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The Georgia GOShawk

Newsletter of The Georgia Ornithological Society Vol. I No. 4

THE GOShawk SAYS - WELCOME to the following new members who have joined us since January 1. T.A. Beckett III, Charleston, S.C. (L); Dr. and Mrs. John Crowley, Augusta; Rosemary Gaymer, Ontario, Canada (she is president of the naturalist group of Ontario); Roger Green, Riverdale; Daniel Jacobson, Wildwood; Victor Landis, Akron, Ohio; H.R. Mathewson, Lancaster, S.C.; Mrs. Rebecca Middleton, Waycross; Sandy Pangle, Dalton (stu.); Harold Strickland, Norcross; Charles Ewing, Swampscott, Mass.; Mr. & Mrs. Buren Burnett, Athens; Steven Schneider, Cambridge, Mass.; William Pfeiffer, University of Georgia Marine Institute, Sapelo Island. A new library has also been added to our roll-College of Charleston Library, Charleston, S.C. We look forward to seeing you at all our meetings!

NEED SOME ENTERTAINMENT? The Ogeechee Audubon Society cleaned up about five miles of the Bartrom's Nature Trail last November. "Entertainment was provided by a member with his five-foot King Snake." The Marshlander. How's that for real, live entertainment? Perhaps he can start a rent-a-snake business!

ROUND-UP OF GOS NEWS - Thank you! - Columbus Audubon Society and Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club for a good week-end. Good birding, good weather, good companions. 65 people were in attendance; 144 species were seen-including 23 species of warblers. Exciting birds-Least Bittern, American Bitterns - some "frozen", some stealthily stalking the marsh, some in flight; Hawks-Cooper's Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, Marsh; Bald Eagle, Virginia Rails, Sora, Owls-Barn and Screech, Red-headed Woodpecker, Bank Swallow, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler.

Tom Imhof, author of Alabama Birds gave an interesting banquet speech - "Birds and Man". Tom's bird banding operation was most intriguing-the netting, banding, measuring of bill, wings, tail, overall size; checking for external parasites and fat, sexing, weighing were all deftly performed and recorded. Sam Pate's slides were most beautiful and interesting. All in all - a really good week-end!

Mark your calendars for the fall meeting at Dalton, October 11-13. Plans are already underway to make this a bang-up week-end. Joe W. Taylor of New York, Treasurer of the American Birding Association, will be the banquet speaker. He is top man among the 600 Club - with 713 North American birds to his credit and is the only man in North America with over 700 birds on his Life List. The migrants should be present in numbers and the mountains will be undergoing a metamorphosis-from summer greenery to brilliant colors as nature marshals her troops, decked out in scarlet and gold, to march up and down the ridges. Come to Dalton for an enjoyable week-end. We need YOU there!

BELATED CHRISTMAS COUNT - Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Savannah - December 29 - 105 species. The only unusual sighting was an Eastern Kingbird, normal only in summer, clearly identified by its white tipped tail and fly-catcher habits. (Is this a first winter record? Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - J. Fred Denton, Milton Hopkins, Jr. - Common summer resident over state. Georgia Birds - Thomas D. Burleigh - Adds - The first part of September sees a noticeable decrease in numbers, and only rarely is the species to be recorded in the state after the middle of the month. Anyone have any more information on winter sightings of this bird in the state?- Ed.)

Since what is not seen is often more important to ornithologists than that which is seen, it should be noted that not a single Wood Duck was spotted on the count while last year 336 were counted. Nor were any Black-crowned Night Herons found though the '72 count produced 154! Equally mysterious was the absence of Cedar Waxwings. The Marshlander. Spring Count - Dalton - May 4-5 - 107 species. Birds of Interest - Cattle Egret-4, Wood Duck-1, Redhead-1, Hawks-Red-tailed-2, Red-shouldered-2, Broad-winged-1, Osprey-1, Yellow-billed Cuckoo-1, Acadian Flycatcher-2, Hermit Thrush-1, Warblers-Prothonotary-1, Worm-eating-1, Northern Parula-1, Canada-2, Sparrows-Grasshopper-2, White-throated-12, Swamp-1.

BIRD NEWS - Upper Flint River Audubon Society - Jonesboro - On the evening of February 27, the editor received a phone call reporting a flock of 37 Sandhill Cranes flying over Stockbridge, headed in an E - N.E. direction. The Check-list of the Birds of Atlanta compiled by the Atlanta Audubon Society indicates the Sandhill Crane is a migrant that goes through our area the first two weeks in March and

again the first two weeks of November.

(May) Some of us have been going along with members of the Atlanta Audubon on their annual Fernbank Bird Walks. Interesting birds we have seen are the Cerulean Warbler, Veery, Rough-legged Hawk (Ed.) and the Barred Owl.

The Fall Line - Macon - On January 26th at the swamp and Herbert Smart Airport the Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, Horned Lark, Common Yellowthroat - singing - , Rusty Blackbird were noted.

The ride on the shrimp boat out to Sapelo Island was the big thrill of the March 30 week-end trip. A composite of several lists for Sapelo Island, Butler Island (Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area), Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge totaled 104 species and a member thought he saw a Bald Eagle. Sightings of interest - Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Green Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Glossy Ibis (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins - Uncommon visitant on coast, non-breeding. Accidental in remainder of state.), Greater Scaup (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Ibid - Considered a rare and local winter resident along coast.), Lesser Scaup, Hawks - Red-tailed, Red-shouldered; Marsh, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk), Willet, Marbled Godwit (editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Ibid - Uncommon transient and winter resident on coast, August - May.), Laughing Gull, Common Tern, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood Pewee, Bank Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Rusty Blackbird.

The Marshlander - Ogeechee Audubon Society - Savannah - Though large flocks of ducks have already departed the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge some Blue-wing Teal and Northern Shovelers are malingering (April). The Wood Ducks at SNWR, Harris Neck and the island refuges have already begun nesting. Also in the nest are the Harris Neck Canada Geese Boat-tailed Grackles (in Sam Young's camphor tree), Loggerhead Shrikes, Osprey (on Wassaw Island).

Three adult Bald Eagles were seen at SNWR in March and are believed to have nested somewhere in the vicinity as eagle reports have persisted for the past two years. An adult was observed executing spectacular aerial maneuverings in late January.

The Bird Watcher - Floyd County Audubon Society - On April 7 some of us saw the Prothonotary Warbler - a very beautiful bird to see!

(May) A pair of Yellow-throated Vireos have built a nest in a tall pine in front of the building in which I live. Through observation, I learned both male and female took turns incubating the eggs. While the male was sitting on the nest he sang several times. I also saw a Carolina Chickadee carry a caterpillar to a nest in a roadside fence post at Berry Schools.

Chattahoochee Valley Natural History Club - (March) Charlotte Blackshear, our Albany member, writes: "It has been known for some time that there are Limpkins in the cypress swamp on the St. Joe Paper Company property in Dougherty County. They have been resident here for a number of years, but are rarely seen. Last week four members of the Albany Audubon Society were fortunate enough to see and photograph them. Also in the swamp there is much nesting activity going on. We estimated 150 Great (Common) Egrets, 40-60 Great Blue Herons were busily repairing last year's nests, and some look as if they have started brooding. I never got around to telling about the four Purple Gallinules were found in Lee County last summer. Three of them had chicks with them. We have also had two Golden Eagles around part of the winter - one adult; one immature." (GOS Meeting at Albany - Spring, 1975 - Ed.)

Sightings - Chimney Swifts down by the river, March 15; a Veery was seen April 9 eating bread crumbs - a very un-veery-like thing to do. L. A. Wells, the official keeper of records, reports the following - James Miller - Barn Swallows, March 23 at the River Road, Brookstone, Yellow-throated Warbler, March 10, (2 days early), Summer Tanager, March 20 (3 days early). He also turned in the only sighting received of Evening Grosbeaks for this winter - a flock of 15 on March 27 and holds the abundance record for vultures - counted a group of 120 mixed Turkey (80) and Black (40) Vultures in Marion County, May 29. An American Woodcock with four downy young was seen on February 24 at Fort Benning. After an absence of several years, Bachman's Sparrows were seen in two widely separated locations by James Miller, Bill Matheny. A Lincoln's Sparrow was observed at Woodbury on January 9 - a first record for this area.

The Observer - Columbus Audubon Society - Field Notes - L. A. Wells - Two factors credited with causing plants of bloom and birds to migrate are length of day hours and rising temperatures. Usually occurring together, they came separately this year. Alertness on the part of two of our members provided opportunities to observe this. First, on February 13, Bill Matheny noted the arrival of the Yellow-breasted Chat. The previous earliest date was March 31. The second

instance was a singing Tennessee Warbler, sighted by James Miller, 3
February 23. The previous earliest date was April 8.

A bit of research unearthed the fact that (these) species winter from old Mexico southward! Also that Alabama's earliest date was not recorded in the usual coastal area-where trans-gulf migrants arrive-but well up-state in the piedmont region. Right or wrong, it is my conclusion that both species were affected by the same record high January temperatures in Mexico that hit us here in Georgia, whereas birds across the gulf were not.

Another theory, being researched by Dr. Nolan of Indiana State University, is that the male of some species do not migrate as far south as the female in order to return at an earlier date and stake out nesting territory. "Lynnhaven" at Forston was one of Dr. Nolan's proving grounds in December where a 2:1 sex ratio of netted Dark-eyed Juncos lent credibility to his theory.

Still another new species for the area a Henslow's Sparrow on February 23 was found by Bill Matheny; this in addition to the Le Conte's Sparrow found earlier. A Louisiana Waterthrush was seen by James Miller, March 11; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bill Matheny, March 31 (5 days early).

Atlanta Audubon Society - (April) - Concerning the Yellow-headed Blackbird report in a previous newsletter, (Vol I, No. 3) we have the following additional news from Lawrenceville. "I noticed the sighting of a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Atlanta. Our sons canoe on the Upper Alcovy River in Gwinnett County. Last fall, our younger son saw a Yellow-headed Blackbird and a Cliff Swallow (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds - Denton, Hopkins - Regular but scarce spring and fall transient all over state. Has nested on Hartwell Dam since 1965.) on one of their trips.

Tom and Anne Bailey write the following- "Jekyll Island, always exciting for unusual sightings has yielded a new state bird, the Smooth-billed Ani, observed by Terry Moore, Tom and Anne Bailey and others.

Not to be overlooked, it turned our heads with its unusual call, flew in its seemingly disjointed fashion and perched in tops of low bushes for approximately thirty minutes, during which time its profile disclosed the Parrot-like bill without grooves. The observation was made with standard binoculars as well as telescope to 60 X. A member of the party made initial photographs; a local resident observed and photographed the Ani on March 5.

Perhaps the extremely warm temperatures (80°) explains its Georgia sighting, as Florida residents have witnessed a northerly movement of the Smooth-billed Ani. Additionally, an eastward movement of the Groove-billed Ani has been noted."

A woman in Canton, after one of those sky-ripping storms, heard the incredible cry of a loon on her lake, April 4. The next day the bird disappeared.

Augusta Audubon Society - More Interstate Hawks - A member and her son saw 15 Red-tailed, 7 Red-shouldered Hawks on I-20 to 285. Upon entering the Dunwoody - Ashford exit from 285 they saw one more Red-tailed Hawk. 23 hawks seen January 13, Augusta-Atlanta!

Three Whistling Swans were reported on February 10 at Merry Ponds. Also seen were 12 Black-crowned Night Herons, 2 Orange-crowned Warblers. At the Lock and Dam 3 Evening Grosbeaks and a Barred Owl were seen. Lack of seed-eating birds was again in evidence. The Whistling Swans were checked daily. They were on the Ponds, March 22 - gone on March 23.

We had a report on February 12 of a blackbird, sp. with a white tail. A member had a male Northern (Baltimore) Oriole at her feeder, plus flocks of Pine Siskins, February 24. A half dozen + Purple Martins were seen in Martinez, February 21 and a female Northern Oriole was at a feeder, February 25.

Ten Snow Geese (Editor's Note: Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds-Denton-Hopkins - An uncommon fall and winter visitant over entire state) were at Merry Ponds, February 28. This is a first for the immediate Augusta area. The Ponds were checked again at a later date; but the geese had disappeared.

February 24 brought news of approximately 30 Least Sandpipers and an Orange-crowned Warbler. Sparrows are still in short supply. 50 Evening Grosbeaks were seen at the Lock and Dam. Two Woodcocks were sighted. One jumped out of the path and froze on the rim of the pond not more than five or six feet away. Everyone had a good look while it was sitting in a camouflaged position.

6 Canvasbacks - 4 males, 2 females - were on the Savannah River just below the 5th Street Dock, March 10. A Cooper's Hawk was seen on the highway to the dam, March 16. March 24 an American Bittern was noted. Seed-eaters were in abundance - they have been scarce all winter. 30 Evening Grosbeaks with bills now a "spring green" were at

a feeder, April 11. Another member reports she has a pair of Evening⁴ Grosbeaks at her home which appear to be mated.

April 21, Gerald Knighton saw a Blue Grosbeak and a Painted Bunting. (Augusta Editor's Note: Two overwintering Painted Buntings were reported. We assume this one is a summer resident as the overwintering ones were in a different location.) At Clark Hill Dam, he saw an Upland Sandpiper (Plover). On April 6, Chimney Swifts were in abundance; 3 Ospreys were seen; a Gray-Cheeked Thrush was observed. The Barred Owl is still in its hole in the tree at the Lock and Dam - perhaps it is nesting. Gerald Knighton saw a female Bufflehead at Merry Ponds. Cattle Egrets (first ones reported for this spring), a Hairy Woodpecker, a Worm-eating Warbler were seen April 28.

CORRECTION - It was reported in the last newsletter (Vol.1, No.3) that an enormous nest had been seen on the river and was suspected to be that of a Bald Eagle. The "nest" was later found to be a huge collection of debris.

The House Finch - Henry County Audubon Society - (May) A call was received that thousands of Bobolinks were in the fields around the caller's home. That was no exaggeration-the fields were alive with them and they could be heard for a considerable distance. The caller referred to these birds as "skunk birds" - this is a colloquial name for them in some parts of the county.

The Dalton Kingfisher - Cherokee Audubon Society - Anne Hamilton saw an Orange-crowned Warbler in her yard, February 11. This is a third record for our area. This bird was seen subsequent times and came into the open to eat crumbs of suet from the ground below a feeder. She also saw a Gadwall and an American Wigeon on Thread Mill Lake, March 26; a Tennessee Warbler in her yard, April 28 and 30 + Bobolinks (male and female), May 7, at the cemetery. 25 + Evening Grosbeaks were seen on February 26. Four more were at a feeder, March 9-10. Sandy Pangle reports the following birds at TML-Barn Swallows-March 20, Bufflehead-March 25, Blue-winged Warbler-April 15 (fide AH, NB, HD). Sandy and Norene Boring saw Night Herons-thought to be Yellow-crowneds-at TML, April 6.

Helen MacNeill saw a Brewer's Blackbird at her feeder on March 31. This bird is not often reported in our area. Her home is adjacent to a pasture complete with barn and cattle. Purple Martins arrived at gourds in western Whitfield County, March 17; a Whip-poor-will was heard at the same place, April 4. A Great Egret was seen in a wet meadow-with a pond in it, April 5. April 5 brought an early Indigo Bunting to a local feeder. Harriett DiGioia-Northern Shovelers, March 21, TML, Ruddy Duck, April 4, TML, a Veery and a Magnolia Warbler at their farm April 6 (early), Osprey at TML, April 13 (two other Osprey reports have been received-one at a pond near Dalton-April 10-14, one at Calhoun, April 15); Gray-Cheeked Thrush, April 28. Two male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were noted on April 5.

A mixed bag of sandpipers was seen May 7 at TML by Harriett DiGioia, Anne Hamilton. 10 Least, 10 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 9 Greater Yellowlegs were seen on a sand bar and spit. Spotted Sandpipers were seen near-by. This is rather an unusual number and variety to be seen at this location.

Milton Hopkins sent in the following news - "Mary Hopkins saw and heard 200 + Sandhill Cranes, March 1, passing over Osierfield. We located a Black Vulture nest with two eggs, February 28, in Coffee County; collected and preserved an albino Common Flicker, March 7; located a Belted Kingfisher nest in early March and saw nine Ruddy Ducks, March 10.

The Pine Siskin invasion in Fitzgerald and here at Osierfield despite a mild winter was unusual. Over 100 + Pine Siskins were noted one morning in Fitzgerald. We have over 18 pairs of Purple Martins at the nest boxes here on the farm."

Charles Ewing of Swampscot, Mass., writes the following - "I thought you might be interested in a sight record of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher on Wassaw Island, March 31. The bird appeared in late afternoon on a small live oak and spent half hour or so pursuing nearby insects and returning to his perch at the tip of a branch. The visibility was perfect as he was in full sunlight and made frequent short flights. We identified him from Peterson's as I had not seen one before, and subsequently checked him out in Birds of Mexico where my wife and I have done some casual birding. The identification was unmistakable.

It may be a matter of interest that the fork-tail's arrival was apparently simultaneous with the arrival of four Eastern Kingbirds which simultaneously operated from the same or a nearby live oak until dusk. The next day the Kingbirds-or at least the same number of them-were evident about the yard during the early morning, but not the fork-tail.

I might add that I have been an annual (more or less) visitor or

resident on Wassaw for sixty years, and have spent most of my time there in the last forty birding." (Is this a first for the state?-Ed.) L.A. Wells reports more birds from his area - Yellow-billed Cuckoo, April 1; Swallow-tailed Kite at Omaha, May 11-a repeat of April, 1973; Lesser Yellowlegs, May 17 is a new late record; Laughing Gulls - 11 on April 20; House Wren, April 27, is a late record - last three birds seen by James Miller. Two adult Laughing Gulls on April 21 mark the eighth spring appearance of this bird.

NEWS OF PEOPLE - On January 27, Les Davenport led a fleet of six canoes and one kayak from Long Bridge to Ebenezer Landing down the scenic Ebenezer Creek. Along with several faculty members from Armstrong (College), the party of twenty-odd nature lovers cleared every floating piece of debris in sight from their route down this cypress studded wilderness.

Dan and Ann Forster went on a birding trip to Mexico the last of March.

The Atlanta Audubon Society could not have found a more colorful and qualified recipient for the 1974 scholarship than our editor, Rosalind Clark. She will be attending Maine Audubon Camp.

Jeanine Angerman was hospitalized earlier this spring for surgery in Aiken. At last report, she had been advised to go to the Mayo Clinic and was in Rochester Methodist Hospital, Rochester, Minn. A speedy recovery to you, Jeanine!

Lorraine Dusenberry lead a discussion on "Inter-governmental Co-operation for Sand Dune Protection for Federal, State, Local Governments" at a recent Tri-State Conference on Methods for Beach and Sand Dune Protection held recently at Jekyll Island.

Norene Boring has completed a course in Ornithology at Southern Missionary College, Collegedale, Tenn. On a field trip to Florida, 150 birds were seen including a Burrowing Owl; Brazilian Cardinal, Black-bellied Tree Duck; Spotted-breasted Oriole; Long-billed Curlew. GOSer Roger Woodruff was in the class-the course was taught by GOSer E.O. Grundset. Norene is working toward her B.S. in Nursing.

Wilella Overing writes - "I thought I would pass along this information. Robert had completed an article shortly before his death a year ago this March. The article, titled "Identifying Birds by Their calls", appeared in the April issue of The Sandlapper, the South Carolina magazine. The article is accompanied by lovely pictures by Jay Shuler of CBC."

L.A. Wells has just completed a new edition of his "Migration Extremes and Abundances of Columbus, Georgia Birds", published by the Columbus Audubon Society-price \$1.00. Write to L.A. for copies. (The name of Florence Lynn should be added to the list of observers.)

Lou Fink writes the following about the Carolina Bird Club Mid-winter Meeting. "Low Country Birding-January 25-27, 1974. Unseasonably warm - 70-75°F, cloudy-drizzling until last hours. Meeting was at Pawley's Island, S.C. 119 in attendance; 134 species recorded. I had a pleasant reunion with Mac and Mozelle Williams, Lida McKenzie, Tom Rial."

Lou saw 95 birds-room does not permit inclusion at this time. Lou also had a good birding trip to Raleigh, N.C. where he addressed the Raleigh Bird Club. He added a new bird to his Life List on this trip - the Greater Scaup.

MISCELLANEOUS - The Richard Park print - "Georgia State Bird and Flower" - offering has been terminated. Sorry, no more orders can be accepted.

All other miscellaneous news is being held until the September issue - lack of room!

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY - Weeds are the bandages that bind the wounds of the earth. Boy Scouts of America

Happy Summering to all and to all Good Birding!

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