



# GOSHAWK

NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Vol. XV Nos. 2-4

June 1989

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Editor

Rare Bird Alert Phone Number (912) 987-1052

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### GOS SPRING MEETING REPORT

Those who were not at Fitzgerald for the spring meeting missed a fine outing. On Friday evening, Helen Ogren's slide program of her recent trip to the Falkland Islands was enjoyed by about 70 members and friends. Saturday morning several field trips were offered. The two that attracted the largest groups were a heron rookery south of Douglas and a mixed habitat area at Bowen's Mill, a good place for spring migrants.

The social hour and banquet were, as always, highlights of the weekend. After the banquet, we were treated to Frank McCamey's slides and discussion of the great spring concentrations of migrating sandhill cranes on the dwindling Platte River in Nebraska.

On Sunday morning, most of those who went to the rookery Saturday, went to Bowen's Mill. The countdown Saturday evening showed a total of 99 species had been seen.

It was an enjoyable weekend in every way. GOS meetings are basically social events with the added bonus of good birding. What could be a better experience for a birder! If you have never, or have seldom attended one of these semi-annual meetings, you are not taking advantage of the most pleasurable part of being a GOS member. The fall meeting is to be held in Savannah.

Don't miss it!

### SAVANNAH MEETING

The fall GOS meeting, being held October 13-15, will be hosted by the Ogeechee Audubon Society, and our headquarters will be the Ramada Inn in downtown Savannah. In addition to great fall birding, this is an excellent location from which to tour the waterfront, historic homes and, for those brave people who require less sleep, experience a bit of the "New Orleans type" night life.

For reservations call or write:  
(All rooms \$48.00 per night)

RAMADA INN  
201 West Oglethorpe Avenue  
Savannah, GA 31401  
(912) 233-3531

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Don Cohrs, chairman of the nominating committee, along with committee members Patrick Brisse and Dale Hardee wish to announce the following slate of officers for two year terms starting with the fall, 1989 meeting:

- President - Branch Howe
- 1st Vice President - Helen Ogren
- 2nd Vice President - Ken Clark
- Secretary - Didi Manns
- Treasurer - Richard Yow

NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE

Mary Lou Cypert, a past president of GOS from 1959-1961 and a life member, died this past March, and her husband, Gene Cypert, who was refuge manager at Okefenokee NWR for a number of years, is in a nursing home suffering from Alzheimer's disease. They were both very active in GOS for many years, and it is sad that Gene is now unable to enjoy the outdoors that he loved so much.

Ken George, who was in an automobile accident in Fitzgerald on the last day of the spring meeting there, has recovered from his injuries and is ready to make final arrangements for the fall meeting in Savannah. It is extremely unfortunate that he was hit while driving his new vehicle which was only two days old!

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GOS member Nancy Iha is due our thanks and appreciation for the great job she did in getting our minutes for two past meetings typed, copied, and collated. We value all our volunteers! If you would like to help in some way, please call Helen Ogren at (404) 475-7218. Thanks again, Nancy.

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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new GOS members:

- Judy Bragg - Albany, GA
- W. H. Buntin, Jr. - Albany, GA
- Edward Caldwell - Rabun Gap, GA
- James Stevan Calver - Savannah, GA
- Michael L. Cohen - Augusta, GA
- W. H. (Bill) Groce, Jr. - Roswell, GA
- J. M. M. Harrison - Macon, GA
- Roger McMillan Reeb - Fitzgerald, GA
- Don R. Robinson, MD - Bainbridge, GA
- Keith Tyler Rott - Atlanta, GA
- Nancy Shaw - Rabun Gap, GA
- Ogeechee Audubon Society - Savannah, GA

ABSTRACT OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Shoney's Inn, Fitzgerald GA - April 23, 1989

FINANCIAL REPORT: Current balances total \$32,701.31. Coastal Georgia Audubon was given \$250 to support their monitoring efforts concerning GLORY moviemakers on Jekyll Island.

GOS membership currently stands at 416, with 78 more not yet renewed.

ACTIVITY, RESPONSIBILITY, STATUS REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS: The staff at DNR's Rum Creek facility is struggling to operate out of badly cramped quarters. Needed is a new office, costing approximately \$32,000. Tax check-offs and other general donations can't be used, by law, for administrative purposes. They are interested in any support possible from us.

Harriett DiGioia, who has resigned as GOSHAWK editor, was commended for her fifteen years of service.

John Swiderski, the current Treasurer, will assume the duties of Business Manager. He replaces Carolina Lane who served for several years in that capacity.

Doug and Betsy Phillips have been asked to audit GOS books.

The Checklist Committee will meet in June; the Golden Eagle Committee was disbanded.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

It is a privilege to serve GOS as new editor of the GOSHAWK, and I welcome any suggestions you, the members and readers, may have regarding types of articles you wish to have included, format, etc., as well as constructive criticism. You are also encouraged to contribute articles to the newsletter. The deadline for the next issue will be August 15th. Please mail all contributions and suggestions to: Ms. Anne Wyand, 1741 Tolleson Court, Dunwoody, GA 30338.

CONSERVATION REPORT

SB 86 Georgia Water Supply Bill

This is the bill which authorizes the DNR to acquire or construct water supply reservoirs. A few artificial reservoirs may be a necessary evil in Georgia, which lacks natural lakes, but remember that each reservoir requires the damming of a stream.

HB 345 Water Resources, amending the Georgia Water Quality Control Act

This bill requires a POTW (Publicly Owned Treatment Works) to notify EPD immediately of a spill; the POTW must also notify governments 20 miles below and keep them informed; the POTW must pay for the monitoring of the spill for one year.

Environmental laws which did not pass during the 1989 General Assembly can be reconsidered and refined in 1990. We hope that the best possible Mountain Protection Bill will pass then, as well as HB 1133, the River Corridor Protection Act, a comprehensive riverine, waterway and wetland protection bill. Bills to assure water supply protection and better air quality are also under consideration this summer. As for hazardous waste legislation, we hope that the state will follow Eugene Odum's proposal that we minimize the problem in Georgia by attracting only companies that do not produce toxic waste. (Our geology is not suitable for safe, permanent hazardous waste storage.) Any toxic waste we are forced to dispose of should be handled only by a company with the most advanced modern technology.

The Swamp of Toa in Albany news is both bad and good. The bad news is that developers are dragging their feet about restoring wetlands they have already violated.

The good news, according to Charles Erwin, former GOS member, is that a 9,000 acre tract of land in the middle of the Swamp of Toa which has been on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife acquisition and preservation list since 1978 may now rise on the priority list. Under the National Emergency Wetlands Resource Act of 1986, we may possibly have a National Wildlife Refuge there within a decade or so. Scientists are making a color-coded map now to decide which wetlands should be considered inviolate. The EPA has established surface, subsurface and ecological connections in the swamp system. It is studying the impact of agriculture, irrigation, forestry, pecan orchards, recurrent droughts, and development. It is studying what makes the Swamp of Toa unique, historically and ecologically. (For birders, the rookery there of the first-known breeding colony of black-crowned night herons away from the coast, is unique.)

#### FT. BENNING AMOK

Sometimes it drops its bombs around rather apologetically, other times it levels the countryside with a real vengeance. The latter happened when this Georgia military base, entrusted with (among other things) the care and management of an endangered species (to wit, the red-cockaded woodpecker), allegedly began ignoring guidelines established by the U. S. Game and Fish Commission and Damaged many aspects of the habitat of this federally protected bird.

The red-cockaded woodpecker has very precise habitat requirements: aged

pinus with heart rot, little or no underbrush, and a sufficient extent of orchard-spaced foraging trees. The colonies at Ft. Benning were properly managed for this habitat until a year or two ago, when severe abuses began to be documented. Lacking corporation from the base, several organizations, including the Atlanta Audubon Society, have agreed to file an Intent to Sue against the government agencies involved. It is our hope that, within the prescribed sixty-day waiting period before the suite takes effect, some promises of better management will be forthcoming from Ft. Benning.

Anselm Atkins, Atlanta Audubon Society Editor  
Reprint from WINGBARS

#### HUMMINGBIRD STUDY

Terry Johnson is asking for volunteers to participate in a study of hummingbirds - reporting their arrival and departure from your feeders this spring and fall, numbers and so on. If you would like to become a "hummingbird helper", drop him a note c/o Georgia DNR, Route 3, Box 180, Forsyth, GA 31029. He'll send you instructions and, on completion of the survey, an attractive window decal and a newsletter.

## WINTER/SPRING 1989 FIELD NOTES

HDiG reports that on 4/4 a COMMON LOON crash-landed on wet pavement in Murray County (MC) during a recent rainstorm, most likely assuming it was landing on water. The bird was captured, treated by a veterinarian and released in Lake Conasauga where it was last seen 4/16.

WHITE PELICANS were seen during Feb. on the Alabama and Georgia sides of Eufaula NWR, and a flock of 12 was seen on Lake Lanier. (3/12, JV) The very rare GREAT CORMORANT was seen from Tybee Island on 3/18 by PS.

The pre-breeding roost (not rookery) in Merry Brickyard ponds (MP) in Augusta was used again this spring beginning in early April. On 4/18 there were 280 CATTLE EGRETS, 4 GREAT EGRETS, 2 LITTLE BLUE HERONS, and 1 SNOWY EGRET (V&AW). A rare winter record for the GREEN-BACKED HERON was a bird near Alpharetta on 1/22 by CLan and HO. GLOSSY IBIS can be difficult to find along the coast during the winter so reports of these birds from Darien on 1/15 (PR, HO, MAV) and on 1/28 (HO, EH) were quite interesting.

A TUNDRA SWAN was seen frequently during the month of January at the Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area near Darien by local rangers. Another rare find was a SNOW GOOSE (blue phase) at Sweetwater Creek State Park (SCSP) on 1/21 by PR. 8 SNOW GEESE (blue phase) were viewed at Eufaula NWR 2/11 by BD, BM, AW, & R&BW. JG reported a ROSS' GOOSE 2/26 at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. Subsequently, many Georgia birders saw the bird over a month long period. On a number of occasions during Jan. and Feb., JP saw 2 WHITE-FRONTED GEESE at Commerce Lake near Gainesville.

Mid-Feb. marked the beginning of the SANDHILL CRANE migration with 950+ birds in the Atlanta area during Feb. and 1250 during March. 100 were reported from Conyer's Monastery by FM, 5 were reported at Eufaula NWR on 2/11 by BD, et.al., 85 on 2/19 by D&PM between Hamilton and Pine Mountain, 50 in Canton on 3/6, 9 over NW Atlanta (PN), and 35 in Dalton on 3/10. (JPe) One bird was spotted by DS on 4/2 at Chester Water Treatment Plant. (CWTP)

A wave of migrant ducks moved through MP on 3/16; most wintering ducks left mid Feb. with the full moon. Five NORTHERN SHOVELERS were spotted in MC on 4/4. (HDiG) 3 WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were at Commerce Lake on 3/4. PR spotted a COMMON GOLDENEYE at SCSP on 1/21, PB & HG reported 5 there on 2/5, one was along the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) in Atlanta on 3/12 (P&TM), and one at SCSP on 3/25 by PR. JP saw 2 COMMON MERGANSERS at Lake Lanier on 3/4. HOODED MERGANSERS were reported 2/24 at Chester WTP. PR found a RED-BREASTED MERGANSER at SCSP on 2/25. (DS)

An OSPREY was seen 3/11 at MP (V&AW), 3/28-4/3 at Chester WTP (DS), and on 6/2 at the Ocmulgee River (DS). 1 MISSISSIPPI KITE was in Fitzgerald on 4/23, 2 on the Augusta levee 4/29, and on 5/6 14 were flying over a field off the Augusta levee. (V&AW) On 5/2, Mississippi Kites were seen in Macon and on 5/29 in Montezuma. On 4/14, a RUFFED GROUSE was spotted at the Cohutta Ranger District. (HDiG) A pair of WILD TURKEYS were reported to have on the levee all spring. (A&VW)

A LEAST SANDPIPER was a good find at the Clayton County Water Treatment Plant (CCWTP) on 1/1 by BB. CLan saw a DOWITCHER (sp.) at CCWTP on 3/19. At DeKalb Reservoir in Atlanta, an immature HERRING GULL was present most of March. A rare non-fall sighting of the LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL was reported by DF & DC. The CASPIAN TERN seen at MP 4/16 was very unusual. The checklist states "rare spring transient in interior." One FORSTER'S TERN appeared at MP in winter plumage-black bill, black patch through the eye and back of the head was gray. The COMMON TERN, a rare spring migrant in the interior, was spotted at MP this spring. (V&AW)

A RINGED TURTLE-DOVE appeared at a feeder in Eastman on 6/6 (DS). FISH CROWS continue to increase in the area with 6 seen in northeast Atlanta on 1/23 by GS and a flock of 9 at the CRNRA on 3/25. A RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD remained at the feeder of BT through Feb. and into March. JS reported that the male SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER is in Cartersville and is expected to remain for about another month, but the female did not show up this year. The VERMILLION FLYCATCHER previously reported from the Okefenokee was seen on 1/14 by M&CLan, 1/20 by HG, 1/27 by HO, and on 2/1 by BD, BM, and AW.

Warbler migration was quite late in beginning in Augusta, as it was the last week in April before most migrants appeared. One early migrant was a WILSON'S WARBLER foraging in a thick area of privet and switch cane near the levee on 3/14. (V&AW) Two male BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS appeared in Augusta on 4/29 and 5/12. It had been several years since this species has been seen there. On 5/2 a BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER was spotted in Macon by DS. A male BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER was singing in swamps off the levee on 5/11 (V&AW).

A SHINY COWBIRD was reported on Cumberland Island by DS and was subsequently viewed by D&BM; another was spotted by D&JD at the Robins AF Base swamp area on 5/27. The very rare LECONTE'S SPARROW was seen on 1/19 by CLan and HO near DeSoto near where a bird was seen last winter. One adult WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW was spotted along the levee on 5/6 which is a late date, especially for the Augusta area, however, they have been recorded in GA as late as 5/13(1928). (V&AW) The extremely hard to find LINCOLN'S SPARROW was seen near SCSP on 1/29 by PR, 2 on 2/11 on the Georgia side of Eufaula NWR (BD et.al.), and 2 birds 3/24-3/26 were reported from Pendergrass area (near Gainesville) by JP. A WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW above Rowsell on 1/2 was reported by (P&TM).

D&PM reported a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD near Pine Mountain on 2/5. Searching of blackbird flocks in southwest GA would probably prove this species more regular than reports indicate. 2 PINE SISKINS in north Fulton County, Atlanta on 2/23, seen by SF, was a good find since they were very rare this past winter.

CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Blakeslee, Donna Clark, Bruce Dralle, Don & Joyce Duncan, Steve Farrell, Dennis Forsythe, Hugh Garrett, Joe Greenberg, Harriett DiGioia, Eileen Hutcheson, Carolina & Mike Lane, Denny & Pam McClure, Bob Manns, Francis Michael, Peggy & Terry Moore, Phillip Northman, John Paget, David Sibley, Paul Raney, Georgann Schmalz, Donny Screws, Paul Sykes, Buzz Trotty, Mary Ann Vernocy, Joel Volpi, Vernon & Anne Waters, Richard & Bridget Wofford, Anne Wyand.

THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY \*\* SALES LIST

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PRICE

ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF GEORGIA BIRDS

Prepared by the GOS Checklist Committee, J. Christopher Haney (chair), Patrick Brisse, Daniel R. Jacobson, Mark W. Oberle and John Paget. Lists 410 species with range, status, dates of occurrence, in Georgia. 55 pages, 6 x 9, 1986. \$5.00

AN INDEX OF GEORGIA BIRD RECORDS IN "AMERICAN BIRDS" AND "AUDUBON FIELD NOTES"

Species listing (6th AOU Checklist order) of all Georgia bird records in the "Seasonal Reports", "Changing Seasons" and articles in "American Birds" and its predecessor "Audubon Field Notes" through 1983. 28 pages, 6 x 9, 1985 \$4.00

A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO GEORGIA (Third Edition)

Editor - Terry Chesser. Guide to birding locations throughout Georgia. Also lists bird clubs. 76 pages, 6 x 9, 1988 \$7.00

THE BIRDLIFE OF BEN HILL COUNTY, GA. AND ADJACENT AREAS

Author - Milton N. Hopkins. Habitats, observations by the author and others from about 1939. 93 pages, 6 x 9, 1975 \$4.00

THE BIRD OF THE SAVANNAH RIVER DELTA

Author - Ivan R. Tompkins. Gaviiformes through Charadriiformes. Habitats, observations, emergent theory. 68 pages, 6 x 9, 1958. \$2.00

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GOS COLOR DECAL Size 3-1/2" diameter, adhesive backing. \$1.25

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