

THE ORIOLE

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



VOL. 61

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1996

NOS. 2&3

THE ORIOLE

(ISSN 0030-553)

Editor - Terry Moore, 13000 Bucksport Court, Roswell, GA 30075
Assistant Editor - Giff Beaton, 320 Willow Glen Dr., Marietta, GA 30068
From the Field Editor - Jeff Sewell, 4608 Westhampton Dr., Tucker GA 30084

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

1997	1999	2001
Georgann Schmalz, Chr. Brad Bergstrom	I. Lehr Brisbin Carolina H. Lane	C. Ray Chandler John Parrish

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

Regular.....\$16.00	Sustaining.....\$25.00	Patron.....\$50.00
Student.....\$ 8.00		Life.....\$250.00

All manuscripts and books for review columns should be submitted to the Editor.

All dues should be remitted to: Georgia Ornithological Society, P.O. Box 1684, Cartersville, Georgia 30120.

Inquiries concerning library subscriptions and back issues of THE ORIOLE or OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE G.O.S. should be directed to the Business Manager: John Swiderski, P.O. Box 1684, Cartersville, Georgia 30120.

CONTENTS

FIRST SIGHTING OF THE SHINY COWBIRD IN GEORGIA <i>Carol Ruckdeschel, C. Robert Shoop and David Sibley</i>	29
STATUS OF SELECTED WETLAND SPECIES IN THE AUGUSTA, GEORGIA AREA <i>Anne R. Waters</i>	31
GEORGIA SPECIMENS OF THE SOOTY SHEARWATER <i>Carol Ruckdeschel and C. Robert Shoop</i>	42
GENERAL NOTES.....	44
FROM THE FIELD - December 1995 - May 1996 <i>Terry Moore</i>	55
EDITOR'S COMMENT.....	72

Publication Date - September 1998
GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Founded December 13, 1936

THE ORIOLE

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

VOL. 61

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1996

NOS. 2&3

FIRST SIGHTING OF THE SHINY COWBIRD IN GEORGIA

Carol Ruckdeschel¹, C. Robert Shoop² and David Sibley³

The Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) is widespread in South America, and in 1947 its northern range was roughly the Grenadines and Barbados (Bond 1947). At that time, it was considered "accidental" as far north as St. Croix and Vieques Island in the Caribbean. The species was first reported in Florida in 1985 and is now apparently a resident in southern Dade County (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). Last winter (1995-1996) the species was observed in the Florida panhandle (Pranty 1996b) and there are indications it may be breeding there (Pranty 1996a).

The first Georgia sight record is from the south end of Cumberland Island, Camden County, Georgia where one and possibly two birds were seen on 16 May 1989, with the first sighting "a day or two earlier." The bird "was walking and feeding in short grass with a few Brown-headed Cowbirds," (*Molothrus ater*) and was described as: "slightly smaller (and) overall more slender than the Brown-headed Cowbird, with a longer tail and shorter wings." The "head (was) glossed purple and distinctly peaked at the area, body duller purple, wing coverts dull blue-green, primaries and secondaries brown-black, flanks and belly slightly brown," but generally, "much blacker all over than (the) Brown-headed." It "never raised (its) tail above (its) wings." The call had a "high, gurgling cowbird-like quality but (with) more varied trills and whistles" (DS notes in parentheses).

On 26 May 1989, a male and female Shiny Cowbird remained together around the Settlement on the north end of Cumberland Island most of the day (CR & CRS). Their calls fit the above description. Records in 1996 include a sighting on Tybee Island, Chatham County, Georgia on 1 June by D. Jacobson (Sewell and Moore 1996), and a male on the north end of Cumberland Island on 23 June (CR & CRS).

LITERATURE CITED

- Bond, J. 1947. Field guide to birds of the West Indies. Macmillan Co., New York.
- Pranty, B. (Compiler). 1996a. Field observations. Florida Field Naturalist 24:48-59.
- _____. 1996b. Field observations. Florida Field Naturalist 24:83-92.

- Robertson, W.R. and G.E. Woolfenden. 1992. Florida bird species: An annotated list. Florida Ornith. Soc., Special Publ. No. 6.
- Sewell, J. and T. Moore. 1996. Field notes, June-July 1996, Goshawk 23:9-11.

¹P.O. Box 796, St. Marys, GA 31558; ²Dept. Biological Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881; and ³P.O. Box 325, Cape May Point, NJ 08212.

STATUS OF SELECTED WETLAND SPECIES IN THE AUGUSTA, GEORGIA AREA

Anne R. Waters

Augusta, Georgia sits on the fall line and even today, when viewed from the air, presents a wonderful mosaic of wetlands. For this reason, the area has long been attractive to waterbirds. The Savannah River, combined with Phinzy Swamp, the Augusta Canal, canals along the levee, Merry Brickyard Ponds and Clark Hill Reservoir, 25 miles north, all contribute to the attraction.

But it is primarily Merry Ponds which are used by waterfowl and other wetland species. For almost 100 years, clay has been dug from an area near downtown Augusta by Merry Brick and as many as eight other brick companies. The resulting ponds have been allowed to revegetate naturally creating a maze of wetlands attractive to wildlife.

I have birded the areas known as Merry Brickyard Ponds since 1972 and have kept detailed field notes. Occasionally I receive comments of sightings from other birders. When sightings are reported to me verbally, I add them to my field notes to be able to keep a record of them. These notes include the name of the person making the observation, the date, and all information on the sighting that the person remembers. Data for this paper has come from these notes as well as a few field note cards kept by Gerald Knighton for the period 1969-72, just prior to the date I began keeping field notes. I have also included records from Haney et al. (1986) relating to Augusta. Much more field work needs to be done. Part of the function of this paper is to spur interest in further study of bird status in the Augusta area.

Species Accounts

- Common Loon (*Gavia immer*).** Loons are common in winter just north of Augusta at Clark Hill Reservoir. Arriving by Nov., they are seen occasionally into May when they have acquired their alternate plumage. Loons are occasionally seen in Merry Ponds mostly in an abandoned gravel pit which is deeper than the clay pits. Extreme dates are 2 Nov. (1980) to 5 May (1990).
- Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*).** This is a common species in Merry Ponds except in summer. Although a few have been observed in the summer months, no evidence of nesting has ever been found. Extreme dates are 11 Aug. (1983) to 14 June (1982) with two mid-summer dates of 4 July 1987 and 30 July 1988.
- Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*).** Uncommon fall through spring, this species prefers the large open lake of Clark Hill Reservoir but is occasionally seen in Merry Ponds. They are seen most easily in

- January and February. Extreme dates are 9 Nov. (1975 and 1991) to 20 April (1991).
- Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). This is a very rare transient in our area. Haney et al. (1986) report Augusta sightings on 13 Feb. 1904 and 3 March 1927 and a sighting for Clark Hill Reservoir on 16 Nov. 1975. Clarence Belger observed an additional bird at Clark Hill Reservoir on 31 March 1985 (Brisse 1985).
- Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*). This is an abundant fall through spring resident; less common during the summer. In 1980 when a cormorant was seen in Merry Ponds, it was considered unusual. Now the species is an abundant resident of the ponds with the larger numbers being seen in the winter. Highest count so far were the 275 seen 21 Nov. 1993. Cormorants have now been observed in Merry Ponds every month of the year but no evidence of nesting has yet been found.
- Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*). The Anhinga is a common resident of Merry Ponds with the numbers of birds increasing over the years. In Dec. 1980 four was considered a very good number but recently, at least 16 were seen in the ponds between Nov. 1993 and Jan. 1994.
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*). Accidental visitor to the ponds, one was seen 11 May 1974 for the only sighting in Augusta.
- Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). This species is considered to be a rare winter visitor. I first saw the Tundra Swan in Merry Ponds on 3 March 1974. The species returned the winters of 1975, 1978, 1980, 1983 and 1984. In 1989 an Augusta Audubon field trip with 12 members present including the author saw three fly over the ponds on 18 Nov. but they didn't spend the winter as they had in the past. This is the most recent record of swans in Merry Ponds.
- Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*). This is a rare winter visitor to our area. One was seen at Clark Hill on 16 Feb. 1979 and two were feeding in Merry Ponds on 26 Jan. 1990.
- Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*). This is also a rare winter visitor to our area. I first saw one here on 23 Oct. 1976 and was told by Lee Gibbs that the only other sighting here was a report by a fisherman of some on Merry Ponds in the spring two years earlier. Since that time, a blue morph was seen 21 Jan. and 7 Feb. 1978; and also from 1 Nov. 1980 through 24 Jan. 1981. One white morph was seen with a blue morph 23 Jan. 1981 and a white morph was seen 14 Dec. 1985.
- Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*). This goose is now a common resident. In the spring of 1976 goslings were raised at Clark Hill from geese kept in enclosures. It was hoped they would imprint

- on this area and return to the site rather than migrate long distances north as is their natural behavior. This project has been extremely successful so there is a large resident population at Clark Hill. As a consequence, it is no longer unusual to see Canada Geese in Merry Ponds and other areas around Augusta. First confirmed nesting for Merry Ponds was 7 May 1995 when two downy young were seen with two adults.
- Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). A common permanent resident breeding throughout our area. Most of the time they are seen nesting in boxes or natural cavities in March and we see young from mid-April through mid-May. Large numbers fly into communal roost sites for the night in areas of the ponds which change from year to year but are often associated with heron roosts (Waters 1987).
- Green-winged teal (*Anas crecca*). An uncommon transient and winter visitor in the ponds, the Green-winged Teal has been seen in Nov. more often than any other month. Numbers are usually small (2-15) but in 1993 approximately 45 stayed from 12 Oct. through 14 Nov. for an unusual record. Extreme dates are 20 Sept. (1980) to 9 April (1988).
- American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*). This duck has declined in the Augusta area in the last 20 years. Never very numerous here, now only a few are seen each winter and Mallard X Black hybrids have also been noted. It is primarily a winter resident generally arriving mid-Oct. and departing by March. Extreme dates for Merry Ponds are 19 Sept. (1981) to 2 May (1983).
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). This is a common permanent resident which breeds in the area. Numbers increase in winter when the non-introduced Mallards join our local breeders. The species breeds commonly all over the area.
- Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*). This is an uncommon transient and winter visitor which used to be seen more often than it is now. From 1972 until 1985 flocks were seen several times every year. After 1985, Pintails have been seen only a few years. Extreme dates are 27 Sept. (1980) to 15 April (1977).
- Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*). This species is a rather erratic visitor to the ponds. During my period of recordkeeping, the species has been seen in the ponds every month of the year, although they are more common in spring and fall. Even though summer records exist, the first breeding record for the species was 6 May 1995 when a female was observed by Richard Lux with two large young in Merry Ponds. They were with several other adult teal and were almost the same size as the adults. Then on 13 May 1995 a female was seen by my husband and I with ten half grown young on another pond which is approximately 0.5 mile from the first sighting.

- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*). An accidental winter visitor, a male was seen in Merry Ponds 22 Jan. 1977, 24 Dec. 1977, 3, 10 and 17 March 1979; then again 23-25 Nov. and 1 Dec. 1979, 12 Jan., 1 Nov. and 26 Dec. 1980. Photos of the male were taken 23 Nov. 1979 and a copy is on file with the Univ. of GA Museum of Natural History. What was thought to be a Cinnamon X Blue-winged Teal hybrid was seen 12 March 1977, 18 Nov. 1978 and 28 Jan. 1979 (Waters 1980).
- Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*). A fairly common transient and winter resident in Merry Ponds in low number, this species' numbers have remained relatively constant for 20 years being seen in groups from 2 to 25. Extreme dates are 1 Aug. (1979) to 13 May (1995).
- Gadwall (*Anas strepera*). A fairly common transient and winter resident on the ponds, Gadwall have steadily increased in numbers using Merry Ponds since the 1970's. In the 1970's ten was considered a good number but now 30 to 40 would not be unusual and 73 were counted on the 1994 Christmas Bird Count on 28 Dec.. Extreme dates in the ponds are 23 Oct. (1993) to 7 April (1982).
- American Wigeon (*Anas americana*). A common transient and winter resident in Merry Ponds, wigeon numbers have remained fairly consistent over the past 20 years, varying from approximately 75 to 300 most of the time. A high count of 729 was made 26 Dec. 1992. Extreme dates for the species are 9 Oct. (1976) to 20 May (1978).
- Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*). A rare winter visitor and transient, this species is not seen every year and only in small numbers. Canvasbacks are usually seen sporadically between Nov. and Feb. One male, seen on 4 and 15 June 1977 was an accidental summer visitor. Extreme dates are 27 Oct. (1990) to 15 June (1977).
- Redhead (*Aythya americana*). An uncommon winter visitor and rare transient, sightings have remained fairly constant over the years. They are seen more commonly in Dec. Extreme dates are 29 Oct. (1987) to 7 March (1991).
- Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*). An abundant transient and winter resident in Merry Ponds, extreme dates are from 24 Sept. (1977) to 8 April (1987) but they are normally here from Oct. through March. Wintering numbers have declined in the last 20 years but 500-1,000 are still present most winters. Ring-necked Ducks color banded at the Savannah River Site (SRS) across the Savannah River near Jackson, SC, are commonly seen in Merry Ponds but we usually have no knowledge of their later movements and it wasn't known if they wintered back and forth between SRS and Merry Ponds or if they were migrating south.

- Banding at SRS has shown that ducks here are often migrating south even in the winter months. One dramatic example of this was a male Ring-necked Duck banded at SRS on 4 Dec. 1987 which was harvested 10 Jan. 1994 in Cuba (Bobby Kennaman - SRS Ecology Lab, pers. comm.). There have been a few summer records of Ring-necked Ducks in Merry Ponds such as a male and female which were seen 15 June 1977 and a male seen on 8 June 1981. But then a female with a half grown young was seen in an old oxbow pond off the Augusta levee on 18 Aug. 1984 (Waters 1985) and a female was seen on the same pond with two half grown young on 31 July 1987 for two area nesting records.
- Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*). An accidental transient and winter visitor, Greater Scaup have been seen in Merry Ponds on 24 Dec. 1977, 4 March 1978, 11 Jan. 1986, 5 Nov. 1988, and 2 Feb., 31 March, 11 Nov. and 23 Nov. 1990. They were all seen in flocks of Lesser Scaup.
- Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*). A fairly common transient and winter resident in Merry Ponds usually in small numbers. Extreme dates are 10 Sept. (1977) to 25 May (1985). The species is occasional in summer being seen 1 June 1985, 15 June 1977 and 27 July 1985 but no evidence of breeding has ever been observed.
- Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*). This is an accidental spring visitor to the ponds. Two were seen from 26 March to 11 April 1984 in the Gordon Highway pond. They were changing into breeding plumage during their visit (Waters 1984). Also a rare winter visitor in Dec. 1960 at Clark Hill Dam north of Augusta and in Merry Ponds 23 Dec. 1989 when seven were sighted by Clarence Belger.
- Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*). A rare winter visitor to the area, this species has been seen in the shoals area of the Savannah River just north of Augusta more often than in the ponds. Extreme dates are 6 Dec. (1975) to 3 Feb. (1989).
- Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*). An uncommon transient and winter visitor usually seen in small numbers both in the ponds and in the Savannah River shoals north of Augusta. Extreme dates are 20 Oct. (1976) to 26 March (1977).
- Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). An uncommon transient and winter visitor to the ponds, extreme dates are 13 Nov. (1987) to 29 May (1987). Usually seen in small numbers, the 62 seen in Merry Ponds on 26 Dec. 1993 was remarkable. Accidental in summer, nesting was suspected in an inaccessible swamp near Merry Ponds in 1987 but was never confirmed. Nesting has been confirmed across the river at the Silver Bluff Plantation Audubon Sanctuary in South Carolina. Paul Koehler, assistant sanctuary manager, reported a pair using a Wood Duck box in 1991. Then

- he observed 11 eggs hatch in another box on 31 March 1993 and a pair successfully nested there again in 1994.
- Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*). A rare transient and winter visitor to Merry Ponds, this species is more common on Clark Hill Reservoir north of Augusta. Extreme dates are 29 Oct. (1991) to 2 June (1974).
- Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). A common transient and winter visitor but now usually seen in small numbers which have generally decreased over the past 20 years. In the 1970's the average flock numbered 10-15 but now most groups are 2-6. Extreme dates are from 22 Oct. (1988) to 2 May (1993).
- King Rail (*Rallus elegans*). The King Rail is resident in Merry Ponds in small numbers but most easily seen in spring and summer when it is courting and breeding. Habitat for this species is declining rapidly in the ponds.
- Sora (*Porzana carolina*). The Sora is a rare fall and winter visitor and uncommon in spring. Extreme dates are 19 Oct. (1969) through 7 May (1983).
- Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*). This species is accidental in spring and fall. One adult was observed in the ponds on 6 May 1973 and three adults were observed 23 May 1975. Clarence Belger observed one adult in the fall of 1978.
- Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). This is an uncommon spring and fall transient and rare winter visitor. Extreme dates are 6 Sept. (1980) to 25 May (1991). Although habitat in Merry Ponds seems to be suitable for this species, it is only observed sporadically. In 1990 the only confirmed nesting took place. Two adults were observed with seven young and another pair was observed with five young on 23 June. These were seen off and on for the rest of the season.
- American Coot (*Fulica americana*). Abundant transient and winter resident in Merry Ponds. Extreme dates are 14 Aug. (1980) through 23 May (1975). In studies conducted at Savannah River Ecology Lab across the river from Augusta, Dr. I. Lehr Brisbin noted that coots present in the fall are equally male and female but by mid-winter the flocks are 98% male. Studies reveal that most females go farther south to winter and then return in the spring before both groups leave for the summer (Brisbin talk at Augusta Audubon Society, 13 Nov. 1986). There are no breeding records for our area but coots have been observed here in the summer. The singles observed 5 June 1981 and 15 June 1977 were not seen again that summer but Clarence Belger reports that one spent the entire summer in Merry Ponds in 1989 and again in 1990. Also, Gary Gray observed one all summer in 1994.

- Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*). This species is accidental in Merry Ponds during fall migration. One was seen there on 2 Nov. 1975 and again on 25 Nov. 1989. Four were seen there by Clarence Belger on 8 Aug. 1992.
- Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). This species is an uncommon spring and fall transient at this inland location with more spring sightings in recent years. Between 1971 and 1980 there were five spring and fall sightings. Between 1982 and 1986 there were nine sightings, eight in spring. Then two recent spring sightings were two birds on 9 May 1992 and one on 13 May 1995.
- Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*). The Killdeer is a common permanent resident nesting over the entire area.
- Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). The only record of this species was one seen by Gary Gray on 9 April 1993 in Merry Ponds.
- American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*). There is but one record of this species for Augusta. This bird was seen in Merry Ponds by many birders on an Augusta Audubon Society field trip on 3 Nov. 1979.
- Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*). This species is an abundant spring and common fall transient in Merry Ponds. Although considered accidental here in the winter 20 years ago, the species was seen during the winters of 1975, 1977, 1980 and 1981. Since 1986 they have been seen every winter and in increasing numbers so it's now considered uncommon in winter. Extreme dates are 19 Aug. (1990) to 23 May (1981).
- Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). The Lesser Yellowlegs is a common spring and fall transient in Merry Ponds. Prior to 1989 they were accidental in the winter, being seen the winters of 1975, 1977, 1978 and 1983. Since 1989 they have been seen every winter and in increasing numbers so the species is now considered to be uncommon during the winter. Extreme dates are 2 Aug. (1979) to 21 May (1977).
- Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*). This is a common spring and fall transient in our area, usually more numerous in the spring, especially in April. Spring extreme dates are 18 March (1979) to 22 May (1982). Extreme fall dates are 23 July (1983) to 22 Oct. (1983).
- Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*). This species is an accidental visitor to our area. On 7 Sept. 1982 Clarence Belger saw eight in the newest dig of Merry Ponds. He stated at that time that he only remembered one other sighting of the species in Augusta since he had been birding and that was in the spring. On 9 Aug. 1990, I

- saw one in a pond that was drawn down for the Wood Storks at Silver Bluff Plantation Sanctuary across the river in Jackson, SC.
- Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). The Spotted Sandpiper is a common spring and fall transient in our area. Extreme dates in the spring extend from 27 March (1982) through 6 June (1987) but it is more common in April. Fall extreme dates range from 10 July (1987) to 29 Nov. (1978). Although rare in winter, there is now at least one winter sighting in the ponds most years.
- Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*). This species is an uncommon bird of short grass fields. All sightings in Augusta (with one exception) have been from the Augusta Airport in spring and fall when this transient visits. In spring, sightings have been between 1 April (1978) and 25 April (1987). Fall sightings have been from 24 July (1972) to 13 Sept. (1979). The lone sighting away from the airport was on 29 April 1989 in Merry Ponds by Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Paul Sykes and Terry Moore (Terry Moore, pers. comm.).
- Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*). This is an accidental visitor reported on 13 May 1958 in Haney et al. (1986).
- Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*). This is another accidental visitor having been reported once on 5-6 Sept. 1962 in Haney et al. (1986).
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). There are only one spring and one fall sighting for this species. One was seen in the ponds on 9 and 15 Oct. 1977 and four were seen 12 April 1984.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*). This species is an uncommon spring and fall transient in Merry Ponds. Spring dates extend from 7 March (1992) to 25 May (1985). Fall dates extend from 14 Aug. (1979) to 18 Oct. (1975). Accidental in winter, it was reported in Merry Ponds on 28 Dec. 1956 in Haney et al. (1986).
- Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*). This is an uncommon spring and fall transient in Merry Ponds. Spring dates extend from 9 March (1985) to 22 May (1992). Fall dates are from 8 Aug. (1992) to 30 Oct. (1982 and 1984). It is now considered rare in the winter in Augusta having been seen on 16 Jan. 1979, 16 and 30 Jan. 1988, 3 Feb. 1990 and 28 Dec. 1994.
- Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*). This species is a very common fall through spring resident in the ponds with lower numbers present during the winter. Extreme dates are 23 July (1983) to 25 May (1985).
- White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*). This species is now a very rare spring visitor to the ponds but used to be found here more often and in larger numbers. Extreme dates are from 24 April (1992) to 1 June (1982). It is accidental in the fall with one being seen on 28 Oct. 1989.

- Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*). This is an accidental spring visitor to the ponds where Clarence Belger saw one on 29 May 1984.
- Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*). This is a common spring and fall transient in Merry Ponds. Extreme dates for spring extend from 29 Feb. (1992) to 21 May (1977) but it is most numerous in April. Fall dates extend from 28 July (1979) to 6 Nov. (1992) with greater numbers present in August.
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*). The Dunlin is an uncommon fall and winter visitor to the ponds. Since 1969 Dunlin have been observed in the ponds 11 times in the period extending from 23 Oct. (1982) to 28 Jan. (1979). It has been observed only once in the spring when one in breeding plumage was seen on 22 May 1992.
- Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*). This species is a rare spring and accidental fall visitor to Merry Ponds. It has been observed in spring from 6 April (1981) to 5 May (1978) and in the fall from 16 Aug. (1992) to 12 Sept. (1992).
- Dowitcher (*Limnodromus* sp.). Dowitchers are rare spring and fall visitors to Merry Ponds. They have been observed in spring from 1 April (1991) to 1 May (1990) and in the fall from 8 Aug. (1992) through 24 Nov. (1973). Although not always able to distinguish species, Augusta observers have positively identified Short-billed Dowitchers (*L. griseus*) on several occasions and a Long-billed Dowitcher (*L. scolopaceus*) in full breeding plumage was seen in the ponds on 30 June 1979 for a rare mid-summer sighting.
- Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). This is a common fall, winter and spring visitor becoming abundant in early spring most years. Extreme dates are from 17 Aug. (1987) to 19 May (1979).
- American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*). This elusive permanent resident of the ponds can most easily be seen during late Feb. and early March when the males are doing their courtship flights.
- Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*). This is an accidental visitor to the Augusta area, Sixty were seen feeding in a wet weather pond on 5 May 1978 by Clarence Belger, my husband and I (Waters 1978). Haney et al. (1986) list previous records for Augusta on 1 June 1975 and 13-16 Sept. 1962.
- Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). This species is a rare visitor to Merry Ponds in winter and spring. It has been seen 26 Dec. 1987, 27 Dec. 1980, 9 Feb. 1985, 3 April 1982 and 27 April 1991.
- Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*). This gull is an uncommon visitor to the Augusta area from late fall through spring. It is seen more easily at Clark Hill Reservoir especially just below the dam but is seen in Merry Ponds at times. Extreme dates are from 11 Nov. (1987 and 1991) to 26 April (1992).

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). Our most common gull is an abundant fall through spring visitor to the entire Augusta area. Extreme dates are 12 Oct. (1986) to 14 May (1985). Accidental in summer, one immature was seen on 7 June 1991 at Clark Hill Wildlife Management area near Raysville Bridge, McDuffie Co. GA.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). This species is an uncommon fall through spring visitor to the Augusta area with most sightings occurring in the winter. The Augusta Landfill is especially attractive to them. Most birds seen are immatures which seem to wander farther from their breeding grounds than do the adults. Extreme dates are from 26 Oct. (1985) to 26 May (1974).

Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*). This species has become an uncommon spring and fall visitor to Merry Ponds in the last 12 years. None had been reported here before 1983 but there have been nine sightings since that time and in 1993 numbers began to increase with four being seen on 8 May 1993 and seven on 23 April 1994. Spring sightings have been between 16 April (1988 and 1989) and 8 May (1993). Fall sightings are recorded between 16 Aug. (1992) and 3 Sept. (1983).

Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*). The only report of this species came from the ponds from 21-28 Oct. 1944 according to Haney et al. (1986).

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*). This accidental visitor was seen once at the ponds. George Reeves saw two there on 23 Sept. 1989.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). This species was accidental in spring in Augusta in the 1970's but has not been recorded since that time. In May 1972 Dr. I. Lehr Brisbin at Savannah River Ecology Lab reported to Gerald Knighton that some were found at Par Pond on Savannah River Site, SC across the river from Augusta and one was seen on 29 April 1975 in Merry Ponds by the Augusta Audubon Society.

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*). This species, not seen here prior to 1982, is now an uncommon fall, winter and spring visitor to the Augusta area. Since 1986 there have been ten reported sightings but prior to that there was only one on 20 Nov. 1982. Extreme dates are from 11 Sept. (1987) to 27 May (1986). Accidental in summer, one was seen in Merry Ponds on 11 July 1988.

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*). This species is a rare spring and summer visitor to the Augusta area. One or two birds were observed in Merry Ponds on 9 April 1984, 15 May 1976, 16 May 1981, 5 June 1987 and 15 June 1977. On 20 Aug. 1975, while canoeing the Savannah River in S. Augusta, my husband and I observed 15-20 birds in an area of the river rarely if ever birded. Since no

- one, to my knowledge, ever birds this area, the species could be more common in the Augusta area than records indicate.
- Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*). This species is an accidental visitor to Merry Ponds. My husband and I saw an adult there on 26 May 1990. There are also two records for this species at Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary across the river from Augusta near Jackson, SC.
- Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*). This species is accidental in the spring with two records in Haney et al. (1986). One was in 1888 and the second was on 13 May 1976.

LITERATURE CITED

- Brisse, P. 1985. From the field: January-June 1985. Oriole 50:46-52.
- Haney, J.C., P. Brisse, D.R. Jacobson, M.W. Oberle, and J.M. Paget. 1986. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10.
- Waters, A.R. 1978. Sixty Wilson's Phalaropes seen in Richmond County. Oriole 43:63-64.
- _____. 1980. Occurrence of Cinnamon Teal in Georgia. Oriole 45:15-17.
- _____. 1984. Oldsquaw pair spring visitors to Augusta. Oriole 49:37-38.
- _____. 1985. Ring-necked Duck breeds in Augusta. Oriole 50:12.
- _____. 1987. Bird usage of a heron roost in Augusta from 1980-1987. Oriole 52:57-61.

1621 Apple Valley Drive, Augusta, GA 30906.

LITERATURE CITED

- Capp, R.B., R.C. Banks, D. Morgan-Jacobs and W. Hoffman. 1983. Marine birds of the southeastern United States and Gulf of Mexico. Part I. Gulliformes through Pelecaniformes. USFWS FWS/OBS-83/11.
- Haney, J.C., P. Brisse, D.R. Jacobson, M.W. Oberle, and J.M. Paget. 1986. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10.
- Purpus, T.S. and A.L. Lang. 1991. Least Tern's Storm-Petrel and other gulls at Sapelo Island. Oriole 56:32-33.
- Roberson, W.B., Jr. and G.E. Woolfenden. 1982. Florida bird species. An annotated list. FL Ornith. Soc. Special Publ. No. 6.
- Rodtschabel, C.A., C.R. Shoop and G.W. Squire. 1994. A mass stranding of Least Terns at Sapelo Island, Georgia. FL Sci. 27(48):497.

GEORGIA SPECIMENS OF THE SOOTY SHEARWATER

Carol Ruckdeschel¹ and C. Robert Shoop²

The Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*) is described as a rare but regular transient off the Atlantic Coast (Haney et al. 1986, Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). One specimen has been reported from Georgia (Clapp et al. 1982) collected in 1970 in the Altamaha Sound, McIntosh County (UGAMNH). At least four specimens are reported from Florida: one each from Volusia County in 1899, Indian River County in 1969 (Clapp et al., 1982, Duval County in 1973 and Monroe County in 1975 (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). As with other pelagic avian species, more records occur in North Carolina, especially in the vicinity of Cape Hatteras, where the distance to the Gulf Stream is reduced.

Seven specimens of the Sooty Shearwater have been collected on Cumberland and Little Cumberland islands, Camden County, Georgia, since 1991. In conjunction with the only reported mass stranding of Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) along the southeast United States coast in 1991 (Ruckdeschel et al. 1994, Parsons and Lang 1991), S. Hendricks collected one dead Sooty Shearwater on Cumberland Island and donated it to the Cumberland Island Museum. We salvaged five more specimens over a seven day period 6-13 June 1996 and one specimen was found on Little Cumberland Island by R. Bell "around the first of June" 1996 and sent to the Cumberland Island Museum. Only four of the seven were intact. Two contained balloons and each contained from one to four sets of squid beaks. All seven specimens are deposited in the Cumberland Island Museum, two skins (1991 and 1996) and five skeletons (1996).

LITERATURE CITED

- Clapp, R.B., R.C. Banks, D. Morgan-Jacobs and W. Hoffman. 1982. Marine birds of the southeastern United States and Gulf of Mexico. Part I, Gaviiformes through Pelicaniformes. USFWS FWS/OBS-82/01.
- Haney, J.C., P. Brisse, D.R. Jacobson, M.W. Oberle and J.M. Paget. 1986. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10.
- Parsons, T.S. and A.L. Lang. 1991. Leach's Storm-Petrel and rare gulls at Sapelo Island. Oriole 56:29-33.
- Robertson, W.B., Jr. and G.E. Woolfenden. 1992. Florida bird species: An annotated list. FL Ornith. Soc. Special Publ. No. 6.
- Ruckdeschel, C.A., C.R. Shoop and G.W. Sciple. 1994. A mass stranding of Leach's Storm-Petrel in Georgia and Florida. FL Sci. 57(48-49).

¹Cumberland Island Museum, P.O. Box 795, St. Marys, GA 31558 and
²Dept. Biological Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881.

GENERAL NOTES

MASKED BOOBY OFF ST. CATHERINES ISLAND - A single Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) was observed by the four authors for several minutes through 20X60 spotting scopes and 10X binoculars off North Beach of St. Catherines Island, Liberty County, Georgia on 6 April 1996.

The observations were at mid-morning with no wind and no waves on the ocean, the surface being as tranquil as protected waters of a farm pond, and lighting was excellent. The distance from the beach to the bird was approximately 400 m.

We were fortunate in observing the species in adult plumage showing black on all flight feathers from wing tip to the body with the black tail clearly visible as opposed to the white tail of Northern Gannets (*Morus bassanus*) nearby. In fact, during portions of the observations, we had both species in sight in the same focal field, thereby giving a good comparison.

We observed the Masked Booby in flight, preparing to dive, diving, and resting on the surface. The bird appeared smaller than the nearby gannets and seemed to rest longer on the surface after its dive.

We were observant of both dorsal and ventral views of the bird as it spun in its dive as do pelicans and gannets in their attempts to follow their prey's movement after the dive starts.

We did not see the facial mask and yellow mandibles but only a white appearing head as opposed to the yellowish heads of nearby adult gannets. Both the Northern Gannets and the Masked Booby appeared to be in a feeding frenzy probably due to a fast approaching front from the west which within an hour reached the beach with westerly winds and rain.

Burleigh (1958) does not mention the species in the state or offshore. Haney et al. (1986) describe the species as a rare offshore visitor from spring through fall on the outer shelf and over the Gulf Stream giving records on 3 May 1983, 20 June 1985, 30 August 1983 and 2 September 1984.

The species has previously been observed from St. Catherines Island on 8 and 10 January 1993 (R. Hayes, pers. comm.) and its status there listed as vagrant by Urban et al. (1995).

LITERATURE CITED

- Burleigh, T.D. 1958. Georgia birds. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
 Haney, J.C., P. Brisse, D.R. Jacobson, M.W. Oberle, and J.M. Paget. 1986. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10.

Urban, E.K., R.H. Hayes, and J.H. Patterson. 1995. The birds of St. Catherines Island. A checklist. St. Catherines Island, Midway, GA

Betsy Hayes, Lois Urban and Milton Hopkins, Jr., St. Catherines Island Foundation, 182 Camellia Road, Midway, GA 31320 and Betty Stewart, P.O. Box 1260, Fairview, NC 28730.

VIRGINIA RAIL BREEDING RECORD IN GEORGIA - For the last several years I have been studying Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*) in two small (<10 acre) emergent-scrub marshes near Atlanta (*Oriole* 56:41-42). Both of these marshes have had permanent or at least year-round populations of Virginia Rails. While I have heard all of the various types of calls, and observed pair behavior and territorial behavior, I had not been able to find definitive proof of breeding such as a nest or young. Paul Sykes has had Virginia Rails in summer also, in Greene County,



Adult Virginia Rail near Kennesaw, Cobb County, GA on 19 May 1996. Photo by Giff Beaton.

GA, but also no proof of breeding (pers. comm.). The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) mentions breeding records from Atlanta in 1970 and 1971 and possible breeding in Chatham County on 1 Aug. 1981.

On 27 June 1996 I was working the edge of one of these marshes looking for breeding activity of any species for the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas. This marsh is on the edge of Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield National Park in Cobb County and has two separate populations of several pairs of Virginia Rails each. As I was walking along in very shallow water, only several cm deep, I noticed some movement in the thick vegetation in front of me. I tried to "herd" whatever it was toward a small point of land and was rewarded by the flushing of a juvenile Virginia Rail about 2 m in front of me. The bird either could not yet fly or chose not to and pretty noisily ran across a small opening, flapping its wings madly.

While I obviously did not get to study the bird, it was the same size as an adult and was very dark, almost black. The head was somewhat lighter in color, more of a dark gray, but was not fully-feathered (or at least not smoothly-feathered), and the bill appeared all black. I have flushed numerous adults in the last few years and at this range you can usually see the reddish color of the bill. The photograph which accompanies this note is of one of the adults observed responding to a tape earlier in the season at this exact spot, so this juvenile is likely to be an offspring of that adult. Ironically, this juvenile was found in an area where I had not even pinpointed a pair, while another small territory with an identified pair yielded neither nest nor young despite intensive searching by the author!

Giff Beaton, 320 Willow Glen Drive, Marietta, GA 30068.

NESTING COMMON MOORHENS IN BIBB COUNTY - Common Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) nested at two locations in Bibb County during the summer of 1996. There are seven previous records for this unusual species in the Macon and middle Georgia area, all of which have been in either May or December (May 1952, 8 May 1957, 24 May 1965, 22 May 1966, 25 Dec. 1955, 20 Dec. 1986, and 16 Dec. 1995). The first five records are listed in *Birds of Bibb and Houston Counties, Georgia* by Hedvig S. Cater written in 1973. The last two records are from Macon Christmas Bird Count data. It is also listed as accidental in spring in the Birds of the Rum Creek Wildlife Management Area checklist (published May 1991).

I discovered the first nesting location, which was at Lake Wildwood, northwest Bibb County, on 26 July 1996. Lake Wildwood is a large subdivision lake where I live. Last winter the lake was lowered for maintenance purposes. Marsh grasses and a few cattails started growing along the edge as a result. I saw Common Moorhens in this habitat. I was first alerted to their presence by their cackles and calls. I found two adults and three chicks at 1850 that evening and last saw them on 22 Sept. (two juveniles). The adults' black bodies, white stripes along their sides, white edges of undertail coverts and yellow and red beaks were obvious. The chicks' faces were reddish, along with the beaks. Their bodies were coal gray, with a few red feathers on the bend of their wings. Each had a tinge of blue on their supercilium and adjacent area.

The second location of nesting moorhens was discovered in early August at Macon Cherokee Brickyards, a mile southeast of Macon, east-central Bibb County. Ty Ivey heard the adult birds several weeks before he actually saw them, which was on 31 August. Also on that field trip were Lil James and the author. The old mined pit that the moorhens chose to nest in is an oval shaped pond several hundred meters long. The whole pit is surrounded by a very dense marsh, with small "islands" of dirt and plants in the middle. We found two adults, four very young chicks, and eight juveniles (gray, medium sized). Since only two adults were seen with two different age groups of young, we assume the adults must have nested twice in this location. They were last found on 2 Sept. (T. Ivey, K. Clark, J. Amerson, P. Johnson). We birded the area again on 14 Sept. but did not find the moorhens. The pond had begun to be drained, so the birds must have moved to another pond.

Although the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) lists the species as a common permanent resident throughout the coastal plain, they are definitely not common in Bibb and surrounding counties. It will be interesting to see if the Common Moorhens return next year to nest in these two locations.

Paul Johnson, 901 Santa Fe Trail, Macon, GA 31220.

AUGUSTA SIGHTING OF A PIPING PLOVER - At 1330 on 26 April 1996, eight members of the Augusta Audubon Society met to begin our 24 hour Bird-a-thon. The sky varied from purple to ominous black as we recounted severe weather reports of a tornado and thunderstorm watch. Deciding to go ahead with the count, we proceeded to Merry Brickyard Ponds. When we checked the mudflats in the current dig area, I noticed a very light shorebird. Its back and wings were very pale sandy colored.

The black neck band only went partially across the front of the chest. Its legs were orange and the bill was orange with a black tip. We studied it in three scopes for over 15 minutes as it fed and all of us agreed it was a Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). The plover was accompanied by 13 Least Sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*), one Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*), two Lesser Yellowlegs (*T. flavipes*), two Greater Yellowlegs (*T. melanoleuca*) and two dowitchers (*Limnodramus sp.*) but the plover stayed by itself on one side of the mudflat. It fed by picking things off of the surface of the mud rather than by probing.

The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) states that the Piping Plover is accidental in the interior at Conyers on 14 July 1963, at the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge on 22 July 1977 and at Lake Chatuge on 29 July 1983. This is the first time one has been seen in the Augusta area. It is also interesting that the other sightings were all in July which suggests post-breeding dispersal. Yet this sighting is in April, prior to breeding. According to the *Birder's Handbook* (Ehrlich, P.R., D.S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. Simon & Schuster Inc., New York.), Piping Plovers winter mostly in the U.S., occasionally to the Bahamas and Greater Antilles. So, it is most likely that this bird was migrating from its winter area.

Anne R. Waters, 1621 Apple Valley Drive, Augusta, GA 30906.

OBSERVATION OF A RED-NECKED PHALAROPE IN LAURENS COUNTY - In the late afternoon of 11 May 1996, Boak Brantley, Hunter Patterson and I were concluding a day of birding for the North American Migration Count when we encountered a Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*).

I had just driven the truck into a pasture in the northeast section of Laurens County to investigate a small area of marsh for the presence of rails. While the other two prepared to wade, I proceeded to the southwest end of the marsh for a better view of any bird which might flush. I stopped the truck about 25 m from the only small area of open water in the marsh. Scanning the section of mud flats with my binoculars, I observed a bird which I had not seen previously, but which was easily recognizable as a phalarope. After only a few seconds of observation, I realized that it was a new species for the county, a female Red-necked Phalarope in alternate plumage.

At my call, the two waders joined me to view the bird. It was then 16:45 EDT and the sun was still reasonably high in the western sky behind us. We observed the phalarope for about 25 minutes. I was using binoculars and Hunter was using a Kowa 27X telescope as he sketched

the markings. I moved to the water's edge, using my binoculars Celestron ED 9.5X44 only sometimes while the bird moved up and down the flats at a distance from me ranging from 20 m to as close as 4 m.

There were four other sandpipers on the flats, two were Least Sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*) and two were Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*). The phalarope ignored these birds while it went busily about its feeding. It would walk, sometimes run or swim, picking from the surface to the left and then to the right. It did not "spin" as I have seen Wilson's Phalaropes (*P. tricolor*) spin. The bird was quick to turn itself 180 degrees to walk in the direction from which it had just come. Occasionally, it crossed a small area of mud, exposing its gray legs as it moved.

The bird's coloration was much richer than I had imagined. The head was dark, almost black. There was a very small elliptical white spot above each eye. The needle pointed bill was also black, and not nearly as long as that of a Wilson's Phalarope. But neither was it short and thick like that of the Red Phalarope (*P. fulicaria*), which I had seen in the same general area in October 1993 (Patterson, T.K., 1994, Red Phalarope observed near Dublin, *Oriole* 59:15-17). A reddish stripe extended down each side of the neck, the two stripes joining on the breast just below the white throat and above the white belly. The "red" color did not fade into the white of the throat and belly, but retained its clear edge of color demarcation. The back was solid except for four, narrow, salmon colored stripes running lengthwise down the back. The flanks were white, with smudges of gray. The rump was dark, the legs were gray.

Twice, I watched the bird as it flushed, showing white wing stripes against the dark wings. At 1710 EDT, all of us turned our attention to the marsh, leaving the bird feeding on the mudflats.

The Red-necked Phalarope apparently departed during the night since we could not locate it in the area on the following day during a morning search.

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

EASTERN PHOEBE NEST IN THE UPPER COASTAL PLAIN - Active nests of the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) have recently been found in the upper coastal plain of central Georgia in Washington, Laurens, and Houston counties. These finds mark a gradual expansion of the southern breeding range from the north Georgia counties over the past four decades. Breeding of this species in the coastal plain has not previously been reported in *The Oriole*.

Burleigh and Oriole Records

Burleigh (1958) lists the status of the Eastern Phoebe in Georgia as "resident and common in the more northern counties, ... and occurs casually in summer as far south as Atlanta and Athens." He comments that "there is some evidence that it is gradually extending its breeding range southward into the lower Piedmont, and in time may reach the fall line."

Some of the "evidence" referred to by Burleigh may have been furnished by records in the early fifties of Fred Denton. Denton (1951) found evidence of summering and nest building in the southern piedmont, although he could not confirm breeding at that time. Later he (1954) documented breeding in Putnam County in the lower piedmont, and recorded additional records of summering birds. All of these records occurred on the eastern side of the state.

In the piedmont on the western side of the state near Columbus, Wells (1969) reported finding a single phoebe nest in 1962, 1963, 1966 and at three locations in 1969.

At about the same time in Richmond County near the fall line, Denton (1969) reported nesting. He also called attention to previously unreported records - an early 1954 record in Lincoln County and a 1963 record in Harris County.

Milton Hopkins (1969) reported a summering bird in June and July of 1969 far south of the fall line in Wheeler County. He saw no mate and found no evidence of nesting.

No further indications of the expansion of the breeding range appeared in *The Oriole* in the next two decades. Apparently, though, the phoebe was consolidating its position as a breeder just north of and near the fall line. In a report to "From the field", there is a reference to "the increase as a nesting species in the Augusta area" by Anne and Vernon Waters (Moore 1991). In a recent letter to me, the Waters indicated that none of these records occurred below the fall line (pers. comm.).

Recent Records in the Coastal Plain

An observer for the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas, Lyn Schlup, reported a phoebe nest with three young in her yard in Davisboro, Washington County in June 1995 (pers. comm.). The nest was found in pipes near a stream at the rear of her lot. This is in the Riddleville quadrangle of the Georgia 7.5 minute topographic maps of the Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey.

Dan Guynn, also working with the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas in the Unadilla quadrangle in Houston County, noted a phoebe nest on 12 April 1996 under a bridge on County Line Road near Dooly County. On

5 May, as he approached the nest, a phoebe flushed. This nest was not easily accessible so he was unable to examine its contents. This site is approximately 90 km below the fall line.

In Laurens County on 19 August 1995, Dan Guynn discovered a vacated phoebe nest while leading a trip into the area with a group from the Ocmulgee Audubon Society. He notified me of the location and suggested that I be alert to possible breeding at the site in the spring of 1996.

On 13 April 1996, Dr. Allen Rhodes, while doing his Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas survey in the Cow Hell Swamp quadrangle in Laurens County, noted a pair of Eastern Phoebes near the prior year's nest site. The nest was very accessible in a culvert under the sandy Thompson Davis Road just 300 m north of its junction with the Old Toombsboro Road in the northern part of the county. The semicircular nest, made of the usual grasses, moss, and mud was attached high on the two and a half m vertical sidewall of the culvert. There was only about 10 cm clearance between the top of the nest and the top of the culvert.

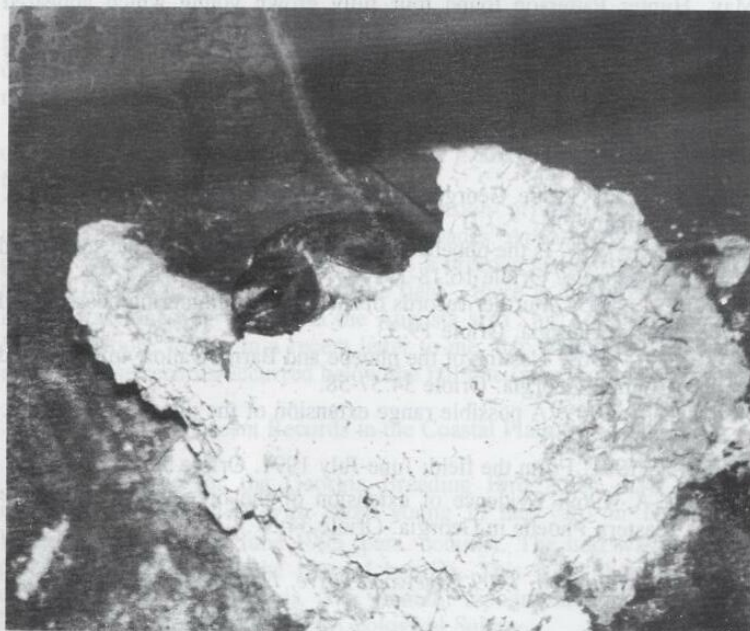
On 20 April, Allen Rhodes flushed an incubating phoebe from the nest. On 4 May, Boak Brantley and I noted four young nestlings. On 11 May, Hunter Patterson found four fully grown young which appeared almost ready to leave the nest; and on 15 May, I found the nest empty, but saw four phoebes in the immediate area. And on 31 May, I found the female again incubating four eggs, a second clutch.

LITERATURE CITED

- Burleigh, T.D. 1958. Georgia birds. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman, OK.
- Denton, J.F. 1951. Is the phoebe attempting to extend its range southward in Georgia? *Oriole* 16:18-19.
- _____. 1954. Further records of the phoebe summering near the fall line in Georgia. *Oriole* 19:33.
- _____. 1969. Nesting of the phoebe and Barn Swallow in Richmond County, Georgia. *Oriole* 34:57-58.
- Hopkins, M. 1969. A possible range extension of the phoebe in Georgia. *Oriole* 34:26.
- Moore, T. 1991. From the field: June-July 1991. *Oriole* 56:85-88.
- Wells, L.A. 1969. Evidence of extension of the breeding range of the Eastern Phoebe in Georgia. *Oriole* 34:57.

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

FIRST GEORGIA RECORD OF CLIFF SWALLOW NESTING AWAY FROM WATER - On 27 June 1996 I was working in the Ramhurst quadrangle of the Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas just west of Carter's Lake in Murray County. I had noticed quite a few Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) working a large field and was attempting to figure out where they were all going so I could hopefully locate some nests to confirm them as breeding in this quad. Even though they were pretty far from the road, I suddenly realized there were several Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) mixed in with the Barn Swallows. Their squared off tails and buffy rumps really stood out among the longer tailed and glossy blue-backed Barn Swallows. Cliff Swallows have been nesting at Carter's Lake for several years and have been expanding their range elsewhere in Georgia as well, but I am not aware of any nests anywhere in the state that are not over water. I assumed that they must have come from one of the colonies at the lake but was puzzled at how far away they were from the water.



Cliff Swallow nest in Murray County, 27 June 1996. Photo by Giff Beaton.

I ended up following them as they foraged through several fields and finally discovered them going in and out of a small barn on private property. After obtaining permission from the landowner, I went into the barn and found two used nests and two fledged young Cliff Swallows (see accompanying photo). The owner was aware that he had many swallows on his property but was not aware he had two types so he could shed no light on how long the Cliff Swallows may have been there. Another item of note is that while the two species were foraging together, the eight Cliff Swallows present were going in and out of only the small barn and the many dozens of Barn Swallows present were avoiding that barn and using several nearby larger barns.

Interestingly, in South Carolina, Cliff Swallows also nested only over water for years but in the last several years they have been following some of the interstates (I-77, I-26) away from traditional colonies and building nests under the interstate overpasses (Robin Carter, pers. comm.). Possibly this small group in the Ramhurst barn is a recent expansion from one of the Carter's Lake colonies. Birders in Georgia should probably keep their eyes open for this species to see if they follow the lead of the South Carolina birds and start utilizing more sites away from water.

Giff Beaton, 320 Willow Glen Drive, Marietta, GA 30068.

UNUSUALLY HIGH FIELD SPARROW NEST FOUND - While searching for bird nests on 21 June 1996 in Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper County, I found a nest approximately 3.5 m above the ground in a flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) tree. When I approached the nest, a bird with a rusty cap flushed from the nest into the surrounding vegetation, but I was not able to get a clear look at it. The nest, constructed of fine materials, was placed 1.2 m from the stem of the tree. It contained three blue, speckled eggs. I concluded that this might be a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) nest because of the nest-height, placement, and construction, and the blue egg color (Harrison 1975) and because the adult's rusty cap seemed to match that described in Scott (1987). The forest around the nest had a sparse loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) canopy and a dense deciduous mid-story.

When I checked the nest the first three times to make sure that it was still active, the adult was not on the nest. On the fourth next check, an adult bird flushed, and appeared to almost fall out of the nest to the ground. The bird flitted among the low brush, chipping repeatedly. I thought this "falling" behavior was unusual for a Chipping Sparrow, so I followed the bird until I got a good look at it through my binoculars. It was a female Field Sparrow (*S. pusilla*). The pink bill and legs, and facial markings described in Scott (1987) were clear and unambiguous.

Harrison (1975) and Ehrlich et al. (1988) noted that Field Sparrows generally build nests on the ground or less than 1.2 m high. They usually nest in old fields, woodland edges, and briar thickets (Harrison 1975, Ehrlich et al. 1988). Although this nest was in a woodland edge there were few of the small sapling stage trees, shrubs, or grasses typically associated with Field Sparrow nesting habitat. However, typical Field Sparrow nesting habitat was available across the refuge road, not more than 45 m away. Field Sparrows were often heard in the southern portion of the compartment during surveys, but none of their nests were found. This bird nested in what appeared to be sub-optimal habitat when there was an abundance of suitable habitat close at hand.

LITERATURE CITED

- Ehrlich, P.R., D.S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. The birder's handbook. Simon & Schuster Inc., New York.
- Harrison, H.H. 1975. A field guide to the birds' nests: United States east of the Mississippi River. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- Scott, S.L. (Ed.). 1987. Field guide to the birds of North America. 2nd Ed. National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

Robert V. Raftovich, Jr., Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

FROM THE FIELD

December 1995 - May 1996

It is really difficult to adequately summarize a full six month period of birding in Georgia. There are so many highlights that it is impossible to mention all of them. Needless to say, Georgia observers are getting out in increasing numbers and finding many exciting things about birding in Georgia. Now, if we could get them all to report their sightings and document their rare ones we really would be cooking!

Let's start the highlights by noting what was undoubtedly a Georgia first - four species of grebes in sight at one time. Luckily, the rarest of these grebes, the Red-necked, lingered in the Lake Lanier area for several weeks and was enjoyed by many observers. Good inland counts of Double-crested Cormorants were received along with large numbers of wintering Anhingas. There were several reports of White-fronted Geese plus the third record for Ross' Goose for the state. A Brant up in the mountains was a very impressive record but the "word" did not get out on this bird in time for many people to see it even though it stayed around for a few weeks. Two Harlequin Ducks stayed in the Atlanta area for about 9 days and were enjoyed by a horde of observers.

Rough-legged Hawks were reported from four separate areas and a pair of Peregrine Falcons managed to bring off three young in downtown Atlanta. A winter shorebird survey along the coast managed to find 124 Piping Plovers, five Long-billed Curlews and eleven Purple Sandpipers. A rare Glaucous Gull was seen at St. Simons and two Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen at the Walter F. George Dam.

Eurasian-Collared Doves reached Atlanta and the Burrowing Owl near Bainbridge was still being seen. It was a good time for hummingbirds with four species being reported. Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen at a good variety of locations and a singing Golden-crowned Kinglet in the GA mountains may lead to adding this species to our breeding bird list. A rare Warbling Vireo was seen at Kennesaw Mt. in Cobb County. Warblers were reported in decent numbers but primarily from Kennesaw Mt. It would be good to have more complete reports from around the state to determine what kind of warbler migration we really did have. Wintering Wilson's Warblers were reported from both Callaway Gardens and Laurens County. Winter finches were fairly well reported with decent reports of Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks plus a report of Red Crossbills visiting a Fannin County feeder. Read on!

Abbreviations used include: AAS - Atlanta Audubon Society, AFB - Air Force Base, CBC - Christmas Bird Count, Co. - county, CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Cobb Co., ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton Co., FDR - Franklin Delano Roosevelt, KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield in

Cobb Co., m.ob. - many observers, NM - National Monument, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas Co. and SGSBA - South Georgia Rare Bird Alert.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

RED-THROATED LOON - This species is always rare inland so sightings of two birds at Lake Lanier in Hall Co. on 6 Dec. (John Paget, Jack Carusos) and on 19 Dec. in Gwinnett Co. by Paul Raney were noteworthy. Another inland sighting occurred at West Point Lake where one was seen on 11 Jan. (Adam Byrne). Along the coast a good count of 30+ was made at Tybee Island on 18 Feb. (Brad Bergstrom). Mark Oberle had at least 15 at Tybee Is. on 1 March and Hunter Patterson had at least 13 at St. Catherines Is. on 21 March.

COMMON LOON - The highest reported count was 15 at Lake Hartwell on 1 Feb. (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen). A somewhat late bird was seen at the DeKalb Reservoir in north Atlanta on 19 May (Jeff Sewell).

HORNED GREBE - Adam Byrne had an impressive count of 60-70 birds at West Point Lake on 11 Jan. This lake is infrequently visited by birders and might yield other interesting records if covered better.

RED-NECKED GREBE - One of the most significant sightings of the period was the group of Red-necked Grebes that were found at Lake Lanier in Gwinnett Co. on 28 Jan. by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert. Unlike most reports of this species, these birds remained in the same general area for many weeks and were seen by numerous observers from around the state. As many as three birds were present during much of the period. On 10 Feb. a new chapter in Grebe history was written for Georgia when four species, Pied-billed, Horned, Red-necked and Eared, could be seen at one time at Lake Lanier (Paul Sykes, Paul Raney, Bruce Dralle). After Pierre Howard saw two birds on 16 March there was a long period when they weren't reported but then on 21 April Jim Flynn saw two birds in the same area.

EARED GREBE - There were a number of reports of this species which used to be considered an accidental visitor to the state. The first sighting was one on the Rum Creek CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Terry Johnson) and perhaps the same bird was reported in the same area on 17 Feb. by Dan Guynn. The Lake Lanier bird mentioned under the Red-necked Grebe was present from at least 10 Feb. (Paul Sykes, Paul Raney, Bruce Dralle) through 12 March (Bob Zaremba). Two birds were at Lake Lanier on 28 April (Paul Raney) and another bird was in Monroe Co. on 11 May (Terry Johnson, Larry Ross).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - There were several reports during the period of the flock of pelicans which frequents the waters between St. Marys and the southern end of Cumberland Island. The peak count was 40-50 on 15 April (fide SGRBA).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Some rather impressive numbers were reported from a couple inland locations. Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett reported 400 from Eufaula NWR and vicinity on 9 and 10 Dec., the Macon CBC recorded 348 on 16 Dec. (fide Paul Johnson) and the 26 Dec. Augusta CBC had 442.

GREAT CORMORANT - This extremely rare species in Georgia was reported from Sapelo Is. on 27 and 28 April (Jim Blum fide Jeff Sewell).

ANHINGA - A rather amazing winter count of 23 was made on the 16 Dec. Macon CBC (fide Paul Johnson). This would be an impressive winter count even at a coastal location. Ten were still there on 10 Jan. (Giff Beaton et al.).

AMERICAN BITTERN - The only report came from McIntosh Co. on 17 April (Doris Cohrs).

GREAT BLUE HERON - Nest building was noted as early as 27 Feb. in Whitfield Co. by Harriett DiGioia. This colony contained as many as 20 nests later in the spring (Harriett DiGioia).

GREAT EGRET - Another impressive count was the 213 birds Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett had on 9 and 10 Dec. at Eufaula NWR and vicinity. Eight birds were in the Macon area on 20 Jan. (Giff Beaton et al.). A very rare winter sighting for the Floyd Co. area was a bird seen on 1 Feb. along Route 140 by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen.

SNOWY EGRET - Rather rare for this early in the year was a bird in Greene Co. on 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.).

LITTLE BLUE HERON - Rare for the time of year was one bird in Greene Co. on 25 March (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). Other spring reports from the piedmont came from SCSP on 5 April (Hal Massie) and two birds (adults) at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett, Kevin Danchisen).

TRICOLORED HERON - Also unusual for being inland this early in the year was a bird in Greene Co. on 26 May by Giff and Becky Beaton et al.

REDDISH EGRET - Whereas this species was once considered very rare even in the summer along the coast, its numbers have increased to the point that we are now picking up winter sightings such as the one at Little St. Simons Island on 15 Jan. (Mike Harris). One bird was seen on Little Cumberland Is. on 21 May by Brad Winn.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - One immature bird in the Macon area on 2 Dec. was a good local record (Ty Ivey).

WHITE IBIS - An excellent count of 1000 was made at Grand Bay in Lowndes Co. on 21 Dec. (fide Gena Dwyer).

GLOSSY IBIS - Two were seen at the Harris Neck NWR on 16 Jan. (Dale Hardee). The winter status of this species is poorly known as the *Annotated Checklist* does not mention any winter dates. More usual were the 14 seen at Jekyll Island on 6 April by Helen and Robert Brackett.

- ROSEATE SPOONBILL - A rare inland winter sighting came from Liberty Co. on 27 Dec. (fide Royce Hayes).
- WOOD STORK - A very out of range bird was reported from DeKalb Co. on 23 April by Wes Chester.
- TUNDRA SWAN - Very rare anywhere in Georgia was a Tundra Swan discovered in the Gillsville area in Banks Co. on 2 Dec. which then stayed until mid-Feb. (John Paget). A second bird was seen at the ELHLAF on 16 Dec. by Patrick Brisse. Another swan, of undetermined species, was seen on the Marietta CBC the same day (fide Bill Blakeslee). There are free flying Mute Swans around, especially around cities, so we must be careful in identifying these birds.
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - The bird that was discovered in the Dublin area in Nov. remained there at least until 3 Dec. (Tom Patterson, Nancy Gobris). Two other birds were seen at Rum Creek NWR on 17 Feb. by Dan Guynn. Eight others were found in the company of nine Snow Geese in Greene Co. on 18 Feb. (Paul Sykes). These birds remained through the end of the month.
- SNOW GOOSE - There were a few scattered reports from around the state with the highest count of 30 coming from the Roswell area on 12 Dec. (Anne Lawson).
- ROSS' GOOSE - One bird was discovered in Oconee Co. on 25 March by Paul Sykes and it remained there until 31 March. This is the third record for Georgia.
- BRANT - This "sea" goose is accidental in Georgia even along the coast so imagine the surprise when one was found in the Blairsville area during the month and recorded on the Blairsville CBC (Ellen Cowgill). Unfortunately the word of the occurrence did not get on the Rare Bird Alert early enough so few observers could make the trip to the small farm before the bird was last seen on 14 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). There are inland records for Tennessee and Alabama so a record from the Georgia mountains is not completely unprecedented.
- GADWALL - Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett had an excellent count of 44 birds along Highway 411 in Floyd County on 23 Feb.
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL - Anne Waters reported a pair with five young in the Augusta area on 5 May.
- NORTHERN SHOVELER - Paul Sykes and Cam Kepler had a very impressive 300 at the Kings Bay Sub Base at St. Mary's on 26-29 Feb. Thirty was a good count at the ELHLAF on 1 April (Giff and Connie Beaton). A late bird was still at the ELHLAF on 12 May (Jeff Sewell).
- CANVASBACK - This species was fairly widely reported with the best counts being 21 on the Macon CBC on 16 Dec. (fide Paul Johnson), and an amazing 150 in one raft at the Kings Bay Sub Base at St. Mary's on 29 Feb. (Paul Sykes and Cam Kepler).

- REDHEAD - Twelve was a good count at the ELHLAF on 9 Jan. (Wes Chester). Two were seen at St. Simons Island on 1 March by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett.
- RING-NECKED DUCK - Late birds were seen at Augusta on 5 May (Anne Waters) and on 11 May in Laurens Co. (Tommy Patterson). Very high counts of the species were the 1091 on the Macon CBC on 16 Dec. (fide Paul Johnson) and 3516 on the Rum Creek CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Terry Johnson).
- GREATER SCAUP - This species is always rare but probably very overlooked in inland Georgia. Four were reported from the SCSP on 9 Dec. (Jeff Sewell), one was at the ELHLAF on the same day (Jeff Sewell and Patrick Brisse), two were in the Macon area on 10 Jan. (Giff Beaton et al.). "Several" were seen from the Sapelo Island ferry on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle..
- LESSER SCAUP - A very high count was the 1106 on the Rum Creek CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Terry Johnson).
- HARLEQUIN DUCK - This was undoubtedly the bird of the period. A pair of these northern ducks was found by Dan Sutherlin at SCSP on 19 Feb. and they were enjoyed by many observers through 27 Feb. For a full account of this extremely rare species, see *Oriole* 61:6-7.
- BLACK SCOTER - Jeff Sewell had a decent count of 500 at Jekyll Island on 17 Dec.
- SURF SCOTER - The only report was one at Jekyll Island on 17 Dec. by Jeff Sewell.
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - Brad Bergstrom had 25+ at Jekyll Island on 2 Dec. and two were still there on 17 Dec. (Jeff Sewell). The only inland sighting was a bird in Laurens Co. between 10 and 13 Jan. (Tommy Patterson and Helen Woods).
- COMMON GOLDENEYE - Single birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 2 Dec. (Bob Manns), at SCSP on 3 Dec. (Patrick Brisse), at FDR State Park on 16 and 17 Dec. (Hal Massie) and back at the ELHLAF on 21 Dec. (Carol Lambert). A very good count of six was made at Gillsville Lake on 2 Jan. by Brad Bergstrom. One was still there on 14 Jan. (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert). In Feb. there were six additional reports from the Atlanta area - all of single birds with the exception of two at Roswell on 22 Feb. (Eran Toomer). A record late bird was seen in Monroe Co. on 11 May by Terry Johnson and Larry Ross.
- BUFFLEHEAD - Paul Sykes and Cam Kepler counted a very impressive 910 birds at the Kings Bay Sub Base at St. Mary's on 2 Feb.
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle had a very good count of 800 birds from the Sapelo Island ferry on 2 March.
- RUDDY DUCK - Patrick Brisse had a good count of 87 at SCSP on 3 Dec. Two late birds were still at the ELHLAF on 9 May (Brock Hutchins).

- OSPREY** - Rare for a piedmont location was a pair of Ospreys which returned to Blalock Lake (part of the ELHLAF) and by 30 March were attending a nest (Carol Lambert and Patrick Brisse).
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - There were a number of early reports for the period. The earliest, and most unusual, was from Perry on 17 March (Pam Guynn). This would appear to be the earliest record ever for the state. Other early reports came from Jekyll Island on 21 March (Lorraine Dusenbury fide Doris Cohrs), McIntosh Co. on 23 March (SGRBA) and Clinch Co. also on 23 March (SGRBA). An out of range bird was reported from Cobb Co. on 2 April by Erin Bouthillier. Two other sightings were single birds in Screven Co. on 23 April (Anne Waters) and near Everett on 21 April by Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore.
- MISSISSIPPI KITE** - A very early bird was reported from the Valdosta area on 15 April (SGRBA). This would appear to be a record early arrival date for the state. An out of range bird was seen at KMT on 6 May by Giff Beaton. More usual was a bird at Hamburg State Park on 4 May by Nancy Iha.
- BALD EAGLE** - Paul Sykes and Cam Kepler had a total of four birds at Kings Bay during the period of 28-29 Feb. An adult was a very rare visitor to Laurens Co. on 6 April (Hunter and Tommy Patterson). A nest at Carter's Lake was reported by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen on 28 April. Three were seen at Lake Oconee on 12 May (Eugenia Thompson and Dennis Rice), one was seen near Piedmont NWR on 18 May (Bill Blakeslee, Brock Hutchins, Jim Flynn) and another was seen at Jackson Lake in Butts Co. on 23 May (Ann Daniels). The pair at Carter's Lake were still there on 24 May (Giff Beaton et al.).
- COOPER'S HAWK** - Paul Sykes and Cam Kepler found a nest at Kings Bay Submarine Base near St. Marys on 7 May.
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - Rare for the coastal area was a bird in McIntosh Co. on 10 April (Doris Cohrs).
- ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** - One dark phase bird was reported from Monroe Co. on 8 Jan. by Billy and Brenda Dunbar (fide Paul Sykes). There were reports of at least one, and sometimes two, on the Lookout Plateau starting on 20 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee et al.). David Cree saw a bird in Walker Co. on 10 and 17 Feb. and another was seen in Pickens Co. on 25 Feb. by Greg Greer.
- GOLDEN EAGLE** - One immature was seen on the Lookout Plateau on 20 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee et al.). Another bird was reported from Oconee Co. on 3 May by Billy Dunbar.
- MERLIN** - Always a good find inland, one bird was seen in the Dublin area on 3 Dec. by Tommy Patterson, one was seen in Clay Co. on 10 Dec. by Giff Beaton, another was seen on the Lookout Plateau on 20 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee et al.) and Tommy Patterson had another in Laurens Co. on

- 29 Feb. More expected were birds at Tybee Island on 3 March (Jerry and Marie Amerson) and at Darien on 5 April (Doris Cohrs).
- PEREGRINE FALCON** - Single birds were seen in Walker Co. on 18 Feb. (Rick Waldrip) and in McIntosh Co. the same day by Billy and Brenda Dunbar. Very rare for the Macon area was a bird in the downtown area on 1 March (Ty Ivey). The best news was that a pair in downtown Atlanta had a couple chicks hatch by 25 April (Pierre Howard) and a final total of three in May (Pierre Howard). There were three sightings of the species around the Atlanta area which could have been the adults or possibly migrating birds. One was seen at Sapelo Island on 17 April by Doris Cohrs.
- PLAIN CHACHALACA** - Six birds were reported from Sapelo Island on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle. Nine were seen there on 21 April by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.
- RUFFED GROUSE** - Four birds in the Blairsville area on 16 Jan. was a good sighting (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett, Terry Moore). Three birds were seen at Rabun Bald on 25 May by Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby.
- BLACK RAIL** - This rare species was reported from Greene Co. on 24 April by Paul Sykes and Billy Dunbar. Paul Sykes recorded this species again at the same location on 4 May.
- KING RAIL** - Giff Beaton et al. had three birds at the KMT marsh on 7 April and again on 25 May.
- VIRGINIA RAIL** - This species was reported from several inland marshes most notably a marsh near KMT, a Greene Co. marsh and also one in Floyd Co. The highest counts were five at the KMT marsh on the 17 Dec. Marietta CBC (Giff Beaton et al.), ten at the same location on 31 March (Giff Beaton) and seven on 7 April (Giff Beaton et al.).
- SORA** - Rare for the area in addition to time of year was one bird on the Macon CBC on 16 Dec. (fide Paul Johnson).
- COMMON MOORHEN** - Very rare for the piedmont was a bird seen on the Peachtree City CBC on 16 Dec. (fide Chris Lambrecht). A good find for the Macon area was a bird at the Brickyards on 23 March (Gary Gray).
- AMERICAN COOT** - A flock of about 300 on Lake Lanier on 31 March was undoubtedly a migrating flock (Jeff Sewell). A high count of 890 was made at SCSP on 5 April by Hal Massie.
- SANDHILL CRANE** - There were a number of southbound birds seen over the Atlanta area during the time period of 6-9 Dec. when a total of nine reports were received totalling approximately 500 birds (fide Terry Moore). Even in January some birds were still headed south with several flocks noted around the state but evidently the last southbound flocks were two seen by Bob Humphries over Marietta on 27 Jan. The northbound migration began with 727 being counted between 10 and 17 Feb. in Murray and Whitfield Cos. by Harriett DiGioia. Three birds were seen over Conyers on 17 Feb. (Paul Raney). During the period

between 20 and 24 Feb. at least 10 flocks totalling 500-600 birds were seen over the Atlanta area. Elsewhere in the state 15 were seen at Lake Oconee on 24 Feb. (Anselm Atkins and Margaret Kavanaugh) and 100+ near Fitzgerald on 26 Feb. (Bob Humphries). In March, seven reports were received with the best count being 362 on 4 March by Hal Massie at Austell. The last report was of six in the vicinity of the ELHLAF on 24 March by Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - Two were seen at the ELHLAF on 21 March (Carol Lambert), six in Bartow Co. on 21 March (Joe Greenberg), one at Jekyll Is. on 23 March (Doris Cohrs and Brad Bergstrom) and two again in Bartow Co. on 24 March (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert).

WILSON'S PLOVER - Chuck Hunter found a very surprising nine birds at Tybee Island on 15 Jan. and on the same day eight were seen at Sapelo Island and two others on Egg Island (fide Malcolm Hodges).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - For an inland location, 21 was a very good count at the ELHLAF on 12 May (Jeff Sewell).

PIPING PLOVER - Chuck Hunter also had an excellent count of 17 at Tybee Island on 15 Jan. The winter survey of this species on 15 Jan. along the coast yielded 124 birds (fide Chuck Hunter). Four were seen at Jekyll Is. on 24 March (SGARBA). Very out of range was a bird in the Augusta area on 26 April by Anne Waters et al. Please see elsewhere in this issue for details of this sighting.

BLACK-NECKED STILT - A very rare inland sighting was a bird in Lowndes Co. on 22 April (Barbara Passmore).

AMERICAN AVOCET - Jeff Sewell had a good count of 16 along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 17 Dec. Even better were the 55+ at Jekyll Island on 28 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee, Don and Doris Cohrs) and 68 there on 1 March (Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett). A very rare inland sighting came from Monroe Co. on 11 May (Terry Johnson and Larry Ross).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS - Giff Beaton et al. had eight birds at Macon on 20 Jan.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS - In the Macon area, Giff Beaton et al. reported two on 20 Jan. An early bird was at the ELHLAF on 22 Feb. (Carol Lambert). Very good numbers were reported from the Atlanta area with 95 at the ELHLAF on 14 April (Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett) and 68 in Bartow Co. on 7 April (Jeff Sewell). Another good count of 43 came from the ELHLAF on 5 May (Paul Raney).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - This rather rare species was fairly well reported. Seven were seen in Laurens Co. on 7 April (Hunter and Tommy Patterson), one at the ELHLAF on 9 April (Carol Lambert), nine in Laurens Co. on 10 and 23 April (Tommy Patterson), one at Augusta on 19 April (Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore) and five in Bulloch Co. on 14 April (Mark Welford). The last

sightings were from Laurens Co. on 2 May (Tommy Patterson) and 4 May in Oconee Co. (Dick Baxtor-Jones).

WHIMBREL - Brad Winn has noted the presence of large numbers of Whimbrels roosting along the coast during migration. One roost in Liberty Co. hosted 2400 birds and several other large roosts have been located.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW - A count of five on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 16 Dec. probably represents the highest one day count ever for Georgia (fide Hunter Patterson). The Georgia coastal survey on 15 Jan. reported five birds (fide Malcolm Hodges). One was seen on Sapelo Is. on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle.

RED KNOT - Jeff Sewell had a good count of 225 birds along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 17 Dec. Another good count was 100+ at Jekyll Is. on 23 March by Brad Bergstrom.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER - An extremely late bird was one in Laurens Co. on 9 Dec. (Tommy Patterson). A good inland count was the 25 on 12 May at the ELHLAF by Jeff Sewell.

LEAST SANDPIPER - On 9 Dec. Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett had 16 in the Lake Eufaula area providing further evidence of this species' occurrence inland during the winter. In the Macon area Paul Johnson had a decent count of 17 on 4 March. Along the coast, Paul Sykes had an impressive count of 5100 at the Kings Bay Submarine Base near St. Marys on 26-29 March. In the Atlanta area, 45 was a good count at the ELHLAF on 5 May (Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - A very late bird was seen in Laurens Co. on 28 Dec. by Tommy Patterson.

PURPLE SANDPIPER - On the Georgia Coastal Survey, eleven birds were counted on Tybee Island on 15 Jan. (fide Malcolm Hodges).

DUNLIN - Rare for the Dublin area was a bird found by Tommy Patterson on 9 Dec. which stayed at least until 28 Jan. (Jerry and Marie Amerson).

STILT SANDPIPER - Perhaps a record number for the state were the 201 at the Kings Bay Submarine Base near St. Marys on 26-29 March (Paul Sykes). Two birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 23 May by Brock Hutchins.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER - A single bird was seen in Laurens Co. on 15-16 May for a very rare spring record (Tommy Patterson).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - Rather unusual was a bird in Bartow Co. on 23 March by Jeff Sewell. More expected were two birds at the ELHLAF on 5 May by Paul Raney.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - One bird was found in Laurens Co. on 11 May by Tommy Patterson, Hunter Patterson, Allen Rhodes and Boak Brantley for a very rare inland record.

LAUGHING GULL - Quite unusual was one seen by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett at the Lake Walter F. George Dam on 9 Dec.

- BONAPARTE'S GULL - Paul Raney had a decent inland count of 60 at Lake Lanier on 19 Dec. Fifty-six were seen at SCSP on 5 April by Hal Massie and 60 were seen at Lake Lanier on 21 April by Jim Flynn.
- RING-BILLED GULL - Rather interesting were 10+ birds seen in the Blairsville area on 16 Jan. (Giff Beaton and Terry Moore). The status of the species in the mountains during the winter is poorly documented.
- HERRING GULL - Jeff Sewell had a rather high inland count when he had 13 at Lake Lanier on 7 Jan.
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Very rare for an inland location was one at the Walter F. George Dam on 3 Dec. (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert). More usual were single birds at Jekyll Island on 17 Dec. (Jeff Sewell), at St. Simons Is. on 27 Feb. (Brad Winn) and Tybee Is. the same day (Mark Oberle). Probably the same Tybee Is. bird was reported again on 3 March by Jerry and Marie Amerson.
- GLAUCOUS GULL - This rare winter visitor was reported from St. Simons Is. on 18 Feb. by Billy and Brenda Dunbar.
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - A truly rare report was of two kittiwakes at the Walter F. George Dam on 1 Dec. by Adam Byrne. Details of this sighting need to be documented in *The Oriole* as it would be a first inland record for the species in Georgia.
- FORSTER'S TERN - Adam Byrne had a very good count of 40 birds at West Point Lake on 11 Jan. This shows that the species can be found far inland even during the winter. A little further inland was a bird at Lake Lanier on 21 April (Jim Flynn).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE - This species finally made an appearance in the Atlanta area when a bird was seen by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert in the Tucker area on 18 May.
- WHITE-WINGED DOVE - This very rare species was seen near Perry on 16 April by Tommy Willard. Any sighting of this species in Georgia deserves being documented in *The Oriole*.
- COMMON GROUND-DOVE - For some strange reason the area around the ELHLAF has provided us with a small number of records for this species over the past few years. On 16 March Carol Lambert found two birds in this area.
- MONK PARAKEET - A small colony of this species in the Claxton area was being eliminated by state DNR personnel during March (fide Jeff Sewell).
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - There were two reports of this difficult to find species. Single birds were recorded in the Rome area on 3 May by Nelson Dobbs and near the KMT marsh on 4 May (Giff Beaton).
- BARN OWL - A nesting bird was found in Johnson Co. on 28 Jan. where it had nested in previous years (Jerry and Marie Amerson).
- BURROWING OWL - The bird which had been previously reported from the Bainbridge area earlier in the year was still there to be counted on the

- 29 Dec. Bainbridge CBC (fide Oscar Dewberry). It was seen again on 9 Feb. by Oscar Dewberry.
- SHORT-EARED OWL - Very unusual for the Atlanta area was a bird heard on the Peachtree City CBC on 16 Dec. by Hugh Garrett.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL - Definitely unusual was a bird in the Grand Bay WMA in Lowndes Co. on 21 May (Brad Bergstrom).
- RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - One bird was fairly early in the Darien area on 15 March (Doris Cohrs).
- BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - One bird was reported from the Brunswick area during the month of Dec. (fide Ken Clark). Another bird was reported from the Savannah area through 24 Feb. by Gil Stacey.
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - Of seven wintering hummingbirds in the Atlanta area during December, five were banded and identified as this species (fide Jeff Sewell). Two other *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were reported from the Valdosta area during the month of Dec. (Barbara Passmore). A bird which spent the winter at a Hahira feeder was last seen on 2 April (Betty Scruggs).
- ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD - This rare visitor to the state was recorded at Macon during the month of Dec. (fide Jerry Amerson) and at Watkinsville on 1-3 Dec. (Billy and Brenda Dunbar).
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER - This species was recorded in Greene Co. on 4 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.), again on 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.) and at Dillard on 25 May (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert).
- LEAST FLYCATCHER - In the extreme NE corner of GA one bird was found at its fairly reliable spot along Hale Ridge Rd. on 25 May by Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby.
- EASTERN PHOEBE - A nest with four young was found in Laurens Co. on 11 May by Tommy Patterson. Please look elsewhere in this issue for details of this occurrence.
- WESTERN KINGBIRD - One bird was seen on the Sapelo Island CBC on 30 Dec. (Milton Hopkins fide Hunter Patterson).
- GRAY KINGBIRD - Very rare for the winter season was a bird recorded on the St. Catherines Is. CBC on 16 Dec. (Les Davenport).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - This species is always rare in the state so one at Wassau Is. on 24 May is certainly worth mentioning (Jerry Amerson fide Mark Oberle).
- HORNED LARK - Good counts were made at the Atlanta Motor Speedway with 48+ on 13 Jan. (Patrick Brisse and Robert Manns), 25+ there on 20 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Patrick Brisse, Pierre Howard) and up on the Lookout Plateau, Bill Blakeslee et al. had 55 on 20 Jan.
- PURPLE MARTIN - Early arrivals were noted in Laurens Co. on 27 Jan. (eight birds by Jerry and Marie Amerson) and also at Thomasville on 29 Jan. (Noel Wamer).

- TREE SWALLOW - Eight were at the ELHLAF on 7 March (Carol Lambert) and 100+ were seen in Bartow Co. on 24 March (Jeff Sewell). A bird at Carter's Lake on 11 May may have had some nesting intentions (Giff Beaton et al.).
- CLIFF SWALLOW - Single birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 13 April by Jeff Sewell and at the KMT marsh on 24 April by Giff Beaton et al. Nesting activity was reported from near Rum Creek WMA on 18 May (Bill Blakeslee, Brock Hutchins and Jim Flynn). An old nest was found in Meriwether Co. on 12 May by Malcolm Hodges and 16 were seen near Carter's Lake on 24 May (Giff Beaton et al.).
- COMMON RAVEN - This species was reported from both Brasstown Bald, two birds on 10-11 May (Dot Freeman), and Rabun Bald, two birds on 25 May (Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby).
- FISH CROW - A few years ago this species was very rare if not accidental in the piedmont. Now, it is fairly easy to find and as evidenced by sightings at Blalock Lake of the ELHLAF on 18 Jan. (Patrick Brisse) it is even wintering in the piedmont. Macon had an amazing 250 on 4 Feb. (Jerry and Marie Amerson).
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - There were a good number of reports of this species during the period. Up to three were seen at KMT during the month of March and there were many other reports of single birds. The last report came from KMT with one on 4 May (Giff Beaton).
- WINTER WREN - A bird at a fairly low elevation near Suches responded to a tape on 26 May (Mark Oberle).
- SEDGE WREN - Inland reports came from Atlanta with three on the Marietta CBC on 17 Dec. (Giff Beaton et al.), an excellent count of 12 at the Macon Brickyards on 2 Dec. (Ty Ivey et al.) and back in the Atlanta area Giff Beaton had five birds on 27 Feb. At Macon, five were seen on 20 Jan. (Giff Beaton et al.). Back at the KMT marsh, Giff Beaton had a high count of eight on 7 April and one as late as 13 May.
- MARSH WREN - Inland reports included two in the Macon area on 2 Dec. (Ty Ivey et al.), a single bird in Floyd Co. on 15 and 20 Dec. (Marion Dobbs) and again on 1 Feb. (Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen). At the KMT marsh Giff Beaton found one on 16 April and a peak count of three on 28 April.
- GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - Very interesting was a singing bird in the Cooper's Creek area in north Georgia on 21 April (Mark Oberle). Could this species actually nest in Georgia?
- VEERY - The high counts came from the Atlanta area with six at Fernbank Forest on 27 April (Georgann Schmalz) and four at KMT on 4 May (Giff Beaton).
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - One bird was heard at KMT on 4 May by Giff Beaton).
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH - The high counts were ten at Fernbank Forest on 27 April (Georgann Schmalz) and 27 at KMT on 4 May (Giff Beaton).

- GRAY CATBIRD - One bird was seen at the KMT marsh on 22 Jan. by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett. This species is infrequently reported from north Georgia after the CBC's are concluded.
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO - One bird was reported on the Athens CBC on 17 Dec. (fide Billy Dunbar). This species is sometimes reported during the winter but these reports are almost never documented! An early migrant was seen in the Darien area on 6 March by Doris Cohrs. A very good count of nine was recorded at KMT on 3 May by Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen and Bruce Hallett.
- WARBLING VIREO - This extremely rare migrant was seen at KMT on 28 April by Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell.
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO - A bird was seen at Barnsley Gardens near Cartersville on 14 April (John Swiderski) and another bird was seen at Fernbank Forest on 20 April (Georgann Schmalz). Both these reports beat the previous early arrival for the state of 21 April listed in the *Annotated Checklist* so would certainly be worth documenting in *The Oriole*.
- RED-EYED VIREO - The best counts came from KMT with 42 on 21 April (Giff Beaton) and from Bartow Co. where 72 were counted on 11 May by Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell.
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - A bird seen in Bartow Co. on 11 May could possibly have been a local breeder as it was in the proper habitat (Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell).
- NASHVILLE WARBLER - Single birds were seen at KMT on 17 April by Giff Beaton, at the CRNRA on 20 April (AAS) and back at KMT on 2-5 May (m.ob.).
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - The peak counts were 20 at Fernbank Forest on 27 April (Georgann Schmalz) and 12 at KMT on 5 May (Jeff Sewell).
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER - The best count of this rather uncommon spring migrant was four at KMT on 5 May (Jeff Sewell).
- CAPE MAY WARBLER - The high count for this species was eight at KMT on 21 April (Giff Beaton). This species is certainly not as common in the spring as it was years ago.
- BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - The best counts were six at Fernbank Forest on 27 April (Georgann Schmalz) and nine there on 2 May (Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen).
- "AUDUBON'S" WARBLER - This western subspecies of the Yellow-rumped Warbler was reported from KMT on 5 May by Ruth Marley (fide Jeff Sewell). Any sighting of this subspecies needs to be documented in *The Oriole*.
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - The first report was of four birds found at KMT on 30 March by Bruce Dralle. The best counts were nine at KMT on both 8 April (Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen) and 14

- April (same observers) and six at KMT on 3 May (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen and Bruce Hallett).
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** - The best count came from KMT where nine were seen on 27 April (Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett).
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** - Rare for the Dublin area was a bird seen on the Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. (Tommy Patterson).
- PRAIRIE WARBLER** - A rather astounding count of 78 came from Bartow Co. on 11 May (Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell).
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** - A very good count of 20 was made at KMT on 5 May by Jeff Sewell.
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER** - The highest reported count was 25 at KMT on 5 May by Jeff Sewell.
- CERULEAN WARBLER** - At KMT the high count was 12 on 28 April (Jeff Sewell). More interesting were the six singing birds on Ivy Log Road in early May reported by Dot Freeman. There have been rumors of this species nesting in Georgia but nothing has been documented thus far.
- WORM-EATING WARBLER** - The high count of eight came from KMT by Giff Beaton.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER** - One bird was reported from the Ocmulgee NM on 14 April by Mark Oberle. Other birds were seen in College Park on 17 and 18 April (Dale Hardee), one at KMT on 21 April (Giff Beaton), two at the ELHLAF on 23 April (Carol Lambert), one at Rum Creek WMA on 1 May (Terry Johnson), one at Augusta through early May (Anne Waters), one at Moody AFB in Lowndes Co. on 25 May (Brad Bergstrom) and one from Greene Co. on 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.).
- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** - The first report was a bird at the ELHLAF Wetlands Center on 17 March (Carol Lambert and Patrick Brisse).
- CONNECTICUT WARBLER** - The only report was by Anselm Atkins from the Arnoldsville area on 27 May.
- HOODED WARBLER** - The high count for this species came from KMT with 21 on 17 April (Giff Beaton).
- WILSON'S WARBLER** - An amazing four birds were reported from Callaway Gardens on 2 Dec. by Lisa Hurt. In the Dublin area Tommy Patterson found a bird on 11 Dec. and the bird remained in the area for several days.
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** - On 11 May in Bartow Co. Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell counted a very impressive 64 birds.
- SUMMER TANAGER** - The high count of 15 came from KMT on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Kevin Danchisen).
- SCARLET TANAGER** - The high count for this species was a very impressive 43 at KMT on 21 April (Giff Beaton). A bird in Henry Co. on 26 May probably represented a local nesting bird south of its usual range (Jeff Sewell et al.).

- NORTHERN CARDINAL** - Jerry and Marie Amerson had an amazing count of 347 birds along a stretch of roads in the Macon area on 4 Feb.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** - An immature was reported from Callaway Gardens from 1 through 26 March (Luann Craighton). More and more people are reporting that this species is frequenting feeders during their migration north. There were so many reports of this behavior that it is impossible to list them all. If my memory serves me correctly, this was unheard of behavior 20 or so years ago. The peak count was 18 at KMT on 28 April (Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell).
- INDIGO BUNTING** - This species, like the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, appears to be frequenting feeders much more than they used to. Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell had a very impressive count of 119 in Bartow Co. on 11 May.
- PAINTED BUNTING** - Totally out of range was a male seen near Chatsworth on 17 Dec. (fide Harriett DiGioia). One bird in the Darien area on 15 March could have been an early migrant or a rare wintering bird (fide Doris Cohrs). In the Macon area three were seen on 11 May (Jerry and Marie Amerson) and another was seen in Cook Co. on 25 May (SGRBA).
- DICKCISSEL** - A bird paid a one day visit to a feeder in Dade Co. on 3 Feb. (Dave Vogt). Dale Hardee reported the species from Henry Co. on 10 May with the number peaking at 12 plus a nest by the end of the month (m.ob.). On 11 May Paul Raney found one bird in Bartow Co. and Terry Johnson and Larry Ross found nine in Monroe Co. the same day.
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW** - Nancy Iha reported the species from Hamburg State Park on 4 May and Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell had five in Bartow Co. on 11 May. Other birds were found in Oglethorpe Co. on 5 May (Marion Dobbs) and at Piedmont NWR on 18 May (Bill Blakeslee, Brock Hutchins and Jim Flynn).
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** - One bird was found at St. Simons Is. on 2 Dec. by Paul Raney.
- VESPER SPARROW** - Good counts were the 21 in Emanuel Co. on 28 Jan. (Jerry and Marie Amerson), 30+ in the Macon area on 16 March (Paul Johnson) and 15 in Bartow Co. on 24 March (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert). At the Atlanta Motor Speedway, fifteen was a good count on 1 April (Giff Beaton and Connie Beaton).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** - The Augusta CBC recorded an excellent count of four on 26 Dec. (Anne Waters). This rare wintering sparrow was found at the KMT marsh on 15, 21 and 28 Jan. by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett. Good counts were the 14 in Bartow Co. on 11 May (Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell) and the 13 in Henry Co. on 26 May (Jeff Sewell).
- HENSLOW'S SPARROW** - One bird was seen on Sapelo Is. on 30 Dec. (Anne Waters).

- LECONTE'S SPARROW** - This species, one of our rarest sparrows, was found at the KMT marsh on the Marietta CBC on 17 Dec. and seen again in late Dec. and on 10 and 21 Jan. (Giff Beaton et al.). Another bird was seen in Bibb Co. on 10 Feb. by Jerry and Marie Amerson.
- FOX SPARROW** - Rather unusual for the coastal area was a bird seen at Sapelo Is. on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - Two birds were a good find on the Marietta CBC on 17 Dec. and three were seen at the same location on 28 Dec. (Giff Beaton et al.). These birds continued in the same area into Jan. (Giff Beaton). One bird coming to a feeder near Andrews was identified as an example of the *gambelli* subspecies (Giff Beaton). One was seen at Sapelo Is. on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle. Six were seen in the Macon area on 14 April by Jerry and Marie Amerson. Somewhat late birds were seen at Macon on 1 May (Jerry and Marie Amerson) and at Cartersville on 5 May (Kate Swiderski).
- BOBOLINK** - The best counts were "several hundred" in Lowndes Co. on 28 April (SGRBA), 25 in Lamar Co. on 1 May (Todd Schneider), 100+ in Lowndes Co. on 1 May (Brad Bergstrom), 100+ in Oglethorpe Co. on 5 May (Marion Dobbs), 250 in Houston Co. on 5 May (Dan and Pam Guynn), 30-40 at the Etowah Indian Mounds on 11 May (Pierre Howard) and 100+ in Henry Co. on 12 May (Jeff Sewell).
- YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** - This very rare visitor was seen in Gordon Co. on 14 Feb. by Aubrey Scott. Unfortunately it could not be relocated. This was the same case with another bird seen in Monroe Co. on 7 April (Donna Johnson).
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD** - Five birds were seen at Youman's Pond on 2 March by Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle and 25 more were seen in the Rock Eagle vicinity on 30 March by Joe Greenberg.
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - Five birds were a great find for the Macon CBC on 16 Dec. (fide Paul Johnson). On 28 Jan. Jerry and Marie Amerson had 250 in Laurens Co. In Bartow Co. Jeff Sewell found a flock of 98 on 23 March. Other observers reported smaller numbers from Bartow Co. through the end of March.
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE** - One bird was seen at the Atlanta Zoo on 6 Dec. (Brad Parks) and another spent the winter in the Valdosta area (Barbara Passmore).
- PURPLE FINCH** - This species was present during the winter but in small numbers which is still better than last year. The highest reported count came from Bibb Co. where Paul Johnson had two separate flocks of about 35 birds apiece in Jan. and Feb.
- RED CROSSBILL** - Two birds frequented a Fannin Co. feeder through 14 Dec. (fide Pierre Howard).
- PINE SISKIN** - There were a few birds during the period but not any large numbers. The southernmost report was one at Darien through at least 29

March (Doris Cohrs). The last report came from Union Co. on 16 May (Dot Freeman).

EVENING GROSBEAK - There were a few scattered reports of this irruptive species as far south as Rum Creek on 21 Dec. (Terry Johnson and Todd Schneider) and Statesboro on 16 Jan. (Ray Chandler). A very reliable spot was at the ELHLAF Wetlands Center where a flock of up to 40 could be found for much of the period (Carol Lambert). Farther south, a small flock frequented the feeders at the Piedmont NWR through the end of April (Jerry and Marie Amerson). The last report came from The ELHLAF with a female on 10 May (Carol Lambert).

Terry Moore, 13000 Bucksport Ct., Roswell, GA 30075.

THE ORIOLE is published quarterly by the Georgia Ornithologists' Club, Inc., 13000 Bucksport Ct., Roswell, GA 30075. The Club is a non-profit organization and the Club's only source of funds is from the sale of the Club's membership. The Club's membership is open to all who are interested in the study of birds in Georgia. The Club's membership is open to all who are interested in the study of birds in Georgia. The Club's membership is open to all who are interested in the study of birds in Georgia.

The Club is responsible for printing the membership list and for production. Authors should submit manuscripts and correspondence for review of papers before submission, and check all references available to them that might have a bearing on their papers.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

It has been my pleasure to be the Editor of *The Oriole* for the past 17 years. From that phonecall back in 1981, when Frank McCamey expressed his confidence in my being able to handle the editor's position until now, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the many people who took the time and effort to send their material to *The Oriole*. However, demands on my time now do not leave adequate time for me to do the job as I wish to do it. For that reason I am now glad to announce that the editorship of *The Oriole* is being passed to two exceptionally qualified individuals, Drs. C. Ray Chandler and John Parrish, both of Georgia Southern University. I do certainly, as well as you, wish them well and encourage them to make *The Oriole* an even better publication than it is now.

There are many people I would like to recognize for helping me with *The Oriole* during these past years but I only have room to mention a few. Both Patrick Brisse and Jeff Sewell have spent countless hours laboring away at the "From the Field" column. GOS members simply have no idea how much time it takes to do one of these columns. It is truly a labor of love! I also want to thank Giff Beaton for his assistance in not only contributing his own notes for publication but also making the telephone calls and writing letters encouraging others to contribute to *The Oriole*. And this doesn't include the numerous calls between the two of us clarifying details of some sighting. Needless to say, John Swiderski has always been a source of support for me. Whenever I needed advice, John was always there with good, common sense suggestions. My wife Peggy has always encouraged me to continue with the editorship even when it meant that I had to take "birdwork" with me on vacation or when I had to stay up late in order to finish *The Oriole* before leaving on a trip. I have been very fortunate to have her love and understanding!

Finally I would like to thank Branch Howe for the times that he helped me with advice or a kind shoulder to lean on. There were a couple instances during my editorship when it would have been easy for someone of less character to brush off involvement but Branch always listened to me and either got actively involved or offered very wise advice. Thanks so much for being there when I needed someone!

A Statement of Policy

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

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

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

COPY - Type manuscripts *double-spaced* throughout. Underscore scientific names only. Number pages in the upper right hand corner. Arrange contents in sequence: title page, text, reference, tables, figure legends, and figures. Type your complete address and date of submitting manuscript. For longer manuscripts, submission on a diskette readable on an IBM-compatible PC would facilitate the editing process.

STYLE - The guide for preparation of copy is the CBE STYLE MANUAL (Fifth Edition) available from the Council of Biology Editors, Inc., Bethesda, MD 20814.

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

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

NOMENCLATURE - Vernacular names should be capitalized in text. They are to be accompanied by appropriate scientific names the first time each species is mentioned. Show reference for long lists of scientific names (i.e., A.O.U. Checklist 6th ed., 1983).

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

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

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

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

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