

## Mountain Plover in Alabama

On Jan. 6, 1973 with Killdeer and Water Pipits in a very large unplanted field near Magnolia Springs, Alabama in south Baldwin County, Fairly Chandler and Peter Quinn discovered a Mountain Plover, *Eupoda montana*. The day's weather was cloudy, wind SW-N 5-15 m.p.h. and temperature range between 50° and 65° F. Previously the winter weather had been very mild with only two light freezes—above 20 degrees. The field was bare of any vegetation, green or otherwise.

The Mountain Plover was observed at leisure for about one quarter hour from approximately one hundred feet distance with 8.5 and 10X binoculars. All field marks were seen quite well: somewhat smaller than the accompanying Killdeer, buffy appearing back and breast and in flight a white wing stripe with dark border and dark tail band with white border.

The bird habitually did much running in search of food, usually 10 to 30 or more feet, after which it would stop and look about or go right to feed-

ing. On occasion it would fly as far as a quarter mile just a few feet above the ground after which it would look about again or go right to feeding and running about.

The bird was studied again some four hours later with binoculars and telescope by FC, PQ, Curtis L. Kingsbery, Lyman Goodnight, Steve Page and Fred Wernicke and again on Jan. 7, 9, 13, and 15 by many other birders. It was photographed in color by Dr. S. E. Liston on Jan. 13 and by FC on Jan. 15. On Jan. 15 three tractors were discing the field and the plover, Killdeer and pipits were avoiding the disturbed ground. On Jan. 17 the field was being plowed and no birds were present. The Killdeer and pipits moved to adjoining fields but the Mountain Plover was not seen again.

According to R. T. Peterson the Mountain Plover is a common breeding bird of the western parts of the Great Plains, wintering in California and Mexico and accidental in Massachusetts and Florida. Alexander Sprunt, Jr. in "Florida Bird Life" lists three records for that state, Dec. 1, 1870 at Key West, late July 1901 from James Island and Dec. 17, 1927 from Daytona Beach.

This is the first known record for Alabama.—P. Fairly Chandler, Magnolia Springs, AL 36555.



*Mountain Plover, near Magnolia Springs, Ala., Jan. 13, 1973. Photo/S. E. Liston.*

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