

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

MARCH, YUKI, MARCH! With a backward look at the second year of the Alabama Ornithological Society, we are proud of the accomplishments. The membership has grown to 107. One A. O. S. chapter has been formed (Auburn). Naomi Banks, of Gadsden, Alabama, has become a bird bander. Field days have been held in districts 1, 3, and 4 which include Christmas censuses. Two state meetings have been held. The fall meeting at Joe Wheeler State Park, attended by 68 members and additional visitors, was highlighted by Gordon Hight, Chimney-swift bander, of Life Magazine fame, and by Ben Fever of Scotland who addressed the group with wit and charm. The annual meeting at Fort Morgan in May was attended by 37 and was addressed by Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr., well-known author, lecturer, and ornithologist of Cape Cod, Mass., who is stationed at Maxwell Field.

Yes, it has been a year well spent. For its success our thanks go to our incoming President, Jim Keeler, now Vice-President and Chairman of the Membership Committee; to all who helped in any way to make the meetings a success, especially Tom Atkeson, David Hulse, Wilson Gaillard, and Byron Huffman who arranged the meetings locally; to Julian Dusi for getting Alabama Bird-Life off to a good beginning; and to Fred Carney who has worked so faithfully as Treasurer. The leaders and planners for the Nature Camp deserve special mention. They have done a fine piece of work for the whole state and the sponsoring organizations. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their help.

As we look ahead, the job before the organization is education. There is a great need for increased activity in the districts. New chapters should be formed, field trips conducted and bird records kept. Each district should seek out leaders with initiative and determination to initiate some activity during his or her term of office. The success of tomorrow lies in the interest and activity in these districts. There is a great need of published material on birds in the state. These things take years to work out and should begin now. So, there is the need for records to be published from all parts of the state. I firmly believe that those who know nature and love our state will rise to meet this challenge if the needs are made known to them. We call upon the membership to begin education in each district, formulate plans, bring suggestions to the president, and to support our officers. Alabama has been retarded long enough by lethargy and ignorance. Like Yuki, Mrs. O. L. Austin's Japanese born Spitz, who understands only one English word "March!" let us awaken to the need and march to achievement.

## THE TERRITORIAL RANGE OF THE ALABAMA TOWHEE\*

By MAY S. LAUDEN

### Introduction

The Alabama Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus canaster* Howell, a subspecies of the Eastern Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (Linnaeus), is recognized as the breeding race in Alabama and in other sections of the southeastern United States. This bird is quite abundant in the vicinity of Auburn, Alabama.

Auburn is a small city located at the juncture of the piedmont and coastal plains areas. Its average elevation is 732 feet above mean sea level and it has a relatively moderate climate. The mean annual temperature is 64.4 degrees Fahrenheit, with a range of from 20 to 100 degrees during the year. The summers are long and warm and the winters mild and damp. Many migratory birds winter in this vicinity and the Alabama Towhee is a year-round resident.

This bird was first described by Howell in 1913, yet very little has been written about this subspecies. A review of the literature revealed only one item on territory, in which the towhee was mentioned. Hickey (1943) discussed foraging areas with regard to a number of species, including the Red-eyed Towhee. His study, made during May and June week-ends at Yonkers, New York, states that "although a number of birds actively defended the areas here reported, more frequent observations are probably needed to show the complete size of their territories." Barbour (1950 and 1951) prepared 2 papers on the breeding habits and the development of the nestlings of the Red-eyed Towhee in Kentucky. Dickinson (1952) published the geographic variation in the Red-eyed Towhee which included the Alabama Towhee. Other articles on the Alabama Towhee were concerned with its range and the reporting of nests found in various localities.

This study was undertaken to determine whether the Alabama Towhee was territorial, and if so, to ascertain the acreage used by breeding pairs. Other aspects of towhee life, particularly those found to be at variance with that reported for the Red-eyed Towhee, are herein included.

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The area in which the study was made was limited to that lying within a one-half mile radius of Comer Hall of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. This information was secured by

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