

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

After traveling over much of the state this last year and visiting with various individuals and with local ornithological groups, one could not help but get the impression that we have tremendous potential in the field for forming local chapters of the Alabama Ornithological Society. Many individuals have expressed a desire for local bird groups to be established in certain small towns or communities. Usually these people have for a long time recognized an exact need or have been aware of certain existing problems involving ornithology or conservation in their own communities. At the same time, they realize that they need help in such a project and have simply felt that they could not accomplish this work without the aid of fellow birders. In most, if not all cases, this has been the genesis for our local existing ornithological clubs. In larger towns and cities, recruiting membership for local chapters poses no real problem. There are already active bird clubs in Anniston, Auburn, Birmingham, and Mobile. In all cases these bird clubs are well staffed with individuals who have a genuine interest in ornithology and conservation. Their monthly meetings are held in museums, institutions of higher learning, and in community centers, with people from all walks of life making up their membership rolls. Each of these groups has well planned calendars for the year. Included in their activities are monthly programs, regularly scheduled field trips, nature camps, conservation films, guest speakers, membership drives, serving as hosts for annual Alabama Ornithological Society meetings, and other worth-while, longrange projects whose objectives are to further the cause of ornithology in Alabama. Other valuable projects which might be considered by our local groups would include: 1) the establishment of bird sanctuaries; 2) the establishment of youth bird clubs for our youngsters; 3) the establishment of annual Christmas, Migration, and Summer bird counts; 4) the compilation of local bird lists and other information which could be distributed to other local bird clubs; and 5) the hosting of monthly visits from other chapters.

The value of these local groups cannot be over-emphasized. Not only do they encourage participation in a growing American activity and hobby, but they are, in many cases, strong conservational forces which can be instrumental in the preservation of our non-renewable natural resources. Alabama is a large state that is interestingly divisible into various life zones and geographical provinces. Our state has many towns and cities which could serve as the nucleus for additional local bird clubs. We need only to create an interest in ornithology.

Dan C. Holliman

Ross Partridge's Comments on the Spring Meeting - 1964

The twelfth annual meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was, indeed a birding holiday with 195 species being counted. This birder journeyed to Dauphin Island on Saturday to attend the meeting in high spirits but time was limited because of the small item known to most of us as earning a living, so I was only on the island for some five hours. In this short time, several things were evident to me and, when driving back to Mobile, several thoughts were pressing into my mind.

The thought most predominant was: what is the most important phase of birding? My mind quickly placed the subject into three categories.

The first is comprised of the "BBC's", that is, those who just watch birds. These birders are only interested in counting species and total birds. They have their BBC's (books, binoculars and check lists) and are running here, there and yond trying to spot one more species for the day. The only good I could see possible evolving from this group is IF their records are given to some scientific organization or other collecting agency for bird information then we could all reap the harvest of their findings. If nothing is done with the information then they are 100 percent free loaders and are not doing the birds one bit of good.

The second category I will call scientific and consists of those birders who count species and make censuses, collect life histories, and band birds. These birders are the ornithologists, the people who study birds. Their efforts do not help the birds today or tomorrow but, rather, help other birders to learn more on the subject and, thus produce a chain reaction in the spreading of knowledge on the subject of birds.

The third order of birders could be called the workers. This group does more for the birds themselves and, thus, makes it possible for the first and second category birders to exist. These workers build houses, establish feeding stations, plant trees that will help the birds in nesting and feeding, and help to develop land for a bird refuge. The workers are the real conservationists. They are the people who are seeing that years from now there will still be a bald eagle or that we will still have a dove or duck to hunt or, better yet we will still have the song birds in our yards. The workers do the most good for the birds themselves.

This writer arrived at one conclusion. The ideal birder is all three. Learn the birds by sight and sound. Collect your information purposefully and pass it on to the many good organizations. Help the birders in your area to build boxes. Help to establish parks and other areas as a refuge. Get others interested in birds.

Which group of birders do you fall into?

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