



Volume 55

No. 1

June 2009

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE



Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Published by the Alabama Ornithological Society to Record and Further the Study of
Birds in Alabama and Northwest Florida

Vol. 55

No. 1

2009

Editor: Tom Haggerty, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632-0001

Assistant Editors: Paul Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL, and Jeff Garner, Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, 350 County Rd. 275, Florence, AL 35633.

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Founded 17 May 1952

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Typeset by Tom Haggerty

COVER: Broad-billed Hummingbird; 23 January 2009, Baldwin Co., AL; photograph by B. Summerour.

UNIDENTIFIABLE SAPSUCKER (*SPHYRAPICUS*) IN HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Scott D. Rose, Howard E. Horne, and
Thomas M. Haggerty

The Red-breasted Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus ruber*), Red-naped Sapsucker (*S. nuchalis*), and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*S. varius*) were considered conspecific (*S. varius*) until 1983 and 1985 (American Ornithologists' Union 1983, 1985). Although some hybridization occurs among these three taxa, gene exchange is thought to be limited, and reproductive barriers prevent free interbreeding in contact zones (Howell 1952, Short 1969, Devillers 1970, Johnson and Zink 1983, Johnson and Johnson 1985).

Generally, the Red-breasted Sapsucker breeds in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and along the coast of the Pacific Northwest from Oregon to southeast Alaska and in central British Columbia. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker breeds in the northern United States, extending west across Canada to eastern Alaska. The Red-naped Sapsucker breeds in the Rocky Mountains north of Mexico, along the east slope of the Cascade Mountains, in a few locations in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and in the Black Hills of South Dakota (American Ornithologists' Union 1998).

The migration habits of the three species differ (Devillers 1970). The Red-breasted Sapsucker is largely resident or a short distant migrant to southwestern Baja California; the Red-naped Sapsucker winters in the lowlands of the southwestern United States, northeastern Mexico, and Baja California; and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker winters in the southeastern United States and Central America to Panama (Dunn 1978). The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a common winter resident in Alabama (Imhof 1976), but no records exist for the other sapsucker species (G. Jackson, pers. comm.), and few exist for the eastern United States (AOU 1998, Kaufmann 1990, Harlan 2005, Robbins et al. 2005, Cardiff 2009).

On 16 December 2008, an unusual sapsucker was found in Huntsville, Alabama, by Scott Rose and was subsequently seen by Howard Horne (Fig. 1). Twenty-four photographs were taken of the Huntsville sapsucker on 16 and 25 December, and were posted on the Internet. After reviewing the literature, consulting with others that reviewed the photographs, and studying Internet photographs (e.g., Vireo, Google), it was concluded that the Huntsville sapsucker was either an aberrant Red-naped Sapsucker or a Red-napped x Yellow-bellied Sapsucker hybrid, and therefore, could not be definitively identified. Although information concerning sapsucker variation and identification has been published, separating a hybrid from

extreme variants can be problematic (Ridgway 1914; Devillers 1970; Dunn 1978; Kaufmann 1988, 1990; Pyle 1997; Shunk 2005; Mlodinow 2005, 2006; Robbins et al. 2005). Therefore, caution seems warranted in identifying the Huntsville bird, especially since this individual could represent the first documented record for Alabama, and possibly only the second record of the species east of the Mississippi (Harlan, 2005). The objectives of this paper are to 1) provide documentation of the Huntsville sapsucker sighting, 2) compare the plumage of the Huntsville sapsucker to *varius* and *nuchalis* plumages, and 3) stimulate interest in sapsucker identification so that observers will look more closely at wintering sapsuckers in Alabama and other regions of the Southeast. This sighting and recent reports of other unusual sapsuckers in winter suggest that vagrant western sapsuckers may occur in the East more often than records indicate (Robbins et al. 2005, Cardiff 2009).

The plumage of the Huntsville sapsucker is most similar to those of *nuchalis* and *varius*, so our focus was to compare the Huntsville bird to those two species. The most important traits used to separate *nuchalis* and *varius* are plumage characteristics associated with the nape, throat, back, and face. Hybrids are typically intermediate in these traits and make definitive identifications difficult (Kaufmann 1990). Below we discuss the diagnostic traits in reference to the Huntsville sapsucker and why there is uncertainty concerning its identity.

Age and nape. — Since there is no evidence of any brown, mottled feathering on the head and throat, as seen in the juvenal plumages of *nuchalis* and *varius*, we conclude the Huntsville sapsucker is in adult plumage (Pyle 1997). The first prebasic or first-cycle molt of *nuchalis* typically is completed on the summer grounds, whereas in *varius* it is completed on the winter grounds (Pyle 1997). Therefore, if the Huntsville bird were a hatching year *varius*, we would expect to see some juvenal feathers. The plumage of the Huntsville bird appears fresh, indicating that the prebasic molt has been completed (Fig. 1).

Red-naped Sapsuckers have red on the back of the head, but since yellow-bellieds sometimes, but rarely, have a red nape (Mlodinow 2006, Landing 1991), this trait is suggestive but not definitive for identifying *nuchalis* (Robbins et al. 2005, Mlodinow 2006). In the Huntsville sapsucker, the red nape marking is somewhat restricted with very little red being seen from a side view (Fig. 1A). The nape color is also paler than the crown color, even though the plumage appears to be fresh. This pale nape may suggest a possible *nuchalis* x *varius* hybrid (Reid Barclay pers. comm., Shunk 2005). However, the shape of the patch and the intensity of red in the nape are variable among red-naped (Internet photographs, Devillers 1970, Dunn 1978), and therefore using these characters to identify a



FIGURE 1. Photographs of unidentifiable sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus*) in Huntsville, Alabama, 16 and 25 December 2008.

vagrant as a hybrid is problematic and awaits further study.

Throat and gender.—An adult female *varius* typically has a white throat bordered by black, whereas an adult female *nuchalis* typically has a red throat and a white chin (Walters et al. 2002a, 2000b). No white is seen on the throat or chin of the Huntsville sapsucker, suggesting the individual is a male (Shunk 2005). A male *varius* has a red throat distinctly bordered with black, whereas an adult male *nuchalis* typically has a red throat that has an incomplete border (Kaufman 1990, Pyle 1997, Mlodinow 2006). The Huntsville sapsucker has the throat pattern of a male Red-naped Sapsucker. The throat is completely red and red feathering intrudes into the posterior region of the malar, giving the appearance of an incomplete black border around the throat (Fig. 1B, 1C). In addition, some red feathering can be seen in the relatively broad, white subauricular stripe and even into the auricular region of the transocular stripe. These two characters (i.e., broken black frame around throat and trace of red on side of head) have not been reported for *varius* (Mlodinow 2006) and suggest that the sapsucker is a *nuchalis* (Devillers 1970, Sibley 2000, Shunk 2005). The amount of red intrusion into the malar stripe can vary (Internet photographs, Mlodinow 2006), so identifying a vagrant as a hybrid based on the degree of red intrusion alone is problematic and awaits further study.

Back pattern and coloration.—The usefulness of the back pattern and color in distinguishing yellow-bellieds and red-naped is unsettled. Mlodinow (2006) found considerable overlap between the two species in his analysis of museum skins, whereas Robbins et al. (2005) considered the back coloration and pattern to be a character showing the least variation among the sapsuckers species. Typically, *varius* has more pale markings that form a wide swath down the back (Kaufmann 1988, 2000; Shunk 2005; pers. obs.) and has a “messier” back pattern than seen in *nuchalis* (Sibley 2000). In *nuchalis*, the pale markings tend to form two distinct broken stripes that converge posteriorly (Devillers 1970, Shunk 2005). Both species can have buffy markings (Kaufmann 1990, Mlodinow 2005, Internet photographs), which can wear with time and leave the back pale markings primarily white (Sibley 2000). More buff markings are typically associated with *varius* (Devillers 1970, Dunn 1978, Robbins 2005). The Huntsville sapsucker had a back pattern that may be intermediate between typical *nuchalis* and *varius* (Fig. 1D; Shunk 2005). The buffy markings form two distinct stripes, but they are wider and more barred than those typically seen in red-naped (Internet photographs) and suggested to some photograph viewers that the individual was a hybrid. Yet, if extreme variants of *nuchalis* can have backs with buffy bars, one cannot exclude the possibility that the Huntsville bird is a *nuchalis*.

Facial pattern.— The difference in facial pattern between *nuchalis* and *varius* is subtle and difficult to measure, especially with varying light conditions, bird posturing, and observation angle (Mlodinow 2006). Typically, *nuchalis* has more black on the side of the head than *varius* because of differences in the thicknesses of the black lateral crown stripe, white supercilium, black transocular stripe, and white subauricular stripe. Some photograph viewers noted that the Huntsville bird had less black in the face than expected for *nuchalis* and this suggested a *varius* or a hybrid. Overlap among variants of the two species does occur (Internet photographs), however, so using this character for definitive identification is not possible.

Conclusion.— The Huntsville sapsucker has two characters, the red intrusion into the malar and the red feathers in the auriculars, which have not been reported in *varius* and suggest a *nuchalis*. The red nape supports this identification, but the Huntsville sapsuckers atypical back pattern and color, and the relatively wide, white supercilium and subauricular stripes suggest *varius* genes may be present. Therefore we cannot exclude the possibility that the bird might be a hybrid (i.e., *varius* x *nuchalis*) and conclude that the Huntsville sapsucker cannot be definitively identified. This conclusion may change as work is published from contact zones between the two species and more is learned about hybrid and adult plumages of sapsucker species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Steve Mlodinow, Mark Robbins, David Sibley, Reid Barclay, and Moez Ali for taking the time to respond to our inquiries. The comments of Eric Soehren, Bill Summerour, Steve McConnell, Greg Jackson, Jeff Garner and Paul Kittle were also very helpful.

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Scott D. Rose, 700 West Magnolia, Apt W6, Auburn, AL 36832. **Howard E. Horne**, 5417 Isabel Way South, Mobile, AL 36693. **Thomas M. Haggerty**, Biology Department, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632.

FALL SIGHTINGS (AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2008)

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

This report covers the period from August through November 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*, and *Santa Rosa*, are in Alabama. “@” = under review by; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “AFB” = Air Force Base; “b” = banded; “BAS” = Birmingham Audubon Society; “FOSRC” = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; “FWBSF” = Fort Walton Beach Spray Fields; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NABS” = North Alabama Birdwatcher’s Society; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – Four at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 26 September (Mike Rogers) marked the seventh record for Alabama and the latest departure date for the Gulf Coast (ph.; @ABRC).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Uncommon but regular at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 25 were noted 8 November (NABS). Rare on the Gulf Coast, two were at Elberta, *Baldwin*, 11 November (David Dortch; ph.). Damien Simbeck found a single at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 26 November, where the species is locally rare.

SNOW GOOSE – Eighty-five (mostly white morph) was a good number for the Inland Coastal Plain at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 8 November (Larry Gardella). Five blue morph individuals were notable at Opelika, *Lee*, 10 October (Rodney McCollum) (uncommon to rare in the Mountain Region).

ROSS’S GOOSE – Three visited Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 16 November (Steve McConnell) (rare but regular at this site).

CANADA GOOSE – On the 27 September fall count by the BAS in *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 729 set a new maximum for the Mountain Region.

MOTTLED DUCK – The second August record for the WP was marked by a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 22 August (Don Ware). Eighteen was a locally good number at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 20 September (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch).

- SURF SCOTER** – A single was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 20 November (Bob Duncan *et al.*) (rare in WP in fall).
- LONG-TAILED DUCK** – The first record for the WP in five years was marked by a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 30 October – 4 November (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Lyn Gould, Jay Gould, Don Ware, Lenny Fenimore).
- SCALED QUAIL** – One at Whiting Field, *Santa Rosa*, 22 September (Carrie Gindl; ph.) was considered an escaped bird.
- RED-THROATED LOON** – This species is rare but regular at Guntersville, *Marshall*, where one was sighted 23 November (Steve McConnell; ph.).
- AMERICAN FLAMINGO** – Observations of a single (probably the same individual), the fourth for the WP since 1885, caused considerable excitement at various sites in the WP: Big Lagoon SP, *Escambia*, 1 September (Rick Argo; ph.); Destin, *Okaloosa*, 5 September (anonymous, photograph in local newspaper), 6 September (Don Ware *et al.*), 8 September (Lucy Duncan; ph.), still present 12 September; Opal Beach near Navarre, *Santa Rosa*, 17 September (Kirsten Dahlen), seen by m.ob. through 20 September; and lingering until 1 October as far west as Pensacola Beach, *Santa Rosa*. The three previous reports of this species from the WP were of birds of questionable provenance, but considering the path of Hurricane Gustav and the associated very strong east and southeast winds along the northern Gulf Coast, this individual was likely a wild bird.
- GREATER SHEARWATER** – Casual in the WP, five birds were seen at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 24 August (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lanny Carpenter, Linda Carpenter) in association with Tropical Storm Fay. A single was at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 22 September (Patrick James; ph.).
- AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** – Casual in the WP, eight birds marked the sixth area record at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 24 August (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lanny Carpenter, Linda Carpenter) in association with Tropical Storm Fay.
- SHEARWATER SP.** – Six birds were at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 25 August (Peggy Baker), and a single was at Gulf SP, *Baldwin*, 25 August (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), both records in association with Tropical Storm Fay. A small shearwater, probably Audubon's, was seen from the Dauphin Island pier, *Mobile*, 2 September (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch, Eugenia Carey) in association with Hurricane Gustav (rare in Alabama).
- WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** – The latest record for the WP was marked by one seen at Perdido Key, *Escambia*, 23 September (Sue Yates) and found dead 25 September.
- MASKED BOOBY** – Two records associated with Tropical Storm Fay were received. A sub-adult at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 24 August (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lanny Carpenter, Linda Carpenter) marked the second August record for the WP. An immature was seen on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 25 August (Chazz Hesselein) (rare).
- BROWN BOOBY** – Casual in the WP, records of single immature birds came from Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 14 September (injured bird taken to Wildlife Rescue of

Northwest Florida and identified by Dorothy Kaufmann) and Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 25 September (Julia Babb).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Several records of this increasingly observed species were received: 300+ on 8 October and 400+ (new maximum for Mountain Region) on 13 October, Weiss Lake, *Cherokee* (Winston Baker, Linda Baker); 567 at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 2 November (Jimmy Wells, m.ob.) and 600 (maximum for inland Alabama) at the same site 15 November (NABS); and 94 (locally good number) at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 26 November (Damien Simbeck).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT – Casual in August in the WP, a single at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 18-20 August (Bob Duncan) marked a very early arrival date.

GREAT CORMORANT – The 16th Alabama record was marked by an immature bird on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26 October (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald). The 17th Alabama record (and the first for inland Alabama) was marked by an adult seen at the Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 17+ November (Eric Beohm, m.ob.; ph.).



Great Cormorant, 17 November 2008, Walter F. George Dam, AL; E. Beohm.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD – There were numerous sightings of this species in the WP during and after Hurricane Gustav in August and Hurricane Ike in September. In Alabama, this species is rare away from the outer coast, so two seen from the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 2 September (after Hurricane Gustav) (Chazz Hesselein) were notable.

LEAST BITTERN – This species is rarely detected inland in the fall, so two found on the fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 27 September (Ken Ward, Stan Hamilton *et al.*) were notable.

GREAT BLUE HERON – Ninety-two on the 27 September fall count by the BAS in *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair* was a good number for the Mountain Region.

GREAT EGRET – An estimated 1,200 in the Marion/Uniontown, *Perry/Hale* area, 28 August (Greg Jackson) ties the maximum count for Alabama. The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced 237 (a new maximum for the Tennessee Valley), and the fall count by the BAS in *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 27 September, tallied 149 (a new maximum for the Mountain Region).

REDDISH EGRET – Seven was a good number on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 24 August (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald *et al.*). The white morph is only occasional in Alabama, so an immature at the Dauphin Island Airport, *Mobile*, 7 September (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Leslie Marcus) was noteworthy.

WHITE IBIS – Damien Simbeck found one immature at Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 August (rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley; ph.).

GLOSSY IBIS – Sightings on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, were made on three dates:

22 (maximum fall count for Alabama) on 2 September (Chazz Hesselein); 16 on 12 September (Geoff Hill); and 20 (good number) on 11 November (Greg Jackson).

WHITE-FACED IBIS – Four on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 11 November (Greg Jackson) marked the 19th record and a maximum count for Alabama.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – Rare but increasing slightly in Alabama, the 12th record for the Inland Coastal Plain was established by two seen on 10 September along the Tallapoosa River east of U.S. 231, *Elmore* (Tommy Pratt, Fred Bassett).

WOOD STORK – Very rare in the WP, a single was at Pace, *Santa Rosa*, 22 August (Carol Lanthrip). An immature was at Lake Purdy, *Shelby*, 18 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.) (rare in the Mountain Region). Rare in the Tennessee Valley, singles were at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 22 August (Damien Simbeck; ph.) and near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 September (Neill Cowles, NABS). A new maximum count for Alabama was established by the 1,020+ in the Marion/Uniontown, *Perry/Hale* area, 28 August (Greg Jackson).

TURKEY VULTURE – This species is rarely seen at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, but a strong north wind on 21 November apparently pushed 17 migrants to this peninsular location (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Four were seen along Ala. Hwy. 183 northeast of Uniontown, *Perry*, 6 August (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson *et al.*) and 10 August (Greg Harber) (locally rare).

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Seventy+ was a good number in the County Road 85 area of *Pickens/Sumter*, 2 August (Greg Harber, BAS). Two late birds were seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 11 October (Mary Mehaffey, Janine Robin, Thomas Trenchard).

COOPER'S HAWK – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied six, a new fall maximum for the Tennessee Valley

SWAINSON'S HAWK – One light morph individual was seen 28 October at a site south of Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, where the species is now rare but regular (David Plumb).

AMERICAN KESTREL – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied 11, a new fall maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

MERLIN – Rare in the Mountain Region, a male was seen at the Birmingham Airport, *Jefferson*, 3 November (Greg Jackson).

AMERICAN COOT – A conservative count of 100,000+ on Pickwick Reservoir at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 26 November (Damien Simbeck) established a new maximum count for Alabama.

SANDHILL CRANE – A rare fall transient in the WP, a single was noted at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 30 October (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lyn Gould, Jay Gould). Ten were seen east of Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 28 November (Greg Jackson) where the species is locally rare.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER – Rare in the Mountain Region, three records were received: a single at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 26 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson); three at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 27 August (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson, Jessica

Germany); and four (maximum for the Mountain Region) at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 27 September (Alice Christenson, Dale Carruthers). A single was near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 September (Neill Cowles, NABS) (uncommon in the Tennessee Valley).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER – Rare but regular in fall in Alabama, reports from four sites were received. A single was at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 17 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson). Two were at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow). At Harpersville, *Shelby*, observations were made on four dates: two, 31 August (Greg Harber); six, 1 September (Greg Harber *et al.*); six, 6 September (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson); and five, 10 September (Helen Kittinger *et al.*), with the two records of six tying the maximum fall count for the Mountain Region. A single was near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 September (Neill Cowles, NABS) (rare but regular in fall).

WILSON'S PLOVER – A late bird was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 October (Ronnie Blackwell, Lin Harper *et al.*).

PIPING PLOVER – A bird banded in South Dakota was seen at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 15 October (Bob Duncan). Occasional for inland Alabama, those seen at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 26 August (three birds; Tommy Pratt *et al.*) and 27 August (a single; Larry Gardella, Tommy Pratt) marked the seventh record for the Inland Coastal Plain.

KILLDEER – A record of an extremely late nesting came from Opelika, *Lee*, where Lorna West observed a pair with one downy young (ph.) on 10 November.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – The first August record for the WP was marked by one on Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, 20 August (Dusty Varble).

AMERICAN AVOCET – This species is rare for inland Alabama, so 12 was a good number at Speigner, *Elmore*, 9 November (Larry Gardella).

WILLET – Rare for inland Alabama, records were received from three sites. Three were at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow). Singles were at Marvyn, *Lee*, 24 August (Barry Fleming), and at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 27 August (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson, Jessica Germany).

RED KNOT – Occasional for inland Alabama, a single was at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) (third record for the Inland Coastal Plain).

SANDERLING – At the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, a single was observed 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow), while 10 (good number) were seen 26 August (Tommy Pratt) (uncommon to rare for inland Alabama).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – The first August record for the WP was marked by a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 14 August (Don Ware). At the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, a single was observed 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) (rare in fall).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – The fourth, fifth, and sixth August records for the extreme WP were established, respectively, by two birds at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 14 August (Don

Ware); three at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 27 August (Bob Duncan); and a single at Fort Pickens 4 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). A single was found at Opal Beach, *Santa Rosa*, 20 September (Alex Harper; ph.). Rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, two were seen along County Road 38 south of Marion, *Perry*, 16 August (Larry Gardella), and two were at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow). Rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley, a single was seen west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 26 August (Damien Simbeck). Rare in the Mountain Region, singles were recorded near Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair*, 26 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.), and at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 27 August (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson, Jessica Germany).

PECTORALSANDPIPER – Two late birds were southeast of Foley, *Baldwin*, 8 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), while six were even later at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 15 November (Ken Ward, NABS).

DUNLIN – The second and third August records for Alabama were marked, respectively, by one at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 10-12 and 30 August (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*; ph.), and 15+ (good number) at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 27 August (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson, Jessica Germany).

STILT SANDPIPER – Greg Jackson found four at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 24 August (uncommon to rare in the Mountain Region), while Tommy Pratt recorded two at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 26 August (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – Uncommon to rare in the Tennessee Valley, one was spotted west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 1 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and four were found near Leighton, *Colbert*, 7 September (Ken Ward, NABS). Also uncommon to rare in the Mountain Region, a single was at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 26 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and at Harpersville, *Shelby*, five were counted on 6 September (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) and eight on 16 September (Maureen Shaffer, Helen Kittinger *et al.*).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Five were at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain). Two were at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 24 August (Greg Jackson) (uncommon to rare in the Mountain Region).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – A single was spotted at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) (occasional on the Inland Coastal Plain).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – A single was found at the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 24 and 26 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow *et al.*) (occasional on the Inland Coastal Plain).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE – At the Sprague Sod Farm, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, a single was noted 24 August (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) and five (maximum for inland Alabama) were counted 26 August (Tommy Pratt) (occasional in Alabama and fifth record for the Inland Coastal Plain).

SABINE'S GULL – An adult was found on Wilson Reservoir, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, two miles above Wilson Dam, 18 September (Damien Simbeck, Jason Mitchell, Raymond Moore; ph.; @ABRC) (sixth record for Alabama and second for the Tennessee Valley).



Sabine's Gull, 18 September 2008, Wilson Reservoir, AL; D. Simbeck.

LAUGHING GULL – This species is rare but regular at the Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, where 32 birds Sabine(only three in Alabama) were reported 28 August in association with Tropical Storm Fay (Walt Chambers, James Flynn). Also rare but regular at Guntersville, *Marshall*, several reports were received: one on 2 September (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds), three on 20 September (Steve McConnell), five on 25 October (Greg Jackson; ph.), and one on 17 November (Greg Jackson).

FRANKLIN'S GULL – A rare winter visitor to the WP, three birds were at the landfill, *Santa Rosa*, 12 November (Bob Duncan), and one-two were noted at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 20-29 November (Bob Duncan, Steve McConnell *et al.*). Numerous records were received for this species that is rare in Alabama: Guntersville, *Marshall*, 31 (good number) on 25 October (Greg Jackson; ph.) and a single on 23 November (Steve McConnell); west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, one on 2 November (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald), and three on 9 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson); Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 182 (maximum for Alabama) on 8 November (Linda Reynolds, NABS); Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, a single on 8 November (Howard Horne, m.ob.); and Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, six+ on 11 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), one on 20 November (Bill Summerour), and three on 25+ November (Bill Summerour).

CALIFORNIA GULL – An adult was found at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 25 October (Greg Jackson; ph.) and 14 November (Larry Gardella) to mark the eighth record for Alabama (@ABRC).

ICELAND GULL – An immature was found at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 22-26 November (Steve McConnell *et al.*; ph.) to mark the ninth record for Alabama (@ABRC).



Iceland Gull, 23 November 2008, Guntersville, AL; S. McConnell.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley and on the Gulf Coast, several records were received: Wilson Dam, *Colbert/Lauderdale*, one on 18 September (early arrival for inland Alabama) (Damien Simbeck, Jason Mitchell, Raymond Moore); Guntersville, *Marshall*, two adults on 4 October and one adult through the fall season (Linda Reynolds, NABS, m.ob.; ph.); west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, two on 11 October (Greg Jackson, Stan

Hamilton), one on 2 November (Howard Horne *et al.*), and one on 17 November (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan); Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, one on 4 November (Larry Gardella); and Guntersville, *Marshall*, one first cycle on 14 November (Larry Gardella).

GLAUCOUS GULL – The first November record for the WP was established by a single at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 14 November (Kirsten Dahlen; ph.).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – Rare in fall in the WP, an adult was at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 14 November (Sally Shultz; ph.). Rare in Alabama, one adult on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 6 September (Jacob Walker) was the earliest arrival for Alabama; also seen 11 and 18 October (Eric Soehren). A third year bird was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 2 November (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald).

BROWN NODDY – The third and fourth records for the extreme WP were marked, respectively, by a single at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 1 September (Dana Timmons, Sue Timmons, Carol Ascherfeld, Peggy Baker; ph.) (associated with Hurricane Gustav), and a single seen at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 14 September (Julia Babb) and recovered dead on 20 September (identified by Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

SOOTY TERN – Hurricane Gustav brought 17 birds to Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) (very rare storm-driven waif in the WP). Two records associated with Tropical Storm Fay were received: three adults were at Lake Oliver, *Lee*, 24 August (Walt Chambers) (fifth record for the Mountain Region), and a single adult was noted at the Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 28 August (James Flynn) (10th record for the Inland Coastal Plain). A juvenile was photographed on Lay Lake near Waxahatchie Creek, *Shelby*, 7 September (Rick Remy *et al.*) (sixth record for the Mountain Region).

BRIDLED TERN – In association with Hurricane Gustav, three birds were observed at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), and a single was at Pensacola, *Escambia*, also 1 September (Ann Forster) (very rare storm-driven waif in the WP).

CASPIAN TERN – Two were at Hope Hull, *Montgomery*, 13 August (Tommy Pratt) (uncommon to rare on the Inland Coastal Plain), and a single was at Logan Martin Dam, *St. Clair*, 1 September (Greg Harber *et al.*) (uncommon to rare in the Mountain Region).

BLACK TERN – A conservative estimate of 4,000 was made at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 4 September (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). In the area of Logan Martin Dam and Harpersville, *St. Clair/Shelby*, 13 were counted on 26 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) and 30 (good number for Mountain Region) on 27 August (Harriett Wright *et al.*). At Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 150+ was a good number on 2 September (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds).

WHITE-WINGED TERN – Dan Forster photographed a possible White-winged Tern at Bayou Grande, *Escambia*, 14 August (@FOSRC).

COMMON TERN – One was late at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 8 November (Ben Garmon, William Lilly).

BLACK SKIMMER – The first local and fifth Mountain Region record was marked by

a juvenile at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 26 August (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.) (occasional inland).

JAEGER SP. – An unidentified single was at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 15 September (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds) (occasional inland).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Rare and increasing inland, six+ were seen at Atmore, *Escambia*, 19 August (Jon Yoder, Dawn Yoder) (maximum for inland Alabama). A maximum fall count for Alabama was established by the 150+ at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 9 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.).

MOURNING DOVE – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced 927, a new fall maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE – Six were at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 17 September (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson (a maximum count for the Mountain Region, where the species is rare).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied 13, a new fall maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

SHORT-EARED OWL – Rare in Alabama, a single was noted at Whiteside, *Limestone*, 22 November (Andrew Haffenden, Bill Turnock).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL – Bob and Martha Sargent banded and photographed 11 birds on 10 dates between 30 October – 27 November at Clay, *Jefferson*, to establish the 18th- 28th records for Alabama.



Northern Saw-Whet Owl, 27 November 2008, Clay, AL; B. and M. Sargent.

WHIP-POOR-WILL – A late bird was calling at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 30 September (Paul Kittle).

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD – Rare but regular on the Gulf Coast, a single was at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 6 November (Fred Bassett, Ken Underwood; b.; ph.). At Fairhope, *Baldwin*, one was observed 25+ November and banded 7 December (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch, Fred Bassett *et al.*; ph.). A different individual captured 7 December at this site had been banded in January 2008 in Lafayette, Louisiana.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD – Rare but increasing, an adult male was at Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 19 November (Fred Bassett, Wanda Garner; b.; ph.).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 127, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

HAIRY WOODPECKER – Rare in the WP, one was reported from Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, 24 November (Kelly Jones).

PILEATED WOODPECKER – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 25, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – Three (good number) were at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 25 August (David Dortch, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) (rare but regular at this site). A single was found east of Vincent, *St. Clair*, 2 September (Maureen Shaffer, Helen Kittinger *et al.*) (rare in the Mountain Region). Another single visited Tyler, *Dallas*,

4-5 October (Frank Farrell, Shirley Farrell) (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – A late bird was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 8 November (Howard Horne *et al.*).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER – Rare but regular in fall in Alabama, numerous reports were received: singles were at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 25 August (David Dortch, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), and 15 and 16 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.); two were seen at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 29 August, and a single was at the same site 12 September (Damien Simbeck *et al.*); two were at the Birmingham Zoo, *Jefferson*, 30 August (Greg Harber); singles were at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, 4 September (Ben Garmon) and 18 September (Greg Harber); one stopped at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 September (Ben Garmon); one was found on Ruffner Mountain in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 20 September (Greg Jackson); and the fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, found a total of five, a maximum fall count for inland Alabama (Stan Hamilton, Duane Brown, Linda Reynolds *et al.*).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER – Larry Gardella found 20 birds west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 23 September to mark a new fall maximum for Alabama. The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 5, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

ALDER FLYCATCHER – One was calling west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 5 October (Larry Gardella) (third record for the Inland Coastal Plain, 17th for Alabama).

“TRAILL’S” FLYCATCHER – One was located west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 18 September (Larry Gardella) (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).

LEAST FLYCATCHER – An early arrival was at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26 August, and four + (good number) were counted there on 5 October (Ben Garmon). A single was noted at Old Lock No. 1 Park, *Clarke*, 5 September (Ben Garmon) (uncommon to rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).

DUSKY FLYCATCHER – Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, hosted Alabama’s second Dusky Flycatcher, 14 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.; ph.; @ABRC).

EASTERN PHOEBE – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied 41, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley, while a similar count by the BAS in *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 27 September, produced 115 (good number).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – A very rare winter visitor in the WP, a male was observed at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 23 October – 29 November (Bob Duncan, Don Ware, Kelly Jones, Steve McConnell *et al.*).

COUCH’S/TROPICAL KINGBIRD – The record of a single at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 2 August (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) has been accepted by the FOSRC (ninth record for the WP).

WESTERN KINGBIRD – The eighth record for the Mountain Region was marked by a single at Trussville, *Jefferson*, 2 August (Bob Sargent).



Dusky Flycatcher, 14 October 2008; Fort Morgan, AL; B. and M. Sargent, Fred Bassett.

GRAY KINGBIRD – Now rare but increasing, singles were seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 6 September (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Leslie Marcus) and 3 October (Lin Harper *et al.*).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 10 November (Patrick James) (rare but regular fall transient in the WP). A single returned to site at Bridgeport, *Jackson*, 15 August (Damien Simbeck) (occasional locally).

WHITE-EYED VIREO – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 43, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO – A single, the first for Alabama, was identified at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 26 October (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Cecil Brown) (@ABRC).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – Six were counted on Monte Sano Mountain, *Madison*, 1 November (Ken Ward, NABS) to set a maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

WARBLING VIREO – Casual in fall in the WP, singles were noted at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 1 and 10 October (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Reports of singles came from west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 18 September (Larry Gardella) (occasional on the Inland Coastal Plain); Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 26 September (Damien Simbeck *et al.*) (rare in the Tennessee Valley); and Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 28 September (Michael Jordan) (rare on the Gulf Coast).

BLUE JAY – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 427, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

FISH CROW – Rare but increasing in the Tennessee Valley, eight (maximum for the Tennessee Valley) were counted at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 20 September (Steve McConnell) and two were there 4 October (Linda Reynolds).

CAVE SWALLOW – One was seen at the Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 19 November (James Flynn *et al.*; ph.) (second record for inland Alabama, first in fall for Alabama).



Cave Swallow, 19 November 2008, Walter F. George Dam, AL; J. Flynn.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 260, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

TUFTED TITMOUSE – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 218, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – One arrived early at Clay, *Jefferson*, 12 September (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) (ties Mountain Region record).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH – One was west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 18 September (Larry Gardella), and two were at a feeder in Wetumpka, *Elmore*, 1-3 November (Jeffrey Harris) (locally rare at south edge of range). The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied 49, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH – A single was noted on the fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 27 September (Ken Ward, Neill Cowles, Beth Wood), where the species is locally rare.

CAROLINA WREN – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 156, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

BEWICK'S WREN – Now occasional in Alabama, a single was recorded from the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 10-12 October (Jacob Walker *et al.*).

WINTER WREN – An early bird was reported from Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 15 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.).

MARSH WREN – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied four, a good number for this species that is uncommon inland (Dwight Cooley, Scott Gravette). A single was at Roebuck, *Jefferson*, 5 October (Scot Duncan) (rare in Mountain Region).

SWAINSON'S THRUSH – Two were early at the Birmingham Zoo, *Jefferson*, 30 August (Greg Harber). A late departure record for inland Alabama was marked by a single at Steele, *St. Clair*, 8 November (Fred Moore; b.).

VARIED THRUSH – Alabama's second record, and the first for the Gulf Coast, was established by one in Cadillac Park, Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 16-22 November (Leslie Marcus, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Jacob Walker, Allison Walker *et al.*; ph.; @ABRC).

GRAY CATBIRD – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 75, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 135, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

AMERICAN PIPIT – A single was the earliest ever for Alabama at Lake Purdy, *Shelby*, 27 September (Pelham Rowan).

"BREWSTER'S" WARBLER – One was noted on the fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 27 September (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, Rick Remy) (rare).

TENNESSEE WARBLER – A late departure date for the Inland Coastal Plain was set by two at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 8 November (Larry Gardella).

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Usually considered a rare fall migrant in the Mountain Region, eight reports were received: on Ruffner Mountain, Birmingham, *Jefferson*, a single was noted on 21 September (Greg Jackson), two were there on 27 September (Scot Duncan), and another single was seen on 4 October (Greg Jackson); at Anniston, *Calhoun*, two were found on 1 October, a single on 6 October, and two on 14 October (Debbie McKenzie; ph.); at the Walls of Jericho, a single was seen on 9 October (John Trent); and south of Houston, *Winston*, one was found on 17 October (Larry Barkey). The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied five (ties maximum for the Tennessee Valley) (Stan Hamilton, Dwight Cooley, Linda Reynolds). Larry Gardella found one west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 5 October (rare



Varied Thrush, 19 November 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; D. Dortch.

on the Inland Coastal Plain). Four (good number) were counted at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 10 October (Damien Simbeck *et al.*) where the species is uncommon.

YELLOW WARBLER – A late bird was at Mobile, *Mobile*, 13 November (Leslie Marcus).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER – An early arrival was at Shorter, *Macon*, 27 August (Eric Soehren). Larry Gardella counted 20 west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 18 September (maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – An early arrival was seen on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 31 August (David Dortch). The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 134, a maximum for the Tennessee Valley. Sixty-one was a good number at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 10 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – Three records, all of singles, were received: Ruffner Mountain, Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 20 September (Greg Jackson) (rare inland); Short Creek, *Jefferson*, 27 September (Sharon Hudgins) (rare inland); and Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 8 November (Greg Jackson) (late).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – One was found at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 9 August (Chazz Hesselein) to mark an early arrival date for the Gulf Coast.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER – A late fall record for the Inland Coastal Plain was marked by a single at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 19 October (Larry Gardella).

PALM WARBLER – An early arrival was at Tyler, *Dallas*, 21 September (Frank Farrell, Shirley Farrell). Northeast of Opelika, *Lee*, Lorna West counted 300 (maximum for inland Alabama) on 11 October, with 200 at the same site on 12 October (Lorna West, Rita Kempf)

BLACKPOLL WARBLER – Occasional in fall in Alabama, singles were recorded at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 4 and 9 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.).

CERULEAN WARBLER – The latest departure date for Alabama was marked by one at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 26 October (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Cecil Brown).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – Two late birds were at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 26 October (Terry Baker, Larry Gardella).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER – One was a late departure at the Hays Nature Preserve, Huntsville, *Madison*, 20 September (Ken Ward, NABS). Two on the Wheeler NWR count, *Limestone*, 27 September (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, Rick Remy) marked the latest departure date for the Tennessee Valley. Still another late bird was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 13 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.) (latest fall record for the Gulf Coast and ties the latest fall record for Alabama).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – One was late at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, 27 September (Duane Brown, Lynn Brown).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER – A single occurred at Cypress Pond, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 1 October (Bill Campbell) (third record for the Inland Coastal Plain).

MOURNING WARBLER – Rare in Alabama, three records of singles were received: Anniston, *Calhoun*, 11 August (Debbie McKenzie; ph.) (earliest arrival for Alabama); Powder Magazine Park, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 19 September (Larry Gardella); and Wheeler NWR count, *Limestone*, 27 September (Rick Remy).



Mourning Warbler, 11 August 2008, Anniston, AL; D. McKenzie.

CANADA WARBLER – Two late birds were at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 4 October (Dick Reynolds, Linda Reynolds, Ken Ward, NABS).

WESTERN TANAGER – Casual in fall in the WP, one was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 28 September (Lucy Duncan, Betsy Tetlow, Bob Duncan).

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – Very rare in fall in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 4 November (Don Ware, Lenny Fenimore). Singles were noted at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 16 October (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.), 4 November (Larry Gardella), and 9 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), as well as at the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 28 October (Howard Horne *et al.*). The species is rare but regular in fall at both sites.

LARK SPARROW – Rare in the WP, a single was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 27 August (Bob Duncan). Three (good number) were at the Dauphin Island Airport, *Mobile*, 24 August (Howard Horne, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald *et al.*) where the species is uncommon. One was spotted at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 16 September (Maureen Shaffer, Helen Kittinger *et al.*) (rare in the Mountain Region).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – A single was at the Walls of Jericho, *Jackson*, 9 October (John Trent) (rare in the Mountain Region).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW – This species was seen on two dates at Oneonta, *Blount*, with four birds on 15 October and 14+ birds (good number for the Mountain Region) on 18 November (Duane Brown, Lynn Brown).

NORTHERN CARDINAL – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 313, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – At Montgomery, *Montgomery*, two late birds were found 26 October and one 8 November, the latter marking a late departure record for the Inland Coastal Plain (Larry Gardella).

BLUE GROSBEAK – A late bird was on the eastern Mobile Causeway, *Baldwin*, 16 November (Rodney Cassiday).

INDIGO BUNTING – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, produced a total of 300, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

DICKCISSEL – Three (maximum fall count for the Mountain Region) were noted in *St. Clair* on the Birmingham area count, 27 September (Jim Sherrill) (rare in fall).

BOBOLINK – The latest fall departure date for the WP was marked by a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 20 November (Bob Duncan). Uncommon in fall on the Gulf Coast, a single was at the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 6 September (Howard Horne,

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Leslie Marcus *et al.*). Rare in fall in the Mountain Region, 10 were noted at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 10 September (Helen Kittinger, Martha Coghlan).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD – A rare winter visitor in the WP, 60 was a good number on Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, 10 November (Kelly Jones).

SHINY COWBIRD – The second November record for the WP was marked by one at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 17 November (Don Ware).

BRONZED COWBIRD – The 15th record for Alabama was marked by one seen at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 9 November (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson; ph.).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH – The fall count on Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan*, 27 September, tallied 95, a maximum fall count for the Tennessee Valley.

NUTMEG MANNIKIN – This introduced species is increasing in south *Baldwin*. Six were seen at Lillian 10 November (David Dortch, Jim Dickerson) and 10 were south of Foley 12 November (Merilu Rose *et al.*).



Bronzed Cowbird, 9 November 2008, Fort Morgan, AL; G. Jackson.

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 (Email: g_d_jackson@bellsouth.net). **Robert A. Duncan** [NW Florida compiler], 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (Email: town_point@bellsouth.net).

WINTER SIGHTINGS (DECEMBER 2008 – FEBRUARY 2009)

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

This report covers the period from December 2008 through February 2009 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*, and *Santa Rosa*, are in Alabama. “@” = under review by; “ABRC” = Alabama Bird Records Committee; “AFB” = Air Force Base; “b.” = banded; “CBC” = Christmas Bird Count; “FWBSF” = Fort Walton Beach Spray Fields; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NABS” = North Alabama Birdwatcher’s Society; “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 – Two were at the fish hatchery in Marion, *Perry*, 24 December (Ben Garmon), and a single was at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 1 January (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow) (locally rare at both sites). It was a good year for this species in the Tennessee Valley where it is uncommon. Damien Simbeck located a single at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 4 December (locally uncommon). At Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, observations included: 25 on 8 November (NABS), 6 on 20 December (CBC), 82 on 4 January (David Trently *et al.*), and 152 (maximum for the Tennessee Valley) on 9 January (Steve McConnell). West of Florence, *Lauderdale*, counts were made as follows: four from 7-13 February (Damien Simbeck *et al.*), 61 on 20 February (Paul Kittle), 74 on 25 February (Damien Simbeck), 84 (maximum for northwest Alabama) on 27 February (Damien Simbeck), 77 on 3 March (Jud Johnston), and 20 on 5 March (Damien Simbeck).

ROSS’S GOOSE – Rare but increasing in Alabama, numerous reports were received. At Wheeler NWR, *Limestone/Morgan* (regular at this site), Steve McConnell found three on 16 November, 10 (good number) were recorded on the CBC on 20 December (Dwight Cooley *et al.*), and Damien Simbeck *et al.* reported four on 7 February. A single was noted near Cherokee, *Colbert*, 20 December (Floyd Sherrod; ph.). At Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, a lone bird was observed 23 December (Tom Ress, Sarah

Wittenberg *et al.*). A single was in the vicinity of Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 26 December – 3 January (Ken Ward, Rufina Ward, Milton Harris, Neill Cowles, m.ob.). Another single was at the fish hatchery in Marion, *Perry*, 27 December and 30 January (Ben Garmon). At Montgomery, *Montgomery*, one was seen 1-3 January (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow), two were found 11 January (Larry Gardella), and a single was present 21 February (Larry Gardella). West of Florence, *Lauderdale*, three were seen 11 January (Steve McConnell) and 7 February (Damien Simbeck), with two there 22 February (Steve McConnell).

CACKLING GOOSE – Two were seen at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, 16 January (Steve McConnell; @ ABRC), to mark the eighth record for Alabama.

CANADA GOOSE – The 86 recorded 3 January on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, was a good number for the Gulf Coast in recent years.

TUNDRA SWAN – A single was seen northwest of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 28 February (Steve McConnell; ph.) (rare and erratic in Alabama).

MOTTLED DUCK – Twenty-two was a locally good number on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 31 January (Steve McConnell).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Three records were received of this species that is rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley: several at Lake Guntersville SP, *Marshall*, 19+ December (Linda Reynolds *et al.*); one at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 22 December (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); and three on Brown’s Creek, Guntersville Reservoir, *Marshall*, 8 February (Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer). Uncommon in winter on the Inland Coastal Plain, six were noted at Pintlala, *Montgomery*, 28 February (Larry Gardella).

NORTHERN PINTAIL – On the 20 December Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 5,006 was a good number.

REDHEAD – A good count of 290 birds was made at Big Sabine, *Santa Rosa*, 9 February (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan).

RING-NECKED DUCK – A new maximum count for Alabama was established by the 10,000 tallied on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December.

GREATER SCAUP – Rare on the Inland Coastal Plain, six were observed at Speigner, *Elmore*, 16 February (Larry Gardella).

SURF SCOTER – Rare in the WP, singles were on Pensacola Bay, *Santa Rosa*, 28 December (Scot Duncan), and at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 23-24 January (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Alex Harper). Rare inland in Alabama, one was seen on the Tennessee River at Waites Cemetery, *Lauderdale*, 22 February (Steve McConnell; ph.).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER – Very rare in winter in the WP, three birds were at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, 23-24 January (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Alex Harper, Peggy Baker). Rare in Alabama, a single



White-winged Scoter, 21 January 2009, Dauphin Island, AL; G. Jackson.

was observed 21+ January on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile* (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson, m.ob.; ph.). One was at Brown's Creek, Guntersville Reservoir, *Marshall*, 26 January (Greg Jackson; ph.). Three birds were found at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 30 January (Greg Jackson). On the Tennessee River at the mouth of Bear Creek, 19 was a good number on 6 February (Damien Simbeck; ph.).

BLACK SCOTER – Rare in the WP, one was tallied on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December. Uncommon to rare on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, on Bon Secour Bay, *Baldwin*, a single was seen 3 January (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) and four were seen 4 January (Steve McConnell, Andrew Haffenden). Four were observed on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January (Dwight Cooley, Maureen Shaffer *et al.*).

LONG-TAILED DUCK – A single was at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 7-8 February (Steve McConnell; ph.) (rare in Alabama).

COMMON GOLDENEYE – The Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, tallied 262 (locally good number) 20 December.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER – Rare in winter on most of the Inland Coastal Plain away from the Chattahoochee River, a single was recorded on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

RED-THROATED LOON – Rare in Alabama, one juvenile was at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 16-17 December (Dwight Cooley *et al.*). An adult was on Bon Secour Bay, *Baldwin*, 4 January (Steve McConnell, Andrew Haffenden; ph.).

PACIFIC LOON – Rare but regular in winter in the WP, one-five birds were seen 22-23 December at Gulf Breeze and on Pensacola Bay, *Santa Rosa* (Scot Duncan, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Ashlin Duncan). Rare but regular in winter at Guntersville, *Marshall*, an adult was recorded 13 December (Steve McConnell), 26 December (Guntersville CBC), 10 and 17 January (Steve McConnell), and 6 February (Greg Jackson). Rare in winter on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, singles were noted at Orange Beach, *Baldwin*, 3 January (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and on Bon Secour Bay, *Baldwin*, 17 January (Larry Gardella).

COMMON LOON – The 26 December Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, recorded 543, a new maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

PIED-BILLED GREBE – On the Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 20 December, 998 marked a new maximum for northwest Alabama. .

HORNED GREBE – The 20 December Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, recorded 184, a new maximum for northwest Alabama. At Guntersville, *Marshall*, 688 were counted on the 26 December Guntersville CBC, while Greg Jackson counted 775 (good number) 26 January.

EARED GREBE – Rare inland in Alabama, a single was at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 6+ December (Steve McConnell *et al.*; ph.). Uncommon to rare in winter on the Alabama Gulf Coast, a single was seen on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – This species is increasing and becoming regular inland in winter, as evidenced by the 100 counted on the Tennessee River at Key

Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 5 December (Damien Simbeck), and the 594 (414 at Wheeler Dam, 180 at the mouth of Town Creek, *Lauderdale/Lawrence/Colbert*; maximum for northwest Alabama) counted by Steve McConnell on 11 January.

BROWN PELICAN – Rare on the Inland Coastal Plain (except *Henry*), an immature was on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January (Ashley Peters; ph.).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT – Increasing in Alabama, a maximum count for the Inland Coastal Plain was established by the 5,226 tallied on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

ANHINGA – A single was sighted at the sewage lagoons in Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 22+ January (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson *et al.*) (locally rare in winter). Two were reported from Moundville, *Tuscaloosa*, 13 February (Esker Harrison) (rare in central Alabama in winter).

AMERICAN BITTERN – Locally uncommon, a single was recorded on the Eufaula NWR CBC, *Barbour*, 19 December (Geoff Hill, Bailey McKay, Brian Rolex *et al.*).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – Uncommon to rare in winter for inland Alabama, a single was recorded on the Eufaula NWR CBC, *Barbour*, 19 December (Geoff Hill, Bailey McKay, Brian Rolex *et al.*; ph.).

REDDISH EGRET – Nine was a good number on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December.

CATTLE EGRET – Powers McLeod noted 8-21 birds 12-23 December at Pensacola, *Escambia* (very late for the WP).

GREEN HERON – Rare in winter on the Inland Coastal Plain, a single was found on the Tuscaloosa CBC, *Tuscaloosa*, 20 December. The third winter record for the Tennessee Valley was marked by two seen at Stevenson, *Jackson*, 13 January (Harold Birch). Rare in winter in the Mountain Region, one was at the Birmingham Zoo, *Jefferson*, in late January (Jamie Nobles).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – One injured bird was found for the fourth year in Fairfield during the Birmingham CBC, *Jefferson*, 27 December (Sharon Hudgins *et al.*) (rare in winter in the Mountain Region).

BLACK VULTURE – Good numbers (302 and 153, respectively) were tallied on the Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, 26 December, and the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

TURKEY VULTURE – The 156 flying west at Clay, *Jefferson*, 7 January (Bob Sargent) was a good number for a single site.

OSPREY – On the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January, 44 were recorded to set a new maximum for Alabama. Rare but regular in the Montgomery area in winter, two were found during the Montgomery CBC, *Elmore*, 3 January (Eric Soehren *et al.*).

BALD EAGLE – A new maximum for the WP was marked by the 17 found at the catfish farms in northwest *Escambia*, 11 January (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Alex Harper), continuing an upward trend.

RED-TAILED HAWK (HARLAN’S) – A dark morph bird was recorded on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Don Ware).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK – Seven on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January, marked a new maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK – An immature dark morph bird was seen 19-27 December north of Town Creek, *Lawrence* (Craig Brown *et al.*; ph.) (rare in Alabama).

GOLDEN EAGLE – Rare in Alabama, records of three singles were received: an immature at Hampton Cove, *Madison*, 7 December (Charles Grisham; ph.); another immature at Lake Guntersville SP, *Marshall*, 22 December (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner); and an adult along the Tennessee River near Waite Cemetery, *Lauderdale*, 6-22 February (Damien Simbeck *et al.*).



Golden Eagle, 7 December 2008, Hampton Cove, AL; C. Grisham.

MERLIN – A single was at Lake Purdy, *Shelby*, 2 December (Greg Jackson) (rare in winter in the Mountain Region).

Another single was north of Belle Mina, *Limestone*, 20 December (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) (rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley). The four counted on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January, tied the maximum winter count for Alabama.

PEREGRINE FALCON – The seven counted on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December, marked a new winter maximum for Alabama. Rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley, one was reported from Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 11 January (Steve McConnell), where the species has been regular in recent years.

SORA – Rare in winter in most inland areas, one was found on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

SANDHILL CRANE – Casual in winter in the WP, 11 were in north *Santa Rosa*, 22 November (Carol Tebay) and 28 December (Laura Catterton). Three were on Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, 2 December (Kelly Jones). Increasing in Alabama, a new maximum for Alabama was established by the 4,130 tallied on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December. Three other records came from areas where the species is locally rare: two at Fitzpatrick, *Bullock*, 29 January (John Trent); north of Atmore, *Escambia*, 40 in late January and 12 on 17 February (Ben Garmon *et al.*); and 108 at Crow Creek, *Jackson*, 28 February (Steve McConnell).

SNOWY PLOVER – A new winter maximum for Alabama was marked by the 16 on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14 February (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Howard Horne).

WILSON'S PLOVER – One at Pointe aux Pins, *Mobile*, 7 February (Lucy Duncan, m.ob.) marked the third winter record for Alabama.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER – On the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 120 (good number) were counted 14 February (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Howard Horne).

PIPING PLOVER – A bird observed in November at Navarre Beach Park, *Santa Rosa*, had been banded at Vermillion, South Dakota, on 28 June 2007 (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Twenty-nine was a good recent number on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14 February (Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald, Howard Horne).

- KILLDEER** – An unusual winter nesting event was documented by the sighting of two downy young at Inverness, *Shelby*, 27 December (Helen Kittinger *et al.*). Andrew Haffenden counted 260 (good number for a single site) at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 14 February.
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** – Seven were counted on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 20 January (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) (casual away from the outer coast).
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER** – Five were found on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December, and six were seen on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January (good numbers for winter on the Gulf Coast).
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** – On the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, the 32 counted on 3 January was a good winter number for the Inland Coastal Plain.
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** – The 56 tallied on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January, marked a maximum winter count for inland Alabama.
- WHIMBREL** – The first winter record for the WP was marked by a bird at Garcon Point, *Santa Rosa*, 20 December (Morris Clark *et al.*).
- MARbled GODWIT** – A single was found during the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December (rare in winter)
- RED KNOT** – Forty-six was a good recent number on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December.
- STILT SANDPIPER** – This species is rare/erratic in winter in Alabama. At Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, three were found 20 December (Howard Horne) and 16 were seen 17 and 24 January (Chazz Hesselein *et al.*).
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** – Four were counted on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January (Larry Gardella, Carolyn Snow), to mark the first documented winter record for the Inland Coastal Plain.
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** – Three were tallied on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January (Larry Gardella) (rare in winter in inland Alabama).
- WILSON'S PHALAROPE** – The first January record for the WP was established by a single at Big Lagoon State Park, *Escambia*, 21 January (Jan Osborne, Carolyn Henning *et al.*).
- LITTLE GULL** – The 10th record for Alabama was marked by one on the Tennessee River east of Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 20 December (Damien Simbeck, Raymond Moore; ph.; @ABRC).
- LAUGHING GULL** – Rare but regular in winter in the Tennessee Valley, numerous records were received: a single at Trinity, *Morgan*, 19 December (Steve McConnell); two on the Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 20 December; two on the Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, 26 December; a single at Wheeler Dam, *Lauderdale/Lawrence*, 11 January (Steve McConnell); two on 11 January (Steve McConnell) and a single on 17 January (Greg Jackson) at Wilson Dam, *Lauderdale/Colbert*; and two on 8 February (Maureen Shaffer, Anne Miller), two on 15 February (Steve McConnell), and a single on 17 February (Raymond Moore) at Guntersville, *Marshall*.

FRANKLIN'S GULL – Present since October, a single was seen at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 29 November (Steve McConnell).

RING-BILLED GULL – An estimated 15,000 (ties maximum for Alabama) were at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 6 February (Greg Jackson).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Now rare but regular at landfills in the WP, an adult was in northern *Escambia*, 11 January (Alex Harper, Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan). This species is rare but expected at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, and increasing. A single was observed 17 December (Bill Summerour) and five were there 2 January (Greg Jackson, Steve McConnell, Bill Summerour *et al.*; ph.); eight individuals were seen and photographed (allowing differentiation) at Magnolia Springs during the winter period.

GLAUCOUS GULL – Very rare in the WP, a first winter bird was in northern *Escambia*, 11-18 January (Lucy Duncan, Alex Harper, Bob Duncan, Carl Edwards). Rare in Alabama, numerous records were received this season: one immature at Alabama Port, *Mobile*, 14 December (Bill Summerour; ph.); one immature at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 2-9 January (Greg Jackson, Bill Summerour, Steve McConnell *et al.*; ph.); one immature (different individual than above) at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 3-9 January (Sharon Milligan *et al.*; ph.); one immature at Perdido Pass, *Baldwin*, 3 January (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) and 14 March (Lucy Duncan *et al.*); one first cycle at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 10 January (Steve McConnell; ph.); one immature on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 1 February (Howard Horne); and one immature on Lake Shelby, Gulf SP, *Baldwin*, 14 January (John Trent) – 28 March (Lucy Duncan *et al.*).



Glaucous Gull, 3 January 2009, Magnolia Springs, AL; S. Milligan.

SANDWICH TERN – Very rare locally in winter, two to seven birds were seen by two parties on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Bill Bremser, Greta Bremser, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Rare but increasing inland, seven were noted south of Atmore, *Escambia*, 13 December (Jon Yoder, Dawn Yoder). Also increasing along the Gulf Coast, 370 was a good number on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January. Lisa Jones counted 33 at Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 14 February.

MOURNING DOVE – A maximum count for the Tennessee Valley was set by the 1,639 tallied on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December. A maximum count for the Gulf Coast and the second highest count for Alabama was set by the 2,103 observed on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE – Twelve was a good number at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 14 February (Steve McConnell). This species is rare in the Mountain Region, but is becoming regular in the Harpersville, *Shelby* area, where two were noted 19 February (Louise Tommie).

GREAT HORNED OWL – A maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain was set by the 12 on

the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

BURROWING OWL – The only colony in the Florida Panhandle is at Site B-70 on Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, where Lenny Fenimore counted 12 on 7 December.

SHORT-EARED OWL – Three were in the Guntersville Dam area, *Marshall*, 26 December and 3 January (Ken Ward, NABS), and a single was at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale*, 11 January (Steve McConnell) (rare but regular at these sites).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL – Bob and Martha Sargent banded and photographed three birds at Clay, *Jefferson*, on 2 and 5 December and 26 January to mark the 30th, 31st, and 33rd Alabama records. Bob Sargent also observed a single at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 19 December to mark the 32nd record for Alabama.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK – Rick Remy found one in Irondale, *Jefferson*, 7 December (rare in winter).

WHIP-POOR-WILL – One was found on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Don Ware) (rare in WP).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD – An adult male was at Montrose, *Baldwin*, 23 January – 24 February (Venetia Friend, m.ob.; b., ph. Fred Bassett, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent; @ABRC) (fifth record for Alabama).

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD – This species is rare but expected in winter in Alabama. Fred Bassett photographed and banded three singles as follows: Fairhope, *Baldwin*, 14 December (Eleanor Livaudais); Fairhope, *Baldwin*, 14 December (Mary Gibson); and Montrose, *Baldwin*, 20 February (Nancy Moore).

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD – Casual in the WP, an adult female was at the home of Jan Lloyd, Pensacola, *Escambia*, 13 December (b. Fred Bassett).

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD – One was at Fairhope, *Baldwin*, 1 December (Fred Bassett, David Dortch, Carrie Dortch; b.; ph.) (13th record for Alabama).

ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD – Rare in winter in Alabama, one was in Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 5 February (Trip Etheridge, Fred Bassett; b.; ph.).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER – The 3 January Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, recorded 196, a maximum for the Gulf Coast.

SAPSUCKER SP. – A possible hybrid individual (Red-naped Sapsucker X Yellow-bellied Sapsucker) was in Huntsville, *Madison*, 15-26 December (Scott Rose, Howard Horne; ph.) (first record for Alabama).

DOWNY WOODPECKER – Sixty-eight was a good number on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January.

HAIRY WOODPECKER – One was found on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Don Ware) (rare in WP). A new maximum count for Alabama was established by the 32 tallied on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December.

SAY'S PHOEBE – Damien Simbeck reported one from northwest of Hazel Green, *Madison*, 26 February (fourth record for Alabama; ph.; @ABRC).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – A male was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Don Ware *et al.*) and 12 February (Bob Duncan).

- WESTERN KINGBIRD** – Rare in winter in the WP, two were recorded on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December. One was at the FWBSF 15 December (Don Ware *et al.*), and another was in east Destin (Dwayne Brown, Lynn Brown). Also rare in winter in Alabama, a single was reported from Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 December (Howard Horne, Leslie Marcus, Tom Siegwald, Joan Siegwald).
- WHITE-EYED VIREO** – This species is rare in winter in inland Alabama, and three reports of singles were received: Eufaula NWR CBC, *Barbour*, 19 December (Geoff Hill, Bailey McKay, Brian Rolex *et al.*); Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January; and Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 8 February (Larry Gardella). The 13 tallied on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January, ties the maximum winter count for Alabama.
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – Rare but regular in winter in both the Tennessee Valley and Mountain Region, five records were received: one at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 13 December (Ken Ward, NABS); five (maximum winter count for north Alabama) on the Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 20 December; one on the Birmingham CBC, *Jefferson/Shelby*, 27 December; one at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, 18 January (Steve McConnell); and one on Rebecca Mountain in Talladega National Forest, *Talladega*, 15 February (Greg Harber) (likely an early migrant).
- FISH CROW** – This species has been increasing in north Alabama in recent years. Rare but regular in winter in the Mountain Region, four were counted on the Birmingham CBC, *Jefferson/Shelby*, 27 December. At Guntersville, *Marshall*, eight (maximum winter count for Tennessee Valley, ties maximum count for Tennessee Valley) were noted 6 February (Greg Jackson) and seven were seen 15 February (Steve McConnell).
- PURPLE MARTIN** – Eight males arrived at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 12 February (Damien Simbeck) to tie the early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley.
- TREE SWALLOW** – Several were early at Lake Purdy, *Jefferson*, 21 February (Greg Harber, Louise Tommie, Birmingham Audubon Society).
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** – The second December record for the WP was marked by three birds at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 1 December (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).
- BARN SWALLOW** – Occasional in winter in Alabama, a single was spotted at Orange Beach during the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January (Don Ware).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – Two+ were reported from Demopolis, *Marengo*, 23 January (Ricky Ault; ph.) (rare so far south).
- HOUSE WREN** – Rare but regular in winter in the Tennessee Valley, one was noted on the Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, 26 December. The 28 tallied on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January, established a maximum winter count for inland Alabama.
- SEDGE WREN** – Singles were reported from Irondale, *Jefferson*, 7 January (Rick Remy), and Saginaw, *Shelby*, 18 January (Andrew Haffenden) (rare in winter in the Mountain Region).
- MARSH WREN** – Rare in the Tennessee Valley in winter, one was seen (Milton Harris) on Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, during the Wheeler NWR CBC, 20 December.
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** – A single was recorded for the Eufaula NWR CBC,

Barbour, 19 December (Geoff Hill, Bailey McKay, Brian Rolex *et al.*) (uncommon in the winter on the Inland Coastal Plain, but regular in this area). Rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley, records of singles came from the Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 20 December, and the boat harbor in Decatur, *Limestone*, 10 January (Ken Ward, NABS).

GRAY CATBIRD – One was noted on the Waterloo CBC, *Lauderdale/Colbert*, 20 December (rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley).

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT – Rare but regular at Site B-70 on Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, Lenny Fenimore found one on 8 February. Rare in Alabama, six+ was a good number south of Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 21 January (David Plumb, Bill Summerour; ph.), while two were noted 22-23 January (Bill Summerour *et al.*).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – Rare but regular in winter in the Tennessee Valley and the Mountain Region, three reports were received: one on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December; four on the Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, 26 December; and one in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 30 December (Derek Lovitch).

NORTHERN PARULA – This species is occasional in winter in Alabama, but one on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January (Annabel Markle, Carolyn Snow) marked the first such record for inland Alabama.

YELLOW WARBLER – The second December record for the WP was marked by a single at Solutia Sanctuary, *Escambia*, 13 December (Ann Ziccardi, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, m.ob.).

PRAIRIE WARBLER – The second January record for the WP was marked by a single at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21 January (Bob Duncan).

PALM WARBLER – Seven was a good number on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December; four were tallied on the Guntersville CBC, *Marshall*, 26 December; and 10 was a good number at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 31 January (Ken Ward, NABS) (uncommon in winter in the Tennessee Valley).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – Occasional in winter for inland Alabama, singles were noted at Andalusia, *Covington*, 6 December (Thomas Savage), and in Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 3 January (Robert Reed) and 6 January (Larry Gardella).

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT – A single was seen at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 22 December (Steve McConnell, Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner), and two were noted at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 31 January (Ken Ward, NABS) (rare but regular in winter in the Tennessee Valley). Twenty (good winter number for the Inland Coastal Plain) were counted on the Montgomery CBC, *Montgomery*, 3 January.

WILSON'S WARBLER – Casual in winter in the WP, singles were recorded on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Kathy Gault), and on the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, 20 December (Powers McLeod, Sam Tagatz, Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

SUMMER TANAGER – Singles were found on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Bob McKenney), and at a feeder in Pensacola, *Escambia*, 9 January (Morris Clark) (rare in winter in the WP). Rare but regular in winter on the Gulf Coast,

one was at Bon Secour, *Baldwin*, 29 January (John Dillon, Kay Dillon). Occasional in winter for inland Alabama, a single was seen at Dothan, *Houston*, 20 February (Glenn Walbek).

WESTERN Tanager – Rare in Alabama, one was observed at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 13-14 December (Howard Horne, John Stowers, m.ob.; ph.; @ABRC).

CHIPPING SPARROW – A new maximum for Alabama was established by the count of 1,605 on the Gulf Shores CBC, *Baldwin*, 3 January.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – The second and third December records for the WP were marked, respectively, by two birds at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 1 December (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan), and one at Pensacola, *Escambia*, 24 December (Merilu Rose, Rufus Rose). Rare in winter in Alabama, a single was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 December (Howard Horne, Leslie Marcus, Joan Siegwald, Tom Siegwald).



Western Tanager, 13 December, 2008, Dauphin Island, AL; B. Summerour.

LARK SPARROW – Very rare in winter in the WP, one was found on the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, 20 December (James Pfeiffer *et al.*). Rare in winter on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, one was noted on the Dauphin Island CBC, *Mobile*, 14 December (Mark Van Hoose, Ralph Havard). Occasional in winter for inland Alabama, singles were seen on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Morgan*, 20 December (Linda Reynolds), and at Lake Land Farms, Marion, *Perry*, 8 February (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – One was seen north of Belle Mina, *Limestone*, 20 December (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) and 24 December (Dwight Cooley) (rare in winter in the Tennessee Valley).

SALTMARSH SPARROW – Bob Duncan and Sam Tagatz observed one in a *Spartina alterniflora* mitigation marsh while participating in the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, 20 December. This is the third sighting of this species by the Duncans in the WP (@ Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – Rare in winter in for inland Alabama, three were tallied on the Wheeler NWR CBC, *Limestone/Morgan*, 20 December (Dwight Cooley, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton *et al.*).

DARK-EYED JUNCO – Rare in the WP, one was seen on the University of West Florida campus, *Escambia*, 24 January (Alex Harper).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR – Twenty were seen southwest of Foley, *Baldwin*, during the Gulf Shores CBC, 3 January (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) (rare but becoming regular on the Gulf Coast).



Snow Bunting, 2 January 2009, Magnolia Springs, AL; D. Dortch.

SNOW BUNTING – An adult male was discovered at

Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 2 January (Steve McConnell, m.ob.; ph.; @ABRC) to mark only the second record for Alabama.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – Two well-described males were reported from Milton, *Santa Rosa*, 18 February (Les Kelly) (first February record for the WP). Occasional in winter for inland Alabama, a male visited a feeder in Auburn, *Lee*, 27 January – 1 February (Sharon Roberts; ph.). Rare in winter on the Alabama Gulf Coast, one was noted at a feeder in Mobile, *Mobile*, 28 February – 28 January (Brian Naylor; ph.).

BLUE GROSBEAK – The eighth winter record for the WP was marked by one on the Choctawhatchee CBC, *Okaloosa*, 15 December (Don Ware). A male was spotted on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 25 January (Ricky Kittinger, Jo Kittinger, Helen Kittinger *et al.*; ph.) (fifth winter record for Alabama).

INDIGO BUNTING – Very rare in winter in the WP, one was found during the Pensacola CBC, *Escambia*, 20 December (James Pfeiffer *et al.*). Rare in winter in Alabama, especially inland, a male was reported from near Walter F. George Dam, *Henry*, 14 February (Steve McConnell). A report of another single came from Mobile, *Mobile*, 28 February (Betsy Eager).

PAINTED BUNTING – Very rare in winter in the WP, a male visited a feeder in Pensacola, *Escambia*, 20 January – 12 February (Gary Money).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD – In the WP, Laura Catterton reported 80 (excellent number) from northern *Escambia*, 23 December. An estimated 500 at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 9 February (Dwight Coley) was a good number for recent years.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD – In the WP, an estimated 100 birds in several mixed flocks were reported from northern *Escambia*, 11 and 18 January (Alex Harper, Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan, Carl Edwards). Sixty+ was a good number so far east on the Eufaula NWR CBC, *Barbour*, 19 December (Geoff Hill, Bailey McKay, Brian Rolex *et al.*).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE – This species is inexplicably rare in the WP, but fairly common just to the east and west. Forty birds were reported from the Escambia River marsh, *Escambia*, 18 January (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan).

HOODED ORIOLE – The first record for Alabama (but see oriole sp. below) was established by an adult male at Barnwell, *Baldwin*, 27 January – 24 March (Kathy Hicks, m.ob.; ph.; found dead 24 March, specimen to Auburn University; @ABRC).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Casual in winter in the WP, a single was at a feeder in Pensacola, *Escambia*, 17 December – 6 February (Betsy Tetlow, Peggy Baker *et al.*), and another bird occurred in the Escambia River swamp, *Escambia*, 18 January (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan). A single was reported from Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 1 January (Larry Gardella,



Hooded Oriole, 20 February 2009, Barnwell, AL; K. Hicks.

Carolyn Snow) (rare but regular in winter in this area). Rare but regular in winter on the Gulf Coast, three records were received: two at feeders in Lillian, *Baldwin*, winter season 2008-2009 (Jim Dickerson, m.ob.; ph.); two-three at Barnwell, *Baldwin*, 28+ January (Kathy Hicks, Bill Summerour, m.ob.); and one at Tanner Williams, *Mobile*, 2 February (Ruth Wilcoxson, Greg Wilcoxson). Rare in winter in the Mountain Region, one was noted at Homewood, *Jefferson*, 3-4 January (Ann Miller).

ORIOLE SP. – An immature male bird was seen at Lillian, *Baldwin*, 20+ January (Jim Dickerson, Bill Summerour, m.ob.; ph.; @ABRC). This bird was probably a Hooded Oriole, but the sighting is controversial and still under review. If deemed a Hooded Oriole, it would be the first for Alabama (preceding the Barnwell Hooded Oriole noted above).

PINE SISKIN – This species was reported at several feeders in the WP, highlighted by about 120 at the feeder of Morris Clark in north Pensacola, *Escambia*, 12 January.

Paul D. Kittle, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632 (e-mail: 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 (e-mail: town_point@bellsouth.net).

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Effectiveness of call-broadcast surveys for breeding marsh birds along coastal Alabama. Soehren, E. C., J. W. Tucker, and D. G. Crow. 2009. *Southeastern Naturalist* 8: 277-292.

Influence of tidal height on detection of breeding marsh birds along the northern Gulf of Mexico. Rush, S. A., E. C. Soehren, K. W. Stodola, M. S. Woodrey, and R. J. Cooper. 2009. *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 121: 399-405.

Birds that inhabit marshes are often secretive and difficult to detect. This has resulted in a shortage of baseline population information for this group of birds across North America. Because of the decline of wetland habitats, it is imperative that accurate methods for detecting wetland bird species be developed. Although new techniques have been adopted for surveying breeding marsh birds, sampling methods and certain environmental factors may influence survey results. In these two papers the researchers address whether species detection rates are improved by broadcasting a species vocalization during surveying (Soehren et al. 2009) and whether tidal heights (i.e., water levels) can influence survey results (Rush et al. 2009).

The call-broadcast study was conducted in the tidal marshes of Baldwin and Mobile counties, Alabama. The species that were surveyed included Least Bittern, Black Rail, Clapper Rail, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, and Common Moorhen. This study found that detection rates for Clapper Rail, King Rail, and Purple Gallinule were significantly improved when recordings of their vocalizations were played during surveying. Detection rates did not improve, however, for Least Bitterns or Common Moorhens. No Black Rails were found during the study.

The second study focused on the effects of tidal height on detection rates of Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrow, Marsh Wren, Purple Gallinule, and Common Moorhen in the coastal marshes of Alabama and Mississippi. This research found that Clapper Rails and Seaside Sparrows were more likely to be detected when tides were high, but that Marsh Wrens were more readily detected during low tides. Although sample sizes were small, they found no evidence that tide levels influenced the detection rates of the two gallinaceous species (Purple Gallinule or Common Moorhen). The authors suggest that changes in tidal levels can influence the behavior of some marsh birds, which in turn can affect their detection rates —
TMH.

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.

Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society

Volume 55

No. 1

2009

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Tom Haggerty, Editor
Alabama Birdlife
Department of Biology
University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama 35632-0001