

## TELEVISION TOWER CASUALTIES AT BIRMINGHAM IN 1967

Michael Lee Bierly

In the fall of 1967, daily records were kept of dead birds found at television towers, WAPI and WBRC, in Birmingham.

Both towers are located one-eighth mile apart south of Birmingham on top of Red Mountain. Both are of the needle construction and reach an altitude of 1802 feet above sea level (including the antenna), which is the maximum that F.A.A. regulation will allow on Red Mountain in Birmingham. The WAPI tower is 825 feet tall and is supported by fifteen cables; the WBRC tower is 795.2 feet tall and has nine cables.

Two random spring collections were made at WBRC by Raymond Bates on May 1 and Andrew Bates on May 7. Collected on May 1 were Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo (6), Blackpoll Warbler, and Indigo Bunting. May 7 yielded Red-eyed Vireo, Blackpoll Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole.

Fall collections were begun on September 13 and terminated on November 15. During this period 64 individuals of 26 species were recorded. Table 1 shows the species list, total numbers of birds and the collection dates. Since it cannot be determined whether a bird fell before or after midnight, the morning date is used.

The Yellow-breasted Chat spanned the longest period from September 13 to November 2 with six individuals. Next was the Tennessee Warbler from September 15 to October 29 with seven birds. The Red-eyed Vireo was evident from September 13 to October 12 with fourteen individuals. The last mentioned composed the largest number of specimens of one species recorded.

Late records were established in the Mountain Region of Alabama for four species: An Acadian Flycatcher on October 10 was sixteen days late; a Wood Thrush on October 23 was one day late; a Philadelphia Vireo on October 20 was seven days late and tied the late record for the state; and a Yellow-breasted Chat on November 2 was ten days late, excluding a wintering date in Gadsden, 1956.

Bats also were victims of the television towers. Two red bats, *Lasiurus borealis*, were found, one each on September 20 and 23, and one hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereus*, on October 10. No explanation can be offered as to why they hit the towers, since the bats have a type of "radar" system that would seem to protect them.

Specimens collected were aged, sexed, and then used for plumage study and skeletons. This type of project provides birds for study that would not have previously been available and eliminates the need for the so called "field collections."

Whether future years produce similar results only time will tell. This year did show that these Birmingham towers reflect both the migration through the area and late records that might have been missed in the field.

I wish to extend my thanks and gratification to Elberta and Robert Reid for their untiring effort and desire in providing transportation for the author and assisting in the collections. Also I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Andrew Bates and Raymond Bates in collections, Thomas Imhof for record data, and the Samford University Biology Department for the use of its facilities.

TABLE 1

Species list. Total numbers and collection dates. Each number in parenthesis indicates total on a given date.

SPECIES	NUMBER	DATES COLLECTED
Virginia Rail	1	Sept. 26.
Acadian Flycatcher	1	Oct. 10.
House Wren	1	Oct. 4.
Wood Thrush	1	Oct. 23.
Hermit Thrush	2	Oct. 29, 30.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	Nov. 4, 12.
White-eyed Vireo	2	Sept. 23(2).
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	Sept. 13.
Red-eyed Vireo	14	Sept. 13(4), 14(3), 15(1), 16(2), 17(1), 24(1), 26(1), Oct. 12(1).
Philadelphia Vireo	1	Oct. 20.
Tennessee Warbler	7	Sept. 15(1), Oct. 3(1), 8(1), 10(1), 11(1), 26(1), 29(1).
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	Nov. 3.
Magnolia Warbler	1	Oct. 19.
Myrtle Warbler	1	Oct. 30.
Black-thr. Green Warbler	2	Oct. 31, 26.
Prairie Warbler	1	Sept. 18.
Ovenbird	1	Oct. 18.
Northern Waterthrush	1	Sept. 13.
Kentucky Warbler	4	Sept. 13(2), 14(1), 15(1).
Yellowthroat	1	Sept. 23.
Yellow-breasted Chat	6	Sept. 13(2), 14(1), 15(1), Nov. 2(1).
Indigo Bunting	1	Oct. 26.
Purple Finch	1	Nov. 5.
Savannah Sparrow	1	Nov. 11.
Grasshopper Sparrow	1	Oct. 30.
White-throated Sparrow	3	Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6.
Unidentifiable	5	

Samford University  
MA-122A  
Birmingham, Alabama 35209