

THE 1965 ALABAMA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

In 1965, there were seven Christmas counts made in Alabama. Unfortunately the first count by the Montevallo group was received too late to include in the regular summary report. It has been added to the end of the regular report. This summary follows the previous practice of presenting the background of each count, the results and comments of the reporters.

Background

ANNISTON (An). Count made on December 26, 1965, within a 15-mile circle centered at the town square at Jacksonville. Number of hours spent in each habitat: deciduous woods 7, mixed conifer and hardwood 9½, open fields and pastures 8, lakes and streams 7 3/4, towns ½. Weather: clear, temperature 29° to 50° F., wind N 10 mph. Total party hours 32 3/4 (17½ on foot, 15½ by car). Total party miles: 185 (20 on foot, 165 by car). Observers: Dick Ambrose (Compiler), Charles Bonham, William J. Calvert, Jr., Jerome Couch, Walter Coxe, Barbara H. Hall, John Hall, J. W. Johnson, Christine Leake, William Summerour. Total species seen 76, total individuals 10,637.

AUBURN (Au). Count made on December 30 within a 15-mile circle centered at the Auburn post office. Habitat composition of the area was: mixed woods 60%, fields and pastures 20%, water areas 20%. Weather: clear and mild, temperature 42° to 69° F.; wind variable 0-5 mph. Total party hours 29. Total party miles 73½ (64 by car, 9½ by foot). Observers were: John Bourne, Rosemary Dusi, Julian Dusi (Compiler), Ted Ellis, William Goslin, Ann Grub, Walter Grub, Kenneth Landers and D. W. Speake. Total species seen 72, total individuals 680,977.

BIRMINGHAM (Bi). Count made January 2, 1966; warm, rainy, windy, predawn rain then heavy rain with thunder from 1 p.m. on for a total of 1.42 inches; wind SSW averaging 12-35 mph. Temperature: 58° to 70°F., water levels low, Lake Purdy 17 feet below the dam. Thirty-seven observers in 11 parties spent 111 (record) party-hours afield from 1 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and traveled 552 miles by car, 49½ on foot, and 3 by canoe for a total of 604½ miles (55 miles per party). Observers (by party with party leaders' name underscored): Raymond D. Bates, Lynnes Thompson, Jack Carusos, Sara Bates, Andy Bates, Blanche H. Chapman, Mildred Ferris, Blanche E. Dean, Walter Coxe, Ed Greene, Dick Ambrose, Dan C. Holliman, Elberta Reid, Robert R. Reid, George Maynard, Richard Bolin, Thomas A. Imhof (Compiler), John Imhof, Helen Kittinger, Ronny Kittinger, Ricky Kittinger, Jerome Couch, Ruth Brabston, Gertrude Bachmann, Clustie McTyeire, Frederick Fish, Margarete Persons, Georgette Canterbury, Morton H. Perry, M. F. Prather, Russell Perry, Margie Tillotson, Idalene Snead, Corinne Glaze, Emmy Lou Grimley, Alfred A. Walker, Malcolm Harden. Total Species seen 93 (one short of record), total individuals 16,191 or 146 birds per hour.

BON SECOUR (BS). Count made January 1, 1966, within a 15-mile circle. Weather: 6° to 10°F., up to 62° to 77°F., wind SE 8-18 mph. Total party hours 14. Observers were: Fairly Chandler (Compiler), C. P. Bianco, T. R. Horne. Total species seen 92, total individuals about 8360.

DAUPHIN ISLAND and BELLINGRATH GARDENS AREA (DI). Count made December 26, 1965, 4:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.; temperature 34°-63°F., wind NE 10-20 mph. Participants were: Fred Bowers, L. J. Dorn, Mary Gaillard, Wilson Gaillard (Compiler), Tuck Hayward, Sybil Hanks, Richard Horn, W. D. McDaniel, Max McGill, Louise McKinstry, Margaret Miller, Ross Partridge, Elin Silsby.

MOBILE (Mo). Count made January 2, 1966, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., weather clear, temperature 63° to 73°F., wind S 5-15 mph. Circle centered at LaFayette and Government Streets. River, bay and ponds 20%, marshlands and beaches 10%, upland woods 25%, hardwoods and hammocks 5%, thickets and pastures, etc. 15%, open areas 15%, residential 10%. Twenty observers in 7-9 parties. Total party-hours 72 (31 on foot, 41 in car, 2 in plane). Total party-miles 525 (43 on foot, 482 in car, 100 in plane). Participants were: Mrs. Lila Crew, Fr. J. L. Dorn, S.J. (Compiler), Miss Mary Gaillard, Dr. Wilson Gaillard, Tuck Hayward, Richard Horne, Mr. and Mrs. Harry I. Johnstone, Electa Levi, W. D. McDaniel, Max McGill, Mrs. Sheldon McKinstry, Mrs. John R. Miller, Ross Partridge, Mrs. Curtis Patterson, Temple Seibles, Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Tait, Ave Tabor, Elin Silsby. Total species 147, total individuals about 24,238.

Synopsis of all Counts

Name of Bird	Number Seen by Localities					
	An	Au	Bi	BS	DI	Mo
Common Loon				46	20	2
Horned Grebe				2	170	7
Pied-billed Grebe	27	4	20	4	9	5
Eared Grebe					3	1
White Pelican						34
Brown Pelican					3	
Gannet				4		
Double cr. Cormorant				7	750	2
Mag. Frigate-bird						2
Anhinga						5
Great Blue Heron		1	1	3	6	23
Little Blue Heron				2	5	12
Common Egret					10	312
Cattle Egret					2	
Snowy Egret					16	118
White Ibis						30
Louisiana Heron					8	1
American Bittern				1		
Snow Goose					3	17
Canada Goose					3	2
Blue Goose					2	

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Species	An	Au	Bi	BS	DI	Mo	
Mallard	4		5		25	481	
Mottled Duck						2	
Black Duck			1		15	306	
Gadwall	29		2		17	147	
Pintail					3	233	
Green-w. Teal			1		22	40	
Blue-w. Teal					10	45	
American Widgeon	6				6	190	
Shoveller					2	90	
Wood Duck	2				8	30	
Redhead	3		1		28	42	
Ring-necked Duck	65	1	122		14	789	
Canvasback			42		5	160	
Greater Scaup				42	12	11	
Lesser Scaup	1		43	23	194	383	
Golden-eye	1						
Bufflehead	1					8	
Ruddy Duck			5			5	
Hooded Merganser	2	3			4	2	
Common Merganser	2				3		
Red-br. Merganser			3	7	55	8	
Unidentified Ducks			11	60			
Turkey Vulture	6	3	2		7	7	
Black Vulture	1	4	2	1	2	4	
Sharp-sh. Hawk	1		3			1	
Cooper's Hawk			2			1	
Red-tailed Hawk	4	2	8	5	2	5	
Red-sh. Hawk	5	1	12		1	1	
Broad-winged Hawk					1		
Marsh Hawk	3	1	1	2	2	2	
Pigeon Hawk				1	1		
Sparrow Hawk	5	1	6	20	26	15	
Buteo sp?			2				
Bobwhite	20	17	32	9	80	15	
Turkey		2					
King Rail					1	1	
Clapper Rail					10	1	
Virginia Rail					2	2	
Sora					3	3	
Common Gallinule					2	4	
American Coot	51		114	13	200	2371	
Am. Oystercatcher					3		
Semipalm. Plover					32	2	
Piping Plover					36	3	
Snowy Plover					6	1	
Killdeer	148	25	135	45	30	76	
Black-bel. Plover				1	77	68	
Ruddy Turnstone					7		
American Woodcock			1		2	2	
Common Snipe	8	12	9	1	3	22	

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Species	An	Au	Bi	BS	DI	Mo	
Spotted Sandpiper					2	4	
Willet					53	4	
Greater Yellowlegs					3	3	
Lesser Yellowlegs					5	20	
Least Sandpiper		5	24		4	203	
Dunlin					57	244	
Short-billed Dowitcher					63	12	
Semipalm. Sandpiper					26	115	
Western Sandpiper					3	10	
Am. Avocet						18	
Sanderling				2	95	5	
Herring Gull				50	614	1022	
Ring-billed Gull	3		1	13	193	906	
Laughing Gull					200	280	
Bonaparte's Gull				23	7	11	
Forster's Tern				13	20	43	
Gull-billed Tern						1	
Common Tern					3	4	
Royal Tern					28	32	
Sandwich Tern					2		
Caspian Tern				1	4	18	
Black Skimmer					12	175	
Mourning Dove	154	5	578	35	134	558	
Ground Dove					3	12	
Barn Owl			1		1		
Screech Owl		1	3	2	2	2	
Great-horned Owl		2	2	1			
Barred Owl			4		1	1	
Chuck-will's-widow					1		
Common Nighthawk					1		
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird					2		
Belted Kingfisher	5	9	19	2	41	18	
Yellow-sh. Flicker	27	10	107	16	80	58	
Pileated Woodpecker	3	2	18	1	2	2	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	10	8	56	13	23	42	
Red-headed Woodpecker		2	15		10	15	
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker	16	5	36	7	8	4	
Hairy Woodpecker	2	1	21		1	2	
Downy Woodpecker	4	8	54		10	7	
Red-cockaded W'pecker	2		5	6			
Eastern Phoebe	10	5	3	3	12	4	
Prairie Horned Lark	34						
Tree Swallow					13	13	
Scissor-t. Flycatcher				1			
Eastern Wood Peewee					3		
Blue Jay	41	28	214	60	227	215	
Common Crow	378	17	166	17	92	335	
Fish Crow				14	190	95	

Species	An	Au	Bi	BS	DI	Mo
Carolina Chickadee	47	12	248	4	3	24
Tufted Titmouse	27	14	169	11	12	18
White-br. Nuthatch	2		52			
Red-br. Nuthatch		2	7	4	30	4
Brown-headed Nuthatch		16	54	1	16	10
Brown Creeper	1	1	14	1	6	1
House Wren		1	5	11	2	4
Winter Wren	1	4	3	1	3	1
Bewick's Wren			1		1	
Carolina Wren	24	16	129	18	35	47
Long-bill. Marsh Wren					20	2
Short-bill. Marsh Wren				3	3	1
Mockingbird	77	26	245	60	110	149
Catbird			1	2	14	3
Brown Thrasher	5	9	31	16	31	48
Robin	511	42	3522	800	2175	2152
Hermit Thrush	1	2	11	3	1	1
Eastern Bluebird	116	25	62	43	5	10
Blue-gr. Gnatcatcher		1		3	27	5
Golden-cr. Kinglet	23	2	90	8	4	6
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	20	7	111	26	65	40
American Pipit	1					
Water Pipit		3	22	25	6	2
Cedar Waxwing	440	120	676	47	166	229
Loggerhead Shrike	39	2	18	18	17	39
Starling	211	37,350	3206	500	216	766
Solitary Vireo				3	3	5
Orange-cr. Warbler				2	11	11
Magnolia Warbler					1	
Myrtle Warbler	9	17	83	800	800	488
Yellow-thr. Warbler					3	2
Blackburnian Warbler					1	
Pine Warbler		9	48	14	21	41
Palm Warbler		1	6	2	1	2
Yellowthroat			1	7	13	4
Yellow-br. Chat					1	
House Sparrow	153	4	618	180	95	404
E. Meadowlark	633	14	255	131	78	88
W. Meadowlark				1		
Red-w. Blackbird	2606	257,140	120	4100	12,500	7392
Rusty Blackbird	40	32,140	13		58	21
Brewer's Blackbird					175	2
Boat-t. Grackle				68		74
Common Grackle	3005	64,280	305	450	582	674
Brown-h. Cowbird	131	289,282	282	8	143	28
Unidentified Blkbirds	243		234			
Cardinal	102	16	486	64	104	117
Evening Grosbeak	11		4			
Purple Finch	37	5	116	30		3
Pine Siskin	12		220	5		3

Species	An	Au	Bi	BS	DI	Mo
Am. Goldfinch	213	37	508	37	87	140
Rufous-s. Towhee	46	21	332	21	92	52
Savannah Sparrow	38	15	40	35	31	81
Sharp-tailed Sparrow				1	5	
Seaside Sparrow				2	11	
Vesper Sparrow	8	9	13	26	8	10
Bachman's Sparrow				2		
Slate-col. Junco	325	1	624		2	
Chipping Sparrow	27	23	146	42	20	42
Field Sparrow	315	43	326	7	38	24
White-cr. Sparrow				2	5	
White-thr. Sparrow	138	37	581	90	200	257
Fox Sparrow	21	14	19	3		
Lincoln's Sparrow					2	1
Swamp Sparrow	44	13	53	31	79	25
Song Sparrow	92	16	164	11	10	19

Summary of All Counts

Location	No. of Observers	Party Hours	No. of Kinds Seen	Total Individuals Seen
Anniston	10	33	76	10,637
Auburn	9	29	72	680,977
Birmingham	37	111	93	16,191
Bon Secour	3	14	92	8,360
Dauphin Island	13	63	156	23,579
Mobile	20	72	147	24,238
Totals	92	322	182	764,968

Comments of the Compilers

Anniston.- The count area was shifted from that of previous counts to include more of Calhoun County since we have just started an intensive campaign on the study of the status of birds within that county. Birds seen during the period but not on the day of the count were: Great Blue Heron, Northern Horned Lark, Brown-headed Nuthatch and Bewick's Wren.

Birmingham.- The rain was undoubtedly responsible for some of our totals being lower than usual. This is particularly true of woodpeckers and many of our landbird species such as sparrows, titmice, nuthatches. The blackbirds were counted in fewer numbers than ever. Mainly frequenters of farming areas in the winter, these birds have declined locally for some years, probably a reflection of a decline in farming areas near the city and within our circle. Finches, notably Cardinal, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak, and American Goldfinch were abundant and if better light for observation had been available, we would have

listed record numbers of some sparrows. Low water levels in Lake Purdy are probably responsible for our failure to list Common Loon, Horned Grebe, and Bufflehead; yet this same condition gave us a record number of Least Sandpipers. The hawk list is excellent, likely the result of better coverage and finding most of them perched. Paradoxically, Hairy Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were recorded in highest numbers. Cedar Waxwing and Mockingbird were also recorded in highest numbers, while others close to the highest ever were Robin, Myrtle Warbler, Pine Warbler, and House Wren. The slight decline in numbers of phoebes and bluebirds and Hermit Thrushes may be explained by the weather making observation difficult, but I suspect that the decline in Bewick's Wren and Brown Thrasher is real. In recent years we have been counting in lower numbers some species that probably find in our count circle less and less available habitat. This seems true of many water birds and also American Coot, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Water Pipit, and Savannah Sparrow. Other species not even recorded this year that are in the above category include the Marsh Wrens, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Bon Secour.-Poor concentration of birds in the area was possibly due to the general mildness of weather. Some increase noted about December 19 and again about January 9. Birds not seen on day of count but during the period: Clapper Rail, Lesser Yellowlegs, Downy Woodpecker, Vermillion Flycatcher (usually seen in mild winters), Yellow-throated Warbler. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was observed in detail by C. P. Bianco and P. F. Chandler and was previously recorded in the 1963 count. The Western Meadowlark was observed separately by C. P. Bianco, P. F. Chandler, and Mrs. T. A. Horne. The Seaside Sparrow was seen at less than 20 feet by C. P. Bianco, P. F. Chandler, and Mrs. T. A. Horne in typical habitat but had not been previously seen here.

Mobile.-Seen during the period, but not on the day of the count: Slate-colored Junco, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Groove-billed Ani (Imhof does not list the Ani and Peterson says occasional in Louisiana and Florida - Ye Ed.).

MONTEVALLO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

E. B. Sledge

The Montevallo Audubon Society conducted its first Christmas Bird Count on December 31, 1965.

The count was conducted in a 15-mile diameter circle, centered at Montevallo Post Office to include Calmont Woods, Alabama College Lake, Ebenezer Swamp, McEntee Farm, and Ashville Circle Subdivision. Oak-pine Woods 35%, Deciduous Woods 20%, Low Floodplain Woods 10%, Pastures and Fence Rows 15%, Ponds and Lakes 5%, Towns 15%.

December 31, 1965; 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.; temperature 55° to 70°F.; wind S 5 m.p.h. Eight Observers in three parties. Total party-hours, 45 (37 on foot, 8 by car); total party-miles, 98 (18 on foot and 80 by car).

Species observed:

Black Vulture 1; Red-shouldered Hawk 1; Pied-billed Grebe 2; Turkey Vulture 5; Cooper's Hawk 1; Mourning Dove 12; Belted Kingfisher 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker 5; Hairy Woodpecker 4; Eastern Phoebe 3; Blue Jay 27; Carolina Chickadee 7; Brown-headed Nuthatch 3; Brown Creeper 2; Robin 9; Eastern Bluebird 8; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 4; Cedar Waxwing 55; Killdeer 4; Common Snipe 1; Screech Owl 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker 4; Pileated Woodpecker 1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2; Downy Woodpecker 3; Common Crow 12; Tufted Titmouse 9; Carolina Wren 9; Mockingbird 9; Brown Thrasher 5; Loggerhead Shrike 3; Purple Finch 8; Field Sparrow 28; White-crowned Sparrow 4; Starling 30; Myrtle Warbler 8; Pine Warbler 4; House Sparrow 15; Rusty Blackbird 3; Common Grackle 12; Cardinal 12; Slate-colored Junco 10; Chipping Sparrow 14; White-throated Sparrow 24; Song Sparrow 8.

Total: 45 species; 393 individuals.

Participants: Mrs. Leslie Hubbard, Mrs. P. J. McEntee, Dr. Robert H. Mount, Dr. E. B. Sledge, Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Trumbauer, Dr. H. F. Turner, Dr. Katherine Vickery.

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Some Notes From Mississippi

The Newsletter of our sister group, The Mississippi Ornithological Society, was received recently and contains some items of interest to Alabama birders.

Two towers near Jackson, Mississippi, were the cause of the loss of an estimated 500 birds last October. Thirty-nine species were identified from those collected. Nineteen of these were warblers. A Lincoln's Sparrow was among those identified.

A Yellow-headed Blackbird visited a feeding station in Moss Point, Mississippi in April, 1965. Mobile's Mrs. Toenes and the Greene's from Searcy, Arkansas, were among those that saw the bird.

Evening Grosbeaks visited Jackson, Mississippi in February, 1966. This species had previously been seen in 1962.

A Harris's Sparrow was recorded and collected on the Christmas Count at Jackson. This is not the first record for the State, but is for the Jackson area.

Maurice F. Baker, Editor