

May, 1969

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ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this, my last message as President of the AOS, I would like to express my appreciation to all who have helped to make this a very memorable year in my life. It has been a lot of fun, and a lot of work, but I have learned a great deal and it truly has been a wonderful experience.

In looking back to some of the goals that I had at the beginning of the year, I see that we have at least gotten a start on most of them:

We have had two very fruitful meetings of the Slide Collection Committee, at which time 262 slides representing 136 different species were selected. Of this number 122 slides are in the Educational Set which will be loaned to responsible persons to help them teach children or give programs to promote interest in birds. At present, 140 slides are in the Scientific Set which were all taken in Alabama, and will be kept to substantiate the presence of the bird in the state. This is especially advisable in such cases as the Red Phalarope, Scarlet Ibis, or other unusual birds seen in the state, making it unnecessary to collect the bird. Some nests, eggs and or young were also included in this set to verify breeding in the state. We hope to add many more slides to each set, as good slides are available. A list of the species that we have selected will be published in the Newsletter so that you can check your files for any additional species you may have to add to our collection.

Secondly, with this issue of Alabama Birdlife, we are reinstating Regional Wingbeats which will become known as the Seasons. I think you will find this helpful and very interesting. This is a very good way for our members in different parts of the state to learn what is being seen in other areas and when. It is also a good way for all of our members to participate in the organization.

As for membership this year, we have gained some and lost some, but our attendance at the meetings has been very good. This is encouraging. We are hopeful that our attendance at our annual spring meeting on Dauphin Island this year will be the largest ever.

Looking forward to the coming year, I know you will give our new officers the same fine cooperation that you have given me. Again many thanks.

Helen Kittinger

THE 1968 ALABAMA CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Compiler and Editor—Robert R. Reid, Jr.

Undoubtedly the most significant feature of Alabama birdlife during the winter of 1968-69 was the large invasion of Evening Grosbeaks—see the winter season report in this issue. These birds had not been reported in Alabama prior to 1956 (Imhof, Thomas A., Alabama Birds (1962) : 532-33), but since then they have appeared in large numbers every three or four years. This winter record numbers were reported on the Birmingham and Auburn counts and a flock of 30 within the count period at Tuscaloosa. A group of Pine Siskins, which are regarded as a rare winter visitor on the Gulf Coast (op. cit.: 537-38), was reported on the Dauphin Island count; and a small flock at Wheeler Refuge was only the second refuge record (fide Thomas Z. Atkeson, Jr.). Red-breasted Nuthatches, which often precede or accompany an influx of northern finches, were seen on five of the seven Alabama counts. There also appears to have been an invasion of Fox Sparrows with a record high count of 137 in Birmingham (previous high 50), a relatively large number in Tuscaloosa and individuals as far south as Mobile and Dauphin Island. The Bewick's Wren on the Spring Hill College Campus was another report of a species that is rare to uncommon as far south as our Gulf Coast (op. cit.: 388).

Other significant winter visitors were a dark-phased Roughlegged Hawk at Birmingham (its first count record and only the second observation of a dark-phased bird for the state), a White-winged Dove at Bon Secour (a western visitor occasionally seen on our Gulf Coast in the fall or winter), the flock of Sandhill Cranes also at Bon Secour, a Long-billed Marsh Wren at Wheeler Refuge (where not usual in winter that far inland (op. cit.: 391), and a Gray-cheeked Thrush also at Birmingham (sixth winter record for the state).

The Dickcissel at a feeder in Mobile was the second consecutive count record for that seedeater and is probably the most significant observation of a summer resident on the counts. Other summer residents that uncommonly winter on the coast were a Cattle Egret in front of the marina on Dauphin Island, White-eyed Vireos on the Bon Secour and Dauphin Island counts, and two Yellow-throated Warblers at Bon Secour. A Baltimore Oriole at a feeder in Birmingham (its second count record) was also noteworthy.

At Mobile, the count record of 40 Avocets off the Cochran Causeway was the fifth report in the last six years and the Eared Grebe at the Chickasaw sewage treatment pond the third in the last four years on that count. High numbers were recorded at Mobile for the Canvasback (1200), Dunlin (518), Black Skimmer (250) and Ruddy Duck (175). The approximately 4500 Widgeons set a count record at Wheeler Refuge, and Coots numbering in the thousands were recorded in bay areas such as Mobile and Bon Secour. On the other hand, low water levels at Birmingham produced near-record low counts for Pied-billed Grebes, Canvasbacks, Lesser Scaup and Coots.

The Wheeler Refuge count included a male of the Iranian race of the Ring-necked Pheasant. That race was introduced at the refuge in 1962, and while other races have failed in Alabama due, it is believed, to our warmer climate, that race has bred on the refuge in the wild. Atkeson reports that while there are sightings of nests and broods each year, thus indicating the pheasants are definitely reproducing, they do not seem to be increasing. Another noteworthy Wheeler observation was the Ground Dove. Atkeson

reported it appeared to have disappeared from the Tennessee Valley over the eight-year period ending in 1963 (Alabama Birdlife (1964), 12 (2):24) but adds there have been a few records in each of the last three years.

Imhof has reported that Wood Ducks appear to be increasing in number in Alabama (Audubon Field Notes (1968), 22(5):615), and the high figure of 61 recorded at Friday Lake on the Tuscaloosa count would add supporting evidence. At Birmingham, the highest count record for Cardinals and White-throated Sparrows and the second highest for Towhees indicates those species are doing well, while the Eastern Bluebird appears to be faring poorly—at least in the count areas—since it was recorded in the lowest number ever at Birmingham and in low numbers elsewhere.

In 1968, Alabama's Christmas counts covered all of the major ecological regions of the state—Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (WR) in the Tennessee Valley, Birmingham (Bhm) in the Mountain Region, Auburn (Aub) in the Piedmont, Tuscaloosa (Tus) in the Coastal Plain, and Bon Secour (BS), Mobile (Mob) and Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens (DI) on the Gulf Coast. Birds seen on the counts were as follows, those indicated by the symbol * being seen during the count period (Dec. 20 through Jan. 1) but not on the count date and those indicated by the symbol x being species for which the exact number of individual birds was not available.

Comments by the compilers in addition to those included above, details respecting the counts (all taken in circles of 15-mile diameter) and participants (names of party leaders underscored where reported) were as follows:

Wheeler Refuge: Dec. 21, 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Overcast all day with drizzle increasing to steady downpour by 3:00PM; 38 degrees to 45 degrees; winds SW, 8-12 mph. 12 observers in 4 parties; 32 party-hours (25 by car, 7 on foot); 181 party-miles (174 by car, 7 on foot). Count centered at refuge headquarters on Flint Creek Island and including north shore of Tennessee River from White Springs Dike to Blackwell Slough; sloughs managed for waterfowl 60%; lakes, rivers and ponds 12%; woodland borders 10%; plowed fields and pastures 10%; bottomland hardwoods 8%. Greater Scaup within count period was a shot specimen. Participants: Thomas Z. Atkeson, Jr. (refuge manager), Andrew K. Bates, Michael Lee Bierly (compiler), J. H. Blackwood, Henry H. Grammer, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Helen H. Kittinger, Richard J. Kittinger, Robert R. Reid, Jr. (reporter for 1968 Alabama Christmas counts), and Thomas P. Sandlin.

Birmingham: Dec. 28, 5:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Solid overcast to clear; 38 degrees to 55 degrees; winds westerly 10-25 mph; water levels extremely low. 37 observers in 10 parties; 92½ party-hours (20 by car, 72½ on foot); 469 party miles (418 by car, 51 on foot). Count centered at Shades Mtn. Filter Plant and including Roberts Field, East Lake, Lake Purdy and Oak Mtn.; oak-pine woods 26%; lakes, rivers and ponds 25%; residential 21%; woodland borders 10%; pastures, airports and golf courses 10%; tall grass 5%; bottomland hardwoods 3%. Participants: Gertrude Bachmann, Naomi G. Banks, Andrew K. Bates, Raymond D. Bates, Ruth Carmichael, Dale J. Carruthers, Jack N. Carusos, Kevin Carusos, Walter F. Coxe, Michael and Thomas Creel, Blanche E. Dean, Louise Foster, Corinne Glaze, Ed Greene, Dan C. Holliman, Ruth Horsley, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof (compiler), Helen H. Kittinger, Richard J. and Ronald D. Kittinger, George F. Maynard, Ann Miller, Bob Mills, Morton H. Perry, Margarette K. Persons, Millard F. Prather, James W. Shepherd, Dennis and Jane Shipley, Mary Alice Skelton, Bernice and D. H. Smalley, Idalene F. Snead, Ginny Toole, and Harriett H. Wright.

	WR	Bhm	Aub	Tus	BS	Mob	DI
<u>Loons</u>							
Com. Loon					13	1	x
<u>Grebes</u>							
Horned Grebe	2				15	4	x
Eared Grebe						1	
Pied-billed Grebe	3	8	1		18	3	x
<u>Pelicans and Allies</u>						5	
White Pelican					1		
Brown Pelican					1		
Gannet							
Double-crested Cormorant					15	1	x
<u>Wading Birds</u>							
Great Blue Heron	4	1	4		15	8	x
4 Little Blue Heron						*	1
Cattle Egret							x
Com. (or Am.) Egret					1	9	x
Snowy Egret						5	x
Louisiana Heron						1	x
<u>Ducks and Geese</u>							
Canada Goose	38,380						
Snow Goose	50					1	
Blue Goose	500					11	
Mallard	13,095	8		1		2	x
Black Duck	1,183					*	
Gadwall	27	2				300	
Pintail	3,997					43	
Green-winged Teal	67					18	x
Blue-winged Teal						5	x
Am. Widgeon (or Baldpate)	4,515					30	

Shoveler	30					341	
Wood Duck	3			61		10	x
Redhead						1	
Ring-necked Duck	2	223				214	
Canvasback		23			20	1,200	x
Greater Scaup	*					*	x
Lesser Scaup		9			20	25	x
Com. Goldeneye						1	x
Bufflehead	3				12	5	
Ruddy Duck	2	9			14	175	
Hooded Merganser	160				2	3	x
Com. (or Am.) Merganser	1						
Red-breasted Merganser					130	4	x
<u>Hawks</u>							
Turkey Vulture		1	*			3	x
Black Vulture			3			*	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		*			*	1	
Cooper's Hawk		2				1	
Red-tailed Hawk	9	11	*	6	2	4	x
Red-shouldered Hawk		7			2	*	
Rough-legged Hawk		1					
Marsh Hawk	3	3	1		3	1	x
Sparrow Hawk (or Kestrel)	7	11	*		26	11	x
<u>Quail and Allies</u>							
Bob-white	46	90	13	22	12	15	x
Ring-necked Pheasant (Iranian race)	1						
Wild Turkey							2
<u>Cranes, Rails and Allies</u>							
Sandhill Crane					15(a)		
King Rail						1	x

	WR	Bhm	Aub	Tus	BS	Mob	DI
Clapper Rail						5	x
Virginia Rail						*	
Sora						3	x
Com (or Florida) Gallinule						6	
Am. Coot	20	160		1	5,000	6,748	x
<u>Shorebirds</u>							
Am. Oystercatcher							x
Semipalmated Plover						4	x
Piping Plover						*	
Killdeer	51	164	11	12	200	73	x
Black-bellied Plover					1	32	x
Ruddy Turnstone							x
Am. Woodcock		7			*	3	x
Com. Snipe	15	40	6	1	8	12	x
Spotted Sandpiper						1	1
Willet						2	x
Greater Yellowlegs	1					12	x
Lesser Yellowlegs						6	
Least Sandpiper		1(b)				5	
Dunlin (or Red-backed Sandpiper)						518	
Short-billed Dowitcher						12	x
Semipalmated Sandpiper						22	x
Western Sandpiper						3	
Sanderling					2	42	x
Am. Avocet						40	
<u>Gulls and Terns</u>							
Herring Gull	166			1	46	163	x
Ring-billed Gull	354				165	259	x
Laughing Gull					1	184	x
Bonapartè's Gull					32	10	x

Forster's Tern					45	25	x
Com. Tern					4	2	
Royal Tern						5	x
Caspian Tern						1	x
Black Skimmer						250	x
<u>Doves</u>							
White-winged Dove					1		
Mourning Dove	1,070	782	10	45	22	375	x
Ground Dove	1				6	1	
<u>Owls</u>							
Barn Owl		1				5	
Screech Owl		*			*	2	x
Barred Owl		2	*	*		1	
<u>Kingfishers</u>							
Belted Kingfisher	1	24	4	1	18	14	x
<u>Woodpeckers</u>							
Yellow-shafted Flicker	18	126	7	25	14	82	x
Pileated Woodpecker	6	16	2	1	*	1	x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	12	63	10	11	16	12	x
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	13	*		3	4	x
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7	12	3	3	7	4	x
Hairy Woodpecker		9	*	11		2	x
Downy Woodpecker	20	70	5	8	4	4	x
Red-cockaded Woodpecker		5			1		
<u>Flycatchers</u>							
Eastern Phoebe		8	3		5	4	x
<u>Larks</u>							
Horned Lark	5	10					
<u>Swallows</u>							
Tree Swallow						31	x
<u>Jays and Crows</u>							
Blue Jay	60	293	64	63	47	91	x

	WR	Bhm	Aub	Tus	BS	Mob	DI
Com. Crow	17,157	370	17	14	1	69	x
Fish Crow					65	14	x
<u>Titmice</u>							
Carolina Chickadee	70	257	40	38	4	6	x
Tufted Titmouse	43	305	61	6	6	26	x
<u>Nuthatches</u>							
White-breasted Nuthatch	4	60	*				x
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	17	16		5		x
Brown-headed Nuthatch		72	25		21	43	x
<u>Creepers</u>							
Brown Creeper	4	12	1			*	
<u>Wrens</u>							
House Wren		1			8	3	x
Winter Wren	3	14	1				
Bewick's Wren		2				1	
Carolina Wren	29	105	32	21	24	24	x
Long-billed Marsh Wren	1					1	x
Short-billed Marsh (or Sedge) Wren		*			1		x
<u>Thrashers</u>							
Mockingbird	32	211	33	40	100	101	x
Catbird					4	2	x
Brown Thrasher	9	55	15	20	28	23	x
<u>Thrashers</u>							
Am. Robin	9	95	350	1	2,000	145	x
Hermit Thrush	2	19	1		*	3	x
Gray-cheeked Thrush		1					
Eastern Bluebird	3	38		4	16	16	x
<u>Gnatcatchers and Kinglets</u>							
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					3	1	x
Golden-crowned Kinglet	19	101	9	2	2		x
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	22	92	26	13	30	29	x

<u>Pipits</u>							
Water Pipit	22	253	1		50	5	x
<u>Waxwings</u>							
Cedar Waxwing		188	50	*	1	3	
<u>Shrikes</u>							
Loggerhead Shrike	3	19	6	1	20	7	x
<u>Starlings</u>							
Com. Starling	350,000	2,773	55,000	439	150	251	x
<u>Vireos</u>							
White-eyed Vireo					1		x
Solitary (or Blue-headed) Vireo					1		
<u>Wood Warblers</u>							
Orange-crowned Warbler		1			1	7	x
Myrtle Warbler	13	59	21	3	1,000	695	x
Yellow-throated Warbler					2		
Pine Warbler	1	25	6		4	19	x
Palm Warbler		*			9		
Yellowthroat				1	4	1	x
<u>Weaver Finches</u>							
House Sparrow	284	445	22	109	250	257	x
<u>Blackbirds</u>							
Eastern Meadowlark	298	404	64	94	200	58	x
Red-winged Blackbird	350,000	600	185,000	92	5,000	718	x
Baltimore Oriole		1					
Rusty Blackbird	50,000	162	1,000			102	
Brewer's Blackbird					*		x
Boat-tailed Grackle					9	58	
Com. Grackle	150,000	127	50,000	71	250	1,375	x
Brown-headed Cowbird	100,000	111	210,000	10	*	25	x

	WR	Bhm	Aub	Tus	BS	Mob	DI
Finches and Sparrows	356	577	51	94	49	52	x
Cardinal						1	
Dickcissel		256	100	*		18	x
Evening Grosbeak	12	47	17		3		
Purple Finch	13	50	12				10
Pine Siskin	868	242	85	98	350	98	x
Am. Goldfinch	90	461	28	20	72	32	x
Rufous-sided Towhee	4	176	8	32	34	41	x
Savannah Sparrow		1			1		
Grasshopper Sparrow							x
Sharp-tailed Sparrow							x
Seaside Sparrow							x
Vesper Sparrow	1	19		2	100	2	x
Bachman's (or Pine-woods) Sparrow							x
Slate-colored Junco	117	923	72	12	2	20	x
Chipping Sparrow	114	50	16		125	25	x
Field Sparrow	24	551	1	68	27	3	x
White-crowned Sparrow		1			6		
White-throated Sparrow	302	1,214	95	67	500	237	x
Fox Sparrow	8	137	2	19		1	x
Swamp Sparrow	62	161	4	19	56	42	x
Song Sparrow	136	377	7	26	38	29	x
Total Individuals (c)	1,084,035	14,455	502,442	1,709	16,634	16,234	-
Total Species on count	82	86	56	47	92	128	113
Total Species within count period	83	90	63	50	99	136	113

Notes:
 (a) Part of an estimated flock of 20 to 25 birds wintering in the Bon Secour area.
 (b) 30 additional Least Sandpipers observed in the Birmingham count area during the count period.
 (c) Total individuals include 2 unidentified hawks at Birmingham and 15 unidentified scaup at Bon Secour.

Auburn: Dec. 21, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Overcast all day with drizzle increasing to hard rain in PM; 43 degrees to 47 degrees; winds light and variable. 7 observers and 2 helpers in 3 parties; 10½ party hours; 99 party-miles (96 by car, 3 on foot). Count centered at Auburn Post Office; mixed woods 50%; pastures and open fields 30%; ponds and mudflats 20%. Participants: D. L. Bateman, Julian L. Dusi (compiler), Rosemary T. Dusi, M. C. Lyons, J. Stuart (helped by sons Brian and Tim), Z. Taylor, and B.F. Young.

Tuscaloosa: Dec. 31, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Rain and fog all day with cold front in PM; 38 degrees to 48 degrees; winds easterly in AM to NW in PM, 5-10 mph with gusts up to 25 mph in PM. 6 observers in 2 parties; 17 party-hours; 35 party miles. Count centered at Broad St. and Greensboro Ave. and including Lake Nichol, Rice Mine Road, Friday Lake, Moody Swamp, Tuscaloosa Airport, Shirley Farm Road, Univ. of Ala. Arboretum and Watermelon Road. Participants: Charles Prigmore, David T. Rogers (compiler) Martha Rogers, Bernice Smalley, Charles T. Traylor, and Faith Traylor.

Bon Secour: Dec. 21, 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Cloudy, 51 degrees to 64 degrees; winds southerly, 10-26 mph. 6 observers in 3 parties; 25 party-hours (21 by car, 4 on foot); 206 party-miles (203 by car, 3 on foot). Count centered at Bon Secour Post Office and including Magnolia Springs, Foley, Gulf Shores, Gulf State Park, and Magnolia and Bon Secour Rivers; fields and pastures 40%; gulf and bay 30%; dunes, marshes, lagoons and streams 12%; prairie 12%; pine-hardwoods 3%; residential 3%. Extreme drought in Baldwin County (about 27% deficiency for the year) and burning of portions of Gulf State Park adversely affected the count. Thanks are due the Francis Weston Nature Club of Pensacola, Florida, without whose assistance the count would not have been possible this winter. Participants: P. Fairly Chandler (compiler), Lloyd Clayton, Curtis Kingsbery, Mary Lou Mottis, Ben L. Osterberg, and David H. Turpin.

Mobile: Dec. 22, 5:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Overcast AM, rain PM; 54 degrees to 70 degrees; winds S to N, 8-26 mph; wind and rain in PM cleared fog from Mobile Bay. 12 observers in 5 parties; 33 party-hours (17 by car, 16 on foot); 189 party-miles (164 by car, 25 on foot). Count centered at Lafayette and Government Sts. and including Ala. Battleship Pkwy., Mobile Bay, Spring Hill College Campus and Mobile Municipal Park; rivers, bay and ponds 23%; upland mixed woods 20%; marshes and beaches 16%; residential 13%; pastures and roadsides 13%; cultivated fields and parks 12%; bottom-land hardwoods 3%. Participants: A. B. Clark, Fr. J. L. Dorn, S. J. (compiler), Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard, Ralph W. Havard, Jr., Richard E. Hayward, Jr., W. D. McDaniel, Max P. McGill, Louise N. McKinstry, Margaret E. Miller, Alice Tait, and Elizabeth R. Toenes.

Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens: Dec. 29. Clear and cool. 15 observers. Count centered at southern tip of Mon Luis Isle and including Cedar Point, Coden, Bayou la Batre, Bellingrath Gardens, and all but westernmost 4 miles of Dauphin Island; mixed woods 28%; pine woods 20%; salt and brackish water 18%; mud and shell flats 12%; residential 12%; salt marsh 5%; freshwater marsh 3%; beaches 2%. Participants: Lois P. Archer, Fr. J. L. Dom, S. J., Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard (compiler), Sybil C. Hanks, Richard E. Hayward, Jr., Ralph W. Havard, Jr., Edwin Laroux, W. D. McDaniel, Max P. McGill, Louise N. McKinstry, Genevieve and James R. Spafford, Elizabeth R. Toenes, and Billy Tonsmeire.

(Editor's note: Numerical data was not available for the Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens Count.)

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY, 1968

Thomas A. Imhof

Only recently have the 1968 breeding bird survey totals been available. In 1966 we ran 40 of the 41 routes in Alabama, in 1967, 37 routes, and last year only 32 of them. We hope this improves considerably in 1969.

The ranking of the 30 most numerous species counted on the surveys in Alabama for the three years is shown below.

1966	1967	1968
1. Bobwhite	Cardinal	Cardinal
2. Cardinal	Mockingbird	Mockingbird
3. Mockingbird	Com Grackle	Bobwhite
4. House Sparrow	Bobwhite	Com Grackle
5. Com Grackle	House Sparrow	Red-winged Blackbird
6. Com Crow	Red-winged Blackbird	Blue Jay
7. Mourning Dove	Mourning Dove	House Sparrow
8. Blue Jay	Blue Jay	Mourning Dove
9. Red-winged Blackbird	Indigo Bunting	Com Crow
10. Indigo Bunting	Com Crow	Indigo Bunting
11. R-s Towhee	E Meadowlark	R-s Towhee
12. E Meadowlark	Starling	E Meadowlark
13. Starling	R-s Towhee	Purple Martin
14. Yellow-br Chat	Yellow-br Chat	Starling
15. Purple Martin	Purple Martin	Yellow-br Chat
16. Chimney Swift	Chimney Swift	Carolina Wren
17. Wood Thrush	Wood Thrush	Chimney Swift
18. Carolina Wren	Field Sparrow	Orchard Oriole
19. Orchard Oriole	Carolina Wren	Wood Thrush
20. Field Sparrow	Orchard Oriole	Field Sparrow
21. Yellow-b Cuckoo	Tufted Titmouse	Tufted Titmouse
22. White-eyed Vireo	Yellowthroat	Red-bellied Woodp
23. Red-bellied Woodp	Red-bellied Woodp	Yellowthroat
24. E Kingbird	White-eyed Vireo	Fish Crow
25. Yellowthroat	Br-h Cowbird	E Kingbird
26. Tufted Titmouse	E Kingbird	White-eyed Vireo
27. Brown Thrasher	Brown Thrasher	Car Chickadee
28. Robin	Robin	Br-h Cowbird
29. Blue Grosbeak	Car Chickadee	Gr Crested Flyc
30. Car Chickadee	Blue Grosbeak	Brown Thrasher

THE SEASON FALL 1968

Compiler and Editor—Thomas A. Imhof

The following tentative schedule is proposed:

Fall Season (September-October-November) deadline for copy 10 December.

Winter Season (December-January-February) deadline for copy 10 March.

Spring Season (March-April-May) deadline for copy 10 June.

Summer Season (June-July-August) deadline for copy 10 September.

The consolidated report below has the advantage of comparing records of the same species in various parts of the state. Please note that it uses records whose parts are: (1) species properly identified, (2) date, (3) locality, (4) observer, (5) number of birds, and (6) significance. The first four must be present, otherwise we cannot use it. If you have any suggestions or criticisms, by all means please contact the Season Editor. If your part of the state or your records are not included, it is up to you to do something about it.

Fall Report—In Alabama generally it was cool and dry all fall. The coolness was due rather to lack of very high temperatures than to some very low ones. Rainfall was low enough to provide good shorebird habitat for Birmingham observers. Mobile at October's end had less than 50% of its normal annual rainfall—a deficiency of over 30 inches!

Possibly the highlight of this fall was the invasion of the state by birds of the northern coniferous forest that do not come this far south in numbers every year—Red-breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin.

Loon, Ibis—A Com. Loon on Lake Oliver, Chattahoochee R. on 21 Oct. (LAW) is earliest for the Piedmont. The report of two pairs of Glossy Ibises—no white on face—photographed nesting in cactus on an island in Mobile County in June (MWG) is the first known breeding of dark ibises between Louisiana and peninsular Florida. This hiatus also exists in the breeding range of Sandhill Crane, Burrowing Owl, Mottled Duck, Painted Bunting, and others, so it is difficult to see why only the dark ibises have evolved two distinct species, Glossy and White-faced.

Waterfowl—Geese arrived early at Wheeler, Canadas on 11 Sept. and Blues and Snows on 2 Oct., near early dates. Arrivals "lagged during October and most of November, though these began to level off in late November" (TZA). At close of period Wheeler was short 10% of the geese present at the same time and place last year (TZA). Due apparently to drought on the Canadian nesting grounds, ducks at Wheeler were 30% off from last year (TZA). At Lake Purdy near Birmingham, a Pintail on 15 Sept. (JNC, HHW, HHK) and an Am. Widgeon on 28 Sept. (JNC, HHK) are earliest for the Mountain Region. Widgeon were particularly numerous at Wheeler (TZA), and at Eufaula Refuge on 19 Oct. it and the Shoveler were the commonest ducks (TAI, DH, et. al.) The Shoveler, however, was considered scarce at Wheeler. A Canvasback at Mobile on 4 Oct. (MWG, JLD, GMM) is by two weeks the earliest for Alabama. Early Lesser Scaup were at Eufaula Refuge on 19 Oct. (TAI, et. al.) and at Mobile on 4 Oct. (MWG, JLD, GMM) earliest for state by 3 days. Many of the waterfowl that used to winter in Mobile Bay are now reported to remain all

season at Noxubee N. W. Refuge, Miss.

Hawks—A Mississippi Kite at Spring Hill on 20 Sept. (MAG) ties the latest date for the state. On Dauphin Island, Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Broadwinged Hawks were noted migrating on 13 Sept. (JLD, MAG); a peak of 100 Sparrow Hawks was counted on 4 Oct. (MAG); and a Krider's Red-tail and a Pigeon Hawk were seen on 5 Nov. (RWS).

Shorebirds—On Sand Island (just south of Dauphin) 25 Snowy Plovers counted on 2 Nov. (TAI&EBM), the highest number for Alabama, is encouraging for a species having difficulty finding quiet beaches. A Com. Snipe on Dauphin Island on 2 Sept. (LT & LA) is except for the Tennessee Valley the earliest for the state. Knots were seen on Dauphin on 11 and 26 Oct. (LMcK, LT). Three species reached Lake Purdy earlier than ever before for Alabama: Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper on 10 July (HHW, PAR, RRR) and Least Sandpiper on 6 July (HHW, et. al.) is the first Mt. Region record. Two Marbled Godwits were at Gulf Shores on 27 Oct. (LMcK & LT). On 20 Oct. at Rutherford Lakes, Shelby Co. an immature Red Phalarope was discovered (JNC & HHK). Well over 30 Birmingham observers were treated to the sight of the bird swimming at very close range typical of animals bred in the wilderness, and several excellent color photos were made.

Jaeger, Terns—an injured Parasitic Jaeger was seen on the beach at Panama City, Fla. on 28 Sept. and picked up dead the next day, wings and tail preserved (EGR & RRR). Does the state line prevent this specimen from substantiating Mobile Bay sight records? Forster's Terns were at Lake Purdy on 23 July (EGR & RRR) and 4 on 21 Sept. (EGR et. al.) On the west side of Lake Oliver (Chattahoochee R. Lee Co., Alabama) they were seen in August and October, max. 3 on 21 Oct. (LAW). Com. Terns were recorded there in August and September, max. 30 on 26 Aug. (LAW), and Least Terns in August and October, max. 12 on 25 Aug.—the latest on 11 Oct., also 12 birds, is the latest inland record for Alabama (LAW).

Goatsucker, Hummingbird—A Chuck-wills-widow netted at a ragwood thicket in Birmingham on 13 Sept. is, except for Dauphin records, the latest for the state (TAI & JMI). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Birmingham on 10 Nov. (JF) is exceeded inland only by a 16 Nov. record in 1955.

Flycatchers, Swallow—Though rather scarce this fall, Western Kingbirds were seen on Dauphin Island on 10, 14 (2), and 19 (3) Sept. and 4 & 5 Oct. (vide, MAG). A Scissor-tail at Basin, Coffee Co. on 30 Sept. (RRR & EGR) is only the third inland fall record—other two in 1964. Netters continue to improve our knowledge of Empidonax movements. A Trail's on Dauphin on 19 Aug. (MEM) is earliest for state by 6 days; two Yellowbellieds in Birmingham on 7 Sept. (TAI & JMI) are by 2 days earliest for the Mt. Region. At Lake Purdy on 6 Oct., 4 Purple Martins (JNC) are, except for the coast, the latest for state by two days.

Jay, Titmouse, Nuthatch, Wren—Blue Jays flooded the state this fall with a count of 788 on the Birmingham fall count on 12 Oct. being the largest number ever recorded in Alabama. Migrating flocks of Blue Jays were evident nearly throughout the state from mid-September into November. Tufted Titmice also showed signs of migration around Birmingham; a flock of 17 moving south on 5 Oct.; flock of 9 on 10 Oct.; and 9 banded all from two nets at the same time on 8 Nov. (TAI & JMI). Red-breasted Nuthatches were first noted in Birmingham on 26 Sept. (HCM), and on the 12 Oct. Fall Count 27 were listed. They first reached Dauphin Island on 11 Oct. (LMcK) and were "all over the island" by 30 Oct. (LA & LT). A Winter Wren in Birmingham on 9 Oct. (HHW) ties the earliest for the Mt. Region.

Mockingbird, Kinglet, Pipit, Vireo—Evidence of Mockingbird abundance is in the record 375 birds on the Birmingham Fall Count on Oct. 12 and the 47 birds netted around Joe-pye weed in Birmingham August to October (TAI & JMI). A Golden-crowned Kinglet on Dauphin Island on 19 Oct. (banded by MEM) ties the earliest for the coast. A Water Pipit in Birmingham on 9 Oct. (HHK & MLB) is earliest for the Mt. Region. A Philadelphia Vireo repeating in nets on 20 Oct. (MLB) ties the latest for the Mt. Region.

On Dauphin Island on 5 Oct., 22 species of warblers and 4 of vireos were recorded (MWG, MAG, et. al.) while in Birmingham on 12 Oct., 19 warblers and 5 vireos were listed (Fall Count).

Warblers—A Blue-winged on 12 Oct. in Birmingham (WFC) is, except for Dauphin records, the latest for the state by 4 days. A Brewster's on Dauphin on 12 Sept. (TH) is further evidence that the bird is regular in fall in Alabama—has now been recorded on coast in '58, '63, '64, & '68. A Nashville banded on Dauphin on 7 Sept. (MEM) is the earliest for Alabama by 7 days. In fall, the Black-throated Blue Warbler occurs annually only in the Mt. Region and the Gulf Coast. This year one was banded on Dauphin on 6 Oct. (MEM) and one seen on the Birmingham Fall Count on 12 Oct. (JS). A Prairie Warbler banded in Birmingham on 18 Oct. (MLB) is, except for coastal records, the latest for the state. The elusive, skulking, difficult-to-identify Mourning Warbler is gradually being established as a regular fall migrant in Alabama. Last fall, three were netted in the state (one taken specimen, another photographed). This fall, one was on Dauphin on 7 Sept. (Banded—MEM) and two were in Birmingham: 15 Sept., a TV tower casualty (MLB); 4 Oct. seen (HHK & JNC). A Wilson's banded on 12 Oct. in Birmingham (MLB) is, except for Dauphin records, the latest for the state by 3 days. An Am. Redstart on 8 Nov. on Dauphin Island (MAG) is, excepting a December Birmingham record, the latest for the state by one day.

Oriole, Finches—A female oriole (probably Baltimore) visited a Montgomery feeder around Thanksgiving (vide RWS). The Rose-breasted Grosbeak, abundant this fall, peaked at 82 in Birmingham on 12 Oct. (Fall Count). One 16 Nov. three Indigo Buntings were still present in Birmingham (TAI, JMI, HHK, JNC). One of three, a very fat immature female, was banded on 22 Nov. and was last seen, band prominent on 27 Nov. at the same place (TAI & JMI). So far, the timetable for the Evening Grosbeak invasion reads like this: 10 Nov., Wheeler Refuge, 5 birds (MLB & HHK); mid-Nov. Blount Springs, small flock (JC); 20 Nov., Mountain Brook, Birmingham, 8 (DC); 25 Nov., Montgomery, first local record (RL vide RWS); and 10 Dec. widespread in Jefferson County. Will they reach Mobile this time? Purple Finches are common; 6 of them reached Mobile on 13 Nov. (JLD). A Pine Siskin banded on Dauphin Island on 26 Oct. (RB) ties a Mt. Region record for the earliest for the state; 25 were in Birmingham on 15 Nov. (HHK). A Bachman's Sparrow banded on Dauphin Island on 25 Oct. (RB) is as far as known the first record for the island. A Slate-colored Junco in a TV tower parking lot in Birmingham on 28 Sept. (MLB) ties the earliest record for the state. The White-crowned Sparrow seems reasonably common: 5 or 6 reported from Mobile County 30 Oct. to 14 Nov. (MAG); and 5 (2 banded) from one field in Birmingham in November (TAI, JMI). A Lincoln's Sparrow banded on 6 Oct. on Dauphin Island (MEM) is the earliest for the coastal plain by 2 days.

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THE SEASON WINTER 1969

Compiler and Editor—Thomas A. Imhof

The main event of this winter season was the invasion of northern finches. Read the details below under Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, Junco, and Fox Sparrow.

Almost universal in the state were a drought from June 1 to December 1, normal or near normal rainfall in January and February, and temperatures for over a year now averaging well below normal but with very few really cold days. The year 1968 in Birmingham at average 60.7 degrees was the second coldest of record. Our two coastal counties finished the year with barely half of normal rain, and water levels were as much as 2 feet below normal. Near Birmingham heavy December rains brought a smaller deficit much closer to normal, but still we had pipits and snipe instead of Horned Grebes and Buffleheads. Throughout the state low water levels were blamed for the scarcity of water birds.

For Christmas Count records—used as little as possible below—see Mr. Reid's excellent account in this issue.

Loons, Grebes—Common Loons were about normal at Lake Oliver on the Chattahoochee R. except that none were noted 2 Dec. to 2 Feb. (LAW). A few were noted at Wheeler Refuge (TZA), but only one was in Birmingham—25 and 26 Jan. (JRB et. al.) Mary Gaillard reports them not as numerous as usual on the coast. A maximum of 10 Horned Grebes were at Lake Oliver on 3 Dec. (LAW), but otherwise the species was scarce inland. Eared Grebes were noted for the 7th straight winter in the state as follows: Dauphin Island, 24 Nov. (MEM & MLR), earliest fall date; and twice at Chickasaw, 22 Dec. (REH, RWH & ERT) and 2 March (LPA & ERT).

Pelicanlike Birds—Brown Pelicans were reported three times—one on the Bon Secour Christmas Count, 21 Dec. (PFC) and at Dauphin Island on 14 Jan. and 20 Feb., no numbers (MAG et. al.). A maximum of 50 Gannets were off Dauphin Island on 20 Feb. (JLD & MAG) and in early February our only winter Magnificent Frigate-bird was spotted there (EBM).

Hérons, Ibises—A Green Heron on Dog R., Mobile, noted 11 times from 8 Jan. to 7 March (LMcK) is the 4th time in the last 12 years that the species has wintered on the coast. A Cattle Egret on Dauphin Island on 29 Dec. (fide MAG) is one of very few winter records for the state. Hundreds of Common Egrets were noted on 10 Dec. on Cochrane

Causeway (LMcK) and at Chickasaw on 2 March (ERT & LPA). A Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Marion Fish Hatchery on 25 Jan. and 1 Feb. (RRR and many others) is the 3rd inland winter record. A satisfactory photograph has been submitted for an adult Glossy Ibis present at Eufaula Refuge 1-16 Feb. (LAW, GS, SP, EC), the first inland winter record. A small flock of White Ibis on Dauphin Island on 19 Jan. (BMB) means the species has now been recorded on the coast in every month of the year.

Waterfowl—At Wheeler Refuge the Canada-Blue-Snow Goose peak this winter was 39,000, peak last winter 48,000, all-time peak 60,000 in 1963 (TZA). As for ducks at Wheeler, this winter's peak was 60,000 compared to 38,000 last winter. The Black Duck, Widgeon, and Shoveler were responsible for this increase while other duck species were down (TZA). Three Blue-winged Teal at East Lake, Birmingham on 8 March (RRR) are earliest for the Mountain Region by a week. Except for Wood Ducks in the Coastal Plain, the Ring-necked Duck appeared to be the only half-way common duck in much of Alabama, certainly around Birmingham and Marion. A male Greater Scaup was identified on 18 Jan. on Cochrane Causeway (REH & ERT); a few of these birds occur here and in Bon Secour Bay, but most of them prefer Mississippi Sound. On both sides of Mobile Bay ducks were reported extremely poor, even Red-breasted Mergansers (PFC, MAG).

Hawks—Bald Eagles were reported from Wheeler Refuge on 14 Dec. (adult fide TZA) and 16 Jan. (imm. fide TZA); from Birmingham on 16 Feb. (JNC); and from Eufaula Refuge about 10 Feb. (GS). A Golden Eagle captured near Evergreen in October 1968 is now a pet in Montgomery (RWS). Winter hawk movement is not confined to eagles; on the windy 28 Dec. in Birmingham several Red-tails, a Rough-legged, and 3 Marsh appeared to be in migration (TAI, JMI, WFC).

Shorebirds—In Birmingham 7 Am Woodcock were flushed on 28 Dec. (JNC, TAI, et. al.) and 5 were seen and heard, 3 of them in courtship flight, on 28 Feb. (TAI & JMI). A Lesser Yellowlegs was at Eufaula Refuge on 19 Jan. (LAW & EC). Least Sandpipers wintered at Wheeler (TZA) and Eufaula (LAW) Refuges, Birmingham (B.A.S.) and Marion (A.O.S.) Am Avocets, wintering at Cochrane Causeway for about 15 consecutive years now, peaked at 40 on 22 Dec. and 8 Jan. (JLD, LMcK, and many others).

Gulls—At Lake Oliver on the Chattahoochee R. 1-4 Herring Gulls were present daily; Ring-billed Gulls, 10-20 daily, maxima 67 on 28 Dec. and 125 on 2 March (LAW). Three adult and one immature Laughing Gulls, present at Lake Oliver 1-6 Dec. (LAW) constitute the only inland winter record. On the coast, these birds were noted with black heads on 20 Feb. (MAG & JLD). Bonaparte's Gulls were on Lake Harding, 15 miles north of Phenix City, 3-4 daily through 28 Dec. and a maxima of 25 on 9 Dec. (LAW).

Homed Lark, Purple Martin—A flock of over 250 Horned Larks delighted many A.O.S. members on 1 Feb. at Lakeland Farms near Marion. This open-country species appears to be doing well. The Purple Martin's annual race to beat the Starling to its nest boxes without dying from lack of insect food in cold weather was earlier than usual this year: 17 Jan. 4 or 5 and 19 Jan. a flock, both on Dauphin Island (BMB); 1 Feb., Marion (A.O.S.); 14 Feb., Chelsea, Shelby Co., 3 males (fide WFC); 17 Feb., Munford, Talladega Co., 1 found dead (JBC); 21 Feb., Montgomery (RWS); 22 Feb., Fayette County (DCH); Seale (RG); and 4 March, Wheeler Refuge (TZA).

Nuthatch, Wren, Thrushes, Waxwing—Although nowhere reported as numerous, the Red-breasted Nuthatch was widespread all the way to the coast with one bird even in The Tennessee Valley where natural pines are scarce—Hartselle at a feeder on 4 March

(Mrs. DP). A Short-billed Marsh Wren was near Hoover, Birmingham on 2, 3 & 4 Jan. (HHK, JNC, et. al.). Near Bon Secour on 27 Jan, the lowest of several counts of Robins in 5 acres of pine thicket was 30,000 (VDH & CLC). Near Birmingham the Robin suddenly became abundant on 31 Jan. and has remained so since. A late Wood Thrush was at a feeder on Shades Mt. on 14 Dec. (NGB). With the Robin, Hermit Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush (see Christmas Count), and E. Bluebird, 5 thrushes were in Birmingham this December. On the afternoon of 28 Jan., a careful estimate of a huge flock of Cedar Waxwings in 4 very large pecan trees in Fairhope comes to 3440 (VDH). As with the Robin, this species became abundant in Birmingham just after these coastal concentrations.

Warblers—Four Black-and-white Warblers on Dauphin Island on 9 March (LPA & ERT) had apparently not wintered locally. At least 4 Orange-crowned Warblers were in Birmingham this winter; 24, 25 Dec. and 1 March (RRR & EGR), 28 Dec. (JWS), 13 Jan. (TAI), and 20 March found dead after being present 2 weeks (Mrs. WEG). The Myrtle Warbler was exceptionally abundant on the coast in January and February; abundant on Dauphin Island through 9 March (MAG), tens of thousands on 23 Jan. near Bon Secour (VDH & CLC), abundant in Mobile and Baldwin Counties in late Feb. (JEK). Recently the Palm Warbler has been getting scarcer as a winter bird around Birmingham (missed on the '67 and '68 Christmas Counts) but one was in Hoover on 30 Dec. (HHK).

Blackbirds, Tanager—Reports from agricultural areas of the state indicate that blackbirds continue to increase, particularly where stock is fed in the open. No numbers are immediately available. The situation in Birmingham is relatively static, although occasional large flocks are seen. At least 2 Baltimore Orioles were at Birmingham feeders, 28 Dec. (MAS) and throughout period (JW), and a third at a Montgomery feeder since late November (RWL). A Summer Tanager at a Mobile bird bath on 12 Dec. (ERT) is the first winter record for Alabama.

Indigo Bunting and Dickcissel—An adult male Indigo Bunting at Foley on 21 Feb. (PFC) is our second winter record. At least 3 Dickcissels wintered, on the coast: one in Spring Hill 6 Dec. to 10 Jan. (ERT); another in Mobile 22 Dec. and 4 March (MWG); and one in Fairhope on 4 Feb. (VDH).

Evening Grosbeak—The headline species of the season made it as far south as the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. First noted for certain in Fairhope on 28 Dec. (Mrs. AS), the birds peaked there at over 100 and were still present on 11 March (VDH). This flock, or more of them, spread north to Spanish Fort (VDH) and south to Point Clear (EMMcG) with one bird in Spring Hill (fide MAG). Birds were present at Jackson, 30 Dec. to March, one specimen to Dept Cons Coll (WJH); Grove Hill (GWC); Dothan (MLH); Brewton (fide JEK); Clayton, 8 birds on 3 March (Dr RB); Seale, 13/Feb. onward (RG); Auburn, over 100 (JD & RD); Montgomery, throughout period (RWL, RWS, JEK); Talladega, 28 Nov. to at least 18 Dec. (VHA); Hartselle, 6 birds, 18 Dec. to at least 2 March (Mrs. DP). In Birmingham over 1500 birds visited at least 25 feeders throughout the period and over 150 have been banded (MLB, HHW, and assistants). A peak of 150 were at one station in Roebuck on 9 Feb. (GH).

Other Finches—The Purple Finch also invaded the coast in large numbers: Fairhope, 6 Dec. to at least 6 March, max 40 (VDH); Magnolia Springs, present through 4 March, largest number in 15 years (PFC); Mobile, about 40 banded on 4 Feb. (MEM & SRH). The Pine Siskin was even more abundant—Mobile about 200 on 14 Jan. (KJ & HJ); 40 of 100 banded on 4 Feb. (MEM & SRH); still present on 4 March (MAG); Foley and Fairhope in large numbers too (PFC & VDH). The Am Goldfinch also followed suit, and a large flock on the west end of Dauphin Island was estimated on 12 Jan. at 500 (GS & JS) and

on 19 Jan. at 600 (KJ & HJ). On 3 Jan. a strange bird, looking like a Savannah Sparrow but with a white wing patch, visited a feeder in Orrville near Selma. M. L. (Jack) Miles, well aware of what species he had, collected the bird on 6 Jan. and the identification was verified by George Lowery at L.S.U. as a LARK BUNTING, second record and first specimen for Alabama.

Sparrows—Three Grasshopper Sparrows were found at Gulf Shores on 18 and 19 Jan. (KRT, LPA, REH); and in Birmingham one was near Hoover 28 Dec to 5 Jan. (JNC, HHK, et. al.) and another was banded from a flock of Savannah Sparrows at Roberts Field on 26 Dec. (TAI). A Henslow's Sparrow was identified in Mobile on 14 Jan. (MWG). Juncos were reported as common throughout Mobile and Baldwin Counties (PFC, MAG, and many others). A Harris' Sparrow at a feeder in Hartselle on 7 Dec. (Mrs. DP) is the third record for the state. White-crowned Sparrows were widespread in southwestern Baldwin County (VDH) and 11 were counted at Gulf Shores on 19 Jan. (ERT, LPA). One was at Clayton on 3 & 5 March (Dr RB). At least 100 Fox Sparrows were present on one weedy 20 acre field in Birmingham; 53 were banded 23 Nov. to 14 March—on the last date 50% of the birds caught were already banded (TAI & JMI). A Smith's Longspur, carefully identified on short grass in Foley on 8 Jan. (PFC) is the first record for the coast and the 6th for the state. It is as far as known, the southeasternmost record of the species!

Deadline for spring observations (March, April, and May) to be in my hands is 10 June. We would like to document the spring advance across Alabama of many common summer birds such as Chimney Swift, Great Crested Flycatcher, Catbird, many warblers, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting, and others just like the Purple Martin above. We look forward to seeing the observer list below look like the A.O.S. membership list.

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GENERAL NOTES

NOTES FROM THE COASTAL PLAIN
AND FLORIDA GULF COAST

Robert R. Reid, Jr.

Reports of the following species during the summer and early fall of 1968 from the Coastal Plain of Alabama and the Panama City-Laguna Beach area of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast may be of interest to Alabama observers. The reports from Northwest Florida are pertinent because of its nearness and ecological similarity to the Alabama Gulf Coast.

Purple Gallinules

In Alabama's Upper Coastal Plain, at a farm owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Bird near Forkland in southern Greene County, Russell Bailey, my wife Elberta and I were pleasantly surprised on August 17, 1968, by an adult and three immature Purple Gallinules. The birds were in a pond filled with water-lillies and American lotus (still commonly known by its Indian name "yonquapin", and a plant that might be described as a giant pond lily although it is of a different family). Both the brilliantly colored adult and drab brown young were feeding while walking over the lily pads, and a number of Cattle Egrets in the surrounding field added to the "tropical" atmosphere. Records in Imhof's Alabama Birds (1962:213-14) include observations of Purple Gallinules in recent years during June in nearby counties (in 1955 at the Marion Fish Hatchery by Imhof, and in 1956 at Demopolis Lake by Walter W. Beshears—older June records are from Autauga County and Auburn). There were reports of adult gallinules seen in the same area of Greene County earlier in the summer, so the presence of the young in this case may well furnish the northernmost breeding evidence in Alabama of this colorful, basically subtropical species.

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers

In the late afternoon on September 30, Elberta and I spotted a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Coffee County in the Lower Coastal Plain. As we watched, it dropped down from its perch on a telephone wire, caught an insect in the field below, returned to eat it on the wire, and then chased off a Mockingbird that alighted closer than suited its preference. We saw only a single bird, which had the long tail of the adult but not much of the bright pink around the shoulders, showing that coloration only on the underparts. This is the first reported observation of the Scissor-tail in the Lower Coastal Plain, there being few inland records for the state at all. It is also an early fall migration date except for an observation by J.W. Johnson and John C. Hall in Cherokee County on August 22, 1964. Thus far, the only other inland fall report is one by Bob Skinner on the Tombigbee River 18 miles WSW of Demopolis on October 18, 1964. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers appear to have been extending their range east in Arkansas where an average of two birds per route were reported on the 1967 breeding bird surveys conducted under the Migratory Bird Populations Station, and they have been wintering more and more in Southwest and extreme South Florida as shown by recent Christmas bird counts reported in Audubon Field Notes. These fall mi-

gration sightings in Alabama may well be of the more eastern birds going to Florida for the winter rather than crossing the Gulf to Central America.

Earlier in the year, Dr. Marion L. Hanahan of Dothan, Elberta and I observed another Scissor-tail on July 7 at Panama City Beach, about two miles west of Saint Andrew State Park where, incidentally, a Gray Kingbird had been noted. Imhof's Alabama Birds (1962:345-47) and subsequent reports show only three records of Scissor-tails in Alabama during the months of June and July—one by David Brown in Cullman County on June 2, 1957, one by Fr. J. L. Dorn on Dauphin Island on June 12, 1965, and the other by C. W. Summerour, also on Dauphin Island, on July 4, 1958. All of these observations are of particular interest because occurring during or near the nesting season.

Parasitic Jaeger

On September 28, 1968, Elberta reported a Parasitic Jaeger on Panama City Beach. This species has been observed in Alabama only off the Gulf Coast and would be considered rare. In addition, it appeared earlier in the season than might be expected for this wandering visitor from the northern seas. The bird seemed relatively tame and perhaps was either tired or sick. The next day a bird we assumed to be the same one was found dead with a broken right wing on a road in the same area after presumably being hit by a car. On account of the heat, the specimen was not in a condition to be preserved. However, we collected the wings and tail feathers, which were brought back to Birmingham to be identified by other interested birders. The specimen measured 18" in length, and the central tail feathers, which were pointed as is the case with the Parasitic species, extended an average of 1 3/4" beyond the other tail feathers. The bird had the black cap of the adult, clear white underparts extending all the way down from the throat, and white markings at the end of the wings that are caused by the white quills and white portions of the primary feathers. It also had white at the base of the tail that is not shown in most of the field guides but is shown in the picture by Arthur Singer in Dr. Oliver Austin's Birds of the World (1961:128).

Redhead

Throughout the summer and early fall, several Birmingham observers noted a male Redhead in a lake east of Phillips Inlet near the Laguna Beach area. Observations were by Pat and Gayle Riley on May 26-28, by Harriett and Dr. D. O. Wright on June 23-25, and by me on July 7 and September 29. As noted by Kortright (1942:230-31, 422-23), the male Redhead, unlike most other male ducks, has only a partial eclipse plumage in the summer. This bird had lost its dark chest feathers when seen on July 7, but had regained most of them by the end of September although it then still retained much brownish coloration on its sides.

Common Merganser

As regards summering waterfowl, Dr. Hanahan, Elberta and I saw a male Common Merganser on July 7 on Hurricane Island (also known as Shell Island) in the mouth of Saint Andrew Bay. Although we are accustomed to seeing some Red-breasted Mergansers in summer in the bay, this bird had no brown or russet feathers on the chest, and it had the more extensive white feathers on the wings and scapulars that appear in the Common or American species. It was not then in eclipse plumage since it still had its green head feathers.

Brown Pelicans

We also saw a flight of 20 Brown Pelicans on July 7 in the Gulf off Panama City Beach. This compares with approximately 30 reported by Dr. Dan C. Holliman and others on Dauphin Island the spring and summer of 1968 and is encouraging evidence of at least a limited return of this species to our coastal water.

Literature Cited:

Audubon Field Notes, Florida Christmas Counts, 1966 and 1967, 21(2):191-211, 22 (2):210-29. In 1966 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were reported on five Florida counts—Fort Myers (4), Naples (2), Coot Bay-Everglades National Park (2), Key Largo-Plantation Key (12) and Key West (7)—and in 1967 on four—Bradenton (3), Fort Myers (5), Coot Bay-Everglades National Park (1) and Key Largo-Plantation Key (10) (no 1967 count reported from Key West).

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OBSERVATIONS ON A BROWN THRASHER
DEHUSKING ACORNS ON THE GROUND

Dr. Gordon Gunter

Pough (1946, The Eastern Land Birds, Doubleday, Inc., Garden City, N.Y.) says that the Brown Thrasher eats acorns. Imhof (1962, Alabama Birds, University of Alabama Press) makes the same statement. These and other local references make no mention of the fact that this slender built bird dehusks the acorns before eating them. This process would seem to be virtually impossible even when one sees it being done. For that reason the following observations may be of some interest.

The Brown Thrasher is quite common in this area and feeds often among the leaves in my yard.

I was amazed one fall day to notice that this long-billed bird had placed small leathery acorns in little pits in the ground and was trying to peck them open. This ground was soft, silty sand among large oak trees and small pines and my observations were made from my bathroom window. Over and over again the Thrasher pecked at the small leathery acorns and never before was I so impressed with the intensity with which wild animals seek food. Over and over the bird pounded so heavily that one would think it jarred his brains. Possibly such was the case, because every once in a while the Thrasher stopped as if to rest and take a few breaths. Every once in a while also the acorn flew out of the little pit. It was retrieved and replaced. I should have counted the times the bird struck the acorn but the surprising performance bemused me. In any case I had the impression that ten or a dozen strikes were made before the acorn fell open and the internal part, tannic acid and all, was made available to the Thrasher, who swallowed it immediately. Then the bird left the scene. There were several pits in the ground and obviously this bird or others gathered acorns and ate them at this place. However, I rather suspect that they do not eat many in one day because the effort seems to be very great.

The acorn in question is from the water oak, Quercus nigra, and it was identified for me by Mr. Lionel Eleuterius. In the early fall in this part of the world the external texture of this acorn is rather leathery.

Some authors have reported that the Brown Thrasher places acorns in cracks of wood and bark of trees. This may well be the ordinary case, but acorns placed in pits in the ground would seem to be safer to handle and less damaging if they are struck with a glancing blow.

After the above was written Dr. Oliver L. Austin has pointed out to me that M. P. Skinner (Guide to the winter birds of the North Carolina sandhills, 1928) "described exactly the same thing. . ." Apparently these observations have not been reported by other writers and mine stand as a corroboration of Skinner's.

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OBSERVATION ON A BLUE JAY
(*Cyanocitta cristata*) ATTEMPTING TO
CAPTURE A ROUGH GREEN SNAKE
(*Opheodrys aestivus*)

Dr. Eugene B. Sledge

Early one afternoon during the first week of August, 1964, I was attracted by a commotion overhead in a water oak tree. The sounds indicated that something was vigorously thrashing about in the leafy branches. I saw a Blue Jay struggling with a Rough Green Snake. The jay was attempting to balance himself on one leg with the aid of his wings, and hold the snake against the limb with his other foot and his beak. The snake was struggling vigorously, and quickly escaped. It fell to the ground near me and the jay immediately flew to a nearby tree and did not return. I caught the snake as it began to crawl rapidly away.

The snake was approximately twenty-four inches long. About midway along the body there were marks made by the jay's beak on the ventral scutes. These marks, in the form of a dark blue-colored V on the yellow ventral surface of the snake, apparently resulted from pressure exerted by the bird's beak. There was also some blue discoloration of the normal green on the reptile's dorsal surface opposite the aforementioned marks, but there was no distinct imprint of the jay's beak. There was no other apparent injury to the snake. I kept it two or more days but observed no apparent adverse effects from its encounter with the jay. The snake was then released.

It has been well established that the Blue Jay partakes of a wide variety of animal food. Bent (Life Histories of North American Jays and Titmice. Part 1, p. 39. Dover Publications, Inc. New York. 1964) states that the small vertebrates eaten by the Blue Jay may consist of fish, salamanders, tree frogs, mice and birds. Imhof (Alabama Birds, p. 372. State of Alabama Department of Conservation, Game and Fish Division, by University of Alabama Press. 1962) gives the same vertebrates as possible prey for this bird. However, neither of these authors include snakes in the known diet of the Blue Jay.

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MINUTES OF WINTER MEETING
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 1-2, 1969

The regular winter meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held at the College Inn Motel on Highway 5, Marion, Alabama, on February 1-2, 1969. Approximately fifty-two members and guests were present.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

The Executive Council met at 11:30 A.M. for a combined lunch and business session in the College Inn Motel dining room. The following officers and directors were present: Helen Kittinger, President; Clara Caffey, Vice President; Sybil Hanks, Treasurer; Idalene F. Snead, Secretary; Dr. Julian L. Dusi, Editor of Alabama Birdlife; Dr. Eugene B. Sledge, Editor of Newsletter; Tom A. Imhof, Director of State-at-Large; Fairley Chandler, Gulf Coast Region; James A. Keeler and Bob Skinner, Coastal Plains Region; Rosemary T. Dusi, Piedmont and Eastern Mountains Region; Dr. Dan C. Holliman, Central Mountain Region. Others present were: Bernice Smalley, Robert R. Reid, and Robert W. Skinner.

The minutes of the Executive Council meeting of November 8, 1968, were read by the Secretary and after being corrected were approved.

The Treasurer's report, stating that a balance of \$635.71 was in the checking account as of February 1, 1969, was read. The report was approved.

Sybil Hanks also read a letter of resignation from Miss Florence Ballard. The Council decided not to accept Miss Ballard's resignation but to give her an honorary membership.

Dr. Sledge reported that the Newsletter in the fall had been late because of unforeseen circumstances, but that the January issue was on time.

Dr. Dusi reported that Alabama Birdlife is a little behind schedule but will be sent out shortly.

There was a brief discussion of trying to change the present law regarding hawk protection so that it would be more specific as to the species included. Mr. Keeler and Mr. Reid thought we should get a definite sponsor, some active, conservation-minded legislator to present the bill. Mr. Reid also suggested that we all contact our own legislators, especially if we know them personally.

The President appointed the nominating committee: Clara Caffey, Mr. Robert R. Reid, and Dr. Dan C. Holliman.

A motion was presented and passed that a resolution in memory of Mr. and Mrs. H. Sevem Regar be recorded in the Alabama Ornithological Society's minutes, and a copy be sent to Mrs. Morton Kleban of Starkville, Mississippi. Likewise, a motion was made and passed that a resolution in memory of Dr. D. O. Wright be recorded in the Alabama Ornithological Society's minutes, and a copy be sent to Mrs. Harriet H. Wright.

Fairly Chandler reported that the activities and field trips have been generally informal in the Gulf Coastal Region, and that there is a possibility of their group's combining with the Mobile group a little later. He also told us of Mr. Francis M. Weston's illness.

Mr. Jim Keeler reported that the Bureau of Sports, Fisheries, and Wildlife wanted to know the status of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Alabama, in order that it might be placed on the rare and endangered species list if the situation warranted it. Mr. Keeler replied that this species was becoming more scarce since there are fewer mature pine

forests in the state and because of our present methods of clearing out all pines with red heart disease. The Council concurred with Mr. Keeler's action on this since there was need of an immediate reply.

Rosemary Dusi, reporting on the Piedmont area, stated that the Evening Grosbeaks and Red-breasted Nuthatches have engulfed them this year. Sometimes they have counted over one hundred Evening Grosbeaks on their feeder at one time.

Dr. Dan Holliman made a motion that the Alabama Ornithological Society send a letter to Senator Aubrey H. Carr asking to use the Nature Center at Oak Mountain State Park for a meeting place for AOS. The motion carried.

Dr. Holliman stated that he had collected the first Recluse Spider in Jefferson County.

Under new business, Helen Kittinger read, in part, a letter from Dr. Julian Dusi stating that he wished to resign as Editor of Alabama Birdlife. Mrs. Clara Caffey made a motion with regret that Dr. Dusi's resignation be accepted. The motion passed.

Mr. Robert Reid reported that the slide committee has not been able to meet yet to see and select slides. Another meeting has been scheduled for March 1, 1969, in Birmingham, Alabama. All out-of-towners were invited to stay at Robert Reid's home or Helen Kittinger's home.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

PROGRAM

After the buffet dinner at 6:30 P.M. in the College Inn dining room on February 1, 1969, Mr. Tom Imhof introduced Dr. David T. Rogers, Jr., who presented "Birds and Man in the Tropics." This was an excellent talk combining instruction with entertainment. Dr. Rogers even made the instruction entertaining with his superb slides showing how man has changed forests into grasslands or woodland borders.

The "Commercial" by Robert Reid rated excellent. It would be hard to find a better Dauphin Island booster anywhere.

COMPILATION

Sunday morning, February 2, 1969, at 11:00 A.M. the group assembled outside the motel for the compilation with Mike Bierly in charge. Seventy-six species were recorded.

Respectfully submitted
Idalene F. Snead,
Secretary

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY Revised Treasurer's report for period: November 1, 1968-February 1, 1969

INCOME

Dues	\$ 85.00
Registrations (Fall Meeting)	23.25
Total	<u>\$108.25</u>

EXPENSES

Publications:	
(Alabama Birdlife, Nos. 2-3)	\$190.28
Treasurer:	
(Badges and Envelopes)	9.01
Meetings	
(Mrs. Helen Kittinger-Door Prizes)	
Spring Meeting - \$4.00	
Fall Meeting - \$3.13	
(Dr. Harold Simon-Lodging - \$13.50	
1 complimentary dinner - \$3.00	23.63
Total	<u>\$222.92</u>

SUMMARY

Balance in checking acct/Nov. 1, 1968	\$750.38
Income	108.25
Total	<u>\$858.63</u>
Expenses	- 222.92
Total	<u>\$635.71</u>

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND IN B.T.N.B.

Five memberships 50.00 each	\$250.00
Interest as of Nov. 11, 1968	51.05
Total	<u>\$301.05</u>

TOTAL ASSETS IN A.O.S. TREASURY

Balance in checking acct/Feb. 1, 1969	\$635.71
Balance in Life Membership Fund/Nov. 11 1968	301.05
Total	<u>\$936.76</u>

Respectfully submitted,
Sybil Hanks,
Treasurer

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Published by the Alabama Ornithological Society

Publication

This Journal is for the publication of material related to ornithology in Alabama. Members of the Alabama Ornithological Society are encouraged to contribute articles and general notes. All manuscripts should be submitted to the editor in duplicate and double-spaced on 8½ x 11 " paper. Nomenclature should follow A. O. U. Check-List, 5th edition, 1957. Recent issues of Alabama Birdlife and Style Manual For Biological Journals by American Institute of Biological Sciences, 2nd edition should be used as guides. Tables should be prepared on separate sheets and should not duplicate material. High quality black and white photographs, line drawings and other figures will be printed at the expense of the author. These visual aids must be large enough to be reduced without losing clarity. If fewer than five references are cited they should be incorporated in the body of the paper. Otherwise the author should prepare a terminal "Literature Cited" section. Reprints should be requested prior to publication date and will be billed to the author through the treasurer.

Participation

All members of the Alabama Ornithological Society are urged to participate in the annual meetings and other activities of the Society. The Newsletter announces these and other events which are available to the members. Seasonal accounts and significant field observations should be directed to the compilers of the "Seasons" and "Counts" section of Alabama Birdlife.

Membership

Application and dues for membership, dues for subscriptions, changes of addresses, orders for back numbers, requests for exchanges and any other inquiry related to membership and or payment should be directed to the treasurer whose name and address will be found on the inside back cover. Sustaining, \$5.00; Regular, \$3.00; Associate (out of state), \$2.00; Student, \$1.00.

An organization dedicated to the study of birds in Alabama

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded May 17, 1952

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 1969-70

President—Walter F. Coxe, P. O. Box 1448, Birmingham 35201

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Editor, Alabama Birdlife—Dr. Dan C. Holliman, Biology Dept., Birmingham-Southern College, Birmingham 35204

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