



Skidaway Island for the first time since the 1931 CBC. Russ Wigh documented the sighting with photographs on 26 October. Steve Calver observed one bird at a feeder in Savannah on 11 November, for another unusual coastal report.

PINE SISKIN - Fannin Co. hosted birds on and off during the summer, so a bird noted on 29 August was likely one of the birds that had been seen by Tom Striker. The highest count was 20 birds seen on 29 November by Lynn Schlup in Oconee. Beth Roth observed two birds on Skidaway Island on 14 November, for an early date in the coastal region (fide Russ Wigh).

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## FROM THE FIELD

DECEMBER 2004 – FEBRUARY 2005

*Note:* The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification of acceptance of a record. Records need to be documented and submitted to the Checklist and Records Committee for consideration.

It was a very good season for rarities, as the mild weather and several offshore excursions combined to provide some very interesting sightings. It was probably a slightly better than average year for the winter eruptive species. The finches showed up in fairly good numbers during the early part of the winter, as did the nuthatches. A Snowy Owl was discovered in the state, but was injured and the Raptor Center in Auburn could not rehabilitate the bird. There were numerous reports of rare birds this season, including Brown Booby, Manx Shearwater, Razorbill, and Glaucous Gull. It was also a good season for some western species, including hummingbirds, as the hummingbird banders reported a slightly higher than average number of birds this winter. A total of 115 hummingbirds was reported representing five species. There were several sightings reported of Western Tanager, Vermilion Flycatcher, and a single Harris's Sparrow to round out the western winter vagrants. The ducks made a good showing as well, with high counts for many species, and several reports of some of the less common ducks like Long-tailed Duck. The other water birds of note were the Pacific Loon and Brant, and both species remained in the area long enough for birders to relocate them. It seems like we have also been experiencing an increase in the number of Snow Goose and White-fronted Goose reports over the past few winters. This could be partly due to the excellent winter birding coverage we are now experiencing all over the state. Please keep taking good field notes and submitting your reports.

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, Giff et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AWEC - Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area in McIntosh Co.; CRC - Checklist and Records Committee; CRNRA - the Cochran Shoals Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; ELHLAF -





E.L. Huie Land Application Facility in Clayton Co.; ENWR - the Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Stewart Co.; JI - Jekyll Island; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Cobb Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island; m.ob. - many observers; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; v.ob. - various observers; SCSP - Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; WPD - West Point Dam.

### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - There were numerous reports throughout the period. The earliest report was on 5 December, when Jim Flynn and Earl Horn found four birds in Burke Co. The highest count was 16 at ENWR on 13 February, as reported by Geoff Hill.

**SNOW GOOSE** - There were multiple reports from around the state. The earliest report was from Lake Acworth in Cobb Co., where Sandy Pangle found four birds on 1 December. Most reports submitted were of individual birds, so six birds seen in the Hawkinsville area on 13 February (fide Jeff Sewell) and seven seen in Gordon Co. on 12 January (Joshua Spence) were good high counts for those areas.

**BRANT** - Two birds reported in the previous season on JI remained until 3 December (Mike Chapman). Had it not been for that report, Michael Beohm's discovery of a single bird on Cumberland Island on 18 December would have caused a rush to that location to see this rare winter visitor. The latter bird remained until at least 19 December. CRC records 2004-20A and 2004-20B.

**TUNDRA SWAN** - The only birds reported this period were two found at MBBP in Augusta on 9 January (Lois Stacy), and two on LSSI reported by Brandon Noel on 9 February.

**GADWALL** - The highest count was from the Macon area, where Jerry Amerson reported finding 116 birds on the Macon Christmas Bird Count on 30 December.

**AMERICAN WIGEON** - The highest count was 130 seen at Garden Lakes in Floyd Co. on 28 December. This small lake has become a traditional wintering spot for this species, and Marion Dobbs has been monitoring the population.

**AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** - The highest count reported was 16 birds from Carters Lake by Joshua Spence on 21 December.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** - The highest count reported was 81 birds from Kings Bay Submarine base by Sheila Willis on 11 December.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** - The highest count reported was 93 birds from Clayton Co. by Carol Lambert and Jeff Sewell on 26 December.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** - The highest count reported was 200 birds from ENWR by Michael Beohm on 2 February.

**CANVASBACK** - The highest count reported was more than 600 birds viewed from the dam at Lake Seminole by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn on 1 January.

**REDHEAD** - The highest counts were from Garden Lakes in Floyd Co., where Marion Dobbs observed 163 birds on 22 February, and from the J.W. Smith



Reservoir on 26 February, when 152 birds were counted (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Jeff Sewell).

**RING-NECKED DUCK** - The highest count reported was 600 birds observed in southwest Burke Co. by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn on 5 December. Jim and Earl also reported 1,150 birds, scattered across middle and eastern Georgia, on 6 February.

**GREATER SCAUP** - Ken Blankenship found a female bird in a Cobb Co. subdivision pond on 1 February, which was unusual for that location.

**LESSER SCAUP** - Paul Sykes reported a high count of 2,863 birds observed at Cumberland Island on 14 January.

**SURF SCOTER** - The highest count, by far, was between 150 to 200 birds reported along the coast on 3 December (Michael Beohm). Chris Loudermilk found a single bird at Sweetwater Creek State Park on 4 December. Further north, Joshua Spence counted six birds at Salacoa Creek Park, also on 4 December.

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - The highest count from the coast was on 3 December, when Michael and Eric Beohm found seven birds. Michael and Eric also found a single bird at Lake Horton on 4 December that remained there at least until 19 December. The most interesting sighting this season was from Brad Bergstrom, who observed a flock of more than 50 birds flying past Ft. Clinch, Florida, into Georgia waters on 18 February. Unusual for the Atlanta area, Walt Chambers found a single bird on the DeKalb Reservoir on 21 February, which remained until 22 February (fide Larry Russell).

**BLACK SCOTER** - Michael and Eric Beohm reported finding more than 5,000 birds on 3 December off Sapelo Island.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** - It was a very good season for this species, with numerous reports from all around the state. The earliest report was from Sapelo Island, where Michael and Eric Beohm observed three birds on 3 December. Marion Dobbs had a very unusual sighting of three birds found in the Rome area on 28 December. Steve Parrish observed several birds near Milledgeville on 9 January, for a very rare sighting from that location. This species is also rare around Atlanta, so a bird found at ELHLAF in Clayton Co. on 26 January was a very good find by Carol Lambert. The latter bird remained in the area until 10 February. Jim Flynn and Earl Horn found a single bird at the MBBP in Augusta on 6 February, which remained until 12 February. Back at the coast, three birds were observed at Gould's Inlet on 11 February (Gene Keferel).

**BUFFLEHEAD** - The highest count reported was 75 birds from Kings Bay Submarine base by Sheila Willis on 11 December.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** - The highest count came from WPD, where Steve Barlow observed 16 birds on 31 January.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** - Paul Sykes had an excellent count of 1,807 birds at Cumberland Island on 14 January.

**PLAIN CHACHALACA** - Information about the population on Sapelo Island is not often received, so a count of 10 birds on 3 December was an excellent report from Michael and Eric Beohm.

**WILD TURKEY** - A count of 52 birds seen by Joshua Spence on the Carters



Lake Christmas Bird Count trial run was an excellent tally for this species on 21 December.

RED-THROATED LOON - There are very few inland reports of this species, so a bird found by Michael Boehm at Plant Wansley on 9 December was a very good find.

PACIFIC LOON - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn discovered a bird at Lake Hartwell on 26 February. This is only the third bird reported for the state and only the second documented occurrence (CRC record 2005-08A and 2005-08B).

COMMON LOON - The highest count reported was 45 birds seen on 26 February by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn at Lake Hartwell.

HORNED GREBE - The highest count reported was 300 birds observed near Little Tybee Island on 15 January by Malcolm Hodges, Rene Heidt, and Deb Barreiro.

RED-NECKED GREBE - This species has been very difficult to find in recent winters, so a bird found by Carol Lambert in Clayton Co. on 2 January was an excellent sighting. The bird remained at the location until 9 January.

EARED GREBE - The only report was a single bird observed at Lake Hartwell on 26 February by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn.

MANX SHEARWATER - Russ Wigh observed three birds on a pelagic trip out of Savannah on 11 January (CRC record 2005-03). Two birds were observed on a subsequent trip out of Savannah on 12 February (Pierre Howard, Steve Barlow; CRC record 2005-13).

BROWN BOOBY - Perhaps the most amazing find of the season was the bird found by Russ Wigh off the coast near Savannah on 2 December (CRC record 2004-19). This species is rarely seen in the state during the summer, and this is the first winter record for the species. Russ also reported finding the remains of another bird on a naval tower offshore from Savannah on 11 January (CRC record 2005-02).

NORTHERN GANNET - Eric and Michael Boehm had a great count of more than 500 birds observed off Sapelo Island on 4 December.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Phil Hardy and Clive Rainey had a good count of six birds found on Lake Blackshear on 18 December.

AMERICAN BITTERN - Several reports, from the AWMA on the coast and Phinizy Swamp near Augusta, were received of single birds (v. ob.).

LEAST BITTERN - There are very few winter records for this species, so a report of a bird at the AWMA on 6 February by Noah Kahn was an excellent find.

REDDISH EGRET - Michael Boehm reported finding two birds on Cumberland Island on 11 December.

GLOSSY IBIS - The highest count reported was 28 birds observed by Earl Horn at the AWMA near Darien on 16 January.

BALD EAGLE - Brandon Noel reported a high count of six birds from LSSI on 18 December.

NORTHERN HARRIER - The highest count reported was 10 birds seen at the Cobb owl fields in Sumter Co. on 12 December by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn.

GOLDEN EAGLE - There were two reports of this species. Eric Boehm reported seeing a single bird in Henry Co. on 1 February, and Michael Bell reported observing





a bird at the Birdsong Nature Center in Grady Co. on 26 February.

PURPLE GALLINULE - A single bird was observed by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn in Lee Co. on 1 January.

SANDHILL CRANE - At least 2,000 birds were reported statewide during migration on 19 December.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - Paul Sykes had a high count of 1,273 birds observed on Cumberland Island on 14 January.

PIPING PLOVER - Brandon Noel reported a high count of 60 birds from LSSI on 17 December. Paul Sykes also reported a very good count of 56 birds on Cumberland Island on 14 January.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER - The highest count reported was more than 300 birds at LSSI on 17 December (Brandon Noel).

BLACK-NECKED STILT - Several observers noted the late presence of two birds at AWMA near Darien. The latest dates reported were 29 December (Joshua Spence) and 15 January (Earl Horn). There are very few winter records for this species.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW - The barrier islands are the most reliable location for this species during the winter. Michael and Eric Beohm reported a single bird from Sapelo Island on 5 December. Jeff Sewell and Carol Lambert reported two birds from St. Catherine's Island, and Brandon Noel reported two birds on LSSI, both on 17 December. Anne Waters reported a single bird seen on Sapelo Island on 1 January. The only report away from one of the barrier islands was of a single bird found behind the JI Visitors Center on 15 January by Earl Horn.

MARbled GODWIT - The highest count reported was 26 birds observed on Sapelo Island by Eric and Michael Beohm on 5 December.

RED KNOT - The highest count reported was more than 250 birds on LSSI observed by Brandon Noel on 18 December. Paul Sykes also had an excellent count of 214 birds observed on Cumberland Island on 14 January.

PURPLE SANDPIPER - The highest count reported, from the usual location at the north end of Tybee Island, was four birds seen on 2 December by Paul Raney.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Eric and Michael Beohm reported a good count of four birds seen on Sapelo Island on 5 December.

RED PHALAROPE - Russ Wigh had a good count of more than 200 birds seen on a pelagic trip off Savannah on 2 December. During a similar pelagic trip on 12 February, 315 birds were observed (Russ Wigh, et al.)

POMARINE JAEGER - Michael Beohm reported finding two birds on Cumberland Island on 18 December.

PARASITIC JAEGER - Michael Beohm had an excellent count of 16 birds on Cumberland Island on 18 December.

BONAPARTE'S GULL - Rare away from the large inland reservoirs, Paul Sykes observed six birds over the sandpit in northern Greene Co. on 11 December. Paul also had a high count of 487 birds observed on Cumberland Island on 14 January. The pelagic trip out of Savannah on 12 February reported 183 birds, a high count for the season (fide Russ Wigh).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - There were scattered reports of this species,



usually seen singly, on the coast (m.ob.).

**GLAUCOUS GULL** - There were several reported sightings of this rare winter visitor. Earl Horn and Owen Kinney reported a bird found at the south beach of JI on 15 January. Eric, Michael, and Richard Beohm observed a first winter bird at Lake Tobesofkee near Macon on 19 January, which was last reported on 26 January by Jerry Amerson.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** - The 12 February pelagic trip from Savannah reported finding four adult birds offshore (fide Russ Wigh).

**RAZORBILL** - The 12 February pelagic trip aboard the Scat II reported a record 106 birds seen off Savannah (fide Russ Wigh; CRC record 2005-12). Interestingly, the previous high count was also on 12 February in 1977, when more than 50 birds were observed.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** - The bird frequenting the JI feeder earlier in the fall was last reported on 14 December (Marjorie Clark).

**SNOWY OWL** - A bird found in Jones Co. and transported to the raptor rehabilitation center in Auburn, Alabama, eventually died (fide Geoff Hill and Michel Beohm). This is only the fifth documented record for the state (CRC record 2006-06).

**SHORT-EARED OWL** - On 7 December, Phil Hardy reported that the birds had returned to the Cobb owl fields in Sumter Co. There were very few reports of birds seen at this location this season, and it appears that habitat changes may be having an adverse affect on the birds at this reliable location.

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** - Nine wintering birds were banded this season (fide Rusty Trump).

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** - The season total of birds banded for this species was eight, according to Rusty Trump. Barbara Passmore reported that a female bird was banded in her Valdosta yard on 18 December.

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** - In Decatur, Patricia White reported that the previous year's male bird returned to her feeder in November, and remained until 31 January. This was the only report of this species this season (CRC record 2004-21).

**RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD** - Rusty Trump reported that 50 birds were banded this winter season, slightly higher than the average for the past five years. An adult male bird was present in Lilburn in January (Rick and Sandy Krause). Johnny Parks hosted a female bird in Ringgold in January, as well. Further south, Jim Yarbrough's yard hosted a female bird that was reported in February, along with a second year Allen's Hummingbird (fide Rusty Trump).

**ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** - Fred Bassett reported that he banded a second-year male bird in Jim Yarbrough's yard, located in Ashburn, on 3 February. The bird had been present since late November, and was present in the yard as late as 15 February (CRC record 2005-07).

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** - There were three birds in southwest Georgia this winter. On 13 December, two birds were reported from Burke Co., and another bird was present in Lee Co. (Christine Gibson)

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** - There were two birds observed on the Bainbridge CBC



on 27 December (fide Giff Beaton).

HORNED LARK - Joshua Spence had a high count of 25 birds seen in Gordon Co. on 7 December.

PURPLE MARTIN - The earliest report of returning birds was a sighting on 13 February in Brooks Co. by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn.

BARN SWALLOW - Earl Horn and Jim Flynn found a single bird on 5 December in Burke Co., for a rare winter record for this species in the coastal plain.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - The number of birds reported dropped off from the fall season, but there were birds present in several locations throughout the winter. Eric and Michael Boehm reported finding a bird on Sapelo Island on 3 December, a very good coastal record.

SEDGE WREN - Joshua Spence reported finding one bird near Carters Lake on 21 December, which was an unusual find for that location in winter.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - A single bird was found on the Marietta/Atlanta Christmas Bird Count on 19 December. This was only the second record for the count circle in the past 26 years (Bob Zaremba).

GRAY CATBIRD - The mild weather most of the winter may have contributed to a high number of reports in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. Joshua Spence had two sightings in the northern part of the state. The first was a bird seen in Gordon Co. on 4 December, and the second was a bird at Carters Lake on 5 February. The highest count came from the coast, where Joshua reported finding six birds on 29 December.

AMERICAN PIPIT - The highest count was a flock of about 250 birds reported from Brooks Co. on 13 February by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn.

TENNESSEE WARBLER - Earl Horn and Jim Flynn observed a late migrating, or possibly wintering bird, in Randolph Co. on 12 December.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER - There were widespread reports of this species throughout the state this season by many observers. The highest number reported was three birds seen near Augusta by Lois Stacey on 1 January.

WESTERN Tanager - A male bird made a very brief appearance at a Cobb Co. feeder on 21 December. This was the same yard that hosted a bird last year for a few weeks in November and December (Laura Brown; CRC record 2006-05). Russ Wigh reported a female bird coming to a feeder on Skidaway Island, first discovered on 21 January, and last seen on 13 February (CRC record 2005-09). Jerry Amerson reported a male bird coming to a feeder in his mother's yard in Macon on 31 January. The bird was last seen on 13 February (CRC record 2005-06).

LARK SPARROW - Georgann Schmalz reported finding five birds in Gordon Co. on 10 December.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - Michael Bell had a good count of five birds at Birdsong Plantation on 18 December.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW - A single bird was found at Birdsong on 18 December (Michael Bell).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW - A single bird was found at Birdsong on 18 December (Michael Bell).





LINCOLN'S SPARROW - Johnny Parks reported finding a single bird on the Amicalola Falls Christmas Bird Count on 27 December. Paul Sykes located a bird in northern Greene Co. on 16 January.

HARRIS'S SPARROW - A bird was frequenting a feeder at a Clarke Co. retirement home, first seen by the homeowner in late February, and remaining through the end of the month (fide Marianne Happek; CRC record 2006-04).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - There were numerous reports from around the state. The highest count reported was nine birds in Franklin Co. on 27 February by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR - Gordon Co. provided the best habitat for this species this winter. Pierre Howard and Bob Zarembo discovered three birds there on 12 December (CRC record 2006-03). The highest count was 15 birds seen on 18 December by Steve Barlow, from the same location on Fite Bend Road. Walt Chambers found at least four of these birds on 28 January at Oxbow Meadows, Muscogee Co. His report (with photos) was accepted by the CRC, record 2005-11.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - Eric Beohm reported finding a late female bird in his yard on 10 December.

PAINTED BUNTING - This species is rarely seen in the winter, so a bird at a feeder in Glenville on 16 December was a very good report from Gene Wilkinson. Paul Sykes reported banding an adult male bird coming to a feeder at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Nelms at Colbert, Madison Co., from 15 February to the end of the period.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - A good count was submitted by Eric Beohm, who reported more than 150 birds in a flock in his yard on 26 December in Spalding Co. The highest count of this species was by Paul Sykes, who observed a flock of 225 birds in northern Greene Co. on 13 February.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - The highest count reported was from Floyd Co., where Marion Dobbs reported a flock containing about 50 birds on 23 February.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Two birds were observed at Oxbow Meadows on 19 December (Walt Chambers, Bill Birkhead). A male bird in Piedmont Park on 24 December was an excellent find by Linda Craiger. From the Atlanta area, Phillip Northman reported finding a male bird in Grant Park on 9 January, and Diane James found a female bird in Gwinnett Co. on 23 January. More in keeping with their typical winter range, there were several reports from the southern part of the state.

PURPLE FINCH - It was a pretty good winter for this species, as there were widespread reports across the state. No one reported any large flocks, and most reports were of between two and 10 birds.

RED CROSSBILL - A bird observed in Cherokee Co. on 5 January by Parrie Pinyan was very unusual for that area. Brian and Lisa Finnicum reported a single bird at their feeder in Fannin Co. on 29 January (fide Tom Striker).

PINE SISKIN - Lynn Schlup had a high count of 56 birds in her Oconee yard on 28 December.

EVENING GROSBEAK - Tom Striker reported that Dave Tickner observed two







birds coming to his Fannin Co. feeder, for one day only, on 22 January. This was the only report of the season.

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## FROM THE FIELD

### MARCH–MAY 2005

Note: The appearance of observations in this section does not suggest verification of acceptance of a record. Records need to be documented and submitted to the Checklist and Records Committee for consideration.

Once again, the spring season was highlighted by lingering rare birds discovered during the winter, and by some unexpected rare migrants. In general, sightings reported from the migration of neotropical songbirds were about average. I received few reports outside of the normal migration hot spots, and nothing out of the ordinary was reported from those spots. The highlight of the season was a Buff-bellied Hummingbird, which visited a feeder in the southern part of the state for several days in April. Luckily, the property owner was able to take photographs so that the record could be submitted and documented, making it the first state record for this species. Late departing birds in March included the Pacific Loon, Harris's Sparrow and Western Tanager. There was a higher than average number of reports of Black-billed Cuckoo and Connecticut Warbler, two birds that are notoriously difficult to find some years. A fortuitous fishing trip offshore turned up a rarely reported Sooty Shearwater, along with expected species. Several birders noted that breeding ranges seem to be extending for some species like Song Sparrow and Dickcissel, as evidenced by territorial birds being seen.

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### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** - Four birds were observed in Camilla, Mitchell Co., on 29 May by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn. The birds had been present

