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MIGRATORY BIRD KILL IN SHELBY COUNTY, ALABAMA

James E. Keeler

An estimated 500 migratory birds comprising 25 species were killed or injured on top of Oak Mountain in Shelby County, Alabama during the night of October 14, 1969. The cause of death was attributed to an attraction of the birds to the mercury vapor lights surrounding a four-acre comfort station on U.S. Highway 280 approximately 20 miles southeast of Birmingham.

The caretaker of the comfort station contacted Conservation Officer Doyle C. Wood who investigated the area and immediately relayed the information to the Game and Fish Office in Montgomery. The author was requested to conduct an investigation as to what killed the birds. Upon my arrival the caretaker produced a wheelbarrow half full of dead birds that he had picked up that morning. Numerous other birds were found hopping about with apparent broken wings.

Four radio towers are located in a line about 250 yards apart on top of this mountain with the nearest tower located about 50 yards from the edge of the comfort station. It was first thought that the birds were "tower casualties" however, of the three towers visited only one dead bird was found. Since the dead and crippled birds were found in the vicinity of the lighted area it was obvious that the kill occurred only on the grounds of the comfort station. A cyclone-type fence, a few trees and light poles were located in this area. Undoubtedly, fog caused the birds to fly into these obstructions although the caretaker was not present during the night hours and could not verify as to whether or not the night was foggy.

A total of 280 birds were picked up around the fence, trees and light poles and many others could have been recovered if time had permitted. It is felt that a minimum of 500 birds were killed or injured during the night. A White-eyed Vireo was found impaled on a broken twig of a pine tree within the lighted area. The twig was pointed in a northerly direction which added emphasis to the theory that the birds were migrating and were killed in the small well-lighted four acre area.

The following birds were recovered and returned to Montgomery. All but four badly-crushed warblers were identified by Robert W. Skinner and the author. One of the Hooded Warblers, an adult male, was wearing band number 117-44783.

Bay-breasted Warbler, 49; Magnolia Warbler, 35; Ovenbird, 34; Olive-backed Thrush, 31; Indigo Bunting, 29; Tennessee Warbler, 13; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 10; Northern Waterthrush, 9; Scarlet Tanager, 9; Blackburnian Warbler, 8; Black-throated Green, 7; Chestnut-sided, 7; Yellowthroat, 5; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 4; Hooded Warbler, 4; Redstart, 4; Savannah Sparrow, 4; Bobolink, 3; Wood Thrush, 2; Yellow-throated vireo, 2; Red-eyed vireo, 2; Summer Tanager, 2; White-eyed vireo, 1; Connecticut Warbler, 1; Grasshopper Sparrow, 1.

According to the caretaker, a bird kill similar to this one occurred on the same area during the fall of 1968, however, fewer birds were found dead at that time.

3576 North Georgetown Drive
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MINUTES OF WINTER MEETING
ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 1, 1970

AOS members from four states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana—gathered for the regular winter meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society held in the Conecuh National Forest in Covington County on January 30-February 1, 1970. Oakwood Lodge, operated by the Blue Lake Methodist Assembly under the direction of Rev. Selman D. Bradley and located in an attractive woodland area in the forest, served as headquarters for the meeting.

Field Trips

Field trips were conducted Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning to various parts of the forest and lakes in the surrounding area including Blue and Open Ponds in the forest, Lake Jackson at Florala and Point "A" Lake north of Andalusia. Leaders of the trips were Curtis Kingsbery and Dave Turpin of Pensacola, Tom Imhof and Bob Reid of Birmingham and Dr. Wilson Gaillard of Mobile. A total of 87 species was recorded during the meeting, the most noteworthy of which were the wintering Spotted Sandpiper, an Am. Woodcock, Short-billed Marsh Wren, a female Bufflehead and a flock of 19 Ruddy Ducks at Open Pond; Common Loons, Horned Grebes, some more Ruddys and a Pintail at Lake Jackson; two Little Blue Herons and a Common Egret on the ponds at the Town of Wing in the forest; and some Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Oakwood Lodge. Also of interest were Red-breasted Nuthatches elsewhere in the forest; a Ring-billed Gull, Catbird, Solitary Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler and a good-sized raft of Lesser Scaup on Point "A" Lake; a group of Palm Warblers and large flocks of Purple Finches and Goldfinches on the highway from Andalusia; and a pair of Pine Siskins with other finches and waxwings at Pond Creek Pond in Lockhart.

Executive Council Meeting

The Executive Council met at Oakwood Lodge after lunch on January 31 with the following present: Mr. Walter F. Coxe, President; Mrs. Helen H. Kittinger, Immediate Past President; Dr. M. Wilson Gaillard, Mr. Thomas A. Imhof, Mr. Robert W. Skinner and Mrs. Harriett Wright, Directors; Dr. Kenneth T. Knapp, Chairman of the Conservation Committee; and Mr. Robert R. Reid, Jr., Chairman of the Slide Collection Committee. Mr. Coxe announced the appointment of Dr. Knapp as Chairman of the Conservation Committee and that he would