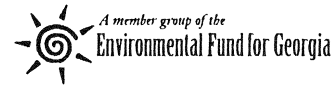


THE *GOS*hawk NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

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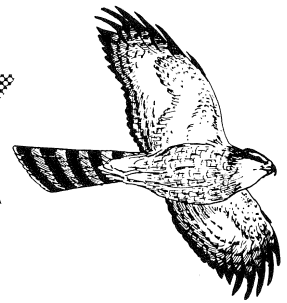


NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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# GOSHAWK



NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 23 NO. 3

SEPTEMBER 1996

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### **GOS/AFO FALL MEETING October 18-20, 1996 Holiday Inn Beach Resort Jekyll Island, Georgia**

As previously announced, this fall's GOS meeting will be a combined meeting with the Association of Field Ornithologists. The focus will be on barrier islands and bird migration. Taylor Shoettle, a naturalist and writer who lives in the Golden Isles, will speak Friday night on the ecology of barrier islands. Saturday night's speaker will be Sidney Gauthreaux, professor of biology at Clemson University. He will speak on the use of radar in studies of bird migration.

Mike Chapman has coordinated an array of local field trips on Saturday and Sunday, as well as full-day excursions to Cumberland Island on Friday and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, with limited registration available.

Saturday will also feature paper sessions, a presentation & panel discussion "Beyond Checklists: Amateurs in Research," and poster Sessions.

GOS members should have received notification and registration forms by a special mailing in July. Room reservations should be made directly with the Holiday Inn Beach Resort by calling: 800-753-5955 or 912-635-3311. If you need more information or meeting reservation forms, call Eugenia Thompson 706-549-7318.

### **"Beyond Checklists: Amateurs in Research" Saturday, Oct. 19th 1:15 - 3:15 p.m.**

- 1:15 - 1:30 Beyond Checklists: Amateurs in Research, Margaret Brittingham, Penn State University
- 1:30 - 2:00 Project Feeder Watch, House Finch Disease Survey and Other Volunteer Based Projects at Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ken Rosenberg, Cornell University.
- 2:00 - 2:20 Breeding Bird Survey, Chandler S. Robbins, National Biological Service
- 2:20 - 2:40 Georgia's Breeding Bird Atlas, Todd Schneider, GOS and GA Non-Game/Endangered Species Program
- 2:40 - 3:00 The Value of Checklists and a Pilot Checklist Program, Greg Butcher, American Birding Association
- 3:00 - 3:15 Wrap-up of workshop, Jim Berry, Association of Field Ornithologists

*Deadline for the next GOShawk is October 15, 1996.*



Sherry K. Anderson  
 Ian A. Baldock  
 Tobias F. Dirks  
 Patricia E. Fincher  
 Elizabeth Howze  
 John & Jody Jensen  
 Julia J. McDonald

Douglasville, GA  
 Doylestown, PA  
 Rocky Face, GA  
 Decatur, GA  
 Doraville, GA  
 Macon, GA  
 Valdosta, GA

Michael H. Sewell  
 Cindy & Paul Shumpert  
 Wallace Warren  
 Linda K. Whiddon  
 Emily Jo Williams  
 Jim Wilson  
 Marianna Wilson

Macon, GA  
 Rockmart, GA  
 Cornelia, GA  
 Waverly, GA  
 Forsyth, GA  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Atlanta, GA

...John Swiderski

**GOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON THE MOVE...**

Please note the following address and telephone changes for  
 Ken Clark, President and Bill Lovejoy, First Vice President:

Ken Clark: 6310 Stapleton Road, Macon, GA 31206-5233 tel: 912/474-1924

Bill Lovejoy: 202 Wintergreen Drive, Brevard, NC 28712 tel: 704/862-3544

**OUR OWN SARA ROBERTSON MAKES IT BIG TIME!**

On May 26th Sara Robertson (now Mrs. Robert Morris) received the Ph.D. degree from Cornell University, concentrating in ornithology. Sara is the daughter of Betsy and Doug Phillips of Atlanta, active members and volunteers for many years in the GOS.

Sara began birding and joined the Society nearly 20 years ago, rapidly running up an impressive life list on our field trips in Georgia. She soon discovered the Cohrs banding station on Jekyll Island (JIBS) and served as a skilled Band-Aide for a dozen years. Naturally, she would use banding as a major feature of her research. Her studies led to becoming leader of the neotropical migrant research on Appledore Island, off the coast of Maine. Many of us remember the fine, detailed workshop she presented on identification of fall migrants at a GOS meeting on Jekyll Island.

After North Fulton High School in Atlanta, Sara won a scholarship to Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, graduation Summa cum Laude in 1989. She then won a prestigious scholarship for graduate study at Cornell University, leading to a Master's degree in 1992. Her research continued with a grant from the National Science Foundation to achieve the Doctoral degree this year. Through banding, Sara investigated stop-over biology of neotropical migrants, seeking basic information important to conservation and management of this endangered population of American birds. GOS and JIBS contributed to the support of her studies through research grants.

Sara has presented scientific papers on her research at meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union and the Wilson Ornithological Society, receiving recognition for the best student paper presented at the recent Wilson meeting. Already, portions of her research have been published in three national ornithological journals, the *AUK*, the *Wilson Bulletin* and *The Condor*. For several years she has taught in laboratory classes at Cornell and led ornithological classes at the Audubon Ornithology Camp on Hog Island, ME. This year she will be teaching biology classes at Canisium College in Buffalo, NY. With her husband, Robert, she is presently living in Geneva, NY.

Now that Sara has graduated from birder to ornithologist, all of us wish her the best of continuing success in her career and hope that it will bring her back to Georgia some day.

... Franklin McCamey

**THE BIRDER'S GUIDE TO GEORGIA**

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A must for birders in Georgia. Even birders who don't go far afield, might be surprised to discover a great birding spot close to home. For the first time, complete with bar graphs and expanded listings. Thanks to great efforts by Joel Hitt and Ken Blackshaw, Co-Editors and Giff Beaton for the bar graphs and research, Georgia has one of the best guides in the country.

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April by Oscar Dewberry who thinks that some critter may have killed them. He has not seen any recent evidence of them at the site.

**WHIP-POOR-WILL** - Up to three were heard calling between 27 February and 27 March near Cox, McIntosh County (Brad Winn). These were probably wintering birds, but there is evidence that Whips are expanding their range southward, particularly in Laurens County (Tommy Patterson). Very unusual for the date and place was a bird heard at the Grand Bay WMA, Lowndes County, on 21 May (Brad Bergstrom).

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** - A bird which spent the winter at a Hahira feeder was last seen on 2 April (Betty Scruggs).

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** - This species was seen in Greene County on 4 May by Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al. and again on 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.) and at a new location in Bartow County on 11 May (Anselm Atkins and Joe Gould).

**EASTERN PHOEBE** - A nest with four young in Laurens County on 11 May was quite a rare find for that area (Tommy Patterson), as was the nest found in south Houston County on 13 April by Dan Guynn.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** - Very rare for the state was a bird reported from Wassau Island on 24 May by John Andrew (fide Mark Oberle).

**BANK SWALLOW** - Small numbers were reported from the ELHLAF during the period with the last two birds reported from there on 12 May by Jeff Sewell.

**CLIFF SWALLOW** - In the Atlanta area single birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 13 April (Jeff Sewell) and at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 24 April (Giff Beaton et al.). A new nesting location was discovered on 11 May at the bridge over the Ocmulgee River near Juliette, Monroe-Jones counties (Terry Johnson et al.).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - Two birds remained at KMT for much of the period with the last bird being seen there on 4 May by Giff Beaton. Another bird lingered in Macon until at least 7 April (fide Paul Johnson). Other birds were seen in the Roswell area through 18 March (Mim Eisenberg) and in Tucker through March (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

**MARSH WREN** - Very rare for the Atlanta area was a bird first seen on 16 April at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh with the peak count of three seen on 28 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** - The only report was of a bird on Giff Beaton's pre-dawn count on 4 May at Kennesaw Mt.

**WARBLING VIREO** - The only report of this very rare species came from KMT on 28 April (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell).

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** - A very early bird was seen at Barnsley Gardens near Cartersville on 14 April by John Swiderski. This appears to be the earliest record for the state by about a week. Another early bird was seen in Fernbank Forest on 20 April by Georgann Schmalz.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** - Single birds were seen at KMT on 17 April (Giff Beaton), at the CRNRA on 20 April (AAS Migration Walk), and back at KMT on 2 May (Giff Beaton, Kevin Danchisen), 4 May (Giff Beaton) and 5 May (Jeff Sewell).

**"AUDUBON'S" YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** - After getting no reports of this western form for several years, this spring Ruth Marley saw one at KMT on 5 May.

**CERULEAN WARBLER** - On 3 May, Dot Freeman counted six males, apparently on territory, along a one-mile stretch of Forest Service road on Ivy Log Mountain in Union County. No nests were found, but perhaps the day will come soon when we can document Georgia's first nesting.

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** - The only report was of a bird heard in Arnoldsville area near Athens on 27 May (Anselm Atkins).

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** - An immature male was reported from Callaway Gardens from 1 March through 26 March (Luann Craighton). This bird most likely spent the winter, a most unusual occurrence.

**DICKCISSEL** - One bird was found on the 11 May Bartow County Migration Count by Paul Raney. Dale Hardee found another bird in Henry County on 10 May and as many as 12 plus a nest were reported late in the month (m.ob.). Nine other birds were reported from Monroe County on 11 May (Terry Johnson, Larry Ross).

**FOX SPARROW** - Rare for the coast were four birds seen on Sapelo Island on 2 March by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** - One bird was seen on Sapelo Island on 2 March by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett where they are very rare.

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** - This rare vagrant made a brief visit to Donna & Terry Johnson's feeder in Monroe County on 7 April. Unfortunately, Terry did not get home in time to see the bird...a tough break, Terry.

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** - Five were seen at Youman's Pond in Liberty County on 2 March by Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett and 25 were seen in the vicinity of Rock Eagle on 30 March (Joe Greenberg).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - Jeff Sewell found a flock of 98 in Bartow County on 23 March and other observers reported smaller numbers through the end of March.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** - One bird spent the winter in the Valdosta area (Barbara Passmore). In the Atlanta area the species was reported widely but in small numbers. The best count was three at Kennesaw Mt. on 4 May (Giff Beaton).

**PURPLE FINCH** - Although not common this species was reported from a number of feeders in small numbers well into March. That is different from last year when the species was almost nonexistent.

**PINE SISKIN** - This species was likewise present in small numbers at many locations. The southernmost report received was of one at Darien on 29 March (Doris Cohrs). The last report was of two at KMT on 2 May (Giff Beaton and Kevin Danchisen).

**EVENING GROSBEAK** - Several places mentioned having flocks which remained fairly late in the season. The ELHLAF Wetlands Center hosted a flock of 30-40 birds most of the period with the last bird being seen on 10 May (Carol Lambert). Elsewhere the bird was present until late April or early May at the Piedmont NWR (Jerry and Marie Amerson) and into late April in Cherokee County (Maryilyn DeMarcos).

*We are sad to report the deaths of three GOS members during the past few months, two of them Charter members.*

### ROBERT E. GORDON

Dr. Robert E. Gordon of LaGrange, who first joined the GOS in 1946, and was a son of Charter Member Mrs. Lewis (Claire) Gordon, died unexpectedly on June 2nd. After retiring as Professor of Biology and Vice-President for Advanced Studies at the University of Notre Dame in 1990, Dr. Gordon renewed his GOS activities upon returning to Georgia, having served on the Editorial Committee since 1991.

... H. Branch Howe, Jr.

### ROGER TORY PETERSON

The passing of Roger Tory Peterson on July 28th brings to an end his long association with Georgia ornithology and with those in the state interested in birds, other wildlife and conservation. Who can forget the wonderful fiftieth anniversary meeting of GOS in Macon in 1986. Anyone who was there, and there were over 300 at the banquet, knows that the wonder and success of that meeting was, in large part, due to the presence of Roger and Virginia Peterson.

What a thrill it was for so many to be in the field with Roger Peterson whom they had known only from afar as the celebrated author/artist of the best known field guide to birds. And for those who had copies of his latest revised edition of *A Field Guide to the Birds*, both he and his wife sat patiently autographing the books. This revised edition was a joint effort with Mrs. Peterson drawing the range maps.

Roger Peterson's first appearance in the state was in 1936 as the speaker at the Christmas banquet of the Atlanta Bird Club (now Atlanta Audubon). The following day the organizational meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held in Atlanta. Among those present was Roger Peterson, who became a charter and life member of GOS at that meeting. At the time of his death he was one of approximately ten surviving charter members.

Except for the first number, all covers of *The Oriole* have featured a male Orchard Oriole by Peterson. For fifty years this was a pen and ink drawing, but since 1986 it has been a full color painting of the same bird, the original of which he presented to GOS.

In 1986 Roger Peterson received the Earle Greene Memorial Award for what he had done for GOS and for his outstanding contributions to ornithology. His last visit to Georgia was earlier this year as part of the annual Weekend for Wildlife at Sea Island where he was one of the principal speakers. He died at the age of 87 of complications following a stroke.

... Richard Parks

### J. HUNTER PATTERSON

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Hunter Patterson on July 11th. We met Hunter and his father, Tommy, in our early days of birding, and have spent many good times in his company. Although our forays with Hunter were almost always bird-based, no time spent with this man was limited to one subject. Hunter's immense cache of information on many subjects, but especially birding and nature, never ceased to amaze and challenge us. Day trips, weekend adventures, or even long telephone conversations tended to leave us somewhat exhausted, but always more thoughtful and intrigued by the subject.

He was an unsurpassed conversationalist with a natural curiosity about all forms of life on this planet. Nothing passed by Hunter unobserved. His knowledge of birds and their behavior caused us many times through the years to agonize longer over sightings and to be more cautious in our field identification methods...we always knew Hunter would bring us back to reality. He had a way of challenging statements, sightings, and conclusions that made you want to review your thought process and re-examine your observations. He seemed to have memorized Burleigh, and could always come up with another angle of observation that we had usually overlooked. You never knew when Hunter called if it would be about a Cardinal behaving oddly in his yard, or a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that he had noticed on a busy Buckhead street. Such events held equal importance.

Hunter had many interests, moved in many circles, and had a myriad of people around the world who cared about him. We consider ourselves fortunate to be among them, and we will all miss his intellect, wit and friendship.

... Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert

The following article is the second in a series of short reports from various committee/activity chairs describing what they do and how they go about it. It is hoped that these reports will help the general membership, and especially our newer members, to understand the workings of GOS and what really good work goes on in the society.

**The Birder's Guide to Georgia: A Special Committee Assignment**  
by Joel Hitt, Chairperson/Co-Editor

This is a follow-up to Ken Clark's reflections on serving in the GOS President's chair, appearing in the last issue of the *GOS Hawk*. These comments describe what my own experience has been like in chairing the Special Committee on the *Birder's Guide to Georgia* (BGG). As most readers will be aware, BGG is our organization's publication telling where to go in the state to find which birds, at which times of the year.

However, for many newer members of GOS, a copy of BGG has been as rare a sighting as a Connecticut Warbler in the Georgia springtime. The fourth edition ran out some time ago, and newer members have not had a new edition available...until now, that is. So I am pleased to announce that BGG, 5th edition, should be hitting the streets, as they say, about the same time you are reading these words. At \$12.00 in price, you can expect about 225 pages of material, including, for the first time ever in the state, bar graphs of each species, depicting frequency of occurrence, per physiographic region, per month of year. The amount of new information within those 40 pages of graphs alone is worth the price of the volume, in my humble opinion.

The other committee members are Ken Blackshaw and Giff Beaton. Ken became the co-editor at the same time I did, in 1990. Ken was a casual acquaintance when we began the previous edition. Now he's a kindred spirit of the keyboard, a dear friend, and not unlike a brother in many ways. A computer and software consultant, Ken somehow got Word 6.0 to generate the bar graphs that depict the data compiled by Giff. I am amazed he figured out how to do it, then did it, and then redid it, when all the data had to be re-entered following a glitch in the program. I would have left the state! He has also been everything else an editor needs to be, in addition to his technological expertise.

Giff was added to the committee specifically for compiling that data for the graphs. Volunteering for this job with the spritely energy that anyone who has birded with Giff knows firsthand, he was indefatigable in his pursuit of the final product. This was a task that grew many, many tentacles soon after he began it 18 months ago, and from which he did not wrest himself until the middle of June. I'm convinced he still awakens in a cold sweat worrying about whether a date range needs adjusting for a bird. (No, Giff, the manuscript is at the printer's at this moment!) He accomplished a Herculean task over this year-and-a-half, utilizing extensive written sources, traveling the state to consult with local birders from each region, and drawing on his own wealth of data he has accumulated during the time he has called Georgia his home. And thus this bar graph project, conceived over 10 years ago by GOS leadership, is at last a reality in the 5th edition of the *Guide*.

This committee met most often in cyberspace. Just our 3-way email correspondence alone would fill a volume, though much of it would be in need of censorship for the eyes of the modest. Like the Cardinal that flew into the window next to our table at lunch one day last spring, we, too, have had to bang heads at times, in order to stand up for what we feel is important in this project. We've also had to apply the fine art of compromise and coalescence at many other times. We've done both credibly and well.

Our convergence on restaurants around the area for a "working lunch," perhaps a dozen of them accumulated over the last 2 years, frequently attracted attention from nearby tables and from the waitpersons. Pages of data spread out amongst plates of food, dialogue as serious as a heart attack in one moment, and in the next uproariously playful -- no wonder one server looked quizzically at us and inquired, "Are you guys really talking about birds?"

In sum, the driving force of this project for me is two-fold. One the one hand, I feel like the BGG project is a chance to pass along to others what was earlier handed to me. As a neophyte birder and GOS member in the early 80's, I cut my teeth on Joe Greenberg's *Birder's Guide to Georgia, 2nd edition*. With co-editor Carole Anderson, he showed me where to go and what to look for, in writing as well as on foot afield. My sense is that on the BGG committee I can keep that project going, and pay due respect to Joe's early work, as well as, through this effort, the Society as a whole.

But on the other hand, there is something else special about our state's *Birder's Guide*. It is, like none other I have seen, an anthology of regional birders' notes, on the roads, the paths, and the places they have found to be the best birding spots, and who want to make this information available to others. About forty persons share in this edition directly, not even accounting for others who preceded them in former editions. If we co-editors are the brain of this project, then these two score individuals are its heart. Giff will tell you the bar graphs operate on the same analogy -- a labor dependent for its being on the labors of many other individuals. It is really an honor, then, to pull together their work and share it with the membership, and with others across the birding community at large.

earlier arrival date by 8 days. Paul Johnson counted seven in Bibb County on 22 April; Anne Waters found a nest in Richmond County on 11 May; Steve Craven saw six along the Ogeechee River in Jenkins County; and to continue a recent run of annual out-of-range Atlanta area sightings, Giff Beaton tallied one over KMT on 6 May.

**NORTHERN HARRIER** - This species is now fairly difficult to find in north Georgia so a bird over KMT on 23 March (Bruce Dralle) and another over Fernbank Forest, DeKalb County on 30 March (Georgann Schmalz) were worth noting.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** - Rather rare for the coast was a bird in McIntosh County on 10 April (Doris Cohrs).

**GOLDEN EAGLE** - A very rare sighting was a bird reported by Billy Dunbar in Oconee County on 3 May.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - One bird was a very rare visitor to downtown Macon on 1 March (Ty Ivey). The best news was that a pair nested in downtown Atlanta and at last report had three chicks (Pierre Howard). Single birds seen at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) on 13 April (Jack Carusos) and at Kennesaw Mt. on 28 April (Giff Beaton and Jeff Sewell) could have been the adults out foraging for food. Another single bird was seen at Sapelo Island on 17 April by Doris Cohrs.

**BLACK RAIL** - Paul Sykes had one bird at the Greene County marsh on 24 April and again on 4 May (with Billy Dunbar).

**KING RAIL** - This species was found at the KMT marsh during April and May with the best counts being three on both 7 April and 25 May (Giff Beaton et al.). The species was also found at the Greene County marsh during the period (Paul Sykes).

**VIRGINIA RAIL** - The peak count of 10 was made at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 31 March (Giff Beaton) but at least a few lingered there through the end of the period. The species was also reported from the Greene County marsh (Paul Sykes).

**SORA** - Single birds were seen on a number of occasions at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh with the last report coming on 3 May (Giff Beaton). The species was also reported from the Greene County marsh during the period (Paul Sykes). An amazing count of 7 was seen and heard in a Macon marsh on 28 April (Jerry & Marie Amerson).

**COMMON MOORHEN** - Rare for the Augusta area was a bird at Merry Ponds on 23 March (Gary Gray).

**AMERICAN COOT** - The highest counts were 300 at Lake Lanier on 31 March (obviously a migrating flock) by Jeff Sewell and 890 at SCSP on 5 April (Hal Massie).

**SANDHILL CRANE** - In the Macon area the last report came on 3 March (fide Paul Johnson). In the Atlanta area there were six reports between 3 and 5 March with the best count being 362 by Hal Massie on 4 March at Austell. The total count was approximately 550. Late birds were three over the ELHLAF Wetlands Center on 16 March (Dave Demko) and six in the vicinity of the ELHLAF on 24 March (Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller).

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** - Reports of this species were two at the ELHLAF on 21 March (Carol Lambert), six in Bartow County on 21 March (Joe Greenberg), one at Jekyll Island on 23 March (Doris Cohrs and Brad Bergstrom) and two back in Bartow County on 24 March (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert).

**PIPING PLOVER** - Four birds were seen at Jekyll Island on 24 March (South Georgia Rare Bird Alert). A very rare inland occurrence was a bird at Augusta on 26 April (Anne Waters), only Georgia's fourth inland sighting.

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** - Fewer than five have been seen inland in Georgia. Barbara Passmore added to that count with one on 22 April in Lowndes County.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** - Giff Beaton and Bruce Hallett had 68 at Jekyll Island on 1 March for a good count. Very rare inland was the bird in Monroe County on 11 May (Terry Johnson and Larry Ross).

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** - This species was well reported this period. Hunter and Tommy Paterson had seven birds in Laurens County on 7 April with at least one bird remaining there through 2 May. One was seen at the ELHLAF on 9 April by Carol Lambert. One was seen at Augusta's Merry Ponds on 19 April by Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore. Five were seen in Bulloch County on 14 April by Mark Welford and Davis Bulloch reported a bird from Oconee County on 4 May.

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** - Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Bruce Dralle had a bird on Sapelo Island on 2 March. Pierre Howard and Hunter Patterson had 2 on St. Catherines Island on 21 March, a very good spring count for this species.

**STILT SANDPIPER** - There were two reports of this rare spring migrant: two at ELHLAF on 23 May (Brock Hutchins), and one in Macon on 20 April (Paul Johnson, Ty Ivey, Nancy Gobris).

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** - Very rare for the spring was one bird in Laurens County on 15-16 May by Tommy Patterson. Tis was his third spring record to go along with many fall records.

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** - A female plumaged bird was found in Laurens County on 11 May by Tommy and Hunter Patterson, Allen Rhodes and Boak Brantley. The species is an unusual inland transient.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** - One bird was reported from Tybee Island on 3 March by Jerry and Marie Amerson.

**MONK PARAKEET** - Any colony found in Georgia is being eliminated by Department of Natural Resources personnel. This evidently was the fate of a colony found in the Claxton area during the period (fide Bill Harbin).

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** - This species finally reached Atlanta with the sighting of a bird in Tucker on 18 May by Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** - This very rare visitor was seen checking out a hummingbird feeder in Perry on 16 April by Tommy Willard who obtained photographs.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** - For some reason the area around the ELHLAF has attracted a small number of records of this species over the past few years. This period Carol Lambert saw two birds on 16 March.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** - There were two reports of this rare species: one in the Rome area on 3 May by Nelson Dobbs and another near the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 4 May by Giff Beaton and Jim Flynn.

**BURROWING OWL** - The last sighting of the birds that took up residence in an industrial park near Bainbridge was on 1

An all-too-short spring migration season was enlivened by the appearance of several rareities, particularly the third Ross' Goose for the state. The Red-necked Grebes, holdovers from winter, remained at Lake Lanier into April. Also holding over at many feeders were the most Evening Grosbeaks Georgians have seen in a long time. Sadly for me, I missed two species that I have yet to see in Georgia, a White-winged Dove in Perry, and a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Monroe County. Both birds made brief visits to feeders and disappeared, but read on for the accounts of many "good" birds seen across the state this spring. A more complete account of the season will appear in The Oriole.

If you have not sent your summer (June-July) report by the time you get this issue, please do so immediately.  
Deadline for the fall season (August-November) is December 20, 1996.

...Jeff Sewell

Send reports to: Jeff Sewell, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, GA 30084

Abbreviations include: ACOGB - *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds* (1986), C. Haney et al, GOS Occ. Publ. No. 10; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, north of Atlanta; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb County; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; RBA - Rare Bird Alert; SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park, Douglas County; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

***Spring 1996: March - May***

**RED-THROATED LOON** - A good migration count this spring. Mark Oberle had 15± on 3 March from Tybee Island. On 21 March Hunter Patterson counted 13 off St. Catherines Island.

**COMMON LOON** - The only late report was of a bird at the DeKalb Reservoir on 19 May (Jeff Sewell).

**RED-NECKED GREBE** - Two of the three birds that were seen continuously from late January were seen at Lake Lanier again on 16 March (Pierre Howard). On 21 April Jim Flynn saw two in the same area of the lake, presumably the same two.

**EARED GREBE** - At Lake Lanier one bird was seen on 12 March by Bob Zaremba and two were seen there on 28 April by Paul Raney. Another bird was seen in Monroe County on 11 May by Terry Johnson and Larry Ross.

**MASKED BOOBY** - Milton Hopkins, Jr. reported seeing this very rare seabird off St. Catherines Island on 6 April. There are fewer than 10 Georgia sightings of this species.

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - Between 40 and 50 birds were seen in the St. Marys area on 15 April (S. GA RBA).

**GREAT CORMORANT** - Jim Blum reported seeing this very rare species for Georgia on 27 & 28 April off Sapelo Island. This sighting should be written up for The Oriole. There are fewer than 10 sightings for the state.

**LEAST BITTERN** - Single birds were seen at the Greene County marsh on 24 April (Paul Sykes), 4 May (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert et al.) and 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.).

**AMERICAN BITTERN** - The only report was a bird in McIntosh County on 17 April (Doris Cohrs).

**SNOWY EGRET** - A very early bird was seen in Floyd County on 7 April by Gordon Hight. Gordon felt this was the first record for the county. Other inland sightings were near Stone Mountain on 3 May (Louise Schreiber) and in Greene County on 26 May (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** - A very early bird was in Greene County on 25 March (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert). Other early sightings were a bird at Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County on 5 April (Hal Massie) and two adult birds at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 22 April (Giff Beaton, Bruce Hallett and Kevin Danchisen).

**TRICOLORED HERON** - One bird in Greene County on 26 May was quite unusual for that location (Giff and Becky Beaton et al.).

**REDDISH EGRET** - One adult was seen on Little Cumberland Island on 21 May, a very rare spring record (Brad Winn).

**GLOSSY IBIS** - Helen and Robert Brackett had a good count of 14 birds at Jekyll Island on 6 April.

**WOOD STORK** - Very unusual was a single bird in south DeKalb County on 23 April by Wes Chester.

**SNOW GOOSE** - Two birds (blue phase) were found at the E.L. Huie Land Application Facility (ELHLAF) in Clayton County on 2 March (Jeff Sewell) and remained there until 1 April (Giff and Connie Beaton).

**ROSS' GOOSE** - Georgia's third record was discovered in Oconee County on 25 March by Paul Sykes and the bird remained there about a week. One wonders if this could have been the same bird which paid Georgia a visit last winter?

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** - A record late bird was seen in Monroe County on 11 May by Terry Johnson and Larry Ross.

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - There were more than the usual number of reports of this species. An extremely early bird was at Perry on 17 March (Pam Guynn). This would appear to be the earliest ever record for the state. Other birds were at Jekyll Island on 21 March (Lorraine Dusenbury fide Doris Cohrs), in McIntosh County on 23 March (South Georgia Rare Bird Alert), in Clinch County also on 23 March (South Georgia Rare Bird Alert), in Cobb County on 21 April for a rare north Georgia sighting (Erin Bouthillier fide Jeff Sewell), in Screven County on 23 April (Anne Waters), and near Everett on 21 April by Anselm Atkins, Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett and Terry Moore.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** - The South Georgia Rare Bird Alert reported a sighting in the Valdosta area on 15 April, beating the

The American Birding Association (ABA) Board of Directors has recently adopted the following (abbreviated version) Code of Birding Ethics. For a complete version of the Code and information about membership in the ABA, contact: American Birding Association, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934; tel: (800)850-2473.

***"Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first."***

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.  
*Support the protection of important bird habitat.  
Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger.  
Limit methods of attracting birds.  
Remain well back from nests, roosts, display areas, and feeding sites.  
Keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.*
2. Respect the law and the rights of others.
3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.  
*Maintain and clean feeders and nest structures regularly.  
Keep birds safe from predation from cats and other domestic animals.*
4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.  
*Respect fellow birders. Share your knowledge, especially with beginners.  
Document unethical birding behavior, intervene if prudent, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.  
Leaders should teach ethics through word and example.  
Limit group impact on birds and their environment, and others using the same area.*

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***DISTRESSING HOUSE FINCH OBSERVATIONS***  
*by Dick & Trudi Baxter-Jones*

My interest in birds started in Scotland when I was 9 years old and whenever I have lived in the U.K. and five different states in America my/our interest has grown and has become a source of considerable pleasure, and, while I am not an ornithological technician, I have, without realizing it, converted many of our friends to become "watchers" and to step beyond the "large and black" and "small and blue" standards of description.

In mid-April this year the traffic around and on our three feeders was very heavy and refilling was a frequent necessity. On this particular day, as I approached the feeder, the busy birds flew off in unison except one female House Finch who chirped in alarm but stayed on her perch. Before I touched her I noticed that both eyes were surrounded by a swollen ring of pinkish "flesh." This poor creature was almost totally blind! As I touched her she flew off.

In the days and weeks that followed until about mid-May we saw at least four other female House Finches in the same condition. I honestly can't recall if any males appeared to be affected, but there may have been.

It was very distressing to see them try to land safely on a feeder or a tree, shrub or roof top. To feed, these particular birds must home in on the sound of the others on the feeder who are loath to give room to a bird that has so much trouble in landing safely.

It is extremely distressing to see these poor creatures suffering so, but, what is far worse is to contemplate the possibility of a spread of this disease to other species. The feeder these House Finches were using has standard size access holes where the birds (of many species) put their beaks and part of their heads to obtain the seeds. I have to wonder if this type of feeder is maybe one of the causes that could further spread the eye problem? The thought is horrifying!

When I clean out a feeder, I haven't, in the past, specifically made a point of doing anything other than thoroughly cleaning it out.

I believe the House Finch eye problem brings up a number of questions: 1) Is it only known to occur in House Finches and only in females? 2) What do we know about it statewide and countrywide? The answers to these questions would, I believe, raise many more.

*Ed. Note: At the GOS/AFO meeting there will be a talk at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 19th by Ken Rosenberg of Cornell University in which he will discuss Cornell's "House Finch Disease Survey," among other topics.*

ENVIRONMENTAL FUND FOR GEORGIA (EFG)

We are happy to announce that we have another check from EFG, this time for \$506.02. Following is the list of employers who are giving their employees the opportunity to give to "the environment," as well as to social and medical causes:

- | <u>Public</u>          | <u>Private</u>                       |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| City of Atlanta        | Atlanta Landmarks                    |
| Clayton County         | CNA Insurance                        |
| Clayton County Schools | Freudenberg NOK                      |
| Federal Government     | Glass, McCollough, Sherrill & Harold |
| State of Georgia       | Intermec Corporation                 |
|                        | LEAF                                 |
|                        | Life College                         |
|                        | Lotus Development Corporation        |
|                        | Memorial Medical Center              |
|                        | Piedmont Hospital                    |
|                        | Rosser International                 |
|                        | Scientific Games                     |
|                        | Southern Federal Credit Union        |
|                        | USA Today                            |
|                        | Roy F. Weston, Inc.                  |

If you work for any of these employers, please pledge generously to either the EFG, which will distribute the money equally among its member organizations, or directly to GOS. Encourage friends and relatives who are employees to do likewise.

This is "Campaign" time, when employees of the workplaces listed above will be asked to sign pledge cards. Nancy Iha will help coordinate an effort to designate as many as possible of us as "Friends" of EFG, and encourage us to promote GOS and EFG.

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**PETE DUNNE TO SPEAK AT TENNESSEE AQUARIUM**

Well-known birder, writer and lecturer, Pete Dunne, will be the featured speaker at Hawkwatch 1996 at the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga on September 14th at 10:00 a.m. Many of us are familiar with his work, including: *Tales of a Low-Rent Birder*, *Hawks in Flight*, *The Feather Quest*, and his newest project *Wind Masters*. Cost of the program is \$3.00, which will include a field trip after the program to Raccoon Mountain Pumped Storage Facility to look for migrating hawks. Call 423/266-9352 for information and reservations.

**ORNITHOLOGICAL COUNCIL**

The Ornithological Council was founded in 1992 by seven scientific ornithological societies to represent the best interests of birds and bird research in Washington, DC. They work with many organizations to facilitate research, ensure funding of scientific research and education, support the Endangered Species Act, and provide impartial scientific information on birds on regulatory issues. They also work with their member societies on conservation and science issues which those societies are addressing.

GOS has a publication exchange arrangement with the Council and receives its quarterly newsletter. Copies of the Ornithological Council Newsletter are available from: Carol Lambert, GOShawk Editor, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, GA 30084.

**THE BIRDER**  
by Patsy C. Paget

*I gave my love a Bird Field Guide to help identify  
The myriad of bird species that daily caught his eye.*

*He bought his first binoculars, and then a telescope;  
He planned that he'd go birding every day when he awoke.*

*For years with expectation he began each brand new day  
Anticipating all the birds that just might come his way.*

*He listened to the songs birds sang and memorized their calls.  
He studied their behavior in the Winter, Spring and Fall.*

*He kept a daily record of the birds that he had seen.  
He started reading articles in birding magazines.*

*He joined a local birding club; subscribed to Audubon.  
He learned of expeditions that he'd like to go upon.*

*His friends were all called birders and their passion was the same.  
He met them on the weekends and they played their birding games.*

*They talked of rare bird sightings and they gave each other tips;  
Kept day lists, state lists, life lists; and they went on many trips.*

*He's upgraded his binoculars and now can see so far  
With help from his new telescope, one crafted by Questar.*

*His shelves of foreign field guides and his walls of birding notes  
Bring memories of birding tours in places quite remote.*

*Oh, had I known the impact of this gift of long ago;  
How his obsession with the sport would grow and grow and grow;*

*Would I have bought a book on Herbs? This thought has oft occurred;  
But mostly when he's far away -- communing with the birds.*

*Congratulations to Patsy for winning Second Place in Poetry in the Northeast Georgia Writers Club competition...and thanks for giving John that field guide! Patsy and John Paget reside in Gainesville, Georgia.*