

MINUTES OF FALL MEETING
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NOVEMBER 19-21, 1965

The regular fall meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society was held at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge near Decatur, Alabama, on November 19-21, 1965. Headquarters motel was the Holiday Inn on U. S. Highway 31 south of Decatur and near the refuge headquarters. A total of 48 members and guests registered for the meeting, fifteen of whom were from outside the state - nine from Georgia and six from Tennessee.

Friday Night Program

The program began with a slide showing at the Holiday Inn on Friday evening, November 19. Excellent color slides were presented by Dr. Julian Dusi on waterfowl and the varying types of habitat found on Dauphin Island, by Jim Keeler on wild flowers of Alabama and other southeastern and plains states, and by Helen Kittinger on birds observed at feeders in suburban Birmingham, including her prize-winning picture of the Cardinal and slides of the Village Weaver that appeared there last summer.

Field Trips

Field trips under the expert organization and direction of Tom Atkeson, Director of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, and his staff of Emmett Waldrep, Leo Derden and Cecil Davis were taken to various parts of the refuge on Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning. Among the areas visited were Garth Slough, Cain's Landing, Flint Creek Island, Beaver Dam Peninsula and Rock House and Buckeye Sloughs. Assisting Mr. Atkeson and his staff in leading the various trips were Paul Robinson, Julian Dusi, Gene West and Jerome Couch. Members also had the opportunity of observing the excellent stuffed specimens of birds and animals found on the refuge that are displayed in the headquarters building.

Meeting of Executive Council

The Executive Council met at 1:45 P.M., November 20, on the lawn in front of the Wheeler Refuge Headquarters Building. Those present were: Mr. Robert E. Waters, President; Mr. Robert R. Reid, Jr., Vice-President and Secretary; Mr. Frank D. Huttlinger, Treasurer; Dr. Julian L. Dusi, Director and Librarian; and Mr. James E. Keeler, Director and Co-Editor of the Newsletter. Several other members of the Society also attended the council meeting. The minutes of the council meeting of April 24, 1965, were read and approved.

The President read a letter from Dr. Maurice F. Baker, Editor of Alabama Birdlife, requesting approval to print an article that appeared in Maryland Birdlife on the breeding bird survey conducted in Maryland and Delaware this past summer under the direction of Chandler S. Robbins of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. That survey was based on statistically controlled observations along 25-mile routes located in each

geographical unit into which the states were divided, and it is hoped that that survey technique can be extended to all states east of the Mississippi this coming summer. The council approved the printing of the Maryland article or a resume of it and also gave its opinion that the Editor of Alabama Birdlife might reprint any articles he felt of interest to the study of ornithology in Alabama or to the members of the Society even though they might not deal with birds in Alabama. The items of business to be brought before the Society at its business meeting, including the reports of the various officers, the memorial resolutions and the resolution on routing Interstate Highway 65 away from the Garth Slough area, were then discussed. Upon motion, the meeting was duly adjourned at 2:15 P.M.

Business Meeting

The business meeting of the membership was called to order by the President at 2:20 P.M. on the lawn in front of the Wheeler Refuge Headquarters Building. Thirty-eight members were present. The minutes of the spring business meeting held on April 24, 1965, were read and approved. The Treasurer reported receipts of \$138.00 and disbursements of \$220.15 for the period since the spring meeting, leaving a balance in the Society's checking account of \$264.49. It was noted, however, that disbursements usually exceed receipts for the latter portion of the year since the bulk of the dues are received earlier. A balance of \$262.11 in the Society's life membership fund was also reported. The Treasurer then stated that 1966 dues would become payable on January 1 and could be paid at the meeting for the convenience of those wishing to pay them at that time. The President then urged each member of the Society to publicize its activities and to try to interest at least one other person in joining the Society during the coming year.

Dr. Dusi reported on the progress of the North American Nest Record Program administered by the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology. He stated that approximately 200 nest record cards were submitted from Alabama this past summer and that the nests reported were reasonably well distributed over the state. He urged greater participation in the program this coming summer. Dr. Dusi also reported that copies of certain back issues of Alabama Birdlife were needed for the Society's library and that a list of the issues needed would be published in the next newsletter.

The President then read a report from Dr. Baker on the issues of Alabama Birdlife published thus far in 1965. There have been two issues, the second and third quarterly issues being combined, with a total of 36 pages. There have been five major articles, and the remainder of the space was devoted to shorter articles and notes of ornithological interest, reports of bird counts (Christmas and summer) and reports of meetings.

The Secretary stated that since the Society's spring meeting, it had lost two of its most loyal friends and avid ornithologists in Mr. Henry K. Toenes and Mr. Joseph A. Friedhoff. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the memorial resolutions appearing at the end of these minutes were unanimously adopted.

Discussion was then had of the problem presented by the proposal of the Bureau of Public Roads to route Interstate Highway 65 through that portion of Wheeler Refuge known as Garth Slough. The loss of the investment of time and expense in developing a wildlife management and conservation area that would result from that proposal was noted as was the fact that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service had proposed an alternate route that would not damage the Garth Slough area and would still provide adequately for routing that interstate highway. After conclusion of the discussion, the following resolution was, upon motion duly made and seconded, unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, it is understood that the Bureau of Public Roads in the U. S. Department of Commerce, acting in conjunction with the State Highway Department of the State of Alabama, is considering routing Interstate Highway 65 through that portion of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge known as Garth Slough, bordering the channel of the Tennessee River;

WHEREAS, the members of the Alabama Ornithological Society are familiar with the wildlife management and conservation work being carried on at said refuge and the importance to that work of the Garth Slough area, which has over the years been developed for wildlife management and conservation and is an integral part of the program being carried on at said refuge;

WHEREAS, the routing of said highway through the Garth Slough area will cause the loss of an area developed for wildlife management and conservation that cannot be replaced and in which a considerable investment in time and expense has been made over the past quarter-century and, in addition, will endanger the only large wintering concentration of wild geese to be found in Alabama;

WHEREAS, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed an alternate route for Interstate Highway 65 running east of the Garth Slough area that will not damage that area and will still provide adequately for the routing of interstate and access traffic around and into the City of Decatur, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, it is the considered opinion of the Alabama Ornithological Society that said alternate route should be followed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alabama Ornithological Society, at its regular fall meeting held on November 20, 1965, that this Society does hereby strongly urge and recommend and state its unanimous opinion that Interstate Highway 65 should not be routed through the Garth Slough area of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge or through any other similar wildlife management or conservation area but, instead, that the alternate route for said highway as proposed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be selected.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Honorable John T. Connor and the Honorable Stewart L. Udall, Secretaries of Commerce and of the Interior, respectively, of the United States, to the State Highway Department of the State of Alabama, and to each of the United States Senators and Representatives from the State of Alabama.

The President announced that the spring meeting of the Society would be held at Dauphin Island on the week-end of April 22-24, 1966, and that the Society was planning to hold its mid-winter meeting during the first part of February at the newly-established Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge if arrangements could be made with the manager of that refuge for holding the meeting there at that time. Upon motion, the meeting was duly adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Banquet and Saturday Night Program

The banquet on Saturday evening was held at the Holiday Inn. The tables were decorated most attractively by Mrs. Pearl Henson assisted by Mrs. Warren. Mr. Huttlinger supervised the drawing of several fine door prizes: The bird song record keyed to Peterson's Eastern Field Guide; a copy of Tom Imhof's Alabama Birds; and several attractive paper weights, ashtrays and other accessories with an ornithological motif donated by Mr. Paul Robinson of Decatur.

After the dinner Mr. Atkeson spoke to the meeting on the history of Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and some of the activities currently being carried on there. Mr. Keeler then reported on the recent conference in Atlanta on the black-bird control problem sponsored by the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, the National Audubon Society and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The principal program for the evening was an excellent wildlife film presented by Adele and Gene West of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The film, which was accompanied by a most interesting and informative narrative, was entitled "The Big Bend" and portrayed the wildlife and scenery of Big Bend National Park in magnificent photography, especially the close-ups of birds of that area.

Compilation

Following the field trips on Sunday morning, Dr. Dusi conducted at the refuge headquarters a compilation of the birds observed during the meeting. A total of 76 species was recorded although it must be noted that the observers concentrated on water birds and, thus, the list is not representative of the total number of species inhabiting the refuge in late fall. The most impressive observations were of the thousands of Canada Geese wintering on the refuge as well as the large flocks of Blue and Snow Geese, including blue-snow hybrids, Mallards, Black Ducks and Baldpates. Also noteworthy were the relatively large numbers of Great Blue Herons (55), Greater Yellowlegs (18), and Dunlins (14), the latter, together with a Black-bellied Plover observed on the Tennessee River, being late migrants for the area.

List of birds seen: Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Green Heron,

Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Blue Goose (including blue-snow hybrids), Mallard, Black Duck, Gadwall, Pintail, Baldpate, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Bufflehead, American Merganser,

Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Eastern Quail,

American Coot, Kill-deer, Black-bellied Plover, Common Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin (or Red-backed Sandpiper),

Herring gull, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove,

Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker,

Blue Jay, Common Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin,

Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Myrtle Warbler,

Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Purple Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird,

Cardinal, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

Robert R. Reid, Jr. Sec.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The article on night herons by Mrs. Johnstone (p. 46) is an excellent example of careful observation and good reporting. In their observations the Johnstones observed and recorded some combinations of plumages and leg colors in Yellow-crowned Night Herons that are not listed in Palmer's Handbook of American Birds. Palmer implies that there are some gaps in our knowledge on this subject, and it is through careful observing of this kind that we can fill these gaps.

Maurice F. Baker, Ed.

WHEREAS, Joseph A. Friedhoff of Mobile, Alabama, was for many years a member of the Alabama Ornithological Society;

WHEREAS, he generously gave of his time and efforts toward promoting conservation and encouraging the development of and an interest in birdlife in Alabama and toward assisting the endeavors of this Society; and

WHEREAS, his untimely death on June 7, 1965, was a great loss to the members of this Society and the purposes fostered by it;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alabama Ornithological Society, at its fall meeting held on November 20, 1965, that this Society, for itself and its members, does hereby express its extreme regret upon Mr. Friedhoff's death and the loss of his friendship and assistance and does hereby extend its deepest sympathy to his family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to his immediate family.

WHEREAS, Henry K. Toenes of Mobile, Alabama, was for many years a member of the Alabama Ornithological Society and its Secretary for the current year and was also Vice-President of the Mobile Bird Club, its affiliate in Mobile;

WHEREAS, he generously gave of his time and efforts toward promoting conservation and encouraging an interest in birdlife in Alabama and toward assisting the endeavors of this Society; and

WHEREAS, his untimely death on September 18, 1965, was a great loss to the members of this Society and the purposes fostered by it;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alabama Ornithological Society, at its fall meeting held on November 20, 1965, that this Society, for itself and its members, does hereby express its extreme regret upon Mr. Toenes' death and the loss of his friendship and assistance and does hereby extend its deepest sympathy to his family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to his immediate family.