

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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.

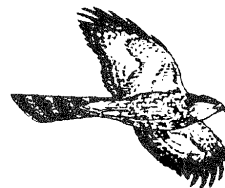
NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

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>

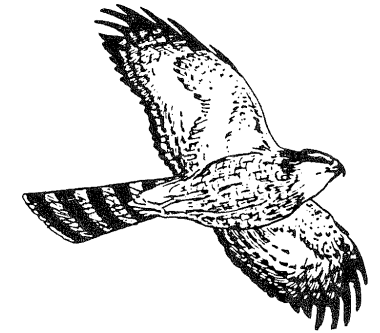
# GOShawk



Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society  
P.O. Box 5825  
Valdosta, GA 31603-5825

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# GOShawk



Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society

Georgia Rare Bird Alert: (770) 493-8862

GOS on the web: [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org)

## Recap of the Fall Meeting

Statesboro, October 6-8  
by Ken Clark

Threats of rain, cold and wind failed to discourage 90 or so GOS members from racing a cold frontal passage to Statesboro for the 123rd semi-annual GOS meeting. Their determination was rewarded as none of the bad weather materialized. Saturday was a beautiful day and Sunday was just a mite cooler. The birding was excellent under the leadership of such local luminaries as Brenda Brannen (field trip organizer), Diana Churchill, Ray Chandler and John Parrish. Field trips and groups covered areas in Bulloch County and Statesboro as well as the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal and Savannah NWR. The species count for the weekend was 116 including 19 warblers and a beautiful male Peregrine Falcon seen at the sod farm area in southern Bulloch County, which may be a first record for the county.

Participants got really close looks at various raptors in action both indoors Friday evening and in free flight Saturday thanks to Steve Hein, Wendy Denton and their assistants at the GSU Center for Wildlife Education and Raptor Center. Besides indigenous species of hawks and owls, we watched swift western Harris Hawks at work and marveled at

(Continued on page 2)

## Black-headed Gull in Brunswick

by Gene Keferl

There were only five of us on the field trip, Majorie Clark, Pat Donahoo, Dot Donahoo, Mike Chapman and me. We were approaching the old sunken barge near the boat ramp. I think Mike was about to go to the other side of the road when I saw a gull standing alone on the bank opposite the barge.

From a distance and without glasses it looked like a Laughing Gull. It was about that size. When I observed it with glasses I noticed the orange legs and bill. I have seen

Laughing Gulls with orange legs before. This bird had the overall appearance of a large Bonaparte's Gull, but it wasn't. We all observed it with a 25X spotting scope. Mike went to get a field guide and the rest of us reviewed the bird's description. After we decided that it was neither a Laughing Gull nor a Bonaparte's Gull, Mike Chapman suggested a Black-headed Gull. Indeed, it was a first winter Black-headed Gull...

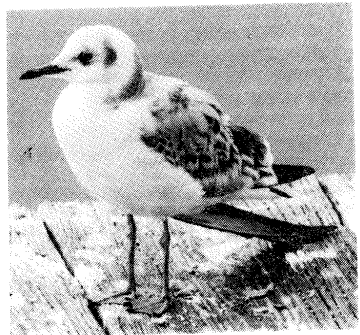


Photo by Jim Flynn

This was excerpted from the GOS website. For the rest of this great species account, go to: <http://www.gos.org/sightings/bhgu.html>

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Environmental  
Fund for Georgia  
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## Georgia Ornithological Society

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(March, June, September, December)

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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!

Elizabeth Todd & Oscar Bird	Mountain Park, GA
Dean Demarest	Forsyth, GA
Wayne Dodson	Thomasville, GA
Brett Eanes	Macon, GA
Laurel Houston (correction)	Blakely, GA
Mrs. Sidney Kimbrough	Douglasville, GA
Nathan Klaus	Forsyth, GA
Bill Lotz	Atlanta, GA
Robert & Pat Reed	Tallassee, AL
Martha Schroder	Duluth, GA

#### Fall Meeting (Continued from page 1)

the silent, swooping flight of the Eurasian Eagle Owl, a giant of the genus with wings spanning five feet or more. You can learn more about this fascinating and rapidly growing center at: <[www.bio.gasou.edu/wildlife](http://www.bio.gasou.edu/wildlife)>.

Meeting in the spacious and impressive Russell Union Building on the GSU campus, Friday's program began with a brisk, well organized and presented report by Scott Somershoe of his field research project for which he received an H. Branch Howe, Jr. grant earlier this year. It dealt with habitat selection by neo-tropical migrants transiting the U.S. southeast Atlantic coast. Steve and Wendy from the Raptor Center followed with not only hawks and owls, but also Madagascar roaches, giant millipedes, Australian bearded dragons, tree frogs and other exotic creatures. Star of the evening was a nine foot albino Burmese python displayed full length by a team of four brave volunteers from the audience. At the close, past-president and tireless, long-time Conservation and Environmental Fund for Georgia committee chair Georgine Pindar received a well-deserved Earl R. Greene Memorial Award for her years of devoted service to the society.

After a great day in the field Saturday participants enjoyed a tasty buffet dinner at the Russell Union and were entertained by long-time GOS Life Member and distinguished ornithologist, Dr. Chandler Robbins of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, with a slide-illustrated narration of a recent sea voyage from the southern tip of South America to the north-thrusting Palmer Peninsula of Antarctica. Originator of the Breeding Bird Atlas project nation-wide, author of the *Field Guide of North American Birds*, and recipient of many prestigious awards for his work in ornithology, Dr. Robbins also proved to be a fine photographer and interesting raconteur. In appreciation for his many contributions to ornithology, Dr. Robbins received an Earl R. Greene Memorial Award on this occasion, presented by selection committee member Terry Moore.

President Swiderski closed the meeting with special thanks to meeting planners and organizers Eugenia Thompson and Gail Russell and a word of appreciation to the many other volunteers who accomplish the work of the society year-in and year-out. He urged attendees to mark their calendars for the spring 2001 meeting 27-29 April in Macon.

For a complete list of the species recorded this weekend, check the GOS website: <http://www.gos.org/meetings/2000-fall.html>

## GOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Chair, Membership Committee	Kristi Avera 5406 Moss Oak Trail Lake Park, GA 31636	(229) 559-6008 kravera@datasys.net
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Chair, Checklist & Records Committee	Chuck Hunter 5363 Milieo Pl. Lilburn, GA 30047	(770) 923-4742 chuck_hunter@fws.gov
Chair, Environmental Fund For Georgia Committee	Georgine Pindar 2633 Ridgemore Rd., NW Atlanta, GA 30318	(404) 355-8454

## Southwest GA Birding Trail Proposed

Terry W. Johnson, DNR Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program Manager, has begun the process to develop a birding trail in Southwest Georgia. This will be the second birding trail following the successful Colonial Coast Birding Trail.

The area of the state proposed for a Southwest Georgia birding trail is described as west of I-75 to Alabama and south of Columbus to Florida. Johnson will be accepting site nominations during the winter months of this year. Minimum qualifications for nominating a site include it being a good place to see birds with public access and parking.

To nominate a site contact Johnson to receive the nomination form. The phone number is 478-994-1438, or you can reach him by email at: [terry\\_w\\_johnson@mail.dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:terry_w_johnson@mail.dnr.state.ga.us)

Johnson also reports that the Colonial Coast Birding Trail has become very popular and that DNR has earmarked some \$150,000 for site improvements to park trails and facilities and also for improved directional signage.

## H. Branch Howe, Jr. Graduate Student Research Grant report

*Last year I was one of the students awarded the H. Branch Howe, Jr. Graduate Student Research Grant. Following is a brief description of the work I conducted over the summer using these funds. I will send a more complete description once I have had time to complete my analysis of the data.*

*Kenneth James Feeley  
Dept. of Zoology, Duke University*

In 1986, Venezuela completed construction on the Raul Leoni dam creating a huge 4300 km<sup>2</sup> hydroelectric reservoir. As the water level rose to over 150 meters, hundreds of islands were created out of what were once hilltops.

This past summer I spent three months censusing the bird population of thirty of the new islands ranging in size from 0.16 hectares to over 350 hectares. Birds were censused using standard point count and spot mapping techniques. In total, over 5000 individual observations were made of over 120 species. These included Harpy Eagles (*Harpia harpija*), Curassows (*Crax alector*), Amazon Kingfishers (*Chloroceryle amazona*) and several species of parrots (*Amazona amazonica*, *Amazona farinosa*, *Pionus menstius*). These data will now be used to determine if the occurrence of bird species on the different islands can be attributed to such factors as island size, distance from the mainland, abundance of insects and abundance of nest predators. In addition, I will compare the data to censuses conducted in 1993. Hopefully I will be able to determine if the islands have reached equilibrium or are still in a state of transition.

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of GOS and the H. Branch Howe, Jr. Graduate Student Research Grant. Thank you very much.

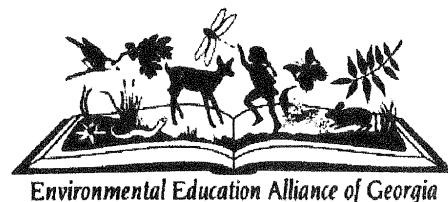
## Georgia's Environment: Reaching and Teaching Communities Conference March 2-4, 2001 Columbus, GA

Throughout Georgia people are learning about the natural world and how we impact it. With their knowledge comes the desire to get involved.

Environmental educators from nature centers, museums, local, state and national parks, wildlife areas, state and national forests, botanical gardens, zoos, universities, schools and government outreach programs are reaching and teaching communities across the state. Community members from schools, scout groups, churches and other organizations are taking action and sharing what they learn.

The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia is hosting a wonderful weekend of workshops, lectures and hands-on learning opportunities. Field trips to several local sites will be featured including Callaway Gardens, Oxbow Meadows EE Center, and the Dragonfly Riverboat tour on the Chattahoochee. GOS is sponsoring a Birds 'n Bagels birding event at Oxbow Meadows on Saturday morning with GOS leaders. Keynote speaker of the conference will be Janisse Ray, author of *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*.

For information, call Peter Gordon at Elachee Nature Science Center 770-535-1976 <[elachee@mindspring.com](mailto:elachee@mindspring.com)> or visit the EEA website: <[www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org)>



## 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.

## President's Report

Two years have flown by since Ken Clark penned a report to the membership in the December 1998 issue of the *GOShawk*. He completed his second term as president in 1999 and turned the gavel over to me at the fall meeting at Jekyll Island.

During the past two years GOS has accomplished a lot thanks to the efforts of the officers, committee chairs and you, our members.

GOS continues to be strong financially with enough revenue and reserves to carry out and improve our programs. A more complete report of our financial status will appear in the March newsletter.

Membership in GOS has remained stable at 500 members which includes 155 life members. Acting on recommendations by the membership committee, we have developed two different checklists for the birds of our state and these have been distributed to parks, refuges, education centers and bird clubs throughout the state along with copies of our membership brochure. We hope that this effort will make GOS better known to those interested in birds throughout the state.

In his 1998 report, President Clark stated that a GOS website was being created by Jim Flynn. Since that report Jim has indeed created a top notch website for GOS, packed with information and links to other organizations throughout the country. The website has also become an important source of new members for GOS. If you have not visited our website lately, take a look at [www.gos.org](http://www.gos.org).

GOS continues to actively support wildlife conservation and environmental protection. A sampling of the issues and concerns which GOS has addressed include: CARA, horseshoe crab conservation and shade grown coffee. We also support organizations such as Partners in Flight and Georgia's non-game wildlife program.

Thanks to many of you who have done field work, the Breeding Bird Atlas project is well on the way to completion and eventual publication. Special thanks to GOS members Todd Schneider and Rick West who have done so much to make this project a success.

We are particularly proud of the H. Branch Howe, Jr. Graduate Student Research Grant program, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. Awards have been made for research projects by 13 students through this program. It is very satisfying to see the recipients who are now working as biologists, teachers and technicians.

Finally, I am very happy to report that our journal, *The Oriole*, is very close to being published in a timely manner by the co-editors, Ray Chandler and John Parrish.

*John Swiderski, President*

## 2000 Georgia list information

For those of you who keep life and year lists of bird species seen in Georgia, the *GOShawk* will publish these totals in the March 2001 issue.

**Listers are encouraged to consult the GOS Checklist of the Birds of Georgia, 1999** for the current Regular and Provisional Lists. This list can be downloaded or ordered from GOS via the website.

Three of our more "energetic" birders, Earl Horn, Bob Zaremba and Tom Egan have been working on "big year" totals for 2000. As of this writing they are all over 300. You may remember that Giff Beaton had a remarkable 317 species in Georgia in 1998.

Totals should reflect numbers as of 12/31/00. Send information to the *GOShawk* editor (see p. 2).

## Birding Georgia

### ...an annotated checklist?

As many of you know, the GOS Checklist and Records Committee is hard at work to produce a long anticipated new edition of our *Annotated Checklist*. Publication is expected next year.

In the meantime you may find some very helpful distribution and status information for birds in Georgia tucked away in *Birding Georgia* by Giff Beaton. This fine book is primarily a guide to birding locations throughout the state.

But the book also includes status and distribution bar graphs for all birds found in the state; and, additionally, 27 pages covering most species with narrative comments about distribution, rarity, etc. I have found these pages very helpful in sorting out questions about bird status throughout the state.

GOS offers *Birding Georgia* for \$19 per copy, postpaid. To order, send your check payable to GOS, to P.O. Box 5825, Valdosta, GA 31603

## Membership Dues Notice

GOS maintains dues records on a calendar year basis, with renewals due in January of each year. Payment of your dues now for the year 2001 will save us the cost of mailing renewal notices. Your mailing label on this newsletter has a code in the upper right hand corner showing your membership class (Regular, Sustaining, Patron or Student) and the calendar year you have previously paid for.

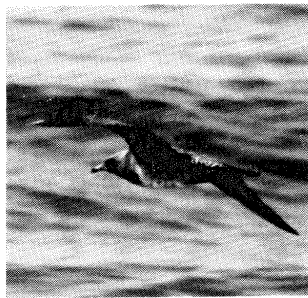
You can renew by simply sending your check to GOS, P.O. Box 5707, Valdosta, GA 31603. The various membership rates are also found on the back of this newsletter.

**The anatomy of a jaeger record**

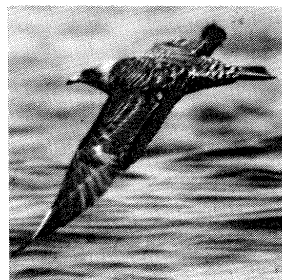
by Bruce Hallett

Ed. note: The following note went out to a group of pelagic birders following an August excursion off the Georgia coast. The group, consisting of many of the "big guns" in the Georgia birding community, were still wondering about a jaeger that some thought looked not quite right for a Parasitic. Fortunately, at least one of them got a good photograph. This sighting was subsequently accepted by the Records & Checklist Committee for a first Georgia record. This is a good account of the painstaking care that must go into any record documentation.

I am assuming that all of you are aware that the jaeger we saw on the afternoon of Aug. 28—that possible Parasitic Jaeger—was later confirmed to be a Long-tailed Jaeger. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that jaeger identification on the seas causes problems. If accepted by the Records Committee, and I assume it will be, this would be the first documented record for Georgia. That's a big deal!



I thought all of you might like to have a quick accounting of how this all came about. When we first saw this thing on the water, Giff (Beaton) and I had a brief exchange that the bird looked like a jaeger and maybe a Long-tailed since it looked so small. I then ran (stumbled) to get my camera because I had been through this before on other trips, not only misidentifying juvenal Long-tails versus Parasitics, but also not taking photos to help with the identification. The bird took off, and I concentrated on getting as many frames as I could. My slides were developed and I got three flight shots, two in focus and one not.



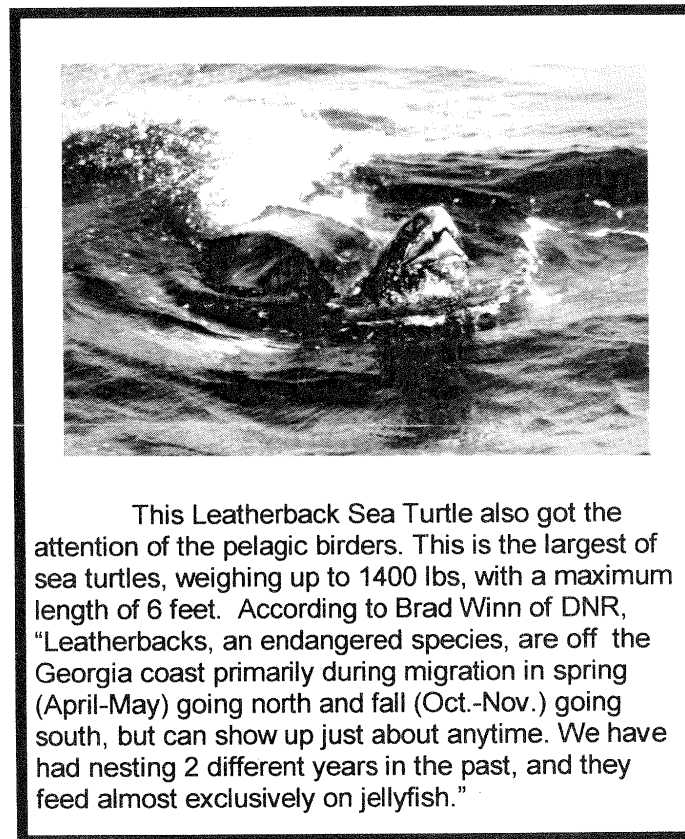
When the jaeger took off, I agreed with Giff's assessment that there was a flash of white in the wing at the base of the primaries, the chest looked heavy enough; and overall, it appeared to be a warm brown — all suggestive of Parasitic. With this in mind, I then looked at my slides and said "uh-oh." First, the bird is a colder, gray-brown rather than the

warm brown I thought I had seen (probably having to do with the light conditions at the time); and secondly, the white at the base of the primaries is only on the underwing, not the upperwing. Parasitics would have white flashes on both wing surfaces; and while Long-tails don't have these wing flashes, the juveniles do have them, but only on the underwing. The upperwing shows

No white but does show a white shaft to the outermost primary which is characteristic of all Long-tailed Jaegers. As to the heavier-looking chest, I checked some other photos and books and realized that while the chest does look heavy, the rest of the body outline tapers off quickly, unlike Parasitic. However, in the future, I don't think I'm going to rely on this feature much anymore. A few other points: juvenal Long-tails have wider barring in the upper and undertail coverts than Parasitics; the belly is whiter, making it contrast with the darker breast, whereas Parasitics would be more uniform in color underneath; and the central tail feathers are rounded versus the sharper tail points of Parasitics.

Thus, with these nuggets of information, I traveled up to Marietta to visit Mr. Beaton and give him my opinions. He concurred with most of what I had to say, but, correctly, thought it was time for the power of the internet. He sent the slides out to some people he thought might be helpful judges. A day or so later Michael O'Brien and Dave Sibley (very big guns from the northeast) sent messages back, corroborated the Long-tailed identification and gave their reasons.

Photos by Bruce Hallett



This Leatherback Sea Turtle also got the attention of the pelagic birders. This is the largest of sea turtles, weighing up to 1400 lbs, with a maximum length of 6 feet. According to Brad Winn of DNR, "Leatherbacks, an endangered species, are off the Georgia coast primarily during migration in spring (April-May) going north and fall (Oct.-Nov.) going south, but can show up just about anytime. We have had nesting 2 different years in the past, and they feed almost exclusively on jellyfish."

**Christmas Bird Counts — 2000**

Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Counts will be held around Georgia during the period of December 14-30. If you are interested in participating in one of the open counts, contact the compiler as soon as possible. You must sign up ahead of time to participate. This is a great way to spend a day with the birds during the holidays. Sam Pate has mentioned that he needs help with the Eufaula NWR count. Information obtained after this publication deadline, can be found on the GOS website.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Compiler</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
<u>Dec. 14th (Thursday)</u> Harris Neck NWR	Steve Calver	912-351-0841	James.S.Calver@SAS02.usace.army.mil
<u>Dec. 15th (Friday)</u> Eufaula NWR	Sam Pate	706-327-2574	spate@brookstone.ga.net
<u>Dec. 16th (Saturday)</u> Athens	Mary Case Eugenia Thompson	706-548-3848 706-549-7318	erthomps@negia.net
Cumberland Island	By invitation.		
Macon	Marie Amerson	478-746-5697	amerson@hom.net
Peachtree City	Brock Hutchins	770-461-5042	brockhutchins@msn.com
St. Catherines Island	By invitation.		
<u>Dec. 17th (Sunday)</u> Atlanta	Giff Beaton Bill Blakeslee	770-509-1482 404-881-6570	giffbeaton@mindspring.com wpb900@aol.com
<u>Dec. 18th (Monday)</u> Piedmont NWR & Rum Creek WMA	Terry Johnson	912-994-1438	terry_w_johnson@mail.dnr.state.ga.us
<u>Dec. 23rd (Saturday)</u> Aiken, SC	Calvin Zippler	803-642-2264	
<u>Dec. 26th (Tuesday)</u> Augusta	Anne Waters	706-793-2788	
<u>Dec. 29th (Friday)</u> Columbus	Sam Pate	706-327-2574	spate@brookstone.ga.net
Okefenokee NWR	Sheila Willis	912-285-0419	
<u>Dec. 30th (Saturday)</u> Albany	Alan Ashley	912-439-8232	pa521aa117@prodigy.net
Bainbridge	Oscar Dewberry	912-246-1890	boscar@planttel.net
Callaway Gardens	LuAnn Craighton	706-663-5192	lkraig@callawaygardens.com
Glynn County	Mike Chapman	912-262-6370	mchapman@darientel.net