

# THE ORIOLE

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# THE ORIOLE

## EDITOR

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

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## NOTEWORTHY GEORGIA SPECIMENS IN THE TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION COLLECTION

By Robert L. Crawford

Tall Timbers Research Station maintains a bird collection of approximately 3,300 skins (October 1974) for reference material and to preserve voucher specimens. The personal collection of the late Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr., formed the basis for the collection, which has had many additions since its establishment. This paper lists and discusses some of these specimens which are of particular interest to Georgia ornithologists. The specimens listed fall into three categories: (1) specimens noted by Burleigh (1958) as being taken by Stoddard, but whose location and catalog number have never been published, (2) specimens noted by Denton and Hopkins (1969) who, because of limited space, were unable to state the collector, location of the skin, or its catalog number, and (3) specimens representing noteworthy records that have never been published. Two of the latter category have been mentioned briefly in the reports of *American Birds*. Accounts of many of Stoddard's records are in his manuscript *The Birds of Grady County, Georgia*, and although this will eventually be published in the Tall Timbers Bulletin series, it will be some time before final editing is finished. With two exceptions, subspecies are not treated in this paper, though it should be noted that many of the skins sent off by Stoddard for identification and cited by Burleigh are also in the Tall Timbers collection. In the following list, common and scientific names follow the A. O. U. Checklist (1957) and its thirty-second supplement (A. O. U. 1973).

### Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)

No. 02; Grady Co., Beachton, Susina Plantation; 13 Nov 1961; J. Mason.

No. 2597; Grady Co., north of Cairo, 2 Apr 1970; E. C. McAlvie.

No. 2713; Brooks Co., 4 June 1965; W. Caldwell.

Loon records from southwest Georgia are scarce (Burleigh, 1958, pp. 77-78; see also Williams, 1973).

### Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*)

No. 2660; Grady Co., Beachton; 28 Oct 1944; H. L. Stoddard, Sr. This was a "Blue Goose," cited by Burleigh (1958, p. 129).

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

No. 115; Grady Co., Beachton, Susina Plantation; 22 Dec 1959; B. White

Although Golden Eagles may well be regular winter visitants in south Georgia, they are seldom recorded (Burleigh, 1958, p. 188; also Hopkins, 1968; Crawford and Dozier, 1973; Erwin, 1974).

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*)

No. 190; Grady Co., Ocklockonee River near Beachton; 21 Oct 1961; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

All of the older records of Limpkins in Georgia were from the southeastern corner of the state (Burleigh, 1958, p. 214). More recently, Harris (1956) reported one near Atlanta and Dopson has found them in Telfair County (Dopson, 1961, 1963). Thus, Cypert's (1957) record near Albany and Stoddard's Grady County specimen appear to be the only records from southwest Georgia.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*)

No. 207; Thomas Co.; 9 May 1940; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

No. 211; Grady Co., Beachton, Susina Plantation; 5 Nov 1943; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

Both of these were cited by Burleigh (1958, p. 220).

Northern Phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*)

No. 348; Grady Co., Beachton, Sherwood Plantation; 3 Oct 1937; H. L. Stoddard, Sr. (Burleigh 1958, p. 278).

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

No. 421; Decatur Co., Faceville; 15 Dec 1959; R. C. Balfour.

Evidently this was the second state record for this species (see Moore [1974] for other Georgia records).

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*)

No. 432; Grady Co., Beachton, Sherwood Plantation; 16 May 1940; H. L. Stoddard, Sr. (Burleigh, 1958, p. 317).

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Nos. 451 and 452; Grady Co., Beachton, Susina Plantation; 1 Mar 1954; L. Neel.

Both of these were females and were taken in a thick growth of young pines. Burleigh (1958, p. 329) listed only two records of this species from south Georgia.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

No. 450; Sumter Co., Americus; 13 Jan 1960; J. P. Greene. Short-

eared Owls (and Long-eared Owls) probably occur regularly in Georgia during the winter, but published records are few (Burleigh, 1958, p. 330).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*)

No. 2677; Thomas Co., Thomasville; 21 Sept 1972; R. L. Crawford (Teulings, 1973).

Apparently this is the only Georgia specimen from south of the fall line (Burleigh, 1958, p. 379).

Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)

No. 594; Grady Co., Beachton, Sherwood Plantation; 2 Oct 1949; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

This specimen was examined by A. R. Phillips in 1964 and was referred to as "*campestris*." Stein (1963) included "*campestris*" in his "*brewsteri*" which was called *traillii* in the recent taxonomic revision of the "Traill's Flycatcher" complex (A. O. U., 1973).

Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Nuttallornis borealis*)

No. 621; Grady Co., Beachton, Sherwood Plantation; 11 Sept 1944; H. L. Stoddard, Sr. (Burleigh, 1958, p. 387).

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

No. 2679; Brooks Co., Brice's Pond; 2 Nov 1972; J. A. Bracey.

This was one of at least four males present (Teulings, 1973).

Fowler (1973) reported a Vermilion Flycatcher from Ware County that same winter.

"Lawrence's Warbler" (*Vermivora chrysoptera* X *V. pinus*)

No. 1111; Colquitt Co., Doerun, WALB TV tower; 7 Sept 1962; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

Short (1963) urged that reports of hybrids between these two species include descriptions of the plumage rather than just a designation to one of the two "types." This specimen (which has a black face mask and bib) has a hybrid-index value of "2" using the following characters: yellow underparts, wing bars broadened with yellow and white, and the back, hindneck, and rump yellow-green.

Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*)

No. 1223; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 14 Oct 1957; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

Though a fairly common spring transient in south Georgia, Cape Mays are rare in the fall.

Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

No. 1724; Grady Co., Beachton, Sherwood Plantation; 5 Feb 1947; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

No. 1725; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 22 Nov 1948; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

These were the first and second Georgia records for the "Bullock's Oriole" (Stoddard, 1951; Burleigh, 1958, p. 589).

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

No. 3283; Miller Co., Colquitt; 26 Dec 1947; collector unknown.

No. 1711; Thomas Co., Greenwood Plantation; 25 Mar 1954; E. V. Komarek.

The latter specimen, cited by Walkinshaw and Zimmerman (1961) and by Crawford and Dozier (1973), was for some time misplaced.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)

No. 1754; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 3 July 1942; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.; juv.

No. 2304; Grady Co., 21 May 1965; H. L. Stoddard, Sr., and L. Neel; juv.

No. 2305; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 3 June 1965; B. Komarek.

No. 2817; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 12 June 1974; B. Komarek; juv.

Burleigh (1958, pp. 599-601) did not mention Stoddard's 1942 specimen in his discussion of the breeding status of the cowbird in Georgia. Cowbirds breeding in south Georgia are now not uncommon.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

No. 1758; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 11 Nov 1954; H. L. Stoddard, Sr., and B. Komarek.

This was the first Georgia record (Burleigh, 1958, p. 602).

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

No. 1823; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 23 Dec 1959; B. Komarek.

No. 2638; Thomas Co., Thomasville; 12 Apr 1963; R. L. Crawford.

These were the first and second Georgia records. Thus, Parker's assertion (1974) of the Atlanta sighting on 10 April 1973 as the first Georgia record was erroneous (cf. Parker, 1973).

Other Georgia records are these: Thomas County, 8 Feb 1964

(Crawford and Dozier, 1973); Lowndes County, 15 March 1967 (Einhorn, 1967); and Muscogee County, 24 Oct 1969 (Wells, 1973). Some of the early records were summarized by Denton and Hopkins (1969, p. 51).

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)

No. 1887; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 10 Dec 1961; B. Komarek.

No. 1888; Grady Co., Beachton, Birdsong Plantation; 17 Nov 1961; B. Komarek.

Dickcissels are uncommon at any time in south Georgia.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

No. 1932; Chatham Co., north end of Tybee Is.; 27 June 1952; H. L. Stoddard, Sr., I. R. Tomkins, and G. M. Sutton.

This was the first Georgia record (Burleigh, 1958, p. 641).

Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*)

No. 2181; Colquitt Co., Doerun, WALB TV tower; 8 Nov 1962; H. L. Stoddard, Sr.

This is an early date for this species in southwest Georgia.

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Tall Timbers Research Station, Rt. 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Fla. 32303.

### GENERAL NOTES

**PAINTED BUNTING BREEDING IN JEFFERSON AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES, GEORGIA** — The most westerly site in the Upper Coastal Plain of Georgia where the Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) was known to nest was at Waynesboro in Burke County (Denton, 1950. *The Oriole*, 15:40). Recently we have obtained evidence of this species breeding near Louisville in Jefferson County and Sandersville in Washington County.

During the late spring and summer of 1972 a pair of Painted Buntings came regularly to two feeders at the W. M. Prichard farm home five miles west of Louisville. In late June the adults were accompanied by two young recently out of the nest. The birds continued to come to the feeders for several weeks thereafter. That this was not just an isolated instance of breeding is evidenced by the return of the birds in the spring of 1973 and of 1974. Both years the birds remained through the breeding season and came to the feeders regularly. The above information was furnished us by Dr. P. M. Prichard of the Medical College of Georgia who visits the home frequently and has observed the birds at the feeders.

Painted Buntings were first detected in Washington County at the rural home of Mrs. Owen Etheridge, Jr., five miles east of Sandersville, also in the summer of 1972. Following a telephone call, one of us (EPN) visited the Etheridge home on July 8, 1972, and observed two male buntings, one on each side of the house. Mrs. Etheridge said that the birds had been present for about a month and she had seen as many as three males at one time. On a visit to the home the next day the two males were sighted in the same general areas as before. One male perched and sang repeatedly from a utility wire above a dense hedgerow that paralleled the road. Two days later a female was observed moving about the hedgerow. On July 18 the female was seen carrying food to two different places in the hedgerow, presumably feeding two or more fledglings. However, the hedgerow was so dense that neither the number of fledglings nor site of the nest was determined.

The Etheridges put up a feeder on the south side of their house in the spring of 1973. On April 27 the first male bunting appeared at the feeder. Subsequently two more males appeared and on May 4, the first female. Several times that day the female was accompanied to the feeder by a male. On May 9, a male and female were seen together several times and then the female, carrying a small strip of paper in her bill, flew into the hedgerow and was lost.

The Etheridges moved into Sandersville before the 1974 breeding season, but on several visits to the farm during the summer they observed Painted Buntings there. Also, a Mrs. Haynes reported seeing a male Painted Bunting in the middle of June, 1974, along the railroad between Sandersville and Tennille, but there was no follow up of this record.

The male Painted Bunting that visited a feeder in Milledgeville, April 20-29, 1974, may have been a bird from the Sandersville population that drifted west in spring migration or it may have been an "over-shoot" from a possible breeding population further south in the Oconee River Valley.

J. Fred Denton, 529 Henderson Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30904 and Elizabeth P. Newsom, 110 West First Ave., Sandersville, Georgia 31082.

**CATTLE EGRETS FEEDING IN SALT MARSH** — Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) were first reported to occur on Sapelo Island by Teal (1956), at which time they were observed to feed with grazing cattle and occasionally in ditches and other wet areas. Ten years later Kale and Hyppio (1966) noted that the removal of cattle from the pastures on the South End had apparently inhibited the establishment of a large population of Cattle Egrets. During this past summer (1974), Cattle Egrets were observed to be exploiting the salt marsh as a source of food.

On 5 June a flock of some twenty Cattle Egrets was sighted foraging in short *Spartina alterniflora* (Loisel.) near the Lighthouse on the South End. The height of the grass was estimated to be 30 centimeters. In a nearby stand of *Batis maritima* L. a solitary Cattle Egret was also observed. On 8 June a flock of 22 Cattle Egrets was observed near the Lighthouse in *Spartina* approximately 40-50 centimeters tall.

Near Marsh Landing in an area of short *Spartina* in which occasional patches of *Salicornia virginica* L. are mixed, six Cattle Egrets were seen on 29 July. On 13 July ten Cattle Egrets were foraging in the same area and again on 20 July, eighteen were present. The average distance from where the Cattle Egrets were hunting to high ground was between 100-200 meters. Numerous stabs at potential food were observed, as were occasional successes. On many occasions the Cattle Egrets would forage in a locale for ten to twenty minutes and then fly off to a site removed by 50 meters or so. The latest observation of Cattle Egrets in the salt marsh thus far this year was on 8 September in a diked area near Shell Hammock by Gerry Plumley.

A probable food exploited by the Cattle Egrets in the high marsh would be the salt marsh grasshopper, *Orchelimum fidicinium* Rehn and Hebard, which reaches average densities in June and July of fifteen per square meter and masses of 50-75 milligrams (Smalley, 1960). The *Orchelimum* population in late July and August of this year was observed to be substantially lower in the high marsh near Marsh Landing in comparison to last year's population and data presented by Smalley (1960), and this in part may be due to the activity of the Cattle Egrets. Additionally wolf spiders (*Lycosidae*) are fairly common (two to three per square meter) during the summer months in the high marsh. Smaller and less frequently occurring arthropods could also be exploited. It would be a very interesting development if the Cattle Egrets are utilizing the abundant fiddler crabs, primarily *Uca pugnax* (S. I. Smith) which average densities of 200 per square meter (Wolf, Shanholtzer, and Reimold, in press). Bent (1926) does note that fiddler crabs are utilized by the Snowy Egret (*Leucophoyx thula*). The feeding of the Cattle Egrets in the salt marsh could well make a small impact on the established food web in the marsh as well as influencing the size of the Cattle Egret population on Sapelo. One of the major hinderances to feeding in the high marsh for the Egrets is the stiff and pointed nature of short *Spartina* shoots.

Cattle Egrets now commonly follow mowing machinery on the South End, but also in the late afternoon and early evening are frequently observed foraging with deer, in particular along the airfield near Marsh Landing from June through August. Often as many as twenty Cattle Egrets feed behind deer numbering up to thirty, with an occasional Egret perched atop a preoccupied deer.

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 William J. Pfeiffer, U. of Ga. Marine Institute, Sapelo Island, Georgia 31327

**MONK PARAKEET ON SAPELO ISLAND, GA.** — An additional bird, albeit an introduced one, may be added to the list of birds that has been compiled over the years for Sapelo Island by many observers. Small flocks of three or four Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) have

been observed near Hog Hammock and the Marine Institute during July and August of 1973 and from April through September of 1974.

William J. Pfeiffer, U. of Ga. Marine Institute, Sapelo Island, Georgia 31327

**AMERICAN AVOCET SIGHTED NEAR DUBLIN** — On Labor Day, September 2, 1974, an American Avocet (*Recurvirostro americana*) was observed in a "wet weather" pond in the Buckeye area of Laurens County by Tom Patterson, Sr., Hunter Patterson, and Porter McCollister of Dublin. The day was typical of the "Dog Days" of September. A light shower had occurred the evening before.

The pond, two to five acres in size depending on rainfall, is in a very large pasture near Thundering Springs Lake. In the pond are 20 to 30 dead, limbless oaks. A number of cattle were feeding in the pasture; and a group of Cattle Egrets were in the pasture and in the trees. Approximately 20 Bluewinged Teal were swimming at the base of the trees.

At approximately 10:00 a.m., the three observers approached the area. The Avocet was first seen and identified by Hunter Patterson, the only one of the group who had seen the species before. He had observed a pair in Florida in 1969, and had recently seen a group of four in Colorado this past summer. The bird was feeding on the back side of the pond, a distance of approximately 400 yards. A 20-power scope was used for better observation. The bird flew to the near side of the pond, only 200 yards distant, and continued feeding in its unique manner with its upturned bill moving pivotally back and forth in the water, as the bird waded forward rather rapidly.

Observation by the three continued for almost half an hour. The bird was still feeding when the group left.

At approximately 5:00 p.m. on the same day Hunter Patterson returned to the pond with his brother, Tom, Jr. The bird was still feeding in the pond.

On Saturday, September 7, Tom Patterson, Sr., returned to the area, but the Avocet was not seen.

The bird had already assumed its winter plumage.

Thomas K. Patterson, 1409 Edgewood Drive, Dublin, Georgia 31021

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES EATING ALGAE** — On December 3, 1974, I went to Thread Mill Lake in Dalton to make a survey of aquatic plants for a project I was working on. The day was clear; the temperature was 44 degrees Fahrenheit.

At 1:00 p.m. as I was walking back to my car, I approached a group of Black Willows (*Salix nigra*). The branches of these trees dipped under the surface of the water. As I came closer, I noticed a small flock of American Goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*), eight or nine in number, on a branch that dipped into the water. They were "talking" amongst themselves and reaching down into the water. I assumed they were drinking. Upon putting my binocular on them, I noted one of the birds had a filament of green algae hanging from its bill. I thought this was the accidental result of getting a drink of water. The birds flew to a neighboring Black Willow as I came near. I decided to stand there a few minutes and enjoy the beauty of these birds.

As I stood quietly, five of the birds returned and again started reaching down into the water. It was then I noticed they were not drinking water, but were plucking strands of filamentous green algae, *Spirogyra porticalis*, from the water and eating it with great relish and pleasure. For all the world, it looked as if they were eating green spaghetti! While the birds were eating, they kept up a steady "conversation" with each other. A few fights broke out over the algae and there was much jockeying for a prime position on the branch; the birds came down both sides of the branch to the water level. Never once did they get their feet wet. At no time did I see them take a drink of water. The birds consumed quite a bit of the algae and at length flew away.

No one I have talked to has heard of American Goldfinches eating algae. In reading (Bent, Arthur C. Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows and Allies, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1968 and Martin, Alexander S., Herbert S. Zim, Arnold L. Nelson, American Wildlife & Plants A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1961), I found no reference to American Goldfinches using algae as food.

Harriett G. DiGioia, 1309 Lakemont Drive, Dalton, Georgia 30720

**EARLY RECORD FOR THE GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** — A female Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) was observed by Dan Hans, Terry Moore, and John Swiderski on September 29, 1974, on the east slope of Brasstown Bald approximately 900 yards below the summit.

The bird was attracted by our "squeaking" for some warblers in front of us and came within fifteen feet, revealing the bright yellow crown of the female. Also noted at this time was the typical high-pitched call of the Golden-crowned.

*Georgia Birds* by Thomas D. Burleigh (1958. U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla.) lists the earliest record for Georgia as October 6, 1921 at Athens. A search through *The Oriole* and *American Birds* failed to reveal an earlier published date.

Terry S. Moore, Apt. 10-F, 1185 Collier Rd. NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30318

**EARLY FALL OBSERVATIONS OF PINTAILS AND COMMON MERGANSER** — On September 27, 1974, Malcolm Bell and I spent the day "birding" at the Harris Neck Wild Life Refuge in Coastal Georgia. This is a great location for many winter birds and we were delighted to find the following already there:

Pintail, *Anas acuta*. Three birds were observed feeding in a small rain pond. The Pintail is always one of the earliest ducks to arrive on the Georgia coast. Burleigh, in *Georgia Birds*, reports one female on September 29, 1939, as the earliest record for the state.

Common Merganser, *Mergus merganser americanus*. One male in bright plumage was resting in the goose pond and took flight as we approached. Burleigh gives November 16, 1935, as the earliest date for this unusual visitor. Could this bird, for reasons unknown to us, spend the entire summer in this area?

Herman W. Coolidge, 13 Bluff Drive, Savannah, Ga. 31406

**COMMON SCOTERS ON THE GEORGIA COAST** — Prior to 1960 the Common Scoter, *Oidemia nigra americana*, was considered a rare winter visitor to our state. Since that time it has been seen so frequently that it no longer has this status and we now expect it as a mid-winter visitor off-shore and in our sounds.

On October 10, 1974, while Malcolm Bell and I were eating lunch at the north end of Wassaw Island in Chatham County, we saw a large flock of ducks flying southward across Wassaw Sound. As they approached the island they dropped in altitude to a position about 10 feet

above the water. The loose flock quickly formed a long single line which swept past us at a rapid rate of speed just above the breakers as they continued to move southward.

The day was brilliant with autumn sunshine and the birds were sufficiently close for us to see the color of their bills and legs without glasses. They were easily identified as Common Scoters and 108 birds made up the flock.

As we finished our lunch, a second flock appeared in the north. This group crossed the sound and it, too, moved southward in a long line above the breakers. There were approximately 55 Common Scoters in this flock.

Herman W. Coolidge, 13 Bluff Drive, Savannah, Georgia 31406

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The communication of birding information is one of the prime functions of the GOS and the purpose of *The Oriole*. Hopefully, a President's Report would be an appropriate addition in meeting these goals. This first attempt will be a simple report on current activities of the Society and a brief statement of what I feel we must do to make the GOS a viable and valuable birding organization.

Our forthcoming spring meeting in Albany on April 11th thru the 13th offers a series of unique experiences; heron and egret rookeries, spring migration along the Flint River, and a guest speaker each and every one of you has seen many times on T.V. As Marlin Perkin's assistant on *The Wild Kingdom*, Jim Fowler, an Albany native, has photographed wild life over the entire world. Past Curator of the Chicago Zoo, a professional biologist and zoologist, Jim will take us on an abbreviated tour of birds and other wild life the world over. More detailed data will be forthcoming soon - this is a meeting you will not want to miss.

The guide to Georgia birding being edited by Dan Hans is progressing very well thanks to the help of members from all over the state. The completion of this project, hopefully by our Fall 1975 meeting, will be a milestone in Georgia birding. With the data this booklet will furnish, no matter where you are in Georgia, you will know where birds are to be found.

The GOShawk speaks elegantly for itself. Thanks to Harriett DiGioia, news of members, clubs, and birding bubbles forth each season. This addition to our activities by the last administration is a binding force and significant step forward for the Society.

You have heard my requests before in support of *The Oriole*. The editor can publish only that material which we furnish. To maintain the standards *The Oriole* requires, we must recognize our obligation to add to the ornithological knowledge of Georgia.

Finally let me ask for your support. We are a Society of birders; professionals, amateurs, students, and just plain lovers of birds. However, to have birds to see, study, and enjoy, the proper habitat must be present. To assure the continuation of this habitat requires that each of us support his or her local conservation organization. If not already a member, join and support the Georgia Conservancy, your local

Audubon Society, Bird Club, or the Siera Club. It is just this simple: tomorrow's birding depends upon your actions today.

*Wallace D. Dreyfoos, President*

### NEWS AND COMMENTS

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Savannah  
Northeast Georgia

If you are willing to serve, please contact Mr. Terry Moore, Apt 10F, 1185 Collier Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30318

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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.

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