

The Georgia GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society, Vol. IV, No. 3

March 31, 1977

THE GOShawk SAYS WELCOME! - To these new members -- Mc Grath Keen and Paul Riddle, Dublin; Dr. & Mrs. R. L. Weed, Jr., and Patricia Wood, Atlanta; Brian Simmons, Duluth; Elizabeth Cain and Thomas Shelton, Decatur; Jeff Petit, Suwanee; David and Mary Elwonger, Augusta; Dr. Eugene Odum and Robert Cooper, Athens; W. K. George and Mr. & Mrs. M. E. Crago, Valdosta; R. C. Butler, Dunwoody; Jean Abt, Alpharetta; Susan Westbrooke, Chicago, Ill.

EDITORIAL COMMENT - This is a meaty issue! Winter produced excellent birding all over our state. There were no cold weather blues in Georgia as far as birding was concerned! Georgia endured one of the coldest winters since records have been kept - if not the coldest; snow fell in areas where it normally does not.

Five birds not listed on any official bird list, to my knowledge, were spotted over the state. Lead-off birds - three Tree Sparrows - one in Whitfield Co.; two in Duluth shook up the birders of Georgia. Other eye-openers -- a Cinnamon Teal surfaced at Augusta - House Finches raided feeders in various sections - Dalton, Atlanta, Columbus. A Prairie Falcon was watched flying over the Georgia side of Lookout Mtn. and a Ruff was counted on the Duluth CBC.

Saw-whet Owls turned up on Jekyll Is. and Atlanta - Red Crossbills were attracted to feeding stations at Calhoun and Atlanta. Off our coast, Razor-bills and Audubon's Shearwaters swung on the ocean breezes. Atlanta comes up with a Snow Bunting; Lapland Longspurs cropped up in a meadow, Georgia side, Lookout Mtn.

Albany, Augusta, Sylvania entertained Snow Geese, while Rome goes them one better - A Snow X Blue Goose hybrid. An Am. Avocet popped up near Albany; Red-cockaded Woodpeckers made the news at Macon; Whistling Swans were at Sylvania and Savannah. A Sandhill Crane flew over the Georgia side, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. Peregrine Falcon at Savannah, Dickcissel at Columbus, N. Orioles were in evidence - Albany, Macon, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus entertaining these tropicals.

Only Rome reports Evening Grosbeaks - none on the CBCs; while Pine Siskins were sparsely sprinkled over the state.

Many Pine Warblers, Purple Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings were reported. E. Bluebirds, Am. Goldfinches, Am. Robins are doing well. The Columbus editor remarked on the numerous sightings of Sharp-shinned Hawks in his area. This editor handles many more birds of prey (excepting eagles) sightings for the state now than in the past. One factor - the more birders in the field, the higher the raptor reports. It is this editor's belief that Georgia is experiencing an upsurge in raptor population.

CBCs produced these finds - Broad-winged Hawk, Magnolia Warbler, Dickcissel, Black and White Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Louisiana Heron-interior, Ruff, Saw-whet Owl, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.

ROUND-UP OF GOS NEWS - Hey, Gang! Let's go to Fitzgerald! Sling your binoculars over your shoulder, put your bird guide in your pocket, pull on your walking shoes and get moving. Invitations are in hand, so you know the interesting activities that are in store. Birding around Fitzgerald is excellent.

Here we will explore and bird three topographical areas - the "flat woods," the gently rolling country and the rolling to rough and hilly terrain. The choice is yours to make! Streams with their attendant bottomland woods interlace the area. Sounds great for birds and birders! Why not come and enjoy the hospitality of Fitzgerald and surrounding area? We'll be ready for that barbeque dinner Saturday night after a day in the field! See you there!

If you haven't bought it, get your copy of the Birdlife of Ben Hill County, Georgia and Adjacent Areas by Milton N. Hopkins, Jr. Order from GOS, 755 Ellsworth Drive, N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30318. This is Occasional Paper #5. Price \$3.00, plus \$.25 postage. Or purchase your copy at the meeting. This book is well-written and packed with information to aid your birding in all sections of Georgia.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS AROUND THE STATE - (Editor's Note - Some of the birds on the following counts that are not supposed to be in the area at count time, will have to pass muster at the National Audubon Society office before being accepted onto official count lists. Underlining a number indicates it is high).

Rome - Dec. 18, 1976 - 16 observers - 98 species - 11,201 individuals. Birds of interest - Red-necked Grebe*-1; Horned Grebe*-2; Green Heron*-4; Gadwall*-22; Pintail*-2; Green-winged Teal*-3; Am. Wigeon *-451; Redhead*-22; Canvasback *-2; Ruddy Duck*-11; Turkey Vulture-38; Black Vulture-26; Cooper's Hawk*-4; Red-shouldered Hawk*-10; Merlin*-2; Sora*-1; Barn Owl*-6; Screech Owl-2; Great Horned Owl*-3; Barred Owl-6; Com. Flicker-58; Pileated Woodpecker-11; Red-headed Woodpecker-7; Red-cockaded Woodpecker*-6; E. Phoebe-51; Horned Lark-10; White-breasted Nuthatch-4; Bewick's Wren*-2; Magnolia Warbler*-2; Brewer's Blackbird-99; Dickcissel*-10; Pine Siskin-6; Grasshopper Sparrow*-2; Bachman's Sparrow*-1; Fox Sparrow-46. Quote from report sent to New York City - "Blackbird roost-on Old Lindale Rd., 1 mile south of Old Furnace Rd., near Bendix Plant. Larger than last year's acre within count circle.

Estimated by three observers from 100,000-500,000 to 900,000 observed entering, an average of 430,000. Birds entering from other directions might swell total to 5,000,000 or more. Time of entering flights 30 mins. by one and 50 mins. by another observer."

HARRIS NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (NWR) - Dec. 26, 1976 - 16 observers - 107 species - ties previous high count in 1971. Birds of note - Snow Geese*-18 (Blue Morph.); Merlin*-1; Bonaparte's Gull-1. Of equal interest are birds missing from count - for the first time in the six-year count history, no Wood Ducks were sighted. This could be due to high water in the woods throughout count area. Others missing- Am. Robin, Gray Catbird, Bobwhite.

GLYNN COUNTY - Dec. 19, 1976 - 39 observers - 143 species - 10,000 individual Good finds - Yellow-crowned Night Heron*, Am. Bittern, White Ibis*, Oldsquaw* Sharp-shinned Hawk*, Virginia Rail, Am. Woodcock, Water Pipit. Break down of species number by area - St. Simon's Island (Is.)-82; Sea Is. -67; Brunswick-73; Jekyll Is.-111.

MACON - 71 species - highest in the past five years. Interesting birds - Loon*, sp.-1; Great Egret-1; Black Vulture-6; Sharp-shinned Hawk*-1; Broad-winged Hawk*-1; Ring-billed Gull-1; Pileated Woodpecker-7; Red-headed Woodpecker-15; Horned Lark-3; Brown Creeper-5; Hermit Thrush-1; White-eyed Vireo-1; Black and White Warbler*-6; Com. Yellowthroat-3.

ALBANY - Dec. 27, 1976 - 13 observers - 90 species. List includes - Louisiana Heron*-1; Wood Duck-68; Turkey-2 hens; many Cedar Waxwings not previously seen in flocks on CBC.

AUGUSTA - Dec. 18, 1976 - 16 observers - 83 species, down from previous years. Prairie Warbler*-1.

SAPELO IS. - Jan. 1, 1977 - 126 (tentative) species. Birds seen include - Redhead*-1; Canvasback*-1; Marbled Godwit*-large flock; Merlin*-1; Henslow's Sparrow*-3; Scaup-estimated 5,000. A Prairie Warbler* was seen on the mainland. The absence of familiar birds and numbers as well as species of overwintering birds were the significant factors in the CBC, being down from previous years.

DUBLIN - first count! - Dec. 18, 1976 - 86 species. Good finds - Ruff-1; Tree Swallow*. (Editor's Note - Please see Vol. III, No. 4, Page 7, this newsletter for other Ruff sightings. Not yet on official state list).

COLUMBUS - Dec. 19, 1976 - 12 observers - Species - one report says 80; another says 86. Down from last year's count of 93 species. Significant finds - Gadwall*, Bufflehead*-75; Canvasback*; Barred Owl, Herring Gull*, Solitary Vireo*, Pine Siskin, Pileated Woodpecker; Great Blue Heron, Com. Snipe.

CALLOWAY GARDENS - Jan. 1, 1977 - 23 or 25 observers, depending on the report read - 78 species - featuring a Broad-winged Hawk*, seen at close range.

ATLANTA - Dec. 19, 1976 - 66 observers - 90 species, highest ever. New high counts were set for 20 species. Good finds - Great Blue Heron -7; Green Heron*-1; Black Duck-2; Gadwall*-7; Green-winged Teal*-2; Am. Wigeon*-4; Bufflehead*-9; Ruddy Duck*-9; Hooded Merganser-47; Turkey Vulture-8; Sharp-shinned Hawk*-5; Cooper's Hawk*-1; Red-shouldered Hawk*-8; King Rail-2; Sora*-2; Rock Dove-97; Great Horned Owl*-3; Saw-whet Owl*-1; Belted Kingfisher-32; Com. Flicker-69; Pileated Woodpecker-22; Red-bellied Woodpecker-78; Redheaded Woodpecker-1; E. Phoebe-18; Carolina Chickadee-410; Brown-headed Nuthatch-134; Carolina Wren-170; Gray Catbird*-2; Hermit Thrush-31; E. Bluebird-346; Golden-crowned Kinglet-397; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-888; White-eyed Vireo*-1; Pine Warbler-93; Pine Siskin-1; Vesper Sparrow-11.

DALTON - Dec. 18, 1976 - 38 observers - 74 species. Down from last year's 78 species. 8,000 individuals down from last year's 14,000. Birds checked off included - Great Blue Heron-7; Canada Goose-60; Black Duck-1; Am. Wigeon*-1; Com. Goldeneye*-2; Hooded Merganser-3; Turkey Vulture-18; Black Vulture-4; Red-shouldered Hawk*-5; Barred Owl-1; Com. Flicker-41; Pileated Woodpecker-14; Red-headed Woodpecker-3; E. Phoebe-10; Bewick's Wren*-1; Gray Catbird*-4; Am. Robin-276; E. Bluebird-86; Loggerhead Shrike-10; Dark-eyed Junco-326; White-crowned Sparrow*-1. Woodpeckers were in low numbers.

BIRD NEWS - An asterisk following the name of a bird denotes it is listed as rare, scarce, uncommon, casual, etc., for that particular area/season in the Pocket Check-list Georgia Birds, J. Fred Denton, Milton Hopkins, Jr. Editor's Notes are taken from this book unless otherwise stated.

THE ALBANY LIMPKIN - Albany Audubon Society (AS) - Turning the calendar back to last October 29, Ann Gordon and Rip Holman saw an Am. Avocet* and a Snow Goose*.

(Feb.) Numerous E. Bluebirds and Am. Goldfinches have been seen up Lee Co. way. Members have been reporting a N. Oriole, Red-breasted Nuthatches and a Loggerhead Shrike coming to feeders. Flocks of Brown-headed Cowbirds and "great flocks" of Purple Finches are raiding other feeders. A Great Blue Heron has been spotted at L. Loretta.

THE FALL LINE - OCMULGEE AS - MACON - Five Whistling Swans* were reported at Savannah River NWR (SRNWR) Dec. 28. Richard Lux found a pair of Red-cocade Woodpeckers* feeding together in open pine woods between River North Development and the Ocmulgee R. Jan. 23. He also saw a female or im. male N. Oriole in his yard Feb. 27.

THE BIRD-WATCHER - FLOYD CO. A.S. - ROME - (Jan.) A member tells of Evening Grosbeaks at his place, arriving just after Jan. 1. (This is the only report of these birds in this newsletter - Ed.) He also mentioned Red Crossbills* were at a feeder in Calhoun.

Byron Eberhart wishes he had fewer blackbirds at his feeding stations. (Don't we all! - Ed.) Phil Ham has about 30 Purple Finches at a time at his feeders and a good number of Pine Warblers coming to his suet.

The field trip of Feb. 13 - Paris L. - turned up - Am. Wigeon*-38 male, 4 female; Redhead*-1 male; Lesser Scaup-5 male, 2 female; Red-tailed Hawk - im. on steel power pole on way to Wax L. (WL). at WL - Pied-billed Grebe-10; Mallard-1 male, 1 female; Redhead*-2 male, 1 female; Water Pipit-1; Rusty Blackbird-10+; Song Sparrow-1. We found at Garden Lakes (GL)- Ring-necked Duck-15; Am. Coot-159; Starling-20+; E. Meadowlark-2.

When Phil Ham visited GL Feb. 19, he found nine Canada Geese and one Snow X Blue Goose hybrid* - all now considered Snow Geese. He also visited the blackbird roost around Feb. 22 and found birds still there, but in somewhat lesser numbers. There was a hawk near the roost, as on other occasions. (Please see further details of this roost under Atlanta news - Ed.)

THE MARSHLANDER - OGEECHEE A.S - SAVANNAH - On a field trip Dec. 4, led by Les Davenport at SRNWR, the following were among the birds listed - Canvasback*, N. Shoveler, Com. Yellowthroat, Am. Bittern, Anhingas - flying, swimming, diving, drying their wings.

A large bird was noticed on a bare tree. From its size and head coloration, we determined it to be a Peregrine Falcon*. It sat motionless for a while and then spooked as some photographers tried to creep near. Going to a smaller tree in the swamp, it swooped down on some small creature. Flying back to the original tree, we watched it feeding. In the short time we watched, the falcon ate three prey.

Another memorable sighting was a Whistling Swan*. We saw it at a distance, watched it take off and fly over our heads. Upon our return to the cars for lunch, the swan was swimming gracefully on the same pond.

THE PIPER - COASTAL GEORGIA AS - BRUNSWICK - (Jan.) A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was espied on the ground on Jekyll Is. (JI). Another visitor to JI was a Saw-whet Owl* seen near a street lamp, holding a squeaking mouse in its talons. Carrying its prey, the owl swooped silently into the darkness. A flock of 80-100 Am. Robins was spotted in the oak trees behind the tennis courts on JI the end of January.

ATLANTA AS - Between 5:20 - 6:00 PM, Dec. 27, Jim and Irene Colehour counted the incoming birds to a blackbird roost south of Rome. The total figure arrived at was 77,800; but, this was probably a conservative estimate because they were only on one side of the roost and missed those birds entering from the opposite side. An estimate of species numbers - Com. Grackles - 20%; Starlings-15%. Most were Red-winged Blackbirds with probably Brown-headed Cowbirds, Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds mixed in. It was impossible to differentiate in the fading light.

A most interesting sidelight was the presence of raptors in the vicinity. Three Red-tailed Hawks were seen - one was perched. An Am. Kestrel was observed flying at the same altitude as the incoming birds, but counter-currently. One thrilling moment was the sighting of a Cooper's Hawk* above the group, dive bombing into it at high speed with arched wings. The hawk disappeared behind the trees, so the result will not be known.

Here is a more complete write-up of the check-list of birds seen the weekend of Nov. 19-21 by the class from Oglethorpe University on JI and Cumberland Is (CI). Gannet*-12; Greater Scaup*-1; White-winged Scoter*-4; Surf Scoter*-2; Bald Eagle*-1 ad, 1 im; Red Knot-2000+; Marbled Godwit*-1; Jaeger*, sp.-1; Barn Owl*-1 seen along causeway to JI. Observers included Catherine Capp, Terry Moore, Vaughn Morrison. (Please refer to Vol. IV, No. 2, Page 6, this newsletter for original write-up - Ed.)

The Saw-whet Owl* seen on the CBC, Dec. 19, was spotted by Joe Greenberg and his party near L. Acworth (LA). Subsequent observations were made Dec. 26 and Jan. 5 by Jean Bevis and Vince Jackson. John Swiderski and his party got the Green Heron* at John Ward Swamp (JWS) on CBC day. On Dec. 26, a Virginia Rail*, JWS; Com. Snipe, Herring Gull*, Ring-Billed Gull-4-6 were viewed at LA.

Traveling to Pendergrast Jan. 9, Jean and Pat Bevis; Vince and Trina Jackson found a Bewick's Wren* and a flock of 35-40 white-crowned Sparrows*.

(Feb.) A N. Oriole has been frequenting a yard in Kennesaw and a Red Crossbill* has been at a member's feeder. Doris Cohrs and Vince Jackson report - third time this winter! - a Snow Bunting* at the Yerkes Primate Field Station, Lawrenceville. Doris found a pair of House Finches* (a second report said four male, two female - Ed.) on Jan. 18 among the jillions of Purple Finches at her feeder in East Point. (Editor's Note - Not yet on official state list; but, being seen in increasing numbers and areas in state.)

Louisa Echols has seven Pine Warblers coming to her feeder to eat a mixture of stale Christmas cookies and peanut butter. Many people have reported these warblers at their feeders this winter; but, the most interesting one is from Joel Volpi who tells of them coming to monkey food at the primate station.

(March) A flock of 17 Canada Geese came to a pond north of Roswell on Jan. 10 and have remained up to the present. A male Pintail* was observed along the Chattahoochee R. near the Nature Center in late January. A Saw-whet Owl* - second report of the winter - was seen sitting outside a window at the Wally Dreyfoos home Jan. 21. A gaggle of Wildlife Screen Tourists were greeted by a Screech Owl at a residence Feb. 5. Jeff Petit reports two Tree

Sparrows* near Duluth, Feb. 4. (Please see Editor's Note under Dalton news.) Tree Sparrows have evidently pushed south in record numbers this winter, as there have been other sightings in the Southeast.

On a tip from Dan Jacobson, Terry Moore went over to the Georgia side of Lookout Mtn. and located two Lapland Longspurs* in a field containing 200+ Horned Larks. (Another source puts the figures at 100 Horned Larks and four Lapland Longspurs - Ed.) A group from Atlanta returned to Northwest Georgia on Feb. 5 to see the Longspurs. They failed to locate them, but a Prairie Falcon was viewed at close range. Jean and Pat Bevis, Terry Moore, Vaughn Morrison were the observers. This all took place near the town of Cloudland. (Editor's Note - Lapland Longspur - erratic winter resident in Coastal Plain, Dec. - Feb. Prairie Falcon - not on any Georgia list to my knowledge. Please see more details of Horned Larks and another falcon sighting under Dalton news.)

AUGUSTA AS - At Merry Ponds (MP) Dec. 9, a flock of 50-60 Snow Geese* flying overhead in the familiar V pattern, headed in a southerly direction were observed. The black-tipped wings were clearly seen. Dec. 10, a Hermit Thrush was spotted near Belvedere. An even dozen Blue-winged Teal were at MP Dec. 13. Gerald Knighton saw 11 of them at MP Dec. 28.

Bill Gibbs saw a flock of Am. Robins about sundown Dec. 29, flying up the Savannah R., apparently to a roost. A black and White Warbler* appeared in the Knippis yard Jan. 2.

Jack and Ruth Cooper, Emil Urban, Gerald Knighton, Clarence Belger, along with about 20 other people, took a trip to the SRNWR Jan. 29. It was an extremely cold day; whipping winds bringing the chill factor down close to zero. Whistling Swan*, Snow Geese* (Blue Morph.), Pintail*, Gadwall*, Ruddy Duck*, N. Shoveler, Redhead*, Hooded Merganser, Gallinule (Com?), White Ibis*, Black-crowned Night Heron*, Snowy Egret*, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Com. Snipe were among the birds ticked off.

Clarence Belger has been checking off the birds. Jan. 17 he reported Com. Loons*, Horned Grebe* at Clark Hill (CH). On Jan. 23, he saw Com. Yellowthroats feeding on an iced-over pond, a Cooper's Hawk* and a grayphase Screech Owl was in his pump house at CH. Also on Jan 23, he, along with Jeanine Angerman and Gerald Knighton reported ducks by the thousands at MP. Gerald says the number is incredible. Among the species seen - Black Duck; Blue- and Green - winged Teal, Ruddy Duck*, Am. Wigeon*, Redhead*, Scaup, sp., Gadwall*. On Feb. 18, Clarence found the first Purple Martin - a loner at MP.

Early in January, Clarence found at MP what he took to be a Cinn. Teal. Some question arose as to its identify and upon further study, it is now assumed that it was either an im. male or a female Cinnamon Teal. (Editor's Note - Not on any Georgia list to my knowledge. Please refer to this newsletter, Vol. IV, No. 1, Page 3 for a sighting near *SAVANNAH*.)

The Harpe's have been entertaining a female N. Oriole at their feeder since Jan. 16. A member noted a Wood Duck searching through the large Sweet Gum trees bordering a pond in back of her home Feb. 10 and watched a Belted Kingfisher grab a fish, then perch on a dead branch and proceed to eat it. Large flocks of Cedar Waxwings continue to be reported and a member tells of seeing thousands of Am. Robins moving up the coast from Daytona Beach, Fla. (through our state) and on into South Carolina early in February. Song Sparrows have been visiting a member's feeders and on Feb. 20, a member observed a Yellow-throated Warbler. This ties an early date record in 1948 for the Augusta area. (Editor's Note - ... winters sparingly in Coastal Plain.) A Fox Sparrow comes into a yard with flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos, White Throated and Chipping Sparrows.

Ruby Hart had a Pileated Woodpecker in her yard Jan. 3. Annie Weigle tells of having flocks of Am. Goldfinches at her feeder and that Brown-headed Nuthatches are invading their property. A Pine Siskin was at a feeder Jan 9. This is the only Pine Siskin report to reach the editor. One does come to a feeder in Aiken, S. C.

Birds listed on field trips in the Augusta area include - Dec. 11 - 50 species. Tree Swallow*-2; N. Oriole-2; Great Blue Heron with red ribbons streaming from each wing was seen again. (First reported in this newsletter Vol. IV, No. 2, Page 5. Please refer to the Miscellaneous section about reporting color marked birds - Ed.) Feb. 12 - Merlin* - watched him hunt as

he swung low over the fields. It was almost close enough to touch! Pipit (water?- Ed.), N. Oriole (same bird?-Ed.), scads of ducks were still on the ponds; the usual warblers and sparrows were picked up. Total-53 species. Feb. 26 - 62 species - Warblers - Yellow-throated, Yellow-rumped, Palm.

Red-tailed Hawks seem to be adapting to city ways. On Jan. 7, while entering Washington Rd from I-20 from North Augusta, Bill and Lee Gibbs saw a Red-tailed Hawk swoop down into the triangle between the roads and snatch a small-sized prey; perhaps a rat or mouse. It then flew back across the entrance road to a clump of small pines where it perched with its prey. Cars were darting past on three sides, yet it did not seem afraid. They are just as daring around busy interchanges about Atlanta. (Please see Dalton news for a sighting near downtown Atlanta - Ed.)

About noon Jan. 20, the Gibbs noted an Am. Kestrel perched on a wire as they entered the John C. Calhoun Expressway at 15th St. This area is thickly populated with homes as well as businesses.

CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY NATURAL HISTORY CLUB - COLUMBUS - Pine Siskins were noted Nov. 9 in Columbus and a Solitary Vireo* was at L. West Point Dec. 2. Bill Matheny spotted a Ground Dove* Dec. 8 at the Columbus Airport. Sam Pate and his father watched an Osprey* with a fish at L. Seminole (LS) and Sam saw a Solitary Vireo* in Seminole Co. (SCo.) Dec. 10. Also in SCo., Sam saw a Forster's Tern* diving into a pond on a catfish farm. (Feb. issue - smart bird! - Ed.) James Miller and Sam came across a mature - black-headed in winter - Laughing Gull and saw a Spotted Sandpiper* at DeSoto (Feb. issue) The Laughing Gull was reported earlier by W. C. Holman, Jr. (Editor's Note - ... Accidental in interior.)

A Columbus College instructor saw an eagle*, sp. fly over the college about noon-time Dec. 30 -- 97 Lesser Scaup were on Cooper Creek (CCr), Columbus, Jan. 13. Jan. 1, James Miller saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk* at Ft. Benning and watched a Merlin* diving at a Red-tailed Hawk in the sky over Columbus. A Sharp-shinned Hawk* was seen making two attack passes at a Pileated Woodpecker in the Cason J. Calloway Memorial Forest Jan. 26. Two N. Orioles were at a Columbus feeder in January. An Am. Kestrel suddenly attacked a group of Purple Finches, catching one, near the feeders in Sue Chambliss's yard Feb. 13. Bill Matheny viewed a male Dickcissel* Feb. 14. Male and female House Finches* were at a Columbus feeder - March issue.

Cedar Waxwings are in the news. Kenneth Nance tells of an invasion of hundreds of these birds at the Illeges Building, Columbus College, Feb. 10. They ate the Pyracantha berries from the expaliered shrubs and were so numerous they couldn't all light on the shallow limbs, so the walls were a mass of wing-fluttering and color. On Feb. 18, these birds moved in and stripped a member's Am. Holly Tree in two days flat.

One of our members was having trouble with a belligerent Mockingbird who spent his time chasing all other birds away from the feeders. So, the member captured it in a cage, took it to Phenix City and released it. Next day, it was back in his yard, busily chasing all birds away. Again, he captured it, hauling it 40 miles away to Auburn. It's been two weeks - no mockingbird yet; but, who knows?

THE OBSERVER - COLUMBUS AS - Last summer, a pair of E. Bluebirds layed five eggs three times. In December, a member was driving along, when a brown phase Screech Owl rocketed out of the night and into the side of his truck. One of the passengers said it hit with a thud and was thrown 20 feet up. The owl was picked up and suffered a hurt eye, wing and leg. It was taken home and fed hamburger and a dead Rock Dove found in the street. Sam Pate took over the care of the owl and fed it various dead birds, including a road-killed Screech Owl. Raw chicken necks were also given the owl. It was released back into the wild.

A Red-tailed Hawk flew over a member's car Jan. 15 with a rabbit in its talons. The rabbit's feet almost touched the hood of the car. This occurred near Buena Vista. McCant's Millpond, near Butler, yielded Wood Duck-25; Mallards; Pileated Woodpecker-3; Great Blue Heron; Black and Turkey Vultures, among other species - Feb. issue. A Sharp-shinned Hawk* was seen picking off a small bird near a feeder Jan. 31. These hawks have been numerous in the area this winter.

Razorbills and Audubon's Shearwaters have been sighted off the Georgia coast on pelagic trips - March issue. (Editor's Note - both birds listed as accidentals. The Razorbill off Tybee Is. Dec. 19, 1967 - specimen and the shearwater on Little Cumberland Is., Camden Co., July 25, 1966 - specimen.)

A Gray Fox was seen eating from a feeder in Harris Co. (HCo.) recently. This day was bitterly cold. The strange thing was about 15 species of birds were eating nearby. They were all so hungry they did not seem to mind their natural enemy being in their midst. On other occasions, the birds really gunned it when the fox appeared. Cold weather makes strange friends! Plenty of wild ducks have been at CCr. since the cold weather hit - Feb. issue.

Dan Carbaugh went down Florida way. While still in Georgia, he lists Purple Sandpipers*, Tybee Is., Great Horned Owl* and Am. Woodcock - Feb. issue.

Sam Pate reports two Merlin*, Eufaula NWR (ENWR) Dec. 3; Sharp-shinned Hawk*, Columbus. Dec. 4; Great Blue Heron over CCr. Jan. 16; Cooper's Hawk*, Whitesville Rd., Columbus Jan. 18. On the chilly morning of Jan. 29, he saw a Sandhill Crane* on the Georgia side, ENWR. (Editor's Note - not generally recorded in winter outside Okefenokee NWR.); Barred Owl - 2 at 1:00 AM while traveling through HCo. Feb. 19 (that's prime owling time! - Ed.) James Miller found four Wood Duck, Dec. 4, Columbus.

ENWR Report - (This refuge embraces the Georgia - Alabama state line. Unless stated to have been seen in Georgia, all sightings are listed under this special section - Ed.) Nov. - Snow Geese - 7 (Blue Morph-6); Am. Wigeon, N. Shoveler, Hooded Merganser-6. Dec. 11-Ducks - 15 species; dozens of hawks, thousands of ducks in huge flocks; Barred Owl-2 - all in the rain! Dec. 30 - Snow Geese-20 (Blue Morph-19); Caspian Tern-3; Grasshopper Sparrow-2; Cooper's Hawk. Jan. 26 - White Ibis-3 im. Feb. 2-King and Virginia Rails, many com. Snipe, Yellowlegs.

THE KINGFISHER-CHEROKEE AS - DALTON - Two birds not listed on the official state check-list were seen near and in Dalton.

Harry White starts the bird news rolling with his tremendous find - a Tree Sparrow coming regularly to his yard and even upon to his porch! Harry first spotted the Tree Sparrow with his naked eye in with his regular conglomeration of sparrows - Field, Swamp, White-throated and the ubiquitous English - on Jan. 17. The bird was seen with regularity until Jan. 28. Harriett Di Gioia and Delano Crowe viewed the sparrow on the cold, cold day of Jan. 18, backing up Harry's identification. Many GOSers - Jean White, Rene White, Doris Crowe, Frank Di Gioia, Anne Hamilton, Norene Boring, Mabel Faulkner, Joe Greenberg, Jean Bevis - all saw the sparrow. Bob Manns also got in some good looks at the bird. Photographs were snapped. Other GOSers came, but luck was not with them and the sparrow did not show -- namely, Joel and Vicki Volpi, Vaughn Morrison.

Terry Moore traveled up to see it, but missed out. He went on to the Georgia side of LM for other finds. Please refer to Atlanta news for details. (Editor's Note - not yet on official state list - undoubtedly will be included on forthcoming lists.)

Next on the agenda - Jan. 24 brought a female House Finch to Anne Hamilton's feeder. Again, a trained eye at work. Without binoculars, she picked the House Finch out of the many Purple Finches making stops at her feeders. The female came regularly until Feb. 1 - the last day it was seen. GOSers also enjoying this bird - Wyatt and Jerrilyn Bruce, Mabel Faulkner, Norene Boring, Frank and Harriett Di Gioia. A male appeared three times at a sunflower seed feeder hanging from Anne's porch Jan. 28.

Now, ordinarily to get a state record, you would have to wade through a swamp, climb the highest mountain or trot out over fields and woodlands. Did Harry or Anne do this? No! Harry sat in his rocking chair in the warmth and comfort of his living room. Anne was in her comfortable kitchen, sitting at a table doing some paperwork.

On Dec. 8, Wyatt Bruce went up on Fort Mtn. to view the ice-covered trees. A lovely sight, he reports, especially with 80 Dark-eyed Juncos sprinkled about. He saw a Red-headed Woodpecker in West Hill Cemetery Feb. 5, and comes up with three Spotted Sandpipers in a low, wet pasture in Murray Co., Mar. 9. This is the earliest date for the area. Around Dec. 16, Harry

White watched a Cooper's Hawk* capture an E. Meadowlark in Whitfield Co. He reports three male Purple Martins at his gourds Mar. 13.

Together, Harry and Delano Crowe checked off the following birds -- going up on the Georgia side of LM, Feb. 6, looking for the Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks seen previously by Terry Moore, they found 25 Horned Larks. (CASers on a field trip Feb. 13 saw 30+ Horned Larks and a falcon. From the coloration - dark, slate gray- and large size, it seemed a Peregrine. No facial markings could be seen as the bird was in swift flight away from the observers.) Birding on Feb. 27 they spied Am. Wigeon*-14 on a pond near Delano's home; Great Blue Heron, Ring-necked Duck-75, Wood Duck-10, Red-shouldered Hawk* at Haig Mill Lake. A Red-head* was at a pond near Gobbler Knob.

Anne Hamilton gives us a Gray Catbird*, seen in her yard, Dec. 11. Frank and Harriett Di Gioia noticed three Ring-billed Gulls* at Carter's Dam, Murray Co., Dec. 17. Although listed as common on large inland reservoirs in the state, they are uncommon to our area. This is the third record. They also watched a Red-tailed Hawk circling around over the corner of Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E. and Penn. St., N.E. in Atlanta, Feb. 19. The hawk was very dirty in appearance, with wing feathers missing.

Harriett lists these sightings -- on Jan. 5, she had the thrill of watching 250-300 Cedar Waxwings down in a creek bottom near Thread Mill Lake (TML). They were feasting on Privet drupes, perched in trees, swooping through the air. Flashing yellow tail bands were an impressive sight that dull day their high-pitched calling filled the air. Three Herring Gulls*, TML, Jan. 28 - fourth record; four banded Canada Geese at the Dalton Golf and Country Club Feb. 3. Each of the four had a wide plastic orange band on the right leg and a regulation aluminum U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service band on the left leg. She watched three hawks in five minutes time at TML - one Red-tailed, two Red-shouldered* Feb. 22. A Pine Siskin came to her feeder Feb. 24; 90 Ring-necked Duck, TML, Feb. 28 - this figure rose to 126 on Mar. 1. 15+ Yellow-rumped Warblers in a swampy area behind the tennis courts at Lakeshore Park and one at her feeder Feb. 28; a male and female Hooded Merganser, TML, Mar. 9.

Miscellaneous sightings in and around Dalton - four White-crowned Sparrows* and a Bewick's Wren* in a member's yard Dec. 19. The sparrows were first noted in November. During the week of Dec. 26, an Am. Kestrel caught a sparrow, then sat on a power pole in a yard and ate it. (They used to be called Sparrow Hawk! - Ed.) A shot Red-tailed Hawk was found on a member's land in Whitfield Co. -- and a Red-tailed was seen soaring over downtown Dalton Jan. 11. On Jan. 3, a Dalton resident saw a Ringed Turtle Dove at her feeder - it was seen until Jan. 7. The editor feels it was an escaped cage bird - these birds have been seen in Atlanta and colonies of them do exist in the wild in Los Angeles, Ca. and in the Tampa-Miami, Fla. area.

15 Geese, felt by the observer to be Blue Morph Snow Geese*, were at TML for half an hour Dec. 30, flying off in a straggly V to the south. 18 Canada Geese came in on TML Jan. 7, staying until Jan. 19. One had a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service band on its leg. Great Blue Herons are being seen regularly in Whitfield County. A Red-headed Woodpecker was at a feeder Feb. 24. The observer is 95 years old -- will you be watching birds at that age? A Bewick's Wren* was in a yard Mar. 12.

Migrating ducks and geese are in the news. 100 ducks passed over a member's house, fairly low, at 5:45 P.M. Feb. 23. 200 Canada Geese were reported passing over Murray Co. in two V's - high and fast - "so high the honking could barely be heard" Feb. 20 and a flight of geese was seen over Whitfield Co. the week of Mar. 6.

LETTERS - Charles Moore of Claxton writes -- "My (Purple) Martins are a month early this year. A male and a female came to my gourds Feb. 22, 1977. They usually come on Mar. 17.

"... if anyone is interested, I will be happy to guide them to a cattle Egret rookery."

Anne Hamilton passes along this news from Sylvania -- eight Snow Geese* (Blue Morph.) on a pond Jan. 9. These were new additions to an existing flock; on Jan. 10 an im. Whistling Swan* was seen by Grace Boddiford.

41 Canada Geese were at the Wade Plantation Jan. 21 reported by Ada Love Hinson. She also tells about a Great Horned Owl* on the nest at a pond on the plantation Jan. 21. Elinor Hagan also saw this nest - 25 feet from the road and seven feet above the water in a Cypress Tree. Hooded Mergansers have been about the area also.

Eleanor Fisher, Burke Co., had a Barred Owl nest near her home and could see two downy young in early March. Grace Boddiford was there one afternoon and the two adults called to each other in the afternoon. A dead Barred Owl was found by Grace on a highway in Screven Co. in the middle of March. On the Millhaven Plantation, a hollow tree was felled and two downy owlets were found. They were taken to Grace for identification. You guessed it! Barred Owls! (If you have a hankering to see or hear a Barred Owl, looks like this is your spot! - Ed.) Grace caught sight of a Blue-gray Gnat-catcher and a White-eyed Vireo, Screven Co., Mar. 15.

NEWS OF PEOPLE -- Here's some real happy news. GOS's newest member, Stephanie Shea Bruce, born March 18, 1977 to Wyatt and Jerilynn Bruce in Dalton. We wish you much happiness with your new daughter!

Sue Chambliss had surgery a while back and Maureen King broke her ankle during the winter months. Her husband, Herman, has been in and out of the hospital recently. Hope all are completely recovered by now!

Here's a highlight of the Golden Anniversary Christmas Banquet of the Atlanta AS -- "We were honored to have Mr. George Dorsey, the only living founder of Atlanta Bird Club, with us at the banquet. As a tribute to his leadership in the club, he was presented with a framed print of Dick Park's lovely Barn Owl. Mr. Dorsey gave a fascinating and amusing talk about his early days with the club. He became one of the founders in 1926. (Congratulations to Atlanta AS for 50 years of promoting birding and to George for his many and fine birding contributions on the local and state levels. - Ed.)

Joel Volpi traveled down Columbus way to give the March program on Birds of Prey. Maridawn Collins is now doing graduate work at the University of Tennessee. Milton N. Hopkins name broke into print. In the letters to the editor section, Atlanta Journal/Constitution Sunday Magazine, Feb. 20, 1977, appears a letter from John A. O'Keefe, Theoretical Studies Group, NASA, Greenbelt, Md. "Tom Allen tells me that as a result of Lucy Justus' article on tektites, a Georgia tektite was found in situ, that is in its original place. This is very rare; almost all tektites to date have been transported, either by water or by people. There is hope of finding microtektites there. (The tektite was found by Milton N. Hopkins in Fitzgerald, Ga.). . . ." (That's where we're going to for our spring meeting folks! - Ed.)

Travelers -- Jane Whiteman helped Dan Carbaugh in his Florida search for unusual cold weather species during the weekend of Jan. 22. They found the huge, northern Glaucous Gull, some Great Black-backed Gulls, the Lapland Larkspur, Gannets, etc.

Don and Doris Cohrs, while in California over the holidays, saw Ross' Goose, Tuffed Duck, White-headed Woodpecker, Wrentit, European Wigeon, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Red Phalarope.

Byron and Myrtle Eberhart are on a jaunt to Texas-going to the places mentioned in George Harrison's book, Roger Tory Peterson's Dozen Birding Hot Spots. They are planning to get to Big Bend National Park and Aransas (NWR).

St. Mark's NWR was visited during the winter by these GOSers -- Bill Matheny, Same Pate, Carolyn and Rip Holman and the November field trip of Atlanta AS. Birds observed include -- Bald Eagle, Snow Geese, Surf Scoters, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dark-eyed Junco, Le Conte's Sparrow, White Ibis, Red-tailed Hawk, Hooded Mergansers.

MISCELLANEOUS -- Joe Meyers gives us this insight into reporting color-marked birds. "I noticed in your most recent newsletter (Vol. IV, No. 2) that a group sighted color-marked (Great Blue) herons. Many people are wondering where to report these sightings and some banders are advertising in journals, etc., to report the sightings to them. These banders are not following U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service procedure. You should not report color-marked birds to the individual bander or banding station.

Color-marked birds should be reported to -- Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Laurel, Md., 20811.

Remember to include color, type of marker, location (miles and direction to the nearest town) and species. This will be greatly appreciated and will avoid confusion in these studies." (Thanks for the information, Joe! -- Ed.)

Gerald Knighton, Audubon Representative of Friends of the River, is asking that any member who is aware of Red-cockaded Woodpecker colonies in the vicinity of Trotters Shoals Dam and Lake area to please contact him at 304 Kirby Dr., North Augusta, S. C., 29841, or phone 279-5274. Gerald says if you want the dam stopped, you must be willing to speak out. Even though President Carter has ordered work on the Russell Dam stopped, the decision is not final, according to Interior Secretary, Cecil D. Andrus.

John Swiderski writes in a letter that Atlanta AS attracted 12 new members for GOS through the subsidy offer in November and December. Atlanta AS paid part of the membership cost. (This plan has worked well in other areas too. Cherokee AS, Dalton, subsidized half the membership cost and has gained four new members for GOS. Augusta has done well with this plan - Ed.)

CHANGES OF ADDRESS -- Wyatt Bruce, 506 South 2nd Ave., Apt. #103, Chatsworth Ga., 30705. Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Henderson-31 Chemin Moise Duboule, Apt. 903, 1209 Geneve, Suisse. In a letter to the editor, the Hendersons wrote -- "Sorry we'll miss the Fitzgerald trip and more in the future. We do want to remain GOS members and correspond about birdlife in Switzerland. We'll be back to USA sometime."

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY -- "Land At Work." Somehow I would like to place such a sign -- or at the very least an imaginary one -- on every so-called "empty" lot and "unused" piece of land. We have, somehow, a strange idea of what use is, particularly as to what constitutes good use. By and large our attitude is that land isn't being used unless it is paved, built upon, worn bare, or littered. Green vacant lots are anything but vacant; the "only grass and weeds" kind of measurement of which we have been guilty is responsible at least in part for many of the environmental difficulties we find ourselves in today. -- From an editorial in Horticulture Magazine by Carlton B. Lees.

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