

THE 1965 BIRMINGHAM MIGRATION COUNTS

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The Birmingham Audubon Society in 1965 inaugurated the taking of bird counts in the Birmingham area during both spring and fall migration seasons. It is planned to conduct such counts each year so that data may be obtained regarding our migratory birds similar to that now on record, through the Christmas bird counts, respecting our wintering bird populations. It is also expected that, in addition to their recreational value, such counts will prove educational in increasing the abilities and knowledge of those who participate in them. The count area, centering in Cahaba Heights (formerly known as New Merkle), was the same circle of 15 miles diameter used for the Christmas and summer counts and included such areas as Roberts Field, Elmwood Cemetery, East Lake, Lake Purdy, Oak and Shades Mountains, and portions of the Cahaba River.

The spring count was held on May 1, 1965. Weather was clear to partly cloudy; temperature 70° to 80°; year to date - dry and cool. Twenty-nine observers in eight parties spent 88 party-hours afield from 4:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and traveled 345 miles by car and foot. Total species: 119; total individuals: 8082 (92 birds per hour).

The fall count was held on October 9, 1965. Weather was clear to partly cloudy; temperature 58° to 78°; year to date - dry and cool; water levels very low. Thirty-two observers in nine parties spent 84 party-hours afield from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and traveled 250 miles by car, 59 miles on foot, and 10 miles by canoe for a total of 319 miles. Total species: 117; total individuals: 7039 (84 birds per hour).

Birds Observed on the Counts

	Spring	Fall		Spring	Fall
<u>Grebes</u>			<u>Hawks</u>		
Pied-billed Grebe	3	32	Turkey Vulture	6	6
			Black Vulture		2
<u>Wading Birds</u>			Cooper's Hawk	1	7
Great Blue Heron	2	3	Red-tailed Hawk	2	6
Green Heron	5	2	Red-sh'ld. Hawk	2	5
Little Blue Heron	1		Broad-winged Hawk	6	3
Common Egret		1	Osprey	1	1
American Bittern	2		Pigeon Hawk		2
			Sparrow Hawk	3	3
<u>Ducks</u>					
Mallard (female)		1	<u>Grouse, Quail and Allies</u>		
Blue-winged Teal		47	Bobwhite	102	68
Ring-necked Duck	5	3			
Lesser Scaup	25	1	<u>Cranes, Rails, and Allies</u>		
			American Coot	4	34

	Spring	Fall		Spring	Fall
<u>Shorebirds</u>			<u>Swallows</u>		
Killdeer	46	131	Tree Swallow	5	
Common Snipe		2	Bank Swallow	6	
Spotted Sandpiper	1	6	Rough-w. Swallow	17	
Solitary Sandpiper	8	3	Barn Swallow	10	2
Greater Yellowlegs	2		Purple Martin	454	
Lesser Yellowlegs	3	1			
Pectoral Sandpiper	3	17	<u>Jays and Crows</u>		
Least Sandpiper		8	Blue Jay	277	469
Semipalm. Sandpiper		3	Common Crow	80	149
Sanderling		1			
			<u>Titmice</u>		
<u>Pigeons and Doves</u>			Carolina Chickadee	66	143
Mourning Dove	257	357	Tufted Titmouse	140	87
<u>Cuckoos</u>			<u>Nuthatches</u>		
Yellow-b. Cuckoo	21	13	White-breasted Nut-hatch	27	28
Black-b. Cuckoo	1		Red-breasted Nuthatch		4(b)
			Brown-h. Nuthatch	36	37
<u>Nightjars</u>					
Chuck-will's widow	2		<u>Creepers</u>		
Common Nighthawk	13	13	Brown Creeper		2
<u>Swifts and Hummingbirds</u>			<u>Wrens</u>		
Chimney Swift	225	1284	House Wren		3
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	8	15	Bewick's Wren		1
			Carolina Wren	70	84
<u>Kingfishers</u>			Long-b. Marsh Wren		1
Belted Kingfisher	4	20	Short-b. Marsh Wren	3	4
<u>Woodpeckers</u>			<u>Thrashers</u>		
Yellow-sh. Flicker	58	119	Mockingbird	200	256
Pileated W'pecker	16	7	Catbird	39	27
Red-b. Woodpecker	47	65	Brown Thrasher	83	36
Red-h. Woodpecker	68	22			
Yellow-b. Sapsucker		15	<u>Thrushes</u>		
Hairy Woodpecker	4	4	American Robin	190	213
Downy Woodpecker	29	46	Wood Thrush	149	5
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	5	8	Swainson's (or Olive-backed) Thrush	1	1
			Gray-cheeked Thrush		1
<u>Flycatchers</u>			Veery	3	
Eastern Kingbird	38		Eastern Bluebird	31	64
Crested Flycatcher	66				
Eastern Phoebe	21	15	<u>Gnatcatchers and Kinglets</u>		
Acadian Flycatcher	3	3(a)	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	21	
Least Flycatcher	4		Golden-cr. Kinglet		1
East. Wood Peewee	38	41	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	4	9

	Spring	Fall		Spring	Fall
<u>Waxwings</u>					
Cedar Waxwing	64		Hooded Warbler	25	1
			Wilson's Warbler		2
<u>Shrikes</u>					
Loggerhead Shrike	14	13	Canada Warbler	1	
			American Redstart	7	13
<u>Starlings</u>					
European Starling	1392	807	<u>Weaver Finches</u>		
			House Sparrow	600	795
<u>Vireos</u>					
White-eyed Vireo	72	9	<u>Blackbirds</u>		
Yellow-thr. Vireo	9	1	Bobolink	31	
Red-eyed Vireo	176	1	Eastern Meadowlark	94	64
Philadelphia Vireo	1	6(b)	Red-w. Blackbird	333	323
			Orchard Oriole	59	
			Baltimore Oriole	6	2
			Common Grackle	142	87
			Brown-headed Cowbird	346	32
<u>Warblers</u>					
Black-and-White Warb.	22		<u>Tanagers</u>		
Prothonotary Warbler	3		Scarlet Tanager	8	1
Tennessee Warbler	80	75	Summer Tanager	67	4
Orange-cr. Warbler					
Nashville Warbler		5(b)			
Parula Warbler	2		<u>Finches and Sparrows</u>		
Yellow Warbler	49	3	Cardinal	302	180
Magnolia Warbler		30	Rose-br. Grosbeak	11	28
Myrtle Warbler	84	12	Blue Grosbeak	28	2
Black-thr. Gr. Warbler		15	Indigo Bunting	164	35
Yellow-thr. Warbler	10	2	American Goldfinch	74	11
Chestnut-s. Warbler	1	2	Rufous-sided Towhee	184	115
Bay-br. Warbler	1	1	Savannah Sparrow	31	40
Blackpoll Warbler	5		Grasshopper Sparrow	5	
Pine Warbler	23	21	Vesper Sparrow	1	
Prairie Warbler	17		Slate-colored Junco		1
Palm Warbler	68	16	Chipping Sparrow	99	20
Ovenbird	7	2	Field Sparrow	65	65
Northern Waterthrush	3	1	White-cr. Sparrow		1
Louisiana Waterthrush	7	2	White-thr. Sparrow	110	3
Kentucky Warbler	12		Swamp Sparrow	7	10
Yellowthroat	26	50	Song Sparrow	2	1
Yellow-br. Chat	59	1			

(a) These fall flycatchers identified only as belonging to the genus Empidonax.

(b) Although not noted in large number, the Nashville Warbler and Philadelphia Vireo were observed on the fall count by four of nine field parties and the Red-breasted Nuthatch by three, thus indicating possible wider distribution than might otherwise be assumed.

Additional species observed within a week of the fall count were American Woodcock, Common Tern, Barred Owl, Rough-winged Swallow, Bachman's (or Pine Woods) Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow.

The fall migration of birds, as a general proposition, extends over a longer period of time than the spring migration. It will be noted, for example, that several warblers, swallows and flycatchers observed on the spring count had already migrated by the time of the fall count or were seen then in much reduced numbers. The number of species observed on the fall count was increased by early arrivals of some winter residents and by additional shorebirds attracted by the low water levels. In the fall, Lake Purdy was very low and all of the shorebirds except the Killdeer were only observed there; by contrast, in the spring when there were no large exposed mudflats, the shorebirds that were observed were noted by several different field parties.

The species observed on these migration counts represented a number of late and early records for the Mountain Region (based on data in Alabama Birds, which was current through August of 1961), as follows:

Spring Count (May 1):

Late dates (previous latest in parentheses) -- Vesper Sparrow (4/20), Greater Yellowlegs (4/24), Lesser Yellowlegs (4/27).

Near late dates (late records in parentheses) -- Philadelphia Vireo (5/4), American Bittern (5/5).

Early dates -- None.

Near early dates (early records in parentheses) -- Least Flycatcher (4/30), Black-billed Cuckoo (4/26).

Fall Count (October 9):

Late dates (previous latest in parentheses) -- Yellow Warbler (9/25), Semipalmated Sandpiper (9/26), Common Egret (9/27), Osprey (10/2), Lesser Yellowlegs (10/2), Sanderling (10/3), Wilson's Warbler (10/8). The Common Tern and Rough-winged Swallow, which were observed on 10/2 within a week of the count, were also late records, their previous late dates being 9/12 and 9/25, respectively.

Near late dates (late records in parentheses) -- Green Heron (10/10), Blue Grosbeak (10/10), Philadelphia Vireo (10/13).

Early dates (previous earliest in parentheses) -- White-crowned Sparrow (10/17 - also a near early date for the state, being exceeded only by a 10/7 record from Dauphin Island), Orange-crowned Warbler (10/13), Lesser Scaup (10/27 - however, a male scaup, which may be assumed to be this same bird, was seen regularly on East Lake throughout the summers of 1964 and 1965, so this is not actually an early record; that bird appeared to be injured and was last noted on the Christmas count conducted on 1/2/66). The Lincoln's Sparrow observed within a week of the count is an early record for the Mountain Region (11/3) as well as for the state (10/14).

Near early dates (early records in parentheses) -- Golden-crowned Kinglet (10/8 with the earliest for the state being a 10/4 record in 1925 from Autauga County), Slate-colored Junco (10/7), Brown Creeper (10/5 for both the Mountain Region and the state).

While figures for abundance may vary depending on the number of observers, weather and other conditions, the following comparisons (based on data in Alabama Birds and counts conducted since its publication) may be of interest in indicating species observed in relatively large numbers:

Spring Count:

Wood Thrush - 149 (high for state, exceeding 116 on Birmingham 1965 Summer Count)

Red-headed Woodpecker - 68 (high for state, exceeding 48 on Birmingham 1961 Christmas Count)

Summer Tanager - 67 (high for state, exceeding 60 on Birmingham 1965 Summer Count)

Yellow-breasted Chat - 59 (2nd highest for state, exceeded by 78 on Birmingham 1965 Summer Count but exceeding 55 at AOS 1957 Spring Meeting at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge)

Red-eyed Vireo - 176 (high for No. Ala., exceeding 129 at Cheaha in summer of 1958)

White-eyed Vireo - 72 (high for No. Ala., exceeding 60 at AOS 1957 Spring Meeting at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge)

Crested Flycatcher - 66 (high for No. Ala., exceeding 44 on Birmingham 1965 Summer Count)

Orchard Oriole - 59 (high for No. Ala., exceeding 45 in Birmingham area in spring of 1949)

Eastern Phoebe - 21 (high for No. Ala., exceeding several records of 15)

Indigo Bunting - 164 (high for Mountain Region, exceeding 142 on Birmingham 1964 Summer Count)

Fall Count:

Blue Jay - 469 (high for state, exceeding 409 on Mobile 1963 Christmas Count and 390 on Mobile 1956 Fall Count)

Yellow-shafted Flicker - 119 (high for No. Ala., exceeding 85 on Birmingham 1962 Christmas Count but exceeded for the state by 121 on Mobile 1957 Fall Count)

Belted Kingfisher - 20 (high for No. Ala., but exceeding by only a few the number observed on some of the Birmingham Christmas Counts)

Yellowthroat - 50 (high for Mountain Region, exceeding 35 in Birmingham area in fall of 1954)

Those participating in these counts were as follows (names of party leaders underscored): Both Spring and Fall Counts: Andrew K. Bates, Raymond D. Bates, Sara D. Bates, Ruth B. Copeland, Walter F. Coxe, F. Bozeman Daniel, Mildred Ferris, Ed Greene, Dan C. Holliman, Thomas A. Imhof (compiler), Helen Kittinger, Ronnie Kittinger, Christine Leake, Clustie McTyeire, Annie Bestor Mitchell, Virginia Nancarrow, Morton H. Perry, Margarette Persons, Robert R. Reid, Jr., and Idalene F. Snead; Spring Count only: Blanche H. Chapman, Blanche E. Dean, Fred Fish, Elizabeth French, Corinne Glaze, Malcolm E. Harden, Millard F. Prather, Orene Rutledge and Alfred A. Walker; Fall Count only: Marcia Baldwin, Mike Bierly, Ruth Brabston, Patricia Byrne, Georgette Canterbury, Jerome Couch, Perry Covington, Emmy Lou Grimley, Larry Hodges, Ricky Kittinger, Rose Perry and Elberta Reid.

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THE NORTH AMERICAN NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM FOR 1966

The first year of the North American Nest-record Card Program went very well. The Laboratory of Ornithology mailed out over 45,000 cards to individuals and regional centers from Florida to Alaska. We were encouraged at the response; over 23,000 completed cards were received from 700 individuals. The principal aim of the program is to accumulate a large amount of data on the breeding biology of birds of the entire North American continent. These data will be sorted on IBM cards in a form ready for analysis. These data, once processed, will be available to researchers interested in many areas of avian biology, such as annual and geographical variations in breeding season, clutch size, fledging periods, and nesting success. We hope that the program will also play a key role in the study of man's modification of his environment through marsh drainage, urbanization, and the use of pesticides.

We need data from all parts of the country. Observations from city parks and back yards, of the commonest species, are as important as those from remote parts of the continent. We need the co-operation of all competent field observers; please get in touch with your local organization through Dr. Dusi at Auburn University who can supply you with our nest record cards. You may also receive cards directly from the North American Nest Record Card Program, Laboratory of Ornithology, 33 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850. Be sure to include your zip code with your return address.

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