

The Georgia GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society, Vol. VII, No. 1

September 30, 1979

To our new members, we extend a hearty welcome. Dr. and Mrs. Albert Kleckner, Athens; Mary Hood, Woodstock; Virne Jackson, Atlanta; Victor Alexander, Atlanta; Ellen Dotson, Statesboro; Carole Crosby, Baxley; Josephine Durant, K. B. Clark, Macon; Harold Elphinstone, East Point; Patrick Brisse, Atlanta.

Texas A & M University Library at College Station, Texas also joins us.

EDITORIAL BIRDS -- The overall bird picture for Georgia was average, with some good finds keeping up birding interest. Summer populations seemed steady with apparently no sharp upswings or downswings. Stable populations were the apparent order of the day from reports throughout our state.

Notable birds listed for the summer season included; Bald Eagle at Lake West Point; Ospreys over Jekyll Island, Columbus, Lake West Point; while Sandhill Cranes were reported winging their way over Macon.

A Gray-cheeked Thrush put in an appearance in Dalton to establish a new early date.

Over Augusta way, a Yellow Warbler, Louisiana Heron, Golden-winged Warbler, Long-billed Dowitcher, Least Flycatcher, Swallow-tailed Kite made news. On Jekyll Island newsworthy birds included; Semipalmated Plover; Glossy Ibis; Great Black-backed Gull; Roseate Spoonbill, Black-necked Stilts were noted at Brunswick.

House Wrens were listed from Whitfield County and Atlanta (nesting); a Blue-winged Warbler was on the Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest, Murray County. Bachman's Sparrows were sighted at Fort Benning and Rutledge; Atlanta gives us Warbling Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, Wilson's Warbler. White Ibis are again nesting in the rookery at Midville.

ROUND-UP OF GOS NEWS -- Fall meeting to be held jointly with the Carolina Bird Club on Jekyll Island, 5-7 October. Details were in June issue of the newsletter (Vol. VI, No. 4).

The Fall Warbler Special, 16 September, to the Songbird Management Area, Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest, attracted eleven participants. Thirty-one species were counted, including Cooper's Hawk chasing a small bird almost into the group; Vireos--Yellow-throated, Solitary, Red-eyed; Warblers--Black and White, Worm-eating, Blue-winged*, Tennessee, Nashville*, Magnolia, Cape May*, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided, Ovenbird, Hooded, American Redstart, plus Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Many warblers and vireos went unidentified due to poor light, highness in trees, heavy foliage, and speed of the waves passing through. A couple of flycatchers were unidentified, and there was some feeling among the group they were Olive-sided (Olive-sided Flycatchers have been seen in the general area--Ed.), and a thrush was unnamed.

BIRD NEWS -- Records listed in the newsletter are largely unchecked and do not constitute an official sighting. Publication of these records is intended to bring interesting sighting to the attention of the membership and to remind them to be alert for unusual species in the areas indicated.

An asterisk following the name of a bird denotes it is listed as occasional, rare, uncommon, casual 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: Audubon Society--AS; National Wildlife Refuge--NWR; adult--ad; immature--im; male--m; female--f; River--R; Lake--L; Creek--Cr; Island--Is; Mountain--Mtn; Fort--Ft; County--Co; Common--Com; American--Am; Warbler--W; Eastern--E; Northern--N.

AUGUSTA AS -- Report on field trips. Herons, egrets, ibises have returned to Font #2 near Midville to nest. Clarence Belger estimated ten times more birds nesting there now than in previous years. The pond was so full of breeding birds that some were forced to move back to the periphery of the pond, nesting there in the stubby trees and shrubs. The pattern of nesting species seems to

be; Cattle Egrets on lower branches with White Ibis* in the tops of trees. Six Little Blue Heron, one Great Egret, four Anhinga nests were scattered throughout the rookery.

16 June -- King Rail, Least Bittern. 30 June -- Least Bittern nests were found, one with young and one with eggs. Yellow-billed Cuckoo and nest discovered; Louisiana Heron* sighted (Editor's Note--Common summer resident near coast and in Okefenokee NWR, breeds; fairly common in winter, rare summer and fall visitor elsewhere) along with a Great Egret.

14 July -- at the levee -- first Spotted Sandpiper of season; Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret. 29 July -- first Pectoral Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow W*. The injured Whistling Swan* that remained on Swan Pond all summer after the other six left is now missing.

11 August -- Yellow W*--3 (Augusta Editor's Note; Yellow W have been seen here all summer. It's a species that's seldom seen in summer in the Augusta area); Tree, Barn, Rough-winged Swallows were numerous. 26 August -- Golden-winged W*, a rare sighting for this area, Black and White W, Summer Tanager--three spotted close together and could be considered migrants; plus Least Terns and bunches of Indigo Buntings, Louisiana Heron* (same bird?--Ed.), Mallard, and Wood Duck.

Area sightings -- On 7 May Clarence Belger observed a Swainson's W at Hall Thompson's Farm and heard two singing males at Stink Ditch (a descriptive name!--Ed.) He has had an albino House Sparrow at his feeder; a Great-crested Flycatcher nested in a bird box in his yard until chased away by Purple Martins.

Mississippi Kite--12 were seen at Bush Field 2 June; 30 June he found a Long-billed Dowitcher* (Editor's Note--Transient on coast, sometimes wintering in numbers. 7 November, 1950--specimen to 17 April 1951; specimen accidental in Baker Co. 17 April, 1951. Evidently no other records outside these dates). 28 August Am. Redstart, Louisiana Heron* (same bird?--Ed.), Green Heron, Least Flycatcher*, Semi-palmated Sandpiper--6, all at Merry Ponds (MP) and the levee. At Clark Hill (CH), 26 August, Great Horned Owl*, Screech Owl, Purple Martin. A used Swainson's W nest was found 1 July.

Bill and Lee Gibbs, along with Clarence, on 4 July watched Swallow-tailed Kite* --4 gracefully soaring over Phinizy Swamp. Ann and Vernon Waters give us these finds; a Monk Parakeet, after a year's absence, paid a visit to their neighborhood 12 July. At MP they found im. White Ibis*--38 on 2 August; Wood Stork*--one on 4 August; im. Yellow-crowned Night Heron on 14 August.

They traveled over to Jekyll Is (JI) 25 August, recording Wood Stork--4; Osprey*--1; Sandpipers; Least--300, Western--200-300, Semi-palmated--100; Plovers; Semi-palmated*--20, Black-bellied--2; Long-billed Dowitcher* (Please see Editor's Note above); Red Knot--1; Terns; Least*--30, Forster's*--1, Royal--200, Caspian 3-5, Sandwich*--5, Gull-billed*--1, Black--1; Gulls; Ring-billed--300, Laughing--500, Herring--2; Black Simmer--20. 27 August -- Glossy Ibis*--7; Wood Stork--7; White Ibis--2; Double-crested Cormorant*--1; Whimbrel--10.

THE FALL LINE -- OCMULGEE AS -- MACON. Bob Herrington reported sighting a Mississippi Kite over the Flint R. Owen Anderson has numerous Ruby-throated Hummingbirds around his place. Many members tell of seeing families of E Bluebird, Carolina Wren, Orchard Oriole, Green heron moving about (from July newsletter).

Ray Mangham mentions Blue Grosbeaks are in fair numbers at Riggins Mill Rd; plus a flight of Sandhill Cranes* over his house. Many Mississippi Kites ~~have been seen circling over the city for the past two to three weeks.~~ (September newsletter)

THE ALBANY LIMPKIN--ALBANY AS. Pileated Woodpecker sightings have come in from Dr. and Mrs. Fowler in Lee Co. MSgt Dick Pate sees a pair frequently on Fleming Rd.

THE OBSERVER -- COLUMBUS AS. Summer Observations; Yellow-throated W by Jane Knight; Purple Martins in houses in Wynnton after many years absence. Am Goldfinches were watched in Hamilton by Francis and Dan Estes 8 July. On 14 July Peggy Spencer had a Black and White W in her yard.

Red-headed Woodpeckers are more scarce than in past years. Jim Shirah saw an ad and im at the Midland Riding Academy 2 July. Sam Pate noted a pair in his neighbor's yard in August.

Bert Talley saw Little Blue Heron, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, lots of Green Heron activity, Summer Tanagers, and an unidentified medium-sized tern at Cooper Cr Park (CCP). (September newsletter)

Jack Stutts found a Yellow-throated Vireo 3 August; while David Flowers watched an Osprey* diving and fishing; Least Sandpiper--2 on 4 August; plus Pectoral Sandpiper--2 on 6 August at CCP.

In Talbot Co, 6 August, James Miller and David Johnston found an Am Redstart hanging in a spider web. They released the struggling bird, and it flew away. On this same date, they found im White Ibis*, Solitary Sandpiper; Warblers; Black and White--6, Kentucky, Hooded; and a White-eyed Vireo.

At the dam at L West Point, a mature Bald Eagle* and an Osprey* were spotted by K. A. Kronner on 12 August. He also tells he saw a flock of large shore birds that had the sounds and flights of Willets, even though they were not viewed with binoculars, on 10 August. (A Willet was seen by David Johnston and Sam Pate 14 August at the sewage treatment plant for Lake Point Resort State Park, Alabama--Ed.) Lots of Black Terns were at West Point in early August. Sam and Nan Pate watched a Cooper's Hawk* on the Georgia portion of Eufaula WR 16 August; Jim Shirah got some looks at two of the five Mississippi Kites that had a successful nesting at Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon 17 August.

Two Bachman's Sparrows* were at Ft. Benning (Lynch Rd) the first week in August, reported by James Miller and David Johnston. Mike Fuller mentions House Wrens* nested at Avondale Estates, Atlanta, in early August. Two eggs were found in the nest.

ATLANTA AS. The Fernbank Migration Watch of last spring, 25 March--27 May, produced two new species: Great Horned Owl* and Warbling Vireo*. Also listed were the following birds: Gray-cheeked Thrush*, Veery*, Blue-winged W*, Cerulean W*, Connecticut W*. A total of 90 species was seen this past spring. The grand total stands at 130 species.

The new Johns' Sanctuary Spring Migration Walks, running from 25 March--27 May, started out with a total of 69 species for the first season. Interesting birds included Cooper's Hawk*, red phase Screech Owl, Veery*.

William Delphey and Lin Schneider want to share some of the birds found in the Shady Valley Park, one block from the intersection of Buford Highway and Lenox Rd on Shady Valley Drive. Two Pileated Woodpeckers have established a residence just inside the entrance. 5 May in two hours of birding; Red-bellied Woodpecker--6; numerous Com Flickers, Red-headed Woodpecker--6, and a host of other birds were listed. The Red-headed Woodpecker population in itself is quite astounding.

May-June Field Notes. Frank McCamey reported Com Loon*--2 in winter plumage 21 June (11 June 1937). Terrill Soules and Richard Parks tell about a Pied-billed Grebe summering at Piedmont Park. An im Roseate Spoonbill* was spotted by Liz Bradshaw and Hugh Garrett 26 May on the JI Causeway. Billy Pulliam found Cattle Egret--3 near Rutledge 3 June.

A scaup, felt to be a Greater*, was observed by Jean Bevis 26 May at JI (Editor's Note--extreme dates 30 December 1929--21 March 1954, specimen). Near Roberts on 2 June, Billy Pulliam sighted a Mississippi Kite. This is close to the northern part of the bird's range. Two Black-necked Stilts* were seen near Brunswick on 27 May by Jean Bevis, and perhaps the same two were observed by Liz Bradshaw and Hugh Garrett, same date, a few miles from the first sighting. An im Great Black-backed Gull* was seen by a group of Atlanta birders on a pelagic trip about five miles off JI 26 May. (Editor's Note--Uncommon winter visitor on coast, December through March.)

A rather late Black-billed Cuckoo was spied on JI by Jean Bevis 26 May; Vince Jackson saw a flock of 20-25 Cedar Waxwings in northeast Atlanta on a rather late date, 17 May. Georgann Schmalz heard a W Parula W singing in Fernbank Forest 20 and 27 June. There are few places in the Atlanta area where this species is found during the summer. The Connecticut W*, heard at Fernbank Forest by Georgann and Elizabeth McCain stayed--or perhaps a second bird entered the picture--until 28 May. Patrick Brisse saw a Wilson's W* in Hurt Park 9 May.

House Finches* continue in the news. Terrill Soules observed a couple at his feeder in the Virginia-Highlands area 1 June. Bob Raymund had eight adults plus a couple of newly fledged, but still begging young at his feeder during June. Billy Pulliam checked off Grasshopper Sparrow*--11 and Bachman's Sparrow*--2 on his Breeding Bird Route near Rutledge in June.

THE KINGFISHER--CHEROKEE AS--DALTON. The House Wren* Harry White saw in his yard carrying nesting material in May, and stuffing three bird houses full and singing in June, was last noted about the middle of July.

From Anne Hamilton. She heard a N Parula W 21 July. The first warbler wave she had was on 8 September; no identification obtained. On 10 September a larger wave went through her neighborhood containing Hairy Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tennessee W, Summer Tanager. 15 September brought another wave with warbler call notes coming from all over. She has had a White-breasted Nuthatch since the first part of September. Norene Borin reports N Oriole* on 8 September.

Harriett DiGioia--sighting from the Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest: Cooper's Hawk* 18 June, Forest Service Rd (FS Rd) 68. Quite a wave of Pine Ws was seen on 27 August at Beech Bottoms. 2 September brought the first mixed warbler wave with Black and White Ws and im Chestnut-sided Ws being noted on FS Rd 18. On 3 September, a wave of vireos and warblers swept across Camping Loop B, Lake Conasauga Recreation Area: Yellow-throated, Solitary, Red-eyed Vireos; Warblers: Black and White, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Hooded. Tennessee Ws were spotted in Camping Loop B on 5 September. A Blue-winged W* was watched on 15 September FS Rd 18, and on 18 September--a very foggy day with fog so thick she could barely see beyond the hood of her truck, warbler call notes were heard from every direction, and warblers flew up from the roadsides on FS Rds 64 and 68. All records from Murray and Gilmer Cos.

Area records from Harriett: N Parula W singing at Carter's Dam, Murray Co, 15 June. Another was heard singing on the Toccoa Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest, near Blue Ridge 20 June. 8 August a Solitary Sandpiper was found in a flooded soybean field on GA 225, Murray Co; at the same place 9 August, a Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs along with Green Herons and Killdeers were observed. Birds are opportunists!

Dalton sightings--all seen in her yard: 4 September Gray-cheeked Thrush* (6 September 1933), 10 September Magnolia W, 11 September Chestnut-sided W, Rose-breasted Grosbeak; 19 September Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. Eugene Cypert of Waycross writes: "Mr. W. B. Owen of Blackshear called to tell me about a pair of Am Robins nesting near his house this summer. As you probably know, it is very unusual for Am Robins to nest in this part of Georgia.

"I know of only one record of its nesting in Waycross. Burleigh's Georgia Birds cites a report in The Oriole by Homer H. Flag in 1937 of the Am Robin nesting in Waycross. As you know, Blackshear is only about eight miles north of here." (Editor's Note. Permanent resident over most of state, nesting commonly to Fall Line and locally and erratically in Coastal Plain; abundant in winter in Coastal Plain.)

Paige Harvey and Carol Hancock of Demorest send the following news: Canada Goose--5 July--small flock in grass beside I-85 near Hartwell L and Georgia Welcome Center. Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks recorded between 10 June and 6 July. Osprey*--pair 15 June, Hartwell L. Turkey--tracks at Panther Cr in June.

Red-headed Woodpecker--26 June--Clarksville, Hwy 441. Acadian Flycatcher--June--two pairs Panther Cr. Also a flycatcher with soft two-syllable call, 12-15 per minute on Panther Cr--possibly Traill's Flycatcher? Brown-headed Nuthatch*--6 July. Swainson's W--25 and 26 June, Panther Cr, adult with young; 2 July heard song at same location. Worm-eating W*--26 June--pair of adults feeding one young, Panther Cr. N Parula W*--13 May--nest Panther Cr. Louisiana Waterthrush--7 July--Demorest L, below dam. Fish Crow--abundant at Clark Hill L. Blue Grosbeak--17 June--nest with three young. Young left nest 22 June. Approximately four pairs nesting in half-mile radius, near a wheat field.

NEWS OF PEOPLE. One of our members, Helene MacNeil of Albany and formerly of Dalton, died 9 August, 1979, at Hampton Beach, N. H. Helene had recently retired from her nursing position and had enjoyed an extended trip across the country.

Harriett DiGioia, 20 August, was awarded a Certificate of Merit and cash bonus by the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, for outstanding service on the Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest. The presentation was made by Lawrence M. Whitfield, Regional Forester, Southeast Region 8, and W. Pat Thomas, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Supervisor.

Eleanor (Morris) Hadden underwent serious surgery a while back and is now recuperating at her Clark Hill home. We wish you a speedy and complete recovery!

Travelers: Bill Matheny had a great trip to Alaska, seeing Gyrfalcons, Wheatears, Arctic W; Emil Urban, Professor of Ornithology at Augusta College, took his students to the Okefenokee NWR and National Seashore on Cumberland I. Then he took them up into the Great Smoky Mt NP. (Get those students out into the woods. It's good for them!--Ed.)

Vernon and Ann Waters took off for Florida, birding the beaches as migration was beginning, listing Osprey and terns. Andy and Jim Parsons traveled 7536 miles throughout the West, adding 47 birds to their Life List. They sighted 107 species, going to the Rocky Mtns, the Snake Rat Hell's Canyon; then down through Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, the Big Bend in Texas.

Jim and Joyce Harrison had a fantastic eight weeks out west, going to New Mexico and southern Arizona. Mabel Faulkner toured the Canadian Rockies in July, staying at Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper State Park, and the Caribou Mtns. Here she was flown by helicopter to glaciers and alpine meadows. She saw many beautiful wildflowers and interesting birds and animals.

MISCELLANEOUS. A new Christmas Bird Count is being planned for the mountains of Northwest Georgia. This will be the only count to be held in the mountains of North Georgia. Harriett and Frank DiGioia are planning to have a count on the Cohutta Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Florest. Elevations will range from 950 feet to over 4000 feet; habitat coverage will be a few farms, clear cuts in various stages of growth, and wilderness area. Willing participants are needed! If you would like to take part, please contact Harriett at the address below, or phone 404/695-6736 and leave name with secretary. Tentative date is for second weekend in count period.

T. McRae Williams has this message from the Pennyfeather Corporation: "A marked variation in the number of songbirds appearing at feeding stations in US and Canada during the 1978-79 winter season has been reported in many areas.

"We'd be grateful for any reliable detail we receive from bird enthusiasts in as many widely-scattered areas as possible, and to that end will send a questionnaire to those who kindly address a card requesting ont to Pennyfeather, Box 3861, Greenville, Delaware, 19807."

From the Canadian Wildlife Service: "Great Lakes Herring Gulls have been marked with numbered and lettered green, orange, blue, or pink leg ribbon--one on each leg. If you see any Herring Gulls so marked, please note number, letter, colour of each ribbon and date and place of sighting. Contact Dr. D. V. Weseloh or Mr. Pierre Mineau, Canadian Wildlife Service, Box 5050, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, L7R 4A6. Phone: 416/637-4264.

"We are continuing our shorebird projects. Persons observing colour-marked shorebirds (feather dyes yellow/orange and coloured leg bands yellow/light blue) are asked to please record species, place, date, specific markings (including area of the bird that was dyed--upper or entire breast or under-belly--which leg and whether above or below the "knee" for leg bands). If possible, record the numbers of other shorebird present. Send to Dr. R. I. G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1G 3Z7."

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY. Nature is not remote, limited to parks and wilderness areas. It is abundant and readily available, as close as your own backyard. Nature is a year-round source of inspiration. Think of the light that filters through new leaves in spring, and the pungent scents of autumn.....A walk through a snow-covered woodland, where you are alone with the sound of the wind and the crunching of your own footsteps, may be a very personal pleasure. Such simple things extend your sense of the pervasiveness of nature. "Joy of Nature", Reader's Digest.

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