



Volume 52
No. 2
December 2006



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. 52

No. 2

2006

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Typeset by Tom Haggerty

COVER: Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*). Photograph by Greg Harber.

BIRD INVENTORY AT RUSSELL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT 2003-2005

Stephen J. Stedman and Barbara H. Stedman

INTRODUCTION

Russell Cave National Monument (RUCA), one of the most significant archaeological sites in the eastern United States, became part of the national park system on 11 May 1961, when the National Geographic Society donated 125 hectares (310 acres) to the federal government. Although RUCA is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS), no serious research has been conducted on the birdlife of the RUCA. Therefore, the primary objectives of this research were to determine the relative status and seasonal abundance of the bird species inhabiting RUCA and to collect evidence of breeding.

METHODS

Study Area.— RUCA is located in Jackson County, Alabama, about 2 km south of the Alabama-Tennessee state line and about 10 km west of the Tennessee River (34°58'43 N, 85°48'03 W). The public entrance to the park intersects County Road 98. The park is composed primarily of low elevation (up to 520 m [1705 ft]) montane forest, mainly deciduous in composition in the old growth or near old growth stage. Some cedar thickets occur up to 300 m (1000 ft), and scattered short-needle pines occur to the summit of Montague Mountain where a number of private holdings lie immediately adjacent to park land. The understory in the forest is usually quite open with poison ivy being the dominant ground cover when any is present. The lowest portions (204 m [670 ft]) of the park lie along small, usually dry streambeds with some riparian vegetation. Slightly higher in elevation are the mowed grassy areas with scattered pines that are near the park entrance, visitor center, and picnic areas.

A 5-km (3-mi) jeep road allows access to the higher elevations of the mountain and its forest in the park. It crosses private property at several places and is gated to the general public. A TVA power line also crosses the entrance road about 100 m from the park entrance. About 500 m from County Road 98, the entrance road crosses a bridge over Dry Creek. A boardwalk leads from the visitor center to the cave entrance, and asphalt-paved and gravel paths lead around the base of Montague Mountain for a total of about 2 km (1.2 mi) up

to an elevation of 244 m (800 ft); these paths are surrounded by fairly mature deciduous forest. A famous mountain overlook, Russell Point (owned by The Nature Conservancy), is located along the northwest border of the park property on Montague Mountain. It is an obvious “sky island” that attracts migrating birds, bats and insects.

Several recent and historical occurrences affected the forests of the park during the bird inventory, including past mining activity near park property, weather events, and prescribed burns. For example, during the early to mid-20th-century a mining operation took place on land that now borders the park at the higher elevations of Montague Mountain. Some of the land that was mined near the park remains quite open and a hunting club whose members hunt on the mountain leases this land. Also, in June 2004, a tornado struck Montague Mountain, causing massive blowdowns and opening up many parts of the forest. By one estimate, 700 large trees in the park were upturned by the tornado and massive debris piles were created. Further, some forested areas on the mountain were burned by park service personnel during late April 2005, leaving much bare ground in the understory during the following breeding bird season.

Inventory methods.—Five methods were used to collect inventory data. Twelve point counts (locations selected by NatureServe) were conducted during late May and/or early June in each of two years, 2003 and 2005. Downed trees from a tornado prevented point counts in 2004. The Partners in Flight (PIF) protocol for these counts entailed standing at the center of a 100 m-diameter plot and counting all birds heard and seen for 10 minutes. Birds were recorded as occurring at one of four distance intervals (< 25 m; 25-50 m; 50-100 m; and >100 m) or as flyovers and were recorded as occurring within one of three temporal intervals (0-3 min; 3-5 min; 5-10 min) (Hamel 1992; Hamel et al. 1996). Any birds flushed during approach to the plot center were included among the birds recorded at the point. Birds counted at a one point were not counted at an adjacent point if the same individuals were detected.

In spring and fall, 1-2 hour walks of about 1.5 km were conducted 3-4 times per season and species seen or heard were noted. Raptor surveys were also undertaken during fall and early winter. Typically, these surveys lasted 2-4 hours during late morning. A route was driven by automobile along all the roads of the park, usually totaling about 4 km and all raptors and shrikes detected were counted. Owls were inventoried at night by using tape-recorded owl calls to elicit responses. Other species that were detected during owl surveys (e.g., woodcocks, nightjars) were also counted. In addition, general

surveys, which were less regimented, were conducted in many promising sites and habitats within the park. During the breeding season, which includes most of the spring and summer, the general surveys included efforts to detect breeding evidence for all species breeding in the park.

The breeding designations were based on the following criteria. "Confirmed breeding" was noted for a species if an individual was observed carrying nest material or food, constructing a nest, performing a distraction display, or incubating. Further, the discovery of a nest with eggs or young, a used nest, or dependent short-tailed young also confirmed breeding. "Probable breeding" was indicated for a species if a pair was found in suitable habitat, if courtship behaviors were observed or if agitation behaviors often associated with nest disturbance were noted. A "possible breeding" designation was given if a species was found in suitable habitat within safe dates determined by the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project (Rick West, pers. comm.).

RESULTS

Total species.—During the inventory period (April 2003-May 2005), BHS made 24 visits to the park (6 days during spring; 6 days during summer; 5 days during fall; and 7 days during winter). In the course of these visits she observed 130 species (Table 1).

Breeding Species.—In the 79 species that were determined to be breeders, 16 (20.3%) were noted as possible breeders, 20 (25.3%) were probable breeders, and 43 (54.4%) were confirmed breeders (Table 1). Point counts were conducted during the breeding period of many species. A total of 46 species was registered during 12 point counts conducted during 2003, while 41 species were detected during 12 point counts conducted in 2005. In all, point count effort led to data for 47 species of birds (Table 2), all of which use RUCA during the breeding season.

DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of survey methods.—Each of the five survey methods used for this inventory was effective for its purpose, but in terms of generating the largest number of species per unit of time expended, the general surveys were probably the most effective (resulting in detection of approximately 120 species), followed by the migration walks (approximately 90 species) and the point counts (47 breeding species). Due to their restricted emphasis, night surveys (approximately 10 species) and raptor surveys (approximately 12 species) generated fewer species per unit of time expended than the other survey

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TABLE 1. Species, status, seasonal abundance, breeding designations of birds observed at Russell Cave National Monument, Jackson Co., Alabama, 2003-2005.

Common Name	Status ^b	Sp ^c	Su	Fa	Wi
Wood Duck ^{*a}	PR	U	U		
Wild Turkey ^{***}	PR	U	U	U	
Northern Bobwhite [*]	PR	U	U		
Common Loon	TR	U		U	
Double-crested Cormorant	TR	U		U	
Great Blue Heron	PR	R	R	R	R
Green Heron [*]	VR	U	U		
Black Vulture [*]	PR	U	U	U	U
Turkey Vulture [*]	PR	FC	FC	U	U
Bald Eagle	VR				R
Northern Harrier	VR			R	R
Sharp-shinned Hawk [*]	VR		U	R	
Cooper's Hawk	VR			VU	U
Red-shouldered Hawk ^{***}	PR	U	U	U	U
Broad-winged Hawk ^{**}	SR	U	U	U	
Red-tailed Hawk [*]	PR	U	U	U	U
American Kestrel	VR				VU
Sandhill Crane	TR				R
Killdeer	VR	R	U	U	R
American Woodcock	WR				U
Ring-billed Gull	TR				VU
Mourning Dove [*]	PR	FC	FC	FC	FC
Yellow-billed Cuckoo ^{**}	SR	U	FC	VU	
Eastern Screech-Owl ^{**}	PR	U	U	U	U
Great Horned Owl ^{**}	PR	U	U	VU	VU
Barred Owl ^{***}	PR	U	U	U	U
Chuck-will's-widow [*]	VR	U	U		
Whip-poor-will ^{**}	SR	FC	FC		
Chimney Swift ^{**}	SR	U	U	FC	
Ruby-throat. Hummingbird ^{**}	SR	U	U	U	
Belted Kingfisher ^{***}	PR	U	U	VU	U
Red-headed Woodpecker	VR	U	VU		VU
Red-bellied Woodpecker ^{***}	PR	U	U	U	FC
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	WR	VU	U	U	U
Downy Woodpecker ^{***}	PR	U	U	FC	FC
Hairy Woodpecker ^{***}	PR	U	U	U	U
Northern Flicker	PR	U	U	U	FC
Pileated Woodpecker ^{**}	PR	U	U	U	U
Eastern Wood-Pewee ^{**}	SR	U	U	U	
Acadian Flycatcher ^{**}	SR	U	U	VU	
Least Flycatcher	TR	U			
Eastern Phoebe ^{***}	PR	FC	U	U	U
Great Crested Flycatcher ^{***}	SR	U	U		
Eastern Kingbird ^{***}	SR	U	U		
White-eyed Vireo ^{**}	SR	U	U	U	
Yellow-throated Vireo ^{**}	SR	U	U	U	
Blue-headed Vireo ^{***}	PR	FC	U	U	VU
Philadelphia Vireo	TR			R	
Red-eyed Vireo ^{***}	SR	FC	U	U	

TABLE 1. Continued

Common Name	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
Blue Jay ***	PR	FC	FC	FC	FC
American Crow ***	PR	FC	FC	FC	FC
Purple Martin *	VR	U	U		
N. Rough-winged Swallow ***	SR	U	U		
Cliff Swallow *	VR	VU	U		
Barn Swallow ***	SR	C	C	U	
Carolina Chickadee ***	PR	C	C	C	C
Tufted Titmouse ***	PR	C	C	C	C
Red-breasted Nuthatch	WR			VU	
White-breasted Nuthatch ***	PR	U	U	U	U
Brown-headed Nuthatch	VR			VU	
Brown Creeper	WR	VU		R	U
Carolina Wren ***	PR	C	C	C	C
House Wren	VR	U			R
Winter Wren	WR			U	U
Golden-crowned Kinglet	WR	VU		U	FC
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	WR	VU		U	FC
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher ***	SR	FC	FC	U	
Eastern Bluebird ***	PR	C	C	C	FC
Swainson's Thrush	TR			R	
Hermit Thrush	WR	VU		VU	
Wood Thrush ***	SR	FC	FC	R	
American Robin ***	PR	U	U	FC	
Gray Catbird ***	SR	U	U	U	
Northern Mockingbird ***	PR	U	U	U	
Brown Thrasher ***	PR	U	U	U	
European Starling ***	PR	FC	C	C	
American Pipit	VR				
Cedar Waxwing	VR		VU	U	
Tennessee Warbler	TR	U		U	
Northern Parula *	SR	U	U	U	
Yellow Warbler	TR	U			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	TR	U		U	
Magnolia Warbler	TR	U		FC	
Cape May Warbler	TR	R		R	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	WR	FC		FC	
Black-thr. Green Warbler	TR	U		U	
Blackburnian Warbler	TR	VU		U	
Yellow-throated Warbler ***	SR	FC	FC	U	
Pine Warbler ***	PR	FC	U	FC	
Prairie Warbler *	SR	U	U	U	
Palm Warbler	TR	U			
Bay-breasted Warbler	TR	VU		U	
Blackpoll Warbler	TR	U			
Cerulean Warbler	TR	U		U	
Black-and-white Warbler ***	SR	FC	U	U	
American Redstart	TR	U		U	

TABLE 1. Continued

Species	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi
Worm-eating Warbler ***	SR	U	U	U	
Ovenbird **	SR	U	U	U	
Northern Waterthrush	TR			U	
Louisiana Waterthrush ***	SR	U	U	VU	
Kentucky Warbler **	SR	U	U	VU	
Common Yellowthroat *	SR	U	U	U	
Hooded Warbler **	SR	FC	U	U	
Yellow-breasted Chat *	SR	U	U	VU	
Summer Tanager ***	SR	FC	FC	FC	
Scarlet Tanager ***	SR	C	C	FC	
Eastern Towhee ***	PR	FC	FC	FC	U
Chipping Sparrow ***	PR	C	FC	FC	FC
Field Sparrow **	PR	U	U		FC
Savannah Sparrow	WR			R	R
Grasshopper Sparrow *	VR	VU	U		
Fox Sparrow	VR			VU	VU
Song Sparrow	WR	VU	VU	U	U
Swamp Sparrow	WR	VU			VU
White-throated Sparrow	WR	FC		FC	FC
White-crowned Sparrow	WR			VU	R
Dark-eyed Junco	WR	VU		VU	FC
Northern Cardinal ***	PR	FC	FC	FC	C
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	TR	U		U	
Blue Grosbeak **	SR	U	U	VU	
Indigo Bunting ***	SR	FC	FC	U	
Red-winged Blackbird ***	PR	U	U		U
Eastern Meadowlark **	PR	U	U	U	U
Common Grackle ***	PR	C	C	U	A
Brown-headed Cowbird **	PR	C	C	U	U
Orchard Oriole ***	SR	U	U		
Baltimore Oriole	TR	U	VU		
Purple Finch	WR			U	U
House Finch **	PR	U	U	U	U
American Goldfinch ***	PR	FC	FC	FC	FC

^a * = possible breeding, ** = probable breeding, *** = confirmed breeding.

^b PR = permanent resident; SR = summer resident; TR = transient; VR = visitor; WR = winter resident.

^c C = common; FC = fairly common; U = uncommon; VU = very uncommon; R = rare.

methods, although the quality of the species detected during these surveys was excellent.

Weather influences.—An effort was made to visit RUCA during periods when the weather was conducive for detecting the maximum number of species during general inventory work, migration walks, point counts, night surveys, and raptor surveys, so the influence of weather on the results of the overall inventory was generally positive. However, the mild winters that took place during the inventory probably prevented detection of some boreal irruptive species, such as Evening Grosbeak. Additionally, lack of powerful frontal passages during the spring and fall seasons of the inventory period probably

TABLE 2. Species and individuals counted at 12 points (10 minutes each) at unlimited distance during May and June, 2003 and 2005, at Russell Cave National Monument, Jackson County, Alabama.

Species	2003		2005	
	Points counted ^a	Individuals ^b	Points counted	Individuals
Wild Turkey	1	1	1	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	1	1
Broad-winged Hawk	1	1	0	0
Mourning Dove	3	3	7	11
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7	8	4	4
Barred Owl	1	1	0	0
Chimney Swift	1	1	1	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	5	8	11
Downy Woodpecker	3	5	3	5
Hairy Woodpecker	3	3	1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	4	4	2	4
Eastern Wood-Pewee	9	11	4	5
Acadian Flycatcher	4	5	3	3
Eastern Phoebe	5	6	4	4
Great Crested Flycatcher	5	7	1	1
Eastern Kingbird	1	1	1	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	3	2	4
Blue-headed Vireo	5	9	4	5
Red-eyed Vireo	12	36	12	36
Blue Jay	7	18	5	10
American Crow	5	13	5	10
Barn Swallow	1	1	2	7
Carolina Chickadee	8	12	6	11
Tufted Titmouse	9	19	8	16
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	16	4	8
Carolina Wren	7	15	10	29
Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher	3	6	0	0
Eastern Bluebird	1	1	1	2
Wood Thrush	9	11	10	17
American Robin	1	1	1	2
Gray Catbird	1	1	0	0
Yellow-throated Warbler	2	2	2	2
Pine Warbler	2	3	2	5
Worm-eating Warbler	6	9	2	2
Ovenbird	6	8	4	5
Louisiana Waterthrush	2	3	0	0
Kentucky Warbler	2	2	2	2
Common Yellowthroat	1	1	0	0
Hooded Warbler	6	9	4	4
Summer Tanager	6	16	5	11
Scarlet Tanager	8	14	9	15
Eastern Towhee	1	1	5	6
Chipping Sparrow	2	4	2	9
Northern Cardinal	9	25	9	21
Blue Grosbeak	2	2	0	0
Indigo Bunting	5	10	2	4
Brown-headed Cowbird	2	4	4	7

^a = total number of points for which species was counted.

^b = total number of individuals counted from all points.

also prevented major fall-outs from occurring; during such events, the likelihood of finding rare species is greater than during less agitated weather.

The species total (41) on point counts conducted in 2005 was lower than the species total (46) on point counts conducted in 2003. This difference may have been due to the tornado blowdown of 2004 and the clean-up efforts (including a prescribed burn) that occurred immediately before the point counts were conducted in 2005.

Species richness.—The small size of RUCA would lead one to estimate that a fairly low degree of bird diversity would be present within its boundaries. Further, the park is not located on one of the major migration flyways of North America, also decreasing the likelihood that it would harbor a rich diversity of bird species. Still further, Russell Cave is not directly connected to the chains of mountains running from the Northeast to northeastern Alabama; rather it is more of a “sky island” that would attract some birds to it, but not the great migration concentrations found, for example, along the Appalachian ridges. However, Russell Cave is endowed with fair diversity of habitats. These increase the likely richness of the avifauna present within a park of its size and location. Further, although the park is not located near the center of a major migration flyway, it is located not too far from the Tennessee River, which acts as a migration funnel; some species detected as flyovers in the park may have been present as a result of the flyway effect created by the Tennessee River. Finally, the forests of the park were not themselves greatly fragmented at the beginning of the inventory and they remained fairly unfragmented even after the tornado of 2004, leading one to predict that they would harbor many species associated with the forest interior, species that add overall richness to an avifauna.

The riparian areas of the park provided habitat for nesting Belted Kingfishers, while the stream at the cave entrance hosted Louisiana Waterthrush. Both Eastern Phoebes and Barn Swallows nested just inside the cave entrance and under the bridge over Dry Creek. A pair of Red-shouldered Hawks nested near the visitor center. The pasture and grassy areas at the low elevations of the park hosted a diversity of species with some—including White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Yellow-throated Warbler, Summer Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, and American Goldfinch—being present in very high densities compared to densities experienced at many other sites (B. Stedman, pers. observ.). In 2003, the higher, densely forested portions of the park harbored dense pop-

ulations of several woodland species—including Whip-poor-will, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, and Scarlet Tanager; these densities were higher than those found in some more northerly populations of these species (B. Stedman, pers. observ.). Migrating raptors and nighthawks were found in lower than expected numbers during the inventory, as were some Neotropical migrant warblers, as noted below. Overall, species richness in the park exceeded our expectations.

Unexpected Results.— Besides some unexpected densities for a number of species, some other results of the inventory were unexpected. For instance, Ruffed Grouse were not expected to occur within the park, based on few observations of this species in the general area since the 1970s (Imhof 1976). Although no Ruffed Grouse were found at RUCA by BHS during the inventory, several hunters reported small groups of these birds on or near park property during fall 2004. Additionally, field workers on the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project reported grouse in the Skyline WMA about 16 km (10 mi) from the park during the period of the inventory. Somewhat unexpected was courtship of American Woodcocks regularly during winter in several of the park's open areas. During fall and winter inventory effort, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted in the park in very high numbers compared to numbers detected at many other sites in the southeastern U.S. (B. Stedman, pers. observ.).

Birds not found.— Neither Sharp-shinned nor Cooper's hawk was found during spring, so breeding by this species was unlikely; however, each of these accipiters was found during fall migration. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were not found despite being regular, if rare, migrants through the Tennessee Valley. Few sightings of Brown-headed Nuthatch took place, despite the presence of suitable breeding habitat for this species in the park. Cerulean Warbler, a species of special concern, was found by field workers of the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project about 32 km (20 mi) from RUCA during the period of the bird inventory at RUCA, but no Ceruleans were located within RUCA boundaries during the breeding season despite the presence of very suitable habitat; this species should be searched for in the park during future breeding seasons.

Migrant warblers that prefer brushy habitats—such as Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Nashville, Mourning, Connecticut, and Canada warblers—were also not found in the park despite the presence of suitable, if limited and fragmented, brushy habitat.

Habitat for declining species.— Excellent habitat for Cerulean Warbler

appears to be present above Russell Cave itself and at several other locations on Montague Mountain. The log debris still remaining in the forests of the park is possible habitat for Bewick's Wren, so these and future debris piles that might be accumulated should not be burned where possible. Many species of Neotropical migrants considered to have declining continental populations, such as Wood Thrush and Kentucky Warbler, have excellent population numbers in the park due to its fine, largely unfragmented forest habitat.

If more shrub-scrub habitat is created and the present shrub-scrub habitat maintained, species that depend on this habitat, such as Prairie Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat, would benefit; some of these species are undergoing long-term population declines on a continental level. This habitat also benefits many species that migrate through and winter in the park.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank John Bundy, Superintendent at Russell Cave National Monument, for support during the course of the bird inventory. Mary Shew, Resource Manager, was helpful and encouraging during the entire project. Jason Money assisted in locating and marking plots for point counts, and he checked to be sure the road up Montague Mountain was clear before visits were made to the monument. Tom Diggs also assisted in locating and marking plots for point counts. Linda Barnes and Shelia Reed in the park visitor center used information we provided to inform the visiting public about the birds of the park, and we thank them for their promotional work. We are greatly indebted to the staff of the Center for the Management, Utilization, and Protection of Water Resources at Tennessee Technological University for high quality management of the fiscal paperwork associated with this bird inventory. Director Dennis George, Sandra Pigg, Yvette Clark, Amy Knox and especially Glenda Sharks and Mary Williford, contributed much to our success. We are especially grateful to Teresa Leibfreid, Inventory and Monitoring Coordinator for the Cumberland Piedmont Network of the NPS, for her dedication and support throughout the duration of this bird inventory. The inventory was supported by a grant (TTU contract #H5000030200) from the National Park Service.

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**FIRST ALABAMA BREEDING RECORD OF GRAY KINGBIRD
(*TYRANNUS DOMINICENSIS*) FOLLOWING HURRICANE
DANNY**

Bailey D. McKay

Gray Kingbirds have been known breeders in Alabama since at least 14 May 1950, when the first nest and first state record were reported from Ft. Morgan by H. M. Stevenson (Auk 68: 510-511). They nested regularly along the coast until July 1997, when Hurricane Danny stalled over the Alabama coast for approximately 36 hours. Though only a Saffir-Simpson Category I storm, massive amounts of rainfall were recorded in some areas, with relentless winds for that extended period. This took a heavy toll on local passerines. For example, Brown-headed Nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla*) were eliminated from Dauphin Island in adjacent Mobile County, and the small Gray Kingbird population across the Alabama coast shared a similar fate (Greg D. Jackson, pers. comm.). Though the kingbirds have occurred sporadically along the coast since then, no breeding evidence has been reported following Hurricane Danny until the present record (Greg D. Jackson, pers. comm.).

On 18 July 2005 at 1600 hours, I was walking around the Enclave Condominium at Orange Beach, Baldwin County, Alabama, when I heard the distinct call of a Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) coming from across Perdido Beach Boulevard. I investigated the rear of Hazel's Restaurant and was immediately mobbed by a pair of Gray Kingbirds. They had gray upperparts and white underparts and were a little smaller than an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*); heads were large with heavy bills and distinct dark masks through the eye. Their tails were forked, and shape and behavior were typical of a *Tyrannus* kingbird. The birds were later seen flycatching for large insects. I am thoroughly familiar with this bird, both by sight and sound, having volunteered for the Breeding Bird Atlas for two months in Puerto Rico where Gray Kingbirds are very common.

A quick search of the parking lot revealed a lone bare tree about 6 m (20 feet) high with a third kingbird perched near the top. I focused my binoculars on the third bird. It looked quite similar to the other two kingbirds but had a distinctly shorter tail, and I later heard it make a higher pitched call (presumably a begging call) to the other two birds. I immediately guessed that this was a fledgling, and this was later confirmed when one of the parents caught a large

insect and fed it to this third bird that was making the higher pitched call.

The three kingbirds were observed frequently for five additional days. They were usually together and stayed either in the lone parking lot tree or in one of a group of pines at the edge of the parking lot. I searched for the nest, which I know from personal experience is usually a conspicuous clump of sticks, but never found one.

Bailey D. McKay, 331 Funchess Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36830.

SPRING SIGHTINGS (MARCH - MAY 2006)

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

This report covers the period from March through May 2006 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.

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PACIFIC LOON – Rare but regular in the WP, one was at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 25 March (Peggy Baker). Another single was at the Destin Bridge, *Okaloosa*, 21 May (Don Ware).

PIED-BILLED GREBE – A pair was at a nest (two eggs 2 April, nine eggs 9 April) at Theodore, *Mobile* (Bill Summerour; ph.) (uncommon and erratic breeder in Alabama).

HORNED GREBE – A bird in pre-alternate molt was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 24 May, to mark the second May record for the WP (Mac Myers, Bob Duncan).

EARED GREBE – Damien Simbeck found a single in near-alternate plumage at Town Creek Point, *Colbert*, 13 March (rare inland).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Uncommon and increasing in the Tennessee Valley, 12 were at Town Creek Point, *Colbert*, 13 March (Damien Simbeck). Rare in the Mountain Region, 175 was an excellent number on Lake Martin, *Tallapoosa*, 12 May (Melissa Middlebrooks; ph.).

BROWN PELICAN – Six were just north of Stimley Bridge on Lake Logan Martin, *St. Clair/Tallapoosa*, 27 May (John Imhof, William Ratliff). This record establishes a new maximum number for inland Alabama, where the species is rare.

- SNOWY EGRET** – Three in *Colbert* (two at Pond Creek, one at Town Creek Marsh) 17 May (Damien Simbeck, Gary Markine, Frances Markine) was a good number for spring in the Tennessee Valley in recent years.
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** – A pair was seen building a nest at East Lake in Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 4 March (Ty Keith, Pelham Rowan, Frank Farrell, Helen Kittinger *et al.*) (early for spring for inland Alabama).
- WHITE-FACED IBIS** – One was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 17 May (Mac Myers, Bob Duncan) (10th WP record; ph.; @FOSRC).
- PLEGADIS SP.** – Jim Sherrill found a single at Lake Purdy, *Jefferson*, 10 April, to mark the fifth record for the Mountain Region.
- WOOD STORK** – One was early at Hacoda, *Geneva*, 29 May and 5 June (Odis Johnson; ph.).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – Rare in the Mountain Region, Mac Braid saw one at Montevallo, *Shelby*, 8 May, where the species has been regular in recent years.
- BALD EAGLE** – An immature near Moulton, *Lawrence*, 28 May (Paul Kittle) was locally rare.
- MERLIN** – Rare but regular in winter on the Inland Coastal Plain, one was at the fish hatchery at Marion, *Perry*, 18 March (Helen Kittinger, Ty Keith, m.ob.).
- BLACK RAIL** – One was seen at the Dauphin Island Airport marsh, *Mobile*, 15-21 April (Reese Partridge, Louise Partridge, Rynetta Coetzee, Stan Hamilton *et al.*) (rare but regular at this site).
- CLAPPER RAIL** – One was banded at an odd location, the Middle Ground at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*).
- KING RAIL** – One was seen and heard at Donovan Lake, Marion, *Perry*, 18 March (Helen Kittinger, Ty Keith, Larry Wright) (rarely documented so early for inland Alabama, though probably uncommon in winter on the Inland Coastal Plain). A single was also reported from Donovan Lake on 20 May (Thomas Wilson). Three, a good number inland, were heard at the Kennedy Unit of Eufaula NWR, *Barbour*, 31 March (Lorna West). This species has a scattered distribution, especially in north Alabama, but reports of singles were received from two new sites: Talladega NF, *Bibb*, 2 April (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton), and Fernbank, *Lamar*, 28 May (Stan Hamilton, Dana Hamilton).
- SANDHILL CRANE** – Casual in the WP, one was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 13 May (Lenny Fenimore). The first Alabama record of Mississippi Sandhill Cranes from the Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR breeding program was set by seven immature birds at Irvington, *Mobile*, 23-29 May (G. Deakle).
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** – Very rare in the WP, three records were received: one in downtown Pensacola, *Escambia*, 11 April (Cheryl Bunch); three at Bayou Grande, Pensacola, *Escambia*, 20 April (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Ann Forster, Dan Forster, Betsy Tetlow, Gary Briece); and one at Destin, *Okaloosa*, 1 May (Patrick Gault).
- BLACK-NECKED STILT** – One was seen at Donovan Lake, Marion, *Perry*, during

the last week of April (Thomas Wilson) (rare for inland Alabama).

WHIMBREL – Twenty-seven was a good number at Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 25 April (Linda Reynolds *et al.*), where this species is becoming regular in good numbers in spring.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Damien Simbeck tallied 14 west of Florence, *Lauderdale*, and near Leighton, *Colbert*, 8 May to tie the maximum number for the Tennessee Valley.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – Three was a good number at Bayou La Batre, *Mobile*, 13 April (Steve McConnell, Lorna West) (rare in spring in Alabama).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – Rare in the WP, four were at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 20 April (Mac Myers, Bob Duncan); a single was at the same site 20 May (Bob Duncan, Will Duncan).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Early singles were at Donnegan Slough, *Colbert*, and Swan Creek WMA, *Limestone*, 24 March (Damien Simbeck). Twenty-eight was a good number (second highest for Tennessee Valley) in the Decatur area, *Limestone*, 14 May (Greg Jackson).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE – The third and fourth records for the WP were set by singles, both 20 May, in northern *Escambia* (Laura Catterton) and at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa* (Will Duncan).

LAUGHING GULL – One was spotted at Decatur, *Morgan*, 3 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) where the species is rare.

FRANKLIN'S GULL – Linda Reynolds found one at Guntersville, *Marshall*, 17 April (rare).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – An immature was on the east end of Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14 April (Jeff Wilson, Steve McConnell, m.ob.) where the species is rare.

CASPIAN TERN – A single was at Spring Creek, *Lawrence*, 24 March (Damien Simbeck) (earliest record for inland Alabama).

FORSTER'S TERN – Along the Tennessee River in the Decatur area, *Limestone/Morgan*, 95 were counted 14 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson) to establish a maximum spring number for inland Alabama.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – The third record for the Mountain Region was set by one at Guin, *Marion*, 4-5 April (Don Wooldridge, *vide* Jud Johnston). Bill Summerour had good numbers at Silverhill, *Baldwin*, with 25+ in the winter of 2005-2006 and 12+ in mid-April.

BURROWING OWL – Eighteen were counted on a 23 April survey of Site B-70, Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa* (Lenny Fenimore), location of the only known colony in the WP.

WHIP-POOR-WILL – Rare documentation of nesting for this species came from Skyline WMA, *Jackson*, 19-21 May, where Eric Soehren found a female at a nest with two young (ph.). One heard at Bakerhill, *Barbour*, 26 May (Don Ware) marked the southernmost possible breeder in Alabama.

- CHIMNEY SWIFT** – Two+ at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 12 March (Carolyn Snow, Phil Snow) tied the early arrival record for inland Alabama.
- OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** – A single was noted at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, *Jefferson*, 13 May (Helen Kittinger, Ty Keith), where the species is rare but regular. Another single at Grove Oak, *Marshall*, 27 May (Steve McConnell; ph.) was rare and late.
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER** – This species is rarely detected in Alabama and is a casual breeder, with only a single nesting confirmation in the state. A probable nesting record was marked by a singing bird in the Masterson SW BBA block, *Lawrence*, found 28 May (Paul Kittle) and 3 June (Rick Waldrop).
- ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** – Rare but regular in the WP, one was spotted at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 16 March (Mac Myers, Bob Duncan).
- WESTERN KINGBIRD** – Singles were spotted at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 5 May (Bob Duncan), and at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 16 May (Bob Duncan) (very rare in spring in the WP). Also rare in Alabama in spring, two were noted at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 11 May (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Betsy Tetlow, Mac Myers).
- GRAY KINGBIRD** – This flycatcher has been rare in Alabama since 1997, but appears to be making a slow comeback. At Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, three were found 6-7 May and one 11 May (Bob Duncan, Michael Jordan, Eva Barnett *et al.*).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – A rare but increasing breeder in the Tennessee Valley, a pair was noted nesting in a pine tree on the Alabama A&M farm, Hazel Green, *Madison*, 6 May (Ken Ward, NABS), a site where the species has previously nested.
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** – One found singing at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 14 March (Carolyn Snow), marked an early arrival date for inland Alabama.
- TREE SWALLOW** – Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, records were received from three new sites: a pair nesting in a Purple Martin gourd, Vandiver, *Shelby*, early May (Bart Stevens); 14+ including fledglings at Priceville, *Morgan*, 27 May (Paul Franklin *et al.*); and a single at May's Bend, Lake Logan Martin, *St. Clair/Tallapoosa*, 27 May (John Imhof, William Ratliff).
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** – An early bird was at Magnolia Springs, *Baldwin*, 7 March (Bob Duncan, Mac Myers).
- CLIFF SWALLOW** – One at Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 11 March (Bob Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Betsy Tetlow, Peggy Baker) marked an early record for the Gulf Coast. In the Beulah CE BBA block, *Coffee/Geneva*, a colony of nesting birds was recorded 28 May (Shirley Ducharme, Frank Ducharme). The latter record documents the continued expansion of the species in Alabama and represents the southernmost nesting occurrence for inland Alabama.
- CAVE SWALLOW** – Rare but seen with increasing frequency in the WP, singles were found at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 12 March (Bob Duncan); Destin, *Okaloosa*, 30 March (Barry Fleming); Site B-70, Eglin AFB, *Okaloosa*, 8 May (Lenny

Fenimore); and FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 10 May (Bob Duncan, Mac Myers). One at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 8 April (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*) was the first banded in Alabama, where the species is rare but regular in spring. Another single was noted on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 28 April (John Porter).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET – One was late at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 3 May (Greg Jackson, Debra Jackson).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH – Twenty was a good number on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 13 May (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch).

AMERICAN ROBIN – A singing male was recorded at Grand Bay, *Mobile*, 29 May (Rick West) (casual nesting this far south).

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Rare in spring in Alabama, an early bird was found at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 31 March (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent *et al.*; b.). Milton Harris counted five at Monte Sano SP, *Madison*, 3 May to establish a new maximum spring count for Alabama.

NORTHERN PARULA – One found by Bob Sargent at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 12 March marked an early arrival date for the Mountain Region.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – Lorna West noted two singing males at Opelika, *Lee*, 1 May (rare inland).

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER – An adult male, the first recorded from Alabama, was seen at the Dauphin Island Sanctuary, *Mobile*, 8 April (Howard Horne, Sarah Whitfield, Cindy McDonald; @ABRC).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER – An early arrival record for the Gulf Coast of Alabama was marked by one on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 8 April (Bailey McKay *et al.*).

WORM-EATING WARBLER – Two early arrivals were on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 23 March (David Dortch, Carrie Dortch).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – An early spring arrival was along the Cahaba River, *Shelby*, 13 March (Helen Kittinger).

MOURNING WARBLER – Rare but regular in spring in Alabama, three records (all singles) were received from *Jackson*: Estill Fork, 15 May (Bert Harris *et al.*); near Paint Rock, 17 May (Bert Harris *et al.*); and Skyline WMA, 19-21 May (Eric Soehren, m.ob.).

HOODED WARBLER – An early male was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 12 March (David Dortch).

WILSON'S WARBLER – As well as being rare in spring in Alabama, one male was early on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 26 March (Kevin Boles, Jerry Hoffman).

LARK SPARROW – Locally uncommon and gradually increasing as a breeder in the Tennessee Valley, Rick Waldrop counted seven (good number) in the Leighton area, *Colbert*, 27 May, and noted a single south of Courtland, *Lawrence*, on the same date. Three were counted on the Alabama A&M farm, Hazel Green, *Madison*, 6 May (Ken Ward, NABS).

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – Rarely recorded as a migrant in the Mountain Region, a window casualty furnished a record for Birmingham, *Jefferson*, 4 April

(Greg Harber; ph.). Two were singing north of Opelika, *Lee*, 13 May (Lorna West) where the species is a locally rare breeder.

PAINTED BUNTING – Very rare in May in the WP, a singing male was found at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 17 May (Bob Duncan).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – One female-type was recorded from Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 4 March (Howard Horne, m.ob.), where the species is rare. Occasional for inland Alabama, an adult male was found at Montgomery, *Montgomery*, 19 March (Tofer Dudley, Larry Gardella *et al.*).

SHINY COWBIRD – Still very rare in the WP, a male was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 10 May (Mac Myers, Bob Duncan). Also rare in Alabama, another male was spotted at Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 7 May (Bob Duncan, Michael Jordan, Eva Barnett).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Several singing males and one nest were noted at Livingston, *Sumter*, 17+ May (Eric Soehren, Mary Holycross) (erratic breeder in Alabama).

RED CROSSBILL – The continued presence of this species at its only known breeding site in Alabama (Coleman Lake area, Talladega NF, *Cleburne*) was confirmed by the eight seen 4 March (Ken Ward, NABS).

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SUMMER SIGHTINGS (JUNE - JULY 2006)

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SNOW GOOSE – Three were north of Auburn, *Lee*, 16 June (*vide* Barry Fleming) (occasional in summer).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Two records of this species, a rare and erratic breeder in Alabama, were received: a female with five large juveniles in the Echo NE BBA block, *Dale*, 4 July (Don Ware), and two males west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self).

NORTHERN SHOVELER – A male in alternate plumage was noted west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self) (occasional in summer).

HORNED GREBE – One lingered at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 2 June (Ron Smith) (very rare in June in the WP).

CORY’S SHEARWATER – The third record for the WP was marked by one spotted at Destin, *Okaloosa*, 31 July (Ben Garmon).

ANHINGA – Two were recorded from Opelika, *Lee*, in mid-July (Rodney McCollum) where the species is locally rare.

AMERICAN BITTERN – Rick West *et al.* found one in the Brundidge CE BBA block, *Pike*, 2 June (occasional in summer).

GREAT BLUE HERON – A white morph individual, very rare in the WP, visited

- Okaloosa*, 19 June – 14 July (Linda Dougherty, Phil Goodyear).
- WHITE IBIS** – Rare in the Tennessee Valley, four immatures were found along AL Highway 117 south of Stevenson, *Jackson*, 25 June (Steve McConnell).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** – A single was northwest of Madrid, *Houston*, 11+ July (Wayne Eidson *et al.*), and this species was also found at Prairie Creek, *Lowndes*, 15 July (a single; Shawn Reed) and 19 July (two; Larry Gardella) (rare in Alabama).
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** – Tommy Pratt had the second highest daily count for Alabama with the 50+ he counted along County Road 21, *Autauga*, 30 July.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** – Thirty-three was a good number at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 21 July (Don Ware). One-two were noted at separate locations at Winfield, *Marion*, 23 June and 4 July (Jud Johnston) (rare this far north).
- KING RAIL** – One was calling at Guntersville Dam, *Marshall*, 8 June (Steve McConnell) (rare breeder in the Tennessee Valley).
- LEAST SANDPIPER** – Two set an early arrival date for the Inland Coastal Plain of Alabama at Linden, *Marengo*, 7 July (Don Self, Judy Self).
- LEAST TERN** – This species had a high degree of nesting success at Fort Pickens, *Escambia*, with over 100 nests producing young and many juveniles present in July (*fide* Bob Duncan).
- BLACK TERN** – An adult in alternate plumage was seen west of Prairie Eden, *Hale*, 5 July (Don Self) (uncommon on the Inland Coastal Plain).
- ARCTIC TERN** – One was reported from Fort Morgan, *Baldwin*, 5 July (Kip Miller) to establish the first record (hypothetical) for Alabama (@ABRC).
- BLACK SKIMMER** – A good breeding season was experienced by this species at Pensacola Beach, *Escambia*, where there were about 30 nests (*fide* Bob Duncan).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** – Paul Franklin heard one calling at Riverchase, *Shelby*, 3 June (new site).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE** – Rare but increasing in summer on the Gulf Coast, one was at Silverhill, *Baldwin*, 29 June (Bill Summerour).
- MONK PARAKEET** – The first report of this non-native escapee for the WP came from Panama City, *Bay*, 4-10 July (Richard Ingram).
- WHIP-POOR-WILL** – Several records helped establish a new southern distribution limit for this species in Alabama: three in the Bleeker SW BBA block, *Lee*, 18 June (Lorna West); one in the Oakmulgee SE BBA block, *Perry*, 18 June (Rick West); one in the Parkers Crossroads CE BBA block, *Lee*, 19 June (Lorna West); and one in the Phipps CE BBA block, *Hale*, 24 July (Rick West).
- GRAY KINGBIRD** – Pairs bred in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa, and downtown Pensacola, *Escambia*, this summer (*fide* Bob Duncan). This species was eliminated as a breeder from Alabama by Hurricane Danny in 1997, but first bred again in 2005 and is now a rare breeder. Two Alabama records were received, a pair with a nest at Lake Shelby in Gulf SP, *Baldwin*, late May (Walter Holman *et al.*) and 8 June (Jan Lloyd *et al.*) (ph. Bill Summerour), and a pair at the golf course on

- Dauphin Island, Mobile, from May to 1 July (Mark VanHoose) (probably nesting).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – A pair, probably nesting, was at a new site along US Highway 72 in the Bridgeport NW BBA block, *Jackson*, 8-11 June (Hill Henry; ph.). Another pair was found at a new site in the Leighton NW BBA block, *Colbert*, 9 July (Jimmy Wells, John Phillips) (rare but increasing breeder in Alabama).
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – This species is a rare breeder away from the Talladega Mountains, and records were received from two new localities: four (including a nesting pair) in the Leesburg CE BBA block, *Cherokee*, 1-2 July (Steve McConnell), and a single in the Hyatt Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 8 July (Pelham Rowan).
- FISH CROW** – Occasional in the Tennessee Valley, a pair was calling at Decatur, *Morgan*, 30 June (Craig Brown), and a single was noted at the northern edge of the species' range in Alabama, a new site in the Leesburg CE BBA block, *Cherokee*, 1 July (Steve McConnell).
- TREE SWALLOW** – The third July WP record was marked by one at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 25 July (Bob Duncan). Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, the following records document its spread: four adults and one+ juveniles at Pell City, *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*); several at two sites (feeding young at one site) in the Cox Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 17 June (Greg Harber, Pelham Rowan, Jessica Germany); and an adult feeding young in the Helena NE BBA block, *Shelby*, 27 June (Helen Kittinger).
- CLIFF SWALLOW** – A single was at the FWBSF, *Okaloosa*, 25 July (Bob Duncan) (very rare in July in the WP).
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** – A juvenile was noted at Opelika, *Lee*, 20 June (Lorna West) (rare this far south).
- HOUSE WREN** – One was singing in the Irondale NW BBA block, *Jefferson*, 27 June (Helen Kittinger) (rare breeder in Alabama).
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD** – The bluebird trail established by Phil Berry in Tiger Point, *Santa Rosa*, produced about 200 young this summer.
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH** – One lingered at the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 10 June (Howard Horne) (third June record for Alabama).
- CEDAR WAXWING** – Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, five were counted on a BBS in *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*).
- YELLOW WARBLER** – A rare breeder in Alabama, one was noted on a BBS in *St. Clair*, 4 June (Paul Franklin *et al.*).
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** – An adult male was at Hullets Chapel, *St. Clair*, 29 June (Bob Sargent) (occasional breeder in Alabama).
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** – One-two early birds arrived at Clay, *Jefferson*, 27-29 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent).
- CERULEAN WARBLER** – One was singing at a new site in the Pleasant Site CW BBA block, *Franklin*, 20 June (Shirley Wayland, Phyllis Nofzinger) (rare breeder

in Alabama).

WORM-EATING WARBLER – Records of singles were received from three locations in south Alabama, where the species is a rare breeder: Opp West NE BBA block, *Covington*, 5 June (Don Ware); Leon CE BBA block, *Crenshaw*, 10 June (Don Ware); and north of Hurstboro, *Russell*, 22 June (Lorna West).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER – Greg Harber *et al.* found one in the Hyatt Gap CE BBA block, *St. Clair*, 8 July (locally rare breeder).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH – A 28 July window casualty in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, was identified (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan), with the specimen being sent to Pensacola Junior College (third July record for the WP).

CANADA WARBLER – Two were early arrivals at Clay, *Jefferson*, 29 July (Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent).

LARK SPARROW – Rare but increasing as a breeder in Alabama, one was recorded in the Deatsville NE BBA block, *Elmore/Autauga*, 11 June (Larry Gardella). One carrying food was seen at Moontown, *Madison*, 19 June (Neill Cowles).

SONG SPARROW – Several were observed and nesting was documented in the Leeds CE BBA block, *Jefferson/St. Clair*, 9 July (Jessica Germany, Harriet Wright, Lee Brewer, Greg Harber). This species is slowly expanding as a breeder in Alabama.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – A rare summering bird was documented in Cullman, *Cullman*, 24 and 26 July (Caila Lamont; ph.).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – The second June record for the WP was marked by a male and a female at a feeder in Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, 4 June (Lucy Duncan, Bob Duncan).

PAINTED BUNTING – This species is rare but increasing as a breeder for inland Alabama. An immature male was noted 26-30 July along County Road 21, *Autauga* (Tommy Pratt), while another immature was found in the Forester SW BBA block, *Autauga*, 29 July (Greg Harber, m.ob.).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – A first year male was reported from Niceville, *Okaloosa*, 14 July (Phil Goodyear) (@FOSRC) and would mark the first July record for Florida if accepted.

NUTMEG MANNIKIN – Mary Miller reported this exotic from east Pensacola, *Escambia*, 29 July, an area from which it was first reported in 2001. The species has since spread throughout the metropolitan area.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Evidence suggesting that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (*Campephilus principalis*) exist in Florida. Geoffrey E. Hill, Daniel J. Mennill, Brian W. Rolek, Tyler L. Hicks, Kyle A. Swiston. 2006. Avian Conservation and Ecology – Ecologie et conservation des oiseaux 1(3): 2 [online] URL: <http://www.ace-eco.org/vol1/iss3/art2/>.

This paper presents exciting new evidence that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers may not be extinct and may be located along the Choctawhatchee River in the Florida panhandle. Since the early 1940's, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is thought to have been extirpated from the southeastern bottomland forests of the United States. Its disappearance was mainly due to the cutting of the swamp forests in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A Cuban mountain population of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers was thought to have been present until the late 1980's, but is now considered to be gone. In 2005, a single woodpecker was briefly captured on video along the Cache River in Arkansas and some ornithologists suggest that the video indicates that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers are in that area. However, other ornithologists still wait for unquestionable evidence that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers occur in Arkansas.

In May 2005, Hill, Hicks, and Rolek identified an Ivory-billed Woodpecker while kayaking through a mature swamp forest north of the town of Bruce, Florida. From December 2005 to May 2006, extensive field work in a 500 ha (1236 acres) study plot surrounding the initial identification site led to 14 sightings of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers! In addition, seven automated listening stations captured 11,419 hours of audio recordings that yielded 99 supposed double knocks (a distinct bill tapping) and 210 "kent" calls. The double knock recordings were carefully analyzed and compared favorably with similar recordings from the closely related Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*). The putative kent calls were analyzed and resembled the historical recordings from Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. Large tree cavities were also discovered that were in the size range historically noted for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and larger than those of the Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*). Finally, the researchers report the presence of unique markings on trees that could not be attributed to any other animal. Specifically, they found woodpecker foraging sign on trees in the study area that had more adherent bark than in areas where Ivory-billed Woodpeckers are not believed to occur. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers are known to use their relatively flat, chisel-like bill to remove tightly adhering bark, whereas the Pileated Woodpecker tends to scale more loosely adhering bark. Although absolute evidence was not presented in this study, the authors report that future research will focus on gathering definitive evidence.— TMH

[**editors note:** see <<http://web2.uwindsor.ca/courses/biology/dmennill/IBWO/IBWOteam.php>> and <http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science_math/cosam/departments/biology/faculty/web-pages/hill/ivorybill/> for the latest news concerning the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Florida.]

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 52

No. 2

2006

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