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BIRDS IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA — 1969

LOUIS C. FINK

Construction of tall office buildings in downtown Atlanta has created a situation which experienced members of the Atlanta Bird Club consider to be unique in the United States.

The completion of two tall structures — one black and unlighted; the other white and brilliantly floodlighted — occurred at the same time as the construction of a small park on the corner of a busy intersection. During September, October, and November of 1969, several hundred birds of 58 different species were either collected from sidewalks and street, picked up in a dazed condition, or carefully observed at remarkably close range by as many as a dozen competent observers.

Most of the birds seen were known to be migrants through Atlanta or residents; the remarkable aspect was the close range at which so many species could be studied. Birds such as the Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Grasshopper Sparrow remained in plain view for several days. In one day, C. M. Einhorn catalogued ten different sparrows in Trusco Park, an area of less than 6,000 square feet. Also surprising were the birds normally associated with water or swamps.

The architectural situation is this (Figs. 1 and 2): On Peachtree Street at Luckie Street in the heart of downtown Atlanta (near Five Points), the Equitable Life Assurance Society erected its 32-story, 452-foot-high structure. This building is very dark or black, with only the word "Equitable" lighted at the very top. Two blocks to the southeast, the Trust Company of Georgia erected its 26-story, 374-foot-high building faced with white marble floodlighted from all sides. In front of each building is a paved courtyard or "patio" area.

Across Pryor Street from the Trust Company building is Trusco Park, 75 by 75 feet, and planted with pyracantha, azaleas, hollies, cornuta, aucuba, euonymus, juniper, and silver maple.

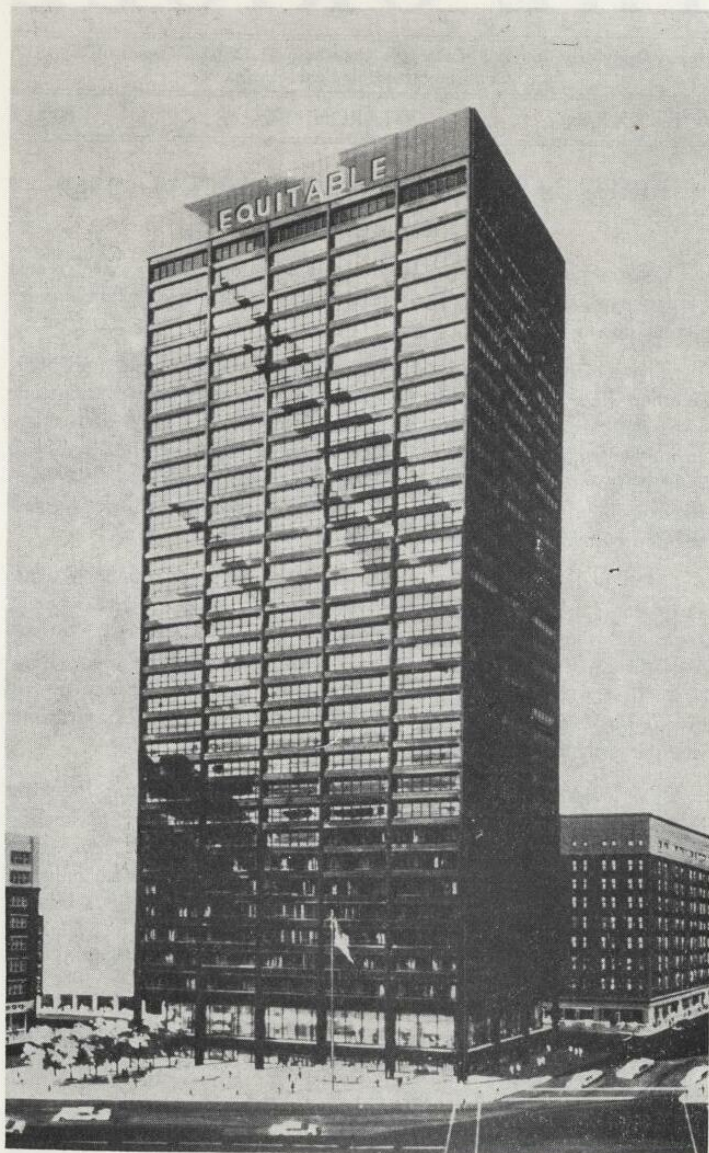


Figure 1. Equitable Life Assurance Society building and plaza in downtown Atlanta, Ga.

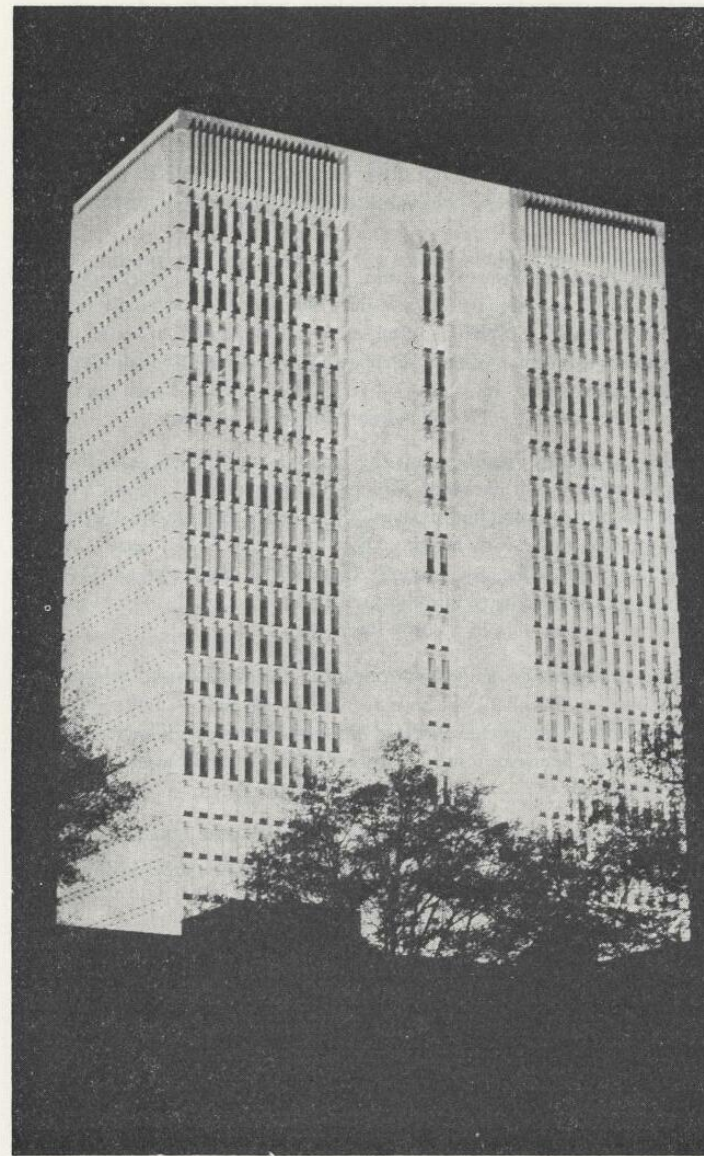


Figure 2. Trust Company of Georgia building across Trusco Park in downtown Atlanta, Ga.

To complete the picture, it is necessary to recall that downtown Atlanta also includes two older parks: Plaza Park and Hurt Park, both planted with magnolias and flowering plants in season.

The bird observations began when the writer heard reports of 30 or more small yellow birds picked up dead on the plaza of the Equitable Building. These birds were not preserved, but I was able to pick up one Orchard Oriole, and it is guessed that many of the yellow birds were orioles.

After that, the observations came rapidly. Richard Parks, William Griffin, and C. M. Einhorn all saw the Dickcissel (an extremely rare fall migrant in Atlanta) which perched on a holly planted in a tub in the Trust Company plaza. The bird appeared disoriented, and allowed watchers to come within four or five feet. Later, Mr. Parks picked up another Dickcissel in a dazed condition and took it home.

Because of the floodlights on the Trust Company building, the park across the street is not darkened throughout the night. Trusco Park soon became the favorite spot for watchers. The entire Atlanta Bird Club concluded its November 11th meeting there after nine P.M., getting a close look at a Lincoln's Sparrow, several Grasshopper Sparrows and a Long-billed March Wren which could predictably be found in the junipers planted in concrete pots in Trusco Park.

Mr. Parks made an effort to collect the dead birds, which were turned over to Fernbank Science Center in DeKalb County for their collection. Mr. Einhorn kept Plaza Park and Hurt Park under observation, with such unusual results as three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers on the same tree branch.

Tom French, a student at Georgia State University, had been picking up dead birds earlier in the day than the rest of us. From October 15 to November 15, Tom picked up 58 birds of 28 species. The skins are in the University collection.

The Trust Company Building is faced with large glass windows, inside of which can be seen the bank lobby with potted plants. On two occasions, I found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet perched in the shrubbery inside the bank. These birds probably entered when movers blocked the doors open to haul in furniture.

More embarrassing to the bank was the White-throated Sparrow very much alive in the safe deposit vault one morning. It apparently entered the building with workmen through a bank door, and then got

into the vault with the first employee. If that explanation is not acceptable, then the new vault is not as impregnable as the bank thinks!

On November 26, Mrs. Helen Wynn called to report that when she came to work at the bank at 6:30 A. M. she had found a stunned bird and took it to her office. I turned out to be a Woodcock, which regained its poise during the day and was released in a swamp that night.

Homer Driggers, another bank employee, was leaving the bank garage at six p. m. when he saw a Coot on the concrete floor. He put the Coot in a box, and it, too, recovered and was released a day later at Stone Mountain lake, where it took off happily.

There are theories about the unusual activities of birds in downtown Atlanta. The night migration over the city is not unexpected, nor is it strange that some birds should crash into a tall black building, which was not there the year before, and be killed.

The lighted white building attracted hordes of insects, which in early fall became a severe janitorial problem for the bank. Both the lights and the insects may have attracted birds which at some point detected an attractive park below. Obviously, they might rest in the park. But why not resume their night migration a day or two later? Quite possibly because it is never night at the Trust Company Building. The lights stay on all through the normally dark hours.

In mid-December, most of the birds had left, and no more dead birds were found. In Trusco Park, however, six White-throated Sparrows and one Towhee are spending the winter, fed by kind Atlantans. In Hurt Park and Plaza Park, you can find an occasional House Sparrow, Blue Jay, Junco, or Starling, but little else.

The Atlanta Bird Club is waiting for next Fall.

Managers of both the Equitable Building and the Trust Company Building have been most cooperative. They will welcome suggestions for reducing the kill during the next migration.

The following list is as complete as possible. The order and the common names follow that of the fifth edition (1957) of the Check-list of the American Ornithologists Union. "Specimen — French" indicates that Tom French collected a dead bird between October 15 and November 15, 1969, and preserved the skin in the Georgia State University collection.

Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) — Perched daily between September 15 and November 15 on tall buildings in the downtown area.

- American Coot (*Fulica americana*) — One captured alive November 15 in Trust Company garage and released at Stone Mountain lake.
- American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) — Specimen-French. A live bird was picked up stunned at 6:30 A. M. on November 26 by Mrs. Helen Wynn and released that night.
- Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) — Specimen — French.
- Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) — One picked up dead at Trust Company building October 15.
- Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) — One picked up dead at Trust Company building October 15.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) — Three birds on one tree limb in Plaza Park.
- Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) — Irregular visitor at Trusco Park, Plaza Park, and Hurt Park.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) — Specimen — French. Live bird in Plaza Park.
- Brown Creeper (*Certhia familiaris*) — Live bird in Plaza Park. Live bird at Equitable Building October 19.
- House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) — Live bird in Trusco Park, October 19 to November 12.
- Long-billed March Wren (*Telmatodytes palustris*) — Live bird in Trusco Park showed preference for low junipers in concrete pots; October 8 to November 15.
- Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) — Specimen — French.
- Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) — Specimen — French. Irregular visitor to three parks.
- Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) — Live bird on potted trees in front of bank building, October 8 and 9.
- Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) — One bird stayed in Trusco Park for a month, October 19 to November 22.
- Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) — Found dead in front of bank.
- Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) — Specimen — French.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) — Specimen — French. Three other dead birds October 19 and November 9.

- Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) — Specimen — French. Live bird in Trusco Park, November 2 to 7. Seven dead birds at Equitable Building, October 18 to November 9. Seen November 1 and 2 in potted shrubs inside lobby of Trust Company building.
- Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) — Specimen — French.
- Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) — Several hundred roosted on adjacent buildings.
- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) — Specimen — French. Two dead birds, Equitable Building, October 19. Two live birds, Trusco Park, October 19.
- Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) — Specimen — French.
- Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) — Live bird in Trusco Park.
- Solitary vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) — Dead bird, Equitable Building, October 18.
- Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) — Specimen — French. Live bird in Trusco Park, November 5 and 9.
- Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) — Live bird in Trusco Park.
- Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) — Specimen — French.
- Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) — Dead bird, Equitable Building, October 18.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) — Live bird in Plaza Park, October 19.
- Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronato*) — Live bird Trusco Park November 9.
- Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) — Specimen — French.
- Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*) — Specimen — French. Live bird in Plaza Park.
- Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) — Specimen — French. Live bird in Trusco Park, October 19. Dead bird in Trusco Park, October 9.
- Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) — Live bird in Trusco Park, November 2 and November 7.
- Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) — Specimen — French. At least three live birds in Trusco Park, October 7 to November 12. One dead bird at Trust Company, October 6.

- Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) — Live bird in Trusco Park, November 2.
- Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) — Specimen — French.
- American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) — Live bird in Plaza Park.
- House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) — Irregular visitor at all three parks.
- Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) — Specimen — French.
- Redwinged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) Specimen — French.
- Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) — Three dead birds picked up in courtyard of Equitable Building; building manager disposed of 30 other birds which may well have been the same species.
- Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) — Live birds in Plaza Park and Hurt Park.
- Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) — Specimen — French.
- Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) — Live bird on potted shrub in front of bank, October 9. Another live bird picked up by Mr. Parks, November 15.
- Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) — Specimen — French.
- Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) — Specimen — French. Two or three live birds in Trusco Park on several occasions, one remaining in January.
- Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) — Three live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to 9.
- Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus samannarum*) — Specimen — French. Three live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to December 14. (One bird on last date.)
- Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) — Six or more live birds in Trusco Park.
- Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) — Specimen — French. Six or more live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to November 13.
- Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) — Specimen — French. Six or more live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to December 14. (One bird on last date.)
- White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) — One live immature in Trusco Park, November 7 to 13.

- White-Throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) — Specimen — French. Six or more (up to 20) live birds in Trusco Park. Three birds entered the Trust Company building, and one was captured inside the bank vault; November 2 to December 14. Six birds remained in January.
- Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*) — Four live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to November 23. Two live birds on November 30.
- Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) — Six or more live birds in Trusco Park, November 2 to November 23.
- Song Sparrow (*Melospiza meolida*) — Specimen — French. Six or more live birds in Trusco Park, October 28 to December 14 (two birds on last date.)
- Apt. 913, 620 Peachtree Street, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH NEST IN SCREVEN COUNTY

ANNE HAMILTON AND GRACE BODDIFORD

The finding of a nest of the Louisiana Waterthrush (*Sciuirus motacilla*) in Screven county on 6 April 1968 clarifies the status of this area (Hamilton, 1964). Also, the location of the nest in the upper coastal plain recalls the suggestion of Burleigh (1958) that "further study may show that this waterthrush is not uncommon as a breeding bird in the coastal plain". Burleigh further stated that actual breeding records were limited to the Piedmont and the mountains. A study of available literature shows no added knowledge of nesting of this species in the coastal plain since that time. However, just above the fall line in southern Jones County T. P. Haines (1965) found a nest on 22 April 1965.

The Screven county nest was found on 6 April 1968 on Millhaven Plantation one mile south of Millhaven Village and less than a mile from Brier Creek. The authors and R. E. Hamilton, riding along an abandoned railroad bed in a forest of pines and mixed hardwoods, discovered the birds busily gathering dead leaves beside a small stream. The pair seemed oblivious to the automobile from which the observations were being made. The observers soon found the nest, a natural cavity 8 or 10 inches in diameter, in the opposite bank of the stream. The sloping bank, about 7 feet higher than the water, and the stream bed were formed during the building of the railroad many years before. The nest cavity was protected by twin trunks of a young hornbeam (*Carpinus* sp.) growing out of the bank. A tree root a few inches below the nest was used as a perch for entering and leaving the nest.

The following notes were made on 6 April:

"9:45 A. M. Waterthrush #1 picked up and discarded several soggy, dead leaves lying alongside the stream.

"9:47 A. M. Waterthrush #2 appeared from about 20 feet away.

"9:48 A. M. #1 picked up a leaf only one foot from the stream and carried it to nest. #2 secured a 2" x 2" dry leaf (beige in color and noticeable because the first leaves brought to nest were damp and therefore dark brown) and brought it to nest from a distance of 18 inches. #1 brought a leaf from the stream edge about 8 feet away.

"9:53 A. M. Both birds brought wet leaves from the stream edge 8 feet away.

"9:54 A. M. They are a little choosy.

"9:55 A. M. They carried small pieces of leaves to nest.

"9:57 A. M. Very choosy. #1 ate a bit of something from stream edge; now it is pulling at root hairs. Took a bunch of root hairs into nest.

"10:00 A. M. #2 on bank near nest tugged at material, apparently root hairs, till the bird almost fell and the material was scattered.

"10:01 A. M. #1 reappeared from left side of nest, coming a distance of 10 feet.

"10:03 A. M. Both transported mixed loads of material to nest.

"10:04 A. M. One entered nest hole with a dry brown leaf."

During the next 15 minutes the pair brought 20 or 25 loads of material to nest.

The following notes were made on 7 April:

"9:00 A. M. No activity. Birds not in sight or within hearing.

"9:10 A. M. The three observers left the area.

"10:00 A. M. Observers returned and saw the birds at once. #1 made three trips to nest in the next 5 minutes, leaving straw or plant strippings each time.

"10:10 A. M. #1 gathered pine straw or pale rootlets and went to a second cavity above and to the left of the nest where yesterday's activity took place. Instead of entering, the bird perched on ground above and at left side of the dummy nest.

"10:12 A. M. The same bird, #1, then entered the dummy nest and left straw there.

"10:15 A. M. #1 returned to tree root perch, thence to the stream edge.

"10:17 A. M. #1 returned to the first nest and left material there. This bird uttered a few sharp notes; then #2 uttered three fast notes which sounded like "dut-dut-dut", but we did not see #2.

"10:18 A. M. #1 came to the root perch below the first nest, then entered the nest with straw-like material.

"10:21 A. M. #2 entered nest where #1 was still present; #2 stayed only one second. #1 worked for about 60 seconds arranging material in the nest.

"10:23 A. M. #2 worked at the stream edge, then entered nest and stooped twice as though shaping the inside of nest; then the bird turned around in nest and faced entrance. #1 was out of sight away from nest.

"10:25 A. M. The observers left the area."

No more observations were made until 9 April.

Most of the material which the waterthrushes brought to the nest on 6 April consisted of large leaves, about half of them wet and half of them dry. On 7 April most of the material consisted of pine straw and grasses. It was noted that 8 trips to gather material were made in a 17-minute period on 7 April.

Grace Boddiford continued observations from 7 April till 11 May. Her notes are as follows:

"9 April — I arrived on location at 5:55 P. M. and stayed until 6:25 P. M. There had been a shower of rain in the late afternoon. Woods relatively quiet, but before I left I heard Towhee, Titmouse, Wood Thrush (first of 1968), Gnatcatcher, Parula Warbler, Carolina Wren, and Pine Warbler. Did not see any sign of life around nest.

"12 April — On location 4:55-5:15 P. M. No sound of bird life, except a Pileated Woodpecker some distance away.

"13 April — On location 6:00-6:15 P. M. Didn't see the waterthrushes, but thought I heard one sing across the road.

"3 May — 6:35-7:45 P. M. daylight saving time. Both adults seen carrying food (insects, I thought) to the nest. Watched them make about one dozen trips. They always used the perch on coming to nest.

"11 May — In late afternoon. Saw one adult momentarily on margin of stream, about 9 or 10 feet from the nest."

There was no further opportunity to watch the nest. After the nesting season Grace Boddiford examined the nest and found a variety of leaves, including willow oak, water oak, turkey oak, red maple, sweet gum, hornbeam, and many others. She noted that pine needles, rootlets, horse hair, and grass formed the inner section of the nest.

SUMMARY

The Louisiana Waterthrush nest found in Screven county on 6 April 1968 comprised the first nest located in this county, and confirmed the

status of this species as a breeding summer resident. Typically located in a hole in the bank of a small stream, the nest was a few inches above a tree root which the birds used as a perch. The stream was shallow and somewhat sluggish in contrast to the "swift-running" and "rushing" streams described by Burleigh (1958) as desirable to this species. Use of a mock or dummy or practice nest was noted on 7 April, though this observation may not be considered significant since the waterthrushes were seen there only once. Neither Burleigh (1958) nor Bent (1953) mentions such a custom among waterthrushes. Later examination of the nest showed typical material, including leaves of three species of oaks, sweet gum, hornbeam, and red maple, with lining of pine needles, rootlets, horse hair, and grass.

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GENERAL NOTES

WOOD IBIS FOUND NESTING ON OKEFENOKEE REFUGE—On July 5, 1967, the writers made what may be a significant find. While on patrol on Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, we came upon a rookery of Wood Ibises (*Mycteria americana*). This rookery was on Craven's Hammock, an island which is rarely visited. Normally this island is almost inaccessible, but there was low water at the time of our visit, and we were able to walk to it.

There were about a dozen nests in the rookery, and the young birds were nearly grown. The old birds were seen feeding the nestlings.

At the time we did not know that this find was especially significant, but since then we have learned that this may have been the first recorded observation of Wood Ibises nesting in Georgia. Neither Bent (1926. Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds) nor Burleigh (1958. Georgia Birds) cites nesting records of this species in Georgia.

William C. Cone, Jewett V. Hall, Biological Technicians, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross, Georgia.

ANOTHER SWALLOW-TAILED KITE AT AUGUSTA—On May 31, 1969, around 11:00 A. M. EDT. Pete Stevens and I spotted a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) feeding with a flock of 22 Mississippi Kites (*Ictina mississippiensis*) over a field across Georgia Highway 56-L from the Airport (Bush Field). A possible reason for this concentration of kites is that the field was being plowed at the time. We drove on to a dirt road at the side of the field from which point we were able to observe the kite at ranges as close as 15 yards. Distinguishing characteristics such as the long black forked tail, black wings with white linings, white head and body were clearly visible even without binoculars.

We returned with my son, Gerald, Jr., to the field that same afternoon around 1:30 P. M. and found the kite still feeding with the Mississippi Kites which now numbered 27.

The next day, June 1, we again located the Swallow-tailed Kite about 10:30 A. M. at the same field, feeding with 12 Mississippi Kites. When we returned past the field about 1:30 P. M. the Swallow-tailed Kite was gone although 5 Mississippi Kites remained at the field.

The last record of the Swallow-tailed Kite at Augusta was a single bird observed in the same area July 30, 1967 (Rial. 1967. *Oriole* 32:52-53). Although it is hoped that this species will again nest in the Augusta

area, there is no evidence that it does at the present time. Gerald E. Knighton, 3 Linnet Loop, North Augusta, S. C. 29841.

RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE MORTALITY IN WEB OF GOLDEN SILK SPIDER — The spider and its web have occasionally been considered among the enemies of birds. Justification for this is based primarily on observations of spiders feeding on birds and entanglement of birds in webs. Feeding observations are rare (eg. Merian, 1705; Shuckard, 1845; Bates, 1863) and to my knowledge have not been reported from North America. Entanglements are more frequent; among the North American birds thus affected are the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris* (McCook, 1889; Torrey, 1903; Danforth, 1921), Anna's Hummingbird, *Calypte anna* (Abbott, 1931; Bent, 1940), Common Bushtit, *Psaltiriparus minimus minimus* (Abbott, 1931) Yellowthroated Warbler, *Dendroica dominica dominica* (Bent, 1953), Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas* (Ross, 1950), Cardinal, *Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis* (Bent, 1968), House Finch, *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis* (Abbott, 1931), American Goldfinch, *Spinus tristis tristis* (Mackay, 1929), and Grasshopper Sparrow, *Ammodramus samannarum* (Teres, 1939). The nomenclature used is that of the A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds (1957); the subspecies is indicated if the above authors did so.

To this list must be added the Rufous-sided Towhee, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, as the following observation attests. On 8 November 1969 I found a web of a Golden Silk Spider, *Nephila clavipes*, suspended between two live oaks, *Quercus virginiana*, in a live oak, saw palmetto community on Little Cumberland Island, Camden County, Georgia. From a supporting strand of the web hung a dead female Towhee. The strand, attached to a second supporting line at one end, had twisted securely around the eighth and ninth primaries of the left wing. The strong line held the Towhee suspended, preventing it from reaching nearby vegetation or gaining sufficient momentum to break loose. The female spider was observed, stationary on the web, showing no apparent interest in the bird.

Most authors recording entanglements comment on the accidental nature and the rarity of the occurrence. The current incident is also presumably accidental, as the spider showed no interest in its captive. While Towhee mortalities may be rare, the abundance of entanglement records for small birds suggests that such occurrences may not be as rare as might be supposed. And the fact that birds the size of Cardinals and Towhees can be caught in spider webs suggests that these webs can be a hazard encountered by more than just the smallest birds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to thank Dr. Austin L. Rand and Mr. James I. Richardson for their comments on this manuscript. I would also like to thank Mr. Ingram Richardson and the Little Cumberland Island Association for allowing access to Little Cumberland Island.

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Hans N. Neuhauser, Department of Zoology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601.

SECOND FALL RECORD OF RED-THROATED LOONS AT COLUMBUS, GA. — On the morning of Nov. 24., 1969, I was present at Lake Oliver outside Columbus, Ga., when three Red-throated Loons (*Gavia stellata*) flew into view and shortly came to rest on the water. One bird retained a dim, but clear, summer head and neck pattern; apparently these were two first year and one older bird.

The only previous fall observation of Red-throated Loons in this area occurred on Nov. 1, 1967. This was also of three birds.

It was interesting to note that Red-throated Loons are not only smaller and slimmer than Common Loons (*Gavia immer*), but also appear to be faster and more active in and on the water.

L. A. Wells, 322 Cascade Road, Columbus, Ga. 31904.

SAW-WHET OWL IN SUBURBAN COBB COUNTY — On Sunday morning, December 21, 1969, at 3:00 A. M., I was awakened by noises made by our dog which was in the backyard. To investigate the reason for the noises I switched on the outdoor floodlights. An adult Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) was observed sitting on a thin limb of a dead tree, facing toward the house. The limb was about six feet off the ground and twenty feet from the window where I was located. A small bird feeder, four and one half inches in diameter, was hanging on an adjacent limb the same distance from the window. The Saw-whet stayed on the limb for about four minutes, during which time my wife also observed him.

Our yard, which is in a tree-covered subdivision on the northern edge of Smyrna, contains tall pines, sweetgums, and hickory trees, scattered with dogwood and other smaller trees. The yard is adjacent on one corner to several acres of pine woods, which is where the Saw-whet flew when it left. The weather at the time of observation was 35°F, completely overcast sky, with no wind.

This is believed to be a rather rare sighting of a Saw-whet in a fairly suburban area and in Cobb County. Burleigh (1958) indicates the Saw-whet is a casual winter resident in Georgia, possibly commoner than the few records show. Denton and Hopkins (1969) also indicate

casual winter residency. I am aware of only two previous suburban records in this area; those of Griffin (1940) and Parks (1948), both of which were in Atlanta.

LITERATURE CITED

- Burleigh, Thomas D. 1958. Georgia Birds, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, page 331.
- Denton, J. Fred, and Hopkins, Milton, Jr. 1969. Pocket Check List of Georgia Birds, Georgia Ornithological Society, page 29.
- Griffin, William W. 1940. Saw-whet Owl from Atlanta, The Oriole, 5:8.
- Parks, Richard A. 1948. Another Saw-whet Owl in Atlanta. The Oriole, 13:26.
- John S. Gibson, 813 Parkway Dr., Smyrna, Georgia, 30080.

TWO NEW SPECIES FOR THOMAS COUNTY, GA. — On Dec. 28, 1969 (Christmas Count day for Thomasville), a male Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) was seen feeding with a flock of Redwings (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) in a corn field. The bird was seen well by both observers, one of whom was previously familiar with the species in Texas.

On the same day a Long-billed Marsh Wren (*Telmatodytes palustris*) was seen in a cat-tail marsh. The conditions of observation were excellent (10 ft., 7 x 35 binoculars) (J. D.).

Both of these birds are new for Thomas County.

Red-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*) are becoming quite frequent in our area. A pair was seen repeatedly on a feeder through the winter. Several others were seen in the field, also (B. C., J. D.). In addition, several were seen and heard in and around Valdosta, Ga. (J.D.) Bob Crawford and Jack Dozier, 221 Myrtle Drive, Thomasville, Ga. 31292.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

EAST COAST TERN WATCH

This summer volunteers from Nova Scotia to South Carolina will band young Common and Roseate Terns with a colored plastic band in addition to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service band. The plastic band will be placed on the leg opposite the aluminum. Each province and state will use a different color so that observers can recognize birds from different areas.

Through observations of these color banded birds we hope to gain information regarding the following questions. How far do birds banded from different areas along the coast as well as inland range from their breeding colonies during their post breeding dispersal? Do birds from different areas along the coast concentrate at particular places in the fall? How late are these species seen at different points along the coast?

The following people will participate in color banding this summer, using the listed colors: Nova Scotia — I. A. McLaren — yellow; Maine — Libby, Hatch, Gobeil — red and white horizontal stripe; Massachusetts — Howard — orange; Connecticut — Procter — green and white horizontal stripe; Lake Erie, New York — Clarke — light blue; Western Long Island, N. Y. — Heath, Gochfeld — royal blue; Eastern Long Island, N. Y. — Wilcox — black and white horizontal stripe; New Jersey — Savell — green; Maryland — Van Velzen — white; Virginia — Byrd — black; North Carolina — Davis, Sussel — green and brown horizontal stripe; Great Gull Island, N. Y. — Hays — color combinations using U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service band and three color bands, two bands on each leg.

Please watch for color banded terns and send observations to the bander in your area or to: Miss Helen Hays, Great Gull Island Project, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, N. Y. 10024.

We would also like to compile a list of places along the coast where concentrations of Common and/or Roseate Terns can be seen in late summer and early fall. If you know of any such places send them to Miss H. Hays at the above address. Any information you can supply on color banded terns or concentration points along the coast would be of great help.

RECENT LITERATURE

A PARADISE OF BIRDS, by Helen Gere Cruickshank; 48 full-page photographs in black and white by Allan D. Cruickshank; 389 pages; \$7.50. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. So many of us in Georgia have been in the field with Mr. and Mrs. Cruickshank or heard one of their lectures that they seem like old friends. Many of us have added to our life-lists in Texas, and that is where Mrs. Cruickshank takes us — from Port Aransas to Big Bend.

She mentions places worth a visit; she describes scores of birds found in that large State; she adds a great deal of background information to her first-hand impressions. The book is not all birds: there is a meeting with a rock-hound and an exploration of a cave of bats, not to mention the mammals and reptiles which dot these pages. Mrs. Cruickshank has a faculty with words which evokes a clear picture in the mind of the reader and makes him want to leave for Texas at once.

Allan Cruickshank's photos of plants and animals are of the high quality we have come to expect of him.

The only disappointment is the careless proof-reading. The reader is constantly distracted by such errors as "Will say a droy" (instead of "Will saw a dory," page 15). On page 22, a line of type is dropped. On page 69, we are treated to the sight of "a olivaceous cormorant."

But if you will be charitable and overlook these slips, you will spend several pleasant hours in Texas with this book. — Louis C. Fink.

LIFE AND DEATH OF THE SALT MARSH by John and Mildred Teal. Illustrated by Richard Fish. Little, Brown and Co., Boston; 267 pages plus index. \$7.95.

One of the numerous serious problems of our modern times is the very large difference between scientific knowledge and public knowledge. Research has revealed vast amounts of information, but for the most part scientists have discussed these among themselves and not told the public about them.

The Teal's book is a very good effort to correct this in an important area of knowledge which is of major concern to both scientists and laymen today, especially on the eastern coast of the United States. It includes discussions of the geography and geology of the coast, the plants and animals that occur there, seasonal changes, the vast productivity of the salt marshes and their fundamental importance to major food supplies for people in

many parts of the world, and the many problems involved in maintaining the productivity of these marshes. This is not a "preservationist" book; John Teal is a highly competent ecologist. It is a book about economically important plants and animals and their interactions among themselves and with their environments, with particular emphasis upon human destructiveness, the reasons for stopping it, and suggestions for doing that. It is scientifically accurate and very well written to present essential information in interesting, easily understandable form without needless detail and without condescending to the reader. It presents knowledge of the salt marshes to the general reader in much the same way that Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us* presented knowledge about the oceans. In many senses it could be considered complimentary to Carson's book, though the latter was published 18 years earlier. There is a timelessness about the Teals' book, too; it should endure as well as Carson's.

This summer would be a fine time to read it; then go look carefully at a marsh and see how much more fascinating it is in the light of your new knowledge. L. B. Davenport, Jr.

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