

recently. Further study will probably show the species is present throughout the southeast, in winter but only in small numbers. Any hummingbird found after 15 November in the area covered by our federal and state permits, which include Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida and Tennessee should be banded and needs in-hand identification and documentation. **Robert R. Sargent and Martha B. Sargent**, 7570 Mac Hicks Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

**FLEDGLING ROBIN (*TURDUS MIGRATORIUS*)
KILLED BY BULLFROG (*RANA CATESBEIANA*)**

Billy F. Gilliland and Joann S. Gilliland

The nesting season here at Drummond Switch in eastern Walker County always brings with it the serendipitous. I'm sure the same is true for the rest of the state, but since we are privy mostly to what transpires here at home, our experiences are most often confined to our own yard.

This past spring and summer my husband Bill and I watched a pair of American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) as they built their first nest in an apple tree some distance from the house, the second in a pear tree down by the vegetable garden, and their third and final nest of the season in a tall loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) in the front yard near the water garden. Their nesting success was not great. The first was broken up by a predator of some sort, probably a cat since it was so close to the ground and quite exposed. One young, which paraded frequently around the yard, seemed to be the crop of the second effort. The third effort looked as though it would be a bit more successful since on the morning of 23 July 1993 both parents were seen busily feeding two fledglings in the front yard.

The following morning, as I am prone to do, I made my way out the front door to the water garden (located somewhat between the front and back yards), coffee in hand, to sit on the bridge over the garden and enjoy the birds, frogs and fishes that abound there. The water garden is approximately 30 inches deep at one end and runs to less than one inch deep at the other. Sundry trees, flowers and shrubs are planted and occur naturally around the garden. In the water itself grow various water lilies and bog plants. These provide good cover and some food for the frogs and fish, and at the shallow end the birds frequently come to drink and bathe.

As I readied myself to take a seat on the bridge, I noticed a rather large frog floating belly-up just under the surface of the water. Obviously it was dead, but the odd thing was that there appeared to be some object caught in its throat. A closer look disclosed the object to be a bird, also dead. Hardly daring to believe what I was seeing, I hastily summoned Bill who confirmed that this was a bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) with a bird hung in its throat and indeed both frog and bird were dead. Pictures were taken and we surmised that both had drowned when the frog attempted to swallow the fledgling. It appeared the bill of the bird had gotten caught

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in the frog's throat, or maybe it was just too large for him to swallow (Figure 1).

We speculate that very early that morning the young robin had wandered too close to the water's edge or maybe had fallen into the water, and the opportunistic frog had taken it for a meal. The parents of the two fledglings were nowhere to be seen at this particular time. I had hoped the second young bird would make it to adulthood, but this did not appear to be the case when, a few days later, I found what I guessed to be the second young robin drowned in another shallow of the water garden. Such, I suppose, is nature's way. **Billy F. Gilliland and Joan S. Gilliland**, Route 2, Box 91-C, Empire, AL 35063.



Figure 1. This large bullfrog apparently choked to death while trying to swallow a fledgling robin. The fledgling presumably drowned during the struggle. (Photo by Billy F. Gilliland)