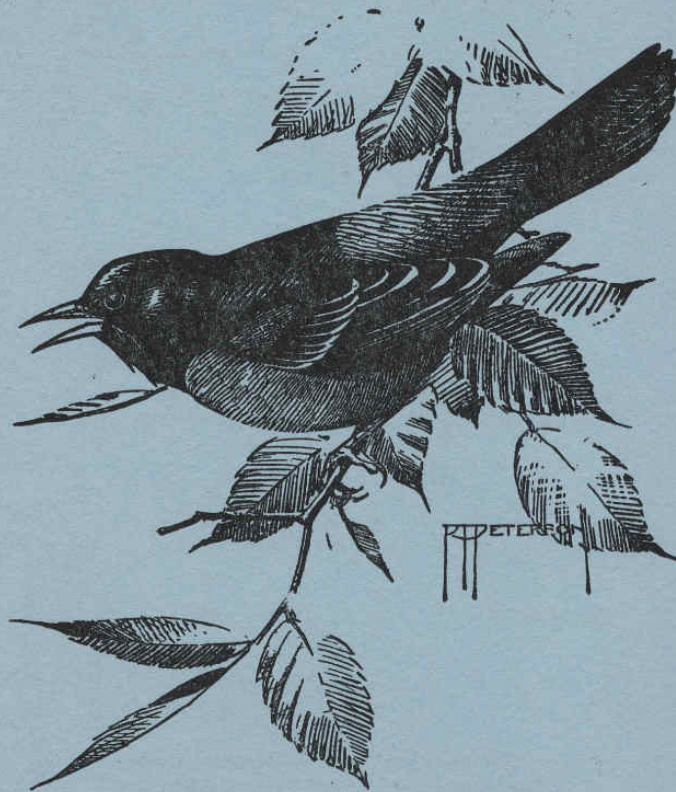


THE ORIOLE

A Quarterly Journal of Georgia Ornithology: Official Organ of the
Georgia Ornithological Society



Vol. XX

JUNE, 1955

No. 2

THE ORIOLE

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MASS BIRD MORTALITY IN GEORGIA, OCTOBER, 1954

By DAVID W. JOHNSTON

Residents of the southeastern states remember only too well the unusually hot, dry summer and early fall of 1954. Here in Georgia the entire month of September was scarcely interrupted by any precipitation; thus virtually little respite was enjoyed from the frequent 100° days. This protracted hot and dry spell was unbroken until a cold front, the first of the season, reached various portions of the state on October 6, 7 or 8, bringing some precipitation and long-overdue lower temperatures. On the nights of October 6-7 and 7-8, as the cold front progressed southward over the state, incidents of mass kills of birds were brought to the attention of many ornithologists from personnel at airports and radio and TV towers.

These incidents in Georgia were only a few of about thirty which occurred at brightly lighted towers or buildings or at airport ceilometers (powerful vertical light beams used to detect and record the height of the cloud ceiling). Thousands of dead birds were reported at various localities from New York to southern Georgia and from the east coast at least as far west as Kansas, all such incidents being associated with the drastic change in weather conditions, namely, an advancing cold front. The first recorded kill came from New York state on the night of October 5-6, and as the cold front progressed southward for the succeeding two nights, similar incidents occurred in Pennsylvania, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Kansas, Alabama and Georgia. The details of these incidents in other states have been or will be published elsewhere. Here in Georgia, as far as ornithologists know, such accidents have not occurred previously, with the possible exception of local kills at lighthouses along the coast. In several other states, however, this seems to be a "normal" autumnal phenomenon, and various investigators in Tennessee, for example, have studied the occurrences for the past four or five years. Recent comprehensive reports of these findings have appeared in at least two published accounts (Howell, *et al.*, 1954; Tanner, *et al.*, 1954), and for comparative purposes, the interested reader is referred to these papers. Similarly, the mass mortality records which occurred in 1954 in the Carolinas have been discussed briefly in *The Chat* (Chamberlain, 1954, 1955).

Coincident with the mass mortality incidents in Georgia was the fall meeting of the G.O.S. at Savannah Beach, and at this meeting I was requested to make the present attempt at correlating

these data for Georgia. In compiling these records, reports of mass mortalities have come from Atlanta (William W. Griffin), Augusta (J. Fred Denton), Warner Robins Air Force Base (Tom Cater, Jr., T. P. Haines, David W. Johnston, Gregor Rohwer), Travis Field and Hunter Air Force Base (William P. Baldwin, E. Burnham Chamberlain), Savannah and Tybee Light (Ivan R. Tomkins, Gilbert Rossignol), Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge at Camp Cornelia (Roy Moore), and Turner Air Force Base (John H. Oliver). Grateful acknowledgment is given for the cooperation of these individuals. The following accounts are arranged more or less along a north-south gradient, the arrangement coinciding somewhat with the southward progression of the cold front.

ATLANTA

The widespread cold front reached Atlanta in the northern part of the state on October 6-7, with the thermometer dropping to 62° that night. This unseasonable cold spell continued through the next night, consequently presenting some confusion as to the exact time

TABLE 1
MORTALITY INCIDENTS IN GEORGIA, OCTOBER 6-8, 1954.

Species	Atlanta	Augusta	Warner Robins	Savannah	Travis Field	Okefenokee	Turner A. F. B.
Pied-billed Grebe			1	1			
Green Heron					1		
King Rail			1				
Sora			10				
Virginia Rail				1	1		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			3				
Black-billed Cuckoo			2				
Acadian Flycatcher			4				
Alder Flycatcher			1				
Wood Pewee			2				
Catbird	1		28		4	2	
Wood Thrush	9		47				
Olive-backed Thrush	5		232	1			6
Gray-cheeked Thrush	2		91				
Veery	1		8		1		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet							1
White-eyed Vireo			3		1	13	
Yellow-throated Vireo	4	2	34				
Red-eyed Vireo	40	10	346	12	4	32	13
Philadelphia Vireo	2		10				
Black and White Warbler	8	2	48	4	6	39	4
Worm-eating Warbler	1			3		3	
Swainson Warbler					1	1	
Golden-winged Warbler	1		3			1	
Tennessee Warbler	30	2	121				
Nashville Warbler			4				
Parula Warbler			2	14	2	31	
Yellow Warbler	1		2				
Magnolia Warbler	62	22	301	4	1	18	26
Cape May Warbler			1	3		3	2
Black-throated Blue Warbler	5	5	5	35	7	20	
Black-throated Green Warbler			11				
Blackburnian Warbler	9	4	102	2		4	1

when birds were killed. William W. Griffin has stated: "On Friday morning, October 15, another cold front had passed and I decided to check the WSB-TV tower. To my great surprise I found many birds—apparently birds that were killed on the night of October 6-7 when the first October front passed Atlanta. Nearly all birds appeared to have been killed at approximately the same date. It is possible, however, that some were killed in the early morning hours of October 7 when the front actually struck Atlanta and others were killed on the following night, Thursday evening, October 7. Several people working near the tower stated that they first noted birds on the first day that it turned cold; this was Thursday. . . . On the basis of density on a roof top 100 yards west of the tower my estimate of the number killed is about 600. . . . the WSB-TV tower is 1062 feet tall. . . . Dead birds were strewn from the base of the tower to the west about 150 yards and to the south about 75 yards. None were found on the north or east of the tower. The center of abundance seemed to be about 90 yards west-southwest of the tower. The tower is lighted with red lights spaced up and down its length.

TABLE 1 (Continued)
MORTALITY INCIDENTS IN GEORGIA, OCTOBER 6-8, 1954.

Species	Atlanta	Augusta	Warner Robins	Savannah	Travis Field	Okefenokee	Turner A. F. B.
Chestnut-sided Warbler	42	18	320			4	
Bay-breasted Warbler	1		30	12	2		
Blackpoll Warbler			4	9	1	23	
Yellow-throated Warbler						2	
Prairie Warbler			1	1		4	
Pine Warbler	2			3		100±	
Palm Warbler			14	5	1	100±	
Ovenbird	56	6	236	124	12	123	18
Waterthrush			5	2		7	
Kentucky Warbler	2		2			1	
Connecticut Warbler			2	3		2	
Yellow-throat	6	3	37	37	17	225	
Yellow-breasted Chat		2	6				
Hooded Warbler	14	5	43	1		10	
Canada Warbler			7				
Redstart	1		73	12	8	91	2
Bobolink			4		1		
Baltimore Oriole			1				2
Scarlet Tanager	7		148			1	9
Summer Tanager			13			1	7
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6		3				
Blue Grosbeak			3			1	4
Indigo Bunting	8		171		1	10	2
Dickcissel			2				
Savannah Sparrow	1		3				
Grasshopper Sparrow			1			1	
Swamp Sparrow			1				
Song Sparrow						1	
Unidentified						9	4
Total individuals	327	81	2,552	289	73	883	101
Total species	28	12	53	22	19	31	14
Estimated number killed	600	200	50,000		2000	900	

... A few birds, perhaps 20, were found around another TV tower by personnel of the station, but I found none at the other towers in Atlanta.

"I understand that about 25 birds were found near the base of the WLW-A television tower here in Atlanta on October 8, 1954. These were not identified by anyone. I checked the ceilometers and no mass killings were noted. At Dobbins Air Force Base several soldiers reported to me that they saw or heard of some birds on the runways a thousand feet or more away from the ceilometer. There was no great number, however."

Since ornithologists in the Atlanta area have for many years been interested in migration extreme dates, it is instructive to compare their published dates (Griffin, 1941; Johnston, 1945) with some of the records obtained by this mass kill at the WSB-TV tower (table 1). One species, the Philadelphia Vireo, is of unusual occurrence anywhere in the state at any time, although observations in recent years have indicated that this species is probably more common than has been previously believed. October 7 is a late date of occurrence for several species—Veery, Yellow-throated Vireo, Worm-eating, Yellow and Kentucky warblers.

A small number of birds was also found at the Atlanta Municipal Airport, but the exact number and species were not recorded.

AUGUSTA

The following report was submitted by Dr. J. Fred Denton. "Location: WRDW-TV tower in North Augusta in Aiken County, S. C. The birds were presumed killed on the night of October 7-8, 1954, (employees of the station confirmed that some if not all were killed on this night) but specimens were not recovered until the morning of October 11. Specific site: half of the birds were recovered from the roof of the TV station and half from the ground. The birds on the ground were lying entirely to the NORTH and WEST of the TV tower. This TV tower is actually 500 ft. high, rises 650 ft. above the surrounding terrain and its top is 968 ft. above sea level. It is strung with red lights according to FCC regulations. Meteorological data: the cold front moved into Augusta at noon on October 7. At 5:15 p.m. the temperature was 54°F. which proved to be the low for the night. The sky was heavily overcast and a very light drizzle fell from dark through the night."

Even though an estimated 200 birds were killed, Dr. Denton and his associates recovered only 81 identifiable birds, several of which were prepared as study skins. The Yellow-breasted Chat was about one month later than previously recorded at Augusta, and the Tennessee Warblers were the first definitely recorded in the Augusta area.

WARNER ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE

The ceilometer kill during the night of October 7 and 8 at Warner Robins was believed to be the largest in the country, unparalleled both as to total number of birds killed and as to number of species recorded. A conservative estimate of the number killed was 50,000, this figure being based upon the number of birds actually counted from the roof of the building where the ceilometer is housed and

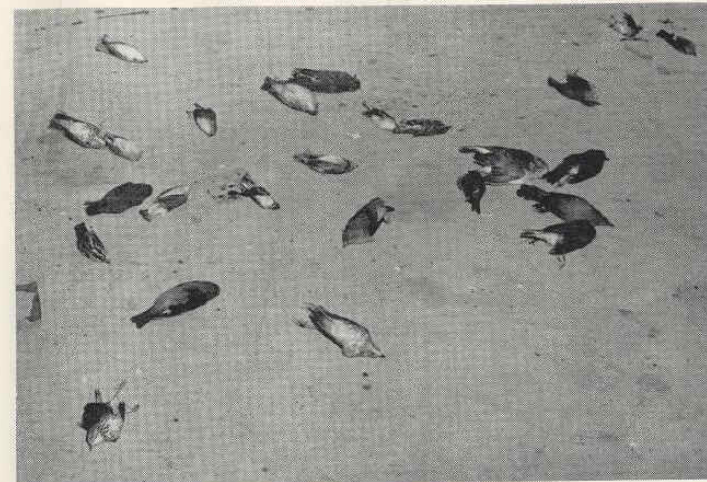


Plate 1

Photograph by Warner Robins Air Force Base

A few birds killed at Warner Robins, as they were found.

from a calculated density of birds lying on the runways and grass within a radius of 1000 feet from the ceilometer. Plate 1 shows a small portion of the birds as they were discovered on the runway. Workmen used street sweepers to get the carcasses off the runways; these birds were then hauled away and burned. Two 30-gallon drums full of dead birds were saved, however, from the roof beside the ceilometer, these comprising the species listed in table 1.

Since the authorities at the base were at least temporarily concerned over the phenomenon, they cooperated readily by furnishing detailed weather data. Table 2 summarizes these important data with the exception of the facts that there was intermittent light rain and moderately strong winds during the night. On previous and succeeding nights the cloud ceiling was unlimited. Daytime temperatures prior to October 7 had been in the high 70's.

By piecing together the accounts of several workmen who witnessed the kill around the ceilometer, it has been possible to obtain a complete picture of the entire phenomenon. Dead birds were first noted at 8:00, and a peak mortality was reached between 9:30 and 11:00, even though birds continued to be killed all night long. Witnesses stated that many birds flew on through the light beam, probably unaffected, whereas others were "caught" by the beam. These were presumably blinded or confused by the bright light to the extent that they flew around in the beam and then plummeted straight down. Most of these individuals crashed into the concrete runways or roof and died instantly. Others hit a grassy plot, and some of these were killed also but others were apparently only stunned. Collisions in mid-air were not infrequent. The following morning "large numbers" of "wounded" or "exhausted" birds were

TABLE 2.

PROMINENT WEATHER CONDITIONS AT WARNER ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, 1954.

	Time	Temperature	Cloud Ceiling
October 7	6:30 p.m.	57° F	3700 feet
	8:30	53	2100
	10:30	54	3000
October 8	12:30 a.m.	56	3000
	2:30	56	2600
	4:30	56	2400
	6:30	55	2130
	8:30	56	2300

found in the grass, in nearby trees and in buildings. The majority of the dead birds lay on a concrete taxi strip about 75 yards south and southwest of the ceilometer, although dead birds were found several hundred feet in all directions from the light.

It has been suggested that the lowered temperature was more directly responsible for the deaths than has been previously believed. In an effort to assist and revive the "exhausted" birds on the ground, the workmen gathered these birds and put them in boxes and in their pockets. It was stated that the birds were shivering as though cold (the outside temperature was 53°), and that they "warmed up and recovered as soon as they were taken inside." It is conceivable that the cold temperature was in some manner partly responsible for these mortality occurrences, but, until more direct evidence is presented, we must not overlook an alternative possibility, namely, that these shivering birds had been stunned from a mild collision and that the shivering was due to nervous shock rather than to muscle tremors as a result of the lowered temperature. Furthermore, there is experimental evidence to indicate that death could not be directly attributed to a lowered air temperature as was experienced in this ceilometer incident. Baldwin and Ken-deigh (1932, pp. 47-50) found that adult House Wrens could withstand a lowered air temperature from about 73° to 45° before dying, and all such experimentals did not succumb at this low temperature which was induced in 90 minutes.

An additional significant observation was made on the same night when a pilot flying over Roberta (30 mi. WNW of Warner Robins) around 10:00 reported that his plane hit many birds as he passed under a cloud formation at 2100 feet. At Cochran Field (7 mi. NNW; no ceilometer) no dead birds were found nor were any found at any of the prominent lighted features of Macon's skyline.

SAVANNAH

In addition to the large numbers of birds which were killed at the airports in the vicinity of Savannah, Tomkins, Rossignol and others found dead birds at the WTOC-TV tower, at the Chatham Apartments in Savannah and at Tybee Light on Tybee Island. These were killed on the night of October 7-8, and many were examined by G.O.S. members. At Tybee Light, Tomkins reported that this was the second kill of the fall. Since the light is close to the ocean and since dead birds have been found in previous years, it is possible that local weather conditions rather than the general, southeastern cold front were responsible for this aspect of the mortality records.

Many of the birds were saved as study skins, and others have been utilized in lipid analyses by Dr. Eugene P. Odum and his students. Weather conditions for the Savannah area are included in the following report.

According to Tomkins, several of the species recorded from Savannah or the nearby airports are unusual or rare. These include Olive-backed Thrush, Veery, Worm-eating, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Connecticut and Hooded warblers, and Northern Waterthrush.

TRAVIS FIELD

On the night of October 7-8 there was a definite change from warm autumnal weather to a colder condition in the Savannah area. From 6 p.m. until midnight the thermometer dropped from 73° to 49°, wind gusts increased from 9 mph. to 36 mph., the cloud ceiling dropped to 1800 feet and there was some light drizzle. From midnight until 6 a.m. the thermometer remained at 54-57°, wind velocity was about 19 mph., and the ceiling came down to 1700 feet. In conjunction with these data, it should be pointed out that personnel on duty at nearby Hunter Air Force Base reported the greatest number of birds were killed before midnight, thus occurring during the most inclement of the weather conditions.

William P. Baldwin reports that "the kill was concentrated around the mercury-arc ceilometer, decreasing proportionately as one proceeded out from the light. . . . The one at Travis Field was reported to put out 26-40 million candlepower and to detect clouds at heights up to 30,000 feet. . . . Numerous birds exhibited skull and breast injuries, broken wings, etc. Most dead birds were within 200 yards of the light, and a few beyond 400 yards. . . . Ceilometers have operated in Savannah since 1948, but this was the first reported bird kill. This would indicate they are death traps only when adverse atmospheric conditions and migration coincide to yield an unusual pattern."

"At Travis Field we picked up a 73 bird 'cross section sample' around the ceilometer from the hundreds lying there." The species listed in table 1 were determined by E. Burnham Chamberlain and Baldwin, and supposedly indicate the relative abundance of birds in the total kill of some 2000 birds.

HUNTER AIR FORCE BASE

Baldwin and others learned about the night kill at this location too late to examine most of the birds. An estimated 25,000 birds were killed here, numerous crippled birds were observed, and hundreds of "bewildered" warblers were roosting around the death sites in low grass, weeds, junked airplanes, along building ground levels and in hangar corners. As before, the kill was concentrated around the ceilometer, the number of birds decreasing proportionately as one proceeded away from the light. Three 50-gallon drums of birds were picked up on the various runways. "In examining several hundred birds at Hunter Air Base we found most of the species listed above [Travis Field], and also found these additional species": Pied-billed Grebe, Sora, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager, and Painted Bunting. Therefore,

about 26 species were found at Hunter Air Force Base. It is unfortunate that this sample was not examined statistically because such an examination would have contributed more toward the elucidation of facts concerning nocturnal migratory flocks.

CAMP CORNELIA, OKEFENOKEE SWAMP

According to Roy Moore, "On the morning of October 8th we found approximately 900 birds under and around the 200 feet steel radio tower at Camp Cornelia. They had been killed by striking the tower and brace cables during the preceding night. It was a chilly, misty night with a strong wind blowing from the north to northeast. Apparently a large flock of migratory birds had passed over the Camp Cornelia area during the night. The lights on the tower were burning. . . . In addition to the above, about 25 injured birds, mostly warblers were picked up. Those that seemed to have some chance of survival were released. This is the first time that anything like this has happened during the three years I have been here. Occasionally we have found from one to a dozen birds under the tower during the spring and fall migrations."

Mr. Moore's report of species (table 1) is rather similar to those from the other localities with a few exceptions. Notice, for example, the unusually high proportion of Yellow-throats, Palm and Pine warblers. Also, it seems unusual that many Black-poll Warblers are listed but no Bay-breasted Warblers; at other localities to the north, the Bay-breasted outnumbered the Black-poll.

Frederick V. Hebard, who has had many years of ornithological experience in the Okefenokee region, has offered the following comments relative to certain species killed at Camp Cornelia. "The Chestnut-sided and Golden-wing records are first for the region and the Scarlet Tanager may be. [First fall record]. The Connecticut and Blackburnian are first fall records. . . . Blackpolls are common spring migrants from Camp Cornelia to the Spanish Mission but we have seen them only once in fall. . . . The Cape May records are interesting, being the first fall records west of St. Mary's, although the species is common to abundant in spring from at least Coleraine to Camp Cornelia. . . . The first fall record [of the Kentucky Warbler] at Coleraine was a young one discovered by Denton August 10, 1948." This is the first record in the fall for the Black-throated Blue Warbler.

TURNER AIR FORCE BASE

Lt. John H. Oliver has kindly furnished pertinent information concerning the birds killed during the night of October 7-8 at this airfield near Albany. Inclement weather beginning about noon of October 7 included severe thunderstorms in the vicinity, rain, and strong winds. The cloud ceiling dropped from 2000 feet at 5 p.m. to 1200 feet at 11 p.m. and rose to 1800 feet by 6 a.m. on October 8. During the night the ceilometer was turned on and "it was into this beam of light that the migrating birds wandered and were subsequently confused and disoriented. Upon leaving this beam, they would crash into hangars, light poles, wires, fences, and I even saw some fly straight into the ground. At a distance, they appeared very

much like moths flying wildly about a glowing lamp." Birds were first seen in the beam at 10:30 p.m.

"All *dead* birds except one male Scarlet Tanager were found within a 75 yard radius of the Ceilometer. Runway lights and ramp lights did not account for any deaths as some local newspapers had reported." Although Lt. Oliver was unable to obtain a total count or estimate of the birds which were observed in the ceilometer beam, he did obtain an accurate count of the dead and crippled birds. Table 1 includes both dead and crippled birds for this locality.

DISCUSSION

It seems desirable here to review the various causes which have been described for these mass mortalities because, unfortunately, newspaper articles have described some rather peculiar causes: poisonous airplane exhaust fumes causing asphyxiation, terrestrial insecticides, and exhaustion of the birds in an attempt to outrun the advancing cold front. These causes are all without scientific foundation, although, of course, they are attractive to a quick, yet undiscerning, public mind. The review articles cited previously and examination of climatological and biological data presented in this paper, however, lead us to a more plausible explanation. Generally speaking, the mortality incidents in Georgia and in other parts of the country have been preceded by several coincident phenomena. (1) There must be a large mass of migrating birds. This condition, we might say, is a normal one especially in the autumn season, although it is probable that these migrants become more concentrated as a result of weather conditions. (2) There must be an advancing cold front which tends to push migrants ahead of or with it and at the same time provides a low cloud ceiling so that the migratory birds must fly closer to the ground than usual. On the basis of the number of birds killed in the southeast and on the basis of the latitudinal extent of the advancing cold front on October 6-8, 1954, some ornithologists have estimated that between one and two million birds were migrating along this front.

Migrating at such low levels, the birds may be affected by one (perhaps both) of two factors. In the first place, they may simply strike a tall obstacle—building, TV or radio tower. The important factor here is the obstruction to flight, and the available evidence indicates that the relatively dim lights on these structures are not particularly effective in attracting large numbers of birds from a wide area. If they were, then more birds would have been killed, but from table 1 it can be seen that the smallest number of birds was killed at these tall structures. In the second place, exceedingly powerful lights, such as the ceilometers, cause death by attracting birds into a sort of lighted sky trap in which they apparently become disoriented or blinded. Then they fly into each other or straight down into the ground or into any nearby obstruction. Of these two factors, it is readily apparent that the ceilometer is by far the more powerful deadly "weapon." It is also probable that the strong winds in some cases have contributed to the deaths by blowing birds into obstacles.

Of the nearly 3000 birds which the writer has personally examined, many of which were dissected in detail, nearly every bird from these

mortality incidents at ceilometers and TV towers in Georgia showed some contusion, hemorrhage, fractured skull, wing or neck. Similarly, investigators of mass mortality incidents in other parts of the country have reported a high percentage of birds having similar injuries. This seems to be *prima facie* evidence that death came as the result of colliding with a solid object. Some biologists, however, have claimed that hemorrhages in the lungs were caused by asphyxiation due to airplane exhaust fumes, but from evidence based on observations presented here and in other scientific papers, it is much more plausible to attribute these internal hemorrhages to collisions.

Finally, it is instructive to note that almost without exception the birds killed at the ceilometers and TV towers were very fat. This would indicate that such birds were in excellent physiological condition for a long migratory flight, and that their deaths could not be attributed to exhaustion as some newspaper articles have stated. In fact, most of the birds identified in these incidents were overseas migrants on their way, perhaps nonstop, to the West Indies or Central America.

In spite of the fact that these mortality incidents are unfortunate and sometimes unavoidable, they do provide ornithologists with much-needed data as to the composition and condition of nocturnal migratory flocks. These matters are to be discussed more fully in a later paper. When such incidents do occur, it is well that we avail ourselves of such opportunities to learn as much as possible about the birds which have been killed, and to investigate more fully the conditions responsible for the mortalities.

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GENERAL NOTES

LATE SPRING RECORD OF THE ROBIN FOR CHATHAM COUNTY.—On the afternoon of May 14, 1955, I observed two robins (*Turdus migratorius*) hunting insects in the freshly mown grass in the center of Abercorn Street at 53rd Street in Savannah. The birds were watched for a period of ten or fifteen minutes from my car parked at the curb. They gave no indication of being a mated pair, did not sing, and did not carry away any food but ate what they found at that location. The birds finally flew away in the direction of a small city park.—HERMAN W. COOLIDGE, *Isle of Hope, Savannah, Georgia*.

AMERICAN BITTERN IN WINTER AT ATHENS.—Whereas the American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) winters regularly in Florida and in certain localities along the Coastal Plain of Georgia, its occurrence in winter above the Fall Line in Georgia is rather unusual. For this reason, it seems desirable to place on record the occurrence of an individual observed near Athens, Clarke County, on November 25, 1954. The bird was first flushed from a small stream bordering an open field on the University of Georgia Agricultural Farm. It lit in a riparian tree, was flushed again, and then disappeared from view as it flew on through the woods. There is a previous winter record from Athens—a single bird was observed by Thomas D. Burleigh on December 1, 1937, in the Sandy Creek Bottoms (*Oriole*, 6: 5, 1941). In the light of these records plus two winter records from Atlanta (Johnston, *Oriole*, 10: 6, 1945), it would seem that this species should be regarded as a rare winter resident in the Piedmont of Georgia.—DAVID W. JOHNSTON, *Department of Biology, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia*.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

SPRING MEETING, 1955.—The thirty-second semi-annual meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held in Atlanta on April 15, 16 and 17, 1955, with headquarters at Hearst Hall, Oglethorpe University.

Registration began on Friday evening and was continued Saturday morning with a total registration of 121.

On Friday evening, immediately after dinner in the cafeteria, the members present went to the auditorium in Lupton Hall where an informal seminar on ornithological problems and techniques was held.

On Saturday the members met in Hearst Hall for breakfast at 6:30 a.m., followed by field trips over the campus and to Murphey Candler Park.

At 10:00 a.m., the group gathered in the auditorium for a meeting which was devoted to a series of papers. Greetings were extended to the Georgia Ornithological Society by Dr. George Seward, acting president of Oglethorpe University. Response and welcome to members and guests was given by Herman Coolidge, First Vice-President of G.O.S.

In the absence of Mrs. T. T. Giffen of Albany, her paper on establishing a bird sanctuary was read by Harold Peters. Dr. E. P.

Odum read a paper on banding studies of wintering sparrows in old fields in South Carolina near Augusta. Rufus Godwin gave a most illuminating discussion of his experiences in banding birds. Dr. David Johnston described the life history of the California Gull which he illustrated with colored slides. Mrs. J. H. Whiteman reported on the successful management of a Bird Conservation Week, sponsored by the Chattahoochee Bird Club of West Point, the week of February 13-19, 1955. The morning session was concluded by a discussion of Avian Botulism, A Major Factor in Waterfowl Populations given by George Seiple.

At 11:30 a.m., an executive meeting was held in the lounge of Hearst Hall.

At 12:30 p.m., the group met in Hearst Dining Hall for the G.O.S. dinner. Herman Coolidge read greetings from the President, Mrs. Charles Neal, traveling in Europe; from the Carolina Bird Club; from Dr. Guy Mayfield; and from Earle R. Greene.

Bill Griffin expressed his thanks to all members of the Atlanta Bird Club who had assisted in the preparations for the meeting. Mrs. J. C. Oliver introduced her committee which handled various details in connection with the meeting.

At 2:00 p.m., the members assembled in Lupton Hall Auditorium for a continuation of papers.

Dr. Dave Johnston reported on the mortality of birds in the state in October, 1954. Dr. E. P. Odum gave a discussion of the fat content of birds killed at that time. Mrs. F. M. Stafford gave an interesting discourse on Audubon Junior Clubs, including many ways in which local clubs might interest young people in bird watching. Mrs. Anne Hamilton gave an account of a rare bird collected in her yard at Dalton which was classified as a hybrid between a White-throated Sparrow and a Slate-colored Junco. Ralph Ramsey spoke on birds at an artificial feeder and illustrated his talk with colored slides. Dr. Wallace Rogers reported on the first nesting of the Horned Lark in Atlanta, illustrating his talk with color motion pictures.

Interesting bird records and recent notes of interest were presented from the floor and closed the regular meeting of formal discussion.

In the course of the business meeting which followed the following were appointed to the Nominating Committee: Mrs. J. C. Oliver, Chairman; George Seiple, and Richard Parks.

At 5:30 p.m., a buffet supper was enjoyed by members in Hearst Hall, compliments of the Atlanta Bird Club.

At 8:15 p.m., the society assembled at O'Keefe High School for an Audubon Screen Tour by Cleveland Grant, who exhibited color motion pictures of Wildlife of Marsh and Mountain.

Sunday breakfast was served in Hearst Hall at 6:30 a.m. and immediately afterward various groups left on conducted field trips.

At noon the members assembled for dinner followed by the tabulation of species observed during the meeting with 97 species noted.

Mrs. L. H. Mounts

We regret to report the death of Mrs. L. H. Mounts on April 14, 1955, at Macon, Georgia. Mrs. Mounts had long been a student of Georgia birds and was a charter member of the Georgia Ornithological Society. At the time of her death she was Regional Vice-President of the G.O.S. for the Macon region. The sympathy of the society is with the family and friends of Mrs. Mounts.