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GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded December 13, 1936

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JAMES FREDERICK DENTON, 1914 — 1978

IN MEMORIAM: JAMES FREDERICK DENTON

Dr. James Frederick Denton, a charter member and faithful supporter of the Georgia Ornithological Society, died at Eugene Talmadge Memorial Hospital in Augusta, Georgia on 2 April 1978, after a long illness.

Fred was born in Americus, Georgia 26 May 1914, and obtained his early schooling there. He graduated from the University of Georgia with a B.S. degree in 1935 and continued his education there and received an M.S. degree in 1938. In 1939 while a Professor of Biology at Middle Georgia College, Cochran, Georgia, he married Virginia Wilson. In further graduate studies he obtained a Ph.D. degree at Rice Institute, Houston, Texas and an M.D. degree at the Medical College of Georgia in 1957. He is survived by his wife, Virginia, son Fred, Jr., and daughter Dale.

He held many prestigious positions in a long life of teaching, including, Instructor in Zoology, The University of Georgia from 1936 to 1938, Professor of Biology, Middle Georgia College from 1939 to 1941, Assistant and Associate Professor, the Medical College of Georgia and Professor of Cellular and Molecular Biology, the Medical College of Georgia until a year before his death. He was a Markle Fellow at Tulane School of Medicine in 1943 and spent a part of that year as a member of a research team in Honduras, Central America. He was a China Medical Board Fellow at Louisiana State University in 1955. He was a member of the American Society of Parasitologists, American Society for Microbiology, and many ornithological societies in North America.

Fred joined the American Ornithologists' Union in 1935. He was elected to Elective Member status in 1950. Recent A.O.U. membership rolls listed him as a Life Elective Member. In Georgia, he was Editor of *The Oriole* 1943-1949 and President of The Georgia Ornithological Society 1949-1951.

It is, methinks, a true measure of a man's worth to judge him by his willingness to help and instruct his fellow man, be they rank amateurs or professional peers (capable of acquiring the same information, but sometimes at great expense and personal discomfort) if these persons are sincere and enthusiastic. This sharing of information and always humble offers of assistance by Fred Denton will live long in my memories. I can well remember many years ago when he asked me to be on the program at a semi-annual meeting of G.O.S. He had mentioned I might like to tell of my experiences with the breeding status of the Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) in the upper coastal plain of Georgia. I was certain of my identification of the species and certain of what little I knew about it, but really uneasy of my presentation on the subject. He adroitly led me on to tell the assembled group what I personally knew about the subject and in his way led me to comfortably do just that.

For many years I sent really in-the-rough drafts of short notes to Fred for his opinion on whether or not they were worthy of publication. His replies were always courteous, to the point, and helpful in ways that, I hope, enhanced my future attempts. Many years later Virginia Denton confessed to me she had gone over the rough drafts with Fred and personally reworded, but not changed the context of many of these notes and then retyped them for me. She was a past-master at this and I know a great help to Fred in his endeavors to put worthwhile information in a form both acceptable, readable and coherent to fellow workers.

The Dentons enjoyed life to its fullest extent. It was a common occurrence at G.O.S. meetings for Fred and Virginia to open their lodgings to all members for an informal get-together usually before the evening meal. Of course, here occurred a bit of informal, gracious hospitality interjected with informative bits of information concerning what was seriously going on in the bird study groups with an infusion of gaiety and a bit of nonsense, but not enough to turn off many charter members of the group who had been attending these meetings since 1936.

The Dentons finally visited us on the farm in February, 1976. We spent a full weekend talking birds, visiting a now silent, off-season heron rookery, and enjoying talking of past events and future plans of our mutual interest, birdstudy. They were guests in our home again in April, 1977. For a couple of days and far into the nights we again talked birds. At this time Fred was still acutely sensitive to the calls and songs of all species and pointed out many to me that I would otherwise have missed. He had done extensive work on wood warblers of the Georgia mountains and had a finely tuned ear for calls and songs of this group.

We were together for another enjoyable weekend on Sapelo Island in the winter of 1976-77. We covered the beaches during a bitter cold day and I was immensely impressed by his knowledge of shorebirds and the minute differentiations of difficult groups by leg color, seasonal plumages, etc. A sector of birdstudy where observers such as I must turn to a good field guide when species in question are seen for the most part only a few times during the year. Fred somehow kept all of this in his head and was able to call on it when needed without hesitation. After a few uncomfortable hours on the open beach, we took refuge from the wind behind the outer dunes and sat for over an hour under dwarf live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) trying alternately by "squeaking" and "scolding" to bring up a few land birds. We added over a dozen species to our list, some approaching to within five or six feet.

Fred was able to attend the fall G.O.S. meeting at Brunswick, Georgia in October 1977, and we again enjoyed a few hours of light birding, although he was severely restricted in his movements due to recent surgery and complications. At this meeting Fred was presented the Earle R. Green Memorial award for outstanding service to G.O.S. He took an active part in the business session, and at the evening meal he arose on several occasions to interject some bit of useful information in his distinctive voice; one which all members had become acquainted with to the point that it could be identified with him even in the dark.

Fred was probably among the most active members in G.O.S. for many years. He contributed two articles to Vol. 1, No. 1 of *The Oriole* and probably attended more semi-annual meetings of the society than any other member.

Due in part to his extensive scientific training, but in my mind, more to his personal discipline, he was a stickler for correctness and scientific honesty in reporting. He would not put up with "maybe so" or "probably," but insisted on the almost unobtainable 100 per cent accuracy in anything he was involved in. This is evident in his bringing to completion the latest checklist of Georgia birds, including substantiations by voucher specimens or clearly recognizable photographs or any new species of birds found in the state which deserved a place on the state list. On a questionable acceptance of a paper presented for publication by G.O.S., he said in a letter of the late 1950's: "If the G.O.S. is to have its name on the publication as sponsor, then we can demand that a first-rate job be done on it."

Fred was an avid fisherman and good boatsman. He and Virginia maintained a summer retreat at Edisto, South Carolina and, although I believe he had birds almost constantly on his mind, he said in an August 1961 letter: "I have just returned from a two-week vacation at Edisto. Was beginning to see a few migrants there, but must confess that the Bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) were receiving a bit of my attention."

Somehow the subject of favorite bird groups never surfaced in our many talks, but the published record attests to the fact that the elusive warbler tribe must have been his favorite. He added much to our knowledge of Georgia mountain warblers and their population dynamics. Many of his contributions to ornithology were certainly worthy of acceptance by the *Auk*, but he chose to publish them in *The Oriole*, his beloved state journal. Over his forty-odd years of serious birding he contributed over 67 articles to *The Oriole*. A partial list of these and articles concerning parasitology, another field in which he gained prominence, are attached. Fred discovered and described several new species of bird and mammal flukes, alone and in conjunction with Dr. Elon E. Byrd of the University of Georgia.

In the early days of 1978, from phone conversations and a four page hand-written letter from him, it was clearly evident to me and to himself that his end was in sight. Finally, in the early days of March, 1978, Virginia called and told me that if I wished to see him alive once more, I'd better come to Augusta soon. I was there within a few days and found him sitting in his room with Virginia, supported by various life supporting apparatus which I knew he hated.

In spite of this he spoke cheerfully, clearly, coherently and knowingly about many subjects which he knew he would not be able to help resolve. He had several bird related books in the room; I cannot remember any save Dr. Eugene Murphy's volume of poems entitled *Wings at Dusk*. I read to him from this small but perceptive and entertaining volume and think the time spent was mutually enjoyed. Before his death, he presented to Augusta College a valuable collection of bird skins. His photographs and notes collected with them have been deposited at the The University of Georgia.

Dr. J. Fred Denton — gentleman, physician, teacher, genuine friend, and Dean of Georgia ornithologists, the surge of titles flow forth endlessly — we salute you. With his death the ornithologists of this country lost one of their finest students and this writer a most valued and generous friend.

Milton N. Hopkins, Jr., Route 5, Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750.

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FIRST RECORD OF THE RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD IN GEORGIA

H. Branch Howe, Jr.

On 6 November 1978, I found a dead female Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) outside the main entrance hallway of the Biological Sciences Building at the University of Georgia, Athens. This hallway, with about 20 m of glass wall on both sides, and illuminated at night, has been consistently the site of kills of both fall and spring migrants. The Rufous Hummingbird has not been previously recorded in Georgia (Denton et al. 1977). Identification of the specimen, which was prepared by Clare Close, was verified by M. Ralph Browning, National Museum of Natural History. The specimen is No. 682 in the University of Georgia Museum of Natural History.

According to the A.O.U. Check-list (1957), the Rufous Hummingbird breeds from southeastern Alaska to northwestern California and southern Idaho, and winters in Mexico, but is casual or accidental in fall migration and winter as far east as Florida and South Carolina. The first record for this western species in the East was that of a specimen taken at Charleston, South Carolina, 18 December 1909 (Sprunt 1929). The second and third specimens in the East were taken, respectively, at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 6 February 1934 (Oberholser 1938:356-357) and at Pensacola, Florida 29 November 1934 (McClanahan 1935). This species is now considered to be of occasional occurrence in fall and winter in regions near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. For example, at least 45 records for Florida have accumulated since 1934 (Fisk et al. 1978).

Although the earlier eastern records for the Rufous Hummingbird indicate a southeastward migration, certain more recent records suggest a more northerly component as well. In support of this contention, 15 published records since 1952 were of occurrences east of the Mississippi River, but removed from the Gulf Coast. Caution is advised, however, if specimens were not taken, particularly of female or immature birds. Specimens: Ocean City, Maryland, 12 September 1963 (Scott and Cutler 1964); Winisk, Ontario, 8 September 1966 (Goodwin 1972); Devon, Pennsylvania, 14 November 1975 (Paxton et al. 1976); and New Castle, Delaware, 27 November 1978 (Conway and Drennan 1979). Photographs: Contoocook, New Hampshire, 18 July 1976 (Finch 1976); and Newton, Massachusetts, 15 April 1978 (Vickery 1978). Sight records: Emmitsburg, Maryland, 8 November 1952 (Richards 1954); Jamesville, Virginia, 30 November 1952 (Fuller 1953); Orono, Maine, 28 July 1957 (Finch 1977); Grand Bahama Island, 22 October 1966 (Kale et al. 1969); Bedford, Nova Scotia, 8 August 1967 (Woodruff and Emery 1968); Lily Pons, Maryland, 1 May 1971 (Rowlett 1971); Wheatley, Ontario, 7 August 1972 (Goodwin 1972); Racine, Wisconsin, 14 September 1976 (Tessen 1977); and Raleigh, North Carolina, 2 November 1976 (Hader and Howard 1977).

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THE RED JUNGLEFOWL IN GEORGIA

Milton N. Hopkins, Jr.

J. Fred Denton and I were doing field work in the vicinity of Bowen's Mill, Ben Hill county in 1976 when he mentioned hearing of the release of a number of Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*) in the area. At the time, we were unable to locate any of the birds, although I had heard and seen them there previously on several occasions. Denton encouraged me to seek what information was available and the remarks below were furnished by biologist Thagard R. Colvin (pers. comm.), formerly with the Bowen's Mill office of the Department of Natural Resources:

"Approximately 750-1,000 junglefowl were raised and released in the Bowen's Mill area between 1966-1969. Most were pen-reared birds. However, I have heard that some eggs were obtained by local farmers and hatched under bantam hens. Approximately 100-150 junglefowl were released in 1968-1969 on Langdale Company lands south of Fargo, Georgia. The only birds seen from this release were a few around some of the local turpentine camps.

In addition to the above, other releases were made near Lake Seminole, Oakey Woods Wildlife Management Area southeast of Perry, Georgia, and Clark Hill Wildlife Management Area in northeast Georgia."

During the late 1960's I accompanied Boy Scout troops into the area northeast of Bowen's Mill and east of House Creek for camping. We saw several cocks and heard many more on each trip. The birds began cackling and crowing before dawn each morning and tended to follow the creek runs, some of which were within the flood plain of the Ocmulgee River. I pursued a couple of the birds for about one km but never got closer than 75-100 m. They were extremely wary and flew strongly through the hardwood tree tops. All the birds I saw were cocks.

In February 1977, Milton Hopkins, III shot a female Red Junglefowl while quail hunting north of Fitzgerald, Ben Hill county. The bird was unbanded. The collection site was approximately eight km SSE of the original release point at Bowen's Mill. One employee at Bowen's Mill told me that all released birds bore one or two bands on their legs.

In April 1978, another employee at Bowen's Mill told me the junglefowl had spread to just north of the city limits of Fitzgerald, about 16 km south of Bowen's Mill. He also had reports of them near Rebecca, Turner county. He does not think the fowl competes with the Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) or at least has no visible evidence that it does, although I have heard one unsubstantiated report of a male junglefowl killing quail chicks. Another employee at the hatchery has seen junglefowl 7 km north of Fitzgerald and indicates the preferred habitat is bottomlands and creek drains. In January 1979, junglefowl were reported 2 km south of Ocilla, Irwin county. I checked this report and

found several crowing males in a hardwood creek run there. This population was started by a farmer who had obtained junglefowl eggs from the hatchery.

Norris (1956) discussed the introductions of exotic game birds in Georgia. He quoted King (1942) as follows: "Introductions are highly expensive; they often prove non-beneficial or injurious; with some species increasing to pest proportions; they create demands on food and cover, may spread new parasites and diseases, and do not necessarily result in reduced hunting pressure on diminished native species." Norris further quoted Redington *vide* King (1942): "Experience has indicated the desirability, as a general rule, of restocking game ranges with the same species that formerly occurred there, as these are adapted to conditions prevailing and are most likely to survive."

It seems probable that the Red Junglefowl, after surviving at least ten years in the wild, is now a permanent resident. If this be true, then the Chachalacas (*Ortalis vetula*) introduced on Sapelo Island in 1923 and the Red Junglefowl are the only surviving exotic game birds from the many species introduced in Georgia.

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NOTES ON SOME GEORGIA VOUCHER SPECIMENS

Robert L. Crawford

Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr. studied the birds of south Georgia from 1924 until shortly before his death in 1970. His notes and specimens were the basis for several contributions to Georgia ornithology including much of the information on the distribution and seasonal occurrence of species and subspecies in south Georgia given by T. D. Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*, Univ. Oklahoma Press). Most of Stoddard's Georgia specimens were collected in Grady County and the museum data for these are included in the recently published *Birds of Grady County, Georgia* (Stoddard 1978. Bull. Tall Timbers Res. Sta. 21:1-175). A few more specimens from other counties in Georgia remain and some are discussed here because discrepancies were found between the data on the original labels and those given in *Georgia Birds*, the records were omitted from *Georgia Birds*, or, because of the special importance of the specimens. Six specimens from Thomas County were collected 24-26 March 1954 incidental to a pest-control operation and were given to Stoddard by E. V. Komarek, Sr. (Burleigh 1958:584).

Each catalog number is preceded by a two-letter abbreviation of the museum: Tall Timbers Research Station, Tallahassee, Fla. (TT), and the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. (NM). M. Ralph Browning and Roger B. Clapp provided the catalog numbers for the NMNH specimens and verified the data by the original labels in some cases.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis parvipes*. TT2662; Thomas County, 31 January 1946; E. V. Komarek, Sr. This specimen was not mentioned by Burleigh (1958:126) who listed only one other specimen of this subspecies from the state. M. Ralph Browning recently confirmed this identification (pers. comm.).

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura marginella*. TT419 and NM548025; both Thomas County, 25 March 1954; E. V. Komarek, Sr. These specimens were not included in *Georgia Birds* (pp.307-308) and they add to the evidence of fair winter abundance for this western subspecies in Georgia.

Carolina Chickadee *Parus carolinensis impiger*. NM410417; Echols County, Statenville, 21 March 1947; H. L. Stoddard. Burleigh (1958:411) gave 22 March 1947 for the date of collection.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii altus*. NM421323; Thomas County, 3 January 1952; H. L. Stoddard and L. Neel. Burleigh (1958:430) gave the date of collection as 3 March 1952 but the original label reads 3 January and Neel informs me (*in litt.*) that the latter is correct.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas ignota*. NM410284; Echols County, Statenville, 22 March 1947; H. L. Stoddard. Burleigh

(1958:560) listed specimens of this subspecies from two counties but not this Echols County individual.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus littoralis*. TT1663, TT1664, TT1665; all Thomas County, 24 March 1954; E. V. Komarek, Sr. Burleigh (1958:583) indicated that these are the only Georgia specimens of the Gulf coast race of the Red-winged Blackbird. *A. p. arctolegus*. TT1662; Thomas County, 26 March 1964; E. V. Komarek, Sr. Burleigh (1958:584) omitted mention of this specimen and listed only one other record of the subspecies from the state.

Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312.

GENERAL NOTES

WILSON'S PHALAROPE NEAR AMERICUS, GEORGIA — At 0900 on 25 August 1978, W.C. Holman and I found a Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) feeding in a mixed flock of shorebirds at the edge of a large pond just east of Desoto, Georgia, in Sumter County. We were able to study the bird, which was already in winter plumage, for about 40 minutes in the best of light at a distance of 10-12 m. Mr. Holman took photographs while I examined the phalarope's field marks. It's breast was a glowing white and its legs a dull yellow; its black bill was long and came to a needle point. Behind each eye was a faint gray wash. In flight, the phalarope's diagnostic white rump was quite evident, and although I looked carefully for any sign of a wing stripe, I saw none.



Fig. 1. Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) in Sumter County, Georgia.

Feeding along with the phalarope were 3 Killdeer, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Solitary Sandpiper, 1 Snipe (an early fall record for Sumter County), 1 Semipalmated Sandpiper, and 19 Pectoral Sandpipers.

According to Denton et al. (*Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, 1977) the Wilson's Phalarope is of accidental occurrence in Georgia away from the coast. This sighting constitutes the first record for Sumter County.

Charles Erwin, 2403 Temple Ave., Albany, Georgia, 31707

CONNECTICUT WARBLERS IN DEKALB COUNTY — On 14 May 1978, we caught a male and a female Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*) in mist nets in an area along the South River near Panthersville Road in DeKalb County. These birds were banded with standard USFW bands before being released. According to the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, (Ga. Ornithol. Soc., Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977), this is an uncommon spring transient over most of the state and a rare fall migrant in the Coastal Plain. The Atlanta area checklist concurs, recording the Connecticut Warbler as a rare migrant during the third and fourth weeks of May. To our knowledge, this is only the second identification in the Atlanta area in the last seven years.

On 21 May, another Connecticut Warbler was heard singing in the same area by the authors and Terry Moore. This bird did not go near the nets. Yellow-breasted Chats (*Icterus vireus*) were quite common during a time when we were banding there each weekend between 30 April and 26 May 1978. There were at least three singing males at all times, sometimes more. During this time period we banded seven Chats, five males and two females. It would therefore appear that the Connecticut Warbler might be found fairly readily by a careful checking of typical Chat habitat during spring migration.

Don & Doris Cohrs, 2446 Jefferson Terrace, East Point, Ga. 30344.

GOLDEN EAGLE SIGHTING IN TOWNS COUNTY — While grouse hunting at Addis Gap (Swallow Creek WMA, Towns County, Georgia; elev. approximately 2800 feet), Ricky Fowler, Mike Harris, Jack Sellers, and I observed a Golden Eagle. The sighting occurred at 1000 hours EST on 3 February 1979. The day was overcast and a measurable snow had fallen the prior night. When first seen, the eagle was hopping up a creek bank approximately 30 yards away. After several wingbeats the bird gained flight, turned, and passed directly over us no more than 20 feet above the ground. Field characteristics readily seen were the golden feathering of the neck, dark underside of the wings and body, feathered tarsi, and white at the base of the tail. Upon investigating the site where the bird was first seen, we found a deer fawn carcass lying in the creek. We could not determine the cause of death, but the carcass had been fed on recently, one ham was completely gone.

Philip E. Hale, Institute of Natural Resources, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602.

MARCH RECORD OF THE WILSON'S WARBLER IN THE GEORGIA COASTAL PLAIN — Late in the afternoon of 24 March 1979, Hunter Patterson noted a male Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) in the dense edge of the wooded floodplain of Hunger and Hard-

ship Creek in Dublin, Georgia. On the following afternoon he and I together searched for the bird in the thickets, which consisted primarily of Blackberry (*Rubus occidentalis*) bushes, Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) hedge, and a few low Willow (*Salix* sp.) trees. We followed the call notes of the elusive bird for nearly an hour before we were rewarded with a clear sighting. A short time later, by playing a tape of the song of the species, I was able to raise the bird for photographs, which confirm the record. The bird responded to the taped song by hopping up to the top of a nearby low tree and singing.

On the morning of 31 March, J. H. Bevis of Atlanta and I again saw the bird and heard its song. However, efforts to locate the bird during the following week were unsuccessful. Apparently the bird had departed the area.

The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (1977, Georgia Ornithol. Soc., Occas. Publ. No. 6) lists the Wilson's Warbler as a rare spring and fall transient in the Coastal Plain, denoting 13 April (1941) as the earliest spring record for the state. It further lists a single record of a bird accidentally wintering, a specimen taken by Dopson in Athens in January 1967.

I regularly observe the area, which is a scant 75 m from my home, and I had not seen the bird in the previous weeks. Nevertheless, whether the warbler was an early migrant, or a belatedly discovered, accidentally wintering bird remains open to question.

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

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE SEEN NEAR DUBLIN — On 17 February 1979, four Greater White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) were seen in a field of winter rye at a wet-weather pond in northeast Laurens County. Allen Rhodes and I noted the birds as we drove by the area at 1500 hours. With binoculars and a 20X telescope from 150 m, we clearly noted these field marks. The birds were a dusky color, with dark barring and patches on the lighter underparts; the legs and feet were orange; and there was a white patch on the face at the base of the bill. One bird, believed to be a juvenile, was lacking the white patch and the barring underneath.

Photographs confirming the record were taken from a distance of 125 m, using a fixed 400 mm lens mounted on a Yashica 35 mm camera. The day was overcast and unseasonably warm. However, a winter storm, which had passed through the southwest and mid-south earlier, arrived about 12 hours after the observation, bringing freezing temperatures and five cm of sleet to the area.

The birds were not seen when the area was observed on 19 February and again on 24 February.

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

WINTER SIGHTING OF INDIGO BUNTING ON ST. SIMONS ISLAND — While participating in the Glynn County Coastal Audubon Christmas Count on 31 December 1977, at about 1600, I closely observed a single male Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*). The sighting took place on St. Simons Island in a newly opened, but undeveloped section of the St. Clair subdivision. The sky was overcast, but clearing; temperature was in the upper 50 s; and my observation was made with 8x40 power binoculars.

The bird was observed in the top branches of a tall, dense myrtle adjacent to the salt marsh, but my being on an incline put the bird only slightly above eye level. It was immediately apparent that this was a different bird from what we had been seeing in the area. The bird became very agitated when I approached and made several loud, distinctive *tsick* notes which were heard by the others in the group. It was bright blue, probably a first year male as it had somewhat mottled appearance and a reddish-brown wash on its wing. The bird had a small bill and was approximately the same size as the ever present Yellow-rumped Warblers. When others were called to verify the observation, the bird took flight and could not be found again. My husband Vince saw the bird's silhouette and verified the call notes with which he was familiar.

I am aware this species is considered occasional in Coastal Georgia, but do not remember it having been reported before. This sighting was published in *American Birds*, (July 1978. 32(4):605).

Trina S. Jackson, 1990 Palifox Dr., NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30307.

HIGH TURNOVER IN WINTERING FLOCKS OF PURPLE FINCHES — Most people may feel that their flock of backyard feeder birds is most stable in number. The same birds come every day, especially in the winter. Our experience with our winter feeding station in East Point (Fulton County) indicates that this is not the case.

From mid-December 1977 to the end of March 1978, we had a flock of about 40 Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*) around the feeders and in the yard. We are bird banders so we set traps with the intention of banding "the flock." By the time "the flock" of 40 birds left for their northern migration, we had banded over 360 Purple Finches. During this time, we never saw more than 40 Purple Finches at one time. The feeding station was in an older residential area without any wood lot in the area. The flock probably changed composition constantly, as we retrapped relatively few birds until late in the period, and even then the percentage of retraps was usually less than 50 percent.

Don Cohrs, 2446 Jefferson Terrace, East Point, Georgia 30344.

A ROYAL TERN OF KNOWN AGE AND ORIGIN IN THE INTERIOR OF GEORGIA — Extralimital records of migratory birds are common, but can seldom be explained because the age and origin of the bird are not known.

The Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) is common all year on the coast of Georgia, but seldom seen far from saltwater. The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Ga. Ornithol. Soc., Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977) lists the species as "accidental in interior at Augusta 21-28 Oct. 1944."

On 14 August 1978, Ashley Smith found a Royal Tern in weakened condition at Snipesville, Jeff Davis Co., Georgia. The bird had been banded by Loftin on 29 July 1978, at Little Bird Island, Duval Co., Florida. The bird was too young to fly when it was banded, therefore the bird had been flying less than 16 days when Smith found it.

Snipesville is about 12 miles southwest of Hazlehurst. This is about 100 miles from the Georgia coast at the nearest point and roughly 120 miles from the natal colony which is in Nassau Sound near Jacksonville. Thousands of juvenile Royal Terns have been banded at this colony in the past five years. Returns indicate that most of them move south when they leave the colony. Only 6 of 66 returns (9%) have been from north of the colony. Two of these 6 were from Fernandina Beach, Florida, only 10 miles from the colony. Four have been from Georgia; the one from Snipesville and 3 from the coast (St. Simon's Island, Jekyll Island, and Savannah Beach).

Coastal birds are sometimes carried inland by storms, but in this case, there had been no weather which would account for the presence of the bird. It seems more likely that the orientation mechanisms of this individual were disordered, causing the bird to move in roughly the opposite direction from most other individuals from this colony and in the wrong direction for a Royal Tern to survive. The bird was doubtless unable to feed and care for itself in this environment and succumbed. This may well be the explanation of many sightings of "accidentals," but since few birds are banded and fewer are recovered and returned, we will probably never know for certain.

Robert W. Loftin, University of North Florida, Box 17074, Jacksonville, Florida, 32216 and Ashley Smith, Route 1, Denton, Georgia 31532.

AN OBSERVATION SUGGESTING REVERSAL OF MIGRATION DIRECTION — In mid-October, 1971, an observation was made at Little Cumberland Island of an occurrence unique to my experience.

At about mid-morning, I was facing northeast and standing atop a high dune line an estimated 700 feet west of the beach. I was looking toward the sea with my eyes at an elevation about 30 feet above it. The overhead sky was fully occluded to the horizon by heavy, low clouds. A misty, light rain was falling. My attention was caught by a shifting, only tenuously visible cloud far out over the sea, and near the limit of my vi-

sion. At first, it appeared to be moving to the south. As I watched, the direction changed, the cloud grew larger. It gradually became apparent that the cloud was composed of many hundred of small birds, and that these birds were now flying westward directly toward the island. They reached land and proceeded to alight in the area between me and the beach, where there were live oak, cedar and small pine trees as well as bayberry bushes. I could see only those individuals in the uppermost reaches of the vegetation. They were about the size of Water Pipits. All I could see were alike in size and behavior. I believe that all birds were members of the same species, though I was not able to be certain of what that species might be.

The birds which could be seen perched, perhaps 1% of the total number, were strikingly active. I could detect no signs of exhaustion in these individuals. I continued to watch for about five minutes. Suddenly the flock rose into the air, though no external threat could be detected by me. There was no circling or hesitation. The birds moved off as a single flock in a direction estimated at ten degrees east of true north. They flew overland approximately parallel to the Little Cumberland beach for about one mile, then proceeded out over St. Andrews Sound to the north. The flock was lost to view in the rain as it approached Jekyll Island, perhaps 2.5 to 3 miles distant. The flock's direction of passage was still slightly east of north when last observed and had not varied appreciably since its members initiated flight from Little Cumberland.

No individual bird and no small group of birds were seen to leave the large flock during any part of its flight, either before arriving or after leaving Little Cumberland Island. Subsequent to the departure of the flock, I quietly and slowly moved to the area where the birds had landed earlier. Not a single living bird could be seen. No dead birds were found, even though a limited ground search was carried out.

This occurrence seems to be of interest in several respects. It was during a period when migration of small land birds is known to occur. It was during weather conditions when the observer had diminished visual information available and the birds may have had visual limitations as well. Third, flight conditions for the birds appeared to be poor. The rain was of fine-droplet type, but dampened the observer fairly swiftly. It could be expected to have dampened the birds' plumage and reduced flight efficiency. Fourth, no external inciting cause was found for the flocks' resuming flight after having alighted at Little Cumberland. Lastly, the direction of flight undertaken after resuming flight was an approximate reversal of the direction taken by the flock when first observed far out over the sea, and its presumed primary migration direction.

I have no explanation to offer, but believe the observation should be recorded.

G. W. Sciple, M.D., 2601 Parkwood Drive, Brunswick, Georgia 31520.

FROM THE FIELD

The format of this informal column precludes presentation of detailed accounts of rare birds. Records listed here are largely unchecked and their appearance in this column should not be considered to constitute scientific publication. They are intended primarily to bring interesting sightings to the attention of the membership and to alert others to look for unusual species in the areas indicated.

NORTH GEORGIA

Fall and early winter migrants came through the northern sector in good numbers in 1978. With winter birds, the story is different. So far, they have been lacking.

Evening Grosbeaks, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Fox Sparrows are being reported in slim numbers. No Pine Siskins were listed for the time period of this report. Ruby-crowned Kinglets have apparently recouped their numbers after last winter's die-off. Golden-crowned Kinglets, Purple Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos, and White-throated Sparrows were present in moderate numbers.

Augusta sightings: field trips turned up Glossy Ibis 2 September at Lock and Dam-Farmer's Field area. The October trip to Merry Ponds found a male Cinnamon Teal. Whistling Swans, 7 were spotted at Merry Ponds 2 December, along with a Spotted Sandpiper for the latest known date in the state.

Clarence Belger gave these sightings: Cape May Warbler at Farmer's Field 25 September; House Wren at Clark Hill 1 October; a Merlin was noted at Merry Ponds 1 December. Back in the fall, he saw an unusually colored thrush with spots on its breast; one like he'd never seen before. An adult Veery came out of the underbrush and fed the young bird.

An earliest-known-date-for-the-state Hermit Thrush was seen by John and Helen Hatcher 17 September in their yard; 26 September brought a Least Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, and Gray-cheeked Thrush to their yard. A Common Loon was sighted by Gerald Knighton and Clarence Belger 19 November on the Georgia side of the Savannah River. Fielding Dillard saw 6 Whistling Swans (five adult, 1 immature) at Swan Pond 19 November.

Down at Macon, Rose Marie and Hunter Johnson saw Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, 3 on the Ocmulgee River across from the Hitchiti Experimental Forest. Bob Todd, Rome, tells about a Whistling Swan at Padgett Lake for several weeks, reported 11 December.

A Buff-breasted Sandpiper was discovered at Pendergrass 16 September by Jack Carusos and was subsequently seen by many observers through 26 September. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were near Wayne's Poultry Processing Plant, Pendergrass, 11 August along with a White-rumped Sandpiper, listed by Joel Volpi.

Ospreys were found by Frank McCamey at Lake Hartwell 15 August; at Sweetwater Creek State Park 7 October by Dan and Ann Forster; at Lake Chatuge 12 October by Bill Terrell. Sandhill Cranes, 12

were observed by Don and Doris Cohrs 6 August between Cartersville and Cedartown; Frank McCamey watched four migrating over northeast Habersham county 25 September. Jeff Petit spotted the earliest known Tennessee Warbler 22 August near Duluth; Jack Carusos saw a Nashville Warbler at Cumming 26 September. Bill Terrell found a Merlin north of Gainesville 12 October; Carol Hancock and Paige Harvey saw Cape May Warblers 19 September at Tallulah Falls and 30 September at Clarksville.

Atlanta area sightings: Yellow-crowned Night Herons, 2 were in Piedmont Park 18 August reported by Richard Parks. He also listed Cerulean Warblers at Piedmont Park 8, 13, 21 August. Terry Moore saw an immature White Ibis flying over his Marietta home 17 September; a male Wilson's Warbler was in his backyard 16 September. Bill Terrell reports a Wilson's in his backyard 17 October; one was at Piedmont Park 23 October, according to Richard Parks.

Dalton and northwest Georgia: Resource Manager Joseph Blackmon at Carter's Dam reports the sighting of an adult Bald Eagle 13 June and a possible immature 16 August in the Regulation Dam area, Gilmer County.

Evening Grosbeaks: 25 to 30 were seen by Harry White over his home 23 October. Harriett DiGioia found an immature Nashville Warbler in her yard 30 September; House Wrens: 2 at West Hill Cemetery 24 October.

Harriet DiGioia on the Chattahoochee National Forest, Cohutta Ranger District, Murray County reported a Veery on Forest Service Road 630 on 4 October; Evening Grosbeaks: 15 flying over a clear cut on Grassy Mountain, Forest Service Road 49 on 4 November; Sandhill Cranes, 75 milling around and calling low in the sky over Forest Service Road 630 on 20 November; plus four flying over Eton that morning. House Wrens, 3 in a logging area, Emery Creek, Forest Service Road 78 on 24 November.

Two White Ibis sightings were made in the mountainous northwest. Clifton Hoffman sighted one on 15 August at his cabin in Fannin County, seven miles north of Blue Ridge and two miles northwest of Lake Blue Ridge. Jeff Dixon watched four flying over LaFayette Lake, LaFayette, 15 September.

(Compiled by Harriett G. DiGioia, U.S. Forest Service, 401 Old Ellijay Road, Chatsworth, Georgia 30705.)

SOUTH GEORGIA

Wilson's Phalaropes are rare transients in the interior of Georgia but several were sighted in the southern portion of the state in the autumn of 1978. Charles Erwin saw one in Sumter County on 25 August (see GENERAL NOTE this issue), and T. K. Patterson found another in Laurens County on 2 September. At Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) near Columbus, Brent Ortego and others saw 5 on 30 September and noted a single bird regularly during 7-14 October. Ortego's observa-

tions were made as a part of his study of the birds of Eufaula NWR (see request for information, *Oriole* 43:69-70, 1978) and his work has documented the influence of the impoundment of Lake George on the local bird life. Here are some other sightings from Ortego's fall report: Reddish Egret, 1 on 12-25 November; White-fronted Goose, 2 on 5-25 November; Redhead, 1 on 28 October; Merlin, 1 on 30 September; American Avocet, 1 on 3 November; Ruddy Turnstone, 1 on 5 August and 1 on 28 October; Willet, 1 on 22 July; Sanderling, 4 on 28 October and 16 on 5 November; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 2 on 5 November, and 3 on 18 November; White-rumped Sandpiper, 1 on 29 October; Pectoral Sandpiper, 10 on 25 November; Stilt Sandpiper, 6 on 14 October; Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 1 on 5 and 13 August, 3 on 24 September, and 1 on 28 October. Ortego reported that Laughing Gulls appear to be reduced in numbers at the refuge since 1978; he saw only 3 during the fall: 2 on 21 October and 1 on 5 November. He saw a Warbling Vireo at the refuge on 14 October. Sightings of other rarer waterbirds were included in Ortego's report but they will be more properly documented in his paper on the refuge birds which will soon appear in *The Oriole*.

In Laurens County, T. K. Patterson's study of water-bird migration yielded, in addition to the phalarope noted above, a Common Loon on 25 November, Semipalmated Plovers on 4, 10, and 15 September, and an Upland Sandpiper and Western Sandpiper on 2 and 4 September.

Near Osierfield (Irwin County), Milton Hopkins recorded his first local Virginia Rail on 20 September. The bird was flushed from a corn field during combining and 4 Soras were revealed by the same process 25 September-2 October.

This report is shorter than it should be. Many other interesting sightings have appeared in local newsletters but they have to be omitted because most often they lack one or more of the necessary data for publication: the number of individual birds seen, the date, the location, and the observer(s). Also highly desired are descriptions of the birds, and explanations of how similar species were excluded. We simply can not rely on local newsletters to record the ornithology of Georgia. That is not their purpose. The Georgia Ornithological Society goes to considerable trouble and expense to publish *The Oriole* but the journal will remain only partially useful until individuals recognize their responsibilities and begin to submit their sightings to *The Oriole* as papers, notes, or reports From the Field. Without the hard work now of documentation by members of GOS, future attempts to summarize the bird life of Georgia will have to deal with vague reports scattered about that are no better than rumors.

(Compiled by Robert L. Crawford, Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312.)

NEWS AND COMMENTS

INFORMATION NEEDED

WILLETS. Observers on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are once again requested to be on the alert for color-marked Willets, especially from June through August. As part of a study of the breeding ecology, population dynamics, and movements of Willets, nearly 150 adults have been feather-dyed and/or color-banded over the past two years in the Chincoteague-Wallops Island area of Virginia. Many more will be marked this year. Sightings have already been reported from North Carolina, the Carribean Sea, and northern South America. More sightings are needed to better document the migration routes of this species.

Northbound migrants in the spring will have molted their dyed feathers, but the color-bands above the leg joints will be conspicuous to the meticulous observer. Many southbound migrants in the summer will bear fresh, conspicuous dyes on the plumage in addition to the color-bands. If you should sight one of these birds, please note the colors of dyes (if present), the parts of the body dyed, and, if possible, the sequence of leg-band colors. Incomplete or uncertain information should also be reported. Data of this sort provided by birders can help answer many interesting biological questions that are otherwise likely to remain enigmatic. I shall be most grateful for even the most fragmentary information. All reports will be personally acknowledged, and as much information as possible about the sighted bird will be provided. Please send reports of sightings to: Dr. Marshall A. Howe, Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland 20811.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS. During the next year I will be finishing a report on the status and distribution of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Georgia. I am mainly concentrating on records over the last 10 years or so. I would appreciate any records of Red-cockaded sightings or information of colony sites (trees with signs) from anyone whom I have not already contacted. W. Wilson Baker, Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312.

LIMPKINS. Limpkins have been banded with color leg bands in Florida. Birders are asked to report sightings, with date and location, noting the color code (top color first; right leg first) to: Dana Bryan, Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Contributors of manuscripts for publication in *The Oriole* can facilitate the reviewing process by submitting two copies, typewritten, using standard type, double-spaced, on good quality bond paper. Do not use erasable or mimeo bond. The format should follow closely that of articles or general notes appearing in this or a recent issue. English measurements are acceptable, but metric is preferred. Use the 24-hour clock for time (0830 and 1600) and the "continental" dating system (1 March 1979).

As the new editor of *The Oriole*, I wish to take this opportunity to apologize for the long delay in publication, for which I am fully responsible. I assure you, I do not take this responsibility lightly and will do my best to maintain the high standards set by my predecessors. — Bill Lovejoy, *Editor*.

ERRATUM

Correction for "Olive-sided Flycatcher in midsummer in Murray County," appearing in *The Oriole*, vol. 43, nos. 2 & 3, p. 36.

In the third paragraph at the bottom of the page, the sentence should read: "On 6 August 1977 in a clear cut near the summit of Grassy Mountain, Forest Service Road 49, I again saw an Olive-sided Flycatcher . . ."

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

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

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