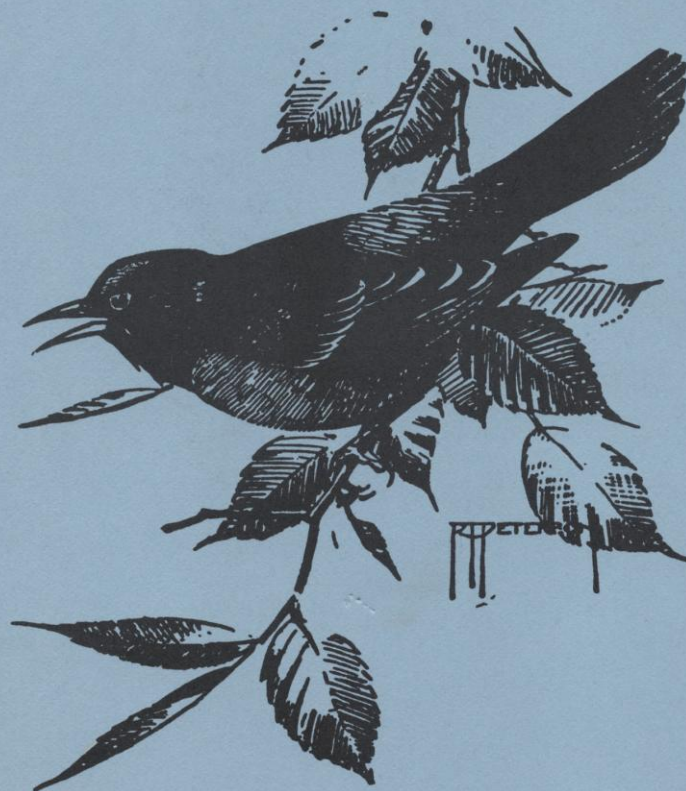


# THE ORIOLE

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NOS. 1 & 2

# THE ORIOLE

## EDITOR

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

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# THE ORIOLE

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## FIRST MODERN RECORD OF THE SCRUB JAY IN GEORGIA

By Terry S. Moore

While on a birding trip to the Georgia coast a Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) was observed by John Swiderski and the author on October 27, 1973, near the south end of Jekyll Island. The Scrub Jay has been on the Georgia hypothetical list on the basis of a bird shot by James M. Thompson in the Okefenokee Swamp during 1896. Unfortunately that specimen was lost. There have been no published records for Georgia since then.

The bird was found near the last group of houses on the seaward side of the south end of Jekyll Island. John and I had been observing a large flock of Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) feeding in some of the low scrubby bushes in that area and I decided to go back to the car, get my camera and take some pictures of the swallows. On the way back to the swallows a bird flew to the top of a nearby tree and gave a rasping call which definitely was unlike anything we had been hearing. Having binoculars in one hand and a camera in the other, I fumbled clumsily until finally getting the bird in my glasses. I could see the blue head, wings and tail, the gray area on the back and the necklace separating the white throat from the grayer undersides. Having seen the bird both in Florida and on several trips to the West, I realized that it was a Scrub Jay and was a new bird for the state. I frantically waved for John to join me and confirm the observation, but by the time I got his attention the bird was starting to move from the wooded area toward the houses.

By the time John arrived at the spot, the bird was about 50 yards away and moving even further. We gave chase, but could not keep up with it. We continued to search the area and after 30 minutes we again encountered the bird appearing out of the scrub growth. This time we kept track of its flight and discovered that it was going to a feeder, feeding for about a minute either on the ground below it or actually on it, and then flying back into the undergrowth. This performance was repeated three or four times over an hour's period of time.



At this time Mr. and Mrs. Millard R. Lindauer of Valley Stream, New York, drove by, noticed we were birding, and stopped. The Scrub Jay appeared within a few seconds and the Lindauers confirmed our identification as they had just visited Florida where they had seen the jay several times.

It was at this time that I was able to obtain pictures which, while not being of the best quality because of the poor light, were recognizably that of a Scrub Jay.

Upon returning to Atlanta that night we notified several birders around the state as to the jay's discovery, but as far as I know, the bird was not seen again. A cold front came through that afternoon and may have forced it to retire to the south.

The presence of this strictly Florida bird (in the East) was totally unexpected. While *Florida Bird Life* by Alexander Sprunt shows the Scrub Jay as being recorded in the Jacksonville area, it has shown no propensity to wander. The occurrence of this species and the appearance six months later of a Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) on Jekyll Island may represent simply accidental wanderings or a hitherto unknown spread of some of the distinctly Florida species.

Apt. 10-F, 1185 Collier Rd. NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30318

## ROSEATE SPOONBILLS IN GEORGIA AND TENNESSEE IN 1972

By Anne P. Hamilton

That there was a northward movement of Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) after the breeding season in 1972 is shown by their appearance in three areas of Georgia and one in Tennessee in the summer of that year. Prior to 1972 the one definite Georgia record was of a bird seen and photographed in the summer of 1934 at King's Pond in Liberty County (Burleigh, 1958). The three other possible records were all in south Georgia. The next definite records were in 1972.

On Saturday, 15 July at 09:00, Mr. and Mrs. Delano Crowe of Whitfield County spotted three spoonbills feeding in a small stockpond in a pasture 225 yards from their home. Use of 10X binoculars enabled them to see the spatulate bill and pink color on the birds. An earlier sighting of spoonbills in Florida aided in identification. The Crowes described the birds as having the pink of the young with no touch of carmine such as adults have on wings and tail. Mr. Crowe noted that one of the three stood constantly on guard while the other two fed. Sprunt (1954) quotes Audubon as writing that "when there are many together, one usually acts as sentinel." Although the pond, which was bordered by grass and reeds, had sometimes been visited by other water birds, there were no birds in company with the spoonbills.

On being reached by telephone, the writer and the late R. E. Hamilton went at once to the Crowe home eight miles north of Dalton. The birds had left, flying in a southwesterly direction according to Eugene Hall, a farmer working nearby. Although Mr. Hall was not familiar with spoonbills, he stated that "they were different" from water birds usually seen in this area. Since they flew toward the southwest, speculation arises as to whether these may have been the same spoonbills which were seen in Floyd County on the same day. It has not been possible to establish the time of arrival of spoonbills in the latter county due to the spotter's having moved away.

Hoping to verify the identification of the spoonbills, since they had never been recorded here before, the Hamiltons dug up squares of mud containing the two best tracks visible in the viscous black mud of the pond's edge. These were later conveyed by Harriett DiGioia to Tom French, then of Georgia State University, who made casts of the tracks. Mr. French stated (pers. comm.): "They are definitely spoonbill tracks



and will serve as a good permanent record for the occurrence of this species." The casts are in Mr. French's possession.

Another 1972 occurrence of spoonbills consisted of some immatures which were seen on a number of days in July at a stockpond in Floyd County (Oriole 37 [2-3]:12). These were photographed on 21 July by Robert Manns, who sent a photograph to the University of Georgia for verification and inclusion in state records. Further notes on these sightings are provided by Robert Todd, president of the Floyd County Audubon Society (pers. comm.):

"The chronology, according to my notes, is as follows: Howard Dorton, who was then director of cattle testing at the Georgia Experiment Station near Rome, noticed the spoonbills on 15 July. Mr. Dorton called Wilson Lovett on 17 July. Lovett said he saw five birds on 18 July. He and I found three on 19 July, feeding at the edge of the pond, 2.85 acres in a pasture of 28.5 acres, according to Howard Dorton.

They were all young birds, white with tinges of pink on the wings, one more so, with yellowish bills and upper legs yellowish to dark, lower legs and feet dark, almost black.

"On 20 July Lovett said there were five again; he mentioned no adults. On 21 July, 09:00 to 11:00, Bob Manns, southeastern Audubon representative, Mike Einhorn of Atlanta, Mr. and Mrs. Dorton, and I found the three sitting in a dead tree. With Mike's scope and Bob's telephoto lens we were able to get good views and pictures as close as 150 to 200 feet without disturbing the birds. They did not fly.

"On 21 July, 20:30 o'clock, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Strange, Mrs. Todd, and I observed the three birds again, feeding. On 22 July, 09:30 to 10:30, George Dorsey, Alan Spearman, and I found the three again in the dead tree, preening. About 10:30 after the appearance of a Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) flying over the pond, the spoonbills flew off and didn't return. We and the car were all of 200 to 300 yards from tree. Birds showed no signs of fear before taking off, circling pond once or twice. No loud noise or other apparent reason for the flight, except the egret? We remained til 11:30, hoping for return. Three other men checked the pond about 16:00, but found no spoonbills. The birds were not seen again after 22 July."

There were still further sightings of spoonbills in Georgia. "Some" were seen in Glynn County between 4 July and 28 August 1972 by Mickey Fountain (Oriole 39 [1]:11).

A few days before the Dalton and Rome sightings a lone spoonbill was identified in west central Tennessee. On 29 June 1972 at approximately 09:00 a faintly pink individual, the light color indicating a juvenile bird, was observed by staff members of the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge at its Duck River unit 10 miles southwest of Waverly, Tennessee. Identification was later corroborated by the refuge manager, V. L. Childs, and several members of T.O.S. Feeding in the shallows of a grassy pond, the spoonbill was in the company of several Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*), Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), and Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*). It was noted that the bird's bill was sweeping the waters in a wide arch as is true of its character." Contact with the spoonbill was lost on 1 July. However, this bird or another like it was again seen at close range on 13 July 1972 by Ernest Rauber and Carl Dowdy of the refuge staff (Rauber, 1972).

With these records for 1972 it is not surprising to learn that the year before in Florida, David W. Johnston reported that "a wide upstate scattering of Roseate Spoonbills included three in the extreme northeast, Amelia Island, on 16 October 1971" (Robertson, 1972).

It is not new that spoonbills wander northward at the end of the breeding season; one wonders, however, if their population has increased since these records constitute the greatest number of occurrences in one year in Georgia.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to Robert Todd for use of his notes on the occurrence of spoonbills in Floyd County, to Harriett DiGioia for transporting the tracks to Tom French, and to Mr. French for making casts of the tracks.

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704 Greenwood Drive, Dalton, Georgia 30720



## BARN OWLS AS MAMMAL COLLECTORS IN GEORGIA, ALABAMA, AND SOUTH CAROLINA

By Thomas W. French and Charles H. Wharton

Food habits are probably better known for the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) than for any other Southeastern raptor, because they tend to regurgitate pellets at specific roost sites, often in old buildings, rather than dispersing them through the woods as most owl species do. An analysis of pellets is not only of interest to the ornithologist, but also to the mammalogist, because the Barn Owl quite effectively samples old field habitats, taking small mammals which are often difficult to detect by trapping.

The Barn Owl is not a common species and is now included on the Blue List as a result of its decline in recent years (Arbib, 1974). The specific cause of this decline is not known for sure, but pesticides are implicated, since Barn Owls often hunt old fields and windrows in close association with heavily farmed areas.

The present study is based on the analysis of Barn Owl pellets collected from ten localities in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. A total of 2,077 animal specimens, 2,004 of which are mammals, were identified from these pellets. In each case whole pellets and materials from old crumbled pellets were collected. The number of each animal species was determined by a count of left and right mandible and maxillary bones. The number representing the most frequently occurring bone was assumed also to represent the total number of individuals.

The sites of collection are as follows: an abandoned house in Childersburg, Talladega County, Alabama; a tool shed at the Savannah Wildlife Refuge headquarters, Jasper County, South Carolina; under an oak tree at the Butler Island Waterfowl Management Area headquarters, McIntosh County, Georgia; an abandoned silo at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart County, Georgia; an abandoned silo at Ida Cason Callaway Gardens, Harris County, Georgia; a hog barn and a peach shed in Coweta County, Georgia; an abandoned antebellum house at the junction of I-20 and U.S. 278, Walton County, Georgia; an abandoned cotton gin in Rutledge, Morgan County, Georgia; at the mouth of a small cave in Ladd's Limestone Quarry, 2.5 miles S.W. of Cartersville, Bartow County, Georgia; and under a hollow Tulip Tree in Dalton, Whitfield County, Georgia. The three localities managed for waterfowl

(Jasper, McIntosh, and Stewart Counties) are located in the Coastal Plain Province and are typified by large expanses of low, wet, grassy fields which are seasonally flooded. All of the other localities are in the Appalachian Ridge and Valley or the Piedmont Provinces and are near upland oldfield habitats.

Not all of the mammal species identified range over the entire area included in this study. The meadow vole occurs on the southern limits of its range in the Piedmont of Georgia and was found only in owl pellets taken from Morgan and Walton Counties, Georgia. The eastern woodrat is absent from much of the Piedmont Province of these states and appears only in pellets from Jasper County, South Carolina. The meadow jumping mouse, taken in Coweta and Walton Counties, Georgia, is a northern form which reaches the southern limits of its range in the Piedmont Province of Georgia and Alabama. The white-footed mouse, found in pellets from Bartow and Walton Counties, Georgia, occurs over the northern half of Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. All of the other mammal species identified occur in suitable habitat throughout the study area.

Table 1 lists the mammals identified from each collection site. The cotton rat makes up the bulk of the Barn Owl's diet within the area covered by this study. In the northeastern United States the meadow vole fills the cotton rat niche and becomes the Barn Owl's staple. The next three most frequently occurring species are the least shrew, eastern harvest mouse, and rice rat. The first two species are common in oldfield habitats, the latter in low wet fields, such as marshes of the waterfowl management areas where it rivals the cotton rat as the more important prey species. House mice, meadow voles, pine voles, and short-tailed shrews are common oldfield inhabitants, although the latter two species are found in greater numbers in woodland habitats.

The remaining mammal species as well as birds, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates are probably taken on an opportunistic basis. The southeastern shrew, for instance, occurs occasionally in oldfields, but prefers wet river-bottom habitats; it has been reported from Barn Owl pellets on only three other occasions (Dusi, 1957; Engels, 1941; Nelson, 1934). Bats are also unusual prey species, and the Stewart County pellets probably indicate that they were roosting in the same silo as the owls.

The following birds, frogs, and invertebrates were identified from the pellets: unidentified sparrows, 9; Redwing Blackbirds, 7; Bobwhite, 5; Rock Dove, 5; Eastern Meadowlark, 5; unidentified warblers, 5;



Table 1. Small mammals identified from Barn Owl pellets

	Talladega Co., Ala.	Jasper Co., S. C.	McIntosh Co., Ga.	Stewart Co., Ga.	Harris Co., Ga.
Cotton Rat ( <i>Sigmodon hispidus</i> )	68	30	59	120	31
Least Shrew ( <i>Cryptotis parva</i> )	2		1	6	
E. Harvest Mouse ( <i>Reithrodontomys hummulis</i> )	11			3	
Rice Rat ( <i>Oryzomys palustris</i> )	1	6	66	74	
Short-tailed Shrew ( <i>Blarina brevicauda</i> )	5	2		4	
Meadow Vole ( <i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i> )					
Pine Vole ( <i>Microtus pinetorum</i> )	8				
House Mouse ( <i>Mus musculus</i> )	12		7	8	
White-footed Mouse ( <i>Peromyscus leucopus</i> )					
Cottontail Rabbit baby ( <i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i> )	1			3	
Meadow Jumping Mouse ( <i>Zapus hudsonius</i> )					
Big Brown Bat ( <i>Eptesicus fuscus</i> )				9	
Southeastern Shrew ( <i>Sorex longirostris</i> )					
Oldfield Mouse ( <i>Peromyscus polionotus</i> )				1	1
Free-tailed Bat ( <i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i> )				1	
Gray Squirrel ( <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i> )					
Cotton Mouse ( <i>Peromyscus gossypinus</i> )					1*
E. Wood Rat ( <i>Neotoma floridana</i> )		1			
Black Rat ( <i>Rattus rattus</i> )		1			

\*New county mammal records

taken at roosts in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina.

	Coweta Co., Ga.	Walton Co., Ga.	Morgan Co., Ga.	Bartow Co., Ga.	Whitfield Co., Ga.	Total	% of total food items consumed
	117	653	48	7	5	1138	54.8
	3	246	11	1		270	13.0
	7	121	21	3		166	8.0
	1					148	7.1
	9	37		8	1	66	3.2
		46*	18*			64	3.1
	10	20	1	5	2	46	2.2
	2	13	1			43	2.1
		16		1*		17	.82
		8				12	.58
	2	10*				12	.58
						9	.43
		6*				6	.29
						2	.10
						1	.05
					1	1	.05
						1	.05
						1	.05
						1	.05

Virginia Rail, 3; Sora Rail, 2; Screech Owl, 1; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 1; Mockingbird, 1; Robin, 1; Eastern Bluebird, 1; unidentified thrush, 1; Starling, 1; Common Grackle, 1; unidentified birds, 9; frogs (*Rana* sp.), 2; large grasshoppers, 4; scarab beetles, 2; and crayfish, 1. It has been suggested that birds are taken by mistake because of their resemblance to small mammals as they move through heavy cover in fields or marshes (Bent, 1938). Some of the bird species identified in this study do inhabit open areas, but some were more likely encountered at Barn Owl roost sites. Rock Dove were almost surely taken at roost sites, but their capture is surprisingly infrequent, considering the numbers observed roosting and/or nesting in close association with the owls.

A note of caution: Histoplasmosis, a fungal infection of the lungs, can be contracted by inhaling spores which are known to occur in the droppings of bats and birds, such as pigeons. When collecting pellets, as little dust as possible should be stirred up and inhaled or a weak formalin solution can be sprayed over the pellets to kill any *Histoplasma* which may have been present.

The authors express their gratitude to Harriett G. DiGioia and her son for collecting the pellets from Whitfield County, Georgia, and to Carol Ruckdeschel for collecting and cleaning the Coweta and McIntosh County pellets.

Department of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36830, and Department of Biology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

### GENERAL NOTES

NESTING FAILURE OF BLACK SKIMMERS ON LITTLE ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA. - Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*) nesting success was monitored on Little St. Simons Island (L.S.S.I.) during 1972 and 1973. The nesting site was a windblown sandy area located on the north end of the island. L.S.S.I. is located in Glynn County, Georgia.

On July 1, 1972, a colony of nesting Black Skimmers was located on the north end of L.S.S.I. Each nest was a depression in the sand about the size of a coffee cup and was devoid of feathers and organic material. Forty-two nests were found containing seventy-eight eggs ( $\bar{x}$  = 1.85 eggs per nest). The nests were inspected again July 3, 1972, and only eighteen eggs remained. The nesting area was littered with eggshell fragments and many raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) tracks were present. That night the area was hunted with a spotlight, and two adult male raccoons (Sanderson, 1961) were collected. Eggshell fragments were found in their stomachs. Inspection of the nesting area revealed that all eighteen eggs had been destroyed.

Fourteen days later a nesting colony of Black Skimmers was found five hundred yards east and across Sancho Panza Creek from the original nesting site. Twenty-three nests containing forty-one eggs ( $\bar{x}$  = 1.78 eggs per nest) were examined. Spring tides heightened by strong north-east winds inundated the nesting site two days later. All the eggs were destroyed, and no other nesting attempts were found. A similar incident occurred to Royal Tern nests on Little Egg Island (Kale et al, 1965).

On June 21, 1973, seventy-two Black Skimmer nests were found on approximately the same area as the first nesting attempt in 1972. One hundred and twenty-nine eggs were counted ( $\bar{x}$  = 1.79 eggs per nest). Three days later all the eggs had been destroyed. Eggshell fragments and an abundance of raccoon tracks indicated that the nests had been destroyed by raccoons.

Kale (1967) banded Black Skimmer nestlings on Little Egg Island, but did not mention nesting success in his account. Incidents of raccoon depredation on quail (Breece and Causey, 1973), turkey (Cook, 1972), and wood duck (Beshears, 1974) nests have been documented. Johnson (1970) felt that egg-eating was a learned behavior in raccoons. Nest depredation appears accelerated at colony nesting sites due to the large number of eggs present. The high population of raccoons along the



Georgia coast apparently plays an important role in shore bird nesting success or failure.

Hanson and Eberhart (1971) found a similar incident when coyotes swam small rivers to reach Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) nests on small islands. Once these islands were reached, the coyotes would search out and destroy the goose nests. Due to raccoon depredation and extreme high tides, Black Skimmer nesting attempts on L.S.S.I. were a complete failure during 1972 and 1973.

Based on this study and the findings of Hanson and Eberhart (1971), predator control may be deemed necessary and justifiable during the nesting periods of some birds. It may prove especially desirable on areas where potentially endangered or threatened birds nest.

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Mickey Fountain, Rt. 4, Box 1, Hazlehurst, Georgia 31539.  
June 10, 1975

BREEDING OF THE AMERICAN KESTREL IN RICHMOND COUNTY WITH COMMENTS ON ITS STATUS IN MIDDLE GEORGIA—Although a common winter resident, the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) is a rare breeding bird in Richmond County and other

counties along the Fall Line in Middle Georgia. Apparently it was formerly more common in the Middle Savannah Valley and presumably in Richmond County. Murphey (1937. Observations on the Bird Life of the Middle Savannah Valley, 1890-1937. Contr. Charleston Mus., IX) states concerning this species "P.r. Common. Breeds in deserted Flicker holes, etc." However, the only actual breeding record cited by him was for Edgefield County, S. C.

During the 32 years (1942-74) that I have lived in Augusta the Kestrel has been recorded in Richmond County during the breeding season (April 15 - August 15) only seven times other than the breeding records described below.

At Macon, D. W. Johnston (1955. A Preliminary List of the Birds of Macon, Georgia, and Vicinity, mimeographed) gives the Kestrel's status as a permanent resident, casual, rare or accidental in summer. Later he reported (1959. *The Oriole*, 24:28) that a pair nested in the steeple of the Administration Building on the Mercer University campus within the city of Macon during April-May 1959. There is one earlier record for Macon, a nest I found in May, 1930, in a Flicker hole 10 feet up in a dead Loblolly Pine at the edge of a field that had not been cultivated for three years. As far as I can determine there are no definite breeding records for the Kestrel in the Columbus area.

It was of interest when I learned that during the second week of June, 1974, Dale Holt of Augusta had captured a not fully fledged Kestrel inside the second floor of an abandoned barracks at Fort Gordon in Richmond County. He was able to keep the bird alive until it developed its juvenile plumage.

On June 30, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Gibbs and I went to Fort Gordon to check further on the breeding birds. Soon after getting out of the car at the barracks we spotted the adult male Kestrel perched in the highest pine tree in the area. As we watched he gave his characteristic *killy* note several times. A little later we observed the female feeding two recently fledged young on a power line about 50 yards from where the male was perched. A passing car soon flushed the birds from the wire, but they remained in the general area. Although it seems certain that the birds nested inside the barracks, we were unable to locate the exact site of the nest. Further investigation revealed that Kestrels have nested on the reservation for several years. Tom Murphy, a wildlife technician at the Fort, reported that in both 1970 and 1971 a pair nested successfully in the rafters of an old barracks at the Fort Riding Stable located some 10 miles



west of the main barracks area. The barracks were no longer occupied by personnel, but were being used for storage. In 1971 Murphy captured one of the fledglings for studies at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory.

Obviously the American Kestrel is an uncommon to rare breeding bird in Georgia, especially near the Fall Line, and all records of nesting should be reported. I am indebted to Tom Murphy and Gerald E. Knighton for allowing me to include their records in this report.

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

**AN UNUSUALLY FINE UPLAND SHOREBIRD HABITAT**—On August 17, 1974, I drove from my home in Gainesville to Wayne Poultry Company in Pendergrass, Jackson County, Georgia, to try to find some Grasshopper Sparrows that had been described to me.

Wayne, a division of Allied Mills, operates a poultry slaughter plant there and uses as its waste disposal system a series of four oxidation ponds. The first pond is smaller than the others and is continually partially covered with a crust consisting probably of a mixture of fats, oils, algae. The crust shifts from one side of the pond to the other depending on the wind direction. It is so thick in places that it has Bermuda grass growing on it. Upon my arrival I noticed at once that there were shorebirds walking around on the crust and feeding on it, a kind of "floating block of suet." In only the two partial migration seasons that I have been observing this habitat it has produced some unusual sightings for me.

On September 7, 1974, Jack Carusos and I found a Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). This seems to be further inland than any other Georgia record I can find. On September 21, 1974, Jack and I found a White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) feeding on the crust.

On April 5, 1975, while birding the ponds with Doyle Land, I discovered an American Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*). Several G. O. S. Members from Atlanta came up the next day and found that there were, in fact, three Plovers there.

Some of the other species that I have observed at this location in the eight months I have been watching it are: Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), Solitary

Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*), Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*), Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*), Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) (often) 1/18 & 2/10/75, Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusillus*), Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*), Common Snipe (*Capella gallinago*), Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*).

Pendergrass, Ga., is located at the junction of I-85 and U.S. 129 between Gainesville and Athens.

John M. Paget, 1530 Vine St. N.E., Gainesville, Georgia 30501

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER SIGHTED IN LAURENS COUNTY**—On April 8, 1975, a male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) was sighted in Laurens County. This bird was seen while I was carrying out my duties as a County Extension Agent. I had gone on a call that morning with a co-worker, Coy Jones. The observation was made on the Gordon Forbes farm adjacent to the Green Acres Golf Course near Dexter, Georgia. The bird was spotted around 9:30 a.m. on a typical sunny spring morning. It was observed for several minutes.

At first I thought it was a Mocking Bird carrying nesting material. Closer observation proved the "nesting material" actually to be the streaming tail feathers of the bird. While observing the bird it performed its classical aerobatics along a fence row which divided a pasture and a paved road. The long scissored-tail and pinkish side markings made the bird easy to identify. Coy and I observed the bird from a distance of approximately fifty feet as it flew along the roadside.

The bird was not seen again upon return visits.

Paul C. Riddle, P. O. Box 1366, Dublin, Georgia 31021



## FROM THE FIELD

Golden Eagles were seen at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge (2 on 25 January 1975 by William and Terry Moore) and at Lake Oliver, near Columbus (1 on 6 February by L. A. Wells and others). Of the many (20+) Short-eared Owls present on the *Alabama* side of Eufaula this winter, at least one found its way to the Georgia side where it was seen by Mike Fuller on 13 January. Least Sandpipers were also at Eufaula in January (7 on the 25th and 1 on the 26th by Henry M. Stevenson) and the Moores reported 1 Le Conte's and 1 Sharp-tailed Sparrow there on 25 January. Milton Hopkins noted 75-100+ Sandhill Cranes in Ben Hill County on 1 March and he and his family had their first local record of a Peregrine Falcon on 24 and 25 March. Purple Martins arrived early near Sylvester, with "scouts" being noted there on 23 January (Albany Audubon Society). From Thomas County, Leon Neel reported a Red-breasted Nuthatch on 17 January and 2 Ruddy Ducks on 3 February. A male Western Tanager was present in Thomasville for the fourth consecutive winter and was still coming regularly to Mrs. E. J. Williamson's feeder through 31 March.

(Compiled by Robert L. Crawford, Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32303)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you ride down the highway a bird flushes from the side of the road and glides to a landing in an adjacent field. Instinctively you know the image you saw was a Meadowlark. In recent trips around the state, at meetings with Conservation Organizations and in conversations with out-of-state ornithologists and members of ornithological societies, the reflected image I have received of G.O.S. is excellent.

In fact, sometimes it has been hard to recognize the G.O.S. I know from the image we portray to outsiders. Upon reflecting on this the reason is fairly obvious. Over the years a relative minority of members has been quite active. Their field notes and articles in *The Oriole* have drawn attention to our society. Our semi-annual meetings have attracted some out-of-state attendees and people like Joe Taylor from New York have expressed an interest in our area and the activities of our society.

Now, I've always felt that birding was a personal experience. It could span the range from back yard feeding to the development of life history material for one or more species. What was important was the inner satisfaction each individual derived from his birding activities. I have not changed this position, but I have expanded upon it.

I no longer feel it is sufficient only to enjoy birding while others fight (and fight it is) to assure the preservation of habitat that provides the birds we watch, or to stand idly by allowing others to do battle to restrict the use of harmful pesticides. Neither is it for only a few to pass on data that contribute to the knowledge of bird life in Georgia.

Let each of us enjoy birding in his own way, but let us as individuals and as a society contribute more to the field of ornithology, the conservation of necessary habitat, and to the maintenance of that image that G.O.S. reflects to other active birders throughout the country. In this way we will have fulfilled the purpose of our society and have increased our own self-satisfaction in having made a worthwhile contribution to the knowledge of bird lore today and the assurance of birding tomorrow.

We need more people who will come forward to take a personal, active interest and participate in G.O.S. affairs. Don't wait to be asked - we don't know all of you and your talents. Come forward; there is much to be done.

Wallace D. Dreyfoos



**RECENT LITERATURE**

**BIRD BEHAVIOR**—by Philip S. Callahan. Illustrated. Four Winds Press, New York. 188 Pages. \$7.95.

This, the fifth book by Philip S. Callahan, Ph.D., Kansas State, professor of entomology at U. of Fla., is catalogued as juvenile literature. However, it is recommended for any student of birds without formal training in ornithology.

After the "Introduction: Birds around Us," the dominant chapter, "Biological Architecture: The Form of Birds," shows "How the behavior of birds depends on the special shape and form of each individual species. Birds fit their environment: that is, they live, reproduce, feed, and move about - according to how efficiently their particular form enables them to function in their particular environment. Each species has evolved its form...and the environment has helped to shape that form."

Nine expansive but significant chapters follow. These include: Reproduction: Survival Chain; Of Home and Weather: Where Birds Live; Bird Territories; Bird Defense; Bird Journeys: Migration and Dispersal; and Bird Communication: Song and Display.

The final chapter, Fun with Birds, discusses identification literature, binoculars, form, life histories, suggested outlines for study, cover mapping and population studies, activity recordings, and the cage. A glossary, a selected reading list, and the index complete the text.

Scanning electron microscope photographs and line drawings supplement the live photography.

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



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**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."

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