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# THE ORIOLE

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## FURTHER NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THOMAS COUNTY, GEORGIA

Robert L. Crawford and Leon Neel

Crawford and Dozier (1973) presented an annotated list of birds from Thomas County. Since the manuscript for that paper was completed (August 1972), field work in the county has resulted in several new records which are presented here. In the annotated list, the ten species new to the county are noted by an asterisk (\*). Several species had their migration extreme dates modified somewhat and these are summarized in Table 2. We would like to thank the following who have contributed in many ways: Mrs. Green Alday, W. Wilson Baker, John A. Bracey, Mrs. W. C. Crawford, D. Jack Dozier, Eugene Driver, Roy Komarek, Mrs. W. H. Neel, Noel O. Wamer, Charles Watt, and Mrs. E. J. Williamson. In the following list and tables, common and scientific names follow the A. O. U. Checklist (1957) and its thirty-second supplement (A. O. U. 1973).

### Common Loon *Gavia immer*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 1 on 7 November 1972. On 2 April 1974 W. W. Baker, Crawford, Neel, Storrs L. Olson, and others saw 5 loons circling at about 50 m altitude in the face of a sudden thunderstorm. The loons circled about three minutes before heading north. Williams (1973) noted occasional sightings of loons in northwest Florida which apparently make up a regular northward migration from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes region. Normally they fly at about 500 m and are rarely observed. Olson noted the time of our observation (10:00), which correlates with Williams' records of the loons leaving the Gulf (about 95 km south of Thomas County) between just after sunrise and 09:30.

### Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 1 on 20 November 1972.

### Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Previous: 4 records. Recent: in addition to the previous records, the following observations would seem to place the cormorant as an uncommon winter visitant: 4 on 11 February 1973, 1 on 12 February 1973, 4 on 6 February 1974, 3 on 1 April 1974, and 1 on 8



January 1975. Apparently, they can be expected from August through April.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

Previous: 2 records. Recent: 3 on 31 March and 1 on 1 April 1973; 1 on 7 May 1975. The May record probably indicates a breeding population.

Fulvous Tree Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*\*

About 200 present 11 January - 6 February 1974 (Neel and Crawford 1974).

Anatidae

Crawford and Dozier (1973) were unable to state with certainty the relative abundance of several of the species of ducks known from the county because most of the wintering ducks are found on private ponds to which public access is limited. Through the cooperation of Wilber Gibson, manager of Millpond Plantation, duck counts were made during the winters of 1973-74 and 1974-75 on Gary Pond, one of the best of these private hunting ponds, and on two smaller nearby ponds. These counts were taken as part of the annual Christmas Bird Counts in December and just prior to draining the ponds in February (a practice described by Neel and Crawford, 1974). The results of these counts are given in Table 1. Also in Table 1 are duck harvest data from Thomas County for the years 1961-70, taken from the files of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Carney et al. 1975, pp. 98-99). Although the duck harvest figures are in part estimates, they do compliment our own counts, particularly in the case of the Ring-necked Duck which is one of the most abundant species.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 1 on 30 November 1973.

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis*\*

On 17 November 1973, Crawford and J. A. Bracey saw 4 cranes flying south over Thomasville.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula chloropus*

Crawford and Dozier (1973) reported downy young on 9 September 1964. The date was incorrect and should have been 9 August 1964.

American Woodcock *Philohela minor*

An adult with 4 downy young on 8 March 1974 is the first positive evidence of woodcocks breeding in the county.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*\*

Eighteen were seen on 11 April 1975 by Crawford and N. O. Wamer after a day and night of steady rain which apparently forced these birds and several other species of shorebirds and gulls down where they were seen in and near dairy fields.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 7 on 11 April 1975; 1 on 9 July 1975.

**Table 1.** Species and numbers of ducks counted on 3 ponds (mainly Gary Pond, Millpond Plantation) in Thomas County, Georgia. Data from Carney et al. (1975) are duck harvest data from Thomas County for the years 1961-70 (see text).

| SPECIES                      | 23 Dec<br>1973 | 6 Feb<br>1974 | 22 Dec<br>1974 | 5 Feb<br>1975 | Carney et<br>al. 1975 |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Fulvous Tree Duck            |                | 1             |                |               |                       |
| <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>   |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Mallard                      | 50             | 155           | 10             | 10            |                       |
| <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>    |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Black Duck                   | 2              | 2             |                |               | 7                     |
| <i>Anas rubripes</i>         |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Gadwall                      | 2              |               | 2              | 1             |                       |
| <i>Anas strepera</i>         |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Pintail                      | 1              | 20            |                |               |                       |
| <i>Anas acuta</i>            |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Green-winged Teal            |                | 4             | 5              | 15            | 49                    |
| <i>Anas crecca</i>           |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Blue-winged Teal             |                | 6             | 50             | 80            |                       |
| <i>Anas discors</i>          |                |               |                |               |                       |
| American Wigeon              | 8              | 110           | 75*            | 300           |                       |
| <i>Anas americana</i>        |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Northern Shoveler            | 1              | 47            | 2              | 20            | 4                     |
| <i>Anas clypeata</i>         |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Wood Duck                    | 35             | 3             | 50             |               | 243                   |
| <i>Aix sponsa</i>            |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Ring-necked Duck             | 25             | 14            | 45             | 60            | 208                   |
| <i>Aythya collaris</i>       |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Lesser Scaup                 | 1              |               | 1              |               |                       |
| <i>Aythya affinis</i>        |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Common Goldeneye             |                |               |                |               | 7                     |
| <i>Bucephala clangula</i>    |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Bufflehead                   | 1              |               |                |               |                       |
| <i>Bucephala albeola</i>     |                |               |                |               |                       |
| Hooded Merganser             | 1              |               |                |               |                       |
| <i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i> |                |               |                |               |                       |

\*This is a new early fall date for this species.



Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*\*

Eight on 11 April 1975.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 2 on 11 April 1975; 1 on 9 July 1975.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Previous: 1 record. Recent: 6 on 27 July 1974.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Previous: 2 records. Recent: 1 on 11 April 1975.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*\*

Ten seen on 11 April 1975.

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia*\*

One was seen on 18 December 1974 on a small pond in suburban Thomasville.

Black Tern *Chidonias niger*\*

Five were seen on 15 August 1974.

White-winged Dove *Zenaidura macroura*\*

One was seen at very close range (4 m) on 11 April 1975 by Crawford and Wamer. The bird seemed to have an injury to its right leg. If the wound was acquired the previous fall or winter, it might account for the bird's presence here in the spring which is most unusual.

Belted Kingfisher *Megascops asio*

In April 1973 (and again in 1974) kingfishers were seen flying in and out of burrows made in the clay bank of a railroad cut. Previously, we had no direct evidence of their breeding in the county.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*\*

One taken 21 September 1972 (specimen, see Crawford 1974).

Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

In April 1973, Roy Komarek noted Rough-wings flying about a railroad cut. Later, 10-12 pair were seen flying in and out of burrows made into the bank of this cut. The kingfishers noted above were nesting adjacent to the swallows, and as was the case with the kingfishers, this was the first direct evidence of Rough-wings breeding in the county.

Long-billed Marsh Wren *Telmatodytes palustris*

This species is now considered a regular but uncommon winter resident in the county for it has been recorded on every Christmas Bird County since 1969. They have been seen as early as 23 October (1972) in the fall.

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*

Formally considered only a winter resident in the county, catbirds are now known to breed, but apparently only sparingly. Neel's mother, Mrs. W. H. Neel, had seen catbirds around her home in Thomasville during the summer of 1974. When they re-appeared the following summer, an effort was made to see if breeding birds were involved. On 2 July 1975, a nest with 3 young was found by Baker, Crawford, and Wamer near Mrs. Neel's home. The nest was about 4 m high in a patch of bamboo. One of the nestlings was collected and prepared as a voucher specimen (Tall Timbers Research Station #3295); a second specimen was obtained on 8 July (TTRS #3296). The possibility that more than this one pair might be in Thomasville was evidenced by the sighting of a catbird on 12 July 1975 by D. J. Dozier (pers. comm.) about 0.5 km west of Mrs. Neel's home.

While this may be the southernmost nesting record in Georgia, there is some evidence that the occurrence is not an isolated case, for they have been seen in summer in several of the southern counties. Hillestad et al. (1975, p. 265) listed the catbird as 'known to nest' in Camden County and Burleigh (1958, p. 441) noted 2 birds seen by Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr. on 29 July 1948 in Grady County. Stoddard's manuscript *The Birds of Grady County, Georgia* notes an additional sighting on 30 June 1955. Dozier (pers. comm.) saw 2 adult and 2 recently fledged catbirds in Valdosta (Lowndes County) in early July 1973 and a pair of adults in Lanier County in June 1969. Farther south, Howell (1932, p. 357) listed several scattered (and old) nesting records in northern and central Florida.

Thus in Thomas County, catbirds can be considered a permanent resident, common in winter and a rare breeder in the summer. Apparently non-breeding birds have been seen as early as 12 August (1974) and as late as 20 May (1975).

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

Previous: 1 record (25 March 1954, see Crawford 1974). Recent: 4 on 16 December, 1 on 17 December, and 1 on 22 December 1973 by Crawford and Dozier. Though Brewer's Blackbirds may well be of regular occurrence in the winter, they appear to be far from common.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Previously unknown in the summer, 8 were seen on 24 June 1973. They undoubtedly breed, as young have been found in adjacent Grady County (Crawford 1974).



Table 2. New migration extreme dates for some Thomas County birds established September 1972-July 1975. EF, LF, ES, and LS are early fall, late fall, early spring, and late spring respectively.

|   |                                 |  |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Blue-winged Teal<br><i>Anas discors</i>       | 20 on 16 Aug 1973—EF            | Eastern Phoebe<br><i>Sayornis phoebe</i> | 1 on 23 Sep 1972—EF             |
| Canvasback<br><i>Aythya valisineria</i>       | 1 <sup>a</sup> on 5 Dec 1974—EF | Tree Swallow                             | 6 on 1 Apr 1974—LS              |
| Bufflehead<br><i>Bucephala albeola</i>        | 2 on 30 Nov 1973—EF             | <i>Iridoprocne bicolor</i>               | 1 on 14 Feb 1973—ES             |
| Spotted Sandpiper<br><i>Actitis macularia</i> | 1 on 11 Apr 1975—ES             | Purple Martin                            | 1 on 14 Nov 1973—EF             |
| Solitary Sandpiper                            | 1 on 27 Jul 1974—ES             | <i>Progne subis</i>                      | 2 on 29 Sep 1972—EF             |
| Tringa solitaria                              | 1 on 11 Apr 1975—ES             | Short-billed Marsh Wren                  | 1 <sup>b</sup> on 2 Mar 1974—ES |
| Whip-poor-will                                | 1 on 9 Jul 1975—EF              | <i>Cistothorus platensis</i>             | 2 on 17 Nov 1972—EF             |
| <i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>                  | 1 on 30 Aug 1972—EF             | Bay-breasted Warbler                     |                                 |
|   |                                 | <i>Dendroica castanea</i>                |                                 |
|   |                                 | Blackpoll Warbler                        |                                 |
|   |                                 | <i>Dendroica striata</i>                 |                                 |
|   |                                 | Purple Finch                             |                                 |
|   |                                 | <i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>              |                                 |

<sup>a</sup> specimen, Tall Timbers Research Station # 3294.

<sup>b</sup> specimen, see Crawford and Watt (1974).

#### Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana*

Previous: 3 records. Recent: a male Western Tanager frequented 3 neighboring feeders in Thomasville for four winters. Mrs. E. J. Williamson has noted the following extreme dates:

| arrival      | departure    |
|--------------|--------------|
| 13 Feb. 1972 | 24 Apr. 1972 |
| 24 Oct. 1972 | 13 Apr. 1973 |
| 29 Oct. 1973 | 25 Apr. 1974 |
| 27 Oct. 1974 | 12 Apr. 1975 |

#### Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*

Previous: 2 records. Recent: 1 on 27 December 1972 (Dozier), 2 on 19 December and 3 on 22 December 1974 (Crawford and Wamer).

#### Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*\*

Eugene Driver has reported an old (but careful) sighting of this species by him on 7 April 1958.

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# BREEDING RECORDS OF SOME POND AND MARSH BIRDS IN LAURENS COUNTY, GEORGIA

Thomas K. Patterson

Laurens County, in the upper Coastal Plain of Georgia, provides excellent opportunities for the investigation of the nesting areas of the pond and marsh birds which breed in the area. These species, as they make their way north in the early spring, are possibly attracted to the area by the Oconee River Basin, which divides the county into near equal parts. Upon arrival, the numerous "wet weather" ponds and small marshes in the county provide the incentive to remain. The ponds, though they may be totally dry in the fall, may become lakes as the water table rises with the winter and spring rains. In the marshes are the appropriate grasses and rushes for nesting sites — maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*), juncus (*Juncus*), bullrush (*Scirpus*), and pickerel weed (*Pontederia*).

The areas investigated for these records are all east of the river, and most are in "Buckeye" (the Buckeye Militia District) which is the north-eastern section of the county. Two of the marshes reported were extensively investigated in the spring of 1971 by my son, Hunter Patterson, with some assistance from me; and all 1971 records are from his notes. His work prompted me to re-investigate these marshes in the breeding season of 1975. These two areas have been named "Buckeye Marsh" and "Pasture Marsh" for the purpose of recording only, and are not commonly known in the community by those names.

The Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) was found to be a common breeding bird. Ten nests were located, seven of which were active.

Three of the floating nests were found at Pasture Marsh, a small watering pond with four acres of marsh grasses, principally juncus and maidencane. On May 31, 1975, two active nests were located, one nest containing only a single egg, and the other holding five eggs. A third nest, inactive, was found on June 7th. By that date, the other nests had become inactive.

At Buckeye Marsh, two inactive nests and another with only one egg — probably abandoned — were discovered on June 14th.

On July 6th, at Sandpiper Pasture, a 5 acre "wet weather" pond, I observed an adult Grebe dive and resurface with food in its bill. Rather than swallowing the food, as I had expected, it paddled some 75 feet, and deposited it into a small clump of grasses. Although the area was not investigated, observation through a scope revealed that there was movement and activity, suggesting that there were young in a nest.

On May 24th, at a pond adjacent to Interstate 16, three miles east of the river, another Grebe was observed brooding on the nest.

At this same pond, as I travelled I-16 on April 30, 1975, I observed an adult Grebe at a willow (*Salix sp.*) in shallow water between the high-way embankment and the right-of-way fence. Nest building was suspected, and was confirmed a week later. As I approached the nest on May 10th, the adult could be seen busily covering the eggs, a behavior that I witnessed on many occasions. Investigation revealed six well-covered eggs in the nest, which was loosely attached to the willows in such a manner that it could rise or fall with the level of the water. Incubation was in process for the next three weeks; and on May 31st, there were three chicks in the nest, the youngest obviously having just hatched. On June 7th, the nest appeared to be abandoned, although a single egg remained.

On July 10, 1975, I observed a pair of Pied-billed Grebes at Sandpiper Pasture engaged in what appeared to be a nest building activity. A subsequent investigation of the site on July 27th disclosed nine partially covered eggs. The nest appeared to be floating freely; but, on closer investigation, it was found to be attached to underwater vegetation. On August 2nd, the nine eggs remained; but on the following day, there were seven eggs and one young. On August 4th, there were five eggs and one chick which was obviously just out of the egg. As young as it was, it made a strong, but unsuccessful attempt to exit the nest. Two other young were "peeping" their brood call from a few yards away. On my last visit to the nest on August 6th, the three young scrambled out of the nest as I approached, leaving five eggs in the nest and a dead salamander (*Urodella*), probably placed there by the adult, either for its own later use, or for the young.

In my investigation of the nest of the Pied-billed Grebe, I witnessed two of the reported breeding behaviors.

On two occasions, as I approached an area in which there was an active nest and one that had recently become inactive, an adult Grebe attracted my attention by spanking the water with its wing, emitting a loud, raucous "keek", and then diving noisily only to resurface a few feet farther away. This behavior was repeated several times, until I had been drawn a sufficient distance from the source of concern. The adult then disappeared, becoming silent and inconspicuous, as is its usual nature.

At another time, as I observed from a distance a nest with young, the adult Grebe approached cautiously with a series of dives. When it resurfaced only fifteen feet from the nest, it issued a call to the three young, who rapidly closed the distance, scrambled onto the adult's back and then under its wings. When the young were secure, the adult submerged, resurfacing some twenty feet farther out in open water.

A small Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) rookery has developed at Bracewell's Pond in East Dublin, Georgia. The 10 acre pond, known for the past few years as a roosting site for the bird, is surrounded by residential area, but is somewhat protected by its marshy edges. The



outer edges of open water surround a group of small cypress (*Taxodium* sp.) trees which provide the birds with their perches for roosting. A number of nest-like constructions seen in the cypress trees in late 1974 suggested that breeding may have occurred at the pond.

On July 19, 1975, there were 20 to 30 birds in the trees at noon, an unusual midday observation. The pond was visited at least weekly thereafter, with the following significant observations:

July 26 — A few birds were incubating, others were engaged in nest building.

August 2 — Approximately 200-300 birds were in the trees at midday, many brooding.

August 9 — Investigation of the area by boat resulted in a count of 122 nest constructions. The nests, of twigs and sticks, ranged from four feet above water level to as high as twenty-five feet. The few nests which could be examined contained either two or three blue eggs.

August 17 — Investigation revealed that a few nests contained downy young.

September 6 — Investigation showed that breeding in the area was complete and successful.

September 26 — Many of the young birds had apparently fledged and were leaving the nest.

October 5 — Only forty of the young birds, apparently unfledged, were in the trees at midday.

October 11 — All birds had apparently fledged, with the exception of two, which were in the trees stretching their wings.

Although several nesting sites of the Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) have been known in the past five years, none has been investigated. However, on July 19, 1975, at Ben Hall Lake, a well-known 200 acre lake in the community, a Green Heron was flushed from a nest containing four downy young. The well cupped nest of fine twigs and willow stems at the edge of a channel was in the willows, about three feet above water level.

Searches for the breeding sites of the Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) yielded a total of eight nests, four of which were active. Buckeye Marsh, covering an area of about twelve acres, with 10% being open water, is favored by the birds. A field of maidencane and juncus, with patches of pickerel weed and other grasses and rushes, the marsh is also an April haven for the migrating American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), the Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), and the Sora Rail (*Porzana carolina*).

Investigation of Buckeye Marsh in 1971 on eleven occasions between April 11 and May 29 produced four sightings of Least Bitterns and a single nest. The nest, discovered on May 29th, contained four light blue eggs.

Investigation of the same area five times between May 24, 1975, and June 28th resulted in thirty-eight observations, three active nests, and three inactive nests. On May 31st, with Hunter Patterson, a total of fifteen Least Bitterns were flushed, probably six or eight individuals; and three active nests were located. Two of the nests, one holding four eggs, the other five, were found in juncus; the other, with four eggs, was in maidencane. Whether this increase in activity between 1971 and 1975 is due to an area population increase, or only to the local conditions of the marsh, is not known.

As one of the nests was approached, it was apparent that a young Bittern was in the process of breaking through his confining eggshell. Within a matter of five minutes, the exhausted, naked young bird had emerged.

Subsequent investigations of Buckeye Marsh produced three other nesting sites, all inactive.

At Pasture Marsh, on May 31st, there were two observations and a single nest find, four eggs in juncus. A later investigation produced another inactive nest, also in juncus.

The King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) also finds Buckeye Marsh suitable for breeding.

On May 8, 1971, an adult was observed brooding on the nest. The nest contained twelve rather fresh eggs and a crayfish (*Astacus* sp. or *Cambarus* sp.), presumably placed there for the nest meal. On subsequent investigation May 29th, the nest was apparently abandoned, with a single egg remaining.

1975 investigations yielded three active nests. On May 24th, a single nest containing only four eggs was found in maidencane at the edge of the marsh. A week later, one egg was floating in the water below the abandoned nest. On June 14th, an adult was observed brooding on seven eggs in a nest in pickerel weed. On the same day, a nest containing only five eggs in maidencane was located. Both of these nests were inactive when visited on June 22nd.

In September of 1974, a pair of adult Common Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus*) was observed at Bracewell's Pond. On October 13, 1974, a single adult was observed with two juveniles, suggesting that breeding may have occurred at the pond.

On April 26th and 27th of 1975 three adults were seen at the pond. Subsequent observations of two adult Common Gallinules through the month of May indicated that breeding on the pond was likely to occur; and by early June, the nesting site was suspected. No investigation of the area was made.

On June 28th an adult was seen near the nest site with three black, downy young tip-toeing on the mud and grasses at the pond's edge. Subsequent observations in the following weeks revealed the growth and in-



creasing independence of the immature Gallinules. The adult was not observed after mid-September, but the three young birds were present until mid-October.

In early August, the inactive nest was investigated. In a clump of juncus at the pond's edge, the nest was constructed of juncus stems and reeds, and was only about twelve inches above water level. Only about thirty feet of marsh separated the nest, which was not well concealed, from the lawn of a nearby residence.

In the marshes of Laurens County, the shy Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) is not easily observed. Neither Buckeye Marsh nor Pasture Marsh lend themselves to observation of the scant open water areas and, as the area is approached, the bird, if it is visible, disappears quickly into the marsh grasses.

However, on May 31st, observation at Pasture Marsh provided a brief glimpse of a Purple Gallinule standing at the edge of the open water. On five occasions over a period of a month, one or two birds were flushed as the marsh was investigated.

Two active nests were found in Pasture Marsh.

One June 22nd a well-hidden nest containing eight eggs was located in the maidencane. The cup was constructed in interwoven blades of the marsh grass with an eight inch base underneath of other material meshed with the live grass. Approximately twenty-two inches from the water level, the cup was concealed by the tall grasses above, which had been loosely pulled over it to form an inconspicuous canopy. Two perches, similar to the cup of the nest but without the supporting base, were found a few feet away. This nest remained intact through June 29th, but on July 6th it contained only one egg and three egg shells. On July 10th only the shell of one egg remained.

A second nest, similar in every detail, was located on June 28th only 75 feet from the first nest. This nest contained five eggs, which remained through July 10th. However, on July 12th the nest contained two eggs and two young; twenty-four hours later, only one egg and one young remained.

At Buckeye Marsh the scolding call of the Purple Gallinule was heard on numerous occasions. On June 14th a nest containing four eggs was discovered in pickerel weed. It was identified as the nest of the Purple Gallinule. The nest was inactive on June 22nd. On that day and on June 28th a single bird was flushed in the vicinity of the nest.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support of A. C. Lamb, III, and Hunter Patterson, who waded the marshes with me on a number of occasions and contributed some of the photography of the nesting sites, and of William Dopson, Jr., who investigated the areas with me on June 22nd and provided his knowledge and technical advice both in the field and in the preparation of this article.

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## GENERAL NOTES

SUMMER RECORD OF YELLOW—CROWNED NIGHT HERON IN DALTON — Since Thomas Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, pp. 113-115) states that the Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) is uncommon in this area and the Pocket Check-list of Georgia Birds by J. Fred Denton and Milton Hopkins Jr. (published January, 1969, by Georgia Ornithological Society) describes this bird as an uncommon summer visitor, it will be of interest to record an occurrence of it in Whitfield County in late June, 1974.

On June 28, 1974, an immature bird was found near an all weather spring off Magnolia Drive in Dalton. Roy Carlock rescued the bird from a dog that had possession of it. It was placed in a metal drum over night, permitting little ventilation, with exposure to the sun during the day.

The writer, Anne Hamilton, and Harriett DiGioia viewed the bird. The writer took it to her home in a large mesh wire cage where it was placed in shade and offered water. It appeared in good physical condition as evidenced by vigorous stabbing movements of it's bill when approached.

That evening the bird was taken to Shield's Pond, eleven miles northeast of Dalton, because of the remoteness of the pond and the availability of minnows and frogs. When released from the cage near the pond, it moved to the edge of the water as it was pursued. It is hoped that the bird was able to fend for itself and recuperate.

Identification was based on the bird being slate blue rather than brown and having a finely speckled back. The legs were fairly long and yellowish. The bill was thick and dark. The bird was not observed in flight.

It is noted that a nest of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron and an adult were sighted in Atlanta on June 27, 1972 (1972. *Oriole*, 37:16-17). Since the publication of the Whitfield County List (1960. *Oriole*, 25:13-23), there have been five local occurrences: July 9, 1962; April 27, 1963; July 31, 1968; June 27, 1974 (personal contact); and July 5, 1975 (*Georgia Goshawk*, 3:1).

In view of these occurrences in the Appalachian Valley and the Piedmont, one wonders whether the status north of the Coastal Plain might now be regarded as an uncommon summer resident rather than an uncommon summer visitor.

Acknowledgement is due Anne Hamilton for her help, encouragement and reference to her records in the writing of this report.

Norene S. Boring, 104 South Tibbs Road, Dalton, Georgia 30720.

BARN SWALLOW BREEDING IN COLUMBIA, McDUFFIE, WARREN AND BALDWIN COUNTIES, GEORGIA. — It is now certain from several recent birding trips in the area that the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a common breeding bird throughout the Piedmont in Eastern Georgia. The expansion of its breeding range in the Piedmont of Georgia has been very rapid, even phenomenal, during the past 15 years. Previously it had been found breeding to the Fall Line in Richmond (Denton, J. F. 1969. *The Oriole*, 34: 57-58) and Muscogee Counties (Wells and Matheny. 1972 *The Oriole*, 37: 39-40), but has not been reported from any sites in between. Recently in 1975 on trips along the Fall Line it was found breeding at two additional sites in southern Columbia County, at two sites in McDuffie County, at Warrenton in Warren County and probably at Milledgeville in Baldwin County.

The two records in Columbia County were nests under the I-20 bridge at the Fort Gordon-Grovetown exit found on June 14 and under the I-20 bridge at the Appling-Harlem exit (U.S. 221) found on May 29. In McDuffie County nests were found under the I-20 bridge at the Thomson-Ga. 150 exit on May 29 and under the I-20 bridge at the Thomson-Washington exit (U.S. 78 ) on June 14. The exact number of nests and their contents was not determined because of the traffic on the Interstate. All bridges over I-20 between Augusta and Thomson were examined with the conclusion that the birds showed a decided preference for bridges at exits over simple cross-over bridges as nesting sites. This was probably because of the greater amount of open space around the bridges at exits.

On June 15 ten Barn Swallows were noted feeding around an aeration pond at the southwestern edge of Warrenton. When I stopped to examine a nearby bridge over a small stream the birds continuously dive-bombed me. There were no nests under this bridge so the birds were probably nesting in a nearby locked barn or under another bridge about 50 yards away which was not accessible for examination. Also on June 15 a pair of swallows was noted feeding beside Ga. 22 west of Milledgeville at the abandoned State Prison about which building they were probably nesting.

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

SANDERLING WITH ONLY ONE LEG — While attending the fall meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society at Jekyll Island, Georgia, I saw a Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) that had only one leg. It was on the beach on the eastern shore of the island. George A. Dorsey was with me, and we saw this bird on October 17, and again on October 18, 1975, on both occasions at the same general location. It was with other Sanderlings, and it seemed able to keep up with them as well as though it



were not crippled. It seemed to be in robust condition, and hopped nimbly along on its single leg, managing quite well in feeding on the wet beach, sometimes wading into the shallow edge of the water with the other birds.

There was a short, dark thread of tissue hanging from where the missing leg had been, and there seemed to be a somewhat reddish place, very short, almost concealed by the feathers, which was possibly the stump of the leg that had been lost. Other than going on one leg, it behaved in the same manner as the other Sanderlings.

Alan Spearman, 109 Robin Street, Rome, Georgia 30161.

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## NEWS AND COMMENTS

## Sandhill Crane Data

Dr. Lawrence H. Walkinshaw has deposited a copy of his field notes on Sandhill Cranes in the southeastern United States and Cuba in the Archbold Biological Station Library. These field notes mainly relate to Florida during 1966 - 1974 but also cover Mississippi, Georgia and Cuba during 1938 - 1974. The crane data include nesting season and habit, nest site and construction, adult behavior at the nest, eggs, young, nest success, and local movements. Also included are some census data for other birds occurring in Sandhill Crane habitat in Florida, Mississippi, and Cuba. For further information write:

Librarian, Archbold Biological Station, Rt. 2 Box 180, Lake Placid, Fl. 33852.



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