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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The President's Page	1
The Status of the Cattle Egret in Alabama, 1966 Julian L. Dusi and Rosemary T. Dusi	2
1966 - Evening Grosbeak Year. Harriett Wright	7
The 1966 Alabama Christmas Bird Counts	9
Minutes of the Winter Meeting, Alabama Ornithological Society	15

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

This spring will see a significant achievement toward the conservation of birdlife in Alabama when the bird sanctuary on Dauphin Island becomes an Audubon National Wildlife Sanctuary. Credit is due to the untiring efforts over the years of Dr. Wilson Gaillard and his fellow Gulf Coast conservationists in creating from some sand dunes and a proposed but abandoned golf course a true sanctuary for both resident species and those who make the long trip across the waters to Mexico and Central America. They have literally built the sanctuary from the ground up -- planting, pruning and clearing areas. There are both pines and deciduous trees, habitat for waterfowl and open areas. Congratulations to our coastal birders and especially to Dr. Gaillard for bringing Alabama its first Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary!

AOS has adopted the conducting of spring and fall migration counts as a proposed part of the year-round surveying of the distribution of birds in Alabama. The spring counts are to be conducted during the last part of April or first part of May in the same manner as the Christmas counts. Specific dates are to be selected by the local groups conducting the counts. All groups are urged to participate in this program so that adequate information on the distribution and abundance of spring birds in the various parts of our state may be collected. All data, including both total species and total numbers of each, should be reported to the editor of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE.

In addition, during the nesting season there are two programs through which we can contribute to the collection of ornithological knowledge -- the North American Nest Record Program and the breeding bird survey conducted in cooperation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The purpose of the nest record program is to collect data on as many nestings as possible throughout the continent and make it available to students, scientists and others. Single nest observations are desired although naturally observations over a period of time are more valuable. Data on common species is sought the same as on rare ones so all of us can easily participate in this program. The small cards, which contain instructions for their completion, may be obtained from Dr. Julian Dusi, coordinator for the program in Alabama.

The breeding bird survey involves statistically controlled observations along routes selected at random throughout the state. Alabama observers staffed forty such routes last year. The routes, each approximately 25-miles in length, are to be run during the month of June although because of our southern geographical location, it is most desirable that they be run during the first part of the month. In addition, the survey routes are not to be run if weather is rainy or too windy, so running them early is a hedge against missing a route due to bad weather. The value of the survey will be greatest in future years when repeated coverage of the same routes under comparable conditions may reveal changes in breeding populations of the various species.

It has certainly been a pleasure for me to have served as your president this past year, and I should like to thank for their assistance all the members of AOS who have cooperated so much in the work of the Society.

Robert R. Reid, Jr.