

# THE ORIOLE

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No. 1



# THE ORIOLE

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## BIRDS OF SAPELO ISLAND AND VICINITY<sup>1</sup>

by

JOHN M. TEAL

The following records have resulted from three and one-half years of observations on the birds of the Sapelo region. The region covered is mostly Sapelo Island and associated marshes and hammocks. Visits have been made to Wolf Island about once every one or two months and Blackbeard Island once or twice a year including a visit during the winter when the annual deer hunt is held. Little Egg Island, a small sand island at the mouth of the Altamaha River, was visited one to three times during the summers. The parts of Sapelo that have received special attention are: the south end of the beach, the region where the Marine Institute is located, a large cattle pasture in the center of the island near the south end, the salt marshes associated with the Duplin River, and the fresh-water ponds, called duck ponds, at the north end of the island. A more detailed description of the Sapelo region may be found in a previous paper (Robert, Teal, and Odum, 1956) which is a preliminary list of the summer birds. It would be impossible to see all the species of birds that occur in this region or even on Sapelo since there are large parts of the center of the island which are virtually inaccessible. However, aside from a few species that may inhabit the central swamps exclusively (Swainson's and Hooded warblers), all of the regularly occurring species are probably recorded.

The list is divided into sections as follows: permanent residents, winter residents, spring and fall migrants, summer residents, and rare visitors. The position of some species will vary in these divisions due to severe weather in summer or winter in an area such as this because it has a mild maritime climate just north of the subtropics. Winter residents will become migrants in hard winters and in cold summers some migrants may become summer residents even though they may not breed.

### A. Permanent residents.

An asterisk (\*) before the name indicates that this bird breeds in

<sup>1</sup>Contribution No. 12 from the Marine Institute of the University of Georgia, Sapelo Island, Georgia. This research was supported by funds from the Georgia Agricultural and Forestry Research Foundation.



the region covered by this paper.

Brown Pelican: *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Common throughout the year on the beaches and sounds. Ten to fifteen birds can be seen on the south beach nearly every day of the year, including January, when they are reported to be rare by Burleigh (1958). Numbers may reach 100-150 at times.

\*Anhinga: *Anhinga anhinga*. Uncommon during winter months but a few may be found at all times. Largely limited to fresh-water areas where it breeds among herons and egrets. Between five and fifteen pairs nest each year.

\*Great Blue Heron: *Ardea herodias*. Common, usually feeding in salt marshes. Nests along tidal Duplin River twenty to forty feet high in pines from March through August. Two young, fully feathered but not yet able to fly, were still in nests on August 10, 1958. About forty-two nests were in the colony in 1958.

\*Green Heron: *Butorides virescens*. Common from March through the fall. Feeds on smaller ponds and tidal creeks and occasionally on beach. Breeds in the large heronry area but in isolated groups of a few nests, from March through August. Also nests as isolated pairs along drainage ditches.

\*Little Blue Heron: *Florida caerulea*. Common. Feeds and nests with the egrets in July and August, but no nests were found for this species in 1958. It has been seen flying close to the water in groups of six to twelve birds at least ten miles offshore during March and April.

\*Common Egret: *Casmerodius albus*. Common. Feeds in salt- and fresh-water marshes. Breeds in fresh-water ponds from April through August. About eighty-five nests were counted in 1958.

\*Snowy Egret: *Leucophoyx thula*. Common. Feeds on the marshes and cattle fields. Breeds in fresh-water areas, about one hundred pairs being located in 1958.

\*Louisiana Heron: *Hydranassa tricolor*. Less common than egrets especially during the winter. Breeds in the fresh-water marshes. From twenty-five to forty nests were found in 1958.

\*Black-crowned Night Heron: *Nycticorax nycticorax*. Common. Breeds with the other herons (fifty to seventy pairs in 1958). Feeds in fresh- and salt-water areas.

All of the resident herons and egrets except the Green Heron and Great Blue Heron roost on a fresh-water pond close to the dwelling areas in the non-breeding season but breed only on areas well removed from human habitation. A representative count of the birds landing in

the area one winter evening included: 77 Common and 33 Snowy egrets, 9 Great Blue Herons, 3 Little Blue Herons, and one Louisiana Heron. Night herons were not counted as they didn't fly until it was too dark to see them. Five to ten were probably present.

Turkey Vulture: *Cathartes aura*. Common, especially in the winter.

Black Vulture: *Coragyps atratus*. Slightly more common than the Turkey Vulture, more often feeding on dead fish on the beach. A typical situation is represented by the following count on a salt pond which was drying up and in which the fish were dying, September 1, 1958: 13 Turkey Vultures, 37 Black Vultures, 18 Common and 24 Snowy egrets, 15 Fish Crows, 29 dowitchers, 10 Semipalmated Plovers, and 54 Western Sandpipers.

\*Cooper's Hawk: *Accipiter cooperii*. The commonest resident hawk, observed throughout the year in the live oak areas and scrub dune areas behind the beach.

\*Red-tailed Hawk: *Buteo jamaicensis*. Seen on all parts of the island.

\*Bald Eagle: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. More abundant in winter than summer but never common. Four eagle nests are known on Sapelo, but none was used from 1955-1957. One pair nested in March, 1958, and raised two young. There is a previous breeding record from Blackbeard in 1957 (reported by Mr. Wineland).

\*Osprey: *Pandion haliaetus*. Most common over Blackbeard and the north end of Sapelo. Nesting may commence in March. About one-third of the known nests are used: five out of thirteen in 1958. Rare in winter.

\*Chachalaca: *Ortalis vetula*. This introduced species is found in dense forest and scrub close to fresh water. Adults with young have been seen in July and August.

\*Bobwhite: *Colinus virginianus*. Common near habitations and cleared areas.

\*Turkey: *Meleagris gallopavo*. Fairly common throughout Sapelo and Blackbeard. It seems to be decreasing on Sapelo as formerly cultivated areas grow up to forest. Perhaps it is increasing on Blackbeard where areas are being cleared in the game management program.

\*King Rail: *Rallus elegans*. Rare. Found in the cattail areas of the ponds on the north end of Sapelo.

\*Clapper Rail: *Rallus longirostris*. Common in the salt marsh



areas where the marsh grass, *Spartina alterniflora*, is three to five feet tall.

\*Common Gallinule: *Gallinula chloropus*. Very common on fresh-water ponds. Breeds from June through August. One nest was begun in the first week of August, 1958.

\*American Oystercatcher: *Haematopus palliatus*. Common on the beach where flocks of twenty or thirty are often seen during the non-breeding season. Fifty-two, all adults, were counted on September 19, 1958. Two to four pairs nest in the beach dune area close to high tide level but seem to be successful only rarely.

\*Royal Tern: *Thalasseus maximus*. Common along the beach at all times of year. Nests rarely along the Georgia coast, not on Sapelo, but recorded nesting on Blackbeard (Burleigh, 1958) and observed nesting on Little Egg Island: 39 nests on June 28, 1958, 9 nests on July 11, 1958 (Kale and Teal, 1958). At least one young was successfully raised.

Caspian Tern: *Hydroprogne caspia*. On the beach twenty-five to thirty may be seen in winter, but only a few in summer.

\*Black Skimmer: *Rynchops nigra*. Common on the beach and feeding in beach sloughs. Nests on Little Egg Island where some 300 were banded in 1958.

\*Mourning Dove: *Zenaidura macroura*. Common in dunes and in park-like areas.

\*Ground Dove: *Columbigallina passerina*. Fairly common near dwellings and in dunes.

Barn Owl: *Tyto alba*. Uncommon. Heard at night in 1955-56, and 1958 but not in 1957. One was seen in June, 1955.

\*Screech Owl: *Otus asio*. Common near dwellings. One pair nests in the hollow tree by the front door of the Marine Institute.

\*Great Horned Owl: *Bubo virginianus*. Common in all forested regions. Young have been seen on Blackbeard in May, and on Sapelo in June, 1958.

\*Pileated Woodpecker: *Dryocopus pileatus*. Quite common even near dwellings and in woods.

\*Red-bellied Woodpecker: *Centurus carolinus*. Probably the most abundant woodpecker.

\*Red-headed Woodpecker: *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. Uncommon and only in areas where there are dead trees.

\*Hairy Woodpecker: *Dendrocopos villosus*.

\*Downy Woodpecker: *Dendrocopos pubescens*. Both the Downy

and Hairy woodpeckers are fairly common in forested areas. Red-cockaded Woodpecker: *Dendrocopos borealis*. Rare. Found in pine woods only.

\*Blue Jay: *Cyanocitta cristata*. Seen only very rarely on Sapelo or Blackbeard for some unknown reason, but a common permanent resident on St. Simons.

\*Common Crow: *Corvus brachyrhynchos*. On fields and pastures. Not as abundant as the Fish Crow.

\*Fish Crow: *Corvus ossifragus*. Very common, both on pastures and the beach.

\*Carolina Chickadee: *Parus carolinensis*. Common in all wooded areas.

\*Brown-headed Nuthatch: *Sitta pusilla*. Fairly common in pine woods.

\*Carolina Wren: *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. Abundant in oak woods and near habitations. One of the earliest nesting passerines, a nest being found on March 20, 1956.

\*Long-billed Marsh Wren: *Telmatodytes palustris*. Common in the tall *Spartina* marshes along the creek banks.

\*Mockingbird: *Mimus polyglottos*. Abundant on Sapelo and Blackbeard.

\*Catbird: *Dumetella carolinensis*. Not common, but more seen in winter than summer. Seen mostly in swampy wooded areas.

\*Brown Thrasher: *Toxostoma rufum*. Common in oak and palmetto areas.

\*Eastern Bluebird: *Sialia sialis*. Common along fields and pastures.

\*Loggerhead Shrike: *Lanius ludovicianus*. A few occur along pasture fence rows.

\*Starling: *Sturnus vulgaris*. Fairly common on fields and around buildings. Nests in the Marine Institute roof ventilator.

\*White-eyed Vireo: *Vireo griseus*. Found in shrubs around ponds and the understory of dense woods. Common from March through the summer.

\*Pine Warbler: *Dendroica pinus*. Common in pine woods in summer. Seen on fields and pastures and edges of pine woods and scrub during fall and winter when the bird is much less abundant.

\*Yellowthroat: *Geothlypis trichas*. Common. Chiefly occurs around ponds and pasture drainage ditches.

\*House Sparrow: *Passer domesticus*. Uncommon. Only found



around habitation where domestic animals are kept.

\*Redwinged Blackbird: *Agelaius phoeniceus*. Common. Breeds in cattail marshes, and in salt marshes.

\*Boat-tailed Grackle: *Cassidix mexicanus*. Abundant in salt marshes. Breeds in bushes at marsh edge, in cattails, in fresh-water marshes, and in the heronry.

\*Cardinal: *Richmondia cardinalis*. Common in oak woods and scrub.

\*Rufous-sided Towhee: *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. Very common all over the island. The red-eyed race is present during winter, but the white-eyed is the breeding race.

\*Seaside Sparrow: *Ammospiza maritima*. Found along tidal creeks and salt marshes. Nests in *Spartina* about three feet tall, fifty feet back from the larger tidal creeks.

\*Bachman's Sparrow: *Aimophila aestivalis*. Probably a permanent resident, but there are few records due to the difficulty of observing this bird.

#### B. WINTER RESIDENTS

Common Loon: *Gavia immer*. Uncommon to land observers from December through March. Mostly on sounds and offshore. Horned Grebe: *Podiceps auritus*. Frequently seen from November through April. On sounds and offshore. Occasionally seen in breeding plumage late in April.

Pied-billed Grebe: *Podilymbus podiceps*. Occurs from September through April and July, on fresh-water ponds and salt-marsh creeks. Common during the winter. Possibly it nests but not commonly, one nest being found on the north pond in June, 1958. Only one bird was present, however, and no eggs were laid. This bird disappeared after June 15.

Gannet: *Morus bassanus*. Fairly common from November through March, offshore and in sounds. A few injured grebes, Gannets, and cormorants are found on the beach each year.

Double-crested Cormorant: *Phalacrocorax auritus*. Common, flocks of fifty to a hundred birds seen from November through May and early June, on beaches, sounds and offshore.

American Bittern: *Botaurus lentiginosus*. Rare in fresh-water marshes from December through February.

Mallard: *Anas platyrhynchos*. Common from September through March, on fresh-water ponds.

Black Duck: *Anas rubripes*. Less common than the Mallard.

Occurs from November through March on fresh-water ponds and edges of sounds.

Gadwall: *Anas strepera*. November through April. This and the Mallard are the most abundant surface-feeding ducks. Flocks of hundreds may be seen on Blackbeard Island.

Pintail: *Anas acuta*. Most common in the fall. Seen on fresh-water ponds from October through February.

Green-winged Teal: *Anas carolinensis*. Fairly common at times on fresh-water ponds from November through February.

Blue-winged Teal: *Anas discors*. On fresh-water ponds from August through June, though rarely seen December through February. Very abundant in the fall and spring.

American Widgeon: *Mareca americana*. On fresh-water ponds, from December through May, but not common.

Shoveler: *Spatula clypeata*. Four were seen on February 22, and one in March, 1957, on fresh-water ponds. Similar occurrences in other years.

Redhead: *Aythya americana*. Rare. Seen only in November, 1955 to 1957. Fresh-water ponds and sounds.

Ring-necked Duck: *Aythya collaris*. From November through March. Not common, but up to twenty-five regularly seen on a pond near the Marine Institute.

Canvasback: *Aythya valisineria*. The second most common diving duck, from November through March. Fifty to a hundred are seen on fresh-water ponds and sounds.

Greater Scaup: *Aythya marila*. Rare. Seen from December through February, in the sounds.

Lesser Scaup: *Aythya affinis*. Seen from November through June on sounds and fresh-water ponds. Several thousand are often scattered over the water off Doboy Sound entrance, with two thousand being seen in one flock in January, 1957. A few remain as late as June.

Bufflehead: *Bucephala albeola*. Uncommon on sounds from December through March.

Ruddy Duck: *Oxyura jamaicensis*. Not common, but often seen in groups of one to five birds on fresh-water ponds and sounds from December through April.

Hooded Merganser: *Lophodytes cucullatus*. Fairly common. Seen from November through March on fresh-water ponds, tidal rivers, and creeks.

Red-breasted Merganser: *Mergus serrator*. Fairly common in



fresh-water ponds and on the sea from November through April. Sharp-shinned Hawk: *Accipiter striatus*. Not common. Seen from October through April over fields and pastures.

Marsh Hawk: *Circus cyaneus*. Observed over salt marshes and beach dunes from September through April. Seen frequently, but probably no more than five to ten birds are present around Sapelo at one time.

Peregrine Falcon: *Falco peregrinus*. Not common. Seen from September through March over beach, beach dunes, fields, and pastures.

Pigeon Hawk: *Falco columbarius*. Uncommon over fields and beach dunes from November through April.

Sparrow Hawk: *Falco sparverius*. Common. Observed over fields and beach dunes from August through April. Five or six of these little falcons may be seen in fields at any time during migration.

Virginia Rail: *Rallus limicola*. One was seen in February, 1958, on a fresh-water marsh.

Sora: *Porzana carolina*. Fairly common throughout its residence period (October-April), more so near fresh-water ponds than salt marshes.

American Coot: *Fulica americana*. Abundant on fresh-water ponds and marshes, occurring from November through June in large numbers. A few may be present throughout the summer. Three were seen in July, four in August, 1958, but there was no evidence of nesting.

Semipalmated Plover: *Charadrius semipalmatus*. Occurs from July through May. Fairly common on the beach; twenty-five to fifty are seen in shorebird flocks.

Piping Plover: *Charadrius melodus*. Not common, but sometimes in flocks of ten or fifteen on the beach from July through March.

Killdeer: *Charadrius vociferus*. Occurs from August to October through May. Fairly common, especially on fields and in wet places.

Black-bellied Plover: *Squatarola squatarola*. Observed in all months but June. Flocks of 300 to 500 individuals in breeding plumage have been seen in May on the beach. Common all winter.

Ruddy Turnstone: *Arenaria interpres*. Fairly common on the beach from July through May. Five to ten individuals are usually found in any large flock of shorebirds.

American Woodcock: *Philohela minor*. One was seen in January, 1957, in a broomsedge field on Sapelo.

Common Snipe: *Capella gallinago*. Not uncommon. Seen from December through April in marshy, fresh-water areas.

Spotted Sandpiper: *Actitis macularia*. Seen on salt marsh creeks and beach from July through May. Fairly common although only a few are present in December and January.

(Western) Willet: *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*. Common on beach from August through March.

Greater Yellowlegs: *Totanus melanoleucus*. Occurs from July through May, but most common during migration. Found on the beach, in salt marshes, in areas where the *Spartina* has died down, and in shallow ponds or pastures.

Least Sandpiper: *Erolia minutilla*. Common from July through May, on the beach and muddy places in the marsh and tidal creek banks.

Dunlin: *Erolia alpina*. Common on the beach during winter, but occurs from July through May.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: *Ereunetes pusillus*. Common during migration on the beach, but less common in winter. Occurs from July through May.

Western Sandpiper: *Ereunetes mauri*. On the beach, in the salt marshes, and on creek banks, it occurs from August through March. Flocks of fifty to a hundred are common.

Marbled Godwit: *Limosa fedoa*. Flocks of twenty-five to thirty have been seen on the beach from July through May although not yet seen during November and December.

Sanderling: *Crocethia alba*. Very abundant from July through May on the beach.

Pomarine Jaeger: *Stercorarius pomarinus*. On March 9, 1958, two were seen sitting on the water and chasing gulls and terns over Doboy Sound. They were followed over the sound with an outboard motor and observed closely several times in the course of two hours. Identification was made by observing the large, blunt-tipped central tail feathers when the birds were within thirty feet of the boat, and comparing the size with the gulls. These jaegers were somewhat larger than Ring-billed but smaller than Herring gulls, while Parasitic Jaegers are about the size of the Laughing Gull. All three gulls were close to the jaegers, making comparison easy.

Parasitic Jaeger: *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Two were seen chas-



ing gulls over Sapelo Sound in March, 1958.

Herring Gull: *Larus argentatus*. Very common along beaches and in sounds. First-year birds occur from August through May, with adults appearing in November and leaving by the end of March or the beginning of April.

Ring-billed Gull: *Larus delawarensis*. Very common. Found from July through May, with a few immatures present at all times. The ring-bill is more of a marsh and pasture bird than the Herring Gull, although both are found throughout the region.

Bonaparte's Gull: *Larus philadelphia*. Flocks of 200 are seen commonly from December through March on the beach and in sounds.

Forster's Tern: *Sterna forsteri*. The most abundant tern during the winter, occurring from July through April. A few return from June on.

Common Tern: *Sterna hirundo*. Not nearly as abundant as Forster's Tern, but a few usually can be distinguished among the large flocks of Forster's especially during migration. Occurs from July through April, on the ocean and beaches.

Belted Kingfisher: *Megasceryle alcyon*. Common throughout the year but missing in June. Several holes of the size made by kingfishers have been found in banks, but so far there is no evidence of nesting.

Yellow-shafted Flicker: *Colaptes auratus*. Not common. Observed only in winter, although possibly a permanent resident, in fields and woods.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: *Sphyrapicus varius*. Not common. Found from December through April, in oak woods.

Eastern Phoebe: *Sayornis phoebe*. Common from November through March, in woods, fields, and beach dunes.

Tree Swallow: *Iridoprocne bicolor*. From August through April, they can be seen over dunes and fields, also over the salt marshes and sounds.

House Wren: *Troglodytes aedon*. Found from November through April, around dwellings.

Short-billed Marsh Wren: *Cistothorus platensis*. Rarely observed. Seen in January and February in fresh and salt marshes.

Robin: *Turdus migratorius*. Quite common in fields and woods from November through April.

Wood Thrush: *Hylocichla guttata*. November through April.

Quite common in woods and scrub.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: *Regulus calendula*. Quite common in oak woods from November through April.

Water Pipit: *Anthus spinoletta*. Present individually and in flocks of twenty to thirty birds from December through April, in fields. A flock of some twenty birds was seen on a field in July, 1958, by several observers.

Cedar Waxwing: *Bombycilla cedrorum*. Fairly common from December through April, in woods.

Myrtle Warbler: *Dendroica coronata*. Very common from October through April, in woods and beach dunes where they feed on the wax myrtle in the coldest months when insects are not available.

Palm Warbler: *Dendroica palmarum*. Found from September through April, in fields, dunes, and fresh-water marshes. Common during migration; uncommon in the middle of winter.

Eastern Meadowlark: *Sturnella magna*. Common. Flocks of five to thirty birds can be found from October through May, in fields and dunes.

Common Grackle: *Quiscalus quiscula*. Fairly common from November through April in fields.

Brown-headed Cowbird: *Molothrus ater*. Common, especially in the fall. Found from July through March, in pastures.

American Goldfinch: *Spinus tristis*. Occurs from January through April in scrub.

Ipswich Sparrow: *Passerculus princeps*. One was seen in beach dunes on January 14, 1957, and January 18, 1958.

Savannah Sparrow: *Passerculus sandwichensis*. Common in fields and dunes from November through April, a few remaining into May.

Grasshopper Sparrow: *Ammodramus savannarum*. One was seen in September, 1956, in beach dunes and several in April, 1958, in fresh-water marsh. Probably present all winter.

Henslow's Sparrow: *Passerherbulus henslowii*. One was seen on January 13, 1957, in the scrub at the border of a field.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow: *Ammodramus caudacuta*. Occurs from December through May in salt marshes.

Vesper Sparrow: *Pooecetes gramineus*. Common from November through April in the dunes.

Field Sparrow: *Spizella pusilla*. Common in fields and dunes from November through April.



White-throated Sparrow: *Zonotrichia albicollis*. Very common in woods and scrub from November through April.

Swamp Sparrow: *Melospiza georgiana*. Common in fresh-water swampy areas from November through April.

Song Sparrow: *Melospiza melodia*. Common in fresh-water swampy areas, fields, and beach dunes from November through April.

C. Spring and fall migrants.

Canada Goose: *Branta canadensis*. Seen flying overhead in October and November. Feeds on beach dunes and fields.

Blue Goose: *Chen caerulescens*. Five were seen on the beach dunes in October, 1955.

Wood Duck: *Aix sponsa*. Rare. Found in February, March, and April on ponds at the end of Sapelo.

Red-shouldered Hawk: *Buteo lineatus*. Found in October, February, and March.

Long-billed Curlew: *Numenius americanus*. Six birds were seen on April 13, 1958.

Whimbrel: *Numenius phaeopus*. Observed in April, May, July, and August. A flock of 300 was seen on Wolf Island in May, 1957. Solitary Sandpiper: *Tringa solitaria*. Seen in groups of two to ten, alone or with Yellowlegs in marshy fresh-water ponds in April and May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: *Totanus flavipes*. Uncommon. Seen in March, April, August, and September with Greater Yellowlegs in shallow fresh-water ponds, in pastures, and dunes.

Knot: *Calidris canutus*. Quite common on the beach from February through May and July through September.

Pectoral Sandpiper: *Erolia melanotos*. Rare. Seen in October, 1956, and April, 1958, in short grass around fresh-water ponds.

White-rumped Sandpiper: *Erolia fuscicollis*. Found in March and May, 1958. One flock of twenty was seen on a mud flat on May 11, 1958.

Short-billed Dowitcher: *Limnodromus griseus*. Common on the beach and salt marshes from February through May and July through October.

Northern Phalarope: *Steganopus lobatus*. One was seen in September, 1955, on a beach pond.

Black Tern: *Chlidonias niger*. Regularly seen from July through September on the beach and sounds usually in small numbers.

A flock of forty-six was seen on August 2, 1958.

Black-billed Cuckoo: *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. One was seen on Blackbeard Island in April, 1958.

Short-eared Owl: *Asio flammeus*. One was seen in November, 1956, on beach dunes.

Barn Swallow: *Hirundo rustica*. Common over salt marshes, dunes, and around buildings from July through October and April and May.

Swainson's Thrush: *Hylocichala ustulata*. Uncommon, in September and November.

Solitary Vireo: *Vireo solitarius*. Found in March and April, in oak woods.

Black-and-white Warbler: *Mniotilta varia*. Fairly common in pine and oak woods from February through April and July or August through November.

Prothonotary Warbler: *Protonotaria citrea*. Seen in March and April in oak woods and around ponds.

Golden-winged Warbler: *Vermivora chrysoptera*. A few were seen in October and April in oak woods.

Blue-winged Warbler: *Vermivora pinus*. April. Uncommon. In hedge rows.

Orange-crowned Warbler: *Vermivora celata*. One was seen in April, 1958, in bushes at the edge of a field.

Yellow Warbler: *Dendroica petechia*. September. Fairly common in tall *Spartina* grass in salt marsh.

Magnolia Warbler: *Dendroica magnolia*. Uncommon in shrubs along the salt marsh edge in September.

Cape May Warbler: *Dendroica tigrina*. Uncommon, in March and April. Seen near dwellings on Sapelo.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: *Dendroica caerulescens*. Uncommon, in April and October in live oak woods.

Black-throated Green Warbler: *Dendroica virens*. Seen around north ponds in April. Rare.

Northern Waterthrush: *Seiurus noveboracensis*. Uncommon in woods and wet places in April and more common in September.

Louisiana Waterthrush: *Seiurus motacilla*. Found from July through September. Often heard singing during late summer along wooded waterways.

Hooded Warbler: *Wilsonia citrina*. This species is rare and its status on Sapelo is uncertain. Found in April and June.

American Redstart: *Seto-haga ruticilla*. Common in oak woods in April, and August through October.



Bobolink: *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. Observed in fields in September and March.

Baltimore Oriole: *Icterus galbula*. Two females were observed singing in April, 1957, by buildings. This is an unusual observation but there was no doubt as to its correctness. Females have been heard singing before but only rarely (Bent, 1958).

Scarlet Tanager: *Piranga olivacea*. Rare. Found in April.

Blue Grosbeak: *Guiraca caerulea*. Observed in fields in April and September.

Indigo Bunting: *Passerina cyanea*. Not common. Found in small flocks and with Chipping Sparrows, in April.

Purple Finch: *Carpodacus purpureus*. Common in February and March around buildings. Not seen in 1958.

Lark Sparrow: *Chondestes grammacus*. One was seen in pine woods on September 1, 1956.

Slate-colored Junco: *Junco hyemalis*. Not common. Found in February, March, and October.

Chipping Sparrow: *Spizella passerina*. Observed irregularly: records for January, March, April, June, August, and September.

White-crowned Sparrow: *Zonotrichia leucophrys*. Immatures were seen in October, 1957.

Lincoln's Sparrow: *Melospiza lincolnii*. One was observed resting on tall *Spartina* at extreme high tide on Wolf Island in October, 1955.

#### D. Summer residents.

\*Cattle Egret: *Bubulcus ibis*. At present only a summer resident, but quite possibly it will stay all year as the bird becomes more abundant and extends its range to the north. Nested with the other egrets in 1957 but did not nest in 1958. Feeds on cattle pastures.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron: *Nyctanassa violacea*. Seen from May through July in small numbers up to five, but it does not breed on Sapelo.

\*Least Bittern: *Ixobrychus exilis*. Occurs from April through September, in fresh-water ponds and along salt-marsh creeks. Probably two or three pairs nest in the cattails of the open part of the north end ponds where they are seen fairly commonly. More may nest in dense cattails which are never visited.

(To Be Continued)

## GENERAL NOTES

**AN ACCOUNT OF A GOOSE NEAR ATLANTA.**—On March 8, 1958, following a period of extremely disagreeable weather during which the temperature went as low as a few degrees above zero, Mrs. Harold Peters, Sam Austin, and the writer visited a small pond on the north side of Atlanta to see a strange goose. The bird was found on the property of Jackson Dick, Jr., and was observed for some time. Because the bird appeared to be nervous and extremely cautious upon our approach, attempts at photography were possible only with the aid of a telephoto lens. With only Peterson's Guide as a reference the goose was tentatively identified as an immature White-fronted Goose. The characteristics noted were an orange bill and feet, back and breast markings similar to those illustrated for the White-front, a small tuft of white at the base of the bill and a lack of a black "grinning" patch, characteristic of the immature Blue Goose. After later examining Bent and Kortright the writer still felt that the predominant characteristics were those of the White-fronted Goose even though the occurrence of the species is unlikely in the Eastern United States.

Color slides of the bird were forwarded to two water-fowl authorities: F. H. Kortright of Toronto, Canada and Dr. A. S. Leopold at the University of California in Berkeley. These authorities returned somewhat divergent yet interesting opinions. Kortright after consulting with T. M. Shortt and James Bailey both of the Royal Museum of Zoology, Toronto, indicated that the bird was possibly "an escape or offspring of escapes of domestic spawned Grey-Lag geese" even though there were some differences in the characteristics. Leopold indicated after reviewing the slides "there is no question in my mind whatsoever about identification" as a young White-fronted Goose.

These opinions are well founded as well as interesting, yet, because of the lack of more identifiable characteristics the incident can merely be recorded as an interesting case in bird identification. Later we found that the goose had remained on the pond for several more weeks after which it was seen in flight by Mr. Dick. Whether it was on its way to the far northland or back to the barnyard can be left only to the imagination.—CHARLES E. COLLUM, 1033 Lucile Avenue, S.W., Atlanta, Georgia.

**UNUSUAL NEST OF THE GREEN HERON AT DALTON.**—The clearing of a willow swamp early in 1958 forced Green Herons (*Butorides virescens*) out of their normal nesting habitat at the north end of Longley Lake in Dalton, Georgia. A nest with five half-grown young was found in late



May, 1958, in a thick and regular stand of young pines, one-half mile from the lake.

The nest was about 25 feet up in the pine at the junction of several small limbs with the trunk, and was formed of loosely placed pine twigs. The young climbed two or three feet out on the limb during the day, returning to the nest at night. One bird fell out of the nest on the night of May 27. Warmed and fed during the next day by the writer, it was restored that evening to a position in the tree two feet under the nest. It was too weak to cling to the limb or else the parents could not find it at feeding time, for on May 28 it was found dead on the ground. The remaining young birds left the nest in mid- or late June.—*Mrs. R. E. HAMILTON, 704 Greenwood Drive, Dalton, Georgia. December 27, 1958.*

#### RESUME OF CHRISTMAS COUNTS, 1958

**OKEFENOCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.**—December 20, 1958; 11 observers in 5 parties (Eugene Cypert, compiler); 93 party-miles; temp. 39°–71°, partly cloudy. Totals: 82 species and 8851 individuals. Of interest were Blue Goose, 2; Golden Eagle, 1; Sandhill Crane, 216; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 2; Henslow, Sparrow, 2; Bachman, Sparrow, 1.

**ATLANTA.**—December 21, 1958; 23 observers (Rufus Godwin, compiler); clear, cold day. Totals: 70 species and 9000 individuals. Unusual observations included an Oldsquaw and Orange-crowned Warbler. Sparrows and robins were very scarce.

**ROME.**—December 28, 1958; 14 observers in 6 parties (George Dorsey, compiler). Totals: 73 species and 110,127 individuals. Of interest were Gadwall, 8; Broad-winged Hawk, 1; Common Crow, 3850; "blackbirds," 100,600.

#### FROM THE FIELD

On January 10-11, 1959, a bird which was apparently a hybrid Blue Goose X Snow Goose was seen by Wallace Dreyfoos and Louis Fink on East Lake in Atlanta. A male Buffle-head was observed on this lake on January 11, although it had been reported in December by Mrs. Georgina Pindar and Jimmy Cook. Two dead Barred Owls were picked up beside the highway two miles east of Herndon (between Millen and Midville) on December 29, 1957, by Mrs. R. E. Hamilton. She also recorded a freshly-killed Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Dalton on October 6, 1958. Two miles southeast of Macon on December 26, 1958, Oliver Snow and David W. Johnston obtained a female Green Heron. This is the first winter specimen from Georgia. Two Golden Plovers were observed in a field south of Warner Robins on October 18-19, 1958, by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cater, Mrs. M. T. Grubbs, and David W. Johnston. Mrs. Cater also reports the occurrence of a fledgling Pied-billed Grebe on the Old Race Track pond in Warner Robins on August 31, 1958.