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Typeset by Tom Haggerty

**Cover:** Whip-poor-will chicks (photo by B. Summerour)

## A CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF TUSKEGEE NATIONAL FOREST

Julian L. Dusi and Rosemary D. Dusi

Tuskegee National Forest is situated in eastern Macon County, Alabama. This checklist (Table 1) is based on 66 field trips (approximately 150 hrs) to Tuskegee National Forest and surrounding areas, including the Tuskegee city lake, between 1989 and 1999.

TABLE 1. Bird checklist of Tuskegee National Forest, Macon County, Alabama.

Species	Sp <sup>a</sup>	S <sup>b</sup>	F <sup>c</sup>	W <sup>d</sup>
Pied-billed Grebe	C <sup>e</sup>	O <sup>f</sup>	O	O
Double-crested Cormorant	O	—	—	—
Anhinga	O	—	—	—
Great Blue Heron	A <sup>g</sup>	A	C	C
Great Egret	O	C	—	—
Little Blue Heron	O	C	O	—
Cattle Egret (when a colony present)	A	A	—	—
Green Heron	C	C	—	—
Black-crowned Night-Heron	—	O	—	—
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	—	O	—	—
White Ibis	—	O	—	—
Wood Stork	—	O	—	—
Black Vulture	C	C	O	O
Turkey Vulture	A	C	O	O
Wood Duck	C	O	O	O
Blue-winged Teal	C	C	—	—
Northern Shoveler	O	—	—	—
Common Goldeneye	R <sup>h</sup>	—	—	—
Hooded Merganser	O	O	—	—
Common Merganser	R	—	—	—
Ruddy Duck	R	—	—	—
Mississippi Kite	R	O	R	R
Sharp-shinned Hawk	O	O	O	O
Cooper's Hawk	O	O	O	O
Red-shouldered Hawk	A	C	U <sup>i</sup>	U



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Table 1. Continued

Species	Sp	S	F	W
Broad-winged Hawk	U	U	—	—
Red-tailed Hawk	C	C	U	U
Wild Turkey	C	C	U	U
Northern Bobwhite	U	U	U	U
American Coot	O	—	—	—
Killdeer	U	U	O	O
American Woodcock	U	—	—	U
Laughing Gull	R	—	—	—
Ring-billed Gull	R	—	—	R
Herring Gull	R	—	—	—
Rock Dove	C	C	C	C
Mourning Dove	A	A	A	A
Common Ground-Dove	R	—	—	—
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	C	C	—	—
Eastern Screech-Owl	U	U	U	U
Great Horned Owl	U	U	U	U
Barred Owl	C	U	U	U
Common Nighthawk	U	U	—	—
Chuck-will's-widow	U	U	—	—
Chimney Swift	A	C	—	—
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	C	U	—	—
Belted Kingfisher	A	C	C	C
Red-headed Woodpecker	C	C	O	O
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	—	—	O	O
Downy Woodpecker	C	C	U	U
Hairy Woodpecker	O	O	O	O
Red-cockaded Woodpecker—Extirpated. Present in 1950's and 1960's.				
Northern Flicker	C	C	O	O
Pileated Woodpecker	A	C	C	C
Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	—	—
Acadian Flycatcher	O	O	—	—
Eastern Phoebe	A	A	U	U
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	C	—	—
Eastern Kingbird	A	A	—	—
Loggerhead Shrike	U	U	U	U
White-eyed Vireo	A	A	O	R
Yellow-throated Vireo	C	C	—	—
Red-eyed Vireo	C	C	—	—



Table 1. Continued

Species	Sp	S	F	W
Blue Jay	A	A	A	A
American Crow	A	A	A	A
Fish Crow	O	O	O	O
Purple Martin	C	A	—	—
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	C	A	—	—
Barn Swallow	A	A	O	O
Carolina Chickadee	A	C	C	C
Tufted Titmouse	A	C	C	C
Brown-headed Nuthatch	C	C	U	U
Brown Creeper	—	—	O	O
Carolina Wren	A	A	A	A
Winter Wren	U	—	—	U
Golden-crowned Kinglet	R	—	—	R
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	U	—	—	U
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	A	O	O
Eastern Bluebird	A	C	O	O
Veery	—	—	—	R
Gray-cheeked Thrush	O	—	O	—
Swainson's Thrush	O	—	O	—
Hermit Thrush	—	—	—	U
Wood Thrush	C	C	—	—
American Robin	C	U	U	C
Gray Catbird	U	U	—	R
Northern Mockingbird	A	A	C	C
Brown Thrasher	C	C	C	C
Cedar Waxwing	U	—	U	U
European Starling	C	C	C	C
Northern Parula	U	U	—	—
Yellow Warbler	U	U	—	—
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	—	—	C
Yellow-throated Warbler	U	U	—	—
Pine Warbler	A	A	C	C
Prairie Warbler	C	U	—	—
Prothonotary Warbler	C	C	—	—
Common Yellowthroat	C	C	U	U
Hooded Warbler	C	C	—	—
Yellow-breasted Chat	A	A	—	—
Summer Tanager	C	C	—	—
Scarlet Tanager	U	—	—	—

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

TABLE 1. Continued

Species	Sp	S	F	W
Eastern Towhee	A	A	C	C
Northern Cardinal	A	A	A	A
Bachman's Sparrow	U	U	U	U
Chipping Sparrow	C	O	O	C
Field Sparrow	U	U	U	U
Savannah Sparrow	U	—	—	U
Fox Sparrow	U	—	—	U
Swamp Sparrow	U	—	—	U
White-throated Sparrow	C	—	—	C
Dark-eyed Junco	C	—	—	C
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	U	—	—	—
Blue Grosbeak	C	C	—	—
Red-winged Blackbird	C-A	C-A	C-A	C-A
Eastern Meadowlark	C	C	C	C
Common Grackle	C-A	C-A	C-A	C-A
Brown-headed Cowbird	U-C	U-C	U-C	U-C
Orchard Oriole	C	C	—	—
Northern Oriole	U	—	—	—
Indigo Bunting	C	C	—	—
House Finch	O	O	O	O
American Goldfinch	A	C	—	—
House Sparrow	U	U	U	U

<sup>a</sup> = Spring

<sup>b</sup> = Summer

<sup>c</sup> = Fall

<sup>d</sup> = Winter

<sup>e</sup> = Common; certain to be seen in proper habitat

<sup>f</sup> = Occasional; seen only a few times during a season

<sup>g</sup> = Abundant; present and usually seen in large numbers

<sup>h</sup> = Rare; seen at intervals of two to five years

<sup>i</sup> = Uncommon; present, but not certain to be seen

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**TWO WHIP-POOR-WILL (*CAPRIMULGUS VOCIFERUS*)  
BREEDING RECORDS FROM CALHOUN COUNTY,  
ALABAMA**

Bill Summerour

Although the Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) is common in summer in the mountains of north Alabama (Imhof 1976), and is well known by voice, it remains one of the least known of Alabama birds and the least known of the three caprimulgids occurring in the state.

On 8 May 1998, the author was successful in finding a Whip-poor-will's nest in the Talladega National Forest in eastern Calhoun County, only the second nesting record for the state and 55 years since H. M. Stevenson (1944) discovered the first nest on 10 June 1943, near Mentone in Dekalb County. Stevenson's reference to a nest was made in a footnote regarding the sighting of a Whip-poor-will, listed among 61 other species, observed on a summer bird count on Lookout Mountain. The footnote stated only, "one young in nest". The nest described in this paper is therefore the only currently available description of a Whip-poor-will's nest from Alabama. Also reported in this paper are egg dates obtained from the dissection of a gravid roadkill female found on 12 April 1999, in the Talladega National Forest in eastern Calhoun County.

Whip-poor-wills return in spring to the mountains of north Alabama as early as the first week in March, three weeks to a month in advance of the first Chuck-will's-widows (pers. observ.). By the middle of April, as the breeding dates in this paper will show, some Whip-poor-wills may already be on eggs, before, or at about the same time as, the first Chuck-will's-widows begin calling in the valleys (pers. observ.).

In the spring of 1998, I decided to focus my efforts on a purposeful search to find a Whip-poor-will's nest. In theory the strategy was simple: hike over every square meter of a block of mountains where I had heard Whip-poor-will's calling until I flushed a female from a nest. Covering every square meter of forested, mountainous terrain is not literally possible of course, but some sort of disciplined, methodical approach was better than walking randomly through the woods hoping to flush a Whip-poor-will.

An indispensable aid when searching for Whip-poor-will nests is a light, dry, flexible cane pole, about six ft (2 m) long and an inch (2 cm) or less in diameter at the hand-held end. By reaching out and tapping the ground on either



side as one walks along, and probing around logs and fallen tree tops and under over-hanging limbs, a strip of forest 12 ft to 15 ft (4 to 5 m) wide can be covered without physically walking over every likely looking spot.

At gray light on 8 May 1998, I set out methodically contouring and walking back and forth over an area in the Choccolocco Wildlife Management Area where I had heard a male calling almost every morning throughout the month of April. The area, which I assumed roughly defined the male's territory, encompassed approximately 100 acres (40 ha) of mixed pine-hardwood ridges and deciduous draws and hollows. The elevation ranged from 920 to 1200 ft (280 to 366 m).

Since there was no way of knowing where the female might be, and having little to go on, I assumed nothing and tried to cover the area completely, including what I considered to be such unlikely places as stream bottoms, dense thickets and steep mountain sides. By early afternoon I had covered about half the area with no luck.

Pressing on, I crossed a narrow stream bottom and started working my way up a steep incline toward the point of a ridge. After reaching the point and after I had just started walking up the ridge, I was suddenly startled by a Whip-poor-will that fluttered from the forest floor 15 ft (5 m) directly in front of me. It flew toward me and hit the ground 10 ft (3 m) to my left, wings spread and tail fanned, feigning injury. I glanced quickly at the spot from which she had flushed, but saw no eggs, and then I focused my attention back on the bird, which was still fanned out on the ground with her head up, looking at me. I took a step or two toward her to give the impression her decoy was working, and she responded by fluttering as though injured over the contour of the ridge and out of sight. I then turned my attention back to the place where she had flushed and approached the spot slowly and carefully.

I first spotted a discarded eggshell, complete with the cap attached. About 18 in (46 cm) from the eggshell was a newly hatched, downy chick, beautifully camouflaged against the forest floor. It was lying motionless in the "nest" which was at best only a slight depression in the leaves caused by the weight of the female while incubating the eggs and brooding the young. Glancing about, I found the other chick hidden under the trunk of a dead pine top about 30 in (76 cm) away. I placed it back with the other nestling and put the eggshell beside them for comparison (see front cover). They were not much larger than the end of my thumb and only a little larger than the eggshell. I judged them to be no more than one or two days old. Their tawny brown color, about the shade of pine straw or the pale brown of oak leaves, almost perfectly matched the leaves on the forest floor. Assuming the incubation period to be at least 19 days (Harrison



1975), and the chicks no more than one or two days old, the eggs would therefore have been laid around 17-19 April.

An examination of the area revealed the nest site to be on a fairly level, but gently sloping, rather open area near the end, or point, of a long ridge which dropped off steeply on both sides into deep hollows. The elevation of the ridge at the nest site was 1120 ft (341 m). The woods on the ridge consisted of mixed pine and deciduous trees including shortleaf (*Pinus echinata*) and loblolly (*P. taeda*) pines 25 to 35 feet (8-12 m) in height, chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*), northern red oak (*Q. rubra*), white oak (*Q. alba*), hickories (*Carya* spp.), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). The ground cover consisted of dense patches of blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), except in the area of the nest, which was relatively open (Figure 1). The adjacent slopes and hollows consisted of open deciduous woods composed of the hardwood species noted above, plus tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), umbrella magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*) and big leaf magnolia (*M. macrophylla*).



FIGURE 1. Eggshell and newly hatched Whip-poor-will chicks, 8 May 1998, Talladega National Forest, Calhoun County (photo by Bill Summerour).



At first glance the site appeared much the same as numerous other places in the forest, but a closer look suggested otherwise. The nest was enclosed on one side by an old, weathered, fire-charred log, and on another by the dead top of a Virginia pine (*P. virginiana*), which had lost most of its limbs to fire and decay (Figure 2). These natural barriers probably served to steer or detour predators such as coyotes (*Canis latrans*), gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), red foxes (*Vulpes fulva*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) and opossums (*Didelphis marsupialis*), around the nest. In addition to the protection provided by the log and tree top, the spot chosen to deposit the eggs was about an inch (2.5 cm) from a small limb, which appeared to serve as a barrier on the down slope side of the eggs (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. Whip-poor-will nesting site in Talladega National Forest, Calhoun County, 8 May 1998. An arrow marks the location of an eggshell and newly hatched chicks (photo by Bill Summerour).

I returned to check the nest the following day and was surprised when the female flushed about six ft (2 m) from the nest site. The two chicks immediately scattered when she flushed, bounding and clambering over the leafy ground cover with surprising speed and energy. Within seconds they covered 10 ft (3



m) before freezing in the undergrowth and relying on their cryptic coloration for concealment. The effect of the female suddenly flushing and the young scattering and bounding about was startling and confusing, as I imagine it would be to a predator. I managed to find one of the chicks under some thick ground cover, but in spite of much searching could not find the other one. It was obvious this tactic of "flush and scatter" and changing locations daily if disturbed, would make it increasingly difficult to find the birds, so I did not return and no further observations were made.

Having succeeded in finding one nest, I set out a few days later to find another. For the next week I hiked over what seemed like most of the mountains in the Talladega National Forest and found nothing. In the spring of 1999, I continued the search, again using the proven contour and cane pole method, but again with the same results. However, I was able to obtain egg dates in quite an unexpected way. On 12 April, while driving out of the Talladega National Forest on FS 532 in Calhoun County, I came across a Whip-poor-will killed in the road. When I stopped to examine the bird, I discovered it was a female and in excellent condition. It appeared to have been killed around daylight, only a few hours earlier. While examining the specimen in hand, I noticed that the abdomen felt hard as though there might be an egg in the body cavity.

Back home, I dissected the specimen and found a fully formed, shelled, pigmented egg in the uterus (Figure 3). Pigmentation usually takes place during the last few hours the egg is in the uterus (Welty 1982), so the egg would probably have been laid that day, 12 April. Further dissection revealed two ruptured follicles in the ovary, evidence that the first of the two eggs had already been laid (Figure 4). Assuming the time from ovulation to laying to be around 60 hours in the Whip-poor-will as it is in some other caprimulgids (Welty 1982), the first egg would therefore have been laid on 9 or 10 April.

In summary, the egg dates extrapolated from the roadkill female found on 12 April 1999 and from the nest found on 8 May 1998 containing the newly hatched young, show that Whip-poor-wills are on eggs as early as the middle of April. Stevenson's (1944) 10 June record in 1943 of "one young in nest" suggests the possibility of more than one brood, or of renesting following a failed nesting attempt.

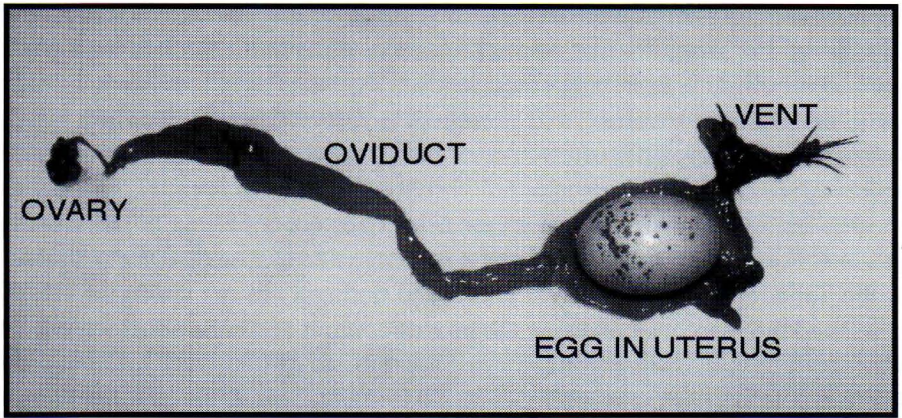


FIGURE 3. Whip-poor-will egg in opened uterine region of dissected reproductive tract, 12 April 1999 (photo by Bill Summerour).

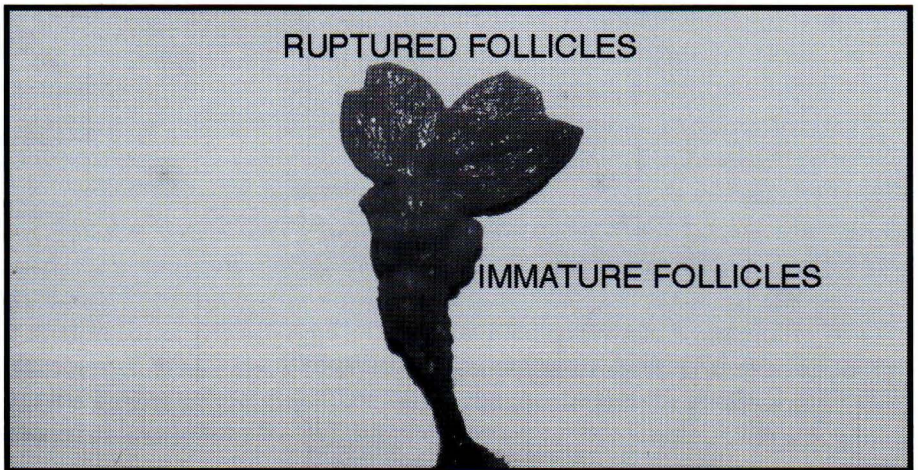


FIGURE 4. Whip-poor-will ovary showing two large ruptured follicles, evidence that two ova had been released. Note immature follicles of the ovary (photo by Bill Summerour).



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**LARK SPARROWS (*CHONDESTES GRAMMACUS*) BREEDING  
IN AUTAUGA COUNTY, ALABAMA**

Lawrence F. Gardella and Shawn Reed

The Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) is considered a rare-but-regular breeder in the Tennessee Valley and Black Belt regions of Alabama (Jackson 2001). In the Tennessee Valley region, recent evidence of breeding has been noted in Limestone (Cutten and Cutten 1998), Madison, Lawrence (Jackson 1999), and Lauderdale counties (Jackson 2000a). In the Upper Coastal Plain, breeding evidence has primarily come from the Black Belt (Imhof 1976). As early as 1890, Lark Sparrow breeding was reported from Hale County (Howell 1924). In addition, Reid (1988) found them on a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey route in Sumter County in 1986 and 1987. Recently, Upper Coastal Plain breeding season records outside of the Black Belt region have come from Perry (Jackson 1999) and Chilton counties (Jackson 2000b). This paper documents a breeding record from an additional county in the Upper Coastal Plain region and presents a brief historical review of the distribution of this species in eastern North America.

On 11 June 2000, Reed found a Lark Sparrow singing on a power line at the edge of the Autauga County Wildlife Management Area. The sparrow was in a field north of Autauga County Road 66, 0.5 mi (10.8 km) from the intersection of Autauga County roads 57 and 66 (DeLorme *Alabama Atlas and Gazetteer*: page 44, grid A5; 32° 36' N, 86° 32' W). He watched the bird for approximately 30 minutes without seeing any further sign of possible breeding.

On 2 July 2000, three weeks after Reed saw a singing male, Fred Bassett and Gardella found at least five Lark Sparrows. Two males were singing from a telephone wire that was approximately 100 yds (91 m) from the location of the Reed sighting. All five sparrows were between the start of Autauga County Road 66 and the first bend in the road. The sparrows flew from the wire to the field and then either returned to the wire or flew to one of several roadside trees. Bassett and Gardella watched one adult Lark Sparrow feed an insect to a fledgling that had nothing but pinfeathers in its tail. This sighting is the southernmost breeding location in Alabama (G. Jackson, pers. comm.).

There are breeding populations of Lark Sparrows just north and just west of Alabama. In Mississippi, the Lark Sparrow is a rare and local breeder in western Hinds County, in the Black Belt and hill counties of the northeast and possibly

in the northern counties bordering Tennessee. It is not found in the southern half of eastern Mississippi (Turcotte and Watts 1999). In Tennessee, Lark Sparrows are regularly found in summer at local sites in the limestone cedar glade regions of the inner Central Basin, but their numbers have been decreasing. There are scattered reports from the rest of the state, mainly on heavily grazed pastures and cultivated fields (Nicholson 1997).

The distribution of Lark Sparrows in the eastern United States has changed twice during the history of this nation. Prior to settlement, the bird was found primarily in the west, with few records east of the Great Plains. As the population of the country grew and pushed westward into the heartland, the Lark Sparrow range appears to have expanded eastward, although some believe that the sparrows simply returned to areas they had bred in earlier (Robbins and Blom 1996). By 1911, Lark Sparrows were breeding as far east as New York. The range expansion was due not only to the clearing of the forests, but also to the early agricultural practices that created fields containing sparse herbaceous vegetation with bare soil, interspersed with woody vegetation (Robbins 1990, Martin and Parrish 2000, Bull 1974). Such habitat is perfectly suited to the Lark Sparrow (Sample and Mossman 1994).

Lark Sparrows began to experience a range contraction by the 1930's as intensive agricultural practices, development, and reforestation claimed much of the Lark Sparrow habitat east of the Mississippi (Robbins and Blom 1996). Many eastern states completely lost their breeding populations (Martin and Parrish 2000). However, Lark Sparrows have maintained vestiges of their former range in locations where mowing, burning or grazing maintain the critical habitat requirements (Dechant *et al.* 1999).

There does not appear to be any systematic data supporting a renewed eastern range expansion for the Lark Sparrow. However, a report of a male in Tallapoosa County, Georgia last summer (Georgia Rare Bird Alert - July 26, 2000) and the recent Alabama records suggest that this beautiful sparrow might be found just about anywhere that suitable habitat exists.

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## A FIRST STATE RECORD OF A CRESTED CARACARA (*CARACARA CHERIWAY*) IN ALABAMA

Robert A. Duncan and Lucy R. Duncan

On 19 February 2001, David Plumb of Baldwin County, Alabama observed a Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) in his yard and was able to record it on videotape for two minutes. If accepted by the Alabama Bird Records Committee (ABRC), this sighting will constitute the first Alabama record of this species. The Crested Caracara ranges from central and southern Texas and southwestern Louisiana, southern Arizona and northern Baja California, Cuba, south through Middle and South America (AOU 1983). A disjunct population, estimated at a minimum of 400-500 individuals in 1991 (Layne, in Stevenson and Anderson 1994) exists in south central Florida.

Mr. Plumb contacted Larry Gardella who called us about the occurrence. On the phone that evening, Mr. Plumb described the bird and offered to provide the ABRC with a copy of his video. We have known David Plumb for a number of years as he permits us access to his family property during the Gulf Shores Christmas Bird Counts. He is a duck hunter with good knowledge of waterfowl and raptors.

The following day, 20 February, we visited his home located about one mile (1.6 km) SW of the intersection of Baldwin County roads 49 and 12. The area is open terrain in sod fields and pasture with copses of trees and hedgerows scattered throughout. The house near which the bird was seen is in an open expanse of grasses with a swampy area, dry at the time, and bare trees about 100-150 ft. (30-45 m) to the south, where the bird was filmed. A search for the bird was unsuccessful. The tape showed the Caracara with recognizable features of Mr. Plumb's yard and trees as reference points. Mr. Plumb first noticed the bird and a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) feeding on a duck carcass. When he approached, the Caracara flew off before the Red-tailed Hawk. Mr. Plumb was able to film the Caracara after it flew into a nearby bare tree, while it sat and turned around on the branch, and then as it flew away from the area. In all, the video showed every feature of a Crested Caracara. Subsequent efforts to find the bird by several birders over the next few days were unsuccessful.

Interestingly on the morning of 1 March 2001, we observed a Crested Caracara at the extreme eastern tip of Santa Rosa Island, Okaloosa County, Florida, near Destin. This area consists of a parking lot, beach dunes, a brackish

lake ringed with juncus, and an adjacent marsh beyond which are dunes and the Gulf of Mexico on the south and a stand of pines, many of which are dead, to the west. The bird was perched on dead branches emerging from the top of a live yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) no more than 100 ft. (30 m) from the parking area. The Caracara flew down into the thick brush networked with narrow paths soon after we pulled into the parking lot. Efforts to find it were futile.

Whether the Alabama bird was the same individual that we spotted in Destin cannot be determined, but we suspect one bird is involved. While the origin of both sightings may never be known, whether from Peninsula Florida or the more western Texas population, we are convinced neither bird was an escape. Lowery (1974) writes "the birds are not easy to find...for they spend much of their time on the ground and have the habit of retreating behind a mass of vegetation or one of the many pimple mounds in the area when an observer approaches." This behavior explains how the Destin bird was able to disappear so quickly. No Crested Caracaras were reported from The Zoo in Gulf Breeze, Florida near Pensacola, the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo in Gulf Shores, or from the Kids Kountry Farm in Magnolia Springs, Alabama.

In both instances the birds exhibited wild behavior unlike a bird that would have been in captivity. The Alabama Caracara flew off before the Red-tailed Hawk, which is typically a rather shy bird. The Florida bird opted for hiding on the ground, a characteristic of a species that spends a good deal of time hunting on the ground.

In Louisiana, the Crested Caracara is considered a rare permanent resident, primarily in Cameron Parish in the southwest part of the state (Lowery 1974). The easternmost record in Louisiana includes a bird that was killed in 1973 in the New Orleans area after it attacked a child and a neighbor's dog. It was considered wild (Lowery 1974). The closest occurrence to the Alabama sighting was a bird photographed in Jackson County, Mississippi, in 1983 (Toups and Jackson 1987). The closest occurrence to the Destin sighting was a bird seen in the Panama City, Florida area in August 1968 (Ingram 2001). It was considered an escape at the time.

We believe the Alabama sighting constitutes the first state occurrence, pending acceptance by the ABRC to which the videotape has been sent.

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**REPORT OF A GREATER ROADRUNNER (*GEOCOCCYX CALIFORNIANUS*) IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA**

Robert A. Duncan and Lucy R. Duncan

On or about 21 January 2001, Ed Case of Gulf Breeze, Florida received a phone call from Max Griggs, a resident of the Barrineau Park area of Escambia County, Florida. He explained that the previous summer he and his friend J. D. Barber had seen a Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) at his residence and blueberry farm.

On 4 February 2001, we visited with Mr. Griggs and his friend J. D. Barber at his residence. The residence is adjacent to La Floresta Perdida Wildlife Management Area which is a pineland forest extending west from his home for about 35 miles (56 km) to the Mobile River Delta in Alabama. His house sits on cleared land with an acre or two expanse of lawn and occasional shrubs. His blueberry farm is behind the house, and consists of several acres of bushes trimmed up from the ground so that the area beneath is clear, with rows spaced about 8 ft (2.4 m) apart. At the time of the sighting Mr. Griggs was on his tractor and the bird paid little attention to him or Mr. Barber.

He described the bird as large, having a crest, long tail, and brown streaking. He said it ran short distances in spurts, stopping periodically. He called Mr. Barber's attention to it and they watched it together. Mr. Griggs stated he knew what it was when he saw it since he had seen them before in Texas where he visits his family. When queried whether he might have mistaken it for another species such as a pheasant, he was emphatic that he knew pheasants and there were no pheasants in his area. He also explained that he hunted wild turkeys and that it was certainly not that species, Northern Bobwhite, or any other species common to his area. He had a Peterson Eastern Field Guide and pointed out that it was unequivocally the Greater Roadrunner pictured therein. Mr. Barber agreed with him. He was able to pinpoint the date, 18 August 2000, from notes in the logs of his blueberry cultivation activities.

The closest zoo is in Gulf Breeze, about 25 miles (40 km) away and separated from the site by Pensacola and Escambia bays. They have never had a roadrunner. To our knowledge, Mobile, Alabama, about 55 miles (88.5 km) away, has no zoo, and the next closest city of size is Montgomery, Alabama, about 130 miles (209 km) away. While Greater Roadrunners occur east to northwest Louisiana and Arkansas, the origin of this bird will never be known. The Mississippi River presents a substantial barrier to natural vagrancy in the eastern United States for



this terrestrial species. A.C. Bent (1964, Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds and their Allies) says, "...a flying roadrunner is as much out of his element as a swimming chicken." However, this report cannot be ruled out entirely due to the witness's credibility, detailed description, and prior experience with the species.

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## FALL SIGHTINGS (AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2000)

Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan

This report covers the period from August through November 2000 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (west of the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this article does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. All submissions of birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, must 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. For guidance, observers are encouraged to consult the Alabama Ornithological Society checklist. Reports should note conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

**Abbreviations and italics:** County names are in italics and, except for the Florida counties of *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa*, are in Alabama. “@” = subject to review by appropriate records committee; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “FOSRC” = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Ft. Walton Beach Sewerage Facility; “m.ob.” = many observers; “MP 252 Platform” = offshore drilling platform, N 29° 21.651’, W 87° 53.057’, 60 miles south of Ft. Morgan Peninsula, *Baldwin*; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “v.t.” = video-taped; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Okaloosa* counties); “WTF” = Woerner Turf Farm.

**PACIFIC LOON** – Steve McConnell reported two from Lake Guntersville SP, *Marshall*, on 25 November. This species is rare inland, but regular at this site.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** – Three at Guin, *Marion*, on 9 August represented early migrants (Jud Johnston). A juvenile in Decatur, *Limestone*, on 9 September probably represented a local nesting of this rare breeder in the Tennessee Valley (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten). The 400+ seen by Steve McConnell at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 29 October represented a good number for this species.

**EARED GREBE** – Now rare but regular in the WP in fall, two were at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 14 September (Bob Duncan). Between 17 October -



29 November, two-three birds were observed at the same site by Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Don Ware, m.ob.

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** – From the MP 252 Platform, B. Mac Myers reported 19, two, and one on 13, 14, and 25 September, respectively, and one-68 on 14 dates between 11-25 October (@ ABRC). The high count of 68 was on 16 October. There are 15 prior Alabama records.

**GREATER SHEARWATER** – Rare in Alabama coastal waters, a single was reported from the MP 252 Platform on 20 October (B. Mac Myers; @ ABRC).

**AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** – Two birds on 14 September and a single on 16 October from the MP 252 Platform constituted the eighth and ninth Alabama records (B. Mac Myers; @ ABRC).

**MASKED BOOBY** – Not all records of pelagics came from the MP 252 Platform. Lucy Duncan and Bob Duncan reported an adult of this species from the beach on Santa Rosa Island, *Santa Rosa*, on 8 September, for a second September record in the WP. From the MP 252 Platform came reports of a near adult on 24 and 26 September, and a sub-adult on 11 October (B. Mac Myers). Masked Booby is rare but regular on the Alabama coast.

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** – This species is rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, so Larry Gardella's sighting of two on 19 November at Speigner, *Elmore*, was notable.

**BROWN PELICAN** – This species is only casual inland, and up to four were seen at the W. F. George Dam, *Henry*, between 1 July and 24 November (Jim Watson *et al.*).

**ANHINGA** – Gary Wayner had one at Fort Payne, *DeKalb*, on 3 September (occasional in north Alabama).

**PLEGADIS SP.** – One individual, a probable Glossy, was recorded at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 2 September (Milton Harris, Bert Harris).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** – The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Alabama records were a single from south of Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 9 August (Carolyn Snow, m. ob.; ph. Steve McConnell; @ ABRC), and a single along the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, on 26 October (C. K. Dindo; @ ABRC).

**WOOD STORK** – Rare in the Mountain Region, nine were seen on Choccolocca Creek east of Ala. Hwy. 77, *Talladega*, on 18 August (Winston Baker, Linda Baker).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** – Casual in the WP, one-three were seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, from 17-29 November (Don Ware, Robert Duncan, Lucy Duncan *et al.*). Locally rare, two were seen in *Elmore* on 28 November (Tommy Pratt, Shawn Reed).

- BLUE-WINGED TEAL** – At Guin, *Marion*, Jud Johnston reported 75 on 10 September, a good concentration of this species for north Alabama.
- REDHEAD** – Setting a new maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain, Giff Beaton and Earl Horn had 164 at W. F. George Dam in *Henry*, on 24 November.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** – A trip on 3 August through the western Black Belt (*Greene, Hale, Marengo, Perry, and Sumter*) netted Charles Kennedy and Tommy Pratt a good total of 35.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – The same trip as described above produced a good total of 70.
- NORTHERN HARRIER** – An early fall record for the Tennessee Valley was established by the single at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, on 9 August (Paul Kittle). Another single passed by the MP 252 Platform on 24 October (B. Mac Myers).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** – The 100+ recorded at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 7 October was a good number (Bob Sargent *et al.*).
- PEREGRINE FALCON** – Greg Harber reported one from along the Alabama River in *Lowndes* on 26 August. This species is a rare migrant for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama.
- YELLOW RAIL** – Gene Fleming accidentally flushed one from an unmowed patch of grass at his home in Molino, *Escambia*, on 7 September; casual in the WP.
- BLACK RAIL** – Bob Duncan and Ed Case flushed one from a marsh at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 27 October, for a 12<sup>th</sup> area record.
- KING RAIL** – Rare in the Mountain Region, two were seen on 30 September at Porter Lake, *Jefferson* (Sharon Hudgins, David George).
- VIRGINIA RAIL** – Also rare in the Mountain Region, one was seen on 30 September at Porter Lake, *Jefferson*, (Sharon Hudgins, David George).
- SORA** – Continuing what must have been a good day for rails, Sharon Hudgins and David George had five on 30 September at Porter Lake, *Jefferson*, a good number for the Mountain Region.
- LIMPKIN** – First reported by Gay Voss and Michael Voss, a very cooperative bird delighted many birders from near and far between 30 September and 23 November. This first record for Alabama (@ ABRC; ph. by m.ob.) came from Smith Lake Park, *Cullman*.
- SANDHILL CRANE** – Casual in the WP, six were observed from a helicopter at the mouth of the Yellow River, *Santa Rosa*, on 21 November (Ed Lowsma). Another autumn record came from Limestone Bay, Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, on 30 November; the 47 birds reported by J. Wells represented a



good number for the Tennessee Valley.

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** – A maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama was set by the six seen at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 10 September (Larry Gardella *et al.*).

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** – The 12 seen at Foley, *Baldwin*, on 9 September (Peggy Baker, m.ob.) set a new fall maximum for the Gulf Coast. Larry Gardella *et al.* saw four at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 10 September.

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** – Locally rare at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, one was reported on 27 September (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

**AMERICAN AVOCET** – Rare inland in Alabama, a report of a single came from Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 25 November (Tom Haggerty, Moez Ali).

**WILLET** – At the WTF, *Lowndes*, Larry Gardella, Pat Johnson, Fred Bassett *et al.* observed one 4-10 September (rare inland).

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** – A fall maximum for inland Alabama was set by the 17 seen at the WTF, *Lowndes*, by Tommy Pratt *et al.* on 4 August; Steve McConnell had 11 at the same site on 13 August. West of Florence in *Lauderdale*, Ned Piper, Moez Ali, and Paul Kittle saw a single 2-6 September (locally rare).

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** – Sod farms attracted a few migrants of this species that is rare for inland Alabama. On 4 September, Carolyn Snow had one at the Sprague Sod Farm, *Montgomery*, and on 10 September, Larry Gardella had one at the WTF, *Lowndes*.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** – The third local WP September record was established by sightings of a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 4 September (Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow) and 8 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Rare in fall in Alabama, a report of four came from Foley, *Baldwin*, on 9 September (Phil Tetlow, m.ob.), and another report of seven came from the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 10 September (Larry Gardella *et al.*).

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** – Rare in fall for our area, small numbers were reported from three sites. One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15-22 September (Don Ware, Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan). A report of two came from Seven Mile Island WMA, *Lauderdale*, on 19 September (Damien Simbeck). The single west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, on 11-12 November set a record late departure date for inland Alabama (Paul Kittle, Tom Haggerty).

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** – Good numbers were recorded from several sites in Alabama. At Foley, *Baldwin*, there were six birds on 10 August (Bill Summerour), 150 on 3 September, and 172 on 9 September (Peggy Baker, m.o.b.) At the WTF, *Lowndes*, seven were found on 26 August (Bob Reid)

and 30 on 10 September (Larry Gardella *et al.*), the latter a maximum for inland Alabama. Ten seen west of Florence in *Lauderdale* on 2 September (Ned Piper, Moez Ali) were a new maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

**RUFF** – A female seen at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 6 August (Larry Gardella) established the fifth record for Alabama (@ ABRC).

**RED PHALAROPE** – One at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 29 October furnished the 21<sup>st</sup> record for the state (Steve McConnell; @ ABRC).

**POMARINE JAEGER** – All records of this rare-but-expected species came from the MP 252 Platform (B. Mac Myers) as follows: one sub-adult on 3 September, one sub-adult on 15 October, two juveniles on 16 October, and one adult or near-adult on 20 October.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** – Two reports of this rare species were received: one seen from the Ft. Morgan/Dauphin Island Ferry, *Mobile*, 26 September (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and one juvenile from the MP 252 Platform on 16 October (B. Mac Myers).

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** – Rare but expected on the Gulf Coast, one first year bird was on the East End of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 12 October (Steve McConnell, m.ob.). Two others were at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, on 4 November (Steve McConnell). One record of a first-winter bird came from the WP at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 22 November (Don Ware) and 29 November (Bob Duncan, Will Duncan, Alan Knothe, Jesse Knothe).

**SABINE'S GULL** – The fourth record for Alabama, and the first since 1984, came from the East End of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, where Bob Reid had a juvenile on 28 October (@ ABRC).

**CASPIAN TERN** – The six at Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, on 23 September (Larry Gardella) set a maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain.

**FORSTER'S TERN** – One was at Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, on 10 September (Larry Gardella).

**BRIDLED TERN** – Uncommon on the Gulf, two records came from the MP 252 Platform, one immature on 27 August and three on 13 September (B. Mac Myers; @ ABRC).

**SOOTY TERN** – Rare but expected on the Gulf, B. Mac Myers reported two adults from the MP 252 Platform on 13 September.

**BLACK SKIMMER** – The 930 counted by Steve McConnell on the Mobile Causeway, *Baldwin*, on 12 October represented a good number.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – This species' ability to expand its range is well-known, so perhaps the single observed at the MP 252 Platform on 12 October (B. Mac Myers) was not too unexpected.



- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – This western species is uncommon-rare in our area, but apparently increasing. Bob Duncan had a flock of 35, one of the largest local concentrations ever, at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 21 October. Charles Kahn and Bob Duncan had a single at Gulf Breeze 22-29 November. At Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, Bill Summerour recorded 12 on 30 October. Steve McConnell had three at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, on 4 November.
- GREATER ROADRUNNER** – Lucy and Bob Duncan submitted details of their conversation with Max Griggs and J. D. Barber of Barrineau Park, *Escambia*, who saw a Greater Roadrunner at Mr. Griggs' residence on 18 August. While the Duncans are convinced that these gentlemen did indeed see a roadrunner, its origin is questionable. See article in this issue.
- BURROWING OWL** – One was seen at Foley, *Baldwin*, on 5 August for the 17<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (Duane Miller; @ ABRC).
- SHORT-EARED OWL** – Regular at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, Steve Seibert reported one on 15 November. An injured bird was found at Perdido Key, *Escambia*, and was brought to Wildlife Rescue on 17 November. Ed Case identified it on 22 November as a bird of the Caribbean race. This was the 12<sup>th</sup> area record.
- BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** – At Cantonment, *Escambia*, a bird returned on 12 September to the Bev Kenney feeder for the sixth year (*vide* Fred Bassett)!
- CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** – An immature male at Pinson, *Jefferson*, produced the first of a remarkable number of records for this species in Alabama and the WP during the fall and winter seasons. This bird was banded on 19 November for the ninth state record (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Sue Adams, m.ob.; @ ABRC; ph.). The 10<sup>th</sup> Alabama record was established on 21 November at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, by a first year bird that was banded (Fred Bassett, Donna Stanton; @ ABRC; ph.).
- BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** – The fifth Alabama record came from Mobile, *Mobile*, on 29 November, where an adult female was banded (Fred Bassett, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Donna Bullard; @ ABRC; ph.). A first year female arrived at a feeder at the Beth Lucas residence in west Pensacola, *Escambia*, around 19 November and was banded on 30 November by Fred Bassett for a possible second state record (@ FOSRC; ph.). The bird remained until 17 February and was observed by over 100 people.
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** – An adult male at Chapman, *Butler*, on 2 August, was early (Fred Bassett, Charles Kennedy, Betty Black).
- ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** – The 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama record was established by

the banding of an immature male at Midland City, *Dale*, on 16 November (Fred Bassett, Gus Scheve; @ ABRC; ph.)

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** – On 18 September, one was seen on the TVA Reservation, Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, where it is rare but regular (Damien Simbeck, Phyllis Nofzinger). Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, is another site where this species is rare but regular in fall. Bill Summerour had one there on 26 September. On 5 October, Carolyn Snow had another single at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, where it is rare.

**YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** – On 2 September, one was seen at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, where it is rare but regular (Steve McConnell, Ben Garmon). The TVA Reservation, Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, is another site where this species is rare but regular in fall. Damien Simbeck had one there on 12 September. On 5 October, Larry Gardella had a calling single at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, where it is rare.

**ALDER FLYCATCHER** – Ben Garmon had two calling singles for the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama records (@ ABRC). The first record was on 24 August along the Little Cahaba River, *Shelby*, while the second record was from the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 24 September.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** – A calling bird was noted at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 12 September for the 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (Larry Gardella; @ ABRC).

**LEAST FLYCATCHER** – The four seen at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 27 September, was a good number (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

**SAY'S PHOEBE** – Only the third Alabama record, one was observed at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 15 October by Mary Anderson and Tom Brindley (@ ABRC).

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** – Rare on the Alabama coast in fall, an immature male occurred on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, on 14-16 October (Kenny Nichols, m.ob.; ph.; v.t.). Casual in the WP, three individuals (an adult male, an immature male, and a female) were at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, between 10 October-29 November (Bob Duncan, m.ob.).

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** – Rare but regular in the WP, two individuals were observed this fall. The first was noted by Lenny Fenimore at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 11 September. This juvenal-plumaged bird was carefully studied at close range between 27 October - 25 November (Ed Case, Bob Duncan, Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow). The second individual was an adult seen at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 29 October (Bob Duncan). Also rare along the Alabama coast, one was banded at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*,



on 18 October (J. Farrington, C. Varian, D. Seaman *et al.*; ph.). Also at Ft. Morgan, Bill Summerour and Dean Cutten had a single on 20 and 28 October.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** – The first or second record of this species Alabama caused much excitement during the fall meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society. One was photographed and videotaped at the Shell Mounds, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 13 October (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Jeff Wilson, m.ob.; v.t.; ph.; @ ABRC).

**CASSIN'S KINGBIRD** – One seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 17 October established the second record for the area and the third for Florida (Lenny Fenimore, Don Ware, Lucy Duncan *et al.*; @ FOSRC).

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** – Rare in the WP, one was recorded at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 26 November (Bill Bremser).

**GRAY KINGBIRD** – The individual seen 18 October at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, set a new record fall departure date (by three days) (Merilu Rose, Rufus Rose).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – Rare anywhere in our area, an immature was noted on 2 September at Cherokee, *Colbert* (Ned Piper, Moez Ali).

**NUTMEG MANNIKIN** – Numbers of these exotics continue to appear at feeders in east Pensacola, *Santa Rosa*, first appearing about two years ago (*vide* Bob Duncan).

**BELL'S VIREO** – The seventh and eighth area records for the WP came from Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 15 September (Bob Duncan), and Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, on 16 September (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan).

**BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – A single at Florence, *Lauderdale*, on 1 November was late for the area (Tom Haggerty).

**WARBLING VIREO** – This is a rarely recorded migrant in our area, so four Alabama records were unusual. The first was from the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, on 2 September (Steve McConnell). Greg Jackson and Debra Jackson had two records, one at Lake Purdy, *Shelby*, on 17 September, and another at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 27 September. The latest record came from Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, on 12 October (Larry Gardella).

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** – One was found at Lake Purdy, *Shelby*, on 17 September, early in the Mountain Region (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson). Another early record of three birds came from the Tennessee Valley at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 18 September (Damien Simbeck, Phyllis Nofzinger). Late for the Tennessee Valley were three at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 22 October (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**BROWN CREEPER** – One was early on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 19 October (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**SEDGE WREN** – Bill Summerour found a dead individual at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 26 September for an early record.

**MARSH WREN** – Tom Haggerty observed two individuals of this locally rare migrant, one at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 26 September, and the other at Florence, *Lauderdale*, on 8 October.

**GRAY CATBIRD** – The banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5-21 October produced a good total of 1,558 (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*).

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** – An adult male on 13 August at Madison, *Madison*, was early for the Tennessee Valley (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten). Two-four were seen at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, on 16 September, where this species is uncommon (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** – Several reports of late migrants were received. Greg Harber had one on 4 November in Birmingham, *Jefferson*; Lorna West had three on 5 November at Opelika, *Lee*; Keith McMullen had two in *Okaloosa*, Florida, on 21 November; and Tom Haggerty had one on 28 November at Florence, *Lauderdale*, for a new late date for the Tennessee Valley.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** – Early for the Tennessee Valley, one was at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 12 September (Damien Simbeck).

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** – A rare fall migrant in most of Alabama, Larry Gardella had one at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 14 September, and another at Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, on 23 September. The banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5-21 October produced a good total of nine (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*). Three at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 22 October, were late and a good number (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**YELLOW WARBLER** – During about a one-hour period on the morning of 13 August at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, Bob Duncan and Lucy Duncan counted 91 birds that were flying west. This phenomenon occurs every August and September. During these months there is a heavy concentration at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, and dozens can be seen on any given day each year.

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER** – Three late birds were reported, one at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 28 October (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten), one at Birmingham, *Jefferson*, on 4 November (Greg Harber), and another at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 5 November (Steve McConnell).

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** – Uncommon in fall migration, a



female was recorded from the MP 252 Platform, *Baldwin*, on 25 September (B. Mac Myers).

**YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER** – The second area record for the WP came from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 18 October (Bob Duncan).

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** – One was late at Auburn, *Lee*, on 3 November (S. Ducharme).

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** – One was late at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 22 October (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** – Latest for the Tennessee Valley (except for one winter record), two were at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 22 October (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**BLACKPOLL WARBLER** – One recorded from the MP 252 Platform on 27 September provided the ninth fall record for the Gulf Coast (B. Mac Myers).

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** – One at Madison, *Madison*, on 2 September furnished a late record for the Tennessee Valley (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).

**MOURNING WARBLER** – A rare fall migrant, two were noted this season. One was reported from the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, on 29 August (Greg Harber), and a late immature was at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 26 September (Tom Haggerty).

**WILSON'S WARBLER** – Larry Gardella's sighting of one at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 6 September was early and provided the sixth record for the Inland Coastal Plain. Three early birds were in the Tennessee Valley, one at Decatur, *Morgan*, on 10 September (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten), and two at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 11 September (Damien Simbeck). Two were seen 24–25 September at Opelika, *Lee* (Lorna West). A count of eight on 27 September set a new maximum for Alabama; six were seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, and two at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson). The banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5–21 October produced a good total of 37 (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*). Keith McMullen reported one from *Okaloosa* on 21 November.

**CANADA WARBLER** – Not often seen in fall migration in the Inland Coastal Plain, one was at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 24 September (Larry Gardella).

**CHIPPING SPARROW** – One juvenile was at the MP 252 Platform on 15 September (B. Mac Myers).

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** – Numerous fall records were followed by several winter records of this species that is uncommon along the Gulf Coast.

On 27 September, Greg Jackson and Debra Jackson had one at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, and two at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*. The banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5-21 October produced a total of four (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*). Other sightings at Ft. Morgan included one on 7 October (Venetia Friend *et al.*), and a maximum of six on 17 October (Bill Summerour). Two were on the East End of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 13 October (Steve McConnell, m.ob.). One was at Meaher SP, *Baldwin*, on 16 October (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds, Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten, Bill Summerour); at the MP 252 Platform, there were two on 20 October and one on 22 October (B. Mac Myers; ph.). The WP of Florida also experienced an "invasion," as witnessed by the following records: at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, one on 23 September (Don Ware, Bob McKenney), one on 5 October (Bob Duncan, Ed Case), one on 12 October (Don Ware, Bob Duncan, Ed Case, Alan Sheppard), one on 18 October (Bob Duncan), and two on 25 November (Bob Duncan, Will Duncan). At Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, there was one on 7-9 October (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, m.ob.) and one on 31 October (Lucy Duncan, Kay Marsh).

**BREWER'S SPARROW** – At Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, Bob Duncan and Lucy Duncan had one on 22 October for a possible first Florida record (@ FOSRC).

**LARK SPARROW** – Casual in August in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 10 August (Bob Duncan), and Merilu Rose and Lucy Duncan had one at the same site on 18 October. Uncommon on the Alabama coast, three was a good number at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 16 September and again on 17 October (Bill Summerour, m.ob.). Singles were seen at Ft. Morgan on 7 October (Venetia Friend) and 20 October (Bill Summerour). One at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, on 11 October was locally late (Dwight Cooley).

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** – Rarely detected during fall migration, one was at the MP 252 Platform on 20 October (B. Mac Myers).

**HENSLOW'S SPARROW** – Uncommon in Alabama at any season, or at least very difficult to find, the banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5-21 October produced two (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*), while a single was found at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, on 11 November (Charles Kennedy, m.ob.).

**LE CONTE'S SPARROW** – Rarely detected during fall migration, an early bird was at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, on 7 October (Paul Kittle *et al.*). Locally uncommon-rare, one was at Speigner, *Elmore*, on 28 November (Tommy Pratt, Shawn Reed).



- NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** – At the WTF, *Lowndes*, one was seen on 22 October (Pat Johnson) and two on 5 November (Larry Gardella *et al.*) to establish the seventh inland Alabama record and the second for the Inland Coastal Plain.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW** – Rare in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 9 October (Don Ware). One was early on 3 October at Madison, *Madison* (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten). The banding program at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, from 5-21 October produced a good total of seven (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, *et al.*). Two singles were reported from the MP 252 Platform, one on 19-21 October and one on 23 October (B. Mac Myers).
- SWAMP SPARROW** – The first September record for the WP, one was at Valparaiso, *Okaloosa*, on 16 September (Pat Baker).
- HARRIS'S SPARROW** – An adult was east of Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, on 26 November through the end of the period to establish the second Tennessee Valley and 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (Ned Piper, Moez Ali *et al.*; ph.; @ ABRC).
- LAPLAND LONGSPUR** – Considered rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, 40 at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 25 November was a good number (Fred Bassett, Pat Baker, m.ob.)
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** – This species is occasional in Alabama. One at Ft. Rucker, *Dale*, on 23 September established the fourth record for the Inland Coastal Plain (Kelly Gregory, Mark Gregory). The second November record for the WP was established by a first year male at a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 20-25 November (Charles Kahn, Betty Kahn, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan; v.t. by Brooks Atherton).
- BLUE GROSBEAK** – Two were late at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 5 November (Steve McConnell).
- PAINTED BUNTING** – Casual in November in the WP, a female-type bird was seen at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 30 November (Bob Duncan).
- DICKCISSEL** – A single on 31 August at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, was late (Paul Kittle).
- YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** – Rare and early for Alabama, a hatching-year male was at the MP 252 Platform on 26 August (B. Mac Myers).
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** – The first September record for the WP came from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 16 September (Don Ware).
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** – A potential first for Alabama came from the MP 252 Platform on 24 September - 25 October, where a female-type was photographed (B. Mac Myers, M. Nelson; @ ABRC).

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** – There are no documented records for Florida, so a first-year male that was videotaped may provide the first state record. It visited a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, from 22-30 November (Charles Kahn, Betty Kahn, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Johnny Peaden, Brooks Atherton, m.ob.; v.t.; ph.; @ FOSRC). This bird was joined by another first-year male on 26 November.

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## WINTER SIGHTINGS (DECEMBER 2000 – FEBRUARY 2001)

Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan

This report covers the period from December 2000 through February 2001 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (west of the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this article does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. All submissions of birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, must 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. For guidance, observers are encouraged to consult the Alabama Ornithological Society checklist. Reports should note conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

**Abbreviations and Italics:** County names are in italics and, except for the Florida counties of *Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton*, are in Alabama. “@” = subject to review by appropriate records committee; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “CBC” = Christmas Bird Count; “FOSRC” = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Ft. Walton Beach Sewerage Facility; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Walton* counties); “WTF” = Woerner Turf Farm.

**RED-THROATED LOON** – This is an expected but rare species on the coast during most years. Three individuals on 19 February at Fairhope, *Baldwin*, represented a good number (Bill Summerour). Another individual was on Pensacola Bay at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 27 January-12 February (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Ed Case, Alan Knothe, m.ob.). Two more individuals were reported from Destin, *Okaloosa*, 11 February (David Simpson and Murray Gardler).

**PACIFIC LOON** – Singles were seen by Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten, and m.ob. on 24 December at Guntersville, *Marshall*, and by Steve McConnell on 31 December at Perdido Pass, *Baldwin*, sites where this species is rare but regular.

**RED-NECKED GREBE** – While not on the official Florida list due to lack of

photograph or a specimen, there are over 40 reports. Three were reported this season from the WP. A first winter bird was seen 13-19 December at Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa Sound, *Santa Rosa*, by Bob Duncan, Ed Case, Lois Case, as well as some 50 additional observers (@FOSRC; ph. by Lois Case), for a fifth area record. A different individual was seen on Pensacola Bay at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, by Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Jan Lloyd, Alan Knothe, Jesse Knothe, m.ob. (@FOSRC), from 28 January-16 February. Also, an adult on 28 February at Destin Pass, *Okaloosa* (Alan Knothe).

**EARED GREBE** – This species is expected but uncommon on Mobile Bay in winter, so the 15 seen by Larry Gardella on 13 January at Mullet Point, *Baldwin*, was a good number.

**BROWN BOOBY** – Bob Reid reported three from Perdido Pass, *Baldwin*, on 30 December. Brown Booby is occasional in Alabama, casual in winter.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** – Casual in December in the WP, an adult was observed at Pensacola, *Escambia*, on 1 December (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Alan Sheppard).

**TURKEY VULTURE** – On the Waterloo CBC (*Colbert/Lauderdale*), the 110 recorded on 16 December represented a maximum for the Tennessee Valley Region. Most were seen at a single roost. Another maximum was set for the Gulf Coast on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, where 160 were recorded on 30 December.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** – An unusual number of sightings came from scattered locations in Alabama and the WP. A single bird representing the 20<sup>th</sup> local record was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 11 December (Don Ware, Bob Duncan, Ed Case, m.ob.). By 7 January there were nine birds that remained until 18 January. One bird first located in *Santa Rosa* on 16 December continued to 28 February (Bill Bremser, Greta Bremser, Becky McQueen, Rick Blom, Bryan Blasie). Three were located by Ned Piper and Walt Burch on the Waterloo CBC, *Colbert*, 16 December (rare in northwest Alabama). This species is also rare in winter on the Gulf Coast, but seven were seen on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, on 30 December (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Bill Summerour, Howard Horne *et al.*), and a single was on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, on 2 January (Bill Summerour, Linda Reynolds). This species is uncommon at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, so the 22 reported by Eric Soehren on 15 January represented a good number.

**SNOW GOOSE** – On the Waterloo CBC, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, on 16 December, 84 was a good number for northwest Alabama.



**ROSS'S GOOSE** – This species is rare but expected at Wheeler NWR, Alabama. Phil Tetlow and Betsy Tetlow had two at the refuge observation building, *Morgan*, on 22 December, while Sue Moske reported one from Limestone Bay, *Limestone*, on 3 January. Two additional records came from farther south. At the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, a single represented the fourth area record (@ FOSRC); seen on 20 December by David Simpson and on 7 January by Bob Duncan and Ed Case. Bob Duncan and Lucy Duncan had one on the Gulf Shores CBC at Bon Secour, *Baldwin*, on 30 December (rare on Gulf Coast).

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** – Damien Simbeck reported one from Donnegon Slough, *Colbert*, on 5 January. This species is rare in winter in north Alabama.

**SURF SCOTER** – Very rare inland in winter, especially in the Mountain Region, a single lingered at Fayette, *Fayette*, from 21 December-12 January (D. Dobbs *et al.*; ph.). Locally rare, Don Ware reported 20 on 5 January from *Walton*.

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** – This bay duck is expected but rare on the Gulf Coast. Larry Gardella had a single at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, on 13 January.

**BLACK SCOTER** – Another bay duck that is expected but rare on the Gulf Coast, a single was reported from Coden, *Mobile*, on the Dauphin Island CBC on 23 December (Bill Summerour).

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** – This species is rare anywhere in our area. It was reported from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 11 December-22 January (Don Ware). Bill Summerour had two at Fairhope, *Baldwin*, on 13 January and 20 February. Dick Reynolds and Linda Reynolds had a single female at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 15 January.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** – On the Waterloo CBC, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, on 16 December, the total of 113 was a good winter number for northwest Alabama.

**RUDDY DUCK** – Steve McConnell established a new maximum for Alabama with his count of 1,084 at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 18 February.

**OSPREY** – Rare in winter in north Alabama, a single was seen at Upper Bear Creek Reservoir, *Marion*, on 10 January (Damien Simbeck).

**BALD EAGLE** – An aerial survey of Pickwick and Guntersville reservoirs in north Alabama (*Colbert/Lauderdale/Marshall*) on 9 January produced a good number of 75 (Keith Hudson, R. Stroud). Locally rare, an adult was recorded south of Montgomery, *Montgomery*, on 11 August by Fred Bassett and Jayne Rushin. Three adults, including two at a previous nest site, were seen at Heiberger, *Perry*, on 15 January (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).

- GOLDEN EAGLE** – Rare and irregular anywhere in Alabama, this species was reported from two localities this winter. Tom Brindley and m.ob. reported two-three below Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, between 6-26 January, and a report of a single came from Willow Springs, *Montgomery* (fide T. Oliver; ph.), on 10 December.
- CRESTED CARACARA** – A potential first record for Alabama (@ ABRC), one was videotaped in southern *Baldwin* on 19 February (David Plumb). See article in this issue.
- MERLIN** – Three reports of this falcon, rare in winter for inland Alabama, were received. Steve McConnell had one at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 9 February, and another at Speigner, *Elmore*, on 23 February. The third report of a single came from Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, on 7 January (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).
- PEREGRINE FALCON** – A second falcon that is rare in winter for inland Alabama, Tommy Pratt and Shawn Reed had one at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, on 22 December, and Larry Gardella had one at Speigner, *Elmore*, on 25 February.
- PRAIRIE FALCON** – The third Alabama record (@ ABRC) came from below Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, where one was observed 6-20 January (Tom Brindley, m.ob.).
- SANDHILL CRANE** – Reflecting the overall increase of this species in the East, reports came from several scattered localities. Bob Reid reported the species from *Walton* on 10 December, while Patrick Gault reported 25 birds from the same county on 7 January, an all-time maximum in the area. David Chaffin reported two from Stevenson, *Jackson*, on 10 December; not often reported from this site, though it may be regular because it is in the main flight path of eastern migrants. A single was seen at Smithsonia, *Lauderdale*, on 16 December by Bill Rogers and Larry Derrick (locally rare). A new maximum for Alabama was set at Limestone Bay, Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, where 160 were reported on 28 December (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten). This flock was observed by many observers throughout the period. Robert Reed and Pat Reed saw four birds near Tallassee, *Lee*, on 31 December and 3 February (locally rare).
- SNOWY PLOVER** – Uncommon in the WP, three reports of this species were received: 10 on 9 December at Navarre Flats, *Santa Rosa* (Peggy Baker, m.ob.), seven on 23 December at Big Lagoon, *Escambia* (Bill Bremser), and a good total of 34 on 7 February at Santa Rosa Island, *Santa Rosa* (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Ed Case).



- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** – At the mouth of Bayou Grande, Pensacola, *Escambia*, one bird was present from 14-23 December, 16 were seen by 26 December, and a few were still present as of 15 February, for the first December and January records as well an all-time maximum for the area (Ann Forster, Dan Forster).
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER** – Rare in winter on the Inland Coast Plain, one was recorded from Hope Hull, *Montgomery*, on 30 December (Larry Gardella).
- SANDERLING** – Only the second winter inland record for Alabama, one was seen at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 4 February (Dean Cutten, Raelene Cutten).
- DOWITCHER SP.** – Eight in basic plumage, probably Long-billed, were rare for the Tennessee Valley in winter at Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, on 16 December (Greg Jackson).
- JAEGER SP.** – Two individuals from separate sites on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, were reported on 30 December (Dwight Cooley, Steve McConnell, Don Ware).
- LAUGHING GULL** – This species is rare but regular inland. One adult was reported from Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale*, on 21 December (Tom Haggerty). The five adults in basic plumage seen at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 19 January, set a maximum number for winter in north Alabama (Dick Reynolds, Steve McConnell, m.ob.).
- FRANKLIN'S GULL** – One record came from Florence, *Lauderdale*, on 9 December (Tom Haggerty). A first winter bird, first reported in November, continued at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, from 5-15 December (Bob Duncan, Don Ware, m.ob.).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** – Rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley and apparently slowly increasing, one adult was reported from Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 12 January (Dick Reynolds, L. West, Steve McConnell *et al.*; ph.), and a first year bird was seen at Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, on 1 February (Damien Simbeck).
- GLAUCOUS GULL** – Rare in Alabama, one immature was at Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 19 January (Dick Reynolds, m.ob.; ph.).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** – This species is rare in the WP, and Bob Duncan observed a first winter bird at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, on 3 February, for the first local record in five years.
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** – Shawn Reed reported one on 17 February from Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, for the 14<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (@ ABRC).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – This species continues to fill in its range,

as evidenced by the report of one from Winfield, *Marion*, on 6 February (Jud Johnston).

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – An uncommon-rare species in our area that is being seen with increasing frequency along the Gulf Coast. Flocks of 16 were seen at both Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 10 December (Bob Duncan) and in *Okaloosa* on 18 December (Alan Knothe *et al.*). On 30 December, the Gulf Shores CBC in *Baldwin* had a good total of 18.

**HUMMINGBIRDS** – Astonishing numbers of wintering hummingbirds were banded by Fred Bassett and Bob Sargent of the Hummer Bird Study Group from December–February in the WP, including 30 Rufous, 12 Black-chinned, 11 Ruby-throated, two Calliope, one Buff-bellied, and one Broad-tailed (*vide* Bob Duncan).

**BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** – One adult female was banded and photographed at Mobile, *Mobile*, on 27 December for the 11<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (Fred Bassett, J. Hartley; @ ABRC).

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** – Individuals of this species, unknown in the WP until 1989, were banded by Fred Bassett on 13 and 30 December at the residences of Veronica Klosiewski and Jan Moomaw, respectively, in Niceville, *Okaloosa* (@ FOSRC), to establish the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> local records. The latter bird was present until 28 February. An immature male banded by Fred Bassett and C. Saunders on 27 December at Mobile, *Mobile*, provided the 11<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (ph.; @ ABRC). A female banded by Fred Bassett and C. Stickney on 12 January at Montrose, *Baldwin* (ph.; @ ABRC), established the 12<sup>th</sup> Alabama record.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** – At a feeder at the residence of Beth Lucas and Bill Lucas in west Pensacola, *Escambia*, a first year female arrived around 19 November, remained until 17 February, and was observed by over 100 people (banded by Fred Bassett; ph.; second possible Florida state record; @ FOSRC). The third possible Florida state record was provided by a female at a feeder at the residence of Nan Estes and Gene Estes in Niceville, *Okaloosa*, on 24 December that was observed by Charles Parkel, Jr., and Robert McKenney, Jr. (@ FOSRC).

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** – Bob Duncan had not seen this species in the WP in about 10 years, so his sighting of one at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 12 February was noteworthy.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** – An adult male and adult female, present at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, in October and November, continued 5-19 December (Bob Duncan, Lenny Fenimore, Pat Baker). An adult female, perhaps one



of the same individuals just noted, was seen at the same site on 27 February (Alan Knothe) and continued through the end of the winter period. This species is casual in the WP.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** – An individual first seen in October at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, continued 15-20 December (Don Ware, Bob Duncan, Alan Knothe, David Simpson). This species is now rare but regular in the WP. Another bird, probably a different individual, was seen at the same site 28 February (Don Ware) and 1 March (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** – Rare in December in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 5 December (Bob Duncan), and another was noted 18-20 December (Bill Bremser, Don Ware, m.ob.).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – Rare in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 5 December (Bob Duncan), and two birds were seen at the same site on 19 December (Buck Cooper, Linda Cooper).

**HORNED LARK** – This species is rare on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama, but Tommy Pratt and Shawn Reed had four at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, on 22 December.

**TREE SWALLOW** – Rare in winter on the Inland Coastal Plain, two were late at Speigner, *Elmore*, on 2 December (Larry Gardella, Pat Johnson, Tommy Pratt *et al.*).

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** – Charles Parkel, Jr., had one at Niceville, *Okaloosa*, on 18 December for a third December record (@ FOSRC).

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** – Bob Reid reported one from the Perdido Pass area, *Baldwin*, on the 30 December Gulf Shores CBC for the ninth winter record for Alabama.

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** – One reported from *Covington* on 24 December represented a rare inland winter record (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow, S. Adair).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** – Rare in Alabama in winter, the eighth and ninth records came from the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, on 30 December. Bob Sargent and Martha Sargent had three at one site, while James Peavy and T. Weems had a single at another site.

**PALM WARBLER** – A remarkable total of 374 from the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, on 30 December, set a new maximum for Alabama (previously 200+).

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** – Larry Gardella found one at Wing, *Covington*, on 14 January for the sixth inland winter record.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** – Casual in December in the WP, several records of

singles were received: 4-7 December, Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa* (Ed Case), 9 and 12 December, Pensacola, *Escambia* (Lynn Gould and James Pfeiffer, respectively), and 18 December, *Okaloosa* (Pat Baker; @ FOSRC). The ninth winter record for Alabama came from Foley, *Baldwin*, on 30 December (Phil Tetlow, Betsy Tetlow), as part of the Gulf Shores CBC.

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** – Elberta Reid saw an individual in the Perdido Pass area, *Baldwin*, while participating in the Gulf Shores CBC on 30 December, to establish the 11<sup>th</sup> winter record for Alabama

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** – One was observed at Florence, *Lauderdale*, between 25 December-7 January for the 16<sup>th</sup> Alabama record (Tom Haggerty, m.ob.; ph.; @ ABRC).

**SUMMER TANAGER** – Three winter records of this species, casual in December in the WP, were received. One adult female was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, on 11 December (Bob Duncan), and another female was at Pensacola, *Escambia*, on 12 December (Bob Sargent, Fred Bassett). A male was at Niceville, *Okaloosa*, on 18 December (Charles Parkel, Jr.; @ FOSRC).

**WESTERN TANAGER** – Casual in the WP, one female was tallied on the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, on 16 December (Phil Tetlow, James Pfeiffer).

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** – Winter records for the WP came from the same two sites where this species was observed in fall. One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 5 December-4 January (Bob Duncan, Don Ware, Ed Case, *et al.*), for the second December record for the area. One was at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, on 9 January (Bob Duncan). In Alabama, this species is occasional in winter on the Gulf Coast. On the Perdido Bay CBC, Bob Duncan and Lucy Duncan had one near Lillian, *Baldwin*, on 23 December. On the Gulf Shores CBC, the Duncans had one at Bon Secour, *Baldwin*, on 30 December. At the WTF, *Lowndes*, Larry Gardella, *et al.* found two on 1 January for the second inland winter record for Alabama (ph.).

**LARK SPARROW** – Rare in winter in Alabama, two records of singles came from the Gulf Coast, the first at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 2 January (Robert Leier, Lauren Fregeau), and the second at the East End of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, on 5 February (Gavin Bieber).

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** – Casual in winter in the Tennessee Valley, two were located at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, the first on 3 February (Paul Kittle) and the second on 18 February (Paul Kittle, Ned Piper, Moez Ali). Uncommon-rare in winter in inland Alabama, one was found at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 18 February (Larry Gardella, Pat Johnson).

**LE CONTE'S SPARROW** - Locally uncommon-rare, one was at Speigner,



*Elmore*, on 2 December (Larry Gardella *et al.*), while two were at the same site on 15 January (Larry Gardella). One was at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 8 December (Pat Johnson, m.ob.). Two were recorded from Seven Mile Island WMA, *Lauderdale*, on 3 January (*vide* Bill Rogers).

**FOX SPARROW** – Rare in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, from 20 December-13 January (Alan Knothe, Bob Duncan *et al.*; @ FOSRC).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** – A single was at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, on 22 December (Tommy Pratt, Shawn Reed), and one was at Speigner, *Elmore*, on 6 January (Pat Johnson); this species is rare in winter for inland Alabama. Casual in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 15 December (Don Ware, Lydia Dougherty).

**HARRIS'S SPARROW** – An adult, first seen on 26 November east of Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, continued through 11 December (Ned Piper, Moez Ali *et al.*; ph.; @ ABRC).

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** – The 50+ seen at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 4 February was a good number (Steve McConnell).

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR** – Rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, the 200+ seen at the WTF, *Lowndes*, on 3 December was an excellent number (Larry Gardella, Pat Johnson). Steve McConnell had three at an unusual site south of Guntersville, *Marshall*, on 17 December. At Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, where this species is uncommon, there were 50+ on 24 December (Eric Soehren, Ned Piper).

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** – An immature male visited a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 13 January-3 February (Pat Taylor, Fred Bassett).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** – The 15<sup>th</sup> WP record came from Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, on 3 and 11 December, where an adult female was observed by Peggy Baker and Bob Duncan, while the 16<sup>th</sup> WP record came from the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, on 20 December, where a female was observed by Alan Knothe and David Simpson (@ FOSRC).

**INDIGO BUNTING** – Rare in winter in Alabama, two records were received. One was near Lillian, *Baldwin*, on the Perdido Bay CBC on 23 December (Lucy Duncan). Another was in *Baldwin* at Foley on 29 December (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent).

**PAINTED BUNTING** – Also rare in winter in Alabama, one female was reported from Foley, *Baldwin*, on 29 December (E. Barnett), and one female-type was reported from Belle Fontaine, *Mobile*, from 26-30 January (J. H. Rabby).

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** – Casual in the WP, the first February record came from a feeder in Navarre, *Santa Rosa*, on 28 February, where

## ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

an adult male was observed by Don Marshall and Alan Knothe.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** – Uncommon in the Tennessee Valley, 50 were at Donnegon Slough, *Colbert*, on 5 January (Damien Simbeck). On 6 January, five were below Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, where this species is rare this far east in the Tennessee Valley (Tom Brindley *et al.*). The 100 reported near Moulton, *Lawrence*, on 5 February (Damien Simbeck) was a good number.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** – Rare in winter in the WP, an immature male was recorded on the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, on 16 December (Ann Forster, Dan Forster, Alan Sheppard).

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** – A first-year male, first seen 22 November and potentially the first state record for Florida, continued through 30 December at a feeder at the residence of Charles and Betty Kahn in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, (m.ob.; v.t. by Brooks Atherton; @ FOSRC).

**RED CROSSBILL** – Along the Pinhoti Trail near Coleman Lake, Talladega National Forest, *Cleburne*, Steve McConnell had 11 on 18 February. This species is rare but regular at this site.

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## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Below are brief summaries of some recent publications from the scientific literature. The summaries are intended to bring the findings of ornithological research conducted in Alabama and in northwest Florida to a larger audience.

**Enhancing Bachman's Sparrow habitat via management of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.** S. Plentovich, J. W. Tucker, N. R. Holler, G. E. Hill 1998. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 62:347-354. This research was conducted on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and was done to help determine if management methods that are used to enhance Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat also provide habitat for Bachman's Sparrows. Bachman's Sparrow populations have been declining since the 1930's, and the species has become rare and locally distributed. Results indicated that areas that are suitable for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are not always suitable for Bachman's Sparrows. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are more tolerant of a hardwood midstory and do not require a dense ground cover of grasses and forbs. Bachman's Sparrows, however, preferred areas with sparse midstory vegetation and a dense ground cover of grasses and forbs. The authors concluded that frequent (3-5yrs) prescribed burning of Red-cockaded habitat early in the growing season would help develop and maintain a dense herbaceous ground cover that would also provide suitable habitat for Bachman's Sparrows. [Department of Biological Sciences, 331 Funchess Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849] — TMH.

**The importance of longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and hardwood forests for breeding birds in the Talladega Mountains, Alabama.** G. E. Hill. 1998. *Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science* 69: 206-222. The Talladega Mountains of eastern Alabama form the extreme southwest extension of the Appalachian Mountains and this research focused on the bird-habitat relationships of this area. Specifically the study compared breeding birds among four dominant upland habitat types: (1) "Hardwood Sites" that were dominated by oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and American beech (*Fragus grandifolia*), (2) "Mixed Pine/Hardwood Sites" that had primarily loblolly pines (*Pinus taeda*), but also shortleaf (*P. echinata*) and longleaf pines (*P. palustris*), as well as various hardwood species, (3) established "Longleaf Sites", and, (4) "Regeneration Sites" that had been recently cut and replanted within the previous 3-7 years in longleaf pines. A total of 209 point counts was conducted and the mean number of bird individuals and bird species (i.e., species richness) was compared among the habitat types. In addition, the vegetation of the habitat types was quantified by measuring the proportion of pine, tree density, and tree diameter at breast height at sampled sites. Further, a comparison was made between the point counts of the Talladega Mountains hardwood forests and those of a previous study in the hardwood forests of Bankhead National Forest (70 miles northwest of Talladega Mountains).

Results indicated that the mean number of bird individuals and species richness

differed significantly among some of the habitat types. For example, the Regeneration Sites and the Longleaf Sites had a higher mean species richness and mean number of individuals than the Hardwood Sites. Specific bird species distribution comparisons among sites found that the distribution of Carolina Wrens, Carolina Chickadees, and Northern Cardinals did not differ among the habitat types, but that Scarlet Tanagers and Red-eyed Vireos were more often found in the Hardwood Sites than the other sites. Indigo Buntings and Eastern Towhees were found more often in the regeneration sites and less often in the Hardwood Sites than expected by chance. Further, Prairie Warblers were abundant in both Longleaf and Regeneration Sites, but nearly absent from the Hardwood and Mixed Pine/Hardwood Sites. Pine Warblers were abundant in the Mixed/Pine Hardwood and Longleaf Sites, but were not present in the Hardwood Sites. Summer Tanagers were equally abundant in Regeneration, Mixed/Hardwood, and Longleaf Sites, but were less common in the Hardwood Sites. The proportion of pine in the Hardwood Sites and the Mixed Pine/Hardwood Sites affected the distribution of some species. For example, Scarlet Tanagers and Red-eyed Vireos declined significantly as the proportion of pine in a site increased, whereas, the numbers of Carolina Chickadees, Indigo Buntings, and Pine Warblers increased significantly as the proportion of pine in a site increased.

A comparison of the Hardwood Sites in the Talladega Mountains with those of Bankhead National Forest found that there was an overall significantly greater number of individuals in the Bankhead National Forest sites. Acadian Flycatcher, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch, Worm-eating Warbler, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo were counted less often in the Talladega sites than the Bankhead sites. However, individual counts of species like Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Great Crested Flycatcher, Ovenbird, and Tufted Titmouse did not significantly differ between the two regions. The author concluded that Longleaf and Regeneration Sites had the greatest diversity and abundance of birds, but that the Hardwood Sites provided critical habitat for several species of Neotropical migrants. [Department of Biological Sciences, 331 Funchess Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849] — TMH



## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Manuscripts submitted for publication in *Alabama Birdlife* should conform to the guidelines listed below. Articles should include some facet of bird ecology, natural history, behavior, management/conservation, identification or other related topics. Refer to this issue or to recent past issues for examples. *Alabama Birdlife* is published twice a year. 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 a hard copy (Word or WordPerfect preferred). A manuscript may also be submitted over the Internet as a file attached to an e-mail addressed to: thaggert@unanov.una.edu.

Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced. A 8 1/2 x 11 inch page format should be used.

Digital images submitted over the Internet, black and white prints, color prints, and slides are acceptable.

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 full 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.

Spell out numbers ten and under and use numerals for numbers 11 and above.

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

Table titles should be in CAPS and placed above the tables.

Figure legends should be in lower case and placed beneath the figure.

Refer to the Literature Cited in past issues for the correct format.

Three or fewer 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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