

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

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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
<del>June 1947</del> ← 7	Ave Marie, Cullman	Cullman	<del>Young out of nest</del>	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,**

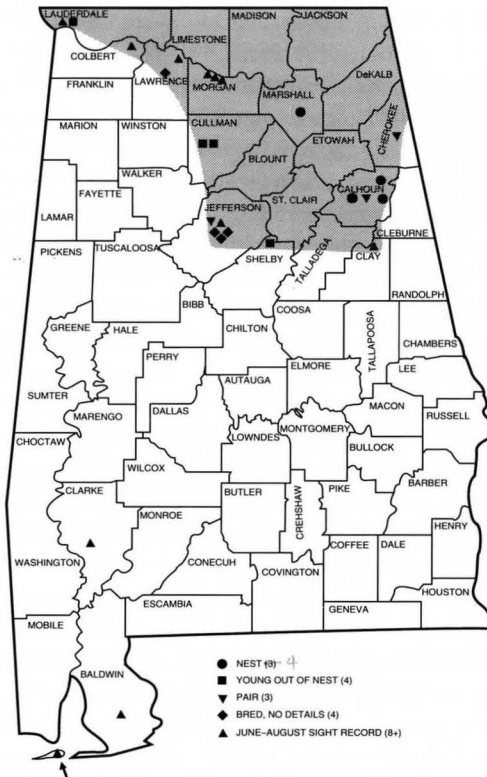


Figure 1. Breeding Range of the Cedar Waxwing in Alabama