

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

1 November 1955.

Dear Fellow-Members:

When you honored me last spring by electing me to the presidency of our society, I little thought my duties with the Air Force would take me away from Alabama as much as they have the past 5 months, and I certainly did not expect to be out of the country most of the ensuing year.

As many of you already know, I am leaving tomorrow for Panama, where I board the Navy's new icebreaker, USS Glacier, as she goes through the Canal, and sails to New Zealand, and thence to the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica. We expect to reach our destination early in December, and will stay there through the antarctic summer (temperatures range from 10° below zero, F., to a maximum of 37° above), and leave about March first, returning home late in April or early in May.

My official duties are to be Air Force Observer on the Navy's "Operation Deep Freeze," but I expect to have time to play with the penguins as well. I will be collecting zoological specimens of all sorts for the U. S. National Museum, and I am taking about 5,000 bird bands of various sizes with me, as well as the flipper tags used on seals in the Pribilofs, which I hope to use on the Emperor Penguins. These birds have no tarsus whatever, and the only way to mark them for future identification is with a tag on the flipper. How successful we will be remains to be seen, but as the bases we are establishing will be occupied at least until the end of the International Geophysical Year in 1957-58, marking penguins at this time should provide the groundwork for later observations on their movements.

While this one of the most interesting assignments the Air Force has given me, I realize that it will in no way help to further the conservation of bird life in Alabama nor will it contribute to the other aims of the A.O.S. I am sincerely sorry that it will prevent me from fulfilling my obligations as your president, but not even for the A.O.S. would I give up the opportunity to be a part of one of Admiral Byrd's expeditions to Little America.

I know that in my absence our able vice president will conduct the affairs of the organization and hold the spring meeting without waiting on my return. If I am here then, I will tell you about the really "deep south" where I have been, and if my return is delayed I will hope for the privilege of speaking to you at the fall meeting.

I shall write from New Zealand before we head southward for an incommunicado 4 months, and tell you of our trip across the South Pacific.

Sincerely yours,
O. L. AUSTIN, JR.

POST-BREEDING ACTIVITIES OF THE ALABAMA TOWHEE

By MAY S. LAUDEN

The Alabama Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus canaster* Howell, a subspecies of the Eastern Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (Linnaeus), was observed by the writer at Auburn, Alabama, during the period from October, 1952 through June, 1953. During this time the territories of ten breeding pairs were located, determined, and studied in detail. The information obtained during this study was published in the Alabama Bird-Life during 1954.

An additional study was undertaken to determine if these breeding pairs still remained on their spring nesting territories during the autumn of 1953. A review of the literature revealed controversial evidence with regard to migration of the Alabama Towhee. Dickinson (1952) commented that the retention of Howell's original concept of the sedentary nature of the Alabama Towhee is impracticable. He agreed that a portion of the towhee population remained on the breeding grounds during the winter but that specimens taken in the winter indicated some post-breeding movement. This was supported by Burleigh (1944) who was convinced, that in part of its range, the Alabama Towhee is migratory. Williams (1945 and 1950) reported that towhees do not migrate south of the United States.

The area in which the study was made contained the ten territories identified and studied during the spring of 1953, which area was limited to that land lying within a one-half mile radius of Comer Hall of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Trapping operations were also conducted in the areas adjacent to these territories. Since the Red-eyed Towhee migrates from the north and winters in this locality, the towhee population during the fall of the year far exceeds that found in the area during spring and summer. By retrapping each territory and by observing adjacent areas, I attempted to learn whether or not the sedentary nature of the Alabama Towhee was such that this bird remained on its breeding grounds during autumn and also if it maintained winter territories.

This article is a portion of a paper submitted to Dr. Henry G. Good, Professor of Zoology-Entomology, A.P.I., to whom I am indebted for his guidance in this work. I am deeply grateful to