

BIRMINGHAM—October followed September with continued slightly above average temperature and rainfall. Although many species arrived "on time," migration was later this fall, possibly due to the continued warm weather. However, the first freeze occurred November 7 and November temperature and rainfall were both below normal.

On August 28, there was a group of water birds migrating on Lake Purdy: Green and Black-crowned Night Herons (immature), Little Blue Herons, Pied-billed Grebe, Black Terns, and Pectoral Sandpipers. The first Baltimore Oriole appeared August 29. A Canada Warbler was seen September 16. The first real migration wave the writer noted was on September 30 with a number of Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Black-throated Green, and Chestnut-sided Warblers. Except for the Bay-breasted, this was not the earliest arrival date for these warblers.

On November 1, a Stilt Sandpiper was feeding on Lake Purdy and was noted again on November 4 by Marge Ayres. On November 3, Idalene Snead and Lois McCullough observed a late Common Nighthawk. A Bay-breasted Warbler was seen on November 4. The Wrights and the Ayres saw four Common Snipe, one Common Loon, 400 Coot, and 15 Lesser Scaup at Lake Purdy. Gayle and Pat Riley had a female Evening Grosbeak visit their feeder on November 21.

Some arrival dates of interest —

September 21—Scarlet Tanager

24—Rose-breasted Grosbeak

October 15—White-throated Sparrow

20—Hermit Thrush.

— Harriett H. Wright (Mrs. D. O.)
2749 Millbrook Rd.
Birmingham 9, Ala

MONTGOMERY AREA AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

November and December were good months for observing uncommon birds in south Alabama. Worthy of mention were three short-eared Owls wintering on Prison farm No. 4, approximately five miles north of Montgomery. These owls were first seen during early November and have remained there throughout December. A tremendous number of Marsh Hawks and Buteo hawks (mostly Red-tailed Hawks) were also present during this period.

High populations of Rice and Cotton Rats were undoubtedly responsible for holding such a large number of hawks during the fall and winter months.

One Harlan's Hawk was observed on the prison farm by R. W. Skinner during the latter part of November and another Harlan's Hawk was seen in the black belt section of Marengo County, approximately six miles southeast of Thomaston, Alabama, December 15, 1959 by the reporter.

Seven Sandhill Cranes were seen flying toward Elberta, in Baldwin County, on December 16, 1959, by the reporter. These birds are known to range between Elberta and the inter-coastal canal east of Gulf Shores, Alabama. A resident of the area was contacted and he stated that there was a total of 14 Sandhill Cranes in that area this fall.

A total of 135 recent band recoveries was reported to the Alabama Department of Conservation during December. Most of these birds were recovered from September 1, to November 15, 1959. These recoveries were as follows: Mourning Dove—90; Mallard—21; Black Duck—13; Canada Goose—5; Baldpate—4; Little-blue Heron—1; White Ibis—1.

Of special interest was the White Ibis recovery. This bird was banded as a nestling in Baldwin County, Alabama, June 21, 1956 and caught August 30, 1959, near San Nicholas de Bari, Havana, Cuba.

— James E. Keeler
State Conservation Dept.
Montgomery, Ala.

THE AUBURN AREA—Notes from eastern Alabama are hard to separate from neighboring Georgia, especially when the events take place only several miles over the line. The Columbus, Georgia, L. A. Wells watched a pair of Mississippi Kites nest and rear one young right in Columbus. The nest was no more than 100 feet from a row of houses. They were first seen May 10 and left August 18. Read more about this in the Oriole, the G. O. S. publication. A second Georgia note was an announcement from Mrs. J. H. Whiteman at West Point. She reports that the noted resort Ida Cason Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, has added an ornithologist, Mr. Winslow M. Shaughnessy, to its staff and that Mr. Shaughnessy is to develop a program of bird study for the area. This should be of great interest to those in Eastern Alabama. We hope Mr. Shaughnessy will become an A. O. S. member.

This fall, being much more moist than usual and mild, has produced a much more interesting migration. With the moisture and more available food, migrants stopped and stayed awhile. As a result, it was actually worth while spending some time in the field netting, banding and collecting.

GOLDEN PLOVER NEAR AUBURN

This fall a number of the experimental ponds of the Agriculture Experiment Station at Auburn University were drained as experiments were completed. This provided an unusual increase in mud flats which are an attraction to migrating shore-birds. As a result the writer collected a female Golden Plover, *Pluvialis d. dominica*, on November 9, 1959. This was a lone individual associated with a number of Killdeers, several Greater Yellowlegs and several Least Sandpipers. There also were several Common Snipes present.

The collection was of interest to the writer because it is the only specimen to his knowledge to be seen or taken near Auburn.

— Julian L. Dusi
P. O. Box 742
Auburn, Ala.

GOLDEN PLOVER NEAR AUBURN

MOBILE AND THE GULF COAST—In any area, one of the prerequisites for abundant bird-life is an ample food supply. Reports and personal observation in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clark and Monroe Counties indicate an unusually bad season for bird food. Our berry, seed, and mast crop, with scattered exceptions, is very poor. Pecan and acorn crops were the worst in many years. The same is true of cherry-laurel, chinaberry, holly, gum, and cedar.

On the brighter side, however, grass seeds are locally abundant, as is insect life. Likewise, shore birds will have no food problem along the salt-water mud flats.

It will be interesting to see whether this food scarcity is reflected in our annual Christmas bird counts. It probably will not show in the Dauphin Island count as that particular area is not as badly affected.

Waterfowl:

The Fall flight of geese was greater than usual and they have remained in the Mobile area longer than usual. Most were Blue Geese, with a few Snow and Canada Geese seen.

Ducks are not as plentiful as last year. Canvasbacks, Redheads, and Ruddy Ducks had such a bad breeding season that the bag limit was wisely cut to one per day.

To cite the value of food supply to bird life, I recently flew to the Texas rice area for the opening of geese and duck hunting. In one protected area geese were so numerous that their calls when disturbed, sounded like the roar at the Alabama-Auburn football game. There were tens of thousands in sight. Let's keep trying to get Coffee Island made into a U. S. Wildlife Refuge. It would not only attract ducks and geese, but also the wonderful bird-life rapidly being crowded off Dauphin Island.

— M. W. Gaillard, DDS
1508 Merchants Nat. Bank Bldg.
Mobile, Ala.