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The Oriole, a quarterly journal of Georgia ornithology, publishes original articles that advance the study of birds in the state of Georgia and adjoining regions. *The Oriole* welcomes submission of articles describing the occurrence, distribution, behavior, or identification of birds in Georgia, as well as scientific studies from all fields of ornithology.

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RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS IN LONGLEAF PINE FORESTS DURING WINTER

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The Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) is perhaps the most abundant species in North America and an important seed predator on commercial crops and weeds in anthropogenic habitats (Yasukawa and Searcy 1995). Birds collected at winter roosts in landscapes dominated by anthropogenic habitats in the southeastern United States contained low frequencies (0-1%) of tree seeds (Dolbeer et al. 1978, White et al. 1985). Although predation on seeds of deciduous trees has been documented (white ash [*Fraxinus americana*], Bent 1958a; sweetgum [*Liquidambar styraciflua*], Meanley 1962), most accounts of tree seed predation by Red-winged Blackbirds refer to species of pines.

Beal (1900:43) documented predation on pine seeds by Red-winged Blackbirds, based on analyses of stomach contents, although the pine species were not identified. Subsequent accounts, based on observational data and a few collected birds, documented predation on five species of pines, of which the white pine (*Pinus strobus*), occupies only northern environments (Bent 1958a). The remaining four species occur in the southeastern United States (longleaf pine [*P. palustris*], Wahlenberg 1946:181-183, Denton 1947, Bent 1958b, Stoddard 1978; slash pine [*P. elliotii*], Fleetwood 1947, Stoddard 1978; loblolly pine [*P. taeda*], Fleetwood 1947, Meanley 1962, 1995, Stoddard 1978; and shortleaf pine [*P. echinata*], Stoddard 1978). Whereas most accounts focused on Red-winged Blackbird foraging behavior on pine seeds in the tree canopy, where birds perch on cones, access and extract the pine seed by gaping (Beecher 1951), husk the wings (seed coat), and eat the kernel, blackbirds also foraged on pine

seeds on the ground (Wahlenberg 1946, Meanley 1962).

My objective is to present information on abundance, activities, and sex-ratios of Red-winged Blackbirds on census plots in longleaf pine forest of the Apalachicola National Forest, northwest Florida. I compare these data with other information on Red-winged Blackbirds in longleaf and other southeastern pine forests to assess the importance of these habitats to this species and the role of red-wings as seed predators in southeastern pine forests.

Study Area And Methods

I employed standardized Winter Bird Population Study (WBPS) methods (Kolb 1965) and counted Red-winged Blackbirds over three winters (1994–1997) in mature longleaf pine forests of the Apalachicola National Forest on four replicate pairs of 12-ha plots (dormant- and growing-season fire was applied to paired plots on a biennial basis). Three pairs of plots were located within the area containing the Wilma savannas, Liberty County; the remaining pair was located 15 km away. I also recorded flock size, activity, and sex-ratio of the Red-winged Blackbirds.

I compared information on abundance of Red-winged Blackbirds in these forest plots to censuses conducted since 1979 in longleaf pine forests on six Winter Bird Population Study (WBPS) plots (Engstrom 1980, 1982; Nesmith and Cox 1984, Baker 1989, Carlile 1994, Moore 1995). I converted results from WBPS plots to the mean number of birds per 10 ha. I supplemented these census data with published and unpublished anecdotal information on the abundance of Red-winged Blackbirds during winter in other southeastern pine forests. I also provide one published source on the abundance of red-wings in a loblolly pine forest. For all forests, I also obtained or extracted information on activities and sex-ratios of Red-winged Blackbirds.

Results

Abundance in longleaf pine forest. — Red-winged Blackbirds were infrequent visitors (20 of 241 visits, 8%) to five of eight longleaf pine forest plots in the Apalachicola National Forest from 9 November to 2 March (median date of occurrence: 14 January) during the 3-yr study. The mean number of blackbirds was 10.1 per 10 ha (Table 1), which excludes one unusually large flock of 380 birds. Otherwise, flock size ranged from 1–40. The mean number of Red-winged Blackbirds per 10 ha counted in longleaf pine forest on six WBPS plots conducted in three states (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana) was 3.5

Table 1. Counts of Red-winged Blackbirds on winter bird population study (WBPS) plots in longleaf pine forests.

| Location | Year | Plot Size (ha) | Mean No. Birds/10 ha | Reference |
|-----------------|---------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Thomas Co., GA | 1979 | 58.3 | 10.3 | Engstrom 1980 |
| Thomas Co., GA | 1981 | 20 | 4 | Engstrom 1982 |
| Thomas Co., GA | 1988 | 20 | 1 | Baker 1989 |
| Thomas Co., GA | 1993 | 20 | 0.8 | Carlile 1994 |
| Leon Co., FL | 1983 | 20 | 3 | Nesmith & Cox 1984 |
| Liberty Co., FL | 1995-97 | 12 | 10.1 | this study |
| Vernon Par., LA | 1994 | 25 | 2 | Moore 1995 |

(± 3.5 SD; range: 0.8–10.3; Table 1). The median number of Red-winged Blackbirds I counted on five visits in the North Carolina Sandhills (Richmond County) during the winter of 1988–1989 (10 December to 15 January) was 25 (range: 1–35). Flock sizes of Red-winged Blackbirds in longleaf pine forests reported from other sources have not exceeded fifty, with the exception of 83 birds on 5 November 1998 at Foshalee Plantation, Leon County, Florida (McNair, unpubl.), and one report of about 100 birds (Bent 1958b). The mean number, range of counts, and flock size of Red-winged Blackbirds in longleaf pine forests of the Apalachicola National Forest, with the exception of an outlier flock of 380 birds, are similar to count data from WBPS censuses and anecdotal information.

Activities and sex-ratios in longleaf pine forest. — All but four flocks (16/20, 80%) of Red-winged Blackbirds in the Apalachicola National Forest were entirely females; most remaining birds were immature males. The major activity of the blackbirds consisted of foraging on seeds of open cones in the crowns of the longleaf pines, occasionally in loose association with flocks of American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*). A few blackbird flocks fed on the ground in loose association with Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*) in a plot that had been prescribe-burned that winter, which eliminated the ground cover. Some blackbird flocks rested but did not feed in the crowns of pines.

Red-winged Blackbirds in the North Carolina Sandhills were females, which rested in crowns of longleaf pines or fed with Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) at a temporary feeding and watering trough (McNair, unpubl.). A large flock of female blackbirds at Foshalee Plantation, Florida, fed on seeds of open cones in the crowns of longleaf pines (McNair, unpubl.). Another large

flock of female and immature male Red-winged Blackbirds at the nearby Wade tract in Georgia also fed in the crowns of longleaf pine on seeds of open cones (R. T. Engstrom 1980, unpubl.). That flock also roosted overnight temporarily in the dense groundcover of this old-growth longleaf pine forest tract (McNair 1999).

Abundance, activities, and sex-ratios in other southeastern pine forest types. — The largest flock size of Red-winged Blackbirds reported in loblolly pine forest was 50 birds in southeast Virginia (Meanley 1962, 1995). He saw adult males feed on loblolly pine cone seeds above ground, but noted that both sexes fed on seeds on the ground. This pine forest tract was adjacent to wetland habitat (river marsh).

Discussion

My data from the Apalachicola National Forest, in conjunction with other information, documented that Red-winged Blackbirds occur infrequently and in low numbers during winter in longleaf and other southeastern pine forests. Red-winged Blackbirds are primarily opportunistic predators on seeds of open cones, an irregular resource, especially in longleaf pine (Wahlenberg 1946). Red-winged Blackbirds have only been documented to forage opportunistically on the ground during winter after a dormant-season prescribed fire had eliminated the groundcover (this study, Wahlenberg 1946). Natural dormant-season fires are rare. Blackbirds foraging in longleaf pine forest did not roost there, except for a flock observed in the Wade tract. The separation of these two activities during winter is the usual pattern of Red-winged Blackbirds in most natural and anthropogenic habitats in the southeastern United States (Meanley 1965, 1971).

Most Red-winged Blackbirds in longleaf pine forests have been females. The only documentation of a substantial number or proportion of males in southeastern pine forests occurred in a loblolly pine forest adjacent to a wetland (river marsh) (Meanley 1962, 1995). The latitudinal range of localities (North Carolina to northern Florida) at which female sex-bias occurs in southeastern pine forests suggests that differential migration of sexes to the winter range (females move farther south) is inadequate to account for this sex-bias in southeastern pine forests, especially since the difference in mean distance is rather small (ca. 230 km, Dolbeer 1982). Furthermore, large numbers of male redwings occur in wetland and anthropogenic habitats at 30° N latitude (the latitude of Apalachicola National Forest) (Meanley 1965; McNair, pers. observ.). The low numbers, infrequent occurrence, female sex-bias, and opportunistic foraging behaviors of Red-winged Blackbirds suggest that longleaf and other southeastern pine forests in winter are secondary habitats.

From the current studies, I conclude that the Red-winged Blackbird is a member of the winter avian community of the longleaf pine ecosystem (cf. Engstrom 1993). I propose that pine forests isolated from anthropogenic habitats during winter are probably used primarily by females. Detailed studies are required to document the sex and age bias of foraging and roosting birds in these habitats, under what conditions these behaviors occur, especially the significance of seed predation, and the basis for apparent sexual segregation of Red-winged Blackbirds in southeastern pine forests.

Acknowledgments

I thank R. T. Engstrom for contributing unpublished observations on Red-winged Blackbirds in old-growth longleaf pine forest (Wade tract) in Thomas County, Georgia. I also thank W. S. Birdkhead, R. A. Dolbeer, R. T. Engstrom, J. F. Glahn, F. C. James, and M. B. Meanley for reviewing a previous draft of the manuscript. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation supported a portion of this study.

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GENERAL NOTES

SUMMER RECORD OF A VEERY IN FERNBANK FOREST, DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA — According to Haney et al. (1986, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10), the Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) is a rare summer resident in the state of Georgia. They are usually confined to breeding above 915 m (3000 ft) elevation on Brasstown Bald, Tray Mountain, and Blood Mountain. Most recently, Todd Schneider (Georgia DNR, pers. comm.) has compiled four reports for the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas. These reports include a fledgling sighted near Epworth, Georgia in Fannin County on 5 June 1995 (Christen, West, and Menk). Mark Oberle reported an agitated adult on Tray Mountain (Townes County) on 12 June 1996. On 20 June 1996 on Tray Mountain, Mark Oberle reported seeing the species in suitable nesting habitat. Finally, Dot Freeman reported a bird seen or heard in suitable nesting habitat at Jack Gap (Townes County) on 24 June 1997.

Considered a montane breeder in Georgia, Veeries are not expected in Fernbank Forest, DeKalb County, except during migration when they are common. So it was with some surprise that I caught and banded a female Veery in the forest on 7 July 1996. This was the first year that Fernbank was registered as a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity) station, part of a cooperative banding program sponsored by the Institute for Bird Populations, Pt. Reyes, California. The bird, a female, was captured at 09:00 EDT in a mist net close to Fernbank Stream. She had a fully ossified skull, indicating that she was an adult, and had no fat deposits. There was no evidence of body molt or flight feather molt, which most passerines undergo once they have finished nesting and are beginning prebasic molt. The Veery also had a well-developed brood patch. I scored the brood patch as a 3, which indicates extensive vascularization, thickly wrinkled skin, and much fluid present under the skin. Such a well-developed brood patch is usually closely associated with incubation and implies local breeding.

Relevant to possible breeding by Veeries in Fernbank Forest is the presence of male Veeries in the forest during each of the three summers prior to the female's capture. One male was heard singing on 18 June 1993 from a trail in the middle of Fernbank Forest. On 14 June 1994, a male was heard and seen singing and then chasing an adult Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*). This bird remained in the forest throughout the month. Two birds were chasing each other near the pond on 10 June 1995. They were present until the end of June of that year. Thus, Fernbank Forest had a record of aggressive, territorial Veeries for three breeding seasons prior to the capture of a female in July 1996.

Was this female Veery nesting in Fernbank Forest? Unfortunately, no nest was found during the summer of 1996. While this bird had an active brood patch, this alone does not confirm nesting. Some female birds will retain a fully vascularized brood patch for some time after attempting incubation. If her clutch had failed to survive or her nesting had been disturbed, it is possible that she had dispersed from her nesting area in the north Georgia mountains.

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BROWN THRASHER WITH CURVED BILL IN AUGUSTA — About 1 April 1997, Augusta Audubon received a call from David Franklin in Augusta reporting a thrasher with a long, curved bill visiting his feeders. On 5 April, Vernon Walters, Larry and Carol Eldridge, and I saw the bird in his yard. It was the size of a Brown Thrasher with rich rufous upperparts, a long rufous tail, and rufous wings with two white wing bars. The breast was lightly streaked with distinct rows of brown spots. The face was quite gray with an orange-yellow eye, which at times looked golden but never truly orange. The bill was very long and curved downward at an extreme angle, but did not seem to be deformed. The bird fed on seeds without difficulty.

About one week later, Vernon Waters photographed the bird and sent the slides to Jeff Sewell, where they were circulated to many birders. The consensus was that the bird was a Brown Thrasher with an abnormal bill. Birders should be alert to the existence of such Brown Thrashers in Georgia.

Anne Waters, *1621 Apple Valley Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30906*

BROWN THRASHER WITH ABNORMALLY LONG BILL — On 10 December 1997, Bill Allgood of Covington, Georgia, called me to report an unusual thrasher that had crashed into his window. Jack Daniel, caretaker for the Allgoods, placed the bird in a small cage so that my husband, Tom Rowland, and I could see the bird. Our observation of the thrasher lead us to believe that it could be a Long-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma longirostre*). I called Joe Greenberg, who came to see the bird the next morning, as did a reporter from *The Covington News* and Joe Riser. After careful study it was determined that the bird was a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) with an

abnormally long bill (Fig. 1). The bill measured 5.72 cm (2.25 in). Jack Daniel said that he has seen at least four thrashers like this in different locations on the Allgood property.



Figure. 1. Brown Thrasher with abnormally long bill, 10 December 1997, Covington, Georgia. Photo by Joe Riser.

The thrasher was released, in apparently good condition, on the afternoon of 11 December. Bill Allgood reported that the bird was seen in good health the following day.

Frances H. Rowland, *1835 Woodlawn Road, Covington, Georgia 30014*

WESTERN GREBE FROM ST. SIMONS ISLAND: A NEW SPECIES FOR GEORGIA — On Friday, 3 January 1997 personnel from the Coastal Nongame Office of Georgia Department of Natural Resources recovered a Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) from beneath the beach seawall crossover at the St. Simons Lighthouse, Glynn County, Georgia. The bird was alive but weak and was photographed and transported to a rehabilitator. It died later that night. The bird was frozen and delivered to the University of Georgia Museum of Natural History where it was prepared as a specimen and accessioned into the collection (UGAMNH catalog No. 5529) by M. E. McGhee, Assistant Curator. The bird was a female. Measurements were as follows: length, 580 mm; tail length, 46 mm; tarsus length, 75 mm; bill (from nostril), 55 mm; bill, 68 mm; and wing chord, 201 mm. The mass was 1062.3 g.

This is the first Western Grebe recorded from Georgia. Burleigh (1958, *Georgia Birds*, Univ. of Oklahoma Press) did not include the Western Grebe as one of Georgia's birds. Likewise, Haney et al. (1986, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10) did not report any records for this species in their checklist of Georgia birds. However, the Western Grebe has been observed in Florida and South Carolina. In Florida, Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) considered the Western Grebe to be a very rare, occasional to irregular winter visitor (October–May) to northern and central Florida, mainly along the coasts. Of approximately 15 reports from Florida, they concluded that only one photograph was identifiable to species. This photograph was determined to be of *A. occidentalis*; other photographs could not be distinguished from *A. clarkii*. Robertson and Woolfenden (1992, Florida Ornithol. Soc., Special Publ. No. 6) did not list any specimens from Florida. Post and Gauthreaux (1989, *Status and distribution of South Carolina birds*, Contrib. Charleston Mus. XVIII) list the Western Grebe as casual in South Carolina with three records, one of which was a specimen of *A. occidentalis*. The other records were based on sightings and could not be distinguished from *A. clarkii*.

Thanks to M. E. McGhee for preparing and measuring the specimen.

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ICELAND GULL AT JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA — On 24 January 1998, a first-winter Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoideus*) was seen by two separate groups at the southern tip of Jekyll Island's South Beach, behind the 4-H building. Mark Welford (MW) located the bird just before noon and showed it to participants on an Atlanta Audubon Society field trip. At approximately 15:00, Michael Bell (MB) and Aubrey Scott (AS) found the bird again among a large concentration of gulls, including Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*), Herring (*L. argentatus*), Laughing (*L. atricilla*), Great Black-backed (*L. marinus*), and Lesser Black-backed (*L. fuscus*). The Iceland Gull, a pale "white-winged" gull, stood out clearly from the other gulls.

The bird was clearly larger than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls, but smaller than the Herring Gulls. Each of us noted that the upperparts were cloudy white, with fine brown speckling on the upperwing coverts and that the primaries, which extended well beyond the tail, were white. The breast was a cloudy white, while the bird's head was rounded, giving a gentle facial expression. MB and AS also noted that the eye was dark with no sign of an eye ring. The bill, which was about the size of a Ring-billed Gull's, was straight and mostly dark with an indistinct pale pinkish area at the base. The legs were flesh-colored and appeared slightly longer than those of the Ring-billed Gull.

MB and AS were able to observe the bird for about 1 hr using 8x binoculars and a 15–45x scope from a distance of 20 m; MW observed the bird for 30 min using 10x binoculars. On a couple of occasions the bird flew a short distance down the beach, allowing MB and AS to the translucent flight feathers of the underwings. The tail was cloudy white, but appeared pure white at the tip.

Haney et al. (1986, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10) list the Iceland Gull as accidental in Georgia and give only five records, the most recent being in Glynn County on 31 December 1973. However, since 1990 Iceland Gulls have been noted more frequently in Georgia. A first-winter Iceland Gull was reported from Jekyll Island on 10–11 March 1991 by several observers (J. Sewell, 1994, *Oriole* 59:53). What may have been an Iceland Gull was seen on Sapelo Island on 28 May 1991 (T. Parsons and A. Lang, 1991, *Oriole* 56:29).

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FROM THE FIELD

March-May 1998

In contrast to last spring, this season produced an outstanding lineup of rare birds. Many veteran birders with Georgia life lists well over the 300 mark added two birds to their lists in March within 16 days and 40 miles of each other, these being the Common Redpoll in Winder and the Long-eared Owl at Fernbank Forest in DeKalb County.

Rare blackbirds were prominent. In May, a Bronzed Cowbird appeared for a few days at a feeder in Ocilla, but unfortunately, word did not get out soon enough, and it did not stay long enough for anyone else to see it. This is the first sighting of this species in Georgia, but as of this writing the report has not made its way through the Checklist and Records Committee. Another unwelcome cowbird, the Shiny, was spotted on two occasions, one a rare inland sighting. When this South American invader first colonized Florida a few decades ago, it was feared that it would proliferate rapidly, but this has not happened, at least not yet. Georgia still has only a handful of sightings, the first being in 1989, but reports are beginning to come in with more frequency in the last two or three years.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds staged an invasion of the state in May, with 14 being seen in Athens, an unprecedented number for this western stray, which is usually seen as singles in large flocks of blackbirds. Two, or maybe just one twice, were seen in the Atlanta area. Farther west, there was no indication of a major movement of the species east this spring except for a flock of 300 in Arkansas, a record high for that state (*Field Notes* 52:343).

This past winter there was a flight of Common Redpolls into the northern states, so perhaps the one in Winder was part of this movement. This means that it could have been in the area undetected through the winter, or perhaps was making its way back north after spending the intervening time farther south. It is likewise uncertain whether the unusually mild winter played any part in the appearance of the Long-eared Owl. The species is one of the most nocturnal of all the owls and is so adept at concealment in the daytime that perhaps it is more common in this state in winter than the few records indicate.

What was certain about the weather this spring was that the unusually mild winter (didn't I say that about last winter, too?) resulted in the hardwoods leafing out about two weeks ahead of schedule. Many observers noted an early influx of passerines about 18-19 April and concluded that an early migration was underway, but this proved not to be the case. Although a number of early arrival records were set in some places, as it turned out, the peak of migration in most places

occurred five to seven days later than average. Detailed records from Kennesaw Mountain in Cobb County corroborate the comments of many birders that migration seemed late.

An ongoing major event in our state's avifauna is the steady advance of the Eurasian Collared-Dove. Sightings in Rome and Athens mean that only our state's mountain region has not been invaded by this prolific wanderer from the Old World.

Much more could be said about this spring season, but I will leave the reader to discern his or her own trends and patterns in the species accounts that follows. Many will note that with many more birders in the field these days, and with many of those becoming ever more skilled, a great deal of information is being added to what is known about Georgia's avifauna. It is one of the purposes of "From the Field" to be the repository of this information, so I hope those who think the Field Notes are too detailed will forgive me.

I thank Georgann Schmalz for typing these field notes and Mim Eisenberg for proofreading and editing them.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, ASWMA - Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co., BURLEIGH - T. D. Burleigh, 1958, Georgia Birds, CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cochran Shoals Unit, Cobb Co., ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., KMNBP - Kennesaw National Mountain Battlefield Park, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park, Douglas Co., SGRBA - South Georgia Rare Bird Alert, WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

COMMON LOON - The northward movement of this species was noticed in many locations, with the best count being 20 at Lake Wildwood in Macon on 14-15 May (Paul Johnson). On 12 April one was seen flying over KMNBP (Bruce Dralle, Jeff Sewell), and two were seen headed north in Greene Co. on 2 May (Paul Sykes). Ray Chandler reported that two birds crash landed in Bulloch Co. and died, one on 14 May and the other on 22 May. One of these apparently mistook a parking lot for a lake, and the other landed in a quarry near where a similar event happened last year. These events took place in calm weather with clear skies.

HORNED GREBE - Late departures included seven at SCSP on 22 March (Michael Bell), two near the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell on 22 April (Jim Flynn) and two in Laurens Co. on 9 May, one of which was in breeding plumage (Tommy Patterson).

RED-NECKED GREBE - This rare find was reported in coastal waters near Wassau Is. on 3 March (Ted Reising). Sightings of this species should be documented.

EARED GREBE - Though not as rare as it used to be, sightings of this species

are noteworthy. One was spotted from the Jekyll Is. Causeway on 29 March (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Shawn Reed, Malcolm Hodges) and one was seen on 9 May in Monroe Co. (Terry Johnson, Dan Gwynn, et al.).

BLACK-CAPPED PETREL - One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Skidaway Is. to the Gulf Stream on 27 May (Pierre Howard, Giff Beaton, Andy Kinsey, Jim Flynn).

CORY'S SHEARWATER - Only two were seen on the 27 May pelagic trip out of Skidaway Is.

GREATER SHEARWATER - One was seen on the 27 May pelagic trip off Skidaway Is.

SOOTY SHEARWATER - This species is a rarer spring transient offshore than the other shearwaters mentioned here. One was seen on the Skidaway Is. trip on 27 May.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER - Three Audubon's were seen on the 27 May pelagic trip.

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL - This was one of the few species seen in good numbers on the 27 May pelagic trip; 34 were counted.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL - Seeing two of this rare offshore species provided excellent consolation to the pelagic birders on the 27 May trip for the low numbers of several of the more expected species.

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD - This species is also rare offshore. One was reported from the Gray's Reef Marine Sanctuary on 16 April, east of Sapelo Is. (Eric McClanahan *vide* Dennis Forsyth).

NORTHERN GANNET - Two good reports were received from Sheila Willis. She counted 67 off Cumberland Is. on 29 April. This is rather late for such a large number. One remained as late as 31 May, besting the ACOGB late date by 8 days (Sheila Willis). A late bird was also seen off Ossabaw Is. on 24 May (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - One bird, thought to be in ill health, stayed three days at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Is. beginning 4 May (Lydia Thompson).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Eighty-five counted at the Smith Reservoir in Clayton Co. on 3 March was a high count for this relatively new reservoir (Brock Hutchins). Mark Davis counted 16 flying over KMNBP on 4 April.

AMERICAN BITTERN - Only two reports were received, which is about average for the period. On 27 March one was seen in Laurens Co. (Tommy Patterson, Shawn Reed), and on the rather late date of 10 May one was spotted in Monroe Co. (Terry Johnson et al.).

LEAST BITTERN - As usual, a few were seen at the ASWMA, two on 16 May being the only count of more than one there (Darrell Lee), but the eight seen on 24 May at Ossabaw Is. was a good count (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett).

GREAT EGRET - One seen flying over the KMNBP on 29 March was unusual that far north so early in the year (Giff Beaton).

CATTLE EGRET - A few Cattle Egrets were seen in north Georgia this period. Seeing them in spring is unusual, as ordinarily we would expect them in late summer during the post-breeding dispersal. The most unusual sighting was of one near Blue Ridge on 1 April (David Tickner). One

stayed for several days at ELHLAF, beginning on 19 April (Jeff Sewell, Aubrey Scott).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - This species may be spreading into north Georgia, or perhaps a few outlying colonies are developing. One was seen on 26 April (Mark Oberle) at the ELHLAF, and once again two returned to the Cochran Shoals Section, CRNRA, being seen on 30 May (Terry Moore); no proof of nesting at this site has been provided. A report from Augusta was received saying that nesting was occurring as of 24 April, but no details were given (newsletter of the Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society).

GLOSSY IBIS - This species is rare but regular inland, so one seen in Macon on 2-3 May is noteworthy. Even more so were the five seen in a pond from GA 400 in Forsyth Co. on 5 May (Frank McCamey). The six seen on Cumberland Is. on 12 April were unusual for the location (Sheila Willis). Doris Cohrs saw 43 on 9 May near Darien, some carrying nesting material.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - This rare winter visitor was spotted only once, on 8 March, when two were seen at the Etowah Bottoms in Dawson Co. (Jim Flynn).

GADWALL - Lingering Gadwalls were seen in several locations. On 21 March six were noted in Greene Co. (Paul Sykes), and 13 was a good count at ELHLAF on 15 April (Aubrey Scott). Six were counted on 9 May in Monroe Co. (*vide* Dan Gwynn).

AMERICAN WIGEON - A very good count of 21 was had on 21 March in Greene Co. (Paul Sykes).

MOTTLED DUCK - Only one was reported all season, that on 29 March by four Atlanta birders at the usual place, the ASWMA (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Shawn Reed, Malcolm Hodges). Have coastal birders simply stopped reporting them because they are now commonly seen here?

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - Only a few reports of this species were received for the period. A small flock resided at ELHLAF for about a month, beginning on 29 March with 20 (Chuck Hunter), peaking on 5 April at 21 (Aubrey Scott), and continuing at least through 7 May, when two were seen (Michael Bell). Paul Sykes counted 24 in a flock in Greene Co. on 21 March and two were noted at the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area, Floyd Co., on 17 May (Michael Bell).

NORTHERN SHOVELER - The wintering flock of about 25 at ELHLAF remained into April, the high count being 26 on 5 April (Aubrey Scott, Carol Lambert).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL - A small flock of 15 or so that wintered at ELHLAF was still being seen as late as 5 April (Aubrey Scott).

CANVASBACK - The only report of this uncommon and irregular inland transient was of two on 9 March at Garden Lakes, Rome (Marion Dobbs).

REDHEAD - A noteworthy movement occurred across the upper piedmont during March. An amazing 126 were counted on 8 March at Garden Lakes, Rome (Marion Dobbs). A few days later, six were seen at ELHLAF on 9 March (Carol Lambert), and ten spent a week through 23 March at the Etchecan Nature Center near Gainesville (Peter Gordon).

- GREATER SCAUP - On 23 March, Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, and Shawn Reed saw two in Dillard, and on 26 March Giff counted ten off the north end of Jekyll Is.
- COMMON EIDER - On 12 April, Sheila Willis received a report of a female Common Eider off Cumberland Is., which she confirmed the next day. The bird was seen again on 21 April (Steve Ehly). This continues an incredible string of sightings of this species over the past year, this being the fourth reported. Remember that it is not even listed in the ACOGB.
- BLACK SCOTER - This wintering species lingered at its usual location, off of the north end of Jekyll Is., through at least 26 March, when five were noted (Giff Beaton).
- COMMON GOLDENEYE - The only report received was of three at Garden Lakes, Rome, on 6 March (Marion Dobbs).
- RUDDY DUCK - A good count of 50 was made on 29 March at ELHLAF, when the wintering flock was joined by northbound migrants (Chuck Hunter et al.). The last report from there was of two on 2 May (Michael Bell).
- OSPREY - The ill-fated pair returned to Lake Blalock, ELHLAF, in April and began nesting (Carol Lambert). It is hoped that their nest construction technique has improved.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - One seen at Ft. Stewart, Bryan Co., on 9 March set a new early arrival date by three days (Larry Carlile). Of several other reports received, perhaps the most interesting was one seen on 2 May on Skidaway Is. (Carol McClelland) and one on Cumberland Is. on 30 May (Sheila Willis).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE - Reports seemed down compared to previous years, although the six seen at the Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon on 8 May was a good count for that location (Jerry Amerson et al.). The only other reports from the piedmont was one seen on 26 April in Henry Co. (Terry Johnson). I am sure more were seen in the coastal area, but I had only one report.
- BALD EAGLE - Jim Ozier of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources reported 37 nest sites, up from 31 last year, 26 of which produced 42 young, about the same as last year.
- NORTHERN HARRIER - KMNBP is an odd place to find this species, yet three singles were seen this spring: on 18, 21, and 26 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Dralle, Jeff Sewell, respectively).
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK - The SGRBA reported one on Jekyll Is. on 9 May during the migration count.
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK - The only report of a decent number was of 28 over KMNBP on 4 April (Aubrey Scott, Michael Bell). One seen in west Waycross on 24 May was unusual for that location so late in migration (Sheila Willis). Reports from the coastal plain in the summer are rare.
- GOLDEN EAGLE - A banded bird was seen on the Sea Is. causeway on 9 April (Barb Zoodsma *vide* Joel Hitt), for a very rare coastal sighting.
- AMERICAN KESTREL - Perhaps the pair seen on 17 May in Walker Co. was considering nesting (Michael Bell). This species is not known as a breeder in the mountains.
- MERLIN - A good number of reports of this migratory falcon was received, all singles. On 25 March, Darrell Lee (*vide* SGRBA) reported one at

- Andrews Is., Brunswick, four sightings were made in the Atlanta area during April (several observers), and back on the coast Darrell Lee had another at the ASWMA on 1 May (SGRBA).
- PEREGRINE FALCON - An average number of sightings was received from the piedmont. One of the Atlanta birds was seen on 13 March at Piedmont and Ponce de Leon Avenues, Atlanta (Pierre Howard), one was seen in Carroll Co. on 31 March (Michael Bell), and on 9 May one was seen Bibb Co. harassing a flock of White-rumped Sandpipers (Jerry Amerson). Coastal reports were down; only one sighting was reported, that of one bird on 29 April on Cumberland Is. (Sheila Willis).
- BLACK RAIL - A marsh on private property in Greene Co. again proved reliable for this hard-to-find species. On 25 April, one was heard, then on 2 May, three were found (Paul Sykes).
- KING RAIL - A marsh in the KMNBP produced one bird on 21 and 29 March (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Malcolm Hodges). Breeding here has not been confirmed, and we assume the birds here are migratory stop-overs. Breeding has been confirmed at the previously mentioned Greene Co. marsh, where on 2 May one was seen (Paul Sykes). Unusual for a barrier island was one seen (?) at Cumberland Is. on 12 April (Sheila Willis).
- VIRGINIA RAIL - The marsh at the KMNBP is a great spot for this species. On 21 and 29 March six were counted in a survey by Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed, et al. Paul Sykes had a few at the marsh in Greene Co. beginning on 14 March.
- SORA - More reports were received than usual. The earliest migrant noted was one heard at the KMNBP marsh on 29 March (Jim Flynn et al.), where on 26 April another was reported (Eran Tomer). The Arrowhead Public Fishing Area in northern Floyd Co. seems an unlikely place to find this species, so Marion Dobbs' sighting of one there on 8 May was noteworthy. A new site for them was discovered in Bartow Co., where on 9 May one was seen (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn), and Paul Sykes had a high count of four at a marsh in Greene Co. on 2 May. The most unusual report, however, was that of a road kill on a busy north Atlanta street on 22 May (Bruce Hallett).
- PURPLE GALLINULE - Are Purple Gallinules expanding their range northward? On 22 April, Gordon Hight Jr. was surprised to find one at the pond at the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area, Floyd Co. This bird stayed at least until 8 May (Nelson Dobbs). Another out-of-range bird was seen at the Rum Creek WMA, Monroe Co., in mid-May (Terry Johnson). These sightings continue a series of sightings over the last several years in north Georgia.
- AMERICAN COOT - What is it about KMNBP that seems to bring down migrating coots? For the second time in recent years this species has been found on the mountain. On 26 April, Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert found one on the ground at the base of the mountain and a little later found one about 15 ft off the ground in a small tree near the top. Later that day a Red-tailed Hawk snatched it off its perch (Gordon McWilliams).
- SANDHILL CRANES - Most northward migrating cranes pass through the state in February. This spring an unusual number were late departing. On 6

March, 74 were counted over Monroe Co. (Terry Johnson), about 18 were seen for several days in Haralson Co. beginning on 9 March (Michael Bell), about 50 were spotted over Roswell on 11 March (Stephen Arey), eight were seen at ELHLAF on 13 March (Stacy Smith), and 15 were observed in Henry Co. at dusk on 23 March, looking for a place to land (Carol Lambert). The best sighting was of a pair at a freshwater pond on Cumberland Is. in April (Sheila Willis). These two might have been off-course northbound migrants enjoying an extended stay on this barrier island or perhaps strays from the resident population in the Okefenokee Swamp.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - One seen on 23 May in winter plumage on Wassau Is. was not only the only report received but is doubly noteworthy, as this species is rare on the barrier islands (Steve Calver).

WILSON'S PLOVER - Good numbers of this species were reported this period. On 25 March eight were counted at the mitigation site on US 17 south of Brunswick (David Galewski), ten were noted at the south end of Jekyll Is. On 2 May (Darrell Lee), and on 31 May Sheila Willis tallied a whopping 26 on Cumberland Is. I don't believe I have ever heard of this many being seen in one spot.

PIPING PLOVER - More reports than usual were received, including several late departing birds. The high count came on 22 March, when Sheila Willis counted 20 on Cumberland Is. She saw eight there on 9 May. A more usual number was the five seen on Jekyll Is. on 27 March (Giff Beaton). Late departures were one seen on 15 May from the Jekyll Is. Causeway (Darrell Lee) and a very late bird on 22 May at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Is. (Michael Bell). The ACOGB late date is 21 May.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS - Better numbers were reported this spring than last, the best being the 11 seen in Macon on 5 April (Jerry Amerson) and the nine seen at ELHLAF on 26 April (Michael Bell).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS - A good season for this species was reported, with the best counts coming from the usual locations. In Macon, 61 were counted on 5 April (Jerry Amerson), and the high count at ELHLAF came on 4 May, when 25 were noted (Jeff Sewell).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - Good numbers of this species were noted. At ELHLAF 15 were seen on 3 May, a good count for the ponds (Jerry and Marie Amerson), and at Sod Atlanta, Bartow Co., 22 were spotted on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Ricky Davis). At a marsh in Greene Co. on 2 May, Paul Sykes added up 22, his highest count there ever.

WILLET - Could the ten seen at the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area, Floyd Co., on 30 April (Dan Harrison *fide* Gordon Hight, Jr.) have been the western race? This is a good possibility as the eastern nominate race would not be traversing the interior of the state. Burleigh (1958) says that the western race replaces the eastern in winter on the Georgia coast. As the breeding ground of the western race is in the north central plains, one might expect that they cross the state. The question is if they do cross over the state, why don't we see more of them in the interior? By the way, the difference between the two races is so slight, it is considered impossible to separate them in the field. These ten were a first for Floyd Co.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Two reports were received from the SGRBA that bear mention here. On 3 May two were seen on the Withlacoochee River near Valdosta that were said to be "possibly breeding" due, I assume, to the lateness of the sighting. On 15 May, 12 were reported seen on the Alapaha River between Lakeland and Mayday east of Valdosta (Andreas Smith), but no mention was made of whether this flock might be breeders. Burleigh (1958) lists a number of sightings from south Georgia later than these two reports, but apparently no nests have ever been found south of the piedmont.

UPLAND SANDPIPER - It was quite a spring for this species. Two were seen in Laurens Co. on 27 March (Tommy Patterson, Shawn Reed) and seven on 5 April (Tommy Patterson, Aubrey Scott). Coverage of several sod farms around the state has greatly increased the number of sightings. A Peach Co. sod farm hosted as many as three between 18 April and 26 April (Jerry Amerson, Paul Johnson et al.). Sod Atlanta in Bartow Co. had one on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Ricky Davis) and four on 24 April (Nelson Dobbs). These birds stayed until at least 3 May (Mike Chapman). Finally, Paul Sykes saw one in a pasture in Greene Co. on 2 May.

WHIMBREL - Researchers along the coast, including Dept. of Natural Resources biologist Brad Winn, have documented the value of Georgia's barrier islands as vital stop-over points for this species. Huge numbers can be seen at dusk congregating on the sandbars off Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Is., where on 2-4 May Lydia Thompson witnessed the northward passage of several hundred each night. On 24 May approximately 200 were seen off Skidaway Is. (Bruce Hallett, Giff Beaton).

MARbled GODWIT - Only two reports of this uncommon transient were received. Both from Darryl Lee via the SGRBA. On 27 March he saw two at the south end of Jekyll Is. and on 15 May one on the Jekyll Is. Causeway.

SANDERLING - With the increase in coverage our large state is getting nowadays, sightings of this rare inland transient have just about reached one a year inland. This time it was Terry Johnson who spotted one in Monroe Co. on 9 May.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER - Two nice-sized flocks were reported from two inland locations. On 24 May, 22 were noted at the protein plant in Forsyth Co. (Jim Flynn), and the next day about 35 were seen at ELHLAF (Chuck Saleeby).

WESTERN SANDPIPER - The only significant count received from an inland location was the eight at ELHLAF on 7 May (Michael Bell).

LEAST SANDPIPER - The Westerns mentioned above no doubt arrived with the 100 or so Least seen on the same day, 7 May (Michael Bell). This is quite a count for ELHALF. Two days later, on 9 May, 116 were noted by several observers on the Monroe Co. migration count, a new high for the count (*fide* Terry Johnson).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - As usual, a few showed up at ELHLAF, but this year the arrival was earlier than usual. Two were seen there on 2 May (David Galewski, Michael Bell, Aubrey Scott) and three were there on 24 May (Jim Flynn). The 16 counted in Monroe Co. on 9 May on

the migration count was a good number (Jerry and Marie Amerson). The Arrowhead Public Fishing Area, Floyd Co., furnished its first sighting that I recall, one on 10 May (Michael Bell). On the coast, two each were seen at Skidaway Is., on 23 May and Ossabaw Is. on 24 May (both by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - This species is listed as accidental by the ACOGB, but since then a few sightings in the interior of the state in the fall have, perhaps, raised its status to rare fall transient. However, spring sightings are extremely rare, so the report of not one but three on 9 May in Monroe Co. (*fide* Terry Johns) should be documented for acceptance by the Checklist and Rare Birds Committee and, if accepted, published in *The Oriole*.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - The best count was of 54 in Macon (Jerry Amerson). Equaling the ACOGB late day of 4 June was one seen at Hutchinson Is., near Savannah (Steve Calver).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - Three over-wintering birds remained on 7 March at their usual spot at Tybee Is. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

DUNLIN - This species seems to be more common, though still rare, as a wintering bird in the interior. For the second time in recent years, one wintered at ELHLAF, being last seen on 22 April (Carol Lambert).

STILT SANDPIPER - The only reports of this erratic transient were of one at ELHLAF on 2 May (David Galewski) and of two on 27 May in breeding plumage at Hutchinson's Is., Chatham Co. (Steve Calver).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - On 22 April one was seen in Bartow Co. at a sod farm, for an unusual spring sighting (Giff Beaton, Ricky Davis).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - ACOGB lists this species as accidental in the interior in the spring. On 4 May Jeff Sewell saw four at ELHLAF. After becoming alarmed and flushing twice, the birds began vocalizing excitedly, thus confirming that they were long-bills.

COMMON SNIPE - Two seen on 2 May at a marsh in Greene Co. were late for that location (Paul Sykes).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - A rare find, especially in the spring, was one seen by Tommy Patterson on 9 May in Laurens Co.

POMARINE JAEGER - One was seen off Skidaway Is. on 27 May (Giff Beaton et al.).

LAUGHING GULL - This species seems to be showing up inland more nowadays. On 5 May two were seen at Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co. (Jim Flynn).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - The only report for this wintering species was one at Tybee Is. on 7 March (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - As mentioned here before, the proliferation of this predator from the north is not a welcomed situation. On 7 March 12 were counted on Tybee Is. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert.) and Sheila Willis saw one at Cumberland Is. on the very late date of 31 May. This is four days after the ACOGB late date.

GULL-BILLED TERN - Five seen from the observation tower at the ASWMA on 15 May was a good count (Darrell Lee).

CASPIAN TERN - On 2 May three were seen in Thomas Co., providing a first county record (Bobby Crawford *fide* Gail Menk).

ARCTIC TERN - What a season for this accidental visitor! On 13 May Lydia Thompson reported seeing two at St. Simons Is., an amazing onshore sighting of this pelagic species. Details have been submitted to the Checklist and Rare Birds Committee. On the 27 May pelagic trip off Skidaway Is., one was seen well offshore (Pierre Howard et al.).

BRIDLED TERN - Also on the 27 May pelagic trip five of this species were seen (Jim Flynn et al.).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE - This recent invader continues its explosive spread across Georgia. On 22 May three were in Rome (Nelson Dobbs) for the first record there.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - This declining species was well reported this period, with the most noteworthy sighting being the six seen in Macon on 8 May (Jerry Amerson et al.).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - KMNBP again came through with three sightings of this rare migrant. Single birds were seen on 10, 12 and 16 May (Giff Beaton, Pierre Howard and Andy Kinsey).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - Eight was a very good count for Cumberland Is. on 30 April (Sheila Willis).

LONG-EARED OWL - One of the most remarkable sightings this period was the one spotted on 28 March by Marsha Little in a tree next to Fernbank Science Center, DeKalb Co., during a migration bird walk. It was seen and identified just after that by Steve Little and Georgann Schmalz. This was at about 08:00. It then flew a short distance and perched across the street, where it remained nearly motionless for nearly another 11 hr, to the delight of birders from all over the Atlanta area who rushed to see it. At dusk, it flew off, never to be seen again. This was the fifth Atlanta record, but was the first live bird seen in the Atlanta area for about 60 years. The last Atlanta record was a road-kill on 1 November 1987 from Smyrna. Amazingly, a dead bird was found on Pine Mountain, Harris Co., on 10 May (Chad Manlove). This was reported by Dr. Geoff Hill of Auburn University, who is preparing a specimen.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW - A rather early bird was noted in Macon on 24 March (Jim Flynn), and on 11 April Sheila Willis counted 23 on Cumberland Is.

WHIP-POOR-WILL - More than the usual number of reports was received from below the fall line. One bird spent about five days in Valdosta beginning on 25 March (Brad Bergstrom), two were heard in Bryan Co. on 30 March and again on 5 April (Dave McKivergan), Sheila Willis reported two on Cumberland Is. on 11 April and one on 29 April, Darrell Lee heard one at Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co., on 1 May and one on 3 May in the Okefenokee NWR, Ware/Charlton counties, and in the upper coastal plain, Jerry and Marie Amerson reported "many" on 12 April in Emanuel Co.

RUBY THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - An albino reported in the Atlanta area on 17 April was interesting (Ginger Muldar).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - An excellent count of seven was noted at KMNBP on 24 March (Kevin Danchisen), and a late bird was spotted in Monroe Co. on 9 May (Terry Johnson).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER - This species is very rare in spring, so a

sighting from Cumberland Is. on 21 April (Steve Ehly) and from KMNBP on 12 May (Pierre Howard) were especially noteworthy. This latter bird was also heard. There are only two spring sightings listed in the ACOBG.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Sheila Willis reported unusual numbers on Cumberland Is. this spring, finding eight birds on 11 May in one location and another eight in another location on 30 May.

EASTERN PHOEBE - Paul Sykes found a completed nest, but no eggs, on the unusually early date of 28 Feb. in Clarke Co.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - This local nester, whose only known reliable nesting site in Georgia is near Dillard, was discovered nesting near downtown Blairsville on 15 May. Three males were singing in a line of willows adjacent to a shopping center. They were there through the end of the period (Giff Beaton, Dot Freeman).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - This species is also rare in the spring, so perhaps the unusual number of sightings noted here is due to more expert birders in the field these days able to identify the *Empidonax* flycatchers. On 9 May one was found in the Pine Log Mountain WMA, Bartow Co. (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn); then on 17 May one was spotted in Rabun Co. (Jim Flynn) and, best of all, the species appeared in Rabun Co., not far from its recent nesting site on Hale Ridge Road on the North Carolina line. Not one, but two, were first heard, then seen, on 25 May at the Sky Valley Resort in Rabun Co. by Brock Hutchins. These remained through the month. No nest was located.

WESTERN KINGBIRD - Michael Bell scored a first, seeing two individuals of this species in one period, and this in the spring, not the fall, their more usual season. On 12 April he found one in Carroll Co. near the Alabama line, then on 24 May had another on the opposite side of the state at Ossabaw Is.

EASTERN KINGBIRD - On 10 May, 22 were counted in one flock south of Reidsville, evidently a migrating flock (Mark Oberle).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO - KMNBP had several good counts, with six seen on 24 and 25 March (Kevin Danchisen) and five on 15 April (Bob and Deb Zarembo). On 16 May an adult was seen feeding a fledgling in the Piedmont NWR, Jones Co. (Bill Blakeslee) in an area where breeding has been previously documented (Jerry and Marie Amerson).

WARBLING VIREO - This very rare species was seen only once this spring (about average nowadays) at KMNBP on 14 May (Pierre Howard, Shawn Reed).

RED-EYED VIREO - Good counts came, as usual, from KMNBP, where on 10 May 33 were tallied, and 43 were seen the next day (Giff Beaton, et al.).

HORNED LARK - The wintering flock at the sod farm in Peach Co. numbered five on 18 April (Michael Bell, Aubrey Scott) and three on 8 May (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton). This species has nested here in the past.

TREE SWALLOW - This species continues to increase inland as both a nester and as a migrant. Migrating flocks were noted on 22 March, when 18 were seen at ELHLAF (Jackie Heyda et al.); on 21 March, when 30 were counted at SCSP (Michael Bell); and 16 April, when 30 were observed near Macon (Paul Johnson). Three bluebird nest boxes were occupied by

this species at Carter Lake, Murray Co., on 25 April (Jim Flynn) and at ELHLAF a pair nested at the ponds, also in a bluebird box, beginning in early April (Carol Lambert).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - What a spring for this species, too! Big numbers were reported by several observers. For example, at SCSP, 80 were counted on 20 March, and then 100 were counted the next day (Aubrey Scott, Michael Bell). Around 50 were tallied on two separate days in April (the 4th and 18th) at the CRNRA (Helen Ogren, Joel Hitt).

CLIFF SWALLOW - Not to be outdone by the other swallows, this species continues to establish itself as a breeder across north Georgia, being found at new nest sites every year. With only one exception I know of, it nests exclusively on bridges over water, having spread into our state from the northeast, mostly during this decade. Although there are a few records prior to that, its nest sites now range from Carter's Lake in Murray Co. to the bridge over the Ocmulgee River at Juliette, Monroe/Jones counties. The highlights are these: on 10 May an amazing 92 were counted on the migration count in Monroe Co. (*fide* Terry Johnson), and a new site was discovered on 15 May, when six birds were seen on the GA 53 bridge over Lake Lanier, Hall/Forsyth county line (Jim Flynn). Jerry Amerson found them at three bridges over the Ocmulgee River in central Georgia. Georgann Schmalz reports up to 20 birds nesting since 1994 at the bridge over the Etowah River at Hwy. 41 just south of Cartersville. Finally, one seen at Skidaway Is. on 23 May was unusual for a barrier island (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett).

BARN SWALLOW - This species, too, is expanding its range southward. Sheila Willis's surveys in southeast Georgia have turned up first county nesting records for Ware Co. (two locations) and Pierce Co. (one location).

COMMON RAVEN - As usual, a few were seen in the mountains, but the most interesting report was the one seen on 25 March at a dump near Tiger, Rabun Co., at an unusually low elevation (Mark Oberle).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - The winter irruption into Georgia over the winter lingered into spring. One bird spent 21 October-28 March at a feeder in College Park (Aubrey Scott), and at least four other observers in the Atlanta area noted having them during March or April. There were three reported away from feeders: one at KMNBP on 4 April (Bruce Dralle), one at Carter's Lake, Murray Co. (Jim Flynn), and one seen on 5 May at KMNBP, which set a new late departure day record for the mountain by one day (Giff Beaton).

BROWN CREEPER - A late departing bird was seen at KMNBP on 11 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Dralle et al.).

WINTER WREN - A late bird was seen on KMNBP on 21 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Dralle).

SEDGE WREN - Now that there are more fanatics willing to tromp around in marshes, this species is turning up as a regular winter resident or transient, at least. On 10 April one was spotted at the Grand Bay WMA, Lowndes Co. (Brad Bergstrom). At the marsh at KMNBP, three were found on 18 April (Eran Tomer). At the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area, Floyd Co., one was seen on 4 May (Jim Flynn), and another single was

- noted in Bartow Co. on 9 May (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn).
- MARSH WREN** - Even rarer inland than Sedge Wren is this coastal species, so one seen 9 May in Bartow Co. (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton) and one spotted on 17 May at the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area (Gordon Hight, Jr.) are noteworthy.
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD** - Terry Johnson saw an Eastern Bluebird feeding Carolina Chickadee hatchlings in Henry Co. on 2 May and fighting off the adult chickadee when they tried to approach the nest.
- VEERY** - It was a rather poor showing this spring for this species. The most reported were four seen on 9 May at Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co. (Georgann Schmalz). One in Darien on 8 May was unusual for the coast (Doris Cohrs).
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** - In contrast, the reports of this uncommon species were a bit above average for spring. On 9 May, two were seen at Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co. (Georgann Schmalz) and one was seen in Bartow Co. (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn). At KMNB, one was spotted on 10 May and three on 11 May (Giff Beaton).
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH** - The best count was the 13 reported from Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co. on 9 May (Georgann Schmalz).
- HERMIT THRUSH** - One seen on 26 April at KMNB was getting rather late (Shawn Reed).
- WOOD THRUSH** - One heard in Waycross from 16 April through the end of the period (Sheila Willis) and the three counted in Grady Co. on 20 April (Gail Menk) were noteworthy for the locations according to the observers.
- GRAY CATBIRD** - A bird that wintered in a yard in midtown Atlanta was last seen on 12 March (Pat Michelson). The one seen at KMNB on 26 March was either a wintering bird or an early arrival (Kevin Danchisen).
- BROWN THRASHER** - Yet another bird with a long, curved bill was reported, this from the Atlanta area. On several dates in late March and early April, Ken Paradise reported seeing the bird in his yard in Lithia Springs. Unfortunately, no photographs were obtained. This is the third time in the last two years that "long-billed" Brown Thrashers have been reported. What accounts for this deformity?
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** - Eight counted along a route in Bartow Co. on 9 May was excellent (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn).
- BREWSTER'S WARBLER** - The more common of the Blue-winged x Golden-winged hybrid was reported from KMNB on 5 May (Kevin Danchisen, Giff Beaton, Pierre Howard).
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** - This species, never common, has become increasingly difficult to find in the mountains. On 15 May a pair was located near Young Harris (Giff Beaton, Dot Freeman). A rare coastal migrant was spotted on Wassau Is. on 9 May (Steve Calver).
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** - The high count was nine from Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co., on 2 May (Georgann Schmalz).
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** - On 19 April six were counted at KMNB, a good number, as usually only one, maybe two, are seen at a time (Bruce Dralle, Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed).
- NASHVILLE WARBLER** - This uncommon transient is more likely in the fall, so four spring sightings is excellent. Singles were seen at KMNB on 23,

- 25 and 26 April by Pierre Howard, Shawn Reed and Eran Tomer, respectively, and at Pine Log WMA, Bartow Co., on 4 May by Jim Flynn.
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** - Seventeen counted by the group at KMNB on 11 May was the best count received (Giff Beaton et al.) this being a rather late date for the peak count here.
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** - On the same day as above, at the same place, KMNB, 17 were tallied by observers (Giff Beaton et al.). This is an excellent count for this transient, which is more common in the fall. A sighting of one on 9 May on Sapelo Is. is outstanding, as the spring migration route of this trans-Gulf migrant usually takes it well west of the Georgia coast (Michelle Cawthorn, Stacy Lindemann *vide* Ray Chandler).
- CAPE MAY WARBLER** - Two huge counts came from Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co. Thirty were seen on 20 May, and 35 were seen on 9 May (Georgann Schmalz).
- BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** - The best counts came from Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co., where on 2 and 9 May five were counted (Georgann Schmalz). One seen on 24 May in Valdosta was noteworthy both for the location and late date (Barbara Passmore per the SGRBA), but not as late as the one seen on 31 May in Glascock Co. (Giff Beaton, Bob Zaremba). The ACOBG late date is 27 May.
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** - Here is a reminder not to ignore those scores of Yellow-rumps as you search for something else. On 11 April a male was spotted at the Bradley Unit, Eufaula NWR, Stewart Co., that had a yellow throat, indicating Audubon's, but, oddly, this was the only Audubon's feature the bird had (Michael Bell, Aubrey Scott).
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** - The first report came from KMNB on 25 March (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen, Shawn Reed, Bob Zaremba). The best counts also came from KMNB with 12 on 18 April (Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed, Bruce Dralle), 10 on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Ricky Davis), and 14 on 11 May (Giff Beaton).
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** - As usual, the best counts came from KMNB, with nine on 18 April and a peak of 14 on 17 May (Giff Beaton et al.). This is late for the peak. Sightings elsewhere, however, were more noteworthy. On 4 May one was spotted in Savannah, where it is rare in spring (Steve Calver) and best of all, one was spotted in Grady Co. on 14 May, which may be a first spring county record (Kathleen Brady *vide* Gail Menk).
- PRAIRIE WARBLER** - A spring migration count route in northeast Bartow Co. produced an impressive 60 on 9 May for Giff Beaton and Jim Flynn.
- PALM WARBLER** - The best counts came from KMNB, with 42 on 18 April and 34 on 19 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Dralle, Shawn Reed).
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** - The highest count was eight at KMNB on 11 May (Giff Beaton).
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER** - Several observers noted that this species was seen in good numbers this spring. This was especially true at Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co., where on 2 May 29 were tallied by observers and on 9 May 40 were seen (Georgann Schmalz).

- CERULEAN WARBLER - High counts at the best place in the state to see this species, KMNBP, were nine on 18 April and six on 22 April (Bruce Dralle, Ricky Davis, Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed). Once again, singing males were seen along Ivey Log Gap Road north of Blairsville, but again, no nests were located. On 15 May, three males were apparently on territory along the road (Dot Freeman, Giff Beaton).
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER - The highest count was eight at KMNBP on 4 April (Aubrey Scott, Michael Bell).
- AMERICAN REDSTART - One bird was rather out of range near Darien on 25 May (Doris Cohrs). A count of four in Glascock Co. on 31 May was surprising, as the late date would suggest breeding. This would be at the southeastern edge of their range in Georgia. Also at the edge of its breeding range was one seen in southeast Quitman Co. on 31 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).
- WORM-EATING WARBLER - One seen at the ASWMA on 1 May was an unusual coastal sighting (Darrell Lee per the SGRBA), and two were spotted in Warren Co. on 30 May carrying food (Giff Beaton). This is well south of their breeding range in the state.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER - A good spring for this species, as it was well reported from around the state. Brad Bergstrom said it was noted by several observers in the Valdosta area (per the SGRBA). Gail Menk had them in several locations in Decatur and Grady Counties during May. The species is rather more uncommon here than in other areas of the coastal plain. Other noteworthy sightings include one reported at Paulk's Pasture WMA, Glynn Co., on 16 May (Darrell Lee per the SGRBA) and four along a forest service road in Rabun Co. on 15 May (Jim Flynn).
- OVENBIRD - One bird was found on 30 May in Warren Co. (Giff Beaton, Karen Theodorou). This is interesting because the late date could indicate nesting, and the location is well south of their mountain-upper piedmont breeding range.
- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH - An early bird was reported to Paul Johnson as seen on 8 March in Bibb Co., and Gail Menk found one on 18 May in Decatur Co., where they are rare as a breeder.
- CONNECTICUT WARBLER - Two were discovered this spring, about one above average. On 17 May, one was seen at the Chickamauga National Military Park (Michael Bell), and KMNBP produced one on 18 May (Giff Beaton et al.).
- CANADA WARBER - This is another trans-Gulf migrant whose spring migration is usually well west of coastal Georgia, making the one seen in Liberty Co. on 23 May noteworthy (Bruce Hallett, Giff Beaton).
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - The ACOGB states that this breeder is rare in southeastern Georgia, so the following sightings are interesting. Brad Bergstrom reported that he saw one in Lowndes Co. in May at the only known breeding site in the county. This would be the third year in a row that the species has been found at this spot. Sheila Willis, doing Breeding Bird Atlas surveys in May, found two on 20 and 27 May in northern Ware Co. and two on 21 and 28 May in Pierce Co. She also spotted one on Cumberland Is. on 30 May, a rare sighting for this barrier island.

- SCARLET TANAGER - The high count was the 12 seen on 2 May at Fernbank Forest, DeKalb Co. (Georgann Schmalz). A male seen in Grady Co. on 6 May was good, as they are rarely seen there. One seen in Warren Co. on the late date of 30 May, well south of its usual breeding range, may have been hoping for a mate (Giff Beaton).
- EASTERN TOWHEE - A late wintering red-eyed bird was spotted on 14 May in Bulloch Co., where, usually by this time, only the resident white-eyed race can be found (Ray Chandler, Laura Vaughn).
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW - Several observations in extreme south Georgia were said to be noteworthy for the locations. On 2 May one was found in Lowndes Co. (Brad Bergstrom, Kristi Avera), and one each was found in Atkinson, Ware, and Clinch counties during late May (Sheila Willis).
- CHIPPING SPARROW - An albino was reported on 25 April in Louisville (O.B. Cannon).
- VESPER SPARROW - Thirty seen in Laurens Co. on 4 March was a good count (Pierre Howard), and one noted in Greene Co. on 22 March was getting late (Jim Flynn).
- SAVANNAH SPARROW - On 2 May, 24 were counted in Greene Co. (Paul Sykes). This is a good count for so late in the season.
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - Fifteen was a good count in northeastern Bartow Co. on 9 May (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn).
- HENSLOW'S SPARROW - The state's most reliable spot, Paulk's Pasture WMA, Glynn Co., came through again with several sightings throughout March. The last was of two birds on 30 March (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Malcolm Hodges, Shawn Reed).
- SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROW - The best place in the state to see this species appears to be at Andrews Is. in Brunswick. On 28 March Darrell Lee reported six there (per the SGRBA). One seen on 23 May at Skidaway Is. was quite late (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett).
- NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW - A "few" of the sharp-tails reported on 25 March at Andrews Is., Brunswick, by Darrell Lee were said to be Nelson's (per the SGRBA).
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW - The first spring record for the KMNBP marsh came on 11 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett), and one was seen in northern Greene Co. on 25 April (Paul Sykes).
- SWAMP SPARROW - This wintering sparrow set a new high count and late date record for a marsh in Greene Co. on 2 May, when Paul Sykes tallied 24.
- WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - Late departures for the locations were the one seen in Valdosta on 30 April (Brad Bergstrom) and one on KMNBP on 19 May (Kevin Danchisen).
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - The only reports received of this uncommon winter resident were of one on 11 April near Cordele (fide Terry Johnson), one in the Macon area on 25 April (Jerry and Marie Amerson), and one at Wassau Is.--where any White-crowned is rare--on 16 May, said to be of the "*gambelii*" subspecies (Steve Calver).
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - Once again the most noteworthy aspect of this species' spring migration was the unusual presence of the species at feeders across the state. One seen at Wassau Is. on 23 May was unexpected (Steve Calver). Not only is this late in migration, the species

is a much less common transient along the coast than it is inland.

PAINTED BUNTING - This species was noted again in Augusta on 24 April, but I have no details (The Feathered Flyer). A small outpost has developed here far from the usual coastal haunt of this species.

DICKCISSEL - Four were found in Monroe Co. on 9 May (Terry Johnson), and three were seen on 23 May in Henry Co. in a field where a nest was found last year. Unfortunately, this site, which also hosts nesting Grasshopper Sparrows and migrating Bobolinks, will no doubt soon be an industrial park (Jeff Sewell).

BOBOLINK - Several observers noted that numbers seemed down this year, but at least it can be said the reports were widespread. The first report was of one at ELHLAF on 16 April (Mark Oberle), followed by 50 seen for a week beginning 27 April in Lowndes Co. (Brad Bergstrom, Kristi Avera, Ann Bennett), and 40 on 1 May at the ASWMA (Darrell Lee fide SGRBA). In Macon only three were reported, that on 10 May (fide Paul Johnson). Fifteen were spotted on 14 May in Grady Co. where they are rarely seen (Kathleen Brady fide Gail Menk), and about 50 were seen in Clayton Co. on 3 May (Patrick Brisse).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - This species staged an invasion into our state this spring that was all the more unusual because it came in mid and late May, well after the time the species heads north from their usual wintering ranges. When seen at all in Georgia, it is usually only one, so the sight of 14 including 11 males, was truly unprecedented. This came on 10 May at the Athens Airport, when a visiting English birder (Mick Rogers) came upon this dazzling sight. He knew the species was a western bird and called the rare bird alert that night, but the flock could not be relocated. Also, on 10 May a male was reported at Skidaway Is. (Carol McClelland). Then on 17 May a male was spotted in northeast Cobb Co. (Tammy Malacher), but it, too, could not be found the next day. On 25 May, a male was discovered in a front yard in a subdivision in north Cobb Co. about six miles from the previously mentioned sighting. Maria LaSalle knew she had a rare bird and called the rare bird alert. This bird, I am sorry to report, appeared ill, evidenced by its lurching and stumbling about as it searched the lawn for food. It stayed in the same general area for five days and was visited by many birders from around the state.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - As ever more able birders scour the state, this hard-to-spot species is being found in small numbers in areas of the state other than its usual spot in Laurens Co. Jim Flynn heard, then saw one near a busy highway intersection in Morgan Co. on 22 March; then he and several others spotted one on 24 March in Towns Co. He was also in the group that located three late lingerers from the Laurens Co. winter flock on 29 March (along with Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed, Malcolm Hodges).

SHINY COWBIRD - When this South American nest parasite first appeared in Florida a few decades ago, it was feared their rapid proliferation would spell double-trouble for cowbird victims, but this has not occurred, at least not yet. Only a handful have been seen in Georgia since then, with the reports being confined to the coast, so it is not necessarily good news to relate that a male was reported well inland at southeast Pulaski Co. on

27 March (Ronna Janssen fide the SGRBA). Another male was seen on 2 and 3 May on Little St. Simon's Is. (Kevin McIntyre, Victor Emanuel, John Fitzpatrick). Both of these birds were seen at feeders.

BRONZED COWBIRD - Although as of this writing this sighting has not been reviewed by the Checklist and Records Committee, good details were received of a male seen 2-5 May in Ocilla by Virginia Dolan. This would be a first state record if accepted. This species, whose range is southern Texas south into Mexico, is a rare but increasing winter visitor in the East and can be found regularly in small numbers at many places in Florida. Most likely, this bird was a stray from Florida moving west.

ORCHARD ORIOLE - As the ACOGB lists this species as a common nester, except in the mountains above 610 m, one seen near Vogel State Park, Union Co., on 16 May was noteworthy, as well as a pair on 14 May at a lower elevation near Young Harris (Dot Freeman.) Also Jim Flynn observed one at Lake Burton, Rabun Co. on 17 May.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - The following reports of over-wintering birds were received: a Valdosta feeder visitor departed on 18 March (Barbara Passmore); a bird first noted in January departed an East Point feeder on 1 April (Aubrey Scott); also appearing in January, a bird in Watkinsville left on 1 April (Paul Sykes); another Watkinsville bird was present through 22 March (Billy and Brenda Dunbar); and another bird departing in March wintered in Carrollton. This latter bird was the pale female that at first was thought to be a Bullock's (Victor and Vicki Williams, Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton). The high count received of migrants came from KMNBP on 10 May (Giff Beaton et al.).

PURPLE FINCH - This species, which has been rather scarce in recent years, was a bit more apparent in March. Several observers commented upon their late winter appearance, so it might be expected that hold-overs would enliven our early spring. The most reported from one yard was the 18 counted on 30 March by Bill and Karen O'Grady in Athens. For late departures, Paul Sykes said that he and Joan had from one to five from February through 2 May. For the most southern record, a pair was seen on 3 and 5 April in southern Grady Co. (Jane Quinton, Beth Bryant fide Gail Menk).

COMMON REDPOLL - One of the two big highlights of the season came on 22 March, when John Dalton of Winder reported a Common Redpoll at his feeder. This bird stayed until 16 March, to the delight of many. This is the first of this species in Georgia in many years (the ACOGB lists only five previous records), made all the more delightful by the graciousness of hosts, John and Marsha Dalton.

PINE SISKIN - Several observers reported small numbers of this erratic winter visitor appearing in March, a few of which lingered into May. Still others reported that although they use to get them in the 1980s, they had none this year. The two high counts were of 50 on 23 March near Vogel SP, Union Co. (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Shawn Reed) and of 75-100 at a feeder in Acworth on 18 March (Dianne Wilkie). At her cabin near Vogel SP, Union Co., Dot Freeman noted 25 on 3 May, but most departed that night, leaving only a few on 4 May. In Watkinsville, a feeder hosted birds from February through 5 May, with the high count

being 22 on 9 March (Paul Sykes). Brock Hutchins saw two in extreme northeast Rabun Co. on 26 May, which may indicate nesting, as they have been found nesting not too far across the North Carolina line.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - Doris Cohrs reported that the large winter flock in Darien left on 19 April, with one straggler remaining until 12 May. In Watkinsville, Paul Sykes had a large flock at his feeders from late March to early May, reporting these data: on 22 March, 60 plus; on 15 April, 100 plus; and on 4 May, ten plus.

EVENING GROSBEAK - A good late winter flight was experienced, with most observers reporting the arrival of small numbers of this erratic northern visitor in March, staying only a few days, if that. The more noteworthy reports were of 75 plus at her feeder in Acworth on 18 March that stayed only two days (Dianne Wilkie), four on 26 March that grew to 25 on 31 March in Hoschton, Jackson Co., (David Phinney fide Karen Theodorou), and ten seen on 20 April in southeast Wilkes Co. (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton). Interestingly, 20 or so returned to Dianne Wilkie's feeder in Acworth on 7 May, to remind us why they are called erratic.

Jeff Sewell, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, Georgia 30084



Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), 21 October 1997, off St. Simons Island, Georgia. Photo by Giff Beaton.

FROM THE FIELD

JUNE-JULY 1998

This summer was hot and dry, so dry in Florida that widespread drought and resulting forest fires there may have been responsible for the major influx of waders into our state, but no tropical storms or floods occurred that might have adversely impacted breeding birds. Of definite impact on our state's avifauna is the continued economic boom in the urban areas of the state. In the Atlanta area, for example, development of farm and forest is chewing up 140 acres a day. Such urban sprawl, fueled by the huge growth in the human population, cannot fail to have a negative impact on many species that breed in our state.

I suspect many read this report to see what unusual vagrants appeared in the state, and this summer did not disappoint. The bird for which most birders will remember this summer was the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck seen in early June at the E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County. Many listers and non-listers alike trekked to the ponds at "Huie" to see it, most at the time assuming it to be an escaped bird. However, after researching the species' explosive expansion across the south from its home range in south Texas in the last few decades, and given its well-known inclination to wander long distances, the Checklist and Records Committee voted to accept it as a wild bird. Given its pattern of expansion over the last decade, the time may not be too far off when the species breeds in Georgia.

The sightings of another invader from the south no doubt did not capture the attention of Georgia birders like the Black-bellied Whistling Duck did, but its appearance in force this summer is not welcomed news even though it may add another bird to the life-lists of Georgia birders. The Shiny Cowbird, a South American nest parasite making its way north from Florida, was first seen in Georgia in 1989 (*Oriole* 61:29). After the 1989 sightings, none were reported until 1996, when two birds were reported in June from two barrier islands. There were no reports in 1997, then two reports this past spring, one of them on a barrier island and one well inland (this being the second inland report). And now this season, a small invasion, especially if the Savannah Spoil Site is considered. Some listers regretted missing the one that was seen at a feeder in Glynn Co., but no doubt they will have another opportunity, and soon, I expect, as there seems to be nothing to stop its spread.

The excitement over the expansion of the Eurasian Collared-Dove seems to be subsiding, yet the bird still has not been seen in many places in the north of the state. Gainesville had its first this summer.

It is perhaps too early to know if the appearance of this invader will have negative consequences on native birds, particularly the Mourning Dove, but as its numbers reach new heights, it will surely affect that species.

Why is it that three swallow species are expanding rapidly in Georgia? Cliff Swallows have been expanding south through Georgia during this decade, with every summer bringing discoveries of new colonies. All of these sites so far, except one, have been under bridges over water. Just in the last few years Tree Swallows have been found nesting in at least one or two places in Georgia, including a pair that returned for the second consecutive year to the "Huie" ponds. The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* compiled in 1986 lists only one nesting, that from Towns Co. near the North Carolina line in 1982-1984. Barn Swallows, too, are apparently expanding their range into the southeastern part of the state, as disclosed by Breeding Bird Atlas surveys.

Speaking of the Breeding Bird Atlas, readers will note how much interesting information reported here was turned up by breeding bird atlasers. This worthy project aims to document breeding activity in every nook and cranny of the state and deserves the full support of every GOS member. Readers are reminded that the following species accounts follows the *Checklist of North American Birds*, 7th Ed. (American Ornithologists' Union, 1998), which rearranged the placement of several family groups in the taxonomic order.

Much thanks to Georgann Schmalz for typing this manuscript and to Mim Eisenberg for proofreading it.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, ASWMA - Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co., Burleigh - T.D. Burleigh, Georgia Birds, Univ. of Oklahoma Press (1958), KMNB - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co., NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SGRBA - South Georgia Rare Bird Alert, WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

COMMON LOON - Two birds were seen at Buford Dam, Lake Lanier, Gwinnett Co. in June. On 7 June one was noted in breeding plumage (Chris Lambrecht), and one seen the next day was not (Karen Theodorou). From the same location the same or another bird was seen on 10 July (Rusty Trump). Other sightings also indicate that a few birds spend the summer in Georgia: on 18 June, one at Lake Horton, Fayette Co. (Brock Hutchins); one near Everett, Glynn Co., on 6 July (Jerry and Marie Amerson); and one at Lake Hartwell in breeding plumage during the period (Gordon Gridley).

PIED-BILLED GREBE - For the third year in a row, this species was found in the Macon brickyard ponds, but this year no evidence of nesting was observed. Three were seen on 21 June (Ty Ivey and Jerry Amerson) and relocated on 11 July (Paul Johnson, Ty Ivey). Less unusual but still noteworthy was one spotted on 6 June in Augusta (Anne Waters).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL - Every now and then this pelagic species can be found in the Altamaha River Estuary. One was seen there on 13 and 14 July (Chuck DeCurtis).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Some of the Cumberland Is. flock apparently decided to spend the summer. Eleven were seen on Raccoon Spit off the north end of Cumberland Is. on 13 July (Chuck DeCurtis).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Two seen on 6 June and 12 July at the brickyard ponds in Augusta were rare summer visitors (Anne Waters).

LEAST BITTERN - This species is being reported more frequently these days, due, I think, to more birders checking appropriate habitat. On 18 June three were seen at a marsh in Greene Co. where they have previously been found before (Paul Sykes), and three were found in Macon on 21 June, where they are of irregular occurrence (Jerry Amerson, Ty Ivey).

GREAT EGRET - A huge number (237) was discovered in Phinizy Swamp in Augusta on 13 and 14 July. Two weeks later they were all gone. (Both reports by Steve Wagner).

SNOWY EGRET - A few of this species show up at ELHLAF every summer. On 10 July five were seen (Rusty Trump). At least two remained through the period (many observers). In Augusta, the Phinizy Swamp hosted three on 27 and 28 July (Steve Wagner).

LITTLE BLUE HERON - Big numbers were reported this summer in post-breeding dispersal. In recent years this has often carried them well north of their usual range. This year the trend continued with 18, mostly immatures, at the Arrowhead Public Fishing Area in northern Floyd Co. (Michael Bell, Aubrey Scott) and more than 300 at the Phinizy Swamp in Augusta, fewer than five of which were adults (Steve Wagner).

TRICOLORED HERON - Rare for the Atlanta area was a bird seen at the ELHLAF on 10 July (Rusty Trump). Perhaps it was the same bird that was reported there on 30 July (Jim Hengeveld *vide* Carol Lambert).

REDDISH EGRET - This species again appeared on the coast earlier than used to be the case ten years ago. On 12 July two were seen at Wassau Is. (Steve Calver, Peter Range) and two were seen on Cumberland Is. on 26 July (Sheila Willis). The best report came in July from Sapelo Is., where a newly fledged bird was observed (Brad Winn). This is the best evidence yet that this species nests in Georgia. The nearest major colony is at Merritt Island NWR in Florida.

CATTLE EGRET - Sixty or so were counted at Phinizy Swamp in Augusta on 13 July (Steve Wagner). This is a good count here at the northerly edge of their dispersal range.

GREEN HERON - Surprising was a bird seen by Peggy and Jill, Mathieu and Terry Moore perched on a telephone wire at the busy intersection of Dresden Drive and Peachtree Road in Atlanta on 19 July. I think a close look would show this adaptable species to be a common nester inside I-285.

- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - One immature was seen in the Lake Allatoona area, Bartow Co., on 9 July by Chris Laudermilk. A single immature was seen at the ELHLAF on 15 and 17 July (Carol Lambert), and two were there on 25 July (Jeff Sewell). Two other immatures were seen at the Arrowhead Fish Hatchery, Floyd Co., on 11 July by Michael Bell. This is an unusual number so far north of the coastal plain. In Augusta, Anne Waters reported that she monitored five nests along the levee of the Savannah River and that two of them fledged ten young by 9 June.
- WHITE IBIS** - This species' post-breeding dispersal brought it to the Atlanta area early this year. On 2 June one was seen at the CRNRA, Fulton Co. (Didi Manns) and four were at ELHLAF as early as 11 June (Carol Lambert). The Phinizy Swamp in Augusta had 100 plus on 18 July (Anne Waters), and five made it to Rome, 31 July (Giff Beaton).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** - In contrast to the northward movement of many waders, only one Roseate Spoonbill was seen in the usual haunt near Brunswick, that on 18 July along the Jekyll Is. Causeway (Darrell Lee). More appropriate of its wandering nature were three seen on 30 July north of Douglas, Coffee Co. (Sheila Willis).
- WOOD STORK** - A solo arrival on 11 July was the Grand Bay WMA's first for the season (Brad Bergstrom), but the six seen on 15 July at ELHLAF were really eye openers (Tim Walker *vide* Carol Lambert). A single bird was spotted there on 31 July (Carol Lambert).
- BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK** - On 6 June Earl Horn and Rusty Trump discovered a one bird among Canada Geese and Mallards at the ponds at the ELHLAF. At first it was dismissed as an escaped bird, but evidence quickly mounted from other locations in the southeast of many sightings of this species, which has in the last several decades undergone a rapid and wide range expansion out of its original south Texas range. Indeed, a large breeding population exists near Sarasota, FL., with smaller numbers at other Florida sites. A few years ago a pair fledged young near Jasper, FL., just a bit south of the Georgia line. Upon its later acceptance by the Checklist and Records Committee as a wild bird, this bird was instantly elevated to THE bird of the period.
- MOTTLED DUCK** - As usual, a few reports were received of this introduced species. On 3 July two were seen at the ASWMA (Eran Tomer), and eight were seen there on 19 July (Darrell Lee).
- AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** - The species is rare but regular at the ELHLAF, where one was seen on 6 June by Bruce Hallett.
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - Macon scored its first June record on 21 June when one was spotted in the brickyards (Ty Ivey, Jerry Amerson).
- REDHEAD** - What's going on here? There was not one, but two reports for the period. The ACOGB (1986) lists no summer records! On 15 and 16 June two were seen on a small pond in south Cobb Co. (Chris Loudermilk), and one was observed on 23 July at Garden Lakes, Rome (Marion Dobbs).
- RING-NECKED DUCK** - A few Ring-necks seem to summer somewhere in the piedmont every year. This year two males spent all summer at ELHLAF (many observers), and three females were seen several times in June at the

- Augusta brickyards, but no nesting could be confirmed. The species has nested here in the past (Anne Waters).
- LESSER SCAUP** - A female spent most of June at the Augusta brickyards, where it is rare in summer (Anne Waters).
- HOODED MERGANSER** - A hen with eight chicks was seen in early June at the Bowen's Mill WMA in Wilcox Co. for one of the few confirmed occurrences of nesting in this state (Tip Hahn *vide* Brad Winn). A formal report is being submitted for publication here.
- OSPREY** - The resident pair returned to the ELHLAF this period and once again did not produce young (Carol Lambert).
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - Individuals were seen on 30 June at Doctortown, Wayne Co. (Giff Beaton) and at Hinesville on 6 July (Jerry and Marie Amerson), but the best reports were of four near Fargo, Clinch Co., over the Suwanee River (Kristi Avera *vide* SGRBA) and the one seen on 3 June carrying food in eastern Atkinson Co. (Sheila Willis).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** - Jim Wilson reported that a friend of his who lives in Newton Co. saw one bird on 1 June in the same area where last year she saw four adults and two juveniles. If they do nest in Newton Co. this would be a significant expansion of their present breeding range in Georgia. A pair was back at the same nest site as last year in Macon (Paul Johnson), and a juvenile was seen on 11 July in Valdosta (Brad Bergstrom). For numbers, Giff Beaton counted 15-20 at Doctortown, Wayne Co. on 30 June, and the SGRBA reported that Dave Belcher saw about 20 near Valdosta in late July.
- BALD EAGLE** - Sheila Willis saw one adult in Coffee Co. on 8 June that she believes is half of a breeding pair. This would be a new nesting location for the species.
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** - One bird seen near Ludowici, Long Co., on 30 June was certainly out of its normal range (Giff Beaton).
- COOPER'S HAWK** - An adult sighted on 8 June north of Douglas, Coffee Co., was rare for the area (Sheila Willis).
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - This species is described by the ACOGB as breeding only north of the fall line, so the following nesting season reports from the lower coastal plain are very interesting: one in south Lowndes Co. on 16 June (Brad Bergstrom, Giff Beaton); another the same day in Wilcox Co. (Giff Beaton); one in northeast Lowndes Co. on 30 June (Brad Bergstrom); and one each on 30 June at Ludowici, Long Co., and Doctortown, Wayne Co. (both by Giff Beaton).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** - These days any evidence of breeding of this species anywhere in the state is welcomed, so a pair seen on 10 and 17 June east of Alma, Bacon Co., apparently nesting in the hollow arm of a power line structure is good news indeed. A pair was seen feeding two young at, of all places, Chamblee High School, DeKalb Co. on 2 July (Steve Ehly) for another of a series of urban Atlanta summer reports over the last decade. One bird was seen for two days beginning 4 July at ELHLAF (Jeff Sewell, Michael Bell), and another pair was seen in Rome on 31 July attending a begging juvenile (Giff Beaton).
- BLACK RAIL** - On 18 June three singing territorial males were heard at a marsh in Greene Co. (Paul Sykes, Giff Beaton).

- KING RAIL** - At the same marsh (see Black Rail) three adults and two juveniles were spotted on 4 July (Marion Dobbs).
- VIRGINIA RAIL** - A marsh at Floyd College near Rome hosted up to three on several dates in June and July (Marion Dobbs). Two were located at the Greene Co. marsh on 18 June (Paul Sykes, Giff Beaton) and a juvenile was seen with adults at the marsh at the KMNBP on 11 July (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen, Bob Zaremba).
- PURPLE GALLINULE** - Sheila Willis reported an adult on 20 June on Cumberland Is., the first sighting of a live bird there since the National Park Service began record-keeping on the island. Brad Bergstrom found good numbers in several locations in the Valdosta area during June, including a high count of 20 at the Grand Bay WMA (with Giff Beaton).
- COMMON MOORHEN** - For the third year in a row, the species was found in summer at the Macon brickyard pods. Four were seen during the period, but unlike the last two years, this year no evidence of nesting was found (Paul Johnson).
- AMERICAN COOT** - The number of summering coots seems to be increasing. Three spent all the period at Augusta (Anne Waters), as did five in Macon (Paul Johnson) and one at ELHLAF (many observers). Elsewhere one was seen during June in Carroll Co. (Michael Bell), and one was noted at Grand Bay WMA near Valdosta (Brad Bergstrom).
- SANDHILL CRANE** - One bird heard at the Eufaula NWR, Stewart Co., on 8 June was very unusual for the date and place (Giff Beaton, Shawn Reed). Could this be the start of another resident population like the Okefenokee Swamp NWR or Grand Bay WMA, or was this a stray or injured bird that never got any farther north?
- WILSON'S PLOVER** - Hopefully there were more sightings of this species than were reported. Two were seen at Jekyll Is. on 30 June (Giff Beaton).
- SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** - An early southbound migrant was already at ELHLAF on 25 July (Jeff Sewell).
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** - An early migrant was seen at the Phinizy Swamp in Augusta on 13 July (Steve Wagner), then two were seen there on 18 July (Anne Waters) and five on 27 July (Steve Wagner).
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** - What I suppose was a southbound migrant was seen 21 June in Macon (Ty Ivey, Jerry Amerson). This is eight days earlier than the early date for fall stated in the ACOGB (1986). Other early sightings include one at ELHLAF on 5 July (Michael Bell), eight on 13 July at the Phinizy Swamp, Augusta (Steve Wagner), building to 24 on 27 July there (Anne Waters, Steve Wagner).
- SOLITARY SANDPIPER** - A good count of 16 was noted at the Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, on 27 July (Steve Wagner).
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER** - Four was a good count for so early in fall migration on 10 July at the ELHLAF (Rusty Trump).
- UPLAND SANDPIPER** - Search of a sod farm in Bulloch Co. revealed two on 26 July and three on 31 July (Andy Kinsey).
- WHIMBREL** - A bird seen on 30 June on St. Simons Is. was probably an early migrant (Giff Beaton). A good count of ten was noted at the Department of Transportation mitigation site on U.S. 17 south of Brunswick on 18 July (Darrell Lee).

- MARbled GODWIT** - The dates given for this uncommon winter resident and coastal transient in the ACOGB (1986) are 28 August through 27 June, making the one seen on 4 July at Jekyll Is. noteworthy (Eran Tomer). We assume this is an early fall migrant, but perhaps it lingered in the area after other northbound migrants had cleared out.
- SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** - Two late birds were seen at ELHLAF on 14 June, five days later than the ACOGB late date for the interior (Jeff Sewell). Other late departures were three on 6 June at Augusta (Anne Waters) and one in Coffee Co. the same day (Sheila Willis). Early fall interior transients began appearing in mid-July, one day after the ACOGB (1986) early fall arrival date. On 18 July four were counted at ELHLAF (Jeff Sewell) and two at Augusta (Anne Waters).
- WESTERN SANDPIPER** - Early arriving southbound migrants began appearing in July in the interior. On 18 July, Anne Waters saw one in Augusta at the Phinizy Swamp, on 25 July three were seen at ELHLAF (Jeff Sewell) and on 27 July back at the Phinizy Swamp in Augusta, three were seen (Steve Wagner).
- LEAST SANDPIPER** - The ELHLAF hosted the last northbound migrant on 12 June (Carol Lambert) and the earliest southbound bird on 4 July (Jeff Sewell). The late departure date in the ACOGB is 4 June; the early fall date is 3 July. High counts for the period were the 50 at Phinizy Swamp in Augusta on 18 July (Anne Waters) and 30 at ELHLAF on 25 July (Jeff Sewell).
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** - This species is a late migrant through Georgia in the spring, so singles at ELHLAF on 6 June (Jim Flynn) and one at Hutchinson Is., Savannah on 4 June (Steve Calver) were not record late.
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER** - One was heading north late at Hutchinson Is., Savannah, on 4 June (Steve Calver). Good numbers of fall migrants were seen in July at several locations, the first being six seen at ELHLAF on 10 July (Rusty Trump), then huge numbers were counted at Phinizy Swamp, Augusta, on 27 July, about 100 (Steve Wagner), and approximately 400 were seen on 30 July at a Floyd Co. sod farm on 30 July (Nelson Dobbs).
- BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** - The two seen at a Floyd Co. sod farm on 30 July (Nelson Dobbs) not only were the only ones reported for the period, but beat the fall early arrival date in ACOGB by six days.
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** - Early, but not records, were two at the Phinizy Swamp in Augusta on 13 July (Steve Wagner).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** - Two seen on 18 July on Jekyll Is. (Darrell Lee) were extremely early. The early arrival date in the ACOGB is 24 August, but they usually are not seen before late September.
- BLACK TERN** - The only report received from the interior was of one on 28 July at ELHLAF (Carol Lambert). Paul Sykes had a good count on 29 July of 150 near Blackbeard Is.
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** - This recent invader continued its advance farther into Georgia. A first report from Gainesville was received from Dick Baxter-Jones, who saw one on 14 June.
- RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** - Buddy Rowe reported that on 5 June he and Terry Johnson banded 28 Ruby-throats, mostly males, in his

backyard in Newborn, proving once again that for every one hummer seen, there are four or five more in the area. A mostly albino bird spent several days at a feeder in Valdosta in July. It was all white, but had pigmented eyes (Brad Bergstrom per SGRBA).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER - The SGRBA reported that a melanistic bird was seen in early July in the Brunswick area by Darrell Lee. It was all black except for the red area on the head.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER - On 18 June, south of Screven, in Wayne Co., Sheila Willis spotted a single bird. There are no known colonies nearby, she reports.

NORTHERN FLICKER - One seen in the Darien area on 25 June was rare for the area (Doris Cohrs).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - The Dillard site, Rabun Co., proved reliable on 8 June, when two were seen (Giff Beaton). At a new site in Greene Co. one was reported on 18 June (Giff Beaton, Paul Sykes), and one bird was observed in Blairsville on 24 July, also a new location for the species (Dot Freeman).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - Two birds, apparently territorial males, were seen and heard at the Sky Valley Resort in Rabun Co. from late May through at least 14 June (Brock Hutchins). Nesting was not detected, but this location is not far from the Hale Ridge Road site a little farther north, where they have nested.

WESTERN KINGBIRD - This species is a rare visitor to our state, usually in the fall or spring. The ACOGB notes only one summer sighting. We can add to this one seen on 16 June at L. Horton, Fayette Co. (Brock Hutchins). Amazingly, this is the third sighting of this western vagrant in the last two months.

GRAY KINGBIRD - A pair returned to its usual spot on Jekyll Is. this summer (many observers).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO - Although there are several older records of this species nesting in the piedmont, it is generally considered that, with one known exception of a small nesting population in the Piedmont NWR, Jones Co., this species does not nest south of the mountains, so one seen near Rutledge, Morgan Co., on 11 June (Giff Beaton) may be part of another disjunct breeding population.

BLUE JAY - Delon Barfuss of Marietta sent a photo of a Blue Jay with a long, decurved bill seen in July in his backyard. This can be added to the reports of three Brown Thrashers seen over the last three years with huge, long decurved bills. What is going on?

COMMON RAVEN - Sightings came from four mountain tops: three at Rabun Bald (Brad Bergstrom) on 13 June; 13 June at the Coopers Creek Recreation Area (Michael Bell); 10 July at Brasstown Bald (Giff Beaton); and 30 July, at least one at Blood Mountain (Mark Oberle).

HORNED LARK - A single bird was seen in western Morgan Co., near Rutledge, on 11 June, a new location for this species (Giff Beaton). Not so unexpected was a fledgling seen at the Peach Co. sod farm on 27 July, an established location at the southerly edge of its breeding range (Paul Johnson).

PURPLE MARTIN - By the use of radar in Valdosta, three huge roost sites were located in late July. One site was in Mitchell Co., one was near the Calhoun and Baker county lines, and the largest was in Worth Co. (Brad Bergstrom per SGRBA).

TREE SWALLOW - The expansion of the species southward continues. Once again a pair nested at ELHLAF, raising four young out of a bluebird box (Jeff Sewell). Other possible nesting sites in the piedmont were in Greene Co., where on 18 June two were seen (Paul Sykes). The sighting of a pair in Jones Co. in the Piedmont NWR in June was also notable (Jerry and Marie Amerson).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - At Cumberland Is., Sheila Willis observed several pair nesting in creek banks in late June, furnishing the first nesting record for the island.

CLIFF SWALLOW - Further evidence of the expansion of this species was gathered this period. In addition to the well-established colonies, five were reported for perhaps the first time around a bridge in Stewart Co. near the Florence Marina State Park on 26 July, though the observer was not able to see any nests (Michael Bell). Surely the time is near when this species will colonize every bridge in the piedmont and, no doubt, will continue its southerly advance.

BARN SWALLOW - This species, which like the Cliff Swallow favors man-made structures including bridges as nest sites, is also expanding its breeding range southerly in the state. Sheila Willis, doing breeding survey work in counties near Waycross in June, found several nest sites in Clinch, Atkinson and Bacon counties, where they are not known to nest and, even better, noted four adults on 20 June and seven adults on 26 July on Cumberland Is., where they have not historically nested.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Once again, one was seen near Burrell's Ford on the Chatooga River in Rabun Co. on the South Carolina line, this one on 11 July (Mark Oberle) and, once again, no nest was found. Nesting has been confirmed just across the state line.

WINTER WREN - Again, this species was seen at Brasstown Bald, Union Co., their most likely possible breeding site in Georgia. On 10 July, two were seen there (Giff Beaton).

WOOD THRUSH - This species is rare as a breeder in the southeastern part of the state, so finding a pair, and hearing one singing regularly in one spot during the period, as though on territory, was quite a rare treat for the Valdosta area (Brad Bergstrom).

AMERICAN ROBIN - In July, two fledglings were seen in Waycross. This is the first known successful nesting for the area (Lois Groszman *fide* Sheila Willis).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - On 11 July a female at KMNBP was seen feeding a recent fledgling, only a day or so out of the nest. Two immatures were nearby. This location is 45 miles south of the known breeding range of the species (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen).

CERULEAN WARBLER - The first southbound migrant was noted on 11 July at, where else, KMNBP (Giff Beaton et al.).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER - A female seen in Augusta on 25 June was noteworthy (Anne Waters). The species is not known as a breeder in the

area, this being well south of the heart of their breeding range, although there are a few old records of nesting in the piedmont. Perhaps atlasing will show this species to be a regular breeder in the area (per Anne Waters).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Worthy of noting here is the occupation of a territory by this species from May through 10 June in Grady Co., where it is considered a rare breeder (Gail Menk).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH - Also uncommon as a breeder in extreme south Georgia, this species was found in May and June at the same location in Decatur Co. (Gail Menk).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - On 10 June one was discovered in Grady Co. at the southern edge of its breeding range (Gail Menk).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - The ACOGB states that this species is a rare breeder in the extreme southeastern part of the state, so one seen on 20 June on Cumberland Is. was noteworthy (Sheila Willis).

SCARLET TANAGER - KMNBP hosted several males and at least one female in July that may indicate breeding. On 10 July Kevin Danchisen saw three males and one female, and the next day, Giff Beaton saw two males and one female. At ELHLAF a male was spotted on 9 July (Carol Lambert).

BACHMAN'S SPARROW - Reports from two birders of this species in the southern tier of counties were considered by the observers to be noteworthy. On several occasions in June and July one was heard singing in east-central Lowndes Co. (Brad Bergstrom per SGRBA). During Breeding Bird Atlas surveys in June, Sheila Willis found them at several sites in Atkinson, Clinch, Wayne and Charleton counties. The ACOGB compiled in 1986 states that the species is "uncommon in the coastal plain in summer," but Burleigh writing in 1958 calls it a "common breeding bird in the extreme southern part of the state." So, in light of the observations noted above, what conclusion can be drawn about this change in status, if indeed, its status has changed at all? Continued breeding bird atlasing will no doubt shed more light on this question.

LARK SPARROW - This western vagrant shows up every two years or so and might be found anywhere in the state, usually in the fall, so the one seen on 7 July at Hutchinson Is., Chatham Co. was most unexpected, as the ACOGB (1986) lists no records for June or July. Good details including sketches were submitted by the lucky observer, Steve Calver.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - One seen on 3 June southeast of Ocilla, Irwin Co., was well south of their usual summer range (Joel Volpi *vide* Mark Oberle). The one seen at ELHLAF on 5 July was noteworthy, as they are seldom seen here, but this is not too far from a breeding site in Henry Co. (Michael Bell).

SONG SPARROW - For the second year in a row, Paul Johnson located a pair near his home in Macon, but did not locate a nest this year. For years the species has been slowly extending its breeding range southward in the state.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - Several observers were concerned not to have found any this summer at Rabun Bald, Rabun Co. (Jeff Sewell, Giff

Beaton, et al.). Two were seen in the Blue Ridge WMA, Fannin Co., on 7 June (Jim Flynn).

PAINTED BUNTING - This coastal nester has a breeding outpost in Macon. This summer males were located in three new locations on 11 July (Paul Johnson et al.).

DICKCISSEL - Four birds returned to a site in Henry Co., being first reported in May and seen again on 6 June (Michael Bell). Two others were found in a new location near Rutledge in Morgan Co. on 11 June (Giff Beaton). On 26 June, one was observed northwest of Cedartown, also a new location (Marion Dobbs).

BOBOLINK - What to make of one spotted on 16 June at Grassy Pond near Valdosta (Giff Beaton, Brad Bergstrom)? A guess would be a late northbound migrant.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - It is odd to find one so far from the coast, but on 16 June Giff Beaton and Brad Bergstrom saw one in Lowndes Co., where the species has been reported before.

SHINY COWBIRD - It is safe to say that the state has experienced an unwelcome invasion of this South American species this year. Two were seen this past spring, including one well inland and one on Little St. Simons Is., where on 3 June the same bird, or perhaps another, was seen at a feeder (Kevin McIntyre). Three birds, two males and a female, were seen on 18 June and relocated on 25 June at the Savannah Spoil Site, near Savannah (Steve Calver). This dredge site actually lies just north of the state line in South Carolina, but I believe the report is significant enough to mention here. Gene Kerferl had one at his feeder in Glynn Co. on 25 June and one was found in June on Cumberland Is. where the species was first seen in Georgia in 1989 (Carol Ruckdeschel *vide* Doris Cohrs).

ORCHARD ORIOLE - A single bird seen on 25 July at KMNBP was considered an early fall migrant, as the species does not nest here. Readers might be surprised to know that this is only the fifth record here for the late summer and fall (Giff Beaton).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - On 11 June a female was seen near Rutledge, Morgan Co. (Giff Beaton), perhaps indicating breeding. The ACOGB says the species is a rare nester north of the fall line, but the only site I know where an ongoing breeding colony exists is in Macon.

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REVISIONS TO THE GEORGIA REGULAR SPECIES LIST

As a result of the latest revision of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (American Ornithologists' Union, 1998, *Check-list of North American Birds*, 7th ed.), there have been several changes to Georgia Ornithological Society's Regular Species List. The GOS Checklist Committee has compiled these changes and the updated list is provided here. Species listed in bold type are those for which the Checklist Committee requires written details. Species listed with an asterisk are new to the list since publication of the Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds in 1986.

Red-throated Loon
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Eared Grebe
Northern Fulmar
Black-capped Petrel
Cory's Shearwater
Greater Shearwater
Sooty Shearwater
Manx Shearwater
Audubon's Shearwater
Wilson's Storm-Petrel
Leach's Storm-Petrel*
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel
White-tailed Tropicbird
Red-billed Tropicbird
Northern Gannet
American White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Anhinga
Magnificent Frigatebird
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Reddish Egret
Cattle Egret

Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Wood Stork
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Greater White-fronted Goose
Snow Goose
Ross's Goose*
Canada Goose
Brant
Tundra Swan
Wood Duck
Gadwall
Eurasian Wigeon
American Wigeon
American Black Duck
Mallard
Mottled Duck
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Readhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
King Eider

Harlequin Duck
Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter
Black Scoter
Oldsquaw
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Masked Duck
Ruddy Duck
Osprey
Swallow-tailed Kite
Mississippi Kite
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Goshawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Golden Eagle
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Plain Chachalaca
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
Yellow Rail
Black Rail
Clapper Rail
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Purple Gallinule
Common Moorhen
American Coot
Limpkin
Sandhill Crane
Whooping Crane
Black-bellied Plover
American Golden-Plover
Snowy Plover*
Wilson's Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover

Killdeer
American Oystercatcher
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel
Long-billed Curlew
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Sanderling
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Purple Sandpiper
Dunlin
Stilt Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Ruff
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Common Snipe
American Woodcock
Wilson's Phalarope
Red-necked Phalarope
Red Phalarope
South Polar Skua
Pomarine Jaeger
Parasitic Jaeger
Laughing Gull
Franklin's Gull
Little Gull*
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Iceland Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
Sabine's Gull
Gull-billed Tern

Caspian Tern
 Royal Tern
 Sandwich Tern
 Common Tern
Arctic Tern
 Forster's Tern
 Least Tern
Bridled Tern
Sooty Tern
 Black Tern
Brown Noddy
 Black Skimmer
Dovekie
Razorbill
 Rock Dove
 Eurasian Collared-Dove*
White-winged Dove
 Mourning Dove
 Passenger Pigeon
 Common Ground-Dove
 Carolina Parakeet
 Black-billed Cuckoo
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Smooth-billed Ani
 Barn Owl
 Eastern Screech-Owl
 Great Horned Owl
Snowy Owl
 Barred Owl
Long-eared Owl
 Short-eared Owl
Northern Saw-whet Owl
 Common Nighthawk
 Chuck-will's widow
 Whip-poor-will
 Chimney Swift
Magnificent Hummingbird*
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Black-chinned Hummingbird*
Anna's Hummingbird*
Broad-tailed Hummingbird*
 Rufous Hummingbird
Allen's Hummingbird*
 Belted Kingfisher
 Red-headed Woodpecker
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
 Downy Woodpecker
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Northern Flicker
 Pileated Woodpecker
 Ivory-billed Woodpecker
 Olive-sided Flycatcher
 Eastern Wood-Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
 Acadian Flycatcher
Alder Flycatcher
 Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
 Eastern Phoebe
Say's Phoebe
Vermilion Flycatcher
 Great Crested Flycatcher
Western Kingbird
 Eastern Kingbird
 Gray Kingbird
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
 Loggerhead Shrike
 White-eyed Vireo
 Yellow-throated Vireo
 Blue-headed Vireo
Warbling Vireo
 Philadelphia Vireo
 Red-eyed Vireo
 Blue Jay
Florida Scrub-Jay
 American Crow
 Fish Crow
 Common Raven
 Horned Lark
 Purple Martin
 Tree Swallow
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Cliff Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Carolina Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 Brown-headed Nuthatch
 Brown Creeper
 Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
 House Wren
 Winter Wren
 Sedge Wren
 Marsh Wren
 Golden-crowned Kinglet

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 Eastern Bluebird
 Veery
 Gray-cheeked Thrush
Bicknell's Thrush*
 Swainson's Thrush
 Hermit Thrush
 Wood Thrush
 American Robin
Varied Thrush
 Gray Catbird
 Northern Mockingbird
 Brown Thrasher
 European Starling
 American Pipit
Sprague's Pipit
 Cedar Waxwing
 Bachman's Warbler
 Blue-winged Warbler
 Golden-winged Warbler
 Tennessee Warbler
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Northern Parula
 Yellow Warbler
 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 Magnolia Warbler
 Cape May Warbler
 Black-throated Blue Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Gray Warbler
 Black-throated Green Warbler
Townsend's Warbler*
 Blackburnian Warbler
 Yellow-throated Warbler
 Pine Warbler
Kirtland's Warbler
 Prairie Warbler
 Palm Warbler
 Bay-breasted Warbler
 Blackpoll Warbler
 Cerulean Warbler
 Black-and-white Warbler
 American Redstart
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Worm-eating Warbler
 Swainson's Warbler
 Ovenbird
 Northern Waterthrush

Louisiana Waterthrush
 Kentucky Warbler
 Connecticut Warbler
 Mourning Warbler
MacGillivray's Warbler*
 Common Yellowthroat
 Hooded Warbler
 Wilson's Warbler
 Canada Warbler
 Yellow-breasted Chat
 Summer Tanager
 Scarlet Tanager
Western Tanager
Green-tailed Towhee
 Eastern Towhee
 Bachman's Sparrow
American Tree Sparrow
 Chipping Sparrow
 Clay-colored Sparrow
 Field Sparrow
 Vesper Sparrow
 Lark Sparrow
Lark Bunting
 Savannah Sparrow
 Grasshopper Sparrow
 Henslow's Sparrow
 Le Conte's Sparrow
 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow*
 Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
 Seaside Sparrow
 Fox Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Swamp Sparrow
 White-throated Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Dark-eyed Junco
Lapland Longspur
Snow Bunting
 Northern Cardinal
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-headed Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting
 Painted Bunting
 Dickcissel
 Bobolink
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Eastern Meadowlark

Western Meadowlark
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Rusty Blackbird
 Brewer's Blackbird
 Common Grackle
 Boat-tailed Grackle
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Orchard Oriole
 Baltimore Oriole

Bullock's Oriole*
 Purple Finch
 House Finch
 Red Crossbill
 Common Redpoll
 Pine Siskin
 American Goldfinch
 Evening Grosbeak
 House Sparrow



Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*), 21 October 1997, off St. Simons Island, Georgia. Photo by Giff Beaton.

FROM THE LITERATURE

"From the Literature" provides brief reviews of recent ornithological studies conducted in the state of Georgia. The reviews are designed for a general reader and are meant to make ornithological research in Georgia available to a wider audience. — The Editors.

Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) predation on mud-dauber wasp prepupae (*Trypoxylon politum*). S. J. Coward and R. W. Matthews. 1995. Journal of the Kansas Entomological Society 68(3):371–373. — During an unusually heavy snow fall in Athens, Georgia, the authors observed a Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) repeatedly peck holes into the nest of a mud-dauber wasp (*Trypoxylon politum*) in order to remove the overwintering prepupae. Bird predation on mud-dauber nests is rarely reported, and this instance may have been prompted by snow covering more typical foraging sites. Interestingly, the authors report that the holes made by the titmouse closely resembled the natural emergence holes cut by the wasps themselves.

Effects of radio transmitters on migrating Wood Thrushes. L. A. Powell, D. G. Krentz, J. D. Lang, and M. J. Conroy. 1998. Journal of Field Ornithology 69(2):306–315. — Taking advantage of improved technology, ornithologists are employing smaller and smaller radio transmitters to study the movements and behavior of small songbirds. Nevertheless, scientists must be sure that the transmitters they use do not impede or alter the normal behavior of the species they study. The public, too, is often concerned that the scientific study of birds does not harm individual birds. This 4-year study from the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge in central Georgia used 1.6-gram radio transmitters to study the behavior and breeding biology of Wood Thrushes. However, at the end of each breeding season, radio-marked Wood Thrushes must migrate while carrying the added load of a transmitter. Fortunately, the authors discovered that radio-marked Wood Thrushes were just as likely to return from the wintering grounds as birds not carrying transmitters, and they did not lose body mass when compared to birds without transmitters. Upon careful examination, no birds showed any calluses, wounds, or feather loss associated with prolonged transmitter attachment. To minimize any possible impact of transmitters, the authors attach their transmitters with light Dacron thread (which is looped around each thigh to hold the transmitter on the back). This keeps the transmitter securely attached during the summer, but the thread disintegrates, and the used transmitter falls off, sometime during the fall or winter.

Food of nestling Wood Storks in coastal Georgia. A. L. Bryan, Jr. and J. C. Gariboldi. 1998. Colonial Waterbirds 21(2):152–158. — Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) are endangered in the state of Georgia, and their colonies are sparsely distributed in the state's coastal plain, mostly in coastal counties. Although birders frequently encounter storks feeding in coastal wetlands, little is known about what foods the storks deliver to their young. This study documented the foods delivered to young storks at four coastal colonies in Georgia by

examining regurgitation samples (adult storks regurgitate partially digested fish for the nestlings). Fish from saltwater or brackish habitats dominated the diet of nestlings (65–95% of prey items). Mummichogs (*Fundulus heteroclitus*) were the most common prey item. However, even at coastal colonies, a substantial portion of freshwater prey was observed at each colony, including pickerel (*Esox americanus*), bullhead (*Ameiurus* spp.), and sunfish. Prey items from freshwater tended to be larger than those from saltwater.

THE ORIOLE

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