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POSTBREEDING BIRD COMMUNITIES OF AN OLD FIELD-FOREST ECOTONE AND SUBDIVISION: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Joseph M. Meyers

With the rapid growth of human populations, man-modified habitat is of increasing importance to many wildlife species, especially songbirds. In the southeast the residential suburb is increasing rapidly, converting farmland and forest to subdivisions. These new habitats are invaded by many bird species; some are common to the region while others are expanding their ranges (Allen 1979).

The establishment of a subdivision may be regarded as an ecological experiment in which new features and resources (e.g. lawns, shrubbery, buildings, telephone lines) are introduced into the area from which many natural features have been removed. The structure of the new community will reflect not only the local resources and features, but also the interaction of species in this habitat (Emlen 1974).

The objectives of this project were to determine bird species composition and relative density in a subdivision and old field-forest ecotone habitat. Data from 146 mist-netted birds were used to meet these objectives.

STUDY AREAS AND METHODS

I sampled birds in a 19 ha subdivision near Athens, Georgia during the postbreeding season, i.e., late July to early September. For comparison, I also sampled birds in a nearby old field-forest ecotone of approximately the same size. Vegetation in both areas was approximately 15 yr-old with scattered older overstory vegetation. Both sites were cultivated before that time. Each study site had scattered pine-hardwood overstory, but the ratios were about 50% pine and 50% hardwoods in the subdivision and 25% pine and 75% hardwoods in the old field-forest.

The subdivision, Clarkedale, is approximately 5.6 km SSE of Athens, Georgia and is bounded by Green Acres Subdivision, Barnett Shoals Road, and undeveloped woodland and fields. The single-family homes date from 1960-1962 and each lot is approximately 0.3 ha. The old field-forest site, Horseshoe Bend Experimental Area, University of Georgia, is 2.5 km SSE of Athens and is bounded by College Station

Road, the Oconee River, and woodlands. The river did not affect sampling stations since all stations were well within (100 m) the old field-forest habitat.

Both areas were systematically sampled with mist nets at 2-week intervals from 27 July to 7 September 1977. Two mist net mesh sizes (32 and 36 mm) were used to sample small and large birds (Heimerdinger and Leberman 1966). Different mesh-sized nets were set in pairs at each sampling location except in the first 2-day sampling in which all nets were 32 mm.

Mist netting and banding songbirds in the postbreeding season were more inclusive than count censuses in these habitats at this time of year and also allowed the investigator to age, sex, weigh, and accurately identify birds. Banded birds were counted only at the time of first capture.

I developed a "community productivity index" for this study by aging and counting the local breeding birds. This index (P) is the number of hatching year (HY) birds divided by the adult females (F) or 50% of the adults in monomorphic species,

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^s (HY_i) (F_i)^{-1}$$

where HY is the number of hatching year birds (immatures) and F is the number of adult females of the i^{th} species, and s is the number of breeding species. P is affected by the success of fledging young and the total number of breeding species. A minimum of 3 individuals of each breeding species was required to enter that species in the index. Data for this index actually should be collected during the months of May, June, and early July for the Athens area; however, project logistics did not allow collection at that time. This index may be useful in bird habitat studies where information on singing males may not be sufficient to determine habitat quality. Data on species and young fledged may be a better way of analysing breeding bird habitat.

Three banding stations were selected in each habitat at approximately 100 m intervals. Two 2.6 x 12 m nets were set at each station for 2 consecutive mornings. Each net was opened at one-half hr before sunrise and closed between 1130 and 1200 hr. Birds were sampled for 3 2-day periods at 2-week intervals.

Each captured bird was banded with a United States Fish and Wildlife aluminum band and released at the capture site within 1 hr. Species, age, sex, weight (nearest 0.1g), various body measurements, location, net mesh size, time of capture, date and band number were recorded for each bird.

Number of species, individuals, HY birds, and adult birds (AHY) were analyzed by days (6) and locations (3) with paired t-tests (Ostle and Mensing 1975). Data were transformed by a square root for statistical

testing to satisfy normality assumptions. Equality of slopes for capture data was tested according to Bethea et al. (1975). Relative bird biomass was compared with a 2-sample t-test (Ostle and Mensing 1975). The Shannon-Weiner species diversity index, \bar{H} , was calculated for each community (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961, Pielou 1975, Whittaker 1975). \bar{H} 's were tested by t-tests using a variance approximation by Hutcheson (1970). Bird community similarity was calculated by a percentage similarity formula (Whittaker 1975).

All English bird names are those standardized and listed with scientific names by the American Ornithologists Union check-list committee (A.O.U. 1957, 1973, 1976).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was important to know if my sampling procedure was consistent from one habitat to the other. Bird capture rates usually decrease at banding stations during non-migratory season (Robbins, C.S., pers. comm.). The number of captured birds by sample day revealed a decrease in the capture rate in both habitats (Fig. 1). Capture rates (slopes) between habitats were not significantly different ($\alpha > 0.05$).

The most abundant species at Horseshoe Bend were Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*), Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*), Northern Parula (*Parula americana*), Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), and Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilocus colubris*). The Clarkedale subdivision had fewer abundant species. The most abundant were Carolina Wren, Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), Gray Catbird, Cardinal, and Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). Relative abundance and number of each species are reported in the Appendix.

Total species and numbers of birds in each habitat were not significantly different ($\alpha > 0.05$) (Table 1). The \bar{H} values for the subdivision and old field communities of this study were 2.7716 and 2.5925, respectively. Evenness, a measure of species distribution, was essentially the same in both bird communities (Table 1). I found no statistical difference in \bar{H} .

Other investigators (Hooper et al. 1975, Emlen 1974, and Geis 1976) found that total bird density increases and species richness decreases in suburban habitat. I found the same result; however, statistically there were no differences. None of the other investigators statistically analyzed their data.

Evenness was relatively high in both communities. There appears to be no dominance by urban species, such as House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Hooper et al. (1975) found large dominant populations of Starlings and House Sparrows in subdivisions with multiple-family units but considerably smaller numbers of these species in subdivisions with single-family units.

Since evenness in both habitats was similar, the slight difference in \bar{H} was caused by species richness. Although this difference in \bar{H} was not

significant, the trend of decreased \bar{H} in suburban habitats was consistent with other studies (Emlen 1974, Hooper et al. 1975).

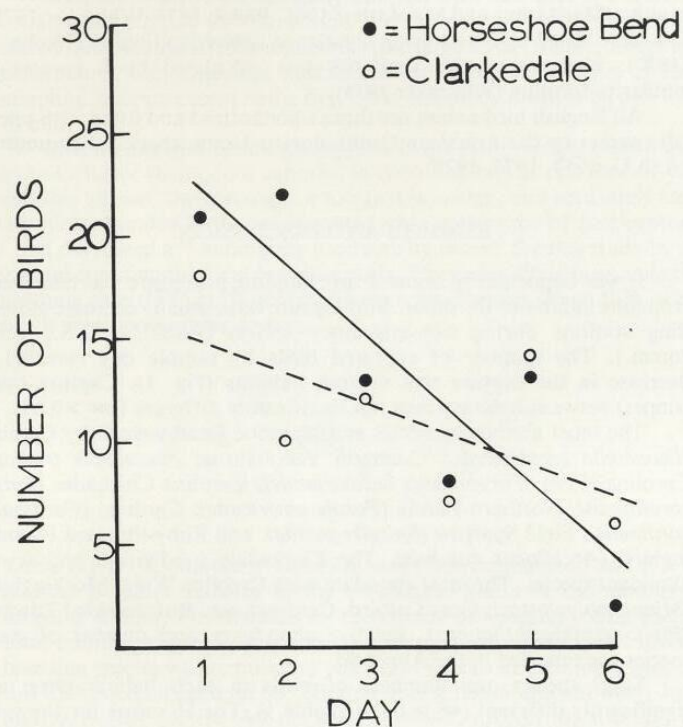


Fig. 1. Capture rate of birds with successive samples. (Horseshoe Bend —————; Clarkdale —————).

An obvious difference between the two communities was mean bird biomass (Table 1). Birds in the subdivision were greater in mass than old field birds ($\alpha < 0.0001$), i.e., the subdivision had larger birds. My data are not sufficient to present conclusions on this phenomenon.

Age structure within the communities was almost identical (Table 1). No significant difference was noted in the numbers of HY and AHY birds. P was 29% greater in the old field-forest edge. This would be expected since P accounts for breeding species richness (which was greater in the old field-forest ecotone) and the number of fledged birds per adult female.

In this preliminary study seven species were common to both habitats, 16 were found only in the old field-forest edge and 12 were limited to the subdivision. The percentage similarity was 0.36 of a possible range from 0 (no spp. in common) to 1 (all spp. identical in abundance). Obviously, new birds invade suburban habitats and others are displaced when subdivisions are built. In general, numbers of migratory bird species were lower in subdivisions than in the old field-forest ecotone, while resident bird species were higher in the subdivision than in the old field-forest ecotone (see Aldrich and Coffin 1980). It is also important to note that I found no difference in the commonly tested parameters: numbers (relative density), species, and \bar{H} . The exclusive use of only these parameters is a common mistake in many environmental impact statements.

TABLE 1

Table 1. A comparison of bird communities from Horseshoe Bend and Clarkdale study areas, 27 July - 7 September 1977.

PARAMETER	HORSESHOE BEND	CLARKDALE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE ^a
Total birds	79	67	0.29
Total species	23	19	0.54
Species diversity (\bar{H})	2.7716	2.5925	0.25
var (\bar{H})	0.0115	0.0121	
Evenness	0.8839	0.8805	
Total biomass (relative)	1.70 kg	2.51 kg	
Mean bird mass	21.49 g	37.41 g	$<<0.0001$
SE of mean	1.69	2.34	
Bird age			
HY birds	40(51%)	34(51%)	0.51
AHY birds	36(45%)	29(43%)	0.54
Unknown	3(4%)	4(6%)	
Productivity Index	27.8	21.6	
Percent similarity	----- 36% -----		

^aPaired t-tests of transformed data.

Management of songbirds is a new field and many principles are not known. However, if homeowners increase the understory vegetation between ground level and 3 m, eliminate some mowed areas either by planting flower gardens and shrubs or by allowing secondary succession to occur, and maintain overstory trees (> 10 m), they may substantially in-

crease the number of species near their home during the spring and summer seasons. Hooper et al. (1975) felt that patchiness and volume of understory vegetation was a key to increasing songbird numbers and diversity in a new town. "Severe disturbance," human and domestic animals, in a suburban area tends to drive some nesting birds away from the ground and a majority of bird species nest between ground level and 3 m (Preston and Norris 1947, DeGraaf et al. 1975). With these vegetative modifications and maturity of the vegetative community an expected increase in bird populations and diversity should occur (Woulfenden and Rohwer 1969).

SUMMARY

Birds were captured from July to August, 1977, by mist netting in an old field-forest ecotone and subdivision near Athens, Georgia. Relative density (net captures), species number, and species diversity were not significantly different ($\alpha > 0.05$) between the 2 habitats. Considerable differences in species composition were found and the calculated community species similarity was 36%. There is an indication that subdivisions are detrimental to migratory bird species and increase resident species. A bird "community productivity index" was developed to measure fledgling success and species richness. Bird community productivity was 29% greater in the old field-forest ecotone.

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APPENDIX

Appendix. Numbers, species, and relative abundance of birds banded 27 July - 7 September 1977.

Species	Control		Subdivision	
	Horseshoe Bend		Clarkedale	
	Rel. Abundance Number	(%)	Rel. Abundance Number	(%)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	4	5.0		
Downy Woodpecker			1	1.5
Acadian Flycatcher	1	1.3		
Blue Jay			3	4.5
Carolina Chickadee	5	6.3	2	3.0
Tufted Titmouse			2	3.0
House Wren	1	1.3	2	3.0
Carolina Wren	6	7.6	10	14.8
Mockingbird			9	13.4
Gray Catbird	17	21.4	9	13.4
Brown Thrasher	3	3.8	3	4.5
American Robin			2	3.0
Wood Thrush	2	2.5		
Swainson's Thrush ^a			1	1.5
Veery ^a	1	1.3		
Eastern Bluebird			1	1.5
Starling			1	2.5
White-eyed Vireo	3	3.8		
Red-eyed Vireo	2	2.5		
Worm-eating Warbler	1	1.3		
Northern Parula	5	6.3		
Blackburnian Warbler ^a	1	1.3		
Common Yellowthroat	7	8.9		
Chestnut-sided Warbler ^a	1	1.3		
Prairie Warbler	1	1.3		
Northern Waterthrush ^a			2	3.0
Kentucky Warbler	1	1.3		
American Redstart ^a	3	3.8		
House Sparrow			2	3.0
Common Grackle			1	1.5
Cardinal	5	6.3	9	13.4
Indigo Bunting	1	1.3		
Rufous-sided Towhee	3	3.8	6	9.0
Chipping Sparrow			1	1.5
Field Sparrow	5	6.3		
Total number	79	100.0	67	100.0
Species	23		19	

^aSpecies does not breed in the region and was not used in the "community productivity index."

KLEPTOPARASITISM OF COMMON GALLINULES ON AMERICAN COOTS

Lawrence Kilham

The kleptoparasitism described in this paper, of Common Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus*) on American Coot (*Fulica americana*), was observed daily between 27 February and 10 March 1981 on an artificial pond located next to the Marine Institute of the University of Georgia on Sapelo Island. The mixed flock consisted of 3 coots and from 2-4 gallinules which, being accustomed to people and cars passing close by, were relatively tame and ideal for watching from the open banks of the pond.

The pond, which included a number of islands, had an inclusive area of roughly a third of a hectare. The area where the coot did most of their diving had a depth of about 1.4 m. In an effort to improve fishing, the pond had been treated with herbicides a year previously, one result having been an overgrowth of *Chara spp.* that, at the time of observation, lay near the bottom in a matted, winter condition. The only other plant consumed during present observations, and only rarely, was *Spirogyra*. As far as I am aware this is the first account of kleptoparasitism for *G. chloropus*. I spent approximately 15 h watching. The kleptoparasitism went on morning and afternoons and appeared to be a steady and regular method of foraging.

Patterns of behavior were the same from day to day. The gallinules swam close behind the coot whenever the latter went in open water. When a coot dove, several gallinules swam to the spot with necks outstretched. If the coot emerged close and facing them, the gallinules were quick to snatch at the *Chara* in the coot's bill. On many dives, the coot came up a meter or so distant. Their swimming away, however, did not always make much difference, for the stringy nature of the *Chara* made it easy for the pursuing gallinules to seize. In addition to the long pieces, there were shorter fragments which both gallinules and coots seized by dabbling or tipping. The kleptoparasitic gallinules got the larger share in some, but usually half or less of what a coot brought to the surface. Estimations were difficult because coots that did not dive joined with gallinules in robbing the coot that had.

Coots regularly robbed each other, behaving in much the same manner as the gallinules when the conspecific dove and emerged. A dive by one coot sometimes kept as many as 2 gallinules and 2 other coots feeding for from 5-12 or more seconds. Coots were less conspicuous in this mixed stealing because the gallinules were faster and more aggressive. When coots were alone, their intraspecific stealing was more apparent. In watching 2 coots make 12 dives in 30 min, I estimated that the diver got the largest share in 5, its associate more in 4, and the diver at least half of its haul in 3. In this all-coot system it did not seem that any individual lost by the stealing. What one coot lost it recovered by stealing from neighbors after their dives. A collective benefit was that many pieces of *Chara* started to sink immediately and would have been lost had there not been other individuals to snap them up. Of a total of 32 dives

by gallinules observed, they were robbed twice by other gallinules. One reason gallinules were robbed infrequently was that they almost always swam for shore where they could eat without interference.

The coots were tolerant of the kleptoparasitism of the gallinules and conflicts between the two species were infrequent. I saw coots rear up on the water ($n = 4$) to present their breasts (a threat display described by Gullion 1952) to gallinules that had apparently annoyed them by coming to steal head on.

A number of circumstances appeared to have favored the kleptoparasitism observed. Had the coot come up with small billfulls they might have been able to consume it quickly, affording little chance for stealing. As it was, the strings of matted *Chara*, up to 60 cm or more in length, were difficult to handle, giving the kleptoparasites time to seize sizeable portions. The depth of the pond also appeared to have favored stealing in being too great for the gallinules to do their own diving readily. In a second and much shallower pond, 2 km away, 12 gallinule and about 25 coot did their foraging by tipping up and I saw no stealing. In spite of these advantages, 6 of the 9 gallinules on the pond stayed away from the coots, either foraging close along the shore or up on the bank. Townsend (in Bent 1923), gives a description of American Wigeons (*Anas americana*) robbing coots in a manner similar to what I have observed for the gallinules.

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FRANKLIN'S GULL ON LAKE LANIER

John Paget and Robert Manns

On 28 April 1981, John Paget borrowed his daughter's speedboat and covered about twenty-five miles of water southward toward a sandspit in Lake Lanier. On the previous day it had been well populated with larids. Scoping the birds from shore had only indicated large and small probable gulls and terns, even at 40X. But the concentration had been inviting, and final arrival by boat provided the following populations: approximately 30 Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), 3 Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*), 4 Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*), 1 Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*), and a hooded gull that caused him considerable anguish. He did not have a field guide and memory of the differences between the Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*), and the western Franklin's (*Larus pipixcan*) seemed quickly out of reach.

Now committed to memorization, Paget marked the size as being slightly larger than the Bonaparte's and noted a thin red bill. The primary wingtips appeared spotted white on black. Upon moving the boat closer and flushing the bird, the black and white tipped primaries "flashed" and folded again as the bird resettled.

Disgusted with the lack of positive identification, yet not wanting to lose the bird by intimidation, Paget turned the boat and headed north over the same twenty-five miles already covered, added seven miles by auto to his home and hurriedly consulted a field guide.

With considerable enthusiasm, he called Robert Manns at 1200 in Atlanta and divulged a possible Franklin's Gull. Manns, who promised to join him with a camera an hour later, joined him an hour later with considerable excitement but a forgotten camera. Then Paget, completing his third twenty-five mile voyage of the day, put both observers before the sandbar and the hooded gull.

Some time was spent detailing the bird at rest, proving nothing in the absence of a Laughing Gull for comparison. Manns noted an apparent lightness in the gray of the wing and back, but said nothing. The bill looked slender. The hood looked as full at the nape as on the Laughing Gull, whereas Peterson (1980) denies that fullness by more closely approximating the back of the hood to that of the Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*).

The birds were flushed and the possible *L. pipixcan* flashed his tips. Under liftoff the accelerated wingbeat made sure identification of the wing pattern difficult and both observers momentarily despaired of accurate observation. Then the bird straightened, leveled and headed in a northwesterly direction and, on the down-stroke, revealed clearly to both observers a separating border of white between the gray mantle and black wingtip.

Both observers agreed on the observation as being of the western Franklin's Gull, the third such in Georgia. The first was by Roberta and L. A. Wells (1965) near Columbus, Georgia on 24 April 1965. The second, by Smith, T.C. (1978) was seen near Savannah on 18 March 1978.

Within an hour, the bird was put on the Georgia rare bird hotline but its northwesterly direction in final flight and inaccessibility of the sandbar to land caused no known subsequent searches, and it is presumed the bird left on the day sighted.

Manns later mentioned to Paget the "light look" of the gray in the Franklin's as a possible indicator to the species, if not a diagnostic mark. This is suggested as a possibility by both Peterson (1980) in his new manual, Robbins et al. (1966) and Godfrey (1966).

Paget succeeded in logging a hundred miles on the water with a large horsepower engine in order to settle his earlier suspicions of the gull. It was probably one of the costlier rarities added to Georgia ornithology.

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PRAIRIE FALCON SIGHTINGS IN GEORGIA

Terry S. Moore

On 5 February 1977, Jean and Pat Bevis, Vaughn Morrison, and I observed a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) on the Lookout Plateau in northwest Georgia. The bird was observed for approximately one minute as it soared directly overhead, and then was lost from view and could not be relocated.

When first seen, the bird was soaring about 50 meters above Georgia Route 157, about 8 miles north of the intersection of Georgia Routes 48 and 157. We immediately noticed the long, pointed wings and long tail typical of falcons. However, when the bird wheeled, the sandy coloration on the back was seen, and we realized that the bird also had black areas where the wings joined the body. This bird was about the size of the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) but did not have the boldly patterned underwing or face pattern so typical of that species.

The habitat in which the Prairie Falcon was seen is unique in the state of Georgia. The Lookout Plateau in the area of the sighting is a short-grass "prairie" habitat of several thousand acres with small, scattered groups of trees. Persons seeing the area for the first time would believe they were actually on a prairie in one of the western states. During the past few winters, the area has also yielded records of Lapland Longspurs, Golden Eagles, a Rough-legged Hawk, and large flocks of Horned Larks.

There have been three other sightings of the Prairie Falcon in Georgia (pers. comm.). The first bird was discovered by Joel Volpi as it spent the period from early December 1975 to January 1976 on a floodplain area near Duluth. The second, perhaps the same bird, was spotted by Wally Dreyfoos along Interstate 285 north of Atlanta on 5 April 1976. The third sighting was by Harriett DiGioia on 5 August 1977 in the Cohutta Ranger District of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

The question with all these sightings is whether they represent sightings of wild birds or escapees from falconers. This question can never be answered completely as there is no easy way to distinguish escapees from wild birds in the field. None of the sightings included jesses or bells, but this is not conclusive. The behavior of the birds likewise was not conclusive in determining whether these birds were wild or not.

The Georgia sightings, plus recent sightings in Alabama and South Carolina (pers. comm.), lead one to believe that the Prairie Falcon may be expanding its winter range into the southeast, but more sightings will have to be made before this hypothesis can be accepted. Observers should be aware, however, that all large falcons in the southeast are not necessarily Peregrine Falcons.

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SWAINSON'S HAWK SIGHTING IN GEORGIA

Terry S. Moore

On 9 October 1977 an immature Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) was seen on the Georgia portion of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge by Lou Echols, Sam Pate, Vaughn Morrison, Beth Ramsey, Mary Ann Vernocy, and me. The bird was actually seen from the Alabama side of the refuge but was on an island in the Chattahoochee River within the Georgia boundary.

The island the bird was located on was about 30 meters long by about 5 meters wide with one tree about 7 meters high on one end and low vegetation on the remainder. The bird was perched in the tree when first observed. What drew our attention to the bird was the sharply defined breast band which gave the bird an almost "Pectoral Sandpiper" look. All the observers were familiar with the common Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), which generally has a "belly" band much less well defined than on this bird. Also, the bird under observation had only a small area of white on the throat as opposed to the larger area of white on a Red-tail that usually encompasses not only the throat but also a portion of the upper breast area. The bird was thought to be an immature because the breast band consisted of very heavy longitudinal streakings on a background of dark or reddish brown. Adult birds would not show such heavy streaking on the breast band.

After a few minutes, the bird flew down to the ground and proceeded to move around, apparently hunting. Its behavior at this time was to move about with short hops and flights of a meter or two while being very attentive to anything moving on the ground. This behavior for the Swainson's had been previously noticed by four observers (Pate, Morrison, Ramsey, and Moore) during trips to the western U.S. The final field mark was a small white area around the rump, seen during one of the bird's short flights by Vernocy and Echols.

The weather immediately preceding the sighting may have had something to do with the occurrence. The night before, an extremely violent cold front moved through the area with high winds and rain. Also seen that day, on the Alabama side of Eufaula Refuge, were two Yellow-headed Blackbirds (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), which may have been deposited by the storm.

About a week previous, Joe Greenberg felt that he had also observed a Swainson's Hawk in the same general area but thought that it was more of an adult bird than the one described above (pers. comm.). Neither bird could be relocated after the original sightings.

Peterson (1980, *A Field Guide to the Birds*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass.) notes that Swainson's Hawks occasionally winter in extreme south Florida, and this sighting may be one of those birds passing through the area. Observers should be aware that these birds may occur in small numbers during the fall in Georgia, and should make efforts to document any further occurrences of this species.

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GENERAL NOTES

GREAT BLUE HERON (WHITE MORPH) SEEN IN MORGAN COUNTY — On 21 June 1981 an example of the white morph of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) was seen in western Morgan County about 3 miles east of the town of Newborn by Patrick Brisse, Bill Pulliam, Peggy and Terry Moore. The bird was standing at the edge of a farm pond of approximately one acre in size. It flew to the opposite side of the pond and then flew toward another pond and was lost from sight. The observers were approximately 75 meters from the bird at the beginning of the observation.

The large size of this white heron was what first attracted the observers' attention. Leg color varied from a light yellow on the upper part of the leg to a slate gray on the lower part. There was no black on the legs as is the case of the Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*). Bill color was yellowish on the lower mandible and more of a gray color on the upper.

Although the "Great White" Heron has been seen a number of times recently along the Georgia coast, this appears to be only the second inland record for this morph. The previous record was by Tom Patterson on 3-31 January 1978 in Laurens County (*Oriole* 43:39-40).

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

LOUISIANA HERON BREEDING IN TURNER COUNTY — On 28 May 1981 a single nest of the Louisiana Heron *Hydranassa tricolor* was noted in the Rebecca heronry 6 km south of Rebecca, Turner County, Georgia.

The presence of this species has been infrequently noted in several of the colonial nesting sites of local waders, usually represented by single birds. Burleigh (1958, *Georgia Birds*, University of Oklahoma Press) states "In Georgia it has shown a definite partiality for the proximity of saltwater, and, while scattered rookeries exist near the coast, it has never been known to breed in the many freshwater marshes in the interior of the state".

I was observing the nesting colony from its eastern rim through a telescope when an adult Louisiana Heron was noted perched in a Swamp Black Gum (*Nyssa aquatica*) approximately 3 m above the water level. Its elongated lanceolate plumes (the longest white) on the rear of the crown and on its nape stood out distinctly. About 1 m below the heron and a bit to the right in the same tree another adult Louisiana Heron was noted sitting on a nest. The tree also contained two active nests holding young of the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*). While one nest of the species will probably not lead to a nesting colony of the same species, this is nevertheless positive evidence of yet another new breeding bird for the area.

The colony was again investigated on 1 June 1981 by wading into its interior. Another nest of the Louisiana Heron was located approximately 3 m above the water level in another Swamp Black Gum. The nest contained four young appearing to be about three weeks old and already

clearly displaying adult markings. Many White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) nest containing young were also in the immediate area.

Milton Hopkins, Jr., Rt. 5, Osierfield, Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750.

SIGHTING OF ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK IN FULTON COUNTY —

On 5 April 1981 I was birding on Roger's Bridge Road near Duluth, in Fulton County, Georgia. At about 1300 I observed a large buteo-shaped hawk circling over the road about one-third mile away. As the bird banked in circling, my first view was of its back and upper sides of the wings. I observed white patches in the wings outside the wrists, and a white tail with a broad (about two or three inch wide) black band toward but not extending to the end of the tail. The undersides of the wings were white, marked with black, especially at the wrists. I noted that the wings were wide front to back as on a buteo and not narrow as on a Marsh Hawk. On the next circle I noted that the white on the tail did not extend onto the rump. On the remainder of that circle and the next I directed my attention to the breast and belly. Whether because of the light or the angle (the bird was never directly overhead), I was never able to distinguish if there was any pattern to be observed in this area. Tall trees beside the road then obscured my view. Although I chased after the bird, I was not able to relocate it.

The hawks normally seen in this area in April include Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, and Marsh. Other than the shape and size, there was nothing that suggested to me that the bird was any of these. From the tail pattern I thought it could be a Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*). After consulting field guides by Peterson (1980) and Robbins, et al. (1966), I discovered that the black wrist marks and the white patches outside the wrists on the mantle were field marks of the Rough-legged Hawk and I concluded that this was the bird I had seen.

Jean H. Bevis, 1197 Mayfield Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30033.

SANDHILL CRANE WINTERS IN LAURENS COUNTY — A Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) was seen on several occasions between 30 November 1980 and 21 March 1981 in Laurens County, Georgia. Laurens County, in the upper Coastal Plain of central Georgia, is approximately 200 km north of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the nearest known wintering range of the species.

The bird, mouse gray in color except for a few brown feathers on the wing coverts, was most often observed feeding in the grasses and marshes of a large pasture in the northeastern section of the county. In prior seasons, transient cranes have been noted in the same pasture.

On 6 March, another of the species, brownish in color and conspicuously larger, had joined the wintering bird. The two were seen together through the last observation on 21 March. Neither was seen in searches of the area on 26 and 28 March.

From its color, behavior, and comparative size, I speculated that the wintering bird was possibly an unpaired, sub-adult female.

Thomas K. Patterson, 1408 Edgewood Drive, Dublin, Georgia 31021.

APPARENT WINTERING BARN SWALLOW SIGHTED AT SAVANNAH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE — On the morning of 15 February 1981, while leading a field trip for the Atlanta Audubon Society, we observed a single Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge near Savannah, Ga. The bird was accompanied by several Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*). While the Barn Swallow was in South Carolina when sighted, it flew in a southeasterly direction into Georgia where it disappeared from sight. The orange coloration of the throat, the deeply forked tail, and the bluish back were plainly visible. The bird was observed for about 60 seconds at a height of 30 meters by two observers using 7X and 8X binoculars.

We realized immediately that this was a rare sighting so the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publication No. 6, 1977) was consulted for current information. The checklist considers the Barn Swallow to be "occasional" in winter. To our knowledge, the Barn Swallow does not reach this area of the South Carolina/Georgia coast until 15 March at the earliest in Spring; therefore, a good case is made for a wintering bird. The swallow was flying freely and rapidly without any apparent injury.

We have seen Barn Swallows as late as the first week of November and have heard of observations as late as December in Georgia (pers. comm.). These sightings most certainly represent late migrants. However, January and February sightings are a different matter. More field observations and reporting of Barn Swallow sightings in winter can help to determine if this bird is truly occasional in winter or if it remains in Georgia more often than previously expected.

Vince and Trina Jackson, 1990 Palifox Drive, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30307.

VARIATION IN GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER — At 0700 of 23 April 1981, on the President's Estate of Emory University in Atlanta, Didi Kelley and I witnessed a Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) that completely keyed as male with one exception. While the eye and auricular patch was a deep black, and forehead, crown and wingbar were vivid gold, the black throat patch was entirely missing. Nor was there any trace of gray, as in the female.

This tended to suggest to us an aberrantly marked "Brewster's" hybrid with no yellow chest patch and heavier than normal eyemask. Although I have seen considerable variation in the dominant "Brewster's" hybrid (completely white breast, white wingbars), I have never been aware of such in the Golden-winged.

The Golden-winged song was coming from the observed bird's direction, but every effort to see it singing was futile.

Robert Manns, 2099 McKinley Road, NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30318.

ADDITIONAL HOSTS OF THE BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD IN GEORGIA — On 7 May 1980 in Gainesville, Georgia, I flushed a Wood

Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) from a nest containing three Wood Thrush eggs and one of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). The partially incubated cowbird egg was destroyed, but on 14 June 1980 I saw a fledgling cowbird in the same vicinity being fed by Wood Thrushes. On 16 July 1980 and again on 16 May 1981 I saw fledgling cowbirds in Gainesville being fed by Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*).

The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, Denton et al. 1977, Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publication No. 6 states that "known hosts in Georgia" (for the Brown-headed Cowbird) "are White-eyed Vireo, Yellow, Prairie, and Hooded Warblers, Indigo Bunting".

John M. Paget, 1530 Vine Street, Gainesville, Georgia 30501.

COMMON REDPOLL AT SANDY SPRINGS FEEDER — At about 1330 on 21 March 1981 a single female or immature Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*) appeared at a basket feeder in Sandy Springs. The bird had a reddish forehead and a black bib but without the rosy breast indicative of the male. It was observed and identified in direct comparison with the many Pine Siskins (*Carduelis pinus*) and American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*) that were also frequenting the feeder at the time. The bird lit in the middle of the basket, looked around for a time, then flew off to a nearby branch before returning in a short while to the basket. It stayed a few more minutes and then finally left the area. It did not eat any of the seed in the feeder, perhaps because the unhulled sunflower seeds were not available. According to Dennis (1976. *A Complete Guide to Bird Feeding*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, New York) "sunflower seed is a preferred food but the redpoll seems to be one of the few members of the finch family that is unable to cope with the outside hull. Redpolls sometimes get their share by gleaning tidbits left by other birds." Although a close watch was made for several days, the bird never appeared again.

Burleigh (1958. *Georgia Birds*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma) classifies the bird as hypothetical in the state with two Atlanta sightings on 5 and 11 February 1922 and a single Macon observation in January 1951. The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Denton et al. 1977) accepts the bird as an occasional visitor in winter and adds a Brunswick observation on 6 April 1972.

Robert G. Raymund, 5320 Roswell Rd., NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30342. and William F. Terrell, 3071 Mabry Rd., Atlanta, Georgia 30342.

LATE SAVANNAH SPARROW AT PENDERGRASS — On 25 May 1981 a rather late Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) was seen by Patrick Brisse and me on the grounds of Wayne's Poultry Plant near Pendergrass, Georgia. The bird was flushed twice and the heavy streakings on the undersides and the yellow wash on the face were observed. Evidently the same bird was seen by John Paget on the record late date of 3 June 1981.

This appears to be the latest record for the Savannah Sparrow for Georgia as the latest previous record was 28 May 1910 near Savannah (Burleigh, T.D. 1958. *Georgia Birds*, University of Oklahoma Press).

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NEWS AND COMMENTS

The ornithological papers of Dr. J. Fred Denton, who died 2 April 1978, were deposited 14 May 1981, in the Museum of Natural History at the University of Georgia. Milton N. Hopkins, Jr. and Richard A. Parks kindly conveyed the papers from Mrs. Denton to me for deposit. Dr. Denton donated his collection of 260 bird skins to Augusta College in October, 1977. The deposited papers include field trip notes, correspondence, range maps, reprints, and manuscripts comprising some 95 pounds of material that span more than 40 years of Georgia ornithological history. Probably the most important part, however, is the loose-leaf folder containing range maps and published literature references for all avian species known to have been recorded in Georgia. Much of the correspondence concerns efforts to confirm records of the less common birds reported.

Dr. Denton was the leading authority on the distribution of birds in Georgia and as such acted as the repository for past and current records. This compiled information was used in the preparation of the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* in 1977, of which he was the senior author. The use of his deposited papers should be helpful to any investigators who work on subsequent revisions of the Checklist.

H. Branch Howe, Jr., Department of Microbiology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

As the new editor of the *Oriole* I would like to thank the previous editor, Dr. Bill Lovejoy, for all his efforts on behalf of the *Oriole* and the Georgia Ornithological Society. His work over the past few years resulted in many very professionally prepared *Orioles* that we are very proud of. I believe everyone will agree that Bill deserves a commendation for a job well done.

I would also like to take a few minutes to encourage all readers of the *Oriole* to devote some time to investigating areas where they might contribute to Georgia ornithology. Not everyone will be able to spend the amount of time necessary to compose a lengthy paper but almost everyone has noteworthy observations which should be documented and submitted for publication. While articles on new species for the state list and accidental sightings must be submitted, there are plenty of other sightings regarding extensions of breeding ranges, early arrival or late departure dates, unusual behavior and many others that would make excellent articles. A review of recent issues of the *Oriole* will give an idea of

the types of articles and notes that can be prepared. Without your input, the *Oriole* cannot continue to be a valuable publication. If the editor can be of any assistance in providing guidance on article preparation or other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

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