

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

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ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*CALYPTE ANNA*) FIRST FOR ALABAMA

Robert R. Sargent and Martha B. Sargent

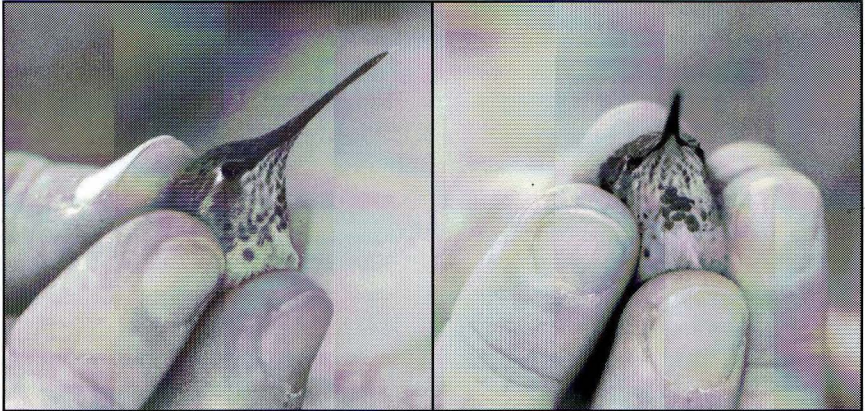


Figure 1. Left, lateral view showing relatively short heavy bill of Anna's Hummingbird. Right, ventral view of throat showing central cluster of iridescent, magenta feathers characteristic of adult female Anna's. (Photo by Martha B. Sargent)

On 15 November 1992 Martha and I received a telephone call from Ernie and Carol Blair of Huntsville, notifying us of a hummingbird at the residence of Frank Brown of 6304 Trailwood Drive in Huntsville. The call was in response to our request to be notified of any hummingbird seen in Alabama after 15 November. This date generally assures that any hummingbird still present will be some species other than a Ruby-throated (*Archilochus colubris*), which by this time should be on their wintering grounds in Central America.

On 19 November we visited the Brown residence and were immediately confronted by a very stocky hummer as we approached the feeder. As we prepared our trapping gear the bird continued to scold and call and Martha quickly recognized it as an Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). Even though the identification had been made, proper documentation would require capturing, weighing, measuring, and photographing the bird in-hand. The bird perched in a nearby apple tree as we set up our banding trap and called repeatedly between forays to hawk insects. The call was a loud, sharp "chink" or "chick" note, one we had heard many times when observing Anna's hummingbirds in California and southeastern Arizona. Once our trap was in place, the bird was captured immediately when it returned to feed.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band (#8000T17964) was attached to the right tarsus and the following measurements were taken: wing, 48.21mm; tail, 30.60mm; exposed culmen, 18.86mm; weight, 3.87 grams.

After taking an extensive series of photographs, the following in-hand observa-

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tions were noted: post-nuptial molt complete except for primaries #8, 9 and 10 on the right wing and primary #10 on the left wing. The bill was short and heavy, adding to the big-headed robust appearance characteristic of this species (Figure 1). The upper mandible was fully rounded, smooth and shiny, and under a 16x jewelers loupe showed no striations, indicating an adult. The forehead and crown were dull emerald green contrasting sharply with a shimmering green back. The long upper tail coverts and four central retrices were the same brilliant emerald green as the back. The tail structure was square and rather stubby, despite being over 30mm in length. The terminal end of retrices #3, 4, and 5 were tipped with white, the basal one-half grayish-green, and the central portion velvet black.

The primaries were long and pointed, extending just past the tail, and the newly unsheathed ones had an iridescent metallic purplish sheen that contrasted noticeably with the old worn outer flight feathers. The chin and throat were light gray with the individual feathers having darker gray centers. These dark gray feathers radiated outward from the chin to the lower throat. There were nine somewhat muted iridescent magenta feathers clustered near the center of the throat (Figure 1). This central cluster of feathers confirmed the bird as an adult female. In addition to the magenta feathers, this individual had many large bronze-green spots on the throat. The emerald green of the back extended laterally behind the posterior margins of the wings down to the anterior portion of the flanks. The underparts were dull whitish-gray, the feet and legs dull black, and the iris dark brown. This adult female was in almost complete postnuptial plumage.

The breeding range for the Anna's hummingbird is generally west of the Sierra Nevada and southern coastal mountains of California. They winter over most of their breeding range and eastward across Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. In the winter of 1992-1993 Anna's hummingbirds were also recorded in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Georgia, indicating an apparent expansion of their eastern wintering limits. This winter record in Alabama was not unexpected. In fact, it was the next species we anticipated would be recorded here.

There are many misconceptions about the nectar requirements of hummingbirds that winter in the southeastern United States. Hours of observations of this Anna's and seven other species we banded this winter indicate that their primary food appears to be insects caught on the wing or gleaned from leaves, limbs and sapsucker holes. However, they continue to be efficient at exploiting hummingbird feeders during the colder winter months. We urge those who enjoy feeding hummingbirds to leave at least one feeder out year-round and to notify us of any hummingbird present after 15 November.

We gratefully acknowledge the use of a paper by Dr. William Baltosser published in *The North American Bird Bander*, December 1987, which was very useful in our identification of this Anna's hummingbird in Alabama. **Robert R. Sargent and Martha B. Sargent**, 7570 Mac Hicks Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

ARE MIGRANTS ARRIVING EARLIER IN SPRING?

Robert A. Duncan

In recent years, several birders have expressed opinions that birds seem to be arriving earlier in spring migration than years ago. It seemed to me this was indeed the case, but impressions are not facts. In an effort to put to rest my own impressions and perhaps that of others, I decided to do an analysis of the timing of migration based on records that I have been keeping since 1974.

My family and I reside in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County, Florida, a migrant trap at the end of a peninsula in Pensacola Bay. I had begun recording the presence of migrants daily since 1974. With some exceptions such as vacations or absences because of work, etc., I spent about 15 to 25 minutes daily during spring and fall migrations, walking a fairly standardized route in my yard and neighborhood. The presence of migrants as to species, as well as their relative abundance, was noted. Exact numbers, however, were not recorded. On weekends more time was spent in the field. This information was also gathered from Ft. Pickens, Escambia County, Florida, another migrant trap, and was supplemented by information obtained from other observers from both locations. In the spring of 1978, Lucy Duncan began operating a banding station which continued until 1985. In effect, our yard and neighborhood, known for being a haven for migrant land birds, has been well monitored since 1974.

Nine neotropical trans-Gulf migrants were analyzed to determine their frequency of occurrence in March, comparing the five year period 1975-1979 to the current period 1989-1993. In Table 1, numbers represent total aggregate days for the whole five year period when the birds were considered relatively abundant.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF NINE NEOTROPICAL MIGRANTS IN THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE, MARCH 1975-1979 AND 1989-1993.

SPECIES	1975-1979	1989-1993
Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)	1.4 (0)	2.2 (0)
White-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo griseus</i>)	4.2 (4)	3.2 (9)
Parula Warbler (<i>Parula americana</i>)	6.8 (3)	5.4 (8)
Black & White Warbler (<i>Mniotilta varia</i>)	.8 (0)	3.4 (0)
Hooded Warbler (<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>)	.8 (0)	4.0 (5)
Prothonotary Warbler (<i>Prothonotaria citrea</i>)	.8 (0)	4.4 (0)
Louisiana Waterthrush (<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>)	.6 (0)	2.8 (0)
Summer Tanager (<i>Piranga rubra</i>)	.6 (0)	1.2 (0)
Wood Thrush (<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>)	.4 (0)	1.2 (0)

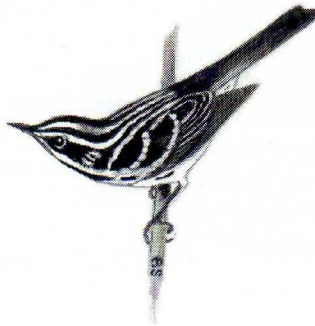
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As one can see from Table 1, seven species were more frequent and two less so in March. Although the White-eyed Vireo and Parula Warbler occurred fewer times, when observed, they were abundant more frequently. Most noteworthy was the Hooded Warbler, a species thought to be impacted by tropical deforestation and forest fragmentation. It has apparently been seen more often in March in recent years and in good numbers on occasion. In addition, since 1988, new all time early arrival dates have been established on eight species as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. NEW EARLY ARRIVAL DATES OF EIGHT NEOTROPICAL SPECIES IN THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE.

Species	Old Date	New Date
Blue-winged Warbler (<i>Vermivora pinus</i>)	29 March	23 March
Tennessee Warbler (<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>)	1 April	30 March
Blackburnian Warbler (<i>Dendroica fusca</i>)	25 March	24 March
Cape May Warbler (<i>Dendroica tigrina</i>)	4 April	29 March
Blackpoll Warbler (<i>Dendroica striata</i>)	12 April	9 April
Worm-eating Warbler (<i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>)	25 March	17 March
No. Waterthrush (<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>)	5 April	29 March
Yellow-breasted Chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>)	31 March	17 March

What conclusions can be drawn from this data? A standard transect was not run nor was the amount of time spent afield or the number of observers consistent. This mitigates the information obtained somewhat. Further, in recent years the number of observers visiting Ft. Pickens and Gulf Breeze has risen considerably, possibly inflating the days of observations, particularly early in the season when many birders are out "jumping the gun." Still, Gulf Breeze and Ft. Pickens was monitored daily by the Duncan family and others during the late 1970's and it isn't likely many birds were undetected. This data were gathered to disprove my "impressions" but the result was a surprise, which certainly gives food for thought or further research. And what if this data is pointing in the direction of earlier migration? What would be the cause? On this point I would rather not speculate. **Robert A. Duncan**, 614 Fairpoint Dr., Gulf Breeze, FL



**ALABAMA SNOWSTORM DEADLY FOR
EASTERN BLUEBIRDS (*SIALIA SIALIS*)**

John Findlay, III

It was aptly reported as “the Snowstorm of the Century.” The late winter storm was unprecedented with blizzard-like conditions the night of 12 March 1993. Central Alabama bore the brunt of the heavy, wet snow, which averaged 12 to 17 inches in depth. It caused great inconveniences and many emergencies for those unable to cope with its destruction and utility outages.

The storm and the cold that followed proved deadly for many of our Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*). A total of 53 bluebirds was found dead in 20 of my approximately 180 trail boxes. It was the worst weather related disaster I have experienced in my 17 years of bluebird trail management. Most of the dead birds were found in boxes located in Oak Mountain State Park just south of metropolitan Birmingham. This largest state park in Alabama was completely isolated by the snowstorm’s fury that downed thousands of trees causing power and travel interruptions.

As many as ten dead bluebirds (five male, five female) were found huddled together in one box in a desperate attempt to stay alive (Figure 1); another box held six. Other boxes contained one to three dead birds. Many had already paired and selected nesting sites. However, none had started nest construction.



Figure 1. Dead bluebirds found in one of the author’s boxes at Oak Mountain State Park south of Birmingham. A total of 53 bluebirds was found dead in 20 of approximately 180 boxes. (Photo by John Findlay, III)

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A lack of food during and immediately after the heavy blanket of snow probably weakened the birds causing an inability to produce a sufficient amount of body heat to survive. This was greatly worsened as official Birmingham temperatures fell to nine degrees F. the first night after the storm's passage on 13 March, and to two degrees F. the night of 14 March. Wind chills dropped the temperature well below zero both nights.

Unlike many bird species that can survive on feeder handouts, bluebirds, for the most part, do not frequent feeders. Their normal diet of insects was unavailable and wild berries, often their late winter survival food, had already been stripped from the trees and shrubs by other species. It was a desperate situation for the bluebirds at a critical time of the year.

After rechecking my boxes as soon as I could after the storm, I placed a "Bluebird Alert" in the Birmingham newspapers. This was done to urge area bluebirders to recheck boxes before nesting season got underway. Many calls were received reporting dead bluebirds. A more complete assessment of the snow-cold effect on the bluebird population was realized. Bob Sargent of Trussville had 42 dead bluebirds in 81 boxes. George Cusick of Leeds reported six dead in one of his 16 boxes; he hadn't seen a bluebird on his property since the storm. . . a wipeout? Similar calls came in from numerous other central Alabama communities. . . Chelsea, Harpersville, Westover, Bessemer, etc.

The storm traveled northeastward the next two days through eastern Tennessee, the Smokies, and the Carolinas. A Knoxville News Sentinel nature column writer told of many bluebirders in that part of the state reporting boxes with bluebirds that did not survive. The Birmingham Audubon Society's annual spring count covering three counties – Jefferson, Shelby, and St. Clair had its lowest bluebird count in years.

The loss of bluebirds was dramatically evident on my trail this year. Fully, one-third of approximately 180 boxes was empty, approximately one-third was taken over by the hardier, more opportunistic Carolina Chickadee (by comparison only ten boxes were so occupied in 1992), and the remaining one-third had active bluebird nests. At this writing, the birds are raising their second broods and seem to be doing better. However, it is obvious that my almost continuous upward production rate of bluebirds to over 6000 birds fledged will be slowed considerably this year.

Man and predators can be blamed for most of the estimated 90% decline in Eastern Bluebirds in my lifetime. But in this sad situation, the cause must be attributed to the unusual weather. However, the successful restoration of the Eastern Bluebird will continue as we all help bring back the bluebird by properly placing, maintaining and monitoring nest boxes.

As noted biologist and field guide author, Chandler Robbins, once said, "The average citizen can not do much to save the Bald Eagle, the Whooping Crane, or the Loggerhead Shrike, but each and everyone of us can help save the Bluebird." **John Findlay, III**, 2749 Millbrook Road, Birmingham, AL 35243.

**PURPLE MARTINS (*PROGNE SUBIS*) SURVIVE
LATE WINTER STORM**

Bill Summerour

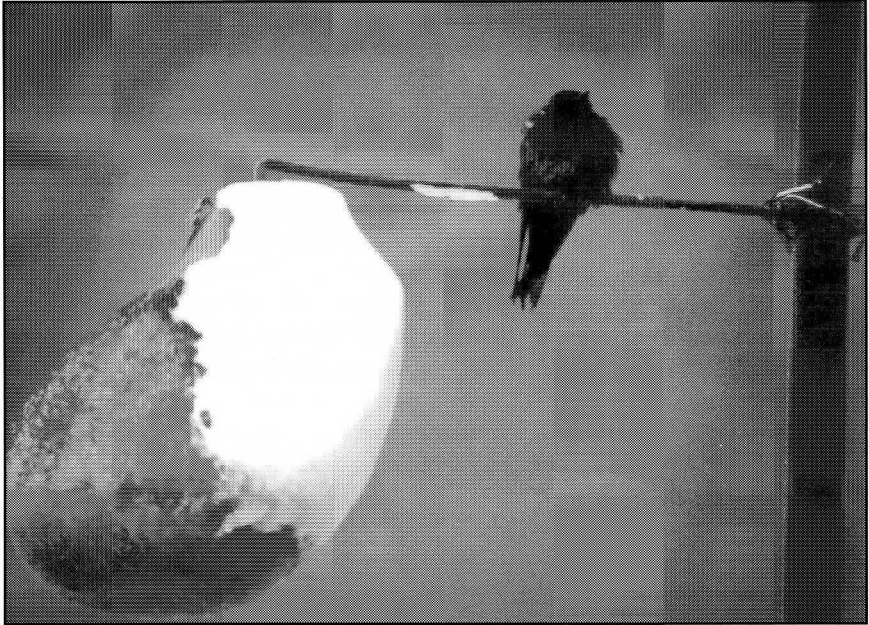


Figure 1. A martin warms up in subfreezing temperatures after the worst winter storm in Alabama history. (Photo by Bill Summerour)

There seems to be a generally held belief that early arriving Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) are vulnerable to perishing from exposure or starvation as a result of late winter cold spells. Living on a farm two miles west of Jacksonville in northeast Alabama, which was among the hardest hit areas by the winter storm of '93, gave me an opportunity to observe first hand the effect this storm had on a colony of early martins. I was able to get an exact count of the individuals that went to roost on the evening of 12 March, the night the storm hit, and an accurate count of the survivors four days later.

The first martins arrived on 22 February, a male and female that appeared to already be paired when they arrived. My neighbor, Carl McGinnis, has had a martin colony for 25 years, and since martins have a very strong site fidelity, it was no surprise that they went straight to his gourds, ignoring my first year housing only 100 feet away. Over the next two weeks, a dozen more birds trickled in, all singles and mostly males. Like the first two, they also went straight to their old colony site.

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By 12 March, however, a few birds had ventured over to inspect my new gourds and that evening four went to roost in them; eleven went to roost in Carl's, for a total of 15, actual count.

The snow started about 8:00 o'clock that evening and continued all night, driven by blizzard force winds. By morning there was a foot of snow on the ground with waist deep drifts around the barns and outbuildings. The wind blew snow into the gourds, filling them with ice and sealing over the openings. One of Carl's poles holding eight gourds was blown down. The gourds landed on a pad of snow on top of a shed which helped cushion the impact, but they were soon covered under a blanket of new snow, entombing the martins inside the gourds. One bird did manage to free itself and sought shelter in a wood pile on the leeward side of my barn. I flushed it accidentally as I walked around the barn to take pictures during the storm. It labored off the ground and flew into the blowing snow, and disappeared into the whiteness. I figured it would die of exposure.

As darkness fell on the 13th, the snow tapered off and the winds died down. That night the temperature fell to near zero (2° in Birmingham). Looking out the window at this cold, bleak scene, it was hard to imagine how any martin, still alive, could survive the night.



Figure 2. Carl McGinnis digging out after the storm. Notice the martin, center pole, middle crossbar. (Photo by Bill Summerour)

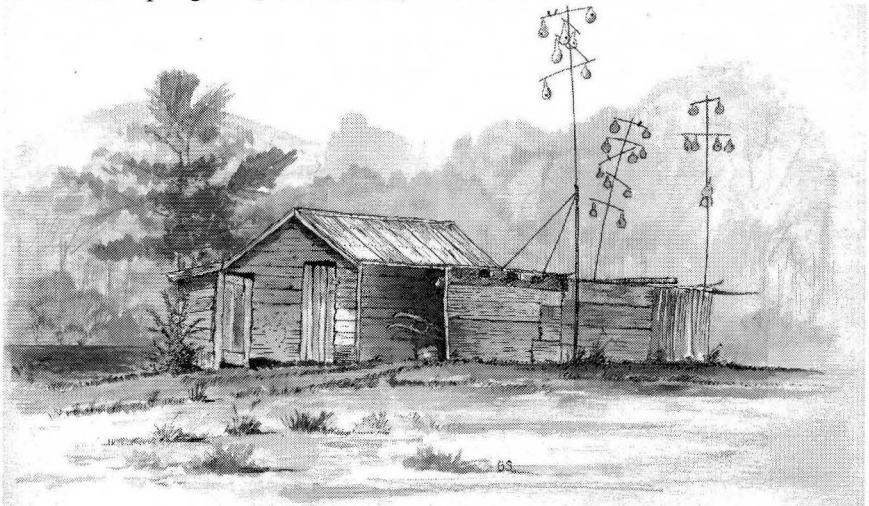
The next morning broke sparkling clear and still, except for the popping and cracking of trees and limbs breaking under a heavy load of snow. There was no sign of life around my gourds where four martins had gone to roost. The gourds hung like lifeless ice balls against the bright blue sky.

Next door Carl was shoveling out a path to his outbuildings where the martin poles were located (Figure 2). There, above him, sitting on one of the poles was a lone martin, facing into the early morning sun trying to gather up a little warmth in the near zero temperature (Figure 1). Later in the morning as the sun melted the snow from the gourds, other birds emerged to dry out in the sun and bask in the subfreezing temperatures.

That afternoon, 24 to 30 hours after the blizzard had blown down Carl's pole, he pulled the gourds down from the roof of the shed where they had fallen, and two martins flew out from under the snow! A third martin could not free itself because its tail was frozen to a sheet of ice in the bottom of the gourd. We managed to get it out unhurt, but it later died due to its weakened condition and probably shock.

On 15 March, the fourth day after the storm began, I counted 14 martins sitting on the crossbars, all busy preening and tidying up after the storm. Of the 15 counted going to roost before the storm, 14 had survived. These birds had survived heavy snow, blizzard force winds, temperatures near zero, wind chills well below zero, and no food for three or four days and perhaps longer.

While it is true that 15 martins is not a sample of 100 or 1,000 birds scattered randomly over the entire storm area, these observations do show that early arrivals are well adapted to surviving very cold and adverse conditions, including heavy snow. If these birds survived the worst winter storm in Alabama history, then it is reasonable to assume that most early arriving martins can handle the routine, even severe, cold spells that occur in Alabama almost every spring. **Bill Summerour**, 2012 Cedar Springs Dr., Jacksonville, AL 36265.



THE BIRDS OF FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

Julian L. Dusi, F. Allen Pursell and Timothy T. McMahon

Fort Benning Military Reservation is situated in Chattahoochee and Muscogee counties, to the southeast and east of Columbus, Georgia. It also extends across the Chattahoochee River into Russel Co., Alabama. Many diverse habitats are present, from the swamps along the Chattahoochee River, with an elevation of about 200 ft. (60m) above sea level, to high, dry and deep sand hills, at an elevation of over 700 ft. (215m). Several creeks (especially Bull, Oswichee, Uchee, and Upatoi) and their tributaries dissect the area. Many vegetation associations are present: bare earth and eroding hillsides; grassy drill fields and rifle ranges; shrubby fields and hillsides, with dense briar patches; hills and valleys with shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), and longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) with a grassy ground cover, or with bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*); hills and valleys with mature deciduous trees and sparse ground cover; and deep sand hills with longleaf pine and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*).

Our bird study was part of a program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (USACERL), called Land Condition-Trend Analysis (LCTA). This program is an environmental analysis designed to assess any military land-use effects on existing biotic communities.

METHODS

During the two summer surveys, birds were sampled from 3 June 1991 to 4 July 1991, by Dusi and Pursell. Similar sampling was done by McMahon and Pursell between 12 May and 26 May 1992. McMahon also made a sample of winter birds between 13 December 1992 and 21 December 1992. Samples were taken from 60 plots, located by computer methods, by which a base spot, determined by longitude and latitude, and a randomly selected azimuth, located each linear transect. The transects were 100m long and the area sampled extended to 100m on all sides of the transect. Sampling was done during the morning and afternoon song periods of calm, rainless days. Each transect had a morning and an afternoon count. This resulted in a total of 120 transect counts. Winter sampling was performed only once at each plot during the daylight hours, resulting in 60 transect counts. A modified point-count technique (Blondel, J. C., C. Ferry and B. Frochet 1981. Point counts with unlimited distance. *Studies in Avian Biology* 6: 414-420.) and (USACERL Technical Report N-92/03. U.S. Army Land Condition - Trend Analysis (LCTA) Plot Inventory Field Methods) were used. To make the count, the observer walked slowly along the length of the transect and recorded all birds seen or heard, in the sampling area. This was done in six minutes. At the end of the transect he paused for eight minutes, recording all new birds, then he retraced his transect path in another six minutes to the base point. This provided

a total observation time of 20 minutes. In addition to the transect count, all birds seen or heard on the reservation were recorded.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains the birds seen on the plots.

Table 2 contains the species seen on the reservation, but not recorded on the plots.

Table 3 contains a list of birds that should have been recorded, but were night birds, or are known to occur in the adjacent area.

Table 4 is the listing of the winter birds and their frequencies.

DISCUSSION

A total of 76 species and 2,647 individuals were recorded on the plots during the summer surveys. The five species that were abundant during the summers were: Northern Cardinal (7.4%), Rufous-sided Towhee (7.0%), Pine Warbler (6.1%), Tufted Titmouse (5.6%) and Carolina Wren (5.4%). Those commonly seen were: American Crow (4.8%), Yellow-breasted Chat (4.8%), Red-eyed Vireo (4.3%), Great Crested Flycatcher (3.5%), Red-bellied Woodpecker (3.3%), Wood Thrush (3.2%), Indigo Bunting (3.2%), Northern Bobwhite (2.9%), Blue Jay (2.5%) and Carolina Chickadee (2.5%).

During the winter survey 44 species were recorded and 939 individuals. The most abundant species were the Golden-crowned Kinglet (13.0%), Song Sparrow (10.0%), Carolina Chickadee (9.8%), Tufted Titmouse (8.2%) and Brown-headed Nuthatch (6.8%).

Six species were recorded only once during the summer surveys and four were recorded only once during the winter. Many of these were chance recordings, like the Great Blue Heron, but the American Goldfinch should have been seen more frequently. It seems that the Red-cockaded Woodpecker should have been seen more than ten times during the summer surveys, but only one of the more than 200 colonies that occur on the reservation was located on a plot.

TABLE 1. OCCURRENCE OF BIRDS ON LCTA PLOTS, FORT BENNING, GEORGIA, SUMMERS 1991, 1992.

Common Name	Recorded	Frequency
Great Blue Heron	1	0.0
Green-backed Heron	1	0.0
Turkey Vulture	7	0.3
Red-tailed Hawk	2	0.1
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	0.1
American Kestrel	2	0.1
Northern Bobwhite	78	2.9

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TABLE 1. Continued

Common Name	Recorded	Frequency
Wild Turkey	3	0.1
Killdeer	15	0.6
Rock Dove	18	0.7
Mourning Dove	60	2.3
Common Ground Dove	2	0.1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	29	1.1
Barred Owl	3	0.1
Chuck-will's-widow	4	0.2
Common Nighthawk	5	0.2
Chimney Swift	18	0.7
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	0.0
Northern Flicker	5	0.2
Pileated Woodpecker	23	0.9
Red-bellied Woodpecker	88	3.3
Red-headed Woodpecker	17	0.6
Hairy Woodpecker	7	0.3
Downy Woodpecker	22	0.8
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	10	0.4
Eastern Kingbird	5	0.2
Great Crested Flycatcher	93	3.5
Acadian Flycatcher	35	1.3
Eastern Wood Pewee	30	1.1
Barn Swallow	7	0.3
Purple Martin	1	0.0
Blue Jay	66	2.5
American Crow	127	4.8
Fish Crow	5	0.2
Carolina Chickadee	67	2.5
Tufted Titmouse	148	5.6
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	0.4
Brown-headed Nuthatch	18	0.7
Carolina Wren	143	5.4
Northern Mockingbird	52	2.0
Gray Catbird	22	0.8
American Robin	2	0.2
Brown Thrasher	10	0.4
Wood Thrush	84	3.2
Eastern Bluebird	19	0.7
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	43	1.6
European Starling	13	0.5
White-eyed Vireo	47	1.8
Yellow-throated Vireo	7	0.3
Solitary Vireo	1	0.0
Red-eyed Vireo	114	4.3
Black and White Warbler	1	0.0
Prothonotary Warbler	4	0.2
Northern Parula	6	0.2
Pine Warbler	161	6.1
Prairie Warbler	54	2.0
Louisiana Waterthrush	5	0.2
Kentucky Warbler	19	0.7
Common Yellowthroat	18	0.7
Yellow-breasted Chat	126	4.8
Hooded Warbler	37	1.4
Eastern Meadowlark	6	0.2
Red-winged Blackbird	2	0.1
Orchard Oriole	14	0.5
Common Grackle	13	0.5

TABLE 1. Continued

Common Name	Recorded	Frequency
Brown-headed Cowbird	18	0.7
Summer Tanager	52	2.0
Northern Cardinal	196	7.4
Blue Grosbeak	4	0.2
Indigo Bunting	84	3.2
American Goldfinch	4	0.2
Rufous-sided Towhee	185	7.0
Bachman's Sparrow	6	0.2
Chipping Sparrow	4	0.2
Field Sparrow	28	1.1
Song Sparrow	2	0.1
Totals 76 Species	2,647	100.0

TABLE 2. SPECIES OF BIRDS RECORDED ON FORT BENNING BUT NOT ON THE PLOTS.

Common Names	Common Names
Pied-billed Grebe*	Broad-winged Hawk
Double-crested Cormorant	Belted Kingfisher
Little Blue Heron	Eastern Phoebe
Great Egret	Rough-winged Swallow
Cattle Egret	Loggerhead Shrike
Blue-winged Teal*	Swainson's Warbler
Wood Duck	American Redstart
Ring-necked Duck*	House Finch
Black Vulture	House Sparrow

(* = winter record)

TABLE 3. BIRDS NOT RECORDED THAT OCCUR IN THE AREA IN SUMMER.

Common Names	Common Names
Pied-billed Grebe	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Double-crested Cormorant	Cooper's Hawk
Anhinga	King Rail
Least Bittern	Forster's Tern
White Ibis	E. Screech Owl
Mallard	Marsh Wren
Osprey	Yellow Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Yellow-throated Warbler

TABLE 4. OCCURRENCE OF BIRDS ON LCTA PLOTS, FORT BENNING, GEORGIA, WINTER 1992.

Common Names	Recorded	Frequency
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	0.1
Red-tailed Hawk	2	0.2
Mourning Dove	3	0.3
Barred Owl	1	0.1
Northern Flicker	4	0.4
Pileated Woodpecker	4	0.4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	27	2.9

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TABLE 4. Continued

Common Name	Recorded	Frequency
Red-headed Woodpecker	3	0.3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	0.3
Hairy Woodpecker	18	1.9
Downy Woodpecker	8	0.9
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	2	0.2
Eastern Phoebe	4	0.4
Blue Jay	9	1.0
American Crow	7	0.7
Carolina Chickadee	92	9.8
Tufted Titmouse	77	8.2
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	0.9
Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	0.6
Brown-headed Nuthatch	64	6.8
Brown Creeper	24	2.6
Carolina Wren	36	3.8
Northern Mockingbird	2	0.2
Gray Catbird	3	0.3
American Robin	16	1.7
Hermit Thrush	3	0.3
Eastern Bluebird	5	0.5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	122	13.0
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	49	5.2
Cedar Waxwing	11	1.2
Loggerhead Shrike	1	0.1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	45	4.8
Pine Warbler	22	2.3
Eastern Meadowlark	4	0.4
Northern Cardinal	18	1.9
American Goldfinch	1	0.1
Rufous-sided Towhee	33	3.5
Savannah Sparrow	4	0.4
Dark-eyed Junco	5	0.5
Chipping Sparrow	39	4.2
Field Sparrow	38	4.0
White-throated Sparrow	18	1.9
Fox Sparrow	2	0.2
Song Sparrow	95	10.0
Totals 44 Species	939	100.0

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Allen Pursell, who administered the project at Fort Benning, was instrumental in locating most of the plots and taking part in the survey. He also obtained permission from Range Control for us to be on the different plot sites. The study could not have been done without his direction and assistance.

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**BREEDING RANGE OF THE CEDAR WAXWING
(*BOMBYCILLA CEDRORUM*) IN ALABAMA**

Bill Summerour

The Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) is a common to abundant winter resident throughout Alabama and until recently has been considered a rare and irregular breeder in the northern one-third of the state. However, the species has been summering in greater numbers in north Alabama in recent years and breeding has been confined by the discovery of three nests since 1989.

According to Bruce Peterjohn (per com.) of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Cedar Waxwings have also been occurring in greater numbers in summer in portions of eastern and central Tennessee and many of these are believed to be nesting, although few nests have been found. A similar expansion has not been apparent in Mississippi or Georgia, although there has been some movement into North Carolina.

On 6 June 1989, Tom Imhof and his grandson, John Rolan, observed a pair of waxwings building a nest in a tree in front of a house on a Breeding Bird Survey stop near Guntersville in Marshall Co. This was actually the first record of a nest in Alabama; all prior breeding evidence had been based on sight records of young out of the nest (Table 1).

The author found a waxwing nest on 17 June 1992 while conducting a Breeding Bird Survey in Choccolocco Valley in Calhoun Co. on 17 June 1992. Since time was limited while running the survey, I could not stay to determine the stage of nesting activity. I returned the following day, 18 June, and observed a bird sitting on the nest. It did not move during the 20 minutes that I was there, so it was obviously incubating, or less likely, brooding newly hatched young. The nest was 20 feet (seven meters) high in a loblolly pine (*Pinus taeta*) and placed well out on an upward sloping limb overhanging a country road.

That same day, 18 June, I revisited another BBS stop where I had observed a pair of waxwings on the day of the count, and found another nest. It was placed well out on a limb of a shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) about 40 feet (13 meters) from the ground. While I was observing the nest, one of the birds was seen feeding a wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*) to its mate sitting on the nest.

In addition to these nesting records, there has also been a number of recent June-September sightings of pairs of waxwings (Table 1). I observed a pair flying over Weiss lake on 5 July 1990. Imhof and Jean Folsom recorded a pair flying over a BBS stop near Guntersville on 28 June 1991. I saw two pairs (plus a single bird) on 17 June 1992, in addition to the nest described earlier. On 28 September 1992, Ann Miller recorded two adults and two juveniles at Lake Purdy in Shelby Co. This summer, on 4 July 1993, I observed a pair flying over my farm two miles west of Jacksonville in Calhoun Co.

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There are three summer records from south Alabama, but no positive evidence of breeding. Seventeen birds were observed by Jim Keeler at Jackson in Clarke Co. on 20 June 1974. R.E. Hayward recorded four birds at Foley in Baldwin Co. on 9 August 1967, and Lovett Williams, Sterling Clawson and J. P. Gee have a 4 July 1962 record (no details) for Dauphin Island, Mobile County.

The current breeding status, based on a summary of records to date, indicate that Cedar Waxwings are at present an uncommon but apparently increasing breeder north of a line from Waterloo in Lauderdale County in the extreme northwest corner of the state, southeast to Birmingham in Jefferson County, east to Cheaha in Clay County, and northwest to Weiss Lake in Cherokee County (See map, Figure 1).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Only four records in this paper are from the author's files. All other records discussed in the text, listed in Table 1, or indicated on the range map in Figure 1, are from the records of Tom Imhof and Greg Jackson. The field observers, who recorded many of the sightings initially, are recognized under Table 1.

TABLE 1. SUMMER RECORDS FOR CEDAR WAXWINGS IN ALABAMA, JUNE-SEPTEMBER, 1935-1993.

Date	Location	County	Remarks	Observer(s)*
4 June 1935	Birmingham	Jefferson	No details	HMS
June 1947 ←7	Ave Marie, Cullman	Cullman	Young out of nest	DB
3 July 1946 ←6	Ave Marie, Cullman	Cullman	Young out of nest	TAI, JI
1946, '47, '49	B'ham suburbs	Jefferson	Bred, no details	TAI
1970	Moulton	Lawrence	Bred, no details	JEK
3&23 June 1984	Waterloo	Lauderdale	3, 1 juvenile	GNP, DJS
6 June 1989	Browns Creek (BBS)	Marshall	Building nest	TAI, JCR
11 June 1990	—	Colbert	No details	JEK
12 June 1978	Hillsboro	Lawrence	No details	CDC
14 June 1990	—	Lauderdale	No details	PDK, DEK
17 June 1992	Choccolocco Valley (BBS)	Calhoun	Nest, incubating	BS
18 June 1992	Choccolocco Valley (BBS)	Calhoun	Nest, incubating	BS
19 June 1990	—	Shelby	No details	TAI
20 June 1974	Jackson	Clarke	17 birds	JEK
20 June 1978	Wheeler Refuge	Morgan	14 birds	DMB
22 June 1979	Wheeler Refuge	Morgan	no details	DMB
23 June 1976	Wheeler Refuge	Morgan	one bird	DMB
28 June 1991	Short Creek (BBS)	Jefferson	A pair	TAI, JF
1 July 1976	Cheaha SP	Clay	No details	HME, EJM

Table 1. Continued

Date	Location	County	Remarks	Observer(s)*
4 July 1962	Dauphin Island	Mobile	No details	LW, SGC, JPG
4 July 1993	Jacksonville	Calhoun	A pair	BS
5 July 1990	Weiss Lake	Cherokee	A pair	BS
15 July 1990	—	Lauderdale	No details	PDK, DEK
9 Aug 1967	Foley	Baldwin	Four birds	REH
11 Aug 1985	Waterloo	Lauderdale	No details	GNP, DJS
29 Sept. 1992	Lake Purdy	Shelby	2 adults, 2 juv.	AM

***Observers: David Brown, D. Mark Brown, Sterling G. Clawson, C.D. Cooley, Howard M. Einspahr, Jean Folsom, J.P. Gee, R.E. Haywood, Janie Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, James E. Keeler, D. E. Kittle, P.D. Kittle, Ed J. Meehan, Ann Miller, G. Ned Piper, John C. Rolan, Damian J. Simbeck, Henry M. Stevenson, Bill Summerour, Lovett Williams. Bill Summerour,**

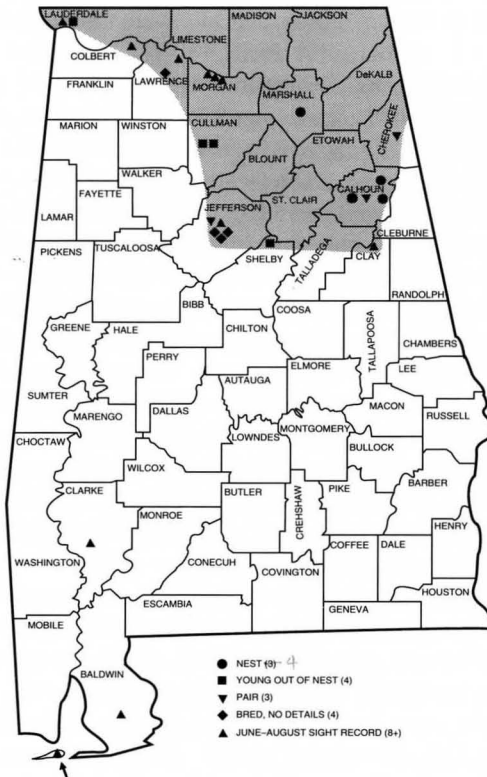


Figure 1. Breeding Range of the Cedar Waxwing in Alabama

1992 SPRING AND SUMMER SIGHTINGS

Greg D. Jackson

The spring of 1992 brought unprecedented birding coverage to our area, but unfortunately the witnessed migration was below average. Several observers commented on the scarcity of transient passerines on the coast. There were reports of several lingering waterfowl. Shorebirds were generally decreased, with acceptable habitat in limited supply in many areas. There were a few exciting birds, though, most notably passerine strays from the south and unusual larids.

The apparent poor migration probably had much to do with the paucity of frontal systems that grounded migrants. As we hosted the biennial American Birding Association Convention in Mobile 20-26 April, the lack of migrants was disappointing. However, the visitors appeared to relish our abundant breeding birds and waterbirds, and I believe had a great time despite the lack of fallouts. The best birding on the coast was in March, with a few minor precipitations of transients noted at Ft. Pickens, Florida. In general, the spring was slightly cooler and much drier than normal. Temperatures in June and July were unremarkable, but rainfall was above average.

This report covers the period from March through July 1992 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (east to the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this column does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. It is important that all submissions for birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, 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. Reports should always describe the conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

County names are in *italics*. "GC" = Gulf Coast (Alabama), "MR" = Mountain Region, "TV" = Tennessee Valley, "WP" = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Okaloosa*). Records not specifying Florida are in Alabama. "acc." = accepted by the Alabama Bird Records Committee, "m.ob." = many observers, "NWR" = National Wildlife Refuge, "p.a." = pending acceptance by the Alabama Bird Records Committee, "ph." = photographed.

LOONS - RAPTORS: Common Loons are unusual in summer on the coast, and one was spotted 23 June at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin* (FJM,JMM,JTM). Two Eared Grebes, rare in the WP, were at Ft. Walton Beach, *Okaloosa*, 12 March - 6 April (RAD). **Shearwaters** are always exciting finds in our area, and this year produced two large shearwaters (either Greater or Cory's). One was in Pensacola Bay Pass, *Escambia*, FL, 4 April (JP), and another was at Gulf Shores 26 April (JH). The 750 Am. White Pelicans 2 April at Big Sabine, *Escambia*, FL (RAD,SN) must have been

impressive.

Eight Double-crested Cormorants flying over a residential area near Birmingham 14 April (ALM) were an odd sight. A late cormorant was at Town Creek, *Colbert*, 25 May (GDJ,DGJ). Three Anhingas were soaring at Fosters, *Tuscaloosa*, 11 July (TAI,SSH); this primitive bird is rare that far north. The eight Glossy Ibis 18-22 April at Blakely I., *Mobile* (GDJ,m.ob.) were unusually numerous for spring. A new Alabama maximum for Wood Stork was set by the 140 birds in *Hale* 7 July (ALM,HHF,ASC).

Greater Scaup are always good finds inland; three were at Decatur, *Limestone*, 1 March (SWM). A late Oldsquaw was near Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 21-25 April (GM,m.ob.). I had two reports of late inland Surf Scoters. One was at L. Porter, *Jefferson*, 25-29 April (TAI,m.ob.); the individual 12 May in the Tennessee R. at Town Creek, *Colbert/Lauderdale* (ALM,ASC) established a new late date for Alabama. Red-breasted Mergansers were abundant 26 March in *Escambia*, FL, with 700 birds counted in the Gulf (RAD,D&BC). A lone Red-breasted 25 May in *Morgan* (GDJ) was late. A rare MR spring sighting of Peregrine Falcon occurred in n., *Shelby* 9 March (GDJ); another 24 May at Ft. Pickens (RLB) set a new WP late record.

SHOREBIRDS - LARIDS: A Black-bellied Plover, rare inland in spring, was spotted 3 May at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert* (GDJ,DGJ). Lesser Golden-Plovers are regular in spring in our area, though they are more difficult to find in the MR. At least 15 birds were at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 20 March (ALM). Eight Piping Plovers were found at Gulf Shores 30 April (ALM), a good number in Alabama for this imperiled shorebird. Six Willets made a rare inland appearance 2 May in e. *Colbert* (PDK,DCP,WJR). A new early Alabama date for Whimbrel was set by the observation of a lone bird 21 March at Dauphin I., *Mobile* (GDJ,DGJ).

Marbled Godwits are regular in small numbers in migration on the Alabama coast. Ten birds were notable at Ft. Morgan 12 April (GDJ,DGJ,RAD,LRD *et al.*). A new Alabama maximum was set 17 April at Dauphin I. by the sighting of 13 Marbled Godwits (GDJ,DGJ,PEL,m.ob.); it is possible that the previous Ft. Morgan birds comprised part of this flock. A good number of Sanderlings, an estimated 250 birds, was at Big Sabine, *Escambia*, FL, 26 March (RAD,D&BC). Long-billed Dowitchers are rarely identified inland in spring; four were recorded at Muscle Shoals 3 May (GDJ). The Am. Woodcock is a rare breeder on the coast, and a fledgling found 25 April marked the first nesting record for *Bay*, FL (R&AI). Another woodcock was spotted 1 June in DeFuniak Springs, *Walton*, FL (TAI,LL).

A rare **Pomarine Jaeger** was located at Dauphin I. 17 April (PEL,SF). Eleven Laughing Gulls were a surprise flying over Birmingham 3 June (GDJ); this species is rare inland, especially in the MR, and this was an unusual number of individuals. Franklin's Gulls are also rare inland, though they are seen in most years. An adult was noted in the n.e. *Colbert* area along the Tennessee R. 7-17 May (ALM *et al.*).

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Alabama's third **Little Gull** was spotted 11 April at Ft. Morgan (JH,JB,ph.,acc.); this dainty vagrant, the first for the GC, was enjoyed by hundreds of observers through at least 27 April. Another rarity was the **Black-legged Kittiwake** 17 April at the mouth of Mobile Bay (PEL,SF,CAM,B&SL,acc.); this represented only the sixth record for Alabama. A Least Tern 26 March in Pensacola (JWB) was early, as was a Black Tern 11 July in *Hale* (TAI,SSH).

DOVES - SWALLOWS: The **Eurasian Collared-Dove** invasion continued this year; at the time of this writing the species has not yet been accepted by the continental records committees. Collared-doves were recorded this spring, beginning 5 April, in Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Beach, FL (RAD,m.ob.). The second confirmed record for Alabama was 16-21 April at Ft. Morgan (RAD,VBF,MFF,LB,m.ob.,acc.). There is evidence now of a large inland jump by collared-doves. Over 30 birds, including an apparent juvenile, were seen throughout the period in Montgomery (LFG *et al.*, p.a.) (see Gardella (1992, *Al. Birdlife* 39(2):3-4)). A White-winged Dove, difficult to find in spring, was at Ft. Morgan 26 April (JH,JB *et al.*). Short-eared Owls are scarce anytime on the coast; the first spring GC record came 21 April when one was found under an oleander bush at Ft. Morgan (PEL,m.ob.)! An adult male Rufous Hummingbird made a rare, but not unexpected, appearance in Birmingham 24 July - 25 August (RRS,MBS).

Olive-sided Flycatchers are rarely seen in spring in our area; a lone bird was at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, 3 May (GDJ,DGJ). The Least Flycatcher is rare on the outer coast in spring, so one studied 19 April at Dauphin I. (KK,SRD,SWM) was noteworthy. The first spring record of W. Kingbird for the TV came 12-13 May in *Limestone* (JM,DJS); this species is seldom seen inland. The most exciting, and frustrating, find of the season was the **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** discovered on Dauphin I. as a front passed 20 April (RAD,WJB *et al.*,acc.). Only five people were present to see the bird, which could not be relocated despite intensive searching by birders arriving at the ABA Convention. There was only one previous Alabama record of this species, of a similarly uncooperative bird at Ft. Morgan 24 April 1988.

An early N. Rough-winged Swallow was at Waterloo, *Lauderdale* 15 March (GDJ,BCG). The inland population of Cliff Swallow has slowly expanded to the southwest over the last 30 years. For the second year, nesting birds were found on the Cahaba R. in *Perry* beginning 17 May (ALM,HHF,ASC). Breeding was also noted 11 July on the Warrior R. in *Tuscaloosa* (TAI,SSH) at a site first discovered in 1975. **Cave Swallows** are rare spring vagrants on the outer coast, first noted in 1984. The ninth state record came 12 April at Ft. Morgan (BS,JRW,SWM,JH,JB *et al.*,acc.); another sighting of this or a different individual occurred at that locale 19 April (RAD,LRD,WWD,acc.). An early Barn Swallow was at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 15 March (GDJ,BCG).

WRENS - BLACKBIRDS: A new late WP record for Winter Wren was provided by a singing bird 19 April at Ft. Pickens (RLB,JWB). The Swainson's

Thrush 25 May in Wheeler NWR, *Morgan* (GDJ) set a new late TV date. Gray Catbird is very rare in summer in n.w. Florida; two were seen in June for the second year at L. Seminole, *Jackson* (TAI). A late Am. Pipit was in e. *Shelby* 2 May (ALM,ADM). Warbling Vireos are rare transients (and casual breeders) in our region. An early individual was in Birmingham 12 April (BCG), and another bird was spotted at Ft. Morgan 22 April (KK,JLD,GM *et al.*).

This was a great spring for Black-whiskered Vireos, with at least eight reported on the outer coast. One was at Ft. Morgan 11 April (D&KJ,JH,SWM,m.ob.); another was picked out at Ft. Pickens, FL, 19 April (RLB,JWB). Minimums of three Black-whiskered on Dauphin I. and two at Ft. Morgan were noted 22-26 April (ABA). The final bird was spotted at Ft. Morgan 7 May (RAD). A Tennessee Warbler provided a new Alabama arrival date 21 March at Dauphin I. (GDJ,DGJ). Also early was a N. Parula 8 March in *Montgomery* (LFG), setting a new early date for inland Alabama. A fallout of hundreds of N. Parulas and Yellow-throated Warblers was reported at Ft. Pickens, FL, 12 March (WF,GF).

Black-throated Blue Warblers are uncommon migrants; one was at Ft. Pickens, FL, 19 April (RLB,JWB), and at least three were seen 22-26 April at Ft. Morgan and Dauphin I. (ABA). Early arrivals included Blackburnian and Cerulean warblers and an Am. Redstart at Ft. Pickens, FL, 31 March (OEF,WF,m.ob.). The Black-and-white Warbler 30 May at Ft. Pickens, FL (JWB) was very late. A Prothonotary Warbler tied the previous WP early date 12 March at Ft. Pickens (WF). Swainson's Warblers are unusual breeders in n.w. Alabama, so a singing bird at Muscle Shoals first discovered 19 July (GNP) was noteworthy. The first weekend of May was good for the rare **Mourning Warbler** in n. Alabama. Single birds were located 2 May in *Shelby* (HHF), and 3 May in *Morgan* (GDJ) and *Jefferson* (RRR). The Hooded Warbler at Ft. Pickens 12 March (WF) provided a new WP early arrival.

Two late Grasshopper Sparrows were singing 22 April near Foley, *Baldwin* (GDJ); none were noted at this site 13 June. Lincoln's Sparrow can be hard to find in spring. One 26 April at Dauphin I. (JH,JB) set a new late GC record. Unusual inland sightings included singles 5-9 May in Huntsville, *Madison* (DRC) and 7 May at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan* (ALM). The **Shiny Cowbird** continued to assault the coast this spring. There were 8-12 birds at Ft. Morgan 11-26 April (JH,JB,m.ob.,acc.), and 2-3 were at Dauphin I. 17-26 April (ABA,p.a.). A **Bronzed Cowbird**, the seventh for Alabama, was at Dauphin I. 22 April (NLN,DG,p.a.); possibly the same bird was at Ft. Morgan the following day (FB,HHK,BCG,m.ob.,ph.CDB,acc.).

CITED OBSERVERS: Alabama Ornithological Society, American Birding Association, Jane W. Ballman, Richard L. Ballman, Laurie Bailey, Fred Barry, Clyde D. Blum, Julie Boone, William J. Bremser, David & Becky Chafin, Alice S. Christenson, Dean R. Cutten, Susan R. Drennan, Lucy R. Duncan, Robert A. Duncan, William W. Duncan, Jon L. Dunn, Owen E. Fang, Harriett H. Findlay,

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Shawneen Finnegan, Gene Fleming, Mary F. Floyd, Venetia B. Friend, Will Fullilove, Larry F. Gardella, Ben C. Garmon, Dan George, Jim Holmes, Sharon S. Hudgins, Thomas A. Imhof, Richard & Ann Ingram, Debra G. Jackson, Greg D. Jackson, Dan & Kathy Jacobson, Kenn Kaufman, Helen H. Kittinger, Paul D. Kittle, Larry LeClaire, Paul E. Lehman, Berna & Stan Lincoln, Curtis A. Marantz, Guy McCaskie, Steve W. McConnell, F. Joseph McLaughlin, James T. McLaughlin, John M. McLaughlin, Al D. Miller, Ann L. Miller, Jennifer Moses, Nancy L. Newfield, Sharon Nixon, Dee C. Patterson, James Pfeiffer, G. Ned Piper, Robert R. Reid, William J. Rogers, Martha B. Sargent, Robert R. Sargent, Damien J. Simbeck, Bill Summerour, Jeff R. Wilson. — **Greg D. Jackson**, 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244.

1992-93 FALL AND WINTER SIGHTINGS

Greg D. Jackson

Autumn and winter are times of excitement for birders, as we lick our lips in anticipation of tasty vagrants. This fall was satisfying in that regard, with two first Alabama records; the winter yielded several choice rarities. Numbers of non-passerine migrants seemed good, though waterfowl were scarce at the coast this winter. Good numbers of transient passerines were noted at the coast in the fall.

August was cooler than normal, but temperatures were not unusual during the remainder of the autumn. Though there were cool spells in early December and late February, most of the winter was warm. The seven-month period generally had higher-than-expected rainfall, excepting October (normal) and February (dry). Tropical activity was limited to the rainfall 27 August in n. Alabama from the dissipating Hurricane Andrew. I received few reports of rarities in our area thought directly related to that storm. The most productive frontal systems were 28-29 August, 27-29 September, and 11-12 October.

This report covers the period from August 1992 through February 1993 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (east to the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this column does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. It is important that all submissions for birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, 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. Reports should always describe the conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

County names are in *italics*. "GC" = Gulf Coast (Alabama), "ICP" = Inland Coastal Plain (Alabama), "MR" = Mountain Region, "TV" = Tennessee Valley, "WP" = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Okaloosa*). Records

not specifying Florida are in Alabama. "AFB" = Air Force Base, "m.ob." = many observers, "NWR" = National Wildlife Refuge, "p.a." = pending acceptance by the state bird records committee, "ph." = photographed, "WMA" = Wildlife Management Area.

LOONS - DUCKS: A rare **Red-throated Loon** was spotted 13 December at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin* (CK). Two **Pacific Loons** were exciting 2-9 January at Gulf Shores (GDJ,JH,CDC,SWM,mob,p.a.); this occurrence was the 11th for Alabama. It was a good season for the uncommon Eared Grebe, with six reports of nine birds. Most unusual of these were single birds 1 October at *Okaloosa*, FL (DMW), and beginning 17 November in w. *Jefferson* (ALM,MJO). Shearwaters are always stellar finds, and the **Greater Shearwater** 31 December and 3 January at Gulf Shores (ALM,ADM,p.a.) provided the first winter record for our area. The Am. White Pelican is difficult to find inland, so lone birds at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 13 September (ALM,ASC) and 1 November (SWM) were noteworthy. A flock of 200 was unusual for Destin, *Okaloosa*, FL, 13 January (JP,JaP).

Double-crested Cormorants continue to recover, and are now expected on inland lakes. An excellent movement of cormorants was detected in n. Alabama in mid-fall, with a total of over 500 at only three sites 24 September to 4 October (TAI,BM,SWM,GNP). Tricolored Herons are uncommon wanderers to the ICP; one was located in *Montgomery* 15 August (LFG). A Reddish Egret 17 January at Cape San Blas, *Gulf*, FL (JHi) was rare for the winter. A new maximum for the TV for Cattle Egret was provided by 94 in *Morgan* 29 August (SWM). Two White Ibis flew over Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 24 December (RAD); there was only one previous WP record for December. The first December WP record for Glossy Ibis was of a bird 21 December at Eglin AFB (LRD,WWD,RAD). A Wood Stork was a rare WP find 5 October in *Okaloosa* (SM).

There are few records for Tundra Swan in the WP, so an individual 23 November at Pace, *Santa Rosa* (ph.CWM) was a surprise. The Gr. White-fronted Goose appears most winters at Wheeler NWR on the Tennessee R.; the maximum reported this year was six in *Limestone* 28 December (SWM). Less expected was a single bird beginning 3 February in *Clarke* (LB,ph.CK,mob). This was a good winter for **Ross' Goose**, previously recorded seven times in Alabama. As many as six birds were in Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, beginning 31 January (JRW,SWM,RAD,mob,p.a.). Single Ross' Geese were in *Clarke* beginning 3 February (LB,ph.CK,mob,p.a.), and in *Perry* 7 February (ph.GDJ,DGJ,p.a.). The 56 Wood Ducks 3 December at, oddly, Ft. Pickens, *Escambia* (RAD) set a new WP maximum. Nine early Gadwall were in *Okaloosa*, FL, 10 September (DMW).

A rare summering Redhead was at L. Porter, *Jefferson* (TAI,mob) throughout the summer and fall. More frequent in summer, but still rare at that season, was a Ring-necked Duck at L. Porter 1 August (TAI,SSH). The Oldsquaw 19 December in Bear Creek, *Colbert* (TMH,JG,SWM,mob) was an unusual bird for the Waterloo

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CBC. Also noteworthy for the TV was the 29 November sighting of three Surf Scoters at the mouth of Town Creek, *Colbert/Lawrence* (JG,LA). Individual White-winged Scoters, scarcest of the three scoters on the coast, were reported 15 December at Ft. Walton Beach, *Okaloosa*, FL (JP), and 2 January at Gulf Shores (MJR).

RAPTORS - SHOREBIRDS: Migrant Ospreys were noted as more common than usual in n.w. Alabama, with a maximum of seven in w. *Lauderdale* 16-17 September (GNP). Rare inland in winter, one was spotted 2-3 January in *Montgomery* (P&CS,LFG). The second TV record for Am. Swallow-tailed Kite was provided by one of these graceful birds 8 (ALM,MJO) & 13 September (GDJ,DGJ) in s. *Morgan*. Two Mississippi Kites 22 August in s.e. *Shelby* (GDJ,DGJ) represented only the sixth MR record. A flock of about 40 birds was unusual 5 September in Tuscaloosa (DH,AK). Three adult Bald Eagles were notable 2 January in *Bay*, FL (R&DH,R&AI,mob). Migrant raptors were observed at the coast in normal numbers. Peak counts for the season included eight Cooper's Hawks 7 October at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* (GDJ,RAD), over 250 Broad-winged Hawks 30 September at Montrose, *Baldwin* (VBF,LB), and 100 Am. Kestrels 11 October at Ft. Morgan (AOS).

The sighting of *three Swainson's Hawks* at Ft. Morgan 18 October (ALM,ADM,p.a.) was unprecedented; this vagrant is seen in most years in late October and early November in s. *Baldwin*, but usually singly. An adult **Golden Eagle** was a rare find 15 October in *Okaloosa*, FL (DMW,CW). Difficult to find inland, I had reports of single Merlins 30 August in w. *Lauderdale* (SWM,GNP), 11 September in *Perry* (SWM), and 16 October (fem.) and 1 November (male) in s.e. *Shelby* (ALM,ADM). Peregrine Falcons are also noteworthy away from the coast. Lone falcons were spotted 9 & 27 September and 5 November in Decatur, *Morgan* (SWM,GDJ,MQ) and 3 October in w. Jefferson (TAI,SSH,F&KK). The **Prairie Falcon** at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, seemingly absent the prior winter, was rediscovered 7 January (JLD,mob). This individual was first observed in 1985 and has returned almost annually.

A Sandhill Crane at Perdido Bay in s. *Baldwin* 26 December (RAD,WWD,LRD) was away from the usual sites in Gulf Shores and west of Wolf Bay. Up to six Black-bellied Plovers, uncommon in fall in the TV, were at Swan Creek WMA 25 October (SWM). We did not have a repeat performance of the L. Golden-Plover invasion of last autumn; only three birds were reported from the TV and GC 4 October to 8 November (SWM,GDJ,CK). The Florida Panhandle produced encouraging numbers of Snowy Plovers this winter. Peak counts included 37 on an unspecified date at St. Andrews SP, *Bay* (EF,ACM,mob), 21 birds 3 December at Ft. Pickens (RAD), and 30 Snowies 8 December at Big Sabine, *Escambia* (RAD). Inland Piping Plovers are rare; single birds were noted 30 August in *Colbert* (SWM,GNP) and 6 September in Decatur (SWM). An incredible 71 Pippings were found this winter at Shell I., *Bay*, FL (BCAS), and another 14 were present 17 January at Cape San Blas,

Gulf, FL (JHi).

The Am. Oystercatcher is difficult to find in *Baldwin*, though reports from Ft. Morgan have increased in recent years; one was there 7 October (GDJ,RAD). An Am. Avocet 26 August in Decatur (SWM) was a rare inland occurrence. At least two Long-billed Curlews returned this year to the regular wintering site on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile/Baldwin*. One seen 18 July (CK,mob) provided a new early record for Alabama. Marbled Godwits are uncommon migrants and rare wintering birds. The maximum reported this fall was three godwits 6 October on the Mobile Causeway, *Baldwin* (GDJ,RAD). Another was at this location 6 December (CK) and 8 January (JLD). Two Ruddy Turnstones were rare inland 4 October in *Morgan* (SWM).

Baird's Sandpipers are regular in small numbers in the autumn. Single birds appeared 9 October in *Okaloosa*, FL (DMW), 1 October at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone* (ALM), and 6 October at Ft. Morgan (GDJ,RAD). Up to two birds were at Swan Creek WMA 12 & 18 October (GDJ) for a new inland Alabama departure date. The 33 Stilt Sandpipers at Decatur 12 October (GDJ) set a new TV maximum; that day Swan Creek WMA produced an impressive 75 basic-plumaged dowitchers (GDJ). A Wilson's Phalarope at Decatur 1-18 October (ALM,MJO,SWM,mob) established a new late date for n. Alabama. The first **Red Phalarope** for the TV, and one of the few recorded for inland Alabama, excited birders in w. *Colbert* 8-13 October (GNP,SWM,mob).

GULLS - ANIS: This was a good year for inland Laughing Gulls, which are usually scarce. Lone birds were noted 6 September in n. *Shelby* (ALM,ADM), 24 September in w. *Jefferson* (TAI,BM), and 21 November in *Marshall* (GDJ,JH) and *Limestone* (GDJ,JH,JTP). Two Laughing Gulls were at Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 2 February (GB). I had one report of the rare Franklin's Gull; one was at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, beginning 29 December (MJO,ALM,ph.SWM,mob). Two **Little Gulls** were discovered this winter; there were only three previous records for Alabama. An adult was near Marion, *Perry*, 2 January (MJO,p.a.), and an imm. was at Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 7-30 January (SRM,ph.GM,JLD,mob,p.a.).

An imm. **Iceland Gull**, accidental in our area, was reported beginning 30 December at Port St. Joe, *Gulf*, FL (WB,*fide* RAD,ph.,p.a.). The ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** 17 December to 14 January at Wilson Dam (ALM,HHF,JF,p.a.) provided a fifth state record. **Great Black-backed Gulls** are rare-but-regular visitors to our area. An adult was at Dauphin I., *Mobile*, beginning 2 October (LR,mob). First-winter Great Black-backed included one at Cape San Blas, FL, 17 January (JHi), another found dead at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, FL, 3 February (CCW), and a bird beginning 27 February at Dauphin I. (ph.CK,mob). Alabama's sixth **Black-legged Kittiwake** was a treat 5 December to 10 March at Wheeler and Wilson dams (BCG,mob,ph.ALM,ph.SWM).

The 52 Caspian Terns 29 August in *Morgan* (SWM) likely were related to

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Hurricane Andrew, and provided a new inland Alabama maximum. An unidentified "crested" tern (*not* a Caspian) appeared 29 December and 12 January at Wheeler Dam and Town Creek (ALM,MJO). Even if this was a Royal Tern, it would be accidental inland; other terns, including Elegant and even Lesser Crested, could not be excluded. A Forster's Tern 7 February in Perry (GDJ,DGJ) was rare for the winter in the ICP. A minimum of 150 Black Terns at Town Creek (ALM,MJO) set a new TV maximum. Four Common Terns were unusual as late as 14 November at Ft. Morgan (ph.GDJ,DGJ).

The spread of the **Eurasian Collared-Dove** continued unabated along the coast and even inland. At least nine were at Dauphin I. beginning 8 October (EC,JP,JaP,GDJ,mob,p.a.) and continuing through the period. Four were noted near Perdido Pass, *Baldwin*, 2 January (RRR *et al.*, p.a.). Collared-doves continued in Montgomery through the winter (LFG). There was even a lone bird in the TV in *s. Limestone* 6 February (MLB,mob,p.a.); this is the northernmost record for the state, possibly for the nation. White-winged Doves at Ft. Morgan 5 October (GDJ,MM) and 1-8 November (CK) represented the only reports of the season. Groove-billed Anis are rare in our area; they are seen in most years east to Ft. Pickens, where one was spotted 21 October (RAD,WF). More unusual were individuals in *Bay, FL*, 18 October (E&LK) and 14 November (RBH).

OWLS - SWALLOWS: The **Burrowing Owl** is a rare vagrant to our area in the fall and winter. We now have evidence of a *colony* of these delightful owls on a closed area of Eglin AFB, FL. They were discovered 11 February, and up to 16 birds have been seen subsequently (DT,DMW,mob). It was a good fall for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, with above average numbers reported (*fide* RRS). A late Ruby-throated was banded in Mobile 20 November (RRS,MBS). Black-chinned Hummingbirds, rare but regular in our area, were banded at two sites in *Jefferson* 8 December and 1 January (RRS,MBS). Alabama's first **Anna's Hummingbird**, an adult female, was banded 19 November in Huntsville, *Madison* (RRS,ph.MBS,mob,p.a.). This stray was enjoyed by multitudes of birders until late January. An impressive nine Rufous Hummingbirds were banded at various locations in Alabama during the late fall and winter (RRS,MBS). A male **Allen's Hummingbird**, Alabama's third, was present in Mobile from early November through February, and was banded 13 February (RRS,ph.MBS,mob,p.a.).

Olive-sided Flycatchers are rare throughout our area, though a few usually are seen each autumn. A regular site is at Gulf Breeze, FL, where one was noted 28-31 August (RAD,RSD,WWD). A late E. Wood-Pewee was in Montgomery 24-25 October (LFG,AM). The "casting of the nets" at Ft. Morgan can turn up some great birds, and this fall was no exception. The first **Hammond's Flycatcher** for Alabama was banded there 19 September (RRS,ph.MBS,p.a.); I am aware of no previous records east of Louisiana. Numbers of Western Kingbirds appeared normal this fall on the coast, where it is uncommon; the latest was an individual 27 November at Ft. Morgan (ph.KAM). A Western Kingbird discovered 6 September

in *Lauderdale* (GNP) established the third TV, and first n.w. Alabama, record.

A gathering of 83 Eastern Kingbirds in *Lauderdale* 23 August (GNP) was unusual. Locally significant were five Gray Kingbirds 26 August in Panama City, *Bay*, FL (ACM). As is usual for the fall, several Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were seen on the outer coast, with a maximum of three at Ft. Morgan 11 October (AOS). A lone bird 30 December at Port St. Joe, FL (WB) was rare for the winter, particularly that far east. Eight Purple Martins 18 November at Panama City, FL (R&AI) were very late. The earliest report of returning martins was of three birds at Dauphin I. 9 February (CCW). Over 50 Tree Swallows 5 November at Guntersville, *Marshall* (ALM,ASC) tied the previous late departure date for the TV. An unidentified swallow 25 December at Guntersville (SWM) likely was this species. Two late N. Rough-winged Swallows appeared 16 November in *Lawrence* (JG). A Barn Swallow 8 November in *Perry* (ALM,ADM) provided a new late date for the ICP; another was tardy 28 November at Dauphin I. (TAI,IAI).

CROWS - FINCHES: Three Fish Crows 19 November in w. *Jefferson* (TAI) established a new late MR record. Two early Golden-crowned Kinglets were at Swan Creek WMA 12 October (GDJ). The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 24 December in *Morgan* (SWM) was a rare winter occurrence. An early Veery was observed 29 August in *Lauderdale* (PDK,GNP,DCP,WJR). Cedar Waxwings are sporadic breeders in n. Alabama; two adults with two juveniles were in n. *Shelby* 29 September (ALM). Uncommon inland in winter, a White-eyed Vireo was in Montgomery 1 January (LFG). A record late Golden-winged Warbler was at Pace, *Santa Rosa*, FL, 21 November (DMW). "Brewster's" Warbler, the more frequent of the two main types of Blue-winged X Golden-winged hybrids, is always a treat to find. The first ICP record was of one in Montgomery 29 August (LFG).

An early Tennessee Warbler was in c. *Baldwin* 6 August (VBF), and a late bird remained in e. *Jefferson* until 2 December (RRS,MBS). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler, rare in the fall, set a new late WP record 15 November at Gulf Breeze (LRD,WWD). The Prairie Warbler spotted 2 January at Gulf Shores (JVP,TW) was only the third winter record for Alabama. Blackpoll Warbler, an Atlantic Coast migrant, is very rare in the fall. The first WP records for autumn were of single birds 11 September and 12 October at Gulf Breeze (RAD,PCT,BT). Mourning Warblers are elusive and are seen rarely in our area. A new early WP date was set by a sighting 29 August in Gulf Breeze (RAD); the Mourning 7 October at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone* (ALM) tied the previous TV departure date. A Wilson's Warbler 17 November to 3 December in *Jefferson* (ALM,MJO,ASC) established a new late MR date. Another discovered 16 January in *Bay*, FL (BR,TR,EF,ACM) provided a rare winter record. Also rare in winter was a Yellow-breasted Chat at Gulf Shores 2 January (RAD,RSD,LRD).

A **Western Tanager** was a good find 10 October at Dauphin I. (SRM,p.a.); this species is recorded almost annually at the coast. The Blue Grosbeak at Gulf Breeze 13 January (RAD) was a surprise, and provided the first January record for the WP.

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Indigo Buntings are rare in winter, so it was notable to have two at Foley, *Baldwin*, 30 December (RAD,PCT). More regular in winter at the coast, but still difficult to find, is the Dickcissel; a single bird was at Ft. Morgan 23 January (WJB,mob). Clay-colored Sparrows are rare but expected strays to the outer coast each autumn. One at Gulf Breeze 10 September (RAD) was only the sixth WP record. Single Clay-colored were observed 6 October at Dauphin I. (RAD,ph.GDJ), and 9 October (GDJ,BS,EC) and 14 November (ph.GDJ,DGJ) at Ft. Morgan.

Lark Sparrows are uncommon on the Alabama coast in autumn; there was one report from that area at Ft. Morgan 6-7 October (GDJ,RAD). This species is less common to the east, and one at Gulf Breeze 9 October (RAD) was the first for the WP in October. Lark Sparrows are difficult to find inland. Two were rare for the MR at Birmingham 22-29 August (TAI,SSH,PH). An immature was in *Perry* 30 August (ALM,ADM); another set a new inland Alabama late date 1 November in *Perry* (ALM,ADM). The rare **Harris' Sparrow** was spotted in s. *Baldwin* 27 November (RAD,WWD,p.a.). A very late N. Oriole was also in s. *Baldwin* that day (LRD,RAD,WWD). Winter finches were present in only moderate numbers this year. The march of the House Finch continued; *Bay, FL*, recorded first occurrences 2 January at Panama City (WB,ACM,PG,JR) and 11 February at Southport (BJ). The Gulf Shores CBC 2 January set a new GC maximum with 237 House Finches.

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Manuscripts submitted for publication in *Alabama Birdlife* should conform to the guidelines listed below. Refer to this issue or to recent past issues for examples. *Alabama Birdlife* is published twice a year; deadlines for submitting articles are **1 June** and **1 November**. If you have access to an IBM compatible or Macintosh computer it saves time and money if you submit your manuscript on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk along with the hard copy (Word or WordPerfect preferred).

Submit manuscripts typed and double spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 inch typing paper.

Black and white photos are preferred, but color prints and slides are acceptable. *Convert slides to prints before submitting article.*

The title should be in CAPS. If the name of a species is used in the title, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. CONNECTICUT WARBLER (*OPORORNIS AGILIS*).

The author's name should be in lower case and centered under the title.

If the article is coauthored by a married couple bearing the same last name, the names should be kept separate, e.g. John B. Brown and Sarah D. Brown.

Whenever a species name is used for the first time in the body of an article, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*).

When using dates, the day should be placed before the month, e.g. 13 April 1992.

Distances should be expressed in English units followed by the metric equivalent in parentheses, e.g. 6.2 miles (10 km). Use the metric system only for scientific measurements, e.g. wing 10.3 cm; tail 15.6 cm.

The title of tables should be in CAPS and placed above the table.

The description of figures should be in lower case and placed beneath the figure.

Refer to the Literature Cited in this issue for the correct way to state references.

Three or less references should be incorporated into the text of the article rather than listed separately at the end, e.g. Imhof (1976, *Alabama Birds*).

The author's name and full address should be line typed at the end of the article. The name used should match the name given under the title.

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