

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.

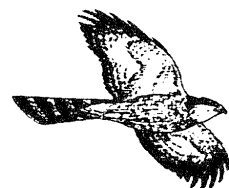
NAME(S) _____

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



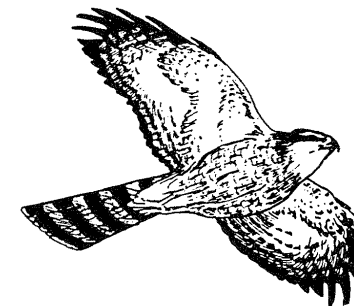
Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
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GOShawk



Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society

Georgia Rare Bird Alert: (770) 493-8862

GOS on the web: www.gos.org

Spring Meeting is coming! Macon, April 27-29, 2001

Make plans now to attend the spring meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society in Macon. All members will receive a registration packet shortly. We will be based at the Ramada Inn this year, and are looking forward to hearing the latest on the hummingbird studies of Bob and Martha Sargent at the Saturday night banquet, a program by Jim Ferrari, President of Ocmulgee Audubon on Friday night and field trips coordinated by Jerry Amerson to great spots such as the Piedmont NWR, Rum Creek WMA, Bond Swamp trails and the Macon Brickyard ponds. Non-members are welcome to attend this meeting and should contact Eugenia Thompson (706-549-7318) email: erthomps@negia.net or Gail Russell (770-9568469) email: grussell@mindspring.com for registration information.

Recap of rare birds this winter by Jeff Sewell

A parade of rarities in December, particularly western hummingbirds, closed out the millennium and made the year 2000 the most phenomenal in my Georgia birding experience. The momentum carried over into the new year, but finally, as of this writing, has begun to return to normal. Perhaps it was the much colder

than normal weather in late November and December that drove so many western and northern species to our state. There were so many western hummingbirds that even with new banders working the area, all the birds could not be checked. Of course, most were **Rufous Hummingbirds**, but the most amazing species was **Calliope**, with five banded in December and January! There were three **Black-chinneds**, Georgia's third **Anna's** and our fourth **Broad-tailed**; but surprisingly, no Allen's Hummingbirds.

The impressive list of western strays was lead by two reports of *Myiarchus* flycatchers, presumably **Ash-throated**, one on St. Catherines Island and one in Brooks County. If the photographs of the Brooks County bird are confirmed, this may become Georgia's first accepted record of this species. The long-awaited **Lapland Longspur** invaded the state with at least seven birds being seen in three widely separated areas. Also, much anticipated, a **Common Merganser** (female), finally appeared at an accessible spot for many to see for the first time. Even **Lark Bunting** was reported, although it could not be relocated.

This Ross' Goose spent two weeks at the "Huie" ponds in Clayton Co. in December; and was, remarkably, one of three in the state this winter. There are only about ten records for Georgia.



Photo by Bruce Hallett

Following is a quick listing of other western or northern strays recently reported: **Ross' Goose, Tundra Swan, Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoters (inland), White-winged Dove, Northern Flicker—red-shafted form, Vermillion Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Clay-colored Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird.**

Obviously, we are receiving many more reports than ever due to better communication and an ever-increasing number of birders in the field. It was also helpful to us all to have three birders working on big year lists, scouring the state and coming up with great birds. I think by any measure, it was a very big year for most of us.

Note: Many of the sightings mentioned here have not been reviewed by the Checklist & Records Committee.

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Georgia Ornithological Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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GOShawk, Editor	Carol Lambert

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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!

- Peggy Baker, Pensacola Beach, FL
- Kathleen Brady, Thomasville, GA
- David Cree, Peachtree City, GA
- Raymond Damian, Watkinsville, GA
- Terri Davis, Kennesaw, GA
- Boyd Goss, Newnan, GA
- Deborah Grimes, Lutz, FL
- Randy Hammer & Angela Hughes, Cumming, GA
- Marilyn Harris, Decatur, GA
- Francis Kimball, Warner Robins, GA
- Valerie Krenicky, Rincon, GA
- Helen Lovell, Statesboro, GA
- Kate MacQueen, Decatur, GA
- Sandy & Simon Miller, Atlanta, GA
- Peter Range, Richmond Hill, GA
- Dianna & Jimmy Wedincamp, Swainsboro, GA
- Thomas Wells, Fairburn, GA

William J. Culpepper

A former GOS member, William J. Culpepper, passed away after a short illness on January 4, 2001. He and his widow, Virginia, were members from 1976 to 1993, and she served as Secretary to the Executive Committee for a time. Bill, as he was known to most, was a Valdosta native where he lived for 91 years. His interest in birds was still keen and he was able to carefully observe the Baltimore Oriole flock which appeared in the yard of their Valdosta home on December 30, 2000.

Membership Directory

The Membership Committee will publish a revised GOS Membership List for distribution with the June issue of the GOShawk. Please submit any changes in your address, phone number or email address to Kristi Avera, Membership Committee, 5406 Moss Oak Trail, Lake Park, GA 31636 or by email at <kravera@datasys.net>.

It is **not** necessary to send Kristi a message about the area code changes in Georgia as those have already been updated.

Nominating Committee Appointed

In preparation for election of officers at the fall meeting this year a nominating committee has been appointed by the president, John Swiderski. The committee consists of Carol Lambert (chair), Giff Beaton and Ken Clark. They will be seeking nominees to serve in the five elective offices for the next two year term. The elective offices to be filled are: president, 1st vice-president, 2nd vice-president, treasurer and secretary. The proposed slate will be published in the September issue of the GOShawk and voted on at the fall meeting in Savannah.

"Georgia Big Year" continued from p. 8

The next month was quiet and it was a good thing since Earl and I were both in Alaska for almost three weeks. When we returned to Atlanta, a **Curlew Sandpiper** showed up on Tybee Island near Savannah in early July.

It was August before we would be able to add any more birds to our year list, and two days of pelagic trips out of Savannah allowed us **Cory and Audubon's Shearwaters** (in record numbers), **Black-capped Petrel** and a first state record for **Long-tailed Jaeger** (thanks to the camera work of Bruce Hallett). The pelagic trip also put us over the 300 mark by the end of August.

The fall migration allowed us to clean up some missing birds from spring, and track down some of the more difficult migrants in Georgia like **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and **Wilson's Warbler**. Only Tom Egan was able to add **Mourning Warbler** to his year list, Earl and I chased numerous reports but could never find this elusive species.

For me, the fun began in November when we started to get some western vagrants in rapid succession. It began with a **Western Kingbird** in south Georgia which took two trips to find because we went to the wrong sod farm the first day. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** at West Point Lake on 11/10, followed by the first state record of **Black-headed Gull** at Brunswick on 11/12 and a **Franklin's Gull** at Eufaula Lake on 11/17 pretty much gave me the hat-trick for gulls in Georgia in about a week. I ended November with 314 species, 2 short of tying Giff's record but with no regular species left to find.

The birding gods shone down brightly in December. It had been a dismal winter for hummingbirds the past year and nothing besides **Rufous** had shown up so far this year. However, between 12/3 and 12/22, we recorded **Broad-tailed, Anna's, Calliope and Black-chinned Hummingbirds**. Throw in a sighting of **Lapland Longspur**, a species that has been absent from Georgia for almost 10 years and the total just before Christmas was 320. Both Earl and Tom were at 319 at this point, but both still needed **White-winged Scoter** which was usually a gettable bird in the winter.

On Christmas Eve, when more rational people would have been finishing their Christmas shopping for their wives (sorry Deb), Tom and I went to a local lake to add some ducks to our Cobb County lists that had been seen on a CBC the previous week. We set up our scopes and in the middle of several hundred **Hooded Mergansers**, out swam a female **Common Merganser**. Common Mergansers haven't been seen in Georgia for a long time so we both were pretty much stunned by

this find!

The last week of the year was a blur. I can hardly recall the "Tour du Georgia," although I went to try and find another rarity. The three of us were knotted at 321 when Earl and Tom added **White-winged Scoter** at West Point Dam. Earl took the lead by two when he found both a **Long-tailed Duck** and **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in the same day on 12/28. Tom and I were both ready to throw in the towel—even if we were to find the duck, the blackbird was a long shot. Miraculously, the next morning we picked up **Long-tailed Duck** and later that day, amid tens-of-thousands of blackbirds, an adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** stepped out of the crowd and became the 323rd year bird for both Tom and I. The next two days involved mad dashes to the coast and back to Columbus in the western part of the state but no new birds were added. The big year was over.

I want to thank Tom Egan and Earl Horn for being gentlemen and good sportsmen. We shared our sighting information freely and made every effort to ensure that each of us had a fair chance at seeing any and all birds found. I am deeply indebted to my wife, Debbie, for being a true friend and excellent birding companion during this record setting year. Now, I'm ready for that long winters' nap!
January 30, 2001

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

by Stephen Vincent Benét

Some men live for warlike deeds,
Some for women's words.
John James Audubon Lived to look at birds.
Pretty birds and funny birds,
All our native fowl
From the little cedar waxwing
To the Great Horned Owl.
Let the wind blow hot or cold,
Let it rain or snow,
Everywhere the birds went Audubon would go.
Scrambling through a wilderness,
Floating down a stream,
All around America
In a feathered dream.
Thirty years of traveling,
Pockets often bare,
(Lucy Bakewell Audubon Patched them up with care).
Followed grebe and meadowlark,
Saw them sing and splash.
(Lucy Bakewell Audubon Somehow raised the cash).
Drew them all the way they lived In their habitats.
(Lucy Bakewell Audubon Sometimes wondered "Cats?")
Colored them and printed them
In a giant book, "Birds of North America"—
All the world said, "Look!"
Gave him medals and degrees,
Called him noble names, —Lucy Bakewell Audubon
Kissed her queer John James.

GOS Historical Note

by Ken Clark

The last time GOS met in Macon was in the fall of 1986, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the society's founding. We met in the same Ramada Inn that will be the venue this spring; however, a new conference facility has been added since then. We will enjoy a more spacious accommodation this time around.

Tommy Patterson of Dublin was our president that year. Don Duncan of Kathleen was 1st VP. A special committee comprised of Dick Parks, Frank McCamey and Betsy Phillips was charged with arranging a very special program for the occasion. Dick and Eulalie Gibbs of North Augusta put together a handsome 50th Anniversary pamphlet and Frank McCamey introduced our very special guest speaker, GOS founder, charter and life member Dr. Roger Tory Peterson. Harriett DiGioia of Dalton was GOShawk editor then. Here are excerpts from her account of the meeting:

"Many thanks go to all who worked long and hard to make the meeting successful. 276 people registered; 301 attended the banquet. 97 species of birds were seen. Bob Loftin kicked off the meeting in style with his excellent slide presentation "Arctic Odyssey." Ron Pulliam presented a well-attended paper session Saturday afternoon. What can be said about Roger Tory Peterson's banquet slide presentation? Marvelous! Educational, entertaining, great photography. Excellent in all respects.

"Two Earle R. Greene Awards were presented. One to Roger Tory Peterson and one to Norman Giles, also a charter member and first editor of The Oriole. Congratulations!"

Shortly after returning home to Old Lyme, Connecticut, Dr. Peterson wrote Tommy Patterson that the pleasant interlude in Macon was "great fun." He went on to write:

"It seems as though a lot of things have been experiencing their 50th anniversary lately. The mid-30's was a period of great ferment. We were pulling out of the depression and there was real hope for the future. A lot of organizations and ideas were being launched, including my own Field Guides, Hawk Mountain, Audubon Magazine, the Duck Stamp, the Wildlife Federation Stamps and at least a dozen other ventures - including the Georgia

Ornithological Society. With best regards, (signed) Roger."

Auction of Peterson print

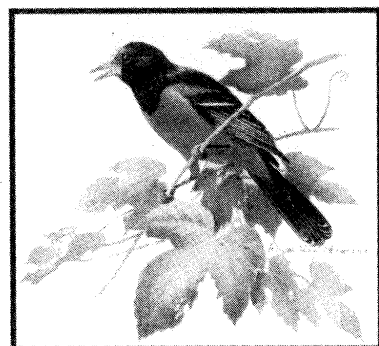
by John Swiderski
GOS President

Following our 50th anniversary meeting in Macon in 1986, prints of the late Dr. Roger Tory Peterson's "Orchard Oriole" were made and offered for sale to our members and the public. Proceeds from the sale of these prints over the years has formed an integral part of the funds reserved for support of the H. Branch Howe, Jr., Graduate Student Research Grants awarded annually by GOS.

This spring we will again convene in Macon, as described by Ken Clark in the previous column. At the time the prints were made available, print #1 was reserved for use at a future time. The GOS Executive Committee has decided to offer the #1 print at auction at the Saturday evening banquet on April 28, 2001. Those in attendance will have the opportunity to bid.

We understand that there may be some members who would like to bid on this unique print, but will be unable to attend the meeting. If you are in this situation you will find a form enclosed with this mailing which will allow you to file a "book" bid by mail prior to the meeting. Simply fill out the form and follow the mailing instructions to enter your mail bid in the auction.

Also available at this auction will be a framed copy of the Richard A. Parks print, "Brown Thrasher and Cherokee Rose." This item has been donated to the auction by past president, Frank McCamey. See you at the auction!



GEORGIA BIRDERS AND THEIR LISTS*

December 31, 2000

	Name	Home	GA Life List—2000	GA Life List—1999	GA Year List—2000	GA Year List—1999
1	Bob Manns**	Camden, ME	368*	371	-	-
2	Giff Beaton	Marietta, GA	355	345	304	300
2	Jeff Sewell	Tucker, GA	355	345	302	271
3	Bruce Dralle	Marietta, GA	350	342	-	-
3	Pierre Howard	Atlanta, GA	350	342	261	272
3	Terry Moore	Roswell, GA	350	349	-	-
4	Bill Blakeslee	Atlanta, GA	347	340	-	-
5	Billy Dunbar	Watkinsville, GA	344	340	-	-
6	Paul Sykes	Watkinsville, GA	342	336	-	-
7	Jim Flynn	Cumming, GA	341	327	278	274
7	Bruce Hallett	Atlanta, GA	341	-	-	-
8	Paul Raney	Stockbridge, GA	340	337	265	-
9	Joe Greenberg	Atlanta, GA	339	339	-	-
9	Bob Zaremba	Marietta, GA	339	321	323	299
10	Brenda Dunbar	Watkinsville, GA	335	332	-	-
11	Carol Lambert	Tucker, GA	334	330	247	242
12	Deb Zaremba	Marietta, GA	333	311	302	-
13	Earl Horn	Lawrenceville, GA	332	304	323	291
14	Anne Mursch	Woodstock, GA	331	-	-	-
15	Jerry Amerson	Macon, GA	328	317	239	230
15	Karen Theodorou	Lawrenceville, GA	328	312	-	-
16	Aubrey Scott	Jonesboro, GA	325	313	-	-
17	Marie Amerson	Macon, GA	324	312	232	224
17	Tom Egan	Atlanta, GA	324	233	323	-
18	Michael Bell	Bainbridge, GA	323	310	256	257
19	Mike Chapman	Brunswick, GA	319	311	-	-
20	Rusty Trump	Suwanee, GA	317	271	296	239

(List continued on p. 4)

GEORGIA BIRDERS AND THEIR LISTS* (continued from p. 3)

	Name	Home	GA Life List—2000	GA Life List—1999	GA Year List—2000	GA Year List—1999
21	Peggy Moore	Roswell, GA	314	-	-	-
22	Doris Cohrs	Darien, GA	311	-	-	-
23	Lydia Thompson	St. Simons Island, GA	310	-	-	-
24	Johnny Parks	Ringgold, GA	307	304	-	-
25	Gene Keferl	Brunswick, GA	302	281	263	244
25	John Swiderski	Valdosta, GA	302	-	-	-
26	Marion Dobbs	Rome, GA	300	-	-	-
27	Brad Bergstrom	Valdosta, GA	299	287	249	-
28	Joel Hitt	Lawrenceville, GA	298	293	-	-
29	Nancy Gobris	Macon, GA	287	-	-	-
30	Mark Beebe	Marietta, GA	273	251	260	-
31	Rick Waldrop	Cleveland, TN	268	-	-	-
32	Melissa Pappas	Marietta, GA	258	-	-	-
33	Jim Pappas	Marietta, GA	255	-	-	-
34	Dot Freeman	Orlando, FL	254	-	-	-
35	Becky Beaton	Marietta, GA	253	253	-	-
36	Ted Reissing	Dunwoody, GA	229	199	170	-
37	Michael Bender	Athens, GA	214	-	188	-
38	Dennis Forsythe	Charleston, SC	205	205	-	-

* This listing includes birders with Georgia life list totals of more than 200 bird species.

** Species deleted from 1999 list by Bob Manns as having Hypothetical List status

The year 2000 was an incredible year of birding in Georgia for many of us. As mentioned in Jeff Sewell's column on p. 1, the last two months of the year were nothing less than remarkable. Even more striking when looking over this list is that 34 people have 300+ bird species in Georgia. Obviously, there are many other birders who don't report, but who have also attained these numbers. When the GOShawk started compiling this list in 1994, only 10 Georgia birders reported having 300 or more species for the state.

In 1998 Giff Beaton stunned us all by observing 316 species of birds in Georgia during one year, setting not only a state record, but apparently a bar for others to challenge. During 2000 three birders, Tom Egan, Earl Horn and Bob Zarembo have raised the roof on "big year" numbers in Georgia. All three ended the year with 323 species. Three other birders, Giff Beaton, Jeff Sewell and Deb Zarembo all observed over 300 species during the year. Granted, it was a great year for rarities, but this is also a great commentary on the improved methods of communication among birders in this state. With the help of many more birders in the field (and yard), the Rare Bird Alert and Georgia Birders Online we were all able to see many more species. Information collected by these three men on species, habitat and new birding locations was shared among themselves and the rest of us as they covered the state over and over again

(Continued on page 8)

Conservation News

by Stephen Stewart
Conservation Committee Chair

The year 2000 was a big year for environmental and conservation issues. The largest conservation legislation ever to make its way to congress, CARA (Conservation and Reinvestment Act), was eventually whittled down and fell far short of its original goals and a vote. With only a few days left in his term, President Clinton signed into law several pieces of conservation legislation with broad impacts on the nation and forests in our own state. In Georgia, several conservation issues are on going with many benefits to our birds. What follows is a summary of recent national and state conservation legislation and projects impacting birds and their habitat.

As mentioned above CARA, while not defeated, was greatly amended and did not reach a vote in the Senate before Congress adjourned in the fall. The legislation had support from all 50 governors, over 6000 organizations, and was passed by the House of Representatives on May 11, 2000. Now CARA, which will provide \$45 billion over the next 15 years, is being hailed as a way for President Bush to enact bipartisan legislation in his first 100 days in office. Keep your fingers crossed for this much needed conservation legislation.

On January 5, President Clinton signed the final Roadless Area Protection Policy which protects 58.5 millions acres of our National Forests from further road construction. This policy has direct implications for the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests in Georgia.

The out-going President also issued an Executive Order on Migratory Birds. This Order requires that all Federal agencies reduce or avoid any activity that negatively impacts migratory birds and habitat. The Order will assist federal agencies in complying with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

To our South, Florida Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy are fighting to ban the use of Fenthion, a chemical used in mosquito control in that state. The risks of Fenthion to all life are well documented.

In Georgia, plans are being made to use dredging spoils from the Brunswick Harbor Deepening Project to construct a bird nesting island. The island would lie in St. Simon's Sound and would result in about 16 acres of nesting habitat. Least Terns are only one of the species that would benefit from this project. There was no word on when the project would begin.

Limits on the harvest of horseshoe crabs have now been set by all the eastern seaboard

states. For years these crabs were caught and used as bait for the seafood industry as well as for medical purposes. This indiscriminate harvest has resulted in a drastically low population. As you may know, several species of migrating shorebirds depend on the eggs of the horseshoe crab as the primary food source on their journeys. The Georgia House of Representatives recently passed HB 172 which

- Prohibits the harvesting of horseshoe crabs unless the harvester possesses a valid license from DNR for medical harvesting or a valid personal commercial fishing license.
- Prohibits the taking of horseshoe crabs for bait except during the time that salt waters are open to trawling for shrimp, whelk or blue crab.
- Prohibits taking more than 25 horseshoe crabs per person or 75 horseshoe crabs per boat (limit does not apply to medical harvesting).

Finally, the Georgia Greenspace Program has begun for 40 qualifying, high growth counties. This program allows private individuals and local governments to donate or sell property easement rights for greenspace. They would still own the land but it would be designated as agricultural or forestry land forever. Donated land is exempt from property and inheritance taxes and is not affected by the sale to a new owner. Local governments can use funds from the program to purchase land, which may then only be used for passive recreation such as walking trails and picnic tables. The program is said to especially benefit farmers since their greenspace property will be exempt from taxes. Development of the land is prohibited, but in some cases single family homes will be allowed.

If you have local conservation issues that may affect bird life in your area please let me know so that I may elicit the help of our members and organization.
Stephen Stewart 706-802-0686 or
email: <bikesnbirds@cs.com>

Environmental Fund for Georgia (EFG)

by Georgine Pindar
EFG Committee Chair

Earth Day Celebration at Magnolia Hall

Among other activities that EFG is sponsoring to celebrate Earth Day 2001 is a function on Friday night, April 20th at Magnolia Hall in Piedmont Park in Atlanta.

The Silent Auction is always an important part of the evening because it brings in revenue for the participating members (GOS is a founding organization). Dick Parks will contribute one of his beautiful framed prints, for which we are very grateful. In addition, Giff Beaton has graciously consented to take a winning bidder on a birding excursion in the Atlanta area. This item "Birding with Giff Beaton" will also include a copy of his book *Birding Georgia*. Thank you Giff.

("GA Birders" Continued from page 4)

in their quests. As exhausting as it was for them, it was also a lot of fun for the many birders who followed their progress, and often their footsteps, benefiting from their great effort. Who's next?

Carol Lambert, Editor

Georgia Birders,

I've spent the last several days going over the list of amazing birds seen in Georgia during 2000. I was trying to narrow down the list and comment on individual birds of importance to me during my Big Year. However, as much time as I spend looking at the list, my thoughts continually wander to the people who made this year possible. With this in mind, I felt it was my turn to weigh in with my gratitude to all of the people who have helped, guided and befriended me during the year. I want to thank Bob and Bud (Earl) for welcoming me into the melee and for being patient and encouraging while I learned the ropes. For those others, I hope to be able to thank you in person this year as I slow down and concentrate on working on my birding skills. It has been a phenomenal year and I will always be thankful for the birds and the birders I came in contact with in 2000.

As for birds, I got **Lincoln Sparrow** in October as my 300th state bird after considerable time and effort. Very elusive but well worth the wait.

Tom Egan
January 9, 2001



Georgia Big Year Account by Bob Zarembo

This past year is in the record books now, and it proved to be an exciting one in Georgia ornithological history. Over the course of the year, I was fortunate to record 323 species in Georgia, breaking the Big Year record set by Giff Beaton in 1998 of 316 species. I was not alone in my accomplishment, as two other Georgia birders, Earl Horn and Tom Egan also recorded 323 species last year. When the year began, both Earl and I had declared our intentions to attempt a Georgia Big Year. Tom, although a late arrival to the game, came on strong in the second half of the year and stealthily caught us by the end of the year! Although we all approached the Big Year attempt differently, and recorded different birds

to attain the 323 species, it was fitting that the contest end in a tie.

No big year attempt is accomplished alone. I am deeply indebted to the numerous birders around the state who so freely offered advice, sighting information and staked out some of the rarities recorded. Giff Beaton was especially helpful this past year, even when his record appeared to be in jeopardy. As always, there is no way to tell what the year will produce in the way of rarities and the results are dependent upon a good year for vagrants. This year was no exception, and we were lucky to have an excellent year for western vagrants and hummingbirds. Several new state records, as in the case of **Black-headed Gull** and rarities such as **Curlew Sandpiper** helped to boost the total. Our mark of 323 represents 81% of all the regular and accidental birds on the state checklist. It also represents an incredible 97% of all the birds reported in Georgia for the year! Obviously, there were very few misses last year. Of the reported birds that one would deem "chaseable", the major misses any of us had were **Lark Sparrow** (several reported), **Western Tanager** (one report), **Magnificent Frigatebird** (several on the coast), **Brandt, Hudsonian Godwit, Limpkin** and **Fulvous Whistling-duck** (all one-day wonders on the coast) and **Ash-throated Flycatcher** and **White-winged Dove** (seen on a CBC on a remote barrier island). For the regularly occurring species, none of us recorded **Black Rail** although some arrived at their normal breeding area later in the season and we did not have access to the site on private property. **Connecticut Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Black-billed Cuckoo** and **Golden Eagle** were noticeably missing this past year as none were reported anywhere in the state. Personally, my biggest miss last year was the **Bell's Vireo** which Walt Chambers found near Columbus in the spring. The bird eluded my searching on five successive days, and more frustrating was the fact that other people were finding the bird shortly after my leaving! Since Earl and Tom both ticked off the bird it was a huge miss for me.

The year started out great as we were able to tally some good birds including all the winter finches. The best find early on was the mini-invasion of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** in the northeast part of the state in January. Things remained fairly quiet during the winter with **Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull** and **Vermilion Flycatcher** being the only significant unexpected additions to the list. Spring migration was about average. The most notable vagrant was the first state record for **Spotted Towhee** which showed up at a feeder in Marietta and stayed for about a week allowing everyone to see it. Earl and I ended the spring season in a virtual tie, with only a two bird difference at 281.

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Georgia Breeding Bird Atlas Project Status and Progress through 2000

by Rick West

This project has now accumulated over 80,000 unique observations of birds—that is, the total number of breeding species found in each block summed up over all the blocks studied. Over 28,000 records were turned in this year. We have met our primary goal of finding 50 or more breeding species in each priority block, except where diversity was low (e.g. salt marsh, high elevation areas and pine plantations) or where access was difficult (e.g., some coastal areas and the Okefenokee Swamp). These observations produced distributional maps showing gaps for some species that are probably continuously distributed. We need to fill in as many of these gaps as we can.

Plans for 2001

For this reason we are continuing the Atlas for an additional year. In the 2001 season we will complete the survey of the priority blocks, upgrade selected priority blocks to 60 or more breeding species, and fill in distribution gaps by searching for additional species outside of the priority blocks. In doing this we will concentrate on some under-reported species including rails, owls, American Woodcock, Wild Turkey, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Common Nighthawk, Chuck-wills-widow/Whip-poor-will, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, warblers, Seaside Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow.

We need your help!

GOS members are urged to contribute additional data this year from their neighborhoods, favorite birding areas, or anywhere else in the state. To contribute data effectively you need a field card, a block map, safe dates list, and a current block status summary report. You can get these from your regional coordinator, Rick West, or Todd Schneider by mail, fax, or e-mail. At the Spring GOS meeting in Macon we will have provisional distribution maps available that will highlight our gaps and needs. Most members will have much of this from last year, but we can provide updated block reports for anyone who asks for one. We particularly invite new members to ask for materials so they can contribute information in this last year. Some completely un-surveyed blocks remain, and surveys of these areas will improve our knowledge and ability to map the bird distribution in Georgia. You only need moderate bird identification skills, ability to read a roadmap, and a few hours in late May and June.

Thank you!

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed data to the Atlas project. If you still have data from past years, please send them in. We will accept data for the 2001 survey season on field cards, as incidental sight-

ings, from birding notes, or in e-mails.

For more information...

please contact your Regional Coordinator,

or

Todd Schneider, Project Coordinator

DNR, Wildlife Resources Division

116 Rum Creek Dr, Forsyth, GA 31029

Ph 912/994-1438; Fax 912/993-3050

Email: Todd_Schneider@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

or

Rick West, Publicity Committee

2808 Rabbit Hill Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32312

Ph 800/707-4382; Fax 850-531-9077

Email: RickLWest@aol.com

The Oriole...call for articles

by Georgann Schmalz,

Editorial Committee Chair

With the publication of Volume 65, Nos. 3 and 4, *The Oriole* is now current, primarily due to the hard work of co-editors Ray Chandler and John Parrish, Michael Bell, current field notes editor and Jeff Sewell, former field notes editor. The journal has been published since 1936 and contains manuscripts and general notes on bird identification, distribution, behavior, migration and rare sightings, along with quarterly species accounts "From the Field."

The Oriole is the official documentation of facts and figures published so that birders can share information pertaining to Georgia birds. It does not exist without your contributions. The editors are asking for material, both short notes and longer manuscripts, for the 2001 issues. Browse through a few issues of the journal to see the tone and content of the manuscripts and general notes. Surely, many of you possess information that is suitable for publication and we have just the right place for it!

Field notes on the web

GOS webmaster, Jim Flynn, and Michael Bell, field notes editor for *The Oriole* have collaborated to make the "From the Field" section of *The Oriole* accessible on the GOS website. This is a seasonal summary of the more interesting birds observed in Georgia. This new page can be accessed at the following URL:
www.gos.org/field/field.html

Jim explains that there is some overlap with the "Field Notes" column of Atlanta Audubon's monthly newsletter *Winging It*, compiled by Terry Moore. There is much sharing of information between Bell and Moore, combined with reports provided by Jeff Sewell of the Georgia Rare Bird Alert. Moore's column can be accessed at:
www.atlantaudubon.org/pages/fieldnotes.html

Important Bird Areas project of Georgia

by Jim Wilson

Last year at the GOS winter meeting in Eufaula, Jim Wilson introduced us to the subject of Important Bird Areas and the work that he and Atlanta Audubon was starting to identify and register these areas in Georgia. Following is a status report of this state-wide project.



Much of the conservation work related to non-game species that has been carried out over the last 50-100 years has been done in a reactive mode—what some call the "don't fix it until it's broke" approach. Non-game species weren't given priority for conservation efforts and conservation dollars unless they were in danger of extinction. More recently, many conservationists have come to realize that by taking a proactive approach we as a society can minimize some of the social, political, and economic difficulties that are encountered when trying at the last minute to prevent a species from becoming extinct.

The Georgia Important Bird Areas program, under the guidance of National Audubon's program, is an example of an effort to take a more proactive approach to the conservation of the birds of Georgia and the habitats on which they depend. The Georgia Important Bird Areas program will strive to inventory the key reservoirs of bird habitats in the state. This is the first step that must be carried out in order to put together a plan to ensure that our bird diversity remains with us for the long term.

An Important Bird Area (IBA) is a site providing essential habitat to one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds. The criteria for what constitutes an Important Bird Area has been developed with the help of a committee of bird and habitat experts from throughout the state. This committee of twenty-five of the state's top birders and habitat experts, including many members of the state's Department of Natural Resources, will also decide what nominated sites will be chosen as IBAs. The first IBA in Georgia, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, was officially designated and celebrated on Nov. 19th of last year. There are currently about 50 IBA nomination sites being worked on in Georgia with the decision as to their IBA status to be made in the coming spring.

IBA sites vary in size, but are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat, or ornithological importance from surrounding areas. Site boundaries may be either natural (rivers, watersheds) or human-made (roads, property boundaries). In general, an IBA should exist as an actual or potential protected area, with or without buffer zones, or should have the potential to be managed in some way for birds and general nature conservation. An IBA, whenever possible, should be large enough to supply all or most of the requirements of the bird(s) during the season for which it is important.

Once these Important Bird Areas have been identified we will work cooperatively with interested parties to develop conservation plans for the sites. In some cases we may work to have a site protected by such action as including it in the state's Green Space Plan for acquisition. In other cases we may suggest conservation easements, landowner education, or land management plans appropriate for the site. We will work to facilitate whatever strategy will work best in each case to ensure the conservation of the site as an Important Bird Area. The program is being carried out cooperatively with advice and assistance from the 8 chapters of the Georgia Audubon Council, the Georgia Ornithological Society, Bird Clubs of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Forest Service, and other conservation minded organizations, both public and private.

Refuges in Crisis

The following is excerpted from a policy statement by the National Audubon Society and reported in the Wetlands Newsletter, Winter-Spring 2001 Issue.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is in a state of crisis. There are major threats, such as development, invasive species and water pollution, which in a thousand different ways threaten and kill birds and wildlife and destroy habitat. These are special places in America that we have set aside to be preserved and protected that are in serious trouble. Audubon's report, "Refuges in Crisis" (available at www.audubon.org), is a call to action to save our nation's imperiled Refuge System.

The report tells the story of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, a haven for birds and wildlife that is being devastated by nutria, an exotic species that has destroyed literally thousands of acres of refuge marsh. It tells the story of incinerators operated at Salton Sea Refuge in California that burn masses of birds killed by pollution and invasive species that foul the Salton Sea's waters. It tells the story of ten wildlife refuges that are major national or international conservation priorities. Not only are each of these refuges jeopardized by imminent threats, but they also are failing to protect bird species that are federally-listed as threatened or endangered or included in Audubon's WatchList of species that could be headed for extinction.

Unequipped to handle the crisis, the Refuge System faces a \$1.6 billion backlog of operations and maintenance needs. Hundreds of refuges have no staff and no visitor center, no signs, brochures or restrooms, and no way to serve the public. But most importantly, they have scarce resources with which to help the wildlife populations they were established to protect. Hard working refuge professionals from across the country are crying out for help.

Vital to birds and wildlife, the 94-million-acre Refuge System is larger than the National Park System. The Refuge System is roughly the size of Montana. Harboring

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("Refuges" Continued from page 6)

one-third of America's remaining wetlands, the System protects more than 2,000 species of birds and other wildlife, including hundreds of threatened and endangered species.

The Refuges in Crisis report makes it clear that we need to act and we need to act now to save the treasures of our Refuge System. To address this crisis, Audubon is advocating an unprecedented funding increase for operations and maintenance of the Refuge System as well as pushing to establish a National Wildlife Refuge Service in the Department of the Interior to better manage the refuges.

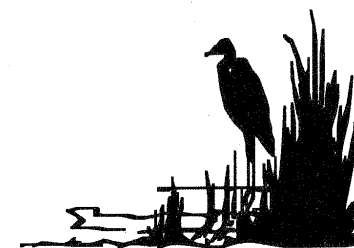
Audubon analyzed our country's refuges and identified ten National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) that represent the crises facing refuges. Criteria used are: —major national or international conservation priorities —jeopardized by imminent threats such as habitat loss —failing to protect bird species that are federally-listed or on Audubon's Watch List (species that could be headed for extinction)

The ten refuges in crisis are:

- Upper Mississippi River NW&FR (WI,MN,IA,IL)
- Kenai NWR (HI)
- Cape Romain (SC)
- Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR (TX)
- White River NWR (AR)
- Monomoy NWR (MA)
- Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR (CA)
- Pelican Island NWR (FL)
- NWRs of the Klamath Basin (OR, CA)
- Blackwater NWR (MD)

All except Kenai, Blackwater, and Monomoy NWR were included because of some water quality or quantity problem.

To find out how you can help in this effort to rescue the Refuge System, please contact Audubon's Grassroots Department at 1-800-659-2622 or email at: audubonaction@audubon.org



Upcoming Events

First Annual "All Womens' Birding Bust"

Announcing the First Annual "All Womens' Birding Bust" to be held on Saturday, May 5, 2001. This is a first for Georgia; a full day of birding to involve only women birders in a Big Day Count.



You can either bird by yourself or form a team. You can bird many hours during the day or just a few. And you can choose where you want to go. Some teams will undoubtedly start at Kennesaw Mountain early in the morning, travel rapidly through the state, and end up on the Coast. Other teams may just do the north Georgia mountains or just the coast.

If you are not a competitive birder, just get out and have a great day on May 5th and see lots of birds. You don't have to be a hot-shot birder to participate in this fun event.

For more information and rules, check out the link for "All Womens' Birding Bust" on the Fernbank webpage, <http://www.fernbank.edu> Go to the Science Center, Information for the Public and then Ornithology. To register contact Georgann Schmalz at 404-633-1527 or email: jbgs.mindspring.com.

Welcome Back Songbirds & Earth Day

Wakulla Springs, FL State Park & Lodge
April 20-21, 2001

A birding and nature festival with birding and environmental education events for the family. For information, contact Lora Silvanima 850-487-0516 or email: silvanl@gfc.state.fl.us.

Future GOS meetings

Spring 2001 Meeting in Macon
See p. 1

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.