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BIRDS AT A MIDDLE GEORGIA POND

By NATHANIEL R. WHITNEY

During the winter and spring of 1953, I frequently visited a marshy pond two miles west of Warner Robins in Houston County. This study area is a depression of about 10 acres, surrounded by a dirt racetrack. Most of the area is actually a pond through May and June, with most of the surface covered by floating and emergent vegetation, primarily water lilies, pondweeds, and lotus, with many patches of cattails. A narrow zone of dry land covered by profuse herbaceous vegetation borders the racetrack.

The accompanying table shows the species of birds observed during May and June, the months considered as the breeding season. Of these, both species of sandpipers were undoubtedly transient, since they disappeared before the middle of May. Since Griffin (*Oriole*, 17: 27, 1952) has found Spotted Sandpipers nesting near Atlanta, they may breed in the Macon region also. The two rails were probably transients also. I had combed the marsh on foot, however, the day I noted the rails, and was unable to do this every time. Thus their nests could easily have been overlooked. The status of the Coot and Gallinule is likewise doubtful.

An outstanding result of the study was the discovery of the nesting of the Pied-billed Grebe, which Dr. Denton has listed as a species probably but not definitely breeding in the Macon region. Small groups of grebes, probably representing transients, were present through the early spring, but from April 18 on only one or two individuals were noted on each trip. A pile of dead vegetation that appeared to be a nest was noted on May 19, but it was in a clump of cattails too far out to be reached by wading, and so I was unable to determine its contents. Observation through a 20-power telescope did not show any signs of activity. On June 9, however, I noted five recently-hatched young in the nest, and at another part of the pond I found two adults with two young. I was unable to return to the pond until twelve days later, when I could find no evidence of grebe activity.

Two species of passerine birds were found regularly. The Kingbirds had regular feeding perches around the pond, usually in marginal vegetation. They presumably nested in brush and saplings outside the dirt road. Redwings, however, nested in the marsh strip surrounding the pond in three definite territories. The male at the northeast corner defended a large strip of pond margin, but the two pairs at the south end sometimes seemed to overlap territories. A nest found on June 9 in the southwest territory, contained two young beginning to grow feathers. On June 21, a nest was located in the southeast territory and a new one in the southwest, both con-

taining three eggs. In spite of careful searching, I was unable to find a nest in the northeast territory, but on June 21 I succeeded in finding four recently fledged young in this territory. Thus at this time, raising of the first broods was apparently complete, and second broods were being started.

TABLE

	May 9	May 10	May 19	May 24	June 9	June 21
Pied-billed Grebe (<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>)	1	1	2 (1 nest)	2	2 pairs 7 young	—
Wood Duck (<i>Aix sponsa</i>)	—	—	2 pairs	—	1 pair	—
Purple Gallinule (<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>)	—	—	—	—	1	—
Coot (<i>Fulica americana</i>)	2	1	—	1	—	—
King Rail (<i>Rallus elegans</i>)	—	—	—	1 or 2	—	—
Sora (<i>Porzana carolina</i>)	—	—	—	1	—	—
Solitary Sandpiper (<i>Tringa solitaria</i>)	2	—	—	—	—	—
Spotted Sandpiper (<i>Actitis macularia</i>)	1	2	—	—	—	—
Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>)	20	20	—	3	6	4
Chimney Swift (<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)	—	—	3	—	—	—
Eastern Kingbird (<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>)	3	3	1	2	—	1
Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)	2 m 1 f	—	3 m 3 f	3 pairs	2 pairs	4 pairs

4350 Meadowwood Drive
Rapid City, South Dakota

GENERAL NOTES

ADDITIONAL GEORGIA RECORDS OF THE AMERICAN SCOTER.—The American Scoter (*Oidemia nigra americana*) has been reported occasionally in South Carolina and on the east coast of Florida, but according to the Georgia Check-list (Greene, *et al.*, 1945) there was then but one specimen extant from Georgia. In earlier years I have seen up to a half dozen at a time in Callibogue Sound, South Carolina, only a few miles north of the Georgia line, but have not seen it in this state. It is possible now to report three more occurrences, one represented by a specimen, one consisting of a pair of wings and one foot and leg, and the third based on information from a friend.

About two years ago, Mr. William S. Roberts, of Isle of Hope, Chatham County, told me of shooting an adult male, but by the time I heard of it, the bird was dressed and frozen to be eaten later. I

know Mr. Roberts well and have confidence in his identification in this case. On March 19, 1955, I found two wings and one foot and leg from a female of this species on the north end of Tybee Island, and on May 1, 1955, collected a full plumaged male in the same place. This bird had an injured wing and could not fly. It bears my serial number 787.—IVAN R. TOMKINS, 1231 East 50th Street, Savannah, Georgia.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER AT ATLANTA.—On Sunday afternoon May 15, 1955, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) was observed flying within fifty feet of the writers at their residence in West End, Atlanta, Georgia. Although the bird was in sight for only one minute, or less, before disappearing behind large trees, its unmistakable silhouette and flight characteristics together with its distinctive color pattern enabled the observers, who have studied it on many occasions in Texas and Oklahoma, to identify it at once.

It may be significant to note that the weather on this particular weekend was of an unusual nature. A cold front had moved in the general area from the west followed by low-hanging clouds, fog and scattered showers; the maximum wind velocity was in excess of twenty miles per hour before it shifted from this direction.

This is the third recorded observation of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in the state (see Greene, *et al.*, *Birds of Georgia*, 1945) and the first sight record from the Atlanta area.—TOM AND ED COLLUM, 1070 Lucille Avenue, S.W., Atlanta, Georgia.

RECENT LITERATURE

LOUISIANA BIRDS. By George H. Lowery, Jr. Louisiana State University Press, 1955; xxix, 556 pp., numerous colored plates, photographs and illustrations. \$5.00.

Here is a state bird book which speaks with enthusiasm in a popular yet authoritative tone. To say the least, *Louisiana Birds* is a pleasing innovation among the many state treatises. Dr. Lowery, allegiant Louisianan and eminent ornithologist, has designed his book with the sole aim of introducing to the people of Louisiana the subject of ornithology. I predict that he will be abundantly successful in the accomplishment of this aim.

The book contains a dozen introductory chapters dealing not only with Louisiana ornithology but with bird study in general. Those of a general nature cover identification of birds, feathers and plumages, the bird skeleton, migration, economic value, conservation and management and means of attracting birds. Of more local application are the chapters on Louisiana as a place to see birds, the history of Louisiana ornithology, the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology and ornithological societies. These chapters comprise nearly a fifth of the total text. A chapter on ecology and, perhaps, more descriptive matter on the physiographic and biological characteristics of the various sections of the state would have been useful.

The accounts of the species recorded in Louisiana follow and comprise most of the remainder of the book. Here the departure from

traditional state bird books is most apparent. Gone is the laborious, scientific style of writing. Gone are the multitudinous specific records of occurrence and breeding. This data is reserved, we are told, for a later, more technical paper. Gone too are the separate listings for each subspecies. Emphasis is placed solely upon the species as the basic category, reference to subspecies being omitted entirely. In view of the author's awareness of the value of study of subspecific variation, we may be certain that this aspect of Louisiana ornithology is also reserved for a later scientific paper.

Into each informal account of the 378 species recorded in Louisiana (plus 7 additional species of doubtful occurrence in the state) Dr. Lowery has crammed a wealth of information concerning abundance, season of occurrence, breeding status, preferred habitat and field identification pointers. Frequently the author will inject some incident of particular local interest or some conservation note or perhaps he will describe an unusual habit of the bird under discussion. All is interwoven in a narrative style that is pleasurable to read as well as informative.

Interspersed throughout are beautiful photographs of Louisiana habitats and birds mainly by Allan D. Cruikshank and Samuel A. Grimes. Each species (except the Clay-colored Sparrow, added to the list just prior to publication) is illustrated in water color, half tone or line drawing by Robert E. Tucker. Most of these drawings are diagrammatic and styled in the manner of Roger Tory Peterson as an aid to identification. The value of depicting the sixty-four accidental or casual species (half of which have been recorded in the state on only one occasion) seems somewhat questionable in view of the adequacy of Peterson's *Guides*. Charts showing the seasonal occurrence of Louisiana birds and a bibliography and index round out the volume.

Priced well below the cost of most state books it should find its way to many shelves outside Louisiana. To Georgians it should have particular significance as a pointer to the many species of western origin which tend to wander into the southeastern states in winter. I shall probably refer to it more frequently than to any state bird book ever published outside of Georgia. WILLIAM W. GRIFFIN.

OCCURENCE EXTREMES OF BIRDS OF THE ATLANTA, GEORGIA, REGION.—This list is a summary of the status of all species recorded in the Atlanta region, but will also be found useful to those in other sections of the State where local lists are not available. It can be secured from Miss Annis Humphries, Treasurer, Atlanta Bird Club, 914 East Rock Springs Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia. The price is fifty cents, postpaid.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

FALL MEETING, 1955.—The thirty-third semi-annual meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held in Perry, Georgia, on October 28, 29 and 30, 1955, with headquarters in the New Perry Hotel. A total of 65 members and guests registered for the meeting. Those present on Friday evening were fortunate in hearing George Dorsey give some highly accurate imitations of bird calls, accompanied by his amusing and instructive commentary.

After early breakfast on Saturday, groups were conducted on field

trips to various localities in the vicinity under the guidance of members familiar with the area. At 11:00 a.m. the Society met in the Houston County Court House for a business meeting, with Mrs. Charles Neal, President, presiding. Mr. Ben Maulsby, on behalf of the Floyd County Audubon Society, extended an invitation to the Society to hold its spring meeting in Rome. The invitation was accepted enthusiastically. The report of the Nominating Committee was read by Richard Parks as follows:

President	Herman W. Coolidge
First Vice-President	George W. Sciple
Second Vice-President	Mrs. J. H. Whiteman
Secretary	Mrs. Fred Crenshaw
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Milledgeville	Miss Katherine Weaver
Augusta	Fred Denton
Albany	Mrs. T. T. Giffen
Statesboro	Tully Pennington
Fitzgerald	Milton Hopkins
Rome	George Dorsey

It was moved and passed that the report of the Nominating Committee be accepted and the officers nominated elected.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

At 2:00 p.m. the group assembled in the Court House for a paper session. T. P. Haynes read a paper on The Roosting Habits of a Summer Population of Purple Martins in Macon. Mrs. Carmen Dobbs and Mrs. J. H. Whiteman reported on the possibility of bird study instruction among the patients at Warm Springs. C. G. Rohwer discussed Federal-State Pest Control Programs in Relation to Bird Life. J. Fred Denton read a paper on Life History Notes of the Swainson's Warbler. James H. Jenkins discussed his findings on The Gonad, Molt, and Lipid Cycles in the Mourning Dove. David W. Johnston reported on the Reproductive Isolation Between Common and Fish crows.

Following the paper session a field trip was conducted to the Malachie farms.

At 7:00 p.m. the banquet was held in the New Perry Hotel. Following a delightful meal, Mrs. Tom Carter, President of the Middle Georgia Audubon Society, introduced the local Chairman, Mrs. J. W. Calhoun, who in turn, presented Mayor and Mrs. Stanley Smith of Perry. Mayor Smith extended a cordial welcome to the Society from the city of Perry. Attention was called to the interesting table dec-

orations featuring actual bird nests. The local committee was introduced and acclaimed for their good work.

Mrs. Neal expressed her pleasure at serving the society as president and then introduced the incoming officers. Mr. Coolidge, the new president, stated his desire to serve the society well during his administration. He then introduced Mrs. Neal who recounted some of the ornithological highlights of her recent European tour. Richard Parks then showed a series of color slides of southern birds.

Sunday morning field trips were conducted to the following places: Beaver Ponds, Howser's Mill Pond, Greene's Pond and Creek Bridge, and the Flint River. On returning from the field trips a tabulation of species showed a total of 82 species for the three days.

The meeting was ended with a group dinner in the Hotel dining room.

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