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# THE ORIOLE

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*The Oriole*, a quarterly journal of Georgia ornithology, publishes original articles that advance the study of birds in the state of Georgia and adjoining regions. *The Oriole* welcomes submission of articles describing the occurrence, distribution, behavior, or identification of birds in Georgia, as well as scientific studies from all fields of ornithology.

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# THE ORIOLE

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## IN MEMORIAM: EUGENE P. ODUM, 1913-2002

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(Photo courtesy of the Athens Banner-Herald)

On August 10, 2002, the world lost a great scholar and teacher, and the Georgia Ornithological Society lost a life member and great friend.



Eugene P. Odum taught the world that natural ecosystems are "more than the sum of their parts," and that ecosystems provide the essential "life support system" for human societies. Although Gene Odum influenced scientists, scholars, and decision makers around the world, he had an even greater impact locally where he shared his enthusiasm for nature with his many students and friends. He was especially enthusiastic about birds, and Georgia ornithologists and birders benefited greatly from his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Gene Odum was born on September 13, 1913, the first child of Howard Washington and Anna Kranz Odum. At the time of his birth, his father was a young professor in the College of Education at the University of Georgia in Athens; however, Gene was born near Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire, where his mother was vacationing with her parents. Gene spent his early years in Georgia until his family moved to Chapel Hill, NC in 1920, where his father became professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina.

Gene Odum's fascination with birds began early. He once organized ornithology classes for his younger siblings, Mary Francis and Howard Thomas Odum. Not only did he lecture to them about bird identification and natural history, he also took them on field trips, gave them exams, and issued progress reports and grades. While in high school in Chapel Hill, Gene and his friend Coit Coker started a bird magazine called the "Briarbridge Bird News" and starting in 1931, Odum and Coker wrote a regular column for the Chapel Hill Weekly newspaper, called "Bird Life in Chapel Hill."

Gene did his undergraduate degree and M.S. studies at the University of North Carolina, and received his Ph.D. with Charles Kendeigh at the University of Illinois in 1939. After completing his Ph.D., he took a job as a naturalist at the Huyck Preserve in upstate New York, and a year later accepted a position in the Zoology Department at the University of Georgia.

At a Zoology faculty meeting in 1945, Odum proposed that ecology be a required course for Zoology majors. When a senior professor asked him, "What is ecology, anyway?", Odum decided to write an ecology textbook so that he could explain the science of Ecology. When he approached a publisher about the book, at first the publisher balked, saying there were no general ecology courses and so, there was no need for a book. Odum's response was, "Let's create a market." In 1953, Odum published *Fundamentals of Ecology* (1953, W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia). Soon, general ecology was taught at virtually every major college and university, and the book is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition. In addition to over 200 papers in scientific journals, Odum also wrote many popular articles and essays. One of his last publications, *Ecological Vignettes: Ecological Approaches*

to *Dealing with Human Predicaments* (1988, Harwood Academic Publishers, Amsterdam), is a nontechnical book meant for the general reader.

Many of Odum's very earliest publications were fairly traditional studies of avian physiology and energetics, but by the early 1950s he began to study the physiology and energetics of whole ecosystems. Ever seeking ways of measuring ecosystem processes above the species level, he pioneered in the measurement of primary and secondary production, decomposition, and nutrient flow in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. He argued that ecosystems, like individuals, have homeostatic mechanisms that regulate energy flow and the recycling of nutrients. In "The Strategy of Ecosystem Development," published in *Science* in 1969, he drew parallels between organismal development and ecological succession, pointing out the regularity of change in production and respiration over time. He also argued that, like individuals and species, ecosystems interact with one another, showing, for example, that the export of detritus from salt marshes is important to ocean productivity. Finally, drawing on examples of symbiosis in the plant and animal world, he argued that human ecology and economics are interrelated and that humans should recognize the value of nature's free goods and services, and strive for a more mutualistic relationship with nature.

Formal recognitions of Odum's contributions have been numerous. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1970, and he won the Institute del Vie Prize (jointly with his brother, H.T. Odum) in 1975 and the Tyler Award in 1977. In 1987 he received the Crafoord Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Science. This is often considered an equivalent of the Nobel Prize, which is not given in Ecology. Among the many honors and prizes he received are Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1951, Georgia Scientist of the Year in 1967, Eminent Ecologist Award from the Ecological Society of America in 1974, and Educator-of-the-Year from the Nation Wildlife Federation in 1983.

To the rest of the world, Gene Odum is known as the father of ecosystem ecology, but to many members of the Georgia Ornithological Society he is remembered as a good friend, an enthusiastic fellow birder, and a prolific contributor to our understanding of Georgia birds. He joined the GOS in 1940, and served as GOS President from 1943 to 1946. He was a frequent contributor to *The Oriole* and served as editor in 1943. Dr. Odum received the Earle R. Greene Memorial Award from the GOS in 1984 in recognition of his lifetime achievements in ornithology and ecology.

He published many ornithological papers on the distribution and behavior of Georgia birds. For example, Odum was co-author of the first



annotated checklist for the state (Greene, Odum, Griffin, Stoddard, and Tomkins 1945, *Birds of Georgia – A Preliminary Check-List and Bibliography*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 2). In 1956, he and Henry C. Robert and John M. Teal (Oriole 21:37-45) published "Summer Birds of Sapelo Island, Georgia, A Preliminary List." Range extensions were always one of Odum's special interests. Odum and Johnston (1951, Auk 68:357-366) reported the first record of breeding House Wrens in Georgia after finding two pairs breeding on the Agriculture College campus at UGA in the summer of 1950. I recall him excitedly telling me about finding a House Finch nest in 1984 in the courtyard of the Ecology Building on the UGA campus. Odum, Allen, and Pulliam (1993, Georgia J. Sci. 51:131-140) reported that "14 species of land birds have extended their breeding ranges into the Athens area on the Georgia Piedmont" since Odum began tracking Athens' birds in 1946. In addition to his own observations and studies, Odum trained and inspired a generation of ornithologists and ecologists. Among the many students who worked under Odum's tutelage and later made contributions to Georgia ornithology are Robert Norris, Milton Hopkins, David Johnston, James Jenkins, I. Lehr Brisbin, Les Davenport, and William Baker.

Eugene Odum will be missed by thousands the world around, but especially by Georgia's birders. An excellent account of his life and contributions can be found in *Eugene Odum: Ecosystem Ecologist and Environmentalist* (Craig 2001, UGA Press).

## HUDSONIAN GODWIT SEEN IN BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA

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At noon on 18 September 2000, a Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) was seen at the Andrews Island dredge-spoil facility on the west side of Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia. The godwit landed approximately 50 meters from us on the wet mud/sand flat on the west interior edge of the dredge impoundment and was observed from 30 meters and as it flew over us for about 15 minutes.

While standing in an alert posture, the bird appeared as a large brownish-gray shorebird. The bill appeared straight and thin. It had a continuous taper from proximal to distal end. Bill color was indistinct but had a light proximal end, becoming darker distally. The tail had a white base and black outer band. The legs appeared dark, with light gray mud-coated feet. In flight, the underwing and axillaries were black. Based on the lack of any buff plumage and primarily gray tones we concluded that the godwit was not a juvenile, but an after hatch year bird in basic plumage. No sound was heard from the godwit during the observation.

The sky was overcast with periodic light rain. The air temperature was about 25 degrees Celsius, and a 20-25 knot wind was blowing from out of the southwest. We estimated that 4,000 shorebirds were in the impoundment including Short-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus griseus*), Black-bellied Plovers (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*), Western Sandpipers (*Calidris mauri*), Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*), Semipalmated Plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), Least Sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*), American Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*), Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), and Stilt Sandpipers (*Calidris himantopus*).

The world population for Hudsonian Godwit is estimated at 50,000, all in the Western Hemisphere (Morrison et al. 2001). The species is a long-distance migrant that nests in poorly defined disjunct sites of northern Canada and Alaska, including areas along the south shore of Hudson Bay

(National Geographic Society 1987). Most of the details of Hudsonian Godwit migration remain a mystery (Harrington et al. 1993). But what is known is that the bulk of the population leaves Canada in August and September, and is not seen again until the birds arrive in southern South America in November (Harrington et al. 1993, and Luis Espinosa pers. comm.). The only known major fall staging site in North America is along the western shore of James Bay (Morrison and Harrington 1979), with a southbound migratory route taking the birds out over the Atlantic Ocean to South America (Morrison 1984), essentially bypassing the United States and Central America. The species winters in southern Patagonia, primarily on the lower Chilean Coast and on Tierra del Fuego (Morrison and Ross 1989) with as many as 20,000 Hudsonian Godwits seen annually in the vicinity of Chiloe Island on the Chilean Coast (Luis Espinosa pers. comm.). About 15,000-20,000 Hudsonian Godwits were seen in early February 2002 at Bahia Lomas, Chile, a huge flat mud bay on the northeast corner of Tierra del Fuego.

Hudsonian Godwits are observed regularly, but only in small numbers, in the New England states particularly on Monomoy Island in Massachusetts, where maximum counts of up to 150 were made in July and August in the 1970s (Veit and Petersen 1993). They are seen only sporadically at best in the southeastern United States, with only a few records for Georgia, including a bird seen in late January (Davenport and Hayes 1997) and in Gwinnett County in April (Greenberg and Manns 1980). The Hudsonian Godwit was on Georgia's Provisional Species List with four additional sightings from 1966-1983 (Haney et al. 1986), but is now on the Regular List (Beaton et al. 2003). Other published sightings in the southeast include: South Carolina, September 2000 (Davis 2001), April 1979 (Velega and LeGrand 1980), and a bird collected in November 1985, with other South Carolina records listed (Post 1986); Tennessee, Haney (1981) and Crawford and Crawford (1979); and in central Florida, Graves and Engelman (1985).

(Record accepted by the GOS Checklist and Records Committee)

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## RECOVERIES OF RING-NECKED DUCKS BANDED ON THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S SAVANNAH RIVER SITE, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Each year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and state and provincial wildlife management agencies band about 300,000 migratory game birds (USFWS 2001). These management agencies, ornithological institutions, researchers, and private individuals also band another 700,000 non-game birds annually. These banded birds and their subsequent recoveries are an important data source used in the management of migratory birds (Nichols 1996). For example, band recovery data frequently are used as a source of information to delineate continental bird migration corridors (Bellrose 1980) and to monitor aspects of hunting pressure on game birds (e.g., Chu and Hestbeck 1989). Particularly in the case of game birds such as waterfowl, large-scale, federally mandated harvests dramatically increase the potential for sufficient numbers of band recoveries to be made. Annually, 87% of all recoveries reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Banding Lab are from waterfowl (USFWS 2001).

The Savannah River Site (SRS), bordered by the Savannah River and located in Aiken and Barnwell counties of west-central South Carolina, is a 780 km<sup>2</sup> (300 mi<sup>2</sup>) tract closed to public access and under control of the U.S. Department of Energy. Extensive natural areas and pine plantations surround former nuclear production facilities of the SRS (White and Gaines 2000). Included within the SRS are more than 1,400 ha (3,458 acres) of reservoir habitat that has been important regionally as an inland refuge for several migrating diving duck species, including the Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*; Mayer et al. 1986). Over a period of 11 years beginning in 1985, Ring-necked Ducks were captured, banded, and released on SRS reservoirs. For the purpose of this study, subsequent recoveries of banded birds as a consequence of harvest activities, incidental encounters, or banding efforts conducted elsewhere, provided the data necessary to examine the origins and migratory routes of these birds, and suggest which demographic segments of the population might be subjected to differential hunting pressures.

## Methods

Each winter from 1985 through 1995, Ring-necked Ducks were trapped on SRS reservoirs from mid-November through late-December using 6–8 welded wire traps (Haramis et al. 1982) baited with corn. Traps generally were checked twice daily to remove birds and to release banded birds that had been captured during the previous visit. All birds were released within 24 hrs of capture at the site (reservoir) of capture. Captured birds were banded with aluminum bands traceable to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Banding Lab, weighed to the nearest 5 g with a Pesola spring scale, sex was recorded, and the birds were aged as HY (hatch-year or immature) or AHY (after hatch-year or adult) according to wing feather characteristics for males and females (Carney 1964) or the presence of white feathers (i.e., flecking) on the head for females (Hohman and Cypher 1986). The results presented below are based upon reports of banded bird recoveries provided to the Bird Banding Lab by the public, institutional researchers, or wildlife agents.

## Results

From 1985 through 1995, 5,672 Ring-necked Ducks were captured, banded, and released on two reservoirs of the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site. Subsequent recoveries of 594 banded birds from December 1985 through January 2003 provided the information that was examined. Hunters who had harvested the birds initiated more than 95% of the recovery reports. Although a majority of band recoveries for which a location was provided ( $N = 592$ ) were from near the site of banding, including South Carolina (37.8%) and Georgia (15.0%), some banded Ring-necked Ducks were recovered far to the north, from Manitoba to Nova Scotia, and southward to Cuba (Table 1). Relatively high rates of band recovery from Ontario, Minnesota, Michigan, and Ohio suggest a prominent southeasterly migratory passage through the Great Lakes region and across the Ohio River valley (Fig. 1). Of secondary importance were movements through Quebec, New York, and southward through the mid-Atlantic states. Meager recoveries of Ring-necked Ducks from New Brunswick ( $N = 2$ ) and Nova Scotia ( $N = 1$ ), while confirming their presence among the wintering contingent in the southern Atlantic Flyway, support the notion that only small breeding populations exist in that extreme northeastern portion of the breeding range. Infrequent band recoveries from southern states within the adjacent Mississippi Flyway, including Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, and even from eastern Texas within the Central Flyway (Fig. 1), suggest that flyway exchange from one winter to the next was very limited. Direct



recoveries (i.e., those occurring within the same winter as banding;  $N = 104$ ) indicate that upon arrival in South Carolina, movements were limited primarily to elsewhere in South Carolina (79.8%), and in Georgia (13.4%), Florida (5.8%), and Alabama (1.0%).

Sex ratios of the banded sample of Ring-necked Ducks favored males by 5.2:1, while recoveries (direct and indirect) favored males by 7.5:1. Although the banded sample of ducks was dominated by adults (3.0:1), ages of the recoveries (direct only) were much more evenly distributed at 1.2:1. Weights of banded and released Ring-necked Ducks differed by sex and age classes, with adult females averaging 659 g ( $\pm 2.8$  standard error [SE],  $N = 497$ ), immature females averaging 629 g ( $\pm 3.1$  SE,  $N = 418$ ), adult males averaging 732 g ( $\pm 1.0$  SE,  $N = 3,771$ ), and immature males averaging 692 g ( $\pm 2.1$  SE,  $N = 983$ ).

### Discussion

Because Ring-necked Ducks figure prominently among North American waterfowl as a hunting resource methods such as banding and band recovery analyses are important management tools for monitoring their populations. Estimates of 2002 breeding waterfowl population sizes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2002) placed the Ring-necked Duck population at more than 400,000 within the eastern survey unit that includes parts of Ontario, Quebec, Labrador, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edwards Island, New Brunswick, New York, and Maine. In the 2001 waterfowl-hunting season, harvests of Ring-necked Ducks ranked third in both the states of Georgia ( $> 8,000$  birds killed) and South Carolina ( $> 27,000$  birds killed), behind Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*; Martin and Padding 2002). In Florida, the Ring-necked Duck ranked first in the 2001 harvest, with more than 41,000 being shot (Martin and Padding 2002).

The concept of migration corridors was first advanced in the late 1960s to describe the movements of waterfowl between their breeding and winter areas (Bellrose 1968). Such migration corridors have been identified through the use of nighttime radar imaging, fall censuses on refuge areas, and the use of band recovery data, thus integrating both directional and abundance information. The band recoveries reported in this study contribute to that body of information unique to the migration of Ring-necked Ducks into the southern Atlantic Flyway. Specifically, this work confirms the continued use of previously identified migration corridors, including one extending through the Great Lakes region and across the Ohio River valley, and a second through Quebec, New York, and the mid-Atlantic states (Bellrose 1980:328). Apparently, these two migration

corridors then merge within the Savannah River drainage separating Georgia and South Carolina.

The concept of flyways and their use in the coordinated management of migratory game birds in various parts of the North American continent is also supported by this study. This process is facilitated by the knowledge that individual birds breeding and wintering in specific regions have a relatively high level of fidelity to those sites and their migratory routes from year to year. In this study, I found exceedingly few Ring-necked Ducks, initially banded on the SRS, within the southern Atlantic flyway that were subsequently harvested while wintering in another flyway.

Sex ratios in this study favored males to a greater degree in the recovery data than in the banding sample, suggesting a greater vulnerability of males to hunting pressure than females. This finding would apply collectively to Ring-necked Ducks within a large geographic range that includes both direct and indirect recoveries. The contrasting makeup of ages from the banding sample and the direct recoveries implies that immature birds were more vulnerable than adults. But, in contrast to the results based upon sex, the age effects would apply to harvests of Ring-necked Ducks only in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida where most of the direct recoveries were recorded.

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Table 1. Recovery locations (N = 592) of Ring-necked Ducks initially captured, banded, and released on Savannah River Site (SRS) reservoirs. From 1985 through 1995 a sample of 5,672 Ring-necked Ducks carried bands that could be traced back to the SRS once encountered and reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Banding Lab.

| Recovery location | Recoveries (N) | Frequency (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| United States     |                |               |
| Alabama           | 9              | 1.5           |
| Arkansas          | 5              | 0.8           |
| Florida           | 45             | 7.6           |
| Georgia           | 89             | 15.0          |
| Illinois          | 11             | 1.9           |
| Indiana           | 8              | 1.4           |
| Kentucky          | 4              | 0.7           |
| Louisiana         | 3              | 0.5           |
| Michigan          | 31             | 5.2           |
| Minnesota         | 29             | 4.9           |
| Missouri          | 2              | 0.3           |
| Mississippi       | 2              | 0.3           |
| North Carolina    | 18             | 3.0           |
| New York          | 10             | 1.7           |
| Ohio              | 17             | 2.9           |
| Pennsylvania      | 1              | 0.2           |
| South Carolina    | 224            | 37.8          |
| South Dakota      | 1              | 0.2           |
| Tennessee         | 3              | 0.5           |
| Texas             | 1              | 0.2           |
| Virginia          | 3              | 0.5           |
| Vermont           | 3              | 0.5           |
| Wisconsin         | 13             | 2.2           |
| Canada            |                |               |
| Manitoba          | 1              | 0.2           |
| New Brunswick     | 2              | 0.3           |
| Nova Scotia       | 1              | 0.2           |
| Ontario           | 44             | 7.4           |
| Quebec            | 11             | 1.9           |
| Cuba              | 1              | 0.2           |
| Totals            | 592            | 100.0%        |



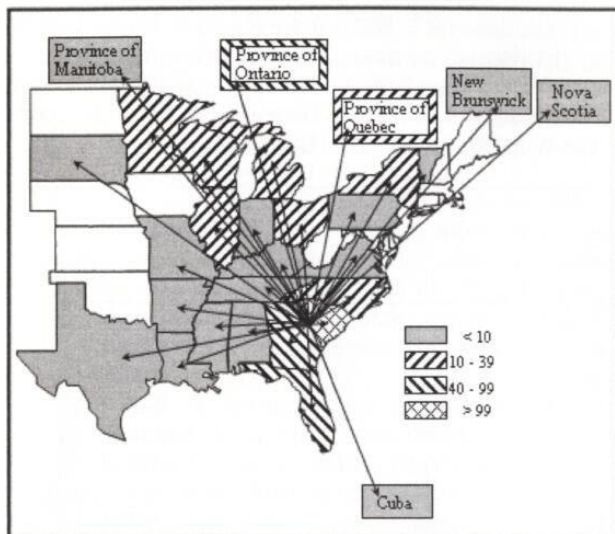


Figure 1. Map showing the geographic locations of Ring-necked Duck recoveries and the relative frequency of those recoveries. Banding site: Savannah River Site, Aiken, SC.



Figure 2. Male Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) with an attached nasal saddle.

## GENERAL NOTES

**FIRST VERIFIED SIGHTING OF A PACIFIC LOON IN GEORGIA** – On 19 December 2002, I was birding at Plant Wansley, a Georgia Power Plant located in both Carroll and Heard counties, which has three large lakes. I first observed a small loon with several Horned Grebes (*Podiceps auritus*) on the Carroll County side of the largest lake, from the picnic area, through a spotting scope, and continued to watch it over the next hour. It was joined by two much larger Common Loons (*Gavia immer*), and direct comparisons were made side by side; there was then no doubt that the smaller bird was indeed a Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), a species previously unconfirmed in our state. It was getting late so I returned the next morning with Richard and Eric Boehm with the hope of obtaining some photographic documentation.

We were able to see every detail of the bird's plumage. The bill was thicker than that of a Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), but smaller than a Common Loon's, and the neck appeared much more arched than in either of the previous species. Brown coloration extended underneath the eye and formed a chin strap under the throat. There were no white indentations on the sides of the neck (as in a Common Loon), and there was a greater percentage of dark brown coloration on the head and neck than white. Its back was dark brown and the back feathers were edged in dull white; the flanks were dark. The pupil of the eye was red, and there was a faint hint of an eye-ring on one side of the head.

This species winters primarily along the western coast of North America, and is considered casual to rare in the East. It was formerly placed on Georgia's hypothetical list, with about two unverified sightings. It was included in John LeConte's list of Georgia birds in 1849, and was later reportedly seen three times in Camden County between 2 December 1962 and 10 February 1963, by Richard Kuerzi (Haney et al., 1986, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10). There also was an unconfirmed report by Paul Sykes several years ago of a Pacific/Arctic Loon from Tybee Island. This sighting was later resubmitted to the state Checklist and Records Committee as an Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) because of its white flanks which extended onto the sides of the rump. However, at the time of that sighting, this field mark was not considered diagnostic of either species, but is now known to be possessed only by the Arctic Loon, with which the Pacific Loon formerly was considered to be conspecific. Several states bordering Georgia have had repeated Pacific Loon sightings. As of 1995 Alabama had 20 accepted reports (Alabama Records Committee Report 1995, Alabama Ornithological Society) and Florida had accepted 17 of 20 reports by 1992 (H.M. Stevenson and B.H. Anderson, 1994, *The Birdlife of Florida*,



University Press of Florida), many of which occurred in the Panhandle, but several were from the Atlantic coast and the Keys.

(B. Pranty, 1996, *A Birder's Guide to Florida*, American Birding Association, Inc.).

Although public access into Plant Wansley has been denied due to security reasons (and may possibly once again be closed to birders in the future due to safety concerns), many individuals were permitted to enter and view the loon as well as take some excellent photographs. Plant Wansley appears to be a very important area for birds due to the large expanse of wetland habitat that is free from boating and hunting pressure.

(Record accepted by the GOS Records and Checklist Committee).

Michael Beohm, 619 West Main Street, Thomaston, Georgia 30286



Pacific Loon – Photo by Earl Horn

#### CEDAR WAXWINGS MAY BE EXPANDING RANGE IN GEORGIA –

On 30 May 2002 a Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) nest was discovered above the parking lot of the Brasstown Ranger District office of the Chattahoochee National Forest near Blairsville, GA (lat N 34.866°, long W 83.991°; elevation 551 m). The nest was in a shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) within a small stand of shortleaf pine. It was placed on a limb on the north side of the tree, 23 m above the ground, approximately five feet (1.5m) from the trunk. The lower four meters of the tree trunk was covered in poison ivy (*Rhus/Toxicodendron radicans*). At that time two parents were feeding an unknown number of young. A later observer (N. Sekera, 31 May) witnessed at least two or three young being fed in the vicinity.

On 9 June 2002 P. Hardy discovered a Cedar Waxwing nest about 25 feet high in a Loblolly pine tree on his property on Lake Jennifer in southeast Americus, Georgia. Both adults were visiting the nest regularly, often together, but no eggs were ever laid. The nest was abandoned on 17 June 2002. This is the first known nesting attempt of this species in the Coastal Plain.

These two independent nesting attempts stimulated our interest in the population dynamics of this species. We found that Cedar Waxwings are uncommon breeders in Georgia, especially outside the Southern Appalachians. Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data indicate substantial population increases in the Southeast (average annual population increase of 9.1% for the period 1980-2000,  $p < 0.000$   $N = 90$  BBS routes). Georgia has shown an even greater increase in detection of 13.3%, though not statistically significant due to the small sample sizes ( $p = 0.14$   $N = 4$  BBS routes) (Fig. 1; J. R. Sauer et al. 2001, *The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2000*. Version 2001.2, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD). Cedar Waxwings are known to preferentially nest in orchards, fields with scattered trees, park-like settings (widely spaced trees, little mid- or under-story), and near water (J. E. Crouch, 1936, *Auk* 53:1-8; C. P. Nicholson, 1997, *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Tennessee*. The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville), and fruit constitutes a substantial portion of their diet (A. C. Martin et al., 1951, *American Wildlife and Plants: A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits*. McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York.; M.C. Witmer et al., 1997, Cedar Waxwing [*Bombycilla cedrorum*]). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 309 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds., The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and the American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.). Both sites were in man-made park-like habitat and near water, with the Blairsville site less than 300 m from Lake Nottely, and the Americus site less than 15m from Lake Jennifer. The combination of park-like habitat, fruit trees, and artificial reservoirs are increasingly common throughout



Georgia as a result of development and may have increased the amount of habitat available for nesting. A range expansion by Cedar Waxwings currently is underway in other parts of the Southeast and may be underway in Georgia, as well.

Nathan A. Klaus and Todd Schneider, *Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame Wildlife/Natural Heritage Section, Georgia, 116 Rum Creek Drive, Forsyth GA 31029 and Phil Hardy, 119 Lake Jennifer Drive, Americus, Georgia 31709*

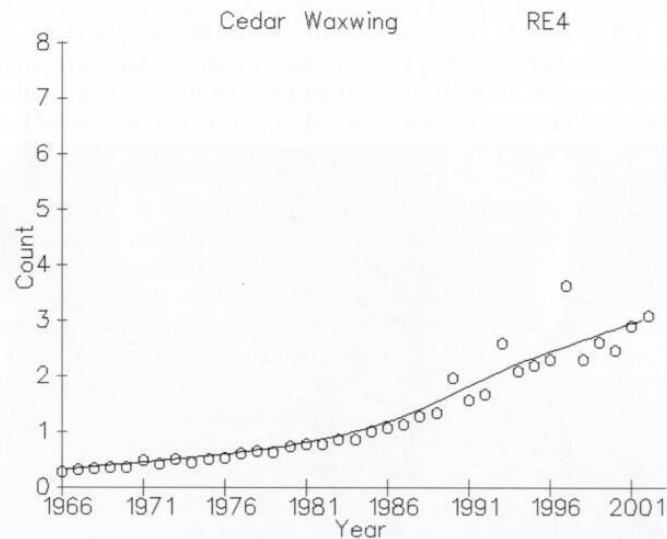


Figure 1. Population trend of the Cedar Waxwing in the Southeastern United States (Sauer et al. 2001).

**BLACKPOLL WARBLER AT SEA** – A single, adult male Blackpoll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*) circled and then landed aboard the NOAA ship, Nancy Foster, at 1315 on 17 June 2003. Our position was slightly north of J Reef (N31-35.769, W80-47.055), 46km west of St. Catherines Island, Georgia. The adult male had a black cap extending through the eye, streaked back, two wing bars, streaked flanks, a malar stripe, and white breast (Fig. 1). Its orange bill color is a feature not described in Sibley (2000, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York), but is shown in the photographs of Dunn and Garrett (1997, *Warblers*, Peterson Field Guides, Houghton Mifflin, Boston), and the plates of Curson et al. (1994, *Warblers of the Americas: An Identification Guide*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston). Weather that day was partly cloudy, with no wind.

The blackpoll departed the ship as we approached land, approximately off the coast of Skidaway Island. This observation is later than the 6 June sighting reported in Beaton et al. (2003, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, GOS Occasional Publ. No.14), and constitutes a new late date for the Coast region of Georgia.

Russell J. Wigh, 34 Peregrine Crossing, Savannah, Georgia 31411



Figure 1. Adult, male Blackpoll Warbler on ship's deck.

**A CLAPPER RAIL IN UPSON COUNTY** – On 30 August 2001, a co-worker at DeSter (a manufacturing plant located on Delray Road near the Thomaston Airport) informed me that there was a large, dead bird outside. I examined it and found that it was a Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) and obtained permission to use the company's Polaroid camera to take two photographs. It had died as a result of hitting a window during flight, and although the specimen seemed to be in relatively good shape it was not saved due to decomposition of the carcass.

The cheeks were gray and the sides of the neck were tan. The throat and belly were white and the flanks were lightly barred. The back was gray and the wings were mostly gray with a small amount of rufous. There also were a few black markings on the wings, but there were no black streaks present on the back, which seemed to point to a Clapper Rail. I sent the photographs to Paul Sykes and Giff Beaton, who both thought that the bird was almost certainly a Clapper Rail (the bill was inconsistent with a juvenile bird and the flight feathers were too worn for a juvenile as well), but it was felt that another expert opinion was probably needed. The photographs were then sent to Michael O'Brien, one of North America's leading rail experts, who verified that it was indeed a Clapper Rail. This is only the fourth inland record for Georgia, and the first in the Piedmont in thirty years (G. Beaton et al., 2003, *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., GOS Occasional Publ., No. 14).

Michael Beohm, 619 West Main Street, Thomaston, Georgia 30286

## FROM THE FIELD

December 2002 - February 2003

The number of well documented reports this winter has provided plenty of work for the GOS Checklist and Records Committee. No less than three new state records resulted from sightings during a five-day period in mid-December. The first was an overdue Pacific Loon found by Michael Beohm at Plant Wansley in Carroll/Heard counties. A few days later, a major invasion of Cave Swallows resulted in three accepted records, as well as a couple of other reports from the state. A Cave Swallow that was captured and measured on Wassaw Island was felt to be of the southwestern subspecies *pelodoma*. During late fall and early winter this year, this species was observed in good numbers in several other Atlantic Coast states, presumably the result of a major storm system that moved across the country in mid-November. A Sage Thrasher was an unexpected find by Tim Keyes at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Newton Co. Other very rare finds listed below include Manx Shearwater, Razorbill, and Sprague's Pipit.

While there was plenty of excitement generated by these super-rarities, it was a slow winter for some of the irruptive species, such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin. There were no reports at all of Evening Grosbeak.

As this is my final report before handing over the reins to Bob Zaremba, I would like to acknowledge several people who have helped me in my duties as editor for From The Field. In particular, I would like to thank Mim Eisenberg for proofreading all of my reports. Terry Moore, editor of Field Notes for the Atlanta Audubon Society's newsletter Wingbars, continues to provide comprehensive monthly and seasonal reports. The editors of The Oriole have been patient in waiting for several of my reports that failed to make the deadline. Many members of GOS regularly have sent summaries of their sightings from many regions of the state. Concise reporting directly to the From The Field editor helps in avoiding a significant sighting, which is otherwise merely mentioned in an Internet post, from being overlooked. Of course, very rare finds, including some birds seen out of season, should be reported to the GOS Checklist and Records Committee.

Finally, as I sat down to finish this report, I received a copy of the updated Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds in my mailbox. This outstanding, thoroughly researched publication will be a great aid to birders in the state.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, 1986, Haney, J.C. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area in McIntosh Co.; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CEWC - Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application in Clayton Co.; ENWR - the Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Stewart Co.; m.ob. - many observers; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; Plant Wansley - Plant Wansley in Carroll and Heard counties; West Point Dam - West Point Dam in Troup Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.



## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**RED THROATED LOON** - The best counts were three at Lake Juliette on 1 Dec (Terry Johnson), seven off Jekyll Island on 25 Jan (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell), and eight on a pelagic trip out of Savannah on 21 Feb (Giff Beaton et al.). Singles were seen inland at West Point Dam from 8 through 21 Dec (Walt Chambers) and at Plant Wansley on 1 Feb (John Gatchet), and a flyover was reported from Spalding Co. on 13 Dec (Eric Beohm).

**PACIFIC LOON** - One was discovered at Plant Wansley on 19 Dec (Michael Beohm). The bird, which remained in the area through at least mid-February, was later seen by many observers and was well photographed. This species is in the Hypothetical Species List in the ACOGB based on John Le Conte's 1894 list of Georgia birds and unsubstantiated records from Camden Co. during the winter of 1962-63. This season's record has been accepted by the GOS Checklist and Records Committee.

**HORNED GREBE** - The high count was 60 at Plant Wansley on 21 Dec (Bruce Dralle et al.).

**EARED GREBE** - One was seen at Carter's Lake on 8 and 14 Dec (John Gatchet), two were at Plant Wansley on 1 Feb (John Gatchet), and 15 was a good count at the Rum Creek WMA also on 1 Feb (Mark Freeman, Jim Ozier et al.).

**MANX SHEARWATER** - As many as six were seen on the pelagic trip out of Savannah on 21 Feb (Giff Beaton et al.). Excellent photographs were taken by Jim Flynn, which should result in this being just the tenth record of this species for the state.

**NORTHERN GANNET** - A good count of 150 was made on a pelagic trip out of Savannah on 26 Feb (Pierre Howard et al.).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - Twelve were seen at the mouth of the Satilla River on 12 Dec (Chris Daughtry), nine were reported on the Cumberland Island CBC on 14 Dec (*fide* Sheila Willis), and two were reported from Skidaway Island on 18 Dec (Russ Wigh).

**AMERICAN BITTERN** - Singles were at the South Peachtree Creek Nature Preserve from 25 Jan (Dave Butler et al.) through at least 19 Feb (Jerry Brunner) and in Macon on 14 Dec (Ty Ivey et al.).

**TRICOLORED HERON** - One was seen in Seminole Co. on 1 Feb (Michael Bell, Sean Kelley).

**REDDISH EGRET** - One was reported on the Glynn Co. CBC on 4 Jan (*fide* Mike Chapman).

**CATTLE EGRET** - Five was a good winter count from Crisp Co. on 1 Jan (Dan Guynn, Pam Guynn), and singles were seen on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 21 Dec (*fide* Steve Calver), on the Albany CBC on 28 Dec (*fide* Alan Ashley), in Toombs Co. on 2 Feb (Jerry Amerson, Marie Amerson) and in Brooks Co. on 28 Feb (Brad Bergstrom et al.).

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - Singles were noteworthy in Spalding Co. during early December (Eric Beohm) and in Forsyth Co. on 26 Dec (Jim Flynn).

**GLOSSY IBIS** - Seven were counted at the AWMA on 24 Dec (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - This species was widely reported, including six at ENWR on 15 Dec (Walt Chambers), 14 in Sumter Co. on 19 Jan (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle, Phil Hardy), four at Oxbow Meadows in the Columbus area from 22 Jan through 8 Feb (Walt Chambers et al.), five in Bulloch Co. from 22 Jan through 13 Feb (Ray Chandler et al.), 16 again at ENWR on 26 Jan (Gene Keferl), one in Floyd Co. also on 26 Jan (Bill Harbin), one in Madison Co. on 26 Jan (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) and 1 Feb (Tom Egan, Pierre Howard, Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba), one in Douglas Co. on 2 Feb (Chris Loudermilk), four at West Point Dam on 8 Feb (Walt Chambers), and two in Bartow Co. on 27 Feb (Bruce Dralle, Tom Egan, Pierre Howard).

**ROSS'S GOOSE** - The resident bird was reported from Madison Co. on 11 Jan (Earl Horn) and 1 Feb (Tom Egan, Pierre Howard, Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba), and another single was seen in Floyd Co. from 26 Jan (Bill Harbin) through at least 18 Feb (m.ob.).

**TUNDRA SWAN** - Two were seen at West Point Dam on 8 Dec (Matthew Pike), one was in the Macon area on 14 Dec (Paul Johnson) and 19 Jan (Ty Ivey et al.), and two were found at the CEWC on 20 Dec (Tim Keyes).

**GADWALL** - A count of 62 came from Merry Ponds in Augusta on 7 Dec (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle), and 42 were counted at Chicopee Lake in Hall Co. on 6 Feb (Karen Theodorou).

**AMERICAN WIGEON** - The high count was 121 at Garden Lakes in the Rome area on 7 Feb (Marion Dobbs).

**MOTTLED DUCK** - Five were observed at AWMA on 22 Feb (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** - Twenty were counted at the AWMA on 28 Dec (Earl Horn), 20+ were seen at ENWR on 12 Jan (Walt Chambers), 14 were observed at Bear Creek Reservoir in Jackson Co. on 25 Jan (Mark Freeman), and about 30 were seen at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 15 Feb (Calvin Zippler et al.).

**CANVASBACK** - The high count for the period was 30+ at Lake Seminole on 1 Feb (Michael Bell, Sean Kelley).

**GREATER SCAUP** - Two were reported from West Point Dam in Troup Co. on 6 Dec (Giff Beaton, Deb Zaremba), as many as four were seen at Plant Wansley during late December (m.ob.), and three were observed along the Chattahoochee River in Fulton Co. (Chuck Saleeby).

**SURF SCOTER** - One was reported from Plant Wansley from 21 Dec (Jim Flynn) through 2 Feb (Bill Lotz, Dan Vickers). The high count from the coast was 22 on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 14 Dec (*fide* Emil Urban).

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - Two were found at Carter's Lake on 7 Dec (John Gatchet), with one remaining there through at least 22 Feb (John Gatchet).

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** - One was seen off St. Catherines Island on 13 Dec (Giff Beaton), one was reported on the Cumberland Island CBC on 14 Dec (*fide* Sheila Willis), one was found at Plant Scherer on the Piedmont NWR/Rum Creek WMA CBC on 16 Dec (Terry Johnson et al.), four was a good count at Plant Wansley from 27 Jan (Rick Waldrop) through 8 Feb (Mary Ann Teal, Sam Teal), and two were found at Rum Creek WMA on 1 Feb (Mark Freeman, Jim Ozier et al.).

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** - The high count was eight at West Point Dam on 6 Dec (Giff Beaton, Deb Zaremba). One returned to Skidaway Island on 3 Dec



(Russ Wigh), one was seen at Carter's Lake on 8 Dec (John Gatchet), another single was at Callaway Gardens from 3 Jan (Walt Chambers et al.) through 12 Jan (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn), three were found at Plant Wansley on 19 Dec (Michael Beohm), one was seen in Baker Co. on 9 Jan (Giff Beaton), a female was observed at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 25 and 26 Jan (Anne Waters et al.), and five were counted back at Plant Wansley on 1 Feb (John Gatchet).

HOODED MERGANSER - A good count of 128 was made at Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas Co. on 18 Jan (Chris Loudermilk).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - Forty was a good count at West Point Dam on 6 Dec (Giff Beaton, Deb Zaremba).

NORTHERN HARRIER - The high count from the Cobb owl fields in Sumter Co. was 27 on 9 Dec (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

OSPREY - Rare for winter were singles along the Chattahoochee River in the Atlanta area on 6 Dec (Chuck Saleeby) and 8 Dec (Mark Davis), and at Lake Allatoona on 22 Dec (Pat Sully).

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK - A single was reported in Floyd Co. on both 24 Jan and 9 Feb (Dan Roper).

GOLDEN EAGLE - A first-year bird was seen and photographed on the Okefenokee CBC on 27 Dec (Earl Horn).

MERLIN - A count of seven was made on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 14 Dec (*fide* Emil Urban).

PEREGRINE FALCON - A bird seen about 55 km offshore at a navigation tower on the pelagic trip on 21 Feb was an interesting find (Giff Beaton et al.).

KING RAIL - Five was the high count at ENWR on 3 Feb (Walt Chambers).

VIRGINIA RAIL - Two were reported from Coosa Preserve in Floyd Co. on 16 Dec (Marion Dobbs), and two were observed at ENWR on 3 Feb (Walt Chambers).

SORA - A very high count of 261 was made on the Augusta CBC on 21 Dec (*fide* Anne Waters).

PURPLE GALLINULE - Singles were seen on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 21 Dec (*fide* Steve Calver), and at Skidaway Island on 1 Jan (Russ Wigh).

SANDHILL CRANE - Good numbers were reported southbound during December and early January, including an impressive 3200 over Cobb Co. on 13 Dec (Bruce Dralle). The first northbound birds reported were a flock of seven over the ELHLAF on 30 Jan (Carol Lambert), with the main push coming on 14 and 15 Feb, including a high count of 650 over Atlanta on 14 Feb (Chuck Saleeby).

WHOOPIING CRANE - One of the birds introduced into Florida was seen in Brooks Co. on 15 Feb (Debbie Grimes).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER - Survey flights along the Georgia coast during December tallied an estimated 950 (*fide* Brad Winn).

AMERICAN AVOCET - The high count from along the Jekyll Island Causeway was 80+ on 10 Feb (E. J. Williams).

WHIMBREL - This species is somewhat rare on the coast in winter, so four seen at Jekyll Island on 1 Jan are noteworthy (Gene Keferl).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW - Singles were seen along Jekyll Island Causeway from 27 Dec (Lydia Thompson) through 20 Jan (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell), on

Sapelo Island from 28 Dec (*fide* James Keener) through 11 Feb (Doris Cohrs), and on Little St. Simons Island on 23 Jan (Bob Zaremba et al.).

MARBLED GODWIT - A count of 23 came from Sapelo Island on 11 Feb (Doris Cohrs).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - The high count from Tybee Island was 11 on 22 Feb (Malcolm Hodges, Bill Lotz, Jeff Sewell).

DUNLIN - Good winter counts were four in Bartow Co. on both 29 Dec and 1 Jan (Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba) and six in Mitchell Co. on 5 Jan (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

RED PHALAROPE - A good count of 937 was made on the pelagic trip on 21 Feb (Giff Beaton et al.).

POMARINE JAEGER - One was reported on the Glynn Co. CBC on 4 Jan (*fide* Mike Chapman).

PARASITIC JAEGER - One was seen on the pelagic trip on 26 Feb (Pierre Howard et al.).

FRANKLIN'S GULL - An immature bird was seen at West Point Dam on 11 Dec (Walt Chambers).

BONAPARTE'S GULL - A good count of 54 was made at Tugalo Lake in Stephens Co. on 12 Feb (Marion Dobbs).

HERRING GULL - A good inland count of 41 was made on the Macon CBC on 14 Dec (*fide* Jerry Amerson).

FORSTER'S TERN - The high count was 70 at West Point Dam on 21 Dec (Walt Chambers).

RAZORBILL - Only four previous records are listed in the ACOGB, so the count of 36 on the pelagic trip on 21 Feb was outstanding (Giff Beaton et al.). Two also were found on the pelagic trip on 26 Feb (Pierre Howard et al.).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - Seven was a good count for Spalding Co., at the northern extreme of this species' usual range in Georgia, on 7 Jan (Eric Beohm). Forty also were counted in Sumter Co. on 19 Jan (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle, Phil Hardy).

SHORT-EARED OWL - A single bird in Spalding Co. on 2 Jan was a good find (Eric Beohm). Five was the high count from the Cobb owl fields in Sumter Co. on 5 Jan (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Singles were banded in the Roswell area on 16 Dec and in the Chamblee area on 16 Jan, and one was found dead in the Alpharetta area on 20 Jan (Rusty Trump). Away from the Atlanta area, singles were reported from Skidaway Island on 1 Jan (Russ Wigh) and in McIntosh Co. on 4 Jan (Doris Cohrs).

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - A bird was banded in the Athens area on 7 Jan (Rusty Trump).

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD - Singles were banded in Hiawassee on 21 Dec, in Lilburn on 16 Jan, and in Athens on 20 Jan (Rusty Trump). These are the 9th through 11th records for the state.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - There were about 40 to 50 reported from across the state during the period (*fide* Terry Moore).

ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD - One was banded in the Athens area on 20 Jan (Rusty Trump). This bird was at the same feeder as one of the aforementioned



Calliope Hummingbirds.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** - A bird found in Baker Co. from 28 Dec (Paul Johnson et al.) through 5 Jan (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) provided a 23rd record for the state. Another bird, an adult male, was reported from Sumter Co. from 4 Jan (Phil Hardy, Clive Rainey et al.) through 19 Jan (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle).

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** - Singles were seen on the Sapelo Island CBC on 29 Dec (James Keener), on St. Simons Island on 19 Jan (Lydia Thompson), and on Jekyll Island on 22 Feb (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** - One was a great find on the Marietta CBC on 22 Dec (Giff Beaton, Karen Theodorou et al.).

**FISH CROW** - Four hundred was a good count in Lee Co. on 9 Jan (Giff Beaton). Perhaps this species is expanding its range into the mountains, as evidenced by two in Habersham Co. on 8 Feb (Giff Beaton, Bob Zaremba) and one in Fannin Co. on 20 Feb (Betty Belanger).

**HORNED LARK** - The high counts were 26 in Bartow Co. on 25 Jan (Bruce Dralle et al.) and 15 in Floyd Co. on 8 Feb (Marion Dobbs).

**PURPLE MARTIN** - The first reports were of four birds at Fort Benning in the Columbus area on 5 Feb (Steve Holzman) and a single at Birdsong Nature Center in Grady Co. on the same day (Laura Reynolds).

**TREE SWALLOW** - Nine were observed at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 13 Jan (Ruth Meade, Anne Waters) and one already was as far north as Chatsworth on 22 Feb (John Gatchet).

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** - Very rare for winter was a bird reported on the Macon CBC on 14 Dec (Paul Johnson et al.).

**CAVE SWALLOW** - Considering this species had not been reported in the state previously, the two-day period from 14 to 15 December was astounding. A bird was captured, measured, and photographed on Wassaw Island on 14 Dec (Steve Calver, Peter Range). On the same day, two birds were observed on the Macon CBC (Walt Bowman, Nancy Gobris, Ty Ivey, Paul Johnson, Larry Ross), and three pale-rumped swallows, possibly this species, were seen on Cumberland Island (Tim Keyes). Also on 14 Dec, one was reported from Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. (Anne Waters et al.), and the following day one was seen at AWMA (Michael Beohm, Tim Rose). To date, the birds reported from Wassaw Island, Macon, and AWMA have been accepted by the GOS Checklist and Records Committee.

**BARN SWALLOW** - Two were seen at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 11 Dec (Calvin Zippler), and one was recorded on the Okefenokee CBC on 27 Dec (Earl Horn).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - Nine were counted along Burrell's Ford Rd. in Rabun Co. on 11 Jan (Earl Horn). There were very few other reports from elsewhere in north Georgia in what was a slow year for this species.

**MARSH WREN** - One was a rare winter sighting in Spalding Co. on 21 Dec (Eric Beohm).

**GRAY CATBIRD** - One was a good find on the Amicalola Falls CBC on 30 Dec (*vide* Jim Greenway).

**SAGE THRASHER** - A bird was found at CEWC in Newton Co. on 19 Dec (Tim Keyes). The bird remained in the area through the following day and was seen

and photographed by a number of observers. This sighting has been accepted by the Records Committee. This species is in the Hypothetical List in the ACOGB based on a report from 1934.

**AMERICAN PIPIT** - About 1000 were observed in Spalding Co. on 30 Dec (Eric Beohm).

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT** - One was reported from the Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 11 Jan (Emil Urban et al.). Another bird was seen in Floyd Co. on 6 Feb (Giff Beaton, Marion Dobbs). The latter sighting already has been accepted by the Records Committee.

**CEDAR WAXWING** - This species was thought by several observers from across the state to be present in fewer than normal numbers, but 1000+ were reported from Fort Pulaski on 25 Jan (Michael Bell) and 12 Feb (Jim Wilson), and at least 1000 were observed in the Valdosta area during February (Brad Bergstrom).

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** - One was in the Marietta area from 3 Dec through at least 1 Jan (Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba), and another bird was reported on 28 Dec on the Sapelo Island CBC (*vide* James Keener). This species is listed as accidental in winter in the ACOGB.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** - This species also is accidental in winter, but one was found in the St. Marys area in Camden Co. on 14 Dec (Jim Flynn).

**NORTHERN PARULA** - One was observed in the Thalmann area in Glynn Co. on 1 Dec (Gene Keferl), and one was reported on the Cumberland Island CBC on 14 Dec (*vide* Sheila Willis).

**OVENBIRD** - Singles were seen on the Cumberland Island CBC on 14 Dec (*vide* Sheila Willis) and in Ware Co. on 28 Dec (Earl Horn).

**WILSON'S WARBLER** - One was observed on Butler Island on 11 Jan (Ray Chandler).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** - One seen in Turner Co. on 8 Dec was a good find (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

**WESTERN TANAGER** - A male was seen at a feeder in Cobb Co. beginning on 10 Dec and was found very sporadically thereafter, with the last sighting being on 8 Feb (Laura Brown).

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW** - Eight was a decent winter count at Ichauway Plantation in Baker Co. on 21 Jan (Michael Bell).

**LARK SPARROW** - One was reported on the Bainbridge-Lake Seminole CBC on 30 Dec (*vide* Oscar Dewberry).

**HENSLOW'S SPARROW** - Reports included 15 to 20 at Paulk's Pasture WMA in Glynn Co. on 1 Dec (Gene Keferl), eight on the St. Catherines Island CBC on 14 Dec (*vide* Emil Urban), four at Birdsong Nature Center in Grady Co. on 8 Feb (Michael Bell), and six in Brooks Co. on 28 Feb (Brad Bergstrom).

**LE CONTE'S SPARROW** - One was seen on the Albany CBC on 28 Dec (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** - A good count of 71 was made on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 21 Dec (*vide* Steve Calver).

**FOX SPARROW** - A bird seen in Augusta on 3 Feb was believed to be of the western subspecies (Clarence Belger, Anne Waters).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** - The only report of more than one bird was two seen on the Floyd Co. CBC on 15 Dec (*vide* Owen Kinney). Singles also were reported



in Irwin Co. on 8 Dec (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn), on the Harris Neck NWR CBC on 21 Dec (fide Steve Calver), in Spalding Co. on 26 Dec (Eric Beohm), in Clinch Co. on 28 Dec (Earl Horn), and at the ELHLAF on 4 Jan (Patrick Brisse, Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle).

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - The best counts were 20 in Lee Co. on 9 Jan (Giff Beaton) and 30 in White Co. on 11 Jan (Earl Horn).

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR** - This species was well reported. Two to three were reported from the ELHLAF on 7 Dec (Dean Demarest), five were found near the south end of Cumberland Island on 23 Jan (Ray Chandler et al.), five were seen in Bartow Co. on 25 Jan (Bruce Dralle), with smaller numbers being reported from there through 10 Feb (Ted Reissing, Chuck Saleeby et al.), and four were observed in Floyd Co. on 8 Feb (Marion Dobbs).

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** - One was seen in Bibb Co. on 5 Dec (John Kraus), one was found in Lamar Co. on 4 Jan (Eric Beohm), and three to four were observed on Skidaway Island on 11 Jan (Joe Dobbs).

**PAINTED BUNTING** - Two were seen at Phinizy Swamp in Richmond Co. on 1 Dec (Calvin Zippler), and one was seen on Jekyll Island on 27 Dec and 10 Jan (Lydia Thompson).

**DICKCISSEL** - Singles were found in the Duluth area on 5 Feb (Karen Theodorou) and in Baker Co. on 25 Feb (Michael Bell). Both birds remained through the end of the season.

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** - Singles were seen in Monroe Co. on 28 Dec (Eric Beohm) and at ENWR on 12 Jan (Walt Chambers).

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** - High counts included 384 on the Macon CBC on 14 Dec (fide Jerry Amerson) and 400 in Spalding Co. on 26 Dec (Eric Beohm).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - An excellent count of 223 was made in Sumter Co. on 19 Jan (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle, Phil Hardy).

**BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE** - One was seen in the Tifton area on 8 Dec (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** - Four spent most of the winter in the Valdosta area (Brad Bergstrom), two were seen in Houston Co. on 7 Dec (Bob Sargent), three were in Brooks Co. on 15 Dec (Debbie Grimes), one was on St. Simons Island on 11 Jan (Lydia Thompson), and two to three were at Merry Bros. Ponds in the Augusta area on 18 and 19 Jan (Judy Gregory, Anne Waters).

**PURPLE FINCH** - There were few reports of this species in north Georgia, though up to three birds were seen as far south as Valdosta during the period (Brad Bergstrom).

**RED CROSSBILL** - The high count from the Pine Log WMA in Bartow Co. was 10 on 2 Feb (Bob Zaremba, Deb Zaremba). One bird was reported in the Blue Ridge area on 25 Feb (Beth Hooper).

**PINE SISKIN** - Only small numbers of this winter finch were reported for the winter.

Michael Bell, 517 S. Lamar St., Bainbridge, GA 39819.

## FROM THE FIELD

March - May 2003

This was possibly the wettest spring migration season the state has seen in the past ten years. The weather systems that blanketed the Southeast probably affected the observers more than the birds, as many species were noted in higher than average numbers around the state. Rainfall amounts were between 1 and 3 inches higher than normal in many areas, and average temperatures were about normal. A nice trend that is continuing has been the increase in the number of reports being submitted from areas outside of the Atlanta area. We had excellent coverage in the southwest and northwest corners of the state, as well as increased reporting from the coast and middle Georgia. This will help us get a better picture of migration across the state, as compared to the well birded areas like Kennesaw Mountain and Clayton County. Now on to the birds!

Two of the more interesting sightings for the season were the two different reports of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in the state, perhaps indicating a dispersal of the breeding populations to our south. Also of note were the reports of Black-billed Cuckoo in the mountains (Murray, Union, and Towns Co.) where the species possibly may nest. The newly published Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds lists this species as historically breeding in the upper Piedmont and Mountains but with very few recent records. Many observers noted the early arrival of several species this spring, most notably Barn Swallow. There were new early dates set in the Coastal Plain, Mountains, and Coast, three out of four of the physiographic regions in Georgia. The pattern of early arrival dates didn't really hold for the majority of the other neo-tropic migrants. Once they began arriving, neo-tropical migrants were seen in good numbers, with several species being recorded in record high counts (See Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, and Cerulean Warblers in the report below). The majority of the reports were from Kennesaw Mountain but many birders made the trip up to Ivy Log Gap Road in north Georgia to report on the breeding population of some of the warbler species. We had excellent counts of Cerulean, Ovenbird, Black-throated Green and Worm-eating Warbler from the mountains during the breeding season. Another good trend has been an increase in the number of sod farms being visited around the state. The number and variety of shorebirds being reported have increased. I received several reports from different areas of the state that included Baird's (very rare spring report) and White-rumped Sandpipers, American Golden Plover, Upland Sandpiper, and Willet. Lastly, several pelagic trips during this season helped to increase our understanding of birdlife offshore. See below for more detail on these and other sightings.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AWEC - Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area in McIntosh Co.; CRNRA - the Cochran Shoals Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton Co.; ENWR - the Bradley Unit of the Eufaula



National Wildlife Refuge in Stewart Co.; Kennesaw Mt. - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Cobb Co.; m.ob. - many observers; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; v.ob. - various observers; SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**COMMON LOON** - The high count for this species was 30 at West Point Lake on 8 April (Walt Chambers). A late bird was reported from a pelagic trip out of Tybee on 30 May (Russ Wigh, m.ob.). A late bird in the Piedmont was a bird reported from Lake Arrowhead through 9 May (Stephen Stewart).

**HORNED GREBE** - The high count was 75 at Shuck Pen Eddy Boat Ramp, Elbert Co. on 17 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn). Also notable was a count of 50 at Richard B. Russell Dam, Elbert Co. They were reported in "every imaginable plumage" on 17 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn) and 10 at SCSP on 20 March (Chris Loudermilk).

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** - Five birds were recorded on a 30 May pelagic trip out from the Savannah area (Russ Wigh et al.).

**WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** - A total of 12 were found on the 30 May pelagic trip (Russ Wigh et al.).

**NORTHERN GANNET** - Two birds were very late on the 30 May pelagic trip (Russ Wigh et al.).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - One bird was an unusual find at the WPD on 28 March (Emily Jo Williams). Probably the same bird was seen there on 11 April (Jim Flynn) and 12 April (John Gatchet). Two birds also were seen at WPD on 23 March (Chris Loudermilk). Three birds were seen at Carters Lake on 14 April by Rick Waldrop. More usual were 15 birds seen in the St. Marys area on 3 April (Sheila Willis).

**BROWN PELICAN** - One bird was a good find at Lake Oconee in Greene County on 27 April (Mark Freeman). Brad Winn reported more than 2,000 nesting pairs as part of the DNR survey results for the coast, and 2,500 were seen resting on a sandbar near the north end of Blackbeard Island on 14 May (Paul Sikes and John Seginak).

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** - A flock of 250 was seen at Bear Creek Reservoir in Jackson County on 24 April (Mark Freeman) for an excellent inland high count.

**AMERICAN BITTERN** - Single birds were reported from Gwinnett Co. on 26 April (Earl Horn), Floyd Co. on 26 April (Chuck Saleeby), ENWR on 2 April and 27 April, and two on 9 April (Walt Chambers), and at Phinizy Swamp on 26 and 27 April (Jeff Sewell et al.). One bird was found at SPCNP on 8 March, then a second bird was found on 16 March, with one bird remaining until 25 April (Jerry Brunner). A late bird was seen 14 May at AWMA by Paul Sykes.

**LEAST BITTERN** - Single birds were seen at ENWR on 27 April (Walt Chambers) and Lake Seminole, Decatur Co. on May 26 (Michael Bell).

**GREAT BLUE HERON** - Three active nests were found at the CRNRA on 7 March (Mark Davis), and 31 nests were found in Heard Co. near Franklin on 25 March (Malcolm Hodges, Carolina Lane).

**GREAT EGRET** - One bird was early on the Berry College WMA in the Rome area on 8 March (Ginny Wood) and 10 was a good inland count in Murray Co. on 6 May (Joshua Spence).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** - A count of 11 on 8 March at the Bradley Unit of ENWR was a good early count (Walt Chambers).

**TRICOLORED HERON** - This species is not widely reported away from the coast, so somewhat rare and early was a bird found in Bartow Co. on 30 March (Bruce Dralle, et al.), and another bird seen at the ENWR on 2 and 9 April by Walt Chambers was a good find for that location.

**CATTLE EGRET** - A single bird was somewhat early at Skidaway Island on 18 March (Russ Wigh), and another bird was already as far north as Murray Co. on 21 April (Joshua Spence).

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - A single bird was reported on 9 April at the Bradley Unit of ENWR (Walt Chambers).

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** - The first report from the Atlanta area came on 25 March at the CRNRA (Mark Davis). Nesting reports from Telfair and Wheeler counties include five adults occupying four nests on 15 April at Gum Swamp Creek, and one adult on a nest on 26 April at Kinchafoonee Creek in Webster Co. (Dan Guynn, Jr.).

**GLOSSY IBIS** - Three birds reported on 11 March from Little St Simons Island were unusual for the coastal islands (Brandon Noel). More expected were the five birds reported from AWMA near Brunswick on 15 March (Gene Keferl).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** - Lydia Thompson reported a single bird at Jekyll Island as early as 29 March, and up to four birds frequented the Jekyll Island Amphitheater area during April and May. Eight were seen along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 27 May (Gene Keferl).

**WOOD STORK** - A report of five birds at Magnolia Springs, Jenkins Co. on 1 April is nearing the northern limit for breeding birds (Russ Wigh).

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** - A couple of very interesting reports were received. A flock of more than 20 birds was found on the Abraham Baldwin Ag. College campus near Tifton on 23 May (William Moore), and five were found at Andrews Island in the Brunswick area on 31 May (Bob Zarembo et al.).

**GREAT WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - A late bird was seen in Stewart Co. on 27 April (Walt Chambers, Bill Birkhead).

**SNOW GOOSE** - One blue form was seen at Vogel State Park on 8 March (Karen and John McFarland). One bird was seen in Floyd Co. on the Berry College campus through 27 April (Marion Dobbs, Chuck Saleeby).

**ROSS'S GOOSE** - One bird was seen in Floyd Co. on 4 March (Joshua Spence) and was last reported on 25 April (Marion Dobbs). Another bird was reported from Hart Co. on 17 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

**GADWALL** - The last reports for this species was from ELHLAF on 12 April (Bill Lotz) and 10 were still present on 8 April at West Point Dam (Walt Chambers).

**AMERICAN WIGEON** - The latest report was from Unicoi State Park where four birds were present on 5 April (Eugene Kelley).

**MOTTLED DUCK** - The only report was a single bird from AWMA on 18 April (Tim Keyes).



BLUE-WINGED TEAL – The last report was from Carol Lambert of four birds at ELHLAF on 6 May.

NORTHERN SHOVELER – The latest reports came from West Point Dam where 10 birds were still present on 8 April (Walt Chambers), and one bird was still present at ELHLAF on 12 April (Bill Lotz).

NORTHERN PINTAIL – A single bird at the Arrowhead Environmental Center in Floyd Co. on 18 April was late (Earl Barton).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL – The latest report was a single bird seen at ELHLAF on 5 April (Gordon McWilliams).

COMMON GOLDENEYE – Three birds at Plant Wansley on 15 March were a good find by Chris Loudermilk.

SURF SCOTER – John Gatchet had a good count of eight at Carters Lake on 13 April.

RUDDY DUCK – An adult male was still at the ELHLAF on 17 May (Jerry Brunner).

OSPREY – At least one bird was at its nest at the ELHLAF on 16 March (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – The first report came from Camden Co. on 4 March (*vide* E. J. Williams). After that there were many scattered reports, with the best count being seven at Billy's Lake in the Okefenokee on 9 May (*vide* Sheila Willis).

MISSISSIPPI KITE – The earliest report came on 27 March from the Laurens County area (Giff Beaton and Tommy Patterson). Rare for the Atlanta area were single birds seen in Spaulding Co. on 20 April (Eric Beohm) and at the CRNRA on 11 May (Mark Davis et al.).

AMERICAN KESTREL – Jim Ozier reported that a number of these birds were using power poles for nesting along a powerline right of way across Mid-Georgia. Estimates of as many as 200 nesting pairs seem almost unbelievable (*vide* Terry Moore).

MERLIN – Somewhat rare for the Atlanta area were single birds in Gwinnett Co. on 13 March (Earl Horn) and Bartow Co. on 30 March (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle, Tom Egan). Two birds also were seen 9 March in Greene County by Paul Sykes.

PEREGRINE FALCON – The downtown Atlanta pair laid four eggs this spring, but none of them hatched (*vide* Jim Ozier).

RUFFED GROUSE – There were several reports from the mountain area, with the earliest "drumming" reported on 17 March by Tim Keyes.

KING RAIL – Walt Chambers had a good count of six birds from the Bradley Unit of ENWR on 8 March.

PURPLE GALLINULE – Walt Chambers had a rather early bird at the ENWR on 2 April.

SANDHILL CRANE – There were still a lot of birds moving through Georgia during March with a total of about 6,000 birds reported. The peak was evidently 8 March, with the latest report of 40 birds coming from the unusual location of Hiawasee on 21 March (Sandra Green).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER – A breeding plumaged bird was seen in Bartow Co. on 18 May (Bruce Dralle).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER – A few birds were seen in Bartow Co. starting on the early date of 12 March when Bruce Dralle found a single bird. Later sightings, all from Bartow Co., included four on 29 March, seven on 30 March, and four on 31 March (Bruce Dralle et al.).

BLACK-NECKED STILT – Two birds on Little St. Simons Island on 7 March would be a record early date for the state (Brandon Noel, Ethel Green). A high count of eight birds were seen at Andrews Island on 31 May (Bob Zaremba, et al.).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER – A nice count of 17 was made on 14 May at AWMA by Paul Sykes.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – A count of 51 was made around a drained impoundment on Butler Island, AWMA by Paul Sykes on 14 May.

WILLET – Joshua Spence had a nice count of 14 inland on 6 May in Murray County.

WHIMBREL – Good counts were made at St. Simons Island with 789 on 28 April (Lydia Thompson) and 391 on 3 May (Lydia Thompson, Sheila Willis).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW – Single birds were seen at Sapelo Island on 11 March (Doris Cohrs) and along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 19 April (Bob Braxton).

MARBLED GODWIT – Gene Keferl saw 15 birds along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 14 April.

UPLAND SANDPIPER – A single bird was seen at Moody AFB on 16 April (Todd Sullivan). Eight were seen at the East Georgia Sod Farm on 18 April (Tim Keyes et al.). Single birds were seen in Floyd Co. on 26 April (Chuck Saleeby) and at Piedmont NWR on 17 May (Brock Hutchins, Terry Johnson). Another bird was seen in Bartow Co. on 4 May (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown).

LEAST SANDPIPER – Seven birds seen in Bartow Co. on 2 March and nine on 4 March probably were overwintering birds (Traci Brown, Bruce Dralle).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – Two birds in Bartow Co. on 27 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba). Three were seen at the AWMA on 1 May (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton, Earl Horn) and one was in Murray Co. on 9 May (Joshua Spence, Max Medley). In Bartow Co., two were seen on 3 May and one was seen on 4 May (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown). The high count of four birds were seen on 31 May at Andrews Island by Bob Zaremba et al. and by Chris Loudermilk on 9 May at a sod farm in Carroll County.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – One bird was found in Bartow Co. on 27 April by Bruce Dralle and Traci Brown.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – Good numbers were reported from Bartow Co., with an early eight on 1 March, 189 on 22 March, and 325 on 23 March (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown).

PURPLE SANDPIPER – Two birds were seen at Tybee Island on 3 March (Pat Sully et al.).

DUNLIN – A bird seen in Bartow Co. on 2 and 4 March most likely was an overwintering bird (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown).

STILT SANDPIPER – Three were seen at the AWMA on 1 May (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton, Earl Horn) and one was in Murray Co. on 9 May (Joshua Spence).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – One bird was found in Bartow Co. on 11 May (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown).

COMMON SNIPES – Joshua Spence had a good count of 100 in Floyd Co. on 4



March.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - At least four were seen offshore on 4 May by Anssi Vahatalo.

LAUGHING GULL - Rather unusual for an inland location were two birds at the WPD on 11 April (Jim Flynn).

BONAPARTE'S GULL - Seven was a nice count along the CRNRA on 7 April (Mark Davis).

RING-BILLED GULL - Bruce Dralle and Traci Brown had an impressive count of 3,000 at Red Top Mountain State Park on 2 March.

HERRING GULL - Quite rare for this time of year was a bird in Bartow Co. on 18 May (Bruce Dralle).

CASPIAN TERN - Eleven birds were seen at Carters Lake on 15 April by Max Medley (*vide* Joshua Spence).

FORSTER'S TERN - Rare for the Atlanta area were three birds at the ELHLAF on 6 May (Carol Lambert) and a single bird in Bartow Co. on 18 May (Bruce Dralle).

SOOTY TERN - A total of six birds were found on the 30 May pelagic trip (Russ Wigh et al.).

BLACK TERN - The only report was of one bird at the Phinizy Swamp on 23 May (Ruth Meade).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Giff Beaton reported this rare species from Murray Co. on 25 May. Nathan Klaus found single birds near Suches on 24 May and on the Ivy Log Gap Road on 29 May.

BARN OWL - Single birds were reported from Gordon Co. on 17 March (John Gatchet), from Murray Co. on 17 March (Joshua Spence), from the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center on 28 March, and from Oconee Co. on 17 May (Mark Freeman, Carole Ludwig).

WHIP-POOR-WILL - An early bird was reported from Monroe Co. on 11 March (Nathan Klaus).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - The earliest report was of two males in Brooks Co. on 6 March (Debbie Grimes).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - A bird that first appeared at a Cumming feeder on 11 Jan. was last seen on 11 April (Theresa Hartz).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - Single birds were seen at KMT on 4 May (Bob Zaremba et al.) and at the SPCNP on 26 May (Art and Lisa Hurt).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - A very early bird was seen at the ELHLAF Wetlands Center on 22 March (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - Several observers reported three birds in the Blairsville area during the month of May. Ty Ivey reported the species from the Macon area on 17 May, and another bird was in Forsyth Co. on 27 May (Andy Kinsey).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - One bird was back in the Suches area on 2 May (Betty Belanger).

EASTERN KINGBIRD - An early bird was seen at the Birdsong Nature Center in Grady Co. on 22 March (Michael Bell).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - For the fourth year in a row, a pair of birds were nesting on a power pole near McDonough. This year they were first reported

on 2 May (Jim Flynn, Giff Beaton, Earl Horn). Another bird was seen in Brooks Co. on 25 May (Jerry and Marie Amerson).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO - The first report came from Elbert Co. on 17 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

WARBLING VIREO - Single birds were seen in the Rome area on 27 April (Marion Dobbs) and in Murray Co. on 28 April (Joshua Spence).

RED-EYED VIREO - The first bird was seen in Chattahoochee Co. on 21 March by Walt Chambers. KMT had some very impressive counts, with 39 on 28 April, 56 on 8 May, and 77 on 7 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

COMMON RAVEN - Two birds were seen along the Ivy Log Gap Road on 15 and 16 May (Tom Striker, Ginny Wood et al.), and two other birds were seen at Woody Gap on 24 May (Nathan Klaus).

TREE SWALLOW - The first birds back in the Atlanta area were four at the ELHLAF on 1 March. They already were investigating possible nest sites in the Hiawasee area on 7 March (Sandra Green).

CLIFF SWALLOW - Many reports were received of this increasing species. The first report came on 20 March from Carters Lake (Joshua Spence). Highest counts were 25-30 nests in the Milledgeville area on 23 April (Chris Skelton), 50 birds at Clark Hill Reservoir on 13 April (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn), 60+ birds at Carters Lake on 16 April (Joshua Spence), and 60 birds at High Falls State Park on 7 May (Michael Beohm).

BARN SWALLOW - Walt Chambers had an early report of three birds at the ENWR on 1 March, setting a new early date for Georgia and a new regional date by one day. In Murray Co., 5 Mar 2003 set a new regional date by 10 days! (Joshua Spence). On Skidaway, 7 March 2003 set a new regional date by eight days (R Wigh), and in the Piedmont, 9 March 2003 missed setting an early date by only three days (J Flynn).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Only a few reports were received. One bird was at KMT on 26 March (Giff Beaton, Deb Zaremba) and again on 22 April (Bob Zaremba et al.), and another bird was in Rabun Co. on 4 May (Carol Vanderschaaf, Gordon McWilliams).

WINTER WREN - Three birds were found at Brasstown Bald on 17 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Earl Horn). This is about the only location in Georgia where nesting is possible.

SEDGE WREN - One bird was found at the SPCNP on 7 May (Art and Lisa Hurt) and two were found in Murray Co. on 9 May (Joshua Spence, Max Medley).

MARSH WREN - Joshua Spence found one bird at Carters Lake on 7 May.

VEERY - Bob and Deb Zaremba and Earl Horn reported 15 birds at Brasstown Bald on 17 May.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH - A pre-dawn count at KMT on 3 May yielded 106 birds on 3 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - Lower than average numbers were reported this spring, with a high count of three birds reported on 26 April at KMT (Giff Beaton).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - A bird at KMT on 14 April was somewhat early for the Piedmont (Giff Beaton).

BREWSTER'S WARBLER - Nathan Klaus reported a male on territory in Fannin



Co. on 24 May.

TENNESSEE WARBLER - A high count of eight was reported on 27 April at KMT (Giff Beaton).

NASHVILLE WARBLER - A lot more than usual were reported this year. Reports at KMT started on 14 April and more or less continued until 4 May. An amazing peak count of six was made on 27 April (Bob Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.). Elsewhere, two birds were reported from Spaulding Co. on 4 May (Eric Beohm).

NORTHERN PARULA - An early bird was in the Columbus area on 8 March (Walt Chambers), and six were at the McIntosh Reserve on 28 March (Chris Loudermilk).

YELLOW WARBLER - A wintering bird on Skidaway Island first seen in mid-Feb. was still there at least through 1 March (Russ Wigh).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - The peak count of 12 was at KMT on 7 May (Giff Beaton et al.).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER - Lower numbers were reported this spring. The high count was six on 6 May at KMT (Giff Beaton).

CAPE MAY WARBLER - The earliest reports were on 18 April at KMT (Giff Beaton).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - This species was in better numbers than usual. An early bird was there on 1 April, and peak counts were 11 on 29 April, 10 on 30 April, and 13 on 1 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - One bird was rather late at the Big Creek Greenway on 21 May (Leslie Curran).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - Eight birds already were in the Floyd/Walker Co. area on 21 March (Earl Barton). KMT had several counts in the 20s, but the peak count was 36 on 27 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.). Elsewhere, Jackie Heyda et al. had 30 along the Ivy Log Gap Road on 24 May.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - The peak count was 14 at KMT on 4 May (Bob Zaremba et al.).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - Two birds already were back at the Pine Log WMA on 22 March (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - A bird at the ELHLAF on 16 March would be a record early date for the Piedmont (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

PALM WARBLER - A high count of 31 on 22 April was a nice count at KMT (Giff Beaton).

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER - Low numbers were reported from KMT with a high count of five on 3 May and 7 May (Giff Beaton).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER - The peak count was 42 at KMT on 7 May (Giff Beaton et al.).

CERULEAN WARBLER - The peak count of 23 came from KMT on 27 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.). Elsewhere, six were found along the Ivy Log Gap Road on 17 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Earl Horn).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER - An early bird was in the Columbus area on 8 March (Walt Chambers). Jackie Heyda et al. had 19 along the Ivy Log Gap

Road on 24 May.

AMERICAN REDSTART - A high count was 11 along Ivy Log Gap Road on 17 May (Bob and Deb Zaremba).

WORM-EATING WARBLER - Marion Dobbs had a rather early bird at Berry College on 3 April. Jackie Heyda et al. had an impressive count of 35 birds along the Ivy Log Gap Road on 24 May.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Bob Zaremba found one bird at Mud Creek in Cobb Co. on 28 April, which was very unusual for the Atlanta area. On 1 May, three birds were found, two singing on territory, and at least two were present through the end of May at this location in Cobb Co. Walt Chambers had a good count of 13 in Chattahoochee Co. on 12 April.

OVENBIRD - Either a very early or a wintering bird was reported from Lake Park on 14 March (Brad Bergstrom). A total of 26 were recorded along Ivy Log Gap Road on 24 May by Jackie Heyda et al.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - A fairly early bird was reported from Greene Co. on 22 March (Billy Dunbar).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH - The earliest reports came from Chris Loudermilk on a bird seen at Plant Wansley on 15 March and another the next day in Chattahoochee Co. on 16 March (Walt Chambers).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - Single birds were found at the SPCNP on 7 May (Art and Lisa Hurt) and 24 May (Jerry Brunner et al.) and at KMT on 9 May (Deb Zaremba et al.) and 16 May (Giff Beaton et al.).

HOODED WARBLER - The high count at KMT was 24 on both 23 and 27 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.). Eleven on 26 May in Decatur County was an excellent count that late in the season (Michael Bell).

CANADA WARBLER - A high count of 15 at Brasstown Bald on 17 May was excellent (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Kevin Danchisen).

SUMMER TANAGER - The high counts at KMT were 18 on 29 April, with 14 to 15 birds seen on a number of other days in early May (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

SCARLET TANAGER - The high count from KMT was 31 on both 22 and 26 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

FIELD SPARROW - Rare for the nesting season in Lowndes Co. was a bird found on 31 May by Brad Bergstrom.

VESPER SPARROW - This species is difficult to find in the Atlanta area so 13 seen in Bartow Co. on 9 March were noteworthy (Bruce Dralle). Six were found at a sod farm in Carroll County on 16 March (Chris Loudermilk).

LARK SPARROW - One bird was found in the Kennesaw area on 7 April and was last reported on 11 April (Richard Cole fide Karen Theodorou).

SAVANNAH SPARROW - Two birds seen on 14 May at AWMA were late (Paul Sykes).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn found ten in Calhoun Co. on 6 April.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW - Three birds were late near Watkinsville, Oconee County on 14 May (Paul Sykes).

DARK-EYED JUNCO - Two birds still were in the Marietta area on 3 May (Bob Zaremba).



ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - The high count at KMT was 29 on 26 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

INDIGO BUNTING - The high count at KMT was 19 on 29 April (Bob and Deb Zaremba, Giff Beaton et al.).

PAINTED BUNTING - The earliest report was a bird at Skidaway Island on 21 March (Carol McClelland fide Russ Wigh). Six birds were seen at the Phinizy Swamp on 26 April and four on 27 April (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.). A single bird was found in the Bainbridge area on 13 April (Michael Bell).

DICKCISSEL - A wintering bird first reported by Karen Theodorou in February was last seen by Karen on 1 March. A bird previously reported from Baker Co. was seen there again on 7 and 11 March (Michael Bell). Eric Beohm found one bird in Spaulding Co. on 30 April and another bird was found in Murray Co. on 28 April (Joshua Spence). Single birds were seen in Bartow Co. on 3, 10, and 24 May (Bruce Dralle, Traci Brown) and at SCSP on 27 April (Chris Loudermilk). Two birds were seen at Cobb Cheek Road on 25 May (Dan & Pam Guynn).

BOBOLINK - Movement through the state apparently peaked on 4 May when Paul Champlin had a good count of 500+ at the Phinizy Swamp and Eric Beohm had 400+ in Spaulding Co.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - The highest count of this species was from Jim Flynn who had a total of 50 in Oconee Co. on 9 March.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - The best report was from Micheal Bell, who had a flock of 250 in Baker Co. on 11 April. Bruce Dralle and Traci Brown had a flock of 20 in Bartow Co. on 22 March.

PURPLE FINCH - This has been a very low year for this irruptive species, so a bird frequenting the feeders at the Wetlands Center of the ELHLAF and last reported on 12 April (Carol Lambert) was one of the few reports this spring.

PINE SISKIN - A single bird remained at the ELHAF Wetlands feeder until at least 26 April (Carol Lambert).

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# THE ORIOLE

Quarterly Journal of the Georgia Ornithological Society

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**TABLES** – Tables should be formatted with the size of *The Oriole* in mind and should be interpretable without reference to the text.

**FIGURES** – Figures should be appropriate for photoreproduction without retouching. Photos should be good-quality color or black-and-white prints.



# THE ORIOLE

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Volume 68

September/December 2003

Numbers 3, 4

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## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| IN MEMORIAM: EUGENE P. ODUM, 1913-2002<br><i>H. Ronald Pulliam</i> .....  | 1  |
| HUDSONIAN GODWIT SEEN IN BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA<br><i>Bradford Winn, Brian A. Harrington, and Catherine Hickey</i> .....                                | 5  |
| RECOVERIES OF RING-NECKED DUCKS BANDED ON THE U.S. DEPARTMENT<br>OF ENERGY'S SAVANNAH RIVER SITE, SOUTH CAROLINA<br><i>Robert A. Kennamer</i> ..... | 8  |
| FIRST VERIFIED SIGHTING OF A PACIFIC LOON IN GEORGIA<br><i>Michael Beohm</i> .....  | 15 |
| CEDAR WAXWINGS MAY BE EXPANDING RANGE IN GEORGIA<br><i>Nathan A. Klaus and Todd Schneider</i> .....   | 17 |
| BLACKPOLL WARBLER AT SEA<br><i>Russell J. Wigh</i> .....  | 19 |
| A CLAPPER RAIL IN UPSON COUNTY<br><i>Michael Beohm</i> .....  | 20 |
| FROM THE FIELD: DECEMBER 2002-FEBRUARY 2003.....  | 21 |
| FROM THE FIELD: MARCH-MAY 2003.....   | 29 |