

## 1968 BIRMINGHAM TOWER CASUALTIES

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Spring and fall collections were made of bird casualties at WAPI and WBRC television towers in Birmingham, Jefferson Co., Alabama. The towers are located on Red Mountain and are described in *Alabama Birdlife* 16:4 (34). In addition, it should be noted that the support cables for the towers are spaced along their length and the cables on each side of each tower join in a common point on the ground. An alternate tower construction is the connection of each individual cable to the ground at expanding intervals. It would seem that the greater the angle of the wire from the vertical tower, the greater the amount of exposed wire at higher elevations and the greater the probability of tower casualties. These towers are built with the least amount of exposed wire and may be, therefore, less obstructive to migrating birds.

The enclosed table shows the 1968 species list, seasonal numbers and the dates collected. Since it cannot be determined whether a bird fell before or after midnight the morning date is used.

The spring period began on 15 March and terminated on 20 May for a total of 66 consecutive days. During this time 36 individuals of 16 species were found on 16 days. The first casualty was a Wood Thrush on 30 March and the last was a Red-eyed Vireo on 15 May. The longest period over which a species was collected was 33 days from 30 March through 2 May represented by the Wood Thrush. The Red-eyed Vireo was next with an extreme of 23 days. This species was the most common spring casualty with 14 individuals. Ten of these fell in a seven day period from 22 April through 29 April. The other four were from 11 May through 15 May. Next in frequency were the Yellow-breasted Chat and Wood Thrush with 3 birds each. The most birds found on one day was 9 on 29 April. There was a northerly wind and precipitation during the night. It is interesting to note that the largest kill was with northerly winds and not southerly as would be expected in spring migration. The second largest kill was 4 birds on 2 May with the wind from the southwest and an unlimited ceiling. Southerly winds prevailed on 10 days out of the 16 days on which birds fell.

The fall period began on 5 September and concluded on 15 November for a total of 72 consecutive days. Twenty-one species were recorded of 47 individuals on 27 days. The first casualties were 2 Red-eyed Vireos on 6 September and the last was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 8 November. The collection of Red-eyed Vireos spanned the longest period with 40 days from 6 September through 16 October. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet was next with an extreme of 33 days from 6 October through 8 November. The Red-eyed Vireo with 14 individuals was the most frequent bird found while the Yellow-breasted Chat was second with 6 birds. The largest total for one day was 4 birds each on 8 September and 15 October. The wind was from the north on both of these days with an unlimited ceiling. Thirty-one birds out of the 47 that fell were on clear nights. The most interesting record was a first year Mourning Warbler on 15 September that was the fourth fall record for the Mountain Region of Alabama.

Again, bats were victims of the towers. Two red bats, *Lasiurus borealis*, were found on 26 September.

This was the first year that systematic spring collections were undertaken, so, no comparable spring data is available. In comparison with the 1967 fall collections, the 1968 fall period yielded 17 fewer birds and 9 additional species. Since 1967, 17 species have been recorded in the spring and 35 species in the fall for a total of 41 species. The Red-eyed Vireo was the most numerous casualty in each season. Fourteen were killed in each period: the fall of 1967, the spring of 1968 and the fall of 1968. Out of 12 birds found in only two spring collections in 1967, 7 were Red-eyed Vireos. There cannot be any statistical data derived from these towers reports due to the small number of individuals that the towers produce. Nevertheless, this does not underate the importance of regular tower collections due to records produced and the availability of birds for scientific study. Furthermore, it is conceivable that someday a large kill might occur.

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Species 1968. Seasonal numbers with dates. Each number in parenthesis indicates total on a given date.

SPECIES	INDIVIDUALS IN SPRING	INDIVIDUALS IN FALL	DATES
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	0	1	Sept. 8.
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	0	May 3.
Wood Pewee	0	2	Sept. 19, 23.
Catbird	2	1	May 3, 8; Oct. 5.
Wood Thrush	3	2	March 30, April 13, May 2; Oct. 2, 15.
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	2	May 3; Sept. 30, Oct. 3.
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	1	Oct. 30.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	3	Oct. 6, 28, Nov. 8.
White-eyed Vireo	2	0	April 3, 18.
Red-eyed Vireo	14	14	April 22(2), 28(3), 29(5), May 11(1), 12(2), 15(1): Sept. 6(2), 7(1), 8(1), 21(1), 22(2), 26(1), 29(1), Oct. 14(2), 15(2), 16(1).
Philadelphia Vireo	0	2	Sept. 28, Oct. 5.
Tennessee Warbler	1	3	May 2; Sept. 17, 26, Oct. 14.
Orange-crowned Warbler	0	1	Oct. 30
Magnolia Warbler	0	1	Sept. 23.
Myrtle Warbler	1	0	April 10.
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0	1	Sept. 23.
Blackpoll Warbler	1	0	May 9.
Ovenbird	0	1	Oct. 15.
Northern Waterthrush	0	1	Sept. 26.
Kentucky Warbler	2	0	April 22, 30.
Mourning Warbler	0	1	Sept. 15.
Yellowthroat	1	0	May 2.
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	6	April 29(3); Sept. 7(1), 8(1), 9(1), 15(1), 20(1), 29(1)
Hooded Warbler	1	0	April 13.
American Redstart	0	1	Sept. 15.

Baltimore Oriole	1	0	April 29.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	0	May 2.
Indigo Bunting	0	1	Sept. 8.
Slate-colored Junco	1	0	April 18
White-throated Sparrow	0	1	Oct. 20.
Song Sparrow	0	1	Oct. 31.
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	

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