

North American Migration Count – Alabama - 2000

May 13th marked the ninth year for the North American Migration Count. AOS has been an active participant since that first year, 1992. That year we started out with only one county, Tuscaloosa. The next year Sharon Hudgins began coordinating our effort and recruiting teams, resulting in coverage of 31 counties, our highest number.

Activities have settled down now with teams covering ten counties again this year. As we mentioned last year, the counties included in this year's survey cover the major physiographic regions of the state, Mobile and Baldwin for the Gulf Coast region (lower unit) of the East Gulf Coastal Plain. The lower unit extends northward to include Montgomery, Lee, and the portions of Bibb surveyed. Jefferson, Shelby, and St Clair are in the Mountain region with Marshall and Morgan closing out to the north in the Tennessee Valley Region (more properly the Interior Low Plateau region). Unfortunately, we are again missing Colbert County in the Tennessee Valley Region.

Table 1, Alabama State Summary, attached, includes the individual county compilations, arranged from left to right in the geographic order from south to north, the order cited above by physiographic regions. Mobile Co. had the largest number of species, while Montgomery had the largest number of birds. Baldwin came in second in both these measures. Table 2, Summary Comparison, Alabama 1993-2000 provides a comparative measure of results and effort over the past eight years. This year, count day, the second Saturday in May, occurred on the 13th, the next to latest day possible. The avian population being sampled is a mixture of resident birds, breeding migrants and non-breeding, transient, migrants. The result of our species count reflects the decrease in transient, non-breeding migrants occasioned by the late date. Table 2 includes a new element, the date of the count for each year. Not surprisingly, there is a strong negative correlation between count date and number of species, the earlier the date the higher the species count. The total bird count was also down a bit from last year. There is a strong positive correlation between total birds counted and total party hours, hence our continued effort to increase the effort dedicated to the count, shooting for 50 party hours per county.

Dwight Cooley, reporting for Morgan Co., noted the decrease in migrants resulting from the late date as well as the weather for the four days preceding the count. With above average temperature and humidity and southerly winds, migrants were pushed further north and singing was suppressed. Dwight also noted that a cold front moved through the night of the count and 14 additional species of migrants were recorded in the following three days.

Bob Reid, reporting for St. Claire Co., also commented on the fall in count due to the late date, noting, however, that it was not too bad. He noted that the Eurasian Collared-Doves were possibly the first for the county and may be showing evidence that the species is moving toward Chattanooga along the principal highways. He further noted that the observations of nesting Tree Swallows and Song Sparrows may be the southernmost nesting observations for these species.

Tuck Hayward reported nine American Golden-Plovers in breeding plumage in a field just off Bellingrath Rd. in Mobile Co. In spite of the encroaching development, he has found this field reliable for the plovers since his early days of birding the area with Father Dorn.

Larry Gardella and the Montgomery Co. team reported the largest number of birds, by a goodly margin, as has been the case for the four previous years. A highlight of the Montgomery count was a Kirtland's Warbler by Bob Reed. We have included it in the count pending acceptance by the Alabama Bird Records Committee. Listed below are the county coordinators and party leaders. We know that there are more field observers than listed here and we want them all to know how much we appreciate their hard work. Here's to you! Thanks a bunch!

Baldwin: **Venetia Friend**, Bill Burroughs, Betsy Eagar, Keith Carter, Allen Tubbs, Paul Blevins, Ralph Tiller, Bill Summerour, Charlie Newcomer, Carolyn Henning;

Bibb: **David George**, Tom Clark;

Jefferson: **Greg Harber**, Sharon Hudgins, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent, Russell Bailey, Edith Hunt, Mary Waldrip, Ernie Stokeley, Alan Yester, Linda Whitworth;

Lee: **Julian Dusi**, Rosemary Dusi, Lorna West, Glenda Merrill, Geoffrey Hill, John V. Ernst, Virginia Ernst, Chester Roe, Virginia Roe, Daniel Hunter, Gary Hepp;

Marshall: **Linda Reynolds**, Duane Brown, Rex Seale, Lynne Hurley;

Mobile: **Mike Wilson**, Tom Siegwald, Jennifer Hartley, John Porter, Tuck Hayward, Elizabeth French, Tom Curry;

Montgomery: **Larry Gardella**, Lauren Blackwell, Lauren Dunning, Jimmy Gilliland, Bob Reed, Carolyn Snow,

Morgan: **Dwight Cooley**, Scott Gravette,

St. Clair: **Robert R. Reid Jr.**, Ben C. Garmon, John Gibson, Delores Guschke, Elberta G. Reid, Mary Jane Wells,

Shelby: **Helen H. Kittinger**, Harriett Wright, Michael Russell.

Thanks again....John & Jackie Porter, Compilers