

# THE ORIOLE

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



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Vol. XII, No. 1

JANUARY, 1947

# THE ORIOLE

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## A WEEK IN THE OKEFENOKEE

BY LAWRENCE H. WALKINSHAW

During the spring of 1945 I spent the first week of April at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Chesser studying the Florida Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis pratensis* Meyer), along the area nearest Chesser Island on the Folkston side of the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge in southeast Georgia. April 1, 2, 3, the morning of the 4th, the afternoon of the 5th and April 7th were spent on Chesser Prairie and vicinity while on April 4 Ben Chesser and I poled across Chesser Prairie and down the canal across Chase Prairie to Floyd's Island where we spent the night, returning the next day. On April 6 I rode with Mr. Walter Schaeffer, Refuge Manager, north to Waycross where I met one of the men who took me into Sapling Prairie about six miles. Except for one real rainy day, the weather was warm and nice, slightly cloudy at times with minimum temperatures ranging from 43° to 66° F. and maximum temperatures from 58° to 90° F. Precipitation ranged from .03 to .50 inches per day on April 2, 3, 6 and 7, but .90 inches fell on April 6 and on the morning of the 7th. In general it interfered little with field work.

The Okefenokee is a beautiful spot even in the rain, but, of course, much more beautiful on a warm spring day. The songs of the Prothonotary Warblers, the calls of the Pileated Woodpeckers and the reverberating calls of the Florida Sandhill Cranes tend to make the wild solitude of the area more beautiful. It is no wonder that Francis Harper and many others have long lauded the charms of the great Okefenokee.

During the week 53 species of birds were recorded. Of special interest were flocks of White Ibis ranging from 100 to 150 birds observed on April 1, 2 and 6, and three birds April 5 on Chesser and Sapling Prairies. On April 6, two Short-billed Marsh Wrens were observed on Sapling Prairie as they sang near the boat, while the Yellow Warbler was seen on April 3, 5 and 7, and a single Blackburnian Warbler on April 5. The Prothonotary Warbler, the commonest warbler in the swamp, was just arriving during the week. Only one individual was seen on April 1, two on April 2, four on April 3, but 19 were counted April 4, and ten on April 5.

It was the great Florida Sandhill Crane that received most of my attention. During 61 hours spent in crane study in the Okefenokee area, 53 cranes were observed and 48 others heard, a total of 101, which averages nearly two cranes per hour of observation. From estimation, 51 miles were poled in a boat and eight miles traversed by foot. Six nests were found, three of them the first day, April 1. The observations made at these nests may be summarized as follows:



**VEGETATIONS** Five of the six nests were built in patches of maiden cane (*Panicum hemitomon*) through which grew considerable moss. "Never-wets" (*Orontium aquaticum*), "wampee" (*Peltandra virginica*), "red-root" (*Lachnanthes tinctoria*), flag (*Iris caroliniana*), white water lilies (*Castalia*), button-grass (*Eriacaulon compressum*), grew in large areas separated from the clumps of maiden cane but the maiden cane offered the most protection. One nest was found in a clump of saw grass (*Cladium jamaicense*). All of the nests were built in the open some distance from neighboring hammocks of cypress, bays, maples and slash pine with their tangles of bamboo and shrubbery beneath and Spanish moss draped overhead.

**THE NESTS.** All of the nests were constructed of material at hand, mostly the maiden cane, with wads of moss and saw grass when that grew near the nest. All were little crane-made islands in water except one that was built on a little five foot island less than a foot from the water. The six nests measured in diameter across the base 90x92 cm., 135x138 cm., 90x90 cm., 100 cm., 92x92 cm. and 36 cm. (the latter was the one on the small island). The water depth varied between 21 cm. and 46 cm., averaging 34 cm. The nests stood from 8 to 15 cm. above the water, averaging 12 cm. in height and all were slightly hollowed in the center of the mass for the eggs.

**THE EGG:** Spotted in the usual manner with heavy splotches, mostly at the larger ends, with lavender and different shades of brown and nearly black over a buffy ground color. The eggs of some sets were darker buff than those of others and the spots varied in size. The eggs measured and weighed:

Nest one. April 1.	1. 97 x62.5 mm., wt. 207.1 grams
	2. 94 x60 mm., wt. 187.8 grams
Nest two. April 1.	1. 87.3x59.4 mm., wt. 144.9 grams
	2. 96.4x58.2 mm., wt. 145.6 grams
Nest three. April 1.	1. 86 x56.5 mm., wt. 138.4 grams
Nest six. April 5.	1. 87.5x57.3 mm., wt. 146.1 grams

The average measurements and weights of the six eggs were 91.3x58.9 mm. and 161.6 grams. There was an average of 1.6 eggs per set in five nests.

The dates and locations of the nests found were: nest no. 1, April 1, near the boat landing back of Ben Chesser's home in section 93, NE of Seagrove Lake in Charlton County; nest no. 2, April 1, about one and a half miles SE from Buck Lake in Chesser Prairie in the SE part of Ware County; nest no. 3, April 1, about one fourth mile SW of Cooter Lake on Chesser Prairie in Ware County; nest no. 4, April 2, in section 106, Charlton County about one mile SE of Ben Chesser's home; nest no. 5, April 5, about 100 meters NW of Buck Lake, Ware County, and nest no. 6, April 5, about 250 meters SE of Buck Lake in Ware County.

Tom Chesser said that nest no. 3 was on the exact spot on which one was found during 1944, and Ben Chesser said that nest no. 4 was on the same identical spot where he found one during the spring of 1944.

In nest no. 4 we found remains of egg shells. This nest was located almost



Fig. 1. **Top**—Nest and eggs of Florida Sandhill Crane, nest no. 1, on Chesser Prairie, Charlton County, Georgia, April 1, 1945. **Bottom**—Newly hatched young of Florida Sandhill Crane, nest no. 4 in Trout Lake area, Charlton County, Georgia, April 2, 1945.

on the shore of a small lake. The parents were found together not more than 20 meters away and after a short search, two newly hatched, downy, young were found (Fig. 1). They answered with a shrill *Peep*, the imitation of the adult



*Purr-r-r-r-r* call which I gave. Both still had their egg tooth and they showed no fear cuddling in our hands for warmth. Both were colored quite alike, resembling the young of the Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*) very much. They were quite tawny. The stronger one had much darker legs than the other, approaching a slate color in contrast to the flesh colored ones of the more newly hatched. They weighed and measured:

	No. 1	No. 2
Wt. in grams	96.6	110
Wing in mm.	35	35
Tarsus	44	44
Bare tibia	21	20
Exp. culmen	22	21

Both parents flew about calling in unison and finally alighted some distance away where they gave the shrill alarm note over and over, but the young answered my call in preference to remaining quiet.

Usually both parents were found near the nest which they used, but on one or two occasions the crane which was not incubating was found as far as one-fourth of a mile away, and once only the incubating crane was seen. Usually they left the nest as we approached, calling loudly, but on other occasions not a sound was made. Nearly all of the cranes called in the early morning about sunrise and again about sundown, often the pairs calling in unison, followed by the neighboring pairs. We could easily hear them a distance of two miles.

On April 5, as we left the region of nest no. 6, a small Navy blimp came low over the marsh. A screaming crane came flying low over the canal and a second one came from farther east near Mizell Prairie but we could not find a nest. Eight others came quickly by in one flock, then later four and a lone one, then another and three more, all very frightened. We visited nest 1, as we passed its region, finding the eggs cold. The parents had left it, too, when the blimp passed by, for later Ben Chesser found them back at the nest. These same cranes paid little attention to the many aeroplanes passing very low overhead.

At nest no. 1, I managed to hide in a small group of cypress and red-bay tangled with bamboo and Spanish moss on April 3, at 8:30 a. m., to watch the parents only 100 meters away. The incubating crane could be seen easily. She(?) sat with head erect facing NNE, turning her head from side to side watching every moving thing. As I watched this bird, a pair of cranes near Seagrave Lake were calling a deliberate *Toyaya* repeated over and over. They had been calling as early as 8 a. m. and continued to call until after 9. The call lasted .01 of a minute and was followed by a space of .04 of a minute, occasionally .06 or .08 of a minute. Occasionally a rest of one minute intervened between calls but in the majority they followed in regular short intervals. At one time 101 consecutive calls were given.

At 9:38 a. m. the incubating crane rose and worked with the nest material and turned the eggs. Some of the time she stood erect watching; again she bent over the nest. She soon settled back on the eggs. (Alligators were booming in the distance at 10:15 a. m. and a Pileated Woodpecker called in nearby "houses")

while a Barred Owl called five times at 10:30 and a male Prothonotary sang in the dense cypress back of me. It was a beautiful clear day, the temperature ranging between 59° and 90° F.).

At 11:45 a. m. the incubating crane turned again a very little, then at 11:53 a. m. rose and worked with the nest and eggs for two minutes and five seconds, and sat down facing in the opposite direction, or S.

At 12:22 p. m. she stood up and turned around several times, working with the nest and eggs, sat down and rose again and again for one minute and 48 seconds, then finally sat facing N.

At 1:15 p. m. a low *Purr-r-r-r-r* was heard and at 1:18 the other parent came to the nest as the incubating crane rose and walked toward an open area a short distance to the west. The second parent was larger and stood about one-half minute before settling on the eggs. He sat with head much higher, too.

At 1:34 p. m. parent called from the west *Toyaya-toyaya-toyaya* but the incubating crane was silent.

Between 2:30 and 2:45 p. m. the incubating parent sat a great deal with mouth open. It was hot with no clouds.

At 3:19 p. m. he stood up, dressed his breast feathers, leaned down toward the eggs and spent 55 seconds working with them, and then sat down.

At 3:36 p. m. a plane went over high. He cocked his head to one side watching it until it was out of sight. Two planes came over quite low and he kept his head down low.

At 4:19 p. m. he rose and preened his feathers for 40 seconds, worked with the nest and eggs for one minute and 40 seconds, and then sat down. Sometimes the head was lowered and came up with a wet bill as he fed in the water about the edge of the nest.

At 4:55 p. m. the other parent was observed about 100 meters to W.

At 5:20 p. m. the incubating crane rose and walked away from the nest, silently passing the female(?) who was approaching the nest on his left, both going to their duties very quietly. The female spent six minutes rearranging the eggs and nest and preening her feathers, then sat down at 5:26 p. m. I left the region at 5:40 p. m. but feel sure that the parents did not change places again. (This agrees with other nests in that the smaller bird, probably the female, incubates at night, the male arriving about one-half hour after sunrise.)

1703 Central National Tower,  
Battle Creek, Michigan.

## THE BREEDING OF THE LEAST FLYCATCHER IN RABUN COUNTY, GEORGIA

By EUGENE P. ODUM

Mr. Glenn W. Bell of Atlanta was the first to report the breeding of the Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*) in Georgia. In 1941 he reported the breeding of the species at Camp Cherokee in Rabun County and also the occurrence



of the bird near Lake Rabun in the same county. Unfortunately, however, in reporting his findings to the *Oriole* (6:36-37, September, 1941) he submitted two photographs of an alleged Least Flycatcher nest which actually turned out to be the nest of the Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius alticola*). Consequently, the record was placed on hypothetical grounds until specimens or further observations could be made (Bell, *Oriole*, 7:9. *Birds of Georgia*, page 78).

We now have specimens of an adult breeding female, four nestlings, and an actual nest of the Least Flycatcher from Rabun County so that it can be definitely stated that *Empidonax minimus* does breed in northeast Georgia. Officially, therefore, a new species has been added to the list of breeding birds of the state, since Highlands, North Carolina, was the previous southernmost known point in its breeding range in eastern United States.

On June 2, 1946, I was driving south on Route 23 when I heard the unmistakable "chebec" call of the Least Flycatcher coming from a little strip of white pine-hardwood secondgrowth just within the city limits of Clayton, Ga. I spent about three-quarters of an hour watching this bird as it appeared to be patrolling a territory within the small strip of trees between the highway and the railroad, but no nest or mate was evident. Later, on reaching Lakemont I located another "singing" male, this time back of a tourist cabin along the bank of a stream, but did not have time to observe it.

On June 9, Mr. Thomas D. Burleigh, Dr. J. Fred Denton and I organized a "Least Flycatcher expedition" with the object of locating a nest or other conclusive breeding evidence. Driving along on Route 23 we had barely left Talulah Gorge and entered Rabun County when vigorous "chebecs" brought our car to a halt at Wade's tourist camp, 3 miles south of Lakemont. Here, in a group of white pines a single bird was observed, but no sign of mate or nest. At Lakemont, a bird was calling at the same place as observed a week before, but again no nest or mate. At one time during our search here our hopes were raised high when Dr. Denton spied a nest with a small flycatcher sitting on it. However, when the bird was flushed and the eggs examined it turned out to be an Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virens*). This experience illustrated how easily a mistake could be made, since the Least Flycatcher was constantly singing nearby and we had not heard or seen any previous sign of the Acadian Flycatcher.

At the Clayton location, first discovered on June 2, we had no trouble finding the singing bird and also its mate, but again no nest. After some time, Burleigh and Denton decided they would explore the vicinity for other birds while I tried again to locate the nest by attempting to follow the elusive female. As often happens, Burleigh and Denton "stumbled" upon another pair of Least Flycatchers nearby while chasing Song Sparrows and soon came back with the adult bird, the nest and four nestlings, all the evidence that would ever be needed to convince the most skeptical that Georgia does have nesting Least Flycatchers. The nest was about 15 feet up on a horizontal limb of a small short-leaved pine. In case anyone is skeptical the adult and three nestling specimens may be seen in the National Museum and the nest and one nestling are deposited in the University of Georgia collection.

In summary, the short trip disclosed four locations where the Least Flycatcher

was holding territory and probably nesting, all locations a few feet from the highway and near habitations. The one nest found was within the city limits of the town of Clayton. Since the Least Flycatcher is a very noisy bird during the breeding season it is not difficult to find (especially since it seems to prefer tourist camps!) provided one is familiar with its distinctive call. As with all *Empidonax* flycatchers, the voice is by far the best recognition aid. Whether birds have recently invaded Rabun County or whether they have always been here is a matter of conjecture. Burleigh states that he was a frequent visitor to this county in the 1920's and never encountered one in the breeding season. So far we have not found the bird in any of the other north Georgia counties, although it has been reported verbally as occurring in the Nacoochee Valley in White County. During the coming season we hope to determine more definitely the exact limits of its breeding range, so that future changes, if any, can be recognized. Since the Least Flycatcher definitely does profit by civilization it is quite possible that it is extending its range southward as are the Robin and Song Sparrow.

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#### THE BREEDING OF SWAINSON'S WARBLER NEAR TIFTON, GEORGIA

By ROBERT A. NORRIS AND MILTON HOPKINS, JR.

In Little River Swamp, two miles west of Tifton, the writers found a male Swainson's Warbler (*Limnethlypis swainsonii*) in full song about 9:30 on the morning of June 13, 1946. This was the second occurrence record for the species in Tift County, the first being a bird collected by Norris on September 20, 1941. It was not long before we located the bird, which was singing only four or five feet from the ground, about 40 feet from a small stream and some 200 feet from the river. In this area the ground was muddy, containing a moderate amount of debris, and the prevalent trees were noted to be red bays, sweet and black gums, red maples, ash, button-willow, and a scattering of loblolly pines.

The bird sang repeatedly for about 20 minutes, then stopped. Only a few sporadic songs were heard thereafter. We estimated the diameter of its range to be about 75 yards. At 11:25 a. m. on crossing the small stream from the territory of the singing male to an adjacent area of very similar woodland, we walked right upon the nest of this warbler. The female was lying close upon the nest, presumably incubating. As later proven this bird was the mate of the nearby singing male.

The nest was composed of dead twigs and leaves, about 4 feet 8 inches above the ground in a collection of dead twigs hanging on, or supported by, several small rather bare growths including one young ash. Also noted in the area were myrtle, sweet bay, magnolia, titi, and small amounts of briar. The nest was not directly supported by anything growing directly from the ground. The earth below was muddy though firm, rich, and with dead leaves intermixed. There



was absolutely no cane at the nesting site or in the general region. The male was not heard singing after we located the nest.

The female sat close until Hopkins' hand was within eight or ten inches of the nest. She then fluttered off silently and went to the ground about 12 feet away and seemed to "run" off rather than hop or walk. We moved about 15 feet away from the nest and within three minutes she was approaching it cautiously and without sound, but on noting us (in plain view), she presently flew off across the stream toward the area occupied by the male. The eggs were three in number, white, one being a little buffy. The nest was lined on the inside with black wiry horse-hair-like substance, and then with dead pine needles. The remainder was of dead twigs, dead deciduous leaves and a small amount of rootlet material. The outside diameter was about five inches and the outside depth approximately four inches. The outside was ragged and uneven looking, the inside quite circular and smooth.

At 12:12 the female returned from across the stream, calling four or five times just after crossing, using a number of flimsy perches as she came. Unmindful of us, she settled on the eggs with her head in a direction opposite of the time before. Other birds present during this period were: Carolina Wren, Hooded Warbler, Hummingbird, Cardinal, Cuckoo, and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers. At 12:15 we left the area.

On June 15, Norris again visited the nesting site. He reached the nest at 7:45 a. m. The three eggs were still present but neither of the warblers was heard or seen. At 7:53 the call note of the species was heard about 50 feet away on the nest side of the stream. Very shortly after this the female approached and settled on the eggs. At 9:05 the song of the male was heard for the first time this morning. On timing the interval in seconds between songs, Norris found: 9, 13, 10, 10, 8, 10, 10, 12, 10, 9, 9, 10, 12, 12 and 13 seconds between successive songs. The average was 10.7 seconds. The male had begun singing with full force, no "tune-up" notes having been heard.

At 10:00 the female still remained in the same position. Other birds including a Prothonotary Warbler and a White-eyed Vireo continued to sing nearby. It was interesting to note that not only had the male not approached the nest spot but also that his territory lay across the stream in the area where we first found him. It seemed, in other words, to one side of the nest spot and not around it. At 11:50 the female left the nest for the first time. Lacking eight minutes she had been on the nest for four hours.

At 12:31 a loud *tchipping* was heard just across the stream. The male was with his mate as they returned to the nest site. Uttering a low tremulous gnatcatcher-like note, the male, after a preliminary pause, fluttered up to the nest! He hovered in the air, issuing the low note again, about a yard from the nest before he lit on its side. The female soon joined him and they remained together on the nest a few seconds, fluttering a little, before he got off and circled about the observer. A male Hooded Warbler came into the nest area to within 12 feet of the nest and within five feet of the male Swainson's Warbler. Neither bird called or paid any particular attention to the other.

The nest was visited for the last time on June 17. At 6:40 a. m. the female was on the nest. The male was not heard. Norris placed his hand within six inches of the incubating bird, which reluctantly got off the nest and flew to the mucky earth ten feet away. The eggs were still present and were noted to be stained with excrement for the first time, indicating that they might be fresh.

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#### GENERAL NOTES

A NOTE ON THE SUMMER BIRDS OF YONAH MOUNTAIN, WHITE COUNTY, GEORGIA.—Mt. Yonah, situated in White County approximately four miles northeast of Cleveland and ten miles from the main Blue Ridge, is the highest of the numerous monadnocks occurring in this and Habersham County. Rising from the southern edge of the broad beautiful Nacoochee Valley (alt. 1500 ft.) to an altitude of 3173 ft., Yonah is one of the most conspicuous and picturesque mountains of the state. This mountain, because of its height and isolated position seemed likely to produce some interesting ornithological finds.

Leaving from the valley at the southwestern foot of the mountain on June 28, 1946, Thomas D. Burleigh and I climbed to the summit of Yonah arriving there at noon. Birds were extremely scarce on the lower slopes but from approximately 2500 ft. to the top they were fairly numerous.

Of the various species encountered on the mountain the most surprising was the Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus carolinus*). A pair of these birds was inhabiting a tract of large timber on the shelf at the foot of the cliff at an altitude of about 2600 ft. The female was collected to substantiate the record. Although *Birds of Georgia* states concerning this species that it is "A common permanent resident over the entire State, breeding", there are no actual records of its occurrence in this part of the state on the higher mountains of the Blue Ridge or on the plateaus north of it.

Of the "northern" species whose breeding ranges extend into the state in the mountains, only the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) was definitely present. Nevertheless, this species was one of the most common breeding birds. We first heard birds calling at 2000 ft. but it was not until we reached 2500 ft. that a male was actually seen and collected. From there to, and on, the summit birds were heard and seen frequently.

The Golden-winged, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided Warblers apparently have not inhabited the mountain although the habitat seemed ideal, particularly for the Chestnut-sided. The breeding status of the Mountain Vireo on Yonah was not definitely determined. No birds were seen and little territory to their liking was noted on that part of the mountain traversed by us. However, several vireos thought to be of this species were heard singing on distant slopes suggesting that this species might be present in small numbers.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Ga.



**VIRGINIA RAIL IN ATLANTA.**—While observing wild life in the South River section near Atlanta on November 2, 1946, the writers flushed a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola limicola*) from a bottomland field overgrown with broomgrass and other tall grasses which formed a dense cover, though perfectly dry, for such secretive birds as rails. Although the bird was flushed only once, it flew between the writers at which time the various points of identification were noted: its size, long bill, general brownish coloration (especially the wing coverts), etc. About 100 yards upstream in a portion of the same field, a Sora was flushed, and the similarity of size in the two species of rails was readily noticeable. So far as is known, this is the first record of the Virginia Rail in the Atlanta area, but it is unfortunate that the bird was not collected to further substantiate the record.—DAVID W. JOHNSTON, *Dept. of Zoology, University of Georgia, Athens*; JIMMY MAJOR, 984 Forrest Road, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia.

**LECONTE'S SPARROW NEAR ATLANTA.**—On the afternoon of November 23, 1946, Thomas D. Burleigh, Bill Griffin, Terry McGown and I were afield in the South River section of DeKalb County about one mile east of Constitution, Georgia. While covering a large field covered with dead grass of uniform height (about one foot) a small sparrow flushed from almost beneath my feet. Its flight was weak and wavering and could be readily distinguished from that of Savannah Sparrows which were common in the field.

I collected the bird which was identified by Mr. Burleigh as a Leconte's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus caudacutus*). The specimen which is now in my possession turned out to be a female.

This is the first time that Leconte's Sparrow has been recorded from the Atlanta area, but *Birds of Georgia* lists two other recent specimens and two sight records from the state.—JIMMY MAJOR, 984 Forrest Rd., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

**RED-WINGS FEEDING ON SEEDS OF LONG-LEAFED PINE.**—Around my home in a suburb of Augusta there are five long-leaved pines (*Pinus palustris*) which, this past fall produced an abundant crop of seeds. About noon on November 3, 1946, I noted a flock of approximately 50 blackbirds alight in the top of the tallest pine. I secured my binoculars and identified them as Red-wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). In the course of observing them I saw that the birds were voraciously feeding on pine seeds which they secured from the partly opened cones. The birds moved about the top of the tree perching on tips of the limbs where the cones were attached or alighting on the large cones themselves in order to secure the seeds. Seeds were pulled from the cones by the wing, then detached from the wing and swallowed. When disturbed by children after they had fed for about 15 minutes in this tree, the flock moved about 200 yards to a tall pine in a neighboring woodlot and resumed feeding there.

On many occasions during the migration season I have seen flocks of blackbirds light in tall long-leaved pines. Until the above observation revealed that it was for the purpose of feeding I had always assumed that they were merely resting. It would be interesting to know to what extent, if any, Red-wings regularly feed on the seeds of other native pines.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Ga.

**THE WHITE PELICAN AT TYBEE ISLAND, GEORGIA.**—On October 13, 1946, during the field trip taken by G. O. S. members attending the fall meeting on Cockspur Island, a White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) was seen by David Johnson, Jimmy Major and the writer on the Savannah River near Tybee Light. The typical pelican shape, the white coloration and the black primaries were clearly observed. Shortly thereafter, and at closer range, a second White Pelican was seen by most of the other participants. The species is a rare migrant in Georgia.—BRANCHE HOWE, JR., 414 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur, Ga.

### SPRING MEETING

The Place and Policies Committee has announced that the 1947 spring meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society will be held at the G. S. C. W. summer camp on Lake Burton probably the second weekend in May. Sleeping accommodations and the necessary meals for all who wish to attend will be available at the camp for cost. Again emphasis at the meeting will be on field observations and most of the time will be spent in this manner. Most of the birds native to the Lake Burton area will have begun nesting by this time thus affording an opportunity of observing the nesting habits of many species peculiar to the mountains. Because of arrangements at the camp there will be again unusual opportunity for getting better acquainted with other members. Let's all begin planning now to attend this meeting and make it the best yet. Detailed information concerning the meeting and blanks for reservations will be mailed to members on a later date.

### NIGHT SINGER—MOCKINGBIRD

BY LOUIS C. FINK

I cannot say of all the birds

His is the most exquisite voice,  
And yet of all the ones I've heard,  
The Mockingbird must be my choice.

Undaunted when the rains stream down,  
From post or bush he trills his tune,  
And when the lazy sun goes home  
He stays to serenade the moon.

## EDITORIAL

The activities of the Georgia Ornithological Society during the ten years of its existence have consisted mainly of gathering and disseminating accurate information concerning the bird life within the State. A great deal has been accomplished along this line as evidenced by the mass of facts recorded in the pages of *The Oriole* and *Birds of Georgia*.<sup>4</sup> In other fields such as bird conservation and education, though included in the purposive program of the Society, practically nothing has been accomplished. It seems that the G. O. S., now that excuses of the past four or five years have practically resolved themselves, cannot delay longer in planning and initiating education and conservation programs.

Last April while observing birds in a woodlot within a hundred yards of our home, we were attracted to a type-written notice tacked to a tree beside the much used path. It read:

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Put away that rifle that you are going to kill wild birds with and help them by giving them a fair chance. It is their nesting season and they deserve this break. Think of the good they do. A few do some damage to crops and poultry. Any control if undertaken should be confined to the type of bird doing the damage. Be a good sport and give them a fair break, won't you?

It was evident from the phraseology and spelling of certain words that this was the work of some high school boy or girl. Furthermore, it was evident that right in our immediate neighborhood there is some young person (we still have not learned his identity) who is sincerely interested in the welfare of our birds. Undoubtedly there are hundreds of interested boys and girls throughout the State who would welcome the opportunity of participating in an active conservation or education program if the G. O. S. had one to offer them.

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Dues! The sole source of funds for carrying on the activities of the G. O. S. during 1947 is from dues paid by members. The Society has no surplus funds, no endowment fund or any other source of income. It is imperative, therefore, that you pay your dues as soon as possible.

Membership dues are payable January 1st, and all who have not paid for the year should remit at once to the Treasurer, Ray C. Werner, 758 Wildwood Road, N. E., Atlanta, Ga. Please give attention NOW in order to avoid being dropped from the membership.