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THE CAROLINA PARAKEET IN GEORGIA: A REVIEW OF REPORTS

Daniel McKinley

The historical status of the Carolina parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) in Georgia has been summarized in modern times by Greene *et al.* (1945: 45) and Burleigh (1958: 314). The result is a smattering of references, fewer than one might expect from a state so near the center of the range of the species and a state, furthermore, explored at a date before depletion of the species had occurred. Ridgway and Bent, both widely cited authorities, gave 1849 as the date of last record for the state (1916: 145; 1940: 3), but that was mere citation of LeConte's date of publication, treated below. The purpose of the present account is to report upon nearly twenty years of search of travel and ornithological literature and to evaluate such material as has been found. The emphasis here is upon Georgia records; it is hoped that various topical accounts of parakeet biology and ecology will appear later.

The modest history of the parakeet in Georgia goes back to Mr. Commissary, Baron Philip-Georg Friedrich von Reck, who charted the early fortunes of a group of Bavarian Saltzburger in establishing a colony near Savannah. Their new home of Ebenezer, which was just south of present Rincon, Effingham County, they soon discovered to be no land of milk and honey. But it had looked good at first, von Reck, for example, noting on 22 April 1734: "We found also very good Honey in a hollow Tree, which very much refreshed us . . . Parrots and Partridges make us here a very good dish" (1836: 15).

Nature continued to be bountiful, at least to newly transported eyes, for in a letter written by a Hessian soldier removed from bleak New York to Georgia, dated 16 January 1779, there is the comment: "there is nothing here except thick forests. The trees yield them turpentine, tar, etc. Early vegetables, like beans, peas, lettuce, white turnips, and carrots, we are eating now. Wild ducks, geese, turkeys, pheasants, parrots, large and small game are — like domestic fowl — found in

superabundance" (Pettengill, 1964: 202-203). The latter possibly refers to parrots — and other "game" — in the marketplace offered as food items.

Jedidiah Morse's *American Geography* of 1789 and 1793 had parakeets native to Georgia, "where they breed and continue the year round" (Nichols, 1934). But however probable, this seems merely extrapolated from Catesby (1731: 11), who vaguely placed the species both north and south of Georgia. Even less value can be placed upon the Georgia reference to the parakeet by Bromme (1837: 65), which is worded much the same.

Sadly enough, there is nothing to distinguish the contribution of John Abbot, who had actually lived in Georgia and perhaps had even seen parakeets there. He arrived in the region about 1775, yet when he wrote and illustrated an account of the species for a projected report upon the birds of Georgia early in the nineteenth century, he hardly got beyond the most barren synonymy. He did not even indicate where he acquired the specimens that he painted. Nor must one be misled by what he did write: "It comes here at times in flocks in Summer, and Autumn, sometimes damaging Orchards by cutting the Apples to pieces to get at the kernels. It is fond of the Seeds of the Cypress" (Abbot manuscript 1804, plate 26). That statement was cribbed uncritically from Lawson (1967: 146-147) and Catesby. His allegation that it was "called in Georgia, Carolina Parrot and Parakeet" sparked a note of gratitude in a fellow copier, John Latham, who gratefully publicized the latter name (Latham 1821-1828, 2: 147). Information on Abbot's ornithological career is scattered, but see especially Allen's accounts (1942: 564; 1951: 543-544).

John LeConte's widely cited date of 1849 is simply the date of publication of his list of "Birds" in George White's *Statistics of the State of Georgia*, in a separately paged appendix signed by "Major LeConte." Although he slavishly copied his scientific names from Audubon (who by a slip of the pen used *Centurus*, instead of *Conurus*, as generic name of the parakeet), LeConte did add a few details: "It is a remarkable fact that our paroquets are very rapidly diminishing in number. Along our maritime districts, where 15 or 20 years ago they were plentiful, scarcely any are now to be found; and it is probable, that in a short time they will entirely disappear from our State" (1849, appendix, p. 12). It is certainly unfortunate that LeConte did not expand upon such information as this, for it is now too late to document any such abundance (or even presence) as he indicated. Gerhardt's nominal list, published in Germany, seems straight out of LeConte, even to the misapplied name *Centurus* (1855-1856: 383).

Professor Paul Ansel Chadbourne of Williams College visited St. Simon's Island in March 1857, but there seems to be no evidence that either he or his informants found parakeets there. Perhaps, of course, they thought them not worth collecting, since the species was common at the Williams expedition's headquarters at Fernandina on the extreme northeast Florida coast. Nor is there evidence that the two recording members of the expedition observed them in Okefenokee Swamp (Lyman and Elmore, 1856-57: 316-317, 319-320). The great swamp was "burnt over, and consequently, destitute of objects interesting to us . . . They had obtained several varieties of birds, reptiles &c., together with two turtles; the gopher and the terrapin; besides making themselves acquainted with that race of men known as 'Crackers,' one of whom accompanied them for part of the journey."

For the rest, it is a matter of memories or unsubstantiated claims. George Twiggs, who died in 1930 at the age of 80, had not seen parakeets during his boyhood in Richmond County, although his father, during the 1840s, had found them common in South Carolina, just over the line from Richmond County (Murphey 1937: 24). In the 1880s, a Georgia newspaper editor wondered what had happened to those birds, meaning parakeets, that in the South used to feed exclusively on cockleburrs: he was especially worried that the birds seemed to have disappeared completely while the burs still thrived (Anon., 1886). Thurman S. Powell recalled seeing parakeets in Georgia "during the war," but no details are known (Merriam, 1892).

The closest approach to a Georgia specimen of the parakeet is a very uncertain "set" of two eggs dated 26 April 1855, presumably from St. Simon's Island, Glynn County (now in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, New York). Taken by Dr. S. W. Wilson, they were originally unidentified; when the collection came to Harry Balch Bailey, he was informed by Robert Ridgway of the U. S. National Museum, who had some personal experience with eggs of this species, that they were probably parakeet eggs. Bendire was inclined to accept them as genuine. The exact locality is not known but is guessed to have been St. Simon's Island, where Wilson did much of his collecting. That some of Wilson's identifications, as noted privately by Dean Amadon, are faulty may not apply here, for Wilson himself did not claim them to be parakeet eggs (Bailey, 1883: 40; Bendire, 1895: 4; Greene *et al.*, 1945: 45; Amadon, letter, 1970). The chief fault with them lies in the date of collection (supposing them to be correctly labeled and fresh when collected), for there is probably no proof that parakeets laid eggs at that time of year, as I shall explain in a report to be published later.

Two final notes are in order. At the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union at Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1969, a short strip of color movie film was shown to a few experts. Acquired by Audubon lecturer Dee Jay Nelson, it was thought to be a motion picture of Carolina parakeets in Okefenokee Swamp. The sequence showing the birds is a short one of three scenes, sandwiched between such typical Okefenokee species as oak toad (*Bufo quercicus*) and American alligator. "The parakeet pictures are, from a technical standpoint, not good. Only one of the three birds can be seen clearly in the pictures (since they were not taken with a telescopic lens, the figures are small). He is standing out in the open and at one point reaches up over his head, grasps a limb with his bill and pulls himself up to a higher level" (Nelson, letter, 1970).

Nelson acquired the pictures fortuitously; they were exposed (apparently by a black Okefenokee guide name Orsen Stemville) and developed about 1936 or 1937. (Data on film type appear to coincide with the date alleged.) It has proved impossible for me to see the pictures and I have had only a noncommittal opinion on them from Dr. George Miksch Sutton, who did view them. Even if the birds were parrots, they may not, of course, have been Carolina parakeets.

Kenneth Able reported to me that accounts of "Carolina parakeets" in McIntosh County came in during 1969. C. William Dopson, Jr., of the University of Georgia, Department of Zoology Museum, checked out the reports and found the observer to be neither amateur nor professional ornithologist. At the same time, there were several reliable records of flocks of budgerigars in southern Georgia and it may well have been one of these groups that started the 1969 report (Dopson, letter, 1971).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. I am grateful to everyone who has taken time to answer my many questions; but I owe special thanks to D. J. Nelson for generously describing his film of the alleged Okefenokee parakeets.

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- Department of Biological Science, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, N.Y. 12222.

POPULATION OF AN EGRET ROOST IN EAST DUBLIN, GEORGIA

Thomas K. Patterson

Bracewell's Pond, see Fig. 1, has been a summer roosting site for the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) and a few of its allies for the past five or more years. From the estimated thousands roosting in the pond in the summer of 1974, by 13 October the number had diminished to only 26 birds, 25 Cattle Egrets and a single immature White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*). It was then determined that the pond would be observed frequently during the spring and summer of the following year to record the fluctuations of the population throughout the season.

The pond is an unusual choice as a roosting site. The ten acre pond lies in the City of East Dublin, Georgia, and is completely surrounded by small frame dwellings. However, there is a limited degree of privacy offered by the perimeter of grassy marsh and small trees. The outer area of open water surrounds a group of about 250 small Cypress (*Taxodium sp.*) trees which provide the roosting perches for the birds. A small heronry (Patterson, 1976. *Oriole* 41:8-13) has also developed at the pond.

The dam, on the eastern end of the pond, offers an observer a clear view of the low horizon in all directions. This fact makes a count of arriving birds possible.

On 17 Mar 1975 the first Cattle Egrets of the season were observed between the ribbons of Interstate 16 east of the Oconee River. That evening, when Bracewell's Pond was visited at roosting time, a single Cattle Egret was in the Cypress Trees, glancing nervously about as if hoping for companions to arrive. None did; it roosted alone.

Between that date and 28 Dec 1975, the first date on which no roosting birds were present, the population was counted on 32 occasions. Fourteen of the significant and most valid counts are presented in Table 1.

In counting and estimating the roosting population, the following procedures were employed:

Upon arrival at the pond, an estimate was made of the number of birds in the trees. Since this estimate was subject to a high degree of error, the observations reported are among those in which this number was not significant. Observations in the months of April through Oc-

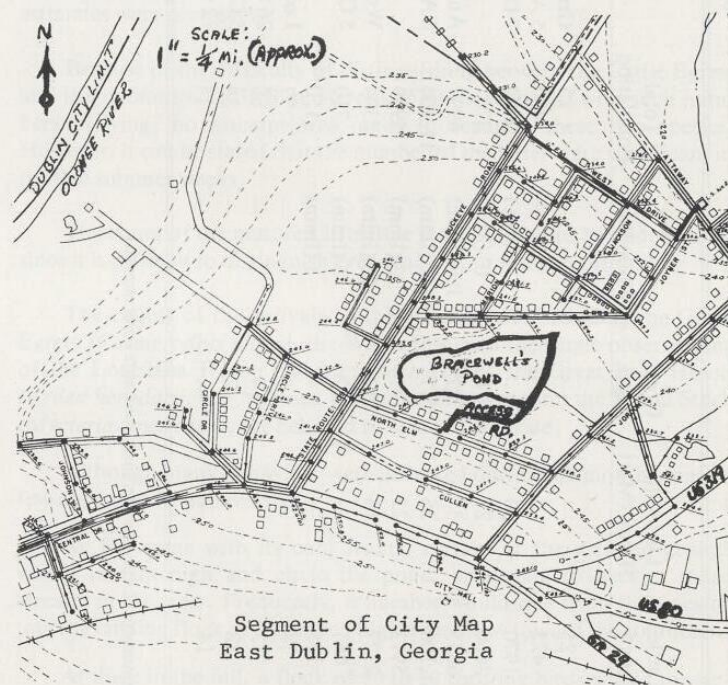


Fig. 1. Location of Bracewell's Pond, East Dublin, Ga.

Table 1. 1975 Egret and Heron roosting population at Bracewell's Pond in East Dublin, Georgia

Date	Cattle Egret*	Little Blue Heron (Mat)	Great Egret	White Ibis	Total Population	Other
23 March	25	—	—	—	25	Great Blue Heron
5 April	425	5	—	—	430	5 Apr. - One Indiv.
27 April	1970	30	—	2 (Juv)	2002	7 Dec. - One Indiv.
10 July	2660	25	6	10 (Mat)	2701	Anhinga
9 August	6835	35	27	100 (Imm)	6997	3 Aug. - One Indiv.
27 August	11,200	26	17	161 (Imm)	11,404	
14 September	5913	22	31	33 (Imm)	5999	
12 October	2327	15	32	20 (Imm)	2394	Wood Stork
19 October	683	—	22	5 (Imm)	710	5 Oct. - One Indiv.
2 November	145	—	4	1 (Imm)	150	Louisiana Heron
14 November	74	—	3	—	77	26 Sept. - One Indiv.
7 December	75	—	14	—	89	5 Oct. - One Indiv.
13 December	32	—	2	—	34	12 Oct. - One Indiv.
23 December	14	—	—	—	14	

*April — October counts include immature Little Blue Herons in the Cattle Egret numbers.

tober were made over an approximate 90 minute period from 30 minutes prior to sundown until very nearly dark. Even then, a few birds continued to arrive after the count had been concluded in darkness.

During the height of the season, a count partner was available; arrivals were counted or estimated and recorded for each ten minute interval of the observation period. Fairly reliable counts could be made when the arrivals were in groups of 60 birds or fewer; but as the groups numbered in the hundreds during late August and early September, estimates were necessary.

Because of the difficulty of distinguishing between the Cattle Egrets and the immature Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) with such numbers arriving, no attempt was made to separate these two species. However, it can be stated that the number of the latter were significant in the late summer weeks.

The count of the mature Little Blue Herons is felt to be understated, since it is difficult to distinguish even black from white in the dusk.

The counts of the arrivals of the other species including the Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*), the White Ibis, and the single observations of the Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor*), the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), the Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), and the Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*), are believed to be quite accurate.

Although many behaviors were observed during the months, only a few appear to be noteworthy.

As fall came with its cool fronts, certain of the arriving groups would remain high and circle the pond, appearing to beckon those already in the trees. Frequently, a number would rise from the trees to join the circling flock as it climbed higher and flew toward the southeast.

At dusk in the fall, a flock of 30 to 50 roosting birds would, on occasion, rise from the trees, seemingly without cause, and circle the pond, as if to call others to follow, before flying into the darkness toward the southeast.

As winter arrived with sub-freezing temperatures, the few roosting birds which remained would not roost in the trees, but in the cover of the marsh grasses on the bank, near where a group of winter residents of the pond, the American Coots (*Fulica americana*), appeared to roost.

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GENERAL NOTES

SECOND RECORD OF WHISTLING SWAN IN OKEFENOKEE SWAMP — Jimmy Petty, a guide for the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, reported to the writer his observation on 6 Dec 76 of what appeared to be a Whistling Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) in the northern portion of Chesser Prairie in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southern Georgia. The writer subsequently visually verified the sighting. The swan was photographed later on that date by Ellen Weyant, a refuge intern.

Chesser Prairie, where the sighting occurred, consists of an open marsh-like habitat characterized by white water lily and maidencane. The only previously recorded occurrence of the Whistling Swan in the Okefenokee was in 1934 when Lemuel Griffis collected a specimen.

Ronald G. Bisbee, Public Use Specialist, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Folkston, Georgia 31537.

SECOND NESTING RECORD OF WOOD STORKS IN GEORGIA — On 28 April 1976 the author with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service pilot Robert Slattery observed what appeared to be a nesting colony of Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) in Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp. The colony, which was estimated at 300 wood storks, was located in a remote section of the Okefenokee National Wildlife refuge about one-half mile north of the eastern tip of Cravens Hammock. This portion of the swamp is characterized vegetatively by an overstory forest association of cypress, blackgum, and loblolly bay trees with a dense understory of shrubbery. The area is mostly inaccessible from the ground. During the April 28 survey a few partially constructed nests were observed, and it appeared that several of the wood storks were establishing and defending territories.

The colony was resurveyed on 19 May 1976 and again during mid-June. During the May survey the author counted a total of 27 Wood Storks and 16 nests containing eggs. Twelve of these nests were located in a large cypress tree which towered over the other trees in the surrounding forest. The other four nests were located in two nearby cypress trees each of which contained two nests. The mid-June survey showed the nesting site to be abandoned. Nest abandonment was probably due to a ten inch rise in the water levels of the Okefenokee Swamp during May resulting in unfavorable feeding conditions for the storks.

The only previous record of Wood Stork nesting in Georgia was in 1967. At that time about a dozen stork nests with young were located

near Cravens Hammock in the Okefenokee Swamp (Hall and Cone, 1970. Oriole, 35: 14).

Wendell D. Metzen, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross Georgia 31501.

SANDHILL CRANES OVER CLINCHFIELD, HOUSTON COUNTY, GEORGIA — On 15 Mar 1975 Mrs. J. W. McElroy, Mary Hopkins and I noted between 75 and 100 Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) approximately one kilometer south of Clinchfield. The birds were "drifting" or flying NNW at about 500 meters above ground level in characteristic northward migration pattern, i. e. circling, disassembling, reassembling into alternate V-shaped formations, scattered groups, long undulating lines, etc., to finally some apparent system of organization, all the while bugling loudly.

This note is an appeal for other observers to report exact geographical locations of their sightings of this species for the purpose of more precisely delineating the corridors of migration. It is my impression that they are quite distinct geographically and probably seasonally predictable.

Milton N. Hopkins, Jr., R. F. D. 5 Osierfield, Fitzgerald, Ga. 31750.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER HOLES IN DISEASE FREE (?) AND IMMATURE SLASH AND LOBLOLLY PINES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY — About 5 p.m. on 11 Nov 76 we observed three trees with Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos borealis*) holes in a planted slash pine area. While we were there one Red-cockaded flew out and was identified as it perched nearby. The trees are about 100 yards off our regular driveway and we cannot say that the holes were made this year, but we did not notice the sap flow when we drove by there six weeks earlier at the beginning of the dove season.

The trees are 20 to 25 years old, measure from 13 to 18 inches D.B.H., and are approximately 60 feet tall. There are another 100 acres of similar slash pines a couple of miles away, but our strength does not attract us to search for other holes. If someone else wants to search, permission can be arranged.

We had a loblolly tree 61 years old, 16 inches D.B.H. and 75 feet high that was killed, probably by lightening, about 1965. It had a Red-cockaded hole that was used for roosting after the tree died. About 1972 it was cut by mis-chance and we had the cockaded hole cut out as a

"drum". There was no red-heart above or below the hole. We set the drum on a nearby 6 foot post, but someone stole it.

There are 30 or 40 Red-cockaded holes, all in very mature loblolly and short-leaf pines, within two miles of the new holes. We have been observing them since 1961 and believe that the population is decreasing. The area is adjacent to State Highway #88 where it crosses the Ogeechee River.

Jesse Newsom, Box 596, Davisboro, Ga. 31018.

BLACK SKIMMER SIGHTED AT AUGUSTA, GEORGIA — About 3:00 p.m. on 13 May 1976, I observed a Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) at the Merry Brothers Ponds at Augusta. I was standing at the south end of Swan Pond scanning the pond margin for shorebirds when I noted a skimmer flying directly toward me a few feet above the water. As I watched, it skimmed back and forth several times in the typical skimmer manner. It then lit on a small bare mud island some 40 yards from me. While it rested there it was possible to note all field marks including the large red bill with the protruding lower mandible.

The appearance of this bird at Augusta at this time was most unusual since there had been no stormy weather either on the Atlantic Coast or on the Gulf prior to its occurrence. There is one previous record of this species at Augusta, a pair of birds collected at the Sandbar Ferry just southeast of Augusta during the great flood in the spring of 1888 (Murphey, E. E. 1937. *Contrib. Charleston Mus.*, No. IX, p. 21).

Clarence A. Belger, 539 Tubman Street, Augusta, Ga. 30904.

OSPREY AND BARN SWALLOW NESTING AT LAKE SEMINOLE — Lake Seminole is a 15,182 hectare reservoir in extreme southwest Georgia formed by the Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam at the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers. The permanent pool elevation of 77 feet above mean sea level was reached in February, 1957. The dam is approximately 172 km from the John Gorrie Bridge on U. S. Highway 98 at Apalachicola, Florida (distance as measured along the center of the main river channel). The reservoir borders Decatur and Seminole Counties in Georgia; Jackson County in Florida. Observations herein pertain only to Georgia.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). There are (Summer, 1976) three known active nests on the lake and these are built on old cypress snags whose tops have been broken off leaving only a limbless trunk. These snags are

from 6 to 10 meters above the water and are approximately 0.75 meters in diameter. Quality nest sites are obviously decreasing. A nest that had been used for years was located approximately 25 meters high in the crotch of a dead cypress tree. This nest and most of the tree was destroyed by lightning in the autumn of 1975. One of this year's active nests is located approximately 300 yards from the nest tree which was destroyed. A young bird was observed in this nest on 14 May 1976. No other young were seen, but adult birds were at the other two nests on 14 May; one adult returned to its nest and assumed a brooding position. Based on prior observations, the young birds will usually look out of the nest at the approach of a boat. This is thin evidence, but I did think that the eggs had not yet hatched in these two nests.

On 13 May 1976 seven Ospreys were seen on the Flint River Arm of the lake between Wingate's Lodge and Bainbridge, a distance of approximately 26 km. Osprey nests are present in this area, but I saw no activity around them. With this number of adults present, however, there are probably more active nests on or adjacent to the lake.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). In the spring of 1975, a pair of Barn Swallows successfully nested in the U. S. Corps of Engineers' boathouse which is located at the east end of the Jim Woodruff Dam. The boathouse is in Decatur County approximately 0.4 km from the southwest corner of Georgia.

A pair of Barn Swallows was first observed this year on 30 April 1976 flying in and around this same boathouse. They did not re-nest at that location, but were observed at a covered boat slip at the Chattahoochee Park Landing (known as the "Booster Club") on 5 May 1976. Investigation revealed an active nest. The male adult's left tail feathers were shorter than the right feathers, providing easy identification. On 10 June five baby swallows were observed in the nest. Both adults were present and were feeding the young. On 23 June both adults, one of which was the short-tailed male, were observed building a new nest approximately three meters from the first nest. This new nest was approximately half completed. No juveniles were observed either in the first nest or flying about. The writer was away from the area during most of July. On returning to the area, no swallows were seen on the first, second, or third of August. The second nest had been completed. Both nests were checked on 4 August. The remains of young birds were found in the first nest and the second nest was empty. As the incubation period is 15 days and the young do not leave the nest until they are three weeks old, it is thought that both nestings were unsuccessful. Causes for this are unknown. However, one possible explanation might be extreme heat.

Both nests were attached to the sides of 2 x 6 inch rafters. The rafters serve as support for galvanized steel roofings and the tops of both nests were approximately two inches from this metal roofing. Official day time temperatures during July were in the mid to upper 90's with 97 degrees F. being the highest. As the official temperature is recorded six feet above ground level, in the shade, with a northern exposure, the temperature in the swallow nests two inches below metal roofing would have been considerably hotter. This may or may not have been a contributing factor in the nesting failure.

Joe Knight, Resource Manager's Office, P. O. Box 96, Chattahoochee, Florida 32324.

THE HAWHAMMOCK CHURCH HERONRY IN 1976 — The Augusta Audubon Society for several years has checked the status of the McKinney's Pond heronry in early June. When the group visited the area on 5 June 1976 we were informed by the owner and George B. Sturgis, who had checked it several times, that the original heronry was deserted this year. Consequently we did not visit this site but did check the second location (site 2) where a number of birds have nested in recent years. This site was almost deserted also, there being only six pairs of Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) with at least two nests, one pair of Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*) with nest containing half-grown young and one pair of Green Herons (*Butorides virescens*). A single Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) was seen but no nest.

Mr. Sturgis then led us to a new heronry occupied for the first time in 1976. It was located about half a mile from the Hawhammock Church which in turn is on the Swainsboro-Canoochee Road in Emanuel County about 11 air miles from McKinney's Pond. This rookery is located in a small shallow "bay" about 40 by 50 yards in size. All nests were situated in swamp black gum trees, the only vegetation in the pond except for some small buttonbushes around the margin. One or more medium-sized alligators lived in the bay.

The composition of the heronry was approximately 165 Cattle Egret nests mostly with eggs although some young had hatched, 25-30 Little Blue Heron nests with eggs and three White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) nests with eggs.

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

FROM THE FIELD — SOUTH GEORGIA

Winter 1976-1977

The bitter winter of 1976-1977 produced some surprising records of late and early birds that would normally be expected in milder weather. Only one definite casualty from the cold was reported and that was a Great Egret found dead at a frozen Laurens County pond by T. K. Patterson. John Bracey saw 102 Cattle Egrets in southern Lowndes County on 25 December 1976 and W. Wilson Baker had a careful look at a Purple Gallinule in Thomas County on 19 December. Gail Menk saw a Green Heron in Sumpter County on 21 December.

Early migrating Sandhill Cranes were seen in Ben Hill County by Milton Hopkins, Jr. on 22 February 1977 (2 flocks of 123 and 35 birds each) and at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge on 29 January by Sam Pate (1 bird). Hopkins also reported an early Ben Hill County Purple Martin on 7 February.

Noel O. Wamer and Carroll Arbogast saw a Henslow's Sparrow in Thomas County on 19 December and that same day added 2 species to the local list with a Le Conte's Sparrow and 3 White-crowned Sparrows. The White-crowned's were seen again on 25 December by Robert L. Crawford. Crawford and Steve Jones saw 3 female Brewer's Blackbirds in Thomas County on 19 December.

Tree Swallows, erratic winter visitants, were present in the Coastal Plain this cold winter. Patterson noted them in Laurens County on 20 December, 29 January, and on 19 February. In Thomas County, John Bracey and Leon Neel found 5 on 19 December. Neel watched them through the winter at the pond they frequented and reported numbers in excess of 100 birds at a time. The last sighting there was of 30 birds on 3 February.

A Whistling Swan was seen near Sylvania in Screven County on 10 January by Grace Boddiford and Anne Hamilton saw 10 blue phase Snow Geese there on 9 January. Jean Bevis saw a Yellow Rail on Jeckle Island on 23 January and James Miller had a Merlin near Columbus on 6 January. Van and Joe Estes had a Western Tanager visiting their Bryan County feeder 24-27 February.

From Laurens County, Patterson noted a Red-breasted Nuthatch on his feeder from 15 December through the end of March and an American Bittern was flushed on 18 December and 26 February. Patterson saw a Horned Grebe from 20 January through 1 February and a Least Sandpiper on 29 January. He also saw 3 Lesser Yellowlegs on 25 February, 1

Pectoral Sandpiper on 26 February, and a very early Yellow-throated Vireo on 26 February. W. Wilson Baker saw a Greater Yellowlegs in Thomas County on 16 January.

(Compiled by Robert L. Crawford, Tall Timbers Research Station, Rt. 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Fla. 31303).

FROM THE FIELD — NORTH GEORGIA

Winter 1976-77

Christmas Bird Counts in North Georgia turned up the following interesting species:

Rome — Red-necked Grebe - 1; Horned Grebe - 2; Green Heron - 4; Pintail - 2; Merlin - 2; Sora - 1; Barn Owl - 6; Red-cockaded Woodpecker - 6; Bewick's Wren - 2; Pine Siskin - 6.

Macon — Great Egret - 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1; Broad-winged Hawk - 1.

Augusta — Prairie Warbler - 1.

Atlanta — Green Heron - 1; Green-winged Teal - 2; Bufflehead - 9; Sora - 2; Saw-whet Owl - 1; Gray Catbird - 2; Pine Siskin - 1.

Dalton — Black Duck - 1; American Wigeon - 1; Common Goldeneye - 2; Bewick's Wren - 1; Gray Catbird - 4; American Robin - 276; White-crowned Sparrow - 1.

Winter bird news: Macon — Richard Lux located a pair of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers between River North Development and the Ocmulgee River on January 23. He also noted a female or immature male Northern Oriole February 27.

Rome — Two male, one female Redhead were seen on the February 13 field trip to Wax Lake. Phil Ham found a Snow X Blue Goose hybrid at Garden Lake February 19.

Atlanta — Jim and Irene Colehour spotted a Cooper's Hawk dive-bombing into a hugh blackbird roost south of Rome December 27.

The Saw-whet Owl seen on the Christmas Bird Count by the Joe Greenberg party at Lake Acworth was subsequently observed on December 26 and January 5 by Jean Bevis and Vince Jackson. A second Saw-whet Owl was noted sitting outside the window of the Wally Dreyfoos home January 21. Coming into view on December 26 were a Virginia Rail in John Ward Swamp and a Herring Gull at Lake Acworth.

Up at Pendergrast, January 9, Jean and Pat Bevis, Vince and Trina Jackson found a Bewick's Wren and a flock of 30-40 White-crowned Sparrows.

A Northern Oriole and a Red Crossbill were at area feeders in February. Doris Cohrs and Vince Jackson report for the third time this winter a Snow Bunting at the Yerkes Primate Field Station, Lawrenceville. Doris reports House Finches — male and female — coming to her feeder at East Point January 18. Near the Nature Center on the Chattahoochee River, a male Pintail was sighted in late January.

Terry Moore went up on the Georgia side of Lookout Mountain and located two Lapland Longspurs in a field containing 200 plus Horned Larks. On February 5, Jean and Pat Bevis, Vaughn Morrison and Terry watched a Prairie Falcon in the same area.

Augusta — Fifty-sixty Snow Geese were spotted flying over Merry Ponds December 9. A Black and White Warbler stopped by the Knipps yard January 2. Clarence Belger lists Common Loons, Horned Grebe at Clark Hill January 17 and a Cooper's Hawk January 23. He, with Vernon and Anne Waters and Gerald Knighton, studied an immature or a female Cinnamon Teal in early January at Merry Ponds.

A Northern Oriole was at the Harpe's feeder January 16 and on February 20 a Yellow-throated Warbler was observed tying the early-date record established in 1948. The February 12 field trip turned up a Merlin and a Northern Oriole.

Dalton — Ann Hamilton saw a Gray Catbird in her yard December 11. Harry White observed a Cooper's Hawk capture an Eastern Meadowlark around December 16. Frank and Harriett DiGioia watched three Ring-billed gulls at Carter's Dam, Murray County, for the third area record on December 17. Harriett noted three Herring Gulls at Thread Mill Lake for the fourth record on January 28. A Pine Siskin was at her feeder February 24 for the only area sighting of the winter.

A field trip up Lookout Mountain yielded 30 Horned Larks February 13. Four White-crowned Sparrows and a Bewick's Wren were in Lois and Mary Meidinger's yard December 19. Wyatt Bruce noticed three Spotted Sandpipers in Murray County March 9 for the earliest area record.

(Compiled by Harriett G. DiGioia, 1309 Lakemont Drive, Dalton, Ga. 30720)

NEWS AND COMMENTS**WANTED: DATA ON THE SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF NORTH AMERICAN GULLS.**

We are developing a procedure whereby the U. S. Air Force can predict the potential seasonal hazard to aircraft represented by gulls in parts of North America. This knowledge will be used to schedule missions around high risk areas thereby reducing the likelihood of bird/aircraft collisions. Supplemental data on local gull populations are needed from all parts of the continent. The assistance of field workers is solicited to aid us in this task. Please submit reports of your gull observations to Dr. William E. Southern, Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Data will be gathered for a 2-year period beginning 1 September 1977.

For each observation, please provide the following information: list of species present, approximate number of each species, precise locality description, dates observed, any information about causes for concentrations (e.g., sanitary landfill operation), and any details about the frequency of such concentrations in the respective areas. Information is sought from inland as well as coastal localities.

Thank you for your cooperation.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION — As regional reporter for region 4 (Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) of the Colonial Waterbird Group, I am compiling a list of individuals researching any aspect of the biology of colonial waterbirds (gulls, terns, shorebirds, herons, ibis, etc.). Investigators are asked to send their names, addresses, and a short, detailed description of past, present and future research to James A. Rodgers, Jr., Department of Biology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620.

REVISED CHECKLIST OF GEORGIA BIRDS

The revised checklist of Georgia Birds is now at the printers and should be available by the middle of September. Copies may be ordered from Georgia Ornithological Society, 755 Ellsworth Drive, NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30318. Price: \$2.00/copy.

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