

# THE ORIOLE

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# THE ORIOLE

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## CONTENTS

SOUTHEASTERN AMERICAN KESTREL NESTS IN BULLOCH, EVANS AND COLUMBIA COUNTIES, GEORGIA <i>Timothy F. Breen, John W. Parrish, Kenneth Boyd and Bradford Winn</i> .....	33
FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF LITTLE GULL IN GEORGIA <i>Malcolm F. Hodges and Terry and Marion Schiefer</i> .....	37
FIRST SPECIMEN OF A WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD FROM GEORGIA <i>Carol Ruckdeschel</i> .....	39
REFUTATION OF PURPORTED HISTORICAL BREEDING RECORDS OF THE BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO ON THE GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA COASTS <i>Douglas B. McNair</i> .....	42
GENERAL NOTES.....	45
FROM THE FIELD - December 1994-February 1995 <i>Jeff Sewell</i> .....	57
FROM THE FIELD - March-May 1995 <i>Jeff Sewell</i> .....	69

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# THE ORIOLE

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## SOUTHEASTERN AMERICAN KESTREL NESTS IN BULLOCH, EVANS AND COLUMBIA COUNTIES, GEORGIA

Timothy F. Breen<sup>1</sup>, John W. Parrish<sup>1</sup>,  
Kenneth Boyd<sup>2</sup> and Bradford Winn<sup>3</sup>

The only 2 subspecies of the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) found in southeastern Georgia are *F. s. paulus*, which is a nonmigratory, year-round resident, and *F. s. sparverius*, which is migratory and only a winter resident in southern Georgia (Burleigh 1958; Johnsgard 1990; White et al. 1994). Burleigh (1958) suggested that the "Little Sparrow Hawk" (Southeastern American Kestrel), *F. s. paulus*, was found locally below the Fall Line breeding on Cumberland and Blackbeard Islands, as well as in Appling, Baker, Ben Hill, Burke, Camden, Charlton, Chatham, Long, Screven, Thomas, and Washington Counties. More recently, Denton (1975) reported kestrels nesting in old buildings at Fort Gordon (Richmond County) in 1974. Although there have been isolated reports of kestrels nesting in southern Georgia since that time, to our knowledge, kestrels have not been documented to nest in Bulloch, Evans or Columbia Counties.

As part of a study on the breeding activity of the American Kestrel, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program, and the Arcadia Wildlife Preserve, Inc. in Atlanta, nest boxes were placed on utility poles or trees along roadsides in southern Georgia, similar to previous kestrel nest-box studies in the Coastal Plains of Florida (Loftin 1992, Smallwood pers. comm.). Boxes were placed about 4-5 m high, near hay fields, pastures, open agricultural lands and sandhills during 1994 and 1995 (Breen 1995).

Only two of 225 nest boxes between Girard and Thomasville were used by kestrels in 1994. Both of those boxes were used by the same pair of kestrels just north of Bellville (Evans County). The pair first nested in a box on a utility pole adjacent to GA 196 highway. The pair was observed in the area in early April. The male was observed entering the box with a lizard on 18 April, and a clutch of 5 eggs was found when the box was opened on 28 April. The box was next checked for nestlings on 1 June, since the incubation period of kestrels is 28-30 days (Johnsgard 1990). Unfortunately, when we opened the box the hatchlings were absent. They had presumably been eaten by a predator, since one cracked egg (rotten



smell) was left in the box. Although the box was subsequently occupied by Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*), the kestrels remained in the area, and within about 2 weeks, they moved about 0.5 km to another box which had been placed on a tree along the same road. The female laid two eggs in that box, but deserted the nest box on 9 June. We also observed a second pair of kestrels that was nesting in the eaves of an empty house along GA 169 highway, which was about halfway between the two nest boxes. Although we could not see the nest, we concluded that three young hatched by listening to them moving about in the rafters of the house. A male nestling that fell out of the eaves at about three weeks of age, was banded and placed back into the eaves. Unfortunately, two of the nestlings subsequently died. They were found inside the empty house and had apparently fallen through large openings in the ceiling in the kitchen area. We also found a partially decomposed carcass (possibly from an earlier clutch) and three kestrel skeletons inside the house, suggesting the kestrels had been using the abandoned house as a nest site for the past few years. The banded male, however, successfully fledged in early July, 1994. At least one pair of kestrels was observed in the area on several occasions during the subsequent winter. In the spring of 1995, that pair occupied the perch sites near the house, and seemed intent on nesting in the eaves of the house again; however, that was not practical as the house was then occupied. The pair eventually nested in a new nest box placed on a utility pole about 0.5 km north of the house. The kestrels hatched 4 eggs on 16 June, and fledged a male and three females on 18 July 1995.

Another pair of kestrels nested in a metal cross beam at an electrical power substation 1 km south of Statesboro in Bulloch County in 1994, even though there were two nest boxes within 0.8 km of the power substation. That pair was observed in early-March, and the male was seen feeding the female in late-April. Although the nest site was not examined due to the presence of 200,000 volt power lines, it was evident from the time intervals involved that the female was incubating eggs. However, the eggs obviously did not hatch, since the female was never observed entering the nest site about 30 days after we calculated the eggs should have hatched. This pair of kestrels did not attempt to re-nest even though they remained together through the remainder of the summer. Both birds disappeared during the winter. A female kestrel was observed near the power substation early in the 1995 breeding season, but she subsequently deserted the site in the first week of May. Stys (1993) reported a Southeastern American Kestrel nest site in a beam of an electrical power substation in Florida, but did not indicate the nesting success. Metal beams at power stations are not likely to be successful kestrel nest sites because of the intense heat that must be associated with them in the summer. We have observed European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) being very successful at such locations, however. Presumably, this is due to the fact that starlings use pine straw nesting materials, and would not lay eggs

directly on the metal, as would be expected of kestrels.

A nest box placed along GA 223 highway, just inside the Columbia County and Grovetown City limit lines, was used by a kestrel pair in 1995. They hatched a single-sex clutch of 5 males on 15 June, which subsequently fledged on 15 July 1995.

These reports of nesting Southeastern American Kestrels are the first to be documented in Bulloch, Evans and Columbia Counties, to the best of our knowledge. There have been few reports of kestrels on Breeding Bird Surveys during the past 29 years (Peterjohn pers. comm.), but because of our project we have now increased kestrels not only in Evans and Columbia Counties but also in Richmond County. Last year, more than 50 kestrels were fledged from 70 nest boxes at Fort Gordon in Richmond County (Breen 1995, Breen and Parrish unpublished). We hope we can continue these successes as we attempt to preserve the Southeastern American Kestrel below the Fall Line in Georgia.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Funding for this project was provided by Arcadia Wildlife Preserve, Inc., and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. MacMillan-Bloodell Co. and Barnes Lumber Co. provided wood for some of the nest boxes.

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## FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF LITTLE GULL IN GEORGIA

Malcolm F. Hodges and Terry and Marion Schiefer

On 2 May 1995 we discovered a Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) on the south beach of Jekyll Island, Glynn County, Georgia. We first saw the bird as it sat among the many gulls and terns on the beach at low tide, at approximately 1615 and watched it until around 1700. We observed the bird through 7X and 8X binoculars and 22X telescopes from as close as 15 m.

The bird was shorter in total length than a Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) standing immediately behind the gull. It appeared to be in worn and faded first winter plumage (Figure 1). The crown was faded to dark gray, and the dark bars across the wing, normally black, appeared brown (Figure 2). Two dark auricular patches stood out on the white face. The mantle was light to medium gray similar to that on an adult Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*), and the rump and underparts were white. The



Figure 1. Little Gull at rest on south beach, Jekyll Island, Glynn County, GA, 10 May 1995. Photo by Giff Beaton.





Figure 2. Little Gull in flight, South Beach, Jekyll Island, Glynn County, GA, 10 May 1995. Photo by Giff Beaton.

gray of the mantle extended onto the lesser and median secondary coverts of the upperwing. A dark brown bar extended across the secondary upperwing coverts from the wrist to the inner greater coverts. The bar continued across the primary coverts to the outer primaries, with most of the greater primary coverts of the upperwing being dark brown. The remainder of the wing was white, except for a dark bar across much of the trailing edge of the secondaries. The tail was white and squared, with a dark subterminal bar across all but the outer remiges. The bill was thin and black, the eyes dark, and the legs and feet were dull red.

The Little Gull used the south beach of Jekyll Island to roost and preen until at least 12 May when it was last seen there. However, another Little Gull, or perhaps the same one, was seen at Gould's Inlet between St. Simons and Sea Islands on 6 June (MH) and again on 10 June (Paul Raney, pers. comm.). Many observers from throughout Georgia were able to see and photograph this individual. Although there is a previous sight record for Georgia at St. Marys on 25-26 March 1956, this is the first documented record for the state.

P.O. Box 79394, Atlanta, GA 30357-7394 and 1394 P.D. Fulgham Road, Starkville, MS 39759.

## FIRST SPECIMEN OF A WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD FROM GEORGIA

Carol Ruckdeschel

Following strong winds and storms on 24 August 1995, an immature White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*) was found dead on the ocean beach of Cumberland Island, Camden County, Georgia. Characters used to distinguish between immature birds of the genus *Phaethon* were: color of crest (Watson 1966), color and relative length of retrices, and length of bill (Palmer 1962). There was no noticeable black crest on the specimen (Figures 1 and 2). The retrices had gray, subterminal spots and the central pair was slightly elongated. The straight line length of the exposed culmen measured 45 mm, length of the bill from the gape was 59 mm, and from the nostril 32 mm (Baldwin, et al. 1931). The specimen was in a deteriorating state and could not be sexed but a study skin was prepared and deposited in the Cumberland Island Museum. Other species found dead on the beach that day included a Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*), two Cory's Shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea*) and one Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*).

Haney, et al. (1986) described the White-tailed Tropicbird as a rare offshore visitor to Georgia in spring and summer and listed numerous offshore sight records. In Florida the species is more frequently encountered but still considered a rare, irregular offshore summer visitor from March to October (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). Tropicbird sightings and encounters are more frequent off North Carolina than either Georgia or South Carolina, presumably due to the proximity to the Gulf Stream (Lee and Irvin 1983). The closest museum specimen to this Georgia record was found at Ponte Vedra, St. Johns County, Florida in September 1950 (McKay 1951). The record reported herein is the first specimen for the state of Georgia.

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Figure 1. White-tailed Tropicbird specimen (lateral view) from Cumberland Island, Camden County, Georgia, 24 August 1995. Photo by Carol Ruckdeschel.

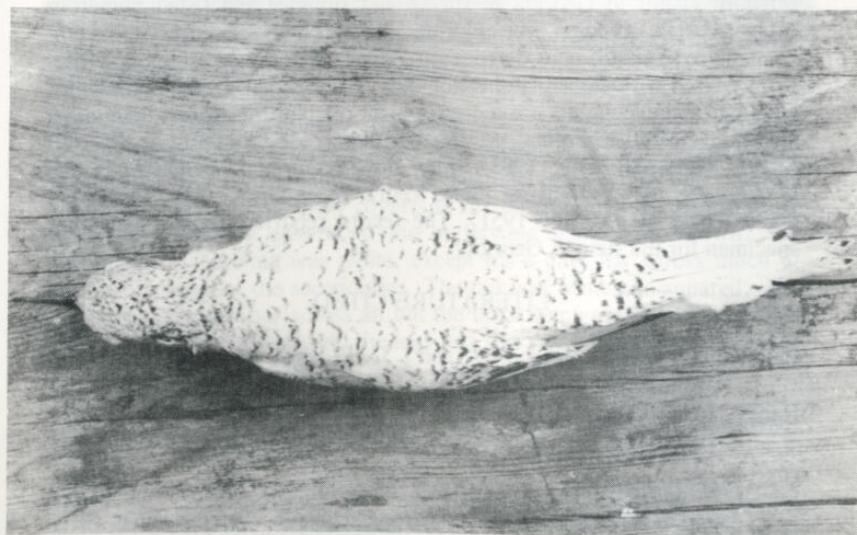


Figure 2. White-tailed Tropicbird specimen (dorsal view) from Cumberland Island, Camden County, Georgia, 24 August 1995. Photo by Carol Ruckdeschel.

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*Cumberland Island Museum, P.O. Box 796, St. Marys, GA 31558.*



# REFUTATION OF PURPORTED HISTORICAL BREEDING RECORDS OF THE BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO ON THE GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA COASTS

Douglas B. McNair

Johnston (1989) stated that J.E. Gould collected an egg set of the Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) at St. Simons Island, Georgia on 5 May 1911. The two long-oval, slightly cylindrical and pale greenish-blue eggs measure 29.4 x 20.1 mm and 28.5 x 20.2 mm (Charleston Museum 1991.13.017). The size of these eggs approach the size of typical eggs of the Black-billed Cuckoo (see Harrison 1975), but their shape and color indicate they are small eggs of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*C. americanus*). Another egg set collected by Gould at Columbus, Ohio, and identified as that of the Black-billed Cuckoo is also a Yellow-billed Cuckoo egg set (ChM). His other cuckoo egg sets are correctly identified (including one Yellow-billed Cuckoo from Georgia). Regardless, Gould clearly had some difficulty distinguishing the eggs and adults of the two species. He was probably also influenced by an earlier unsubstantiated report of breeding Black-billed Cuckoos on the Georgia coast (Bailey 1883), to expect them here (see below).

S.W. Wilson and W.J. Hoxie, who both erroneously reported Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) breeding on the Georgia coast (see McNair and Post 1994), also stated that Black-billed Cuckoos nested on the Georgia or South Carolina coast (Bailey 1883; Hoxie 1885, 1887). Wilson purportedly collected an egg set of the Black-billed Cuckoo on 18 May (year unknown) at or near St. Simons Island, Georgia, but provided no documentation. Wilson was probably influenced by Nuttall's (1832) undocumented statement that Black-billed Cuckoos nested in Georgia. Black-billed Cuckoos are rare breeders in Georgia, but only in the upper piedmont and mountains (Burleigh 1958; Haney et al. 1986).

Hoxie reported Black-billed Cuckoos breeding near Frogmore, Beaufort County, on the South Carolina coast, on 18 June 1886 (Hoxie 1887), and earlier (Hoxie 1885), he also stated "a few breed". He provided no details in either reference. Hoxie (1885) was clearly confused about the expected breeding range of Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, for he stated that the Black-billed was a more southerly bird, the opposite of their true status. Further evidence that Hoxie (1885) could not reliably distinguish the two species from one another are his statements that the Yellow-billed Cuckoo did not breed on the South Carolina coast (it is actually fairly common), that the Black-billed Cuckoo was a common spring and autumn migrant (it is actually rare), and that the Black-billed was a more numerous fall migrant than the Yellow-billed (the opposite is true) (Post and Gauthreaux 1989; McNair and Post, in prep).

Obviously, Hoxie's report of breeding Black-billed Cuckoos on the South Carolina coast is not credible.

A.T. Wayne (1911) also suggested that Black-billed Cuckoos nested on the South Carolina coast at Mt. Pleasant, Charleston County, though definitive evidence was lacking. Wayne (notebooks, ChM) collected two females at Yough Hall Swamp with their "lower breasts and abdomen denuded of feathers." Wayne stated these females "had laid every egg," but this was his first record for the species. Wayne (notebooks, ChM) also stated a Yellow-billed Cuckoo had "laid every egg" at the same locality on 17 April 1912, a species he knew well, but the date is far too early for completion of egg-laying. The earliest acceptable egg date of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo is 2 May (1908, by Wayne); otherwise it is 11 May (1958, by E. Cutts, unpubl., ChM) (the early egg date of 29 April cited in Post and Gauthreaux 1989 is a transcription error). I believe Wayne probably misinterpreted the evidence he obtained by his anatomical examinations, and that both species of cuckoos were instead preparing to begin development of eggs for production and egg-laying elsewhere. This explanation probably also applies to a female Black-billed Cuckoo collected by W. Post in May 1984, also at Mt. Pleasant (see Post and Gauthreaux 1989).

I do not accept the undetailed report of a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos breeding near Kilsock Bay, Santee area, South Carolina, in June 1936 (Saunders 1951). Other errors or apparent errors on rare bird reports occur in this work.

Finally, E.J. DeCamps' son collected a Yellow-billed Cuckoo egg set near Beaufort in June 1948 which contained 4 eggs (see Sprunt and Chamberlain 1949). DeCamps suggested that two of the eggs may have been those of the Black-billed Cuckoo, but no cuckoo eggs collected by DeCamps are in either the collections of the Charleston Museum or Clemson University (pers. exam.; S. Miller *in litt.*).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Will Post, Curator of Ornithology, Charleston Museum, provided access to the collections under his care. S. Miller, Curator of Vertebrate Collections, Clemson University, provided information about his collections. I thank R.L. Crawford for reviewing a draft of this manuscript.

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Tall Timbers Research Station, Route 1, Box 678, Tallahassee, FL 32312-9712.

## GENERAL NOTES

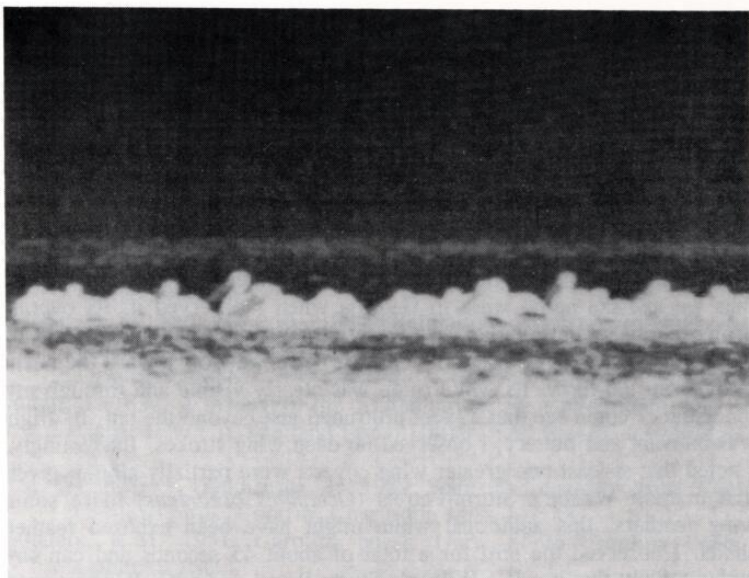
### WILSON'S STORM-PETREL OBSERVED FROM FERRY BETWEEN ST. MARY'S AND CUMBERLAND ISLAND, GEORGIA

- At approximately 1205 on 24 June 1995, as the Cumberland Island ferry slowed to approximately 5 knots to allow a nuclear submarine moving up the inter-coastal waterway to enter its home base at King's Bay Naval Base, Camden County, Georgia, I noted a small storm-petrel sitting on the water some 10 m from the ferry. To avoid the submarine, the ferry had maneuvered into the north-west side of the inter-coastal waterway and thus we and the petrel were in Georgia when I observed it. Its overall brown plumage and tubular nose were clearly visible without the aid of binoculars. Once level with the ferry, the petrel flew off toward the north away from the ferry. Its white rump was clearly visible and through my binoculars I could see that its feet protruded just beyond the tail. Its flight was buoyant and fluttery; I observed no deep wing strokes. Interestingly, I noted that at least two greater wing coverts were partially albino; given that in molt Wilson's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) lose some wing feathers, this additional white might have been exposed feather shafts. I observed the bird for a total of about 45 seconds and can say without doubt that it was a Wilson's Storm-Petrel and not a Band-rumped (*Oceanodroma castro*) or Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) Storm-Petrel. It appears such a sighting is quite unusual as I understand no other sighting of a Wilson's Storm-Petrel has occurred in the inter-coastal area of Georgia.

Mark R. Welford, 19 Henry St. #2, Statesboro, GA 30458.

**A REPORT OF AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS IN CLAYTON COUNTY** - On 10 April 1995 an employee of the Clayton County Water Authority told me he had seen a flock of white pelicans on Shamrock Lake "a few years ago." I responded with something like "well, that's interesting," and proceeded to talk about egrets and gulls and the way vision can be a funny thing across water and distances, especially without binoculars. The employee, Robin Liles, listened to me, agreed with what I was saying, and the next day brought me two photographs of about 30 American White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) on Shamrock Lake, Clayton County. The pictures were taken on an overcast day, from the shore, without a strong lens, but the birds were unmistakably American White Pelicans, grouped in a close line and apparently feeding (see accompanying photograph). Although he does not consider himself a birder, Liles knew these birds were white pelicans and he knew they were not in their normal territory. Unfortunately for area birders, he didn't





American White Pelicans at Shamrock Lake, Clayton County, Georgia about November 1991. Photo by Robin Liles.

know how to report such a sighting or even if anyone would be interested, however, he knows now.

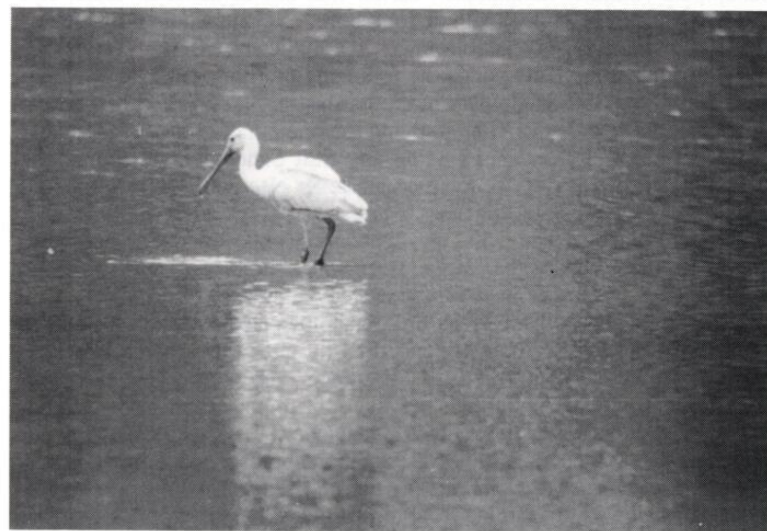
As best as can be determined from other photographs taken on the same roll of film, these pelicans were in Clayton County in November of 1991, but an exact date is not available. The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) lists this species as a rare winter visitor on the coast; and accidental to rare in the interior as a post-breeding wanderer July-November. Of eleven inland sightings, only four have been in the Atlanta area, the most recent before this sighting in November 1975, when twelve birds were seen over the Stone Mountain Freeway.

The 68 acre Shamrock Lake is one of three public fishing lakes operated by the Clayton County Water Authority. These reservoirs have been stocked through the years with bream, channel catfish and bass. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) have nested on adjacent Blalock Lake for several years, and Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) have frequently been seen on the lakes and ponds. Most Atlanta birders are more familiar with the holding ponds, also a part of the Water Authority's E.L. Huie, Jr.

Land Application Facility, and commonly referred to as 'HUIE' or the "Clayton County Water Treatment Plant." These ponds have attracted large numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl during the past 12 years that birders have monitored them. The sighting of American White Pelicans on Shamrock Lake should remind us to check all inland lakes and reservoirs regularly for the occasional rare visitor that might show up.

Carol Lambert, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, GA 30084.

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL SIGHTING IN DEKALB COUNTY** - On 19 August 1995 my wife and I were driving home past Echo Lake along Briarcliff Road in DeKalb County (NE part of Atlanta) when I noticed a medium-sized whitish bird whose bill was unusual but not clearly defined during the few seconds I was able to view it. Upon returning to the lake, and expecting to see a White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), we were pleasantly surprised to find a Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) resting in the shallow water not more than 40 m from the road. The bill could now be seen to be long with a flattened tip and the body and wing color to be faintly pink. The accompanying photograph clearly shows the spoon shaped bill of this individual.



Roseate Spoonbill in DeKalb County, Georgia, 19-20 August 1995. Photo by Jim Wilson.



Several other observers arrived shortly thereafter including Georgann Schmalz, Peter Schantz, Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell who considered the bird to be a first year immature spoonbill, mostly based on the light coloring which was considerably less than the striking pink of an adult Roseate Spoonbill. The bird fed in the shallow waters of the lake until the next day when it was last seen. Although the species has shown a tendency to wander inland (please see records below), its presence in Atlanta may have been influenced by Hurricane Erin which was affecting the weather in the southeast a week before.

Although the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) lists the species as accidental in inland Georgia, it does list six inland records through 1986. Two other inland records have been published in *The Oriole* since then. One bird was seen in Burke County on 29 July 1988 (*Oriole* 53:26-27) and in the Augusta area on 24 Oct. 1992 (*Oriole* 58:28).

Jim Wilson, 2726 Parkview Dr., Atlanta, GA 30345.

**THREE RUDDY TURNSTONES IN THE ATLANTA AREA** - On 18 May 1995, I got a call from Brock Hutchins that he had seen eight Stilt Sandpipers (*Calidris himantopus*) earlier that day at the E.L. Huie, Jr., Land Application Facility south of Jonesboro, Clayton County, as well as several other species of shorebirds.

I arrived at the Huie ponds the following morning at about 0800 but did not find the Stilt Sandpipers in the northeastern pond (Pond B) where Brock said he saw them. After studying the one hundred or so sandpipers in Pond B carefully and not finding any Stilt Sandpipers I scoured the other four ponds looking for them or whatever else I might find. Finding nothing unusual except a lingering Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*), I returned to Pond B and with my 8X42 binoculars and 25X telescope examined once again the large flock of shorebirds, mostly Least Sandpipers (*C. minutilla*) and Semipalmated Sandpipers (*C. pusilla*).

This time around I found six Stilt Sandpipers among the peeps on the mudflats of the mostly drained pond. Shortly after that, Pierre Howard, whom I had called about the Stilt Sandpipers, drove up. Together with our telescopes we went through the flock examining each bird. After I had counted about 25 White-rumped Sandpipers (*C. fuscicollis*), 55 or so Semipalmated Sandpipers, 40-45 Least Sandpipers, one Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), two Solitary Sandpipers (*Tringa solitaria*), I slowed to examine what turned out to be a Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. melanotos*), the first in several weeks here.

While I was looking at this bird, to my utter amazement, a Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) flew into my scope's field of vision and

landed a few feet from the Pectoral Sandpiper. There was no mistaking the identification. The bird was the most beautiful Ruddy Turnstone I had ever seen even though I have seen many on the coast. Surely, I had simply failed to study them at this time of year on the coast for only now did I really notice that, in addition to the bright rufous reds and blacks that the bird presents, the white crown was crossed lengthwise with a fine zig-zag striation of black lines.

Later that day, I called my wife, Carol Lambert, to tell her about the sighting and suggested she stop by the ponds after work. I was amazed for the second time that day when she got home and told me she saw not one but three Ruddy Turnstones on Pond B at about 1520.

This sighting of Ruddy Turnstones was only the fifth in the Atlanta area and the first involving more than one bird. In "Birds of the Atlanta Area", Patrick Brisse states that this species is accidental in the Atlanta area and notes only one report, that of a bird seen on 30 July 1971 (*Oriole* 46:30). Subsequent Atlanta area records are: one bird at Cartersville on 11 Sept. 1983; one at E.L. Huie on 18-19 May 1985; and one in Forsyth County on 3 Oct. 1992 (Patrick Brisse, pers. comm.). The *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) states that this species is accidental in the interior of Georgia in the spring and lists a sighting in Augusta on 13 May 1958, a sighting in Whitfield County on 15 May 1983 and the previously mentioned 1985 sighting in the Atlanta area.

Jeff Sewell, 4608 Westhampton Dr., Tucker, GA 30084.

#### OVER ONE THOUSAND RED KNOTS AT CUMBERLAND ISLAND

- On 4 April 1995 at 1510 while birding Cumberland Island, Camden County, I found approximately 1,260 Red Knots (*Calidris canutus*). I found this large concentration of knots on the beach one half mile north of the jetty at Cumberland Island's south tip. The knots were in four flocks, the largest totalling 515 birds, in a quarter mile stretch of the beach. Most of the knots had some form of their alternate plumage, the brick red breast. The weather was in the 70's and 80's F and it was sunny in the afternoon.

Large numbers of Red Knots were seen elsewhere in Georgia this winter. Some of the high counts of last winter include the following: 600 by Jeff Sewell at Jekyll Island's South Beach on 2 Dec. 1994; 708 on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 17 Dec. 1994 and 434 on the Glynn County CBC on 31 Dec. 1994. Haney et al. (1986) list the Red Knot as a common spring transient on the Georgia coast, uncommon in winter.



In Florida, Red Knots are a fairly common to abundant transient, and an uncommon to locally abundant winter visitor, primarily on the peninsular Gulf Coast, population ca. 10,000 (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). High counts for South Carolina include the following: 690 in the Litchfield-Pawley's Island area on 30 Dec. 1981, 2,030 in the Awendaw/Cape Romain area on 7 May 1979 (Post and Gauthreaux 1989) and more recently, 3,100 at March Island, Bull Bay, 15-18 Sept. 1988 and 1,500 at Seabrook Island, on 9 March 1991 (McNair and Post 1993).

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Paul Johnson, 901 Santa Fe Trail, Macon, GA 31220.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES IN SOUTHWEST GEORGIA - On 18 February 1995, while at a public event at Moody Air Force Base in Lowndes County, Georgia, I saw a pair of Eurasian Collared-Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*); I also heard one of them calling. I saw one perched on a wire near the base control tower, and saw another fly from a nearby young pine and land adjacent to the other on the wire.

The birds had a distinctive look, a seemingly uniform pale gray (from 40 m away), with a longish tail. The call was very distinct and different from other pigeons and doves in the area; I had just heard a tape recording of one a week before. I did not have binoculars with me when I saw them, so I never got a really detailed look.

On 2 July 1995, I saw another pair at a shopping center in Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia. One flew about the parking lot several times, allowing me to observe the distinctive, accipiter-like, long blunt tail. Another was perched on a wire and I was able to see it from below through a 20X telescope. I saw the black collar, the white patch on the underside of the distal end of the tail, and the gray undertail coverts. Subsequently, the species has become well established at this and at least two other sites in Thomasville.

This species has recently been reported from various sites in Georgia south of the fall line and on the coast (Hodges 1993, Moore 1993, 1994, Sewell 1994). Hodges (1993) pointed out that details for the first specimen for Georgia (LeGrand 1988) have not been published. I recently examined this specimen and can provide these data: Tall Timbers Research Station # 3810, female, collected 2.5 miles NW of Whigham, in Grady County, Georgia on 9 January 1988, by James M. Cox, who was hunting Mourning Doves (*Zenaida macroura*); apparently more than one collared-dove was present at the time. The bird was given to the late Roy Komarek, a Tall Timbers official, who prepared the specimen.

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Robert L. Crawford, 208 Junius St., Thomasville, GA 31792.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL HEARD IN NE GEORGIA - On 26 April 1995 at about 1030 I was returning to Sky Valley, Rabun County, GA after doing some birding in the nearby extreme western edge of South Carolina. Having recorded Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*) the same morning in South Carolina, and needing the same species for my Georgia list, I had stopped at a likely looking spot to attempt to hear or observe this species.

The location of the spot was as follows: From Dillard, GA on US highways 441 and 23, go east on GA highway 246 several miles and pass the Sky Valley City Hall. About a mile past the city hall, turn right at a Sinclair station on Old Mud Creek Road. This road, which begins in North Carolina, crosses the GA state line and the same road is labeled Bald Mt. Road. Approximately one hundred m past the yellow caution sign (indicating a curve in the road to the right) on the left side of the road up a bank was the spot where I recorded the following observation.

After parking the car and listening to various bird notes and calls, I heard two series of whistles. Each series consisted of six to eight notes each, all on the same pitch. I realized I had just heard the call of the Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*). My experience with this



species had been in TN and NC on Roan Mt. and along the road to Clingman's Dome near Indian Gap respectively. However, most of my experience with this species had been in 1994 when I spent twenty-five percent of the year working in Alaska and especially owling in the Juneau area.

The "Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds" (Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) lists the Northern Saw-whet Owl as a rare winter visitor north of the fall line and on the coast, with extreme dates of 14 Oct. (1952) to 14 Mar (1948). Thus, this auditory record expands the late date in the spring by more than a month. I was quite surprised to hear this species on this spring date, but also at the time of day. My Juneau experience had been mostly calling birds in the thirty to forty-five minutes after dawn. However, I had not tried to record this species in midmorning in Alaska. With Northern Saw-whet Owls occupying nest boxes on Roan Mt. in TN, one has to wonder if this species also nests in the north GA mountains. Attempts to hear this bird later the same week on two other visits were unsuccessful. Nesting bird or late migrant? For now, we'll have to wonder.

David C. Chaffin, 1606 Everhart Drive, NW, Cleveland, TN 37311-1523.

**POSSIBLE BREEDING BY RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH AND GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET IN GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA** - Donna and Dennis Forsythe on 18 June 1995 saw a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*) and a singing male Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) at Burrell's Ford, Chattooga River, Chattahoochee National Forest in Rabun County, Georgia. They also saw a Red-breasted Nuthatch just across the Chattooga River in South Carolina, and observed Golden-crowned Kinglets feeding fledglings at the Walhalla Fish Hatchery, 2.4 km east of the Chattooga River in South Carolina. The hatchery is located 4.4 km northeast of Burrell's Ford, at the eastern boundary of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area, Sumter National Forest, Oconee County, SC.

On 1 September 1995 Mark Oberle visited the Burrell's Ford site and played tapes of both species in hopes of confirming the persistent presence of these species. After playing the tapes for a quarter mile west of the river along FS 646, Oberle heard a distant nuthatch replying to the tape. The bird was calling from a tree uphill (north) and perpendicular to the road from a square concrete road drain 100 m west of the Chattooga River bridge.

The male nuthatch was calling rapidly from the end of a 1 m long dead pine branch about 10 m above ground level. It called from the same perch persistently for 5 minutes then began foraging higher in the canopy.

Oberle then played a recording of a Red-breasted Nuthatch briefly. The bird quickly circled him at multiple levels of the canopy and then began calling persistently for ten minutes. At first it called at a rate of 130 notes per minute, but after a few minutes it called at a rate of 370 notes per minute. At one point when the male was high in the canopy, a second bird may have called briefly from farther downhill, but that could have been a distortion of the sound from the male.

The Burrell's Ford site is at 650 m elevation. The forest canopy at this site consisted of mostly Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*: some trees were 58 cm diameter at breast height), with some White Oak (*Quercus alba*) and Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus*). Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) composed an intermittent lower canopy. Isolated tall Rhododendron sp. and hemlock (*Tsuga* sp.) were in the understory. The ground cover was extensive blueberry/huckleberry (*Vaccinium* sp.).

Other bird species present on 1 September were Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) and American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). While making a recording of the nuthatch, Oberle heard a Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), fly up the river. Dr. Thomas Hahn of Johns Hopkins University reviewed the tape and agreed that the crossbill was call type 1 (Groth 1993) which is one of the two Red Crossbill call types documented to occur in the Southern Appalachians (Groth 1993).

Neither the Golden-crowned Kinglet nor the Red-breasted Nuthatch were observed nesting at the Burrell's Ford site. However, the previous late date for Golden-crowned Kinglet in Georgia is 26 April (Haney, et al. 1986), and kinglets departed from Georgia earlier than usual in the spring of 1995. Likewise the previous published late date for Red-breasted Nuthatch was 14 May and the earliest fall sighting was 8 September (Haney, et al. 1986). These historical extreme dates suggest that the 1995 birds at Burrell's Ford may well have attempted to breed in mature White Pine forests along the Chattooga River just a few km south of the North Carolina state line.

Golden-crowned Kinglets have been found during the breeding season in South Carolina at the Walhalla Fish Hatchery (770 m elevation), 2.4 km east of the state line prior to the Forsythes' observation of fledglings in 1995. The species is described as a casual breeder there: two birds were seen during the breeding season there on 26 May 1986, and one bird was carrying food on 12 June 1986 (Post, et al. 1989).

Red-breasted Nuthatches may also have bred at the Walhalla Hatchery in South Carolina. There are two previous summer reports there: 10 June 1910 and 26 May 1986 (two birds). One of the two seen 26 May 1986 at Walhalla was inspecting cavities (Post, et al. 1989). Of additional interest in Georgia was a late sighting of a female Red-breasted Nuthatch at the summit of Rabun Bald, by Bill Blakeslee and Billy



Dunbar on 11 June 1995, just one week earlier than the sighting at Burrell's Ford. Also, unpublished reports of Red-breasted Nuthatch near Panther Creek in northeastern Habersham County in the early 1970's may be relevant to the 1995 observation (Frank McCamey, pers. comm.).

Both the kinglet and nuthatch species typically nest at high elevation in the spruce/fir forests of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. This forest is threatened by the exotic Homopteran insect, *Adelges piceae* (Simpson), but the impact on these two avian species is poorly documented. Both species also nest regularly in mature White Pine forests as far south as the 1,160 m elevation east of Highlands, NC, 10 km northwest up the Chattooga River from this site (Potter et al. 1980; Simpson 1992). In addition, Red-breasted Nuthatches have occasionally made extralimital breeding attempts in the piedmont, e.g. in Rockingham County, NC (Potter, et al. 1980). Extralimital breeding of this species often occurs after winter irruption, but the winter of 1994-95 saw few Red-breasted Nuthatch reports in Georgia.

It is possible that these nuthatch and kinglet species may have been present in the breeding season in Rabun County, but missed by earlier observers (Burleigh 1958). However, it is more likely that, as the mixed coniferous and deciduous forests of the region have matured, these species have colonized more mature forest areas. In northern states such as Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania, Golden-crowned Kinglets have expanded their range into maturing second-growth coniferous forests far removed from their recent breeding range (Hall 1992; Andrie 1971; Browning 1992).

Although the Burrell's Ford site in Georgia is 510 m lower than the established Highlands, NC breeding site for these species, the forest type is quite consistent with the habitat there. No nests were found at Burrell's Ford in 1995, and the two species' presence may represent a nonbreeding occurrence outside of the normal breeding range rather than a breeding range extension. However, attempts should be made to search for nesting evidence near Burrell's Ford and in the adjacent Ellicott Rock Wilderness area between Burrell's Ford and the North Carolina state line.

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- Mark W. Oberle, 2690 Briarlake Woods Way, Atlanta, GA 30345 and Dennis M. Forsythe, Department of Biology, The Citadel, 171 Moultrie St., Charleston, SC 29409.
- DARK-EYED JUNCO ON JEKYLL ISLAND IN MID-MAY** - During the course of our coverage of Jekyll Island, Glynn County, Georgia for the North American Migration Count on 13 May 1995, we were surprised to find a Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*).
- Our group consisted of Keith Tassin, my husband Don and myself. We were at the SW corner of the parking lot of the water slide park scoping the extensive mudflats at the site of the silted-up, never-completed marina. As Keith and Don continued counting shorebirds, I walked away a bit to admire a brilliantly blooming lantana (*Lantana camara*). To my astonishment, a lone junco hopped from the bush onto the ground in clear view about 3 m from me. I quietly called to Keith and Don to come and verify my sighting. They agreed on the bird's identity, no question. Temperature was in the mid 80's, sky was clear. Time of the sighting was near 1500.
- Haney, J.C., et al. (*Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) state the species is a common to abundant winter resident throughout most of the state, late date of 3 May, more erratic in the southern part of the state. From my personal observations and records since late 1989, this species' status along the coast would best be described as scarce. Though found on most Glynn County Christmas Bird Counts, the numbers are small.
- Doris Cohrs, P.O. Box 1908, Darien, GA 31305.



**FEMALE WESTERN Tanager IN NORTH ATLANTA** - On 16 April 1995 at around 1300, I noticed an olive-colored bird drinking at my birdbath about 20 m from my window at my home located in Buckhead in north Atlanta, Fulton County. I keep a pair of 10X40 binoculars on a table by this window for just such occasions. I observed this bird in the birdbath and preening on a dogwood limb above the birdbath for around ten minutes. The bird drank again from the birdbath before flying off. It was not seen again. The weather was sunny and warm and no significant weather fronts preceeded this visit.

The bird was definitely a female tanager by bill shape, size and slow movement. The distinctive feature that immediately caught my attention was the two wingbars. The top wingbar was noticeably more yellowish and a little wider than the lower one. The rump area was also yellowish in contrast with a darker back. I am familiar with female Summer (*Piranga rubra*) and Scarlet (*P. olivacea*) tanagers as they also visit the bath on occasion. I then referred to entries in my copy of Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* (R.T. Peterson, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1980). All of the descriptions pointed to the Western Tanager (*P. ludoviciana*). The guides mention that fall juvenile Scarlet Tanagers may exhibit wingbars, but because of the time of year, this is very unlikely.

Haney, et al. (*Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, 1986) list the Western Tanager as accidental or rare visitor in fall, winter and spring in Grady County 11 Nov 1954, Warner Robbins 24 Dec 1955-18 Mar 1956, Thomasville 24 Oct (1972)-25 Apr (1974), Atlanta 24 Apr 1976, Dalton 16-25 Sept 1976, in the Cohutta Mountains 17-18 Jul 1978, Americus 7 Apr-10 May 1985.

Carl Miller, 391 Herrington Dr., NE, Atlanta, GA 30342.

## FROM THE FIELD

December 1994 - February 1995

The warm fall continued into winter and was no doubt responsible for the many species that lingered or over-wintered in the state, as you will note frequently in the account below. On the other hand, winter finches were hard to find and many observers reported not seeing even one all winter. Oddly though, we seemed to get a fair share of several cold hardy species that would not be expected in such a warm winter. Wintering hummingbirds kept many folks focused on their feeders as record numbers of the little blurs visited feeders all over the state including Georgia's second Broad-tailed Hummingbird. The seasonal highlight for me, though, was the Vermilion Flycatcher in Albany, a first state record for me and the many birders statewide who trekked to see it.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10, ASWMA - Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area at Darien, CBC - Christmas Bird Count, CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cobb Co., ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, OAS - Ocmulgee Audubon Society, and SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park near Douglasville, and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**RED-THROATED LOON** - The only reports during the period were: six seen on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 17 Dec. (Emil Urban), two at Tybee Island on 29 Jan. (Giff Beaton) and one off Tybee Island on 4 Feb. (Mark Welford).

**HORNED GREBE** - Perhaps because of the unusually warm winter this species was seen in lower than normal numbers on inland lakes. The best count was 22 on the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC on 19 Dec. (Terry Johnson) but most other counts were in single digits.

**EARED GREBE** - Continuing a strong fall showing, this species was found three times during the period: two were seen on the 19 Dec. Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC (Terry Johnson); on 29 Dec. Jerry Payne saw one at Plant Scherer, Monroe County; and the OAS spotted one on 18 Feb. at the Rum Creek WMA, Monroe Co.

**NORTHERN GANNET** - Perhaps the abnormally warm winter caused the low numbers of this species also. The high count was 13 on the St. Catherines CBC on 17 Dec.

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - The flock of approximately 40, first seen in the fall, remained all winter at the mouth of the St. Marys River, near Cumberland Island, Camden Co. (m.ob.).



- BROWN PELICAN** - Lake Lanier produced its second Brown Pelican on 12 Feb. when Bill Huff saw one fly past him in Hall Co. This is only about the 8th inland record for the state.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** - A huge count, 315, was tallied on the Macon CBC on 17 Dec. (Jerry Amerson).
- ANHINGA** - Wintering birds were counted on two CBCs, Augusta had six on 28 Dec. (Anne and Vernon Waters), Macon had nine on 17 Dec. (Ty Ivey). Another winterer was one seen at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett).
- AMERICAN BITTERN** - This species can be very difficult to find so four reports this period was an excellent showing. Single birds were found at the Altamaha SWMA where Malcolm Hodges had one in Dec., on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 30 Dec. and at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett). A new location for wintering birds was the Grand Bay WMA near Valdosta where Brad Bergstrom located three in late Feb.
- LEAST BITTERN** - Also in Grand Bay WMA were two Least Bitterns spotted on 26 Feb. by Brad Bergstrom.
- REDDISH EGRET** - One of the several Reddish Egrets from the fall period lingered at Jekyll Island where it was seen on the Glynn Co. CBC on 31 Dec. by Nancy Gobris (first record for the count).
- CATTLE EGRET** - Interesting winter sightings of this species were of one on 18 Dec. in coastal Liberty Co. (Anne and Vernon Waters), 12 seen in Crisp Co. on 30 Dec. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert) and even more interesting, two seen in Macon on 19 Feb. (Paul Johnson).
- GREEN HERON** - A rare wintering bird was seen in Albany CBC on 17 Dec. (fide Alan Ashley).
- BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - High counts received were of 41 on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 30 Dec. and 56 seen by Malcolm Hodges in McIntosh Co. during his regular surveys. Anne and Vernon Waters report that 14 spent the winter at Merry Bros. Ponds in Augusta.
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - As usual a few over-wintered on the coast. The St. Catherines Island CBC found one on 17 Dec., at the Harris Neck NWR CBC one was seen on 30 Dec. and nine were tallied on the Glynn Co. CBC on 31 Dec. Mark Welford had two at Youman's Pond, Liberty Co., on 15 Jan.
- WHITE IBIS** - The Albany CBC had 68 on 17 Dec. which was the highest inland count received.
- GLOSSY IBIS** - A few of this species are apparently beginning to winter on the coast. The Harris Neck NWR CBC counted 18 on 30 Dec. and Malcolm Hodges said five or so wintered at the ASWMA.
- WOOD STORK** - Eighty-nine were counted on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 17 Dec. which was the highest count received for the period.
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - Establishing a first county record were the two seen on 20 Feb. in northern Greene Co. by Paul Sykes for our only winter report of this rare vagrant.
- SNOW GOOSE** - There were too many reports received to list separately but the high count came from the Glynn Co. CBC on 31 Dec. when ten were seen on Jekyll Island (Nancy Gobris).

- GREEN-WINGED TEAL** - A few can usually be found in the piedmont during the winter. The most interesting sighting was of 25 on 24 Dec. at a marsh in Greene County, the most yet seen there (Paul Sykes).
- AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** - Rare for the area were the two seen on 24 Dec. in northern Greene County by Paul Sykes and one female seen first on 8 Dec. along the Chattahoochee River near the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Cobb Co., that remained in the area through January (Chuck Saleeby). Five were counted on the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC on 19 Dec. (fide Terry Johnson).
- NORTHERN PINTAIL** - The high count inland was of 16 on 21 Feb. in northern Greene Co. (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell).
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen saw a male in eclipse plumage on 11 Jan. on the Chattahoochee River in Cobb Co.
- NORTHERN SHOVELER** - Ten birds which appeared at the ELHLAF back in Aug. remained there well into Dec. (Carol Lambert).
- GADWALL** - Anne and Vernon Waters saw 30 at the brickyard ponds, Augusta, on 22 Feb., a very good number there.
- AMERICAN WIGEON** - A flock of about 25, first seen on 20 Feb. in Greene Co., remained there several days (Paul Sykes).
- CANVASBACK** - As usual a few were seen in north Georgia this winter. On 3 Dec. singles were seen at the ELHLAF and at the Griffin Reservoir (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell, Brock Hutchins). Nelson Dobbs found two at Garden Lake, Floyd Co., on 7 Dec., a female spent several days at the ELHLAF beginning on 30 Dec. (Jeff Sewell). The best count of nine on 28 Jan. came from the Macon brickyard ponds (Ty Ivey).
- REDHEAD** - Despite the warm weather, this species was reported in fairly good numbers with the high count of 43 seen on 18 Feb. on a field trip to Rum Creek WMA by the OAS.
- RING-NECKED DUCK** - The Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC tallied an impressive 2406 on 19 Dec. for the highest count received.
- GREATER SCAUP** - Though it was thought that many species were absent from the state this winter due to the record warmth, ducks, including this species, were well reported. Amazing was a count of 500 off Jekyll Island on 17 Jan. by Malcolm Hodges who boldly asserts he looked at every one. No less astounding were 60 seen inland, in Putnam Co., on 26 Feb. by Nancy and Ren Gobris and Jerry and Marie Amerson.
- LESSER SCAUP** - The Rum Creek area came through with the high count, 111 seen on the 19 Dec. Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC.
- OLDSQUAW** - The only report was of a female in Monroe Co. on 19 Dec. on the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC (Todd Schneider).
- SURF SCOTER** - The only inland report was of one seen for one day on 1 Dec. at the ELHLAF (Brock Hutchins). The Glynn Co. CBC had a very good count of 30 on 31 Dec. (fide Elaine Young).
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - The St. Catherines Island CBC produced eight on 17 Dec. and on 14 Jan. Billy and Brenda Dunbar saw 30 off Jekyll Island.
- COMMON GOLDENEYE** - Of the pair first seen on 17 Dec. at Lake Kendron, Fayette Co. (fide Chris Lambrecht), the female remained until 15 Jan. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). A male was seen on 26 Dec. at Lake Lanier, Hall Co. (Patrick Brisse, Jeff Sewell). Billy and Brenda Dunbar had three at Rock Eagle 4-H Center, Putnam Co. on 7 Jan. Beginning



on 28 Jan., a pair was seen at the Smith Reservoir, Clayton Co. (Brock Hutchins). On 31 Jan. only a female was seen (Pierre Howard) but was joined by another female on 8 Feb. (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell). Susan Brunig saw a male at Murphy Candler Lake, DeKalb Co., on 30 Jan.

**HOODED MERGANSER** - Again, the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC sent in the high count, 71 on 19 Dec. A flock of 50 on a small farm pond in Henry Co. on 7 Dec. must have been a beautiful sight (Wade Crumbley fide Pierre Howard).

**OSPREY** - A few were seen inland in the piedmont where they are rare in the winter. Jerry Amerson had one on the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC on 19 Dec. and ever rarer, one was seen on 28 Dec. near the Chattahoochee River in Roswell (Chuck Saleeby). The St. Catherines Island CBC tallied a high count of six on 17 Dec.

**BALD EAGLE** - Once again this species was reported widely throughout Georgia from Carter's Lake, Gilmer Co., in the north all the way to the coast. At least four CBCs recorded one or two on their counts: Glynn Co., Harris Neck, Bainbridge/Lake Seminole and Albany. The mid-winter survey by various governmental land management agencies, coordinated by Jim Ozier, reported the sighting of 21 adults, 11 immatures, with 25 active nests statewide, 15 of which were successful in producing 23 young.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** - Paul Johnson reported that as this species has been hard to find this winter, one seen in early Feb. in the Macon area by Dan and Pam Guynn was noteworthy.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - A candidate for most unusual sight of the period was that of 30-40 in a kettle over I-75 near the Atlanta-Fulton Co. stadium on 26 Feb. (Steve Ehly). See *Oriole* 60:5 for details of this unusual sighting.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** - One was seen at the usual place, Pigeon Mt., near the hack site, Walker Co. on 24 Jan. (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen).

**MERLIN** - The only reports were one on the 17 Dec. St. Catherines Island CBC, one in Greene Co. on 24 Dec. (Paul Sykes) and two on the Glynn Co. CBC on 31 Dec. (fide Elaine Young).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - Sightings in downtown Atlanta during the period suggested at least one wintered (Chris Geller, Hunter Patterson). In Forsyth Co. on 24 Dec. another was seen (Jack Carusos, John Paget).

**WILD TURKEY** - Of the several reports received, the most interesting one was of three birds seen on 18 Jan. in a most unlikely location, heavily populated east Cobb Co. (Giff Beaton).

**NORTHERN BOBWHITE** - The Blairsville CBC recorded its first for the count on 30 Dec. when two were heard.

**KING RAIL** - On 4 Dec. Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett counted four at the ASWMA. On 28 Dec. Clarence Belger noted two on the Augusta CBC at Merry Bros. Ponds where it is thought the species may be permanent residents (fide Anne Waters).

**VIRGINIA RAIL** - This species is now being found in winter in small numbers at certain marshes in the piedmont, as well as on the coast. On 3 Dec. Ty Ivey found one in the Macon brickyard ponds, eight were counted on 4 Dec. at the ASWMA (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett) and on 21 Jan., Paul Sykes tallied three at a marsh in northern Greene County.

**SANDHILL CRANE** - Very unusual were southbound flocks still being seen into Jan. Chris Geller had three flocks totalling 225 birds on 8 Jan. over Smyrna, Cobb Co. Those headed north began on 4 Feb. when seven were seen in Bartow County (Dennis McClure).

**WILSON'S PLOVER** - The ACOGB shows this species as accidental in winter, listing only two previous records, so this winter was quite abnormal. Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett saw six on Jekyll Is. on 4 Dec. Pierre Howard had two there on 24 Feb. beating the ACOGB early date by two days, but amazing was the count of ten on 17 Dec. on the Cumberland Is. CBC (Shiela Willis).

**PIPING PLOVER** - The high count was 19 on 17 Dec. on the St. Catherines Island CBC (fide Hunter Patterson).

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** - The St. Catherines Is. CBC tallied 27 on 17 Dec. for the highest count received.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** - A nice sized flock of 61 was seen on 2 Dec. near Andrews Is., Glynn Co. (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell). As many as 15 were seen off and on through Jan. near Brunswick (Malcolm Hodges).

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** - Interesting inland winter reports were of two on the Albany CBC on 17 Dec. and two on the Augusta CBC on 28 Dec. The ACOGB says the species is rare inland in winter.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** - Perhaps due to unusually warm winter, this species was well reported inland where the Annotated Checklist shows it be accidental. On 28 Dec., the Augusta CBC tallied 15 and on the same day, the Bainbridge CBC counted 21. At the industrial area in Macon, Jerry and Marie Amerson saw one and sometimes two beginning on 5 Feb. The number there peaked on 19 Feb. at 15 (OAS).

**WHIMBREL** - Five seen on Jekyll Is. on the Glynn County CBC on 31 Dec. were a rare sight.

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** - On 15 Jan. Hunter Patterson and Royce Hayes found two on St. Catherines Is. where the species winters regularly.

**MARbled GODWIT** - Two birds which arrived on 25 Nov. at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island, apparently spent the winter there (m.ob.). The best counts came from St. Catherines Island where on the 17 Dec. CBC 88 were counted. On 15 Jan. 40 were seen there by Royce Hayes.

**RED KNOT** - Large numbers of this species were found on the coast this winter. At South Beach, Jekyll Island, Pierre Howard and Jeff Sewell found a flock of about 600 on 2 Dec. of which 400 remained for the Glynn Co. CBC on 31 Dec. (Nancy Gobris). The St. Catherines CBC also saw an unusually high number, 708 on 17 Dec. (fide Emil Urban).

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** - One seen on the Augusta CBC on 28 Dec. was a good sighting as the species is listed in the ACOGB as being accidental during the winter in inland GA.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** - The warm winter may have been the cause of the high number of inland sightings this period, many of which remained to the end of the period. On 3 Dec. Ty Ivey and Paul Johnson saw 35 in Macon, the Augusta CBC counted 26 on 28 Dec. (fide Anne Waters); and 45 were seen over a period of time in a Putnam Co. pond between 7 Jan. and 26 Feb. (Paul Sykes).

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** - This species wintered once again at Tybee Island after being absent last year and was seen by several observers. The high count was five on 13 Feb. (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell).



**DUNLIN** - As this species is considered very rare inland in winter, one that was seen several times between 7 Jan. and 26 Feb. at a pond in Putnam Co. was quite a good find (Paul Sykes, Billy and Brenda Dunbar).

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK** - The Blairsville CBC tallied two on 30 Dec., their first for the count.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** - On 17 Dec. at Cumberland Is. Malcolm Hodges saw not one but three of this species only rarely seen from shore. Mark Welford saw one on 29 Jan. from the beach at Jekyll Island to complete quite a reporting period for this species.

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** - Several good reports were received of wintering Bonaparte's. On 12 Dec 57 were seen in one bay on Lake Lanier in Forsyth County (Jeff Sewell) but the numbers seen in Jan. and Feb. never exceeded 15. At Lake Chapman on 17 Dec., the Athens CBC noted six, a rare appearance for this count. Lake Oconee hosted a wintering flock of at least 30 on 8 Jan. (Chuck Saleeby) and 28 in one location on 7 Jan. (Paul Sykes).

**RING-BILLED GULL** - In one of several paradoxes noted this mild winter, this species was found in unusually high numbers in several inland locations; or perhaps, because of the mild winter, they did not go as far south as usual. A large influx occurred inland in Jan. On 10 Jan. Anne and Vernon Waters saw 1400 at the Augusta landfill, a very high number for this location, then on 22 Jan. a flock of 2000 to 3000 was counted (Mark Oberle, Joel Volpi) at Lake Lanier. Then, the next day, on 23 Jan., 500 were seen on the Chattahoochee River in Fulton County (Chuck Saleeby) and the next day, 24 Jan., 346 were noted at Garden Lake, Rome (Nelson Dobbs). Finally, for Jan., on the 28th, 449 were seen in the Macon Industrial Area (Ty Ivey et al.). All this was a mere prelude, however, to the approximately 12,000 Ring-bills seen from two separate shoreline viewpoints on Lake Lanier (one flock of 10,000, the other of 2,000) on 18 Feb. by Jeff Sewell.

**HERRING GULL** - The day after the huge flock of Ring-bills were seen, a good count of 20 of this species was counted by boat on Lake Lanier. This was on 19 Feb. (Jeff Sewell, Russ Wigh, Patrick Brisse).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** - We have come to expect this European vagrant in the fall, and now, in the winter, too. The high count was three at South Beach, Jekyll Island, on 2 Dec. (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell). At least one was seen there throughout the period (m.ob.). One bird apparently wintered on Tybee Island (m.ob.). Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett saw one on Cumberland Island on 3 Dec., and two were seen at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island on 19 Dec (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). The big find, however, was Georgia's third inland sighting on Lake Lanier, Forsyth County, on 19 Feb. (Patrick Brisse, Russ Wigh and Jeff Sewell) of a winter plumaged bird. When you report this species, please try to determine its age so we can get a better idea of the frequency and movements of sub-adults in North America.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** - What a winter for this species! No fewer than six sightings were received, although, some sightings could involve the same bird. On 31 Dec., Les Davenport and Milton Hopkins saw a first winter bird on Sapelo Is. On 12 Jan., a first winter bird was seen at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Is. (Lydia Thompson). Another, also a first winter bird, was seen not far away on Jekyll Island on 25 Jan. (Lorraine

Dusenbury). No less an observer than Roger Tory Peterson reported a second winter bird at Jekyll Island on 11 Feb. at DNR's Weekend for Wildlife, and back at Gould's Inlet on 25 Feb., Paul Sykes, Billy and Brenda Dunbar spotted a first winter bird. But, the best find was the first winter bird seen on Lake Lanier on 18 Jan. by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen, this being only the second Atlanta area record. Please see *Oriole* 60:5-6 for more details of this sighting.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** - This is another gull species that is slowly increasing on our shores. On 3 Dec. Pierre Howard and Jeff Sewell saw nine at Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Is. and three at South Beach, Jekyll Is. The St. Catherine's CBC counted three on 17 Dec. and the Glynn County CBC had eight on 31 Dec. Tybee Is. had one on 13 Feb. (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell), Sapelo Is. hosted one on 19 Feb. (Hunter Patterson) and back at Gould's Inlet, three were seen on 25 Feb. (Paul Sykes, Billy and Brenda Dunbar).

**GULL-BILLED TERN** - Elaine Young noted that the one seen on the Glynn County CBC on 31 Dec. was quite rare for the winter period.

**CASPIAN TERN** - The St. Catherine's Is. CBC counted 10 on 17 Dec. and on 31 Dec. the Glynn Co. CBC tallied four, good counts for the winter.

**SANDWICH TERN** - As the ACOGB lists this species as accidental in winter, the following sightings are very interesting: 27 on 2 Dec. at South Beach, Jekyll Island (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell) and three at the same location on 11 Dec. (Carol Eldridge).

**FORSTER'S TERN** - Noted as accidental in winter in the interior by the ACOGB, these sightings were quite good: one at Carter's Lake, Gilmer Co. on 2 Dec. (Giff Beaton, Bill Blakeslee); one on the Thomasville CBC on 30 Dec. (fide Bobby Crawford); five at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett) and three on 29 Jan. at Lake Tobesofkee, near Macon (Paul Johnson).

**LEAST TERN** - This species is considered to be a summer breeder and is usually gone by Sept., so a sighting of one at Jekyll Island on 11 Dec. would be quite remarkable (Carol Eldridge). This observation, it is hoped, will be documented in *The Oriole*.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** - Although first seen in Brunswick in 1992, it was not until this year that this foreign invader was counted on the Glynn Co. CBC. On 31 Dec. 31 were tallied in their most reliable location. Elsewhere they were noted in two new locations: on 13 Dec. Bob Manns saw two in Early Co. and in Feb., two were seen in the Valdosta area (Bobby Crawford).

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** - The 13 seen on the 17 Dec. Albany CBC was the best count received. There is concern that this species is declining in numbers, especially along the coast.

**LONG-EARED OWL** - No contest for the best owl award: on 13 Jan. DNR personnel brought a wounded Long-eared Owl found in the Enigma area, Berrien County, to Jay Whitesell, a raptor rehabilitator (fide Barbara Passmore). Sadly, the bird died the next day. It is hoped this record will be documented in *The Oriole*. The most recent report of this species was a bird found in the Smyrna area on 1 Nov. 1987.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** - Apparently no one had checked the A&B farms area in Sumter County recently for this species. Three seen by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert in the pre-dawn darkness of 31 Dec. Returning to the



same area on 2 Feb., two were found just before and after dark (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell, Cole Woodruff).

**HUMMINGBIRDS** - This winter saw the most wintering hummers ever. Bob and Martha Sargent said they received 50 reports beginning in mid-Nov. Almost all were Rufous, although Bob and Martha were not able to band them all. One bird in Thomasville, and one in Fitzgerald were thought to be Black-chins (Bob Sargent) as was one in Brunswick (Malcolm Hodges). Another Brunswick bird was thought to be an Allen's but the Sargents weren't able to capture it. I want to thank GOS member Richard Cole for his help in keeping the birding community posted on our wintering hummers.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** - Georgia's second Broad-tailed appeared at a feeder on 27 Nov. in Kennesaw, Cobb County, and was banded by the Sargents on 3 Dec. and stayed until 3 Jan. (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett).

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** - The first record of this species in many years, a beautiful male, was found on the Albany CBC on 17 Dec. The bird remained in the area through the end of the period and was seen by a number of observers. Please see *Oriole* 60:6-8 for details of this sighting.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** - No less than two were found this winter. Oscar Dewberry discovered one on the Bainbridge CBC on 27 Dec. and one was found on St. Simons Island on 19 Feb. (Denny and Pam McClure) that stayed at least through 25 Feb. (Paul Sykes).

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** - A very early Eastern Kingbird was seen by Billy and Brenda Dunbar on 26 Feb. at the same farm near Albany that hosted the Vermilion Flycatcher. The earliest date in the ACOGB is 23 March.

**HORNED LARK** - The Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Henry Co., again hosted wintering larks throughout the period, the peak count being 50+ birds seen on 28 Jan. (Joe Greenberg). Lookout Mt., Walker Co., always reliable, hosted at least 50: Giff Beaton on 8 Jan. and Chuck and Sylvia Saleeby on 29 Jan. At the Super Sod Farm in Peach Co., 13 were seen on 1 Jan. (Jim and Joyce Harrison). The high count came from Bartow Co. where on 8 Jan. Lanny Henson counted 100.

**PURPLE MARTIN** - Very early, but not record early, was the male that returned to a regular nesting site near Eastman on 3 Feb. (Donny Screws). The early spring arrival date in the Annotated Checklist is 19 Jan. During the last week of Feb., sightings came in from St. Simons Is. (25 Feb., one male, Paul Sykes) to Jasper in the mountains (26 Feb., two, Bill Bouthillier).

**FISH CROW** - This species is rare in the interior of the state during the winter. A few were found in the Atlanta area during the period (e.g., three at Stone Mt. on 20 Feb. by Carol Lambert, three in Athens on the 17 Dec. CBC), but truly unusual were the 45 tallied on the Piedmont NWR-Rum Creek WMA CBC on 19 Dec., the first time this species has been seen on this count (Terry Johnson).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - After the invasion of last winter, numbers returned to normal, that is, very few and all in north Georgia. Singles found were at Berry College on 7 Dec. (Jack Carusos), at Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co., on 20 Dec. (Pierre Howard), and on Pigeon Mt., Walker Co., on 8 Jan. (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell). Only Chuck and Sylvia Saleeby spotted more than one when, on 29 Jan., they had two at Cloudland Canyon SP, Dade Co.

**WINTER WREN** - One seen on the St. Catherines Is. CBC on 17 Dec. was a good find for that location (Anne Waters).

**SEDGE WREN** - The Thomasville CBC had an all time high count of 14 on 30 Dec., an excellent inland count (fide Bobby Crawford). In fact, this number exceeded the high count from the coast of 10, on the St. Catherines Is. CBC on 17 Dec. (fide Emil Urban).

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** - Another indicator of a mild winter were the numerous sightings of this species around the state especially inland. One was seen in Tucker on 1 Dec. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert), one in Fernbank Forest on 12 Jan. (Georgann Schmalz), two at Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Putnam Co. on 17 Jan. (Billy and Brenda Dunbar) and two at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett).

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** - A count of 428 on the Marietta CBC on 18 Dec. was good for that count (fide Terry Moore).

**WATER PIPIT** - Several large flocks were noted this winter. On 17 Dec., 78 were counted in Bibb County (Jerry and Marie Amerson), approximately 100 were seen on 28 Jan. at the Atlanta Motor Speedway, Henry County, a place where they may reliably be found (Joe Greenberg), and on 20 Feb. Paul Sykes saw 80 in Greene County.

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** - Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell found one on Lookout Mt., Walker County, on 8 Jan. The species is rare in the mountains.

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** - The ACOGB lists this species as accidental in winter in the piedmont so the following sightings are perhaps another indicator of a mild winter: the Athens CBC on 17 Dec. recorded its first for the count (fide Billy Dunbar); on the same day three were seen on the Macon CBC (fide Jerry Amerson); the next day, 18 Dec., one was seen on the Callaway Gardens CBC (fide LuAnn Craighton); the Augusta CBC also had one on 28 Dec.; at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. one was found (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett); and one came to the feeder of Ken Clark in Macon in Feb.

**SOLITARY VIREO** - Two found on the Harris Neck CBC on 30 Dec. were interesting for the count (fide Patricia Metz).

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** - Perhaps due to the very mild winter, two unusual reports of wintering warblers were received. B.B. Sams of Social Circle noticed a Tennessee Warbler feeding from his hummingbird feeder on 24 Dec. He took photographs and we hope he will write this up for *The Oriole*. The bird was last seen in late March and is only the third winter record.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** - The following reports were received: one in Bibb County on 17 Dec. (Jerry and Marie Amerson); three the same day on the Albany CBC (fide Alan Ashley); three on 18 Dec. on the Marietta CBC (fide Terry Moore); and four at the Eufaula NWR on 28 Jan. (Terry Moore, Hugh Garrett).

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** - A good find for the date and location was one seen in Augusta on 6 Jan. (Anne and Vernon Waters).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** - Rarer still was a Prairie seen in Dawson County on 14 Dec. (Jeff Sewell, Jack Carusos). This bird could have been a very late migrant but more probably a winterer.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** - The Athens CBC had its first, one bird, on 17 Dec. (fide Billy Dunbar). Also, other inland reports came from the



- Rum Creek WMA CBC on 19 Dec. (one bird, fide Terry Johnson) and two were seen on the Augusta CBC on 28 Dec. (Anne Waters).
- AMERICAN REDSTART - Even rarer than the Tennessee Warbler was the first Georgia wintering record of this species first seen on 18 Jan. by Nancy Iha in Marietta. Please see *Oriole* 60:8 for details of this observation.
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT - On 1 Jan., Paul Sykes found five in the Greene County marsh, a good number for winter.
- WILSON'S WARBLER - Almost every winter this species turns up somewhere. This year it was in Thomasville on the CBC on 30 Dec. (fide Bobby Crawford).
- WESTERN TANAGER - B.B. Sams of Social Circle who had the above mentioned Tennessee Warbler also called to describe what he thought was this species that came to his feeder for one day in Jan.
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK - A first year male was first seen at the feeder of Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Willard of Perry on 14 Jan. For details of this observation please see *Oriole* 60:8-10. This is Georgia's first sighting since 1973!
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW - The only one reported was one seen on 17 Jan. in Thomas County (Pierre Howard).
- LARK SPARROW - The only one reported for the period was a bird near Athens about 10 Dec. (Cam Kepler fide Paul Sykes).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - This rare winter resident was seen twice in McIntosh Co. On 4 Dec. Malcolm Hodges and Doris Cohrs saw two and on 2 Jan. three were in a different location.
- HENSLOW'S SPARROW - Many observers visited Paulk's Pasture WMA in Glynn County to look for this species and other hard-to-find winter sparrows. First reported in Nov. and then several times in Dec., the high count was six on 1 Jan. (Malcolm Hodges, Nancy Gobris). On St. Catherines Island, one was found on 16 Dec. at the north end of the island (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell), and the next day on the CBC, two were seen near the island's south end.
- LECONTE'S SPARROW - Paulk's Pasture WMA, Glynn County, also hosted this rare winterer for three days in early Dec. On 2 Dec., two were seen by Jeff Sewell and Pierre Howard. The next day Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett saw three to five and on 4 Dec., Nelson Dobbs saw two.
- SHARP-TAILED SPARROW - Good counts were noted on the St. Catherines Is. CBC (89 on 17 Dec.) and the Glynn Co. CBC (63 on 31 Dec.).
- SEASIDE SPARROW - An exceptional number (638) of this species was seen on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 17 Dec. (fide Emil Urban). A very high tide concentrated the birds in grasses on the inland side of the island. One flock was estimated to have 250-300 birds including many birds of the subspecies from farther north (William Dopson).
- FOX SPARROW - Only a few reports outside of CBC's were received. Dawson Forest, in Dawson County, yielded one on 24 Dec. (Jack Carusos, John Paget); Ellery McClintock saw three at Cochran Shoals, CRNRA, on 29 Dec. for the high count, two were found nearby at the Johnson's Ferry section, CRNRA on 11 Feb. (Chuck and Sylvia Saleeby) and one was seen in Walker County on 8 Jan. (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell).
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW - This rare sparrow was reported only once: one bird on the Thomasville CBC on 30 Dec. (fide Bobby Crawford).

- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - This is another hard-to-find winter sparrow, especially after the reliable "sparrow field" at Pendergrass went under concrete and asphalt. One was reported at Carter's Lake on 2 Dec. (Giff Beaton et al.), the Harris Neck NWR had its first ever when two were seen on the CBC on 30 Dec. (fide Pat Metz) and on 18 Jan., Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen saw two near Cumming.
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD - This was a fairly good winter for this species. The Albany CBC counted six on 17 Dec., the Piedmont NWR-Rum Creek WMA on 19 Dec. had 16; at the Harris Neck NWR on 30 Dec. 99 were tallied. A new reliable spot for them, at least new to Atlanta birders, is the Atlanta Motor Speedway near Hampton, Henry County. From the three seen there on 7 Jan. (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell), the flock grew larger (about 50 on 16 Jan. by Pierre Howard) to a large flock of about 250 on 4 Feb. (Joe Greenberg).
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - This rare winter resident was reported in numbers a bit above average. In addition to the regular flock in Laurens County, sightings were made in several widespread locations. Mark Oberle saw three on 12 Dec. in Bleckley County, on 17 Dec. three were seen on the Albany CBC, on 28 Dec. 22 were seen on the Bainbridge CBC and on the same day, one was seen on the Augusta CBC where the species is rarely seen.
- BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - The Thomasville CBC on 30 Dec. recorded an all-time high of 275. The species is a recent arrival in winter to the area (fide Bobby Crawford).
- COMMON GRACKLE - On 16 Jan., Pierre Howard carefully examined a very unusual specimen at the Atlanta Motor Speedway in Henry County. It had a white head, a white eye and some of the secondaries were white.
- NORTHERN ORIOLE - Three were reported this winter, a little above average. The Dublin CBC on 23 Dec. found one, an adult male, and the Augusta CBC had one on 28 Dec. One bird spent several days at a feeder in Perry during Feb. (fide Terry Johnson).
- PURPLE FINCH - Indicative of the very poor year for winter finches, perhaps due to the mild weather, only a few reports of this species were received. The Marietta CBC counted only one on 18 Dec. (fide Terry Moore) but none were found on the Augusta CBC on 28 Dec. (fide Anne Waters). Only the Blairsville CBC had anything approaching good numbers with 30 (actually above the average for the last five counts). Only one report was noted for Jan., one at a feeder in Bartow County on 23 Jan. (fide Bill Bouthillier) and only two reports were received for Feb.: Frank McCamey had one at his feeder in Dawson County and the Cochran Shoals Section, CRNRA, produced two (Gail Russell).
- HOUSE FINCH - The proliferation of this species continues as evidenced by the 333 tallied on the Macon CBC on 17 Dec. (fide Jerry Emerson) and the ten seen in the Bainbridge area on 25 Feb. (Paul Raney).
- RED CROSSBILL - Reports of this species are never numerous. Harriett DiGioia reported three or four in early Jan. near Lake Conasauga, Murray County.
- PINE SISKIN - A very lean year also for this irregular winter finch. Oddly, while the Bainbridge CBC in southwest Georgia counted 21 on 27 Dec. (fide Oscar Dewberry), the Blairsville CBC at the other end of the state found none (fide Lou Laux). This count had averaged 118 over the



previous five counts. On 28 Dec., the Okefenokee CBC had eight (fide Sheila Willis).

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** - An albino was reported coming to a feeder in Ellijay in late Jan. (Bob and Betty Jones).

**EVENING GROSBEAK** - This winter was more of a normal year for this species, following last winter's invasion. Only two reports were received. The Callaway Gardens CBC on 18 Dec. had eight (fide LuAnn Craighton) and one appeared for one day at a feeder in Gwinnett County on 9 Feb. (Bruce Dralle).

Jeff Sewell, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, GA 30084.

## FROM THE FIELD

March - May 1995

This season saw two outstanding finds. Georgia's first documented Little Gull was discovered on Jekyll Island and, near Bainbridge, what was thought to be a pair of Burrowing Owls provided our first well documented sighting of this species. Some birders reported another slow migration season, but some spots had notable sightings, such as the Atlanta area's first Black-necked Stilts at the E.L. Huie Land Application Facility ponds, topping off a very eventful shorebird migration there.

Here is a reminder for those of you reporting from outside the Atlanta area. When you report a sighting that is unusual for your area but may not be an obvious rarity (like a Little Gull), please tell me why you are reporting it. Is the bird unusual in your area, is it early arriving, or late departing, for example. This will help me determine whether the sighting should go into the field notes. An example: I did not know until recently that White-breasted Nuthatch is rare in central Georgia and the report might have been deleted had not the reporter told me of its status in his area.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed. Keep those reports coming - and good birding!

Abbreviations used include: AASMW - Atlanta Audubon Society Migration Walk; AFB - Air Force Base; *Annotated Checklist - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, Haney, J.C., et al., GOS Publ. No. 10, 1986; ASWMA - Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area, Butler Island, McIntosh County; Co. - County; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, north of Atlanta; DNR - Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; Kennesaw Mt. - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield, Cobb Co.; NAMC - North American Migration Count; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**COMMON LOON** - Four birds in breeding plumage on 27 March at the DeKalb Reservoir were a beautiful sight (Jeff Sewell), but a truly remarkable sighting came from Lake Burton in Rabun Co. where on 11 April a resident reported seeing 100 and the next day another resident counted 500 (fide Ann Miller). The last departing birds were noted on 29 May when Jeff Sewell saw one at the DeKalb Reservoir and Carol Lambert had one at the Smith Reservoir in Clayton Co.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** - Unusual for this time of year were two birds: one that showed up at the ELHLAF on 30 May (Carol Lambert) and one seen in Monroe Co. on 13 May (Terry Johnson).



- AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Sixteen were seen on 4 April near Point Peter, St. Marys River, Camden Co. from the Cumberland Island ferry (Paul Johnson). These birds were part of a larger flock that has wintered in this area for at least the last two years.
- BROWN PELICAN - Paul Raney had an amazing sight of a Brown Pelican flying over I-85 in DeKalb Co. on 16 April. This is the second sighting already this year for the Atlanta area.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Although this species continues to increase, we generally don't get too many reports of migrating flocks inland so the sighting of three flocks totalling 65 birds flying past Kennesaw Mt. on April 19 was significant (Giff Beaton).
- ANHINGA - Although this species has been seen a few times in the Atlanta area during the last five years, it is still quite rare there, so the sight of one on 17 May and possibly the same bird on 20 May at two adjacent lakes at the ELHLAF is noteworthy (Carol Lambert).
- MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - This very rare coastal visitor was seen on 17 May off Sapelo Island (Brad Winn). This is the second report of this species in the last six months, which must be a record.
- AMERICAN BITTERN - At least two were seen beginning on 18 March at a small pond in Lowndes Co. (Brad Bergstrom). At the ASWMA, Malcolm Hodges had one on 4 April and in a Greene Co. marsh, one was seen on 23 May (Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen).
- LEAST BITTERN - This secretive marsh dweller was well reported this period. Near Valdosta Brad Bergstrom had at least one pair beginning on 5 March. The ASWMA produced three arrivals on 4 April (Malcolm Hodges), two were seen at Sapelo Island on 4 April (Pierre Howard), and in Greene Co. a pair, first noted on 22 April (Billy and Brenda Dunbar) was seen several more times during the period (m.ob.). On 20 May, Bill Blakeslee et al. estimated at least 12 at the ASWMA. Near Augusta on 21 May, Gary Gray saw three immatures, indicating nesting nearby (fide Anne Waters).
- REDDISH EGRET - Although reports of this species in coastal Georgia have increased dramatically in recent years, the sightings have occurred on barrier island beaches in late summer and fall, so the sighting of one bird in the tidal creek adjacent to the Andrews Island causeway in Brunswick on the early spring date of 22 March (Bob Manns, Steve Ehly) is worthy of being documented in *The Oriole*. In future reports, please note the age and color phase of this species so that we can better track its status.
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - This species is seldom seen in Laurens Co., so two seen on 6 May were interesting (Tommy Patterson). For the 14th year in a row, John Ogden had a nesting pair in his yard near downtown Atlanta which fledged at least two young by the end of May.
- GLOSSY IBIS - On 17 March an excellent count of 130 was made at the ASWMA (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK - Bill Blakeslee et al. had a group of eight birds at the ASWMA on 20 May for a rare sighting of this species in the state.
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - This very rare species was seen at the ELHLAF on 22 March (Brock Hutchins) and on 1 April (Jim

- Arduino) but not on several days in between, so it may or may not have been two different birds.
- SNOW GOOSE - A good winter continued into spring. One was seen in Greene Co. on 1 March (Jim Blum). Eight blue-phased birds, including two immatures, were seen in the same location on 4 March (Paul Sykes). A white-phase bird that wintered in the area was last seen on 10 March at ELHLAF (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). On 25 April, Paul Sykes again saw a bird that wintered at the Kings Bay Submarine Base, Camden Co.
- AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - The only reports were of one at the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Fulton Co. (m.ob.), on 21 March, three at the ASWMA on 7 April (Paul Johnson) and two there on 6 May (Jeff Sewell, Bruce Dralle).
- MOTTLED DUCK - Some years ago this species, native to coastal Texas, Louisiana and southern Florida, was introduced by South Carolina officials to its coastal refuges. It can now be found with regularity at the ASWMA as witnessed by the five seen there on 22 April (Terry Moore et al.) and 30 on 20 May (Bill Blakeslee).
- NORTHERN PINTAIL - Few reports of this species were received with the best being eight in Greene Co. on 1 March (Jim Blum).
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL - Augusta had its first nesting record this spring. On 7 May, Richard Lux saw two almost grown young with adults at the brickyard pond. Six days later, 13 May, a female with 10 young was seen (Anne and Vernon Waters). This species rarely breeds in Georgia. In Laurens Co., three seen on 20 May were late departures (Tommy Patterson).
- NORTHERN SHOVELER - Reported in small number from several locations. Two seen on 13 May in Augusta beat the *Annotated Checklist* late spring date by three days, but two seen on 20 May in Laurens Co. topped that (Tommy Patterson).
- AMERICAN WIGEON - This species did not live up to its status of "common" in the *Annotated Checklist* as only two birds were reported: one at the Chattahoochee Nature Center on 2 March (Carol Lambert) and one at the ELHLAF on 2 April (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).
- REDHEAD - Good numbers were seen in the Rome area with 20 on 5 March (Chuck and Sylvia Saleeby) and 36 on 12 March (Nelson Dobbs).
- RING-NECKED DUCK - At the ELHLAF, most of the wintering flock of 100 or so had departed in March, but 10 remained as late as 10 April (Carol Lambert). One bird, a male, lingered through the end of the period. A female remained in the Augusta area, the only spot in the state where the species has bred, at least through 13 May (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- GREATER SCAUP - The usual few were seen early in the period. On 18 March, Patrick Brisse saw one at Lake Spivey, Henry/Clayton counties; Brock Hutchins noted four at the ELHLAF on 24 March, and Paul Johnson spied one in the sound off Jekyll Island on 6 April.
- BLACK SCOTER - Very late for the state were 15 birds reported from Jekyll Island on 6 May by Jeff Sewell and Bruce Dralle.
- SURF SCOTER - The only report of the period was of two seen each day between 9-13 April at Jekyll Island (Peggy and Terry Moore).
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - Also, only one report of this species: one seen each day between 1-4 April at Sapelo Island (Ken Clark).



- HOODED MERGANSER - As there are fewer than five nesting records of this species for Georgia, four fledglings seen in May at the Grand Bay WMA near Valdosta was quite noteworthy (Brad Bergstrom). This should be documented in The Oriole as well as the female with a chick at Cochran Shoals, CRNRA, Cobb Co. on 1 April (Jim Wilson).
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - Only small numbers were reported for the period with the 10 seen at Lake Oconee on 7 May (Bill Blakeslee) being the high number. Two sightings of singles exceeded the *Annotated Checklist* late date of 11 May: Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert saw one at Lake Oconee on 14 May and Brad Winn saw one on the North Newport River in Liberty Co. on 22 May.
- TURKEY VULTURE - Please report sightings of migrating vultures. Movement in the Atlanta area was noted on 7 March when Giff Beaton saw 19 in Cobb Co. headed north and Georgann Schmaltz saw a huge flock of 300 over Decatur.
- OSPREY - Sightings of this species have increased in recent years although this season's reports were about average for recent springs. At Blalock Lake, part of the ELHLAF, in Henry Co., where a pair has attempted to nest in the past, first one bird (15 March) then two (on 26 March) were seen (Patrick Brisse). This pair nested, but again luck was not with them. Their nest was destroyed in high winds on 15 May and the chick (or chicks) were lost (Carol Lambert). Jack Johnson saw three on 9 April at the Cornish Creek Reservoir, Newton/Walton counties.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - A very good spring for this species as reports of them were almost as numerous as for Mississippi Kites. Beginning with a record early arrival on 12 March when one was seen by K. Tassin (fide Malcolm Hodges) in McIntosh Co., to another seen on Sapelo Island on 13 March by Fred Hays (fide Doris Cohrs), reports of nine sightings came from many areas in southeast Georgia in April and May. The farthest inland sighting was of one at Tobesofkee Park, Bibb Co., on 5 May (Ray Mangham). The only sighting of two was near Cox, McIntosh Co., on 9 May (Brad Winn).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE - Two sightings of singles equalled the *Annotated Checklist* early arrival date: on 23 April, Brad Bergstrom saw one near Valdosta and one was seen in Greene Co., the county's first, by Billy and Brenda Dunbar on the same day. Beginning on 24 April the Macon area hosted several over the period (m.ob.) and Brad Bergstrom reported seven in Lowndes Co. on 19 May. The highlight, though, was 35+ seen feeding over the same field in Augusta on 6 May at the spring GOS meeting (Bill Blakeslee, Anne and Vernon Waters, et al.). On 13 May, the species again proved reliable at Hamburg State Park, the northern edge of its range in Georgia, where Nancy Iha had three.
- BALD EAGLE - This recovering species continues to increase slowly and had a decent nesting season as 25 nests produced 23 fledglings, based on DNR's annual survey (Jim Ozier). Away from the coast, good sightings were of one in Laurens Co. (Tommy Patterson) on 20 April, three at Lake Oconee on 25 April (Paul Sykes), and beginning on 14 May, at least one, probably two, on the ELHLAF property (Carol Lambert).
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK - Only a few reports were received, mostly of single birds. On 8 April one was seen in Augusta by Anne and Vernon Waters who noted that the species is an uncommon transient there and Doris

- Cohrs reported seeing one in Darien on 14 April where the species is unusual in the spring.
- MERLIN - Best report was of 12 birds moving north on 13 April at Jekyll Island (Peggy and Terry Moore). One seen near Brunswick on 2 May was pushing the late departure date for spring (Malcolm Hodges). The *Annotated Checklist* shows 7 May as the late date.
- PEREGRINE FALCON - As usual a few were reported from the coast in early April (sev.ob.). On 12 March, one was seen in Decatur Co. (Brian Milsap). The most interesting report, though came from downtown Atlanta where beginning on 15 March between one and three birds (two adults, one immature) were seen on or near the NationsBank Building and the Hurt Building (Chris Geller). Whether representing one of the afore-mentioned "downtown" birds, or being another entirely, was one seen on the old Biltmore Hotel on 28 March by Pierre Howard. It is thought that at least one of these downtown birds is one of those released there in recent years in a DNR/Zoo Atlanta project.
- RUFFED GROUSE - On 2 April, Jack Carusos and John Paget saw one in Dawson Forest, Dawson Co., at the southern limit of its current range in Georgia.
- WILD TURKEY - Though the numbers of this species around the state have recovered so nicely that we often do not mention it anymore in these reports, the one heard at Kennesaw Mt. in Cobb Co. on 9 April (Pierre Howard, Brock Hutchins, Bruce Hallett) and on 19 April (Jeff Sewell) is truly a remarkable comeback for this adaptable species.
- BLACK RAIL - A marsh in Greene Co. once again hosted this species where beginning in late April through the end of the period, one, and often two, could be heard calling regularly (Paul Sykes, Billy Dunbar).
- KING RAIL - At least one of this species again stopped over at a marsh in Greene Co. beginning on 27 April (Paul Sykes) through 28 May (Billy and Brenda Dunbar). Giff Beaton discovered one on 14 May in a new location, a marsh near Kennesaw Mt.
- VIRGINIA RAIL - At the small marsh near Woodstock, Giff Beaton had three birds on 7 March and one on 28 March. At another small marsh, this one in the Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park in Cobb Co., Giff Beaton had six on 13 April, four on 20 April and ten on 21 April. Another Virginia was heard in a marsh in Greene Co. on 14 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.).
- SORA - Rather rare for the Atlanta area were single birds at the Woodstock marsh on 28 March (Giff Beaton et al.) and again on 1 April by Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert and Pierre Howard. One was also reported from Greene Co. on 22 April and 27 April (Paul Sykes, Billy Dunbar).
- AMERICAN COOT - In the Atlanta area, one loner remained at the DeKalb Reservoir through 31 May (Jeff Sewell) and another was at the ELHLAF as late as 28 May (Bill Blakeslee et al.). The Monroe Co. NAMC recorded three on 13 May (Terry Johnson).
- SANDHILL CRANE - From 1 March to 10 March, 19 flocks were reported, totalling 1607 birds, with the average flock size being about 85 birds. The sightings were concentrated between 2 and 7 March. Nelson Dobbs saw two large flocks of about 200 birds each in Floyd Co. on 2 and 6 March. Nanette Hutchinson-Johnson also had a flock of about 200 near the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Fulton Co., on 2 March.



- WILSON'S PLOVER** - On 27 March, Malcolm Hodges counted 15 on Jekyll Island, an outstanding number. Nine were there on 9 April (Paul Johnson). Paul Sykes et al. tallied 11 on Crab Island, Camden Co., and found a nest under incubation.
- PIPING PLOVER** - Small numbers of this uncommon winter resident were reported from seven coastal locations. The most notable sightings were of 15 on Ossabaw Island on 18 April (Brad Winn) and, equalling the *Annotated Checklist* late date, one on St. Catherines Island on 21 May (Brad Winn).
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** - On Crab Island, Camden Co., Paul Sykes et al. counted seven and found a nest with eggs on 4 May.
- BLACK-NECKED STILT** - Quite a season for this species, including two inland records! The Atlanta area's first, two birds, spent the afternoon of 17 April at the ELHLAF (Carol Lambert) and Tommy Patterson found Laurens Co.'s first on 4 May in a farm pond named the Avocet Pond. High counts were the 30 seen on 6 April at the ASWMA (Malcolm Hodges) and 48 on 4 May on Crab Island, Camden Co. (Paul Sykes et al.).
- AMERICAN AVOCET** - This irregular coastal visitor was reported twice: 25 on 22 March (Jeff Sewell, Pierre Howard) and nine on 6 April (Paul Johnson), both reports from Jekyll Island.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** - The high count reported was of 15 on 30 March at the ELHLAF (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell, Pierre Howard). The last inland sighting was of one on 17 May at the DeKalb Reservoir (Jeff Sewell).
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** - Good counts for the Atlanta area were the 50+ on 18 April at the ELHLAF (Bill Blakeslee) and again on 30 April (AASMW) at the same location. Tommy Patterson reported 17 on 14 May near Dublin, a good number for that location.
- UPLAND SANDPIPER** - Tommy Patterson reported his first spring arrivals on 5 April, seven birds, in Laurens Co.. These birds were not seen the next day. On 10 April he found 14 at the same place, peaking at 18 on 13 April. One was found in Greene Co. on 15 April (Paul Sykes) and another single was spotted near Brunswick on 22 April (Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore).
- WHIMBREL** - Seven early arrivals were seen on 12 March at Jekyll Island (Bob Manns, Steve Ehly). High counts were 27 on 4 April at Sapelo Island (Jerry and Marie Amerson), 30+ in Glynn Co. on 10 April (Terry and Peggy Moore) and 25 on 27 April on Jekyll Island (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- LONG-BILLED CURLEW** - This is another species that is recently being found more frequently, maybe one or two a year. I attribute this to more birders, rather than more birds. Steve Ehly and Robert Manns saw one at Jekyll Island on 22 March.
- MARBLED GODWIT** - Reported in better than average numbers and from more locations, the high count being 12 on 22 March at the old marina on Jekyll Island (Pierre Howard, Jeff Sewell).
- RUDDY TURNSTONE** - The ELHLAF turned in a stellar shorebird performance this spring (see Black-necked Stilt also). On the morning of 19 May, Jeff Sewell and Pierre Howard saw a male in beautiful plumage fly in to join the usual spring shorebird migrants. By late that

- afternoon, two more birds had arrived (Carol Lambert). The species is a very rare migrant anywhere in the state away from the coast.
- RED KNOT** - On 15 March Sheila Willis reported 150 on Cumberland Island. Paul Johnson had an excellent count of 1262 there on 4 April.
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** - One bird was reported from the Harris Neck Refuge on 2 May by Malcolm Hodges. One was seen at the ELHLAF on 14 May by Carolina Lane and AAS. Five were recorded from Laurens Co. on 14 May by Tommy and Hunter Patterson. Back at the ELHLAF, 25 were seen on 19 May (Jeff Sewell and Pierre Howard).
- BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** - One bird was seen at the ELHLAF on 1 May (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert) and again on 5 May (Carol Lambert). Jeff Sewell and Bruce Dralle had one on Jekyll Island on 6 May. On 14 May, back at the ELHLAF, at least one, and maybe two were present (Carolina Lane).
- DUNLIN** - One bird at the ELHLAF on 21 April was a rare spring sighting for the Atlanta area (Carol Lambert).
- STILT SANDPIPER** - One bird was seen in Laurens Co. on 14 May by Tommy and Hunter Patterson. At the ELHLAF, 8 were seen on 18 May and stayed for three days (Brock Hutchins). Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co. produced three on 2 May (Malcolm Hodges).
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** - Unusual numbers for the location were two separate, large flocks this spring at the ELHLAF. On 2 May, Carol Lambert and Brock Hutchins counted 51. This flock stayed only one day. On 14 May, 32 were seen by Carolina Lane. The previous record high count from the ELHLAF was no more than 15 (Terry Moore, pers.comm.).
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** - One report of this rare migrant was received, one bird in Macon on 8 April (Marie Amerson, Nancy Gobris).
- POMARINE JAEGER** - One bird was seen from shore at Jekyll Island on 12 April by Peggy and Terry Moore.
- LITTLE GULL** - The rarest sighting for the period was the immature Little Gull found by Malcolm Hodges and Terry and Marion Schiefer at Jekyll Island on 2 May. It was seen by a number of observers with the last sighting from that area being on 12 May. This is the first documented record for Georgia and details along with recognizable photos can be found elsewhere in this issue of *The Oriole*.
- BONAPARTE'S GULL** - Very late for the state was a bird at Jekyll Island on 20 May (Bill Blakeslee).
- HERRING GULL** - Late for the Atlanta area was a bird at the Cornish Creek Reservoir on 15 April (Jeff Sewell and Jack Johnson).
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** - One bird was seen at Jekyll Island on 6 April by Paul Johnson. This species is primarily a fall vagrant but is now becoming more frequent during the winter and spring.
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** - Only one report was received, that of two on 6 April at Jekyll Island (Paul Johnson).
- CASPIAN TERN** - Two birds were seen at Blalock Lake on 19 April by Carol Lambert and one was seen in Greene Co. on 14 May by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert et al. Another inland bird was seen on 4 May in Augusta (Anne and Vernon Waters).
- LEAST TERN** - The report of at least 100 pairs at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 20 May was encouraging (Bill Blakeslee et al.).



- EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE - One bird was seen near Colquitt in Miller Co. on 19 March by Pierre Howard. Paul Johnson found two in another new location, Folkston, on 5 April. Several observers reported the species from its population center at Brunswick during the period. Three others were seen at Ashburn on 9 May by Chuck Saleeby and Malcolm Hodges reported that a population has shown up in the Darien area.
- COMMON GROUND-DOVE - A good count of 10 was made at Andrews Island near Brunswick on 20 May by Bill Blakeslee et al. This species has certainly declined in numbers along the immediate coast over the past ten years. In a similarly depressing vein, Anne Waters says they seem to be harder to find in Richmond Co. where on 30 May she had three. This is at the northern edge of their breeding range.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - More were seen than usual, all single birds. On 29 April Paul Johnson had one in his subdivision near Macon, Kevin Danchisen saw one at Kennesaw Mt. on 3 May, Kings Bay Submarine Base, Camden Co., produced one on 4 May (Paul Sykes) and several observers were lucky enough to see one in Augusta on 6 May on a GOS field trip (Anne Waters).
- BURROWING OWL - Ranking just below the Little Gull was the discovery of one, possibly two, of this species near Bainbridge on 12 March by Brian Milsap. The bird(s) remained through the period and were seen by many, but it could not be determined with certainty if nesting occurred. This species has been reported a few times before in the state, but so far has not met the criteria to achieve regular species status in the *Annotated Checklist*.
- NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL - David Chaffin reported hearing one near Sky Valley, Rabun Co., on 26 April.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL - The most unusual report was of two heard in Emanuel Co. on 5 May which may indicate a farther southward extension of their breeding range, but perhaps could have been simply late migrants (Jerry and Marie Amerson).
- CHIMNEY SWIFT - A very early bird was seen in Emanuel Co. on 11 March by Jerry and Marie Amerson. The *Annotated Checklist* previous early arrival date is 12 March.
- RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD - The last departing wintering bird was seen on 2 April in Atlanta (fide Jeff Sewell).
- OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - A very rare migrant in the Atlanta area, but it seems that reports of it are increasing, perhaps due to the increase in observers. On 6 May, David Cree and Chris Lambrecht saw one at Peachtree City and Giff Beaton had one on 8 May at Kennesaw Mt.
- EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - Very early reports in the Atlanta area came on 1 April by Chuck and Sylvia Saleeby and 2 April by Jeff Sewell.
- YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER - This very rare spring migrant was reported on 25 April at Kennesaw Mt. (Joseph Knapp). There are only two spring records for Georgia so this sighting should be written up for *The Oriole*.
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER - One bird appeared to be on territory in DeKalb Co. on 17 May and 27 May (Georgann Schmalz). After being among the missing for a year or so, a Willow Flycatcher reappeared in Greene Co. on 14 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.) and 23 May (Kevin

- Danchisen and Giff Beaton) but no mate was ever seen. Pierre Howard and Kevin Danchisen saw and heard one on 3 May at Kennesaw Mt.
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER - The first sighting of this very rare western vagrant was on the Albany Christmas Bird Count in December. It was seen by many observers all winter. The last report came on 4 March (Mark Oberle). For more details see the article in *The Oriole* (60:6-8).
- EASTERN KINGBIRD - Bill Blakeslee et al. reported a good count of 69 in three plowed fields in the Augusta area on 6 May on a GOS field trip.
- GRAY KINGBIRD - A pair faithfully returned to its nesting spot at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and were noted by several observers but this was the only location for the species reported this period.
- HORNED LARK - The Atlanta Motor Speedway again hosted this species. At least two pairs lingered past winter and were heard and seen on 19 March (Pierre Howard). No proof of nesting was noted this year. The species was also reported on 26 March in Houston Co. (Jerry and Marie Amerson, Nancy Gobris).
- TREE SWALLOW - On 2 May, Malcolm Hodges saw 80 in McIntosh Co., an unusual number for so late in migration. Terry Johnson counted 11 in Monroe Co. on 13 May.
- BANK SWALLOW - Small numbers were reported from the ELHLAF between 23 April and 1 May, with a high count of five on 24 April (Carol Lambert). The only others seen were two on 3 May at the Juliette Road bridge over the Ocmulgee River, Jones/Monroe counties (Nancy Gobris).
- CLIFF SWALLOW - On 24 April Carol Lambert had all the Georgia swallows at the ELHLAF, including three Cliffs. Cliff Swallows returned to their usual nest sites on Lake Oconee under the U.S. 278 bridges, and were found in a new location: the Juliette Road bridge over the Ocmulgee River, near Juliette, in Monroe Co.. On 3 May, Nancy Gobris saw eight there building nests. By 20 May the number had grown to 20 birds with 16 working nests (Nancy Gobris, Paul Hoinowski, Jerry and Marie Amerson).
- BARN SWALLOW - An early bird was seen in the Conyers area on 11 March by Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert and Francis Michael.
- TUFTED TITMOUSE - On 29 March, Sheila Willis observed the first instance of nesting behavior on Cumberland Island in her many years of birding on the island. A pair was nesting in a cavity in a cabbage palm.
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - On 4 May, Tommy Patterson saw one in the Beaverdam WMA, Laurens Co.. He has seen them only a few other times in the county.
- SEDGE WREN - Inland sightings included two at Grand Bay WMA, Lowndes Co., on 18 March (Brad Bergstrom, Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert), one bird near Woodstock on 26 March and 28 March (Giff Beaton et al., one in Augusta on 2 April where they are very uncommon (Anne and Vernon Waters), one bird in Dawson Co. on 8 April (Jeff Sewell, Jack Caruso), 6-7 in a small marsh near Kennesaw Mt. on 20 April (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen) and one in Greene Co. on 14 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert, et al.).
- MARSH WREN - Singles were seen inland at Grand Bay WMA, Lowndes Co., on 13 March (Brad Bergstrom), in Dooly Co. on 7 May by Dan Guynn



and another was found in a marsh near Kennesaw Mt. on 16 May by Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen.

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** - During May, John Kiser watched a pair nest on Burnt Mountain in northeast Pickens Co. at an approximate elevation of 851 m (2793 feet). The *Annotated Checklist* says they do not nest above 700 m.

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** - Donny Screws reported finding a nest with one egg on the early date of 8 March near Elko. He also found two nests back in Jan. but they were soon abandoned.

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** - The only reports were of singles, one seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 7 May (Jeff Sewell, et al.) and another there the next day (Giff Beaton).

**HERMIT THRUSH** - A rather late bird was found in McIntosh Co. on 22 April by Doris Cohrs.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** - Dan Gynn reported that the one he saw on 27 May near Unadilla was unusual for time and place.

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** - One seen on 8 April in northern Forsyth Co. was rare for that area (Jeff Sewell).

**WARBLING VIREO** - Only one report was received of this rare transient: one near Lizella, Bibb Co., in late April (Ray Manghum).

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** - The only report was of a bird near the ELHLAF on 5 May by Carol Lambert.

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** - Surely more were seen than reported. One was in Tucker on 9 April (Jeff Sewell) and one at Kennesaw Mt. on 21 April (Giff Beaton).

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** - A few more Golden-wings were reported than Blue-wings. On 21 April Giff Beaton saw two at Kennesaw Mt., Jeff Sewell saw one there on 23 April and arriving back home in Tucker, found one in his yard. Back at Kennesaw Mt., two were seen on 26 April (Giff Beaton, Pierre Howard).

**BREWSTER'S WARBLER** - This hybrid, described in good detail, was seen on 6 May at the CRNRA in Cobb Co. (Pierre Howard).

**TENNESEE WARBLER** - The bird which spent the winter at a feeder in Social Circle, Walton Co., was last seen on 15 April (fide Paul Sykes). This is only about the third record of a wintering bird.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** - One bird seen near the ELHLAF on 26 March by Joe Greenberg et al. was probably a wintering bird. Calvin Zippler saw a record late bird in Augusta on 13 May. The *Annotated Checklist* record is 5 May.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** - Two reports came from Kennesaw Mt. where on 29 April at least two were seen (Billy Dunbar, Chuck Saleeby) and 3 May when one was spotted (Kevin Danchisen, Pierre Howard). Another bird was reported from Piedmont NWR on 4 May by Kevin Danchisen.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** - A record late bird was seen in the Augusta area on 30 May by Giff Beaton. The *Annotated Checklist* gives the late departure date as 29 May.

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** - The first report received was of one on 18 March near Moody AFB, Lowndes Co. (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). On a canoe trip through the Okefenokee NWR, Mark Oberle reported 80-100 on 6 April.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** - This species isn't generally thought to be much of a coastal spring migrant but Malcolm Hodges had an early one on 4 April in the Darien area, Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore had three in the Brunswick area on 22 April and Doris Cohrs banded one and saw another in the Darien area on 23 April.

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** - More reports than usual were received of this elusive breeder: twelve reports from eleven locations, mostly in the piedmont, of at least 14 individual birds. On the coast, Doris Cohrs saw one on 16 April in McIntosh Co. where they are rare. Why don't we get more reports from the mountains of that population?

**OVENBIRD** - Nancy Gobris reported that Jason Long, while conducting a Wood Thrush project at Piedmont NWR in May, found an Ovenbird nest. He has been encouraged to write this up for The Oriole. A late migrant was heard singing at the CRNRA on 20 May (Terry Moore).

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** - Another species reported more than usual this spring, but this is probably due to more birders, not more birds. The first report, on 8 May, was of one bird seen in the same spot as one last year, on the Berry College campus near Rome (Bill Allen). Paul Johnson had one in Macon on 13 May. Other singles were seen on 14 May at Cochran Shoals section, CRNRA, Cobb Co. (Joseph Knapp) and Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett found one on the summit of Kennesaw Mt. on 22 May.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** - Singles were seen on 30 April (Gordon McWilliams) and another on 3 May (Kevin Danchisen, Pierre Howard) both at Kennesaw Mt., on 4 May in Camden Co. (Paul Sykes) and two in Augusta on 13 May (Larry and Carol Eldridge).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** - Perhaps this species is considered too common to report, but the 34 seen along his migration count route in northeast Bartow Co. on 13 May was impressive (Jeff Sewell).

**SCARLET TANAGER** - Accounts of nesting Scarlet Tanagers in the Atlanta area continue to surface. Wade Crumbley of Henry Co. reported a pair nesting on his property for the second year in a row (fide Pierre Howard).

**WESTERN TANAGER** - A female was well described by Carl Miller in Atlanta coming to his feeder on 16 April. Unfortunately it only came there for one day. This sighting will be documented in a later issue of The Oriole.

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** - Even rarer was a male which appeared at Tommy Willard's feeder in Perry as early as 18 Jan. but wasn't reported to local birders until the day it left on 12 March (fide Jeff Sewell). This was the first report in a long time for Georgia - perhaps as long ago as 1973. Please see *Oriole* 60:8-10 for details of this observation.

**BLUE GROSBEAK** - A rather early bird for the Atlanta area was one seen in the Cornish Creek Reservoir area on 15 April by Jeff Sewell and Jack Johnson.

**INDIGO BUNTING** - One bird in the Valdosta area on 14 March was almost too early for a migrant and may have been a wintering bird (Barbara Passmore).

**PAINTED BUNTING** - The first report from Lower Poplar Street in Macon was of one bird on 23 April (Paul Johnson). Also at the northerly edge of



their breeding range in Augusta, Anne and Vernon Waters counted 12 on 13 May.

**DICKCISSEL** - Ten birds were reported from the Brunswick area on 7 May by Billy and Brenda Dunbar. A single bird was reported from Greene Co. on 14 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.).

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW** - This species was found in several new locations. Anne and Vernon Waters found one at the Augusta brickyard ponds on 13 May, a first for that location and also discovered them in seven or eight places south of Augusta leading Anne to speculate that the species is much more common in that area than previously thought. Also on 13 May, one, possibly two, were seen on Johnston Mt. in extreme northeast Bartow Co., another "new" site, by Jeff Sewell and Gordon McWilliams.

**VESPER SPARROW** - This uncommon and local winter resident was seen at the Johnson's Ferry section, CRNRA, Cobb Co., on 28 March when three were reported (Pierre Howard). Anne Waters reported them conspicuous this spring for their absence in her area, noting that the 15 she and Vernon saw at DiLane Plantation WMA, Burke Co., was their only sighting this spring (no date given).

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** - The most interesting report came from the Augusta area. On 2 March Anne and Vernon Waters saw one at the DiLane Plantation WMA, south of Waynesboro, which was believed to be an early transient for that area. The one they saw on 8 April at the Augusta brickyard ponds and the four seen on 13 May at the Augusta Airport were thought to be nesters as they have been found nesting in these areas before.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** - As there are few spring records of this species, the one seen on 23 April in Greene Co. was an excellent find (Billy and Brenda Dunbar).

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - Anne Waters reported that she found only four all spring, much below the usual numbers she sees in the Augusta area. All were immatures seen on 2 April at the Augusta brickyards. Three singles were reported in the Atlanta area: 10 April in Tucker (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert), 1 May along the Chattahoochee River, Cobb Co. (Terry Moore); and on 8 May in Lawrenceville (Karen Theodorou).

**DARK-EYED JUNCO** - A very late bird was seen on 13 May on Jekyll Island by Doris Cohrs et al. The *Annotated Checklist* gives 3 May as the late departure date.

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** - A pair was found on 4 April at ASWMA where they are quite uncommon (Malcolm Hodges). A late departing bird was seen on 4 May in the same area (Anne and Vernon Waters). Also late was a flock of 30 was seen on 21 April in the Augusta area (Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore).

**NORTHERN ORIOLE** - Of several reports received, the most noteworthy were these: one seen in Echols Co. on 25 March probably wintered (Kristi Avera, Jim Harrell) and six were seen on 4 May in Macon's Central City Park where there is an isolated breeding population (Kevin Danchisen).

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