

## STATUS OF THE BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER IN ALABAMA

By JULIAN L. DUSI

To the best of our knowledge, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, *Tryngites subruficollis* (Vieillot), is a rare fall visitor.

Prior to 1955, its presence was not known for the State of Alabama. On September 12 of that year the writer (Dusi, 1955) observed a specimen among a group of sandpipers near Gulf Shores. Two days later, Ernest Byford collected the first specimen of the state at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, Decatur, Alabama (Imhof, 1956). This year the writer was again observing the early migrations on the Gulf Coast and collected a male Buff-breasted Sandpiper near Gulf Shores on September 8, 1959.

The buff-breasted Sandpiper is known to migrate from its arctic breeding ground through the prairies west of the Mississippi River. From the records of this bird in Alabama, it must migrate only in the western portion of the state. Likewise, the records indicate that it is an early migrant. It is the opinion of the writer that many appearances of this sandpiper have been overlooked in Alabama because it is not looked for early enough in the fall migration. It would seem that a concentrated effort in late August and early September, studying the prairie-like fields and mud plots in Western Alabama, should reveal that the Buff-breasted Sandpiper appears in Alabama more often than we have heretofore thought. It is a challenge and opportunity for observation that should not be overlooked.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Dusi, Julian L. and Rosemary T. Dusi, 1955. An annotated list of birds observed on the Gulf Coast. *Alabama Birdlife* 3(3-4), 27-33.
- Imhof, Thomas A., 1956. Present status of the Alabama bird list. *Alabama Birdlife* 4(3-4), 24-26.

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## RECENT RECORD FOR LINCOLN'S SPARROW IN ALABAMA

By MARGARET ROBINSON

The Lincoln's sparrow breeds from Newfoundland and N. Quebec south to Maine, N. New York, N. Michigan and Minnesota. It is known to winter from N. Mississippi and S. Oklahoma south to the Gulf, and it appears on the Alabama State Bird List as it was presumed to occur here in winter, also. There is no specimen for the State. Howell, in *Birds of Alabama*, states that he observed a Lincoln's sparrow near Florence, May 4, 1912.

I have been trapping and banding birds on Chapman Mt., here in Huntsville. I have maintained four traps—two in an open abandoned barnyard, and two in open but heavily shaded areas near a small stream, surrounded by dense undergrowth. Since I have not wished to keep any adult birds from their nests or young, I have been trapping from 5:30 P. M. to 7:00 P. M., D.S.T., only, so I consider it a great stroke of luck that during that short time on May 2, 1959, I caught a Lincoln's sparrow. When I checked one of the traps along the creek, I found an adult white-throated sparrow and a smaller sparrow, which at first glance, resembled an immature swamp sparrow.

On April 2, 1959, I banded an immature swamp sparrow at another location, and in identifying it read much about similar species.

When I removed the bird from the trap, I noticed immediately the nearly rust colored head stripes and the very narrow eyering, and when I turned the bird over and saw the white throat with its very fine black streaks, the bright creamy breast and sides with their only slightly heavier streaks, and the clean white belly, I knew I had no swamp sparrow. The bird was clearly an adult. It measured  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches and had a long, unnotched tail.

My first thought was of its being a Lincoln's sparrow, but I am chagrined to have to admit that the importance of this bird's being found in Alabama did not enter my mind. With field guides (Peterson, 1956 and Pough, 1953) I eliminated any species with which the Lincoln's sparrow could possibly be confused. Had this not been a mature bird with such striking markings and had I not had the memory of the swamp sparrow

still fresh in mind, I might have had some difficulty in identification.

When I knew beyond doubt that the bird was a Lincoln's sparrow, I placed a band on its leg and let it go. Only when I arrived home and checked the State Bird List, did I realize what I had let fly away without my getting even a photograph.

#### Literature Cited

Howell, A. H., 1928. Birds of Alabama. Birmingham Printing Co., Birmingham, Ala., p. 246.

Peterson, R. T., 1956. A field guide to the birds. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, p. 238.

Pough, R. N. All the birds of eastern and central North America. Doubleday and Co., New York, pp. 269-270.

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.—As part of a study of the shorebird population on the Florida Gulf coast, a large number of short-billed dowitchers, semipalmated plovers, dunlins, and lesser numbers of other waders were trapped, banded and color-dyed in spring, 1959. Birds caught in May were dyed a vivid golden color which is known to have remained unaltered after at least one month on a dowitcher. Birds trapped in June were dyed scarlet, though dyed birds seen two weeks later were only pinkish in hue. All birds dyed were presumed to be in northward migration. Other colors will be used in the fall, 1959.

It is earnestly requested that anyone observing such colored shorebirds please communicate promptly with the undersigned, stating color, species, and date and location of observation. Horace Loftin, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.