

TO: Georgia Ornithological Society
P.O. Box 5825
Valdosta, GA 31603-5825
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) _____

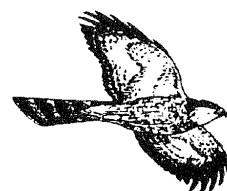
MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

PLEASE SEND ADDRESS, PHONE OR E-MAIL CHANGES TO:

Kristi Avera, Membership Chair, 5406 Moss Oak Trail, Lake Park, GA 31636
<kravera@datasys.net>

GOShawk



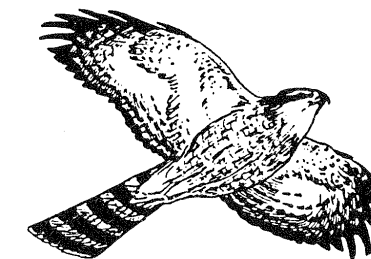
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P.O. Box 5825
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Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society

GOS on the web: www.gos.org

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

GOS Fall Meeting — Statesboro, GA October 6-8, 2000

The fall meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society will be held in Statesboro the weekend of October 6-8, 2000. Registration materials have been mailed to all members. The programs and registration for this meeting will be in the Russell Union building on the campus of Georgia Southern University.

Our special guest for this meeting is the noted ornithologist, Chandler S. Robbins, who will present a program "Icebergs and Icebirds" from his recent trip to the Antarctic after the banquet on Saturday evening.

On Friday evening, the Wildlife Education Center at Georgia Southern will present a program featuring live birds and other critters. The Center will also offer raptor flight shows during the weekend at the Raptor Center (a good photo opportunity).

Field trips will be offered on Saturday and Sunday mornings and will include the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal, Fort Stewart and other local sites. Full details of the field trips will be presented at the end of the Friday night meeting.

For additional information or registration materials contact Gail Russell, 770/956-8469, or email: <grussell@mindspring.com>.

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Curlew Sandpiper found in Georgia!

by Deb Barreiro

In Georgia, fall migration starts when you least expect it. On July 5th, a flock of shorebirds returned to Little Tybee State Heritage Preserve. Located 17 miles east of Savannah, the Preserve is the northern most coastal island of 120 miles of state owned protected shoreline.

In a mixed flock of 20 or so weary birds (some still in breeding plumage), there was a bird that didn't look like the usual suspects. The bird had a thinner, decurved bill, almost like a dunlin, only a little more graceful. As it lay with the other birds resting, I thought of their journey to arctic breeding grounds and marveled at the big picture. Thinking of others whose clocks are in tune



Photo by Jim Flynn

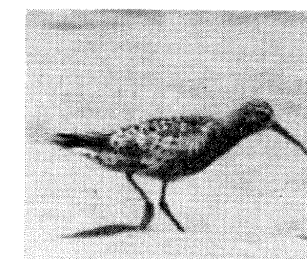


Photo by Jim Flynn

with the movement of species, I posted a message to GABO (Georgia Birders Online) saying some shorebirds had made their way to back to our coast. The post was considered by fellow shorebird enthusiast, Lydia Thompson, who shared some insight into species arrival dates. She encouraged me to "get another look at that dunlin."

Three days later, in pretty much the same location, I found the bird preening & feeding. The Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) was observed by more than 30 enthusiasts who traveled to coastal

(Continued on page 3)

**Georgia
Ornithological
Society**

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Deadline for article submission is the 1st of
the month prior to publication.
Text by email is appreciated.

Welcome New Members!

Kathleen Brennan	Pickney, MI
Shan Cammack	Watkinsville, GA
Matt Carey	Decatur, GA
Wendy Denton	Statesboro, GA
Dave & Luci Donaldson	Peachtree City, GA
Nancy Kay Duncan	Woodstock, GA
Lauren Houston	Blakely, GA
Kim Kilgore	Armuchee, GA
Glenda Merrill	Columbus, GA
Anthony Orlowski	Decatur, GA
Matt & Lyn Oxley	Vidalia, GA
Sally Ramer	McDonough, GA
Edwin Schreiber, Jr.	Sedona, AZ
Mitch & Patty Seal	Woodstock, GA
Kyle Segars	Toccoa, GA
Joseph Wahl	Savannah, GA

As of August, GOS has 495 members.

CHARLES N. ELLIOTT

Charles N. Elliott of Covington, Georgia, passed away on May 1, 2000 at the age of 93.

Elliott was a Georgia native who was one of the very few remaining charter members of GOS, an association he maintained through World War II.

Early in his life Charlie was a forest ranger for the state and federal agencies. He served as the first director for Georgia's Department of State Parks and later served as director of the State Game and Fish Commission. After leaving that post in 1948 he embarked upon a writing career centered around his love of hunting and fishing. He wrote a number of books and was outdoor columnist for the Atlanta newspapers from 1956 to 1987. It is believed that the comic strip character of Mark Trail was modeled after Charlie Elliott.

The Charlie Elliott Wildlife Management Area and Center in Mansfield, near Covington, was named in his honor and a very active outdoor education program has been established there.

Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas

Many thanks to all of you who have collected data for the Atlas Project over the past several years!

We were able to complete survey work on most of our priority blocks, but may do a little "clean-up" work on several blocks next year. Since we need to enter all the data into the computer to figure out what areas need more work, we would like you to send your data to the regional coordinator or me as soon as possible. This will allow plenty of time to assess where we are, and will also allow us to start working on publishing the book.



Todd Schneider
BBA Coordinator

Southeastern Rare Bird Alerts

Georgia
Statewide 770-493-8862
S. Georgia 912-244-9190

Alabama
Statewide 205-987-2730

Florida
Statewide 561-340-0079
N. Florida 912-244-9190
Northwest 850-934-6974
Miami 305-667-7737
Lower Keys 305-294-3438

Kentucky
Statewide 502-326-0878

North & South Carolina
Statewide 704-332-2473

Tennessee
Statewide 615-356-7636
Chattanooga 423-877-1129
Knoxville 423-577-4717 x80

Can you recycle Your PAYCHECK?

Does your company give you a "Green" option during your fall charity campaign? Probably not — chances are the United Way is your only choice.

The Environmental Fund for Georgia now partners with over 50 companies to offer an environmental giving option. Since our founding in 1992, employees have donated more than \$1 million to EFG's 25 member groups, including the Georgia Ornithological Society. Help EFG enlist your company so that you and your co-workers can recycle your paychecks back to nature.

For more information, call Alice Rolls at 404- 873-3173 or complete our online company survey at www.efg.org

Close Focus

The following account was posted to Georgia Birders Online (GABO) recently by Rusty Trump of Suwanee, Georgia.



Earl Horn and I went down to Tattnall County to look for the Limpkin that was spotted on August 4th by Lawrence Carlisle. We had decided to search for the Limpkin both Friday night and Saturday morning by canoe. We launched from Tattnall Landing about 30 minutes before sunset, and floated down the Ochopee to the Altamaha and then drifted down the Altamaha playing a tape of a Limpkin every so often hoping for a response.

We did get a response at sunset, but not from a Limpkin. A Barred Owl was keeping watch at the point where the Ochopee converges with the Altamaha. A few minutes later we heard Chuck-will's-widows adding to the chorus of the various frog species. The Chuck-will's-widows only called for a few minutes and that was the last we heard from them. Then it was the Whip-poor-wills turn. They too only sang for a couple minutes and were not heard the rest of the night. We searched the river banks etc. until about midnight enjoying the bugless perfect weather.

We had not planned on staying out that late and, therefore, hadn't packed any drinks or food. Earl wanted to just stay out on the river since it was so nice, but I was ready to eat dinner. So, we grabbed a bite at the Waffle House in Metter and decided we should just stay out all night. From there we went owling in a couple counties and found Screech-Owls and Barred Owls. We returned to Tattnall Landing around 4:00 AM adding a Great Horned Owl to the trip list.

We searched upstream on the Altamaha this time, where we found a young Wood Stork resting at the edge of the water as well as several Black-crowned Night-Herons. One of them allowed us to approach quite close and seemed to appreciate the flashlights to hunt.

During the night we were treated to a spectacular meteor shower. Sometimes, the meteors would light the sky like lightning and leave a trail glowing for several seconds after streaking across the sky. We searched for the Limpkin until about 10:00 AM and then packed it in. On the way out of Tattnall Co. we stopped to see the kites at Robert Rushing Rd. There were about 35-40 Swallow-tailed Kites and 5-10 Mississippi Kites feeding in the field around noon.

...Rusty Trump

H. Branch Howe, Jr. Graduate Student Research Grant

Call for Applications

The Georgia Ornithological Society offers two annual graduate student research grants of up to \$1,500.00 each in support of ornithological research. The Research Grant Committee of GOS receives the applications and selects the grantees.

The grant application and letters of reference should reach the Research Grant Committee no later than January 16, 2001. The grantees will be selected by March 15, 2001.

Interested candidates should check the GOS website <www.gos.org> for guidelines or contact the Committee: GOS Research Grant Committee, 237 Woodlawn Ave., Athens, GA 30606, (706) 543-3072.

Upcoming Events

Jekyll Island Banding Station (JIBS)

Sept. 23—Oct. 15

Butler Island Altamaha Station (BIAS)

Sept. 2—Nov. 5

All bird watchers and nature lovers are welcome and will receive training from experienced banders.

Call Don & Doris Cohrs 912-437-3333.

Email: doris_cohrs@yahoo.com

Bird Watching During Fall Migration — Rome, GA

Sept. 26 & Sept. 30

A general knowledge bird watching class and field trip. Open to the public through the Continuing Education Department at Berry College.

Instructor: Stephen Stewart. Call 706-236-2270.

North Georgia Wildlife Festival — Blue Ridge, GA

Sept. 16-17

Fine arts festival featuring more than 75 wildlife artists, food & entertainment. Call 706-632-2144.

Georgia Forest Watch & The Wilderness Society Annual Retreat — Hiwassee, GA

Sept. 29—Oct. 1

Join members for a weekend of informative talks, workshops, discussions with forest activists, hikes and many other activities. Call 706-635-8733.

Georgia Ornithological Society Fall Meeting

Statesboro, GA

Oct. 6—8

See page 1.

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The elegant 8.5 inch chestnut wader, a Eurasian species, is rare to the east coast of the U.S. This well documented sighting is currently under review by the GOS Records Committee. If accepted, it will be added to the State Annotated Checklist, but when remembered, it was an opportunity to observe the unbelievable on a remote barrier island whose shifting shores are protected from encroaching development with the hope of offering safe haven to many more weary species.



Photo by Giff Beaton

Ed. Note: According to the *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 1986 GOS*, this is the first documented sighting of the species in Georgia. Previous sightings were from the Altamaha WMA in 1961 and the Jekyll Island Causeway in 1975.

GOS webmaster, Jim Flynn, has set up a link containing photos of the species. You can view them online at the GOS website.



Photo by Giff Beaton

Earl Horn emerges from the waters of Little Tybee, having taken no chances on the Curlew Sandpiper not being well-documented, as he swam across a channel, holding his camera aloft... what dedication!

Future GOS meetings — mark your calendars

Spring 2001 Meeting in Macon

The Spring 2001 meeting will be in Macon, GA April 27-29 at the Ramada Inn. Bob & Martha Sargent will present their wonderful program on hummingbirds.

Fall 2001 Meeting in Savannah

The Fall 2001 meeting is being planned for October 5-7 in Savannah, with our programs being held at Skidaway Island.

Visit GOS
on the
web at
www.gos.org



Georgia
Ornithological
Society

Conservation News

by Stephen Stewart

CARA Update

On July 25, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted 13-7 to move CARA (Conservation and Reinvestment Act) to the Senate floor for full consideration. At this writing there was no word on when the bill would come up for a vote. Recall that CARA passed the House on May 11.

Passage in the Senate is widely anticipated and is receiving support from all 50 governors and at least 52 Senators in addition to hundreds of conservation and environmental groups, including GOS. The Senate version of the CARA bill would reinvest approximately \$3 billion annually from Federal Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas revenues. Provisions such as Title III will provide funds for a diverse array of fish and wildlife species, with an emphasis on preventing species from becoming endangered.

Under the House version of the bill (HR 701) Georgia would receive approximately \$40 million. It is unclear at this time how the Senate version will differ in the amount of money invested in Georgia:

- Title 1 * Coastal Impact Assistance \$6.7 million
- Title 2 * Land & Water Conservation Fund \$15.9 million
- Title 3 * Wildlife Conservation Fund \$8.8 million
- Title 4 * Urban Park & Recreation Recovery \$1.9 million
- Title 5 * Historic Preservation Fund \$2.4 million
- Title 6 * Federal & Indians Land Restoration \$1.7 million
- Title 7 * Conservation Easements \$1.3 million

The dredging of the Savannah River is still on hold due to environmental studies and a law suit filed on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation. The suit alleges the dredging will destroy the 26,000 acre Savannah National Wildlife Refuge and cause serious erosion to Tybee island. Plans call for the Army Corps of Engineers to deepen the channel from 42 to 48 feet for a distance of 36 miles. (API newswire)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently involved in a project to designate critical habitat for breeding and wintering piping plovers. Along the Georgia coast sixteen separate areas have been designated as critical wintering habitat. These areas include some portion of each of our barrier islands from Tybee, south to Cumberland. While the designation does not protect the habitat from private and state development, it does give some protection against projects involving federal support. A letter has been sent by this committee in support of the plans and we have asked for further designations. The project will be completed by April 30, 2001.
(<http://southeast.fws.gov/>)

What can we do?

Perhaps one of the best solutions to preserving our environment is education. Although some will never be educated (I teach high school), each year we see thousands of adults and children joining us as birdwatchers, and they want to learn more about their new hobby. So what can we do as GOS members to encourage further involvement and teach those newcomers? Here are two things I have done and I hope you will try these for yourselves.

- We all have our favorite birding areas, so why not start there. Contact the owner or supervising agency of your favorite birding place and ask if you can type up a list of birds found at the site and post it near the entrance. Visiting birders will know what to expect and novices may get the birding bug. Make sure you have a contact number on your list, have the list laminated and secure it tightly. Identify species as breeders, migrants, etc. I have done this at Arrowhead Lakes and Floyd College in Rome. I can send out examples of the format via email for those who are interested.

- We can all be teachers. There is probably a community or junior college near you. Contact them and ask if you can teach a 2-3 hour birding class and follow it up with a fieldtrip. Local libraries also sponsor such continuing or community education programs. Your class does not have to have the air of a university degree program. Keep it simple, don't start with population dynamics of riparian systems and theories of migration in neotropical migrants. Start with habitats and simple identification of common birds in your area. Make sure you have handouts for identification and an overhead so everyone can follow along. Take your class to your favorite birding area. I have recently begun such a birding class at Berry College in Rome through the Continuing Education Department.

Conservation Web:

www.enr.com (environmental news network) — a world wide site with daily news, interviews, and environmental education.

<http://southeast.fws.gov/> —Fish and Wildlife Service site on issues and projects in the southeast.

<http://actionnetwork.org/> —Environmental activist site maintained for Environmental Defense. Specializes in lobbying Congress.

<http://www.edf.org/> —News, education, science, and activism all in the name of a better planet.

Send me your local conservation news at 62 Vernon Rd., Rome, GA 30165, 706-802-0686 or email: [<bikesnbirds@cs.com>](mailto:bikesnbirds@cs.com)



Photo by Earl Horn

Swallow-tailed Kite

Although many of us have had good views of this wonderful bird this summer around the state, the range and numbers of this species have been greatly reduced. Swallow-tailed Kites are considered to be of "Extremely High Conservation Concern."

You can help determine their distribution and concentrations in Georgia by watching for them during the months of March—September and reporting information to the GA Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame Program, 116 Rum Creek Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029. 912-994-1438 Attn: E.J. Williams
Email: ej_williams@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

Unconfirmed Ivory Bill sighting increases mystery

The following is from "Bird Calls" March 2000, the newsletter of the the American Bird Conservancy.

Despite the widespread belief that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker became extinct in the U.S. sometime during the last 60 years, reports of the species continue, with a recent "sighting" coming from the Pearl River in Louisiana in April 1999. Unconfirmed rumors of the species' continued existence in Cuba also remain strong. Although misidentifications of Pileated Woodpeckers as Ivory-bills are commonplace, the claim from the Pearl River has provoked serious interest on the part of scientists from a number of agencies including U.S. Fish & Wildlife and the Louisiana Museum of Natural Science. The report, which came from a Louisiana State graduate student in wildlife studies, refers to a pair allegedly seen in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, but no birds were located during follow-up surveys by a team of biologists. For now, the continued existence of the Ivory-billed remains a mystery.

Contact: Mike Parr, ABC, 202-778-9705
[<mparr@abcbirds.org>](mailto:mparr@abcbirds.org)

West Nile Virus

by Deb Barreiro

In August 1999, the first birds in the western hemisphere documented as infected with the West Nile Virus were found in New York (the pathogen was first isolated in the West Nile region of Uganda in 1937).

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recently published perspectives of emerging infectious diseases that focused on "Migratory Birds and Spread of West Nile Virus in the Western Hemisphere." In the report they concluded that birds appear to be the principal means by which West Nile Virus spreads from site to site. In the south-east, we host many migratory species that pass through New York on route to their winter locations. Ornithophilic mosquitoes, like our house mosquito, that feed on birds infected with West Nile Virus are the link to human infection.



In an effort to minimize the effects of West Nile Virus on humans, Public Health officials have recommended a plan that includes mosquito control & monitoring fall and winter avian concentrations for abnormal die-offs. By discarding unwanted water-holding containers and flushing bird baths at least twice a week you can decrease the house mosquito population (as well as the Asian Tiger Mosquito, whose role in the epidemic is uncertain).

Contact your local health department with reports of any dead birds. In particular, if you find a bird that is a migratory species and is relatively freshly dead (not stiff or eaten by ants or bugs), the health department may want to test the bird for West Nile Virus. If you need to preserve the dead bird, you may double bag and refrigerate, but do not freeze the carcass because freezing destroys the tissue that needs to be tested.

For more information on West Nile Virus, call the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta or check the CDC's electronic journal on the web: www.cdc.gov/incidod/eid/vol6no4/rappole.htm