

# THE ORIOLE

A Quarterly Journal of Georgia Ornithology; Official Organ of the  
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# THE ORIOLE

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## GEORGIA BIRDS

by

THOMAS D. BURLEIGH

The editor takes great pleasure in dedicating this issue of *The Oriole* to Thomas D. Burleigh whose book on the birds of our state appeared somewhat earlier this year. Rooted in some thirty years of field experience in the state and supplemented by the additional observations of scores of other ornithologists, this handsomely illustrated book is up-to-date, authoritative, and scientifically accurate. Those of us who have known Tom in the field know of his untiring efforts while chasing birds from mountains to seashore, in swamps and fields, from daybreak to sundown (and beyond!), and in rain or shine. The long-awaited appearance of this book is a tribute to these years of hard work and unforgettable experiences. The systematic listing and description of each species makes the book useful for the layman and scientist alike, and certainly everyone interested in the birds of Georgia will want to have a copy within easy reach.

Reviews of Burleigh's book are appearing in other journals, and we have asked Francis M. Weston, a veteran ornithologist in Florida, to prepare a review for *The Oriole*. Mr. Weston's provocative and timely remarks will be found toward the end of this issue.



## SUMMER BIRDS OF THE LAKE CONASAUGA— GRASSY MOUNTAIN AREA IN GEORGIA

By J. FRED DENTON

The Lake Conasauga Recreational Area in the eastern part of Murray County was developed by the U. S. Forest Service on the shores of Lake Conasauga and formally opened in 1940. On the east side of the lake there is a camping area with concrete tables and benches, outdoor grills, toilets, and water supply whereas on the west side is the picnic area with numerous outdoor tables and grills, three large shelters with tables, water supply, bathhouse, and swimming dock. The lake, the highest in Georgia, is located in a cove at 3000 feet on the eastern slope of Grassy Mountain. It is entirely spring fed, is 17 acres in extent, and was formed by a dam built by the C.C.C. in 1935.

Grassy Mountain, the highest peak in the western rim of the northern mass of the Cohuttas, rises to a height of 3682 feet. Because of its height and the fire observation tower on top, it is readily recognizable from various points in the vicinity of Crandall located in the Appalachian Valley below. The lake is surrounded on three sides by ridges with elevations up to 3260 feet.

This rather secluded area is reached over a 20-mile all-weather gravel road which leaves U. S. Highway 411 at Eton and runs east to the head of Holly Creek. From there it ascends rather abruptly to the top of Potato-patch Mountain (el. 3720 ft.), then makes a half-circle along the ridge to approach Grassy Mountain from the east. At the entrance to the Recreational Area the road forks, one fork dropping down to the camping area, the other following the ridge around the lake to the picnic area on the west side. At the point where the road descends to the picnic area, a branch continues one and a half miles on up Grassy Mountain to the summit.

The forest around the lake and on the surrounding ridges is typically of southern hardwoods, mostly oaks with very few chestnut sprouts. In some of the small ravines running out from the lake there are small stands of white pine and eastern hemlock, scattered individuals of which are quite large and appear to be in virgin areas. On some of the road cuts and scarred areas young Virginia pines have sprung up but there are no extensive stands in the area studied. At the time of my visit the area was undergoing a scourge by the snowwhite linden moth. Most of the trees, especially oaks and hickories, were partly defoliated and many completely so by the ravages of the caterpillars of this moth. The defoliation made birds easy to see but what other effects it may have had on them was not too evident. Possibly it was responsible for an increase

in the number of Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the area since the species was definitely more numerous than I have found it in other areas of the Georgia mountains at this altitude.

From the afternoon of June 9 to noon on June 13, 1958, I camped with my family on the shore of the lake. Most of the daylight hours were spent studying the birds of the area. The weather was clear and warm during this period except for a 30-minute shower on the afternoon of June 11. Since the trails and roads with one exception were located at lake level or on the higher ridges, no observations were made below an altitude of 3000 feet except for a descent of 200 to 300 feet down Tibbs Trail on June 12.

In any particular area the birds that are absent are often of as much interest as the ones that are present. Of the many species that might possibly occur there but which I failed to find, I will mention only a few. The lake shore seemed to offer suitable habitat for the American Redstart and the presence of gray-beard moss (*Usnea* sp.) looked attractive for the Parula Warbler, but neither could be found. The absence of the Veery, Canada Warbler, and Slate-colored Junco is apparently due to the fact that the top of Grassy Mountain is too low to furnish suitable habitat for their breeding. Of the 38 species reported here all, with the possible exception of the Chimney Swift and Common Crow, are thought to have been breeding. Considerable evidence to support this view is presented in the list below.

The only other bird students to visit the region are Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Hamilton of Dalton, Georgia, who have made several over-night trips to the area during the past 18 years. They very kindly loaned me their notes and permitted me to include records of several species and nests in this report. For this I express my sincere thanks. Thomas D. Burleigh had access to this same material but the only species listed below which is mentioned in *Georgia Birds* (1958) as occurring on Grassy Mountain is the Scarlet Tanager.

### Annotated List of Species

Turkey Vulture: *Cathartes aura*. Single birds were seen circling over the lake daily. On the afternoon of June 11 three birds were noted perched on the railing of the fire tower on the top of the mountain.

Broad-winged Hawk: *Buteo platypterus*. A pair inhabited the lake area and every day was frequently heard and less frequently seen soaring over the lake.

Ruffed Grouse: *Bonasa umbellus*. My only record was a bird flushed from a rhododendron thicket beside the lake on June 12. The Hamiltons recorded single birds in the area on June 6, 1947, and June 30, 1956.



The resident wildlife ranger, however, reports the bird fairly common in the area.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: *Coccyzus americanus*. Fairly common; more frequently heard than seen. On June 10 an adult was found tending a young bird, which, though out of the nest, was still unable to fly. I was able to lift it from the rhododendron limb to which it was clinging and examine it in hand. On June 11 an adult was flushed from a nest which was located three feet from the ground in a hawthorne bush and contained one fresh egg.

Black-billed Cuckoo: *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. A single bird was observed on June 12 about one-fourth mile down the Tibbs Trail. Although it showed considerable excitement as if a nest were nearby, an extensive search failed to reveal one. The note given by this bird was recognized immediately as being different from that of the yellow-billed form that I had been hearing.

Chimney Swift: *Chaetura pelagica*. From three to five birds were noted daily flying over the lake and surrounding ridges.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: *Archilochus colubris*. Fairly common, one or two birds being seen every day.

Yellow-shafted Flicker: *Colaptes auratus*. Only two pairs were located; one in the picnic area and one by the road at the entrance to the recreation area. The nest hole of the latter pair was in the top of a dead red oak 40 feet from the ground.

Pileated Woodpecker: *Dryocopus pileatus*. Three pairs inhabited the area studied, each pair occupying a different ridge. Although several recently excavated holes were noted none seemed to contain active nests.

Hairy Woodpecker: *Dendrocopos villosus*. A single pair was noted on June 11 beside the road about halfway from the picnic area to the top of the mountain.

Downy Woodpecker: *Dendrocopos pubescens*. Common, observed daily throughout the area.

Great Crested Flycatcher: *Myiarchus crinitus*. Common, generally distributed in the area and rather noisy, particularly in the early morning and late afternoon.

Wood Pewee: *Contopus virens*. Common, occurring in numbers about equal to the preceding species. Their plaintive call was heard throughout the day.

Blue Jay: *Cyanocitta cristata*. Surprisingly common, occurring all around the lake as well as on the surrounding ridges. On June 10 an adult was noted feeding a bob-tailed young just out of the nest.

Common Crow: *Corvus brachyrhynchos*. Uncommon; two or three

birds were noted flying over the area calling on June 11 and again on June 12.

Carolina Chickadee: *Parus carolinensis*. Fairly common but rather silent and inconspicuous. Birds were noted daily and on June 10 a family group containing four fully grown but obviously young birds was noted.

Tufted Titmouse: *Parus bicolor*. Fairly common, occurring in numbers about equal to the Chickadee and generally distributed in the area. Two or three pairs were noted daily.

White-breasted Nuthatch: *Sitta carolinensis*. Three pairs, one of which was accompanied by fully grown young, were noted in the area.

Catbird: *Dumetella carolinensis*. One of the common birds of the area, occurring around the lake and along small streams in the ravines. Two nests were found, one on June 10 located six feet from the ground in a small rhododendron growing at the lake's edge and containing four fairly fresh eggs, and a second built three and a half feet from the ground in an alder that overhung the lake beside our tent. In the latter nest single eggs were laid daily on June 10, 11, and 12, with incubation beginning with the laying of the third egg.

Brown Thrasher: *Toxostoma rufum*. Common, possibly slightly more numerous than the Catbird because it was found distributed throughout the area. Two nests were found; one built three and a half feet from the ground in mountain laurel and containing four eggs was found on June 11 on the road to the top of the mountain, the other built three feet from the ground in rhododendron near the lake and containing four slightly incubated eggs was located on June 12.

Robin: *Turdus migratorius*. Two pairs inhabited the area, one pair on the partly cleared picnic area on one side of the lake, the other on the camping area on the opposite side. The nest of the pair in the picnic area, on which the female was sitting on June 11, was located 30 feet from the ground in a fork of a southern red oak while the nest of the pair in the camping area, located 25 feet from the ground in the main fork of a white oak, was nearly complete on June 12. That morning as we sat eating breakfast we watched the female gather mouthful after mouthful of mud from the lake margin only 10 feet from our table and carry it to and mold it into the nest wall.

Wood Thrush: *Hylocichla mustelina*. Common and generally distributed throughout the area, its song contributing greatly to the serenity of this beautiful spot. Two nests were discovered, one on June 10 located six feet from the ground in a rhododendron, holding four large young which left the nest early on June 13, and the other on June 12



built against the main trunk of a small hemlock eight feet from the ground, containing three fresh eggs which the female was incubating.

Yellow-throated Vireo: *Vireo flavifrons*. Apparently very scarce as only a single pair was noted down the Tibbs Trail on June 12.

Solitary Vireo: *Vireo solitarius*. This species was equally as scarce as the Yellow-throated Vireo, only one pair being located along the road to the picnic area at the top of the ridge on June 12. The Hamiltons recorded a single bird on June 6, 1947.

Red-eyed Vireo: *Vireo olivaceus*. One of the more common species being recorded daily and occurring throughout the area.

Black-and-white Warbler: *Mniotilta varia*. Common, occurring around the lake, in the ravines, and even on the ridges where there was mature timber. On several occasions adults were noted feeding fully grown young.

Golden-winged Warbler: *Vermivora chrysoptera*. This species was not recorded by me, but the Hamiltons found a pair at the parking lot above the picnic area on May 27-28, 1944, and succeeded in finding their nest. The nest, located on the ground in shrubs only two or three feet from the lower edge of the cleared lot, contained five eggs.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: *Dendroica caerulescens*. Very common and, next to the Oven-bird, the most abundant warbler, occurring almost everywhere in the area. No nests were located but many pairs exhibited behavior indicative of nesting.

Black-throated Green Warbler: *Dendroica virens*. One fully grown immature in the company of a Chickadee was seen by the lake on June 10 and another immature was squeaked up with other warblers in a ravine on June 12. On June 13 a mated pair, apparently breeding, was located in white pines and hemlocks in the ravine just to the east of the picnic area. It is probable that this species breeds much more commonly lower down on the shoulders of the mountain where there are extensive stands of short-leaf and Virginia pines. Some support of these data is furnished by the fact that the Hamiltons, although they have not observed this species in the area studied by me, did find it on June 1-2, 1940, June 6-7, 1947, and June 30, 1956, at sites below 2800 feet on the mountain.

Blackburnian Warbler: *Dendroica fusca*. Three singing males were found in deciduous woods near the top of the ridge. The mate of one of them seen on June 12 gave every indication of a nest in a large white oak beside the trail, but I was never able to locate it. However, the Hamiltons found a nest on June 1-2, 1940.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: *Dendroica pensylvanica*. Common, especially noted in an abandoned field or pasture on the ridge which had

grown up to blackberry bushes and saplings, and in brushy slashings in some of the saddles between knolls. On June 12 one female was noted carrying nesting material (Virginia pine needle) while another was noted feeding a young bird which, although out of the nest, was able to flutter only a few yards through the huckleberry bushes and weeds. On June 6-7, 1947, the Hamiltons located a nest which contained three small young.

Oven-bird: *Seiurus aurocapillus*. This was unquestionably the most abundant species in the area with almost every available space from the lake to the top of the mountain being occupied by a breeding pair. Although numerous pairs exhibited behavior indicative of a nest I never succeeded in finding one.

Yellow-breasted Chat: *Icteria virens*. Two pairs were located, one in the abandoned field on top of the ridge on June 11, and the other down the Tibbs Trail on June 12.

Hooded Warbler: *Wilsonia citrina*. Common, occurring on the slopes around the lake, in ravines and in mature woods at 3300 feet along the road to the top of the mountain.

Scarlet Tanager: *Piranga olivacea*. This was the second most abundant and vociferous species in the area, occurring in all types of habitat from the lake shore to the top of the mountain. Apparently the crop of young birds was not yet out of the nests because none was seen, although many pairs exhibited excitement indicative of nesting.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Common; each of the five or six rhododendron thickets around the lake as well as those up the ravines had its pair of these grosbeaks. On June 10 a pair was noted attending a young bird just out of the nest while another female was discovered sitting on a nest in the top of a mountain laurel eight feet from the ground. She had to be pushed from the nest with a stick in order to see the three fresh eggs she was incubating.

Indigo Bunting: *Passerina cyanea*. Abundant, apparently the third most common species in the area, occurring in many habitat types including a pair in the clearing around the fire tower on top of the mountain. Many broods of young were already on the wing. One nest, discovered on June 12 two and a half feet from the ground, was located in a fire cherry sapling growing beside the road and held four fresh eggs.

Rufous-sided Towhee: *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. Common, recorded daily and occurring everywhere that thick undergrowth was found, including the top of the mountain.

1510 Pendleton Road,  
Augusta, Georgia.  
August 13, 1958.



## GENERAL NOTES

**THE OCCURRENCE OF THE TENNESSEE AND BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS IN RICHMOND COUNTY.**—The available information on the warblers of Richmond County, Georgia, was summarized in a paper published in 1952 (Denton, *Oriole*, 17: 33-35). At that time there was only one unsubstantiated record of the occurrence of the Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) in this county, so no mention was made of it. Subsequent observations indicate that this warbler is a scarce but probably regular fall migrant in Richmond County and prompts me to publish all records to date.

The previously mentioned record was of six birds observed on October 11, 1944, in King Woods. The next definite record was of a single bird seen at close range as it fed in black locust shrubs along Forter's Lane on September 19, 1953. Two weeks later on October 3, a flock of five birds was noted along Lover's Lane by a group, including the writer, from the Augusta Bird Club. The next fall on October 2, 1954, a single bird was seen in scrubby growth along the Savannah River. Although no specimen has been obtained in Richmond County, two birds were killed at the TV tower just across the river in South Carolina on the night of October 7-8, 1953, confirming the presence of Tennessee Warblers in the area.

In the above mentioned paper (*ibid*) the Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) was reported as a rare transient in the county, there being only four records, all in the fall, for its occurrence. Additional records, each of single birds except where noted, are September 28, 1952; September 12, 1953 (2 birds); September 19 and 20, and October 17, 1954. On the basis of these records and the fact that on several occasions birds have been killed at the TV towers just across the river, this species must be considered an uncommon but regular fall transient in Richmond County.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Road, Augusta, Ga. June 17, 1958.

**NOTES ON A NESTING TUFTED TITMOUSE.**—On April 30, 1958, I discovered a nest of the Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) in a box at my home in Atlanta, Georgia. This box, about six feet from the ground, was used three years ago, but no nest was made in it again until this year. On this day, the nest contained eggs. On May 19, four young birds, fully feathered, were noted in the nest, and on May 21 one or more birds left the box. Since then, this family has been feeding at our shelf through mid-July.—RAY C. WERNER, 758 Wildwood Road, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia. July 28, 1958.

**THE EVENING GROSBEAK AT THOMSON, McDUFFIE COUNTY, GEORGIA.**

—A female or subadult male Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) was taken at Thomson on February 4, 1958, and preserved by Henry Hunt. The bird was actually shot by a nine-year-old friend and given to Henry, sixteen-year-old high school student, for use in his Science Fair project. It was shot with a B-B gun from a flock of 25-30 birds feeding on the ground under pines in the backyard of a home in the southern part of town. The homes in this area are built in what apparently was a pure stand of shortleaf and loblolly pines, many of which are still present. The flock of grosbeaks had been in the neighborhood for at least a week prior to February and was seen on the three following days.

Credit for discovering this specimen while judging exhibits in the Central Savannah River Science Fair at Augusta, March 27-29, goes to Robert A. Norris who called it to my attention. I was able later to determine the collector and obtain additional facts—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Rd., Augusta, Georgia. June 17, 1958.

**WINTERING HORNED LARKS IN HOUSTON COUNTY.**

—Previous observations of Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) in the Warner Robins (Houston County) area have been January 19 and 26, 1952, when N. R. Whitney, Jr. observed a flock of 40 to 50 birds just north and west of Warner Robins. Single birds have been seen on December 28, 1952 (Whitney), and on Robins Air Force Base December 21, 1954 (Myers), August 11, 1955 (Rohwer), and May 2, 1956 (Cater).

On December 26, 1957, we were driving in a light rain just north and west of Warner Robins when Mr. Cater spied Horned Larks feeding in a freshly plowed field. They were very well hidden by the furrows and by their protective coloration. Had it not been that the closest ones were only 25 feet from the road, we would very possibly have missed them. We estimated four dozen birds, mostly immature, not having the sharply defined black and yellow marking on the face and throat.

On December 29, we counted two dozen and noted some adult birds. Water Pipits and Vesper Sparrows were also in the field. On January 5, 1958, the temperature was 35° F., and we searched the field in vain for the larks although a number of pipits were present. Many species seemed to take cover from the cold in the denser trees and shrubs adjoining the field. On January 9 we saw about two dozen again in the same field, and on January 12, about four dozen were present.

The last time we saw this flock was on February 5 when we estimated four dozen birds again. The grain in this field was growing noticeably



taller each time we visited it. Thorough seaching in this field and freshly plowed fields close by failed to produce any Horned Larks after this day.

But of even more interest was a much larger flock which we located ten miles south of Warner Robins on a newly plowed field on January 18, 1958. A conservative estimate of the number would be twelve dozen. We had learned to spot them by the light coloration underneath as a group would fly up and wheel around, alighting again, usually not far from where they had been. On January 25, a large flock was seen in the same field and still others flew up in a field beyond an adjacent peach orchard. Again, an estimate of 200 birds would be conservative. Of the adult birds we could see closely enough, the white stripe above the eye could be distinguished with binoculars. We saw just a few birds at this location on February 9, and none on subsequent visits, March 1 and 9. Mrs. M. Travis Grubbs accompanied us on most of these field trips.—HEDVIG S. CATER, 315 Davis Drive N., Warner Robins, Ga. July 14, 1958.

**SPRING NOTES FROM ATLANTA.**—A Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) was seen in the South River area of Atlanta by the author and Ray Werner on May 10, 1958. The bird was found in typical wet, grassy marsh along the river, and was observed for some time within a few feet. This wren is a transient in the Atlanta area, appearing only rarely.

A collection of shore birds was studied at a sewage disposal plant in Southeast Atlanta on May 10, 1958. Among the birds was a single White-rumped Sandpiper (*Erolia fuscollis*). This bird, which is a rare transient in the Atlanta area was observed within fifty feet by the author, Ed Lamb, Sam Austin, and Drury Simpson with the aid of a 30X telescope. The white rump patch was quite easily distinguished from the white outer tail feathers of the Pectoral Sandpipers in the group. Also in the group was a Semipalmated Plover, an uncommon transient in the area. The group of birds consisted primarily of Solitary Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Spotted Sandpipers, and Killdeer. The observation date of the Pectoral Sandpiper is a late date for the area—CHARLES E. COLLUM, 1033 Lucille Ave., S. W., Atlanta, Georgia. May 11, 1958.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES AT WARNER ROBINS.**—The prolonged cold that extended deep into Florida may account for more Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) observations in Georgia during the winter of 1957-1958. The status of this species in the region around Macon and Warner Robins has been "transitory; casual in winter" with the spring migration dates from April 18 to May 30 (subject to revision).

From March 9 to April 22, 1958, we had Baltimore Orioles at our

feeder in Warner Robins eating doughnut crumbs practically every day. During the weekdays I would sit at the window until the oriole had made his appearance. By April 22 we had seen three individuals, two different males and one female.

The one male appeared the whole time from March 9 to April 22, and we could definitely see the plumage becoming brighter in color and the bird becoming plumper. Occasionally he would eat apple, suet, or bread crumbs if there was no doughnut available, but the cake doughnut was the favorite food of all the species that came to our feeding tray.

The oriole would approach the feeder cautiously alighting several times on the electric wire and then on the wire from which the feeder was suspended before finally reaching the tray itself. The feeder was a flat piece of wood with a low ridge two inches wide around the outside. This did not give the larger perching birds any place for a foothold. To remedy this we tacked a pencil onto the tray. The oriole came around to this side of the feeder and grasped the pencil from the beginning.

On April 14 a male came in followed by a female. This male seemed slimmer. However, we knew we could not report two males unless we saw them both at the same time. This was the only day the female appeared. On April 18 from the breakfast table we saw two males coming in to the feeder, one plumper and one slimmer. Finally on April 22, I had no doughnuts but soaked some stale slices of rye bread for the birds. One male oriole flew in alighting on the wires nearby, refused the bread and flew back into the wooded hollow behind our property. HEDVIG S. CATER, 315 Davis Drive N., Warner Robins, Georgia. July 14, 1958.

**LAPLAND LONGSPURS AGAIN WINTERING AT AUGUSTA.**—An account of the discovery and wintering of the Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) at the Augusta Municipal Airport during 1952-53 and 1953-54 has been published (*Oriole*, 19: 19-20). Although this area was checked several times during each of the next two winters no longspurs were found. The winter of 1956-57 produced a single record of a bird feeding with Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) on January 20 at this favored spot.

Anticipating the possible arrival of Lapland Longspurs with the cold wave of December 11-13, 1957, I visited the airport on the 14th. Shortly after entering the front drive I noted longspurs feeding in the sparse short grass just to the left of the drive. Approaching in the car to within 20 feet of them I studied the flock carefully. It consisted of 19 longspurs, adult males, females and immatures, and was the first pure flock I have seen here. Continuing my search I located a second flock of 12 longspurs



on the lawn between the U. S. Weather Bureau and the runways. This flock was accompanied by six Water Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*).

On the next visit to the airport on December 21 with four members of the Augusta Bird Club only a single male longspur was noted feeding with Horned Larks on the front lawn. However, on the next trip alone on December 23, a bright warm day, a flock of 15 longspurs was located in the area by the Weather Bureau. Getting out of the car I was able to walk about among the flock, approaching to within 15 feet of some of them. When I came too close to them they would fly a short distance and resume feeding. Two birds were noted to perch on the low fence by the runways and sing their characteristic song. Other birds sang from the ground from time to time.

On subsequent visits to the airport only one to three longspurs were seen, each time with the flock of Horned Larks. The last record was of three birds noted on February 9, 1958—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Road, Augusta, Georgia. June 17, 1958.

**ROYAL TERN NESTING ON LITTLE EGG ISLAND.**—On June 28, 1958 during a visit to Little Egg Island, a sand-bar island located south of Sapelo in Altamaha Sound, 39 nests of the Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) were counted. Each nest was a shallow depression in the sand or no depression at all and contained only one egg. Three groupings of nests were observed, two within ten feet of each other and the third about fifty feet away. The distance between the nests within each group varied, but was generally twice the area that would be in bill reach of an incubating bird. Surrounding these groupings were hundreds of nests of the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*). From their actions a pair of American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*) and a pair of Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) were presumed to be breeding also.

At an earlier visit on June 5, three Royal Tern eggs were seen—one of these was partially buried and was collected—but before positive identification could be made, two Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*) destroyed the remaining two. The appearance of Fish Crows on each subsequent trip (usually about an hour after we had arrived) was a signal to cease our operations and depart.

On July 11 the eggs in two of the three groupings seen on June 28 had vanished and only eight tern eggs were observed in the third site. On July 24 we found only one egg and one immature tern with developing wing feathers. The tern was banded and released. It ran into the water when we approached it, but returned to the beach as we moved away.

Burleigh (*Georgia Birds*, 1958) mentions the Royal Tern as breeding on Blackbeard Island in 1914 and on Oysterbed Island near the mouth of the Savannah River, on June 17, 1933. Presumably then, this is the first time that the Royal Tern has been observed breeding on the Georgia coast since 1933.

The egg of the Royal Tern is very similar in size and markings to the egg of the Oystercatcher and it is very possible that some eggs which were seen on a trip to Little Egg Island in 1955 and thought to belong to the Oystercatcher were, instead, those of the Royal Tern.—HERBERT W. KALE and JOHN M. TEAL, *The University of Georgia Marine Institute, Sapelo Island, Georgia. August 2, 1958.*

#### ANOTHER RECORD OF THE WHITE-WINGED SCOTER AT AUGUSTA.—

On February 25, 1958, an adult female White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta deglandi*) was observed by Ed Lamb and me on one of the borrow pits beside the Gordon highway at the Augusta city limits. The bird was observed from the car window in good light at 25 yards through binoculars and a 20X telescope, all field marks being plainly visible. Although there was a flock of 46 Lesser Scaups feeding in the borrow pit at the time, the scoter remained apart from them near the south end. During the period that it was under observation the scoter dived several times, apparently feeding, but on what was not determined. This borrow pit and one on the opposite side of the highway had been fertilized regularly during the fall and winter by a local game and fish club preparatory to opening them to public fishing. This fertilization greatly increased their attractiveness for ducks and a flock consisting of Ring-necks, Canvasbacks, and Lesser Scaups used them all winter in preference to other ponds nearby. When these ponds were searched two days later the scoter could not be found.

This is the second record of the occurrence of the White-winged Scoter at Augusta, the first being of a male feeding in the rapids in the Savannah River on January 23-24, 1954 (*Oriole*, 19: 32-33). The fact that the two birds were encountered in such entirely different habitats makes it impossible at this time to suggest where they are likely to occur in inland Georgia.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Road, Augusta, Georgia. June 17, 1958.

#### A FURTHER NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF THE COWBIRD IN RICHMOND COUNTY.—

Since the publication (Denton, *Oriole*, 11:24-27, 1946.) of the first record of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) breeding in Richmond County, additional data on its occurrence in summer



and breeding here have been slow in accumulating. Thomas D. Burleigh, as he entered Augusta by U. S. Highway 78 on June 25, 1946, noted a flock of cowbirds consisting of 12 adult males and two adult females feeding in a pasture at Bryson's Dairy. I watched these birds for the next ten days and attempted to find parasitized nests of various species nesting about the pasture but none was found. The next significant summer record of the Cowbird was on June 27, 1951, when I observed a flock of approximately 50 birds consisting mostly of adult males and females feeding in the pasture at Sancken's Dairy on the old Savannah road.

The second parasitized nest to be found in Richmond County was that of a Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) which I discovered on May 3, 1958. This nest, built two feet from the ground in small cane was located in the swamp at the Federal Lock and Dam and held two eggs of the warbler and one of the cowbird on that date. The female warbler was incubating until flushed. The nest was left undisturbed with the intention of studying it further. At my next visit on May 18 all three eggs had hatched, the warblers appearing to be 3-4 days old and the young cowbird about three times their size. When next visited on May 27 the nest had been destroyed by people digging fish bait, so whether any of the young were successfully fledged is not known. No adult Cowbirds were seen in the area although there are several pastures close by, including some inaccessible ones on the South Carolina side of the river.—J. FRED DENTON, 1510 Pendleton Road, Augusta, Georgia. August 13, 1958.

### FROM THE FIELD

Dick Parks observed a Brewster's Warbler in Piedmont Park in Atlanta on August 26, 1958. Also at Atlanta, Alma Cooke, Marene Snow, and Margaret Roddy noted a Snowy Egret on September 1, 1958. On August 16, 1958, Ivan Tomkins reported an unusual concentration of shorebirds on the Hutchinson Island "borrow pit" near Savannah. It consisted of at least 80 Stilt Sandpipers, several dowitchers, 11 Northern Phalaropes, and other "sandpipers as far as I could see. . . . I think this is further evidence of a substantial migration of species usually considered rare, and points out the importance of micro-habitats." From Floyd County, Ben Maulsby reports Black Terns on August 15, Shoveller on August 24, Common Tern on August 26, and a Common Loon seen in July and August. Black Terns were observed at Lake Sinclair on August 3 and 17, 1958. Hedvig and Tom Cater report Semipalmated Plovers in Twiggs County on September 5, 1958.

### NEWS AND COMMENTS

**FALL MEETING, 1958.**—On October 3, 4, and 5, the Fall Meeting of the G. O. S. will be held at Milledgeville. An interesting program and field trips are being planned by a local committee and officers of the Society. Fall migration should be at a peak in the area, so make plans now to attend.

**BACK ISSUES.**—Business Manager Ralph Ramsey announces that several out-of-print issues of *The Oriole* have now been reprinted and are available for \$1.00 each. These are Vol. IX, Nos. 3-4 (Sept.-Dec., 1944) and Vol. X, No. 2 (June, 1945). Many members will want to obtain copies to complete their sets.

### RECENT LITERATURE

**GEORGIA BIRDS.**—by Thomas D. Burleigh. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla. xxix + 747 pp., 35 color pl., 2 state maps, 12 species distribution maps. 1958. Price, \$12.50.

Following the usual introductory sections are: a history of ornithology in Georgia by William W. Griffin; a detailed description of the physiographic regions of Georgia, with special reference to the distribution of the breeding birds by Robert A. Norris; a systematic listing and description of 330 species and 112 additional subspecies of birds; a hypothetical list of 25 species and two additional subspecies, reported as having occurred in Georgia but not substantiated by actual specimens; a list of the birds originally described from Georgia; a comprehensive bibliography of Georgia ornithology; and an adequate index.

This long-awaited book on the birdlife of Georgia fulfills all expectations. Thomas D. Burleigh, one of this country's veteran ornithologists, gives an authoritative account of the birds of the State, based largely on his own intimate knowledge of them from long residence and frequent subsequent visits. His subject matter is arranged under each species for convenience of reference, as follows: range of the species in general; status in Georgia, including migration dates in each of the physiographic regions; and habits and recognition features. Under "habits," he has done some very fine writing based on his own impressions gained in the field. This reviewer was interested to read, under Eastern Henslow's Sparrow, of that bird's odd habit of perching on a bush when thoroughly alarmed. He (the reviewer) well remembers Mr. Burleigh's amazement when he first discovered this habit and was able to take a sitting speci-



men instead of having to rely as formerly on an uncertain snap shot at a difficult flying target.

The superb paintings by Dr. George M. Sutton measure up to that artist-ornithologist's usual high standard. Dr. Sutton adds much to their interest by his remarks and anecdotes about the making of each painting. In general, reproduction is excellent and the color plates retain all the vigor of the originals. Unfortunately, a few toward the end of the book fall below perfection. In the copy examined by this reviewer, the colors of the Summer Tanager do not do justice to that bird's brilliance.

It was the hope of several ornithologists that this latest of State bird books would depart from the stereotyped treatment of subspecies and, by following the Fifth Edition of the Checklist of North American Birds, subordinate the subspecies. To many readers of this book—and it is expected that non-technical purchasers and readers will outnumber the technical people—the treatment of subspecies under headings as prominent as those used for species can only cause confusion. To the lay reader, a Robin is a Robin, and he is confused when he reads that apparently three Robins occur in Georgia. The technical reader, on the other hand, demands full treatment of subspecies so that he may study the interesting migratory movements leading to their occurrence in Georgia. By treating a species as a whole under the heading of a simple common name and a binomial scientific name and giving habits and recognition marks under that inclusive heading, all data on subspecies could then have followed in smaller type at the end of the section. Much would have been gained in clarity for the lay reader while the technical man would have lost nothing. By giving subspecies undue prominence under major headings, it becomes necessary then to retain (or manufacture) a common, English name for each, even though the Fifth Edition of the Checklist had made a long step forward by eliminating common names for subspecies. The common names built up for some of the subspecies seem, to this reviewer, to be laboriously artificial—"Florida Carolina Wren" and "Red-eyed Rufous-sided Towhee," for instance.

But, take it by and large, this is a fine book. And it is a beautiful book. All the people concerned in its production—author, artist, contributors and publisher—can point to it with justifiable pride. Most important, it is dependable in its completeness and in its technical correctness as the "last word" on the birdlife of Georgia.—FRANCIS M. WESTON.