

THE ORIOLE

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CONTENTS

THE CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW IN THE OKEFINOKEE REGION, By Francis Harper	9
HISTORY OF THE SAVANNAH AUDUBON SOCIETY, By Edna A. Pigman	14
NOTES AND NEWS: White Pelican at Mouth of the Savannah River, p. 17; Limkin in Charlton County, Georgia, p. 17; The Duck Hawk in the Okefinokee Swamp. p. 17; Golden Eagle in Georgia, p. 18; Ring-tailed Gull, p. 18; Eastern Snow Bunting, p. 18.	
G. O. S. NEWS	19

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No. 2

THE CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW IN THE OKEFINOKEE REGION

BY FRANCIS HARPER.

The general fascination that attaches to birds of the night is enhanced if they are endowed with weird or startling voices (as most of them seem to be). Their intimate ways of life are veiled in darkness and mystery; and so these birds appeal to our imagination and become established in our folklore. In the Southern States a prominent member of this group is the Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*). Yet it is far better known as a mere voice of the night than as a creature of flesh and feathers. Bit by bit, during the past 17 years, I have managed to add to my acquaintance with it in the Okefinokee Swamp region of Georgia.

When a resident of these parts speaks of a "Whip-poor-will," he invariably means the Chuck-will's-widow. As far as he is concerned, the latter is a mere book name, that has never come into vernacular use here. The true Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus vociferus*), as a rare bird of passage, is known to some of the residents, but seems to have no distinctive name. Another local name for the Chuck-will's-widow, current on Billy's Island in days gone by, is the onomatopoeic "Stick-far-the-white-oak." Jack Mizell, of Charlton County, knows this name and a slight variant as well: "Stick-far-the-red-oak." He adds that the song is also represented as "Dick-married-a-widder."

In the Okefinokee region the species seems to be only locally common, although it has apparently increased in numbers during the past few decades along the eastern border of the swamp. For example, while living on this border, several miles north of Camp Cornelia, during the 1890's and 1900's, Hamp Mizell never heard one of these birds thereabouts, and his sister, Mrs. Rhoda Mizell Spaulding, heard only one. Accordingly they expressed surprise at the numbers I reported at Camp Cornelia in 1929. During a stay at Chesser's Island from July 12 to 21, 1921, I neither saw nor heard these birds, and Allen Chesser said they were not present that year. However, in 1922, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1936, 1937 and 1938 they were noticed on this island, perhaps with gradually increasing frequency. Of the islands farther within the swamp, Billy's is the only one on which I have noted the species, and there (at least in former years) it was of quite irregular occurrence. In May, 1912, I did not record it there. In 1921, from April to August, only a single individual was identified on Billy's Island; on July 26, at deep dusk, a female appeared on a stub at the border of a field, giving a series of low clucking notes, and was collected.

At various places in Charlton County, away from the immediate borders of the swamp, the species appears to be fairly common. I have heard it along the St. Mary's two miles below St. George (August 13, 1921); near Starling Branch (July 3, 1922; April 8, 1932); near Trader's Hill (July 3 1922; April 15, 1932); at Folkston (May 24, 1930; April 15 and 17, 1932;

April 9, 1933); and 3-4 miles west of Folkston (June 7, 8, and 22, 1929; June 1, 1930; March 26, 28, and 29, April 4, 5, 12, 13, 26, 27, 28, and 29, May 4, 5, and 6, 1936). In general, these localities are better drained than the borders and islands of the swamp, and probably for this reason are more favored by this ground-roosting and ground-nesting bird. The eastern slope of Trail Ridge, falling away toward the St. Mary's River and forming one of the best-drained areas in this part of the Flat Pine Lands (a well-marked physiographic division of southeastern Georgia), may provide an optimum habitat for the bird in this region. (Trail Ridge parallels the entire eastern border of the Okefinokee, and extends still farther to the north and to the south.)

The territory adjacent to the Okefinokee on the northwest is much flatter and more poorly drained than that on the east, and it offers less favorable conditions for certain ground-nesting birds and burrowing animals. Thus, in the vicinity of Suwannee Lake, Ware County, the Chuck-will's-widow is said to be of scarce and irregular occurrence. During a number of sojourns there, from 1929 to 1936, in April, May, June, and July, I have never encountered the bird.

In its habitat preferences (for the purposes of roosting, singing, or nesting) the bird seems partial to hammocks, either on the Okefinokee islands or along such rivers as the St. Mary's, the Satilla, and the Ochopee; also to the borders of branch swamps and cypress ponds. When feeding, it will venture under cover of darkness into more open country, such as pine barrens and fields. Its ecological distribution is somewhat complementary to that of the Florida Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor chapmani*), which nests largely in the open pine barrens and cultivated land and feeds over the same areas. I have never known the Chuck-will's-widow to rise above the tree-tops, where the Nighthawk habitually disports itself; it seems to skim along only a few feet or yards above the ground, like its congener the Whip-poor-will.

The bird is evidently in song on its arrival in the spring, and the first indication of its presence is almost always a vocal announcement. My earliest spring record is March 26, 1936, at Long Branch, west of Folkston; on the same day the species was reported by Tom Chesser at Chesser's Island. This day was also interesting for two other first seasonal records: the bellowing of the Alligator in the swamp (reported by Ben Chesser) and the piping of the Oak Toad (*Bufo quercicus*) on Chesser's Island. (The maximum daily temperature had been rising quite steadily from about 56° on March 17 to about 88° on March 26—the highest so far that season.) In other years I have not been in the swamp region quite so early in the spring, and consequently have not been in a position to note the first arrival of the Chuck-will's-widow. In 1937 and again in 1938 it was heard either by others or by myself in the last few days of March on Chesser's Island. Probably it generally arrives in the region by the last week of March.

My latest seasonal record is August 13, 1921 (on both sides of the St. Mary's River below St. George). Probably the species does not take its final departure until sometime in September, or possibly later, but it escapes notice for the most part after it ceases singing. My only records of song after June are July 3, 1922, July 16 and 17, 1931, and August 13, 1921. Apparently it sings infrequently after the middle part of July.

Unlike the Nighthawk, this bird appears to be strictly nocturnal. I have never known it to stir abroad voluntarily until dusk, but it is remarkably regular in commencing its vocal activity at that time. A few records will serve to illustrate this point. As the days gradually lengthen in the spring, the time at which the first song is heard in the evening becomes correspondingly later. On March 28, 1936, west of Folkston, a bird sang about 7:05

p. m., and on the next evening one began while a Mockingbird* was still singing in the dusk. On three successive days (March 29, 30, and 31, 1938), at Chesser's Island, the first song was heard at about 7:04, 7:03, and 7:04 p. m., respectively. On April 13, 1933, one was heard here about 7:20 p. m.; on April 15 (a dark and cloudy evening) one started as early as 7:06 p. m.; and on April 22 the first song came at 7:18 p. m. The song was heard on April 17, 1936, at Ridgeville, McIntosh County, at 7:15 p. m.; on April 24, at Swift Creek, Toombs County, at 7:25 p. m.; and on May 6, west of Folkston, at 7:40 p. m. At Camp Cornelia, in 1929, the first note on May 27 was heard at 7:45 p. m., long after the Florida Nighthawks had been out in force; on May 30 the birds started to sing about 8 p. m.

Singing during the night is determined very largely by the moonlight. On moonless nights it appears to be limited to brief periods at dusk and daybreak. On moonlit evenings the birds continue to sing indefinitely beyond dusk. The following records are only part of those that might be quoted. On May 29, 1929, at Camp Cornelia, the moon had risen just a little above the horizon at 1:45 a. m., when the Chuck-will's-widow (and the Mockingbird as well) sang. During the moonlit night of June 21-22, 1929, west of Folkston, the birds continued singing till at least 2 a. m., and during the following night till midnight (as I was able to note while remaining afieled to observe and photograph singing frogs). On April 5, 1936, west of Folkston, one was heard in the moonlight about 2:45 a. m.; on April 12 one was heard about 12:15 a. m., a little after moonrise, and during the next night at 4:55 a. m.; one April 26 one was heard in the moonlight at intervals during the evening up to about 10:10 p. m., and on the following evening till 10:48 p. m.; and on April 28 and 29 one continued till at least 10 p. m. Apparently every other case of the Chuck-will's-widow's singing, that I have definitely timed somewhere between the periods of dusk and daybreak, has occurred during hours of moonlight, as shown in my own field notes or determined by later reference to the almanac.

It would be extremely interesting to ascertain whether or not feeding activity is suspended so wholly during the dark of the moon as singing seems to be. Probably it is not.

The name of the Chuck-will's-widow is an excellent rendering of its song; practically every letter is sounded, except the s. The initial chuck is of distinctly different quality, and not musical like the other notes. The second and third syllables are chiefly, and apparently almost equally, accented. In comparing the song of this species with that of the Whip-poor-will, Chapman (Handbook Birds E. North America, 2nd rev. ed., p. 345, 1932) considers the former the louder, while Howell (Florida Bird Life, p. 298, 1932) states that it is the less vigorous. Perhaps there is a large element of truth in both statements. One May evening a bird that sang regularly for several minutes seemed to invariably repeat the last word of the song: chuck-will'-wid'-wid'-wid'-ow. Two nights later, however, I became fairly convinced that this was merely the effect of an echo between a tobacco barn and a dwelling, for elsewhere in the vicinity the bird gave a song of normal length.

Among 20 records of the Chuck-will's-widow's rate of singing between March 30 and May 3, I find a variation from 16 to 30 songs per minute. In an effort to discover a possible relation between the bird's rate of singing and the air temperature, I have prepared the accompanying graph (fig. 1). For

* The Mocker, itself a seminocturnal bird, has abundant opportunities for listening to the Chuck-will's-widow, and includes the latter's song in its repertoire.

the records on the bottom line (all secured on April 5), at temperature of 60° F. was estimated; but the other temperature records are based upon thermometer readings. There is evidently considerable variation in the rate at a given temperature; e. g., 16 to 22 songs per minute at 60°, and 22 to 29 songs per minute at 76°. Thus no exact or uniform relation between the rate of singing and the temperature is indicated. However, as far as these few records go, they show a definite though irregular tendency toward an increase in the rate with the temperature.†

This tendency becomes more evident when each additional record at a given point on the graph is indicated. Thus a single record is represented by a dot; two records by a dot and a circle; and three records, by a dot and two concentric circles. At temperatures below 70°, the rate is not more than 22 songs per minute; at temperatures above 70°, the rate is not less than 22 songs per minute.

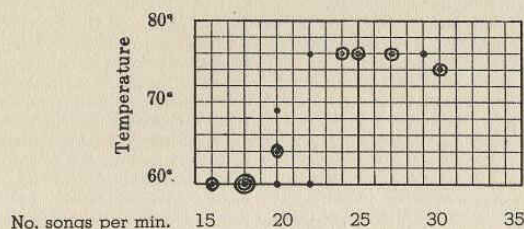


Fig. 1.—Relation between the rate of singing in the Chuck-will's-widow and the temperature.

The above-mentioned rates per minute are calculated on the basis of the number of songs actually recorded within shorter period—20 to 30 seconds. I have only one definite record of the total length of a song period; this lasted for 87 seconds, at a time when the bird was averaging 30 songs per minute.

On its nesting ground the species is naturally more vociferous and indulges in a greater variety of notes than elsewhere. My one experience with nesting birds was at Camp Cornelia in May, 1929. Here the elevated sandy banks of the old Suwannee Canal, in the nearly 40 years since its construction, had become partly overgrown with an oak thicket. During the evening of May 24, while studying Gopher Turtles (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and Gopher Frogs (*Rana capito*) in this area, I flushed a Chuck-will's-widow, which flopped and fluttered about in a manner plainly indicating the possession of eggs or young. Several times it lit on a limb overhead. Meanwhile it kept complaining with a soft yet guttural note: quah, quah, quah, etc., or quuh, quuh, quuh, etc. On the ground where the adult had taken wing, I saw a fluffy, buffy young one in the open, and another among some fallen timber about a yard away.

On the following morning the old bird flushed from a spot among fallen timber, about a rod from the previous evening's location; she had presumably been brooding the two young ones, which were now together. She flew to a fence-post, and also fluttered about on the ground, coming to a pause with

†I have shown a very uniform relation of this sort in the case of Le Conte's Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris ornata*). Cf. Am. Midl. Naturalist, vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 265-266, 1937.

barred wings outspread and head held high. I had time to note the bright, elliptical eyes, the rich, soft brown plumage, and perhaps a slight elevation of feathers over each eye. On the wing (and elsewhere) the bird had quite an owl-like appearance. Once more the soft quuh note was given frequently.

When I poked at the young ones, one hopped away into the brush with uplifted wings, but the other showed defiance, throwing its wings out, raising its head, and leaping up with open mouth. Meanwhile it uttered a low, querulous qrrrr, qrrrr. All these reptilian actions were doubtless designed to intimidate an enemy. The youngster was clothed in rich ochraceous-buff down, mixed with pinfeathers. On May 29 I came upon one of the young ones again, in a spot perhaps 50 feet from the scene of the earlier encounters. By this time it had developed some contour feathers. The old bird declined to brood the young one by day, or to feed it by night, while a camera was focused upon it.

At this period, during the evening activity, I heard not only the common call-note of quah or quuh, as a bird would go flitting through the dusk, but also a bass, resonant koh, koh. On May 27 a bird was giving this call while apparently another, near by, was singing. I have no further record of this note during subsequent years, and its significance has escaped me. It may be remarked, however, that Bendire (Life Histories N. Am. Birds, vol. 2, p. 149, 1895) has described a possibly analogous note that was given by a female Whip-poor-will in the presence of a singing and courting male.

At dusk on May 24 I saw a Chuck-will's-widow drop down into a grassy yard at Camp Cornelia, and then flop up and down in a queer sort of way, suggestive of a chicken's antics. Possibly it was rising to catch insects passing a short distance above it.

In 1929 there were probably at least two pairs nesting at Camp Cornelia. In the spring of 1938 I found the fallen timber and the sheltering undergrowth in their old haunts on the canal banks so thoroughly and so unnecessarily "cleaned up" by the tender ministrations of the Civilian Conservation Corps, that the possibility of the species nesting there again has been destroyed for years to come. The spot has likewise been made unsuitable for the extremely interesting Gopher Turtles and their associates, the Gopher Frogs, both of which formerly abounded there.

During the evening of April 11, 1933, I heard a remarkable sort of wing-popping sound that seemed to come from a Chuck-will's-widow flying along through a hammock of Chesser's Island.

On April 18, 1933, I flushed an adult female several times in one of the hammocks on this island. For the first two or three times it pitched on the ground, but finally perched near the top of a young pine, at a height of about 15 feet. The weight of this specimen was 121.3 grams. Its ovary was only slightly enlarged at this date, measuring 10 by 8 mm. Its iris was olive-brown; bill fuscous at the tip, horn color basally; toes dark brownish; nails fuscous.

In 1921 Marion Lee, who had spent most of his life on Billy's Island, gave me an interesting bit of swamp folk-lore concerning the Chuck-will's-widow. In former years his father and uncles, on hearing this bird on Billy's Island, would pronounce it "Fontis' Cat," in order to scare the children. The latter corrupted the name into "Funny-sacks." They were afraid to venture outdoors after dark when this mysterious creature was calling.

A few additional records of the Chuck-will's-widow from various localities in southeastern Georgia, beyond the environs of the Okefinokee, may be

¹Spelling phonetic; etymology undetermined.

inserted here. During the evening of April 7, 1933, one was heard at Wal-thourville, and two at Riceboro, Liberty County. About noon on April 9, 1933, I flushed two birds together from dead leaves in a swampy part of a river hammock beside the Satilla, between Atkinson and Lulaton, Brantley County. A very soft note, sounding somewhat like quoke, quoke, was uttered as they took flight. One of them settled on a slender limb about 12 feet from the ground, perching somewhat lengthwise, but with its tail off to one side of the limb. The bird's initial flight, on being flushed, was marked by quick flaps of the wings.

Along the Ochoopee River I heard the species on April 30, 1933, at Shepard's Bridge, near Reidsville, Tattnall County; and on May 7, 1936, and April 3, 1937, north of Oak Park, Emanuel County. On April 18 1936, I was glad to hear one on Colonel's Island—a delightful spot on the coast of Liberty County, worthy to be remembered in the annals of Georgia natural history by reason of visits in former days by William Bartram, John Eatton Le Conte, and Charles Sprague Sargent. On the following day a Chuck-will's-widow was flushed in a hammock on this island.

Numerous important gaps in the life history of this odd bird of the South-land remain to be filled.

Swarthmore, Pa.

HISTORY OF THE SAVANNAH AUDUBON SOCIETY

By EDNA A. PIGMAN

It was April in Savannah. The great Chautauqua tent was up in Forsyth Park Extension and Mr. Earnest Harold Baines of Meridian, N. H., was speaking. "My Wild Bird Guests" was his subject and, as he told in happy fashion of these friends, there was a quickening in the hearts of his audience: April had pierced the tent and was entering in on myriad tiny wings. He paused. Then, "Who will organize a society for the protection of birds in this beautiful city of Savannah?"

And then it was that one sitting not far away rose to her feet and answered simply, "I will." Two others quickly declared themselves. And thus on the afternoon of April 29, 1916 the Savannah Audubon Society came into being.

The lecture was ended; but the writer of this history, realizing what she had done, hurried home aghast. However, to the heart's S.O.S. came the answer in person: Mrs. Alex Thesmar's great organizing strength was to stand behind her.

For the present the volunteers of that fateful afternoon were pulling mightily together. The third day, May 2, 1916, found them, also Professor Hoxie, collaborating on the future of Savannah's birds. It was agreed that Mrs. B. F. Bullard was to be secretary, and Miss Eleanor Puder treasurer.

The first public meeting of the Audubon Club was held at the DeSoto Hotel May 5, 1916. Six new members were enrolled. It was decided to visit the schools through the Parent-Teachers meetings as a means of interesting both children and adults in the movement of bird conservation. By May 22, 1916 the membership had increased to 176.

A committee was now appointed by the acting president to draw up a Constitution and By-laws. Among the new members was one with a gift for parliamentary law, Miss Dora Mendes. Her memory will ever sweeten the tangle of those early days. Aided by Mr. Walter Stillwell and Miss Puder she made the crooked ways straight. On June 5, 1916 the Pape School wit-

nessed the reading and adoption of said Constitution and By-laws, after which a committee headed by Mrs. Alex Thesmar returned the following slate which was voted on as a whole and adopted:

OFFICERS

President.....	Mr. Walter B. Stillwell
First Vice President.....	Mrs. W. A. Pigman
Second Vice President.....	Mrs. J. S. Howkins
Secretary.....	Mrs. J. A. Montgomery
Corresponding Secretary.....	Miss Hattie Drew

MEMBERS OF BOARD

For 2 Years

Mrs. Victor Bassett
Mrs. J. F. C. Myers
Mrs. M. L. Myrick
Mr. W. L. Wilson
Mr. J. B. Copps
Mr. A. P. Solomons

For 1 Year

Mrs. W. W. Gordon
Mrs. M. S. Lebey
Mrs. Charles Ellis
Mr. Robert Butler
Mr. T. L. Draper
Mr. H. B. Skeele

HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD OF NATURALISTS

Prof. A. R. Hoxie
Mr. G. R. Rossignol, Jr.
Mr. Troup Perry
Mr. W. J. Erickson

Mr. Stillwell's term of office was brief. Business caused him to resign January 20, 1917.

With the election of Mr. H. B. Skeele to the presidency, January 29, 1917, a firmer hold was given the society. It acquired membership with the National Society. Early bird walks were the fashion; weekly jaunts to Laurel Grove under the guidance of Mr. Rossignol drew many out. In March of the same year the Norman McClintock lecture packed the Savannah Theatre.

The next few years found the society digging in. Bulwarked on all sides by willing and efficient workers under the guidance of an able president, Savannah had become bird conscious. Mr. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, had visited her shores and given several lectures; the Morning News and Savannah Press had generously cooperated with Mrs. Bassett's Committee on Publication by which some bird was featured each week under a local signature.

Meanwhile the Boy Scouts were busy making bird houses. The work begun in the schools in 1916 had broadened its lines under the enthusiastic leadership of Mrs. Carleton B. Gibson's Educational Committee. Regular monthly meetings were now the habit of the society; the DeRenne collection of birds was loaned to it and Professor Hoxie made happy displaying their fine points. Spring meant trips to Wormsloe and the Hardy Gardens. It was after breakfast served from the rose covered porch of the latter that Mr. Henry Oldys, national lecturer, mingled his famous bird calls with those of the birds. Mr. Herbert Job's interesting lecture at the Bijou Theatre was accompanied with lantern slides. Mr. Job later addressed the schools.

During the first ten years the personnel of the Audubon Society saw many changes. Each spring brought new recruits. In 1921 Mrs. J. F. C. Myers was made treasurer; in 1922 the J. E. Wingos—could any name be more fitting?—had arrived; April 17, 1923 the writer was elected from first vice president to honorary president, and Mr. Gilbert Rossignol was made first vice president.

The second stage of the society's activities was vastly more educational and professional. It had passed its infancy and, save for a love of excursions

of all kinds, now entered upon a period of concentrated energy directed more and more to future generations through education of the youth.

Dr. Eugene Swope, an ardent bird conservationist and superintendent of the Roosevelt Bird Sanctuary at Oyster Bay, Long Island, had visited the schools in Savannah and through his talks and lecture given at the Thirty-fifth Street Junior High School (now Richard Arnold Junior High School) January 24, 1928 had paved the way for a field agent: one to direct the children in the enjoyment of birds and understanding of their economic value. The work was undertaken and Mrs. J. E. Wingo chosen for the position.

The first report made by Mrs. Wingo, May, 1928, shows 179 Junior Audubon Clubs and 6,250 members. The next year's report tells of the endeavor to make each school a sanctuary for birds and the placing of bird baths on the school lawns.

At the very beautiful exhibit put on by the Audubon Society at the Georgia State Fair and arranged by Mrs. Bassett, Mrs. Wingo and Mr. Copps, a frieze of posters by high school pupils extended around the top of the booth. This exhibit won a blue ribbon and \$15.00 for the society. Mr. Skeele speaks in gratitude of Mrs. Wingo's work, that "in every way the society has reason to feel a pride" in it.

Turning back the pages to January, 1928 it is Mrs. Bassett who is second vice president; in January, 1931 Mrs. J. R. Cain who is secretary and Mr. Wingo treasurer. There is a note of sadness in Mr. Rossignol's saying goodbye to Savannah and a growing feeling of pride in Mrs. Bassett—now next to the president.

It is mostly pride that goes with one the rest of the way: pride in Mrs. Cain as she faithfully records each meeting, pride in Mr. Skeele's resourcefulness in providing interesting speakers—Mr. E. B. Whitehead, Federal Game Warden, and his successor, Mr. John C. Boswell; Mr. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., Curator at the Charleston Museum; and Mr. John H. Baker who lectured in the Gold Room of the DeSoto Hotel.

It is with increasing pride that the society and its friends, gathered for the dedication of the beautiful bronze bird sign erected near the approach to the Savannah River bridge, read the words, "Protect the Birds. Savannah Audubon Society;" while listening to a brief resume of its history by the President, Mr. H. B. Skeele; and address by that friend of birds, Mr. James B. Copps. One regrets that the birds were not word-wise on that occasion.

These are the same enthusiasts with, now, the John Seymours and the Hugh Tallants, recent members, and many others. There is the Bird Lady, Mrs. Wingo, and her following of children; and there in the trees looking down are the birds. It is May 30, 1934, day of the dedication of the bird bath in Forsyth Park. It is Mr. Tallant who has designed it, a clear pool of water circled in rocks amid a setting of trees, ferns and flowers. It is Mr. Seymour, acting for Mr. Skeele, who presents the bath to the city; Alderman H. E. Wilson, who accepts it in the name of the Mayor, and Miss Angela Altick, teacher at one of the schools, who leads the children in singing "Hark, Hark, the Lark" and other songs. Mr. Copps' hand shows in the landscaping and his are the lines, "Thanksgiving for Water," written for the occasion. Over all lingers heaven's smile in a perfect spring day.

How swiftly fly the years! It is now May 14, 1937, and the place the beautiful parlors of the Skeele home. There is nothing new in the society's meeting here, but some new sadness and new joy seem to be present. It is the annual meeting of the society and a new slate has been made up. But we shall let Mrs. Bassett tell it:

"After twenty years of faithful service our president feels that he must

discontinue his work as president to our very great regret. . . .

"Now that the time has come that another must succeed him we wish, as a very small token of our great appreciation, to present him with these books on birds which we hope he will enjoy. . . .

"As Mr. Skeele looks over the books we hope they will bring back happy memories. . . . These we herewith present with beautiful affection and appreciation to our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Skeele."

Thus Mr. Skeele was elected honorary president, and Mr. John B. Seymour, president.

October 9 and 10, 1937 was the meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society, honored guests of this, the oldest organized bird study group in the state. Dr. R. J. H. DeLoach of Statesboro, presided at the afternoon business session held at the Armstrong Junior College; Mrs. Bassett welcomed the visitors and Mrs. J. C. Oliver of the Atlanta Bird Club responded. The large gathering at dinner in the college grill presented a merry crowd to which the witticisms of Dr. Eugene Murphey, toastmaster, gave added zest. Mr. Alexander Sprunt's stirring appeal for bird protection closed the day's entertainment. Sunday morning was given over to a trip to Oysterbed Island led by Mr. Ivan Tomkins of Savannah. It was a distinguished gathering that did honor to these shores, and a happy time long to be remembered.

Though Mr. Seymour wrote from England his acceptance of the presidency and all hearts made ready to receive him, it was not to be. And so it is Mrs. Seymour who will carry on for him the activities of the Savannah Audubon Society.

NOTES AND NEWS

White Pelican at Mouth of the Savannah River.—A single White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) was observed by the writer on July 3, 1938 on Oysterbed Island, a dredge-built island in the mouth of the Savannah River near Savannah. It was resting on a sand-bar with Brown Pelicans where its large size in comparison was very striking. The bird is still present at this writing (August 15, 1938) and has been in the vicinity since at least the second of June according to surveyors of the United States Engineers.—Don Eyles, Fort Pulaski National Monument, Savannah, Georgia.

Limpkin in Charlton County, Georgia.—A Limpkin (*Aramus pictus pictus*) flew up while I was dove shooting November 20, 1937, within 200 yards of where I first definitely identified one February 24, 1936, as recorded in The Oriole two years ago. I heard one calling from a branch near the Maybluff Road in Charlton County on January 19, 1938 about 11 a. m.—F. V. Hebard, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Duck Hawk in the Okefinokee Swamp.—Records of the Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) in the Okefinokee are scarce. I saw a female on the canal near Chesser Prairie on December 1, 1932; a male on Floyd's Island Prairie on December 2, 1934, and Lucien Harris, Jr. saw one on Chase Prairie on December 3, 1934.

On November 25, 1937, I came upon the feathers of a freshly plucked

Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinense*) near Round Top in Chase Prairie. It had been raining off and on but the feathers were very fresh and indicated careful plucking. About twenty feet away I found where the duck had been caught and there found a hawk feather. As a Duck Hawk alone can catch a teal, it can be identified as the killer.—F. V. Hebard, Philadelphia, Pa.

Golden Eagle in Georgia.—A friend of mine brought me a fine female Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos canadensis*) killed January 20, 1938 in northeastern Charlton County. He had called a flock of about 10 Turkey gobblers within 100 yards when an enormous bird plunged from the sky scattering the turkeys in all directions. The intruder lit in a tree facing away. My friend used his turkey call once. The intruder turned around. He used it again. The intruder flew straight at him "with incredible rapidity" until stopped with No. 5 shot about 20 paces distant.

Rough measurements made on the living room floor showed a length of 29½ inches (tip of bill to tip of tail), spread of 72 inches; wing of 19½ inches, and tail of 15½ inches. The specimen was shipped to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

My friend obviously knew the bird. He said that one had been killed about a year before and another five or six years before in Camden County near the Charlton County line about two miles north of the St. Mary's River. He stated that the taxidermist at Brunswick, Georgia had only received two or three in the past twenty or thirty years. Herbert L. Stoddard has written me that the taxidermist at Brunswick has two mounted specimens.—F. V. Hebard, Philadelphia, Pa.

Ringed-bill Gull. *Larus delawarensis* (Ord.)—An adult female in rather worn plumage was taken on the Savannah River on April 9th, 1938. The river was very high and had flooded some hay fields lying without the levee and the weather unusually cold for April. There were three other Gulls, presumably of the same species, in the neighborhood at the time this specimen was taken. While Gulls, tentatively Ring-billed, have been observed in this locality on a number of occasions, the taking of this specimen removes the uncertainty which inevitably accompanies practically all sight records.—Eugene Edmund Murphey, Augusta, Georgia.

Eastern Snow Bunting. *Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis* (Linnaeus).—An adult female in fine plumage was taken near Blythe, Richmond County, Georgia, on November 10th, 1937, by a trainer of bird-dogs and brought to me for identification. This is the second record of this species in the Middle Savannah Valley, the other record being that of a specimen taken in Columbia County, Georgia, February, 1891, by the late Mr. Henry Hillyer.—Eugene Edmund Murphey, Augusta, Georgia.

THE ORIOLE

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G. O. S. NEWS

The Spring meeting of the G. O. S., held in April at Statesboro, was the best yet from the standpoint of sections represented. The roll-call showed the following members present: Dr. Eugene Murphey of Augusta; President Stoddard of Bechtol; Mr. Earle Greene from the Okefinokee; Miss Fannie McClellan from Dalton; Dr. and Mrs. Bassett, Mrs. Cain, Mrs. Seymour, and Mr. Erickson from Savannah; Miss Mabel Rogers, Dr. and Mrs. Anderson, Miss Mary Burns, and Miss Maymie Jones from Milledgeville; Mr. Burleigh from Gulfport, Miss.; Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Harris, Miss Louise Girardeau, Mr. Don Eyles, and Mr. Bill Griffin from Atlanta. Dr. DeLoach and Miss Malvina Trussell represented Statesboro.

The afternoon meeting opened with a round-table discussion of ornithological activity from all parts of the state. Then Mrs. Bassett presented a paper on John Abbott, an early student of bird life in Georgia, but best known for his paintings of insects. It is planned to have papers by members at each meeting from now on.

The evening program began with a dinner at which Professor Harris served as toastmaster. Dr. Pittman, President of the Georgia State Teachers' College, favored the assemblage with a clever ditty about "the prettiest bird you ever did see." This, together with bits of good repartee, made up the program of entertainment. At the business session which followed the chief discussion concerned "The Oriole" and how to finance it. The problem presented was whether to reduce the magazine to a mimeographed publication or to increase the membership fee to \$2.00. Those present wished to get the opinion of the whole society in regard to this. A decision will be made on this question at the October meeting.

Mr. Greene's invitation to have the Fall meeting at his place in the Okefinokee, October 8 and 9, was received with applause. It is planned to make this a very informal meeting—with one principal object—to look at birds. The Okefinokee has much to offer, and under Mr. Greene's expert guidance there should be ornithological thrills aplenty in one of Georgia's most interesting natural areas. Definite instructions on how to reach Mr. Greene's camp at Fargo, together with a detailed outline of the activities for the meeting will be mailed out in September. Be sure to make plans now to attend and become better acquainted with both Georgia's bird students and Georgia's birds.

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