

# THE ORIOLE

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No. 3



# THE ORIOLE

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## ADDITIONS TO THE SUMMER BIRDS OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

BY HENRY M. STEVENSON

In 1953 J. Fred Denton published a compiled list of birds known to occur in summer on Lookout Mountain, including records in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. The physiography, vegetation, and other aspects of the mountain were given, and sources of the records were mentioned. Also it was pointed out that certain species seen during the late summer months, for example, the Veery, probably did not breed on this mountain.

Since 1953 additional field work on Lookout Mountain has resulted in the addition of several species to the list of those which probably breed there. Miss Barbara Lund, of Tallahassee, Florida, has spent the greater part of three summers there and has provided me with notes of birds seen. Julian L. Dusi published a list of species (1956) encountered in early June, 1956. The writer spent four days there in June, 1954, and has returned for two short visits since that time. The majority of the records in this article are from northeastern Alabama, but significant records from Georgia concern the Barn Swallow, Horned Lark, and Blue Grosbeak.

The present report concerns only the summer birds of Lookout Mountain which probably breed there, and not any species presumed to be migrating. Of the recent additions which fall into the former category there appears to be one which requires confirmation—the Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*). To the best of my knowledge there is no other record of the species so far north in Alabama, nor anywhere else at a combination of latitude and altitude comparable to that of Lookout Mountain. On the contrary, the observer (Dusi, 1956) who reported this species did not list the White-breasted Nuthatch (*S. carolinensis*), which is fairly common on Lookout Mountain.

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*). This species was frequently encountered by Lund on the DeSoto River (Alabama) in July and Aug-



ust. Although these may have wandered up from nesting grounds at lower elevations, it appears likely that a few may nest along the river.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). One was reported "flying along the river" by Dusi. Also Thomas A. Imhof has informed me of its breeding there.

Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). In addition to the reports of natives, there is the record of a hen heard calling by Dusi.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*). This species was seen by Imhof and the writer on June 4, 1954, and Mrs. Blanche Dean, of Birmingham, Alabama, told me she had been the species there.

Barred Owl (*Strix varia*). Several members of the Alabama Nature Camp saw one of these owls at close range in DeSoto State Park, June 4, 1954.

Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*). Although the regular goatsucker on the mountain is the Whip-poor-will, Lund distinctly heard this form singing on June 28, 1946, near the DeSoto River. The elevation there (about 1700 feet) is high for the species. It has been recorded by West (1956) at Chickamauga, Georgia, at about 740 feet elevation.

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*). Dusi's reference to this species as "commonly seen on farm lands" is vague, in view of the fact that his list includes birds which he recorded only in the valley (e.g., Killdeer), but there is a record of two seen on the mountain by Imhof and Stevenson, June 4, 1954.

Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). On June 26, 1956, the writer saw two juvenal larks on the Georgia part of the mountain a few miles north of Cloudland and two adults a few miles away in Alabama, providing strong circumstantial evidence of its breeding on Lookout Mountain (Stevenson, 1956, p. 4).

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). Mr. and Mrs. Eugene West, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the writer started on a field trip on Lookout Mountain on the morning of June 15, 1957, beginning near the Georgia-Tennessee line and working southwestward on Georgia highway 157. Exactly 4½ miles before the intersection with Georgia 143 we stopped at a point where there were large fields on each side of the highway. Within a few minutes Mrs. West called our attention to a swallow flying around a distant pond, and tentatively identified it as a Barn Swallow. Agreeing with the identification, I suggested that we check

a nearby barn for nests. Failing to find evidence of its nesting there, we soon noticed a swallow fly into a barn on the opposite (west) side of the highway, where we had no difficulty in locating its nest and about five young. This barn is on the property of G. E. Jenkins, and the elevation there is about 1940 feet. This nesting record appears to be the first for inland Georgia. A search of the literature reveals breeding evidence in Georgia only on or near the coast. It has been recorded by Jones (1947) "during the nesting season" near Rome, but there are no definite nesting dates.

Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*). As we drove down the north slope of Lookout Mountain toward Fort Payne on Alabama 35, on June 4, 1954, Imhof heard the distinctive song of this species. On the opposite side of the car, however, I did not hear the bird.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). The occurrence of this familiar pest on Lookout Mountain pre-dates Denton's paper, from which it must have been inadvertently omitted. Small numbers are found around stores and on some farms.

Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). There is abundant evidence that this species has invaded Lookout Mountain only within the last decade, as it has done in many other parts of the Southeast. It was not recorded by Denton in 1936, Stevenson in 1943, or Imhof in 1949, but most ornithologists visiting there since have found it. The first records were made by the writer and others at the Nature Camp on June 1 and 4, 1954, and I saw others on June 26, 1956. Dusi saw some on the Denton farm in June, 1956. Lund found them in the summer of 1954, as well as in succeeding years, and in 1957 saw a young one being fed by a Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens*).

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*). The top of Lookout Mountain is comparable to the highest elevations reached by this species in the breeding season, and it appears to be uncommon there. The first record was at the site of the Horned Lark record in Alabama, at an elevation of about 1800 feet, on June 26, 1956. The Wests and I saw another at the site of the Barn Swallow nest at 1940 feet, June 15, 1957.



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*Biological Sciences Department*  
*Florida State University*  
*Tallahassee, Florida*  
September 15, 1957.

## GENERAL NOTES

**AN OBSERVATION OF THE LIMPkin NEAR ALBANY.**—On May 5, 1957, the morning field trip of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held at the edge of the Chickasawhatchie Swamp on the wildlife refuge area of the St. Joe Paper Company, about 20 miles southwest of Albany, Georgia. A group of us who were on the west side of the swamp, heard what we thought was the loud screaming call of the Limpkin (*Aramus scolopaceus*) coming from somewhere in the swamp but we were unable at the time to locate the source of the calls.

That afternoon, Charles M. Jones and I returned to the swamp and again heard the calls coming from a clearing near the point where the road crosses Chickasawhatchie Creek. We waded cautiously through the overflowed bottomland for about 100 yards to the edge of the clearing where we saw a Limpkin at a distance of about 30 yards. Either it was not aware of, or did not care about, our presence, because we were able to observe it for some time. It even called while we were watching.

Sam Jones, formerly manager of the refuge, said that Limpkins had used the particular place where we saw the bird, for seven or eight

years, but that he had never seen them at any other locality in the swamp. This record constitutes the first published account of the occurrence of this species in this part of Georgia.—EUGENE CYPERT, *Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross, Georgia. July 2, 1957.*

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER AT ATLANTA.**—On May 12, 1957, about 5:30 p. m., we found shore birds feeding around the ponds and on the sludge drying beds at the Sewage Treatment Plant located in the South River Section near Atlanta, Georgia. We identified several Lesser Yellowlegs and a number of "peeps." With these "peeps" was one bird differing in color and slightly larger in size. We identified this one bird as a White-rumped Sandpiper (*Erolia fuscicollis*). After close examination at a distance of about fifteen feet we flushed the bird. It flew directly away from us and to a lower level. This gave us an excellent view of the white rump and back pattern. The next afternoon the bird was observed again at close range. This time it bathed, preened and flew overhead.

In a recent compilation on records of birds around Atlanta (Griffin and Parks, "Occurrence Extremes of Birds of the Atlanta, Georgia, Region," mimeo. 1955), there are only two previous records for this species—May 21, 1932, and May 17, 1952.—MARENE SNOW, MARGARET RODDY, M. ALMA COOKE (Compiler), P. O. Box 692, Atlanta, Georgia. June 29, 1957.

**UNUSUAL NESTING SITE OF THE RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER.**—On July 1, 1956, at Birdsong Plantation, Grady County, Georgia, there was a nest of a Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*) in a pine pole used to support the midsection of a cowshed roof. The pole, about ten inches in diameter, was situated several feet inward from the edge of the roof where it was in the shade at all times. Entrance to the nest was about seven feet above ground, but only about three and one-half feet above the level of the cattle feeder. At the time of this observation in midafternoon, the young birds were noisy and moving inside the nest, but none was visible. The parents were perched about fifteen feet away on upright poles while we examined the nest, and did not offer to attack us. One of the young birds, which fell from the nest before it could fly, was reared by the son of the plantation owner, and became quite tame. In January, 1957, it would ride on the shoulder of any member of the family, in and out of the residence. Its favorite roosting place was under the eaves of the porch.—EZDA DEVINEY, *Department of Biological Sciences, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. July 8, 1957.*



**A WHOOPING CRANE FROM MACON.**—The Georgia State Museum in Atlanta has recently acquired a heretofore unreported specimen of the Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) from Georgia. One of us (McLean) learned of the existence of the specimen and together we went to examine the bird which had been stored in a basement in Macon, Georgia, for many years. We must confess that we were surprised to find a mounted crane rather than a heron of some species. It is a fine adult bird mounted fairly skillfully but showing considerable damage from the ravages of insects and dust. There was no label attached to the specimen and its sex is not disclosed.

Varnished to the side of the case in which the bird had been displayed at one time were two newspaper clippings evidently cut from a Savannah newspaper. Some of the words have been obliterated in one article, but fortunately the name of the collector and the date and place of collection appeared in the other article and this information is still clearly legible. The text of this news item is as follows:

#### A Whooping Crane

Mr. George Noble, the bird fancier and taxidermist, has on exhibition in one of the windows of his store on Bull Street a large white bird of the genus crane. He calls it the Whooping Crane, *Grus americana*. A card fastened to the bird says it was shot by Mr. Edward Hodgkins near Macon on November 12, 1885. It also suggestively and paragraphically adds:

"This is a crane."

"It is not for sale."

"It is not finished yet."

"It's owner wants it."

"We don't know anything more about it."

The card is intended possibly to answer the questions that inquisitive people would ask. The bird is a handsome specimen and when ready to go forth from the hands of the taxidermist will be a valuable acquisition to some museum.

There is but one other valid Georgia record of the Whooping Crane, according to *Birds of Georgia* (Greene, *et al*, 1945). The sternum and trachea of a bird taken at St. Simons Island, date and name of collector unknown, are deposited in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. Accordingly, every effort is being made to recondition the Macon specimen for permanent preservation in the Georgia State Museum.—WILLIAM W. GRIFFIN, 3232 Pine Ridge Road, N. E., Atlanta 5, Georgia, and ANNETTE McLEAN, Georgia State Museum, State Capital, Atlanta 3, Georgia. July 18, 1957.

## RECENT LITERATURE

**HOW TO WATCH BIRDS.**—by Roger Barton. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York. 1955, 229 pp. \$3.50.

This little book will be of especial interest to the beginning bird student, for the eighteen chapters embrace such popular subjects as where and how to find birds, how to build bird houses, and bird watching at night. Some of the chapters contain data of some use to all those interested in birds, such as measurements for bird houses and natural foods attractive to birds. Generally speaking, though, the book can be recommended for the less serious-minded bird student.

**NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.**—by Leonard W. Wing. Ronald Press, New York. 1956, 539 pp. \$6.75.

Of the several recent textbooks of ornithology, this is undoubtedly the most complete and up-to-date one, because its 24 chapters and appendices cover most of the major phases of ornithology adequately (migration, ecology, morphology, etc). This reviewer has had success in using it as a text primarily because students have found it to be readable, well organized, and complete. The technical ornithologist may perhaps question the validity of some of the author's tables and notice typographical as well as factual errors ("enucleated red cells" in birds, temperature "of birds ranges between 104° F. and 110° F."). In spite of these possible objections, the author is to be commended for a generally well-written, comprehensive treatise on modern phases of ornithology.

**THE FLAMINGOS: THEIR LIFE HISTORY AND SURVIVAL.**—by Robert P. Allen. National Audubon Society Research Report No. 5. 1956, xv and 285 pp. \$3.95.

This is the fifth report of rare or vanishing species of North American birds, and it gives special reference to the American or West Indian Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). Chapter headings include Historical Sketch (Introduction), Distribution and Migration, Numbers, Food Habits and Ecology, The Breeding Cycle, and Conservation. The most serious losses for this species are attributed to storms, floods, heat, and drought, and it is felt that a joint conservation effort involving hunting, eggging, and loss of habitat will help to perpetuate the species. This is a significant study of a large group of interesting birds.



**CHECKLIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS. FIFTH EDITION.**—prepared by the A. O. U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. Order from the Treasurer, American Ornithologists' Union, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. 1957, 691 pp. \$8.00.

This long-awaited revised edition of the Check-list is certainly welcome to American ornithologists because it contains the "official" scientific and vernacular names and ranges of North American species. It is a "must" for the serious student's bookshelf.—D.W.J.

### FROM THE FIELD

A single adult male Pigeon Hawk was observed by William W. Griffin on April 14, 1957, at the edge of Silver Lake at Atlanta. He has seen Pigeon Hawks in Atlanta on two previous occasions—April 12, 1952, and April 16, 1949. On August 12, 1957, a live but exhausted Woodcock was caught on a city street in Macon, thus constituting the only definite summer record for this species at Macon. A Ground Dove was taken by a hunter at Sparta on September 14, 1957. Ivan Tomkins discovered a Chipping Sparrow building a nest in late July, in the eastern edge of Effingham County, near Meldrim.

### NEWS AND COMMENTS

Congratulations are due to Drs. J. Fred Denton and George Sciple who recently obtained their M.D. degrees. Dr. Denton remains on the staff at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta, whereas Dr. Sciple is an intern at Seattle, Washington. His address is 1511 Lander Street, Seattle 44, Washington.

Dr. Robert Norris participated in the recent meetings of the American Institute of Biological Sciences at Stanford University at Palo Alto, California.

At the 75th stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union held at historic Cape May, New Jersey, September 10-15, 1957, William W. Griffin and Dr. David W. Johnston were elevated to the class of "Elective Member" of this society. This is a recognition of which all G. O. S. members as well as they can be justly proud since only seven ornithologists in the United States and Canada were so honored at this meeting.

Members of the G. O. S. from Georgia who attended the meeting included Dr. Johnston, Dr. J. Fred Denton, Herbert L. Stoddard, and Ivan R. Tomkins. Two of these presented scientific papers. Dr. Denton gave a paper entitled, "The Southeastern Limits of the Breeding Ranges of Certain North American Birds and the Associated Ecological Factors," and Dr. Johnston one on "Isolating Mechanisms Between American Crows."—J.F.D.