

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

TO: Georgia Ornithological Society
 P.O. Box 1684
 Cartersville, GA 30120
 E-mail: gos@hom.net

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.

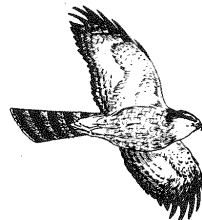
NAME(S) _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

**PLEASE SEND ADDRESS, PHONE OR E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
 KRISTI AVERA, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, 5406 MOSS OAK TRAIL,
 LAKE PARK, GA 31636 <KRAVERA@DATASYS.NET>**

GOShawk



NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

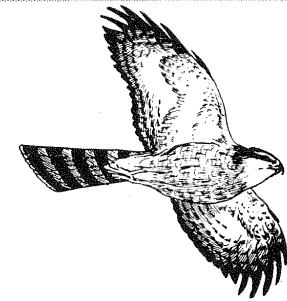
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GOShawk



Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society

Georgia Rare Bird Alerts: Statewide (770) 493-8862 ♦ South Georgia (912) 244-9190

SPRING MEETING

**Holiday Inn - Rome, Georgia
 April 16-19, 1999**

All members are receiving a registration packet for the GOS Spring Meeting. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn at the rate of \$60 plus tax (\$67.20) per room which covers 1-4 adults. Call the Holiday Inn at (706) 295-1100 for reservations. As always, we will have an excellent speaker for the Saturday night banquet and a great selection of field trips on Saturday and Sunday, coordinated by Stephen Stewart, and previewed Friday night. They will include excursions to: Johns Mountain & Keown Falls; Berry College; Thomas Brothers Sod Farms & Coosa River bottomlands; downtown Rome Riverwalk & Myrtle Hill Cemetery; north Floyd County backroads & swamps; and Arrowhead lakes and vicinity.

The following GOS members may be contacted for additional information:

For a registration packet or general information:

Gail Russell (770) 956-8469
 <grussell@mindspring.com>
 Eugenia Thompson (706) 549-7318
 <erthomps@negia.net>

For registration payment information:

Jeannie Wright (404) 451-1518
 <jeannie@mindspring.com>

EARLE R. GREENE AWARD

The Earle R. Greene Award

For his outstanding contributions to the Georgia Ornithological Society, **John Swiderski** received the Earle R. Greene Memorial Award for 1998. The Award was presented at the Fall meeting of the Society.

John became a member of GOS in 1973 and in 1976 was elected Treasurer. He served in that office for 11 years keeping the financial records with great care and precision, thus ensuring the sound fiscal condition of the Society. In 1987 he was elected Business Manager. In that capacity he has arranged for the publication and distribution of *The Oriole* and *GOShawk*; the publication and sale of all Occasional Publications; the design and production of tee shirts, logo patches, caps and the like. John has also arranged for the display of the original Roger Tory Peterson painting of the Orchard Oriole and the promotion and sale of the signed prints. In addition he maintains the membership list, receives dues and forwards them to the Treasurer, and attends to all the considerable correspondence in connection with the office of Business Manager.

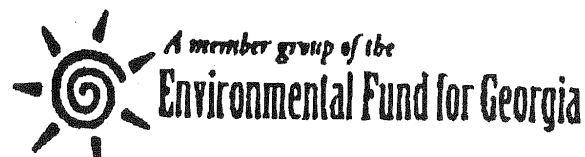
MEMBERSHIP

Welcome New Members!

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Fletcher & Kay Bingham | Augusta, GA |
| Stephen Bingham | Augusta, GA |
| Jim Greenway | Fairmount, GA |
| Henry Harbert | Edmonds, WA |
| Stephen Howe | Atlanta, GA |
| Jerry McCormick | Rome, GA |
| Richard Page | Beaufort, SC |
| Jean Pugh | Gainesville, GA |
| Douglas Robinson | Auburn, AL |
| Beth Roth | Savannah, GA |
| Barb Samuels | LaGrange, GA |
| Ari Savola | Savannah, GA |
| Nedra Owens Sekera | Melbourne, FL |
| Sweetgrass Farm | Waverly Hall, GA |
| Mark Welford | Statesboro, GA |
| Tom Wright | Tucker, GA |

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**Georgia
Ornithological
Society**

*Executive Committee
1997-99*

Ken Clark, *President*
(912) 474-1924

Eugenia Thompson, *1st V.P.*

Gail Russell, *2nd V.P.*

Marie Amerson, *Secretary*
gos@hom.net

Jeannie Wright, *Treasurer*

John Swiderski, *Business Manager*

Helen Ogren, *Past President*

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(912) 559-6008

Editorial Committee

Georgann Schmalz, *Chair*
(404) 633-1527

Conservation Committee

Georgine Pindar, *Chair*
(404) 355-8454

Checklist & Records Committee

Chuck Hunter, *Chair*
(770) 923-4742

The Oriole

Ray Chandler, John Parrish, *Editors*

GOShawk

Carol Lambert, *Editor*

Other Committee Chairs

Doug Phillips, *Finance*
(404) 255-8017

Special Projects:

Georgia Rare Bird Alert

Jeff Sewell (770) 493-8862

Birder's Guide to Georgia

Joel Hitt

Internet Home Page

Jim Flynn

<http://www.gos.org/index.html>

GOShawk is published quarterly
(March, June, September, December).

Carol Lambert, Editor
4608 Westhampton Drive
Tucker, GA 30084
(770) 939-7668

lambertsewell@mindspring.com

*Deadline for submission is
the 1st of the month prior to
publication unless otherwise noted.*

Text by e-mail or diskette is appreciated.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

**'99 Season / Barn Owl & American Woodcock Projects
by Rick West, Atlas Steering Committee**

Todd Schneider is busy digesting all the Breeding Bird Atlas data, and will have lists and maps ready soon. Some maps are also promised for the Spring meeting.

In the meantime the 1999 Atlas season has begun with most of the CBCs turning in good information on Barn and Great Horned Owls. Also thanks to others who have already turned in 1999 info on Great Horned Owls. We need more reports from this winter.

Two special projects are being initiated. The Georgia DNR has turned over old files of Barn Owl locations which have good leads to 60 sites. We are initiating a publicity campaign, directed primarily toward farmers, concerning Barn Owl locations. As the program develops we will pass more information on to GOS members, primarily through regional coordinators.

We are also initiating a special effort with American Woodcock this spring -- starting MARCH 1, when the bulk of the wintering woodcocks will have left. We ask all of those who can, to run a woodcock route in early March -- here is how, based on USFWS techniques: Starting 22 minutes after local sunset, drive a quiet secondary road stopping about every 0.4 mile. The distance isn't important, but fields are. Stop for 2 minutes and listen for the peenting and wing chipping of a courting male woodcock. Work quickly so that you can get in about 8 stops in a half hour, before the woodcocks quit preforming. You can run a similar route in the morning starting 52 minutes before sunrise and going for 30 minutes. Weather is important. It can be cold but it should be still and dry. Clouds shift the courting time a little, because the birds are affected primarily by light levels. Also, for the hardy, a bright moonlit night is good for a number of hours of survey, as long as clouds or fog do not interfere, and as long as you can stay awake.

Please try to survey your atlas block(s) in March. If you want a route to do near your home, please contact your regional coordinator, or contact me at 800-707-4382 or ricklwest@aol.com. We have hundreds of blocks in Georgia to cover, and only a few minutes a day in March to find them. So we really do need others to try to find new woodcock areas in their own county. If you run a survey, please send, phone or e-mail me your results, including negative ones so we will know which blocks have been surveyed. Members of the Georgia DNR will also help us.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FALL 1999 GOS
MEETING AT JEKYLL ISLAND -- OCTOBER 15-17.**

LESS THAN 50 PRINTS REMAIN!

DR. ROGER TORY PETERSON PRINT "ORCHARD ORIOLE"

Georgia Ornithological Society has available a limited number of "Orchard Oriole" prints produced from the original painting by Dr. Roger Tory Peterson. Each print is numbered, has been personally signed by Dr. Peterson, and is available only through GOS.

You may be interested in the events which led up to the production of this special print. Dr. Peterson is a founding member of GOS and his monochrome sketch of the Orchard Oriole graced the cover of our journal, *The Oriole*, for 50 years. As part of the Society's 50th anniversary celebration in 1986, Dr. Peterson agreed to paint the "Orchard Oriole" in color to be used to prepare a full color cover for our journal. In addition, he allowed the Society to prepare a limited number of prints from the original painting.

Our resident Georgia artist, Richard A. Parks, closely monitored the production of the print to assure that it is of the highest quality, and it is truly a beautiful print done on 11"x14" heavy stock.

The Society will send you this unique print upon receipt of your check made payable to GOS for \$125. Print numbers will be assigned in the order received, and your print will be sent promptly to you, flat in a heavy mailing box.

The mailing address is: GOS, P.O. Box 1684, Cartersville, GA 30120.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PRINTS @ \$125.00 each

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____ Payable to GOS

Wildlife Health Alert #99-01

To: Natural Resource/Conservation Managers
From: Director, USGS National Wildlife Health Center (Bob McLean)
Title: NEUROLOGIC DISEASE IN NEW WILD BIRD SPECIES AND LOCATIONS

Pathologists at the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) in Madison, Wisconsin and the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) at the University of Georgia have found changes in the brains of mallard, wigeon and ringed-necked ducks from Woodlake, North Carolina that are similar to the changes found in the brains of American coots and bald eagles with vacuolar myelinopathy. The disease had not previously been documented in species other than American coots and bald eagles. In addition, bald eagles collected from 4 new locations (near Woodlake, North Carolina; Aiken, South Carolina; and Strom Thurmond Lake and Lake Juliette, Georgia) and coots from Aiken, South Carolina appear to also have the same brain disease. In Arkansas, at least 58 bald eagles and an unknown number of coots have died from this disease since it was first detected in 1994. A previous Wildlife Health Alert confirmed vacuolar myelinopathy in coots collected at Woodlake in North Carolina and Lake Juliette in Georgia (See Wildlife Health Alert 98-03).

Vacuolar myelinopathy is a central nervous system lesion, diagnosed by microscopic examination of very fresh brain tissue. In affected birds it appears as open spaces in the white matter of the brain. Using electron microscopy, scientists determined the spaces are caused by separation of the myelin layers that surround and protect the nerves. Using electron microscopy, the SCWDS pathologist has confirmed the lesion in one of the North Carolina mallards and the Strom Thurmond Lake eagle. Electron microscopy confirmation of vacuolar myelinopathy lesions in the remaining ducks and eagles is pending.

Affected birds have erratic flight or are unable to fly, may crash land, swim tipped to one side with one or both legs or wings extended or be in the water on their back with their feet in the air. On land, birds stagger and have difficulty walking and may fall over unable to right themselves (appear intoxicated). Birds are usually alert and may bite when handled even if unable to escape capture. It remains unknown if the disease is "spreading" or if affected birds at other locations are recognized because more people are aware of the problem.

All diagnostic, field and laboratory efforts indicate the cause is most likely a toxin, either one that is naturally occurring or manmade. Tests have been unfruitful for the toxins previously associated with vacuolar myelinopathy in other species. Route of exposure to the toxin is not known at this time. Multiple agencies are continuing field, laboratory and research efforts to determine the cause of the disease.

Wildlife managers are encouraged to observe coots, waterfowl and eagles and report any sick birds to the National Wildlife Health Center at 608-270-2400 or the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study at 706-542-1741. If any freshly dead birds are found, please keep carcasses chilled on ice or refrigerated, but not frozen, while you contact the above agencies.

WILDLIFE HEALTH ALERTS are distributed to natural resource/conservation agencies to provide and promote information exchange about significant wildlife health threats in their geographic region.

National Wildlife Health Center
6006 Schroeder Road
Madison, WI 53711
608-270-2400

<http://www.emtc.usgs.gov/nwhchome.html>

If you observe birds in Georgia exhibiting the problems described above, contact Jim Ozier at the Georgia DNR Nongame office: (912) 994-1438



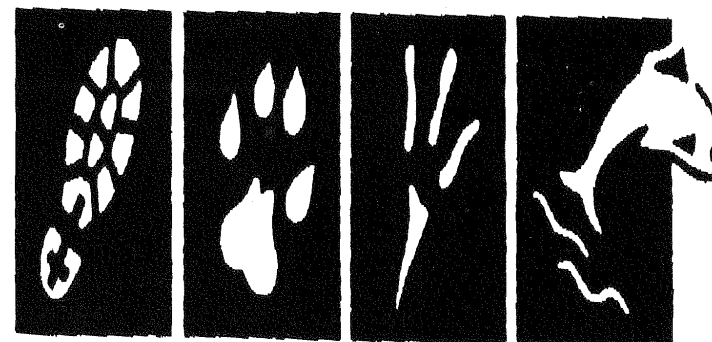
CONSERVATION NEWS

New Wildlife Funding Initiative Needs Support by Ken Clark

Remember a while back when the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition was formed (GOS is one of 3,000 members nationwide) we were urged to support a wildlife funding initiative in which a small surcharge on backpacks, binoculars, canoes and other outdoor recreation equipment would fund non-game wildlife programs in America? Well, that smelled like a tax and went over like a lead balloon; but an exciting new source of funds for wildlife has been unearthed, or more accurately, dredged up. It's called CARA (the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999) or S.25 and it dedicates a percentage of federal offshore oil and gas revenues to states for wildlife programs. About one-half of the estimated \$4-5 billion annual revenues would be allocated to three CARA divisions: Title I: coastal impact assistance; Title II: land-based recreation; and Title III: wildlife conservation. The Senate bill, co-sponsored by Georgia's Senator Max Cleland, was introduced in January and a House version is expected soon. Charles Norwood (R-GA) is a co-sponsor in the House.

The Senate bill dedicates about 7% of the revenues to Title III (wildlife conservation), while the House bill is pointing toward 10%. We should write Senator Cleland, thank him for his sponsorship and urge increasing the Senate bill Title III portion to 10%. We should also urge Senator Coverdell and our own district Congressperson to support the legislation. Time is of the essence. A hand-written note, phone call or e-mail message to our Senate and House legislators supporting the Conservation & Reinvestment Act of 1999 could be decisive.

For more information on this legislation, contact the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies at (202) 624-7980 or e-mail: <teaming@asso.org> or visit the Teaming With Wildlife website at: <http://www.teaming.com>



Partners in Flight: Call for Assistance Experienced birders needed for spring migration study: Forest Obligate Neotropical Migrants in the Southeastern United States

Migrating birds don't just fly. They also stop, rest, and feed. Successful migration for species requiring forest habitats depends on suitable stopover habitat all along the inland migration route. The southeastern U.S.-- Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida - is an important part of the migration route for many Neotropical migrants. Yet we know almost nothing about habitat requirements during migration (which habitats are best; which will be used in extreme emergency; what is the extent of remaining forest habitats; is the size & shape of an individual forest patch important; how are forested habitats arranged along the migration route???) We need a regional perspective that encompasses the distribution of suitable stopover habitats and what makes those areas suitable. Surveying such a broad study area is a daunting task, which is why we need help. Using satellite imagery and computer mapping, we have developed a 'picture' of forest habitats across the southeast that we believe assesses patch-level habitat qualities important to migrants. The next step is to examine individual forest areas on the ground, to determine if our 'picture' is accurate, and to discover ways that we can improve it.

Volunteers Needed!

PIF needs volunteers from across the southeast to bird forest patches in their area. Before the spring migration begins, we will send a map that highlights local forest patches. Volunteers will select three patches that are easily accessible, visit each area once during migration, and record the species and no. of individuals they see. There's no laying out transects, and no timed counts at established points. Surveys should be conducted in the bird-active morning hours. By participating in this study, you will give us the critical information we need. The contact for this study, Roger Tankersley, is working on a PhD. in Geography at the Univ. of Tennessee. The results of the field surveys will help to verify models that are part of his dissertation. Sometime after migration, Roger will visit each locale to meet with volunteers and talk about some of their favorite spots for migrant birding, and to discuss any changes in migration noticed during recent years. This will give us first-hand experience of many areas, and allow you to share your knowledge about local habitats. We realize that there is not much time to spare during migration. So we are asking for just one trip to each forest patch, and a simple checklist report listing species and numbers of individuals. Please consider participating in this important study. Respond to:

Partners in Flight Spring Migration Survey
c/o Roger Tankersley, 2924 Jenkins St.,
Knoxville, TN 37921
(423) 632-1427 or e-mail: <rtdtanker@utk.edu>

**GEORGIA BIRDERS AND THEIR LISTS
AS OF 12/31/98**

GEORGIA BIRDING ✓✓✓ 1998

1998: it was a very good year...

Our call for Georgia life list numbers and 1998 year totals resulted in responses from 35 birders -- the highest participation to date. The appearance of species such as Common Redpoll, Long-eared Owl, South Polar Skua, Northern Wheatear, Calliope Hummingbird and Eurasian Wigeon boosted the Georgia life lists of many birders. Pelagic trips enabled some sturdy-stomached folks to add pelagic species to their life and year lists (actually, the boat trips were said to be very "smooth sailing" this year, with no seasickness reported).

We seem to have many new birders around Georgia -- both new residents and new listers. This contributes enormously to the sightings reported and field coverage. A very well-functioning Rare Bird Alert telephone system with computer transcription and the Georgia Birders Online listserv have vastly improved communication between birders in Georgia.

We had some extra excitement in 1998 as many of us followed Giff Beaton's quest to set a new Georgia year list record. His month-by-month account of his year's birding follows. It is an amazing account documenting an a truly amazing accomplishment as he surpassed the previous record by two to finish the year with 317 species of birds in Georgia. The Georgia Birders summary list for 1998 can be found on p. 7.

Georgia "Big Year" in 1998, by Giff Beaton

1998 is finally in the books, and I wanted to thank all of you who helped me in my quest to set a new Big Year record for Georgia. This was a phenomenal year for rarities in Georgia, and I was able to find or see enough of them to top the old record of 315, set by Chris Haney in the early 80s, with a final total of 317. Many of you were extremely helpful with info or scouting, and many thanks for all of your help! For those who have expressed an interest in this, a short recap follows.

January-May The year started out innocently enough, with plenty of general birding (partly field work in support of the book, which naturally took me to many of the best birding sites in the state at the best times). I had no plans of doing a Big Year at this time, believe it or not! A few rarities were chased, highlighted by a Common Redpoll at a local feeder near Atlanta in March. The lowlight occurred in March also, as I missed an all-day Long-eared Owl also in Atlanta because I was on the coast. I accidentally picked up all the winter finches, which was good because there weren't many in the fall. Other serendipitous "gets" were Oldsquaw at Lake Lanier, Connecticut Warbler at Kennesaw Mountain (only my 3rd in GA) and a few difficult but findable birds that I didn't need to plan for later like Long-billed Curlew on Ossabaw Island and Short-eared Owl in Cobb, GA. . The turning point of the year was a three day pelagic trip arranged by Pierre Howard, who gets special mention for getting me into several places I couldn't have otherwise been to later in the year as well. This trip, from 5/26-5/28, didn't produce many birds but the species list was staggering. Standouts were Black-capped Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, and Arctic Tern (approx GA's 8th record). On the way back home from this trip, Jim Flynn made the observation that I should do a Big Year because of what I already had for the year, and now that it's over I can't decide if I should thank or curse him! I initially resisted, for about a day, and then went to work. I drew up a large worksheet of what I had, what I could expect and when and where to look for them, and hit the road. May ended at 268.

June. This is a month for breeders, so I made the obvious trips. Red-cockaded Woodpecker at Piedmont NWR on 6/4, Ruffed Grouse at Rabun Bald 6/8, Purple Gallinule near Valdosta 6/16, Black Rail at the only inland marsh with known breeding 6/18, Swallow-tailed Kite near Ludowici and Gray Kingbird on Jekyll Island on 6/30. I also saw the Black-bellied Whistling Duck at E.L.Huie near Atlanta, but did not count it until it was formally accepted by the Record Committee in early December. I ended June at 274, with no huge misses.

July. A little early for fall migrants, which I needed many of, but I did pick up Raven at Brasstown Bald 7/10 (missed at Rabun), and an early Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Rome on 7/31. This would be my last low-key month, as I had many more birds to try to find than I had time for thereafter. July ended at 276.

August. My strategy here was to max out on shorebirds so I could concentrate on passerines in September, and it mostly worked. One special trip I made was to Sapelo Island, the only place to get Plain Chachalaca, on 8/3. They were suprisingly easy to find this late in the season. Other adds were Reddish Egret at St. Simons Island on 8/2, Mottled Duck on 8/3, Bank Swallow near Dyar Pasture WMA 8/5, Upland Sandpiper back at Rome 8/21, Black Tern at Andrews Island 8/23,

| NAME | HOME | | GA LIFE LIST - 1998 | GA LIFE LIST - 1997 | GA YEAR LIST - 1998 | GA YEAR LIST - 1997 |
|-----------------|-------------------|----|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bob Manns | Atlanta, GA | 1 | 369 | 363 | - | - |
| Terry Moore | Roswell, GA | 2 | 345 | 344 | - | - |
| Giff Beaton | Marietta, GA | 3 | 340 | 327 | 317 | 286 |
| Joe Greenberg | Atlanta, GA | 4 | 339 | 336 | - | - |
| Jeff Sewell | Tucker, GA | 4 | 339 | 331 | 280 | 271 |
| Bill Blakeslee | Atlanta, GA | 5 | 337 | 332 | - | - |
| Bruce Dralle | Marietta, GA | 5 | 337 | 330 | 240 | - |
| Billy Dunbar | Watkinsville, GA | 6 | 335 | 329 | - | - |
| Patrick Brisse | Tucker, GA | 7 | 334 | 330 | - | - |
| Pierre Howard | Atlanta, GA | 7 | 334 | 319 | 288 | 248 |
| Paul Sykes | Watkinsville, GA | 8 | 330 | 325 | - | - |
| Carol Lambert | Tucker, GA | 9 | 327 | 319 | 252 | 245 |
| Brenda Dunbar | Watkinsville, GA | 10 | 326 | 320 | - | - |
| Mark Oberle | Calabash, NC | 11 | 325 | 322 | - | - |
| Jim Flynn | Cumming, GA | 12 | 319 | 299 | 290 | 285 |
| Peggy Moore | Roswell, GA | 13 | 312 | 312 | - | - |
| Bob Zaremba | Marietta, GA | 13 | 312 | 278 | 296 | 250 |
| Jerry Amerson | Macon, GA | 14 | 311 | 306 | 223 | - |
| Marie Amerson | Macon, GA | 15 | 306 | 301 | 218 | - |
| Aubrey Scott | College Park, GA | 15 | 306 | - | 285 | - |
| Mike Chapman | Brunswick, GA | 16 | 303 | 293 | - | - |
| Kevin Danchisen | Marietta, GA | 16 | 303 | 283 | 248 | - |
| Johnny Parks | Ringgold, GA | 17 | 301 | 296 | - | - |
| Karen Theodorou | Lawrenceville, GA | 18 | 300 | 278 | 270 | - |
| Michael Bell | Tallapoosa, GA | 19 | 299 | - | 280 | - |
| Joel Hitt | Lawrenceville, GA | 20 | 289 | 283 | - | - |
| Deb Zaremba | Marietta, GA | 20 | 289 | 241 | 277 | - |
| Brad Bergstrom | Valdosta, GA | 21 | 282 | 277 | - | - |
| Nancy Gobris | Macon, GA | 22 | 278 | - | - | - |
| Steve Holzman | Brunswick, GA | 23 | 275 | - | - | - |
| Gene Keferl | Brunswick, GA | 24 | 269 | - | 233 | - |
| Earl Horn | Lawrenceville, GA | 25 | 252 | - | 252 | - |
| David Chaffin | Cleveland, TN | 26 | 241 | - | 85 | - |
| Rusty Trump | Suwanee, GA | 27 | 227 | - | 223 | - |
| Dennis Forsythe | Charleston, SC | 28 | 201 | - | - | - |

Sooty Tern on a pelagic trip from Savannah 8/24, and two great birds 8/31: Baird's Sandpiper at American Protein in Cumming and Olive-sided Flycatcher at the Newman Wetlands Center. I was very lucky this bird stayed two days, as most Olive-sides are one day wonders, and also lucky to know Carol Lambert, who let me go in on a day the Center was closed. I was becoming concerned about Stilt Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope, but otherwise the fall shorebird migration was very good. August closed out at 286, and 300 was starting to look like a real possibility.

September. I birded Kennesaw virtually every day I was not flying, and got everything I needed except Wilson's Warbler. Among the adds for this month were a Mourning Warbler at Kennesaw on 9/6 (found the previous day), Nashville Warbler also on 9/6, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on 9/13 at Ocmulgee National Monument (4 of them!), Philadelphia Vireo on 9/15 at Kennesaw, Warbling Vireo at Kennesaw 9/21 during the only major "fallout" there this fall and the only one reported this fall, Peregrine Falcon at Kennesaw 9/23, and American Avocet at Andrews Island 9/25. I was still concerned about Stilt Sand and Wilson's Phalarope, and added Wilson's Warbler to that list. Unfortunately, Wilson's Phalaropes were seen both spring and fall in Augusta but never reported until several weeks later both times. I also finally saw the Northern Pintail at E.L. Huie during a Big Day on 9/24, a bird I had looked for several times without success. September closed out at 295.

October. I would be gone most of the month in Ecuador (great for birding in general but bad for a Big Year!), so I planned a coast trip around the GOS Fall Meeting before I left. This resulted in two great birds in Dublin on the way down on 10/2, American Bittern and a totally blind-luck Clay-colored Sparrow. The latter was a first county record for Laurens County, arguably one of the best-covered upper coastal plain counties in the state, thanks to the Pattersons. On 10/4, I made a last trip into the hell that is Andrews Island in the summer and scored #298, a Stilt Sandpiper (one of four total shorebirds in the whole place!). This was about my 7th trip in there this summer and fall, primarily for this one species. I never did get another one. On the way back we stopped in Dublin again for a Wilson's Phalarope spotted the day before, but it had already gone, unusual for this species which usually stays for a couple of days. I never did get one. I made a tactical error on 10/10, two days before my trip when I didn't chase the Wheatear seen on Jekyll. I wouldn't have seen it, as only those right there did, but I would have seen the Lark Sparrow found the next day by birders scouring the island for the wheatear. I never got this species either. In spite of my fears, the whole time I was gone nothing great was found in GA except a South Polar Skua which showed up at Jekyll and defied the odds by staying a couple of weeks until I got back to become #299 on 10/29. This species is normally highly pelagic and extremely rare on land. On 10/30 I found a 1st-winter Franklin's Gull above the dam at Walter F. George Reservoir (11 were found the next day) and lucked into a LeConte's Sparrow at the Bradley Unit of Eufaula NWR. This location ended up being reliable for this normally-ephemeral sparrow. October ended at 301.

November. My window for passerine migrants was pretty well closed, but I had several ducks to look for and started shifting my focus to winter species. My hit list was getting smaller and smaller, but this was when I started thinking I might give the record of 315 a run, so I decided to put most other normal priorities aside to go for it. As a result, I logged many miles, and found lots of good birds but not as many great ones as I hoped. I also started going up to the Cohuttas repeatedly in what would be a futile attempt to find Red Crossbill. In all I made 9 trips up there this fall without success for this species. I also had to make numerous trips up to Pigeon Mountain to see a Golden Eagle (12/9, finally), surely one of the remnants of the hacking program from a few years ago. My first stroke of luck was a Calliope Hummingbird on 11/7 that came to an Atlanta feeder, the first state record for this western hummer. Hummingbirds were certainly in my plans, with the help of Bob and Martha-Gail Sargent and Terry Johnson. I thought I would get Black-chinned and hopefully Allen's, and hoped for anything else. The Calliope was a great start on that! I got Rusty Blackbird at the Atlanta Motor Speedway on 11/19, Greater White-fronted Goose in Dublin on 11/24, and Surf Scoter also 11/24 but at West Point Dam. By this point I was checking the big lakes on the western side of GA at least weekly, a strategy which paid off with some pretty good birds but not any real finds except for the Franklin's Gulls. I still think this is the best shot for super-rarities such as Pacific Loon, Western Grebe, Common Merganser or Black-legged Kittiwake. All of these have a pattern of fall vagrancy to these habitats in the southeast, and I predict they will all be found there eventually, just not this year. Another huge stroke of luck arrived in the form of a Thanksgiving hummer in Smyrna. I was the first to view this bird on 11/27, which was GA's second Anna's Hummingbird, banded on 11/28 but not seen thereafter. A pelagic trip on 11/30 was my best shot for bonus birds, but produced "only" Red Phalaropes (almost 1,000 of them!). November closed out at 307.

December. I didn't have that much to reasonably target, so I basically raced all over looking for mega-rarities (not a very rewarding activity in terms of results) and hoped for some surprises. One of my last official targets was Purple Sandpiper, seen at Tybee Island on 12/1, with a major bonus Parasitic Jaeger there the same day. This saved me hours if not days of scanning shrimp boats at Jekyll. Later that day, White-winged Scoter became #310 off the north end of Jekyll Island. The ferry back from Cumberland Island produced American White Pelican on 12/3, because they were all in Florida on the way over. As mentioned before, Golden Eagle on 12/9 was #312. On 12/10, the last reasonable target was seen at West Point Dam, Common Goldeneye. On 12/12, the Black-bellied Whistling Duck was formally accepted by the GOS

Checklist and Record Committee. I was now reduced to trying such schemes as scouring the mountains for Saw-whet Owl, with predictable results. On 12/20, a pair of White-winged Doves were found on St. Catherine's Island, and I was fortunate enough to be able to go out there on 12/22 to see these two birds for #315. Thanks to Royce Hayes for letting me visit his wonderful island to tie the record! As I was preparing to go to Charleston for Christmas with Becky, a call came in about another hummer to check out. It turned out to be a young female Rufous, which I at first thought might be a Broad-tailed but my pictures proved otherwise. I checked out about 15 hummingbirds, thanks to the "feeds" from the banders, and am continually amazed by how different the birds may be from the description you get over the phone. I called the Anne and Vernon Waters, compilers for the Augusta CBC, before leaving Charleston on 12/26, only to learn that they had found a drake Eurasian Wigeon on their count! So, on 12/27, we looked for this gorgeous duck along with several other birders and found it for #316. Another CBC bird was a Glaucous Gull on Cumberland Island, searched for all day on 12/28 without success. No White Pelicans were visible in GA on either ferry ride this day, making the 12/3 trip all the more important. A cross-state search over the south of Georgia did net a Ross's Goose (another CBC bird) on 12/30 in the Georgia portion of Eufaula NWR after a several hour search for #317, the final species. A mountain search on 12/31 was, of course, fruitless...

All in all, a wonderful, if exhausting year. Some great birds, some great (and some frustrating) adventures, and lots of great birding days with some good friends. This was a very good year to try a Big Year, as the Georgia list for 1998 (total number of species reported) was 336, one of the largest total state lists in many years. It should be noted that Bob Zaremba tallied 296 and Jim Flynn 290, both huge lists as well. Many thanks to all of those who helped, encouraged or simply cheered, and most of all to those who slogged along with me!

FIELD NOTES

There is no "Field Notes" section in this *GOShawk* issue. As all of you know by now, the new editors of *The Oriole*, Ray Chandler and John Parrish, are making great strides toward bringing that publication to current status. It is anticipated that they will have it up to date during 1999. At that time, it would be a duplicative effort to have field notes in both the *GOShawk* and *The Oriole*, so they will only appear in *The Oriole*. This *GOShawk* issue would normally have covered the Fall (August, September, October, November) of 1998. However, we decided that we would not add field notes to this issue due to Jeff Sewell's current efforts to catch up with "From the Field" for *The Oriole*, together with the fact that Giff Beaton wrote a great summary of what were certainly the best birds seen in Georgia in 1998. The field sightings reports sent to Jeff for the Fall season will be incorporated into a future publication of either the *GOShawk* or *The Oriole*.

We have not yet decided how to present field sightings information in future issues of the *GOShawk*, because it is unclear whether Jeff will be able to devote the time and effort he has in the past to that endeavor. We greatly appreciate all the work he has done on the *GOShawk* for the past four years as Field Notes Editor and look forward to his continued participation as his schedule and other commitments allow.

Carol Lambert, Editor

RARE BIRD ALERTS

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Birders watch as Bob and Martha Sargent band Georgia's first Calliope Hummingbird in Lilburn. November 9, 1998. Photo: Carol Lambert