

FROM THE FIELD

JUNE - JULY 2007

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.

The summer season is typically fairly quiet. The majority of migrants have moved through the area weeks ago, and those that are breeding here do so quietly and secretively. However, this season was sparked by the amazing discovery of the SOUTH POLAR SKUA at Carter's Lake. This bird attracted hundreds of birders from our state and from neighboring states for a chance to see this rare vagrant up close. The discovery of the skua led to the subsequent discovery of a FRANKLIN'S GULL in the same area, the famed "Patagonia picnic table effect" in practice! What started out as a very exciting season quickly settled into the normal summer birding in the state. There were a few unexpected surprises added later in the season, but you will have to read my detailed report to savor those tidbits.

This is my last penning of this section for The Oriole. I have enjoyed authoring this section for the past 5 years, but the time has come to pass this baton on to another of our ardent area birders. Ken Blankenship has graciously agreed to continue as editor of the "From the Field" column. I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to say thank you to all who provided guidance, information, and reports over the past 5 years to aid me in my quest to make this data relevant and timely, and as accurate as possible. I wish Ken good luck in his new endeavor, and I know that you will all give him the same guidance and support that you so generously gave to me!

Abbreviations used include: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, Beaton et al. 2003, GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AWEC - Arrowhead Wildlife Education Center in Floyd Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; CRC - Checklist and Records Committee; CRNRA - Cochran Shoals Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cobb Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; ENWR - Bradley Unit of Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; JI - Jekyll Island, Glynn Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; m.ob. - many observers; MBBP - Merry Brothers Brickyard Ponds, Richmond

Co.; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; SCSP- Sweetwater Creek State Park, Douglas Co.; v.ob. - various observers; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; and WPD - West Point Dam, Troup Co.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK - Lois Stacey had an interesting report of 7 birds from Phinizy Swamp Nature Park on 26 and 27 June (CRC 2007-19 accepted). At AWMA, at least 20 birds were present throughout the summer months, as reported by multiple observers.

RING-NECKED DUCK - Carol Lambert reported that 2 birds spent the summer months on the ponds at ELHLAF.

HOODED MERGANSER - Jim Flynn found a female with 3 young in Dawson Forest on 5 June.

RUFFED GROUSE - Dan Vickers discovered a female with chicks along Ivy Log Gap Road on 3 June, and Earl Horn and Jim Flynn found 4 birds in Rabun Co. on 30 June.

COMMON LOON - Dan Vickers observed a pair of birds on Lake Nottley on 3 June, and Jim Throckmorton reported finding a pair of birds on Lake Burton in Rabun Co. on 9 June. A single bird was observed at Carter's Lake from 11-18 June (Joshua Spence, Ken Blankenship), and another bird was observed in Lowndes Co. by Julius Ariail from 23 June through 21 July.

PIED-BILLED GREBE - Carol Lambert reported finding 3 pairs of breeding birds with young at ELHLAF in June.

HORNED GREBE - A breeding plumaged bird was observed at Carter's Lake by Steve Barlow on 24 June.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Patrick Brisse and Terry Miller observed one bird on the Andrew's Island Causeway on 1 July.

BROWN PELICAN - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn had a good sighting of a single bird at Lake Walter F. George near the dam on 3 June.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - A female bird was observed on JI on 18 June (Paul and Anna Catherine Super).

AMERICAN BITTERN - Max Medley observed a bird at Carter's Lake on 18 June, which was a very unusual sighting for that location.

LEAST BITTERN - Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, and Terry Moore found one bird in a Bartow Co. marsh on 9 June. The highest count reported was more than 10 birds observed at the Phinizy Swamp Nature Park on 8 July (Mark McShane, Bill Boyd).

CATTLE EGRET - Carol Lambert reported finding a bird at the ELHLAF on 14 June, which was unusual for that location. Joshua Spence also had an unusual sighting of a bird in Murray Co. on 18 June.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Terry Miller and Patrick Brisse had a good count of more than 50 birds on JI on 30 June.

WHITE IBIS - Jim Flynn discovered a bird in Forsyth Co. on 29 June, which was a good find for that area. Another unusual sighting was a bird discovered in Cobb Co. on 5 July (David Hedeem).

GLOSSY IBIS - A single bird was seen at Phinizy Swamp Nature Park by Earl Horn and Jim Flynn on 1 July.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - A single bird was observed in the Tifton area by Zack Moye on 13 June. On the coast, Terry Miller and Patrick Brisse had a good count of 14 birds near JI on 30 June, and 8 birds along the Andrew's Island Causeway on 1 July.

OSPREY - Carol Lambert observed 3 young birds accompanying 2 adults at Lake Blalock on 15 June.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - Three birds were observed near Tifton on 9 June, one of which caught and ate a bat (Pierre Howard, Bob and Deb Zaremba). Gene Wilkinson had a good count of 18 birds in Long Co. on 20 July.

BALD EAGLE - Dan Vickers observed an adult on Lake Nottley on 3 June, and 2 juveniles and 2 adults were observed near ELHLAF on 15 June (Carol Lambert).

COMMON MOORHEN - These are becoming regular breeders in Clayton Co., as 8 nesting pairs were observed at the ELHLAF during June (fide Carol Lambert).

LIMPKIN - As many as 3 birds were observed at Reed Bingham State Park by park employees during June (previously accepted CRC 2006-21).

BLACK-NECKED STILT - Lois Stacey reported 4 birds observed at Phinizy Swamp Nature Park on 26 and 27 June.

UPLAND SANDPIPER - Jim Flynn and Earl Horn had a good count of 11 birds in Marshallville on 29 July.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - Steve Barlow found 2 birds still on the ponds at ELHLAF on 9 June.

DUNLIN - A single bird was an unusual sighting at Carter's Lake on 6 June (Darlene Moore).

STILT SANDPIPER - Ken Blankenship observed an early migrating bird in Bartow Co. on 31 July.

WILSON'S SNIPE - Ken Blankenship saw an early migrating bird in Bartow

Co. on 31 July.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - Jim Flynn discovered a bird in Forsyth Co. at the American Protein Plant on 2 June, which remained until the next day when it was seen by Brandon Best.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA - An incredible observation of a bird at Carter's Lake brought observers from around the South to this location for several weeks. The bird was originally discovered by Joshua Spence on 12 June, and remained in the area through 28 June, being observed and photographed by many observers. This may have been the state's first inland pelagic trip, as birders piled into rented pontoon boats to get better photographs of this rare visitor (CRC 2007-18 accepted).

LAUGHING GULL - Six birds were observed at Lake Walter F. George on 3 June (Jim Flynn and Earl Horn), and Dan Vickers reported finding 4 birds on Lake Nottley on the same day. Another bird was seen on Lake Blue Ridge by Tom Striker on 6 June, which was very rare for that area.

FRANKLIN'S GULL - Max Medley observed a bird at Carter's Lake on 18 June, for a very good report from that area.

GULL-BILLED TERN - Two birds were a very surprising discovery at Lake Walter F. George on 7 July (Walt Chambers).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - Steve Barlow found a bird in Union Co. on 2 June, and Dan Vickers reported finding a bird along Hale Ridge Road on 3 June.

GRAY KINGBIRD - Steve Wagner discovered 2 adult birds with 4 young in the Savannah area on 28 June, for an excellent report from that location.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - The male bird that had returned to the power line cut near McDonough in the spring was still present on 10 June (Mike Phelps). Another bird was found in Habersham Co. on 15 July (Dave Hall).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO - Three birds were an unusual discovery in Warren Co. on 10 June (Jim Flynn and Earl Horn).

CLIFF SWALLOW - This species continues to expand its range throughout the state. Jim Flynn and Earl Horn counted 75 birds in Clay Co. on 3 June, and Peter Range discovered 12 nests under the U.S. Highway 17 bridge over the Ogeechee River on 6 June.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Two birds were a good find in Rabun Co. by Jim Flynn and Earl Horn on 30 June. Another 2 birds were also a good find in western Fannin Co. in the Cohutta Mountains by Jeff Sewell on 16 July.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER - Joshua Spence had a good count of 7 birds in the Coosawattee WMA on 4 June.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Dan Vickers reported finding a bird along

Burrell's Ford Road on 3 June.

DARK-EYED JUNCO - Gene Keferl had a very unusual sighting of a late migrating bird in Glynn Co. on 11 June.

DICKCISSEL - A male bird was singing in Bartow Co. on 9 June (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett, Terry Moore). Single birds were also observed in Gordon Co. on 6 June and in Murray Co. on 21 June (Joshua Spence).

BOBOLINK - A very late migrating bird was seen in the Glenwood area on 7 June (Tim Keyes and Bill Blackburn).

RED CROSSBILL - Nedra Sekera had a very good sighting of 9 birds in Fannin Co. on 12 June, and Jennifer Nealy reported finding one bird on a feeder in the Big Canoe area on 12 July.

Bob Zaremba, 2702 Lillie Lake Drive, Marietta, GA 30064