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The Oriole, a journal of Georgia ornithology, publishes original articles that advance the study of birds in the state of Georgia and adjoining regions.

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CONTENTS

2018 UPDATE TO THE CURRENT STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (<i>DENDROCYGNA AUTUMNALIS</i>) IN GEORGIA <i>Gregory D. Balkcom and Bobby T. Bond</i>	1
YOUNG SCIENTIST PAPER: HEMATOCRIT AND GROWTH IN NESTLING SONGBIRDS <i>Tracey A. Le, Caroline W. Adkins and Megan Heberle</i>	5
GENERAL NOTES	15
BOOK REVIEW	24
FROM THE FIELD: AUGUST 2016 – NOVEMBER 2016	26
FROM THE FIELD: DECEMBER 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017	45

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**2018 UPDATE TO THE CURRENT STATUS
AND DISTRIBUTION
OF THE BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK
(*DENDROCYGNA AUTUMNALIS*)
IN GEORGIA**

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Introduction

Since 2006, the Black-bellied Whistling-duck (BBWD; *Dendrocygna autumnalis*) has become a confirmed breeder in the state of GA and is expanding its range. Balkcom et al. (2012) published the history of BBWD in GA along with their status and distribution at that time. According to Giff Beaton (pers. comm. 2013), there were 3 “unsubstantiated” sightings of BBWD in GA before its official acceptance by the Georgia Ornithological Society Checklist and Records Committee as wild sightings: in 1976, 2 BBWD were seen on Jekyll Island but were “unsubstantiated by details”; in 1991, a banded BBWD from a waterfowl breeder was seen on Lake Sinclair; and in the mid-1990s a BBWD was reported from a pond in Cobb County, but was considered an escapee. The first accepted report of a wild BBWD in GA occurred in June 1998 in Clayton County (Sewell 2000). Following this sighting, there were scattered reports of BBWD seen in GA, until 2006 when it was confirmed as a breeding species in Brooks County (Keyes 2010). Breeding was also confirmed in McIntosh County in 2007 at the Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, and since that

time the number of BBWD seen at that site has increased dramatically (Georgia Department of Natural Resources, unpubl. data). In the last 6 years, sightings of BBWD in other GA locations have increased as well, especially in the Coastal Plain. Georgia's BBWD population appears to be a natural expansion of FL's well-established BBWD population.

Methods

We have continued compiling information on BBWD sightings from 3 primary sources: the Georgia Birders Online (GABO-L) listserv website (<http://www.gos.org/gabo.html>), the eBird.org website (Cornell Lab of Ornithology <http://eBird.org/content/ebird/>), and direct reports to GA DNR.

For the purpose of this review, all listings and records that mentioned BBWD were investigated; however, only listings or records with photographic documentation of ducklings or of adults using nest boxes were considered confirmed breeding records. Location information for each sighting was used to determine the county where the sighting occurred.

Results

As of 15 November, 2018, BBWD have been reported in 62 of 159 GA counties and were breeding in 17 of those (Figure 1). For the last 5 years (2014 – 2018), BBWD have been reported in an average of just over 7 new counties per year (Figure 2).

Discussion

Georgia's BBWD population has expanded up the coast and appears to be using river systems, primarily the Flint River and the Savannah River, as their movement corridors into interior GA. With breeding in Baker, Decatur, Dooley, Dougherty, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, and Sumter cos, it appears that the Flint River drainage and its associated wetlands are acting as a core area for expansion. On the opposite side of the state, breeding is occurring in Chatham, Burke, and Richmond cos., indicating that the Savannah River drainage and its associated wetlands may be corridors for expansion as well. It is easy to assume that BBWD are present in several other counties in southeastern GA, but simply have not been reported yet. Quite possibly, the entire Coastal Plain physiographic province may soon be the breeding range of the BBWD.

Acknowledgments

We thank all the birders and citizen-scientists who posted their sightings on eBird.org and the GABO-L listserv.

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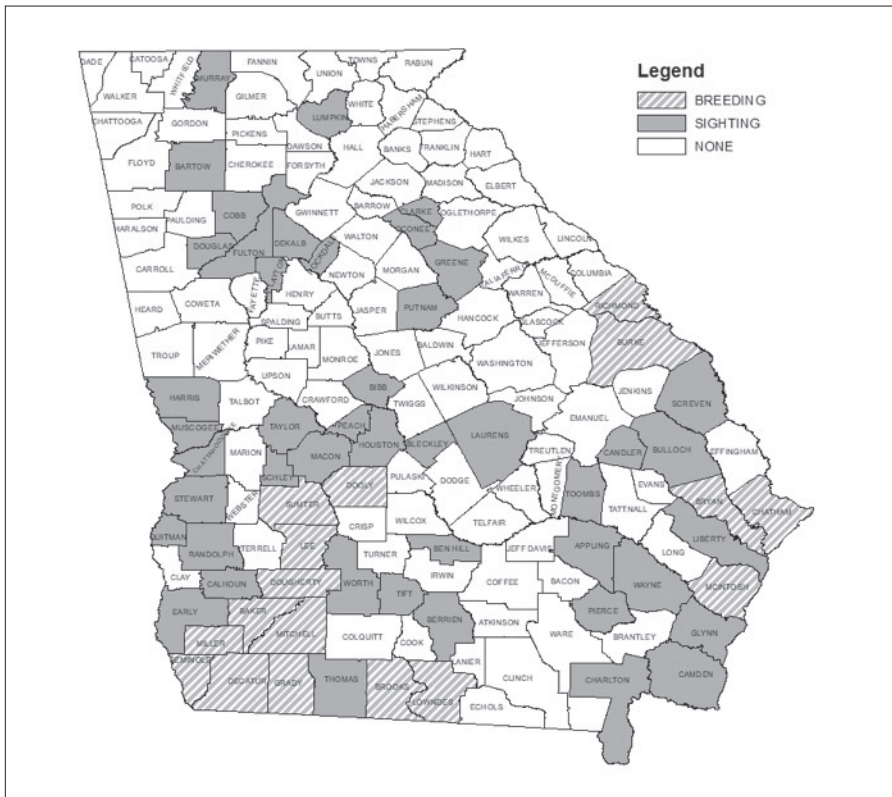


Figure 1. Current status and distribution of Black-bellied Whistling-duck in GA, November 2018.

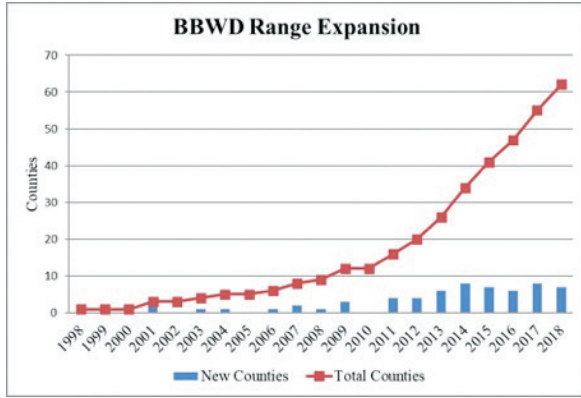


Figure 2. Rate of expansion of Black-bellied Whistling-duck in GA, November 2018.

**YOUNG SCIENTIST PAPER:
HEMATOCRIT AND GROWTH IN
NESTLING SONGBIRDS**

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Abstract

Development in birds occurs from hatching until maturity and is impacted by nutrition, parasites, and parental care during the nestling phase. The objectives of this study were to determine if nestling growth influences hematocrit. From February through June of 2018, we collected physiological and morphological data from Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) and Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) in the area surrounding Islands High School, Chatham County, GA. We discovered that as age increases, hematocrit increases significantly. Additionally, we found that morphological measurements and hematocrit levels are positively correlated.

Introduction

Post-hatching development occurs from the nestling phase until maturity (Jongsomjit et al. 2007). Development is based on tissue level constraints, in which a nestling's maximum growth rate is dependent on available resources and the amount of tissue that has fully matured. Once tissue has matured, it does not continue to grow (Jongsomjit et al. 2007).

Body condition reflects the overall health and wellness of a bird; poor body condition can decrease the development rate of nestlings, while good

body condition can increase the development rate of nestlings (Jenni et al. 2006). Various methods are utilized to estimate and measure body condition, including hematocrit, the ratio of red blood cells to the total volume of the blood sample (Fair et al. 2007). Hematocrit is a well-studied indicator for overall body condition (McKinnon et al. 2015). Hematocrit is impacted by nutrition, temperature, and parasites, and can be an indicator of a bird's oxygen-carrying abilities and how well a bird thermoregulates (Markowski 2015). Severely high or low hematocrit can indicate diseases or poor body condition (Markowski 2015). For instance, an extremely high hematocrit can indicate the presence of polycythemia, in which an excess number of red blood cells are present in the bloodstream, while an extremely low hematocrit can be an indicator of anemia (Markowski 2015). Optimal hematocrit, especially for physical activity, is thought to be at an intermediate level, rather than at a maximum level (Bowers et al. 2014).

Hematocrit tends to remain constant throughout the bird's life or increases with age (Fair et al. 2007). Nestling hematocrit is consistently lower than fledgling, juvenile, and adult hematocrit (Fair et al. 2007). Hematocrit also tends to remain similar between broods of the same parents, which is likely due to similar genetics (Markowski 2015). However, as nestlings fledge and develop into adulthood, their hematocrit begins to differentiate from the rest of their brood as nestlings encounter individualistic stressors (Markowski 2015).

Development of nestlings can be monitored through physiological and morphological traits, including tarsometatarsus (tarsus) length, ninth primary feather (P9) length, and body mass (Johnson et al. 2013). Different parts of a bird's structure develop separately. For example, structures that develop initially tend to be significant for nestling survival, such as those necessary for foraging or thermoregulation. Therefore, measuring multiple morphological features can provide a more accurate and reliable indicator of overall nestling growth and development (Jongsomjit et al. 2007). The length of the tarsus and P9 are common indicators of nestling body condition as they are indicators of development (Rega-Brodsky and Nilon 2016, Harriman et al. 2017). Tarsus length is a strong indicator for nestling development, as it develops normally regardless of a nestling's nutrition (Jongsomjit et al. 2007). The P9 is the longest flight feather along the farthest edge of the wing (Johnson et al. 2013). Primary feathers help birds to generate lift and establish control while flying (Lovette and Fitzpatrick 2016). P9 length is a strong indicator for nestling development, as it tends to be less erratic than mass growth (Jongsomjit et al. 2007).

Much of nestling growth rate differs based on body mass, particularly

in altricial species, such as Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) and Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) (Jongsomjit et al. 2007). Eastern Bluebirds are sexually dimorphic with an average clutch size of 2–7 eggs and have 1–3 broods annually. The incubation period lasts from 11–19 days (generally 14 days), while the nestling period lasts 17–21 days (Gowaty and Plissner 2015). Carolina Chickadees are sexually monomorphic with an average clutch size of 3–10 eggs and have 1–2 broods annually. The incubation period lasts from 12–15 days, and the nesting period lasts 12–16 days (Mostrum et al. 2002). While mass is not the best indicator for nestling development, as it can be heavily influenced by environmental and external factors, it is commonly used in research analyzing development, and is a beneficial indicator when used in conjunction with other development indicators (Jongsomjit et al. 2007). The purpose of this study was to examine how hematocrit and certain morphological measurements reflect developmental progress.

Methods

Study Site and Data Collection

From February to May of 2018, we collected physiological and morphological data from Eastern Bluebirds and Carolina Chickadees in the surrounding area of the campus of Islands High School, Chatham County, GA (32.037124° N, -81.0076367° W). The study site contained 26 nest boxes placed within various habitats, including areas adjacent to retention ponds, forest edges, and athletic fields. The boxes were 29.21 cm x 29.21 cm x 20.32 cm and had an entry hole diameter of 3.81 cm (Wild Birds Unlimited, Savannah, GA).

We checked all nest boxes every 3 days for activity (foraging, gathering, and parental care), eggs, and nestlings. We banded all nestlings at 11–13 days of age. Each nestling was banded with 1 aluminum U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band and 3 plastic color bands for subsequent identification of each individual bird. Banding was carried out under Federal Bird Banding Permit (Permit No. 23253), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Permit (Permit No. MB08766C-0), and GA Scientific Collecting Permit (Permit No. 1000565751). In order to identify the nestlings before they reached 11 days of age, we clipped 1 claw for each nestling; we clipped the far right claw for the first nestling, the second right claw for the second nestling, and continued this pattern for each nestling in each brood.

Nestling Traits: Body Condition and Hematocrit

We measured 18 Eastern Bluebirds and 8 Carolina Chickadee nestlings. We measured each nestling's tarsus length, P9 length, and body mass, along with taking a blood sample, for nestlings of both species at post-hatch day 5–7 and post-hatch day 11–13. We measured length of P9 and tarsometatarsus (tarsus) using dial calipers (± 0.1 mm). We measured the body mass of each nestling of both species using a 30 g Pesola scale to the nearest 0.1 g. Each time we took a morphological measurement, we took it 3 times and averaged to increase accuracy. We monitored nestlings for development rate and banded them on nestling day 11–13. We determined the sex of the Eastern Bluebirds through observation of differences in feather coloration. At 11–13 days, Eastern Bluebird nestlings begin to display sexual dimorphism; male nestlings have bright blue feathers and female nestlings have white edging on the outer tail feathers (Ritchison 2000). Sex of Carolina Chickadee nestlings could not be determined at either 5–7 days or 11–13 days. We noted hatch date of eggs and P9 lengths of both species (Johnson et al. 2013) to determine nestling age and appropriate dates for bleeding. We obtained the blood of both species from the brachial vein (Tsui et al. 2018) using a 27.5 gauge needle. The amount of blood drawn from each bird followed permit guidelines. We collected blood in a heparinized capillary tube (Fisher Scientific, Pittsburgh, PA), kept the samples on ice, and centrifuged the samples at 12000 rpm for 10 min within 4 hr of the collection. After centrifugation, we measured the packed cell and plasma components within the capillary tube and calculated the hematocrit ratio.

Statistical Analysis

We performed statistical analyses using GraphPad Prism 8 Software (San Diego, CA). We used paired Student's *t* tests and Pearson's correlations to examine relationships with hematocrit and morphological metrics. In the paired *t* tests, we only included hematocrit measurements from individuals from whom we obtained repetitive blood samples. Based on an exploratory comparison, we found no difference between hematocrit ratios of male and female Eastern Bluebirds. Therefore, we separated species by age alone (5–7 days and 11–13 days) when we compared hematocrit. Data from individuals, rather than an average from each nest, were used for analysis due to the small number of nest boxes monitored during the study.

Results

Age-related Differences in Hematocrit

Hematocrit was significantly greater in 11–13 d nestlings than in 5–7 d for both bluebirds ($t=11.77$, $df=7$, $p<0.0001$) and chickadees ($t=5.624$, $df=4$, $p=0.0049$) (Fig. 1). This represented a 6.1 percent increase and a 10.25 percent increase, respectively.

Morphological Metrics and Hematocrit

Hematocrit and morphological measurements both increased positively as development proceeded. Nestlings' hematocrit levels were greater in relation to their morphological metrics (9th primary, tarsus, and mass) in both species (Figs. 2–4). As the nestlings in both species grew, the increase in their morphological metrics followed an increasing hematocrit.

Discussion

Hematocrit did not differ between sexes for Eastern Bluebird nestlings, but hematocrit did increase with age for both species. While morphological measurements increased along with hematocrit when measurements of both age groups were combined, we determined that these measurements likely increased as a result of age. The positive correlation between 9th primary length, tarsus length, and mass in relation to hematocrit was more pronounced in Carolina Chickadee nestlings than Eastern Bluebird nestlings. The small sample size of our study could have influenced results.

Hematocrit and morphological metrics can be influenced by similar physiological and environmental stressors. In the future, we want to determine if the alterations in hematocrit that we observed are related to changes in stress hormones, lack of nutrition, or other environmental factors (Fair et al. 2007) and plan to continue collecting additional samples during spring and summer of 2019 to explore these factors. We will also monitor this cohort of birds to determine if hematocrit and other biological markers are altered across multiple breeding seasons and if there exists a correlation between hematocrit and nesting success.

In the next breeding season, we hope to compare the largest and smallest nestlings of each nest in order to determine if the largest nestling is perhaps fed more than the other nestlings in the same brood of Eastern Bluebirds or

Carolina Chickadees. It is possible that nestling size may be influenced by how often nestlings beg for and receive food. We also want to determine if degree of parental care affects the average hematocrit ratio of each nest.

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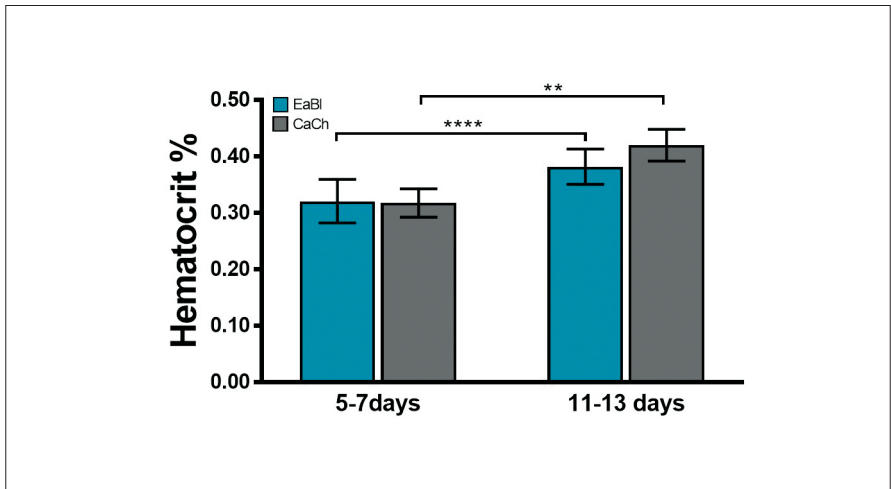


Figure 1. Hematocrit increased significantly in both Eastern Bluebirds and Carolina Chickadees between 5 to 7 days of age and 11 to 13 days of age.

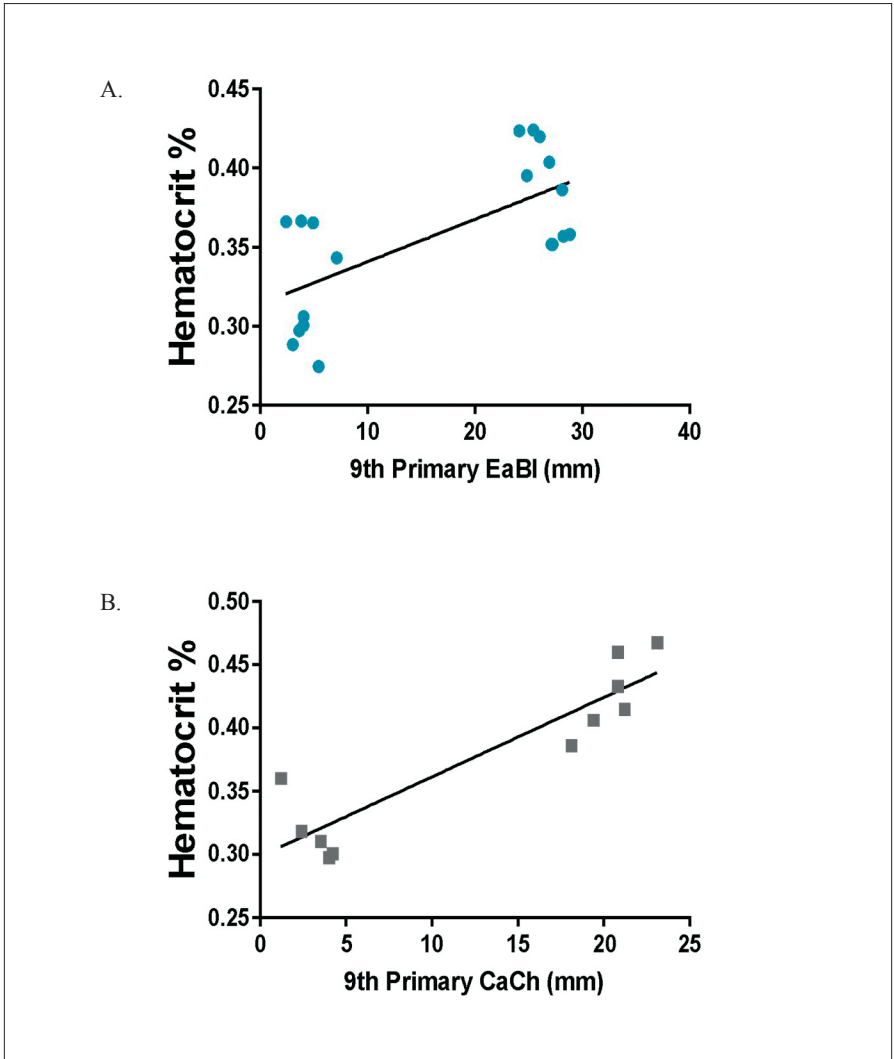


Figure 2. Relationship between the length of the 9th primary and hematocrit. A. nestling Eastern Bluebirds from 5 to 13 days of age; B. nestling Carolina Chickadees from 5 to 13 days of age.

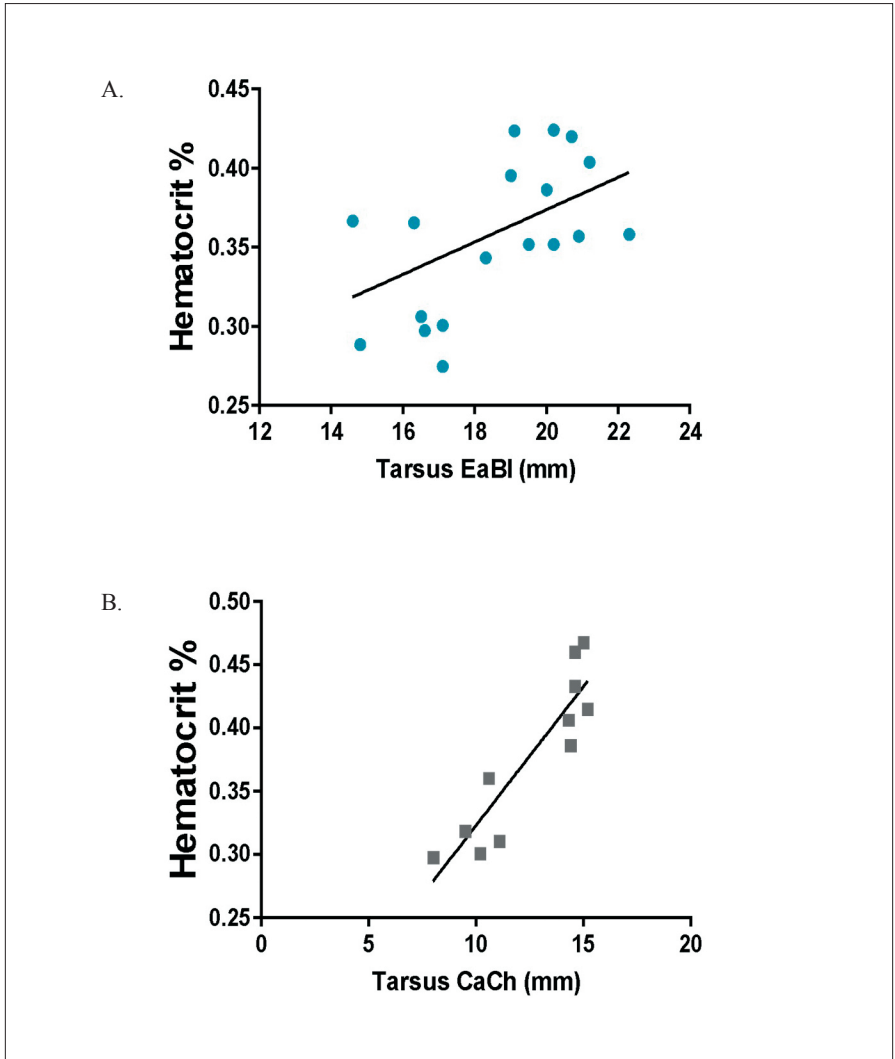


Figure 3. Relationship between the length of the tarsus and hematocrit. A. nestling Eastern Bluebirds from 5 to 13 days of age; B. nestling Carolina Chickadees from 5 to 13 days of age.

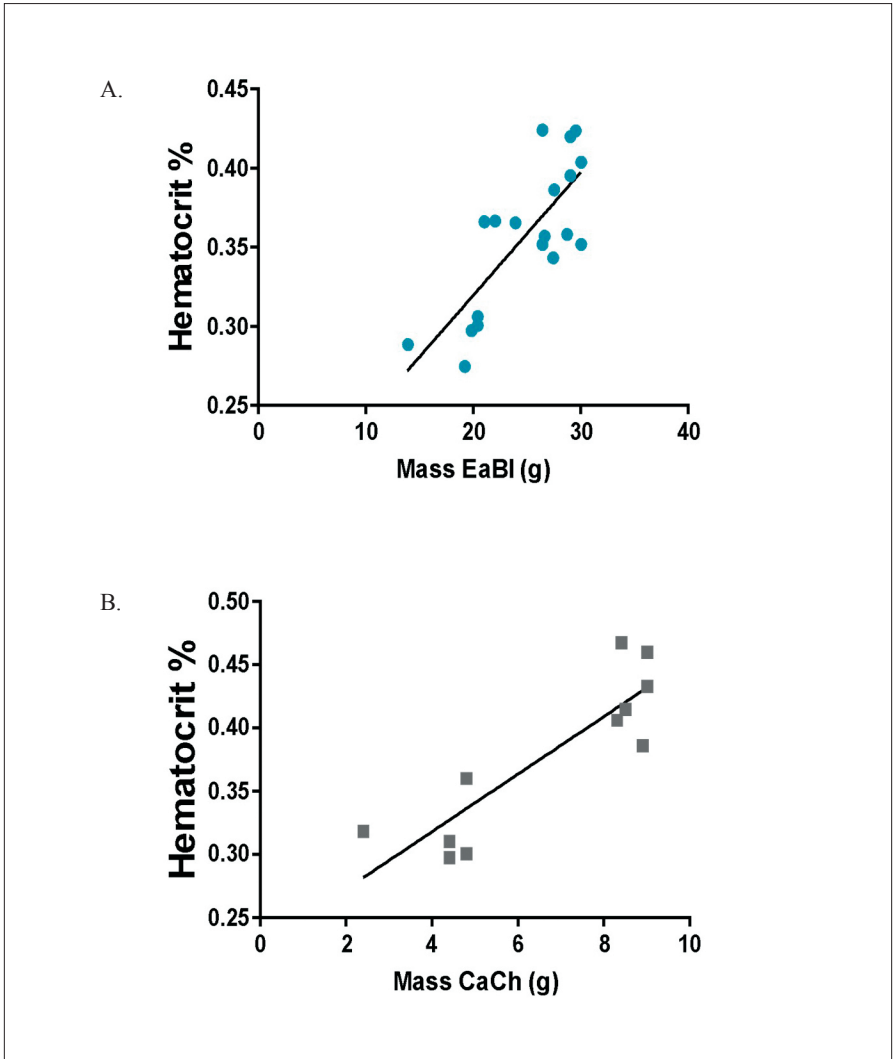


Figure 4. A positive relationships between body mass and hematocrit. A. nestling Eastern Bluebirds from 5 to 13 days of age; B. nestling Carolina Chickadees from 5 to 13 days of age.

GENERAL NOTES

POSSIBLE CASE OF MYCOPLASMAL CONJUNCTIVITIS IN A NORTHERN CARDINAL IN GEORGIA— Since the mid-1990s, finches at backyard bird feeders have been prone to annual infections by the bacterium *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Mg), which causes visible swelling of birds' eyes, or conjunctival tissue (conjunctivitis). This disease has largely been confined to birds in the family Fringillidae, including House Finches (*Haemorrhous mexicanus*), Purple Finches (*Haemorrhous purpureus*), American Goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*), Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*), and grosbeaks (Hartup et al. 2001). After it was first introduced, the disease rapidly spread throughout the eastern United States and Canada, and is now in the western half of the continent (Duckworth et al. 2003). There is a distinct seasonal cycle, with outbreaks occurring almost like clockwork each fall and also in the spring, albeit at a smaller scale (Altizer et al. 2004). The prevalence of infection is known to be highest in the southeastern states (Altizer et al. 2004). Here, I provide detailed observations of a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) with a suspected case of mycoplasmal conjunctivitis during the winter of 2019.

There have been early reports of non-finch species, including cardinals, contracting the disease, although it is sometimes difficult to verify these, especially without photo-documentation. The early study by Hartup et al. (2001) highlights this difficulty. In that study, which was conducted only a few years into the outbreak (1994–1998), and prior to the advent of digital cameras (!), researchers asked citizens to report observations of any birds with suspected conjunctivitis. Twenty-three reports of Northern Cardinals with signs of conjunctivitis were reported at sites spread across the eastern seaboard. The authors attempted to verify these records based on descriptions of the clinical signs, and notes on the birds' behaviors. In one other study of Mg incidence in non-finch species, researchers in Alabama conducted a mist-netting survey to evaluate Mg seroprevalence in wild birds (Farmer et al. 2005). Of the 49 cardinals they captured, 14% were seropositive, demonstrating these birds had prior exposure to the disease, but may or may not have developed an active infection. Collectively, these 2 studies provide indirect evidence that cardinals may be capable of contracting this disease, although a verifiable, clear case of conjunctivitis has not yet been documented until now.

The cardinal in question was a female seen at the author's backyard feeder near Athens, GA. It is a rural, farmland area, and there are 3 feeders at this station, all filled with sunflower seeds. There are daily influxes of House Finches

at the feeders year-round, with other visitors including cardinals, Tufted Titmice (*Baeolophus bicolor*), Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*), and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). The feeders are close enough to a window (10 feet) to be able to view the birds carefully with binoculars. Importantly, I had observed a pronounced level of conjunctivitis in the finches there in Dec 2018, with sometimes 3 to 4 infected finches seen in a flock of 12. The cardinal was first seen on Dec 22, 2018. At the time, I noticed that its right eye appeared to be slightly swollen. The bird did not show evidence of illness, such as lethargic movement, or behavioral abnormalities.

On Jan 27, 2019, I observed, presumably, the same cardinal at the feeder. While the bird had not been marked in any way, I could only assume it was the same individual, given the similarity in the appearance of its right eye. On this occasion, the bird remained for approximately 30 minutes, and I was able to make careful observations and obtain suitable photographs through binoculars (Figure 1). I was also able to record a short video clip of the bird (as viewed through binoculars), which is available online (<https://youtu.be/mpKF4jpdTlI>). I noted that the conjunctival tissue of the bird's right eye was swollen more so than the prior observation. The left eye remained unaffected. There was evidence of feather loss around the affected eye, which is consistently observed with Mg infections in House Finches (*pers. obs.*). There was little evidence of leakage or discharge (as occurs in active finch infections), although I noted the bird shook its head on occasion; this behavior is frequently seen in infected finches, as if they try to dislodge any built-up discharge. This bird appeared capable of opening and closing its swollen eyelid. However, it was clear that it could not see well out of the affected eye (it moved its head so as to only scan with its clear eye). Finally, the bird did not appear lethargic, nor was there evidence it was weak or moribund while at the feeder, since it switched perches numerous times. It also flew away readily when the other birds did. This is pertinent, since infected House Finches often linger at feeders well after their flock has departed (Hawley et al. 2007).

It should be noted that this is only a *suspected* case of Mg infection. To be certain that this was a case of Mg, the bird would need to be captured and a sample of conjunctival tissue obtained for genetic testing. However, certain observations here do provide considerable circumstantial evidence. The cardinal was visiting feeders that were also visited (even on the same days as the observations) by clearly infected House Finches, and the author noted that this winter the infection was pronounced amongst the finches at these feeders. This is relevant because the early study of conjunctivitis in non-

finches showed that the presence of diseased House Finches is a key predictor of spillover infections in other species (Hartup et al. 2001). Second, from the author's experience handling House Finches with conjunctivitis (Davis et al. 2004, Davis 2007, Davis 2008, Davis 2010), the conjunctivitis in this cardinal appeared remarkably similar, and in fact, this degree of conjunctivitis would be classified as moderate-to-severe in such research (Luttrell et al. 1998, Dhondt et al. 2007). In the most severe cases, the eyelids are completely swollen shut. Finally, these clinical signs were not consistent with avian pox infection, which is the only other visibly-identifiable disease that could cause tissue swelling. Pox can affect the ocular region of birds (*pers. obs.*), but in those cases, a growth is usually present at the site of swelling, and this was not seen in the cardinal.

As of this writing (March 2019), the bird has not been seen again, which means it either perished, moved away from this location, or the infection resolved and it is now is unrecognizable from the many other female cardinals at this feeder. Nevertheless, these fleeting observations should be of importance if this disease eventually progresses to other species beyond those in the finch family. Moreover, they demonstrate that backyard feeder-watching can sometimes provide valuable information that can supplement scientific investigations.

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Figure 1. Images of a female Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) with suspected mycoplasmal conjunctivitis.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW DIET ON CUMBERLAND ISLAND — On 26 May 2017, 2 Chuck-will's-widows (*Antrostomus [Caprimulgus] carolinensis*) were found dead on a Cumberland Island road. The habitat surrounding the location was scrub-flatwoods, with many scattered temporary ponds, most of which were dry at the time. Except for thick ground cover and the open sand road, there was little canopy. The 2 birds were probably in courtship at the time they were killed by a likely vehicle impact. We collected the birds and performed post-mortem examinations to determine what the birds had been consuming. Food items in their crops were identified to family and the amount of each item type estimated as percent volume (Table 1). One bird had consumed only beetles representing 7 families, the most abundant being Scarabaeidae (June Beetles) and Elateridae (Click Beetles). Two of the families were of aquatic species, Dytiscidae and Gyrinidae. Only beetles of 2 families were found in the second bird, Scarabaeidae and Elateridae, along with Damselflies (Anisoptera), moths (Lepidoptera), and Praying Mantis (Mantidae).

Chuck-will's-widows are common summer residents on Cumberland Island from early March through August. Although they typically winter in the Bahamas and Central America, they may winter as far north as the GA-FL stateline (Straight 2010). A call noted on the island on 27 February 1997 could have been an over-wintering bird.

Three Chuck-will's-widows have been found dead on Cumberland Island beaches in the past 3 decades; on 29 April 1991, 28 April 1994, and 27 September 2001. The bird found in 2001 died with a Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) in its esophagus (Ruckdeschel 2003).

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Table 1. Insect prey items recovered from the crops of 2 Chuck-will's-widows from Cumberland Island, GA, May 2017.

Insect prey			Bird 1		Bird 2	
Order	Family	Common Name	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Coleoptera	Scarabaeida	June beetle	18	45	9	28.1
	Elateridae	Click beetle	14	35	8	25
	Pyrochroidae	Fire-colored beetle	3	7.5	-	
	Dytiscidae	Diving beetle	2	5	-	
	Cerambycidae	Long-horned beetle	1	2.5	-	
	Gyrinidae	Whirligig beetle	1	2.5	-	
	Curculionidae	Snout beetle	1	2.5	-	
Anisoptera		Damselfly	-		8	25
Lepidoptera		Moth	-		6	18.7
Mantidae		Praying Mantis	-		1	3.1
Total			40		32	

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RAT SNAKE PREDATION OF A NORTHERN CARDINAL AT A BIRD FEEDER — In August 18, 2018, in Snellville, Gwinnett County, the Georgia-based co-authors witnessed a rat snake (*Elaphe* sp.) in the process of swallowing a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) which it had captured at a bird feeder suspended under the eaves of their house (Figure 1). The bird was already dead when they made the observation. The snake was lying in the roof gutter at the time of the incident; it is not known whether the bird was actually on the feeder, in flight and approaching the feeder, or perched on the gutter or roof at the time of the attack. They observed the snake for approximately 30 minutes as it struggled to pull the bird up and over the lip of the gutter. It made a number of attempts to pull its prey up higher toward the gutter, but without success. The co-authors left the scene to run errands and upon their return, there was no sign of either the snake or the bird. Presumably, the snake successfully swallowed the unfortunate Cardinal.

Rat snakes are documented to prey upon birds and bird eggs, hence the common name “chicken snake” for these species. Clark (1949) found bird remains in the stomachs of 17 rat snakes examined in Louisiana, and Dundee and Rossman (1989) referenced notes from Louisiana biologist Percy Viosca, who witnessed a rat snake consuming a bird while in a tree. We are not aware of any reports of rat snakes capturing birds at a feeder. Dunn and Tessaglia (1994) used results from a special survey conducted by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Project FeederWatch participants (11 November 1989 to 6 April 1990) to document incidents of predation at bird feeders. Approximately 10% (567 of 5500) of survey participants reported predation incidents by Sharpshinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), Cooper’s Hawk (*A. cooperii*), and domestic cats (*Felis catus*) most frequently. There were 2 reports of snake predation during the survey; one by a rattlesnake (*Crotalus* sp.) and one by what was believed to have been a garter snake (*Thamnopsis* sp.). The exact location of the attacks in relation to the feeders under observation was not included (Dunn and Tessaglia 1994).

Although the Georgia-based co-authors have not observed additional predation events by this snake species at their feeder, the event leads to speculation as to whether the event was simply a matter of chance, or that the snake observed bird activity at the feeder and positioned itself to take advantage of possible opportunities. Rat snakes have proven to be adaptable to suburban environments (Dunn 2016), and it may be that this behavior has occurred elsewhere, but was unobserved or undocumented.

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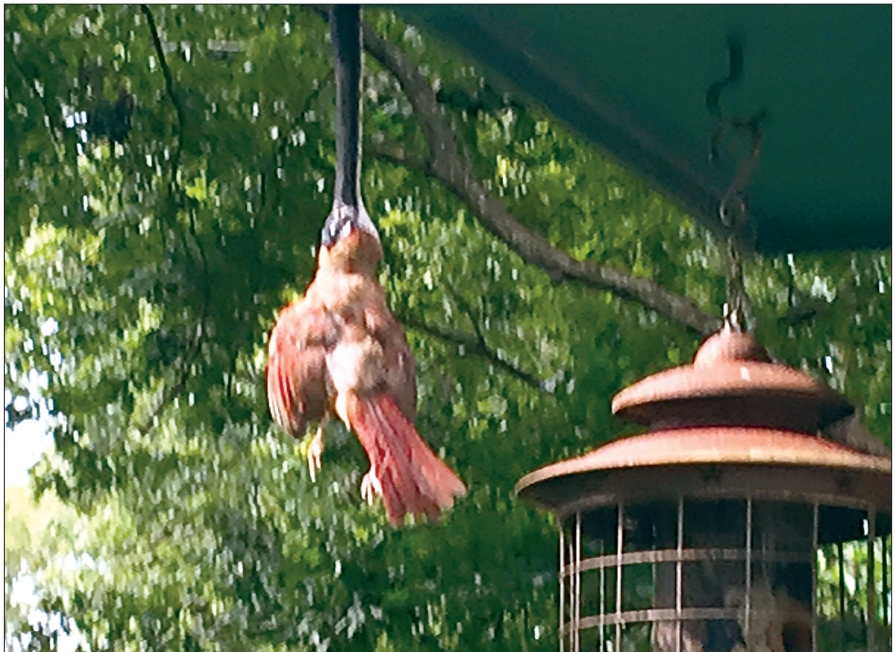
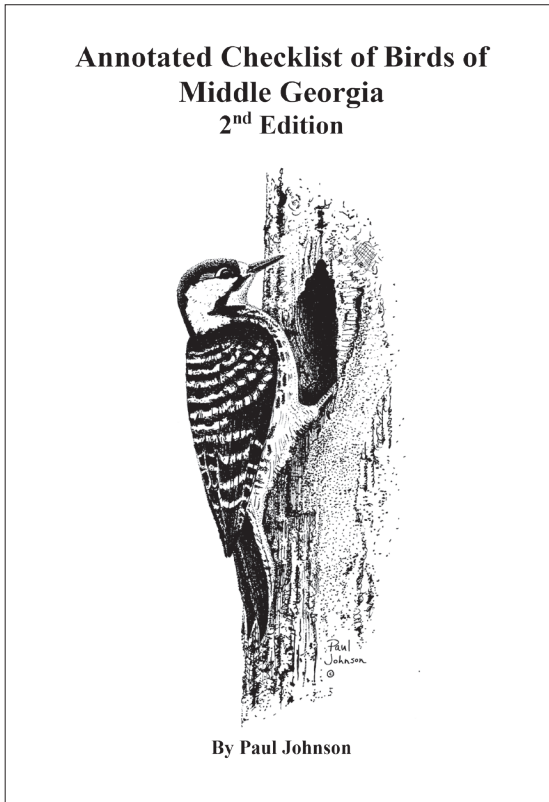


Figure 1. Rat Snake (*Elaphe* sp.) preying on Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) at bird feeder, Snellville, GA, August 2018.

BOOK REVIEW**ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF MIDDLE GEORGIA,
SECOND EDITION****By Paul Johnson***Available through Amazon.com. 2018. 232 pp.**Print ISBN-10 1723139559, ISBN-13 978-1723139598. US \$10.*

The first edition of this book was already a great regional annotated checklist, and this one improves it further. The area covered has grown by several counties, and it now includes 17 counties surrounding Macon-Bibb County. The book begins with a history of bird study in the region, including discussion of many of the major ornithologists and birders who spent time here, all the way up to present day. A really nice addition to this edition is a fully reprinted copy of the first regional checklist, Hedvig Cater's 1973 *Birds*

of *Bibb and Houston Counties, Georgia*, which is an appendix at the end of the book. In addition to adding several new counties, this edition updates all the species accounts with sightings and status changes for all the species in the 1998 edition. Also included are 25 new species that have occurred since 1998 or were from recently added counties.

The species accounts are generally very complete, with listings of individual reports and high counts as well as discussion where warranted. Additionally, the reports are helpfully split into Piedmont and Coastal Plain records where possible (many of the counties straddle the Fall Line).

In addition to standard annotated checklist listings of location, numbers, and dates, there is much anecdotal information for many of the species, locations, and observers, that most checklists don't include. This information adds greatly to not only the overall usefulness of the book, but its readability. In short, this is a superbly-researched, well-written, and extremely useful book for anyone interested in the birds or ornithological history of middle Georgia!

Giff Beaton, *Palmetto, GA.*

FROM THE FIELD

AUGUST 2016 – NOVEMBER 2016

Fall 2016 was exceptionally warm and dry, extending from a hot and dry summer. Atlanta had its warmest fall ever to date, with average temperatures 5.5 degrees F above the norm. Rome's precipitation was more than 10 inches below normal during September-November, while Macon went 52 consecutive days without rain, breaking a record set in 1892. Conditions were ripe for wildfires, with multiple blazes simultaneously occurring over extensive portions of the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains. Wild food crops, both insects and fruit, were likely negatively impacted by these weather patterns, thus affecting the survival of resident and migrant birds.

Summer storm effects continued in GA (think Brown Booby) even as Hurricane Hermine crossed south GA in early September, generating several interesting inland seabird records. Hurricane Matthew's passage off the GA coast resulted in cancellation of the GOS meeting, as well as damage to several favorite birding locales (e.g., Ft. Pulaski, Tybee I., Sapelo I., Cumberland I.). Yet, you can pore over weather reports until your face turns grosbeak-blue, and never find a reason why some birds wind up where they do; case in point, how did a Crested Caracara find Forsyth Co. in mid-November 2016? The serendipitous nature of our hobby is one of the things that keeps us birding!

This compilation relied heavily on a summary of eBird reports for the period. I apologize if I did not notice a GABO-L post with your unusual sighting (I did a cursory search of the GABO-L archives for those months), or missed a GOS Facebook group posting. If you do not use any of these media, but wish me to include your noteworthy bird observations in future FTFs, feel free to write to me at mhodes@tnc.org or c/o The Nature Conservancy, 100 Peachtree St. NW, Suite 2250, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AIC - Andrews Island Causeway and spoil site, Glynn Co.; AP - American Proteins settling ponds, Forsyth Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; AWRW - Azalea and Willeo roads wetlands, Fulton Co.; BCL - Bartow Co. Loop, a cluster of sod farms and cattle ponds on Brandon Farm Road and Taff Road, west of Cartersville; BUENWR - Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CCWA - Clayton Co. Water Authority, Clayton

and Henry cos.; CINS - Cumberland Island National Seashore, Camden Co.; CLRL - Carter's Lake Re-regulation Lake area, Murray Co.; COP - Centennial Olympic Park, Fulton Co.; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; CSU - Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co.; GCRC rns - photo-documented but not written up for GCRC; GI - Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; HN - Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co.; HP - Henderson Park, DeKalb Co.; JI - Jekyll Island, Glynn Co.; JIBS - Jekyll Island Banding Station, Glynn Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co.; LEIB - Little Egg Island Bar, McIntosh Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; LTI - Little Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; LWFG - Lake Walter F. George, Clay Co.; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds, Richmond Co.; m. ob. - multiple observers; MSS - Marshallville Super Sod Farm, Macon Co.; MWSS (Mid-winter Shorebird Survey of the Georgia coast); NAB - North American Birds (journal of the American Birding Association); NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; OISNWR - Onslow I., Savannah NWR, Chatham Co.; OM - Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, Muscogee Co.; ph. - photographed; PP - Piedmont Park, Fulton Co.; PSNP - Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, Richmond Co.; Region - when capitalized, refers to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina; SBG - State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Clarke Co.; SCI - St. Catherines Island, Liberty Co.; SF - sod farm; SI - Sapelo Island, McIntosh Co.; SP - State Park; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; TI - Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; WFGD - Walter F. George Dam, Clay Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; WPD - West Point Dam, Harris and Troup cos.

Notes: The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification or acceptance of a record. Observations of Review Species need to be documented and a rare bird report submitted to the Georgia Checklist and Records Committee (GCRC) for consideration.

Species that appear in a **bold-faced font** represent those that were considered Review Species by the GCRC during the year of the sighting. This list changes from year to year. The current review list may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/review-list>. GCRC activity, including the status of reports listed as "pending" as of press time, may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/GCRCActivity>.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – Reported from 12 counties, with highest numbers in Lee, Seminole, and Decatur cos. in southwest GA (m.obs.).

SNOW GOOSE – Late November was the general arrival time, but the earliest report was from Kathy Miller of 1 bird at Oconee WMA, Putnam Co. on 22 October.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Out of season, a bird in DeKalb Co. (mostly Emory's Lullwater Preserve) was first spotted by Fernanda Duque and Carlos Antonio Rodriguez on 14 August, and then reported by Kathy Miller through 8 September.

BRANT – Breanna Ondich picked up an ill bird on JI South Beach, 28 October, and brought it to the nearby Georgia Sea Turtle Center for possible rehabilitation, but it unfortunately died shortly after arriving there (*vide* Tim Keyes; GCRC 2016-17, accepted).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – Of the 450 person-records on eBird, the earliest was 3 at HN on 5 August (Chris Thornton), and the high counts (300+) came mostly from coastal Chatham and Glynn cos., and from WPD (m.obs.).

NORTHERN SHOVELER – Jeff Sewell and Jean Luc Betoulle spotted the earliest, 2 birds at CCWA's E. L. Huie Ponds, Clayton Co., on 9 August; all August records were from CCWA. High counts of 450 birds came from AIC in October (m.obs.).

GADWALL – Earliest was a single bird at CCWA E. L. Huie Ponds, Clayton Co., on 2 October (Carol Lambert et al.). The high count by far was 314 birds in Coweta Co. on 23 November (James White).

AMERICAN WIGEON – Ken Blankenship and David Crotser spotted a bird at HN on 2 October for the arrival; Marion Dobbs had the high count of 57 at Garden Lakes, Floyd Co., on 28 November.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK – Jacob and Jim Flynn had the only October record, a bird at Oconee WMA, Putnam Co., on 16 October; otherwise, birds began arriving in ones and twos at several sites in mid-November (m.obs.).

MOTTLED DUCK – High counts of 32–38 birds were on LSSI, 24–26 September (m.obs.).

NORTHERN PINTAIL – Amy Alderman found the first on 8 October at Wesleyan College, Bibb Co. Lois Stacey and Augusta-Aiken Audubon found 21 in Richmond Co. on 22 October for the high count.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL – First of the season was James Gibson's at CCWA E. L. Huie Ponds, Clayton Co., on 3 September. The high count was 460, seen by Steve Calver at OISNWR on 23 November.

CANVASBACK – A female showed up more than a month early on 28 September at OISNWR (Elizabeth Anderegg et al.). A flock of 20 on WFGD on 24 November presaged next season's concentrations in that corner of the state (Bob Kornegay and Renea Simpson).

REDHEAD – Earliest by far was Paul Raney's 11 September sighting of a male on City Pond in Newton Co. Most birds arrived in late October and early November; 120 was the high count, at WPD, 12 November (Malcolm Hodges).

RING-NECKED DUCK – A male at CCWA Lake Shamrock, Clayton Co., on the early date of 12 August may have spent the summer there (Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell). Flocks of 1000+ were estimated from Bibb and Burke cos. in November (Jim Ferrari and John Whigham, respectively).

GREATER SCAUP – James White had 3 careful observations from Troup Co.—28 October, 14 and 19 November—of 1 to 10 birds; none were reported to eBird from the coast during the period.

SURF SCOTER – In addition to a scattering of expected coastal records in November, there were 3 interior lake sightings of single female/immature birds: WPD, 5 November (James White); LWFG, 24–25 November (Bob Kornegay, Shannon Fair); moving between Hall and Gwinnett cos. on Lake Lanier, 28–29 November (Jim Flynn et al.).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER – One bird was off CINS, 23 November (Richard Candler).

BLACK SCOTER – Many sightings came from the coast during November, the greatest number being 295 seen by Diana Churchill on 28 November of TI South Beach. Away from the coast, James White found 2 female/immature birds at WPD on 5–6 November, also seen by others; possibly 1 of this pair was seen there on 13 November. Two adult males and a female were seen on Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co., by Jim Flynn on 7 November.

BUFFLEHEAD – The first bird arrived on the scene on 5 November, spotted by Paul Turgeon at CCWA, Clayton Co.

HOODED MERGANSER – Helen Aikman found 50 on Turkey Pond, Burke Co., on 27 November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER – First reliable report of the season came from Rebecca Byrd and Henning von Schmeling, who found a young male on Lake Lanier, Hall Co., on 22 October. A high of 17 were counted at WPD on 12 November (Malcolm Hodges).

RUDDY DUCK – Outside an over-summering bird at CCWA, which continued into this period, Paul Raney found an early migrant at Georgia Veterans' Memorial SP on 8 September. The high count came from Turkey Pond in Burke Co., where John Whigham found 200 on 22 November.

HORNED GREBE – Jacob and Jim Flynn found a bird on 3 September at Richard B. Russell Dam, Elbert Co., a full 2 months before any others were reported. Highest counted were the 60 at WPD on 12 November (Malcolm Hodges).

EARED GREBE – The only report came from WPD on 23 October, of a single bird (Patty McLean, Michael Linz).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE – Josiah Lavender and John Mark Simmons agree that 50 were present at a site in Oglethorpe Co. on 20 August.

INCA DOVE – Kathy Miller and Patty McLean were last to observe the continuing bird on Privett Store Rd., Miller Co., on 20 August.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Single birds were reported from Jeff Davis Co., 5 November (Lou Duncan), Gordon Co., 12–14 November (Rebecca Byrd, m.obs.), Calhoun Co., 17 November (Alan Ashley), and Chatham Co., 29 November (James White).

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO – Angie Jenkins observed a bird departing on the expected date of 1 November in Cobb Co.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO – Four singletons were observed in Chatham, Fulton, Cobb, and Butts cos. on 13 (Diana Churchill), 23 (James Swanson), 25 (Mark McShane), and 26 September (Kathy Miller), respectively.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK – Georgann Schmalz counted 215 birds flying north over Forsyth Co. (perhaps retreating from Hurricane Hermine's wrath) on 2 September. Last seen was a bird in Clarke Co., 19 October (Christine Kozlosky).

CHIMNEY SWIFT – Richard Hall estimated 600 birds were using a roosting chimney in Clarke Co. on 5 September. The last report came on 28 October, when Clarence Arnold saw a bird in Clinch Co.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD – The first bird showed up on 3 October in Barrow Co. (Kimberley Hancock); thereafter, reports of single birds in Brooks, Columbia, Fulton, and Turner cos. came in through the end of the period (m.obs.).

SORA – Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell, and Bill Lotz counted an impressive 19 birds at CCWA, Clayton Co. on 2 October.

PURPLE GALLINULE – Last noted were an adult and immature at BUENWR on 1 October (Bob Kornegay et al.).

COMMON GALLINULE – A count of 65 at PSNP on 2 November (Calvin Zippler) tells us they are doing well there.

LIMPKIN – Up to 8 birds continued at the Albany, Dougherty Co. site throughout the period (m.obs.), but the Reed Bingham SP bird was reported

5–29 August only, from both the Colquitt and Cook cos. sides of the park (Lois Stacey, Clarence Arnold, John Galvani; GCRC 2016-15 accepted).

SANDHILL CRANE – Many birders delighted in the first wave of migrants that passed through the state, 10–12 November, though John Deitsch was first out of the tent with his flock of 45 at Cloudland Canyon SP, Dade Co., at 9:40 AM on the 10th.

BLACK-NECKED STILT – Highest count for the period was 149 at OISNWR on 17 August (Brenda Brannen); last reported were 2 at AIC on 2 October (Eugene Keferl, Ken Blankenship, David Crotser).

AMERICAN AVOCET – The 17 birds at Rolling Meadows Farm in Coweta Co. on 20 September was most surprising (Richard Candler).

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – Many concentrations were noted, but the 139 counted by Tim Keyes and Joanna Hatt on LEIB, 6 September, was the highest tally.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER – The 341 counted on a bar at the mouth of the Satilla River, Camden Co., 8 September, was the high for the period (Tim Keyes, Joanna Hatt).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER – Records include 1–5 birds at multiple sod and cattle farms in Bartow Co., 31 August through 14 September (m.obs.), 1 at OISNWR, 21 September (m.obs.), 1 at Lake Allatoona, Cherokee Co., 17 October (Jim Flynn et al.), 1 in Decatur Co., 1–8 October (Wayne Schaffner), 1 in Gordon Co., 11 September (J. P. Moss), and 1 in Muscogee Co., 13 September (Mason and Mitchell Jarrett).



American Golden-Plover, Macon Co., 23 October 2016, by Mark McShane

WILSON'S PLOVER – LSSI competes only with itself for highest counts of this species (as for so many others), with 213 noted on

26 September (m.obs.).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER – A count of 1499 was the high, from the mouth of the Satilla R., Camden Co., on 23 August (Joanna Hatt, Tim Keyes).

PIPING PLOVER – LSSI produced 32 birds for the period high, 28 September (m.obs.).

UPLAND SANDPIPER – Most birders went to sod farms around Marshallville, Macon Co., to see this species, where from 2–18 birds were seen until 3 September (m.obs.). Marching to her own drummer, René Carleton found a singleton in Bartow Co. on 23 August.

WHIMBREL – Although many fewer are seen in fall than in spring, a high count of 33 in Camden Co. on 23 August (Tim Keyes, Joanna Hatt) seems low. LONG-BILLED CURLEW – From 1–8 birds were seen throughout the period on LSSI (m.obs.); Bob Sattelmeyer found 3 at nearby McIntosh Co. sites on 7 and 20 September.



**Long-billed Curlew, Glynn Co., 28 September,
by Larry Edmonds**

MARBLED GODWIT – Numbers peaked in mid-fall when 115 were counted by Bob Sattelmeyer on LEIB, 20 September.

STILT SANDPIPER – Birds were seen at OISNWR throughout the period, with a high of 309 on 10 August counted by Steve Calver (m.obs.). Inland, birds were observed in Baker, Bartow, Burke, Clayton, Decatur, Forsyth, Mitchell, Monroe, and Seminole cos. (m.obs.).

SANDERLING – Jim Flynn estimated 500 birds on SCI, 23 September, for the high count (with Earl Horn).

DUNLIN – The first bird was at LEIB on 22 August (Joanna Hatt, Tim Keyes). Bruce Dralle counted the high of 355 birds in Brunswick, Glynn Co., on 26 November.

PURPLE SANDPIPER – Patty McLean and Michael Linz saw a bird on the TI North Jetty on 3 November, while Cheryl Parkes' bird at the SSI Fishing Pier was seen 18 November.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – Records include 1 in Decatur Co., on 20 August (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller), apparently relocated on 27 August by several others; 1 at AP 26–29 August (Jim Flynn, m.obs.); 1–2 at CCWA, Clayton Co., 9–11 September (James White, m.obs.); 1 in Gordon Co., 11 September (J. P. Moss); and 2 on the BCL, 12 September (James White).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER – One bird was in Monroe Co., 10 September (Kathy Miller), 2 were at AP, 12–23 October (Jim Flynn et al.), and 1 was at AIS on 16 September (Bob Sattelmeyer et al.).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – Seen at 15 sites in 9 counties, this was an excellent fall for watching BBSA. Most interesting were Patty McLean's bird at Hardman Rd. sod farm in Habersham Co. on 10 September, at the northeastern corner of GA's Piedmont, and the 4 hatch-year birds seen by Tim Keyes and Joanna Hatt on LTI on 24 August; this species is much more likely to be seen inland than along the coast.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – Migrants peaked on 21 August at MSS, with 127 being counted by Bill Lotz and Dan Vickers (m.obs.), comparatively low for a GA fall maximum.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER – Wes Hatch estimated 1500 were at AIS on 16 September; the last couple of birds were seen at OISNWR on 5 October (m.obs.).

WESTERN SANDPIPER – Maximum count was 730 birds in Camden Co. on 23 August (Joanna Hatt, Tim Keyes).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – It must have been a spectacular morning at the mouth of the Satilla on 23 August, when Tim Keyes and Joanna Hatt counted 1555 of this species in addition to all the above-mentioned birds.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – The species was present throughout the period at OISNWR, peaking on 28 September when Steve Calver counted 77. Wayne Schaffner found 8 birds at 2 sites in Decatur Co. on 29 October, and 1 in Grady Co. the following day. Two birds were seen at Cooper Creek Park, Muscogee Co., 7–15 November (Glenda Merrill, Walt Chambers, m.obs.).

WILSON'S SNIPE – Wayne Schaffner found single birds in both Baker and Decatur cos. on 3 September for the arrival(s); Lois Stacey counted 36 at PSNP on 27 November for the high.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – A remarkable 76 were counted in Camden Co. on 23 August (Tim Keyes, Joanna Hatt).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER – Marie and Jerry Amerson counted 11 in Tattnall Co. on 6 August; last seen was a bird at AP on 12 October (Jim Flynn), a fairly early departure.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – The high of 176 at OISNWR on 3 August (Steve Calver) was fairly low for this species.

WILLET – Camden Co. was the place to be on 23 August (if not *in* the boat with Tim Keyes and Joanna Hatt), when they scored yet another seasonal high, counting 306 of this species.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – The high of 25 counted by Wayne Schaffner in Grady Co. on both 13 and 20 November was quite low in comparison with previous years, according to eBird data.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE – Mostly seen at OISNWR August-September (m.obs.), 1 was at BCL, 23 August (Joel McNeal), and another in Baker Co., 29 August (Wayne Schaffner). One at AIC on 2 October (Gene Keferl, Ken Blankenship, and David Crotser) was the last seen.

RED PHALAROPE – A young bird appeared in a wetland behind Rome's baseball stadium, Floyd Co., on 10 September, and suffered birders' ogling for the next 2 days (Shawn Reed, m.obs.).

PARASITIC JAEGER – Two pale-morph adults “double-teamed a tern” off CINS on 22 November, according to Richard Candler.

BONAPARTE'S GULL – Jim Flynn saw an arriving trio of birds on 28 October near Buford Dam, Gwinnett Co., while Mark McShane counted over 50 from each of 2 locations in the Forsyth Co. portion of Lake Lanier on 20 November.

FRANKLIN'S GULL – James White found the only birds reported with 5 from WPD on 13 October.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Totals of 18 to 20 birds were counted from 4 coastal sites on 6 occasions this fall (m.obs.).

SOOTY TERN – Marvin Smith observed a juvenile and an adult on Long Pond, Lowndes Co., on 2 September, likely Hurricane Hermine waifs.



**Red Phalarope, Floyd Co., 12 September 2016,
by Mark McShane**

LEAST TERN – Last reported was a bird on LSSI, 24 September (Georgann Schmalz et al.).

GULL-BILLED TERN – Lauren Gingerella and Wes Hatch reported 14 of this species from 2 breeding areas, LSSI and AIC, on 3 and 9 August, respectively.

CASPIAN TERN – A high of 100 were estimated on LSSI on 19 September (Irene Fortune et al.).

BLACK TERN – A maximum of 54 were counted at WPD on both 17 August and 1 September (James White).

COMMON TERN – Jim Hanna and Mark McShane watched the last bird depart from TI North Beach on 15 October.

BLACK SKIMMER – Bruce Dralle and Jeff Sewell estimated 2000 at GI on 23–24 October.

COMMON LOON – Earliest noted was Aija Konrad's molting bird on Lake Allatoona, Bartow Co., on 8 September. Jim Hanna's remarkable count of 37 on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., on 30 November, was topped by Mark McShane's 42 birds on Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co., on 20 November.

STORM-PETREL sp. – James Fleullan reported an unidentified storm-petrel in flight over the Bass Pro Shop in Chatham Co. on 10 October, associated with Hurricane Matthew.

WOOD STORK – The highest count above the Fall Line was Bob Zaremba's 32 near Elberton, Elbert Co., on 9 October.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD – Hurricane Hermine threw single birds inland to Long Pond, Lowndes Co., 2 September (Marvin Smith), Lake Seminole, Seminole Co., 3 September (Mark McShane), and Lake Allatoona,

Cherokee Co., 5 September (Natalie Bailey, m.obs.); 2 from JI on 2 September were also likely associated with Hermine (Bob Sattelmeyer).

BROWN BOOBY – The amazing adult female on Clarks Hill Reservoir continued from the end of summer, and was seen in Elbert, Lincoln, and finally Columbia cos. through 21 October, after which we hope she made a safe journey to the Atlantic (m.obs.; GCRC 2016-14 and 2016-16 accepted).



**Brown Booby, Elbert Co., 5 August 2016,
by Mike Weaver**

NORTHERN GANNET – Patty McLean and Michael Linz found arriving birds (1–3) off TI, 2–4 November; Diana Churchill's count of 40

there on 22 November was at least twice as many as any other.

ANHINGA – Highest count for the season came from Bibb Co., 3–5 September, of 44 birds seen by many of our Macon friends.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Away from the even busier coast, inland records came from Bartow, Charlton, Cherokee, Clay, Decatur, Elbert, Floyd, Fulton, Muscogee, and Richmond cos. (m.obs.).

AMERICAN BITTERN – Chris Thornton found a bird at AWMA on 9 September, 13 days before others began arriving.

LEAST BITTERN – Georgann Schmalz and others observed the last reported bird on LSSI on 25 September.

GREAT EGRET – A healthy count of 109 were at CCWA, Clayton Co., on 24 August (Nathan Farnau, m.obs.).

SNOWY EGRET – Farthest inland was a bird in Bartow Co. on 1 August (Aija Konrad).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – High numbers at HN peaked on 30 August when James White counted 87.

TRICOLORED HERON – Most interesting was a bird at AWRW, 31 August through 19 September (James Swanson, m.obs.). A remarkable 250 were estimated at HN on 23 November (Catherine and Carl Miller, David McLean).

REDDISH EGRET – Several birds were seen on beaches (and sometimes in marshes) of Chatham, Glynn, and McIntosh cos. throughout the period, with 1 bird lingering to at least 28 November at GI (m.obs.). The high count was 6 on LSSI, 19 September (Irene Fortune, Bayard Nicklow).

GREEN HERON – John Deitsch found a late bird at Cardinal Lake in Gwinnett Co. on 1 November, at a time when other sightings are mostly coastal or from the darkest recesses of Okefenokee Swamp.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – The Gaggle spotted an immature bird at CCWA, Clayton Co., on 22 October, the only eBird sighting for this period from the Piedmont (m.obs.).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – Highest counts came from the JI Amphitheater Pond, with Marcie Oliva's 59 on 4 September topping all.

WHITE IBIS – An immature bird was far from home at the Rome Braves' State Mutual Stadium swamp, Floyd Co., 10–12 September (m.obs.), our northernmost wanderer this season.

GLOSSY IBIS – In southwest Ga., records came from Baker, Decatur, Grady, and Mitchell cos. (m.obs.).

WHITE-FACED IBIS – The bird on Brock Cemetery Rd., Decatur Co., continued from the summer, and was last seen by Wayne Schaffner on 4 September (m.obs.).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL – Glynn Co. is ground zero for the invasion of this species, with Wes Hatch carefully counting 70 birds at AIC on 16 September for the highest number. Sightings from Baker Co. on 29 October (Wayne Schaffner), 1–2 birds at 3 Dougherty Co. locations through 1 October (m.obs.), and 3–4 birds in Mitchell Co. 13–14 August (Wayne Schaffner, m.obs.) were the only ones away from the coast.

OSPREY – A count of 23 on SCI, 24 September, was impressive (Meg Walker and David Hedeem).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE – Marie and Jerry Amerson had a respectable count of 30 at the Skeen's farm in Long Co. on 6 August. The latest report came from Clarke Co., where Rachel and Steve Holzman saw 1 on 6 September.

MISSISSIPPI KITE – Two sightings were on the departure date of 5 September: Andrew Baxter's bird on Skidaway I., Chatham Co., and 3 seen by Melanie Furr et al. at Bond Swamp NWR, Twiggs Co..

NORTHERN HARRIER – Gene Koziara and Tom Gray were there for the first wave of arriving birds on 2 September, with singletons in Bartow and Floyd cos., respectively.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – Stacy Zarpentine watched the last bird leave the state on 23 October in Fulton Co., an adult kettling with Turkey Vultures.

BARN OWL – Only 6 birds were reported from 6 of the state's 159 counties this fall.

SHORT-EARED OWL – Wayne Schaffner observed a bird barking at twilight along Laramore Rd., Lee Co., on 24 November.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL – The entire Muise family enjoyed a bird netted and banded by Charlie at their home in Lamar Co. on 17 November.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER – The first report came from the Berry College campus in Floyd Co., where J. P. Moss found 1 on 25 September.

CRESTED CARACARA – An astounding rarity, this bird was found by Chris Geller in Forsyth Co. on 13 November and seen by several other birders on the 14th (GCRC 2016-18 accepted).



**Crested Caracara, Forsyth Co., 14 November 2016,
by Mark McShane.**

MERLIN – Diana Churchill found the first bird of the season on 12 September on TI. Wes Hatch had the only double-digit day this fall, finding 16 on JI on 30 September.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – Sightings of 3 single birds were at N. G. Turf in Gordon County, 31 August (Georgann Schmalz, Theresa Hartz), George Pierce Park in Gwinnett Co., 15–22 September (Chris O’Neal, m.obs.), and SCI on 24 September (Dave Hedeem, Meg Walker, Mark Freeman).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – Jeff Sewell recorded the species’ departure in DeKalb Co. with 1 bird on 30 October.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER – Records of single birds came from Dawson Co. on 17 September (m.obs.), Bibb Co. on 18 September (Jim Ferrari), and JI on 15 October (Simon Thompson et al.).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER – Birders bid adieu to the species 16–17 October, during which several singletons were seen across Georgia (m.obs.).

ALDER FLYCATCHER – Two at SBG 14–22 September were unusually cooperative (Jason Gardner, Richard Hall, m.obs.); a single bird at Georgia Highlands College, Floyd Co. 11–13 September (Jim and Jacob Flynn, m.obs.) was almost as friendly.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER – A bird remained in Dillard on 13 and 20 August (Andre Coquerel, Georgann Schmalz, respectively), while a migrant was at SBG on 28 September (John Mark Simmons).

LEAST FLYCATCHER – SBG was Empid Land this fall, with this species present on 12 September (Richard Hall, Mitchell Jarrett, Christine Kozlosky). Single birds also appeared at J. J. Biello Park, Cherokee Co., 27 September (Rich Hull, JoAnn King), and in Burke Co., 2 October (Helen Aikman).

SAY’S PHOEBE – After Wayne Schaffner found the first in Miller Co. on 22 October, several were seen in both old and new locations in Baker and Miller cos. through the end of the period (m.obs.).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – After Wayne Schaffner found the first in Decatur Co. on 22 October, several were also seen in both old and new locations in Baker, Decatur, Miller, and Mitchell cos. through the end of the period (m.obs.).

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER – Lydia Thompson found the last one in Glynn Co. on 19 October.

WESTERN KINGBIRD – Rachel and Steve Holzman found a bird on SCI, 23 September. Two were found on Hutchinson I., Chatham Co., on 19 November (m.obs.), building to 3 by the end of the period at this now-traditional wintering site.

EASTERN KINGBIRD – An impressive 70 were counted in Oglethorpe Co. on 20 August (Josiah Lavender, John Mark Simmons). Last out the door was 1 on Hutchinson I., Chatham Co., 12 October (Larry Carlile).

GRAY KINGBIRD – Reports only came from Glynn Co., where 1 to 4 were seen at several island and mainland sites through 25 September (m.obs.); the 23 September sighting on LSSI (Georgann Schmalz, m.obs.) was most interesting. Unfortunately, the species appears to have been extirpated from JI, with all records coming from the greater SSI complex and Brunswick. The dearth of late records from TI is also alarming; please make an effort to seek out this rare breeder in order to help monitor its status at the northern limit of its range.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – A juvenile made an appearance at SSI Airport, 23–24 October (Bob Sattelmeyer, m.obs.).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO – Rachel Elkins observed the last departing bird in Fulton Co. on 23 October.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO – Arrival was on 5 September with 1 bird in Lowndes Co. (Marvin Smith) and 5 in Lumpkin Co. (Chuck Saleeby), the latter also being the high count; departure was on 16 October, a single bird in DeKalb Co. (Angus Pritchard).

RED-EYED VIREO – Earl Horn counted a high of 47 on SCI on 24 September. Diana Churchill saw the last in Chatham Co. on 23 October.

COMMON RAVEN – Outside their strongholds in Rabun, Towns, and Union cos., a bird was observed at Amicalola Falls SP, Dawson Co., on 11 October (Steve Bump).

PURPLE MARTIN – Richard Candler had the only October record, a bird in Baker Co. on the 8th.

TREE SWALLOW – Michael Linz and Patty McLean estimated 20,000 birds at a site in Camden Co. on 6 November.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW – The high was an estimate of

500 birds in Macon Co. on 20 August (m.obs.); Jeff Sewell observed the last 2 in DeKalb Co. on 1 November.

BANK SWALLOW – Larry Carlile counted a high of 64 at OISNWR on 10 August; last observed were 3 birds on LSSI, 26 September (m.obs.).

CLIFF SWALLOW – Last observed was Gene Keferl's bird in Glynn Co. on 10 October.

BARN SWALLOW – Bob Sattelmeyer had the last observation (uncounted numbers) on LEIB, 31 October.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – J. P. Moss' 5 birds on Pine Mt., Bartow Co., 7 October, presaged 179 records from 38 counties spanning mountains to coast—an irruption year, indeed.

BROWN CREEPER – Throngs of Athens birders found birds at multiple Clarke Co. locations on 16 October for the lowland migration arrival (m.obs.).

WINTER WREN – Richard Hall found an arriving bird in Clarke Co. on 2 October.

SEDGE WREN – Kathy Miller saw the first 2 in DeKalb Co. on 29 September.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET – J. P. Moss found the first on Pine Mt., Bartow Co., on 7 October.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET – The species was first detected on the coast, when Jim Flynn and Earl Horn had 1 on SCI on 23 September.

VEERY – A little early for migration, and thus possibly a local disperser from nearby high peaks, 1 was seen at Black Rock Mt. SP, Rabun Co., on 12 August (Andre Coquerel). The 27 heard on SCI on 25 September were mostly detected at nighttime by the species characteristic “vee-er” flight call (Meg Walker, Dave Hedeon). Last noted were 2 at Kolomoki Mounds SP, Early Co., on 11 October (Bob Kornegay).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH – First to arrive was 1 at CSU on 9 September (Shannon Fair); last out was a bird in Gwinnett Co. on 10 October (Jeff Sewell).

SWAINSON'S THRUSH – Arriving on 4 September were 3 in Cobb Co. (Mark McShane) and 3 in Murray Co. (Reneé Carleton). The high of 62 on SCI, 24 September, was mostly nocturnal migrants peeping overhead (Dave Hedeon, Meg Walker). One in Decatur Co. on 10 November marked the species' departure (Lisa and Mark Hughes).

HERMIT THRUSH – Belinda Jacob found an arriving bird in Chatham Co. on 1 October.

WOOD THRUSH – Becky Cover noted a flock of 15 migrating through Cherokee Co. on 6 October. Virginia Wood had the latest departing bird on 3 November at her home in Cobb. Co.

GRAY CATBIRD – A remarkable 106 were counted by Steve Calver at OISNWR on 5 October.

AMERICAN PIPIT – Michael McCloy found the first on 11 October in Stewart Co. Theresa Hartz noted 100 along Fite Bend Rd., Gordon Co., on 20 November.

PURPLE FINCH – Following the first report of 1 in Fannin Co. on 13 October (Brian Lupa), birds were being seen throughout the mountains and Piedmont by November.

PINE SISKIN – An early bird showed up in Fannin Co. on 10 September (Bill Schmid, m.obs.).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR – Joel McNeal found a bird at Sam Smith Park, Bartow Co., on 24 November, last seen on the 26th (m.obs.).

BACHMAN'S SPARROW – Records came from 10 counties, the highest count 9 birds at Chickasawhatchee WMA, Dougherty Co. (Larry Gridley).

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – Steve Calver found a bird on Hutchison I., Chatham Co., on 15 October; 1 was found by Larry Carlile on 24 October at Old Roberds Dairy Farm, Chatham Co., found again by Steve Calver the next day.

VESPER SPARROW – An ambitious arriving bird showed up on the coast at AWMA on 22 October (Bob Sattelmeyer).

LARK SPARROW – Two birds were on SCI, 23–27 September (Rachel and Steve Holzman, m.obs.).

LARK BUNTING – Birds named for larks like SCI, as 1 of this species was there 23–25 September (Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell, m.obs.).

SAVANNAH SPARROW – Showing up first on the coast appears to be a thing with sparrows, and AWMA is a good spot to find them, as Gene Keferl did with this species on 24 September.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW – Richard Candler found the first at his home in Coweta Co. on 31 October.

NELSON'S SPARROW – Bayard Nicklow found 3 birds on 21 October on LSSI for the arrival.

SALTMARSH SPARROW – Rob Holbrook found the first, 3 birds in McIntosh Co. on 3 November.

FOX SPARROW – The species arrived on 22 October, when Eric Cormier saw 1 at CRNRA, Fulton, Macon, and Bibb cos., was as far south as the species penetrated, where MaryAnn Fitzgerald hosted an individual from 21 November through the end of the period.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – Of 9 records in 6 counties, Nathan Farnau's bird on 9 October in Fulton Co. was the first.

SWAMP SPARROW – Kathy Miller spotted the first in DeKalb Co. on 30 September.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – The species was suddenly upon its wintering grounds on 9 October, being found in Cherokee, Cobb, and Hall cos. that day (m.obs.), and throughout north GA in the following days.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW – Birds flooded the state on 22 October, being seen in Clarke, Cobb, and Jones cos. (m.obs.).

DARK-EYED JUNCO – Birds had penetrated as far south as Chatham and Decatur cos., 11 and 12 November (Charles Hall, Lisa and Mark Hughes, respectively).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT – John Deitsch found a late migrant in Gwinnett Co. on 3 November.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – Lynn Schlup reported the only bird, a male in Washington Co. on 20 October.

BOBOLINK – First noted were up to 20 birds at OISNWR on 31 August (Steve Calver, Steve Wagner). Numbers never built this fall beyond the 25 seen at AWMA on 30 September (Ken Blankenship, David Crotser), a comparatively paltry high count for fall in GA. The bird in Chatham Co. on 15 October was last out (Steve Calver).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Birds began appearing at KMT on 19 August, when Bob Zaremba found 2; 16 was a good count by Brad Bergstrom at his home in Lowndes Co., 19 September.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD – They began showing up on 22 October when James White reported 12 in Coweta Co., and were building into the 100s by 13 November, when Stan Gray reported 270 in Chatham Co.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD – Wayne Schaffner reported the first, a flock of 14 on 5 November in Decatur Co.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE – Away from the coast, birds showed up in 5 southwest GA counties, with the 11 noted in Lee Co. on 25 September being the northwestern-most (Wayne Schaffner).

OVENBIRD – A bird at COP was last observed on 30 October (Nathan Farnau).

WORM-EATING WARBLER – Richard Hall found the last at SBG on 8 October.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – Departing birds were noted on 5 September in Coweta (Richard Candler), Fulton (Barb Bassett), and Greene cos. (Josiah Lavender).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH – A bird in Dougherty Co. on 16 August was first to arrive (Melvin Dees); the only count in double digits was 14 at AWMA on 3 September (Dan Vickers); last apparent migrant was a bird at PSNP on 24 November (Sam Murray).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER – Brenda Brannen found the first in Bulloch Co. on 25 August; last noted was a bird in Dougherty Co. on 8 October (Alan Ashley et al.). Records came in from 17 counties (m.obs.).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER – Jeff Schaberg first noted a migrant on 25 August in Fulton Co.; 1 lingered at SBG until 19 October (Brian Cooke, Richard Hall).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER – Steve Holzman saw the last on SCI on 24 September.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER – Darlene Moore reported the last bird, banded at JIBS on 1 October (m.obs.).

TENNESSEE WARBLER – Gene Koziara found 2 at KMT on 9 September for the fall arrival; James White found 3 departing birds on 6 November in Coweta Co.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – Ken Blankenship and David Crotser found the first bird at AWMA on 30 September.

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Of 13 sightings this fall, the first was from near West Point Lake, Troup Co., on 10 September (Geoff Hill); the last regular migrant was seen at another point along the lake on 23 October (Michael Linz, Patty McLean). Then there was the COP bird seen on 25 November (Andrew Baxter), possibly attempting to overwinter.

KENTUCKY WARBLER – From 8 September through the last seen on 24 September (Ed Maioriello), all departing birds were seen in Clarke Co. (m.obs.), as Athens birders ushered those “Blue” birds safely out of the state.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT – A high of 40 was noted at Hutchinson I., Chatham Co., on 24 September (Diana Churchill, m.obs.).

HOODED WARBLER – Jacob and Jim Flynn found the last reported, 2 birds near West Point, Troup Co., on 29 October.

AMERICAN REDSTART – John Robert found the last, a female in DeKalb Co. on 30 October.

CAPE MAY WARBLER – Lydia Thompson found the first to arrive on SSI, 6 September; last to depart was Bob Zaremba's bird in Cobb Co. on 28 October.

CERULEAN WARBLER – Last noted was Kathy Miller's bird in DeKalb Co. on 16 September.

NORTHERN PARULA – Steve Calver's count of 16 on 3 September in Chatham Co. was the highest. The last migrants generally left by the end of October (m.obs.), then J. C. Knoll hosted a bird at their property in Camden Co. 14–17 November.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – First noted was a bird in Fulton Co. on 27 August (Roseanne Guerra); 16 birds at SBG on 20 October was the high count (Ryan

Chitwood, Samuel Merker); last observed was a bird on 31 October in DeKalb Co. (John Robert).

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER – Eric Cormier found the first, 2 birds in Fulton Co. on 15 September; Richard Hall saw the last bird out in Clarke Co. on 20 October.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER – Adam Betuel recorded the last in DeKalb Co. on 21 October.

YELLOW WARBLER – Last reported was a bird at AWMA on 16 October (Jason Gardner).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER – Ryan Chitwood and Samuel Mercer recorded the high count of 25 at SBG on 8 September; multiple records in 3 counties on 20 October marked the species' departure (Jean-Luc Betoulle, Ken Blankenship, Richard Hall).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER – Three were reported, 2 on 14 October: 1 at KMZ (Gene Koziara) and 1 banded at JIBS (Mary Kimberly et al.). A singleton was reported at PSNP on 23 October (Gary Jarvis).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER – JIBS had an amazing day with this species, 16 birds (12 juveniles, 4 adults) on 30 September (Darlene Moore et al.); last seen was a bird at COP on 16 November (Ed Wallace).

PALM WARBLER – Three birds were detected on 5 September, the arrival date: AP (Jim Flynn), Muscogee Co. (Ryan Chitwood), and PSNP (Eric Gropp and Anne Sammis). Bob Sattelmeyer counted 125 at the south end of JI during a “mini-fallout” on 5 October.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER – Richard Knowlton recorded the first of the onslaught with 2 birds in Effingham Co. on 1 October. Records nudged into the 100s later that month (m.obs.).

PRAIRIE WARBLER – Last bird reported was 1 at ONWR on 7 November (J. C. Knoll).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER – Last out was a bird in Clarke Co. on 6 November (Richard Hall).

CANADA WARBLER – First migrant for the period was a bird at KMT on 6 August (Gene Koziara); the departure bird was in Cherokee Co. on 27 September (Rich Hull, JoAnn King).

WILSON'S WARBLER – Eleven records were from 7 counties (m.obs.); the first was on 12 September in Floyd Co. (James White), and the last on 9 October in Fulton Co. (James Swanson).



**Wilson's Warbler, Fulton Co., 1 October 2016,
by John Whigham**

SUMMER TANAGER – Marvin Smith found a departing bird in Lowndes Co. on 24 October.

SCARLET TANAGER – Last out were birds in Chatham and Fulton cos. on 22 October (Steve Calver, Rachel Elkins, respectively).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – Separating wandering Southern Appalachian breeders from southbound migrants can be tricky for late-summer birds of several species, but we can be sure the departing bird seen by Kyleen Austin in Cherokee Co. on 30 October was making a beeline for the tropics.

BLUE GROSBEAK – Last bird out the door was 1 in Chatham Co. on 1 November (Steve Calver).

INDIGO BUNTING – Maximum number was 120 at OM on 2 September (Mason Jarrett); last observed was a bird in Chatham Co. on 9 November (Bill Lotz, Dan Vickers).

DICKCISSEL – A bird on SCI found by Meg Walker and Dave Hedeon on 23 September stayed until at least the 27th (m.obs.). Jeff Sewell's bird in DeKalb Co., 30 October, was seen again the next day by Kathy Miller.

Malcolm Hodges, Riverdale, Georgia

FROM THE FIELD

DECEMBER 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017

Weather was warm throughout the state, with many sites recording top-ten monthly temperature averages; Atlanta had its warmest February on record and Athens experienced its second-warmest winter overall. Precipitation was variable, with a generally wet January (Macon had its second-wettest January ever) offsetting a dry February (Athens had its fifth-driest February ever).

If there was a Bird of the Season, it might arguably have been the Broad-billed Hummingbird that stayed at the hospitable Screws' residence in Eastman long enough for many birders to enjoy its gaudy tropicalness. But there were many exciting rarities to see around Georgia, including Western Grebe, Snowy Plover, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and many lingering or over-wintering warblers. Read on!

This compilation relied heavily on a summary of eBird reports for the period. They no longer supply birder's names in their data dumps. I have developed a code-breaking list of regular users from old dumps, but if you are not a regular Georgia contributor, you may be identified below only by your secret-agent-style eBird user number, for which I am sorry. I also apologize if I did not notice a GABO-L post with your unusual sighting (I did a cursory search of the GABO-L archives for those months), or missed a GOS Facebook group posting. If you do not use any of these media, but wish me to include your noteworthy bird observations in future FTFs, or if you recognize your number below and wish to come in from the cold, feel free to write to me at mhodes@tnc.org or c/o The Nature Conservancy, 100 Peachtree St. NW, Suite 2250, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AIC - Andrews Island Causeway and spoil site, Glynn Co.; AP - American Proteins settling ponds, Forsyth Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; AWRW - Azalea and Willeo roads wetlands, Fulton Co.; BCL - Bartow Co. Loop, a cluster of sod farms and cattle ponds on Brandon Farm Road and Taff Road, west of Cartersville; BUENWR - Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CCWA - Clayton Co. Water Authority, Clayton and Henry cos.; CINS - Cumberland Island National Seashore, Camden Co.; CLRL - Carter's Lake Re-regulation Lake area, Murray Co.; COP - Centennial

Olympic Park, Fulton Co.; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; CSU - Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co.; GCRC rns - photo-documented but not written up for GCRC; GI - Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; HN – Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co.; HP - Henderson Park, DeKalb Co.; JI - Jekyll Island, Glynn Co.; JIBS - Jekyll Island Banding Station, Glynn Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co.; LEIB – Little Egg Island Bar, McIntosh Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; LTI - Little Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; LWFG - Lake Walter F. George, Clay Co.; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds, Richmond Co.; m. ob. - multiple observers; MSS - Marshallville Super Sod Farm, Macon Co.; MWSS (Mid-winter Shorebird Survey of the Georgia coast); NAB - North American Birds (journal of the American Birding Association); NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; OISNWR – Onslow I., Savannah NWR, Chatham Co.; OM - Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, Muscogee Co.; ph. - photographed; PFA – Public Fishing Area; PP – Piedmont Park, Fulton Co.; PSNP - Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, Richmond Co.; Region - when capitalized, refers to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina; SBG - State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Clarke Co.; SCI - St. Catherines Island, Liberty Co.; SF - sod farm; SI – Sapelo Island, McIntosh Co.; SP - State Park; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; TI - Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; WFGD – Walter F. George Dam, Clay Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; WPD - West Point Dam, Harris and Troup cos.

Notes: The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification or acceptance of a record. Observations of Review Species need to be documented and a rare bird report submitted to the Georgia Checklist and Records Committee (GCRC) for consideration.

Species that appear in a **bold-faced font** represent those that were considered Review Species by the GCRC during the year of the sighting. This list changes from year to year. The current review list may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/review-list>. GCRC activity, including the status of reports listed as “pending” as of press time, may be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gos.org/GCRCActivity>.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK – The high count was also the only non-coastal record, 13 birds in Lee Co. on 28 February (Wayne Schaffner).

SNOW GOOSE – The high count was a flyover flock of 27 at Garden Lakes, Floyd Co., on 6 December (John Patten Moss).

TUNDRA SWAN – A flock of 5 (2 adults, 3 juveniles) was located in Macon Co. on 23 December by a group of 5 Macon (city) birders, and the birds lingered until 29 December (m.obs.). On 30 December, a juvenile was seen on McGee's Pond in Meriwether Co. (James White); perhaps the same bird was seen at the same location on 26 January and lingered through at least 18 February (Patty McLean, Michael Linz, m.obs.). Since it is not far from McGee's Pond, Callaway Gardens, Harris Co., may have been the location of that bird's long hiatus, as an immature bird was seen there on 24 January (eBird observer 847846).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL – A peak of 250 were on LSSI on 8 February (Bayard Nicklow).

NORTHERN SHOVELER – Eugene Keferl counted 1343 birds at AIC on 5 December, hundreds more than were seen elsewhere.

GADWALL – James White kept tabs on a big paddling at Arnco wastewater treatment pond, Coweta Co., which peaked at 347 birds on 28 January.

AMERICAN WIGEON – The best spot in Georgia to observe this species is Garden Lakes, Floyd Co., where Marion Dobbs counted 135 on 18 December.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK – Furthest south was the bird at Cooper Creek Park, Muscogee Co., found by Mason Jarrett on 4 January, and seen by many through the end of the period.

NORTHERN PINTAIL – Jacob and Jim Flynn noted the high count at Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., where they found 50 on 29 December.

CANVASBACK – Adam Betuel and Nathan Farnau counted 82 rafting on the Flint R. arm of Lake Seminole, Decatur Co., on 18 February, relatively low for a winter high count.

REDHEAD – Jim Hanna and Mark McShane estimated 250 were on a pond in Seminole Co. on 4 February.

RING-NECKED DUCK – Paul Sykes and Bill Blakeslee recorded a healthy 2600 in Brooks Co. on 25 February (*vide* Mark McShane).

SURF SCOTER – Non-coastal records included a female at PSNP 24–29 December (Sam Murray, m.obs.), 2 adult males at CLRL 20 December (Joshua Spence), 1 at CCWA Lake Blalock, Henry Co., 16 December (Anne McCallum, Danielle Bunch), and a male at LWFG 1 February (Bob Kornegay, Renea Simpson).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER – Non-coastal records reported to eBird were 1 male and 2 females/immatures on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., 29 December (Jacob and Jim Flynn), 1 immature male, Lake Lanier, Gwinnett and Forsyth cos., 24 January (Jim Flynn, Patty McLean, Michael Linz), and a female on Lake Windward, Fulton Co., 1–6 January (Nathan Farnau, m.obs.).

BLACK SCOTER – James Neves spotted a female at Sandy Creek Park, Clarke Co., on 5 January, later seen by others, for the only non-coastal occurrence of our commonest scoter.

LONG-TAILED DUCK – Patty McLean and Michael Linz spotted 2 females/immatures on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., on 9 January, with none being found on the coast this winter.

BUFFLEHEAD – How many were underwater as John Mark Simmons counted 170 around the TI jetty on 13 January?

COMMON GOLDENEYE – James White counted 26 from WPD on 26 December, the raft including 8 drakes; he matched that maximum on 3 January just downriver at West Point's River Overlook Park, Troup Co.

HOODED MERGANSER – The peak count by far was from Camp Viking, Liberty Co., where 221 were counted on 16 December (eBird observer 557170).

COMMON MERGANSER – Wayne Schaffner found a female at Paradise PFA, Berrien Co., on 1 January, to the delight of many who observed it through 4 February (I can find no mention of this record on the GCRC webpage).



Common Merganser, Berrien Co., 29 January 2019, by Dan Vickers

PLAIN CHACHALACA – A bird called for the GOS field trip on 15 January, SI (m.obs.).

RUFFED GROUSE – Bill Schmid had a rare winter sighting of a bird on 8 December in Gilmer Co.

HORNED GREBE – Mark McShane had the high count by far with 192 on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., 10 February.

EARED GREBE – One was on Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co., 28 November (Jim Flynn, Georgann Schmalz).

WESTERN GREBE – Jim Hanna and Mark McShane located a bird on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., on 23 December; the following day a second bird was present, and 1–2 were seen by many through 10 January (GCRC-rns).

INCA DOVE – A bird in Miller Co. found by Adam Betuel and Nathan Farnau on 18 February continued through at least 26 February. A second bird was

reported on 25 February, though no details on that individual were given. (No mention of this record on GCRC webpage.)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE – Piedmont NWR, Jones Co., yielded the only wintering record above the Fall Line when Kathy Miller saw 1 on 11 December.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – Most records came from Decatur, Dougherty, and Miller cos. in southwest Ga., the preponderance from the latter. Birds were also seen at 2 locales in the Savannah area, Chatham Co.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD – Chatham Co. hosted as many as 23 of this species at 16 locations in the Greater Savannah area over the winter months.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD – Around 6 of this species also frequented feeders in Chatham Co., some sharing feeders with the above Ruby-throats (as much as hummingbirds can share anything). Bob Sattelmeyer also reported one from SSI on 1 December.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD – About 15 birds attempted overwintering in 7 counties ranging from Chatham to Clarke.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD – A hatch-year male was banded at a Gwinnett Co. residence on 9 December (Karen Theodorou).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD – The male that frequented the Screws' residence in Eastman, Dodge Co., was first reported on eBird on 6 December by Patty McLean and photographed by Bob Sattelmeyer, though the GCRC webpage indicates Donny Screws first observed the bird on 28 November. It was enjoyed by many birders through 4 February. Remarkably, this is said to be Georgia's 4th record of the species (report requested by GCRC).



**Broad-billed Hummingbird, Dodge County, 13 January 2017,
by Dan Vickers**

CLAPPER RAIL – A healthy 60 were noted by a 4-birder boat team on the HN CBC on 16 December (eBird observer 305632).

VIRGINIA RAIL – Reports came from 18 counties this winter (m.obs.).

SORA – Birds were observed in 13 counties, all in the Coastal Plain except Clayton and Cobb cos. (m.obs.).

PURPLE GALLINULE – A singleton gussied up Crevasse Pond, Brooks Co., 21–26 February (Deborah Grimes, m.obs.).

AMERICAN COOT – Nathan Farnau and Adam Betuel estimated 13000 on Lake Seminole, Seminole Co., the seasonal high count.

LIMPKIN – Wayne Schaffner found 1 of the Reed Bingham SP birds on the Colquitt Co. side, 1 January, while several reports came in 19–28 February of singles from the Whispering Pines Rd., Albany band (I love the image of a Limpkin marching band!), Dougherty Co. (m.obs.). For these 2 long-established locations, I hope we can dispense with a full search of the GCRC records for documentation, these being some of the most photographed birds in the state. If they were sexually dimorphic, they would all have names!

SANDHILL CRANE – Vicki Williams’ counts of 4925 and 4308 on 10 and 14 December, respectively, at her home in Cobb Co., were the 2 largest in what amounted to a healthy migration.

WHOOPIING CRANE – An adult was spotted migrating with Sandhills over Cobb Co. on 15 December (Stacy Zarpentine); 2 birds were seen in Lee Co. 3–4 January (Wayne Schaffner); finally an apparent family group of 2 adults and 1 juvenile were observed in Miller Co., 4–26 February (Wayne Schaffner, m.obs.). None of these records have been reviewed by the GCRC; their webpage indicates that a report has been requested for the Miller Co. record only.

AMERICAN AVOCET – This species peaked on 30 January at AIC when Gene Keferl counted 349.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER – Maximum count for the period was 200 at LEIB on 5 January (Tim Keyes).

SNOWY PLOVER – Ryan Chitwood, Mark McShane, and Mark Welford were first to report this bird on 14 January, presumed to be the same individual wintering on LTI for the past couple of years. It was last seen on 30 January (m.obs.; GCRC-rns).

WILSON’S PLOVER – Lauren Gingerella counted a remarkable 92 on only 1 section of LSSI’s beaches on 17 February, for the seasonal high.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER – A “careful estimate” of 1500 birds was made at AIC on 28 January (Eugene Keferl, m.obs.).

PIPING PLOVER – Patrick Leary’s maximum count of 51 on CINS, 13 September, was almost twice the next number, 26 on LSSI (though the latter, by Lauren Gingerella et al. on 17 February, was for only 1 section of LSSI’s beach, and the former the entire length of CINS).

WHIMBREL – Susan De Rosa spotted 10 while birding with Ogeechee Audubon at Ft. Pulaski, Chatham Co., on 11 December. Tim Keyes et al. counted 9 each on Queen’s and Wolf islands, McIntosh Co., on 4 January.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW – As usual, a group of up to 7 spent the season on the islands around the mouth of the Altamaha River (Glynn and McIntosh cos.; m.obs.).

MARBLED GODWIT – Tim Keyes counted 119 at LEIB on 5 January for the seasonal high count.

RUDDY TURNSTONE – Wes Hatch and Bob Sattelmeyer counted 127 on the south end of CINS during the CBC there on 17 December, the high count for the season.

RED KNOT – Top concentrations were noted during the 30 January MWSS on LTI and LSSI, where 300 and 240, respectively, were seen (m.obs.).

STILT SANDPIPER – Besides the birds at OISNWR, which peaked at 10 on 28 December (m.obs.), Patty McLean and Kathy Miller found 7 on CINS during the CBC on 17 December.

DUNLIN – Steve Calver estimated 7500 were on SCI 30 January for the MWSS. Among several interesting inland records, up to 13 birds were seen at a pond along Melvin Rd., Macon Co., 28 December to 27 January (Bill Lotz, Kathy Miller, m.obs.).

PURPLE SANDPIPER – A lucky few started the year with 3 of this species on the TI North Beach jetty, 1 January (Dave Hedeem, eBird Observers 124840 and 179309).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER – Two each were noted in both Bartow and Miller cos. on 19 February for the “spring” arrival date (m.obs.).

WESTERN SANDPIPER – The peak count was 861 seen on SCI south end during the CBC, 17 December (Nathan Farnau, Bill Lotz, Joel McNeal).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – Estimates of 400 were made at both LEIB on 5 January (Tim Keyes) and LTI on 30 January (Mary Pfaffko et al.), the latter for the MWSS.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – Steve Wagner counted an impressive 145 at OISNWR on 22 February. Frequency of this species has increased in recent winters; I suspect we are simply learning where (and how) to look for them.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK – Jim Flynn visited Rock Creek Park, Dawson Co., on 18 dates between 16 January and the period’s end, documenting 1–4 displaying birds on each, amidst his AMWO records in 6 other counties.

WILSON’S SNIPE – Lois Stacey and local Audubon birders counted 110 at PSNP on 21 January.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER – Larry Carlile and Mary Lambright found a remarkable 11 roosting together on riprap during the HN CBC on 16 December.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – A high of 41 was counted at a field in Colquitt, Miller Co., 4–26 February (Wayne Schaffner, m.obs.); see Greater Yellowlegs account below.

WILLET – A substantial 190 were estimated on Wassaw I. NWR, Chatham Co., on 14 January (m.obs.).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS – A flooded field in Colquitt, Miller Co., proved attractive to this species, where Wayne Schaffner counted 96 on 4 February; almost that number lingered until 26 February (m.obs.).

RED PHALAROPE – Pelagic trips offshore of Chatham Co. during the GOS Winter Meeting, 14–15 January, produced records of multiple flocks each day, with up to 360 estimated at 1 location during the first trip (m.obs.).

POMARINE JAEGER – One was about 4–5 mi offshore during a GOS Winter Meeting pelagic, 14 January (m.obs.).

PARASITIC JAEGER – Lauren Gingerella spotted 1 from LSSI on 2 January. During the 2 pelagic trips mentioned in the last 2 accounts, 3 of this species were seen on 14 January and 1 the following day (m.obs.).

BONAPARTE'S GULL – Away from their strongholds along the coast and on the major reservoirs, the 55 seen by Patrick Maurice and John Patten Moss at Georgia Highlands Wetlands, Floyd Co., on 26 February was most interesting.

FRANKLIN'S GULL – John Patten Moss and Jim Hanna saw 1 at Georgia Highlands Wetlands, Floyd Co., on 3 December for the only record.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – Largest concentration noted was 6 on Wassaw I. NWR, Chatham Co., during the GOS Winter Meeting, on 14 January (m.obs.).

CASPIAN TERN – High number was 30 on CINS, 20 February (eBird Observer 846047).

SANDWICH TERN – Lingering into December along 4 coastal counties, both the latest and largest group were Jean-Luc Betoulle's 6 on JI, 28 December.



**Parasitic Jaeger, Chatham Co., 14 January 2017,
by Dan Vickers**

BLACK SKIMMER – Concentrations ranging from 500–800 were noted on JI, SSI and SI, lower than the thousands often seen along our coast in

winter (m.obs.).

RED-THROATED LOON – An amazing concentration estimated at 100 was around Wassaw I. NWR, Chatham Co., on 14 January, seen during the GOS Winter Meeting field trip (m.obs.). Away from the coast, Richard Candler watched a bird move from Coweta Co. into Fayette Co. on Lake McIntosh on 5 December, and James White spotted 1 on Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., on 27 December.

COMMON LOON – “Large rafts feeding around the submerged wrecks” off

Chatham Co. added up to 120 observed during the GOS Winter Meeting pelagic field trip on 14 January (m.obs.).

MANX SHEARWATER – Groups of 1–6 were observed at multiple locations off Chatham Co. on 14–15 January during GOS Winter Meeting pelagic field trips (m.obs.).

NORTHERN GANNET – Steve Calver had the high count with 109 from TI North Beach on 13 February.



**Northern Gannet, Chatham Co., 14 January 2017,
by Dan Vickers**

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN – Numbers peaked on Hutchinson I., Chatham Co., on 15 January when Nathan Farnau counted 225. Non-coastal records include an impressive 160 birds flying over Cusseta, Chattahoochee Co., on 29 December (eBird Observer 301832).

TRICOLORED HERON – A count of 497 birds coming in to roost at Woody Pond during the HN CBC, 16 December, was thought to be conservative (Dot Bambach et al.).

REDDISH EGRET – Wes Hatch and Bob Sattelmeyer found a bird of indeterminate age on the south end of CI during the CBC, 17 December.

CATTLE EGRET – A count of 40 in Seminole Co., 19 February, is high for winter (Tommie Rogers and Jeffrey Schaarschmidt).

WHITE-FACED IBIS – Continuing from fall, HN hosted 1–2 birds from 1 December through 24 January (m.obs.; GCRC-rns); meanwhile, down at AWMA, a bird was seen from 8 January through at least 26 February (m.obs.; GCRC record 2017-1 accepted).

GOLDEN EAGLE – Reports of singletons came from Jones Co. on 15 December (Jim Ferrari) and Greene Co. on 20 December (Joel McNeal).

BARN OWL – Reports came from 6 counties, the majority in Stewart (BUENWR silo birds) and McIntosh (4th St. nest box in Darien) cos. (m.obs.).

SHORT-EARED OWL – Shannon Fair provided the only report, of a bird on Laramore Rd., Lee Co., on 28 January.

AMERICAN KESTREL – Joy Brown and Herschel Thompson found 12 in Macon, Bibb Co., on 11 February, a good one-list total.

MERLIN – Reported from 31 counties over much of the state, this winter was productive for this species (m.obs.).

PEREGRINE FALCON – Always a prize, only 11 counties turned up records, 6 of them coastal (m.obs.).

SAY'S PHOEBE – Wayne Schaffner (WS) continues to alter our understanding of the abundance and distribution of this species in the state. He (and a few others = et al.) observed 2–3 birds at 2 New York Rd. sites, Lee Co., 6 December to at least 25 February (GCRC-rns). WS et al. observed 4 birds at various locations in Baker Co., 10 December–18 February (GCRC-rns). WS et al. watched a bird on Swanner Rd., Seminole Co., 5 January through at least 26 February (unmentioned on GCRC webpage). WS et al. tracked 2 in Miller Co., 1 continuing from fall through at least 26 February on Grimsley Bridge Rd., and another on Shingler Rd., 17 December–26 February. Finally, WS's first in Early Co., he found 1 on 29 December and last observed it 26 February (m.obs.; GCRC-rns). I therefore count 11 birds observed wintering in SW Georgia—astounding.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER – Mostly WS (also m.obs.) observed around 20 birds; 1–3 at several locales in Baker, Decatur, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, and Seminole cos., throughout the period.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER – WS discovered this bird on 4 February on Frith Rd, Early Co., subsequently observed by many through at least 26 February (GCRC-rns).

WESTERN KINGBIRD – Chatham Co.: 1–5 were on Hutchinson I., 7 December–11 February (m.obs.). In Glynn Co.: 1–2 wintered at the usual location near the SSI airport, 2 December–5 January (Bob Sattelmeyer, m.obs.); 1 was on Admiralty Way, Brunswick, 30 December (Bruce Dralle); and 1 was on East Beach, SSI, 10 January (Bob Sattelmeyer).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE – Northwestern-most was a bird near Menlo, Walker Co., spotted by Mark McShane on 7 January and relocated by others on 23 January.

WHITE-EYED VIREO – Piedmont records included birds in Clarke (at least 2), Fulton, Greene, and Oconee cos. (m.obs.).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – This species is rare in the Southern Blue Ridge in winter, so records in Fannin, Murray, and White cos. were notable (m.obs.).

PURPLE MARTIN – Mary Kimberly noted the first on 27 January in Dodge Co. while looking at the Broad-billed Hummingbird, after which date martins began showing up throughout the coastal plain (m.obs.).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW – Birds were seen in metro Atlanta—DeKalb and Fulton cos., and to a lesser extent Clayton and Cobb cos.—at multiple sites throughout the winter (m.obs.).

CLIFF/CAVE SWALLOW – James Neves studied a bird at Redlands WMA, Greene Co., on 16 December, which was not identifiable to species.

BARN SWALLOW – Brad Bergstrom and Marvin Smith spotted a late bird in Lowndes Co. on 9 December.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – It was a good year for this irruptive species, with many coastal plain sightings, including as far south as Lowndes Co. (Marvin Smith, m.obs.).

HOUSE WREN – Birds attempted wintering as far north as Murray, Gordon, and Dawson cos. (m.obs.).

SEDGE WREN – Beyond the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, Shawn Reed found 1 on Blacks Bluff Rd., Floyd Co., on 3 December.

MARSH WREN – Away from the coast, birds were noted wintering in 11 Coastal Plain counties, and in the Piedmont only at CCWA, Clayton Co. (Kathy Miller, m.obs.).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER – In the Piedmont, birds were noted wintering in Barrow, Clarke, Cobb, Greene, and Fulton cos. (m.obs.).

GRAY CATBIRD – Farthest north was a bird in Hall County on 24 February (Gerald Hadder).

PURPLE FINCH – This winter, birds penetrated to the depths of the Coastal Plain, including multiple Florida-border counties (m.obs.).

PINE SISKIN – Not mirroring other irruptives, few were noted south of the Fall Line, with birds found in Dougherty, Grady, Marion, and Tattnall cos. (m.obs.).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR – James White found 1 at Sam Smith Park, Bartow Co., on 3 December; Jim and Jacob Flynn heard 2 along South Melvin Rd., Macon Co., on 30 December, observed by many through 27 January.

LARK SPARROW – Wayne Schaffner (WS) found 1 on 4 December near Camilla, Mitchell Co. James White next turned 1 up in Wilcox Co. on 14 December, and WS answered with 2 in Miller Co. on 17 December. WS finally hit the jackpot with a bird along Stage Coach Rd, Mitchell Co., which became as many as 7, seen by the masses through at least 26 February.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – Given the numbers likely present, only a few records of this secretive species came in from Dougherty, Glynn, and Richmond cos. (m.obs.).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – Besides a cluster of records in 3 Atlanta-metro counties (DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett), Steve Calver had a singleton in Chatham Co. on 10 January, and an Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) ornithology class found 1 in Tift Co. on 8 February (m.obs.).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE – Besides the expected coastal plain birds, several individuals wintered in 7 Piedmont counties (m.obs.).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE – Reports of Gulf Coast population expansion came from 7 southwest Georgia or Florida-border counties (m.obs.).

OVENBIRD – Elusive in winter along the coast, Gene Keferl saw a bird at Altama WMA, Glynn Co., on 16 January, and Steve Calver found 1 at Old Roberds Dairy, Chatham Co., on 9 February.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH – Marshall Weber found 2 at OISNWR, 28 December; undisputed King-of-the-NOWA Steve Calver had 1 at Hutchinson I., Chatham Co., on 1 January, 1 at HN on 5 January while birding with Dot Bambach, Leslie Weichsel, and Sandy Beasley, and 2 at Chatham Co. Wetlands Preserve on 8 February (heralding winter's entrenchment).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – Records came from 10 Piedmont counties this winter (m.obs.).

TENNESSEE WARBLER – Nathan Farnau reported a lingering bird in COP on 7 December.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER – Josh Spence recorded the farthest north-wintering bird this year in Gordon Co. on 21 December.

NASHVILLE WARBLER – Joy Carter reported a bird—lingering migrant or hopeful winterer?—in Sandy Springs, Fulton Co., on 15 December.

AMERICAN REDSTART – Lois Stacey found a late female/immature bird at PSNP on 17 December.

CAPE MAY WARBLER – A male found by Lydia Thompson in the Historic District at JI on 16 February continued to feed in bottlebrush shrubs until at least 23 February (m.obs.).

NORTHERN PARULA – Nathan Farnau and others spotted an adult male “likely over-wintering” at AWMA on 28 January; unusually far from the coast, Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell found 1 at Paradise PFA, Berrien Co., on 8 February; and Larry Carlile’s bird at Ft. Stewart, Liberty Co., on 28 February was likely in the vanguard of the first wave of migrants.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER – Well into the Piedmont, James McDermott observed 1 occasionally at his feeders in Canton, Cherokee Co., from 9 December through 31 January.

PRAIRIE WARBLER – Besides the expected 6 or so records from 3 coastal counties, 15 members of an ornithology class (from ABAC) enjoyed an adult male at Paradise PFA, Berrien Co., on 17 February (*vide* eBird observer 131165).

WILSON’S WARBLER – Although noted as a “continuing bird,” Adam Betuel’s was the only report of 1 at a Fulton Co. residence, 12 January.

SUMMER TANAGER – Kenneth Shiver observed 1 at his home in Carroll Co. on 22 December, then Marvin Smith found 1 at his home in Lowndes Co. on 23 December.

INDIGO BUNTING – The bulk of this species vacated the state by the 1st

week of November, and are unusual at any season in COP, but Nathan Farnau observed a male there on 7 December.

PAINTED BUNTING – Things you read in eBird data dumps: “I was sitting at my desk at home, listening to The Shins and working on my organic chem homework when I see a flash of blue in my crape myrtle. I thought, ‘Hey, a bluebird!’ but upon closer inspection I noticed the yellow on the mantle and I realized it was no bluebird. I quickly grabbed my camera and shot through the window until the bird flew on to the next tree and I finished my chem homework. Neat bird to see here in Winter!” Observed by (and with apologies to) Liam Wolff in Richmond Co., 11 February.

DICKCISSEL – Jean-Luc Betoulle described well an immature bird at Stone Mountain Park, DeKalb Co., on 26 January; MaryAnn Fitzgerald had a bird apparently coming to feeders in Bibb Co., 18–28 February.

Malcolm Hodges, *Riverdale, Georgia*

THE ORIOLE

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