

Fla. Field Nat. 25(2):73, 1997.

**A Birder's Guide to Georgia, 5th Ed.**—Joel R. Hitt and Kenneth Turner Blackshaw, Eds., 1996; Occ. Publ. No. 13, Georgia Ornithological Society, P. O. Box 1684, Cartersville, Georgia 30120. 222 pages, \$12.00 Postpaid, wire-O bound paper.—Georgia is the largest state east of the Mississippi River (Florida is second, with a difference of 316 square miles, or if you insist, 81,844 ha). Georgia's diverse environments offer many attractions for birders, from 1,458 meter-tall Brasstown Bald with its Ruffed Grouse, Veeries, and Common Ravens to the semi-tropical Golden Isles of the Atlantic Coast that provide access to shore birds, pelagic birds, and land birds during migration fallouts. In between, in the Piedmont and Coastal Plains, extensive pine and mixed forests support resident Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and Bachman's Sparrows, and populations of more northern species whose ranges just lap into Florida, such as White-breasted Nuthatch and Field Sparrow. Swainson's Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrushes breed in river bottom forests and along rushing streams. Georgia even has recent nesting records of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher!

Despite this rich avifauna, no Lane Birding Guide to Georgia exists. Thus, the Georgia Ornithological Society has produced its own "A Birder's Guide To Georgia", now in a Fifth Edition since first appearing in 1974. This latest version is by far the best effort, and compares favorably with any I have seen from other states.

New and welcome features include wire-O binding and species status bar graphs. Where appropriate, a species' status by season and abundance is given separately for as many as four regions of the state. Anyone compressing this much detailed data exposes themselves to quibbling and nitpicking, but those species accounts I spot-checked seemed reasonably correct. Regrettably, nesting status is only implied by the season, not with an asterisk or some other annotation. There is an informative list of Georgia State Parks, another of local bird and Audubon clubs, and a thorough index of species and localities. However, there is no annotated list of specialty species.

The locality accounts are concise and the writing style is generally good. Computer generated maps are clear and sufficiently detailed, but as most cover only the environs of population centers, complete state coverage is a bit spotty. Also there are no very small-scale maps of individual sites and the map of physiographic regions is inadequate and confusing. The clarity and detail of the written directions are impressive, and lapses are rare (e. g., no driving directions to Kennesaw Mountain, a premier migration locality). Noting MARTA (local mass transit) access for Atlanta sites is a nice touch, as is a section listing access points for the Appalachian Trail.

The editors and GOS can be proud of this clear, thorough, and attractive guide. FOS members with any interest in their neighbor state will find it desirable for their personal libraries. Because Florida birders might make the Georgia mountains their choice destination, I join the editors of this Guide in recommending conjunctive use of The Georgia Conservancy's Guide to the North Georgia Mountains (F. Brown and N. Jones, Eds., 1991, \$18.95, paper, ISBN 0-929264-46-0, 290 rich pages.)—**Robert L. Crawford**, 208 Junius Street, Thomasville, Georgia 31792.