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ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this my final message to the membership for my term of office, I wish to express my appreciation for the support I have received.

The AOS has been a comfortable organization. We have a nucleus of professionals and knowledgeable amateurs, supported by a loyal and constant membership. Our Society has grown slowly, and to our advantage in at least one respect: most of us have known each other long enough to have become old friends.

But now we are faced with the disturbance of controversy. We have engaged briefly in the conservation fight, and we have spoken out loudly enough to commit ourselves to a stand. This brings up a point. Although we have had unanimous support for our resolutions and other actions, I sense that the membership at large does not wish to engage in the politics and associated responsibilities which come with involvement in controversial issues.

We need to decide immediately whether we should continue to fight our own private battles for conservation or just give our support to other organizations created primarily for the cause of conservation.

In the past year we have engaged in a letter writing campaign in opposition to the Alabama Water Improvement Commission standards for Alabama streams and we have issued a resolution opposing the stream channelization program of the United States Government's Soil Conservation Service.

We should be pleased that the United States Department of the Interior has expressed dissatisfaction with the Alabama water standards.

In the stream channelization issue, our resolution has been distributed widely, but the success of our campaign appears doubtful.

Significantly, we seem to have lost the support of the state government in both issues. Governor Wallace has notified Secretary of the Interior, Udall, that Alabama's water standards are good enough and we have been advised by the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee of the wholehearted state support of the stream channelization program.

In regard to our ornithological activities, I feel that we should expand our organized programs and try to interest our membership in greater participation. We need more programs of interest to our younger members and we should include them in our assignments and appointments.

I am sure that AOS can look forward to another successful year and I hope that our new officers receive the same support and consideration that I have received in the past year.

James C. Robinson

THE 1967 ALABAMA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Summarized by The Editor

The 1967 Christmas Bird Counts in Alabama, submitted to the Editor, were made at Auburn, Birmingham and Jacksonville.

All counts were centered as in 1966. Pertinent data and participants for each area were as follows:

Auburn: - - December 30, 1967. Weather was clear. Temperature at start 29°; 43° at finish. Wind was light and variable. Five parties drove 65 miles, walked 14½ miles, in 27 party - hours. Participants were: Julian L. Dusi (compiler), Rosemary T. Dusi, George W. Folkerts, Hilburn O. Hillestad, William E. Goslin and Robert Waters.

Birmingham: - - December 30, 1967. Skies broken to overcast. Temperature at start 29°; 44° at end. Winds easterly at 5 mph. Twelve parties spent 114½ party - hours afield, traveling 559 miles by car and on foot. Participants, listed by party with leaders names underscored, were: Morton H. Perry, M. F. Prather; Raymond Bates, Andrew Bates, Larry Hodges; Dan C. Holliman; J. Russell Bailey, George F. Maynard; Robert R. Reid, Jr., Elberta G. Reid, Robert E. Burks, Jr., Mary Ivy Burks, Bobby Burks, James W. Shepherd, Cale Carruthers, Maxine Wright; Walter F. Coxe, Naomi Banks, Ed Greene, Christine Leake, Larry Roberts; Jack N. Carusos, Ricky Kittinger; Helen Kittinger, Jerome Couch; Clustie McTyeire, Fred Fish, Anne Fish, Margarette Persons; Blanche E. Dean, Wilma Lindberg, Harriett H. Wright, Blanche H. Chapman; Idalene F. Snead, Mildred Ferris, Corrine Glaze; Thomas A. Imhof (compiler), and John M. Imhof.

Jacksonville: - - December 26, 1967. Weather with light haze. Temperature 36° to 48°; wind WSW at 5 mph. Four parties traveled 10 miles on foot, 79 by car, in a total of 20 3/4 party-hours. Participants were: R. E. Ambrose (compiler), W. E. Calvert, L. D. Jennings, S. Jones, K. E. Landers, Leon McCleur, H. H. Mueller, Marion Rollins, C. L. Simpson, Alex and Mrs. Stuart, and C. W. Summerour.

List of Species

Name	Localities			Name	Localities		
	AUB	BHM	JVL		AUB	BHM	JVL
Loon, Common		2		Merganser, Hooded		2	
Grebe, Pied-billed	8	51	74	Merganser, Common			1
Heron, Great Blue	1	4	2	Merganser, Red-b.		1	
Goose, Blue		2		Vulture, Turkey		7	3
Mallard		49		Vulture, Black	20		
Gadwall		2	6	Hawk, Sharp-sh.	1		
Duck, Wood	2	3		Hawk, Cooper's	1	1	
Redhead			16	Hawk, Red-tailed	7	18	2
Duck, Ring-necked	1	103	6	Hawk, Red-sh.	1	12	
Canvasback		86	1	Hawk, Marsh	2		
Scaup, Lesser		87		Hawk, Sparrow	2	19	2
Goldeneye, Common	3	2		Bobwhite	107	77	10
Bufflehead		1		Coot, American		447	46
Duck, Ruddy		13		Killdeer	16	143	11

Name	Localities			Name	Localities		
	AUB	BHM	JVL		AUB	BHM	JVL
Woodcock, American	2	1		Warbler, Myrtle	27	353	
Snipe, Common	4	23	3	Warbler, Pine	5	30	14
Sandpiper, Least	3	7		Warbler, Palm	1		
Gull, sp.				Yellowthroat		1	
Dove, Mourning	72	709	67	Sparrow, House	57	195	87
Owl, Screech		2		Meadowlark, E.	41	410	210
Owl, Gr.-horned		1		Blackbird,			
Owl, Barred	4	1		Red-w.	360,000	317	250
Kingfisher, Belted	5	25	10	Blackbird, R.	100	87	6
Flicker, Y.-shafted	22	131	30	Grackle,			
Woodpecker, Pileated	4	41	5	Common	90,000	25	75
Woodpecker, R.-b.	16	100	10	Cowbird, Br.-			
Woodpecker, R.-h.	1	20	1	headed	60,000	85	33
Sapsucker, Y.-b.	6	32	9	Cardinal	71	489	83
Woodpecker, Hairy	1	14		Finch, Purple	3	77	3
Woodpecker, Downy	21	97	7	Goldfinch, Am.	38	908	103
Woodpecker, Red-c.		12		Towhee, Rufous-			
Phoebe, Eastern	7	13	4	sided	48	341	40
Lark, Horned			100	Sparrow, Savannah	17	28	10
Jay, Blue	42	311	108	Junco, Slate-c.	76	719	100
Crow, Common	61	237	250	Sparrow, Chipping	110	232	21
Chickadee, Car.	51	267	77	Sparrow, Field	88	348	190
Titmouse, Tufted	29	211	9	Sparrow, Wh.-thr.	106	1,054	36
Nuthatch, Wh.-br.		28		Sparrow, Fox	3	32	
Nuthatch, Br.-h.	29	129	3	Sparrow, Swamp	5	62	24
Creeper, Brown	2	16	2	Sparrow, Song	43	353	22
Wren, House		2		Total Species	66	83	60
Wren, Winter	3	18	1	Total Individ-		12,734	
Wren, Carolina	35	181	37	uals	601,506		2,751
Mockingbird	30	259	75				
Catbird		3					
Thrasher, Brown	28	49	11				
Robin	69	549	56				
Thrush, Hermit	2	13					
Bluebird, Eastern	10	61	14				
Kinglet, Golden-cr.	8	103	7				
Kinglet, Ruby-cr.	32	265	14				
Pipit, Water	2						
Waxwing, Cedar	45	645	14				
Shrike, Loggerhead	9	22	13				
Starling	90,074	861	370				
Vireo, Solitary		1					

In addition to the foregoing lists seen on the count days, the following species were seen in the count areas during the count period but not on the count days:

Birmingham: - - Sharp-shinned Hawk, Barn Owl, Water Pipit, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler.

Jacksonville: - - Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Marsh Hawk, Hermit Thrush, and Fox Sparrow.

THE COMPETITION BETWEEN CATTLE EGRETS AND LITTLE BLUE HERONS

Julian L. Dusi

Since the Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, invasion into the heron colonies of Alabama in 1963, we have carefully watched for possible competition with the other species in the colonies and especially with the Little Blue Heron, *Florida caerulea*.

A cursory look at the food items regurgitated by the nestlings and observations of feeding adults shows little, if any, possibility of competition for food.

In an orderly nesting colony, the nests of Cattle Egrets and Little Blue Herons are interspersed, sometimes within a foot of each other. At a glance, there does not appear to be much nesting strife...little more than an occasional territorial squabble. There is, however, one critical point at which competition for nesting sites and even nests is very great. To comprehend the situation, it is necessary to explain both the non-competitive and the competitive sequences of nest establishment.

Non-competitive Nest Establishment:

The Little Blue Herons arrive first at the colony area and establish their nests in one or more concentrated groups. By the time the Cattle Egrets arrive, the Little Blue Herons usually have eggs in the nests and may even have young hatched. Small numbers of Cattle Egrets arrive and shortly begin nest building in sites adjacent to Little Blue Heron nests. Nest building is done in an orderly manner and under these circumstances there is little disturbance of the already nesting Little Blue Herons and little competition in the colony.

Competitive Nest Establishment:

This sequence starts in the same way with the Little Blue Herons in their arrival and nest establishment. The Cattle Egrets arrive later than usual and when they arrive their numbers are greater. By arriving later, or by being delayed by drought conditions, some are in more advanced breeding condition and more quickly seek nesting sites. Their nest building is not orderly and they cause much confusion in the colony. The other Cattle Egrets that do not immediately nest use the colony as a roosting area only. They usually arrive at near dusk, roost close to the nesting egrets and thus cause much confusion. This often causes the poorly constructed nests to collapse or the confusion is so great that it causes nest desertion to take place. The Cattle Egrets quickly take over any deserted nests. Thus nesting competition results.

Results of Competition

The results of the nesting competition are difficult to absolutely assess because other contributing factors are operative. The following observations show trends, at least.

Comparison of Numbers of Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets:

In most of the colonies studied, we have very generalized data on trends but for the colony near Pansey, Houston County, Alabama, we have

better population density information. Table 1 presents these data.

Table 1. Comparative Numbers of Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets at the Pansey, Alabama Colony.

Date	Numbers Counted and Estimated	
	LBH	CE
July 7, 1963	300	600
Sept. 13, 1964	100	3,000
April 29, 1965	190	167
July 23, 1965	25	950
1966	Colony Area Not Used	
June 10, 1967	300	3,000
Aug. 4, 1967	300	6,650

Apparently in this colony the Little Blue Herons are remaining about the same in numbers and the Cattle Egrets are increasing in numbers greatly. Also, it is apparent that the existing competition is not greatly harmful to the Little Blue Herons and that their population density is controlled by other limiting factors. The Cattle Egrets, on the other hand, are not limited by the Little Blue Herons and most seasons are not limited by other environmental factors and are therefore increasing at an expanding rate (Dusi and Dusi, 1968; Dusi and Dusi, manuscript).

Possible Breakdown of Species Isolating Mechanisms:

Normally two species, occupying the same habitat, are isolated from breeding by one or more mechanisms which may be morphological, ecological, or behavioral. When the mechanisms fail to isolate the species, hybrids between them result.

Until the Cattle Egret invaded our native heron colonies, the Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets were isolated by being found on separate continents, during their breeding seasons. Our data on nesting competition show that fairly often nests deserted by Little Blue Herons are taken over by Cattle Egrets and that the Cattle Egrets often simply add their eggs to those already present in the nests. When the eggs hatch, the Little Blue Heron nestlings are reared by adult Cattle Egrets, just like their young. The final step has yet to be observed but we expect that the imprinting that has resulted through the action of the Cattle Egrets rearing their nestlings together with Little Blue Heron nestlings, will cause a breakdown in species recognition. This should occur in the breeding season following the hatching year. If the Little Blue Herons, still in their white or slightly mottled plumage, return to breed (Dusi, 1967), they may select or be selected by a Cattle Egret as a mate. If other behavioral patterns and chromosomal likeness permit, they may produce hybrid young.

We expect, therefore, that the major effects of competition between the Little Blue Heron and the Cattle Egret will be seen in the final results of nesting competition, in the form of hybrids. We also expect

the great increase in Cattle Egret numbers will result in the establishment of more nesting colonies.

Competition Between Nestlings:

Thus far, most nestling behavior has been compatible enough that little competition has been seen. The young of both species are belligerent to any foreign nestling and will repel it from their nest.

On June 24, 1967, while gathering data for a nesting success study near Pansey, Alabama, we found a nestling Cattle Egret in the process of swallowing his nest mate. The cannibalistic young egret was about two weeks old and his nest mate about half as old. When they were observed, the larger nestling had swallowed the head and neck of the smaller bird but the body was too large to be swallowed. The following day the nest was visited and the neck of the smaller bird had been separated from its body. Apparently the head and neck had been swallowed completely. The larger nestling seemed to be in good condition and eventually fledged.

This is the first case of cannibalism we have observed but it could be more common than we suppose. Frequently the smallest young of a nest is found dead in the nest, or missing. Some of these losses could have been caused by cannibalism. It is possible also, that large Cattle Egret young could eat small Little Blue Heron young in an adjacent nest. Therefore, this relationship between the young might add another phase to the competition that exists between the Cattle Egret and the Little Blue Heron.

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ORNITHOLOGY IN ALABAMA

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Part I

Editorial Note. The major aim of Alabama Birdlife has been to gather and print articles of ornithology in Alabama. In an attempt to mention articles printed elsewhere and before the advent of Alabama Birdlife, bibliographies must be resorted to. Mrs. Jordan's annotated bibliography was submitted as a qualifying paper to the Graduate Faculty of Jacksonville State University, in May 1967, and is condensed here to omit all Alabama Birdlife articles, routine reports in Audubon Field Notes, and the several major works on Alabama birds. It covers the period from 1824 to 1966.

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Wadley, Alabama

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded May 17, 1952

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SLIDE COLLECTION NOTICE !!!

The Executive Council of AOS at its recent meeting on Dauphin Island voted to establish a slide collection of photographs of all species of birds occurring in the State of Alabama and, where there are differences in plumage due to season, age or sex, of each such plumage. It is intended that there will be two sets of slides -- one to provide a collection substantiating occurrence of the species in Alabama, and a second set to provide educational and scientific material on birds of Alabama for use by authorized persons. The first set will consist of the best pictures available of the species as determined by the slide collection committee, and the second will consist of duplicates of the first set plus other photographs determined by the committee to be satisfactory for the uses to which the second set is to be put.

Members are encouraged to submit to the committee all slides they wish considered for the collection. Those to be included in the first set must, of course, be taken of birds in Alabama. Original slides are preferred although duplicates may be accepted. Each slide submitted should be accompanied by the name or AOU number of the bird, date and place of photograph, name or initials of contributor and, where relevant, seasonal plumage, sex and age of the bird. The council has authorized payment of 25¢ for each slide accepted for the collection, although donations will be gratefully received. Slides should be delivered to the chairman of the committee or, if more convenient, to one of the committee members. (Members of the committee may, of course, retain their slides pending the first meeting of the committee to select slides for the collection.) The committee members are Fairly Chandler, Julian Dusi, Tom Imhof, Helen Kittinger, Jim Robinson and Harriett Wright. Please let us know as soon as possible what slides you wish to submit for inclusion in the collection so that the committee may begin its review promptly.

Robert R. Reid, Jr., Chairman
1500 Brown-Marx Building
Birmingham, Alabama 35203