

THE GEORGIA GOSHAWK

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society

Vol. VIII, No. 3

March 31, 1981

Editorial Comment

Winter bird sightings seemed fairly consistent over the state. No major invasion seemed to shape up by any of the invasive species. Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins were here in goodly numbers; but the term invasion could not be used from the reports crossing my desk.

Winter regulars - Purple Finches, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Winter Wrens - were in their usual numbers, with Purple Finches, perhaps, in a bit higher numbers than usual. Both Kinglets - Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned - came into the state, then apparently dropped from sight. Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen about Georgia. Red-breasted Nuthatches were here in higher numbers than in the last few years. Two winter residents appeared to be in depressed numbers - Marsh Hawks and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.

Good winter sightings for over Georgia include: four Mountain Plovers at Dublin; Lapland Longspur at Gainesville; and from St. Simon's Island came a report of Snow Buntings. An immature male Orchard Oriole was found in Covington. House Finches continue to be reported from Dalton, Columbus and Atlanta.

Bald Eagles plied the skies over Columbus and Savannah; a Golden Eagle showed up on St. Simon's Island. Snow Geese appeared at Augusta and Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, while a Whistling Swan was spotted at Augusta. Surf and Black Scoters were spotted at Jekyll Island as was a Red-necked Grebe. Common Loons swam on Atlanta area lakes; Horned Grebes were discovered at Jekyll Island and Peachtree City.

Sandhill Cranes were seen going south at Atlanta, Butts County, Rex and Marietta. Going north they were reported from Dalton, Whitfield County and the Cohutta Ranger District on the Chattahoochee National Forest.

The above sightings do not include the Christmas Bird Counts results.

Round-up of GOS News

Spring meeting at Tallahassee, FL, April 24, 25, 26. You need to be there! This is a joint meeting with the Alabama and Florida Ornithological Societies. Hosts for this meeting are Tall Timbers Research Station, Apalachee Audubon Society and Florida State University. You have your invitation in hand; see you at Tallahassee!

Fall meeting: October 2, 3, 4 at Savannah, hosted by Armstrong State College and the Ogeechee Audubon Society. Mark your calendar now!

Field Trips: Mountain Foray June 13, 14, 1981

Leader: Ann Wyand, 1741 Tolleson Court, Atlanta, GA 30338; Tel. 404/394-9277
To find Canadian Zone birds nesting in Georgia, join us this weekend to look for breeding birds in the Patterson Gap area west of Clayton.

We can have the use of Tumbling Waters Camp for bunking, dormitory style (bring your own bedding and towels) at \$5.00 per person per night. Some meals can be furnished at a reasonable price if enough of us want them. (Probably Saturday

and Sunday breakfasts at \$3.00; Saturday dinner at \$6.00.)

The Foray will be planned to explore the mountains in several small groups. Ann says we can expect to find Ruffed Grouse, Least and Willow Flycatchers, Raven, Veery, several Warblers -- Swainson's, Worm-eating, Golden-winged, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE June 1. Write to Ann if you're coming -- enclose \$5.00 per person per night for a bed and tell her if you want any meals.

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Where will the next field trip be? Suggest a location and a leader by contacting Tommy Patterson, 1409 Edgewood Dr., Dublin, GA 31021, phone 912/272-1987 to get an announcement in this newsletter. The success of these extra field trips depends on you!

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Dues for 1981 have been coming in at an encouraging rate. Please attend to yours if they have not been paid. Members in arrears for 1981 will be dropped from the mailing list May 1, and this is the last GOSHawk that will be mailed to them. Keep up with all the news by sending your payment to:

John Swiderski, Treasurer
3735 Tulip Tree Road
Marietta, GA 30066

The Nominating Committee is expecting suggestions from you. Contact any of them:

Dr. L. B. Davenport, Jr., - Chairman
726 Windsor Road
Savannah, GA 31406

Mr. Milton N. Hopkins, Jr.
RFD 5, Box 113
Fitzgerald, GA 31750

Mr. Robert Manns
2099 McKinley Rd., N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318

The Earle Greene Award Committee is seeking nominations. This memorial award is made by the Georgia Ornithological Society to an individual or organization that has made the most outstanding contribution to the field of ornithology or to the Georgia Ornithological Society within the state of Georgia.

In past years, the award has been made to:

Harriett G. DiGioia
Richard A. Parks
Dr. J. Fred Denton
Milton R. Hopkins, Jr.
Dr. L. B. Davenport, Jr.

The Earle R. Greene Award panel welcomes recommendations from the Society's membership for this important recognition. Please send nominations to:

W. Elbridge Freeborn, Chairman
122 Lamont Drive
Decatur, GA 30030

Tel. 404/373-6806

Rare Bird Alert Network: A Rare Bird Alert for Georgia was only a dream -- now it is a reality! With Robert Manns of Atlanta providing the inspiration and organization, the network began operating March 1 with 10 stations covering most of the state. Give us time to work out some remaining details and the network can be expanded. Full details of the operation will appear in a future GOSHawk.

Work is proceeding on a new Birder's Guide to Georgia, and input from all field birders in the state is needed. Please note comments of Joe Greenberg, editor, reproduced from the September GOSHawk and contact him.

"I am attempting to revise "A Birder's Guide to Georgia". This is being done at the behest of the Executive Committee of GOS. I would like to maintain the excellent quality of the Guide and, if possible, increase its coverage. To do this, I will need your cooperation.

First, there are errors which need correction - distances between points, for example. There are "good" areas which have been destroyed by human intrusion. There are "good" areas which have not been included in the Guide. I believe maps would be helpful.

Please let me know of any errors in the Guide, areas no longer good, and any favorite areas of yours. Follow the style of the current Guide.

Do you have any experience drawing simple maps? I could use a volunteer or two in this department.

Do you know any other areas in which "much wanted" birds can be found? These species are listed in the back of the Guide. Most particularly, do you know where Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Swainson's Warblers, or Bachman's Sparrows can be found?"

Tel. 404-458-9059

Joseph Greenberg
3634 Sunderland Cir.
Atlanta, GA 30319

We welcome our new members: Tim Rose, Chamblee; Esta Brian, Doraville; Stewart Daniel, College Park; Linda Jones, Atlanta; H. M. Jones, Atlanta; Allen Rhodes, Dublin; T. C. Larimer, Athens; Dr. & Mrs. John Hall, Atlanta; Emory & Emily Rumble, Macon; Mac McIntosh, Commerce; Steve Rhodes, Dahlonega; Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Gillis, Dunwoody; Mrs. Gerald May, Augusta; Grady Knight, Atlanta; Earle Hunter, Watinsville; Mr. & Mrs. Michael Jeneid, Norden, CA; Edward Harden, Thomasville.

The GOSHawk will soon be changing its format for the bird news. Suggestions are welcome. Please send your thoughts on a new format to the editor.

Bird News

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

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

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.

Christmas Bird Counts Around the State

Augusta - December 27: 97 species, 7,428 individuals. Best Birds: Merlin*, Bonaparte's Gull*-1; Laughing* and Herring* Gulls.

Harris Neck NWR - January 3: 106 species, 2786 individuals. Best Bird: Bald Eagle*.

Jekyll Is - 121 species; Brunswick - 105 species; Sea Is - 78 species; Rivers and offshore by boat - 48 species. A grand total of 152 species, 24,088 individuals were tallied on these four counts. Best Birds: Red-throated Loon*; Grebes - Red-necked* and Horned*; Black-crowned Night Heron*; Sandpipers - Least* and Spotted*; Marbled Godwit*, Am Avocet*; Gulls - Greater Black-backed* and Laughing*; Greater Scaup*, Com Goldeneye*; Black Scoter*; Com Merganser*; Merlin*; Sora*; Am Oystercatcher*; House Wren*; Short-billed Marsh Wren*; White-eyed Vireo*; Warblers: Black-and-White*, Magnolia*, Yellow-throated*; Fox Sparrow*; Snow Bunting*.

Columbus - Best Birds: Horned Grebe*-1; Gadwall*-14; Am Wigeon*-2; Redhead*-1; Com Goldeneye*-2; Bufflehead*-92; Ruddy Duck*-12; Red-breasted Merganser*-17; Bald Eagle*-2; Gulls - Herring*-8 and Bonaparte's*-75; House Wren*-3.

Okefenokee NWR - December 20: 77 species. Best Birds: Yellow-crowned Night Heron*-1; Wood Stork*-10; White Ibis*-122; Black Duck*-6; Pintail*-4; Am Wigeon*-15; Red-cockaded Woodpecker*-3; House Wren*-1; Swainson's Thrush*-1; White-eyed Vireo*-1; Warblers - Black-and-White*-1; Com Yellowthroat*-6; Fox Sparrow*-1.

Atlanta - December 21: 8 species, 18,367 individuals. Best Birds: Great Blue Heron-17; Hooded Merganser-101; Red-shouldered Hawk-24; Am Kestrel-28; Bobwhite-185; Gulls- Herring*-2, Ring-billed-50; Winter Wren-24; Black-and-White W*-1; Cardinal-497. (The above species represent new all-time high counts. The two exceptions are the Herring Gulls and Black-and-White W. These two are new to the count this year - Ed.)

Dalton - December 20. 68 species, 3,146 individuals. Best Birds: Red-headed Woodpecker; E. Bluebird-106.

Chattahoochee National Forest Songbird Management Area - December 27: 52 species, 3,500 individuals. Best Birds: Great Blue Heron-1; Turkey Vulture-2; Am Kestrel-3; Red Crossbill-13.

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Augusta AS - Field Trip Results: January 10 - A Snow Goose* (blue morph) was on Swan Pond along with 3 Whistling Swans* and 3 Redheads*. Four Double-crested Cormorants* and 21 Great Egrets were also noted. January 24 - A Snow Goose* was at Swan Pond as well as Ruddy Ducks*, Gardwall*, Am Wigeon*. Least*, Spotted* Sandpipers; 3 Herring Gulls* along with 14 Great Blue Herons in one oak tree were listed.

Anna and J. A. Salley of Martinez have had Evening Grosbeaks and on Jan. 15 a Red-breasted Nuthatch was in their yard. Pine Siskins are in the Augusta area and R. C. Couch reports House Finches* on Jan. 11. The Carnne's have banded m and f Evening Grosbeaks (2 birds - Ed.) coming to their feeder. Clarence Belger noticed an E Bluebird carrying nesting material into a box at Clark Hill in early January. Upon checking, he found pine straw circled in the bottom of the box. When the cold weather returned, the birds left.

Columbus AS - On the weekend of Jan. 18, Sam and Nan Pate counted a Barred Owl and 120 hawks on a trip to Augusta. At Bartlett's Ferry on National Bald Eagle Survey Day (Jan. 10), Sam spotted 4 Bald Eagles* - all in flight at the same time and in the area. At the same dam, Archie Moore, Jan. 17, found 3 Bald Eagles* - one was mature. Thelma Dawson reports House Finch* Jan. 2 and Evening Grosbeaks Jan. 14. Bob Grier tells us that 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches were at his feeder Jan. 3. Am. Wigeons*-6 were seen at Cooper Cr Feb. 8.

Atlanta AS - November Field Notes: Com Loons* were on the Griffin Reservoir (GR) seen by Patrick Brisse Nov. 16; 6 were seen near Acworth by Terry Miller on Nov. 2 and 1 at Sweetwater Cr State Park (SCSP) on Nov. 29 by Terry. A Red-necked Grebe* was spotted in with Horned Grebes* at the Jekyll Is Marina by Joe Greenberg Nov. 15. Patrick and other birders found 6 Horned Grebe* at Peachtree City L (PCL) Nov. 23. Gadwalls*, Pintails*, N Shovelers* were seen on the GR and PCL during the month.

Dick Parks reports a Wood Duck in Piedmont Park - the second one he has seen there - in November. Redheads* were at GR on Nov. 6, seen by Hugh Garrett. He saw Canvasbacks* there on the same date; Terry saw them on Nov. 9 at Murphey Candler L (MCL); Donna Brisse spotted them at PCL Nov. 29. A f Com Goldeneye* was sighted by Hugh on GR Nov. 26; Jeff Petit had a good count of Bufflehead* - 100 - at the Cumming Water Treatment Plant Nov. 28. Four Surf* and 1 Black* Scoters were observed by Joe at Jekyll Is Nov. 15. Terry Moore found 3 Red-breasted Mergansers* at PCL Nov. 23.

Joe saw an ad Bald Eagle* near Savannah Nov. 16; an im Golden Eagle was spotted by Elaine Young on St. Simon's Is Nov. 22. Eileen Hutcheson gives us a Sandhill Crane* sighting in north Atlanta Nov. 2. About 100 Sandhills were reported from Butts Co on this same date. Beth Allen saw 12 near Rex Nov. 20. At John Ward Swamp, John Paget found a Virginia Rail* Nov. 8. Four Mountain Plovers* were sighted near Dublin in early November by Tom Patterson. (Editor's Note - Single birds were seen on Sapelo Is 1-3 Jan. 1956, by John Teal and Jergen Jacobs and on 23 Jan. 1957 by Teal. 1969 Oriole 24; 27-30. Although probably correctly identified by the observers, additional convincing evidence is desired. On hypothetical list.) A late Pectoral Sandpiper was at Pendergrass Nov. 8, seen by Elizabeth McCain (1 Nov. 1942) and a Purple Sandpiper was at Savannah Beach, reported by Mike Jones Nov. 30. An im Herring Gull* was in the Home Depot parking lot, Marietta, Nov. 15, spotted by Ken Acree.

A Long-billed Marsh Wren* was at the Chattahoochee R Recreation Area on Nov. 22 according to Terry Moore. Wood Thrushes lingered late. Jack Carusos had one in his yard Nov. 2 and Vince Jackson saw one at his home Nov. 6 (31 Oct. 1959) Jack also saw a Swainson's Thrush in his yard on this same date. Warblers also hung around rather late. Mark Oberle saw a Tennessee in Decatur Nov. 2; John saw a Magnolia Nov. 1 north of Atlanta and a Blackburnian near Gainesville Nov. 4. The Brisses observed an Ovenbird in their backyard Nov. 9.

Jack found a Blue Grosbeak* near Kennesaw Nov. 8 and Patrick had a Rose-breasted Grosbeak* at Bobby Jones Golf Course Nov. 4. Terrill Soules spotted a late f Painted Bunting* on Jekyll Is Nov. 28. Evening Grosbeaks are appearing in the Atlanta area, along with Pine Siskins. House Finches* are being seen around Atlanta. A Lapland Longspur* was seen at the Gainesville Airport by John Nov. 10 and was seen by many others on Nov. 29 and 30. Snow Buntings* were on St. Simon's Is and Jekyll Is,

being seen Nov. 22 (two of them) by Elaine and Nov. 28 and 29 by Terrill, respectively.

December Field Notes: Two Com Loons* were at SCSP Dec. 12, seen by Donna. Jean Bevis gives us 4 blue morphs of the Snow Goose* at Harris Neck NWR Dec. 10. A large group of Gadwalls* was at the Chattahoochee Nature Center on Dec 10, told to us by Donna. She saw 2 Com Goldeneye* on Dec. 11 at SCSP.

Bill Terrell saw 6 Sandhill Cranes* Dec. 14 west of Marietta. The outstanding observation of the month was an im m Orchard Oriole* seen by Frances Rowland at her home in Covington Dec. 25. (Editor's Note - ... accidental at Dalton 30 Nov. 1974 - 18 Jan. 1975.) This bird was seen for about 15 minutes and closely compared to the pictures in Peterson.

January Field Notes: A Black Swan has been on the Chattahoochee R just north of I-285. It appeared a few months ago. A Peregrine Falcon* has evidently taken up residence on the tall buildings surrounding Central City Park in downtown Atlanta. Many observers have seen this bird but it's by no means easy to spot. Joe spotted a Short-billed Marsh Wren* at the Regional Hospital Jan. 31. Peggy Moore tells us about finding a Long-billed Marsh Wren* wintering at the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area during January.

Fairman Cumming reported a f Yellow-headed Blackbird* several times during the month flying in a group of other blackbirds in Decatur. Frank McCamey, Jan. 19, saw a flock of 20 Brewer's Blackbirds north of Fayetteville for one of the few recent sightings of this bird. Frank Thompson reported 75 Am Wigeon* and 2 Redheads* at Floyd Jr. College in Rome. Two m Oldsquaw* were seen on Cumberland Is Jan. 1 by Donna. An Osprey* at the GR was an unusual find by Atlanta Auduboners on a field trip Jan. 18. About 20 Com Snipe was a good count at Pendergrass Jan. 10 told to us by Patrick.

Cherokee AS - Dalton: Margaret and Bud Newman have been hosting a m and a f House Finch* at their feeder. Dec. 26 Harriett diGioia went over and verified the f sighting. Auduboners on a field trip stopped by this feeder and saw both the m and f. A m was still coming as of March 21.

Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks and Red-breasted Nuthatches are frequenting local feeders. Sandy Pangle noted a Ring-billed Gull near the apartments where he lives Jan. 27.

Run-down of Sandhill Crane* sightings: 20 on March 2 over the Chatsworth Hwy by Kelly Caldwell; 50 on March 3 flying over the Cohutta Fish Hatchery by Frank Parulsa. Anne Hamilton heard them on March 5 and during the same timeframe a friend called her and told her she had seen them flying over Walnut Ave. Frank Findley watched 35 on March 6 over the West Cowpen Rd. (Forest Service Rd. 17) on the Cohutta Ranger District of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Katherine Sapp spotted them flying over Hamilton Memorial Hospital March 7. There were 75 in one flock and 25 in another flock.

Doris Crowe found what she feels to have been a Herring Gull* at the Whitfield Square Shopping Center March 5.

Letters to the Editor

Grace Boddiford reports Pine Siskins have been noted in Screven Co and that Bill Lovejoy has had them at his feeder in Statesboro.

Eugene Cypert writes from Waycross: "... My wife, Mary Lou, yesterday, February 5, saw three Purple Martins here in our neighborhood."

Dennie and Pam McClure write from College Park: "... Evening Grosbeaks have increased to a maximum of 25 at a single counting at our feeder January 18. We spotted a Water Pipit January 2 on the grounds of the Clayton Water Authority - Pollution Control Division, Hwy 54 near Fayetteville. On a visit to the Alabama side of the Eufaula NWR, we saw an immature Bald Eagle*. Eventually it soared out of sight toward the Georgia side January 24."

Arthur Green of Hiawassee writes: "There seems to be several Am Kestrels in the surrounding country. Any trip to Young Harris or Blairsville usually turns up one or two. We had one at our house Dec. 13 and 30. Sharp-shinned Hawk* December 2; im Cooper's Hawk* near house December 19. This hawk began raiding our feeders several times a day by late February. Once it was sitting on the front steps. Evening Grosbeaks appeared January 5; two Pine Siskins showed up March 1. No Red-breasted Nuthatches so far. Great Horned Owl* heard January 30."

News of People

We are saddened to report the death of one of our Life Members, Robert I. Todd of Rome, on January 20. He had a lifelong interest in birds and attended several meetings. Our sympathy is extended to his family.

Anselm Atkins will teach a course this spring in the "Evenings at Emory" series on Darwin's The Origin of Species. Harriett DiGioia taught a course on Folk Medicine in the winter quarter at Dalton Junior College. This spring she will teach courses on Bird Identification and Wildflower Identification. She presented a slide program "Black Bears, Bald Eagles and Butterflies as Environmental Indicators" to the Bald Eagle Days, cosponsored by the Chattanooga Nature Center and Chickamauga National Park in Chattanooga.

Joe Greenberg saw Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Vermillion Flycatcher, LeConte's Sparrow at St. Marks NWR, FL over the Thanksgiving Day weekend. Dan and Ann Forster, at the same place, saw White Pelicans and a Henslow's Sparrow. Bill Pulliam reports getting a number of life birds at Yosemite National Park, on a pelagic trip out of Monterey Bay, CA, and on general California birding.

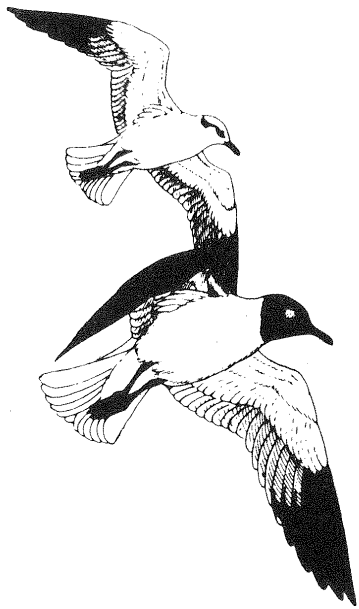
Thought for the Day

Support GOS through your presence at our meetings and field trips; by participating in our business sessions; by writing articles for The Oriole; by recruiting new members and through paying your dues. GOS needs YOU - YOU need GOS!

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