

MAR 1974

The Georgia GOShawk

Newsletter of The Georgia Ornithological Society Vol. I No. 3

THE GOShawk SAYS - Welcome to a new member - Mrs. Helene MacNeill, Dalton. Mrs. MacNeill is Director of Nurses at Hamilton Memorial Hospital and she attended the meeting at Stone Mountain.

Looks like Spewrell Bluff Dam is alive and kicking. Proponents of the dam are eagerly at work talking with the powers that be. Old dams never die; they just lurk about waiting for the administration to change (Jan. 1, 1975).

The Marshlander had an excellent headline on an article about Spewrell Bluff - "Dam That River; It Might Get Away".

ROUND-UP OF GOS NEWS - The Spring meeting will be at Columbus, April 19-21. Mark your calendars and save this week-end to come down to the Fall Line and see what's what among the birds. The migration should be well under way and warblers abounding. (Unless the unusually mild weather being experienced pulls the birds through earlier.) Come - bring a friend or relative and enjoy the beauties of a Spring week-end.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS AROUND THE STATE - Some counts had good weather; some had bad weather. When the weather was bad, it was very, very bad. Columbus - December 15 - 81 species. Birds of interest - Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers, Brown Creepers, Bluebirds, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Horned Grebes, Solitary Vireo, Northern (Baltimore) Oriole, Fox Sparrows, Cooper's Hawk.

Macon - December 29 - 64 species. Interesting birds - Herring Gull-1; Ground Dove-4; Horned Lark-7; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher-1; Black and White Warbler-3; Magnolia Warbler-1 (Editor's Note: As far as can be ascertained, no winter record exists for this bird. Pocket Check-list of Georgia Birds - J. Fred Denton, Milton Hopkins, Jr. - Uncommon spring transient, and common fall transient, but uncommon below Fall Line. Georgia Birds - Thomas D. Burleigh - says essentially the same thing and gives October 28, 1927, Athens, as the latest date. Allan D. Cruickshank, American Birds Vol. 27, No. 2 deleted the sighting of 3 Magnolia Warblers from Macon's Christmas Count - 1972); Evening Grosbeak - 12. A Solitary Vireo was seen during count period.

Augusta - December 23 - 87 species. Unusual sightings - Black & White Warbler, Orange-Crowned Warbler, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, female Northern Oriole and a Sora, an uncommon species for this time of year.

Sapelo Island - December 29 - 132 species. GOSers counting - Gerald Knighton, Jack Cooper, Milton Hopkins, Jr. (Tom Rial was down with the flu and could not count). Hawks seemed to be in abundance - the American Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk), Sharp shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red shouldered, Marsh Hawks and two Peregrine Falcons being reported.

Milton Hopkins reporting from Cabretta Island (Sapelo), said he felt the medium sized shore birds - the six - seven inch classification - Knots, Dowitchers, Turnstones and smaller sandpipers were in greater numbers on the island than he had ever seen before.

The Whip-poor-will was noted, also the Solitary and White-eyed Vireos. The seed eating birds were down for some unknown reason, Gerald said, especially the Chipping and Field Sparrows.

Callaway Gardens - January 1 - 82 species. Interesting sightings - Common Goldeneye-4; Bufflehead-3; Ruddy Duck-1; Great Horned Owl-1; Barred Owl-2; Bewick's Wren-1; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher-2; Orange-crowned Warbler-1; Henslow's Sparrow-1.

Atlanta - December 29 - 75 species. Notable birds - Hooded Merganser-25; Great Horned Owl-2; Screech Owl-15; Bluebirds-148; Solitary Vireo-1; Red Crossbills-2; Evening Grosbeaks-3.

Dalton - December 15 - 70 species. Species of interest - Horned Grebe-2; Ring-necked Duck-200; Bewick's Wren-1; Water Pipit-100(all together); Evening Grosbeak-15; White-crowned Sparrow-1.

BIRD NEWS - With this issue the change will be made to the new names as specified in the 32nd Supplement of the A.O.U. Checklist. It is the opinion of the editor that we should swing with the change. The Christmas Count was reported in the new nomenclature; publications dealing with birds are using the new names. Bird names have been changed before and, undoubtedly, will be changed again and reflects changes in scientific thinking. As more knowledge is gained, the names are changed to accommodate the latest ideas. These names were not changed without a great deal of thought and discussion on the part of the A.O.U. Committee. It will be hard to change - upon seeing the aerial maneuverings of a pair of falcons, the name Sparrow Hawks will slip out. On paper they will be American Kestrels.

Wally Dreyfoos reports - On August 18, 1973, my wife (Jeanne) and I saw a Caspian Tern at Lake Lanier. This should be noted somewhere other than my own records. (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins - Common all year on Coast non-breeding. Accidental in interior at Columbus.)

The Marshlander - Ogeechee Audubon Society-Savannah--As of December 3 there was an estimated 25,000 ducks on the Savannah Refuge (SR), Ring-necked Ducks being most abundant, followed by Green-winged Teal and Wood Ducks. The Black Duck population on the SR is the highest it has been in five years. Redhead Ducks, never very abundant, have been seen both at Harris Neck and SR. Canvasbacks, Ruddy Ducks, American Wigeon (don't grab your books - this is not misspelled - the "d" is being dropped as part of the name change), Mallards and all other winter regulars can be seen easily.

House Wrens flew in about a month ago. Purple Sandpipers have been seen at Tybee (October 25).

Unusual sightings include a flock of 72 Fulvous Tree Ducks seen on the SR the last week in November; an adult Bald Eagle sighted three times on the SR in November (photographed); and four Snow (Blue) Geese. The House Finch - Henry County Audubon Society -(Dec.) A member reports seeing flocks of Ground Doves at McDonough. Barn Owls are nesting in the remains of the steeple in the top of Locust Grove Academy. Mr. & Mrs. Fred Beers are hosting an American Woodcock which has taken up residence in a brush pile in their yard.

Atlanta Audubon Society - Terry Moore and John Swiderski made a 125-species-seen-birding trip October 25-28. Here are John's words - It was certainly a birding trip to remember during the cold (tripless?) months ahead. The trip started with a Lincoln's Sparrow in hand and a Scrub Jay in bush, (but very much in Georgia). The Lincoln's Sparrow was found at the Trusco flower plot near Atlanta's Five Points. This little 10 x 20 foot area has produced Long-and Short-billed Marsh Wrens, assorted warblers and sparrows this fall. The Lincoln's Sparrow was slightly stunned by an encounter with the Trusco marble, but recovered nicely after a free ride to a weedy field south of town.

October 27 produced a White-crowned Sparrow and a stunning sunset flight display by a male adult Merlin (Pigeon Hawk) on Jekyll.

October 28 was nearly all Scrub Jay. The single bird was observed on south Jekyll near the beach entrance for some two hours as it fed in the scrub growth and nearby yard feeders. This is the first modern sighting of the Scrub Jay in Georgia. Attempts to locate it on the 29th were fruitless.

Elbridge Freeborn has what he feels is a real outstanding record. A man who lives on White Road, Red Oak (six miles south of College Park), has observed a Ruby-throated Hummingbird attempting to feed from frozen bed flowers on the afternoon of November 12 and the morning of November 13. According to the Georgia Birds the latest Atlanta record was October 20, 1954. An interesting note is the fact that the Hummingbird was trying to get into the man's greenhouse where the flowers would be alive.

John Swiderski reports seeing these birds at the following locations. Two female Common Mergansers at Atlanta Regional Hospital, November 25: On December 1, about 20 Red Crossbills visited Stone Mountain: On December 2, at Lake Acworth Redhead, Bufflehead and Oldsquaw Ducks were seen.

The following observation was sent in - Just want to report that January 12 we saw a Yellow headed Blackbird in our backyard. We live in the Sagamore Hills area. (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins-Accidental in fall, winter. Georgia Birds - Burleigh - Accidental in fall. He gives two records - an adult female collected at Richmond County, September 23, 1893 and seven birds seen at Half-Moon Lake, Savannah, November 26, 1927. Norene Boring saw one male in her yard among a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds and Cowbirds, September 6, 1965. One was reportedly seen in Murray County in 1950.)

The Observer - Columbus Audubon Society - A late date is noted for the Rose-breasted Grosbeak - October 22 - this is the latest date since 1959. James Miller reports a new species for Columbus: the Common Gallinule - October 28, Mirror Lake Marsh. He gives an all-time late date (for Columbus) of November 3 for the Swainson's Thrush and an all-time early (for Columbus) record for the Pine Siskin - October 28. News from Lake Oliver - Common Loon-November 4; Horned Grebe-November 7; Herring Gull-November 11. Duck sightings - 8 Pintails - October 30; 9 Shovelers-November 7; 7 Buffleheads-November 6; 19 Redheads-November 8.

The Bird-Watcher - Floyd County Audubon Society - While our hawk population seems to have been cut down in numbers, we still have some left. A member saw within about half an hour on October 27-3 Red-shouldered, 2 red-tailed Hawks, 5 Black, 7 Turkey Vultures at his home on Calhoun Road.

(Jan.) An unusual report comes in from a member - Red Crossbills have been among the birds at the feeder at his home on Hycliff Road. As many as 19 have been present at one time. The last time we had them in Rome was January-February 1953.

George Dorsey says he spent Christmas at the home of his sisters near Fayetteville. On December 27, 14 Western Palm Warblers came across the lawn and through the trees about the house. I do not believe I've ever seen this large a number together before.

Augusta Audubon Society - November 10 - A White-eyed Vireo was seen. Whether it was overwintering or just late starting south, we can't be sure, but it does seem to be cropping up more of late in winter. An unusual sighting was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo-late for this area. November 25 - One Yellow Crowned Night Heron was seen in a flock of 5 Black-crowned Night Herons. This is a late date for the yellow-crowned as it is not known to appear during the winter north of Florida. We did have summer in November! On November 7 a member saw an immature Whistling Swan on Par Pond at the SRP. Another person also saw this bird. This swan is considered a rare winter resident or transient in South Carolina, Georgia; although it winters in great numbers in North Carolina. Sighting records are increasing steadily for the two states. (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds-Denton, Hopkins... Recent records from Floyd, Fulton, Muscogee, Rockdale Counties.)

MORE HAWKS - On December 29, the William Gibbs' travelled to Atlanta via I-20 and 285. They observed 6 Red-tailed, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, 1 Marsh Hawk, 1 American Kestrel! Although in scanning observations reported, we noticed the number of hawks recorded and wonder if there might be an unusual influx of hawks into the Southeast. (Editor's Note: In a recent article, it was stated that hawks are often seen along interstates, freeways, etc. The highways, with large open areas on both sides, afford good hunting territory where the prey is easily seen.)

December 4 brought a male Northern Oriole to a local bird bath. On December 7 a Bald Eagle was seen at Par Pond. An enormous nest has been found on the river and is suspected to be that of the eagle. Gerald Knighton observed 2 Bonaparte's Gulls, January 5 on a pond on Gordon Highway. A Fish Crow was seen in a pecan tree in the 600 block of Greene Street, January 19.

On January 13, Gerald Knighton, Tom Rial and others saw a Bonaparte's Gull at Merry Ponds and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The thrill of the day was the sighting of a Prairie Warbler and a Northern Parula Warbler. Georgia Birds - The only definite winter record for Georgia for the (Northern) Parula Warbler is that of a sighting of a single bird seen by Stoddard in Grady County, December 25, 1947. Georgia Birds does not list a winter sighting for the Prairie Warbler so this seems a first sighting for the state. (Augusta Editor's Note: If anyone knows of a recent winter record for these two birds please notify us).

(In a search of The Oriole quarterlies a Prairie Warbler was seen November 27, 1966 at Athens. Vol. 33 No. 1. Northern Parula Warbler-1 - Christmas Count-1966-Okefenokee. Vol. 32, No. 2. There was a sighting at Athens, November 4, 1929. Vol. 33, No. 1. Another was seen on Sapelo Island Christmas Count-1967. Vol. 33, No. 4. Another record at Okefenokee and The Refuge Plantation. February 28, 1945. Vol. 10, No. 2. Editor's Note).

Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club - L.A. Wells reports 9 Common Mergansers - November 3; early. A House Wren was seen October 7; early. James Miller saw the following - Short-billed Marsh Wren-October 17; early. Yellow-throated Vireo-October 17 late; Kentucky Warbler-October 11; late; Northern Waterthrush-October 4; late. A Black-billed Cuckoo was seen in lower Russell County-October 13. Lake Oliver-L.A. Wells-Red-throated Loon - late November; 2 Red-necked Grebes recently (Dec. issue). (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins - Red-throated Loon - Regular winter resident off-shore; casual in interior in migration. Red-necked Grebe-Uncommon winter visitant on coast; rare in other parts of state. Recorded at Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus.)

The Dalton Kingfisher - Cherokee Audubon Society - Two late birds are reported by Harriett DiGioia - male Summer Tanager - November 13; female Rose-breasted Grosbeak - November 21. (Editor's Note: A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen in Atlanta by Louis Fink, December 14, 1971. The Oriole - Vol. 37, No. 1.). Solitary Vireo - November 21. Anne Hamilton reports 2 Horned Grebes-November 22. A Great Horned Owl is being heard these November nights by a member. New Bird Recorded In Dalton - January 10, Anne Hamilton saw 12-15 male and female Red Crossbills in the pine trees about her home. Anne noted these birds again in her yard and flying over on February 14. There were approximately 20 in the flock in flight. (Editor's Note:

Socket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins- Scarce and irregular winter visitant over entire state. Accidental in mountains in summer.). A Bewick's Wren was seen December 14. Norene Boring saw two male and 5 female Redhead Ducks on Swift's Pond-February 9.

Evening Grosbeaks do not seem to be in Georgia in any number this year. Reports of sightings have come from Macon, Dalton, Augusta, Atlanta.

NEWS OF PEOPLE - It is always with sadness that we report the death of members. Mrs. Carl (Cecily) Masters died December 11, 1973, Jekyll Island. Mrs. Masters had been a GOSer for only about a year or so; but in that short time she recruited 20 new members in one fell swoop! The following quote is from Jekyll's Golden Islander. "Human friends chuckled at Cecily's comment, 'I know too many people now to keep up with them..but birds, never'." Mrs. Masters will be missed from the ranks of the coastal birders.

Mary Blackmon was severely burned in an accident at her home, October 31. She spent 55 days at the Medical Center undergoing skin grafts and recuperating. We all hope you are entirely recovered now!

Terry Moore has a change of address - it is now 1185 Collier Road N.W., Apt. 10-F, Atlanta 30318. Phone number 355-6975.

McRea and Mozelle Williams enjoyed a trip this fall to the Gulf Coast and Big Bend National Park. 13 species of birds were added to their Life List (this was a repeat trip last spring on which they added 42 new species).

Wally Dreyfoos went on a business trip to the Philippine Islands in late fall.

Maibelle Hodgins has recently had two articles in print. The September-October issue of Southern Gardens has her article - "The Name of This Garden Game is 'Birding'." Pictures taken by Maibelle of birds and GOSers Pat, Larry, Leita Thompson, Mozelle Williams, John Mummert, John Hodgins appeared with the article. The Atlanta Journal/Constitution Magazine of February 10, 1974 carried her article and photographs - "Those Strange Yellow Birds".

Albridge Freeborn also broke into print in the Atlanta Journal, January 4, 1974. Seems a Great Blue Heron ran into difficulties with a muskrat trap up in New York state. The bird was given medical aid and then an effortless migratory flight to Atlanta via Eastern Airlines -Cost \$11.55. Atlanta was chosen because it was a direct flight. Elbridge met the bird and released him on the Chattahoochee River near Roswell-his picture and that of the Great Blue Heron appeared with the article. The bill of lading said "Great Blue Herring". A baggage truck driver inquired - "Is that a bird or a fish?"

Lou Fink is getting in on the writing business, too. His article- "Bird Lectures Soft Sell Bird Prints" appeared in the December issue of Decor - a magazine of the decorating trade. The article describes Hastings and their bird print operation.

Don and Doris Cohrs, together with Terry Moore, have prepared a new check-list of the birds in a radius of 30 miles from the center of Atlanta. Copies may be obtained from H.G. Hastings Co.

GOS members attending the CBC Midwinter Meeting included Tom Rial, Ed and Lola Case. 135 species were seen - 125 in attendance at Pawley's Island, S.C.

Jeannine Angerman participated in four Christmas Counts - Augusta, Aiken, Pawley's Island, Charleston.

Ed and Lola Case took a leaf tour in the mid-west. They added a Lincoln's Sparrow to their Life List.

Tom and Marilyn Rial spent a week at the Okefenokee Swamp. The common bird, they reported, was the Pileated Woodpecker.

MISCELLANEOUS - It was reported in the Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Clubs' bulletin - Vol. 14, No. 1 that James Keeler, Chief of Game Research, Alabama Dept. of Conservation mentioned in a slide lecture..."it has now been found that Red-cocagged Woodpeckers will nest in live healthy pines as well as those which have red heart disease."

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY - A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. Henry David Thoreau.

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