

December, 1966

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| The President's Page | 40 |
| A Survey of Peak Migration Dates of Birds at Tuscaloosa, Alabama -- Richard Ambrose | 41 |
| Minutes of the Fall Meeting at Jackson, Alabama | 44 |

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

In addition to serving as a rewarding hobby, furnishing desired recreation and stimulating conservation of our natural resources, birding -- by both amateur and professional -- can contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge. More and more people are becoming active each year in conducting bird surveys, banding birds and otherwise studying them. We must bear in mind, however, that a significant observation can do no more than bring pleasure to the observer unless it is reported to those who are in a position to collect the data or is written up for publication. All of us should, therefore, report our observations. In this way we can not only bring pleasure to our fellow birders who are interested in our activities but also contribute to the fund of ornithological information.

AOS has directors for the various geographical regions of Alabama. Their names are set forth on the back cover. They are some of the most knowledgeable birders in the state and can advise you whether your observations are significant. They will also be glad to review any note or article you may write. Therefore, we urge you to report your observations to them so that they can turn significant ones in to the editors of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE and our AOS Newsletter. Articles of a more scientific nature should be published in ALABAMA BIRDLIFE while shorter field notes should appear in the Newsletter. If your observation is thought to be of particular importance, such as a new inland or coastal record or early, late or abundant migration, make sure it gets to Mr. Tom Imhof so that it might be reported in Audubon Field Notes; and if you have a nest record, be sure you turn it in to Dr. Julian Dusi so it can be included in the North American Nest Record Program. In this way our members may serve the study of ornithology as well as enjoying it.

I feel sure all of us have friends who would be interested in one or more aspects of birding so let me ask you to encourage them to participate in our activities and join us as members of AOS. As you will note from the minutes of the last executive council meeting in Jackson, AOS is now operating on a rather tight budget because publication costs are rising as are most other expenses. We need either to increase our membership or to increase our dues. Those who can do so might assist the Society by becoming sustaining members at \$5 annual dues instead of the regular \$2. Our regular dues are very low compared to similar organizations so a modest increase should not be out of order. However, it would be preferable to increase our membership for we would then be adding new voices for conservation and potential collectors of ornithological information. Therefore, let me urge each of you this coming year to interest at least one additional person in joining the Society. For your convenience an application blank was included at the end of the last newsletter although no set form is required. The name and address of the new member need only be sent with the appropriate dues to the Treasurer.

I should like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a very happy and prosperous New Year and better birding in 1967.

Robert R. Reid, Jr.

A SPRING SURVEY OF PEAK MIGRATION DATES OF
BIRDS AT TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

Richard E. Ambrose

INTRODUCTION

The dates of arrival and departure on a migration have long been the focal point for one of the most intensively studied aspects of avian biology. Yet it seems that their might be another factor of possibly greater importance than an "early" or "late" sighting; this being the fluctuating abundance among the migrants during their passage. James (1965) writes that "Actually, an analysis of the timing of the passage of peak abundances from year to year would be a much more sensitive yardstick than early or late dates in detecting distributional trends..."

It was with the above approach in mind that I proceeded with a migrant census in the spring of 1965. A census of this type does not require a great deal from the observer, except persistence -- the recording of birds on all possible dates being vital to the prediction of a trend. For a description of the procedure used on this census refer to Ambrose (1966).

RESULTS

Following is a complete listing of all birds sighted during these spring censuses in AOU order within their respective status in the Upper Coastal Plain from Imhof (1962). Explanation of the various column headings follows.

Number of Records -- This denotes the number of days on which a species was recorded. The maximum number of sightings possible being 52, as I made 52 counts.

Arrival - Departure -- These headings give the observed arrival dates for winter residents and the occurrence dates of the transient species during the census. For species that did not exhibit a good peak, dates of observation are given (in parenthesis) under these headings.

Peak - This column represents what the author has estimated to be the dates at which the various species reached their maximum abundance during this migration.

PERMANENT RESIDENTS:

The following permanent residents were sighted. The figure in parenthesis represents the number of times each species was seen. Great Blue Heron (9), Wood Duck (2), Red-tailed Hawk (2), Sparrow Hawk (1), Bob-white (28), Mourning Dove (52), Barn Owl (52), Belted Kingfisher (9), Yellow s. Flicker (44), Pileated Woodpecker (12), Red-b.

Woodpecker (43). Red-headed Woodpecker (3), Hairy Woodpecker (14), Downy Woodpecker (25), Phoebe (6), Blue Jay (51), Common Crow (49), Carolina Chickadee (50), Tufted Titmouse (50), Brown-headed Nuthatch (6), Carolina Wren (52), Brown Thrasher (48), Robin (50), Loggerhead Shrike (1), Starling (52), Pine Warbler (2), Yellowthroat (10), House Sparrow (52), Red-winged Blackbird (3), Common Grackle (52), Brown-headed Cowbird (17), Cardinal (52), American Goldfinch (30), Rufous-sided Towhee (52), Chipping Sparrow (2), Field Sparrow (4).

WINTER RESIDENTS:

| Species | No. Records | Departure | Peak |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|------|
| Pied-billed Grebe | 4 | (3/6, 3/22, 3/26, 4/4) | |
| Ring-necked Duck | 2 | (3/12, 3/15) | |
| Lesser Scaup | 2 | (3/18, 4/12) | |
| Ring-billed Gull | 4 | (3/10, 3/15, 3/19, 3/26) | |
| Yellow-b. Sapsucker | 24 | 4/12 | 4/1 |
| Brown Creeper | 19 | 4/5 | 3/17 |
| House Wren | 2 | (3/29, 4/10) | |
| Winter Wren | 21 | 4/8 | 4/1 |
| Hermit Thrush | 6 | (3/13, 3/14, 3/16, 3/23, 4/2, 4/4) | |
| Golden-cr. Kinglet | 12 | 3/31 | 3/14 |
| Ruby-cr. Kinglet | 40 | 4/26 | 3/26 |
| Cedar Waxwing | 20 | ---- | 4/11 |
| Myrtle Warbler | 36 | ---- | 3/22 |
| Rusty Blackbird | 4 | 3/6 | |
| Purple Finch | 15 | 4/4 | 3/27 |
| Slate-colored Junco | 5 | (3/11, 3/26, 4/2, 4/8, 4/14) | |
| White-th. Sparrow | 52 | occurred entire period | |
| Fox Sparrow | 2 | (3/20, 3/23) | |
| Swamp Sparrow | 24 | 4/14 | 4/7 |
| Song Sparrow | 20 | 4/4 | 3/21 |

SUMMER RESIDENTS:

| | | Arrival | |
|-----------------------|----|--|------|
| Green Heron | 6 | (3/30, 4/8, 4/10, 4/12, 4/27, 4/29) | |
| Spotted Sandpiper | 4 | (4/22, 4/26, 4/28, 4/29) | |
| Chimney Swift | 16 | 3/24 | 4/18 |
| R.-thr. Hummingbird | 9 | 3/28 | 4/4 |
| Crested Flycatcher | 2 | (4/28, 4/29) | |
| Rough-winged Swallow | 7 | (4/1, 4/4, 4/5, 4/8, 4/13, 4/20, 4/22) | |
| Purple Martin | 3 | (3/29, 3/30, 4/13) | |
| Catbird | 7 | (4/20, 4/22, 4/26 thru 4/30) | |
| Wood Thrush | 27 | 3/26 | 4/22 |
| Blue-grey Gnatcatcher | 16 | 3/18 | 4/1 |
| White-eyed Vireo | 29 | 3/25 | 4/11 |
| Red-eyed Vireo | 8 | (4/20 thru 4/28, 4/30) | |
| Black & White Warbler | 6 | 3/27 | 4/3 |
| Prothonotary Warbler | 23 | 3/29 | 4/27 |
| Yellow Warbler | 12 | 4/5 | 4/28 |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----|---|-----|--|
| Prairie Warbler | 1 | (4/2) | | |
| Kentucky Warbler | 6 | (4/6, 4/8, 4/12, 4/23, 4/26, 4/28) | | |
| Yellow Warbler | 12 | (4/21, 4/26) | | |
| Hooded Warbler | 4 | 3/27 | 4/6 | |
| Orchard Oriole | 6 | (4/14, 4/22, 4/23, 4/26, 4/28, 4/30) | | |
| Scarlet Tanager | 1 | (4/20) | | |
| Summer Tanager | 2 | (4/26, 4/29) | | |

TRANSIENT SPECIES:

| | Arrival | Departure | | |
|----------------------|---------|--------------------|------|------|
| Solitary Sandpiper | 2 | (4/21, 4/22) | | |
| Veery | 2 | (4/29, 4/30) | | |
| Warbling Vireo | 1 | (4/20) | | |
| Worm-eating Warbler | 7 | 4/8 | 4/14 | 4/11 |
| Blue-w. Warbler | 8 | 4/3 | 4/14 | 4/11 |
| Tennessee Warbler | 3 | (4/6, 4/9, 4/28) | | |
| Black-th.Gr.Warbler | 1 | (4/4) | | |
| Cerulean Warbler | 5 | 4/5 | 4/14 | 4/9 |
| Blackburnian Warbler | 1 | (4/26) | | |
| Blackpoll Warbler | 1 | (4/29) | | |
| Western Palm Warbler | 5 | 3/29 | 4/26 | 4/24 |
| American Redstart | 3 | 4/1 | 4/5 | 4/4 |
| Rose-br. Grosbeak | 3 | (4/27, 4/28, 4/29) | | |

LITERATURE CITED

- Ambrose, Richard E. 1966. Changes in abundance of Myrtle Warblers during spring migration at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. ALABAMA BIRDLIFE 14(2-3):9-13.
- Imhof, Thomas A. 1962. Alabama Birds. Univ. of Ala. Press.
- James, Douglas. 1965. Regional Reports Central Southern Region. Audubon Field Notes 19(1):46.

ERRATA

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE, Vol. 14, No. 2-3 was improperly page-numbered. This issue, No. 4, is numbered as it would have been if this error had not been made.

The author's name is misspelled at the end of the article, "Changes in Abundance of Myrtle Warblers During Spring Migration at Tuscaloosa, Alabama." It should read, "Richard Ambrose."

MINUTES OF FALL MEETING
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NOVEMBER 18-20, 1966

The regular fall meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held at Jackson, Alabama, on November 18-20, 1966. Headquarters motel was the Jackson Motel on U. S. Route 43 By-pass. Sixty members and guest attended the meeting.

Friday Evening Program and Field Trips

The program began Friday evening with the showing of slides at The Restaurant adjoining the Jackson Motel. The members present enjoyed a series of slides of Alabama winter birds by Dr. Arthur A. Allen of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, shown by Helen Kittinger in the absence of Dr. Dan Holliman. A few slides of the White Pelican taken at Lake Purdy were also shown.

Field trips were led Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning to Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge, Fred T. Stimpson Sanctuary and the Upper State Sanctuary by Mr. Cecil E. McMullan, Mr. James R. Davis, Mr. Bill Hamrick, Mr. Huey Dykes and Mr. Fred Pringle.

Meeting of Executive Council

The Executive Council met at 12:30 P. M., November 19, at The Restaurant with the following members present: Mr. Robert R. Reid, Jr., President; Mr. Frank D. Huttlinger, Treasurer; Mrs. Helen H. Kittinger, Secretary; Dr. Maurice F. Baker, Editor. ALABAMA BIRDLIFE; Dr. Julian L. Dusi, Librarian and Director; Mrs. Rosemary T. Dusi, Mr. Fairly Chandler and Mrs. Harriett H. Wright, Directors.

The Secretary read the minutes of the spring meeting which were approved as read. The President announced the appointment of Dr. Julian Dusi, Dr. Dan Holliman, Mr. Thomas Imhof and Mr. James Keeler to the Editorial Board to advise and consult with the editor of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE.

Plans for the winter meeting of A.O.S. were discussed. The date was tentatively set for January 28-29, 1967, at Scottsboro, Alabama.

The matter of birds protected by the laws of Alabama, and particularly hawks, was discussed. The Executive Council then discussed and approved a resolution opposing encroachment on Wheeler Wildlife Refuge to be voted on by the membership.

Dr. Maurice Baker reported on the cost of printing ALABAMA BIRDLIFE. Two issues containing four major articles in addition to notes and routine Society business had been printed in 1966 at a total cost of \$208. Dr. Dusi, Librarian, suggested reprinting certain back

issues of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE so as to be able to use entire series for library exchange purposes. Dr. Baker and Dr. Dusi are to investigate the feasibility of this suggestion.

Mr. Huttlinger, Treasurer, reported balances on hand of \$443.85 in the checking account and \$272.69 in the life membership fund. He reported 203 active members. Based on estimated yearly income of \$400 from dues, a budget for annual expenditures was set at \$315 for three issues of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE, \$60 for four issues of the Newsletter and \$25 for the Treasurer's office and miscellaneous expenses. The matter of raising annual dues was discussed.

The water pollution hearings being held in Alabama were announced. There was then a discussion of the Conservation Services Center being set up under the auspices of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The center would pool the resources of conservation organizations and make available to members its library, conservation materials, newsletters, motion pictures and slides, etc.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P. M.

Dinner, Business Meeting and Program

A dinner meeting was held Saturday evening at Ray and Tom's Restaurant on U. S. 43 By-pass. Mr. Huttlinger supervised the drawing of several fine door prizes. The main prize was a revised edition of A Natural History of American Birds of Eastern and Central North America by Edward Howe Forbush.

After the dinner Mr. Reid, President, called the meeting to order. The minutes of the spring meeting were read and approved. The Secretary read the following resolution by the Executive Council opposing encroachment on the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge:

WHEREAS, the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, located in the Tennessee River Valley of Northern Alabama, has since its creation demonstrated and realized great potential for wildlife management, conservation and recreational activities and is the only national wildlife refuge in Northern Alabama;

WHEREAS, a considerable investment in time and expense has been made over the past 28 years in development of the refuge for those purposes so that it now constitutes an irreplaceable asset and natural resource of Alabama for the conservation of wildlife and the recreation and enjoyment of our residents and visitors to our state;

WHEREAS, much of the refuge that is best suited for those uses, such as the Flint Creek, Garth Slough and White Springs Dike areas, is below the high water line and, consequently, its optimum use in over-all planning is for wildlife management, conservation, recreation and related activities;

WHEREAS, the only large concentration of wild geese in Alabama is located on the refuge and it provides habitat for numerous other migratory waterfowl and resident land birds and animals that would not otherwise migrate to or live in that area of the Tennessee Valley;

WHEREAS, throughout the nation there are much too few areas near population centers that are devoted to wildlife and recreational uses;

WHEREAS, encroachments have already been made on the refuge by the construction of a large airport on its northern boundary and the routing of Interstate Highway 65 through the Garth Slough area, and further encroachments, especially in the Flint Creek, Garth Slough or White Springs Dike areas, will cause loss of the substantial investment that has been made in the refuge and loss of this asset and natural resource of Alabama and particularly of the Tennessee Valley;

WHEREAS, a substantial investment would be required to develop another such refuge in some other location, thus causing great expense to the taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Alabama Ornithological Society have long been interested in and familiar with the development of the refuge and the wildlife management and conservation work carried on at it, and it is the considered opinion of the Society that it is in the public interest of the nation, the State of Alabama and most especially the residents of the Tennessee Valley that further encroachments should not be made on the refuge;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alabama Ornithological Society, at its regular fall meeting held on November 19, 1966, that this Society does hereby strongly urge and recommend, and state its unanimous opinion, that no further encroachments should be permitted on land contained in the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge but that it should be continued to be developed as an asset and natural resource of Alabama for wildlife management, conservation, recreation and related activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in evidence of its concern as to the need for such continued development of the area now contained in the refuge, copies of this resolution be sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority (owner of certain land in the refuge and holding reservations as to the use of the remaining land), the Governor of the State of Alabama, the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the City of Decatur, Alabama, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, the U. S. Senators from the State of Alabama, the U. S. Representative from the Eighth Congressional District of Alabama, the Chambers of Commerce of those cities and any other bodies and public officials concerned with use of the land in the refuge.

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Dr. D. O. Wright made a motion that this resolution be adopted. Mrs. Blanche Dean seconded the motion. It was voted on and unanimously adopted.

The President announced the water pollution hearings to be held in Alabama during November, December and January under the Water Quality Act of 1965. There will be 14 public hearings, each on a different river basin. Members of the public might attend in person or present written statements to the Water Improvement Commission in Montgomery for 15 days after each hearing. Members were urged to support water standards for a particular watershed that would be high enough to support fish and other wildlife and recreation, such as swimming and other water contact sports. Members might emphasize such factors as the number of people in the area who could use the river system for such purposes and other benefits derived from uses higher than mere navigation and waste disposal. Conservationists should urge that all waters be kept free from all substances attributable to sewage and other wastes that are harmful to animal life, cause noxious sedimentary deposits, or are unsightly or interfere with the above water uses.

Dr. Gaillard announced that plans for making the Bird Sanctuary on Dauphin Island a National Audubon Sanctuary, to be dedicated in April, were near completion.

Mr. Cecil E. McMullan, Manager of the Choctaw Refuge, and Mr. James R. Davis, District Biologist with the State Conservation Department, presented a most interesting program. They showed slides and elaborated on the programs being carried on at the refuge and the game sanctuaries.

Compilation

Following the field trips on Sunday morning, a compilation was held at the Upper State Sanctuary, Mr. Fairly Chandler in charge. A total of 87 species was observed and recorded during the meeting. The most impressive observations were of the Golden Eagle at the Fred T. Stimpson Sanctuary and the many wild Turkeys and Wood Ducks, and for some the Anhinga, Double-crested Cormorant, and White Ibis (immatures), also Virginia Rails, Ring-billed Gulls and lots of Great Blue Herons and Common Egrets. Some late dates for the Lower Coastal Plain Region, additional to those in ALABAMA BIRDS and records reported since its publication, were the Tree Swallow, Wood Thrush, Parula Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and, perhaps of most significance, an Empidonax (probably Least) flycatcher at the Choctaw Refuge. Early dates for that region were noted for the Purple Finch and Fox Sparrow. Also noteworthy because of the present lack of Lower Coastal Plain records were the five shovelers at the Choctaw Refuge and the Red-breasted Nuthatches at the Stimpson Sanctuary.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen H. Kittinger, Secretary