

**ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Founded May 17, 1952

**Officers**

President: Dr. Julian L. Dusi, P. O. Box 742 ..... Auburn, Ala.

Vice-President: Mrs. Ben. P. Clark, 948 Forrest Ave. ....  
Gadsden, Ala.

Secretary: Mr. James E. Keeler, 3576 Georgetown Dr. ....  
Montgomery, Ala.

Treasurer: Miss Clustie McTyeire, 1804 Arlington Ave. ....  
Bessemer, Ala.

Editor, Alabama Birdlife: Mr. D. W. Speake, 1010 E. Glenn  
St. .... Auburn, Ala.

Librarian: Dr. Henry G. Good, 527 S. College St. .... Auburn, Ala.

**Alabama Birdlife**

Published quarterly by the Alabama Ornithological Society in February, May, August and November, at Auburn, Alabama. It is sent to all of the membership, or may be obtained by subscription in the United States, for \$1.50 per year, or \$.50 per issue.

Entered as second class matter at Auburn, Alabama.

**CONTENTS**

|                                                                   | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Contents .....                                                    | 1    |
| The President's Page .....                                        | 2    |
| The Cattle Egret in Alabama—Blanche E. Dean ....                  | 4    |
| Barn Owl Food Habits—Julian L. Dusi .....                         | 7    |
| Ibis Records from the Tennessee Valley—Thomas<br>Z. Atkeson ..... | 9    |
| Christmas Bird Counts, Alabama, 1956—Thomas<br>A. Imhof .....     | 11   |
| Blackburnian Warbler Near Birmingham—Mrs. E.<br>M. West .....     | 15   |

**Notes of Interest**

Shrike

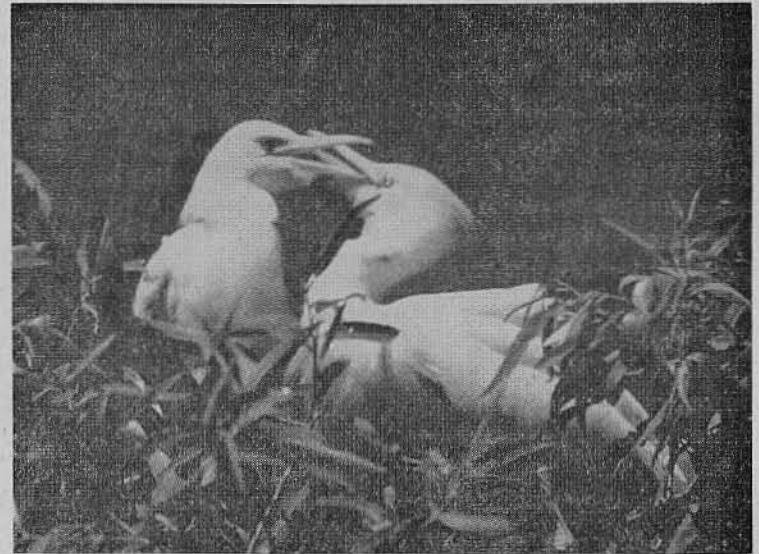
Coturnix

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

On May 17, 1952, the Alabama Ornithological Society was organized. July 1, 1957, starts the fifth fiscal year of our organization. The past four years have been quite eventful as the society has grown from a few members in a few areas of Alabama to a much wider distribution in Alabama and several other states. Our constitution has undergone revision and each new president has had some special problem.

Our coming year will have its problems; at the moment I envision the opportunity for many accomplishments. At our recent meeting at Decatur we resolved to aid in the establishment of water bird sanctuaries of several of the islands in the Gulf. We also resolved to express our interest in the educational work the Alabama Department of Conservation is doing in its teaching collection of bird skins, by recommending that a certain type of mount be used. The outstanding study of the White Ibis and associated birds carried on by James E. Keeler and a number of collaborators will be continued and much amplified this year. Many of the members have their pet projects of banding or some other phase of ornithology which will result in additional knowledge of ornithology in Alabama.

Our greatest problems will be in increasing our membership and in reaching the interests of all of our members. I hope we will all recruit new members and subscribers to Alabama Birdlife. The newsletter has been added as an effort to continually stimulate our interest and to help unify the A.O.S. by letting us all share in each others projects and ornithological programs. With a little help from every member, there is no reason why the A.O.S. cannot make this fifth year the best we have had.



—Courtesy of Samuel A. Grimes

## THE CATTLE EGRET

## THE CATTLE EGRET IN ALABAMA

By BLANCE E. DEAN

Strangely missing from Alabama's new Field Check List, just recently off the press, is the Cattle Egret. A 1956 estimate of the numbers of Cattle Egrets in Florida is 6500 birds. They have been found along the coast from Florida to Texas and north to Newfoundland. One of my friends, Mrs. Amy Baldwin of Chicago, reported finding them in that area in 1953. They must surely be in Alabama. Who will be the first to report one in this state? Below is a brief history and description to aid you in reporting this to our ornithologists.

This immigrant appeared in the Western Hemisphere about 1930. The first specimen was obtained in 1937 in British Guiana. There has been much speculation about how the **Bulbulcus ibis** arrived in South America. Were they brought over as pets by Orientals? Were they escaped from some zoo importing animals? Or did they arrive by wing under their own power? Most authorities are inclined to think they arrived by wing with the aid of wind even though it is about 1775 miles from Africa to South America at the closest points. Since the Cattle Egrets eat live insects a long voyage would be extremely difficult to manage. There is no record of any number being imported for zoos and any having escaped. They are known to be good flyers and wander great distances in the Old World. This species **Bulbulcus ibis** is distributed widely over Europe, Africa, and the Middle East and a sub-species **Bulbulcus ibis coromandus** has spread over India, Japan, and Australia. So the most logical conclusion is that they came under their own power across the Atlantic.

When did they arrive in the United States? Again we do not know the exact time. Willard E. Dilley who is now on the staff of Grand Canyon National Park recalls having seen two in the summer of 1941 or 42 near Clewiston, Florida, but supposed that they were escaped from some zoo. In 1952, in March, Richard Borden, a bird student, took some pictures of egrets and herons in a field of cattle on Eagle Bay Ranch near Lake Okeechobee. Months later he examined his picture more carefully and discovered Cattle Egrets and not the Snowy Egrets as he supposed he had photographed. Our friend, Samuel A. Grimes, made history on May 5, 1953, when he and Glenn Chandler discov-

ered and photographed the first Cattle Egret nest in North America. It was on an island known as King's Bar in Lake Okeechobee at the north end of the lake. The nest was in a rookery with little blues, Louisiana, and Snowy Egrets.

Imagine Roger Tory Peterson going to Europe in 1952 hoping to see and study especially the Cattle Egret only to find that in his absence it had suddenly made its appearance in the United States!

The first specimen collected in the United States, now in the museum of Comparative Zoology of Harvard, was collected by William H. Drury of Cambridge, Allen Morgan, and Richard Stackpole. They had gone out to Erwin Farm at Heard Pond to check a duck, April 23, 1952. As they were preparing to leave Drury saw the heron settle down among some cattle in the field. He had seen them years before in South America. He could scarcely believe his eyes. "Tradition" says there must be a specimen before the authorities will believe a new species can be counted in a state. So they wanted to collect it, but first, they should have Dr. Ludlow Griscom, dean of field ornithologists, see the Cattle Egret. One rushed to the phone and called him. He said "Collect it and take no chances on it escaping." While this went on the bird stuck close by the cattle . . . too near for shooting. . . and after two wild shots flew off to another field. The men searched for it and finally called in the aid of an airplane to assist in locating the bird. After these reports Cattle Egrets began to be seen in many other places.

At the Wilson Society meeting in Cape May, N. J., June 11-14, 1954, a constant trek to the McPherson Farm near by was made by all the members. I am sure most of the group saw the egrets; but, although I left the meetings, or the lunch, or breakfast every time it was reported, I did not succeed in seeing it.

### The Identification Characteristics

The Cattle Egret is about 1½ feet high, about the size of little blues and snowys. It has a short, stout, stubby yellow bill and yellow feet (dark in the immature). It has pink eyes with a buff crown, neck, and back; hence the common name "buff-backed heron." Another common name, "cow heron," refers to the habit of close association with cattle. Its food is insects secured when the cattle steps, disturbing the insects; the heron darts forward to catch them. Oc-

asionally, it reaches up and catches something or picks something from the body of the cattle—probably flies or ticks. The cattle do not seem to mind the closeness of the bird. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., writing in a special report for Smithsonian Institute "The Spread of the Cattle Egret" says, "One mannerism never observed in any other heron is a kind of weaving. The bird suddenly stops feeding, stands upright and weaves the upper part of the body in a kind of hula-like motion. Then after a few times resumes feeding."

Comparison with other herons:

|         | Cattle                                     | American                               | Snowy                                    | Little Blue                            |
|---------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Size    | 20-27 in.                                  | 37-40 in.                              | 20-27 in.                                | 20-25 Immature                         |
| Bill    | Short, stout, stubby, yellow               | Yellow, slender                        | Narrow, dark                             | Narrow, dark, bicolor                  |
| Legs    | Yellow, immature dark                      | Blackish                               | Dark                                     | Dark, greenish                         |
| Feet    | Yellow, immature dark                      | Dark                                   | Yellow                                   | Dark, greenish                         |
| Habitat | Near cattle                                | Marshes, ponds, lakes                  | Marshes, ponds, fields, meadows          | Marshes, ponds, meadows                |
| Food    | Insects, ticks                             | Aquatic fish, frogs, snakes, lily seed | Aquatic fish, tadpoles, snails, crayfish | Crayfish, frogs, grasshoppers, lizards |
| Color   | White, brushed buff on head, neck and back | White                                  | White                                    | White                                  |

All the herons in flight have their necks drawn in, while the cranes fly with their necks extended straight out.

1228 South 29th Street  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Received April 15, 1957

BARN OWL FOOD HABITS

By JULIAN L. DUSI

A pair of Barn Owls, *Tyto alba pratincola*, have roosted in the tower of Samford Hall, on the Alabama Polytechnic Institute campus at Auburn, for a number of years. This has made easy the study of their food habits by the collecting of the pellets of hair and bones which they regurgitate at the roost.

Pellets were collected from this roost over a period of a year. The pellets were stored in a can in a dark place so that clothes moths could eat the hair. This left an accumulation of bones. The bones were carefully sorted and the skulls and lower jaws removed. These were then identified.

A total of 190 skulls were recovered. Of these, 136 (71.5 per cent) were cotton rats, *Sigmodon hispidus*; 28 (14.7 per cent) were least shrews, *Cryptotis parva*; 8 (4.4 per cent) were house mice, *Mus musculus*; 5 (2.6 per cent) were short-tailed shrews, *Blarina brevicauda*; 4 (2.1 per cent) were old field mice; *Peromyscus polionotus*; 3 (1.5 per cent) were pine mice; *Pitymys pinetorium*; 1 (0.5 per cent) cotton mouse, *Peromyscus gossypinus*, was present; 1 (0.5 per cent) southeastern shrew, *Sorex longirostris*, was present; and 1 (0.5 per cent) Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*, was present.

Cotton rats were by far the most important food item. They were the largest of the mammals and were most frequently eaten. The next highest percentage eaten was least shrews. These were next to the smallest in size and it is surprising that they were caught so frequently. Of the other mammals eaten, it seems odd that more house mice, old field mice, and cotton mice were not taken since they are usually quite plentiful. These, however, were just a small part of the food eaten. Moles were an unusual item since they spend little time above ground. They are a large animal for Barn Owls to eat, so they made a good addition to the diet of the owls on the nights that no moles were caught. The one Starling eaten must have been roosting on the building near the entrance to the tower. It must have been easily available because Barn Owls seldom feed on birds.

The one southeastern shrew eaten is an interesting addition because it is a rather rare mammal in Alabama. The first record of this shrew was recovered from a Barred Owl stomach by Howell. Several ad-

ditional specimens have been collected by the writer and the specimen taken by these Barn Owls is the fifth record for the state.

The group of mammals that these owls ate confirm the classical habitat preference of Barn Owls, the old field. Around Auburn these mammals are easiest found and found in greatest numbers in old fields, or fields that have been left out of cultivation for several years. These old fields are vegetated by various grasses and annual and perennial woody plants. Usually pine trees are widely scattered through them, making the habitat desirable for pine mice. Fields of this sort occur within a mile of the Barn Owl roost, so a feeding area was easily available for them.

Owl food habits are of interest to ornithologists in their studies of these birds and they are also quite helpful to mammalogists because they do a thorough job of sampling the mammal populations where they feed.

---

Department of Zoology-Entomology  
A.P.I. Auburn, Alabama  
Received February 20, 1957

## IBIS RECORDS FROM THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

By THOMAS Z. ATKESON, Biologist

The increase of ibises in Alabama is typical of the responses that many nongame birds have made to the protection afforded by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1915. Howell's *BIRDS OF ALABAMA*, most of the material for which was collected prior to 1922, states that White Ibis is only an accidental visitor to the State, cites only two old records for Wood Ibis and gives no actual records for Glossy Ibis. A review of the present status of these birds indicates a dramatic increase.

In the southern half of the State, wherever suitable habitat occurs, White Ibis are now fairly common during the warm-weather months. The discovery in 1956, by James Keeler and others, of a large nesting colony on a small island in Southfield Lake, Baldwin County, firmly establishes them as Alabama nesters. Even in the Tennessee Valley of northern Alabama, where these birds would seem least likely to occur, they are classed as irregular visitors.

While Wheeler Reservoir was impounded in the fall of 1936, and the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1938, no ibises were noted until 1948. During both 1948 and 1949, large birds were tentatively identified as ibises, but specific identification was not possible. The first accurate record came on July 11, 1950, when four immature White Ibis were noted feeding in a shallow borrow pit. There were no further records for that year, but in 1951 these birds became fairly common with numerous small flocks, usually numbering from 5 to 7 individuals and the majority of which were immature birds, noted regularly from April 17 through September 18. There was only a single record for 1952, an immature bird seen on August 5, and none appeared in 1953. The only record in 1954 was a couple of immature birds noted on July 14 and none reappeared in 1955. In 1956, a small flock of immature White Ibis were seen on September 2 and a small flock of mature birds on September 4. The above records were supplied by Dr. F. J. Buchmann, H. H. Grammer, E. A. Byford, Eugene Cypert, James Keeler, Wayne Colin, David Hulse, Paul Bryan, and J. L. Heflin.

Wood ibis are now regular residents during the warm-weather months in the southern tier of counties and are occasional visitors further inland. Even in the

Tennessee Valley, these ibis can be considered irregular visitors. The first Wood Ibis record for Wheeler Refuge came in 1951, when from 1 to 3 mature birds were noted regularly from August 1 through October 15. There were no further records until 1955 when a flock, sometimes numbering 32 individuals, was seen regularly from June 27 through September 10. Wood ibis sight records for the Valley can be credited to Charles M. Parker, Grammer, Byford, Cypert, Hulse, Bryan, and Heflin.

All the above Tennessee Valley records for both White and Wood Ibises have come from Wheeler Refuge and the backwater area immediately west of it, i. e., the southern edge of Limestone County and the northern edge of Morgan County, although Bryan, on July 18, 1955, picked up a dead Wood Ibis along a roadside in Lawrence County, a few miles west of Mallard Creek. There is no indication that either species nested in the Valley. Since the singular appearance of these birds makes a mistaken identification unlikely and since the number of qualified observers was large, no collection was considered necessary.

While there are now several Glossy Ibis records for Alabama and these birds have appeared as far north as the Tuscaloosa vicinity, none have been reported from the Tennessee Valley.

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge  
Decatur, Alabama  
Received March 16, 1957

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, ALABAMA, 1956

Compiled by THOMAS A. IMHOF

**BIRMINGHAM:** 21st annual count, 16 observers in 5 parties, 46 party-hours. December 22, .66 inches of rain all day, temp. 58 to 68, wind SSE 0-18 mph; warm, wet December made up for a cold, dry November so that the year is just about average for temperature and precipitation. Several species missed on account of rain.

**MOBILE:** 3rd annual count and the first time Fr. Dorn has had some help, 9 observers in 3 parties, 30 party-hours. Dec. 28, clear, windy, temp. 45 to 55, wind SW 5-25 mph; steady, strong wind hampered observation of small birds in cover.

**DAUPHIN ISLAND:** 1st count in this area except for an old count at Coden, which was strictly land birds, taken in 1913; 9 observers in 4 parties, 37 party-hours. Dec. 29, clear and windy, temp. 40 to 55, wind NW 3-18 mph; boat trip cancelled, small craft warning up; due to NW wind, water in bays very low, shorebirds scattered and far out, small birds hard to flush. On both coastal counts, Miss Rosemary D. Gaymer of Toronto, Ontario, (vacationing in Fairhope with friends) gave a good account of herself and the birds she saw. In addition, she supplied us with a record of the Rufous Hummingbird from Fairhope, Dec. 26, a first record for the state, and the 2nd hummingbird known to have wintered in Fairhope.

| SPECIES                          | BIRMINGHAM | MOBILE  | DAUPHIN |
|----------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Common Loon .....                | 1          | 1       | 1       |
| Horned Grebe .....               | 4          | 42      | 40      |
| Pied-billed Grebe .....          | 113        | 37      | 10      |
| White Pelican .....              | .....      | 41      | 13      |
| Brown Pelican .....              | .....      | 16      | 126     |
| Double-crested Cormorant .....   | .....      | 151     | 101     |
| Great Blue Heron .....           | 2          | 3       | 20      |
| American Egret .....             | .....      | 28      | .....   |
| Snowy Egret .....                | .....      | 95      | .....   |
| Louisiana Heron .....            | .....      | 3       | .....   |
| Little Blue Heron .....          | .....      | 1 (JLD) | .....   |
| Black-crowned Night Heron .....  | .....      | 2       | .....   |
| Yellow-crowned Night Heron ..... | .....      | 1       | 1       |
| American Bittern .....           | .....      | .....   | 1       |
| Mallard .....                    | 4          | 2       | 1       |
| Black Duck .....                 | .....      | 2       | 3       |
| Gadwall .....                    | .....      | 4600    | 260     |
| Am. Widgeon (Baldpate) .....     | 4          | 12      | 2       |
| Pintail .....                    | .....      | 600     | .....   |

| SPECIES                       | BIRMINGHAM | MOBILE             | DAUPHIN      |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Green-winged Teal             | 7          | 150                | ---          |
| Shoveller                     | ---        | 1                  | ---          |
| Redhead                       | 1          | 32                 | 4            |
| Ring-necked Duck              | 92         | 74                 | ---          |
| Canvasback                    | 5          | 3200               | 3            |
| Lesser Scaup                  | 4          | 800                | 50           |
| Am. Goldeneye                 | 1          | 3                  | 250          |
| Bufflehead                    | ---        | 2                  | ---          |
| Ruddy Duck                    | ---        | 15                 | ---          |
| Hooded Merganser              | ---        | 16                 | ---          |
| Red-breasted Merganser        | 2          | 18                 | 165          |
| Unidentified ducks            | ---        | 3000               | 300          |
| Turkey Vulture                | ---        | 1                  | 10           |
| Black Vulture                 | ---        | 27                 | 8            |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk            | ---        | 1                  | ---          |
| Cooper's Hawk                 | 3          | ---                | ---          |
| Red-tailed Hawk               | ---        | 2                  | ---          |
| Red-shouldered Hawk           | 4          | 3                  | 3            |
| Marsh Hawk                    | ---        | 7                  | 4            |
| Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk)  | 1 (MHP)    | ---                | ---          |
| Pigeon Hawk                   | ---        | 1 (TAI)            | 1 (JLD)      |
| Sparrow Hawk                  | 4          | 6                  | 28           |
| Bob-white                     | 37         | 1                  | ---          |
| King Rail                     | ---        | ---                | 1            |
| Clapper Rail                  | ---        | 4                  | 18           |
| Virginia Rail                 | ---        | 3                  | 8            |
| Sora                          | ---        | 1                  | 6            |
| Florida Gallinule             | ---        | 2                  | ---          |
| Am. Coot                      | 277        | 5400               | ---          |
| Am. Oystercatcher             | ---        | ---                | 1            |
| Piping Plover                 | ---        | ---                | 110          |
| Snowy Plover                  | ---        | ---                | 2 (JLD)      |
| Semipalmated Plover           | ---        | ---                | 100          |
| Killdeer                      | 161        | 245                | 61           |
| Black-bellied Plover          | ---        | ---                | 75           |
| Ruddy Turnstone               | ---        | 2                  | 28           |
| Wilson's Snipe                | 34         | 18                 | ---          |
| Willet                        | ---        | ---                | 10           |
| Greater Yellowlegs            | ---        | 4                  | 11           |
| Least Sandpiper               | 22         | 15                 | 5            |
| Dunlin (Red-backed Sandpiper) | ---        | 22                 | 650          |
| Eastern Dowitcher             | ---        | ---                | 8            |
| Semipalmated Sandpiper        | ---        | ---                | 18           |
| Western Sandpiper             | ---        | 1                  | 63           |
| Sanderling                    | ---        | ---                | 66           |
| Unidentified sandpipers       | ---        | 100                | 200          |
| Great Black-backed Gull       | ---        | 1 (TAI, RDG, CMcT) | ---          |
| Herring Gull                  | ---        | 700                | 600          |
| Ring-billed Gull              | ---        | 900                | 1000         |
| Laughing Gull                 | ---        | 1000               | 800          |
| Gull-billed Tern              | ---        | 1 (TAI, RDG)       | 4 (JLD, CEV) |
| Forster's Tern                | ---        | 300                | 19           |
| Royal Tern                    | ---        | 2                  | 54           |
| Caspian Tern                  | ---        | 95                 | 65           |
| Unidentified gulls and terns  | ---        | ---                | 5000         |
| Mourning Dove                 | 172        | 9                  | 14           |
| Horned Owl                    | 1 (TI, DH) | ---                | ---          |
| Screech Owl                   | ---        | 1 (JLD)            | 1 (JLD)      |

| SPECIES                      | BIRMINGHAM | MOBILE    | DAUPHIN          |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Belted Kingfisher            | 8          | 10        | 17               |
| Yellow-shafted Flicker       | 51         | 30        | 7                |
| Pileated Woodpecker          | 12         | ---       | ---              |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker       | 18         | 6         | 8                |
| Red-headed Woodpecker        | 17         | ---       | ---              |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker     | 6          | 2         | 2                |
| Hairy Woodpecker             | 6          | ---       | 1                |
| Downy Woodpecker             | 18         | 2         | 1                |
| Red-cockaded Woodpecker      | 3          | ---       | ---              |
| Eastern Phoebe               | 8          | 3         | 68               |
| Vermilion Flycatcher         | ---        | ---       | 1 (GS, CMcT)     |
| Tree Swallow                 | ---        | 150       | 2                |
| Blue Jay                     | 134        | 67        | 50               |
| Am. Crow                     | 78         | 90        | 500              |
| Fish Crow                    | ---        | 3         | 18               |
| Carolina Chickadee           | 94         | 5         | 2                |
| Tufted Titmouse              | 77         | 6         | ---              |
| White-breasted Nuthatch      | 30         | ---       | ---              |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch        | 2 (FBD)    | ---       | ---              |
| Brown-headed Nuthatch        | 3          | ---       | 24               |
| Brown Creeper                | 1 (TI, DH) | ---       | ---              |
| House Wren                   | ---        | 1         | 8                |
| Winter Wren                  | 1          | ---       | ---              |
| Bewick's Wren                | 3          | 2         | 1 (RGD, BHC)     |
| Carolina Wren                | 64         | 17        | 28               |
| Marsh Wren (LBMW)            | ---        | 2         | 2                |
| Sedge Wren (SBMW)            | ---        | ---       | 17               |
| Mockingbird                  | 131        | 74        | 56               |
| Catbird                      | 3 (IFS)    | 2         | 10               |
| Brown Thrasher               | 7          | 12        | 26               |
| Am. Robin                    | 65         | 1065      | 9                |
| Hermit Thrush                | 20         | 5         | 3                |
| Eastern Bluebird             | 84         | 25        | 51               |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher        | ---        | 8         | 15               |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet       | 61         | 18        | 1 (RDG)          |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet         | 125        | 55        | 29               |
| Water Pipit                  | 9          | 50        | 43               |
| Cedar Waxwing                | 119        | 75        | 1                |
| Loggerhead Shrike            | 10         | 13        | 34               |
| Common Starling              | 557        | 2700      | 25               |
| Yellow-throated Vireo        | ---        | ---       | 1 (IS, GS, CMcT) |
| Solitary Vireo (Blue-headed) | ---        | ---       | 3                |
| Orange-crowned Warbler       | ---        | 3         | 2                |
| Myrtle Warbler               | 44         | 787       | 1500             |
| Pine Warbler                 | 59         | ---       | 123              |
| Palm Warbler                 | ---        | 25        | 4                |
| Common Yellowthroat          | 4          | 1         | 13               |
| House Sparrow                | 193        | 115       | 5                |
| Eastern Meadowlark           | 195        | 279       | 47               |
| Red-winged Blackbird         | 537        | 350       | 1150             |
| Rusty Blackbird              | 169        | 23        | 70               |
| Brewer's Blackbird           | ---        | 250 (JLD) | 6 (TAI)          |
| Boat-tailed Grackle          | ---        | 251       | 3                |
| Purple Grackle               | 149        | 3100      | 25               |
| Brown-headed Cowbird         | 554        | 75        | 33               |
| Unidentified Blackbirds      | ---        | 40,000    | ---              |
| Cardinal                     | 240        | 58        | 73               |
| Purple Finch                 | 5          | ---       | ---              |

| SPECIES                | BIRMINGHAM | MOBILE | DAUPHIN    |
|------------------------|------------|--------|------------|
| Pine Siskin            | 4 (MHP)    |        |            |
| Am. Goldfinch          | 149        | 17     | 52         |
| Eastern Towhee         | 170        | 30     | 39         |
| Savannah Sparrow       | 18         | 31     | 35         |
| Leconte's Sparrow      |            |        | 3 (TI, DH) |
| Sharp-tailed Sparrow   |            | 1      | 5          |
| Seaside Sparrow        |            | 2      | 6          |
| Vesper Sparrow         | 2          | 35     | 12         |
| Pine-woods Sparrow     |            |        | 3          |
| Slate-colored Junco    | 209        |        |            |
| Chipping Sparrow       | 84         | 30     |            |
| Field Sparrow          | 361        | 81     | 37         |
| White-crowned Sparrow  | 4          |        |            |
| White-throated Sparrow | 587        | 745    | 32         |
| Fox Sparrow            | 17         |        |            |
| Swamp Sparrow          | 102        | 65     | 29         |
| Song Sparrow           | 278        | 100    | 7          |
| TOTAL SPECIES          | 81         | 116    | 112        |
| TOTAL INDIVIDUALS      | 6915       | 73,591 | 14,781     |

At Birmingham, a male Baltimore Oriole which regularly fed at Harriet Wright's feeder failed to show up in the downpour. It has been seen many times before and since. Adele West, just arrived in town on Sunday the 23rd, discovered a young male Blackburnian Warbler at Huffman on a drizzly day. On the 24th it cleared, and efforts to relocate the bird for collecting proved fruitless.

#### Observers

|                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ruth Brunson, B          | Thomas A. Imhof, B, M, D       |
| Blanche H. Chapman, B, D | Clustie McTyeire, M, D         |
| Ruth Copeland, B         | Rev. C. T. Miller, M           |
| F. Bozeman Daniel, B     | Morton H. Perry, B             |
| Rev. J. L. Dorn, M, D    | Robert D. Perry, B             |
| Marie Davis, B           | Peter Smith, B                 |
| Mildred Ferris, B        | Idalene F. Snead, B, M, D      |
| Rosemary D. Gaymer, M, D | Grace M. Snead, B, M, D        |
| Virginia Hamilton, B     | J. Bolling Sullivan, B         |
| Malcolm Harden, Jr., B   | Rev. Claude E. Valentine, M, D |
| Dan C. Holliman, B, M, D |                                |

397 38th Street  
Fairfield, Alabama  
Received January 6, 1957

## BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER NEAR BIRMINGHAM

By MRS. E. M. WEST

While in Birmingham for Christmas, 1956, I went birdwatching in the immediate neighborhood each day. A mixed flock was very much in evidence near the house on the morning of the 23rd of December which was cold and drizzly. Many Field Sparrows and at least 6 Pine Warblers were feeding on the ground. A couple blocks farther the new residential area is bordered by an extensive woodland. As I stood at this edge, another mixed flock flew rapidly, one by one, from the woods to a nearby lawn. This flock consisted mainly of juncos, Field Sparrows, Bluebirds, and half a dozen Pine Warblers. I approached the green lawn where the birds were very busy feeding and started checking each individual. Soon my binoculars lit on a small black and white bird with a yellow throat. I forgot everything else while I concentrated my attention on it. My first impression was that it must be a Blackburnian Warbler, but knowing how unlikely that was, I considered the possibility of something else—possibly a Yellow-throated Warbler. However, several looks at the face showed too much yellow in that vicinity. Two white stripes running down each side of the back were very conspicuous and were even noticeable without the binoculars.

After I watched this bird for some 20 or 30 minutes, the whole flock started moving away from me through the weedy field behind the lawn. I immediately returned home to ascertain if the warbler could possibly be anything other than a Blackburnian. It finally became obvious that the white stripes on the back were diagnostic even if the yellow on face and throat and the striped sides had not also been closely seen.

The following day I went back to the same spot at approximately the same time of day and searched the area for a quarter mile in all directions but found no sign of the flock the Blackburnian was traveling with. In fact, all the birds in the neighborhood were very secretive that day, which was very windy and even colder than the previous one.

The Blackburnian Warbler has been recorded three times on the Christmas Counts; twice at Santa Ana, Texas, (1953 and 1954) and once at Titusville, Florida, (1955). These are the only known records of the species between Nov. 2 and March.

1625 S. Clayton Ave., S.E.  
Chattanooga 11, Tennessee  
Received January 6, 1957



## NOTES OF INTEREST

### SHRIKE

On Sunday P. M., February 24, 1957, Richard Custer, a former student of Woodlawn High who lives at 8607 4th Avenue, North, called me about a strange "sight" at his home. He said he has a small plum tree in his yard which has a good many thorns on it. From time to time, he has found several things impaled on these thorns. Yesterday, he came home to find a Blue Jay partly, but enough to see that it was a jay, fastened there. He has found as many as nine small black snakes, but not all at the same time. There have been pieces of bread, cloth, and insects found from time to time.

Mrs. Matthew Wimpee, who lives at 508 South 60th Street, told about the same kind of "sight" last summer while we were at Nature Camp. She said she had found a snake caught on a thorn bush in her yard and wondered about it. One day as she lay on her bed resting she looked out the window and saw a "Butcher bird" fastening a small green snake on the thorn. Have any of you observed whether or not the Loggerhead Shrike ever returns to eat these things which he impales on thorns, fences, etc? Why not report your experiences?—Blanche E. Dean.

### COTURNIX

Missouri, Tennessee and Alabama have had mass releases of the Japanese quail, *Coturnix coturnix japonica*. All are banded. These are migratory birds and some banded in Tennessee have been taken in South Carolina and Alabama. This quail resembles a Meadowlark in appearance and size without the white tail markings. The tail is very short and it has a buff colored, instead of yellow breast. The flight is different from the Meadowlark. Be on the lookout for these quail. Others are to be released this spring and summer.—Blanche E. Dean.