

LITERATURE CITED

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HOUSE FINCHES, CARPODACUS MEXICANUS, NESTING IN ANNISTON

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On 8 April 1985, while standing in downtown Anniston, AL., I noticed warbling coming from one of the ornamental trees on the main thoroughfare through town. An investigation revealed a pair of House Finches on territory and busily engaged in searching for a nesting site among the trees in front of the Federal Building.

Two days later, on 10 April, Patty Smith, an ornithology student at Jacksonville State University, searched the downtown area and found a half dozen singing males, including 1 pair that was building a nest under a metal awning. On 13 April, I found 3 more nests under construction, one in a crevice in a building, another under the metal braces supporting the insulators on top of a telephone pole, and another in a dense, ornamental cedar. I also noted about a dozen singing males.

On 16 April, Chris Nixon and John Chapman, also ornithology students at JSU, found a pair building a nest in a hanging fern bracket on the front porch of a house. The nest, which was composed of grasses and soft plant

fibers, was nestled in the center of the fern and completely hidden among the fronds. Nest construction required about 1 week. On 19 April, the nest held 2 pale blue eggs lightly flecked with black dots. The resident of the house (Ms. Bright) kept a check on the nest and said that one egg was laid each day between 0600 hr and 0800 hr until the full set of 6 eggs was completed on 23 April. The last egg hatched on 4 May, making the incubation period about 12 days. One egg failed to hatch. According to Ms. Bright, the young remained in the nest for 16 to 17 days, leaving on 21 May.

By 29 April, nesting activities in town were in all stages, from nest building to young out of the nest.

Two old nests were found in the shrubbery around Ms. Bright's house, indicating that House Finches have been nesting in Anniston since at least 1984. This is also supported by an observation by Dr. George Richards, an English professor at JSU, who called last year to say that he had seen a pair of House Finches feeding a fledgling near the library in Anniston on 31 May. However, a follow-up on that observation turned up no further evidence of the species in Anniston in 1984.

All indications are that House Finches will become an abundant breeding resident in Anniston. At present the breeding population is confined to the center of town between Quintard Avenue on the east, 9th Street on the south, Moore Avenue on the west and 16th Street on the north. The current population is estimated to be 2 or 3 pairs per block.

Dr. Julian Dusi (1982) cited evidence of House Finches nesting in Auburn in the summer of 1982, the first account of the species breeding in Alabama. Since then they have also been reported from Montgomery and now in Anniston. A summary of the occurrence of the House Finch in Alabama is given by Summerour (1980) in Alabama Birdlife.

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A SUCCESSFUL NESTING OF THE REDDISH EGRET (DICHROMANASSA RUFESCENS) ON CAT ISLAND, ALABAMA

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The Reddish Egret (Dichromanassa rufescens) is a transient along the Alabama Gulf coast. Breeding occurs from lower California, coastal Texas, and Florida, followed by migration along the Gulf coast (Imhof, 1976). Probable nesting of the Reddish Egret in Alabama has been reported only once. This record was by W. M. Gaillard in 1965 on Cat Island (Imhof, 1976). In an ongoing study being conducted on Cat Island (a 5.2 ha island located 11 km north of Dauphin Island in Mississippi Sound), Reddish Egrets began to appear shortly after the first arrival of Snowy Egrets (Egretta thula), and tricolored Herons (Hydranassa tricolor) on 28 March 1985. The latter 2 species quickly established nest sites and nest building activity was underway by 4 April. Three pairs of Reddish Egrets also started nest building on 25 April. Nests were constructed in the upper branches of a dense stand of marsh elder (Iva frutescens), approximately 1.2 m off the ground. Upon examination two weeks later, only 2 pairs had successfully established nests, with 4 eggs in one nest and 2 in the other. The nests were tagged and followed throughout the study, along with nests of other species in the colony. Only 1 of the 2 Reddish Egret nests was successful, with 2 birds being fledged. The other nest site was destroyed during early incubation and