

THE ORIOLE

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

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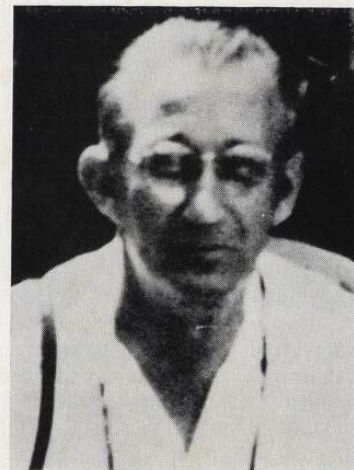
NO. 4

IN MEMORIAM: IVAN REXFORD TOMKINS

By HERMAN W. COOLIDGE

The afternoon of February 14, 1966, was bright and sunny. We were gathered in Bonaventure Cemetery to pay our last respects to a friend and teacher, Ivan Rexford Tomkins. A flock of Crows drifted down wind. One called as they passed overhead, and we knew them to be Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*). Small birds darted into the Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) some distance away, their bright yellow rumps easily seen in the sunlight; and almost without looking we knew them to be Myrtle Warblers (*Dendroica coronata coronata*). These bits of knowledge, together with hundreds of other lesser and greater bits of information we had learned from our friend and teacher during the last quarter century.

Ivan Rexford Tomkins was born August 18, 1893, in the farming community of Ellenton, near Williamsport, Pennsylvania, the son of Cassius H. Tomkins and Jennie King Tomkins. During World War I he served in Company G, 314th Infantry from November 1917 to February



Ivan
Rexford
Tomkins

1918, and with the Tank Corps and Company A, 65th Engineers until April 1919. This service carried him overseas to France. He first came to Georgia to work with the Public Health Service on December 8, 1922, and was assigned to the U. S. Quarantine Station located on Cockspur Island near the mouth of the Savannah River. Some three years later he accepted the position of Dredging Inspector with the Corps of Engineers on the dredges Cumberland, Morgan, Welatka and Clinton. He continued to work with the Corps, rising through the ranks to the position of Chief of the Projects Branch of the Savannah District, which position he held at his retirement on March 1, 1956.

The isolated character of his work at the Quarantine Station and his life aboard the dredges in the Savannah River gave Mr. Tomkins ample opportunities to develop his interest in the life of the salt marshes, beaches and open waters surrounding him. It was his good fortune on arriving in Georgia, to meet and become friends with three capable ornithologists of that time: Troup D. Perry, Walter J. Erichson and Gilbert R. Rossignol. In addition to their friendship, these men became Mr. Tomkins' instructors, imparting to him their knowledge of many years' experience, and in turn, Mr. Tomkins was their most apt pupil. From this beginning as a budding ornithologist, Mr. Tomkins advanced to the point where his knowledge and advice were sought by many men of science throughout the Southeast, all of whom regarded him with highest respect for his learning and ability.

Progress in his work with the Corps of Engineers finally brought Mr. Tomkins from the mouth of the Savannah River to the office in Savannah, and it became possible for him to lead a more normal life. On March 15, 1941, he married Isabel F. Berry who, in her gracious way, was as charming and capable as her husband. This good marriage was doomed to a short existence and terminated when Mrs. Tomkins died on April 19, 1948.

Through the years intense and constant study of the river, surrounding area and the life therein, continued without serious interruption. Soon Mr. Tomkins became recognized as a specialist by reason of his detailed and exact knowledge of the wildlife, and birds in particular, of the Savannah River delta and surrounding country. In 1934, the Charleston (S. C.) Museum elected Mr. Tomkins an Associate in Zoology, and for many years he rendered invaluable service on a voluntary basis to that outstanding institution. Many study skins collected and prepared by Mr. Tomkins are to be found there. Other specimens of scientific worth can be found in the study collections of the University of Georgia, Mercer University, Youth Museum of Savannah and other similar institutions.

In 1928 Mr. Tomkins became an associate member in the American Ornithologist Union and in 1939 his knowledge and ability received proper credit when he became one of only eighty elective members of that organization. From time to time Mr. Tomkins' writings have appeared in the *Auk*, the official organ of that elite and select group. He was also a member of the American Society of Mammalogist and contributed less frequently to publications of that Society.

Mr. Tomkins was an accomplished and enthusiastic photographer. Many of us throughout the State were privileged from time to time to see his wonderful color slides and black and white photographs. In 1937 he became a charter member of the Savannah Camera Club winning many awards, both within and beyond that group, with his technically accurate work. Other hobbies, of lesser standing to him personally, included a fine knowledge of antique guns, semi-precious stones, and antique glass.

When the Georgia Ornithological Society came into being in 1936, it was only natural that Mr. Tomkins would be a charter member in that group. Throughout the years his loyalty to that organization has been outstanding, insisting always, in his quiet manner, that the work of the Society and its publications be kept at the highest scientific level. Mr. Tomkins contributed several notes to the very first issue of *The Oriole*, the official journal of the Georgia Ornithological Society. Since that day in 1936 he has written many more excellent notes and longer articles which appeared in that publication, all of which added much to our knowledge and pleasure.

On February 12, 1966, after an illness of about a month, Ivan Rexford Tomkins passed away. With his death the more serious ornithologists of this State lost one of their finest students, and the Georgia Ornithological Society and this writer lost a most valued and generous friend.

A partial list of Mr. Tomkins published observations, notes and articles prepared by Dr. David W. Johnston is attached.

PUBLICATIONS OF IVAN REXFORD TOMKINS

- 1929—The Avocet in Georgia. *Auk*, 46: 383-84.
- 1929—The Barn Owl nesting on the lower Savannah River. *Auk*, 46: 387.
- 1930—Some records from the Savannah River entrance during 1929. *Auk*, 47: 577.
- 1931—A snowy Owl from Coastal Georgia. *Auk*, 48: 268.
- 1931—Further notes from the Savannah River entrance. *Auk*, 48: 279-82.
- 1931—Additional species for the Georgia list. *Auk*, 48: 435-36.
- 1932—The Black Skimmer, a permanent resident in Georgia. *Auk*, 49: 85-86.
- 1932—Worthington's Marsh Wren in the vicinity of Savannah, Ga., *Wilson Bull.*, 44: 40.

- 1932—Some observations on the Eastern Willet at nesting time. *Wilson Bull.*, 44: 46-47.
- 1932—A Greater Snow Goose from Georgia. *Auk*, 49: 213-14.
- 1932—A Sooty Tern from Georgia. *Auk*, 49: 219.
- 1932—Yellow-eyed Boat-tailed Grackles again. *Auk*, 49: 227.
- 1933—The Western Willet in winter in Georgia and South Carolina. *Auk*, 50: 102.
- 1933—Ring-billed and Herring Gulls at the Savannah River mouth in July and August. *Auk*, 50: 103.
- 1933—An Eastern Snow Bunting from Georgia. *Auk*, 50: 227.
- 1933—Ways of the Black Skimmer. *Wilson Bull.*, 45: 147-51.
- 1933—Upward currents not required for soaring flight. *Wilson Bull.*, 45: 200.
- 1933—The yellow-legs wintering in South Carolina. *Auk*, 50: 215.
- 1934—Notes from Chatham County, Georgia. *Auk*, 51: 252-53.
- 1934—A curious Tern accident. *Wilson Bull.*, 46: 128.
- 1934—Hurricanes and subspecific variations. *Wilson Bull.*, 46: 238-40.
- 1935—A Blue Goose from Georgia. *Auk*, 52: 78.
- 1935—Another Ipswich Sparrow from Georgia. *Auk*, 52: 194.
- 1935—Another Blue Goose from Georgia. *Auk*, 52: 302.
- 1935—An Atlantic Song Sparrow from Georgia. *Auk*, 52: 315.
- 1935—The Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius I. lapponicus*); a South Carolina specimen, and a Georgia sight record. *Auk*, 52: 315.
- 1935—The Marsh Rabbit: an incomplete life history. *J. Mamm.* 16: 201-05.
- 1936—The White-rumped and Stilt Sandpipers in southern South Carolina. *Auk*, 53: 80.
- 1936—The Red-tailed Hawk breeding on the Georgia Coast. *Oriole*, 1: 9.
- 1936—Southern Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Georgia and South Carolina. *Auk*, 53: 335-36.
- 1936—The Ring-billed Gull summering again in Georgia. *Oriole*, 1: 9.
- 1936—Nesting records of a Catbird in Chatham County. *Oriole*, 1: 10.
- 1936—The Bank Swallow, a fall migrant in coastal Georgia. *Oriole*, 1: 10.
- 1936—Miscellany. *Oriole*, 1: 15-16.
- 1936—Hovering of the Red-tailed Hawk. *Oriole*, 1: 18.
- 1936—Partial albinism in two species of birds. *Oriole*, 1: 19.
- 1936—Notes on the winter food of the Short-eared Owl. *Wilson Bull.*, 48: 77-79.
- 1936—The Stilt Sandpiper again on the lower Savannah River. *Auk*, 53: 329.
- 1936—A eleven-year list of the shore birds of the Savannah River entrance. *Oriole*, 1: 32-34.
- 1936—A Georgia specimen of Wayne's Marsh Wren. *Auk*, 53: 339-40.
- 1937—The status of Macgillivray's Seaside Sparrow. *Auk*, 54: 185-88.
- 1937—Wayne's Clapper Rail carries its young. *Wilson Bull.*, 49: 296-97.
- 1937—Marsh Hens of the Georgia coast. *Oriole*, 2: 29-31.
- 1938—Geese in the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 3: 24.
- 1939—Eastern Nighthawks from the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 4: 30-31.
- 1940—Sight record of a Kittiwake from the Savannah River. *Oriole*, 5: 8.
- 1940—White-crowned Sparrow from coastal Georgia. *Oriole*, 5: 9.
- 1940—Whistling Swan from the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 5: 17.
- 1940—Four essentials in writing notes. *Oriole*, 5: 13-14.

- 1941—Notes on Macgillivray's Seaside Sparrow. *Auk*, 58: 38-51.
- 1941—Broken-wing performance by the Eastern Willet. *Auk*, 58: 95.
- 1941—Foot-washing by the Black Skimmer. *Auk*, 58: 96.
- 1941—A Georgia specimen of the Iceland Gull. *Oriole*, 6: 49-50.
- 1941—Snow Goose from the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 6: 49-50.
- 1941—The Stilt Sandpiper in Georgia. *Oriole*, 6: 50-51.
- 1941—Sight record of European Cormorant in Georgia. *Oriole*, 6: 51.
- 1941—An oddly colored Wilson's Snipe. *Auk*, 58: 256.
- 1942—Least Tern watering eggs: Gideon Mabbett's query. *Auk*, 59: 308.
- 1942—The "injury-feigning" behavior of the Florida Nighthawk. *Wilson Bull.*, 54: 43-49.
- 1942—Osprey occurrence in January. *Oriole*, 7: 6.
- 1942—The range of the Little Sparrow Hawk in Georgia and South Carolina. *Oriole*, 7: 13-14.
- 1942—A Blue Goose on Blackbeard Island, Georgia. *Oriole*, 7: 17-18.
- 1944—Pine Siskins at Savannah. *Oriole*, 9: 8.
- 1944—Wilson's Plover in its summer home. *Auk*, 61: 259-69.
- 1945—Birds of Georgia (co-authored). *Occas. Publ. 2, Georgia Ornith. Soc.*, 111 pp.
- 1946—Georgia Swan records—A correction. *Oriole*, 11: 20-21.
- 1946—Duck Hawk wintering at Savannah. *Oriole*, 11: 21.
- 1946—Nesting of the Barn Owl on the lower Savannah River. *Oriole*, 11: 59-63.
- 1947—The Oyster-catcher of the Atlantic coast of North America and its relation to oysters. *Wilson Bull.*, 59: 204-08.
- 1948—More notes on the two races of Sparrow Hawk inhabiting Georgia. *Oriole*, 13: 23-24.
- 1949—The Mississippi Kite along the Savannah River in Georgia and South Carolina. *Auk*, 66: 82.
- 1949—Orchard Oriole feeding on nectar. *Oriole*, 14: 19-20.
- 1949—Stilt and White-rumped Sandpipers in the Savannah, Georgia, area. *Oriole*, 14: 22-23.
- 1950—Purple Sandpipers wintering in Georgia. *Oriole*, 15: 7.
- 1950—A Georgia breeding record of the Black-necked Stilt. *Oriole*, 15: 30-31.
- 1950—Unusual bird records after the Labor Day storm. *Oriole*, 15: 39-40.
- 1950—Notes on wing-flashing in the Mockingbird. *Wilson Bull.*, 62: 41-42.
- 1951—Method of feeding of the Black Skimmer, *Rynchops nigra*. *Auk*, 68: 236-39.
- 1951—Notes from the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 16: 39.
- 1952—The Purple Sandpiper as a regular winter visitor on Tybee Beach. *Oriole*, 17: 28-29.
- 1952—More about the Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 17: 38-39.
- 1953—A specimen of Eastern Glossy Ibis from Chatham County. *Oriole*, 18: 44.
- 1953—The Belted Piping Plover on the Georgia coast. *Oriole*, 18: 45.
- 1953—Notes from the Savannah area. *Oriole*, 18: 35.
- 1954—Golden Plover and Arkansas Kingbird in Chatham County. *Oriole*, 19: 18.
- 1954—Life history notes on the American Oystercatcher. *Oriole*, 19: 37-45.
- 1955—Additional Georgia records of the American Scoter. *Oriole*, 20: 30-31.

- 1955—The distribution of the Marsh Rabbit in Georgia. *J. Mamm.*, 36 (1): 144-145.
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- 1956—An avocet in Long County, Georgia. *Oriole*, 21: 32.
- 1956—Blue Jay regurgitating food for the young. *Oriole*, 21: 31.
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- 1959—A second Vermilion Flycatcher in South Carolina. *Chat*, 23 (2): 37-38.
- 1959—A specimen of the Greater Shearwater from South Carolina. *Chat*, 23 (1): 19.
- 1960—Sabine's Gull; an addition to the Georgia list. *Oriole*, 25 (4): 44-45.
- 1960—Pocket list of Georgia birds. *Ga. Ornith. Soc.*, 57 pp.
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- 1961—Gilbert R. Rossignol. *Oriole*, 26 (4): 61.
- 1961—The Burrowing Owl in coastal Georgia and South Carolina. *Oriole*, 26 (1): 1-2.
- 1961—An albinistic sparrow from Hiltonhead Island, S. C. *Chat*, 25 (2): 35-36.
- 1961—Review of Birds of North Carolina (Rev. ed., 1959) *Chat*, 25 (1): 20-21.
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- 1963—A Royal Tern choked by a fish. *Wilson Bull.*, 75: 198.
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- 1964—The Ring-billed Gull "skimming" on foot. *Oriole*, 29 (4): 62.
- 1964—A specimen of Florida Cormorant from Tybee Island. *Oriole*, 29 (1): 17-18.
- 1964—Migration and habitat of the Long-billed Dowitcher on the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. *Wilson Bull.*, 76: 188-189.
- 1965—Swallow-tailed Kite and snake: an unusual encounter. *Wilson Bull.*, 77: 294.
- 1965—Absence of the Blue Jay on some of Georgia's coastal islands. *Oriole*, 30 (2): 77-79.
- 1965—Wilson's Plover: some egg weights. *Oriole*, 30 (1): 67-68.
- 1965—The Willets of Georgia and South Carolina. *Wilson Bull.*, 77 (2): 151-167.
- 1965—The Royal Tern colony of Little Egg Island, Georgia. *Bird-Banding*, 36: 21-27, Kale, H. W., II, G. W. Sciple, and I. R. Tomkins.
13 Bluff Drive, Isle of Hope
Savannah, Georgia
March 3, 1966

GENERAL NOTES

FLICKER NESTING ON SAND PILE—In the literature there are few recorded instances of flickers nesting on the ground. William Brewster in 1909 published an account of a flicker's nest on the ground, discovered by some ladies on Cape Cod and seen by him (Bent, A. C., 1939. *Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers*. *U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 174). Bent (ibid.) also mentions two nests of flickers "similarly located" which were shown in pictures in *Bird-Lore* (18: 399 and 36: 105). In Georgia a flicker was reported by Parker B. Smith to be nesting on the ground in a cotton field in Elbert County in June 1964 (*The Oriole*, 29: 42, 1964).

The first such nest to be found in Whitfield County was located on a child's sand pile. On May 31, 1965, Mrs. Hoyt Shields saw a female flicker sitting on some eggs on a mound of sand fifty yards back of her home in a grove of young shortleaf and Virginia pines (*Pinus echinata* and *Pinus virginiana*). The Shield's home is ten miles northeast of Dalton on the Beavertdale road.

Mrs. W. C. Cox, Sr. and the writer went to the Shields' home on June 4, 1965, and observed the female flicker brooding on five eggs. When disturbed, the bird flew to a shortleaf pine nearby and uttered a few "chee" notes in an unconcerned manner. When the observers left the area, she returned almost at once to sit on the nest. The nest site was a circular, dishpan-shaped mound of sand two feet in diameter and ten inches higher than the surrounding, sand-covered ground. The five eggs lay together in the three-inch deep depression in the top of the mound to which no nest-building materials had been added. Before Mrs. Cox and I left, we again flushed the female and again upon our departure she came back to the nest almost at once.

Mrs. Shields watched the female sitting upon the nest daily until June 11, when she found the nest deserted and only three eggs remaining. On this date Sarah Lloyd and I visited the nest spot and examined the eggs. One egg was cracked; when we peeked into it, we found fresh-looking contents, the white being clear and the yolk being yellow, though broken. The remaining eggs almost exactly resembled Bent's description, the lustrous white shell being translucent with the yolk showing through it with a "delicate pinkish glow." Mrs. Shields suspected an animal, perhaps a weasel, of breaking up the flicker's nest. Mrs. Lloyd and I noted a few strange tracks in the mound around the nest depression. In view of the fresh quality of the eggs after a possible twelve days of incubation, it may

be queried whether some animal may have regularly stolen eggs from the nest — Anne P. Hamilton, 704 Greenwood Drive, Dalton, Georgia, November 10, 1965.

SHOVELER WINTERING IN ATLANTA FOR FIRST TIME — The shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) is well established as a transient in Georgia north of the fall line, including the Atlanta area. As a winter resident, the bird confined itself to South Georgia, notably Okefenokee Swamp.

Mrs. James Bell observed a shoveler on a small pond (about one acre) in Adams Park in southwest Atlanta, on or about October 15, 1965. While she saw the bird almost daily, it was not reported to the Atlanta Bird Club, so that it was not included in the Christmas Count for the area.

Identification was confirmed on December 31 by Mr. C. M. Einhorn, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Freeborn, the writer and others. The shoveler associated with some white domestic ducks, and was not disturbed by human visitors. We did force it to fly to make sure that the bird was not injured.

The shoveler was generally brown, with a dark head more nearly black than the green of a male shoveler. There was no blue patch visible on the wing, but the sides were rufous and the speculum green. Some of us decided to call it an immature male, a decision borne out when the white on the throat began to appear as the winter wore on.

During the week of January 17, 1966, Mr. Freeborn visited the pond three times and found the bird missing. Its winter stay can be recorded uncertainly as from October 15, 1965, to January 15, 1966.

Records of the common loon (*Gavia immer*) are scarce enough in Georgia to make two more worth noting. C. M. Einhorn found a loon on East Lake in Atlanta and observed it on May 30 and 31, and June 4, 5 and 6 of 1965. The golf course greenskeeper said the bird left a few days later. Vaughn Morrison recorded another loon on November 13, 1965, on the reservoir on Howell Mill Road in Atlanta — Louis C. Fink, 688 North Parkwood Road, Decatur, Georgia 30030, February 18, 1966.

NOTES FROM ATHENS, GEORGIA — On the morning of August 31, a Traill's flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) was heard singing in some pine scrub bordering a small pond about two miles south of the University of Georgia campus. The bird was under observation for nearly ten minutes, during which time it sang repeatedly and sallied forth after

insects in typical flycatcher fashion. Burleigh (1958) calls this species a "scarce fall transient in the northern part of the state."

As I drove past the beef cattle barns at the south edge of the campus on September 13, I spotted a different-looking bird on the wire fence. Examination with field glasses showed it to be a western kingbird. It was sharing the fence-top with about twenty house sparrows, and in posturing at them threateningly the kingbird turned first its breast and then its back to this observer, thus affording me views of its yellow belly, pearly chest, olive back, and black tail bordered thinly with white. After a minute or two it flew out of sight, and could not be located again.

The most looked-at bird in Athens this fall was undoubtedly the greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) that appeared on September 21 at Lazy Lago Lake, a 1½-acre pond five miles southeast of town. This bird was seen by dozens of people and photographed by Dr. J. H. Jenkins. The bird's arrival accompanied a front of unseasonably warm, tropical air from the south, and its disappearance on September 28, corresponded to the arrival in the Athens region of the wet, inclement weather associated with the remains of tropical storm "Debbie."

The red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) is extremely numerous at Athens this year. They first arrived on October 4, along with the sapsuckers and myrtle warblers. In contrast, I never once recorded the red-breast here last year, although I was in the field just as often.

This could be a good year for the pine siskin (*Spinus pinus*), also. I saw a flock of twelve siskins at Sandy Creek Bottoms on October 29 (Burleigh's earliest for the state, October 20), and two more with some goldfinches in the Forestry School Preserve on November 20.

One of my biggest thrills this fall was a flock of 48 sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) that flew over the University campus at 10:00 a.m. on October 26. They were moving due south at an altitude of about 500 feet. Some of the flock were bugling loudly, and the birds could be heard for several minutes both before and after they were within view.

Birders at my former home in northeastern Ohio have written me that this is "the best winter yet" for northern finches, especially evening grosbeaks. Therefore, I was not too surprised when twelve evening grosbeaks (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) appeared on November 22 at the home of Dr. R. B. McGhee about three miles south of Athens. According to Burleigh this would be the first fall date for the state — Elliot J. Trammer, Department of Zoology, the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, December 1, 1965.

WHIP-POOR-WILL IN COFFEE COUNTY, GEORGIA IN JANUARY — A male Whip-poor-will, (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) was collected on January 31, 1966 at Seventeen Mile Creek five miles east of Douglas, Coffee County, Georgia. The bird was flushed from a small oblong depression in the ground in sand and liveoak leaves on the south side of an oak hammock at 11:45 A.M. The depression in the sand and leaves appeared to be more than a temporary resting place. When the bird was first flushed from almost under foot it fluttered off weakly for about twenty feet.

I returned to the area at 12:45 P.M. and began a slow search for the bird. It was again flushed from near where it had first landed and again fluttered away moth-like for a short distance. The bird was collected on the wing as it rose from the ground the third time. The specimen appeared to be extremely emaciated, had no food in its crop, and its digestive tract was devoid of any juices. The air temperature in this area was recorded at 7:00 A.M. on the morning before and was 4° F. On the morning of the collection the air temperature at 7:00 A.M. was 16° F. At noontime the temperature was still below freezing.

Although the bird was definitely not hibernating its body condition and the seemingly semi-torpid state of the individual bring to mind the findings of Culbertson (1946) and Jaeger (1948, 1949) and their investigation of a Nuttall's Poor Will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) in a true state of hibernation (the only such authenticated case of avian hibernation).

The only other record of this species in this area is of a singing bird heard from 5:30 P.M. till dark on the south city limits of Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, Georgia on April 6, 1957. This species, however, according to Burleigh (1958), has been recorded in winter in Grady County, Folkston, Okefenokee Swamp, and at Savannah. The present record is, to my knowledge, the farthest inland record of this species in Georgia in mid-winter. An intensive search of similar habitat in this vicinity on succeeding days failed to turn up other birds — Milton Hopkins, Jr., Osierfield, Georgia, March 3, 1966.

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WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS AT COLUMBUS — Four tired but nervous White-winged Scoters (*Melanitta deglandi*) were in my scope overlooking Lake Oliver for about an hour this morning. All immatures or females, they apparently were trying to nap but repeatedly would quickly dive at the approach of Ring-billed Gulls that seemed to be attracted to them.

They are farther south than usual probably because of the severe weather north. With the passing of a "low" just under us in the Gulf, which brought rain last night, the wind has changed rapidly from SE to E, N and around to NW, with a predicted low temperature of twelve tonight.

The only Georgia record of which I am aware is that of Dr. J. Fred Denton at Augusta on January 23, 1954, as related under the hypothetical list of *Georgia Birds*, 1957 — L. A. Wells, Cascade Road, Rt. 1, Columbus, Georgia, January 29, 1966.

Ed. note: Ivan R. Tomkins has noted this species at Savannah, Georgia. Six White-winged Scoters were noted at Sapelo Island on the Christmas Count in 1964. The species remains extremely rare almost anywhere inland in Georgia.

FROM THE FIELD

Col. and Mrs. C. E. Case, Jack Cooper and Mercedes Buckner, Ellen Merry, and Mr. T. M. Rial of the Augusta Bird Club observed a Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) on the Merry Brothers' brickyard pond south of Augusta, Georgia on November 14, 1965.

Mr. John R. Eadie of New Eufaula Wildlife Refuge reports a Whistling Swan on November 19, 1965. The refuge is in Georgia and Alabama. Mr. L. A. Wells of Columbus, who sent in the swan record, also recorded the following species. Pigeon Hawk, 1 on Sept. 9, Western Kingbird on Oct. 17 and Oct. 26, Old Squaw on Nov. 18, and 60 Pectoral Sandpipers on Augusta 2, 1965.

Anne and R. E. Hamilton noted the following birds on Nov. 7 and 8, 1965 at Dockery Lake Campground at Woody Gap (el. 3300') and on Black Mountain (el. 3800'), all in Lumpkin County about twelve miles north of Dahlonega: Ruffed Grouse 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Flicker 1, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Blue Jay 2, Common Crow 3, Carolina Chickadee 2, Red-breasted Nuthatch 1, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1, Winter Wren 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 3, Cedar Waxwing 2, Cardinal 1, Goldfinch 2, Rufous-sided Towhee 1, Junco 10, White-throated Sparrow 3.

On November 14, 1965, the following ducks were seen by Cherokee Audubon Society members at L. A. Lee's lake near Resaca in Gordon County: Hooded Merganser, 2 males and 2 females; Goldeneye, 2 females; and American Widgeon, 5 males and 2 females. A Bald Eagle in immature plumage was injured when it was shot on November 23, 1965, by two boys near Varnell in Whitfield County. The bird was kept alive in a cage until November 26 when it died. This note was submitted by Mrs. R. E. Hamilton.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

THE NORTH AMERICAN NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM
FOR 1966

The first year of the North American Nest-Record Card Program went very well. The Laboratory of Ornithology mailed out over 45,000 cards to individuals and regional centers from Florida to Alaska. We were encouraged at the response; over 23,000 completed cards were received from 700 individuals. We have accumulated over 500 cards each for several species; among these are Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. The Red-winged Blackbird has been selected for a trial run on the computer, and the data from our 2,300 cards on that species are now being punched onto IBM cards.

The principal aim of the program is to accumulate a large amount of data on the breeding biology of birds of the entire North American continent. This data will be stored on IBM cards in a form ready for analysis. This data, once processed, will be available to researchers interested in many areas of avian biology, such as annual and geographical variations in breeding seasons, clutch size, fledging periods, and nesting success. We hope that the program will also play a key role in the study of man's modification of his environment through marsh drainage, urbanization, and the use of pesticides.

We need data from all parts of the country. Observations from city parks and back yards, of the commonest species, are as important as those from remote parts of the continent. We need the co-operation of all competent field observers; please get in touch with your local organization and find out if it is co-operating as a regional center for the distribution of cards. If they are not, you may want to help organize a club effort. Individuals may also obtain cards directly from us. In any case, write for information and cards to North American Nest Record Card Program, Laboratory of Ornithology, 33 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850. Be sure to include your zip code with your return address.

The announcements in journals have proven a very effective means of communication with the public. We thank you sincerely for your co-operation.

Helen Fessenden
Laboratory of Ornithology
33 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, New York 14850

EDITOR'S NOTE

Through the past five volumes of our journal the editorship has been my privilege. During this time the Fulvous Tree Duck, Western Lark Sparrow, Florida Red-tailed Hawk, and another sub-species or two have been added to the list of Georgia birds. The Masked Duck has been photographed in color within our boundaries. The field is still wide open for the inquisitive student. Surely there are other Harris and Tree Sparrows, Green-tailed Towhees, and others to name but a few. We don't have to look far or long to find that many of our most common yard birds have yet to have their life histories recorded in the literature.

To you who have gone through the distasteful task of assimilating your notes and observations and submitting them for publication—thank you. Ornithological knowledge is richer because of you. For those who have had good intentions now is the time to support your new editor, Dr. L. B. Davenport, Jr., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Georgia—MNH.

RECENT LITERATURE

THE OXFORD BOOK OF BIRDS — Illustrations by Donald Watson, text by Bruce Campbell, 1964, Oxford University Press, London, E. C. 4, 207 pp., 35 shillings in United Kingdom.

Measuring 7 x 10 inches, this handsome book is a little large for a field guide, but it certainly would not be cumbersome for a traveler to Britain. Any bird which is seen at all regularly in any part of the British Isles is illustrated in full color, and the text describes every bird which has ever been recorded in Britain. About 320 species are illustrated. Most of the birds of western Europe are included in the text (because they have been found in Britain), and there is a page devoted to nine American passerines. The author notes that the black and white warbler can be recognized in Britain by its resemblance to the striped treecreeper!

All illustrations include the correct habitat as background, which should help with identification.

Numbers from one to twelve are used to indicate the months in which a bird can be seen in Britain, with bold type to indicate nesting months and underlines to indicate months of singing.

There are interesting articles on classification, the principal parts of a bird, anatomy, flight, behavior, migration, numbers and age.

This reviewer has particular interest in "The Oxford Book of Birds" because he used it to identify little gulls and black-headed gulls at South Amboy, New Jersey, this summer. Peterson portrays both European gulls, but the Oxford illustrations are larger and more helpful — Louis C. Fink.

AUSTRALIA, 1965, photographs by Maurice Berney and others, text by various authors, published by Kummerly & Frey, Berne, Switzerland, distributed in United States of America by Rand McNally & Company, 160 pages 9½ x 12 inches, maps and charts in black and white, photos in color, no price indicated.

This is one of the over-size series which the publisher calls "photo-books" and is mouth-watering to any naturalist, whether he ever hopes to visit Australia or not. The chapter headings include history, native people, geography, geology, plants, animals, economics and government. The first photo to catch a Georgian's eye shows Ayers Rock, 1,100 feet high and five miles in circumference, "the largest monolith in the world."

The G.O.S. member turns to the chapter on animals and learns that Australia, with a land mass greater than that of the United States, has

only 707 species of birds (which the authors say may be reduced in further calculation of species and sub-species). Happily, only one species has been eliminated since Europeans first arrived — one of the emus — and other flightless emus are still plentiful in Australia. Some species (magpies, wagtails, mud-larks, sunbirds and cavebirds) have adapted to civilization and increased in numbers. Bird-students have also increased; banding, taperecording and photography are all popular.

More than 50 kinds of birds in Australia are accomplished mimics in the wild state; the lyrebird even imitates the rustling of the wings of a flock of parrots. Lyrebirds and bower-birds (which construct highly decorated nests) are of course the star attractions of Australia. The book includes color photos of emus, lyrebirds, black swans, kookaburras (giant kingfishers or laughing jackasses), the platypus and many other forms of wild life — Louis C. Fink.

THE BIRD, ITS FORM AND FUNCTION, 1965, by C. William Beebe, Dover Publications, 180 Varick Street, New York, New York, 496 pp., paperbound, \$2.75.

This volume is an unabridged and unaltered reprint of the 1906 edition and consists of a general study of the bird as a living organism. It contains a new preface by Dean Amadon. Beebe's discussion of the birds' beak and its evolutionary adaptation for securing and holding the type of food suited to it is one of the better coverages in this book. Beebe was a fluent writer and the amateur naturalist will find much of value and interest in *The Bird*. Beginning with a brief paleontological sketch of the bird and then following with an anatomical discussion of its body parts the book ends with a chapter on the bird in the egg.

THE BIRD WATCHERS QUIZ BOOK, 1965, by Henry Hill Collins, Jr., Dover Publications, 180 Varick St., New York, New York, 116 pp., paperbound, \$1.00.

This is a republication of the work first published in 1961. It is divided into sections for the amateur, advanced, expert, and specialist bird student. As abilities differ, an expert in oceanic birds might make a poor showing on sections of the book dealing with small inland terrestrial birds in one of the simpler quizzes. This small book could be a lot of fun to a group of bird watchers shut in by inclement weather. It is an easy way to learn facts since many of the questions have to do with key points in field identification.

BIRD STUDIES AT OLD CAPE MAY, AN ORNITHOLOGY OF COASTAL NEW JERSEY, 1965 (by Witmer Stone, Dover Publications, 180 Varick Street, New York, New York, 941 pp., paperbound in two volumes at \$2.75 per volume.

Witmer Stone's work was originally published in 1937 by the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club. These present two volumes are unabridged republications of the original work with the addition of a new introduction by Roger T. Peterson, a list of 59 species recorded in Cape May County from 1937 to 1963 compiled by Edward A. Choate, and a biography of Stone by James A. G. Rehn.

The original introduction consists of a general discussion of the prominent birds of particular habitats, notes on changing bird life as recorded through the ornithological history of the Cape, bird migration at the Cape, a monthly summary of birds of Southern Cape May County, and discussions of the breeding and winter ranges of New Jersey birds.

The species accounts cover over 350 studies of individual species and are classics in life history reporting. The two volumes will afford many an evening of pleasant reading and enrich your ornithological store of facts. The accounts cover intensive field work from 1920 to 1937. The books contain 227 line drawings and 225 photographs.

THE GIANT CANADA GOOSE, 1965, by Harold C. Hanson, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Illinois, 265 pp., clothbound, \$9.75.

Classical accounts told of this giant goose weighing sometimes over 20 pounds and having a wing spread of over six feet but these accounts for the most part were discounted or when accepted as truth most writers said that this huge bird had long been extinct. Statements to the effect that it had been extinct for at least 30 years were widely accepted.

On a routine banding job in 1962 Dr. Hanson began getting what he considered fantastic weights for many of the birds that he was handling but on checking his scales found that they were indeed correct. The original range of *Branta canadensis maxima* extended from Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee to the region of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The data at hand in 1963 pointed to a population of about 55,000 wild Giant Canada Geese on government refuges and privately owned lands in Canada and the U. S. Hanson estimates that about 7,000 more are held by private individuals in the south-central states and says that, "the future of the giant Canada goose is indeed bright."

The book contains 81 photographs and maps and many tables document the story of rediscovery and identification of this, the world's largest goose — Milton Hopkins, Jr.

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