

# THE ORIOLE

A Quarterly Journal of Georgia Ornithology; Official Organ of the  
Georgia Ornithological Society



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# THE ORIOLE

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## GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN THE CATBIRD

*Dumetella carolinensis*

by THOMAS D. BURLEIGH

Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

In connection with a distributional study of the birds of Idaho specimens representing the breeding population of catbirds of the northwestern United States were critically examined to determine the validity of *Dumetella carolinensis ruficrissa* described from eastern Washington by John W. Aldrich (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 59: 129-136, 1946). Comparative material was available from throughout the breeding range of this species and when arranged geographically it was found that actually there are three well-marked subspecies of the catbird, one of which occurs in the western United States and two in the east. The eastern populations include the nominate race and one as yet unnamed. This new subspecies may be known as:

*Dumetella carolinensis meridianus*, new subspecies

*Characters*.—Most closely resembles *Dumetella carolinensis ruficrissa*, being noticeably pale both above and below, which character readily distinguishes it from *D. c. carolinensis* with its darker upper and under parts. Both sexes of *meridianus* suggest *ruficrissa* in their appearance, but they can be distinguished by the brownish wash both above and below, the western race being a clearer gray on the lower surface and on the back. Females of all three races are perceptibly darker than the males; in this sex *meridianus* further differs from *ruficrissa* in being more whitish on the abdomen, instead of uniform gray. The black pileum in both *meridianus* and *ruficrissa* is duller than in *carolinensis*; that of *meridianus* is least clearly black and in most individuals has a definite brownish tinge.

*Measurements*.—Adult male (20 breeding specimens from South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi): wing 85-92.5 (90.5); tail 86-97 (93); exposed culmen 14-17.5 (16.1). Adult female (16 breeding specimens from South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana): wing 82.5-92 (87.5); tail 82-95 (90.3); exposed culmen 14-16 (15.8).

*Type*.—Adult male, No. 382266, U. S. National Museum (Fish and Wildlife Service collection), Athens, Clarke County, Georgia, June 4, 1946, Thomas D. Burleigh, original number, 9497.

*Distribution*.—Breeds from southwestern Maryland southward, east



of the Appalachians, to northern Florida and west to eastern Texas. In Alabama and Mississippi it is limited in its distribution as a breeding bird to the northern half of these States. In the eastern part of its range *meridianus* occurs only on the Coastal Plain, specimens taken in the lower Piedmont being clearly referable to *carolinensis*. Farther west it occurs also in the Piedmont where it is a common breeding bird north to the foothills of the Appalachians. In winter it is known to occur on the Gulf Coast, in Cuba, and in Central America as far south as Honduras.

*Remarks.*—Rand and Traylor (Auk 66:25-28, 1949) discuss in some detail geographic variation in *Dumetella carolinensis*, and state that although western specimens appear lighter than those from the eastern United States, the breeding population from west of the Great Plains is not sufficiently different to be separable. They noted that a proportion of the birds from the eastern seaboard are as pale as those from the far west, but they apparently failed to appreciate the fact that these pale eastern birds represent a race that could be distinguished from western breeding populations.

A factor that must be taken into consideration where breeding catbirds are concerned is the late date in the spring when transients can be found well south of their breeding range. In northern Idaho, for example, it is the third week in May before the first individuals appear, and the end of the month before this species is of more than casual occurrence. This late date of arrival is also undoubtedly true farther east at the extreme northern limits of the breeding range of the catbird. For this reason specimens taken in the southeastern United States before the first of June, and even later, would not necessarily represent the breeding population. This must be borne in mind in determining the status of specimens taken as breeding birds. Dark plumaged catbirds taken in late May and sometimes even early June, within the breeding range given for *meridianus* would be late transients, and their occurrence then should not be considered justification for questioning the validity of this new race.

The 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-List (1957) gives "in Carolina-Virginia" as the type locality for *Dumetella carolinensis*. This is based mainly on The Cat-Bird, *Muscicapa vertice nigro* of Catesby (Natural History of Carolina, Florida and The Bahaman Islands, Vol. 1, p 66, 1766). Catesby worked largely on the coast, from the Savannah River north to Virginia, but in the account of his travels he mentions one occasion when he reached the foothills of the mountains. Consequently the specimen from which he painted his plate of the catbird could have been taken within the breeding range of either *carolinensis* or *meridianus*,

and could also have been a migrant. His plate depicts a dark bird, so the name *carolinensis* is herewith assigned to the breeding population of catbirds occurring north of the southeastern United States and west to Minnesota. The more southern breeding population may be known as *Meridianus*.

*Specimens of Dumetella carolinensis meridianus examined.*—Total number, 67, from the following localities—*Maryland*: Blandensburg, August 24, 1959, male adult, 2 female immature. *Virginia*: Alexandria, June 1, 1959, male adult; June 4, 1959, male adult; June 8, 1959, male, female, adult; June 30, 1959, male adult; July 1, 1959, female adult; July 19, 1959, female immature; July 26, 1959, male immature; July 28, 1959, female adult; August 4, 1959, female adult. Mt. Vernon, April 19, 1959, female adult; June 24, 1959, male adult; July 13, 1959, male immature. Falls Church, August 29, 1959, female adult, male immature. *District of Columbia*: October 4, 1958, female immature. *North Carolina*: Beaufort, July 5, 1915, male adult. *South Carolina*: Caesars Head, July 18, 1940, male adult. Marietta, July 19, 1940, female adult. *Alabama*: Mobile, October 31, 1945, female adult. Akron, Hale County, May 16, 1959, male adult. E. Macon County, June 13, 1959, male adult. Montgomery County, June 21, 1959, male adult. *Georgia*: Athens, June 29, 1928, male adult; July 14, 1939, male adult; June 4, 1946, male adult; June 5, 1946, male adult; June 6, 1946, female adult. Mountain City, June 21, 1939, male adult. Winterville, Clarke County, June 11, 1946, female adult. Snellville, Gwinnette County, June 12, 1946, female adult. Social Circle, Walton County, June 13, 1946, female adult. Decatur, June 16, 1946, male adult; July 1, 1946, female adult; July 14, 1946, male adult; August 22, 1946, female immature; August 30, 1946, female adult; June 3, 1947, male adult; June 28, 1947, male adult. Crawfordville, Taliaferro County, June 29, 1946, male adult. Dallas, Paulding County, July 12, 1946, male adult, female adult. Duluth, Gwinnette County, July 15, 1946, female adult. Carrollton, Carroll County, July 18, 1946, female adult. Cumming, Forsyth County, July 23, 1946, male adult. Milledgeville, June 7, 1947, female adult. Greenville, Meriwether County, June 21, 1947, male adult. Arabi, Crisp County, June 24, 1947, male adult. Pearson, Atkinson County, June 26, 1947, male adult, female adult. Sylvester, Worth County, June 26, 1947, female adult. Marietta, Cobb County, July 7, 1947, male adult. Montreal, DeKalb County, July 8, 1947, female adult. *Mississippi*: Horn Island, January 21, 1939, female adult. Brooksville, June 14, 1940, male adult. Meridian, July 13, 1940, female adult. *Louisiana*: Baton Rouge, June 12, 1944, female adult. *Texas*: Ellis County, May 13, 1938, female adult. Denton County, May 18, 1948, female adult;



May 16, 1949, female adult. Smith County, May 16, 1950, female adult. *Cuba*: Guantanamo, January 10, 1916, male adult; January 26, 1919, male adult. *Honduras*: Yaruca, February 12, 1902, male adult. December 2, 1959, Washington 25, D. C.

## LATE SUMMER OBSERVATIONS FROM RABUN COUNTY, GEORGIA

by  
DAVID W. JOHNSTON

Rabun County, occupying the northeasternmost portion of Georgia, contains some of the most scenic and interesting mountains of the state. With elevations ranging from 900 feet at Tallulah Gorge to about 4700 feet on Rabun Bald, this part of the Blue Ridge country is well known for its natural beauty. Little, however, is known of its wildlife (and even less has been published), even though in recent years federal and state authorities have concentrated on this area for the restoration and protection of wildlife. Indeed, much of Rabun County is in the Chattahoochee National Forest, and parts of the county are included in several wildlife management areas under the supervision of the Georgia Department of Game and Fish. Much of this forest is inaccessible to the general public, but the mountain valleys are frequently used for agriculture, small fields of corn and pasturelands predominating.

From August 25 until September 1, 1958, I had the pleasure of staying in Clayton, the county seat, and making daily trips into the surrounding countryside. Although this period was not designed solely for concentrated study of flora and fauna, distinct impressions were gained and observations made and the data gleaned from these are presented here as contributions to ornithological knowledge of this little-known part of our state.

Weatherwise, conditions at this time were perfect. During the day temperatures rose to the high 80's and at night fell to the cool low 60's. Although skies were threatening on several occasions, there was no rain. There was a noticeable feeling of fall in the air, probably due to the combined cool temperatures, frequent stiff breezes which knocked leaves from the trees, blooming of a few fall plants (asters, goldenrod), and the change in color of leaves (sourwood, maple, persimmon). The effect was a portent of real autumn, the beauties for which these mountains are renowned.

Ornithologically, the experience could have been disappointing because, with only a few exceptions, birds were not evident. The numerous sorties through fields and forests alike generally failed to produce any considerable number of species or individuals. In fact, during the week only 60 species were recorded. Only rarely could I find groups of birds which might be termed "waves" of migrants, and with the general absence of breeding forms the forests were rather sterile and quiet. Occasionally a noisy family group of titmice and/or chickadees could be found in which there might be associated a single vireo or warbler. At Warwoman Dell, some four miles east of Clayton on August 28, in a cove of hemlock, hardwoods, and rhododendron, there was a group of chickadees, cardinals, and one each of Chestnut-sided, Worm-eating, Canada, and Black-and-white warblers, and a Red-eyed Vireo. Similarly on August 31, at an elevation of 4200 feet on Rabun Bald, I found a small, loose aggregation of titmice, chickadees, and one or two each of the White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy Woodpecker, Slate-colored Junco, Wood Pewee, Blue-headed Vireo, Rufous-sided Towhee, and the Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white, Hooded, and Black-throated Green warblers. At about 3000 feet on the same mountain my imitation of a Screech Owl was answered by three of these owls, one of which was immediately mobbed by three Ovenbirds, two thrashers, several chickadees, and a Black-throated Green Warbler. Except for these occurrences no real migratory movements were detected in any of the forested areas.

These observations led me to agree with others that here negative information is perhaps as significant as positive—by this is meant that the general absence of birds at this time presents a situation of distinct importance. A week of searching produced less than ten each of the Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, and Red-eyed Vireo, probably the most abundant breeding birds in these hardwood forests. Evidently these and most other breeding forms had already migrated by this time, and one wonders if later on other migrants would occupy these mountains on their way south.

Around the various towns in the valleys, migration was evident in only a few birds. Hundreds of Chimney Swifts were noted especially in the early evening, as were considerable numbers of Common Grackles and Common Nighthawks. On the other hand, there were not noticeable concentrations or movements of hawks, fringillids, flycatchers, thrushes, cuckoos, or tanagers in the valleys, stream borders, or other habitats around the towns.



Certain species were conspicuous for their absence; at least I was unable to find them in a week's searching. Among these were *Empidonax* flycatchers, shrike, cuckoos, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Mockingbird, Sparrow Hawk, Common Yellow-throat, swallows, Redheaded Woodpecker, and Bewick's Wren. Perhaps, I just missed some of these, but on the other hand I wondered if some of these even occur in this part of the state (Sparrow Hawk, Mockingbird, Redheaded Woodpecker) and if others had not already migrated.

Probably the most conspicuous migratory movement was seen in the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Whereas practically every clearing in the forest or roadside vegetation might harbor one or more hummingbirds, these avian minuscules were especially concentrated along stream borders where jewelweed and its orange-red blossoms were profuse. In fact, nearly every small stream winding its way across an open valley had its stand of jewelweed and hence attracted these hummers. Within the town of Clayton, a one-hundred-yard stretch of Chechero Creek was selected for studying numbers and movements of hummers on August 28. Their abundance at this site was indicated by the fact that between 9:20 and 10:20, 12 were seen, and in the next hour, 10. Perhaps some birds were counted more than once, but in general the hummers worked their way along the jewelweed stretch from one end to the other, then took off toward town, thus suggesting that different birds were being seen. In any event, no more than three were seen at a given time, and only once did I detect a tiny glint of the reddish gorget. There was considerable belligerency among these birds. As a new hummer approached the jewelweed from over the trees, it was frequently set upon by a bird which had been feeding there for some time, and practically never could two birds come within ten feet of one another without an ensuing chase. This pugnacious nature was also directed toward a male Indigo Bunting and a dragonfly!

Interesting sidelights of this simple "backyard" observation is worth reporting. The *same* jewelweed blossoms were visited time and again on this morning and on other days. Do these flowers replenish their nectar so rapidly that an almost continuous food supply is available? I examined several of these flowers and tasted their contents but could not taste anything sweet; neither were they fragrant. Until about 11 a.m. the hummers were *always* on the wing, but after that time there were noticeable periods of rest and preening, these placid periods usually being terminated by an abrupt chase. Certainly all of these hummers could not have been local

birds; one wonders therefore where they came from and to what extent they use these mountain valleys in spring and fall migration.

Another simple observation was a food niche in the woods—a single wild cherry tree. Its fruit attracted numerous species, although few ever occurred together. Over a period of three days, the fruit was utilized by the Blue Jay, Wood Thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, Robin, and Summer and Scarlet tanagers. Probably cardinals and towhees ate the cherries too, for an occasional bird was seen near the base of the tree. At this time of year few other fruits were ripe for birds, but at a later time blueberries, huckleberries, dogwood berries, and others would become available. I wondered if these were not local birds, tarrying to utilize available food before their migratory urge would carry them southward.

As indicated above, certain species gave indication of occurring in family groups. Especially was this true of cardinals, towhees, titmice, chickadees, jays, crows, and Chipping Sparrows. For others—Whip-poor-will, woodpeckers, tanagers, pewees, and gnatcatchers—only an occasional individual was seen or heard, suggesting that families of these species had already disbanded and dispersed.

On several occasions I inquired about Ravens from forest rangers, game wardens, and "old-timers," but in no case did anyone give any indication that these birds had occurred recently in these stretches of mountains. Formerly when the forest lands were open range, apparently the livestock, especially pigs, attracted Ravens in small numbers, but none of the old-timers could recall having seen one in the last twenty or more years. This is, of course, not conclusive evidence that this species does not occur at all, but it does indicate that one would have difficulty finding it.

With this background information there was little likelihood that Ravens would be found on Rabun Bald, but in order to see more of that rugged and wild peak, I accompanied State Warden George Speed up the mountain along the southeast road. As we left Clayton on August 31, we noted a Red Squirrel (heretofore unrecorded in Georgia) scamper across the road toward a walnut tree. These "boomers" and the larger tree squirrels are not uncommon in the hardwood forests where, this year, there was an abundance of acorns and hickory nuts. On two occasions along the road we found freshly-killed Timber Rattlesnakes and a Copperhead, and once we spotted an immature Great Horned Owl as it moved quietly through the timber. Deer tracks were plentiful on the dirt road and its banks, though less so as we approached the steep upper portion of the mountain. Many of these deer, as was also true of the Wild



Turkeys, are local animals, but others have been introduced to augment the dwindling populations on this Warwoman Wildlife Management Area. On a nearby road earlier this year two hen turkeys were seen with their broods of chicks. Warden Speed had noted several bears along this road on an earlier patrol, and stopped to show me large rocks which the bears had overturned in search of food. At this point from practically under our feet, a Ruffed Grouse whirred off through the undergrowth. Eventually arriving at the end of the road below the summit, we searched the cliffs and listened at length for Ravens, but our searches were fruitless.

After returning from north Georgia, I talked with Dr. Wilbur Duncan of the University of Georgia's Department of Botany. He has travelled extensively for many years all over the state collecting botanical specimens and observing wildlife, and he was able to contribute some knowledge of recent vintage concerning Ravens. Although he did not recall having seen this bird around Rabun Bald, he did hear them on Brasstown Bald in Union County on July 8, 1939. Also, on Hightower Bald (4568 feet), an extremely wild and remote peak in Towns County, he remembered Ravens in the summer of 1946, 1947, or 1948. This site was only about 1/10th of a mile from the Georgia-North Carolina line. But the big question remains—does the Raven still occur with any degree of regularity in Georgia?

These observations from northern Georgia are admittedly somewhat random, but they indicate some unsolved problems concerning the bird-life there, especially in the nonbreeding season. Furthermore, to my knowledge no one has ever published an intensive study of the breeding birds anywhere in Rabun County. It would seem, then, that these mountains afford practically virgin territory for the ornithologist desirous of collecting data on breeding status and migratory occurrence.

*Department of Biology, Mercer University,  
Macon, Georgia. March 30, 1959.*

## GENERAL NOTES

### MISSISSIPPI KITES BREEDING IN MUSCOGEE COUNTY, GEORGIA.—

A pair of Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) bred and successfully raised one young on the Jack Sealy place about five airline miles northeast of the Columbus, Georgia courthouse and four miles east of the Chattahoochee River. The nest was located approximately 90 feet from the ground in a dense grove of tall pines near a creek bottom and pas-

ture. It appeared to be made of coarse twigs and was so small that the bird seemed to sit on the nest instead of in it. The Seals first saw them on May 10, 1959 amid torrid mating activities lasting two or three days, subsiding toward the incubation date. Both Mr. and Mrs. Sealy made notes and observations.

May 14 A third Kite appeared but left on the second day.

May 16 A nest was located by Dr. Julian Dusi and the senior class from A. P. I.

May 20 The incubation period began and the male bird took his turn on the nest.

June 21 One young was hatched.

July 25 The young left the nest.

July 27 The young left the nesting tree for adjacent pines.

August 2 The young bird had selected a perching tree which was a dead pine approximately 100 feet from the ground. The female grew less attentive after the fledgling left the nest and the male took over feeding duties altogether. The female disappeared from the vicinity about August 12. To date, August 18, the young bird had made a few practice flights and had sat on a dead pine perch whining for food. This call is a feeble imitation of the two part shrill whistle of the parent birds. The accent is on the first sharp syllable, the second abating with a downward slur. The call was not heard until after the hatching date. Adept in aerial maneuvers, the Kite has a trick of twisting his tail as if it were a rudder when veering in flight.

During the beginning of the Kite's nesting activity the male bird carried nesting material to the nest site and was later seen feeding the female as she sat on a perch nearby. The male bird on one occasion chased a Red-shouldered Hawk from the vicinity. Crows that formerly nested there and Pileated Woodpeckers that had once used the area were now not to be seen. The Kites, however, tolerated much human activity without apparent fear. L. A. WELLS, *Green Island Hills, Rt. 1, Columbus, Georgia, August 18, 1959.*

### A SECOND GEORGIA SPECIMEN OF WILSON'S PHALAROPE.—

Three Wilson's Phalaropes (*Steganopus tricolor*) were found on Sept. 23, 1959, in a shallow pool on Hutchinson Island, across the river from the city. One bird was collected and is the second specimen from Georgia. Two birds, probably the same ones, were found in the same locality several times from then until October 25.

These birds fed with a group of Stilt Sandpipers and Dowitchers



(probably *scolopaceus*). The others waded in a few inches of water and probed deep in the silty bottom while the phalaropes swam along, putting the whole head and neck under water in search of food. On the first day, four Northern Phalaropes were in the same pool, but they were not seen after that.

IVAN R. TOMKINS, 1231 East 50th St., Savannah, Ga., 27 October, 1959.

**NEW BIRDS ADDED TO FLOYD COUNTY LIST.**—Paris Lake, in the past good territory for water birds, was drained during the early summer but a small stream of water has continued to flow through the lake bed. This unusual condition has been ideal for shore birds. On May 17, 1959, three Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen there by Marion King, Alta Stevens, Louise Nunnally, Phil Ham, and Ben Maulsby. These were seen again during the first and fourth weeks of September. The Ring or Semipalmated Plover was seen near the water but in another area of the lake bed on the same date. This bird was observed again in August 23 and on the same date several Sanderlings were also seen. The Sanderling has been seen on a number of other occasions up until the first week of October. These birds were observed by the above named group and also by Virginia Starr and Jack Wyatt. On September 12, 1959, two Dowitchers were seen in this territory by Marion King, Louise Nunnally, and Phil Ham. These birds were seen by others throughout September but were gone by the end of the month. A very interesting observation was made by Phil Ham during the second week of September when he saw the Dowitcher and Wilson's Snipe through the scope at the same time. The Dowitcher was seen in another section of Floyd County a good many years ago but this is the only recent record on this bird.

LOUISE NUNNALLY, 8 Washington Apartments, Rome, Georgia, October 7, 1959

**KIRTLAND'S WARBLER ON ST. SIMON'S ISLAND.**—On September 19, 1959, Roy Moore, Byron Groszmann, Raymond Johnson, my wife and I saw what we believed was a Kirtland's warbler. The bird flew into a dead bush at the edge of the marsh on the north side of St. Simon's Island. It posed nicely for us and we studied it at a distance of about twenty yards through 10 power and 7 power binoculars for about ten minutes before it flew away. Occasionally it would drop down into a patch of Sea-ox-eye below the bush and then reappear. We had our field guide and checked the field marks of Kirtland's warbler and of the confusing species. After eliminating the species it could not have been, we had only Kirtland's warbler left.

The bird was rather large and inactive for a warbler. The underparts, including the throat, were yellow with faint dark streaks along the sides. The upper parts were grayish brown. Wing bars were present but indistinct. It wagged its tail. No tail markings nor rump patch were seen and we believe we had ample opportunity to have seen them had they been present. There was no yellow or pale line above or through or under the eye. The face was unmarked except that the cheek appeared to be a darker gray than the upper part of the head. There was no chestnut crown. EUGENE CYPERT, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross, Georgia. Rec. for Publication Nov. 18, 1959.

**BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH IN HABERSHAM COUNTY.**—On June 1, 1959 I stopped beside a small farm pond at the edge of woods in the Glade Creek District, and saw my first Brown-headed Nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla*). There were two of them in a group of low pines. They flew into the woods after letting me watch them for at least half a minute.

On June 2 there were approximately ten of these nuthatches in pine trees around the southernmost farm house in Fair Play District, nearly five miles from where I had seen those of the previous day. Dr. Wesley Atkins and I were surrounded by the squeaking, excited-acting birds, moving from tree to tree in many directions for about fifteen minutes before they moved off into adjacent woods.

On June 20, I stopped on a road two miles northwest of Clarkesville, Georgia, the northernmost location of the three places. While I was observing other birds I heard calls of the Brown-headed Nuthatch coming from a single white oak in front of a farm house. There were two birds this time and after perhaps three minute's stay in the oak they flew off across a field to a mixed forest.

The only previous record of this species in Habersham County was that of an immature bird found dead on a road near Cornelia and sent to Mrs. Dorothy Neal. The locations where I saw the nuthatches are between seven and nine miles north of Cornelia. EDWARD G. NICHOLS, Box 49, Demorest, Georgia, July 3, 1959.

**WOODCOCK NESTING AT MACON.**—On March 31, 1959, Lewis Batts, Jr., called my attention to the nest of a Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) about five miles west of Macon, Bibb County, Georgia. The nest and incubating bird had been found on March 27 by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hunt about fifty yards from their rural home. We were surprised to find the nest in an exposed and unlikely spot—in the open at the dry edge of an old field, at



the end of brush pile, and partly under the canopy of a large oak. The incubating bird sat closely while we photographed her as close as two feet, but soon flew off performing a "broken wing" act. The nest was lined with oak leaves and contained four eggs mottled with large and small blotches of dark brown.

The bird was still incubating on April 4, but the nest was empty the next day. Broken egg shells were discovered a short distance away. Since the nest was not torn up, we could only hope that the eggs hatched successfully and the young escaped predators. (Many rats were noticed in the field near the nest). No parents or young were found anywhere in the vicinity of the nest.

Mrs. Hunt recalled that she had seen an adult woodcock and three young late in April, 1958. The birds were found as they crossed the road near the Hunt's home, whereupon Mrs. Hunt stopped her car and caught one of the young birds. The adult gave a typical injury-feigning reaction.

Whereas woodcocks have been seen occasionally in spring and summer around Macon, these are the first actual breeding records for this area.—DAVID W. JOHNSTON, *Department of Biology, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia. April 15, 1959.*

**ERRATUM.**—In Teal's article, "Birds of Sapelo Island and Vicinity" (*Oriole*, 24: 1-14), the last line of page 10 should read:

Wood Thrush: *Hylocichla mustelina*. Not common. One was seen in December and on January 1, 1956; several are seen in February and March every year.

Hermit Thrush: *Hylocichla Guttata*. November through April.

## NEWS AND COMMENTS

### MINUTES OF THE FORTY-FIRST SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The forty-first semi-annual meeting of the Georgia Ornithological Society was held at Dalton, Georgia on October 9, 10, 11, 1959 with headquarters at the Hotel Dalton.

Registration began at 4:00 P.M. with a total of 66 persons registering through Friday evening. During the evening R. E. Hamilton of Dalton described the Dalton area and the field trips planned for the meeting.

At 6:30 Saturday morning all met at the Oakwood Cafe for breakfast. After breakfast field work was begun in five areas about Dalton. Several types of habitats were included in each trip. Field work continued throughout the morning.

The business meeting was opened by President Maulsby at 2:00 P.M. in the Dining hall of the Hotel Dalton. Ed Collum read the minutes of the fortieth semi-annual meeting. The minutes were approved as read. Katherine Weaver read the Treasurer's report. There was no discussion of this report, and it was approved as read.

President Maulsby called for reports from the Regional Vice Presidents. Those Vice Presidents present made short reports. A very interesting report describing the Savannah Youth Museum was made by Herman Coolidge.

Carmen Dobbs of Atlanta described the work of Wayne Shortt in attempting to organize the World Science Institute, Inc. an organization to provide lecturers in various fields particularly in natural history subjects. Harold Peters of Atlanta made a motion that a letter be sent to Shortt. Such a letter should acknowledge his work on behalf of G.O.S. The motion was passed.

Bill Griffin was asked to describe the progress on the pocket-sized checklist for various sections of Georgia discussed at the previous Fall meeting. Bill indicated that Ivan Tomkins had done all the work on the project and turned the discussion over to him. Ivan Tomkins described the simple, pocket-sized booklet as a State checklist of birds with space provided for field notes. He stated that the booklet would be financed by an undisclosed donor and would be available shortly for fifty cents through Ralph Ramsey the business manager with approval of the membership. Immediate approval was given.

A letter from Ralph Ramsey was read indicating that a large quantity of past business records, supplies, etc. presently stored by Ray Werner and himself should be stored in a better place. Carroll Hart of Atlanta suggested that all records including past secretarial records be kept at the University of Georgia in Athens in the G.O.S. library. President Maulsby suggested that Carroll Hart and Bill Griffin look into the problems associated with this storage.

President Maulsby discussed the possibility of providing in the future a president's page in the Oriole, perhaps in loose leaf form. Such a page would serve as a newsletter for the membership. Members were generally in favor of such a method of keeping informed, but no further action was taken at this time.

Ben Maulsby introduced several members of the Rome section of the Georgia Sportsmen's Federation, Georgia chapter of the National Wildlife Federation. They discussed the possibilities of members of G.O.S. be-



coming affiliated with their organization. After considerable discussion, Carmen Dobbs suggested that each local group study the matter of such an association before any action was taken by G.O.S. The membership approved this suggestion.

Dr. Sara Nelson chairman of the nominating committee read the report of the nominating committee for officers for the next two years as follows:

President: Mrs. Mary Lou Cypert  
 First Vice-President: Mrs. Hedwig Cater  
 Second Vice-President: Mr. Tully Pennington  
 Secretary: Mr. Frank Fitch  
 Treasurer: Miss Katherine Weaver  
 For Regional Vice-Presidents:  
 Dalton Region, Mrs. Herman King  
 Demorest Region, Mrs. Charles Neal  
 West Point Region, Mrs. C. O. Williams  
 Atlanta Region, Mrs. Harold Peters  
 Athens Region, Mrs. James H. Jenkins  
 Macon Region, .....

Milledgeville Region, Mrs. Jesse Newsome  
 Augusta Region, Mrs. Gary Satcher  
 Albany Region, Mrs. J. W. Calhoun  
 Statesboro Region, .....

Kingsland Region, .....

Brunswick Region,.....Herbert W. Kale  
 Savannah Region, Herman Coolidge  
 Fitzgerald Region, Mr. Milton Hopkins  
 Rome Region, Miss Louise Nunnally

There were no further nominations. A motion was made and passed that the slate be accepted as read. This election brought to a close the business meeting.

Field work provided the afternoon program.

At 7:30 P.M. a banquet was held in the Hotel Dalton. After the meal Dr. W. K. Butts of the University of Chattanooga presented the program. He spoke on birds of the area. He illustrated the talk with slides and presented sound recordings. A Chattanooga associate of Dr. Butts presented excellent color movies of birds which he had made himself.

After breakfast at the Oakwood Cafe, the group traveled to Fort Mountain, performing field work on the way and on the mountain. A

box lunch was eaten on the mountain. After lunch, a park ranger described the damage in the mountains due to the Linden Moth and the work done to study and overcome the problem.

A suggestion was made to have the Spring meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in conjunction with the Tennessee group. A second suggestion was made to have the next meeting at Ida Cason Gardens. With these suggestions the meeting came to a close.

Charles E. Collum,  
 Secretary

## RECENT LITERATURE

**FUNDAMENTALS OF ORNITHOLOGY.**—by Josselyn Van Tyne and Andrew J. Berger. 1959 John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York 624 pages, 252 illustrations, \$11.75.

This book will fill a long felt need for a combined fundamental ornithological facts volume and reference text for the more advanced ornithologist and taxonomist. The book contains twelve chapters with subject matter relating to paleontology, anatomy, plumage and molt, senses and behavior, voice and sound production, bird distribution, migration, flight, food and feeding habits, breeding behavior, social relations, taxonomy and nomenclature. The section entitled "Classification of World Birds by Families" is a book in itself and contains material compiled here from many sources and generally unavailable in this form elsewhere.

The book will fill many needs of the ornithology student as anticipated by the late Dr. Van Tyne and expressed in its introduction by Dr. Berger. It will serve "as a quick reference for information on all the families of birds; as a dictionary of ornithological terms; as a general reference for those interested in life history, taxonomy, and anatomy; as a summary of anatomical characteristics used in the classification of birds; and as a guide to ornithological literature."

The excellent pen sketches executed by Dr. George Miksch Sutton appearing before each family in the classification section are eye-appealing and convey well the form and character of at least one representative of that family but could possibly be somewhat misleading, especially where some family groups contain a very large number of species.

There are generalizations in the Physical Characteristics subheadings on a few of the family account pages that tend to be somewhat confusing



in some instances such as the statement that "sexes are alike or unlike". There are exceptions (although noted within the family accounts) to the generalized family descriptions that might lead the less advanced student to believe that he has a good mental picture that would enable him to place this particular bird in one or another family if it were not for the exceptions to the rule.

The book also contains a section "Ornithological Sources", a glossary that is very comprehensive in anatomical terminology, and an index.

To the advanced laboratory student, taxonomist, and researcher in ornithology this text is as indispensable as a good field guide when problems and questions confront him.—MILTON HOPKINS, JR.

### FROM THE FIELD

L. A. Wells of Columbus, Georgia reports two Bachman's Sparrows singing on August 13, and a third carrying nesting material to an almost completed nest. Allison Dodson reports the nesting of a pair of Barn Swallows in Hogansville, Georgia. His letter is dated June 24, 1959. Rev. Edward G. Nichols found a House Wren singing near Demorest and observed it at close range on July 13. On July 17 Rev. Nichols heard this species singing at Cornelia. Mrs. Dorothy Neal notes that these are the first summer records, to her knowledge, from Habersham County although the species has been found breeding farther south. From Savannah Ivan Tomkins reports Blue Geese on two different days during the last week of October. One group of eleven individuals was noted at about 100 yards distance. On October 24 he observed an immature White-crowned Sparrow. Milton Hopkins, Jr. noted three Blue Geese (two adults and one immature) on a pond near Osierfield, Irwin County on October 19. On November 18 he observed 62 Florida Cranes flying SSE at approximately 400 feet high. A Black Tern was seen at Osierfield on September 10.

Ed. Note: "From the Field", a section begun by David Johnston, will continue to appear in future issues of *The Oriole*. Readers are urged to send significant records to the present editor. If time does not permit their preparing a short note then a mention of species, numbers, and dates of observation will be appreciated. A postal card will suffice for this purpose. Observations cited in this section, will not, of course, preclude their future publication in the form of more detailed notes and articles. MNH