

# THE ORIOLE

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



VOL. XXXIII

DECEMBER, 1968

NO. 4

# THE ORIOLE

## EDITOR

Leslie B. Davenport, Jr., Biology Department, Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga. 31406

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

J. Fred Denton; George A. Dorsey; Milton N. Hopkins, Jr.; Harold C. Jones; Richard H. Packer, Jr.

THE ORIOLE is mailed to all members of the Georgia Ornithological Society not in arrears for dues. Classes of membership are as follows:

Regular — \$3.00 Library — \$2.00 Sustaining, Garden Club — \$5.00; Life — \$50.00; Patron — \$100.00

Inquiries concerning back issues of THE ORIOLE or OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE G. O. S. should be directed to the Business Manager.

All dues should be remitted to the Treasurer of the Society: Robert Overing, Rt. 2, Chapin, S. C. 29036.

## CONTENTS

### LATE SUMMER AND FALL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE GEORGIA COAST

C. William Dopson, Jr., and James I. Richardson .....41

### SUMMARY OF THE 1967 GEORGIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

C. William Dopson, Jr. ....44

GENERAL NOTES .....50

RECENT LITERATURE .....53

## GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY Founded December 13, 1936

Mrs. E. O. Mellinger, President  
L. A. Wells, Vice-President  
C. William Dopson, 2nd Vice-President

Mrs. Norene Boring, Secretary  
Robert Overing, Treasurer  
W. P. Kellam, Librarian

Business Manager: T. McRae Williams, 755 Ellsworth Drive, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30318.

# THE ORIOLE

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

VOL. XXXIII

DECEMBER, 1968

NO. 4

## LATE SUMMER AND FALL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE GEORGIA COAST

C. WILLIAM DOPSON, JR., AND JAMES I. RICHARDSON

During the late summer and fall of 1968 the authors made visits to several of the outer islands on the Georgia coast. Our primary purpose for the visits was not avian investigation, but some of our rather hastily made observations seem noteworthy.

Marbled Godwit: *Limosa fedoa*. The authors and H. Neuhauser noted an unusually large flock of 108 Marbled Godwits resting on the spit at the northeastern corner of Little St. Simons Island, Glynn County, on 24 November 1968. This observation was made within seven miles of Sapelo Island, McIntosh County, where Teal (1959) reported no recent November records. Kale and Hyypio (1966) made no mention of any November records for Sapelo Island either. Burleigh (1958), however, reported that the Marbled Godwit was commonest on the Georgia coast from late November until the first of April. Only one individual of this species was found on this spit on 4 August 1968.

American Avocet: *Recurvirostra americana*. On 24 November 1968 Richardson and Neuhauser observed an Avocet flying over the large freshwater pond on the northern end of Little St. Simons Island. Burleigh (1958) reports the Avocet as a scarce and irregular transient on the coast. From the few published reports since then, it seems that the status has not changed.

Wilson's Phalarope: *Steganopus tricolor*. On 4 August 1968 the authors found a Wilson's Phalarope feeding in a small brackish pool on the northeastern corner of Little St. Simons Island. We observed it for a few minutes as it fed in association with Lesser Yellowlegs (*Totanus flavipes*), Dunlins (*Erolia aplina*), and dowitchers (*Limnodromus* sp.). After we observed the single bird through binoculars and a 30 power telescope, it flew and was not seen again. This is apparently an early fall record for the state; the previous early fall date was 14 August (Tomkins, 1958).



Royal Tern: *Thalasseus maximus*. On 4 August 1968 while on Little Egg Island, McIntosh County, the authors found the desiccated remains of a Royal Tern with a Fish and Wildlife Service band still on the foot. The band was returned and the Service advised us that the bird had been banded when too young to fly near Edisto Island, South Carolina, on 1 July 1967 by T. A. Beckett.

Sandwich Tern: *Thalasseus sandvicensis*. During the first two weeks of August, Sandwich Terns were noted on Little Cumberland (Camden Co.), Little St. Simons, Little Egg, Cabretta (McIntosh Co.), and Sapelo Islands. The number seen at each locality varied from one to 27 (27 observed by Dopson on Cabretta Id. 13 Aug. 1968). From these observations it would seem that the Sandwich Tern occurred more frequently on the Georgia coast during the summer of 1968 than in the past (Sciple, 1963).

Black Skimmer: *Rynchops nigra*. On 4 August 1968 the authors visited a sandbar island in St. Andrews Sound. During the visit which lasted not more than five minutes because of a threatening squall, we estimated about 400 adult and immature Black Skimmers present. At least 15 downy young skimmers were also noted. This island, at its highest point, is only a couple of feet above normal high tide and probably not over two acres in size at normal high tide. Later that day we visited Little Egg Island in the Altamaha Sound where we found no evidence whatsoever of any recent avian breeding activity.\* It would be interesting to know if the Little Egg Island nesting skimmers reported by Kale and Teal (1968) and Kale et al (1965) had relocated on the sandbar island in St. Andrews Sound.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: *Sitta canadensis*. On 24 November 1968 four Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed in the interior forest of Little St. Simons Island. This is apparently the earliest fall-winter record for the region.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Burleigh, T. D. 1958. Georgia Birds. U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla. 746 pp.
- Kale, H. W., II, and P. A. Hyypio. 1966. Additions to the Birds of

\*Prolonged human disturbance and/or the presence of Rice Rats (*Oryzomys palustris*) could possibly account for the recent absence of nesting terns and skimmers on the island. The authors and Neuhauser captured a Rice Rat and found evidence of others on 23 Nov. 1968.

Sapelo Island and Vicinity. The Oriole, 31(1):1-11.

Kale, H. W., II, G. W. Sciple, and I. R. Tomkins. 1965. The Royal Tern Colony of Little Egg Island, Georgia. Bird Banding, 36(1):21-27.

Kale, H. W., II, and J. M. Teal. 1958. Royal Tern Nesting on Little Egg Island. The Oriole, 23(3):36-37.

Sciple, G. W. 1963. Sandwich Terns Present on Outer Coastal Islands and Offshore. The Oriole, 28(1):11-12.

Teal, J. M. 1959. Birds of Sapelo Island and Vicinity. The Oriole, 24(1):1-14, (2):17-20.

Tomkins, I. R. 1958. The Birdlife of the Savannah River Delta. Occas. Pub. No. 4, Ga. Ornithol. Soc. 67 pp.

Department of Zoology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601.

#### SUMMARY OF THE 1967 GEORGIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

C. WILLIAM DOPSON, JR.

Eleven counts were conducted in Georgia this year, with a total of 174 species being recorded in the state. The counts were as follows: Athens, Dec. 20, 12 observers, Richard Peake, compiler; Atlanta, Dec. 30, 23 observers, Louis Fink, compiler; Augusta, Dec. 23, 13 observers, J. Fred Denton compiler; Barnesville, Jan. 1, 4 observers, Tom Collum, compiler; Callaway Gardens—Pine Mt., Jan. 1, 13 observers, Ted Ellis, compiler; Columbus, Dec. 26, 7 observers, L. A. Wells, compiler; Dalton, Dec. 21, 14 observers, Anne Hamilton, compiler; Milledgeville, Dec. 30, 7 observers, Katherine Weaver, compiler; Rome, Dec. 31, 8 observers, George Dorsey, compiler; Sapelo Island, Dec. 30, 12 observers, C. William Dopson, Jr., compiler; Thomasville, Dec. 24, 2 observers, Jack Dozier, compiler.

The information in this summary was taken from *Audubon Field Notes*, Vol. 22, No. 2. As last year, the numbers of birds for each species having one hundred thousand or more were rounded to the nearest one thousand. Where the numbers are rounded off the Roman Numeral M was used to represent one thousand. Although this is not done in *Audubon Field Notes*, it was done here to make it possible for these large numbers to be printed in the *Oriole* in chart form.

Department of Zoology  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia

[illegible]





Myrtle Warbler	78	6	87	140	285	4	18	13	2100	75
Yellow-th. Warbler			1						13	
Pine Warbler	26	9	14	23	44	5	4		132	41
Palm Warbler	1		8	1			6		47	3
Yellowthroat		1	2	2	1				60	17
Yellow-br. Chat									1	
House Sparrow	72	168	42	282	380	77	288	269	2	15
Eastern Meadowlark	46	232	313	74	86	93	59	96	160	65
Red-winged Blackbird	3080	1461	2248	885	413	271	4000M	500M	920	900
Baltimore Oriole						1				
Rusty Blackbird	168	12	56	1	301	65		400M	12	1
Brewer's Blackbird		50			35			200M		
Boat-tailed Grackle										
Common Grackle	7830	10000	144	1020	29	16	1200M	1000M	1170	175
Brown-headed Cowbird	63	79	3	18	16	14	400M	100M	46	2
blackbird (sp.)					2170					
Cardinal	97	69	132	32	175	145	73	51	103	65
Purple Finch	23	28	5		58	5	6	13	1	2
Pine Siskin	1				6	1	2		1	
American Goldfinch	168	224	28		70	85	48	15	194	80
Rufous-sided Towhee	153	152	86	10	116	120	61	35	57	50
Savannah Sparrow	27	55	72		113	132	5	7	1	3
Grasshopper Sparrow		1								
Henslow's Sparrow									1	
Sharp-tailed Sparrow									1	
Seaside Sparrow	2	10	7	3	37	3			26	125
Vesper Sparrow								20+	14	
Lark Sparrow										
Bachman's Sparrow	2									
Slate-colored Junco	258	338	126	18	395	62	53	226	31	40
Chipping Sparrow	34	60		42	170	361	11	18	49	75
Field Sparrow	333	305	91	25	166	115	96	390	97	45
White-cr. Sparrow	4	2		2	1	2				
White-th. Sparrow	519	445	355	45	222	305	87	53	196	95
Fox Sparrow	21	5	4	1	7	5	5		1	4
Swamp Sparrow	88	37	64	9	8	45	44		9	35
Song Sparrow	191	36	156	14	82	128	32	20	9	17
TOTAL SPECIES	74	60	84	48	71	83	70	52	63	86



## GENERAL NOTES

**TAILLESS SHRIKE**—On May 17, 1962, I noted a Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) flying along a fence row near Osierfield, Irwin County, Georgia. It had no retrices, but the bird performed the customary down swoop-up glide just before reaching its next perch.

In "Louisiana Birds" George H. Lowery, Jr. says the French call this peculiar action the "reverance" or the "curtsy". The tailless shrike was again observed in flight several times on May 22. Apparently the retrices in this species have little if anything to do with the rapid gain of elevation that the bird accomplishes just before reaching its intended perch, but rather a much more rapid wing beat and steep glide bring about the sudden unsweep. Milton Hopkins, Jr., RFD 5, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

**GOLDEN EAGLE IN IRWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA** — A Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) was noted soaring low over a farm pond two miles southwest of Osierfield, Irwin County, Georgia, on September 21, 1963. The bird was in sight for over fifteen minutes as it gradually gained altitude and passed out of binocular range in an easterly direction. This is the only record of this species in the Fitzgerald region. Milton Hopkins, Jr., RFD 5, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

**A SECOND SPECIMEN OF THE REDDISH EGRET FROM GEORGIA**—On 14 September 1967 Milton Hopkins, Jr., and the author found two reddish Egrets (*Dichromanassa rufescens*) feeding in a tidal pool on the spit at the northeastern corner of Little St. Simons Island, Glynn County, Georgia. After we observed the birds through binoculars and a 30 power telescope, one of the egrets was collected. The specimen, a subadult female, is now No. 2913 in the University of Georgia Museum of Zoology. The stomach contents consisted of at least 33 small fish, some of which were tentatively identified as *Fundulus*.

This is apparently the second record of the Reddish Egret for the state. The only other record of this species in Georgia is of a bird in immature plumage collected by William Brewster at St. Marys on 20 April 1877 (Burleigh, T. D. 1958. U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla. 746 pp.). C. William Dopson, Jr. Department of Zoology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601.

**BLACK-NECKED STILTS AND NORTHERN PHALAROPES AT JEKYLL ISLAND, GA.**—On September 12, 1968, I saw about a dozen Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) in a large rain pool that had collected in a grassy swale off the far end of Jekyll Cause-

way. It was full of birds: dowitchers, yellowlegs, sandpipers of other kinds—but among them, standing high on their rosy-red legs, were the Stilts. One little group of four stood away from the crowd at the water's edge and watched a fifth wading to them—a lovely picture.

I started to count the Stilts but stopped when I realized that the many light-colored birds in the crowd were my first Northern Phalaropes (*Lobipes lobatus*). They waded out from shore, one or two at a time, until they were out far enough to swim, then began swirling around like slow-spinning tops, dabbing as they went.

About half of the Stilts and Phalaropes were gone the next day and all were gone on the third day. Cecily Masters, Jekyll Island, Ga.

**WINTERING GREEN HERON IN ATLANTA**—Sunday, December 15, 1968, was cold and windy in Atlanta, and I waited until the sun was high before going out. About four P.M. I reached a small pond on Panthersville Road, near the property formerly maintained as the U. S. Honor Farm. (The State has built a mental hospital now.) Half of the lake was covered with ice, and I was surprised to see a Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) standing on the shore and seemingly looking through the ice for a minnow. The bird ignored me, but soon flew to a part of the pond where the water was open.

On the Atlanta Christmas Count on December 29, William W. Griffin confirmed the record of the heron, the first on the Atlanta Christmas Count in 20 years. There are few other winter records in the interior of Georgia.—Louis C. Fink, 620 Peachtree Street N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

**DECEMBER RECORD OF THE YELLOWTHROAT AT DALTON**—On 21 December, 1968, while participating in the Dalton area Christmas Bird Count, the writer located a Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) in an area known as the Deep Springs swamp. The area is located approximately three-tenths of a mile northeast of the Deep Springs Church on State Road 728, northeast of Dalton. The area, approximately 100 yards by 250 yards in length, could best be described as a natural overflow swamp composed of several large spring pools surrounded by an inundated woodland area containing a mixture of low shrubs and trees and some large hardwood and pine specimens. The depth of the water varies from a few inches around the edges to ten to fifteen feet in the spring pools themselves.

When first seen at 1:15 p.m. the adult male bird was perched about three feet above the water level on the outer branch of a dead Black



Willow tree. Excellent views from all angles were easily obtained at this time as the bird began flitting from one branch to another. The yellow of the under tail coverts, the upper belly and the breast and throat was very bright. The black "mask" and white over-line were most prominent as the bird moved within fifteen to thirty feet of the writer. The bird stayed in the immediate area for approximately two or three minutes and then flew to the opposite side of the swamp where the writer pursued it and was again able to relocate it in short brushy growth. The bird was then kept under observation for approximately five minutes with, again, excellent views being obtained as it moved about in the bushes, never more than a few feet above the water level.

All observations were made with 7x50 Bausch & Lomb binoculars. At the time of the observation the sky was a consistent overcast light gray. Optical quality was excellent at short distances, with colors being very true when viewed in the absence of bright reflections on the water. Jon E. DeVore, 4922 Sarasota Drive, Hixson, Tennessee 37343.

## RECENT LITERATURE

**WILD SANCTUARIES, OUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES—A HERITAGE RESTORED**, by Robert Murphy, Foreword by Stewart L. Udall (E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1968.) 288 pages, 250 photographs in color and monochrome, 32 maps.—I was just back from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge near Palm Beach, Florida, when I received this book, and the Sandhill Cranes in full cover on the dust jacket reminded me of just how close I had stood to those cranes a few days before. The author conveys that sense of immediacy, just as he did in his other books, such as "The Golden Eagle" and "The Peregrine Falcon."

Mr. Murphy has precisely limited himself to a discussion of the National Wildlife Refuges, their origins, their development, and the present concept of their use. A Refuge is always a place of sanctuary for endangered species (usually birds, but including pronghorn, sea otter, bison and loggerhead turtle), and the book is an optimistic account of results achieved. When conditions are favorable, hunting and fishing are allowed, and visitors are welcomed.

There are 300 Refuges in the United States (including Hawaii and Alaska) and the author does not describe each one in detail. He does have a map showing the locations of all of them, and individual maps of many Refuges. Of the 60 refuges in the Southeast, he describes Cape Romain, Okefenokee, Sabine, and Lacassine in some detail. If you like the outdoors (free of motels and refreshment stands) and especially if you enjoy wetlands, this book will make you want to leave tomorrow for a visit to one of our National Wildlife Refuges. There is a brief description of each Refuge, including the mailing address so you can send for detailed directions and bird-lists.—Louis C. Fink, 620 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

**COMMON BIRD SONGS**, recorded by Donald J. Borror; LP record, Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, N. Y. 10014. \$2.50.

Though it covers relatively a small number of species (sixty), this is one of the better records for learning bird songs. In many instances it presents songs by several different birds of each kind and frequently several different kinds of songs for one species of bird. A person trying to learn bird songs is thus given some insight into the dimensions of the undertaking as well as a decidedly better than usual repertoire for the species included. Even people with some experience in identifying birds by song may learn from this record. L.B.D., Jr.



FIELD BOOK OF WILD BIRDS AND THEIR MUSIC, by F. Schuyler Mathews. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, N. Y. 10014. \$2.75.

This book is one of those rather curious relics of an earlier time which probably had limited value originally and has not improved particularly with age. It is an attempt by the author around the turn of the century to represent the songs of some 125 species of birds in musical scores for the piano. According to his own statement in the introduction, he intended only to demonstrate the musical content of the bird's song: "Bird-notes can scarcely be recognized with the assistance of the piano."

In his foreword to the Dover edition, Dr. Donald J. Borror states that this book will be of value to musicians and students of bird song who have some knowledge of music, and because of the particular songs described will be of interest to people concerned with non-musical (biological) aspects of bird song. However, for the last group I suspect that some competence at the piano would be essential, as well as a very substantial prior knowledge of bird song. I could not in good conscience recommend this book to the general birder, or even to a non-musical ornithologist. L.B.D., Jr.

## A STATEMENT OF POLICY

Application for membership may be made to the Treasurer. *THE ORIOLE* is sent without charge to all classes of members not in arrears for dues. Send changes of address, claims for undelivered or defective copies and requests for information relative to advertising, subscriptions and back numbers to the business manager.

All articles and notes submitted for publication and all books and publications intended for review should be sent to the editor.

Original papers in the field of ornithology are published in *THE ORIOLE*. Papers are judged on their contribution of original data, ideas, or interpretations and on their conciseness, scientific accuracy, and clarity.

**COPY**—Type manuscripts *double spaced* throughout. Underscore scientific names only. Number pages in the upper right hand corner. Arrange contents in this sequence: title page, text, reference, tables, figure legends, and figures. Type your complete address and date of submitting manuscript.

**STYLE**—The guide for preparation of copy is the **STYLE MANUAL FOR BIOLOGICAL JOURNALS** available from American Institute of Biological Sciences, 2000 P Street NW, Washington 6, D.C., \$3.00. A copy of this manual is held by the editor for use by contributing authors. A postal card request and return postage by you is required for its use.

**TITLE**—The title should be concise, descriptive, and not more than 10 words in length. Avoid use of scientific names in titles if possible.

**FOOTNOTES**—Avoid footnotes by incorporating such material in the text.

**NOMENCLATURE**—Vernacular names should be capitalized in text. They are to be accompanied by appropriate scientific names the first time each species is mentioned. Show reference for long lists of scientific names (i.e., A.O.U. Checklist, 5th ed., 1957).

**REFERENCES**—When there are fewer than 3 references insert them in parentheses where needed in the text by author, journal, volume, pagination, and year of publication. Three or more references are grouped alphabetically by authors last names under "literature cited".

**TABLES**—Prepare tables in keeping with size of *THE ORIOLE*. A good table should be understandable without reference to the text.

**ILLUSTRATIONS**—Illustrations should be suitable for photographic reproduction without retouching. Colored plates will be charged to the author.

**REPRINTS**—Request for reprints must be sent with original manuscript and are to be paid for by the author.

The *author* is responsible for putting his manuscript in final form for production. Authors should consult colleagues and specialists for review of papers before submission, and check all literature available to him that might have a bearing on his paper.