

SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2003)**Paul D. Kittle, Greg D. Jackson, and Robert A. Duncan**

This report covers the period from June through July 2003 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. “BBS” = Breeding Bird Survey; “CE” = central east block of topographic quadrangle; “FOSRC” = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Fort Walton Beach Sewerage Facility; “NF” = National Forest; “ph.” = photographed; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, *Okaloosa*, and *Walton* counties); “WTF” = Woerner Turf Farm.

COMMON LOON – Singles were seen at Auburn, *Lee*, 8 June (Shelley Ducharme) and at the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 9 July (Eric Soehren) (rare in summer).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is an erratic breeder in Alabama. Two broods were observed near Leighton, Colbert, 7 July (Damien Simbeck).

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS – Two amazing reports of this species, both well described and convincing, were received but written details are pending for submission to FOSRC. The first bird was seen at leisure feeding on chum from a fishing boat nine miles south of the Alabama-Florida border, in Florida waters, 6 June (James Pfeiffer). The other report of a probable Yellow-nosed Albatross came from Blackwater Bay, an arm of Pensacola Bay, *Santa Rosa*, 2 July during or right after Tropical Storm Bill (Michael Wilson).

SOOTY SHEARWATER – Casual in the WP, five were reported from Ft.

Pickens, *Escambia*, 18 May (Jan Lloyd).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL – A bird brought in to the Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida in Fort Walton Beach 1 July (following Tropical Storm Bill) expired 3 July (Mary Coerver, Don Ware, Lenny Fennimore) (rare in WP).

BROWN BOOBY – Casual in the WP, a single sub-adult bird was at the mouth of Bayou Grande, Pensacola, *Escambia*, 5 July (Dan Forster).

NORTHERN GANNET – One found dead at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 6 July (Homer Singleton) and another single at the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 9 July (Eric Soehren) represented rare summer records.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT – Rare in summer on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama, one was found at Coffee Springs, *Geneva*, 29 May (Don Ware). An indication of the expanding population of this species in the eastern U.S. was the discovery of a large breeding aggregation in Alabama, with only one prior nesting (1990) in the state. Multiple nesting colonies were at North Sauty and South Sauty creeks, *Marshall/Jackson* in June (*vide* Keith Hudson), with 281 nests counted on Conner's Island alone.

GREAT BLUE HERON – A white morph individual, rarely seen in the WP, was noted at Destin, *Okaloosa*, 8-13 June (Charley Saleebe).

WHITE IBIS – Reports of two singles came from the Mountain region, where the species is rare: Alexander City, *Talladega*, 29 June (Linda Baker, Winston Baker), and north of Auburn, *Lee*, 5 July (Shelley Ducharme). Also rare in the Tennessee Valley, one was found near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6 July (Ned Piper *et al.*).

WOOD STORK – It was a banner season for this species in Alabama, beginning with a single early bird at Old Spring Hill, *Marengo*, 26 May (Don Self, Judy Self) and 40+ (good number so early) along Ala. Hwy. 183 northeast of Uniontown, *Perry*, 9 June (Duane Berger). Barry Fleming counted a state record 700 on 17 June between Marion and Prairie Eden, *Perry/Hale*, a number later exceeded (see below). Reports of singles came from: Waverly, *Lee*, 22 June (Shelley Ducharme) (rare in Mountain Region); east of Elberta, *Baldwin*, 3 July (*vide* Howard Horne), a bird that was found ill, died, and is now the first specimen from Alabama (University of South Alabama collection) (rare on Gulf Coast of Alabama); and Meltonsville, *Marshall*, 17 July (Dick Reynolds) (occasional in the Tennessee Valley). At the Williamson Cattle Co. ponds at Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 20 July, 750 were tallied (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) to establish a new maximum high for Alabama, replac-

ing the record set on 17 June (as described above).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – The Gulf Breeze Zoo has had free flying individuals of this species present since 1998, so the origin of the birds in the following records (first possible WP records) is questionable. One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 12 June (Perry Ping), and two flew by at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 26 June (Bob Duncan),

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Phil Berry found one at Tiger Point, *Santa Rosa*, 3 July to establish the first summer record for the WP.

SNOW GOOSE – Rare in summer in Alabama, one was seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 25 June (Howard Horne, Ben Garmon).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – One was at Prattville, *Autauga*, 6 June (Shawn Reed) (rare in summer).

RING-NECKED DUCK – Rare in summer in Alabama, single adult males were spotted at Casemore, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self, Judy Self) as well as near Leighton, *Colbert*, 15 July (Damien Simbeck).

HOODED MERGANSER – This duck is an erratic breeder in Alabama, so the following records are noteworthy: a female with four young at Bethsaida, *Franklin*, 30 May (Paul Kittle), and a female with eight young at Wende, *Russell*, 1 June (Barry Fleming).

RUDDY DUCK – A male in alternate plumage near Leighton, *Colbert*, 9 July furnished a rare summer record (Damien Simbeck).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Twenty-five was a good number for this species at the northern locale of Prattville, *Autauga*, 25 July (Tommy Pratt).

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Two immatures were noted at Brierfield, *Bibb*, 23 July (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) (rare in Mountain Region).

BALD EAGLE – Single adults were noted at two sites on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama, where the species is rare in summer: Old Spring Hill, *Marengo*, 26 May (Don Self, Judy Self), and Andalusia, *Covington*, 19 June (James Talbot). An adult and two immatures were recorded from the Mountain Region at Lake Martin, *Elmore/Tallapoosa*, 25 June (Linda Baker, Winston Baker) where the species is a rare breeder.

AMERICAN COOT – Rare in summer in Alabama, one was seen at Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 17 June (Barry Fleming), and two were spotted at Gallion, *Marengo*, 6 July (Don Self, Judy Self).

AMERICAN AVOCET – Two in alternate plumage were on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 26 June (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch; ph.) (occasional in June).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – One at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 2 July (Don Ware) was very early. A single was also early near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6

July (Ned Piper).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – Ned Piper found an early migrant near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6 July.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - One was early near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 July (Damien Simbeck).

WILLET – One was found at Eufaula Dam, *Barbour*, 1 July (Tyler Hicks), after Tropical Storm Bill (early if not displaced from the Florida coast; occasional on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama).

UPLAND SANDPIPER – Four early birds were found at the WTF, *Lowndes*, 20 July (Larry Gardella).

WHIMBREL – Two were photographed at Pensacola, *Escambia*, 5 June (Cheryl Bunch) (very rare in June in the WP). A single was early at Isle Aux Herbes, *Mobile*, 11 July (Eric Soehren).

MARbled GODWIT – One was found at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, 30 June – 1 July (Bob Duncan, Peggy Baker) (casual in WP).

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER – Very rare in June in the WP, an estimated 25 birds were found 3 June at Pensacola, *Escambia* (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

LEAST SANDPIPER - One was early near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6 July (Ned Piper). Eleven were found at Heiberger, *Perry*, 9 July (Harriett Wright, Alice Stevenson, Edith Hunt) (early record for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Very rare in June in the WP, an estimated 25 birds were found 3 June at Pensacola, *Escambia* (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

STILT SANDPIPER – A single in alternate plumage on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 25 June (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch; ph.) set the first June record for Alabama. Another was early near Leighton, *Colbert*, 15 July (Damien Simbeck).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Two were early near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 July (Damien Simbeck).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – Ten on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 9 July (Eric Soehren) set an early record for Alabama.

PARASITIC JAEGER – One was at Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 26 June (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch; ph.) (occasional in summer).

RING-BILLED GULL – Uncommon in summer in Alabama, a single was at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 10 June (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

CASPIAN TERN – The single found at Heiberger, *Perry*, 9 July (Harriett

Wright, Alice Stevenson, Edith Hunt) set an early record for inland Alabama. One near Leighton, *Colbert*, 17 July (Damien Simbeck) was also early.

COMMON TERN – Rare to occasional on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama, Tropical Storm Bill brought one to Eufaula, *Barbour*, 1 July (Tyler Hicks), while one was an early migrant at Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 26 July (Walt Chambers).

FORSTER'S TERN – Tropical Storm Bill preceded the appearance of two birds at Eufaula, *Barbour*, 1 July (Tyler Hicks) (occasional in summer on the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama).

BRIDLED TERN – Casual in the WP, five were at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 1 July, associated with Tropical Storm Bill (Bob Duncan).

SOOTY TERN – Six were seen flying during Tropical Storm Bill over Pensacola Bay at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 July (Lucy Duncan). The seventh inland record for Alabama and the first record for the Mountain Region were set by an adult bird found dead at Auburn, *Lee*, 3 July after Tropical Storm Bill (Julian Dusi; ph.; specimen to Auburn University; see p. 7 of this issue).

BLACK TERN – One at Lee County Public Lake, *Lee*, 1 July (Tyler Hicks) appeared after Tropical Storm Bill. A single at Hope Hull, *Montgomery*, 1 July (Larry Gardella) was early. One near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6 July (Ned Piper) set an early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley. Twenty-five at Guin, *Marion*, 31 July (Jud Johnston) was a good number for the Mountain Region.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Bob and Lucy Duncan hosted this species at their feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 June – 31 July. The occurrence of three adults and two juveniles on 26 July confirmed breeding at this locale. White-winged Dove was confirmed breeding earlier in the year in Pensacola, *Escambia*. A pair at Mobile, *Mobile*, 1 July (*vide* Howard Horne) was probably nesting (one previous Alabama nesting).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE – A single bird observed on 26 July at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, was considered a migrant (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). A pair at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 14-15 June (Jessica Germany, Mary Roll *et al.*) indicated probable nesting (occasional breeder this far north).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO – This species is a casual breeder in Alabama, so one calling at Hulaco, *Marshall*, 28 June (Steve McConnell) was notable.

WHIP-POOR-WILL – One at Opelika, *Lee*, 1 June (Lorna West) was just south of its usual range, while two singing at Hatchechubbee, *Russell*, 1

June (Barry Fleming) represented the southernmost possible nesting in Alabama.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD – An adult male was early at a feeder in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 27 July (*vide* Bob Sargent).

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER – Shawn Reed found a pair at a new site in Talladega NF (Harrisburg CE block), *Perry*, 14 June, while two birds were located at another new site in Talladega NF (Forest Road 708 NW of Payne Lake), *Hale*, 5 July (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – The first July record for the WP was established by one found at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 July (Joni Ellis, Julie Brashears). A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, three records were received: one at Priceville, *Morgan*, 15 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton *et al.*), a return to this site; a single at a new site near Paint Rock, *Jackson*, 27 June (Paul Kittle); and up to three not far from a previous nesting site along Ala. Hwy. 183 southwest of Marion, *Perry*, in early June (two birds) (Shawn Reed, Harriett Wright *et al.*) and 9 July (three birds) (Harriett Wright *et al.*).

WARBLING VIREO – A single was noted near Brantley, *Crenshaw*, 2 June (Don Ware) in the same general area where the species was discovered last year (and which established the first summer record for south Alabama).

HORNED LARK – Two singing in southwest *Pickens*, 31 May (Rick West) documented the second Inland Coastal Plain summer site.

TREE SWALLOW – A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, the following records document its spread. At Pinedale Shores, *St. Clair*, a pair was nesting in a Wood Duck box 9 June (Fred Moore, Brandee Moore). This site is at the southern edge of the range for the species in Alabama and hosted the species for the second straight year. Single pairs were observed on the *Walker/Winston* line and at Cullman, *Cullman*, June-July (Paul Lollar). The former is a new site, while the latter also hosted the species last year.

BANK SWALLOW – The fourth July record for the WP was established by a single seen at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 26 July (Bob Duncan).

CEDAR WAXWING – A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, a number of the many records received were related to Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas activity (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Cedar Waxwing records for summer season 2003.

Site	County	Number	Date	Observer	Notes
Marion	<i>Perry</i>	1	2 June	Shawn Reed	Late or possibly nesting
Sprott	<i>Perry</i>	1	4 June	Shawn Reed	Late or possibly nesting
New Market CE	<i>Madison</i>	1	5 June	Steve McConnell	Late or possibly nesting

TABLE 1. continued

Site	County	Number	Date	Observer	Notes
S. of Double Springs	<i>Winston</i>	pair	8 June	Paul Kittle	At nest
Vina BBS	<i>Franklin</i>	1	13 June	Steve McConnell	Possibly nesting
Harpersville	<i>Shelby</i>	pair	14 June	Jessica Germany, Mary Roll <i>et al.</i>	Probably nesting; south of usual range
Newsome Sinks CE	<i>Marshall</i>	1	14 June	Steve McConnell	Possibly nesting
Hulaco CE	<i>Marshall</i>	1	14 June	Steve McConnell	Possibly nesting
Talladega	<i>Talladega</i>	2 pairs	21 June	Greg Harber	Probably nesting
Carter Grove BBS	<i>Madison</i>	pair	27 June	Steve McConnell	Probably nesting
Loackle Ford	<i>Bibb</i>	pair	28 June	Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson	Probably nesting; southernmost site in Alabama
Maysville CE	<i>Madison</i>	1	29 June	Steve McConnell	Possibly nesting
County Line	<i>Walker/Winston</i>	pair	June- July	Paul Lollar	Nesting

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER – A singing male at Bellville, *Conecuh*, 19 and 22 June (Don Ware) set the first recent summer record for south Alabama and was at the farthest south site in the state for summer.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER – A female at Old Spring Hill, *Marengo*, 26 May (Don Self, Judy Self) set a late departure record for south Alabama.

CERULEAN WARBLER – An immature female was early at Opelika, *Lee*, 20 July (Lorna West).

FIELD SPARROW – Several were singing along Ala. Hwy. 112 in the Dogwood quad, *Baldwin*, 25 May – 4 July (Claire Krusko), representing the first possible breeding on the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

LARK SPARROW – This sparrow is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama. One was singing in southwest *Pickens*, 31 May (Rick West), another single was found in the New Market CE block, *Madison*, 5 June (Steve McConnell), up to three were found at Prattville, *Autauga*, 6 June (Shawn Reed *et al.*), and one was observed at Gainesville Lock and Dam, *Greene*, 26 July (possible a transient at this date) (Bob Reid *et al.*).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – A partial albino was noted at Clay, *Jefferson*, 13 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) (casual in summer in Alabama).

PAINTED BUNTING – Increasing as a breeder in Alabama, an adult male was recorded from Gallion, *Marengo*, 26 May and 15 June (Don Self, Judy Self).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – At Demopolis WMA, *Sumter*, a female carrying food documented a rare nesting this far south in Alabama (Don Self, Judy Self).

Paul D. Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632 (Email: pdkittle@una.edu). **Greg. D. Jackson** [Alabama compiler], 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244 (E-mail: g_d_jackson@bellsouth.net). **Robert A. Duncan** [NW Florida compiler], 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (Email: Town.Point@attinet).