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THE SEASON, Summer-Fall

June through November, 1973 in Alabama

Thomas A. Imhof, Editor

Early summer was wet and reproduction was late but adequate, as best as can be told. Fall was warm with occasional cool spells. The trees still had half their leaves by Thanksgiving, and the birds appeared sometimes as a confusing array of late lingerers and early arrivals.

Coastal banding again showed the Catbird to be the top woodland migrant, although Margaret Miller's top Sept.-Oct. birds on Dauphin were Yellowthroat, White-e Vireo, Swamp Sp, Catbird and Indigo Bunting. In coastal Baldwin County, mostly Fort Morgan, in late Oct., Imhof and Peavy found the following most common landbird migrants in order of abundance: Catbird, Swamp Sp, Myrtle W, Hermit Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Wood Thrush and White-e Vireo. Total birds banded both sides of Mobile Bay, 556 - Catbirds, 114.

Birmingham's ninth annual Fall Count on Oct. 6 with record coverage, 48 observers, 11 parties, 136 party hours, produced a record 126 species. The following species were recorded higher than any fall count on a per party hour basis: Red-cockaded Woodpecker (18 birds), Brn Thrasher, Robin, Solitary Vireo, Golden-wg W, Orange-cr W, Parula W, Blackburnian W, Chestnut-sd W, Bay-breasted W, Palm W, Rose-br Grosbeak. The following were recorded lowest of 9 years: Turkey Vulture, En Bluebird, L Shrike, Towhee, Field Sp.

The Mobile Bird Club's Fall Count on Dauphin Island Oct. 20 produced 96 species.

Waterfowl at Wheeler Refuge are up this year from last year same time. Atkeson reports present as of Dec. 3, 19,500 Canadas, 1100 Snows (both morphs) and 30,000 ducks. Wood Duck and Gadwall are up, Teal and Pintail down, Goldeneye not seen. The usual number of westerns showed on the coast, White-winged Dove, Wn Kingbird and Scissor-tail.

The following noteworthy species were reported this summer and fall:
 Red-thr Loon: Nov. 16, L Oliver, Phenix City (LAW) 5th local rec, 7th inland.
 Eared Grebe: June 13, sum. plum., Gulf Shores (REH), first in summer Alabama; Nov. 27 Dauphin (REH).
 Red-nk Grebe: Dec. 7, L Oliver (LAW) 4th Ala. rec, 7th inland.
 Pied-bl Grebe: July 22, Muscle Shoals (JVP, WRM) 14, indicates successful local breeding.
 CORY'S SHEARWATER: Sept. 10, just north of west end of Dauphin (TWa, JVP, WRM, mob) FIRST ALABAMA.
 Greater Shearwater: present vic Dauphin July, Aug. & Sept., photo July 25, Sept. 10, max 16 Aug. 14 (TWa, JVP, WRM, FEB mob).
 Brown Pelican: abundant near Dauphin May to Aug., max 400. June 17 (LRT) few after Sept.
 Cattle Egret: Aug. 11, Weiss L (WJC) earliest fall Mtr; Nov. 25, Wheeler (ENW) latest fall TV.
 Reddish Egret: Aug. thru Nov. 25, Dauphin 1 or 2 (LRT); Sept. & Oct. Gulf Shores (mob).
 Glossy Ibis: Sept. 3, Ashford, Houston Co., 12 (RJK, HHK, JLS) 1st fall LCP.
 Glossy Ibis: Sept. 18, Wheeler Refuge, (fide TZA) 1st fall TV.
 Glossy Ibis: Nov. 17, Fink's L, Calhoun Co. (WJC, B.A.S. mob) 1st fall Mtr.
 White Ibis: Aug. 26, 2 & Sept. 15, 4, L Purdy (HHK, KRK, HHW, ALM) becoming regular.
 Whistling Swan: Nov. 11, Wheeler Ref, 5 (fide TZA); Nov. 13, Fink's L, 1 (WJC) 3rd Mtr.

Black Duck: Sept. 19, Weiss L (WJC) earliest Mtr.
 Green-wg Teal: Sept. 8, L Oliver, 5 (LAW) earliest Pied.
 Blue-wg Teal: Aug. 9, 5 at L Purdy (B.A.S.); Aug. 9, L Oliver (LAW).
 Am. Wigeon: Aug. 17 at Weiss L (WJC) earliest Mtr, possibly summered.
 Redhead: Oct. 29 Fink's L (WJC) ties earliest Mtr.
 Ring-necked Duck: East Lake, Birmingham summered for 10th consecutive year (RRR, mob).
 Greater Scaup: Ft. Morgan, Oct. 23 (JVP, ICY) earliest Ala.
 Lesser Scaup: Muscle Shoals, July 22 (JVP, WRM) 2nd summer TV.
 Common Merganser: Nov. 3, L Oliver (LAW) 9 birds, earliest Pied.

Bald Eagle: Dauphin, Sept. 18 (B&HH); Wheeler, Nov. no dates (TZA).
 Peregrine Falcon: Sept. 19, Ft. Morgan (PFC, MLM, SG); Sept. 24, Marion (JVP, TW); Sept. 21, 26 & Oct. 10, Dauphin (SBH, REH, LRT).
 Merlin: Oct. 10, Jacksonville (WJC); Oct. 17, Fairhope, 3 (JDW).
 Bobwhite: all over Alabama Sept. & Oct. coveys held half-grown birds from late nestings; early clutches flooded out.
 Black Rail: June 18, L Shelby, Gulf Shores, calling late at night, probably bred (JVP).
 Am. Coot: East Lake, B'ham, nested 2nd year in a row, 3 chicks (RRR).
 Am. Golden Plover: Aug. 12, 2, Wheeler Ref. (DCH) 1st Aug. rec. Alabama.
 Black-b Plover: Oct. 20 L Purdy (DJH, BSH); Sept. 29 & Nov. 24 Weiss L (WJC), 3rd, 4th & 5th rec. Mtr.
 Com. Snipe: June 26 to July 21, 1-4 birds, Wheeler (DCH, mob), 1st June & July recs. Alabama.
 Com. Snipe: Aug. 18, Bussey's L, Russell Co. (WM, MF) earliest UCP.
 Knot: Sept. 2 & 3, Marion Hatchery (JRB, photo-JVP, LNP) exc for TV 1st inland rec.
 Pectoral Sandp: July 10, 5, Wheeler Ref (DCH) earliest TV; Nov. 10, Wheeler (MLB).
 White-rumped Sandp: July 18, 3 & Aug 12, 7, Wheeler Ref (DCH, JRW) earliest Ala.
 Baird's Sandp: May 13, 2, Dauphin (R&LD); July 25 to Sept. 6, 2-5 birds, Wheeler Ref, (DCH) 1st summer & fall recs. TV.
 Least Sandp: June 17 & 18, Alabama Point (MLM) 2nd summer rec. GCoast.
 Dunlin: Nov. 10, 106 in Limestone Bay, Wheeler Ref. (MLB) max inland; Nov. 24 Weiss L (WJC).
 Short-b Dowitcher: July 10, 4, Wheeler Ref (DCH) earliest TV; Nov. 10 there (MLB) late.
 Stilt Sandp: July 14, Wheeler Ref. (DCH) earliest Ala.
 Buff-br Sandp: Aug. 23, B'ham Airport (TAI) earliest Mtr; Aug. 28 & 29, Marion (JVP) earliest UCP.
 Sanderling: July 14, 18, 21, Wheeler, 4 birds (DCH) 1st inland July recs.
 Black-nk Stilt: Oct. 15, Cochrane Causeway (JLD) late.
 Wilson's Phalarope: June 17 & 24, Mary Lou Slough, Ala. Point (K&MB) 1st sum rec.
 Northern Phalarope: Sept. 10, 6 in flock 10 mi S of Dauphin (TAI, mob), earliest Ala., 2nd coast.
 Northern Phalarope: Oct. 13 & 14, Blakely I, Mobile (A&MN, VDH) 7th Ala., 3rd coast.
 Northern Phalarope: Nov. 13, Fink's L, Galhoun Co (WJC) 8th Ala., 3rd Mtr.

Pomarine Jaeger: Sept 10, 5 (2 ad) plus 2 jaeger sp., 10 mi S of Dauphin (TWa, mob) 3rd Ala. rec.
 Glaucous Gull: Oct. 22 & Nov. 27, Cochrane Causeway (REH, SBH) 5th & 6th recs. Ala.
 Laughing Gull: Nov. 19-21, Wheeler Ref. (DCH) 7th TV rec.
 Yellow-b Cuckoo: Nov. 5, Ensley, B'ham (TAI) 7th Nov. rec. Ala.
 Short-eared Owl: Nov. 20, Dauphin (REH, SBH) latest of 4 recs. on coast all fall.
 Chuck-w-widow: Oct. 24, Ft. Morgan (JVP, TW) ties latest Ala. (banded)

Gray Kingbird: scarce this year, late but not latest, Oct. 18, Fairhope (JDW).
 Great Crested Flyc: Oct. 26, seen & heard, Ft. Morgan (PFC, TAI) latest Ala.
 Acadian Flyc: Oct. 13, lower Russell Co. (H & TM) latest inland Ala.
 The Willow Flycatcher (FITZ-BEW) differs from the Alder Flycatcher (FEE-BEE-O) in

having a longer bill and more rounded wing, measurable in the hand such as in museum specimens and during banding. Thus far for Alabama, we have the following records of heard & measured.
 Alder Flyc: 6 recs., May 7-22 (TV, MTR, GC), 2 banded Sept. 6, 1966 (B'ham); heard DI Oct. 4
 Willow Flyc: June 5, 1965 (heard, B'ham); apparently regular in fall (B'ham and coast) Aug. 15 to Oct. 4, specimen Aug. 29 from Ft. Morgan.
 Tree Swallow: July 22, Muscle Shoals (JVP, WRM) exc for Mtr earliest Ala.
 Bank Swallow: Oct. 24, Mary Lou Slough, Ala. Point (TAI) latest Ala.
 Barn Swallow: coastal breeding population at Cochrane Causeway is now only 75 miles from the nearest inland breeding station at Millry.

Red-br Nuthatch: Sept. 12 & 19, Ft. Morgan & Gulf Shores (PFC, MLM, SG) earliest Ala.
 House Wren: June & July in Mtn. Brook, B'ham, a female built a nest (ELG, photo-KWG) 2nd breeding attempt, 3rd summer rec. for Ala.
 Catbird: A bird banded by TAI, Ft. Morgan, Oct. 1972 recovered in Pembroke, Ont. Sept. 1973.
 Robin: July 16 on Dauphin (G&JS)
 Swainson's Thrush: Oct. 27, Jacksonville (WJC) latest Mtr.
 Veery: Oct. 26, Ft. Morgan, banded (TAI) latest Ala.
 Golden-cr Kinglet: Oct. 17, Vestavia, B'ham (HBT) & Oct. 19, Dauphin (REH) early.
 Ruby-cr Kinglet: Sept. 24, B'ham (HHW) earliest Mtr; Sept. 15, Tuscaloosa (JCT) earliest UCP.
 Yellow-thr Vireo: Oct. 13, Tuscaloosa (JCT) latest UCP.
 Solitary Vireo: Nov. 22, Fink's L (WJC).

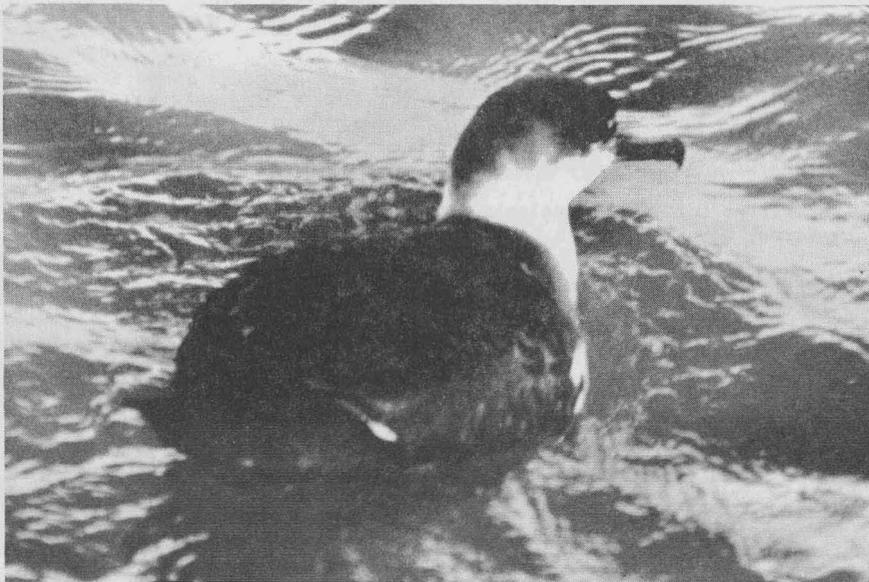
Prothonotary W: Sept. 8, Tuscaloosa (JCT) latest UCP; Oct. 6, B'ham Zoo (JVP, WRM) latest Mtr.
 Swainson's W: Oct. 6, Hoover, B'ham (RJK, JLS) latest Mtr.
 Swainson's W: Oct. 2, 8, 15, 18 Dauphin Island, banded (MEM).
 Swainson's W: Oct. 27, St. Andrew's Bay near Ft. Morgan, banded (JVP, TW) latest Ala.
 Blue-wg W: Sept. 29, Tuscaloosa (JCT) latest UCP.
 Brewster's W: July 11, Tensaw R near Mobile (REH) earliest fall Ala., 7th Coast.
 Tennessee W: Sept. 15, Tuscaloosa (JCT) earliest fall UCP.
 Myrtle W: Huntsville, June 9 & 17 (BGM, PS, MLB) 2nd sum. rec. Ala. Tuscaloosa, Oct. 7 (JCT) ties earliest UCP.
 Chestnut-sided W: June 10, Bankhead Forest, Bunyan Hill Rd (MLB, BGM) 3rd sum. rec. Ala.
 Prairie W: Oct. 8, Tuscaloosa (JCT) latest UCP; Oct. 27, Ft. Morgan (JVP, TW) latest Ala.
 Connecticut W: Sept. 11, Spring Hill, Mobile (MAG) earliest Ala.
 Mourning W: Dauphin, 4 banded Sept. 12, 14, 16 (MEM, REH); seen Oct. 19 (LPA, LRT) late.
 Yellowthroat: Nov. 10, Wheeler Ref. (MLB) late.
 Bobolink: Sept. 8, Tuscaloosa, 50-75 birds in 3 flocks (JCT) earliest fall UCP.
 Summer Tanager: Oct. 13, Tuscaloosa (JCT) latest UCP.

Blue Grosbeak: Oct. 18, Roberts Field, B'ham 2 (TAI) latest Mtr.
 Indigo Bunting: Oct. 27, Tuscaloosa, (JCT) latest UCP.
 Painted Bunting: Sept. 29 & Oct. 17, banded on Dauphin (REH) rare in fall.
 Vesper Sp: Oct. 13, Fairhope (A&MN, WG, JDW) earliest coast.
 Clay-colored Sp: Oct. 18, 2, Dauphin (REH), 12th rec. coast, 14th Ala.
 Dark-e Junco: Oct. 20, Tuscaloosa (JCT) earliest UCP; Oct. 23, Ft. Morgan, banded (JVP, TW).
 Fox Sp: Oct. 21, Roberts Fd, B'ham, netted bird banded Nov. 1, 1969 (TAI, JMI)
 Song Sp: summer thru Aug. 17, Weiss L (WJC); we now have summer recs. for 4 counties, DeKalb (breeds), Morgan, Jefferson, Cherokee; it probably breeds in all 4.

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Abbreviations: TV-Tennessee Valley, MtR-Mountain Region, Pied-Piedmont, UCP-Upper Coastal Plain, LCP-Lower Coastal Plain, GC-Gulf Coast, mob-many other birders, rec-record, L-Lake.

1036 Pike Road, Birmingham 35218



Photograph by Helen H. Kittinger;
courtesy of AOS slide collection committee

OFFSHORE TRIP INTO GULF OF MEXICO

September 10, 1973

Thomas A. Imhof

Through the courtesy of the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium on Dauphin Island and specifically Drs. William W. Schroeder and Dan C. Holliman and Boat Capt. Thomas Walker, six of us - Helen H. and Ricky Kittinger, Ann L. Miller, W. Roger Maner, James V. Peavy and Thomas A. Imhof - birded from the RV Pisces to at least 10 miles south of Dauphin Island on September 10, 1973.

We left Bayou La Batre about dawn, 6:00 a.m., passed just west of Dauphin, went at least ten miles south, turned east to the Ship Channel, followed it north into Mobile Bay, then into Mississippi Sound, and reached Bayou La Batre about 5:00 p.m. The sky was partly cloudy with occasional rain squalls and the

5-10 knot SW wind produced 4-foot swells. Use of binoculars and cameras was often difficult due to the choppiness, but this same wind brought some sea birds closer to shore, even into Mississippi Sound.

The best bird seen was CORY'S SHEARWATER, *Puffinus diomedea*, first record for Alabama and probably the entire Gulf of Mexico. This bird, in Mississippi Sound about 7:00 a.m., flew toward the boat and passed less than 10 yards to starboard (right). Field marks noted were its large size (larger than Greater Shearwater or Laughing Gull), uniformly dark brown upperparts including head, gradual shading on sides of head to white throat and white below, and large pale yellow bill. Walker discovered the bird, Maner and Peavy in the bow saw it well, the rest of us saw mostly the upperparts.

This species breeds in the Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Atlantic (Canaries, Azores), migrates west in fall to become common offshore from Newfoundland to the Carolinas August to November, and winters south to Brazil. To our knowledge it had not been recorded in the Gulf of Mexico, but it is certainly to be expected there.

Other marine species seen were: Greater Shearwater, 5 (photo, seen at least 4 times this August and September); unidentified shearwater, 1; Magnificent Frigatebird, 23 (photo); Northern Phalarope, 6 (earliest for state); unidentified phalarope, 2; Pomarine Jaeger, 5 (flock with 2 adults attacked Sandwich Terns - 3rd record for state); unidentified immature jaegers, 3; Herring Gull, 4; Ring-billed Gull, 20; Laughing Gull, 500; Royal Tern, 150; Sandwich Tern, 20; Least Tern, 2; Black Tern, 1000; hummingbird, 1 (halfway between Fort Morgan and Dauphin Island going west).

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FIELD NOTE: CLIFF SWALLOW NESTING IN COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA 1972-1973

James V. Peavy, Jr.

In July of 1972, Bob and Elberta Reid checked Cliff Swallows nesting in Colbert County. The results of their search indicated at least three different localities with active nests and one additional site with a probable nest. Localities and counts are as follows:

1. Natchez Trace Parkway bridge over the Tennessee River - 200+ nests, 110 birds counted.
2. Colbert Steam Plant bridge over Cane Creek - 28 nests with 22 birds.
3. Little Bear Creek at U.S. 72 - 3 nests with 26 birds.
4. Town Creek at Ala. 184 - 2 birds, nest not seen.

In July of 1973, Roger Maner and I surveyed this same general area; we found Cliff Swallow nests at six sites and birds at one additional site. Localities and counts are as follows:

1. Natchez Trace Parkway bridge - no significant change from 1972.
2. Colbert Steam Plant bridge at Cane Creek - 57 nests with 40 birds.
3. Spring Creek at U.S. 72 - 2 nests with 4 birds.
4. Town Creek at Ala. 184 - 1 nest, no birds.
5. Big Bear Creek at U.S. 72 - 5 nests with 10 birds.
6. Unnamed Creek on Colbert Co. Rt. 40 - 5 nests with 30 birds.
7. Colbert Co. Rt. 40 at Town Creek - 4 birds, no nests.