

**BARRED OWLS (*STRIX VARIA*) FLEDGED  
FROM NEST BOX IN MONTROSE**

Bill Summerour

For the past two years a pair of Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) has successfully fledged young from a man-made nest box in Montrose, near the home of Jack and Venetia Friend, on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay. The owls raised one owlet in 1989 (*Alabama Birdlife*, 1989), and in the spring of 1990, two young were fledged. This year Venetia managed to get a picture of the two fledglings posed on a limb outside her window (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Young Barred Owls fledged from nesting box on the property of Jack and Venetia Friend of Montrose. (Photo by Venetia Friend)

In 1988, Howard and Larry Smith, who have a cabin on Guntersville Lake, constructed a box for a pair of Barred Owls (*Alabama Birdlife*, 1988), and placed it in a tree behind their cabin. Within a few weeks an owl moved in, but it was never known for sure if the box was ever used for nesting.

Judging from these two cases, although admittedly not exactly a large sample, it appears that Barred Owls are quite responsive to man-made nesting boxes, especially in areas where natural cavities are probably scarce. It is encouraging to know that these owls, usually associated with swamps and river bottoms, can adapt to wooded suburban areas, at least where there is ample cover and they are provided nesting sites.

Anyone interested in owl boxes should contact Howard and Larry Smith, 804 13th Avenue, Jacksonville, AL 36265.

### Literature Cited

Smith, Larry. 1988. Barred Owls use nesting box. *Alabama Birdlife*, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 13.

Summerour, Bill. 1989. Barred Owls use box in Montrose. *Alabama Birdlife*, Vol. 36, No. 2, p. 15.

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## PREDICTING THE NEXT TEN SPECIES FOR ALABAMA

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What will be the next species to be added to the Alabama state list? This question was probably easier to answer in March of 1990 as Alabama anticipated the unwanted visit of the Shiny Cowbird. Not only did the state get its first record of this species, but it came in large numbers.

Now, what will be the next species to be added to the state list? Better yet, what will be the next ten species to be documented within the state's borders? I posed this question to seven of Alabama's more active birders and received a large variety of ideas. The rules they had to follow were as follows: 1) they could not choose a species on the Alabama Records Committee Review List, 2) they could not choose a species to be reviewed by the committee (Shiny Cowbird) and 3) they had to rank their choices from one to ten, with one being the most likely.

Of the 33 choices made, only two received first place votes. Twelve choices could be grossly viewed as western, ten as northern, five as South Florida specialties, three as Mexican, two as European, and one pelagic.

The Purple Sandpiper, an Atlantic Coast rock-loving shorebird, received three first place votes and was on everyone's top ten. This species has occurred on the Mississippi Coast the past three winters and on the Louisiana Coast the past two. Although Alabama lacks extensive rocky shores, as Harriett Findlay states, "It's time one occurred in Alabama on some riprapping shore."