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BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLES ON THE SAVANNAH RIVER PLANT, SOUTH CAROLINA

John J. Mayer, Richard T. Hoppe and Robert A. Kennamer

The Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) is a fairly common permanent breeding resident in South Carolina and is most abundant in the coastal region (Sprunt and Chamberlain 1970). The Golden Eagle (Aquila chrysaetos) is a rare resident in the mountains of the northwestern section of the state but is found in winter in other areas (Sprunt and Chamberlain 1970). There have been no recent documented nesting records for this species in South Carolina (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.). The Bald Eagle population in South Carolina has been increasing since 1981 (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.). As the nesting pairs of Bald Eagles along the coast have recovered, so has the nesting success, allowing greater numbers of fledglings to disperse to suitable inland areas where both density and competition are lower (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.). This colonization of nonhistoric range is primarily the result of the construction of large inland impoundments on the Santee-Cooper and Savannah River drainages which provide new foraging habitat for this species (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.). Recent Golden Eagle numbers in South Carolina have remained low but constant (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.).

The Savannah River Plant (SRP) is a 77,000 ha federal Department of Energy nuclear production complex and research facility, occupying portions of Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale counties in west-central South Carolina. This site includes three large impoundments and extensive wetland habitats along the Savannah River which potentially constitute a substantial amount (approx. 4,953 ha) of inland Bald Eagle foraging and roosting habitat. Potential impacts on or benefits for this endangered species resulting from activities at the SRP have not been documented. With the increase in density of Bald Eagles sighted inland (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.) and construction of a new 400 ha impoundment on the SRP, the potential exists for an overall increase in the use of the site by at least this eagle species. Although the SRP is not ideal Golden Eagle habitat, it does provide potential wintering habitat for this species. The purpose of this report is to review the history of Bald and Golden Eagle use of the SRP and to provide a detailed assessment of the past year's sightings of these species on the site.

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The previous documented occurrence of Bald Eagles on the SRP has been uncommon but persistent. Records of Bald Eagles in this area date back to 1904 (Murphy 1937). The presence of this species on the site has been documented as early as May 1959 (Norris 1963). Three birds were observed that year on Par Pond, a 1,130 ha cooling reservoir on the site. At least one of these birds, seen in September, was immature (Norris 1963). Par Pond has been and still is the location where the majority of sightings on the SRP have taken place (Figure 1). Jenkins and Provost (1964) reported that 2 Bald Eagles had been recorded for the SRP, with neither being permanent residents nor breeders. Langley and Marter (1973) also noted that 3 Bald Eagles were "transient visitants" near Par Pond. Since 1978, a near-shore survey of a majority of Par Pond has been conducted as part of the annual SRP Christmas Bird Count. The Bald Eagle sightings on Par Pond during this annual one-day survey prior to the 1984 count were: Dec. 23, 1978 - 1 adult in Big Lake section and 1 immature in Pump House Cove; Dec. 15, 1979 - 1'adult on the north shore of East Lake; Dec. 18, 1982 - 1 adult in Gentry's Gulf (I. L. Brisbin, Jr., pers. comm.). Dukes (1984) stated that a few Bald Eagles had been observed on Par Pond, but that there was no resident population on the site. The use of the SRP by Bald Eagles, however, is not well understood and no Bald Eagle nesting has been documented. The lack of continuous sightings suggests that these birds are probably not permanent residents on the site. In addition, the minimal maintenance of sight records increases the lack of understanding of how, where and when Bald Eagles use the SRP.

In contrast to the Bald Eagle, sightings of Golden Eagles on the SRP are very rare. Records of the Golden Eagle in this area of South Carolina and Georgia date back to at least 1933. Even then, this species was locally classified as rare (Murphy 1937). Only two sightings of Golden Eagles have occurred on the SRP. The first was an immature bird that spent several weeks on Par Pond during the 1972-73 winter (T. M. Murphy and I. L. Brisbin, Jr., pers. comm.). The second was an adult bird seen over Par Pond during the 1978 SRP Christmas Bird Count (I. L. Brisbin, Jr., and E. K. Urban, pers.

From September 1984 through August 1985, a study was conducted to document Bald and Golden Eagle use of the SRP for a one-year period. Ground and/or aerial surveys were conducted on the Par Pond Reservoir System at least twice per month during this period. In addition, efforts were made to document any other eagle sightings reported on the entire SRP during that period. The location, date, time of day, number of adult and immature birds, and behavior when observed were recorded. Descriptions of any tags or bands were also noted.

Thirty-six Bald Eagle sightings were made in 31 instances during the 12-month period. No Golden Eagles were sighted or reported. Most (91.7%) of the Bald Eagle sightings were on the Par Pond Reservoir System. Within this system, the largest number of sightings (66.7%) were on Par Pond. This was followed by Pond C (24.2%), Pond B (6.1%), and Pond 2 (3.0%). On Par Pond, the Big Lake section adjacent to the Cold Dam had the most use (22.7%), followed by Loyal's Lair (18.2%), and then Hot Arm, North Arm

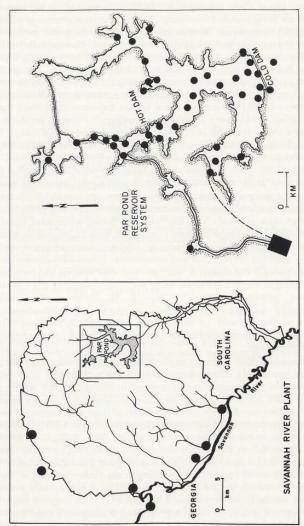


Fig. 1. – Locations of Bald Eagle sightings on the Savannah River Plant, South Carolina, and specifically on the Par Pond Reservoir System between 1978 and 1985. Each dot represents one or more sightings of this species at that location. Sightings are based on this study, the SRP Christmas Bird Count, the SRP waterfowl aerial surveys, and reports of reliable sightings prior to September 1984.

and Pump House Cover (all at 13.6%). On Pond C, most of the sightings were between the main lake and Sanctuary Cove. Seventy-two percent of all of the birds sighted were adults. Thirteen percent of the sightings were paired birds. Of these pairs, two were both adults, two were both immatures, and one was an adult/immature pair. A group of three adult Bald Eagles soaring together over Par Pond was seen in the winter of 1982-83 by RAK, but no other social group larger than a pair was noted during the 1984-85 study period. Of the undisturbed birds (77.8% of the total) seen during this study, a breakdown of the behaviors observed was as follows: 75,0% were soaring and/or flying; 14.3% were foraging and feeding; 7.1% were perching; and 3.6% were being mobbed in flight by a flock of crows. Of the 3 birds observed foraging/feeding, 2 were seen catching fish on Par Pond and 1 was feeding on a road-killed mammal on the ground adjacent to a road. The remaining 22.2% of the total number of birds seen were either flushed from cover or were disturbed in some manner so that normal behavioral patterns could not be determined. Bald Eagles were seen every month of the survey. Most of the birds (63.9%) were seen during the winter and spring months (November through May). This was also the period when most immature birds (90.0%) were observed. Only 1 immature Bald Eagle was seen in the fall and none was seen during summer. Observations were evenly divided between morning (0930-1130) and afternoon (1230-1630) periods. Two of the adult birds (7.7%) observed were marked. One of these had been tagged as a fledgling in a nest somewhere along the South Carolina coast north of Charleston between 1978 and 1981 (T. M. Murphy, pers. comm.). The second was of unknown origin since the tagging method and color were not registered with or known to either the U. S. Fish and Wildlife service or the Raptor Information Center (D. Bystrak, pers. comm.; K. Klein, pers. comm.).

In conclusion, Bald Eagle use of the SRP is more common than had been suspected previously. This may be a result of either poor earlier documentation or an actual recent increase in the use of this site by Bald Eagles or both. A more complete assessment of Bald Eagle use of the SRP is needed at this time. Because of the presence of large impoundments on the site with high densities of fish (Bennett and McFarland 1983), Bald Eagles will probably continue to be attracted to the SRP. In light of the large proportion of fish in the diet of this species (Bent 1961) and the elevated mercury levels (3-5 ppm) in the fish inhabiting Par Pond (Clay et al. 1979), the possibility exists for mercury poisoning in any birds remaining on the site for extended periods of time (Fimreite et al. 1971). Since mercury poisoning in raptors can be fatal (Fimreite and Karstad 1971), the negative impact on this endangered species as either a permanent or temporary resident on the site could be substantial. Golden Eagle use of the SRP remains rare. Because local numbers of this species have not increased recently, future increases in the use of the site by this species would not be expected at present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank I. L. Brisbin, Jr., J. A. Jackson, T. M. Murphy, J. W. Gibbons and L. C. Lee for critically reading this manuscript. We are also grateful to those persons who reported the various sightings included in this study, especially J. F. Bergan, J. L. Knight, and K. B. Floyd. This study was supported by a contract (DE-AC09-76SROO819) between the Institute of Ecology at the University of Georgia and the United States Department of Energy.

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GENERAL NOTES

ROSEATE SPOONBILL IN LAURENS COUNTY, GEORGIA — A single Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) was sighted with a small flock of thirteen Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) on 28 August 1985 at a small pond on GA Hwy 338. The pond is located 0.6 km north of the intersection of GA Hwy 338 with Hwy 117 at the city limits of Cadwell, GA.

My husband, Stoughton, and I were returning on Hwy 338 to Cadwell from Macon at 1600 hrs; we slowed at the pond to look for wading birds which frequent its shallow water in the summer. The storks were perched in the tops of pine trees on the back or north side of the pond; however, atop a

tall, dead pine in the pond we both noticed a pink bird.

Minutes later I was back with binoculars to study the bird. It had rose-colored wings, a pale pink body and was similar in size to the Wood Stork. The bill was light colored and enlarged at the end spatula-like. The head was feathered and white. From the plumage description in *Life Histories of North American marsh birds* (A.C. Bent, Dover Publications, New York, 1963), the bird seemed to be an immature just before the first complete molt to adult plumage.

At 1700 Tom Patterson and I returned to the pond to photograph the bird but it could not be found. The bird reappeared at about 1800 (shortly after Tom left) circling the pond and passing overhead with its neck and wings fully outstretched. It then returned to its former perch atop the dead pine

tree. This was the last sighting.

Interior records in Georgia for the Roseate Spoonbill are unusual, as indicated in the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (GOS Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977). A total of 4 interior records are listed. This sighting represents the first record of the species in Laurens County, Georgia.

Susan Richmond, P. O. Box 159, Cadwell, Georgia 31009.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE ON JEKYLL ISLAND — On 17 November 1985 at 0810, while walking to the South Beach of Jekyll Island after parking my car, I saw a White-winged Dove (Zenaida asiatica) as it flew to and perched on an electric wire no further than 20 m away. My first reaction when I saw a dove with white wing patches flying in front of me was astonishment. Once perched, the bird was observed through 7X35 binoculars and a 20-30 power telescope. The bird turned on the wire a couple times allowing me to observe the large amount of white along the edge of the folded wings. The dove was definitely stockier than nearby Mourning Doves (Zenaida macroura) perched on the same wire, more of a grayish-brown color and lacking the pointed tail. Over a hundred Mourning Doves were present in the area at that time.

After a few minutes of observation, I rushed back to the hotel and campground to call my wife and a few friends. We were back to the spot in less than 40 minutes but during a search of over an hour we failed to relocate the dove. Most of the Mourning Doves seen earlier had left by that time. A few local people were notified of the sighting and John Thompson of Jekyll

Island was able to locate the bird the next morning in the same area. As far as I know, he was the only other person to see it.

This appears to be the 8th record for Georgia. Five records are listed in the Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds (GOS Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977). Two additional records were a bird on Little Cumberland Island on 19 Nov. 1981 by Dopson and Baker (American Birds 36: 153) and another bird in Laurens County on 23 Dec. 1984 (Oriole 49: 75-76).

Patrick Brisse, 4960 Gatebouse Way, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30088.

BIRDS CALCULATE ESCAPE FROM PUZZLING ENCLOSURE — The center of the observer's house is a glassed enclosure, open at the top. It is 4.5 m high and 6 m in diameter. There is nothing in it to entice birds. With the exception of one individual which entered regularly to collect cocoons (Oriole 49: 44-45), birds appear to enter only by accident. They ordinarily strike a glass pane once, attempt other panes several times more, then finally (if not injured) perch on a horizontal mullion. Thus far their behavior seems normal and expected, but the next thing they do is of some interest. If allowed to rest without interference for a minute or more, all the birds invariably fly straight out the opening at the top. They do not make further attempts to beat against the glass unless prematurely disturbed. They give every appearance of "taking stock" of their situation and determining the right way out. This always requires a certain amount of time, as if the sorting of information simply could not proceed at a faster rate. However, when they finally act, they act correctly.

Anselm Atkins, 2525 McKinnon Drive, Decatur, GA 30030.

LATE SIGHTING OF COMMON NIGHTHAWKS IN ATHENS, GEORGIA—On 18 November 1985, at 1640, I observed two Common Nighthawks (Chordeiles minor) flying over the School of Forest Resources on the University of Georgia campus. The birds were observed for approximately two minutes flying in wide, erratic arcs over the parking lot adjacent to the building. The characteristic flight and the nasal, "peenting" call of these birds clearly identified them as Common Nighthawks, despite the fact that I had no field glasses and was unable to get a clear view of the white wing bars that are a field mark of this species (R. T. Peterson, A Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980). I was unable to return to the lot until 25 November, and I did not observe any nighthawks at that time. These birds are regularly observed at this location throughout the spring and summer months.

The latest sighting date previously recorded for nighthawks in Georgia is 3 November (Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, GOS, Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977). The average temperature for November 1985 was 62°F, 10°F higher than the November daily average for the past thirty years, according to the National Weather Service, and these unseasonably warm temperatures may account for this unusually late sighting. Greater numbers of insects on which

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nighthawks feed are active during the warm seasons of the year (D. J. Borror and R. E. White, A Field Guide to the Insects of America North of Mexico, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970). Sustained insect activity encouraged by the continued warm temperatures would provide a food source that may promote delayed migration.

Amy E. Stone, School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602.

WINTER OBSERVATION OF BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER -While conducting the Sapelo Island Christmas Bird Count on 28 December 1985, we observed a female Black-throated Green Warbler (Dendroica virens). The warbler was located by Vernon as she foraged in a mixed flock composed of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (Regulus calendula), Pine (Dendroica pinus), Yellow-rumped (Dendroica coronata), and Yellow-throated Warblers (Dendroica dominica), Brown-headed (Sitta pusilla) and Red-breasted Nuthatches (Sitta canadensis). This group foraged in a mixed pine/oak area on the edge of the skeetfield. The bird was viewed for approximately 2 minutes from a distance of 6-7 m with 10X binoculars as she foraged approximately 6 m up in a large Live Oak. It was 1130 with bright sun overhead so colors were easy to discern. The most prominent feature observed was the bright yellow face but the olive ear patch and olive crown and shoulders were also noted. Two white wingbars on dark wings, a narrow black indistinct band below the yellow chin and white belly and breast with black streaks on the sides of the upper breast were also seen as the bird moved about foraging. Then the flock moved on as quickly as it had appeared.

The Annotated Checklist of Georgia birds (GOS Occas. Publ. No. 6, 1977) lists the Black-throated Green Warbler as a transient for most of Georgia, being seen in the fall from 20 August (1967) to 19 November (1970) and notes that it is rare in the Coastal Plain. On 23 November 1985 a Black-throated Green Warbler was seen and studied by Anne and Vernon Waters, Clarence Belger, Jack Cooper and Steven Guy while on an Augusta Audubon Society field trip near Augusta at Merry Ponds. This immature bird was considered by the group to be a very late migrant. It is not known if the female seen on 28 Dec. was an extremely late migrant or an instance of overwintering.

Anne and Vernon Waters, 1621 Apple Valley Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30906.

A FIRST RECORD FOR HOUSE FINCHES IN BEN HILL COUNTY — At approximately 0945 on 24 November 1985 I observed seven male and nine female House Finches (Carpodacus mexicanus) at three backyard feeders in Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County. The birds fed for less than twenty minutes. At 1236 twelve male and sixteen female birds were observed. The birds seemed to be more stable in their positions upon this arrival and after a few minutes I noticed several of the birds eating Dogwood berries off the ground.

Recently, I have noted flocks of up to 38 birds on and around the feeders. They have also been observed in two large fields nearby and near downtown Fitzgerald. With this information, one would conclude that the birds are possibly becoming fall and winter visitors to the area.

The Birdlife of Ben Hill County, Georgia and adjacent areas (GOS Occas. Publ. No. 5, 1975) does not list the bird as a resident of the area. Since 1977 the species has nested at Athens, Atlanta and several other localities in north Georgia, but has rarely, if ever, come this far south. Because this bird adapts fairly easily, invasions of this sort may become more widespread throughout Georgia.

W. Brian Brown, Rt. 2, Box 106, Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750.

BOOK REVIEW

Birds of the Nashville area (fourth edition) — Henry E. Parmer, David F. Vogt, C. Gerald Drewry, Paul B. Hamel and Stephen J. Stedman. 1985. Tennessee Ornithological Society, Nashville, TN. iv + 60 pages. \$4.00.

For the Georgia birder who occasionally gets the chance to visit the Nashville area, this is a very valuable book. It details the status of each of the 306 species recorded in the Nashville area through 31 August 1985. Since Nashville is located far inland, it is interesting to note the number of out of range waterbird records such as Harlequin Duck, all three scoters, Snowy Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Purple Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Iceland, Glaucous and Great Black-backed Gulls and Black-legged Kittiwake. Admittedly these are all accidental but it gives all inland observers encouragement that rare birds can be found, even inland.

Other features of the book are a bargraph for all the species giving the periods of occurrence. There is also a map of the area giving the locations of the better birding spots of Nashville. Other sections of the book give some of the ornithological history of Nashville, some of its physiography, and a

summary of changes since the previous edition.

There were only two areas which I felt could be strengthened. First of all, it would have been nice to have had more precision in the bargraphs. That is, there isn't any way to tell when a species is abundant and when it is uncommon. There are only two thicknesses of bars, one for its period of expected occurrence and the other for its possible occurrence. Therefore, the bargraph can't differentiate between the abundances of the European Starling and the Philadelphia Vireo. These differences in abundance are spelled out in the species account but it would have been helpful to have some of this in the bargraph. The second item which would have been nice to have would have been more detailed directions to some of the Nashville birding spots. There is a description of each area and a map giving its location but I have the feeling that in order to find some of the areas a phone call to some of the local birders might be necessary.

All in all, it makes a fine addition to a birder's library. Copies can be obtained from the Treasurer, Nashville Chapter, TOS, P. O. Box 24573, Nashville, Tennessee 37202-4573. — TERRY MOORE, 13000 Bucksport

Drive, Woodstock, Georgia 30188.

CORRECTION — In the note "Inland sighting of Purple Sandpiper" (Oriole 49: 74-75) the color of the base of the bill should have been noted as being "orangeish" rather than "grayish".

FROM THE FIELD

July - September 1985

Even though the season didn't seem particularly noteworthy, there were, as usual, a number of good sightings from around the state. A few of the more interesting ones were an American White Pelican at Macon, a coastal Magnificent Frigatebird, inland sightings of a Roseate Spoonbill and numbers of Wood Storks, a record number of Broad-winged Hawks near Cartersville, a good shorebird migration through Atlanta, a possible invasion year for Red-breasted Nuthatches and a few early warblers to spice up Aug. and Sept.

Abbreviations used include CCWTP for Clayton County Water Treatment Plant about 20 miles south of Atlanta, CNC for the Chattahoochee Nature Center north of Atlanta, PCL for Peachtree City Lake about 20 miles southwest of Atlanta, MBBT for Merry Brothers Brickyard and Tile Ponds in Augusta, AS for Audubon Society and NWR for national wildlife refuge.

The accounts of four species had to be left out of the previous issue due to lack of space. These were House Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak. These are included in this account in their normal place.

PIED-BILLED GREBE - A single bird at CCWTP on 21 July was most likely a very early migrant (Patrick Brisse).

CORY'S SHEARWATER – About 30 birds were seen 75 miles offshore by Hugh Garrett, David Glass, Vince Jackson and Terry Moore on 20 July while on a fishing trip southeast of Hilton Head Island but in Georgia waters. A dozen Audubon's Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-Petrels were also seen during the same

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN — A lone bird arrived during the last week of August at the Macon Industrial Ponds. It was seen by Ty Ivey and Arlene and Ken Clark on 31 Aug., Tom Patterson and Allen Rhodes on 2 Sept., and remained there

through the end of the period.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT — A few sightings were noted inland. Paul Raney had a bird near Bainbridge in southwest Georgia on 5 July and another was seen during an Augusta AS fieldtrip on 17 Aug. In the Dublin area Tom Patterson mentioned 1 to 4 birds in Aug. and Sept. and in Atlanta Patrick Brisse saw one at PCL on 29 Sept.

ANHINGA – A lone individual was seen at MBBT in Augusta on 3 Aug. by Clarence Belger and again on 17 Aug. during an Augusta AS field trip.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD – The species is rarely reported in Georgia, probably due to the lack of coverage of the coastal area, so of note was a bird sighted by Liz Horsey on St. Simons Island on 1 Sept.

GREAT EGRET - Clarence Belger checked the MBBT roost in Augusta several times in July and Aug. The high count was 70+ on 20 Aug. In the piedmont area fewer birds were sighted compared to previous years; only 2 birds were reported, the first one over downtown Atlanta on 17 July and the other near Stone Mountain on 28 July (Patrick Brisse).

SNOWY EGRET — Ten birds at the MBBT roost in Augusta in mid-July were noteworthy (Clarence Belger). Only one bird was there on 31 Aug. Anne Waters

noted 2 more near the Augusta levee on 14 Sept.

LITTLE BLUE HERON — The Augusta roost at MBBT yielded over 180+ birds in mid-July and Aug., fide Anne Waters. In the Atlanta area numbers were down from previous years as all the reports were of single birds (fide Terry Moore).

TRICOLORED HERON - Rare inland, although regular in Augusta, were 2 birds at

MBBT on 6 Aug. and another on 28 Sept. (Clarence Belger).

CATTLE EGRET - The best count at the MBBT roost was 1200+ birds in mid-July

according to Clarence Belger.

WHITE IBIS — In the piedmont area, as with Little Blues and Great Egrets, numbers were down as only one report was received; a single immature was seen along the Chattahoochee River in north Atlanta on 23 July (Paul Raney). In Augusta, Clarence Belger reported 12 in mid-July and 1 on 3 Aug., and Anne and Vernon Waters sighted 4 adults and 3 immatures off the Augusta levee on 28 Sept.

GLOSSY IBIS – Although regular in the Augusta area, its status is still rare so a single bird on 28 Sept. by Clarence Belger is worth mentioning. More unusual was the one found by Jerry and Marie Amerson on 9 July on the Ocmulgee Mounds near

Macon as the species is rarely seen that far inland.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – Extremely unusual inland was a single bird found near Cadwell in southwest Laurens County on 28 Aug. The sighting was reported to

Tom Patterson by Susan and Stoughton Richmond.

WOOD STORK — The species was definitely on the increase in the upper coastal plain area. Tom Patterson reported 45 birds near Cadwell in southwest Laurens County on 10 July and a roost near Montrose in the northwest part of the county was occupied with more than 100 birds in Aug. and Sept. The species was also reported in small numbers from Wilcox County on 30 Aug. - 4 Sept. (Suzie Daniel), Dodge County on 1 Sept. (Don and Joyce Duncan) and Twiggs and Bleckley Counties on 20 Sept. (Bill Pulliam).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - Rather early for the Atlanta area were 2 individuals at

PCL on 29 Sept. as reported by Patrick Brisse.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL — It seems that the species came back in mid-Aug. this year since reports were received from Augusta where a male and female were seen on 17 Aug. during an Augusta AS field trip, from Atlanta where 3 birds were spotted at CCWTP on the same day by Patrick Brisse, and from Macon on 18 Aug. as mentioned by Don and Joyce Duncan. The high count was 42 at CCWTP on 8 Sept.

NORTHERN SHOVELER - A single bird was amazingly early in northeast Laurens County on 11 Aug. (Tom Patterson). Less notable, but still early for the Atlanta area, was a female plumaged bird at CCWTP on 28 Sept. (Patrick Brisse).

RING-NECKED DUCK — As in the last few years 5 birds spent the entire summer at PCL in Fayette County and were seen by many observers; no nesting occurred.

LESSER SCAUP — Over a month early, 2 scaup were noted at the Macon Industrial Ponds by Ty Ivey and others on 31 Aug. They were seen a few days later by Tom Patterson and Allen Rhodes and remained through the end of the period.

RUDDY DUCK — The female observed in June at PCL stayed through the fall (Patrick Brisse and others).

OSPREY - An early migrant was seen along the Chatta hoochee River in Atlanta on 2 Aug. according to Paul Raney. In Laurens County, Tom Patterson reported the species as being less frequent than usual with only 1 record on 18 Aug. The last sighting was at the Macon Industrial Ponds on 15 Sept. as noted by Ty Ivey and Ken and Arlene Clark.

BALD EAGLE – Paul Raney photographed an immature at CCWTP on 14 Sept, for a rare record in Atlanta; a few reports were received from around Eufaula NWR in July and Sept, fide Sam Pate; and another was seen by Rip Holman on 29 Aug, at Lake Loretta near Albany. Inland records of Bald Eagles in Georgia are now rare but fairly regular.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK – A very early migrant or a rare nester was seen by Patrick and Donna Brisse, Liz and Hugh Garrett and Anne Wyatt at PCL on 4 Aug.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – Liz and Hugh Garrett sighted possibly the largest number of migrating Broad-winged Hawks ever reported in Georgia when 2100+ were estimated flying over in a little more than an hour on 14 Sept. at the Cartersville Dam.

MERLIN - Early migrants were seen over the Augusta levee on 14 Sept. (Anne Waters)

and in north Fulton County on 17 Sept. (Peggy and Terry Moore).

PEREGRINE FALCON — Also early was a single bird at the Cartersville Dam on 14 Sept. as noted by Liz and Hugh Garrett.

KING RAIL - The only inland report was received from Tom Patterson when he saw a bird in a marsh drainage in northeast Laurens County on 20 July.

PURPLE GALLINULE – A good inland count for southwest Georgia was 12 adults and 20 chicks in Decatur County on 6 July (Paul Raney).

AMERICAN COOT — A few birds again summered at PCL and were seen by many observers. No evidence of nesting or pairing was noted.

SHOREBIRDS — The months of Aug. and Sept. were exciting for shorebirds in the Atlanta area, especially at CCWTP as this was the best migration in years. Table 1 shows the results of 20 trips taken by Patrick Brisse and other observers to CCWTP during those two months.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - Probably the largest number ever seen in Atlanta was 15 spotted by Paul Raney on 2 Sept. at the CNC in north Atlanta.

YELLOWLEGS — Both species were noted at MBBT in Augusta on 20 July during an Augusta AS field trip and Lesser's were back in Atlanta on 27 July according to Patrick Brisse.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - Don and Joyce Duncan reported an early bird at Grubby's Pond near Kathleen on 7 July.

WILLET – Rare inland were single birds at CCWTP on 30 Aug. (Hugh Garrett) and another in Laurens County on 1 Sept. for only the third local record (Tom Patterson).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - The fall migration was rather poor as Tom Patterson was the only one to report the species - a single bird on the early date of 2 Aug. in Laurens County.

WHIMBREL – Robert Manns noted 6 very early migrants along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 18 July.

RUDDY TURNSTONE — Ty Ivey, Tom Patterson and Allen Rhodes noted a bird at the Macon Industrial Ponds on 2 Sept. for a rare inland record.

SANDERLING — Out of place was a bird found by Jerry Brunner on 29 July in a Norcross parking lot after some heavy rains.

WESTERN SANDPIPER — Not as rare as previously thought inland, the species was found at the Macon Industrial Ponds on 31 Aug. and 2 Sept. (Ty Ivey and others) and at MBBT in Augusta on 29 Sept. (Clarence Belger).

LEAST SANDPIPER - Tom Patterson noted 6 early individuals in Laurens County on 7

July. Elsewhere the first ones were noted near Kathleen on 13 July (Don and

Joyce Duncan) and at MBBT on 20 July (Augusta AS field trip).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER — Two birds were found at CCWTP on 17 Aug. for the third fall season in a row (Donna and Patrick Brisse). The birds were seen by many observers through the 19th. Photographs were taken and this represents the first documented record for the state.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER — Don and Joyce Duncan sighted one as early as 13 July on a small pond near Kathleen.

DUNLIN – The first fall inland record was received from Clarence Belger who saw one in Augusta on 29 Sept.

STILT SANDPIPER — This species seems to be on the increase over the past few seasons. In addition to the Atlanta reports the species was sighted 3 times. The first one was near Kathleen on 11 Aug. (Don and Joyce Duncan), the second was in Laurens County on 25 Aug. (Tom Patterson) and the last one was at the Macon Industrial Ponds on 31 Aug. (Ty Ivey, Ken and Arlene Clark).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – The only state records were received from CCWTP on 31 Aug. - 2 Sept. where a single bird was seen by many observers and from Forsyth County where a second bird was spotted by John Paget on 14-15 Sept. Of note was the absence of the species from Laurens County where Tom

Patterson reported it regularly the last few years.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITGHER - Ty Ivey and other observers identified 3 dowitchers

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of this species by voice on 31 Aug. at the Macon Industrial Ponds. Rather unusual was a flock of 22 birds found by Tom Patterson in Laurens County on 25 Aug.; normally only singles or pairs are found inland.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE — One in Laurens County on 25 Aug. and 8 Sept. by Tom Patterson and a small group of 7-8 along the Savannah River on 29 Sept. by Chris Haney and Dan Jacobson were the only reports outside the Atlanta area.

LAUGHING GULL - Increasing inland in recent years this species was seen during an Augusta AS field trip on 17 Aug.

CASPIAN TERN – Always a good find inland, one was at the Macon Industrial Ponds on 2 Sept. according to Ty Ivey and Tom Patterson.

FORSTER'S TERN – Greg Greer spotted an early bird on 28 July on Lake Allatoona north of Atlanta and Ty Ivey and others reported 4 birds from the Macon Industrial Ponds on 31 Aug.

BRIDLED TERN - Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett, Vince Jackson and David Glass were the only observers to take a pelagic/fishing trip during the period. The species does not seem to be as common as it did a few years ago as only 2 birds were seen during their 20 July trip.

BLACK TERN — Dale Hardee sighted 4 early migrants at CCWTP on 6 July and 3 more on 8 Aug. The last one was noted there on 22 Sept. by Patrick Brisse. Outside Atlanta, one was at Callaway Gardens on 1 Sept., according to Dennie and Pam McClure

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - Ty Ivey, Ken and Arlene Clark reported the species from Macon on 31 Aug. Although not rare in the Coastal Plain, the species is more difficult to find near the fall line.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK — For the first time in several years, a large number were seen migrating over Atlanta as Hugh Garrett reported 600+ on 27 Aug.

VELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER — The first migrant was noted along the Chattahoochee River in north Atlanta on 29 Sept. (Atlanta AS field trip).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER — One bird at its regular location along the Chattahoochee River in north Atlanta from 23 Aug. -1 Sept. was expected (Paul Raney and others). Other reports of single birds came from Laurens County on 29 Sept. for a first local record (Tom Patterson) and from Fort Mountain State Park near Macon on 21 Aug. (Jerry and Marie Amerson).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER — Two birds were noted along the Chattahoochee River north of Atlanta. The first one was seen on 15 Sept. by Peggy and Terry Moore and the other on 27 Sept. by Paul Raney. Both sightings detailed the very greenish-yellow underparts with emphasis on the throat area. This is a very difficult species to identify in the fall.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW — A late bird was seen in Forsyth County on 28 Sept. by John Paget.

BANK SWALLOW – A few were noted at CCWTP on 25 Aug. - 1 Sept. (many observers) and again on 14 Sept. (Paul Raney); others were at the Robbins Air Force Base on 14 Sept. also (Don and Joyce Duncan).

CLIFF SWALLOW – Four birds at CCWTP on 31 Aug. was a good inland count for the Atlanta area (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett) and 2 were still there on 14 Sept. (Paul Raney).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – The first to arrive were noted in north Fulton County on 16 Sept. by Peggy and Terry Moore and in Harris County on 21 Sept. by Florence Lynn. More sightings were received through the end of the month for what seems to have been the beginnings of an invasion year.

WINTER WREN - A very early bird was in Marietta on 25 Sept. as reported by Nancy Iha

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - A dead bird, now a specimen at Mercer University in Macon, was found on 10 Sept. in the backyard of T. P. Haines in Macon. Elsewhere, five reports were received from around Atlanta between 12-22 Sept. fide Terry Moore. This is a few more than usual.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO - A good count for Atlanta was the 4-6 seen by Paul Raney

on 22 Sept., only one bird was seen at the same place on 29 Sept. during an Atlanta AS field trip. Another bird was seen on 14 Sept. in Augusta during a field trip for a first record in a long time (*fide* Anne Waters).

BREWSTER'S WARBLER - Of note was one seen at MBBT on 3 Sept. by Anne Waters.

Anne also reported more Blue-winged Warblers than usual for that area.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - An extremely early migrant was already back in Gainesville on 6 Aug. according to John Paget.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER — Clarence Belger reported an early migrant from MBBT on 3
Aug. Early for the Atlanta area but not for the state was one in Cobb County on
28 Aug. according to Paul Raney.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER — Early for Atlanta was a bird seen on 22 Sept. during an Atlanta AS field trip and an even earlier bird was spotted by John Paget in Gainesville on 14 Sept.

CERULEAN WARBLER - Terry Moore received 8 reports from around Atlanta from late July through early Sept., a little less than in previous years.

MOURNING WARBLER - An adult female was spotted by Greg Valpey near Gainesville on 1 Sept. for a very rare fall record in Georgia.

WILSON'S WARBLER - Nancy Iha was the only one to report the species, a male in the Marietta area on 12 Sept.

VESPER SPARROW — Left out from the previous "From the Field" section was a record of 2 birds near Sky Valley in northeast Georgia on 11 June by Frank McCamey. This is probably the only June record for the state and nesting in that area is quite conceivable.

SAVANNAH SPARROW – An early migrant was already back in the Gainesville area as early as 1 Sept. (John Paget).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - Anne Waters sighted 5 birds near the Augusta levee on the early date of 14 Sept.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD — Anne Waters and Clarence Belger also observed this species along the Augusta levee in Sept.: 11 on the 7th and 50+ on the 14th, both early dates for Georgia.

HOUSE FINCH — Nesting again occurred in Atlanta, Columbus and for the first time in Augusta. John Paget reported a bird building a nest in Gainesville on 20 April. In Augusta, Anne and Vernon Waters saw a male feeding young several times on 17 June. Breeding has been suspected for several years but no evidence could be found. In Atlanta, Terry Moore estimated 50 pairs along a 2 mile stretch near downtown and with other nesting sites around town, Terry believes the population in the city could be close to 100 pairs.

COMMON REDPOLL — One bird visited two feeders in the Dunwoody area in north Atlanta from 2-5 March (Bob Raymund). Frank McCamey photographed the bird on 5 March (American Birds 39: 287). This is only the fifth record for Georgia.

PINE SISKIN — Although not an invasion year, a flock of 100+ in Augusta during the last week of Feb. was unusual (Katheryne May). Late birds were in Columbus on 17 April (Lyle Bundt) and Atlanta on 21 April (Ken Blackshaw).

EVENING GROSBEAK — Even though the species went almost unreported this season, Harriett DiGioia found one on the rather late date of 19 May in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Patrick Brisse, 4960 Gatebouse Way, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30088.

TABLE 1. — Shorebird records for the Clayton County Water Treatment Plant for August and September 1985.

		August										September										
Species	3	4	10	11	17	18	24	25	28	31	1	5	5	7	8	14	55	25	58	29		
Semipalmated Plover			1		3	-	-	-	5		-	1	2	-	1	-	1	-	2	-		
Killdeer	6	6	30	x	12	X	X	X	12	40	X	30	12	50	25	25	40	X	20	14		
Greater Yellowlegs	1		1	-	3	840	-		3	-	-	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
esser Yellowlegs	1	3	4	X	10	5	1	1	6	6	12	12	6	4	5	7	9	-	-			
Solitary Sandpiper	6	4	8	X	12	3	5	5	8	10	7	7	4	5	5	3	-		-			
Spotted Sandpiper	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	4	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	5	-	-			
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	-	1	-	15	12	7	11	25	30	25	25	36	12	35	6	3	-	-			
Western Sandpiper	5	-	7		5	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-			
Least Sandpiper	5	5	4	4	X	4	7	19	90	70	25	50	13	12	12	6	15	7				
Baird's Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	2	1			-	-	-	-	2	-	-			2	-			
Pectoral Sandpiper	6	3	4	X	50	X	15	29	40	40	20	50	-	-	8	15	7	-	-			
Stilt Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	3	3	3	3	-	4	4	1	5	-	-	-		
Buff-br. Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Short-billed Dowitcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	5	5	4	-	1		-	-	-	27		
ong-billed Dowitcher	-	-	1	-	-		-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*			
Common Snipe		-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	65		
dilson's Phalarope		-	-	-	3	-	1	1	1	1	-	-		-	-	-	1070	-	-			

X = Seen but numbers not recorded. Observer in all cases was Patrick Brisse sometimes accompanied by others.

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