

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