

WESTERN VISITORS HIGHLIGHT  
1972 AOS CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Western visitors were in the limelight on the record number of 11 AOS Christmas Counts conducted in the winter of 1972-73. Probably most noteworthy were the Groove-billed Anis at Panama City. One bird had been first seen on October 16, 1971, and a pair, thought to be breeding during the spring of 1972, at a pond in the city limits. None were noted the summer of that year, but in the fall numbers from 2 to 5 were observed at the same pond where 3 were recorded on the Bay County Christmas Count. The next sighting was one the last of March and then none until 4 appeared in fall, 1973; in addition, one was found at Navarre on the October 6 Pensacola Fall Count. The Panama City observations are the farthest eastward for the groove-billed species, although somehow it reached Missouri and Ohio in the fall of 1972 (see American Birds, Vol. 27, No. 1, page 69). In addition, it is considered usual in Louisiana and has also appeared in Mississippi (Ibid. page 73; Vol. 27, No. 3, page 628--see also reports of the Central Southern Region in Vol. 26).

Second in importance was the Mountain Plover observed and photographed at Gulf Shores--the first record for this species in Alabama. The male Rufous Hummingbird at a Mobile feeder during the count period was the second Alabama record; and another hummingbird, unidentified as to species, was recorded within the count period at Pensacola. Pensacola also listed within its count period a Yellow-headed Blackbird, which may be considered a sequel to the reports from Dauphin Island during the winter of 1970-71 and fall of '72.

Other western visitors were a Clay-colored Sparrow within the count period at Gulf Shores and an Oregon Junco for the third count record and fourth known Alabama record at Birmingham. (To describe this bird adequately in view of the 1957 and recent 1973 revisions of the AOU checklist, it was of the pink-sided race of the Oregon-type Dark-eyed Junco.)

The area was not without its northern visitors also. Rough-legged Hawks (both light-phased) appeared at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge and Gulf Shores. A Harlan's Hawk (for which there are only about a half-dozen records in Alabama) was leisurely observed in full sunlight also at Wheeler, an immature Great Black-backed Gull at Ft. Morgan (third Alabama record) and a Lapland Longspur at Wheeler (recent field research indicates that seemingly these longspurs are erratic wanderers that appear in numbers in Alabama only after severe winter weather farther north).

The large number of seven counts conducted on the Gulf Coast produced an interesting number of southern species that normally are not found in our area during the winter. These included an adult and an immature Masked (or Blue-faced) Booby at Gulf Shores, and a Whimbrel during the count period there, a Sandwich Tern at Ft. Morgan and others near the count circle at Gulf Shores, a Magnolia Warbler also at Ft. Morgan, and an Ovenbird during the count period in Bay County.

The Gulf Coast also reported summering residents that rarely winter there, including two Barn Swallows at Gulf Shores for the first Alabama winter record (perhaps a sequel to the bird seen last year on the Pensacola count)

and Dickcissels at Mobile and Bay County and within the count period at Pensacola. The one at Mobile was the fourth count record for its last six Christmas Counts. Other species that are rare or uncommon on the coast in winter included Green Herons on or within the count period of three counts, Cattle Egrets on three, Yellow-crowned Night Herons on two, White-eyed Vireos on three, Black-and-White Warblers on two, and Yellow-throated Warblers on four. In addition, an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen within the count period as far north as Birmingham, this bird doubtless being one, lingering north during the mild winter, from the colony that has been established for the last several years near the Birmingham Airport.

Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, with its record Christmas Count, produced a number of other notable inland observations--count records for Horned Grebes (6) and Com. Goldeneyes (14), a Double-crested Cormorant (virtually eliminated from inland localities for the last decade), Whistling Swans during the count period (for the third consecutive year), two Blue-winged Teals, four Oldsquaws and an immature Bald Eagle during the count period, a Spotted Sandpiper, a Dunlin (then the 2nd inland winter record for the state), two Laughing and three Franklin's Gulls (all adults except one immature Franklin's) observed at close range during the count period, a Catbird, two Palm Warblers for the first winter record in a number of years, a Com. Yellowthroat (which does not usually winter that far north), and four Brewer's Blackbirds (uncommon and local in winter in the Tennessee Valley). Among other noteworthy inland observations were the Forster's Tern (second inland winter record), five Dunlin, and six Semipalmated Sandpipers at Eufaula Refuge, 20 Hooded Mergansers at Jacksonville, and at Birmingham, 6 Greater Scaup for its first count record and a female Merlin (or Pigeon Hawk). Another Merlin was also observed at Gulf Shores.

Notable coastal records included the Brown Pelican on five counts with recent Christmas Count record numbers at Dauphin Island and Ft. Morgan, indicating some optimism for the future on the Gulf Coast of this species threatened by accumulation of pesticide residues. In the same category should be included the single Ospreys at Ft. Morgan and Gulf Shores. Other coastal notables were 16 Sandhill Cranes in the flock now usually seen in winter at Gulf Shores, Snowy Plovers on three counts, and Am. Avocets at Mobile for its ninth Christmas Count record out of the last ten years.

The mild winter may perhaps have accounted for the high numbers of wading birds on the coast. In addition to those mentioned above, state winter records were set at Mobile for the White Ibis (80--2/3rds immatures--with 3 others seen at Dauphin Island) and the Louisiana Heron (31). The Great Blue Herons at Gulf Shores (68) and Little Blues at Mobile (38) are Gulf Coast winter records, while Christmas Count records were tallied at Dauphin Island for Little Blues (13) and Snowy Egrets (67). Also noteworthy were sightings of Am. Bitterns on or within the count period of six of the eleven counts. Additional Gulf Coast records in the non-passerine category were the Ground Doves at Bay County (49 with good numbers also at Eufaula Refuge, Gulf Shores, Pensacola and Marianna), Red-bellied (95) and Pileated (18) Woodpeckers at Gulf Shores, and Spotted Sandpipers at Pensacola (9). In addition, high numbers were reported for Common Loons at Pensacola (330) and Red-breasted Mergansers there (555) and at Gulf Shores (423). The 53 Am. Kestrels at Gulf Shores tied a state winter record in abundance, and they were also counted in good numbers at Dauphin Island and Pensacola.

In the passerine category, the most notable abundance reports were the state record of 12,000 Robins at Mobile with numbers around 8000 at Ft. Morgan and Pensacola, the almost 1500 Tree Swallows at Gulf Shores, a Gulf Coast record of 103 Slate-colored Juncos at Pensacola, and unfortunately the 5000 Cowbirds at Bay County. Gulf Shores also had state records in abundance for Myrtle Warblers (over 3400) and Long-billed Marsh Wrens (56), a state winter record for Catbirds (94), Gulf Coast records for Towhees (409), Brown Thrashers (99) and Carolina Wrens (94), and large numbers of Mockingbirds (282), Palm Warblers (55), Short-billed Marsh Wrens (34), Yellowthroats (26), Hermit Thrushes (15) and Grasshopper Sparrows (7) --also Savannah Sparrows (442), another state record, although farther north and in an increasingly urban area that species was recorded in the lowest number ever in Birmingham (10). At Marianna, a record count number of Field Sparrows was noted (109) and high but not record numbers of Chipping Sparrows (395) and Turkey Vultures (61). On the other hand, observers there report the absence of Fish Crows extremely atypical, especially after the large number of 4000 last year.

High inland figures were recorded for the Shoveler (190), Red-tailed Hawk (44), Water Pipit (259), Horned Lark (575) and Song Sparrow (385) at Wheeler Refuge, the first three being records in abundance for No. Alabama. The 39 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Birmingham is a state winter record; and as a result of energetic birding there, record numbers of Am. Woodcock (15) and Screech Owls (27) were tallied.

As widely noted, the winter of 1972-73 was a "finch" year. Evening Grosbeaks appeared early at Birmingham (a large number of 34 on November 12 at Lake Purdy with the species having been heard in the suburbs the previous day) and set early records for Shelby County and for the Upper Coastal Plain (at Southern Bibb County) on November 18. On the Christmas Counts, those grosbeaks were recorded on or within the count period of five of the eleven counts, including 12 birds at Gulf Shores and others at five different locations within the count period at Pensacola in Northwest Florida, where they had never been known before 1969. This count tally compares with observations on three of seven counts during the previous high finch year of 1968-69. Purple Finches, seen on all eleven counts, set regional count records at Wheeler Refuge, Mobile and Bay County and were recorded in relatively large numbers at Birmingham. On the other hand, the Pine Siskin strangely enough was reported in relatively low numbers and on only five of the counts. The Red-breasted Nuthatch, which often accompanies a large invasion of northern finches, turned up on seven of the 1972 counts with record numbers at Birmingham and Gulf Shores. Also in the category of northern birds making their way south were the Fox Sparrows on four of the coastal counts and White-crowned Sparrows on or within the count period of three, observations of interest since those wintering species are rare to uncommon on the coast. The Fox Sparrow also set a record for the Lower Coastal Plain at Eufaula Refuge.

On the 1972 counts, 183 species were recorded and 10 additional ones during the count periods. Four counts were conducted in inland areas--Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (WWR) in the Tennessee Valley; Birmingham (Bhm) and Jacksonville (Jvl) in the Mountain Region; and Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge (EWR) in the Coastal Plain. The 7 Gulf Coast counts were Mobile (Mob), Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens (DI), Ft. Morgan (FM), Gulf Shores (GS), Pensacola (pen), Marianna (Mar) and Bay County (BC). Birds seen on the AOS counts were as follows, those indicated by the symbol \* being reported not on the count date but during the count periods (December 16 through January 1 or, in the case of unofficial counts, within a week of the count):

	WWR	Bhm	Jvl	EWR	Mob	DI	FM	GS	Pen	Mar	BC
<u>Loons</u>											
Common Loon	2	-	-	-	3	9	45	169	330	-	57
<u>Grebes</u>											
Horned Grebe	6	1	-	1	3	16	32	102	222	1	143
Pied-billed Grebe	16	80	63	6	22	18	25	44	26	21	49
<u>Pelicans and Allies</u>											
White Pelican	-	-	-	-	70	*	-	-	*	-	-
Brown Pelican	-	-	-	-	1	68	58	4	-	-	3
Masked (or Blue-faced) Booby	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Gannet	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	28	*	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	1	-	-	-	3	38	356	55	101	-	176
<u>Wading Birds</u>											
Great Blue Heron	13	5	3	14	1	15	21	68	40	3	23
Green Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	*
Little Blue Heron	-	-	-	-	38	13	2	-	-	*	1
Cattle Egret	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	17	-	1	-
Com. (or Am.) Egret	-	-	-	8	15	8	-	4	-	*	7
Snowy Egret	-	-	-	-	53	67	-	-	-	-	-
Louisiana Heron	-	-	-	1	31	11	-	-	-	-	-
Black-crowned Night Heron	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	*	-
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	-	*	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
Am. Bittern	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	3	*	1	-
White Ibis	-	-	-	-	80	3	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Waterfowl</u>											
Whistling Swan	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canada Goose	23252	-	-	223	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snow Goose	60	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue Goose	600	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Mallard	11151	*	1	146	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black Duck	2177	-	-	12	3	-	-	-	*	-	-
Gadwall	143	-	-	2	150	-	-	-	2	-	-
No. Pintail	1305	-	-	13	400	-	1	-	1	-	-
Green-winged Teal	129	-	-	21	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
Blue-winged Teal	2	-	-	-	25	-	13	6	4	-	-
Am. Wigeon (or Baldpate)	2722	-	28	230	37	-	-	2	-	-	-
No. Shoveler	190	-	-	101	42	11	-	-	*	-	3
Wood Duck	147	2	8	258	15	3	-	-	19	3	-
Redhead	15	*	2	6	2	-	-	60	2	-	2
Ring-necked Duck	340	77	1	341	8	4	-	21	-	-	5
Canvasback	18	87	-	28	350	-	-	1	2	-	5
Greater Scaup	-	6	-	-	3	-	200	-	9	-	56
Lesser Scaup	36	36	2	12	75	536	400	34	63	-	188
Com. Goldeneye	14	-	-	*	1	13	-	-	36	-	2
Bufflehead	10	*	-	13	8	4	-	30	92	-	89
Oldsquaw	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	9	24	2	21	31	3	2	63	-	-	39
Hooded Merganser	22	3	20	-	4	3	-	-	1	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	2	-	-	-	1	28	180	423	555	-	168
<u>Hawks</u>											
Turkey Vulture	4	1	-	-	15	8	-	*	3	61	21
Black Vulture	1	-	-	-	2	25	8	*	40	-	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	2	-	3
Cooper's Hawk	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Red-tailed Hawk	44	13	4	7	6	6	3	10	7	5	2
Harlan's Hawk	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	6	11	8	1	-	1	-	7	1	6	5
Rough-legged Hawk	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bald Eagle	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marsh Hawk	14	-	-	15	1	3	2	12	5	3	-
Osprey	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Merlin (or Pigeon Hawk)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Am. Kestrel (or Spar. Hawk)	14	10	7	3	2	26	14	53	23	12	11
<u>Quail and Allies</u>											
Bob-white	64	21	29	1	23	53	14	94	13	23	13
Turkey	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Rails and Allies</u>											
Sandhill Crane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-
King Rail	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	-	-	-
Clapper Rail	-	-	-	-	1	8	11	21	*	-	5
Virginia Rail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	-	-
Sora	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	12	1	-	3
Com. (or Fla.) Gallinule	-	-	-	-	15	1	-	10	-	2	7
Am. Coot	232	149	250	220	10000	34	17	1198	265	1450	685
<u>Shorebirds</u>											
Am. Oystercatcher	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Semipalmated Plover	-	-	-	-	3	22	-	4	3	-	1
Piping Plover	-	-	-	-	1	14	-	2	-	-	1
Snowy Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	1	-	-
Killdeer	219	126	13	36	87	29	9	193	137	22	18
Mountain Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	-	31	12	14	7	35	-	11
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	15

	WWR	Bhm	Jvl	EWR	Mob	DI	FM	GS	Pen	Mar	BC
<b>Shorebirds (cont.)</b>											
Am. Woodcock	3	15	2	-	2	1	1	1	1	*	1
Com. Snipe	11	21	-	5	23	3	-	3	4	2	7
Whimbrel (or Hud. Curlew)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-
Spotted Sandpiper	1	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	9	-	-
Willet	-	-	-	-	3	64	4	18	9	-	7
Greater Yellowlegs	2	-	-	3	3	2	-	2	-	-	-
Lesser Yellowlegs	-	-	-	-	12	1	-	-	-	-	-
Red Knot	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Least Sandpiper	40	1	-	45	14	20	-	1	-	-	3
Dunlin (or Red-bk Sand.)	1	-	-	5	5	104	39	12	31	-	8
Short-billed Dowitcher	-	-	-	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	-
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	-	-	6	33	6	-	-	-	-	2
Western Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	6	67	103	100	146	-	67
Am. Avocet	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Gulls and Terns</b>											
Great Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Herring Gull	207	-	-	5	38	81	130	65	418	-	353
Ring-billed Gull	249	1	-	12	850	78	35	91	209	-	305
Laughing Gull	*	-	-	-	600	210	5	(a)	270	-	104
Franklin's Gull	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bonaparte's Gull	*	-	-	-	1	3	56	235	614	-	354
Forster's Tern	-	-	-	1	280	100	192	88	24	-	47
Com. Tern	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	1	-	3
Royal Tern	-	-	-	-	1	87	202	21	10	-	9
Sandwich Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(a)	-	-
Caspian Tern	-	-	-	-	19	6	22	1	-	-	-
Black Skimmer	-	-	-	-	29	150	1	-	200	-	120
<b>Pigeons and Doves</b>											
Rock Dove	71	701	11	-	100	-	-	-	245	5	101
Mourning Dove	1478	645	15	112	125	109	20	111	281	63	236
Com. Ground Dove	-	-	-	7	1	-	-	9	13	13	49
<b>Cuckoos and Allies</b>											
Groove-billed Ani	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
<b>Owls</b>											
Barn Owl	-	-	-	-	*	1	-	1	-	-	-
Screech Owl	1	27	-	-	*	*	-	11	-	1	3
Great Horned Owl	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	3	*	-	-
Barred Owl	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
<b>Hummingbirds</b>											
Rufous Hummingbird	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Kingfishers</b>											
Belted Kingfisher	1	26	5	3	15	31	18	48	29	9	27
<b>Woodpeckers</b>											
Yellow-shafted Flicker	38	146	16	13	61	34	28	80	38	53	41
Pileated Woodpecker	9	17	3	1	1	5	-	18	*	6	-
Red-bellied Woodpecker	51	65	14	4	15	19	20	95	40	24	12
Red-headed Woodpecker	21	31	-	-	6	2	1	7	11	4	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	15	39	6	2	5	7	13	14	9	10	4
Hairy Woodpecker	5	10	-	-	3	1	-	5	-	1	-
Downy Woodpecker	31	86	3	6	5	5	3	11	3	9	3
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	-	11	-	-	-	-	2	7	-	-	-
<b>Flycatchers</b>											
Eastern Phoebe	3	18	2	4	1	6	4	7	11	21	6
<b>Larks</b>											
Horned Lark	575	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Swallows</b>											
Tree Swallow	-	-	-	-	45	140	12	1457	8	-	-
Barn Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
<b>Jays and Crows</b>											
Blue Jay	426	292	83	47	175	104	164	432	277	96	208
Com. Crow	1882	288	378	36	133	26	-	5	2	187	18
Fish Crow	-	-	-	-	17	135	9	22	132	-	285
<b>Titmice</b>											
Carolina Chickadee	67	279	14	14	14	9	12	18	13	44	11
Tufted Titmouse	33	200	8	1	12	10	8	14	30	28	43
<b>Nuthatches</b>											
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	25	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	32	-	-	-	3	7	21	7	-	2
Brown-headed Nuthatch	-	126	5	-	5	16	18	25	5	-	13
<b>Creepers</b>											
Brown Creeper	1	6	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	-
<b>Wrens</b>											
House Wren	-	*	-	-	2	1	1	15	3	6	8
Winter Wren	2	9	-	1	-	-	1	3	-	-	-
Bewick's Wren	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carolina Wren	34	193	30	22	15	18	45	92	18	23	25
L-b Marsh Wren	-	-	-	-	7	3	3	56	1	-	2
S-b Marsh (or Sedge) Wren	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	34	2	-	-

	WWR	Bhm	Jvl	EWR	Mob	DI	FM	GS	Pen	Mar	BC
<b>Thrashers</b>											
Com. Mockingbird	61	224	50	8	61	65	114	282	116	55	119
Gray Catbird	1	-	-	-	3	3	26	94	5	-	9
Brown Thrasher	65	86	14	10	14	23	67	99	32	21	31
<b>Thrushes</b>											
Am. Robin	30	805	65	58	12000	3530	792	8125	7745	887	1075
Hermit Thrush	13	20	-	5	1	4	10	15	4	5	2
Eastern Bluebird	9	50	17	-	2	59	38	169	85	27	130
<b>Gnatcatchers and Kinglets</b>											
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	-	-	9	4	7	8	6	-	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	35	103	7	6	51	11	2	6	1	2	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	15	74	12	27	28	16	42	60	51	54	18
<b>Pipits</b>											
Water Pipit	259	10	-	50	7	6	1	92	*	-	-
<b>Waxwings</b>											
Cedar Waxwing	461	433	50	-	19	25	-	5	372	32	31
<b>Shrikes</b>											
Loggerhead Shrike	17	7	8	13	5	7	7	54	13	42	20
<b>Starlings</b>											
Com. Starling	90968	1937	1017	1	630	451	6	1877	90	52	80
<b>Vireos</b>											
White-eyed Vireo	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
Solitary (or Blue-hd) Vireo	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	1	1	1	-
<b>Wood Warblers</b>											
Black-and-White Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	*	-	-	5	4	1	2	2	1	1
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Myrtle Warbler	13	46	9	74	1200	282	1428	3437	272	150	415
Yellow-throated Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	1
Pine Warbler	1	17	11	1	15	14	12	32	12	10	13
Palm Warbler	2	-	1	16	2	-	3	55	1	3	-
Ovenbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*
Com. Yellowthroat	1	2	-	6	1	1	7	26	5	1	6
<b>Weaver Finches</b>											
House Sparrow	593	1012	31	9	500	250	36	356	146	253	433
<b>Blackbirds</b>											
Eastern Meadowlark	223	278	136	72	9	50	1	221	8	241	98
Yellow-headed Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	147764	1657	707	1500	3000	2650	1394	4151	136	65	248
Rusty Blackbird	16	516	151	-	9	-	-	-	16	1	-
Brewer's Blackbird	4	-	-	-	13	175	-	32	-	-	-
Boat-tailed Grackle	-	-	-	-	30	-	50	73	-	-	-
Com. Grackle	66169	1299	508	31	305	770	651	1107	37	145	255
Brown-headed Cowbird	13113	755	211	1	10	33	2	115	2	280	5000
<b>Finches and Sparrows</b>											
Cardinal	347	426	44	48	43	44	86	305	93	149	153
Dickcissel	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	*	-	1
Evening Grosbeak	-	181	30	-	*	-	-	12	*	-	-
Purple Finch	91	220	4	7	200	14	2	8	1	19	107
Pine Siskin	3	64	20	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-
Am. Goldfinch	289	351	37	17	175	73	52	157	2	138	44
Rufous-sided Towhee	138	302	28	76	15	29	162	409	218	92	90
Savannah Sparrow	53	10	44	33	110	54	2	442	26	9	9
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	-	-
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	-	-	-	-	15	14	1	6	-	-	3
Seaside Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	10	*	-	-
Vesper Sparrow	1	7	-	140	12	8	-	128	5	96	-
Slate-colored Junco	108	859	66	45	2	6	1	38	103	35	7
Oregon Junco (mearnsi race)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chipping Sparrow	11	36	2	62	21	16	9	250	9	395	36
Clay-colored Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-
Field Sparrow	303	231	78	268	10	3	2	28	35	109	16
White-crowned Sparrow	28	-	-	-	-	6	-	*	2	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	789	1365	31	100	1500	535	547	632	1363	220	249
Fox Sparrow	14	28	-	15	-	5	2	144	2	13	65
Swamp Sparrow	72	82	5	28	38	17	47	6	23	26	25
Song Sparrow	385	363	28	107	12	16	6	104	-	-	-
Lapland Longspur	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Individuals (b)(c)	384870	17864	4462	4952	34513	12094	8247	29249	16192	5893	13406
Total Species on count	111	85	64	87	137	124	103	133	108	73	109
Total Species within count period	117	92	64	88	142	127	103	138	121	77	111

Notes:  
(a) On Gulf Shores count date, 9 Laughing Gulls and 4 Sandwich Terns observed near but outside count circle.  
(b) Eufaula Refuge inventory estimate for certain species made on Jan 6, the day preceding the count, showed higher numbers for most ducks, Am. Coot and Red-winged Blackbird.

Notes (cont.)

(C) Total individuals include the following, unidentified as to species: Wheeler Refuge--14012 ducks and 144 gulls reported from aerial survey, 1 buteo hawk, and 1 rail; Birmingham--10 ducks, and 2 accipiter and 4 buteo hawks; Ft. Morgan--3 yellowlegs, and 1 fly-catcher; and Bay County--181 scaup, 100 other ducks, 1 accipiter hawk, 5 crows, and 1 marsh wren. Others within the count periods, also unidentified as to species, were: Pensacola--hummingbird; and Bay County--night heron.

For descriptions of most count areas and habitats, see *American Birds*, Vol. 26, No. 2, and, for the Alabama counts (except the newly established Ft. Morgan and Gulf Shores counts), *Alabama Birdlife*, Vols. 18 & 19, No. 1. Other details respecting the counts (all taken in circles of 15-mile diameter except where indicated) and participants (names of party leaders underscored where reported) were as follows:

Wheeler Wildlife Refuge (incl Tenn. R., Flint Creek, Limestone Bay, sloughs managed for waterfowl, and part of Decatur): Dec. 16; 6:30 AM to 5:15 PM. Clear; 18° to 25°; wind NW, 10-30 mph, gusty; river and streams flooded; some refuge roads impassible. 40 observers in 7 parties; 66 party-hours (30 on foot, 35 by car, 1 by airplane); 383 party-miles (10 on foot, 303 by car, 70 by airplane). Blackbird-startling roost at Point Mallard as before; no crow roost in count circle this year. Participants: Thomas Z. Atkeson, Jr. (refuge manager), J. Russell Bailey, Jr., Raymond D. Bates, Richard Bays, Michael L. Bierly (compiler), Helen and Lloyd W. Clayton, Dwight Cooley, Fred Daugeette, W. Cecil Davis, Leo Derden, John A. Dougherty, Dale and Jeanne Dreyfoos, Wallace D. Dreyfoos, Howard M. Einspahr, Ann and Dan Forster, Thomas Hull, David C. Hulse, Charlotte H. and John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D. Jackson, Helen H. Kittinger, W. Roger Maner, Frank McDaniel, Bobby G. Meadows, Ann L. Miller, Alberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Jr., Debbie Rogers, Don Simbeck, P. Bob Truett, Emmett N. Waldrep, Tim Weston, George, Jr., and Morris D. Williams, Harriett H. Wright, and Joe Wright.

Birmingham (incl Oak Mtn., Lk. Purdy, East Lk., Cahaba R., Roberts Field, city and suburbs): Dec. 30; 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Cloudy with rain beginning about 3:00 PM; 54° to 63°; wind SE, 10-38 mph; water levels high (2' from top of Lk. Purdy Dam). 57 observers in 13 parties and at feeders; 123 party-hours (74 on foot, 49 by car); 504 party-miles (74 on foot, 430 by car). Participants: Gussie Arnett, Gertrude Bachmann, J. Russell Bailey, Jr., Naomi G. Banks, Andrew K. Bates, Raymond D. Bates, Bobby, Mary I. and Robert E. Burks, Jr., G. Rod and Lou Butler, G. Bradley Carlisle, Greg C. Carlisle, Frederick T. Carney, James L. Cox, Walter F. Coxe, Bruce Crider, Howard M. Einspahr, Louise Foster, Corinne Glaze, Emmy Lou Grimley, John F. and Mildred M. Harsh, Dan C. Holliman, Ruth R. Horsley, Billie Sue Hulsey, Donald J. Hulsey, Gina Marie, Joseph A. and Stephen M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof (compiler), Greg D. Jackson, Helen H. Kittinger, Christine Leake, Donaldson Lee, John R. Lester, W. Roger Maner, Ann L. Miller, Francis Owens, James V. Peavy, Jr., Lee N. Peavy, Morton H. Perry, Robert D. Perry, Margarette K. Persons, Polly Powell, Millard F. Prather, Alberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Jr., James W. Shepherd, Anne K. Smith, Idalene F. Snead, Virginia R. Thrasher, Arthur and Becky Tyson, Ted L. Weems, Harriett H. Wright, and Maxene Wright.

Jacksonville (incl Choccolocco Valley, Pink's Lk., Jacksonville State Univ. Campus and city): Jan. 1; 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Partly cloudy; 44° to 51°; wind NNE, 10 mph. 7 observers in 3 parties; 19 party-hours (12 on foot, 7 by car); 144 party-miles (18 on foot, 126 by car). Participants: Richard F. Ambrose (compiler), William J. Calvert, Jr., Jerry A. Clonts, Kenneth E. and Tim Landers, J. W. Selman, and C. William Summerour.

Eufaula Wildlife Refuge (incl Chattahoochee R., sloughs managed for waterfowl, and Cowikee and Wylaunee Creeks--count limited to refuge area): Jan. 7. Overcast with much drizzle; cold; strong easterly wind. 19 observers in 4 parties; 30 party-hours; 96 party-miles (4 on foot, 92 by car). Participants: Charlotte Blackshear, Julian L. Dusi (compiler), Rosemary T. Dusi, Ted Ellis, Charles Erwin, Mike Fuller, Emma Giffen, Bob Grier, Elliott Jones, Gail Keracofe, Florence Lynn, William Matheny, Jackie and Ron McKitrick, Harriett and Tom Meadows, Cindy Parsons, and Joy and Robert Terhune.

Mobile (incl Cochrane Causeway, Mobile Bay, Spring Hill College Campus, city and suburbs): Dec. 16; 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Clear; 30° to 42°; wind N-NE, 10-20 mph. 13 observers in 8 parties; 55 party-hours (24 on foot, 31 by car); 306 party-miles (17 on foot, 289 by car). Participants: Lois P. Archer, Fred E. Bowers, Fr. J. Lambert Dorn, Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard, Richard E. Hayward, Jr. (compiler), Elin H. Kincaid, Tom Logan, Max P. McGill, Louise N. McKinstry, Albert and Mini Nonkes, and Elizabeth R. Toenes.

Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens (incl also Cedar Point, Coden, Bayou la Batre, Miss. Sound, and Gulf): Dec. 30; 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Clear AM, rain PM; 65° to 70°; wind S-SE, 5-15 mph. 12 observers in 6 parties; 38 party-hours (11 on foot, 27 by car); 222 party-miles (14 on foot, 208 by car). Participants: Don Bland, Fr. J. Lambert Dorn, Mary A. Gaillard, M. Wilson Gaillard (compiler), Richard E. Hayward, Jr., Edgar Hughes, Elin H. Kincaid, Max P. McGill, Genevieve and James R. Spafford, Elizabeth R. Toenes, and William Tonsmeire.

Ft. Morgan (terminal 15 mi Ft. Morgan Peninsula, W end of Little Lagoon, Bon Secour and Mobile Bays, and Gulf): Dec. 30; 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Cloudy; 65° to 70°; wind SE, 15-25 mph. 14 observers in 5 parties; 47 party-hours (37 on foot, 8 by car, 2 by boat); 125 party-miles (22 on foot, 99 by car, 4 by boat). Participants: Katharine Beck, P. Fairly Chandler (compiler), Sherlie E. Gade, Wyly V. Gammon, Goldwyn O. Gary, Louise T. and Verda D. Horne, Curtis L. Kingsbery, Mary Lou Mattis, Marjorie McNair, Albert and Mini Nonkes, Peter Quinn, and Joseph D. Wetzel.

Gulf Shores (incl Gulf State Park, Lk. Shelby, E end of Little Lagoon, Perdido Pass, Wolf and Oyster Bays, Bon Secour R. and Bay, Foley, Gulf Shores, and Gulf): Jan. 6; 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Cloudy; 50° to 65°; wind SW-N, 5-15 mph. 33 observers in 10 parties; 90 party-hours. Participants: Evelyn and Thomas Barbir, Katharine Beck, Michael L. Bierly, P. Fairly Chandler (compiler), Robert A. Duncan, Amy W. Furnans, Edward E. Furnans, Sherlie E. Gade, Wyly V. Gammon, Goldwyn O. Gary, Lyman E. Goodnight, M. Fred Griffin, Louise T. Horne, Joseph A. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, Greg D. Jackson, Curtis L. Kingsbery, W. Roger Maner, Mary Lou Mattis, Marjorie McNair, Albert Nonkes, Mini Nonkes, Steven G. Page, James V. Peavy, Jr., Lee N. Peavy, Peter Quinn, Alberta G. Reid, Robert R. Reid, Jr., Anne K. Smith, Virginia R. Thrasher, Frederick J. Wernicke, and Joseph D. Wetzel.

Pensacola (incl Pensacola Bay, Santa Rosa Sound, Gulf, city and suburbs): Dec. 16; 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Clear; 33° to 40°; wind NW, 15-25 mph. 34 observers in 8 parties; 71 party-hours (37 on foot, 34 by car); 352 party-miles (30 on foot, 322 by car). Participants: Richard L. Ballman, Katharine Beck, Brooke and Hal Beecher, Frank Bray, Lucy and Robert A. Duncan, Amy W., Edward E. and Vance A. Furnans, Sherlie E. Gade, Goldwyn O. Gary, Lyman E. Goodnight, Leroy E. Healy, Louise T. Horne, Roy L. Hyatt, Charles J. Kahn, Albert Keyser, Curtis L. Kingsbery (compiler), Doris A. Lewis, Susan F. and Steven E. Liston, Mary Lou Mattis, Marjorie McNair, C. William and Judy Milmore, Karen Oetken, Judith B. and Steven G. Page, J. Pheane Ross, Alan C. Sheppard, David H. Turpin, Frederick J. Wernicke, and A. Fred Wicke.

Marianna (incl Chipola R., Merritt's Millpond, McCormick's Lk., Fla. Caverns St. Park, and city): Dec. 16; 6:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Cloudy; 28° to 36°; wind NE, 18-30 mph; 40° drop in temp. over previous 12 hrs; very dry fall. 11 observers in 4 parties plus 1 at feeder; 34 party-hours (8 on foot, 23 by car, 3 by boat); 144 party-miles (7 on foot, 131 by car, 6 by boat). Participants: Lillian Cook, Marion W. Gray (compiler), Mary Gray, William A. Hearn, Vicki Milam, Nancy and Wilbur Roberts, Celma and James Rosborough, Donald P. and Frances Scott, and Stephen J. Stedman.

Bay County (incl St. Andrew Bay, Grand Lagoon, Deerpoint Dam, Gulf, Panama City and suburbs): Dec. 30; 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Cloudy; 57° to 71°; wind SE, 3-25 mph. 20 observers in 9 parties; 62 party-hours (23 on foot, 31 by car, 8 by boat); 241 party-miles (18 on foot, 190 by car, 33 by boat). Participants: Jane Adams, Lee Benoit, Eric Fontaine, Betty Friedman, William A. Hearn, Fred Jones, Vicki Milam, Mary Ann and Terri Olson, Audrey Parker, Nancy and Wilbur Roberts, Donald P. Scott (compiler), Frances Scott, Stephen J. Stedman, David and Gladys Todd, Anna and Tom Watson, and Larry York.

Robert R. Reid, Jr., Counts Editor  
2616 Mountain Brook Parkway  
Birmingham, Alabama 35223

MOUNTAIN PLOVER IN ALABAMA

P. Fairly Chandler

On January 6, 1973, with Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) and Water Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*) in a very large, unplanted field near Magnolia Springs, Alabama, in south Baldwin County, Fairly Chandler and Peter Quinn discovered a Mountain Plover (*Upoda montana*). The day's weather was cloudy, wind SW-N 5-15 mph with temperature range between 50° F and 65° F. Previously, the winter weather had been very mild with only two light freezes (above 20°). The field was bare of any vegetation, green or otherwise.

The Mountain Plover was observed at leisure for some one-quarter hour as near as approximately one hundred feet with 8.5x and 10x binoculars. All field marks were seen quite well -- somewhat smaller than the accompanying and related Killdeer, buffy appearing back and breast and, in flight, a white wing stripe with dark border, and dark tail band with white border.

The bird habitually did much running in search of food, usually 10 to 30 or more feet, after which it would stop and look about or go right to feeding. On occasion, it would fly as far as a quarter-mile just a few feet above the ground, after which it would look about again or go right to feeding and running about.

The bird was studied again some four hours later with binoculars and telescope by Chandler, Quinn, Curtis L. Kingsbery, Lyman Goodnight, Steve Page, and Fred Wernicke, and again on January 7, 9, 13, and 15 by many other birders. It was photographed in color by Dr. S. E. Liston on January 13 and by Chandler on January 15. On January 15, three tractors were discing the field and the Plover, Killdeer, and Pipits were avoiding the disturbed ground. On January 17, the field was being plowed and no birds were present. The Killdeer and Pipits moved to adjoining fields, but the Mountain Plover has not been seen again to date.

According to R. T. Peterson, A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS, the Mountain Plover is a common breeding bird of the western parts of the Great Plains, wintering in California and Mexico, and accidental in Massachusetts and Florida. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., in FLORIDA BIRD LIFE lists three records for that state: December 1, 1870, at Key West; late July 1901 from James Island; and December 17, 1927, from Daytona Beach.

This is the first known record for Alabama.

P. O. Box 142, Magnolia Springs 36555