

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Geese since I observed only one instance of aggressive behavior (straightened, lowered neck with hissing) by the Canadas toward the Ross'. It was reported, however, that on 23 February some Canadas were actively pursuing and nipping the Ross'.

Bent (*Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl*) described the Ross' Goose as tamer than other species of geese that visited the California Region. The bird observed here also appeared to be less shy than the Canadas and Snows. Even after five days of being observed and harassed by birders it remained somewhat complacent. Daniel Drennen, *Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Route 2, Box 97-B, Eufaula, Alabama 36027-9294*.

ROSS' GOOSE (*CHEN ROSSII*) SIGHTED IN COLBERT COUNTY

Damien J. Simbeck

On 22 February 1988, at approximately 1500 CST, as I was driving along River Road east of the Shoals area I noticed two geese on a pond about eight km east of Highway 133. My initial impression was that both birds were Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*), one white and one blue morph. I stopped and began studying them with a Baush and Lomb Discoverer at a distance of about 30 meters in good light. While looking at the white bird, I immediately noticed a small blue patch at the base of its bill and absence of a dark grin patch, the latter being characteristic of Snow Geese. These are distinct features of the Ross' Goose (*Chen Rossii*), a species with only one previously confirmed record in Alabama.

I continued to watch the birds for several minutes, and as the two moved side by side I could see that the white goose was distinctly smaller and shorter necked than the Blue Goose. I approached the birds, attempting to take photographs, until they flew, then watched as they circled the pond several times and finally settled on the opposite end of the lake.

I immediately called Paul Kittle who joined me on a return trip to the pond. We found both geese still there and swimming with a small group of Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*). We studied the birds until about 1545 and later notified other birders of the sighting. Throughout

the remainder of that afternoon and following day, about 15 people saw the bird. The Blue Goose was not seen after that first day. The Ross' Goose was observed both at the pond and in the surrounding green fields the following day, on the 22nd, but was not seen on the 23rd, although a number of birders searched for it all day in the surrounding countryside.

This sighting represents the second confirmed record for the Ross' Goose in Alabama, but careful checking of large Snow Geese flocks could possibly turn up other birds on a more regular basis. *Damien J. Simbeck, Dept. of Zoology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, 30 November 1988.*

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*BUTEO REGALIS*) RECORDED IN COLBERT COUNTY

Damien J. Simbeck

On 24 February 1988, while birding at the Hog Pond near Leighton in northwest Alabama, I noticed a large hawk soaring low overhead, at approximately 15-20 meters. The underside of the bird was white, with only a few small dark spots on its legs. The underside of the wings was also white, with distinct black wrist patches and a dark margin along the trailing edge. I was able to see the upperside as the bird banked and circled, revealing the pale reddish-brown back. The upper wing was mostly dark, but had very distinct white, rectangular patches at the base of the primaries. The tail was mostly white, with a faint reddish tinge near the end.

Using National Geographic's *Birds of North America*, I identified the bird as an immature Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*). I have seen adults of this species previously in Oklahoma, and this bird was similar to these both in flight and in shape. The wing pattern was very similar to that of an adult. This individual, however, lacked the distinct reddish legs, and reddish color near the end of the tail.

I continued to watch the bird in good light with both 8X40 binoculars and a 10-60X spotting scope for about five minutes. On one occasion it flew low over my car, giving me an excellent view of its underside until it flew out of sight over a nearby woodland. The area in which the bird was found included many large fields, which is typical habitat for this species. *Damien J. Simbeck, Dept. of Zoology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996.*