

The Georgia GOShawk

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

March 31, 1978

THE GOShawk SAYS -- A GREAT BIG WELCOME to the following new members -- Beauford Cranford, Statesboro; Vernon and Anne Waters, Augusta; Michelle Moran, Norcross; Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Green, Hiwassee; Ellinor and Helen Hagan, Sylvania; Dr. Conrad Easley, Rocky Face; Marie and Mel Mellinger, Tiger; Rob Jacobs, Marietta; Martha Smart, Valdosta; Mr. & Mrs. Lysle Young, St. Simons Island; Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Jordan, Nashville; Donald Burke, Register; Mr. & Mrs. John Forbes, Atlanta; Noel Holcomb, Austell; Raymond & Mildred Mangham, Macon; James Davis, Hawkinsville; Lindsay Lilly, Rockville, Md; Mrs. Dee Hunter, Dunwoody.

Three libraries, two of them overseas, are also joining us -- Hawkes Library West Point; Senckenbergische Bibliothek, Frankfurt, Germany; Biblioteka Akademii Nauk; Kishinjev, USSR.

EDITORIAL COMMENT -- The winter summary of rare, uncommon, out-of-season birds (excluding birds listed on Christmas Counts) kicks off with a Cinnamon Teal sighting at Augusta. This teal is not on the official or hypothetical lists for the state. What strengthens this observation is one was seen last winter in the same area and the same couple was involved. A Glaucous Gull was at the lock on Walter F. George Dam.

A Wilson's Phalarope surfaced on the Georgia side of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in November and a "positive" identification of a Greater Scaup comes in from Augusta.

Bald Eagles cleaved the skies over the Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge and Fort Gaines; a Golden Eagle was over Lookout Mountain. Lake West Point (Georgia side) and Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge hosted Whistling Swans; Wood Storks were at Ossabow Island in December. House Finches appeared again in Atlanta, expanding into new territories; Alpharetta, Cumberland Island, Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge were visited by Peregrine Falcons.

Athens, Dalton, Atlanta report flocks of Sandhill Cranes on migration; Green Herons were discovered at Augusta and Atlanta. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird turned up in December at Columbus while Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Black and White Warblers made winter records at Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge.

Northern Orioles, although not uncommon winter residents, appeared widely over the state at Valdosta, Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge, Atlanta, Rome, Augusta and Columbus. Birds reported to be low in Georgia -- winter 1978 -- include Kinglets, Ruby-crowneds, and especially Golden-crowneds; Hermit Thrushes, Winter Wrens. Evening Grosbeaks were moderate, with Cedar Waxwings, American Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins, White-throated Sparrows being abundant. Dark-eyed Juncos were in normal numbers.

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. *See under Bird News.)

Columbus - December 17 - 96 species - a record number, including a Bald Eagle* for the first time.

Sapelo Island - An unofficial tally of 140 species with a com. Yellow-throat and a Yellow-breasted Chat reported being seen.

Glynn County - December 31 - 144 species -- White Morph* Great Blue Heron-1; a new form for the count (sixth sighting for state according to new Checklist - Ed.) White-winged Scoter*-2; new to count; Brown Pelican*-169; Wood Stork*-10; Surf Scoter*-3; Com. Scoter*-769; Parasitic Jaeger*-5.

Augusta - 89 species -- 6986 individuals. Most unusual sighting was a Wood Thrush (no winter record to this editor's knowledge - Ed.); most abundant bird -- Red-winged Blackbird, 1552; second most abundant bird - White-throated Sparrow, 694.

Macon - December 17 - 63 species, plus three seen during count period. 3388 individuals. Great Blue Heron - 5; Great Egret-1; Black Vulture - 1; Red tailed Hawk-3; Marsh Hawk-1; Am. Kestrel-6; Red-headed Woodpecker-2; Red breasted Nuthatch-1; Hermit Thrush-5; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-55; Cedar Waxwing-99; Loggerhead Shrike-7; Solitary Vireo-1; Evening Grosbeak-86; Purple Finch-13; Am. Goldfinch-105; Vesper Sparrow-6; Fox Sparrow-1. Sharp-shinned Hawk* seen during count period.

Atlanta - December 18 - 86 species: 14,498 individuals. Great Blue Heron-4; Lesser Scaup-91; Com. Goldeneye*-1; Bufflehead*-11; Sharp-shinned Hawk*-6; Cooper's Hawk*-1; Red-tailed Hawk-23; Red-shouldered Hawk-15; Merlin*-1 new to count; Am. Kestrel-20; Sora*-1; Ring-billed Gull-6; new to count; Rock Dove-156; Screech Owl-29; Great Horned Owl*-6; Com. Flicker-102; Pileated Woodpecker-27, Red-bellied Woodpecker-95; Red-headed Woodpecker-6; Downy Woodpecker-63; E. Phoebe-19; Blue Jay-729; Com. Crow-710; Carolina Chickadee-437; Red-breasted Nuthatch-7; Brown-headed Nuthatch-204; House Wren*-1; Winter Wren-3; Hermit Thrush-9; E. Bluebird-454; Golden-crowned Kinglet-53; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-157; Cedar Waxwing-489; Loggerhead Shrike-19; Com. Yellowthroat-1; Pine Siskin-231; Am. Goldfinch-728; Red Crossbill*-2; Fox Sparrow-10. Last year's count tallied 397 Golden-crowned Kinglets; 888 Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Rome - December 27 - 110 species. Com Loon*-1; Horned Grebe*-2; Great Blue Heron-10; Green Heron*-7; Little Blue Heron*-1; Louisiana Heron*-1; Least Bittern*-1; Snow Goose* blue morph-1; Gadwall*-12; Pintail*-6; Green-winged Teal*-3; Am. Wigeon*-1294; Redhead*-16; Canvasback*-58; Oldsquaw*-2; Ruddy Duck*-18; Turkey Vulture-24; Black Vulture-8; Sharp-shinned Hawk*-1; Cooper's Hawk*-7; Red-tailed Hawk-28; Red-shouldered Hawk-18; Broad-winged Hawk*-1; Marsh Hawk-16; Merlin*-4; Am. Kestrel-30; Bobwhite-201; Turkey-3; Sora*-4; Barn Owl*-6; Great Horned Owl*-4.

Red-headed Woodpecker-10; Red-cockaded Woodpecker*-3; Red-breasted Nuthatch-5; Winter Wren-19; Bewick's Wren*-1; Mockingbird-219; Brown Thrasher-132; Am. Robin-239; Hermit Thrush-22; E. Bluebird-116; Golden-crowned Kinglet-100; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-55; Cedar Waxwing-68; Loggerhead Shrike-44; White-eyed Vireo*-1; Magnolia Warbler*-2; Com. Yellowthroat-1; Brewer's Blackbird-199; Dickcissel*-3; Evening Grosbeak-10; Pine Siskin-225; Grasshopper Sparrow*-1; Vesper Sparrow-7; White-crowned Sparrow*-2; Fox Sparrow-18.

Dalton - December 31 - 67 species, 8875 individuals: Great Blue Heron-5; Green Heron*-1; Turkey Vulture-2; Cooper's Hawk*-1; Red-tailed Hawk-13; Red-shouldered Hawk-3; Marsh Hawk-1; Am. Kestrel-20; Falcon, sp.-1; Screech Owl-1; Pileated Woodpecker-19; Red-headed Woodpecker-9; Com. Crow-311; Red breasted Nuthatch-14; Brown-headed Nuthatch-16; Hermit Thrush-1; E. Bluebird -34; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-17; Cedar Waxwing-280; Loggerhead Shrike-9; Brewer's Blackbird-2; Cardinal-144; Evening Grosbeak-14; Am. Goldfinch-322; Fox Sparrow-3.

BIRD NEWS -- An asterisk following the name of a bird denotes it is listed as occasional, rare, uncommon for that particular area/season in the Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, J. Fred Denton. Editor's notes are taken from this book.

Abbreviations used in this newsletter - National Wildlife Refuge - NWR; River-R; Lake-L; Creek-Cr; Island-Is; County-Co; Mountain-Mtn; Fort-Ft; Common-Com; Immature-im; Adult-Ad; Warbler-W; Audubon Society-AS; American-Am

ATHENS -- We are glad to have news from Athens, Grady Horne reporting. This enlarges our birding coverage of the state. Keep that news coming, Grady! Most of the sightings took place on Grady's acreage six miles W of downtown Athens from December 19 through the middle of March.

Accipiter-1; Red-tailed Hawk-2; Am. Kestrel-2; Bobwhite-6; Sandhill Crane*-two flocks, 60 March 11; 40 March 12. Killdeer heard March 7; Am. Woodcock heard February 18; Whip-poor-will heard beginning March 16; Pileated Woodpecker-1; Red-breasted Nuthatch-1 seen January 14-March 11. Brown Creeper - December 23 - February 17 with a total of four sightings. E. Bluebird-5; Ruby-crowned Kinglet- December 31 - February 26 for a total of three sightings. Cedar Waxwing-100 February 17-middle of March; Loggerhead Shrike-1; E. Meadowlark - 15; Evening Grosbeak-31 December 31-March 21 with eight - 20 almost daily. A flock of 15 was seen flying high overhead March 22; on

March 23, six came to the feeder. Purple Finch-18; Am. Goldfinch-24; Pine Siskin-20; Sparrows-Chipping-5; Field-5; Fox-5; Song-2.

UPPER FLINT RIVER AS - JONESBORO -- Roger Green tells of seeing some Evening Grosbeaks January 28 in the SW part of Riverdale. Nine of these birds came to an area feeder this same date.

THE MARSHLANDER - OGEECHEE AS - SAVANNAH -- Ogeechee ASers and Sylvania birders joined forces for a field trip to the Savannah RNWR (SNWR) December 3; listing White-throated Sparrow; female N. Oriole; Blue-gray Gnatcatchers*; numerous Kinglets; Loggerhead Shrike; Black and White W*; Marsh Hawk; Anhinga.

Someone noticed a large black and white blob in a tree on the horizon. Inspection with field glasses showed this to be the Bald Eagle* we had been hoping to see. The snowy whiteness of the head contrasted with the blackness of the body giving an impressive sight. In a neighboring tree, we spotted a Red-tailed Hawk and so compared sizes. The eagle eventually left the tree, circled around a few times, then departed. Also spotted was a group of White Ibis* along with a couple of Louisiana Herons; Great Blue Heron; Com. Egret; Am. Kestrel.

BIRDING ABOUT - WITHLACOOCHEE WATCHERS -- VALDOSTA -- Harris and Tillie Mathis

noted Wood Stork on Grassy Pond Rd, plus a Redhead*. They, along with M. E. Crago, Ken George and others, report seeing E. Bluebirds frequently in the past three months. According to many watchers, E. Bluebirds abound in the area.

Clyde Connell passes in the first Purple Martin report with an early arrival date in his yard of January 26. Am. Kestrels are plentiful on the telephone wires along the highway. (Wonder what birds sat around on before telephone and power lines were strung all over the countryside?-Ed.) A Cooper's Hawk* perched on Tony and Edna Criscuolo's feeder and they report Ruby-crowned Kinglets are regular visitors. N. Orioles showed up at the Crago's one cold afternoon - another member was visited by one of the winter Tropicals coming in with her Purple Finches. Pine Siskins and Dark-eyed Juncos feed at the Crago's. All above news from the March issue.

Virginia Culpepper reports Ruby-throated Hummingbirds came back on schedule March 15.

ATLANTA AS - Don and Doris Cohrs came up with a good find -- a Glaucous Gull at Walter F. George Dam on the Chattahoochee R (CR) December 4. This big white gull was sitting in the lock at the dam bathing and preening. That's a pretty big bathtub but maybe the gull felt very dirty! The bird was all white; no black; bill flesh-colored with a dark tip. Two days later Bob Manns and Joe Greenberg visited the dam and saw the bird, confirming the identification. On December 11, another Atlanta expedition visited the area, but failed to find the bird. Sam Pate writing up this sighting in The Columbus Observer noted it to be a second-year bird. (Editor's Note-- Rare visitor near Savannah and on Tybee Light, 9 December, 1933 - 30 May, 1951-specimen.)

From September 29 to October 19, Vicki and Joel Volpi, with Malcomb Edwards, sighted 93 Tundra Peregrine Falcons* on Cumberland Is. Twenty-seven were captured and banded during this period. Of the 27 banded, 25 were immature and two were second-year birds. The sexual ratio of the banded Peregrines was three males, 24 females. Each banded bird was fitted with a standard aluminum US Fish & Wildlife Service band and a green color band with raised white letters and numerals.

Numerous other raptors were sighted during our stay including 267 Am. Kestrel; 36 Merlin*; 60 Marsh Hawk; 140 Osprey*; nine Sharp-shinned Hawk*; four Cooper's Hawk*.

We were especially pleased to have captured two Peregrines that had been previously banded. On October 6 we captured an im. female that had been banded September 27 near Green Bay, Wis. October 8 we captured an im. female banded on October 3 on Panamore Is., Va. This type of information -- band sightings and recoveries -- provides data about the migratory habits of the endangered Peregrine Falcon.

Other banding stations reported good numbers of Peregrines this fall migration. It appears as though a record number of Peregrines were banded during the fall 1977 migration.

Field Notes -- A Great Blue Heron was at L. Acworth November 26, along with 13 Ring-necked Ducks and one Bufflehead*. Blue morph Snow Geese*, considered accidental in Atlanta, were seen by Jeff Petit November 26 at Rogers Bridge (RB) on the CR. Jeff said there were about 50 of the geese flying in perfect formation. A flock of "extremely noisy" geese WAS near Westminster School November 25. There were 50-60 unidentifiable geese "swarming" at an altitude of about 1,000 feet for five minutes or so before they moved into a loose formation, heading south.

The most interesting reports this month were those turned in about Sandhill Cranes*, another uncommon migrant through Atlanta. There were three sightings on the late date of December 1. Larry Thompson saw a flock of 45-50 cranes circling very high over the Cross Creek Apartments for about 15 minutes around noon. At 4:00 p.m., Vince Jackson saw approximately 175 cranes in a loose V formation over Peachtree Battle Shopping Center calling very loudly and moving from NW to SE. This same flock was spotted in the Virginia-Highland area ten minutes later.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets continue to be low and there was one individual Golden crowned Kinglet reported, bringing the grand total to three sightings from mid-September to mid-December.

By December 6, Don and Doris Cohrs had one male, five female House Finches* visiting their feeder. Vaughn Morrison turned in the first feeder report for Evening Grosbeaks, coming in on December 8. Mary Anne Neville has two Red-breasted Nuthatches at her feeder. On December 6, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-headed Woodpecker were at an area feeder.

Billy Pulliam found a Great Blue Heron and a Green Heron* at Emory University's President's Estate (EPE) January 8, with the Great Blue still there on January 10. An Am. Wigeon* was found in a flock of Mallards at the Chattahoochee Nature Center January 14; Ann and Dan Forster found a female Canvasback on Murphy Candler L December 29. Anne Bailey reports a Peregrine Falcon* just outside Alpharetta January 3. All the above sightings, except the Great Blue Heron, are considered rare/accidental in the Atlanta area in winter.

January 10, a member observed a male Am. Kestrel perched on a Custer Avenue power line eating the head from a House Sparrow. The headless carcass was deposited on the ground and the bird perched again. A few minutes later, the Kestrel descended to a clump of dead grass and killed a mouse so large the bird had difficulty flying with it. As he skimmed a dead shrub, a Red-tailed Hawk burst from cover, causing the Kestrel to drop his intended meal; whereupon the Red-tailed ate the mouse and flew back into the shrub. The enraged Kestrel dived twice at the hawk before retiring to the power line. January 11, the same Kestrel was back on the power line tearing into a now-stiff, frozen sparrow carcass.

Two more reports of individual Golden-crowned Kinglet by Billy Pulliam and several more reports of Ruby-crowned Kinglets coming to feeders by John Swiderski have been received. Brown Creeper, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, Am. Goldfinches are free-loading at area feeding stations.

The January field trip to R Band Shakerag was cold! Thirty-eight species were tallied -- Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks; a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers; Water Pipits, Fox Sparrows. Jeff Petit saw about 10 Horned Larks up at L. Lanier February 4; he and Joel and Vicki Volpi found four Snow Geese* (including one blue morph) in a field at RB. Seems we have fishing Red-shouldered Hawks. A pair was reported fishing in the CR near Willeo Cr. On February 12, John Swiderski watched one of these hawks catch seven fish in seven tries. John hasn't been able to find any other documentation of Red-shouldered Hawks taking fish.

January 21, Louisa Echols was startled to find a brilliant m. N. Oriole at her kitchen window. As of February 20 the Oriole was still coming to her feeder, eating peanut butter, disregarding the orange halves put out for it. Doris and Don Cohrs have lost their monopoly on House Finches* after a year. Billy Pulliam and Jayne Ryan both have them in attendance.

Vince Jackson has this item for us -- beginning last December, Trina and I noticed a com. Grackle at our feeders which appeared to be partially albinistic. We thought nothing of it as this is not uncommon among blackbirds and their allies. We started seeing more of these grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds with a random sprinkling of pure white spots over head, back, wings.

Our initial reaction was that the birds, which are a subgroup of the larger N. DeKalb Shopping Center roost, had probably been "sprayed" to reduce their numbers, resulting in a bleaching reaction from the applied chemical. The January 27 Audubon Leader reported that blackbirds had been bleach-marked 300 miles away in Milan, Tn., by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. A large roost was being marked to better understand where and how far they range. The birds were dipped in ordinary hair bleach. A call to the director of the project revealed that our blackbirds were not their marked birds. The dipped birds became "dishwater blonds" more or less all over. We still do not know the cause of the white dots on our birds, but if you see a "dishwater blond" blackbird let the agency know.

Elizabeth McCain reports St. Simons Is. was a good place to be December 23. Among the birds seen: Red-breasted Mergansers, Ruddy Turnstones, Piping Plover, Black Skimmers - "hundreds standing together on a sandbar; quite a sight." Two rainy hours spent at SNWR produced on December 30 - 40 Canvasbacks*, an ad. Bald Eagle*, Peregrine Falcon*; Terns, Gull-billed (Editor's Note: Erratic and uncommon summer resident on coast...) and Common*; Warblers -- Black and White* and Orange-crowned; N. Oriole - White I bis*, Greater Scaup*, Purple Sandpipers were located on a trip to Savannah Beach January 1 by Ann and Dan Forster and Billy Pulliam.

Terry Moore viewed a Golden Eagle on Lookout Mtn in NW Georgia when he, Mary Ann Vernocy, Louisa Echols made a trip there February 12. The trio found two to three dozen Horned Larks.

THE FALL LINE - OCMULGEE AS - MACON -- A Hooded Merganser has been seen for three weeks in the area. Palm W, Am. Goldfinch, Pine Siskins with E. Bluebirds in their midst, plus three Great Horned Owls* have been reported from Byron from the March newsletter.

THE BIRD-WATCHER - FLOYD CO. AS - ROME -- Our December 11 field trip took us to Paris L. where we found Pied-billed Grebe-3; Pintail*-1m; Am. Wigeon* approximately 540; Redhead*-1; Ruddy Duck*-2; Am. Coot-over 300; Red-shouldered Hawk, com. Snipe-3; Belted Kingfisher-1; Starling-6; E. Meadow-lark-3.

At Padgett L. we tallied Great Blue Heron-2; Canvasback*-7; Lesser Scaup-8; Brown-headed Nuthatch-2; E. Bluebird-1; Yellow-rumped W-1. A trip in March revealed a com. Crow harassing a Red-tailed Hawk and six Savannah Sparrows in an open area near Hall's L.

Bob Todd tells us a m. N. Oriole has been visiting his neighborhood and was last seen February 24. He had some Pine Siskins come and take seeds from his hand. Lenn Sisson and George Dorsey found some White-crowned Sparrows* near Floyd Jr. College March 4. Four were counted; but it is felt there were more in with a large gang of White-throated Sparrows. George had a Red-breasted Nuthatch at his feeding tray March 18. One fem. Bufflehead* was on Paris L. March 4.

CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY NATURAL HISTORY CLUB-COLUMBUS -- Going back to October, Hermit Thrush, Harris Co (HCo) October 26; Worm-eating W October 29; Purple Finches and Pine Siskins November 5; Fox Sparrow November 7. On November 26, 30 and December 1 a Ruby-throated Hummingbird* was seen by OT (no name, initials only given in newsletter-Ed.) in Columbus. (Editor's Note -- November 25, 1958. Accidental in winter at Waycross January 8, 1974.) Evening Grosbeaks HCo November 29; Bald Eagle at Ft. Gaines Dam December 11 seen by Sam Pate, Bill Matheny. James Miller saw two Whistling Swans, Georgia side of West Point L. January 5.

Am. Coots were back at Callaway Gardens by the thousands in early November. N. Orioles - f/m - have been attracted to an in-town feeder this winter. A flock of 60 E. Bluebirds was seen on a lawn near Buena Vista February 8-13.

Everyone with feeders is still enjoying large flocks of Purple Finches, Am. Goldfinches, Pine Siskins along with a few Evening Grosbeaks. Large flocks of Am. Robins, Cedar Waxwings, mixed Blackbirds are being seen all over the valley.

THE OBSERVER - COLUMBUS AS -- Bill Matheny and Sam Pate found a Wilson's Phalarope for an extremely rare and late sighting on November 13 Georgia (and also Alabama) side Eufaula NWR (ENWR). The phalarope was flushed to make sure of wing pattern and it appeared to be very healthy. (Editor's

Note: Rare spring and fall transient on coast in April and 4 August 1968 - 23 September 1959 - specimen; accidental in interior at Atlanta 30 July 1971, Augusta 1 June 1975 - photograph; 13-16 September 1962 and ENWR 13 April 1975.)

Many Scaup, Bufflehead* Ruddy Duck* at L. Richards along with two Red-breasted Nuthatches November 26; two Great Horned Owls* seen by Sam Pate at 2:00 a.m., December 2.

During the very cold weather about 1000 Pine Siskins gathered daily at the feeder at Lynnhaven, home of Florence Lynn. This brought an "invasion" of Sharp-shinned Hawks*. One feeder was placed under Azaleas for protection. One day, Florence saw one of the hawks walking under the bushes as it looked for the little siskins that usually hide there. Sharp-shins have been appearing at other feeders that are crowded with siskins. At one feeder a Pileated Woodpecker and a Sharp-shinned were in a confrontation. The little hawk giving the larger woodpecker a hard time until the woodpecker let out a scream. This brought a second Pileated into the fracas. The Sharp-shinned hit the woods fast!

AUGUSTA AS -- New GOSers Anne and Vernon Waters made a trip to SNWR November 12. They stated most of the ducks were in but not in large numbers, recording: Ring-necked Duck-1000-2000; Mallard-17 (still in pairs); Blue-winged Teal-10-15; N. Shoveler-5; Am. Wigeon - 50-100; Ruddy Duck-3; Com. Pintail-5; Bufflehead-2 f; Canvasback-1f; Lesser Scaup-4; Wood Duck-15 to 20 (still paired); Gadwall*-4; Anhinga-3; Com. Gallinule-12; White Ibis-2. The most interesting find was Horned and Red-necked* Grebe from 10 feet away.

Fred Denton reports the first Purple Finch of the season November 14 and Evening Grosbeaks at his feeder December 30. The first Evening Grosbeak was spotted at Leah November 19 and a Barred Owl was seen this same date at Clark Hill (CH). Seven hundred plus Red-winged Blackbirds were in the L. Olmstead area. Large flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos were in a member's yard, plus 8-12 Bobwhite. Eleanor (Morris) Haddens of CH reports Evening Grosbeaks, along with the Rollie Harps of Martinez.

Anne and Vernon Waters came up with this news -- December 24 they had a regular "teal" day observing a male Cinnamon and Blue-winged* and Green-winged* Teal. (Editor's Note: Cinnamon Teal not on any list for state to this editor's knowledge. The Waters and Clarence Belger spotted a Cinnamon Teal on this same pond in early January 1977, reported in Vol. IV., No. 3, Page 5 this newsletter. For another sighting in the Savannah area, please see Vol. IV, No. 1, Page 3 this newsletter.) On this same day they had a positive identification of a Greater Scaup (Editor's Note: Rare and local winter resident along coast, rare visitor inland in Okefenokee Swamp, at Augusta and Cumming.) All above sightings at Merry Ponds (MP). The Cinnamon Teal was again seen by five birders on a field trip February 5.

January 14 on Swan Pond (SP) they found Pintail*, Canvasback*, N. Shoveler*, Ruddy Duck*; Ring-billed Gull; February 9 a Horned Grebe* below the Lock and Dam. On a trip to Sapelo Is. (no date given - Ed.) they listed Short-billed Marsh Wren*, Sparrows - Sharp-tailed and Henslow's* and two partial albinos - a white-headed White-throated Sparrow and a white-tailed Red-tailed Hawk.

A dead squirrel was left on a bird feeder; along came a Red-shouldered Hawk that tried to cart it off. The hawk could not lift the squirrel. After retreating to the edge of the yard to reflect on the problem, the hawk tried again. Not being successful, the hawk dragged the squirrel on the ground for a few feet, then began to eat. An Am. Kestrel flew inside an enclosed patio to pick off a Carolina Chickadee at a feeder. The patio is enclosed in brick and redwood with a plastic roof. An opening between wall and roof is about 18 inches wide. An im. m. Cooper's Hawk* struck down a Purple Finch at a feeder February 23. Next day a f. Cooper's Hawk* captured a f. Purple Finch from a window feeder. Clarence Belger had a Cooper's Hawk* pick off a Starling at his feeder in February. (Hawks seem to be adapting to a new and easier food source by watching feeding stations for prey. Adaptation is the essence of staying alive in a changing world - Ed.)

Clarence gives us a Greater Yellowlegs, Merlin*, Fish Crow and a pair of Am. Woodcocks going through their mating ritual at dusk on February 11. (Allan and Elaine Gates watched Am. Woodcocks displaying on February 13 at MP). On February 11 at CH, Clarence saw a Horned Grebe* and heard a com. Loon* call.

A N. Oriole was at a feeder February 6, along with 150-200 Evening Grosbeaks, same number of Purple Finches and a large flock of Pine Siskins. Large flocks of migrating Cedar Waxwings and Am. Robins have passed through the area and a Brown Creeper comes regularly to a suet feeder. On February 13 an E. Phoebe was seen - the Speltz's and Knighton's have Evening Grosbeaks coming to feed. (From February issue.)

The first Purple Martin was reported by a family in Hephzibah February 14 -- a female coming in that day. This is the first time, they said, since putting up gourds and apartments for them, that a female has come in before the male. (Could they have seen a first-year male? - Ed.) Three reports have been received of a large falcon in the area. No identity as yet -- March issue.

Results of field trips -- December 3 - Ruddy Duck*, flock of 12 Black-crowned Night Herons*, White-crowned Sparrows*, Ruby-crowned Kinglet at M.P. December 10 -- Mallard - 140; Pintail* - 12; N. Shoveler*-7; Black Duck*-2; Bonaparte's Gull*-14; Least Sandpiper*-1 at M.P.

On the February 5 trip -- blue morph Snow Goose*; White-crowned Sparrow*, numerous Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks were watched. The walk of February 25 brought forth 73 species, including Green Heron*, Black-crowned Night Heron*, Purple Martin, Lesser Yellowlegs*, Gadwall*, F. Bufflehead* at M.P.

Over at SNWR, Clarence Belger and others found, on February 12, Whistling Swans*, Pintail*, N. Shoveler*, Green-winged and Blue-winged* Teal, Canvas-back*, Ruddy Duck*, Am. Wigeon*, Osprey*. They noted a decrease in number of ducks, but not in species. At the Spoil Disposal Area near Savannah, a flock of 200-300 Am. Avocet* was seen along with huge flocks of Dunlin, Greater and Lesser* Yellowlegs; Bonaparte's and Laughing Gulls, White Ibis*.

THE KINGFISHER -- CHEROKEE AS - DALTON -- Delano Crowe and Harry White spied a Hooded Merganser at Haig Mill L. December 24. Harry has had a Sharp-shinned Hawk* hanging around his place and saw it capture a sparrow January 14. An injured Cooper's Hawk* was brought to Delano Crowe by two members of the Geodetic Crew attached to the Department of Transportation March 10. The bird was carried to a veterinarian; but, unfortunately, died.

Ollie Munn reports a Fox Sparrow in her yard January 15. Anne Hamilton tells of lucking up on a Golden-crowned Kinglet February 10 for the only report from Dalton/Whitfield Co. She also had a tail-less Dark-eyed Junco come to her feeder. Its wings projected in two points over the area where the tail normally would be. The bird seems to get along all right.

Sandhill Cranes* report -- five landed February 28 in a bottom land cornfield at Pangle's Curve on Hwy. 201. Ed and Peggy Whitfield, with their teenage sons Michael and Mark, witnessed the landing, giving an excellent description of the birds. As they were leaving to report their find, two boys appeared on the scene with rifles. Fearing the boys were planning to shoot the birds, the Whitfields shooed the birds up. They rose high in the sky to seek a safer haven. Four were reported to have landed in Whitfield Co. 25 years ago.

Seventy Sandhill Cranes* were seen and heard passing high over the Grove Level Baptist Church March 5. Harriett Di Gioia watched 50 Cranes* passing low over the ridge between West Hill Cemetery and the Tibbs Rd, Dalton at 3:50 p.m., March 11. These birds paused, wheeling and circling low in the sky for five minutes. It seemed they were looking for a place to put down. Then they rose up in the sky, flew to the gap where Hwy 41 and I-75 meet, circled briefly, then took off down I-75 toward Chattanooga, Tenn.

Harriett Di Gioia -- Whitfield Co. Sightings -- Am. Wigeon*, F. Hooded Merganser, Swift's Pond January 12; one Canada Goose on the ice at Thread Mill Lake (TML) January 16; im. White-crowned Sparrow* West Hill Cemetery (WHC), February 4. Three Ring-billed Gulls (two ad and a one-legged im.) put down on the wet pavement at Dalton Shopping Center March 2 for the sixth area sighting; a Hermit Thrush, one of the few reported for the winter, reported at WHC March 6. Am. Wigeon*-6; Blue-winged Teal-2m; Com. Goldeneye*-1; Red-breasted Merganser, TML, March 14. Cohutta Ranger District on the Chattahoochee National Forest, Murray Co. - February 27 - Woodpeckers - Pileated-6; Hairy 12 (7m, 5f); Downy-6 (3m, 3f); E. Bluebird 11 (7m, 4f) all displaying breeding behavior except the Pileateds. Four Winter Wrens were seen, again one of the few sightings of the winter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- Eugene Cypret of Waycross writes --- "Mary Lou and I saw 600-700 Cedar Waxwings, March 10, in uptown Waycross. They were flitting around in trees just off Plant Ave. Maybe 100-200 would fly up from the trees, flit around, descend; while others would then fly up. I have never seen

Cedar Waxwings in such a large flock. Usually they will be seen in small flocks of 20-30 individuals; but not in big numbers like this."

A. Stephen Johnson of West Point -- "On December 28, several Sierra Club members, including myself, saw a flock of six Wood Storks* on Ossabaw Is. Dick Murlless and Richard Krogdon of Wilderness Southeast, Inc., Savannah, who were in the group said they had also seen a similar flock -- possibly the same birds -- on Little St. Simons Is. three weeks previous to this."

Arthur Green feels he saw a Tree Sparrow and writes this from Hiwassee -- "On February 1, one (Tree Sparrow) flew out of the brambles and weeds at the edge of our lawn and perched facing me and the sun, only a few feet distant. We fed hordes of sparrows - Field, Song, White-throated, Savannah, along with Purple Finches, Am. Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, Dark-eyed Juncos-- I never knew it to come in to the feeders and never saw it again. Bill Terrall came up and looked for it; but no luck. This is one of the commonest winter birds in New England and I have notebooks going way back to the early 1920's with my earliest date for each year; so I have been familiar with it for over 50 years. This is undoubtedly the rarest bird I've seen in Georgia, while being no rarer to me than an Am. Goldfinch." (Editor's Note: Not yet on official list of Georgia birds. One was seen in Whitfield County on January 28, '77 Many GOSers saw the bird; photographs were taken. Georgia Birds, Thomas D. Burleigh puts it on the hypothetical list; three birds being sighted by Aaron C. Bagg, February 25, 1921, feeding on a lawn in Augusta. Please see Vol. IV, No. 3, Page 7, this newsletter for write-up of above bird. See pages 4 and 5, same newsletter, for another report of two Tree Sparrows near Duluth).

Tom French - Indiana State University - Terre Haute, Ind -- "During my spring vacation, I made a trip to the Georgia Coast. I saw many interesting birds but only two that are noteworthy. On Champney Is. (part of the Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area) in an impoundment along US 17 was a single Glossy Ibis on 25 March. The new checklist (Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, J. Fred Denton) gives 5 April as the earliest date. On the same day, about halfway across the Jekyll Is. Causeway there was a Long-billed Curlew (listed as a rare winter resident in checklist). Several photographs were taken of the curlew. I was too far away for the photos to be very esthetic, but they should turn out to be easily identifiable.

Another item of interest is the fact I saw six Cliff Swallows on I-24 at the Nickajack Reservoir near Chattanooga, Tenn on 18 March. The new checklist gives 29 March as Georgia's earliest date. It was very good to see some of Georgia's wildlife again."

Peggy Waters, Bloomingdale, sends this news along -- " On February 19 our local group went to Harris Neck NWR (near Savannah). Among other things we saw six White-fronted Geese*. According to Pat Young, employed on the refuge, the geese have been there all winter. She said there had been as many as 11 White fronted Geese on the refuge this winter.

Whistling Swans* have been spending the winter at SNWR. I saw seven on a trip there on February 5. Numerous Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks have been at various feeders all over Chatham Co. this winter. I have had flocks of Evening Grosbeaks and have had two Red-breasted Nuthatches since at least October 30 in Effingham Co."

NEWS OF PEOPLE -- We are saddened to report the untimely death of Louisa Echols in a car accident near the Okefenokee NWR after a day of birding. Our sympathy is extended to her family.

Jeannine Angerman was hospitalized back in the winter; Harry White had a hospital stay as a result of the accident he suffered last summer; Anne Hamilton had eye surgery; Kenneth Nance had a long hospital stay last November as the result of a fall. We wish good health to all!!

GOSers IN PRINT -- The March/April edition of Brown's Guide to Georgia had a special section entitled: "The World of Georgia Birds." Included was an article "Georgia's Bird Artists" featuring Dick Parks and James Kilgo and a "Who's Who Among Georgia Birders." Out of 10 selectees, nine were GOSers -- Terry Moore, Harriett Di Gioia, Eugene Odum, Joseph Greenberg, Leslie Davenport, Maibelle Hodgins, Eulalie Gibbs, J. Fred Denton and the late Herbert Stoddard, Sr. Lee Gibbs inspired the article by sending Brown's Guide a story about her successful bluebird trail.

Mary Anne Neville had a nice mention in Charles Seabrook's article in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Sunday, January 29, 1978, dealing with endangered animals. George Dorsey recently was on Channel 10 TV in Rome talking birds.

TRAVELERS -- Bob Todd went down to Florida, listing 80 species, mostly at Osprey and Myakka R State Park. Several hundred Black Vultures; Bald Eagle, 500 Am. Robins on a lawn were enjoyed. Sam Pate over at St. Mark's NWR, Fla, on December 19 found Brant-4; a few Wood Storks, several blue morph Snow Geese. Roberta and L. A. Wells journeyed to Columbia, S.C. and Savannah to tour the historical sties of the Deep South. Don and Doris Cohrs, Ann and Dan Forster, Mary Anne Neville, Louisa Echols, Rip and Carolyn Holman, at St. Mark's NWR recorded ad. Bald Eagle and Ad. Swainson's Hawk December 3 and 4. Billy Pulliam found in Jacksonville, Fla. January 27-29 im. Gannet -2; Glossy Ibis-17; Burrowing Owl. Terry Moore visiting Dan and Sara Hans now living in Chicago, went birding near Duluth, Mn., finding Boreal Owl-4; Great Gray Owl-1; Hawk Owl-1; Snowy Owl-1; "numerous" N. Shrikes, Com. and Hoary Redpolls, Bohemian Waxwing; Pine Grosbeak.

Wyatt Bruce, stationed with the Army at El Paso, Tex., writes: "February 3 I drove up to Soccora, N.M. and spent Saturday morning birding at Bosque del Apache NWR. I saw two Whooping Cranes that had been fostered by Sandhill Cranes - a sight I'll never forget. I also feasted my eyes on 2200 Snow Geese; 1300 Sandhill Cranes; 500 Yellow-headed Blackbirds; 1 Golden Eagle 4 (3 im. 1 ad.) Bald Eagles.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY -- Perhaps when the time comes that there is no more silence and no more aloneness, there will also be no longer anyone who wants to be alone. Joseph Wood Krutch.

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