

# THE ORIOLE

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



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No. 4



# THE ORIOLE

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## GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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## NOTES ON THE OCCURRENCE IN SUMMER OF THREE SPECIES AT TOCCOA, GA.

By J. FRED DENTON AND DOROTHY P. NEAL

The writers spent May 31, 1961, observing birds in the immediate vicinity of Toccoa, Stephens County, Ga. Observations and comments on three species occurring there and assumed to be breeding are presented below.

Brown headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*).—The range of this species in northern Georgia is poorly defined. Burleigh (1958 Georgia Birds) states that it has been reported in the eastern part of the state north to Toccoa and in western Georgia to Rome. Apparently the species is not uncommon in the vicinity of Toccoa as we observed a pair accompanied by three or four young in pines on the fairway of the Toccoa Country Club. A second pair was noted to the east of Toccoa in the yard of the Lake Louise Hotel.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*).—Although definite records of this species breeding at Athens, Atlanta and Dalton have been published, there has been no information to indicate how common the species is in the upper Piedmont of Georgia. It was with mixed emotions that we recorded this bird in about ten different localities. Birds, adult males and females, singly or in pairs, were noted on lawns, in town and at the edge of town. Out in the country they were noted on pasture fences and around cattle and horse lots. This is the first time we have been aware of the commonness of the Cowbird during the breeding season in this area.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*).—Between 1946 and 1951 the breeding range of the Song Sparrow in Georgia was well documented in the literature. However, nothing has appeared concerning its further increase in numbers or extension of range during the succeeding 10 years. On June 27, 1960, Rev. E. G. Nichols (personal communication) recorded



Song Sparrows at Baldwin, Habersham Co., an extension of its summer range some three miles from its southern known limit at Cornelia. At Toccoa on May 31, the writers located a pair of Song Sparrows, apparently nesting, along a stream by the Toccoa Falls Road just off Highway 17. A second pair occupied territory by a bridge about 100 yds. further up the road. In the city a third pair was found on the lawn of a housing project behind Terrel's Restaurant. On July 17, 1961, a fourth pair was located by Denton in the heart of the city where highway 17 passes under the railroad tracks. Apparently the Song Sparrow is now well established and fairly common as a breeding bird in this city. The present known breeding range in eastern Georgia with its southern limits at Toccoa and Baldwin suggests that further extensions, if they occur, will be in Lavonia, Carnesville, Homer and Gainesville and the bird should be searched for in these towns. In this connection it should be emphasized that at the southern periphery of its range the Song Sparrow appears to be strictly limited to habitats within towns and thus easily located. J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta and DOROTHY P. NEAL, Demorest, Ga., January 5, 1962.

## GENERAL NOTES

### A SPECIMEN OF THE FULVOUS TREE DUCK FROM AUGUSTA, GA.—

Mr. Sid Newton brought to the writer for identification the head, neck and left wing of a duck which was killed on December 6, 1961, at the large settling basin of the Continental Can Company's pulp mill located twelve miles south of Augusta in Richmond County, Georgia. This bird was one of five flushed from the basin that day. The parts which are preserved in the writer's collection were easily identified as those of a Fulvous Tree Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*). During the next ten days at the same basin eight birds were seen and three killed on December 9, five birds seen on December 12 and five birds seen and one killed on December 16. The fate of the remaining four is unknown. This is the first record of the occurrence of this duck in Richmond County, only the second record for the state and apparently the first specimen to be preserved from the state.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Ga., January 5, 1962.

**LIMPKIN IN TELFAIR COUNTY.**—The Limpkin, (*Aramus guarauna pictus*) found in Georgia almost exclusively in the southeast corner, was found in Telfair County on August 20, 1959.

On the C. W. Dopson farm in lower Telfair County, there is a marsh of about twelve acres. In summer it abounds with bird life. At one time in mid-June I located two Purple Gallinules' nests and twelve nests of the Pied-billed Grebe.

By late summer the water level was lowered considerably, leaving a partially open edge, occupied by black gum trees around the marsh. On August 20 I observed a medium sized brown bird on a stump in this area. I was not positive about its identification.

On August 26 Mrs. S. T. Parkerson, who is familiar with the Limpkin at Wakulla Springs, Florida, identified the bird as this species. We approached to within about twenty-five yards and observed the bird through 7x50 binoculars for about fifteen minutes. We could plainly see the brown with white markings and the decurved bill. We did not hear its cry. WILLIAM DOPSON, 708 Graham Street, McRae, Georgia, Nov. 14, 1961.

Ed. Note—Richard E. Morlan and fellow observers in the T.O.S. report this species near Nashville, Tennessee in June of 1961, *The Migrant*,



XXXII, 48-49. The Limpkin is possibly spreading its range northward and should be looked for in aquatic habitats in Georgia similar to that described above by Mr. Dopson.

**LONG-EARED OWL AT AUGUSTA IN OCTOBER.**—On the morning of October 12, 1961, Mrs. Irene Stephens found a freshly killed Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus wilsonianus*) on a street in the hill section of the city. The remains of this owl which had been run over by several automobiles were brought to the writer for identification and are preserved in his collection. This is only the second definite record of the occurrence of this owl in Richmond County, the first being a bird collected by Dr. E. E. Murphey on January 26, 1923. Of added interest is the date, this being the earliest for the state by about six weeks. J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Ga., January 5, 1962.

**THE SNOWY OWL IN WHITFIELD COUNTY.**—A Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) was shot and killed on December 11, 1960, by J. B. Souther on his farm two miles east of Varnell, Whitfield County, Georgia. Mr. Souther stated to the writer that he observed the owl three times on that day, seeing it first on the dam of his fishpond, later on a rise of ground in a pasture, then perched on a fence post back of his house. Byron Wilson reported that he saw two white owls on an adjoining farm in early December 1960. The specimen was sent to Dr. Eugene Odum, one of whose students skinned and mounted it, and it is now in the museum of the University Science Center in Athens.

A check of Audubon Field Notes (15: 303-376, 1961) revealed that the invasion of Snowy Owls during the winter of 1960-61 was not the largest in recent years. Christmas bird counts furnish figures for comparison. "The total of 134 Snowy Owls this winter is surpassed only by the value 151 obtained in the 'large invasion' year, 1949-1950, in the Middle West (only 80 were counted in the 1945-1946 invasion and 88 in 1953-1954)"—(AFN 15: 305). The only other record for the southeastern U. S. was one seen in Nashville, Tennessee, on Dec. 18 and captured apparently weak from hunger on Jan. 5. This seventh all-time record for Tennessee died in captivity on Mar. 1 (AFN 15: 336). ANNE P. HAMILTON, 704 Greenwood Drive, Dalton, Georgia, Dec. 7, 1961.

**GOLDEN PLOVER AND DUNLIN AT AUGUSTA, GA.**—Four Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica*) spent the period September 10-20, 1961, on the front lawn of the Municipal Airport (Bush Field) located nine miles

south of Augusta in Richmond County, Ga. The birds along with six or seven Killdeer were rather tame and little disturbed by passing cars. By driving across the lawn it was possible to approach within 50 feet of them. All were in practically full breeding plumage. The few records of the occurrence of this species at Augusta in fall have all been between September 10 and October 6.

A single Dunlin (*Erolia alpina*) was carefully studied as it probed about a mud flat at the brickyard ponds at Augusta on November 5, 1961. There are two previous records of the occurrence of this sandpiper at Augusta, November 1-8, 1942 and November 6, 1949. Possibly these records suggest a small but definite movement of Dunlins through the Augusta area the first week in November. J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Ga., January 5, 1962.

**DOWITCHER AT COLUMBUS.**—It was almost noon on August 30, 1961 and a low overcast was drifting out of the east at the Columbus "city dump".

Here a huge ditch is opened into which the daily take of garbage is dumped and at the end of the day is covered as the next furrow is opened for the following day. This continuous process is at the same time a lowland reclamation project from the river plains. There are always low places with standing water or partly dried up puddles.

At this hour an assortment of 16 least, solitary and spotted sandpipers were seen along with one larger bird with all the markings of a fall Dowitcher (*Limnodromus Sp.*). He caught our attention with the rapid pump action of his bill going up and down in the mud. Finally, in his snipe-like flight, his conspicuous white rump and beautiful, horizontally barred tail was impressive.

After several years of looking and waiting this bird is now recorded in Columbus. L. A. WELLS, Green Island Hills Rt. 1, Columbus, Ga., November, 1961.

**BLUE GOOSE IN BIBB COUNTY.**—We had been told by sportsmen that a Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) had come to the lake of Bill Jones on Bethel Church Road, south of Macon in Bibb County.

When we arrived on the morning of February 22, 1961 we found it resting in the grass beside the lake along with four Canada Geese, a number of tame Mallards, and one Redhead.



Mr. Jones told us that the Blue Goose had come to the lake in the autumn of 1959, alone, and in immature plumage. In early winter it was joined by the four Canada Geese. The Blue Goose was now in adult plumage with white head and upper neck, and dark body. The geese and the ducks feed together and have become quite tame. The Blue Goose seems to be the leader of the group according to Mr. Jones.

Checking with Mr. Jones November 3, 1961, I learned that the Redhead (*Aythya americana*) had spent the winter of 1960-61 but left at migration time. The Blue Goose and the Canada Geese have remained at the pond ever since they first arrived in the autumn of 1959 although their wings have not been clipped. One of the Canada Geese was recently found dead, presumably shot.

The owner plants rye grain around the pond and places grains of corn under the water near the shore regularly. He also feeds them quantities of bread regularly. The pond is open with no trees except on one side where the Jones residence is located. HEDVIG S. CATER, 315 Davis Drive North, Warner Robins, Ga., November 3, 1961.

**HORNED LARKS IN THE MACON AREA.**—August 12, 1961 Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cater, Jr., and Gustav Swanson saw a small loose flock of Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) just north of Robins Air Force Base in Houston County. They flew into a borrow pit area where there were puddles of water. The temperature was over 90 degrees and many sought shelter from the direct sun in the shade of small tufts of grass. Most of the birds were young, probably not more than three weeks out of the nest according to Dr. Swanson.

As Mr. Cater and I were leaving this same general area October 22, 1961 we heard notes that sounded like Horned Larks from inside the fence of the air base. One adult male with the characteristic pattern was observed with binoculars but there must have been a group of them judging by the many notes. HEDVIG S. CATER, 315 Davis Drive North, Warner Robins, Ga., November 3, 1961.

**EVENING GROSBEAKS IN ATLANTA.**—The evening grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) was unknown in Georgia until 1955. During the winter of 1959-1960, there was a marked invasion, as reported in *The Oriole* for September 1960. In the following winter, only one sight record was reported to this observer.

Miss Orpha Baber, of the Atlanta Bird Club, reported to me on a trip she made to Gatlinburg, Tennessee on November 12, 1961. On that date she saw 43 evening grosbeaks in one tulip tree feeding on seed pods. The following day, she could find only six birds in Gatlinburg.

On November 18, Miss Baber reported 26 grosbeaks on Lullwater Parkway, a short street near Ponce de Leon Avenue and barely within the city limits of Atlanta. Some of the birds were drinking from the creek at this point; others were moving south along the Parkway.

I was able to confirm this observation in part on Thanksgiving Day, November 23. Heavy rain made it impossible to find birds in the morning, but about three P.M. I was able to explore Lullwater Parkway thoroughly. The sky was still black, and several birds in tall trees were impossible of identification for me. However, one bird landed directly over my head about 30 feet from the ground, in an oak tree. Through eight-power binoculars, the yellow coloring of the male evening grosbeak was distinct, and of course the large whitish bill was unmistakable.

This appears to be the earliest date on record for the evening grosbeak in Atlanta, or anywhere else in Georgia. LOUIS C. FINK, 688 North Parkwood Rd., Decatur, Georgia, December 3, 1961.

**DUNLIN AT CALLAWAY GARDENS.**—The semi-annual meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held in October 1961 at Ida Cason Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia. Before the first field trip on Saturday morning (about 7:15 A.M. on October 14), Harold Peters told me that he had spotted a Dunlin (*Erolia alpina*) on a small mud flat in the large lake directly across the road from the Gardens Motel. I finished breakfast quickly and made a search of the area, but could not find the bird.

As the field trips concluded at dusk that afternoon, a dozen members of G.O.S. had discovered the bird in the same location. Early arrivals felt it was a dowitcher because of its rapid bill action in the mud. The bird fed undisturbed by a gathering crowd of humans, some of whom stood within six feet of the bird. Eventually, the bird flew, so that all present could identify its flight pattern. Final identification as a dunlin, or red-backed sandpiper, was agreed upon by William Griffin, Rufus Godwin, Tom Imhof, Jr., and others.

Burleigh's "Georgia Birds" gives only three other records for the dunlin away from the coast of Georgia. LOUIS C. FINK, 688 North Parkwood Road, Decatur, Georgia, December 3, 1961.



**WILSON'S PETREL OFF SAPELO ISLAND, GEORGIA.**—On July 11, 1961 while conducting research aboard the motor vessel "Kit Jones" in the coastal waters approximately 12 miles east of Sapelo Island, Georgia, several Wilson's Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) were observed flying around the boat. The black plumage, white rump, square tail and swallow-like flight confirmed identification. On August 3, 1961, several more petrels were seen during a trip to the edge of the Gulf Stream.

According to Burleigh (Georgia Birds, 1958) the last recorded occurrence of this species in Georgia waters was by Sciple in 1939 off St. Simons Island. Dr. Lawrence R. Pomeroy of the Marine Institute staff states that he has observed birds that may have been this species in off shore waters during the past five years. SUSAN J. GRIFFITH AND HERBERT W. KALE II. *University of Georgia Marine Institute, Sapelo Island, Georgia, November 1961.*

## FROM THE FIELD

On October 29, 1961 Hedvig Cater and Mildred Grubbs saw 16 Canada Geese on a farm pond in Washington County. A lone Tree Swallow was noted on this same date.

Anne Hamilton reports Red-breasted Nuthatches arriving near Dalton on October 23, 1961 and that the species has been seen almost daily since November 23, this winter being the "best" invasion since 1954-55.

Edward G. Nichols was very active during the fall at Demorest and noted 14 Rough-winged Swallows on Aug. 18, 1961, an Eastern Kingbird on Sept. 18 and 5 Barn Swallows. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet arrived on September 25. Rev. Nichols noted 10 Red-breasted Nuthatches on October 2 and mentioned their presence on December 6 when he wrote. Also arriving on October 2 were two Cape May Warblers. Twelve individuals of this species were noted on October 9 and one on October 23. Ten Blackpoll warblers were noted on October 9, eight Scaup on Nov. 17, an Indigo Bunting on Nov. 17, and a pair of Buffleheads on Nov. 29. These Buffleheads and the Red-breasted Nuthatches were the first records for these two species in the Demorest area.

Friar M. Martin of The Monastery of the Holy Ghost, Conyers, Georgia reports the Green-winged Teal on Nov. 9, female pintail and

a male American Widgeon on Nov. 7 and a Ruddy Duck on this same date. Other species observed near Conyers during the year were: Kentucky Warbler Oct. 3, Acadian Flycatcher, Oct. 18, Blue Grosbeak, Oct. 8, Summer Tanager, Oct. 19, Snowy Egret, July 16-17, Blue-winged Teal, 17 birds on Oct. 12, King Rail, May 17, Greater Yellowlegs, Nov. 5, Crested Flycatcher, Sept. 26, Short-billed Marsh Wren (seen or heard almost daily from Aug. 10 to Sept. 6,) Cape May Warbler, Oct. 18, Ovenbird, Oct. 22, a single Purple Finch on Oct. 5 and a flock on Oct. 27, White-crowned Sparrow, Oct. 13, Gadwall on Oct. 29, Ruddy duck on Oct. 23, and the Mallard on November 1.

## NEWS AND COMMENTS

### MINUTES OF FORTY-FIFTH SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The 45th semi-annual meeting of the G. O. S. was held at the Gardens Motel Conference room, Ida Cason Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia on Oct. 13, 14, and 15, 1961.

The business meeting was opened at 1:00 P.M. on Saturday and minutes taken at the previous meeting were approved as read. Katherine Weaver gave the treasurer's report which was approved as read.

President Cypert called for reports from the regional vice-presidents. Those present gave short reports. The Rome group has established a memorial fund in honor of Ben Maulsby. The Atlanta group provided two scholarships to Audubon camps during the summer. Dalton has placed several copies of Georgia Birds in the local school library. All groups reported sponsoring field trips, talks to garden clubs, and other educational meetings.

President Cypert read a response from Mrs. Maulsby in answer to a letter of sympathy.

The Committee on Hawks and Owls reported no progress on legislation but at the present there are plans to renew the effort to get a favorable bill introduced in the general assembly.

President Cypert read excerpts from a letter from Milton Hopkins requesting more material for The Oriole and Louise Nunnally asked for more news and information for Oriole Chirps. Lee Marshall then reported on expenses for the current meeting.

Old business topics included Mr. Fred Hebard's manuscript. Membership in the Georgia Sportsmen's Federation was discussed by Harold



Peters. He moved that we affiliate with the Federation on a club basis. This motion was carried unanimously.

The nominating committee report was then given and accepted by the society. The following officers will lead the G. O. S. in 1962:

President—Mrs. Tom Cater, Jr.  
 1st. Vice-president—Mr. Rufus Godwin  
 2nd. Vice-president—Miss Louise Nunnally  
 Secretary—Mrs. Jesse Newsome  
 Treasurer—Miss Kitty Weaver  
 Business Manager—Mr. Louis Fink  
 Editor of Oriole—Milton Hopkins, Jr.  
 Regional vice-presidents:  
 Dalton—Mrs. Herman King  
 Demorest—Rev. Edward Nichols  
 West Point—Mr. Lee Marshall  
 Atlanta—Mrs. Emma Boyd  
 Athens—Mr. Herb Kale  
 Macon—Miss Alma Cooke  
 Milledgeville—Dr. Sarah Nelson  
 Augusta—Mrs. Gary Satcher  
 Albany—Mrs. J. W. Calhoun  
 Statesboro—Mr. Tully Pennington  
 Waycross—Mr. Gene Cypert  
 Columbus—Mr. L. A. Wells  
 Savannah—Mr. Ivan Tomkins  
 Fitzgerald—Mr. Milton Hopkins, Jr.  
 Rome—Mr. George Dorsey

Jay Brower gave the membership a report on plans for Audubon Screen Tours for the Atlanta area. Dr. Fred Denton invited the G. O. S. to meet in Augusta for the spring 1962 meeting.

President Cypert turned the session over to Mrs. Hedvig Cater who introduced Mrs. Whiteman of the Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club who presented the program. Speakers included Dr. Julian Dusi, Professor at Auburn University, and Fred C. Galle, Director of Horticulture, Ida Cason Gardens.

A word of appreciation for retiring officers, the paintings of Dick Parks on exhibition, and for the hospitality of the Gardens was given by Mrs. Oliver in concluding the program. Frank W. Fitch, Jr., secretary

#### CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

In reference to "In Memoriam: Frederick Vanuxem Hebard" by Lucien Harris, Jr., *The Oriole*, XXVI, 17. Instead of being elected a "Fellow of the A. O. U." in 1951 he became an "Elective Member". In addition to Mr. Hebard's bibliography should be added the title, "Water

Birds of Penobscot Bay" published by the Portland Society of Natural History, Portland, Maine 1959, 1-36pp.

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION—MIGRATION OF BUFFLEHEADS

A study of the Bufflehead is under way, and information on the migration of that species is needed. Data required include first arrival dates, peak date of migration and peak numbers, and departure dates.

Only birds actually believed to be migrants should be listed, but, where pertinent, other data on wintering or summering numbers should be included. If only infrequent visits are made to areas frequented by Bufflehead, the statement "present by (date)" is preferable to "arrival (date)", and "last seen (date)" to "departure (date)". Information is solicited particularly for the spring migration of 1962, but it is hoped that interested observers will report any data they may have obtained in the past; requests for fall migration data will be made later. It is planned to colour-mark some Buffleheads in Maryland, New York, and Oregon during the winter of 1961-62, and observers should take particular note of any Buffleheads bearing bright patches of red, yellow, or orange. Please send information on the Bufflehead to:

A. J. Erskine,  
 Canadian Wildlife Service,  
 P. O. Box 180,  
 Sackville, New Brunswick  
 Canada.

#### GILBERT R. ROSSIGNOL

Gilbert R. Rossignol died at his home in Savannah, on Friday night, December 22, after a long illness. The funeral was at Blessed Sacrament church on December 26, and burial in Laurel Grove Cemetery. He was 76 years old.

He was a well-known ornithologist of an earlier period, and was a contemporary and friend of Arthur T. Wayne, George Noble, Troup D. Perry, Walter J. Hoxie, and Walter J. Erichsen. His most active period was from about 1907 to 1937, although he never lost his interest in anything pertaining to birds.

To this writer he was an unfailing friend and advisor from 1923 on.  
 I. R. T.



## RECENT LITERATURE

BIRDS OF THE WORLD—by Oliver L. Austin, Jr., illustrations by Arthur Singer, 1961, Golden Press, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York 20, New York, 316 pages, First edition \$14.95, subsequent editions \$17.50, Golden-craft edition \$11.98.

This is an unusual bird book. The pages measure 10 by 13 inches. More than 700 birds are illustrated and there is a color plate on almost every page. Both the book's cover and the dust jacket are riots of color.

The author's foreword says he has written a comprehensive "survey of the world's birds"—all 27 orders and 155 families. He estimates as 8,650 the number of species of birds (both flying and flightless) living today or recently extinct (which he defines as "since the late 17th century.") He feels that something less than 100 species remain to be discovered.

Obviously, 8,650 species cannot be described in 316 pages. The author selects samples from each family, apparently on a random basis. Thus he has several paragraphs on the robin, a few lines on the wood and hermit thrushes, and a paragraph on the habits of the wrenthrush (*Zeledonia*) from the mountains of Costa Rica.

The artist, who is identified only by name, has similar random choices. A full-page plate includes a fine view of the cattle egret (which will interest Georgia readers), a similar picture of the black heron of Africa, and none at all of our familiar green heron.

In short, the book is filled with information, but it is too scattered to be useful as reference. It is uneven if read for pleasure: Mr. Austin cites the pelican, "whose bill holds more than his belly can," and discusses the truth of the rhyme. The white pelican's pouch will hold three gallons, far more than the bird's stomach. A few pages later, Mr. Austin is not so easy to read: he is discussing "totipalmate swimmers," a "relict group" of herons, and three ciconiids which are aberrant, lethargic and have a nuchal crest.

His writing is sometimes puzzling. I studied this sentence a long time: "The prevention of stream pollution and the discharge of oil in coastal waters *have* reduced the danger to many coastal and other populations of water and shore birds." (*Italics mine.*)

The introduction is a splendid short summary of the evolution of birds and a discussion of how they learned to fly. *Louis C. Fink*

MY WILDERNESS: EAST TO KATAHDIN—by William O. Douglas, 1961, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 290 pages, \$4.95.

This is a companion to "My Wilderness: The Pacific West." Justice Douglas has a highly readable style, and he recounts days on the trail in Zion National Park, the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming, and remote spots in Canada. As his readers already know, Justice Douglas likes to venture into normally inaccessible wilderness, using horses, canoes, and more often than not, his own legs. He describes the natural history of such places in detail, with special emphasis on botany, which is his own personal interest. However, he describes many of the birds which he meets on his travels.

The book becomes of keenest interest to Georgians when the author describes one visit to the Everglades, and another to the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. "I remember the Smokies," he writes, "as soft ridges touched by tendrils of mist."

Final adventures include a description of his beloved Chesapeake and Ohio Canal outside of Washington, D.C., the White Mountains, and finally Mount Katahdin in Maine, where the Appalachian Trail comes to the end of its 2,000 mile journey from Georgia. *Louis C. Fink.*

THE BIOSYSTEMATICS OF AMERICAN CROWS—by David W. Johnston, 1961, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 119 pp., \$3.25.

This volume contains a section on methods employed in the study, sections on the Common Crow, Fish Crow, Mexican Crow, Cuban Crow, White-necked Crow, Palm Crow, and Jamaican Crow. Chapter 10 deals with other interspecific relationships and Chapter 11 contains a summary and conclusions. Also included is a list of literature cited and an index. The book has six figures and eleven tables.

Dr. Johnson has helped clear up many misconceptions concerning range limitations and extensions in the genus *Corvus* and has contributed new methods and enlarged old ones that could be gainfully employed in further studies of closely related species that do not always differ strikingly in their morphological features.

One of the most interesting aspects of such a study as this is the analysis of isolating mechanisms or factors which prevent interbreeding of sympatric or contiguous populations. As the author has stated: "attention is focused upon the biological features which characterize each species and which prevent interbreeding between species."



His approach to the problem has tended to get away from minute color differences and too much reliance on measurements which are highly variable for too many reasons to discuss although they are offered in addition to his stronger approach and application of methods to the study of the genus *Corvus's* geographic ranges, habitat choices, voice, reproductive phenology, and other ecologic considerations.

Dr. Johnson examined 2269 breeding specimens of seven species of *Corvus* in connection with his systematic and biological investigation of American crows. His taking account the recognition of both sex and age groups within a given species gives added importance, in my opinion, and strengthens considerably his conclusions pertaining to each species.

Reproductive phenology has, in his opinion, been the most effective isolating mechanism in regards to our two crows east of the Mississippi although their territories or ranges overlap in almost all instances.

A study such as this necessarily involves much work to enable a researcher to draw conclusions that will be of a valid nature and it follows that these conclusions cannot be effectively presented in a few simple words.

For the reader who is willing to accept the fact that some things are black and that some things are white and that all things are not some shade of gray and at the same time wishes to explore some of the complexities of avian relationships this work is recommended. *Milton Hopkins, Jr.*

## EDITORIAL

Unfortunately the greater part of the present editor's time that is devoted to The Oriole is spent in solicitations for suitable material for publication or waiting on each issue beyond suggested publication dates in anticipation of material that never seems to get here.

Preferably, in my opinion, our journal or any scientific journal should consist of a balance of major articles of some length and a few general notes in each issue.

It has become increasingly difficult to secure any material above notes of several paragraphs in length. This, however, should not be taken as evidence that short notes are not appreciated since many profound and useful discoveries have been presented in very few words.

What lies at the base of this dearth of material? It is not found in the absence of non-published findings certainly. It lies in the fact that many of us are too lazy to spend the few hours necessary to assimilate our findings and place them in the mails.

What is considered suitable material for publishing in The Oriole? Any articles of any length concerning bird life in Georgia from notes concerning a new species in your area to how many species nest on your property. Also articles of general ornithological interest such as taxonomic studies or where to look for a particular species. Articles need not contain any profound, earth-shaking discoveries to be worthy of recording. Most of us have projects in bird study or breeding studies underway that could be reported on now. We have upwards of 300 members in addition to others who do not have to be G.O.S. members to qualify as an Oriole contributor. Out of this number less than twelve have furnished practically all of the material in the last few volumes.

Printing costs are steadily rising and each member would benefit from his or her investment in yearly subscriptions by becoming a contributor. These words, which should be unnecessary, could have been replaced with valuable material on Georgia bird life. They have been placed here due to the fact that the December Oriole has been delayed for nearly two months due to lack of manuscript. We are all guilty of taking our jobs and our leisure too seriously. Take a few hours now and then and devote them to ornithology. *M.N.H.*