

FROM THE FIELD

MARCH - MAY 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.

The season began with some unseasonably cold snaps and even a few mountain snow showers in early March, as winter refused to release its grip. But before long the trees were covered with flowers, and warm weather and colorful Neotropical migrants returned to the Peach State. It was also a relatively wet spring, providing some relief from record drought conditions across the region. The state's first Green-breasted Mango continued to wow observers, as it remained long enough to molt into stunning adult plumage before departing in early April. Kennesaw Mountain lived up to its reputation as one of the best places to see migrants in the East, with more than 20 species of wood warblers seen on single mornings on several occasions, and new state high counts were established there for several species. This spring also provided several records of rare Georgia nesting species from the mountains. The state's first Brown Creeper nest was discovered in early May, and a second nest was found later that month. Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed throughout the season, including a pair at a nest cavity. Red Crossbills were reported at many feeders and from the field this spring, providing evidence of a significant movement of this nomadic species into the northern tier of the state.

Abbreviations: ACOGB - Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds, 2003, Beaton, G. et al., GOS Occ. Publ. No. 14; AWMA - Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, McIntosh Co.; BUENWR - the 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 Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cobb Co.; DF - Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area, Dawson Co.; ELHLAF - E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co.; FCCR - Floyd Creek Church Road, Bartow Co.; KMT - Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Cobb 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.; PCR - Pine Chapel Road, Gordon Co.; RBA - Rare Bird Alert; SCI - St. Catherine's Island, Liberty Co.; v. ob. - various observers; 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 - A count of 25-30 was recorded at AWMA on 26 April (Bob Sargent et al.); 22 were seen here on 17 May (Mark McShane, Jim Hanna), and 27 were present on or about 20 May (Tom Striker et al.). This species is a well-established breeding permanent resident at AWMA, and sightings away from this location are now of particular interest.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - On 2 March, 8 birds were seen at the UGA Plant Sciences property, Oconee Co. (Will Gravlee). A flock of 17 was found on Fagala Rd, Murray Co., on 4 March (Joshua Spence), and was relocated by v. ob. as late as 11 March. Three were on FCCR on 16 March (Ken Blankenship) and were present until at least 23 March.

SNOW GOOSE - Five were seen flying over Taff Rd on 2 March (Ken Blankenship). A single bird originally reported in winter continued until 8 March on the Troup/Harris Co. line (Walt Chambers).

ROSS'S GOOSE - A single bird was found on FCCR on 16 March (Ken Blankenship; pending, GCRC 2008-26), and was seen by v. ob. until at least 23 March.

GADWALL - A good count of 220 was made at ELHLAF on 13 March (Carol Lambert).

MOTTLED DUCK - Among several reports of this species was a good count of 10 birds at AWMA on 17 May (Mark McShane, Jim Hanna).

REDHEAD - Among several reports, a high count of 38 birds was recorded on Lake Lanier on 4 March (Jim Flynn).

SURF SCOTER - Five birds were seen on private property belonging to S.I. Storey Lumber Company, Floyd Co., on 4 April (Richard White). A first-winter male was found on J.W. Smith Reservoir, Clayton Co., on 8 April (Carol Lambert, Jeff Sewell).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER - A single bird was found at Bear Creek Reservoir, Jackson Co., on 6 March (Mark McShane).

HOODED MERGANSER - A rare breeding bird in the state, 2 adult females were observed this season at Arrowhead Environmental Learning Center, Floyd Co., including one with 2 young on 20 April (Marion Dobbs), and one with 6 young on 9 May (Dan Roper).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - Among several reports of this species was a good inland count of 17 males at Lake Lanier on 4 March (Jim Flynn).

PLAIN CHACHALACA - Two birds were heard calling on Sapelo Island on 10 March (Ken Blankenship).

COMMON LOON - Among many reports, a good count of 95-100+ birds was recorded at Bear Creek Reservoir, Jackson Co., on 5 April (Joel McNeal et al.).

PIED-BILLED GREBE - A bird with young was seen in Clayton Co. on 15 May (Carol Lambert et al.). A rare and local breeder in the Piedmont, this species has nested in the past at this location.

RED-NECKED GREBE - The only report of this rare species was a single bird on Clarks Hill Lake, Columbia Co., on 8 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

EARED GREBE - One bird in breeding plumage was seen in Tidwell Park on Lake Lanier on 20 March (Mark McShane). A single bird in basic plumage was reported from Florence Marina Park, Stewart Co., on 6 April (Walt Chambers).

NORTHERN GANNET - The latest report of this wintering species was a single juvenile bird off Tybee Island on 19 May (Tom Striker et al.).

BROWN PELICAN - A very unusual inland record was a single bird seen at Big Lazar WMA, Talbot Co., on 17 April (Ben Moore).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - A good count of 24 birds was recorded at Sapelo Island on 10 March (Ken Blankenship et al.). A very rare record for the Piedmont was a single bird reported from Lake Acworth, Cobb Co., on 29 May (Joe Croft).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD - One report of a single female bird was made from Jekyll Island south beach on 4 March (Steve Mammoser). This is quite an unusual date for the species, and if considered a regular sighting (versus an accidental occurrence), it would establish a new state early date by nearly 2 months.

AMERICAN BITTERN - A good count of 7 birds was made on both 14 and 15 March at the Okefenokee Swamp (Chip Campbell). On 21 April, one bird was present at Arrowhead Environmental Learning Center, Floyd Co., the fifth year in a row one has been recorded at this location at the same time of year (Dan Roper).

SNOWY EGRET - On 17 March, a single bird was found at CSU, for a very rare spring Piedmont record of the species (David Hodgson).



Snowy Egret, Cobb Co., 17 March, by David Hodgson

CATTLE EGRET - On 16 April, a high count of 350 birds was made at a very important rookery for this species at Stapleton Pond, Coffee Co. (Todd Womack). Two birds were found in Gordon Co. on

22 May, for a rare record in the Ridge and Valley (Joshua Spence).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON - This species is listed as a rare and local breeder in the Piedmont in the latest ACOGB (2003). Over the past 5-10 years, multiple sightings of birds at several locations across the Piedmont region during breeding season - including juveniles and fledglings - indicate that its breeding range continues to expand inland. It may now be considered a locally uncommon breeder in the Piedmont. On 10 May, a pair was observed at the Constitution Lakes ponds, DeKalb Co., a site with a small but nonetheless increasing breeding population (Phillip Northman). On 22 May, 3 birds were observed flying along the Chattahoochee River at the Johnson Ferry South Unit of the CRNRA, Cobb Co., including one juvenile (Chris Lambrecht); notably, this property is adjacent to CSU, where adults (and later juveniles) were also seen throughout the spring by v. ob. An adult bird and a fledgling were observed at the Mercer Wetlands, DeKalb Co., on 26 May (Patty McLean et al.), and on subsequent visits by v. ob.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, DeKalb Co., by Darlene Moore

GLOSSY IBIS - Two birds were seen at BUENWR on 6 April, for a rare Coastal Plain record (Walt Chambers). A

good count of 75 was recorded at AWMA on 26 April (Bob Sargent et al.).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL - A count of 16 birds was made at a roost site in Glynn Co. on 20 May (Tom Striker et al.).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE - The first reports of the season were 2 birds near Folkston, Charlton Co., and a single bird near Waverly, Camden Co., both on 15 March (fide Jeff Sewell).

MISSISSIPPI KITE - Only the third record for KMT, 2 birds were seen there on 4 May (Gordon McWilliams). Two birds were observed in Murray Co. on 8 May, for a rare record in the Ridge and Valley (Joshua Spence).

BALD EAGLE - An interesting report came from Ware Co. of an adult bird approaching a fisherman and his wife on several occasions to grab a recently-caught fish, consuming it nearby before flying off (Marsha Kriete).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK - A rare dark morph was soaring over KMT on 12 April (Chuck Saleeby et al.).

GOLDEN EAGLE - A juvenile bird was reported from a semi-annual wintering site at the Charlton Co. landfill on 11 March (Howard Hunt).

MERLIN - A single bird was seen on the Troup/Harris Co. line on 8 March (Walt Chambers). On 11 March, one was seen in Gordon Co. just east of Nickelsville (Tom Striker et al.). On 22 March, another one was spotted in Stephens Co. (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn). A bird was reported from Savannah NWR during several days in late March and early April (m. ob.). Single birds were seen in Lamar Co. on 6 April (Charlie Muise) and in Dawson Co. on 7 April (Jim Flynn). On 10 April, one was seen at the State Botanical Gardens, Clarke Co. (Joel McNeal et al.). The latest report of a single bird in Lamar Co. on 18 May (Charlie Muise) was only three days short of the state record late date of 21 May 2005 (Oriole 70/71:54).

KING RAIL - A locally uncommon breeder in the Piedmont, a bird was first heard calling at CSU on 30 April, and was present through the end of the season (m. ob.); breeding is suspected but was not confirmed.

PURPLE GALLINULE - Single birds were observed at AWMA on 27 April (Nathan Farnau) and 18 May (Mark McShane, Jim Hanna).

WHOOPIING CRANE - A single bird was reportedly flying with a flock of Sandhill Cranes over Decatur, DeKalb Co., on 1 March (fide Theresa Hartz).

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER - A single bird was a great find on Tybee Island north beach on 11 May (Diana Churchill).



**American Golden-Plover, Tybee Island, 11 May,
by Diana Churchill**

SNOWY PLOVER - A bird originally found in the winter, representing only the second record for Georgia, was present on Jekyll Island south beach as late as 17 April (Lydia Thompson; accepted, GCRC 2008-18A).

WILSON'S PLOVER - Several pairs of this beleaguered species successfully nested on Jekyll Island south beach thanks, in part, to the dedicated efforts of coastal birders placing warning signs informing the public of their presence. Adults were seen throughout the season, with young observed on 25 May (Lydia Thompson et al.).

BLACK-NECKED STILT - A good count of 28 breeding birds was recorded on 27 April at AWMA, with several pairs observed copulating (Nathan Farnau).

WILLET - A rare inland transient, a group of 12 birds at Garden Lakes, Floyd Co., was a great find on 28 April (Gladys Edmondson). All inland sightings of this species likely pertain to migrating Western Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*), which winters on the coast alongside the common resident breeding Eastern Willet (*C.s. semipalmatus*; ACOGB).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - Not reported as often in spring as in fall (possibly more a result of birding effort rather than actual migration patterns), a group of 8 birds was a nice find at MSS on 10 April (Mark McShane).

WHIMBREL - A good count of 417 was recorded on 30 April at St. Simons Island (Sheila Willis et al.).

RED KNOT - A good count of 597 was recorded on Sapelo Island on 10 March (Ken Blankenship et al.).

SANDERLING - A rare spring inland record was a single bird seen at MSS on 11 May (Nathan Farnau).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - There were at least 8 reports of this uncommon spring transient, with the highest count being 11 birds on Taff Rd, Bartow Co., on 23 May (Pierre Howard).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - The latest report of this wintering species was 6 birds on Tybee Island on 3 April (Diana Churchill).

STILT SANDPIPER - There were at least 6 reports of this uncommon to common transient, with the most interesting being 9 birds in alternate plumage at ELHLAF on 18 May (Nathan Farnau).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - A single bird was observed and heard giving its diagnostic flight call at Ocmulgee National Monument on 15 March (Jerry Amerson et al.).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - There were 2 sightings of this rare to uncommon migrant in Bartow Co. this season. On 10 May, a single bird was found on



Brandon Farm Rd (Mark McShane). On 21 May, 2 birds were seen on adjacent Taff Rd, including a female in breeding plumage (Ken Blankenship).

**Wilson's Phalarope, Bartow Co., 10 May,
by Darlene Moore**

BONAPARTE'S GULL - Among several reports of this species were high counts of 266 at CLRL on 29 March (Joshua Spence) and 100 birds at Bear Creek Reservoir, Jackson Co., on 2 April (Brandon Best).

LITTLE GULL - A single bird was found at Lake Lanier, Forsyth Co., on 4 March (Jim Flynn; accepted, GCRC 2008-06).



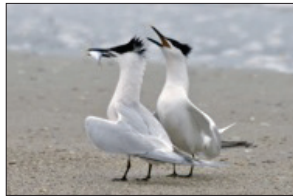
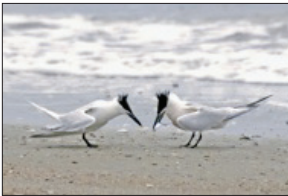
Little Gull, Forsyth Co., 4 March, by Jim Flynn

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Among several reports were 4 birds on Tybee Island on 3 April (Diana Churchill).

CASPIAN TERN - Inland sightings of this species are always notable. Five birds were seen at Carter’s Lake on 7 April (Max Medley), 4 were seen at ELHLAF on 17 April (Lloyd Snyder), and a pair was present at MBBP on 26 April (Lois Stacey et al.).

COMMON TERN - Only one bird was reported this spring, an adult at CLRL on 19 April (Max Medley).

SANDWICH TERN - Among several sightings of this locally nesting species on the coast was a fascinating photographic sequence capturing pair bonding and feeding rituals on Tybee Island on 18 May (Russ Wigh, Diana Churchill).



Sandwich Terns, Tybee Island, 18 May, by Russ Wigh

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - A single bird visited feeders at a residence in Dodge Co. in early March (Pamela Moore), while another was seen on a rural highway in Telfair Co. on 21 May (Tim Keyes).



COMMON GROUND-DOVE - A single bird was seen in northern Greene Co. on 2 March and 13 April, providing rare records of the species for the upper Piedmont (Paul Sykes). On 26 April, a single bird was spotted at Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center, also in the Piedmont (Ed Maioriello et al.).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - A bird struck a window in Cherokee Co. on or about 8 May and was photographed before flying off (fide Rusty Trump).

SHORT-EARED OWL - A very good count of 12 birds seen on 13 March at the annually reliable wintering area along Cobb Cheek Rd, Sumter Co., tied the state high count (Phil Hardy). The last report of the season was one at the same location on 29 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn).

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - The last confirmed report of this wintering species was a bird in Decatur, DeKalb Co., on 30 March (fide Rusty Trump).

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD - A wintering female bird was last seen visiting feeders at a residence in Lilburn, Gwinnett Co., on 16 April (Rick and Sandy Krause; pending, GCRC 2008-34). This is quite an impressive record, considering the late date and the fact that the closest known breeding areas are well over 1,000 miles away in the northwestern United States!

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD - A bird spending its second winter at a residence in Mableton, Cobb Co., was last seen on 26 March (fide Rusty Trump; GCRC 2007-06).

GREEN-BREASTED MANGO - Likely the biggest “celebrity bird” in Georgia birding history, this gorgeous Central American species continued to visit feeders at a residence in Dublin, Laurens Co., until as late as 4 April (Marshall and Laurie Jackson; GCRC 2008-04). In later observations, the bird



showed evidence of molting into adult plumage, and by late March was even more stunning than when it first appeared in the fall. It was featured in local newspaper articles, and as many as 600 birders came from 28 states, 4 Canadian provinces, and from as far away as Alaska to see this U.S. mega-rarity before it departed for destinations unknown.

Green-breasted Mango, Laurens Co., 21 March, by Jerry Amerson

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - The last confirmed report of this wintering species was a bird in Cumming, Forsyth Co., on 28 March (fide Rusty Trump).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - A sighting on 14 May at Whitehall Forest, Clarke Co., tied the state record late date for non-breeding (wintering) birds, and set a new late date for the Piedmont by one day (Michael Parrish).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - A single bird was found on Pine Mountain, Harris Co., on 9 May (Bill Birkhead).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - This rare to uncommon summer resident was reported from several locations and in good numbers this spring, with territorial pairs and nest-building behavior observed. Along with an annual nesting site along Butternut Creek in Blairsville, other locations included: GA Hwy 60/Grizzle Creek Rd, Union Co. (one pair); Harold Hefner River Park, Gilmer Co. (3 pairs); and behind a Subway sandwich shop on US Hwy 19 northwest of Blairsville (one pair).



Willow Flycatcher, Union Co., 18 May, by Darlene Moore

LEAST FLYCATHER - This uncommon locally nesting species (in the mountains) was first noted at an annually reliable site in Union Co. on 2 May (Grant McCreary).

SAY'S PHOEBE - A very rare wintering bird was last seen on Cobb Cheek Rd, Sumter Co., on 29 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn; accepted, GCRC 2008-28).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER - A wintering female at BUENWR was last reported on 1 March (Greg and Natalie Bailey).

GRAY KINGBIRD - The first report was a single bird on Jekyll Island on 17 April (Lydia Thompson). Notably, this date is earlier than a previously published state early date (ACOGB), but the new state early date is 13 April 2006 (Oriole 70/71:91).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - A male was first noted at a formerly annual nesting site in McDonough, Henry Co., on 10 May (Jim Flynn), and was last reported on 21 May (Tom Striker). Sadly, for the second year in a row a female never appeared.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO - Rare in the spring, a single bird was a good find at Dug Gap, Whitfield Co., on 17 May (Max Medley).

RED-EYED VIREO - A very good count of 56 was recorded on 30 April at KMT (Giff Beaton et al.).

COMMON RAVEN - Two birds were observed flying over the Chattahoochee National Forest, Fannin Co., on 26 April (Ken Blankenship). Singletons were reported over Burrell's Ford Rd, Rabun Co., on 1 May (Frank Renfrow), over Union Co. on 3 May (Dot Freeman et al.), near Panther Creek, Habersham Co., on 4 May (Joel McNeal et al.), and at Brasstown Bald on 10 May (Ken Blankenship) and 28 May (Mark McShane, Max Medley).

HORNED LARK - This common wintering species is rare and local in the state in late spring and summer (but is known to nest), so 3 birds were a good find in Madison Co. on 24 May (James Neves).

BANK SWALLOW - A single bird was seen on 28 April in Gordon Co. (Joshua Spence). Two were seen at BUENWR on 4 May (Walt Chambers). Six were spotted on 11 May in Dillard, Rabun Co., for a rare mountains record (Ken Blankenship).

BARN SWALLOW - A significant migratory observation of 5000 birds seen moving northward over the course of 2 hours along the ocean side of SCI was made on 4 May (Paul Sykes, Steve Holzman).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Many reports of this species at feeders continued well into spring, no doubt lingering birds from the significant invasion of the previous winter. A rare breeder in the mountains, several birds

were observed in known nesting areas in Rabun Co. later in spring such as



Coleman River Rd, Patterson Gap Rd, and Overflow Creek Rd. An active nest cavity was discovered at the latter location on 17 May (Rachel Cass), with a female displaying wing-flicking behavior and a male applying pine resin to the outside of the cavity.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch at nest cavity, Rabun Co., 17 May,
by Rachel Cass**

BROWN CREEPER - An exciting observation was made on 1 May of Georgia's first documented nesting of this species on Burrell's Ford Rd, Rabun Co. (Frank Renfrow). On 11 May, a second nest was discovered on nearby Billingsley Creek Rd with parents actively tending to their brood (Ken Blankenship). On 17 May, a single bird was seen and photographed at a different location on Burrell's Ford Rd (Phil Hardy et al.), several miles from the original nest discovery, and thus another possible breeding bird. On 29 May, one or 2 birds were found singing and delivering food on Patterson Gap Rd, Rabun Co. (Ken Blankenship, Pierre Howard); however, a nest was not located during this observation.

WINTER WREN - The first report of a bird singing at the annual nesting site on Brasstown Bald came on 24 May (Joel McNeal et al.).

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET - A single bird was found on Billingsley Creek Rd, Rabun Co., on 11 May (Ken Blankenship).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - Rare for spring (and certainly more so for the location), a singing bird was found in downtown Atlanta at Centennial Olympic Park on 10 May (Nathan Farnau). A single bird was seen at Sandy Creek Nature Center in Clarke Co. on 12 May (James Neves), while another bird was at a residence in Catoosa Co. on the same day (David Hollie).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - The first report of the season was 2 males at KMT on 20 April (Giff Beaton et al.). On 26 April, as many as 8 birds were seen in the Chattahoochee National Forest, Fannin Co. (Ken Blankenship); on 10 May, a similar count was recorded at the same location and 2 nesting pairs were noted (Rachel Cass).

"BREWSTER'S" WARBLER - A hybrid between Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler, a single individual was seen in Forsyth Co. on 30 April (Grant McCreary).

TENNESSEE WARBLER - Less common in spring than in fall, 3-5 birds were a nice find at Dug Gap, Whitfield Co., on 27 April (Adam Smith), while 6 were at KMT on 30 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER - The latest report of this wintering migrant was on 1 May at the State Botanical Gardens, Clarke Co. (Joel McNeal et al.).

NASHVILLE WARBLER - There were at least 7 reports of this rare migrant this season, with 2 seen at KMT on 30 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

YELLOW WARBLER - A single bird found at KMT on 14 April (Giff Beaton, Deb Zaremba) represents a new early date for that location; the previous early date was 16 April.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - A new migration high count of 16 was established on 4 May at KMT (Giff Beaton et al.), besting a previous migration count of 15 in DeKalb Co. in 1993. The highest count on breeding grounds in the mountains is 29 birds on 29 April 2001 (ACOGB).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER - A good count of 25 was recorded at KMT on 30 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - A good count of 23 was recorded at KMT on 30 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - A single bird at KMT on 22 March (Roy and Andy Hester) represents a new early date for that location; the previous early date was 26 March. A good count of 60 was recorded on SCI on 3 May (Paul Sykes, Steve Holzman).

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER - Five birds were seen at KMT on 2 May (Deb Zaremba et al.).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER - A good count of 28 birds was recorded at KMT on 2 May (Deb Zaremba et al.).

CERULEAN WARBLER - The first report of the season was 2 birds at KMT on 12 April (Bob Zaremba et al.), and the high count there was 8 males on 21 April (Giff Beaton et al.). On 23 April, a single bird was heard and seen on Gumlog Gap Rd, Union Co., one of very few locations where the species breeds in the state (Dot Freeman, Betty Belanger); 3 birds were found at the same location on 16 May (Dot Freeman et al.). On 13 May, a single bird was found near Coosa Bald on Duncan Ridge Rd (Georgann Schmalz). The Georgia DNR and US Forest Service have been experimenting with managing forests specifically for the declining Cerulean Warbler on Gumlog Gap Rd and adjacent Ivylog Gap Rd in Towns Co., and along Duncan Ridge Rd in Union Co. Birders who visit these areas are encouraged to participate in the effort to survey for this species. A web page provides details about the survey protocol: <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/birds/ceruleansurvey.htm>

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - A single bird found at KMT on 22 April was only the second record of the species for that location (Chuck Saleeby et al.). Seventeen birds were observed at Sandy Creek Nature Center, Clarke Co., on 12 May, a very good count for the Piedmont (James Neves).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - A single bird found at KMT on 30 April represented only the second record of the species at that location (Giff Beaton et al.).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH - A single bird found in Murray Co. on 18 March represents a new Ridge and Valley early date by one day (Joshua Spence).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - A good count of 15 birds was made on 20 April at Standing Boy Creek WMA, Muscogee Co. (Walt Chambers, Jerry Johns).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - A single bird was present in a yard in Catoosa Co. from 5-7 May (David Hollie). One was found in Clayton Co. on 10 May (Carol Lambert et al.). Two birds, including a male singing out in the open, were a great find at Sandy Creek Nature Center, Clarke Co., on 12 May (James Neves). On 15 May, a single bird was seen at Standing Boy Creek WMA, Muscogee Co. (Walt Chambers).

MOURNING WARBLER - A male bird was observed at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve, DeKalb Co., on 12 May (Nathan Farnau).

WILSON'S WARBLER - Two birds were seen at Dug Gap, Whitfield Co., on 13 May (Adam Smith). A female was found at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve, DeKalb Co., on 14 May (Pierre Howard). One bird was seen on 18 May in a small area of riparian habitat behind a Subway sandwich shop off US Hwy 19 just northwest of Blairsville (Ann Stewart et al.), while a singing male was seen on 19 May in a yard in Catoosa Co. (David Hollie). The last report of the season was single bird back at Dug Gap on 21 May (Adam Smith).

CANADA WARBLER - A good count of 8 birds was recorded on 17 May at the established breeding area on Brasstown Bald (Ken Blankenship et al.).

SCARLET TANAGER - A new state high count of 67 was established at KMT on 28 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

VESPER SPARROW - A nice flock of 21 birds was seen in Oconee Co. on 29 March (Mark Freeman).

"IPSWICH" SAVANNAH SPARROW - A single bird was a nice find on 16 March (Mark McShane) on Jekyll Island south beach. This subspecies is a rare winter resident, found only on barrier islands. This is one of approximately 20 records for the state, most of which have come from this location in recent years due to good birding coverage.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - A single bird found on Cashes Valley Rd, Fannin Co., on 24 April represents the first mountains record of the species (Nedra Sekera et al.).

HENSLOW'S SPARROW - A scarcely seen migrant, a good find was a single bird located at Standing Boy Creek WMA, Muscogee Co., on 12 April (Walt Chambers).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW - The latest report of a single bird on wintering grounds at BUENWR came on 6 April (Walt Chambers). A single bird at CLRL on 8 April was a great find, and represents the first Ridge and Valley record of the species (Joshua Spence).



**Le Conte's Sparrow, Murray Co., 8 April,
by Joshua Spence**

FOX SPARROW - A good count of 23 birds was recorded in northern Greene Co. on 2 March (Paul Sykes), while 18 birds were at the Newman Wetlands Center, Clayton Co., on 3 March (Carol Lambert).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - Single birds were reported in Bleckley Co. on 1 March (Jim Flynn, Earl Horn), at Little Mulberry Park, Gwinnett Co., on 15 April (Brandon Best), and at OM on 16 April (Walt Chambers).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - A new state high count of 46 was established at KMT on 27 April (Giff Beaton et al.).

BLUE GROSBEAK - A male at KMT on 13 April represented a new early date for that location by one day (Giff Beaton et al.).

PAINTED BUNTING - Quite unusual for the location, a male was seen visiting feeders in McDonough, Henry Co., on 6 May (fide Pierre Howard). While still rare, sightings of vagrant Painted Buntings in the middle Piedmont in late spring have been increasing in recent years. This phenomenon is poorly understood, as these may represent migrating birds from the central U.S. breeding population or northbound overshoots of the eastern population (P. Sykes, pers. comm.).

DICKCISSEL - Many sightings this spring indicated a substantial movement of the species into the state this season, with several colonies noted in various locations. The first report (Mark Davis) of a single bird was made on 24 April on Brandon Farm Rd, Bartow Co., with m. ob. reporting birds there throughout the season. Three separate males were detected singing at this location on 21 May (Ken Blankenship). Several birds were observed on Taylor Rd, Lamar Co., in early May (Paul Raney, m. ob.). On 15 May, one bird was found on PCR (Joshua Spence), an area which previously hosted a large colony. On 24 May, a

single bird was found in Madison Co. in the eastern Piedmont (James Neves). This species is an erratic and local breeder in Georgia, and has apparently been expanding its range eastward in summer from its core breeding grounds in the prairie grasslands of the central U.S. When these extra-limital colonies are established, it is notable that they sometimes persist for relatively long periods, but most are abandoned after several nesting seasons (Post et al. 2009). In

Georgia, Dickcissels are usually found in the Ridge and Valley, Piedmont, and upper Coastal Plain (ACOGB). To put the trend into perspective on a regional scale, Dickcissels were first documented breeding in Florida in 1999 (a large colony), and they nest sporadically across North and South Carolina - even adjacent to the coast in Charleston Co., South Carolina (Post et al. 2009), and in Carteret Co., North Carolina (J. Fussell, pers. comm.).



Dickcissel, Bartow Co., 10 May, by Darlene Moore

BOBOLINK - A flock of 200+ birds was found in Bartow Co. on 27 April (Mark McShane, Bill Wiggins).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - A group of as many as 6 birds on a farm in Macon Co. was reported to the RBA on 9 April (Ruth Weaver), and was observed by v. ob. until as late as 17 April.

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Macon Co., 15 April, by Steve Slayton



RUSTY BLACKBIRD - A very large flock of 700 birds was seen at Sandy Creek Nature Center, Clarke Co., on 2 March (Joel McNeal et al.). A flock of 50 birds was reported from Cooper Creek in Columbus, Muscogee Co., on 8 March (Walt Chambers). On 6 April, 131 birds were seen in northern Greene Co. (Paul Sykes).

SHINY COWBIRD - A female was found and collected at Harris Neck NWR on 24-25 May (Paul Sykes et al.; specimen, University of Georgia).

PURPLE FINCH - This irruptive species was well-represented in the state this spring as it was all winter, with too many reports to mention individually. Among many high counts, the best was up to 80 birds visiting feeders in Lilburn, Gwinnett Co., on 5 April (Rick and Sandy Krause).

RED CROSSBILL - A productive winter season was followed by an even more interesting spring for this nomadic species, which warrants individual

documentation. On 5 and 6 March, 3 birds visited feeders at a residence in Union Co. (Betty Belanger). On 8 March, a female made an appearance at feeders during a snow shower in Fannin Co. (Nedra Sekera). On 22 March, an adult female was found in a very unusual southerly location at Piedmont NWR, Jones Co. (Jerry Amerson, Bob Sargent); on 26 March a bird was heard calling as it flew over the same location (Pierre Howard, Bruce Hallett). On 23 March, 3 were seen and heard calling in northern Greene Co. (Paul Sykes). On 28 March, 2 were found at Dawson Forest WMA (Yvonne Bombardier), and the following day up to 6 were re-located there (Grant McCreary); on this occasion, sound recordings were obtained which were later analyzed by researchers and revealed that these were likely “Type 1” birds. On 13 April, 7 birds visited feeders in the Piedmont in Cherokee Co. (Sue Aughey) and 2 returned on 25 April. On 15 April, several birds visited feeders at a residence outside Clarkesville, Habersham Co. (fide Carol Vanderschaaf). For 2 weeks leading up to 26 April, as many as 8 were visiting feeders at a residence in White Co. (Eugene Kelley). On 28 April, 6 made an appearance at feeders at a relatively southerly location in Marblehill, Pickens Co. (Lynn Kenyon). On 28 May, 4 birds were heard and seen on Brasstown Bald, Union Co. (Jackie Heyda et al.). On 30 May, 2 birds enjoyed their dinner at the same time as their observers at a residence in White Co. (John McClatchey).



Red Crossbill, Jones Co., 22 March, by Jerry Amerson

PINE SISKIN - The last report of this irruptive winter species was a single bird visiting feeders at a residence in Lamar Co. on 17 April (Tracey Muise).

Literature Cited

Post, W., Sanders, F., and Wood, L. 2009. The History of Dickcissels (*Spiza americana*) Nesting on the Southeastern Coast of North America. Florida Field Naturalist. 37(2):45-50.

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