 (TAI,JVP), earliest for CP.
 Savannah Sparrow: Sep. 11, Roberts Field, B'ham, 4 (TAI), earliest Ala.; Sep. 18,
 Fort Morgan (FW,MLM,KB), earliest CP; Sep. 25, Wheeler Ref., 3 (CDC), earliest
 TV.

Fox Sparrow: Sep. 25, Oct. 1 & 4, Wheeler Ref. (DCH), earliest Ala.

Swamp Sparrow: Sep. 3, Swan Cr. (DMB), earliest Ala.

Song Sparrow: May 2 & 8, Aug. 15, Stevenson Bridge, 1 (FH), new probable breeding site.

Deadlines require the temporary setting aside of some perfectly good records. If you have such, remember that it is never too late to amend the state list. So, if you have forgotten details on a record you feel is good, please write me about it. Even though it may be too late for American Birds or Alabama Birdlife, we never want to eliminate perfectly good Alabama Distributional or Migration Information. We are always considering the next edition or supplement of Alabama Birds.

Observers: Alabama Ornithological Society, Thomas Z. Atkeson, Birmingham Audubon Society, Kate Beck, Charlotte D. Blackshear, Charles W. Brasfield, D. Mark Brown, Thomas A. Brindley, P. Fairly Chandler, C. Dwight Cooley, W. Cecil Davis, J. L. Dorn, Robert A. Duncan, Sherlie Gade, Mary A. Gaillard, Scott Gravette, Don Hale, J. Milton Harris, Richard E. Hayward, Kenneth Hensley, Frank Hixon, Thomas R. Horne, Verda D. Horne, Ruth G. Howell, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D. Jackson, Kenneth T. Knapp, Helen H. Kittinger, Mildred Linder, Mobile Bird Club, Mary Lou Mattis, Ann L. Miller, Albert & Mini Nonkes, Dave Patick, James V. Peavy, Eugene N. Prestriedge, Elberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Rick J. Remy, Bob Simonson, Robert D. Sloman, Peggy Smith, C. William Summerour, Steve & Barbara Stedman, James C. Thompson, Lib R. Toenes, J. Arthur Tyson, Wayne C. Weber, Ted L. Weems, Fred Wicke, Beverly A. Winn, John T. Winn.

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NESTING OF THE EASTERN
PHOEBE AND BARN SWALLOW IN WESTERN ALABAMA

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The southern limit of the breeding range of the Eastern Phoebe (Sayornis phoebe) in Alabama has been reported to be roughly coincident with the Fall Line, though there are sight records of the species between May and August from several areas south of the Fall Line (Imhof, Alabama Birds, Univ. Alabama Press, University 1976). The Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica) is now known to breed in most parts of Alabama, but has only recently expanded its breeding range southward (Imhof 1976). We present here data documenting the breeding of phoebes south of the Fall Line in Marion, Lamar, and Pickens counties. We also include breeding records of Barn Swallows from these localities.

On 12 October 1973 Weeks discovered an old phoebe nest on a rock ledge under an overhang in the southwest corner of Marion County along Marion County