

The area in which the bird was sighted is the campus of U.A.B. and is part of an urban renewal scheme. It may be characterized as containing blocks of classroom buildings interspersed with sparsely wooded vacant lots that have been cleared of shrubbery and are mowed regularly in the summer. It is bordered by small businesses and light industry to the north and west, a residential area to the south and the massive U.A.B. Medical Center complex to the east. This area, some 12-15 square blocks, supports sizable populations of Rock Dove and Mourning Dove (Zenaidara macroura). Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) are often seen as well as may breed on the gravel roofs of some of the buildings. Birds of prey of several species have been seen there from time to time.

While this area is not unfrequented by raptors, it is decidedly unusual that a Prairie Falcon should be sighted there. This sighting is the first record for the state of Alabama and, to the best of our knowledge, the first record of the species for the southeastern region of the United States. There are very few records east of the Mississippi River. A. C. Bent (Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey, Dover Publications, New York (1961)) acknowledges several records for Minnesota, one record for Wisconsin, and three for Illinois, all in early winter and all prior to 1931. The fifth edition of The A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds (1957) lists the species as casual in Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana.

The weather in the weeks prior to this sighting, according to National Weather Service records, included the passage of two cold fronts through Birmingham. A strong front arrived on the afternoon of January 19 with winds out of the northwest gusting to 28 mph and considerable precipitation, including a very light snow fall with no accumulation. The second and somewhat weaker front arrived February 1 from a westerly direction with winds gusting to 25 mph.

The unusual nature of this sighting now seasons with anxiety any periods we spend out-of-doors without binoculars (though they really weren't necessary in this case) or camera. We feel that the details of this observation are sufficient grounds for addition of Prairie Falcon to the Alabama state list with hypothetical status. We agree, however, that it should remain on the hypothetical list either until additional sightings are made in the state or until photographic evidence of its occurrence in this region is available. It should be noted that the Prairie Falcon is considered an endangered species and taking of specimens is prohibited by Federal law.

1500 33rd Street So. Apt. 1
Birmingham 35205

BANDING ON THE BALDWIN COUNTY COAST

Thomas A. Imhof and James V. Peavy, Jr.

On September 19 and 20, 1958, and at least twice each winter, spring and fall since August, 1971, the writers have banded at Fort Morgan. This produced a total of 2269 new banded birds of 96 species on 64 days or 35 birds per day. At Fort Morgan, the birds are netted on the north (bay) side just under one mile from the west end of the 21-mile-long peninsula. This site, known as the "Wall," is near the east boundary of Fort Morgan State Park, where a 5-foot-high wall bisects the peninsula. Birds cross this wall in huge numbers during migration, but it is somewhat exposed to the west, and catches are sometimes poor in the afternoon or when the wind is westerly. But, the funneling effect of the terrain and the use of alternate nearby sites make up for any disadvantages.

Other Baldwin County Coastal (south of the Intracoastal Canal) bandings by Imhof and Peavy were at St. Andrew's Bay (near Navy Cove), Gulf State Park, and Mary Lou Slough (Alabama Point) for a total of 3042 birds on 87 days or 35 birds per day. Andrew K. Bates banded another 23 birds in September, 1971, for a grand total of 3065 birds of 116 species in 92 days of banding, or 33 birds per day. We are unaware of any other banders operating in Baldwin County south of the Canal since 1946.

Of the 92 banding days, 34 were in April, 19 in October, 13 in September, and none in June or July. Most of the birds banded were transients, and they have furnished information on migration, such as dates of peaks for various species, relative abundance, and distributional data on hard-to-identify species such as the Empidonax flycatchers. Much of this information has been published in season columns in Audubon Field Notes, American Birds, and Alabama Birdlife for pertinent seasons. Recapture data are rather meagre because transients rarely stay in the same place very long, and on future migrations seldom stop at the same places. Many surprises found in the nets not only contributed valuable distributional data but helped make the 600-mile round trip from Birmingham to Fort Morgan worthwhile.

Of the 3065 birds of 116 species banded, only 116 birds of 32 species (3.8%) were recaptured later than the day they were banded. Most of these were next-day repeats of transient species, but 44 of them (1.44%) were recaptured 90 or more days after banding and are called returns. These 44 were Screech Owl, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Carolina Wren, 5; Brown Thrasher, 4; Gray Catbird, 6; Myrtle Warbler, 5; Cardinal, 9; Rufous-sided Towhee, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 6; and Swamp Sparrow, 3. The Catbird, Myrtle Warbler, White-throated Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow (20 birds) were returning to their wintering grounds on the Gulf Coast of Alabama; the other 24 are considered permanent residents there.

More than 20 individuals of the following 31 species were banded: Catbird, 554; Myrtle Warbler, 359; Whitethroat, 140; White-eyed Vireo, 137; Wood Thrush, 122; Red-eyed Vireo, 122; Cardinal, 115; Indigo Bunting, 108; Swamp Sparrow, 96; Blue Jay, 75; Rufous-sided Towhee, 75; Swainson's Thrush, 63; Hooded Warbler, 60; Northern Waterthrush, 57; Goldfinch, 47; Prothonotary Warbler, 44; Hermit Thrush, 43; Ovenbird, 43; Summer Tanager, 43; Common Yellowthroat, 40; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 38; Tennessee Warbler, 34; Worm-eating Warbler, 33; Carolina Wren, 31; Veery, 31; Kentucky Warbler, 27; Scarlet Tanager, 25; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 24; Black and White Warbler, 22; Mockingbird, 21; and Orchard Oriole, 21. Some other interesting totals include: Green Heron, 3; Least Bittern, 2; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 3; American Kestrel, 1; Virginia Rail, 2; Sora, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 3; Willow Flycatcher, 2; Black-whiskered Vireo, 2; Swainson's Warbler, 14; Cape May Warbler, 7; Black-throated Blue Warbler, 1; Western Tanager, 1; Fox Sparrow, 1.

In the above account, less than half of the species (47 of 116) are mentioned. The full list includes 8 species of flycatchers, 4 wrens, 5 vireos, 31 warblers and 20 finches. This is an effort of barely 4 years by two banders. The Dauphin Island experience of about 17 years (1958-1975) by veteran banders, Margaret E. Miller, Richard E. Hayward and Imhof, tells us that many more additions can be made to the Baldwin County Coastal Banding List. We are looking forward to making these additions, but we are also looking forward to the day when a bird banded on Dauphin Island will be recaptured at Fort Morgan or vice versa. Two birds, a Cardinal and an American Redstart, banded at Fort Morgan have been recaptured at St. Andrew's Bay, four miles to the east. We still have little direct evidence of what these thousands of migrants do after we band them. But, it's fun trying to find out.

1036 Pike Road and 5205 Beacon Drive
Birmingham 35218 Birmingham 35210