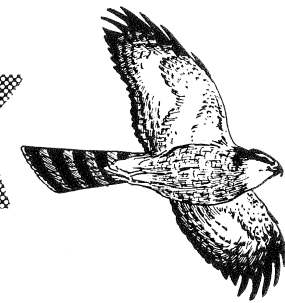


THE *GOS*hawk NEWSLETTER IS  
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GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY.

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# GOSHAWK



NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 23 NO. 4

DECEMBER 1996

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

TO: Georgia Ornithological Society  
P.O. Box 1684  
Cartersville, GA 30120

Please enroll the undersigned as a member of the Georgia Ornithological Society for the calendar year.  
Dues are enclosed as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular \$16.00                      \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$50.00

(The above are annual rates for individuals or families.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership \$250.00                      \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$8.00/per year

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me a list of publications available from the GOS.

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE LET US KNOW OF ANY ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER CHANGES!

**GEORGIA RARE BIRD ALERT: (770) 493-8862 Statewide  
(912) 244-9190 South Georgia**

**ALABAMA: (205) 987-2730**

**FLORIDA: (813) 435-2722**

**(813) 657-4442**

**N/S CAROLINA: (704) 332-2473**

**TENNESSEE: (615) 356-7636**

**Chattanooga: (423) 843-2822**

### **GOS/AFO FALL MEETING Jekyll Island, Georgia**

It was a pretty good omen when a Townsend's Warbler was spotted on the opening day of the GOS/AFO meeting at Jekyll Island... GOS celebrated its 60th anniversary in fine style as the birders outnumbered the birds at the combined AFO/GOS Fall Meeting on Jekyll Island, October 17-20. Almost 250 AFO and/or GOS members and guests enjoyed a weekend of perfect fall weather, Georgia seafood and migrating birds. Mike Chapman set up an outstanding selection of field trips -- and birds! Most notable was the aforementioned Townsend's Warbler, only the second state record, which many birders were lucky enough to see at Jekyll's north end near Clam Creek. (Ironically, birders visiting from Monterey, CA were as thrilled to see a Black-throated Green Warbler there on the same weekend!) A total of 163 species were recorded at the Saturday night countdown. In addition to the Townsend's, we will all remember flocks of Tree Swallows so huge that they defied estimation.

Paper and poster sessions were held on Saturday, and artists exhibited their work Friday and Saturday. Doris and Don Cohrs kept the banding station (JIBS) open all weekend. Field trips included Cumberland Island, Okefenokee NWR, Sapelo Island, Harris Neck NWR, St. Simons Island, the Brunswick area and, of course, Jekyll's hot spots.

Friday night's speaker, Taylor Schoettle, educated Georgians and non-Georgians alike on the dynamics of our treasured barrier islands -- and autographed books afterwards. Following the buffet dinner Saturday night, Dr. Sid Gauthreaux of Clemson University explained the use of radar in tracking bird migration. After the day's species countdown, the editors of *A Birder's Guide to Georgia (fifth edition)* held an autographing session.

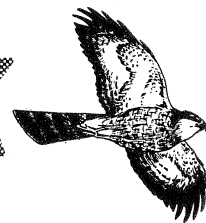
We thank Coastal Audubon and all who helped welcome AFO and GOS to the Golden Isles.

...*Eugenia Thompson*

Our joint meeting with AFO was a first-class convention, about which I've heard nothing but praise, compliments and expressions of enjoyment. GOS has unquestionably demonstrated its ability to hold its own with the best of ornithological associations. On behalf of all the members of GOS, I want to thank those of you on the "Committee on Arrangements" who devoted so much time and talent to the planning and successful conduct of this memorable meeting. Thank you Eugenia Thompson, Bill Lovejoy, Helen Ogren, Dick Parks, Frank & Virginia McCamey, John Swiderski, C. Ray Chandler, John Parrish, Les Davenport, Branch Howe, Mike Chapman, Doris and Don Cohrs.

...*Ken Clark*

# GOSHAWK



NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1684  
Cartersville, GA 30120

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

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CARTERSVILLE, GA

PERMIT NO. 97

Deadline for the next *GOS*hawk is February 1, 1997



## GOS SPRING MEETING

May 2-4, 1997

Athens, Georgia

Plans are underway for an exciting Spring GOS meeting in Athens, based at the Holiday Inn. Oconee Audubon is working on a great array of field trips. Dr. Eugene Odum, "father of ecology" and director emeritus of the Institute of Ecology at the University of Georgia and Dr. Ronald Pulliam, currently Science Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior have been lined up as speakers. Look for further details in the March *GOShawk*.

### ☺ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! ☺

Michael Bell	Tallapoosa, GA	Fred & Eleanor McCarley	Carrollton, GA
William & Erin Bouthillier	Lithia Springs, GA	Steve Mitchell	Pendleton, SC
Bill & Clare CooleyFamily	Suwanee, GA	Diane Perdue	Atlanta, GA
John & Sylvia Drew	Snellville, GA	Shawn Reed	Marietta, GA
Steve Friedman	Decatur, GA	William R. Sullivan	Knoxville, TN
Pamela M. Hall	Decatur, GA	Pat Sully	Doraville, GA
David Harrison	Roswell, GA	David A. Tickner	Blue Ridge, GA

...John Swiderski

### EARLE R. GREENE MEMORIAL AWARD

The Earle R. Greene Memorial Award was presented to Dr. I. Lehr Brisbin at the AFO-GOS meeting at Jekyll Island. Dr. Brisbin is Senior Research Scientist at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory and is recognized for his many contributions to ornithology. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithologist's Union and a life member of the Georgia Ornithological Society. A vertebrate ecologist, Dr. Brisbin's main research has been in the area of birds. He has been published extensively.

...Richard Parks

### CONSERVATION NEWS

#### *The Orange Trail at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia:*

GOS, some years ago, adopted the Orange Trail at the Botanical Garden in Athens as a special memorial project. The trail as originally laid out was beautiful, with a wide variety of bird habitat. However, the entrance to the trail was outside the garden and a temptation for motorcyclists. That circumstance, together with a period of unusually bad weather, damaged the trail so significantly that Branch Howe, Frank McCamey and I went to discuss the problem with Dr. Jefferson Lewis, Director. As a result of that conversation, the entrance to the trail has been located inside the garden and damage repaired, and the trail is again the lovely path it was originally. You will enjoy visiting the garden and the Orange Trail, and perhaps you will want to memorialize or honor someone with a gift to the garden in the name of GOS.

#### *The Environmental Fund for Georgia:*

EFG has recently welcomed into membership three fine new organizations:

- Trees Atlanta
- Atlanta Bicycle Campaign
- Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

The Atlanta Audubon Society, one of the member organizations of EFG, has been successful in persuading the Turner Broadcasting Systems to place EFG (including GOS) on all its pledge cards. (Some time ago, a member of GOS persuaded Bank South to include environmental organizations on its pledge cards, but, sadly, the merger with NationsBank cancelled that agreement. Do any of you have a close tie with NationsBank?)

...Georgine Pindar

**CLIFF SWALLOW** - Approximately twenty-four birds were seen at the Juliette Bridge over the Ocmulgee River on 15 June by Nancy Gobris, Carolyn Rogers. This species first nested here last year. Twelve others were seen at Lake Oconee on 22 June (Jeff Sewell, Jim Flynn). On 27 June Giff Beaton found as many as eight nesting in a barn in Murray County. Evidently this is the first time the species has been found nesting in Georgia away from a water related structure. Two birds were seen at a Greene County marsh on 13 July by Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby.

**COMMON RAVEN** - Good counts were received with four at Rabun Bald on 3 June (Pierre Howard) and three at Tray Mt. on 12 June (Mark Oberle).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** - This species has never been found nesting in Georgia so sightings in Rabun County on 7 June (Mark Oberle) and 19 June (Pierre Howard, Kevin Danchisen) and in the Cooper Creek area on 15 June (Chris Haney, Jon Andrew) are certainly intriguing as are some of the next observations also.

**BROWN CREEPER** - Two birds were found in the Cooper Creek area near Suches on 11 June by Chris Haney. This species has never been found nesting in Georgia although there is a summer record from Rabun County in 1981.

**WINTER WREN** - More observers getting into the mountains in June yielded a number of records of this, supposedly very local nesting species. Bill Blakeslee had one at Brasstown Bald on 1 June which might be termed expected as this has always been the one area to find the species in the summer. However, Chris Haney (fide Mark Oberle) had one bird on 2 June and two on 11 June in the Cooper Creek area and Mark Oberle had another bird on Tray Mt. on 20 June.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** - This is another species never found nesting in Georgia. Three birds were reported by Chris Haney and Jon Andrew from the Cooper Creek area on 15 June.

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** - Jerry and Marie Amerson counted 17 birds, including adults and young birds in Laurens County on 16 June.

**SOLITARY VIREO** - While conducting their breeding bird survey route in the Piedmont NWR, Jasper Co., Jerry and Marie Amerson counted five in locations where they have had them in the past.

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** - Giff Beaton found this species present at 1050-1150' in Murray County on 22 and 27 June in good numbers. This is considerably below the 1800' mentioned in the Annotated Checklist as the generally accepted lower elevation limit. The earliest arrival at Kennesaw Mt. was on 6 July (Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell, Pierre Howard).

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** - The earliest report came from Kennesaw Mt. on 14 July (Giff Beaton).

**CERULEAN WARBLER** - The earliest report was on 14 July and the peak count was eight on 26 July, both by Giff Beaton at Kennesaw Mt.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** - The peak count was 10 which was on 26 July at Kennesaw Mt. (Giff Beaton).

**AMERICAN REDSTART** - Three birds were seen at Kennesaw Mt. on 26 July (Giff Beaton) and one was at Darien on 30 July (Doris Cohrs).

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** - Single birds were reported from the State Botanical Garden at Athens on 1 June (Marion Dobbs) and from Randolph County on 2 June (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert). Two birds were reported from Rabun County on 19 June by Pierre Howard and Kevin Danchisen. We get very few reports of the mountain population of this species, so this is especially noteworthy.

**OVENBIRD** - As many as three birds were reported from west Bibb County from early June through mid-June by Jerry and Marie Amerson. Two birds were found in Oglethorpe County on 12 June by Marian Dobbs.

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** - One bird seen at Darien on 26 July by Doris Cohrs was probably already on the move south.

**SCARLET TANAGER** - Two birds seen at the Piedmont NWR on 15 June (Nancy Gobris, Carolyn Rogers) represent yet another summer sighting of this species from this area, far south of its normal breeding range.

**PAINTED BUNTING** - Jerry and Marie Amerson saw two on 2 June in Macon where they are regularly found nowadays. This is perhaps their northernmost outpost in the state. Jerry and Marie found an adult male on 16 June, then two males on 28 June at the same location in western Laurens Co.

**DICKCISSEL** - Four birds were seen in Henry County on 1 June (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert) and again on 3 June (Kevin Danchisen). The last report from that area was a female and immature on 6 July by Bill Wiggins. One bird was seen along the Walton/Morgan County line on 10 June (Joel Volpi fide Mark Oberle). Four pairs were seen in Spaulding County on 11 June (Joe Greenberg). I don't think I have ever heard of so many reports of this species.

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW** - One bird was found in Oglethorpe County on 12 June by Marian Dobbs.

**FIELD SPARROW** - Three birds found in Brooks County on 4 June were said to be rare for that area (SGRBA).

**SHINY COWBIRD** - Dan Jacobson found this rare invader when he spotted one on Tybee Island on 1 June. This is about the fourth record for the state but so far we have no documentation on any of the sightings published in *The Oriole*.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** - In their isolated breeding "colony" in Macon, four birds including three males were seen on 2 June by Jerry and Marie Amerson.

**RED CROSSBILL** - Mark Oberle had as many as four birds in Rabun County on 6-7 June and Chris Haney and Jon Andrew had "some" in the Cooper Creek area on 15 June.

**BALD EAGLE** - An immature was seen at the Greene County marsh on 13 July by Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby.

**AMERICAN KESTREL** - Giff Beaton observed adults feeding a young bird in the Mableton area on 29 June and Billy Dunbar reported another nesting in Franklin County also during June. On 9 July one bird was seen chasing a Peregrine Falcon in a downtown Atlanta park (Chris Geller).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - The pair which attempted to nest in downtown Atlanta evidently pulled it off as two fledged young were seen during the month of June in downtown (David Kennedy fide Pierre Howard). Unfortunately, one may have been the immature bird killed near Hartsfield Airport when it hit a window (fide Jeff Sewell, *The Atlanta Constitution*).

**WILD TURKEY** - This species appears to be more adaptable than we previously thought as more and more observations are being reported from urbanized areas. Martha Bargo reported four birds on 14 June and a single bird on 25 June in the Kennesaw Mt. area of Cobb County.

**BLACK RAIL** - A Greene County marsh yielded single birds on 8 June (Pierre Howard), 22 June (Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell) and two birds on 13 July (Jeff Sewell, Chuck Saleeby) and 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

**KING RAIL** - Single birds were seen at a Greene County marsh on 4, 11 and 16 July (Marion Dobbs).

**VIRGINIA RAIL** - A juvenile seen at the Kennesaw Mt. marsh on 27 June confirmed nesting at this location (Giff Beaton, Bill Blakeslee). Later, two birds were seen there on 8 July and a single on 18 July (Giff Beaton). At a Greene County marsh, three birds were reported on 22 June (Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell) and again on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

**COMMON MOORHEN** - Paul Johnson reported what could possibly be the first nesting of the species for Bibb County when he saw two adults with three young chicks at Lake Wildwood on 22 July.

**AMERICAN COOT** - Summering birds included two at the ELHLAF on 9 June (Jeff Sewell) and seven at Lake Juliette in Monroe Co. on 6 July (Terry Johnson).

**SEMPALMATED PLOVER** - Somewhat uncommon for the ELHLAF so early in migration was a bird on 28 July (Bill Blakeslee, Bruce Hallett).

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** - Two birds along the Jekyll Island Causeway on 23 June were a nice find by Robert and Helen Brackett.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** - Four seen in Laurens County on 16 June by Jerry and Marie Amerson were either very early or very late or just lazy.

**WHIMBREL** - Ten were counted on 20 July in the Jekyll/St. Simons Islands area (Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell, Jim Flynn). This species is not considered a summer resident on the Georgia coast, so these birds were probably early migrants.

**STILT SANDPIPER** - This species is uncommon in the piedmont so a single on 25 July (Pat Michelson) and two on 26 July (Carol Lambert) and 28 July (Bruce Hallett, Bill Blakeslee) at the ELHLAF were worth noting.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** - Single early migrants were seen at the ELHLAF on 17 July (Carol Lambert), 27 July (Paul Raney) and 28 July (Bruce Hallett, Bill Blakeslee).

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK** - This species is rarely reported in summer, so three birds seen in the Dawson Forest area on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell) was noteworthy.

**LAUGHING GULL** - Inland reports were single birds at Lake Wildwood in the Macon area on 9 June (Paul Johnson) and at Plant Scherer on 6 July (Terry Johnson).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** - Two adults were seen at Gould's Inlet on 13 July by Bill Harbin.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** - The only report of the species came from Sapelo Island on 13 July by Doris Cohrs.

**EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE** - Other than the usual spots around Brunswick and Darien, the only report came from the Decatur area where Anselm Atkins and Margaret Kavanaugh continue to hear the species although they haven't been able to get a visual on the bird(s) yet.

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** - Buddy Rowe reported a good number of birds (15-20) at his yard in Newton County on 15 July.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** - At a Greene County marsh two birds were found on 8 June (Pierre Howard) and 22 June (Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell) and a single bird was there on 13 July (Jeff Sewell, Chuck Saleeby) and 16 July (Marion Dobbs).

**LEAST FLYCATCHER** - At the single reliable location for this species nesting in the state, Hale Ridge Road in Rabun County, a single bird was found by Bill Blakeslee and Helena Wood on 2 June. Several birders did not find it there later in the month.

**EASTERN PHOEBE** - One bird near the Macon/Sumter County line on 7 July was rare for that area (Dan and Pam Guynn).

**GRAY KINGBIRD** - Two birds were seen at Jekyll Island on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell) and one bird on 22 July (Doris Cohrs).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** - A bird was well described from Douglas County on 10 June (Julie Kidd). Unfortunately, as is often the case with this species, the bird could not be relocated by others.

**HORNED LARK** - A single bird was seen at the Super Sod Farm south of Macon on 22 June by Paul Johnson. Another bird was seen in Walker County on 7 July by Bill Harbin and Gordon Hight.

**TREE SWALLOW** - A bird seen at the Piedmont NWR on 15 June raises the possibility of its nesting in that area (Nancy Gobris, Carolyn Rogers). A fairly early bird was seen at Harris Neck NWR on 24 July by Doris Cohrs.

**BANK SWALLOW** - An early arrival was seen at a Greene County marsh on 13 July by Jeff Sewell and Chuck Saleeby.

## HOUSE FINCH DISEASE UPDATE

Having participated in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology House Finch Disease Survey since its inception 2 years ago, I can provide some answers to some recently asked questions concerning sick *Carpodacus mexicanus*. The information provided herein is the result of Cornell's Lab of Ornithology analyses of over 2000 participants' observations in the eastern United States.

The conjunctivitis (inflammation of the mucous membrane in the eyelids) affecting the eastern population of the House Finch (native populations in the west show no signs of the epidemic), was first observed only 3 years ago, during the winter of 1993-94, in Maryland and Virginia. Birds showing symptoms (swollen, red, irritated, runny eye(s) or totally swollen shut, crusted-over eye(s) were diagnosed as being infected by the parasitic bacterium *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*.

Here are some of the results of the analyzed data and some personal observations:

1. the disease occurs in both sexes, not just females (I have observed many infected males)
2. the disease has expanded rapidly in most of the range of the Eastern House Finch
3. % of diseased birds appears to be on the increase
4. % of diseased birds appears to be greater in winter
5. other species appear not to be affected (however, last winter in southwest Ohio, I observed an American Goldfinch with conjunctivitis)

In conclusion, the data is still being collected and analyzed through, at least, October 1996. One theory on why Eastern House Finches may be sensitive to the disease is because they are introduced and probably highly inbred, therefore less resistant to new diseases.

For more information, contact:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
House Finch Disease Survey  
159 Sapsucker Woods Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850

Phone: 607-254-2446 Fax: 607-254-2415 e-mail: feederwatch@cornell.edu

...Kevin Danchison

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## NOTES FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

♪ GOS prepared a Sixtieth Anniversary booklet for the fall meeting which updates the GOS history printed for the 1986 Golden Anniversary meeting. A limited number of extra copies are available for members who were unable to attend the Jekyll Island meeting. Please include \$1 with your request to cover postage. (Send requests to the Business Manager, GOS, P.O. Box 1684, Cartersville, GA 30120.

♪ The annual membership list will be printed and mailed to members in January of 1997. If you have any corrections for address or phone number, please send them asap to the above address.

...John Swiderski

### INTERNATIONAL BALD EAGLE DAYS 1997 *The Future of the Bald Eagle and the Tennessee River*

The Eagle Nature Foundation, Ltd. will sponsor an international conference on bald eagles and the Tennessee River in Chattanooga January 16-19, 1997. The four day event will be a forum for research and knowledge about forest and stream ecosystems as they affect bald eagles and the Tennessee River Valley. Events will include panel discussions, related papers, general sessions and field trips.

Local arrangements are being coordinated by Ken Dubke, Conservation Chairman for the Tennessee Ornithological Society (and GOS member). For more information, contact Ken at 423/238-4969.

**1996 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**

Following are as many dates for this year's CBC's as were available this issue's deadline. Volunteers are still needed for many of the counts; however, others are already filled and can only handle limited participation. Be sure to call the compiler as early in December as possible if you are interested in participating. Any dates that were tentative are followed by "T".

<b>Compilers:</b>	Aiken, SC	Calvin Zippler	803-642-2264
	Albany	Alan Ashley	912-439-8232
	Athens	Branch Howe	706-543-1577
	Atlanta	Giff Beaton	770-509-1482
	Augusta	Anne Waters	706-793-2788
	Bainbridge-Lake Seminole	Oscar Dewberry	912-246-1890
	Callaway Gardens	LuAnn Craighton	706-633-5192
	Chattahoochee Nat. Forest SMA	Harriett DiGioia	706-278-3858
	Cumberland Island Area	Sheila Willis	912-285-0419
	Dalton, GA	Harriett DiGioia	706-278-3858
	Dublin, GA	Tommy Patterson	912-272-1987
	Glynn County	Mike Chapman	912-262-6370
	Macon	Jerry Amerson	912-746-5697
	Okefenokee NWR	Sheila Willis	912-285-0419
	Peachtree City	Brock Hutchins	770-461-5042
	Piedmont NWR-Rum Creek WMA	Terry Johnson	912-994-1438
	St. Catherines Island	Emil Urban	706-733-5740
	Savannah River Site, SC	Carol Eldridge	803-725-8198

*Christmas Bird Counts*

*Dec. 20, 1996 - Jan. 5, 1997*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					20	21 * Athens * Cumberland-T * Dalton * Macon * St. Catherines
22 * Atlanta * Chatt. Nat'l. Forest-SMA	23 * Piedmont/ Rum Creek	24 * Aiken, SC	25	26	27 * Okefenokee-T	28 * Albany * Augusta * Dublin * Peachtree City
29	30 * Bainbridge/ L. Seminole * Savannah River Site	31	1	2	3	4 * Glynn County
5 * Callaway						

**FIELD NOTES**

**June-July 1996**

**Jeff Sewell and Terry Moore**

Summer is often the Georgia birder's least interesting season. Most migrants have passed over the state and vagrants are few. This summer was no exception; but there were enough late or early migrants to keep things lively. Only one or two reports fell into the "grab-your-binoculars-and-head-for-the-car" category. The most unusual aspect of the season was the discovery in the mountains of several species not thought to nest in Georgia: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Several of these finds were made by ornithologists doing research on the breeding birds of the Coopers Creek area in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

A more extensive report of this season will appear in The Oriole. Please send your reports for the fall season (August through November) to me before Christmas, or if you have just one or two sightings to report, you can call the Rare Bird Alert at (770)493-8862 and leave a message.

...Jeff Sewell, 4608 WesthamptonDr., Tucker, GA 30084

**Summer 1996: June - July**

**Abbreviations include:** DNR - Department of Natural Resources, ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SGRBA - South Georgia Rare Bird Alert, and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

**WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** - One was seen at the mouth of the Ogeechee River on 1 July by Brad Winn.

**ANHINGA** - One bird at Lake Wildwood in Bibb County on 22 July was the first for that location (Paul Johnson). This species appears to be increasing at a number of locations around the state.

**LEAST BITTERN** - Inland locations where this species can be found are few so sightings from a Greene County marsh on 4 July (two birds) and singles on 7 and 16 July are noteworthy (Marion Dobbs).

**GREAT BLUE HERON** - Nestings of this species in the piedmont are rare so two adults with three young at the ELHLAF on 2 June were an excellent find (Carol Lambert). They were still around the area on 26 July (Carol Lambert). Several hundred birds were reported from Dyar's Pasture WMA in Greene County (a pond designed by the DNR just for waders) on 19 July (fide Terry Johnson).

**GREAT EGRET** - "Hundreds" were reported from Dyar's Pasture WMA in Greene County on 19 July by Terry Johnson. **SNOWY EGRET** - Two birds at the ELHLAF on 28 July were rather uncommon for the area (Bruce Hallett and Bill Blakeslee).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** - Also uncommon for the area was a bird in the Dawson Forest area on 30 June (Jim Flynn). A mixed rookery of Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets, consisting of about 1000 birds, was reported from Montezuma, Macon County, on 7 July by Dan and Pam Guynn.

**REDDISH EGRET** - One immature was reported from St. Simons Island on 15 July (Bill Harbin). Probably the same bird was seen at Gould's Inlet between St. Simons and Sea Islands on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

**WHITE IBIS** - Uncommon for the piedmont were single birds in the Dawson Forest area on 30 June (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell), in Walker County during July (Bill Harbin) and 24 in Greene County on 13 July (Jeff Sewell, Chuck Saleeby).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** - A rare inland sighting was reported from Brooks County on 4 June (SGRBA). Good numbers were reported from the Brunswick/Jekyll Island area with nine on 10 June (Brad Winn) and six on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

**WOOD STORK** - About 70 were seen south of Brunswick on 10 July by Steve Holtzman. A few birds were seen at the Greene County marsh with eight on 11 July and two on 23 July (Marion Dobbs). One immature was seen in Houston County on 7 July by Dan and Pam Guynn. At Dyar's Pasture WMA in Greene County, 28 were seen on 19 July (fide Terry Johnson) and Eugenia Thompson saw five on 21 July.

**MOTTLED DUCK** - Seven were reported from the Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area at Darien on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - A late or summering bird was seen in Laurens County on 16 June by Jerry and Marie Amerson. **NORTHERN SHOVELER** - A late male was seen at the ELHLAF on 2 June (Jeff Sewell) and again on 9 June (Patrick Brisse, Jeff Sewell).

**LESSER SCAUP** - A summering male was reported from Lake Juliette on 6 July by Terry Johnson.

**HOODED MERGANSER** - An immature plumaged bird was seen at the ELHLAF on 9 June by Jeff Sewell.

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - The only report came from McIntosh County on 27 July by Doris Cohrs.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** - One bird was seen along the Taylor/Upson County line during the month of June by Pierre Howard. Hamburg State Park continues to produce the species with five on 10 June (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell). Oscar Dewberry reported a pair from the Bainbridge area on 4 July. The species was also reported from the Darien area during July by Doris Cohrs and two were seen in Sparta on 20 July (Giff Beaton, Jim Flynn, Jeff Sewell).

The following article is the third 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.

**GOS's Checklist and Records Committee**  
**What we do and why we do it**

*by Chuck Hunter and Bill Blakeslee*

Many of us serious-birder types became hooked when a rare bird showed up somewhere nearby and we took an extra special effort to look for it--and actually found it! Two joys of birding are discovering your own rare and out-of-place birds and finding familiar birds occurring "out-of-season." Do you ever wonder what becomes of all the rare bird sightings published in *The Oriole* or listed in the *GOShawk*? Have you found a species in Georgia that was out-of-range and did not know how to document your "record?"

In fact, one of the most important functions of the Georgia Ornithological Society is to encourage observers to document their sightings and then to serve as a clearing house for documenting the occurrence and status of all wild birds in this State. This function is the main duty of the Checklist and Records Committee (Committee). This Committee conducts business as called for under the Handbook approved by the GOS Executive Board on April 27, 1996, with seven purposes:

- ✓ Validating reports of selected birds from the State of Georgia and adjacent waters.\*
- ✓ Maintaining permanently the original bird records and all committee votes for use by future bird students.
- ✓ Publishing at least minimal data on all reports receiving a decision.
- ✓ Providing a means by which sight records can gain universal acceptance as valuable scientific data.
- ✓ Increasing knowledge of the birds of Georgia.
- ✓ Establishing standards of observation and reporting against which field observers may compare their own techniques.
- ✓ Keeping or causing to keep the official Georgia State List of Birds.

We encourage you the reader to turn in your unusual bird records for the consideration of the Committee. We acknowledge your report as soon as possible after its receipt. Then your record and the supporting evidence is circulated among the Committee members. The six members serving on the Committee are Chuck Hunter (chair, Atlanta), Bill Blakeslee (secretary, Atlanta), Emil Urbin (Augusta), John Paget (Gainesville), John Parrish (Statesboro), and Giff Beaton (Atlanta). Members review the evidence you provide with each record, with an eye to documenting the status of each species reported from within Georgia. All records provided to the Committee are seriously considered and ultimately voted upon to determine whether or not to accept the record. Firm evidence may include specimens, photographs, tape recordings, and written descriptions. You will be notified promptly of the Committee's decision and the complete file will be archived at the University of Georgia and available for future review.

Species reported from Georgia may be placed on one of three lists, together making up the Official State List (last published by GOS in 1986 as the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*; see attached table). The Regular List serves as the main list where firm documentation is established for species occurring in Georgia. Second, the Provisional List includes those species reasonably well-documented, but without firm (specimen, photograph, etc.) evidence, as occurring in Georgia. Last is the Hypothetical List which includes species reported with (1) unclear origin or (2) unsubstantiated identification. Records for species listed on the Hypothetical List are deemed "unaccepted" by the Committee, but nevertheless suggestive of the species in question. Records maintained on the Hypothetical List still serve important functions as future acceptable records may require reevaluation of these past records to best interpret the increasing occurrence of certain species in Georgia over time.

(...continued on p. 6)

**WOODTHRUSH**

*by Dr. Eugene Edmund Murphey*

*My Father and I, riding the rim of a hillside,  
Heard from the bottom below us  
Shaded by sweetgum and poplar  
Where a spring gushed out and meandered  
Through thickets starry with laurel  
The marvelous song of the Woodthrush.  
Said he "When my brother and I  
Were ploughing these very same acres  
There came to us always at noon-time  
That exquisite bird-note.  
And also at eve when the heads of our horses  
Were turned to the welcoming farm-house  
Again it echoed, speaking of coolness.  
We did not know birds  
But boy-like we named it  
"The rest-time bird."  
The name has stayed with me.  
I ask you what could be better  
When one is a-weary and ready  
To turn from life's heat and its ploughing  
To enter the ultimate coolness  
Than some day, softly at sundown  
To hear through fading senses  
The comforting cadence of thrushes  
To feel with the sureness of boyhood  
The rest-time bird  
Calling, calling  
Me.*

*Dr. Eugene E. Murphy (1875-1952) was born and lived in Augusta, Georgia where he practiced medicine, studied birds and occasionally wrote poetry. In 1937 the Charleston Museum published his monograph on the Birds of the Middle Savannah River Valley. The "Woodthrush" appeared in Bird Lore (now Audubon magazine) in the March-April issue of 1936 and was included in Wings at Dusk, a collection of his poems.*

*...Richard A. Parks*

In addition to reviewing your records, the Committee plans an update to the *Annotated Checklist* through a supplement identifying (1) new birds documented or reported from the State, (2) changes of species from one list to another, (3) official changes in common and scientific bird names, and (4) obvious changes in abundance or frequency of occurrence from within the State. Beyond the publication of a supplement, the Committee is planning a complete revision to the *Annotated Checklist*, so stay tuned for this publication. In the meantime, we hope that you understand better the function of the Checklist and Records Committee and we hope you are encouraged to turn in your rare bird sightings to better document Georgia's ever-interesting bird life.

Please note the insert of this *GOShawk* issue, identifying those species for which documentation is solicited and a GOS Rare Bird Report Form for you to copy and use for documenting your records. Good birding and, more importantly, good birds for you in the coming season.

\*"Adjacent waters" are defined as those waters of the Atlantic Ocean extending 200 miles due east of Georgia's borders with both South Carolina and Florida.

**CALL FOR 1996 GEORGIA LIST DATA**

The third annual publication of GOS members' Georgia life and Georgia year species totals for 1996 will appear in the March 1997 *GOShawk*.

Please send your name, hometown, phone number and total species seen during 1996 in Georgia and the total species seen in your Georgia birding lifetime. Please do not send your entire list - just the totals. If you don't keep an annual list, please send in your life list. The top ten listers from 1995 are recapped below. For any of you with Georgia life lists totalling over 330 and Georgia year lists over 280, the rest of us peons sure would be interested in a chance to see them...if only to dream about what's possible in this state. If you're game, just send a copy of your list along with 96's numbers.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS (CITY/STATE) \_\_\_\_\_

GEORGIA LIFE LIST TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

1995 GEORGIA LIST TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Carol Lambert, 4608 Westhampton Drive, Tucker, GA 30084

NAME	HOME	GEORGIA LIFE	GEORGIA 1995
Bob Manns	Atlanta, GA	360	-
Terry Moore	Roswell, GA	341	-
Joe Greenberg	Atlanta, GA	336	-
Patrick Brisse	Stone Mountain, GA	330	-
Paul Raney	Conyers, GA	323	-
Bill Blakeslee	Atlanta, GA	322	-
Bruce Dralle	Marietta, GA	322	-
Paul Sykes	Watkinsville, GA	322	-
Billy Dunbar	Watkinsville, GA	320	297
Jeff Sewell	Tucker, GA	319	276

Least Tern nesting ecology was studied this summer at six Georgia colonies, representing two of each of three nesting habitats chosen by Least Terns: natural beaches, dredge spoils and rooftops. At each colony the number of nests, eggs, chicks and fledglings were counted to determine nest success and chick survival. The main objective of the study, to be concluded next year, was to determine if Least Terns are more successful at one habitat than another. Other objectives such as dyeing adults to determine site fidelity and radio marking chicks to monitor survival were unsuccessful.

*"Early indications suggest that nesting on the Savannah rooftops was the most successful..."*

Colony sizes ranged from 19 nests on Ossabaw to 929 nests on a Savannah rooftop. The 1996 colonies were at least twice as large as last year's. Early indications suggest that nesting on the Savannah rooftops was the most successful. A total of 586 chicks were observed with an overly optimistic estimate of about 1434 chicks actually produced. This large difference could be attributed to lack of data, but it is mainly due to the precocial nature of the chicks. The chicks leave the nest or scrape within 2-3 days of hatching, and their cryptic coloration makes them difficult to locate on beaches and dredge spoils. Rooftops provide another hazard because rain storms can wash away eggs and chicks without leaving a sign.

Causes of egg and chick mortality were varied in nature and severity. Ossabaw and Crab Islands failed to produce any chicks at all. Frequent spring high tides wiped out all of Ossabaw's Least Tern nests and greatly diminished the success of Sea Island's colony. The Crab Island colony was initially consumed by raccoons and then active nests were abandoned as the birds gathered for their migration to Argentina. Feral cats, dogs and a coyote destroyed numerous nests and chicks on Andrews Island. Avian predation was less than expected with the major evidence coming from the presence of Great Horned Owl primaries at Sea Island and a Savannah rooftop. One fledgling at a Savannah rooftop was beheaded in the fashion typical of Great Horned Owls.

The Savannah rooftops lost many eggs and chicks to extremely high temperatures and thunderstorms, but these large colonies had very low losses from avian or mammalian predators. Many cracked eggs and dehydrated chicks were collected in July. Unfortunately, I cannot distinguish between heat, water or research related causes of mortality. Because some chicks jumped from the rooftops during surveys, future efforts will be made to minimize this mortality.

Miscellaneous causes of mortality include one chick that choked on a fish that was too large to swallow and two chicks that had wounds to the back of the head. These wounds suggest that nonparental adults attacked the chicks to drive them away from an active nest.

Before and during the 1997 nesting season I will implement methods such as mammal trapping, electric fencing, herbicides and roof modifications to increase nesting success and chick survival.

The presence of so many Least Terns and their success on rooftops is a good sign for the species in Georgia. However, many beach colonies that were active last year were absent this year (i.e. Cumberland, Sapelo). Continued loss of beach habitat due to human development and disturbance continues to push Least Terns off their natural nesting habitat and onto artificial habitats. During the study additional rooftop colonies were found in St. Mary's, Brunswick, Wilmington Island and Savannah.

This summer's field work would not have been possible with the assistance of Vic Carpenter, Mary Elfner, Tom Smith and John Stafford. Questions can be directed to me at: D.B. Warnell School of Forest Resources, Athens, GA 30602-2152.

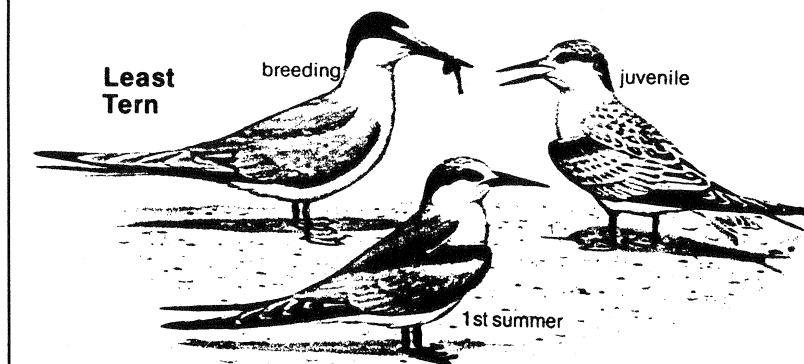


Illustration: National Geographic Society  
*Field Guide to the Birds of North America*  
Second Edition

**GEORGIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM**

Observer writing this account & date \_\_\_\_\_

Species \_\_\_\_\_ Number, Age, Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Distance from bird(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Relative size of bird \_\_\_\_\_

Head & Neck (describe forehead, crown, auricular, malar region, median line, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Eye & Loes (describe supercilium, ring, stripe, color, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Upper & Lower Mandibles \_\_\_\_\_

Legs & Feet \_\_\_\_\_

Upperparts (describe nape, back, rump, upper tail coverts, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Underparts (describe throat, belly, side, flanks, crissum, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rectrices (describe inner, middle, outer tail feathers, color pattern, shape, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Wing (describe color, length, shape, linings, bars, coverts, leading & trailing edges, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vocalization \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Weather \_\_\_\_\_ Sky Cover \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of observation \_\_\_\_\_ Bird-Sun Orientation \_\_\_\_\_

Exact Location \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat \_\_\_\_\_ Other Observers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Optical Equipment \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(An accompanying sketch or photograph can be excellent further documentation.)  
Send to: Checklist & Records Committee, c/o Bill Blakeslee, 1722 Noble Dr., Atlanta, GA 30306

**Species Requiring Documentation for the Georgia Ornithological Society  
Checklist and Records Committee (October, 1996)**

**Regular Species List**

Red-necked Grebe  
Black-capped Petrel  
Greater Shearwater  
Sooty Shearwater  
Manx Shearwater  
Leach's Storm-Petrel  
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel  
White-tailed Tropicbird  
Red-billed Tropicbird  
Great Cormorant  
Magnificent Frigatebird  
Reddish Egret  
Fulvous Whistling-Duck  
Greater White-fronted Goose  
Ross's Goose  
Brant  
Mottled Duck  
Cinnamon Teal  
Eurasian Wigeon  
King Eider  
Harlequin Duck  
Common Merganser  
Masked Duck  
Northern Goshawk  
Rough-legged Hawk  
Golden Eagle  
Plain Chachalaca  
Yellow Rail  
Black Rail  
Limpkin  
Whooping Crane  
Long-billed Curlew  
Red Phalarope  
Pomarine Jaeger  
South Polar Skua  
Franklin's Gull  
Little Gull  
Iceland Gull  
Glaucous Gull  
Black-legged Kittiwake  
Sabine's Gull

Arctic Tern  
Bridled Tern  
Sooty Tern  
Brown Noddy  
Dovekie  
Razorback  
White-winged Dove  
Smooth-billed Ani  
Snowy Owl  
Long-eared Owl  
Northern Saw-whet Owl  
Magnificent Hummingbird  
Black-chinned Hummingbird  
Anna's Hummingbird  
Broad-tailed Hummingbird  
Allen's Hummingbird  
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
Alder Flycatcher  
Least Flycatcher  
Say's Phoebe  
Vermilion Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
Florida Scrub-Jay  
Bewick's Wren  
Bicknell's Thrush  
Varied Thrush  
Sprague's Pipit  
Warbling Vireo  
Black-throated Gray Warbler  
Townsend's Warbler  
Kirtland's Warbler  
Mourning Warbler  
MacGillivray's Warbler  
Western Tanager  
Black-headed Grosbeak  
Green-tailed Towhee  
American Tree Sparrow  
Lark Bunting  
Harris' Sparrow  
Lapland Longspur

Snow Bunting  
Western Meadowlark  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Bullock's Oriole  
Red Crossbill  
Common Redpoll

**Provisional Species List**

Northern Fulmar  
Masked Booby  
Brown Booby  
Common Eider  
Swainson's Hawk  
Mountain Plover  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Long-tailed Jaeger  
Roseate Tern  
White-winged Tern  
Burrowing Owl  
Bell's Vireo  
Painted Redstart  
Shiny Cowbird

**Hypothetical Species List**

Any species now listed as hypothetical (see GOS Occasional Publ. No. 10) or not previously recorded for Georgia.