

FROM THE FIELD

AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2008

Note: 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.

Fall was an active season, both in ornithological and meteorological terms. Severe drought conditions were briefly alleviated by heavy rains in late August, but persisted throughout the period, especially in northeast Georgia. Weather was drier and cooler than average across the Southeast. Tropical Storm Fay delivered much-needed rain and several unusual species to various parts of the state, including a group of AMERICAN AVOCETS in the Blue Ridge and a new state high count of BROWN NODDIES on the coast! Tropical Storm Hanna displaced many seabirds as it passed east of the coast, leading to some big surprises during a September pelagic trip to offshore waters: a MASKED BOOBY and a new state high count of BROWN BOOBY. Wood warbler migration was generally reported to be quite productive this fall, with many local hotspots hosting good numbers, and a nice diversity of birds along with a few sought-after rarities. Georgia's third BELL'S VIREO was banded on Jekyll Island in early October, and the state's second inland GREAT CORMORANT made a big splash in November, spending the rest of the period fishing and sunning at the base of Lake Walter F. George's dam. A prolonged highlight of fall 2008 was a massive invasion of PINE SISKINS, which were widely reported both from the field and at feeders from the mountains to barrier islands, and most points in between.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AIC - Andrews Island Causeway, Glynn Co.; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; BUENWR - Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart Co.; CLRL - Carter's Lake Re-regulation Lake area, Murray Co.; CRNRA - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; CSU - Cochran Shoals Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; JIBS - Jekyll Island Banding Station, Glynn Co.; HP - Henderson Park, DeKalb Co.; LSSI - Little St. Simons Island, Glynn 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.; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; OM - Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, Muscogee Co.; PSNP - Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, Richmond Co.; SCI - St. Catherine's Island, Liberty Co.; v. ob. - various observers; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area

Note: 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/checklists/reportables.html>

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK - On 13 August, as many as 16 adults were observed at AWMA, including a pair with 18 ducklings (Brenda Brannen, Sandy Beasley). Such a large brood is not likely the result of eggs laid by only one female. This species is an intraspecific brood parasite or "dump-nester," with females frequently laying eggs in several nests if they are left unattended. Among many subsequent reports of large flocks of adults and juveniles at this location, the high count was 68 birds on 24 November (Joshua Spence).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - On 8 November, 2 were on Clarks Hill Lake in Lincoln Co. (Jim Flynn).

SNOW GOOSE - Among several reports around the state, a large flock of 63 migrating birds seen off Wassaw Island NWR on 5 November was quite notable (Steve Calver, Peter Range). Another interesting find was an almost entirely dark immature bird on Skidaway Island on 13 November (Fitz Clarke).



Immature dark-phase Snow Goose, Skidaway Island, 13 November, by Fitz Clarke

ROSS'S GOOSE - Two reports of this species, both supported by photos, were received on the same day, 15 November: one in Henry Co. (Eric Beohm) and one in Clarke Co. (James Neves; pending, GCRC 2009-15). An interesting bird, which may have been a hybrid Snow X Ross's Goose, was spotted on 8 November at Clarks Hill Lake in Lincoln Co. (Jim Flynn). This last report is not an atypical sighting,

and illustrates a key reason why this is still considered a “review” species by the GCRC: there is no question that it occurs in Georgia, but it can be difficult to demonstrate that a bird is a pure Ross’s Goose without proper photographic documentation, a detailed description of key field marks, sketches, or all of the above. Thus, if a candidate goose is discovered, birders should take note of this challenge and record as many details and photos as possible.

**Ross’s Goose,
Atlanta Motor Speedway,
Henry Co., 15 November,
by Eric Boehm (left).
Ross’s Goose, Clarke Co.,
15 November,
by Joel McNeal (right)**



GADWALL - A single bird seen in Bartow Co. on 1 September was early for this species (Georgann Schmalz et al.). Like this report, recently published late August records (18-20 August 1989; 24 August 2003; 25 August 2006) may have fallen into a “gray area” of early arrival versus accidental summer records. However, when considered together, the data seem to support a trend of earlier fall arrivals for the species.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - Two birds were a rare find for the date on 23 August in Treutlen Co. (Jim Flynn), while a good count of 24 was made in Clarke Co. on the more typical date of 22 November (Joel McNeal et al.).

MOTTLED DUCK - A good count of 55 was made at AWMA on 26 November (Bruce and Traci Dralle).

CANVASBACK - Among a few reports was a raft of 510 birds observed at the important wintering site on Lake Seminole on 24 November (Ken Blankenship, Nathan Farnau).

SURF SCOTER - A female was at West Point’s dam relatively early on 29 October (Walt Chambers), one was at LWFG on 19 November (Pierre Howard et al.), and 15-20 were typical off the shores of Cumberland Island on 25 November (Ken Blankenship).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - A group of 8 was spotted off the shores of Jekyll Island on 25 November (Jeff Sewell).

BLACK SCOTER - A female seen in Commerce, Jackson Co., on 12 November was a notable inland report (Mark Freeman). Flocks totaling 60-70 were typical off the shores of Cumberland Island on 25 November (Ken Blankenship), as were 6 off Tybee Island on 30 November (Bob Zaremba).

COMMON GOLDENEYE - Ten birds were a nice find at LWFG on 17 November (Eric Beohm).

EARED GREBE - Five of this rare to uncommon wintering bird were seen at Lake Lanier 11-22 November (Jim Flynn; Jeff Sewell et al.); this species may be increasing in winter in the eastern U.S.

CORY'S SHEARWATER - On a very productive seabirding trip out of Tybee Island on 14 September, 114 birds were observed (Bill Lotz et al.).

GREATER SHEARWATER - Four were seen on the 14 September pelagic out of Tybee Island (Bill Lotz et al.).



AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER - Six were found on the 14 September pelagic trip (Bill Lotz et al.).

Audubon's Shearwater, Atlantic Ocean, 14 September, by David Hollie

MASKED BOOBY - A single bird was photographed on the 14 September pelagic trip, and represented the 12th state record (Bill Lotz et al.; accepted, GCRC 2008-29).

Masked Booby, Atlantic Ocean, 14 September, by David Hollie



BROWN BOOBY - Quite notable was a juvenile bird near Jekyll Island on 30 August (Bruce and Traci Dralle), but more remarkable was the discovery of 13 birds near U.S.



Navy towers M2R6 and R3 during the 14 September pelagic trip (Bill Lotz et al.), solidifying a new state high count and the ninth record overall. The presence of this and several other species were likely a result of the passage of Tropical Storm Hanna a week previous.

Brown Booby, U.S. Navy tower in Atlantic Ocean, 14 September, by David Hollie

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - Inland flocks of this species are occasionally spotted on lower Chattahoochee River reservoirs, thus 100+ birds soaring over LWFG on 16 November were quite notable (Eric Beohm). Sixteen were at AIC on 16 November (Gene Keferl), and 6 were there on 18 November (fide John Galvani), a reliable site for the species from late

fall through early spring; 13 were spotted from Jekyll Island south beach on 26 November (Joshua Spence). Two birds were seen at AWMA on 25 and 29 November (Jeff Sewell).

BROWN PELICAN - A single inland bird was at LWFG from 28 August (Jim Flynn) through the end of the season, and may have been the same individual discovered there in June.

GREAT CORMORANT - A single bird seen at LWFG on 17 November was an excellent discovery, and it stayed through the end of the season, providing only the second inland record and the seventh overall for the state (Eric Boehm, m. ob.; accepted, GCRC 2008-33A/B).



**Great Cormorant, Lake Walter F. George dam,
18 November, by Darlene Moore**

ANHINGA - Birds found in the Piedmont included 2 in Barrow Co. on 17 August (Jim Flynn), and one on 1 September in Henry Co. (Paul Raney), providing further evidence of inland expansion of this species' range.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - Tropical Storm Fay produced 4 late August sightings on the coast, including 3 on Jekyll Island on 22 August (fide Lydia Thompson), and singles on Skidaway Island on 22 August (Russ Wigh), on Jekyll Island on 23 August (Steve Stokes), and at Gould's Inlet, SSI, on 24 August (Paul Raney).

REDDISH EGRET - Two birds were at Gould's Inlet, SSI, on 17 August (Darlene Moore et al.), one was near Jekyll Island on 30 August (Bruce and Traci Dralle), a rare white morph graced LSSI on 15 October (Theresa Domanski), 2 were back at SSI on 8 September (Nathan Farnau), and one was there on 27 October (Gene Keferl).

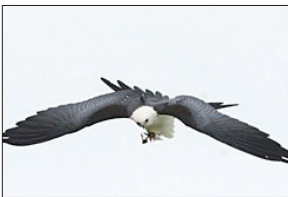
ROSEATE SPOONBILL - Among many typical reports from the coast was an inland bird in Dougherty Co. on 16 August (Brenda Brannen).

WOOD STORK - Thanks to several decades of conservation efforts, this species is recovering from a major decline which was at its worst in the 1970s; its breeding range in Georgia is expanding along the coast and well into the Coastal Plain, and rookeries have been documented in North and South Carolina as well. Accordingly, reports of wandering birds during post-breeding dispersal are increasing in number, especially farther inland. Its status in the Piedmont may now be considered uncommon (not rare) in late summer and fall, and it is also expected that birds may begin arriving further inland earlier

in the summer than in the past. This trend was well-illustrated this season by many Piedmont sightings, which therefore deserves detailed documentation: one was in Forsyth Co. on 15 August (Jim Flynn), 2 were in Jackson Co. on 16 August (Mark Freeman), 12 were in Clayton Co. on 16 August (Carol Lambert), 4 were in Greene Co. on 18 August (Jim Flynn), 5 were in Greene Co. on 24 August (Paul Sykes), 9 were at OM on 25 August (Walt Chambers), 3 were in Henry Co. on 26 August (James Brooks), 4 were in Madison Co. on 27 August (Vanessa Lane), 5 were in Jasper Co. on 31 August (Ellen Miller), an immature bird was in Oconee Co. on 1 September (Mark Freeman), 27 were in Lincoln Co. on 3 September (Jim Flynn), one was in Morgan Co. on 4 September (Mark McShane et al.), 3 were in Hall Co. on 4 September (fide Peter Gordon), 12 were in Henry Co. on 9 September (Carol Lambert), 2 were in Cobb Co. from 11-19 September (Chuck Saleeby, m. ob.), 7 were in Oconee Co. on 16 September (Steve Holzman), one was in Oconee Co. on 21 September (Jim Flynn), one was in Rockdale Co. on 22 September (Mark Freeman), and 10 were in Henry Co. on 26 September (Paul Raney). A count of 64 birds at PSNP on 1 October (Ruth Mead) was a high number for such a late date, even for this location near the Fall Line. Four birds that remained in Henry Co. until at least 1 October were fairly late for the Piedmont (Paul Raney).

TURKEY VULTURE - A remarkable count of 878 birds migrating over the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Cobb Co., on 18 October represented a new state high count (Stacy Zarpentine).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - One bird was a rare find for the upper Piedmont in Cherokee Co. from 2-14 August (Vicki DeLoach, v. ob.). An incredible sight to behold were 2 flocks totaling 90-100+ individuals in Long Co. on 14 August (Gene Wilkinson, Pete Moore); by 16 August, one flock had “diminished” to 64 birds hawking insects over a single field (Gene Wilkinson, m. ob.).



**Swallow-tailed Kite, Long Co., 16 August,
by Rachel Cass**

MISSISSIPPI KITE - The highest count of post-breeding dispersal birds was 75 in Muscogee Co. on 17 August (Ted Theus). Indications of northward expansion of this species' range included: 7 in Dawson Co. on 30 August (Georgann Schmalz), 28 in Gordon Co. on 4 September (Joshua Spence), and one in Habersham Co. on 1 September (Jim Flynn).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - Intriguing were single birds reported on consecutive days at Eufaula NWR on 21 October (Walt Chambers; pending, GCRC 2009-04), and at CSU on 22 October (Chuck Saleeby).

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK - A single light-morph was quite a rare find soaring over Gordon Co. on 29 October (Joshua Spence).

BLACK RAIL - Three birds were at the regular site in northern Greene Co. on 10 August (Paul Sykes).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER - Likely influenced by Tropical Storm Fay were the 2 birds found in Peach Co. on 23 August (Jim Flynn) and one in Morgan Co. on 25 August (Joel McNeal, Mark McShane). One bird was at Lake Acworth, Cobb Co., on 1 October (Chuck Saleeby), and another inland bird was at MBBP on 8 November (Lois Stacey et al.).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - This species was well-represented in the state this fall, with 9 total reports between 23 August and 25 September. The majority of reports came from various sod farms in Bartow Co., where 4 were still sporting signs of breeding plumage on 19 September (Ken Blankenship, Nathan Farnau).

PIPING PLOVER - An inland bird seen in Washington Co. on 23 August (Jim Flynn) was one of several atypical shorebird sightings associated with the passage of Tropical Storm Fay.

BLACK-NECKED STILT - One bird found in Bartow Co. on 31 August represented the farthest inland record in the state (Ken Blankenship et al.).

AMERICAN AVOCET - By far the most unusual sighting was a group of 14 that took refuge from Tropical Storm Fay at a pond in the mountains near Suches, Union Co., on 25 August (Betty Belanger, v. ob.). A good count of 107

was recorded at AIC on 6 September (Gene Keferl), and one inland bird was at PSNP on 1 October (Ruth Mead, m. ob.).



American Avocet, Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, 1 October, by Gene Howard

WILLET - Singletons were spotted inland in Bartow Co. on 25 August (Ken Blankenship) and in Peach Co. on 26 August (Walt Chambers).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - Reports of this species were slightly below average this season. The first involved 1-2 birds at the sod farm in Bostwick, Morgan Co., from 31 July through 5 August (m. ob.), 3 were at the MSS on 14 August (Walt Chambers), one was in Bartow Co. 21-22 August (Mark McShane), one was in Washington Co. on 23 August (Jim Flynn), and 3 were at the MSS on 26 August (Walt Chambers).

SANDERLING - Inland birds are always good finds: one was at CLRL on 27 August (Joshua Spence), and 2 were in Cobb Co. on 11 September (Bob Zaremba et al.).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - A juvenile was in Forsyth Co. from 16-21 August (Jim Flynn, m. ob.), one was in Peach Co. on 26 August (Walt Chambers), and a juvenile was on SSI on 8 September (Nathan Farnau),

PURPLE SANDPIPER - A nice total of 23 was tallied on Tybee Island on 28 November (Bob Zaremba).

DUNLIN - Two inland birds were early at Lake Acworth, Cobb Co., on 19 September (Chuck Saleeby et al.); another inland pair was at MBBP on 8 November (Lois Stacey et al.).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER - This sought-after fall specialty was fairly well-represented this season, with 14+ total reports - too many to list separately.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Eight birds were a good find at AWMA on 9 August (Jim Hanna).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - Tropical Storm Fay may have delivered the one found in Peach Co. on 24 August (Trey McCuen).

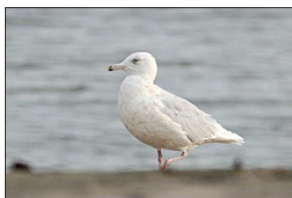
RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - Fay was also the likely source of 3 inland reports: one at OM on 23 August (Walt Chambers), one in Forsyth Co. on 26-27 August (Jim Flynn, Mark McShane), and 2 in Oconee Co. on 27 August (Mark Freeman). The 14 September pelagic trip produced a count of 25 of this species (Bill Lotz et al.).

LAUGHING GULL - A flock of 32 inland birds at LWFG on 28 August (Jim Flynn) was likely Tropical Storm Fay leftovers, as was one seen at West Point's dam on 2 September (Walt Chambers), and one juvenile at J. Strom Thurmond dam on 3 September (Jim Flynn). A remarkable count of 6050 was made at Jekyll Island on 12 October (Paul Sykes); notably, this is short of the state high count of 8000, which was established on 6 October 2002 (Oriole Vol. 68, No. 1-2, p. 25).

FRANKLIN'S GULL - Single birds were noted on LWFG on 9 and 24 November (Mark McShane, Max Medley).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Always notable inland, singles were found on Lake Hartwell on 2 September (Jim Flynn), and at West Point's dam on 8 October (Walt Chambers).

GLAUCOUS GULL - A third-winter bird was present in Brunswick, Glynn Co., from 9-18 November (Nathan Farnau, m. ob.), the first record of this species in Georgia since 2005, and nearly 2 months earlier than any previous record.



Glaucous Gull, Glynn Co., 14 November, by Bill Flatau

BROWN NODDY - Both major storm systems delivered this species to Georgia in record numbers. As many as 10-12 were found on Cumberland Island on 24 August in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Fay (Doug Hoffman; accepted GCRC 2008-13), easily establishing a new state high count. Another remarkable discovery was the observation of 6 birds on and around U.S. Navy towers M2R6 and R3 on 14 September, presumably brought in by Tropical Storm Hanna (Bill Lotz et al.; pending, GCRC 2009-03).

Brown Noddy, U.S. Navy tower in Atlantic Ocean, 14 September, by Darlene Moore



SOOTY TERN – Tropical Storm Fay-related sightings included an exhausted bird at Jekyll Island on 22 August (Lydia Thompson), one at LSSI from 22-23 August (Theresa Domanski), 3 on Lake Oliver, Muscogee Co., on 24 August (Walt Chambers), 2 on LWFG on 28 August (Jim Flynn), one at West Point's dam on 2 September (Walt Chambers), and 2 on J. Strom Thurmond Lake on 2 September (Jim Flynn). Tropical Storm Hanna brought 4 birds to Jekyll Island on 5 September (Gene Keferl). The 14 September pelagic trip produced sightings of 23 birds (Bill Lotz et al.).

BRIDLED TERN - Fay deposited 7 birds on Jekyll Island on 22 August (Lydia Thompson), a moribund bird was still there on 23 August (Steve Stokes), and had sadly succumbed by the following day, 24 August (Jared Fisher). Also on 24 August, approximately 12 birds were observed from the beaches of Cumberland Island (Doug Hoffman). One bird was reported far inland in Forsyth Co. on 27 August (Darlene Moore et al.). The 14 September pelagic trip produced sightings of 6 birds (Bill Lotz et al.).



Bridled Tern, Jekyll Island, 23 August, by Steve Stokes

CASPIAN TERN - A far inland group of 9 birds, likely storm-related, were at CLRL on 26 August, where at least 2 remained until 1 September (Joshua Spence); also inland were 3 at Lake Acworth, Cobb Co., on 10 September (Bob Zaremba et al.).

BLACK TERN - A good count of 130 was made at Lake Seminole on 28 August (Jim Flynn), and 50+ were at West Point's dam on 2 September (Walt Chambers).

COMMON TERN - A rare and likely storm-related inland record was one bird seen on 26 August at Yahoola Creek Reservoir, Lumpkin Co. (Jim Flynn).

PARASITIC JAEGER - One was seen from Jekyll Island north beach on 25 November (Jeff Sewell, Carol Lambert).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER - An immature bird was spotted during the pelagic trip off Tybee Island on 14 September (Bill Lotz et al.; accepted, GCRC 2008-27), and a juvenile bird was at Lake Seminole on 28 August (Jim Flynn; accepted, GCRC 2008-11).



**Long-tailed Jaeger, Atlantic Ocean, 14 September,
by Bob Zaremba**

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Though the species is increasing in the eastern U.S., only 2 were reported this season: one on SSI on 16 August (Patty McLean), and one on Jekyll Island on 17 August (Mark McShane et al.).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE - Two birds were found in Gordon Co. on 1 November, a very rare record for the Ridge and Valley (Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Single birds were observed in the city of Decatur on 6 September (Gordon McWilliams), in Baldwin Co. on 16 and 28 September (Steve Parrish), at Joe Kurz WMA, Meriwether Co., on 4 October (Charlie Muise), and one was spotted flying across a road in Fulton Co. on 19 October (Pierre Howard).

SHORT-EARED OWL - One bird was spotted in Baker Co. on 16 November (Eric Beohm), and another was in a soybean field in Sumter Co. on 24 November (Phil Hardy).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL - One bird was glimpsed on 25 November as it flew past a net array set up to band this poorly-understood late fall and winter visitor (Charlie Muise).

CHIMNEY SWIFT - A high count of 1292 birds was made on 13 September at a major annual roosting site - a large brick chimney in Waycross, Ware Co. (Sheila Willis).

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD - Among a few early reports of Georgia's most common wintering western hummer was a male in Dawson Co. on 7 August,

which was his third consecutive fall in the state (Georgann Schmalz); arriving for her second consecutive year was a female in Fulton Co. on 7 October (Bill Lotz).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - One bird was reported from the Johnson Ferry North Unit of the CRNRA on 23 August (Jerry Brunner).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE - A bird found in Gordon Co. on 1 November established a new late date for the Ridge and Valley (Joshua Spence).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER - This sought-after species was well-represented this fall by 11 total reports, most of which came from sites with consistent coverage such as CSU and HP.

ALDER FLYCATCHER - Rare and notoriously difficult to identify when not vocalizing, one was in Habersham Co. on 7 September (Jim Flynn; accepted, GCRC 2008-12), and one was reported at West Point's dam on 6 October (Eric Boehm).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - One bird responded to a recording at Ocmulgee National Monument, Bibb Co., on 27 September (Trey McCuen).

LEAST FLYCATCHER - Single birds were found in Clarke Co. on 1 September (Joel McNeal et al.), in Stephens Co. on 2 September (Jim Flynn), in Forsyth on 25 September (Grant McCreary), at CLRL on 20 September (Ken Blankenship et al.), and 1-2 were observed at CSU from 28 September through 3 October (Ken Blankenship, Nathan Farnau, Chuck Saleeby).

GRAY KINGBIRD - This species was reported from several annual breeding areas, including a combined count of 8 from several sites in Glynn Co. on 13 August (Brenda Brannen).

BELL'S VIREO - A bird banded at JIBS on 5 October was only the third to be documented in the state (Chris Pitman; pending, GCRC 2009-25).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO - This sought-after species was reported in good numbers this season, with high counts of 6 at CLRL on 27 September (Rick Waldrop), and 5 at CSU on 28 September (Ken Blankenship et al.).

COMMON RAVEN - A very interesting observation was the 1-2 birds engaging in aerial acrobatics with 2 **PEREGRINE FALCONS** at Rabun Bald on 26 October (Jared Fisher).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - Two birds at PSNP on 28 November were quite late for this species (Lois Stacey).

CAVE SWALLOW - This species again roamed the state this season, with singles at AWMA on 30 October (John Galvani; accepted, GCRC 2008-22), 24 November (Joshua Spence), and 25 November (Jeff Sewell; pending, GCRC 2008-38), and one inland at BUENWR on 1 November (Jim Flynn; accepted,

GCRC 2008-24). Vagrants of the southwestern subspecies *Petrochelidon fulva pallida* (*pelodoma*) have been increasing in Georgia in recent years in late fall and winter, as is true in the Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic states. It is interesting to note that increases in sightings of fall wandering and wintering birds preceded breeding range extensions in areas such as New Mexico and Texas. In the past decade or so, nests have been documented in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and even as far east as Louisiana; this has led to speculation that the increased frequency of sightings of wandering individuals in the Southeast, combined with the mild climate of the region, could be a prelude to breeding on the East Coast (Post 2008). Birders might therefore take a few extra moments to study all buffy-rumped swallows during breeding season, even though all will likely be Cliff Swallows. This is particularly important in the Coastal Plain and especially on the coast, where Cliff Swallows are not firmly established (if at all) in most areas. Look closely at buffy-rumped swallows relating to highway bridges (vs. over-water structures). Cliff Swallows very rarely nest away from water in Georgia. In contrast, Cave Swallows have been extensively documented using highway culverts as stepping-stones in their breeding range expansion into the southwestern and central U.S.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Two birds were heard on 10 August on Rabun Bald (Brandon Best); this species is now known to be an uncommon permanent resident in that area, and at other locations in the Blue Ridge and Cohutta Mountains featuring high elevations and mature white pine-hemlock forest.

BROWN CREEPER - A single bird found on 10 August on Burrell's Ford Rd, Rabun Co. (Brandon Best), most likely represents a rare breeding permanent resident; while one seen on a suet feeder in Carroll Co. on 22 August (Stanley Tate) likely represents an early migrant, and establishes a new state early-arrival date by nearly a month!

TENNESSEE WARBLER - A major movement of this common fall migrant lasted for several days at HP, with a new state high count of 112 established there on 5 October (Hugh Garrett).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER - A high count of 9 was notable at Hutchinson Island, Chatham Co., on 30 November (Bob Zaremba).

NASHVILLE WARBLER - A high count of 4 was notable at HP on 4 October (Patrick Brisse).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER - A very high count of 46 was notable at Little Mulberry Park, Gwinnett Co., on 13 October (Luke Theodorou).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER - Due to its amazing over-sea migratory path in the fall, sightings of this species in this season are rare anywhere south of North Carolina's Outer Banks. Reports this season included singles at Jekyll Island on 4 October (Steve Wagner), and at LSSI on 12 October (Chuck Saleeby et al.). CERULEAN WARBLER - Both very late and very rare for the coast was one bird spotted on St. Catherine's Island on 27 September (fide Gene Keferl).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Rarely detected in the fall, 2 were still singing in Muscogee Co. on 13 September (Ken Blankenship et al.).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - One was reported at HP on 3 October (Theresa Hartz), which was very unusual given that most birds likely depart from the middle Atlantic coast in fall on a direct flight to South America.

MOURNING WARBLER - There was only one report of this species, a first-fall female at HP from 5-6 October (Hugh Garrett et al., m. ob.).

HOODED WARBLER - A bird lingering at the State Botanical Gardens in Clarke Co. on 2 November was quite late (Joel McNeal et al.).

CANADA WARBLER - Single early arriving migrants were reported at HP on 1 August (Jeff Sewell) and in Muscogee Co. on 3 August (Walt Chambers).

SUMMER TANAGER - A female bird photographed in Cobb Co. on 20 November tied the state late date (Steve Slayton).



**Summer Tanager, Cobb Co., 20 November,
by Steve Slayton**

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - Reports this season included one at CLRL on 10 October (Max Medley), one in Glynn Co. on 13 October (Gene Keferl), one at CSU on 19 October (Patty McLean et al.), and one on Tybee Island on 1 November (Richard Hall).

HENSLOW'S SPARROW - Rare migrant sightings included one in Catoosa Co. on 7 October (David Hollie), and one or 2 at CSU from 18-25 October (m. ob.).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW - Single birds were reported from the annual wintering grounds at BUENWR on 23 November (Mark McShane et al.), and on 30 November (Trey McCuen).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - Over the past decade, this species has been increasing in the southeastern U.S., both during migration and in winter, a trend exemplified this fall by 12 separate reports across the state - too many to list separately.

INDIGO BUNTING - Three birds at Lake Seminole on 16 November were quite late (Eric Beohm).

DICKCISSEL - Two immature birds at CSU from 19-27 October provided a rare fall migration record (Stan Chapman, m. ob.).



Dickcissel, Cochran Shoals Unit of CRNRA, 19 October, by Stan Chapman

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - Approximately 400 birds were detected in a large wave of 8,000+ migrating blackbirds over Henry Co. on 27 November (Paul Raney), while 120 birds were observed at the important annual wintering site at PSNP on 28 November (Joel McNeal et al.).

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - Three birds were in Gordon Co. on 20 October (Joshua Spence), and 20 birds were a good find near LWFG on 17 November (Eric Beohm).

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE - On 3 September, several males and females were observed in Fitzgerald, Ben Hill Co. (Dot Freeman). A relatively large and apparently stable population in this area, representing a further inland range extension of the dark-eyed Gulf Coast subspecies *Quiscalus major westoni*, was well-documented (including breeding) in 2003-2004 (Hopkins, Baker, and Snow; Oriole Vol. 69, No. 3-4, p. 62-63).

RED CROSSBILL - Two flocks that had been visiting feeders at residences in Rabun Co. and White Co. in the summer were observed sporadically throughout the fall (John McClatchey, m. ob.).

PINE SISKIN - One bird found in Rabun Co. on 1 August (Steve Slayton) represents a summer record; the bird was present at the same residence in July. A surge of migrants started in late October, which was likely the beginning of a large winter irruption. Notable sightings related to this event included a relatively early arrival date in Maxeys, Oglethorpe Co., on 23 October (Leta Bird), and flocks of 75-100+ birds in Chattooga Co. on 14 November (David Brown), and in Catoosa Co. on 15 November (David Hollie). The species was commonly observed at feeders south to the upper Coastal Plain, and was also found on the coast, where 3 were located just a few miles north of the Florida border at Crooked River State Park, Camden Co., on 25 November (Ken Blankenship).

Literature Cited

Post, W. 2008. Cave Swallows wintering on the coasts of Georgia and the Carolinas: a prelude to breeding? *Florida Field Naturalist* 36(1):1-22.

Ken Blankenship, 3774 Tulip Tree Road, Marietta, GA 30066
kenhblankenship@comcast.net