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# THE ORIOLE

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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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# THE ORIOLE

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## THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS IN GEORGIA

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The American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) is listed as rare under Georgia's Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973 (Ga. L. 1973, p. 932, O.C.G.A. Secs. 12-6-172, 27-3-132). Because of this listing, many questions exist about the population trend, demography, physical health, reproductive success, and seasonal movements of this coastal, ground-nesting species in Georgia. Therefore, in 1999 the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) initiated a survey to determine the coast-wide distribution of American Oystercatchers in Georgia during the breeding season. The primary objective of this research was to collect baseline data for a long-term study of Georgia's oystercatcher population.

Historically, Burleigh (1958) estimated 35 pairs of American Oystercatchers breeding along the Georgia coast. Rappole (1981) estimated that 70 pairs of oystercatchers nested in Georgia in 1980. Corbat (1990) counted between 16 and 18 pairs nesting on Ossabaw, Sapelo, and Little St. Simons islands during the 1986 and 1987 breeding seasons. However, prior to surveys by the GDNR, no comprehensive census of all potential nesting areas on the Georgia coast had been completed. Therefore, all of the barrier-island beaches, sandbar islands, oyster-shell bars, and dredge-spoil deposit sites in Georgia were targeted for this survey. These ecologically distinct areas have supported nesting oystercatchers in the past (Tomkins 1954, Rappole 1981).

### Study Area

The Georgia coast is composed of a chain of 13 barrier islands in eight island complexes, with approximately 161 km of barrier beach (GDNR, unpubl. data). Georgia's islands begin with Tybee to the north (32.0261 N, 80.8494 W) and extend to Cumberland to the south (30.7136 N, 81.4510 W). Sounds, tidal creeks, and tidal rivers separate the islands. These waterways bisect approximately 134,400 ha (332,000 acres) of saltmarsh (GDNR 1996). The tidal amplitude for the Georgia Coast normally fluctuates between 1.8 m and 2.7 m (6–9 ft).

### Methods

Aerial surveys were initiated on 19 April 1999. The purpose of the first flight was to determine the distribution of oyster-shell deposit bars within the entire estuary west of the barrier islands. I flew with a GDNR pilot in a Cessna 185 at an altitude of approximately 500 m to locate oyster-shell bars. These shell deposits are typically linear, stand 0–1 m above mean high water, and sit at the edge of open water against the saltmarsh.

American Oystercatchers (Fig. 1) are large shorebirds with distinct markings that make the birds easily identifiable from the air. I used a Bell Jet Ranger 206 to fly on 21 April, 4 May, and 6 May 1999. These dates were within the estimated peak of nesting activity in Georgia, and coincided with peak nesting in Virginia (Nol and Humphrey 1994). I used a flight speed of approximately 112 km/hr (60 knots) at an altitude of 76–91 m (250–300 ft). I conducted flights within 1.5 hr of high tide so that the search area was minimized and oystercatchers would be high on the bars or beach, clearly visible.

I conducted the first observation flight, on 21 April, at St. Andrew's Sound west of the south tip of St. Simons Island, and proceeded south along the west side of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) to the Georgia/Florida border. The northbound leg of that flight proceeded up the eastern side of the ICW to Doboy Sound at the northwest corner of Wolf Island. I conducted the second flight, on 4 May, beginning on the eastern side of the ICW at Doboy Sound, west of Sapelo Island's south tip. On this flight, I proceeded north to the Savannah River and examined all available habitat on the east side of the ICW, including the sounds. On the return flight, I covered all of the western side of the ICW and the western side of the sounds from the Savannah River south to St. Andrews Sound and St. Simons Island. I conducted the last flight on 6 May and included all of the barrier island beaches except those with planned ground surveys. I recorded locations of American Oystercatchers from the aircraft with a

hand-held Garmin 12 global positioning system (GPS) and the aircraft's onboard GPS by circling back over the birds. GDNR staff, USFWS staff, seasonal interns, and volunteers conducted ground surveys by foot and on all-terrain vehicles in May and June. GDNR surveyed Sapelo, Ossabaw, Williamson, Sea, and Jekyll islands, as well as the St. Catherines Island Bar, St. Catherines Sound Marsh Island, Egg Island Bar, Pelican Spit, and Satilla River Marsh Island. A University of Georgia undergraduate student located pairs and monitored nesting success of American Oystercatchers, Wilson's Plovers, and Least Terns on Cumberland Island from 15 May–15 July.



Figure 1. American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), 13 June 2000, Cumberland Island, Georgia. Photo by Bradford Winn.

Coordinates for locations of oystercatchers on the ground were recorded with a Trimble Explorer GPS. I mapped and assigned approximate (best guess) coordinates to other locations based on the description of the locations given by the observers. I used ArcView Geographic Information System for mapping the oystercatcher locations and assigning coordinates. Volunteers as well as seasonal staff associated with Georgia's sea turtle conservation programs surveyed Wassaw, St. Catherines, Blackbeard, and Little St. Simons islands. Due to shoreline development and heavy pedestrian use, I did not survey Tybee Island.

I conducted boat surveys opportunistically in the Wilmington River in Chatham County on 29 May and along the Intracoastal Waterway in Liberty and McIntosh counties and in St. Catherines Island Sound on 8 June. I checked oyster-shell bars from a boat for the presence of American Oystercatchers, and when found, evidence of nesting was checked on foot or from the boat. The dredge-spoil deposit areas of Kings Bay Submarine Base in Camden County and the Andrew's Island dredge-deposit site in Brunswick Harbor in Glynn County were surveyed from the ground.

### Results

A total of 241 American Oystercatchers (86 pairs and 18 individuals) were recorded in coastal Georgia during the 1999 breeding season (Fig. 2). I also observed three flocks of oystercatchers presumed to be nonbreeding birds. Oystercatchers were observed in all four habitats, with the majority of pairs on barrier beaches and oyster-shell bars (Table 1).

**Barrier Island Beach.** — There were 137 oystercatchers (44 pairs, 9 individuals, and a flock of 40) recorded on barrier beaches, 57% of the observed oystercatchers (137/241). Oystercatchers were observed on Little Tybee (4 pairs, 2 singles), Williamson (2 pairs, 1 single), Wassaw (1 pair), Ossabaw (5 pairs, 2 singles), St. Catherines (6 pairs, 1 single), Blackbeard (1 pair), Sapelo (1 pair), Wolf (2 pairs, 1 single, and a flock of 40), Little St. Simons (11 pairs, 1 single), Sea (2 pairs), and Cumberland (9 pairs, 1 single). No oystercatchers were observed on the barrier beaches of St. Simons, Jekyll, or Little Cumberland.

**Oyster-shell Bars.** — Oyster-shell deposit bars, commonly called "shell rakes," were found primarily along both sides of the ICW and at the edges of the sounds between barrier islands. I observed several extensive oyster-shell bars well up the Wilmington River in Chatham County. The number of these bars and their respective sizes were not quantified.

I observed 68 oystercatchers — 28% of the oystercatchers

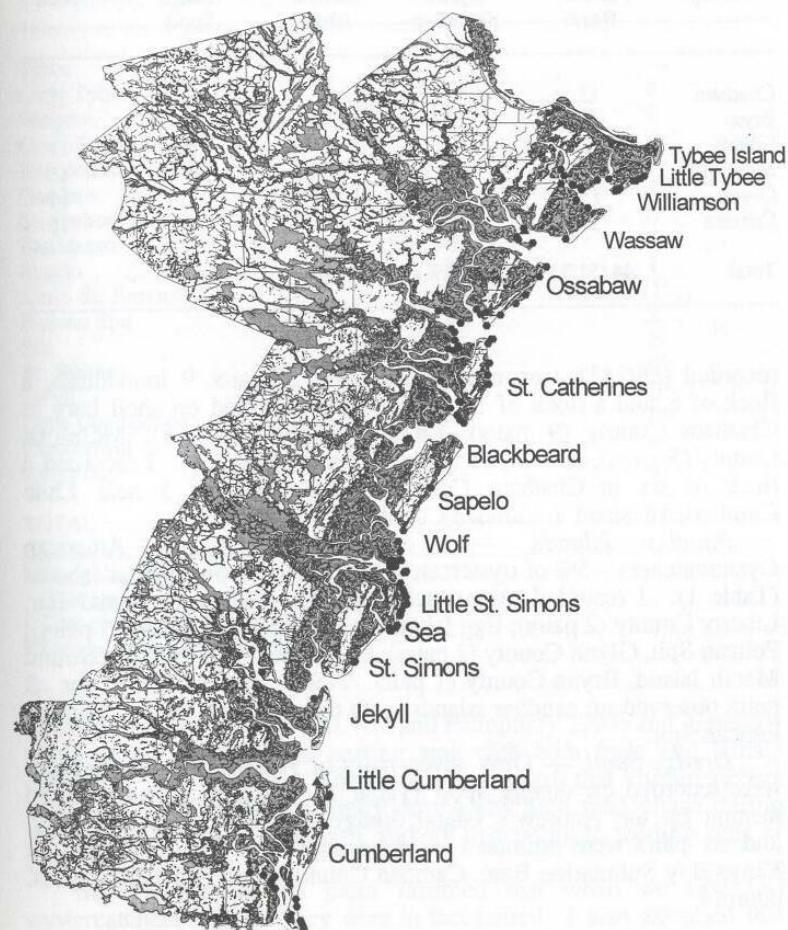


Figure 2. Locations where American Oystercatchers were recorded along the Georgia coast during the breeding season of 1999.

Table 1. Spatial distribution of pairs of American Oystercatchers among four ecologically distinct nesting habitats in coastal Georgia, 1999.

County	Barrier Beach	Oyster Shell Bar	Sandbar Island	Dredge Spoil	Total
Chatham	12	9	0	0	21
Bryan	0	0	1	0	1
Liberty	6	9	2	0	17
McIntosh	4	5	6	0	15
Glynn	13	1	2	1	17
Camden	9	0	0	6	15
Total	44 (51%)	24 (28%)	11 (13%)	7 (8%)	86

recorded (68/241) – on oyster-shell bars (24 pairs, 9 individuals, a flock of 6, and a flock of 5). Pairs were observed on shell bars in Chatham County (9 pairs), Liberty County (9 pairs), McIntosh County (5 pairs), and Glynn County (1 pair) (Table 1). I recorded a flock of six in Chatham County and a flock of 5 near Little Cumberland island in Camden County.

*Sandbar Islands.* — I counted 11 pairs of American Oystercatchers – 5% of oystercatchers observed – on sandbar islands (Table 1). I recorded oystercatchers on St. Catherines Island Bar, Liberty County (2 pairs); Egg Island Bar, McIntosh County (6 pairs); Pelican Spit, Glynn County (2 pairs); and on the St. Catherines Sound Marsh Island, Bryan County (1 pair). Nests were confirmed for all pairs observed on sandbar islands, with the exception of one pair on Pelican Spit.

*Dredge Spoil.* — Only seven pairs of American Oystercatchers were recorded on dredge spoil (Table 1). One pair was reported nesting on the Andrew's Island dredge-spoil site in Glynn County, and six pairs were estimated to be nesting on dredge-spoil sites at Kings Bay Submarine Base, Camden County (Paul Schoenfeld, pers. comm.).

### Discussion

Several assumptions have been made to develop the spatial distribution and pair estimates presented here. I assumed that birds were not counted more than once, even though surveys were conducted over geographically proximate areas within hours or sometimes weeks apart. American Oystercatchers are territorial

Table 2. Comparison of number of pairs of American Oystercatchers observed along the Georgia coast in 1980 and 1999.

Location	1980 <sup>a</sup>	1999 <sup>b</sup>
Tybee	0	—
Little Tybee	2	6
Wassaw	3	1
Green Island Spit	2	—
Raccoon Key	5	3
Ossabaw	7	5
St. Catherines	7	6
Blackbeard	3	1
Sapelo	7	1
Little St. Simons	10	11 <sup>c</sup>
Pelican Spit	1	2
Sea	0	2
St. Simons	0	0
Jekyll	0	0
Little Cumberland	3	0
Cumberland	12	9
Kings Bay	7	6 <sup>d</sup>
TOTAL	67	53

<sup>a</sup> Rappole 1981

<sup>b</sup> This study

<sup>c</sup> Data provided by Kevin McIntyre

<sup>d</sup> Data provided by Paul Schoenfeld

(Tomkins 1954, Corbat 1990, Nol and Humphrey 1994) and generally show strong fidelity to a nesting area with both male and female defending (Nol 1985). Therefore, I assumed that oystercatchers would be on the nesting territory during any high tidal phase during the peak of the breeding season, and not dispersing to feeding sites or new territories.

My estimate of 86 pairs assumed that when we saw two oystercatchers together they were in fact paired. I also assumed that observers saw all birds that were present, so that the single birds were in fact not paired, although it is possible that a mate may have been at a feeding site or hidden on a nest.

A site-by-site comparison of estimates for the number of pairs of American Oystercatchers on the outer Georgia coast on Rappole's 1980 survey and this survey suggests a 21% decrease over that 19-yr period from 67 to 53 pairs (Table 2). Rappole (1981) examined all of

the barrier beachfront by walking, and most of the sounds by boat, but did not investigate the entire estuary, particularly oyster-shell bars. The apparent 21% decrease may indicate an actual loss of pairs in Georgia, or a shift of nesting pairs from the outer barrier environs to oyster-shell bars or dredge-spoil sites.

Corbat (1990) conducted multiple walking surveys on Ossabaw, Sapelo, and Little St. Simons islands during the spring and summer of 1986 and 1987. During the 12 yr between Corbat's 1987 survey and this study, Little St. Simons gained four pairs (from 7 to 11), Ossabaw lost two pairs (from 7 to 5), and Sapelo had one pair in both years. This net gain of two pairs for the three islands represents a 13% increase over the 12-yr period. This slight increase can be attributed to the additional pairs on Little St. Simons Island.

Notable concentrations of birds were found on the oyster-shell bars of Wassaw Sound including the Wilmington River (12) and St. Catherine's sound (17), as well as the outer beaches of Little St. Simons Island (23), Wolf Island (flock of 40), and on Little Egg Island Bar (12). Likewise, oystercatchers were absent from some areas that appeared to have good habitat. I did not find birds on the beach habitat of the north end of Wassaw Island, on most of Blackbeard Island, and anywhere on the beaches of Jekyll or Little Cumberland Islands. St. Andrews Sound, with extensive oyster-shell mounds, was devoid of oystercatchers except a flock of five on the inside of Little Cumberland Island. The paucity of oystercatchers observed from the air in St. Andrews Sound was confirmed with an intensive boat survey of the potential nesting/roosting sites.

Some areas of the Georgia coast where oystercatchers were found to be nesting in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which are listed in Burleigh (1958), were still being used in 1999. These sites included the mouth of the Altamaha River, Raccoon Key and Cabbage Island in Chatham County, Pelican Spit in Glynn County, and Cumberland Island in Camden County.

#### Acknowledgments

The Georgia Waterbird Initiative is made possible by proceeds from the sale of GDNr Nongame/Heritage Section conservation automobile license plates. A sincere thank you to all of the Georgia citizens that purchased a plate. Much of this work would not have been possible without the expert flying skills of Georgia Department of Natural Resources pilot Stephen Turner. Besides his considerable abilities as a pilot, Stephen also became adept at identifying oystercatchers from the air and helped record locations of the birds. Bill Mars and Royce Hayes walked the beaches of St. Catherine's Island. Mark Dodd, Erica Lemoine, Deb Keineth, and Kris Williams,

looked for birds on Sapelo, Blackbeard, and Wassaw islands, respectively. Kevin McIntyre has been surveying beach-nesting birds for 9 yr on Little St. Simons Island, and generously shared his 1999 data for this report. Paul Schoenfeld provided data from Kings Bay. I also appreciate the help of Carolyn Belcher, Mark Dodd, John Fortuna, Christi Lambert, and Barb Zoodsma, who reviewed drafts of this paper.

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# BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES NEST IN THOMAS COUNTY: FIRST CONFIRMED BREEDING RECORDS FOR INTERIOR GEORGIA

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Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*) have not been documented breeding in the interior (away from tidewater) of Georgia (Haney et al. 1986, Burleigh 1958). Boat-tailed Grackles were vagrants prior to 1991 in Thomas County, along the Florida state line in southwest Georgia (Crawford and Dozier 1973, Crawford 1991) and appeared sporadically for several years afterwards. Non-breeding populations have increased dramatically since October 1994, mainly at Stegall Pond (Crawford 1994, unpubl.). This small (about 1 ha) pond, located within a large cattle pasture, is a semi-permanent pool lacking woody and emergent vegetation. Thus, the habitat is unsuitable for breeding Boat-tailed Grackles (Post et al. 1996). Also in southeast Thomas County, R. L. Crawford (pers. comm.) had from one to three male Boat-tailed Grackles at Gary Pond (about 3 ha), Mill Pond Perry Plantation in early March, and from late May to late June in 1997. On 25 April 1999, Crawford and W. W. Baker found one female and one male at Mitchell Pond (about 2 ha), Sedgefield Plantation. These two sites are 13 and 8 km north of the Florida state line, respectively. Gary and Mitchell ponds were created by diking and damming Ward's Creek. We did not find Boat-tailed Grackles at Gary Pond in 1999 because it had been drained; only a small mudflat with a shallow pan of water over it remained. Mitchell Pond, however, was stable. This note documents confirmation of a small colony of Boat-tailed Grackles (the dark-eyed subspecies *Q. m. westoni*) at Mitchell Pond, Thomas County, Georgia, in 1999, and reviews the range expansion of Boat-tailed Grackles in the interior of the southeastern United States.

Mitchell Pond is about 50 years old. This palustrine wetland is dominated by emergent vegetation, and to a lesser extent by shrubs such as swamp-loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), and buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*); taller woody vegetation is scarce except for red maple (*Acer rubrum*). Rooted emergent vegetation in areas of open water is dominated by fragrant water-lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), water shield (*Brasenia schreberi*), spatterdock (*Nuphar lutea*), frog's-bit (*Limnolobos spongia*), and pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*). Cattails (*Typha* spp.) dominate the emergent vegetation in shallower areas along the shore and on floating vegetation mats.

We found two females, one adult (after second year) male, and four complete nests of the Boat-tailed Grackle at Mitchell Pond during a complete census on 27 April 1999. Three of the four nests were inactive. Two of the inactive nests were built on small rectangular duck blinds that were 1.3–1.5-m high from the floor of the blinds. Tightly packed dead dog-fennel (*Eupatorium* spp.) surrounded the perimeter of the wooden frame of each blind to form a walled enclosure. Both nests were built in dog-fennel, one placed within old bunched flower heads 40 cm from the top of the duck blind (nest 1), the other within the stems on the outside, 20 cm from the top (nest 2). The duck blind that contained nest 1 was built on a raised (1.2 m) artificial dirt mound placed at the edge of open water and close (1.5 m) to a floating vegetation mat. The duck blind that contained nest 2 was located in open water, 70 m away from the other duck blind, where the water depth was 2 m. Seven other duck blinds were available at Mitchell Pond, but Boat-tailed Grackles did not nest in these; several of these blinds were occupied by nesting Common Grackles (*Q. quiscula*).

Both nests of Boat-tailed Grackles on the duck blinds apparently failed because of predation. Nest 1 had tiny bits of egg shell at the bottom of the nest cup, which indicated a recent breeding attempt had occurred. The nest was undisturbed but we observed no fledglings in the vicinity that may have been associated with it. Nest 2 contained three broken eggs and several rectrices of an adult female, suggesting the bird was killed on the nest by an avian predator. The use of duck blinds as nest-sites by Boat-tailed Grackles is the first documentation of use of any man-made nest-site from anywhere in its range (Post et al. 1996), although the use of duck blinds as nest sites in Louisiana has previously been documented for their sibling species, the Great-tailed Grackle (*Q. mexicanus*) (Guillory et al. 1981).

The other two Boat-tailed Grackle nests were 40 m apart and built 0.9–1.3 m up in the crotch of 1.7–2.3-tall willows. The nest-sites were on small vegetation mats located near (12–30 m) open water and close (15–45 m) to the duck blind with nest 1. Nest 3 was built in a leaning willow on the larger (15 x 12 m) mat dominated by willows and cattails, where the water depth was 1.2 m. The fresh nest was empty although it was torn and tilted, suggesting a mammalian predator had destroyed the contents. Nest 4 was built in a bushier willow on the smaller (9 x 6 m) mat dominated by willows and swamp-loosestrife, where the water depth was 2 m. This nest was successful; we located one recently fledged young in nearby shrubbery. The adult female was feeding and brooding 1–2 other young that were still in the nest.

No Boat-tailed Grackles were present at Mitchell Pond during our next visit on 11 May, despite an extensive search. Fledglings cannot

fly well for the first 10-12 d after leaving the nest (Post et al. 1996). Consequently, we doubt the one fledgling and the nestlings from the active nest survived. Boat-tailed Grackles frequently re-nest following breeding failure, but we believe the adult birds had abandoned Mitchell Pond. Furthermore, all Common Grackle nests on duck blinds at Mitchell Pond that we found earlier and examined again on 11 May were either depredated or contained complete clutches that had been abandoned.

Our discovery of breeding Boat-tailed Grackles at Mitchell Pond, Thomas County, is the first documentation of confirmed breeding in interior Georgia, about 63 km away from tidewater and the northeast Gulf coast of Florida. In 1997, female Boat-tailed Grackles were observed carrying food at three localities in the interior of southern Georgia near the Florida state line east of Thomas County (Brooks, Lowndes, and Colquitt counties), but no active nests or recently fledged young were seen (unpubl. Georgia breeding bird atlas data; T. Schneider). Boat-tailed Grackles nest in the interior of Florida west and north to nearby Leon County in the eastern Panhandle (Stevenson 1978, 1981; Menk 1981, Stevenson and Anderson 1994); ostensible breeding records west of Leon County from 1986-1991 during the Florida atlas project are undocumented and probably pertain to misidentified Common Grackles (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Otherwise, Boat-tailed Grackles have only been documented breeding in the interior of the southeastern United States in the lower coastal plain of South Carolina; one small colony was located in a wetland within a large hydroelectric reservoir (Lake Moultrie) connected by a canal along a river channel to tidewater regions 25 km away and to the Atlantic Ocean 55 km away (Post 1988).

In the interior of Florida in the northern peninsula and the eastern Panhandle, Boat-tailed Grackles have gradually expanded their breeding range over the last 20-25 yr (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In the northern peninsula near the Georgia state line, the northernmost breeding records (females with recent fledglings) are from northeast Suwannee County (1971) and southeast Hamilton County (sometime between 1986-1991) (Stevenson 1978, Menk 1981, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In Leon County, Boat-tailed Grackles were vagrants prior to 1974, except for an anomalous verified breeding record at Lake Jackson in 1959 (Stevenson 1978, 1981; Menk 1981; Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Since 1974, Boat-tailed Grackles have occurred regularly. Regular nesting commenced in 1979-1980 when breeding was documented (adult females with recent fledglings) at Lake Jackson (Menk 1981). Boat-tailed Grackle populations have continued to increase in Leon County, especially since 1991 (G. E. Menk, unpubl.), which is consistent with the recent increase in Thomas County, Georgia. In

Leon County, breeding Boat-tailed Grackles are no longer rare to uncommon (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but are now locally fairly common to common in appropriate habitat (McNair and Baker, unpubl.). Formerly, proven or presumed breeding of Boat-tailed Grackles in Leon County had been confined to the four large natural sinkhole lakes (Iamonia, Jackson, Lafayette, Miccosukee) in the Tallahassee Hills physiographic province (Menk 1981, unpubl.; McNair and Baker, unpubl.).

In addition to Thomas County, Georgia, in 1999, we also confirmed breeding of smaller populations of Boat-tailed Grackles at smaller lakes and small man-made ponds in the Tallahassee Hills of Florida (McNair and Baker, unpubl.). Habitat features that all of these breeding sites share are open or semi-open marshes in lakes and ponds, where Boat-tailed Grackles build their nests in shrubs, on duckblinds, or in emergent vegetation over water, or on uplands in shrubs on islands next to shore, but surrounded by marshes. Boat-tailed Grackles do not have a commensal relationship with humans (Post et al. 1996) in this region. They can, however, be indirectly dependent on man-made habitats (ponds) and nest-sites (duck blinds) at some localities.

The incremental breeding range expansion of Boat-tailed Grackles from the eastern Panhandle of Florida to Thomas County, Georgia, took about 20 yr to move a distance of about 35 km, in stark contrast to their rapid breeding range expansion in coastal marshes along the Atlantic Ocean north to New York (Post et al. 1996). We anticipate that Boat-tailed Grackles will breed at other localities with suitable habitat in the Tallahassee Hills in interior Georgia near the Florida state line and at other inland localities farther east just north of the Florida peninsula (e.g., the Valdosta, Georgia, area). However, we believe that large landscapes of open and semi-open habitat (marshes and wet prairie) that occur in the southern two-thirds of the Florida peninsula (Shelford 1963, Davis 1967, Kushlan 1990), but which become scarce outside Florida in the southeastern United States, are required for Boat-tailed Grackles to continue their breeding range expansion in the interior.

Similarly, despite an explosive northerly breeding range expansion in the central and western United States since the 1960s (Selander and Giller 1961; Faanes and Norling 1981; Dinsmore and Dinsmore 1993a, 1993b), Great-tailed Grackles have also barely penetrated the interior of the southeastern United States (Louisiana and Arkansas). Great-tailed Grackles first reached southwest Louisiana by 1959 (Selander and Giller 1961), but they have only settled coastal marshes and inland prairies northeast to Evangeline Parish in south-central Louisiana, where they nest in wetlands (Selander et al. 1969, Pratt et al. 1977, Guillory et al. 1981, American

Ornithologists' Union 1998). This species has made no farther advance east or north of Evangeline Parish in over 20 yr and in Arkansas, has only occupied the extreme western parts of the state since the late 1970s (James and Neal 1986) where they usually breed in wetlands in association with heron colonies.

The Pleistocene disjunction theory of Selander and Giller (1961; also Post et al. 1996) states that Boat-tailed Grackles, in contrast to Great-tailed Grackles, became confined to coastal marshes and evolved special adaptations that limit their ecological range. These adaptations were not identified, and we believe that Selander and Giller overstated their case. Neither species has been able to penetrate appreciably the temperate deciduous forest biome (dominated by oak-hickory, pine, and maritime-magnolia forests in the southern United States; Shelford 1963), where both species have tended to converge in use of habitat and nest-sites. Both Boat-tailed and Great-tailed Grackles are adapted to large landscapes of open and semi-open habitats regardless of the degree to which either species has adapted to these natural or acceptable human-altered habitats at any particular locality.

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## GENERAL NOTES

**OVENBIRD FOUND ON SAPELO ISLAND IN WINTER** — On the afternoon of 29 December 1999, Vernon Waters, Chris Copeland, and I were birding on Sapelo Island in the area known as the Beach Duck Ponds. After checking the ponds, I noticed an Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) feeding in the grassy median of the dirt track that leads by these ponds. It was only about 3 m from us but continued to feed, only occasionally raising its head to look our way. The orange crown, edged in black, was obvious as it continued to feed on the ground facing us. We noted the white breast with heavy streaking, the white eye ring on the brown face, the olive-brown back and wings with no wing bars, and even the pink legs and pink on the lower mandible of the bill. It made no sound and after 10 minutes or so it flew off. Although another team searched here the next day on the Christmas Bird Count, the Ovenbird was not located again. J. C. Haney et al. (1986, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10) states that "the Ovenbird is accidental to rare in winter as far north as the lower piedmont." An Ovenbird was seen on St. Catherines Island Christmas Bird Count on 14 December 1991.

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

**MIGRANT REFUGE IN A DOWNTOWN ATLANTA PARK** — There is only a small amount of literature on birds occurring in downtown Atlanta (e.g., Fink, 1970, *Oriole* 35:1; Fink, 1971, *Oriole* 36:2). Therefore, the purpose of this note is to report on the occurrence of birds, particularly migrants, at a small green space in downtown Atlanta (Table 1).

In January 1995 a job change took me to the Georgia Pacific Center at 133 Peachtree Street in the heart of Atlanta. The building is a massive pink granite structure located on the southeast side of Peachtree Street, directly opposite the Carnegie Library. This area of Peachtree Street is dominated by office buildings ranging in height from one to over fifty stories. There is also the occasional asphalt parking lot at street level.

The single exception to these structures within a 2.5-km radius is a small green space immediately west of the Georgia Pacific Center. The Esplanade, as it is called, is enclosed by an impassable wrought iron fence on three sides and, rising about 27 m (88 ft), a solid wall of a low-rise wing of the office tower to the south. The park is barely

Table 1. Bird species observed in a downtown Atlanta park between 27 January 1995 and 10 October 1996.

Species	Comments
Turkey Vulture ( <i>Cathartes aura</i> )	
Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	15 Oct 1995, 8 Apr 1996
American Kestrel ( <i>Falco sparverius</i> )	Nest on nearby building
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	29 Apr 1995, 16 Jun 1995
Rock Dove ( <i>Columba livia</i> )	
Mourning Dove ( <i>Zenaida macroura</i> )	Common
Common Nighthawk ( <i>Chordeiles minor</i> )	13 Sep 1996
Chuck-will's-widow ( <i>Caprimulgus carolinensis</i> )	17 Apr 1995
Whip-poor-will ( <i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i> )	3 Apr 1996
Chimney Swift ( <i>Chaetura pelagica</i> )	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker ( <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i> )	20 Apr 1995, 16 Oct 1995
Eastern Wood-Pewee ( <i>Contopus virens</i> )	17 Sep 1996
Acadian Flycatcher ( <i>Empidonax virens</i> )	8 Oct 1996
Least Flycatcher ( <i>Empidonax minimus</i> )	13 Sep 1996
White-eyed Vireo ( <i>Vireo griseus</i> )	
American Crow ( <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i> )	
Fish Crow ( <i>Corvus ossifragus</i> )	
House Wren ( <i>Troglodytes aedon</i> )	8 Oct 1996
Winter Wren ( <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> )	17 Oct 1995
Ruby-crowned Kinglet ( <i>Regulus calendula</i> )	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher ( <i>Poliophtila caerulea</i> )	
Gray-cheeked Thrush ( <i>Catharus minimus</i> )	8 Oct 1996
Swainson's Thrush ( <i>Catharus ustulatus</i> )	29 Sep 1995, 12 Sep 1996
Wood Thrush ( <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i> )	18 Sep 1995
American Robin ( <i>Turdus migratorius</i> )	
Gray Catbird ( <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i> )	
Northern Mockingbird ( <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> )	
Brown Thrasher ( <i>Toxostoma rufum</i> )	
European Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	
Tennessee Warbler ( <i>Vermivora peregrina</i> )	16 May 1995, 20 Sep 1995
Magnolia Warbler ( <i>Dendroica magnolia</i> )	Common in winter
Yellow-rumped Warbler ( <i>Dendroica coronata</i> )	30 Aug 1996
Blackburnian Warbler ( <i>Dendroica fusca</i> )	Common in migration
Palm Warbler ( <i>Dendroica palmarum</i> )	30 Sep 1996
Black-and-white Warbler ( <i>Mniotilta varia</i> )	Common in migration
American Redstart ( <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i> )	Common in migration
Ovenbird ( <i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i> )	15 Apr 1996, 9 Sep 1996
Louisiana Waterthrush ( <i>Seiurus motacilla</i> )	29 Aug 1996
Kentucky Warbler ( <i>Oporornis formosus</i> )	30 Mar 1995, 20 Sep 1995
Common Yellowthroat ( <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> )	6 Apr 1995, 15 Aug 1996
Hooded Warbler ( <i>Wilsonia citrina</i> )	1 May 1995, 21 Aug 1996
Yellow-breasted Chat ( <i>Icteria virens</i> )	

Table 1. Continued.

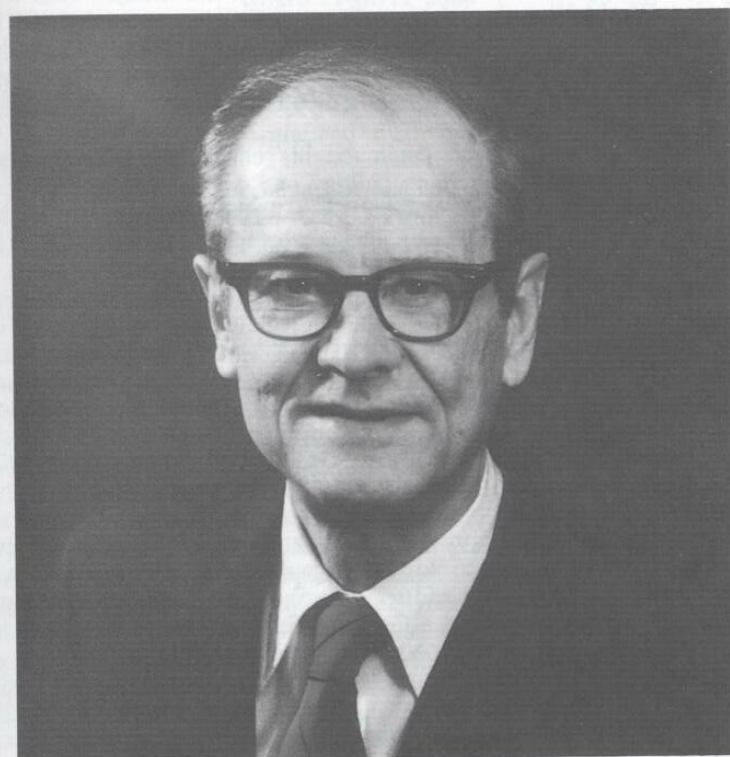
Species	Comments
Eastern Towhee ( <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> )	13 Apr 1995, 15 Apr 1996
Song Sparrow ( <i>Melospiza melodia</i> )	26 Feb 1996
White-throated Sparrow ( <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i> )	Common in winter
Dark-eyed Junco ( <i>Junco hyemalis</i> )	16 Oct 1995
Northern Cardinal ( <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i> )	12 Oct 1995
Red-winged Blackbird ( <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> )	8 Oct 1996
Common Grackle ( <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i> )	
Brown-headed Cowbird ( <i>Molothrus ater</i> )	21 Aug 1996
House Finch ( <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i> )	
House Sparrow ( <i>Passer domesticus</i> )	

more than 0.367 ha (0.9 acres). It features an expanse of grass lawn at the lower end leading to a brick patio, which is surrounded on three sides by a terraced hill of dense juniper shrubs (*Juniperaceae*) about 60 cm (2 ft) high. Above the hill, at street level, is a picnic area shaded by four Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) trees. A hedge of Photinia (*Photinia serrulata*) runs most of the north side, and there are several deciduous trees including maple (*Acer* sp.) and ginko (*Ginko biloba*) among the masses of juniper, as well as six birch trees (*Betula* sp.) on the patio. At the highest level, the park abuts the Peachtree Street sidewalk and a rapid transit station at the busy urban street corner of Peachtree and Ellis Streets. Directly north at Ellis is a Street level parking lot. At night the building, like so many others in the area, has the office lights on. However, unlike most others, the stepped rear wall of the building on the southeastern side is illuminated by a strong lighting system.

Table 1 provides a list of 52 species I recorded in or from this park between 27 January 1995 and 10 October 1996. I have included comments where I could or where it seemed appropriate. I made each of these observations and accept responsibility for their accuracy. I do not wish to draw conclusions from this list, but merely to add to paucity of bird studies from downtown Atlanta.

Russell J. Wigh, 5650 River Oaks Place, Atlanta, Georgia 30327

# IN MEMORIAM: H. BRANCH HOWE, JR.



H. Branch Howe, Jr. (1990)

Dr. H. Branch Howe, Jr., long a member of the Georgia Ornithological Society and former president, died on 24 October 1998, in Nairobi, Kenya. He and his wife Anne had spent two weeks in Africa visiting national parks. This African tour was another of the world-wide trips they had made after his retirement in 1990. These trips had taken them to South America, Europe, China, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Branch was born and lived in Atlanta but was living in Birmingham, Alabama, where his father's job had taken him when he joined the Boy Scouts and became active in scouting. It was through scouting that he became interested in birds, an interest that continued

all his life. The first entry on his life list was a Northern Mockingbird seen in his backyard in Birmingham in 1939.

By 1942 his family had moved back to Atlanta where he completed high school and enrolled in Emory University. This was during World War II, and his college education was interrupted in March of 1944 when he joined the U. S. Army and served in the 100th Infantry Division. Branch saw action in France and Germany and received awards that included the Combat Infantry Badge and two Purple Hearts.

After the war Branch continued his education at Emory and earned BS and MS degrees in biology and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa honorary scholastic society. For further graduate studies he entered the University of Wisconsin, where he received a PhD in genetics.

Branch was a professor emeritus of microbiology at the University of Georgia and taught in that department from 1957-1990. He also served as an associate dean of the Graduate School from 1981-1990. Before coming to the University of Georgia he taught at Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky, and at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Branch had joined the Georgia Ornithological Society in 1942, and when he returned to the state in 1957 he became active in the society. He served long and well on the Editorial Committee overseeing the society's publications, and as an academician he rendered valuable service to the organization. He was elected president of GOS in 1989 and served two terms. During his term as president, Branch instituted a Graduate Student Research Award, in which GOS awards a stipend for ornithological research by a deserving student. He continued to administer this program until his death. The program has now been named for him as a memorial. In 1993 he was awarded the coveted Earl R. Greene Award for outstanding service to the GOS.

Active also in his local bird club, Branch organized and annual Christmas Bird Count and compiled the results each year thereafter. He was instrumental in establishing the Orange Nature Trail in the State Botanical Garden at Athens. Dedicated as a GOS project in 1991, the society continues to support this project with memorial contributions, which go toward the upkeep of the trail.

A gentleman, scholar, and good friend, Branch is missed by all who knew him.

Richard A. Parks, 2636 Warwick Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30345

## FROM THE FIELD MARCH-MAY 2000

The highlight of the season must surely have been the Spotted Towhee found in Atlanta, though the discovery of a Bell's Vireo in the Columbus area, just a week or so later, disrupted almost as many lives, as a throng of birders grabbed their binoculars and headed to Muscogee County.

The Spotted Towhee, found by Richard and Nancy Cole at their home, provided a first state record. Fortunately, the bird remained in the area for several days and was seen by a large number of observers. Excellent photographs should make it an easy decision to add this species to the regular state checklist. The Spotted Towhee was, of course, until recently lumped together with the Eastern Towhee into a single species, the Rufous-sided Towhee. One wonders if full species status had not been restored how much excitement this find, though no less significant, would have generated. Many thanks are due to the Coles for allowing birders unrestricted access to the grounds around their home while the bird remained in the area.

Bell's Vireo is listed on the hypothetical species list in the ACOGB, with just two records noted. This species has eluded Georgia birders for many years, so when Walt Chambers found one in Muscogee County word spread quickly. This bird also remained in the area for a few days, though it usually took some perseverance and luck to find it. Photographs were also obtained, so hopefully this species will also make it to the regular list. Interestingly, the two previous records in the ACOGB were from the same area of the state. One was recorded in Columbus and the other in neighboring Harris County, both sightings being in 1975.

Other highlights for the season included a Rough-legged Hawk in Monroe County, a Western Tanager in the Athens area, and Georgia's second Calliope Hummingbird. See below for more details of these and other sightings.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; CRNRA - Cochran Shoals Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cobb Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; ENWR - Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; Kennesaw Mt. - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co.; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park, Douglas Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- COMMON LOON - The best counts reported were 15 at Plant Wansley in Carroll/Heard Cos. on 18 March (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott), and 27 at Rum Creek WMA on 20 March (Eric Beohm). Five were seen at Nottely Dam on 13 May (Jim Flynn), and one bird was still at Lake Juliette in Monroe Co. on 23 May (Nathan Klaus).
- HORNED GREBE - At least 100 were counted at Plant Wansley in Carroll/Heard Cos. on 18 March (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott), and about 50 were still there on 5 April (Michael Bell).
- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - One was seen along Jekyll Island Causeway on 14 March (Eric Haley), and five were seen near the mouth of the Satilla River on 15 March (Brad Winn).
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Sixty-eight were counted flying by Kennesaw Mt. on 17 April (Giff Beaton et al.).
- AMERICAN BITTERN - Grand Bay WMA may be the best spot in the state for this species in winter, as evidenced by the 10-13 counted there during early March (Darrell Watson *vide* Brad Bergstrom). Other reports included one, and sometimes two, seen at the South Peachtree Nature Preserve in DeKalb Co. from 15 April (*vide* Jerry Brunner) through 23 April (Steve Ehly), a single bird at the CRNRA on 29 April (Bill Blakeslee et al.), and two seen at the Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co., also on 29 April (Earl Horn, Ann Stewart).
- LEAST BITTERN - Paul Sykes found the first one for the spring at a breeding site in Greene Co. on 6 May. One was a good find at the Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co. on 14 May (Marion Dobbs). Another single was seen at the ENWR on 16 May (Walt Chambers).
- GREAT EGRET - One seen at Peachtree City Lake in Fayette Co. on 4 March was unusual for the time of year (Eric Beohm). Other early sightings in the Piedmont included a flyover at the Newman Wetlands Center in Clayton Co. on 22 April (Jeff Sewell), and 11 in Heard Co. on 18 May (Michael Bell).
- SNOWY EGRET - Four were noted in the Augusta area on 16 May (Anne Waters).
- LITTLE BLUE HERON - This species was again found in the piedmont in early spring. Singles were reported from Fernbank Forest in DeKalb Co. on 25 March (Georgann Schmalz), at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 1 April (Giff Beaton, Bob Zaremba), in Carroll Co. on 5 April (Michael Bell), and in Conyers in Rockdale Co. on 13 April (Francis Michael).
- REDDISH EGRET - One was reported at Little St. Simons Island on 18 May (Steve Hawk).
- GLOSSY IBIS - A good count of 44 was made at the AWMA on 22 April (Bob Zaremba et al.).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL - An early sighting, of a single bird, was made in the Brunswick area in Glynn Co. on 25 March (*vide* Steve Holzman). Other reports included singles at Tolomato Pond near Darien on 11 May (Doris Cohrs) and near Harris Neck on 13 May (Larry Carlile).
- WOOD STORK - Good counts were 80 at Tolomato Pond near Darien on 4 May (Doris Cohrs) and 53 at Skidaway Island on 13 May (Beth Roth).

- "Hundreds" were noted nesting at Harris Neck WMA on 14 May (Steve Livingstone).
- ROSS'S GOOSE - A bird that apparently arrived in Madison Co. more than a year ago was still there on 24 April (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Paul Sykes).
- TUNDRA SWAN - Two birds were reported in the Albany area during early March (Don Cook).
- GADWALL - At least 200 of the flock that wintered on a small pond in Coweta Co. were still there on 7 March (Michael Bell).
- NORTHERN PINTAIL - Two were seen at Lake Hartwell in Stephens Co. on 12 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).
- CANVASBACK - A male was seen at Lake Horton in Fayette Co. on 4 March (Eric Beohm).
- REDHEAD - On 4 March Eric Beohm had sightings at three locations, with six at Peachtree City Lake in Fayette Co., 15 at Lake Horton in Fayette Co., and 50 at Griffin Reservoir in Spalding Co. On the same day 60 were seen at the Macon brickyard ponds (Ty Ivey et al.). Twenty-two were counted at SCSP on 11 March (Giff Beaton, Tom Egan, Chris Loudermilk).
- GREATER SCAUP - Two were found at Peachtree City Lake in Fayette Co. on 4 March (Eric Beohm), and seven were seen at the Macon brickyard ponds on the same day (Ty Ivey). Another inland report was that of a single bird at Cooper Creek in Muscogee Co. on 16 March (Walt Chambers).
- LESSER SCAUP - A good count of 300+ was made at Plant Wansley in Carroll/Heard Cos. on 18 March (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- SURF SCOTER - Three were seen at SCSP on 11 March for a rare inland report (Giff Beaton, Tom Egan, Chris Loudermilk). Good counts from Jekyll Island were 16 on 26 March (Bob Zaremba) and 11 on 2 April (Eric Beohm, Jessica Beohm).
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - One was seen at Jekyll Island on both 17 March (Lydia Thompson) and 26 March (Bob Zaremba).
- COMMON GOLDENEYE - One was seen at Lake Horton in Fayette Co. on 5 March (Eric Beohm, Michael Beohm).
- HOODED MERGANSER - Breeding was confirmed at the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center when Jim Flynn observed a family group there on 30 April. Another rare nesting of this species was confirmed by the sighting of a female with two young at Ozierfield in Irwin Co. on 9 May (Milton Hopkins).
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - The only inland reports received were of four at Commerce Waterworks Lake in Jackson Co. on 19 March (Eugenia Thompson) and eight at Plant Wansley in Carroll Co. on 5 April (Michael Bell). Two were still at Skidaway Island on 13 May (Beth Roth).
- RUDDY DUCK - A nice count of 93 was made at Lake Horton in Fayette Co. on 4 March (Eric Beohm). One seen at the ELHLAF on 6 May was a little late (Giff Beaton, Randy Crooks, Richard Crooks).
- OSPREY - A pair was observed building a nest at Lake Shamrock in Clayton Co. during April (Carol Lambert). This species has nested in the area before.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - The first birds reported were one at Riceboro on 22 March (Gail Whalen) and one at Fort Stewart on the same day (Larry

- Carlile). E.J. Williams reported that 20 were found along the Altamaha River during surveys for this species from 4-6 April.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE - One seen near Douglas in Coffee Co. on 25 March was very early (Helena Wood). Ten was a good count at Oxbow Meadows in the Columbus area on 29 April (Michael Bell, Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell), and about 30 were seen in Crawford/Taylor Cos. on 6 May (Kitty Esco, Nathan Klaus, Phil Spivey). One was a good find in the Athens area on 27 May (Kitty Reynolds).
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK - One was reported in Houston Co. on 21 May (Dan Gynn).
- RED-TAILED HAWK - A rare dark-morph bird was reported from Liberty Co. on 4 April (Howard Weinberg).
- ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK - One seen in the Rum Creek WMA in Monroe Co. on 1 May was the first one reported in the state in more than three years (Georgann Schmalz, E.J. Williams).
- PEREGRINE FALCON - Singles were seen in the Okefenokee NWR in Charlton Co. on 22 March (Sheila Willis), in the Cumming area on 7 May (Theresa Hartz) and at Brasstown Bald on 29 May (Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- BLACK RAIL - This species was late in returning to the marsh in northern Greene Co. this spring, according to Paul Sykes, with the first bird being found on 6 May.
- KING RAIL - Two were reported at the CRNRA on 29 Apr. (Giff Beaton, Bill Blakeslee et al.), and two were found at the ENWR on 16 May (Julie Ballenger, Walt Chambers). This species was present all spring at the Phinizy Swamp Nature Park in Richmond Co. (Anne Waters).
- VIRGINIA RAIL - Three were found in the ELHLAF area on 16 April (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). The high count for the marsh in Greene Co. was seven on 22 April (Paul Sykes).
- SORA - Reports from the Atlanta area included one at Kennesaw Marsh on 18 March (Giff Beaton, Tom Egan, Bob Zaremba), a roadkill near the ELHLAF on 25 April (Carol Lambert), one at the CRNRA on 29 April (Giff Beaton et al.), and one at the South Peachtree Creek Nature Center on both 30 April (Jerry Brunner) and 2 May (Jeff Sewell).
- SANDHILL CRANE - Small flocks were still seen migrating north during early March, with the last report for the month being of four in Gwinnett Co. on 12 March (Jim Flynn). A single bird seen flying north over Wassaw Island on 20 May was unexpected (Steve Calver).
- AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - One was seen at the Super Sod Farm in Peach Co. on both 8 April (Walt Chambers) and 9 April (Rusty Trump, Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba).
- WILSON'S PLOVER - Twenty-four was a good count at St. Simons Island on 8 April (B. Hilton).
- BLACK-NECKED STILT - Two seen at Onslow Island on 26 March were early (Bob Zaremba).
- UPLAND SANDPIPER - One was seen at the Super Sod Farm in Peach Co. on 9 April (Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba), and two were spotted at the East Georgia Turf Farm in Bulloch Co. on 22 April (Tom Egan, Earl Horn, Bob Zaremba). The best counts, however, came from a sod farm in Macon Co., with 16 on 22 April (Eran Tomer), 16-18 on 24 April (Walt

- Chambers) and nine on 29 April (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). A bird was heard calling in Greene Co. on 6 May (Bill Blakeslee, Paul Sykes).
- WHIMBREL - Good counts were 150 in the Darien area on 22 April (Bob Zaremba et al.), 100+ at Ossabaw Island on 6 May (Michael Bell, Mary Elfner, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott), 650 at Goulds Inlet on 6 May (Lydia Thompson), and 230 at Little St. Simons Island on 18 May (Steve Holzman).
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW - Singles were reported from Ossabaw Island on 5 March (Mary Elfner, Geoff Wilson) and St. Catherines Island on 7 April (Nathan Klaus). Two were seen at Wassaw NWR on 16 April (Steve Calver).
- RED KNOT - High counts were 500 at Tybee Island on 16 May (Diana Churchill, Jesse Fagan) and 450 at Little St. Simons Island on 18 May (Steve Hawk).
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - One was seen at the brickyard ponds in Macon on 29 April (Ty Ivey, Carl Perry, Paul Sykes), and two were spotted at the same location on 6 May (Ty Ivey). Singles were seen in northern Greene Co. on 6 May (Bill Blakeslee, Paul Sykes) and at the ELHLAF on 7 May (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell).
- PURPLE SANDPIPER - The last one reported from Tybee Island was seen on 13 March (Eric Haley, Rachel Haley).
- STILT SANDPIPER - Twenty were seen at Onslow Island on 26 March (Bob Zaremba).
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - One was seen in the Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. from about 21-28 April (Michele Barry, Anne Waters).
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Nine that wintered at the Macon brickyard ponds were still there on 8 April (Ty Ivey et al.).
- POMARINE JAEGER - One was seen at St. Andrew Sound on 31 March (Brad Winn). At least one was seen off Sapelo Island during strong northeasterly winds during March (Brad Bergstrom).
- PARASITIC JAEGER - About 10 were seen, also off Sapelo Island, on the same day (Brad Bergstrom).
- LAUGHING GULL - One was found inland at Walter F. George Dam on 23 May (Walt Chambers).
- BONAPARTE'S GULL - Nine were spotted at various sites along Strom Thurmond Lake on 6 March (Jim Flynn). Seventeen were counted at SCSP on 11 March (Giff Beaton, Tom Egan), and 28 was a good count for the ELHLAF on 22 March (Eric Beohm). Five were seen flying by Kennesaw Mt. on 17 April, providing a first record for that location (Giff Beaton et al.).
- RING-BILLED GULL - A large count of 1250 was made at the DeKalb Reservoir on 5 March (Jeff Sewell).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Two were still at Gould's Inlet on 6 May (Lydia Thompson).
- GLAUCOUS GULL - A first-year bird seen at Jekyll Island on 24 April was an excellent find (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Paul Sykes).
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - Lydia Thompson noted two at Gould's Inlet on 6 May.

- GULL-BILLED TERN - Three were seen at Jekyll Island on 5 May (Lydia Thompson), and four were found on Ossabaw Island on 6 May (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- BLACK TERN - A single bird seen at Carter's Lake on about 27 May was a good find (Ted Reissing).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE - This species continues to show up in new locations, with the most interesting report being several in Murray Co. during March (Rusty Trump).
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Two were an excellent find in Dooly Co. on 2 May (Dan Guynn).
- SHORT-EARED OWL - Two reports were received from unusual locations. One was seen at Little Egg Island on 3 March (Brad Winn), and 1-3 were found in Pike Co. on 17 March (Earl Horn).
- NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL - The last report from along Burrell's Ford Rd. in Rabun Co., where as many as four were found during the winter, was of one on 4 March (Sylvia Chandler, Stan Chapman, Mark Oberle). A report was also received of one calling at Brasstown Bald on 15 May (Dominic Roche). The same observer also stated that he heard one at this location during May 1999.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL - One heard on Cumberland Island on 2 March may have been a wintering bird (Malcolm Hodges).
- RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - The first report of one came from Darien on 9 March (Doris Cohrs).
- CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD - Terry Johnson banded one in Fayette Co. on 9 March that had apparently been coming to a feeder throughout the winter. This is the second record of this species in Georgia.
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - A male and a female spent the winter at a feeder in Rusty Trump's yard in Suwanee, with the last sighting of the male being on 8 March and the female on 27 March.
- EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - One seen in Grady Co. on 26 March was early (Aubrey Scott, Jeff Sewell).
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER - One was seen at the brickyard ponds in Macon on 29 April (Ty Ivey, Carl Perry, Paul Johnson). Four were found in Blairsville, where the species has nested the previous two years, on 13 May (Jim Flynn). Three were also reported from the same area on 27 May (Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- LEAST FLYCATCHER - Dave Galewski found three birds in the Suches area on 16 May, and as many as four were reported in the area through the end of the month by a number of observers.
- GRAY KINGBIRD - One was already back at Jekyll Island on 22 April (Howard Weinberg, Beth Willis).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - One made a brief visit to the Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co. on 11 April (Kim Kilgore). Another bird was discovered near McDonough in Henry Co. on 4 May by Ted Seckinger. Several observers looking for this bird found not one, but a pair at this site, and by the end of the month the birds were seen carrying nesting material to a metal power pole. To round off a great spring for this species, a single bird was reported from Emanuel Co. on about 29 May (Mike Simpson).

- BELL'S VIREO - Walt Chambers made a truly great discovery when he found one at Oxbow Meadows in the Columbus area on 26 April. The bird was later seen and heard by many observers through 29 April. This is the first well-documented report of this species in Georgia, though the ACOGB mentions two previous sightings from the same part of the state.
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO - Two were found at Tally Mt. in Haralson Co., where this species nested last year, on 29 May (Michael Bell).
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO - The only report received for the period was of one at the Kennesaw Marsh on 6 May (Giff Beaton, Randy Crooks, Richard Crooks).
- RED-EYED VIREO - One seen at Callaway Gardens in Harris Co. on 15 March was early (Walt Chambers).
- TREE SWALLOW - Three early birds were seen checking out nestboxes at Carter's Lake, where the species has nested in recent years, on 3 March (Giff Beaton, Earl Horn). A pair was exhibiting nesting behavior at Folly Lake in Thomson in McDuffie Co. on 23 April (Richard Lux). Jim Flynn made an interesting observation at the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center on 30 April when he saw eight birds, including three males guarding possible nest entrances and a female carrying nesting material. Stephen Stewart noted a pair entering a Wood Duck nestbox at the Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co. on 13 May.
- CLIFF SWALLOW - Eight seen in the Columbus area on 29 March were early (Walt Chambers). On 11 May Dan Guynn found this species present at sites in Dooly and Sumter Cos., where nests were found in 1998 and 1999, respectively. Ninety nests were counted this spring under the Veteran's Memorial Highway bridge over the Oostanaula River in Rome (Stephen Stewart).
- BARN SWALLOW - The first report of this species for the year came from SCSP on 12 March (*vide* Joel Hitt).
- RED-BREADED NUTHATCH - Four were found in the Sheffield WMA on 4 March (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott) and one was also seen there on 22 April (Liz Horsey, Jim Wilson). One was reported from Banks Co. on 12 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn). One seen on Wassaw Island on 16 April provided a rare sighting for the coast (Steve Calver). The last report from Kennesaw Mt. was of a single bird on 1 May (*vide* Susanna Rinard).
- WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH - One was seen at the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal in Chatham Co. on both 21 March (Sheila Willis) and 6 May (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- BROWN CREEPER - A singing bird was found at Blackrock Mt. in Rabun Co. on 31 May (Walt Chambers). This species' usual breeding range extends south along the Appalachian Mountains not far to the north of Georgia.
- HOUSE WREN - Anne Waters reported that a pair successfully fledged two young in downtown Augusta during May.
- SEDGE WREN - Good counts were six at the CRNRA on 22 April (Eric Beohm) and also six at Callaway Gardens on 30 April (Walt Chambers).
- MARSH WREN - Singles were seen at the ELHLAF on 16 April (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell) and at the CRNRA on both 22 April (Eric Beohm) and 29 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

- VEERY - A male was banded at Fernbank Forest in DeKalb Co. on the late date of 25 May (Georgann Schmalz).
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH - A late migrant was seen and heard singing at Blackrock Mt. in Rabun Co. on 31 May (Walt Chambers).
- HERMIT THRUSH - One was still in the Darien area on 29 April (Doris Cohrs).
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - This species is rare on the coast, especially in spring, so the following sightings are particularly noteworthy. One was seen on Wassaw Island on 16 April (Steve Calver). In the Savannah area, Howard Weinberg reported one on 16 April, Steve Calver saw one on both 24 and 26 April, and Mary Elfiner saw one on 27 April. One seen in Haralson Co. on 16 May may have been a rare local breeder (Michael Bell).
- TENNESSEE WARBLER - Fourteen at Kennesaw Mt. on 5 May was a good count for spring (Giff Beaton et al.).
- NASHVILLE WARBLER - One seen in Baker Co. on 31 March was early (Rusty Trump). This species was well reported at Kennesaw Mt., with a total of 28 birds recorded for the period, including excellent counts of five on 27 April (Susanna Rinard et al.) and seven on 30 April (Jeff Sewell et al.).
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - A late bird was seen at Lake Wildwood in Bibb Co. on 19 May (Paul Johnson).
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - An early bird was seen in the Macon area on 10 March (Paul Johnson). Not so early, but still noteworthy, was one seen in the Rome area on 22 March (Marion Dobbs). A good count of 35 was made at Kennesaw Mt. on 30 April (Jeff Sewell). There was an interesting report of six in the Pine Log WMA in Bartow Co., with at least one bird seen carrying food, on 13 May (Giff Beaton).
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - One seen along the McDuffie/Wilkes Co. line on 6 March was a little far north so early in the year (Jim Flynn).
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER - Late birds were singles in the Darien area on 22 May (Doris Cohrs) and at Jekyll Island on 29 May (Lydia Thompson).
- CERULEAN WARBLER - High counts at Kennesaw Mt. were 13 on 26 April (Giff Beaton et al.) and 12 on 30 April (Jeff Sewell et al.).
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - Eighteen was an excellent count on Wassaw Island on 16 April (Steve Calver). Eleven were also noted at ENWR on 16 May (Walt Chambers).
- WORM-EATING WARBLER - Walt Chambers had good counts with 15 at Callaway Gardens in Harris Co. on 16 April and seven, also in Harris Co., on 25 April.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Nathan Klaus had good counts at the Bond Swamp in the Macon area, with seven on 23 April and nine on 25 April. Dan Guynn also reported good numbers in the upper coastal plain, with as many as 14 singing individuals found at various sites in Bleckly, Dooly, Houston, Pulaski, Twiggs and Wilkinson Cos. during the month of May. Anne Waters, however, noted that none was found in the usually reliable sites for this species in the Augusta area.
- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH - One seen in Paulding Co. on 5 March was early (Susanna Rinard).
- WILSON'S WARBLER - A male was seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 19 April (Susanna Rinard et al.).

- SUMMER TANAGER - One seen in Grady Co. on 26 March was fairly early (Aubrey Scott, Jeff Sewell).
- SCARLET TANAGER - Thirty-seven, including one group of about 30 birds near the top of the mountain, were counted at Kennesaw Mt. on 17 April (Giff Beaton et al.).
- WESTERN TANAGER - A male made a one-day visit to a feeder in Athens on 8 April (Eugenia Thompson).
- SPOTTED TOWHEE - Richard and Nancy Cole discovered one coming to their feeder in Cobb Co. on 18 April. The bird was subsequently seen by many observers through 22 April. This is a first record for the state, and fortunately the bird was well photographed.
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW - This species was once again well reported at the Pine Log WMA in Bartow Co. throughout the period (m.ob.).
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - This rare sparrow was found at the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center on 30 April (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - One near Watkinsville on 1 March was a good find that early in the year (Billy Dunbar). Jim Flynn had a decent count of 13 in Walker Co. on 8 May.
- HENSLow'S SPARROW - Singles were reported from Fort Stewart on 22 March (Larry Carlile) and Hannahatchee WMA in Stewart Co. on 3 April (Nathan Klaus).
- LECONTE'S SPARROW - Two were still at the Macon brickyard ponds on 8 April (Ty Ivey et al.).
- NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW - A late migrant was seen at St. Catherines Island on 19 May (Malcolm Hodges).
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW - One in Mitchell Co. on 31 March was a good find (Rusty Trump). Other singles were found in northern Greene Co. on 22 April (Paul Sykes) and at the brickyard ponds in Macon on 29 April (Ty Ivey, Carl Perry, Paul Sykes).
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - Twenty was a good count in White Co. on 5 March (Ted Reissing). Five were recorded at the Merry Bros. Brickyard Ponds in Augusta on 15 April (Anne Waters), and six were found at the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center on 30 April (Jim Flynn). There were several other reports, all of single birds, from throughout the Piedmont.
- INDIGO BUNTING - A male seen at Lake Horton in Fayette Co. on 4 March was early (Eric Beohm). Also early were one at Skidaway Island on 29 March (Beth Roth) and one at Wassaw Island on 31 March (Steve Calver).
- DICKCISSEL - Several observers reported as many as four during the month of May at the field in Henry Co. that has been fairly reliable for this species in recent years. Unfortunately, it looks as though this site may soon be lost to development. At least four were found in Carroll Co. on 14 May through the end of the month (Michael Bell), at least 12 were counted in a field in Houston Co. on 16 May (Dan Guynn), and four were seen near the Thomaston airport in Upson Co. on 20 May (Walt Chambers).
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD - Eight were seen at the ELHLAF on 1 March (Eric Beohm).
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - Three were seen at the ELHLAF on 1 March (Eric Beohm), and one was seen in Douglas Co. on 2 March (Giff Beaton, Earl Horn).

- SHINY COWBIRD - One to two of this unwelcome invader were found on Jekyll Island beginning on 5 May (Lydia Thompson) through 19 May (Brad Bergstrom). One was found on Wassaw Island on 6 May (Steve Calver), and two were seen on St. Simons Island on 8 May (Gene Keferl).
- ORCHARD ORIOLE - Fifteen was a good count at ENWR on 16 May (Walt Chambers).
- PURPLE FINCH - This species was still being well reported during March, with the best counts being 22 at Kennesaw Mt. on 20 March (Kenny Peloquin) and 30-35 at Fernbank Forest in DeKalb Co. on 25 March (Georgann Schmaltz).
- HOUSE FINCH - Two were noted in the Darien area on 13 May (Doris Cohrs).
- RED CROSSBILL - Four were found at the Pine Log WMA in Bartow Co. on 24 April (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Paul Sykes). Two were reported coming to a feeder in the Big Canoe area in Pickens Co. during April (Barbara Richards *fide* Pat Sully).
- PINE SISKIN - Following an excellent winter, this species was widely reported, with the best count being 54 at Kennesaw Mt. on 3 April (Giff Beaton). Ten were still coming to a feeder in Monroe Co. on 3 May (Paul Johnson), and one was still in Oconee Co. on 7 May (Paul Sykes).
- EVENING GROSBEAK - One was reported at Kennesaw Mt. on 14 March (Kenny Peloquin).

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#### Correction

The Short-eared Owl present at Kennesaw Mt. on 9 October 1998 (*Oriole* 64:22) was seen by Bruce Dralle, and not by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen.

### FROM THE FIELD JUNE-JULY 2000

Despite the hot and dry conditions this summer, birders still managed to get out into the field and make several exciting discoveries. The best find, by far, was the Curlew Sandpiper that visited Little Tybee Island during early July. The bird was originally detected by Deb Barriero, and Deb, along with Captain Rene Heidt, was able to arrange for a large number of birders to make the trip over to the island to see what will be Georgia's first well-documented Curlew Sandpiper. This species is listed in the hypothetical list of the ACOGB, with single records for 1961 and 1975. Both previous records lacked sufficient details to place the species in the provisional list.

A number of significant reports of breeding birds were received during the period, especially from those doing field work for the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas. This year is the last scheduled for field work for this valuable project. While carrying out field work in the Cohutta Wilderness Area, Malcolm Hodges found strong evidence of breeding by Red-breasted Nuthatch. The pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers that began nesting in Henry County during the spring successfully fledged three young, and Eran Tomer found young of both Hooded Merganser and American Kestrel in the Atlanta area.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds; AWEC - Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center, Floyd Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- COMMON LOON - Two winter-plumaged birds were seen at Walter F. George Dam in Clay Co. on 22 July (Michael Bell).
- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - A small flock was reported from the usual wintering area on the St. Marys River during late June (Scott Somershoe).
- BROWN PELICAN - One was seen at Walter F. George Dam on 22 July (Michael Bell). This species is considered rare inland, though it has been recorded at this site in the past.
- AMERICAN BITTERN - A rare report for summer was one seen at Grand Bay WMA on 12 June (*fide* Brad Bergstrom).
- LEAST BITTERN - One was found at the sewage ponds at the Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 17 June (Anne Waters), one was noted at Reed Bingham State Park in Colquitt Co. on 22 June (Gail Menk), 1-2 were seen at the AWEC on 22 June (Stephen Stewart) and 2 July (Chris

- Loudermilk), and two were found in northern Greene Co. on 4 July (Paul Sykes).
- GREAT EGRET** - The high count for the ELHLAF was 41 on 31 July (Rusty Trump).
- LITTLE BLUE HERON** - Reports from the Piedmont included 11 at J.L. Lester WMA in Polk Co. on 8 July (Giff Beaton) and five, including one adult, at Buchanan Lake in Haralson Co. on 25 July (Michael Bell).
- REDDISH EGRET** - The high count was three seen on Little Tybee Island on 9 July (Jeff Sewell et al.). Singles were reported from Cumberland Island on 29 and 30 June (Jenny Bjork, Scott Somershoe), St. Catherines Island on 8 July (Paul Sykes), Sapelo Island on 18 July (Doris Cohrs), and Crooked River State Park in Camden Co. on 21 July (Eric Beohm).
- BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - Four were seen at a small pond in Seminole Co. on 22 July (Michael Bell).
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - One was reported from along the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta during the period from 10 to 12 June (Eran Tomer). Four were found at the AWEC on 22 June (Stephen Stewart), one was seen at the State Botanical Gardens in Athens on 28 to 29 June (Carole Anderson), and three were reported from Eagle's Landing marsh in Henry Co. on 9 July (*vide* Joel Hitt).
- WHITE IBIS** - There were many inland reports received of this species, the most interesting sightings being of a flock of 25-30 in the Gainesville area on 12 June (Peter Gordon), 80 in the Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 17 June (Anne Waters), five in Union Co. on 25 June (Dennie McClure, Pam McClure), and 60 in Seminole Co. on 22 July (Michael Bell).
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** - Sightings away from the usual roost area near Brunswick included one at Skidaway Island on 23 June (*vide* Beth Roth), two at Tolomato Pond near Darien on 7 July (Doris Cohrs), and singles at Little St. Simons Island on 22 July (Eric Kellon) and at Harris Neck WMA also on 22 July (Diana Churchill).
- WOOD STORK** - Good numbers were found in the northern half of the state during the period, including ten at Reeves Creek Wetlands Area near Atlanta on 4 July (Paul Raney), four at Eagle's Landing marsh in Henry Co. on 4 July (Paul Raney), 13 again at Eagle's Landing marsh on 9 July (*vide* Joel Hitt), 18 at Dyar's Pasture in Greene Co. on 19 July (Eugenia Thompson), and one in the Calhoun area on 30 July (*vide* Nita Wynn). Other good counts included 130+ at Skidaway Island on 17 June (Beth Roth) and 40 in Seminole Co. on 19 June (Rick West).
- SNOW GOOSE** - One was a very unusual find at Walter F. George Lake on 4 June (Jeff Sewell). This record ties the late date given in the ACOGB.
- RING-NECKED DUCK** - A male summered at the ELHLAF (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell, Rusty Trump). A female was also noted at the sewage ponds at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 17 June (Anne Waters).
- HOODED MERGANSER** - Eran Tomer found a female and three young at the Johnson's Ferry Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Atlanta during early June.
- OSPREY** - One bird was seen carrying sticks on three separate occasions along the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta from 10 to 12 June (Eran Tomer). Outstanding counts made from Sealy Point at Lake Seminole in

- Seminole Co. were 45 on 19 June and 31 on 17 July (Michael Bell). At least 17 active nests were also noted at this site on 19 June.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - Sightings from the coastal plain included five along the Oconee River in Wheeler Co. on 7 June (Dan Guynn), one in Grady Co. on 28 June (David Harder, Gail Menk), three at LeConte-Woodmanston Plantation near Riceboro on 2 July (Gail Whalen), six near Hinesville also on 2 July (Gail Whalen), and four in Effingham Co. during early July (Nathen Klaus). More unusual was one seen in DeKalb Co. on 22 July (Marianna Wilson). A large congregation of kites, containing 30-40 of this species, was found in Tattnall Co. on 30 July (Dirk Stevenson, Beth Willis). During a helicopter flight wildlife biologists found a total of 84 birds at five roosts in and around Big Hammock WMA on 31 July (*vide* E.J. Williams).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** - Eleven were noted in the Hinesville area on 2 July (Gail Whalen). One was a good find in the Athens area on 29 July (Becky Beaton, Giff Beaton). The kite congregation discovered in Tattnall Co. on 30 July included 10-15 of this species (Dirk Stevenson, Beth Willis).
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** - One was an unusual find in Houston Co. on 6 June (Dan Guynn).
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - Perhaps this species is more common in south Georgia during summer than I had believed. One was seen in Dodge Co. on 1 June (Dan Guynn), two were seen in Randolph Co. on 4 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell), one was heard in Macon Co. on 5 June (Dan Guynn), two were found in Montgomery Co. on 7 June (Dan Guynn), and singles were noted in Decatur Co. on 9 June (Michael Bell), in Clay Co. on 10 June (Walt Chambers), in Houston Co. on 23 June (Dan Guynn), and at another location in Decatur Co. on 25 June (Michael Bell).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** - Single birds were seen in Randolph Co. on 4 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell) and near Morgan Falls Dam in Atlanta on 10 June (Eran Tomer). Two adults and three young were found near the Lindbergh MARTA station in Atlanta on 20 June (Eran Tomer). Four or five, including at least two young, were reported from Floyd Co. on 29 June (Stephen Stewart).
- PEREGRINE FALCON** - An immature seen in Douglas Co. on 14 June may have fledged from the pair in Downtown Atlanta (Giff Beaton).
- BLACK RAIL** - Two territorial birds were noted in northern Greene Co. on 4 July (Paul Sykes).
- KING RAIL** - Two adults and two small chicks were a nice find in the Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 17 June (Anne Waters).
- SANDHILL CRANE** - Highly unusual were the reports of a flyover in Decatur on 24 July (*vide* Jerry Brunner) and two in Douglas Co. also on 24 July (Dennie McClure, Pam McClure).
- PIPING PLOVER** - One found on St. Catherines Island on 8 July (Paul Sykes) was early, as were the four seen at Little Tybee Island on 9 July (Giff Beaton).
- BLACK-NECKED STILT** - An outstanding count of 300+ was made at Onslow Island on 28 July (Deb Barriero, Mary Elfner).

- WHIMBREL - Early sightings were two at Little Tybee Island on 9 July (*fide* Joel Hitt) and 11 along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 29 July (Lydia Thompson).
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW - One was seen on Little Tybee Island from 8 July (Deb Barriero) through 16 July (Deb Barriero, Rene Heidt, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott), and two were reported from Little St. Simons Island on 22 July (Eric Kellon).
- MARbled GODWIT - A few were reported from Little St. Simons Island on 22 July (Eric Kellon).
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER - The first ones reported were three at the ELHLAF on 16 July (Jeff Sewell). The high count for the period was 40 in the Cartersville area on 29 July (Bruce Dralle).
- CURLEW SANDPIPER - One was found on Little Tybee Island on 5 July by Deb Barriero, though it was not positively identified by the same observer until 8 July. The bird was subsequently seen by many observers through 10 July, with good photographs being taken by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn on 9 July. Although two previous records are mentioned in the ACOGB, this is the first documented record of this species in the state.
- STILT SANDPIPER - Excellent counts from Onslow Island were 80 on 28 July (Deb Barriero, Mary Elfner) and 185 on 29 July (Bob Zaremba). Four found in the Cartersville area also on 29 July were a good find (Bruce Dralle).
- WILSON'S PHALAROPE - One was seen at Onslow Island on 29 July (Bob Zaremba).
- LAUGHING GULL - Two were found well inland at Lake Walter F. George on 11 June (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Two were seen at Jekyll Island on 15 July (Lydia Thompson).
- GULL-BILLED TERN - Good counts were 44 in the Darien area on 21 July (Eric Beohm) and 30 at Onslow Island on 28 July (Deb Barriero, Mary Elfner).
- CASPIAN TERN - One was seen at Lake Walter F. George on 11 June (Michael Bell, Chris Loudermilk, Aubrey Scott).
- COMMON TERN - About 200 were seen at Little Tybee Island on 9 July (Jeff Sewell et al.).
- LEAST TERN - Excellent counts from Jekyll Island were 100 on 1 July (Diana Churchill, Lydia Thompson) and 350 on 22 July (Gene Keferl).
- BLACK TERN - One seen at Tybee Island on 17 June (Deb Barriero) was probably an early fall migrant. The high count from the coast was about 100 at Little Tybee Island on 9 July (Jeff Sewell et al.). The only inland reports were of one in Fannin Co. on 28 July (Nedra Sekera), and three at the ELHLAF on 31 July (Rusty Trump).
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER - Three were found on territory in northern Greene Co. on 4 July (Paul Sykes).
- LEAST FLYCATCHER - Most unusual was the one seen and heard on Ossabaw Island on 4 June (Mary Elfner). At least one was reported in the Suches area on 7 June (Russ Wigh) and 24 June (David Chafin), and one was observed at Sky Valley Golf Course in Rabun Co. during June (Brock Hutchins).

- GRAY KINGBIRD - Two were a good find on Tybee Island on 15 July (Bob Zaremba). The high count from Jekyll Island was six on 21 July (Lydia Thompson).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - The pair discovered building a nest during the spring near McDonough in Henry Co. raised three young (many observers). Another pair, possibly nesting, were reported in Covington on 25 July (*fide* Pierre Howard). Singles were also reported from Emanuel Co. on 4 June (Jerry Amerson), Piedmont NWR on 6 June (*fide* Nathan Klaus), and Pickens Co. on 10 June (Jeff Petit). It will be interesting to see if this species becomes a regular breeder and summer visitor to Georgia in the coming years.
- TREE SWALLOW - Four birds were seen at the ELHLAF, where this species continues to nest, on 10 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). A nest was found at Folly Lake in Thomson in McDuffie Co. on 9 June (Richard Lux), and another pair were confirmed nesting at AWEC during June (Gordon Sikes).
- BANK SWALLOW - One was noted in Jenkins Co. on 23 July (Jim Flynn), and two birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 30 July (Dot Freeman).
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Malcolm Hodges found evidence of breeding when he observed an adult gathering food along Jacks River trail in the Cohutta Wilderness Area during the month of June.
- WINTER WREN - Two singing birds were found at Brasstown Bald on 1 June (Walt Chambers).
- VEERY - Three were observed at Brasstown Bald on 1 June (Walt Chambers).
- CEDAR WAXWING - Two birds were an interesting find in northern Forsyth Co. on 30 June (Jim Flynn).
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - Presumably, the three birds seen in northern Pickens Co. on 16 July were early migrants (John Kiser).
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - Another early migrant in northern Pickens Co. was the single seen also on 16 July (John Kiser).
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER - One was already in the Darien area on 21 July (Doris Cohrs).
- AMERICAN REDSTART - Two early arrivals were noted in the Darien area on 22 July (Doris Cohrs).
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER - During the month of June, Dan Guynn found singing birds in Bleckley, Dodge, Emanuel, Houston, Jefferson, Peach and Twiggs Counties.
- OVENBIRD - A pair were observed building a nest near Musella in Bibb Co. during June (*fide* Paul Johnson).
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - An exceptionally late bird was reported in Athens on 5 June (Billy Dunbar). Early fall migrants were recorded at a banding station at Fort Stewart, where Larry Carlile banded one on 7 July and two on 12 July.
- LARK SPARROW - One was a nice find in the parking lot of a truck stop near Tallapoosa in Haralson Co. on 25 July (Michael Bell).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - About 20 were found at the J.L. Lester WMA in Polk Co. on 8 July (Giff Beaton).
- DICKCISSEL - Two were seen near Pine Log WMA in Bartow Co. on 17 June (Chris Loudermilk).

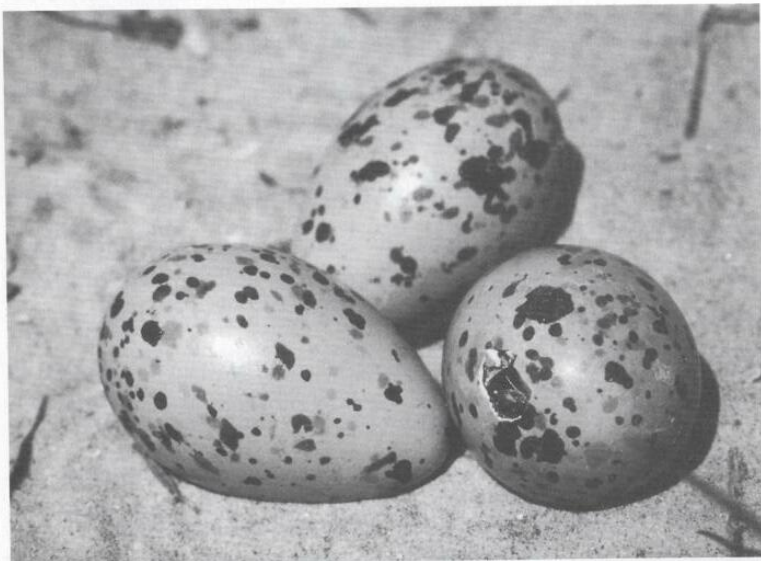
BOBOLINK - A male seen in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Atlanta on 12 June was late (Eran Tomer).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - Five, including three young, were seen in Lowndes Co. on 15 July (Krista Avera).

SHINY COWBIRD - A female was found on Blackbeard Island on 7 July (Paul Sykes), and another female was seen at the AWMA on 21 July (Eric Beohm).

RED CROSSBILL - Two were a good find in the Cohutta Mountains on 25 June (Giff Beaton, Earl Horn).

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Eggs of American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), 21 April 2000, Little St. Simons Island, Glynn Co. Photo by Bradford Winn.

## CHANGES TO THE GEORGIA CHECKLIST

Changes listed below to the Georgia Checklist are required by the recently published 42nd Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist (AOU. 2000. Forty-second supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list of North American Birds*. Auk 117:847-858).

South Polar Skua — Because of a change in generic status, change the scientific name from *Catharacta maccormicki* to *Stercorarius maccormicki*.

Oldsquaw — Change English name from Oldsquaw to Long-tailed Duck to conform with worldwide usage.

Black-capped Chickadee — To make the specific name grammatically correct relative to the generic name, change scientific name from *Poecile atricapillus* to *Poecile atricapilla*.

Bullock's Oriole — Move Bullock's Oriole to a position following Orchard Oriole.

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# AUTHOR INDEX TO THE ORIOLE VOLUMES 61-65

- Allsop, J. 1997. Brown-headed Nuthatch feeds Eastern Bluebird nestlings. 62:4.
- Balkcom, G. D., and D. E. Marler. 2000. Waterfowl use of a refuge on Lake Seminole, Georgia, in response to hunting pressure. 65:1-6.
- Baker, W. W. 2000. See McNair, D. B.
- Beaton, G. 1996. Virginia Rail breeding record in Georgia. 61:45-46.
- , 1996. First Georgia record of Cliff Swallow nesting away from water. 61:52-53.
- Bell, M. K., A. Scott, and M. R. Welford. 1998. Iceland Gull at Jekyll Island, Georgia. 63:71.
- , 1999. Golden Eagle in Bibb County. 64:6-7.
- , 1999. From the field: December 1998-February 1999. 64:30-39.
- , 1999. Spring sightings of Western Kingbirds in Georgia. 64:54-55.
- , 1999. From the field: March-May 1999. 64:58-67.
- , 1999. From the field: June-July 1999. 64:68-73.
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