

**FROM THE FIELD**

DECEMBER 2012 - FEBRUARY 2013

*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.

December and January were 5-8 degrees warmer than average, which may have been a factor in the unusually late southbound migration of Sandhill Cranes and in the number of winter records of Neotropical migrants including Yellow-throated, Cape May and Prairie warblers in the Piedmont and a Wood Thrush at the coast. Heavy rains in North Georgia beginning in mid-December helped alleviate drought conditions; after boat ramps at Lake Lanier were closed indefinitely on 13 December due to low water levels, by the end of the month the lake level had risen by 18 inches! Conversely, drought conditions intensified in the southern portion of the state, with Augusta recording its driest January on record, until February's heavy rains eliminated drought conditions statewide for the first time in two years. Winter 2012/2013 will long be remembered for the appearance of several crowd-pleasing rarities, including the first Georgia records of Northern Lapwing, White-winged Crossbill, and a lingering Snowy Owl that graced several of our barrier islands. Common Merganser, Cinnamon Teal and 3 Western Grebes were the pick of the waterbirds. Manx Shearwaters and Razorbills showed up in big numbers off the coast, but the three rarest gulls (Little, California, and Iceland) were, unfortunately, all seen briefly by just a few lucky observers. It was a good year for rare flycatchers, with Say's Phoebe showing up in the south of the state and multiple Western Kingbirds at the coast. Feeder watchers throughout the state were entertained by the major incursion of Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches, and an influx of winter hummingbirds that included Broad-tailed, Calliope, and Buff-bellied.

**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.; 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; 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.; GI - Gould's Inlet, St. Simons Island, Glynn 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.; LCI - Little Cumberland Island, Camden 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; OM - Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, Muscogee Co.; PCR - Pine Chapel Road, Gordon Co.; ph. - photographed; 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; SP - State Park; SSI - St. Simons Island, Glynn Co.; TI - Tybee Island, Chatham Co.; WMA - Wildlife Management Area; WPD - West Point Dam, Harris and Troup cos.

*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> 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/checklists/gcrc-activity.html>

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** - The high count from AWMA was 30 birds on 6 December (Angus, Ewan and Rusty Pritchard).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - The long-staying bird was again reported from Columbus, Muscogee Co., through February (m. ob.). One was at Adairsville, Bartow Co., on 14 December (Derrick Ingle), and 3 were at UGA Plant Sciences, Oconee Co., on 3 February (Rachel Cass, Steve Holzman).

**SNOW GOOSE** - This species was widely reported and the largest group of 19 was observed at MSS on 3 December (James Fleullan).

**ROSS'S GOOSE** - Single birds were reported at AP in 15 December (Jim Flynn; GCRC 2012-52), Cobblestone Golf Course, Cobb Co., on 15 January (ph., Bob Zaremba; GCRC 2013-42) and Simm's Lake Park, Gwinnett Co., on 4-6 February (*vide* Rusty Trump, ph., GCRC 2013-13).

**TUNDRA SWAN** - An immature was found at AWMA on 10 January (Chris Coppola, Gene Keferl) and was last seen on 10 February (Hans Bucht, Patty McLean).

**CINNAMON TEAL** - The returning drake was seen at CCWA on 10 December (m. ob.; GCRC 2012-46).

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** - An exceptional 2072 at the AIC spoil site on 2 January almost quadrupled the previous state high count (Gene Keferl) and the cumulative total of 3261 across all CBCs was a new Georgia CBC high count (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**REDHEAD** - Many observers reported larger than usual numbers across the state during this period. The highest count of 309 was made on private property in Murray Co. on 24 January (Max Medley, Joshua Spence).

**GREATER SCAUP** - Away from the coast, this species was reported to eBird from 9 inland locations, with the highest count of 12 birds reported from LWFG on 2 February (Larry Gridley).

**SURF SCOTER** - Inland reports of single birds were received from Lake Varner, Newton Co., on 2 December (Patty McLean), Chesser Island Road Landfill, Charlton Co., on 18 January (Rebecca Byrd), WPD on 26-28 January (Mason Jarrett, Mark McShane, Max Medley) and LWFG on 18 February (Patty McLean).

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** - Inland, one was at Lake Blalock, CCWA, on 25 January (m. ob.), one was at WPD on 27-28 January (Mason Jarrett, Trey McCuen, Mac McCall), and 2 were at LWFG on 18 February (Patty McLean), and 8 were there on 24 February (Larry Gridley).

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** - Good numbers of this species were recorded this winter with eBird reports from 10 different sites across the state. The highest count of 38 birds came from the regular site of WPD on 24 January (Walt Chambers).

**COMMON MERGANSER** - One was found at CLRL on 24 February (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd, m. ob.; GCRC 2013-17) and was still present at the end of the period.

**RUDDY DUCK** - An incredible 4000 at the AIC spoil site on 2 January represents a new state high count (Gene Keferl).

**WILD TURKEY** - A statewide total of 552 was a new CBC high count (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**RED-THROATED LOON** - Inland reports of single birds were received from Lake Hartwell, Hart Co., on 18 February (Eric Beohm) and Lake Strom Thurmond Dam, Columbia Co., on 24 February (Calvin Zippler).

**COMMON LOON** - An impressive 1055 were seen on a pelagic trip on 20 February, representing a new state high count (Bill Lotz).

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** - A new statewide CBC high count of 1486 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

**RED-NECKED GREBE** - One was at Strom Thurmond Dam, Columbia Co., on 29 January (ph., James Fleullan, Trey McCuen) and another at LWFG on 18 February had almost attained alternate plumage (ph., Patty McLean).

**EARED GREBE** - Two were at the regular wintering site of Plant Scherer Ash Ponds, Monroe Co., on 1-2 December (m. ob.), one was at CLRL on 30 January (Joshua Spence), and one was at LWFG on 2 February (Larry Gridley).

**WESTERN GREBE** - Remarkably, three were observed together from CINS on 22 February (Sidney Gauthreaux; pending, GCRC 2013-22). If accepted, this will represent a new state high count.

**MANX SHEARWATER** - This species has seen a remarkable upswing in observations over the last two winters and a new state high count of 125 was set in Camden Co. waters on 16 December (m. ob., pending, GCRC 2013-41). Additional sightings include 109 counted on a pelagic off J1 and CINS on 8 December (m. ob., GCRC 2012-51) and 19 seen on a pelagic out of Skidaway Island on 20 February (Steve Calver, Bill Lotz; pending, GCRC 2013-34).

**WOOD STORK** - Rarely observed far from the coast in winter, reports of 2 birds in Bulloch Co. on 13 February (Patty McLean) and 5 in Jenkins Co. on 28 February (Sandy Beasley, Brenda Brannen) were notable.

**GREAT CORMORANT** - The continuing bird was still present at LWFG through the end of the period (m. ob.; GCRC 2012-47).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** - This species is now too numerous at the coast to list individual observations. Inland reports were received from 7 locations, with the best inland count of 21 from WPD on 11 January (Rodney McCollum).

**AMERICAN BITTERN** - Wintering individuals were found at BUENWR on 21 December (Kyle Fritz) and AWMA on 15 January (James Fleullan, Trey McCuen), and 2 were at PSNP on 11 January (Patrick Addy, Nathan Farnau). An unusual record of a bird hunting far from water was documented on the campus of Armstrong Atlantic University, Chatham Co., on 21 February (ph., Maureen Keong-Lee).

**GREAT EGRET** - A new statewide CBC total of 1313 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

SNOWY EGRET - A new statewide CBC total of 2196 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

REDDISH EGRET - The continuing dark morph was seen at GI until 16 December (m. ob.).

BLACK CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - One was reported at PSNP on 15 December and 1 January (m. ob.).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - Rare in winter in the Piedmont, one was seen at Exchange Park, DeKalb Co., on 26 January (David Kuechenmeister).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - A statewide CBC total of 9 birds was recorded. Spoonbills have been recorded on the last 7 CBCs, with no prior CBC records (*fide* Giff Beaton).

BLACK VULTURE - A new statewide CBC total of 2604 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - One seen on LSSI on 13 February represents a new early date for the state (Scott Coleman).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - A new statewide CBC high total of 338 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

RED-TAILED HAWK - A dark morph Western bird was seen on Fite Bend Road, Gordon Co., on 23 December (Mark McShane, Max Medley).

**YELLOW RAIL** - One was flushed from salt marsh on a very high tide at the SCI CBC on 15 December (m. ob.; GCRC 2013-39), representing the second state CBC record.

CLAPPER RAIL - A new statewide CBC total of 649 was recorded (*fide* Giff Beaton).

PURPLE GALLINULE - Rarely observed in winter, one was at Harris Neck NWR, McIntosh Co., on 31 December (Edward Rigel).

SANDHILL CRANE - At least 1000 roosted at Lake Allatoona, Cherokee Co., on 1 December (Sandra Garber). The southbound migration was late and prolonged, and continued into mid-January.

WHOOPIING CRANE - Two birds roosted with Sandhill Cranes in Gordon Co. on 26 February (Rebecca Byrd, Max Medley).

**NORTHERN LAPWING** - This first state record was found during an Ornithology class field trip at Kennedy Pond, Bulloch Co., on 6 February (Lauren Deaner; GCRC 2013-12) and was last seen on 24 February. It was an excellent year for this species in the eastern US, and a different individual was found in neighboring North Carolina.



**Northern Lapwing, Bulloch Co., 16 February 2013,  
by Ben Thesing**

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** - The MWSS high count for this species was smashed yet again on 17 January, with a total of 11,094 recorded, including 5,410 from CINS (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** - Just slightly higher than last year's total, 681 were recorded on the MWSS on 17 January (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** - Rare in the Piedmont in winter, single birds wintered at CCWA, CSU and Dyar Pasture, Greene Co. (m. ob.).

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** - Rare north of the Fall Line in winter, one was on the BCL on 23 Feb (m. ob.).

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** - A total of 8 were seen on the MWSS on 17 January (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**MARbled GODWIT** - An excellent count of 365, 200 of which were on Little Egg Island Bar, was recorded on the MWSS on 17 January (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** - A total of 1197 were recorded on the MWSS on 17 January (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** - One was seen in St Mary's, Camden Co., on 14 December (Joan and Richard Becker), only the 6<sup>th</sup> Georgia CBC record, and 27 very early migrants were seen on the BCL on 28 February (ph., Patty McLean).

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** - Always noteworthy away from their TI hot spot, one was at GI on 3-7 December (Bob Sattelmeyer) and 2 were present on 5 December (Krista Gridley). The highest count from TI was 11 birds on 27 February (James Fleullan, Trey McCuen).

**DUNLIN** - A new MWSS high count of 48,625 was recorded on 17 January, of which 12,593 were on CINS (*vide* Tim Keyes). The statewide CBC total of 25,179 was also a new CBC high count (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** - A new high count of 4989 was recorded on the MWSS on 17 January (*vide* Tim Keyes).

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** - Two birds were at Faulk Lakes, Twiggs Co., on 1-5 December (m. ob.).

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** - One was at the Barrington Dairy farm pond, Macon Co., on 13 January, representing the first winter sighting of this species in Georgia (ph., Patrick Brisse, Hugh Garrett).

**RED PHALAROPE** - A total of 1400 were recorded on a pelagic trip on 8 December (m. ob.).

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** - An impressive 1720, a new state high count (Bill Lotz), were recorded on a pelagic trip on 20 February.

**LITTLE GULL** - One was seen at Lake Lanier, Hall Co., on 31 January (Jeff Sewell; GCRC 2013-11), and becomes the 6<sup>th</sup> Georgia record.

**LAUGHING GULL** - One with a red bill base and legs was seen on TI on 9 December (ph., Cameron Cox).

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** - One was at WPD on 24 January (Walt Chambers).

**ICELAND GULL** - One was on TI on 26 January (ph., Mirko Basen; GCRC 2013-40).



**Iceland Gull, Chatham Co., 26 January 2013,**  
by Mirko Basen

**GLAUCOUS GULL** - Two were seen on Camden Co. pelagic on 28 December (m. ob.; pending, GCRC 2013-36).

**Glaucous Gull, Camden Co., 28 December 2012,**  
by Bill Flatau



**FORSTER'S TERN** - A new statewide CBC high count of 2981 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**ROYAL TERN** - A statewide CBC high count of 1066 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**BLACK SKIMMER** - A new statewide CBC high count of 2935 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**POMARINE JAEGER** - One was seen on a Camden Co. pelagic on 21 February (ph., m. ob.).

**PARASITIC JAEGER** - The majority of sightings came from pelagic trips in Glynn Co. and Camden Co., but 5 recorded from shore on TI during the GOS meeting was notable (David Hedeon, Meg Walker).

**RAZORBILL** - Given the unprecedented influx of this species into Florida, it is not surprising that multiple birds were observed in Georgia this winter. Pelagic trip totals were 24 on 8 December, at least 50 on 16 December, and 2 on 28 December (m. ob.).

Rarely seen from shore, one was seen from Sea Island, Glynn Co., on 9 December (Ken Blankenship, m. ob.). The first state CBC records were single birds seen at CINS and SCI on 15 December, and one was seen from TI on 13 January (Calvin Zippler).

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**RAZORBILL** - Given the unprecedented influx of this species into Florida, it is not surprising that multiple birds were observed in Georgia this winter. Pelagic trip totals were 24 on 8 December, at least 50 on 16 December, and 2 on 28 December (m. ob.).

Rarely seen from shore, one was seen from Sea Island, Glynn Co., on 9 December (Ken Blankenship, m. ob.). The first state CBC records were single birds seen at CINS and SCI on 15 December, and one was seen from TI on 13 January (Calvin Zippler).

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** - One was on JI on 9 December (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd). Highly unusual for the Piedmont, a bird visiting a backyard south of Athens from 11 January - 16 February was the first Clarke Co. record (Steven Holland, m. ob.). One in a Savannah backyard from 3-24 February was thought to be a returning bird (Steve Wagner).

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** - A new high statewide CBC total of 138 included an unusual Piedmont sighting of 4 birds on Nichols Road, Greene Co., on 19 December (Rachel Cass, Steve Holzman, Joel McNeal).

**SNOWY OWL** - One of the stars of this winter, a bird was spotted by Sea Island staff on 1 December, and confirmed by naturalist Kristen Morris on 4 December, where it remained until 9 December (m. ob.; GCRC 2012-55). It then relocated to SSI from 10-27 December before disappearing. What was assumed to be the same bird was photographed at Vilano Beach, Florida, on 2 January, and then moved back north to SCI on 25 January (Jenifer Hilburn) before taking up residence on TI from 4-23 February (Julie Dylan, m. ob.; pending, GCRC 2013-18). This bird is the 6<sup>th</sup> record for the state, and the first not to be collected, found moribund, or dead. Pellets recovered while the bird was roosting on Sea Island were found to contain small bird bones and one small shell; combined with the bird's habit of flying out to sea each evening in the direction of Pelican Spit, it was thought to be feeding on small shorebirds (*vide* Tim Keyes).



**Snowy Owl, Glynn Co., 5 December 2012,  
by Dan Vickers**

**SHORT-EARED OWL** - One was seen at the Cobb owl fields, Sumter Co., on 21 December (Wayne Schaffner).

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** - Birds were banded in a Lamar Co. backyard on 1 and 6 December, amounting to a total of 8 different birds caught at this location in 2012 (Charlie Muise).

**WINTER HUMMINGBIRDS** - Hummingbird banders Julia Elliott, Karen Theodorou, and Rusty Trump banded a total 58 birds plus two recaptures between October 2012 and April 2013; of these, 48 were Rufous and 2 were Ruby-throated.

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** - A male visited a feeder on Skidaway Island, Chatham Co., from 13 December - 2 March (ph., Russ Wigh). A continuing female in Macon, Bibb Co., was banded on 22 December and was still present at the end of the period (Jim Ferrari). A female banded in Marietta, Cobb Co., was still present on 6 January (Bob Zaremba).

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** - The young male in Marietta, Cobb Co., was present throughout the period and became the second CBC record for Georgia (Bob and Deb Zaremba). One was banded in Lawrenceville, Gwinnett Co., on 13 January (Bob Hill, Karen Theodorou), and another was banded in Marietta, Cobb Co., on 22 January (Julia Elliott).



**Calliope Hummingbird, Cobb Co., 27 January 2013,**  
by Rachel Cass

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** - An adult male was banded near Jasper, Pickens Co., on 13 December and remained until 18 December (Rusty Trump, Russell and Whit Wright; GCRC 2012-50).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Pickens Co., 13 December 2012,** by Rusty Trump



**BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** - An immature male, present since mid-October on Skidaway Island, Chatham Co., was banded on 16 January and still present at the end of the period (Rusty Trump; GCRC 2013-10). This represents the 5<sup>th</sup> record for the state (and the 4<sup>th</sup> individual).



**Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Chatham Co., 27 February 2013,** by Russ Wigh

**BELTED KINGFISHER** - A new statewide CBC total of 427 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** - A new statewide CBC high count of 1964 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**Downy Woodpecker** - A new statewide CBC high count of 964 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - One was at PSNP on 8 December (m. ob.).

**SAY'S PHOEBE** - One was seen in Baker Co. on 5-19 January (ph., Larry Gridley; GCRC 2013-06). Assuming that this is the same bird observed at the site in November 2012, this represents the 3<sup>rd</sup> CBC record and the 5<sup>th</sup> state record.

Say's Phoebe, Baker Co., 5 January 2013,  
by Larry Gridley



WESTERN KINGBIRD - Single birds were found on JI on 7-13 December (m. ob.) and on a GOS field trip to Fort Pulaski, Chatham Co., on 20-21 January (Rachel Cass, m. ob.). Two were on Hutchinson Island, Chatham Co., from 21 January until the end of the period (Diana Churchill, m. ob.).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE - A white-headed bird was at Lake Mayer, Chatham Co., on 9 December (ph., Cameron Cox).

HORNED LARK - A record statewide CBC total of 81 was far higher than the ten-year average of 8.2 (*vide* Giff Beaton).

PURPLE MARTIN - The first returning birds were reported on 25 January from Dougherty Co. (Larry Gridley).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - A flock of 15 spent the winter at CCWA (m. ob.); 4 birds on the Macon CBC on 15<sup>th</sup> December were only the 4<sup>th</sup> CBC record (*vide* Giff Beaton).

BARN SWALLOW - The first migrants were reported from Huie Ponds, CCWA on 23 February (Eric Bowles).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Good numbers were reported statewide in this irruption winter. A new statewide CBC total of 246 was recorded (*vide* Giff Beaton), dwarfing the previous total of 114, and included a new state high count of 124 on SCI on 15 December.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - One was seen on Hunt's Gin Road, Gordon Co., on 31 December (Jeff Sewell, Dan Vickers) and was still present for the CBC on 5 January. Another was at CSU from 26 January-24 February (Jim and Allison Healy).

WOOD THRUSH - One at the Chatham Co. Botanical Gardens on 24 February (ph., Joel Ludlam) is a rare winter record for the state.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT - The continuing bird was seen at MSS regularly until at least 3 December (m. ob; GCRC 2012-45).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR - This winter saw above-average numbers of this species. Two were seen on the Laurens Co. loop on the Dublin CBC on 27 December (ph., Jerry and Marie Amerson); one was heard in flight at Fite Bend Road, Gordon Co., on 3 January (m. ob.), and 2 were recorded there on the CBC on 5 January (Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd); one was at MSS on 22 February (Walt Chambers), and one was on Leary Road, Dougherty Co., on 23 February (Larry Gridley).

banded at Panola Mountain SP, Rockdale Co., on 12 January (Charlie Muise) and one in northern Greene Co. on 13 January (Paul Sykes).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW - No reports were received from the regular wintering site of BUENWR. However, 3 were found on PCR on the Carter's Lake CBC on 5 January (Derrick Ingle) and single birds were seen at Paulk's Pasture WMA, Glynn Co., from 28 December - 12 January (m. ob.), on a GOS field trip to the Solomon Tract of Savannah NWR, Chatham Co., on 19 January (m. ob.), and Fort Stewart, Liberty Co., on 14 February (Larry Carlile).

NELSON'S SPARROW - A new statewide CBC total of 165 included a new state high count of 124 from SCI on 15 December (*fide* Giff Beaton).

SALTMARSH SPARROW - A new statewide CBC total of 94 was recorded, 84 of which were on SCI on 15 December (*fide* Giff Beaton).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - One was at Swamp of Toa, Baker Co., on 19 January and 10 February and one was at Lily Pond Road, Dougherty Co., on 24 February (both Wayne Schaffner).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - A new statewide CBC high count of 271 included 115 on the Lake Oconee CBC on 19 December and 101 on the Carter's Lake CBC on 5 January (*fide* Giff Beaton).

SUMMER TANAGER - One was in Savannah, Chatham Co., from 5 January-15 February (ph., Mary Lambright), and one was in an Upson Co. yard from 23 December to early February (Rosemary Kramer).

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK - One was at JI campground on 8-9 December (Lydia Thompson, Ken Blankenship, Rebecca Byrd), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> CBC sighting was of a bird visiting a feeder on the Piedmont-Rum Creek CBC on 17 December (*fide* Giff Beaton).

INDIGO BUNTING - One was at Aucilla Pines, Thomas Co., on 1 January (Todd Engstrom) and another was seen in Summerville, Chattooga Co., on 10 January (David Brown).

PAINTED BUNTING - Rare in the Piedmont, an adult male was found at the Athens Landfill, Clarke Co., from 11 January - 9 February (Mitchell Jarrett, m. ob.); a green bird was seen at this location in March 2012, raising the possibility that this is a returning individual. Ten individuals were reported to eBird from the Coastal Plain.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD - The statewide CBC total of 2101 was much better than the ten-year average of 1019; 1157 of these were recorded on the Athens count on 15 December (*fide* Giff Beaton).

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD - Seven were seen at the Cobb owl fields, Sumter Co., on 22 December (Larry Gridley); 5 were seen on PCR on the Carter's

Lake CBC on 5 January (Jeff Sewell, Dan Vickers); 16 were on the BCL on 23 February (m. ob.); and a maximum of 20 were observed at the Northern Lapwing site on Alma Lane, Bulloch Co., on 24 February (Paul Sykes).

**COMMON GRACKLE** - A huge flock containing an estimated 750,000 birds was seen in Murray Co. on 6 December (Max Medley, Joshua Spence).

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** - A new statewide CBC total of 41 included 37 from the Savannah CBC on 5 January (*vide* Giff Beaton). An excellent single site count of 25 was recorded in a Savannah backyard on 17 February (Daniel Levine).

**RED CROSSBILL** - One was in Dawson Forest, Dawson Co., on 5 January (Chris O'Neal), and 13 were seen at nearby Amicalola Falls SP on the same date (Shannon Fair, Iris Schumacher, Michael Weaver); 15 were seen at Blue Ridge Gap Road, Rabun Co., on 12 January (Patty McLean, Kathy Miller); at least 12 were at Fields Landing Park, Cherokee Co., on 20 January (Jim Flynn, Jim and Allison Healy); and flyover birds were heard on Warwoman Road, Rabun Co., on 21 January (Karen Theodorou).

**WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** - This amazing first state record, a male, was found visiting feeders in Burke Co. on 1 February (Karen Cox; GCRC 2013-15). It reappeared on 8 February, and thanks to the hospitality of the Cox family, was enjoyed by many birders until it departed on 14 February. It was associating with a flock of 300 Pine Siskins (see below).



**White-winged Crossbill, Burke Co., 9 February 2013,  
by Rachel Cass**

**PINE SISKIN** - This was an irruption year for the species throughout the state, with multiple backyard counts of 200-300 birds submitted to eBird in February.

[**EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** - A presumed escapee was found south of Athens by birders looking for the White-winged Dove on 11 January (ph., James Neves).]

**Richard Hall**, *Odum School of Ecology, 140 E. Green Street, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602*

*rjhall@uga.edu*