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STATUS OF THE OSPREY IN GEORGIA

Ron R. Odom and J. William Guthrie

Early Georgia records indicate a healthy breeding population of Ospreys *(Pandion haliaetus)* along the coast and in the Okefenokee Swamp (Burleigh 1958). Green et al. (1945) considered the Osprey to be a fairly common breeding bird along the coast and in the Okefenokee but gave no population estimates. LaBastille (1973) estimated 25-50 pairs of Ospreys in Georgia, occurring primarily in the Okefenokee Swamp with one nest on Lake Seminole. Adults were reported in the literature as occurring throughout the state but breeding appeared to be restricted to the coast, Okefenokee Swamp, and in recent years, Lake Seminole. However, these accounts are based on non-systematic estimates of local populations without any attempt to survey statewide populations or population changes (Henny and Noltemeier 1975; Burleigh 1958).

Denton (1977) conducted a coastal nesting survey through use of a questionnaire distributed to ornithologists, biologists, refuge managers, wildlife rangers, and other interested persons living in the coastal area. Information was solicited on Osprey nests and all known nesting sites, however no attempts were made at field verification or determination of statewide productivity.

Trends in Osprey nesting populations in Georgia cannot be accurately determined because of the absence of precise data prior to 1977. Although Georgia populations are thought to have experienced declines similar to those caused by pesticides in other areas, this has not been verified.

This paper reports the first measurement of actual Osprey production in Georgia (1980). This study was designed to detail nesting population changes since 1977 and to establish baseline data for future production studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Systematic nest surveys were conducted during the reproductive season from April 1979 to September 1980. Intensive nest surveys for purposes of determining production were conducted throughout the nesting season of 1980. During 1979, aerial searches were made of the coastal area east of Interstate Highway 95, along major river systems in

South Georgia, and around the shorelines of large inland impoundments. During 1980, aerial surveys were restricted to the coast and inland areas known to have had previous Osprey nesting activity. All reports of nesting observations received from qualified observers were investigated in the field.

Initial aerial production surveys were made with the Department of Natural Resources' helicopter using a pilot and two observers. Three scheduled visits were made to individual nests in April, May, and June 1980. Extra visits were made to some nests in conjunction with other coastal surveys.

When possible, nest trees were marked from the air with paint to aid in future identification of the tree. A Nel-Spot Co_2 marking gun was used for aerial marking. The need to positively identify individual nest trees on subsequent visits was made clear during earlier surveys because of changes in nesting activities due to factors such as weather, predation, and renesting.

Data were then recorded on location of nest, type of nest structure, estimated height of nest, and nesting stage. Aerial photographs of each nest site were taken. Notes were recorded on a hand-held cassette recorder and were later transcribed on standardized field forms.

A letter was also distributed to qualified ornithologists, biologists, wildlife rangers, refuge managers, and other knowledgeable individuals, soliciting information on nesting Ospreys. The Department of Natural Resources released newsletters to the media on two occasions asking for Osprey sighting information from the general public.

Only data gathered by the authors were used for computing Osprey production in this study. This reduced sample size from 95 to 69 and reduced the amount of error resulting from the use of multiple techniques by many different observers.

Terminology used in describing the status of Osprey nests followed that suggested by Postupalsky (1977) and is as follows:

Occupied nest — any nest in which at least one of the following activity patterns was observed during the breeding season:

1) eggs were laid;
2) young were raised;
3) one adult was observed sitting low in the nest, presumably incubating;
4) two adults were present on or near the nest, regardless of whether or not it had been repaired during the nesting season under consideration, providing there was no reason to suspect that this pair had already been counted elsewhere;
5) a recently repaired nest with fresh sticks or fresh boughs on top, or droppings or molted feathers on its rim or underneath.

Active nest — a nest in which eggs have been laid.

Successful nest — an occupied nest from which at least one young fledged during the breeding season under consideration, or if actual fledging was not proven, an occupied nest in which at least one young was raised to an advanced state of development.

Unsuccessful nest — an occupied nest from which no young fledged due to any cause.

Nesting success — percentage of eggs laid that developed into fledgling young. (Young raised to an advanced stage of development).

Productivity — number of young produced per occupied nest.

When available, dead or moribund Ospreys found in the field were collected for pesticide and heavy metal analysis. Laboratory analysis of these birds was done by The University of Georgia Extension Poultry Science Laboratory, Athens, Georgia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ninety-five occupied nests were identified during the surveys: 71 (75%) in the coastal area; 19 (20%) in the Okefenokee Swamp, 4 (4%) on Lake Seminole; and 1 (1%) new record on the Altamaha River in Tattnall County (Fig. 1). Production data were gathered for 69 (72.6%) nests. The nest reported in Pulaski County by Denton (1977) was not occupied during this study. The number of occupied nests occurring in the Okefenokee Swamp increased from 12 to 19 (58.3%) from 1976 to 1980. It is difficult to ascertain whether increases in number of occupied nests represent an increase in the Osprey breeding propulation or are a result of better surveying methods and/or increased public awareness. Denton (1977) reported between 50-55 nesting pairs of Ospreys along the 97 miles of Georgia's coast. The 1980 survey identified 71 occupied nests, 29 (42%) over the 1976 estimate. Denton's definition of an active nest in 1976 corresponds with the definition of an occupied nest during this study.

Thirty-three of 69 (47.8%) occupied nests monitored to completion in the coastal area were successful in fledging young. The survey team was unable to follow the progress of two occupied nests on Kings Bay Submarine Base because they were located in a restricted area. Known reasons for unproductive occupied nests generally fell into one of the following categories:

1) no eggs laid;
2) eggs were destroyed or lost;
3) eggs failed to hatch;
4) young hatched but did not survive to fledging.

Fifty-one of 69 (73.9%) coastal occupied nests monitored to completion were active. Inactive nests (26.1%) are thought to be either occupied by subadult birds not yet capable of breeding or adult birds unable to lay eggs for one reason or another (Postupalsky 1977). Reproductive success has been calculated in other studies on the basis of the number of active nests only, or on the number of occupied nests (Postupalsky 1977; Henny and Van Velzen 1972). Georgia Osprey pro-

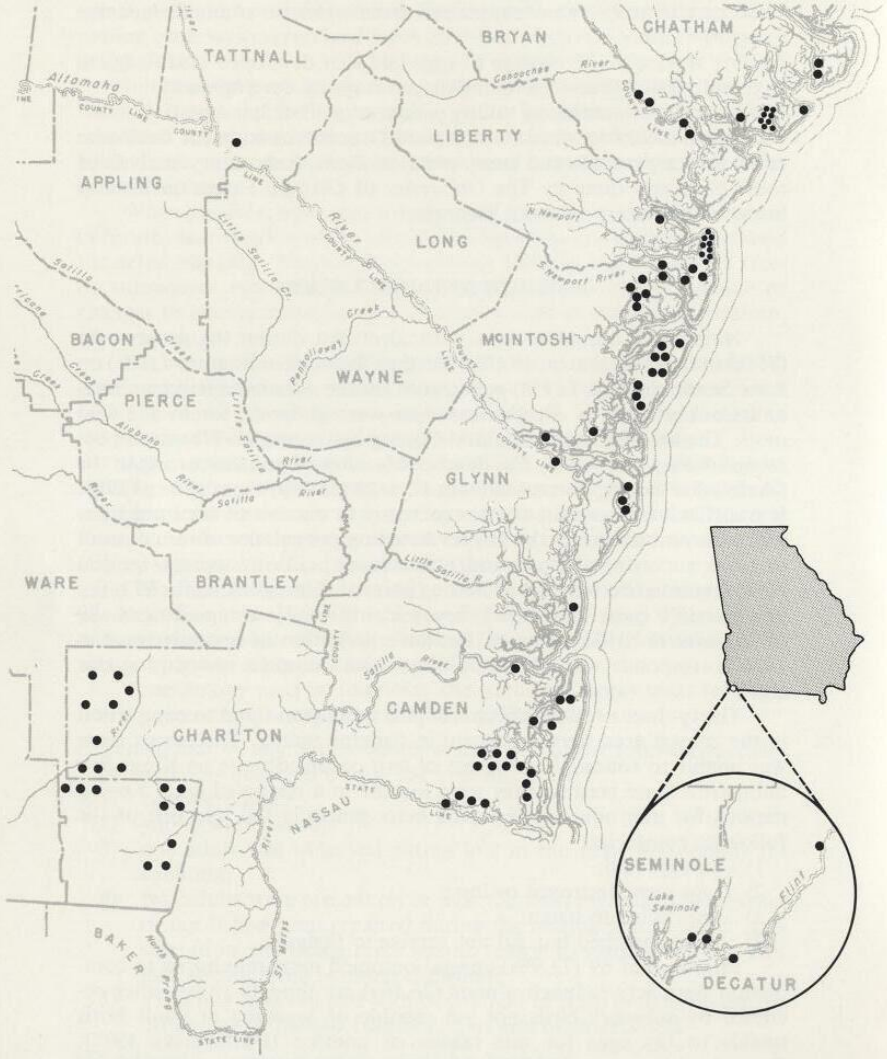

Fig 1. Distribution of Georgia Osprey nests in 1980.

ductivity for 1980 based on 69 occupied coastal nests was 0.91 young per nest. The fledging rate per active nest was 1.24. Table 1 presents a summary of production data.

Reasons for nest failure occurring after eggs were laid could seldom be identified. High winds were known to have destroyed 4 nests. Although numerous potential predators such as crows (*Corvus sp.*), rat snakes (*Elaphe sp.*) and raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) occur on or near nest locations, no actual cases of predation were observed. Late in the season a raccoon was observed loafing in an abandoned Osprey nest on Wahoo Island. One young fledged from 3 eggs laid earlier at this nest. In other years nest losses have been caused by human disturbance. None was known to be lost to this cause during 1980. Some "nuisance" Ospreys that built on the tops of light poles in 1979 were manually removed. Other nests have been lost to development projects. A total of 13 nests were built on power poles in 1980. "Nuisance" Osprey problems are likely to increase as human and Osprey populations increase.

Based on production data generated by observation of 60 coastal nests followed to completion, a statewide production of 86.5 Ospreys fledged from 95 occupied nests was projected. Productivity rates for Georgia Ospreys compare favorably to rates determined for other southeastern populations (Parnell et al. 1977; Ogden 1977).

Based on data collected during this study, Georgia Osprey populations are reproducing at a rate that should result in a stable or gradually expanding population. Studies by Henny and Wight (1969) have shown that it takes a rate of 0.95 young fledged per active nest to maintain a stable Osprey population, assuming that shooting is not a mortality factor. If shooting must be included as a mortality factor in a population, and shooting does occur in Georgia, then the rate necessary to maintain a stable population increases to 1.22 to 1.30. Georgia's fledging rate of 0.91 per occupied nest followed to term (1.24 per active nest followed to term) should insure at least stable Osprey numbers depending on the severity of shooting as a mortality factor.

Nest tree species were recorded for 95 nests. Species used included dead pine (*Pinus sp.*) (24.2%); live pine (21.1%); dead cypress (*Taxodium sp.*) (3.2%); live cypress (24.2%); dead live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) (5.3%); live live oak (1.1%); live black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) (1.1%); dead trees, species unknown (6.3%); power poles (13.7%). Estimated average nest height was 10.1 meters with a range of 4.6 to 24.4 meters.

Surveys in recent years have shown an increase in the use of dead live oak snags by nesting Ospreys. Along the Georgia coast where many areas are intensively managed for pine tree production, the standard forest management technique is the conversion of hardwood stands to more profitable pine. Live oaks are injected and left to die. These sites, when replanted to pine, have large, dead, live oak snags prominent above the pine canopy for several years. It is uncertain whether increased use of these sites by nesting Ospreys reflects a shortage of traditional nest trees or preferred nesting sites.

Table 1. Georgia Osprey survey summary data for 1980.

	Statewide	Coastal
A) Number of occupied nests (C plus E)	95.00	71.00
B) Number of occupied nests monitored to term	69.00	69.00
C) Number of active nests (A minus E)	72.00	51.00
D) Number of active nests monitored to term	51.00	51.00
E) Number of inactive nests (A minus C)	23.00	20.00
F) Total number of eggs laid	130.00	130.00
G) Total number eggs hatched (Based on D)	71.00	71.00
H) Total number young fledged (Based on D)	63.00	63.00
I) Total number of nests with fledglings	31.00	31.00
J) Average clutch size (F/G)	1.83	1.83
K) Hatching rate (G/F)	0.55	0.55
L) Percent occupied nests with fledglings (K/A)	32.60	43.70
M) Percent active nests with fledglings (K/C)	43.10	60.80
N) Percent successful occupied nests (C/A)	75.80	71.80
O) Average number young fledged per occupied nest (H/B)	0.91	0.91
P) Average number young fledged per active nest (H/D)	1.24	1.24
Q) Fledging rate (H/F)	0.48	0.48

The aerial survey technique combined with distribution of questionnaires was thought to be quite accurate. Seldom were nests reported by the public that were not previously located during aerial surveys. Although fixed-wing aircraft can be useful in locating nest sites, a helicopter is far superior for intensive nest monitoring because the slower speeds allow accurate counts of eggs and young.

Many other reports of nesting Ospreys on large inland reservoirs were received during the summer. Searches by air and/or ground however, revealed no nesting activity other than that which is included in this report. The presence of these non-nesting pairs in the interior of the state during the nesting season is as yet unexplained. Although Ospreys historically were not known to nest inland in Georgia, other than in the Okefenoke Swamp, it is possible that nesting may occur on these inland reservoirs in future years. Large reservoirs, common throughout Georgia, have created additional nesting habitat that may eventually be utilized by Ospreys.

Efforts were made to obtain dead Ospreys found in the field for analysis of pesticide burdens. Although heavy pollutant residues were known to occur in other areas of the country, no recent data on birds existed from Georgia (Weimeyer et al. 1980). Necropsy data and environmental pollutant residue level data for five Ospreys found dead or moribund in Georgia are presented in Table 2. Pesticide contamination and heavy metal toxicity was suspected as the cause of death in one bird taken from Grady County. In this bird, levels of PCB, mercury, and lead were elevated to a degree capable of causing death in certain other species of birds (Nettles, pers. comm.).

SUMMARY

Ninety-five occupied nests were found during a 1980 survey of nesting Ospreys in Georgia. Statewide production was calculated to be 0.91 young fledged per occupied nest with known outcome. Estimated total young fledged statewide was 86. Seventy-two of 95 (75.8%) occupied nests were active. Ninety-five percent of all nesting occurred in the coastal region and in the Okefenokee Swamp. Environmental pollutant residue levels for dead Ospreys are presented along with recent nesting records from Seminole and Tattnall Counties.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the help of those individuals and agencies who responded to various questionnaires and/or news releases requesting Osprey nesting data. Special thanks are due Department of Natural Resources pilots Barry Vaughn, John Hill, and Boyd Cline for their expertise, patience, and cooperation during this study. The following individuals offered constructive criticism on the manuscript: Terry

Table 2. Recent environmental contamination residues for Georgia Ospreys.

Sample Number	Date	County	Tissue	Contaminate Residues in PPM			
				PCB(1254)	Mercury	Lead	DDE
1	9/20/79	McIntosh	Liver	23.51	N.D.*	6.91	14.88
			Brain	5.96	N.D.	3.69	2.97
			Bone	N.D.	N.D.	8.45	N.D.
2	10/19/79	Grady	Muscle	358.92	1.64	N.D.	N.D.
			Liver	363.10	19.69	27.72	N.D.
			Brain	219.69	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.
3	9/22/80	Camden	Feather	N.D.	5.45	N.D.	N.D.
4	10/80	Washington	Muscle	1.68	1.46	N.D.	N.D.
5	4/11/80	Chatham	Liver	N.D.	10.12	N.D.	N.D.
			Muscle	N.D.	2.66	N.D.	N.D.

*N.D. = non-detectable

Johnson, Kent Kammermeyer, Joe Kurz, John Rappole, and Ron Simpson. This work was partially financed with grant-in-aid funds under Section 6 of The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P1-93-205).

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Department of Natural Resources, Game and Fish Division, Non-Game/Endangered Wildlife Program, Route 2 - Box 119A, Social Circle, Georgia 30279.

WOOD STORKS NESTING IN JENKINS COUNTY, GEORGIA

Albert L. Tate and Robert L. Humphries

On 6 July 1980 a nesting colony of Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) was found near Millen in Jenkins County, Georgia. We were accompanied by Milton N. Hopkins, Jr., who was also very helpful in editing the manuscript. A return visit to the site is planned for Spring 1981.

Based on visual inspection from the ground, the colony was estimated to contain over 100 active Wood Stork nests and over 200 feathered young. Total Wood Storks observed in the colony numbered about 500. Most of the stork nests were in large pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) trees and were situated in the topmost two-thirds of the trees. Large juvenile birds were standing two and three to the nest throughout the colony.

A few Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) and Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) were also nesting in the stork heronry. Seven Great Blue Herons and about 20 Great Egrets were seen. One immature White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) was also observed.

A flock of about 100 vultures had congregated in the heronry, primarily perched on the lower limbs of nest trees. Both Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) and Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) were present, but Black Vultures comprised about 90 percent of the vulture flock. Most of the vultures remained perched while the heronry was being investigated. Many of the adult storks also did not take flight.

Recent Wood Stork breeding colonies have been reported in Camden, Glynn, and McIntosh counties along the Georgia coast (Odom 1978, Odom et al. 1979), and older records exist for storks nesting in the Okefinokee [*sic*] Swamp (Hall and Cone 1970; Metzen 1977). Burleigh (1958, p. 118) records the Wood Ibis or Wood Stork as "A fairly common summer visitant on the coast and in the Okefenokee Swamp . . ." and notes breeding "from South Carolina, Florida, and Texas south to Argentina and Peru." However, Palmer (1962, p. 511) states that there is "no nesting now on the Atlantic seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina; breeding apparently never was extensive there."

The Jenkins County site described above and the other sightings reported in Georgia since 1970 may indicate a northward movement of the Wood Stork population. This site is over 160 km inland from the previously reported coastal breeding colonies and 224 km north of the Craven's Hammock site in the Okefinokee Swamp making it the northernmost Wood Stork breeding record for Georgia and possibly the U.S. Also, this colony is one of the largest, if not the largest breeding colony of Wood Storks yet reported in Georgia.

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UPLAND SANDPIPER, WILSON'S PHALAROPES, AND HUDSONIAN GODWITS IN GWINNETT COUNTY

Joe Greenberg and Robert Manns

On 15 April 1980, a little after 1000, we entered an abandoned corn field on McGinnis Ferry Road in Gwinnett County. Approximately one-fifth of the ten acre field was given to pondwater from heavy rainfall the preceding two days, the rain attending heavy tornado-laced storms out of Texas and Louisiana. On the northern side of the pond, in mudbanks and edge grasses, we immediately found several Hooded Mergansers (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) and what we took to be Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*).

For whatever reason, Manns engaged the scope again at a distance of about 100 feet and watched one after another of the "yellowlegs" redefine themselves as godwits. Calling Greenberg to the scope, redefinition was corroborated. The next five minutes tended to support the notion that a second look can, indeed, alter the apathetic findings of a first one. The scope was given back to Manns, who counted eleven birds. Greenberg's turn on the scope produced the announcement that they were Hudsonian Godwits (*Limosa haemastica*). Manns, who had never seen the species, suggested they flush them for tail identification. Before he left the scope, Manns found some five or six Wilson's Phalaropes (*Steganopus tricolor*), all females, to the left of the godwits — one of which was circling quickly in the shallow water. Greenberg corrobrated, and we both noted the long slender bills, black eye and neck line, reddish neck and back stripes, and white or light gray crowns. The birds were in breeding plumage.

While Manns looked again at the godwits, Greenberg announced the presence of an Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) some 40 feet off in the corn field. Manns confirmed the identification.

It remained to flush the godwits and to still the one observer's pessimism. Careful progress was made to about 50 feet, where Manns clearly noted on one bird the gray face, deep red-wine neck, breast and belly, godwit bill and eye-ring. Then the birds became alert. At 40 feet the birds went up and dead away (west) from us. As they rose, the white basal half and black terminal half of several tails were seen.

Although all birds could not be ascertained to be Hudsonian, it was not within the long field experience of Greenberg to have found Marbled (*Limosa fedoa*) and Hudsonian Godwits in mixed flocks.

Greenberg's initial recognition of the species was again questioned later in the day by Manns via telephone. He raised the spectre of the European Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*). Greenberg had seen the Black-tailed in Australia and refused the possibility by virtue of neck and breast color and the extent of that coloration onto the belly. He described the Black-tailed neck and breast as chestnut, the Hudsonian as wine. The gestalt, he said, was different. The face of the Black-tailed is

brown in breeding plumage, not gray. The bill is only slightly recurved, well recurved in the Hudsonian.

Both of us had seen that the belly, as far back as undertail coverts, was wine with black flank barring. *The Birds of Britain and Europe* (Heinzel, Fitter, and Parslow, 1972) and *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* (Peterson, Mountfort, and Hollom, 1966) describe white bellies for breeding plumage Black-tailed Godwits.

The birds had been seen at 1015. We then left the field to telephone the Rare Bird Alert in Atlanta. Between the time we left and noon, it is surmised that the godwits left. At 1200 Hugh Garrett found the field empty of interest and a later afternoon party of some 20 observers found only the phalaropes at another neighboring pond.

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TWO LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS AT JEKYLL, A SECOND APPEARANCE

Robert Manns, Jean Bevis, and Didi Kelley

On Sunday 31 August 1980, at about 1500, ebb tide and a scorching sun prevailed at the south beach of Jekyll Island. We observed an estimated population of 800 to 1000 perched birds, all facing a slight northern breeze, none feeding. Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) numbered only some dozen or so, all first winter birds. Ring-bills (*Larus delawarensis*) were even fewer. Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) were preponderant. Terns were well, if not uncommonly, represented — with Forster's (*Sterna forsteri*) most numerous. The smaller, beach-dwelling charadriids bordered the larger bird colonies and occupied several shallow tidal pools landward.

After perhaps five minutes of scanning the flocks, Kelley called attention to a dark-backed gull some 35 meters to the groups front. It was 2 or 3 centimeters shorter than the Herring, not so heavy and sizeably larger than the Laughing Gulls to its left and right. Back and wings were slate, or dark gray, primaries black. Head and neck were white with heavy striations on the crown, behind the eyes, front and back of neck. The bill was, none too helpfully, deformed. Its bottom mandible drooped away from the upper about midway and allowed, perhaps, 1 centimeter of separation from mid-bill to the bill end. When we closed to a distance of 20 meters, the legs were seen to be yellow. The bill was ascertained to be dark-ended as in immature gulls of several species, and the bird was identified as a Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*).

Kelley volunteered to make the necessary telephone call to the rest of our Atlanta party in Brunswick. Less than an hour later, one of the approaching group, Patrick Brisse, found a completely mature and perfectly unblemished black and white gull slightly northward (60 meters) that was also identified as a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Legs were a vivid yellow. Several confusing moments ensued while both the larger and the smaller group scrambled to see both individuals of the species. In less than five minutes, it was concluded that the following observers had seen both birds and agreed on identifications for both as Lesser Black-backs: Bob Manns, Jean Bevis, Didi Kelley, Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Peggy Fletcher, Donna Brisse and Patrick Brisse. Moore notified the group that he would inform Terrill Soules in Brunswick of the gulls, and this allowed Soules to see the birds about an hour later.

The only previous report of this species in Georgia was on 15 October 1977 (Manns 1978, *Oriole* 43 (2&3):32).

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GENERAL NOTES

A RECORD OF THE WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD FOR GEORGIA — On 27 August 1977 a White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*) was seen by Ken Blackshaw, Susan Davis, Trina and Vince Jackson, Vaughn Morrison, and me approximately 45 miles ESE of Savannah Beach, Georgia while we were on a combination birding and fishing trip. The bird appeared around the boat a total of three times before finally disappearing. The total time of observation was probably about 2-3 minutes.

When first seen the bird was flying approximately 25 meters above the water and crossed our bow about 50 meters out from the boat. The time was 1530 EDT and the depth of the water was approximately 30 meters. The bird then turned and flew along our right side at a height of about 35 meters. The first field marks which caught our attention were the distinctive flight of the species (fairly rapid, shallow wingbeats with a direct flight) and the pure white underparts including the wings. The bird did not have the long streamer tail of the adult but did have a wedge-shaped tail with the central tail feathers extending perhaps 5 cm past the other tail feathers. The black line through the eye and the yellow bill were carefully observed. When the bird flew off a distance, the barring on the back and the small amount of black on the upperside of the primaries were seen.

The bird rapidly put distance between itself and the boat until it was a mere speck. The captain of the boat had had some experience with this species in the Gulf Stream and suggested that we chase it as the bird is evidently quite curious. Soon after turning the boat in its direction the Tropicbird returned giving us an even better look before finally disappearing.

Since the bird we observed had only a spiked tail, a yellow bill and barring on the back, we felt that it was an immature rather than an adult, which would have had the streamer tail and an orange bill. A similar bird that it might be confused with is the very common Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*), which would not be pure white underneath because the dark primaries would be evident and the tail would be forked instead of wedged-shaped. The pure white undersides also rule out a Red-billed Tropicbird and the yellow bill rules out the Red-tailed Tropicbird. The only one of the observers familiar with this and the other species of Tropicbirds was the author.

The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (1977, Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publication No. 6) does not list this species in the regular section but does list a hypothetical record by William W. Griffin on 15 August 1940 at the Atlanta Waterworks. In addition, the captain of our boat, Jim Walthall of Savannah, had observed an adult of the species the previous summer at about this same time in roughly the same waters. He mentioned that the reason he noticed the bird in the first place was the long tail and when he returned to land he

identified the bird from pictures in his field guide. Since there had been no storms before either this bird was seen or the bird the previous summer, it is assumed that they both came into Georgia waters voluntarily and probably would prove to be a rare but regular visitor, if Georgia birders made more frequent trips to far offshore waters.

Terry S. Moore, 3086 River Oaks Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30339.

FRIGATEBIRD SIGHTED OVER SAPELO SOUND — Magnificent Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*) have been observed on infrequent occasions over the coastal waters of Georgia. I believe that these occasions are infrequent enough to justify recording another sighting.

At about 1600 on 26 April 1980, a single Magnificent Frigatebird was seen flying over Sapelo Sound near the northwestern tip of Blackbeard Island. The earliest previous sighting listed in the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (1977, Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publication No. 6) is 16 May 1933. This bird was approximately 150 to 200 feet above the surface of the water. It circled about in the company of several other large birds of other species. Air temperature was estimated to be about 78° to 80° F. Sea temperature was likewise estimated to be about 76° to 78° F. Humidity was high. A pale, faint mist rose into the air from the cool water of the sound. A severe thunderstorm and a heavy weather front were approaching from the south and west at the moment the observations were made.

The bird was lost to view as it continued to soar in irregular oval patterns and as my vessel moved away toward the storm.

G. W. Sciple, M.D., 2601 Parkwood Drive, Brunswick, Georgia 31520.

TREE SWALLOWS ATTEMPT NESTING IN GEORGIA — On a clear afternoon of 4 May 1980, I saw a Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) land on and then enter my 16-room martin house, located on the edge of Lake Chatuge, 2 mi NW of Hiawassee on Cedarcliff Road, Friendship Community, in Towns County, Georgia. The next day I saw two pairs of Tree Swallows on and in the house. On 8 May, I saw a pair apparently building a nest in one of the rooms. On 9 May, two pairs were again on the house, and later I saw five birds.

On 11 May, I saw a pair of Purple Martins (*Progne subis*); these were the first I had seen near the house in 1980. On 12 May, a pair each of martins and swallows whirled about the house. The swallows had been building in the upper south room; the martins opted for the lower SW corner. On 14 May, a martin kept the swallows from entering the latter's compartment. The swallows dove to within six inches of the martin, but could not drive it away. The martins were very noisy, the swallows silent.

During 15-17 May, the swallows continued nest-building, and on 18 May, I saw a pair copulating on a telephone wire in front of the house. On 26 May, I saw swallows and martins still fighting over the house; a pair of swallows was able to drive off a single martin. On 27 May, I saw a pair of martins nest-building in the upper NE corner of the house, and I saw two pairs of swallows again on the 28th. On 29 May, I saw that a single martin perched in the entrance of the swallows' apartment kept them out most of the time. On 31 May, the swallows began investigating one of the two empty Bluebird boxes within 100 feet of the martin house; I did not see them again.

About a month later, Robert W. Loftin told me that he had just seen a pair of Tree Swallows down the lake about a quarter of a mile. I wonder if the second pair did manage to nest somewhere in the vicinity.

On 25 July, I examined the Tree Swallows' compartment. There were four eggs in a typical Tree Swallow nest. I was able to remove only one without crushing it. Its measurements were in the mid-range for a Tree Swallow's egg, but I failed to note just what they were. I also noted then that the martins had built in a number of apartments, but had laid no eggs so far as I had been able to determine. There had been no sign of nestlings.

Had the martins been in residence when the Tree Swallows first appeared, perhaps the swallows would have built in a Bluebird house and we might have had the first successful Georgia nesting.

Arthur A. Green, Cedarcliff Road, Route 1, Box 778, Hiawassee, Georgia 30546.

FIRST WHITE IBIS RECORD FOR ATHENS, GEORGIA — White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) are residents in southeastern Georgia and South Carolina (south of Georgetown County), but they do wander casually northward in autumn (A.O.U. 1957, Check-list of North American birds. 5th ed. Lord Baltimore Press, Baltimore, MD). Griffin (1941) in Burleigh (1958, Georgia birds. University Oklahoma Press, Norman), recorded White Ibis as a rare summer visitor in Atlanta. As many as eighty in a flock were observed by R. A. Norris in the northwestern corner of Georgia during summer (Burleigh 1958).

On 2 and 5 August 1980, an immature White Ibis was observed roosting on the edge of Clay Pit Pond at Sandy Creek Nature Center, Clarke County, Georgia. It was first noticed by Donald Scott on 2 August at approximately 1900 EDT. I checked the bird at that time and identified it by its decurved and flesh-colored bill, white belly, and slate gray back as seen through Zeiss 10x40 binoculars at 20 m. Three days later on 5 August I returned and located a White Ibis at the same location and time (1930). I was able to approach to within 10 m of the bird without flushing it. It appeared healthy and was roosting in a habitat that was structurally similar to the Mack's Island rookery in the Okefenokee Swamp, Charlton and Ware County, Georgia.

I banded 220 White Ibis at the Mack's Island rookery on 17-19 June 1980. Most of the Okefenokee White Ibis fledged by mid-July 1980, but in Georgetown, South Carolina they fledged one month earlier. Im-

mature White Ibis in the Okefenokee Mack's Island rookery were marked with alpha-numeric coded (lettered and numbered, e.g., V22) patagial wing streamers and USFW aluminum leg bands. If you should see a marked White Ibis please record the species, date, location, streamer color, and alpha-numeric code/color and report these data to the Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, MD 20811.

Joseph M. Meyers, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602.

Editor's Note: See NEWS AND COMMENTS for a similar request for White Ibis sightings.

KING EIDER AT SAVANNAH RIVER DELTA — On Tuesday 1 April 1980, I was at the beach at the mouth of the Savannah River. This is the Fort Screven or northern part of Tybee Island, Georgia. The delta-sand beach area is a good place for birding, and for a couple of hours the usual species such as Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*), sandpipers (Family Scolopacidae), and other shorebirds were observed. Although there was a high haze across the sky, the light was good and identification was not difficult.

While routinely glassing the offshore waters, I paused at one bird that was not particularly distinctive but that I thought might be a Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*). Putting the more powerful scope on it, I realized it was something new to me, with a vague familiarity of birds known only from pictures but never before seen. The *Birds of North America* (Robbins, C. S. et al. 1966, Golden Press, New York, N.Y.) confirmed it to be an immature male King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). It was about 70 yards offshore, alone, and because it was busying itself with preening, washing, and such activities, I was able to observe it well for about 30 minutes. The distinctive head shape, frontal plate, and color scheme were obvious and easily seen and several times the bird rose to an upright posture fanning the air with its wings and giving me a good look at its breast and belly area. If it had been "tucked up" with its head under a wing, I'm sure I would never have identified it.

The tide was an hour or so past its lowest ebb and was beginning to rise again, slowly carrying the eider along the beach and around a 90° turn into the wide mouth of the Savannah River. By occasionally moving the scope 50 yards or so up the beach, I was able to keep it in view along a mile or so of shoreline for approximately half an hour. By then it was drifting up the river into the afternoon glare of a low sun on the water.

Thomas C. Smith, 124 E. Taylor Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

The inside front cover of this issue contains several changes that should be brought to the attention of members.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE — This committee is now chaired by H. Brance Howe, Jr., and includes former editor Les Davenport, I. Lehr Brisbin, Jr., and Thomas K. Patterson as new members. Milton N. Hopkins, Jr. and Emil K. Urban continue as members. Georgia Ornithological Society and its members are indebted to Robert L. Crawford, former chairman, and to George A. Dorsey for their many years of service on this committee.

NEW BUSINESS MANAGER — William A. Gibbs, Jr. replaced T. McRae Williams who retired after many years of devoted service in this position. Please direct all address changes and requests for back copies to Mr. Gibbs at 816 Hammond Drive, North Augusta, SC 29841.

NEW ADDRESSES — Please note also the change of address for Treasurer John M. Swiderski. Dues and membership applications should be sent to John at P.O. Box 1278, Cartersville, GA 30120.

A new mailing address for the Society appears on the outside back cover of this issue. Your attention is called also to the new membership rates currently in effect.

FROM THE EDITOR — I wish to take this opportunity to solicit manuscripts for publication in *The Oriole*. A long-standing backlog of manuscripts has been nearly exhausted and publication delay for future contributions should be reduced substantially. However, contributors should bear in mind that dated observations can not be published in an issue bearing a date earlier than the observation.

Articles need not be limited to new records or to research projects. Well written articles of general interest will be accepted if deemed appropriate for *The Oriole*. Occasional nonbird articles will also be accepted. Inexperienced authors who need help with their writing should consult members of the Editorial Committee or recent contributors to *The Oriole*. It would be very helpful if you would have two or more experienced authors critically review an early draft of your paper before submitting the final manuscript. Please submit two copies, including the typed original. Everything should be **double spaced** throughout. Always refer to the most recent issue of *The Oriole* for style, paying particular attention to the layout of figures and tables.

A limited number of good quality black-and-white photographs of unusual birds or unusual photographs of ordinary birds will be accepted for publication from time to time, on a trial basis and as space allows. Be sure to include identification, location and date of the photograph, and name of the photographer. Also include photographic data, such as camera, lens, film, and exposure, if known.

WANTED: WHITE IBIS SIGHTINGS

During the spring of 1980, 250 juvenile White Ibis were marked near Georgetown, South Carolina, with orange wing tags. Little is known about their post-fledging dispersal, and a report of any sightings would be useful and much appreciated, even if the numbers cannot be determined.

Tags are on one wing only, with black numbers and in some cases, numbers in combination with letters. If you see any of these birds, please send the date, location, and tag number to: Peter Frederick, Zoology Department, Wilson Hall 046-A, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

WANTED: SPECIMENS

The Biology Department and newly established Museum at Georgia Southern College is in need of bird and mammal specimens to augment the vertebrate collection used for educational and research purposes. Specimens may be prepared study skins or taxidermy mounts, or they may be recently dead specimens that have been preserved by freezing. These should be sealed in plastic bags. In the case of mammals, skins with skulls are preferred, but either alone would be acceptable. All specimens should be accompanied by the locality, date, and name of collector. While collecting *per se,* requires state and/or federal permits, it is entirely appropriate and desirable that dead specimens be salvaged and turned over to institutions licensed for that purpose.

Contact the editor for further information and shipping instructions.

A Statement of Policy

Application for membership may be made to the Treasurer. *THE ORIOLE* is sent without charge to all classes of members not in arrears for dues. Send changes of address, claims for undelivered or defective copies and requests for information relative to advertising, subscriptions and back numbers to the business manager.

All articles and notes submitted for publication and all books and publications intended for review should be sent to the editor.

Original papers in the field of Ornithology are published in *THE ORIOLE.* Papers are judged on their contribution of original data, ideas, or interpretations and on their conciseness, scientific accuracy, and clarity.

COPY — Type manuscripts *double spaced* throughout. Underscore scientific names only. Number pages in the upper right hand corner. Arrange contents in sequence: title page, text, reference, tables, figure legends, and figures. Type your complete address and date of submitting manuscript.

STYLE — The guide for preparation of copy is the STYLE MANUAL FOR BIOLOGICAL JOURNALS available from American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1401 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22209.

TITLE — The title should be concise, descriptive, and not more than 10 words in length. Avoid use of scientific names in titles if possible.

FOOTNOTES —Avoid footnotes by incorporating such material in the text.

NOMENCLATURE — Vernacular names should be capitalized in text. They are to be accompanied by appropriate scientific names the first time each species is mentioned. Show reference for long lists of scientific names (i.e., A.O.U. Checklist 5th ed., 1957).

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."

TABLES — Prepare tables in keeping with size of *THE ORIOLE.* A good table should be understandable without reference to the text.

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