

**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*BUTEO LINEATUS*)
VISITS BIRD FEEDER**

Harriett Wright Findlay



Figure 1. Red-shouldered Hawk feeding on suet at bird feeder.(Photo by Harriett Findlay)

For the last three years a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) has nested in some vacant woods beyond our property. Occasionally, one of the hawks could be observed perched in a tree about 50 feet from bird feeders near our house that attracts birds, chipmunks and squirrels. A swinging feeder is 15 feet from the breakfast room windows and a sweet gum stump, about 18 inches high and 31 inches in diameter, is ten feet beyond the swinging feeder and serves as an additional bird feeder.

Following the 15 inch snow of 12 March 1993 there were no rodents stirring to feed hungry Red-shouldered Hawks. Large chunks of suet were placed on the sweet gum stump and on three occasions a Red-shouldered Hawk was seen to swoop down, peck at, then carry away in it's talons the suet which was placed on the feeder (Figure 1). **Harriett Wright Findlay**, 2749 Millbrook Road, Birmingham, AL 35243.

1993 SPRING AND SUMMER SIGHTINGS

Greg D. Jackson

After the poor migration noted in Spring 1992, we had better luck in 1993. Observers at coastal locations had the opportunity to view excellent numbers of passerines, and the migration inland also was good. The number of rarities was not high this year, though a few exciting species appeared.

Spring and summer were generally dry; at Birmingham every month from March

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through June showed a deficit of one to two inches, with a four-inch drop from normal in July. The spring was cooler than usual; temperatures were above average in June and July. The big weather event was the winter storm 12-13 March, when up to *18 inches* of snow fell on Birmingham! Best birding days were 14 March, 8-10, 15-16, 21-22, and 25-26 April, and 2-4 and 13-14 May; as usual, these were associated with frontal systems.

This report covers the period from March through July 1993 in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (east to the Apalachicola River). The appearance of observations in this column does not suggest verification or acceptance of records for very rare species; these must be considered by the appropriate state records committees. It is important that all submissions for birds that are rare, either in general or for a particular season or region, be accompanied by adequate details of the observation. The extent of this documentation depends on the rarity of the species and the difficulty of identification. Reports should always describe the conditions of observation and the diagnostic characters observed. Your help in this matter is appreciated.

County names are in *italics*. "GC" = Gulf Coast (Alabama), "ICP" = Inland Coastal Plain (Alabama), "MR" = Mountain Region, "TV" = Tennessee Valley, "WP" = Western Panhandle of Florida (*Escambia*, *Santa Rosa*, and *Okaloosa*). Records not specifying Florida are in Alabama. "m.ob." = many observers, "NWR" = National Wildlife Refuge, "p.a." = pending acceptance by the state bird records committee, "ph." = photographed, "SP" = State Park.

LOONS - SHOREBIRDS: This was a good spring for the rare **Pacific Loon** on the coast. The 12th record for Alabama was provided by the individual 28 February at Dauphin I., *Mobile* (BCG,p.a.). Another was at Gulf Shores, *Baldwin*, 6 March (JH,JFH,p.a.), and the third was at Ft. Morgan, *Baldwin*, 19 April (GDJ,p.a.). A Pacific Loon also occurred 2 May at Gulf Breeze, *Santa Rosa*, FL (RAD,LRD). Eleven Com. Loons were noteworthy as late as 2 May in the Tennessee R. at Town Cr., *Colbert* (GDJ). Eared Grebes are uncommon at the coast; one was nearly in alternate plumage 6 March at Gulf Shores (JH,JFH).

A rare **shearwater** spotted from shore 24 April at Gulf Shores (JH,JB) could not be definitely identified. Large flocks of Am. White Pelicans are not as common in the WP as in coastal Alabama, so 200 birds 30 March were interesting at Niceville, *Okaloosa* (RT). The Anhinga 20 June in n.e. *Montgomery* (LRG) was unusual for that portion of the ICP. A Cattle Egret set an early record for *Bay*, FL, 14 March (R&AI). An immature White Ibis was rare for the TV 25 July in Decatur, *Morgan* (SWM). Glossy Ibis is rare inland, especially in the spring; one identified 30 May in e. *Colbert* provided only the third TV record in that season. The season's first Wood Stork report was of three birds 10 July at Demopolis, *Greene* (RRS,MBS).

A Green-winged Teal in s. *Limestone* 14 May (SWM) set a new late TV record. Also tardy were two Gadwall 23 May at Decatur, *Morgan* (SWM), and three Ring-necked Ducks in s. *Limestone* 16 May (SWM). Eight Greater Scaup were unusual 14 March in the Tennessee R. in *Morgan* (SWM). Black Scoters are always good finds,

and eight were spotted 6 March at Ft. Morgan (JH,JFH). Rare inland, an immature male and two female Surf Scoters were in the Tennessee R. near Wheeler Dam 28 March (ALM,MJO); the same combination of birds was seen nearby 29 November 1992. Bald Eagles are rare in the WP. It was good to have reports from Niceville, *Okaloosa*, of an adult 6 March (DMW) and an immature 15 April to 8 May (DMW,BM). The Peregrine Falcon in s. *Limestone* 14 May (SWM) established a new late date for Alabama.

One to two Am. Oystercatchers were unusual at Ft. Morgan 19-20 April (GDJ,DGJ). The flock of 121 Am. Avocets was noteworthy as late as 24 April at Blakely I., *Mobile* (JH,JB). Eleven Upland Sandpipers represented a good number for the MR at Harpersville, *Shelby*, 26 April (GDJ,DGJ). Long-billed Curlews are expected near Mobile, but are rare elsewhere on the coast; a lone bird was at Dauphin I. 13 March (CK). A solitary Marbled Godwit was an uncommon find at Ft. Morgan 17 April (JH *et al.*). Baird's Sandpiper is rare inland in the spring; one discovered 16 April at Harpersville, *Shelby* (ALM,ADM) provided only the second MR spring record. Eleven Buff-breasted Sandpipers were notable in s. *Baldwin* 21 April (GDJ,DGJ). Identified Long-billed Dowitchers are rare in the MR; four were at Harpersville 26 April (GDJ,DGJ).

LARIDS - CREEPERS: The unidentified **jaeger** soaring over the Tennessee R. in *Limestone* 20 June (SWM,PD) was exciting. This was only the second jaeger observation for inland Alabama. Two early Gull-billed Terns were at St. Joseph Peninsula SP, *Gulf*, FL, 20 March (DMW,mob). Four Caspian Terns were early 11 April in n.e. *Colbert* (GDJ,DGJ). A Least Tern appeared near Muscle Shoals, *Colbert*, at the odd date of 20 June (SWM). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued to establish a beachhead in our area. There were still birds throughout the period at Montgomery (LRG) and Dauphin I. (AOS); nesting was noted for the first time this spring in *Bay*, FL (ACM). Unusual numbers of White-winged Doves were present in the Florida Panhandle in early spring; this species is usually rare then. An unprecedented 28 White-wingeds appeared 1 March in Gulf Breeze (RAD), dwindling to one bird by 28 March. Six were unusual 21 March to 3 April at Baypoint, *Bay*, FL (ACM). A solitary White-winged Dove was at Dauphin I. 24-25 April (JH,JB).

Black-billed Cuckoos were noted with unusual frequency in late spring at the coastal migrant traps (*vide* RAD). This species is not often seen inland, so an individual 2 May in *Jefferson* (ALM) was interesting. Two Groove-billed Anis at Blakely I. 3 April (AOS,ph.WCB) provided the first spring record for Alabama. A Rufous Hummingbird banded in *Morgan* 19 March (RRS,MBS) was the only report of this rare-but-regular species. The singing Willow Flycatcher 13 May at Huntsville, *Madison* (CWB) was a good find; this species is rarely identified in our area. Rare for the coast in spring was a Least Flycatcher 8 May in *Okaloosa*, FL (SC, TB). An E. Phoebe in Montgomery was noteworthy as late as 8 May (LRG). The discovery of a **Vermilion Flycatcher** is always exciting, particularly in the spring; one appeared at Ft. Morgan 2 April (SWM,DRJ,JHe,SRM). The prize of the season was Alabama's third **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** at Dauphin I. 26 April (MLB,CDC,ph.,p.a.). All state records have occurred on the outer coast within the narrow window of 20-26 April. An extremely late Brown Creeper was reported 8 May in *Walton* (EG), setting a new WP date.

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WRENS - BLACKBIRDS: House Wrens are occasional breeders in n. Alabama. One was discovered 24 May in *Jefferson* (ALM), and a pair produced young in June at Sheffield, *Colbert* (PDK,SW,WCB). Two Cedar Waxwings, a rare nesting bird in n. Alabama, were noted 9 July in Decatur, *Morgan* (SWM). A Yellow-throated Vireo set a new early date for *Bay*, FL, 14 March (R&AI). Red-eyed Vireos were "abundant" on the coast this spring (*fide* RAD). Black-whiskered Vireo is an expected rarity in spring from Dauphin I. east to Gulf Breeze, FL. This year I received five reports of six birds beginning 26 April and continuing as late as 14 May (CK,RAD,LRD,OEF); unusually, four of these sightings were in May.

A Blue-winged Warbler 14 March was the earliest ever for *Bay*, FL (R&AI). Golden-winged Warblers are uncommon in spring in the ICP; one appeared 18 April in Montgomery (LRG). The rare "**Lawrence's**" Warbler, the recessive Blue-winged X Golden-winged hybrid, was an exciting find 25 April at L. Purdy, *Shelby* (GDJ,DGJ). This singing male was only the third for the MR, and the ninth for Alabama. Black-throated Blue Warblers are uncommon in the spring; the individual 11 May at Dauphin I. (SWE) set a new late GC record. Another tardy migrant on Dauphin I. was the Palm Warbler 9 May (PWS). Eight Cerulean Warblers 18 April at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan* (SWM) provided a new TV maximum. Swainson's Warblers were unusually plentiful at the coast in early April (*fide* RAD). The Louisiana Waterthrush 14 March was early for *Bay*, FL (R&AI). A rare **Connecticut Warbler** was quite a "yard bird" 4 May in e. *Jefferson* (RRS,MBS,p.a.). A new early record for *Bay*, FL, was provided by the Hooded Warbler 14 March (R&AI).

An early Blue Grosbeak was discovered at Dauphin I. 7 March (JH). Painted Buntings appeared in excellent numbers at Dauphin I. and Ft. Morgan in mid April. Two Bachman's Sparrows, rare in n. Alabama, were located in w. *Lauderdale* 4 July (SWM). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Ft. Morgan 24-25 April (JH,JB,mob,ph.) was only the second recorded in spring in the state. Lark Sparrows are difficult to find in the spring. Single birds were at Dauphin I. 7 March (JH) and Ft. Morgan 10 April (JH,mob). The species nests occasionally in the TV. One Lark Sparrow occurred near Wheeler Dam in *Colbert* 25 April (SWM); a pair produced three young nearby in *Lawrence* 30 May to 4 July (SWM,GNP,SRM,GM). Lingered sparrows included a Savannah 9 May at Dauphin I. (PWS), and a Grasshopper 20 & 23 April at Ft. Morgan (GDJ,DGJ). Lincoln's Sparrows are interesting in the spring; two were banded 12-16 April at Ft. Morgan (RRS,MBS). This species is rare inland at that season, and I had a single report of one at Wheeler NWR, *Morgan*, 5 May (ALM,ADM). The **Shiny Cowbird** continues a low-level incursion on the coast, with single males seen 9 April at Ft. Pickens, *Escambia*, FL (RAD,LRD,WWD) and on Dauphin I. 10-24 April (JH,JB,CK,mob,p.a.).

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