

SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2005)

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This report covers the period from June through July 2005 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. “BBA” = Breeding Bird Atlas; “CE” = central east; “FWBSF” = Fort Walton Beach Spray Fields; “m. ob.” = many observers; “ph.” = photographed; “NF” = National Forest; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – The third WP record was marked by 11 seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 June (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown *et al.*).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Twenty-four inches of rain in April produced a large temporary wetland at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*. Two broods of this species were noted 27 June to the end of the period (Bob Duncan).

The following three records of diving ducks at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, were marked by apparently sick birds:

GREATER SCAUP – One 15 June – 5 July (Bob Duncan) (first June record for the WP).

LESSER SCAUP – One 15-27 June (Bob Duncan, Don Ware) (casual in summer in the WP).

BUFFLEHEAD – One 15 June – 5 July (Bob Duncan) (second June record for the WP).

RED-THROATED LOON – One in basic plumage was found on Ann Jordan Lake west of Alexander City, *Tallapoosa*, 3 June (Tommy Pratt, Charles Kennedy) (second summer record for Alabama and first in summer for inland Alabama).

COMMON LOON – Rare but regular in summer on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, 1-2 were in the Grand Bay area, *Mobile*, 21 May and 1 June (Mark Van Hoose), and one was at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 17 June (John Porter).

- PIED-BILLED GREBE** – This species is an uncommon and erratic breeder in Alabama. A pair, probably nesting, was in Alabaster, *Shelby*, 10 June (Jessica Germany, Ben Garmon), and a single was in northern Mobile Bay, *Mobile/Baldwin*, 8 July (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch).
- BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL** – Casual in the WP, one was seen on Pensacola Bay, *Santa Rosa*, 6 July in association with Tropical Storm Cindy (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, m.ob.).
- MASKED BOOBY** – An immature was found on the beach at Panama City, *Bay*, 2 June (Nancy Evou), taken to a wildlife rescue center for rehabilitation, and released (casual in northwest Florida).
- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** – Rare but increasing in summer for Alabama, three reports were received: 10, Guntersville, *Marshall*, 10 June (Hill Henry); 12, Demopolis, *Marengo*, 19 June (Don Self, Judy Self); and six, west Mobile, *Mobile*, 5-7 July (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*).
- ANHINGA** – Two were found at Alabaster, *Shelby*, 10 June (Jessica Germany, Ben Garmon) (rare in Mountain Region).
- MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** – Occasional inland after storms, one was spotted 6 July west of Mobile, *Mobile*, after Tropical Storm Cindy (Howard Horne). Two were at W.F. George Dam, *Henry*, 11 July after Hurricane Dennis (Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm) (fourth well-inland record for Alabama).
- LEAST BITTERN** – Helen Kittinger *et al.* found one at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 21 June (rare breeder in Mountain Region).
- GREAT BLUE HERON X GREAT WHITE HERON** – A bird with an all white neck except for a thin gray line down the throat, otherwise like Great Blue Heron and presumably a hybrid, was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 28-30 June (Bob Duncan).
- WHITE IBIS** – Uncommon in the Mountain Region, three reports were received: eight immatures (good number) near Harpersville, *Shelby*, 26 June (Greg Harber); one immature along the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River near Cleveland, *Blount*, 3 July (locally rare) (Dan Frederick, Raymond Odom; ph.); and one immature at Allgood, *Blount*, 7 July (Karen White, Phillip White; ph.). Rare in the Tennessee Valley, three reports were received: nine immatures (good number) at Raccoon Creek WMA, *Jackson*, 13 July (after Hurricane Dennis) (Damien Simbeck); one immature near Leighton, *Colbert*, 15 July (after Hurricane Dennis) (Damien Simbeck); and eight and nine immatures west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 22 and 23 July, respectively (Damien Simbeck, Paul Kittle, respectively).
- GLOSSY IBIS** – Along the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 28+ Glossy Ibises were identified, along with six *Plegadis* sp., 15 July (Howard Horne, Terry Hartley, Tom Siegwald *et al.*) (maximum count for Glossy Ibis in Alabama); a mixture of 45 White-faced Ibis, Glossy Ibis, and *Plegadis* sp. (maximum count for *Plegadis* spp. in Alabama) was recorded at the same site 16 July (Ben Garmon; ph.).
- WHITE-FACED IBIS** – Three-four (18th record and maximum for Alabama) were

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along the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 15-17 July (Howard Horne, Terry Hartley, Tom Siegwald *et al.*; ph.).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – The fifth record for the WP was marked by two seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21 June (Bob Duncan).

WOOD STORK – One engaged in courtship behavior, and probably nesting, was observed in the Brooklyn SE BBA block, *Coffee*, 25 June (Don Ware, Carol Ware). Tommy Pratt had 500+ (good number) in *Dallas/Perry*, 19 July.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Along Co. Rd. 21 near Autaugaville, *Autauga*, Bill Lipscomb counted 30+ on 28 July, while Greg Harber *et al.* counted 42 at the same site and an additional two along Co. Rd. 11 near Hunter, *Montgomery*, 30 July. The latter total of 44 established the second highest daily maximum for Alabama.

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Two (one adult, one unknown) in the Alabaster NW BBA block (Brantleyville), *Shelby*, 23 June (Greg Jackson) were rare for the Mountain Region (except for the extreme southeast portion).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK – A single seen at Bayley's Corner, *Mobile*, 28 May – 4 June (Mark Van Hoose) may have been nesting and represents the first June record for the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

AMERICAN COOT – Pairs observed at Gadsden, *Etowah*, 10 June (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent), and at Speigner, *Elmore*, 31 July (Larry Gardella) were probably nesting (rare and erratic breeder in Alabama).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – A single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 June (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown *et al.*) marked the second June record for the WP.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – Bob Duncan had 4-14 birds at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21-27 June (rare in June in the WP).

WILLET – Rare for inland Alabama, two records were received for 11 July after Hurricane Dennis: a single at Miller's Ferry, *Wilcox* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and four at a sod farm near the W.F. George Dam, *Henry* (Lorna West).

WHIMBREL – A single in the Isle aux Herbes NE BBA block, *Mobile*, 1 June (Mark Van Hoose) set a late departure date for Alabama.

MARbled GODWIT – A single was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 5 July (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown) (casual in July in the WP).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Eleven were at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 June (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown *et al.*) (casual in June in the WP).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 June (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown *et al.*) (second June record for the WP).

STILT SANDPIPER – Early by six days for the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 5 July (Bob Duncan, Cecil Brown).

DOWITCHER SP. – Lorna West found six at a sod farm near the W.F. George Dam, *Henry*, 11 July after Hurricane Dennis (uncommon for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama and early).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – A female and a juvenile at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21 June – 5 July (Bob Duncan, Don Ware) marked the second June record for the WP.

- LAUGHING GULL** – This species is rare for inland Alabama, so the following records, mostly after Hurricane Dennis in July, were notable: one first-year bird at Jackson, *Clarke*, 22 June (Helen Kittinger, Ty Keith); four-five at Miller's Ferry, *Wilcox*, 11 July (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson, Larry Gardella; ph.); 10 at W.F. George Dam, *Henry*, 11 July (Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm); one adult west of Opelika, *Lee*, 11 July (Paul Milotis); and one adult at Bear Creek, *Colbert*, 11 July (Stephen Dinsmore).
- CASPIAN TERN** – One was in the Miller's Ferry area, *Wilcox*, 11 July after Hurricane Dennis (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.) (rare for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama).
- ROYAL TERN** – There are 10 previous inland Alabama records, and the following records are the earliest for inland Alabama: two-three at Miller's Ferry, *Wilcox* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and one at W.F. George Dam, *Henry* (Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm), both records from 11 July after Hurricane Dennis.
- SANDWICH TERN** – One was found at Big Creek Lake, *Mobile*, 6 July after Tropical Storm Cindy (Howard Horne) (rare away from outer coast).
- SOOTY TERN** – Forty-five (maximum ever for the WP) were at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 6 July associated with Tropical Storm Cindy (Laura Catterton, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). The following five records from inland Alabama came after Hurricane Dennis: one adult at Miller's Ferry, *Wilcox*, 11 July (Greg Jackson) (six previous Inland Coastal Plain records); 17 (maximum for inland Alabama) at W.F. George Dam, *Henry*, 11 July (Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm, Lorna West) (six previous Inland Coastal Plain records); one found dying at Opelika, *Lee*, 11 July (Paul Milotis; ph.) (fourth record for the Mountain Region); five at Bear Creek, *Colbert*, 12 July (Damien Simbeck, Stephen Dinsmore) (second Tennessee Valley record); and three-five adults at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, 13 July (Damien Simbeck) (third Tennessee Valley record).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – Twenty were counted at Brantleyville, *Shelby*, 2 July (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) (new site, documents continued expansion).
- WHIP-POOR-WILL** – A Southern Piedmont Summer Bird Count in *Coosa/Tallapoosa*, 4-20 June (Larry Gardella, Greg Jackson *et al.*) produced a total of 27, a large number at the southern edge of the range.
- GRAY KINGBIRD** – A pair and one fledgling at Orange Beach, *Baldwin*, 18 July (Bailey McKay) marked the first recorded nesting in Alabama since 1997.
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – This species is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, and records from three new sites were received: one, possibly nesting, was in Madison, *Madison*, 2 June (Neill Cowles, Beth Wood); a pair was just north of Uniontown, *Perry*, 4 July (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton); and a pair and two fledglings were noted at Red Bay, *Franklin*, 17-19 July (Jud Johnston, Sylvia Johnston *et al.*). A pair, probably nesting, was at a previous nesting site near Scott Station, *Perry*, 19 July (Tommy Pratt).
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – A pair, probably nesting, was found at the southern mar-

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gin of the breeding range in Alabama in the Bucks Gap NW BBA block, Talladega NF, *Clay*, 25 June (Greg Harber).

TREE SWALLOW – Increasing as a breeder in Alabama but still rare, 30+ (with many newly fledged young) were found nesting at Gadsden, *Etowah*, 10 June (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent). One juvenile at Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair*, 7 July (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), was either an early migrant or evidence of local breeding.

CLIFF SWALLOW – A new maximum count for Alabama (1600+) was set 7 July after Tropical Storm Cindy, with 1550+ at the sod farms at Harpersville, *Shelby*, and another 50 at Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

HOUSE WREN – This species is a rare breeder in Alabama, and the BBA produced several records: one, probably nesting, in the Anniston NW block, *Calhoun*, 7 June (Laura Meeds); a pair, probably nesting, 23 June, and a single, possibly nesting, 24 June, at two different sites in the Roanoke NW block (Rick West); and a pair with young in the Anniston NE block, 28 June (Laura Meeds).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET – One singing in the Duncanville CE BBA block, *Tuscaloosa*, 16 June (Jeff Garner) marked the first June record for Alabama.

VEERY – One was found in the Winterboro CE BBA block, *Talladega*, 26 June (Bob Reid, Ty Keith, L. Wright) (casual in summer in Alabama).

CEDAR WAXWING – A pair and a nest were found in the Daviston CE BBA block, *Tallapoosa*, 19 June (Malcolm Hodges; ph.), to confirm the southernmost nesting for this rare breeder in Alabama.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER – Two were found in the Hackneyville CE BBA block, *Tallapoosa*, 7 June (Barry Fleming) (rare breeder this far south).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER – This species is an occasional breeder in Alabama. Two singing males were found in appropriate habitat in Skyline WMA east of Alabama Highway 79, *Jackson*, 9 June (Eric Soehren), although they were not found two weeks later.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – A fledgling confirmed nesting in the Buck's Gap NW BBA block, Talladega NF, *Clay*, 25 June (Greg Harber) (rare breeder this far south).

WORM-EATING WARBLER – One was singing in the Nymph CE BBA block, *Conecuh*, 25 June (Don Ware, Carol Ware) (rare breeder this far south).

OVENBIRD – A Southern Piedmont Summer Bird Count in *Coosa/Tallapoosa*, 4-19 June (Greg Harber, Malcolm Hodges) produced a total of five, a good number this far south.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – One, both seen and heard, was in the Hurricane CE BBA block, *Baldwin*, 6 and 13 June and 15 July (Claire Krusko) and was probably nesting (rare so far south as a breeder). Another single was in the Tanner Williams CE BBA block, *Mobile*, 5 July (Rick West) (very far south if breeding).

SCARLET TANAGER – A Southern Piedmont Summer Bird Count in *Coosa/Tallapoosa*, 4-19 June (Greg Jackson *et al.*) produced a total of 28, a high

number this far south and unexpectedly prominent.

LARK SPARROW – Several reports of this species, a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, were received from new sites: one south of Eutaw, *Greene*, 2 June (Jud Johnston); one east of Tallassee, *Tallapoosa*, 17 June (Bob Reed) (very rare breeder in the Mountain Region); one in the Deatsville CE BBA block, *Elmore*, 19 June (Larry Gardella); and one in the Mud Creek CE BBA block, *Jackson*, 1 July (Steve McConnell) (far east of other sites).

PAINTED BUNTING – This species is rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama. One was found at a new site in the Ansley CE BBA block, *Pike*, 18 June (Don Ware, Carol Ware).

PINE SISKIN – Two were at Tuskegee, *Macon*, 3 June (Tyler Hicks) (latest departure date for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama, ties latest departure date for Alabama).

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