

## The 1965 Alabama Summer Bird Count

Compiled by Maurice F. Baker

Five summer bird counts were made this year. This report of these counts follows that pattern used in the past for Christmas and Summer Bird Counts.

Auburn (Au). May 25, 1964, 4-9 A.M. & 2-5 P.M.; Same 7.5 mile radius circle used in Christmas counts; 4 parties, 17 individuals, 19 party hours, 105 miles by car, 3 miles by foot; clear and dry.

Birmingham (Bi). Count made on June 5, 1965; clear to partly cloudy with a brief light rain west side about 5 P.M., wind mostly easterly; temperature 70° to 85° F. Twenty-six observers in 10 parties spent 106.5 party-hours afield from 4:00 A.M. to 7:45 P.M. and travelled 410 miles by car and on foot. Averaged 157 birds per hour. Area covered as in previous counts. Tom Imhof, compiler.

Bon Secour (BS). Same 15-mile diameter circle used for Christmas counts centering at Bon Secour Post Office. June 4, 1965, 5:00 A.M. to 6:45 P.M.; weather fair and hot, extremely dry, S-SW wind 8-16 M.P.H.; 2 observers, 22 party hours; 174 party miles, 165 in cars, 7 on foot, 2 by boat. Participants, P. F. Chandler (compiler) and H. M. Stevenson.

Dauphin Island (DI). June 5, 1965; includes Dauphin Island and Little Dauphin Island; 12:50 - 7:20 P.M.; 6.5 party hours, one observer; 18 party miles, 10 by car and 8 by foot; Henry M. Stevenson.

Mobile (Mo). June 12, 1965. The usual 15 mile circle including Dauphin Island and Bellingrath Gardens. Clear, hot, tide very high all day. Seventeen observers. Dr. Wilson Gaillard, compiler.

## Synopsis of all Counts

SPECIES	Au.	Bi.	BS.	DI.	Mo.
Pied-b. Grebe		1			2
White Pelican					2
Brown Pelican					15
Mag. Frigate-bird				1	15
Great Blue Heron			1		15
Green Heron	8	20	8	3	15
Little Blue Heron	1	1	1		15
Cattle Egret			19	16	1000
Reddish Egret			1	1	4
Common Egret					25
Snowy Egret				2	78
Louisiana Heron				6	205
Yell.-cr. Night Heron				2	5
Least Bittern			4	1	2
White Ibis					100
Mallard		1			2

SPECIES	Au.	Bi.	BS.	DI.	Mo.
Mottled Duck				2	
Wood Duck	1				18
Ring-n. Duck		1			
Lesser Scaup		1			
Red-br. Merganser					10
Turkey Vulture		9			
Black Vulture		2			5
Cooper's Hawk		4			
Red-tailed Hawk		1			
Red-should. Hawk	1	2			1
Broad-winged Hawk		2	3		1
Osprey			2	1	
Sparrow Hawk		3			3
Bobwhite	45	165	79		24
Turkey	2				
King Rail					1
Clapper Rail			5	6	42
Sora					2
Common Gallinule					2
Am. Coot		1			
Am. Oystercatcher					8
Semipalm. Plover				4	3
Snowy Plover					8
Wilson's Plover				18	15
Killdeer	4	49			7
Black-bellied Plover				1	2
Ruddy Turnstone				3	20
Spotted Sandpiper	1			3	
Willet				110	155
Lesser Yellowlegs					8
White-rumped Sandpiper					3
Least Sandpiper					8
Short-billed Dowitcher				2	22
Semipalm. Sandpiper				3	
Sanderling				11	15
Herring Gull					8
Ring-billed Gull					5
Laughing Gull			1	35	79
Gull-billed Tern				5	100
Forster's Tern			10	1	23
Common Tern			80	1	11
Least Tern			4	180	830
Royal Tern					108
Sandwich Tern			13	20	75
Caspian Tern			2		16
Black Tern			100	20	100
Black Skimmer				160	500
Mourning Dove	21	559	50	8	35
Ground Dove		4			
Yellow-b. Cuckoo	14	31	14		37
Screech Owl		2			
Great-horned Owl			1		

SPECIES	Au.	Bi.	BS.	DI.	Mo.
Barred Owl		1			
Chuck-will's widow	6	7	1	6	20
Common Nighthawk	3	11	11	24	12
Chimney Swift	33	13	23	6	85
Rudy-thr. Hummingbird	2	1			5
Belted Kingfisher	7	15	5		7
Yellow-sh. Flicker	12	59	13		30
Pileated Woodpecker	4	6	7		4
Red-b. Woodpecker	12	42	33	1	23
Red-h. Woodpecker	4	38	10		16
Hairy Woodpecker		3	2		
Downy Woodpecker	8	33	5		9
Eastern Kingbird	42	27	47	3	12
Gray Kingbird					7
Scissor-t. Flycatcher					1
Great-cr. Flycatcher	18	44	30	3	54
Eastern Phoebe	2	9			
Acadian Flycatcher	1	9			1
Traill's Flycatcher		1			
E. Wood Pewee	9	35			6
Rough-w. Swallow	13	30	8		20
Barn Swallow			3	2	12
Purple Martin	7	5117	142	35	412
Blue Jay	38	195	107	3	290
Common Crow	46	110	2		60
Fish Crow			60	35	200
Carolina Chickadee	4	81	9		5
Tufted Titmouse	25	158	25		47
White-br. Nuthatch		14			
Brown-hd. Nuthatch	14	24	33	2	35
Bewick's Wren		1			
Carolina Wren	39	78	62	4	43
Long-b. Marsh Wren					4
Mockingbird	100	298	203	6	58
Catbird	3	21			
Brown Thrasher	23	100	46		68
Robin	11	242			
Wood Thrush	25	116	5		8
Eastern Bluebird	10	48	13		
Blue-g. Gnatcatcher	3	8	2		6
Loggerhead Shrike	16	23	21	1	15
Starling	31	2175	21	6	200
White-eyed Vireo	19	54	26		15
Yellow-thr. Vireo	1	4	1		3
Red-eyed Vireo	15	104	13		8
Bl.-&Wh. Warbler	2	5			
Prothono. Warbler	5	3	16		2
Blue-w. Warbler		2			
Parula Warbler			23		8
Yellow Warbler	6	23			
Myrtle Warbler					6
Yellow-thr. Warbler		8	1		
Pine Warbler	1	20	4		11
Red-cocka. Woodpecker		8	7		

SPECIES	Au.	Bi.	BS.	DI.	Mo.
Prairie Warbler	3	54			
La. Waterthrush	1	8			
Kentucky Warbler	6	7			
Yellowthroat	10	25	35		9
Yellow-r. Chat	35	78	5		
Hooded Warbler	14	9	14		2
American Redstart	4	4			
House Sparrow	39	950	424	20	65
Bobolink				6	
East. Meadowlark	52	110	68		65
Red-w. Blackbird	101	383	205	120	550
Orchard Oriole	37	42	65	1	11
Baltimore Oriole					1
Boat-t. Grackle			10		
Common Grackle	32	1663	370	29	100
Brown-h. Cowbird	11	2100	8	2	2
Summer Tanager	10	60	16		15
Cardinal	80	277	89	4	135
Blue Grosbeak	14	23	9		
Indigo Bunting	46	109	1		
Am. Goldfinch		17			
Rufous-s. Towhee	71	262	77	9	94
Seaside Sparrow				16	40
Richman's Sparrow	1		1		
Chipping Sparrow	13	77			
Field Sparrow	13	73			
Swamp Sparrow					7
Total Species:	74	86	73	53	110
Total Numbers:	1317	16729	2833	970	6734

Additional Notes From the Count Areas.

Auburn. The Auburn count was made earlier than last year and found most species nesting, and not too many young birds out. The Black and White Warblers apparently were not nesting, at least they were not seen in several repeat visits to the area. The techniques of a successful summer count need to be worked on. Maybe more than one day would be good. For sure, the observers need to know their observation areas before the day of the count.

Birmingham. Seen in the area within one week of the count: Worm-eating Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and an additional Coot.

It is difficult to compare only two summer counts. It will probably take several counts for most observers to know where to find certain species, what time of day they are most active, how to recognize the songs of those we don't hear too often and so on. Additional summer counts may uncover unsuspected seasonal variations in abundance of the year some birds are more difficult to locate. We learn all sorts of things about our birds, as long as we are learning something, whether facts or skills, the counts are worthwhile even beyond their recreational value. (Paraphrased from comments by T. Imhof in FLICKER FLASHES, Special Edition, June 1965.)

Bon Secour. Birds seen in count area during the count period, but not on the day of the count: Common Egret, Snowy Egret, White Ibis (2 immatures on June 27), Wood Duck, Mississippi Kite, Cooper's Hawk, King Rail, Screech Owl, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Robin (Gulf State Park, June 10).

Relatively few birds were found inland, possibly due to drought conditions. All ponds and marshes above the tide line were dry. The small number of observers (2) may have affected the results. We found only one Yellow-throated Vireo, though we know there were four or more pairs in the area. The Yellow-throated Warbler is probably present in normal numbers though only one was found. The 2 Ospreys and 4 Pine Warblers probably reflect low numbers. The 7 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers may represent a fortunate find rather than an increase. Birds believed to show an improvement in status are the Eastern Bluebird and Hooded Warbler. Usually present but not found were: Gallinules, Ground Dove, and Barred Owl. Unexpected finds were: Reddish Egret, White Ibis, and Robin.

Dauphin Island. (Stevenson). The following shorebirds were observed, that, for the most part, are known to summer but not to breed in Alabama: Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Spotted Sandpiper, Sanderling, Common Tern, Black Tern. One or more individuals of each kind that was observed were in full breeding plumage - usually an indication of their being migrants. The Bobolinks represent a latest coastal record, as did the Spotted Sandpiper. The Osprey was very tame or ill.

Mobile. Only 3 comments from the compiler - (1) the Least Bittern was nesting, and (2) the wood Thrush numbers were low, and (3) the Myrtle Warblers included young.

#### THE NEST CARD PROGRAM OF THE CORNELL LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY

The North American Nest Card Program is winding up the 1965 nesting season, and many cards have already been returned. There are still many cards in the hands of the individual recorders, however, and these should be returned as quickly as they are completed. The Laboratory of Ornithology is preparing the data for transferal onto IBM cards, and a large bulk of material is needed for the first run, to be started soon.

To those of you in Alabama who have such cards please return them to Dr. Julian Dusi, Department of Zoology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36830, as soon as you have filled in the data on the card. Dr. Dusi is acting as the clearing house for the Alabama information. He will forward them to the Laboratory of Ornithology.

#### AN UNUSUAL NORTHERLY FALL MIGRATION AND HURRICANE HILDA

Fairly Chandler

In early October, 1964, during the normal southerly migration, Hurricane Hilda approached and entered the Louisiana Coast bringing southerly winds to the Alabama Coast. In central Louisiana she turned approximately 90° and swept east across South Mississippi, North Mobile and Baldwin Counties in Alabama and on along the Alabama-Northwest Florida line bringing winds from the north.

On Sunday afternoon, October 4, as Hilda entered Louisiana and the Alabama Coast received southerly gale force winds we noted more than 100 Magnificent Frigate-birds at Lake Shelby in Gulf State Park and more than 50 were seen at Pensacola (Audubon Field Notes, 1965: 46). Few other birds were to be seen or heard in the park though many must have been present in protected shrubs. At about 9:00 P.M. Sunday as Hilda swept across Mobile and Baldwin Counties the wind changed to the North to 91 m.p.h. as recorded at Dauphin Island and evidently displaced many birds south of their normal penetration for that date. High winds continued from the north on Monday and few birds other than Brown Thrashers and Catbirds in protected shrubs were to be seen. The NORTHERLY MIGRATION-evident recovery from displacement by the winds-noted almost immediately Tuesday A.M., October 6, with winds still from the north at 15-25 m.p.h.

At 7:00 A.M., Tuesday, in Magnolia Springs when we first noted the movement there were literally hundreds of small birds in waves one-fourth to 1 minute apart all flying North. In the poor light and high winds a large percentage of the birds could not be identified but of the ones which dropped into the trees to rest or could be identified by call note, flight pattern, silhouette, etc. they were in order of abundance: Magnolia Warblers, Yellow Warblers, flickers, Blue Grosbeaks, Red-eyed Vireos, Black-throated Green Warblers, and two early gold-finches.

Though we have approximate counts on these birds, we feel that only the relative numbers are of any consequence as there were obviously many, many more of these species seen which could not be positively identified. However we feel safe in saying that we saw more Magnolia, Yellow, and Black-throated Green Warblers that morning than we had previously seen in the combined Fall migrations in Baldwin County since 1960. This migration over Magnolia Springs though diminishing in numbers continued until at least 11:00 A.M. when we quit watching, but the same situation was noted again that afternoon over Mobile Causeway involving mostly Rough-winged Swallows.

It is difficult to reach any conclusions in regard to the Red-eyed Vireos and Blue Grosbeaks as they had been abundant in the area several weeks at the time. We began to see flickers in numbers above the normal residents on October 9. Aside from the many Magnolia Warblers seen October 6, only 14 others were seen during the Fall Season - much below normal. Previous to this display only 6 Yellow Warblers were seen in the two weeks before and 7 in the remainder of the season. The Black-throated Green Warblers were the first seen during the season and only 18 later. The two goldfinches were the first of the season and 14 days early (Imhof, 1962:539). No others were seen until October 24.