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COVER: Black-billed Cuckoo, 18 April 2008, Dauphin Island, AL, by G. Jackson.

SURVEY FOR COLONIAL NESTING BIRDS ON SEVEN ISLANDS OF COASTAL ALABAMA

Orin J. Robinson and John J. Dindo

INTRODUCTION

Islands of coastal Alabama provide important habitat for birds that nest in large colonies such as wading birds, terns, shorebirds, and Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*). Because coastal development and severe weather (e.g., hurricanes) can significantly impact the size, desertion rates, and/or establishment of bird colonies, regular monitoring of populations on nesting islands is important to help conserve and manage colonial nesting species. This report presents baseline information from monitoring efforts conducted during the breeding season of 2007 on seven islands on the Alabama coast. The objectives of the study were to identify colonial nesters and to obtain population estimates.

METHODS

Study Areas.— The seven islands that were monitored in 2007 were Gaillard Island (30°30'27.9"N, 88°02'08.1"W), Cat Island (30°19'13.7"N, 88°12'36.7"W), Marsh Island (30°19'14.2"N, 88°13'22.5"W), Isle Aux Herbes (also referred to as Coffee Island; 30°20'32.6"N, 88°15'22.6"W), Robinson Island (30°17'8.2"N, 87°33'4.4"W), Walker Island (30°17'13.5"N, 87°32'28.7"W), and Bird Island (30°16'53.0"N, 87°33'5.5"W).

Gaillard Island is a man-made, dredge spoil island in Mobile Bay that is approximately 2.6 km (1.6 mi) at its greatest width and 3.6 km (2.3 mi) at its greatest length. It is situated just east of Dog River and approximately 17.7 km (11 mi) south of downtown Mobile. The Army Corps of Engineers completed the island in 1981 utilizing the dredge material from the creation of the Theodore ship channel. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Gaillard Island had a 6.1 m (20 ft) dirt perimeter completely around the island that protected it from storm surge and helps provide ample, protected nesting habitat for numerous species. Dredge spoil islands have proven to be excellent habitat for colonial nesting birds once vegetated (Maxwell and Kale 1977). Gaillard Island is the only known nesting site in Alabama for Brown Pelicans (Fig. 1) and it is also an important nesting site for Laughing Gulls (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), Caspian



Figure 1. Brown Pelican colony on on Gaillard Island (Photo by John Dindo).



Figure 2. Royal Tern colony on on Gaillard Island (Photo by John Dindo).

Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*), Royal Terns (*Thalaseus maximus*) (Fig. 2), and Sandwich Terns (*Thalaseus sandvicensis*) (pers. observ.). The colony of Laughing Gulls is the largest Laughing Gull breeding colony on the Gulf of Mexico (Stout 1998). During Hurricane Katrina of 2005, Gaillard Island lost much of its berm and a large portion of the dredge spoil from its interior (pers. observ.). In addition to Brown Pelicans and larids, Gaillard Island has been a nesting site for wading birds such as the Great Egret (*Ardea alba*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*), and White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*).

Cat Island, Marsh Island, and Isle Aux Herbes are located in Portersville Bay of the Mississippi Sound. Cat Island is approximately 0.45 km (0.28 mi) long and 0.09 km (0.06 mi) wide and is unique among the islands in this area in that the shell hash is deposited in such a way that it forms a ridge (0.5-1 m) around the island and raises the north end of the island 0.91 to 1.21 meters above sea level (Dindo 1991). This allows the growth of vegetation (primarily *Iva frutescens* and *Baccharis hamilifolia*) that provides nesting material for wading birds, as well as support for nests. The salt marsh habitat provides an excellent foraging area for wading birds. Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, Green Herons, and White Ibises are wading birds known to breed on Cat Island (Dindo 1991). Royal Terns, American Oystercatchers (*Hematopus palliatus*), and Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*) have also nested on the shell hash perimeter of Cat Island (pers. observ.)

Marsh Island is approximately 0.74 km (0.46 mi) long and 0.17 km (0.11 mi) wide and like Isle Aux Herbes, is tidally inundated and the dominant vegetation is black needle rush (*Juncus romericansus*) and marsh cord grass

(*Spartina alterniflora*). Isle Aux Herbes has an approximate length of 4.68 km (1.38 mi) and width of 1.06 km (0.66 mi). Isle Aux Herbes was not a known site for colonial nesters until 2004, when a few wading birds were observed nesting on the west side of the island in a small patch of marsh elder (*Iva frutescens*) (pers. observ.). There has never been any known colonial nesting on Marsh Island.

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina scoured all the vegetation used by the birds for nesting on Cat Island, but Marsh Island and Isle Aux Herbes were less affected because they were dominated by marsh vegetation. The new wading bird nesting colony of Isle Aux Herbes was not present during the breeding season following Hurricane Katrina (pers. observ.).

Three islands inside of the Perdido Pass were surveyed: Robinson Island (30°17'8.2"N, 87°33'5.45"W), Walker Island (30°17'13.5"N, 87°32'28.7"W), and Bird Island (30°16'53.0"N, 87°33'5.5"W). These islands are sandy islands with the main vegetation being marsh grasses and some shrubs. Robinson Island is approximately 0.51 km (0.31 mi) long and 0.12 km (0.07 mi) wide. Walker Island is horseshoe shaped with an approximate length of 0.59 km (0.39 mi) and width of 0.19 km (0.12 mi). Both Robinson and Walker islands have small stands of pine trees, but Bird Island does not. The tall pine trees found on Robinson Island have been used for nesting by Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), Great Egrets, and Snowy Egrets for the past 20 years (pers. observ.). Initial development of Robinson Island by its owner destroyed two thirds of the pine forest used by these birds and hurricane Katrina left only about a dozen trees suitable for nesting. A majority of the shrubs that existed on Walker Island and Bird Island were killed by salt intrusion and have blown over. There is a sea grass bed (*Halodule wrightii*) situated around all three islands that provides excellent foraging opportunities for piscivorous birds.

Survey Methods. — Each island was visited at least twice monthly between January 2007 and September 2007. The islands were visited more frequently when breeding was first observed (3-5 times per month after 30 March 2007). Two or three observers per trip counted the number of individuals of each species that were nesting and the species that were observed but not nesting, including non-colonial nesters. When accurate counts could not be made (e.g. due to an extremely large number of individuals of one species) an estimation technique was used (Sutherland et al. 2004). Data on non-colonial nesters that were of conservation concern were also collected.

RESULTS

Cat Island had the highest counts of nesting colonial wading bird species (nine) and individuals nesting (240) of the seven surveyed islands (Table 1). On Cat Island, the dominant nesting waders were the Cattle Egret and the Tricolored Heron (Table 1). Also of special interest were the nesting Reddish Egrets, a species of “high conservation concern” in Alabama (Table 1; Cooley 2004). Although large numbers of Royal Terns were seen, nesting was not confirmed. Similarly, Least Terns (*Sternula albifrons*) and Gull-billed Terns (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) were also observed, but no nests were found. Although a non-colonial species, the American Oystercatcher is also a species of “high conservation concern” in Alabama, so the four nesting individuals on Cat Island are important to note (Clay 2004).

TABLE 1. Number of nesting wading birds comprising mixed colony between January and September 2007 on Cat Island, Alabama.

Species	Number nesting	Percentage of colony
Cattle Egret	80	33.30%
Tricolored Heron	83	34.50%
Great Egret	23	9.50%
Snowy Egret	25	10.40%
Reddish Egret	3	1.25%
White Ibis	15	6.25%
Black-crowned Night-Heron	6	2.50%
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	3	1.25%
Little Blue Heron	2	0.80%

Like Cat Island, Gaillard Island had relatively high counts of nesting colonial wading bird species (seven) and individuals (239) (Table 2). However, Great Egrets and Reddish Egrets were not nesting on Gaillard Island and the numbers and percentages of nesting Cattle Egrets and White Ibis were higher than on Cat Island. In addition, on Gaillard Island non-wading colonial species were found nesting. Approximately and conservatively, 4,000-5,000 Brown Pelicans, 10,000-12,000 Laughing Gulls, and 12 Black Skimmers were nesting. Also, Royal and Caspian terns were observed in large numbers and were assumed to be nesting.

On Isle Aux Herbes, only 49 nests were observed and very few could be attributed to a species. The majority of the birds observed around the nests were Cattle Egrets and Tricolored Herons. At least one Reddish Egret was

TABLE 2. Number of nesting wading birds comprising mixed colony between January and September 2007 on Gaillard Island, Alabama.

Species	Number nesting	Percentage of colony
Cattle Egret	144	60.25%
Tricolored Heron	20	8.36%
Snowy Egret	9	3.77%
White Ibis	50	20.92%
Black-crowned Night-Heron	7	2.92%
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	6	2.51%
Little Blue Heron	3	1.25%

confirmed nesting on Isle Aux Herbes (Roger Clay, pers. comm.). Two species of non-wading, colonial nesting birds were confirmed nesting; 137 Royal Terns and 110 Black Skimmers. Six American Oystercatchers were also found nesting. No nesting occurred on Marsh Island.

The three islands of Perdido Pass had considerably less colonial bird nesting activity. On Robinson Island, nine Great Blue Heron nests and three Great Egret nests were counted in pine trees, but no non-wading, colonial birds were breeding. On Walker Island, 19 Green Herons (*Butorides virescens*) were nesting, but on Bird Island no nests of colonial birds were found.

DISCUSSION

The colony of wading birds on Cat Island seems to have decreased significantly since the counts made in 1988 (Dindo 1991). For example, 440 wading bird nests within 0.76 m (2.5 ft) of three 100 meter transects were counted (i.e., not all the nests were counted on the island), but in 2007, only 238 nests were found on the whole island. We suspect that Hurricane Katrina contributed to this decline. Further, Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and Green Herons once nested on Cat Island (Dindo 1991), but we found neither species in our survey.

On Isle Aux Herbes, however, there is evidence that the size and richness of the nesting wading bird colony is increasing. In 2004, only a few wading birds were observed nesting on Isle Aux Herbes, while in 2007, 49 wading bird nests were observed. The majority of the birds observed on Isle Aux Herbes were Cattle Egrets and some Tricolored Herons (the two most common nesters on Cat Island). The loss of nesting habitat on Cat Island may have been the

cause for the establishment of a colony on Isle Aux Herbes. Additional monitoring is needed to see if this increase continues and to better understand the causes. The absence of colonial nesting on Marsh Island can probably be attributed to the low elevation of this island.

Our study clearly indicates the importance of Cat and Gaillard islands to colonial nesting birds in Alabama. Regular monitoring of the nesting colonies on these islands, as well as other islands, is critical if we are to understand the dynamics of colonial bird populations and make sound conservation and management decisions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FIRST RECORD OF THE INCA DOVE (*COLUMBINA INCA*) FOR ALABAMA

Robert A. Duncan and Lucy R. Duncan

On 19 April 2008, at about 1340 hrs, we spotted a small dove feeding on the ground with Blue Grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*) in the “moat” on the southeast side of Ft. Morgan, Baldwin County, Alabama. We immediately recognized it as an Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) as we have had considerable exposure to the species in the southwestern United States and Mexico. Lucy Duncan heard its distinctive *cooo-coo* “no hope” call almost simultaneously with the sighting. She immediately began to take photographs for documentation.

The bird was smaller than a Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*), overall light grayish in color with a paler head. The head, nape, back and wings had a distinct scaly pattern formed by darker feather edgings. The long, slightly darker tail was edged in white. A finer scaly pattern was evident on the belly and flanks. The bill was completely dark. The primaries flashed rufous in flight. Both the long tail and its call notes separated it from the Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*) and Ruddy Ground-Dove (*C. talpacoti*), the two other small doves. In the original thirty-minute observation, the bird flew from the weedy moat area where it was feeding to the top of the fort wall

several times, calling intermittently.

After securing photographs and a digital recording of the call, Lucy Duncan alerted birders attending the Alabama Ornithological Society meeting at Dauphin Island. We then found Eva Barnett and Michael Jordan birding near the runway and took them to see the dove, where they also took photographs and got a digital recording. Greg and Debi Jackson, Larry Gardella, Andrea Menyhert, Stan and Dana Hamilton, and Howard Horne arrived from Dauphin Island by ferry later in the afternoon and were able to see it feeding leisurely between the parking lot and the restrooms. Greg Jackson took more photographs. Additional birders found the bird the following morning, 20 April, but by afternoon it had disappeared.

The Inca Dove is a resident from southeastern California, central Arizona, southern New Mexico and central Texas, south through Mexico to northwestern Costa Rica (American Ornithologists' Union, 1983. Checklist of North American Birds. 6th ed. Washington, D.C., American Ornithologists' Union). In recent years it has expanded its range eastward and is now breeding in southwest Louisiana (Buford M. Myers, pers. comm.).

Its occurrence in Alabama has been expected. On 10 February 2007, fourteen were found in Arcola, Washington Co., west-central Mississippi by Stephen J. Dinsmore *et al.* (Cooley, D. C. 2007. Region reports: Alabama & Mississippi. North American Birds 61:278). In southeastern Louisiana, one or two were found in three parishes between 21 December 06 and 27 February 07 by Harvey L. Patten *et al.* indicating the species' continuing expansion out of southwestern Louisiana (Cardiff, S. W. 2007. Region reports: Arkansas & Mississippi. North American Birds 61:281). This is the first record for Alabama, pending acceptance by the Alabama Bird Records Committee.

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DISCOVERY OF A NEW SPECIES OF *OCEANODROMA* STORM-PETREL – A GULF COAST CONNECTION

Robert A. Duncan and Lucy R. Duncan

It began with a phone call to us from Ann Forster on 28 April 1998. And thence began a story of investigation, scholarship, tragedy and science that resulted in our area's assistance in the discovery of a new species of storm-petrel from the Azores.

Barry Sweatt, a fisherman out of Orange Beach, AL brought a petrel that had landed on his boat in the Gulf of Mexico on April 27th to Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida for rehabilitation. This was not the first time he had done this. On other occasions he brought in several petrels for rehabilitation by Dorothy Kaufmann and her staff, and most were successfully released from the Forster's home near the entrance to Pensacola Bay. But in this instance the attempted release was unsuccessful and the bird died. Noticing that the bird had a band on the leg, Ann gave it to us for transfer to Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid, Florida as a valuable museum specimen.

Upon receiving the bird, a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*), we observed that the band was not a standard US Fish & Wildlife band. It read CEMPA LISBOA D017788. Lucy traced its origin to the Centro de Estudos de Migracoes e Proteccao de Aves, Lisbon, Portugal, and found that this small pelagic bird had been banded on 25 September 1993 on Praia Islet, Graciosa Island in the Azores. It was a female at least 6 years old!

Band-rumped Storm-Petrels spend most of the year in the ocean and return to land only for a few months to breed. Until recent years, they were not known to frequent the Gulf of Mexico and western Atlantic with any regularity. Thus, the specimens from the Gulf corroborated sight reports from birders taking pelagic trips into the offshore Gulf.

Bob began an article on this recovery for the *Florida Field Naturalist* and contacted Dr. Glen Woolfenden, director of Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid, FL since he prepared the specimen, and it was decided to collaborate. He in turn contacted the researcher banding in the Azores, Luis R. Monteiro, of the Department of Oceanography and Fisheries, University of the Azores, and learned of an interesting study underway at the time by this graduate student and his colleagues. The article appeared in the *Journal of Field Ornithology* (Woolfenden, G. E., Monteiro, L. R. and Duncan, R. A. 2000.

Recovery from the Northeastern Gulf of Mexico of a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel banded in the Azores. *Journal of Field Ornithology*. 72:62-65). This was the *first* recovery from the western Atlantic, and Montiero was ecstatic. Little did he know how exciting it was to become.

Woolfenden discovered from Monteiro that he and his colleagues established that there were two breeding populations of Band-rumped Storm-Petrels in the Azores. One bred in the cool season and the other in the hot season, and researchers suspected they might actually be two separate species based on measurements and plumage characteristics observed when there was breeding-season overlap of the two groups. “Our” bird turned out to be a “cool-season” bird. During the time our article was being written, tragedy occurred, and Luis Monteiro was killed in a helicopter crash while furthering his research. He never lived to see it published.

The study continued, however, and culminated in another publication (Bolton, M., Smith, A. L., Gomez-Diaz, E., Friesen, V. L., Medeiros, R., Bried, J. Roscales, J. L. and Furness, R. W. 2008. Monteiro’s Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma monteiroi*: a new species from the Azores. *The Ibis*. 150: 717-727). The research concluded that the two breeding populations were indeed two separate species based on several factors. DNA evidence indicated genetic distinction as did different vocalizations. Warm-season birds were smaller, with longer, more deeply-forked tails and smaller, thinner bills than cool-season breeders. And the seasonal molts of each population did not coincide.

So how did our Gulf of Mexico specimen contribute to the split? The timing of molt in the primaries was an important factor. Did both populations molt at the same time or at different times? The problem was that the progression of molt of cool-season birds between April and July was unknown because the birds dispersed to the open ocean and could not be scrutinized. Until our specimen was examined along with four others from the Gulf of Mexico and salvaged through the Wildlife Sanctuary, it could not be determined which population dispersed to the western Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. Our specimens were molting their primaries, indicating they were cool-season breeders since they molt after breeding. This factor helped determine that the cool-season breeding birds were a species separate from the warm-season breeders.

So are the two species separable in the field? The authors indicate it is well nigh impossible to do so. But don’t worry, all you listers out there. The newly-described, warm-season breeding Monteiro’s Storm-Petrel numbers are estimated at no more than 250 – 300 pairs, and although the distribution outside

the breeding season is unknown, it is thought that it does not occur in the western Atlantic.

Luis Monteiro did not live to see his hard work come to fruition, and Glen Woolfenden, who died before the publication of the split, did not witness the part played out on this side of the Atlantic. But they must have suspected they were part of the discovery of a new species. The importance of salvaging specimens through rehabilitation centers like Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida cannot be overstated.

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SPRING SIGHTINGS (MARCH - MAY 2008)

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

This report covers the period from March through May 2008 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. “@” = under review by; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “b.” = banded; FOSRC = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NABS” = North Alabama Birdwatcher’s Society; “NF” = National Forest; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Larry Gardella found seven near Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 2 March, and six at the same site 16 March (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain except at Eufaula NWR). At Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, Damien Simbeck *et al.* recorded 12 on 10 March, 14 on 14 March, and nine on 16 March (locally rare).

CANADA GOOSE – The spring count on the Wheeler NWR area, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tallied 62, a new spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley. Similarly, the Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 26 April, recorded 191, a new spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

WOOD DUCK – One hundred five was a good number on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April.

HOODED MERGANSER – The spring count on the Wheeler NWR area, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tallied 29, a good number so late. This species is a rare breeder in the Mountain Region, so a male at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 13 May (Helen Kittinger, Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer *et al.*) was noteworthy.

COMMON LOON – Jessie Griswold noted four at Oak Mountain SP, *Shelby*, 15 May, a good number for the Mountain Region at this late date. A single was late at Lake Jordan, *Elmore*, 26 May (Bruce Parsons; ph.).

HORNED GREBE – Seventy-five was a good number so late at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 8 March (Steve McConnell), while 100+ on Wilson Reservoir at the mouth of Town Creek, *Colbert*, 10 March (Damien Simbeck) established a new spring maximum for Alabama.

RED-NECKED GREBE – The seventh record for the WP was marked by a single at Perdido Key, *Escambia*, 20 February (Jan Osborne, Carolyn Henning, Annelise Reunert, Bob Strader, Dave Maitland; @FOSRC).

EARED GREBE – Rare in Alabama, one was spotted at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 8 March (Steve McConnell; ph.).

GREATER SHEARWATER – Casual in the WP in spring, a single was found four miles south of Destin, *Okaloosa*, 30 May (Phil Goodyear). One was seen 30 miles south of Perdido Pass, *Baldwin*, 20 April (Rodney Cassidy) (rare in Alabama).

NORTHERN GANNET – An adult at the mouth of Town Creek, *Colbert*, 5 May (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner; ph.) marked the second inland record for Alabama.



Northern Gannet, 5 May 2008, Town Creek, AL; S. McConnell.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Damien Simbeck tallied 192 at the mouth of Town Creek, *Colbert*, 10 March, to establish a maximum spring count for Alabama. At Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, 115 was a good number 26 March (Paul Kittle, Donna Kittle). Rare in the Mountain Region except at Weiss Lake, two were noteworthy at Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT – Greg Jackson counted 150 at Gadsden, *Etowah*, 30 March, to establish a new spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

ANHINGA – Ten (good number) were seen along I-65 north of Montgomery,

Montgomery (Larry Gardella). Rare in the Mountain Region, two reports were received from Saginaw, *Shelby*: a single 26 April (Frank Farrell, Shirley Farrell, Harriett Wright) and two 13 May (Helen Kittinger, Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer *et al.*).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD – Rare in the WP, three birds were discovered at Destin, *Okaloosa*, 30 April (Les Kelly); three were at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 11 May (Carol Ascherfeld, Ray Ascherfeld); and a single was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 16 May (Bob Duncan).

AMERICAN BITTERN – Rarely noted inland, Odis Johnson reported four sightings of singles from Hacula, *Geneva*, 11 and 14 March and 6 and 26 April.

LEAST BITTERN – On 26 April, sightings of singles came from Saginaw, *Shelby* (Frank Farrell) (rare in Mountain Region), and Wheeler NWR, *Limestone* (Steve McConnell, Sue Moske) (rare and local breeder in Tennessee Valley).

SNOWY EGRET – Pelham Rowan found two at Lake Purdy, *Jefferson*, 26 April (rare in spring in the Mountain Region).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – Two were noted on the Wheeler NWR spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April (Dwight Cooley, Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds, Scott Gravette) (rare in spring in the Tennessee Valley).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – On 31 March, Powers McLeod noted 24 individuals at a traditional nesting site on 19th Street in Pensacola, *Escambia*.

WHITE-FACED IBIS – Very rare in the WP, three birds were identified at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 19 April (Bob Duncan). Rare but increasing in Alabama, a single was tallied at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Madison*, 19 April (Neill Cowles, NABS; ph.) to mark the first record for the Tennessee Valley and the fifth inland record for Alabama.



White-faced Ibis, 19 April 2008, Wheeler NWR, AL; N. Cowles.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – Rare but increasing in Alabama in general, a single was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 3 May (Joan Siegwald, Tom Siegwald, Howard Horne) and marked the fourth spring record for Alabama.

WOOD STORK – Two were noted at Albertville, *Marshall*, 28 April (Sylvia Gentry) (occasional in the Mountain Region and early). At Hacula, *Geneva*, Odis Johnson reported 40 on 30 April and 30 on 14+ May (good numbers so early; ph.).

OSPREY – Three were noted 16 March (ties early record for the Tennessee Valley) below Wheeler Dam and at the mouth of Town Creek, *Lawrence/Lauderdale/Colbert* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson); these birds were all on different pylons, with one near a complete nest and the others building nests. One at McCalla, *Jefferson*, 18 March (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) marked an early record for a migrant in the Mountain Region. Six was a good number on the Wheeler NWR spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – More reports than usual were received from the WP

this season, with five a good number locally at Pensacola, *Escambia*, 28 March (Powers McLeod). The eighth and earliest record for the Mountain Region was marked by a single at Oneonta, *Blount*, 31 March (Duane Brown, Lynn Brown), while the ninth record (and early) for the Mountain Region was set by one at Smith Lake south of Houston, *Winston*, 1 April (Larry Barkey).

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Two were at Montevallo, *Shelby*, 26 April (Ty Keith, Kenny Keith, Rick Kittinger, Helen Kittinger) and 30 April (Mac Braid) (rare in the Mountain Region but regular in this area). Occasional in the Tennessee Valley except near Wheeler NWR, two were notable at Monte Sano, *Madison*, 2 May (Milton Harris, Bert Harris).

BALD EAGLE – At Marion-Heiberger, *Perry*, 11 were counted 15 March (Maureen Shaffer, Jessica Germany, Lee Brewer, Martha Dagg) to establish a new maximum count for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – A single at Monte Sano, *Madison*, 25 March (John Ehinger) was early. Twelve were seen in 10 minutes at Mobile, *Mobile*, 9 April (Chazz Hesselein) to mark a spring maximum for the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

AMERICAN KESTREL – Ten were counted on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, to tie the spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

CLAPPER RAIL – John Trent and Collin Roberts conducted counts at multiple sites in the Grand Bay/Point aux Pins area, *Mobile*, and found 46 on 23 April and 62 on 29 May, the latter count a maximum for Alabama.

KING RAIL – Rare in the Tennessee Valley but regular at this site, calling birds were at Oakland Marsh, *Lauderdale*- two on 26 April and a single on 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner *et al.*). One was found at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 26 April (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, Rick Remy). John Trent and Collin Roberts conducted counts at multiple sites in Lillian Swamp, *Baldwin*, and found 7 on 23 April and 12 on 28 May, with the latter number tying the maximum for Alabama.

VIRGINIA RAIL – A rare migrant in the Tennessee Valley but regular at this site, one was heard at Oakland Marsh, *Lauderdale*, 26 April (Damien Simbeck).

WILSON'S PLOVER – This species has been absent as a breeder in the WP for decades, but Gulf Islands National Seashore personnel reported seven nests as of 8 May from Santa Rosa Island, *Santa Rosa*.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER – Sixty-five was a good number at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 21 April (Bob Duncan).

BLACK-NECKED STILT – Two were early at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 8 March (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald).

AMERICAN AVOCET – Good numbers were reported from Blakeley Island, *Mobile*: 84 on 13 March and 86 on 23 March (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*), and 80 on 14 April (Steve McConnell).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – Unless it was an occasional wintering bird, one set an early arrival record for the Mountain Region at Sandy Point Creek, *Fayette*, 11

March (David Campbell).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER – The spring count on the Wheeler NWR area, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tallied 22, tying the spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

WILLET – Rare for inland Alabama, good numbers were at Wright (22) and Wilson Dam (3), *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 26 April (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); 14 were at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 5 May (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); and two were at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 5 May (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – Damien Simbeck found a total of 120 (good number) 25 April: 94 near Leighton, *Colbert*, and 26 west of Florence, *Lauderdale*.

WHIMBREL – Chazz Hesselein reported 300+ from north of Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 30 April (maximum count for Alabama by a wide margin).

MARbled GODWIT – Occasional for inland Alabama (mostly in Tennessee Valley), a single was photographed west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 25 April (Damien Simbeck).

RED KNOT – This species is becoming scarce in Alabama, so records on 16 May (four; Bert Harris, Brett Scheffers, Angie Langevin) and 26 May (18+ birds; Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Howard Horne; ph.), on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, are noteworthy, as were the two at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 16 May (Bert Harris, Brett Scheffers, Angie Langevin).



Red Knot, 26 May 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; T. Siegwald.

DUNLIN – At Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, Damien Simbeck's observation of 60+ on 10 March ties the maximum spring count for inland Alabama.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Damien Simbeck and Jeff Garner found a total of 28 (good number) 26 April: 12 near Leighton, *Colbert*, and 16 west of Florence, *Lauderdale*.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – Two at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 14 March (Damien Simbeck) marked an early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley (unless wintering locally). Rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley, four were noted at Wright, *Lauderdale*, 26 April (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner). Twenty-two were counted on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, to mark a new maximum for inland Alabama (Dwight Cooley, Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds, Scott Gravette).

AMERICAN WOODCOCK – A rare breeder in the Gulf Coast Region, especially so close to the coast, two adults and two large young at Coden, *Mobile*, 4 April (Jabe Fincher; ph.) provided a rare nesting record. Two were noted at Hacoda, *Geneva*, 30 April (Odis Johnson) (rare breeder this far south).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – Rare inland, a single was near Leighton, *Colbert*, 6

May (Damien Simbeck).

BONAPARTE'S GULL – On Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, the 100 seen on 30 March (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) set a spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

A first-year bird was late at Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair*, 3 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

LAUGHING GULL – Rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley, two were at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 4 May (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds, NABS), while “several” were noted at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 5 May (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds).

FRANKLIN'S GULL – A first winter bird at the *Santa Rosa* Landfill, 10 April (Bob Duncan) marked the second April record for the WP.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – At the *Santa Rosa* Landfill, an adult in breeding plumage, a third winter bird, and a first summer bird were seen 2, 10, and 23 April, respectively (Bob Duncan) (very rare in the WP).

GLAUCOUS GULL – Very rare in the WP, a first-winter bird was on Pensacola Bay, *Escambia*, 27 March – 7 April (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

SOOTY TERN – Rare in Alabama, a single was noted on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 20 April (Bailey McKay *et al.*).

FORSTER'S TERN – Maximum counts (100+ and 100, respectively) for inland Alabama were made at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 16 March (Greg Jackson), and at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 29 March (Steve McConnell).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE – The spring count on the Wheeler NWR area, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tallied 33, marking a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Rare but increasing inland in Alabama, a single was reported at a feeder in Atmore, *Escambia*, 9 May (Jon Yoder, Dawn Yoder).

INCA DOVE – The first record of this species for Alabama was marked by one at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 19-20 April (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, m.ob.; ph; videotaped; @ABRC). See page 8 of this issue.



Inca Dove, 19 April 2008, Fort Morgan, AL; L. Duncan.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO – A conservative count of 50+ was a good number for mid-May at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 16 May (Jacob Walker).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO – An early arrival was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 18 April (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson, m.ob.; ph.; see cover of this issue), while good numbers were reported from the same site on multiple dates: four+ on 29 April (Eugenia Carey, Chazz Hesselein *et al.*), three on 16 May (Jacob Walker), and three on 17 May (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald). Three was also a good number at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 12 May (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL – The 18th record for Alabama was marked by one

at Clay, *Jefferson*, 12 March (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent; b.; ph.; @ABRC).

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW – A census for this species in Blackwater State Forest, *Santa Rosa*, revealed 20 birds on 20 May (Peggy Baker, Jan Lloyd). One heard at Shorter, *Macon*, 26 March (Eric Soehren) marked the earliest record for inland Alabama.

WHIP-POOR-WILL – Rare documentation of nesting for this species came from Skyline WMA, *Jackson*, 7-9 May, where Bill Summerour found a nest with two eggs (ph.), and from Weogulka Creek at Hatchett Creek, *Coosa*, 9-21 May, where Mark Bailey, Jeff Baker, *et al.* found a nest with two eggs (ph.) that then produced two downy young.



Whip-poor-will nest, 9 May 2008, Skyline WMA, AL; B. Summerour.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER – The 16 on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tied the spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – One was early at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 April (Michael Jordan).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER – John Trent recorded a single north of Tallassee, *Tallapoosa*, 8 April (early record for inland Alabama).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER – One was seen and heard at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 27 April (Larry Gardella), and marked an early arrival record for Alabama and the second for the Inland Coastal Plain.

LEAST FLYCATCHER – Four were recorded at two sites along the Elk River, *Limestone/Lauderdale*, 9 May (Jason Mitchell, Damien Simbeck, R.J. Moore) (maximum count for Tennessee Valley and ties the maximum for inland Alabama).

EASTERN PHOEBE – The 14 on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley. The 84 tallied on the Birmingham area (*Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*) count 26 April was a good number.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – A male at Penny Bottoms, Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 26 April (Stan Hamilton), marked the second record for the Tennessee Valley (first in spring) and the third spring record for inland Alabama.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER – The 64 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

TROPICAL/COUCH'S KINGBIRD – The ninth record for the WP was established by a single seen at the Pensacola Airport, *Escambia*, 30 May (Powers McLeod).

WESTERN KINGBIRD – Singles were spotted at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 7 April (Bob Duncan) and 14 May (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) (very rare spring transient

in the WP). Rare in spring in Alabama, three records were received. At Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, one was seen 10 April (Jennifer Rycenga *et al.*) and two were found 19 April (Michael Jordan), while a single was at the country club on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 20 April (David Dortch; ph.).

EASTERN KINGBIRD – Sixty was a good number for a single site at the west end of the Birmingham Airport, *Jefferson*, 6 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

GRAY KINGBIRD – One at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 20 March (Bob Duncan) marked the earliest arrival date for the WP by four days. This flycatcher is rare but becoming regular again in Alabama. One was at the country club, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 April (Howard Horne) (return to probable breeding site).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – Very rare in spring in the WP, one was spotted at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 7 April (Bob Duncan). At the Alabama A&M Farms, Hazel Green, *Madison*, a pair was noted 3 May (Ken Ward, NABS) (regular breeder at this site). One was seen at a new site west of Athens, *Limestone*, 7 May (Carla Gregg).

WHITE-EYED VIREO – One at Saraland, *Mobile*, 1 and 10 March (Michael Jordan) was uncommon if wintering and early if a migrant. The 97 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, tied the maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO – Early birds were at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 8 March (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald), and at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 16 March (Larry Gardella).

WARBLING VIREO – Rare in Alabama, a single was at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 19 April (Ronnie Blackwell).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO – Rare in spring in Alabama, one was singing at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 27 April (Larry Gardella) (second spring record for the Inland Coastal Plain).

RED-EYED VIREO – John Trent observed a single at Fort Toulouse, *Elmore*, 21 March to mark an early arrival date for inland Alabama.

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO – An early single was at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 2 April (Carrie Dortch, David Dortch) and 5 April (Howard Horne), and another early bird was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 6 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*; b.). One was still on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 17 May (*vide* Howard Horne) to mark a late spring departure date for Alabama.

FISH CROW – Rare but increasing in the Tennessee Valley, records were received from four sites: six (maximum count for Tennessee Valley) at Decatur, *Morgan*, 9 April (Steve McConnell); one on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 26 April (Dwight Cooley, Scott Gravette); two at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 5 May (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); and a single at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 5 May (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds). A pair was noted at Clay, *Jefferson*, from early May- 20 May (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) (locally rare, but increasing in north Alabama).

- TREE SWALLOW** – The 19 recorded on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, was a good spring number for the Tennessee Valley.
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** – An early arrival record for the Gulf Coast of Alabama was marked by three at Bon Secour NWR, *Baldwin*, 1 March (Gary Koehn) (a single present 2 March). Other early birds included six at Eufaula, *Barbour*, 4 March (Lorna West), and a single along Smith Lake south of Houston, *Winston*, 6 March (Larry Barkey).
- CLIFF SWALLOW** – An early arrival record for the Inland Coastal Plain was marked by one at the Alabama River Parkway bridge, *Elmore*, 13 March (Michael Jordan). Also early was a single at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 15 March (Howard Horne). At Weiss Lake, *Cherokee*, 100 was a good number so early for the Mountain Region, 30 March (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).
- CAVE SWALLOW** – A rare but now regular spring migrant in the WP, singles were found at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 April (Malcolm Boothroyd, Bob Duncan) and 10 April (Bob Duncan), and in *Okaloosa*, 14 April (Kelly Jones). Also rare but now regular in spring on the Alabama Coast, two reports were received from Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*: three, 16 March (early arrival record for Alabama) (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), and 30+ (second highest count for Alabama), 3 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, m.ob.). Four reports came from Dauphin Island, *Mobile*: five+, 5 April (Howard Horne); one, 12 April (Steve McConnell, C.K. Borg); one, 17 April (Howard Horne, Michael Collins); and one, 20 April (Van Remsen *et al.*).
- BARN SWALLOW** – Early birds included a single at Hartselle, *Morgan*, 1 March (Steve McConnell), a single south of Houston, *Winston*, 2 March (Larry Barkey), and two along I-65, *Montgomery/Elmore*, 4 March (Glenn Peterson).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – Joe Wyatt found one in *Walton*, 10 May (very rare in Western Panhandle). The 24 recorded on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, marked a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.
- HOUSE WREN** – Evidence of nesting by this species came from Anniston, *Calhoun*, 23 April (Debbie McKenzie), where it is a rare but regular breeder.
- WINTER WREN** – A late departure date for the Gulf Coast was marked by a single at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 2 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*; b.).
- SEDGE WREN** – Six singing birds in a grassy marsh were surprisingly vocal at Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*, 16 April (Bob Duncan). One was found at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 26 April (Ken Ward, John Ehinger, Neill Cowles, Beth Wood) (uncommon in the Tennessee Valley).
- RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** – A late bird was at Shorter, *Macon*, 12 May (Eric Soehren).
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** – The 179 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a maximum for the Tennessee Valley.
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD** – The 93 on the Wheeler NWR area count,

Limestone/Morgan, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

AMERICAN PIPIT – One at the Alabama A&M Farms, Hazel Green, *Madison*, 3 May (Ken Ward, Linda Reynolds, Dick Reynolds, NABS) was late.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER – Nine was a good number on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 5 April (Jacob Walker).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – Three was a good number at Ruffner Mountain, *Jefferson*, 26 April (Scot Duncan, Ashlin Duncan).

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Rare in spring, but regular at this site, sightings were made on three dates on Monte Sano Mountain, *Madison*: one, 27 April (land trust property; NABS); two, 1 May, and one, 4 May (SP; Bert Harris, Milton Harris). One was found in western *Lauderdale*, 5 May (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner).

NORTHERN PARULA – One was early at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 4 March (Lorna West), and 15+ was a good number this early on 8 March, Dauphin Island, *Mobile* (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald).

YELLOW WARBLER – The 40+ on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 16 May (Jacob Walker) was a good number.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – Twenty-five on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 16 May (Jacob Walker) was a good number.

CAPE MAY WARBLER – Rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, Larry Gardella found one at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 27 April.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – Rare inland, a singing male was observed at Ruffner Mountain Nature Center, *Jefferson*, 6 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – One was early at Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 22 March (Scot Duncan).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER – One was early near Florence, *Lauderdale*, 28 March (Phyllis Nofzinger).

PRAIRIE WARBLER – One was early at Lowndes WMA, *Lowndes*, 20 March (John Trent).

PALM WARBLER – If migrants, the following records represent early birds: two east of Troy, *Pike*, 18 March (John Trent), and one at Lowndes WMA, *Lowndes*, 20 March (John Trent).

CERULEAN WARBLER – Single singing males were early at two sites in *Madison*: Hays Nature Preserve near Huntsville, 12 April (John Ehinger, Ken Ward, NABS), and Madison County Public Lake, 13 April (John Ehinger, Ken Ward, NABS). As a breeder, this species is rare and localized and nests are seldom found, so the observation of a pair feeding two+ young in a nest along Flannagin Creek, Bankhead NF, *Lawrence*, 22 May (John Trent) was noteworthy.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – One was early on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 8 March (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald).

- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** – The 93 on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a maximum for the Tennessee Valley.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER** – Ten was a good number at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 6 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*; b.).
- OVENBIRD** – Forty-nine were banded at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*) (maximum spring count for Alabama). One at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 7 April (John Ehinger) marked an early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley. Another early bird was at Fort Toulouse, *Elmore*, 12 April (John Trent).
- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** – One at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 14-15 March (John Ehinger) marked an early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley.
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** – A maximum spring count for Alabama was set by the 156 at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*; b.).
- HOODED WARBLER** – An early bird was north of Tallassee, *Tallapoosa*, 26 March (John Trent).
- WILSON'S WARBLER** – Rare in spring in Alabama, four records were received: one on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 30 March (early) and one on 6 April (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch); one in western *Lauderdale*, 5 May (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); and two in Madison, *Madison*, 11 May (Ken Ward, NABS).
- CANADA WARBLER** – One was a late departure at Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 25 May (Scot Duncan).
- SUMMER TANAGER** – The 118 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a maximum for the Tennessee Valley.
- SCARLET TANAGER** – The “100’s” reported from Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 29 April (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*) was an impressive total.
- LARK SPARROW** – Rare but increasing as a breeder, the 12 on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April (Duane Brown, Lynn Brown, Dwight Cooley, Steve McConnell, Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton *et al.*), marked a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley. Four were noted at the Alabama A&M Farms, Hazel Green, *Madison*, 3 May (Ken Ward, NABS).
- SAVANNAH SPARROW** – The 57 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.
- NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** – Late singles were noted at Isle aux Herbes, *Mobile*, 14 May, and at Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 15 May (John Trent, Collin Roberts).
- SONG SPARROW** – Nine birds were found in *Walton*, 10 May (Bob Reid, Carol Goodyear, George Russell) (first May record for area). The eight on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley. One nesting at Opelika, *Lee*, 25 May (Lorna West) was a rare breeder this far south.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – Very rare in the WP, one was found at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 15 April (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan). Rare in spring in Alabama, a single was noted at Oakland Marsh, *Lauderdale*, 5 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner).

SWAMP SPARROW – The 17 on the Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 26 April, established a spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – Thirty were counted at feeders in Anniston, *Clay*, 7 May (Debbie McKenzie), a good number for a single site in inland Alabama.

INDIGO BUNTING – One at Atmore, *Escambia*, 15 March (Jon Yoder, Dawn Yoder) marked an early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain. The 198 banded at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 6 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*) was a good number.

SHINY COWBIRD – Rare in Alabama, one was found on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 19 April (Larry Gardella *et al.*; ph.).

BRONZED COWBIRD – Very rare in the WP, one was identified at Pensacola, *Escambia*, 6 April (Ann Forster, Dan Forster). The 14th record for Alabama was marked by one on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 19 April (Bert Harris).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Two+ were early on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 6 April (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch).

PURPLE FINCH – At Hollins, *Clay*, Mary Wilson banded 1,050+ from late 2007 through mid-March 2008 period, an impressive number.

RED CROSSBILL – Two were in the Coleman Lake area, Talladega NF, *Cleburne*, 1 March (Ken Ward, m.ob.), while one was noted there 10 May (Bill Summerour) (continuation at this site).

NUTMEG MANNIKIN – A request from feeder watchers resulted in over 20 reports from throughout northeast and western Pensacola, *Escambia* (Bob Duncan). A specimen 28 February will be deposited with the Florida State Museum in Gainesville.

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SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2008)

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

This report covers the period from June through July 2008 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*, *Franklin*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa*, are in Alabama. “@” = under review by; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “b” = banded; “NF” = National Forest; “ph.” = photographed; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – Observations of this species came from Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, on multiple dates: six+ on 1 June, 12 on 4 June, and still present 23+ June (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*; ph.; @ABRC), providing the sixth record for Alabama.



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, 8 June 2008, Blakeley Island, AL; C. Hesselein.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Three at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 1-4 June (Chazz Hesselein; ph.) were late if not rare breeders. Seven were at Cedarville, *Hale*, 7 July (Eric Soehren, John Trent; ph.) (rare breeder in Alabama).

SURF SCOTER – On Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, three were present 8 June (Chazz Hesselein, Martha Hesselein, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Mike Rogers; ph.) to mark the second summer record for Alabama.



Surf Scoter, 8 June 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; T. Siegwald.

COMMON LOON – Rare in summer in the WP, five birds were at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 11 June (Bob Duncan).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is an erratic breeder in Alabama, so an adult and five downy young at Cedarville, *Hale*,

7 July (Eric Soehren, John Trent; ph.) were noteworthy.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT – Rare in summer in the WP, one-four birds were on Pensacola Bay, *Santa Rosa*, 1-26 June (Bob Duncan).



Pied-billed Grebe, 7 July 2008, Cedarsville, AL; E. Soehren.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Rare in summer for inland Alabama, 20 were seen at Cedarville, *Hale*, 7 July (Eric Soehren, John Trent; ph.), and an estimated 50 were along Ala. Hwy. 25, *Hale*, 19 July (Greg Harber *et al.*).

ANHINGA – One male and two female-types (probably nesting) were seen at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 31 July (Greg Jackson) (rare in Mountain Region but becoming regular at this site).

GREAT BLUE HERON (WHITE MORPH) –

The 15th record for the WP was marked by one at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 19 July (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Occasional in Alabama (and the first this decade), a single was at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 4-8 July (Andy Nelson *et al.*; ph.) to mark the third Tennessee Valley record.



Great Blue Heron (white morph), 4 July 2008, Guntersville Dam, AL; A. Nelson.

REDDISH EGRET – Casual in summer in the WP, one dark morph was at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 23 June, and one white morph was at the same site 18-22 July (Bob Duncan).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – One was found in the Chesson quad, *Macon*, 7 June (Eric Soehren) (locally rare).

WHITE IBIS – Uncommon to erratic in the Mountain Region, an immature was spotted at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 13 July (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Two-three seen near Malvern, *Geneva*, 8 June (Dan Clark) were locally uncommon. The 36 seen along Little River, *Baldwin*, 15 June (Randy Butler *et al.*, *fide* Venetia Friend; ph.) established a maximum count for the Gulf Coast of Alabama.

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Rare in the Mountain Region, records came from an area where the species has been regular in recent years: four (good number) on 12 June, one on 13 June, and one on 1 July at Winfield, *Marion* (Jud Johnston), and two on 8 July and 16 July (copulating) near Guin, *Marion* (Michael Estill, Don Wooldridge).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK – The first July record for the WP was marked by one at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 6 July (Bob Duncan).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER – Two+ were seen on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 June (Chazz Hesselein) (uncommon in June).

SNOWY PLOVER – It was another banner year for breeding birds at Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*. There were 56 nests as of 17 June, not including numerous young fledglings (*fide* Monica Cain).

SEMPALMATED PLOVER – Two+ were seen on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 June (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*) and one was there 8 June (John Dixon) (uncommon in June).

KILLDEER – At Pell City, *St. Clair*, 120 on 13 July was a good number for summer in the Mountain Region (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – A single that was probably an early migrant marked a rare June record at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 28 June (Chazz Hesselein).

WHIMBREL – Rare in July, one was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26 July (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald).

MARBLED GODWIT – Casual in July in the WP, a single was at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 17-18 July (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Rare in July in Alabama, one was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26 July (Eugenia Carey *et al.*) and 27 July (Mike Rogers; ph.).

RED KNOT – and 5 June (15 birds; Bill Summerour) (rare in June).

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER – Casual in summer in the WP, 15-23 birds in basic plumage were counted on the mud flats at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 4-17 June (Bob Duncan).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Casual in summer in the WP, 1-3 birds were on the mud flats at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 4-17 June (Bob Duncan).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – Chazz Hesselein found one lingering at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 1 June (rare in June).

DUNLIN – A single was on the mud flats at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 4 June (Bob Duncan) (second June record for the WP).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – One-seven birds were on the mud flats at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 4-17 June (Bob Duncan) (only three previous June records for the WP).

DOWITCHER SP. – Uncommon to rare in June, two+ were on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 June (Chazz Hesselein).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – Uncommon in July, one-two were on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26-28 July (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald *et al.*; ph.).

LAUGHING GULL – Seven along I-65 north-west of Atmore, *Escambia*, 6 July (L. Ellis) marked a rare record for inland Alabama.

SOOTY TERN – Breeding birds were reported from St. George Island, *Franklin*, 2 June (Alan Knothe).

LEAST TERN – It was another banner year for breeding birds at Fort Pickens, Gulf



Marbled Godwit, 27 July 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; M. Rogers.



Wilson's Phalarope, 28 July 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; M. Rogers

Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*, where an estimated 200 chicks successfully fledged as of 17 June (*vide* Monica Cain).

ROSEATE TERN – The first record in 50 years for the WP was marked by an alternate-plumaged bird watched at leisure at Fort Pickens, Gulf Islands National Seashore, *Escambia*, 4 June (Bob Duncan, Monica Cain, Sally Shultz).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Increasing as a breeder on the Gulf Coast, a pair was observed at Mobile, *Mobile*, from mid-June to early July (Ruth White). Rare but increasing in inland Alabama, one was noted at Greenville, *Butler*, 30 June (Annabel Markel).

BARN OWL – A juvenile was found injured and taken to rehabilitation at Ft. Payne, *DeKalb*, 7 July (Gary Wayner; ph.) (uncommon breeder).

BURROWING OWL – A count at site B-70, Eglin Air Force Base, *Okaloosa*, 7 June revealed 11 birds (Lenny Fenimore, Bob Duncan *et al.*).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD – An early arrival for the Inland Coastal Plain was marked by an adult male at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 30 July (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent; b.).

HAIRY WOODPECKER – Very rare in the WP, one was noted at Pensacola, *Escambia*, 15 June (Betsy Tetlow).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER – A singing bird was found along the Cahaba River near Jericho, *Perry*, 27 June (but not relocated 29 June) (Eric Soehren, Chris Smith), to mark the third record for the Inland Coastal Plain and the fifth June record for Alabama.

TROPICAL/COUCH'S KINGBIRD – The eighth record for the WP was marked by a single at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 10 July (Bob Duncan).

GRAY KINGBIRD – One at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 27 June (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) was evidence of a continued and gradual recovery for this species in Alabama.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – This species is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, and a pair was found at a regular site along Ala. Hwy. 183 north of Uniontown, *Hale*, 19 July (Greg Harber *et al.*).

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO – Very rare in summer in the WP, a single was noted at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 16 June (Bob Duncan).

FISH CROW – Rare but increasing in the Tennessee Valley, two were found in the Wheeler Dam quad, *Lawrence*, 22 June (Tom Haggerty), and a single was heard at Decatur, *Morgan*, 30 July (Steve McConnell).

TREE SWALLOW – Increasing as a breeder in Alabama but still rare, one-two were at a nest cavity at White Hall, *Lowndes*, 24 May and 14 June (Larry Gardella) (southernmost nesting in Alabama). Singles were in the Little Texas quad, *Macon*, 18 June (Lorna West), in the Town Creek quad, *Lawrence*, 21 June (Damien Simbeck), and in the Wheeler Dam quad, *Lawrence*, 22 June (Tom Haggerty).

CLIFF SWALLOW – Four were noted along I-65 at the Perdido Creek Bridge,

Escambia, 3 July (L. Ellis) (if nesting, the southernmost record for inland Alabama).

HOUSE WREN – A pair feeding young in a nest was observed at Florence, *Lauderdale*, 21 July (Jennifer Moses, Frank Moses, Ann Moses) (rare breeder, especially in northwest Alabama).

CEDAR WAXWING – Four were seen at the mouth of Spring Creek, *Lawrence*, 15 June (Paul Kittle) (rare breeder).

YELLOW WARBLER – Now a rare breeder in Alabama, one was found in the Landersville quad, *Lawrence*, 19 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER – In Bankhead NF near Youngtown, *Lawrence*, one was recorded 19 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) (occasional breeder in Alabama).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER – The second June record for the WP was marked by a male that lingered at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 June (Bob Duncan).

CERULEAN WARBLER – This species is a rare breeder in Alabama; reports from three sites were received. Singles were at two separate sites in the Bee Branch quad, Bankhead NF, *Lawrence*, 9 June (Greg Jackson) (regular in this area); one was seen near Moulton, *Lawrence*, 13 June (Steve McConnell) (probably a wandering non-breeder); and a pair feeding two young were along Larkin Fork, *Jackson*, 5 July (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, Greg Harber) (regular in this area).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, one was found in the Moulton quad, *Lawrence*, 22 June (Andrew Haffenden).

SCARLET TANAGER – This species is a rare breeder on the Inland Coastal Plain, so a male along County Road 65 south of Uniontown, *Perry*, 16 June (Judy Self, Don Self) was notable and southwest of known locations. One in the Tuskegee quad, *Macon*, 22 June (Larry Gardella) was at the southern edge of the breeding range. A single along the Tallapoosa River north of Tallassee, *Tallapoosa*, 26 June (John Trent) was at the margin of the breeding range and uncommon this far south.

LARK SPARROW – A rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, the summer bird count in *Lawrence* 6-22 June produced 35, an excellent number: 16 in the Courtland quad (Paul Kittle), 10 in the Town Creek quad (Damien Simbeck), and five in the Caddo quad (Steve McConnell) (regular in this part of Alabama). Tommy Pratt *et al.* had four+ along County Road 145 east of Autaugaville, *Autauga*, 16 July.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – Twenty-six was a good number in the Oakville quad, *Lawrence*, 6 June (Steve McConnell).

PAINTED BUNTING – This species is a rare breeder on the Inland Coastal Plain. A single was at a regular site along River Road in Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 5 July (Larry Gardella), and one was noted along County Road 145 east of Autaugaville, *Autauga*, 16 July (Tommy Pratt *et al.*).

DICKCISSEL – Twenty-eight was a good number in the Oakville quad, *Lawrence*, 6 June (Steve McConnell). This species is a rare and local breeder in the Mountain Region, so two singing at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 2 July (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson) were notable.

ORCHARD ORIOLE – One was singing on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 9 June (Eugenia Carey) (locally rare in June).

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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: tmhaggerty@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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