

THE ORIOLE

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



VOL. XXXIII

JUNE, 1968

NO. 2

THE ORIOLE

EDITOR

Leslie B. Davenport, Jr., Biology Department, Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga. 31406

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

J. Fred Denton, Milton N. Hopkins, Robert A. Norris

THE ORIOLE is mailed to all members of the Georgia Ornithological Society not in arrears for dues. Classes of membership are as follows:

Regular — \$3.00 Library — \$2.00 Sustaining, Garden Club — \$5.00; Life — \$50.00;
Patron — \$100.00

Inquiries concerning back issues of THE ORIOLE or OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE G. O. S. should be directed to the Business Manager.

All dues should be remitted to the Treasurer of the Society: Robert Overing, Rt. 2, Chapin, S. C. 29036.

CONTENTS

RANGE EXTENSIONS OF WARBLERS IN THE GEORGIA PIEDMONT

Richard H. Peake, Jr. 23

GENERAL NOTES 27

RECENT LITERATURE 30

GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY Founded December 13, 1936

Mrs. E. O. Mellinger, President

L. A. Wells, Vice-President

C. William Dopson, 2nd Vice-President

Richard H. Peake, Jr., Secretary

Robert Overing, Treasurer

W. P. Kellam, Librarian

Business Manager: T. McRae Williams, 755 Ellsworth Drive, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30318.

THE ORIOLE

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

VOL. XXXIII

JUNE, 1968

NO. 2

RANGE EXTENSIONS OF WARBLERS IN THE GEORGIA PIEDMONT

RICHARD H. PEAKE, JR.

A brief glance at the range maps for wood warbler species (*Parulidae*) in Thomas D. Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*, U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla., pp. 492-572) reveals that a large number of warblers present in the Coastal Plain and in the mountains of Georgia are absent from the Piedmont. Because of its location and because it contains habitats similar to those in both the mountains and the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont affords a likely area for warbler range expansion from either north or south. Evidently just such an expansion of range is now occurring in northeastern Georgia. For example, C. William Dopson, Jr., (1965. *The Oriole*, Vol. XXX, No. 3, Sept. 91) has recently found the Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) nesting in the Lower Piedmont in Jackson County.

Observations in the Athens area by me and others since 1961 indicate that the Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) and the Parula Warbler (*Parula americana*) have extended their breeding ranges into the Piedmont. In addition the American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) and the Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) have now appeared in the Athens region during the breeding season and may be breeding in this section of the Piedmont.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER:

Burleigh lists the Prothonotary Warbler as a spring migrant at Athens. When I first did field work in the Athens region in 1961-1963, the Prothonotary Warbler did appear to be fairly common in spring at places such as Sandy Creek Bottoms and Bear Creek, Clarke County. However, when I returned to the region after a two-year interval, I found the Prothonotary Warbler common throughout the spring and summer at Sandy Creek Bottoms, Thompson's Lake (Clarke County), and Bear Creek (Clarke County).

Probably the Prothonotary Warbler began breeding in Athens in 1964 or 1965, for Ronald Pulliam (personal communication) found evidence of

breeding on June 26, 1965, when he saw a pair of Prothonotary Warblers at Horseshoe Bend in Athens. Pulliam saw one of these birds carrying food. In addition Pulliam found two Prothonotaries in this area. In 1965 also, Dr. Ernest Provost (personal communication to Elliot Tramer) obtained what appears to be the early date of arrival for the Athens region when he observed a bird along the Oconee River in Athens on March 15.

In June, 1966, Calvin S. Brown, Hugh Brown, and I found Prothonotary Warblers at Bear Creek on the ninth. Later trips to this area during June and July produced singing Prothonotary Warblers. Then on June 25 I counted three singing birds and observed a pair of adults feeding two young birds. Fortunately these young were easily distinguishable since one had a black "whisker mark" whereas the other had a white "whisker mark." At close range (5'-20') I watched these young birds being fed for over twenty minutes and was able to attract both young and their parents by "squeaking." Although the parents did not seem to object to my presence, they did scold and chase other birds (Wood Pewee, Worm-eating Warbler—see below, Louisiana Waterthrush, Cardinal, Towhee) attracted to the spot by the noise of the young. These immature birds were well feathered, although their tails were still short; the young moved from one honeysuckle tangle to another, and the parents tended to discourage movements to more open places.

Prothonotary Warblers were present at many points along the Oconee River in Athens during the summer of 1966. W. Wilson Baker (personal communication) found the species in the vicinity of the Fire Tower in the University Woods on May 2-5 and again on July 8, when he saw two birds working along logs and other debris in the Oconee River. This same summer I found Prothonotaries present at Horseshoe Bend and Sandy Creek Bottoms during June and July.

By 1966 the Prothonotary Warbler had appeared in Oglethorpe and Madison Counties. Calvin Brown and I made a trip into Oglethorpe County on June 29, 1966, and found two Prothonotary Warblers at the junction of Big Barrow Creek and the Oconee River. And on July 13 Brown and I found three Prothonotaries on the Broad River just south of Comer, Madison County.

Therefore the Prothonotary Warbler had become fairly common along the branches of the Oconee River in the Athens area by the summer of 1966. In addition the species had appeared on the Broad River.

The following year the Prothonotary Warbler was even more common in the locations where it had already appeared. Elliot Tramer noted a male at Sandy Creek Bottoms on March 31, 1967. By the middle of April this species had become the most noticeable species along the Oconee River

and its tributaries, appearing in many spots where it had not been present in 1966.

Further evidence that this species is still extending its range along the Broad River was obtained by me when I sighted a singing male on June 21 at the point where Ga. Highway 59 crosses the North Fork of the Broad River in Franklin County. Another singing bird also was present.

Thus the Prothonotary has established itself as a breeding species in the Athens region during the early sixties and continues to expand its range along the Oconee and Broad Rivers. There are definite breeding records for Clarke and Greene Counties, but as yet no nest has been located in the region.

PARULA WARBLER:

Burleigh (*loc. cit.*) states that the Parula Warbler "apparently does not breed in the Piedmont, where it occurs as a common spring and fall transient." My field work in Athens from 1961-1963 showed nothing different from Burleigh's findings. However, on June 9, 1966, I found a Parula Warbler singing at Bear Creek. On subsequent trips to the area, I heard this species and on June 16 observed a male Parula Warbler feeding a bob-tailed young bird. Parula Warblers continued singing in the area throughout June and July, and on June 25 I observed there what appeared to be an immature Parula Warbler.

During the summer of 1967 the Parula Warbler appeared again at Bear Creek. In addition this species was represented during the breeding season by a singing male near Whitehall on the Oconee River in Oconee County (May 31) and others singing at Oconee Recreation Area in Greene County (April 8, May 22, June 18). On June 26 I found a singing Parula on Richland Creek in southwestern Greene County where the creek meets Ga. Highway 44. In addition I found two singing males in White County (Upper Piedmont) on June 29; these birds were located on Shoal Creek just northwest of Ga. Highway 115. One further record comes from Ft. Yargo State Park in Barrow County, where Richard K. Fatora and I saw a singing male just outside the park boundary on July 23.

Probably the Parula Warbler is extending its range from the mountains into the Piedmont, but some collecting should be done to determine whether the northern or southern subspecies (or both) is involved in this range extension.

REDSTART:

During the breeding season the Redstart has been noticeably absent from the eastern portions of Georgia outside the mountains, although Dr. J. Fred Denton found a pair breeding in Richmond County in June, 1953

(Burleigh, *loc. cit.*). However, on June 18, 1967, Richard K. Fatora and I heard a male of this species singing in the Oconee Recreation Area, Greene County. Upon investigating, we found a singing male. Also I saw a female carrying food, a small moth; she disappeared in a tangle about twenty-five feet up a large tree and then reappeared without the moth. Fatora returned to the area on June 19 and sighted a female. On June 22 he found a male, and I heard a singing male in the area on June 26. Quite likely these Redstarts represent breeding birds.

In addition, I found a singing male together with a female in southwestern Habersham County (Upper Piedmont) on June 26.

WORM-EATING WARBLER:

Burleigh (*loc. cit.*) found birds of this species at Athens on June 29, 1927, and July 1, 1939. Although Burleigh may well have been correct in terming these birds early fall transients, this judgment should be accepted with caution. The possibility that these records represent breeding birds certainly exists and is supported by a Worm-eating Warbler carefully observed at close range by me on June 25, 1966, while I was viewing the feeding of young Prothonotary Warblers (See above).

SUMMARY

Since 1961 the Prothonotary and Parula Warblers have extended their breeding range well into the Lower Piedmont of Georgia, and both species show signs of continuing this trend. The Prothonotary Warbler has become a very common breeding bird along the Oconee River and its tributaries in the Athens area and has appeared on the Broad River in two widely separated places. Recent records indicate also that the Redstart probably is breeding in Greene County and suggest that the Worm-eating Warbler may breed at Athens.

For their help I wish to thank the following persons who contributed to this paper: W. Wilson Baker, Richard F. Fatora, Ronald Pulliam, and Elliot J. Tramer.

342 Milledge Terrace, Athens, Georgia 30601.

GENERAL NOTES

NEW LATE AND EARLY STATE RECORDS FROM ATHENS—

A new waterfowl late date and finch early date for Georgia were recorded from Athens in Clarke County in northeast Georgia during 1967. Three Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), two drakes and one female, were observed on Thompson's Lake near Athens on 4 June 1967 by Richard H. Peake and the author. The Athens area experienced a very heavy rainfall on the night of 3-4 June, and 4 June was a day of several other noteworthy records for the area (Fatora, 1967, Field notes, Athens Yellowthroat, 1 (1, 2, 3) : 9), the severe weather evidently forcing down the last of the northwardbound migrants. Burleigh (1958, *Georgia Birds*, Univ. of Okla. Press, Norman, p. 139) lists 27 April for Athens and 16 May for the state (Atlanta, by Griffin) as the late spring dates for this fairly common transient, with a few small flocks not uncommon as late as the first week in May. However, the present record is nearly three weeks later than Burleigh's late date for the state and apparently constitutes a late date for both Athens and Georgia for the Blue-winged Teal.

A very early Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) was observed on 23 September 1967 at Athens by Elaine K. Fatora. The observer is familiar with this species, and this specimen, apparently a mature male, was observed under ideal conditions at close range. Two other Purple Finches were seen at Commerce High School at Commerce in Jackson County on 29 September by the same observer, again under favorable conditions. Burleigh (*ibid.*, p. 622) records 21 October as the early fall date for the state (Atlanta) and 23 October for Athens for this common winter resident. The present record apparently constitutes a new early fall date, nearly a month earlier, of 23 September for both Athens and Georgia for the Purple Finch.

The author is indebted to Elaine K. Fatora and Richard H. Peake for permission to use the observations contained in this report. — Joseph R. Fatora, School of Forest Resources, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30601; Present Address — Georgia Game and Fish Commission, Route 1, Clarkesville, Georgia, 30523.

NOTES ON FEEDING IN SEVERAL SPECIES—The following notes concerning food items and food gathering attempts by several species of birds in south Georgia are taken from field notes.

March 18, 1960. A flock of about twelve Cedar Waxwings (*Bombus cedrorum*) was seen eating swelled buds and newly emerging blossoms of the Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) tree.

April 21, 1961. A group of six Cedar Waxwings was seen darting over a small pond in pursuit of insects near Osierfield, Irwin County. It

is a coincidence that both of these aberrant food seeking forays of this species were made within a hundred yards of each other in different years.

April 9, 1962. Two Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) were observed as they flew under a farm shelter at Osierfield and took two young House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) from a nest.

May 1, 1962. A male Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) was noted perched on a wire holding a Six-lined Racerunner (*Cnemidophorus sexlineatus*). The hawk flew away still clutching the lizard in its talons.

June 27, 1962. In the early morning I noted a Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens*) feeding on tent caterpillars in a pecan orchard near Osierfield, Irwin County. The bird flew to a web and fluttered or hovered near as it picked a caterpillar from the web without alighting. The bird consumed several of the caterpillars by picking them off the web in this manner and then flying to a nearby limb to devour each one.

April 7, 1964. A Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was noted flying away with a young skunk in its talons at Osierfield.

May 18, 1964. A Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) was seen picking up another adult shrike that had been killed on an Irwin County roadside. The bird flew a few feet with the dead bird in its beak before dropping it. I do not know whether this was a "food seeking" attempt or an action of other consequence.

January 19, 1966. A Loggerhead Shrike was noted when it killed a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) and impaled the bird on a plum tree thorn in Ben Hill County.

January 19, 1966. A Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) was noted feeding on the remains of a Cottontail Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) on a roadside in Irwin County. Milton Hopkins, Jr., R.F.D. 5, Box 113, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

ALLIGATORS IN HERON ROOKERIES—While it is fairly common knowledge to persons in this area of Georgia that the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) is a common cohabitant with the wading birds in most heron rookeries, this fact has seldom been mentioned in ornithological literature. The relationship does not seem to have any symbiotic significance although the alligator undoubtedly eats a few fledgling herons that fall from nests during the breeding season. Its presence could also be a deterrent to certain predatory animals, including man.

There has been no indication of aggressiveness towards humans by this reptile, however, and its presence is usually indicated only by eyes, heads, and snouts. The entire animal seldom shows itself except for small

basking individuals. Milton Hopkins, Jr., R.F.D. 5, Fitzgerald, Georgia, August 3, 1968.

AVIAN PREDATION BY THE GREY RAT SNAKE—The Grey Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta confinis*) in this area has been known to prey on birds of several species and its arboreal habits are well known, especially to rural people.

Its predatory forays are probably much more frequent than my observations indicate for I can recall several instances of avian predation that have not been recorded in my field notes. The snake will not hesitate to enter trees standing in water in search of birds and bird eggs.

The following notes were made in south Georgia over a number of years.

April 8, 1951. A Grey Rat Snake was collected alive on Ichawaynochaway Creek, Baker County, from limbs hanging over the creek. The next day it regurgitated an adult Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*).

April 18, 1967. A rat snake was taken from a farm shelter near Osierfield, Irwin County. Its head had been poked into a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) nest which I had examined a short time before. The nest contained four eggs. It was now empty and the adults did not attempt to start nesting again in this location. I cannot say that the snake caught either of the adult birds, but it did swallow the eggs.

May 8, 1967. A rat snake entered a bird house on a well post at Osierfield, Irwin County, and swallowed five nestling Great Crested Flycatchers (*Myiarchus crinitus*). The snake was not in the least deterred by the alarm notes of the adult birds who repeatedly flew at it but did not peck it.

Predation by this snake on Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) has been noted previously (See *The Oriole*, 27: 17, 1962). The adult birds of hole-nesting species are probably more susceptible to predation by this snake than those that nest on exposed branches. Milton Hopkins, Jr., R.F.D. 5, Box 113, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

RECENT LITERATURE

COMMUNICATION IN THE ANIMAL WORLD, by William F. Evans, 182 pages, 25 line drawings by Nancy Lou Gahan and 25 photographs. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 201 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003. \$5.95.

In separate chapters on aquatic invertebrates and fishes, insects, reptiles and amphibians, birds, land mammals, aquatic mammals, and primates, this book discusses the need and ability of animals to communicate — for such purposes as defense, courtship, food-gathering, mating, caring for young, and preserving territories. There is a wealth of information about the *means* of communication: odors, touching, pointing, gestures, postures, chest slapping (by gorillas), signs (some bears rub fur on a tree), and even illumination (as with certain fishes.)

In the chapter on birds, the author points out that birds can be persistent: a red-eyed vireo has repeated his call 20,000 times a day until mating takes place. Then Mr. Evans says, "Few naturalists can identify even a small number of bird species accurately merely by listening to their songs; for exact identification, visual examination of the bird or study of a sound spectrogram is required." As evidence, he says that 900 variations of the song of the song sparrow have been recorded. My complaint with the book is that this argument is not followed up. In the next paragraph, the author writes, "... there seem always to be enough typical characteristics by which to identify the species." (Ten lines before he had said it couldn't be done.)

The photographs are rather uninspired; some of them seem to be pictures of museum exhibits. The line drawings do not compare with the bird art being published today.

In spite of its drawbacks, the book offers much information and much food for thought. The final chapter, for example, suggests approaches to field study in the area of animal communication, and G.O.S. members who want to do more than list birds could explore this exciting area. — Louis C. Fink.

FLASHING WINGS: The Drama of Bird Flight, by John K. Terres. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y.; 131 pp., three appendices, bibliography, and index. \$3.95.

As a former editor of Audubon Magazine, John K. Terres is already known to most GOS members. He is both an ornithologist and a writer who is experienced in handling materials intended for a general audience. In *Flashing Wings* he has combined these abilities to produce a highly readable explanation of how birds fly. The fifteen chapters of the book

include accounts of flapping, soaring, gliding, and hovering flight; heights at which birds fly; the speeds of flight of many species; the dangers of bird flight; and even "flight" under water. The explanations of these aspects of flight are enhanced by accounts of Mr. Terres' personal experiences with and observations of birds, especially his falcon, the Princess. The first appendix is a technical supplement on the physics of bird flight.

This book is well written, a pleasure to read, educational, and quite reasonably priced, L.B.D., Jr.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

Application for membership may be made to the Treasurer. *THE ORIOLE* is sent without charge to all classes of members not in arrears for dues. Send changes of address, claims for undelivered or defective copies and requests for information relative to advertising, subscriptions and back numbers to the business manager.

All articles and notes submitted for publication and all books and publications intended for review should be sent to the editor.

Original papers in the field of ornithology are published in *THE ORIOLE*. Papers are judged on their contribution of original data, ideas, or interpretations and on their conciseness, scientific accuracy, and clarity.

COPY—Type manuscripts *double spaced* throughout. Underscore scientific names only. Number pages in the upper right hand corner. Arrange contents in this sequence: title page, text, reference, tables, figure legends, and figures. Type your complete address and date of submitting manuscript.

STYLE—The guide for preparation of copy is the **STYLE MANUAL FOR BIOLOGICAL JOURNALS** available from American Institute of Biological Sciences, 2000 P Street NW, Washington 6, D.C., \$3.00. A copy of this manual is held by the editor for use by contributing authors. A postal card request and return postage by you is required for its use.

TITLE—The title should be concise, descriptive, and not more than 10 words in length. Avoid use of scientific names in titles if possible.

FOOTNOTES—Avoid footnotes by incorporating such material in the text.

NOMENCLATURE—Vernacular names should be capitalized in text. They are to be accompanied by appropriate scientific names the first time each species is mentioned. Show reference for long lists of scientific names (i.e., A.O.U. Checklist, 5th ed., 1957).

REFERENCES—When there are fewer than 3 references insert them in parentheses where needed in the text by author, journal, volume, pagination, and year of publication. Three or more references are grouped alphabetically by authors last names under "literature cited".

TABLES—Prepare tables in keeping with size of *THE ORIOLE*. A good table should be understandable without reference to the text.

ILLUSTRATIONS—Illustrations should be suitable for photographic reproduction without retouching. Colored plates will be charged to the author.

REPRINTS—Request for reprints must be sent with original manuscript and are to be paid for by the author.

The *author* is responsible for putting his manuscript in final form for production. Authors should consult colleagues and specialists for review of papers before submission, and check all literature available to him that might have a bearing on his paper.