

# THE ORIOLE

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



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NOS. 2 & 3



# THE ORIOLE

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## BIRDS IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA – FALL, 1970

Louis C. Fink and Thomas William French

This is the third in a series of reports describing the birds attracted to the heart of downtown Atlanta, Georgia, by the construction of two new skyscrapers. The architecture and geography were discussed in "Birds in Downtown Atlanta – 1969" (The Oriole, 35 (1): 1-9, 1970).

During migration in the Fall of 1969, several hundred birds of 58 species were collected or observed at close range. Records were not kept carefully at first, because the unique character of the situation was not appreciated.

In the Spring and early Summer of 1970, twenty additional species were recorded.

A third tabulation was made in more careful fashion in the Fall of 1970. A total of 73 species was recorded from July 16 to December 31, 1970. Nine species were added to the cumulative list, so we now have record of the occurrence of 87 species in downtown Atlanta in a period of 15 months.

In Trusco Park, the plantings of azaleas were replaced with holly and juniper, and the thicker vegetation made it slightly more difficult to identify living birds. Some experimenting was done with extinguishing the lights on the two buildings at the peak of migration; this seemed to favor the birds, but results were not conclusive.

Mr. French picked up dead birds at both buildings – Trust Company of Georgia and Equitable – on a regular and systematic basis. In addition to identifying every bird not hopelessly damaged, he noted the specific area in which the dead bird was found.

The main entrance to the Trust Company opens on a large plaza of concrete. This entrance faces a little north of due west, and it is here that most dead birds were found. Sixteen birds were picked up on this westerly side of the building – against two birds on the more northerly side, none at



all on the south, and eleven on the east. These records are for the fall of 1970, when the birds are presumably flying from the north and might be expected to hit the north side of the building.

However, the Trust Company is white marble, brilliantly floodlighted all night. The upper floors overhang the ground floor, and most of the birds picked up by Mr. French were *under* this overhang. Obviously, they did not hit upper stories. The ground floor is faced with large glass windows, behind which can be seen potted plants of good size. Mr. French deduces that the birds killed in front of the Trust Company were, in fact, trying to fly through the glass windows to the safety of the potted shrubbery in the lobby. The rest of the building has curtained windows, or the windows themselves are obscured by shrubbery on the outside. On these other sides of the building, the dead birds fell outside the overhang, indicating that they hit upper stories or possibly flew to exhaustion.

At the Equitable Building, the upper floors also overhang the first floor, but the birds were never found under the overhang. In both the spring and fall migration, the majority of birds fell in front of the Equitable Building, which faces about southeast and also has a large concrete plaza.

At first, it was felt that most dead birds were found in this plaza area only because it was an open space. However, the entire building is surrounded by streets which Mr. French checked carefully for dead birds; even when the birds were run over by automobiles, they could be collected (although sometimes not identified.) Generally, the birds fell about five to ten feet from the building, but on windy nights they were found twenty or thirty feet away.

In the spring of 1970, Mr. French picked up 64 dead birds on the southeast (plaza) side of the Equitable Building, but only 16 on the other three sides of the structure.

In the fall of 1970 (excluding September 28 and 29), 115 birds were picked up on the plaza or southeast side. Only 33 birds were found on the other three sides.

The nights of September 28 and 29, 1970, were remarkable as a cold front accompanied by fog moved through Atlanta. On the two following mornings, Mr. French picked up 444 dead birds in the plaza area, against only 17 on the other three sides of the building.

An impressive majority of the birds were killed on one side of the Equitable Buildings, in two different migration periods and during unusual

weather conditions. They may be attracted to this dark building by the lighted name at the top, which is visible from a distance and not obstructed by near-by buildings. However, the Trust Company is brightly lighted, and it is situated to the southeast of Equitable. It is quite probable that the lights of Trust Company attract the birds in both migrations; the birds fly around the lights and strike the dark Equitable Building.

There is one final observation: certainly the large majority of the birds discussed here are night migrants, and most of them are killed at night, or are found alive after they have come to rest in Trusco Park at night. It is important to note exceptions to this rule. In a few cases, it could be established that the bird was killed in daylight hours.

The following list includes observations between July 16, 1970, and December 31, 1970. The order and the common names follow that of the fifth edition (1959) of the Check-list of the American Ornithologists Union. Identifications of dead birds are by Mr. French, who preserved most of them in the museum of the Georgia State University; sight records of live birds are by Mr. Fink unless otherwise noted.

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) — October 7, one bird soaring around Trust Company.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) — September 1, one bird soaring near Trust Company at sunset.

Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) — This bird is seen regularly in downtown Atlanta. On August 26, C. M. Einhorn saw five birds in the air at Trust Company; single birds were seen September 24, November 12, and December 22.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*) — At noon on November 20, this bird was found on a concrete wall between the new Trust Company building and an old structure being demolished. It allowed observers to come within 18 inches, whereupon it flew strongly about 50 feet, and was lost to sight.

Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) — One dead bird on October 16 and one dead bird on November 11. On November 9, a live bird was found on the ground in Trusco Park.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) — Single dead birds on August 7, September 6, and September 29.

Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) — October 4, one live bird (Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Freeborn.)

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) — Although this is a common summer resident in Atlanta, no live birds were reported for the period in the area covered. Dead birds were as follows: One on August 31, one on September 1, five on September 6, 25 on September 11, and one dead bird each on September 13, 23, and 28.



Yellow-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) – One dead bird on September 29.

Empidonax flycatcher (*Empidonax sp.*) – One live bird in Trusco Park on August 24, one dead bird September 29.

Eastern Wood Peewee (*Myiochanes virens*) – One dead bird each on August 24 and September 21; two dead birds on September 28.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – September 29, one dead bird. One live bird in Trusco Park seen October 19, 25 (two birds), 27, 28, 30, November 18, 19, 21, and December 4.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 4, 7, 9, and 25.

Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – August 10, one live bird in Trusco Park.

Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) – One dead bird on October 1; two live birds in Trusco Park on November 6. (Bill Terrell)

Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – September 28, three dead birds. September 29, five dead birds. October 1, three dead birds. October 16, one dead bird. One live bird in Trusco Park October 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, November 3, 4, and 16.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) – One dead bird September 29. One live bird in Trusco Park September 30, October 1, 2, 4, and 9.

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – One live bird in Trusco Park September 24, 30, October 1, 2, 4, 5. Dead birds: One on October 1; two each on September 29 and October 4.

Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata*) – One live bird in Trusco Park November 8 and 10.

Swainson's Thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata*) – One dead bird September 29 and one dead bird October 18. One live bird in Trusco Park September 30.

Gray-Cheeked Thrush (*Hylocichla minima*) – One dead bird September 21. One live bird on October 25 and November 6.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) – One dead bird on September 29 and November 7. One live bird in Trusco Park October 25, 26, and 27.

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) – Thirty-seven dead birds on September 28 and 40 dead birds in September 29. One dead bird October 1.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) – All dead birds recovered as follows: one on August 24; two on September 2; one on September 3; twelve on September 28; seven on September 29.

Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) – One dead bird on September 29 and one dead on November 8.

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Dead birds recovered as follows: One on August 7, 14, 15; three on September 2; two on September 4; two on

September 5; two on September 6; three on September 7; one each on September 11, 12, 13, and 15; two on September 25; 34 on September 28; 13 on September 29; two on October 1.

Philadelphia vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – Two dead birds on September 28. Ten dead birds on September 29.

Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – One live bird in Trusco Park August 10 and 31; October 1 and 2; November 21. Dead Birds: One on August 14 and 26; two on September 6; five on September 7; eight on September 28; two on September 29; one on October 1.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*) – One dead bird August 14 and September 28.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) – One dead bird August 14; three dead birds September 28.

Golden-Winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – One dead bird September 28.

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) – One live bird in Trusco Park August 26, 27, and 28.

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) – Dead birds as follows: One each September 1, 11, and 26; four on September 28; 18 on September 29; one on November 2.

Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 27 (W.W. Griffin), November 3 and 20. Two live birds in Trusco Park November 6 (Bill Terrell).

Parula Warbler (*Compsothlypis americana*) – One dead bird Sept. 28. Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) – One dead bird August 18. One live bird in Trusco Park September 3.

Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) – One live bird in Trusco Park September 3 and 4. Dead birds: one each September 6 and 7; 18 on September 28; 27 on September 29; one on November 3; At six P.M. on October 10, Mr. Fink picked up a dead bird—the body still warm—at the Life of Georgia Tower, about a mile from the area under study.

Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*) – Four dead birds on September 28 and three dead birds on September 29.

Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) – One dead bird September 11; three dead birds September 28.

Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) – One live bird in Trusco Park November 3 and 6.

Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) – Four dead birds on September 29. One live bird in Trusco Park November 18 and 19.

Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) – One live bird in Trusco Park September 24; Dead birds: three on September 6; one on September 22; eleven on September 28; three on September 29. One dead bird was picked up September 30 on North Avenue, a mile north of the area.



Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) – One dead bird on September 6 and one dead bird on September 29.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pennsylvanica*) – Dead birds as follows: One each on September 2, 6, 10, and 24; 19 on September 28; six on September 29.

Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) – One live bird in Trusco Park November 8 (John Galli), November 15, 21, and 27. Four dead birds September 29; one dead bird November 4.

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) – One dead bird each September 20 and November 4. One live bird in Trusco Park August 31, September 3, November 2 and 18.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) – Four dead birds September 28 and 29.

Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*) Four dead birds September 28 and two dead birds September 29.

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) – Live birds in Trusco Park: one on October 22; two on October 25; one on October 26; one on November 17, and 18. Dead birds: One each August 25, 26, September 1, 2, 6, 12, 20, 21, 23, October 25; 21 on September 28; two on September 29. One dead bird was picked up in the Buckhead section September 6.

Northern Water-thrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) – Dead birds: one on September 7; four on September 11; two on September 28.

Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 26. Dead birds: one each August 26 and 31; eight on September 28.

Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Live birds in Trusco Park: one on August 10, September 8, October 2, 4, 6 (two birds this day), 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, November 1 (two birds), 3, 8, 19 (two birds), and 28. Dead birds: One on August 10; one on August 26; two on September 18 (these two struck the Trust Company building between eight and ten A.M.), nine on September 28; three on September 29; two on October 2; one on October 6.

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) – One dead bird each day on September 2, 4, 9, 28, and 29. Live bird in Trusco Park August 26, October 2, and November 21. The bird was seen again on December 2 and observed daily until December 23, when it disappeared.

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 23 and two live birds on October 25. Dead birds: one on September 6; two on September 28; one on October 6.

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – One live bird in Trusco Park September 3, 4, 24, and October 4. Dead birds: one each on September 4, 6, 9, and 18, October 1 and 19. Two dead birds on September 7; four dead birds September 28; seven dead birds September 29.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – August 18, thirty birds in Trusco Park, including adult feeding young. September 8, no house sparrows present. October 25, four live birds. November 16, twenty live birds. Then these birds disappeared from the park about December 10.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) – Two live birds in Trusco Park August 6, and one live bird on August 11.

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – One live bird in Trusco Park on August 25. One dead bird recovered September 2.

Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) – Two dead birds September 28; one dead bird September 29.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – Two dead birds September 28.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Hedymeles ludovicianus*) – Dead birds: one on September 28; two on September 29; one on October 1.

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) – Three dead birds September 29.

Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) – Live birds in Trusco Park: October 22, 23 (two birds), 24 (three birds), and 30, November 2, 3, (two birds), 4, 9, 19 (two birds), 22, and 24, then one or two birds seen daily until the end of the year.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – One dead bird each on September 29 and October 22. Live bird in Trusco Park November 22 and December 22.

Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 25.

Henslow's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus henslowii*) – One live bird in Trusco Park November 21 (Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Einhorn.)

Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – One dead bird November 6.

Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) – One dead bird each on November 12 and 18. Two live birds in Trusco Park on November 2, 3, 10, and 21 (only one bird this date.)

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) – One dead bird on November 2; three dead birds on November 9. Live birds in Trusco Park: one on October 26; two on October 30; one on November 2 (this bird struck the Trust Company building and was stunned; it was placed under a potted shrub outdoors and remained for about an hour, allowing observers to stroke its head); three on November 10; one on November 12 and 21.

White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – One dead bird each on November 9, 10, 11, and 12. One live bird in Trusco Park October 23. Six live birds in Trusco Park October 25 and seen daily until early December, when one remained for rest of the year.

Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*) – One live bird October 25 and November 21. This bird could be found in the potted shrubs in front of Trust Company as often as in heavier cover of Trusco Park.



Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Two dead birds on November 4. One dead bird each day November 5, 6, and 23.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) – One live bird in Trusco Park October 27, November 12 and 21.

The authors express their appreciation to Dr. J. Fred Denton of Augusta for his courtesy in reviewing this manuscript before submission to the Editor.

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#### RED PHALAROPE RECORD for GEORGIA

Julian L. Dusi and L. A. Wells

After a heavy rain, October 29, 1970, a Red Phalarope, *Phalaropus fulicarius*, was found on a road intersection in a subdivision about four and one-half miles north of Thomaston, Upson County, Georgia, by Terry Bowles. He took the bird to Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Carswell of Thomaston, who later referred it to L. A. Wells, who brought it to the writer.

The specimen was an adult male in winter plumage. Its heavy "plover-like" bill was yellow at the base and black distally. Legs were blue-black with some yellow on the phalanges and webs. Measurements were: Total Length 190 mm, Tail 70 mm, Tarsus 23 mm, Wing Chord 125 mm, and Culmen 21.6 mm.

It was in poor physical condition and had expired by the time it was brought to me. No fat was present along feather tracts, in muscle tissue, or in the abdominal cavity.

A study skin was prepared and it is now specimen A-321 of the writer's series in the Auburn University Museum at Auburn, Alabama.

Department of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, 36830, and 222 Cascade Road, Green Island Hills, Columbus, Georgia 31904.

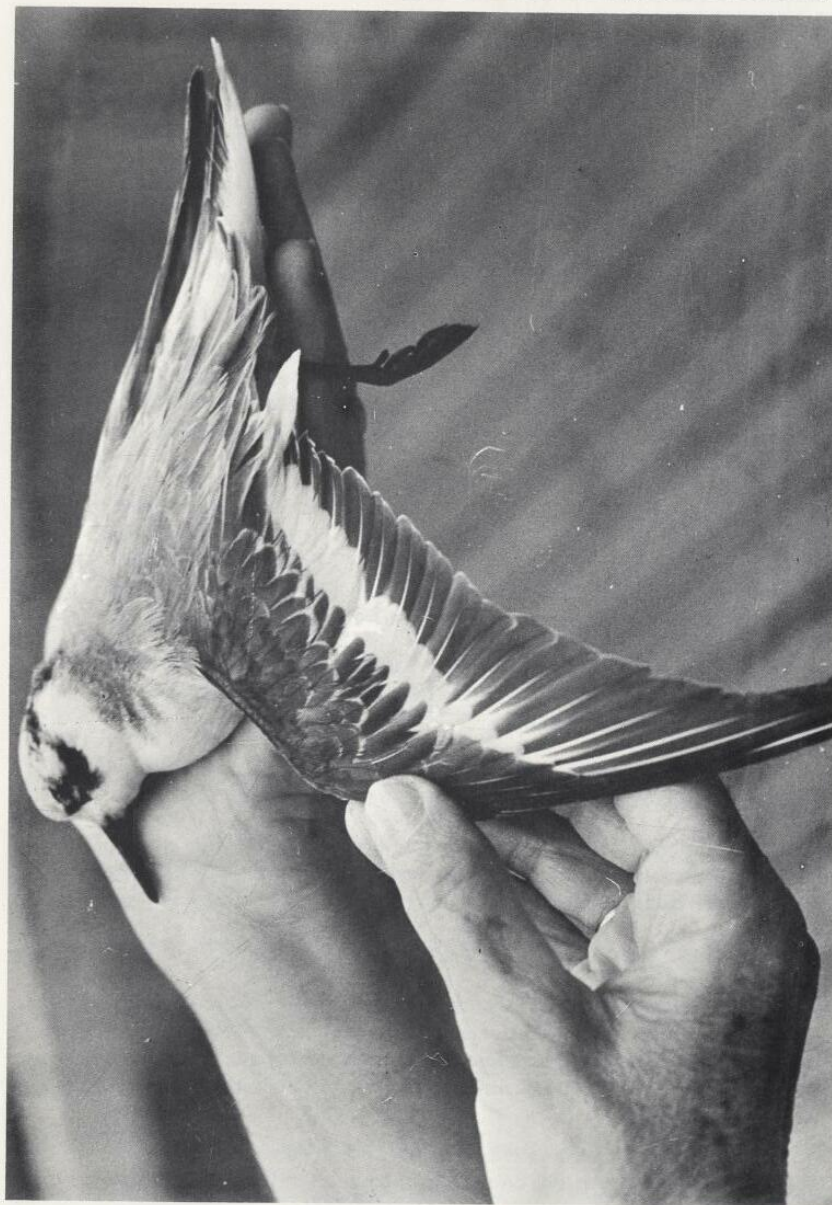


Fig. 1. Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) taken Oct. 29, 1970, in Upson County, Ga.

## SCARLET IBIS AT OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Eugene Cypert

On April 24, 1971, at Suwannee Canal Recreation Area in Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, John Boatwright, one of the guides from the Suwannee Canal Dock, came to me and said he had seen a Scarlet Ibis (*Guara rubra*) that morning in Chesser Prairie. Naturally I was dubious. I asked him if he was sure he had not seen a Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*). He said that he was certain of his identification, that the bird was like a White Ibis (*Guara alba*) except that it was pink.

Then I talked with the other two guides, William Eason and Robert Adkins. They too had seen the bird and they were certain of the identification. In their guided tours they had taken several boatloads of visitors into Chesser Prairie, some of whom were birders, and all had agreed that the bird was a Scarlet Ibis.

That afternoon, Sarah Kaeiser, my wife, and I took a boat into Chesser Prairie hoping to see the bird. We went past the place where it had been observed, but we were not fortunate in seeing it. Farther down the boat trail, we met Henry Holt. He too had been looking for the bird and had been unsuccessful. We went farther out the trail, but were still unsuccessful.

Upon our return to the Suwannee Canal Dock, we saw Henry Holt again. He had seen the bird on his return trip shortly after he had talked with us and had taken photographs of it.

Later we learned that Ed Yaw, the refuge's Public Use Specialist, had been into Chesser Prairie and had photographed the bird.

On April 29, Luther Goldman from the Washington office of the Division of Conservation Education, Fish and Wildlife Service, saw what was probably the same bird and he was in agreement with the identification.

Mr. Yaw's color photographs of the bird leave no doubt that it was a Scarlet Ibis.

White Ibises and Wood Ibises (*Mycteria americana*) have been unusually numerous at Okefenokee this past spring. Probably the extremely droughty conditions in south Florida have forced many birds northward. Probably the Scarlet Ibis of this report had made the trip northward with some of his White Ibis kinsmen.

Thomas D. Burleigh (1958. Georgia Birds., Univ. of Okla. Press, Norman) puts the Scarlet Ibis on the hypothetical list of Georgia birds based

upon a report by John Abbot "from about 1800 to 1810".

Will Henry Thompson (1915. Forest and Stream, June issue) reported seeing two groups of Scarlet Ibises along the Suwannee River somewhere downstream from Billy's Lake in Okefenokee Swamp.

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## GENERAL NOTES

A WINTER RECORD OF THE LEAST BITTERN IN CAMDEN COUNTY, GA.—On 29 December 1969 my brother and I flushed a Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) from cattails on the edge of a pond near Woodbine, Ga. I had been walking along the edge of the pond when my foot struck a stick protruding from a clump of cattails. The bird immediately flushed from the clump, flew about twenty feet farther along the lakeshore, and settled into another stand of cattails. Wishing to get a better view of the bird, I threw a couple sticks into this clump, whereupon the bittern flushed again. This time, however, instead of settling almost immediately the bird circled and criss-crossed the pond repeatedly, affording us excellent views of its black back, buffy wing patches, and small size. After about two minutes of circling, the bird settled into a nearby cattail clump and could be seen plainly. Again the small size, black back, and buffy wing patches were evident.

The pond where these observations were made is on the north bank of the Satilla River, immediately east of US 17. A fading sign of unknown origin identifies the area as a "bird sanctuary." This pond is the most westerly of two shallow ponds, each lined with a thin border of cattails and covering about one acre. The surrounding land is covered with scrubby oak-pine with a scattered understory of palmetto.

To my knowledge this constitutes the first winter record of the Least Bittern from Georgia. Though Peterson (1947, *A Field Guide to The Birds*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston) includes south Georgia in the winter range, the *Pocket Check—List of Georgia Birds* (1969, Ga. Ornithological Society) describes the Least Bittern as only a summer resident in the state. Burleigh (1958, *Georgia Birds*, U. of Okla. Press, Norman) states that "Hebard (1941) reports one bird seen in the Okefenokee Swamp on November 1, 1932." I have been unable to find any Georgia records from later in the year.

Michael B. Lilly, 1760 Venlo Court, SE, Apt. K., Marietta, Ga. 30060.

WHIP-POOR-WILLS SUMMERING IN COLUMBIA COUNTY, GEORGIA—Previously I reported the Whip-poor-Will (*Caprimulgus vociferous*) summering at Elijah Clark State Park, Lincoln County, Georgia (1956, *Oriole* 21: 33-34). More recently Baker and Peake (1966, *Oriole* 31: 15-19) have reported summer records of this species from five counties in the Lower Piedmont in Eastern Georgia. Their records from Greene County were within 40 miles of the Fall Line.

In order to determine how close the summer range of this species approaches the Fall Line in the Augusta area, searches were made for calling Whip-poor-Wills on the nights of June 15, accompanied by G. E. Knighton, and June 17, 1970. Starting from the edge of Augusta the main roads leading northwest were surveyed with stops to listen being made at each likely spot. This resulted in the discovery of Whip-poor-Wills at four sites, all in Columbia County. The number of birds calling and the specific locations are listed below.

June 15, two birds at Little Kioke Creek on Georgia Highway 104. This location is approximately 14 miles from the Fall Line at Augusta.

June 15, two birds at 11:05 p.m. along U.S. Highway 221 about 1½ miles southeast of Pollard's Corner.

June 17, three birds at Greenbrier Creek on Georgia Highway 47 about 5 miles north of Appling.

June 17, two birds beside Georgia Highway 150 about one mile east of its junction with Highway 47.

On the South Carolina side of the Savannah River in the sparsely populated Sumpter National Forest Whip-poor-Wills were found this summer about 8 miles closer to Augusta (Knighton, G.E. in press).

—J. Fred Denton, 529 Henderson Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30904

NESTING OF THE SNOWY EGRET AND OTHER HERONRY NOTES—On June 6, 1970, the writers discovered an active nest of the Snowy Egret (*Leucophoyx thula*) in the Spring Hill, Wheeler County, heronry described by Hopkins and Dopson in 1967. This nesting probably represents the farthest from the coast of any reported from this species in the interior of Georgia. The location is approximately 90 to 100 air miles from the sea-coast. Our attention was called to the nest by the strident and distinctly different scolding calls of the brooding bird. The next itself was located in the west side of the heronry nearest dry land and was situated in a stunted Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) about five feet over the water's surface. The adult flushed from the nest and we backed away, waiting unobtrusively for the return of this bird to its nest. The bird returned in about fifteen minutes and again settled on the nest. Upon examining the nest we found that it contained three young approximately four days old and one piped egg. The bird in the egg was alive and struggling to free itself.

We feel that this was probably a solitary nesting since the calls of this bird were not heard anywhere else in the heronry. This is the first occurrence of this species in any of the mid-south Georgia heronries. The appearance of



the nest, egg, and young were very similar to the Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*) and Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*).

This trip into the heronry was my first since 1968 when Philip Murton and I banded there (1969). It now contains over 1500 active nests, by far the greatest increase of any species being the Cattle Egret. The numerical makeup of the remainder of the birds nesting there is about the same as in 1968 with the exception of an increase in Common Egrets (*Casmerodius alba*) and a solitary nesting of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) noted first by Kilgo. This nest contained young. The area covered by the heronry has been extended to the west and north, but water levels remain about the same. Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) were present in numbers of 100 to 150 individuals.

During the afternoon we visited the Abbeville heronry described by Hopkins and Murton (1969). Water levels here were over two feet deeper than in 1968 and the main body of the colony has shifted west from the cypress stand within the pond to a growth of stunted Black Gums nearer dry land. Numbers of active nests here have increased from a counted 527 in 1968 to over 2,000 at the present time. Common Egrets are now in the colony and probably nesting. Yellow-crowned Night Herons (*Butorides viridescens*) were present and probably nesting, for we noticed several birds of this species flying low, back and forth, within the heronry. These latter two species were not noted in 1968. Two additional Yellow-crowns were also observed about one mile away and near the Ocmulgee River. Heights of nests about the water averaged six to twelve feet this year, probably due to the rise in water levels following the extensive rainfall on the area in May. No immature plumaged Little Blue Herons were seen in either of these heronries.

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**SUMMERING WATER BIRDS IN ATLANTA**—When members of the Bird Club reported a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) near Atlanta in the middle of June, I was prompted to look for the bird. On July 5, 1970, I drove to the Chattahoochee River where it flows under Roswell Road North of Atlanta. At 10:00 A.M., the thermometer was at a pleasant 72°, following a week of weather in the high 90's. A cold front had pushed through from the north-west the day before, bringing severe local thunderstorms, including hail.

The marshy area in which the rail had been seen was examined, but the bird was not to be seen. However, almost at once I spotted an American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), standing immobile in shallow water just a few inches from some reeds. Burleigh (1958, Georgia Birds, U. of Okla. Press, Norman) describes the bird as a spring transient, giving dates as February 21 to May 15. I watched the bittern from 30 feet for five minutes, during which time it never moved.

Thirty minutes later, just past the Chattahoochee Dap Camp on the river, I saw a Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*), also described by Burleigh as a spring transient in the Atlanta area. The gallinule, which was in the grass at the edge of a channel, allowed me to approach within 50 feet of it. It swam briefly and then bounded into the air and flew into the reeds.

Finding two spring transients in July may have been due to the weather or to human disturbance. Considering the rapid rate at which new records are being established in the Atlanta area, I am more than ever convinced that birds like these have been here all along. Their discovery may be due simply to more intensive field work by more observers than formerly.

—Louis C. Fink, 620 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

**NESTING RECORD OF THE PURPLE GALLINULE IN ATLANTA AREA**—The evening of July 17, 1970, Doris Gray phoned me to report that Tom French had seen a gallinule with five young earlier in the day near the Chattahoochee Camp School in Fulton County. No mention was made of species, so we assumed the birds were Common Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus*), regarded as rare and transient in the Atlanta area. My wife and I went to the school area the following morning in the hope of being able to confirm a nesting record for this species.

About half an hour after our arrival, we spotted a gallinule-sized bird in a small shrub. It had apparently just finished bathing and was perched with wings drooped and in a position where we could not observe any field marks. Poor light conditions and wet feathers combined to make coloring indiscerni-



ble. Eventually the bird descended into a patch of weeds and it took another half hour before a series of quick glimpses of different parts of the bird gave us an opportunity to note from the forehead, bill, sides and under-tail coverts that the bird was a Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*). We returned the next morning and with better light were able to observe the distinctive coloring. On this occasion we also noted a young gallinule within a few feet of the adult bird.

Upon checking with Tom French, I learned that the sighting reported to me by Doris Gray had been made while he was birding with Wesley Hester. From their car they had noticed the birds feeding in the mud exposed by a temporary lowering of the level of the Chattahoochee River. When they got out of the car for a closer observation, the young birds dashed for nearby cover and the adult bird flew a short distance before alighting in a small bush. The adult bird was identified as a Purple Gallinule.

I notified several members of the Atlanta Bird Club. Among those who reported seeing an adult Purple Gallinule, with or without young, were John Galli; Doris, Suzanne, Leonard and Pamela Gray; Mike and Lindsay Lilly; and Bob Manns. Several other members advised they had seen a gallinule, but were unable to determine the species because of distance and light conditions.

On August 2 Peg and I had a clear view of two nearly full-grown immature Purple Gallinules. On August 26 Julian Almeida phoned Lou Fink to advise that he had picked up a young Purple Gallinule in the center of the old Marietta Highway. At Lou's suggestion the bird was returned to the nearby Chattahoochee River.

Burleigh (1958, Georgia Birds, U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Oklahoma) refers to the Purple Gallinule as a fairly common but local summer resident of the southern part of the state and on the Savannah River as far north as Augusta, but of casual occurrence elsewhere. He mentions that Griffin reported the first record for this gallinule in the Atlanta area, a female being captured alive May 5, 1948, on Oxford Road near Emory University, in DeKalb County. This single record is mentioned by Griffin and Parks (1955, Occurrence Extremes of Birds of the Atlanta, Georgia, Region), who considered this species as an accidental transient for the Atlanta area.

—C. M. Einhorn, 1340 Holly Hane, NE, Atlanta, Georgia, 30329

LATE NESTING OF THE SOLITARY VIREO IN McDUFFIE COUNTY, GA. On August 1, 1970, Gerald E. Knighton, Gerald E. Knighton, Jr., Sandra Knighton, Jim Reinig, and Ray Holzworth found a Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) nest with two well feathered young in McDuffie County, Georgia.

The nest was located in the Georgia Wildlife Management Area north of Thomson off US Highway 78 between Harte Creek and Little River. The parents were observed feeding the young in the nest.

The nest was approximately 16 or 17 feet off the ground in a small cherry tree (*Prunus* sp.) located in a broken stand of trees. The stand consisted of open, moderate-sized pines with a few hardwoods underneath. The nest was collected on August 22, 1970, and contributed to the Augusta Museum, where it is now exhibit no. 1440.

August 1 is an unusually late nesting date for the Solitary Vireo. South of the mountains nesting usually occurs much earlier. For instance, Burleigh shows the latest date south of the mountains as June 16, 1946, when Fleetwood found a nest with three fresh eggs at Round Oak in Jones County (Burleigh, T.D. 1958, Georgia Birds, U. of Okla. Press, Norman, Okla. 746 pp.)

On the same trip, the party observed a pair of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos borealis*) drilling holes in an apparent breeding area. The area is a stand of open pines that had been logged, but trees with Red-cockaded nests were left standing.

This is the second report of the Solitary Vireo nesting in McDuffie County. Denton (1962, *Oriole* 27: 1-6) reported this vireo nesting in the northeastern section of the county beside Georgia Highway 43.

—James W. Reinig, 1014 Stanton Drive, North Augusta, S. C. 29841.