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A NEW COLONY OF NESTING WOOD STORKS IN SOUTH GEORGIA

Barbara K. Passmore

In December 1987 a friend mentioned to me that Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) had nested that year on his property in a south Georgia county west of Valdosta. The Wood Storks returned in 1988 and in late March 1989, when I learned they were again nesting, I received permission for a small group of Valdosta birders to visit the colony. On 29 April 1989 approximately fifteen members of the Withlacoochee Watchers visited this blackwater cypress swamp (hereafter Blackwater colony) on a cool (11 degrees C), clear windless day.

The swamp is oval-shaped with the north-south axis about twice as long as the east-west axis. It covers approximately 40 ha, of which about 26 ha are in trees and the remainder in open areas. The swamp is almost completely surrounded by pastureland, which in turn is bordered by oaks and other hardwoods. On its north side, the swamp narrows sharply where it adjoins a densely forested pond lying to the north and which is enclosed on three sides by earthen dams.

The swamp has a center clearing covered with a grasslike aquatic plant which gives a meadow-like effect to the area when viewed through the outer band of trees. The dominant tree in the forested area is pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) and it is the only tree in which the Wood Storks had nests. Other trees in the swamp are swamp black gum (*Nyssa biflora*) and a few black willows (*Salix nigra*). Secondary emergent vegetation is mostly buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*) and swamp-loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*), while floating vegetation includes fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) and floating-hearts (*Nymphoides aquaticum*). The dominant species on the outer rim of the swamp is soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) which in places was 15 m or more from the water's edge.

There was considerable activity around the colony with storks continuously flying in from the wooded perimeter and entering the swamp carrying twigs and small limbs (some a meter or more in length). Other storks were seen roosting in the trees on the NW and SW sides of the outer perimeter of the pasture. Some nests had already been competed however and we could see downy young in them. The owner was not certain when the Wood Storks first nested in the swamp but said it could have been as early as 1985 or 1986.

METHODS

The owner's permission was obtained for a second visit in order to accurately determine the number of Wood Stork nests. This visit occurred on 13 May 1989.

When we arrived at the swamp at 0800 it was calm, cool (10 degrees C) with a cloudy but clearing sky. The cloud cover burned off by midmorning but returned around 1100. Bird activity was much decreased from the previous visit. Wood Storks were not entering and leaving the colony as before nor were they roosting in the trees surrounding the pasture. Nest building appeared to be complete and even before we started our nest count, the clatter from the nestlings was evidence of the presence of a large number of young, hungry Wood Storks.

We started our nest count at a point near the southern edge of the northwest quadrant of the swamp. It was in the outer thick growth of pond cypress that we found the largest concentration of nests in the area beginning at our starting point and continuing approximately half way into the southwest quadrant. A few trees had three or four nests in the same tree and one very large dead tree had six nests.

The nests appeared to be rather loosely constructed of a size 0.6 - 1.0 m in diameter and in some cases precariously placed. None was lower than 6 m above water level; most were 10-12 m; and a few were in the tops of trees at 15-17 m.

On the southern edge of the swamp we found a second group of nests which was considerably smaller than the western group. On the eastern edge only an occasional nest could be seen although we did appear to be able to see the eastern side of the primary western nesting group.

We found a separate group of nests on the northwest side of the swamp which contained more nests than the southern group but less than the western group and which we had not seen from our starting point. The owner stated this was the first year the Wood Storks had nested in numbers in this area of the swamp.

RESULTS

We concluded that the Blackwater colony contained approximately 200 inhabited nests which were divided roughly into three groups, one half in the western section of the swamp, one third in the northern section and one sixth in the southern section. The nests on the east side were too few to include and are omitted.

The Wood Stork nests as a rule contained three young when the nests could be seen clearly. Some of the young were well feathered although it was not determined whether any had actually fledged. The age of the nestlings was estimated to be 4-6 weeks but because nest building had been such a recent activity, incubation of some nests was almost certainly still in progress.

Other species seen during the 13 May 1989 nest count of the Blackwater colony were:

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - 25 nests were observed;

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - four individuals were seen;

Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) - four to five individuals were seen;

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) - only one individual was seen;

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) - Five individuals seen with two of these in changing plumage between the white immature and dark mature plumages;

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) - one individual was seen;

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) - 20-30 birds seen, mostly flying over the colony;

Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*) - four individuals seen;

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) - one adult bird seen;

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) - extremely common, in sight all morning, certainly nesting;

Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) - Two nests, one with two young and one with one young;

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*) - present in good numbers and certainly nesting;

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) - more common than the preceding species and more vocal and certainly nesting.

DISCUSSION

Terres (1980) stated that Wood Storks are "now resident and limited to peninsular Florida." Hopkins and Humphries (1983), however, recounted the history of nesting colonies of Wood Storks in Georgia as a total of five colonies consisting of two separate colonies in the Okefenokee Swamp, one colony in Camden County, one colony in Glynn County (all four of these colonies prior to 1980) and the Big Dukes Bay colony in Jenkins County which on 21 April 1981 had approximately 150 nests. West (1987) reported the Big Dukes Bay colony nest count to be 193 suggesting there had been some increase in this colony.

Ruckdeschel and Shoop (1987), in reporting the history of nesting colonies in Georgia, included a colony in McIntosh County which made a total of six nesting colonies of Wood Storks which had been previously reported on mainland Georgia and their paper dealt with a seventh colony which they had found on Cumberland Island, Camden County.

No Wood Storks have been previously reported as nesting in Georgia west of the Okefenokee Swamp. Although Hopkins (1975) reported heronries as far west as Baker County, there is no mention of any of them containing Wood Stork nests.

The Blackwater nesting colony reported in this paper is the eighth and westernmost colony in Georgia reported to date and may be the largest, as the estimated nest count exceeded the 1987 Big Dukes Bay nest count reported by West (1987). The Blackwater colony is also very different from the other colonies so far reported in at least two respects.

Instead of being in a remote and sometimes almost inaccessible location, the Blackwater colony is actually located in the midst of a cattle and tree-farming operation and is almost completely surrounded by pastures in which cattle and horses periodically graze. The general area, however, has a minimum of high intensity row-crop farming, and many lakes, ponds and pine forests are nearby. It is interesting to note that, according to the owner, the Wood Storks are not

disturbed by routine daily activities, such as workers delivering bales of hay to the cows in the surrounding pasture. The owner is a true conservationist in his agricultural practices e.g. he does not clearcut timber and stopped planting cotton because of the pesticides required. His farm management seems to work well for the Wood Storks as he reports the colony has increased each year since they first nested on his property.

Another remarkable aspect of the Blackwater colony is the large area used for nesting as compared to the very compact area used by the Big Dukes Bay colony (Milton Hopkins, Jr., pers. comm.). No part of the 26 ha of wooded area was found to be completely ignored by the Wood Storks at the Blackwater colony whereas in the Big Dukes Bay colony only 0.4 ha out of 600 was used for nesting, with some of the trees containing as many as 25 nests (Hopkins and Humphries, 1983). The trees in the Blackwater colony are not large enough to support as many nests and it seems the Wood Storks may have adapted to the smaller trees by utilizing a larger area.

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JOSEPH EDWARD GOULD - EARLY GEORGIA OOLOGIST

David W. Johnston

Joseph Edward Gould was born at Black Banks Plantation on St. Simons Island, Georgia on 8 January 1866. Old correspondence, a catalog, and several obituaries (Bailey 1945; English 1946, 1948) provided much biographical information about Gould. He was the 11th child of Deborah Abbott and Horace Bunch Gould who had been a cotton planter and lifelong resident of the island. Joseph's grandfather, James Gould, a young engineer, had gone to the island from Massachusetts to secure live oak timber for the *USS Constitution*, then settled on the island in 1807. The lives of the several Gould families were described in a historical novel by Eugenia Price (1965), but the novel ends at the Civil War just before Joseph was born. As a small boy, Joseph had little formal education but developed a love for birds, started egg-collecting (apparently none of his early sets were saved), and learned the names, appearances, and habits of the island's birdlife (D.H.G. Gould, pers. comm.). In the absence of books and kindred spirits, Joseph learned the common names of birds from local blacks or made them up. For example, the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) was the "little cedarbird" because he had found a nest in a cedar, the Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) was the "magnolia flycatcher" because it nested in magnolias, and the Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) was the "crazy bird" because of its erratic song flight.

At an early age, Joseph was sent to the Advanced School Academy in Utica, New York, where, according to his widow, Jessie, his classmates included "sons of the best people - senators and representatives." At age 15, he left the academy for mechanical training at the Pennsylvania Railroad shops in Dennison, Ohio. In 1889, he enrolled at Ohio State University in Columbus in mechanical engineering, graduating in 1892. While there he met his future wife, Jessie Wilcox, and spent much time at her father's farm at Jersey, Ohio and other nearby Ohio and Indiana localities observing birds and adding to his egg collection. In the ensuing years, railroading became his career, during which time he made periodic trips to the midwest and southern states where he also collected eggs (Bailey 1945; English 1946, 1948). From 1915 to 1921, he resided in Arcadia, Florida, collecting eggs there too, then "retired" to Norfolk, Virginia in 1922, although he continued to work periodically into the 1930s. At the time of his death on 3 November 1945, his egg collection contained 588 sets representing 167 species, more than one half of them from Ohio and Indiana. He kept the collection in a magnificent oak chest which had been used to store fine silver in a railroad dining car. After his death, his egg collection was given to a longtime friend, Almon O. English in Roanoke, Virginia, who subsequently gave the collection to the Charleston (SC) Museum where it is now being cataloged. Although Gould had told English in a letter in 1936 that he wanted his egg collection to go to some Virginia museum, presumably English gave it to the Charleston Museum because of his (English) earlier acquaintance with Alexander Sprunt, Jr. who had been associated with that museum.

Recently Mrs. Almon English gave me Gould's catalog, a box of old correspondence, and some of Gould's pocket notebooks. In reviewing all that material, I learned that Joseph and Jessie owned property on St. Simons Island for many years and often returned to the island and Arcadia for short visits, one

as late as 1939. Although most of his eggs from Georgia were taken on St. Simons, Sea, and Little St. Simons islands in the 1890s, other sets were collected there as late as 1932 (Table 1). His catalog and notebooks contain detailed field observations from the Norfolk and Arcadia areas, but unfortunately I could find no field notes from Georgia.

It is not surprising that the authors of *Birds of Georgia* (Greene *et al.* 1945) and *Georgia birds* (Burleigh 1958) did not mention Joseph Gould because he was a shy and modest man and published very few of his records (none, so far as I know, from Georgia). He was credited with collecting the first Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) in Ohio in 1889 (English 1946, 1948) and the first nest of the Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) in North Carolina in 1906 (Pearson *et al.* 1942). As far as can be determined from his catalog, his only ornithological acquaintance in Georgia was Troup D. Perry, but the extent of that acquaintance is unknown. Perry described in some detail 12 egg sets from Swainson's Warblers in 1885-1887 (Perry 1886, 1887) near Savannah. One of these in 1887, Perry's "fifth nest", had three eggs on 31 May, and this must be the set marked 5/3 now in the Gould collection. How Gould obtained this set is unknown. Probably he had met Perry.

Gould's collection contained 120 egg sets from Georgia, these from 48 species. Three of those sets merit special mention:

Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) - This set comprises the only known nesting record for this species in Georgia;

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) - Previous nesting records for this species came from the northern part of the state (Greene *et al.* 1945; Burleigh 1958). It is also interesting to note that the Wilson collection (see below) also contained a set of two eggs taken 18 May from somewhere near the Georgia coast;

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) - Bailey (1883) reported on a collection of eggs taken by Dr. S. W. Wilson from coastal Georgia between 1853 and 1865. The collection contained eggs of several species, including the Bank Swallow, which were subsequently called into question by Wayne (1908, 1910). Species identification of the swallow set was confirmed by Robert Ridgway at the U.S. National Museum (1910). Also, Walter Hoxie reported nesting Bank Swallows near Savannah in 1918, but W.J. Erichsen (1918) wrote that Hoxie had misidentified Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) and categorically stated that "the bank swallow does not breed on the coast of Georgia". If need be, the Gould set adds further evidence of former nesting of Bank Swallows in Georgia.

In a letter (7 July 1946) from Jessie Gould to Almon English after Joseph's death, she wrote: "I do not suppose Mr. Gould ever told you that Audubon was there (on St. Simons) and visited Aaron Burr at Cannon's Point Plantation. Darling (Joseph) showed me a window pane where Burr wrote his name with a diamond ring . . . , he refuged there after shooting Hamilton. But Audubon was on St. Simons, also (Alexander) Wilson . . ."

At the second annual meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (13 Feb. 1932), Dr. J.J. Murray read a paper of Gould's entitled, "Reminiscences of a Field Ornithologist." Therein, Gould stated some of his philosophies - "I think the real intimacy with birds is best obtained through hunting their nests." Apparently he did not sell eggs nor did he solicit exchanges, although his collection contained a few sets taken by other oologists in California.

Table 1. Georgia eggs sets in the Gould collection. Numerator in the set column refers to Gould's set number for the species. The denominator is the number of eggs taken in that set.

Species (Scientific Name)		Date	Remarks
Set	Locality		
<i>Least Bittern (Ixobrychus exilis)</i>			
7/4	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1895	Salt marsh
8/4	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1897	Salt marsh
<i>Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias)</i>			
4/3	St. Simons Is.	6 April 1895	30' cypress
<i>Great Egret (Casmerodius albus)</i>			
1/3	Little St. Simons Is.	23 April 1932	
2/3	Little St. Simons Is.	23 April 1932	
<i>Snowy Egret (Egretta thula)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	Unknown	
<i>Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1911	
2/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1911	
3/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1911	
4/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1911	
5/3	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1911	
<i>Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	2 May 1895	
2/4	St. Simons Is.	5 May 1895	
3/3	St. Simons Is.	24 May 1901	
4/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1901	
5/3	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1901	
6/3	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1901	
<i>Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax)</i>			
1/1	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
2/3	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
3/4	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
4/3	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
5/3	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
6/3	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	
<i>Osprey (Pandion haliaetus)</i>			
1/3	St. Simons Is.	20 April 1895	Large pine
<i>Cooper's Hawk (Accipiter cooperii)</i>			
5/5	St. Simons Is.	3 May 1907	Oak
<i>Red-shouldered Hawk (Buteo lineatus)</i>			
13/2	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Oak
17/2	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1910	Pine

Table 1. Continued

Species (Scientific Name)			
Set	Locality	Date	Remarks
<i>Clapper Rail (Rallus longirostris)</i>			
1/8	St. Simons Is.	7 May 1890	Salt marsh
2/10	St. Simons Is.	2 April 1895	Salt marsh
3/9	St. Simons Is.	2 April 1895	Salt marsh
4/10	St. Simons Is.	2 April 1895	Salt marsh
<i>King Rail (Rallus elegans)</i>			
2/9	St. Simons Is.	6 June 1898	Pond edge
<i>Purple Gallinule (Porphyryla martinica)</i>			
1/5	St. Simons Is.	27 April 1898	
<i>American Oystercatcher (Haematopus palliatus)</i>			
1/3	Long (Sea) Is.	28 May 1908	
<i>Willet (Catoptrophorus semipalmatus)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	15 April 1895	
2/4	St. Simons Is.	15 April 1895	
3/4	St. Simons Is.	15 April 1895	
4/4	St. Simons Is.	1 May 1895	
5/4	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1911	
6/4	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1911	
7/4	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1911	
8/4	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1911	
<i>Caspian Tern (Sterna caspia)</i>			
1/1	Little St. Simons Is.	10 July 1900	
<i>Black Skimmer (Rynchops niger)</i>			
1/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
2/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
3/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
4/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
5/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
6/2	Long (Sea) Is.	13 July 1903	
<i>Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina)</i>			
1/2	St. Simons Is.	Unknown	
<i>Black-billed Cuckoo (Coccyzus erythrophthalmus)</i>			
5/2	St. Simons Is.	5 May 1911	Oak bush
<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus)</i>			
4/3	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1895	Oak
<i>Eastern Screech-Owl (Otus asio)</i>			
2/4	St. Simons Is.	5 May 1890	Oak hollow
3/4	St. Simons Is.	24 April 1895	Oak hollow

Table 1. Continued

Species (Scientific Name)			
Set	Locality	Date	Remarks
<i>Common Nighthawk (Chordeiles minor)</i>			
3/2	St. Simons Is.	12 May 1890	Sand hill
4/2	St. Simons Is.	17 May 1897	Old cotton field
5/2	St. Simons Is.	28 May 1901	Little Rainbow
6/2	St. Simons Is.	1 June 1903	Old field
<i>Chuck-will's-widow (Caprimulgus carolinensis)</i>			
1/2	St. Simons Is.	3 May 1890	
2/2	St. Simons Is.	10 May 1895	
3/2	St. Simons Is.	10 May 1895	
4/2	St. Simons Is.	24 April 1897	
5/2	St. Simons Is.	21 May 1897	
6/2	St. Simons Is.	31 May 1903	
<i>Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris)</i>			
2/2	St. Simons Is.	10 May 1897	Live oak limb
4/2	St. Simons Is.	5 May 1905	Live gum limb
<i>Red-headed Woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus)</i>			
2/5	Brunswick	19 May 1889	Dead pine
<i>Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes carolinus)</i>			
3/4	Long (Sea) Is.	Unknown	Pine stump
<i>Pileated Woodpecker (Dryocopus pileatus)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	11 April 1903	Dead pine
<i>Acadian Flycatcher (Empidonax vireescens)</i>			
5/3	St. Simons Is.	13 May 1895	Oak limb
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher (Myiarchus crinitus)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	16 May 1890	Hole in live oak
2/5	St. Simons Is.	16 May 1890	Hole in live oak
<i>Eastern Kingbird (Tyrannus tyrannus)</i>			
6/3	St. Simons Is.	25 May 1911	
<i>Bank Swallow (Riparia riparia)</i>			
3/5	Long (Sea) Is.	7 May 1897	Sand hill
<i>Fish Crow (Corvus ossifragus)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	18 May 1890	Pine
2/4	St. Simons Is.	27 April 1890	Pine
3/5	St. Simons Is.	4 April 1898	Pine
<i>Carolina Wren (Thryothorus ludovicianus)</i>			
1/5	St. Simons Is.	7 May 1890	In old house

Table 1. Continued

Species (Scientific Name)			
Set	Locality	Date	Remarks
<i>Marsh Wren (Cistothorus palustris)</i>			
1/5	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1890	
2/4	St. Simons Is.	9 May 1890	
<i>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Poliopitila caerulea)</i>			
3/4	St. Simons Is.	18 May 1890	Oak
6/4	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Gum
<i>Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	9 May 1890	In bush
2/5	St. Simons Is.	19 May 1890	Myrtle
3/4	St. Simons Is.	3 May 1897	Oak
4/5	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1897	Oak
5/4	St. Simons Is.	6 May 1897	Myrtle
<i>Brown Thrasher (Toxostoma rufum)</i>			
4/4	St. Simons Is.	24 April 1911	Live oak
<i>White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus)</i>			
2/4	St. Simons Is.	28 April 1895	Myrtle
3/4	St. Simons Is.	30 April 1897	Myrtle
4/3	St. Simons Is.	7 May 1897	Myrtle
5/4	St. Simons Is.	9 May 1897	Holly
<i>Northern Parula (Parula americana)</i>			
1/3	St. Simons Is.	19 May 1895	In moss
2/3	St. Simons Is.	3 May 1897	In moss
3/3	St. Simons Is.	12 May 1897	In moss
4/3	St. Simons Is.	27 April 1898	In moss
<i>Pine Warbler (Dendroica pinus)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	14 May 1897	Pine limb
<i>Swainson's Warbler (Limnithlypis swainsonii)</i>			
5/3	Savannah	31 May 1887	From T.D. Perry
<i>Hooded Warbler (Wilsonia citrina)</i>			
2/2	St. Simons Is.	30 April 1897	Bush in palmettos
<i>Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	10 May 1890	Oak
2/4	St. Simons Is.	9 May 1895	Oak
3/3	St. Simons Is.	5 May 1897	Pine
4/4	St. Simons Is.	14 May 1897	Pine
5/3	St. Simons Is.	28 May 1901	Oak
<i>Northern Cardinal (Cardinalis cardinalis)</i>			
4/4	St. Simons Is.	21 April 1895	Myrtle
5/4	St. Simons Is.	25 April 1895	Oak

Table 1. Continued

Species (Scientific Name)			
Set	Locality	Date	Remarks
<i>Painted Bunting (Passerina ciris)</i>			
1/4	St. Simons Is.	12 May 1897	
2/4	St. Simons Is.	15 May 1897	Small oak
3/4	St. Simons Is.	24 May 1901	Small plum
4/3	St. Simons Is.	24 May 1901	Small plum
<i>Red-winged Blackbird (Agelaius phoeniceus)</i>			
4/3	St. Simons Is.	10 May 1897	Cattails
5/4	St. Simons Is.	15 May 1897	Cattails
<i>Boat-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus major)</i>			
1/3	St. Simons Is.	20 May 1890	Salt marsh
2/3	St. Simons Is.	20 May 1890	Salt marsh
3/3	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Oak
4/3	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Oak
5/3	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Salt marsh
6/4	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Salt marsh
7/3	St. Simons Is.	23 April 1895	Salt marsh
<i>Orchard Oriole (Icterus spurius)</i>			
3/4	St. Simons Is.	17 May 1897	Persimmon

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FINANCIAL REPORT

The following income and expense information has been provided by the Treasurer:

Balance as of 1 October 1988	\$30,864.82
Sources of Funds	
Dues	\$3,183.00
Life Membership	700.00
Interest	3,062.53
Sales	3,016.40
Meetings	1,725.50
Other	234.74
Total	11,922.17
Uses of Funds	
Oriole (3)	3,260.93
Goshawk (4)	556.81
Postage	666.88
Meetings	921.63
Birder's Guide Publication	3,078.75
Other	1,839.33
Total	10,324.33
Increase in Funds	1,597.84
Balance as of 30 September 1989	\$32,462.66

GENERAL NOTES

COMMON LOON SPENDS SUMMER IN TELFAIR COUNTY, GEORGIA - On 18 August 1989 I received a call from Peggy Jones, a fellow birder from Milan, Telfair County, Georgia. Mrs. Jones asked me to come and identify a strange bird she believed to be a loon which was swimming in one of her pasture ponds. Fall was approaching and I didn't think this would be that unusual until I consulted Haney *et al.* (1986) which gave an early fall arrival date of 5 September.

I visited the area the following day and quickly located the bird swimming in the middle of a small one acre pond. I immediately realized it was indeed a loon and after checking Peterson (1980), National Geographic Society (1987), Farrand (1983) and Robbins (1983) I was able to identify it as a winter plumaged Common Loon (*Gavia immer*).

I left the pond and visited Mrs. Jones who told me the loon had been there for at least two months and had exhibited breeding plumage during the earlier part of the summer. She described this plumage as a "checkerboard pattern".

I called Tommy Patterson in Dublin and spoke with his son, Hunter, who helped me go through any possible mistakes I might have made in my identification. Hunter also did some research and suggested waving a red handkerchief. Apparently, according to some older books, loons are attracted to this. I tried it and the bird immediately dove, surfacing about 10 m closer than before. After that, however, the bird kept a more respectful distance. I tried playing a Common Loon call which produced no response at all while the bird was trying to sleep but later the loon became very attentive when the call was played.

I returned an hour later and waded into the pond to make some videos of the bird. Don Duncan and Hunter Patterson suggested that the loon may have been stranded by landing in what it perceived to be a small cove of a nearby larger lake. I observed the bird trying to take off by "running" across the water while frantically flapping its wings but it soon ran out of water area before becoming airborne. This appeared to support their hypothesis.

Otherwise, the bird appeared to be in good shape. The bill was straight, stout and grayish black. As noted in National Geographic Society (1987) there was a slight white indentation at mid-neck. The head was held level but the bird intermittently dipped its beak into the water and then shook off the moisture. I observed the loon diving and eating small fish for about two hours.

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 Donald G. Screws, Route 5, Box 142, Eastman, GA 31023.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE CATTLE EGRET - The following incidents were related to me by Dr. Vernon J. Henry of Georgia State University and seem worthy of note. Dr. Henry was Director of the University of Georgia Marine Institute on Sapelo Island for a number of years in the 1970s.

Dr. Henry stated that whenever he used his push lawnmower to cut the grass around his home on Sapelo, the Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) would congregate and follow him feeding on the insects being disturbed. This is, of course, a commonly observed behavior of the species. However, whenever he would stop for a few moments to drink water or mop his brow, the egrets would come up and begin to peck at his bare legs in an apparent attempt to get him moving again.

I have not made a search of the literature to determine whether this type of behavior of Cattle Egrets has been observed in their association with cattle or other large animals. It would be interesting for observers to note apparent efforts by Cattle Egrets to motivate their symbionts.

Bob Humphries, 1597 Milford Church Road, Marietta, GA 30060.

PREDATION AND POTENTIAL PREDATION ON WILD TURKEYS AT LITTLE CUMBERLAND ISLAND - Strikingly variable frequency of occurrence of observations of Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallapavo*) from year to year on an isolated sea island has been reported by the author in three previous communications (*Oriole* 45:49-51; *Oriole* 47:17-18; and *Oriole* 50:39-40). Numbers of observers and numbers of observation periods per year have been roughly comparable since 1976 when Wild Turkeys were first found after many years of apparent absence from Little Cumberland Island. No major environmental changes have been recognized on this primitive two thousand acre island whose owners are deeply committed to conservation. No instance of human predation on Wild Turkeys is known to have occurred in the period from 1976 to present. Non-human predation is suspected as a factor in what the author believes to be a strikingly varying Wild Turkey population size on this barrier island. This paper describes one instance of observed predation and two instances of potential predation observed by the author.

The long axis of Little Cumberland Island is roughly north-south. The open sea and the beach limit the island on the east. Just west of the current beach and running along approximately the mid-third of the north-south axis of the island is a linear strip of sandy soil accreted in recent years. This strip is about 200 to 275 m wide. The whitish, soft sand soil is covered with early succession plants, the earliest to the east where the beach is building to the oldest at the foot of the high, live oak forested dunes. These dunes limit the early succession area. The soil of this part of the island is covered with plants, mostly grasses, forbs and wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) bushes. A few small young pine trees are found in the western (older) section.

The area described is one in which Wild Turkeys are frequently seen. More observations of downy young have been made by the author in this area than in all other parts of the island. This is also an area frequented by several species of snakes.

In the second week of May 1989 an observer was walking slowly through this section of the island. He came upon an adult female Wild Turkey accompanied

by four good-sized downy young. These birds moved rapidly away from the observer. He heard a persistent, characteristic peeping distress cry of a young Wild Turkey from beneath an area thickly covered by several large wax myrtle bushes. This growth was so heavy that he could not see into it from his standing position. He got on his hands and knees to peer into the thick vegetation. To his terror, he found himself staring directly at a 1.5 to 2.0 m heavy-bodied eastern diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*) which had a rather large downy poult in its mouth. One of the bird's wings was folded back so that the basal wing veins near the thorax could be seen much distended. In a few seconds the young Wild Turkey began to convulse and die. The snake still had the dead bird in its mouth. Observations were terminated at this time (Seth Brock, pers. comm.).

Approximately eleven months earlier, the author was sitting quietly in his cabin on the island at dusk. The cabin is in the high dunes referred to earlier and elevated so that it sits near the same height as numerous 25-30 cm diameter live oak branches. These limbs run almost parallel to the ground about 5 m below. In the last late light a moment before full darkness, the author saw movement on one of these limbs. He had earlier seen Wild Turkey droppings on the ground in this area and therefore suspected what he had barely glimpsed in the dying light was a Wild Turkey settling into its roost.

Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are in great numbers on the island. The population of these creatures is suspected by the author currently to be near, at, or above its maximum in terms of habitat resources available. Intense food competition among raccoons is observed so frequently as to be considered routine. Several sudden raccoon population declines, associated with many individuals showing signs of neurologic disease, have been noted during the past twenty years. Many adults are bitten, scarred and ragged-eared. Raccoons have been seen previously on several occasions, at night, climbing in the tree in which the presumed Wild Turkey had just been observed. None were seen on the night of the observations.

The author waited about an hour after complete darkness to investigate further what might be in the tree. He took a powerful flashlight and shined it along the limb, fully expecting to see a sitting Wild Turkey with its neck retracted onto its breast. Such a familiar form was not detectable among the shifting shadows cast by the beam of the flashlight and from the pale light from the sky. A considerable time was spent examining nearby limbs. Still, no familiar form could be picked out. As he was about to conclude that no roosting bird was present, an unusual conformation of a limb was detected. Close examination revealed a fully feathered young Wild Turkey stretched flat along the limb. The long neck was fully extended. The neck followed the subtle irregularities of the tree's shape. The thorax and tail were laid flat on the limb as well. The bird's feathers were pressed against the bark in such a manner that the form of the tree and the form of the bird blended almost completely. The feet and legs could not be seen.

The above described roosting posture is believed to be unusual for Wild Turkeys at Little Cumberland Island. The author wonders if it is an adaptation to threatened or previous predation by raccoons.

Within a few days of the observation of the roosting described above, another observation of potential predation on young Wild Turkeys was made. To the author's surprise, Wild Turkeys have been seen on numerous occasions walking in *Spartina alterniflora* grass and the damp, saline, sandy and muddy soil where it is growing. This marsh grass habitat is present over about half of the area of Little Cumberland Island. Wild Turkeys do not seem to prefer this habitat, but they certainly enter it on occasion.

About mid-morning at half-tide on the day in question, the author was sitting still on the deck of a small barge moored in Shell Creek. At the place the barge was secured to the shore, and at half-tide level, the small estuary was about 7-8 m wide and about 1-2 m deep. Alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) are frequently present in the tidal water, their population having markedly increased in recent years. Much flocculent, gel-like sediment is usually carried in the water, which is semi-opaque at a depth of a few centimeters when viewed from above. A Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) was walking about and feeding at the water's edge on the muddy bank of the creek. The author was looking directly at the bird and detected not even a ripple of water near the bird. In a sudden, lightning-swift rush, a 1.5-2.0 m long alligator seized the Clapper Rail and proceeded to devour it.

In the author's estimation Clapper Rails, in these circumstances, are more swift and agile than young Wild Turkeys. If an alligator is capable of capturing a Clapper Rail, as observed, it almost certainly is capable of capturing a slower, larger, less agile and less cautious young Wild Turkey.

These two instances of potential predation plus one observed predation by species known to be present on Little Cumberland Island in considerable numbers leads the author to believe non-human predation plays an important role in what are believed to be widely varying population levels of Wild Turkeys on Little Cumberland Island.

George W. Sciple, 2601 Parkwood Drive, Suite One, Brunswick, GA 31520.

AMERICAN COOT NESTING IN THE ATLANTA AREA - American Coots (*Fulica americana*) are mostly common transients and winter visitors to Georgia. They are rare summer residents in the Coastal Plain where they breed occasionally. Although summer records for the Piedmont area exist, a breeding record has never been verified before. The Atlanta area had five single date summer records: 31 July 1965, 26 July 1979, 18 June 1980, 17 August 1980 and 13 June 1981. In addition, from one to five birds were found summering at Peachtree City Lake (Fayette County) from 1980 to 1986. The lake has not been checked in the last few summers. Finally, a few birds summered at Sweetwater Creek State Park (Douglas County) in 1985.

The spring and summer of 1989 were wetter than usual and the five ponds of the E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County were full most of the summer. In May and June up to four coots were sighted there. I was not able to visit the ponds again until 23 July and no coots were noted that day or on 29 July.

On 6 August at about 0900 I was surprised to find one adult coot with two young which were probably just a few days old. The young birds looked downy gray with reddish orange bills and were about 5-6 inches long. The first time they were seen they were swimming near the adult at the edge of a small island in the northwestern pond. Due to the high level of water in the pond, a lot of vegetation protruded from the water on the north part of that island. This vegetation probably provided adequate cover for the bird's nesting. This represents the first confirmed nesting record for the Atlanta area and probably for the Piedmont. Dale Hardee photographed the family a few days later.

On 12 and 13 August the adult was seen with a third youngster about four or five days younger than the other birds. However, this bird was not present on 20 August and subsequent visits to the area. The family was noted through the middle of September with one young remaining until late September. During this period many observers were able to verify this first nesting record for the Atlanta area.

Patrick Brisse, 4960 Gatehouse Way, Stone Mountain, GA 30088.

A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER NESTING RECORD FROM BARTOW COUNTY, GEORGIA - A new nesting record for Georgia was established in 1988 when a pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Tyrannus forficatus*) raised one offspring in Bartow County. It was somewhat by chance that I learned of the nesting which occurred on property owned by Mike and Cathy Harris about 5 miles west of Cartersville.

Cathy Harris attended a bird program which I presented some time ago to the Etowah Garden Club. On 7 August 1988 she called me to say that three parrots were staying around their neighborhood and she wondered what they were. After some discussion about the parrots she mentioned that her family had been enjoying watching the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher family which was nesting in their backyard. Mike Harris was familiar with the species because he had lived for several years in Texas where the species was common. After nearly dropping the phone, I told her I would stop by the next morning to try to see the birds.

Since the next day was Monday I had very little time to spend at the Harris home before work but I did hear the birds at some distance but did not see them. As luck would have it, the birds apparently left the area that day after Cathy saw them briefly that morning.

The nest was clearly visible in a mature Loblolly Pine (*Pinus palustris*) in the backyard of the Harris home located in a country subdivision. The Harris property is bounded on two sides by partially grownup pastureland which provided ideal habitat for the flycatchers. The nest tree, overlooking the adjacent field, was about 20 m in height and the nest was located toward the end of a limb at about 10 m above the ground. The nest was bulky, about 0.3 m in diameter, and appeared to be made of sticks and twigs.

As the word of the nesting spread, many observers waited anxiously for the spring of 1989 for a recurrence. Fortunately, a male did spend the spring and early summer from 2 May to 5 July and was seen by many observers. The Harris said that one male bird was also present during the summer of 1987. Each of the three years the bird(s) arrived early in May and departed by the first week of August.

There have been two other nesting records for the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reported in the literature for the southeastern United States. The first nesting record east of the Mississippi River was reported in 1975 by Jerome Jackson, Robert Howell and David F. Werschkul (*American Birds* 29:912). In 1982, Rudy Mancke documented a nest in Laurens County, South Carolina (*The Chat* 46:112-113).

Hopkins and Baker (*Oriole* 39:6-7) summarized ten sightings of this species between 1911 and 1970. In addition to the nesting documented in this note there are seven additional sightings between 1970 and 1988 (Table 1). Two items of interest regarding these sightings are that most of the recent ones have been in the summer months and also that there were three other 1988 sightings in addition to

Table 1. Summary of recent Scissor-tailed Flycatcher sightings in Georgia.

Date	Observers	Locality	Information Source
10 Oct. 1970	Dillard, F.	Richmond Co., Augusta, Merry Brothers Ponds	Denton, J.F. <i>Oriole</i> 39:29
12 Oct. 1971	Lindauer, M.R.	Jenkins Co., Millen	Denton, J.F. <i>Oriole</i> 39:29
8 April 1975	Riddle, P.C.	Laurens, Co., Dexter	Riddle, P.C. <i>Oriole</i> 40:15
9 June 1986	Thompson, L.	Glynn Co., US 17 near Altamaha River	Thompson, L. <i>Oriole</i> 52:47 Photograph
4 June 1988	Iha, N. and Fincher, P.	Marion Co., SR 137 near Tazewell	Iha, N. <i>Oriole</i> 53:32
3 July 1988	White, R. and H.	Floyd Co., SR 140 and Bells Ferry Road	White, R. <i>Oriole</i> 53:32-33
11 July 1988	Roberts, L.	Harris Co.	<i>vide</i> Sam Pate



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Cartersville, GA. Photo by Joel Hitt.

the Cartersville birds.

If there are additional sightings of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that readers are aware of, please convey them to the author or the editor so that they may be published in *The Oriole*.

John Swiderski, 29 Town and Country Drive, Cartersville, GA 30120.

FROM THE FIELD

December 1988 - May 1989

It was refreshing to note that although there weren't that many truly exciting sightings during the period, there certainly were a lot of observers out in the field discovering a lot of our infrequently found species. Two species new to the Georgia list were recorded during the period. First was a Ross' Goose which spent some time at the Eufaula NWR and would occasionally stray into Georgia and the second was a recent invader of the United States, the Shiny Cowbird, which was seen at Cumberland Island and at Warner Robins. Thus far, the Ross' Goose has been documented and is under consideration by the Checklist Committee but the Shiny Cowbird has not been documented.

Other sightings of interest include a Red-necked Grebe at Sea Island, American White Pelicans at Eufaula and Lake Lanier, a Great Cormorant at Tybee Island, a Common Eider at St. Catherine's Island, a Vermilion Flycatcher in the Okefenokee, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Cartersville for the third year in a row, a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Crooked River State Park and LeConte's and Lincoln's Sparrows reported from several localities.

Abbreviations used include: AAS - Atlanta Audubon Society, CBC - Christmas Bird Count, ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton County, MBBT - Merry Brothers Brick and Tile Co. in Augusta, MIA - Macon Industrial Area at Macon, NWR - National Wildlife Refuge, SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County and WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

RED-THROATED LOON - Thirty-five was a high count during the St. Catherine's Island CBC on 17 Dec. (*vide* Anne Waters). The Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec., a couple weeks later, yielded only one bird (Anne Waters). A very late individual was sighted by Joe Greenberg *et al.* near Brunswick on 5 May.

COMMON LOON - Most unusual was a bird crashlanding on Holly Drive off GA highway 52 in Murray County on 4 April. The bird was captured and released on Lake Conasauga and was still observed there on 16 April (Harriett DiGioia). A late record for the Atlanta area was a winter plumaged bird at the ELHLAF on 20 May (Debbie Grant and Carol Loewen).

HORNED GREBE - John Paget spotted a late migrant at Commerce Lake in Jackson County on 12 May.

RED-NECKED GREBE - Always rare and noteworthy in Georgia, one was sighted by Hugh Garrett off the north end of Sea Island on 28 Dec.

NORTHERN GANNET - I received only two reports during the period. Milton Hopkins saw two on 31 Dec. during the Sapelo Island CBC and Anne Waters saw three there the next day (*vide* Anne Waters). Was the species that rare off the Georgia coast this winter?

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Up to fifteen individuals were counted from late Feb. into early March on the Georgia side of the Eufaula NWR (*vide* Terry Moore). An additional twelve birds on Lake Lanier on 19 March could well have been the same group moving north (Joel Volpi).

GREAT CORMORANT - Paul Sykes saw a bird flying past Tybee Island on 18 March. This represents only the fifth Georgia record. Improved checking of the large flocks of cormorants along the coast would probably prove this species to be a regular winter visitor to the state.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - Numbers along the fall line in the winter continue to increase. Forty-three were counted during the Macon CBC on 17 Dec. and fifty during the Augusta CBC on 23 Dec. North of the fall line only a couple individuals wintered at Lake Commerce (John Paget).

- ANHINGA - Unusual were the 18 birds seen during the Augusta CBC on 23 Dec. (*vide* Anne Waters).
- AMERICAN BITTERN - In Augusta, the species was noted on 3 Dec. during a fieldtrip; then two were seen during the CBC on 23 Dec. with one bird remaining until 16 Jan. (*vide* Anne Waters). Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller saw three more individuals on the Georgia side of Eufaula NWR on 12 March.
- GREAT WHITE HERON - Rare but regular, this form of the Great Blue Heron was seen by Eileen Hutcheson at St. Simon's Island's East Beach on 1 May. The bird was spotted there again on 16 May by Lydia Thompson.
- GREAT EGRET - Anne Waters mentioned counts above normal for the Augusta area during the winter: 39 were seen during the 23 Dec. CBC and 22 were at MBBT on 29 Jan. Only a few individuals of this species are normally present during the winter in the Augusta area. Also unusual for the winter was a bird far inland at Callaway Gardens from 4 to 19 Feb. (Dennie and Pam McClure).
- SNOWY EGRET - This species is always worth mentioning when seen away from the Coastal Plain. One was at MBBT in the pre-breeding roost during most of April (Anne Waters). Another was at Lake Oconee on 15 and 29 April (Peter Yaukey) and the last one was seen during a migration walk at the ELHLAF on 30 April (Atlanta Audubon Society).
- GREEN-BACKED HERON - Inland wintering birds were found at Augusta on 16 Jan. and 25 Feb. (Anne Waters) and at Alpharetta on 22 Jan. (Helen Ogren and Carolina Lane).
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Unusual for the Piedmont in the winter was the single bird found by Susan Daniell at the Rum Creek WMA on 29 Jan.
- GLOSSY IBIS - This species can be rather difficult to find along the coast during the winter; however, Helen Ogren and Eileen Hutcheson counted 31 near Darien on 28 Jan. Eleven birds were reported from the same area on 15 Jan. by Paul Raney *et al.*
- MUTE SWAN - Four birds appeared at the Rum Creek WMA on 18 April and were seen by many observers through 6 May (*vide* Terry Johnson). This species is commonly kept in captivity so records of the species in the southeast are highly suspect.
- TUNDRA SWAN - Two records were received. Anne Waters reported one bird at Augusta from the end of Dec. through 24 Feb. and another spent most of the month of Jan. at the Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area at Darien and was last reported on 26 Jan. by Helen Ogren.
- GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - John Paget observed a pair at Commerce Lake from 17 Dec. until at least 26 Feb. Tom Patterson found another bird in north Laurens County on 22 Jan. which remained through Feb.
- SNOW GOOSE - The only spring report received was of a blue phase individual at the Rum Creek WMA on 19 April by Terry Johnson.
- ROSS' GOOSE - A possible addition to the Georgia state list was a bird reported by many observers at the Eufaula NWR (Joe Greenberg, Robert Manns, Bruce Dralle, Helen Ogren *et al.*). It remained at the refuge from about 17 Feb. into early April but generally remained on the Alabama side of the refuge. Information documenting the bird's occurrence in Georgia is currently under review by the Checklist Committee.
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL - Uncommon in the Upper Coastal Plain during the winter, two birds were reported off and on by Tom Patterson in NE Laurens County. Early migrants in the Piedmont area were at Commerce Lake on 21 Feb. and at Lake Lanier on 25 Feb. (John Paget).
- NORTHERN SHOVELER - Three birds were at the ELHLAF from 22 Jan. through 11 March (Patrick Brisse, Joel Hitt and others). The species is becoming more common during the winter in the Atlanta area where it used to be accidental.
- AMERICAN WIGEON - Of note was the pair sighted by Harriett DiGioia on 10 Feb. in Murray County.
- CANVASBACK - Twelve birds seen during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec. by Clarence Belger and four spotted during the Piedmont NWR CBC on 19 Dec. (*vide* Terry Johnson) were the only reports received during the period.
- RING-NECKED DUCK - The only large group was the 1100 birds seen by Clarence Belger at MBBT during the Augusta CBC on 23 Dec.
- GREATER SCAUP - A few records this period continue the pattern of increasing inland sightings which started several years ago. Terry Johnson reported the species from the Plant Scherer ash pond in Monroe County with outstanding counts: 27 on 1 Dec. and 44 on 7 and 23 Jan. In Atlanta, two birds were seen at the ELHLAF on 26 March during an AAS migration walk.

- COMMON EIDER - For the second year in a row, a female was discovered off the Georgia coast. Brad Winn and Janice Nichols found the bird off the south end of St. Catherine's Island on 17 Dec. (*Oriole* 54:4). The record is currently under consideration by the Checklist Committee. If accepted, this would be the second Georgia record.
- OLDSQUAW - The female located by Milton Hopkins and Betty Stewart during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec. was the only period sighting. The bird was seen the next day by many other observers.
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - Rare inland transients were a single bird at Lake Juliette, Monroe County, on 2 March (Dan Forester) and three birds at Commerce Lake on 4 March (John Paget).
- COMMON GOLDENEYE - This species was more common this winter than usual. One bird was at Peachtree City Lake, Fayette County, on 10 Dec. (Chris Lambrecht). One to five individuals were at SCSP from 21 Jan. through 15 Feb. (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Paul Raney and others). Four birds were at the Plant Scherer ash pond on 4 Feb. (Terry Johnson). Two more were at Augusta on 3 Feb. (George Reeves) and the last one was at SCSP on 30 March (Jerry Brunner).
- BUFFLEHEAD - A late bird for the Piedmont area was at Rum Creek WMA on 6 May (Dale Hardee *et al.*).
- COMMON MERGANSER - Always noteworthy in Georgia, six were counted by Milton Hopkins during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec. Two more female plumaged birds were seen at Wahoo Creek on Lake Lanier by John Paget on 4, 11 and 12 March.
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - John Paget reported a very late migrant from Lake Lanier on 17 May.
- AMERICAN SWALLOWTAILED KITE - Paul Hoinowski reported the earliest bird this season from the Hawkinsville area on 3 April.
- BALD EAGLE - The nesting pair at the Rum Creek WMA hatched two chicks during the winter, one of which died. Terry Johnson saw the surviving chick on the nest on 17 Jan. and it fledged by 29 March. This is one of the very few known eagle nests in the state.
- NORTHERN HARRIER - Late migrants were noted at Augusta on 12 May (Anne Waters) and near Cumming on 13 May (Joe Greenberg).
- GOLDEN EAGLE - An individual seen during the Piedmont NWR CBC on 19 Dec. was a rare sighting (*vide* Terry Johnson).
- MERLIN - Single birds were spotted during the Callaway Gardens CBC on 18 Dec. (*vide* Sam Pate) and at the ELHLAF on 9 April during an AAS migration walk.
- PEREGRINE FALCON - A few individuals were reported inland during early winter. One was seen during the Dalton CBC on 17 Dec. (*vide* Harriett DiGioia), another was spotted during the Piedmont NWR CBC on 19 Dec. (*vide* Terry Johnson) and the last one was in Chamblee on 27 Dec. (Frank McCamey).
- BLACK RAIL - One bird was heard off and on for about 20 minutes at Andrews Island, near Brunswick, on 30 April by Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore and Paul Sykes. More attentive coverage of the shortgrass salt marsh along our coast would undoubtedly prove this species to be regular in the area.
- SANDHILL CRANE - Migrating birds seem to be moving south later in December and then returning north earlier every year. Thirty-nine were over Tucker on 11 Dec. (Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert) and 55 were over Lake Tobesofkee near Macon on 12 Dec. (Ken and Arlene Clark). The first spring migrants were sighted over the Conyers Monastery on 7 Feb. (*vide* Francis Michael). Terry Moore received many reports from the Atlanta area with totals of over 500 birds in Feb. and 1200 birds in early March. The migration was about normal in Dalton and Columbus and less than average for the Macon area. Two very late individuals were noted by Jerry and Marie Amerson over Jones County on 29 April.
- BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER - One bird at the Gainesville Airport on 7-8 May was rather unusual (John Paget).
- PIPING PLOVER - Anne Waters was the only one to mention the species. Eleven were seen during the St. Catherine's Island CBC on 17 Dec. and six more were seen during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec. Please send in your reports so we can monitor the status of this species along the Georgia coast.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS - Rare inland in the winter, one was seen during the Augusta CBC on 23 Dec. and three were at MBBT on 20 Jan. (Anne and Vernon Waters). Six more were at Jackson Pasture in north Laurens County on 28-29 Jan. (Tom Patterson).
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS - This species is also rare in the winter inland. Anne Waters mentioned one bird on 29 Jan. and two on 11 Feb. at MBBT. Could these have been early migrants?

- UPLAND SANDPIPER - For the first time in a few years, the species was sighted in the Atlanta area. Five birds were located near Duluth on 9 April by Hugh Garrett and others. Bruce Dralle found three individuals at the Gainesville Airport the day before. Terry Moore and others found the last one at MBBT on 29 April.
- MARbled GODWIT - Six were seen during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec.; unusual were the 47 counted during the St. Catherines Island CBC on 17 Dec. (*vide* Anne Waters).
- LEAST SANDPIPER - An increase in the number of inland winter records occurred again this year with the following reports: eight during the Piedmont NWR CBC on 19 Dec. (Terry Johnson), one at ELHLAF on 1 Jan. (Bill Blakeslee), two in Laurens County on 28-29 Jan. (Tom Patterson) and over twenty at the MIA on 12 Feb. (Ty Ivey and others).
- PURPLE SANDPIPER - Paul Sykes noted five at the lighthouse on Tybee Island on 18 March for the highest count during the period.
- DUNLIN - Rare inland in the winter was a bird sighted at the MIA by Ty Ivey and others on 12 Feb.
- LAUGHING GULL - Two birds seen on Lake Lanier by John Paget on 13 and 17 May were a rare inland record. Even rarer were the two seen at the ELHLAF on 7 May during an AAS migration walk.
- BONAPARTE'S GULL - This species is becoming more common in the winter in the Atlanta area with four sightings received (*vide* Terry Moore). Terry also mentioned the increase in the number of spring sightings for the area. High inland counts around the state included 69 at Lake Juliette on 16 Dec. (Terry Johnson) and 34 at SCSP on 21 Jan. (Paul Raney). John Paget saw a late bird at Lake Lanier on 17 May.
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - A first for inland Georgia was an adult winter-plumaged bird that appeared at the MIA on 21 Jan. and was seen by Ty Ivey, Jerry and Marie Amerson and others. The bird was last seen during the first week of March (*Oriole* 54:5). More expected was a second year bird at Tybee Island on 26 March (Dennis Forsythe and Donna Clark).
- CASPIAN TERN - A few more birds than usual were reported inland: a single bird at the MIA on 15 and 21 April (Ty Ivey); others at MBBT on 16 April (Anne Waters) and Commerce Lake (Jack Carusos and John Paget). The latest sighting was a group of five spotted at Plant Scherer's ash pond on 29 April (Terry Johnson).
- FORSTER'S TERN - Rare inland during mid-winter, one was spotted by Anne Waters at MBBT on 20 Jan. Anne Waters and others sighted another bird at the same place during an Augusta Audubon Society fieldtrip on 25 March.
- BLACK TERN - Three individuals seen by Father Francis Michael at the ELHLAF on 16 May provided Atlanta with a rare spring record.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Peter Yaukey found two birds in Greene County on 6 May.
- SHORT-EARED OWL - One bird was found at the usual wintering ground near Cordele on 4 Dec. by Bruce Dralle and others. Rarer was the individual found in the spring near Athens on 19 March by John Dunning.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL - Early birds were reported by Tom Breazeale in Hamilton on 13 March and by Florence Lynn in southern Harris County on 16 March (*vide* Sam Pate).
- RUFous HUMMINGBIRD - Terry Moore received a couple reports of wintering hummingbirds in the Atlanta area. One was a definite Rufous Hummingbird. It appeared at the feeder of Buzz Trotty in NE Atlanta in October and left on 6 March. Excellent photographs were taken and the bird was identified later that winter as a male.
- OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - Helen Ogren and Carolina Lane sighted a bird near Dawsonville on 29 April for the only period record.
- WILLOW FLYCATCHER - Singing birds were noted in Greene County on 6 May by Peter Yaukey and Paul Sykes. Up to two birds were there on 13 May. On the same day John Paget saw one in Dawson County and the last one was seen by Don and Joyce Duncan at a swamp on the Warner Robins Air Force Base on 20 May.
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER - Terry Moore received several reports of a male and female located near the east entrance of the Okefenokee Swamp NWR starting in December. The female was sighted through at least the month of Jan. The species is still classified as accidental in Georgia.
- GRAY KINGBIRD - Two birds were seen on Jekyll Island at their usual spot on 29 April by Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore and Paul Sykes. Surprisingly this tied the earliest arrival date for the species in Georgia. Does anyone know how early these birds actually come back every year?

- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - For the third year in a row, the species returned to the yard of Mike and Cathy Harris near Cartersville (see Swiderski this issue). One bird arrived on 2 May and was photographed by numerous observers. Unfortunately its mate failed to return and nesting did not occur.
- PURPLE MARTIN - As usual a few early birds were back in February. Terry Johnson reported the species at the Rum Creek WMA on 9 Feb. Anne Waters saw three males and two females at MBBT on 11 Feb. and Bruce Dralle reported some from the Georgia side of Eufaula NWR on 11 Feb.
- CLIFF SWALLOW - On 28 May Paul Raney found two nests and five swallows gathering mud at the Highway 278 bridge over Lake Oconee. He also found some active nests at Lake Sinclair that same day. A new nesting colony was found around Lake Oconee only a year ago so it appears the species may be undergoing a range expansion.
- BARN SWALLOW - A bird at the ELHLAF on 11 March by Patrick Brisse was early for the Atlanta area and the state.
- WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH - Rare along the coast, one was sighted by Anne and Vernon Waters on 31 Dec. during the Sapelo Island CBC.
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - One bird near Stone Mountain on 4 Dec. was most likely a late migrant (Joel Hitt). Although unusual in mid-winter around Augusta, one was sighted on 23 Dec., 29 Jan. and 4 Feb. (Anne Waters).
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - An early bird was reported by Joel Hitt on 15 April near Lithonia.
- WATER PIPIT - The species was rather difficult to locate around the Augusta area this winter according to Anne Waters.
- WHITE-EYED VIREO - A bird seen by Patrick Brisse and Hugh Garrett on 5 Feb. near Shamrock Lake in Clayton County was most likely a wintering bird.
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO - Florence Lynn saw an early bird in Harris County on 14 March (*vide* Sam Pate).
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO - A bird found during the 29 April AAS migration walk along the Chatahoochee River in north Atlanta was the only report received for the period.
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - One bird seen at Youman's Pond near Midway on 29 April was a rare spring coastal record (Patrick Brisse).
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER - Terry Moore received seven Atlanta area reports from 24 March until 22 April. This represents a definite increase over the usual 2-3 spring reports.
- NASHVILLE WARBLER - Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert sighted an individual in Tucker on 14-15 May.
- BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER - Harry LeGrand (regional editor for *American Birds*) received a report of a bird at the Crooked River State Park on 1 Feb. for the second sighting of this species in Georgia (Michael Resch, *American Birds* 43:466). The GOS Checklist Committee has yet to receive any documentation on this sighting of an accidental species in Georgia. The sighting is mentioned here to remind birders that sightings of accidental species in the state need to be documented and submitted to *The Oriole* or to the Checklist Committee.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - A bird at MBBT on 28 Jan. could have been an early migrant according to Anne Waters.
- CERULEAN WARBLER - Terry Moore commented on the apparent decrease of the species in the Atlanta area based on the number of reports he received this period.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER - A few more birds than usual were located singing in the state. Peter Yaukey reported one from Greene County on 25 April and 10 May and in Clarke County on 23 May. Near Pendergrass, Helen Ogren and Carolina Lane saw one on 29 April and Paul Raney and others also saw one near Shamrock Lake, Clayton County, on 7 and 31 May.
- WILSON'S WARBLER - Anne and Vernon Waters saw an early male foraging near the Augusta levee on 14 March.
- INDIGO BUNTING - A possible wintering bird was one located in Tattal County on 16 Dec. by Stuart Coward.
- PAINTED BUNTING - A male was seen during the 17 Dec. St. Catherine's Island CBC by Stuart Coward *et al.* for a rare winter record.
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW - As usual a few were reported from the Piedmont area. Bob and Dorothy Potts located one at Callaway Gardens on 5 May and Dale Hardee saw three at the Piedmont NWR on 6 May.

LECONTE'S SPARROW - This elusive species was reported three times this winter compared to our usual lack of reports. Maybe more observers are out stomping through wet fields? Herb Kale saw the first one during the Sapelo Island CBC on 31 Dec. Possibly up to three birds were sighted near Desoto at the A&B Farm on 19 Jan. by Helen Ogren and Carolina Lane. The last report was of a bird which spent most of the winter in Clarke County from 8 Jan. through 1 March according to Bryan Watts.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - This species was also more common than usual this period. Paul Raney spotted one at SCSP on 29 Jan. Bruce Dralle reported two from the Georgia side of Eufaula NWR on 11 Feb. John Paget encountered the species three times around Pendergrass on 25, 26 March and 16 April. Peter Yaukey saw singles in Greene County on 1 and 17 May, the latter being a very late departure date for the state.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - Late departing birds were reported from the Augusta levee on 6 May (Anne Waters) and from Pendergrass on 14 May (John Paget).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - Single females were sighted at Pine Mountain in south Atlanta on 5 Feb. (Dennie and Pam McClure) and near Commerce Lake on 22 April (John Paget).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - An interesting count was the 200+ in Phinzy Swamp in Augusta by Anne Waters on 4 Feb.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - This species seems to be holding its own in the Upper Coastal Plain as Tom Patterson estimated a flock of 300-400 birds at Jackson Pasture in Laurens County most of the winter. In Augusta, where Anne Waters has been locating the species every winter recently, the high count was 30 birds on 14 Jan.

SHINY COWBIRD - A secondhand report was received of two individuals at Cumberland Island on 13-14 May by David Sibley. One of the birds was seen the next weekend by Robert and Didi Manns. Don Duncan also mentioned a single bird from the Warner Robins Air Force Base near Macon on 25 May. None of these sightings has yet to be submitted to the Checklist Committee for what would be a new state record.

NORTHERN ORIOLE - The winter status of this species is largely unknown and may fluctuate greatly from year to year. This period four immatures were seen during the Augusta CBC on 23 Dec. (Vernon Waters *et al.*). A male was seen near Kathleen on 16 Feb. by Don and Joyce Duncan.

RED CROSSBILL - As usual, Harriett DiGioia was the only observer to report the species. She recorded the species near Blue Ridge on 14 Jan.

PINE SISKIN - Terry Moore received only a few reports during the season from the Atlanta area. What happened in the remainder of the state is unknown since there were no reports.

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