

# THE ORIOLE

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



Vol. XXII

JUNE, 1957

No. 2



# THE ORIOLE

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## CONTENTS

ISAAC FLOOD ARNOW. By WILLIAM W. GRIFFIN.....	13
KITES IN THE MACON AREA. By DAVID W. JOHNSTON.....	16
GENERAL NOTES.....	18
NEWS AND COMMENTS.....	22
FROM THE FIELD.....	24
RECENT LITERATURE.....	24

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## ISAAC FLOOD ARNOW

By WILLIAM W. GRIFFIN

Isaac Flood Arnow was born in St. Marys, Georgia, October 8, 1869. He died in St. Marys on April 28, 1957, at the age of eighty-seven years. During his long, active life, he maintained a constant interest in bird study, and from about 1900 through 1912, the vigorous pursuit of the science of ornithology consumed most of his leisure time.

Arnow (pronounced "are now") was born in the town of St. Marys, but while he was still a boy, his parents moved to a farm four miles from town on Burel Creek. His father was Peter Robert Arnow and his mother was Susan Flood Arnow. Both parents had been reared in St. Marys. As a matter of fact, Isaac's grandfather, John Sebastian Arnow, had moved to St. Marys in 1805. Young Isaac had every opportunity to develop a first-hand knowledge of birds, for his father's farm, the salt marsh, woods, and fields around it abounded in wildlife. He was educated in the public schools of Camden County and when he reached manhood he left his father's farm for the life of a merchant in St. Marys (population in 1890, 575). He married Estelle Arnow, but shortly after the birth of their first child, Madena, Estelle died.

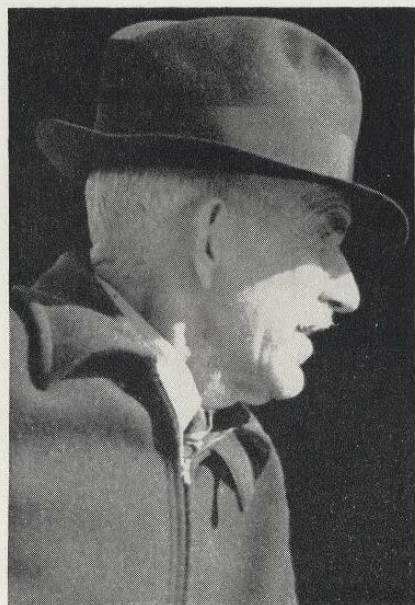
In 1899 Isaac married Annie Mongin Arnow. For a short while Annie and Isaac continued to live in town, but the yearning for country life was irresistible. Isaac returned to the Arnow farm land on Burel Creek to build a home of his own, where to Annie and Isaac were born four children: three daughters and one son who died in infancy. Here it was that Isaac spent his leisure hours afield on horseback or on foot in search of the birds.

During this period of Arnow's life, from 1900 until about 1912, he was an avid ornithologist. He learned the art of bird skinning and began collecting specimens of the birds of Camden County. Oology also fascinated him and he ardently searched out the nests and eggs of the breeding birds of the area. Fifty years ago the practice of exchange of bird skins among ornithologists was far more prevalent than it is today. Isaac exchanged his bird skins for those of naturalists from other parts of the United States, and as a result his skins may now be found in most of the major museums of the country, for most of the large private



collections of that day have now found permanent disposal in the larger museums. Here in Georgia he exchanged with the Reverend W. H. LaPrade and a good many of his skins are thus to be found in the LaPrade Collection deposited in the Emory University Museum in Atlanta. In 1947 Arnow presented the remnants of his collection, consisting of over 400 bird and mammal skins to the University of Georgia in Athens.

Arnow never travelled far from his home on collecting trips. As a matter of fact he seldom left his home county of Camden to study birds.



Photograph by Ivan R. Tomkins.

Isaac F. Arnow in 1941.

Occasionally he would take his daughters to Savannah to attend the races, but such trips were not occasions for ornithological pleasures beyond a social call upon some of the local bird men. Generally his field work was accomplished alone. Fifty years ago there were no guides to field identification, nor did Arnow have the benefit of fellow ornithologists nearby to counsel and aid him in his daily bird work. But Arnow lived in a more leisurely epoch, and when an out-of-town ornithologist did come to St. Marys, Arnow would entertain him. Troup D. Perry, of Savannah, was accustomed to make an annual trip to the Burel Creek farm for a week's visit. Others, such as

Gilbert Rossignol and Walter Hoxie of Savannah and Arthur H. Helme of New York, experienced the hospitality of Isaac and Annie Arnow. On such occasions Arnow would show his guests his favorite tramping grounds by day, and the evenings would be spent in conversation about the birds while skinning the day's collections.

The collecting of rare and unusual birds was the most intriguing aspect of ornithology in Arnow's day, and he was successful in obtaining species which eluded others working the Southeastern Seaboard in the early part of this century. The published reports of his finds appeared

from time to time in *The Auk*. Among his most unusual discoveries were the Holboell's Grebe, American and Surf scoters, Krider's Hawk, Avocet, Bachman's and Kirtland's warblers, American Crossbill, and Henslow's and Lark sparrows. Dr. David W. Johnston, in reworking the portion of Arnow's collection deposited in the University of Georgia Museum, has discovered that Arnow also collected specimens of Fuertes Red-tailed Hawk, Western Pigeon Hawk, and Florida Screech Owl, all of which represent first occurrences in the State for these subspecies.

Arnow at one time reported the capture of a Masked Duck from Savannah by Gilbert R. Rossignol and Walter J. Hoxie. He relied on the identification of these gentlemen. Unfortunately, he had not personally examined the specimen when the article was sent in to the editor of *The Auk*. After publication, opportunity to examine the specimen was afforded and Arnow found that the rare Masked Duck was in fact only an immature Lesser Scaup Duck in peculiarly stained plumage. He was quick to print a corrective note in *The Auk*.

A somewhat similar situation arose when Arnow reported the collection of a set of three eggs of the Bachman's Warbler from Chatham County by Mr. Rossignol. Arnow reported this nest in connection with three specimens of Bachman's Warbler which he himself had collected at St. Marys. He mentioned that Rossignol had found a nest near Savannah and that several days later Rossignol and Hoxie had returned to find three eggs in the nest. Rossignol saw no bird about the nest, but Hoxie did and identified it as Bachman's Warbler. Arnow stated that he had personally examined the eggs and compared them with eggs of Swainson's Warbler and that they were the eggs of Bachman's Warbler. A few years later Arthur T. Wayne, the famous South Carolina ornithologist, published a short note in *The Auk* rebuking Arnow and Hoxie, holding Rossignol blameless and stating positively that the eggs were those of Swainson's Warbler, he having examined them and having noted the misidentification at once. Wayne, of course, was very dogmatic in all of his determinations, but this note displayed a lack of grace which could well have curtailed Arnow's interest in birds. (It would be interesting to know who was right about these eggs.)

After 1912, the year of Wayne's article in *The Auk*, Arnow published no more and apparently his intense interest in birds abated. He moved back to St. Mary's and the tasks of providing for his young daughters no doubt cut heavily into his leisure time. He became engrossed in politics and served in many local elective offices. For 15 years prior to his retirement a few years ago, he was postmaster of St. Marys. He became a poet of considerable local renown and was immensely interested in the history of the region in his later years. In 1941, Ivan R.

from time to time in *The Auk*. Among his most unusual discoveries were the Holboell's Grebe, American and Surf scoters, Krider's Hawk, Avocet, Bachman's and Kirtland's warblers, American Crossbill, and Henslow's and Lark sparrows. Dr. David W. Johnston, in reworking the portion of Arnow's collection deposited in the University of Georgia Museum, has discovered that Arnow also collected specimens of Fuertes Red-tailed Hawk, Western Pigeon Hawk, and Florida Screech Owl, all of which represent first occurrences in the State for these subspecies.



Tomkins, Walter J. Erichsen, and Don Eyles visited Arnow in St. Marys, and Tomkins' engaging portrait of the man in his seventy-second year accompanies this article.

Isaac Arnow has rendered a service to mankind in manifold ways, not the least of which has been his addition of a good many facts about birds to the sum total of human knowledge.

3232 Pine Ridge Road, N. E.

Atlanta 5, Georgia

July 18, 1957

## KITES IN THE MACON AREA

BY DAVID W. JOHNSTON

For the past three years my attention has been focused on the distribution, ecology, and physiology of avian species in central Georgia. Among the more unusual field observations made near Macon have been those of kites in the environs of the Ocmulgee River south of the city. I was especially interested in this group of birds because of previous experiences with the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) in central California and the Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) near Memphis, Tennessee, and because of their unique abilities of feeding and flight. It was with considerable interest, therefore, that I discovered the regular occurrence of the Mississippi Kite in the river bottomland about two miles south of Macon. Prior to my residence at Macon, other ornithologists, such as J. Fred Denton, Edmund Farrar, Jr., and Brooke Meanley, had made sporadic records of this kite at Macon, but the following data generally summarize recent observations of kites at Macon and represent about twenty-five hours of observations on at least twelve different days.

### MISSISSIPPI KITE

*Occurrence.*—The earliest spring arrival date for this species was March 6, 1955, when a single bird was seen circling over a farm pond on the outskirts of Jeffersonville in Twiggs County. In the river bottomlands near Macon this species generally arrives about the first week in May, and observations of it have been made throughout June and July. Usually only one or two birds were seen at a time, perched on dead stubs beside the "borrow pit" or flying over the water and/or fields. On May 24, 1956, however, six birds were seen in one tree. At least two of these were in immature plumage. At times the birds would spread their wings and tails in a fashion similar to vultures trying to dry themselves after a rain, but when this observation was made, it was quite hot and sunny. On June 19, 1956, beside the "borrow pit" there were four

kites (one immature) in one tree. The birds showed little fear of man, and could be approached within about 50 yards before they would fly. I have no observations of this species after late July, but Farrar reported kites here on August 21, 1951, and August 29, 1950 (*Oriole*, 17: 9, 1952).

*Flight and feeding.*—It is undoubtedly true that kites of the various species are peerless fliers. One is impressed by the ease and graceful nature of their flight which may involve soaring to great heights, "beating" back and forth over fields in search of food, or straightforward progress from one perch to another. In any of these situations the flat appearance of the wings with respect to the body is apparent, as is the constant tipping or rudder-like action of the tail. When harassed by kingbirds, jays, or crows, the kites will effect a hasty retreat, all the while darting up and down or sideways in an attempt to escape these antagonists.

Upon many occasions the birds were seen flying rather low over the "borrow pit" and an adjacent field, but never did we observe these birds alight on the ground. During many hours of observation, if any food was taken at all, it was captured on the wing, and the only direct evidence of food items which I have is based upon the examination of two stomachs. An immature male (DWJ #1137), taken on May 19, 1956, had small grasshoppers in its gizzard. (This bird had some fat and weighed 261 grams. Its right testis measured 13 mm.) An adult male (DWJ #1187) was shot by a farmer on May 9, 1957, and had in its gizzard the remains of a few grasshoppers and many small beetles less than one half inch in length. (The left testis of this bird measured 20 mm.) The size of these food items coupled with our knowledge of their flying habits, leads us to believe that most of the feeding was done on the wing.

*Nesting.*—Unfortunately no nest of the Mississippi Kite has ever been located near Macon, but the presence of numerous individuals throughout the breeding season would cause one to suspect breeding. Two observations indicate possible nesting activity. Quoting from my field notes for July 6, 1955, "T. P. Haines and I arrived at the borrow pit at 4:15, and immediately observed a Miss. kite flying from the river in a southerly direction. It passed high overhead but was flying "deliberately" as if heading for a nest. It was apparently not carrying anything. As it flew out of sight over Walker Lake, a kingbird began to harass it. Not 5 min. later we saw another kite flying in the same direction." On May 30, 1956, at the same location one bird was seen carrying a stick; it flew and circled quite high and then disappeared from sight at least a mile up the river. These observations resemble one reported by Denton for kites in Macon on June 18, 1944 (*Oriole*, 9: 37, 1944). The extent and complexity of the river bottomland forest in this area makes it virtually impossible to follow these birds for any distance.



## SWALLOW-TAILED KITE

It was with considerable pleasure that I could point out to my ornithology class two Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) on May 8, 1957, as they flew over and near the "borrow pit." Quoting from my field notes for this day, "The birds were gliding effortlessly through and over the large trees, but never lit or hit the ground. As they banked we noticed the white head and underparts, black pointed wings, and black forked tail. They used the tail adroitly as a rudder, and almost never flapped their wings. On several occasions the birds would apparently fly into the foliage, and without stopping come out with something in the claws. We first thought it to be nesting material, but this was not true—it was something to be eaten. For the bird while still gliding gracefully among the trees would reach down with its bill and eat whatever was in the claws. We imagined that this was a lizard or insect since it was taken 50' or more off the ground and since nothing was dropped by the birds. We observed them for about 20 minutes. Eventually they worked their way through the trees toward Walker Lake." On the same afternoon a single bird of this species was seen briefly as it passed overhead in the Ocmulgee River bottomland on the opposite side of the river from the first observation.

This is the first recorded instance of this rare bird at Macon since L. H. Mounts recorded it on December 6 and 24, 1924. It furthermore constitutes one of the few recent records for this species in Georgia. To the best of my knowledge, the most recent reported occurrence in Georgia is that of a single bird observed by Jenkins in the Okefenokee Swamp on June 8, 1952 (*Oriole*, 18: 33, 1953). (See "From the Field," this issue—Ed.)

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## GENERAL NOTES

**UNUSUAL FEEDING HABITS OF THE PURPLE FINCH.**—On January 20, 1955, I began close daily observations of the peculiar feeding habits of a flock of 24 Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus*), about equally divided (adult males and immature males or females) on the wooded lots along George Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia. Our abundant winter residents, the Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), after gorging on the privet and ligustrum berries, left the earth purple with droppings as they flew down to drink at our two bird baths. The finches followed

and harvested this windfall of seeds in the droppings, neatly cracking each seed and eating the kernel.

This feeding continued daily from January 20, 1955, until February 25, 1955, and was resumed the following fall on December 6, 1955, and ended on February 28, 1956. Throughout this period, the finches ignored the cracked corn and wheat at our feeding station. MRS. GLADYS B. BLACK, 608 DeWitt Street, Pleasantville, Iowa. February 25, 1957.

**THE BLUE JAY AS AN IMITATOR OF HAWKS.**—Tyler (*in Bent's Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows, and Titmice*, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 191, 1946) states that "the jay's loud cry often sounds exactly like the *teearr* of the red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*). On more than one occasion I have supposed I was listening to a hawk screaming in the distance but found that a jay near at hand was the author of the notes." It is probable that many bird watchers in various regions have been deceived temporarily by calls of jays which seem to mimic those of the Red-shouldered Hawk. The Blue Jay can also reproduce with fidelity the voice of several other kinds of hawks. An allusion to this fact is made by Forbush and May (*Natural History of the Birds of Eastern and Central North America*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1939), though none of the hawks are named specifically. In my field notes from Georgia are records of what I interpret to be imitations by jays of call-notes not only of the red-shoulder (numerous instances) but also of three other kinds of hawks, as follows:

In the summers of 1947-48, in Baker County, I recorded jay notes that bore close resemblance to those of the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). Similar observations have probably been made by other people.

On August 6, 1951, in Worth County, I noted a Blue Jay possibly a bird of the year, imitating the *cac-cac-cac-cac-cac* notes of the Cooper Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). There were several repetitions of this series of notes. Soon afterward the bird gave a few cries like those of the Red-shouldered Hawk. None of these imitations appeared to affect Cardinals or other passerine species (Carolina Wren, Catbird, and Red-eyed Towhee) in the near vicinity.

Two days later, in Tift County, I heard a jay in a pecan grove giving excellent imitations of the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*). Comments made at the time were these: "Once, notes of this hawk were followed by a note or so very like the call of the red-shoulder. Today was the first time I'd heard the jay calling like the broad-wing. Though the jay imitations of the red-shoulder lose much real similarity due to their being, in general, so much weaker than the hawk's calls, this was



not true of the broad-wing imitations which seemed fully as loud as the 'original.' Broad-wings do occur in our general neighborhood; consequently jays have had a good opportunity to hear them."

With reference to the similarity between some of the Blue Jay's call-notes and those of other birds, Tyler (*op. cit.*) acknowledges that the jay has thus gained a reputation as an imitator. He goes on to say, however, that "it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to be sure that such cases are not coincidence, especially when we recall the multiplicity of the jay's vocabulary." I wonder whether Tyler, in remarking that such cases might be mere coincidence, tends to err on the conservative side. To me it would seem that deliberate imitativeness could easily be involved, particularly where the vocal mimic and its models occupy the same geographic area. Since the jays that I observed imitating the Cooper and Broad-winged hawks followed up their imitations with call-notes like those of the red shoulder, I am led to wonder also whether certain jays are on occasion in "hawk-imitating moods."—ROBERT A. NORRIS, 1918 Hahn Avenue, Aiken, South Carolina. March 14, 1957.

#### LITTLE BLUE HERON ROOKERY IN MONROE COUNTY, GEORGIA.—

On August 12, 1956, at Culloden, Monroe County, Georgia, a small rookery of the Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*) was shown to me by Mr. Jewett Holmes, a local resident and keen observer of wildlife. The colony was located in a narrow tract of woods within the corporate limits of Culloden and about two hundred yards east of U. S. Highway 341. Mr. Holmes had found eleven nests earlier in the season, but on this date we located only eight of these. The young birds were on the wing at this time, and the site was used only for roosting.

The area occupied was no more than fifty feet in diameter and was clearly marked on the ground by droppings, feathers (both gray and white), and fragments of egg shells. At one edge of the woods there was a small stream which flowed to a farm pond two hundred yards to the east. The predominant tree was sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) six inches and less in diameter and forty to fifty feet in height. A single large water oak (*Quercus nigra*) stood at the edge of the nesting area and held two or three nests. All other nests were in the sweet gums. The nests varied in height from about twenty-five to forty feet above the ground.

Lack of suitable feeding ground in the immediate vicinity made it necessary for the birds to fly to a beaver pond (or ponds) about two miles to the west. They apparently never frequented the nearby farm pond.

The *Birds of Georgia* (Greene, *et al.*, 1945) gives the breeding range of the Little Blue Heron in Georgia as "below the Fall Line in the Coastal Plain." Culloden, in the extreme southeastern corner of

Monroe County, is approximately twelve miles above the Fall Line. This is, therefore, apparently the first reported instance of this species breeding outside the Coastal Plain in Georgia.

It seems also unusual that these birds selected a site devoid of any apparent advantages, in close proximity to human habitation, and far removed from sources of food. It is reasonably certain that this site has not been used in previous years.—RICHARD A. PARKS, 2303 Pembroke Place, N. E., Atlanta 5, Georgia. December 4, 1956.

#### LARGE WINTER POPULATION OF SANDHILL CRANES ON OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.—

The Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) population in the Okefenokee Swamp was certainly higher during the 1956-1957 winter than it has been in many years. Jewett Hall, William C. Cone, Tom Chesser, and Dock A. Rider, employees of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and Will Cox, guide for the Okefenokee Swamp Park, all life-long residents of the swamp area, believe that there were more cranes in the swamp than at any time in their memory.

From 100 to 200 cranes could be seen on Chesser Prairie almost any day during the late winter. On January 29, Dock Rider and I spent most of the day walking about five miles in Chesser Prairie and we recorded 522 cranes. Some of our observations may have been duplications, although we attempted to avoid this. Flock numbers observed during the day were as follows: 4, 18, 5, 17, 2, 3, 3, 6, 6, 3, 4, 4, 9, 35, 3, 3, 3, 7, 4, 4, 4, 12, 6, 3, 4, 23, 4, 6, 100 (est.), 4, 3, 192 (170 estimated), 3, 4, 3.

Whereas the greatest concentrations in the swamp were in Chesser Prairie, cranes were seen in all the other prairies. Flocks were observed in Grand, Floyd's, Mizell, Sapling, Durden, Sapp, and Chase prairies on nearly every trip made to these prairies by refuge personnel. I believe that 1000 cranes is a conservative estimate for the winter population of the Okefenokee Swamp. The estimated winter populations on the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge for the three previous winters was only 200. The refuge embraces approximately 330,000 acres of the swamp's 400,000 acres.

Walkinshaw ("The Sandhill Crane," 1949, p. 139) placed the population of the swamp at about 100 cranes in 1921. Hebard ("Winter Birds of Okefenokee and Coleraine," 1941, p. 44) states that Thomas and James Roddenberry noted 94 cranes in the three days, January 24 to 27, 1935. H. A. Carter observed 70 cranes in three days, February 13 to 15, 1935. Walkinshaw states that he and Ben Chesser made observations as follows: 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 8, 4, 1, 1, 3, 1 during a day spent in Chase and Chesser Prairies in 1945. It appears that these estimates and observations



of former years are in sharp contrast to the observations made during the past winter.

It is possible that habitat conditions are more attractive to the cranes than in the other winters when estimates were made. General water levels in the swamp had been much below normal for a period of four years. Paint root (*Lachnanthes tinctoria*), a favorite food of the crane had increased considerably. The prairies, during most of the winter, were usually in a wet state but were not flooded.

After the middle of March, large numbers of cranes have not been observed. On trips across Chesser and Grand prairies the numbers of cranes seen were as follows: April 15, 14; May 13, 2; June 30, 5. Several factors may have contributed to this apparent decline in population: (1) some of the birds evidently migrated to nesting grounds elsewhere; (2) there was a rise in water levels, a fact which might have made the swamp less attractive to cranes and caused part of them to leave; and (3) during the nesting season cranes are more scattered and are less likely to be seen.—EUGENE CYPERT, *Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross, Georgia. July 8, 1957.*

## NEWS AND COMMENTS

**SPRING MEETING, 1957.**—The thirty-sixth semi-annual meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held at Radium Springs in Albany, Georgia, May 3, 4, and 5, 1957. Registration began Friday night and continued through Saturday noon, a total of 45 registering.

The group Friday night saw colored slides of the hawk-training station in Florida.

At 6:00 a. m. Saturday, a short field trip was taken around the grounds of Radium Springs and vicinity. Breakfast was served at the Radium Springs Hotel, followed by longer field trips down the stream.

The business meeting was held at 2:00 p. m. with President Herman Coolidge, presiding. In the absence of Mrs. Crenshaw, Katherine Weaver served as secretary. The reading of the minutes of the fall meeting was dispensed with. The Treasurer, Gordon Hight, gave his report. He was commended on the condition of the treasury. It was restated that dues run from fall to fall.

Gordon Hight proposed an amendment to the constitution eliminating out-of-state memberships and making them regular members. Those who wanted only the *Oriole* could subscribe to it. Discussion of this proposal ended in a decision to have a resolution covering the matter submitted in writing before the next regular meeting.

Mrs. Gordon suggested that we have more field trips between reg-

ular meetings. Mrs. Carmen Dobbs moved that the Secretary notify the Regional Vice-presidents that the Society, at this meeting, recommended that they implement the sections of their duties dealing with field trips. Motion was carried.

The President read a portion of a letter from Dr. David Johnston saying that our library contains disposable material in the form of duplicates, and asking for some disposition of it. After some discussion about the incomplete files in the library, it was moved and seconded that the Librarian and the Editor try to locate the missing numbers and report at the next meeting the cost of binding those deemed valuable enough.

Herman Coolidge announced the unveiling of a marker on May 25 at 3:30 p. m. at McElveen cemetery, at the grave of John Abbott, in Savannah. He also said that a new set of Abbott's drawings had been recently discovered at the National Museum.

After a discussion of the place for the next meeting, George Sciple moved that the meeting be held at Rock Eagle. This motion was carried and Carroll Hart was authorized to contact the officials there.

A nominating committee was appointed consisting of Mrs. J. C. Oliver, Chairman, Bill Griffin and Dick Parks.

Motion was made by Mrs. Gordon that a list of the membership be sent by the Treasurer to the Secretary to be mailed with the ballot with the request that the ballot be returned to the Secretary. Motion was carried.

Harold Peters read a list of 43 towns that have been designated as sanctuaries. It was urged that the approved wording be used in the designation of a sanctuary.

It was stated that Thos. D. Burleigh had signed the contract two months ago, putting the book on Georgia's Birds in type, and the color engraving was under way, making it hopeful that the book will come out in September or October.

The business meeting was adjourned and at 7:30 p. m. the dinner was served in the Radium Springs Hotel. This was followed by the showing of Ivan Tomkins' excellent colored slides, enhanced by comments by Mr. Tomkins.

At 6:30 a. m. Sunday, breakfast was served at Davis' Restaurant and a field trip followed to the Wildlife Refuge, which proved to live up to its name since deer, wild hogs, bobcats and snakes were seen in addition to 101 different birds. After the count, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Katherine Weaver,  
Secretary *pro tem.*



**ANNOUNCEMENT OF FALL MEETING.**—The fall meeting of the G.O.S. will be held at Rock Eagle Park near Eatonton on October 25, 26, and 27. Make plans now to attend.

### FROM THE FIELD

Donald R. Ambrosen reported 525-550 Sandhill Cranes flying northward over the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge on March 11, 14, and 15, 1957. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen at the feeding shelf of Mrs. B. N. Willingham in Atlanta "all the winter," and remained until at least April 23, 1957. She also recorded male and female Brown-headed Cowbirds, respectively, on March 28 and April 18, 1957. At the Fulton County Airport on May 11, 1957, Marene Snow and M. Alma Cooke located a nest of a Horned Lark. One egg had been broken by a mower, and a week later, following another mowing, the nest had been abandoned. From the Okefenokee Swamp Eugene Cypert *et al.* report the following observations of Swallow-tailed Kites in 1957: one on Billy's Island, May 14; six on Sapling Prairie, April 17; one at Jones Island, May 17; one on Sapling Prairie, May 29; and one on Sapling Prairie, June 3.

### RECENT LITERATURE

**ON THE TRAIL OF VANISHING BIRDS.**—by Robert Porter Allen. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York .1957. — 251 pp. \$4.50.

The author is well-known in conservation circles for his monographs published by the National Audubon Society on the Whooping Crane, Flamingo, and Roseate Spoonbill. Whereas these reports are significant contributions toward the natural history and otherwise scientific aspects of these species, the present book is a popular account of the trials and tribulations encountered by the author in assembling his data. It is really a series of adventure stories wherein the author describes graphically physical difficulties entailed while studying spoonbills, cranes, and flamingos.

In some instances, this reviewer found the accounts to be unnecessarily long and involved. Also disturbing were the frequent incomplete sentences and the fact that the search for the Arctic breeding grounds of the Whooping Crane is suddenly interrupted by several chapters on flamingos in the Caribbean area. The book is subsequently terminated by the continued search for and discovery of the crane's breeding grounds in the Arctic plus a general chapter or summary dealing with the conservation of these and other rare birds.

For those who would like to relive with the author his adventure-some experiences with birds over much of North America, this book is highly recommended. D. W. J.