

ALABAMA'S FIRST BREEDING BIRD SURVEY
1966

Tom Imhof

In June, 1966, 22 observers and 15 assistants manned 40 survey routes in Alabama. Observers are listed below and marked with an asterisk for each route covered. *Richard Ambrose, ****Maurice Baker, Naomi Banks, *Raymond Bates, Sara Bates, **Fairly Chandler, *Blanche Chapman, Lynn Childers, *Jerome Couch, *Walter Coxe, Tommy Creel, *Blanche Dean, *Rev. J. L. Dorn, **Julian Dusi, Rosemary Dusi, Mary Gaillard, *Wilson Gaillard, **Dan Holliman, **Thomas Imhof, James Imhof, *Helen Kittinger, W. D. McDaniel, *Clustie McTyeire, Margaret Miller, Ross Partridge, Margarete Persons, Elberta Reid, ***Robert Reid, James Robinson, ***Margaret Robinson, Joe Schlatter, ***Robert Skinner, Idalene Snead, **C. W. Summerour, **David Turpin, **Robert E. Waters, *Harriett Wright.

On these 40, 25-mile routes, the observers covered 1000 miles, made 2000 stops, and counted 32,281 birds of 123 species. This averaged 16 birds per stop, 807 birds per route, and 51 species per route. All the birds along these routes were not counted; some were between stops, some just didn't show themselves, and others could not be identified. The problem of identification especially by song is a tough one, and becoming an expert on bird identification is not easy.

In 26 states east of the Mississippi and 4 Canadian provinces, 518,176 birds of 274 species were counted on 586 routes. This averaged out at 17,272.5 birds and 19.5 routes per state, and 884 birds per route and 17.7 birds per stop.

We now have increased considerably our knowledge of our breeding birds, particularly relative abundance, frequency, and distribution statewide. The following list in decreasing order of abundance portrays this numerically. The first figure is the total number of individuals recorded, a measure of abundance. The second is the number of stops at which the species was recorded, the frequency with which the bird was met. The third figure is the number of routes on which the species was recorded, and it tells us how widely distributed the bird is in Alabama.

Look at the Barn and Rough-winged Swallows for instance. These figures tell us that these two swallows are about equal in abundance, but the Barn Swallow was found on $\frac{1}{2}$ of the routes and was more frequently met with in its range. The Rough-winged Swallow was found on more than half the routes but only $\frac{2}{3}$ (32/48) as often. The Carolina Wren, 18th in abundance but 13th in frequency averaged 1.3 (537/416) birds per stop. On the contrary, the House Sparrow, 4th in abundance was only 18th in frequency. An average of 5.4 (1710/316) was seen per stop.

A word of caution: these figures represent a sample of the breeding birds of Alabama. Birds easy to see and easy to identify along roads are represented by higher figures in relation to their true abundance. Birds of the deeper woods and swamps (many warblers), those not conspicuous at the time of the survey (such as those more active earlier in the season or late in the day, hawks, Pine Warblers, Com. Nighthawk) do not

have their true abundance reflected in these figures either. Nevertheless these data have plenty of meaning and are well worth the effort. In later years, counting will be under these same conditions, and we can tell which species are increasing or decreasing in abundance and which ones are expanding or contracting their ranges.

In the following tabulation of birds recorded by Alabama observers, the bird species are listed in descending order of their recorded abundance. For each species the number of individuals reported, the number of stops are which the species was recorded, and the number of routes on which the species was recorded, are listed.

Common Name	No. of Individuals	No. of stops	No. of routes
Bobwhite	2399	1153	40
Cardinal	2062	1013	40
Mockingbird	1934	1030	40
House Sparrow	1710	316	38
Com. Grackle	1671	452	40
Com. Crow	1543	673	40
Mourning Dove	1511	736	40
Blue Jay	1471	778	40
Red-winged Bl.	1390	439	40
Indigo Bunting	1142	677	37
Ruf-s. Towhee	1106	679	38
E. Meadowlark	1067	499	39
Starling	1010	329	39
Yell-br. Chat	831	555	38
Purple Martin	795	218	34
Chimney Swift	701	290	39
Wood Thrush	556	340	35
Carolina Wren	537	416	40
Orchard Oriole	494	345	38
Field Sparrow	493	330	30
Yellow-b Cuckoo	380	306	38
White-e Vireo	357	254	38
Red-bell. Woodp.	368	309	38
E. Kingbird	351	247	39
Yellowthroat	315	242	30
Tufted Titmouse	314	216	37
Brown Thrasher	304	247	38
Robin	287	180	17
Blue Grosbeak	287	220	38
Carolina Chickadee	287	154	34
Red-eyed Vireo	287	199	32
Br.-hd. Cowbird	258	155	33
Fish Crow	253	68	11
Gt. Crested Flyc.	231	178	38
E. Bluebird	228	134	25
E. Wood Pewee	226	171	29
Summer Tanager	226	183	33
Chipping Sparrow	216	143	25
Prairie Warbler	212	148	24

Common Name	No. of Individuals	No. of stops	No. of routes
Loggerhead Shrike	172	130	36
Barn Swallow	159	48	10
Rough-winged Swallow	157	32	22
Chuck-wills-widow	134	83	26
Blue-gr. Gnatcatcher	110	59	24
Red-hd Woodpecker	93	73	22
Pine Warbler	92	71	23
Yell-s Flicker	89	81	33
Little Blue Heron	87	32	15
Downy Woodpecker	86	76	28
Catbird	85	68	25
Brown-hd Nuthatch	76	41	18
Killdeer	74	41	25
E. Phoebe	62	42	13
Am Goldfinch	59	15	9
Kentucky Warbler	56	50	20
Prothonotary Warb.	56	42	19
Pileated Woodpecker	52	46	24
Least Tern	51	5	1
Com. Nighthawk	48	30	10
Turkey Vulture	44	30	14
Hooded Warbler	40	33	15
Acadian Flyc.	37	31	16
Rock Dove	36	12	10
Black Vulture	35	17	12
Yellow-thr. Vireo	34	31	14
Green Heron	31	25	16
Black & White Warb.	27	22	8
Belted Kingfisher	24	18	12
Am. Redstart	23	15	12
Yellow-throated W.	20	17	9
Parula Warbler	19	14	7
Ovenbird	19	13	1
Cattle Egret	17	5	4
Hairy Woodpecker	15	14	10
Bachman's Sparrow	15	12	7
Black-thr. Green W.	13	8	2
Sparrow Hawk	11	11	4
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	11	10	10
Red-shouldered Hk.	11	9	7
Wood Duck	11	4	4
Yellow Warbler	10	9	7
Ground Dove	10	9	4
Whip-poor-will	10	6	4
Brown Pelican	10	4	2
Broad-winged Hawk	9	9	7
Com. Egret	9	4	2
Seaside Sparrow	8	4	1
Red-tailed Hawk	7	5	5
Dickcissel	7	5	3
Turkey	7	2	2
Great Blue Heron	6	6	4

Common Name	No. of Individuals	No. of stops	No. of routes
Barred Owl	6	5	5
Willet	6	3	2
Boat-tailed Grackle	6	3	1
Worm-eating Warbler	5	5	3
Black Skimmer	5	3	1
Blue-winged Warbler	4	4	4
Grasshopper Sparrow	4	4	3
Yellow-cr. Night Heron	4	3	3
Canada Goose	4	1	1
White-br. Nuthatch	3	3	2
Scarlet Tanager	3	3	1
Screech Owl	3	2	2
Louisiana W. thrush	3	2	2
Miss. Kite	2	2	2
Horned Lark	2	2	2
White Ibis	2	2	1
Louisiana Heron	2	1	1
Least Bittern	2	1	1
Cooper's Hawk	2	1	1
Clapper Rail	2	1	1
Forster's Tern	2	1	1
Red-cockaded w. p.	2	1	1
Baltimore Oriole	2	1	1
Sora	1	1	1
Purple Gallinule	1	1	1
Com. Gallinule	1	1	1
Am. Coot	1	1	1
Herring Gull	1	1	1
Black Tern	1	1	1
Gr. Horned Owl	1	1	1
Long-b. Marsh Wren	1	1	1
Bobolink	1	1	1

1036 Pike Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35218