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Alabama Ornithological Society

Founded May 17, 1952

Officers

President: Mrs. D. O. Wright.....	2749 Millbrook Rd., B'ham., 13, Ala.
Vice President: Mr. Robert Skinner.....	Rt. 4, Box 46, Montgomery, Ala.
Secretary: Mrs. W. H. Persons.....	2148 Shadybrook Lane, B'ham., Ala.
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Editor Birdlife: Miss Blanche Chapman.....	1325 South 19th Street, B'ham., Ala.
Directors: Julian Dusi, Tom Imhof, Jim Keeler	

A.O.S. MEMBERSHIPS

Honorary, no dues	Sustaining, \$5.00 annually
Active, \$2.00 annually	Student, \$1.00 annually

Life, \$50.00, payable within 2-year period

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE is included in all types of memberships. For others by subscription, \$1.50 yearly or 50c per issue.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from your president! Thank you for your excellent cooperation and help. Many of you have sent in worthwhile suggestions and ideas that would aid our organization. A.O.S. is as good as each member makes it. We are a growing organization, and to remain so, each one must continue to be a useful and responsive member.

When there is a bill in Congress to protect, e.g. . . . the Golden Eagle, let's voice our written approval to our Senators and Congressmen. We shall have occasion for such action over the year to endorse similar conservation measures.

Continue to send in your articles on birds to the editor. Send other bird news and news about yourself to the president for inclusion in the next newsletter.

A.O.S. needs chapters over the state. A committee is working on the idea that present nature and conservation groups may be affiliated with the Alabama Ornithological Society. A chapter does not have to be large. Where even two or three are interested in "birds," a chapter could be formed.

The fall meeting will be at that "best birding spot in Alabama," Dauphin Island. The date is October 28, 29. The birding will be good. The meeting has been planned, and the success of the weekend depends upon your participation. Come and bring a friend.

—HARRIET H. WRIGHT

MINUTES OF A. O. S. SPRING MEETING

The semi-annual meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held on April 21-23, 1961, at DeSoto State Park. Tom Imhof presided at the business meeting which was held Saturday night. In the absence of the secretary, no minutes were read, but these had previously been published in Alabama Birdlife. Clustie McTyeire was appointed to serve as secretary for the meeting.

The treasurer reported a balance of \$142.11. Opportunity was given to pay dues. There were twenty-one members present.

Under **old business** came a discussion of ways to increase our membership. There was also discussion concerning our publication. Suggestions were offered relative to a change in the number of issues per year, type of the issues, type of printing, etc. No action was taken at this time.

New business decided that the next issue of Birdlife would probably be published in September, since the Editor would leave on June 1 for Europe. A motion was made by Clustie McTyeire that a committee be appointed to study the constitution and any necessary improvements be recommended for adoption by the membership. The motion was seconded by Blanche Chapman and the vote carried. The committee appointed is as follows: Clustie McTyeire, chairman; Margaret Robinson and Tom Imhof.

A motion was made by Tom Atkeson that no specific locations for meetings be set. The motion was seconded by Jim Robinson. The vote carried. A discussion followed. The general feeling was to have the spring meeting in the central part of the state and the autumn meeting to alternate between the northern and southern parts of the state. This will be considered further by the committee to study the constitution.

The report of the nominating committee was read as follows: President—Harriett (Mrs. D. O.) Wright; Vice President—Bob Skinner; Treasurer—Margaret (Mrs. James C.) Robinson. The nominating committee consisted of Clustie McTyeire, chairman; Blanche Dean and Idalene Snead.

The president requested nominations from the floor, but none were made. A motion was made by Clustie McTyeire and seconded by Blanche Chapman to approve the report as read.

Following the business meeting, Mr. George Kyle, now with the U.S. Forest Service, discussed the role of the National Forest Service and showed how it affects every citizen. After his interesting and informative talk, slides were shown by Jim and Margaret Robinson of some interesting birds they had netted and banded.

A compilation of the birds observed by the various groups concluded the program. A report of 105 species was made.

Respectfully submitted,
CLUSTIE McTYEIRE, Acting Secretary

SOME INTERESTING NESTING RETURNS

While many species of passerine birds are "permanent residents" throughout the state, others, perhaps the majority of species which nest here, are only "summer residents." This is particularly true of the warblers and vireos, most of which winter in Central and/or South America. During the past seven years I have had the opportunity to band a small number of these "summer residents" and to retrap some of them in later years. Below is presented a list of such returns (warblers and vireos) with one exception. Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) returns have been omitted since I consider those birds which have been retrapped to be "permanent residents." This list includes all birds captured before September 7, 1961. They are listed by band number, date of banding, and date of recapture, in that order.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*):

61-39008—June 20, 1958; July 16, 1960.

Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*):

52-67693—July 5, 1957; June 12, 1958.
61-39009—June 20, 1958; June 10, 1959.
61-39086—June 10, 1959; July 2, 1960.
61-39088—June 10, 1959; July 20, 1960.
61-39088—June 10, 1959; June 14, 1961.
64-18135—July 16, 1960; June 13, 1961.

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*):

61-39004—June 12, 1958; July 13, 1960.
61-39022—July 4, 1958; September 14, 1959.
61-39024—July 8, 1958; July 27, 1960.
61-39038—September 5, 1958; September 16, 1959.
61-39095—September 2, 1959; July 2, 1960.
61-41505—September 12, 1959; September 14, 1960.
61-41508—September 14, 1959; July 18, 1960.
61-41508—September 14, 1959; September 6, 1961.
64-18121—July 2, 1960; June 12, 1961.

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*):

54-140072—May 10, 1955; September 12, 1959.
56-112617—July 2, 1957; June 10, 1959.
57-136108—June 18, 1958; June 14, 1961.
57-136124—June 28, 1958; July 2, 1960.
57-136145—July 11, 1958; June 14, 1961.
57-136155—July 27, 1958; July 2, 1960.
58-172610—July 7, 1960; June 13, 1961.

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*):

55-82567—May 12, 1955; July 5, 1957.
61-39005—June 18, 1958; June 12, 1959.
61-39087—June 10, 1959; July 18, 1960.
61-39094—September 2, 1959; July 13, 1960.
61-41509—September 14, 1959; September 6, 1961.
61-41512—September 14, 1959; September 13, 1960.

Since individuals of all these species have been captured during migration, as well as during the nesting season, one must be careful in drawing conclusions about percent of banded birds returning. Migrating birds are seldom if ever retrapped in subsequent years, while the "summer resident" birds are often recaptured. At the time of capture it is often possible to determine whether or not the bird is a migrant. In some cases it is not possible. Thus, I am listing total birds banded (through 1960) separately and not with the returns. These figures must be used merely to indicate percent returning, and one must not draw any definite conclusions with respect to actual percent returning. The totals are: Black-and-white Warbler, 12; Kentucky Warbler, 24; Hooded Warbler, 36; Yellow-breasted Chat, 29; and White-eyed Vireo, 37.

Several other species of "summer resident" warblers and vireos have been banded, but these have not yielded any returns. They are: Worm-eating Warbler, 6; Yellow-throated Warbler, 1; Prairie Warbler, 5; Ovenbird, 1; Louisiana Water-thrush, 2; Common Yellow-Throat, 4; Red-eyed Vireo, 15; and Yellow-throated Vireo, 1.

These returns show not only the ability but also the persistence with which birds return to their familiar "territories." We may conclude that this phenomenon must have strong selective value in the lives of most birds.

—J. BOLLING SULLIVAN, III, 3416 Sherwood Road, Birmingham 13, Ala.

WINTERING OF LINCOLN SPARROW AT LIVINGSTON

For two seasons now the Lincoln Sparrow has fed at my tray in Livingston. He first appeared on October 17th, 1958, and fed daily at the tray and drank and bathed in the bird bath until January 5th, 1959. I saw him thirty-one different days during this period. The next time I saw this bird at my tray was March 30th, 1961, and I observed him daily through April 15th, 1961. I have seen the Lincoln Sparrow to such good advantage and over such long periods of time now that I feel as familiar with him as I do the House Sparrow.

—JENKINS JACKSON, Livingston, Alabama

MORE ON BALTIMORE ORIOLES AT LIVINGSTON, ALABAMA

The Baltimore Orioles arrived at Livingston on April 17th, 1961, which is about an average date for their Spring arrival, although many species of birds ran a few days late this year, evidently due to bad weather.

There are two nesting territories of Baltimore Orioles within the corporate limits of the town that have been occupied for four successive years that I know of as I have gathered four nests from each. One territory is on the East side of town and one is on the South side, embracing my home. In "Alabama Birdlife" issue of September, 1960 (Vol. 8,—No. 3), I wrote of observing the rearing of the young in the East territory last year. The birds there have nested now three successive years in a Chinquapin Oak and once in a Durand Oak a few feet from it. An Orchard Oriole has nested two years in the same Chinquapin Oak. Last year the nests of the two species were only fifteen feet apart, this year about thirty feet.

The nest of the Baltimore Oriole last year was a marvel of bird ingenuity. The bird obtained a cord almost as large as the little finger, doubled it and laid it over a little twig. Into the dangling ends she wove a nest mostly of grey horse hair, through which ran smaller cords securely tied with numerous knots, the whole nest matching in color the grey-green under side of the leaves. The female doing this wonderful work lived to see her young only a week old, but the male brought them off with literally "flying colors" at the end of the second week. I then took this nest down.

This male did not secure a new mate this year until the first day of June when I discovered her starting a nest (and where?) on the end of the very same branch where I had sawed off the nest last year. This nest is made of white hair so thinly woven that it looks like white lace. On June 28th the young was able to sit on a twig above the nest and in a few days was gone. I carefully took this nest down (leaving a third branch for the next one!) and how striking the contrast with darker nests placed in trees of darker leaves.

I have every reason to believe that the young are returning to settle here, as I have apparently discovered this year two more territories on the West side of town, but will not be able to prove this until the leaves drop and I can find the nests.

—JENKINS JACKSON, Livingston, Alabama

REGIONAL WINGBEATS

DECATUR — Tennessee Valley weather, over-wet during the past winter, continued wet throughout the spring and most of the summer, though showers became more widely spaced in late July and August. On the first weekend of June, a lock wall collapsed at Wheeler Dam and this had much the same effect on Wheeler Reservoir that pulling out the stopper does on a bath tub. Bankful from spring storage, the reservoir dropped quickly to about the 548 foot contour, its lowest level in over 20 years. Waters have remained low, and the thousands of acres of exposed mudflat have grown to dense stands of rank vegetation ranging from two to seven feet in height. This will furnish a wealth of waterfowl food, if reflooded this fall and winter.

A number of interesting bird notes have turned up since this report was last written in early February. These include a lone White-fronted Goose that walked about the Wheeler Refuge headquarters lawn on February 16 and 17. On April 13, Louis Nebrig, a local farmer, telephoned to say that three strange birds were walking about his pasture near the southeastern edge of Decatur. Charles Parker, Henry Grammer, William Depreast and Tom Sandlin investigated and found three fine examples of the Cattle Egret, complete with the reddish wash on heads, necks and backs, the first record for northern Alabama. On April 20, Paul Robinson spotted a Golden-winged Warbler on Trinity Mountain, the first positive local record. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were noted earlier than ever before and were seen at the Triana nesting colony by William Depreast on March 31. There were five interesting late records: an Old Squaw noted by William Depreast and Phillip Kyle on April 11; a flock of eight Buffleheads on April 20 by David Hulse; a Horned Grebe on May 10 by Henry Grammer and Tom Sandlin; an American Bittern on May 24 by Henry Grammer and a Laughing Gull on June 8 by Hulse. None of these birds were cripples.

Two early arrival records included an Indigo Bunting by Paul Robinson on April 19 and a Dickcissel by William Depreast on May 25.

A few Greater Yellowlegs and Willets have remained here throughout the summer, possibly due to food made available by low water. Except for Common Egrets and Green Herons, most of the wading birds have been unusually scarce, probably because mudflats have volunteered to rank vegetation. Though local dove numbers seem normal, there have been losses to Trichomoniasis throughout the summer. The Iranain Pheasants stocked by the State on the Swan Creek hunting area have scattered widely, seem to have survived well and at least one brood has been reported. Duck nesting on Wheeler Reservoir increased, with many broods of Mallards, Black Ducks and Wood Ducks noted here.

—THOMAS Z. ATKESON, Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, Decatur

HUNTSVILLE — (Ed. note—Since much of this is a banding report it might more properly be included in the Banders' Corner, but I am including it in Regional Wingbeats to remind any of the rest of you who may have some observations to report, that especially during migrations a running day-to-day account of what is seen, what passes through, is not only a record for comparison another year, but is of interest to other people. So please record and send in to Alabama Birdlife your records to share with the rest of us.)

News from the Huntsville area is rather sparse for the spring and summer, with only banding news and whatever incidental observations were made during banding operations. February was uneventful. In fact, repeats on Slate-colored Juncos were so numerous that the nets were taken down.

In March activity improved and a total of 112 birds were banded, still mostly Juncos and White-throated Sparrows. On the 15th male and female Cowbirds were seen and their squeaking, gurgling songs were heard. On the same day Chickadees were observed picking up dog's hair for nesting material. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen on the 19th. At this time a Loggerhead Shrike moved into the banding area and for several days attacked birds caught in the nets—some were killed. The shrike managed to avoid capture. Among captures were a Brown Creeper, Purple Finches, and a Screech Owl. We sighted a Golden-crowned Kinglet on the 26th, and a Black and White Warbler on the 29th. On the 30th, we had a return of a Black and White Warbler banded in August, 1960.

During April 406 birds were banded. A Yellow-throated Vireo and a Hermit Thrush were banded on the 3rd. On the 5th, we sighted Rough-winged Swallows and heard a Common Yellow-throat. Hooded Warbler was heard on the 6th. On the 10th we saw Blackpoll Warbler, Chimney Swift, and heard Chestnut-sided Warbler and a Whip-poor-will. We saw Prairie Warbler and White-eyed Vireo on the 13th. On the 15th we spotted Palm Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Summer Tanager. The same day we had a return on a Wood Thrush banded September, 1960, as well as banding a Blue-winged Warbler, and observing two Broad-winged Hawks courting. On the 16th we banded a Scarlet Tanager, and on the 19th an Orange-crowned Warbler.

On April 29th, a definite wave of birds came in, among which were Redstarts and Golden-winged Warblers, with Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows at the same time. On the 21st, a Kentucky Warbler and a Yellow-breasted Chat were banded. On the 23rd we banded the first Indigo Bunting of the season and also Swainson's Thrush. On the 24th, we banded the first Gray-checked Thrush, Veery, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Ovenbird. On the 25th we banded first Catbird, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler. We also netted a Brewster's Warbler which died later.

On the 26th we banded Nashville and Magnolia Warblers, sighted Philadelphia Vireos, Baltimore Orioles, Cape May Warbler and a Bay-breasted Warbler. Sighted two Bell's Vireos on the 28th and Cerulean Warbler on the 29th.

350 birds were banded in May, among which were a Pileated Woodpecker, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Black-poll, Black-throated Blue and Canada Warblers, as well as both Northern and Louisiana Water-thrushes.

June, July and August have been more or less uneventful, principally because netting was suspended most of the time, with less than 100 birds banded. The only notable records were a Great Crested Flycatcher on August 27th, a Canada Warbler on August 22nd, and a Least Flycatcher on August 30th.

—JIM AND MARGARET ROBINSON, Rt. 1, Box 91, Brownsboro, Alabama

BIRMINGHAM — The Birmingham area has experienced an unusual summer, deviating from the normal by being cooler and with above average rainfall. As of July 25, we were 16.10" in excess of average rainfall for the year. This condition may have some bearing on nesting successes, but has not been ascertained by this writer.

Blanche Dean and Elizabeth Eddy report a nest built by a pair of Brown Thrashers this year that was used for three broods of young. The first nest contained two, possibly three young; the second and third contained three young each. At the second and third nesting the thrasher did not refurbish the nest. Blanche and Elizabeth suspect the same pair of thrashers occupied the nest each time, but cannot be certain.

In late May, Bill Summerour found a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos nesting near Oak Grove which is on the road to Lock 17. Later when he visited the nest he found the eggs broken. Bill believed there was a second pair of Black-billed Cuckoos in the same vicinity. On June 30 Bill found the suspected nest of an Ovenbird in the extreme western part of Jefferson Co. in the direction of Brookwood. A second visit on July 3 confirmed his suspicion that a pair of Ovenbirds were nesting in Jefferson Co.

The K. W. Grimleys had a White-throated Sparrow and a Veery stay near their grounds, 107 Pine Ridge Circle, this summer. This is the third year a White-throated Sparrow has remained for the summer. The White-throated Sparrow in the summer of '60 was not seen after June 19. Since July 21 Mrs. Grimley has not seen or heard the White-throat or Veery. There has been no shore-birding at Lake Purdy since the mud flats that commonly appear through August have remained well submerged. A reconnaissance at this site on August 22 gave evidence of migration with five Barn Swallows.

On September 1, between the hours of 5:30 and 6:16 p.m. D. O. and Harriett Wright counted 161 migrating Nighthawks in five groups along Highway 11 between Trussville and the intersection of Highway 231 and Route 11. There could easily have been as many as 50 additional birds, for buzzing along at sixty makes for inadequate coverage in birding.

HARRIETT WRIGHT, 2749 Millbrook Road, Birmingham, Alabama

TUSCALOOSA — Spring migrants threaded their way up through the river bottoms of western Alabama and nested earlier this season than in previous years recorded. An abundant food supply eased a poor situation weather-wise for the beginning of the nesting season. Early floods muddied roads and made birding difficult in the river bottoms, and as a result, several favorite localities were left unbirded. Fish Crows made their appearance early and one could hear their croup-like calls during the spring days. Water-turkeys are rather common south of Tuscaloosa and can be seen perched on snags drying their wings along the river edges. Painted Buntings were missed again this year. Two springs ago a large nesting population was established ten miles east of here along a wooded lake shore, where they enjoyed a successful season. Quail appear to have had a good nesting season, as numerous large families were noted not only in the Tuscaloosa area, but also along the southern row of counties south of the fall line. Immature doves have been regularly coming into local feeders in large numbers and would indicate a good year for these birds.

We are hopeful for a full fall migration and are anxious to bird the salt marshes come October.

—DAN C. HOLLIMAN, Box 1927, Biology Dept., University, Alabama

AUBURN — From the abundance of birds at our feeders this summer, the breeding season has been well extended throughout the summer. From large numbers of immature birds present, it was a very successful season for Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Rufous Towhees, Chickadees, Bluebirds, Robins, Wood Thrushes, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Summer Tanagers, and of course, Mockingbirds and Blue Jays.

Dr. Maurice Baker, leader of the Alabama Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, has been quite active in banding nestling Red-winged Blackbirds, in answer to the Fish and Wildlife Service request to banders in this region. No other especial efforts were made at banding, since no heron colonies appeared locally.

The dry August weather has produced the usual lack of migrants in this area.

We are looking forward to the Georgia Ornithological Society meeting at Ida Cason Calloway Gardens, October 13, 14, and 15. Being so close to Auburn and the meeting being hosted by the Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club, which includes Auburn, make it of great interest to us. An invitation to attend is extended to all A.O.S. members.

We are encouraged by the editorial in the September 2, Saturday Evening Post, regarding the unwise use of insecticides and their disastrous effects on bird and wildlife populations.

—JULIAN L. DUSI, P. O. Box 742, Auburn, Alabama

GULF COAST — During the last two weeks of April this area was host to the most colorful spring migration seen in many years. A strong north wind meeting our warm gulf breeze produced heavy fogs over a 60 mile area immediately north of Mobile, thus holding up the main wave of migrants. The area from Mobile to Dauphin Island literally teemed with gaudy bird life. On one weekend we checked 135 species including almost every warbler using this flyway. It was the most exciting field trip I have ever made and we wished every A.O.S. member could have been here to enjoy the spectacle with us. Perhaps we may some day arrange a spring meeting.

After the migration passed, our local bird counts seemed rather an anticlimax, yet a report on the nesting season may add to our knowledge of nesting areas.

REGIONAL WINGBEATS—(Continued)

Our marsh birds got off to a late breeding season, because of extremely high rivers. After the flood receded, Gallinules, both Purple and Florida, had good hatches. As late as August 19 I saw broods of very small Purple Gallinules, causing me to wonder if they were second broods.

All other marsh birds were plentiful and had good hatches.

Our shore birds did not fare as well. Jeeps and outboard motors have seriously disturbed their nesting areas. We recommend a rush program to set aside several small islands west of Dauphin Island causeway as sanctuaries for these species.

Black Terns and Brown Pelicans were almost non-existent in this area this summer. Bald Eagles, Mississippi Kites, and Ospreys were also hard to spot.

Let's all support our capable president, Harriett Wright, by attending the Dauphin Island meeting and each member bring some type of bird food to plant on Oct. 28th.

—M. WILSON GAILLARD, 1508 Merchants Nat. Bank Bldg., Mobile

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD NUTHATCH

On December 29, 1954, I banded a Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) with band number 55-82501. This bird was retrapped once more in 1954, five times in 1955, one time in 1958, two times in 1959, and one time in 1960. On September 2, 1961, I again retrapped the same bird. Thus, this bird was in its eighth summer and must be at least seven years old. Due to the high rate of mortality among passerine species (40% or more per year, with heaviest mortality the first year), this is certainly an "old" bird, and must be considered an exception rather than the rule. For further information on longevity and survival rates in the Brown-headed Nuthatch see: Norris, R. A., 1958. Comparative Biosystematics and Life History of the Nuthatches *Sitta pygmaea* and *Sitta pusilla*. University of California Publications in Zoology, 56: 119-300.

—J. BOLLING SULLIVAN, III, 3416 Sherwood Road, Birmingham 13, Ala.

Welcome to New Members

We welcome as new members:

Mr. Archie B. McKay, 713 Terrace Avenue, Montgomery

Mr. Robert E. Waters, 505 Short Street, Hartselle

Address Changes

These new addresses have been reported to us:

Mr. Fred Carney, 3453 Blueberry Lane, Birmingham 13

Mr. Robert Skinner, Route 4, Box 46, Montgomery

Dates to Remember

OCTOBER 13, 14, 15.....G.O.S. Meeting, with Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club—Ida Cason Callaway Gardens

OCTOBER 28, 29.....A.O.S. MEETING — DAUPHIN ISLAND—Make your reservations and remember to plant some bird food.

Watch for publication date of "BIRDS OF ALABAMA" by Thomas Imhof. It won't be long, now.