

THE ORIOLE

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



VOL. XXXII

SEPTEMBER, 1967

NO. 3

THE ORIOLE

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THE CLIFF SWALLOW: A NEW BREEDING BIRD FOR GEORGIA

C. WILLIAM DOPSON, JR., AND RICHARD H. PEAKE

According to Burleigh (1958) the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) in Georgia has been a "regular but somewhat scarce transient throughout the state in both spring and fall." However, a colony of Cliff Swallows has recently become established at Hartwell Dam in Hart County, Georgia.

Observations, 1965:

In 1965 Adair M. Tedards (Tedards, 1965; Parnell, 1965) reported the discovery of Cliff Swallows found at the Hartwell Dam by Caroline Watson. On the evening of May 23, 1965, Adair and R. Connor Tedards visited the dam in order to search for nests. They saw nests and estimated that about fifty Cliff Swallows were present. Eventually the Tedards located sixteen nests: "10 were built on the bottom of the stop logs, 5 were located on the concrete faces of the sluices, and 1 on the power house itself."

Adair Tedards assumed that the majority of the Hartwell colony was in South Carolina, but the authors and Paul W. Sykes have made a thorough investigation of county and federal maps and have found that all the nests originally described by Tedards were in fact in Georgia. The accompanying photograph shows the position of the Cliff Swallow nests in relation to the Georgia-South Carolina line.

Observations, 1966:

On April 16, 1966, Cliff Swallows returned to Hartwell Dam (Tedards, 1966). On this date seven birds were present, but by April 23 over fifty birds had arrived. Tedards reports that by May 21 "nesting was well underway. At this time four nests were visible in number nine sluice and three in number ten sluice."

The authors visited Hartwell Dam on June 4, 1966, and found Cliff Swallows going to and from nests under the fishing ramp over the dam's tailwater. Although nests were visible, the authors could not obtain an

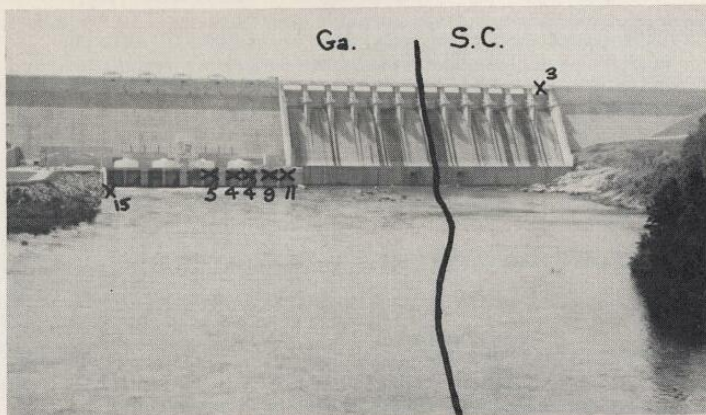


Figure 1. Location of Cliff Swallow nests on Hartwell Dam on the Savannah River, 1967. The line crossing the dam shows the approximate location of the Ga.-S. C. boundary. Nest locations are designated by X's accompanied by numbers giving the number of nests at each point.

accurate nest count. Therefore Dopson and Peake returned on June 5 with a boat and investigated the underside of the fishing ramp, where they found six completed nests together with nine under construction.

Dopson and W. Wilson Baker returned to Hartwell Dam on June 16 in order to collect Cliff Swallows. With a mist net they collected two birds, now Nos. 2850 and 2851 in the University of Georgia Collection. The specimens, both males, weighed 20.04 and 21.90 gms. respectively; they were prepared by Dopson.

Dopson and Baker counted 14 completed nests and 6 under construction beneath the fishing ramp. They estimated 35-40 birds flying in the vicinity of these nests.

Observations, 1967:

On April 15, 1967, Dopson visited Hartwell Dam, but did not find any Cliff Swallows. However, by May 21 nesting was well underway, and Peake estimated that at least 25-30 birds were present and that at least one nest was complete and two more were almost complete.

Peake and Paul W. Sykes made a systematic count of Cliff Swallow nests at Hartwell Dam on July 20, 1967. Under the fishing ramp above the dam's tailwater, Sykes and Peake found fifteen active nests. Then, counting from the Georgia side, Sykes and Peake investigated the ten sluice

gates of the dam. In the last five sluice gates they found 33 nests distributed in the following manner: Gate 6: 5 nests; 7: 4; 8: 4; 9: 9; and 10: 11. The observers estimated that over 100 swallows were present.

With the help of dam officials, Sykes and Peake were able to survey the top of the dam on both sides of the service road. Just above the twelfth tainter gate (counting from the Georgia side) Sykes and Peake observed three active Cliff Swallow nests as well as evidence that one nest had been above this gate previously. These three nests were definitely in South Carolina.

SUMMARY

The Cliff Swallow has now established itself as a breeding bird in Georgia at Hartwell Dam. Contrary to previously published accounts, the majority of the colony's nests are on the Georgia side of the Dam. Counts of nests and of birds in flight suggest that the colony is increasing.

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- Bird and Mammal Range, Dept. of Zoology, University of Georgia; and 342 Milledge Terrace, Athens, Georgia.

THE BARN SWALLOW NESTING IN COLUMBIA AND LINCOLN COUNTIES, GEORGIA

J. FRED DENTON

As was recently pointed out by Peake and Baker (Oriole 32: 1-3, 1967) the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is rapidly expanding its breeding range eastward and southward in Georgia and South Carolina. Observations during the summers of 1966 and 1967 indicate that this swallow, as in western Georgia, now breeds fairly commonly to within 20 miles of the Fall Line in the eastern part of the state. Details of these observations, all of which were at sites adjacent to the Clark Hill Reservoir, are summarized below.

Broad River Bridge, Ga. Highway 79, Lincoln-Elbert County line. On June 3, 1967, adult birds were noted flying up to three active nests under the Lincoln County end of the bridge. There were possibly other nests, but the length and height of the bridge prevented a complete examination.

Fishing Creek Bridge, Ga. Highway 79, Lincoln County. This bridge had been recently painted when examined on June 3, 1967, thus removing any evidence of possible previous nests. However, on this date it contained one nest on which the female was incubating.

Unnamed creek bridge, two and one half miles north of Lincolnton on Ga. Highway 79. Louis Schweizer reported to me that Barn Swallows nested under this bridge during the summer of 1966. When this site was visited by me on October 2, 1966, fifteen nests were noted on the flanges of the several I-beams. Most of them were perfectly preserved and were no doubt from the past summer. A few were considerably deteriorated and may have been from the summer of 1965.

This site was visited again on June 3, 1967, when nineteen nests were counted, at least seventeen of which were active. The occupied nests contained either young birds or incubating adults.

Clark Hill Dam, Columbia County. On June 7, 1966, Barn Swallows were noted flying about immediately below the dam. Three birds were seen lighting on a wet bank below the dam where they seemed to be gathering mud. From this site they flew up onto the dam gates near the Georgia end. On June 3, 1967, about six swallows were observed feeding against the lower side of the dam and flying up into the gates. Because of the massive size of the dam and the numerous inaccessible crevasses no actual nests were spotted. However, there seems little doubt that the birds are nesting somewhere on the dam.

Little River Bridge, Ga. Highway 47, Columbia-Lincoln County line. On June 3, 1967, and again on July 25, 1967, Barn Swallows were noted flying close beside this bridge as I crossed it. This bridge was not investigated further since to do so will require a boat. However, it is likely that swallows are now nesting here also. 529 Henderson Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30904.

GENERAL NOTES

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK IN GEORGIA — Early on March 15, 1967, my wife Peg and I decided to spend a few minutes birding in a patch of woods behind a motel in Valdosta, Ga., before continuing on to Florida. I heard what sounded like the note of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak with which I was quite familiar. Noticing movement in the woods, I decided to try to squeak the bird into view. It flew from side to side, gradually getting closer, and we were very much surprised when it approached to where we were able to identify it positively as an adult male Black-headed Grosbeak.

This appears to be a record for Georgia unless there have been previous unreported sightings. Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*. U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla.) does not mention this species nor is it listed in the Pocket Check List of Georgia Birds published by the GOS on April 15, 1960. This species appears on the Alabama check list. It is a winter visitant to Florida where I saw the female in January and March of 1967. I am aware of records in Massachusetts and New Jersey. It would be interesting to learn if any of our GOS members have found this species in Georgia. C. M. Einhorn, 1340 Holly Lane, N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30329.

HOODED MERGANSERS NESTING ON PIEDMONT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE — A female Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) with a brood of 8 young estimated to be 4 weeks old was observed on May 1, 1967, in impoundment 9A (8 acres) on the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge in the north end of Jasper County, Georgia. The brood was observed by Refuge Manager W. H. Julian and Biological Aid Walter R. Tillman. The female and brood was first observed at a distance of 40 feet and observed for several minutes. A brood of 8 (probably the same one) was recorded on May 3, 1967, by Biological Technician Joe G. Adams and an incomplete brood count of 5 on May 25 by Tillman.

On a wood duck brood count on May 3, 1967, on impoundment 11A, (Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper County, Georgia), Biological Aid Walter R. Tillman was on location before daylight. At daylight he noted a female hooded merganser sitting on a floating log. A few moments later this duck swam away with 3 downy young mergansers that she had been hovering but Tillman had not seen. Impoundment 11A covers 9 acres.

Impoundment 9A and 11A each have 12 wood duck nesting boxes. They have had these boxes for 3-4 years and wood ducks have used some

boxes. A pair and a single merganser in flight were seen on April 23 over impoundment 2A. This is a 36 acre impoundment near 150 acres of beaver ponds. W. H. Julian, Refuge Manager, May 26, 1967.

REDSTART HABITAT? ? ? — On Saturday, May 6, 1967, we spent several hours fishing at the base of a large structure known as the "Texas Tower". This steel edifice was erected some years ago to replace the Light Ship which stood in the entrance to the Savannah River. The Tower is twelve miles due east of Tybee Light and is, by several miles, out of sight of land. On arriving at the Tower we saw three small birds which proved to be Redstarts (*Setophaga rusticilla*) moving about the superstructure. The birds were in constant motion, but made no effort to leave the Tower. As the tide dropped, algae and small barnacles were exposed. The birds worked this area constantly, obviously feeding on the minute animal life living in this tidal zone. After four hours of fishing we departed for home, leaving the Redstarts behind as active as they were when we first arrived. Herman W. Coolidge, 13 Bluff Drive, Isle of Hope, Savannah, Georgia.

SIGHTING OF WESTERN KINGBIRD IN ATLANTA — Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*; U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla.) lists only five recorded sightings of the Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) in Georgia, the last sighting being at Tybee Island in 1953 (Tomkins); since then, the bird has been reported in *The Oriole* as having been sighted at the following places: Sapelo Island (Kale, 1957); Tybee Island (Tomkins, 1958); Tybee Island (Tomkins, 1962); Columbus (Wells, 1962); Jones County (Hall, 1964); Columbus (Wells, 1964); Atlanta (Fink, 1965); Athens (Trammer, 1965). Because only two of these recorded sightings in Georgia of the Western Kingbird have occurred in the Atlanta area (Gordon, May 9, 1949, and Fink, May 2, 1965), the following sighting of the bird is of specific interest. On May 9, 1967, L. Hugh Moore and John J. O'Connell had an excellent opportunity to observe the Western Kingbird — the black tail bordered with white providing especially clear field characters — at Intrenchment Creek near the South River in Atlanta. Further, the above sighting, seen in conjunction with the increase in reported observations since 1958, is perhaps of additional relevance since it appears to confirm Burleigh's observation that the range of the Western Kingbird is gradually extending eastward and that in time it may occur regularly throughout the state as a spring and fall transient. L. Hugh Moore and John J. O'Connell, Department of English, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Ga.

A LATE-SUMMER AMERICAN GOLDFINCH IN BROOKS COUNTY, GEORGIA.—On September 2, 1967, while botanizing near the junction of State Highways 33 and 94 in extreme northern Brooks County, Georgia, I observed an American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) in overhead flight. The lone bird would not have been seen if it had not given its characteristic flight notes. Silhouetted against a dark, overcast sky, the goldfinch was soon lost from sight, and no attempt was made to find it again. This location is approximately 75 miles south and east of Edison, Calhoun County, the nearest place in Georgia where goldfinches have been observed in summer (cf. Burleigh, *Georgia Birds*, 1958, U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla.: 628 ff.). As far as I know, goldfinches do not normally appear anywhere in the Lower Coastal Plain of either Georgia or Alabama before middle or late October (*ibid.*; Imhof, 1962, *Alabama Birds*, U. of Ala. Press, University, Ala.: 539). Hence there is a possibility that the individual seen in Brooks County — on the Hazelhurst Terrace of the Lower Coastal Plain — was a breeding bird or a potential breeder. Further searches next summer may shed light on this question. — Robert A. Norris, Department of Biology, Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Georgia 31601.

SCARLET TANAGERS EATING GRAPES AND WASPS—Mrs. Micklas' account (Chat. 30:102, 1966) of Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra*) eating social wasps (*Polistes* sp.) in South Carolina prompts me to report an incident concerning wasp eating by Scarlet Tanagers (*Piranga olivacea*) near Blairsville, Georgia, in August and September, 1962.

The Agricultural Experiment Station at Blairsville sent several birds collected in their vineyards in mid-August to the University of Georgia for identification and stated that they were causing considerable damage to the grape crop in the region. The specimens were immature Scarlet Tanagers undergoing post-juvenile molt, and the stomachs of all of them contained insect fragments, chiefly remains of wasps of the family Vespidae. I found no evidence of grapes present and at the time concluded that the tanagers were being blamed unjustly for the grape damage.

A personal visit to the station vineyards on September 2 revealed that the tanagers were indeed eating the grapes. By sitting on the roof of the station with binoculars I was able to look down on the rows of grapevines and observe the birds feeding. Tanagers were flying back and forth between the nearby wooded slopes and the vineyard. Frequently a bird would pick a grape, fly to a post, and there consume the soft pulp, but leave the skin and seeds. Numerous skins and seeds were found on or near posts. This pulp, which is mostly water, was unrecognizable in the gizzard. The punctured

grapes were attracting numerous wasps and these, in turn, were being eaten by the tanagers. A tanager was collected on this day and its stomach contents appeared similar to those of the earlier specimens.

I do not know how widespread the grape damage was in other vineyards of the region; however, this was the first time that tanagers were known to cause severe grape depredation at the experimental station. Perhaps the natural fruit crop normally utilized by the tanagers failed and the birds resorted to the grapes for a substitute.

This investigation was supported in part by The Wildlife Fund provided by the Georgia Game and Fish Commission to the Department of Wildlife Management, George Foster Peabody School of Forestry, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. I am grateful to James H. Jenkins for a critical reading of this manuscript. Herbert W. Kale, II, Entomological Research Center, Florida State Board of Health, P. O. Box 308, Vero Beach, Florida 32960.

RECENT LITERATURE

BIRD CASUALTIES AT A LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA TV TOWER: AN ELEVEN-YEAR STUDY, by Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr., and Robert A. Norris (Bulletin Number 8, June 1967, of Tall Timbers Research Station, Tallahassee, Florida.) 104 pages, two photographs, many charts. — There are more than 500 television towers in the United States, and they account for the deaths of many birds. This research report analyzes the loss of life at a 1,010-foot tower erected in 1960 about 20 miles north of Tallahassee and similar loss at a near-by tower 673 feet high from 1955 to 1961.

There are many sides to the research: clearing the area below the tower, for example, so that specimens are not lost. The effect of weather on "kills" is discussed in detail. The use of skins by museums and colleges is explained. There is an illuminating chapter on predation, which emphasizes that dead birds must be collected very early in the morning, before they are destroyed. (The authors observe that some owners of TV towers think they are exempt from bird-loss because of predation in the early hours.) Among the predators described are house cats, opossums, foxes, skunks, raccoons, shrikes, crows, ants, and Great Horned Owls. "We have lost more birds due to these fierce creatures (the owls) than to all other scavengers together."

The last portion of the report is a detailed analysis of 29,451 individual birds of 170 species handled at the towers in eleven years. Since many of the birds were migrating to or from Georgia, the records are of extreme interest to anyone studying the birds of this State. There is excitement in reading of some of the unusual finds: a Black-capped Petrel, a Red Phalarope, and a Western Tanager, for example. — Louis C. Fink, 620 Peachtree Street N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

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