

In general, distribution in Alabama is heaviest in the good pasture regions in the southern tier of counties and following the large rivers northward through the coastal plain, especially in localities with nesting colonies of native herons. They are also present in the pastures of the Tennessee Valley. Rarely are they seen in the Piedmont and mountain areas, as well as in the large heavily wooded areas in much of the rest of the state.

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## 1966 - EVENING GROSBEEK YEAR

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Howell (1924) does not include the Evening Grosbeak among the birds of Alabama. Imhof (1962:532) states that since 1956 the Evening Grosbeak, Hesperiphona vespertina, has become known as a rare and local bird in winter in Alabama.

Evening Grosbeaks have appeared in Alabama in greater numbers during the first part of the years 1958, 1962, 1966 (Wright 1962). A much smaller number was noted in the fall of 1959 and early part of 1960 (Anon. 1960). Only one record is reported for the first part of 1961 (Imhof 1961). No Evening Grosbeaks were reported in ALABAMA BIRDLIFE for the first part of the years 1957, 1959, 1963, 1964, 1965. It will be of interest to observe the Evening Grosbeak invasions in future years to note if the greater numbers follow the four year cycle suggested by the 1958, 1962 and 1966 invasions.

Ludlow Griscom emphasized the importance of food availability when explaining movements of nomadic species (James 1958). Douglas James (1958) pointed out that in the winter of 1957-58 there was a general scarcity of conifer seeds, deciduous tree seeds and berries in the boreal forest. The 1961-62 winter marked the first year that Arkansas and Louisiana experienced an Evening Grosbeak invasion and showed a progressively greater southern penetration, close to the Gulf Coast in three states (James, 1962). According to James (1962), Aaron Bagg reported the increasing breeding population of Evening Grosbeaks in the northeast which may be noteworthy in regard to the increasing wintering of Evening Grosbeaks in the south.

The first report of the Evening Grosbeaks in Alabama for the 1965-1966 season was made on the Christmas counts of December, 1965, both for the Birmingham area and Anniston area (Anon. 1966). Not until February 5, 1966, did two male Evening Grosbeaks appear at the feeder of the author. Following this date Evening Grosbeaks were seen at the feeder until May 4<sup>th</sup> with a final appearance of one female. A total of 76 Evening Grosbeaks, 25 males and 51 females, were banded. Rarely, in a flock of 15-20 could more than two bands be seen. This might indicate that the flock was more or less moving, but does suggest very substantial numbers of Grosbeaks in the vicinity.

Two Evening Grosbeaks trapped in the 1966 spring season were recoveries: a male, 591-37968, banded at Sykesville, Pa. March 18, 1966 and retrapped at this station April 10, 1966; the second, a female, 631-06122, banded at Lake Junaluska, N. C. on April 12, 1964 and retrapped at this station April 14, 1966. Of the 50 Evening Grosbeaks banded at this station in the spring of 1962, one female, 621-70642, banded April 16, was retrapped March 21, 1963 at Ballaton Spa, N. Y.

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## KIRTLAND'S WARBLER IN ALABAMA?

In October we received from Dr. William J. Calvert, Jr., of Jacksonville a detailed account of his observation of a warbler, which he concluded with, "I can find no other warbler, however, that is nearly like what I saw except the Kirtland's." In February I received another letter from him in which he said, "My last letter to you contained the report of the Kirtland's Warbler. I sent a similar record to Roger Tory Peterson and received the same judgement: the bird would have been creditable if it had not been so extremely rare and if more than one person had seen it." This experience points out the need for absolute identification of rare or unusual birds, and also illustrates one of the reasons bird watchers watch birds - namely, you never know what you might see next.

The Editor

## THE 1966 ALABAMA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Summarized by the Editor

The 1966 Christmas Bird Counts were made in locations as follows: Auburn (Au), Birmingham (Bi), Bon Secour (BS), Dauphin Island-Bellingrath Gardens (DI), Jacksonville (Ja) and Mobile (Mo). The count made by the Calhoun County group was made in an area centered around Jacksonville instead of Anniston as had been done previously, and they plan to use this new location for future counts. This report follows the same format as those of previous years.

## Background Data of Counts

Auburn:--The Christmas Bird Count was made at Auburn, Alabama, December 30, 1966. The center of the 15 mile diameter circle was the Auburn Post Office. Composition of the area was: mixed woods, 50%; pastures and open fields, 30%; water and mud flats, 20%. Weather was overcast with light drizzle in the afternoon. Temperature at start, 34° and 35° at end. Wind was 0-10 mph variable. Nine observers made three parties, which spent 23 party hours in the field, driving 139 miles, walking 2.5 miles and one mile by boat.

Participants were: M. F. Baker, Beth Baker, D. L. Bateman, J. L. Dusi (compiler), R. T. Dusi, T. Ellis, W. E. Goslin, P. Spencer, and B. F. Young.

Total species recorded, 64; total individuals, 502,254.

Birmingham:--December 26, 1966: overcast, temperature 30° to 51°; low of 15° the morning before was not only the coldest for the winter thus far but the coldest Christmas of record here. Thirty-four observers in 11 parties spent 112 party-hours afield from 5:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. and traveled 595 miles by car and on foot.

Observers (names of party leaders underscored) by party: Raymond Bates, Andy Bates, Jack Carusos, Ranny Kittinger, Blanche Chapman, Elizabeth Archibald, Mary Ivy Burks, Blanche E. Dean, Walter F. Coxe, L. E. Greene, Agnes Simonetti, Dan C. Holliman, Mike Creel, John M. Imhof, Thomas A. Imhof, compiler, Helen Kittinger, Ricky Kittinger, Ronny Kittinger, Clustie McTyeire, Frederick P. Fish, Jr., Anne Fish, Morton H. Perry, Russell Perry, M. F. Prather, Frederick T. Carney, Margie Tillotson, Robert R. Reid, Jr., Elberta Reid, George Maynard, Russell Bailey, James Shepherd, Idalene Snead, Corinne Glaze, Virginia Nancarrow.

Total species recorded, 92; total individuals, 14,594.

Bon Secour:--Count was made December 31, 1966, with the center of the census area at the Bon Secour post office, beginning at 5:30 A.M. and ending at 6:30 P.M.; temperature 44° to 50°; partly cloudy; wind SE 10-18. Miles on foot, 8; miles by car, 208.

Observers: Fairley Chandler (compiler), Fred Auther, Tuck Hayward,