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# THE ORIOLE

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## SIXTEEN YEARS OF BANDING BIRDS DURING FALL MIGRATION ON JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA

Donald G. and Doris A. Cohrs

A pilot banding project was undertaken in 1977 when two master banders, Doris Cohrs and Terry Moore, and three assistants visited Jekyll Island over the Thanksgiving weekend (24-27 Nov.). The hope was to establish an on-going fall banding operation that would start to accumulate data on what species move through coastal Georgia in the fall and in what numbers. Jekyll Island was chosen as the site since it was very accessible and was also known for being one of the best concentration points for migrating birds during the fall along the Georgia coast. The St. Andrews picnic area near the southwest corner of the island was the base of operations. Mist nets were set up in the surrounding vegetation, a mixed habitat dominated by live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) and wax myrtles (*Myrica cerifera*) at the juncture of the rear dunes and maritime forest. Jekyll Island is a barrier island off-shore from Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia. It is reached via a seven-mile causeway bordered by extensive salt marshes. The island is eight miles long and slightly over two miles wide.

From 1978 to 1993 banding has been conducted annually in the inner dune area within a quarter of a mile south of the initial site. The first six years consisted of one week of banding. Over the next three years the project expanded to two and then three weeks. From 1987 to date, the program has been at least four weeks long. There have been several extra days added at the end of some years if it was felt that the birds were still moving through the area and the personnel were available. Banding in early years was restricted by the lack of helpers. As more people showed an interest, the program expanded. The initial four-week efforts were thin on personnel, but the word continued to spread. Recent sessions have had adequate staffing.

A major problem initially was the availability of only two master banders. Don Cohrs became a sub-permittee and acquired all the skills and knowledge of a master bander. Through the teaching and training by Terry Moore, Don Cohrs, and Doris Cohrs, the following have received their master bander permits: Ann Wyand Mursch, Nannette Johnson, Kristen Poulsen, Sara Robertson Morris and Lydia Thompson. These people helped make the four-week program possible. A five-week program is desirable, but attrition of the above cadre due to changes in



location and life style makes this improbable at this time. The Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland, is reluctant to issue additional permits at present.

In January of 1988, the Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS) was formed as a not-for-profit organization. A semiannual newsletter, the *JIBSheet*, was started. Membership categories were established. This organization continues to date.

In 1987 and 1988, the Atlanta Audubon Society made substantial contributions to the banding project. In 1988 and again in 1993, generous contributions were received from the Georgia Ornithological Society. In 1991, JIBS applied for and received a small grant from the Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Fund of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Each year subsequent to this, an additional grant has been awarded. A grant has been applied for in 1994. These grants have purchased nets and other equipment. In 1992, JIBS was given a computer by Dr. Carol Schneier, thus making it much easier to manipulate the voluminous data associated with the banding of several thousands of birds.

#### METHODOLOGY

JIBS operates in the inner dune meadow of a barrier island, as described by Schoettle (1983). The most prevalent plant surrounding the mist nets is the wax myrtle. See Table 1 for a list of common plants, exclusive of grasses, found in the banding area.

The mist nets used are 1.25-inch mesh, 6, 9, & 12 meters in length, about 2 meters high. The nets are placed both within and at the edge of wax myrtle clumps. Generally the nets are placed so that the bottom of the net is about 0.5 m above the ground so that the net does not get tangled with ground vegetation. The top of the net, therefore, is generally about 2.5 m above ground. The total number of nets in use at any one time varies from year to year but is usually between 15 and 20. The south end of the island is accreting, causing the wax myrtles to invade the former secondary dunes. As the wax myrtles have moved seaward, we have moved our net sites in the same direction, allowing us to sample roughly the same habitat every year. During the 16 years of banding, the location of the banding site has moved approximately 75 m.

Since 1986, the station has usually opened the last week in September and operated through the third week in October. When the birds were still migrating in significant numbers, additional days of operation occurred. Table 2 gives dates of banding for all years.

JIBS operates every day from 7 am (around first light) and continues until the birds stop moving around, usually about noon. Nets are closed in case of rain, fog, or extreme heat. A 90-degree temperature is much too stressful on birds suspended in the nets, even briefly, since the birds would be in somewhat unnatural postures and would not be able to make

Table 1. Flora of the vicinity of the banding station at Jekyll Island, Glynn County, Georgia, excluding grasses. (Radford et al., 1968; Batson, 1977; Clewell, 1985).

Common name	Scientific name
Southern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus silicicola</i> (Small) Bailey
Saw Palmetto	<i>Serenoa repens</i> (Bartram) Small
Catbrier	<i>Smilax bona-nox</i> L.
Spanish Bayonet	<i>Yucca gloriosa</i> L.
Wax Myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i> L.
Climbing Buckwheat	<i>Polygonum convolvulus</i> L.
Poke	<i>Phytolacca americana</i> L.
Red Bay	<i>Persea borbonia</i> (L.) Sprengel
Coral Bean	<i>Erythrina herbacea</i> L.
Butterfly Pea	<i>Centrosema virginianum</i> (L.) Benth
Butterfly Pea	<i>Clitoria mariana</i> L.
Milk Vetch	<i>Galactia macreei</i> M.A. Curtis
Hercules Club	<i>Zanthoxylum clava-herculis</i> L.
Spurge Nettle	<i>Cnidioscolus stimulosus</i> (Michaux) Englem & Gray
Beach Croton	<i>Croton glandulosus</i> var. <i>septentrionalis</i> Muell-Arg.
Sand-dune Spurge	<i>Euphorbia ammanniodes</i> HBK
Virginia Creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (L.) Plancon
Muscadine	<i>Vitis rotundifolia</i> Michaux
Summer Grape	<i>V. aestivalis</i> Michaux
Pepper-vine	<i>Ampelopsis arborea</i> (L.) Koehne
Yellow Passionflower	<i>Passiflora lutea</i> L.
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia drummondii</i> Graham
Buckthorn	<i>Bumelia tenax</i> (L.) Willd
Beautybush	<i>Callicarpa americana</i> L.
Blue Curls	<i>Trichostema dichotomum</i> L.
Ground Cherry	<i>Physalis</i> sp.
Nightshade	<i>Solanum gracile</i> Link
Poor Joe	<i>Diodia teres</i> Walter
Bedstraw	<i>Galium hispidulum</i> Michaux

best use of their feathers for insulation. The nets are checked every 10 to 15 minutes at a minimum. On days of great abundance of birds, the nets are checked constantly. Nets remain open much later in the day in cases of overcast days following the passage of a strong weather front. Such a weather pattern yields a veritable flood of migrants, frequently well into the late afternoon.







Table 3. Continued.

SPECIES	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	TOTAL
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	21
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	23	4	4	7	1	1	1	0	45
Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	1	0	1	10
Veery	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	5	3	5	5	3	2	38
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	2	13
Swainson's Thrush	6	7	6	0	2	1	7	1	13	10	9	11	10	3	5	10	101
Hermit Thrush	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Wood Thrush	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	11
Gray Catbird	66	263	33	0	47	59	78	131	191	392	341	200	101	188	38	357	2485
Northern Mockingbird	8	21	12	16	9	1	6	12	6	32	19	7	7	3	4	5	168
Brown Thrasher	3	9	3	0	3	5	5	2	1	5	12	4	7	1	2	4	66
White-eyed Vireo	10	31	21	11	17	14	24	16	35	60	41	58	46	74	19	22	499
Yellow-throated Vireo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
Philadelphia Vireo	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	8
Red-eyed Vireo	9	15	48	12	11	5	20	16	51	40	57	87	64	23	20	18	496
Blue-winged Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Golden-winged Warbler	4	8	6	4	0	3	19	17	13	19	14	21	2	5	8	7	150
Tennessee Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	3	3	2	0	0	14
Orange-crowned Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	11
Nashville Warbler	2	2	5	2	0	1	2	4	7	12	9	20	6	6	9	10	97
Northern Parula	0	0	15	39	2	0	3	3	10	21	40	21	6	17	22	19	218
Yellow Warbler	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	12
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5	10	8	3	1	2	7	5	8	14	15	27	10	4	3	5	127
Magnolia Warbler	5	22	6	4	3	7	17	23	5	26	18	104	12	17	6	13	288
Cape May Warbler	12	22	27	9	4	6	32	27	30	90	65	73	67	60	37	61	622
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	13	9	0	0	0	4	1	5	44	91	45	219	60	18	22	37	568
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Townsend's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	7
Black-thr. Green Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	9
Blackburnian Warbler	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	8
Yellow-throated Warbler	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	8	15	21	7	11	2	5	96
Pine Warbler	0	1	6	0	2	2	3	8	9	32	34	78	48	52	65	78	547
Prairie Warbler	1	10	35	33	6	5	21	513	1075	1258	1572	1145	750	1104	1098	1309	11854
Palm Warbler	61	264	510	400	201	217	377	513	1075	1258	1572	1145	750	1104	1098	1309	11854
Bay-breasted Warbler	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	14

Table 3. Continued.

SPECIES	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	TOTAL
Blackpoll Warbler	1	4	0	0	0	2	2	1	9	6	4	7	2	1	6	4	49
Black and White Warbler	10	18	28	15	5	3	20	13	9	28	31	26	15	19	14	13	267
American Redstart	32	82	83	78	19	49	58	91	74	93	146	218	99	118	112	146	1498
Prothonotary Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Worm-eating Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Ovenbird	5	11	6	7	1	4	9	2	5	13	18	45	12	16	13	1	168
Northern Waterthrush	5	11	8	40	4	5	15	10	33	26	41	83	28	26	40	38	413
Kentucky Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	4
Connecticut Warbler	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	9
Mourning Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
MacGillivray's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Common Yellowthroat	24	67	194	114	39	27	148	144	295	315	710	631	528	586	939	538	5299
Hooded Warbler	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	1	1	15
Wilson's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	4
Canada Warbler	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	6
Yellow-breasted Chat	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	14
Summer Tanager	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	8
Scarlet Tanager	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
Northern Cardinal	34	17	26	11	18	17	32	49	27	27	38	66	44	29	12	31	478
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	10
Blue Grosbeak	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	1	11
Indigo Bunting	13	38	39	4	5	14	39	32	43	75	72	32	32	39	42	48	587
Painted Bunting	13	6	27	12	14	12	36	19	49	49	56	33	35	41	30	33	465
Dickcissel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rufous-sided Towhee	7	4	3	0	2	4	10	6	7	8	4	3	4	2	6	6	76
Bachman's Sparrow	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chipping Sparrow	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
Clay-colored Sparrow	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	2	0	10
Vesper Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Savannah Sparrow	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	7	11	7	0	1	2	6	12	51
Grasshopper Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Henslow's Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Song Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	2	1	12
Lincoln's Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2



Table 3. Continued.

SPECIES	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	TOTAL	
Swamp Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	13	9	4	6	0	7	3	6	51
White-throated Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
White-crowned Sparrow	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	2	3	14
Bobolink	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	7
Red-winged Blackbird	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Eastern Meadowlark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Boat-tailed Grackle	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Northern Oriole	1	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	17
Yearly Totals	369	1009	1237	858	430	496	1029	1195	2180	2964	3565	3550	2074	2581	2697	2961	29195	
Total Net Hours	1036	807	1427	851	398	412	955	1137	1504	2235	2329	2230	1995	2134	1634	1967	23051	
Number of species	40	53	48	46	31	39	47	45	54	74	63	73	53	53	56	55	111	

Table 4. Scientific names of birds banded at Jekyll Island between 1978 and 1993.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Merlin	<i>F. columbarius</i>
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Piping Plover	<i>C. melodus</i>
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>C. americanus</i>
Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferous</i>
Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>
Northern Flicker (Yel.-sft.)	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>
Eastern Wood Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>
Acadian Flycatcher	<i>E. virescens</i>
Traill's Flycatcher	<i>E. traillii</i>
Willow Flycatcher	(" " )
Least Flycatcher	<i>E. minimus</i>
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>
Eastern Kingbird	<i>T. tyrannus</i>
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Carolina Chickadee	<i>Parus carolinensis</i>
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Winter Wren	<i>T. troglodytes</i>
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>
Sedge Wren	<i>C. platensis</i>
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>
Gray-cheeked Thrush	<i>C. minimus</i>
Swainson's Thrush	<i>C. ustulatus</i>
Hermit Thrush	<i>C. guttatus</i>
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>
White-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>
Yellow-Throated Vireo	<i>V. flavifrons</i>
Philadelphia Vireo	<i>V. philadelphicus</i>
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>V. olivaceus</i>
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>V. chrysoptera</i>
Tennessee Warbler	<i>V. peregrina</i>
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>V. celata</i>
Nashville Warbler	<i>V. ruficapilla</i>
Northern Parula	<i>Parula americana</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>D. pensylvanica</i>
Magnolia Warbler	<i>D. magnolia</i>



Table 4. Continued.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cape May Warbler	<i>D. tigrina</i>
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>D. caerulescens</i>
Yellow-r. Warbler (Myrtle)	<i>D. coronata</i>
Townsend's Warbler	<i>D. townsendi</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>D. virens</i>
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>D. fusca</i>
Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>D. dominica</i>
Pine Warbler	<i>D. pinus</i>
Prairie Warbler	<i>D. discolor</i>
Palm Warbler (>99% Western)	<i>D. palmarum</i>
Bay-breasted Warbler	<i>D. castanea</i>
Blackpoll Warbler	<i>D. striata</i>
Black-and-White Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>
Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>
Northern Waterthrush	<i>S. noveboracensis</i>
Kentucky Warbler	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>
Connecticut Warbler	<i>O. agilis</i>
Mourning Warbler	<i>O. philadelphia</i>
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>O. tolmiei</i>
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
Hooded Warbler	<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>
Wilson's Warbler	<i>W. pusilla</i>
Canada Warbler	<i>W. canadensis</i>
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Scarlet Tanager	<i>P. olivacea</i>
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Blue Grosbeak	<i>Guiraca caerulea</i>
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Painted Bunting	<i>P. ciris</i>
Dickcissel	<i>Spiza americana</i>
Rufous-sided Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>
Bachman's Sparrow	<i>Aimophila aestivalis</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>S. pallida</i>
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>A. henslowii</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>M. lincolnii</i>
Swamp Sparrow	<i>M. georgiana</i>
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Z. leucophrys</i>
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>
Boat-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus major</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Northern Oriole (Baltimore)	<i>Icterus galbula</i>

indicate any significant trend with the only exception being the Northern Mockingbird. This species shows a decline but this may be a function of changing the banding site location over the years farther away from the species' favored residential habitat as opposed to an actual change in the numbers of these birds in the area. We do feel, however, that there is a wealth of information in the accumulated data and would be glad to share this data with anyone wanting to make a more in-depth statistical analysis.

The Georgia state checklist of birds has been added to and altered several times by the work at JIBS. Clay-colored Sparrows (*Spizella pallida*) have been banded in 5 of the 16 years that JIBS has operated (Moore 1980, Brisse 1988). The official status of this bird in Georgia went from hypothetical to accidental with these additional occurrences. On 2 October 1987, a MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*) was banded and photographed, providing the first record of this bird in Georgia (Brisse 1988; Cohrs, et al. 1991). On 30 September 1993, a Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) was banded and photographed, another first for Georgia (Thompson 1993). White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) have been banded in eight different years at JIBS. While this was not a status change for the bird, these records confirmed the species as a regular fall migrant on the Georgia coast (Brisse 1984).

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## SIXTEEN YEARS OF ENCOUNTERED BIRDS DURING FALL MIGRATION ON JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA

Donald G. Cohrs

This paper deals briefly with birds captured over the past 16 years (1978-1993) at Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS), Glynn County, Georgia, that have been previously banded. These instances are referred to as "encounters." Encountered birds are readily identifiable, even if encountered in a foreign country, based on the band the bird is wearing. Encounters herein described are of three types: birds with JIBS bands encountered at JIBS, birds encountered at JIBS wearing a band other than ours, and birds with JIBS bands encountered elsewhere. Table 1 shows all instances of the latter two types of encounters.

An average of about 5% of the birds we capture have JIBS bands and most were banded in that same season and generally within just a few days of the initial banding as they rest and gain fat for the next leg of their migratory journey. The only birds with JIBS bands recaptured in subsequent years are believed to have been residents of the area such as Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*), Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). Capturing a three-year old bird with a JIBS band is a rarity.

Three birds banded elsewhere and caught at JIBS have been hawks. We have netted two Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*) and one Merlin (*Falco columbarius*). All three had been banded within weeks of our catching them. All were released as healthy birds.

We found a banded dead Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) on the south beach of Jekyll Island. Upon reporting its band number to the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland, we learned it had been banded two months previously in North Carolina. Cause of death was not determined.

One of our banders brought to us a banded, injured Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*), alive but not well. It died before we could get it to a veterinarian. Our report from the Bird Banding Laboratory indicated that the bird was banded three years before on 5 August 1989 near Wanchese, North Carolina.

We have not handled any small birds bearing other banders' bands. However, other people have encountered eleven of our banded birds. Only one of these ten was found alive. A Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) that we had banded 7 October 1982 was caught and released alive by a bander in Cuba on 28 October 1983. We banded it on Jekyll Island as a green bird, sex unknown. It was released in Cuba as a green bird; hence, it was a female (*Oriole* 48:67).



Table 1. Encounters at Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS), Glynn County, Georgia.

BIRDS BANDED ELSEWHERE, ENCOUNTERED AT JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA			
Species	Date Banded	Where Found	Date Encountered
Sharp-shinned Hawk	24 Sep 1987	New Jersey	10 Oct 1987
Sharp-shinned Hawk	01 Oct 1987	Connecticut	21 Oct 1987
Merlin	22 Sep 1984	New Jersey	01 Oct 1984
Royal Tern	15 Jul 1984	Kure Beach, NC	30 Sep 1984
Black Skimmer	05 Aug 1989	nr Wanchese, NC	07 Oct 1992
BIRDS BANDED AT JEKYLL ISLAND, ENCOUNTERED ELSEWHERE			
Species	Date Banded	Where Found	Date Encountered
Sharp-shinned Hawk	09 Oct 1988	Sarasota, FL	07 Mar 1990
Eastern Phoebe	19 Oct 1987	Anderson, SC	31 Mar 1989
Gray Catbird	16 Oct 1986	Ardsley, NY	10 May 1987
Gray Catbird	28 Sep 1988	Naples, FL	25 Feb 1990
Northern Mockingbird	08 Oct 1988	Wilmington Is., GA	25 Jun 1989
Orange-crowned Warbler	19 Oct 1990	Lake Carlos, MN	04 May 1991
Common Yellowthroat	20 Sep 1988	Hillsboro, NH	07 Jul 1989
Common Yellowthroat	08 Oct 1988	Las Guazumas, Dom. Rep.	14 Dec 1988
Common Yellowthroat	06 Oct 1988	Jacksonville, FL	09 Oct 1988
Painted Bunting	07 Oct 1982	Caletone Beach, Cuba	28 Oct 1983
Painted Bunting	05 Oct 1988	Velasco, Cuba	07 Nov 1992

Our other recovered Painted Bunting banded in 1988 was found dead in 1992. This would indicate that this bird survived at least four years and perhaps longer. It, too, was in Cuba when found.

An Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) was banded at Jekyll Island on 19 October 1987 and found at Anderson, SC on 31 March 1989.

A Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) was banded at Jekyll Island on 16 October 1986 and found at Ardsley, NY on 10 May 1987. Another Gray Catbird was banded at Jekyll Island on 28 Sept. 1988 and found at Naples, FL on 25 Feb. 1990. It is somewhat surprising to us that these are the only encounters for Gray Catbird since the species is banded in such large numbers and its size, one would think, might make its body easier to find than other smaller species.

Also of note was a Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) banded on Jekyll Island 8 October 1988 and found dead on Wilmington Island, GA on 25 June 1989. This may indicate dispersal behavior as opposed to migration but further work on this species would need to be done to confirm this.

An Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*), banded at Jekyll Island on 19 Oct. 1990 was found at Lake Carlos, MN on 4 May 1991.

The Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) banded 8 October 1988 made it to the Dominican Republic only to be shot. A nine-gram bird yields very little sustenance, one would suppose.

As suggested in Table 1, we do not band birds for recovery data because our rate of recovery is too low. Rather, we use banding to help monitor the populations of birds that move through the south dune area of Jekyll Island.

In answer to the question, "Why so few recoveries?", let us look at the habitat our migratory songbirds occupy. They use woods and fields, not cities. When they die, a predator is on the remains almost immediately, be that predator ant, raccoon, or whatever else may happen along. Within 24 hours, there is nothing to find. And try as we may, we only band an extremely minute percentage of the total population. Data from the Bird Banding Laboratory clearly indicate that recoveries from coastal locations have always been very low, however, we can always hope.

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# GEORGIA MOUNTAIN WARBLERS: A HALF-CENTURY LATER

Robert A. Sargent and John C. Kilgo

In May 1945, 3 weeks after the conclusion of the war with Germany, Eugene P. Odum and Thomas D. Burleigh undertook a 3 day birding trek through the mountains of Dawson, Gilmer, Fannin, and Pickens Counties in north Georgia (Odum 1945). These counties contain the southernmost 3000-ft (914 m) elevations in the Appalachian Range--peaks believed to be the very southern limit of the breeding ranges for many species. Their objective was to "check up on the exact present-day limits of the breeding ranges of warblers and other mountain species." In May 1994, nearly 50 years after Odum and Burleigh's trip, we repeated their trek. Our goal was to follow their exact route (as closely as possible based on discussions with Odum and on the description provided in the 1945 account) and to record species encountered and their relative abundance, and then to compare our records to theirs, noting any changes that might have occurred in the intervening period.

We drove north from Athens on 21 May and made our first stop at a creek west of Dawsonville on Ga. Hwy. 53. The morning was clear with the temperature about 18° C. We recorded our first two warblers, Prairie and Hooded (see Table 1 for scientific names of warblers, Appendix 1 for those of other species), in their typical habitats. Vegetation on the adjacent hillslope graded from young Virginia pine above to riparian hardwoods along the creek. Also seen here were Red-eyed Vireo and Indigo Bunting, two species which we would encounter at almost every stop for the entire trip. Three km west, in a mixture of yellow poplar and loblolly pine, we observed our first Yellow-throated Warbler. Odum (1945) noted that this species did not breed in the Athens area at the time, and as recently as the 1960's Tramer (1968) reported the species as an uncommon transient in Athens. Odum et al. (1993) did not mention the Yellow-throated Warbler as having extended its breeding range into the Athens area, though we have observed it often during the breeding season at Whitehall Forest in Athens. Regardless of its status in Athens, however, Odum (1945) described it as common in the mountains, and we also found this to be true.

In eastern Pickens County we recorded two Pine Warblers in a stand of loblolly pine. Near Marble Hill we observed a Yellow-breasted Chat singing from a tangle of vines in an old field, and 3 km east of Tate we found a Common Yellowthroat in a moist, brushy field. In Jasper we turned right on Burnt Mountain Road, which Odum (1945) described as "well graded but rocky." The road is now paved with several houses scattered along its length. It remains, however, a scenic drive, particularly once it begins to gain elevation, and is bordered by chestnut

Table 1. Species of warblers known to breed in the mountains of north Georgia and those detected on two birding expeditions in Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer and Pickens Counties, 1945 and 1994.

Breeding Species	Scientific Name	1945 (Odum 1945)	1994 (This Study)
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>		X X
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>V. chrysoptera</i>	X X X	
Northern Parula	<i>Parula americana</i>	X X X	
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	X X X	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>D. pensylvanica</i>	X X X	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>D. caerulescens</i>	X X X	
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>D. virens</i>	X X X	
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>D. fusca</i>	X X X	
Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>D. dominica</i>	X X X	
Pine Warbler	<i>D. pinus</i>	X X X	
Prairie Warbler	<i>D. discolor</i>	X X X	
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>		X X
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>		
Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helminthophila vermivorus</i>		
Swinson's Warbler	<i>Limnethypis swainsonii</i>		
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	X	
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>S. motacilla</i>		
Kentucky Warbler	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>	X X X	
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	X X X	
Hooded Warbler	<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>		X X
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>		
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	X	X



oak, white oak, and Virginia pine. We recorded our first Black-throated Green Warblers, a species we found to be abundant in coniferous forests in the mountains, in a mixed stand of conifers and hardwoods. Fifteen minutes east of Jasper (ca. 820 m) we stopped at a scenic overlook. An Ovenbird sang from the mountainside above, and a Black-and-white Warbler sang from the slope below. Odum (1945) noted that Ovenbirds were not yet known to breed at Athens; they now are considered uncommon breeders around Athens (Odum et al. 1993).

Near Sequoyah Lake we turned onto the road leading to the summit of Burnt Mountain, now paved for the first 1.5 km or so. Odum (1945) described the Burnt Mountain/Mount Oglethorpe area as having "mature forest of tall oaks, maples, and tulip poplars" and "scrub growth which formed tangled thickets under blighted chestnut trees." There must have been scrub clearings from timber operations as well; many stands do not appear to be over 60-70 years old. The blighted chestnut trees, of course, are long-since gone, but much scrub habitat remains in power line corridors, roadsides, and around clearings for houses (the Sassafras Mountain area has been subdivided and several lots have been cleared). Less than 0.4 km up the road we heard a familiar song and stopped alongside a mature deciduous forest, with scant understory. Here we located an American Redstart and a Blackburnian Warbler in the same area where Odum and Burleigh noted their first Blackburnian. At roughly 945 m we stopped at a powerline break and were promptly greeted with the "please-please-please-to-meet'cha" song of the Chestnut-sided Warbler. This presumably is the same powerline at which Odum and Burleigh found their first Chestnut-sided. Several individuals sang along the powerline above and below us. We also saw a Scarlet Tanager holding a caterpillar, perched near a Chestnut-sided Warbler in a black locust. Odum (1945) described both of these species as common on Burnt Mountain, and they remain so. As we traveled the ridge separating Burnt Mountain from Mount Oglethorpe, we heard Ovenbirds and Black-and-white Warblers singing from the mature deciduous forest, but detected no new warblers.

During the first day we located 12 species of warblers. That night, whereas Odum and Burleigh had been able to enjoy "the kind hospitality of [Odum's] aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Bryce, of Tate, Ga.," we pitched tents at Cooper Creek campground in the Chattahoochee National Forest. We hardly complained though, as the area along the creek is dominated by massive white pines. Here we heard Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Parula, and Ovenbird, as well as Solitary and Red-eyed Vireo. However, we could not add the only new warbler species (Northern Parula) to our list, as we were not on Odum and Burleigh's route. At dusk, a Wood Thrush sang briefly, and then a Whip-poor-will.

On the morning of 22 May, White-breasted Nuthatches called in the campsite and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird buzzed by to check out RAS's red sleeping bag. We drove to Blue Ridge in Fannin County, then west toward Flat Top Mountain east of the Cohutta Wilderness Area in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Along Route 2 roughly 10 km west of Blue Ridge we observed a flock of 25 Cedar Waxwings perched in a snag alongside a creek. Odum and Burleigh observed a lone waxwing near Tate and noted that "this individual probably represented a late migrant rather than a breeding bird since the species does not breed until nearly two months later." Seven kilometers down the road at a wide point in the creek bordered by black willow and sycamore, we recorded a Song Sparrow. Odum (1945) reported Song Sparrows with young 1.7 km north of Ellijay, noting that it had extended its range south and observing that, "It will be very interesting to see if the species will follow the valley from Ellijay, the present 'front,' down to Tate." We later found one in downtown Tate. (Note: the Song Sparrow now breeds commonly as far south as Athens [Odum et al. 1993].)

On Dyer Mountain (El. 945 m) we heard our first countable Solitary Vireo. We then began the long climb up the rocky road leading to the summit of Flat Top Mountain (El. 1,100 m). The wind picked up about this time, making detection of bird songs difficult as we neared the summit. At roughly 1,067 m we heard a Black-throated Blue Warbler singing from the dense brush below the road. The summit of the mountain apparently was a bald 50 years ago, for Odum (1945) reports Chestnut-sided Warblers as being common. It is now somewhat more mature, having black cherry, southern red oak, poplar, and white oak, but much scrub vegetation persists. We stopped for lunch and were again greeted by a Chestnut-sided Warbler. Also recorded were Gray Catbird, Veery, Dark-eyed Junco, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Rufous-sided Towhee. On the way back down we observed a Blackburnian Warbler (ca. 1,067 m) and an American Redstart (ca. 914 m).

From Flat Top Mountain, we returned to Burnt Mountain via Ellijay, examining brushy and moist forest habitats along the way. In a brushy strip of maple, poplar, and locust near Sequoyah Lake we observed a Golden-winged Warbler and more Chestnut-sided Warblers, and along the lake side of the road we spotted another American Redstart. We continued up the road connecting Burnt and Oglethorpe Mountains again, and hiked down into a moist ravine looking for a Kentucky Warbler, but were unsuccessful.

Late in the afternoon we started back for Dawsonville and Athens, having been at it since sunrise, but only adding 2 new warblers to the previous day's total. In particular, we hoped to find the Northern Parula, Kentucky, and Yellow Warblers. We examined several more brushy and riparian areas, including Long Swamp Creek. Three km west of Dawsonville just before dark we stopped to confirm a snatch of song



heard from a pine-oak forest, and confirmed the presence of a Northern Parula, our last warbler species of the trip.

Odum and Burleigh detected 17 of the 21 species of warblers known at the time of their trip to breed in the "mountain region of Georgia" (Table 1) and revised distributional knowledge of these and other species. It is known now that an additional species, Swainson's Warbler, breeds in this region, bringing the total number to 22. Breeding records in White County (2 counties east of Gilmer County) in 1950 (Burleigh 1958) and since probably do not reflect a range expansion for this species; rather, it had simply been overlooked until the 1950's (Burleigh 1958).

Along Odum and Burleigh's route, we found 15 of the 22 warbler species known to breed in the Georgia mountains (Table 1). We recorded six individuals of one species that they did not find, the American Redstart. Haney et al. (1986) characterize the Redstart as an uncommon to common breeder in the mountains. We were not able to find Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow Warbler, or Kentucky Warbler, three species which Odum and Burleigh located. Haney et al. (1986) characterize the Blue-winged Warbler as rare to uncommon, the Yellow Warbler as uncommon, and the Kentucky Warbler as uncommon to common. Odum and Burleigh apparently only encountered one Blue-winged Warbler, which they were unable to see. However, Odum (1945) describes the Yellow Warbler as being common in valleys, and he makes no mention of the relative abundance of the Kentucky Warbler, so presumably it too was common. Notably, two of the species we failed to detect--Blue-winged Warbler and Yellow Warbler--are species frequently associated with second growth habitats, habitats which have declined in area in the Georgia mountains during the past 60 years (Odum and Turner 1990). Like Odum and Burleigh, we did not find Canada Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, or Louisiana Waterthrush. Canada and Swainson's Warbler breed further east than our route (Burleigh 1958, Haney et al. 1986) and thus were not expected. However, Worm-eating Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush are considered common and uncommon to common, respectively (Haney et al. 1986).

Much has changed in the distributions of breeding bird species in north Georgia during the 50 years since Odum and Burleigh's trip, particularly with regard to the southward expansions by several species. This fact is especially interesting in light of current declines in the populations of many of these species. We wonder, as Odum (1945) did, whether these range expansions, which may simply be re-colonization of previously occupied habitat (Odum et al. 1993), will continue or if current population trends will cause a reversal of this pattern.

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Appendix 1. Scientific names of non-warbler species mentioned in the text.

Common Name	Scientific Name
<b>PLANTS</b>	
White Pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>
Loblolly Pine	<i>P. taeda</i>
Virginia Pine	<i>P. virginiana</i>
Black Willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>
Chestnut Oak	<i>Q. prinus</i>
Southern Red Oak	<i>Q. falcata</i>
Yellow Poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>
Sycamore	<i>Plantanus occidentalis</i>
Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>
Black Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>
<b>BIRDS</b>	
Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>
Ruby-throated hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
Solitary Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>V. olivaceus</i>
Scarlet Tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Rufous-sided Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>

# EARLIEST VERIFIED BREEDING RECORD OF THE ROYAL TERN IN GEORGIA

Douglas B. McNair

Johnston (1989) stated that J.E. Gould collected an egg set of the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) from Little St. Simons Island, Georgia (see also McNair 1994). However, upon examination, the single egg is smaller than most Caspian Tern eggs, and has the characteristic size, color, and pattern of an egg of a Royal Tern (*S. maxima*). It is long-oval, slightly cylindrical, has a whitish background, and measures 60.8 x 43.8 mm (Charleston Museum 1991.13.006); identity also confirmed by W. Post). A clutch of one is a normal complete set for Royal Terns, while a clutch of two is typical for the Caspian Tern in the southeastern United States (Kale et al. 1965, Dunstan et al. 1975, Clapp et al. 1983).

The egg set of the Royal Tern collected by Gould in 1900 from Little St. Simons Island is the earliest verified breeding record for Georgia (see Kale et al. 1965). The second confirmed breeding record on the Georgia coast was not until 1933 (Tomkins 1934, 1958), though breeding may have occurred in 1914 (Burleigh 1958). This species remains a rare breeder on the Georgia coast (op. cit., Kale and Teal 1958, Kale et al. 1965, Rappole 1981, Clapp et al. 1983). I know of no other confirmed nest records from Little St. Simons Island. This location is probably unsuitable for nesting Royal Terns because it does not have suitable colony sites due to the size of the island and subsequent presence of mammalian nest predators (see Kale et al. 1965, Buckley and Buckley 1972).

I suspect, therefore, that Gould's Royal Tern egg probably came from sandbars or banks just offshore of the north tip of Little St. Simons Island (Little Egg Island), or just off the south tip (Pelican Spit). Little Egg Island, at the mouth of Altamaha Sound (see Fig. 1 in Kale et al. 1965), was the major breeding colony in Georgia; nesting was first documented there in 1958 (Kale and Teal 1958; Kale et al. 1965). In contrast, Royal Terns have never been known to breed on Pelican Spit.

The Royal Tern egg was the only egg set collected by Gould in coastal Georgia in 1900. It is possible that Gould may not have collected the egg himself (McNair and Post, in prep.) but I have no evidence to doubt the validity of the nest record. Gould's misidentification of the egg for that of a Caspian Tern is not surprising, as many naturalists frequently confused the eggs of the two species in Georgia and South Carolina during the period when Gould collected. Even adults of the two species were confused at one time (cf., Nuttall 1833). Except for one unconfirmed historical record of the Caspian Tern in South Carolina, nest records of this species from Georgia and South Carolina were probably invalid (see Wayne 1905, McNair 1994). However, Gould possessed his



egg before the earliest bogus or suspect nest records in coastal Georgia or South Carolina (1905). Consequently, Gould had no *a priori* reason for believing Caspian Terns nested in this region. H.H. Bailey (1913), an acquaintance of Gould's in Virginia (Johnston 1991), provided an accurate description of Caspian Tern eggs which he stated were "easily distinguished" from the eggs of the Royal Tern. It is unfortunate that Gould did not ask Bailey to confirm the identification of the Royal Tern egg that Gould identified as that of the Caspian Tern, especially since neither Caspian nor Royal terns had been documented breeding in Georgia.

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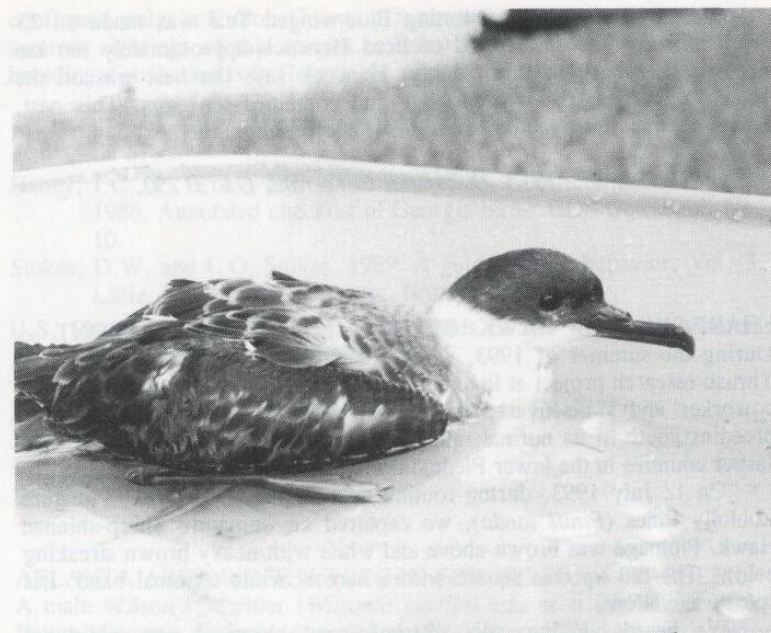
## GENERAL NOTES

**GREATER SHEARWATER IN HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA** - On 28 July 1994 an injured gull-like bird was delivered to the Gainesville office of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by a resident of Hall County, Georgia. The bird had landed in the Hall County yard and was unable to fly. Closer examination by DNR biologists revealed the bird had a tubed bill and was subsequently identified as a Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*). The bird was dark above except for a narrow white curved band at the base of the tail and a white band on each side of the nape resulting in a capped appearance of the head. The accompanying photograph clearly shows this last field mark. The underside of the bird was predominantly white. Exceptions were black edging on the underside of the wings, brownish gray patch on the belly, and a dark gray tail. The bill and tubed nostrils were black, whereas the legs and feet were pale pink. The black bill, smudge on the belly, white band on the nape and lack of a white forehead distinguish the Greater Shearwater from other similar shearwaters and the Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*).

The shearwater was transported to a wildlife rehabilitator in McIntosh County, but attempts to release the bird failed and it subsequently died. Measurements taken at time of death were as follows: extended wingspan - 1148 mm, culmen - 47 mm, tail - 102 mm, tarsus - 60 mm, wing - 333 mm, total length - 483 mm and weight - 576 g. The bird was deposited in the Museum of Natural History, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia (UGA MNH 5525).

Haney et al. (*Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) list the pelagic Greater Shearwater as an uncommon visitor offshore during summer and fall and an accidental in winter off St. Mary's, Camden County, Georgia. The only previous inland record of a Greater Shearwater in Georgia was in Baldwin County on 4 Sept. 1974 (Haney et al. 1986).

William O. Fletcher, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, 2150 Dawsonville Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501.



Greater Shearwater found in Hall County, Georgia on 28 July 1994. Photo by William Fletcher.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL NESTING IN ATKINSON COUNTY** - On 27 April 1988, Emil Urban, his ornithology class from Augusta College, Frankie Snow from South Georgia College, Douglas, Georgia and I visited a heron rookery in northwestern Atkinson County, Georgia. The location is near the Axon highway, just north of the Satilla River. A more exact location puts the heronry 11.27 km northeast of Pearson and 1.2 km north of the Satilla River. See Hopkins (*Oriole* 45:53-54) for a more detailed description.

While scanning the pond with a 20X telescope, we observed a pair of Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) swimming along with four ducklings following them. Kevin Wright, son of the pond's owner, was asked to look at the birds in the scope and he correctly identified them as to species. He told us that Blue-winged Teal had nested successfully at the pond the previous year.



Yet another record of nesting Blue-winged Teal was made on 23 April 1994 on the farm pond of Fred Hancock approximately ten km north of Leesburg in Lee County. Hancock says the nest was on the ground very near the water's edge and contained ten eggs. This nest, however, was destroyed by Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) the next day.

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

#### SHARP-SHINNED HAWK BREEDS IN LOWER PIEDMONT -

During the summer of 1993, while conducting field work for a Wood Thrush research project at Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge (PNWR), a coworker and I discovered a Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) breeding south of its normal range in Georgia. PNWR lies in Jones and Jasper counties in the lower Piedmont Physiographic Province of Georgia.

On 12 July 1993, during routine mist-netting in an area of mature Loblolly Pines (*Pinus taeda*), we captured an immature Sharp-shinned Hawk. Plumage was brown above and white with heavy brown streaking below. The tail tip was square with a narrow white terminal band. Iris color was yellow.

We heard begging calls overhead and observed two additional immature hawks and one adult hawk flying among the pines. In one of the pines we located a nest about 22 m up in a fork, in line with the main trunk. We thought the young hawks might have fledged from this nest because they consistently returned to this tree. However, upon examination of the ground beneath the nest, we found no evidence that it was the current year's nest (e.g., whitewash, fresh pellets, or down). Although we did not find what we believed to be the active nest, we did find scattered feathers, bone fragments, and whitewash in the area.

The hawks remained at this site for at least two more weeks. I last observed them on 25 July. I assume the hawks must have nested in this area because Sharp-shinned Hawks generally stay near one another and near the nest for about a month after fledging during which time the fledglings are dependent on the adults for food (Stokes 1989). I returned to the area several times in 1994 but encountered a Sharp-shinned Hawk only once, an adult bird on 4 June.

This appears to be the southernmost breeding record for Georgia. The Sharp-shinned Hawk is considered an occasional spring transient, uncommon fall transient, and uncommon winter resident at PNWR (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 1985). There are no previously documented nesting records of the species on the refuge (R. Shell, pers. comm). Haney et al. (1986) list the Sharp-shinned Hawk as an uncommon permanent resident in the upper Piedmont and mountains, with nesting

confirmed only in Fulton County. Observers are encouraged to report summer sightings of this species to better document exactly what their breeding distribution is in Georgia.

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Nancy M. Gobris, 500 River North Blvd., Macon, GA 31211.

#### ATLANTA AREA WINTER RECORD FOR WILSON'S WARBLER -

A male Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) was seen in College Park, Fulton County, Georgia during late December 1993 and very early January 1994. The bird frequented our backyard which is at the edge of fairly thick, mixed-growth woods and has a small creek, Camp Creek, running through it, creating a habitat that attracts a wide variety of birds.

I first spotted the Wilson's Warbler in my backyard on 22 December 1993 around 0900 and knew immediately it was an unusual sighting. I confirmed the identification as a male Wilson's Warbler by using my Peterson field guide (Peterson, R.T., 1980, *A Field Guide to the Birds*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA) and by consulting the Atlanta Audubon Society's checklist of Atlanta birds where I found the bird listed as a rare migrant in the spring and fall.

I saw the bird every day from 22 December through 26 December. The bird was a bright yellow with an olive-yellow back and a coal black cap covering much of its crown. The bird had brilliant plumage and stood out quite well in the gray of the winter. I saw the bird frequently the first few days, then only sporadically. He was very active, often flitting his wings. He stayed rather close to the ground most of the time, visiting low shrubs and bushes directly behind the house. The bird seemed especially fond of the English ivy, apparently finding a good source of insects there for food.

As I sat in the backyard observing the bird, it would sometimes come to within a few feet of me, seemingly unperturbed by my presence. It gave its chipping call note often.



I did not see the bird on either 27 December or 28 December but he reappeared on New Year's Eve and again on 1 January 1994, both days around noon. During this time he seemed to be feeding higher in the bushes than previously.

Aubrey Scott, 2346 Parkview Circle, College Park, GA 30337.

#### COMMON REDPOLL SIGHTING FROM STEPHENS COUNTY

The week of 16 January 1994 was extremely cold with a coating of ice covering ground and trees in northeast Georgia. On 17 January I put wood ashes on our ice covered driveway and on 18 January I saw a small bird pecking at the ice and ashes on the driveway. It did not fly at my slow careful approach nor did it move until I was about 2 m from it. It then hopped about 1 m farther away and continued to peck. I stopped to watch the bird because it was new to me. It had a bright red cap on the top front of its head. The back and wings were a brownish color. The chest and sides had light brownish speckled streaking over a cream color. The bird looked smaller than a sparrow or House (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) or Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*), perhaps the size of an American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), but rounder. I watched it for a minute or more as it moved about unafraid of me. The lighting was good. The bird did not fly until I started for the mailbox.

After returning inside our house, I saw the bird again where it was with American Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) and Purple Finches all on an open platform bird feeder about 4 m away at the corner of our deck railing. Size comparison was evident. It had a finchlike tail but never turned so I could see under its chin.

I live about 6 miles SE of Toccoa, Stephens County, Georgia on about 5 acres of woods. I reported the sighting at a Toccoa Bird Club meeting on 21 January 1994. I identified the bird as a Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*) upon looking it up in field guides at the time, immediately upon sighting, and thought it unusual to be here instead of Canada.

The Common Redpoll is regarded as an accidental winter visitor in the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) but the winter of 1993-94 proved to be one of the greatest flight years ever for this species into the mid and southern Atlantic states (*National Audubon Society Field Notes* 48:195 and 48:199).

Robert H. Bundus, Rt. 2, Box 92B, Toccoa, GA 30577.

#### FROM THE FIELD

December 1993 - February 1994

This winter season was not that spectacular. We had a decent variety of good reports but few really great ones. Probably the best ones were the Ross' Goose in Candler County (second Georgia record), a probable Yellow Rail at Brunswick, an Allen's Hummingbird at Cartersville (Georgia's second record), four Rough-winged Swallows and a Barn Swallow on the Piedmont NWR CBC and an American Tree Sparrow in Greene County.

Abbreviations used include: *Annotated Checklist* - *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* by Haney et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986, CBC - Christmas Bird Count, ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County, KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Cobb County, m.ob - many observers, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**RED-THROATED LOON** - This species can sometimes be very difficult to find along the coast so it was noteworthy that as many as 60 were reported on the St. Catherine's Island CBC on 18 Dec. (Emil Urban) and good numbers were seen off Jekyll Island on 29 Jan. (Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore)

**COMMON LOON** - Although this species migrates across all of Georgia, generally they fly at such heights that they are uncommonly seen. Therefore, a flock of 11 over KMT on 8 Dec. was interesting (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett). Twenty-five were seen at the Lake Lanier Dam on 20 Jan. by Bruce Dralle.

**HORNED GREBE** - A good inland count was 18 at the Lake Lanier Dam on 20 Jan. (Bruce Dralle).

**NORTHERN GANNET** - Although they are a relatively common offshore species, the only reports of significant numbers were 21 on the St. Catherine's Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Emil Urban) and 18 off Tybee Island on 22 Dec. (Anselm Atkins, Margaret Kavanaugh).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - Three were seen on the Cumberland Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Sheila Willis) and one bird was seen at Sea Island on 2 Feb. by Louise Shriber. This species has been increasing in Georgia the past few years.

**ANHINGA** - Very rare was a bird seen in Forsyth County on 12 Dec. by John Paget and Jack Carusos. Surprisingly enough, another bird was seen at the same location nine years ago on 2 Dec. 1984. A count of 8 on the Macon CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Marie Amerson) and 16 on the Augusta CBC on 26 Dec. (fide Anne Waters) were high counts for the winter season.



- GREAT WHITE HERON** - An amazing find for the location and the winter period was this form of the Great Blue Heron on the Atlanta CBC on 18 Dec. by Georgann Schmalz et al. This bird was found in the Marietta area and had evidently been there since the summer.
- GREEN HERON** - One bird was a good find at the Griffin Reservoir in Spaulding County on 2 Jan. (Paul Raney).
- GLOSSY IBIS** - One bird at Darien on 11 Dec. (fide Bruce Dralle) and a bird seen on the 27 Dec. Harris Neck NWR CBC (fide Patricia Metz) were quite late as the *Annotated Checklist* gives 17 Nov. as the latest date for the state.
- WOOD STORK** - The best winter count was 20 on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Emil Urban).
- SNOW GOOSE** - Single white phase birds were seen on the Albany CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Alan Ashley), in the Dublin area on 19 Dec. (fide Bruce Dralle) and from Dalton on 31 Dec. (Bruce Dralle, Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert, Harriett DiGioia). Ten (eight blue phase and two white phase) were seen flying in the Cartersville area on 8 Feb. (John Swiderski, Terry Moore). Very interesting was the fact that one of the white phase birds was very much smaller than the other one (please see below). Unfortunately, the flock could not be relocated to determine the identity of the smaller bird.
- ROSS' GOOSE** - The second record for this western species in Georgia occurred when one was observed on a small pond near Excelsior, Candler County, on 1 Feb. and the bird evidently remained there until mid-April (*Oriole* 59:1-2). It appeared that the bird arrived in late Dec. or early Jan. but word of its presence didn't hit the birding community until late February.
- NORTHERN PINTAIL** - A good count of 50+ was made at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 29 Jan. (Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Mike Chapman, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore).
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - Two late or wintering birds were seen in the Dalton area on 31 Dec. by Bruce Dralle, Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert, Harriett DiGioia).
- NORTHERN SHOVELER** - An excellent count of 100+ was made at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 29 Jan. by Terry Moore et al.
- GADWALL** - Another good count was 25 Gadwall near Cedartown on 19 Jan. by Jeff Sewell.
- AMERICAN WIGEON** - At least 60 birds were seen in the Cedartown and Rome areas on 4 Dec. by Bruce Dralle, Jeff Sewell and Lanny Henson.
- CANVASBACK** - Recently, this species has proved to be a very difficult one to find in Georgia. As many as nine were seen in the Rome area between 15 Jan. (Bruce Dralle) and 17 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee). One was seen at the ELHLAF on 23 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee). Eight were seen at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 29 Jan. (Terry Moore et al.).
- REDHEAD** - This species of diving duck is also difficult to locate in the state. Two birds frequented the ELHLAF during most of Dec. (m.ob.). Paul Raney and Bruce Dralle saw 10-12 at Jekyll Island on 11 Dec. As many as five could be found in the Rome area from 10 through 27 Jan. (Lanny Henson). The best count was 35 at Jekyll Island on 15 Jan. by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.

- GREATER SCAUP** - It is becoming evident that as we look more carefully at inland scaup flocks, there are generally a few Greater Scaup with the more frequent Lesser Scaup. Two birds were reported from the ELHLAF on 22 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert) and 23 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee) and six were there on 30 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). Five other birds were seen at the DeKalb County Reservoir on 23 Jan. and remained there through 21 Feb. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). One bird was seen at SCSP on 30 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert), another was seen in the Rome area on 14 Feb. (Lanny Henson) and back at the ELHLAF, three were seen on 15 Feb. and two on 27 Feb. (Jeff Sewell).
- OLDSQUAW** - Single birds were seen at Jekyll Island on 11 Dec. by Paul Raney and Bruce Dralle and at St. Catherines Island on 15 Jan. (Hunter Patterson).
- SURF SCOTER** - The only inland sighting was a bird seen on Lake Lanier on 12 Dec. (Jeff Sewell). At Jekyll Island, two birds were seen on 16 Jan. by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - Inland sightings of this species were made at Garden Lake in the Rome area from 4 Dec. through 8 Dec. (Lanny Henson) and another bird at Stone Mountain Park in DeKalb County from 19 Feb. through 26 Feb. (Tim Whitehouse).
- COMMON GOLDENEYE** - This species was reported much more often than usual. One bird was seen near Midway in Liberty County on 11 Dec. by Bruce Dralle. On 25 Dec. Paul Raney found two at Lake Spivey south of Atlanta and four at SCSP. One male was seen at Garden City Lake in the Rome area on 15-16 Jan. by Lanny Henson and Bruce Dralle, a male and female were seen at the Lake Lanier Dam on 20 Jan. by Bruce Dralle and two female plumaged birds were seen at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 29 Jan. by Terry Moore et al. Finally, a male was seen at the Eufaula NWR on 6 Feb. by Terry Miller.
- COMMON MERGANSER** - Quite rare for the state were two birds seen at Lake Lanier on 12 Dec. by Jeff Sewell. Unfortunately the birds did not stay around to be enjoyed by other birders.
- BALD EAGLE** - Two reports away from their usual haunts were a sub-adult in Bartow County on 2 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Pierre Howard) and another sub-adult in Spaulding County the same day by Paul Raney. The best counts were four on both the 18 Dec. St. Catherines Island CBC (fide Emil Urban) and the 1 Jan. Sapelo Island CBC (fide William Dopson).
- GOLDEN EAGLE** - Three birds (one adult and two immatures) were seen on the Lookout Plateau on 24 Jan. by Bill Blakeslee, Mark Oberle and Jeff Sewell.
- MERLIN** - Inland sightings were single birds on the Athens CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Branch Howe), on the Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. (fide Tom Patterson) and one bird at the Hall County Landfill on 14 Jan. (John Paget).
- PEREGRINE FALCON** - Single birds were seen on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Emil Urban), on the Harris Neck CBC on 27 Dec. (fide Patricia Metz) and back at St. Catherines Island on 15 Jan. by Hunter Patterson.



- YELLOW RAIL** - A very possible Yellow Rail was seen by Dan Guynn on the Glynn County CBC on 1 Jan. (*Oriole* 59:12-13). This elusive species undoubtedly winters along the coast but is extremely difficult to detect.
- SANDHILL CRANE** - From the Atlanta area came 13 reports totaling about 450 birds spread over 11 dates between 4 and 30 Dec. (fide Jeff Sewell). This species seems to be migrating later and later in the fall. Eight of the Georgia CBCs recorded the species either on the count or during the count week. A count of 508 was made on their wintering ground in the Okefenokee Swamp by Dennie and Pam McClure. In Feb. the first birds moving north were three seen at Roswell on 3 Feb. by Peggy Moore. The highest counts were reserved for the end of the month around 25-26 Feb. when approximately 580 birds were seen in the Atlanta area (m.ob.).
- WILSON'S PLOVER** - Three birds were recorded on the Cumberland Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Sheila Willis). Five birds at Jekyll Island on 13 Feb. were quite early (Paul and Joan Sykes).
- LEAST SANDPIPER** - A rare winter record for the Atlanta area was a bird seen at the ELHLAF from at least 15 Feb. through 27 Feb. (Jeff Sewell, Jerry Brunner).
- PURPLE SANDPIPER** - Two birds were seen at their usual haunts on Tybee Island on 10 Dec. (fide Bruce Dralle).
- DUNLIN** - Rare for the Augusta area during the winter season was a single bird seen on the 26 Dec. Augusta CBC (fide Anne Waters).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** - An adult was first reported from Tybee Island on 24 Dec. (Bruce Dralle) and remained at least through 27 Feb. (Anne and Vernon Waters). Two birds were seen on the Cumberland Island CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Sheila Willis) and one was seen on the Glynn County CBC on 1 Jan. (fide Elaine Young). Perhaps this same bird was seen at St. Simons Island's East Beach on 22 Jan. by Paul Rane.
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** - This species continued to be reported from the Brunswick area by a number of observers. Also, one was seen on the Callaway Gardens CBC on 19 Dec. (fide LuAnn Craighton).
- COMMON GROUND-DOVE** - This species appears to be declining over much of its range so the following reports were welcome. Six were seen at the A&B Farms near DeSoto on 25 Dec. by Bruce Dralle and Jeff Sewell and 35 were seen on the Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. (fide Tom Patterson).
- COMMON BARN-OWL** - Four birds were seen near Byron on 19 Feb. by Jeff Sewell and Bruce Dralle.
- SHORT-EARED OWL** - Very rare for the Atlanta area was a bird seen by Joel Volpi in the Duluth area on 7 Dec. Efforts to relocate the bird were unsuccessful.
- BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** - Georgia's sixth record of this western species occurred when a female appeared at a Cartersville feeder on 11 Nov. and was last seen on 15 Jan. (*Oriole* 59:18-19). Another female (Georgia's seventh record) appeared at a Hahira feeder on 31 Jan. and remained there until 15 Feb. (fide Bruce Dralle).
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** - This species is now becoming a recognized regular part of our winter avifauna. One bird was found on the Chattahoochee National Forest CBC on 19 Dec. (fide Harriett DiGioia). Another bird remained at a Duluth feeder from 22 Nov. through 22

- Feb. (Jack Bluster). Other Rufous Hummingbirds were reported by Debbie Garner from the Marietta area, until 22 Feb. at Valdosta (Barbara Passmore) and from 3 Jan. through 6 Feb. at Augusta (*Oriole* 59:19). Bob Sargent reported a total of seven birds were banded in Georgia during the period.
- ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** - A second year male appeared at the same Cartersville feeder as the Black-chinned Hummingbird on 7 Jan. and remained there until 15 Jan. (*Oriole* 59:18-19). Strangely enough, this bird had been banded by Bob Sargent at Chattanooga on 27 Dec. 1993 and was recaptured by Bob at the Cartersville feeder on 9 Jan. This is the second record for the Allen's Hummingbird, a bird generally restricted to the Pacific coast, for the state of Georgia.
- HORNED LARK** - We are becoming more adept at finding Horned Larks in the state. The Atlanta Motor Speedway was host to a nice flock of 25+ or so during most of the period (Jeff Sewell). Eighty were recorded on the Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. (fide Tom Patterson). Fifty-five were seen at the Super Sod Farm below Macon on 25 Dec. by Bruce Dralle. Up on the Lookout Plateau, only ten were seen on 24 Jan. by Bill Blakeslee, Jeff Sewell and Mark Oberle. Another reliable place for the species, the Etowah Indian Mounds near Cartersville, produced a couple birds on 8 Feb. (John Swiderski, Terry Moore).
- PURPLE MARTIN** - The first arrivals were reported from Morgan County on 18 Feb. by Billy Dunbar.
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** - An amazing record was four birds recorded on the Piedmont NWR CBC on 20 Dec. (fide Terry Johnson). If documented, this would be the first winter record of this species in the state.
- BARN SWALLOW** - Only a little less rare than the previous species was the single bird seen on the 20 Dec. Piedmont NWR CBC (fide Terry Johnson).
- FISH CROW** - This species continues to invade the piedmont as birds were noted returning to the Atlanta area by a number of observers in mid-February.
- COMMON RAVEN** - This species is rarely reported in the winter so a bird at Brasstown Bald on 31 Dec. by Chris Geller was noteworthy.
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - There were a few reports during the winter season. One bird was seen in the Doraville area from 1 Dec. through 8 Dec. by Jackie Heyda. Two birds were seen on the Atlanta CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Terry Moore). Also on 18 Dec., one was seen on the Macon CBC (fide Marie Amerson) and two were seen on the St. Catherines Island CBC (fide Emil Urban). On 19 Dec. one was recorded on the Callaway Gardens CBC (fide LuAnn Craighton). Two birds were seen at Fort Mountain in 16 Jan. by Mary Francel and three were found on the Lookout Plateau on 24 Jan. by Bill Blakeslee, Jeff Sewell and Mark Oberle. Finally, one bird was seen at the Russell Lake WMA near Cornelia on 19 Feb. by Patrick Brisse.
- SEDGE WREN** - A good find for the Atlanta area was a bird seen at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area on 12 Jan. by Jeff Sewell.



- LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** - The best counts were 21 on the Albany CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Alan Ashley) and 28 on the Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. (fide Tom Patterson).
- NORTHERN PARULA** - Extremely rare anywhere in the state during the winter but especially inland was the report of one on the Callaway Gardens CBC on 19 Dec. (fide LuAnn Craighton).
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** - Although probably regular along the coast during the winter, this species is rarely reported. One bird was seen on the Harris Neck CBC on 27 Dec. (fide Patricia Metz) and another bird was seen at Youman's Pond near Midway, Liberty County, on 28 Jan. by Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore.
- WILSONS' WARBLER** - A male was seen in the College Park area near Atlanta from 22 Dec. through 1 Jan. by Aubrey Scott for a very rare winter record. See elsewhere in this issue for details of this observation.
- AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** - This very rare species was reported from Greene County on 19 Feb. by Paul Sykes. Despite intensive searching the next day, it could not be relocated.
- FIELD SPARROW** - Generally the Atlanta area CBC is either the national high count for this species or close to it. This year only 64 were counted for some reason.
- FOX SPARROW** - Both Giff Beaton and Terry Moore reported numbers coming to their Atlanta area feeders, especially during Feb. The peak count was 15 at Roswell on 6 Feb. (Terry Moore).
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - Two birds were a good find near Dalton on 31 Dec. (Bruce Dralle et al.). The reliable spot at Pendergrass yielded 10 on 12 Jan. (Jeff Sewell) and six on 18 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Pierre Howard).
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - This species was more widely reported than usual with sightings from Dublin, the A&B Farms near DeSoto, the Atlanta Motor Speedway, Cedartown and Greene County. The best count was 650 on the 23 Dec. Dublin CBC (fide Tom Patterson).
- NORTHERN ORIOLE** - Single birds were seen on the Macon CBC on 18 Dec. (fide Marie Amerson) and in the Savannah area on 23 Dec. by Anselm Atkins and Margaret Kavanaugh.
- PURPLE FINCH** - This species continues to decline in numbers all across Georgia during the winter.
- HOUSE FINCH** - In contrast to the above species, this one continues to increase year by year.
- RED CROSSBILL** - Five birds were recorded on the Chattahoochee National Forest CBC on 19 Dec. (fide Harriett DiGioia).
- PINE SISKIN** - This species was found sparingly around the state during the period but with an excellent peak count of 316 on the Blairsville CBC on 2 Jan. (fide Dot Freeman).
- EVENING GROSBEAK** - A total of 18 reports were received, all from the northern third of Georgia. The peak count was evidently the 78 recorded on the Blairsville CBC on 2 Jan. (fide Dot Freeman).

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## FROM THE FIELD

March - May 1994

This spring season yielded passerine migrants in numbers a little above average, but most of the bird reports are coming from a few "hot" locations. Other than these areas (e.g. Kennesaw Mt. in Cobb County), migrant passerines are getting harder to find. More ardent birders than ever are scouring the state, keeping the total number of species up, but the fact is that numbers would be even better if birders from all areas of the state would report with regularity. Particularly needed are reports from the coast, southwest Georgia, and the Columbus area. For example, most of the coastal reports came from birders in Atlanta and Augusta (with a few and very appreciated exceptions).

Abbreviations include: *Annotated Checklist* - refers to *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occas. Publ. No. 10, 1986), CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Atlanta, ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County, MP - Merry Brothers Brick and Tile Company pond area in Augusta, m.ob. - many observers, NAMC - North American Migration Count on 14 May, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- RED-THROATED LOON** - As the Atlanta area has fewer than ten records, the report of one bird at Lake Lanier, Forsyth County, on 2 April (Jerry Brunner and Joe Greenberg) was quite interesting. Also unusual was a late bird at St. Simons Island on 30 May (Jeannie Wright).
- COMMON LOON** - Several birds lingered at Lake Lanier through 8 March with the high count of eight on 2 March (Jeff Sewell).
- EARED GREBE** - One bird in breeding plumage was seen on 17 April at Lake Spivey, Clayton/Henry counties, by Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** - Anne and Vernon Waters noted increasing numbers at MP with a high count of 265 on 4 March. Laurens County lakes yielded 11 on 6 March (Tom Patterson) and 125 were seen at Blalock Lake in Clayton County on 9 April (Patrick Brisse).
- ANHINGA** - Anne and Vernon Waters reported that this species continues to increase at MP with six on 14 May.
- AMERICAN BITTERN** - Only one inland report: one bird seen in Greene County on 18 May by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen. On the coast, Malcolm Hodges reported one in April. Perhaps we should consider changing the status designation for this species in the *Annotated Checklist* to "rare transient" from "uncommon to common transient".
- LEAST BITTERN** - This is another candidate for a status change and not in a positive direction. Sheila Willis saw a bird at Lake Pomona, Liberty



County on 21 May and other observers reported the species at the same location on later dates indicating a possible nesting site. We need to do a better job of documenting the status of this species even along the coast.

**GREAT EGRET** - Four birds seen at the Suwanee Creek Section of the CRNRA, Gwinnett County, on 29 March were quite early for the Atlanta area (Jeff Sewell).

**SNOWY EGRET** - Unusual for the mountains, two birds were seen on 13 April at Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee by Dot Freeman and also noteworthy for Augusta was one at MP on 14 May (Larry and Carol Eldridge fide Anne Waters).

**CATTLE EGRET** - Also unusual away from the coastal plain was one bird seen in Bartow County on 15 May (John Swiderski) and another the next day at Red Top Mountain State Park in the same county (Peggy and Terry Moore).

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - For the eighth straight year this species returned to nest in an intown Atlanta neighborhood. This year three adults returned on 24 March, built one nest and raised four chicks (fide Jeff Sewell). Elsewhere, Jeff Sewell saw an adult on 7 and 12 May at the Cochran Shoals Section of the CRNRA in Cobb County.

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** - A good count of seven was seen along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 21 May (Paul Raney et al.).

**WOOD STORK** - Anne and Vernon Waters reported 40 nests seen from the road at Harris Neck NWR on 1 April, however, they could not see the entire area so there may have been more nests. Jim Harrell and Kristy Avera reported that the Blackwater colony near Valdosta had 375 nests during the period (fide Barbara Passmore).

**AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** - The *Annotated Checklist* shows this species to be an uncommon transient and winter resident over the entire state and gives the latest spring departure date as 18 April. Therefore, the following sightings, two on the coast and one well inland, were quite interesting. Paul Raney saw one near Darien on 21 May, Malcolm Hodges reported seeing two in April and four in May in coastal locations. Another bird was spotted at the ELHLAF on 21 May by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.

**MOTTLED DUCK** - We have recently become aware that this species, introduced from Louisiana several years ago into South Carolina, is being regularly seen, mostly by hunters, on the Georgia coast, particularly at the Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area near Darien, and, in fact, may already have nested on an island in the Altamaha River (fide Malcolm Hodges). The species may have hybridized with American Black Ducks and these hybrids may account for some reports of American Black Ducks in late spring and summer along the coast (fide Pat Metz). Georgia observers are encouraged to document with great care identifications of these two species along the Georgia coast during the late spring and summer. Any information about the introduction of the species in South Carolina, on its status there and in Georgia, would be appreciated as we attempt to document its existence in Georgia.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - The best inland counts were of 16 at the ELHLAF on 26 March (Patrick Brisse) and 55 at Lake Lanier on 27 March (Jeff Sewell).

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** - Birders who have a chance to check the DeKalb Reservoir periodically might find some interesting species there as did Jeff Sewell on 22 March with 11 Northern Shovelers. At the ELHLAF, Patrick Brisse had five birds on 1 April.

**REDHEAD** - Two birds were seen at SCSP on 10 March by Jeff Sewell.

**GREATER SCAUP** - A flock of five, first seen in January, remained at the DeKalb Reservoir through 3 March with one bird remaining until 26 March (Jeff Sewell). At SCSP, one male stayed for three days beginning on 10 March (Jeff Sewell).

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - Lanny Henson found a female plumaged bird at Garden Lake in Rome on 7 April. This small lake has proved to be an excellent spot for transient and wintering waterfowl.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** - This rare transient was noted in the Atlanta area with reports of two birds at SCSP on 10 March, three there on 19 March and one other bird at DeKalb Reservoir on 26 March (Jeff Sewell).

**COMMON MERGANSER** - Tom Patterson saw his first for Laurens County on 6 April.

**RUDDY DUCK** - One bird at Lake Spivey in Clayton/Henry counties on 2 May was rather late (Patrick Brisse and Terry Moore).

**OSPREY** - Reports were almost too numerous to list as this species continues to increase in numbers. On 19 March, Greg Greer counted 300-400 birds headed north at Cumberland Island in a matter of just a few hours. Lake Chatuge hosted one on 11 April for the third sighting from that area (Dot Freeman). On the NAMC on 14 May, five were counted in the Augusta area (Anne and Vernon Waters). Rare for an inland area was the pair building a nest at Blalock Lake in Clayton County late in the period (Patrick Brisse).

**AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - Three birds joined the large movement of Ospreys at Cumberland Island on 19 March (Greg Greer). Terry Miller saw one at Jekyll Island on 20 March and Terry Moore saw one at Youman's Pond, Liberty County, on 9 April. The earliest date in the *Annotated Checklist* is 20 March.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** - This summer resident of the coastal plain arrived early and appeared at some rather unusual locations. Single birds in McIntosh County on 18 April (Don and Doris Cohrs) and at MP on 27 April (Anne and Vernon Waters) were early. The earliest date in the *Annotated Checklist* is 23 April. Amazingly, four birds were seen from the top of Kennesaw Mt. on 30 April (Bill Blakeslee and Pierre Howard). Bill Blakeslee had another bird in Bartow County on 14 May during the NAMC and Dianne Green saw one on I-75 near the Tennessee state line on 15 May. Jeff Sewell and Bruce Dralle saw four at Hamburg State Park, Washington County, on 30 May. This location is perhaps the most reliable spot to find the species away from the large coastal river systems.

**BALD EAGLE** - This is another raptor which is increasing in numbers and occupying new areas. Reports were received from the coast (Greg Greer and Malcolm Hodges), Augusta (Anne and Vernon Waters), ELHLAF (m.ob.), and one at a new location, Lake Nottely, on 8 April (Dot Freeman).



- NORTHERN HARRIER** - A few late reports were received of a bird near Dublin on 7 May (Tom Patterson) and another bird near Cartersville on 13 May (John Swiderski).
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - This species was very poorly reported with the peak count being only five at Kennesaw Mt. on 17 April (Bruce Dralle).
- AMERICAN KESTREL** - David Brown and Kris Poulsen reported a nesting pair at Berry College in Rome on 23 April.
- MERLIN** - All the reports for the period came from the coast. Terry Miller saw two birds at Jekyll Island on 18 March and one at St. Simons Island on 19 March. Peggy and Terry Moore at Jekyll Island saw one on 6 April and four migrating north on 7 April.
- PEREGRINE FALCON** - The only report was one bird seen at the Pigeon Mt. WMA on 30 April by David Brown and Kris Poulsen.
- BLACK RAIL** - After a lot of hard work, Jeff Sewell and Bruce Dralle heard a bird at a marsh in Greene County on 22 May where the species had been found previously.
- VIRGINIA RAIL** - The marsh at I-575 and GA Hwy 92 near Woodstock, Cherokee County, again played host to a few of this species with a high count of five on 9 April (Giff Beaton). Unfortunately, the status of this marsh is uncertain as development encroaches.
- AMERICAN COOT** - Extremely odd were the two Coots found by Giff Beaton at Kennesaw Mt. on 5 April. One was found on the ground at the base of a tree near the visitors center and the other was perched about 40 feet up in a tree near the summit.
- SANDHILL CRANE** - One reluctant migrant, found in a Henry County pasture (with cows and nearby domestic Emus), remained at least until 17 April (Patrick Brisse).
- WILSON'S PLOVER** - The high count was the 20 seen at Jekyll Island on 16 March by Malcolm Hodges.
- SEMPALMATED PLOVER** - Rather high for an inland location was the count of eight at ELHLAF on 15 May (Patrick Brisse).
- PIPING PLOVER** - Malcolm Hodges saw a late female at Jekyll Island on 21 May.
- SANDPIPERS** - The more common migrants were reported in average numbers from inland localities although Tom Patterson noted that high water levels in Laurens County ponds made for poor shorebirding in his area.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** - The best count was 67 at MP on 19 March (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** - Again at MP, 15 was a decent count on 18 March (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- UPLAND SANDPIPER** - Small numbers were seen in their usual Laurens County haunts during April (Tom Patterson).
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW** - Finally, one showed up in an accessible place, the old marina mudflat at Jekyll Island and stayed for several days beginning on 5 April (Peggy and Terry Moore).
- WESTERN SANDPIPER** - Eight birds seen at the ELHLAF on 22 May was a high spring count for an inland location (Hugh Garrett).
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** - The peak count at the ELHLAF was 11 on 28 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert and Patrick Brisse). Tom Patterson had three on 21 May in Laurens County.

- PECTORAL SANDPIPER** - One bird seen at the ELHLAF on 28 May by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert was rather late.
- DUNLIN** - Unusual for the Atlanta area were the four birds seen at the ELHLAF on 14 May by Brock Hutchins.
- STILT SANDPIPER** - Four birds stayed two days at the ELHLAF beginning 12 May (Terry Moore).
- WILSON'S PHALAROPE** - The only report was of a bird that appeared at the ELHLAF on 11 May and remained there for three days (Brock Hutchins).
- POMARINE JAEGER** - Malcolm Hodges sent a description of two Pomarines seen on 20 March at Jekyll Island's South Beach. One was a dark phase adult and the other a dark phase immature. Two other jaegers seen at the same time were thought to be Pomarines.
- PARASITIC JAEGER** - Malcolm Hodges reported two of this species, evidently from the same area and same day as his reports of the Pomarines.
- LAUGHING GULL** - Quite rare inland was one seen at the ELHLAF on 26 April by Kevin Danchisen.
- BONAPARTE'S GULL** - A large flock peaking at 125 on 15 March was present for much of February and March at Lake Lanier, Forsyth County (Jeff Sewell).
- GLAUCOUS GULL** - Malcolm Hodges provided details of a bird seen on 11 March along a tidal river near Brunswick. Although the species is regarded as accidental in the *Annotated Checklist*, there have been at least a couple other recent records.
- GULL-BILLED TERN** - Paul Raney saw two of this rather rare breeder near Darien on 21 May.
- CASPIAN TERN** - Two inland reports were received with one bird at ELHLAF on 8 April (Terry Miller) and a very high count of seven at MP on 23 April (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- BLACK TERN** - One seen on 9 May at Reed Bingham State Park in Cook County was unusual for that area (Jim Harrell, Kristy Avera fide Barbara Passmore).
- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** - Everyone needs to be looking out for this species as it spreads north into Georgia. The most reliable spot for the species, Brunswick, yielded 10 birds on 21 May (Paul Raney).
- MONK PARAKEET** - A pair of Monk Parakeets of unknown origin were discovered building their large stick nest in an electrical power substation in Doraville during April. Unfortunately for them, their instant celebrity status did not save them from being removed by Department of Natural Resources officials as being potential agricultural pests.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** - There were two spring records with single birds in Laurens County on 6 April (a first county record for Tom Patterson) and in McIntosh County on 27 April for a very rare coastal spring record (Don and Doris Cohrs).
- RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** - The bird at Barbara Passmore's feeder at Valdosta departed on 20 March after spending 108 consecutive days at the feeder.
- OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** - After not being seen in the Atlanta area for several years, two birds showed up on the same day. Bruce Dralle found one at Kennesaw Mt. on 14 May and another was seen late that afternoon at the Johnsons Ferry Section of the CRNRA in Cobb County.



by Chuck Saleeby. This latter bird remained for two days and was seen by many observers.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** - This local breeder was found at a new location when Jeff Sewell found a singing bird at the Suwanee Creek Section of the CRNRA in Gwinnett County on 21 May. The bird remained at that location through the remainder of the period.

**GRAY KINGBIRD** - Two birds were seen at their usual haunt around the Jekyll Island Convention Center on 21 May by Paul Raney.

**HORNED LARK** - A few birds from the small flock which was found during the winter at the Atlanta Motor Speedway near Hampton remained there throughout the period. On 6 March 11 were seen there by Paul Raney and Jeff Sewell. Jeff also saw six at the Etowah Indian Mounds near Cartersville on 19 March.

**BANK SWALLOW** - One bird was extremely early on 29 March at Woodstock (Giff Beaton). More to form were the seven seen on 21 May along the Jekyll Island Causeway by Paul Raney and the small numbers seen at the ELHLAF beginning in mid-May (m.ob.).

**CLIFF SWALLOW** - This species was reported from two new locations. Two were seen at Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee gathering mud on 25 April (Dot Freeman). One bird was seen at the Bethany Bridge at Lake Allatoona on 14 May by Patrick Brisse. As many as 8-12 were seen there on following days but the birds did not remain there to nest.

**COMMON RAVEN** - Reports totaling seven birds were received during May from Rabun and Brasstown Balds (Pierre Howard, Dot Freeman, Bruce Dralle and Jeff Sewell).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - One and sometimes two birds lingered at a Doraville feeder until 20 March (Jackie Heyda).

**WINTER WREN** - Several reports were received from both Rabun and Brasstown Balds during May so it is quite likely that the species nests at both localities (Nelson Dodds, Paul Arnold, Tom Bennett, Pierre Howard and Jeff Sewell). The *Annotated Checklist* only mentions Brasstown Bald as a nesting site in Georgia.

**MARSH WREN** - Very unusual was an inland sighting of a bird in Greene County on the late date of 22 May (Bruce Dralle and Jeff Sewell).

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** - The only report was a single bird seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 10 May by Giff Beaton.

**WARBLING VIREO** - Congratulations to Terry Moore, who after birding in Georgia for 32 years, finally saw his first Georgia Warbling Vireo on 29 April at Kennesaw Mt. along with wife Peggy and Bruce Dralle. Then, amazingly, he and Jack Carusos saw another one in Dawson County on 10 May. Yet another bird was seen on 19 May in Greene County by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen.

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** - There were only two reports of this species with single birds in the Macon area on 22 April (Paul Johnson) and one at Kennesaw Mt. on 7 May (Bruce Dralle).

**TROPICAL PARULA** - The most outstanding report for the entire period, if not the entire year, was the sighting of a bird felt to be this species at Augusta on 27 April by Anne and Vernon Waters. The details of the sighting of this species, never seen east of the Mississippi before, have been submitted to *The Oriole*. Although no pictures could be taken, Anne's color drawing of the bird is quite convincing.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** - Two reports of this rare migrant were more than usual for the spring. One was seen at the Cochran Shoals Section of the CRNRA on 23 April (m.ob.) and another was seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 26 April (Bruce Dralle et al.).

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** - Considering how secretive this species can be, there were a lot of reports during the period. One was reported at its usual location near the ELHLAF during April and May (m.ob.). Paul Sykes found two in two different locations in Greene County during April. The Cochran Shoals Section of the CRNRA in Cobb County hosted one and possibly two birds with reports on 28 April (Jack Carusos) and another one on 14 May (Dennis Lacoss). One was found in Forsyth County on 1 May by Jack Carusos and John Paget and Joe Greenberg found the species in the Blairsville area on 17 May. Near the coast, Sheila Willis found four pairs on territory at Ft. Stewart during May.

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** - This rare transient was seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 10 May by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen and at Athens on 14 May (John Brunjes).

**WILSON'S WARBLER** - A male was seen in Atlanta on 9 May by Jerry Brunner and another male was seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 21 May by Bruce Dralle.

**SUMMER AND SCARLET TANAGERS** - These two species peaked on the same day at Kennesaw Mt. on 1 May when Bruce Dralle et al. counted 14 Summer Tanagers and 9 Scarlet Tanagers.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBILL** - Again, Kennesaw Mt. provided the highest count with 12 on 20 April (Giff Beaton). A fairly late bird was singing on 20 May in the Suwanee Creek Section of the CRNRA, Gwinnett County (Jeff Sewell).

**DICKCISSEL** - An amazing count of 30-50 birds near Athens was reported by John Brunjes on 14 May. The numbers had dwindled to 4-5 by the end of the month (m.ob.).

**PAINTED BUNTING** - Way out of range was one seen near LaGrange on 1 May by Anne and Vernon Waters. The Augusta NAMC turned up 12 there on 14 May (Anne and Vernon Waters). In Macon, the species still hangs on at the water treatment plant despite severe habitat alteration by the authorities (Ken Clark).

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - Late birds lingered at Canton through April with the last one being seen on 6 May (Jeff Petit).

**BOBOLINK** - A large flock of 200+ was seen on 24 April by Barbara Passmore in Lowndes County. Tom Patterson reported several small flocks in Laurens County on 27 April and again on 4 and 7 May. A large flock of about 100 accompanied the Dickcissel flock in a vetch field near Athens on 14 May (John Brunjes).

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** - A large flock of 80+ which frequented the Atlanta Motor Speedway area during the winter was last seen on 6 March by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - Anne and Vernon Waters saw three of this rare winter visitor in the Augusta area on 6 March.

**NORTHERN ORIOLE** - There were only four reports of this species from the entire state during the period. One was seen in April on the coast by Malcolm Hodges. A male was seen at the ELHLAF on 2 May by



Patrick Brisse and Terry Moore. One was seen on 6 May at Peachtree City and the final bird was seen at Ansley Park in Atlanta on 11 May (Jerry Brunner).

**PURPLE FINCH** - This species has declined as a winter visitor recently so a count of 21 at Lanny Henson's feeder in Cedartown on 8 April was encouraging.

**PINE SISKIN** - The last report of this species was on 30 May in Union County (Dot Freeman and Deborah Decker). This species nests just across the border in North Carolina so it is not inconceivable that we could find it nesting in Georgia at some time. If there is a Christmas tree farm in north Georgia that is growing spruce trees, that would be a likely habitat to search for the first Georgia nesting record.

**EVENING GROSBEAK** - The winter invasion lasted well into spring. David Emory hosted eight birds at Palmetto on 30 March. In Cedartown, Lanny Henson had one until 10 April. Dot Freeman reported eight from a feeder at Hiawasse on 13 April and heard of many other flocks in Union and Towns counties during the period.

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