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Layout by Tom Haggerty

COVER: Upland Sandpiper, 24 April 2012, Baldwin Co., AL; photograph by Greg D. Jackson

**JOINT NESTING BY THE EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*SIALIA SIALIS*) IN
SOUTHEAST ALABAMA**

John Andrew Arnold, John A. Trent, and Eric C. Soehren

The Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) is an obligate cavity nester that relies on abandoned cavities excavated by other species. Eastern Bluebirds have been historically limited by the availability of natural cavities and compete intensely for those that are vacant (Gowaty and Plissner 1998, Seifferman and Hill 2005). Hence, the construction and provisioning of nest boxes in parks and along trails throughout its range has been a successful management action that has significantly benefited this species. Moreover, accessibility to nest boxes by researchers has enabled detailed studies on the breeding biology of Eastern Bluebirds, yielding many interesting facets about their life history (Gowaty and Plissner 1998).

The Elhew Field Station, located on the Wehle Forever Wild Tract in Bullock County, Alabama (N 32.036°, W -85.475°), annually monitors 92 Eastern Bluebird nest boxes established along a trail on the property. In 2012, Elhew Field Station personnel documented 118 successful nesting attempts (N=160) with one unusual attempt of particular note. On 28 March 2012, one nest box contained nine Eastern Bluebird eggs indicating a possible joint nesting. Two days later while checking the nest box, joint nesting was confirmed when two females immediately flushed out of the box and began scolding alongside the male. The nest had a maximum clutch size of ten eggs (Figure 1). Of the ten eggs, only one hatched and the nestling was subsequently banded and successfully fledged. None of the remaining nine eggs were fertile.

While primarily monogamous (>95%), Eastern Bluebirds occasionally engage in polygamy, including cases of both polyandry (female with multiple males) and polygyny (male with multiple females; Gowaty 1980, 1983; Gowaty and Plissner 1998). During polygynous events, mated females usually nest in separate cavities, but will on very rare occasions nest together in a single cavity (Gowaty 1980). For example, Gowaty and Plissner (1998) documented five joint nestings from more than 4,000 monitored nesting attempts during a long-term study in South Carolina.

Joint nesting by Eastern Bluebirds is poorly understood. Verner and Willson (1966) posited that when suitable nest cavities are in short supply in a given area, a male may claim possession of the available cavities when establishing its territory, while adjacent occupied territories may be devoid of them, thereby making it more advantageous for one or more females to select the mate possessing the available

nest cavities. The male in this observation appeared to be territorial over several nest boxes including the one used. However, it remains unclear why the two females chose to nest jointly instead of separately given the number of nest boxes available within the breeding territory.

Another unusual aspect of this observation was the increased level of



Figure 1. Eastern Bluebird nest containing ten eggs on the Wehle Forever Wild Tract, Bullock County, Alabama. Photograph by John Trent on 1 April 2012.

cooperation exhibited by the females involved. Joint nesting requires a subsidence of aggressive behavior, which normally occurs between members of the same species (Duckworth 2006, Gowaty 1981, Gowaty and Plissner 1998). Aggression is a common behavior in Eastern Bluebirds, especially during the breeding season when competition determines selection of the fittest mates. These aggressive interactions include tactics such as colliding, pecking, chasing and grappling with feet, and may lead to serious injury or death. Although regularly exhibited toward other species viewed as competitors, aggression is most often intrasexual, or between members of the same sex and species (Duckworth 2006, Gowaty and Plissner 1998). Several Eastern Bluebird studies involving intrasexual aggression show male-male disputes linked to protecting paternity and female-female aggression serving to help avoid nest parasitism (Gowaty 1981, Gowaty and Wagner 1988).

There is uncertainty as to why joint nesting would occur in a species generally considered monogamous. Of the five instances of joint nesting mentioned by Gowaty and Plissner (1998), at least two were believed to be mother and daughter cases, and their relationship may infer why there was a lack of aggression between them. Although the relationship of the two females nesting together on the Wehle Tract is unknown, it is reasonable to suspect this may have been a mother and daughter cooperative breeding effort similar to cases described by Gowaty and Plissner (1998), but this is merely speculation. Current efforts to band nestlings at the Wehle Tract may provide more insight to this question if another joint nesting is observed in the future. Regardless of the circumstances leading to joint nesting, this observation is a noteworthy occurrence in the breeding biology of Eastern Bluebirds.

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SPRING SIGHTINGS (MARCH - MAY 2012)

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

This report covers the period from March through May 2012 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.



Regions of Alabama and Florida Panhandle for Bird Distribution Data

Abbreviations and italics: County names are in italics and, except for the Florida counties of *Bay*, *Escambia*, *Franklin*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa*, are in Alabama. “b.” = banded; “FWBSTF” = Fort Walton Beach Sewerage Treatment Facility; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NWR” = National Wildlife Refuge; “ph.” = photographed; “SP” = State Park; “WMA” = Wildlife Management Area; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK – Four in east Pensacola, 15 May (Becky McQueen) and two at the International Paper wetlands, Cantonment, 28 May (Jerry Callaway) (both *Escambia*), marked the eighth and ninth records for the WP, respectively. Rare but increasing on the Inland Coastal Plain, records were received from two localities that marked the third and fourth (and first spring) records, respectively, for the region: Hacoma, *Geneva*, six on 13 April and 2+ on 19 April (Odis Johnson; ph.), and Conway Acres, *Lee*, 10+ on 30 April (Stewart McCoy; ph.). Howard Horne found two on the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 3 May (rare but now

regular in this area).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – At Star Lake in Hoover, *Jefferson*, an immature was noted approximately 1-10 May (Karen Moore, Ken Wills; ph.) (rare in the Mountain Region; late departure date for Alabama).



Greater White-fronted Goose, 1 May 2012, Jefferson Co., AL; K. Moore.

SNOW GOOSE – During count week for the Birmingham area spring count, three were reported from *St. Clair*, approximately 28 April (Jim Sherrill) (rare in spring in the Mountain Region).

GADWALL – Eric Soehren and John Trent counted 150 along the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 12 March (maximum spring count for the Gulf Coast).

MOTTLED DUCK – Two were noted at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 25 April (Greg Jackson), where this species is locally rare.

RING-NECKED DUCK – Late birds were near Leighton, *Colbert*: two on 12 May (Greg Jackson, Howard Horne), three on 19 May, and a single on 23 May (Damien Simbeck).

SURF SCOTER – Several were reported from Tyndall Air Force Base, *Bay*, 17 April (Neil Lamb) (very late). Three males were spotted at Bon Secour NWR, *Baldwin*, 26 April (Brittany Peterson) (rare in spring).

RED-THROATED LOON – Three were reported at the airport on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 24 March (Howard Horne, Michelle Steber, Patsy Russo) (rare; maximum spring count for the Gulf Coast).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – Damien Simbeck reported 358 (maximum spring count for the Tennessee Valley) from the Riverton area of Pickwick Reservoir, *Colbert*, 1 March. One in the Perdido Bay area, *Baldwin*, 17 May (Ashley Peters) was late if not a rare Gulf Coast breeder.

HORNED GREBE – Damien Simbeck reported 96 from the Riverton area of Pickwick Reservoir, *Colbert*, 1 March (good number for spring). Sixty were counted at the airport on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 10 March (Howard Horne) (maximum spring number for the Gulf Coast).

WOOD STORK – At the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, Eric Soehren found a single on 26 April and John Trent noted seven on 18 May (rare this early).

ANHINGA – At Saginaw, *Shelby*, a single was noted 28 April (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) and five (maximum for the Mountain Region) were reported 19+ May (Greg Harber *et al.*) (rare in the Mountain Region; return to site). Kathy Hicks found 10 at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 10 May (maximum spring count for the Gulf Coast). A single was spotted at Wheeler NWR, *Limestone*, 13 May (Chuck Graham), and three reports came from Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*: a single on 28 April (Chuck Graham), another single on 14 May (Jeff Garner), and four on 27 May (Chuck Graham) (rare in the Tennessee Valley). One female was seen at a lake on County Road 22 north of Montevallo, *Shelby*, 23 May (Harriett Wright, Alice

Christenson) (rare in the Mountain Region; new site).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – On the Coosa River near Southside, *Etowah*, 10 were seen 18 March (Bobby Sims, Ann Sims) (rare in the Mountain Region). Another 10 were reported from Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 13 May (John Trent) (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).

AMERICAN BITTERN – John Trent noted a single at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 14 April (uncommonly detected on the Inland Coastal Plain). Sharon Hudgins recorded another single during the Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson*, 28 April (rarely detected in the Mountain Region). Howard Horne found one at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 26 May (latest departure record for the Gulf Coast except one late June record).

GREAT BLUE HERON – The Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 28 April, recorded 130 to mark a spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

GREAT EGRET – The Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 28 April, recorded 109 to mark a spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

SNOWY EGRET – Cheryl Horncastle found two during the Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 28 April (rare but regular in spring in the Mountain Region). Near Leighton, *Colbert*, good numbers for spring in the Tennessee Valley were reported as follows: 11 on 3 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Warren Massey), 14 on 14 May (Damien Simbeck), and 15 on 15 May (Sue Moske).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – In the Leighton area, *Colbert*, two were found on 10 April (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), five were seen 3 May (Damien Simbeck), and three were noted 19-23 May (Sue Moske, John Trent) (good number for spring in the Tennessee Valley where this species is rare but regular in spring in recent years). Michael Jordan estimated 600 at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 20 May (maximum spring count for the Gulf Coast).

TRICOLORED HERON – One adult was found near Leighton, *Colbert*, 14-19 May (Damien Simbeck *et al.*) (rare inland).

PLEGADIS SP. – Twenty were tallied during the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone*, 28 April (Ken Ward, David Pylant, Mike Stahl, Angela Stahl) (rare inland, maximum for this genus for inland Alabama).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – One at St. Andrews SP, *Bay*, 10 April (Rick Argo) was very rare.

BLACK VULTURE – The Birmingham area spring count, *Jefferson/Shelby/St. Clair*, 28 April, recorded 34 to mark a spring maximum for the Mountain Region.

OSPREY – A maximum total for inland Alabama came from Lake Guntersville, *Jackson*, with the observation of seven pairs and three young on 28 May. At Mink Creek, six nests were reported, one with one young and one with two young, while at South Sauty Creek, one nest was reported (Jerry Green *et al.*; ph.).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Ninety-three (good number) were reported from the WP 27 February – 13 March (m.ob.). In Alabama, Roger Clay noted 29 in scattered groups flying east at Daphne, *Mobile*, 12 March (maximum spring count for the Gulf Coast).

HARRIS'S HAWK – One found in Cantonment, *Escambia*, 27 April (Emily Allen)

and brought to the Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida was of questionable provenance.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – An adult dark morph bird was reported from Scottsboro, *Jackson*, 21 April (Rocky Baker, Inez Klatt ; ph.) (second record of a dark morph for Alabama and the first inland).

RED-TAILED HAWK – Twenty-three were tallied during the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 28 April (ties maximum spring number for the Tennessee Valley).

YELLOW RAIL – One was found at Point aux Pins, *Mobile*, 13 March (Eric Soehren, John Trent, Jake Walker *et al.*; b.; ph.) (rare but probably regular at this site).

COMMON GALLINULE – Six were reported from the fish hatchery at Marion, *Perry*, 21 March (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson) (maximum spring count for the Inland Coastal Plain).

AMERICAN COOT – Records of late birds, all singles, came from four sites: north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 26 May (Michael Jordan); Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 26 May (Howard Horne); Speigner, *Elmore*, 26 May (Larry Gardella); and Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 28 May (John Trent, Ashley Peters).

LIMPKIN – A single was at Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 13 May (John Trent *et al.*; ph.; under review by the Alabama Bird Records Committee) (fourth record for Alabama, first in spring).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER – A late bird was near Leighton, *Colbert*, 12-14 May (Bala Chennupati, Greg Jackson, Howard Horne *et al.*; ph.).

WILSON'S PLOVER – An early arrival was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 March (Howard Horne, Patsy Russo *et al.*).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – One in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 2 May (Bob Duncan) was unusual at that location.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – An early arrival was along the Chattahoochee River at Valley, *Chambers*, 13 March (Geoff Hill).

UPLAND SANDPIPER – Late departing singles were near Oakland, *Lauderdale*, 3 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Warren Massey), and at Sprague, *Montgomery*, 13 May (Larry Gardella).

RED KNOT – Geoff Hill counted 30 on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 20 May (good number in recent years).

SANDERLING – On Pelican Island, *Mobile*, Howard Horne counted 212 on 4 March (new spring maximum for the Gulf Coast).

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER – Damien Simbeck observed a single near Leighton,



Yellow Rail, 13 March 2012, Mobile Co., AL; E. Soehren.



Limpkin, 13 May 2012, Barbour Co., AL; E. Soehren.

Colbert, 19 April (new early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley).

LEAST SANDPIPER – Near Leighton, *Colbert*, Damien Simbeck counted 209 on 14 May (maximum spring count for north Alabama).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – Rare but regular in the spring in Alabama, reports of singles were received from three sites: Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 6 April (Zach Loman); Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 20-23 April (Eric Soehren *et al.*) and 14 May (Bill Summerour); and west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 3 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Warren Massey).

STILT SANDPIPER – Howard Horne reported 21 from Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 8 March (good number so early).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – Two were at the FWBSTF, *Okaloosa*, 13 April (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – A single was at the FWBSTF, *Okaloosa*, 13 April (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan). Singles were noted at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 23 April (Howard Horne) and 14 May (Bill Summerour; ph.) (rare but regular in spring on the Gulf Coast).



Wilson's Phalarope, 14 May 2012, Mobile Co., AL; B. Summerour.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – An adult and two immatures were found at Town Creek Marsh, *Colbert*, 21 March (Damien Simbeck) (rare but increasing; maximum spring number for Alabama).

GLAUCOUS X HERRING ("NELSON'S") GULL – A second cycle individual was seen at the Santa Rosa County Central Landfill, *Santa Rosa*, 13 March (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan; ph.) to establish the first report for the WP.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – A first cycle bird was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 5 March (Ben Garmon, Patsy Russo) (rare but regular in this area).

HERRING X KELP (CHANDELEUR) GULL – An adult was on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 March (Howard Horne, Terry Hartley), and another (or same?) adult was at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 7 April (Lisa Comer; ph.) (rare but becoming regular on the Gulf Coast; second and third spring records for Alabama).

SANDWICH TERN – Four early birds were at Gulf SP, *Baldwin*, 24 March (Karen Chiasson; ph.).

GROOVE-BILLED ANI – One at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, 24 March (Brenda Callaway, Jerry Callaway) was very rare for spring.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK – An early arrival was in Irondale, *Jefferson*, 29 March (Jamie Nobles).

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD – One in Cantonment, *Escambia*, 5 March – 5 April (Brenda Callaway, Jerry Callaway, Laura Catterton, Fred Bassett; b.) was very rare.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER – Sixteen were tallied during the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 28 April (ties maximum spring number for the Tennessee Valley).

CRESTED CARACARA – One at Apalachicola, *Franklin*, 11 March (Sally Bru, Stephen

Bru) was very rare for the Florida Panhandle.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – A single was reported from Green Mountain in Huntsville, *Madison*, 4 May (Sue Moske, Mike Stahl, Angela Stahl; ph.) (rare in spring).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – Early singles were southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 6-7 April (John Trent, Ashley Peters *et al.*) and at Yellow River, *Covington*, 10 April (Tom Savage).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER – An early single was southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 14 April (John Trent). Nine were tallied during the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 28 April (maximum spring number for the Tennessee Valley).

LEAST FLYCATCHER – One was at Cadillac Square on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 22 April (Eric Soehren) (rare in spring).

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER – A single at the FWBSTF, *Okaloosa*, 24 March (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, m.ob.) was very rare for spring in the WP.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER – An early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley was marked by a single at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 6 April (Milton Harris).

TROPICAL/COUCH'S KINGBIRD – One in Destin, *Okaloosa*, 6 May (Bruce Purdy; ph.) marked the 11th record of this complex for the WP.

WESTERN KINGBIRD – A single was noted on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 29 April – 1 May (Howard Horne, Michelle Steber *et al.*) (rare in spring).

EASTERN KINGBIRD – An early arrival was at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 6 April (Damien Simbeck).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – One was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 7 April (Howard Horne) (rare but regular in spring). Sue Moske (ph.) located one at Key Cave NWR, *Lauderdale* (not a regular site), 19 May (rare but increasing breeder in the Tennessee Valley).

WHITE-EYED VIREO – Three early birds were northwest of Dees, *Mobile*, 3 March (Howard Horne).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO – An early arrival was at the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 15 March (John Trent). Larry Barkey observed another single south of Houston, *Winston*, 15-19 March (early arrival record for the Mountain Region). Still a third early bird was west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 26-31 March (Bert Harris).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – One west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 15 March (Bert Harris) was early if not a rare Tennessee Valley wintering bird.

WARBLING VIREO – This species is a rare breeder in Alabama, but one returned to site at Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 28+ April (Tom Haggerty, Jeff Garner *et al.*). Sue Moske noted one on Green Mountain, *Madison*, 14 May (rare).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO – Rare but regular in spring, records came from five sites: one at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 12 April (Howard Horne, Ben Garmon); one at Homewood, *Jefferson*, 28 April (Ken Archambault); two on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone* (Ken Ward, Dwight Cooley *et al.*); one at Union

Hollow, *Lauderdale*, 3 May (Damien Simbeck, Jeff Garner, Warren Massey), and one at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 7 May (Milton Harris).

RED-EYED VIREO – Records of early arrivals came from five sites: one at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 15 March (David Dortch); one at Marion, *Perry*, 21 March (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson) (ties early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain); one at the Stimpson WMA, *Clarke*, 21 March (Ashley Peters) (ties early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain); two+ at Highland Home, *Crenshaw*, 23 March (Ken Archambault); and one west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 1-2 April (Bert Harris) (early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley).

FISH CROW – Rare but increasing in the Tennessee Valley, reports of singles came from four sites: Waterloo, *Lauderdale*, 1 March and 3 May (Damien Simbeck *et al.*); Wright, *Lauderdale*, 28 April (Tom Haggerty, Jeff Garner) and 3 May (Jeff Garner *et al.*); Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 14 May (Damien Simbeck); and Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 14 May (Damien Simbeck).

TREE SWALLOW – This species is rare but increasing as a breeder and two records were received: a pair with young at Clay, *Jefferson*, 20 May – 1 June (Bob Sargent), and two pairs west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 26 May (Milton Harris).

CLIFF SWALLOW – An early arrival was at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 16 March (Ashley Peters). A maximum count for Alabama (1,910) was made during the Wheeler NWR spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 28 April.

CAVE SWALLOW – Two at Milton, *Santa Rosa*, 26 May (Peggy Baker, Carol Tebay) marked the latest spring record for the WP. Singles were at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 24 April (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson), and at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 27 April (Howard Horne) (rare but regular on the Gulf Coast in spring).

HOUSE WREN – One was singing at Clay, *Jefferson*, 26 May (Bob Sargent) (rare local breeder; new site).

SEDGE WREN – Seven were tallied at Point aux Pins, *Mobile*, 13 March (Eric Soehren, John Trent, Jake Walker *et al.*) (maximum spring number for the Gulf Coast).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER – The Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, tallied 208 on 28 April to mark a new maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET – Sixteen were counted west of Millbrook, *Elmore*, 6 April (Larry Gardella) (maximum spring count for the Inland Coastal Plain).

WOOD THRUSH – Banders Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.* were busy at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, on 6 and 7 April when 37 and 52 were banded, respectively, the latter a maximum spring number for the Gulf Coast.

OVENBIRD – The Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, tallied nine on 28 April to mark a new spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

WORM-EATING WARBLER – One arrived at Clay, *Jefferson*, 28 March (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) to mark an early arrival date for the Mountain Region. The Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, tallied nine on 28 April to mark a new maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – Two early birds were on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4

March (Patsy Russo, Michelle Steber, John Stowers, Jenny Stowers *et al.*). An early nesting for Alabama was reported from the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock* (Eric Soehren, John Trent, Daniel Wright): heard on 11 March, nest building on 19 March, nest found on 22 March, and nest destroyed on 27 March. An early bird was at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 17-18 March (John Ehinger *et al.*).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH – The Wheeler NWR area spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, tallied 14 on 28 April to mark a new spring maximum for the Tennessee Valley.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER – An early arrival was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER – A single west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 2 April (Bert Harris) established an early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley. Another early arrival was at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 6 April (Bert Harris, Milton Harris).

“BREWSTER’S WARBLER” – Rare in Alabama, reports (all of singles) came from three sites: Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 7 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.); Hoover, *Jefferson*, 14 April (Ken Wills); and Anniston, *Calhoun*, 28 April (Debbie McKenzie; ph.).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – Early singles arrived on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 March (Patsy Russo, Michelle Steber, John Stowers, Jenny Stowers *et al.*), and at the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 11 March (John Trent, Daniel Wright).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER – One at Perry Lake, Marion, *Perry*, 17 March (Maureen Shaffer, m.ob.) marked an early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain and tied the early arrival date for inland Alabama. Another early arrival was at Snowdown, *Montgomery*, 25 March (Larry Gardella).

SWAINSON’S WARBLER – A single in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 18 March (Rick Remy, Susan Remy) marked a new early arrival date for Alabama. At Catoma Creek southeast of Montgomery, *Montgomery*, Larry Gardella found one on 25 March (early arrival record for the Inland Coastal Plain). Records of other early arrivals came from Kinston, *Coffee*, a single on 27 March and two on 29 March (Randy White).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – One west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 1 April (Bert Harris) was early if not a rare Tennessee Valley wintering bird.

NASHVILLE WARBLER – A single was recorded on the Wheeler NWR area count, *Limestone*, 28 April (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton, Rick Remy) (rare but regular in spring in the Tennessee Valley). Another single was at the Ruffner Mountain Nature Center, Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 1 May (Greg Jackson) (rare in spring in the Mountain Region). Eric Soehren found one near Hardaway, *Macon*, 7 May (second spring record for the Inland Coastal Plain).

HOODED WARBLER – Reports of early arrivals (all of singles) came from three sites: Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 12 March (David Dortch); Loango, *Covington*, 19 March (Tom Savage); and Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 22 March (Larry Gardella).

AMERICAN REDSTART – Eric Soehren found one near Hardaway, *Macon*, 3 April

(early).

CAPE MAY WARBLER – One at Underwood, *Lauderdale*, 9 May (Paul Kittle) was locally rare.

NORTHERN PARULA – An early arrival was at the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 5 March (John Trent). Another early arrival was in Huntsville, *Madison*, 30 March (Bert Harris).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – Larry Gardella reported migrants on several dates between 29 April – 18 May at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, with five+ on 13 May marking a new spring maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER – This species is rare in spring on the Inland Coastal Plain. Late birds were at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 11 May (Larry Gardella), and at Eoline, *Bibb*, 23 May (Harriett Wright, Alice Christenson) (latest departure for the Inland Coastal Plain).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER – Larry Gardella observed singles east of Montgomery, 10 May, and at Powder Magazine in Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 13 May (late; rare but regular on the Inland Coastal Plain).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – A single was noted at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 28 April (Harry Dean *et al.*) (rare but regular at this site in spring).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER – At the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, John Trent *et al.* observed one 6-8 March (early). Two early arrivals were at Dale County Lake, *Dale*, 8 March (Randy White). Six (good number so early) were noted along the Chattahoochee River at Valley, *Chambers*, 13 March (Geoff Hill). Two+ west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 26 March (Bert Harris) were also early.

PRAIRIE WARBLER – At the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, John Trent *et al.* observed one 18-20 March (early). Ken Archambault reported two+ at Highland Home, *Crenshaw*, 23 March (early).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – John Ehinger reported one from Monte Sano Mountain in Huntsville, *Madison*, 19 March (early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley). Another early arrival was west of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 26 March (Bert Harris). Two late birds were at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 13 May (Larry Gardella).

WILSON'S WARBLER – Singles were at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 3 and 5 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Fred Bassett *et al.*; b.) (rare but regular on the Gulf Coast in spring).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT – An early arrival was at the Stimpson WMA, *Clarke*, 21 March (Ashley Peters).

SPOTTED TOWHEE – A female observed in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 13 March (Bob Duncan; ph.) was present since 13 January.

LARK SPARROW – Twenty-two were tallied on the Wheeler NWR spring count, *Limestone/Morgan*, 28 April (maximum spring count for Alabama).

HENSLOW'S SPARROW – At Point aux Pins, *Mobile*, 13+ (three b.) were reported 13 March (Eric Soehren, John Trent *et al.*; ph.) (maximum count for Alabama).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW – Two were reported from Point aux Pins, *Mobile*, 13 March

(Eric Soehren, John Trent, Jake Walker *et al.*; ph.) (rare in spring).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – Singles were at the University of West Florida, *Escambia*, 10 March (Laura Catterton), and at Garcon Point, *Santa Rosa*, 11 March (Daniel Stangeland). Rare but regular in spring in the western Tennessee Valley, singles were noted at Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 25 April (Damien Simbeck) and in the Waterloo area, *Lauderdale*, 28 April and 3 May (Tom Haggerty, Jeff Garner *et al.*).

DARK-EYED JUNCO – One was on Green Mountain, *Madison*, 5 May (Sue Moske) (late departure date for the Tennessee Valley).

SUMMER TANAGER – A single was reported from Clay, *Jefferson*, 28 March (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent) (early arrival record for inland Alabama). Another early bird was at the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 1 April (John Trent).

SCARLET TANAGER – Records of early arrivals came from four sites: a single at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 31 March (Michael Jordan); two on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 31 March (Howard Horne, Patsy Russo, Michelle Steber); two west of Millbrook, *Autauga*, 6 April (Larry Gardella); and a single at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 6 April (Bert Harris, Milton Harris) (ties early arrival record for the Tennessee Valley).

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK – One arrived early on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 24-25 March (Howard Horne, Michelle Steber, Patsy Russo, Eugenia Carey *et al.*). Two early birds were at Leroy, *Washington*, 10-12 April (Matthew Rouse; ph.). A late bird was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 21 May (Ben Garmon, Patsy Russo).

INDIGO BUNTING – One at Huntsville, *Madison*, 8 April (Harold Peterson) marked an early arrival date for the Tennessee Valley.

PAINTED BUNTING – Larry Gardella reported one along Rabbit Road, Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 15 and 19 May (rare inland breeder; return to site).

BOBOLINK – Jeff Garner reported 75 from the fish hatchery at Marion, *Perry*, 23 May (good number this late). One on 26 May (Howard Horne) and eight (E. Wallace) on 28 May at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, were late.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – One was at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 30 March (Bob Sargent), and one was at a feeder on the Fort Morgan Peninsula, *Baldwin*, 22 April (Janice Neitzel; ph.) (rare).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE – Thirteen males and thirteen females were at Floridatown, *Santa Rosa*, 13 March (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) where breeding is suspected but not confirmed.

ORCHARD ORIOLE – An early arrival was at the Wehle Nature Center southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 29 March (John Trent).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Four early birds were on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 7 April (Howard Horne, Patsy Russo, Zach Loman).



Yellow-headed Blackbird, 21 April 2012, Mobile Co.; B. Chennupati.

PURPLE FINCH – A single was at a feeder on the Fort Morgan Peninsula, *Baldwin*, 22 April (Janice Neitzel; ph.) (late).

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ERRATUM

In *Alabama Birdlife* 57(2), December 2011, the Glaucous Gull photograph taken on 17 April 2011, Mobile Co., Alabama was taken by Bill McAllister, not G. Jackson.



SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2012)

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

This report covers the period from June through July 2012 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. “GINS” = Gulf Islands National Seashore; “m.ob.” = many observers; “NC” = Nature Center; “ph.” = photographed; “SBC” = Summer Bird Count; “WP” = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Okaloosa*, and *Santa Rosa* counties).



Regions of Alabama and Florida Panhandle for Bird Distribution Data

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – One at Taminco Sanctuary, *Santa Rosa*, 16-31 July (Les Kelly, Bruce Furlow, Larry Goodman, Peggy Baker) marked the 10th record for the WP. Multiple records documented the continued increase of this species in Alabama. Two-three were noted at Hacoma, *Geneva*, 8 June – 17 July (Odis Johnson) (fourth record for the Inland Coastal Plain). Rare but increasing on the Gulf Coast, records were received from four sites. At Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, Bill Summerour and Roger Clay made observations as follows: 17 adults and one occupied nest on 15 June; 31 adults plus two broods of 9 and 9-10 downy young on 25 June; and 26 adults plus young on 27 June (nesting at this site since 2009). South of Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, David Plumb found two on 19 June and 8-14 on 20 June, and Kathy Hicks

noted two on 21 June. At the sewage lagoons in Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, Paul Knock and Bill Summerour reported one pair with eight downy young and another pair with five downy young 10-11 July+ (new nesting site). At Bon Secour, *Baldwin*, two were reported 12 July+ (Jan Dillon; ph.).

WOOD DUCK – Twenty (maximum summer count for the Gulf Coast) were reported from Mobile, *Mobile*, 6 June (Brian Naylor, Charlotte Naylor).

GADWALL – A late male was noted near Leighton, *Colbert*, 4 June (Damien Simbeck, Ashley Peters).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – This species is a rare breeder in Alabama, so the following records were notable. Two males and one female were at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 13 June (Carl DeFavero; ph.). At Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, two were present on 6 June (Ben Garmon, Patsy Russo), two on 18 June (Howard Horne), five on 19 June (Howard Horne, Eric Soehren, John Trent), and 7 on 8 July (Michelle Steber).

NORTHERN SHOVELER – A male in basic plumage lingered (from spring) at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 18 June – 6 July (Howard Horne *et al.*) to provide the first summer record for the Gulf Coast.

SURF SCOTER – One taken from Perdido Key, *Escambia*, to Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida on 4 June provided the first June record for the WP.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER – A single at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 22 June (Elizabeth Cooper) provided a rare lingering summer record.

RUDDY DUCK – A male in alternate plumage and a female were seen south of Browns, *Dallas*, 26 June (Tommy Pratt *et al.*) (rare lingering summer record).

WILD TURKEY – Michael Jordan counted 21 on the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 28 July (maximum summer count for the Gulf Coast).

COMMON LOON – Rare but regular in summer as a lingerer, Howard Horne sighted a single at Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 13 June, and Tom Haggerty found one at Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 14 July.

PIED-BILLED GREBE – This species is an uncommon breeder in Alabama. Breeding was documented at the Forever Wild Field Trial Area (regular site), Cedarville, *Hale*, 2 June (nest and nine birds, including young) and 21 June (nine birds, including young) (John Trent, Howard Horne *et al.*). Two birds were noted at Hacoma, *Geneva*, 6 June (Odis Johnson). During the *Colbert* SBC, Damien Simbeck reported a single from a sinkhole pond near Leighton, 22 June (frequent site). One-three were spotted in Mobile, *Mobile*, 14 June – 5 July (Brian Naylor, Charlotte Naylor). During the *Shelby* SBC, a single was reported from the Shelby quad, 20 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).

HORNED GREBE – Singles at Taminco Sanctuary and Milton, *Santa Rosa*, 4-28 June (Les Kelly, Larry Goodman, Bruce Furlow, Peggy Baker) marked very rare June records for the WP.

WOOD STORK – A single was at the International Paper Wetlands, *Escambia*, 1 July (Jerry Callaway, Brenda Callaway) (rare in the WP). At the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, Kathy Hicks found two on 7 June and Michael Jordan found one

on 28 June (rare on the Gulf Coast). Two-four were seen at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 1-15 July (Greg Harber *et al.*) (rare in the Mountain Region). Michael Barbour counted 1,246 (good number) from *Hale/Greene*, 13 July, with 463 at a single site southwest of Greensboro, *Hale*. Mark Bailey spotted four at Silver Lake north of Fort Mims, *Baldwin*, 19 July (rare on the Gulf Coast).

ANHINGA – A maximum count (six) for north Alabama was made at three sites from Saginaw to Montevallo, *Shelby*, 20 June (Greg Jackson) (rare but now regular in this area). Michael Jordan documented nesting at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, with 12 birds on 16 June and 14 on 23 June (including nests with young on both dates) (maximum count for the Gulf Coast).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – West of Sledge, *Hale*, 450 (maximum for the Inland Coastal Plain) were counted on 17 June (Paul Franklin, Eva Franklin), and 48 were there 20 July (Larry Gardella) (rare but increasing on the Inland Coastal Plain).

BROWN PELICAN – Gaillard Island, *Mobile*, hosted 8,600 (good number) on 12 June (Howard Horne, Roger Clay, Bill Summerour).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – Michael Jordan *et al.* documented nesting at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, with 600 birds on 20 May and 1,500 (maximum for the Gulf Coast) on 16 June. Tom Haggerty reported a pair feeding one young in a nest at Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 14 July, to mark the first confirmed nesting in the Tennessee Valley since 1965.

CATTLE EGRET – A maximum of 100 was reported from Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 10-18 July (Damien Simbeck, Tom Haggerty) (maximum summer count in recent years in the Tennessee Valley).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – Tom Haggerty counted 32 (good number) at Wheeler Dam, *Lawrence*, 14 July.

WHITE IBIS – Rare but regular in the Mountain Region, two-five were noted at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 22 June – 6 July (David Frings, Ken Wills, Larry Gardella). Tom Haggerty found one immature at Wilson Dam, *Colbert*, 14 July (rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley).

WHITE-FACED IBIS – Howard Horne found singles at Blakeley Island and the Mobile Causeway, *Mobile*, 18 June and 21 July, respectively (rare).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – A single was at Cantonment, *Escambia*, 13-27 July, 2011 (late report) (Mark Free *et al.*) to mark the 11th record for the WP. The fifth record for the Mountain Region was marked by an immature at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 21 June – 15 July (David Frings, m.ob.; ph.).

TURKEY VULTURE – Two hundred were counted at Sledge, *Hale*, 21 June (Howard Horne, Eric Soehren, John Trent) to establish a new maximum count for the Inland Coastal Plain.

OSPREY – Thirty-five at Fort Pickens, GINS, *Escambia*, 9



Roseate Spoonbill, 22 June 2012, Shelby Co., AL; D. Frings.

July (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan) was a good number.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Singles were reported from south of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 8 July (Beth Wood, Neill Cowles; ph.) and near Scottsboro, *Jackson*, 13 July (*vide* David Dodd; ph.) to mark the sixth and seventh records, respectively, for the Tennessee Valley. Five were reported from Nixon Chapel, *Marshall*, 31 July (Tommy Mann, *vide* Linda Reynolds) (10th record and maximum count for the Mountain Region).

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Rare but increasing in the Mountain Region, a single was in the Columbiana quad during the *Shelby* SBC, 19 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton). Two-seven were reported from a new area at Graysville, *Jefferson*, first week July – 5 August (Mr. Ashley *et al.*, *vide* Bianca Allen; ph.) (maximum summer count for the Mountain Region).



Mississippi Kite, 5 August 2012, Jefferson Co., AL; H. Roach.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – Damien Simbeck had multiple sightings of this species in northwest Alabama during the season and suggested a general increase in numbers.

AMERICAN COOT – This species is a rare breeder/lingerer in Alabama, and numerous reports were received this season. At the Forever Wild Field Trial Area, Cedarville, *Hale*, 14 were counted on 1 June and 17 (maximum summer count for the Inland Coastal Plain) on 2 June (John Trent, Howard Horne). Two were noted at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 3 June (Michael Jordan). One-two were seen at Saginaw, *Shelby*, 13-16 June (Carl DelFavero *et al.*). A single was spotted in Mobile, *Mobile*, 14 June (Brian Naylor, Charlotte Naylor). Two were at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 19 June – 15 July (Howard Horne, John Trent, Eric Soehren *et al.*). A single was at an unusual location on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 27 July (Andrew Haffenden).

WILSON'S PLOVER – Counts of 14 (maximum summer count for Alabama) on 26 June and 10 on 1 July came from Pelican Island, *Mobile* (Andrew Haffenden).

SEMPALMATED PLOVER – Counts of 35 (maximum summer count for Alabama) on 16 June (Ben Garmon) and 26 on 1 July (Andrew Haffenden) came from Pelican Island, *Mobile*.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – A count of 14 on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 15 July (Andrew Haffenden) marked a new summer maximum for Alabama.

AMERICAN AVOCET – Three were reported from Gaillard Island, *Mobile*, 12 June (Howard Horne), and a single was on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 16 June (Michelle Steber, Ben Garmon) (rare in June on the Gulf Coast).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – An early arrival was west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 4 July (Tom Haggerty).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – A single was on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 26 June (Andrew Haffenden) (rare in mid-late June). An early arrival was west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, 8 July (Tom Haggerty).

WILLET – Tom Haggerty reported one from Wilson Dam, *Colbert*, 14 July (rare but regular inland).

WHIMBREL – One was reported from the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 3 and 30 June (Howard Horne, Andrew Haffenden) (rare in June), and one was on West Point Island, *Mobile*, 11 July (Roger Clay).

MARbled GODWIT – A single was at Opal Beach, *GINS, Escambia*, 18 June (David Sparks) (rare in June).

RUDDY TURNSTONE – Twelve (good number for mid-June) were counted on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 16 June (Ben Garmon).

RED KNOT – On Pelican Island, *Mobile*, seven were seen 13 June (Howard Horne) and six were there on 1 July (Andrew Haffenden) (good numbers of birds lingering through summer). One of these birds was banded as a chick on North Beach Island, Massachusetts, 9 September 2011, and had been seen at three sites in Florida 15 April – 21 May 2012.

SANDERLING – Pelican Island, *Mobile*, provided good numbers of this species: 34 on 1 June (Howard Horne), 58 and 61 on 1 and 15 July, respectively (Andrew Haffenden), with the latter total a summer maximum for Alabama.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER – One was on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 30 June (Howard Horne, Andrew Haffenden) (rare this late in June on the Gulf Coast).

DUNLIN – This species rarely lingers in summer in Alabama. A single was reported from Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 13 June, and two were there on 1 July (Howard Horne). A single was seen on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 17 July (Ben Garmon).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Three reports came from Pelican Island, *Mobile*: three on 13 June (Howard Horne) (rare in June); nine on 1 July (Andrew Haffenden) (good number this early); and 50 on 15 July (Andrew Haffenden) (maximum summer count for Alabama).

LAUGHING GULL – An estimate of 12,000 on Gaillard Island, *Mobile*, 12 June (Howard Horne, Roger Clay, Bill Summerour) provided a maximum count for Alabama.

GLAUCOUS GULL – An immature bird on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 14 June (Howard Horne) and 23 June (Andrew Haffenden) continued from spring and marked the first summer record for Alabama.

HERRING X KELP (CHANDELEUR) GULL – A single adult was on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 22 June (Eric Cooper) and 23 June (Andrew Haffenden) (rare but becoming regular on the Gulf Coast).

SOOTY TERN – One was noted on the west end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 3 June (Howard Horne) and 30 June (Howard Horne, Andrew Haffenden) (rare but now regular onshore; rare breeder).

LEAST TERN – Tom Haggerty found two at Wilson Dam, *Colbert*, 9 June (rare but regular in the Tennessee Valley).



Herring X Kelp (Chandeaur) Gull, 23 June 2012, Mobile Co., AL; A. Haffenden.

- CASPIAN TERN** – Greg Harber found a single at Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 15 July (rare on the Inland Coastal Plain).
- ROCK PIGEON** – Damien Simbeck reported 200 from Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, 6 June (maximum summer count for Alabama).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – John Trent reported one from a feeder in Monroeville, *Monroe*, 7 June. Ten were seen in Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 16 June (Larry Gardella; ph.) (rare but increasing on the Inland Coastal Plain).
- YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** – Twenty-four were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (ties maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).
- BARN OWL** – This species is a rare but regular breeder in Alabama. One was seen at Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 18 June (Howard Horne) (regular site). A pair and four young were reported from a nest at Center Star, *Lauderdale*, another regular site, from May – 27 July (David Carter, Dixie Carter, Damien Simbeck).
- EASTERN SCREECH-OWL** – Greg Jackson found 10 in the Alabaster quad during the *Shelby* SBC, 20 June (maximum summer count for the Mountain Region).
- EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL** – A single calling bird was at the Wehle NC southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 31 July (John Trent). This species is rare in summer on the Inland Coastal Plain, and this record marks the southernmost summer occurrence in Alabama.
- RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** – Twenty-three were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).
- HAIRY WOODPECKER** – A single was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 5 June (Jere French) (rare in the WP).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** – One was seen in Talladega National Forest (along Alabama Highway 148 east of Sylacauga), *Talladega*, 30 June (Jessie Griswold, Greg Harber, m.ob.) (rare but regular breeder).
- EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** – Twenty-five were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).
- ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** – Twenty-five were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – One at the Fort Walton Beach Sewerage Treatment Facility, *Okaloosa*, 5 June (Michelle Rachie, Eric Rachie) marked the third June record for the WP. An adult was observed feeding two dependent young along County Road 10 west of Sledge, *Hale*, 17 June (Paul Franklin, Eva Franklin) (rare but increasing breeder in Alabama).
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** – Fifteen were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).

- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – One was recorded from the Chelsea quad (Oak Mountain State Park) during the *Shelby* SBC, 17 June (Greg Harber *et al.*). This species is a rare breeder in this part of the Mountain Region, and this record marks the most southwestern summer occurrence in Alabama.
- FISH CROW** – A maximum summer count (17) for the Mountain Region was made in the Bounds Lake quad during the *Shelby* SBC, 17 June (David George).
- HORNED LARK** – During the *Cherokee* SBC, a total of five was reported from two quads, 4-19 June (David George, Owen Kinney) (rare breeder in the Mountain Region).
- TREE SWALLOW** – This species is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, and the following two records are from new sites: 40+ birds and three nests with young at the Walker County Public Fishing Lake near Jasper, 18 June (Paul Franklin), and two birds seen in the Pride quad during the *Colbert* SBC, 20 June (Shirley Wayland, Dee Patterson). A gathering of 250 was noted at Langston, *Jackson*, 20 July (Damien Simbeck) (maximum summer count for Alabama).
- CLIFF SWALLOW** – The first confirmed breeding record for the WP came from Milton, *Santa Rosa*, where 8-12 birds were at three nests and feeding young, 26 May – 10 July (Peggy Baker, Carol Tebay, Larry Goodman; ph.). A single on Pelican Island, *Mobile*, 13 June (Howard Horne) was at an unusual location for mid-June. A count of 700 was a good number in the *Shelby* quad, *Shelby* SBC, 20 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).
- TUFTED TITMOUSE** – Damien Simbeck counted 60 in the Barton quad during the *Colbert* SBC, 19 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – A single was at the Wehle NC southeast of Midway, *Bullock*, 18-27 July (Eric Soehren *et al.*) (occasional this far southeast).
- HOUSE WREN** – This species is a rare local breeder in Alabama, so three records were noteworthy. Two were at the Ruffner Mountain NC in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 8 June (Ken Wills); a pair was seen using a nest box in Florence, *Lauderdale*, 28 June (Paul Kittle); and a single was noted at Fulton Springs, *Jefferson*, 29 June (Ken Wills).
- AMERICAN ROBIN** – A single was reported from Little Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 17 June (Howard Horne, Jon Stowers, Don McKee, Eli McKee) (occasional on the outer coast in June).
- GRAY CATBIRD** – This species is a rare but increasing breeder on the Gulf Coast. At *Mobile*, *Mobile*, three were found on 5 July and two on 13 July (Brian Naylor, Charlotte Naylor). A single was reported from Blakeley Island, *Mobile*, 26 July (Larry Gardella).
- EUROPEAN STARLING** – Three hundred were reported from southern *Baldwin*, 21 July (Howard Horne, Patsy Russo, Michelle Steber) (maximum summer count for the Gulf Coast).
- CEDAR WAXWING** – A fledgling from Huntsville, *Madison*, was brought to the Alabama Wildlife Center, 1 July (*vide* Sandra Allinson) (rare but increasing breeder in the Tennessee Valley).
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** – One at Avalon Beach, *Santa Rosa*, 2 July (Daniel

Stangeland) was very early. Another early bird was at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 8 July (Michael Jordan).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER – A regular site on the Muscle Shoals TVA Reservation, *Colbert*, produced one bird 5 June (Damien Simbeck, Ashley Peters) (rare in the Tennessee Valley). A count of six in the Vincent quad, *Shelby* SBC, 9 June (Pelham Rowan) tied the maximum summer count for the Mountain Region.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER – Damien Simbeck found one in the Pleasant Site quad during the *Franklin* SBC, 11 June 2011 (rare).

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT – Thirty-four were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).

AMERICAN REDSTART – Jeff Garner found one in the Bishop quad during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (uncommon and localized breeder in northwest Alabama). An estimate of 20 at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 20 June (John Trent, Eric Soehren) marked a maximum summer count for Alabama.

CERULEAN WARBLER – One east of Oak Bowery, *Chambers*, 19 July (Lorna West, Kevin Jackson) was early.

NORTHERN PARULA – Thirteen were counted in the Bishop quad (Jeff Garner) and a single was in the Cherokee quad (Paul Kittle) during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).

YELLOW WARBLER – This species is now a rare breeder in Alabama. Paul Franklin reported a singing bird from the Walker County Public Fishing Lake near Jasper, 18 June (new site).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – The *Colbert* SBC produced two records of singles: Pride quad, 20 June (Shirley Wayland, Dee Patterson), and Leighton quad, 22 June (Damien Simbeck) (occasional breeder in the Tennessee Valley).

LARK SPARROW – This sparrow is a rare but increasing breeder in Alabama, and the following record marks the most southeastern nesting record: an adult feeding a dependent young, south of Loachapoka, *Lee*, 4 July+ (Bill Deutsch *et al.*).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – Three were located in the Columbiana quad during the *Shelby* SBC, 19 June (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton) (uncommon breeder in the Mountain Region).

INDIGO BUNTING – One hundred sixty-eight were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert* SBC, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley). A maximum of 100 was counted at the Clearwater Tract north of Stockton, *Baldwin*, 16 June – 28 July (Michael Jordan) (maximum summer count for the Gulf Coast).

PAINTED BUNTING – This species is a rare but increasing breeder on the Inland Coastal Plain. One was singing at the Forever Wild Field Trial Area, Cedarville, *Hale*, 2 June (John Trent, Howard Horne) (new site).

DICKCISSEL – A singing male in northern *Escambia*, 9 July (Laura Catterton; ph.) marked the first July record for the WP.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD – Thirty-eight were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert SBC*, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley). Two hundred were reported from southern *Baldwin*, 21 July (Howard Horne, Patsy Russo, Michelle Steber) (maximum summer count for the Gulf Coast).

HOUSE FINCH – Eighteen were counted in the Bishop (Jeff Garner) and Cherokee (Paul Kittle) quads during the *Colbert SBC*, 15 June (maximum summer count for the Tennessee Valley).

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**IN MEMORIAM: DAN C. HOLLIMAN, 1932-2009
LIFE'S NATURALIST**

Daniel J. Drennen and Jack Johnston

Dr. Dan Holliman received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Alabama. Dan had teaching and research careers at Birmingham-Southern College, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of Alabama, and Dauphin Island Sea Lab that spanned 44 years. A native of Jefferson County, Dan retired from Birmingham-Southern College in 2000 as the Ada Rittenhouse Snavelly Professor of Biology. During his career, Dr. Holliman taught honor courses on Henry David Thoreau and studied under Thoreau scholars at Concord, Massachusetts. He worked with the State of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Science Foundation, Coastal Area Board of Alabama, NASA and others. He was on the staff of the Alabama Museum of Natural History as Curator of Mammalogy and had been a contributing editor for the quarterly series *Nature South*.

Holliman authored 35 scientific papers and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. His research interests included rare and endangered species, avian and mammalian ecology, and aquatic macroinvertebrate taxonomy. The subjects of his research were varied and ranged from Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, beach mice, wetlands, and land use studies in the southeastern United States. Dr. Holliman also conducted research in the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon River Valley in Peru. Dr. Holliman was active in the first and second nongame wildlife symposiums focusing on identifying and providing conservation recommendations for imperiled species in Alabama. He chaired the mammals committee and contributed species accounts for both mammals and birds in the subsequent publications. Among those of special interest was the species account for the Jaguarundi (*Puma jaguarundi*).

Some of Dr. Holliman's honors included the Gardner Award from the Alabama Academy of Science for notable achievements in the field of science in Alabama, ODK Excellence in Teaching Award at Birmingham-Southern College, Legacy Award for the creation of the Greystone Educational Wetland, State of Alabama Governor's Award by the Alabama Wildlife Federation for the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year, and Exemplary Teaching Award by the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry of the United Methodist Church.

Dan Holliman had a strong sense of place and believed that knowing and understanding both the natural history and cultural history of an area was essential in having a fruitful and rewarding life. As a teacher, Dr. Holliman emphasized

this precept to his students in the classroom and especially while they were in the field. Developing a relationship with the landowner and those that have a stake in the habitats that he was studying and conserving was essential in Dr. Holliman's philosophy and was sincerely expressed to all those that he encountered during his fieldwork. This philosophy was explicitly expressed with energy and action through the Birmingham Audubon Mentone Mountain Workshop which he organized, developed and directed for more than 20 years.

Dr. Holliman was always attracted to the Alabama gulf coastal counties that provided seasonal habitats and migration corridors to countless numbers of bird species and other animals endemic to the coastal region. He watched with dismay the development of the natural dune habitat in Baldwin County and on Dauphin Island. The preservation at Fort Morgan and lands west of Gulf Shores were seen by Dr. Holliman as a great accomplishment. On Dauphin Island, following Hurricane Frederic that destroyed the causeway bridge, Dr. Holliman and his students regularly monitored bird populations. Coincidentally, Holliman noted that a reduction in human activity allowed birds to live with fewer disturbances for a few years, and the restricted human access to Little Dauphin Island after the rebuilding of the bridge system on the main island was an opportunity to improve the habitat for birds.

Dan was keenly interested in salt marshes and their bird life. He understood the complex ecology of the marshes by focusing his studies on clapper rails. This allowed him to spend many hours in the marshes. Beginning at dawn he and his students were there counting rail calls. His students in ornithology were required to know all the genera of native birds, and of course, everyone became familiar with the rails of the marshes.

Trips to the coast brought him in contact with local fishermen who sometimes inquired about the identity of conspicuous birds. Dan would teach them about the most obvious ones. If Laughing Gulls were of interest because they followed the fishing boats he would point out how they varied from Ring-billed Gulls or Herring Gulls. Soon the fishermen could put a name on the bird and that seemed satisfying to them.

Participation in the North American Breeding Bird Surveys in June was a time honored tradition for Dr. Holliman. He would drive from Birmingham and be in position at the starting point of the 25 mile long route 30 minutes before sunrise. Dr. Holliman used his experiences on his survey routes in his teaching. He commented on the importance of dawn singing in identifying individuals that were less likely to vocalize later in the day and how habitat differences along the route influenced the species of birds that were counted. Dr. Holliman also

watched how the survey routes changed over time as the landscape was altered. He specifically commented on the scarcity of Red-eyed Vireos as the forest cover was thinned and removed.

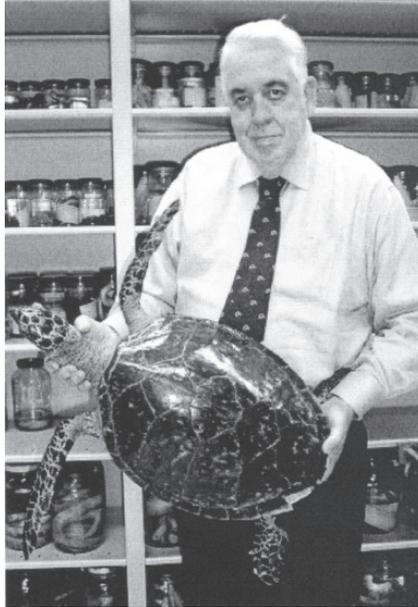
Dr. Holliman encouraged students always, and would often ask for field marks seen on birds that were difficult for a beginner to name. With a focus on field marks seen, the learner could often arrive at the correct name. Dr. Holliman would ask, “Does it have wing bars?” Other questions required more subtle answers such as “Does it have an eye ring?” In this way he could help students narrow down options and helped them arrive at some new point of understanding based on field marks, vocalizations, behaviors and habitat. Also, Dan taught which birds were likely to be seen at a given season.

No birding trip was complete without a stop at a local restaurant if the trip was of long duration. If Holliman was in north Alabama he knew the location of the best barbeque, if on the coast, the best place for flounder. Once on a birding trip in a sparsely populated area of east Alabama, a pizza was ordered at an establishment that obviously did not feature an accomplished cook. The pizza was served and was hearty but did not have the typical cheese. Instead it had yellow cheese which he referred to as “rat-trap cheese.” A favorite place to eat when in Mobile County was Mary’s Place. This establishment did not have a menu. When asked about choices, Mary would say, “We have seafood and chicken and the seafood is better.”

Dan was keenly interested in eagle populations returning to Alabama, and visited Town Creek when eagles started overwintering in good numbers. He studied eagle behavior and even took canoe or boat trips up Town Creek to count the birds on winter surveys. He was interested in all predatory birds and took a special interest in Peregrine Falcons. He followed attempts to introduce Peregrines as nesting birds on tall Birmingham buildings. Dr. Holliman felt that it was a good thing that Peregrines made the news and that local people who were not bird watchers took an interest in this project. At his home in Hoover, Dr. Holliman felt that the practice of maintaining neatly mowed yards was a misuse of land that could be of use to animals. He had a neat front yard and a back yard planted with bird friendly plants. These plants perhaps provided protection for nesting, berries for food, or were good perches. He soon studied the requirements for typical back yard birds such as Carolina Wren, mockingbird, towhee or Brown Thrashers. Dan added a water feature and provided supplemental food to allow convenient viewing of birds. From his back deck he would observe migrants moving through the neighborhood.

Dr. Holliman’s life was well-lived and one which few can duplicate in the remarkable devotion and diligence he had for teaching and exploring the natural

world. During his lifetime, Dr. Holliman touched the lives of many people. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have shared with him his enthusiasm, his interest in nature, and guidance, carry many fond memories, not only of the field excursions and bird lore, but of life's journey.



Dr. Dan C. Holliman

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Manuscripts submitted for publication in Alabama Birdlife should conform to the guidelines listed below. Articles should include some facet of bird ecology, natural history, behavior, management/conservation, identification or other related topics. Refer to this issue or to recent past issues for examples. Alabama Birdlife is published twice a year. If you have access to an IBM compatible or Macintosh computer, it saves time and money if you submit your manuscript on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk along with a hard copy (Word or WordPerfect preferred). A manuscript may also be submitted over the Internet as a file attached to an e-mail addressed to: tmhaggerty@una.edu.

Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced. A 8 1/2 x 11 inch page format should be used.

Digital images submitted over the Internet, black and white prints, color prints, and slides are acceptable.

The title should be in CAPS. If the name of a species is used in the title, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. CONNECTICUT WARBLER (*OPORORNIS AGILIS*).

The author's full name should be in lower case and centered under the title.

If the article is coauthored by a married couple bearing the same last name, the names should be kept separate, e.g. John B. Brown and Sarah D. Brown.

Whenever a species name is used for the first time in the body of an article, it should be followed by the scientific name in parentheses, e.g. Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*).

When using dates, the day should be placed before the month, e.g. 13 April 1992.

Spell out numbers ten and under and use numerals for numbers 11 and above.

Distances should be expressed in English units followed by the metric equivalent in parentheses, e.g. 6.2 miles (10 km). Use only the metric system for scientific measurements, e.g. wing 10.3 cm; tail 15.6 cm.

Table titles should be in CAPS and placed above the tables.

Figure legends should be in lower case and placed beneath the figure.

Refer to the Literature Cited in past issues for the correct format.

Three or fewer references should be incorporated into the text of the article rather than listed separately at the end, e.g. Imhof (1976, Alabama Birds).

The author's name and full address should be line typed at the end of the article. The name used should match the name given under the title.

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